

# Player's Primer

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A Glossary

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

This book is designed to provide a friendly introduction to various aspects of Rise so you can more easily follow along in your game. However, it is light on specific rules and details. In general, it assumes that you are using a character sheet that someone else in the game is responsible for creating and maintaining. For a more detailed explanation of Rise's rules and character customization, see the separate Comprehensive Codex. The GM will also have a Tome of Guidance, which has advice for running the game and rules for various monsters and challenges that you may face.

### What Is Rise?



Rise is a tabletop role-playing game, or TTRPG. In Rise, you play as a specific character in an imaginary universe. Your character can try to do anything you can describe in a world that the game master, or GM, creates. Of course, you won't always succeed. Usually, your character will go on adventures with other characters, each of which is played by other players. Together, you will create and experience a story with the Game Master, or GM, who defines the universe that the player characters inhabit.

### How to Play - The Short Version

When you are learning Rise, you should generally focus on roleplaying as your character in a fantasy universe. The GM can provide details about the expected tone of the game and the universe your character inhabits. For example, they should be able to help you understand whether they expect the game to be fundamentally silly, serious, or both. There isn't a correct answer to that sort of stylistic question, but everyone should be on the same page about what they want.

Sometimes, when your character tries to do something particularly interesting, the GM will ask you to roll to see if you succeed. When that happens, roll a ten-sided die, or d10, and tell them the result. They may ask you to add a relevant number based on how good your character is at that thing. If they do, find that statistic on your character sheet and add that number to what you rolled on the d10. Your character will succeed if your result is high enough, and otherwise will fail. The GM will describe what happens in either case.

If you get into combat, you don't need to keep perfect track of what the other players are doing. Just be able to describe what your character wants to do when the GM asks, such as attacking or running away. You may take damage from enemy attacks. Damage reduces your character's hit points. If those reach zero, your character may become vitally wounded. Try to avoid that.

Attacking is basically the same taking any other action with a chance of failure. Generally, you'll have at least one ability on your character sheet that does damage. You roll d10, add a relevant number, and see if it is high enough. If you succeed with the attack, you'll generally roll damage. Damage is the only common roll in Rise that doesn't always use a d10. Your character sheet should tell you what dice you roll to deal damage.

That's the absolute minimum information you really need to get started, as long as you have a helpful GM and fellow players. Over time, you'll get used to playing your character, both in terms of their personality and in terms of the rules. If you want to learn more about how Rise works, you can keep reading!

# Chapter 2

## How to Play

### Saying What Your Character Does

There are two basic modes that you can use to describe how your character acts. You can describe in general terms what you want them to do, and let the GM figure out how to translate that into game mechanics. Alternately, you can say that you're using a specific ability or game mechanic, and let the GM figure out how that affects the narrative universe.

Either approach is generally reasonable. Some people tend to prefer using one mode more often, and some GMs generally prefer to hear one mode. When in doubt, communicate at your table!

#### Describing Actions

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With this style of communication, you describe what you want your character to do. For example, you can say that your character steps out of their room in the inn and walks over to knock on a friend's door. Although Rise has rules that could govern some aspects of that scenario, such as an Awareness [check](#) to see if your friend notices you knocking, you wouldn't usually reference those rules explicitly. Even in the unlikely scenario that your friend doesn't notice you knock the first time, you can just knock again, so there's no point in worrying about the details. If something seems reasonable, it probably is, and you don't need to worry about the fiddly bits.

Sometimes, when you describe what your character tries to do, the action has a narratively relevant chance of failure. Instead of knocking on the door to say hi, you might only have time to bang on it once to warn your sleeping friend about an attack from assassins. In that case, there's some chance that your friend is sleeping too deeply to notice the noise the first time you knock. You could try knocking again, just like in the first scenario, but in this scenario that failure would cost you valuable time to survive the attack. In that scenario, you would roll a die to determine whether you succeed in your action - or in this case, whether your friend would succeed in their attempt to notice you.

#### Using Specific Abilities

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Instead of describing broadly what you want to have happen, you might choose one of a list of clearly defined abilities that your character can use. Every character has specific abilities unique to them, such as a wizard's spells or a fighter's maneuvers. There

are also a number of simple abilities that anyone can use, such as the [grapple](#) or [trip](#) abilities. These universal abilities attempt to adequately describe a wide variety of reasonable improvised actions that you might try to use in combat.

Explicitly defined abilities have rules for determining what happens when you use them. Some abilities, such as attacks in combat, require rolling dice to determine how effective they are. You can use your character's abilities at any time, not just in combat. Abilities such as the [create water](#) or [distant hand](#) spells can be used to solve other kinds of problems entirely.

### Rolling Dice

When you need to determine whether something succeeds or fails, you roll a die. This can happen as part of using a specific ability that tells you exactly what to roll, or because you tried to narrate your character taking an action that has a dramatically relevant chance of failure. In either case, you'll roll a single ten-sided die, also known as 1d10. You'll add some modifier that represents how skilled your character is at the particular thing that they are trying to do. At the GM's discretion, they may also give the roll an extra bonus or penalty based on the circumstances that your character is in. If your die roll is high enough, your character succeeds at whatever they were trying to do. Otherwise, your character fails, which may sometimes have additional consequences.

In Rise, it's entirely possible for characters to be so skilled that they succeed at what they are trying to do even if you roll a 1. Likewise, there are tasks that are so obviously impossible for your character that they cannot possibly succeed. In those cases, there's no reason to roll! Of course, the GM is the final arbiter of whether rolling is necessary. They may have information that the players do not.

In some cases, you roll multiple dice at once. This generally happens when you deal damage in combat. A collection of dice is called a [dice pool](#). Dice pools are written with the number of dice, followed by "d", followed by the size of dice to roll. For example, 2d6 means you roll two six-sided dice.

### Making Checks

A [check](#) is a roll that you make to try to accomplish a task. For example, climbing a wall or remembering an obscure piece of trivia

may require a check. Unlike an [attack](#), the difficulty of a check is not measured by the defense of another creature or object. Instead, it depends on the task itself.

To make a check, roll 1d10 and add your modifier with the check. You compare that result to a [difficulty value](#) that represents the difficulty of the task. The more difficult the task, the higher the [difficulty value](#) will be. If your result is equal to or higher than the [difficulty value](#), the check succeeds. This usually means you accomplish a task successfully. Otherwise, the check fails. This usually means that nothing happens, though sometimes there are specific consequences for failure.

## Critical Success

If your check result is at least 10 higher than the [difficulty value](#), your check is a [critical success](#). Some checks have a special effect on a critical success. For example, a critical success while climbing means you move twice as quickly.

## Standard Difficulty Values

Most checks are made against a fixed [difficulty value](#) that represents how hard the task is. Detailed rules for determining difficulty values in specific circumstances can be found in the Expanded Skills chapter from the Tome of Guidance. However, most of the time, it's not worth the effort to consult charts and tables to figure out how hard a task is. Instead, you can estimate it based on the guidelines below.

- Easy (DV 0): Only an exceptionally incompetent or impaired person could possibly fail a DV 0 check. For example, this includes walking on rough ground without tripping (Balance) or noticing that a yelling, red-faced person is angry (Social Insight).
- Average (DV 5): A typical human with no relevant skills should still succeed at a DV 5 check without much issue. However, it would be possible to fail in a stressful situation where time is limited if the person had no relevant training. For example, this includes climbing a ladder (Climb) or hearing the topic of a nearby conversation in a crowded bar (Awareness).
- Hard (DV 10): A typical human with no relevant skills might succeed at a DV 10 check, but only if they were very lucky or had a lot of time on their hands. An experienced practitioner might fail infrequently in stressful circumstances, but a world-class expert would never fail. For example, this includes swimming in fast-moving water (Swim) or providing first aid to mitigate a barely lethal wound (Medicine).
- Very Hard (DV 15): Only an experienced practitioner could succeed at a DV 15 check, and they would still need to get lucky if they were in a rush. Even a world-class expert at the peak of real-world human potential could fail, but only rarely. For example, this includes picking a well-made lock (Devices) or holding your breath for eight minutes while staying still (Endurance).
- Almost Impossible (DV 20): A world-class expert like an

Olympic medalist could succeed at a DV 20 check if they were lucky or patient. Succeeding consistently at tasks of this difficulty requires superhuman capabilities. For example, this includes climbing a weathered natural rock wall without equipment (Climb) or squeezing through a space with a diameter of only half a foot (Flexibility).

- Impossible (DV 25+): No real-world human can succeed at a DV 25 check. This sort of feat is only possible for high-level Rise characters who have explicitly surpassed ordinary limitations. For example, this includes running at full speed along a slack rope (Balance) or climbing a sheer glass pane (Climb).

## Trying Again

You can think of checks as being broadly divided into two categories: checks that give you information, and checks that cause a change in the world around you. In general, you can retry checks that change your environment indefinitely until you succeed. The only major limiting factor to those checks is that failure sometimes also changes your environment in ways that may punish your failure or make it impossible to retry the check. For example, if you are trying to climb a cliff, you can keep trying until you succeed, but you may take [falling damage](#) from falling off while halfway up the cliff.

You generally cannot retry checks that give you information unless the situation changes in a way that is relevant to your check. This generally means that you must learn new information before making the check again. For example, if you've already examined a creature to determine whether they are disguised, you can't keep just keep staring that creature to make sure. However, if you splash the creature with water which washes away some makeup, you can try again now that you have more information.

In addition, checks that require a free action to make can never be made more than once for the same purpose within a round.

## Opposed Checks

An opposed check involves multiple creatures competing to get the highest result. In case of a tie, all tied creatures roll again to break the tie. Usually, the creature with the highest result succeeds, while all other creatures either fail completely or simply succeed less effectively depending on the situation.

Some opposed checks involve multiple creatures using the same skill to see who does the best job. For example, a climbing race up a wall might involve each participant rolling a Climb check, or you might make a Strength check to hold a door closed while another creature tries to shove it open. Alternately, it can involve creatures rolling opposite skills. For example, if you are trying to hide, you roll a Stealth check opposed by the Awareness check of any creatures who could notice you.

Not all opposed checks require all participants to roll at the same time. For example, a creature who creates a disguise rolls the Disguise check at the time that the disguise is created. A creature who tries to notice the disguise would roll their Awareness check at the time they see the disguised creature.

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## Extended Checks

An **extended check** is a **check** that represents your character taking some action over a prolonged period of time. You cannot use abilities like **desperate exertion** to modify the results of an extended check. If your modifier changes over the course of the task, use your lowest modifier at any point during the task.

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## Hidden Checks

The GM can always make checks on your character's behalf without telling you. Generally, this is used for observation-based skills. For example, it's very suspicious if the GM tells you to make an Awareness check and then tells you that you don't see anything interesting. One of the ways a GM can avoid that is by simply rolling a check on behalf of your character and only telling you the result if you succeed.

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## Helping On Checks

You can help an **ally** make a check. To help an ally, you make a check of the same type against a **difficulty value** that is 5 lower than the regular difficulty value. This has the same requirements, including time and physical contact, as the check would have if you made it yourself. For example, to help an ally climb a cliff, you must be able to touch your ally to guide them up. Success means that the ally gains a +2 bonus to the check.

Multiple creatures can try to help the same person. At the GM's discretion, there may be a practical limit to how many people can assist with the same task. The bonus from multiple creatures helping does not stack. It just makes it more likely that the helping attempt will succeed.

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## Checks for Timed Tasks

For every 5 points by which you beat the **difficulty value** to accomplish a timed task, the time required is usually halved. This only applies for tasks that have a base time requirement of at least one minute, if the GM agrees that it is relevant, and if there are no other specific ways in which your result is improved with higher check results.

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# Defining the Undefined

This book does not attempt to include specific rules for every aspect of a realistic world. Unless defined otherwise - or if it's not worth the effort to look up Rise's exact rules in the flow of a game - you should assume that the universe works more or less like the real world does, and as long as everyone agrees that something is reasonable, it's not worth worrying about in more detail.

For example, Rise does not have specific rules for how long it takes to eat a meal, the arc that a thrown ball takes through the air, or how much extra weight a well-made chandelier can hold without breaking. It's possible to imagine situations where each of those might be important to a game, however, so you'll have to guess what would be reasonable as obscure situations arise. The Game Master has the final word when defining ambiguities like this.

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## Resolving Ambiguity

When the rules are ambiguous about how they apply to you and no other creature, you decide how to resolve that ambiguity. For example, if an ability causes you to remove one of your **vital wounds**, and you have more than one vital wound, you choose which vital wound is removed. When the rules are ambiguous in any other situation, the GM decides how to resolve that ambiguity. This includes situations where multiple creatures are relevant and situations where no particular creature is relevant.



# Chapter 3

## Characters

In Rise, you play as a character with a variety of unique abilities. This section provides an overview of how characters are defined. It assumes that the GM will provide a character for you or help you make your character. For full details about how to create a character yourself, see the separate Comprehensive Codex.

### Species

There are eight common species.

- Human: Common and capable of anything
- Dwarf: Slow and steady, with famous beards
- Elf: Graceful, frail, and extraordinarily long-lived
- Halfling: Short and laid-back
- Kobold: Small and reptilian, with draconic ancestry
- Mixed: Highly variable
- Orc: Strong and intimidating

### Attributes

There are six fundamental attributes. A character's attributes have broad effects on many aspects of their statistics.

- Strength: Muscle and physical power
- Dexterity: Hand-eye coordination, agility, and reflexes
- Constitution: Health and stamina
- Intelligence: Learning, reasoning, and versatility
- Perception: Observation, awareness, and precision
- Willpower: Mental resilience and magical potential

### Combat Statistics

There are five main combat statistics.

- Accuracy: This affects how likely you are to hit with attacks.
- Defenses: These affects how likely you are to avoid being hit by attacks.
- Hit points: This affects how much damage you can take without suffering vital wounds.
- Injury point: If your hit points drop below your injury point, you are **injured**. This has no direct effects, but some wttacks against you are more effective if you are injured.
- Power: This affects how much damage you deal with attacks. You have two types of power: **magical** ✨ power and

**mundane** power.

### Resources

There are three main resources.

- Attunement points: This affects how many spells and items you can benefit from simultaneously. It typically comes from wearing armor.
- Fatigue: This affects your accuracy and checks. It typically comes from using special abilities.
- Insight points: This affects how many special abilities you know, such as spells and maneuvers.

### Narrative Customization

A character also has an alignment, age, appearance, and similar traits that anchor them in the world. Generally, these do not have any mechanical effects, but they are an important part of designing a complete character. For details, see Alignment, page ??, Personal Appearance, page ??, and Backgrounds, page ??.

### Classes

Each character has at least one class. A character's class has a significant influence on their special abilities and narrative style. The eleven classes are briefly summarized below.

- Barbarians are primal warriors who draw power from their physical prowess and unfettered emotions.
- Clerics are divine spellcasters who draw power from their veneration of a single deity.
- Druids are nature spellcasters who draw power from their veneration of the natural world.
- Fighters are highly disciplined warriors who excel in physical combat of any kind.
- Monks are agile masters of "ki" who hone their personal abilities to strike down foes and perform supernatural feats.
- Paladins are divinely empowered warriors who exemplify a particular alignment.
- Rangers are skilled hunters who bridge the divide between nature and civilization.
- Rogues are skillful and versatile characters known for their ability to strike at their foe's weak points in combat.



- Sorcerers are arcane spellcasters who draw power from their inherently magical nature.
- Votives are pact spellcasters who draw their power from a dangerous deal made with extraplanar creatures.
- Wizards are arcane spellcasters who study magic to unlock its powerful secrets.
- Survival: This represents your ability to take care of yourself and others in the wilderness, including the ability to follow tracks.
- Swim: This represents your ability to swim.

## Skills

Skills represent the myriad of talents that people can have, such as cooking or swimming. Each character is trained in a certain number of skills from their class and Intelligence. The twenty-six skills are summarized below.

- Awareness: This represents your ability to observe things which you might otherwise fail to notice.
- Balance: This represents your ability to maintain your balance and poise in difficult circumstances.
- Climb: This represents your ability to climb obstacles.
- Craft: This represents your ability to construct objects from raw materials.
- Creature Handling: This represents your ability to influence non-sapient creatures.
- Deception: This represents your ability to lie or otherwise mislead people without being caught.
- Deduction: This represents your ability to make logical deductions based on evidence.
- Devices: This represents your ability to manipulate mechanical devices such as locks, traps, and other contraptions.
- Disguise: This represents your ability to create disguises to conceal the appearance of creatures or objects.
- Endurance: This represents your ability to persevere through physical trials.
- Flexibility: This represents your ability to escape bindings and move through small areas by contorting your body.
- Intimidate: This represents your ability to intimidate and coerce people into doing what you want.
- Jump: This represents your ability to jump.
- Knowledge: This represents your understanding of particular aspects of the world.
- Medicine: This represents your practical understanding of how to tend to the wounds of living creatures.
- Perform: This represents your ability to create particular forms of entertainment.
- Persuasion: This represents your ability to convince people to think what you want them to.
- Profession: This represents your practical understanding of a particular profession.
- Ride: This represents your ability to ride and control horses and other mounts.
- Sleight of Hand: This represents your ability to pick pockets, palm objects, and perform other feats of legerdemain.
- Social Insight: This represents your ability to read body language and emotion.
- Stealth: This represents your ability to escape detection while moving or taking large-scale actions.

## Chapter 4

# Combat



The world of Rise can be a harsh one, and not all disagreements can be resolved peacefully. At some point, you will be forced to enter combat. This chapter explains how combat works in Rise. The combat rules also generally cover situations where time and precise positioning are important, even if they do not involve violence.

## Attacking and Defending

When you use an offensive ability, you will have to make an attack. To make an attack, roll 1d10 and add your [accuracy](#) with the attack. That should be written on your character sheet in the attack's description. If you get a 10, add 10 to your result and roll the d10 again, adding the new result to your total. This can only happen once per attack roll. If you get a 10, keep rolling until you get a number less than 10, then sum all of the rolls. This is called "exploding".

Your attack result is compared to your target's relevant defense. There are five defenses: Armor, Brawn, Fortitude, Reflex, and Mental. Each attack specifies what defense the target uses to avoid the attack.

There are four possible outcomes for an attack: a critical hit, a regular hit, a glancing blow, and a miss.

- **Critical hit:** Your attack result is at least 10 higher than the target's defense. A critical hit deals double damage, and may have other special effects.
- **Hit:** Your attack result meets or exceeds the target's defense. The ability has its normal effect.
- **Glancing blow:** Your attack result was too low, but only by 1 or 2. The ability deals half damage, and doesn't have any special effects other than damage.
- **Miss:** Your attack was too low by 3 or more. The ability has no effect unless it specifically says it does.

This process works in the same way when enemies attack you. The GM may ask you what your defenses are when attacking you.

## Dealing and Taking Damage

If you hit with a damaging attack, you roll the damage dice for that attack, sum them all together, and tell the GM the result. Many abilities also add a flat amount to the damage result. The GM will track that damage and tell you what effect it had.

When you take damage, the damage reduces your [hit points](#). If your remaining hit points are at or below your [injury point](#), you are [injured](#). Some attacks have detrimental effects on you while you are injured. If you are dealt damage that reduces your hit points below 0, you gain one or more [vital wounds](#).

While you have vital wounds, you suffer penalties based on the wound. If you get more than one vital wound, you can die. The GM can explain how vital wounds work in more detail if it comes up. Vital wounds can only be removed with an 8 hour rest, or with some rare abilities which you probably won't have access to.

## Tracking Time in Combat

Combat takes place in a series of [rounds](#), which represent about six seconds of time. Each round of a combat is divided into two [phases](#): the movement phase and the action phase (see Phases, page ??). After both phases are complete, the round ends and the next round begins.

During the movement phase, everyone will move, but can't attack. During the action phase, everyone will take a [standard action](#) of their choice. This could be an attack, an additional movement, or

another special ability.

You and your fellow player characters will take turns during each phase, but you can act in any order. The GM might ask each player in turn what they plan to do, or players could decide for themselves what they want to do and tell the GM whenever they have decided. It depends how the GM wants to run the game.

While your characters take actions, your enemies will also take their own actions. Their actions resolve simultaneously with your actions. The GM will typically tell you what your enemies did after all of the players have finished their actions.

## Action Types

Most abilities require a **standard action** to use. You can take one standard action during each action phase.

Some less common abilities require a **minor action**. You can take one minor action during each action phase in addition to your standard action.

There are also **free actions**, which aren't generally used for specific player abilities. You can take any number of free actions during both the movement and action phase.

## Movement

During the movement phase, your character move up to their speed along the ground. Most characters have a movement speed of 30 feet, but your character sheet will tell you your speed. You tell the GM which location you want to move to, or which creature you want to move next to. If you move during the action phase, you can sprint, which doubles your movement speed. Enemies will still get a chance to attack you from your original position even if you move during the action phase, so you can't dodge attacks that way.

You might be playing with a gridded battlemat with figures for each character, or you might be just imagining the world. Movement on a grid or hex map is typically more precise and tactical, while purely mental scenes tend to be more loose about exact distances and positioning. As usual, talk to your GM about what you each want from the game.

## Universal Combat Abilities

Your character sheet will have some abilities unique to your character written on it. In addition, there are a variety of things that every character can do in the world. These won't generally be written on your sheet explicitly because they are the same for everyone. However, it can be useful to know that they exist. If you find yourself using one of these abilities often, consider adding it to your character sheet.

- **Charge:** Move and make a strike with a weapon, but suffer a brief -2 penalty to defenses afterwards.
- **Desperate Exertion:** Reroll any attack or check with a +2 bonus, but you gain two **fatigue levels**.
- **Escape Grapple:** Stop being grappled.
- **Grapple:** Start grappling with a foe.

- **Maintain Grapple:** Continue grappling with a foe as a **free action**.
- **Recover:** Regain all of your hit points and remove all conditions. However, you gain two fatigue levels, and you can only do it once per fight.
- **Shove:** Push a foe up to half your speed.
- **Sprint:** Move at double speed. Costs one fatigue during the movement phase, but is free during the action phase.
- **Total Defense:** Gain a +2 bonus to all defenses this round.
- **Throw:** Throw a creature or object you're holding.
- **Trip:** Knock a foe **prone** (*half speed, -2 Armor and Ref*).

## Using Abilities

### Ability Descriptions

Abilities are typically written in the following form:

Ability Name	Usage time
Tags: Ability tags, such as <b>Attune</b> or <b>Fire</b>	
This section will explain who or what the ability affects, and how those targets are affected. Many abilities cause you to make an attack.	
<b>Hit:</b> This describes the effect that the ability has against a target that you successfully hit with it.	
<b>Critical hit:</b> If the ability has a special effect on a <b>critical hit</b> , that effect is described here.	
<b>Miss:</b> Some abilities still deal half damage even when they miss.	

### Magical and Mundane Abilities

Every ability is either **magical** ✨ or **mundane**. Magical abilities use Willpower to determine their **power**, while mundane abilities use Strength. If an ability has a ✨ next to its name, it is magical. Otherwise, it is mundane.

### Ability Range

Many abilities only work within a particular distance from you. This maximum distance is called the ability's **range**. There are five common ranges: Short (*30 ft.*) range, Medium (*60 ft.*) range, Long (*90 ft.*) range, Distant (*120 ft.*) range, and Extreme (*180 ft.*) range. Any ability with a range requires both **line of sight** and **line of effect** unless otherwise noted.

### Line of Sight

You have **line of sight** to something if you can see it. Glass does not block line of sight, but darkness and fog can.

### Line of Effect

You have **line of effect** to something if you could touch it with a really long pole. Glass blocks line of effect, but darkness and fog do not.

## Targeted Abilities

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If an ability affects a specific number of creatures or objects, it is called a **targeted** ability. Targeted abilities require you to have **line of sight** and **line of effect** to all targets. Every targeted ability has a **range**.

## Area Abilities

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If an ability affects everything of a certain type within an area, it is called an area ability.

## Area Types

There are three common area types. If an area's type is not mentioned, it is a burst.

- **Burst:** Has an immediate effect and then ends.
- **Emanation:** Has a duration based on a specific creature or object. If the source of the area moves, the area's effect moves with it.
- **Zone:** Has a duration based on a location. Some zones can be moved after being created, but that movement is not tied to a specific creature or object.

## Measuring Areas

Areas are always measured from a **point of origin**, which must be a grid intersection. An area's size defines the extent to which it extends out from its point of origin, whether as a radius or as a length. All four of a square's corners must be within an area for that square to be in the area.

When using an area ability, you must have **line of sight** and **line of effect** to its point of origin. The ability's **range** measures the maximum distance to its point of origin. If it does not have a range, its point of origin must touch your space.

There are six common area sizes: Tiny (*5 ft.*), Small (*15 ft.*), Medium (*30 ft.*), Large (*60 ft.*), Huge (*90 ft.*), and Gargantuan (*120 ft.*).

There are five common area shapes. If an area's shape is not mentioned, it is a sphere.

- **Cone:** A 90 degree arc, measured by length. A cone's height is normally 5 feet.
- **Cylinder:** A circle with a height, measured by radius. A cylinder's height is normally equal to its radius.
- **Line:** A straight line, measured by length. A line is normally 5 feet wide and 5 feet high.
- **Sphere:** A sphere, measured by radius.
- **Wall:** A straight line, measured by length. A wall's height is normally equal to half its length, and its width is essentially zero. A wall is always a **zone**, not a **burst** or an **emanation**.

## Dismissal

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When an ability is **dismissed**, all of its lingering effects immediately end. Unless otherwise noted, all **magical** ✨ abilities with a duration can be dismissed, but **mundane** abilities cannot be dismissed. You can dismiss abilities as a **free action** that requires only mental effort.

## Chapter 5

# Items and Equipment

Items are divided into five broad categories:

- Weapons are typically used to make [strikes](#). Weapons come in many forms, and can have very different uses in combat.
- Armor is worn or wielded to protect yourself. There are two types of armor: body armor and shields.
- Apparel items are worn on the body, but unlike armor they have no intrinsic defensive properties. Rings, cloaks, and all manner of other worn items are considered apparel. The only mechanically significant apparel items are [magical](#) ✨.
- Implements are typically held while casting spells or using other magical abilities. The only mechanically significant implements are [magical](#) ✨.
- Tools are used to achieve an effect instead of worn on the body. Potions, traps, and magic bags are all tools.

## Wealth and Item Ranks

The worth of an item can be measured with money, or with the more abstract concept of an item's rank. Money is typically measured with gold pieces, or gp. An item with a given rank is typically worth a certain number of gold pieces, as shown in the table below. Consumable items are worth a fifth as much as a permanent item of the same rank.

Rank	Power	Typical Item Price	Permanent Typical Price	Consumable Typical Price
0	0	10 gp or less	2 gp or less	
1	2	40 gp	10 gp	
2	4	200 gp	40 gp	
3	6	1,000 gp	200 gp	
4	8	5,000 gp	1,000 gp	
5	10	25,000 gp	5,000 gp	
6	12	125,000 gp	25,000 gp	
7	14	625,000 gp	125,000 gp	

## Weapons

Weapons are used to make [strikes](#) in combat. Your class determines which weapons you are proficient with.

Each weapon deals a specific amount of damage if you hit with it. Weapons can also have other special properties to change how you use them. For example, many weapons grant a small accuracy bonus, and some weapons are ranged or can be used to attack

multiple creatures at the same time. There are too many unique weapons to even summarize them here. Your character sheet should indicate what weapons you have, and how they modify your attacks.

## Armor

Armor protects you from incoming attacks. Body armor has two main effects: it increases your Armor defense, and it increases your [durability](#). Shields only increase your armor defense, and they require a hand to use. Your class determines which armor you are proficient with.

There are three main types of armor.

- Light: Not very protective, but has few penalties. Typically useful for characters with a high Dexterity, since they can dodge more easily while wearing it.
- Medium: Reasonable for most characters to use, with solid protection and only minor penalties.
- Heavy: Extremely protective, but heavy body armor reduces your speed by 10 feet. Proficiency with heavy armor is relatively rare.

## Magic Items

There are a vast array of magical items that exist in Rise. If you find a magic item, the GM should explain what it can do, assuming that you can identify it. In order to use magic equipment, you have to [attune](#) to it, which costs one of your [attunement points](#). Magic tools, like permanently glowing rocks or bags of holding, don't require attunement.

## Other Items

There are many other items that you might find or use on your journey. Rise doesn't define specific rules for many regular items that exist in the world, like backpacks or ropes. Talk to your GM about what makes sense for you to have in your game.



## Chapter 6

# The World

Rise does not attempt to define a single geography with specific countries and locations that is shared between all games. It is common for GMs to define their own setting when running a game, and that freedom is important. However, the universe of Rise does differ in a number of important ways from the real world. The fundamental assumptions that Rise makes about the its fantasy world are:

- Magic is commonly known but rarely understood
- Some people are vastly more powerful than others
- Souls, deities, and the afterlife are real

These core elements are ambiguous about some details, and GMs are encouraged to fill in those details as they see fit. Of course, a GM has absolute power, and can create a world that changes any number of these assumptions. However, doing so can significantly change the tone of the game and create logical inconsistencies, so it should be done carefully.

## Magic

The world of Rise is a magical place. Many people are capable of using magic to perform feats that would be impossible in the real world. Not everyone is capable of magic, of course. It's reasonable to assume that about ten percent of the civilized people in the world have a magical ability of some kind. In some societies, such as a feudal human-dominated society with a large number of commoners and serfs, the percentage of people with magic can be lower. However, this is balanced by the existence of other societies that tend to be more magical, such as elven communes in deep forests. Even in low-magic societies, everyone knows that magic exists, and almost everyone has observed something magical at some point in their lives.

People can have magical abilities for a wide variety of reasons. There are three main categories to explain why people can access magic: intrinsic magic, learned magic, and gifted magic. Each class with magical abilities belongs to one of these groups. Characters with magical feats are free to choose any of those three explanations for their feats. The explanation does not have to be the same as for any other magical abilities they possess. For example, a cleric may be gifted their magical cleric abilities because they worship a particular deity, but they may also be naturally telepathic.

Some people are simply intrinsically magical. They may require training and experience to improve their natural magical talents,

but they had magical capabilities before doing any training. This intrinsic magic can come from magical ancestry, unusual birth circumstances, magical experimentation, exposure to powerful magic, simple random chance, or any number of other sources. This is the standard explanation for sorcerers. In addition, this is the most common explanation for the magical abilities of monsters.

Some people gain access to magic through personal training or research. These people find ways to tap into some pre-existing magical property of the universe and manipulate it at their command. This is the standard explanation for monks, rangers with the Beastmaster archetype, rogues with the Bardic Music archetype, and wizards.

Some people are gifted magic by their association with powerful magical entities or forces. They offer worship, allegiance, or their souls, and are granted magical power in exchange. This is the standard explanation for clerics, druids, paladins, and votives.

## Personal Power



The median person in the world of Rise is not particularly more or less capable than the median person in the real world. Training can



help people improve their skills, but as in the real world, anyone who tries to improve themselves through training and practice eventually reaches an upper limit to their potential. However, unlike in the real world, people in Rise can reach beyond their ordinary limitations. By defeating powerful foes and performing great deeds that influence the world around them, people can gain levels, which allows them to reach new heights of power. At high levels, people can perform clearly superhuman feats that would be impossible for ordinary humans, even without the influence of magic.

People in Rise wouldn't usually talk about "levels" as a discrete concept ranging from 1 to 21. They would perceive the world as a spectrum, and the specific divisions would be more subtle. However, they would be aware that some people are fundamentally stronger and more skilled than others. Individual scholars or scholastic groups may create their own concepts in-universe to categorize and explain the phenomenon of levels, since the growth of personal power over time is observable and studiable. However, those in-universe concepts would never exactly replicate the metagame concept of a level.

It is common for people in positions of political power to also wield unusually large amounts of personal power. High level individuals can be savvier, wiser, and more persuasive than any ordinary human. They are more likely than low-level individuals to be able to gain political power through whatever means they see fit, and more likely to maintain their hold on that power. In addition, political power can grant further opportunities for performing great deeds, which helps those in power to gain levels and stay ahead of any competition.

The fastest path to acquiring personal power does not come from pursuing political power. It comes from adventuring. Adventurers can defeat powerful monsters, help towns in need, and otherwise have a significant personal influence on the world. In the process of these adventures, they can amass personal power much more rapidly than ordinary people. Of course, adventuring also has an unusually high risk of death. Even worse, people who die while adventuring often leave their corpse in the middle of nowhere - in a monster's stomach - which prevents them from being resurrected without incredibly rare magic. Adventurers must constantly seek out new challenges to test their limits, or else they will stagnate and stop acquiring personal power, so it is never a sustainable long-term activity. There are many people in the world who were adventurers at some point in their past, and everyone is familiar with the concept, but active adventurers are still unusual.

## Deities and Afterlives



When a humanoid creature dies in Rise, they know beyond a shadow of a doubt that they will go to an afterlife. Most likely, they know exactly which afterlife they will go to, either as a result of their alignment or their worship of a particular deity. In that afterlife, they will live again for as long as they want, though they cannot leave without being magically resurrected. People are confident that this is true because deities have told them so, and deities are provably real. Also, rare and powerful magic can be used to communicate with people in their afterlife, or even to physically travel to an afterlife plane.

It is an undisputed fact that Rise is filled with a wide variety of deities of varying power and influence. They divinely empower their clerics to act on their behalf. Many people know, though some chain of connections, someone who chose to become a cleric and was quickly rewarded with divine magic far beyond anything they could previously do on their own. Everyone has heard legends of deities intervening more directly in the world even without a cleric, though these stories are rare and few have experienced them firsthand.

There are nine distinct afterlife planes, with one plane for each alignment combination. Each of those planes is divided into layers. Some of those layers are reserved for deities, with major deities claiming layers that are entirely their own and multiple minor deities sharing territory within a single layer. The remaining layers have no specific associated deity. People can travel between the layers, though the specific mechanisms for traversing layers are different for each afterlife plane. Most people do not know this level of detail about afterlife planes, and a commoner would simply be confident that they will go where they belong.

It is well known that the afterlife planes for evildoers are much

harsher than the other afterlife planes. The three evil afterlife planes are collectively referred to the Abyss. Demons stalk those planes, tormenting evildoers for their own sadistic reasons. One of the reasons that some people worship evil deities is to gain a promise of safety, since evil deities protect their worshippers from demonic torment in the afterlife. It is also said that demons only torment the weak-willed, and that those who escape demonic torments are free to live in hedonistic luxury. There is truth in this, though there are far more people who are confident that they would rule proudly in the Abyss than people who succeed.

A list of specific well-known deities is given in Table 6.1: Deities. The many minor deities worshipped by monsters are not listed here. Of course, the GM may use their own custom pantheon.

planes. It is occupied by aberrations and horrors that ruled the cosmos before the rise of mortals and deities. The precursors, ancient leviathans of unfathomable size and power, periodically try to reclaim what was once rightfully theirs.

## Planes

The universe of Rise is divided into planes. A plane is a distinct realm of existence. Except for the connections between planes through planar rifts, each plane is effectively an isolated universe, and different planes can obey different fundamental laws. For example, the Material Plane has gravity that exerts a consistent acceleration in a single absolute direction. However, the Astral Plane has subjective gravity, where each creature on the plane chooses the direction that gravity pulls it in, if any.

### General Cosmology

The planes of Rise are divided up into groups.

**Primal Planes:** The primal planes are manifestations of the basic building blocks of the universe. Each plane in this group is predominantly composed of a single element or type of energy. There are four primal planes: Air, Earth, Fire, and Water.

**Aligned Planes:** The five aligned planes are manifestations of the five alignments. Elysium is good-aligned, the Abyss is evil-aligned, Ordus is law-aligned, Discord is chaos-aligned, and the Expanse is neutral-aligned.

When mortal creatures die, their souls travel to an appropriate location on an aligned plane, where they gain new plane-forged bodies and live again. If they pledged their soul to a deity in life, that deity can take ownership over their soul in death, and the soul is reborn within that deity's territory and under their protection. Otherwise, they appear on the aligned plane that most closely reflects their primary alignment in life.

**Nexus Planes:** The nexus planes are composite planes with a number of distinct environments and filled with creatures of myriad alignments. Nexus planes comprise the majority of civilization across all planes. They do not have their own unique planar essence, and no planar creatures are native to nexus planes. There are two nexus planes: the Material Plane and the Astral Plane.

**Demi-planes:** These planes are small, fragmentary realms that are greatly limited in their scope. There is no specific list of demi-planes, and they share few common properties. Most demi-planes were created for particular purposes by beings of great power, though some simply came into existence through unknown means.

**Eternal Void:** The Eternal Void is the space beyond all other

**Table 6.1: Deities**

Deity	Alignment	Domains
Gregory, warrior god of mundanity	Lawful good	Law, Protection, Strength, War
Guftas, horse god of justice	Lawful good	Good, Law, Strength, Travel
Lucied, paladin god of justice	Lawful good	Destruction, Good, Protection, War
Simor, fighter god of protection	Lawful good	Good, Protection, Strength, War
Ayala, naiad god of water	Neutral good	Life, Magic, Water, Wild
Pabs Beerbeard, dwarf god of drink	Neutral good	Good, Life, Strength, Wild
Rucks, monk god of pragmatism	Neutral good	Good, Law, Protection, Travel
Vanya, centaur god of nature	Neutral good	Good, Strength, Travel, Wild
Brushtwig, pixie god of creativity	Chaotic good	Chaos, Good, Trickery, Wild
Camilla, tiefling god of fire	Chaotic good	Fire, Good, Magic, Protection
Chavi, wandering god of stories	Chaotic good	Chaos, Knowledge, Trickery
Chort, dwarf god of optimism	Chaotic good	Good, Life, Travel, Wild
Ivan Ivanovitch, bear god of strength	Chaotic good	Chaos, Strength, War, Wild
Krunch, barbarian god of destruction	Chaotic good	Destruction, Good, Strength, War
Sir Cakes, dwarf god of freedom	Chaotic good	Chaos, Good, Strength
Mikolash, scholar god of knowledge	Lawful neutral	Knowledge, Law, Magic, Protection
Raphael, monk god of retribution	Lawful neutral	Death, Law, Protection, Travel
Declan, god of fire	True neutral	Destruction, Fire, Knowledge, Magic
Mammon, golem god of endurance	True neutral	Knowledge, Magic, Protection, Strength
Kurai, shaman god of nature	True neutral	Air, Earth, Fire, Water
Amanita, druid god of decay	Chaotic neutral	Chaos, Destruction, Life, Wild
Antimony, elf god of necromancy	Chaotic neutral	Death, Knowledge, Life, Magic
Clockwork, elf god of time	Chaotic neutral	Chaos, Magic, Trickery, Travel
Diplo, doll god of destruction	Chaotic neutral	Chaos, Destruction, Strength, War
Lord Khallus, fighter god of pride	Chaotic neutral	Chaos, Strength, War
Celeano, sorcerer god of deception	Chaotic neutral	Chaos, Magic, Protection, Trickery
Murdoc, god of mercenaries	Chaotic neutral	Destruction, Knowledge, Travel, War
Ribo, halfling god of trickery	Chaotic neutral	Chaos, Trickery, Water
Tak, orc god of war	Lawful evil	Law, Strength, Trickery, War
Theodolus, sorcerer god of ambition	Neutral evil	Evil, Knowledge, Magic, Trickery
Daeghul, demon god of slaughter	Chaotic evil	Destruction, Evil, Magic, War

## Chapter 7

# What Makes Rise Different?

If you have played other tabletop roleplaying games, you may wonder what makes Rise unique. Rise has five fundamental principles that differentiate it from other TTRPGs: minimal resource management, simultaneous combat, optional complexity, unbounded scaling, and a bounded action economy.

### Minimal Resource Management

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Many games make use of resources like mana, spell slots, or timed cooldowns to limit how often characters can use their abilities. These systems have fundamental problems that undercut the fun and flow of a TTRPG, and Rise essentially does not use resources to limit character ability usage. In Rise, characters can cast spells or use special attacks any number of times in a row without consuming resources.

Some systems have resources that are designed to ebb and flow in the course of a typical combat. You might expend mana to use a powerful spell, and then regain mana over time by using weaker spells or fulfilling certain conditions. Alternately, you might use a spell and then wait some number of in-game turns before you can use that same spell again. This can be fiddly to track and hard to recover from if you forget what happened to your resource pool, which is why this approach is more common in video games than in TTRPGs. More importantly, this system has no clear way to handle ability usage outside of combat. It effectively gives unlimited ability usage when time is no obstacle, but only in an awkward and convoluted way. This category of system is unsuitable for Rise because it is too fiddly in combat and doesn't make sense out of combat.

Some systems have finite-use resources that are tied to the expenditure of in-game time, such as taking long rests, or session breaks. You might spend a spell slot to use a powerful spell, and then be unable to cast that spell again until your character rests for some period of time. This can be manageable from a complexity perspective if the number of unique resources is small. However, it can get dangerously convoluted if characters have a large number of separate or partially interchangeable resource pools, such as using separate pools for individual spell levels.

The real problem is that this limitation requires you to make your decisions based on not just the current situation, but also on your prediction of all future situations you will encounter before you have the opportunity to rest. This contributes significantly to the tactical complexity of deciding each individual action in combat,

which slows down the pace of the game. It is also punishing to newer players who have less experience with the metagaming required to deduce how many resources an individual fight is worth. This strategic complexity is compounded if hit points are treated as an additional resource, since you now have to trade off the potential impact of one limited resource against another limited resource.

Optimization of resource usage can be unintuitive and out of character, but failure to correctly manage your resources can leave you with no useful abilities remaining. This concern can be exacerbated if some characters are extremely resource-intensive while others have no meaningful resources to track. No one likes being forced to hide from a difficult fight or take only insignificant actions while your more resource-savvy or resource-independent allies continue using dramatic and powerful abilities. It can also add stress to the party dynamics when one character frequently asks for long rests after fights because they expended resources and no one else needs to rest. This category of system is unsuitable for Rise because it creates complexity in ways that detract from the fun and narrative of a game instead of adding to it.

Rise does not use resources to limit normal actions in combat. The vast majority of spells, special martial attacks, and other abilities that affect enemies or your environment can be used any number of times. There are a small number of abilities with one-round cooldowns, and a universal ability that can only be used once per short rest. However, there is no time tracking in the system longer than "next round". Small cooldowns are a fine-grained balancing tool that allow characters to have powerful abilities which would have detrimental effects for the game if they could be used every turn.

Rise does use a single universal resource, called "fatigue", that recovers based on long rests. This allows some opportunity for characters to invest extra effort into specific difficult fights, and to become tired after a long day. Normal damage taken during a fight is easily recovered after a ten minute rest. This means that you typically don't have to track state between fights. However, a GM can prevent that rest time with multiple sequential fights to increase difficulty and drama.

Overall, Rise uses resource limitations very sparingly. This allows it to gain some of their benefits while avoiding the detrimental effects that come from making resource limitations a fundamental part of the system.



## Simultaneous Combat



In most TTRPGs, combat takes place in a series of turns. When your turn comes up, you take all of your actions, and then you wait through everyone else's turn until your turn comes again. This system has one foundational disadvantage: it is very, very slow. Rise uses a simultaneous combat system that dramatically increases the pace of combat.

Imagine a typical 4-5 player game with 1-2 enemy groups using a traditional turn-based initiative system. In this scenario, you have to wait through about 5 turns before it comes back to your turn. This number can increase significantly in large-scale fights. Each of those 5 or so turns can meaningfully change the battlefield situation on its own by moving, weakening, or defeating various enemies and allies. The state of the battlefield at the end of last turn is often drastically different than the state of that battlefield at the start of your new turn. Player coordination can be challenging, since they must coordinate in the specific order assigned by the initiative system, and enemy turns can intervene to ruin coordinated plans.

In theory, every player should accurately track the unfolding battlefield state through each of the intervening turns. That would mean everyone would know what to do when their turn comes up. In practice, many players find that difficult or impossible. Instead, at the start of each of their turns, they ask or try to figure out how the situation has changed. Not everyone asks this explicitly, but it must always be analyzed anew.

Once a player understands the current battlefield state, they can finally decide their actions. This typically involves both movement and any number of sequential attacks, so there are many factors to consider. Everyone else must wait and do nothing while this happens. Once the active player has decided their actions, those

actions must be fully rolled and resolved before combat can proceed. Even the next player in the initiative order may not be able to make accurate plans during this time, since the die rolls can change those plans. All of this combines to make even short combats take an hour or more, and six-person adventuring groups can feel dangerously bloated.

Rise works differently. Combat in Rise is broken up into two phases: the movement phase and the action phase. During the movement phase, all creatures move simultaneously, and no attacks are possible. Characters can declare certain simple reactive movements like “stay adjacent to this enemy” to ensure that they end up in a reasonable position regardless of enemy actions. If the movements of characters conflict in impossible ways, initiative checks can temporarily force a linear order of resolution. Each player declares their own actions in an arbitrary order as soon as they decide them, so people are not forced to wait and do nothing while slower players contemplate their choices. Player coordination is easy, since all actions are happening together.

During the action phase, players resolve their actions sequentially, but in an arbitrary order of the players' choice. This allows slower players to make their decisions when they are ready, while allowing faster players to resolve their actions first. Since movement during the action phase is rare, and enemies cannot unexpectedly move, players are typically able to decide their actions much more quickly and easily even when they have a large number of unique abilities to choose from. Once all players have resolved their actions, they learn what their enemies did. Those actions all resolve simultaneously, so enemy actions cannot interrupt player actions and vice versa. Attackers are always responsible for rolling instead of using “saving throws” or similar mechanics that force defenders to roll dice. All of this means that players can choose and resolve their actions simultaneously and efficiently, minimizing total time spent in combat while still allowing significant tactical complexity.

The start of each phase still requires a general assessment from all acting players about the current state of the battlefield, which takes just as much time as the assessment in a classic initiative system. However, the time required for this tactical analysis only increases marginally as the number of players and enemies in the game increases. This allows Rise to handle large player counts or large enemy hordes without becoming glacially slow. Combat in Rise flows by quickly, making it much easier to balance time between combat and non-combat encounters within the same game session - or to run through multiple separate, individually challenging combats without sacrificing the pace and energy of the game.

## Optional Complexity

Many games operate at a consistent level of complexity. Many rules-light games are always simple, and many rules-dense games are always complex. This is a perfectly reasonable design philosophy. Among other benefits, it makes it easy to know what to expect from the game, which helps give the game a well-defined niche.

Rise is designed to allow players to choose their own level of complexity. This broadens its potential audience by allowing people

with very different play styles or tolerances for complexity to enjoy the same game together. This goal is manifested in several key ways in Rise's design:

- Core gameplay is designed to be simple.
- Character creation is deeply interconnected.
- Complexity is not tied to narrative roles.
- Character power does not require complexity.

### Simple Core Gameplay

The core gameplay loop must be simple. You can contribute in combat by relying on one or two standard attacks that you use in all circumstances. In narrative situations, you can just roll the skills you have trained, and ignore other options. Engaging with the system more deeply than that is a choice, not a requirement.

### Interconnected Character Creation

Character creation and build optimization is a better place to store complexity. Creating a Rise character involves a number of decisions, each of which can have nuanced ramifications on other aspects of the system. If you are just trying to build a character that matches a desired narrative, you can generally approach each decision in isolation.

For example, you can decide that your character is intelligent and agile but not very strong or durable, because that is the concept you want. That decision has consequences, such as changing how many trained skills you have and what your defenses are. If you approach each decision sequentially, each one is relatively easy to make, and doesn't require deep system knowledge. On the other hand, trying to mathematically optimize a character requires thinking about many aspects of the system at once. This results in a system that is easy to learn but hard to master.

Even for simple characters, the process of character creation is still one of the most complicated aspects of Rise. That is why Rise provides (or will provide, once that section is done) an extensive selection of premade characters for a wide variety of narrative archetypes. Each premade character includes advice for how to play that character and level them up. The premade characters make the system more accessible to people who don't want to deal with the complexity of creating a character from scratch.

### Complexity and Narrative

Complexity and simplicity should not be directly connected to a character's concept or narrative. For example, it would be a bad idea to define a system where martial characters are simple and spellcasters are complicated. Both of those are rich and evocative narrative constructs. Many people who don't enjoy complexity will want to play spellcasters, and many people who enjoy complexity will want to play martial characters. Gameplay complexity must be more finely tuned and localized than those sweeping strokes.

In Rise, gameplay complexity is generally generated by acquiring a large number of increasingly situational abilities. Every class has some archetypes that grant additional abilities known and some archetypes that grant additional passive abilities. If you like having a lot of unique abilities, you can have a high Intelligence to maximize your insight points, and focus on learning spells and

maneuvers that attack your enemies or have situational effects. If you like minimizing complexity, you can instead choose archetypes or learn spells that simply grant you passive benefits, and focus on one or two standard attacks that you specialize in. Some feats give you new abilities and new circumstances to pay attention to that make you more effective, while others simply increase your passive statistics and defenses.

Rise specifically handles complexity for martial characters and spellcasters slightly differently. Martial characters in Rise typically have fairly simple individual abilities. However, they can use those abilities with a variety of meaningfully different weapons. A martial character with four unique attacks and three different weapons has twelve different options in combat. In addition, martial characters can typically make better use of universal abilities, such as shoving and grappling.

Spellcasters have more complex and varied individual abilities. They also tend to have more abilities that have significant narrative effects. However, their abilities are more isolated. There is no spellcaster equivalent of martial weapons that would multiply their number of distinct abilities in combat. The result of this design is that both martial characters and spellcasters can be very simple or very complicated. However, they approach complexity in different ways, ensuring that they feel narratively distinct.

### Complexity and Power

All of this customization of complexity would be mostly pointless if complexity was strongly correlated with character power. If exceptionally complicated or hyper-specialized characters were obviously and consistently more effective than other characters, it would push everyone to use those characters. Rise structures the tradeoffs between gaining raw power and gaining additional options balanced enough that neither is always superior.

There will always be some benefit from build optimization and system mastery. Players who are deeply familiar with Rise will be able to build characters with more relevant strengths and fewer relevant weaknesses. However, the gap between optimized characters and "normal" characters is limited. There will always be specific contexts where one character's mechanics are superior to another's. For example, a specialized defensive melee character may excel in a duel in a confined space. However, it may be irrelevant against cavalry archers on an open field. Characters in Rise cannot drastically change their capabilities each day, so they will always have moments to shine and moments of weakness.



## Unbounded Scaling



Some systems use bounded bonuses for accuracy or other game statistics. Bounded scaling means that every character of the same power level - or in some systems, of any power level - has a similar chance of success with any given skill check or attack roll. This can frequently cause narratively inappropriate and even comical events, and Rise explicitly rejects this philosophy.

Imagine a typical party of four players, with one character being exceptionally skilled at a particular task. Perhaps the rogue is exceptionally skilled at lying, or a barbarian is exceptionally skilled at climbing. If “exceptionally skilled” only means that they have a +5 bonus on a d20 compared to +0 from the rest of the party, the exceptionally skilled character will only get the best result in the party half the time. The other half of the time, some other character with no relevant skills will meet or exceed the skilled character’s result - sometimes by a dramatic margin. When failure compared to rank amateurs happens this often, it becomes hard to take seriously the idea that any character can be exceptionally skilled at anything.

Rise characters can have dramatic statistical differences between each other, even at low levels. It uses a d10 as the fundamental die, which makes every bonus more significant. In addition, a 1st-level character can easily reach a +6 bonus with a skill check that is particularly relevant to their character. This means that a skilled character can beat a party of rank amateurs 80% of the time, and at higher levels their success becomes completely guaranteed. Likewise, the difference in Mental defense between a powerful sorcerer and a cowardly rogue can allow mind-affecting attacks to almost always hit a rogue while almost never hitting the sorcerer. These statistical differences do not always grow with level, but they remain significant at every level.

One advantage of systems with bounded scaling is that it is easier to guarantee that every character is relevant in any situation. Even if your character has no useful abilities of any kind, you might sometimes succeed on important actions through sheer luck. However, this design philosophy often breaks the symmetry between magical and non-magical characters. Magical characters can often use extremely specific and powerful abilities that are impossible for nonmagical characters to duplicate. If magical characters also have similar odds of success with all generic mechanics of the game, they will almost certainly have far more influence over the narrative of the game than any nonmagical character can hope to match.

The philosophy of Rise is that it’s okay for some characters to be irrelevant in specific contexts. It’s good to give people time in the spotlight where their character’s abilities help solve the specific problem that the group is facing when no other character could. Rise encourages that, and makes it impossible for one character to be relevant in *all* contexts. Each character has their own strengths and weaknesses, and if you try to be good at everything, you’ll fall behind people who specialize in a particular area. This will naturally rotate the spotlight between different characters, allowing each player to feel relevant and important in turn.

This dramatic scaling is also used to govern the power of characters over time, in addition to the power of characters relative to each other. Rise attempts to model a massive power range for player characters. They are expected to start their journeys at level 1 as little more than commoners, and by level 21 they are effectively demigods who can alter the fate of entire worlds. This is a critical part of the narrative fabric of Rise, and it is reflected in the statistics and abilities of characters. If a level 1 kobold posed even a tiny threat to a level 21 character, the mechanics of the game would sabotage the purported narrative of power and growth. In Rise, overall character power doubles approximately every two to three levels. The system takes some care to avoid bloating numbers to unwieldy levels on this journey, and the use of the d10 as the standard die helps immensely.

## Bounded Action Economy

It is dangerous to give characters too many actions each turn. Each additional action a character can take increases how difficult it is for a player to decide what to do on their turn. In addition, each additional action increases the complexity of the change between the start of the turn and the end of the turn. This is especially risky with Rise’s simultaneous initiative system, which combines the actions taken by all characters into a single resolution process.

Rise places significant limitations on how many relevant actions each character can take on their turn. Generally, characters can only move during the movement phase and then take one significant action each turn. Some characters can use a minor action to accomplish something useful. However, that essentially marks the end of action economy scaling, even up to the maximum level.

Detrimental effects that could deny actions are also heavily limited. Total action denial effects are only usable by high level characters, and even then they only work against weak enemies or enemies that have already been significantly damaged. Taking actions is

fun, and sitting quietly while everyone else does things can be very frustrating. Similarly, completely removing an enemy's ability to act can easily remove the tension from a fight before it's actually over.

# Appendix A

## Glossary

**ability:** An ability is a generic term for any unusual property a creature has or any special actions it can take to cause particular effects. Spells, racial traits, and the benefits from class [archetypes](#) can all be called abilities.

**ability rank:** An ability's [rank](#) is typically the minimum [character rank](#) required to learn or use the ability. If this is unclear, such as for unique monster abilities, use the creature's character rank.

**ability tag:** An ability tag describes the effects of an ability. For details, see [Ability Tags](#), page ??.

**accuracy:** The bonus added to an [attack roll](#). For details, see [Accuracy](#), page ??.

**action phase:** The action phase is the second of two [phases](#) in a combat [round](#). During the action phase, creatures can [attack](#), cast [spells](#), and take other major combat actions.

**alchemical item:** An alchemical item is any item created using the Craft (alchemy) skill. This includes firebombs, potions, and many other items.

**alignment:** Your alignment represents your general morality in broad terms. For details, see [Alignment](#), page ??.

**allied group:** Your allied group is the set of allies that you can coordinate your actions with. This group resolves its actions together, separately from other combatants. For details, see [Resolving Actions](#), page ??.

**ally:** An ally is any creature you consider an ally, and who also considers you an ally, excluding yourself. For details, see [Allies and Enemies](#), page ??.

**archetype:** An archetype is a collection of related abilities from a particular class. Each class has five archetypes. For details, see [Archetypes](#), page ??.

**archetype rank:** Your rank in an archetype determines which abilities from that archetype you have access to, and the power of those abilities. Your rank in any given archetype cannot exceed your [character rank](#). For details, see [Archetype Ranks](#), page ??.

**area:** An area ability has a [point of origin](#) and affects all valid targets within some distance from that location. There are six standard area sizes: Tiny (5 ft.), Small (15 ft.), Medium (30 ft.), Large (60 ft.), Huge (90 ft.), and Gargantuan (120 ft.). For details, see [Area Shapes](#), page ??, and [Area Types](#), page 11.

**armor:** Armor is a form of equipment that protects your body from harm. There are two kinds of armor: [body armor](#), which you

wear on your body, and [shields](#), which you wield in a hand. For details, see [Armor](#), page ??.

**astral beacon:** An area with an astral beacon is easier to [teleport](#) to using long-distance teleportation abilities. For details, see [Astral Beacons](#), page ??.

**attack:** Any ability that requires an [attack roll](#) is an attack, even if it is used in a non-harmful way.

**attack result:** An attack result is the total you get on an [attack roll](#), after taking into account any bonuses or penalties that apply to the roll.

**attack roll:** To make an attack roll, roll 1d10 + your [accuracy](#) with the attack. If the result equals or exceeds the target's [defense](#), the attack succeeds. Some attacks, especially damaging area abilities, have effects even on a failed roll. For details, see [Attack Rolls](#), page ??.

**attended:** An attended item is an item currently being held or carried by a creature. Some abilities can only affect [unattended](#) items.

**attribute:** An attribute represents a character's capacity in a wide range of areas. There are six attributes: [Strength](#), [Dexterity](#), [Constitution](#), [Intelligence](#), [Perception](#), and [Willpower](#).

**attune:** Some abilities last as long as you attune to them. Attuning to an ability costs an [attunement point](#) that you cannot recover as long as you maintain that attunement. For details, see [Attuned Abilities](#), page ??.

**attuned:** If you are attuned to an ability, you have invested an [attunement point](#) in it to maintain its effect. For details, see [Attuned Abilities](#), page ??.

**attunement point:** Attunement points allow you to [attune](#) to effects such as spells or items. For details, see [Attunement Points](#), page ??, and [Attuned Abilities](#), page ??.

**barding:** Armor designed for non-humanoid creatures is called barding. The Armor defense bonus provided by barding is 2 lower than normal. For details, see [Barding](#), page ??.

**base class:** Your base [class](#) grants you a variety of benefits. You always have a single base class, even if you are a multiclass character. For details, see [Base Class](#), page ??.

**base speed:** Each size category has a base speed that indicates how far creatures of that size category can generally move. For details, see [Base Speed](#), page ??.

**brawling accuracy:** Your brawling accuracy is your [accuracy](#)

with [Brawling](#) abilities. It uses your Strength instead of your Perception to determine your accuracy. For details, see [Brawling Accuracy](#), page ??.

**brawling attack:** A brawling attack uses your [brawling accuracy](#) instead of your normal accuracy. For details, see [Brawling Accuracy](#), page ??.

**briefly:** An effect that lasts briefly is called a brief effect. A brief effect lasts through the end of the next round after the effect was applied.

**bright illumination:** In an area with bright illumination, creatures can see clearly. Any effect which creates bright illumination in an area also creates enough light for [dim illumination](#) in twice that area. For details, see [Vision and Light](#), page ??.

**brilliant illumination:** In an area with brilliant illumination, creatures can see clearly. No shadows exist within an area of brilliant illumination. Any effect which creates brilliant illumination in an area also creates enough light for [dim illumination](#) in twice that area. For details, see [Vision and Light](#), page ??.

**body armor:** Body armor is a form of [armor](#) that you wear on your body. For details, see [Armor](#), page ??.

**broken:** A broken object is damaged and unsuitable for use, though it retains its general structure and can be repaired. For details, see [Broken Objects](#), page ??.

**burrow speed:** A creature with a burrow speed can move at that speed through solid ground. For details, see [Movement Modes](#), page ??.

**burst:** A burst is a type of area that an ability can have (see [Area Types](#), page 11). A burst ability has an immediate effect on all valid targets within an area.

**cantrip:** Some [mystic spheres](#) have minor spells called cantrips. Anyone who has access to a mystic sphere knows all cantrips from that sphere.

**carrying capacity:** Your carrying capacity defines the amount of weight you can carry without penalty. For details, see [Weight Limits](#), page ??.

**character level:** Your character level is your total level, including levels from all of your classes. Whenever text refers to your “level”, without specifying a particular kind of level, it means your character level.

**character rank:** A character’s rank is a broad categorization of its capabilities, ranging from 0 to 7. Character rank is based on level, as defined in [Table ??: Character Advancement and Gaining Levels](#), page ??.

It is also listed in the base class table for each class, since it determines a character’s maximum [archetype rank](#) (see [Archetype Ranks](#), page ??).

**chain:** An ability can specify that it chains a certain number of times. The chain starts from any primary target of the ability. Each chain allows you to choose an additional secondary target for the ability. That target must be within 15 foot [range](#) of the previous target in the chain, it must not already be a target of the ability. You must have [line of sight](#) to each chained target. However, you do not need [line of effect](#) to them, and they can be beyond the ability’s original range.

You can chain to objects if the ability can normally affect objects.

However, they must be well-defined objects that are Gargantuan or smaller, so you can’t chain off of the ground.

**check:** A check is a roll that you make to try to accomplish a task. If the result of your roll, including your modifier, is high enough, you succeed. Otherwise, you fail. For details, see [Making Checks](#), page 4.

**class:** A character’s class determines their fundamental source of power and many of their abilities. For details, see [Classes](#), page ??.

**class skill:** Each [class](#) has an associated set of class skills that members of that class often know. Your [base class](#) automatically grants you training with a specific number of skills from this list. For details, see [Skills](#), page ??.

**climb speed:** A creature with a climb speed can move at that speed while climbing, and does not suffer penalties while doing so. For details, see [Movement Modes](#), page ??.

**close range:** Weapons have two [range limits](#): close range and [long range](#). Attacks within a weapon’s close range have no penalty. For details, see [Weapon Range Limits](#), page ??.

**combat style:** A combat style is a collection of [maneuvers](#) that some classes gain access to. For details, see [Combat Styles](#), page ??.

**common language:** Common languages are languages that are widely spoken. They are described in [Table ??: Common Languages](#), page ??.

**concealment:** Concealment represents effects which make a target harder to see, such as shadowy lighting. All [targeted](#) attacks against a creature or object with concealment from you have a 20% [miss chance](#). For details, see [Concealment](#), page ??.

**condition:** A condition is an effect that lasts on a creature until it is removed. Most conditions are standard [debuffs](#). Player characters can remove conditions with a [short rest](#), or with special abilities like [recover](#) (see [Recover](#), page ??). For details, see [Ability Durations](#), page ??.

**Constitution:** Constitution is an [attribute](#) that measures your health and stamina. For details, see [Constitution](#), page 23.

**corpse:** A corpse is the inanimate, deceased body of a once-living creature. If a corpse is [destroyed](#), it can no longer be treated as a corpse.

**cover:** Cover represents any obstacle that physically prevents you from striking your target, such as a tree or intervening creature. It grants a +2 bonus to [Armor](#), [Brawn](#), and [Reflex](#) defenses. For details, see [Cover](#), page ??.

**critical hit:** An attack that beats the target’s defense by 10 or more gets a critical hit. On a critical hit, a damaging attack rolls twice as many damage dice and doubles all flat damage modifiers, unless otherwise noted. For details, see [Critical Hits](#), page ??.

**critical success:** A [check](#) that beats the [difficulty value](#) by 10 or more gets a critical success. Some abilities have special effects on a critical success.

**damage:** Taking damage reduces a creature’s [hit points](#). For details, see [Taking Damage](#), page ??.

**darkvision:** A creature with darkvision can see perfectly in



complete darkness. For details, see Darkvision, page 23.

**dead:** A dead creature's soul leaves its body. Dead creatures cannot benefit from normal or magical healing, but they can be restored to life via magic (see Resurrection, page ??). A dead body decays normally unless magically preserved.

**debuff:** A debuff is a negative effect on a creature. Many debuffs are applied as [conditions](#), but some last for longer or shorter times. For a list of debuffs, see Circumstances and Debuffs, page ??.

**deep attunement:** A deep attunement ability is an [Attune](#) ability with two additional restrictions. First, it costs an extra [attunement point](#) to [attune](#) to. Second, these attunement points are not recovered until you take a [short rest](#), even if the attunement is released. For details, see Deep Attunement, page ??.

**defeat:** A creature is defeated when it stops being able to continue fighting, such as when it is killed.

**defeated:** A creature is defeated if it dies or is incapacitated for an extended period of time (such as by being knocked unconscious). Defeating a creature generally requires inflicting a [vital wound](#) on it.

**defense:** A defense is a static number which represents how difficult you are to affect with attacks. There are five defenses: Armor, Brawn, Fortitude, Reflex, and Mental. For details, see Defenses, page ??.

**destroyed:** A destroyed object has been damaged to the point where it is completely beyond repair. For details, see Destroyed Objects, page ??.

**Dexterity:** Dexterity is an [attribute](#) that measures your hand-eye coordination, agility, and reflexes. For details, see Dexterity, page 24.

**dice pool:** A dice pool is a collection of dice that are all rolled together and summed to find a result. Damage typically uses a dice pool.

**difficult terrain:** Difficult terrain costs an additional 5 feet of movement to move out of. For details, see Difficult Terrain, page ??.

**difficulty value:** The difficulty value of a [check](#) is the check result required to succeed. It can be abbreviated as "DV".

**dim illumination:** In an area with dim illumination, it is more difficult to see clearly. Creatures and objects within this area have [concealment](#), which can allow creatures to make Stealth checks to hide (see Stealth, page ??). For details, see Vision and Light, page ??.

**disease:** An affliction of the body, causing a steady deterioration over time. Diseases are not mechanically defined in Rise, though they still exist in the narrative of the world.

**dismiss:** When an ability is dismissed, it ends and all of its lingering effects are removed. Any [magical](#) ✨ ability with a duration can normally be dismissed as a [free action](#), but [mundane](#) abilities cannot be dismissed. For details, see Dismissal, page 11.

**dual strike:** A dual strike is a [strike](#) made with two weapons at once. You treat both weapons as a single combined weapon, adding together most of their statistics. For details, see Dual Strikes, page ??.

**elite:** Elite monsters are much more dangerous than standard

monsters.

**elite action:** Elite monsters can take a special extra action every round called an elite action. Every elite monster has at least one special ability which requires an elite action to use.

**emanation:** An emanation is a type of area that an ability can have (see Area Types, page 11). An emanation ability has effects within an area for the duration of the ability. It emanates from a specific creature or object, rather than a location. If that creature or object moves, the emanation moves with it.

**enemy:** An enemy is any creature you consider to be an enemy, excluding yourself. For details, see Allies and Enemies, page ??.

**enhancement bonus:** Enhancement bonuses do not stack with other enhancement bonuses, even if they are from different sources. For details, see Stacking Rules, page ??.

**exclude:** Some effects allow you to exclude specific targets that would normally be affected by your abilities. A creature or object excluded from an ability is not considered a target of the ability, even if it is within the ability's area or otherwise would normally be affected by the ability.

**exotic weapon:** A rare few weapons are considered exotic weapons. They are unusually difficult to wield, and even being [proficient](#) with the associated [weapon group](#) does not grant you the ability to use an exotic weapon. Some class abilities grant proficiency with exotic weapons.

**explode:** When you roll a 10 on an [attack roll](#), the die can explode. If it does, you roll it again and add the two results together to determine the total. For details, see Exploding Attacks, page ??.

**extended check:** An extended check is a [check](#) that represents your character taking some action over a prolonged period of time. You cannot use abilities like [desperate exertion](#) to modify the results of an extended check. If your modifier changes over the course of the task, use your lowest modifier at any point during the task.

**extra damage:** Extra damage is additional damage added on top of an attack's normal damage. For details, see Extra Damage, page ??.

**failure chance:** If you have a failure chance with an ability, you have a random chance to fail. Failure chances are rolled before [miss chances](#) and [attack rolls](#). An ability that fails on a target has no effect on that target, even if the ability would normally deal damage on a miss. If you have multiple failure chances, only the highest one applies.

**falling damage:** When a creature or object falls 10 or more feet, it takes falling damage based on its [weight category](#). This falling damage is also dealt to the surface it lands on, but not to any other creature. A Medium weight creature takes 1d8 falling damage per 10 feet fallen (maximum 30d8). For details, see Falling Damage, page ??.

**fatigue level:** A creature takes a [fatigue penalty](#) if its fatigue level exceeds your [fatigue tolerance](#). For details, see Fatigue, page ??.

**fatigue penalty:** You take a penalty to [accuracy](#) and [checks](#) equal to your [fatigue level](#) – your [fatigue tolerance](#). When your fatigue penalty reaches –5, you fall [unconscious](#) until your fatigue penalty is reduced below –5. For details, see Fatigue Penalty, page

??.

**fatigue tolerance:** Your fatigue tolerance measures the maximum [fatigue level](#) you can reach before you suffer a [fatigue penalty](#). For details, see [Fatigue Tolerance](#), page ??.

**fly speed:** A creature with a fly speed has the ability to fly through the air. Its speed is the distance it covers in a single [movement](#). Most creatures suffer a -4 penalty to their Armor and Reflex defenses while flying. For details, see [Aerial Movement](#), page ??.

**forced movement:** A forced movement ability can cause a creature to move unwillingly. There are two types of forced movement: [push](#) and [fling](#). Although [teleportation](#) can cause a creature's location to change unwillingly, it is not considered a type of forced movement.

**free action:** A free action is one of the four action types (see [Actions](#), page ??). Each round, you can take any number of free actions. Free actions can be taken in any phase. For details, see [Free Actions](#), page ??.

**free hand:** A free hand is a hand or similarly dexterous appendage that is not currently being used for any purpose. Many abilities require a free hand to use. You cannot use the same hand for two different purposes in the same [phase](#).

**glancing blow:** When you miss on any attack by 2 or less, it is called a glancing blow. Whenever you get a glancing blow with a damaging attack, you deal half damage. For details, see [Glancing Blows](#), page ??.

**glide speed:** A creature with a glide speed can glide through the air. It cannot fly upwards, but it can travel forward while it descends, and it descends at a significantly reduced rate. Most creatures suffer a -4 penalty to their Armor and Reflex defenses while gliding. For details, see [Gliding](#), page ??.

**grappling:** You are grappling if either a creature is [grappled](#) by you or you are [grappled](#) by a creature. For details, see [Grappling](#), page ??.

**grounded:** A grounded creature or object is standing on or otherwise supported by a stable surface that can support its weight. The surface must be at least as large as the creature or object resting on it. Some effects only work if the creature or object is grounded by a particular material, such as stone.

**hardness:** Whenever a creature or object with hardness takes damage, it reduces that damage by an amount equal to its hardness. Normally, only objects have hardness. For details, see [Breaking Objects](#), page ??.

**heavy undergrowth:** A space overrun with thick bushes, vines, and similar natural obstacles has heavy undergrowth. Heavy undergrowth provides [concealment](#) and is considered [difficult terrain](#).

**heavyweight:** A heavyweight object has a [weight category](#) that is one category larger than the object's [size category](#). For details, see [Weight Categories](#), page ??.

**height limit:** A height limit defines your maximum distance directly above an object at least two size categories larger than you that is free-standing and capable of supporting your weight. This is common for flying creatures (see [Flight](#), page ??).

**hit point:** Your hit points measure how hard you are to seriously

injure or kill. You lose hit points when you take damage. If you run out of hit points, you gain [vital wounds](#) when you take damage instead, which can cause you to die quickly. For details, see [Hit Points](#), page ??.

**ice crystal:** Ice crystals improve the effects of some spells from the [Cryomancy](#) mystic sphere. You can normally have a maximum of three ice crystals. At the end of each round, if you did not gain or spend any ice crystals that round, one of your ice crystals melts. For details, see [Cryomancy](#), page ??.

**immune:** Creatures treat effects they are immune to as if they did not exist. An creature cannot have or gain [conditions](#) or similar effects from sources it is immune to. For example, a creature that becomes immune to poison would remove all poisons affecting it.

**improvised weapon:** An improvised weapon is an object which could conceivably be used as a weapon, but which was not designed for that purpose. Common examples include doors and wine bottles. For details, see [Improvised Weapons](#), page ??.

**initiative:** When multiple creatures take mutually impossible actions simultaneously, such as racing to be the first one to a door, they must roll initiative checks to determine who completes the action first. Your initiative modifier is equal to your Dexterity. For details, see [Conflicting Actions](#), page ??.

**injury:** If your remaining hit points are at or below your [injury point](#), you are [injured](#) (see [Injury](#), page ??). For more long-term consequences of taking damage, see [Vital Wounds](#), page ??.

**insight point:** Insight points can be spent to gain additional abilities or proficiencies. For details, see [Insight Points](#), page ??.

**Intelligence:** Intelligence is an [attribute](#) that represents how well you learn and reason. For details, see [Intelligence](#), page 25.

**item rank:** Items have ranks indicating their approximate value and rarity. For details, see [Item Ranks](#), page ??.

**loose equipment:** Loose equipment is much more vulnerable to damage than ordinary equipment. For details, see [Loose Equipment](#), page ??.

**key attribute:** The key attribute for a skill is the attribute associated with that skill. For example, Climb is a Strength-based skill. Some skills, such as Persuasion, do not have a key attribute.

**fling:** A fling is a type of [forced movement](#). It represents being thrown backwards by a single large impact. If a creature or object being flung encounters an obstacle, it and the obstacle each take 1d8 damage per 10 feet of movement remaining. For details, see [Fling Effects](#), page ??.

**legacy item:** A legacy item is an item magically bonded to its bearer. As its bearer gains levels, it increases in power as well. For details, see [Legacy Items](#), page ??.

**light undergrowth:** A space with passable bushes, vines, and similar natural obstacles has light [undergrowth](#). Light undergrowth provides [concealment](#).

**lightweight:** A lightweight object has a [weight category](#) that is one category smaller than the object's [size category](#). For details, see [Weight Limits](#), page ??.

**line:** A line is an area shape that an ability can have (see [Area Shapes](#), page ??). A line-shaped area has a given length, width, and



height. Unless otherwise stated, a line's height is equal to its width.

**line of effect:** You cannot target something that you do not have line of effect to. Line of effect is blocked by solid obstacles, even invisible ones. For details, see Line of Effect, page ??.

**line of sight:** You cannot target something that you do not have line of sight to. Line of sight is blocked by any obstacle that blocks sight, even if that obstacle does not block physical passage. For details, see Line of Sight, page ??.

**long range:** Ranged weapons have two [range limits](#): [close range](#) and long range. Attacks beyond a weapon's [close range](#), but within its long range, have a -4 [longshot penalty](#). For details, see Weapon Range Limits, page ??.

**long rest:** A long rest represents eight hours of relaxation or sleep. It allows you to remove all of your [fatigue levels](#) and make progress towards healing a [vital wound](#). For details, see Long Rest, page ??.

**longshot penalty:** A longshot penalty is the penalty that you take for attacking outside of a weapon's [close range](#). It is normally a -4 [accuracy](#) penalty. For details, see Weapon Range Limits, page ??.

**magic source:** A magic source defines where a creature's [mystic spheres](#) come from. There are four magic sources: arcane, divine, nature, and pact. Sorcerers and wizards cast arcane spells, clerics and paladins cast divine spells, druids cast nature spells, and votives cast pact spells.

**magical:** A magical ability is an ability whose origin derives from magic. Examples include [spells](#), a dragon's ability to fly, and a paladin's ability to smite foes. For details, see Magical and Mundane Abilities, page 10.

**magical power:** Your magical power is your [power](#) with [magical](#) ✨ abilities. It is typically equal to half your level + your Willpower. For details, see Power, page ??.

**maneuver:** A maneuver is a type of [mundane](#) ability that some classes grant access to through particular combat styles. For details, see Combat Styles, page ??.

**manufactured weapon:** A manufactured weapon is a [weapon](#) that is external to its user's body. A [natural weapon](#) is not a manufactured weapon. Some abilities affect or require manufactured weapons instead of natural weapons.

**melee:** A melee ability affects targets in physical contact with its source. Typically, this involves touching a target or using a weapon that never leaves your grasp. Unless you are using a [Long](#) weapon, you can only make melee attacks against targets adjacent to you.

**metallic:** A creature is metallic if it is wearing metal armor or otherwise carrying a significant amount of exposed metal. This includes any [body armor](#) with a metal material type. It also includes exposed metal objects or parts of objects that are no more than two size categories smaller than the creature. This includes most weapons with any metallic components. It does not include creatures who have small amounts of metal safely stowed in larger containers, such as a common amount of coins or metallic tools stowed in a coin purse or backpack.

Similarly, an object is generally considered metallic if it has an exposed piece made of metal that is no more than two size

categories smaller than the object as a whole.

**midair:** Most creatures are [unsteady](#) (-2 [accuracy](#), *Armor, Brawn, Ref*) while they are in the air and unable to touch the ground and move normally. This applies even if the creature has a fly speed or glide speed. However, it does not apply to creatures who are native to the air, such as birds and monsters with no defined walk speed. It also does not apply to creatures who intentionally jump until after they begin falling, which happens at the end of the round. This means you can jump into the air during the movement phase and attack in midair during the action phase without becoming unsteady.

**minor action:** A minor action is one of the four action types (see Actions, page ??). You can take one minor action each [round](#) during the [action phase](#). For details, see Actions, page ??.

**miss chance:** If you have a miss chance with an [attack](#), you have a random chance to miss with the attack. You roll the miss chance first, and if it causes you to miss, you do not roll an ordinary attack roll. In general, only [targeted](#) attacks can have a miss chance. If you have multiple miss chances, only the highest one applies.

**move:** When you move, you usually travel a distance equal to your speed. See Movement and Positioning, page ??, for details. For specific [move actions](#), see Movement Abilities, page ??.

**move action:** A move action is one of the four action types (see Actions, page ??). You can use one move action during the [movement phase](#) of each round. Almost all move actions change your location on the battlefield. For details, see Movement and Positioning, page ??.

**movement mode:** A movement mode is a method of moving from one location to another. The most common mode is a [walk speed](#). For details, see Movement Modes, page ??.

**movement phase:** The movement phase is the first of two [phases](#) in a combat [round](#). During the movement phase, creatures can take [move actions](#) (see Movement and Positioning, page ??). The movement phase is followed by the [action phase](#).

**multiclass:** A multiclass character can gain access to [archetypes](#) and other abilities from multiple classes. For details, see Multiclass Characters, page ??.

**mundane:** A mundane ability does not originate from a magical source. Mundane abilities have a natural explanation, such as a weapon attack or a barbarian's rage. Unless otherwise indicated, all abilities are mundane.

**mundane power:** Your mundane power is your [power](#) with [mundane](#) abilities. It is typically equal to half your level + your Strength. For details, see Power, page ??.

**mystic sphere:** A mystic sphere is a collection of thematically related magical effects that includes both [spells](#) and [rituals](#). For details, see Mystic Spheres, page ??.

**natural weapon:** A natural weapon is a [weapon](#) that is part of a creature's body. For details, see Natural Weapons, page ??.

**object:** An object is something with physical substance that is incapable of meaningful motion or agency. Some objects, such as ordinary plants, are [living](#), but most objects are [nonliving](#).

**object manipulation:** The weight and accessibility of an object determines the action required to manipulate it. For details, see

Manipulating Objects, page ??.

**obstacle:** An obstacle is anything that blocks free movement. Normally, both large objects and **enemies** are obstacles, but **allies** are not. For details, see Obstacles, page ??.

**Perception:** Perception is an **attribute** that describes your ability to observe and be aware of your surroundings. For details, see Perception, page 27.

**phase:** A phase is part of the combat **round**. There are two phases: the **movement phase** and the **action phase**. For details, see Phases, page ??.

**planar rift:** A planar rift is a location where the boundaries between planes are unusually thin. Planar rifts can be used to travel between planes using the appropriate rituals. For details, see the Tome of Guidance.

**plane:** A plane is a distinct realm of existence. Except for the connections between planes through **planar rifts**, each plane is effectively an isolated universe, and different planes can obey different fundamental laws. For details, see the Tome of Guidance.

**point of origin:** A point of origin is the grid intersection, creature, or object that an area originates from. For details, see Point of Origin, page ??.

**poison:** Poisons attack Fortitude defense each round to cause debilitating effects or damage. For details, see Poison, page ??.

**poison stage:** Each **poison** progresses in a series of stages. Each stage inflicts a particular negative effect on the poisoned creature according to the poison's description. For details, see Poison, page ??.

**potion:** A potion is a magical liquid that is typically contained in a Fine vial. In general, drinking a potion requires a standard action. Potions cannot be safely mixed together without diluting their magic, so you cannot consume two potions with the same action.

**power:** Your power increases your damage, and can have other effects on specific abilities. For details, see Power, page ??.

**primary target:** Some abilities that affect multiple targets distinguish between their primary and secondary targets. For details, see Primary and Secondary Targets, page ??.

**proficient:** A creature must be proficient with weapons and armor to use them effectively. Using a weapon without proficiency imposes a -2 accuracy penalty. Wearing armor without proficiency halves its defense bonus and applies its Armor defense bonus as a penalty to **accuracy**.

**projectile:** A projectile is an object fired from a weapon at a target. Arrows and bolts are projectiles.

**push:** Push is a type of **forced movement**. It represents being pushed by a constant force. If a pushed creature encounters an obstacle, it stops moving with no negative consequences. For details, see Push Effects, page ??.

**range:** The range of an ability determines how far away it can be used. Unless otherwise noted, all abilities with a range require both **line of sight** and **line of effect** to the point of origin or to all targets. There are five standard ranges used for abilities: Short (30 ft.) range, Medium (60 ft.) range, Long (90 ft.) range, Distant (120 ft.) range, and Extreme (180 ft.) range (see Ability Range, page

10). Ranged weapons do not use those standard ranges, and instead use specific **range limits** (see Weapon Range Limits, page ??).

**range limit:** Ranged weapons have two **range limits** listed, with a slash between them, such as 60/180. The first number indicates the maximum range for a weapon's **close range**. The second number indicates the maximum range for a weapon's **long range**. For details, see Weapon Range Limits, page ??.

**ranged:** A ranged ability affects targets at a distance from its source. Ranged abilities always have a **range** at which they function.

**rank:** A rank is a general categorization of how powerful something is. There are several specific types of rank: **ability rank**, **archetype rank**, **character rank**, and **item rank**.

**rare language:** Rare languages are languages that are only spoken by rare or distant creatures or cultures. They are described in Table ??: Rare Languages, page ??.

**reactive attack:** A reactive attack is an **attack** that happens outside of your control. You cannot modify it in any way, and it is not improved if you are **empowered** (*add rank to damage*), **focused** (*roll attacks twice*), **maximized** (*deal max damage*), or **primed** (*always explode*). For example, you cannot use the **desperate exertion** ability to reroll a reactive attack, or add an extra target with a **Sweeping** weapon.

If you would make multiple reactive attacks during the same phase with the same ability against different targets, use the same attack roll for each target. A reactive attack can never be triggered by a reactive attack or reactive check.

**reactive check:** A reactive check is a **check** that you make during the resolution of another creature's actions. Just like a **reactive attack**, you cannot modify a reactive check in any way.

**repeat:** Some effects can repeat abilities at a later time. When an ability repeats, it normally keeps the same choices as the original ability, such as targets and affected area. Some effects change the choices for a repeated ability, such as only affecting a subset of targets.

All attacks made for a repeated ability are **reactive attacks**. They are made using the creature's statistics when it used the ability originally, not its current state. For example, imagine a creature had a +2 accuracy bonus when it initially used a repeating ability and then was knocked unconscious before the repeat occurs. Although the creature is unconscious and unable to attack, the repeat would still occur, and its accuracy bonus would still apply.

Some repeats specify their targets, such as repeating only for a particular creature. Other repeats affect the entire ability. If a repeat specifies a target, it works on that target regardless of the ability's original targeting restrictions.

**reroll:** Some abilities allow you to reroll a roll you just made. The most common ability that allows rerolling is **desperate exertion** (see Desperate Exertion, page ??). You must reroll the entire roll, not just one die from the roll (such as if the original roll **explodes**). It is possible to reroll the same roll multiple times with different abilities. Each reroll only grants one extra roll.

**resource:** A resource is something that a character can expend to gain a benefit. Most resources are shared between all types of char-

acters, though different characters can use them differently. There are two resources that are used during the character creation and leveling process: **insight points** and **trained skills**. In addition, there are two resources that are used during gameplay: **attunement points** and **fatigue level**.

**resurrection:** When a creature is resurrected, it comes back to life after being dead. For details, see Resurrection, page ??.

**ritual:** A ritual is a complex **magical** ✨ ceremony that has a specific effect when completed. For details, see Spell and Ritual Mechanics, page ??.

**round:** Combat takes place in a series of rounds, which represent about six seconds of action. Rounds are divided into two **phases**: the **movement phase**, and the **action phase**.

**secondary target:** Some abilities that affect multiple targets distinguish between their primary and secondary targets. For details, see Primary and Secondary Targets, page ??.

**scent:** A creature with the scent ability has an unusually good sense of smell. For details, see Scent, page 28.

**scrying sensor:** A scrying sensor is a magical construct created by some magical abilities. Scrying sensors are Fine objects resembling a human eye in size and shape, though they are **invisible**. Scrying sensors typically float in a fixed position in the air. They normally can't be moved by external forces without destroying the sensor. Unless otherwise specified, a scrying sensor's visual acuity is the same as that of a normal human, giving it a +0 bonus to the Awareness skill and similar checks.

**sentient:** A sentient creature is capable of experiencing emotions and perceiving its surroundings. Complex animals are sentient, but trees are not. Some creatures have incomplete minds that are capable of simulating intelligence without true sentience. These creatures are called **simple-minded**.

**shadowed:** A creature or object is shadowed if it is touching its shadow. That typically means it is in **dim illumination** or **bright illumination**, but not **brilliant illumination** or complete darkness. In addition, it must be **grounded** or otherwise touching a surface.

**shapeable:** Abilities with shapeable areas can customize the exact area they affect. For details, see Shapeable Areas, page ??.

**shapeshift:** Shapeshifting abilities change the physical form and abilities of a creature or object. For details, see Shapeshifting, page ??.

**shield:** Shields are a form of **armor** that you wield in a hand to protect you from harm. For details, see Armor, page ??.

**short rest:** A short rest represents ten minutes of relaxation. It allows you to regain lost **hit points** and any **attunement points** you released from **attunement**. For details, see Short Rest, page ??.

**size category:** A creature's size category indicates how large it is. There are nine size categories, from smallest to largest: Fine, Diminutive, Tiny, Small, Medium, Large, Huge, Gargantuan, Colossal. For details, see Size Categories, page ??.

**skill:** A skill represents your degree of talent with a particular non-combat aspect of the world. For example, the Climb skill represents how skilled you are at climbing. For details, see Skills,

page ??.

**somatic components:** Somatic components are hand motions required to cast arcane and pact spells. For details, see Ability Usage Components, page ??.

**something:** Many abilities say they target "something", generally within a **range**. This means they target one creature or object of your choice.

**space:** Your space is the area that your physical body occupies. For convenience, your space is measured in five-foot **squares**. Medium creatures occupy space equal to a single five-foot square. For details, see Size Categories, page ??.

**speed:** Your speed represents the number of feet you can move with a single movement (see Movement and Positioning, page ??).

**spell:** A spell is a discrete **magical** ✨ ability with combat-relevant effects. For details, see Spells, page 28.

**spell list:** The list of spells you can cast from a particular **magic source**. Each spell source has a specific spell list which is described at Spells, page 28. Most characters with the same spell sources have the same spell lists. However, some effects, such as a cleric's domains, can add spells to a character's individual spell list.

**square:** A square represents a single 5-ft. by 5-ft. space. Many areas are measured in squares for convenience.

**standard action:** A standard action is one of the four action types (see Actions, page ??). You can take one standard action each **round** during the **action phase**. For details, see Actions, page ??.

**Strength:** Strength is an **attribute** that measures your muscle and physical power. For details, see Strength, page 28.

**strike:** A strike is a single physical attack with a weapon. It is the most common type of attack. You can make a strike as a **standard action** in the **action phase**. For details, see Strikes, page ??.

**subdual damage:** Subdual damage is a special kind of damage that can't kill you. If you would gain a **vital wound** from subdual damage, you increase your **fatigue level** by three instead. For details, see Subdual Damage, page ??.

**suppressed:** Effects have no effect while they are suppressed.

**sustain:** Some abilities last as long as you sustain them. Each ability specifies a particular action that is required to sustain the ability, such as a **minor action**. When **Swift** abilities resolve during each **action phase**, the ability is dismissed unless you take the action to sustain the ability that round. For details, see Sustained Abilities, page ??.

**Swift:** An ability with this **ability tag** resolves its effects before other actions in the same phase. For details, see Swift Abilities, page ??.

**swim speed:** A creature with a swim speed can move at that speed while swimming, and being underwater does not make it **unsteady** (-2 *accuracy*, *Armor*, *Brawn*, *Ref*). For details, see Movement Modes, page ??.

**target:** A target is a creature or object directly affected by an ability. Many abilities only affect a single target, and some affect a specific number of targets. For details, see Ability Targeting, page



??.

**target square:** A target square is a particular [square](#) that an attack is made against. A target square is chosen to determine [cover](#) and [concealment](#) (see [Cover](#), page ??).

**targeted:** A targeted ability allows you to individually choose which creatures or objects are affected. Area abilities are not targeted, since you choose the area rather than individual targets. A [strike](#) is a targeted ability, as is any ability that causes you to immediately make a strike. Adding an extra target to an ability that causes you to make a strike means you hit an extra creature with the strike, not that the extra target also makes a strike.

**targeting proxy:** When you use an ability through a targeting proxy, you determine its targets as if you were in the targeting proxy's location instead of your own. This can allow you to affect targets outside your normal range. For details, see [Targeting Proxies](#), page ??.

**telepathy:** A creature with telepathy can mentally communicate with other creatures within a given range. For details, see [Telepathy](#), page ??.

**teleportation:** A creature or object that is teleported instantly leaves one location and arrives at another. Unless otherwise specified, teleportation requires [line of sight](#), [line of effect](#), and an unoccupied destination on stable ground. For details, see [Teleportation](#), page ??.

**thrown weapon:** A thrown weapon is a weapon designed to be thrown at a target. For details about attacking with thrown weapons, see [Basic Strike – Thrown](#), page ??.

**touch:** You can generally touch an adjacent creature with a [free hand](#) as a [free action](#), even an enemy. This has no mechanical effect by itself. Some abilities function on creatures you touch, so you can touch them as part of using those abilities. Some creatures cannot be touched, such as [intangible](#) creatures.

**trained skill:** If you are trained in a [skill](#), you have learned how to use it well. Your modifier with a trained skill is equal to 3 + the higher of its associated attribute (if any) and half your level. For details, see [Trained Skills](#), page ??.

**unaffected:** If you are unaffected by a particular effect, it doesn't do anything to you. Unlike being [immune](#), you do not automatically remove persistent effects that you are unaffected by, such as [conditions](#). This means you may still need to track that the effect is on you in case you stop being unaffected by it. For example, a barbarian is unaffected by conditions while raging, but those conditions have their full effects when the barbarian stops raging.

**unattended:** An unattended item is an item not being held or carried by a creature. Some abilities can only affect unattended items.

**undergrowth:** The presence of a significant amount of roots, bushes, and similar plants that can obstruct movement is called undergrowth. There are two kinds of undergrowth: [light undergrowth](#) and [heavy undergrowth](#). For details, see [Undergrowth](#), page ??.

**usage class:** The [usage class](#) of armor is a measure of how much effort it takes to use it. There are three usage classes: light, medium, and heavy. For details, see [Armor Usage Classes](#), page ??.

**verbal components:** Verbal components are words required to

cast most spells. For details, see [Ability Usage Components](#), page ??.

**vital wound:** A [vital wound](#) is a serious injury that inflicts negative effects on you. You gain one or more [vital wounds](#) when you take damage in excess of your hit points (see [Negative Hit Points](#), page ??). For details, see [Vital Wounds](#), page ??.

**vulnerable:** A vulnerable creature takes a –4 penalty to all defenses against whatever it is vulnerable to. For details, see [Vulnerable](#), page ??.

**wall:** A wall is an area shape that an ability can have (see [Area Shapes](#), page ??). A wall-shaped area has a length and height, but its width is not measured in squares.

**walk speed:** A creature's walk speed is a [movement mode](#) that determines how fast it can walk on land (see [Movement Modes](#), page ??). Most creatures have an average walk speed.

**weapon:** A weapon is an object used to inflict damage. Some creatures can treat parts of their body as weapons. For details, see [Weapons](#), page ??.

**weapon damage:** Each weapon defines the damage die or dice that it deals when you hit with it. Typically, weapon damage is dealt by [strikes](#) (see [Strikes](#), page ??). For details about the damage dealt by specific weapons, see [Weapons](#), page ??.

**weapon group:** A weapon group is a category of [weapons](#) with a similar design and fighting style. Some abilities grant you proficiency with or special abilities with particular weapon groups. For details, see [Weapon Groups](#), page ??.

**weapon tag:** A weapon tag describes the special effects of a weapon. For details, see [Weapon Tags](#), page ??.

**weight limit:** Your weight limits define the amount of weight you can carry or push without penalty. For details, see [Weight Limits](#), page ??.

**weight category:** The weight category of an object or creature is a broad measurement of how much it weighs. Weight categories are closely related to [size categories](#). For details, see [Table ??: Weight Categories](#), page ??.

**Willpower:** Willpower is an [attribute](#) that represents your ability to endure mental hardships. For details, see [Willpower](#), page 29.

**vital roll:** When you gain a [vital wound](#), you make a [vital roll](#) to determine the detrimental effect of the [vital wound](#). To make a [vital roll](#), roll 1d10 – the number of [vital wounds](#) you already had, ignoring the vital wound you are rolling for. For details, see [Vital Wounds](#), page ??.

**zone:** A zone is a type of area that an ability can have (see [Area Types](#), page 11). A zone ability has effects within an area for the duration of the ability. Unless otherwise noted, it does not move after being created.

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