

Campfire

5E

An Elegant Travel System
for the World's Greatest Roleplaying Game

AB
ABYSSAL BREWS



CREDITS

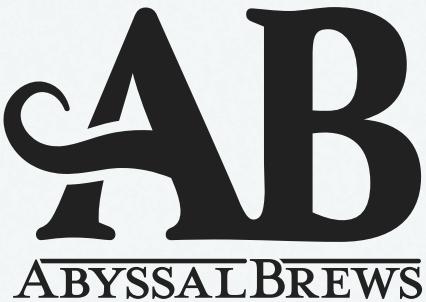
Writer: Matthew Ross

Illustrator: Fernando Dominguez

Playtesters: Fangy, Amanda Igyarto, Andrew Larson, Chelsea Larson

Special Thanks: Kyle Haydon, Idea generation & contemplative chattery

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TARUK TOSED HIS GEAR LADEN SATCHEL ONTO THE soft grass at the side of the dirt trail that they had been following all day and slumped down on a log beside it. The weather had not been kind to them on this day and his boots were soaked clean through. He swatted a mosquito away from his pale grey skin and looked up towards the roiling, clouded sky. They still had three more days on the road and only enough food to last for two of them if they really stretched it. Farsel handed over her waterskin from her waist and knelt down beside him, patting his shoulder with a smile. He took a hearty slug of the cool liquid and nodded to her. He rose, slinging the heavy sack back across his broad shoulders. Just three more days.

- An excerpt from *What the Others Did* by Twisy Gingerbread

Getting to where you're going is never an easy undertaking. Along the way, many perils and pitfalls await the unaware adventurer. Knowing the direction they need to travel and having enough food to make it there may only be part of the problems they face, but for every adversity there is opportunity. Strewn about the land are hidden treasures to be found, wondrous sights to behold, and perhaps even friends to be made.

Nothing invigorates the soul of a traveler more than reaching their destination with a full belly and a happy party. Nothing brings more misery than the bite of insects in an already oppressive swamp. For the seasoned traveler, the journey is always part of the tale worth telling.

FINDING YOUR WAY

Characters often have somewhere that they need to go and that place may be several days away. Traveling to a location is part of the adventure, but it is also not a part that should impede what they find at their eventual destination.

It's important to remember that for players, often the destination is more interesting than how they get there. It's your job as a Game Master to employ this rule set only when it makes sense.

Opportunities abound for setting interesting travel, but take stock of how interested your party is in the journey and adjust your situation as needed. It's possible that you could use this system for journeys as short as a few hours down the road, but it is recommended that you save these rules for longer travels.

This system could be used traveling across a very large and dangerous city or for journeying deep into the frozen mountains of the north. It's imperative that you, as the Game Master, make informed decisions about when to employ the travel rules presented here and when to let the party arrive with a short travel montage.

Travel in Campfire is meant to be a streamlined approach. Resolving the entirety of a travel should only take 15 minutes if you focus on the core rules. Weaving in roleplay opportunities will increase that time. Keep an eye on your players and determine when to move on.



PHASES OF TRAVEL

Travel is broken down into three distinct phases where each plays an important role. This travel system keeps adventures moving, be sure to keep your players on task during each phase.

Preparation. During this phase, the characters should gather whatever supplies they might need for the trip, including enough water and food to make the journey. You should give them enough information as they would realistically have in character. If they know the dungeon is roughly four days away, don't be afraid to remind them of that. You will set the difficulty of the trip during this phase.

Expedition. This is the actual journey itself and where the characters will use their combined skills and resources to make their way to their destination. There are opportunities for additional roleplay and storytelling as you see fit. You should let the characters work with you to tell the story of their expedition.

Resolution. This is when the characters arrive at their destination in whatever state the road has left them. They may arrive feeling upbeat and perky from an enjoyable jaunt on the trail, or they may arrive miserable and discouraged from the rigors of the wilderness.

PREPARATION

During this phase, the important tasks of setting the challenges on the road will be resolved. While the characters are tending to their tasks of shopping for the trip, set their Travel DC and their Destination Score.

TRAVEL DC

The Travel DC is a summation of the difficulties the characters will face on the road. It is calculated by determining your Terrain Difficulty and adding your Weather Modifier to it.

$$\text{Travel DC} = \text{Terrain Difficulty} + \text{Weather Modifier}$$

TERRAIN DIFFICULTY

Terrain Difficulty is a representation of how treacherous the lands are that the party will cross. Determine the Terrain Difficulty, as shown in the Terrain Difficulty table.

TERRAIN DIFFICULTY

Difficulty	Type of Terrain
8	Easy terrain. Well worn paths, gentle plains, and placid forests.
10	Moderate terrain. Thick forests, sloping hills, and less worn paths.
12	Difficult terrain. Mountainous trails, boggy swamps, and choking deserts.
14	Deadly terrain. Lands tainted by great evils, lava flows, and the underdark.

WEATHER MODIFIER

Weather is always a worry when journeying. A foul rain storm or gusting winds can change a brief trip across the grasslands into a grinding affair of stuck carts and poor attitudes.

The Game Master should choose the Weather Modifier based on the overall theme of the weather throughout the expedition. Choosing rain does not mean that it rains every moment of the trip, it simply means that the weather was overall rainy. Determine the Weather Modifier, as shown on the Weather Modifier table.

WEATHER MODIFIER

Modifier	Type of Weather
1	Comfortable weather. Sunny days, light showers, and nights around campfires.
2	Tiresome weather. Cold nights, windy days, and soaking rains.
3	Dangerous weather. Blizzards, thunderstorms, and sandstorms.
4	Deadly weather. Supernatural storms, ashen rains, and hurricanes.

After determining your Travel DC, write this number down or keep track of it in some other way as it will be important. You may tell your party what the Travel DC is, or keep it to yourself. This will depend on how you run your table.

DESTINATION SCORE

Your Destination Score is a target that your players will try to hit in order to find their destination. This is an abstraction of the length of their journey. It is assumed that your players will get to their destination eventually and the Destination Score represents how long they are exposed to the wilderness. For brief journeys, it is recommended that you don't use these rules and instead allow your players to just simply get there. Set the Destination Score using the Destination Score table.

DESTINATION SCORE

Score	Length of Journey
3	Short journeys. Three to five days of travel.
4	Moderate journeys. Five to nine days of travel
5	Long journeys. Ten days to a fortnight of travel.

The Game Master should feel empowered to change the lengths of journeys to what makes sense for your campaign. If your setting involves small outposts that are several weeks apart, change the Destination Score definitions to fit what works for you.

You can set Destination Scores higher than five if you wish, but only do so with parties that enjoy rolling dice. You know your party best, so adjust the length and scores to suit them.



EXPEDITION

The Expedition phase is when your party will actually set out on their journey and face whatever hardships and majesties may come. This phase simulates the road to their location and is much more of a collaborative process than traditional travel.

The goal of the Expedition phase is for your party to use their skills to overcome the Travel DC that was set in the Preparation phase. The party will attempt to use skills in which they are proficient and roll Ability Checks against the Travel DC.

The party's goal is to achieve an amount of successes on their Ability Checks to match the Destination Score before they accumulate a number of failures equal to the Destination score.

When the Expedition phase begins, narrate the beginning of their journey and inform them of the length of the trip and the Destination Score they need to reach in order to arrive. Your characters should then look to their skills as adventurers in order to see them through safely.

Have them put forth ideas of what skills (in which they are proficient) that they could use and how those could help with the journey. Then, have them roll an Ability Check based on that skill versus the Travel DC set in the Preparation phase.

If they succeed, mark a success towards their Destination Score; if they fail, then mark a failure toward their Destination Score. If they roll five or more over the Travel DC, mark two successes. If they roll five or more under the Travel DC, mark two failures.

Once enough successes or failures have been marked to meet the Destination Score, the Expedition phase ends

and the Resolution phase begins. You should encourage each player to contribute an Ability Check once before allowing someone to contribute a second time. This will go a long way in helping your players feel like their characters helped in the journey.

Consider using this as a roleplay opportunity and empower your players to create scenarios in which their skills would be useful. For example, a player might say that their Halfling Ranger is proficient in survival and will use his ability to track animal movements in order to find a safe path through a forest they encounter along the way.

Take the time to describe the forest through which they would travel and have the player roll a Survival Ability Check versus the Travel DC set in the preparation phase. You should then narrate their success or failure to go along with the roll. On a success, the Halfling Ranger may find a game trail that they can follow easily to help the party navigate the woods. On a failure, perhaps the rain of the last few days has washed away all noticeable tracks leaving the party wandering.

You should be open to the idea of using skills in non-traditional ways and award creativity early and often. If your players put forth a good or entertaining reason that Intimidation could help them through their travel, consider giving them a chance to execute that idea. It is your role as the Game Master to ensure that each member of the party feels as though they can contribute. Consider allowing them to use tools with which they are proficient, as well. For example, Cartographer's Tools could be quite beneficial to the travel process.

RESOLUTION

Upon arriving at their destination, your party will learn during the Resolution phase of what the road has offered or taken away from them. There are several benefits and pitfalls on a journey, and the Resolution phase gives the party a feel for what kind of journey it was. Much of this phase can be obfuscated to the party. They may already have a feeling for how the trip went based on their successes and failures along the way.

At the start of the Resolution phase, determine whether the journey was a Windfall or a Hardship by reviewing the Ability Check successes and failures from the Expedition phase. If they achieved enough successful Ability Checks to meet the Destination Score, then the journey was a Windfall. If they accumulated enough failed Ability Checks to meet the Destination Score, then the expedition was a Hardship. Whether the journey was a Windfall or a Hardship, they should make it to their destination during the Resolution phase.

WINDFALL

If the expedition was considered a Windfall, narrate the party arriving in good spirits, fresh off the trail with full bellies and dry stockings. Perhaps they basked in beautiful sights along the way, or they were beset by friendly fae creatures that sang them soft and lilting songs.

Take the number of successful Ability Checks that they accumulated during the travel and subtract from it the number of failures that they amassed. This is your Windfall Score. Tell the party to make a number of rolls on the Windfall table equal to their Windfall Score. Narrate the results of their rolls and give them the boons provided by a successful journey.

WINDFALLS

d20 Windfall

- 1 The trail was plentiful with flora or game. The party did not have to consume any of their food along the way.
- 2 The party learns an interesting or useful fact about the world they are in. Perhaps it was told to them by a friendly traveler or found via an old ruin along the way. It might be useful in the future.
- 3 Swift of foot and path, the party arrives at their destination earlier than expected. You use less resources and may have different opportunities.
- 4 Whether it's the new boots fitting well or a journey through blessed waters, each member of the party adds 5ft to their movement speed. This effect lasts for 24 hours after their arrival.
- 5 Tales of your actions have arrived before you. The party meets a friendly NPC that will house them free of charge for a number of nights determined by the Game Master
- 6 Perhaps it fell out of someone's pack or was left somewhere for safekeeping, but the party comes across a level appropriate spell scroll.

d20 Windfall

You stumble upon a cache of lost goods or coinage. Each character gains $1d12+3$ gold. This amount increases to $3d12+6$ at level 5 and $6d12+9$ at level 10.

You arrive with glorious tales of successful expeditions and a renewed sense of joy for civilization. The party has advantage on Charisma Ability Checks for the rest of the day after their arrival.

Your travels have left you with a renewed sense of purpose and direction. Each character that currently doesn't have inspiration, gains it.

Sharp as a tack, your mind races with possibilities of danger and how to avoid them. The party member with the highest Intelligence Ability Score gains a boon that lets them halve the damage of one attack or spell that hits them. This boon lasts until they use it.

A new friend joins the fold. The party meets a friendly NPC that takes a liking to them and either has a service to offer or a gift to give. Perhaps a druid cures a disease or a bard gives them a charge of Bardic Inspiration.

Perhaps it was a hearty breakfast or a magically infused patch of flowers, but whatever the case, the party feels ready to face the world. Have each party member roll a hit die without expending a use. They should then add an amount of Temporary Hit Points equal to the result of the hit die.

Whether for mundane or magical reasons, you feel a spring in your step. The party has advantage on Dexterity Ability Checks and Saving Throws for the rest of the day after their arrival.

The party comes across a level appropriate potion. The Game Master should determine what potion it is and how they come across it.

You feel fast. You are speed. The party member with the highest Dexterity Ability Score can choose to make the next attack that would have hit them, miss instead.

By some magical means, several party members come under the effect of the Bless spell until they take a short rest. Roll $1d4$ to determine how many of them are affected.

The party found a unique piece of art or history. It might be something traditionally valuable or something worthwhile to a certain PC or NPC.

You feel ready for combat. The party member with the highest Strength Ability Score lands a guaranteed critical strike on their next Attack Roll.

The magically inclined can feel a rush of energy in their body. Each spellcaster in the party may cast their next level appropriate spell without using a spell slot.

Your soul sings from the sights on the journey or perhaps you overcame a tough obstacle and feel invigorated by it. The party may replace one future result of a d20 roll with a 20. This boon lasts until your next travel takes place.

HARDSHIP

If the expedition was considered a Hardship, narrate the party arriving in low spirits, weary of the road and ready to seek comfort where possible. Perhaps they couldn't sleep because of giant frogs croaking all night in the

swamp, or the frigid mountain air leaves them shivering under their armor.

Take the number of failed Ability Checks accumulated during the travel and subtract from it the number of successes amassed. This is your Hardship Score. Tell the party to make a number of rolls on the Hardship table equal to their Hardship Score. Narrate the results of their rolls and consign them to the pitfalls provided by a rough expedition.

HARDSHIPS

d20 Hardship

- 1 Your feet ache and your back burns. Each member of the party has 5ft less movement speed per round. This effect lasts for 24 hours after their arrival.
- 2 A powerful enemy learns the location of the party and will more than likely use this for their own means. Perhaps a spy saw them or a scrying scroll was used.
- 3 Non-stop obstacles and problem after problem beset the party. You arrived later than expected and used more resources to boot.
- 4 Something was misplaced. Whether it be an important item or a trusted weapon, an item is missing from one of their packs. You may be able to recover it if you look hard enough, but that will make the journey take longer.
- 5 Frailty creeps in leaving you feeling unsure and weak. Each spellcaster of the party loses a level appropriate spell slot.
- 6 Your morale is sapped by something and your heart just isn't in it. The party has disadvantage on their next Initiative Rolls.
- 7 Whether it be the weather, insects, or local thugs, you arrive in a bad mood and have no patience for the inane chatter of others. You have disadvantage on all Charisma Ability Checks for the rest of the day after arriving.
- 8 A detestable meeting. The party meets with a hostile NPC who demands something of them. Perhaps a local king demands a favor or a thieves guild demands an audience. The Game Master determines what they desire.
- 9 A creeping dread or perhaps some bad dreams seep into your mind. The two members of the party with the lowest Wisdom Ability Scores have disadvantage on their next Saving Throw. This effect lasts for 24 hours after their arrival.
- 10 Something is amiss. Perhaps you made a wrong turn and are not sure where you are or perhaps the gates to the city are locked. The Game Master should create an obstacle for the party to overcome to reach their destination.
- 11 Your body is beaten and needs time to recover. Each member of the party should lose a use of their hit dice.
- 12 Whether an unintentional step in a bear trap or something nefarious placed by enemies, the Game Master chooses a number of party members and they must succeed on an appropriate Ability Save or take a level appropriate amount of damage.
- 13 Sapped of strength and ready to find a warm bed. Each character gains a level of exhaustion.

d20 Hardship

Your armor weighs heavy on you and rubs in all the wrong places. Each member of the party should subtract 1 from their AC. This effect lasts for 24 hours after their arrival.

14 Something was waiting in the wings, stalking the party. They will be confronted and must face a level appropriate combat encounter.

15 Perhaps it was the biting insects or some noxious plant, but the character with the lowest strength score becomes Poisoned. The Game Master will choose the type of poison they're affected by.

16 Whether by poor maintenance or lack of will, your weapons just aren't hitting like they used to. Each member of the party has disadvantage on their next Attack Roll. This effect lasts for 24 hours after their arrival.

17 Doubt can be an insidious killer. The party member with the highest Constitution Ability Score will take a critical strike on the next attack that hits them.

18 This one really did a number on you. Everything aches and you can barely keep your eyes open. Each party member must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution Saving Throw or gain 2 levels of exhaustion.

19 For some reason it just got away from you. The next time a spell is cast by the party, make a roll on the Wild Magic Surge table and play out the results.



MAKE IT YOUR OWN JOURNEY



While the wilderness is meant to be a tough environment, it can also feel very daunting for the players to have no chance to rest and recuperate. Consider breaking down journeys into several legs with chances to rest in between them.

You should use these opportunities to allow the players to roleplay with one another. You could have them come across a traveling caravan that offers them a safe place to stay for the night, or perhaps an old cave with hot springs in it provides a comforting environment away from the frozen tundra. It is up to you as the Game Master to make sure that the players feel they have a chance to overcome the obstacles they face.

If your setting is one where travel is dangerous and daunting, then you should consider raising the Travel DC by small increments to make it feel more taxing to get from point to point. Just remember that your players may not feel the same, so make sure that they agree by communicating with them.

If you think the Windfalls or Hardships are too weak or too powerful, consider changing the tables to include things more in line with your setting. The tables have been left intentionally vague to allow you to roleplay things that make sense in your setting. There are many reasons that characters might feel exhausted or inspired by a trip. Narrate them in a way that makes sense for your setting.

THANK YOU

AbyssalBrews is a small project started by two people hoping to release interesting systems and give people options in their campaigns. We pride ourselves on producing high quality systems and illustrations to go along with them.

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Variant: Obfuscated Travel

An option that you can employ is to keep all information about the journey secret from the players. In this variant, you do not inform them of the Travel DC or Destination Score during the Preparation phase. You should keep your narrations of their Ability Checks vague and don't inform them of successes or failures. When they meet the Destination Score with successes or failures, inform them that they have arrived and tell them to make their table rolls. Don't let them know what table they are rolling on. This variant keeps things more obscure and allows for tense moments where they don't know if they are facing a Triumph or Hardship.

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