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SOLAS Handbook

A Simply Organized, Lightweight Adventure System

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Preface

The main goals of TTRPGs are to provide exploration, social interaction, and combat, but many have far too complex systems that don't allow new players to pick up the rulebook and start playing that same day.

Solas's goal is to make a dead-simple system that uses players' knowledge of storytelling to allow them to quickly understand their options and get started playing with any type of story they want to tell, in any setting. Whether it's cowboys vs aliens, a prohibition murder mystery, or medieval fantasy, Solas helps you tell that story in a fun, interactive way.

I grew up playing first edition Dungeons and Dragons (copyright, Hasbro), and when I moved to fifth edition I noticed some things that didn't seem like they helped streamline the TTRPG process. Spell lists had been made confusing, with differing rules for different classes and combat having more moving pieces but less flexibility. After playing TIME Stories (copyright, Space Cowboys) and seeing the strengths of a D6 dice system, I started building out this system. After getting wind of a fan-made Hollow Knight-inspired TTRPG, and playing a hybrid first/fifth edition Dungeons with friends, I started refining the mechanics of SOLAS to make it an easily adaptable and quicker to learn, and more usable for different settings.

And that's where we are today! Thanks for checking it out.

Introduction

Welcome to SOLAS! It's a rules system for running tabletop role-playing games (TTRPGs) that anybody can pick up and play. TTRPGs are about getting together with others and letting a story play out, with players controlling characters of their own creation.

To play, you'll need more than two people (one of whom is the Game Master, referred to as the GM), a way to take notes, and at least one standard six-sided die. Other materials are nice to have (like more d6s, some way to take notes), but are certainly not needed.

Rolling

A die roll is when someone rolls at least one standard six-sided die to determine an outcome. A roll of four or higher is a success (a six is worth two successes), meaning a three or lower is a failure. The “result” of a roll is how many total successes there are. In these rules, rolls are indicated in these rules by an **R**, followed by a number such as R1, R4, etc. The **R** indicates a roll, and the number after it is the number of dice that you are rolling.

Sometimes a roll is specified as “advantaged” which means dice rolls succeed on a 3 or higher. Another variant is “disadvantaged” which means dice rolls succeed on a 5 or higher. Rolling a 6 is always considered to be 2 successes. Advantages and disadvantages don't stack, you can only be “advantaged” or “disadvantaged” and any amount of each cancels out. Having double advantage means the dice are successes on twos or higher.

Rolls can be used to determine damage, healing, or checks of your abilities. The weapon, trick, or GM will describe what you are trying to accomplish and what attribute you will be using. If your GM calls for a Dexterity roll (perhaps you've activated a trap!), you would roll a number of dice equal to your dexterity score, and count your successes.

Trick

Something that a character is able to do which isn't an aspect of their normal self. This works for lots of settings, from flashbangs to spells to traps

Damage Types

SOLAS contains many different damage types for different weapons and tricks. This list can be expanded upon for your needs, but the standard categories as follows:

- **Physical:** Bludgeoning, Piercing, Slashing
- **Elemental:** Acid, Fire, Cold, Lightning
- **Celestial:** Radiant, Necrotic, Force, Psychic

Point Pools

These are points you can save up to spend attacking, moving, or doing tricks. When combat ends, these are returned to their maximum.

Focus is your mental concentration at any given moment. These points are used up when you use tricks, and some are given back at the start of each turn.

Stamina is your physical ableness at any given moment. These points are used up when you move or attack, and some are given back at the start of each turn. Every character has 3 stamina points.

Primary Attributes

Characters in the game have different attributes to describe their general skills. The number associated with each attribute is its relative effectiveness, 1 being the minimum possible. The categories are as follows:

Strength*Natural athleticism, physical power*

Dexterity*Physical agility, reflexes, precision*

Constitution*Physical/Mental toughness, persistance*

Mind*Analytical skill, intuition*

Tiles

A tile is typically a square or hexagon on a grid, and is considered to be 5 feet (or 1.5 meters). While you may not be playing with an actual grid at all, this still describes specific distances for tricks, ranges, and movement.

Character Creation

To play this game, each player must create a character, a member of the setting that the GM is describing. SOLAS is designed to have very a simple character creation system, but one that lets creativity run wild. The easiest way to create a character is to break it down into two parts: Before they became an adventurer, and where they are now. Doing this naturally flows with the character creation process. The first step is...

Backgrounds

Think about what makes your GM's setting different from the world you live in. There may be fantastical races, parts of the world still yet unexplored, or conflict between groups. These are shaping elements, and change the people who experience them.

So how does this affect your character? Think about where they come from, what sort of upbringing they had, what are values that were instilled in them? All of these help to form a full character who really lives in the world and isn't just an observer.

Select **one** of the following backgrounds for your character

Athlete

You have advantage on **Strength** checks.

You've been raised to depend on your physical strength, in and out of combat.

Far Traveler

You have advantage on **Constitution** checks.

You are from a distant place, one so remote that few of the common folk realize that it exists, and chances are good that even if some people you meet have heard of your homeland, they know merely the name and perhaps a few outrageous tales.

Runaway

You have advantage on **Dexterity** checks.

Staying on the outskirts of society, you had no one to watch over you or to provide for you, so you learned to provide for yourself. You've survived despite all odds, and did so through cunning, strength, speed, or some combination of each.

Sage

You have advantage on **Mind** checks.

You've spent your time pouring over every detail in your area of research, memorizing every intricacy of the field.

Lineages

There are many different kinds of people, and in your GM's setting, there may be far more, from humans to animals to deities, and everything in between. Your character may reflect some of these differences, either directly or somewhere far back in their ancestry.

*Select **one** of the following lineages for your character*

Celestial Ancestor

You are resistant to one celestial damage type (Radiant, Necrotic, Force, or Psychic) of your choice, which cannot be changed later. You also roll with advantage when attacking with this type of damage.

Your power may come from deities, psions, or something else entirely. This usually manifests in a shifted palette, gold for celestials, reds for devils, purples for psions, etc.

Darkvision

You have superb vision in the dark, being raised in it or naturally gifted. Your character can see up to 6 tiles away in darkness, in shades of gray.

This may manifest in the form of non-human eyes, such as cat pupils or glowing irises.

Elemental Ancestor

You are resistant to one elemental damage type (Poison, Fire, Cold, or Lightning) of your choice, which cannot be changed later. You also roll with advantage when attacking with this type of damage.

Your power may come from primordials, dragons, or something else entirely. This usually manifests in a shifted palette, dealing in reds and oranges for fire, etc.

Lucky

Once per rest when you make a roll, you may re-roll all of the dice. You must use the new result.

Twilit

You no longer need to sleep to fully recover heart, instead only requiring 4 hours of conscious meditation.

This may be the result of exposure to the feywild, underdark, or similar place. Your skin may

sparkle in the right light, some animalistic features may manifest (satyrs, for example), flowers may bloom/wilt around you depending on your mood, or similar flavoring.

Attributes and Scores

When you've started your character and you have your background(s)/lineage(s) chosen, start your character with one point in each of your **Primary Attributes**, then add one point to the attribute of your choice.

You then must figure out your other scores. Referring back to the **Primary Attributes** section:

Strength

Your **strength** limits what **armor** you can wear. Ask your DM if you are allowed to start with armor, or if armor will be available in their setting.

Dexterity

Your **dexterity** affects your **speed**. This is equal to four plus your **dexterity** score.

Constitution

Your **constitution** affects your **heart** (also referred to as health and/or hit points). This is equal to your **constitution** score times your level, plus five.

Mind

Your **mind** score is your maximum **focus** (the amount of which you begin with at the start of combat).

Your **mind** also affects what tricks you know. A character can only memorize a certain number of tricks at a time, this being your **mind**. The ones you have memorized can be swapped during rests, but if you don't have a trick prepared, you cannot use it. Characters with a **Mind** score higher than one can use **tricks**, so check out the section to make sure you know your character's options.

Leveling Up

After some progression in the story, your GM may decide that it is time for your characters to become stronger! You get to add another point to one of your primary attributes (**Strength**, **Dexterity**, **Mind**, or **Constitution**), and if at an appropriate level you also receive another **Boon**!

Boons

A boon is something that is a unique skill that shapes how your character interacts with the world, that they have acquired throughout their journey. Some boons have requirements, and characters that do not meet these cannot receive the boon.

You get to choose one boon when you create your character, as well as an additional boon every three levels after that (levels four, seven, ten, thirteen, sixteen, and nineteen).

Basic Boons

These do not have requirements

Among the Dead

You have advantage on checks against disease. Additionally, any necrotic damage against you is rolled with disadvantage.

Arcanist

When using a trick, you can instead choose to use any combination of **Heart** and **Focus** totaling the focus cost of the trick.

Blink

You can use the **Misty Step** trick once per rest with no **Focus** cost (still costs 1 **Stamina**).

Divine Smite

When you attack a creature, you can expend **Focus** points to do additional celestial damage (choose this type when you select this boon, this cannot be changed). You roll an additional dice of this type for each **Focus** point you spent.

Duelist

Once per round when you are hit with a physical melee attack, you can spend some or all of your remaining stamina points to reduce the damage by that much.

Elemental Shift

When you attack with a physical weapon, you can spend one **focus** to randomly change its damage type to an elemental one. This effect persists through combat, and you can spend another point to roll the type again. To determine the damage type, roll a d6:

1. No change, the damage type is the normal one for the weapon

2. Poison
3. Fire
4. Cold
5. Lightning
6. Your choice of an elemental damage type

Finesse

If you are wearing light or no armor, you can use your dexterity instead of strength when rolling melee damage with a light or medium weapon.

Glory

While you are fading, all damage rolls are made with advantage.

Hunter's Mark

When you reduce a creature's heart, you form a mystical bond with that creature. If you attack another creature or don't attack it on your next turn, the mark vanishes. When you attack that creature again, you roll with advantage.

Inspiration

Once per rest on your turn, you can spend one **stamina** and inspire another creature. The target creature can roll an additional die for a roll of their choice. Once the extra die is used (or the creature rests), the inspiration fades.

Rage

If you aren't wearing armor, you can use a **Focus** point to channel your primal ferocity. You get advantage on melee attack rolls, and all physical attacks have disadvantage against you. While you are raging, however, you do not recover **Focus** at the start of your turns.

Second Wind

Once per rest at the start of your turn, you may recover **Focus** or **Stamina** points (or a mix of the two) equal to your level.

Sneak Attack

You have learned to exploit an enemy's moment of weakness. If you have advantage on an attack against a creature, you gain an additional R1.

Soul Siphon

Once per turn when you reduce a creature's heart, you recover **Focus**, **Stamina**, or **Heart** at

the start of your next turn. Recover your normal amount, then also roll R1 and recover points in the one that you choose (up to your maximum), equal to the number of successes.

Warcaster

If your **heart** is reduced while you are concentrating on a trick, you may roll a **Constitution** check. If you roll more successes than damage that you took, you maintain concentration on the spell.

Well Armored

Your **strength** is considered to be one higher when meeting an armor requirement. For example, a strength score of one allows the character to wear light armor, which usually requires a strength of two.

Upgraded Boons

These require other boons, a high enough primary stat, etc.

Arcane Entanglement

*Requires **Arcanist***

Once per rest, you can choose to lose some **focus** points instead of **heart** (as the result of an attack or trick).

Combat Inspiration

*Requires **Inspiration***

Instead of giving inspiration on your turn, you can now give it at any point (up to immediately after a roll, which it can be used to improve). Additionally, the inspired creature can now use the inspiration die to reduce the damage of an attack.

Font of Inspiration

*Requires **Inspiration***

You can give inspiration dice multiple times per rest, equal to your maximum **stamina**. These can be given on different turns, or all on the same turn (provided you have enough stamina to do so).

Extra Attack

*Requires **Divine Smite**, **Finesse**, **Rage**, or **Second Wind***

On your turn, you can make two attacks with one light or medium weapon (both attacks cost a **Stamina** point).

Misty Escape

*Requires **Blink***

You can now also use your Blink ability outside of your turn, after you take damage. When you do not immediately reappear. While you do move to the space that you can see, you remain invisible until the start of your next turn.

Movement Master

*Requires **Hunter's Mark***

You can swim and climb at your normal speed. Additionally, when you have a creature marked, you gain 2 tiles of movement speed.

Runewoven

*Requires **Arcanist***

When you are healed, you have the option of regaining a combination of **heart** and **focus** equal to the amount of heart you would regain normally.

Your body itself has become the conduit for tricks, with the line between your mental fortitude and your physical resilience becoming blurred.

Spirit Interference

*Requires **Soul Siphon***

The spirits of those who you've felled in battle manifest for a moment. After using soul siphon on a creature, it has disadvantage when attacking you until your next turn.

Undying

*Requires **Among the Dead, Glory, or Rage***

When your character is fading, you do not need to use an extra heart to take your turn. Any healing on your character (while fading) is rolled with advantage.

Playing the Game

Most TTRPGs are broken down into a cycle of play, but this is by no means a one-size fits all solution. Generally, a GM will describe the environment, and the players respond with what their character does. The GM then goes back and forth with the players, narrating the results of their actions and having the players respond, until a scene comes to a natural close.

Combat

Struggle is a part of every story, and it may present itself in the form of combat. Your characters have specific strengths and weaknesses based on your primary attributes. To start combat, everybody (including the GM's characters) make dexterity checks, where play goes highest to lowest according to the number of successes (this can be changed to play continues to the right, for convenience).

On a Turn

It's your time to shine! Your character starts their turn by recovering some of their **Focus** and **Stamina** points (up to their maximum) the amount you recover of each is equal to your **Constitution**.

Now you're ready to go! You can take any of the following actions for the cost of 1 stamina point:

- Moving a distance up to your speed
- Attacking with a weapon (you must be on an adjacent square to do so with a melee weapon, or the target must be within range for a ranged weapon)

You can also use a trick for the cost of one **Stamina** point, as well as the listed **focus** cost for the trick.

If you do not have enough stamina and/or focus to take an action, you cannot do it.

Resistances/Weaknesses

Some enemies or characters may be resistant or weak to certain types of damage (see **Damage Types** in the Introduction. If something is weak to a type of attack, count your successes with advantage. If something is resistant to the type of attack, count the successes with disadvantage.

Fading

Once your character reaches 0 heart, you begin fading. This means your character is losing their grip on mortality, and will soon die. Once you reach 0 heart, continuing to fight is dangerous. At the start of each of your turns, you lose a heart. Additionally, you can choose to

lose an extra heart to take your normal turn, being any number of actions up to your current stamina/focus. Once you reach -5 heart, your character falls and dies.

Resting

Once combat comes to a close, your focus and stamina are restored. However, your characters cannot stay awake indefinitely, and will need to recover from the physical exertion of the battle. Characters will need to rest for a total of 8 hours, up to two of which can be sitting/lying down. If characters go 24 hours without resting, they receive disadvantage on all checks due to exhaustion, and their speed is halved.

Weapons

These are physical implements of destruction. For weapons, their damage is based off of your associated Primary Attribute. Melee weapons are based on strength, ranged ones on dexterity. While your primary attribute is affecting how many dice that you roll, some weapons can be specially made, being +1 or higher. This indicates to roll an extra dice when attacking with the weapon. While most standard weapons fall into the physical (bludgeoning, piercing, slashing) category, some special weapons could be of a different damage type.

Each weapon that is held can be used once per turn.

Melee Weapons

...are held in the wielder's hand as they harm another. Swords, clubs, knives, and similar fall into this category.

Light Weapons

Weapons that are quick to use, and one can be held in each hand.

- Standard light weapons limit any attacks with them to 3R damage

Medium Weapons

Standard weapons that have the option of being held with two hands to gain advantage on attacks.

- Standard medium weapons limit any attacks with them to 5R damage

Heavy Weapons

Weapons that are so large that they require both hands to be held, there is no limit to the amount of damage a heavy weapon can deal.

Ranged Weapons

...are used to harm another over some distance. Two hands are required to operate ranged weapons that have to be loaded.

Light Weapons

Weapons that are quick to use, like shortbows, slingshots, or throwing knives.

- Standard light weapons limit any attacks with them to 3R damage
- Limited to a range of 4 tiles

Medium Weapons

Weapons that pack more of a punch and can shoot further, like pistols, hand crossbows and longbows.

- Standard medium weapons limit any attacks with them to 5R damage
- Limited to a range of 8 tiles

Heavy Weapons

Weapons that are so large that they require both hands to be held, there is no limit to the amount of damage a heavy weapon can deal. Crossbows and greatbows are a great example of this.

- Limited to a range of 12 tiles

Armor

Armor is an important thing for any adventurer to consider, but not everyone is capable of wearing it. The listed strength requirements are what your strength must be for you to effectively wear the armor.

2 Strength

Light armor is capable of warding off some damage. Fabric/cloth/leathers/hides are found in this category.

- Reduces physical damage by 1
- Reduces your speed by 1 tile

4 Strength

Medium armor is capable of warding off a decent amount of damage, but begins to impact your mobility. Expect to find breastplates, chainmail, and lighter metals.

- Reduces physical damage by 2
- Reduces your speed by 2 tiles

6 Strength

The heaviest armor around, which can completely mitigate lighter attacks. This severely reduces your mobility, but who needs to move if nobody can hurt you?

- Reduces physical damage by 3
- Reduces your speed by 3 tiles

Tricks

A character can only memorize a certain number of tricks at a time, this being your **mind**. The ones you have memorized can be swapped during rests, but if you don't have a trick prepared, you cannot use it. Keep in mind that tricks cost **focus** to use: a trick that requires more focus than your maximum simply cannot be memorized.

Each spell costs 1 stamina to cast, as well as its associated focus cost, regardless of the damage dealt. If you don't have enough focus OR stamina, you cannot use it. Some spells require concentration, meaning that if your heart is reduced, or you cast another spell, the spell ends. You can use at most one trick per turn.

Simple Tricks

Requires 2 Mind, Cost: 2 Focus

These tricks represent things that a character can do with hardly any effort.

Cure Wounds

Range: 1 Tile

You cure the wounds of a willing creature (including yourself) that is within range.

You can increase the **Focus** cost of this spell when casting it. For every **Focus** that you spend, the creature recovers the successes of R2 as **Heart**. (For example, the normal **Focus** cost is 1, so would heal R2. Increasing the cost to 2 would result in R4).

Fire Bolt

Range: 12 Tiles

R3 Fire

You hurl a mote of fire at a creature or object within range. A flammable object hit by this spell ignites if it isn't being worn or carried.

Healing Word

Range: 6 Tiles

You help a willing creature recover lost heart within range (including yourself). Count the successes of R3, and the target creature regains this amount of heart up to their maximum.

Ray of Frost

Range: 6 Tiles

R3 Cold

A frigid beam of blue-white light streaks toward a creature within range. If it reduces the target's HP, its speed is reduced by 2 tiles until the start of your next turn.

Shocking Grasp

Range: 1 Tile

R4 Lightning

Lightning springs from your hand to deliver a shock to a creature you try to touch. You have advantage on the attack roll if the target is wearing armor made of metal.

Toll the Dead

Range: 6 Tiles

R3 Necrotic

You point at one creature you can see within range, and the sound of a dolorous bell fills the air around it for a moment. If the target is missing any of its hit points, you may roll with advantage.

Word of Radiance

Range: 1 Tile

R3 Radiant

You utter a divine word, and burning radiance erupts around each creature of your choice that you can see within range.

Easy Tricks

Requires 3 Mind, Cost: 3 Focus

This tricks represent things that a character can do with a small effort.

Armor of Agathys

Range: Self

R4 Cold

A protective magical force surrounds you, manifesting as a spectral frost that covers you and

your gear, and you gain 3 temporary health. If a creature within 1 tile reduces this to 0, the creature takes R4 Cold (no stamina/focus cost). If not fully used in 3 turns, the spell fades and any remaining temporary health is removed.

Bless

Concentration

Range: 6 Tiles

Three creatures of your choice who remain in range get to add R1 to their rolls (checks, attacks, and tricks)

Burning Hands

Range: 3 Tiles

R5 Fire

As you hold your hands with thumbs touching and fingers spread, a thin sheet of flames shoots forth from your outstretched fingertips, burning every creature in a 3 tile cone.

Chromatic Orb

Range: 9 Tiles

R5 Choose

You hurl a small sphere of energy at a creature that you can see within range. You choose the damage type, from the elemental damage category.

Hex

Concentration

Range: 9 Tiles

You place a curse on a creature that you can see within range. Until concentration ends, you get to add 1R on all attacks and tricks with that creature as the target.

Inflict Wounds

Range: 1 Tile

R6 Necrotic

Your touch causes a creature to be wracked with decay.

Inspire

Range: 6 Tiles

A creature that you choose within range has advantage on their next roll (check, attack, or trick).

Revitalizing Aura

Concentration

Range: 1 Tile

A creature of your choice that starts their turn within range recovers an additional stamina point. If they start their turn outside of the range, the aura fades and ends.

Witch Bolt

Concentration

Range: 6 Tiles

R4 Lightning

A beam of crackling, blue energy lances out toward a creature within range, forming a sustained arc of lightning between you and the target. As long as you do damage with the witch bolt, you may use witch bolt again with only stamina cost.

Moderate Tricks

Requires 4 Mind, Cost: 4 Focus

Tricks that require some decent concentration.

Barkskin

Concentration

Range: 1 Tile

You touch a willing creature, giving them a resistance point back. The target's skin has a rough, bark-like appearance, and at the start of each of their turns, they get an additional resistance point.

Dragon's Breath

Concentration

Range: 1 Tile

You touch one willing creature and imbue it with the power to spew magical energy from its mouth, provided it has one. Choose a damage type from the elemental damage category. Until the spell ends, the creature can use a stamina point to exhale energy of the chosen type in a 3 tile cone, doing R4 damage of the chosen type to each creature in the area.

Misty Step

You disappear in a silvery mist, reappearing in an open space within 6 tiles that you can see.