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Introduction

What is a Tabletop Role-playing Game?

A tabletop role-playing game, commonly shortened to TTRPG, is a cooperative storytelling experience where players must role-play a character's actions and navigate an imagined world to accomplish some task. Players will create and take control of a character, then become that character and explore the world through their eyes.

One player, known as the Architect, is responsible for providing opposition to the players in the form of monsters and traps, and other obstacles that might be encountered in the world. The Architect is not fighting against the players, however. All players, Architect included, are simply working together to tell the most amazing story possible.

Outside of that basic premise, there is no limit to what a TTRPG can be.

Why DRGN?

Don't Ruin Game Night, or DRGN, is a TTRPG system designed fundamentally to be customizable. DRGN draws inspiration from modern video games and their cosmetic "skins" for weapons and characters. In a single game, there could be Halloween, Christmas, Sci-fi, Wild West, and Fantasy characters fighting each-other, with no fundamental difference in how the game is played. That same idea is applied in DRGN. Instead of creating whole new systems of rules, characters, and weapons for every possible storytelling scenario, DRGN allows any setting, be it Sci-fi, High Fantasy, Modern, or Heroic, to be played with a single set of common rules.

What is needed to play?

A group of 3-7 friends, one of whom is the Architect, a few hours and some snacks, a character, a 20-sided dice, and an imagination.

Other optional gear includes battle maps, miniatures, props, costumes, rule-books, background music, or even recording hardware. As long as the gear enhances storytelling and the experience overall, it can be used.

Setting up the Game

Session Zero

Before the player's adventures even begin, there are a few items of business that must be taken care of so playing the game can be a smooth and fun experience for everyone. Most of these should be discussed in person during a "session zero," where players meet for the first time to create characters and take care of logistics so the game can run smoothly.

The first step is to get a group to play with. The player that will be the Architect should decide on a group size they are comfortable working with. Once the size and players are decided, all players should work together and come to a consensus on a couple of key decisions. These key decisions include:

- Logistics: When? Where? Who? How often? Snacks? Transportation?
- Tone: Fun and relaxed or Serious and strict? Alcohol? Voice Acting?
- Difficulty: Challenging? Character death?
- Scope: World-wide catastrophe or small town heroes?
- Story: Railroad or open world?
- Boundaries: LGBTQ+ characters? Sex and relationships? Murder? Gore? Players vs Players?

Setting

Once logistical stuff is taken care of, it's time to decide on a setting. The setting may be one created and designed by the DRGN team, or it could be a setting created in house by the Architect.

Some common genres for settings include:

- Sword and Sorcery
- Space Odyssey
- Superheroes vs Villains
- Modern
- Post Apocalyptic
- High Concept Fantasy
- Steampunk
- Wild West

Other details that should be discussed with the setting are:

- What kind of characters are the players allowed to make?
- What skills or traits will characters need to have to successfully navigate the setting?
- Will the characters start at the beginning of their journey, or will they have a head start?
- What "common knowledge" should the players know about the game world?
- Where and how will the players begin their adventure?
- What common goal will allow the player's characters to work together?

Key Mechanics

“Risk it All”

While playing the game, players will be confronted with various challenges and things to do. DRGN is designed to have a very black and white outcome system: Either something succeeds or it fails. Attacks made during combat are guaranteed to hit the opponent. If a character’s trait is higher than the Difficulty Value (DV) of the task, they succeed at the task.

Some players prefer a little more chance in the outcomes of their actions. Players may choose at any time to “Risk it All” and let dice decide their fate. Whenever a player makes an action, they can choose to leave the outcome of that action up to chance and roll a 20 sided dice. The outcome of the action is based on the dice roll:

- On a 1, the outcome is a catastrophic failure
- On a 2-7, the outcome is one step below the normal outcome (e.g. an attack misses, or a trait is reduced by 10 for a trait check)
- On an 8-13, the outcome is normal
- On a 14-19, the outcome is one step above a the normal outcome (e.g. an attack hits a specific body part on an enemy, or a trait is increased by 10 for a trait check)
- On a 20, the outcome is an instant success (provided the action is actually possible)

Taking risks has an additional benefit as well. For every 3 times a player “risks it all,” they gain 1 Epicoin to use.

Epicoins

Epicoins are a way to reward players for cleverly interacting with the game. Epicoins are given out by the Architect, and can be given out at any time. Common ways for players to earn Epicoins are:

- Role-playing their character really well
- Coming up with a clever strategy to defeat an opponent
- Overcoming a difficult obstacle
- The player’s character achieving significant character growth (for better or worse)
- After suffering defeat at the hands of the enemy, in preparation for their epic escape

Epicoins can also be earned when a player “Risk(s) it all” 3 times. These risks do not have to be taken in a row.

There is no limit to the number of Epicoins a player can have. An Epicoin can be redeemed at any time to allow a character to do something “epic.” Here are some ideas for “epic” things players can do:

- Survive an incoming attack and remain standing at 1 HP
- Score a critical hit on an attack, dealing double damage
- Critically injuring or disabling an enemy, such as slashing an enemy’s eyes, rendering an enemy’s legs useless, or preventing a dragon from using its breath weapon
- Use an ability in an unusual way, like using heat vision to cauterize a wound
- Gain a “second wind,” allowing the player to take an additional action immediately
- Use an ability that is out of uses

There are many more things a player could want to do that would be considered “epic.” It is up to the Architect to decide what is allowed when redeeming Epicoin.

“It’s Gonna be Close”

The same “Risk it All” mechanic can also be used to accentuate difficult circumstances within the game world. Whenever a character would do something abnormally difficult, the Architect can declare the action will be left to chance by saying “it’s gonna be close.” For example, hitting a target with the sun glaring behind them is “gonna be close.” Shooting a bow and arrow while grappled by a giant snake is “gonna be close.” When an action is declared, “close,” by the Architect, the character taking the action must roll a d20 and follow the chart above for the action. Rolling a d20 in this way does not count towards earning an Epicoin.

There is a difference between a task simply being difficult and “it’s gonna be close.” Climbing a cliff might be a Difficulty Value (DV) 20 task. Climbing the cliff while it is raining is not “close,” but rather more difficult, and as such will have a DV 40. Climbing the cliff while enemies are shooting at you would constitute an “it’s gonna be close” situation, and would require a roll to complete successfully.

The difference between a task with a high difficulty value and a task with an “it’s gonna be close” dice roll are left up to the Architect. In general, disadvantageous circumstances will make an action, “close,” as opposed to a generally difficult task. Discuss with the Architect and come to a consensus as a group for split opinions.

Note: If a player is going to take an action that would be declared, “close,” but decides to “Risk it All” before the Architect declares the situation is “gonna be close,” the player will be given credit towards earning an Epicoin. Once the Architect says, “it’s gonna be close,” the player cannot earn credit towards an Epicoin, even if they “risk it all”. A player also cannot change a course of action if the Architect has declared, “it’s gonna be close.”

Flavor with Gameplay Ramifications

As mentioned before, DRGN relies heavily on flavor to fill in the gaps for its simplified rule-set. A pistol, hand crossbow, plasma pistol, and sling are all the same exact thing under the hood: A light ranged weapon. DRGN gives the stats for “Light Ranged Weapon,” but its up to the players and the Architect to decide what that looks like. This customization is referred to as flavor, and changing the flavor of equipment and abilities to match a character is critical to making them exciting. A homemade flamethrower powered by alcohol is a lot cooler than just, “ability that does fire damage in a cone.”

Generally, as long as changing the flavor of an item doesn’t make it more effective and fits within the setting, it should be allowed. It is up to the Architect to make any final decisions on allowing flavored items or not.

There may be bits of flavor that could have actual gameplay ramifications. A player’s “Medium armor” may be reflavored to be a steel chest plate, which would cause that chest plate to react to magnets and be destroyed by rust. Flavor should interact with the world as realistically as possible, wherever possible, but should never bog down the experience of playing the game with unnecessary bookkeeping. Just because steel armor can rust doesn’t mean the player needs to keep track of how much water their steel chest plate has come in contact with.

With Great Power

DRGN gives players a lot of freedom. That freedom comes with the burden of responsibility. The most important thing to remember when it comes to making characters and abilities is this: just because DRGN allows you to do something, doesn't mean you should. The game as written allows a player to create an ability that instantly deals 300 damage to a single enemy right from the start of the game. This could ruin the game for both the Architect and the other players, and so it should not be created. Be reasonable when creating characters, abilities, and equipment, and use the freedom responsibly.

Remember, the goal of DRGN is to tell an epic story, not to optimize a character's stats and kill every goblin that stands in their way.

Ability Scope

DRGN's abilities are painted with broad strokes, which allows them to be somewhat effective in any possible scenario. However, players or the Architect may wish to narrow the effectiveness of an ability to fit a more flavorful role.

Players and the Architect can always reduce an ability's effectiveness to fit a more flavorful role. A few good examples of this limited scope include:

- An ability that can only be used when a character is under 50% of their health
- An ability that only protects against a specific kind of damage
- An ability that only affects creatures that are a specific size or smaller
- An ability that can only be used once other conditions are met
- An ability that only works against one specific type of enemy
- An ability that only works if the target is already friendly towards the user

Additionally, if the Architect allows, abilities that are narrowed in scope can become more powerful. A basic shield spell could be modified to only reduce fire damage, but provide twice as much protection. It is up to the Architect to decide whether reduced scope abilities have increased effect.

Character Creation Overview

Here's a quick summary of the character creation process:

0. Design and create a character concept

1. Body Shape and Size
2. Features
3. Traits
4. Abilities
5. Equipment
6. Finishing Touches

Design and create a character concept

Before even writing anything down, design and create a “character.” Players should know who their character is, what their character looks like, what their character can do, and why they do it before beginning character creation. Character creation should feel less like exploration and more like translation: taking a character that already exists or has been imagined and converting them into a DRGN compatible stat block.

Body Shape and Size

Characters come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes. Players will select a body shape and size for their character, which determines their Hit Point modifier, base movement speed, equipment slots, and token size (if using a battle map.)

Features

Features are things a character has or can do that come from their “species.” This includes things like additional limbs and whether or not a character is a construct.

Traits

Traits are measures of a character's various strengths and weaknesses. The traits that are available for characters to level-up will change based on the setting.

Abilities

Powers, talents, skills, and spells are all the same thing in DRGN: abilities. A superhero with the power to fly, a dragon using its wings, and a wizard casting “Flight” on himself are functionally the same thing. Abilities rely heavily on the flavor mechanic to reach their full potential.

Equipment

Equipment includes everything from armor, weapons, and ammunition to backpacks, shoes, clothes, glasses, hats, radios, and anything else a character might need during the course of their journey. Equipment varies heavily between different campaigns and genres, and details for different equipment will be given later.

Character Creation

Before jumping into character creation, there are a few things to note.

- The limit on size and the amount of XP player's have to make their characters can be changed at the Architect's discretion.
- Character creation in DRGN relies heavily on the Flavor mechanic mentioned above. There are no "stat blocks" or rules for making an elf character, but a player can still be an elf. Simply make a humanoid character and re-flavor them to be an elf.

Experience

Throughout the character creation process, players will spend experience to gain features, level up traits, and create abilities. Body shape, size, and equipment do not cost experience. All experience is spent from the same pool. At the beginning of the game, the Architect will decide which tier of play the campaign will use. Based on the Tier of the game, players will get the following amounts of XP to create their characters:

Tier 1: 350 XP
Tier 2: 800 XP
Tier 3: 1350 XP
Tier 4: 2000 XP
Tier 5: 2750 XP
Tier 6: 3600 XP
Tier 7: 4550 XP
Tier 8: 5600 XP
Tier 9+: 6750+ XP

These amounts above are the recommended amounts, but the Architect can change them to make a campaign more or less challenging.

Additionally, when players are choosing equipment for their characters, they may fill all of their equipment slots with Basic equipment from the tier of play the campaign is taking place in. Special equipment can be taken in higher tiers of play with the Architect's permission.

Body Shape and Size

A character's body shape determines what kind of equipment they can use.

Every character will start a Head slot, a Main Armor slot, and a Weapon slot, as well as 5 additional slots which the player can choose. The additional slots can be:

- Boots – Used for equipment that boosts movement capabilities
- Weapon – Used to equip items and use them in combat
- Accessory – Generally used to provide passive benefits or carrying capacity

The “body type” of a character is based off of the equipment slots that are chosen, but does not have to represent an exact 1-to-1 conversion of body parts to equipment slots. A character with 2 Boots slots might have 4 legs or 40, and a character with 3 Weapon slots might have 2 arms and a prehensile tail or 2 regular arms and a robotic 3rd arm.

Body parts for a character that serve no function can be added for free, as they are just flavor. If a player wanted to make a character with wings that were purely aesthetic, they wouldn't need to account for them or try to stat them out, but simply have them on their character. If a player wants additional, functional limbs that can use equipment, they will need to take a Feature (next section).

A few example body shapes and the associated equipment slots are listed on the next page.

| | |
|--|--|
|  <p>Humanoid</p> | <p>Helmet Main Armor Weapon Weapon Boots Accessory Accessory Accessory</p> |
|  <p>Bipedal</p> | <p>Helmet Main Armor Weapon Boots Accessory Accessory Accessory Accessory</p> |
|  <p>Mermaid</p> | <p>Helmet Main Armor Weapon Weapon Accessory Accessory Accessory Accessory</p> |
|  <p>Monster</p> | <p>Helmet Main Armor Weapon Weapon Weapon Weapon Boots Accessory</p> |
|  <p>Centaur</p> | <p>Helmet Main Armor Weapon Weapon Boots Boots Accessory Accessory</p> |
|  <p>Animal</p> | <p>Helmet Main Armor Weapon Boots Boots Accessory Accessory Accessory</p> |

Size

Characters can come in a wide range of sizes, from the smaller gnomes and dwarves to hulking golems and giants. A character's size will determine that character's base movement speed, hit point modifier, bonus evasion, and token size (if using a battle map). Player characters typically fall into the small, medium and large range, with the miniscule, tiny, huge, and kaiju sizes being reserved for monsters and creatures that inhabit the world. If a player would like to play a tiny or huge character, talk with the Architect and the group.

The size of a character can also limit the type of equipment that character can wear, and how expensive it is. A large character could not wear a small helmet, nor could a small character wield a large character's broadsword. Armor generally does not give increased protection for being larger, and neither do small weapons deal less damage. It is up to the Architect to determine how much more expensive larger equipment is.

If this creates too much bookkeeping for the Architect and players, simply ignore this rule and allow any creature of any size to equip any equipment.

When multiplying a character's health pool by the hit point modifier, round up on the number of hit points a character end up with. A large character with 50 constitution ($50 * 4 * 1.25$) will have 250 hit points.

For the token size, the number given is how many spaces a character's token takes up. If the number is less than 1, multiple characters can fit into a single space, according to the ratio. If the number is larger than 1, a character's token needs to take up that many spaces. A character doesn't have to just take up a "box" though. A huge snake, for instance, could take up 9 spaces, but all in a line. Tokens can also have a different look if using a Hexagonal grid or a Square grid. Work with The Architect to figure out a character's token dimensions.

| | Token Size | Base Speed (Units) | Bonus Evasion | Hit Point Modifier |
|-----------|------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Minuscule | 1/6 | 3 | +30 | .25 |
| Tiny | 1/3 | 4 | +20 | .5 |
| Small | 1 | 5 | +10 | .75 |
| Medium | 1 | 5 | 0 | 1 |
| Large | 3-6 | 7 | -10 | 1.25 |
| Huge | 7-10 | 9 | -20 | 1.5 |
| Kaiju | 11+ | 10+ | -30 | 1.75+ |

Features

By this point, characters should aesthetically be mostly complete. Features fundamentally change the way a character functions, and thus not every character will need to take a feature.

The table below offers a list of features, though it is not comprehensive. If a player desires a feature not listed in this table, they should work together with the Architect to create the feature and determine its cost.

| Feature | Cost | Effect |
|-------------------|------|---|
| Flexible | 10 | Character can occupy another creature's space, and move their character's token spaces as they wish |
| Amorphous | 50 | Character's body has no set shape, and can move through spaces as small as 1 square centimeter. Besides the Head slot, all equipment slots transform as needed to match the current shape of an amorphous character. |
| Limb Regeneration | 10 | A character's non-vital limbs can regenerate on their own if they are ever lost, at a rate of 1 limb / week |
| Additional Limb | 25 | An additional limb that grants one equipment slot of player's choice |
| Artificial | 25 | An artificial character does not need to eat, drink, or sleep. Additionally, they cannot be healed and must be repaired to regain hit points |
| Battery Powered | 0 | A character's "life" energy comes from some source that must be replenished. The time gone without recharging, the process of recharging, and the time needed to recharge is left up for discussion with the Architect. |

This list will seem very short for those coming from other TTRPG systems. More traditional "features" like natural armor, night vision, or water breathing, are actually abilities within the DRGN rules. One of the ability components players can take is "intrinsic," allowing an ability to always be active or usable an infinite number of times. A character that can always see in the dark does not need a feature, but an intrinsic ability that always allows them to see in the dark.

To help illustrate this idea, here are a few examples of common "features" that a player might want to have for their character, and how they can instead be created as intrinsic abilities:

- Natural Armor: Intrinsic ability + Protection (reducing all incoming damage by up to 10)
- Wings: Intrinsic ability + Enhancing (Grant flight speed up to max of 5)
- Night vision: Intrinsic ability + Enhancing (Grant night vision up to 24 units)
- Natural Weapons: Intrinsic ability + Power (Simple ability that deals up to 10 damage)
- Reach: Intrinsic ability + Enhancing + Ranged (Grant +1 range to all melee attacks / abilities)
- Chameleon Skin: Intrinsic ability + Illusory (Create illusion of character vanishing)
- Natural Agility: Intrinsic ability + Enhancing (Grant new type of mobility with max speed 5)
- Fins: Intrinsic ability + enhancing (Grant swim speed up to max of 5)
- Gills: Intrinsic ability + enhancing (Grant ability to breathe under water)

Traits

It's time to give characters the skills they need to navigate the world.

All traits start with a score of 10. The max a trait can be leveled to is 100, but it can be boosted higher with Special equipment or abilities. Traits can also go negative.

Traits are a measure of a character's capability in a certain task. A scale of simply 0 – 100 can be difficult to imagine, so the following is rough scale to illustrate what trait scores might look like.

For this example, consider the trait “Athletics,” which has been defined as a character's raw strength:

| | |
|-----|--------------------------------|
| 10 | / Average Human |
| 20 | / Lion or Tiger |
| 30 | / Crocodile |
| 40 | / Horse or Ox |
| 50 | / Grizzly Bear or Young Dragon |
| 60 | / Elephant or Orc |
| 70 | / Demigod |
| 80 | / Giants |
| 90 | / Roc or Adult Dragon |
| 100 | / Kaiju |

Players can spend Experience Points to increase the traits of their characters. It costs 1 Experience Point for each boost from 10-19, 2 Experience Points from 20-29, 3 Experience from 30-39, and so on.

Traits are very simple to use. Players will use their traits either in a “Trait Check” or a “Trait Showdown”.

A Trait Check is a simple comparison of a character's trait versus a Difficulty Value (DV) determined by the Architect. If a character's trait meets or beats the DV of a task, the character succeeds at the task.

A Trait Showdown is a contest between two characters. A player will pick a trait they would like to use to attempt to beat the opponent, The opponent will pick a relevant trait as well. The traits do not have to be the same, but they must make sense in the context of the contest. The character with the highest trait value wins the showdown, with ties going in favor of the character that started the contest. If characters use different traits in a showdown, and one is clearly more fitting for the situation than the other, the Architect can “boost” a character's effective score for the purposes of determining the winner.

Some equipment will require a trait at a certain level before a character can equip and use it. Character's must have the required trait score to equip these items.

As stated before, not every campaign will have need for the same traits. A sci-fi campaign would make heavy use of Hacking, Piloting, and Xenobiology traits, whereas a sword-and-sorcery setting would have no need for these traits. The Architect should get together with the players during character creation to discuss which traits will be used in the setting.

Some traits have additional uses besides the ones listed above, They are known as “Functional Traits.” The Architect can create functional traits as well.

Here are some of the recommended the **functional traits**:

Constitution – Affects a character's Hit Points (HP.) 1 point in constitution is 4 HP.

Evasion – Reduces damage of all incoming attacks and abilities by 1/5 of evasion rating.

Perception – Affects a character's ability to detect unseen characters. When an enemy attempts to stealth, they must beat a character's perception score to succeed.

Some common traits that could be used in a game include:

- Melee Weapons
- Ranged Weapons
- Armor
- Stealth
- Deception
- Unarmed Combat
- Athletics
- Acrobatics
- Navigation
- Technology
- Intimidation
- Hacking
- Lock Picking
- Charm
- Piloting
- Piety
- Crafting
- Intellect
- Sleight of Hand
- Computers

Some uncommon traits that could be used in a game include:

- Animals
- Performance
- Musical Instrument (Instrument)
- Beauty
- Luck
- Intuition
- Reputation (faction)
- Nature
- Cooking
- Persuasion
- Investigation
- Spellcasting
- Magic
- Research
- Tracking

Abilities

Abilities elevate gameplay from repetitive actions to intense power struggles. As opposed to having lists of spells for players to choose from, DRGN lets players build their own abilities using the components listed below. Components are like Lego bricks. Each component is only one part of an ability. By combining components different combinations, players can craft their own, totally unique ability.

When creating abilities, consider whether or not a character needs a focus. A wizard might need a magic wand, and an alchemist might use a special pouch containing various alchemical reagents as the source of his abilities. A focus is not required to use abilities.

All abilities initially deal force damage, which is simply neutral to everything. If a player decides to add the elemental component to an ability, the damage of that ability changes to be the elemental type chosen. Abilities should have elemental damage that makes sense for the ability, as well as for the focus, if the ability uses a focus.

Abilities have a limited number of uses. When creating an ability, players will spend experience points, calculating the raw numbers first and then adding percentages for components such as multi-target. The final cost of an ability is how many ability points it costs to “buy” a single use of that ability. Abilities that consume resources as with the consuming component have unlimited uses, so long as a character has access to the resource.

When using an ability, it is assumed that characters do not need any special materials unless the ability has the consuming component. However, logic may apply to abilities that use items, such as if an ability involves throwing a fan of blades, that character will need blades to throw. If players are unsure whether or not their ability needs to be consuming, and what it will consume, talk to the Architect.

Contestable abilities will need to be resolved as trait showdowns, such as if a wizard would like to trap a dragon in animated vines. If an ability is contestable, both parties will pick traits that are applicable, and the showdown would begin. The wizard would begin a trait showdown using his intellect trait versus the dragon’s athletics trait, with the wizard successfully restraining the dragon if he wins.

Lines, cones, and spheres can be difficult to visualize without a battle map. To help assist with improvising how many targets are hit by a line, cone, or sphere, use the following guideline: lines hit (1/6 their length) targets, cones hit (1/3 of their length) targets,, and spheres hit (2/3 of their radius) targets. For example, a line that is 12 units long hits 2 targets. A cone that is 12 units long hits 4 targets. A sphere with a radius of 12 units hits 8 targets.

More details on creating lines, cones, and sphere on a grid is detailed in the component’s respective sections.

Below is a list of Components players can use to create their abilities.

| | | |
|---------------|----------------------|---|
| Single Target | 0 | Can target a single character |
| Elemental | 0 | Ability does damage of chosen elemental type |
| Benign | 0 | Non harmful effect. More power gives stronger effects. |
| Illusory | -50% | Has no actual effect |
| Power | +1 per | Increase damage or power of summons |
| Translocating | | Moves target. Power increases weight |
| Ranged | +1 / 2 per "unit" | +1 cost per 6 units of combat abilities, +2 cost per 1 mile otherwise |
| Duration | +1 / 2 per "unit" | +1 cost per 1 turn of damaging abilities, +2 cost per hour otherwise |
| Line | +1 per 1 unit length | Effects all targets in a line |
| Cone | +2 per 1 unit length | Effects all targets in a cone |
| Sphere | +3 per 1 unit radius | Effects all targets in a sphere centered on origin |
| Sensing | +2 per sense type | Gain sensory data from point in range |
| Interactive | 0 | Ability interacts with environment naturally |
| Pushing | +1 per unit moved | Targets are pushed in direction of choice |
| Marking | +5 per activation | Ability "marks" target with condition. When the condition is met, rest of ability takes effect. Can be activated multiple times |
| Additive | | Can be used for free to add additional affects to an action |
| Protecting | Special | Gives temporary HP or reduces damage based on power |
| Afflicting | Special | Gives or removes a status effect. +5 for basic, +15 for advanced |
| Augmenting | Special | Enhances the targets capabilities |
| Altering | Special | Change target(s) into other things. |
| Overloading | Special | Characters can spend multiple actions on an ability, increasing power |
| Intrinsic | Special | Ability is always active or usable |
| Drawback | Special | Ability has negative side-effects |
| Restoring | +10% | Heals target(s) based on power. Can grant max HP |
| Consuming | -20% | Ability consumes some resource when used |
| Cooperative | -20% | Ability can only be used with another character that has the same ability |
| Uncertain | -10% | Must roll a dice to see if ability takes effect |
| Subtle | +10% | ability can be used without revealing user |
| Creation | Special | Create matter. Decide permanence. Durability based on Power |
| Summoning | +10% | "Summons" a minion(s). Minion(s) HP & damage based on power |
| Phasing | +10% | Do not need line of sight to target |
| Reliable | +10% | Uses refresh on a short rest |
| Multi-Target | +10% per target | Can choose multiple targets or origins |
| Sustained | +100% | ability lasts until ended |
| Careful | +10% | ability will not affect allies |
| Duality | | Ability has different effects on allies vs enemies |

| | Good Against | Good Against | | Poor Against | Poor Against | Poor Against |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Force | NA | NA | | NA | NA | NA |
| | | | | | | |
| Piercing | Abrasion | | | Piercing | | |
| Bludgeoning | Piercing | | | Bludgeoning | | |
| Slashing | Bludgeoning | | | Slashing | | |
| Abrasion | Slashing | | | Abrasion | | |
| | | | | | | |
| Cryo | Poison | Acid | | Cryo | Fire | Earth |
| Fire | Cryo | Poison | | Fire | Water | Psychic |
| Water | Radiation | Fire | | Water | Electric | Poison |
| Electric | Psychic | Water | | Electric | Radiation | Acid |
| Acid | Earth | Electric | | Acid | Cryo | Psychic |
| Radiation | Psychic | Electric | | Radiation | Earth | Water |
| Poison | Water | Earth | | Poison | Cryo | Fire |
| Earth | Radiation | Cryo | | Earth | Poison | Acid |
| Psychic | Fire | Acid | | Psychic | Radiation | Electric |
| Light | Dark | | | Light | | |
| Dark | Light | | | Dark | | |

Single Target

Cost: 0

Effect: Allows an ability to affect a single character, object, or location

For the purposes of creating matter or illusions, a “single” target is at its largest a 1 unit cube in space. On a grid, this would take up either 1 square or 1 hex.

When combining with a “Summoning” component, the creature or creatures that are summoned by the ability can also choose only 1 target when attacking.

This component cannot be added multiple times. To affect multiple targets with an ability, see the Lines, Cones, Spheres, and Multi-Target components.

Elemental

Cost: 0

Effect: Changes the damage type of the attack to the selected elemental

If this component is not chosen, an ability does force damage.

This component can be added multiple times. Each time it is added, it adds a different elemental damage type to the damage of the ability.

An ability that has 2 damage types can choose how the different types of damage are distributed. An ability with 10 power, elemental (fire), and elemental (cryo) could do 5 fire damage and 5 cryo damage, 1 fire damage and 9 cryo damage, or any other possible combination, though it must be a minimum of 1 damage.

A ability that does not have the elemental component is not restricted from being reflavored to look cool, or even seem elemental.

For abilities that do not do damage, the elemental component gives an elemental flare of the chosen type.

When combining with a “Summoning” component, the creature or creatures that are summoned by the ability have the damage of their attacks changed to the elemental type chosen with this component.

Benign

Cost: 0

Effect: The ability has a harmless effect, the scale of which is proportional to the power put into the ability. Does not take the place of other components

Benign is a very generic term for abilities that have no directly harmful effect on the target. This can be anything from teleportation to creating a light in the palm of a hand.

Benign does not overrule other components, even if the effect would not directly be harmful. The benign component does not allow an ability to blink matter into existence, affect multiple targets, create an illusion, or enhance a target’s capabilities, for instance. Anything that is not directly harmful and does not fall into another component’s category is considered a benign ability.

Benign abilities can vary widely in their effect. Opening a portal between two dimensions and cooling an overheating weapon would both use the benign component. For that reason, the effectiveness of a benign ability should be discussed with the Architect. The power component can allow for more powerful benign effects to take place, as is shown with the following chart:

Protecting

Cost: 0 or 1 per

Effect: Grants the user temporary hit points or reduces the damage of incoming attacks

Temporary hit points are hit points that stack on top of existing hit points. Temporary hit points can take damage whenever the user specifies the damage is taken. When used in this way, this component costs no additional XP to add to an ability.

Temporary hit points can either take all damage before any is taken by the target, as a sci-fi shield might do. Temporary hit points also might take damage alongside hit points, splitting the damage taken by the temporary hit points and the character 50/50. Temporary hit points can also not take effect until a certain damage threshold is reached, such as if an attack does more than 30 damage, or if a character drops below 10 hit points.

A Protecting ability with the Duration component maintains its protection either until the duration ends or the protection runs out.

The Duration can also be used to cause a certain number of temporary Hit Points to be regenerated every round. When used in this way, the “power” of the ability is divided as evenly as possible throughout the duration, and the amount of temporary hit points gained each round is based on this divided number.

Temporary hit points from different abilities can stack or remain separate, determined by the user.

Protecting also can be used to grant additional toughness, or damage reduction to incoming attacks. When used in this way, this component costs 1 XP per point of toughness granted.

Illusory

Cost: 0

Effect: ability becomes an illusion, which means it has no actual effect.

An ability with the illusory component has no actual effect on targets. Illusory damage, status effects, and other effects appear to anyone who doesn't know the ability is an illusion to be real. Though the ability is itself illusory, it can have a real affect on the target. A target that believes it is fighting a monster can use their actions to fight it. A target that believes it is chained to a wall will act as if it has been restrained. Any logical inconsistencies created by the illusion are compensated for with this component.

An illusory ability does not have a specific target, as the target itself is the illusion. Instead, the user declares which characters will be fooled by the illusion. This can exclude allies, meaning an illusory ability does not need to take the careful component to avoid affecting allies. Once a character believes an illusion is real, they must continue to act as if the illusion is real, either until they are given an obvious reason not to, or until the duration of the ability expires.

If an illusory ability also has the contestable component, characters affected by the illusion can spend an action to attempt a Trait contest against the user to break themselves free of the illusion.

Power

Cost: 1 percentage

Effect: Increased the power of the ability

Increasing the power of an ability that deals damage directly increases its damage. A 30 power fireball would deal 30 damage to any target it affects.

When power is used with the summoning component, it directly increased the damage and hit points of a summon.

Equipment

The last part of character creation is equipment. A rogue is nothing without his dagger, after all.

The first step to getting equipment is to get determine your resistances. Your character's initial resistances are based off of what physical element (e.g. slashing, bludgeoning, piercing, abrasive) your "skin" is resistant to. Your character might have scales, feathers, a carapace, skin, fur, a very thick hide, or blubber. Pick a physical element to resist that makes sense for your "skin."

Next up is your elemental resistance. Pick an elemental type (cryo, radiation, earth, electric, etc.) that your "skin" would be resistant to. A crocodiles scales would be good against water, but a dragon's scales might be good against fire. Once again, pick a type that makes sense for your character.

These initial elements you've chosen will be your character's resistances. All Main Armor and some other equipment will also come with and resistances. When you equip a piece of equipment with resistances different than your own, you can either use your own resistances or the equipment's resistances.

If an armor comes with the resistances, "free/ free," the player who buys the armor (or crafts it) decides what the resistances of the armor will be.

Any equipment that "adds X element to your resistances" will allow you to be resistant to an additional element. You gain all weaknesses and resistances associated with that new element, in addition to your other elements. Weaknesses and resistances do not stack, and a weakness + a resistance simply nullify each-other out.

Now that your resistance is set, you can start selecting your equipment.

To begin, select an equipment chapter that best suits the setting of the game you will play. You can work with the Architect to modify or re flavor one of the preexisting chapters if you need to. You can choose any Tier 0 or Tier 1 equipment from that chapter to fill your character's equipment slots with the appropriate equipment. *YOU DO NOT NEED TO PAY FOR YOUR INITIAL EQUIPMENT.* Once all your character's equipment slots are full, you're ready to play the game.

Ranged Weapons that use ammo do not deal damage themselves, but instead increase the damage of the projectile they fire. For example, A Shortbow will use Arrows as its ammo. An Arrow does 2 piercing damage on hit, and a Shortbow adds +2 damage, meaning a target shot with an Arrow from a Shortbow will take 4 piercing damage. Other ranged weapons, like Shurikens or Kunai, will deal damage as normal.

Weapons that are not being used as weapons are considered trinkets. You could keep a spare dagger on your utility belt, a handgun in its holster, or a crossbow strapped to your backpack.

ANYTHING can be equipped into a weapon slot and used as a weapon. If it is not a weapon type equipment, it will be treated as an improvised weapon. A folding chair can be equipped as a weapon for example, and it does bludgeoning damage.

If a single piece of equipment is wielded with 2 weapon slots, such as wielding a broadsword with 2 hands, that weapon does double damage. Not all equipment can be wielded with 2 hands, and some

equipment must be wielded with 2 hands. A player could not throw a javelin with 2 hands, but could wield it like a spear to ram through the opponent's chest. It would have double damage in the second instance, but normal damage in the first. As normal, this damage cannot go above 50.

Some equipment will itself have additional equipment slots you can fill, such as a backpack or quiver. You are able to fill those equipment slots with appropriate equipment as well. Make sure your equipment is completely filled. A quiver can hold up to 50 arrows, which means you can fill it with any amount of arrows you would like, up to 50.

Finishing Touches

Now all you need to do to finish character creation is to calculate your character's battle stats.

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Movement speed | - Determined by character size and features |
| Resistances | - Determined by "skin" and equipment |
| Toughness | - Given by Main Armor. Shields have toughness, but do not give it to the player |
| Max HP | - Determined by a character's Constitution skill multiplied by a size multiplier |
| Temporary HP | - Starts the game at 0, is increased by shielding abilities |
| Current HP | - Is the same as Max HP, until damage is taken |
| Epicoins | - Start the game with 0, Epicoins earned are kept through sessions of play |

Leveling Up

Character's in Don't Ruin Game Night DO NOT level up. Instead, they gain experience points as they play. These experience points can be spent to increase traits, purchase new abilities or buy more uses of existing abilities, and upgrade existing abilities.

Character advancement is also heavily influenced by the equipment your character finds while exploring the world and the mastering of their traits through repeated use.

The only limit to what equipment your character can equip is the equipment slots they have and any trait requirements the equipment has. As long as a character has the appropriate slots and strong enough traits, they can use the equipment.

Traits that are improved apply their bonuses immediately as they are applied. When improving a character's constitution, their max Hit Points immediately increases. This does not refill a character's current Hit Points, but it does increase the current amount by the same amount the maximum was increased.

For starting games at higher levels, simply use higher tier equipment and more skill boosts as appropriate.

Playing the Game

Navigating the World

To start, there are two different things the players can interact with during the game:

- The world
- Other characters

The basic rules will be sorted into those categories for ease of access, but that does not prohibit the rules from one category being used or modified for another category.

The World

Roleplaying

The easiest ways for players to interact with the world is to simply role-play their desired interaction. If the action cannot be role-played, simply state intent to do something.

- “I pick the berries.”
- “I activate the ship’s Lightspeed drive.”

Not all role-played actions will be achievable, and the Architect will let players know when a desired course of action is not possible.

- “You cannot activate the ship’s Lightspeed drive, as it has sustained damage and is broken.”

Use a Trait

If a player wants to do something that not everyone can naturally do, the player can state that they would like to use one of their traits. The Architect may also ask the player for a specific trait to complete a task.

- “Can I use my athletics trait to climb up the side of the castle?”
- “I want to pick the lock.”
- “What is your character’s Lockpicking trait?”

The architect will then make a ruling based on a character’s trait score. The difficulty of any task will be a number between 0 and 100. Typically, If the player’s trait score is higher than the task’s Difficulty Value (DV), the player will succeed at the task.

- “My character’s Lockpicking trait is a 35”
- “You fumble around with the lock for a bit, but eventually it clicks open”

Tasks can be anywhere from Routine (DV 0) to Almost Impossible (DV 100) and anywhere in-between. Occasionally, however, circumstances surrounding a task will make the task easier or harder than normal.

- “As you begin hacking the terminal, the computer screen fries and goes dead.”

If the Architect feels that a task would be easier or harder than normal due to circumstance, they may apply a circumstance modifier to the DV of the task. Circumstance modifiers go in increments of 5, and can be either added or subtracted to the DV depending on whether or not the circumstance is helpful or a hindrance.

- “With the help of your allies and the table, you barely manage to keep the door shut.”

Use an ability

All characters have special powers or abilities they can use, which are simply referred to as abilities. Abilities can range from flight and super strength to casting fireballs and psionic blasts. A player can use their character’s abilities to overcome obstacles in the world.

- “I activate my echolocation and locate all the guards in the prison.”
- “I throw a ball of fire at the door to burn it off its hinges.”

The Architect will decide exactly how the ability interacts with the world.

Other Characters

Roleplaying

When interacting with other characters, both parties will be role-played by different players. Characters that are controlled by players are called PCs. Characters that are controlled by the Architect are known as NPCs. When PCs are interacting with other PCs, each player should role-play their own character. Interactions with NPCs and PCs will have the Architect role-playing the NPCs and the players role-playing their PC.

- (Architect) “Hello and welcome to Don’s Depot, your one stop shop for any and all space junk! What can I help you with?”
- (Player 1) “I was hoping you guys might have a model 3 wormhole communicator, as ours was damaged in... recent events.”
- (Player 2) “We got in a fight with some space pirates because our captain didn’t know how to program a nav computer properly. Don’t suppose you have an AI unit in stock as well?”
- (Player 1) “They’ll be no need for an AI unit. Just the communicator.”
- (Architect) “Of course. Right this way.”

Trait Showdown

Similar to Using a Trait, Trait Showdowns are designed for more competitive use of traits, like arm wrestling or persuasion. Players may initiate a Trait Showdown with another character at any time.

- “I want to grapple the bat and prevent it from flying away”

In this case, there is no DV for the task to be completed. Instead, the DV for the task is a trait of the opponent’s choice.

- “The bat has an athletics score of 20, which is less than your 30, so you manage to hold it down”

Either character in a trait check may use any trait, as long as it makes sense for the situation.

Using Traits

The next question that will often, but not always, need to be asked is, “**How well can I do this?**” Trait Checks and Trait Showdowns establish that the character CAN do the task, but to what degree can they do it?

There are a number of different methods used to answer this question, **but all of the answers are based off of a trait’s score.** *Manipulating the score of a trait to acquire a **number** and using that **number** is sufficient to answer this question.* Manipulated scores can be used for a number of things, like determining how long it takes to complete a task, or how well the task is done.

Any trait can be used and manipulated in a number of ways. There is no proper way to manipulate a trait. The Architect will have final say on how the skill is manipulated.

So what are the different ways to manipulate the score?

The Medicine trait with a score of (54) will be used for **example** to demonstrate how a trait’s score can be manipulated and applied to different scenarios. This does not mean the Medicine trait has to be manipulated in these ways for these scenarios.

The first method of manipulation is simply to **use the score as is.** A medic using a first-aid kit on a player can simply use his Medicine score of 54 to restore 54 Hit Points to the player over the course of a full night’s sleep.

A second method is to **turn the score into a percentage.** The same medic working at a hospital with the best technological equipment may be able to restore 54% of a player’s Hit Points over the course of a night.

The third method is to **divide the score by a number.** On the battlefield, the medic may be able to tear his shirt and make a bandage with 1/10 the efficiency of a first aid kit, meaning he restores 5 Hit Points to a player with his Medicine trait. In this case, the score is rounded down at the end.

The rule for rounding is: 0-4 goes down, 5-9 goes up.

The number a trait is divided by depends on the scenario, and is really just “whatever feels good.” Is a character really good at holding their breath? Divide their constitution score by 5 to see how many rounds they can hold their breath. An amateur might have their constitution score divided by 10 instead. It is recommended that the largest number you divide by is 20.

Try to avoid dividing by awkward numbers to keep play smooth. Use 2, 5, 10, and 20 to keep math simple.

Scores can also be manipulated 2 or 3 times if necessary. For instance, a character good at fixing golems could try to build his own. The GM rules that the player should divide his Crafting trait by 10 to get a number, and then convert that number into a percentage. The final number (4% in this case) is the percentage of the golem’s construction the tinkerer can complete in a single week.

The set of rules above governs most exploration, puzzle solving, and “role-playing.” Sometimes though, things need to get a little more heated. That’s where Encounters come in.

Encounters are the other half of playing DRGN. An encounter is simply an event that happens in the course of the story that requires more than a simple Trait Check to overcome, like a dragon blocking the path or pirates capturing the players. Encounters can be either Combat Encounters or Social Encounters, with Combat Encounters involving fighting and using abilities, and Social Encounters involving good role-playing and usage of traits.

Combat Encounters

Combat encounters will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Social Encounters

Social Encounters are all about talking, a back and forth between characters in an attempt to achieve some goal. This is most easily done through actually role-playing the conversations, with each player putting themselves into the mindset of their character and speaking for them as they imagine the character would. The Architect will also role-play, acting as the non player characters (NPCs) in opposition to the party. From there, the Social Encounter is simply that negotiating until one or both sides get something they want, or one side concedes to the other.

While the many minute details of an exchange cannot be written into rules, DRGN provides a simple outline for monitoring the ebb and flow of said exchanges. These rules also allow players who are uncomfortable with Role-Playing to have fun and contribute to the success of a team in the back-and-forth without having to get into character.

All players should attempt to role-play as their character, even if they are uncomfortable with it. It will make the story more fun, and players will more closely be able to connect with their characters. It will also allow players a chance to practice, improving their skill over time.

Now, onto the rules.

1. Declare each team’s goals and a deadline

When a Social Encounter is declared, it should be made clear exactly who is on which team and what each team is trying to accomplish with the encounter. Social encounters can also take anywhere from a few seconds to hours. To keep track of time, the GM will declare a number of “rounds” for the social encounter to take place. Rounds can vary in the time they actually take, but a round is simply the time it takes for each team to make an argument and either increase or decrease their standing in the Encounter.

Example: The pirates have 6 rounds to convince the players to spill the information on the stolen data disk they are looking for.

2. Decide on tone of encounter and choose appropriate skills

A Social Encounter can take many different tones, from intimidating to sweet-talking to desperate bargaining to scientific arguments. Each Social Encounter will have participants use a different trait appropriate to the tone of the conversation. Pick a tone for the Social Encounter, and 1 player to use a

trait relevant to that tone. Both teams will agree on the tone, and then pick the trait they would like to use. **DO NOT TELL THE OTHER TEAM WHAT YOUR SCORE IS.**

Example: The pirates want to try to intimidate the players into spilling the information, so the Social Encounter will be hostile. The pirates will have their boss, Garrix, use his intimidate trait. The players choose to have their fearless paladin, Robin IronShield, use Constitution as her trait, to resist any attempts the pirates make to brute force the information out of her with physical violence.

3. Begin the Encounter

The goal of a social encounter is to get your team's score higher than the opponents by the end. The team with the highest score at the end of the round limit wins. If all parties are able to come to an agreement before then, the Social Encounter ends immediately.

The first round of a Social Encounter begins immediately. Each round of a Social Encounter allows all parties to "have the floor," long enough to make an "argument" that can either benefit or hurt their team. An "argument" can be something other than words, like pointing a gun to a character's head, silence, or even revealing a hostage. "Arguments" can also be offerings of money, diplomatic favor, information, or anything else that might be of value. If a player feels uncomfortable roleplaying their character's argument, they can simply state which argument they would like their character to make. Other parties can react to the "Arguments" by accepting the offer or adjusting their own argument.

If an agreement is ever reached, the Social Encounter ends immediately. If no agreement is made and the negotiations on current arguments comes to a standstill, the round ends.

4. Round End

When a round ends, players and the Architect will work together to decide whether or not a team's argument was compelling. Player's and the Architect will give arguments for all teams a rating from -3 to 3 based on how well they believe the argument was articulated, and whether it was actually relevant and effective. Based on the rating each argument received, the team's individual score will be increased or decreased in accordance with the following chart:

- (-3) Abhorrent argument – decrease the team's score by 5
- (-2) Detrimental argument – decrease the team's score by 3
- (-1) Poor argument – decrease the team's score by 1
- (0) Neutral argument – no change
- (+1) Good argument – increase the team's score by 1
- (+2) Beneficial argument – increase the team's score by 3
- (+3) Phenomenal argument – increase the team's score by 5

Every team will receive a rating for their argument, and every team will have their score modified in accordance with their rating. Players and the GM must reach a consensus on what score each argument will receive for all teams.

If this is the last round in a Social Encounter, compare the scores for each team, with the highest score "winning" the social encounter. The winning team gets to decide the outcome of the Social Encounter, but the degree to which they decide is determined by how many points they won the Social Encounter by. If a team beats the other team's score by only 2 points, the winning team may get only a small portion of what they actually want. A definitive victory will result in more say in the outcome of the Encounter. If there is a tie, no team gets what they want. A victory for one team may result in a Combat Encounter as retaliation from the other team.

If this is not the last round, repeat steps 3 and 4 until an agreement is reached or the encounter is over.

Combat

Combat Encounters

Combat is the other half of playing Don't Ruin Game Night. If a situation ever devolves into physically fighting, there will be a combat encounter. Like social encounters, there are an infinite number of possible situations combat could take place in, and there simply cannot be a rule for each of them.

The process for running a combat encounter is pretty simple. All participants are split into teams, and one of the teams is selected to go first, defaulting to the players unless stealth or surprise factors in. Combat is measured in rounds, and a round ends once all teams have had a chance to act. Every time a round begins, all characters gain 3 actions that they can use to do a number of things, which will be listed below. When it is a team's turn, any character on that team can perform actions at any point. The actions do not have to be all at once, nor do they have to be different. Actions can be used on another team's turn, but only as a response to an enemies incoming attack or ability.

So how exactly does combat work?

Basic Turn Order

Each round of combat, every team will get a turn. During a team's turn, characters on that team will take turns spending in actions in 1 of 3 phases: Prep, Dec, and Go.

The Preparation phase, or Prep phase, involves all actions that do not harm or affect opponents. This can include healing, using skills, moving, using abilities that effect only allies, and coordinating plans with teammates. The only exception to this is Marking spells which can be cast on enemies during Prep phase.

The Declaration phase, or Dec, phase, involves characters on the team declaring attacks against opponents. No damage is dealt during this time. All other teams will have a chance to react against attacks that have been declared. Members of other teams can only spend 1 action as a reaction to declared attacks. Once all attacks have been declared and responded to, move on to the Go phase.

The Go phase is where everything happens. All declared attacks take effect and deal damage at the same time. The Architect and players can "resolve" attacks, duels, abilities, and anything else in whatever order makes the most sense, but all attacks are assumed to go off together.

Stealth and Surprise

For most Combat Encounters, it is assumed the players will go first. However, there are instances where enemies will be able to surprise the players and take their actions first.

If an enemy attempts to stealth and evades detection of the players, when that enemy enters combat, it will surprise the players, meaning the enemy's team gets to move first.

If something happens to surprise the characters as well, like an NPC betrayal or a pit trap opening underfoot, the players will act 2nd.

Actions

Actions

Each character gets **3 actions** at the start of the round that they can spend either on their turn or in response to another team's actions. Actions do not have to be spent on your turn. The following are the actions that a character can take:

- **Attack:** A character declares an attack against an opponent. The attack will be either ranged, melee, or an ability. An ability that does not affect enemies can be used during the Prep phase of combat. If you have multiple weapons equipped, your attack will deal damage using all of them.
- **Move:** A character can move any direction they would like with a max distance equal to their movement speed. When used as a response to an enemy's attack, the move action can only be used in response to a ranged attack or an ability, and a character can only move half their speed. If the character can break line of sight to their attacker or move out of range, the attack will miss. This fails if the creature is restrained or prevented in any way from moving. Grappling can reduce a creature's movement speed to half, but only if it makes sense. A Giant eagle carrying a rabbit will not have reduced speed.
- **Activate Equipment:** Any time a character needs to interact with the equipment or items they have, they will use this action. This can be used to reload a weapon, drink a potion, toss a spare magazine to an ally, or pull a sword out of its sheath.
- **Use a Trait:** Not all combat is simply swinging swords. Characters can use a trait on their turn to attempt to gain information about an enemy, recall knowledge about a monster's weakness, attempt to intimidate a foe, hack a computer to shut down enemy auto-turrets, climb a ladder quickly, escape a T-Rex's jaws, or any other task that might require a trait in combat. This is done as a simple Trait Check, with the Architect determining the TV for the task.
- **Communicate:** A minor exchange of words does not cost an action. Communicating more than just a quick sentence requires an action, but taking this action allows an infinite amount of information to be exchanged. This action allows the antagonist to monologue to the players, the players to try to convince a goblin to surrender, or anything of that nature.
- **Command Summons:** You only have to use this action once to immediately command all familiars or summons you have. When using this, each summon or familiar gets 2 actions, which must be used immediately. Not all actions must be spent.
- (2 actions) **Shake off:** When a character is affected by a status effect, such as blinded or paralyzed, a character can spend 2 actions to reduce the duration of the status effect by 1 round, provided they are not still in contact with the source of the status effect and it makes sense for them to be able to escape. This can also be used to overcome poisons, reducing the duration of active poisons by 1 round. If this drops the duration to 0, they are cleared of the effect. Lingering abilities or effects that renew themselves each round cannot be shaken off. Status effects that use skill checks to escape also cannot be shaken off.

- (RESPONSE ONLY) **Block:** If an opponent declares an attack against a character, that character can choose to block that attack. The blocking character must choose something to block with, which takes damage in place of the character. When using the block action, the blocker can choose one creature and block ALL attacks coming from that character with a single action. If the blocker is using a shield to block, the blocker can instead block all attacks coming from a direction, as opposed to a single opponent.
- (X actions) **Special:** If the desired course of action does not fit any other actions listed above, it is instead considered a special action. The GM determines how many actions a desired action will take and how it works.

Taking Damage and Dying

Damage and Death

When a creature gets hit by an attack, it is important to calculate how much damage the creature takes. The damage formula is as follows:

$$((\text{Damage} * \text{Attunement}) * \text{Crit}) - (\text{Toughness} + \text{Evasion}) = \text{Damage Taken (Hit Points Lost)}$$

Damage – This is the actual damage that the attack does, and is determined by the attacker’s equipment and energy spent on the attack.

Toughness – Toughness is a special stat that can be granted by armor, shields, abilities, or trinkets. Toughness acts as “damage reduction,” directly reducing the amount of damage taken by an attack or ability.

Attunement – Every character will have a physical and a special element they will be attuned to. Attacks that are less effective against a creature’s attuned element will only deal ½ damage. Attacks that are more effective will deal 1.5x damage.

Crit – If a player chooses to get a critical hit on their turn, it doubles the damage of the attack.

The final amount calculated is the amount of hitpoints a creature will lose from the attack. When a character drops below 50% of their max HP, they are considered “wounded,” or “injured.” The Architect should let players know when a creature becomes injured, as it can help combat feel like its progressing. If a creature’s hitpoints ever drop to 0 through combat, a creature is considered unconscious.

Attacks against an unconscious creature deal double damage. This can be increased with a critical hit as well.

Hit points CAN go negative, and should be tracked accordingly. If a creature ever reaches -100% of their HP value, they die instantly. Creatures healed while in negative HP do not automatically return to consciousness. A creature must have at least 10% of their max HP in order to regain consciousness.

While characters in the story don't know what "hit points" are, those with healing abilities can tell whether or not a creature is "stable," or unconscious at 0 hit points, and estimate roughly how much energy it would take to heal that creature to the stabilization point.

Most creatures are assumed to just die immediately. If the players wish to keep an enemy alive, it will follow the negative HP rule.

Status Afflictions

Certain abilities and items allow characters to inflict Status Effects on other characters. Status can affect a character's combat ability, movement capabilities, or even silence them.

Characters affected by a status effect will suffer the status's effects until the duration of the status effect is over. Status effects will be listed as (Blinded 1) (4), which means there are 4 rounds left until the status effect goes away. Status effects tick down at the beginning of a new round, and if the counter hits 0, a character is no longer afflicted.

A character who has resistance to a status effect reduces the duration of the incoming status effect by the value of their resistance. A creature with paralysis resist (3) will reduce the duration of all incoming effects that paralyze by 3 rounds. Creatures with paralysis resist (*) are completely immune to the paralysis condition.

After being affected by a status effect and overcoming its effects (whether through shaking it off or waiting out the duration,) a creature gains resist (1) to the status affect they were afflicted by. This is to prevent players and monsters from being "Stun Locked." A wizard could use a (Stun 1) (1) spell to paralyze a zombie for 1 round, but would have to use (Stun 1) (2) to affect that same zombie again. However, the wizard using a (Stun 1) (2) spell from the beginning would stun the zombie for 2 rounds.

Additionally, some status effects can have a degree, as well as a duration. If a status effect has (x) after it, such as with Ailed (x), the degree of the status effect can be changed.

The following is a list of status effects available in the game:

Basic Status Effects

Ailed (x) – A creature that is ailed is taking damage over time. At the start of a round when the status is reduced, a creature will take the damage that was associated with the ailed condition. This damage can be increased or reduced through attunement and critical hits. The amount of damage taken is indicated by the (Ailed X) number.

Blinded – A character that is blinded cannot see anything, meaning they miss all single target attacks. They can still use AoE attacks though.

Charmed – A charmed character believes the person who charmed them is an ally. This does not change their relationship with ANY OTHER character, or mean that the charmed person will do anything for the charmer.

Crippled (x) – A character that is crippled has had one of their limbs destroyed. Whenever a character's limb is destroyed, they automatically gain the crippled condition. If they already have the crippled condition, increase the crippled condition by 1. The crippled condition does NOT decrease over time. The crippled condition reduces a character's max HP by 20% for every level of crippled.

Deafened – A character that is deafened cannot hear anything, meaning they will miss auditory cues.

Dying – A creature automatically gains this condition when they drop below 0 Hit points. A creature that is dying is also unconscious. A creature must have 0 Hit points to gain this effect. This condition goes away when they are healed above 0 hit points, but the unconscious condition remains until they are healed to at least 10% of their max HP.

Exhausted (x) – A creature that is exhausted (x) will lose (x) actions at the start of a round.

Grappled – A character that is grappled has no control over their own movement, and will be dragged along with the character who is grappling them. The person who IS grappling cannot dodge the person they are grappling, and can only move ½ their normal movement speed with the move action.

Hidden – A character that is hidden has evaded detection of enemies, and thus has their location unknown. They cannot be directly targeted by attacks.

Inhibited (x) – The Inhibited status effect will always come with an associated skill and a degree. A character that is inhibited receives a -10 penalty to the associated skill for every degree of the inhibited skill.

Injured – A character automatically gains this condition when they drop below 50% of the max HP. This condition goes away when they are healed above this threshold. A character that is injured will show visual signs of being injured, visible to all combatants.

Intimidated – A character that is intimidated cannot willingly declare an attack directly at the source of their intimidation.

Prone – Removing the prone condition requires the “move” action to be taken, at which point this condition will be removed. A character who is prone can only move ½ of their total movement speed with a move action, cannot use the move action as a response to an incoming attack, and deals only half damage with any melee attack or melee-based ability.

Rooted – A character that is rooted cannot use the move action.

Scared – A character that is scared must spend all their actions either attacking or moving.

Slowed - A character that is slowed can only move half of its movement when taking the move action, and must spend 2 actions to perform the attack action, as opposed to 1.

Suffocating – A character is losing air, and will fall unconscious if they run out of air. The length a character can hold their breath is up to the GM, using the “How well can I do this” rules for manipulating skill scores. If a character runs out of air, they fall unconscious and drop to 0 hit points.

Taunted – A creature that is taunted can only use the attack action against the creature that taunted them. They can use any other action as normal.

Moderate Status Effects

Confused – A Character that is confused will simply attack the closest creature to them with a melee attack on their turn. Anyone can make a TV 25 skill check (with the “use a skill” action) to convince the confused character which targets are enemies. The choice of skill is up to the player.

Juiced (x) – A character that has been hasted gains an additional action at the start of a round, and can move at 2x their normal speed when taking the move action on their turn.

Paralyzed – A paralyzed character is conscious, but cannot take actions or talk on their turn.

Restrained – The restrained condition negates the use of certain limbs. When a character is restrained, it loses the function of the limbs that have been restrained. Restrained can also limit the use of non-limb parts, such as the mouth, ears, tails, or anything else that moves or functions.

Silenced – A creature that is silenced cannot use abilities.

Unconscious – A character that is unconscious is unaware of their surroundings and cannot take actions. Unless an unconscious character is supported by something, they will also have the prone condition.

Advanced Status Effects

Stasis – A creature that is in stasis is completely removed from combat for the duration of the effect. They cannot be the target of enemy attacks or abilities, cannot take actions, or be interacted with in any way.

Controlled – A character is under the influence of another. The character who is in control determines what the controlled character does with their actions.

Equipment

Equipment is extremely important to the progression of characters within the game. This section will give some guidelines for making fun equipment that feels balanced.

All equipment is sorted in tier from Tier 0 to Tier 10. Tier 0 equipment is “common.” Every civilian will have access to Tier 0 equipment, and it will be pretty easy to find. Tier 10 is the secret governmental projects, the enchanted weapons of legend. All other equipment will fall somewhere on that scale.

Weapons and Armor are sorted into additional categories: Light, Medium, and Heavy. Light weapons will always do less damage than medium weapons of the same tier. Light armor will always provide less protection than medium armor of the same tier.

Armor

Armor Toughness is based on the following chart:

| | Tier 0 | Tier 1 | Tier 2 | Tier 3 | Tier 4 | Tier 5 | Tier 6 | Tier 7 | Tier 8 | Tier 9 | Tier 10 |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| Light | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Medium | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 |
| Heavy | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Melee Weapons

Weapons have an additional point of scaling. At Tier 0, the most damage a weapon can deal is 10. For ranged weapons, this is split into 5 from a Heavy projectile, and +5 from a Heavy weapon, with Light and Medium Ranged weapons and projectiles doing less. Light melee weapons deal from 1-3, Medium melee weapons deal from 4-7, and Heavy melee weapons deal 8-10. **As Melee weapons increase in tier, they gain ADDITIONAL damage based on the following chart:**

| | Tier 0 | Tier 1 | Tier 2 | Tier 3 | Tier 4 | Tier 5 | Tier 6 | Tier 7 | Tier 8 | Tier 9 | Tier 10 |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| Light | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Medium | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 |
| Heavy | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

For example, a Tier 10 Heavy Broadsword would have 20 damage.

Ranged Weapons

Ranged weapons are special. Ranged weapons have two parts, a weapon and a projectile. To keep this simple, the “weapon” simply adds additional damage to the projectile. The reason this is done is because certain weapons, like a Desert Eagle and a Barrett .50 cal, both shoot the same type of ammo, a .50 caliber bullet. The weapons have very different damages though. The Desert Eagle is a Light

Weapon that shoots Heavy Ammo, and a Barrett .50 cal is a Heavy Weapon that shoots Heavy ammo. Projectiles and weapons will gain additional damage according to the following charts:

Ranged Weapons:

| | Tier 0 | Tier 1 | Tier 2 | Tier 3 | Tier 4 | Tier 5 | Tier 6 | Tier 7 | Tier 8 | Tier 9 | Tier 10 |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| Light | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Medium | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Heavy | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 |

Ammo:

| | Tier 0 | Tier 1 | Tier 2 | Tier 3 | Tier 4 | Tier 5 | Tier 6 | Tier 7 | Tier 8 | Tier 9 | Tier 10 |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| Light | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Medium | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Heavy | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 |

These charts should allow GM's to quickly and easily give a weapon a damage value.

Helmets

Helmets don't provide any additional bonuses to a character's toughness, but instead primarily grant the Head Limb additional hitpoints for protection. Additional effects, like increased skills, protection, or resistances can come from more advanced helmets. The hitpoints a helmet can grant are based off the tier of the material they are made of.

Helmets:

| | Tier 0 | Tier 1 | Tier 2 | Tier 3 | Tier 4 | Tier 5 | Tier 6 | Tier 7 | Tier 8 | Tier 9 | Tier 10 |
|-----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| Hitpoints | 0-5 | 6-15 | 16-25 | 26-35 | 36-45 | 46-55 | 56-65 | 66-75 | 76-85 | 86-95 | 96-105 |

Boots

Boots, like helmets, don't provide toughness bonuses normally. Boots most commonly grant increased base movement speed, with more advanced boots enabling additional types of movement. Boots can also be modified to increase skills, protection, and resistances.

Boots:

| | Tier 0 | Tier 1 | Tier 2 | Tier 3 | Tier 4 | Tier 5 | Tier 6 | Tier 7 | Tier 8 | Tier 9 | Tier 10 |
|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| Speed | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Shields

Shields are special pieces of equipment that upgrade the Block action and have their own pool of hitpoints and toughness.

Shields:

| | Tier 0 | Tier 1 | Tier 2 | Tier 3 | Tier 4 | Tier 5 | Tier 6 | Tier 7 | Tier 8 | Tier 9 | Tier 10 |
|-----------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Toughness | 1-2 | 2-3 | 3-4 | 4-5 | 5-6 | 6-7 | 7-8 | 8-9 | 9-10 | 10-11 | 12+ |
| Hitpoints | 25-50 | 51-75 | 76-100 | 101-125 | 126-150 | 151-175 | 176-200 | 201-225 | 226-250 | 251-275 | 276+ |

Misc Equipment

There are many other pieces of equipment that exist, and it would be impossible to create a “stat block” for them all. Instead, there are a couple different types equipment can be, which can fit into different slots.

Helmet – Pieces of equipment designed for the “head” limb. Can include helmets, goggles, combat interfaces, and masks.

Main Armor – Main Armor equipment determines the toughness of a creature, and can be anything from bulletproof vests or chain mail to a full set of knight’s armor or a powered exoskeleton.

Boots – Boots improve movement speed and allow for additional types of movement.

Weapon – Technically anything and everything can be used as a weapon. Equipment specifically designed for combat are “weapons.” Anything not designed for combat that is used as a weapon is considered an “improvised weapon.” Improvised weapons do damage appropriate for the object being used.

Trinket – Any equipment that is not being actively used is considered a trinket. Trinkets can be stored in chests, backpacks, or anywhere else that makes sense for them to fit. While trinkets include equipment that is not being worn, it also includes equipment that can’t be “equipped” and can include anything from arrows, ammo magazines, tents, flashlights, lighters, poisons, chalk, maps, phones, potions, bandages, and medicines.

Accessories – Accessories are additional pieces of equipment that can be worn in addition to helmets, boots, and main armor. This can include things like backpacks, rings, necklaces, glasses, holsters, quivers, watches, capes, belts, etc. They can provide any number of benefits, including additional storage, quick access to ammo and equipment, or anything in between.

Modifiers

The coolest equipment often comes with “additional” effects, besides just being a higher tier. These additional effects can include boosted damage against particular targets, elemental damage, extra abilities, and additional protection.

Modifiers are the final tool for use in creating epic equipment. Modifiers can add or remove effects from equipment to make it more or less powerful.

In general, modifiers are ranked from 1 to 5, with 5 being the max level of a modifier. Not all modifiers will be able to be leveled up, however, and these will have a max level of 1. For example, a Sword with a “Fire Damage” modifier could be upgraded to do more fire damage, but a Trident of Water Breathing could only ever have Water Breathing 1.

When making modifiers for equipment, GM's can choose a generic modifier or a specific modifier. Generic modifiers provide a simple boon or detriment in many scenarios, like a Lightning (2) Assault Rifle or a Ring of Thirst. Specific modifiers can be more powerful, but only apply to specific scenarios, like an Axe of Giant Slaying.

Equipment can have multiple modifiers. A shield may have reduced toughness against axe attacks, but increased toughness against all other attacks. GM's can combine modifiers to tailor equipment for certain play styles, characters, and scenarios.

The most legendary equipment will have their own completely unique modifiers. GM's should create their own modifiers for equipment to make equipment the most fun.

Whether or not players can craft items with modifiers is up to the GM, as is the cost of purchasing a weapon with a modifier. Most modified equipment will be found whilst exploring or looting enemies, but that doesn't mean players can't modify their own equipment or pay someone else to do it.

Here are a couple ideas for Modifiers:

| Modifier | Max Level | Effect |
|-----------------|-----------|---|
| Elemental | 5 | Adds +1 damage of any element per level |
| Purifying | 5 | Adds +2 damage to weapon attacks against undead per level |
| Leeching | 1 | Damage dealt with this weapon heals the user |
| Auto-Loading | 1 | This weapon does not have to reload |
| Repairing | 5 | Repairs 1 durability every day per level |
| Water Breathing | 1 | Allows the user to breathe in water |
| Shocking | 1 | This weapon deals double damage to shields |
| Piercing | 1 | The user has access to the "Line" component |
| Infinity | 1 | This weapon does not consume the ammo it fires. |
| Boosting | 5 | Adds +5 in a skill per level |
| Protection | 5 | Adds +1 protection per level |
| Sentient | 1 | This equipment is sentient, and has its own personality and goals |
| Coinspllosion | 1 | Enemies killed with this weapon explode into currency |
| Silencing | 1 | Enemies hit by this weapon are silenced for 1 round |
| Doubling | 1 | Every time this weapon shoots a projectile, it shoots two instead |
| Resisting | 1 | This armor grants resistance to a type of damage |