



FROG GOD GAMES ADVENTURES

HAZARDOUS HABITATS

Grasslands



SYSTEM
NEUTRAL

HAZARDOUS HABITATS

Grasslands

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Grasslands

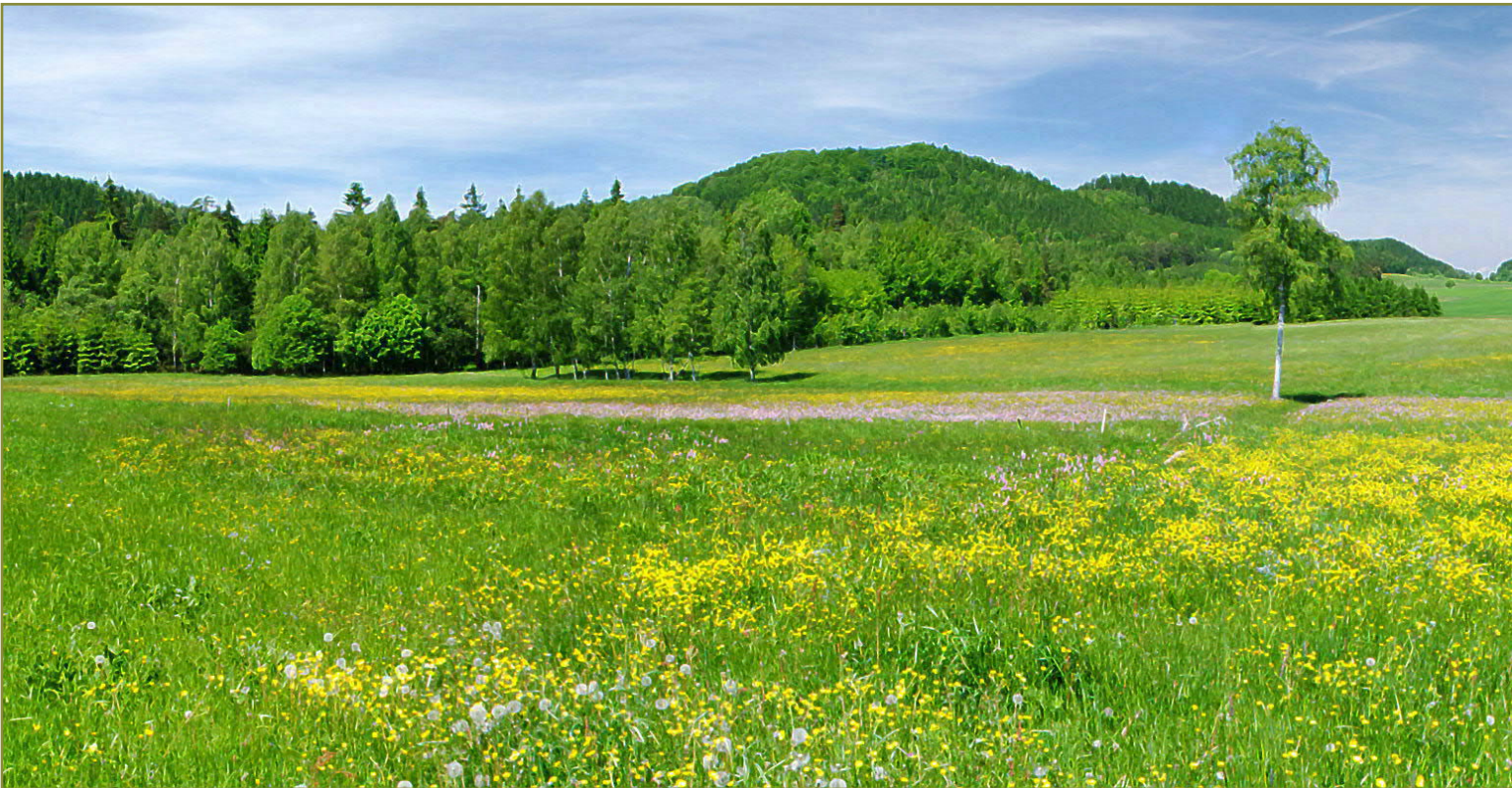
A gentle breeze rolls through the endless fields, swaying grasses taller than the average man as if they were dancing to the beat of a silent drummer. The vast sea of greenery stretches as far as the eye can see across a topographically featureless landscape. These are the images commonly associated with the plains. They are seen by many as a monotonous tapestry of green grass and amber grain. Yet, this flatland teems with life. Countless herbivores leisurely graze on the lush plants growing in the rich soil. Meanwhile, predators hidden in the grass wait for the opportunity to pounce on the herd's most vulnerable member. Unlike any other biome, these beasts share some responsibility for shaping their grassy environment. They devour and trample any tree saplings struggling to take root in the earth. Their voracious appetites and thundering hooves help prevent the plains from transforming into forests.

In many respects, the plains, or the more accurate term — grasslands — act as a middle ground between the arid deserts and the moist forests. Many scholars refer to the grasslands as a transition zone because this fertile land separates the two extremes of the environmental spectrum. The grasslands receive enough rain to allow grasses, smaller flowering plants, and legumes to take root and flourish, but there is usually not enough moisture and nutrients in the soil to support large shrubs and trees. However, another natural and sometimes manmade force plays a more significant role in stifling tree growth in the grasslands — fire. Grasslands experience an annual rainy season and a dry season. During the drier months, the brown, desiccated stalks and withering blades of grass act as tinder. Raging infernos spawned by lightning strikes, extreme heat, and careless people race across the plains at breakneck speed, consuming everything in their path. Grasses quickly rebound from the fiery conflagrations because their root crowns lie underground. Trees succumb to the flames. The blaze destroys the burgeoning sapling and the tree's shallow root system, which is too close to the surface to withstand the fire's intense heat.

The grasses also play a pivotal role in preventing the plains from turning into deserts. Their underground water storage structures and deep

roots retain enough moisture to keep the soil damp and firm during the dry season and even during prolonged periods of drought. Without these root systems, even a mild drought can cause the thin layer of fertile topsoil to dry up and turn into worthless dust. A strong wind then lifts the dust off the ground and creates a dust storm much like the black blizzards that ravaged the United States during the 1930s. In addition to maintaining the ground's integrity, grasses are indirectly responsible for fertilizing the soil. Numerous animals eat the plant's exposed blades and, in turn, these creatures eventually return the nutrients back to the earth in the form of bodily waste. This process replenishes the soil's nutrient content on a continual basis and adds another layer of topsoil to the ground, thus improving the grassland's overall health.

This biome's moderate temperatures and adequate rainfall support a diverse assortment of flora and fauna. Naturally, grasses dominate the landscape, but other plants also thrive. Forbs such as clover and sunflower are common on the plains. Likewise, legumes, peas, and beans also grow well in this environment. Grazers — animals who primarily eat grass and other low-lying plants — roam the plains in a constant search for food. Humanoids and many animals cannot digest grass. These creatures developed specialized adaptations over time allowing them to break down cellulose, the primary organic compound found in grass. These mechanisms include ridged teeth to grind grass into many parts, compartmentalized stomachs containing enzymes that break down cellulose, and the practice of regurgitating the grass and chewing it again even after it has been partially digested. The regurgitated plant matter is commonly known as cud. These social herbivores live in large groups numbering into the thousands and, in some instances, into the millions. Sheep, cattle, buffalos, wildebeests, gazelles, deer, rabbits, and prairie dogs are just some of the many animals dwelling in this habitat. Naturally, the abundance of prey animals supports a sizable predator population ranging from the relatively small coyotes and badgers to larger predators such as bears and lions. The circle of life is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the world's temperate and tropical grasslands.



Right Ingredients

Temperature and precipitation are the predominate factors in creating the plains, but it takes a delicate balancing act to sustain this vital biome. Too much heat and not enough water can turn the grasslands into a desert. Likewise, too much rainfall can transform the plains into forests. Year-round frigid temperatures stifle plant growth and prevent grasses from taking root and growing in the extreme cold. Maintaining the plains' ideal equilibrium of moisture and warmth is a difficult challenge. It is not just the amount of rainfall that is important, but also how and when the rains fall. Warmer grasslands typically experience a rainy season followed by prolonged periods of drought. This alternating cycle of drenching storms and dry spells is critical to the grassland's survival. Rainfall received during the wet seasons provides enough water to prevent the soil from drying out and reverting into a desert, even during an extended dry spell. When the rains finally subside, the damp, green blades of grass slowly transform into browned, dried husks. Any parched trees attempting to take hold steadily wither in the thin, arid soil. The desiccated plants provide the perfect fuel for fires to sweep across the land and destroy any encroaching forests. The charred remains of plants and animals in the conflagration's path become the grasslands' newest layer of topsoil. If the rains fell year-round, the moist, green grasses and damp earth would douse most fires before they even started, giving trees and shrubs an opportunity to establish a foothold in the grasslands.

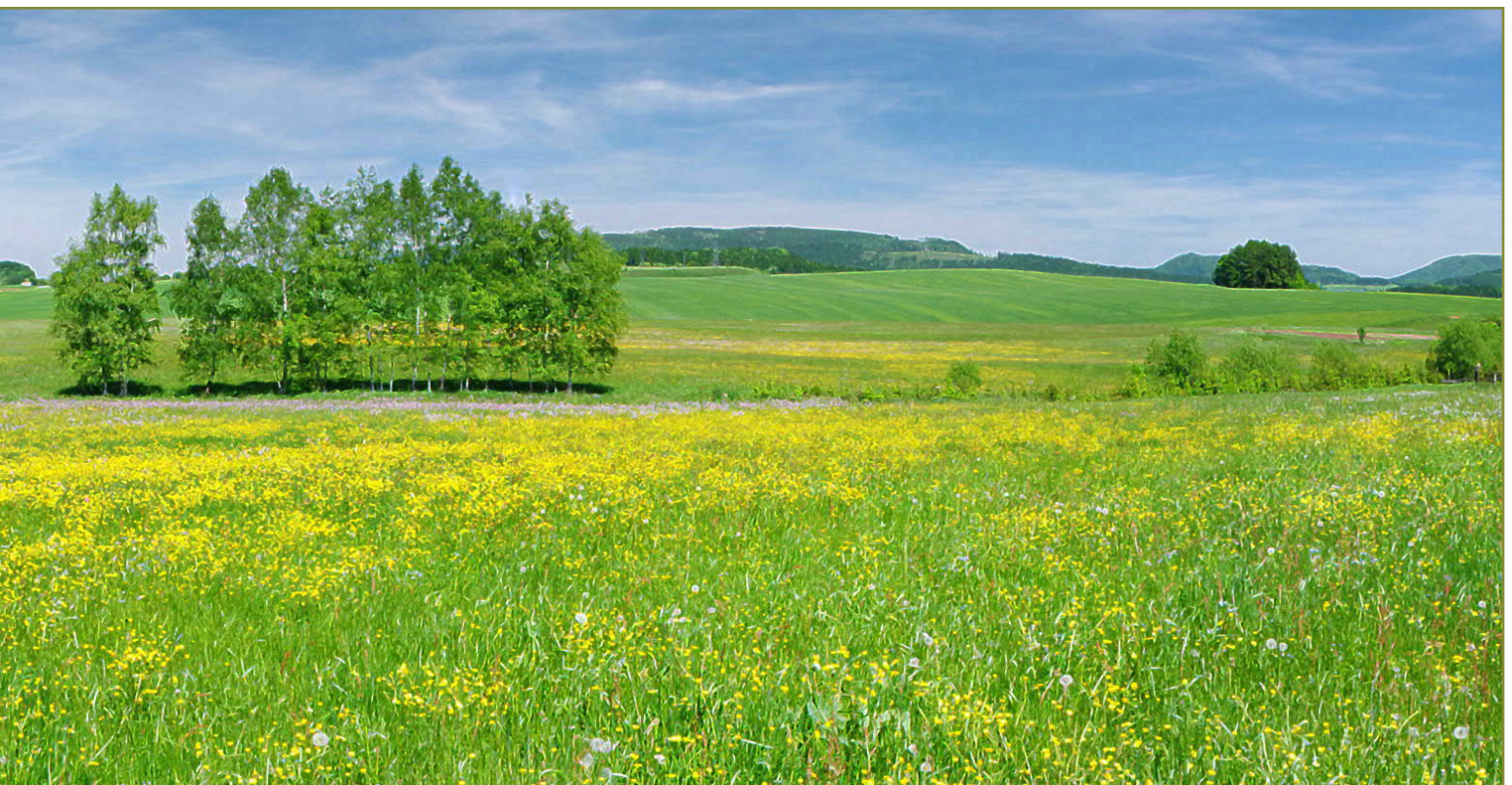
Temperate grasslands differ from tropical grasslands in that the contrast between the rainy and dry seasons is not as extreme. They do, however, experience more dramatic seasonal temperature swings than tropical grasslands. Temperate plains typically receive less annual rainfall than tropical grasslands, but dry spells are shorter. On the other hand, temperatures vary wildly throughout the year. It is not uncommon for temperatures to soar in excess of 90 degrees Fahrenheit during the hot summer months and then drop below zero degrees Fahrenheit during the frigid winters. Grasses generally do not grow when the temperature falls below 50 degrees Fahrenheit, so temperate grasslands experience a growing season and a dormant season, whereas plants in tropical grasslands grow year-round. Naturally, the growing season usually occurs from mid-spring through mid-autumn, followed immediately thereafter by the dormant season. Some regions have very short growing seasons lasting only through the summer months. Because grasses grow from the bottom up, their stalks wither during the dormant season. The decaying plant matter becomes a source of fertilizer for the next growing season

and prime fuel for any fires beating back the encroaching trees. Winter's flames transform the desiccated husks into fresh topsoil for spring.

Without any trees, wind is a constant hazard for plains travelers, though it plays a critical role in regulating this unique biome. The steady breezes are a key ingredient in shaping the fires that ravage the grasslands. Wind constantly replenishes the fire's source of oxygen, but more importantly, it ensures the flames do not linger too long in a fixed location. The breezes buffet the flames like seeds on the wind, allowing them to burn dead and dying organic matter without charring the soil itself for a prolonged period of time. This prevents grass roots from sustaining significant damage from the raging inferno. Wind also blows away any loose surface dirt, creating dust storms that hurtle across the land during the dry and dormant seasons. The wind keeps the topsoil relatively thin and dry, thus preventing encroaching trees and shrubs from establishing roots in the ground and toppling over the rare few that actually manage to establish a brief foothold in the grasslands.

Although grasslands hug the coastlines in several parts of the world, most plains are found in interior regions next to deserts and mountain ranges. For instance, Africa's great savannahs border the Sahara Desert to the north and the Kalahari Desert and Namib Desert to the south and west. Likewise, the Great Plains of the American Midwest lie east of the Rocky Mountains and west of the Mississippi River. This particular configuration of geographical features leaves the Great Plains especially vulnerable to tornadoes. Warm, humid air surging northward from the Gulf of Mexico interacts with cooler, drier air passing over the Rocky Mountains and Canada. The collision creates violent thunderstorms that spawn fearsome tornadoes. The vast tracts of low-lying flat land provide no natural obstacles to the swirling vortexes of intense wind and flying debris. During the winter months, the same weather pattern produces ferocious blizzards that howl across the prairies.

The runoff from these intense thunderstorms and melting snows gives rise to rivers and streams carving paths through this expansive landscape, as well as lakes and ponds where the waters eventually collect. Still, finding water can be difficult in the grasslands. While the search is not as desperate as those encountered by desert travelers, fresh water is not as plentiful as in other environments. For that reason, animals and men frequently live near sustainable bodies of water. The watering hole is a common gathering place for animals inhabiting the savannahs. Likewise, villages, towns, and cities spring up in close proximity to lakes and rivers used to irrigate fields during dry spells and to transport goods to distant locales.





The grasses themselves are a critical component of this precariously balanced environment. They are the glue holding the semidry soil together. Their intricate network of roots extends deep below the ground and anchors the fragile dirt in place, preventing it from blowing away during the dry and dormant seasons. These subterranean tendrils function like countless strands of string literally tying down the earth. In comparison, trees and large shrubs have shallow root systems better suited for the forest's thick layer of damp earth. The fierce winds rushing across the plains deal no damage to the flexible grasses but would quickly uproot any trees standing in their path. Although trees provide a home for many animals, few creatures eat their leaves, stems, and bark. Various species of grasses are a plentiful source of food for vast herds of herbivores and humanoids alike.

Grains of Truth

It is very likely civilization as we know it would not exist without this remarkable biome. The temperate plains' endless cycle of growth, fire, decay, and renewal creates a nutrient-rich soil conducive to large-scale farming generally not possible in a desert or a forest without expending considerable resources to irrigate arid lands or fell numerous trees. This environment has the right temperature and moisture levels to produce food crops essential for human survival. None is more important than cereal grass, commonly known as grain. Grain is an essential dietary staple, whether it comes as rice, wheat, barley, corn, oats, or rye. In addition to its nutritional value, grains can also be dried, milled, and pressed for long term storage and usage in other popular food products. Although fruits and vegetables can be dried, and meat can be smoked and salted, grain is far

easier to store and secure than these foodstuffs. Even today, grain silos are a common sight on many farms. The ability to preserve grain for future use allows large populations to withstand temporary disruptions to the community's food supply caused by prolonged drought, disease, and fire. Grain has a nearly indefinite shelf life, whereas dried fruits, vegetables, and meats can only be preserved for limited periods of time.

Wild grains differ dramatically from the domesticated varieties most people are accustomed to seeing. The maize plant originally encountered by the ancient Mayans bears little resemblance to the cornstalks seen today throughout the Midwestern United States. Crossbreeding and selective planting processes transformed these raw materials into a more desirable end product. For instance, if a particular cornstalk developed sweeter kernels than the neighboring plants, farmers would exclusively plant the seeds from the sweeter plant the following year. Over time, these grains transformed into their current forms.

Rice and corn are commonly eaten in their original form, whereas wheat and rye are frequently ground into powder and combined with other ingredients to create bread. As a result, many people refer to the plains as civilization's "breadbasket." The fertile plains of North Africa and the Nile River Delta were known as the breadbasket of the Roman Empire in ancient times. Likewise, many Americans still use the term to describe the grain-producing areas of the Midwestern United States. Grains can also be used as the fermentable base for many alcoholic beverages that were usually safer to drink than untreated water. Barley and hops are the primary components in beer, while barley, corn, and rye are often used to make whiskey. Dried grains are also used as a construction material for building homes. Although commonly applied to roofs, thatch, the name used to describe threshed grains, is sometimes applied to walls as well. Thatch insulates structures, allowing the building to maintain a comfortable

interior temperature regardless of exterior weather conditions. Despite its appearance, thatch does not burn easily, and it resists the ravages of wind and water with remarkable durability. Likewise, straw, the dry stems of threshed grain plants, serves as a bedding material, fuel, insulation, and even a decorative material for making baskets or stuffing scarecrows and dolls. Grain's applications are virtually limitless.

Grass is also the primary food for many animals. Fortunately, the livestock found on the typical farm prefer to eat plants few humanoids can digest. Cattle and sheep, perhaps the two most common domesticated animals, have specialized stomachs that break down grass. Horses also subsist on a diet of grass, though they can break down cellulose, the primary molecule found in grass, without a compartmentalized stomach. The omnivorous domesticated pig can eat both meat and plant matter, but most farmers feed them a corn-based diet supplemented with grass and other plants. These animals are responsible for nearly all dairy products, meat, leather, wool, and, in the case of horses, the primary means of long-distance transportation across the fertile plains.

Domesticated animals are not the only creatures grazing in the pastures. Immense herds of wild beasts also feast on the rolling fields. Luckily for them, grass is a renewable food source. Unlike trees and shrubs, grass grows back relatively quickly after an animal devours its stem. While it would take a forest years and perhaps even decades to ecologically recover from the devastation wrought by thousands of hungry herbivores eating its bark, stems, and leaves, the hewn blades of grass reemerge from the soil within a matter of weeks. A diverse array of predators follows close behind the migratory herds on their constant search for greener pastures. No other biome can support such large animal populations without straining its resources to the absolute limit. Thanks to the wonders of grain, the grasslands bestow enough food to satisfy man and beast alike.

Water

Drought is a constant fear and reality in the grasslands. Even under the best of circumstances, precipitation is generally scarce during the dry season, especially in the steppes. Weather offers no guarantees. Sometimes, rainy seasons come and go with little or no precipitation. The problem gets exponentially worse for every year that passes without enough rain to replenish the waters lost to evaporation and consumption. Whenever the rains fail to come, the shortage places an incredible strain on the available water resources. No area feels the effect more dramatically than the large cities and towns that depend upon water to quench their residents' thirst and irrigate the surrounding fields providing much of the community's food supply. Prudent civic planners and farmers ideally plan their settlements with water needs foremost on their minds. Although this would seem to dictate developing villages, towns, and cities along riverbanks and lakebeds, this course of action has its own set of problems. Flash floods from torrential downpours and rapid snow melt are just as much of a reality on the plains as drought, particularly in nearby low-lying areas. To avoid such a catastrophe, architects construct the settlement's infrastructure in an elevated location close enough to draw water from its source, but high enough and far enough away to avoid damage from flooding. Engineers must strike a careful balance between giving the residents easy access to water while ensuring public safety.

Rivers and Lakes

Grasslands are generally located on the continent's interior, a great distance from the oceans. Rivers and lakes are an important water source and means of travel for settlers. The largest rivers and lakes are generally found in the savannas, which receive more precipitation than the prairies and steppes. For instance, the African savanna's largest lakes, Lake Tanganyika and Lake Victoria are considerably larger than any lakes in the Great Plains and the Eurasian Steppe. Lake Victoria is also a source of the Nile River, which is generally considered the longest river in the world. Rivers and lakes in the savanna accumulate much of their water from direct precipitation and lie in valleys encapsulated by mountain peaks. Small vessels can navigate most parts of these rivers, but some areas are too shallow and rocky to negotiate without risking damage to the boat.

When the dry season comes, predators gather near these narrow straits and wait for the migrating herds to ford the treacherous waters. When they spot suitable prey, the beasts charge toward the animals, sending the entire throng of beasts into a mad panic that crushes and drowns far more escaping animals than the hunters do.

Most rivers in the prairies and steppes originate in adjacent mountain ranges or are tributaries of a much-larger river. This is particularly true in the case of temperate grasslands forming on the lee side of a mountain range emulating the rain shadow effect. Runoff from melting snow high atop the peaks accounts for most of the river's water content. An individual river's navigability depends upon precipitation totals. If the annual rainfall is at or above its annual average, the waterway's entire length is usually navigable. Otherwise, large portions of the river are too shallow for vessels larger than a rowboat. Riverbanks and lakebeds are also important to plains settlers because they are usually the only locations where trees grow. Wood is necessary to build shelters, weapons, and other tools. Lakes found in the prairies and steppes are considerably smaller than those in the savanna and are used predominately as a source of drinking water and irrigation rather than commercial interests.

Aquifers

In the absence of a surface lake or river, settlements and farms sometimes rely upon underground rivers and aquifers to meet residents' needs. As an example, vast areas on the Great Plains rely almost exclusively upon aquifers to irrigate their crops. Because they are not readily visible, successfully locating an aquifer is a bit of a challenge. Finding an aquifer is only the first part of the equation. Water sinks to its lowest level. Therefore, a pump or a well must be used to bring the water to the surface. For this reason, engineers build settlements that rely upon an underground water supply in a low-lying area close to the subterranean reservoir.

Watering Hole

The term watering hole does not describe an actual body of water, per se. The watering hole itself may be an accessible riverbank, a lake, or a small pond. The term is used to describe an area where numerous animals come to drink from and bathe in the refreshing waters, particularly during the dry season when water is scarce. The breathtaking scene of watching hundreds and even thousands of animals gather around a small, blue oasis is one of the savanna's most indelible images. It is also one of the tropical grassland's most dangerous places. Predator and prey alike need water to survive, forcing the opposing factions in close proximity to each other. Even a sudden flinch from a thirsty lion can trigger a mad stampede. Adventurers approaching a watering hole must do so with extreme caution to prevent attracting unwanted interest from a hungry predator or setting off a mass panic among the nervous prey animals. To make matters worse, pathogens frequently lurk in the watering hole's stagnant liquid.

Game Applications

Grasslands often serve as a buffer between the arid deserts and the vibrant forests. As such, the residents of these biomes may cast an envious eye in the direction of their fertile and temperate neighbor. Desert inhabitants seeking water, food, and shelter from the relentless heat frequently cross the border to trade with the nearby plains communities or in extreme cases, take up arms to acquire these valuable commodities from their fellow men. Although forest-dwellers lack the desperation of their desert counterparts, the grasslands' fertile soil is easier to work and more conducive to farming than the thick, damp forest floor. Likewise, plains residents need wood to build their homes and manufacture a variety of essential goods, such as furniture, weapons, and tools. Careless humans in either biome could deliberately or accidentally start a fire that spreads to the neighboring biome. In these circumstances, adventurers may be needed to repel desert raiders, to establish diplomatic ties with a foreign nation, or to even extinguish a raging inferno before it destroys countless acres of valuable farmland. All it takes is a single spark to ignite a war between these competing interests.



Types of Grasslands

As the name implies, grasslands are a biome dominated by grasses, though not all grasses are the same. Some grasses tower higher than the average man, and others are little more than greenish-brown stubble coating the dry earth. Naturally, temperature and rainfall decide which path the land is going to follow. Warm, humid climates give birth to tropical grasslands, generally known as savannas. Africa is home to the world's best-known savanna, which is inhabited by many of nature's most iconic animals, including lions, cheetahs, giraffes, zebras, and gazelles. Temperate grasslands, often referred to as prairies and steppes, receive less rainfall than their tropical counterparts and experience much greater seasonal temperature fluctuations as well as greater variations between daytime and nighttime temperatures. The Great Plains of the American Midwest and the Eurasian Steppe are the most recognizable examples of temperate grasslands.

Tropical Grasslands

Tropical grasslands, also known as savannas, are characterized by year-round warm temperatures and greater humidity than their temperate counterparts. Grasses are the most prevalent form of plant life. However, individual trees and even some clusters of trees can be found close to sustainable water sources, such as large lakes and rivers. Acacia trees are among the most common found in this habitat. Their fire-resistant bark and deep taproots allow them to withstand the seasonal fires and long periods of drought that plague this biome during the dry season. Baobab trees are also found here, though they adapted differently to life in the savanna. The leaves and branches of this tall tree lie far beyond the reach of the typical herbivore, including the giraffe. These plants also store water in their incredibly thick trunks. In addition to their unusual shape and size, some believe that these trees live for thousands of years. These claims remain unverified.

Temperatures peak during the summer months, though they rarely eclipse 90 degrees Fahrenheit (32 degrees Celsius), and typically average around 80 degrees Fahrenheit (26 degrees Celsius). Temperatures generally remain constant throughout the course of the day with the difference between the daytime high and the overnight low being no more than 15 degrees Fahrenheit (9 degrees Celsius). Winter is more noticeable for its lack of rainfall rather than any discernible drop in air temperatures. Winter temperatures are roughly 15 degrees Fahrenheit (9 degrees Celsius) cooler than the summer highs, and also experience little variation between the daytime high and overnight low temperatures.

Savannas receive an average of 40 inches of rainfall per year, though the amount of rainfall is less critical than how it is distributed. Savannas have a rainy season, which lasts from six to eight months, and a dry season encompassing the balance of the year. Roughly 90% of the average annual precipitation falls during the rainy season. Torrential downpours generally occur at the onset and conclusion of the rainy season but are not exclusively limited to these periods. The typical rainy season starts in early spring and ends in mid-autumn, give or take a month on either end. Violent thunderstorms and a persistent, drying wind usher in the start of the dry season. The dry season is critical for the savanna's continued survival because the prolonged lack of moisture keeps the soil thin and arid. This allows fires to destroy burgeoning saplings and dead vegetation, killing invasive trees and replenishing the soil with vital nutrients.

Natural processes are responsible for the creation of most savannas, but men and even animals can give birth to this biome. The most common example of the former's role in breathing life into a savanna occurs when farmers fell nearby forests and burn the trees as fertilizer in a vain effort to transform the former forest floor into farmland. The plan succeeds for a short time until the crops exhaust the soil's limited nutrient content, and the farmers eventually abandon the withering fields. The surrounding trees make an attempt to reclaim the tilled land for the forest, yet the damage is already done. The neighboring grasses infiltrate the neglected earth, and seasonal fires do the rest to keep the encroaching forest at bay. In a similar fashion, massive herbivores with an appetite for tree leaves, branches, and bark can wreak havoc on a forest. Unlike the humans, these animals did

not intend to convert a copse of trees into grassland, but their insatiable hunger accomplished the identical ends with less expended energy.

Even in the preceding circumstances, grasses grow in a territorial manner. It is extremely unusual to see different grass species intermingled with one another in a particular area. In general, one and possibly two varieties of grass hold sway over a wide region, choking off any invaders trespassing on their space. Several species of grass found in the savanna can reach a staggering height of 9 feet, though the constant movement of immense migratory herds ultimately tramples even the hardiest plants. Most are roughly half that height. Savanna grasses adapted to the thin, porous soil and extended droughts by storing nutrients and water in their underground root network. During the dry season, the plant no longer supplies these precious commodities to its expendable stem and leaves. The plant's exposed parts turn brown and eventually wither, only to be replaced by fresh, green ones when the rainy season returns.

Characters trekking through the savanna encounter different terrain depending upon the season. When the rains deluge the earth, the grasses flourish and the ground yields underfoot. Conversely, the dry season turns the soil hard, causing the lush greenery to wither. The following table describes the vegetation and ground conditions found within the surrounding 2d4 miles in the savanna based upon the season. When consulting this table, the GM rolls percentile dice for each feature to determine if it is present in the area. One or more types of vegetation may coexist in the same general area.

Table 2-1:
Savanna Vegetation and Terrain Type by Season

Vegetation and Terrain	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Watering Hole^a	01–10	01–20	01–15	01–05
Tall grasses^b	01–70	01–90	01–50	01–30
Tree^c	01–15	01–20	01–15	01–10
Shrubs^d	01–20	01–25	01–20	01–15

^a There are 1d3 watering holes present within the area. Each body of water measures 2d6 x 100 feet in radius and reaches a depth of 2d3 feet.

^b Tall grass reaches a height of 2d4 feet. If tall grasses are present, the ground is soft and yielding. The vegetation and yielding earth reduces overland speed by half and vehicle speed by three-quarters. If tall grass is not present, the ground is firm, and the grass is short (3d4 inches tall). Firm soil and short grass have no effect on overland movement. The ground is treated as difficult terrain, if applicable.

^c When a tree is present, there is a 50% chance they are individual trees 1d6 x 100 ft. away from the nearest tree, and a 50% chance 1d10 trees are clustered together 2d10 x 10 ft. away from the nearest cluster of trees.

^d Shrubs have no effect on overland speed, but areas containing shrubs are treated as difficult terrain, if applicable.

Savannas teem with animal life, especially during the hot, rainy season. Insects, rodents, and birds are plentiful during the humid summer months. Unfortunately, many of these small creatures carry an unwanted passenger with them — disease. Mosquitoes transmit an entire host of virulent pathogens, including yellow fever, dengue fever, encephalitic viruses, and the dreaded malaria, while rats and other rodents can transmit the rabies virus with their bite and are unwitting carriers of bubonic plague and hantavirus. Still, these pests take a backseat to the remarkable fauna inhabiting this lush habitat. The savanna is best known for the enormous herds of large herbivores that call this environment home. At any given time, a million or more wildebeests, gazelles, antelopes, and water buffalos may be grazing on a fertile tract of grassland or drinking from the refreshing waters of a lake or river. Although they are not as numerous as the preceding animals, the mighty elephant and the odd giraffe must be mentioned among the biome's most-renowned and recognizable creatures. These animals do not stray far in search of food and water during the rainy season, yet the advent of the dry season sends them on an annual pilgrimage to find fresh, running streams and greener pastures. The savanna's iconic predators always trail close behind them. The sleek

cheetah, the conniving hyena, the crafty leopard, and the king of beasts, the majestic lion, occupy the highest rung of the habitat's extensive food chain. In the eyes of most humans, it is impossible to separate these creatures from the savanna.

The GM may consult the following table to determine the fauna, flora, and random events the characters may encounter during their journey across the savanna. These items may be used solely as wilderness dressing, to plant the seeds for an upcoming adventure, or as an interesting side trek.

Table 2-2: Savanna Flora, Fauna, and Random Events

d20	Encounter
1	An ostrich inexplicably runs backwards while keeping its gaze fixed on something.
2	A young zebra carcass lies on the ground, yet predators and scavengers alike refuse to approach the enticing fresh kill.
3	Flecks of gold protrude from the opening into a massive, termite mound.
4	Warm, dry breezes buffet the vegetation.
5	Someone carved a triangle, a square, two intersecting lines, and a circle onto the trunk of an acacia tree.
6	An enormous piece of fruit suspended thirty feet in the air clings to a branch near the top of a baobab tree. A boisterous monkey sits atop the tasty morsel. The animal howls wildly whenever anyone approaches its prized treasure.
7	Four vultures tirelessly circle overhead.
8	The desperate cries of a lion cub presumably calling for its mother attract the attention of an opportunistic hyena.
9	Spilt ink drenches the pages of a weathered, leather journal lying in the grass. The name D. Hartigan Rourke appears on the inside jacket, but there is no legible writing on any of its soaked pages.
10	Blood covers the lapel of an abandoned khaki shirt lying at the base of a shrub.
11	An elephant uses its trunk and tusks to uproot a large shrub. When it succeeds, the animal roots around in the loose earth in an apparent attempt to find something buried underneath the woody plant.
12	An adolescent boy tells the characters about his plan to tame cheetahs.
13	Forty-seven gazelles hastily drink from a small watering hole in a circular depression.
14	Grass stalks in a roughly rectangular area oddly grow at a 30-degree angle.
15	A mighty lion's roar pierces the stillness, unnerving every animal in the immediate area.
16	Someone embedded a spear into the ground.
17	Unidentified blue residue coats the blades of 10-foot tall grass stalks scattered throughout the region.
18	Two young giraffes try in vain to devour a baobab tree's leaves just beyond their reach.
19	A skeleton tenaciously clutches a barrel of dried beans in its bony hands.
20	In addition to its normal black and white stripes, four zebras also sport red stripes on their coats.

Humans living alongside these creatures lead a similarly nomadic lifestyle. Despite the fact it is warm enough to grow crops throughout the year, the thin, arid soil and protracted droughts generally make farming a difficult and laborious endeavor. Like the animals, man is a hunter-gatherer. Humanoids follow their prey’s migratory patterns, practically walking side by side with the fearsome canine and felid predators stalking the tall grasses. The hunt is a communal event in most humanoid settlements. A lone man is no match for an angry wildebeest and faces grave danger when surrounded by agitated herbivores or in the sights of a larger predator. Like hyenas and lions, men organize themselves into groups to track down and slay their quarry. Numbers and strategies compensate for what men lack in raw size and strength.

Those who do not hunt forage through the grasses in search of wild grains, fruits, and seeds, such as okra. In spite of their need to work together, humanoid settlements in the savanna are much smaller in size and population than those found in the temperate grasslands where wide-scale farming is possible. Most humanoids live in communities consisting of extended family members near a viable water source. The typical settlement consists of at least several moderate-sized huts. The residents occupying these quarters share the space with their immediate families along with a few domesticated animals, most notably goats, which are used to produce milk, fur, and meat. The crude abodes are constructed from plant matter, particularly grasses. There are some trees in the savannas, so structures crafted from tree branches and cut wood can be found in the largest and most established towns and villages. Because the climate is fairly stable throughout the year, the structures are designed to provide shelter against

heavy rains and high winds rather than keep the residents warm during the winter months. The roofs and walls allow light breezes to pass through their porous surface, while repelling rainfall. Despite their lightweight construction materials, the huts cannot be disassembled with ease.

When adventurers encounter humanoids in a predetermined location or in a randomly generated community near a road (see **Table 2–30**), the population size affects its demographic makeup as reflected in the following table.

Table 2–3: Population Effect on Demographics

Population	Modifier
Fewer than 50	–4d10
51–200	–2d10
201–2,000	none
2,001–5,000	+2d10
5,001–15,000	+4d10
15,001–30,000	+6d10
31,000+	+8d10

After determining the modifier based upon the population size, the GM may then apply that modifier to the following table to determine the demographics of a tropical grasslands community.



Table 2-4: Humanoid Demographics

D100	Racial Makeup
<26	Exclusively Homogenous. Everyone is a member of the same humanoid race, religion, or ethnicity, if applicable.
26–45	Predominately Homogenous. Almost everyone is a member of the same humanoid race, religion, or ethnicity, if applicable.
46–65	Largely Homogenous. The majority are members of the same humanoid race, religion, or ethnicity, if applicable.
76–85	Neutral. One race, religion, or ethnicity, if applicable outnumbers all others but does not comprise a majority. Nonetheless, their culture, traditions, and beliefs define society, though other peoples exert lesser degrees of influence as well.
86–95	Moderately Diverse. Some races, faiths, and ethnicities, if applicable, are more prevalent than others, but none greatly outnumbers all others. The traditions of several races, religions, and ethnicities combine forces to determine society's overall cultural makeup.
96–00	Largely Diverse. A multitude of races, religions, and ethnicities make up the largely integrated population. The fusion of backgrounds creates a unique society embodying traits borrowed from numerous traditions, though some perspectives influence the community more than others.
>00	Completely Diverse. Nearly every race, faith, and ethnicity imaginable can be found among the population. Most citizens are multicultural and multilingual, embracing their own customs as well as adopting those acquired from neighboring peoples.

The following table modifies the results on **Table 2-6** based upon the community's demographics.

Table 2-5: Demographics Effect on Humanoid Attitudes

Demographic	Modifier
Exclusively homogenous	–5d10
Predominately homogenous	–3d10
Largely homogenous	–1d10
Neutral	none
Moderately diverse	+1d10
Largely diverse	+3d10
Completely diverse	+5d10

Although all humanoids see the same world, every individual perceives it differently. Some easily accept those who do not look like them, believe what they do, or share some common ancestry. Others view their surroundings through narrow, biased lenses. Personal prejudices govern their outlook leading them to ostracize any who do not comport with their expectations. The GM may use the following table to determine the prevailing attitudes towards others within and outside the community.

Table 2-6: Humanoid Attitudes

D100	Attitude
<31	Segregated. Society is strictly divided along racial, religious, or ethnic lines with the more populous groups assuming a dominant role. They treat minorities as inferiors, relegating them to subservient status. Civil or religious authorities strictly enforce boundaries between divergent populations through threats, intimidation, and if necessary violence.
31–50	Prejudiced. Although some integration takes place, racial, religious, or ethnic tension hangs heavy in the air. Many people hold persistent, deep-seated opinions sowing mistrust between members of different groups. Residents keep a wary eye on those different than themselves, perceiving them as second-class citizens who pose a constant threat to their supposedly superior way of life.
51–65	Biased. Few individuals publicly express their misgivings about other people, yet it is difficult to ignore the undercurrent of bias bubbling beneath the surface. Although people can move freely about without restriction, subtle acts of discrimination still permeate society. Interactions between different sets of people may seem courteous and polite on the surface, yet words, gestures, and body language belie the person's compartmentalized suspicions.
66–80	Indifferent. An indifferent society strives to maintain the society's <i>status quo</i> sweeping any pervasive prejudices under the proverbial rug. Gradual modification of existing attitudes can occur, though some find its pace too plodding for their liking. Residents rarely let their biases govern their actions and perceptions of other people, yet few go out of their way to welcome those different than themselves.
81–90	Tolerant. Multiple languages, religions, and cultures mingle together, though members of the same race, religion, or ethnicity feel more comfortable with others of their kind than outsiders. A live and let live attitude best summarizes a tolerant society's outlook towards the community at large, though some innate biases linger in certain circles.
91–00	Accepting. Members of different races, religions, and ethnicities live side by side in almost completely integrated communities. Familiarity forms the cornerstone of an accepting society. However, those hailing from unfamiliar places or arriving with previously unseen customs encounter some misgivings and suspicion from startled observers.
>00	Welcoming. Society welcomes immigrants and visitors, regardless of race, religion, or ethnicity into the fold. Newcomers are encouraged to quickly assimilate into their surroundings as they adapt to their neighbors' customs and traditions while adding their uniqueness to the mix. Indeed, most members perceive themselves as citizens first and foremost relegating association with their race, religion, or ethnicity to a secondary status. Prejudice persists in some isolated corners, but the overwhelming majority strongly condemn such viewpoints and celebrate diversity.

The people of the tropical grasslands generally live in cooperative communities, sharing their resources with their fellow inhabitants, who typically belong to their extended family. People generally place less emphasis on power, wealth, and status than in most sedentary societies. Tribal beliefs dominate this biome, though some individuals devoutly revere the gods and their chosen emissaries. The GM may consult the following table to ascertain the system of government presiding over the people.

Table 2-7: Political System

D100	Political System
01-10	Autocracy. A single individual, who seized control of the state through bloodless or violent means, wields absolute power over his people. This individual may have attained this position from their predecessor who was a family member or hand-picked this person as their successor. An autocrat often targets one or more segments of society as their sworn enemies, encouraging their subjects to take some punitive actions against the autocrat's real or imaginary foes.
11-25	Gerontocracy. While birthright, wealth, or political connections normally determine membership in the ruling class, this political system grants supreme authority to the community's eldest residents regardless of their gender or social status. Age is a relative term based upon the person's longevity for their race rather than their age measured in years. Because these individuals cannot bequeath their station to a designated heir or successor, they often rule in a just manner, relying upon their extensive life experiences to better the lives of their subjects. Nonetheless exceptions exist, especially for those who fear death and pursue every avenue to defy their own mortality.
26-35	Monarchy (Absolute). A group of blood relatives rules the land with ultimate authority vested in one or two persons known as the monarch. This individual's power is absolute, though the crown may vest some jurisdiction in others. In patriarchal societies, the eldest male descendent of the previous leader functions as the monarch, assuming the title of chieftain, elder, or another suitable designation. In a matriarchy, the oldest female descendent performs the same role as the state's queen, empress, or other lofty heading. The monarch's spouse, typically hailing from a neighboring royal family or a distant relative, functions solely as a consort, preventing the surviving spouse from inheriting the throne when the monarch dies. Younger siblings, living parents, and children undertake other civic and religious duties within the state, while extended family members also enjoy the trappings of nobility.
36-40	Monarchy (Constitutional). In this system, the monarch shares authority with the aristocracy or another group of individuals entrusted to oversee the crown's decisions. The monarch's authority may range from nearly absolute with few restrictions to a mere figurehead. Regardless of the delineation, the nobility plays a prominent role in society and government.

D100	Political System
41-50	Theocracy (God Figure). All civil authority derives from a divine source. In the case of a god figure, political power rests in the hands of one individual who may be a living deity, a demigod, or a representative chosen by one or more gods. The god figure wields absolute authority over all matters of state including serving as the head of its church.
51-55	Theocracy (Clerical State). In a clerical state, the clergy interprets the deity's or deities' commands and codifies them as law. Priests enforce the gods' edicts, allowing them to preside over all religious and secular matters. Unlike the god state, the priests may select one of its members to serve as its high priest, a role granting the individual supreme authority but not divinity.
56-60	Theocracy (Shared Authority). A single individual serves as the head of state and the titular leader of the church. While recognized as the supreme religious leader, the political figure defers judgment on all ecclesiastical matters to the clergy. This person may have inherited this position from their predecessor, acquired it through force or shrewd political maneuvering, or used their vast wealth to usurp the title.
61-90	Tribal. This society lacks any formal government. Instead, a familial patriarch, matriarch, or a family council usually consisting of the group's elders presides over their individual clans who may live cooperatively or competitively with other bloodlines in a shared community or as parts of smaller, rival communities dwelling close together. Military might, more than lineage, frequently determines an individual's status within the tribe.
91-00	Warrior State. Incorporating elements of tribalism and autocracy, the community's warriors enjoy an exalted status within society, gaining civic rights and privileges denied to average citizens. Military commanders or celebrated heroes may assume rulership over the state, though these individuals usually defer daily oversight of civic and religious matters to others.

The tropical grasslands teem with resources. Water is rarely in short supply, especially during the rainy season. Vast herds of migratory animals provide an ample food source, while excellent growing conditions allow residents to harvest a bounty of wild and domesticated plants. Tropical grassland residents adopt multiple strategies to survive in this biome. Some follow the herds on their quests for greener pastures, while others till the soil closer to home. The GM may consult the following table to determine the people's lifestyle. When the characters encounter people close to a dependable and renewable water source, he may add +1d10 to the die roll. Conversely, he may subtract -1d10 to the die roll for individuals living far from any replenishable water source.

Table 2-8: Lifestyle

D100	Lifestyle
<26	Nomadic. The people live exclusively off the land and are constantly on the move, never staying in the same location for more than one night. They are exclusively hunter-gatherers. To cover more ground in a single day, most nomadic peoples ride atop domesticated animals and frequently travel with large herds of livestock. Most share common lineage with their fellow travelers.

D100	Lifestyle
26–60	Semi-nomadic. These individuals have no permanent home, though they may settle down in one location for several days, weeks, or even a few months under the right conditions. Their movements usually coincide with seasonal changes, though they rarely revisit the same exact locale. Although they are predominately hunter-gatherers, they may engage in limited agricultural activities before moving on to their next destination. These individuals typically reside in mobile, temporary shelters they erect soon after their arrival.
61–85	Semi-sedentary. Although they construct permanent settlements, these people divide their time among a few predetermined locations based upon the seasons. They may spend several months in one favorable spot to raise crops, fish its bountiful waters, or hunt a herd of game animals traveling along a migratory route. While they may still be classified as hunter-gatherers, they spend a roughly equal amount of their time raising domesticated livestock, growing agricultural products, and engaging in commercial activities.
>86	Sedentary. The residents live in the same location year-round, where they farm the land, tend to their domesticated flocks, hunt game in the surrounding wilderness, and develop commercial enterprises. Trade routes, civic engineering projects, and a reliable water source can be typically found in a sedentary society.

Tropical Grassland Campaign

The tropical grasslands rank near the top of the most hospitable biomes in terms of weather. With the exception of the hot, humid summer, temperatures are generally comfortable throughout the rest of the year, allowing adventurers to explore the vast tropical plains without worrying about the dangers posed by intense heat and numbing cold. Still, finding water can be a challenge, especially during the dry season. Explorers therefore frequently carry sufficient quantities of water to last for the duration of their journey. Food poses less of a problem as wild grains, fruits, and game are plentiful all year round, particularly along riverbanks, ponds, and lakes. The same principle applies to most humanoid settlements found scattered throughout the savanna. Most communities are relatively small with transient populations and few, if any, permanent structures crafted from mud bricks or wood. Towns and cities constructed from stone do exist, though they are the exception rather than the rule. Most sprang up near coastal areas bordering oceans and other substantial bodies of water that facilitate commerce with neighboring regions. Here, the rural residents of the plains mingle and trade with the city’s cosmopolitan inhabitants and exotic foreigners visiting these far-flung shores. Adventurers find these distant locales to be the best places to acquire information from the local populace and trade for vital provisions and magical equipment.

The tropical grasslands are renowned for their unique and abundant flora and fauna. But other valuables buried beneath the thin, arid soil also command the attention of monsters and adventurers alike. Diamonds are perhaps the most valuable and sought after of the savanna’s inorganic resources. Prospectors find the precious mineral in ores extracted from the earth as well as close to the surface in riverbeds, along the shores of lakes, and in shallow ponds scattered throughout the savanna. Gold and platinum are also found in similar areas throughout the tropical grasslands. Makeshift towns and villages frequently spring up near the source of these valuable commodities. Naturally, conflicts between business rivals and the indigenous peoples and monsters take place on a

regular basis. Adventurers are often hired by one or more of these parties to eliminate their competitors and protect their employer’s financial and personal interests.

The following table gives the GM several adventure ideas he can use to bring the tropical grasslands to life. He may combine these inspirational seeds with one of the adventuring sites appearing in the table following this one.

Table 2–9: Tropical Grassland Adventure Ideas

d10	Event
1	Antelopes. Normally shy and passive, these nine beasts display aggression reserved for the biome’s fiercest carnivores. The animals lower their abnormally long, pointed horns and charge any creature they see larger than a small rodent. In addition to their oversized weaponry and surly demeanor, the beasts also bear deep, healed scars running from their foreheads to the back of their heads. The revelation suggests they were subjected to some bizarre experiment or severe cranial trauma, which may account for their belligerent attitudes.
2	Blood Diamond. Torrents of rain during a recent torrential downpour unearthed a small red diamond. Despite its modest size, the stone’s rare coloration drastically increases its value. Unfortunately for the young boy who discovered the gem while tilling the fields, a dread curse also accompanies the red diamond. According to popular folklore, the blood diamond once sat atop the diadem of a seductive demoness until a paladin wrested the piece from her head and shattered the evil relic with her holy weapon. The stone survived the righteous blow, disappearing without a trace until its recent, brief reappearance. The unlucky boy who found the object mysteriously contracted and succumbed to hemorrhagic fever causing profuse bleeding from the eyes and ears the following morning. Once again, the stone vanished without a trace.
3	Comet. A bright object leaving a trail of superheated dust in its wake streaks across the night sky barreling towards earth before disappearing over the horizon. Moments later, a blinding flash of light accompanied by a wicked tremor confirms the comet’s impact. The collision generates tremendous heat, igniting any dry vegetation in the area. Adventurers who investigate the crash site find an enormous crater and an odd gout of flame hovering overhead, which seems to move and dance about with deliberate purpose.
4	Flamingos. An immense flock of pink birds blissfully wades in a shallow pool of water spread out across hundreds of acres. The scene appears tranquil on the surface, yet closer scrutiny reveals many of the colorful flamingos stand on one leg or float on the water’s surface. Strangely, the animals exhibit no outward signs of stress, trauma, or anxiety, but something feels amiss about their predicament, especially when the characters observe several of the birds stick their heads beneath the water and deliberately drown.

d10 Event

5 Hunt. Ten young men follow hot on the trail of an elusive white rhinoceros recently sighted in a neighboring village. Armed with spears, the excited yet frightened teenagers consider the hunt the final rite of passage to manhood. Of course, their quarry has other ideas with some locals claiming the prized beast can match its pursuers' cunning and tenacity.

6 Kora. The frayed strings from this musical instrument indicate the device suffers from extensive wear and tear rather than a destructive end. The kora rests against a tree adjacent to a recently abandoned and extinguished camp fire. Someone also carved the chords for a song onto the kora's neck. Characters who carefully examine the kora also locate a hidden surprise. A note tucked beneath the instrument's fretting says, "All he does is gab, gab, gab." When an adventurer plays the notes G, A, B in succession three times, the kora belches out a wispy, puff of smoke.

7 Mask. This grotesquely oversized mask carved from an exotic wood lies face down on the ground. When turned over or retrieved, colorful paint coats the surface of the large decorative piece shaped into the likeness of a human face with some demonic traits including small horns protruding from the forehead, bright red skin, and pointed teeth. Leather straps affix the device to the wearer's head. An enormous gouge from a heavy, sharp weapon nearly cracked the mask down the middle. Who left the object here and why the person abandoned it is not apparent at first glance, though flecks of dried blood on the grass suggest a violent struggle.

8 Poachers. Many cultures deem certain animals to be sacred for a variety of reasons. Some are affiliated with a popular deity, while others possess rare, desirable traits. Local authorities forbid anyone from killing these beasts on their lands, but these creatures' hides, claws, tusks, and other body parts often fetch a king's ransom outside their jurisdiction. The illegal hunters currently scour the grasslands for a young albino elephant rumored to be wandering the area searching for its missing mother. The animal's extraordinary hide and unusually flecked ivory tusks make the beast a valuable prize, prompting the authorities to seek adventurers to find and protect the wayward animal before the poachers slay it.

9 Prophecy. Many signs and portents exist within the tropical grasslands oral tradition, but one prophecy stands out above all others — the tale of the white lion. The appearance of this rare mutation can yield great fortune or doom to the land. If the white lion cub matures into an adult and sires his own pride, the lands and crops will be bountiful for years to come. However, the young beast's demise angers nature, causing the rains to stop and the sun to scorch the land. Rumored sightings of such an animal buzz through the air, prompting humanoids to seek out the creature to either protect it for the common good, or slay it for their own nefarious purposes.

d10 Event

10 Stampede. The herd seems on edge. Their wary eyes survey their surroundings, and their ears stand at attention nervously trying to hear the footsteps of an approaching predator. Yet, the animals' demeanor feels different. A palpable sense of fear accompanies them, as if something worse than death lurks in the grass. Suddenly, a lone beast inexplicably panics, sending the mass of pounding flesh and bone running in every direction to escape an unseen and apparently unnatural danger.

In addition to scouring the land for buried riches, some wealthy hunters contract the services of adventurers to accompany them on safaris in the feral tropical grasslands. These intrepid explorers endeavor to add the land's most dangerous game animals to their expansive trophy collections. Their prize kills include lions, rhinoceroses, elephants, leopards, water buffalos, and cheetahs. Other hunters seek the assistance of adventurers to slay these creatures for commercial purposes. In addition to selling their fur, humanoids use the body parts of many of these animals for homeopathic remedies and magical concoctions. Furthermore, ivory culled from the tusks of elephants also fetches a hefty price on the open market.

Tropical grasslands offer several intriguing adventuring sites, including many embracing the land's wild side. The GM may consult the following table to randomly determine an exciting adventuring site in the tropical grassland.



Table 2–10: Tropical Grassland Adventuring Sites

d10	Location	d10	Location
1	<p>Baobab. Few trees are as iconic or as unusual as the baobab. Renowned for their massively thick trunks and clusters of fruit and leaves high above the ground, these massive plants can live for centuries, allowing them to witness countless sins and tragedies during their lifetime. Most offer no testimony about what they saw or heard, but stories claim one baobab remembers a horrifying sight all too well. However, the cantankerous woody giant never reveals its terrifying secret without challenging the inquisitor's virtue and wits. So far, none have passed the baobab's test. Unlike the typical contest, defeat also ends in near certain death at the hands of the sentient behemoth.</p>	5	<p>Lion's Den. Cut into the base of a rocky plateau, this cave offers shelter to a small pride of lions led by a robust male cat far older than his appearance. Indeed, the indigenous people claim the animal reached adulthood during their grandparents' childhood. The beast's unnatural long life causes some to speculate something in the cave may account for the phenomenon, though this theory fails to explain why the other pride members do not share his penchant for longevity. Speculation runs the gamut of possibilities from a genetic mutation to a shape changer to a powerful spellcaster disguised as a beast. The few individuals foolish enough to investigate the matter firsthand ended up as scraps for the savannah's famished scavengers.</p>
2	<p>Chieftain Burial Site. Many tropical grasslands cultures reserve burial for chieftains and great warriors. In this case, a pile of loose stones designates the chieftain's final resting place. Slain by an assassin in his home, the angry tribesmen killed his bodyguards and left their rotting corpses in the field above his grave, allowing hungry predators and scavengers to feast on their flesh. Not surprisingly, none of these spirits rests peacefully. The chieftain's spirit demands revenge against his killer and the men who failed to protect him. Meanwhile, his servants seek redemption in the next life and vengeance against the tribesmen who condemned them to death.</p>	6	<p>Mud Lake. Although most people refer to this locale as a lake, this vast swath of fetid mud contains no standing water and is far from any visible water source. No plants grow in its malodorous soil, and even insects steer clear of this puzzling anomaly. Oral tradition claims a devious sorcerer created this stinking pool when he cast a spell transforming solid ground into pliable mud to wipe out a cavalry regiment pursuing him decades earlier. Regardless of its origins, the isolated site serves as an ideal dumping ground for criminals looking to dispose of evidence or their victim's bodies. An enigmatic cult known as the Children of the Soil supposedly conducts their barbarous rites along the mud lake's edge, beseeching their deity to coalesce the moist dirt into a hideous monstrosity subservient to their commands. Fortunately, their prayers continue to fall on deaf ears.</p>
3	<p>Geyser. Every day like clockwork, a fissure in the earth's crust spews scalding water and steam hundreds of feet into the air for a few minutes and then subsides beginning the process anew several hours later. Although most believe the geyser is purely a natural phenomenon, the gouts of superheated vapor and liquid nonetheless attract attention from adventurers seeking to verify or debunk a local legend to the contrary. The story claims an avaricious water spirit built a subterranean palace and then flooded it with water to prevent her fiery counterpart from stealing her treasure. However, the fire spirit survived the initial dousing and now wages a constant battle against her nemesis, which causes the geyser to periodically erupt.</p>	7	<p>Outcropping. Overlooking the valley beneath it, this elevated, narrow outcropping holds tremendous spiritual significance among the local people. Indeed, many contend its smooth, rocky surface and strategic location attest to its manmade or divine origins. While not considered to be a temple in the conventional sense, several faiths use the religious site to conduct their ceremonies. Although most conform with acceptable norms, some practitioners and worshippers perform vile rituals under the cover of darkness. In addition to sacrificing animals to a malevolent entity, the wickedest cults add to the carnage with humanoid victims abducted from neighboring communities.</p>
4	<p>Haunted Hut. Remarkably this temporary shelter has stood the test of time, standing for more than a decade past its typical lifespan. Made from thatch placed atop a primitive wooden frame, the small hut once housed a young man named Masti and his family of four. Endowed with remarkable fighting prowess, the hotheaded warrior hid a dark side. Jealousy coursed through his veins. One night, his suspicions got the better of him when he mistook another woman for his wife. Believing she slept with another man, the wild-eyed Masti butchered her and their children before taking his own life. Their angry spirits now haunt the site where the terrible atrocity occurred. While Masti fuels his insecurities, the souls of his wife and children deprive others of the lives stolen from them.</p>	8	<p>Pillar Tomb. Carved from stone, this 30-foot tall pillar commemorates the decedent buried in the foundation beneath it. Unlike most tombs, the marker bears no inscriptions or artwork identifying or describing the person buried here. Residents generally believe the pillar stands directly atop the grave, but a vocal minority suggests the pillar serves as an entrance to a grander underground complex containing a network of passages and chambers teeming with riches. To date, no one has ever found a portal granting access to the pillar's interior, though witnesses claim they occasionally see the ghostly outline of a door appear midway up the pillar only to watch it vanish seconds later.</p>

- 9 **Scorched Earth.** Grass fires are a common occurrence in the savannah, especially during the dry season. Most can be attributed to natural causes, but the conflagration responsible for burning roughly 100 acres of vegetation to scorched earth defies rational explanation. It took place hours after intense rains saturated the land, and the brief inferno suddenly ended as mysteriously and quickly as it started. Furthermore, a pungent odor reminiscent of smoldering tar still hangs in the air, though there is no evidence of the gooey liquid anywhere.

- 10 **Watering Hole.** Regardless of season, pure, fresh water always bubbles to the surface in this broad, yet shallow watering hole. Herd animals and predators briefly set aside their differences to quench their thirst, prior to resuming their natural hostilities. Humanoids also gather around the pond to wash their clothing along its banks as well as drawing water from the reservoir for drinking purposes and to irrigate their fields when necessary. Local legends claim the refreshing liquid suppresses anger and violence, a belief borne out by the peaceful interactions between predator and prey around the watering hole. The myths go to say a powerful, benevolent water spirit protects the fountain against the forces of evil.

Temperate Grasslands

Temperate grasslands are commonly referred to as plains, prairies, and steppes. Most people use each of the preceding terms interchangeably, but there are subtle differences among the three. The word plain is a geographical term used to describe flat terrain. It became synonymous with temperate grasslands because North America's temperate grasslands are notoriously flat, thus earning the moniker The Great Plains. Prairies are temperate grasslands dominated by tall grasses. Short grasses are more prevalent on the colder and drier steppes. Regardless of the term used, grasses including wild cereal grains dominate the temperate grasslands. Trees and shrubs are difficult to find, but a few species, such as poplars and oaks, grow near riverbanks and lakebeds.

Temperate grasslands experience more seasonal and daily variations in temperature than their tropical counterparts. During the hot summers, daytime highs soar above 90 degrees Fahrenheit, and even exceed 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Because there is less humidity in the air than in the savanna, overnight lows can drop by as much as 30 degrees Fahrenheit, especially in interior areas far removed from the moderating influence of large bodies of water. The same extremes are felt during the biting, cold winters. Highs barely crawl above the freezing point, and lows routinely dip into the teens and single digits and occasionally flirt with subzero readings. The frigid winds howling across the prairies make it feel even colder on the plains during the harsh winters.

Steppes receive between 10 inches and 20 inches of annual rainfall, while prairies get between 20 inches and 35 inches of annual rainfall. Steppes are often found adjacent to deserts and on the lee side of mountain ranges, which lessens the amount of rain received in the steppes because of the rain shadow effect. It is also common for prairies and steppes to border one another, especially in areas close to mountain ranges. In either case, precipitation occurs predominately from early spring through late summer, typically peaking in May followed by a slow and steady decline until October. The contrast between the wet season and dry season is less severe than that experienced in the savanna. Temperate grasslands are less dependent upon fire to eradicate burgeoning trees and shrubs, in large part due to the decreased rainfall and the bitterly cold winters. In addition,

most precipitation that occurs during the dry season falls to the ground as snow. The coating of snow prevents most fires from igniting and spreading across a wide area. Still, the flames eventually come, burning away the rotting vegetation slain by the lack of moisture and winter's deep freeze.

The warm, moist months are better known as the growing season, whereas the colder, drier months are referred to as the dormant season. Farmers working the land sow their seeds at the beginning of the growing season and harvest their crops at the onset of the dormant season. This is especially true with cereal grass plants such as wheat, rye, barley, rice, corn, and oats. In spite of the bitter cold winters and moderate rainfall, the temperate grassland's soil is slightly deeper and more fertile than the warmer savanna's thin, arid earth. This is particularly true on the prairies where the warmer and moister climate is more conducive to growing than the cooler and more arid steppes. During the dormant season, some plants succumb to the lack of moisture and the frigid temperatures. The rotting organic matter adds another layer of topsoil to the already nutrient rich dirt. This is especially true when grasses die. Their complex, subterranean network of roots decomposes beneath the surface thereby increasing the soil's fertility. The decaying plant matter also maintains a firm grip on the surrounding earth, which prevents it from drying up and blowing away. While the ground remains undisturbed, the land retains its stability and productivity. However, the farmer's plow frequently sunder the unseen bonds holding the soil together. Unless properly irrigated and maintained, the rich earth can turn into worthless dust during periods of extended drought, as exemplified by the Dust Bowl that devastated the North American Plains during the 1930s. Likewise, men hew the trees in neighboring forests to transform the former forest floor into arable land. Success demands several years of careful planning and fertilizing to build up the ground's topsoil layers, yet permanent conversion ultimately depends upon climactic factors outside of humanity's control. Without man's intervention, the land may revert to forest over time or turn into grassland under the right conditions.

Grasses coexist better in the temperate grasslands than they do in the savanna. Naturally, some thrive in the warmer and moister prairies, while others prefer the colder and drier steppes. The slightest variations in temperature and rainfall frequently determine where a particular species grows best. Prairie grass can reach a staggering height of 10 feet, though most varieties average between 6 feet and 8 feet. Mixed in among these conventional types of grasses are the wild varieties of important food staples such as wheat and barley. Other important cereal grasses including oats, rice, corn, and rye flourish in this fertile soil. Flowering plants also take root in the prairies. Most notable among these are some members of the legume family such as clover and alfalfa. On the other hand, the grasses encountered on the steppe are much shorter. The tallest grasses, often located in areas bordering forests, stand approximately 4 feet above the ground. Most other grasses grow to a maximum height of 2 feet. The few flowering plants found in the steppe generally bloom during the early spring. Despite the inroads made by several types of flowering plants, grasses still dominate other forms of plant life in the prairies and the steppe.

Winter is an inevitable fact of life in the temperate grasslands, and the creatures calling this place home must adapt to their environment if they hope to survive. Bison, also known as buffalos, are probably the best known of the large herbivores inhabiting the lush prairies, and they exemplify this important principle. The massive beasts grow thick, dark brown, shaggy coats to insulate their bodies during the frigid winters. They also use their enormous, furry heads as a makeshift snowplow, allowing them to eat the dormant grasses beneath the white coating covering the ground. As spring approaches, they shed their winter coat and replace it with a lighter brown coat better suited for tolerating summer's oppressive heat. Other animals cope with the changing temperatures in different ways. Some ride out the winter in subterranean burrows. The underground lair may be as simple as a hole in the ground, or it can be as massive as the prairie dogs' elaborate network of tunnels and chambers with multiple entrances. Larger herd animals huddle close together to preserve body heat and give them some protection against the frigid winds howling across the plains.

Characters traversing through the temperate grasslands come across different varieties of vegetation. Although the land does not experience dramatic seasonal differences in moisture, the dry season claims its share of woody victims. The following table describes the vegetation and ground conditions found within the surrounding 2d4 miles in the prairie based

upon the season. When consulting this table, the GM rolls percentile dice for each feature to determine if it is present in the area. One or more types of vegetation and surface conditions may coexist in the same general area.

Table 2-11:
Prairie Vegetation and Terrain Type by Season

Vegetation and Terrain	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Tall grasses^a	01–75	01–95	01–50	01–30
Trees^b	01–10	01–15	01–10	01–05
Shrubs^c	01–20	01–25	01–15	01–10
Snow^d	01–05	–	01–05	01–25

^a Tall grass reaches a height of 2d4 feet. If tall grasses are present, the ground is soft and yielding. The vegetation and yielding earth reduces overland speed by half and vehicle speed by three-quarters. If tall grass is not present, the ground is firm, and the grass is short (3d4 inches tall). Firm soil and short grass have no effect on overland movement. Treat as difficult terrain, if applicable.

^b When a tree is present, there is a 50% chance they are individual trees 1d6 x 100 ft. away from the nearest tree, and a 50% chance 1d10 trees are clustered together 2d10 x 10 ft. away from the nearest cluster of trees.

^c Shrubs have no effect on overland speed, but areas containing shrubs are treated as difficult terrain, if applicable.

^d Snow measuring 1d6 inches deep covers the ground and vegetation. It reduces overland speed by and vehicle speed by three-quarters. The surface is treated as difficult terrain, if applicable.

Table 2-12:
Steppe Vegetation and Terrain Type by Season

Vegetation and Terrain	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Tall grasses^a	01–10	01–15	01–05	–
Trees^b	01–05	01–10	01–05	01–03
Shrubs^c	01–15	01–20	01–15	01–10
Snow^d	01–15	–	01–20	01–40

^a Tall grass reaches a height of 2d4 feet. If tall grasses are present, the ground is soft and yielding. The vegetation and yielding earth reduces overland speed by half and vehicle speed by three-quarters. If tall grass is not present, the ground is firm, and the grass is short (3d4 inches tall). Firm soil and short grass has no effect on overland movement.

^b When a tree is present, there is a 50% chance they are individual trees 1d6 x 100 ft. away from the nearest tree, and a 50% chance 1d10 trees are clustered together 2d10 x 10 ft. away from the nearest cluster of trees.

^c Shrubs have no effect on overland speed, but areas containing shrubs are treated as difficult terrain, if applicable.

^d Snow measuring 1d6 inches deep covers the ground and vegetation. It reduces overland speed by and vehicle speed by three-quarters. The surface is treated as difficult terrain, if applicable.

The GM may consult the following table to determine the fauna, flora, and random events the characters may encounter during their journey across the prairie and the steppe. These items may be used solely as wilderness dressing, to plant the seeds for an upcoming adventure, or as an interesting side trek.

Table 2-13: Prairie Flora, Fauna, and Random Events

D20	Encounter
1	A dreamcatcher hangs from a pole embedded into the middle of a rye field.
2	Three prairie dog sentries loudly howl to each other.

D20	Encounter
3	A swarm of bumble bees buzz around a wild clover, yet none of the diligent workers can reach its elusive nectar.
4	A lone bison grazes on a patch of grass and alfalfa.
5	An eagle swoops down from the skies and into the tall grasses. A minute later, the bird of prey emerges with a young rabbit in its crushing talons.
6	The grasses conceal a neglected still containing several ounces of moonshine.
7	Wisps of smoke from a burgeoning grass fire rise in the distance.
8	A discarded saddlebag contains a handful of coins, a lock of red hair, and a small chunk of limestone bearing several chisel marks.
9	Something disturbs the earth, hurling clumps of dirt, grass, and roots into the air. A tail protruding out of the freshly dug hole suggests a badger is hard at work constructing its burrow.
10	A silver necklace is wrapped around a buck's antler.
11	Two teenage girls trample through the grass searching for their missing goose.
12	Numerous holes and depressions apparently made by the indigenous wildlife fill the surrounding area.
13	Rust covers the blades of a discarded hoe and pitchfork.
14	A lone beanstalk towers above the surrounding grass.
15	Something splintered an abandoned wagon wheel's spoke.
16	An elderly couple wander the prairie picking wild berries and threshing wild grain. They warn anyone within earshot of the dangers of contracting egotism from grains contaminated by ergot. (The couple meant to say ergotism. Nonetheless, even when corrected, they insist the infected person becomes a jerk.)
17	Two coyotes gnaw on what looks like a severed humanoid hand.
18	Sunlight or moonlight (at night) reflects off the skin of a cluster of orange-red berries growing on a buffalo berry shrub.
19	A faint buzz emanates from a cluster of gnats circling overhead.
20	Pieces of canvas punctured multiple times by a sharp object lie next to a clear, running stream.

Table 2-14: Steppe Flora, Fauna, and Random Events

D20	Encounter
1	Someone left a half-empty jug of fermented goat's milk at an abandoned camp site.
2	The crumbled remnants of a sundered yurt litter the ground.
3	A rusty, curved blade lies atop the short grass.

D20	Encounter
4	A young man uses a cudgel-like tool to strike a tiny, leather ball. When questioned about the activity, he tells his audience he is inventing the sport of gulf.
5	An antelope species with a grotesquely and disproportionately oversized nose grazes on thistle.
6	A bell attached to a goat's collar rings across the steppe with every step the animal takes.
7	Two shepherds tend to their small flock of sheep.
8	A majestic falcon soars across the sky and then makes a steep dive at breakneck speed. After crashing to the ground, the bird carries a vole aloft in its talons.
9	An old woman carries a burlap sack filled with wild rhubarb.
10	In an odd twist, a lone Bactrian camel with an ornery disposition munches on cereal grains.
11	A nomad performs a rain dance.
12	Countless hoofprints head off into the distance beyond the horizon.
13	Four white fox pups peer out from their den.
14	The splintered pieces of a compound bow are strewn across the ground.
15	A horse inexplicably lies on its side adjacent to a patch of flowering plants. The animal periodically raises its head and tries to rotate it 360 degrees before falling back to the earth.
16	Two teenage boys on horseback practice firing their bows at what appears to be an imaginary target.
17	A weathered, leather saddle missing its straps and stirrups rests atop a sturdy shrub. An arrow tip pierces the riding device's pommel.
18	Clouds of dust gather on the horizon, though the wind remains deathly calm.
19	The faint sound of hoofbeats fills the air, but no horses are in sight.
20	A rider atop a white stallion offers guests a strip of raw meat stashed under his saddle.

When adventurers encounter humanoids in a predetermined location or in a randomly generated community near a road (see **Table 2–29** and **2–31**), the population size affects its demographic makeup as reflected in the following table.

Table 2–15: Population Effect on Demographics

Population	Modifier
Fewer than 50	–4d10
51–200	–2d10
201–2,000	none
2,001–5,000	+2d10
5,001–15,000	+4d10
15,001–30,000	+6d10
31,000+	+8d10

After determining the modifier based upon the population size, the GM may then apply that modifier to the following tables to determine the demographics of a prairie or steppe community.

Table 2–16: Prairie Humanoid Demographics

D100	Racial Makeup
<16	Exclusively Homogenous. Everyone is a member of the same humanoid race, religion, or ethnicity, if applicable.
16–35	Predominately Homogenous. Almost everyone is a member of the same humanoid race, religion, or ethnicity, if applicable.
36–55	Largely Homogenous. The majority are members of the same humanoid race, religion, or ethnicity, if applicable.
56–75	Neutral. One race, religion, or ethnicity, if applicable outnumbers all others but does not comprise a majority. Nonetheless, their culture, traditions, and beliefs define society, though other peoples exert lesser degrees of influence as well.
76–90	Moderately Diverse. Some races, faiths, and ethnicities, if applicable, are more prevalent than others, but none greatly outnumbers all others. The traditions of several races, religions, and ethnicities combine forces to determine society's overall cultural makeup.
91–00	Largely Diverse. A multitude of races, religions, and ethnicities make up the largely integrated population. The fusion of backgrounds creates a unique society embodying traits borrowed from numerous traditions, though some perspectives influence the community more than others.
>00	Completely Diverse. Nearly every race, faith, and ethnicity imaginable can be found among the population. Most citizens are multicultural and multilingual, embracing their own customs as well as adopting those acquired from neighboring peoples.

Table 2–17: Steppe Humanoid Demographics

D100	Racial Makeup
<11	Exclusively Homogenous. Everyone is a member of the same humanoid race, religion, or ethnicity, if applicable.
11–25	Predominately Homogenous. Almost everyone is a member of the same humanoid race, religion, or ethnicity, if applicable.
26–45	Largely Homogenous. The majority are members of the same humanoid race, religion, or ethnicity, if applicable.
46–60	Neutral. One race, religion, or ethnicity, if applicable outnumbers all others but does not comprise a majority. Nonetheless, their culture, traditions, and beliefs define society, though other peoples exert lesser degrees of influence as well.
61–75	Moderately Diverse. Some races, faiths, and ethnicities, if applicable, are more prevalent than others, but none greatly outnumbers all others. The traditions of several races, religions, and ethnicities combine forces to determine society's overall cultural makeup.

D100	Racial Makeup
76–85	Largely Diverse. A multitude of races, religions, and ethnicities make up the largely integrated population. The fusion of backgrounds creates a unique society embodying traits borrowed from numerous traditions, though some perspectives influence the community more than others.
>86	Completely Diverse. Nearly every race, faith, and ethnicity imaginable can be found among the population. Most citizens are multicultural and multilingual, embracing their own customs as well as adopting those acquired from neighboring peoples.

The following table modifies the results on **Tables 2–19 and 2–20** based upon the community’s demographics.

Table 2–18: Demographics Effect on Humanoid Attitudes

Demographic	Modifier
Exclusively homogenous	–5d10
Predominately homogenous	–3d10
Largely homogenous	–1d10
Neutral	none
Moderately diverse	+1d10
Largely diverse	+3d10
Completely diverse	+5d10

Many temperate grasslands residents travel extensively during their lifetimes, bringing them into contact with people hailing from many different backgrounds. While not immediately judgmental in most cases, they feel more comfortable among others like them. The GM may use the following table to determine the prevailing attitude among prairie dwellers towards others within and outside the community.

Table 2–19: Humanoid Attitudes (Prairie)

D100	Attitude
<16	Segregated. Society is strictly divided along racial, religious, or ethnic lines with the more populous groups assuming a dominant role. They treat minorities as inferiors, relegating them to subservient status. Civil or religious authorities strictly enforce boundaries between divergent populations through threats, intimidation, and if necessary violence.
16–25	Prejudiced. Although some integration takes place, racial, religious, or ethnic tension hangs heavy in the air. Many people hold persistent, deep-seeded opinions sowing mistrust between members of different groups. Residents keep a wary eye on those different than themselves, perceiving them as second-class citizens who pose a constant threat to their supposedly superior way of life.
26–50	Biased. Few individuals publicly express their misgivings about other people, yet it is difficult to ignore the undercurrent of bias bubbling beneath the surface. Although people can move freely about without restriction, subtle acts of discrimination still permeate society. Interactions between different sets of people may seem courteous and polite on the surface, yet words, gestures, and body language belie the person’s compartmentalized suspicions.

D100	Attitude
51–75	Indifferent. An indifferent society strives to maintain the society’s <i>status quo</i> sweeping any pervasive prejudices under the proverbial rug. Gradual modification of existing attitudes can occur, though some find its pace too plodding for their liking. Residents rarely let their biases govern their actions and perceptions of other people, yet few go out of their way to welcome those different than themselves.
76–90	Tolerant. Multiple languages, religions, and cultures mingle together, though members of the same race, religion, or ethnicity feel more comfortable with others of their kind than outsiders. A live and let live attitude best summarizes a tolerant society’s outlook towards the community at large, though some innate biases linger in certain circles.
91–00	Accepting. Members of different races, religions, and ethnicities live side by side in almost completely integrated communities. Familiarity forms the cornerstone of an accepting society. However, those hailing from unfamiliar places or arriving with previously unseen customs encounter some misgivings and suspicion from startled observers.
>00	Welcoming. Society welcomes immigrants and visitors, regardless of race, religion, or ethnicity into the fold. Newcomers are encouraged to quickly assimilate into their surroundings as they adapt to their neighbors’ customs and traditions while adding their uniqueness to the mix. Indeed, most members perceive themselves as citizens first and foremost relegating association with their race, religion, or ethnicity to a secondary status. Prejudice persists in some isolated corners, but the overwhelming majority strongly condemn such viewpoints and celebrate diversity.

The GM may consult the following table to determine the prevailing attitudes held by steppe dwelling humanoids.

Table 2–20: Humanoid Attitudes (Steppe)

D100	Attitude
<06	Segregated. Society is strictly divided along racial, religious, or ethnic lines with the more populous groups assuming a dominant role. They treat minorities as inferiors, relegating them to subservient status. Civil or religious authorities strictly enforce boundaries between divergent populations through threats, intimidation, and if necessary violence.
06–20	Prejudiced. Although some integration takes place, racial, religious, or ethnic tension hangs heavy in the air. Many people hold persistent, deep-seeded opinions sowing mistrust between members of different groups. Residents keep a wary eye on those different than themselves, perceiving them as second-class citizens who pose a constant threat to their supposedly superior way of life.

D100	Attitude
21–40	Biased. Few individuals publicly express their misgivings about other people, yet it is difficult to ignore the undercurrent of bias bubbling beneath the surface. Although people can move freely about without restriction, subtle acts of discrimination still permeate society. Interactions between different sets of people may seem courteous and polite on the surface, yet words, gestures, and body language belie the person's compartmentalized suspicions.
41–70	Indifferent. An indifferent society strives to maintain the society's <i>status quo</i> sweeping any pervasive prejudices under the proverbial rug. Gradual modification of existing attitudes can occur, though some find its pace too plodding for their liking. Residents rarely let their biases govern their actions and perceptions of other people, yet few go out of their way to welcome those different than themselves.
71–85	Tolerant. Multiple languages, religions, and cultures mingle together, though members of the same race, religion, or ethnicity feel more comfortable with others of their kind than outsiders. A live and let live attitude best summarizes a tolerant society's outlook towards the community at large, though some innate biases linger in certain circles.

D100	Attitude
86–95	Accepting. Members of different races, religions, and ethnicities live side by side in almost completely integrated communities. Familiarity forms the cornerstone of an accepting society. However, those hailing from unfamiliar places or arriving with previously unseen customs encounter some misgivings and suspicion from startled observers.
>96	Welcoming. Society welcomes immigrants and visitors, regardless of race, religion, or ethnicity into the fold. Newcomers are encouraged to quickly assimilate into their surroundings as they adapt to their neighbors' customs and traditions while adding their uniqueness to the mix. Indeed, most members perceive themselves as citizens first and foremost relegating association with their race, religion, or ethnicity to a secondary status. Prejudice persists in some isolated corners, but the overwhelming majority strongly condemn such viewpoints and celebrate diversity.

The humanoids who inhabit the temperate grasslands prefer loose confederations rather than rigid authority. The trappings and pageantry of most political and religious institutions are lost on the rugged men and women who call the prairies and steppes home. Most live in large family units numbering in the hundreds. They also loosely affiliate themselves with distant relatives living and hunting on neighboring lands. The GM may consult the following tables to determine the system of government found in a prairie.



Table 2–21: Prairie Political System

D100	Political System
01–10	Autocracy. A single individual, who seized control of the state through bloodless or violent means, wields absolute power over his people. This individual may have attained this position from their predecessor who was a family member or hand-picked this person as their successor. An autocrat often targets one or more segments of society as their sworn enemies, encouraging their subjects to take some punitive actions against the autocrat's real or imaginary foes.
11–20	Elected Official. Residents select an individual to serve as the settlement's leader. The person may wield absolute authority or share civic responsibilities with a council of fellow citizens. The elected official, known as a mayor, magistrate, or similar title typically defers judicial matters to a judge or sheriff appointed by the elected official.
21–30	Gerontocracy. While birthright, wealth, or political connections normally determine membership in the ruling class, this political system grants supreme authority to the community's eldest residents regardless of their gender or social status. Age is a relative term based upon the person's longevity for their race rather than their age measured in years. Because these individuals cannot bequeath their station to a designated heir or successor, they often rule in a just manner, relying upon their extensive life experiences to better the lives of their subjects. Nonetheless exceptions exist, especially for those who fear death and pursue every avenue to defy their own mortality.
31–40	Monarchy (Absolute). A group of blood relatives rules the land with ultimate authority vested in one or two persons known as the monarch. This individual's power is absolute, though the crown may vest some jurisdiction in others. In patriarchal societies, the eldest male descendent of the previous leader functions as the monarch, assuming the title of chieftain, king, or another suitable designation. In a matriarchy, the oldest female descendent performs the same role as the state's queen, empress, or other lofty heading. The monarch's spouse, typically hailing from a neighboring royal family or a distant relative, functions solely as a consort, preventing the surviving spouse from inheriting the throne when the monarch dies. Younger siblings, living parents, and children undertake other civic and religious duties within the state, while extended family members also enjoy the trappings of nobility.

D100	Political System
41–50	Oligarchy. A group of individuals determined by birthright, military might, or personal wealth oversee all matters of state and economic development. The oligarchy's views towards personal freedoms range from moderately tolerant to oppressive with most examples skewing closer to the latter option than the former. The oligarchy's members along with their family and friends, if they choose, act with impunity while those outside the inner circle must abide by the oligarchy's edicts. On some occasions, individuals outside the elite group who are fortunate enough to amass wealth under this system may be granted membership into the oligarchy.
51–55	Republic. Citizens elect representatives to create laws and govern the populace. These representatives may choose an executive to oversee the legislative body, establish the judiciary, command the state's military forces, craft economic policies, or undertake any other task delegated to that individual. Alternatively, the citizens can directly elect the executive. The written charter creating this form of government may be drafted by the executive, the representatives, the people themselves, or any combination of these individuals. The charter, usually referred to as a constitution or governing articles outlines the powers delegated to each branch of government. By their nature, most republics grant enhanced rights to citizens. However, there are circumstances where the executive or a group of representatives abuses their authority and transforms the republic into an autocracy or an oligarchy. Although they may keep the vestiges of the republic alive, elected representatives wield no real power.
56–60	Theocracy (God Figure). All civil authority derives from a divine source. In the case of a god figure, political power rests in the hands of one individual who may be a living deity, a demigod, or a representative chosen by one or more gods. The god figure wields absolute authority over all matters of state including serving as the head of its church.
61–90	Tribal. This society lacks any formal government. Instead, a familial patriarch, matriarch, or a family council usually consisting of the group's elders presides over their individual clans who may live cooperatively or competitively with other bloodlines in a shared community or as parts of smaller, rival communities dwelling close together. Military might, more than lineage, frequently determines an individual's status within the tribe.
91–00	Warrior State. Incorporating elements of tribalism and autocracy, the community's warriors enjoy an exalted status within society, benefitting from rights and privileges denied to average citizens. Military commanders or celebrated heroes may assume rulership over the state, though these individuals usually defer daily oversight of civic and religious matters to others.

The people of the steppe are the most mobile grasslands residents. As a rule of thumb, they prefer simplicity over complexity. Their harsh world gives them little time to ponder political matters. The GM may consult the following table to determine the steppe people's system of government.

Table 2-22: Steppe Political System

D100	Political System
01-10	Autocracy. A single individual, who seized control of the state through bloodless or violent means, wields absolute power over his people. This individual may have attained this position from their predecessor who was a family member or hand-picked this person as their successor. An autocrat often targets one or more segments of society as their sworn enemies, encouraging their subjects to take some punitive actions against the autocrat's real or imaginary foes.
11-25	Monarchy (Absolute). A group of blood relatives rules the land with ultimate authority vested in one or two persons known as the monarch. This individual's power is absolute, though the crown may vest some jurisdiction in others. In patriarchal societies, the eldest male descendent of the previous leader functions as the monarch, assuming the title of king, sultan, caliph, sheik, or another suitable designation. In a matriarchy, the oldest female descendent performs the same role as the state's queen, empress, or other lofty heading. The monarch's spouse, typically hailing from a neighboring royal family or a distant relative, functions solely as a consort, preventing the surviving spouse from inheriting the throne when the monarch dies. Younger siblings, living parents, and children undertake other civic and religious duties within the state, while extended family members also enjoy the trappings of nobility.
26-40	Theocracy (God Figure). All civil authority derives from a divine source. In the case of a god figure, political power rests in the hands of one individual who may be a living deity, a demigod, or a representative chosen by one or more gods. The god figure wields absolute authority over all matters of state including serving as the head of its church.
41-80	Tribal. This society lacks any formal government. Instead, a familial patriarch, matriarch, or a family council usually consisting of the group's elders presides over their individual clans who may live cooperatively or competitively with other bloodlines in a shared community or as parts of smaller, rival communities dwelling close together. Military might, more than lineage, frequently determines an individual's status within the tribe.
81-00	Warrior State. Incorporating elements of tribalism and autocracy, the community's warriors enjoy an exalted status within society, benefitting from rights and privileges denied to average citizens. Military commanders or celebrated heroes may assume rulership over the state, though these individuals usually defer daily oversight of civic and religious matters to others.

Like animals, humanoids must also adapt to the changing seasons. Their adaptations depend upon whether they lead a nomadic or sedentary lifestyle. The prairie's hunter-gatherers live in portable shelters made

from leather panels wrapped around retractable wooden frames. These hardy individuals spend their days in close pursuit of the migratory, herd animals they hunt. They usually prey upon large game beasts such as bison, caribou, and deer, though they are not averse to feeding on birds, rodents, and smaller predators if left with no other choice. In addition to procuring meat, these nomads also harvest wild grains, fruits, and vegetables that they use to make flour and meal.

These men and women roam the land as large family units that may number in the hundreds. Despite rarely establishing any permanent roots, these nomadic people can be extremely territorial, especially when it comes to fending off rivals encroaching on their hunting grounds. Many migratory animals follow the same trail year after year. Therefore, a territory overlapping with the beasts' preferred route is highly sought after and coveted by hungry nomads. Territorial disputes sometimes end in violence, and blood feuds between rival groups can last for decades and even centuries.

Sedentary farmers dwell year-round in permanent shelters crafted from wood, thatch, and other natural materials. Men work the land, planting seeds for their crops at the first signs of spring and harvesting their yields at the onset of the dormant season. In addition to growing cereal grasses, legumes, and vegetables, many plains dwellers also raise livestock for milk, wool, leather, bone, and meat. These animals graze on the bountiful grasses under the watchful eyes of their owners. For the most part, sedentary residents are self-sufficient. They have enough stored grain and livestock to outlast severe droughts and famines. This allows farmers to sell their surplus food and goods to others. Villages, towns, and even cities spring up close to these agricultural centers to facilitate the trade of these vital commodities and to protect the citizens from would-be thieves and marauders. Of course, water is a necessity for farmers and townsfolk alike. The shrewdest architects build their settlements close to potable and navigable waterways. Cities usually develop near riverbanks and lakebeds that can accommodate commercial vessels.

Individualism runs deep among the inhabitants of the temperate grasslands. As the saying goes, "all politics are local," and the overwhelming majority of citizens have no interest in what happens ten miles from their door, let alone across the vast breadth of the plains. Despite their ability to feed, arm, equip, and house large populations, these communities are extremely insular and often completely apathetic about the prospects of nation building. The concept of taming and conquering vast swaths of territory is thoroughly unappealing and fruitless in their eyes.

The GM may consult the following table to determine prairie people's lifestyle. When the characters encounter people close to a dependable and renewable water source, he may add +1d10 to the die roll. Conversely, he may subtract -1d10 to the die roll for individuals living far from any replenishable water source.

Table 2-23: Prairie Lifestyle

D100	Lifestyle
<31	Nomadic. The people live exclusively off the land and are constantly on the move, never staying in the same location for more than one night. They are exclusively hunter-gatherers. To cover more ground in a single day, most nomadic peoples ride atop domesticated animals and frequently travel with large herds of livestock. Most share common lineage with their fellow travelers.
31-55	Semi-nomadic. These individuals have no permanent home, though they may settle down in one location for several days, weeks, or even a few months under the right conditions. Their movements usually coincide with seasonal changes, though they rarely revisit the same exact locale. Although they are predominately hunter-gatherers, they may engage in limited agricultural activities before moving on to their next destination. These individuals typically reside in mobile, temporary shelters they erect soon after their arrival.

D100	Lifestyle
56–80	Semi-sedentary. Although they construct permanent settlements, these people divide their time among a few predetermined locations based upon the seasons. They may spend several months in one favorable spot to raise crops, fish its bountiful waters, or hunt a herd of game animals traveling along a migratory route. While they may still be classified as hunter-gatherers, they spend a roughly equal amount of their time raising domesticated livestock, growing agricultural products, and engaging in commercial activities.
>80	Sedentary. The residents live in the same location year-round, where they farm the land, tend to their domesticated flocks, hunt game in the surrounding wilderness, and develop commercial enterprises. Trade routes, civic engineering projects, and a reliable water source can be typically found in a sedentary society.

Surprisingly, the nomadic peoples of the steppe are more apt to carve out an empire of endless grass than their sedentary, urban counterparts. The reason is rather simple. Nomads take whatever they need from those who already have it. This is especially true on the steppe, where vital resources are scarce and therefore in greater demand. In fact, nomadic steppe people under the command of Genghis Khan carved out the largest contiguous land empire in human history, though his hard-won kingdom fragmented shortly after his death. While urban dwellers are bound together by commercial necessity and mutual convenience, the bonds of blood, kinship, and desperation tie the migratory of hunter-gatherers together.

The GM may consult the following table to determine the steppe people's lifestyle. When the characters encounter people close to a dependable and renewable water source, he may add +2d10 to the die roll. Conversely, he may subtract –2d10 to the die roll for individuals living far from any replenishable water source.

Table 2–24: Steppe Lifestyle

D100	Lifestyle
<46	Nomadic. The people live exclusively off the land and are constantly on the move, never staying in the same location for more than one night. They are exclusively hunter-gatherers. To cover more ground in a single day, most nomadic peoples ride atop domesticated animals and frequently travel with large herds of livestock. Most share common lineage with their fellow travelers.
46–75	Semi-nomadic. These individuals have no permanent home, though they may settle down in one location for several days, weeks, or even a few months under the right conditions. Their movements usually coincide with seasonal changes, though they rarely revisit the same exact locale. Although they are predominately hunter-gatherers, they may engage in limited agricultural activities before moving on to their next destination. These individuals typically reside in mobile, temporary shelters they erect soon after their arrival.

D100	Lifestyle
76–00	Semi-sedentary. Although they construct permanent settlements, these people divide their time among a few predetermined locations based upon the seasons. They may spend several months in one favorable spot to raise crops, fish its bountiful waters, or hunt a herd of game animals traveling along a migratory route. While they may still be classified as hunter-gatherers, they spend a roughly equal amount of their time raising domesticated livestock, growing agricultural products, and engaging in commercial activities.
>00	Sedentary. The residents live in the same location year-round, where they farm the land, tend to their domesticated flocks, hunt game in the surrounding wilderness, and develop commercial enterprises. Trade routes, civic engineering projects, and a reliable water source can be typically found in a sedentary society.

Temperate Grasslands Campaign

The temperate plains offer a good mix of wilderness and urban adventuring opportunities. The untamed prairies and steppes are vast open spaces subject to the ever-changing whims of the savage beasts and hardscrabble nomads constantly roaming these lands in search of greener pastures. For those endeavoring to make their mark on this domain, it is practically impossible to do so without first taming the iconic symbol of these lands — the horse. Children are born and bred in the saddle and learn to fight from horseback at an early age. The temperate plains' fortunes are shaped by the ability to maneuver and attack in unison with a trusted steed. Fortunately, these skills are not always needed, as most residents harmoniously coexist with the land and each other. Still, some men and monsters exhibit no reverence for nature or their fellow man. Instead, they take what they want from others regardless of the consequences. In the absence of any governmental authorities, innocent civilians frequently turn to adventurers to protect them from raiders and brigands terrorizing their lands. In addition to human adversaries, heroes also battle against aggressive humanoids such as orcs and goblins, as well as predatory beasts and herd animals such as hyenas, lions, and bison. Monstrous humanoids and other intelligent foes also stalk the tall grasses and abandoned camps in search of sentient prey.

Adventurers making their way in the villages, towns, and cities scattered throughout the temperate plains face similar perils. Dark forces lurk behind closed doors in the halls of power and the depraved underbellies of these settlements, though they hatch their schemes and plots with more subtlety than the brazen marauders harassing passing travelers. Rare, exotic, and illegal goods can also be bought and sold through the same illicit channels typically doubling as a legitimate business. An air of suspicion always accompanies newcomers. Therefore, the average citizen usually keeps information about black markets and nefarious services close to the chest when dealing with strangers. In addition to the materials available within inhabited locales, abandoned settlements typically harbor vile secrets and forgotten treasures left behind in the haste to escape a long-forgotten apocalypse.

The GM may use the following table to spark the seeds of adventure for heroes traveling through the prairie in search of glory and riches.

Table 2-25: Prairie Adventure Ideas

d10	Event
1	Bean. Stored inside a leather pouch, this solitary bean supposedly possesses magical powers allowing its owner to affect plants. It can be used to accelerate the growth process or instantly blight a swath of vegetation. Unfortunately, its owner fails to realize the dried legume's properties come with a steep price. With each use, the bean shrivels the owner's body and mind, leaving a deranged husk of a person in its wake. A significant uptick in the number of failed crops causes many to blame the legendary bean and its insane owner for the calamity prompting an outcry to find and destroy the object.
2	Bison. A quartet of these massive herbivores feasts on a wolf's carcass, upending the relationship between predator and prey. The four animals bite, chew, and move in synchronized unison. Dried blood covers their horns and the thick, dark fur beneath their mouths. The animals then grunt to one another as if engaging in an intense conversation about an unknown topic.
3	Blood Brothers. Two adolescent boys from rival families forged a fast friendship. Their bond remained strong throughout the years, though their paths greatly diverged. One fell into a life of depravity and crime, while the other led a pious, peaceful existence. At some point during their foray into the prairie, the adventurers killed or captured one member of the tandem, causing the surviving blood sibling to seek vengeance against them.

d10	Event
4	Dappled Gray Mustang. A dappled gray feral horse roams the prairie among a small herd of its kin. No one can recall ever seeing an animal bearing this unique coloration, making it a valuable asset for the person who can break the wild beast and potentially breed it. Accounts of close encounters with the animal swirl throughout the region, though the mustang displays an uncanny knack for eluding capture.
5	Dark Clouds. The winds suddenly intensify, while angry, black clouds gather on the horizon. Something foul coalesces in the air, though it is impossible to tell whether the phenomenon is a thunderstorm, a black blizzard, a burgeoning tornado, a flock of birds, or supernatural activity. Regardless of its nature, the danger barrels towards the adventurers at a rapid pace.
6	Grain. Throughout the ages, men have referred to the prairies as the bread basket of civilization. In that vein, a quirky farmer with a visionary mind and abrasive personality claims he recently cross-pollinated barley with rice, giving birth to a hardy plant able to flourish when submerged below standing water and in cooler climates. Despite his reputation for exaggeration and hyperbole, his alleged discovery raises eyebrows in many circles and has various factions competing to verify its existence and exploit the agricultural breakthrough for their benefit.



d10	Event
7	Rain Dance. Crippling drought grips the land, prompting a family to undertake desperate measures. The parents and their three young children perform a forbidden rain dance, which finally opens the heavens and deluges the earth with live-giving water. However, joy soon turns to misgiving as horrific images plague their dreams, giving them the uneasy feeling the clouds transported something unearthly and unwelcome into their midst.
8	Rustlers. Most thieves target inanimate objects, but rustlers defy convention and instead steal domesticated animals from their owners. Over the course of the past several weeks, eighteen head of cattle, nine horses, and five sheep disappeared from their pens. Nervous and upset ranchers want to stop their losses, recover their stolen animals, and punish the offenders who took them.
9	Scythe. On her deathbed, an elderly family matriarch tells her stunned family about an ancient scythe she claims she won from the Grim Reaper himself during her younger days. With her final words, she told her oldest son the tool slays any living creature with a single touch. She hid the scythe under the floorboards beneath her home, but she cannot remember exactly where she put it. Naturally, her skeptical family initially doubted her tall tale, though a cursory search of her home turned up several missing planks of wood pried up from the floor and a trail of small, dead animals leading out the door. While no one believes the scythe came from Death itself, they now wonder if the item truly has some dread property.
10	Stagecoach. News of a stagecoach carrying valuable passengers circulates throughout the area. Reports claim the vehicle and its crew will pass through the region in the coming days, though the passengers' origins, names, schedule, and destination remain a mystery. Local thieves and criminals may take an interest in commandeering the vehicle and holding their vehicle's occupants for ransom. On the other side of the ledger, covert operatives working for the transportation company look for parties interested in protecting their coveted charges from mayhem.

Every story needs a setting, even in the prairie. The GM may consult the following table to use one of the following manmade or natural locales as the adventure's backdrop.

Table 2-26: Prairie Adventuring Sites

d10	Location
1	Brewery. Grain is the primary ingredient in beer, and the prairie hosts many of the starches used to brew the alcoholic beverage. Recipes differ based upon regional availability and preferences, but this brewery's steadfastly loyal following defies conventional explanation. Its customers rave about the beer's freshness and subtle fruity taste, yet some of its imbibers occasionally experience what they describe as surreal memories of being victimized while under its influence. Without any physical evidence confirming whether these deeds actually took place, the drinkers usually attribute their recollections to a bad dream or overindulgence. Yet, the frequency of these experiences arouses suspicion in a few circles, leading them to suggest the eccentric brew master adds more than fruit and spices to his delicious beverage.
2	Crop Circles. Someone or something hewed the tall grasses leaving only bare earth in its wake. To further compound the mystery, the plants were cut in a series of circular and linear patterns of varying sizes. Many of these geometric shapes are interconnected, though a few are completely isolated from the others. The felled grasses literally sprang up overnight, and no one in the area recalls seeing or hearing anything unusual when they were presumably created. The crop circles' full breadth can only be seen from an aerial view, suggesting an airborne creature designed them.
3	Dust Bowl. Natural processes can transform formerly lush prairieland into a fallow field over the course of many months or years. Unsound land management practices can achieve the same undesirable goal in a fraction of the time. In this case, an unscrupulous developer turned acres of fertile farmland into a worthless tract of dust in a manner of weeks. Once the prized jewel of several close-knit farming families, the lifeless soil offers a sad reminder about the perils of greed. Tormented by guilt and anger, one of the ruined patriarchs murdered the amoral speculator and then took his own life. Their restless spirits still roam the ravaged dust bowl, where they seek new outlets for their outrage.
4	Fairground. Competition brings out the best and worst in people. This fairground hosts an array of athletic events including horse races, foot races, jousts, archery contests, and other popular local activities. Most participants observe good sportsmanship and play by the rules, but a handful of competitors subscribe to the adage of winning at any cost. Victory not only satisfies their ego; it also fattens their coin purses. They use a variety of underhanded tactics to enhance their performance or sabotage their opponents, giving them a decided advantage in the gaming and wagering arenas. Needless to say, intrigue abounds both on the field and off the field.

d10	Location
5	Farm. Farmers craft scarecrows from old clothing and straw and spread them around their fields to dissuade birds from eating recently sown seeds. In most cases, the lifeless dummies stand silent vigil over their creator's crops without incident, yet on this occasion, three of the stuffed mannequins inexplicably abandoned their posts without a trace. Although their disappearance may be attributed to a prank or an odd coincidence, the farmhands naturally tie the scarecrows' absence to several killings involving the farm's livestock and most recently one of its seasoned workers.
6	Migratory Trail. Herd animals are often creatures of habit, following the same migratory paths according to seasonal changes. Humanoid hunters also know of the creatures' proclivity for repetitive behavior. Bison usually travel along this migratory trail at this time, but they are noticeably absent this year. There are no fresh tracks, no grazed fields, and no other evidence of their present whereabouts. Backtracking along the usual route proves fruitless except for one tantalizing, yet terrifying clue — a lone footprint large enough to accommodate five men.
7	Pumpkin Patch. Many cultures associate pumpkins with the harvest season. The squash's large size and orange coloration enhances its affinity with autumn traditions and festivities. Children frequently carve out the plant's innards and illuminate the hollowed cavity to make jack-o'-lanterns. Six jack-o'-lanterns now inhabit this pumpkin patch, yet no one knows who made these eerie decorations and placed them here. In addition, they move to a different location within the patch every night, even when the field is under constant surveillance. Nothing sinister has happened yet, but local residents worry about the mysteries lurking amid the green vines and orange plants.
8	Silo. This cylindrical structure capped by a round dome normally stores grain for the upcoming winter, though this silo appears oddly out of place. There is no neighboring farm, home, or field nearby raising the inevitable question of who erected this seemingly abandoned building and why. Although the silo has no windows, brief, intermittent flashes of light are visible through the slightly ajar door, which periodically releases puffs of putrid, gray smoke.
9	Tipi. A pungent aroma seeps through the leathery opening into a conical tent large enough to house roughly ten people. Sounds resembling a donkey's bray emanate from within the temporary structure, though the wilted grass along the tipi's edges suggests the transitory shelter has been in the same spot for quite some time. The outer panels bear painted images of epic battles, leading most observers to speculate the tipi once belonged to a great warrior or general. Rumors claim the owner placed the tipi above the entrance to a subterranean complex to hide his clandestine exploration of the passages and chambers below the ground.

d10	Location
10	Windmill. Standing in the middle of an overgrown field, its architects once used this mechanical device to mill grain. Although presumably no longer active, its blades still capture the wind, rotating the machinery inside the structure constructed from wood and stone. Strange noises probably unassociated with the grinding mechanisms inside the windmill occasionally pierce the air. The wooden door into the building's interior appears sturdy and too well-maintained for a neglected site. Rumors persist about a mad professor using the natural power source to attempt to revivify the recently deceased, some who attained their unfortunate condition because of his intervention.

It takes just a single spark to ignite a grass fire or set the characters on the road to adventure. The GM may use the following table to create a backstory for a steppe adventure.

Table 2-27: Steppe Adventure Ideas

d10	Event
1	Black Sheep. An old shepherd leans against his crook, demanding observers and listeners help him reclaim his missing black sheep. The senile man claims the animal he named Nightmare can walk upright, speak, and even read a few words. While his story sounds totally far-fetched and imaginary, the elderly shepherd insists Nightmare is real and extremely dangerous. He is convinced the unusual yet clever sheep could be a monster disguised as a black sheep. Despite his conviction, the man displays numerous outward signs of dementia, casting significant doubt on the veracity of his contentions.
2	Cold Snap. Bone chilling temperatures are a common occurrence in the steppe, especially during the winter, but this unseasonable, extremely localized cold snap seems to be more than a weather anomaly. A gentle breeze surprisingly ushers in the frigid onslaught, dropping temperatures by as much as 40-degrees Fahrenheit in a matter of minutes before returning to normal several hours later. On some occasions, the sudden chill delivers more than shivers to startled inhabitants. It also takes young lives with it, causing parents to attentively watch their children while it lasts.
3	Collapsed Horse and Rider. Drenched in sweat and dust, an exhausted, emaciated horse suddenly keels over, depositing its dead rider onto the ground as well. The mount and its master display no colors, clothing, or banners indicating an affiliation with any organization, though the man appears to be a local. His rigid fingers tightly grip a weathered scrap of paper bearing the message, "They are riding a thousand strong across the steppe. Look north on the morning of the fourth day. They will be waiting."



d10 Event

4 Death Box. Steppe tradition forbids spilling blood during an execution, which forces executioners to devise alternative and often crueler methods of killing enemies. The unfortunate victim in this case is a man literally encased inside of a wooden box. His arms and legs protrude through holes cut into the sides and bottom of the rectangular container, while his torso and head remain locked inside the cavity. The circumstances surrounding the individual's demise remain a mystery, though it seems evident someone went to great lengths to ensure the person met an agonizing, torturous end for an unknown reason.

5 Horse Whisperer. A local horse trainer who mastered the art of non-verbal communication with the animals under his care abruptly left the community after an encounter with a runaway horse. He only uttered one word before riding off into the sunset — impossible. By all accounts he headed east, all the while shaking his head in utter disbelief. For its part, the horse mysteriously died less than an hour after its meeting with the clearly ruffled horse whisperer, causing many humanoids to claim the horse told him something unbelievable.

d10 Event

6 Letter. A lovesick yet intensely shy young man begs anyone willing to listen to deliver a love letter to a young woman he knows by her childhood nickname Speckled Partridge. He believes she resides in a neighboring village, though he cannot be certain because it took him seven years to muster the courage to write the note since he last saw her. Furthermore, each time he dreamt of her, he experienced visions of a hideous monster constantly looking over his shoulder. The adults interpret the creature to be the embodiment of his internalized fears, but the smitten lover believes the abomination from his nightmares endeavors to keep them apart forever.

7 Omen. Steppe cultures revel in omens and superstitions. When fire rolls across the land, it typically chars the short, stubby grass to its roots. However, on some rare occasions, the flames merely singe the blades, changing their color from green and amber to a purple hue. Steppe inhabitants interpret this occurrence as an omen of ill times ahead. The strange colors usher in an era of drought, extreme temperatures, or worse. To make matters worse, on this occasion, no one recalls ever seeing flames, smoke, or any other telltale signs of a fire. The locals conjecture this phenomenon must be the handiwork of displeased deities.

d10	Event
8	Porcelain Dish. After accidentally burning herself while cooking, a flustered mother hurled a porcelain dish against a wall, shattering it into countless pieces. After she destroyed the family heirloom, which has been handed down from mother to daughter for twelve generations, her relationship with her young, rebellious daughter rapidly deteriorated to the point where the headstrong teenager jumped onto her father's horse and left. The superstitious parent blames all her woes on the shattered plate. She hopes someone could repair or replace the broken object as well as her tattered relationship with her only child.
9	Silk Shirt. Six splotches of blood stain a discarded silk shirt left in the grass. The soiled areas correspond with locations where the fabric is stretched, presumably by a sharp projectile. According to a popular local superstition, the seventh blow struck against a silk shirt is always fatal, which may explain why the garment's owner took the risk of removing the clothing article. However, the owner's identity and the reason why someone tried to kill the wearer require further investigation.
10	Slip. A lucky teenage girl found a crumpled winning betting slip from a horse race that took place six weeks ago during a traveling show. Although she has no idea what the slip is worth nor whether the person who took the wager would even honor the ticket, she insists on locating the bookmaker and collecting her winnings.

After setting the story into motion, the characters need somewhere to go in the steppe. The GM may consult the following table to find such a place.

Table 2-28: Steppe Adventuring Sites

d10	Location
1	Bridge. Spanning the breadth of a shallow yet wide river, this stone bridge holds strategic, economic, and military significance for numerous political and commercial interests. Despite its remote location, the sturdy structure sees a tremendous amount of foot and vehicle traffic. To offset the costs of maintaining and securing the bridge, the local authorities on each side of the span charge a hefty toll to cross. Of course, everyone fails to agree on the best way to manage the bridge and the income it generates. Rival factions endeavor to claim the crucial link for their own, while others merely want to redistribute its financial windfall elsewhere.

d10	Location
2	Deer Stone. Artisans carved intricate patterns and geometric shapes onto the face of a 20-foot tall slender, upright stone. The object's significance and purpose remain unknown, though the most popular theory contends the stone stands lonely vigil over a nearby grave. Other plausible hypotheses state the deer stone commemorates an important event in the distant past or serves as a marker for a forgotten overland highway. The last excavation of the surrounding area occurred twenty-three years ago, yielding mixed results. Pottery shards and strips of linen buried beneath the earth confirm some past humanoid activity, but the absence of any valuable treasures ultimately led every expedition to shut down the expensive venture. Nonetheless, many natives still believe the deer stone has more secrets to reveal in the future.
3	Game Preserve. Powerful rulers and wealthy individuals occasionally cordon off a swath of territory and make it their personal hunting ground. Trespassers who enter this designated area face swift retribution from its owner if he can capture or identify the interloper. Over the course of the past several weeks, someone or something has infiltrated the game preserve and left six carcasses rotting in the open. The perpetrator never ate a morsel of meat from the beasts or salvaged any trophies from his kills. The animals represent a mix of predators and prey adding to the puzzle involving these mysterious slayings.
4	Gate. Two badly damaged statues of predatory cats comprise the base for a ruined, stone gate, which once led into a sprawling yet short-lived steppe metropolis. Wars, natural disasters, and time razed the rest of the city to the ground, leaving the pair of stone lynxes to guard the former entrance. Looters presumably absconded the settlement's remaining assets, but a local historian asserts civic planners constructed a secret vault beneath the ruler's palace, which remains undiscovered. Adventures who ventured here searching for the vault found nothing and worse still never returned. The scholar also believes the ruler created an army of constructs to guard his treasures for all eternity.

Horse Statue. A life-sized bronze statue of a majestic horse rests upon a stone pedestal set atop a plateau overlooking the chilly grasslands. Artistic renditions of horses typically found in the area depict them outfitted with riding gear, but this animal wears none of the equipment associated with the pastime. The beast's posture, bearing, and expression suggest the sculpture may serve as a grave marker for a revered animal or as a shrine for humanoids worshipping an equine deity. A popular theory implicates the stone pedestal conceals an entrance into a subterranean chamber where the followers of an entity known as "The Zephyr" gather to offer tribute and sacrifices to the bestial god or goddess.

d10	Location
6	Pasture. An old man and his rambunctious dog watch over their flock of sheep peacefully grazing in the pasture. Without warning, one of the animals repeatedly bleats. Others steadily join the beast shortly thereafter. Within ten minutes, the entire flock bleats uncontrollably with their gazes squarely fixed on the exposed tip of a long-buried stone one of them just unearthed. The mottled rock bears no inscriptions or other markings betraying its origins, though the odd coloration and its incredible hardness suggest it may be an extraterrestrial object.

7	River Tomb. To keep the location of his tomb a secret, a powerful chieftain ordered his followers to construct a subterranean tomb and then conceal its location by diverting a nearby river over the site. When the laborers returned from completing the task, his heirs slaughtered the workers, erasing any firsthand knowledge about the underground complex. Over the years, multiple expeditions set out onto the rugged steppe to find the hidden grave without success. Last week, a young man fording a nearby river stumbled upon a rusty stirrup in the water, adjacent to a conspicuous pile of stones on the river bed. According to legend, the chieftain's vast treasury accompanied him into the afterlife.
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8	Well. Stone and mortar form the walls of a circular well dug into the firm soil. A twisted and bent steel bucket hangs from a rope attached to a winch mechanism on top of the well. A quick peek into the abscess reveals a 40-foot deep pit culminating in malodorous, black mud. Apparently, the well's builders abandoned the location when its waters ran dry, though there are no signs of any permanent humanoid habitation in the surrounding area, raising questions as to who constructed the manmade system and why they erected it here. The preceding inquiries still defy explanation, but the sight of a hideous gray shadow emerging from the well's depths may solve the mystery of why the well's builders suddenly left.
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9	Yuam Relay Station. In a predominately landlocked domain, steppe people must rely upon overland travel to communicate messages and information throughout the region. Obviously, a single horse and its rider, commonly referred to as a yuam, can only travel a finite distance over the course of a single day. Therefore, to speed up the delivery of these vital communiques, steppe kingdoms establish a network of relay stations along frequently traveled routes, which allow the messenger to hand off the correspondence to a fresh horse and its rider. The system usually works flawlessly, but something is wrong at this outpost. The riders, stable boys, ancillary personnel, and horses are all missing. Animal tracks lead west implying the horses either escaped or were led off in that direction. The copious volumes of blood splattered throughout the grounds implicate the humanoids did not fare as well as their four-legged associates. Despite the pervasive evidence of a violent struggle, the perpetrators left scant details about their identities, while the victims' bodies are nowhere to be found.
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d10	Location
10	Yurt. The acidic odor of curdled goat's milk escapes through the tent's bamboo walls and felt covering into the outside world. The spacious rounded structure appears fit for a king thanks to its large size and luxurious appearance. Nonetheless, the lone yurt feels neglected and out of place on the barren steppe. There are no signs of life emanating from within the yurt and no humanoid or animal tracks in the vicinity outside the temporary shelter. Even the grass appears undisturbed, raising even more questions about the yurt and its owner.

Plains Travel

Travel across the plains frequently evokes iconic images drawn from classic Western movies and history. Whenever the thought first comes to mind, many envision a pitched battle between mounted bandits and the defenders of a horse-drawn stagecoach desperately trying to outrun one another as they barrel across the short grasses. Some watch in awe as cavalry archers under the command of the legendary Genghis Khan charge across the Mongolian steppe and fire arrows at their terrified enemies. Still others see the lone rider deftly maneuvering his trusted steed through the tall grass and across the shallow rapids in a frantic dash to warn others of an impending attack from hostile invaders. As the preceding images demonstrate, it is practically impossible to imagine trekking across the untamed grasslands without the horse. Though the horse plays a prominent role in plains travel, it is not the only means of journeying across the vast expanses. The mode of transport frequently depends upon the trip's purpose and the terrain. Leading a flock of sheep across the steppe in search of fresh grass is easily accomplished from horseback. Fording a raging river while mounted is almost a sure way to drown. Experience has taught the grasslands' residents that every situation is different, and those who succeed must adjust to overcome unique and unexpected obstacles.

Many plains dwellers, particularly in the steppes and savannas, lead a nomadic lifestyle, so travel is an integral part of their existence. Steppe peoples are constantly on the move. Animal husbandry is a way of life in this environment, and those who tend to the flocks must sate their livestock's voracious appetite. A hungry herd can devour an entire field in a single day, necessitating relocating the animals to greener pastures on a continual basis. Likewise, the dry season forces the savanna's hunter-gatherers to follow their migratory prey and locate new fresh water sources along with burgeoning fields of wild grain and ripened vegetables. Their long, circuitous journey often crosses tumultuous waterways and brings them in close contact with the animals they hunt and the fearsome predators following in their footsteps as well. The prairie's fertile farmlands attract a continuous influx of new settlers looking to build a better life on the rough and tumble temperate grasslands. These newcomers frequently travel great distances searching for the ideal tract of land to plant their seeds and build their new life. Although many establish permanent roots in this biome, they frequently sell their surplus of food products to local vendors and merchants from far-flung lands. The humanoids who inhabit the tropical and temperate grasslands likely travel more than the inhabitants of any other environment.

Trails

Grasslands present few natural barriers to travelers, yet explorers frequently develop a preference for a particular route as they make their way across the vast plains. Although these roughhewn, dusty trails would not be considered roads in the traditional sense, they still serve their intended purpose — to provide a safe and efficient means for transporting people and goods through the uncharted wilderness. In many instances, these trails run parallel to the rivers and streams that bisect the land. Their close proximity to water is not an accident. The men and animals that traverse the grasslands need water to survive. While a handful of men can carry enough water to

complete their journey with relative ease, transporting enough water to quench the thirst of several hundred cattle, sheep, or horses is completely impractical. The same waters that nourish man and beast alike also pose the greatest natural obstacle to those venturing across the plains.

Crossing a treacherous river with a herd of animals, a horse-drawn vehicle, or a frail person requires tremendous bravery and skill. Few attempt the harrowing feat. A single misstep can subject the errant trespasser to one of the waterway's lethal currents and drag the creature to a watery grave. In the case of social animals, a frightened beast can send the entire herd into a mad panic as the terrified animals battle the current and each other to find firm footing on dry land.

Bridges are rare, because width tends to be a greater challenge than depth. Spanning a 100-foot-wide river is an expensive proposition requiring enormous financial resources as well as tremendous amounts of men and materials. Whenever a trail fords a stream or river, it usually does so at the most navigable location rather than the seemingly more logical shallowest point. This is highly advantageous on the most heavily traveled trails, where industrious boatmen ferry passengers from one bank of the river to the other. In the absence of any available watercraft, finding a negotiable path across a straight, wide, and shallow point or a location where the river breaks into several channels is usually a better proposition than exclusively looking for the narrowest and shallowest spot, which often has dangerous, swirling currents containing hidden debris.

Trails link humanoid communities together. Like the debate about the chicken or the egg, it is sometimes difficult to tell which came first — the trail or the settlement alongside it. Most trails are manmade, so the answer depends upon who first blazed the trail. Did the villagers or townsfolk create the trail to facilitate travel to a nearby location or did someone establish the settlement to accommodate the needs of passing travelers on the nearby trail? In either case, practically every permanent settlement has at least one trail passing through the center of it.

The following tables represent the percentile chance of encountering a settlement while traveling on a trail in a savanna, prairie and steppe. (Cities are not included on the table, because they are large enough to generally appear on a map of the immediate area.) The GM should consult the table every 24 miles, which is the amount of ground an unencumbered man can cover in a single day on the trail. Naturally, creatures that move faster than 30 feet may require the GM to consult the table more than once over the course of the day, and those who move slower may roll on the table every other day instead. The GM should attempt only one roll for each 24-mile interval.

Table 2-29: Settlements in a Prairie

Settlement Type	Percentage Chance of Settlement
Village (fewer than 201 residents)	01–45
Town (201–5,000 residents)	46–60
No Settlement	61–00

Table 2-30: Settlements in a Savanna

Settlement Type	Percentage Chance of Settlement
Village (fewer than 201 residents)	01–30
Town (201–5,000 residents)	31–35
No Settlement	36–00

Table 2-31: Settlements in a Steppe

Settlement Type	Percentage Chance of Settlement
Village (fewer than 201 residents)	01–25
Town (201–5,000 residents)	26–30
No Settlement	31–00

Blazing a Trail

Trails are born more than they are made. Pioneers exploring the wild grasslands almost never devise a deliberate plan of how they intend to get somewhere. Instead, they set foot into the wilderness with nothing more than a vague idea and an intended destination in mind. The land then dictates how they get there through trial and error. Trails mimic the laws of electricity. They normally follow the path of least resistance. Naturally, flat land near a plentiful water supply and lush, short grasses makes the best terrain, but nature is not obligated to accommodate humankind. Rivers, lakes, tall grasses, hills, gradients, and other natural and manmade obstacles frequently stand in the intrepid explorer's way. Whenever these barriers confront the bold pioneer, he must use his ingenuity and experience to devise a feasible solution.

The easiest option is to go around the impediments, but efficiency and simplicity are important considerations in making that decision. Taking travelers twenty miles out of their way to avoid a vast tract of tall grass is grossly inefficient in comparison to using a controlled burn to carve a negotiable path through the high vegetation. Likewise, there are instances where rivers and streams can and should be crossed out of necessity rather than completely avoided. Trails must also be easy to follow for people to use them. It is very easy to get lost or stuck on a meandering route filled with switchbacks and steep inclines, which defeats the purpose of blazing the trail in the first place. Roads are not made from cobblestone and macadam. Over time, the passage of men and beasts beats the ground into submission and creates a well-worn, dusty trail readily visible to the naked eye even from afar. Although some contain periodic signposts and landmarks, they are primarily constructed from extensive use by living creatures.

Fields of Gold

Trails create opportunities. They take downtrodden farmers searching for a second chance to virgin farmlands they can call their own. They beckon shepherds and their flocks to greener pastures, and lead merchants to newfound markets in distant lands. Others follow in the footsteps of immense herds of prey animals on their endless search for food. Trails are the glue holding civilization together even in a land dominated by vast fields of green and gold. This is especially true as it relates to neighboring domains. Although the grasslands produce an abundance of grain, meat, precious metals, and gems, other important commodities are in high demand and short supply. Foremost among these are wood and salt, two goods respectively found in abundance in the adjacent forests and deserts. Trails allow suppliers to reliably transport their merchandise without incurring extensive delays caused by getting lost or following a circuitous and even dangerous route across the uncharted wilderness. In addition to connecting the people and products of the plains to foreigners, travelers hailing from the forests and deserts also establish overland trails across the grasslands connecting them with one another. For instance, the Great Silk Road that crossed the Eurasian steppe facilitated trade between the Mediterranean world and the exotic markets of the Far East.

Trails are also used to transport animals and information in a fast and dependable manner. The dry season renders much of normally edible plant life inert and worthless, so farmers must frequently relocate their herds to greener pastures or quickly transport their livestock to larger settlements for slaughter. Animals, especially domesticated ones, are generally fearful of water and any changes in their routines. Avoiding perilous treks across waterways and unfamiliar routes makes it safer and easier to move large herds without incurring substantial resistance from the animals and casualties along the way.

News also travels quickly along the trails, especially when they are combined with horse relay stations. Although most people are familiar with the Pony Express from the American West, the Persians and the Mongols had a mail delivery system that predated the Pony Express by more than 500 years. Fresh horses and riders would be stationed at varying intervals along the trail. As one rider galloped into the station, he would pass his message off to a new rider who would then repeat the process at the next designated interval. This system allowed messages and correspondence to move much faster than relying upon one person and one horse to carry the message the entire distance.

The passage of valuable goods and information along these trails attracts the unwanted interest of bandits and highwaymen. Unfortunately, the tall grasses bordering many trails offer ideal ambush sites for these ne'er-do-wells to use their advantage. In the absence of any strong, centralized governmental authority, the responsibility for keeping the roads safe usually falls to the local citizens and private enterprises using these routes to relocate their herds and ship their wares to markets. Few farmers and merchants have enough time and energy to deal with these problems themselves. Therefore, they frequently hire adventurers to patrol the roads and bring the perpetrators of any crimes committed on the trails to justice. Of course, the exact parameters involved in dispensing justice to criminals are often left to the adventurers' imagination. Small villages, towns, and individual merchants rarely have the logistical and financial means to incarcerate prisoners for extended periods of time. They generally prefer that adventurers mete out their concept of "frontier justice," which may consist of anything ranging from summary execution to a stern warning. Most punishments fall somewhere between these two extremes.

Traveling Plains Trails

Plains travelers generally view trails as a guide through the feral grasslands rather than an absolute necessity. Shepherds, farmers, and merchants alike commonly seek out the road less traveled and make their own way across the fertile landscape only to once again converge with the well-worn trail miles down the road. The reasons for doing so vary. A rash of robberies on a particular stretch of trail may convince some to avoid the area for the time being. Others may try their luck at finding a verdant field of green grasses for their livestock some distance away from the beaten path. A few brave souls may even attempt to blaze a new trail across trackless ground on their way to their final destination. In the end though, the majority opts for familiarity over the unknown.

Trails are vital for vehicular traffic. Men and horses fare well walking and striding across the open plains. The same cannot be said for covered wagons, carriages, and stagecoaches. These vehicles are best suited for a flat, trampled-down surface and are easily jostled and damaged when rolling over uneven terrain. A large stone or a hidden depression may shatter its fragile wheels or even overturn the vehicle and destroy it. Likewise, water and mud also impede the vehicle's movement and can easily bring the entire contraption to a screeching halt. Drivers almost always stick to the roads, which also makes the vehicle an easy target for brigands and thieves. To deter would-be robbers and protect their valuable cargo, an armed contingent usually accompanies the shipment for the entire trek. While merchants can afford this luxury, settlers and pioneers headed for greener pastures are not as fortunate. Most cross their fingers and pray for the best on the perilous journey. Those who can afford it may pin their hopes on adventurers to safely guide them to their new life.

Roads Untraveled

Trails are primarily designed with long-distance commercial traffic in mind rather than short jaunts through the grasslands. Hunters are not going to find prey animals waiting for them on the side of the road. Farmers and shepherds looking for new arable land and fresh fields are unlikely to find unclaimed territory next to a trail. Some endeavors necessitate traveling off the beaten path and across the untracked plains. In general, the land itself does not pose any significant obstacles to explorers. Tall grasses impede movement and obscure vision but navigating a path through the vegetation merely requires extra work. The peril lies with what is hidden within the tall grasses. Predatory beasts and monsters frequently lurk behind the amber and green façade, where they patiently wait and watch as their unwitting victims draw closer to their ideal ambush site. In the blink of an eye, the attacker crashes through the stalks of grains and pounces on its startled prey. Rivers present a similar dilemma. Crossing the river is generally not a necessity, but it can be extremely dangerous for those choosing to do so. In addition to contending with the treacherous currents and murky depths, hungry crocodiles and alligators troll the muddy waters and savagely bite any creature straying too close to the water's edge.

Animals and monsters are not the only creatures that use camouflage and deception to slay their quarry. The humanoid hunters stalking the

wildebeests, gazelles, buffalo, and the grasslands' other large herbivores also use the untamed terrain to their maximum advantage. In addition to blending in with the tall grasses and remaining downwind of their target like most other predators, men can learn a great deal from the grasses. Many migratory animals follow the same paths year after year, so a trampled-down patch of grass may indicate the herd's annual route. This is especially true in areas with heavy undergrowth. If a herd passed through a narrow path surrounded by undergrowth within the last year, characters attempting to pick up their trail gain advantage on their check, if applicable, or benefit from a numerical bonus to their check. Likewise, a field reduced to stubble is another indicator that a large group of animals recently grazed in a particular area. The grasses sometimes have a tale to tell for those who know where to look for it.

Plains-dwellers often quip that "the common man commonly stays on the well-worn trail and remains common, while the extraordinary man blazes his own trail and becomes the stuff of legends." Whether or not one believes the adage to be true, adventurers seeking adulation and fortune in this rough-and-tumble world must stray from the beaten path and make their unique mark on the world in places where others fear to tread.

Modes of Travel

Perhaps no other environment is as conducive to travel as grasslands. This lush biome has enough vegetation and water to support men and beasts alike for a long journey, but not enough to impede progress on most occasions. Steep hills, sharp declines, and muddy earth are rare obstacles. Trees and other immovable objects are few and far between. These stomping grounds are ideally suited for most creatures, but no animal has had a bigger impact shaping this land's destiny than the horse. The horse singlehandedly altered the outcomes of wars, opened the wild frontiers for exploration, and facilitated trade between distant lands. It is impossible to imagine what the grasslands would be like without this remarkable creature.

Horses

Humanity's domestication of this noble creature indelibly changed the fortunes of those aspiring to make their mark on the plains. This is especially true in the temperate grasslands where cavalry soldiers reign supreme, as exemplified by the Mongols' conquest of vast territories in Asia and Europe during the Middle Ages. The flat, open terrain and firm earth are perfectly suited to accommodate the horse's many combat applications. Although deserts lack natural obstacles, the loose, shifting sands, undulating dunes, and scorching heat limit the animal's ability to function in the hot environment for more than brief intervals. Likewise, the forest's abundance of trees and soft, yielding ground significantly reduce the horse's speed and ability to move through the congested terrain.

Under the ideal conditions found on the plains, the horse's size, strength, speed, and maneuverability give its rider a significant advantage over infantry troops. The mere sight of an armored half-ton beast charging across the field of battle at breakneck speed can shatter the fighting spirit of the average foot soldier and send the panicked warrior into a mad dash for safety. The mounted archer may be the deadliest weapon on the battlefield. Armed with his fearsome composite bow, he can fire his arrows at a target up to one mile away. An entire column of these dreaded bowmen can unleash a coordinated barrage of projectiles that could turn the skies dark on a sunny day and rain down death upon their helpless foes.

Horses also play a critical role in reconnaissance missions and communications. A lightly encumbered unit of mounted soldiers can cover tremendous amounts of ground in a few hours and provide military commanders with detailed intelligence about enemy formations, sizes, locations, and movement. Perhaps the horse's greatest military advantage is its ability to transport men and equipment vast distances in a single day on the temperate grasslands. Horses are grazers. Therefore, there is no need to carry immense quantities of feed to satisfy the animal's nutritional demands. When it is hungry, it stops in a field and devours enough grass and plant matter to re-energize itself and resume the journey. Its ability to

forage for food in the grasslands without incurring any significant delays further enhances its usefulness and efficiency on the battlefield.

Although most commonly associated with their combat usage, horses also perform other important tasks that warrant mention. They are commonly used as pack animals. The average horse can carry a maximum load roughly equal to its weight. Doing so greatly encumbers the animal, however, and slows it down. Obviously, packhorses never travel alone and are always accompanied by their humanoid masters and armed guards charged with safeguarding the animals and the goods they carry. The entourage may include up to 50 horses walking in single file. Their human traveling partners may walk alongside them, ride atop a horse or, in the case of a wealthy merchant, sit in a luxurious carriage. Horses can also pull covered wagons and stagecoaches. These vehicles substantially increase the animals' hauling capacity, but they function poorly on rough, uneven surfaces. For that reason, they are predominately confined to trails and are almost exclusively used for long-distance travel by those who can afford such amenities. Horses also play a prominent role speedily transporting words and ideas instead of goods and wares. The fastest and most-durable animals are chosen to perform the important task of delivering correspondence to distant lands. Some do so at the direction of an individual or small group of persons, while others are part of a centrally governed mail delivery system. In either case, many treasured and sacred documents began their journey into history within the closed confines of a mounted courier's saddlebags.

Without a doubt, horses are the preferred means of travel and transport among plains-dwellers. In addition to the animal's speed, practicality, and self-sufficiency, the fastest, best-mannered, and most-beautiful specimens serve as a status symbol among the gentry and the ruling elite. Unfortunately, the typical horse is an expensive purchase beyond the reach of the average man. A champion racing stallion or a specially trained prancing pony can cost more than most people would ever earn in a dozen lifetimes. Regardless of whether an individual owns a prized steed or an old nag, the horse is often a household's most valuable and loyal asset.

Taking a Ride

There are some instances where being a passenger is a better alternative than being an active participant. Instead of buying horses and procuring provisions for a long overland trek, characters may decide to leave the logistics to someone else, while they sit back and take a ride. The vehicle's operator generally charges a fee dependent upon the quality of the accommodations and the total distance traveled. Adventurers have many tricks up their sleeve, and hitchhiking ranks among the oldest. In lieu of payment, a character may try to convince the operator to allow him and perhaps even his friends to ride for free.

By Hoof or by Foot

Walking is a cheap alternative to purchasing a horse, though it is generally slower and more tiring than traveling on horseback. Still, walking has its advantages, especially in the savanna. Men are more predictable than horses. Large predators are more commonly encountered in the tropical grasslands than they are in the temperate grasslands. The average man is unlikely to bolt and run at the sight of a charging monster or an unearthly event. More importantly, fresh grass is often difficult to find during the savanna's severe dry season. For most residents of this warm environment, the expenditures in time and energy needed to feed the animal on a year-round basis do not justify the benefits of saving travel time. In comparison, a small goat consumes far less food and water, is not a finicky eater, may be sheared for wool, provides a renewable source of milk, and can be slaughtered for meat, leather, and bone in a time of extreme famine. It also costs significantly less to purchase a goat than a horse.

Just like horses, shoes, albeit of a different variety, are an absolute necessity for those who travel by foot. The undergrowth teems with sharp edges and spines from the indigenous vegetation. In addition, the grasses



hide large quantities of debris and wildlife that can injure bare feet. Sandals are commonly worn in the savannas, as their open-foot design allows more air circulation and keeps the feet cooler than conventional shoes. The seasons determine the type of footwear worn in the temperate grasslands. Sandals are appropriate during the hot summers, but the cold, snowy winters demand insulated boots that protect the extremities from frostbite.

Exotic Mounts

Horses are not the only animals used for combat and transportation purposes. Other beasts and monsters sometimes cooperate with men to smite enemies and get them and their goods from one place to another. The massive elephant is perhaps the most impressive and feared combat mount, mostly because of its enormous size. Elephants lack the speed, grace, and maneuverability of horses. Therefore, they are predominately used to overrun and terrify enemy forces. Perhaps the best-known use of war elephants occurred during the Second Punic War when the Carthaginian general Hannibal Barca crossed the Alps and attacked the Romans with his unit of war elephants. In addition to their roles in combat, elephants are also used as pack animals, though their enormous food and water requirements limit their usefulness to short trips rather than long journeys. Powerful rulers and wealthy aristocrats occasionally use the immense beasts as mounts in an ostentatious display of their might and vast fortune.

Oxen, neutered male cattle, are used to pull carts and haul goods over short distances, though they are better known for lugging heavy ploughs across untilled fields. It is possible to ride an ox as a mount, but its slow speed and lumbering gait make for a tedious, bumpy ride. Mules, the sterile offspring of a male donkey and a female horse, make excellent pack animals, especially in rugged terrain that requires sure footing. However, they and their donkey relatives have the same food demands as the horse, making them a poor substitute for their faster and considerably stronger kin. Although they can be ridden as mounts, mules and donkeys generally cannot be combat trained.

The domesticated animals presented above are docile and accustomed to being in close quarters with people, making it relatively easy to train them as mounts and laborers. Wild beasts present a much different challenge. These creatures must be tamed before they can be used for any of these purposes. Doing so requires the handler to rear the animal from infancy. Humanoids have attempted to rear many animals over the generations, but the most popular mounts include zebras, lions, leopards, buffalos, gazelles, and even cheetahs, as well as the dire varieties of these and other animals indigenous to the grasslands.

Waterborne Travel

Waterborne travel is an alternative to overland travel, but it too comes with its share of benefits and drawbacks. Unlike men and pack animals, boats do not need to stop for food or rest. As long as they have a sufficient crew to man the oars in shifts, the vessel moves around the clock without interruption. When propelled by even a modest current, a boat floating downstream can travel 50 miles or more in a single day. Unfortunately, ships moving in the opposite direction do not fare as well. Rowing a large watercraft upstream is an exercise in futility. The skippers of these vessels must devise an alternate means of propulsion to combat the natural flow of water. The options include using a rotating paddle powered by a team of men or a small contingent of giants, having pack animals on shore pull the vessel upstream, creating a magical means of propulsion, or fabricating a mechanical engine. Rivers and oceans experience the strongest tidal variations with their water currents and waves. These natural forces also affect lakes, albeit to a lesser degree.

Waterborne travel is a feasible alternative for transporting goods and passengers that offers significant advantages over its land-based competitors. As previously discussed, superior speed tops the list of benefits. Watercraft operators do not need to feed and care for dozens of pack animals before, during, and after long journeys. In spite of the frequently cramped, overnight quarters, a large ship offers more amenities and comforts than an animal's back or even the most luxurious carriage. It is possible to relax on deck, engage fellow passengers in conversation, and even dine in style aboard the vessel as opposed to the monotony and deprivation experienced during a long, overland journey.

Traveling aboard a rowboat or keelboat seems like a wondrous alternative to the drudgeries of horseback travel and walking, but it is not as idyllic as it first seems. The most formidable obstacles are finding the materials and someone with the expertise to build a seaworthy vessel. Wood is in relatively short supply in the temperate grasslands, particularly in the steppe. Plains are typically located in landlocked areas far from the oceans, so sailors and shipbuilders are difficult to find in this environment. Hence, most seagoing vessels are constructed elsewhere at great expense to the purchaser. Those that are built locally tend to be small craft requiring few materials and limited expertise to build and operate, such as canoes, kayaks, and rafts rather than keelboats and rowboats. The shift toward lightweight boats is partly attributable to the lack of building materials and skilled craftsmen, but it is also linked to the navigability of the waterways themselves. Many rivers are too shallow to support bulky, oceangoing ships. Rapids are another common hazard, especially during the height of the rainy season in the savanna and after the snow melts in the temperate grasslands. The jagged rocks and rough currents rip larger vessels' hulls to shreds. On the other hand, the people manning a canoe or kayak can lift the lightweight craft out of the water and carry it overland, allowing them to safely bypass the river's treacherous sections. Of course, doing so also prevents them from transporting large quantities of cargo.

Manmade creations also pose problems for waterborne commercial traffic in particular. Men and some monsters build dams along the course of a river in order to protect low-lying areas from flooding, to increase a river's depth in particular sections, or to siphon off river water to construct a reservoir for a town or city's drinking water supply. Although these projects are built to benefit the community, they often create unintended consequences that transform the surrounding landscape. A dam may accidentally divert water into a populated area and destroy a settlement, or it could transform a previously navigable stretch of river into rapids, thus defeating its original purpose.

Just as highwaymen plunder valuables from those traveling by land, pirates and ruffians also troll the waters for fresh victims. Pirate ships are rare on the rivers, but they are more common than expected on large lakes. (For those interested in naval combat, *Fire as She Bears* from **Frog God Games** is a valuable resource for building and outfitting vessels, as well as for resolving combat between them.) Pirates prefer lakes over rivers for several reasons. Fewer places exist along riverbanks to hide, whereas a lake may contain numerous small islands with hidden coves and foggy areas perfect for concealing pirates and their vessels. In addition, crossing the lake by boat is a much faster alternative to circumventing the lake by an overland route that could add hundreds of miles to an otherwise short trip.

The few brigands that stalk the rivers use the terrain to their maximum advantage. One of the most common tactics involves affixing a heavy rope or a chain to an immovable object on opposing riverbanks, thus creating a barrier that prevents larger boats from passing. Meanwhile, the thieves concealed within the vegetation on each side of the river demand the crew pay a fee to continue past their illegal tollbooth or surrender their vessel to the concealed thieves. If the captain refuses to accept their terms, the concealed thieves fire their arrows at exposed crewmembers and lob other projectiles and spells at the boat until the skipper acquiesces to the brigands' demands, the crew destroys the barrier and continues their journey, or the crew repels the thieves.

Grassland Hazards

The world's grasslands may be the planet's most hospitable environment, at least from a weather standpoint. With the exception of a few weeks during the summer months, temperatures in the savanna remain comfortable year-round. Likewise, temperate grasslands also experience comfortable temperatures for roughly half of the year, with the remainder split between three months of hot, sticky weather and three months of numbing cold. In a world teeming with life, finding food and water rarely presents a significant challenge except during the frigid winters in the temperate grasslands. Daily survival is usually not the life-and-death struggle encountered in the hot and dry desert and the frigid taiga.

Still, the plains have their share of formidable hazards. Although frequently brief, the weather events that torment the grasslands rank among the deadliest. Animal predators often lurk in the grasses waiting to

Dealing with Hazards

Hazards are natural obstacles characters must overcome to survive in the savannas, prairies, and steppes. Many appear under a general heading providing a broad overview of these perils. Others warrant a detailed entry. Those falling into the latter category are presented by name followed by the type of hazard they pose — disease, poison, terrestrial, and weather and an intricate description of the hazard. Stampedes, which are presented here, are classified as an animal hazard.

Because the *Hazardous Habitats* is a system neutral work, we are not presenting any specific game mechanics regarding the detection, identification, avoidance, escape, dimensions, and effects the hazards and other challenges presented here. However, these sourcebooks offer guidance on how to adjudicate these hazards and challenges in your game. One of the ways we accomplish this is by assigning degrees of difficulty to the various tasks a character may undertake to detect, identify, avert, and escape the obstacle. All hazards and challenges are rated as easy, moderate, hard, and arduous based upon the following definitions.

Easy difficulty: An easy challenge is one where low-level characters have at least a 50% chance of success. Mid-level characters are likely to succeed most of the time, while high-level characters would almost always succeed absent atrocious luck.

Moderate difficulty: A moderate challenge is one where mid-level characters have a roughly 50% chance of success. Low-level characters sometimes succeed when luck is on their side, while level characters are likely to succeed most of the time.

Hard difficulty: A hard challenge is one where high-level characters have at least a 50% chance of success. Mid-level characters sometimes succeed when luck is on their side, while low-level characters need remarkably good luck to have any chance of success.

Arduous difficulty: An arduous challenge is one where even high-level characters struggle to succeed. They sometimes succeed when luck is on their side. Mid-level characters need remarkably good luck to have any chance of success, while low-level characters succeed on the rarest of occasions, and even then, they need astounding luck to pull off the impossible.

Hazards are then presented in the following format to allow characters to interact with and defeat the hazards. The Detection, Identification, Avoidance, and Escape sections use the scales of difficulty presented above. The Dimensions and Effects sections follow a different format described under those headings.

Detection: This section describes the suitable ability check or appropriate skill check that may be used to spot the hazard before encountering it as well as listing the degree of difficulty associated with the preceding check. It may also describe the sense used to notice it.

Identification: This section describes the suitable ability check or appropriate skill check that may be used to identify the hazard and its potentially detrimental effects to the character. Naturally, a character cannot identify a hazard he failed to detect.

Avoidance: This section describes the hazard's degree of difficulty and the suitable ability check or saving throw type that may be used to avoid the hazard when the character is subjected to its effects. In most cases, avoidance becomes applicable when the character failed to detect the hazard beforehand.

Escape: This section describes the degree of difficulty required to escape from the hazard as well as the ability or skill check used to escape from the hazard.

Dimensions: This section describes the hazard's overall size as defined below.

Individual: The hazard impacts a single creature or object who is exposed to it. However, the same hazard may affect more

than one creature or object who comes into contact with it.

Small-scale: The hazard affects an area no greater than 1,000 square feet.

Large-scale: The hazard affects an area greater than 1,000 square feet but less than 1 square mile.

Localized: The hazard affects an area greater than 1 square mile but less than 1,000 square miles. Despite its magnitude, its effects are most strongly felt closest to its epicenter.

Regional: The hazard affects an area greater than 1,000 square miles but are not felt worldwide. Despite its magnitude, its effects are most strongly felt closest to its epicenter.

Worldwide: The hazard affects the entire world. On this grand scale, the hazard may equally impact creatures and objects regardless of their distance from its epicenter.

Effects: This section describes how the hazard affects the character. Its impact is categorized as nuisance, harmful, dangerous, deadly, or lethal. The definition for each category appears below.

Nuisance: A nuisance has a minimal impact on low-level characters and no impact on mid-level and high-level characters. At worst, the hazard may temporarily inconvenience the character or deal damage no greater than one-quarter his maximum hit points.

Harmful: A harmful effect has a modest impact on low-level characters, such as potentially dealing damage no greater than one-half the character's maximum hit points or having another temporary, minor detriment on the character. Mid-level characters may potentially take no more than one-quarter their maximum hit points, while high-level characters would regard the hazard as a temporary inconvenience.

Dangerous: A dangerous effect may imperil the lives of low-level characters, dealing significant amounts of damage to them or otherwise incapacitating them. Mid-level characters would suffer a modest impact from the hazard, while high-level characters would potentially take no more than one-quarter their maximum hit point total.

Deadly: A deadly effect almost always kills low-level characters, while potentially imperiling the lives of mid-level characters. The hazard imposes a modest impact on high-level characters.

Lethal: A lethal effect always kills low-level characters, and almost always kills mid-level characters. The hazard even imperils the lives of high-level characters.

In addition to indicating the hazard's degree of danger, the Effects section also lists the following information.

Damage Type: This listing indicates the type of damage, if any, the hazard deals to affected creatures, such as bludgeoning, fire, or piercing damage. If the type of damage dealt is not applicable to the game system, at the GM's discretion the hazard instead deals normal hit point damage or otherwise impacts the character's health.

Condition: This listing states the condition the hazard imposes to a character caught in the hazard, such as blinded, paralyzed, or poisoned.

Complications: This listing indicates the complications that may arise from falling prey to the hazard, such as drowning or suffocating.

Remedy/Cure: This listing details what actions the creature can take to cure or remedy the hazard's effects, such as succeeding on two consecutive Moderate difficulty Constitution saving throws.

pounce on their next meal. These ferocious beasts generally target game animals, but a sick, injured or vicious predator may zero in on a humanoid meal instead. The grasslands are home to many of nature's fiercest and deadliest creatures, but they are not all renowned for their sheer brawn. Some of them, like the mosquito, are barely visible to the naked eye, but they are far more lethal than a pride of lions or even a mighty tyrannosaurus. These tiny pests are the unwitting carriers of countless diseases, including dengue fever, malaria, and yellow fever. Insects and beasts are not the environment's only living threats. Bandits, outlaws and highwaymen plague the land, depriving their unfortunate victims of their valuables and on some occasions, their lives. Savage, brutish monsters always pose a danger to those that stray too far from home to traverse the wilderness. Unseen hazards frequently hide behind the façade of tranquil fields and lush waves of grain.

Terrestrial Hazards

Fire is the force that shapes the plains. It simultaneously destroys and renews the landscape. The charred remains of burnt tree saplings and brown grass replenish the biome's fertile topsoil with vital nutrients. As previously discussed, the flames keep trees and shrubs at bay. Without it, tropical grasslands would eventually transform into forests, while temperate grasslands would teeter between turning into forests or deserts. Naturally, grassfires are most prevalent during the dry season, as the sere, withering plant stalks reach the peak of their flammability. Yet the dry season can also bring more than fire. Poor farming practices, arid soil and wind may turn a once-prosperous farm into a massive dust storm known as a black blizzard. Besides stripping essential topsoil from productive, cultivated land, the massive cloud of swirling dirt can damage life and property. While there is no mistaking a black blizzard, sinkholes are nearly impossible to spot until it is too late. Formed by natural processes, manmade construction, and the underground activities of several animals and monsters, sinkholes can turn a tract of fertile farmland or a patch of grass into an inescapable deathtrap in a matter of seconds.

Grassfire (Terrestrial)

Detection: Moderate Wisdom ability check/skill check pertaining to visual perception at range of 1 mile; obvious at a range of one-half mile or less

Identification: Easy Intelligence ability check or skill check pertaining to nature

Avoidance: Moderate Dexterity-based saving throw partially avoids effects

Escape: Fleeing the area

Dimensions: Localized

Effects: Harmful

Damage Type: Fire

Condition: Sickened

Complication: Smoke obscures vision

Cure/Remedy: None

Whether ignited by a wayward lightning bolt, intense summer heat, a camper's carelessness, or a deliberate act, grassfires can start in an instant and spread across vast swaths of land in mere minutes. Buffeted by the wind, grassfires move extremely quick and do not linger in the same place for more than brief intervals. During a forest fire, it takes an extended period of time to reduce even a dry tree to smoldering ash. But desiccated grass plants shrivel and burn in a matter of seconds, forcing the starving fire to find more combustible fuel elsewhere.

The leading edge of a grassfire (the downwind side) moves extremely quickly, traveling at a speed of 2d6 x 20 feet per round in light to moderate winds, 2d6 x 30 feet per round in strong to severe winds, and 2d6 x 40 feet per round when influenced by winds in excess of 51 mph. As previously mentioned, grass fires exhaust their fuel supply relatively quickly, so once a particular portion of the grasslands is ablaze, it remains so for only 2d4 minutes (1d4 minutes in the steppe) before it reduces the withered grasses and plants to fine ash.

Of course, the preceding discussion relates to grassfires caused by unseen forces. Characters and their enemies may intentionally or accidentally ignite a grassfire while fighting on the open plains. A dropped torch, a neglected campfire, a *flaming sword*, and many spells that create fire can set the grasslands ablaze. The risk of starting a deadly inferno is a significant consideration when battling foes outdoors, especially during the dry season. As a general rule of thumb, green plants subjected to an instantaneous flame do not catch fire, whereas dried, brown plants have a 50% chance of igniting. Fires that last for 1 round or more always ignite desiccated grasses, grains, and other plants. On the other hand, every round there is a cumulative 10% chance that a green plant exposed to an open flame catches fire. Once a fire starts, the wind direction determines where it goes unless the characters or their adversaries use other means, such as a spell to steer the blaze in another direction. Whether caused by nature or the actions of living creatures, virtually nothing can stop a raging grassfire except perhaps a torrential downpour.

Black Blizzard (Terrestrial)

Detection: Moderate Wisdom ability check/skill check pertaining to audio or visual perception at range of 1 mile; obvious at range of one-half mile or less

Identification: Easy Intelligence ability check or skill check pertaining to nature or weather

Avoidance: Moderate Dexterity-based saving throw partially avoids effects

Escape: Fleeing the area or finding shelter

Dimensions: Localized

Effects: Nuisance

Damage Type: bludgeoning

Condition: blinded

Complication: Dust particulates deal damage each hour to creatures exposed to them; dust obscures vision and potentially chokes creatures who inhale the particulates (see below)

Cure/Remedy: Easy Strength ability check to dig out of the dust

Fires may be attributed solely to natural causes, but the dreaded black blizzard cannot spring into existence without human intervention. Grasses have deep and intricate root systems that keep the soil in place during prolonged dry spells. Whenever farmers till the fields where the plants once grew, the plow sunders these bonds to make room for new crops to grow in their place. Although the grassland's fertile soil produces wondrous yields, farmers often forget the biome is always one precarious step away from turning into worthless desert. Experienced farmers know that in order to prevent desertification from happening, they cannot exclusively rely upon rain to water their fields. They must use water from another source such as a nearby river or aquifer to irrigate their plants. Those who do not learn this valuable lesson helplessly watch as their crops die and the rich topsoil becomes fallow. The dusty particulates fuel the black blizzard, but one more ingredient is needed to finish the devastating concoction.

Location is another critical factor that plays into the creation of a black blizzard. The flat land's lack of obstacles and undulations makes it easy to keep a close eye on the pastures and work the plow, but it also leaves the land vulnerable to the black blizzard's catalyst — wind. Hills, trees, and shrubs provide some natural protection against the wind, as do manmade barriers such as berms, stone walls, and earthworks. An open, dry field with no protection against the wind is a black blizzard waiting to happen, especially when combined with unsound farming techniques. Farmers who fail to rotate their crops and leave their fields bare during the windy, winter months practically ensure the creation of black blizzards.

Black blizzards reduce vision to 1d4 x 5 feet and turn the sky so dark that it blocks out the sun, turning day into night (twilight). They smother unprotected flames and can even choke protected flames (50% chance). Black blizzards are accompanied by strong winds. The fine particulates choke anyone caught out in the open without shelter. A creature exposed to these particulates has a chance of contracting dust pneumonia, a potentially deadly disease (see the subsequent Sidebox for details regarding this ailment). The dust creeps in through all but the most secure

Dust Pneumonia (Disease)

Detection: Easy Wisdom ability check or skill check pertaining to diseases, medicine, or nature

Identification: Easy Intelligence ability check or skill check pertaining to diseases, medicine, or nature

Avoidance: Easy Constitution-based saving throw completely avoids hazard

Escape: Breathing through a mask, cloth, or other suitable device grants a bonus on the preceding saving throw to avoid contracting the disease

Dimensions: Individual

Effects: Harmful

Damage Type: Constitution

Condition: Fatigued

Complication: Disease deals additional damage every day until cured; afflicted creature frequently coughs affecting his ability to speak clearly and without interruption as well as his ability to remain undetected

Cure/Remedy: Successful Moderate Constitution saving throw made immediately after taking damage.

seals and seams, chafing skin and contaminating gear. Black blizzards typically last for 2d10 hours and leave 2d3–1 feet of fine sand in their wake. These dusty cyclones can travel for hundreds and even thousands of miles before finally dissipating.

As if the black blizzard's physical damage were not bad enough, its economic and social toll is far greater. Farmland ravaged by black blizzards may be rendered useless for years, forcing the resident farmers to abandon their farms and seek work elsewhere. In addition to losing their land, livestock losses are often devastating. Homeless and penniless, these migrants rarely receive a warm welcome wherever they go. It is hoped most learn a valuable lesson from the experience and realize that those who live off the land must also be its caretakers.

Sinkhole (Terrestrial)

Detection: Hard Wisdom ability check/skill check pertaining to visual perception or Moderate skill check pertaining to moving through wilderness or getting along in the wild

Identification: Hard Intelligence ability check or skill check pertaining to geology, geography, or nature identifies areas more susceptible to sinkholes (see below)

Avoidance: Hard Dexterity-based saving throw completely avoids hazard

Escape: Hard Strength ability check or Moderate skill check pertaining to climbing if there is a surface to climb out of the sinkhole

Dimensions: Small-scale

Effects: Dangerous

Damage Type: bludgeoning, falling

Condition: None

Complication: Portions of the sinkhole may collapse, burying the creature beneath 1d4+1 feet of dirt and debris; buried creature may suffocate

Cure/Remedy: Moderate Strength ability check to dig out of the dirt and debris

Geologically, the plains are less susceptible to sinkholes than most other environments. Although the grasslands typically occupy elevated plateaus several hundred and sometimes several thousand feet above sea level, there is usually not enough groundwater to erode the rock layers beneath the surface needed to create a naturally occurring sinkhole. Instead, manmade subterranean structures and the burrowing activity of several animals and monsters account for the plains' seeming abundance

of sinkholes. Abandoned mines are another common cause of sinkholes. Over time, the support structures holding the tunnels' ceilings in place steadily rot and weaken. When they fail, the mineshaft collapses, creating a sinkhole. Faulty sewer tunnels in urban areas can also lead to the development of a sinkhole. Men are not the only creatures that delve into the earth. Ankhegs burrow just below the surface, leaving tons of displaced and disintegrated soil in their wake. Likewise, prairie dogs dig elaborate networks of tunnels and chambers. Ultimately, the rocks and dirt above these complexes slowly give way until they completely collapse under their own weight or under the weight of a creature passing overhead, such as an unsuspecting adventurer.

The typical sinkhole measures 4d6 feet in diameter and descends to a depth of 2d4 x 10 feet, though they can be larger or smaller depending upon the circumstances surrounding their creation. Terrain conducive to creating a natural sinkhole can be spotted ahead of time, though a successful check does not verify the presence of a sinkhole or pinpoint one's exact location. It merely tells the character that a sinkhole is more likely to be found in a given region than elsewhere. Creatures who fail to detect the sinkhole walk 1d6 feet past the edge before the ground suddenly collapses. In general, for every mile traveled in the savanna and prairie, there is a 1% chance of stumbling across a sinkhole. Passing through areas near abandoned mines, prairie dog complexes, and ankeg lairs may increase the percentage chance of encountering a sinkhole to 5%. There are fewer sinkholes on the steppes, so there is a 1% chance of stepping onto a sinkhole for every two miles traveled across the steppe.

Plants

Green plants are endemic throughout the grasslands. Luckily, the overwhelming majority of the plains' plant life provides more benefits than detriments. Grasses, legumes, and other edible species sustain vast populations of animals and people alike, yet mixed in among the vast fields of nourishing grain are several plants with unintentional and deliberate abilities to harm other creatures. Some expel immense clouds of irritating pollen, and others develop defense mechanisms to prevent hungry animals and people from eating and injuring them.

Johnson Grass (Poison)

Detection: Moderate Intelligence ability check or skill check pertaining to botany, nature, or moving through wilderness

Identification: Moderate Intelligence ability check or skill check pertaining to botany, nature, or moving through wilderness

Avoidance: Moderate Constitution-based saving throw completely avoids hazard

Escape: None

Dimensions: Individual

Effects: Nuisance

Damage Type: Poison

Condition: Nauseated, poisoned, sickened

Complication: Poison deals additional damage every 1d4 minutes until cured

Cure/Remedy: Successful Moderate Constitution-based saving throw immediately after taking damage

Humanoids generally do not walk into a field and eat grass. However, most herbivores, including livestock and horses, regularly do. In general, poisonous plant species have a bitter, unpleasant taste, so after a few tentative mouthfuls, the animal wisely moves on to better-tasting fare with no ill effects. Still, some varieties do not display the outward signs of toxicity such as bad taste, prickly texture, and odd coloration. Naturally, these varieties are the most dangerous because the animal's keen senses of taste and smell fail to protect it from the perilous meal. Johnson grass is perhaps the most invasive of these species. Under normal circumstances, eating a healthy Johnson grass plant's leaves and stems poses little danger to livestock and horses unless consumed in extremely large quantities. However, merely chewing on an injured, wilted, or frozen specimen can be fatal. Under these conditions, a chemical compound within the leaves

changes, coating the plant with minute traces of cyanide. These grasses are most prevalent in the savannas and prairies (2% chance of encounter per square mile). They are less common in the steppe (1% chance of encounter per square mile).

Stinging Grass (Terrestrial)

Detection: Hard Wisdom ability check/skill check pertaining to visual perception or Moderate skill check pertaining to botany, nature, or moving through wilderness

Identification: Hard Intelligence ability check or Moderate skill check pertaining to botany, nature, or moving through wilderness

Avoidance: Moderate Dexterity-based saving throw completely avoids hazard

Escape: Fleeing the area

Dimensions: Large-scale

Effects: Nuisance

Damage Type: acid, piercing

Condition: None

Complication: Animals and mounts refuse to move through area without a successful Hard Charisma ability check or Moderate skill check pertaining to animal handling

Cure/Remedy: Armor and heavy clothing mitigate damage

While the preceding grasses only pose a danger to grazing animals, other species are not as kind. Stinging grasses are the most common and painful hazard to men and beasts alike. Fine, translucent nettles cover the plant's leaves and stem and inject a weak, yet painful acid into the skin. These plants blend into the surrounding foliage, making it difficult to see them and their nettles amid the sea of vegetation. Stinging grasses are most prevalent in the steppe where there is a 2% chance of encountering them within a 4-square-mile area. They are less common in the prairie (1% chance) and are extremely rare in the savanna (1% chance per 25-square-mile area).

Poison Ivy (Poison)

Detection: Hard Intelligence ability check or Moderate skill check pertaining to botany, nature, or moving through wilderness

Identification: Hard Intelligence ability check or Moderate skill check pertaining to botany or nature

Avoidance: Moderate Constitution-based saving throw completely avoids hazard

Escape: Removing or washing items that came into contact with poison ivy prevents future exposure to the poison

Dimensions: Individual

Effects: Nuisance

Damage Type: Constitution (if inhaled), poison

Condition: Distracted

Complication: Poison deals additional damage each day until cured

Cure/Remedy: Successful Moderate Constitution-based saving throw immediately after taking damage

In many respects, poison ivy is the chameleon of the plant kingdom. It can grow as a small vine along the ground, as a shrub or as a climbing vine, making it difficult to positively identify. Poison ivy is commonly found along the transition zones between grasslands and forests. But it also grows in open fields where it is least noticeable and more dangerous. Even if the character can identify the plant, it is sometimes impossible to see it tangled amid the neighboring grasses.

Whenever the plant's leaves or stem are injured, it releases a toxic concoction of oils known as urushiol. Injury occurs whenever a creature brushes against any part of the plant. The oil clings to skin, fur, and clothing, though it only irritates skin. Removing and thoroughly washing any clothing or fur that came in contact with the poison ivy plant eliminates any possibility of future contamination. If these items are not removed in

a timely manner, transferring the urushiol to the skin becomes a foregone conclusion. Poison ivy causes a severe rash and blisters to develop on the skin. In spite of its ugly appearance, the rash and blisters cannot be spread from person to person unless the second individual comes in direct contact with any urushiol residue still present on the first person.

Burning poison ivy to eradicate it from a field is an incredibly bad idea. Inhaling the smoke has the same effects on the lining of the lungs as it does on the skin. In addition to the effects detailed above, inhaling poison ivy deals additional damage to the creature (see above).

Ragweed (Poison)

Detection: Moderate Intelligence ability check or Easy skill check pertaining to botany, nature, or moving through wilderness

Identification: Moderate Intelligence ability check or Easy skill check pertaining to botany, nature, or moving through wilderness

Avoidance: Easy Constitution-based saving throw completely avoids hazard

Escape: A successful saving throw grants immunity to ragweed for one year; two consecutive saving throws grant lifelong immunity to ragweed

Dimensions: Individual

Effects: Nuisance

Damage Type: Poison

Condition: Distracted

Complication: Poison deals additional damage each day until cured; frequent sneezing and watery eyes impose penalties on skill checks pertaining to stealth and visual perception

Cure/Remedy: Successful Easy Constitution-based saving throw immediately after taking damage

Ragweed is the bane of many farmers and allergy sufferers worldwide. The flowering weed is an opportunist. It lacks the hardiness to compete with entrenched grasses for nutrients, and must rely upon natural forces and living creatures to eradicate its competitors before it can take firm root in disturbed soil. Ragweed commonly appears in recently tilled or burnt fields, along riverbanks and in other areas devoid of dominant plant species. Ragweed is most prevalent in the prairies, though it can also be found in lesser concentrations in the savannas and steppes.

The plant survives for only one season, but midway through the summer until the onset of winter, its flowers open and release up to a billion grains of pollen into the air. The wind propels the lightweight, roughly spherical grains across the plains, where they can travel for several hundred miles before finally settling back to earth. As a general rule of thumb, any creature within 3d6x10 feet downwind of the plant comes in contact with its pollen. The pollen has no detrimental effects to living creatures other than humans. Ragweed pollen may trigger a severe allergic reaction in some people. Those affected by this irritant must endure several days of the classic symptoms associated with hay fever — watery eyes, runny nose, sneezing, itching, and a sore throat. Every day from midsummer through late autumn, a character traveling through the prairie has a 5% chance of encountering ragweed pollen. The chances decrease in the savanna (3%) and the steppe (2%).

Plains Inhabitants

Vast herds of wild and domesticated herbivores thrive on the nutrient-rich grasses. Likewise, the abundance of prey animals also supports a diverse predator population. These creatures generally do not pose a threat to humanoids, but there are always exceptions. Instead, the pests they cannot see are a far greater danger than the behemoths that are practically impossible to miss. Mosquitoes, ticks, and other creatures that feed on human and animal blood transmit a host of deadly diseases to their unsuspecting victims. In many ways, the bite of a minute tick can be deadlier than a lion's bite or the horns of an enraged buffalo. However, vermin, beasts, and monsters are not the only living creatures setting their

sights on humanity. Outlaws and highwaymen prowl the trails, farmlands, and untamed fields in search of easy marks. Some resort to simple muggings, while others stage elaborate robberies holding up horse trains, carriages, and even entire towns. Although some creatures deliberately intend to cause harm to others, plains inhabitants can unwittingly wreak tremendous damage.

Mosquitoes (Disease)

Detection: Arduous Wisdom ability check pertaining to audio or visual perception or Hard skill check pertaining to audio or visual perception detects mosquito crawling on skin before it bites

Identification: Easy Intelligence ability check/skill check pertaining to entomology, nature, or getting along in the wild

Avoidance: Moderate Dexterity-based saving throw allows creature to kill mosquito before it bites, if it has already been detected

Escape: Insect repellent gear and equipment may reduce chances of exposure

Dimensions: Individual

Effects: Nuisance

Damage Type: Piercing

Condition: Distracted

Complication: Creature bitten by mosquito may contract a Mosquito-transmitted Disease (see **Tables 2-32** and **2-33** as well as the **Sidebox** below); Disease deals additional damage each day until cured

Cure/Remedy: Successful Easy Constitution-based saving throw immediately after taking damage

Every so often, the typical plains traveler experiences an unwelcome sensation. Sometimes it feels as if something is moving across his skin. Other times, there is a sudden and urgent need to rub or scratch a swollen nodule that just appeared on his skin a few moments earlier. In certain cases, the person catches the bloodthirsty thief in the act of feasting on his warm, nourishing blood. The ordeal then ends with a quick slap or flick that crushes or removes the offending creature before it causes any more damage. Other than an irritating itch and mild annoyance, most people give no further thought to the brief engagement with the unwelcome parasite. Within hours, the swelling and redness subside, and the interlude becomes a distant memory. In most cases, this attitude is justified; however, there

are rare instances where the pest leaves more than a passing mark on its unwitting host. Instead, the insect's bite or proboscis transmits a virulent disease to the unsuspecting victim. Mosquitoes and ticks are the two creatures most responsible for spreading contagions in this manner.

In the real world, mosquitoes easily kill more people than all other non-sentient creatures combined. They have spread numerous diseases from antiquity through the present with malaria likely being the deadliest. Mosquitoes thrive in warm, humid environments, so they are most active in the savanna where the year-round warmth and abundance of animal and human hosts provides the ideal environment for feeding themselves and their offspring. Mosquitoes that live in the prairies and steppes hibernate during the long, cold winters. Female mosquitoes deposit their eggs in stagnant water. Small ponds, puddles and even manmade rain collection devices are ideal locations for mosquito larvae to feed and grow. Larvae that reach adulthood perpetuate the reproduction cycle, allowing the insects to multiply at staggering rates.

Most game systems offer statistics for swarms of these insects or their giant counterparts. An ordinary, solitary mosquito poses no combat threat whatsoever to even the tiniest and feeblest character. A flick of a finger is enough to kill the pest in most instances. Still, the common mosquito can inflict tremendous damage to even the mightiest warrior. Table 2-32 below details the daily chances of encountering a disease-carrying mosquito based upon the grassland type and time of year. The GM can and should interject encounters with non-disease carrying mosquitoes to increase the characters' fear and paranoia of these pests.

Table 2-32: Daily Percent Chance of Encountering Disease-Carrying Mosquito

Grassland Type	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Prairie	01-03	01-05	01-02	–
Savanna	01-06	01-10	01-04	01-02
Steppe	01	01-02	–	–

The following table may then be used to determine which disease the mosquito carries based upon the season and type of grassland. The following Sidebox provides details about the possible diseases.

Table 2-33: Disease Transmitted by Mosquito

Grassland Type	Dengue Fever	Encephalitis	Filariasis	Malaria	Yellow Fever
Prairie	01-05	06-80	81-85	96-95	96-00
Savanna	01-20	–	21-35	36-75	76-00
Steppe	–	01-90	91-95	96-00	–

Mosquitoes are typically most active at dawn and dusk, so characters that protect their exposed skin and sleeping quarters are less likely to get bitten than those that take no precautions. Still, there are no foolproof ways to completely avoid any exposure to these creatures other than completely covering a person's entire skin, which is rather impractical.

Ticks (Disease)

Detection: Hard Wisdom ability check or skill check pertaining to visual perception detects tick before it bites

Identification: Easy Intelligence ability check or skill check pertaining to entomology, nature, or getting along in the wild

Avoidance: Moderate Wisdom ability check or skill check pertaining to feeling physical sensations allows creature to feel tick biting it; Easy Constitution-based saving throw to resist disease, if any

Escape: Spotting and removing tick in skin with a successful Hard Dexterity ability check or Moderate skill check pertaining to hand and eye coordination or manipulation of tools and small objects; failure injures tick and automatically spills any contagions into the wound

Mosquito-transmitted Diseases

The follow entries detail the modifications the GM should make to the preceding hazards listing to simulate the effects of the following mosquito-transmitted diseases

Dengue “Breakbone” Fever: Add Dexterity and Constitution to the *Damage Type* and fatigue to the *Condition* listing. Increase *Effects* to Dangerous and *Cure/Remedy* to two consecutive successful Moderate Constitution-based saving throws.

Encephalitis: Add Wisdom to the *Damage Type* and confused to the *Condition* listing. Increase *Effects* to Harmful.

Filariasis: Add Dexterity to the *Damage Type* and slowed to the *Condition* listing. Increase *Effects* to Harmful and *Cure/Remedy* to two consecutive successful Easy Constitution-based saving throws.

Malaria: Add Constitution and Wisdom to the *Damage Type*. Increase *Effects* to Dangerous and *Cure/Remedy* to two consecutive successful Easy Constitution-based saving throws.

Yellow Fever: Add Constitution to the *Damage Type*. Increase *Effects* to Dangerous and *Cure/Remedy* to two consecutive Moderate Constitution-based saving throws.

Dimensions: Individual
Effects: Nuisance
Damage Type: Piercing
Condition: Distracted
Complication: Creature bitten by tick may contract a tick-transmitted Disease (see **Table 2-34** and **2-35** as well as the **Sidebox** below); Disease deals additional damage every day until cured; using a tool or precision instrument may grant a bonus to removing the tick
Cure/Remedy: Successful Easy Constitution-based saving throw immediately after taking damage

Mosquitoes are not the only critters that spread disease on the open plains. Ticks, a member of the arachnid family, also lurk in the grasses, waiting to hitch a ride on a suitable host for a future blood meal. Like mosquitoes, ticks prefer warm, humid habitats such as the savanna over the temperate grasslands' cooler and drier environment. Still, ticks can be found practically anywhere and are ideally suited for life on the plains. These insidious bloodsuckers cannot fly or jump. Instead, they use two pairs of legs to attach their bodies to a leaf or a blade of grass and use their forelegs to climb onto a victim as it passes their hiding spot. Ticks have acute senses allowing them to detect the nearby presence of a potential host and find a weak spot in the creature's skin so that it can easily burrow through the outer epidermis. Whereas mosquitoes use hit-and-run guerilla tactics to feed and find their next meal, ticks hang around for the long haul. A tick can attach itself to a single host for days at a time until it finally sates its appetite for blood. They are silent, tiny parasites whose coloration blends well with clothing and are difficult to locate without a thorough, tactile examination.

Like mosquitoes, most game systems present statistics for giant versions of these bugs or swarms. A solitary, adult tick is no match for even a small child. The youngster can crush the arachnid with ease. Ticks are hard to spot and tricky to permanently remove. Smashing a tick kills the pest, but leaves its mouth and head buried beneath the skin, guaranteeing any contagion it carries spills into the host's bloodstream. The following table details the daily chances of encountering a disease-carrying tick based upon the grassland type and time of year. The GM can and should interject encounters with non-disease carrying ticks to increase the characters' fear and paranoia of these pests.

Table 2-34: Daily Percent Chance of Encountering Disease-Carrying Tick

Grassland Type	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Prairie	01-02	01-03	01	–
Savanna	01-03	01-05	01-02	01
Steppe	01	01-02	–	–

To come into contact with the tick, the person must brush against the tick's temporary home, and the tick must latch onto the target's clothing or its body. Ticks move relatively slowly and can spend 1d4 hours looking for an ideal feeding location on its host. This gives the character or his companions a chance to spot the hitchhiker before it has an opportunity to deal any damage. If the check succeeds, the character may kill or remove the tick without making an attack roll.

An undetected tick eventually settles on a feeding location and burrows into the skin. Because ticks stick around for a while, they secrete an anticoagulant that prevents the blood from clotting, giving the pest an uninterrupted flow of blood. Catching a tick in the act of feeding requires a delicate procedure to completely remove the hungry arachnid. Crushing the tick kills it, but its detached mouth and head remain buried beneath the skin. Other than using magical means, ticks are best removed with a

Table 2-35: Disease Transmitted by Tick

Grassland Type	Encephalitis	Lyme Disease	Hemorrhagic Fever	Spotted Fever	Tularemia
Prairie	01-35	36-50	51-55	56-80	81-00
Savanna	01-25	–	26-75	76-85	86-00
Steppe	01-35	36-75	–	76-90	91-00

Tick-transmitted Diseases

The follow entries detail the modifications the GM should make to the preceding hazards listing to simulate the effects of the following tick-transmitted diseases

Encephalitis: Add Wisdom to the *Damage Type* and confused to the *Condition* listing. Increase *Effects* to Harmful.

Hemorrhagic Fever: Add Constitution and Wisdom to the *Damage Type* and bleed to the *Condition* listing. Increase *Effects* to Dangerous and *Cure/Remedy* to two consecutive Moderate Constitution-based saving throws.

Lyme Disease: Add Dexterity to the *Damage Type*. Increase *Effects* to Harmful and *Cure/Remedy* to a Moderate Constitution-based saving throw.

Spotted Fever: Add Constitution and Wisdom to the *Damage Type* and sickened to the *Condition* listing. Increase *Effects* to Dangerous and *Cure/Remedy* to two consecutive Moderate Constitution-based saving throws.

Tularemia: Add Constitution to the *Damage Type*. Increase *Effects* to Harmful and *Cure/Remedy* to a Moderate Constitution-based saving throw.

steady hand and a small precision grasping tool. **Table 2-35** may be used to determine which disease the tick carries based upon the season and type of grassland, and the Sidebox presents details on the diseases.

Animals

Wildlife abounds in great numbers on the plains, especially in the savanna and prairie. It is not unusual to see thousands and perhaps even millions of hungry herbivores mass together around a watering hole or along a migratory route heading toward a vast field of pristine grasses. Naturally, predators are rarely far behind, patiently watching and waiting for the opportune moment to strike an isolated and comparatively weak animal. Under normal circumstances, these animals pose minimal danger to humans. But there are occasions where they defy convention and become a deadly threat, either intentionally or unintentionally.

The large plains herd animals are generally docile creatures that display aggression only when humans and predators threaten them and most especially their offspring. Although they do not actively hunt other creatures, an angry wildebeest or bison is a powerful and dangerous opponent even for an experienced adventurer. An attack rarely comes without significant provocation and a warning, so in most instances, the character has ample time to back off and diffuse the tension between himself and the agitated beast. In some cases, an adventurer who fails to get the message may find himself engaged in combat with not just one animal, but an entire slew of them, particularly in the case of the more aggressive creatures. As a general rule of thumb, domesticated animals and noncombative animals flee in the face of danger. Deer, sheep, cattle, antelopes, and zebras fall into this category. The larger and more combative herd animals, such as cattle and bison, typically stand their ground to fight off trespassers and predators.

Stampede (Animal)

Detection: Hard Intelligence ability check/skill check pertaining to animals, nature, or sensing mood to determine if the herd is already on edge (see below)

Identification: Obvious
Avoidance: Hard Dexterity-based saving throw partially reduces effects
Escape: Fleeing the area
Dimensions: Large-scale
Effects: Varies (see **Table 2–38**)
Damage Type: Bludgeoning
Condition: Knocked prone on a failed Dexterity saving throw
Complication: None
Cure/Remedy: None

Herd animals sometimes react en masse to a singular event that can be as mundane as a clap of thunder and as extraordinary as a ghostly presence walking among them. In most cases, the sight or scent of a fearsome predator is responsible for frightening the herd. What ensues is a stampede — a chaotic, mad dash to escape the danger as quickly as possible regardless of what stands in their way.

The first step in the process of adjudicating a stampede is to determine whether it takes place at all. Animals who gather in herds are the only creatures that behave in this manner, although a stampede may include several different species at any given time. The next ingredient is a catalyst — an event that potentially triggers a stampede. It can be as simple as an inexplicable sound from the opposite bank of a watering hole or as unusual as an undead creature. Once these two conditions are met, the GM must determine whether a stampede takes place. This is done by rolling Wisdom-based saving throws for the herd animals. **Table 2–36** provides the level of difficulty for these saving throws based upon the particular situation.

Table 2–36:
Difficulty Level of Herd Animal Saving Throws

Difficulty Level	Event
Easy	Inexplicable noise, sight or scent of unknown creature
Moderate	Peal of thunder, sight or scent of humanoids
Hard	Sight or scent of recognizable predator, partially submerged in water, use of magic
Arduous	Herd member attacked, fire, unnatural aura, sight or scent of an unnatural creature

It is impossible to roll several hundred or even several dozen individual saving throws to determine how the entire herd responds to the potential crisis. The GM should instead roll a sampling of saving throws to accurately gauge the herd’s overall mood. Depending upon the herd’s size, it is recommended that the GM attempt at least three saves for a small grouping (30 or less), five saves for medium-sized grouping (31–100), seven saves for a large grouping (101–

250) and up to nine saves for a very large herd (250+). (Odd numbers are preferable to even numbers to eliminate any potential ties.) If there are several different types of herd animals present, such as sheep and cattle, each creature type should receive at least one saving throw. If there are any remaining saving throws to be divided based upon the herd’s size, the GM may allocate them on a pro rata basis or distribute the rest to the most numerous animals within the herd. **Table 2–37** details the outcome of these saving throws.

Table 2–37: Saving Throw Results

Result	Outcome
Majority of animals fail their saving throws	stampede
At least one animal fails its saving throw	herd is nervous but does not stampede, impose a penalty on future saving throws

Result	Outcome
All animals succeed	herd remains calm, grant a bonus to the herd on future saving throws

Bonuses and penalties accrued during this phase expire 1 hour later. A saving throw must be made for each separate event (even if the herd is stampeding), unless the herd encountered an event within the last hour that had a higher difficulty level than the current event, and the herd did not stampede. If that occurs, the herd does not need to attempt another saving throw to avoid stampeding. For instance, if the herd spotted a pride of 10 lions thirty minutes ago and did not stampede (Hard Difficulty Level), a saving throw would not be needed to avoid stampeding because of a peal of thunder (Moderate Difficulty Level).

If a stampede occurs, the entire herd turns and flees at maximum speed away from the perceived danger. In most cases, the animals run in the opposite direction from the threat, but that may not always be possible. Another obstacle or potential threat may stand in their way, in which case the herd bolts in a random direction. Any creature or object in the herd’s path is subject to being trampled. **Table 2–38** describes the amount of damage the herd deals based upon its size. The GM may adjust the scale upwards or downwards depending upon the size of the individual animals comprising the herd. If the beasts are smaller than the average person, it may be appropriate to scale back the damage. On the other hand, creatures much larger than the average person warrant an increase in the damage.

Table 2–38: Stampede Damage

Herd Size	Effects
Small grouping (30 or less animals)	Harmful
Medium grouping (31 to 100 animals)	Dangerous
Large grouping (101 to 250 animals)	Deadly
Very large grouping (250+ animals)	Lethal

Predatory Animals

The predators stalking the great herds come in all shapes and sizes. One of the largest, the majestic lion, saunters across the savannas with the swagger of a mighty king. On the other hand, the crafty hyena skulks behind the confident feline as it waits for an opportunity to steal the big cat’s most recent kill. In spite of their fearsome natural weaponry, predatory animals typically do not target humanoids, yet there are always exceptions to the rule. Humanity refers to beasts that deliberately hunt and eat humans as man-eaters. One of the most famous incidents of this behavior occurred in the late 19th century, when two man-eating lions mauled and devoured railway workers building a bridge over the Tsavo River in Kenya. Numerous theories abound as to why some predatory animals develop a taste for human flesh, but the consensus holds that most do so as a last resort or in response to human behaviors. Large predators scavenging the remains of dead soldiers littered about a battlefield may grow accustomed to eating humans and begin to see people as prey. A sudden and sharp population decline among their traditional fare may also force the hungry beasts to find alternative food sources. A man-eating big cat, crocodile, and even a hippopotamus can be a frightful adversary for a farming community, nomadic people, and adventurers alike.

The savannas are also home to these animals’ prehistoric counterparts, the dinosaurs. These behemoths roam the tropical grasslands, devouring anything in their path. Fortunately, most are herbivores, but the carnivorous dinosaurs are not selective about their prey. A hungry dinosaur attacks and eats any living creature that crosses its path regardless of its appearance and size. The gargantuan tyrannosaurus is the largest and most-feared of these reptilian predators. A lone tyrannosaurus can level a building in a manner of seconds and can slay a bison with a single bite. The savanna’s nomadic residents steer a wide berth around these monsters, yet conflicts are sometimes unavoidable. When they do occur, villagers seek adventurers to rid the tropical grasslands of this enormous, destructive beast. Although a few species can endure the temperate grasslands’ frigid winters, most

dinosaurs, especially the largest ones, fare poorly in cold environments. They generally remain within the warmer tropical grasslands and forests on a year-round basis.

Snakes (Poison)

Food is often foremost on the minds of most predators, yet animals sometimes attack people for other reasons. Some lash out at humans who wander too far into their territory or stray too close to their young. More commonly, people stumble into a predator they rarely see slithering through the tall grasses. From the dawn of time, humanity has feared and reviled snakes. These reptiles are often seen as wily deceivers that serve as the willing agents of dark deities and evil monsters. Reality is different than perception. Snakes avoid people whenever possible and usually give loud and ample warning of their displeasure. Some aggressive species do not back down from a confrontation with humanoid foes, however.

Snake venom comes in two general varieties — hemotoxins and neurotoxins. Hemotoxins destroy living tissue and red blood cells which disrupts clotting. Neurotoxins are paralytic agents that shut down the victim's nervous system. Most snake venoms incorporate elements of both types of toxin, but one is generally predominant. Presented below are the hazard tables for hemotoxic venom and neurotoxic venom. The effects of individual species are detailed in the subsequent Venom sidebar.

Hemotoxic Venom (Poison)

Detection: None

Identification: Moderate Intelligence ability check/skill check pertaining to animal and nature

Avoidance: Easy Constitution-based saving throw, after being bitten

Escape: None

Dimensions: Individual

Effects: Harmful

Damage Type: Dexterity, piercing, poison

Condition: None

Complication: Poison deals additional damage every 1d4 minutes until the creature is cured

Cure/Remedy: Subsequent successful Easy Constitution-based saving throw immediately after taking damage

Neurotoxic Venom (Poison)

Detection: None

Identification: Easy Intelligence ability check/skill check pertaining to animals and nature

Avoidance: Moderate Constitution-based saving throw, after being bitten

Escape: None

Dimensions: Individual

Effects: Harmful

Damage Type: Piercing, poison, Strength

Condition: Paralyzed

Complication: Poison deals additional damage every 30 minutes and the creature remains paralyzed until cured

Cure/Remedy: Subsequent successful Moderate Constitution-based saving throw immediately after taking damage

These animals share the same statistical blocks as those used for poisonous or venomous snakes in your game system. Presented below are three tables to randomly determine the type of snake encountered in each of the grasslands as well as provide more individualized effects for the species' venom. A snake whose bite delivers hemotoxic venom uses the preceding hazard listing unless otherwise noted in the following Venoms Sidebar. A snake whose bite delivers neurotoxic poison uses the preceding hazard listing unless otherwise noted in the following Venoms Sidebar.

Venom

All snake venoms are not made alike. Although they share many common characteristics, the toxins differ slightly from one species to the next. For GMs seeking added realism, the following entries detail the modifications you can make to the hemotoxic and neurotoxic venom hazard listings for each individual species.

Adder: Add suffocation^a to the *Complication* listing.

Black mamba: Increase *Effects* to Deadly and the *Cure/Remedy* to two consecutive Hard Constitution-based saving throws. Add Strength to the *Damage Type* and suffocation^a to the *Complication* listing.

Boomslang: Increase *Effects* to Dangerous and the *Cure/Remedy* to two consecutive Moderate Constitution-based saving throws. Add Strength to the *Damage Type* and nauseated to the *Condition* listing.

Cobra: Increase *Effects* to Dangerous and increase the *Cure/Remedy* to two consecutive Moderate Constitution-based saving throws. Add Strength to the *Damage Type* and suffocation^a to the *Complication* listing.

Copperhead: Add Constitution to the *Damage Type*.

Rattlesnake: Add Constitution to the *Damage Type*.

Viper: None

^a Suffocation automatically occurs when the creature's Strength is reduced to 0.

Table 2-39: Savanna Snakes

Type of Snake	Encounter Chance
Adder ^a	01–30
Black mamba ^a	31–45
Boomslang ^b	46–60
Cobra ^a	61–80
Viper ^b	81–00

^a Neurotoxin

^b Hemotoxin

Table 2-40: Prairie Snakes

Type of Snake	Encounter Chance
Copperhead ^a	01–30
Rattlesnake ^a	31–00

^a Hemotoxin

Table 2-41: Steppe Snakes

Type of Snake	Encounter Chance
Adder ^a	01–50
Viper ^b	51–00

^a Neurotoxin

^b Hemotoxin

Men and Monsters

Virulent pests and wild animals are not the only living creatures to torment the plains' humanoid inhabitants. Men and monsters also stalk the land searching for hapless victims to further their diabolical schemes. Villages, towns, and especially cities typically have some form of organized criminal activity within the community. Some openly sell their illicit goods and services, and others lurk in the shadows in furtherance of their nefarious plots. Outlaws living outside of humanoid settlements

typically resort to thievery as their primary occupation. Petty thieves steal agricultural products such as grain and livestock under the cover of darkness while their owners sleep.

The plains' more daring and violent crooks ply their craft on the trails and rivers that bisect the grasslands. Unlike their nocturnal counterparts, these brazen bandits and highwaymen attack horse-drawn vehicles and their passengers in broad daylight, which may result in a high-speed chase across the plains and a bloody battle with the vehicle's hired defenders and occupants. The boldest criminals ride into villages, towns, and cities and rob lucrative targets, such as armories, banks, museums, and treasuries. In some remote circles on the rough-and-tumble prairies, their exploits frequently catapult them from hated villains into celebrated outlaws and the stuff of legends. To further enhance their exalted status, clever thieves redistribute some of their ill-gotten spoils among the impoverished local populace. Doing so buys them a network of spies and informers as well as vital logistical support and temporary safe houses in times of need.

Although some criminals go it alone like the savanna's solitary cheetahs and leopards, the vast majority follows the lead of the grasslands' social predators and forms gangs that closely emulate the animals' hierarchal order. The leader and second-in-command typically direct and coordinate the group's activities. The gangs are evenly split between those leading a nomadic lifestyle on the outskirts of society, and those adhering to a sedentary existence. In the latter case, they usually live under an alias, and typically lead unassuming lives in remote, rural communities far away from their criminal stomping grounds or dwell in the seedy underbelly of the grasslands' largest humanoid settlements. A handful even takes up residence with the region's malevolent giants, ogres, orcs, and goblins in exchange for a percentage of their earnings.

Many adopt colorful monikers such as Rhett Smiley and the Haymakers, The Shrieking Buffalos, Kid Goat and the Wild Horsemen, and Death by Horseback that increase their reputation among their adoring followers and their aggrieved victims. Notoriety is a heavy burden. In many cases, the victims of their deeds seek restitution and revenge regardless of the potential costs. A few prefer to take matters into their own hands and mete out their own brand of justice. The rest defer to the expertise of bounty hunters and adventurers alike. The rewards offered for taking down a renowned and dangerous gang can exceed the haul gained from a royal tomb or a giant's lair. Capturing and killing wanted outlaws can be a very lucrative profession indeed.

Humanoid thieves are not the only sentient creatures prowling the endless waves of grain and grass. Goblins and their larger cousins are prolific breeders when left unchecked, could outnumber all other humanoids combined. In spite of humanity's constant efforts to rein them in, these savage creatures swarm across the land like a virulent plague. Gnolls are also prevalent in large numbers in the savannas where they scavenge kills from other predators alongside their hyena companions. These creatures boast the largest monstrous populations, but an individual goblin or gnoll is no match for the grasslands' mightiest creatures. Gold dragons hold sway in the savannas, though they rarely interfere in the affairs of others unless they are left with no other choice. These creatures pose the greatest hazard to the adventurers that call this environment home.

While traveling through the grasslands, the GM may use the following table to determine random encounters. To use the table roll 1d1000 (3d10). Consult the prairie column to determine encounters in that environment, the savanna column for encounters in that environment, and the steppe column for encounters in that environment.

Table 2-42: Random Grasslands Encounters

Creature	No. App.	Prairie	Savanna	Steppe
Ankheg	1–6	1–40	–	1–40
Antelope (deer)	1–50	41–80	1–50	41–60
Axe beak	1–6	81–100	–	61–70
Basilisk	1–6	101–105	51–55	71–75
Bison	1–30	106–175	–	76–150
Blink dog	1–14	176–185	–	151–160

Creature	No. App.	Prairie	Savanna	Steppe
Cat	1–12	186–215	56–90	161–180
Centaur	1–30	216–260	91–145	181–220
Cheetah	1–2	–	146–190	–
Cockatrice	1–12	261–280	–	221–235
Dog	1–12	281–315	191–220	236–270
Doppelganger	1–6	316–320	221–235	271–275
Elephant	1–30	321–360	236–285	276–295
Elk	1–50	361–375	–	296–335
Gargoyle	1–12	376–380	286–300	336–350
Ghost	1	381–390	301–320	351–365
Ghoul	1–12	391–410	321–360	366–405
Giant elk	1–12	411–420	–	406–420
Giant hyena	1–12	–	361–370	–
Giant poisonous snake	1–6	421–430	371–400	421–435
Giant scorpion	1	431–445	401–430	436–440
Giant spider	1–8	446–465	431–445	441–450
Giant vulture	1–8	–	446–470	–
Gnoll	1–100	466–495	471–520	451–475
Goblin	1–100	496–540	–	476–500
Gold Dragon	1	541–545	–	501–505
Hell hound	1–12	546–550	501–515	506–515
Horse	1–30	551–590	516–555	515–575
Hyena	1–12	–	556–595	–
Lich	1	591–595	596–600	576–580
Lion	1–10	–	601–630	–
Mammoth	1–20	596–610	–	581–630
Mimic	1	611–615	631–635	631–635
Minotaur	1–4	616–645	636–655	636–655
Mummy	1–12	646–665	656–685	656–680
Pony	1–30	666–700	686–720	681–715
Rakshasa	1–12	701–705	721–725	716–720
Rat	1–20	706–735	726–760	721–740
Rhinoceros	1–12	–	761–775	–
Saber-Toothed Tiger (Smilodon)	1–10	736–775	776–790	741–770
Scorpion	1	776–795	791–805	771–780
Shadow	1–12	796–810	806–815	781–810
Skeleton	1–50	811–840	816–830	811–845
Snake (constrictor)	1–6	–	831–840	–
Snake (poisonous)	1–8	841–860	841–855	846–860
Specter	1–12	861–880	856–865	861–875
Spider	1–20	881–890	866–880	876–895
Triceratops	1–8	–	881–885	–
Tyrannosaurus	1–6	–	886–890	–



Creature	No. App.	Prairie	Savanna	Steppe
Vampire	1	891–895	891–895	895–900
Vulture	1–24	–	896–920	–
Werewolf	1–8	896–910	921–930	901–930
Wight	1–12	911–930	931–950	931–945
Worg	1–12	931–960	–	946–965
Wraith	1–12	961–975	951–965	966–975
Zombie	1–50	976–000	966–000	976–000

Weather

Malevolent men and creatures are not the only dangers in the grass and grain fields. Weather on the temperate plains is harsh and fickle. Adventurers seeking fame and fortune must be prepared for nature's furious and sometimes unpredictable wrath. Hot, humid summers wither the hardiest warriors, and frigid winters literally chill the stoutest souls to the bone. Tornadoes destroy anything in their path and can level a city in minutes. The fierce winds and blinding snow of a prairie blizzard can halt a giant in its tracks. A single lightning strike can transform a peaceful pasture into a roaring blaze in a matter of seconds. Plains adventurers soon discover nature cannot be controlled.

The grasslands' weather hazards tend to be extremely violent, but short-lived. The low-lying plains are highly susceptible to nature's most powerful weather event — the tornado. In addition to spawning this whirling vortex of destruction, the vicious thunderstorms that rumble across the flat expanses occasionally transform into microbursts, a column of shifting winds and

torrential rain that is the bane of all flying creatures. They can also produce lightning strikes that can transform a tranquil field into a raging inferno in a matter of seconds. During the winter months, the colliding masses of cold and warm air conjure fearsome blizzards packing high winds, bitter cold, and blinding snows that blanket the landscape in a coating of ice and snow. The intense storms that wrack the plains wreak tremendous damage that can require years of extensive rebuilding and recovery.

Tornado (Weather)

Detection: Hard Intelligence ability check or Moderate skill check pertaining to geography or weather identifies topography or weather conditions conducive to tornado development; Easy Wisdom ability check or skill check pertaining to audio or visual perception spots the tornado at a range of 1 mile; obvious at ranges of one-half mile or less
Identification: Easy Intelligence ability check or skill check pertaining to nature or weather

Avoidance: Hard Dexterity-based saving throw partially reduces effects

Escape: Fleeing the affected area, taking shelter below ground or in a secure, interior room within an above-ground structure capable of withstanding the tornado

Dimensions: Large-scale

Effects: Deadly

Damage Type: Bludgeoning

Condition: Blinded, deafened

Complication: Wind hurls creature in a random direction; creature close to or within the vortex is subjected to additional bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from flying debris; lightning may accompany supercell

containing tornado (see Lightning below)
Cure/Remedy: None

No weather event is as awe-inspiring and terrifying as a tornado. Its inverted cone shape and ferocious howling winds strike fear in the hearts of every creature that inhabits the plains. Although they can occur in almost any location, the majority occur in flat areas on the lee side of mountain ranges bordering warm coastal regions as exemplified by the portion of the United States commonly referred to as Tornado Alley. Cold, dry air passing eastward over the Rocky Mountains collides with warm, moist area surging north from the Gulf of Mexico. When the opposing air masses meet, thunderstorms erupt. Occasionally, these violent storms transform into locally intense bands known as supercells. Most tornadoes develop from these supercells, but tornadoes can form without the presence of a supercell. Still, the tornadoes spawned in this manner are often much larger and far more potent than tornadoes created by other atmospheric conditions. A successful ability check or skill check as mentioned above allows a creature to determine if a particular region is conducive to the formation of these monstrous weather events. Likewise, the same check determines whether the current weather conditions are likely to spawn a tornado, but it does not provide exact details — specifically where and when the tornado is going to form.

Tornados can occur at any time of year, but they are most common during the spring and least so during winter. They are difficult to predict and can form in a matter of minutes. Tornadoes come in varying shapes and sizes. The average tornado measures 10d10x5 feet across and moves at an average speed of 250 feet per round, making it virtually impossible to outrun. Tornadoes move in a haphazard manner. A GM should randomly determine the cyclone’s direction each round. Tornadoes occurring in areas conducive to their formation may be ten times larger than average and can move twice as fast. Seeking secure shelter, preferably underground, is the only defense against the tornado. The average tornado lasts for 3d10 rounds before dissipating, though it is possible for a tornado to last for an hour.

Microburst (Weather)

Detection: Hard Intelligence ability check or Moderate skill check pertaining to weather identifies conditions conducive to microburst development
Identification: Hard Wisdom ability check or Moderate skill check pertaining to weather differentiates a microburst from an ordinary thunderstorm
Avoidance: Hard Dexterity ability check or skill check pertaining to flying prevents a flying creature from being blown in a random direction including towards the ground, or have its progress impeded
Escape: Fleeing the area
Dimensions: Small-scale
Effects: Nuisance
Damage Type: Electrical, if any
Condition: Blinded
Complication: Wind hurls flying creature in a random direction or impeding its forward progress through the air; ranged attacks, including siege weapons, automatically miss within a microburst; lightning may accompany microburst (see Lightning below)
Cure/Remedy: None

Cousin to the tornado, a microburst is a dangerous downdraft of air that creates straight-line winds as opposed to the rotational winds encountered in a hurricane or tornado. A microburst is always associated with a thunderstorm. This weather event duplicates the effects of a conventional thunderstorm with one notable exception: Flying creatures are especially vulnerable to the shifting downdrafts of wind that occur in a microburst. These creatures may be hurled to the ground or have their progress checked while flying through a microburst.

Lightning (Weather)

Detection: Hard Intelligence ability check or Moderate skill check pertaining to weather determines how far the lightning bolt is from current location
Identification: Obvious
Avoidance: Hard Dexterity-based saving throw partially reduces effects
Escape: Fleeing the area
Dimensions: Individual
Effects: Deadly
Damage Type: Electrical, fire, lightning
Condition: Stunned, unconscious
Complication: Electrical surge shuts down brain function and heart rhythm if the creature failed its Dexterity saving throw
Cure/Remedy: A successful Hard Constitution saving throw restarts the creature’s normal brain and heart operations; creature attempts saving throw every minute until cured or dead

Thunder and lightning go hand in hand. It is impossible to have one without the other. It would also be difficult to have grasslands without lightning. These random bolts of electricity are frequently the sparks that set the desiccated plants ablaze and turn the formerly tranquil grasslands into a roaring inferno. Every 30 seconds during a tornado, microburst, or thunderstorm, a lightning bolt crashes to the ground 2d4–2 miles away in a random direction from the storm’s center (treat a result of “0” as less than 1 mile). The bolt deals electrical damage to everything in its path and ignites any flammable materials it hits. There is a 1% chance of lightning striking any creature less than 1 mile from the bolt. This chance is reduced to 0.5% if the character is curled into a ball in a depression or other low-lying area. The chances of getting struck are doubled for creatures wearing metal armor or standing adjacent to materials that conduct electricity.

Daily Weather

The temperate grasslands are a study in temperature contrasts. While temperatures remain fairly steady throughout the year in the savanna, the variations in temperature between summer highs and winter lows can vary by as much as 100 degrees Fahrenheit (55 degrees Celsius). Excessive heat and bone-chilling cold are serious dangers for plains adventurers. The following random weather charts allow the GM to determine the daily high and low temperatures along with the wind speed and chances of precipitation.

Prairies

Prairies experience the greatest temperature fluctuation among all the grasslands. The following tables reflect those variations as well as the possibilities of running into foul weather while traveling through these temperate grasslands.

Table 2-43: Daily High Temperatures

D100	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
01–10	65+4d6° F	85+4d6° F	60+4d6° F	35+4d6° F
11–20	65+3d6° F	85+3d6° F	60+3d6° F	35+3d6° F
21–30	60+4d6° F	80+4d6° F	55+4d6° F	30+4d6° F
31–40	60+3d6° F	80+3d6° F	55+3d6° F	30+3d6° F
41–50	55+4d6° F	75+4d6° F	50+4d6° F	25+4d6° F
51–60	55+3d6° F	75+3d6° F	50+3d6° F	25+3d6° F
61–70	50+4d6° F	70+4d6° F	45+4d6° F	20+4d6° F
71–80	50+3d6° F	70+3d6° F	45+3d6° F	20+3d6° F

Savannas

The following tables generate the daily high temperatures, low temperatures, wind speed and chance of precipitation in a savanna according to season.

Table 2-47: Daily High Temperature

D100	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
01-10	84+3d4° F	88+3d4° F	78+3d4° F	68+4d4° F
11-20	82+3d4° F	86+3d4° F	76+3d4° F	66+4d4° F
21-30	80+3d4° F	84+3d4° F	74+3d4° F	64+4d4° F
31-40	78+3d4° F	82+3d4° F	72+3d4° F	62+4d4° F
41-50	76+3d4° F	80+3d4° F	70+3d4° F	60+4d4° F
51-60	74+3d4° F	78+3d4° F	68+3d4° F	58+4d4° F
61-70	72+3d4° F	76+3d4° F	66+3d4° F	56+4d4° F
71-80	70+3d4° F	74+3d4° F	64+3d4° F	54+4d4° F
81-90	68+3d4° F	72+3d4° F	62+3d4° F	52+4d4° F
91-00	66+3d4° F	70+3d4° F	60+3d4° F	50+4d4° F

To determine the daily low temperature, subtract the amounts shown on the following table from the day's high temperature. For instance, if the preceding table generates a high temperature of 100° F, and the low temperature generates a result of 25 - 4d6°, which results in a total of 36°, the daily low temperature is 73° F (109° - 36° = 73° F).

Table 2-48: Daily Low Temperatures

D100	Low Temperature
01-10	-2+3d4
11-20	-4+3d4
21-30	-6+3d4
31-40	-8+3d4
41-50	-10+3d4
51-60	-12+3d4
61-70	-14+3d4
71-80	-16+3d4
81-90	-18+3d4
91-00	-20+3d4

The following table determines the wind speed measured in miles per hour based upon the season.

Table 2-49: Daily Wind Speed1 (miles per hour)

D100	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
01-10	1d3	1d4	1d3	1d2
11-20	1d4	1d6	1d4	1d3
21-30	1d6	1d8	1d6	1d4
31-40	1d8	1d10	1d8	1d6
41-50	1d10	2d6	1d10	1d8
51-60	2d6	3d6	2d6	1d10
61-70	3d6	4d6	3d6	2d6
71-80	4d6	5d6	4d6	3d6
81-90	5d6	6d6	5d6	4d6
91-00	6d6	7d6	6d6	5d6

¹ Increase the daily wind speed by 6d6 mph in the event of a thunderstorm or blizzard.

D100	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
81-90	45+4d6° F	65+4d6° F	40+4d6° F	15+4d6° F
91-00	45+3d6° F	65+3d6° F	40+3d6° F	15+3d6° F

To determine the daily low temperature, subtract the amounts shown on the following table from the day's high temperature. For instance, if the preceding table generates a high temperature of 109° F, and the low temperature generates a result of 25 - 4d6°, which results in a total of 36°, the daily low temperature is 73° F (109° - 36° = 73° F).

Table 2-44: Daily Low Temperatures

D100	Low Temperature
01-10	-5+3d6
11-20	-5+3d6
21-30	-10+4d6
31-40	-10+3d6
41-50	-15+4d6
51-60	-15+3d6
61-70	-20+4d6
71-80	-20+3d6
81-90	-25+4d6
91-00	-25+4d6

The following table determines the wind speed measured in miles per hour based upon the season.

Table 2-45 Daily Wind Speed1 (miles per hour)

D100	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
01-10	1d8	2d6	1d6	1d8
11-20	2d6	2d8	1d8	2d6
21-30	2d8	3d6	2d6	2d8
31-40	3d6	3d8	2d8	3d6
41-50	3d8	4d6	3d6	3d8
51-60	4d6	4d8	3d8	4d6
61-70	4d8	5d6	4d6	4d8
71-80	5d6	5d8	4d8	5d6
81-90	5d8	6d6	5d6	5d8
91-00	6d6	7d6	5d8	6d6

¹ Increase the daily wind speed by 6d6 mph in the event of a thunderstorm or blizzard.

The following chart determines the daily chance of experiencing a storm. It is also based upon the season.

Table 2-46: Daily Chance of Precipitation

Result	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
No Precipitation	01 - 55	01 - 60	01 - 70	01 - 65
Rain ¹	56 - 90	61 - 75	71 - 94	66 - 90
Thunderstorm ²	91 - 94	76 - 95	95 - 97	91 - 98
Microburst	95 - 96	96 - 97	98	99
Tornado	97 - 00	99 - 00	00	00

¹ If the temperature is 32° F or less, the precipitation falls as snow.

² If the temperature is 32° F or less, the thunderstorm becomes a blizzard.

Whenever the wind speed equals or exceeds 30 miles per hour, it triggers a duststorm during the dry season.

The following chart determines the daily chance of experiencing a storm. It is also based upon the season.

Table 2-50: Daily Chance of Precipitation

Result	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
No Precipitation	01-80	01-60	01-78	01-97
Rain	81-82	61-68	78-84	98
Thunderstorm	83-00	69-00	85-00	99-00

Steppes

The following tables generate the daily high temperatures, low temperatures, wind speed and chance of precipitation in a steppe according to season.

Table 2-51: Daily High Temperature

D100	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
01-10	65+4d4° F	80+4d4° F	45+5d4° F	20+2d4° F
11-20	63+4d4° F	78+4d4° F	43+4d4° F	18+2d4° F
21-30	60+4d4° F	75+4d4° F	40+4d4° F	15+2d4° F
31-40	58+4d4° F	73+4d4° F	38+4d4° F	13+2d4° F
41-50	55+4d4° F	70+4d4° F	35+4d4° F	10+2d4° F
51-60	53+4d4° F	68+4d4° F	33+4d4° F	8+2d4° F
61-70	50+4d4° F	65+4d4° F	30+4d4° F	5+2d4° F
71-80	48+4d4° F	63+4d4° F	28+4d4° F	3+2d4° F
81-90	45+4d4° F	60+4d4° F	25+4d4° F	0+2d4° F
91-00	43+4d4° F	58+4d4° F	23+4d4° F	-2+2d4° F

To determine the daily low temperature, subtract the amounts shown on the following table from the day's high temperature. For instance, if the preceding table generates a high temperature of 100° F, and the low temperature generates a result of 25 - 4d6°, which results in a total of 36°, the daily low temperature is 73° F (109° - 36° = 73° F).

Table 2-52: Daily Low Temperatures

D100	Low Temperature
01-10	-2+2d4
11-20	-4+2d4
21-30	-7+2d4
31-40	-9+2d4
41-50	-12+2d4
51-60	-14+2d4
61-70	-17+2d4
71-80	-20+2d4
81-90	-22+2d4
91-00	-25+2d4

The following table determines the wind speed measured in miles per hour based upon the season.

Table 2-53 Daily Wind Speed¹ (miles per hour)

D100	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
01-10	1d3	1d2	1d3	1d4
11-20	1d4	1d3	1d4	1d6
21-30	1d6	1d4	1d6	1d8
31-40	1d8	1d6	1d8	1d10
41-50	1d10	1d8	1d10	2d6
51-60	2d6	1d10	2d6	2d8
61-70	2d8	2d6	2d8	3d6
71-80	3d6	2d8	3d6	3d8
81-90	3d8	3d6	3d8	4d6
91-00	4d6	3d8	4d6	4d8

¹ Increase the daily wind speed by 6d6 mph in the event of a thunderstorm or blizzard.

The following chart determines the daily chance of experiencing a storm. It is also based upon the season.

Table 2-54: Daily Chance of Precipitation

Result	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
No Precipitation	01 - 65	01 - 50	01 - 70	01 - 75
Precipitation¹	66 - 90	51 - 75	71 - 90	76 - 96
Thunderstorm²	91 - 98	81 - 99	91 - 00	97 - 00
Tornado	99 - 00	00	—	—

¹ If the temperature is 32° F or less, the precipitation falls as snow.

² If the temperature is 32° F or less, the thunderstorm becomes a blizzard.