

# Alhinator's Digital TTRPG, 1st Ed.

This document is designed as a framework of a RP system; an all-encompassing barebones approach. It is meant to be a digestible middle ground between free-form roleplay and the medium weighted mechanics of D&D 5e, focusing on allowing maximum character customization within reasonable bound, and creating a space where each participant can serve as the 'game master' from time to time without feeling the stress of preparing an entire story in advance. The game itself is not 'balanced' per se, as there is little premade content to balance; rather, it gives a framework to create, and the onus of designing a character that operates on the same level as one's partymates lies upon its creator.

## **Sec. 1: An Introduction to the World**

### Planes

The universe consists of two distinct dimensions; the material world and the spirit realm. The *material world* is a loose copy of our own Earth, with many changes to its history, peoples, and culture due to the discovery of magic in the Middle Ages, and the cultivation and use of magics throughout the history of the world. The *spirit realm* is a fantastical parallel of the *material world*, accessed by many means, such as portals, astral projection, and naturally occurring *Wellsprings*. The *spirit realm* is ever-changing and impermanent; entire landscapes can shift in mere days when nobody is watching, however, it is said that the sky of the spirit realm exactly mirrors the sky of the *material world*. *Leylines* originating from the *Spirit Realm* dig like roots into the world; sources of potent magic that encompass the planet.

### The Material World

Dominated by humanity, the material world lies in a state of rebirth following the Third Global War. Some pseudo-governments coalesced in the ashes of war, and many strongholds of the Old World still persist to this day, especially on the eastern borders of North America. After one hundred years since the ceasefire and near annihilation of humanity, many great cities and factions have risen from the rubble of former capitals. Tight-knit communities of wanderers, raiders, and merchants roam the settled fallout, scavenging for what they can, as well as hunting or defending from mutants, monsters, and incursions from the spirit realm.

As one of the major powers during the war, the lands of the United States have fallen prey to secession, factionalism, and countless occurrences of barbarous self-proclaimed leaders conquering large areas of land. Both the midwest and southeast regions are filled with thousands of standalone "doomsday-prepper" survivors competing for land, resources, and blood. On North America's east and west coast, respectively, lie the *United American Citadel* and *New California Coalition*: these are the two largest settlements of "surviving" western culture, both aiming to preserve the "old ways" of pre-war society. Rumors are often spread of a

settlement of hyper-augmented militants that have taken over the former NORAD headquarters in Colorado.

South America was not left untouched by the generally “Western” conflict; the past hundred years combined with large amounts of ley magic and mutation have covered the entire continent in thick jungle, inhabited by both native, mutated beasts and invasive monsters.

Both Western and Eastern Europe were completely decimated by the war, leaving a wide swath of uninhabitable rubble across the British Isles, France, Germany, and the Balkan States.

Remnants of magi-nuclear war in Western Russia turned the already rough lands there into a tundra brimming with pools of radiation; the combination of fallout and snow leaves for land with very little to give. The land east of the Urals remains relatively untouched by man, however, its sparseness in population led to a large increase of invasive magical species, especially those attuned to the cold.

Due to the natural mountainous barrier and weather conditions of the Himalayan mountain range, the farthest west reaches of Asia were minimally affected by nuclear war, however, factionalism during wartime led to bloody massacres of the people there led by the major powers of the war. Left in ruins by conventional bombings and a century of wandering raiders, the area is generally safe and uninhabited, but severely lacking in local resources.

Eastern Asia was one of the hardest-hit regions during the war, containing both the former Chinese, Korean, and Japanese capitals; while Japan remained generally neutral during the war, it was not left unchanged. When the dust settled, the archipelago quickly rebuilt itself under a harsh isolation; high walls both of magic and defense systems prevent nearly everything from entering or leaving the nation. The other two superpowers lie dormant in expanses of abandoned steel and concrete skyscrapers; surviving citizens took the opportunity to flee, while governments recuperated their losses by using slave labor to rebuild underground.

The temperate regions of Africa, while subject to the least damage during the war, suffered the most immediately after the ceasefire. Local governments fell to pieces under a dual threat of insurgency groups paired with European and American settlers rushing to claim the “best” pieces of land for themselves. At the current moment, the continent is in a constant state of small-scale warfare as territory between settler groups and local piecemeal governments is hotly contested.

The once-glorious ice-swept tundra of Antarctica is somehow more barren than it was before; a high increase in average global temperature led to severe shrinking of the ice caps. A rise in sea level of approximately ten feet drastically affected the coastlines of the world.

Globally, temperatures are more extreme; the nights are sometimes below freezing in the summer at the equator, and temperatures of 120°F and above are not uncommon during the winters of the Mojave. The unfortunate wanderer left outside with no protection from the elements is by far the most common cause of death, followed by disease.

Most of the planet operates on the barter system, with currencies being local and varied, often tied to a specific city, settlement, or region. Global trade operates at a snail’s pace, often enabled by single individuals or groups with control over functioning aircraft or cargo ships; nuclear and magical power have made fuel and operational range a non-issue, rather, the problem lies in maintenance and repair when parts need to be replaced, or are damaged in combat.

## The Spirit Realm

The spirit realm has existed in full since the dawn of time; the leylines of magic that permeate the material world are the roots anchoring the spirit realm to the planet. In the early days, the realm was mostly empty, inhabited by only a few *Greatsouls* embodying the elements of the earth. As life began to form, new *Greatsouls* emerged into being from the constants of life; eventually shaping their own offspring from raw magic. These collectives of spirits sometimes found conflict with each other, but were so physically apart in the realm that those conflicts were few and far between. As the human societies in the material world became more complex, convoluted, and globalized, new *Greatsouls* wrought of humanity were born, embodying aspects that did not previously exist in the spirit realm. These *Greatsouls* born of humanity's desires, anger and suffering, rather than natural constants, were the first to become *Demons*, those who augmented their own power by consuming the essence of other spirits. Humanity's lightest and darkest hours are mirrored by the spirit realm, the collective consciousness and will of the world shaping the manifestations of power within. The two worlds are new to each other, though - formal contact between human powers and spirits was only made in the late 1700s, and passage between the two worlds was extremely dangerous and sparse until the mid-1940s, when the discovery of atomic power led to the creation of the first artificial portal.

At the current moment, the spirit realm lies shattered by the twin wraths of two wars. First, the Third Global War, fought by humanity, used magical ordinance so powerful that it ripped holes in the thin weave between the two worlds. Cities, landmasses, and peoples were supplanted from both dimensions into the other, causing untold amounts of chaos as ecosystems were upturned, and millions of people, both human and spirit, were displaced across dimensions. Since then, the barrier between dimensions has grown ragged, making it easy to traverse. Second, a *Demon* known only by the name of *Simaires* leads an army of conquest across the spirit realm, with the goal to assimilate all spirit life into himself, before breaching into the material world to consume all life there, as well. *Simaires* leaves no survivors in his wake except those who pledge fealty to his cause; they are branded into his servitude with the knowledge that he will consume them once his conquest is complete.

Wellsprings, once the only way to travel between dimensions, are places of great ley energy, often where the leyline penetrates the fabric between the two planes. Both physics and magic behave erratically around Wellsprings, and travel using them is unsafe, random, and can lead to disastrous consequences. Artificial portals, created by humans using mass amounts of magical or nuclear energy, snip open and sew closed holes in the dimensional fabric using a carefully constructed mixture of technology and magic, and are generally between the size of a person and a large land vehicle.

## Inhabitants

### Humans

**Humans** are by far the most common sentient creature in the material world; their societies and great peoples have shaped the course of reality as it is known today. Humans are varied and diverse, and their paths are often shaped by their own willpower and desires over an innate birthright or destiny.

Most humans living today were born after the ceasefire, however, there are scarce few who live falsely extended lives; some of these rare elders may even know of a world before the Third Global War. The average human lives less than a century, although many with the means to do so will artificially extend their lifetimes.

Humans often augment themselves with cybernetic technology, but technological progress was halted and set back many years by the War before a complete replacement of the body was discovered. Similarly, there are only a few known cases where a human consciousness was successfully supplanted into a machine. Humans are also prone to genetic mutation through both science and magic, allowing those who survive the process to develop a wide variety of powers that stem from their internal energy.

The **fey-touched** are a subset of humanity whose lives have been guided towards a specific destiny by nebulous entities known as *fey*.

### Spirits

‘Spirit’ is the general term for the inhabitants of the spirit realm, whether Greatsoul, humanoid, beast, demon, or a combination thereof.

**Greatsouls** are powerful living embodiments of facets of life and earth. Examples of older Greatsouls might include Water, Moon, Death, and Tundra, whereas new Greatsouls born of humanity are more akin to Love, Greed, Debt, and Envy; lesser Greatsouls may even encompass very specific concepts such as Snow Falling From Leaves, or Going To Bed On An Empty Stomach. Each Greatsoul has a unique name in the language of the spirits, and if it is killed, a new Greatsoul will emerge into existence as long as that facet still exists as a part of life. Conversely, if a facet is completely wiped from the world, its corresponding Greatsoul shall wither and disappear.

**Spirits**, specifically referring to those with full sapience and intelligence are the most common, and have inspired many common human ideals of spirits, ghosts, and the arcane, over the years. Spirits like this are given a form upon creation, but are not solely bound to it; they may shift their form as it aligns with their own will and purpose, and many spirits seek to permanently alter themselves through magic. Given forms are either humanoid or humanoid adjacent, often containing aspects of animals like heads, tails, feet, or the ability to shift to a form that does; or that of a beast or hybrid with the ability to speak, comprehend, and have critical thought.

Beast-spirits, monsters, and constructs are those that are created without that level of humanoid thought. Even though they may appear as humanoid forms, such as undead, they possess either minimal or no intelligence, acting as animals, pre-programmed instructions, or upon instinct to

survive alone. Most commonly, beast-spirits and monsters are created as guardians or protectors of spirit settlements, and turn to violence only when left alone and uncared for.

**Demons**, as a label, refer to any spirit, including Greatsouls, who have augmented their own power by consuming the life force of another spirit. Not all Demons are evil, however, all Demons are Demons of their own accord. A spirit's mind and body must be wholly willing to accept the infusing of power of another; and they must be the one to kill the being they intend to infuse.

### Half-Spirits

Half-spirits are the offspring of a human mother and a spirit, or one with a half-spirit parent. They have life spans beyond the regular length of a human, and age slowly, but don't take longer to reach maturity. Socially, they often gravitate to other humans due to their mortality, but may experience distancing due to various cultures' stereotypes, portrayals, and preconceived notions.

### Pantheons

To put it simply, all-knowing, all-powerful gods are not real. Many religions worshipping invisible higher powers have risen, fallen, or persisted over the centuries of humanity's existence, with dedicated and pious leaders, however, no confirmation has ever existed of higher entities, or even eldritch beings hailing from beyond these planes.

Spirits often worship the *Greatsoul* from which they came; if they were not made by one, they either search for one, or feel no need to.

However, the most common form of "worship" among both humans and spirits is tribal; a leader who has amassed great power through either the use of magic, military strength, etc., demands or requests tribute from those under its leadership or protection.

Often equated to the God-Kings of old, the *Elevated* are those who have overcome their bodily limitations, and ascended into beings of immense power, taking and stemming from both humanoid, beastlike, or eldritch forms. Only achieved by millenia-old demons or the rich, dedicated, and insane of humanity, *Elevated* command fear, respect, and followers on top of their vast resources and power, whether it takes the form of magic, technology, or both.

## Magic

*All magic in the universe stems from the leylines of the Spirit Realm, whether direct or indirect, and can be categorized into three broad Schools. These Schools are all-encompassing but not mutually exclusive; techniques from each are often combined with each other; the best mages specialize in one, but draw inspiration from all three Schools. Practices are the common term for derivations of “subclasses” of the three Schools, and players are encouraged to create their own Practices as needed when developing their characters.*

### Ley Magic

Ley Magic is considered the most raw and pure form of magic; by storing mana drawn directly from the Material World's leylines or the Spirit Realm's ambient energy in oneself or a magical focus, Ley Mages can manipulate the classical elements, the land around them, the natural magical auras of others, and overwhelm their enemies with sheer force. Ley Magic requires either a personal attunement to the flow of the leylines, or a focus that allows for the draw and usage of mana. While Ley Magic is incredibly powerful, it depends heavily on a source of mana; if a caster runs out of mana without a natural or artificial source to draw from, they are left without access to their magic. Ley Magic can also be difficult to control as it intensifies, often leading to gruesome consequences when a caster attempts to exert more power than their body or mind can handle. Ley Magic is elemental in nature - Ley Mages often devote themselves to a *Practice* that involves mastery over two or three of the 'classical' elements, including but not limited to Earth, Wind, Fire, Lightning, Water, Flora, and Ice.

### Alchemy

Alchemy is the practice of using, combining, and mutating the latent magical properties found in plants, animals, metals, gemstones, and more. Most commonly, Alchemists work as apothecaries or weaponsmiths, brewing potions or creating magical weapons. If a Ley Mage desired a focus for casting spells, they would likely turn to the assistance of a tenured Alchemist. Additionally, some Alchemists might specialize not in the transmutation of materials, but living beings. Alchemy also covers the discipline of construct-making; golems, homunculi, and automatons are made by Alchemists, and have exceptionally wide use cases. As technological medical supplies and equipment became less common after the war in the Material World, many doctors have turned to Alchemy to supplement their practices.

### Rune Magic

Rune Magic is both the simplest and most complex form of magic. Originally created by the spirits and adopted by humanity, the Runic Language allows anyone to tap into the 'instructions' of the universe, altering the happenings of the world to their will. Rune Mages create their spells by creating single-use glyphs or spell circles containing highly specific sets of rules and instructions, and fuel them by specifying the energy source in the spell - eg. drawing heat from a nearby fire, or via a magical focus similar to a Ley Mage's. The largest constraints around rune magic are as follows: If the spell is written incorrectly, it will either do nothing or do what the incorrect instructions specified; and Nothing cannot be created from Something, and Something Cannot be created from Nothing; ie. The First Law of Thermodynamics. Matter can be transmuted into energy, and vice versa, but nothing may be entirely created or destroyed.

## **Sec. 2: Creating a Character**

*When creating a character, the most important aspect to focus on is a synergy between numbers and personality. A wall of statistics without a story means nothing; a rich, lore and power-packed character needs numbers to ground it and keep competitive roleplay enjoyable for all parties. Ideally, each group member should have more than one player character they can roleplay when the occasion calls for it, as well as a healthy spread of major and minor NPCs.*

A character is most roughly defined by their seven core stats: Strength, Agility, Precision, Resilience, Intelligence, Willpower, and Luck. All core stats are measured with a *base* of zero to twenty, however, modifiers from other sources may bring them outside of that range. *There is no maximum cap to any of the stats, however, no stat may be brought below negative ten by any means. If two or more of a character's stats are simultaneously negative ten, that character should suffer severe consequences relevant to the situation.*

**Strength**, as is typical, is a measure of one's physical strength. This can be both a measure of raw brute force, as well as measured strength or athletic prowess. How well one can lift heavy objects, push obstacles, and utilize large weapons like greatswords or heavy machine guns.

**Agility** is a measure of one's dexterity, evasiveness, and speed; how quickly one can crawl through a muddy bog of barbed wire, how fast one can sprint across an open field without getting hit, and how quickly one can react to ambushes or traps.

**Precision** measures the fine motor control that Strength and Agility do not; the nimble fingers of a lockpick or hacker, or the delicate aim of a rifle. Precision also covers the ability to determine and attack the weak points of a foe, create high-quality goods, and operate complex machinery.

**Resilience** covers a wide variety of conditions; most notably how long one can remain standing in a fight or while drinking, but it also speaks to how long one can remain still, aiming down a scope, or maintaining their ability to cast spells under fire. Additionally, more resilience means more resistance to extreme weather conditions and minor poisoning.

**Intelligence** is not limited to book smarts - it also ascribes a tendency towards rational thinking over instinctual reaction, how well one can determine a truth from a lie, or unravel the secrets behind a riddle or clue. Intelligence is the highest factor in one's aptitude for programming, hacking, and repurposing scrap, as well as creating or deciphering strings of runes and spell circles.

**Willpower** is the driving determination behind one's motives and actions. Willpower is a character's ability to persevere under harsh conditions, convince or deceive others, and draw forth mana from the leylines to use as fuel for spellcasting. Willpower also factors into one's resistance to torture, as well as the ability to survive close encounters with death.

**Luck** is the measure of one's gravitation towards chance; the ability to hit critical shots during a close fight, finding crates that have the best loot in them, and sometimes, the ability to come out of a deadly scenario completely unscathed.

## Assigning Core Attributes

On the character sheet, the seven boxes on the far left represent your character's seven core attributes. This character sheet is meant to be usable for every type of character in the game, including PCs, NPCs, bosses, enemies, and monsters. A *Standard Distribution* for a level one character would use the following scores, assigned to the attributes of choice: **10, 8, 5, 4, 3, 3, 1**. If the *Standard Distribution* is unappealing, use the following method to assign attributes: Starting at zero base stats across the board, spread **34 points** across the seven attributes, with *none exceeding twelve* and *no more than two attributes greater than or equal to ten*.

Incompetent	Competent	Trained	Expert	Master	Exemplar
0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21+

For example, a character with average build who sometimes exercises may have a strength score of 3, while a battle-hardened military veteran would have a score closer to 13-14.

## Weight Class

Rather than lock hitpoint scaling behind a specific class, it is generalized into simple categories to choose from, based on that character's physical build. Weight classes can be used to calculate the hitpoints of both humanoids as well as monsters.

Frail	Lightweight	Standard	Athletic	Enhanced	Gargantuan
5 hp/lvl	8/lvl	10/lvl	12/lvl	15/lvl	20/lvl

**Frail:** Someone who can't take hits. Likely afflicted by some sort of medical condition that makes them especially frail, or is just very delicate.

**Lightweight:** Someone who doesn't often get involved in physical altercations. Can't really take a punch.

**Standard:** A build of someone who could take a bit of a beating. Ideal for those moving in and out of the front lines of combat.

**Athletic:** Would be able to withstand a harsh fight on the battlefield. Meant to be absorbing hits during small fights and skirmishes.

**Enhanced:** Their bodily vigor is enhanced by either strong cybernetics, powerful magic, or raw size. Meant to be able to hold off many enemies without flinching.

**Gargantuan:** This weight class is primarily reserved for creatures, constructs, beasts, transformations, etc. at least twice or three times as large as a human. Monsters on the battlefield, they require highly concentrated damage to stagger and fell.



## Assigning Secondary Attributes

Once a character's core attributes have been chosen, their secondary attributes should be automatically calculated by the digital character sheet. This section will go over how they are calculated, and how they are used.

**Hitpoints:** A character's hitpoints, or HP, is a measure of how well they can endure the rigors of combat. A character's maximum hit points may be bolstered by various equipment, but the base score is calculated by their *Resilience* score times two, plus hit points per level based on their weight class. If a character ever drops below half of their base HP, they are considered *Bloodied*. Characters that are *Bloodied* may invoke various effects, either from themselves, allies, or enemies. When a character is reduced or set to zero hit points, they can no longer fight. Whether this means they are knocked out, killed, or forced to flee is up to the player and the situation. **Temporary hit points** are granted by various means, and are subtracted before regular hit points when taking damage, and may exceed a character's maximum hit point value. They last for the duration specified, until the character sleeps, or until removed by damage. If a character would be granted new temporary hit points, they overwrite the current amount, rather than adding to it. There is no maximum amount of temporary hit points a character may have at one time.

**Speed:** A character's *Speed* determines how many feet they can walk or run per turn when engaged in combat. *Speed* is calculated with a base of 10 feet, plus a character's *Agility* score rounded up to the nearest five, and half of their *Strength* score rounded up to the nearest five.

**Burden:** Burden is the maximum "weight" of items a character may have at the ready at any time; this includes weapons, armor, computers; anything they are ready and able to use in combat. All combat-ready equipment has a *Burden* value, and exceeding this weight of active equipment invokes negative effects for the character. *Burden* is calculated by combining a character's *Strength* and *Resilience* scores, plus five. On a character sheet, *Burden* is represented with a fraction; the numerator represents the weight occupied by current items, and the denominator represents the maximum item weight before becoming *Overburdened*.

**Awareness:** A character's awareness represents their attunement to their surroundings, both in social scenarios as well as combat. Awareness represents how well one can perceive hidden threats, as well as passively recognize signs, messages, or symbols meant to be secret. Awareness is calculated by combining a character's *Intelligence* score with their *Precision* score.

**Sanity:** A character's sanity represents their ability to rationalize and ground themselves in the face of the impossible or unknown. Sanity also determines a character's ability to cope with trauma, recover from strenuous mental activity, or remain focused during combat. *Sanity* is calculated by combining a character's *Willpower* score with half of their *Resilience* score rounded up, and half of their *Intelligence* score rounded up.

## The Level System

A character's prowess and growth is measured through a mostly non-linear leveling system. Unlike traditional experience tracking, level-ups should be determined by milestones in the story. When a character performs a relevant feat, overcomes a physical or mental obstacle, or dedicates themselves to honing their skills through study or training, they should level up.

Levels one through fifteen are considered low level; the average citizen or worker in their mid to late twenties would find themselves between level three and five, depending on their skill level. From level fifteen to thirty are the seasoned veterans, those who have spent decades mastering their craft or honing their skill. Levels thirty and above are the extremely powerful, those who extend their lifetimes or spend their primes augmenting themselves with powerful magic or technology. Anything above level fifty is extraordinarily powerful, often achieved or held by the *Elevated* or *Greatsouls*, and revered with caution.

When leveling up, increase one core attribute's base score by one and increase the hitpoints-by-level by the amount indicated by the character's weight class. The ability increased should be directly correlated to the milestone achieved. Characters actively seeking improvement or training through harsh encounters should be leveling up about once every in-game month or two. More passive characters should be leveling up once every one to two in-game years. **It's important to know that leveling up is NOT the way characters should be unlocking powers, skills, and gear.** Leveling up is simply a way to track and increase a character's base stats and innate health value.

Characters don't need to always start at level one - fresh, main-character PCs can probably start around level three, four or five - on the edge of making a breakthrough into becoming someone more powerful.

## Level Regression

Sometimes, extenuating circumstances such as age, apathy, illness, and amputation (but not limited to those), will cause a character's level to decrease. Similarly to leveling up, level regression should occur during relevant milestones, but should not occur regularly. Old age, mainly for humans, should cause level regression in cases where a character is far beyond their prime. When regressing a character's level, decrease one core attribute's base score by one, and decrease their hitpoints by the amount indicated by their weight class.

*If a character were to increase/decrease their resilience score by leveling up or down, their base health should be recalculated entirely. Similarly, if it's decided that a character should change their weight class, due to extreme lifestyle changes, their base health should also be recalculated to reflect their current weight class and level.*

## **Sidebar - Notation**

The rest of the rulebook uses shorthand notation that is crucial to understanding the core mechanics of the game. This preface serves as a quick reference guide as to the meaning of all the shorthand used in the rulebook. These notations should also be used when creating Abilities, Equipment, and other Characters.

STR - A character's Strength value. If prepended with BASE, then their Strength before any additions or modifiers. The same holds true for: AGI - Agility, PRE - Precision, RES - Resilience, INT - Intelligence, WIL - Willpower, LUC - Luck, HP - Hitpoints, SPE - Speed, BUR - Burden, AWR - Awareness, SAN - Sanity.

STAT - a placeholder for any of the above stats.

LVL - A character's level.

STAT/x - the *rounded down* integer value of the stat divided by x.

STAT\*x (or x\*STAT) - the stat, multiplied by x, rounded down to the nearest integer.

STAT % x - the statistic rounded up to the 'bin' determined by size x. For example, if a score is 'binned' by x = 5, then values 1-5 would equal 1, 6-10 would equal 2, 0 would equal 0, etc.

STAT > x - True, if the stat is above x, false otherwise. The operands <, <=, and >= follow the same method.

STAT == x - True if the stat is equal to x, false otherwise.

STAT != x - True if the stat is NOT equal to x, false otherwise.

DRANGE[min, max] - the range (minimum and maximum rolls) of a given dice combination.

DAVG - the average roll of a die or dice pool.

CRANGE[min+] - the "critical success range" of an action, ability, item, etc. based on the die's raw roll.

FRANGE[max-] - the "critical failure range" of an action, ability, item, etc. based on the die's raw roll.

If a CRANGE or FRANGE are not specified, they default to 20 and 1 respectively.

## **Sec. 3: Combat**

*At its heart, this system strives to meld together free-form and structured roleplay into something in which combat is balanced, but is not a major focus, rather, it exists as an aside to storytelling, writing, and worldbuilding. However, this manual should not guide the writing aspect; it is here to supplement writers with a system of balance. Therefore, it is required to cover Combat content before diving into the more important aspects of ability and world design.*

### Dice and Storytelling

At the core of combat is the d20, which is the standard die to be rolled when contesting actions, making checks, or more. However, due to the story-heavy nature of the system, dice may sometimes be forgone if the participants are willing to do so, rather than relying on chance as an outcome. The purpose of including dice is to add an element of thrill and randomness to the storytelling, however, a player should never feel “backed into a corner”, writing-wise, **especially if their character is**. However, one should be mindful of when they do or don’t use dice for contesting actions, checks, etc., and especially communicate their decision to use or forgo dice to their fellow players. When choosing to succeed or fail when one would normally roll dice, consider if this is because the character would naturally succeed or fail, or if it is relevant to the plot for them to do so.

### Contests and Checks

Simply put, Contests occur when two separate characters or entities roll dice, and compare each result. Checks are one character or entity’s roll, compared to a “Bar”. Bars should be set at 5 for something simple that anyone could do; 10-15 for more specialized; 20+ for something that requires either high luck or a high base modifier, and 30+ for something that even further exemplifies those requirements. Checks should be reserved for when characters encountering them have a chance of success; otherwise, a check should not even be rolled. Contests and Checks should not be rolled when characters are doing something they know how to do, or are comfortable with. They are not “style points”, they do not determine “how well” a character is able to do something, etc. That is up to the writer. Rather, checks should be used when interacting with things out of the character’s control. **If it can be roleplayed, roleplay it. Crucial interactions should not be left up to chance if the writers don’t want them to.** Checks, especially, should be reserved for when the *aspect of chance is more important than the outcome*. For both Contests and Checks, if they are associated with a STAT, the score for that stat is added to the roll.

### High of X & Low of X

Sometimes, one d20 won’t suffice. To represent scenarios in which one has a higher or lower chance of succeeding or failing than normal, multiple dice may be rolled, and the highest or lowest of those results chosen as the final result. For example, High of 2 would equate to D&D’s “Advantage”, and High of 3 would mean roll three dice and use the highest result. The more dice are rolled, the more “skewed” an outcome is in a certain direction. Sometimes, certain attributes or conditions will add dice or remove dice from a roll; the maximum number of d20 allowed to count for one roll in a Contest or Check is four, and the minimum is one.

## Character Death

**Player Characters should not die unless their player wants them to.** Always give the character an out, or the ability to escape from deadly situations, or avoid putting them into them in the first place, if they shouldn't die. **Plot armor is important. Make sure it makes sense.**

The same applies for *permanent* injuries, disfigurements, transformations, etc. These should remain scripted, unless, of course, the player wants them to be left to chance.

## Damage: Its Types, Amplifiers, and Reductions

### Damage Types

Inside and out of combat, a near-infinite variety of damage types and combinations can be encountered. This list may not even cover all of them. Experiment with new damage types as needed, and consider their place in the world around them. Can they be quantified in a way that differentiates them from one of the existing types? Can the damage be “re-skinned” as a status effect instead?

The Damage Types fall into a few Categories; they are grouped as such for the sake of an action or ability being able to deal multiple damage types.

**Elemental:** Fire, Freezing, Lightning, Corrosive

**Physical:** Bludgeoning, Slashing, Piercing, Crushing, Impact

**Bodily:** Radiation, Bleeding, Disease, Poison, Suffocation

**Ballistic:** Ballistic, Explosive, Sonic

**Supernatural:** Psychic, Necrotic, Radiant, Negative, True

### Damage Type Descriptions

**Fire** damage is fairly standard; it should be used when encountering an open flame or excessive heat originating from an object.

**Freezing** damage is similar; anything radiating extreme cold should deal freezing damage.

**Lightning** damage is taken from anything electrical in nature, even if it's not actual lightning.

**Corrosive** damage stems from acid, corrosive chemicals, or magic; anything that would melt or strip away.

**Bludgeoning** damage occurs when a blunt or heavy weapon is used; it may also occur when two objects of similar size collide.

**Slashing** damage represents the damage caused by a sharpened, cutting, blade in an arc, or damage dealt by tearing or ripping with claws or chainsaws.

**Piercing** damage is for stabbing, thrusts with a blade, or a sharpened projectile such as a spear or arrow.

**Crushing** damage occurs when something is bound or trapped by inward forces; these may be caused by something physical, such as restricting vines, walls of earth, a crushing grasp; or a force like manipulated gravity.

**Impact** damage is similar to bludgeoning damage, however, it is reserved for cases where something collides with an immovable object, like falling from a height or being thrown into a building.

**Radiation** damage should occur during and potentially after one is exposed to high levels of radiation. Radiation damage is generally small but persistent and difficult to deal with.

**Bleeding** damage occurs from hemorrhaging or severe blood loss.

**Disease** damage, like radiation, should be small, consistent, and chronic. Disease damage represents the breakdown and failure of internal organs and processes.

**Poison** damage occurs when one is exposed to poison or toxins that cause instantaneous harm, rather than long-term ailments.

**Suffocation** damage occurs when a character is deprived of the ability to breathe; whether it involves a lack of air or water, drowning, or the vacuum of space.

**Ballistic** damage is the type dealt by bullets and other high-velocity physical projectiles. Ballistic damage exists to differentiate between “traditional” piercing damage from arrows and tipped weapons, and higher-caliber projectiles.

**Explosive** damage is less representative of exposure to open flame, rather, it is the force from a detonation. Explosive damage should also include the damage dealt by implosions.

**Sonic** damage represents damage dealt by overwhelming auditory assault; whether it comes from something like a flashbang, concussive blast, otherworldly screech, or standing too close to something breaking the sound barrier.

**Psychic** damage represents a supernatural assault on the mind, whether from malicious telepathy, malefic visions, or the sight of the eldritch.

**Necrotic** damage is the energy of death and decay.

**Radiant** damage is the energy of both the holy or divine, as well as the overwhelming presence of magical aura.

**Negative** damage is the energy of chaos and unmaking; it is the energy of Nothingness

**True** damage is an antithesis to Negative; it is the result of creation and reality willed into existence.

## Damage Amplifiers: Vulnerability, Resistance, and Immunity

Alongside Damage Types are the Amplifiers: Vulnerability, Resistance, and Immunity. Creatures, Characters, or Objects that are Vulnerable to a specific damage type take twice as much damage from it; Resistance halves damage of a given type, and Immunity negates damage of a given type. When granting Vulnerability, Resistance, or Immunity, consider if the recipient really *deserves* it. Does it have a *reason* to be affected (or unaffected) by that damage type? What is the source granting it that strength or weakness? Although it may seem silly at first, when playing with big damage numbers, double damage can rack up to a lot. Immunity may feel unfun or unfair if granted without purpose. Sometimes, it makes sense to give immunity to multiple damage types; an unliving construct would not be able to suffocate, and a heavily-armored tank cannot bleed. Consider only granting damage modifiers or negators when the recipient performs a certain action, such as hunkering down or activating a shield; or revealing weak spots under a hardened shell. **Both Negative and True damage should be dealt with carefully during both writing and roleplay, as nothing should have Vulnerability, Resistance, or Immunity to them. Damage Amplifiers may also apply to an entire Category of damage rather than just a specific type.**

## Damage Reduction

Damage Reduction is a flat, rather than percentage-based way of reducing damage taken. Armor, Equipment, or Abilities often grant damage reduction to the holder or user, and the types of damage reduced can vary based on the source. Generally, the amount of damage reduced should be zero to two points when light or low-level, four to five points when medium or mid-level, and eight to ten when heavy or high-level. Damage reduction should not be constantly applied unless it is a core mechanic or gimmick of the character, especially if it applies to more than one type. Any damage reduction above ten should be reworked as a Damage Threshold instead.

## Damage Thresholds

When creating a character, encampment, vehicle, etc., meant to be extremely tanky, damage thresholds are the best way to do so. With a damage threshold of “X”, any single-instances of damage below that threshold are ignored entirely. Heavy armor or armored exosuits should generally have damage thresholds of five to ten based on their purpose, heavily armed vehicles or chitinous beasts should have thresholds of ten to twenty; from twenty to fifty would be buildings or gargantuan constructions meant to withstand mass amounts of force. Anything with a damage threshold above fifty should be extremely rare or not even seen in-game. Additionally, damage thresholds may only apply to a specific type or category of damage.

## Combining Amplifiers, Reduction and Thresholds

While it is possible to combine damage reduction and thresholds, this should be done so cautiously, in order to not create scenarios where dealing damage is impossible. Consider the damage of characters, enemies, etc. at the intended level. Damage Amplifiers apply to damage **BEFORE** Reduction or Thresholds; Thresholds apply before Reduction.

## Priority Brackets and Speed

*The Bracket system discards the initiative turn-based system in favor of a speed-tier bracketing system. Although it may seem complicated at first, it allows for a welcoming variation during gameplay that allows characters who specialize in speed to shine, and “slow” characters to feel as if they aren’t stuck waiting around for their turn to arrive.*

The Priority Bracket system is one in which each possible action a character could take during a round falls into a priority bracket, and their actions for each bracket are decided simultaneously. Priority brackets operate on a polar scale, ranging from +3 to -2, including zero. The +3 bracket moves first, and the -2 moves last. Any action a character takes while in combat must fall into one of those six brackets. If multiple characters take action in the same bracket, they occur simultaneously. Rather than “deciding” what to do during one’s own “turn”, everyone engaged in combat decides what to do at the beginning of each priority bracket. **Characters are limited to the amount of actions they may take by the equipment they use and abilities they are granted; they may take only one action per priority bracket. Multiple actions by the same character may not overlap unless the action specifies it may be used CONCURRENTLY with another action.** Only after a priority bracket has been “resolved”, or every action taken has been calculated/rolled for, should the actions be described in roleplay, and characters don’t need to be taking actions in *every* bracket.

**The +3 bracket** is dedicated to actions with unmatched speed. They occur immediately after the last “round” ends, and some actions performed on the previous round may spill over into the +3 bracket with their additional effects. The +3 bracket can be considered the “top of the round”.

**The +2 bracket** is for extremely fast actions meant for blitzing combat. They occur before most other actions in a round, and abilities with long “casting times” often *begin* casting in the +2 bracket.

**The +1 bracket** is for general “priority moves”, ones that are meant to give a slight upper hand in immediate action.

**The 0 bracket** is for most actions. Often, abilities will finish “casting” during the 0 bracket, and anyone acting in the 0 bracket is moving at a regular pace.

**The -1 bracket** is for actions delayed beyond the 0 bracket; either an ability takes a while to cast, or one waits for after an enemy’s strike to counter-attack.

**The -2 bracket** is for significantly delayed actions. Some of the most powerful actions may take the entire turn to cast, from +3 to -2, and have the largest impact. However, -2 actions may simply dictate a “telegraphed” attack, or may simply be regular actions for which the user has been slowed by some means.

An entire round lasts 6 seconds, with the timestamps of each bracket’s “duration” being split up as follows:

+3: 0 -> 0.1s  
 +2: 0.1 -> 0.5s  
 +1: 0.5 -> 1.5s  
 0: 1.5 -> 4s  
 -1: 4 -> 5s  
 -2: 5 -> 6s



## Engaged and Independent Actions

*Since actions in the same turn bracket occur simultaneously, it is important to distinguish whether or not an action is affected by other actions. For example, a marksman's shot may be unaffected if their target is taking actions hundreds of feet away, but two clashing swordsmen would be directly affected by the moves the other makes.*

**Engaged** actions, when faced with another Engaged action, result in a “contest” - dice are rolled by each combatant, modified based on the action or ability, and the results are processed.

Sometimes, a combatant may be targeted by multiple engaged actions, but only have one of their own to respond with. In this case, it is up to the combatant with LESS actions to decide which enemy actions they will engage with, and which ones they will leave unengaged. When a contest is left unengaged, the combatant's “roll” for that contest is counted as their ability score, with no die roll attached to it.

By default, actions are High Engage.

- **High Engage** actions succeed if the user's roll is the highest in the contest.
- **Draw Engage** actions succeed if both rolls are equal.
- **Unequal Engage** actions succeed if the rolls are not the same.
- **Raw Engage** actions succeed if the user's raw, unmodified roll is the highest raw roll in the contest.
- **Difference X Engage** actions succeed if the user's roll is X greater than the other roll in the contest. When determining what X should be for an ability or action, X=5 should require a solid upper hand, X=10 should indicate a major advantage, and X=15 or X=20 should be an overwhelming difference in power.
- **No Engage** actions succeed only if they are used on an enemy who does not engage back.
- **Counter Engage** actions succeed only if they are used on an enemy who engaged the user in a previous priority bracket that round.

Engaged action “contests” are linked to one Statistic of each user; for example, a simple melee attack may call for “High Engage STR”, and be pitted against a “High Engage AGI” ability.

**Independent** actions aren't affected directly by the action the target is taking. Sure, the outcome may be altered if the target is dodging or blocking, but the course of action remains unaltered. However, independent actions are still susceptible to interruption in some cases. Characters may respond to as many Independent actions as they are targeted with.

Sometimes, an Engaged action may have Independent effects.

- **Focus** actions are those that begin during one priority bracket and end during another, but only persist over the course of one round. The user must remain alive and not incapacitated for the full duration of the action in order for it to succeed. **Full Focus** actions succeed only if the user remains alive and does not sustain **any damage or incapacitating status effects whatsoever** during the action, and are generally more rewarding than regular **Focus** actions.
- **Persistent** actions succeed if the user remains alive and is not incapacitated during the action, and can then be then sustained for multiple rounds afterwards, accounting for any restrictions in place for maintaining that action.
- **Revenge** actions succeed only if the user dies, is incapacitated, or sustains a specified injury or status affliction before the action finishes. They should be uncommon.
- **Extended** actions carry over into the +3 bracket of the next round, as long as the user remains alive and is not incapacitated. This rollover does not count as an action; eg., the user may make an action during the +3 bracket if they are able.

Independent actions are linked to one Statistic of the user and one of the target; a sniper shot may call for "Full Focus +2-o PRE -> AGI", in which the user must Full Focus from brackets +2 to 0, and then make contesting rolls between their Precision and the target's Agility.

## Global Actions

There are actions that should be available to any combatant, regardless of their equipment or abilities, barring edge cases. These should be used in tandem with actions and abilities, helping shape the flow of combat. Actions that are CONCURRENT with one of the following global actions are the only types of actions that may overlap with the same character's other actions. Sometimes, equipment or abilities can modify when or how Global Actions may be taken.

### Move

During the 0 or -1 brackets, a character may move a number of feet up to their SPD Attribute. This action may be taken in both the 0 and -1 brackets if desired. A player may expend half of their movement during a Move action to stand up, crouch, or lie prone if they are able to and not already in that position. When swimming or climbing, a character's SPD is halved, rounded up to the nearest five. Moving out of an enemy's melee range on the same bracket does not cancel a melee attack, however, that attack will miss if it occurs on a subsequent bracket and the target is out of range.

### Dodge

During the 0 or -1 brackets, a character imposes a -1 per character LVL penalty on all incoming attack rolls. A character may only take the dodge action once per round.

### Dive

During the 0 or -1 brackets, a character may launch themselves up to ten feet in any horizontal direction, landing prone at their destination. They impose a -1 per character LVL penalty on all incoming ranged attacks. Characters may only take the dive action if they would normally be able to take the move action, and if they are not already prone. Diving out of an enemy's melee range on the same bracket as an attack cancels it if the dive lands out of range.

### Protect

During the 0 or -1 brackets, a character gains resistance to all incoming *Physical* damage during that bracket. The Protect action is often improved by armor or shields. This action may be taken in both the 0 and -1 brackets if desired.

### Basic/Unarmed Attack

During the 0 or -1 round but not both, a character may make an Unarmed Attack. Damage is calculated based on the character's weight class. Basic/Unarmed attacks are High Engage STR contests.

Frail	Lightweight	Standard	Athletic	Enhanced	Gargantuan
1 dmg	2 dmg	5 dmg	8 dmg	10 dmg	15 dmg

Oftentimes, equipment and abilities will augment the damage, or even the related Attribute, of a character's Basic/Unarmed Attack.

### Equip/Unequip

During the -1 and -2 bracket, a character may add or remove one piece of equipment from their list of combat-ready items. Characters may take this action in both brackets.

## Status Conditions

Status Conditions can be used whenever a character is afflicted or affected by environmental or combat effects that may cause changes in their behavior or available actions, but not directly deal damage. For the purposes of clarity, anyone or anything with a condition is referred to as “the target” in this section. Conditions last until they are countered/removed via an action, or by duration based on an ability or action that caused them. The conditions in the following list are the “Standard” conditions; they should apply across the board when in play, however, new or different conditions should be developed when the need arises for them. When developing Conditions, make sure they are unique, readable, and descriptions are included anywhere the name is found (or a reference to the description).

### Standard Conditions

**Prone:** The target is lying prone on the ground. Their speed is halved and they are forced to crawl unless they use half of their SPD during a move action to stand back up.

**Grappled:** The target’s speed becomes zero, they are Restrained, and they must succeed in a High Engage STR contest with the grappler in order to break free. They automatically break free, ending the condition, if the grappler is incapacitated or separated from the target by an outside means.

**Incapacitated:** The target cannot take actions or use abilities unless specifically stated.

**Overburdened:** The target’s speed is halved, and they may not take the Dodge or Dive actions. They may also be unable to take other actions which rely on not being Overburdened.

**Restrained:** The target’s speed becomes zero, and they may not use movement actions or abilities unless specifically stated.

**Stunned:** The target is incapacitated until the effect duration ends. They cannot move or speak.

**Unconscious:** The target is incapacitated, cannot move or speak, drops anything they are holding, and falls prone.

**Starvation/Dehydration:** The target loses half of their maximum HP, SPD, and BUR, which may be regained by ending the condition. For every week they spend in this state, they continue to lose half of those stats. If they are reduced to or below 1 maximum HP, they are incapacitated until they recover.

## **Sec. 4: Abilities and Equipment**

*Whether a battle-scarred bounty hunter, feral beast, or powerful mage, a player character needs something to set them apart from the crowd. Full-spectrum customization takes more thought and tweaking than picking from a list of abilities or spells, so these guidelines are written as a framework to build and create from.*

### **Types of Abilities**

A character's limits during roleplay should be more freeform than not; it's up to the player and the circumstances to determine those, however, structured combat requires more balancing. A character's combat powers should fall into one of four categories; and all Abilities should stem from a character's internal powers. Even if they require something to use, they should be specific to the character, not an item, weapon, or piece of equipment.

**At-Will:** A character's At-Will abilities should be usable whenever a character desires. Their power should scale with the character's overall strength, but should be low-impact compared to the character's other abilities. Depending on where a character draws their powers from, At-Will abilities may be unlimited, or draw low costs from a resource such as mana. At-Will abilities are the 'bread and butter' of a character; they are reliable, consistent, and the foundations upon which a character expands their powers. At-will should also be the typing for any "passive" or always-active Abilities.

**Per-Encounter/Per-Day:** Per-Encounter abilities are usable by a character one or more times during a single combat encounter. They should be stronger than At-Will abilities, but not by far. Per-Encounter abilities should be something the character can use a few times back to back without overexerting themselves, but excessive use will cause physical or mental strain. These abilities should be the core of a character's powers; ie combos, setters, and support. They should feel as if they are the ebb and flow of a combat, the push and pull back and forth of a struggle.

Per-Day abilities should feel the same, if not slightly stronger, than a Per-Encounter ability - the only difference being a character needs a full night of rest before they can use that power again without exerting themselves.

**Ultimate:** Ultimate abilities are the pinnacle of a character's powers, either within or outside of their normal reach. Ultimate abilities should be able to turn the tides of a losing battle when used well. When a character uses an Ultimate ability, it should exert a significant amount of their power, and not be available to use for a healthy period of time without consequences; whether that's a day, week, or even a month. Not all characters can or should have Ultimate abilities; they should be attained when reaching special milestones of training, learning, or intense pressure.

**Resource:** Resource abilities are similar to At-Will abilities in the sense they have no direct time limit on usage, however, they are limited by either a physical resource, such as expendable glyphs, chemicals, or ritual components - or a shared innate resource like mana, ki, etc. Characters should be tasked with balancing the usage of these resources in-story; if they expend

mana, they must take time elsewhere to regain it, or if they rely on written rune-spells, they must take time to rewrite them, in whatever form they may be.

## Designing Abilities

The first thing to consider when designing an ability is its relation to a character's archetype or power. If they are a Ley Mage, do they rely on a classical element to control, such as Hydromancy or Ferromancy? Do they branch out, or are they confined to a single discipline? For Alchemists and Rune Mages, when and how do they gain their components for creating spells, potions, and anything else they may create? Consider a mage's *Practice*, and how it may mesh between various Schools of magic.

Even if a character doesn't use magic, they should still have abilities. What can they do to gain the upper hand in battle using their innate skills? Can they support their allies, expose weak points in an enemy, or toughen their own resolve with determination?

A fresh player character at level one through five should have two to three At-Will abilities, and one or two Per-Encounter/Per-Day abilities. These are what set them apart from the masses around them, and give them the upper hand when exploring, adventuring, and surviving. They should feel coherent towards themselves, and should make sense in the context of the character. Abilities should be able to play well with each other, but have some weaknesses or vulnerabilities. The best characters have one to two strong suits, and allow themselves to be complemented, supported, and completed by fellow characters.

## Formatting an Ability

This is the standard format for creating an ability, both for the sake of readability and transferability. Anyone familiar with the format should be able to glance at the "Ability Blurb" and have a fair understanding of what the ability does, its limitations, and how it works.

*Italics in the box surrounded by <> are for you to fill in and replace with your own content.*

**<Ability Name>** (<Character Name>)

Tier & Uses: <At-Will, Encounter X, etc.>

Action Type: <x turns, minutes, hours> | <priority bracket>

Range: <Self, Touch, 'Any ally/enemy/creature/structure/etc. within x feet'>

Source: <Resource used, school of magic, innate ability, etc.>

<The description of the ability here, including any prerequisites, components, specifications, as well as any damage or effects the ability has, or ways the ability can be canceled, removed, etc.>



## Casting Time, Range, and Area of Effect

When designing an Ability, there are a few important denominators other than the Ability's type. The following guidelines should help with designing abilities that look and feel good when used.

### Casting Time

When a character is using an ability, the “cast time” is the duration they must allocate their full attention to using the ability. This time varies widely; it may be merely an instant, or consistent rituals over the course of a year. Most spells that require a wind-up time (but only take one turn to cast) should begin casting during the +2 or +1 phase and finish during the 0 or -1 phase. Spells that don't require an extended wind up should start and finish on +2 or +1 if they fall into that speed-tier, or simply start and finish on 0.

### Area of Effect

When creating area of effect abilities, consider the following suggestions when accounting for size and impact of abilities.

**Shape:** What shape is the area of effect? Is it planar or 3-dimensional? Does it wrap around walls or obstacles? Does it penetrate through solid objects, split, fizzle out, etc?

**Centered/Edge:** Is the shape centered in the actual center, or is it centered on an edge/face? Can it be centered on a character? Does it have to be centered on something specific?

**Friendly:** Does it hit allies within range if it's a damaging AoE? Does it hit enemies if it's buffing? What discriminates or differentiates between the two?

### Range

Depending on the format, accurate rulers or measurements may not be available, so write ability ranges with regard to the physical or digital space of the roleplay.

A range of “Touch” is as it is described; the target must be in physical contact in order to use the ability.

Short-range Abilities should be in the five-to-fifteen foot range.

Medium-range should be anywhere in the twenty to sixty foot range; abilities that are thrown, lobbed, etc. should be limited to sixty feet.

Long-range abilities should reach up to 120 or 150 feet; they should specifically be things that don't suffer from damage falloff due to range.

Abilities might have an infinite or unspecified range; in these cases, consider what allows the user to “target” something.

Additionally, consider what an ability requires to “lock on” to its target. Does it need line of sight? Previous knowledge of a location or target? Does something need to be set up beforehand, like a charm, ward, or bond? Can the ability be curved around obstacles, or will it risk friendly fire? Does it have damage falloff or reduced accuracy at long range?

## Ability Creation Guidelines

Creating an **At-Will** ability should follow these guidelines:

- At-Will Abilities that affect more than one target should be less potent than single-target abilities. They should be weaker when applying a secondary effect other than simple forms of damage.
- They should have low scaling values with a character's core stats.
- No At-Will Ability should damage or heal more than a meager amount at any level.
- At-Will Abilities should feel small, but not useless. They should feel natural for a character to be able to practice, and gain finesse over when used repeatedly.
- At-Will Abilities should not use large dice or risky rolls. Low-risk, low-reward.

Creating an **Encounter** or **Daily** ability should follow these guidelines:

- The amount of times the ability can be used per time slot should scale slowly with the affiliated STAT.
- There should be a distinction between risky and reliable abilities via the number and size ranges of dice.
- Encounter or Daily abilities should be the core of battle, rather than big-ticket abilities.

Creating an **Ultimate** ability should follow these guidelines:

- The amount of uses of the ability should never exceed one or two, unless the ability is specifically meant to be chained. Chained ultimate abilities should be less immediately impactful, focusing more on DoT or stacking effects.
- There should be a distinction between risky and reliable abilities via the number and size ranges of dice.
- Ultimate abilities should be able to turn the tide of battle when used correctly, but have consequences for the character if abused or misused.

When calculating damage numbers:

- Damage or healing should not rely on dice rolls if the Attack or Ability is meant to be consistent. Dice rolls should be reserved for risk/reward situations.
- At-will abilities should deal damage roughly equal to the half the STAT the character is using for that ability, OR, damage roughly equal to their LVL. For example, at-will abilities for a character with 8 WILL would deal 3-5 damage if they scaled by attribute.
- Encounter or Daily abilities should deal damage equal or up to double to the STAT they use; however, their LVL can also be taken into account and added to the calculation, as well as balancing considerations for AoE, Single Target, additional Healing/Side Effects, etc. AoE should deal less damage, and healing should be more effective the more difficult/time consuming it is to cast. Healing should be fairly available outside of combat, however, in-combat healing should require specific effects or triggers in order to be highly effective, especially if the character isn't based around healing.
- The damage of Ultimate abilities should vary widely based on the core concept of the ability, if it even deals direct damage at all. However, its raw power, especially dealing massive amounts of damage, should be directly proportional to its consequences (which don't always need to be official rules or statistics).

## Ability Examples

**The easiest way to familiarize oneself with the ability crafting system is to look at examples taken from outside media. These example abilities should help to give an idea of how to maximize the benefits of this system.**

For the first example, we look at the Fireball spell from D&D 5e. Consider a 5th level Ley Mage with 11 WILL and 200 mana that has gained access to this ability.

### ***Fireball*** (*Joe Cool the Ley Mage*)

Tier & Uses: *Daily 3 (WIL BIN 5) , 30 mana*

Action Type: *Focus +1-0 WIL -> AGI*

Range: *Projectile which expands into a 20' radius sphere, centered on a visible point within 100 feet.*

Source: *Ley Magic, Mana*

*Deals 27 (2\*WIL + LVL) Fire damage to all creatures caught in the radius. If the target succeeds the contest, they take half damage. The sphere spreads around corners and ignites flammable objects in the area that are not being worn or carried.*

Consider this ability's balance in comparison to 5th edition:

Similarities:

- It can insta-kill low-level groups of enemies.
- It can be used a few times before the equivalent of a long rest.
- Its damage is halved on a fail (dexterity equivalent contest), but is still reliable (And also hits allies).
- It requires Line of Sight to target, but not a specific target.
- I didn't ask how big the room was....

Differences:

- The cast time is not 'instantaneous', it requires Focus during the +1 & 0 priority brackets to cast.
- The range is reduced to fall within this system's range suggestions.
- It has both a daily limit as well as a mana cost to cast, as opposed to requiring a spell slot.
- The caster must also make a roll in the contest.

For the second example, we use an ability from *Yasuo*, a character from the game *League of Legends*. Assume he's level 11.

***Windwall*** (*Yasuo*)

Tier & Uses: *Encounter 1*

Action Type: +2, *Indep.*

Range: *A line on the ground centered 5 feet in front of the caster.*

Source: *Ley Magic*

*A 10 foot tall, 5 foot thick, and 15 (LVL BIN 5)\*5 foot wide wall of wind erupts from the ground, blocking any projectiles that attempt to pass through it. Each round in the +3 bracket, it drifts forwards 1 foot. The wall does not block movement, beams, or projectiles that phase through solid matter. The wall dissipates after four rounds.*

Consider this ability's balance in comparison to *League of Legends*:

Similarities:

- It has an extremely fast cast time.
- It can be used once per fight, and lasts for a reasonable amount of time.
- It can't be controlled once it's used, and slowly drifts forwards.
- The width scales with level.
- It doesn't block beams, movement, etc.
- It doesn't require a resource to cast, other than access to magic.

Differences:

- It operates on an encounter cooldown rather than a time-based cooldown.
- It has a height, rather than simply being a two-dimensional object (as it is in the game).
- It blocks *all* projectiles that pass through it, rather than only enemy projectiles (physics!).

## Equipment

Even the most experienced adventurers rely on equipment to survive; the conditions of both the planet and its mirrored reflection are harsh and unforgiving no matter the location. Equipment is what allows characters to surpass the limits of their own bodies, in many different ways. The term ‘Equipment’ covers just about anything a character would wear, carry, or use during their stories, and the sheer amount of equipment that may exist in a world requires it to be carefully crafted to allow for balance.

### Designing Equipment

When designing a piece of equipment, first consider its origin. Is it from a time before the war, during, or after? Is it designed by humans? Spirits? Both? Is it readily available, or is it rare? Secondly, consider its purpose. It may seem simple or straightforward, but the smartest survivors carry things that serve many purposes and take up the least space. Lastly, is it meant to be a permanent staple of a character’s equipment, or is it something they would use only when called for?

### Equipment Types

The most vague denominator of a piece of equipment is its type. Generally, Equipment should fall into one of these categories, however, equipment isn’t bound to the classification given in the rulebook. If a piece of equipment should fall outside of the basic types, make sure the custom “type” can be applicable to more than just that piece of equipment. Otherwise - it’s not a type. If something might fall into one category, but not entirely - make a subcategory!

**The basic equipment types are: Weapon, Tool, Accessory, Clothing, Armor, Consumable, Material, and Vehicle.** Players shouldn’t overwhelm themselves with too much equipment, either - they should be able to quickly remember everything that a character has on them at a given time. Additionally, equipment is what grants characters new actions in combat; two to three pieces of major equipment should generally be enough to provide enough variety, with minor equipment providing more passive benefits.

### Equipment Loads & Design Specifications

All characters are already limited by their Burden attribute for how much equipment they are able to carry at one time, but additional limitations apply. It’s easier to determine the limits of real equipment than fantasy equipment, so the following guidelines should help.

- A character may layer clothes or armor, but only if they are designed to do so - you can’t layer Kevlar with plate mail, but you *could* wear chainmail while wearing an exosuit.
- A character may only benefit from one ring per finger, one necklace, one headpiece, one arm or leg-piece per limb and appendage, and must have pierced ears to wear earrings.
- When classifying clothes, armor, and accessories, specify Head, Chest, L/R Arm, L/R Hand, L/R Leg, Face, etc. This is the ‘Slot’ the equipment should go in.
- Any equipment should have a load of at least 1. Medium-large equipment should have a load of 2-4, and bulky equipment should have 5+. Exceptions to this rule would be equipment that *increases* one’s maximum Burden, like mechanical exoskeletons; or equipment that one doesn’t actively carry, like an autonomous drone or flying sword.

## Formatting Equipment

Like Abilities, Equipment has its own format in order to maintain organization.

However, some Equipment grants Actions or Abilities that would be too long to fit nicely inside one format box. In this case, list the name of the Ability in the Equipment box, and then use a separate Ability format to describe it.

*Italics in the box surrounded by <> are for you to fill in and replace with your own content.*

**<Equipment Name>** (<Equipment Type>)

Slot: <Handedness, Body Part, Etc.>

Size: <Applicable to things that require a size (eg. vehicle), HP>

Load: <Equip Load for BUR score>

Resources: <What this equipment requires to function, if anything.>

Passives:

<Passive benefits granted by or part of the equipment; damage resistance, bonuses, etc.>

Actions:

<Action that is granted by the equipment; attack, ability, etc.>

<Action that is modified by the equipment; protect, dodge, etc.>

<A detailed description of the Equipment here, including any defining characteristics, as well as its source/origin, uses, and any other important information.>

## Equipment Examples

**The easiest way to familiarize oneself with the equipment crafting system is to look at examples taken from outside media. These example items should help to give an idea of how to maximize the benefits of this system.**

For the first example, let's use the Seaglide from the game *Subnautica*.

**Seaglide** (*Handheld Aquatic Vehicle*)

Slot: *Two-handed*

Size: *3'x1', 5lbs, 5 HP*

Load: *3*

Resources: *Large Battery*

Passives:

- *When equipped, sets the user's swimming speed to 30.*
- *This equipment is **Immune** to all Bodily damage and Psychic damage. It is **Vulnerable** to Electric damage.*
- *When underwater, can be set to display a small hologram of the nearby terrain, as well as toggle a flashlight that extends in a cone for 30 feet.*

*The Seaglide is a personal underwater propulsion vehicle. Made of a fairly durable metal, it houses a replaceable, rechargeable battery and a small holographic display. Anything that moves faster underwater is probably trying to eat you.*

For the second example, let's dive into what a piece of equipment would look like when it requires multiple boxes. For this, we use *Hunter's* staff from the show *The Owl House*. This staff is meant to be a central, always-equipped weapon, which is why it's so strong & widely versatile.

***Grimwalker Staff*** (*Weapon, Magical Focus*)

Slot: *1 or 2 handed*

Load: *3*

Passives:

*Focus - stores up to 200 mana used for Ley or Rune Magic*

*Basic attacks may use AGI, and gain +1 (+2 for 2-handed) to contest and damage.*

*Magical attacks gain +2 to contest and damage.*

Actions:

*Lightwarp*

*Staff-Flight*

*A fusion of magic and old-world technology, this staff provides a source of magic to those without an innate mana pool.*

***Lightwarp*** (*Grimwalker Staff*)

Tier & Uses: *Encounter (WIL BIN 3), 10 mana*

Action Type: *Indep. | +2, +1, 0*

Range: *Self, all items worn or carried, and up to one held ally.*

Source: *Grimwalker Staff, Rune Magic*

*Instantaneously warp to a visible location with an unobstructed path within 30 feet. May choose to land prone, standing, kneeling, etc. The location does not need to be grounded.*

***Staff-Flight*** (*Grimwalker Staff*)

Tier & Uses: *At-will*

Action Type: *1 minute (Up to 1 hour outside of combat) | +1, 0, -1*

Range: *Anything riding the staff, up to 400 pounds.*

Source: *Grimwalker Staff, Rune Magic*

*Allows limited flight no more than 50 feet off the ground (100' out of combat). Grants a flying speed of 30, and the Move action may be taken during the +1 bracket while flying.*