

BURNABARIAN

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THESE ARE MY RULES. They are inspired by [Whitehack](#), various [glogs](#), [Torchbearer](#), [Halberds and Helmets](#), [Beyond the wall](#), [Mothership](#), and various blog posts, and discussions in the OSR glog discord. Logo courtesy of the excellent [beer](#) this ruleset is named after.

Introduction

These rules are compatible with most OSR products and are not that different from what you would see in a typical OSR product. The main emphasis of the ruleset is:

1. Archetypes (fierce, skilled, weird) that require a discussion between the GM and the players for how abilities work, under what conditions they apply, so that every character feels fresh and players can capture unique characteristics in play. This is the spirit of Whitehack.
2. Classes based on these Archetypes so new characters can be quickly created. The option to roll your own entirely based on the Archetype always remains possible. This is the spirit of GLOG.
3. Non-vancian magic system, with magic words and phrases to be used for inspiration for discussion between GM and player for spell effect, cost, etc.
4. [Phased Simultaneous Combat](#) theater of the mind combat rules including JRPG-style battlelines. My early RPG playing was heavily influenced by PBTAs and I always enjoyed the free form combat but hated the looseness of it. This is an attempt to stay OSR with quick combat, but re-capture some of that flavour.
5. A focus on low level play (after level 5 players get stronger but don't gain any new skills)
6. Slot based encumbrance where items matter but bean counting sucks
7. Because items matter, hirelings are important
8. Because hirelings are important, you need to manage them
9. A lightweight camping and resting system, where perilous camp sites have consequences, and items, food, and hirelings matter –seeing a theme here?
10. A lightweight town, resupply, and revelry system



Virtual tabletop support exists via a [FoundryVTT module](#)

Spells and other supernatural abilities cost HP and using powerful arcana is another resource and set of tradeoffs to be managed by the players. The cost is based on the effect, and the HP loss represents mental and physical strain, danger, loss of life force, or whatever else the GM and players come up with to define how magic works in their game world. Hack your magic.

Hirelings are important!: porters, torch bearers, mercenaries, carters all cost money but the characters need them to get around and keep the players alive. No one is running around the countryside in full plate mail, cookpots, tents, torches, and rations. Because death comes easy in OSR, these hirelings are likely the source of many of your next characters.

Character Creation

ROLL 3D6 IN ORDER for your attributes.

Strength: allows you to hit harder and carry more. Add the bonus to your damage rolls when using *melee weapons*. Roll under Strength to open doors, tear apart chains, or climb a cliff.

Dexterity: Roll under Dexterity to dodge traps, leap over obstacles, or perform delicate tasks under pressure. A character's Defense and Stealth are modified by their Dexterity Bonus. It also affects how coordinated you are while loaded down with your inventory.

Constitution: Roll under Constitution to resist fatigue, drowning, and poison (add positive bonus to your Save for these kinds of throws). It affects your stamina when loaded down with your inventory. A character's starting hitpoints are based on their Constitution.

Intelligence: Roll under intelligence to solve difficult puzzles, read obscure texts, or identify items and treasure. If you have a positive bonus it indicates how many extra language you speak. Bonuses also apply to how spatially organized you are with your inventory.

Wisdom: Roll under wisdom to see through lies, spot hidden dangers, and avoid mind altering spells (add positive bonus to your Save for these kinds of throws). A wisdom modifier of +3 grants an extra descriptor during player creation.

Charisma: Roll under Charisma to flatter, beguile, or barter. Charisma determines how well other mortals *react* to you, how many retainers and pets will follow you (2 + your bonus) and their *morale* (7 + your bonus), and can influence resupply rolls.

ASSOCIATED ATTRIBUTES

Attack: Your attack rating. Starts at 9, 10, or 11 depending on the archetype.

Defense: Your defense rating. Starts at 10 and is modified by dex bonus and/or armour.

Stealth: How stealthy you are. Starts at 5 and is modified by your dex bonus and armour. Some armours make it very hard to be stealthy.

Save: How lucky you are. Starts at 5 + Cha bonus. If an effect, challenge, attack, etc. doesn't fall under another category use this as the fallback. This represents the character's luck and determination to resist the cruel hand of fate.

Slots: How much you can carry. Your hands count as two slots. The amount can be modified by your **fatigue**. It is calculated by the sum of the following:

A short summary for players:

1. roll for your six attributes
2. choose your class
3. ... todo ...
4. buy equipment

When using *ranged weapons*, the damage you roll remains unchanged. This is good for weak characters and bad for strong characters.

Each score comes with a bonus:

Score	Bonus
3	-3
4-5	-2
6-8	-1
9-12	
13-15	+1
16-17	+2
18	+3

You have two **Quick slots** representing your hands. The remaining slots are **Regular slots**. Anything in a regular slot takes 1 round to fish out.

Ability	Value	Notes
Strength	3	Strength bonus (± 3)
Constitution	3	Constitution bonus (± 3)
Dexterity	3	Dexterity bonus (± 2)
Intelligence	1	Intelligence bonus (± 1)
Wisdom	0	Wisdom bonus (0 to +2)

If this is too finicky, use $9 \pm \text{strength}$ modifier to determine the total number of slots.

CHOOSE YOUR CLASS.

Classes in **Burnabarian** are based on three archetypes. Pick something from the class section or use these templates, and the class list for examples of how to hack your game world to fit what you like. Don't be afraid of making a character too weak or too powerful; you can always adjust that at the table with your players. Classes **TODO LINK TO CLASS SECTION FOR EACH ARCHETYPE** are based off one of the following three archetypes. You don't play this archetype directly but it is the blueprint behind the class.

Fierce You can fight well; you can wear the heaviest armour; you have special combat abilities for you and your hirelings; this is the simplest character to play.

Skilled You rely on superior technique and training to do things in the world. You often roll with *Advantage* when doing something within your wheel-house and in certain situations you are even guaranteed success. You can do things that almost look like magic; however, they are not magical and are possible only because of intense training, upbringing, or other reason. This is the most open-ended class and the hardest to define, requiring a dialogue between the GM and player(s) for what should and should not be possible. The classes for this archetype are more like broad strokes that need to be filled in and customization is not only encouraged but required.

Weird You break the rules of the universe. They call you Alchemist; Scientist; Witch; Sorcerer; Demon; Cursed. You have the least amount of hitpoints but you are capable of extraordinary wonders, provided you are willing to pay the cost.

Archetypes broadly define the type of character you have. Besides setting the Hit Dice and Attack value for each class, each archetype has the following:

Abilities: The number of abilities the player has. These could be combat abilities, attunements (skilled), or number of magic words/phrases known.

Descriptions: Descriptive relationships (race, careers, affiliations, history, literal relationships) associated with one or more character stats

Gaining a new **description is generally automatic**; however, gaining a new **ability requires time**, training, and money and

Archetype mixing is encouraged when hacking classes! You could have a weird fighter in order to model some sort of battle warrior that may be weak but augments themselves with powerful combat magic.

needs to work with the fiction of the class, game, and or campaign. This should be worked out between the GM and player. It should not be hard for a character to achieve this if it is aligned with the fiction; if it is outside of the fiction, a quest or similar may be appropriate in order to achieve it.

ROLL FOR HIT POINTS and apply your constitution bonus. Fierce roll 1d8, skilled roll 1d6, and weird roll 1d6.

ROLL 3D6 ×10 COINS. Buy some [equipment](#) using this coins. For example:

1. rations for a week
2. armour, shield and helmet
3. a melee weapon
4. a ranged weapon (a sling if necessary)
5. a light source (or several)
6. to explore: one of rope, pole, or spikes & hammer
7. to fight monsters: one of torches & flasks of oil, mirror, stakes & hammer, or wolfsbane
8. use the remaining money to hire retainers and equip them
9. and don't forget something to cook with and sleep in

When gaining a level, reroll one die per level. A die can not be reduced below 1. Keep your old hit points if the new result is lower.

More money for retainers if you are playing a skilled or weird

Fierce Archetype

Level	Experience	HP	Attack	Save	Active Abilities	Inactive Abilities	Descriptions
1	0	8	11	6	1		1
2	2,000	+d6	12	7	2		1
3	4,000	+d6	13	7	2		2
4	8,000	+d6	14	7	3		2
5	16,000	+d6	15	8	4		2
6	32,000	+d6	15	8	4		3
7	64,000	+d6	16	9	4		3
8	100,000	+d4	16	9	4		4

A character using a fierce archetype adds their Constitution Bonus to their HP every second level. Their abilities are typically combat oriented feats.

Skilled Archetype

Classes based on the skilled archetype are strongly defined by their description, and are broadly the only class that gains has abilities associated with objects (grandfather's sword, a necromancer's skull, stolen lockpicks of the Grand Visier, a person from their past, an

Fierce abilities are tricky. These feats are typically things that other classes cannot do, even in fiction. When designing feats, make sure they are not just a regular combat gambit a player would want to attempt, as you don't want to destroy the players imagination when problem solving combat. For example, every character can sunder a shield to reduce damage by 1d12; however, perhaps a certain fierce based class could sunder a shield twice, or sunder a shield and automatically recieve the max damage reduction.

upbringing, etc.). You could say that this is their obsession, allowing them to do feats that would appear to be magic, with any object that they are particularly skilled with. As a skilled player levels, they use their ability slots to attune themselves with various objects. Switching active and inactive abilities is possible and requires a days undisturbed training.

When a skilled archetype has advantage, it may trade it's double advantage roll for a double damage roll if the combat situation is aligned with their description. When doing something aligned with their abilities, hard tasks should succeed automatically while nigh impossible tasks, well described by the player, should require a standard roll. Switching active and inactive abilities requires a days undisturbed training.

Level	Experience	HP	Attack	Save	Active Abilities	Inactive Abilities	Descriptions
1	0	6	10	6	1	1	1
2	2,000	+d6	11	7	1	2	1
3	4,000	+d6	11	7	2	2	2
4	8,000	+d6	12	7	2	2	3
5	16,000	+d6	13	8	3	2	3
6	32,000	+d4	14	8	3	2	4
7	64,000	+d4	14	9	3	3	4
8	100,000	+d4	15	9	3	3	4

A skilled character cannot use a shield or wear armour heavier than studded leather. If they do, they lose their abilities and special rolls. They have -2 Attack with any two-handed weapon (including the longbow) that is not their specialty.

A character based on a skilled archetype does not mark their fundamental descriptor with a statistic like other archetypes.

Weird Archetype

Weird abilities are worked out on a per situation basis and should be kept in a log to keep a consistent world. A word or a phrase can be present in an ability. Switching active and inactive abilities requires a days undisturbed training.

Level	Experience	HP	Attack	Save	Active Abilities	Inactive Abilities	Descriptions
1	0	6	10	6	1	1	1
2	2,000	+d6	10	7	2	1	1
3	4,000	+d6	11	7	2	2	2
4	8,000	+d6	12	7	3	3	2
5	16,000	+d6	13	8	3	3	3
6	32,000	+d6	14	8	3	3	3
7	64,000	+d4	14	9	3	4	3
8	100,000	+d4	15	9	4	4	3

A weird character with a wisdom score above 15 gets +1 Active ability total at player creation time.

A weird character pays double HP for weird abilities if wearing armour heavy than studded leather. or when using a shield.

A weird character can only use pistols and muskets for ranged weapons. A weird character can only use 1H weapons with space requirements less than Space (quarterstaves are exempt for thematic reasons).

Descriptions

Every character has a single defining descriptor in addition to the listed values above. This **fundamental descriptor** is commonly in line with training, vocation, or career. For example: archer in the 17th regiment, brigand, horse thief, wizard of the granite path, etc. Many of the suggested starting classes come with this partially or fully defined. As always, feel build something yourself using the above archetype rules.

The descriptions a character gains as they level give characters broadly defined skills and backgrounds that may become useful or relevant during the adventure. Having a relevant description associated with a task being attempted gives beneficial rolls, and in some instances may be required to even attempt the task. These other descriptions could be minor jobs, positions and titles, schooling, or other affiliations picked up over the course of an adventure.

All descriptions are associated with a single ability (Strength, Dexterity, etc). Mechanically, when doing a task where both the ability and the description come into play (e.g. lifting a heavy stone trap door because it's a strength task and the player has marked Weightlifter beside Strength), the player will roll with advantage. An attribute can have a maximum of two descriptions associated with it.

There is one exception for Skilled archetypes –they do not mark their fundamental descriptor with a stat as they get they get to roll with advantage for any task associated with their fundamental descriptor regardless of the underlying ability being tested.

A starting character has both a defining descriptor and one additional description as defined in the above tables.

Equipment

Weapon	Notes	Damage	Space	Slots	City	Rural
Axe	1H, tool, bash doors	1D6		1	15	25
Battle axe	2H, tool, bash doors	1D8+1	Space	2	20	-
Club	1H, can be improvised	1D6-2		1/2	2	2
Dagger	1H, can be thrown or hidden	1D6-2	Formation	1/2	10	10
Halberd/Polearm	2H, reach	1D6+1	Formation*	4	30	-
Mace/Warhammer	1H, +1 Atk vs metal, -1 rest, bash	1D6		1	10/15	25/-
Morningstar	1H, +1 Atk vs metal, -2 rest, 3x crit	1D6	Space	1	20	-
Spear	2H, reach	1D6	Formation*	2	5	10
Sword (Back)	1H	1D6		1	25	60
Sword (Sabre)	1H, +1 Atk while riding	1D6		1	25	-
Sword (Short)	1H	1D6-1	Formation	1	10	30
Sword (Great)	2H, can attack 2 enemies	1D8+1	Lots	2	50	-
Quarterstaff	2H, Reach	1D6	Space	2	5	3

Two handed melee weapons must be carried in hands (cannot be slotted in backpack)

Ranged weapons have a given range (without a penalty), the maximum abstract range they can be hit, and the penalty for each step in abstract range. Rate of Fire (RoF) is the number of shots that can be fired in a round. If less than one, assume it is reloading time. A character who is reloading cannot reload while in melee.

Weapon	Range	Max Range	Penalty	RoF	Damage	Slots	City	Rural
Bow (Short)	Near	Range	-1/step	1	1D6-1	1	25	25
Bow (long)	Range	-	-1/step	1	1D6+1	2	45	-
Dagger	-	Room	-	1	1D6-2	1/2	10	10
Dart	-	Room	-	2	1	1/3	2	2
Musket	Near	-	-2/step	1/3	1D8+1	2	100	-
Pistol	Room	Near	-3/step	1/2	1D6+2	1	75	-

Armour	Notes	Defense	Slots	City	Rural
Leather		2	1/2	15	30
Studded Leather	-1 Stealth	3	2	30	50
Chainmail	Can't sneak, swim	4	3	100	-
Splintmail	Can't sneak, swim	5	5	500	-
Full Plate	Can't sneak, swim	6	6	1000	-
Shield	Sundered for 1d12 damage reduction	+1	1	10	25
Helmet	Helps against injury/death	-	1/2	10	25

todo - remaining equipment tables*Encumbrance*

A character or hireling cannot carry the world. Inventory management is part of the game and if a character can't carry everything they need then they will have to do without or hire someone to carry it for them.

When **exploring use the following table**, with each excess slot consumed applied:

Burdened Slots	Rating	Land	Explore	Climb
0	Unencumbered	24	120'	8'
1	Light	18	90'	6'
2	Heavily	12	60'	3'
3	Severely	6	30'	1'
4	Over	0	10'	0'
5	Haha	0	0'	0'

Encumbrance affects **how well you fight** and how much you can move in abstract combat. The **penalty applies to Attack, Defense, and Stealth**. If you are too encumbered you will have a hard time moving around the battlefield during combat:

When a **roll is required** to move, **roll against strength**. Failure means you hesitate, stumble, catch your breath, etc., and you forfeit your movement for the round. **Success means that you can move up to 1 zone this round.**

Let the fiction guide you –moving close by to duck behind a table should be fine, but trying to cross a room or dash across a hallway when severely encumbered should require a roll in combat.

Burdened Slots	Rating	Penalty	Move	Run
0	Unencumbered	0	1 zone	2 zones
1	Light	-1	1 zone	2 zones
2	Heavily	-2	Roll with Penalty	1 zone
3	Severely	-3	Roll with Penalty	-
4	Over	-4	Roll with Penalty	-
5	Haha	Automatically Hit	-	-

Any agility related tasks outside of combat requiring a roll should also have the same penalty applied to it.

Classes

The Rules of the Game

todo intro...

Player: The people sitting at the table (physical or virtual)

Player Character: The people we're playing.

Experience Points: Defeating opponents grants a small amount of experience point. More experience is gained by **spending money** you gained on adventures. You don't get much experience for mundane items such as selling weapons, and items. Only truly interesting loot that is donated to temples, erecting a statue, building a business, building an estate, retainers who work for you, and so on. Let's not fool ourselves that murderhobo adventuring is not part of the OSR tradition. Loot for XP doesn't count until it's brought back to town safely. If a character wasn't present for at least some significant portion of an adventure, they probably shouldn't get the XP for it. Consider rewarding XP for travel, exploration, and ingenuity as well. Handle new characters joining the table however seems fair for your table.

Level: As time passes, characters hit better, get better saving throws and gain hit points. They *gain a level*.

Hit Points: Hit points indicate your condition, endurance, luck, and fortitude. and will to live

Hit Dice: For players, this is their level. For NPCs this is approximately how skilled or dangerous they are. This system assumes 1 HD = 1D6

Saving Throw: When in danger from poison, some magical effects, and other situations you are sometimes granted a saving throw in order to avoid negative effects or to reduce the damage taken. Spell or monster descriptions should explicitly state if saving throws apply. To make it, one must roll under the appropriate stat. If no stat seems to apply, use the generic Save derived attribute.

If converting material from other OSR games that use 1D8 or more for the monster HD consider downgrading to 1D6. Weapons generally cause 1D6 damage only, so don't forget to also downgrade monster attack damage as appropriate.

Kinds of Rolls

Advantage and Disadvantage Rolling with advantage means rolling twice and taking the best result. Rolling with disadvantage means rolling twice and taking the worse result.

Doing Stuff When a character wants to undertake a task that requires a roll (e.g. a risky task) then they need to roll a D20. If the result is equal to or under the task's attribute then the character is successful. If it is over then they are unsuccessful. Rolling a 1 is a critical success, rolling a 20 is a critical failure. GM discretion of these should influence the result of a roll on a case by case basis.

Difficulty A task may be easier or harder than normal and the GM should add or subtract modifiers as appropriate. A character getting help from others (or interference from others) may also add or subtract modifiers. You cannot roll below 1 (it automatically fails) and you cannot roll above 20 –although a roll may still be used to see if a critical failure or critical success happens.

Descriptions and Rolls The characters description (from race, background, career, etc.) also play a role in rolling. The descriptions give the character broad backgrounds to pull from when attempting skills. When a description is written next to an attribute (e.g. Strength - Bodybuilder) then the character rolls with advantage as long as that description and the stat itself are relevant to the task at hand.

Some tasks require a **trained roll** because it would be challenging for someone without training to even attempt it. Examples include trying to crack a safe, scaling a sheer surface, guessing the value of a gemstone, tracking an animal, etc. If a character has a relevant description written anywhere on the sheet, then the player can roll a D20 like a regular task. If it's written next to the right attribute, then roll with advantage. If they don't have it anywhere then roll with disadvantage or not allow the roll at all.

Encounters

Combat

COMBAT RANGES are abstracted into zones for quicker theater of the mind combat driven by the player fiction. Be generous with abstract movement, spells with templates, etc. It should be obvious from the fiction what should apply. Players can use their movement (subject to [encumbrance rules](#)) to move between a single zone in combat. They can forgo melee by running two zones. They can charge within a zone.

There are five zones; however, not every combat needs to use all five. Typical combat will be (melee, room) and occasionally (range).

For larger encounters, battlefields, and the outdoors the full five ranges may come into play.

Zone	Description	Approximate Distance (ft)	
Melee	In fighting range of a typical weapon	5	Some weapons have a reach of 10 ft. Let the fiction guide and have those weapons come into play when a clear battle line with a front and back row is formed, otherwise assume they are in mlee range.
Room	Nearby, but not yet in melee range	25	
Near	Close enough to run to in a round	50	
Range	Visible, but unreachable in a round	75	
Far Range	Max range combat range	100	

For farther ranges you probably don't need to track it as combat zones and if anything is happening, it's probably just ranged plinking or magic. Most weapons cannot even accurately shoot that far such that they don't even have a modifier to apply. Assuming generous aiming time (such as an ambush situation) consider -4 or even -5 for anything except a longbow or a musket, which should have a penalty of at least -2.

MASS COMBAT is handled by scaling damage and hp:

1. group combatants into units as appropriate (probably led by a PC)
2. compute total hitpoints for all units
3. damage dealt is multiplied by the Weapon Damage Multiplier
4. When hit, adjust the combat scale. Divide the remaining hitpoints by the average points per individual (round up) to see how many are alive
5. Player characters are the last to die in a unit
6. Spells work as normal
7. Every unit must make a morale check when they lose the first member or lose more than half their members
8. If the unit fails the morale check it is **broken**. A broken unit that suffers any damage will rout. If they flee the battlefield, any unit(s) in melee range get a free attack with a +2 bonus. If it is the PC unit, they can attempt to rally the next round (roll under appropriate stat).

Consider increasing the cost of spells. For example, a spell normally costing 2 HP should cost d6+2 when affecting a group of 21-40 people. If the spell does damage, use the same modifier as in the table.

Number	Magic Step Increase
2-5	None
6-10	1
11-20	2
21-40	3
41-80	4

Number	Dam. Multiplier	HD 1	HD 2	HD 3	HD 4	HD 5
2 - 5	x3	22	45	89	180	360
6 - 10	x4	45	89	180	360	720
11 - 20	x5	90	180	360	720	1440
21 - 40	x6	180	360	720	1440	2880
41 - 80	x7	360	720	1440	2880	5760

*Advancement**Magic*

Minor cantrips from GLOG...should be free

Major todo..spells as we know them

Ritual magic is grand miracles on a large scale. The destruction of a castle, splitting of seas, raising of the recently dead, causing a volcano to erupt etc. This type of magic requires days of preparation, expensive and rare ingredients probably requiring a quest of their own if the ritual is particularly powerful. There is a significant risk to the caster. The HP cost is permanent; save reduces HP by half (round up).

*Hirelings**Property and Finance**Exploration*

Reaction Roll: The referee will make a reaction roll for almost all creatures characters talk to. Roll 2d6 and add the *reaction bonus* of the person doing the talking. If you don't share a common language, apply a -2 penalty. Typically a result of 5 or lower is considered a negative outcome and a result of 9 and higher is considered a positive outcome.

Morale Check: Player characters must never check morale. Everybody else must make a morale check when losing the first member of their unit and another one when having lost half their unit's members. The referee rolls 2d6 and compares it with the unit's morale: if the roll came up higher, that unit breaks and flees. A unit with a morale of 12 is either too loyal or too singleminded to flee. A unit must make at most two morale checks per fight. Mercenaries hired by characters must make morale checks when suffering losses.

*Movement**Dungeon**Wilderness**Camping, Resting, and Foraging**Towns*

Reaction Bonus: Roll 2d6 + the charisma bonus of the most visible party member. If the monsters are intelligent, use the following:

2d6	They will...
2	attack you
3	rob you
4	threaten you
5	make demands
6	refuse to cooperate
7	be skeptical
8	be wavering
9	only take safe bets
10	cooperate
11	be friendly
12	be helpful

Otherwise:

2d6	They will...
2 or less	attack you
3 - 7	May attack if victory likely
8 - 11	Stand their ground
12	Move on