

## Shroud - Rules

“Shroud” is a purely d6-based RPG system made for fantasy adventures. Other dice can be used for simplicity if necessary, but the core rules assume you only have a d6. It is a lightweight system designed to describe adventures as a collection of scenes while still leaving a large amount of freedom to both the Game Master (GM) and the players to explore the world as a whole.

### Gameplay

Each player controls a single character in an adventure. The GM takes the role of the world that the characters are in, describing events as different scenes. “Shroud” has very few rules on the day-to-day running of the world, focusing instead on the characters and their adventures. It is very freeform, allowing characters to explore the world and go on adventures without worrying too much about bookkeeping.

### Heroic Points

Heroic points let characters do truly heroic things, like jumping onto the back of a speeding dragon as it dives into the sea or racing through the plumes of lava spewing out of a volcano. If you fail a skill check, you can use 1 heroic point to succeed instead, and heroic points also let you do things otherwise outside of your expertise and to twist fate to your side. The adventuring party has a certain number of heroic points for an adventure and these can be used by any player character. Heroic points are not replenished during an adventure, so use them sparingly!

### Initiative

The initiative system describes the order of actions in a period of time. Most commonly, it is used during combat scenarios, but it should be used in any circumstance where the order of actions matters. The initiative is always broken down into groups – the player characters are usually one group, their adversaries another, and any third-parties act on a different initiative. Turn order is decided at the start of initiative. One character from each group (usually the one who triggers the event) rolls a d6. The groups then act in descending order of the rolls. For larger groups, initiatives should be split into groups of 3-4 characters. For example, a party of 8 adventurers would have 4 characters act in one group, and the remainder act as a separate group. This should be resolved *before* rolling initiative. In the case of a tie, re-roll to determine who should go first.

Some abilities and effects reference “turns” and “rounds”. A *turn* is one group’s action, and a *round* is all of the groups’ actions. For example, if three groups are in combat, the first round of combat is made up of Group A’s turn, Group B’s turn, and Group C’s turn. Combat then progresses to the second round. Turns and rounds do not have fixed time lengths; they depend on the situation.

### General Character Stats

Each character has a certain number of hit points (HP), an armour class (AC), a maximum number of Sustainable Wounds (SW) and a maximum number of Sustainable Afflictions (SA).

HP encompasses your health and stamina. Various effects and detriments can cause you to lose HP, such as being hit with attacks, falling off a cliff, or being targeted by a hostile magical effect. During a fight, HP is meant to describe your ability to dodge and block attacks rather than sustain injury. If your HP reaches 0, you are knocked unconscious and immediately sustain a wound. While unconscious, you cannot move or perform any actions, and are at the mercy of the other characters in the scene. You die if no aid is administered within 3 rounds.

You can regain HP in a few ways. The most common way is resting. You can take a long rest of 8 hours and regain all of your HP if all wounds have been treated. Otherwise, roll a d6 for each wound: the total is subtracted from your maximum HP until you treat the wound and complete another long rest. Note that this effect does not stack with itself, meaning the total is re-rolled at the end of the next long rest for any untreated wounds.

AC is a number between 1 and 5. An attack hits you if the attack roll is greater than your AC. AC depends on worn armour, carried trinkets, magical effects, and situational circumstances, but can never drop below 1 or exceed 5. Most creatures have an AC of 2 or 3.

SW is the maximum number of Wounds you can sustain before you die. At any point, if your current Wounds reach your SW value, you die outright. Wounds need to be treated with medical supplies or magic.

SA is the maximum number of Afflictions you can sustain before going insane and is the mental analogue of Wounds. At any point, if your current Afflictions reach your SA value, you are driven insane. While insane, you automatically fail all core skill checks, and act erratically during combat, unable to tell friend from foe. Your character might flee, curl up into a ball, or turn their weapon on themselves. It is up to the GM to describe the effects of insanity to the player, and it is up to the player to roleplay these effects accordingly. For example, an insane character may wander into the dungeon at night while the rest of the party is asleep, perhaps getting themselves killed in the process. Afflictions can be cured through a number of ways, including resting and magic. Certain characters will also be able to remove Afflictions through their charismatic charm, helping others hold themselves together.

## Combat

Combat in “Shroud” is intentionally deadly. That is not to say it is not a vital part of the system, but rather that strategic planning and execution are rewarded over charging head-first into every scenario. Monsters can chew through even seasoned adventurers if encountered head-on, but all of them have weaknesses that can be exploited. All creatures can incur Wounds, not just player characters. Indeed, inflicting Wounds on monsters is often a faster way of dealing with them rather than relying on reducing their HP.

That being said, dealing large amounts of HP damage in a single turn is one way to inflict a Wound. The GM should define a Wound Threshold (WT) for each monster: if this value is surpassed in a single turn, the monster suffers a Wound. Monsters, like player characters, have HP, AC and SW values, and their behaviour during combat should reflect these. Monsters near-death will likely flee, unless there is sufficient cause to stay and fight, like defending its nest.

On your group’s turn in combat, you decide amongst yourselves the order of the individual character’s turns. You can move and take a single ‘action’ during combat, like attacking or distracting a monster. If you choose to attack, you can take one of the ‘Attack’ options on your character sheet. Different weapons lets you perform different attacks. For example, a rogue wielding two daggers

might attack two separate foes, while a warrior with a greatsword might cleave into a group of monsters. When you make an attack, roll a d6 and add any relevant modifiers. For Area-of-Effect (AoE) attacks, you roll once and use that value for every target in the area. You hit if your attack roll is greater than the target's AC. Then, roll the respective damage.

If you try to use a weapon or make an attack that is not listed on your character sheet, the attack roll is made with a -3 modifier by default. Ultimately, it is up to the GM to decide the effects – it might not even be possible for a character to wield a certain weapon (like trying to wield a giant's club), or another might be close enough to an existing Attack that it could be substituted (like using a curved scimitar instead of a short sword).

### Skill Checks

The GM can call for relevant skill checks from player characters to advance scenes or uncover more information. The character rolls a d6 and succeeds if the rolled number is greater than the skill value on their character sheet. The GM may choose to impart knowledge if the character fails by a small margin, but by default success in Shroud is binary. It is then up to the GM to add sufficient detail so the plot does not rely on a few number of skill checks that could be failed!

### Core Skills

Every character shares three core skills: Observation, Fortitude and Willpower. Each one of these is a value between 1 and 5.

**Observation** describes your ability to perceive your surroundings and notice subtle differences.

**Fortitude** describes your natural heartiness and how well you can withstand physical ailments.

**Willpower** describes your ability to withstand afflictions of the mind and stave off madness.

### Specialised Skills

Each character also has two specialised skills. These could be shared amongst multiple characters, but the combination of the two is unique to the character. One of these skills should have a value of 1, and the other a value of 3 (or both can have a value of 2).

The specialised skills are:

**Acrobatics** – performing acts of finesse, like walking across a tightrope or squeezing through a hole

**Athletics** – performing feats of athletic strength, like jumping across a gorge or hoisting a boulder

**Deception** – fooling other characters verbally or by performance, such as attempting to pass off as a nobleman in the capital city

**Deductive Reasoning** – making logical leaps based on evidence, like recognising an insignia on a corpse's armour and rationalising its reason for being here

**Diplomacy** – reasoning with other characters and solving matters peacefully, like defusing a tense situation with the guards over a misunderstanding

**Forbidden Lore** – recalling information about monsters and the arcane, such as a mantichore's weaknesses

**Historical Knowledge** – recalling bits of history to gain further insight, such as viewing a painting and recognising the scene that is depicted to be of a long-forgotten war

**Intimidation** – scaring other characters and commanding their attention, such as ordering a group of investigators to leave

**Natural Knowledge** – being able to survive in the wilds and knowing about wildlife, like where best to set up camp to avoid the attention of wandering monsters

**Religious Lore** – recalling information about various deities and their means of worship, like recognising an altar in an otherwise abandoned ruin

**Situational Awareness** – recognising situations and reacting accordingly, like noticing the pedestrians in a shady area slowly block off exits in preparation for an ambush

**Stealth** – sneaking around while avoiding detection, like trying to approach the dragon's hoard without waking it

**Thievery** – pickpocketing, lockpicking and general sleight of hand, like stealing a guard's keys from his belt while he is distracted

### Abilities

Each character starts with a special ability. This should be unique to the character – though two priests may both have healing abilities, perhaps one can heal a single character for a large amount while the other can heal a group for a small amount. Abilities can be used a certain amount of times before a character has to rest to recover their uses.

### Inventory

Each character holds items in an inventory. For simplicity, "Shroud" does not have rules for carrying capacity or maximum weight. Instead, it is assumed that each character has a pack and can carry a reasonable amount of items.

Characters usually keep their money in a coin pouch, and, like the rest of the inventory, there are no rules about how much a character can carry on their person.