Arcane Engine Rulebook

Contents

Chapter 1. Overview

Welcome

This is "The Arcane Engine"; it is a tabletop role-playing game set in the tumultuous industrial revolution. It is a time of great innovation and social upheaval, where fantasy and science fiction blend together.

The Arcane Engine is a game of imagination, through which you craft adventures by taking on the role of a character. You are a hero or a villain, a powerful magician, a brilliant technologist, an ultra-skilled warrior. Whatever you wish to be, you are destined for greatness. The world awaits your brilliance, so go forth!

The game itself is a science-fiction, fantasy game limited only by your imagination. There are no computers controlled programs to run, no world boundaries on pre-made map models, no doors that cannot be opened, no boxes that cannot be smashed, no person that will not speak, no limit that cannot be reached. You and your friends merely get around a table, take your characters, your keys to the world, and play the game as if you were in it yourselves. Players are heavily encouraged to get into characters as much as possible, if only to enrich the experience for everyone playing.

There is, however, some method to this reality. Like nearly all tabletop games, there are players, and a game referee, or Game Master (GM). The GM is a single person, who accepts the arduous job of managing the world, the monsters, the non-player characters. He also manages the story, and all other facets that facilitate a space with which Players can interact. The Players Themselves merely control a single, special, character within the world set up by the Game Master. Think of the GM and Players as two parts to a book, with the GM being the writer, and the Players being the lead characters. The key difference being that the lead characters of the story are acting of their own accord, and the GM merely has control over everything else.

This Core Rulebook contains all necessary information for designing and taking part in a game of The Arcane Engine. From beginning the design of a character, figuring out their stats and skills, giving them life and depth, and entering them into the world. The core rulebook also contains a couple of quick encounters with which players and GM's can get a feel for the game; it contains a limited list of possible monsters and enemies; it also contains comprehensive list of currently created magic spells, specialist classes, and technological items; finally, it contains a section of good GM tactics and valuable hints for running a game.

Playing the Game

This game is a game of tactics, strategy, roleplaying, acting, and storytelling. It is most recommended to use a grid and miniatures, as these aid in the description of a setting and especially in the tactics of play. These are hardly necessary though, and many players always opt to not employ one. Instead, they play in a "theater of the mind" which allows for quicker gameplay and a more cinematic experience.

As a character you will face tasks. This is a loose term to describe situations which you must overcome. To simulate the often unseen circumstances of real life that many cannot track but dictate how any task will resolve, this game uses dice. The Core Mechanic of this game is to roll a 20 sided die (d20) whenever you are faced with a task and must take action. Your roll on the die is added to whatever modifier that exist, such as your skill at the task, and compared against a number called a Target. This target number represents how difficult the task is, the higher the number, the more difficult the task. Depending upon how close you come to the number, under or over, shows how well you succeed, or how badly you fail at the task.

This system is designed to only need a single die, a single d20 to roll for all things. There are no other dice needed for anyone except the GM, who needs only 2 6-sided die. Other things will be needed will be this ruleset, a character sheet provided in the book, and scrap paper. The use of a battle grid and miniatures is optional.

Remember, this system is a game of imagination. There is no limit to what your characters can do. Describe what you want to do, and talk to the GM about whether what you wish is possible, and what happens because of it. Your character has a plethora of numbers: attributes, skills, abilities, and knowledge fields, to figure out if and how they can do something. These are rolled using the core mechanic to accomplish tasks in the world.

This Core Rulebook should be used to create and manage characters, create and manage worlds, and give ideas and tools to craft stories. This core rulebook does not contain an exhaustive list of possible plot points and does not set hard rules about abilities. You are allowed to ignore or expand upon parts of this book at your leisure to suit your game.

Chapter 2. The Core Mechanic

The Core Mechanic

The core mechanic refers to the central method by which anything is resolved within the game.

The Core Mechanic of The Arcane Engine is a d20 based rolling system. You simply roll a d20 and add all relevant modifiers, ranging from skill to possible scenario bonuses against a target number. This target number represents how difficult the task being done is. This system differs from the traditional d20 system however in one way: thresholds. The binary pass/fail dichotomy of the normal d20 system where you simply attempt to beat a target number is a little too intense, and none too satisfying. Alternatively, this game utilizes thresholds for all things. GM's are encouraged to come up with ways that players can partially fail or partially succeed at tasks without explicitly saying the player failed. The closer you come to the target number, within specific ranges, dictates how well the task was completed. Generally falling below the number means you completed the task unsatisfactorily. This can include dealing less than optimal damage in an attack, or making it only most of the distance across a pit, meaning you narrowly grabbed the opposite ledge. Likewise, falling above the number allows you greater modes of success. From dealing bonus damage in an attack, to perhaps jumping so swiftly you avoided the gaseous burst coming from inside the pit that you didn't know about.

Tasks

Tasks are a simple way to just name something that must be done. But why are they in the game? In real life, when someone does something, and it doesn't matter what, they are not operating in a vacuum. Some innumerable, incalculable factors go into a task going smoothly or very wrong. Simply picking up a sturdy box can go wrong by a slight shift of weight; a jump can go wrong if there happens to be a small rock to slip on, taking away most of the pushing power. This randomness in real life is represented by dice in the game world. It would be completely outrageous and unreasonable to think that the GM could simulate all that, they have a hard enough job. At its heart, tasks are there for characters to have something to do, and a way for there to be some intrigue and randomness in the game world. If everything happened according to narrative agreement, then the game would not be a game, it would be a book. There are multiple types of tasks, and each entails a different variation of rolling.

Task List

The following is the list of task types, the way they are executed, and when they are used.

Table 1:

Task Type	When to Use	Method
Standard	When the opposition of the check is unchanging or static, and the scope of the task can be finished in a single continuous action.	The player rolls a single die, adds any possible attributes, skills, and other modifiers, and compares it to a set number as determined by the GM. If the roll total is equal to or greater than the set number, the action is successful.
Opposed	Similar to a standard task, but the opposition is actively attempting to impede the progress of the player.	Like a standard test, but instead of a set number determined by the GM, the opposing force makes their own roll in the same way. Whoever has the higher total wins and has their intended effect happen.
Linked	When the task is complex, and requires multiple skills or when multiple, separate, sequential tasks combine to have an emergent effect.	A series of multiple standard tests, where each success unlocks the ability to make the next roll in the chain.
Joined	Similar to a linked test, but multiple actors are completing the separate tasks at the same time.	A number of standard tests, where each success makes all other tests easier, and any failures make all other tests harder as determined by the GM.

Success and Failure

There is no success and failure within the strictest sense. There are degrees of success and degrees of failure, but an abject failure is very rare, as even in complete disaster, something is often taken away.

For GM's, opposed rolls often do not halt the game by their nature. When adjudicating standard rolls against a simple target, it is important that there not be a binary outcome to the roll. Rolls should have a target, but the character falling below the target does not mean they simply fail. Provided is a table with common rolls in comparison to the target, and the outcome of those rolls.

For opposed checks, the difference to the target refers to difference between the players roll and their oppositions roll.

Degrees of Success/Failure

This is a table of possible rolls, and their effects on the results of intended actions.

Table 2:

Difference to Target	Effect
10+ Below Target	The intended task is a complete failure, and extra negative effects are assured.
5-9 Below Target	The intended task is barely completed but in a very unsatisfactory manner.
1-4 Below Target	The intended task is completed adequately, but negative side effects are likely.
Equal to Target	The intended task is completed exactly as intended.
1-4 Above Target	There are possible positive side effects in addition to the task completion.
5-9 Above Target	The intended task is completed with incredible quality and speed.
10+ Above Target	The intended task is completed exceptionally, better than intended, and with positive side effects.

Chapter 3. Characters

What is a Character?

A character is a person that exists within the game world for the purpose of a player to play them. A player's key, their portal into the world, is their character, and it is the one true thing that the player has control over. Characters are merely people within the game world, and they should act and be treated as such.

To a GM, the characters are paramount insofar as they are the stories' protagonists. The GM is at no time to develop the story not about the lead characters. Though the main characters face hardship, they might be outmatched constantly, and they may not remain the true hero of all time, they are the main characters.

What Makes a Character?

A quick overview of what makes a character what they are, and what they are marked by.

A character is a collection of numbers that describe themselves, combined with the story of their life and personality. Neither the numbers, nor the story are meaningful without the other when it comes to taking part in the game.

A character is defined by what is on their character sheet, which is supposed to be a symbolic translation of their physical and mental being into numbers and words. Their attributes define their physical and mental faculties as raw power and unharnessed energy. Their skills show this being put into practical use, and define their proficiency at achieving things in the world. Their abilities translate their specialness and extraordinary capabilities into a tangible asset that can be used in the game world. Their equipment represents all the stuff they should have on them. Their knowledge fields represent their mental store of information. Their Goals, Habits, and Facets, reduce a complex personality into an easily digestible format for the players and the GM to understand.

Attributes

An attribute is a number that represents something innate about a characters physicality or mental capabilities. Attributes are untrained talents that a character is good or bad at. An attribute does not describe how good a character is at doing any one task, and attributes apply to many tasks.

Derived Attributes are secondary attributes that describe things that are innate, but not a core attribute. They are derived, because their values are derived from math applied to the regular 8 attributes.

Attribute List

The following is a list of attributes, descriptions for the attributesat possible values, and what the attributes may be used for.

Table 3:

Attribute	Description	Possible Values	
Strength	Strength is a measure of your characters muscle and physical power and prowess. . This attribute is important for any character that wishes to focus in melee combat, but also serves important roles for other characters.	1-3	Very weak
		4-6	Weak
		7-10	Below Average Strength
		11-14	Average Strength
		16-18	Very Strong
		19-20	Exceptionally Strong
Dexterity	Dexterity is the main attribute to determine the coordination and agility of characters. It is directly a measure not only of how deft the character is with their appendages, but their ability to contort themselves, and their ability to move quickly.	1-3	Nearly Immobile
		4-6	Slow and Clumsy
		7-10	A little uncoordinated

Attribute	Description	Possible Values	
		11-14	Average
		16-18	Fast and Dexterous
		19-20	Competitive Sprinter
Constitution	Constitution is the measure of your characters' physical hardiness and stamina. Constitution directly contributes to physical resistance and to the fatigue pool.	1-3	Sickly and Bedridden
		4-6	Poor Health
		7-10	Mildly Unhealthy
		11-14	Average
		16-18	Tough and Hardy
		19-20	Exceptional Immunity
Perception	Perception is a measure of your characters acute awareness of the surrounding area, and their attention to detail.	1-3	Nearly Blind/Deaf
		4-6	Oblivious and Unobservant
		7-10	Unperceptive
		11-14	Average
		16-18	Very Observant
		19-20	Incredibly Alert and Observant
Intelligence	Intelligence is the measure of a person's ability to think and create sound conclusions to problems. Intelligence is also a measure of a person's memory, and is often rolled to recall specific things that wouldn't pertain to a knowledge.	1-3	Severe Mental Disability
		4-6	Very Dim with a Bad Memory
		7-10	A Little Slow
		11-14	Average
		16-18	Very Intelligent
		19-20	Genius
Willpower	The willpower of a character determines their mental hardiness and stamina, their determination, as well as their acute attention to themselves.	1-3	Compulsive Liar with no Mental Fortitude
		4-6	Weak Willed
		7-10	Meek and Shy
		11-14	Average
		16-18	Stubborn and Strong Willed
		19-20	Unbreakable Will
Charisma	Charisma is the measure of a characters force of personality, drive, personal magnetism, leadership capabilities, and ability to press their mind onto others.	1-3	Disgusting and Repulsive
		4-6	Blunt and Boorish
		7-10	Awkward
		11-14	Average
		16-18	Suave and Charming
		19-20	Almost Supernaturally Alluring
Beauty	Beauty is the measure of a characters physical attractiveness. This can mean multiple things, from the attractiveness or look of their skin and physical shape, to their smell, and even their clothes.	1-3	Severe Deformities
		4-6	Incredibly Ugly
		7-10	Unattractive
		11-14	Average
		16-18	Very Attractive
		19-20	Hauntingly Beautiful

Derived Attributes

This is a list of derived attributes, what they are, and how they are derived.

Table 4:

Attribute	Description	Derivation
Physical Resistance	Your physical resistance is a blanket attribute to describe your ability to resist a multitude of various attacks. Anything from poison, electricity, to great forces that attempt to knock you down roll against your physical resistance.	Strength + Constitution divided by 2.
Mental Resistance	Your mental resistance is a blanket attribute to describe your ability to resist any type of assault on your mind or psyche. Anything from mental magic, to mind affecting gadgets, and even persuasion techniques that attempt to lull you into some non-natural state. In addition, this is used to roll against any type of fear or mental trauma.	Willpower + Intelligence divided by 2.
Damage Resistance	Damage resistance is your ability to slough off damage dealt directly to your body.	(Strength divided by 2) + any bonuses from armor.
Creation Expertise	Creation expertise is your ability as a technologist, to create things that are of higher quality.	Dexterity + Intelligence divided by 2.
Spell Power	Spell power is a derived attribute that determines how powerful your spells are	Willpower + Charisma divided by 2.
Speed	This is how fast your character moves, and how many times they may act in battle. Faster characters gain more actions and can move further.	Dexterity + Perception divided b 2.
Health	Health is a numerical abstraction of a persons ability to cling to life. The lower the number, the closer they are to death.	(Strength multiplied by 5) + 100.
Fatigue	Fatigue is a numerical measure of a persons energy levels. As the number falls, the character becomes more and more tired, until finally falling unconscious or becoming unable to act due to exhaustion.	(Constitution multiplied by 5) + 100.

Skills

Skills represent an abstraction of a character's trained abilities. While attributes are untrained and are innate in the character, skills are gained over time. Skills are measured 1-20 like attributes, and without training, each starts at zero. Each skill is controlled by an attribute, and this means that a skill cannot go above the number that its controlling attribute is. If an attribute is at 10, any skill controlled by that attribute cannot go above 10.

Skills List

Tables of skills separated by the attributes that control them.

Table 5: Dexterity Skills

Skill	Description
Dodge	Dodge is incredibly important, it is your ability to avoid attacks and other things that would otherwise hit you.
Small Melee	Small Melee is your characters' ability to use small melee weapons such as swords and axes.
Large Melee	Large Melee, conversely, is your characters skill with heavy weapons that require two hands, such as great swords and mauls.
Unarmed	Unarmed is your skill fighting without a weapon. It is useful for brawls where weapons are inappropriate, and for martial artists.
Stealth	Stealth is the ability to silently move around not seen or heard. It is rolled vs the enemies Perception.
Acrobatics	Acrobatics is the ability to perform jumping and twisting feats including flips and rolls.
Athletics	Athletics is the ability to perform athletic feats such as sustained running, swimming, and climbing.
Grapple	Grapple is used in wrestling and ground fighting.Dexterity Skills

Table 6: Intelligence Skills

Skill	Description
Forgery	Forgery is the ability to fake handwriting, but also to make things look more official than they are.
Roguery	Roguery is the ability to perform roguish acts. These include acts such as picking locks, picking pockets, and performing assassinations, no matter what they be.
Traps	This is the user's aptitude with setting traps and ambushes, in addition to their ability to spot and disarm said traps.
Repair	Repair is the ability to repair mechanical things.
Drive	Drive is used to operate any vehicle.
Ride	Ride is the ability to maintain control of animals or things that have a mind of their own.

Table 7: Perception Skills

Skill	Description
Small Guns	This is the skill used to operate most pistols and small automatic weapons.
Large Guns	Large Guns refers to the operation of two-handed firearms, most rifles both single shot and automatic, and any heavier cannons.
Bow	Bow is the skill with accurately shooting a drawn bow and a crossbow, through crossbows can also use the guns skills.
Investigate	Investigate is the user's ability to find hidden objects that would be impossible to see at a mere glance.
Read Crowd	Reading Crowds is used to ascertain the necessary arguments or preferred arguments of a crowd or judge in a debate.
Thrown	Thrown is your skill with accurately throwing things, anything from a throwing knife to a grenade.

Table 8: Willpower Skills

Skill	Description
Command	Command is both used to command allies in combat, but it is also used to intimidate opponents.
Survival	Survival is the user's aptitude for surviving in the wilderness, scavenging and foraging, finding and building shelter.
Deception	Bluff is simply the ability to lie convincingly. Including disguising oneself, performing a role, and outright spoken lies to someone else.
Heal	Heal is the ability of the character to perform first aid and conventional medicine.

Table 9: Charisma Skills

Skill	Description
Entertainer	Entertainer is the ability of the user to make a performance.
Social Sense	Social Sense is both a user's ability to know how they should act in a situation, but also the user's ability to know when they are being lied to.
Persuasion	Persuasion is used to simulate the characters ability to persuade another to do something the character wishes, to change ones viewpoint, or to get something from someone else.
Debating	Debating is the basic skill used in a debate, and represents the characters ability to make certain types of arguments within a debate.

Classes

Classes are exceptional abilities and powers that go beyond skills and attributes. No application of training a skill can gain you the abilities from classes, they are above and beyond the capabilities of ordinary people. Classes truly define characters and their difference from average people. Classes are ranked 1-5. No class is inherent, and the default is a character that has no class ranks. Each rank of a class provides more extensive control over the domain of the class, though specifics are up to imagination. The classes are broadly defined into three categories, and from there, each category has a list of available classes.

Class List

This is a list of classes, and their descriptions.

Table 10: Magic

Class	Description
Air	Control of air and wind.
Coveyance	Control of movement and kinetic energy.
Divination	Control of visions and information.
Earth	Control of dirt, rock, and lava.
Fire	Control of heat and fire.
Lightning	Control of electricity and magnetism.
Mental	Control of the mind and thoughts.
Meta	Control of magic and magical energies.
Water	Control of water and ice.
Nature	Control of nature, plants, and animals.
White	Control of life and healing.
Black	Control of death, pain, and suffering.
Phantasm	Control of illusions.
Temporal	Control of time.
Thaumaturgy	Control of blood and flesh.

Table 11: Technology

Class	Description
Medicine	The study of medicine and herbal infusions.
Chemistry	The study of caustic chemicals, poisons, and acids.
Electricity	The study of electricity and magnetic creations.
Explosives	The study of explosives and volatile compounds.

Class	Description
Gunsmithing	The study of making guns and bullets.
Blacksmithing	The study of metallurgy, melee weapons, and armor.
Mechanics	The study of mechanical and physical machines.
Therapeutics	The study of drugs and stimulants.

Table 12: Specialist

Class	Description
Commander	Master of commanding allies and controlling the battlefield.
Martial Artist	Master of hand to hand combat.
Infiltrator	Master of stealth and silent infiltration.
Gunslinger	Master of hand-guns and flashy firearms maneuvers.
Operative	Master of survival and tracking.
Rifleman/Archer	Master of long-arms and bows.
Enforcer	Master of heavy weapons and furious combat.
Melee Master	Master of melee weapons and blades.
Bodyguard	Master of defense and defending allies.
Transporter	Master of vehicles and mounts.
Spy	Master of face-first infiltration and snooping.
Knife Thrower/Grenadier	Master of thrown weapons.
Debate Master	Master of debates and arguments.

Goals, Habits, and Facets

This is a section that describes the less mechanical aspects of a character to round out personality.

Goals, Habits, and Facets are meant to round out a characters personality. There are no set values for these, and they are inherently intimate to a character and a player. They are also individual to every character.

Goals	Goals are simply things that the character wants to do, life goals, temporary goals, anything that the character believes should be done. These can be anything from a simple goal to find your brother, to something as grandiose as dethroning the king. Characters are encouraged to pick three of these that are meaningful, and can get the player into interesting and dangerous situations.
Habits	Habits are things that your character does reflexively. "I scream when startled". These may not be apparent to work against or for you immediately, but perhaps you scream loudly at a fancy dinner because the waiter brushed your back…that can be interesting.
Facets	Facets are things about your character that stand out, and are memorable. "Hairy," "Hot-headed," or "Clumsy," things that people will remember you by. Again, these things might endear you to someone or antagonize others, and either way, it builds story and tension.

Making a Character

This is the step-by-step process for making a character.

Making a character may take a little while, especially including any conceptual steps to figure out what the goals in this character are. Record it all on the character sheet.

1. **Concept**: Come up with what the character does, who they are, what generally are they good at, what are they bad at, and what is their history, etc.

2. **Attributes**: Determine the characters attributes. Take 30 attribute points, start all attributes at 1, and distribute those attribute points among the various attributes, with each attribute point adding 1 to the attribute it is applied to. Reference: Attribute List *(page 7)*.

3. **Skills**: Determine the characters skills. Take 20 skill points, start all skills at 0, and distribute those skill points among the various skills, with each attribute adding 1 to the attribute it is applied to. Reference: .

4. **Classes**: Determine the characters classes. Take 5 class points, start all classes at 0, and distribute those class points among the classes, with each class point adding 1 to the class it is applied to. Reference: Class List *(page 10)*.

5. **Derived Attributes**: Based on attributes, record derived attributes. Reference: Derived Attributes *(page 9)*.

6. **Goals, Habits, Facets**: Determine the characters goals, habits, and facets. Think long and hard about it, and record them down. Try to come up with at least 1 of each, but more is always welcome. Reference: Goals, Habits, and Facets *(page 11)*.

Chapter 4. Magic, Technology, and Specialists

Magic

The power of a mage comes from their raw energy or fatigue. Casting spells constantly is thoroughly draining, and becomes even more acutely tiring as you unlock more powerful abilities. A powerful mage may enjoy stronger spells than a weaker mage, but it also becomes much more difficult to cast those spells; with increased power comes increased responsibility to both yourself and the world. Your power may eventually become powerful enough to destroy whole towns and level battlefields in an instant; these powers are for you to choose how to act, but let it be known that there will always be those who fear your power and abilities; those who wish to control your inherent abilities; those who hate your gifts and will stop at nothing to demolish them in whatever way possible.

Magic is intrinsically personal to the mage, and often reflects and/or directly affects their personality. This is one of the many differences between magic and technology, which is often quite detached from the personality of the technologist.

Magic, especially high powered magic, leaves scars and traces in the world. Magic or the energy that allows mages to use magic, is little understood, but is oftentimes referred to as the essence of reality. By working magic, a mage is bending and tearing at reality in a fundamental way.

There are 15 distinct magical classes, each commanding a separate array of powers. Oftentimes these classes overlap in usage, some are meant to deal damage; some are meant to heal and support; some contain defensive capabilities; some utilitarian uses; most combine two or three of these.

Casting Magic

This is the way in which magic is cast in the game.

Magic works the same way as any roll, but it does require a few extra steps. It will come down to a dice roll however.

1. Choose the spell that the player wishes to cast.
2. Determine the effect of the spell with the GM.
3. Determine how much the spell is going to cost to cast it, either in materials or in fatigue.
4. Determine the target of the spell, if applicable.
5. Determine how the target will resist the spell, if applicable.
6. Roll: The player rolls their Spell Power, and the opponent rolls their resistance in an opposed check.
7. Determine effect as a normal opposed roll. If the player wins, the spell affects the enemy, if the enemy wins, the spell does nothing.

Technology

Technologists create machinery from nothing, seeming to manage the world's powers with nothing more than a heap of scrap metal and some good ingenuity. Technologists have an array of many inventions on them which they can use to boost themselves, and entrap or defeat enemies. The life of a technologist is what you make of it. The rewarding nature of invention provides a rich life full of challenges that test both your physical and mental prowess.

Unlike magic, technology and its disciplines are not inherently tied to the personality of whoever studies them. That in itself is one of the most considerable strength of modern science and technology. There is such a diversity of opinions and ideas, and the best and brightest rise quickly to the top!

There are eight distinct Technological classes, each with a very distinct set of schematics, and each with its own general usage. Oftentimes these classes overlap in their usage though, and most classes contain schematics that require creations from other classes; likewise, they contain items that are used as reagents for other creations in other classes.

Using Technology

This is the way in which technological items are created.

1. Determine the item that the player wants to make.
2. Determine the effect of this item.
3. Determine how difficult it will be to make, and required materials, and any complications.
4. Roll: The player rolls their Creation Expertise as a standard test.
5. Determine the result: If the result is higher than the number set by the GM in step 3, the item is created, if it is not, the process fails, and the item is lost.

Specialists

There is little to be said about the special aspects and quirks of being a specialist. These men and women address the necessary gaps left by those who devote themselves to technology, magic, or more mundane life.

The name specialist is not meant to be specific. It is not a title that one would give them. It is a name to differentiate them from technologists or mages; to enhance the fact that these people have perfected an art, just as difficult as any technology or magic class. These people can be anyone and can come from all walks of life. There is often a reason why someone would choose a particular specialist class, and the class that one chooses is often tied to their background. Specialist classes are used to represent years of hard training and focus funneled into a specific set of skills. It does not frequently confer significant powers that defy the laws of reality or allow the creation of incredibly complex machines or drugs. Alternatively, it enhances a set of skills with particular passive and some active abilities. These abilities would exclusively come to one who specifically dedicates time in their life to honing these skills.

There are 13 distinct Specialist Classes, each with a very distinct set of abilities, and each with its own general usage. These classes rarely overlap, each one focuses on a specific set of skills, and though some of them might demonstrate similar abilities, each has a narrow focus.

Chapter 5. Items and Equipment

Equipment Overview

Equipment and armor are essential to a player characters life in the world. If you are going to be adventuring then you are going to want some protection from damage and the ability to dish it back out. This section covers mundane objects that might be found in these marketplaces, what to purchase, and their uses.

All items come with a price, though many shopkeepers can be persuaded to lower them. The straightforward fact, however, is that not all items are available at all times. Scarcity of materials and rarity of skill in craftsmanship are two important limiting factors into where and when items may be found. Few Blacksmiths can make a suit of elite plate, and it would be difficult to find an herbalist that can craft a life restorer. Just the same, some villages lie far on the outskirts of society; located in a barren tundra. They might not have much of anything beyond farm goods and simple metal implements. GM's, and Players must arrange an agreement as to the affluence and influence a shopkeeper has in bringing wares to his shop. The general clerk shouldn't be selling flaming rifle rounds, but a specialty gunsmith would most assuredly have those. It is up to each game and each GM however as to what they want in their campaign.

Weapons and Armor

Armor and weapons are those items that specifically deal damage, and protect you from damage. As opposed to other equipment that provides tangential bonuses or other effects, weapons specifically are used in combat, and armor is worn to protect you from damage.

It is imperative that any character have at least a weapon and some armor in any dangerous situation. The world is deadly, and weapons can kill. Your enemies will have them, so should you.

Archaic Weapons

Archaic weapons refer to melee weapons and non-firearms that are out-of-use in the modern era.

Header	Description
STR	Numerical requirement for Strength to use the weapon.
Hand	How many hands it requires to wield the weapon.
Cost	The amount of money in gold pieces it requires to buy the weapon.
FT	How much fatigue it costs to use the weapon in combat.
Dmg	How much damage the weapon deals when it hits someone.
CRIT	A multiplier for the damage if the character gets an incredible hit.
Type	The type of weapon: B=Blunt, S=Sharp.
AP	Armor Piercing, how much damage reduction the weapon ignores on target.
Range	The maximum range of the weapon, it is harder to use beyond this range.

Archaic Melee Weapons

STR	Weapon	Hand	Cost	FT	Dmg	CRIT	Type	AP
1	Fists	1	-	5	5	x2	B	
2	Brass Knuckles	1	20g	5	10	x2	B	
3	Dagger	1	30g	5	25	x2	S	-10 DR
3	Assassins Dagger	1	60g	5	25	x3	S	-10 DR
3	Spring Dagger	1	100g	5	25	x2	S	-10 DR
3	Club	1	5g	5	15	x2	B	
4	Rapier	1	100g	5	30	x2	S	
4	Cavalry Battle-Axe	1	150g	5	30	x2	S	
4	Mace	1	50g	10	25	x2	B	
5	Flail	1	80g	10	25	x2	B	
4	Hammer	1	10g	10	15	x2	B	

STR	Weapon	Hand	Cost	FT	Dmg	CRIT		AP
5	Javelin/Short spear	1	60g	10	25	x2	S	-10 DR
5	Sword	1	100g	10	35	x2	S	
5	Sword-Cane	1	150g	10	25	x2	S	
5	Hand Axe	1	80g	10	25	x2	S	
6	Battle-Axe	1	120g	10	35	x2	S	
4	Whip	1	50g	10	15	x2	S	
8	Lance	1	100g	10	30	x2	S	-10 DR
5	Staff	2	50g	10	15	x2	B	
8	Spear	2	100g	10	30	x2	S	-10 DR
10	Great Sword	2	200g	15	50	x2	S	
10	Halberd	2	200g	15	40	x2	S	-15 DR
10	Great Axe	2	200g	15	50	x2	S	
10	Maul	2	200g	15	40	x2	B	

Archaic Ranged Weapons								
STR	Weapon	Hand	Cost	FT	Dmg	CRIT	Range	AP
3	Sling/Slingshot	1	10g	5	15	x2	20 ft.	
3	Chakram	1	50g	5	15	x2	STRx2 ft.	
3	Throwing Knife	1	1g	5	15	x2	STRx2 ft.	-10 DR
4	Short Bow	2	100g	10	25	x2	60 ft.	-10 DR
4	Light Crossbow	2	100g	10	30	x2	100 ft.	-10 DR
8	Long Bow	2	150g	15	35	x2	200 ft.	-20 DR
8	Heavy Crossbow	2	150g	15	40	x2	250 ft.	-20 DR

Modern Weapons

Modern weapons refers to firearms and explosives.

Header	Description
STR	Minimum numerical strength required to use the weapon.
Hand	Hands required to wield the weapon.
Cost	Cost in gold pieces to use the item.
Ammo	Amount of ammo in the weapon before a reload is needed.
FT	Fatigue cost to use the weapon in combat.
Dmg	Damage of the weapon it deals when attacking an opponent.
CRIT	Damage multiplier in case the player gets a superbly critical attack.
Range	Maximum range of the weapon, using the weapon beyond this range is harder.
AP	Armor piercing, the amount of damage reduction the weapon ignores.

Modern Weapons								
STR	Weapon	Hand	Cost	Ammo	FT	Dmg	CRIT	Range	AP
8	Compound Bow	2	250g	1	10	40	x2	250 ft.	-20 DR
5	Auto-Crossbow	2	200g	8	10	30	x2	120 ft.	-10 DR
4	Single Shot Pistol	1	100g	1	5	25	x2	80 ft.	-10 DR
4	Revolver	1	150g	6	5	25	x2	80 ft.	-10 DR
6	Heavy Pistol	1	180g	1	10	35	x2	80 ft.	-15 DR
6	Tri-Barrel	1	220g	3	10	35	x2	50 ft.	-15 DR
7	Hand Cannon	1	220g	1	15	45	x2	120 ft.	-20 DR
5	Carbine	2	200g	6	10	30	x2	150 ft.	-20 DR
5	Auto-Carbine	2	250g	6	10	30	x2	120 ft.	-20 DR
6	Rifle	2	150g	1	10	35	x2	250 ft.	-20 DR
6	Gentleman's Rifle	2	170g	1	10	30	x2	200 ft.	-20 DR
6	Long Rifle	2	170g	1	10	35	x2	350 ft.	-20 DR
8	Heavy Rifle	2	200g	1	15	50	x2	200 ft.	-30 DR
6	Repeater Rifle	2	250g	6	10	35	x2	200 ft.	-20 DR
6	Auto-Rifle	2	300g	12	10	35	x2	200 ft.	-20 DR
7	Looking Glass Rifle	2	250g	1	10	50	x2	800 ft.	-40 DR
8	Buckshot Rifle	2	170g	1	10	60	x2	50 ft.	-30 DR
10	Light Repeater Cannon	2	400g	8	15	25	x2	60 ft.	-20 DR

| 10 | Heavy Repeater Cannon | 2 | 600g | 8 | 15 | 35 | x2 | 60 ft. | -20 DR |
| 8 | Grenade Rifle | 2 | 300g | 1 | 10 | 120 | - | 100 ft. | - |

Armor and Shields

Armor and shields refers to any type of protection worn. Armor is worn over the body, shields are wielded and can be dropped quickly.

Header	Description
STR	Strength required to wield this armor or shield.
Cost	Cost in gold pieces to buy this piece of equipment.
DR	Damage reduction addition of the armor or shield.
Skill Modifier	Negative modifier to all Dexterity controlled skills as a consequence of wearings or using this particular piece of equipment.
Block Bonus	Shield bonus to any active check to block attacks.

Light Armor

STR	Armor	Cost	DR	Skill Modifier
3	Class 1 (Armored Coat)	50g	4	0
5	Class 2 (Reinforced Leather Armor)	150g	8	-1

Medium Armor

STR	Armo	Cost	DR	Skill Modifier
6	Class 3 (Soldiers Armor)	400g	12	-2
7	Class 4 (Scale Mail)	800g	16	-4
9	Class 5 (Light Plate)	1000g	20	-6

Heavy Armor

STR	Armor	Cost	DR	Skill Modifier
10	Class 6 (Half-Plate)	1500g	25	-8
12	Class 7 (Full Plate)	3000g	30	-10
12	Class 8 (Machined Plate)	6000g	35	-10

Shields

STR	Shield	Cost	Block Bonus	Movement Mod.
3	Class 1 (Buckler)	50g	+1	0
6	Class 2 (Kite Shield)	200g	+3	-25%
9	Class 3 (Tower Shield)	800g	+6	-50%

Equipment

Equipment refers to any items that aren't weapons or armor. These items may have some use in combat, but the primary use of equipment is not to kill or protect from damage. Many items however, can still be used as weapons or armor, but they are not as useful because they are not purpose built to do so.

Clothing

Clothing refers to cloth or bodily wear that offers no actual protection from damage.

Item	Cost in gold pieces
Machinist Gear	150g
Mages Gear	100g
Alchemical Coat	150g
Thief's Cloak	80g
Nobleman's Overcoat	200g
Business Suit	400g

Gear

Gear refers to any equipment that is usually hand-held and useful in a number of scenarios.

Item	Cost in gold pieces
Backpack	10g
Bell	5g
Caltrops	20g
Candle	1g

Item	Cost
Chain (5 ft.)	2g
Crowbar	5g
Electric Lantern	30g
Entrenchment Tool	30g
Gas Mask	80g
Goggles	10g
Gun Brace/Bandolier	20g
Lantern	10g
Manacles	10g
Mining Pick	40g
Net	40g
Padlock	5g
Pocket Watch	15g
Spyglass	10g
Watch	5g
Whistle	1g
Wrench	5g
Quiver	60g

Serums and Kits

Serums are those items that heal and revive characters. Kits are abstractions of a lot of small pieces of gear meant for specific tasks.

Item	Cost in Gold Pieces
Climbing Gear	150g
Disguise Kit	150g
Fatigue Serum	100g
Healing Serum	100g
Life Restore	5000g
Medics Kit	150g
Repair Kit	150g
Thief's Kit	200g

Technology

Technology refers to those items that aren't weapons and armor, but are incredibly complex technology that cannot easily be found at any shop. They are often expensive and rare. Some of these can be made by Technology classes.

Item	Cost
Auto Skeleton Key	1200g
Automaton	10000g
Battery	5g
Bipod	50g
Charged Ring	1800g
Dynamite	20g
Electric Motor	200g
Engine	500g
Eye Gear	1000g
Flow Disruptor	2000g
Mage Binders	2500g
Magnetic Inverter	3000g
Scope (Pistol or Rifle)	150g
Tesla Coil	2000g

Mounts and Vehicles

This sections is a reference for mounts and vehicles, their speeds, and weights.

Header	Description
Average Speed	The speed this mount/vehicle can maintain endlessly.
Max Speed	The maximum speed of this mount/vehicle, this can only be maintained for 10 minutes.
Weight Limit	The maximum weight this mount/vehicle can carry before they break or refuse to continue.
Cost	Cost of buying this vehicle/mount in gold pieces.

Vehicle/Mount	Average Speed	Max Speed	Weight Limit	Cost
Riding Dog	2 mph	5 mph	100 lbs.	50g
Mule	3 mph	7 mph	300 lbs.	150g
Light Horse	5 mph	12 mph	200 lbs.	250g
Heavy Horse	4 mph	10 mph	400 lbs.	500g
Warhorse	4 mph	10 mph	400 lbs.	1000g
Small Stagecoach	5 mph	15 mph	800 lbs.	2000g
Heavy Stagecoach	6 mph	18 mph	1100 lbs.	6000g

Motor Carriage	5 mph	25 mph	1500 lbs.	15000g
Flying Machine	60 mph	110 mph	400 lbs.	60000g
Airship	12 mph	35 mph	200 tons	300000g

Chapter 6. Combat and Adventure

Combat

Combat is the basis of interaction, and underlies all higher diplomatic exchanges from the individual to the international. In this world, there are rules that outline how to translate real world combat to the table.

Note through all of this that combat in The Arcane Engine is not meant to be simulation-like or hyper-realistic. There are plenty of RPG systems that wish to translate hyper-realism. The Arcane Engine wishes to translate a heroic combat system that simplifies combat. It is meant to enable players to engage in stylish combat with dangerous enemies while maintaining a very deadly and vulnerable atmosphere. Players will utilize their full arsenal and work together to succeed.

Combat in The Arcane Engine is cyclical, with everyone going in turn following a standard combat sequence. This, of course, is not literally supposed to be imagined as people waiting for another to produce an action before they execute their turn, everything is happening simultaneously. Each character has a number of actions to take each turn and takes them on their turn.

To assist the GM and characters in maintaining a collective imaginative space, and ensure the players understand events in the game, a game grid can be used. Game grids and miniature figures or markers allow the table to physically show character positions and range for abilities, attacks, and movement. There may not be much use for a game grid when doing normal adventuring, but during battle it is invaluable.

Rounds, Turns, and Actions

Combat occurs in rounds, each one taking approximately 10 seconds of game-time. Each round, every character receives a turn within the round, where they take actions. Actions are things that the characters can do. Every character gets to perform a number of actions equal to their Speed. Actions include things such as running, attacking, or using abilities.

Each round represents about 30 seconds of time in game, though that can be changed according to the GM's wishes. This is significant to understand the length of effects, and the logical limits to what can be completed within a round.

Actions

This is a list of possible actions.

Action	Description
Draw Weapon	Draw a weapon.
Attack	Make an attack roll against a target. See The Attack Roll *(page 19)*.
Cast a Spell	Cast a spell. See Casting Magic *(page 12)*.
Move	Move where you wish to move to, within reason.
Take Cover	Take cover, providing a bonus determined by the GM to defending against attacks.
Use an Item	Using an item.
Overwatch	Set up overwatch, and get to use Attack against anyone that moves within sight.
Parry/Block	Actively parry or block with a shield or weapon. Make an attack opposed to the enemies attack.
Sprint	Double movement at the cost of fatigue.
Aim	Gain a bonus to next Attack action taken.
Grapple	Wrestle with the opponent, locking both of you out of using weapons.
Trip	Trip an enemy, knocking them to the ground.
Disarm	Disarming an opponent, removing their weapon by making an Attack action.

The Attack Roll

An attack roll represents your attempt to strike your opponent on your turn in a round. When you make an attack roll, you roll a d20 and add your appropriate combat skill. The enemy rolls a d20 and adds their Dodge skill against Physical Damage, their Physical Resistance against Elemental Damage, or Mental Resistance against Mental or Enchantment Damage. If the attacker rolls higher than the defender the attack succeeds and deals damage. If the defender rolls higher than the attacker, the attack fails and does not deal damage. If the difference between the attack and defend rolls are 5 or more, then extra effects may happen.

Damage, Injury, and Death

Getting damaged happens when a character does not completely dodge out of the way of an attack. Suffering hits is never good, as every hit reduces the HP of the character, which may end in death. There are ways to reduce the damage a character takes. These include extraordinary skills for defense, and high damage resistance from armor.

Damage Resistance is the armor, both natural and non-natural of a character. Damage Resistance is naturally half of your STR. Beyond that, any armor the character wears will add more to Damage Resistance. The DR of all specific types of armor will be detailed later in the book. Damage Resistance is removed from damage directly. A 20 damage attack against a character with 20 DR does no damage.

Health Points means two things in the game world: the ability to bear physical punishment and keep going, and the ability

to turn a devastating blow into a less serious one. Likewise, Fatigue represents your inability to maintain composure and consciousness under intense pain and blood loss, as well as exhaustion from exerting yourself in extraordinary ways.

It is assumed that until a character hits 0 HP, they have not taken any massive wounds that would stop them through their adrenaline. Upon hitting 0 HP, the character suffers a massive disabling wound, and could possibly end in instant death.

Likewise, it is assumed that adrenaline preserves a character acting as normal until FT hits 0. Upon a character hitting 0 FT, the characters adrenaline fails them, and their battle fatigue catches up, forcing them to take a quick breather.

Initiative

Initiative is the order in which individuals act in a structured time frame. It determines who goes first in a combat scenario.

Initiative is simply a series of standard rolls using the initiative attribute.

1. Everyone rolls a simple task, adding Initiative to the roll.
2. Compare all results and order them highest to lowest.
3. Resolve all actions according to the list in order.

Traveling and Adventure

Travel and adventure is important to the game. In between moments of action, every other things falls into traveling and adventure. Most things within adventure and travel scenarios are standard checks. They do not have to be resolved by paying attention to time.

This is the time to challenge all the skills that aren't necessary for combat, and to include things like debates and mysteries.

Travel

Between certain events, much of the time of adventuring and traveling is the actual journey itself. Characters may often spend weeks in an airship before they reach their target city, and upon another mission are sent to a location three days away. The journey itself is just as important as combat.

GM's are responsible for pacing a game. Journeys don't require being noted or measured all the time but the journey itself can be filled with such rich storytelling that it would be a shame to pass up the chance.

Long Distance Travel is determined by what kind of movement the characters are taking.

For every two levels of Athletics, a character possesses, they add an extra mile onto their daily walking and marching distances.

Travel Reference

This is a reference for long distance travel numbers.

Long Distance Travel			
Travel Type	Distance per Hour	Distance per Day	Carrying Capacity
Walking	2 miles	16 miles	-
Marching	3 miles	24 miles	-

Bicycle	4 miles	32 miles	-
Horse	4 miles	32 miles	250 lbs.
Warhorse	5 miles	40 miles	350 lbs.
Carriage	4 miles	32 miles	800 lbs.
Motor-Carriage	30 miles	240 miles	1500 lbs.
Flying Machine	40 miles	400 miles	400 lbs.
Airship	12 miles	300 miles	200 tons
Man-Powered Boat	10 miles	100 miles	1800 lbs.
Sailing Ship	8 miles	200 miles	1500 tons
Powered Ship	12 miles	300 miles	5000 tons

Weight Management

Strength determines the amount of weight someone can carry. There are four types of weight management:

Packing: Packing refers to the absolute maximum amount of weight a character can carry in a pack over long periods of time. This amount of weight would be uncomfortably heavy, but is manageable for a theoretically indefinite amount of time barring severe terrain, weakness, or injury.

Carrying: Carrying refers to the absolute maximum amount of weight a character can carry in their arms, barring injury, extreme terrain, or weakness, for up to 1 mile. At about a mile, the character would collapse under this amount of weight.

Lifting: Lifting refers to the absolute maximum amount of weight a character can lift and hold above their head for a maximum of 30 seconds barring injury or weakness. This weight would collapse the strength of the character after no more than 30 seconds.

Dragging: Dragging refers to the absolute maximum amount of weight a character can push or pull along the ground for any amount of time barring weakness, extreme terrain, or injury.

STR	Packing (lbs.)	Carrying (lbs.)	Lifting (lbs.)	Dragging (lbs.)
1	10	20	30	40
2	20	40	60	80
3	30	60	90	120
4	40	80	120	160
5	50	100	150	200
6	70	140	210	280
7	90	180	270	360
8	110	220	330	440
9	130	260	390	520
10	150	300	450	600
11	180	360	540	720
12	210	420	630	840
13	240	480	720	960
14	270	540	810	1080
15	300	600	900	1200
16	340	680	1020	1360
17	380	760	1140	1520
18	420	840	1260	1680
19	460	920	1380	1840
20	500	1000	1500	2000

Vision and Light

Light sources provide artificial light where there was none, and is important for characters that cannot see in the dark. Each source has a radius of light it provides, past that darkness makes sight impossible.

Light Source	Light Radius
Candle	5 ft.
Torch	20 ft.
Lantern	30 ft.
Lightbulb	40 ft.
Electric Lantern	50 ft.
Spotlight Lantern	100 ft. Cone
Fog Light	200 ft. Cone
Floodlight	200 ft.

Treasure and Rewards

As characters complete missions and adventure around, characters will often find themselves with a lot of money and treasures. These treasures are often in the form of money, but will often be rare treasures and old items.

It is recommended that players come up quickly with a method for divvying up loot and treasures. Oftentimes a good way to divvy up loot is to split it evenly. If someone wants a specific item, then perhaps that lowers their share of the rest of the treasure. Perhaps that item is so valuable it is their entire share, or perhaps they get that item simply because they can use it.

Rewards can come in other forms of course, including followers and henchmen, reputation, honors and medals, titles and property. The important thing about rewards is they are meaningful. GM's do not want to send players on a long and difficult mission only to give them a meaningless reward. That does not make a good gaming experience.

Chase and Pursuits

Chasing opponents or objects refers to the short-term, quick act of going after a target. This target could be a person, especially an enemy the players want to catch and/or kill. It could be an object like a piece of paper flying in the wind or a runaway cart, or a skittish horse.

Chasing is simple, and will involve both Athletics and Acrobatics checks, with possibly other checks like Contort if necessary. Chasing a target that is actively running away usually means that the Athletics and Acrobatics checks are rolled vs. the targets Athletics or Acrobatics roll. Athletics is used when they jump in the water, climb a wall, or simply run. Acrobatics is used to resolve leaping over obstacles or winding through a hectic, busy environment, like a street market. When chasing an object, the rolls are made vs. a simple target.

Pursuing a target is a process that can take a very long time, perhaps weeks or months trekking across wilderness. The important distinction between pursuit and chase is that during a pursuit, the pursuers do not know their targets precise location, and cannot catch them immediately.

Each day, the pursuer and target make an opposed roll. The skill used depends upon the action taken in the pursuit.

Making a Chase/Pursuit

This is the method in which a chase or pursuit is resolved.

1. Determine how far apart each party is.
2. Determine the amount of successful rolls must be made to catch up with the target.
3. Roll an opposed check using any skill or attribute determined appropriate for the chase/pursuit.
4. If the pursuer wins, they lower the number of successful rolls to catch the target by 1. If the one fleeing wins, increase that number by 1 instead.
5. Determine if the pursuer loses track of their target or catches up.
6. If they catch up, it becomes the chase is over, if they lose track, the chase is also over. If neither, return to step 3.

Chapter 7. Game Mastering

Creating a World

This may seem like the most cumbersome task in beginning a game, and indeed it is a very intensive task; it is very rewarding to play in a world that you have created, especially from the ground up. There are a number of considerations to take into account when creating a world, this section shall cover them in moderate detail.

You, as a world creator want to have an end goal in sight. What kind of world do you want to create? Is your world a richly populated world neatly divided into sovereign territories? Is your world a wild untamed place where humanoids cower in their cities to avoid the dangers of the wild? Is your world a place of desolation? Has some cataclysmic event or series of events has left it mostly in ruin? Are your players are meant to scrounge for the pieces of a shattered realm?

Once you have a general idea of what you want in your world then you must start creating rough outlines for things that exist within.

World Creation

Here you have to ask yourself a number of broad questions, each of them is meant to give a better idea of what will be in the world, what won't, and how to build it. In addition, it will give a better idea of what to make when you inevitably have to simulate history.

1. How old is my world? Remember that the world must be old enough for the story to take place. Planets are not formed in days. They are formed over eons of time. Billions of years for the process of rock formation and volcanic activity to give way to basic life forms. These evolve in complexity over many millions upon millions of years until humanoids evolve. Then of course, humanoid civilization takes many thousands, if not millions of years to evolve in complexity. Many start out as tribal hunter-gatherers, slowly settling down into sedentary lifestyles. Later developing culture, language, and technology. To give you an idea, as of the year 2015, the Earth is roughly 4.5 Billion years old. Modern humans have only existed for about 200,000-1 million years, which is relatively short.

2. How developed is my world? This gets more into the people and civilizations of your world. By nature of playing The Arcane Engine, it necessitates a number of assumptions about the technological level of your world. That doesn't mean that socio-cultural development has kept pace; nor does it mean that all this technology affords humanoids dominance over the natural world. How much of the planet's surface could be considered, "civilized"? Is the whole world within the reach of one or another sprawling empire or is the world still wild, with pockets of capable civilizations?

3. How wild is my world? If you choose to have a wild world where humanoids cannot dominate the landscape, what is stopping them? Surely with massive machines, guns, explosives, magic, etc. Humanoids could rule the landscape? This question can have many answers, such as a dearth of resources, of course no one can build that many machines if iron deposits are rare. Perhaps the landscape is filled with deadly monsters that can tear full grown ogres limb from limb, and to whom bullets are a mere annoyance. Perhaps the landscape is filled with war; the kingdoms of humanoids are so distrusting of each other that populations never reach levels high enough to tame the landscape.

4. How rich is my world? This question flows naturally out of the last one, and doesn't refer to money, as money is an invention. How much of any and all natural resources are in your world? If gold is everywhere it won't become a commodity, because everyone has it. If Iron is extremely rare, then war is harder to wage as weapons are harder to make, and iron mines are national treasures. In addition, in such a world, any scrap metal left over from destroyed machines would be scrounged up immediately and sold quickly. A world mired in war must have a rich stock of resources to fuel those wars.

5. How old is civilization? When did humanoids start developing complex cultural civilizations? An easy marker to begin with is the widespread development of agriculture. Sedentary lifestyle was based around the demands of farming, and farming was adopted as a way to easily and efficiently make food. Deliberate cultivation and animal domestication began on earth somewhere between 10,000-13,000 years ago. Though it is common to include some cataclysmic event that reset civilization and extends the development time of humanoid civilization to the current date within your game.

6. Where did civilization begin? How did it spread? Generally, the first signs of agricultural development will be in very fertile areas where crops are easy to grow. On Earth, farming began in the Fertile Crescent, an area that enveloped the ancient lands of Mesopotamia, Phoenicia, and Egypt. These areas are today Egypt, Israel, Iraq, Iran, and their surrounding nations. This is important because where civilization began, characters will find the oldest ruins, and possibly some of the strangest remains…perhaps ancient magic? In addition, this allows for the development of larger

and more established civilizations, as technology and culture will flow from already established cultures to new lands where they will be adopted by less advanced people.

7. Where are resources most plentiful? Simply put, the land with the most resources will end up becoming the most powerful nation. Though often, certain lands are rich in certain resources, while others are rich in different resources. If gold is rare, then a country with massive gold deposits will be rich and is in a good position to become trade masters. The country with the most fertile land will have a higher population, and of course that means larger cities and larger armies. The land with the most iron will have more iron items. They will be able to field better equipped armies, as they have the materials for good armor and weapons without having to import them.

8. How many states exist in this world? Are they peaceful or not? This is simple, if you want to have a lot of kingdoms in your world, they will be smaller and there will probably be more war. Conversely, larger kingdoms and empires will often also have war, but the scale will be much larger and more widespread.

9. How much magic exists in this world? Magic is a part of this system, a very integral part. So how much magic exists in the world? Is technology much more common, or is there magic to go around constantly? Does everyone have access to it or is it expensive and hereditary? Magic will also shape culture and often has an effect on the distribution and development of kingdoms. Be mindful of all this.

10.
11.
12.
13.

Campaigns and Adventures

Adventures or campaigns are strings of scenarios and encounters put together by an overarching story, which includes a consistent cast of characters. Adventures are incredibly rewarding and interesting, because it allows players to see characters develop over a longer period of time, and see a story through a satisfying end.

GM's should be communicating what type of campaign they would like to play to their players. If the campaign is to be structured, the GM should make their campaign after the players make their characters. That way, they can build the campaign in a way that incorporates each players' character seamlessly.

For Game Masters, designing an adventure can take a long time, and it is good to get collaboration from your players in what campaign to run.

Elements of a Campaign/Adventure

The following is a quick exploration of the things that make a good campaign:

Element	Description
A Problem That Needs Solving	There must be something to overcome, a specific reason why the party would go forth and do what they are doing. This can be as simple as a singular assassination contract, or a multiple part, world-wide treasure hunt. The problem may simply be that the party wants an item and will do whatever is needed to obtain that item. The problem must however be worthy of their attention and valuable to them in some way, even if it's only valuable to give to someone else.
A Clear Goal	Characters must have a clear goal to work towards. In a structured campaign, this is very easy to set up, and the goal is ever-present. In a free form campaign, this means that the characters must always have something to do. It is not necessarily something they should or will do, but merely something that they can do.
Meaningful Outcomes for Everyone	This means two things: That the players should have choices that actually matter to the outcome of the story, and that there should be choices that everyone can participate in.
Interesting Encounters	Encounters, which are covered later, are the basis of what a campaign is identified by. In essence, a campaign is a series of encounters. Each of these encounters should be interesting and meaningful. Having filler fights for the sake of fighting is not a good way to go about it. Players should feel like every encounter, whether social or martial, has a meaning. Do not just randomly set enemies upon your players, with no outcomes for winning beyond experience and loot. The enemies should have a purpose to be there. This is not to say that random encounters are not good, but just that random encounters for the sake of randomness is not good. If the players are attempting to fight through a docks district to catch a VIP, then random henchmen or bodyguards popping up to fight the players is meaningful. They are not just there to fight the players, they are there to defend the VIP. Even if the enemies are there just to weaken the players and expend valuable items before the players fight some monster at the end of a tunnel system is meaningful, even though it may not appear so.

Encounters

Going beyond the campaign itself to the building blocks that comprise the body of a campaign, encounters form the basis of interaction for your players. They do not interact with the campaign as a whole, instead, they interact with the individual

encounters that make up the campaign. The types of encounters generally include storytelling encounters, combat encounters, investigative encounters, social encounters, explorative encounters, and skill encounters.

Elements of an Encounter

To understand how to make an encounter, a GM must understand the basics of how to build an encounter, and how the encounter will resolve. There are multitudes of ways that an encounter can resolve. It is not always a pass/fail objective, in fact oftentimes the characters will partially succeed at a task and ultimately spawn new problems, and thus new encounters, for themselves.

Element	Description
Clear Goal	A GM must have a clear goal for an encounter. There should never be encounters where nothing is accomplished. Of course, the GM should not attempt to force their ideal resolution to an encounter that would be railroading. The point is to make the encounter meaningful. Combat not just for the sake of combat, but to do something beyond, to symbolize a purpose or forward an agenda. A social encounter should never end with an awkward silence and no progress; ending the social encounter having made a bitter enemy of the players is still progress, and possible plot points later on.
Interesting Developments	Simply put, an encounter should have some interesting developments made so that the players actually feel invested in the outcome. Players should never feel like the encounter they ended was completely frivolous and pointless. It is up the GM to specially craft encounter so as to make them interesting, and with interesting outcomes. Encountering the barbarian tribe should make the players excited or nervous, because the barbarians should pose a significant threat while the players finish another objective in the area. Talking with the local lord should give the players a mission that is both interesting and challenging. For a group of master level mages and weapon experts, a den of overgrown rats is hardly challenging or interesting. An evil cult attempting to raise a demon is much more interesting, mostly because it actually poses a challenge to the players' abilities. Players like to see their characters constantly grow and overcome greater and greater challenges, so give them such.
Fun for Everyone	An encounter should be fun for everyone involved. Again, this goes back to the fact that the players should be challenged, but the players should also actually be having fun. A slugfest against equally matched opponents is challenging, but hardly fun. The players should be given opportunities to show their tactical prowess and critical thinking skills, and rewarded with bonuses that affect their dice rolls. Social encounters should not just be a simple roll vs another roll. There should be preparation and intrigue invested into the final conversation.

Non-Player Characters

Enemies and Non-Player Characters (NPCs) are an incredibly important aspect of being a GM, and can quite possibly be the most difficult things to create and manage. NPC is a general term that refers to everyone else in the game world that is not actively controlled by one of the players at the game table. Every enemy, every shopkeeper, every civilian, and every critter that the players meet is an NPC, and is under the complete control of the GM. The players control their characters, and the GM quite literally plays as the rest of the world.

Elements of NPC's

In creating an NPC, the GM must understand exactly what the NPC is supposed to do. They are not a Player Character, and their importance to the story is less for that, but they do serve some purpose, otherwise, why would they be there?

Element	Description
NPCs are not Player Characters	The Player Characters are the center of the story. The players are your reason why this campaign is happening, so you as the GM must understand that your part is to play the less important world around them. Now this is not to say that anything that happens to anyone else isn't as important within the game world, but outside the game world, everyone else is, in fact, less important. NPCs should almost never become the focus of your story, and if they must, they should not be able to drive the plot forward without the aid of the player characters.
NPCs are People Too	Just because NPCs are not as important as the players doesn't mean they aren't supposed to be living thinking beings as well. They have emotions, they make mistakes, they are not all knowing, and they don't usually want to die. NPCs should react accordingly when the players do something. Even if the NPC would severely complicate the lives of the Players, such as calling the police when the Players are spotted committing a crime, that NPC should do so. It is what the NPC would do naturally.
The GM is not the NPC	As a GM, you must understand above and beyond your players the necessity of separating in-game and out-of-game knowledge. You as the GM understand what is going to happen in a few moments. You know when the wolves are going to attack, and when the police are going to arrive. The NPC you are playing as may not know these things. In combat, enemies are not perfectly coordinated unless they have some sort of mental link. They often do not perform 4-part combos unless they happen to be some special task-force that have worked together before.

Guidelines of Being a GM

Know the Rules

GM's are meant to be the rules keeper, and the arbiter of the game. The players will constantly ask you if anything they are doing is ok to do, and if they can do something within the game. More importantly, they will ask you how to do something, so having the rules ready both in your mind and in text are essential to being a good GM.

Know How to Break the Rules

If the rules are too stringent for your tastes, or the rules are not correct in your mind or the mind of your players, you must be a good improviser in making up other rules for the situation. This is especially important in places where there is no specific rule. This book is not meant to be a replete composition of all possible scenarios and all possible rules. In addition, if you make a new rule, you must be consistent with them. Players want to have a consistent set of rules so they know what game they are playing.

You are the Game Master: "Master" of the Game

You are the master of the game, the story teller, the guide. The players may object to some of your decisions, and they may very well believe that your judgments are not right, but they, and you, must understand that the GM's rulings are final. Later on, you may come to find your old judgments are, in fact, wrong, and you can change them (Make sure to apologize).

The Players are Not the Enemy

If a Player does something you do not like, or if you feel that the players are doing too well and need challenging, you must remember that the players are your friends, and collaborative storytellers. Often, GMs will see that they are constantly playing the villain attempting to best the Player Characters, and will extrapolate that outside of the game world. They will believe that the GM himself is supposed to best the Players at the table. So they will throw all manner of horrible obstacles at the players, thinking this time they have them dead to rights. The Players come out on top, and the GM just gets more frustrated, and schemes further. Take a step back, and realize that fighting your players leads to bitterness, and a completely un-fun experience for everyone. Seeing the Players overcome a meaningful challenge should provide you with the satisfaction you need. If you don't derive satisfaction from helping other people succeed, then being a GM may not be for you.

What Happens in Game, Stays in Game

If a problem happens in game, it must stay within the game, and though players may be prone to bringing quarrels outside of the game world, you as the GM should help them to cool off, and bring it back to reality. Romantic relationships in the game do not mean anything outside of it, and arguments within the game should never cause the players to actually get angry at each other.

In addition, things that happen outside the game should never make it into the game world. You and your players are playing this game to simulate a separate reality from the world you live in. Thusly, your real-world problems should not become in-game vendettas. If you dislike something someone did that day, their character should never suffer for it.

Let Go of Your Creations

Just because you created something does not mean that it means the same thing to the players. The immense effort you put into building a storyline might be all for naught as the players kill the NPC that would introduce them to said storyline. It is better for yourself and for everyone else if you calm down, and let go of things you hold dear. It is sometimes physically painful to see a well-built villain die in a single round of combat due to three critical hits, but that is life, and neither the dice, nor your players, hate you.

Let the Players Help You

Sometimes the work of creating the world can get overwhelming, this is completely understandable. It is always recommended to let the players help in designing the world, especially if something they create is relatively inconsequential outside of itself. Perhaps Player A has come from a small town not on the map. Alright, let him create that town, and let him flesh it out. This adds to your world, it takes work away from you, and it gives your player a wonderful sense of attachment to the world. In addition, remember that your players will feel attached to their characters. These characters are the players' insertion into the world, their creative sandbox. So let them do whatever they want with their characters, within reason of course. A consequence of this is, **be very careful taking control**

away from the players. This includes all types of mind control or action control. If your players no longer have their characters, they have nothing…and if they have nothing, they have no reason to be at the table.

Have Fun with It

This is a game, so have some fun! Your role as a GM was never mandated by anyone, and you are probably not being paid to be a GM. It can feel like a job at times, and the players may never know the work you put into the game, but that isn't important. What is important is that you and your players have fun with the game. So enjoy yourself, and enjoy the amazing collaborative experience that Tabletop RPGs can bring.