

“Enough expository banter. It's time we fight like men. And ladies. And ladies who dress like men.”

Gilgamesh  
FINAL FANTASY V

Given the sheer number of fiendish monsters and evil empires waiting to be vanquished in the name of justice, it shouldn't be surprising that combat is an unavoidable part of day-to-day life in the world of **Final Fantasy**. This section covers these encounters — and more importantly, how to emerge from them alive. The chapter itself is divided into an overview of some fundamental principles not covered in **Chapter 1**, followed by an examination of how the three Phases work in combat. Following this is an overview of some special situations in FFRPG combat.

## THE BASICS OF COMBAT

Battles within the FFRPG are structured in a relatively straightforward manner. The following rules are common to every fight, regardless of scale.

### Rounds and Turns

To make the flow of combat more manageable, all battles are divided up into a number of **Rounds**, with every Round further broken down into Initiative, Action, and Status Phases. The Action Phase is divided into a number of **turns**; this is the space of time during which individual combatants act. During their turns, combatants may make one or more Actions, depending on their Job, equipment and other circumstances.

### Critical Hits and Automatic Misses

In combat, Botches and Critical Successes operate a little differently than they would under normal circumstances. When rolling to hit during an Attack Action, a result of 1 to 10 on a d% is considered to be a **Critical Hit**, doing **+100%** damage and striking with an unusually flamboyant visual effect in the process.

A roll of 95 to 100, on the other hand, is always an **Automatic Miss**, regardless of the character's Weapon Skill Rating and the target's Evasion. Additional penalties for Automatic Misses may be applied at the Gamemaster's discretion. Note that this applies to

Attacks only; Automatic Misses and Critical Successes have no effects on Spells or Abilities.

### Targeting

As explained in **Chapter 1**, most Abilities and other attacks have a limited range of effect, defined by its 'Target' type. Of the five possible Targets, two — Self and All — are self-explanatory. The remaining three, however, require a little more definition.

### SINGLE TARGETS

A Single target is — as the name implies — a single combatant, friendly or enemy. Such targets may be picked out of a larger formation, or exist simply because the PCs are fighting against one powerful foe.

### PARTIES AND GROUPS

The Party simply consists of a combatant and their immediate allies in the area. Generally, this target type is used for beneficial effects which automatically affect allied combatants, such as the White Magic Spell *Vaccine*. For balance reasons, Parties are limited to nine combatants at a time; if there are more allies on the battlefield than this, the combatant must decide which of their comrades are covered by the effect in question.

Groups are formations of combatants up to nine strong, friend or foe. This target type is used for effects that can be turned on allies as well as enemies, inclusive of most offensive Abilities. If more than nine valid opponents — or allies — exist, the combatant using the Ability decides which nine are targeted.

Both Parties and Groups have a 'coherency' which assumes that all members of that respective formation keep roughly within three or four meters of one another, but this does not need to be strictly enforced unless large distances are involved — two monsters separated by nearly 40 meters, for instance, clearly should not count as a single Group for purposes of calculating targets *vis-à-vis* a well-aimed *Thundaga* Spell.

### ! Dealing With Multiple Groups

The 'Group' designation is purposely limited in numbers to avoid overkill with area effects. Because of this, it is not recommended that these limits be ignored. For larger combats, encounters can be split into multiple Groups, but the amount of book-keeping involved in may bog down the flow of the game. As an alternative, attacks by larger groups of opponents can be played out as "waves" — the first Group of monsters attacks the players; once they have been defeated, the second Group enters combat, and so forth.

This keeps the number of combatants to a manageable range while still simulating the effects of attrition with a large number of opponents.

## DECLARING A TARGET

Unless they are Target: All or Self, Attacks and Abilities require the combatant to declare a valid target when using them. In most cases, a valid target is both *active* — in other words, hasn't been reduced to 0 HP or removed from the battle — and visible. Combatants affected by the *Vanish* Status Condition or hiding out of sight or behind cover are not valid targets under normal circumstances. However, they will be affected as normal if the Group or Party they currently belong to is targeted by an effect. Similarly, incapacitated opponents are not considered valid targets for most Actions; the only exceptions are effects that explicitly affect *Unconscious* combatants, such as *Life* or an Item Action using a Phoenix Down.

Choice of target is further restricted by the target type of the effect being used. In case of Single targets, this will be relatively straightforward; the combatant selects one opponent or ally ("*I throw an Elixir at Food the Mage.*") and then resolves the effects of the action. Groups are more complex, but only marginally so. If there between one and nine opponents on the battlefield, a Target: Group effect will hit all of them, or can be turned on a Party of up to nine PCs or NPCs. If there are more than nine opponents on the battlefield, the combatant must select which nine they wish to target, provided they close enough to form a valid Group.

## FRIENDLY FIRE

Single and Group effects can be turned on allies and one's own Party respectively, although under most circumstances, players will refrain from baking their team-mates with a *Firaga*. There are exceptions, though. One popular tactic involves casting a Spell on an ally under the *Reflect* Status, resulting in an unblockable attack that can even bypass an opponent's own *Reflect*.

Other situations arise as a result of certain Status Conditions. *Sleep*, *Confuse*, *Heat*, and *Frozen* can all be canceled by inflicting a certain type of damage on the target; rather than wait for the Condition to wear off, the victim's allies may find it more expedient to simply attack them and forcibly cancel it.

## SWITCHING SIDES

Combatants affected by the Status Condition *Charm* or the Ability

*Control* may well end up attacking their own allies or healing their sworn opponents. For purposes of targeting, however, the 'traitor' is part of their original Group or Party. For example, if a monster aims a *Thundara* at a party that includes an opponent it's successfully *Charmed*, that opponent would still be hit — attacks that affect an entire formation always affect everyone within that formation, regardless of which 'side' they are currently fighting for.

## RANDOM TARGETS

Certain effects like *Confuse* call for a 'randomly determined' target. In such cases, simply roll a d% for every eligible combatant — the one with the highest roll is the one affected. The definition of 'eligible' will usually be given with the effect in question: a 'randomly determined opponent' means rolling for all opponents on the battlefield; a 'randomly determined ally' means rolling for all allies. If neither is explicitly stated, make a roll for all active combatants.

## Ranges

Range is not intended to be a major factor in most FFRPG battles. In the e-games, combat tended to be restricted to areas small enough that characters and monster could stare each other straight in the face, reducing the amount of movement to a bare minimum. FFRPG battles may be more expansive than this, but for the most part, it's easiest to assume that everybody remains within easy movement distance of each other and the only practical difference between Ranged and Melee attacks is the Reactions they trigger.

If range ever becomes an actual factor in or out of combat, use the following guidelines:

## MELEE

"Melee" means up close and personal; accordingly, Melee effects can only be used within 1 to 3 meters of a target. If Status Conditions, terrain, or other circumstances make it impossible to close to this range, no Melee effects may be used.

## RANGED

Ranged effects can hit from a distance, making them more convenient in situations where Melee effects cannot be used. By default, Ranged effects can affect targets up to 15 meters away; exceptions to the rule will have their maximum effective range given in parentheses. Ranged (30), for example, means that the effect can reach up to 30 meters.

## MULTI-TARGET EFFECTS

Both Group and Party effects radiate out over a circular area roughly 10 meters in diameter, affecting any eligible target even partially within its reach. In-game, the size of the area will be a moot point most of the time — because combatants have to be in close proximity to qualify as a Group or Party under the FFRPG rules and the size of either formation is explicitly limited, players should never worry about whether or not they can squeeze everything in the Group into the range of a *Firaga*.

## TARGET: ALL

Effects with Target: All radiate out to cover a circular area roughly 50 meters in diameter. Most **FFRPG** battles are small enough in scale to ensure that they will utterly consumed by an All effect; in larger conflicts, an All effect will still be cataclysmic, albeit only to a smaller portion of the overall engagement.

## Movement

Because the 'typical' **Final Fantasy** battle takes place in a relatively confined space, most movement in combat is assumed to be too trivial to keep track of. However, on larger battlefields, how fast characters can move from Point A to Point B can start being an issue. In this case, use the following guidelines:

## FREE MOVEMENT

During their turns, combatants can move a distance in meters equal to their SPD Attributes without penalty. This distance does not have to be covered all at once, and may be split into separate movements before as well as after an Action has been made.

## FULL MOVES

Spending an Action exclusively on movement allows a combatant to move a distance in meters equal to **(Combatant's SPD x 2)**. A character with an SPD of 20, for instance, could move 40 meters with each Action spent on movement.

## TERRAIN EFFECTS

The kind of terrain a combatant moves over will affect how far they can move — logically, dashing across flat and solid ground will get you further than trying to do the same in a dense jungle rich with creepers and vines. To make it easier for GMs to decide how terrain affects movement, all battlefield terrain can be broken into one of five categories.

**Standard Terrain** is exactly that — areas that are assumed to be the norm for combat movement. Standard Terrain has no effect on movement — combatants move across it at the normal rate.

**Difficult Terrain** slows combatants' movement by smaller but still noticeable amounts. When traversing Difficult Terrain, the total distance a combatant can move is reduced by **25%**. Examples of Difficult Terrain include light snow, shallow water, and unsteady ground.

**Adverse Terrain** has a significant effect on combatants' movement. When traversing Adverse Terrain, the total distance a combatant can move is reduced by **50%**. Deep snow and ice are both examples of Adverse Terrain.

**Impassable Terrain** is exactly what the name implies — areas of the battlefield that cannot be crossed under normal circumstances, making them effectively off-limits to combatants without *Float* or *Fly*. In the unlikely event that a combatant ends up thrown into Impassable Terrain, the result is usually *Ejection* or instant death. Bottomless pits, ravines, and lava fields are all examples of

Impassable Terrain.

**Water** presents a case unique enough to warrant a terrain category of its very own. If the water merely reaches to the combatant's waist, it is considered Adverse Terrain. If the combatant has to actually swim or dive through it, however, it is not only counted as Adverse Terrain, but requires them to devote all of their actions to movement and movement alone for as long as they remain in the water.

Combatants with *Move-Water* or *Swimming* at a rating of 80 or higher may make Actions as normal whilst in water. The same applies to any combatants with technological or magical assistance.

## FLOATING AND FLYING COMBATANTS

Being able to defy the clutches of gravity naturally makes one more mobile in battle. Combatants under the effects of *Float* ignore all movement modifiers for terrain, but cannot make Full-Move Actions; Combatants with *Flight* ignore all movement modifiers while flying, and suffer no penalties for doing so.

## Doing Damage

The ultimate goal of combat is to inflict enough damage on one's opponents to permanently put them out of commission, or subdue them long enough to make a clean getaway. While simple in principle, the specifics are a little more involved than immediately apparent.

## TARGETS AND APPLYING DAMAGE

Unless otherwise noted, damage done by attacks is applied to all combatants targeted by them, then modified by each individual combatant's ARM or M. ARM to determine the actual damage inflicted. If a *Fira* Spell inflicting 60 damage hit three monsters with M. ARM 10, 20 and 30 respectively, for instance, they would lose 50, 40 and 30 HP.

<b>! Single/Group</b>
Spells with the Single/Group designation allow the caster to split the effects over a larger group for reduced effectiveness. Such Spells do <b>100%</b> of the listed damage to Single combatants and <b>75%</b> damage to Groups.

## CURRENT AND MAXIMUM VALUES

In as well as out of battle, a distinction is made between a combatant's 'current' Hit and Magic Points and their 'maximum' values. The *maximum* value is equal to the Hit and Magic Points generated at character creation, plus any bonuses gained from Levels and equipment. The *current* value is the maximum value, modified by any gains or losses of Hit and Magic Points over the course of the battle. For instance, an uninjured combatant with a maximum HP value of 40 begins the battle with a current HP value of 40. If he loses 10 Hit Points to an attack in the first Round, his current HP value drops to 30, though his maximum value remains unaffected. The current value can never exceed the maximum value;

if a combatant regains more Hit or Magic Points than their maximum value, the excess is lost.

## REACHING 0 HP

What happens when a combatant is reduced to 0 or fewer Hit Points depends on who they are. In case of most monsters and other NPCs, it will mean they are disposed of and take no further part in the battle. For more powerful opponents, the results may vary; they may shift to another incarnation, die spectacularly, or merely teleport to safety, vowing to return and take their revenge another day.

When a PC reaches 0 or fewer HP, they are rendered **Unconscious** — not in any immediate danger of death, but in no position to continue fighting. *Unconscious* characters generate no Initiative, and therefore neither move nor act during the course of a Round. All Status Conditions affecting the character — excepting the Condition *Stone* and any Transform-type Conditions — are automatically canceled, regardless of their remaining timers. Auto-Status Conditions resume effect only once the PC is back on his or her feet.

*Unconscious* PCs cannot regain Hit Points from most Recovery effects. The only things capable of restoring them are Items and Spells that specifically affect an *Unconscious* combatant. Once their Hit Points have been restored to 1 or greater, they are no longer considered *Unconscious*, and may once again generate Initiative. Alternately, PCs may also be revived through recuperation at a GM's discretion — see **Chapter 9** for more details on this.

## THE INITIATIVE PHASE

Initiative in combat is generated as outlined in **Chapter 1**, though certain Status Conditions and Abilities may affect the outcome of the Initiative rolls. Once all Initiatives have been generated, the Initiative Phase ends; the Round moves into the Action Phase.

### ? Initiative in Action (1)

*Having escaped their cell, our heroes now make a desperate break for freedom... and encounter trouble along the way.*

**Rodger (GM):** Deathsight's dungeon seems to stretch on into an infinity of dank metallic staircases. Occasionally, steaming vents and rattling chains break up the monotony; strange lights flash in the gloom, indicators for some mysterious device buried deep in the walls. You're just starting to catch your breath at the top of the third set of steps when a blue light illuminates the gloomy stairwell. Then another -- footsteps grow louder, underscored by soft, tinny clinks. You step back instinctively as two of Deathsight's mechanical guards round the corner; tailing them is a grotesque assemblage of gears and steam pipes bent into a vaguely hound-like shape, oil dripping from the crushed metal of its head. The first guard buzzes with surprise as he notices you, then reaches for his sword.

### ? Initiative in Action (2)

**Rob (Hiro):** Hiro shakes his head as he unholsters his gun. "No turning back now. Let's get 'em!"

**Rodger:** Everybody else is following?

**Carl (Kumani):** The only way back's down to the dungeons again. We've got to keep going.

**M (Haze):** Sure thing.

**Rodger:** Roll initiatives.

**Rob:** (rolling) D'oh. 2. Plus Speed 5 equals 7.

**M:** (rolling) 6 plus Speed 8 equals 14.

**Blair:** (rolling) Hey, a 10! ...plus Speed 8 equals 18.

**Carl:** (rolling) 6. Plus Speed 8 equals... 14.

*Rodger rolls in secret, coming up with a 1, 5 and 3. The two Guards have SPD 5, so their Initiatives are 6 and 10; the Oily Fang has SPD 7, coming up with an Initiative of 10.*

**Rodger:** Right. Order of initiative is Mint with 18, Kumani with 14, Haze with 13, Oily Fang with 10, Guard B with 10, Guard A with 8...

*For reference's sake, Rodger distinguishes between the Guards by assigning them letter codes. This will help keep down confusion between players in a fight where two of their opponents are of the same enemy type.*

**Rodger:** ...and Hiro with 7.

*The Round's timer begins at 18 ticks — Mint's Initiative — with Mint taking the first turn.*

## Conflicting Initiatives

The above example poses an interesting question — what happens when multiple combatants generate the same Initiative score? While the combatants in question still take their turns on the same tick, the combatant with the highest SPD automatically has the first turn, the combatant with the next-highest SPD the second, and so forth. In the example, both Guard B and the Oily Fang started with an Initiative of 10, yet the Fang acted first, as it had the higher SPD value of the two. If the Fang and the Guard had had identical SPD Attributes, however, they would have been deadlocked. In this case, Rodger would have had to roll a d10 for both to resolve the situation; whoever rolled highest would then act first.

## THE ACTION PHASE

The Action Phase makes up the bulk of each Round. During this period of time, combatants can cast spells, use special powers, make attacks, and reposition themselves. Once all movement and Actions have been dealt with, the Round moves into the Status Phase.

## Actions

Combat is a complex swirl of activities and maneuvers, ranging from simply striking a pose to cleaving demons in twain with a well-placed sword-stroke. For the sake of keeping things simple, the FFRPG groups these activities into two broad headings.

### ZERO ACTIONS

**Zero Actions** are trivial Actions, and consume less time and effort than a full-blown Action. A character may make up to two Zero Actions each turn. Some examples of Zero Actions include:

**Combat Movement.** Because combatants can freely attack each other by default, almost all attacks are assumed to include a certain amount of movement. A character making a standard melee attack, for instance, would first need to run up to her target to deliver the blow, then retreat to safety before said target could strike back. This kind of movement is called *Combat Movement*, and treated as a Zero Action. More extensive movement requires an Action as normal.

**Communication.** Communication is an important part of battle, even if it is used for nothing more than idle boasting and taunts. Proclamations ("*Watch out for its lightning attack!*") and ten- to thirty-second conversations are both treated as Zero Actions.

**Style Moves.** Small actions primarily meant to show a character's personality in combat — pausing to adjust one's sleeves, flexing after a successful strike, flipping aside an immaculately-styled length of hair before delivering a finishing blow.

**Reactions.** The final, and arguably most important, example of a Zero Action. Because a combatant's Reactions rarely occur to their own turn, they don't count towards the limit of two Zero Actions per turn.

### STANDARD ACTIONS

More intensive activities — making attacks, casting spells, fiddling with a potion bag in search of a curative — are treated as 'standard' Actions. Unlike Zero Actions, combatants are only allowed one standard Action per turn, though it is possible to gain additional Actions through Abilities like *Fast Pockets* or Spells like *Quick*. Standard Actions are further divided into nine categories, collectively covering the majority of possible battlefield activities: **Full-Move, Attack, Ability, Trigger, Item, Defense, Wait** and **Escape**. Each of these is covered in detail in subsequent sections.

### SLOW ACTIONS AND INITIATIVE

As explained in **Chapter 1**, Slow Actions require a certain amount of preparation before they can be used. This 'charging' is represented through a Charge Time (CT) listed in parentheses with the Ability type. Each point of Charge Time is roughly equivalent to one second or tick of charging; an Ability with a Charge Time of 18 would require 18 ticks of uninterrupted concentration before its effects take hold.

When a Slow Action is declared in battle, the Charge Time is subtracted from the combatant's basic Initiative for the Round. The new, adjusted Initiative is when the Action is resolved. For instance, if a combatant with an Initiative of 18 declares they are using an

Action with a CT of 12, the actual Action is resolved at 6 ticks. The character spends the intervening 12 ticks charging.

#### ! Interrupting Slow Actions

Because Slow Actions are not resolved immediately, it is possible that a character may be struck with a Status Condition which prevents them from carrying out the Action — *Berserk*, *Confuse*, *Sleep*, and *Curse* are all obvious examples — or reduced to 0 or fewer HP before the Action is resolved. If either of these occurs, the Action is automatically canceled. A character may also voluntarily abort a Slow Action, nullifying that action.

If CT reduces a character's Initiative to less than 0, the remaining CT 'carries over' and is subtracted from their Initiative in the subsequent Round. The Slow Action is then resolved at the new, modified Initiative in that Round. If a combatant opted to use a Slow Action with a CT of 12 on an Initiative of 8, for instance, the CT would reduce their Initiative to -4. As this is lower than 0, nothing would happen in the Round the Action was declared. In the following Round, the combatant generates Initiative as normal, then subtracts the remaining CT of 4 ticks; the Slow Action is resolved at this reduced Initiative count. Note that any CT that ends up delaying an Action for one or more Rounds results in the combatant's normal turn being 'skipped over;' any Actions they could have made during that time are automatically forfeited.

#### ! Retargeting Slow Actions

If the target of a Slow Action is incapacitated or removed from the battle before the Action's effect takes place, the Action is retargeted, striking a random opponent instead.

### EXTREME INITIATIVES

Under most circumstances, combatants only have one turn per Round. However, there are times in which a combatant can surpass the one-turn limitation through sheer speed alone.

Combatants with an Initiative value higher than 35 at the end of the Initiative Phase have **Extreme Initiative**. In game terms, they are eligible for additional turns during the course of the Round. When the combatant's turn comes up, perform an Action as usual; after the Action has been carried out, reduce the combatant's remaining Initiative by 35. If this leaves them with an Initiative greater than 0, they may take another turn at the new Initiative count, subtracting a further 35 from their Initiative after the completion of every subsequent turn until their Initiative is less than or equal to 0. Note that Actions with a Charge Time add their given CT to this 35-tick penalty; the Action is performed on the adjusted Initiative count as normal. For instance, if a Thief with an Initiative of 50 decided to use *Mug* (Slow, CT 10) on an opponent, its effects would go off at 40 ticks, after which the Thief's Initiative count would be reduced by 35 to 5. As this is greater than 0, the Thief takes another turn at 5 ticks.

While there is no penalty for reducing Initiative to a negative value through Fast Actions, a Slow Action that reduces the combatant's

Initiative count to less than zero will carry over into the next Round as normal.

## Attack Actions

An Attack Action is a combatant's standard means of offense, and involves striking targets with whatever Weapon is currently equipped. Actions of this type are resolved through the five following steps:

**1. Select a Target.** With a few notable exceptions, all Attack Actions are Single-target. This means the attacker selects one eligible combatant from all active combatants on the battlefield and declares them as the target.

**2. Roll to Hit.** The success of an Attack Action is determined in the same manner as a Skill Test – the attacker makes a Percentile Roll to beat a given CoS. In this case, the CoS is equal to **(Attacker's ACC, using the relevant weapon skill), Target's Evasion**, where the Weapon Skill in question is the one required by the equipped Weapon used in the attack: *Staves* for a Staff, *Swords* for a Greatsword or Katana, and so on. If the attacker manages to roll equal to or under the CoS, they succeed in hitting their target and proceed to the next step. Otherwise, they miss and have wasted their Action.

Not every attack needs to be this straightforward – GMs can easily apply Conditional Modifiers to simulate the effects of extreme glare, encumbrance, or nighttime conditions. However, such modifiers should generally only be used in extraordinary circumstances to avoid bogging battles down with small details.

### ? Sample Attack (1)

*With all Initiatives generated, the battle begins in earnest.*

**Rodger (GM):** Mint's turn.

**Blair (Mint):** Mint draws her Rod of Darkness as the Guards close in, smashing Guard A straight in the face with as much force as she can muster.

**Rodger:** Roll to hit.

**Blair:** (rolling) 48. Accuracy with *Cudgels* comes out to 97.

*Here Rodger consults his notes. The Guards' Evasion is only 22; Blair's roll comfortably beats the adjusted CoS of 75.*

**Rodger:** Mint's attack connects, slamming into the guard's helmet with a sharp clang. Roll for damage.

**3. Generate Damage.** Each Weapon has its own 'damage code,' expressed in terms of a **Damage Scale** and a **Damage Die**. A Weapon with a damage code of **(3 x STR) + d10**, for instance, is said to have a Damage Scale of 3 and a Damage Die of d10.

To determine how much damage the attack inflicts, multiply the Damage Scale by the Attribute in question – in this case, Strength – and then roll the Damage Die, adding the result to the total. The final number is the basic damage inflicted by the Attack. For a speedier resolution, it helps to have the damage code precalculated before the battle begins.

Effects such as *[Element] Strike* or the Status Condition *Power Up*

change this raw damage output by a certain percentage. The same applies to Critical Hits, which increase basic damage dealt by a successful Attack Action by **+100%**. Such bonuses should be applied when basic damage is calculated.

### ? Sample Attack (2)

*Mint's Rod of Darkness has a damage code of (2 x STR + d6), ARM. To save time, Mint's player, Blair, has already multiplied her Strength, 8, by the Damage Scale of 2 for a total of 16.*

**Blair (Mint):** (rolling) 5. Plus 16 is 21.

**Rodger (GM):** All right. Now Armor...

**4. Adjust Damage.** Once the basic damage has been calculated, subtract either the target's ARM rating if it is Physical damage, or M. ARM if it is Magical damage. The end result is the total damage inflicted on the target – reduce the target's current HP by that amount. Should this take the target to 0 or fewer HP, it will be incapacitated and takes no further part in the battle.

### ? Sample Attack (3)

*As Mint's Rod of Darkness inflicts Physical damage, the attack will be reduced by the Guard's ARM. Rodger consults his notes again, finding the Guard has an ARM of 6. Subtracted from Mint's basic damage of 21, this means the attack inflicts a total 15 HP damage to the hapless mechanoid. Not enough to put him out of commission, but there's always next round...*

**Rodger (GM):** 15 damage. Roll for *Blind*...

**5. Resolve Other Effects.** If the Weapon has any Equipment Abilities that have not already been applied to the attack, they are brought into play after the target's Hit Points have been adjusted. The player rolls a d% against whatever CoS may apply.

### ? Sample Attack (4)

*The Rod of Darkness has the Equipment Ability Blind Touch, giving Mint a flat CoS of 30 for inflicting Blind on the Guard in addition to the damage she's already done.*

**Blair (Mint):** (rolling) Woo. 14.

**Rodger (GM):** The Guard staggers back as the light in his visor dims, frantically flailing his sword about. Guard A's got Status Condition *Blind* with a timer of 4.

A few other details regarding Attack Actions also worth noting:

## AMMO

Characters attacking with a Weapon that supports the use of ammunition may choose to use one unit of it in the Attack Action. This must be declared when first announcing the attack's target; the effects of the selected ammunition are then applied accordingly. Note that the unit of ammunition is used up regardless of whether the Attack Action is successful or not.

## BRAWLING

If a character does not have a Weapon equipped, they may still attack bare-handed. This form of attack is known as **Brawling**. Attack Actions made in this fashion are handled as normal, using the character's *Brawl* rating in place of the usual Weapon Skill. Such attacks have a damage code of **(1 x STR) + d6**.

## ATTACKING OFF-HANDED

Most characters wield Weapons exclusively in one hand or the other, a habit further reinforced by their training. If they are ever forced to equip a Weapon in a hand other than their customary one, they suffer a flat **-50** penalty to ACC unless they have the *Two Weapons* Skill; if so, they suffer no penalty, but use *Two Weapons* instead of the normal Weapon Skill when rolling to hit.

## ATTACKING WITH TWO WEAPONS

Characters with two Weapons equipped strike two blows with each Attack Action, one per Weapon. For purposes of rolling to hit, damage, and the like, each attack is treated as a separate Attack Action. A character equipped with a Mythril Knife and a Mythril Rod, for instance, would resolve the attack as if they had made one Attack Action with the Mythril Knife and one with the Mythril Rod, rolling to hit for each. If one attack misses, the other still proceeds as normal; if both miss, the Action is wasted.

## PULLING BLOWS

Not every attack needs to hit home with life-threatening force. A combatant can declare that they are pulling a blow at the beginning of an Attack Action. In doing so, damage for the subsequent attack is reduced by **-50%**.

## IMPROVISED WEAPONS

An Attack Action can also be used to pick up odds and ends capable of being used as offensive items and make an immediate attack with them. Such improvised weapons can take many forms: chairs, paperweights, ornamental swords, and frying pans are all valid fodder for heroes short on armaments but big on imagination.

Attack Actions made with such objects are resolved as normal, using the most appropriate Weapon Skill to calculate rolls to hit. Damage is calculated using the damage code of a standard d6, d8, d10, or d12 weapon with an Equipment Tier half that of the character's normally equipped Weapon. The die type used is left to the GM's discretion, but should take into account the size and 'heft' of the object; the larger the object, the higher the die.

For instance, a character who had previously wielded a Tier 4 Weapon and picks up a laundry pole in a tense brawl would treat it as a Tier 2 Weapon. In this case, the laundry pole's size and length means it would be closest to a Staff, making it a d8 Weapon. For purposes of calculating damage, it would thus be treated as as a Tier 2 Staff, doing damage equal to a Crescent Pole, or **(3 x STR) + d8**.

Unlike normal Weapons, improvised Weapons aren't made to last;

most will be destroyed after the first Attack Action, while more durable ones last until end of the battle at best. They also usually lack Equipment Abilities, though some improvised Weapons may inflict Status Conditions **(2)** in addition to or instead of damage, depending on their nature. For example, throwing a handful of chili powder at an opponent would do no damage, but instead have a chance of inflicting *Blind*. Such Status Conditions always have a flat CoS of **30%**; the Status Condition inflicted is chosen by the GM.

## Ability Actions

Ability Actions allow combatants to take active advantage of the powers and talents in their Ability Sets. While Attack Actions are relatively straightforward, the wide range of effects found in a character's Ability Set means very few operate in exactly the same manner. A general set of steps for resolving Ability Actions is given below, though not every step will apply to every Ability.

**1. Select a Target.** Abilities can have a wide variety of Target types, ranging from Self to All. Target: Self, Target: Party and Target: All do not give the combatant much choice in what to target, but Target: Single and Target: Group do — in this case, the combatant must declare an eligible target or group of targets for the Ability to affect.

**2. Adjust MP.** Certain Abilities require a number of Magic Points to use. If the Ability has an MP cost associated with it, begin by subtracting the effect's MP cost from the combatant's current MP score. The desired effect may only be used if this leaves the character with 0 or more MP; otherwise, the combatant will have to choose another course of action. If no MP cost is given for the effect, proceed to the next step.

**3. Adjust Initiative.** Slow Abilities deduct a Charge Time from the combatant's Initiative. If the combatant is using a Slow Ability, adjust their Initiative accordingly and continue on to the next applicable step once the effect goes off.

### ? Sample Ability (1)

*Mint has just completed her turn. Now it's Carl's character, Kumani, who acts.*

**Rodger (GM):** Kumani's up.

*Carl wants to use a Magic Ability, all of which require MP. A quick glance at his character sheet for Kumani's MP — 21 — confirms he's got enough to use every Blue Magic Spell currently in her arsenal.*

**Carl (Kumani):** Kumani will focus on the Oily Fang, going through the fluid kata for *Leap* before jumping into the air, claws outstretched. 8 MP; leaves her with 13.

*Carl makes a note on his character sheet, subtracting the 8 MP from his current score. With no Charge Time, he proceeds straight to the next step.*

**Rodger:** All right. Roll for M. ACC.

**4. Roll To Hit.** Most Abilities take effect automatically, but some may require a d% roll. If so, the relevant CoS will be noted in its description. Spells used against an opponent always require a successful Percentile Roll to use; in this case, the CoS will be equal to **(Caster's M. ACC + Additional Modifiers)**, **Target's M. Evasion**, where the 'Additional Modifiers' are those listed in the Spell's description. If no modifiers are given, simply subtract the target's M. EVA.

If the attacker manages to roll equal to or under the CoS, they succeed in hitting their target and proceed to the next step. Otherwise, they miss and have wasted their Action, plus any MP and Initiative spent on it.

#### ? Sample Ability (2)

*Checking Leap's Spell description, Carl finds no modifiers for basic accuracy. As a result, his base M. ACC of 115 stands.*

**Carl (Kumani):** (rolling) 76, against M. ACC of 115.

*Rodger checks his notes for the Oily Fang's M. EVA – 24. 115 minus 24 is 91; Carl's roll of 76 is well under.*

**Rodger (GM):** That's a hit – Kumani lands squarely on the mechanical hound with a hollow thud, knocking several pipes out of alignment. Time to roll for damage...

**5. Generate Damage.** If the Ability inflicts damage, the damage code will be found in its description. Damage adjustments caused by effects like *[Element] Enhancer*, Status Conditions like *Magic Up*, or Elemental Weaknesses, Resistances, and Immunities will be factored in at this point. Begin by adding together all percentage modifiers with a + or - in front of them, then adding these to **100%**. Apply the final percentage to the damage generated. If no damage code is given in the description, skip ahead to the seventh step.

**6. Adjust Damage.** Once the basic damage has been calculated, subtract either the target's ARM or M. ARM rating, depending on which of the two is given in the damage code. If neither is given, the damage is not reduced. The end result is the total damage inflicted on the target – reduce the target's current HP by that amount. Should this reduce the target to 0 or fewer HP, it will be incapacitated and takes no further part in the battle.

#### ? Sample Ability (3)

*Like Blair, Carl has precalculated damage. Kumani's MAG is 7; factored into Leap's damage code of (4 x MAG) + d8, this means the Spell does 28 + d8 damage.*

**Carl (Kumani):** (rolling) 6. 34 damage.

*Rodger consults his notes – the Fang's M. ARM is 8, meaning the attack does 26 damage.*

**Rodger (GM):** Good hit! 26 damage. Roll for *Armor Down*.

**7. Resolve Other Effects.** Certain Abilities and Spells may inflict one or more Status Condition instead of or in addition to damage. The durations for these will always be given in the Ability's or Spell's description. Status Conditions inflicted by damaging attacks have an additional CoS separate from the main attack, and will require a d%

to determine whether these take effect.

#### ? Sample Ability (4)

*Leap also has a (M. ACC - 50), M. Evasion chance of inflicting the Status Condition Armor Down. This reduces Kumani's M. ACC to 65.*

**Carl (Kumani):** (rolling) 14, against a modified M. ACC of 65.

*Subtracting the Fang's M. EVA of 24 from the modified M. ACC, Rodger finds Armor Down's CoS is 41. Once again, Carl's roll is comfortably under.*

**Rodger (GM):** The Fang's now suffering from *Armor Down*, duration of four Rounds. Haze, you're up...

## Trigger Actions

Trigger Actions cover in-combat activities that require a Task Checks to carry out. Examples of Trigger Actions include lifting up a table and throwing it at a charging opponent with STR, using *Systems* to disable an out-of-control mechanoid, catching a falling sword through AGI, or using *Acrobatics* to execute a triple cartwheel through a group of Imperial soldiers onto an overhanging balcony. A Conditional Modifier is applied by the GM as normal, and should take the combatant's shape and circumstances into account – somebody who's just spent the last six Rounds bashing Stropers is not going to be in much form to lift a one-ton boulder in the seventh. Depending on the complexity of the Trigger Action, the GM may also choose to impose a Charge Time.

A successful Task Check is required before the Action can be carried out. Failure means a combatant has wasted their Action, while consequences for a Botch or Critical Success are left to GM discretion. Trigger Actions can also be used for Actions that do not require a roll or directly target an combatant, but are too 'major' to be treated as Zero Actions – pushing a button, kicking over a torch, or maneuvering a crane into position.

#### ? Sample Trigger Action

*Haze's player weighs his next course of action. At this point, the party's survival depends on their ability to stop the guards from alerting their fellows – if either one escapes, the consequences could be dire.*

**M (Haze):** Rodger, I want to make a leap up the stairs, shutting the door and sealing it. Do I have enough clearance on the stairwell to get behind the guards?

*Rodger sees this as an Average task; no Conditional Modifiers applied, making the CoS equal to Haze's AGI Attribute Rating,*

**Rodger (GM):** Sure. Give me a roll against your AGI.

**M:** (rolling) 25, Attribute Rating of 31.

**Rodger:** Smooth. Haze manages to vault onto the rail and dive behind the second guard before either of the two realizes what's happening, sliding the bolts into place. There's an angry snarl as one guard trains the Fang on you as the second slowly steps down the stairs towards the rest of the party...



## Item Actions

Item Actions involve a character's equipment or Inventory. An Item Action may be used to do any of the following:

**Use an Item.** Any character with a Throwing Weapon, Battle Item, Support Item, or Recovery Item in their Inventory Slot may expend an Item Action to retrieve it and use it on a valid target. Standard targeting rules and restrictions apply.

**Equip a Weapon or Shield.** If a character does not have a Weapon or Shield equipped but has one in their Inventory Slot or within easy reach, they may expend an Item Action to equip it. This assumes they have the appropriate Slot free.

**Replace, Return or Drop a Weapon or Shield.** An Item Action may be used to replace a currently-equipped Weapon or Shield with one in the character's Inventory or the general vicinity, or return a Weapon or Shield to the inventory, thereby de-equipping it. The piece of equipment in question may be dropped or discarded instead.

**Drop or Discard an Item:** One Item Action may be used to drop or permanently remove an Item from a character's Inventory Slot.

### ? Sample Item Action

*Hiro's turn comes last in the Round. Guards A and B have both attacked Mint, and the Oily Fang's taken a healthy chunk out of Hiro. Rob considers his options...*

**Rodger (GM):** Rob? It's Hiro's turn.

**Rob (Hiro):** Hmm. Blair, how's Mint doing?

**Blair (Mint):** 17 HP left. One hit from that Fang, and she's a goner. How about a heal?

*Rob checks his character sheet — sure enough, he's got two Potions in his Inventory Slot, each capable of restoring 50 HP to a Single combatant.*

**Rob:** Can do. Rodger, I'm chucking a Potion in Mint's direction.

**Rodger:** Mint recovers 50 Hit Points... and that's the end of the Action Phase. Time to move on to the Status Phase.

## Full-Move Actions

As described earlier in the chapter, combatants can devote an Action to nothing but movement in order to cover greater distances. Such Actions are called Full-Move Actions.

## Defense Actions

In a Defense Action, a combatant braces for the worst the enemy can throw at them. Defense Actions must be declared at the beginning of the combatant's turn, before any other Actions are made. In doing so, the character automatically forfeits their first Action for that Round. In exchange, all damage they receive until they take their next Action is reduced by **-50%** after adjusting for ARM and M. ARM.

## Waiting

If everything else fails, a combatant may choose to simply wait. The

player declares how many ticks they spend waiting, and adjusts Initiative accordingly. For example, a combatant with an initial Initiative of 24 may decide to wait 5 ticks and take their turn at an Initiative of 19 instead. If the combatant does not wish to act at their new, reduced Initiative count, they may continue to wait instead of taking an Action. Should this eventually reduce their Initiative count to 0 or lower, they automatically forfeit all remaining Actions for the Round. Note that any effects with a Charge Time use the combatant's reduced Initiative as a basis.

## Escape Actions

Sometimes, it's better to run and fight another day than stand and be slaughtered. If a combatant wishes to attempt to escape the battle, they must declare an Escape Action during the Initiative Phase. When their turn comes up in the Action Phase, they must make an opposed Task Check pitting their SPD against that of all opponents still actively engaged in the battle. Opponents who have been incapacitated do not participate in this Check. If an opponent has no interest in preventing the escape, they likewise waive the roll. The escapee rolls only once, comparing the result to all other rolls. If it is the highest roll, the escape is successful and the combatant is removed from the battle. If not, the Action has been wasted.

As always, Conditional Modifiers can be applied for situations such as attempting to run through difficult or hazardous terrain, or escaping from a monster whose attention is otherwise engaged.

## THE STATUS PHASE

In combat, the Status Phase is used to do three things:

**1. Adjusting Timers.** Most Status Conditions only have a limited duration in combat, indicated by a 'timer' of 2, 4, or 6 Rounds. During the Status Phase, reduce the value of each active 'timer' by one. Should this give the timer a value to 0, the Status Condition is canceled

### ! Tracking Duration

When multiple Status Conditions enter the picture, it may be more convenient to track timers visually. The best way to do so is with a colored d6 displaying the remaining duration. At the end of each Status Phase, adjust the die accordingly so the side facing up shows the current timer. When the timer reaches 0 or the Status Condition is cancelled, simply remove the die.

**2. Resolving Effects.** Certain Status Conditions such as *Poison* and *Regen* affect their targets on a Round-to-Round basis. For instance, *Poison* reduces a victim's HP by 10% of its current value for each Status Phase it remains in effect. These effects are all calculated and applied during the Status Phase.

**3. Refreshing Auto-Status Conditions.** In addition to the Status Conditions inflicted during the course of the Round, combatants may also be affected by Auto-Status Conditions of one sort or another. If

the Status Condition in question has been canceled during the Round, it is automatically re-applied to the combatant during the Status Phase.

Once all active Status Conditions have been addressed, the Round ends, and a new Round begins at the Initiative Phase.

#### ? Sample Status Phase

*Now the Action Phase is over. There are two Status Conditions in play as the Round enters the Status Phase; the Rozelle Fang's Armor Down and Guard A's Blind. Armor Down and Blind both have a timer of 4; this is reduced to 3, meaning the Status Conditions will wear off in another three Rounds' time.*

Rodger: All right. Initiatives...

## Status Condition Descriptions

Combat in the FFRPG isn't limited to damage and healing; Status Conditions play just as great a role in the outcome of a battle. Many are consequences of indirect offensive strategies, but some are designed to defend and enhance combatants' abilities, giving them an important edge in tough battles.

The considerable impact Status Conditions can have on the battlefield makes their removal a prime tactical consideration. Though most expire after a certain period of time, it may be in a combatant's best interests to get rid of them as soon as they arise. Each Condition therefore has its own set of 'cures', any of which will serve to remove — or 'cancel' — it before the timer hits 0. The alternative is to finish the battle as quickly as possible; for Status Conditions with a limited duration, the Condition is automatically cancelled once the battle concludes, regardless of how many Rounds are left on the timer. Conditions with an unlimited duration, however, will endure after battle, and last until healed by items, magic, or recuperation.

The following section deals with both positive and negative Status Conditions, detailing their effects as well as their remedies. The negative Conditions are divided into seven categories based on similarity of effect; positive Conditions are grouped into two.

## STATUS IMMUNITIES

Some combatants may have an Immunity (I) to a given Status Condition or category of Status Conditions. When any said Condition — or a Condition belonging to the Status category in question — is used against the combatant, their Immunity automatically reduces its CoS to 0.

## FATAL

Any Status Condition with the potential to instantly remove its victim from the fight. For purposes of calculating immunities to effects, the Fatal category also includes several related 'conditions' which are not Status Conditions in their own right, but still are considered Fatal-type effects.

## CONDEMNED

**Effect:** A sinister spectre appears over the combatant, placing a fatal curse upon them before vanishing into thin air. When the combatant is first afflicted with *Condemned*, a four-Round timer starts. Should the timer reach 0 before the battle ends, the combatant's life essences are torn from their body, instantly reducing them to 0 HP, regardless of their current HP, ARM, and M. ARM ratings.

**Canceled by:** None

## DEATH

The catchall category for any Ability that reduces a target to 0 HP, regardless of current Hit Points, ARM or M. ARM ratings. This includes the Equipment Abilities *Death Touch* and *Death Strike*.

## EJECT

The catchall category for any Ability that physically removes the target from the battlefield. As they are not actually 'defeated' by doing so, *Ejected* opponents award no Items. Gil and XP gained from an *Ejected* opponent are reduced by 50%.

## FROZEN

**Effect:** The combatant is frozen solid, caked with a layer of ice thick enough to prevent them from performing any Actions or Zero Actions until *Frozen* expires. If struck by Physical damage whilst in this state, the resulting shock will reduce the *Frozen* combatant to 0 HP, regardless of current Hit Points, ARM, or M. ARM ratings. If necessary, the combatant's body can be carried around by allies until *Frozen* wears off.

**Canceled by:** Fire Elemental Damage, *Esuna*

## GRAVITY

The catchall category for any Ability that does damage based on a percentage of the target's HP or MP, rather than a fixed amount.

## HEAT

**Effect:** A crackling shroud of intense heat surrounds the combatant, leaving them on the verge of collapse. Should the combatant make any Actions or Zero Actions while *Heat* is in effect, the resulting flare-up will reduce the combatant to 0 HP, regardless of current Hit Points, ARM, or M. ARM ratings. The effects of *Heat* are always applied before the results of the Zero Action or Action that triggered it.

**Canceled by:** Ice Elemental Damage, *Esuna*

## NEAR-FATAL

The catchall category for any Ability that reduces a target to 1 HP, regardless of current Hit Points, ARM, or M. ARM ratings.

## MYSTIFY

Status Conditions that affect a combatant's mental faculties.

## BERSERK

**Effect:** The combatant is consumed with indescribable fury, abandoning tactics for an outright fighting frenzy. Generate Initiative

as normal; whenever the combatant is eligible to make an Action, they make an immediate Attack Action against the nearest opponent or inanimate object, striking for **+50%** damage. Should multiple eligible targets exist, randomly determine which one is attacked.

**Canceled by:** Tranquilizer, Remedy, *Wash*, *Esuna*

## CHARM

**Effect:** The combatant becomes besotted with an opponent, obeying their every command. Generate Initiative as normal; whenever the combatant is eligible to make an Action, the combatant who originally inflicted *Charm* may choose what Action their victim takes, if any. Should the combatant who inflicted *Charm* be killed or otherwise incapacitated before the Status is canceled, their victim will instead make an Attack Action against a random ally every time they are eligible to act. The same applies for situations where an ally — or the combatant themselves — inflicted this Status Condition.

**Canceled by:** Physical Damage, *Esuna*

## CONFUSE

**Effect:** The combatant's mind becomes clouded, distorting their perception of reality. Generate Initiative as normal; whenever the character is eligible to make an Action, roll a d8 and consult the table below to determine what the character does. With only one exception, all of the effects listed are Target: Random.

d8	Character's Action
1.	<b>Use Spell/Ability against ally.</b> The combatant uses their weakest Ability or one randomly-determined Spell of the lowest available Level, targeting one ally. If neither is an option, re-roll and apply the new result instead.
2.	<b>Recover ally.</b> The combatant uses a Recovery Item or Spell on one randomly-determined ally; this will always be the most expensive Item or MP-intensive Spell at their disposal. If neither is an option, re-roll and apply the new result instead.
3.	<b>Attack random ally.</b> The combatant makes an immediate Attack Action against a randomly-determined ally, using whatever Weapon they currently have equipped. Roll to hit and calculate damage as normal.
4.	<b>Attack self.</b> The combatant makes an immediate Attack Action against themselves, using whatever Weapon they currently have equipped. Roll to hit and calculate damage as normal.
5.	<b>Attack random opponent.</b> The combatant makes an immediate Attack Action against a random opponent, using whatever Weapon they currently have equipped. Roll to hit and calculate damage as normal.
6.	<b>Attack random ally.</b> The combatant makes an immediate Attack Action against a randomly-determined ally, using whatever Weapon they currently have equipped. Roll to hit and calculate damage as normal.
7.	<b>Recover opponent.</b> The victim uses a Recovery Item or Spell on one randomly-determined opponent; this will always be the weakest Item or least MP-intensive Spell at

their disposal. If neither is an option, re-roll and apply the new result instead.

8. **Use Spell/Ability against opponent.** The victim uses either their strongest Ability or one randomly-determined Spell from the highest available Level, targeting one random opponent. If neither is an option, re-roll and apply the new result instead.

**Canceled by:** Physical Damage, Remedy, *Esuna*

## UNAWARE

**Effect:** The combatant is distracted, leaving themselves open to attack. Until they receive a turn, the next attack that deals Physical damage against them inflicts **+100%** damage. In addition, combatants under the effects of *Unaware* cannot roll to prevent an opponent from making a successful Escape Action. If a combatant is under the effects of *Unaware* when their turn arrives, they take no action. Instead, *Unaware* is canceled

**Canceled by:** Physical Damage, Action, Alarm Clock

## TOXIN

Status Conditions of a toxic nature.

## POISON

**Effect:** The combatant is afflicted with a virulent poison, turning them a sickly shade of purple. For every Status Phase that *Poison* remains untreated for, the combatant loses a number of Hit Points equal to **10%** of their current HP. A combatant with a total of 500 HP would lose 50 HP the first Round, 45 the next, 40 the Round after that, and so on.

**Canceled by:** Antidote, Remedy, *Poisona*, *Wash*, *Esuna*

## VENOM

**Effect:** A fast-acting, lethal poison has entered the combatant's body. For every Status Phase that a combatant afflicted with *Venom* remains untreated for, they lose a number of Hit and Magic Points equal to **10%** of their respective maximum values. A combatant with a total of 500 HP and 250 MP, for instance, would lose 50 HP and 25 MP for each Status Phase *Venom* stays in effect.

**Canceled by:** Antidote, Remedy, *Poisona*, *Esuna*

## SEAL

Status Conditions that prevent a combatant from making actions in combat, or otherwise impair their ability to use their full arsenal of offensive powers.

## BLIND

**Effect:** A dark haze settles over the combatant, severely impairing their ability to locate opponents. Whilst afflicted with *Blind*, the combatant's ACC is reduced by **50%**. In addition, any Critical Hits scored when making the to-hit roll are ignored. Abilities that take an Attack Action as a basis — or do damage based on the currently equipped Weapon — have a flat CoS of **75%** for as long as *Blind* remains in effect. Similarly, Skill and Attribute Ratings for Task Checks

that require use of sight are reduced by **50%**.

**Canceled by:** Eye Drops, Remedy, *Wash*, *Esuna*

## CURSE

**Effect:** A sinister black aura forms around the combatant, sealing away their *chi*. A combatant afflicted by *Curse* may make no Slow or Fast Ability Actions until cured of the Status Condition. Magic, Reaction and Support Abilities are unaffected. VIT, SPR, and MAG Attribute Ratings are reduced by **50%** for purposes of making Task Checks for as long as *Curse* is active.

**Canceled by:** Holy Water, Remedy, *Esuna*, *Aura*

## PETRIFY

**Effect:** The combatant's body begins to harden, flesh slowly turning to stone. When the combatant is first afflicted with *Petrify*, a four-Round timer starts. Should the timer reach 0 before the battle ends, the petrification is complete; the combatant is turned to stone on the spot with the same effects as the *Stone* Status Condition.

**Canceled by:** Soft, Remedy, *Stona*, *Esuna*

## SILENCE

**Effect:** A zone of absolute silence forms around the combatant; while sound penetrates in a normal fashion, they themselves can't even hear themselves breathe, let alone speak. Until cured, a character afflicted by *Silence* may not use Magic Abilities. All Skill and Attribute Ratings for Task Checks requiring use of speech are reduced by **50%**.

**Canceled by:** Echo Screen, Remedy, *Esuna*

## SLEEP

**Effect:** The combatant falls asleep on the spot, completely oblivious to the dangers around them. Until this Status Condition is cured, the combatant may make no Actions or Zero Actions during the course of the Round, though they continue to generate Initiative as normal and may take their turn if the Condition is canceled before it comes up. The combatant's EVA is also reduced to 0 for as long as *Sleep* remains in effect. If necessary, the combatant's body can be carried by an ally until *Sleep* wears off.

**Canceled by:** Physical Damage, Alarm Clock, Remedy, *Wash*, *Esuna*

## STONE

**Effect:** The combatant is turned into solid stone: impervious to all damage and Status Conditions, but unable to make any Actions or Zero Actions until *Stone* has been cured. If necessary, the combatant's body can be carried by an ally until *Stone* wears off.

**Canceled by:** Soft, Remedy, *Stona*, *Esuna*

## TIME

Status Conditions that affect a combatant's place in the flow of time.

## DISABLE

**Effect:** The combatant is afflicted with a sluggish numbness, greatly restricting their ability to act. Until cured, a combatant afflicted with *Disable* may not make any Attack, Item or Defend Actions. STR, AGI,

and SPD Attribute Ratings are reduced by **50%** for purposes of making Task Checks for as long as *Disable* is active.

**Canceled by:** Bandage, Remedy, *Esuna*

## IMMOBILIZE

**Effect:** The combatant is rooted to the spot, unable to advance or retreat in any fashion. Until cured, a combatant afflicted with *Immobilize* may not make any Full-Move Actions during the course of the Round, and cannot attempt or prevent Escape Actions. Furthermore, their EVA is reduced by **50%**. Task Checks requiring the use of movement automatically fail for as long as *Immobilize* remains active.

**Canceled by:** Bandage, Remedy, *Esuna*

## SAP

**Effect:** The combatant bleeds life force, gradually moving closer to death. At the beginning of every Status Phase that *Sap* remains untreated for, the combatant loses 5 HP for every 1 point of Initiative they generated in the previous Initiative Phase.

**Canceled by:** Chronos Tear, Remedy, *Esuna*

## SLOW

**Effect:** The combatant is trapped in a pocket of localized time; reactions are more sluggish than usual, making it virtually impossible for them to gain the initiative over their opponents. Targets affected by *Slow* halve their Initiative scores during the Initiative Phase when determining the order of combat, and have their Skill and Attribute Ratings reduced by **50%** for purposes of Task Checks requiring fast action or movement.

**Canceled by:** Chronos Tear, Remedy, *Esuna*, *Haste*, *Stop*

## STOP

**Effect:** The combatant becomes frozen in stasis. No time passes for the combatant; they do not generate Initiative, and may make no Actions or Zero Action for as long as *Stop* remains active. Gains or losses for Status Conditions like *Poison*, *Regen* and *Venom* are not calculated while *Stop* remains in effect; Status Condition timers — with the exception of that of *Stop* itself — will not decrease until *Stop* has been removed. This includes the specialized timers used by *Petrify* and *Condemned*. If necessary, the combatant's body can be carried by an ally until *Stop* wears off.

**Canceled by:** Chronos Tear, *Esuna*

## TRANSFORM

Status Conditions that affect a combatant's physical shape.

## MINI

**Effect:** The combatant shrinks to a mere fraction of their former size. While in this state, the combatant's ARM and M. ARM are both reduced by **50%**; all Physical damage dealt by the combatant is reduced to 1 damage, regardless of Strength, equipped Weapon or the target's ARM rating. Other Abilities continue to function as normal, and are not affected by this Status. All Task Checks using the combatant's STR and VIT Attribute Ratings will automatically fail as

long as *Mini* is active. *Stealth* and *Escape* rolls, however, gain a **50%** bonus.

**Canceled by:** Cornucopia, Remedy, *Esuna*, *Mini*

## TOAD

**Effect:** The combatant is turned into a slimy, croaking toad. While in this state, the combatant's ARM and M. ARM are both reduced by **50%**; all successful Attack Actions made by the combatant inflict 1 damage, regardless of Strength, equipped weapon or the target's ARM rating. The combatant cannot make any Ability Actions while in this form; should they possess the Black Magic Spell *Toad*, however, it may be cast as normal. All Task Checks taken while in *Toad* form — other than those involving *Stealth*, *Swimming*, *Escape*, or related activities — will automatically fail. Rolls against the latter Skills gain a **50%** bonus.

**Canceled by:** Maiden's Kiss, Remedy, *Esuna*, *Toad*

## ZOMBIE

**Effect:** The combatant is drained of their life force, transforming them into a green-skinned zombie. As they are effectively undead, Recovery effects that would normally restore HP instead inflict an equivalent amount of damage, not modified for ARM or M. ARM. A Hi-Potion, for instance, causes 250 HP damage to a combatant with *Zombie*. Any effect that revives an unconscious combatant or restores Hit Points to maximum instead has a CoS of **(M. ACC - 50)**, **M. Evasion** of instantly reducing a *Zombied* combatant to 0 HP, regardless of current Hit Points, ARM, or M. ARM.

Drain attacks are also reversed; all damage inflicted by such an attack on a target affected by *Zombie* is subtracted from the attacker's HP instead, with the combatant regaining an amount of HP equivalent to that lost by its attacker. In addition to this, the combatant gains Immunity to *Death*-type Status Conditions and *Condemned* for as long as *Zombie* remains in effect.

For purposes of resolving Task Checks which use Social Skills, the character's Skill Ratings are decreased by **50%** for as long as *Zombie* remains in effect.

**Canceled by:** Holy Water, Remedy, *Wash*, *Esuna*

## WEAKEN

Status Conditions which diminish a combatant's general fighting ability.

## AGILITY BREAK

**Effect:** The combatant feels sluggish and heavy; all sense of coordination seems to leave them. For as long as *Agility Break* remains in effect, the combatant's EVA and ACC are both decreased by **50%**; The character's initiative score is decreased by 4 when calculated at the start of the round. For purposes of Task Checks, the character's AGI Rating is also decreased by **50%**.

**Canceled by:** *Esuna*, *Agility Up*, *Agility Down*

## AGILITY DOWN

**Effect:** The combatant's movements become awkward and uncoordinated. For as long as *Agility Down* remains in effect, the

combatant's EVA and ACC are both decreased by **25%**; The character's initiative score is decreased by 2 when calculated at the start of the round. For purposes of Task Checks, the character's AGI Rating is also decreased by **25%**.

**Canceled by:** *Esuna*, *Agility Up*, *Agility Break*

## ARMOR BREAK

**Effect:** The combatant feels fragile and vulnerable at once; formerly-impervious defenses suddenly seem inadequate at best. The combatant's ARM is reduced by **50%** for as long as *Armor Break* remains in effect.

**Canceled by:** *Esuna*, *Armor Up*, *Armor Down*

## ARMOR DOWN

**Effect:** The combatant's defenses are weakened, making them more vulnerable to incoming attacks. The combatant's ARM is decreased by **25%** for as long as *Armor Down* remains in effect.

**Canceled by:** *Esuna*, *Armor Up*, *Armor Break*

## ELEMENT WEAK

**Effect:** The combatant is temporarily left vulnerable to a specific Combat Element. Treat this as if the combatant had a Weakness (W) to the Element in question.

**Canceled by:** *Esuna*, *Element Resist*, *Element Immune*, *Element Absorb*

## LOCK

**Effect:** A glowing set of crosshairs encloses the combatant, magically guiding incoming attackers. EVA and M. EVA are both reduced by **20** for as long as *Lock* remains in effect.

**Canceled by:** *Esuna*

## MAGIC BREAK

**Effect:** The combatant's spellcasting powers weaken; fireballs suddenly sizzle rather than scorch and other elemental destruction is a mere shadow of its former self. For as long as *Magic Break* remains in effect, all magical damage inflicted by the combatant is reduced by **-50%**.

**Canceled by:** Remedy, *Magic Up*, *Magic Down*, *Esuna*

## MAGIC DOWN

**Effect:** The combatant feels their innate mystical energies dulling, compromising their ability to channel magic. For as long as *Magic Down* remains in effect, all magical damage inflicted by the combatant is reduced by **-25%**.

**Canceled by:** Remedy, *Magic Up*, *Magic Break*, *Esuna*

## MELTDOWN

**Effect:** A hazy, deep-red aura forms around the combatant, rendering all armor useless. The combatant's ARM and M. ARM are both reduced to 0 for as long as *Meltdown* remains in effect. For purposes of Task Checks, the character's VIT Rating is also decreased by **25%**.

**Canceled by:** Remedy, *Esuna*

## MENTAL BREAK

**Effect:** The combatant's mental defenses fade, leaving them highly vulnerable to hostile magic. The combatant's M. ARM is decreased by **50%** for as long as *Mental Break* remains in effect. For purposes of Task Checks, the character's MAG Rating is also decreased by **50%**.

**Canceled by:** *Remedy, Mental Up, Mental Down, Esuna*

## MENTAL DOWN

**Effect:** The combatant's innate magical defenses suddenly weaken, diminishing their ability to weather incoming spells. The combatant's M. ARM is decreased by **25%** for as long as *Mental Down* remains in effect. For purposes of Task Checks, the character's MAG Rating is also decreased by **25%**.

**Canceled by:** *Remedy, Mental Up, Mental Break, Esuna*

## POWER BREAK

**Effect:** The combatant feels all strength deserting them, robbing their blows of any impact they might have once possessed. For as long as *Power Break* remains in effect, all physical damage inflicted by the combatant is reduced by **-50%**; for purposes of Task Checks, the character's STR Rating is also decreased by **50%**.

**Canceled by:** *Remedy, Power Up, Power Down, Esuna*

## POWER DOWN

**Effect:** The combatant feels strangely weak; where they strike, their attacks cannot muster as much force as usual. For as long as *Power Down* remains in effect, all physical damage inflicted by the combatant is reduced by **-25%**; for purposes of Task Checks, the character's STR Rating is also decreased by **25%**.

**Canceled by:** *Remedy, Power Up, Power Break, Esuna*

## SPIRIT BREAK

**Effect:** The combatant feels dull-witted and scatter-brained, utterly unable to concentrate for any length of time. For as long as *Spirit Break* remains in effect, the combatant's M. EVA and M. ACC are both reduced by **50%**. For purposes of Task Checks, the character's SPR Rating is also decreased by **50%**.

**Canceled by:** *Remedy, Spirit Up, Spirit Down, Esuna*

## SPIRIT DOWN

**Effect:** The combatant loses concentration, finding it difficult to focus intently on any one thing. For as long as *Spirit Down* remains in effect, the combatant's M. EVA and M. ACC are both reduced by **25%**; for purposes of Task Checks, the character's SPR Rating is also decreased by **25%**.

**Canceled by:** *Remedy, Spirit Up, Spirit Down, Esuna*

## BARRIER

Status Conditions that create distinctive energy fields around combatants, increasing their defense against certain types of attack.

## ELEMENT ABSORB

**Effect:** The combatant is temporarily steeped in a specific Combat

Element, allowing them to absorb all damage associated with it. Treat this as if the combatant had an Absorbance (A) to the Element in question.

**Canceled by:** *Dispel, Debarrier, Element Weak*

## ELEMENT IMMUNE

**Effect:** The combatant is temporarily immune to the effects of a specific Combat Element, allowing them to negate all damage associated with it. Treat this as if the combatant had an Immunity (I) to the Element in question.

**Canceled by:** *Dispel, Debarrier, Element Weak, Element Absorb*

## ELEMENT RESIST

**Effect:** The combatant is temporarily fortified against a specific Combat Element. Treat this as if the combatant had a Resistance (R) to the Element in question.

**Canceled by:** *Dispel, Debarrier, Element Weak, Element Immune, Element Absorb*

## ELEMENT SPIKES

**Effect:** The combatant is surrounded by a hazy, colored energy field; as opponents draw near, the energy solidifies, turning into wicked spikes of fire, ice or surging thunder. Any successful non-Ranged Attack made against the combatant triggers the *Element Spikes*, inflicting (**2 x MAG**) Elemental damage on the attacker. The Element in question is determined when *Element Spikes* is first applied. Damage inflicted by *Element Spikes* is not reduced by M. ARM, but may be adjusted for Elemental Weaknesses, Immunities and the like.

**Canceled by:** *Dispel, Debarrier*

## PROTECT

**Effect:** The combatant is encased in a cocoon of power which absorbs the kinetic energy of incoming attacks. Whenever a combatant under the effects of *Protect* is struck by Physical damage or Elemental damage reduced by Armor, that damage is reduced by **50%** after it has been modified for ARM.

**Canceled by:** *Dispel, Debarrier*

## REFLECT

**Effect:** The combatant is surrounded by a blue aura capable of deflecting magical energies back at their respective sources. Whenever a Spell hits a combatant affected by *Reflect*, there is a chance that the magic will instead bounce off to strike a random opponent. Whether or not this depends on the Spell, and will be given in the Spell's individual description.

Spells that target multiple combatants will reflect once for each combatant with *Reflect* struck. For instance, a *Fira* Spell inflicting 60 Fire Elemental damage before ARM, striking two combatants with *Reflect*, would result in two 60-damage *Fira* Spells bouncing back at random opponents. Any given Spell can only be reflected once, however; *Reflect* has no effect on magic already reflected off another target.

**Canceled by:** *Dispel, Debarrier*

## RESIST

**Effect:** The combatant is inoculated against all harmful and abnormal conditions. For as long as *Resist* remains in effect, the combatant is considered to have Immunity to all Fatal-type, Mystify-type, Seal-type, Time-type Toxin-type, Transform-type and Weaken-type Status Conditions.

**Canceled by:** *Dispel*

## SHELL

**Effect:** The combatant is encased in a cocoon of power that saps the energy of incoming spells, substantially reducing their effectiveness in the process. Whenever a combatant under the effects of *Shell* is struck by Magical damage or Elemental damage reduced by M. Armor, that damage is reduced by **50%** after it has been modified for M. ARM.

**Canceled by:** *Dispel, Debarrier*

## SHIELD

**Effect:** The combatant is fully enclosed by a glittering dome of magical energy, essentially cutting them off from the general melee. For as long as the *Shield* remains active, all damage done to the combatant is automatically reduced to 0. All Status Conditions — positive or negative — and Recovery effects, Items included, are similarly nullified. Any preexisting Status Conditions are also nullified.

**Canceled by:** n/a

## STATUS IMMUNE

**Effect:** The combatant is temporarily immune to the effects of a specific Status Condition or group of Status Conditions. Treat this as if the combatant had an Immunity (I) to the Condition — or Conditions — in question.

**Canceled by:** *Dispel*

## WALL

**Effect:** An invisible barrier of impenetrable force surrounds the combatant, nullifying physical attacks. Whenever a combatant under the effects of *Wall* is struck by Physical damage or Elemental damage reduced by Armor, that damage is reduced to 0.

**Canceled by:** *Dispel, Debarrier*

## STRENGTHEN

Status Conditions that increase a combatant's fighting potential and equipment power.

## ACCELERATE

**Effect:** The combatant moves with greater speed, covering ground at a far more rapid pace. While under the effects of *Accelerate*, a combatant's SPD is doubled for purposes of calculating movement rates; for purposes of Task Checks, the character's Speed Rating is increased by **25%**.

**Canceled by:** *Dispel, Slow*

## ACCURACY UP

**Effect:** The combatant's blows land fast and true, bypassing shields, dodges, and parrying attempts with equal ease. For as long as *Accuracy Up* remains in effect, the combatant's ACC is increased to **255**.

**Canceled by:** *Dispel*

## AGILITY UP

**Effect:** The combatant becomes more nimble, allowing them to strike and dodge with greater ease. For as long as *Agility Up* remains in effect, the combatant's EVA and ACC are both increased by **25%**. The character's initiative score is increased by 2 when calculated at the start of the round. For purposes of Task Checks, the character's AGI Rating is also increased by **25%**.

**Canceled by:** *Dispel, Agility Down, Agility Break*

## ARMOR UP

**Effect:** The combatant feels skin and armor harden, enhancing their defensive capabilities. For as long as *Armor Up* remains in effect, the combatant's ARM rating is increased by **25%**.

**Canceled by:** *Dispel, Armor Down, Armor Break*

## AURA

**Effect:** The combatant is surrounded by an invigorating golden glow. For as long as *Aura* remains in effect, all Charge Times for Ability Actions taken by the combatant are halved.

**Canceled by:** *Dispel, Curse*

## BLINK

**Effect:** The combatant phases between solid and immaterial states at random intervals, increasing their ability to escape attack. The combatant's EVA is increased by **20** for as long as *Blink* remains in effect.

**Canceled by:** *Dispel*

## CRITICAL UP

**Effect:** The combatant's blows are drawn towards opponents' weak spots, increasing the likelihood of a lucky hit in the right place. For as long as *Critical Up* remains in effect, the combatant's CoS for landing Critical Hits is at **+100%**. By default, this means that Critical Hits will occur on a 1 to 20 rather than a 1 to 10, though this effect also stacks with *Critical+*, *Critical++*, and *Signature Weapon*.

**Canceled by:** *Dispel*

## FLIGHT

**Effect:** The combatant gains the ability to move through air, traveling over hindering environmental features almost effortlessly. While in this state, the combatant can move over hazardous terrain — such as lava flows and spiked floors — with no ill effects, and suffers no movement modifiers for terrain. Combatants under the effects of *Flight* cannot be reached by Melee effects; this Status Condition also protects against certain other attacks, such as *Quake*.

**Canceled by:** *Dispel, Drag*

## FLOAT

**Effect:** The combatant hovers a half-meter off the ground, seemingly suspended on thin air. While in this state, the combatant can move over hazardous terrain – such as lava flows and spiked floors – with no ill effects, and suffers no movement modifiers for terrain. However, movements become more difficult to control, making it impossible to take Full-Move Actions. *Float* may also protect against certain attacks and Abilities; if so, this will be noted in the relevant description.

**Canceled by:** *Dispel, Drag*

## HASTE

**Effect:** The combatant is surrounded by a red aura; when they move, it is with such speed that they appear like a blur to the untrained eye. Combatants affected by *Haste* double their Initiative scores during the Initiative Phase when determining the order of combat, and may gain additional Actions as a result of this – see the rules on *Extreme Initiative* on page 4 for more details. If in a Scene where no Initiative is generated, *Haste* bestows two Actions by default. For purposes of Task Checks, the character's SPD Rating is also increased by **50%**.

**Canceled by:** *Dispel, Slow*

## MAGIC UP

**Effect:** The combatant is imbued with a sudden surge of magical energy, greatly increasing their spellcasting potential. All magical attacks inflict **+25%** damage for as long as *Magic Up* remains in effect.

**Canceled by:** *Dispel, Magic Down, Magic Break*

## MENTAL UP

**Effect:** The combatant becomes exceptionally strong-willed, granting them superior protection against magic. For as long as *Mental Up* remains in effect, the combatant's M. ARM rating is increased by **25%**. For purposes of Task Checks, the character's MAG Rating is also increased by **25%**.

**Canceled by:** *Dispel, Mental Down, Mental Break*

## MP HALF

**Effect:** The combatant is fortified with ambient magic, greatly increasing their own mana reserves. For as long as *MP Half* remains in effect, all Magic effects with an MP cost have their costs lowered by **50%**. *Fira*, for instance, would only cost 11, rather than 22 MP to cast for a combatant under the effects of *MP Half*.

**Canceled by:** *Dispel*

## MP QUARTER

**Effect:** The combatant's ability to channel magic is strengthened, significantly reducing the amount of mana they must sacrifice to cast magic. For as long as *MP Quarter* remains in effect, all Magic effects with an MP cost have their costs lowered by **25%**. *Fira*, for instance, would only cost 17, rather than 22 MP to cast for a combatant under the effects of *MP Quarter*.

**Canceled by:** *Dispel*

## POWER UP

**Effect:** The combatant is imbued with a sudden surge of physical strength, allowing them to attack with greater force. For as long as *Power Up* remains in effect, the combatant's physical attacks inflict **+25%** damage. For purposes of Task Checks, the character's STR Rating is also increased by **25%**.

**Canceled by:** *Dispel, Power Down, Power Break*

## REGEN

**Effect:** The combatant is surrounded by a green aura that slowly begins to heal their injuries, regenerating accumulated damage over time. Whilst under the effects of *Regen*, a combatant recovers an amount of HP equivalent to **10%** of their maximum HP score at the beginning of each Status Phase.

**Canceled by:** *Dispel*

## RERAISE

**Effect:** A golden halo of vital energy hovers over the target. If any attack or other event should ever reduce a combatant under the effects of *Reraise* to 0 or fewer HP, *Reraise* will immediately cast the *Spell Raise* on them. The Status Condition automatically expires once the target has been resurrected.

**Canceled by:** *Unconscious, Dispel*

## RUSE

**Effect:** The combatant is surrounded by mirror images, confounding and confusing foes in equal measure. The combatant's EVA is increased by **40** for as long as *Ruse* remains in effect.

**Canceled by:** *Dispel*

## SPIRIT UP

**Effect:** The combatant is gifted with a burst of spiritual energy, infusing their incantations and fortifying their mind against harmful magics. For as long as *Spirit Up* remains in effect, the combatant's M. EVA and M. ACC ratings are both increased by **25%**. For purposes of Task Checks, the character's SPR Rating is also increased by **25%**.

**Canceled by:** *Dispel, Spirit Down, Spirit Break*

## VANISH

**Effect:** The combatant is turned completely transparent, rendering them invisible for all intents and purposes. Combatants affected by *Vanish* may not be targeted by normal Attacks, Spells or Abilities, though they will still take damage if the Group or Party they belong to is targeted; attacks with the 'All' designation will also affect them. *Stealth* rolls made while under the effects of *Vanish* gain a **50%** bonus; monsters using the Day Vision sense to detecting a target under the effect of *Vanish* do so with a Conditional Modifier of -70.

**Canceled by:** *Dispel, Damage*



## THE SPOILS OF BATTLE

If the PCs prevail over their opponents, they will be rewarded for their troubles. This payoff can come in the following three forms:

**Gil and XP.** Every defeated opponent has a value in Gil and XP. For simplicity's sake, these values are tallied up for all opponents defeated in the course of the battle, taking into account any foes that were *Ejected* from the fight or ran away on their own accord. The total is then divided evenly among all PCs.

**“The way I see it, every battle brings you one step closer to your dream.”**

Seifer Almasy  
FINAL FANTASY VIII

How the reward is claimed is another matter entirely; though finding 300 gold pieces on a dead shark is well and acceptable for a **Final Fantasy** game, some GMs may prefer to adopt a more realistic approach. For this reason, it may be convenient to think of the Gil value as representing the economic value of hides, bones, fangs and other by-products derived from the monster's corpse. Stripping these requires a successful roll against *Scavenge*, with the Gil equivalent being awarded once the party drags their harvested odds and ends to the nearest trader.

**Items.** Provided they haven't been *Ejected*, some opponents may also drop more concrete rewards: Recovery, Battle or Support Items, pieces of Armor or Weapons, Materials, or other odds and ends whose uses may not be immediately obvious. Again, how the GM chooses to award such equipment is a matter of individual discretion; the rewards can either drop directly from the monster — cheerfully ignoring the logical problems inherent in, say, a high-class suit of mail being pulled off the corpse of a dinosaur — or be 'processed' from the monster's remains, requiring a successful *Scavenge* roll and trip into town to redeem.

Unlike Gil and XP, item rewards will rarely come in quantities large enough to make a totally even split possible, meaning PCs must decide amongst themselves who walks away with the loot. More detailed notes on determining rewards and drops for monsters can be found in **Chapter 10** and **Appendix II**.

### ? Dividing the Spoils (1)

*A few short rounds later, the Guards and their charge have been wiped out. Rodger consults his notes...*

**Rodger (GM):** With a feeble croak, the second Guard collapses, armor rattling. You gain 120 XP and 90 Gil apiece from the encounter. In addition... (rolling) You find a Potion and two Tinctures.

**Rob (Hiro):** I'll take the Potion. I used one up healing Mint earlier, so it's only fair.

**M (Haze):** What about the Tinctures?

**Blair (Mint):** Carl's character is the only one who can really use them at the moment. I'd say let him have them.

### ? Dividing the Spoils (2)

**Rob:** Fine by me.

**Carl (Kumani):** All right. I'll take 'em. Now, the next big question is — how do you want to take it from here on?

**Blair:** We can't be sure that fight didn't attract more trouble just yet. If we just charge ahead, we could get ourselves in some serious hot soup.

**Carl:** Playing it cautiously might be smarter. We should send our stealthiest party members up through the door to scout out the situation; the rest will follow at a safe distance and be ready to back them up if they run into any trouble.

**Rob:** Sounds good to me. That'd be... Mint and Haze?

**Blair:** Yep.

**M:** Sure. If we can pick off the guards in small numbers and avoid tripping any alarms...

## SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Not every battle is a straightforward face-off. Sometimes, characters will find themselves fighting under unusual circumstances that require them to exercise additional strategy and care.

### Ambush and Surprise

The element of surprise has always had its place in **Final Fantasy** battles. In earlier games in the series, combat occurred randomly, meaning that monsters seemed to literally pounce on the heroes from out of nowhere. In the **FFRPG**, however, characters can pick their battles — if they spot a monster before it spots them, they can always elect to turn around, sneak by, or prepare for the fight before it happens. With enough foresight, a party may even turn the tables on its opponents and surprise *them*, throwing the odds in their favor.

An ambush can only take place if the ambushing party is aware of their victims' presence and has managed to conceal their own. Under most circumstances, this requires an Opposed Task Check pitting the ambushers' *Stealth* against their targets' *Awareness*. Each participant rolls separately. Though there are no Conditional Modifiers by default, they can be assigned as needed if circumstances or the difference in average Level between the two groups seem like they would affect the outcome.

If the ambushers managed to beat their victims' rolls across the board, the ambush is successful, and the first Round in the ensuing battle will be a **Preemptive Round**. During this Round, only the ambushing party is allowed to make Actions; roll for Initiative as normal amongst the members of the attacking party, then assign Actions. The victims of the ambush generate no Initiative during this Round, and are afflicted with the Status Condition *Unaware*. After all Actions have been resolved, the battle carries on as usual, with both sides making Actions and rolling for Initiative.

If some members of the ambushed party managed to beat the ambushers' *Stealth* rolls but the majority remained unalerted, run a Preemptive Round as normal. In this instance, any opponent whose *Awareness* beat their ambushers' *Stealth* rolls is exempt from being

*Unaware* during the Preemptive Round.

If the majority of the ambushed party managed to beat the ambushers' *Stealth* rolls but the ambushers still had enough time to spring a surprise attack before their quarry could react, run a Preemptive Round. All victims of the ambush are exempt from the *Unaware* Condition.

If the ambushing party was completely unable to beat their targets' rolls, battle proceeds as normal. No Preemptive Round is run.

### ? Ambush in Action (1)

*With Hiro and Kumani at their backs, Haze and Mint creep through the dungeon complex, keeping a close ear open for passing patrols.*

**Rodger (GM):** This far up, you're beginning to glimpse the scarcest glimmers of natural light filtering in from grilles in the floor above, throwing little mosaics and patterns on the metal underfoot. You can hear faint voices; the sound of weapons rattling, of footsteps suggesting passing patrols.

**M (Haze):** As long as they stay above ground...

**Rodger:** Give me a roll for *Awareness*, both of you.

**Blair (Mint):** (rolling) 60.

**M:** (rolling) 42.

**Rodger:** There's a dull rattle; chains being lowered, hidden machinery in the wall ticking over just up ahead. Sounds like there's an elevator coming down further along the corridor.

**Blair:** Any chance we can get into position to attack before they know we're coming?

*Rodger checks his notes. The elevator to the dungeon level is closed; realistically speaking, the guards wouldn't know they were walking into an ambush until the doors opened. In this case, the *Stealth* check can be waived in favor of a simple *Opposed Attribute Check*.*

**Rodger:** You'll have to move fast. Attribute Checks against Speed, please.

**M:** (rolling) 35.

**Blair:** (rolling) 18.

*Rodger makes separate rolls for the three Guards coming down the lift; Mint and Haze's rolls beat all of them.*

**Rodger:** You manage to reach the elevator cage a half-minute before the heavy brass car slams into position. A mailed hand closes around the wire mesh, pushing it back; the first guard steps out, adjusting his visor—

**Blair:** We attack!

**Rodger:** The mechanoid barely has time to react before you close in, weapons drawn. Preemptive Round — roll for Initiatives.

### ? Ambush in Action (2)

**M:** (rolling) 3 plus Speed 8 equals 11.

**Blair:** (rolling) 7. ...comes out to 15.

**Rodger:** Mint acts first, followed by Haze. Guards A, B and C aren't *Unaware*, but you've got surprise on your side. Blair, what's your action?

**Blair:** Mint'll jump forward, trying to smack Guard A across the face with her rod before he has a chance to go for his weapon.

**Rodger:** All right. Roll to hit...

## REINFORCEMENTS

Battles aren't an invite-only affair; additional combatants may come in on either side of the engagement during either the Initiative or Action Phases, automatically joining a Party or Group in the process if applicable. Reinforcements that enter during the Action Phase do not generate Initiative, and cannot act until the following Round.

Depending on the circumstances, new arrivals may transform an ongoing battle into a Pincer Attack — see below for more details.

### ? Reinforcements in Action

*Two Rounds later, one Guard is down and another is on his last legs. Suddenly, the elevator car begins to ascend...*

**Rodger (GM):** ...and that's 14 damage to Guard C. Deathstight's crony staggers back, the light in his visor flickering erratically as he tries to steady himself. Mint's about to act when the loud rattle of chains being pulled taut interrupts the proceedings; for a second time, the elevator car has arrived at the dungeon level, searchlights flickering as the cage slides open, revealing four more Guards.

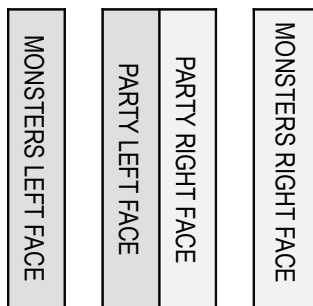
**Blair (Mint):** They're coming in during the Action Phase? Are they going to act this Round?

**Rodger:** No.

**Blair:** In that case, Mint's going to bash the nearest new arrival. Let's see if we can't even those odds a little bit...

## PINCER ATTACKS

A **Pincer Attack** occurs when one side completely encircles the other. As a result, the encircled combatants must split their attention between multiple groups of opponents, potentially leaving them open to an attack from behind. In-game, this is represented by dividing the battle into two 'faces' — a Left Face and a Right Face, roughly representing the two major flanks of the attack. The example on the next page shows a party hemmed in by monsters:



Any combatant involved in a Pincer Attack must decide which facing – Left or Right – they have. Switching facing from Left or Right – or vice versa – is a Zero Action, but must be declared at the beginning of a combatant's turn. Combatants in the encircled party may only attack opponents who share their facing, while the encircling side can attack either facing at will. Furthermore, whenever a combatant in the encircling party attacks an opponent who does not share his facing, that opponent is considered to be *Unaware*. To compensate, the opponent may switch facing as a Reaction if they take damage from a foe they are *Unaware* to.

Pincer Attacks last for as long as the encircling side keeps combatants on both the Left and Right Faces. As soon as this stops being the case, the Pincer Attack breaks up; combat proceeds as normal.

#### ? Pincer Attacks in Action

*The Initiative Phase of Round 3 sees Haze and Mint trapped by enemy reinforcements. The two prepare for a bitter struggle.*

**Rodger (GM):** With six Guards and just two of you, you're completely surrounded. Give me facings; the six Guards – A, B, C, D, E and F – are split evenly between the two.

**M (Haze):** I'll face left, Mint will face right. That'll at least give us even odds.

**Blair (Mint):** Fine.

**Rodger:** All right. Roll for Initiatives.

**M:** (rolling) 4 plus Speed 8 equals 12.

**Blair:** (rolling) 2. ...plus Speed 8 equals 10.

*Rodger rolls Initiative for the Guards in secret, coming up with Initiatives of 13, 7, 6, 14, 8 and 9.*

**Rodger:** All right. Initiative order is as follows: Guard D, Guard A, Haze, Mint, Guard F, Guard E, Guard B and Guard C.

**Blair:** ...yeah, this is gonna hurt. A lot.

**Rodger:** (rolling) And they're off! Guard D's visor flashes bright as he slashes at Haze's back; our favorite Dark Knight's not facing him, so he's considered *Unaware* and takes double damage.

**M:** Wonderful. How bad is it?

**Rodger:** (rolling) Haze takes 9 damage, doubled to 18 for being *Unaware* – do you want to change facing?

**M:** I'm staying the course here.

#### ? Pincer Attacks in Action (2)

**Rodger:** (rolling) Good call – the wounded Guard A throws himself at Haze before his comrade has even begun to step back. The impact's as much kinetic energy as surprise, damn near knocking the air out of your lungs. (rolling) 7 damage, but you're sharing his facing, so no mods this time. Haze, you're up.

**Blair:** May as well finish off Guard A while we've still got the chance.

**M:** Healing might be a better idea... I'm getting beat up something fierce out here. Kumani and Hiro'd better get a move on.

## TIMED BATTLES

Adding a time limit to a battle is a great way to ratchet up the tension. More importantly, reasons for doing can vary dramatically – the heroes may be trying to escape a collapsing palace, engaged in a contest to subdue and defeat as many Ochus as they can in the space of 10 minutes, or only have a scant half-hour before the Empire's Justice Tower takes out rebel headquarters.

When setting up a timed battle, the GM begins by establishing the time limit. This will usually be in minutes, and ideally in increments of 5. Next, that limit is converted into 'ticks' by multiplying it by 60. When a battle takes place, every Round that elapses in combat reduces the total timer by a number of ticks equal to the Round's highest non-Extreme Initiative minus the lowest Initiative for that Round. Intervening time, including travel and other activities between battles, reduce the timer at the GM's discretion. Should the timer hit 0 before the heroes have accomplished their objective, it's game over.

Another way to run timed battles is to give the party a certain amount of time during which they must hold out against attack. For instance, the party may be defending a critical location against opposing forces, and must hold their ground for at least 10 minutes to give reinforcements time to arrive.

## CHAPTER GLOSSARY

The following list recaps some of the most important concepts introduced in this chapter for quick reference.

**Ability Action.** Any Action using Slow, Fast, or Magic Abilities, including Spells.

**Adverse Terrain.** Terrain that reduces movement by 50%.

**Attack Action.** Attacking an opponent with an equipped Weapon.

**Automatic Miss.** A Botch in an Attack Action.

**Brawling.** Attack Actions without a Weapon equipped.

**Critical Hit.** A Critical Success in an Attack Action.

**Combat Movement.** Movement undertaken as part of an attack.

**Difficult Terrain.** Terrain that reduces movement by 25%.

**Defense Action.** Giving up all Actions and bracing for damage.

**Escape Action.** Action resulting from a combatant's attempts to withdraw to a safer position.

**Extreme Initiative.** An Initiative of 35 or higher. Entitles a combatant to additional Actions.

**Full-Move Action.** An Action spent entirely on movement.  
**Item Action.** Action involving using items or changing equipment in-battle.  
**Pincer Attack.** Battle in which one side complete encircles the other.

**Preemptive Round.** **Specialized** Round resulting from ambush.  
**Trigger Action.** An Action involving a Task Check.  
**Unconscious.** Condition in which a PC or NPC has been reduced to 0 or fewer HP.  
**Wait.** Delay acting for a certain number of ticks.