39 Languages (Ver 2.0)

The campaign has many languages. Each sentient race usually has one intrinsic to itself, or more if that race is split into various populations. There is no universal language, but Common is the first language of several nations.

39.1 Restrictions

A language may not be known above its maximum rank. Characters may not speak a tongue for which they do not have the vocal apparatus. Characters may not learn a language without instruction from a source of at least the same rank as that being learnt.

39.2 Structure

Family Each Language belongs to one particular Family of intrinsically related tongues (see §39.6).

Language Group History, geography, and custom all transform languages — therefore languages with a common history or interaction share the same Language Group (see §39.7). A language may belong to several groups, and a group may link languages from different Families.

Learning a language is easier if one already knows a related or similar language at a higher rank. The EP discount is:

- 20% if in the same Family or Group;
- 30% if in both the same Group and the same Family.

39.3 Benefits

Languages vary in their complexity; a low maximum rank may indicates less versatility, vocabulary, or foreignisms.

At Rank 0 in a language, you cannot speak it, but can probably sense the general mood of plain statements: a threat, a greeting, etc. Thereafter, with increasing rank, one's competency and vocabulary progressively increase, as compared to humans, using a typical human language, to talk about every-day things in their village.

Rank Effect (& approximate Vocabulary).

1 Some of the simple, common words (2%).

2 A few simple statements (5%).

3 Common phrases, including basic directions; several tenses; Effectively rank 0 in all other languages of that Group (20%).

4 Common idioms; more tenses; can give passable descriptions of events or people; Effectively rank 0 in all other languages of the same Family (70%).

5 Rarer idioms; most tenses; sufficient to use most professional skills (90%).

6 Normal, every-day fluency & usage; can give clear & accurate descriptions of events or people; Effectively rank 1 in all other languages of that Group (100%).

7 Courtly or professional speaker (120+%).

8 Can express any conceivable thought; may cast college magic; Effectively rank 1 in all others of the same Family (200+%).

9 Effectively rank 2 in all other languages of that Group (400+%).

10 Maximum mastery of the language (500+%).

Note that some languages are very limited. For example, many concepts or emotions cannot be articulated in Troll.

39.4 Literacy

Literacy in a language is distinct from the skill of speaking. It is easily learnt if the written form is alphabetic. Most cultures have a large proportion of the population that is illiterate.

Not all languages have a written form. It is not possible to attain literacy in a language that does not have an established written form. One may attempt to transcribe that language, adapting a known script, but the "writing" produced is ineffectual for communicating with others.

Phonetic Reading & Writing

Most Alusian languages are written using a phonetic alphabet: a set of signs representing, one-to-one, all the sounds of that language. Historically, a recently literate language usually re-uses an established alphabet with minor variations. Therefore there are many languages, but few alphabets.

For each alphabet, the cost is 1000 EP and 4 weeks the first time you learn literacy using it; literacy in a subsequent language, using the same alphabet, is only 500 EP and 2 weeks. Sometimes, for different cultures, one language is written in different phonetic alphabets. If so, you must pay the time and EP for each one you learn.

Table of known Alusian alphabets

b Bedouin script (human, flowing, cursive).

d Drakonic.

e Elvish script.

i Island (used near the land-locked ocean).

k Kingdom (used near the Azurian Empire).

n Nagan (elaborate, but versatile).

o Ogham (human, rune-like).

r Dwarvish runes.

w Westron (usual Western human alphabet; also adopted by many newly literate societies).

Orthographic languages

A literate language not using a truly phonetic alphabet is orthographic — e.g. it uses pictograms, or an elaborate spelling structure. The written form is so complex that it must be learned as if it were, in effect, another language of the same language family (e.g. written and spoken Erehleine are treated as two separate members of the Eldar Family). Hence one often speaks and writes an orthographic language at different ranks. Orthographic languages are indicated in §39.6 by an asterisk (*). Each orthographic system is functionally unique to its particular language.

39.5 Special rules

Common is easily learnt. Knowledge of any other language at a higher rank gives a 50% EP discount.

Accent Every speaker has an accent which reflects a mixture of their native language and the tutors from whom one learnt the language. At Rank 6 or higher, any speaker may gain a particular accent by spending 500 EP and 1–3 weeks study or being tutored (the GM decrees how much time is necessary).

Unpronounceable Tongues all languages of the Dragon Family (except Saurime) require unusual vocal apparatus. No humanoid race may normally speak these tongues. However, you may rank the language at twice normal cost, to gain comprehension. Alphabetic literacy in an unpronounceable language costs 2000 EP and 8 weeks. If you do have the physiological or magical ability to speak such languages, you may rank them without penalty.

Immersion If character spends a number of weeks listening to a particular language being spoken daily and frequently by speakers who use it at a rank higher than the character knows it, the GM may allow that character to use those weeks as ranking time for that language in addition to any other activity undertaken e.g. going on adventure, other training, etc. The EP

must still be paid. A character may only rank one language by immersion at any one time.

New languages when a new language is introduced into the campaign, the GM concerned must determine the following:

1. Its Family and any language groups.
2. Whether it has a written form — and, if so, is it phonetic or orthographic? If it is alphabetic, what alphabet is used?
3. Its maximum rank.

39.6 Language Families

The figure in [ ] represent the maximum rank that can be achieved with the language; the letter(s) represent the phonetic alphabet(s) used, and * identifies orthographic languages. If no letter or asterisk is given, the language does not have an established written form.

Common Common [9i,k,w].

Western-Human Alman[9o,w], Brett[9o,e], Destinian[8w], Ebolan[9w], Folksprach[9w], Lalange-[10w], Raniterran[9e], Reichspiel[9w].

Central-Human Arabiq[9b], Draknbrger[9w], Ellenic[10i], Kravonian[9*], Panjari[9*], Pasifikan[8], Sanddweller[9e], Sea-of-Grass[9], Themiskryan [9i,*].

Eastern-Human Five-Sisters-Courtly[10*], Five-Sisters-Trader[9*], Lunar-Empire[9*].

Merfolk [?,?].

Eldar Drow[9e], Eldaran[10d], Elvish[10e], Erehleine[10*], Frogelf[8*], Purple-Drow[9e], Purple-Old-Drow[9e], Quenchan[10*], Terranovan-Drow-[9*].

Faerie Brownie[7], Centaur[9i], Dryad[6], Fossegrim[6], Leprechaun[6], Nixie[6], Nymph[7], Pixie[7], Satyr[7], Sylphine[6].

False-Fey Doppelganger[8], Gargoyle[6], Harpy-[7], Medusa[6].

Earth-Dweller Gnomish[9r], Goblin[8w], Halfling[9r], Hobgoblin[8w], Khuzdul[9r], Kobold[8], Dwarvish[9r], Ogre[6w], Orcish[9w], Sasquatch[3], Troll[4], Yeti[3].

Giant Cloud[9w], Fire[9w], Frost[9w], Hill[8w], Stone[8w], Storm[9w], Titan[10i].

Dragon Culhuan[10*], Draconic[10d], Nagan[10n], Old-High-Draconic[10d], Saurime[7d], Wyvern[4].

Signing Silent-Tongue[6], Bandito [5].

39.7 Language groups

Archaic Eldaran, Purple-Old-Drow, Quenchan.

Draconic Draconic, Nagan, Old-Draconic, Wyvern.

Dravidic Drow, Raniterran, Sanddweller.

Dwarvic Dwarvish, Gnomish, Halfling, Khuzdul.

Dwarvidic Alman, Brett, Ebolan, Folksprach, Reichspiel.

Ellenic Centaur, Ellenic.

Elvic Drow, Eldaran, Elvish, Erehleine, Purple-Drow, Terranovan-Drow.

Elvidic Elvish, Lalange.

Gnomic Fossegrim, Gnomish.

Herpetic Culhuan, Saurime.

Littoral Destinian, Ebolan.

Low Gigantic Hill-Giant, Ogre, Stone-Giant.

Nomadic Draknbrger, Kravonian, Sea-of-Grass.

Orcal Goblin, Hobgoblin, Kobold, Ogre, Orcish.

Panic Centaur, Dryad, Nymph, Satyr, Sylphine.

Perfidic Fossegrim, Nixie, Pixie.

Protonic Eldaran, Old-Draconic, Draconic.

Purpuric Purple-Drow, Purple-Old-Drow.

Rustic Brownie, Leprechaun.

Titanic Cloud-Giant, Storm-Giant, Titan.