

# BEOWULF RULES SUMMARY

## NEW SKILLS

The **Legends** skill replaces the Arcana and History skills, reflecting that in the world of BEOWULF, knowledge is passed down in the stories of Heroes and their deeds.

## INSPIRATION

In BEOWULF, *wyrd* — the strands of fate — are important and powerful to a Hero since they were chosen for greatness. This manifests in several ways: when a Hero rolls with advantage they can select one of the dice in advance to be their alignment die. If that die is selected as the result, the Hero gains inspiration. They can draw from the Hero Pool in order to regain inspiration and can do the same on behalf of their Followers. But beware! Just as Heroes are beyond mortal means, so are Monsters, who can draw on the Monster Pool for inspiration as well.

## COMBAT

Heroes in BEOWULF have hit points and Hit Dice like other characters in 5e. However, since they must often stand alone against powerful Monsters, their initial hit points are calculated by adding 10 plus their Constitution score. A starting Hero with a good complement of Followers can be as effective as a party of four 1st level characters using standard classes.

You can use miniatures to represent a combat scene or use theatre of the mind. Remember that Followers usually can't be directly targeted by opponents, so having them on the battlemap might introduce confusion.

## FOLLOWERS

Followers are the friends and assistants of the Hero. Like in the poem, we don't always focus on Followers. Instead they appear in the foreground when appropriate and recede into the background at other times. Here's some important terms to know about Followers:

### ACTIVATE

The Hero can activate a Follower by using a bonus action or a reaction. A Follower that is taking a combat action shares the Hero's initiative count. Some gifts will provide a saving throw to prevent the Follower from becoming spent after being activated. Some gifts can be activated without any danger of the Follower being spent. No matter what, a Follower can only use one gift in a turn. Some burdens might also be triggered — if so, you must resolve all burdens in that round as well.

### SPEND/SPENT

If a gift asks you to spend a Follower, that means you will activate them to use that gift and they will automatically be spent afterwards. A spent Follower is alive but not currently able to help the Hero in any significant way. Spent Followers are recovered at the end of an adventure and sometimes Heroes or other characters can restore a spent Follower to active status.

### SLAIN/KILLED

The world of BEOWULF is a dangerous one and Followers may die. A Follower that dies in combat with an opponent or doing some noble deed has been slain. They are dead, but songs will remember their deeds and the living will praise their memory. Followers that die in ignoble ways are simply killed. They will soon pass from the lips of the living and no songs will be made in their honour. In the full BEOWULF rules, we distinguish between being slain and killed for the purposes of recruiting new Followers and retaining existing ones.

### GIFTS

A gift is an ability that a Follower has. Some gifts have passive components, allowing a Follower to speak confidently about a topic, or providing automatic advantage to a type of roll. Some gifts require activating the follower, where the Hero urges the Follower to act decisively, often in a dangerous situation. Sometimes the acting Follower might become spent or you might need to make a saving throw to prevent the Follower from becoming spent or being killed.

### BURDENS

A burden is some negative aspect of the Follower, which might be inherent to their personality or an acquired trait. Many are passive, applying a penalty to a roll or delaying other features. When you activate a Follower, always check to see if any of their burdens apply. If so, resolve the burdens before you resolve the gift.

### DEATH SAVING THROWS

Followers are asked to make death saving throws just like characters are. However, Followers don't have hit points (or any other modifiers — always assume that every modifier is +0 and any calculated value like AC or a passive score is 10). When a gift, burden or the scenario asks for the Follower to make a death saving throw, they must roll 1d20. On a 10 or higher they are fine; on a 1-9 they die outright (they don't get multiple chances like Heroes). Depending on the situation, such a death might count as being slain (see above).

## OTHER RULES

Unless the scenario specifies otherwise, the core rules of 5e are in effect. If you have questions or feedback for us, please contact us at [jon@handiwork.games](mailto:jon@handiwork.games)

