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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 starting 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, spell, 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.

Damage Types

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

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

Point Pools

These are points you can save up to spend attacking, moving, or doing spells. 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 spells, 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 spells, 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 unique bodily color palette, golds 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 if the form of non-human eyes, such as cat pupils or glowing irises.

Elemental Ancestor

You are resistant to one elemental damage type (Acid, 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 unique bodily color palette, with reds and oranges for fire, etc.

Innate Arcana

You permanently memorize one simple trick, which costs one **Focus** as opposed to the normal two. This does not count towards your maximum number of memorized spells. After using this memorized trick for the reduced cost, you recover one less **Focus** at the start of your next turn.

Your ancestry has been touched by magic, having a natural gift of spell usage. This can come from all sorts of places, from planar magic to deities, a natural connection or a deliberate augmentation.

Lucky

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

Runewoven

When casting a spell, you can use a combination of **heart** or **focus** points to equal the original cost. Likewise, when you're healed, you can regain a combination of **heart** or **focus** points instead of just heart. Once per rest when you lose **heart**, you can instead choose to lose a combination of **heart** or **focus** points that is equal to the original amount.

Your connection to magic is much more than knowledge, it's what keeps you alive. This could manifest as runic etchings carved into your skin/exterior, a cracked appearance with a dull glow coming through, etc.

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 spells you know. A character can only memorize a certain number of spells at a time, this being your **mind**. The ones you have memorized can be swapped during rests, but if you don't have a spell prepared, you cannot use it. Characters with a **Mind** score higher than one can use **spells**, 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

Arcane Infusion

You've learned how to invest a spark of magic into mundane objects. You can touch a nonmagical object, spending one **Focus** to give it one of the following magical properties of your choice:

- **Boots of Speed**, infused to increase the wearer's speed by 1 tile
- **Armor of Strength**, infused to give the wearer advantage on **Strength** checks
- **Helm of Awareness**, infused to give the wearer advantage on **Mind** checks
- **Gloves of Persuasion**, act as light melee weapons that deal an additional R1 force damage
- **Radiant Weapon**. The infused item deals radiant damage instead of the usual type, and can emit light in a 6 tile radius. Once per rest, the wielder can use one **Focus** to blind melee target, giving them disadvantage on any rolls until the end of the target's next turn

The chosen property lasts indefinitely, and you can end the property at will. You can bestow magic on multiple objects, though a single object can only bear one property at a time. The maximum number of objects you can affect with this feature at one time is equal to your **Mind** score.

Barbarous Rage

While you aren't wearing armor, you can use one **Focus** to channel your primal ferocity and rage. While you are raging, you have advantage on all **Strength** checks/rolls (including damage). While raging, you reduce incoming damage by 1 per attack. While you are raging, however, you do not recover **Focus** at the start of your turns. If you do not lose heart in between two of your consecutive turns, your rage ends.

Bardic Inspiration

You can spend one **Focus** 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. You can use this a number of times per rest, equal to your **Mind** score.

Divine Domain

You choose a certain domain, gaining additional power from a higher power associated with it. You can use your domain's features a number of times per rest, equal to your **Mind** score. You expend one **Focus** point when you use a feature.

Tempest

- **Thunderous Rebuke.** When a creature hits you with a melee attack, you can cause them to make a **Dexterity Check** against your **Mind** score. They then take R4 Lightning damage (with disadvantage if they succeeded the check).
- **Destructive Wrath.** When you are rolling lightning or force damage, you can gain advantage on the roll.

Trickery

- **Blessing of the Trickster.** You touch a willing creature, giving them advantage on dexterity checks for an hour
- **Invoke Duplicity.** You can create an illusory duplicate of yourself that lasts for 4 rounds. For this duration, you can take actions, move, and use spells from your duplicate, using focus and stamina as normal.

War

- **War Priest.** You can make an additional attack with a weapon on your turn, even if you've already attacked with it.
- **Guided Strike.** When you make an attack roll, you can add R2.

Martial Arts

Your fists are now considered to be light melee weapons, with no limit on the number of attacks per turn (a stamina point still must be expended for each attack). Additionally, you can expend **Focus** points instead of stamina to make attacks with your fists.

Paladic Presence

When you make a melee attack against a creature, you can expend **Focus** points to do additional celestial damage (choose this type when you select this boon, this cannot be changed later). You do an additional R2 of this type for each **Focus** point you spend.

Ranger'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 additional dice equal to your **Constitution** score.

Rogue Agent

You have learned to exploit an enemy's moment of weakness. If you have advantage on a melee attack

against a creature, you roll additional dice equal to your **Dexterity** score.

Second Wind

You push yourself to continue fighting, past the point of what would normally be possible. 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. Additionally, you roll a number of dice equal to your **Constitution** score, and recover the successes as **Heart**.

Sorcerous Origin

You are able to channel spells using bursts of physical strength, granted to you by an otherworldly patron. Your maximum amount of **Focus** is equal to your **Mind** + **Strength**. This does not increase the number of spells you can memorize, nor the difficulty.

Dexterity Boons

*These boons require you to have a **Dexterity** score of 2 or Higher*

Duelist

If you are wearing light or no armor, you can use your dexterity instead of strength when rolling damage with a light or medium melee weapon. Additionally, if you are attacked by a creature within melee range, you can spend one **Focus** to impose disadvantage on the roll.

Strike True

While making a **Dexterity** based attack roll, you can spend an additional **Stamina** point to gain advantage on the roll.

Mind Boons

*These boons require you to have a **Mind** score of 2 or Higher*

Warcaster

If your **heart** is reduced while you are concentrating on a spell, you may roll a **Constitution** check. If you roll more successes than damage that you took, you maintain concentration on the spell. Additionally, if you are able to make an attack of opportunity, you can instead use a spell with a 1 Tile range, with the target being the creature that provoked the opportunity attack. You must have and expend the appropriate amount of **Focus** and **Stamina**.

Upgraded Boons

These boons require you have selected another boon at an earlier level.

Blood Hunter

*Requires **Ranger's Mark***

You've learned occult rituals that twist the ways of normal magic to help you track down your targets. When you mark a creature, you lose R1 heart, with your blood sacrifice strengthening the bond between you. You choose an elemental or celestial damage type for the nature of the bond when you select this boon.

- **Binding Curse.** When you attack a marked creature, they must make a **Strength Check** equal to the damage they recieved. If they fail, their speed is reduced to 0 until the end of your next turn.
- **Crimson Brand.** If a marked creature is within melee range of you and attacks you or an ally, you can expend any number of **Focus** points you currently have. You roll a number of dice equal to the focus points you expended, the successes being damage to the creature of your mark's type.

Combat Inspiration

*Requires **Bardic 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.

Extra Attack

*Requires **Barbarous Rage**, **Duelist**, **Martial Arts**, **Paladic Presence**, **Ranger's Mark**, **Rogue Agent**, or **Second Wind***

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

Font of Inspiration

*Requires **Bardic Inspiration***

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

Movement Master

*Requires **Ranger's Mark**, or **Martial Arts***

You can swim and climb at your normal speed. Additionally, you can fall from a number of tiles equal to your **Dexterity** score without taking damage.

Stunning Strike

*Requires **Martial Arts***

When you attack a creature with your fists, you can spend a **Focus** point to attempt to stun them. The creature makes a **Constitution check**, and if they roll fewer successes than the heart that they lost, they cannot spend any **Stamina** or **Focus** until the end of your next turn.

Zealous Presence

*Requires **Paladic Presence**, or **Rage***

By spending one **Focus**, you can give a number of creatures (equal to your level) that can hear you advantage on attack rolls and checks until the start of your next turn.

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 spell for the cost of one **Stamina** point, as well as the listed **focus** cost for the spell.

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

Opportunity Attacks

If a creature leaves your melee range, you can make a melee attack against it, provided you have enough stamina to do so.

Resistances/vulnerabilities

Some enemies or characters may be resistant or vulnerable to certain types of damage (see **Damage Types** in the Introduction. If something is vulnerable 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 -7 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.

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 R3 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 R5 damage
- Standard medium weapons that are being held with two hands have a damage limit of R7.

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 R3 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 R5 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

Spells

A character can only memorize a certain number of spells at a time, this being your **Mind** score. The ones you have memorized can be swapped during rests, but if you don't have a spell prepared, you cannot use it. Keep in mind that spells cost **focus** to use: a spell 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 spell per turn.

Some spells are **scalable**, which means they can be improved by spending more focus. The scalable description explains how the spell improves for each additional point you spend.

Basic Spells

Requires 2 Mind, Cost: 1 Focus

Simple Spells

Requires 2 Mind, Cost: 2 Focus

These spells represent things that a character can do with little concentration.

Entangle

- **Concentration**
- Range: 12 Tiles
- Duration: 1 Minute

Within range, grasping weeds and vines sprout in a two-tile radius from a point on the ground within range. Any creature who is in this range must make a **Strength Check**. Creatures who get fewer successes than your **Mind** score can only move at half of their normal speed while in the area.

Fire Bolt

- Range: 12 Tiles
- Scalable: +R2

You hurl a mote of fire at a creature or object within range, doing **R2 Fire** damage. A flammable object hit by this spell ignites if it isn't being worn or carried.

Guiding Bolt

- Range: 6 Tiles
- Scalable: +R2

A flash of light streaks toward a creature of your choice within range, doing **R3 Radiant** damage. The next attack against this target before the end of your next turn has advantage, thanks to the mystical dim light glittering on the target until then.

Healing Word

- Range: 3 Tiles
- Scalable: +R2

You cure the wounds of a willing creature (including yourself) that is within range, healing the target R2.

Mage Hand

- **Concentration**
- Range: 30ft
- Duration: 1 Minute

A spectral, floating hand appears at a point you choose within range. The hand lasts for the duration or until you dismiss it as an action. The hand vanishes if it is ever more than 6 tiles away from you or if you cast this spell again.

You can use your action to control the hand. You can use the hand to manipulate an object, open an unlocked door or container, stow or retrieve an item from an open container, or pour the contents out of a vial. You can move the hand up to 6 tiles each time you use it.

The hand can't attack, activate magical items, or carry more than 10 pounds.

Ray of Frost

- Range: 6 Tiles
- Scalable: +R1 and target's speed - 1 tile

A frigid beam of blue-white light streaks toward a creature within range, dealing **R3 cold** damage. 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
- Scalable: +R2

Lightning springs from your hand to deliver a shock to a creature you try to touch, dealing **R4 Lightning**. You have advantage on the attack roll if the target is wearing armor made of metal.

Toll the Dead

- Range: 6 Tiles
- Scalable: +R2

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, dealing **R3 Necrotic** damage. If the target is missing any heart, you may roll with advantage.

Wither and Bloom

- Range 12
- Scalable: +R1 and radius + 1

You weaken the veil between life and death at a point within range. In a radius of 2 tiles, each creature of your choice takes **R2 Necrotic** damage (rolled individually). Additionally, a creature of your choice within the radius gains heart equal to the number of creatures who took damage.

Word of Radiance

- Range: 1 Tile
- Scalable: +R1

You utter a divine word, and burning radiance erupts around each creature of your choice that you can see within range, dealing **R3 Radiant** damage.