

# Obligatory Sample Rules



An OSR Ruleset  
by Zzarchov Kowolski

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# Character Generation

You know what this world needs *another* OSR ruleset. For a lot of my OSR/NGR dual statted adventures, people have asked me what OSR ruleset I use and honestly the answer is “the vague mishmash of rules in my head” including a lot of house rules not found in any system. My go to system for a campaign is NGR, but I do know the value of old school gaming as a lingua franca for easy pick-up games. To that end I am putting together this little booklet as a guide for running OSR games the way I do at conventions. Anytime you see something missing, just pick your brain for a similar rule from your game of choice. Content for any OSR game should work just fine for this ruleset. I will be making the assumption you’ve played roleplaying games before and understand the GM/Player dynamic and I’ll lean to the assumption you’ve probably also played classic or old school games before.

-Zzarchov Kowolski



A core element to an Old School game is that you don’t create a character, you generate one. This has its pros and cons for what you want out of a game, but especially for pickup games its incredibly handy. Everyone other than the GM will roll up a character using the following steps.

## Step 1

### Get a Character Sheet

You could print out a fancy one, but its more traditional to use a scrap of paper and write down what you come up with. Be sure to doodle on it and eventually lose it but assure your GM you remember what was on it as you recreate it.

## Step 2

### Roll Attributes

All characters have six attributes. Strength (STR), Dexterity (DEX), Constitution (CON), Intelligence (INT), Wisdom (WIS), and Charisma (CHA). For each of these roll 3d6 and write the total of the dice as the score. Each score has a modifier associated with it based on the total (see below) that you should write beside it.

Score	Modifier
3	-2
4-8	-1
9-12	0
13-17	+1
18	+2

For example, if you rolled 2,6,6 on your first roll of the dice you would write Str 14 (+1) on your sheet somewhere.

The attributes have the following general uses (among others), but they will be mentioned in each instance they are used so you don't need to remember this or know the acronyms.

Attribute	Uses
STR	* Modifies attack rolls with thrown and melee attacks. * Modifies carrying capacity.
DEX	* Modifies AC * Modifies attack rolls with missile attacks
CON	* Modifies HP per HD
INT	* Modifies the maximum number of languages/spells known
WIS	* Modifies saving throws
CHA	* Modifies the number of followers

### Step 3

#### Roll Class

The characters then roll a d6 to end up with a character class.

d6

1-2: Fighter

3-4: Thief

5-6: Magic-User

A Fighter is, as the name implies, primarily about fighting opponents. A Thief is all about the things between fights, helping to ensure any fights are easier for the fighter. The Magic-User has potent spells that can bend the rules. Sometimes they help the thief, sometimes they help the fighter.

All classes gain 1 hit die (HD) each level and require the same amount of experience points (XP) to level up (seen below). XP is gained through recovering treasure while adventuring (see page 19)

Level	XP
1	0
2	1,500
3	3,000
4	6,000
5	12,000
6	25,000
7	50,000
8	100,000
9	200,000
10	300,000

# Character Generation

## Fighter

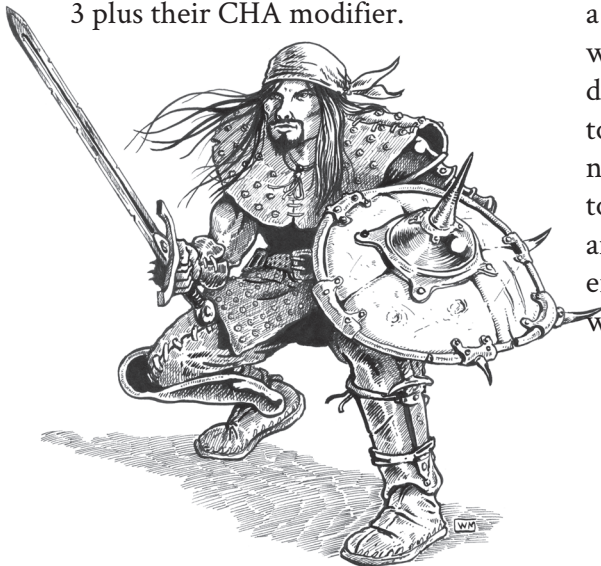
Fighters gain the following special abilities.

**Martial** Fighters are not encumbered by wearing armour.

**Tough** Fighters receive an additional Hit Die every odd numbered level.

**Slayer** Fighters of 5th level or higher make 2 attacks whenever they make an attack action instead of 1.

**Warlord** While land, men, and title can be gained at any point, an adventuring fighter will automatically attract loyal soldiers who follow them if they claim, build, or attempt to capture a stronghold at 10th level. They will attract a number of units of soldiers equal to 3 plus their CHA modifier.



## Thief

Thieves gain the following special abilities.

**Smuggler** Thieves can modify their clothes to contain secret pockets, and gain 2 extra inventory slots regardless of the pack they are carrying.

**Expert** Thieves gain 1 extra skill die every odd numbered level.

**Survivor** Thieves of 5th level or higher may add their entire level to their saving throws instead of half their level.

**Robber Baron** While land, men, and title can be gained at any point, an adventuring Thief will automatically attract loyal bandits, rebels, or the like into their service if they attempt to claim, build, or capture a stronghold at 10th level. They will also attract an equal number of disloyal bandits who will attempt to usurp them. They will attract a number of units of soldiers equal to 2 plus their CHA modifier and an equal number of disloyal followers. There is no easy way to know which units are loyal or disloyal.

## Magic User

Magic Users gain the following special abilities.

**Excellent Memory** Magic Users are able to learn a maximum of 3 additional spells and 1 additional language.

**Occultist** Magic Users gain 1 additional Spell Point per level.

**Familiar** Magic Users of 5th level or higher can summon a Familiar. The magic-user is able to learn an additional spell, and must then imbue a single spell into the familiar permanently. At any point afterwards, the magic-user may convert any other prepared spell or spells of equal or greater spell level into that spell. For example, if the familiar is imbued with Fireball (a third level spell), the magic-user could convert a prepared bless spell (first level) and two prepared magic missile spells (both first level) into a prepared Fireball spell. If the familiar had been imbued with the bless spell, the magic-user could convert a prepared Fireball into three separate instances of bless. Should a familiar die, the Magic User loses a level, but may then summon another familiar.

**Master** While a magic-user can always hire guards, build a tower, or raise the dead as finance and magic allow, at 10th level, the magic-user will automatically be able to draw forth supernatural servitors through either divine favour, binding magics, conjuring, or infernal contracts whenever they first claim, build, or attempt to conquer a lair such as a tower or dungeon. The magic-user is able to summon a number of units equal to 2 plus their CHA modifier.



# Character Generation

## Step 4

### Roll a Background

After a class is rolled, the player looks at the table related to their class and rolls 1d6 to see what their background was before becoming an adventurer. If the GM wants to allow specialist classes, the player can roll 1d8 to open up two new possibilities for each class that gain some minor abilities from another class. If a GM allows non-humans, characters with appropriate stats may choose one of the non-human backgrounds instead of rolling. Most of the backgrounds give a bonus to an attribute. If you end up with such an attribute, roll an additional d6 and add that to the listed attribute on your sheet and change the modifier as appropriate. An attribute cannot become higher than 18 and any additional points are lost.



### Fighter Backgrounds

Roll	Background	Bonus
1	Gladiator	+1d6 STR
2	Swashbuckler	+1d6 DEX
3	Barbarian	+1d6 CON
4	Mercenary	+1d6 INT
5	Town Watch	+1d6 WIS
6	Knight	+1d6 CHA
7	Ranger	+1 Skill Die
8	Paladin	+1 Spell Point

### Thief Backgrounds

Roll	Background	Bonus
1	Thug	+1d6 STR
2	Burglar	+1d6 DEX
3	Scout	+1d6 CON
4	Assassin	+1d6 INT
5	Hunter	+1d6 WIS
6	Highwayman	+1d6 CHA
7	Brigand	+ <i>Martial</i> ability
8	Charlatan	+1 Spell Point

### Magic User Backgrounds

Roll	Background	Bonus
1	Physician	+1d6 STR
2	Alchemist	+1d6 DEX
3	Hermit	+1d6 CON
4	Wizard	+1d6 INT
5	Druid	+1d6 WIS
6	Witch/Warlock	+1d6 CHA
7	Cleric	+ <i>Martial</i> ability
8	Cultist	+1 Skill Die

Demihuman Backgrounds

Elf (*Requires a CON less than 12*)

- \* +1 Spell Point
- \* Immune to Level Drain
- \* Cannot wear non-magical medium or heavy armour.

Dwarf (*Requires a CHA less than 12*)

- \* Gains Dark Vision
- \* Dwarves are not encumbered by packs.
- \* Combat movement rate is reduces by 5ft.

Halfling (*Requires a STR less than 12*)

- \* +1 to hit on ranged attacks
- \* +1 skill die
- \* Cannot wield large weapons and medium weapons take 2 hands.



Step 5  
Starting Languages

A character may know a number of languages equal to three plus their INT modifier. All characters start knowing the common tongue (Common), except Dwarves and Elves who know Dwarven and Elven respectively. If they can know additional languages Dwarves and Elves must take Common before rolling or choosing any additional languages. Characters may choose to start with other random languages by rolling 2d6 and consulting the chart below. Literacy allows a character to read and write a language that they speak (of their choice). If they roll a result for a language they already know they may choose any result on the table. Magic-Users do not need to be literate but it helps. A character with the capacity to learn additional languages may learn them with a season of study or immersion (followed by a lifetime of attempting to gain fluency).

2d6	Language
2	Enochian
3	A Dead Language
4-5	Dwarven*
6-8	Literacy
9-10	Elven*
11	The Black Tongue (Orcish)
12	Infernal

\* or the language of a neighbouring people

# Character Generation

## Step 6

### Hit Points and Hit Dice

A character has both a maximum number of hitpoints (referred to as MAX HP) and a current number of hitpoints (HP) that represent a remainder of that maximum. Whenever a character or monster reaches 0 remaining HP they die. A player character (as in not someone run by the GM) may roll on the “Death and Dismemberment” table if they reach 0 HP from an injury to try to avoid dying.

A character’s MAX HP is equal to the maximum possible roll of all their Hit Dice (HD) with a bonus (or penalty) to each die of their CON modifier. A Hit Die is a d6. A character with 3HD and no CON modifier thus has a MAX HP of 18. If they had a +1 CON modifier they would have a MAX HP of 21 and if they had a -1 CON modifier they would have a MAX HP of 15.

A character starts with a current HP equal to their MAX HP

## Step 7

### Starting Equipment

Each Character starts with 3d6 SP (Silver Pieces), and one of the following equipment packs based on the roll of a d6.

Roll	Pack	Equipment
1	Explorer	Backpack Rations (wk) Bow Quiver Knife Flint and Steel Lantern Flask of Oil Bedroll
2	Tomb Robber	Crowbar Sack 3 Torches Lockpicks Oil Dagger Mysterious Cloak
3	Warrior	Light Shield Spear Backpack Leather Armour Wineskin Torch
4	Pilgrim	Holy Symbol Satchel Candle Flint and Steel Rations (wk) Staff
5	Looter	Sack Lantern Flask of Oil Shovel Club 200 Silver Pieces
6	Peasant	Rucksack Rations (wk) Wineskin Shovel Torch Sling Pouch of Stones Hatchet Mule

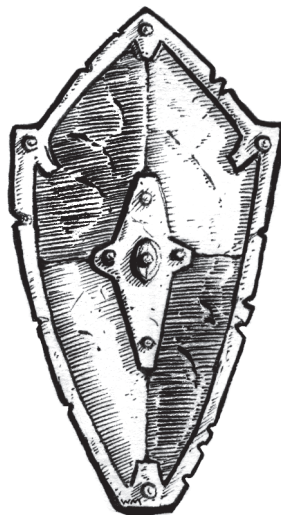
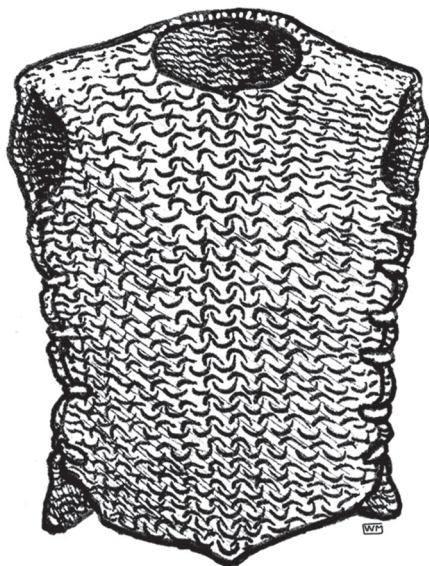
## Step 8

### Armour Class

Armour class (AC) represents how hard it is to harm a character in combat (covered on page 26). The base AC of everyone is 10. This is then modified by DEX (giving it a range of 8-12). I know a lot of older systems had Low AC = good and High AC = bad, and ThAC0 really wasn't that difficult, but screw it. This ruleset assumes High AC = good. Armour, Shields, and Great Helms will grant a bonus to AC. Leather Armour (light armour) gives +2 to AC for example, while a light shield gives a +1 bonus to AC. The equipment section will cover this in more detail. Based on available starting equipment, use the following steps to determine your character's AC.

- 1 Start with a base AC of 10
- 2 Modify it by DEX
- 3 Add +2 for Light Armour
- 4 Add +1 for Light Shield

Your AC as a new character should be between 8 at worst and 15 at best.



# Price List

## Weapons

Type	Size	Cost*
Melee		
	Small	2
	Medium	15
	Large	50
Missile		
	Small	5
	Medium	30
	Large	75
Ammunition		2

\* Cheap weapons are priced in CP,  
Standard weapons in SP, and  
Quality weapons in GP.

## Supplies

Type	Cost
Food (day)	1CP
Rations (week)	20SP
Full Wineskin	2 SP

All supplies take 1 inventory slot, rations are much more calorie dense.

## Lodging

Type	Cost per night
Basic Shelter	2CP
Inn Room	2SP

Carousing 1d100x1d4SP\*

\*Roll after carousing, you may end up owing money you don't have.

## Armour

Type	AC	Encumbrance	Cost	Special
Light Armour	+2	Lightly Encumbered	5 SP	
Medium Armour	+5	Encumbered	150SP	
Heavy Armour	+8	Heavily Encumbered	1000SP	
Great Helm	+1	Unencumbered	50SP	-1 to Spot Hidden checks
Light Shield	+1	Lightly Encumbered	10SP	
Heavy Shield	+2	Encumbered	25SP	

## Tools

Type	Bonus	Cost	Special
Crowbar	+2 to opening doors	10SP	
Toolkit	+1 to picking locks and disabling traps	50SP	
Lockpick	Can be used to pick locks	2SP	
Full Lockpick Set	+2 to picking locks	30SP	
Rope (50ft)	+2 to climbing	5SP	
Grapnel	-	25SP	
Shovel	-	5SP	
Flask of Oil	+1 to opening doors	1SP	Splash weapon
Bandages	+1 to medicine for stopping bleeding	2CP	
Herbalist Kit	+2 to medicine	200SP	
Small Mirror	-	25SP	
Bag of Caltrops	-	30SP	Save vs d6
Flint and Steel		1SP	

Pack

Type	Encumbrance	Inventory Slots	Cost	Special
Satchel	Unencumbered	5 + STR modifier	2SP	
Backpack	Lightly Encumbered	10 +STR modifier	5SP	
Rucksack	Encumbered	15+STR modifier	10SP	
Sack	*	10+STR modifier	5CP	
Mysterious Cloak	Unencumbered	0	20SP	+1 to Stealth

*\*A sack does not cause encumbrance and is not a pack, but must be carried in a hand. This means you could carry 2 sacks and wear a backpack. You are limited to 1 pack.*

Light Sources

Type	Cost	Burn Time	Radius
Candle	1CP	12 Turns	5ft
Torch	5CP	6 Turns	30ft
Lantern	25SP	36 Turns per Flask of Oil	30ft

Animals

Type	Uses	Cost
Dog	3/6 Spot Hidden	2SP
Hunting Dog	As Dog, and +2 to Tracking	15SP
Guard Dog	As Dog, will also fight enemies. 2HD	25SP
Mule	Can carry 2 Packs	20SP
Riding Horse	Can carry riders, or be used as a pack animal (as Mule)	75SP
War Horse	As Riding Horse, but will ride into battle	400SP

Magical Aid

Type	Use	Cost	Special
Vial of Holy Water	Splash Weapon	25SP	Can temporarily enchant a weapon
Holy Symbol	Casting Implement	25SP	Protection against supernatural beings
Athame	Casting Implement	66SP	Can become a magical weapon
Flying Rowan Staff	Casting Implement	500SP	Bonus to Saves against Spells and Magic
Silver Ammunition (1 shot)	Counts as a Magical Weapon	10SP	

# Equipment

Equipment probably belongs in a section *after* explaining how to actually adventure, but for most people reading this you already know the basics of how to play and so you'll use the equipment listing more frequently. So in pandering to you it comes first.

## Currency

For ease of use, the entire world uses a simple coin based monetary system with universal price controls, because a wizard did it. The coins are a gold piece (GP) which is worth 10 silver pieces (SP), each of which is in turn worth 10 copper pieces (CP). This rule set assumes a "Silver Standard" in that you gain XP for recovering treasure based on its SP value and prices assume a SP is the standard coin adventurers use. A lot of other OSR systems use a "Gold Standard". To convert between them, simply change the treasure, price, and XP values by the appropriate factor of 10.

## Inventory

A huge part of OSR gameplay is resource management. To facilitate that, there have to be limits to how many resources you can truck along with you. The more stuff you carry, the less room for treasure and the slower you move in case you need to run from danger. The OSR inventory system handles these concerns.

Each character can wear a set of armour, a helmet, hold things in their two hands, and wear a single pack. Things can (usually) be stored in a pack, allowing a character to carry more things by granting them a number of inventory slots. Each "thing" a character has packed away is 1 slot. Tiny items (like coins) are 200 to a slot, unless you want to be able to draw it in combat (such as a vial of holy water), then it is 1 item per slot as you must pack it specially in cloth or straw to more easily gain access to it in a hurry.

Bigger packs allow you to carry more inventory slots but also affects encumbrance, as does wearing armour for anyone without the Martial ability (Fighters mostly).

A character is encumbered equal to the worst value between their armour, shield, and pack and has a movement rate to match. A Burglar in leather (light) armour wearing a satchel is lightly encumbered as the leather is the worse encumbering of the two. A Fighter with the martial ability is not encumbered by armour and so would be unencumbered (satchels do not add encumbrance) but if the fighter donned a rucksack they would be encumbered (a rucksack is encumbering).

# Items in Detail

## Weapons

There are an almost infinite number of potential weapons, especially once you get into polearms. For simplicity reasons they are defined by three categories: their size, their workmanship and if they are melee or missile weapons. All weapons deal 1d6 damage. Weapons will have other abilities where the actual type is important. A warhammer can be used to drive in a nail, an axe can chop a tied rope, a spear can fight from the second rank, etc.

### Size

#### Small Weapons

Things like a rock, fists, daggers, hatchets, truncheons, or slings are small weapons. Small weapons do not take an action to draw in combat, but re-roll their damage and choose the worse result. This includes any extra damage from skill dice.

#### Medium

Things like maces, broadswords, spears, axes, and bows are medium weapons. Medium weapons take an action to draw in combat.

#### Large

Things like polearms, greatswords, mauls, and longbows are large weapons. Large weapons cannot be drawn from a pack in combat, but re-roll their damage and choose the better result. This includes any extra damage from skill dice.

## Workmanship

### Cheap

Cheap weapons include things like clubs, staves, stone spears, thrown rocks, and slings. While they have a very low price they are unable to score critical hits and are able to suffer fumbles.

### Standard

Standard weapons include things like axes, spears, maces, bows, or rusty swords. They are able to both score critical hits and suffer fumbles.

### Quality

Quality weapons include swords, composite bows, and pretty much any magic weapon. They are able to score critical hits and do not suffer fumbles.

### Natural

Natural weapons include teeth, claws, fists, horns or other parts of a living being. They can neither score critical hits nor suffer fumbles.

**Melee weapons** are used in hand-to-hand attacks, while ranged weapons are used to shoot. **Missile weapons** have a range of 100ft for small, 200ft for medium, and 300ft for large. Ranged weapons require the use of **ammunition** specific to the weapon (arrows, stones, bolts, etc). Thrown weapons go 30ft.

# Items in Detail

## Armour

There are all sorts of different historical and cultural armours, but they are simplified into three types (Light, Medium, Heavy). Armour type determines its AC bonus and the amount of encumbrance from wearing it. Those with the Martial ability do not suffer encumbrance from wearing armour.

**Light Armour** includes things like leather jerkins, gambesons, or even primitive bone armour. It causes the bearer to be lightly encumbered and grants +2 to AC.

**Medium Armour** includes things like scale, mail, or segmented armour. It causes the bearer to be encumbered and grants +5 to AC.

**Heavy Armour** is mostly things like Gothic Plate or Hoplite Panopty armour. It causes the bearer to be heavily encumbered and grants +8 to AC.

## Other Protection

**Grand Helms** are over-the-top pieces of protection as worn by jousting knights or gladiators rather than the standard helms included with all armour. It grants +1 AC and a -1 penalty to Spot Hidden skill checks.

**Light Shields** include bucklers, targes, and oxhide shields. They cause the bearer to be Lightly Encumbered and grant +1 AC when held in a hand.

**Heavy Shields** include hoplite shields, tower shields, and similar bulky shields. They cause the bearer to be encumbered and grant +2 AC when held in a hand. They cannot be drawn from a pack in combat.

## Supplies

**Food** represents fruit, vegetables, bread, and other common provisions. The main limitation is that an inventory slot of food is only enough to feed one person for one day.

**Rations** are calorie dense foods with a long shelf life. Hard tack, jerky, pemmican, and old cheeses would count as rations. They are expensive, but one inventory slot is 7 days worth of food for a person.

**Wine** is pretty self explanatory, but having strong drink available is useful for regaining hitpoints while camping or when taking a break.



## Packs

A character may only wear one pack at a time and gain benefits from it. If someone packs a pack in a pack, it doesn't give more inventory.

**Satchels** are messenger bags and similar travelling gear. They leave the bearer unencumbered and provide 5 inventory slots, modified by STR.

**Backpacks** leave the bearer lightly encumbered and provide 10 inventory slots, modified by STR.

**Rucksacks** are very large backpacks with supports, often used by porters and soldiers. They make the bearer encumbered and provide 15 inventory slots, modified by STR.

**Sacks** are not technically a pack, but they do provide extra inventory slots when held in a hand. They provide 10 inventory slots, modified by STR.

A **Mysterious Cloak** is a dark and concealing hooded cloak. It is technically a pack, but it provides no inventory slots (it merely prevents someone from using both it and a backpack). When worn without a pack, it gives a +1 bonus to stealth.

## Tools

**Crowbars** are pretty much what you would expect. They provide +2 to Skill checks for opening stuck doors.

**Toolkits** are a set of fine workmans tools often used by tradespeople. They prove a +1 bonus to Skill checks for picking locks and disabling traps or other mechanical devices.

**Lockpicks** are a simple piece of bent steel that are combined with some form of tension wrench to allow someone to try to pick a lock. They are tiny items and usually illegal.

A **Full Lockpick Set** is a suite of different speciality picks, rakes, tension wrenches, and other tools in a nice leather case. They provide a +2 bonus to Skill checks to pick locks and are highly illegal.

**Rope** is just that, hemp rope in a 50 foot coil. Rope gives a +2 bonus to climbing Skill checks.

**Grappnels** are useful for allowing someone to throw a rope onto a ledge and hook onto it.

**Shovels** are.. for fucks sake its a damn shovel. Do you really need a description?

# Items in Detail

**Flasks of Oil** are needed to keep Lanterns burning, and can be used to oil hinges and grant a +1 bonus to Skill checks when attempting to open a stuck (but not locked) door. It can be turned into a molotov cocktail and turned into a splash weapon. If you hit with an attack roll you have set the target on fire and it will take d6 damage at the end of all future rounds until extinguished.. Hit or miss, roll 1d6. A number of targets equal to 7 - the roll take an amount of damage equal to the roll. If a 6 is rolled, one person is hit for 6 damage. If a 1 is rolled, 6 people are hit for one damage. Those hit by this splashing oil may make a saving throw to take half damage.

**Bandages** give a +1 bonus to Medicine Skill checks to keep someone from bleeding out (often a death and dismemberment table result).

**Herbalist Kits** are ye olde doctor's bag and contain absorbent mosses, various healing herbs, and special drugs. They grant a +2 bonus to Skill checks for Medicine. They have 6 uses.

**Small Mirrors** are useful for all sorts of reasons. You'll figure something out.

**Flint and Steel** is used to start a fire. Striking them together is loud, and if used without oil for a quick flame, will trigger a random encounter check in a dungeon.

**Bags of Caltrops** can be thrown on the ground, usually to evade pursuers. Anyone moving through the caltrops without carefully sweeping them aside (impossible in combat) must make a saving throw or take 1d6 damage.

## Light Sources

**Candles** provide shadowy light for the holder that extends 5 feet. They are incredibly easy to extinguish (such as by being in combat) but otherwise burn for 12 turns.

**Torches** provide good light for the holder and extend shadowy light for 30 ft. They burn for 6 turns.

**Lanterns** are your classic storm lantern (anachronistic or not). They prove good light for holder and extend shadowy light for 30 ft further. As an added benefit they can be hooded to temporarily hide the light. Dropping them often breaks them and causes a fire.

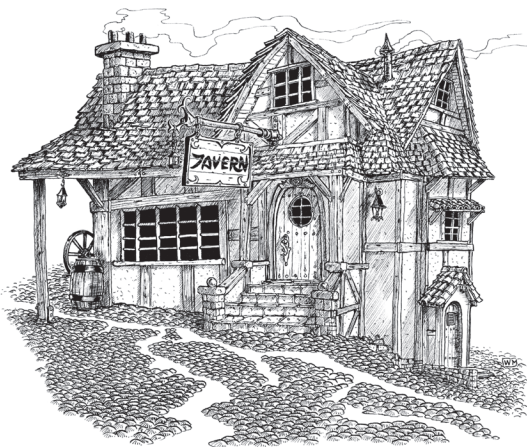


## Lodging

**Basic Shelter** is little more than a roof over your head and a pile of straw to sleep on. It does not include food or drink, it merely keeps you from being arrested for vagrancy. You regain hitpoints as if you were camping (page 23).

**Inn Rooms** include not only a bed but a warm meal and strong drink. You regain hitpoints as if you were at an Inn (page 23) ...obviously.

**Carousing** involves a pub crawl and lots of drunken revelry, allowing you to regain (or lose) hitpoints. It has a variable cost that may result in owing unsavoury characters a lot of money.



## Animals

**Dogs** includes both large and small breed dogs for the same price.

Large breed dogs are 1HD and will only fight if attacked. Small breed dogs are 1 inventory slot. All dogs will help their master keep watch, having a 3/6 skill at Spot Hidden.

**Hunting Dogs** have all the features of regular dogs, but also give a +2 bonus to tracking Skill checks.

**Guard Dogs** have all the features of large breed dogs, but will fight on command and have one extra HD (2HD total).

**Mules** are used as pack animals and can carry 2 packs as saddle bags. They will flee from melee combat or if shot.

**Riding Horses** can be ridden, having double the movement of an equally encumbered human. They will flee from melee combat or if shot. Having a rider makes a horse lightly encumbered while having two riders makes it encumbered. It can be used as a pack animal as if it were a mule.

**War Horses** have all the benefits of a Riding Horse, but will not shy from combat and will grant its rider (if there is only 1) +1 to melee attacks and +1 AC versus people on foot. It can also rear up to attack instead of moving, making a single attack as a 3HD creature.

# Items in Detail

## Magical Aid

**Holy Water** is sold in a small glass vial that must be carefully packed to avoid breaking. It can be applied to a weapon, causing the weapon's next attack to count as if it were a magic weapon until it dries. It can also be thrown against undead and unholy creatures as if it were a flask of burning oil, and can set them on fire.

**Holy Symbols** include things like crosses and medallions featuring religious insignia, usually blessed by priests. When brandished in a hand they can be used as a heavy shield against evil (or good) supernatural creatures and grant +2 to any saving throws against them. They count as a *Casting Implement* to followers of the god they represent.

**Athames** are ceremonial daggers (small standard weapon) engraved with potent runes. After dealing damage to a living being, an Athame counts as a magic weapon for the purposes of attacking creatures requiring a magic weapon to harm until after it next strikes a corporeal creature. They count as a *Casting Implement*.

a **Flying Rowan Staff** is carved from sacred wood and warded with potent sigils. When held, it grants +1 to saves against magic and spells and can be wielded as a large cheap weapon. They count as a *Casting Implement*.

**Silver Ammunition** is any arrow, bolt, or sling bullet crated from pure silver (or at least the weapon head). It counts as a magic weapon for the purposes of attacking creatures requiring a magic weapon to harm.



# Adventuring

## The Point of Adventuring

You have fun, a sense of wonder, and have some cool stories to tell your friends. That is the trite answer that is not required.

Old School games assume you are treasure hunters. It is assumed you will go to dangerous locations seeking to make a fortune, and then later translate that fortune into power.

Characters will go into wild places, loot forgotten tombs, and ransack lost cities. In doing so they will recover treasure and become better adventurers.

You are probably familiar with the “level up” mechanic that is in every sort of game. You gain Experience Points (XP) and when you gain enough you level up. This was mentioned on page 3. Your adventuring party gains 1 XP for every SP (silver piece) they bring back to town from an adventure. That is it, the only mechanic. The XP is split evenly among the party regardless of what share of treasure people walk away with.

Everything else in this section are just rules for how the GM adjudicates you getting that treasure and returning safely with it.

## Saving Throws

When a character has gotten themselves into trouble and danger is imminent they may be called upon to make a saving throw. Whenever a character is required to make a saving throw they roll 1d20 and attempt to score a 15 or higher. They add their WIS modifier and either half of their level to the roll, or their entire level if they are a Thief of 5th level or higher. There are many different subsets of saving throw a character might need to make (such as a save VS poison or a save VS magic), in which case they may be entitled to special bonuses from items. For example, a character may have a magic ring that gives them +2 to a save VS Petrification. If they are making a Saving Throw against being turned to stone they may then add the +2 bonus, but not for a different saving throw against the poisonous bite of one of the snakes on the medusa’s head.

## Skills

Characters will periodically try to do some task of uncertain outcome such as breaking down a door, sneaking down a hall, or walking a tightrope.

All characters have at least one skill die, Thieves and some backgrounds may have additional skill dice. To make a skill check must be unen-

# Adventuring

cumbered or lightly encumbered. When making the check, a character rolls all of their skill dice and needs to roll a success on at least one die. A success is normally a roll of a 1, but each skill check ties back to an attribute (based on what the skill is being used for). The modifier of that attribute is applied to the success range. So if a character had a STR modifier of +1 and was attempting to bust down a door, success would be any roll of 1-2. You may be asking why not instead say you need to roll a 6+ for a die to be a success and then just add the modifier since that is way simpler to explain and mathematically the same? Tradition. If you and your group are new to OSR games then do it that way. If they are used to OSR games you'll have to stop every time they roll and explain that "no, rolling a 1 on a listen check is bad" and it's easier to just go with it. Quality tools can grant a bonus in a similar manner to an Attribute. A useful tool gives a +1 bonus and a specialty tool gives a +2 bonus, a makeshift tool would give a -1 penalty. A lock pick is needed to make a skill check but also having a box of tools would give a +1 bonus. A full set of specialty lockpicks gives a +2 bonus, and attempting to use a bent nail a -1 penalty.

Attribute	Examples
STR	Open Stuck Doors Climbing Lifting Gates
DEX	Stealth Lockpicking Picking Pockets Acrobatics
CON	Holding Breath Treading Water Wilderness Survival
INT	Disabling Traps Decoding Ciphers Medicine
WIS	Searching Spot Hidden Listening at Doors Tracking
CHA	Reaction Deception Intimidation Sensing a Lie
Special	Extra damage on surprised enemies

## Providing Help

RPG's are a group activity, so there will usually be a case where multiple people will try to perform or help perform an activity. If someone is receiving help with a task, they receive a +1 bonus on the die. The individual helping cannot be performing other tasks like keeping watch.

## Heroic Tasks

Truly difficult tasks may require multiple successes (usually 2). Picking a simple lock on a door would require one DEX Skill success, while picking the lock on a vault

constructed by Dwarven masters would require 2 (and thus those with only 1 skill die could not open it).

**Surprise**

Anyone can bust out of cover and attack an opponent in an ambush. Doing so automatically grants the ambusher the higher initiative for the combat but they might also be able to surprise their opponents. To check for surprise, everyone being ambushed rolls Spot Hidden (WIS Skill) and totals the number of successes. Everyone in the ambushing party then rolls Stealth (DEX Skill) and every individual must score more successes than the entire group being ambushed scored. This is very difficult for large parties to pull off.

If a group is surprised, everyone attacking them adds their skill dice to their damage on the first round. Someone who normally deals 1d6 damage with 1 skill point would do 2d6 damage to a surprised opponent, while someone with 3 skill points would deal 4d6 damage.

**Reaction Roll (2d6)**

When encountering a group with unknown attitudes, roll 2d6 and consult the chart below. The roll can be modified by one to three steps based on the relationship between the party (or people like them) and the group. Goblins and

Dwarves (having a blood feud) would increase tensions by 3 levels. If the party are knights of the realm and run into fellow, although potentially rival, knights then tension can be lowered by two levels. Merchants are uninterested in fighting and would lower by one level while thieves would probably increase by one level.

Score	Result
10-12	Violent
8-9	Hostile
7	Neutral
5-6	Friendly
2-4	Helpful

**Violent** Roll initiative, it's an attack!

**Hostile** If the party makes any hostile motions, or tries to move forward they become violent (roll initiative). They probably want some sort of toll or payment (aka, a robbery) or perhaps to just call out the party as cowards and challenge them.

**Neutral** They are wary of the party and will become hostile if they make moves that threaten them, but are otherwise happy to part ways peacefully.

**Friendly** They are friendly, and as long as no threats are made will exchange information and agree to tasks that place no real burden upon them (such as relaying a message to a location they are already going).

# Adventuring

**Helpful** They are not only friendly but will offer both information and to render immediate aid if needed. They will do their best to help the party so long as it doesn't interfere in their own goals, or if the needs of the party are more important. For example, a squad of wandering road wardens might send a runner to town telling them of danger and follow the party to help rescue a kidnapped merchant.

Trying to talk to a group allows a Reaction check (CHA Skill) to lower their attitude by 1 level. This requires an action and will always fail if your group has made attacks against their group, even in self defense. A 6 causes them to increase their attitude by 1 level. Gifts and offerings to nonviolent groups will lower their attitude by 1 additional level.

## Movement

Movement will be a key factor in surviving encounters. Characters have a movement rate based upon how encumbered they are. Characters are Unencumbered, Lightly Encumbered, Encumbered, or Heavily Encumbered. This will be based on a combination of worn armour and what pack a character carries (more on in the equipment section).

## Combat Movement

In moments of tension or danger (such as combat), characters may run 35 feet per round if they are unencumbered, 30 feet per round if they are lightly encumbered, 25 feet per round if they are encumbered, and 20 feet per round if they are heavily encumbered.

## Wilderness Movement

Unencumbered characters move 4 hexes per day. Lightly encumbered characters move 3 hexes per day. Encumbered characters move 2 hexes per day. Heavily encumbered characters move 1 hex per day. These movement rates are modified by the terrain ( $\frac{1}{2}$  movement through difficult terrain like forests and hills,  $\frac{1}{4}$  movement through very difficult terrain like swamps and jungles).

## Dungeon Movement

During dungeon exploration, all characters move slowly as it is assumed they are trying to avoid patrols, sneak along hallways, peak around corners, map, and check for obvious traps or signs of danger. They move 100 feet every 10 minutes (1 Turn).

## Random Encounters

As mentioned, Old School games are about resource management. The fact that you don't get XP for fighting (only treasure) allows for

fighting to be a good risk. Random Encounters are to force the party to treat time as a resource, the longer they spend doing something the more chance they will encounter another fight and drain resources better used elsewhere.

In a Dungeon there is a secret 1/6 chance every Turn (10 minutes) that a random encounter is triggered. This also happens if the party makes some really loud noise.

In the Wilderness there is a 1/6 chance of a random encounter during the morning, the afternoon, and evening. There are also three chances at night (dusk, midnight, dawn) that correspond to a standard three shift watch schedule.

### **Healing and Rest**

Hitpoints can be regained by taking a rest, having some food and wine, and relaxing a bit. Whenever hitpoints are regained through non-magical means, it is by rolling a number of Hit Dice (adding any CON modifier to each die) and comparing the total result to the character's current HP. If it is higher, that is the new current HP of the character. For magical healing (such as potions or spells), simply add the result of the healing to the current HP.

If Current HP is ever somehow more than the MAX HP, the current HP is lowered to the MAX HP.

### **Taking a Break**

A party can rest for a turn to catch their breath. This requires either a skin of wine to share, or that everyone eats a day's rations if they haven't already eaten today. Every player rolls 1 Hit Die to potentially regain hitpoints.

### **Camping**

When camping for the night, the next morning players roll 1 Hit Die if they aren't awoken in the night (including being the middle watch), 1 Hit Die if they have food or rations, and 1 Hit Die if they had wine to drink or some other luxury the night before. This means they may be able to roll up to 3 Hit Dice each, but they may not use more Hit Dice than they have based on their level, class, and background. (A level 1 Magic-User wizard could roll 3 hit dice but select at most 1).

### **Inns**

When staying a night at an inn or other proper lodging with food and drink, a character may roll up to 3 Hit Dice to potentially regain hitpoints. but they may not use more Hit Dice than they have based on their level, class, and background. (A level 1 Magic-User wizard could roll 3 hit dice but select at most 1).

### **Weeklong Rest**

When resting for a week (including between adventures), a character rolls all of their Hit Dice to potentially regain hitpoints.

# Adventuring

## Carousing

When having a celebration, pub crawl, or otherwise partying hard a character may roll all of their Hit Dice plus two additional Hit Dice to potentially regain hitpoints but they may not use more Hit Dice than they have based on their level, class, and background. (A level 1 Magic-User wizard could roll 3 hit dice but select at most 1). As a negative side effect, if the total of the HD is lower than their current HP, that becomes the new current HP. You can end up worse off. Should a character with a low CON end up with zero or less HP from carousing, roll on the Death and Dismemberment table to see what ill effects they suffered. Don't drink if you can't handle your liquor.

## Dungeoneering Concerns

### Light

Light management is one of the key resources in old school dungeon crawling. The last thing you want to do is push your luck and end up stuck in the dungeon without light. Light is abstracted to light levels and a distance. See the following chart.



Light Level	Effect
Blinding	Unable to see, can only hit on a natural 20. Cannot Spot Hidden.
Very Bright	+1 Bonus to spot hidden, -2 to hit in melee
Good	
Shadowy	+1 bonus to stealth, -2 to hit with missile fire.
Dark	Unable to see, can only hit on a natural 20. Cannot Spot Hidden.

Blinding and Dark are obvious I hope. Bright is uncomfortably strong, akin to being in front of someone who won't turn their damn high beams off. Good represents normal daylight or a close light source. Shadowy is a dim candle lit room.

### Dark Vision

A creature with Dark Vision, or any other form of "see in the dark ability", counts darkness as 1 category brighter. This can lead to problems with too much light.

### Traps

Rather than just rolling to check for traps and rolling to avoid traps, ideally you should telegraph the potential presence of traps to the careful observer (like dead rats in a room with a poison gas trap). Describing how to check to see if there is a trap and how to avoid its harmful effects is one of the big

# Combat

sources of fun in an Old School Game. To resolve them with a die roll would be like going to an Escape Room and rolling a die to get out instead of solving the puzzles.

This requires the GM understands the mechanics of the trap and doesn't just place them in random locations. If that is the case, use of a WIS Search Skill check and a Disable Trap INT Skill check will also work. If you set off a trap, a saving throw will allow you to take half damage.

If a trap is an alarm it will automatically trigger a random encounter unless a saving throw is made, in which case it triggers a 1/6 chance of a random encounter.

## Stuck and Locked Doors

Another common obstacles in dungeons will be doors that are stuck shut. Perhaps they have hinges that have rusted solid, or moisture has caused the wood to warp, or maybe sand of untold aeons has piled against the far side of the door, either way its stuck.

A STR Skill check to open a stuck door will always open the door, but if the check is a failure it will do so loudly and trigger a check for a random encounter.

If a door is locked, it can be picked with a DEX skill check. On a success it opens quickly, on a failure it takes an entire turn to open. On a 6 the lock actually jams and cannot be unlocked. A locked door can also be forced open. This requires a successful STR Skill check to open and is loud (triggering a random encounter check) whether you succeed or fail. Repeatedly battering on the door may draw many random encounters before the door gives way. A barred door requires 2 successes.

## Combat

At some point, its going to come to blows. Each combat takes 1 Turn and is assumed to feature time after the fight recovering one's breath, binding wounds, etc.

Combat is broken up into rounds, each round is further broken into actions. Resolve combat in the following steps.

### Step 1. Roll Initiative

All sides roll a single d6 at start of combat. Whichever side had the highest initiative has won initiative, flip a coin to break ties. This initiative is used for the entire combat.

# Combat

## Step 2. Rounds

Combat then proceeds in rounds until one side flees, surrenders, or is destroyed. Those with the highest initiative go first, then those with the lower initiative. Every character can move and take an action.

## Step 3. Actions

Common actions include making an attack, casting a spell, or drawing a weapon or shield.

## Attacks

To make an attack, a creature or character rolls a d20 and adds their number of Hit Dice (HD) and any modifier from STR for Melee attacks or DEX for Missile attacks. Thrown weapons can use either STR or DEX.

If the result of this roll is equal to or greater than the target's AC it is a hit. Most attacks do a d6 of damage.

A roll of a natural 20 can be a Critical Hit, though only Quality and Standard weapons may score a critical hit (Cheap and Natural weapons cannot). A Critical Hit always hits regardless of the opponent's AC and always scores maximum damage (a 6 on every d6 for damage).

A roll of a natural 1 can be a Fumble, though only Standard and

Cheap weapons can Fumble (Quality and Natural weapons cannot). A weapon that fumbles is damaged or lost for the fight, though you can repair it by spending a full Turn doing so.

## Casting a Spell

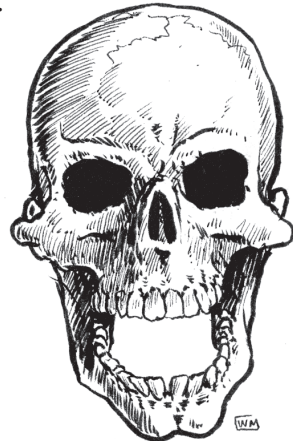
Any character with a prepared spell may cast it as an action, follow the directions in the spell. This is a dangerous thing to do in Melee (see Page 27).

## Step 4. Repeat

Keep going round by round until one side flees, surrenders, or is destroyed.

## Death

Opponents are killed when they hit 0HP. Player Characters (or notable levelled opponents or allies) may roll 2d6 on the death and dismemberment table to avoid that fate. If a character is killed (or downed) by a melee attack, the attacker may move forward five feet into their space.



## Death and Dismemberment (2d6)

Score	Result	Effect
2	Adrenal Rush	Roll all Hit Dice, that is the new current HP until the fight is over, then as if Bleeding Out.
3	Still Standing	Set current HP to 1.
4-5	K.O'd	Set current HP to 1, but is unconscious for 1 Turn.
6-8	Bleeding Out	Requires a Medicine Skill check within next 2d6 rounds to avoid death.
9-10	Lost Use of Limb	Permanet loss d4*1 left leg *2 right leg *3 left arm *4 right arm
11	Dead	Not even true blove can save you
12	Mangled	Dead in a gory manner and armour is ruined beyond easy repair

## Other Combat Concerns

### Cover

Characters in cover can claim a bonus to their AC against missile attacks. Light cover (such as hedges, corners, and windows) give a +2 bonus to AC. Heavy cover (such as ramparts, trenches, or an emplaced pavise) gives a +5 bonus to AC.

### Firing into Melee

Firing into melee is an ill advised tactic, but the ruthless might not care. If someone fires into a melee that they are not part of and miss, a random ally must make a saving throw or suffer 1d6 damage.

### Two weapon fighting

A character wielding a weapon in each hand gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls.

### Parry

A character wielding an appropriate weapon (such as a sword, or staff) may Parry instead of moving. A character gains +1 to AC against melee attacks when they Parry.

### Leaving, Casting Spells, or Firing Missile Weapons in melee

Anytime a character does something ill advised in melee combat, the same rule can be used. The character must make a Saving Throw or suffer 1d6 damage. This could be fleeing, firing a missile weapon, attempting to pick a lock, or casting a spell (unless it is a touch based spell).

# Magic

## Spells

In some Old School games there is a whole system of how many spells of each level a Magic-User can cast. It is much simplified in this system.

Each spell still has all the normal criteria of an Old School spell entry. They have a spell level, an effect, and require Verbal (spoken magic words), Somatic (magical gestures), and/or Material (use of magical ingredients) components to cast. You can only cast spells you have prepared ahead of time. Spells from any Old School system are not only cross compatible but I recommend you use them to add spells to your game.

Other systems use the word “memorized” to mean prepared. That to me implies that it is just remembering how to cast a spell. Preparing a spell is not just memorizing words and acts but all sorts of actions to allow those words and actions to have the desired outcome.

Preparing means praying for specific Saints to intervene when called upon and making appropriate offerings. It means performing rituals at appointed times to open extra-planar gates to allow magic to flow, or bartering with Djinni to fetch spells to wait unseen in the astral plane until released by the caster.

A character can prepare 1 spell level worth of spells per spell point. A character with 5 spell points could prepare one 5th level spell, or five 1st level spells, or a 2nd and a 3rd level spell, or some combination. Preparing a spell takes 1 hour per level.

A character can only prepare spells they have learned (mastered) and can only learn a limited number of spells. This is 3 modified by INT, with Magic-Users able to learn an additional 3. A familiar allows a Magic-User of 5th level or higher an additional learned spell. Learning a spell takes a month worth of study and practice.

When a spell is cast the preparation is expended and it must be prepared again before it can be recast. If a spell has a Verbal component the caster must be able to speak, if it has a Somatic component the caster must have either a free hand or be holding a Casting Implement, and if it has a Material component the caster must be holding the component in a hand.

A character with spell points begins with 2 random spells (roll d6 and a d8), and additional spells must be found adventuring. 8 Sample spells are listed, but I encourage you to borrow from other games.

## **1 Bless/Curse**

**Level 1**

**Components V,S**

**Range Touch**

The target gains +1 to saving throws and attack rolls for 1 hour per level of the caster. The reverse (curse) gives a -1 penalty to saving throws and attack rolls for the same duration.

## **2 Healing**

**Level 1**

**Components V,S**

**Range Touch**

The target increases their HP by 1d6+ the level of the caster, up to their MAX HP.

## **3 Light**

**Level 1**

**Components V,S**

**Range Self**

An orb of light that produces 60 feet of good light hovers over the caster for 1 hour.

## **4 Magic Missile**

**Level 1**

**Components V,S**

**Range 100ft**

The target automatically takes 1d6 damage for every 4 levels (or part thereof) of the caster.

## **5 Stoneskin**

**Level 1**

**Components V**

**Range Self**

The caster gains +3 AC for 1 Turn per level.

## **6 Turn Undead**

**Level 1**

**Components V,S,M**

**Range 30ft**

The caster drives away 2d6 HD of undead, who must flee for 1 hour. Only Undead with equal or lesser HD to the caster will flee, and undead with the lowest HD are the first to flee. If more HD are rolled then are in range the undead are destroyed.

## **7 Knock**

**Level 2**

**Components V,S**

**Range Touch**

A lock or stuck door automatically opens unless warded with magic.

## **8 Fireball**

**Level 3**

**Components V,S,M**

**Range 100ft**

The caster hurls a ball of flame at a target point within range, dealing 1d6 damage per level to everyone within 30ft of that point. Those harmed may make a saving throw to take half damage. The material component is a ball of sulfur, which is expended in the casting of the spell.

# Magic

## Magic Items

One of the other major forms of coveted treasure (beyond coin), is magic items.

Ideally magical items will have strange and unique powers. A sword named “Gloombane” that casts Light in the presence of Shades is pretty cool. But sometimes you want to run someone else’s module and it has a +1 sword.

For magical items of a “plus” variety (usually +1 to +5), they work as follows.

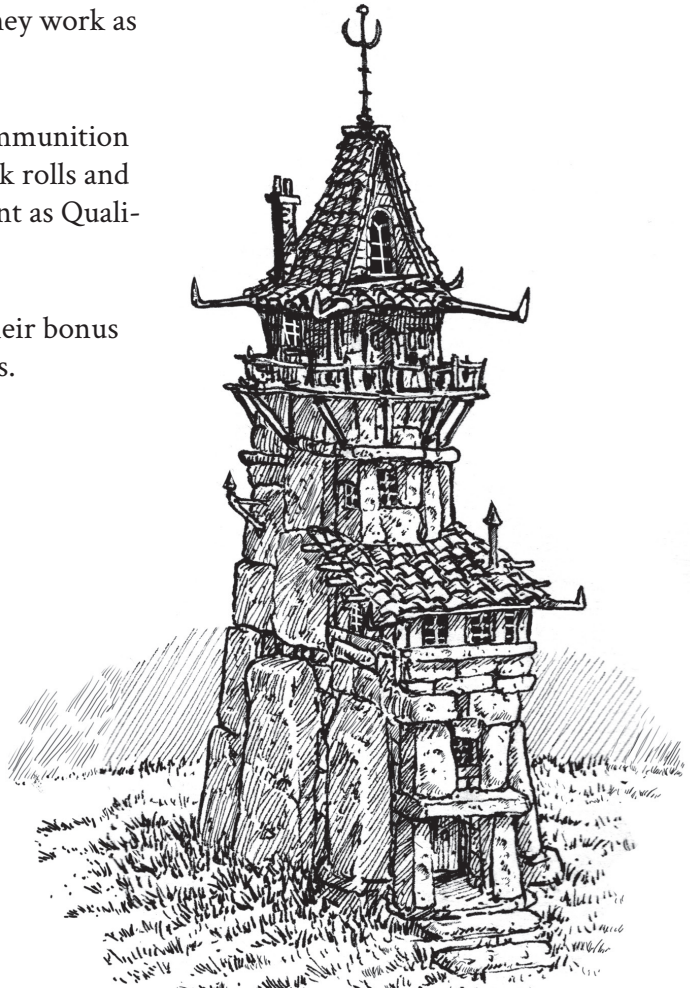
Magical weapons and ammunition give their bonus to attack rolls and damage, and always count as Quality weapons.

Magical armour gives their bonus to AC and saving throws.

Magical Shields give their bonus to AC and to attack rolls.

Magical tools roll an additional skill die with the bonus.

Anyone literate with at least 1 spell point can read magical scrolls, casting the spell contained on it and destroying the scroll in the process. They may also instead try to learn the spell on the scroll (destroying it in the process).



# Name Level

When a character wants to establish a stronghold, use these quick and easy rules.

They must clear out the hex in question of all dangers or obstacles to their building a stronghold. They must also clear out all of the neighbouring hexes of any obvious dangers or obvious obstacles to their building of a stronghold.

Assuming they have workers and materials to begin construction, they pay 10,000 SP to build one of 4 stronghold types (or 5000SP to repair a ruin)

Estates include sprawling fields, hired labourers, and herds of livestock. They provide 3d6x500 SP each year in income for each level of Estate.

Castles are fortresses designed to withstand sieges. From a simple motte and bailey or watchtower to a vast citadel. They can hold 1 military unit per level of Castle.

Palaces provide no useful function, but everyone loves them. They impress dignitaries and may have non-mechanical benefits.

Sanctums include temples, dungeons, laboratories, and other places of power. The lord of a sanctum can prepare 1 extra spell point of spells per level of Sanctum while in the sanctum. These extra spells can only be cast in the sanctum's hex.

It takes 1 year to finish construction of a stronghold, or 1 season if it is repairing a ruined one. At that point the character becomes the lord and master.

Fighter lords attract a small unit of 20 Guards as a garrison unit. They arrive with just clubs.

Thief lords can establish a "side business" that earns an extra 500SP a year.

Magic-User lords will always build on ley-lines and can prepare spells 6 times as fast (1 Turn per spell level) in their stronghold's hex.

A character may level up their stronghold by paying 10,000 SP times the new level, waiting 1 year times the new level, and clearing an additional ring of hexes.

For example. Prince Bi-Tor decides to build a Stronghold. He clears out the hexes, gets the workers, and pays 10,000SP. A year later he has a level 1 Castle.

Then he decides to upgrade it, he pays 20,000SP, clears more hexes, and waits 2 years and could have either a stronghold that is a level 1 castle and a level 1 estate, or a level 2 castle, or other combinations.

Units at name level (level 10) are groups of 50 soldiers.