

Rulebook

Aspects of Nature is a story-focused, rules-lite tabletop roleplaying game. Set in a world populated by several varieties of humanoid races, all are born with the ability to manipulate one or more elements of nature, or **Aspects**, to their will.

Gameplay Overview

Players should first create their characters, assigning attributes, aspects, and traits that suit them.

The narrator¹ should prepare a scenario for the players to play through, whether it's a single-session one-shot, or a campaign spanning over dozens of sessions. Sessions can last anywhere around 1 to 3 hours, depending on the energy levels, attention span, and/or available time for those playing.

The game starts and runs as a back-and-forth between players and the narrator.

Players

When building your character, aside from their personality and overall vibe, one of the things you'll want to give them is a goal. It can be something concrete, such as wanting to find a lost sibling, or it can be a general north star that guides their decisions. Examples:

- A doctor who lost someone close to them. This leads them to try to help others when they can, even to the detriment of themselves.
- A rogueish drifter who's felt betrayal by those they thought they trusted. They now only view others as resources to take advantage of.
- A business owner who always tries to steer themselves towards opportunities for profit. With a weakened sense of self damaged by their upbringing, they know

no other means of proving their own worth.

During gameplay, you'll tell the narrator what you would like your character to do in any given scene. You'll usually make actions that fit with your character's strengths. For example, as a strong brute type character, a lot of your problem solving would involve Strength checks. As a charming social butterfly, a lot of your actions would involve Wit.

Narrator

As the narrator, start by describing the scene to the characters. Describe the look and feel and mention any other NPCs who might be present, as well as any points of interest.

When players want to do something, think about whether it's something that could fail. If so, ask for a skill check, picking the appropriate skill.

Although players will attempt to lean on their character's strengths, it can make things interesting to put them in situations that force them to make unfavorable compromises.

Additionally, consider the scenario, and whether there are factors that might help or hinder their attempt. If so, apply power or risk dice as appropriate. If a player is asking a favor from an NPC, asking a helpful long-time friend might give them a power dice, but asking an irritable, unfriendly stranger might give them one or more risk dice instead.

For a compelling, immersive game, consider parallel story threads or imminent events that may be happening in the background, and how they might affect the player's current situation.

It can also help to inject minor bits of trivia to diagetically add flavor to the world. Here's an example:

"You walk into a café at night. The interior is warmly lit with light aspect crystals lining the walls and hanging from the ceiling. The tables and chairs sport the

dark greenish color of the tall trees that border your town.

Behind the counter, you see a brown-skinned barista with a set of panda ears, tail, and small stubby horns that suggest a mixed lineage. You watch as she operates a small metal brewery range, sending heat through it to keep her pots of coffee and tea steaming hot.

She notices a pot that's nearly empty. After discarding the old coffee, she fetches a bag of beans and pours them in a grinder. You watch her blow softly into a compartment of the grinder, a small bit of wind art which prompts it to spin rapidly, chopping up the beans into coarse bits ready for a fresh pot.”

Character Creation

Characters in Aspects of Nature are often humans with traits that follow some sort of creature or fantasy lineage. Think cat-like humans with cat ears and long thin tails; part-dragons with horns, glowing eyes, and patches of scales on their bodies; part-lizards with scales and skin fading to green; or anything else you can think of.

As mentioned in the [player guide](#), you'll also want to think of your character's theme, goal, and/or background. You don't have to go into too much detail; that can be fleshed out as the game unfolds.

Once you know what you want to go for, it's time to make your character sheet. I [recommend using the character builder here](#).

Alternatively, you can get out some paper, or open your favorite text editor. Then note down the following:

1. Your character's name, background, and any other important details
2. For each [attribute](#) choose a value from 1 to 6. They should add up to 18.
3. For each [aspect](#), choose a value from 0 to 6. They should add up to 6.
4. Pick three [traits](#). While picking traits, keep a tally of power dice added to your attributes and aspects.

And you're done!

Attributes

Attributes represent your character's core strengths of various capabilities or domains. Each player character should have a score for each attribute from 1 to 6. They should all add to 18.

- **Intellect** - *breadth of knowledge and how to apply it*
- **Sense** - *strength of mind, ability to focus and perceive*
- **Agility** - *nimbleness, adaptability, swiftness*
- **Strength** - *physical prowess, strength of body*
- **Wit** - *social skills, insight, manipulation*

Hits & Toughness

Hits represent the damage you've taken, and your toughness is the number of hits you can take before you go down. Hits start at 0, and your toughness equals your Strength score plus your Agility score.

While down, you're unable to make action rolls. Narratively, this can be flavored depending on the scenario, like being knocked unconscious, or being physically paralyzed.

Fatigue & Resolve

Fatigue represents your mental stress, accumulated by performing particularly taxing actions, such as aspect art.

Resolve is the maximum amount of fatigue you can take. **Each point of fatigue you take beyond your resolve becomes a hit.**

Fatigue starts at 0, and your resolve equals the sum of your Intellect, Sense, and Wit scores.

Resting

You may choose to rest for a number of in-game hours, recovering one hit and fatigue per hour.

Aspects

Aspects are the five elements of nature which characters may manipulate to their will.

Every aspect is linked to a unique attribute. Characters with a high score in that attribute will have more success with the aspect. For example: high Strength characters would be naturally more proficient with Fire than those with low Strength.

Every character has a base score for each Aspect from 0 to 6. They should add to 6. The total aspect score is the sum of the character's attribute score and their aspect score. For example: you give Wind a score of 3. Wind is linked to Agility. If your Agility has a score of 5, your total Wind score would be 8.

Your character's **attuned** aspects are those with a base score of one or more. For example: if you assign 4 points to darkness and 2 points to water, you have two attuned aspects: darkness and water. Fire, light, and wind are unattuned.

- **Light** (Intellect) - *physical light, healing, strengthening*
- **Water** (Sense) - *water, ice, frost, cold, protection*
- **Wind** (Agility) - *air, sound, weather, speed, acrobatics*
- **Fire** (Strength) - *flame, heat, tectonics*
- **Darkness** (Wit) - *psychology, illusions, reality bending*

Aspect Art

The manipulation of aspects is called **aspect art**, of which there are two categories: **minor**, and **major**.

Minor arts are more subtle, low-risk, and low-impact. Minor arts are the sorts of arts used in normal day-to-day life. Examples include:

- Light: making an orb of light
- Water: drying a set of clothes
- Fire: heating a cup of tea
- Wind: making a gentle breeze
- Darkness: conjure an amusing illusion for fun

Major aspect arts are more powerful and cost more to perform. They can be used to great effect, whether to help a friend or to cause a great deal of damage. Major aspect arts require an aspect check. Examples include:

- Light: healing the wounds of several injured friends
- Water: parting a path through a lake
- Wind: creating a deafening thunderclap
- Fire: throwing a massive fireball at an enemy or obstacle
- Darkness: turning silent and invisible to escape capture

For attuned aspects, minor arts are free, while major arts cost **1 fatigue**.

For unattuned aspects, minor arts cost **1 fatigue**, while major arts cost **2 fatigue**, while adding a risk die to the roll.

Action Rolls

Action rolls are the core determinant of success or failure. The result of the die represents the difficulty of the task.

Action rolls use a roll-under system. For a roll to succeed, it must be **equal or lower than the target value**, depending on the type of roll being made.

Only use action rolls when the action has some chance of failure. Otherwise, the narrator should allow the action without a roll.

Skill Checks

Skill checks are the most common type of action roll. Each attribute has a set of skills that map to various tasks. For example:

- To spot something hidden, you would use Spy.
- To try to sway a shopkeep for a discount, you would use Charm.
- To try to weather a snowstorm, you would use Endure.

Skill checks are made with a d6. The target is the character's value in the skill's attribute. For example: you want to make a Spy check, and your Sense score is 5. This means you must roll 5 or lower to succeed.

*“Tip: Narrators should aim to make failures interesting. For example, consider a character tries to **Spy** for something they lost. On failure, instead of having nothing happen, maybe they find something that a friend lost instead!”*

Intellect

- **Intuit** - understand complex concepts or make logical deductions
- **Recall** - remember facts, details, or past experiences
- **Aid** - provide medical treatment or assistance
- **Operate** - use complex tools or machinery
- **Tinker** - repair, modify, or craft items

Sense

- **Spy** - spot hidden details or distant objects
- **Listen** - detect and identify sounds
- **Feel** - notice changes in temperature, pressure, or vibrations
- **Shoot** - attack accurately with ranged weapons
- **Focus** - maintain concentration or resist distractions

Agility

- **Dash** - move quickly in bursts or sprint
- **Jump** - leap across gaps or over obstacles
- **Climb** - scale walls, trees, or other vertical surfaces
- **Dodge** - avoid incoming attacks or hazards
- **Maneuver** - perform acrobatic movements or maintain balance

Strength

- **Strike** - attack with melee weapons or bare hands
- **Block** - defend against physical attacks with your body or shield
- **Throw** - hurl objects or people with force
- **Lift** - carry heavy objects or move obstacles
- **Endure** - resist physical strain, exhaustion, or harsh conditions

Wit

- **Charm** - persuade or influence others positively
- **Intimidate** - threaten or pressure others through fear
- **Deceive** - lie convincingly or misdirect
- **Read** - understand others' emotions and intentions
- **Sneak** - move quietly and remain undetected

Aspect Checks

An aspect check is a special kind of skill check to perform a major aspect art. The roll is made with **a d12 die** instead of a d6, and the target is the character's score in the corresponding aspect.

For example: you want to use *Shield*, which is a water aspect art. If your total water score is 7 (Base 3 + Sense 4), you would need to roll a 7 or lower to succeed.

Each aspect action has a success case, the base effect. If you fail the roll, then you'll instead apply the failure case, which **modifies** the base effect.

For example: a successful check for *Inspire* will add 2 power dice to a target's next roll. On failure, it will give them 1 power die instead.

Below is a list of built-in aspect arts. Think of them as presets; you can still perform other "freeform" aspect arts not listed here.

Light

- **restore** - heal any 2 hits; on failure, 1 hit
- **sacrifice** - try to heal any 4 hits, then take 1 hit if any hits were healed; on failure, heal any 2 hits (still take 1)
- **inspire** - add 2 power dice to a target's next roll; on failure, add 1 power die
- **justice** - add 1 to a character's chosen attribute or aspect value for their next check with that attribute or aspect; on failure, the attribute or aspect is random

Water

- **shield** - a target may not take more than 1 damage until your next action; on failure, 2 damage
- **protect** - choose two targets. until your next action, if either of them take hits this round, prevent it, and take a hit; on failure, choose one target
- **castle** - prevent all allies' hits until your next action, you must skip your next action; on failure, you must skip your next 2 actions

- **pacify** - a chosen target may not deal more than 1 hit until your next action; on failure, 2 hits

Wind

- **evade** - prevent all hits on self this round; on failure, prevent hits up to your Agility
- **adapt** - immediately make another action with two of your attributes swapped; on failure, make your next action with two attributes swapped (not immediate)
- **surge** - apply another character's next action three times; on failure, two times
- **multicast** - add 2 additional targets to another character's next action; on failure, 1 additional target

Fire

- **flame strike** - deal 3 hits to one target; on failure, 2 hits
- **flame arc** - deal 1 hit to 3 targets; on failure, 2 targets
- **blind fury** - deal a ranged hit to 2 random enemies or 5 random characters; on failure, you must choose 5 random characters
- **inferno** - your next action deals triple the hits; on failure, double the hits

Darkness

- **imperil** - add 2 risk dice to a target's next roll; on failure, add 1 risk die
- **transfer** - try to remove any 2 hits, then deal any 2 hits; on failure, remove 1, deal 1
- **cancel** - prevent a target's next action; on failure, the target is random
- **foresight** - reveal any action, then you may take 1 additional fatigue (once) to let another target character change their action; on failure, you may not allow a character to change their action

Modifier dice

Modifier dice are added to action rolls and can alter a roll's chance of success.

- Power dice **subtract** from the roll, narratively making the roll easier.
- Risk dice **add** to the roll, narratively making it harder.

Modifier dice alter the roll's result depending on how they land:

- 1-2, the modifier die does nothing
- 3-5, adds or subtracts 1
- 6, adds or subtracts 2

An action roll can have any number of modifier dice.

Modifier dice may be added by certain actions or effects, such as the *Inspire* aspect art. They should also be added situationally by the narrator.

Example: let's say you're attempting to ask someone for a favor. If they're a close friend, their predisposition may give you a power die. If they're a coworker with a negative opinion of you, that may give you a risk die.

Push Yourself

For any action roll, you may **push yourself**, which allows you to spend 2 fatigue to reroll it.

Comeback

You earn 1 comeback point when failing a roll. You can spend any number of points on **any** roll (including that of your teammates) to reduce its result by 1 per point and make it a success. Spending 3 comeback points would reduce the roll by 3.

Example: let's say you have an Intellect score of 5. You make an Intuit check, and with a roll of 6, you fail and gain 1 comeback point. Later, you make an Operate check, and you roll 6, failing that roll again. You can use 1 comeback point earned earlier to lower the Operate roll by 1, making it a success.

Additionally:

- You cannot use a comeback point on the same roll that gave it to you.
- All comeback points reset to 0 at the end of a session.

Attacks

Attacks are a specific kind of action with the intent to damage another character. They can be made with any skill, but only with the appropriate justification. Successful attack checks will deal either 1 hit or 1 fatigue, depending on the manner of attack. For example, physical attacks like Strike or Shoot would deal 1 hit. Scaring someone into a corner or weakening their morale would deal 1 fatigue.

Luck

To determine the outcome of things outside of player's control, players or the narrator may make a luck roll. Luck rolls are made with a d12, treating the result as a gradient from one possibility to another.

Example: a character needs to catch a train to work.

- 12: their path is completely clear
- 9: they got momentarily stopped by a cat along the way
- 6: construction required them to take a different route, but they know the city well enough for that to not be a problem
- 3: it seems like the whole world doesn't want you to get to that train! they'll need to pass several skill checks to make it on time
- 1: the train itself got delayed; they'll be late no matter what

Zones & Ranges

Characters in a scene are placed in a 2D space divided into **zones**. Zones represent general spaces where characters can interact with other characters. A zone would be

about 5 to 10 square meters in size. They might be smaller in a tighter space like a small office room, or larger in something like an open field. All characters can hear other characters within their zone clearly, as well as physically interact with them.

A character's **range** to another character is the number of zones from one to the other:

- Immediate: distance 0 (same zone)
- Short: distance 1 (adjacent zone)
- Medium: distance 2 (one zone between)
- Long: distance 3-5
- Very long: distance > 5

A character's range affects their action rolls in the following ways:

- Characters may only attack other characters with Strike in immediate range
- If attacking with Throw, the other character must be in immediate to short range
- If attacking with Shoot, the other character cannot be in immediate range, and cannot be at a distance further than your Sense score (e.g. if your sense is 5, they must be 5 or fewer zones away)
- When making an aspect check with targets at medium to long range, add a risk die
- Aspect art targets cannot be further than long range

Zones can be laid out in any way you prefer, including but not limited to:

- with vague narrative positioning in theater-of-the-mind
- as distinct areas on a map
- as cells on a grid

Traits

All characters come from lineages which express traits that make them unique.

Pick three traits for your character. Narratively, your character may possess as few or as many traits as you want, and you can narratively flavor these traits however you like. For example, a tail could be long and thick like a lizard's, or thin with a spaded tip like a devil's.

Each trait grants the following bonuses:

- +1 power die for skill checks in 2 specific attributes
- +1 power die for aspect checks in 1 specific aspect
- your choice of two proficient skills: one for each of the trait's attributes

A proficient skill gives you *an additional* power die.

Trait bonuses stack. If you pick two traits which both give a power die to Sense, then your Sense rolls have 2 additional power dice, plus an extra if you're rolling a proficient skill.

Example

You're making a bird-like character. You pick the following traits:

- Wings - a set of feathered wings sprout from their back
- Long tail - a feathered tail matching the wings
- Claws - sharp nail-like claws for doing *definitely* legal and moral things

Looking at the attributes and aspect for each trait, you would gain the following bonuses:

- Intellect: +1 power die (Wings)
- Sense: +1 power die (Long tail)
- Agility: +2 power dice (Wings, long tail)
- Strength: +1 power die (Claws)

- Wit: +1 power die (Claws)
- Wind: +2 power dice (Wings, long tail)
- Fire: +1 power die (Claws)

Additionally, you can pick 6 proficient skills: one for each of your trait's attributes.

In this case, your combination of traits let you pick one proficiency in every attribute, except for Agility, which gives you *2 proficiencies*, due to the overlap from your wings and tail!

In Intellect, you decide to pick Operate. This gives you an additional power die for that skill, *on top of* the one from your wings. These are your final Intellect skill bonuses:

- Intuit: +1 power die
- Recall: +1 power die
- Aid: +1 power die
- Operate: +2 power dice
- Tinker: +1 power die

In Agility, you decide to pick Maneuver and Dodge, giving you an additional power die on top of those from your traits. These would be your total Agility skill bonuses:

- Dash: +2 power dice
- Jump: +2 power dice
- Climb: +2 power dice
- Dodge: +3 power dice
- Maneuver: +3 power dice

You can find a list of available traits below.

Antennas

- attributes: intellect, sense
- aspect: darkness

Bioluminescence

- attributes: intellect, wit
- aspect: darkness

Claws

- attributes: strength, wit
- aspect: fire

Fins

- attributes: agility, sense
- aspect: water

Furred ears

- attributes: sense, wit
- aspect: light

Horns / antlers

- attributes: strength, sense
- aspect: light

Long tail

- attributes: sense, agility
- aspect: wind

Scales

- attributes: strength, intellect
- aspect: water

Sharp teeth / fangs

- attributes: strength, wit
- aspect: fire

Wings

- attributes: agility, intellect
- aspect: wind

Combat

Combat starts after a character acts adversarially against another. This'll happen most often through an attack. Other ways include being spotted by enemies after a failed stealth attempt, and similar others.

When combat starts, everyone should roll an initiative number to determine turn order. Every character should roll a D6, then add their choice of Agility (moving quick) or Wit (thinking quick) to the result. To break ties, the person with the higher chosen attribute goes first, or you can resolve via another flat dice roll.

Example:

- Allison rolls 4. They have an Agility of 3 and Wit of 5, so they'll choose Wit. Their initiative number is 9.
- Winter rolls 6. They add their Agility of 1, making their number is 7.
- Ivory rolls 3. They add their Wit of 4, making 7.
- Since Winter and Ivory both got 7, they'll break the tie using their chosen initiative stat: Ivory's Wit 4 and Winter's Agility 1. Ivory goes before Winter.
- The order is: Allison, Ivory, Winter.

After that, combat runs round after round until all adversarial acts end. This usually means when every involved character does not make a harmful action against enemies, but combat can end in any narrative way that makes sense. Maybe the enemies fell off a bridge!

After combat ends, if any present characters are down, you may attempt to succeed a Focus or Endurance skill check to heal 1 hit.

Combat Rounds

Combat rounds simulate the simultaneous, fast-paced nature of real-time combat encounters. To do this, each round is divided into two phases: the **decision phase**, and the **action phase**, in that order.

By default, **each character has one action per round**. Several other mechanics can change this, such as the *Surge* wind art, adrenaline, or the *Cancel* darkness art.

The Decision Phase

During the decision phase, everyone decides the action they want their character(s) to make in secret. Use sticky notes, note cards, whiteboards, or similar. Write down your action, then put it face down to commit your action.

All necessary information to execute your action should be written down, such as targets and whatever other choices your action allows. For example:

- If you want to use the *Surge* aspect art, decide which character you want to apply it to during this phase.
- For *Adapt*, specify the attributes being swapped, and the other action you're taking².

Do not make dice rolls or random selections during this phase. The decision phase should only include **deterministic intentions**: matters within your control. Since you can't control the outcome of dice rolls or random selections, those should not be made during this phase.

Adding hits or fatigue should also be avoided in this phase. Some factors may prevent you from making your action at all, such as the *Cancel* aspect art.

Additionally:

- **Players cannot communicate with each other *or* the narrator during the decision phase.** In real-time scenarios, you don't get a minute to stop and make a game plan.
- **Once the action is written down and committed, you cannot go back and change it³.**

If you make a mistake, such as forgetting to specify a target, because actions earlier in the round may influence your choices, your action is invalid and cannot be made this round.

However your group might want more leniency here, especially if you're learning. For example, the narrator could allow you to correct your mistake for a fatigue point. It's up to you how strictly your group wants to follow this.

The Action Phase

After all players have made their decision, resolve actions in initiative order, including dice rolls, random selections, fatigue, hits, and all other side effects.

Movement

You may move one zone in a combat round. Movement does not use an action; you can move and use an aspect art in the same round, for example.

Optionally, you can choose to make a Dash check as an action⁴. On success, you can move one additional zone.

Movement should be written down during the decision phase.

Adrenaline

Adrenaline allows you to take **2 fatigue** for **1 additional action** in combat. You may use adrenaline only once per round.

When using adrenaline, write it down during the decision phase, along with the additional action you're making with it. Only deduct the fatigue during the action phase if you were able to carry out adrenaline action.

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1. In other systems, this is called the game master or dungeon master ↩
 2. The failure case of surge disallows you to immediately take another action. In this case, you can change the action you take on the following turn, and that action will be made with the swapped attributes you chose. ↩
 3. An exception: some mechanics may explicitly allow a character to change their action. Notably, the *Foresight* aspect art. ↩
 4. While regular movement is not an action and can't be used with the Surge wind art, a combat dash *is* an action, and it works as you might expect; you'll get three additional zone movements with a successful aspect check. ↩