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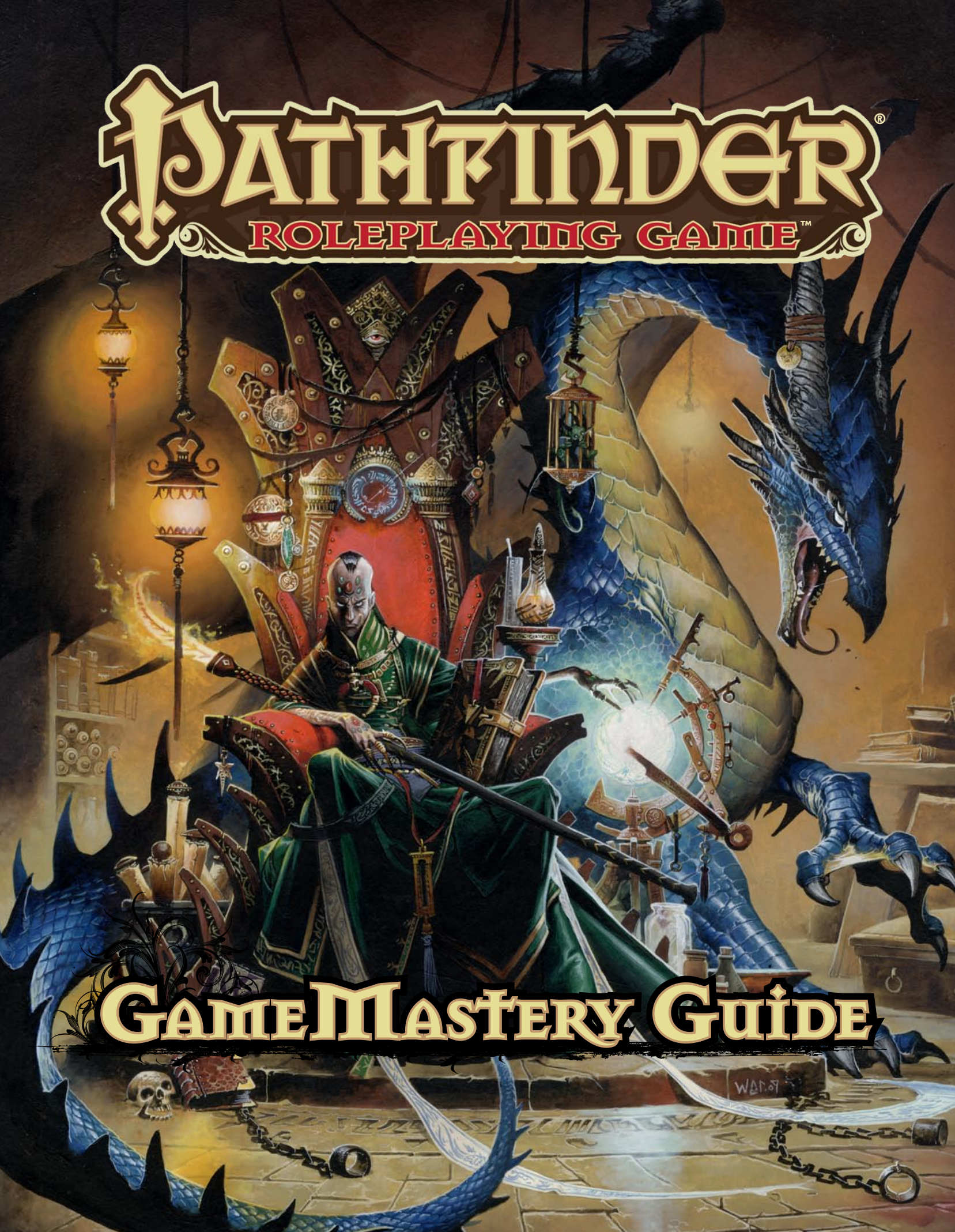
Roleplaying Game™



GameMastery Guide

Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game™

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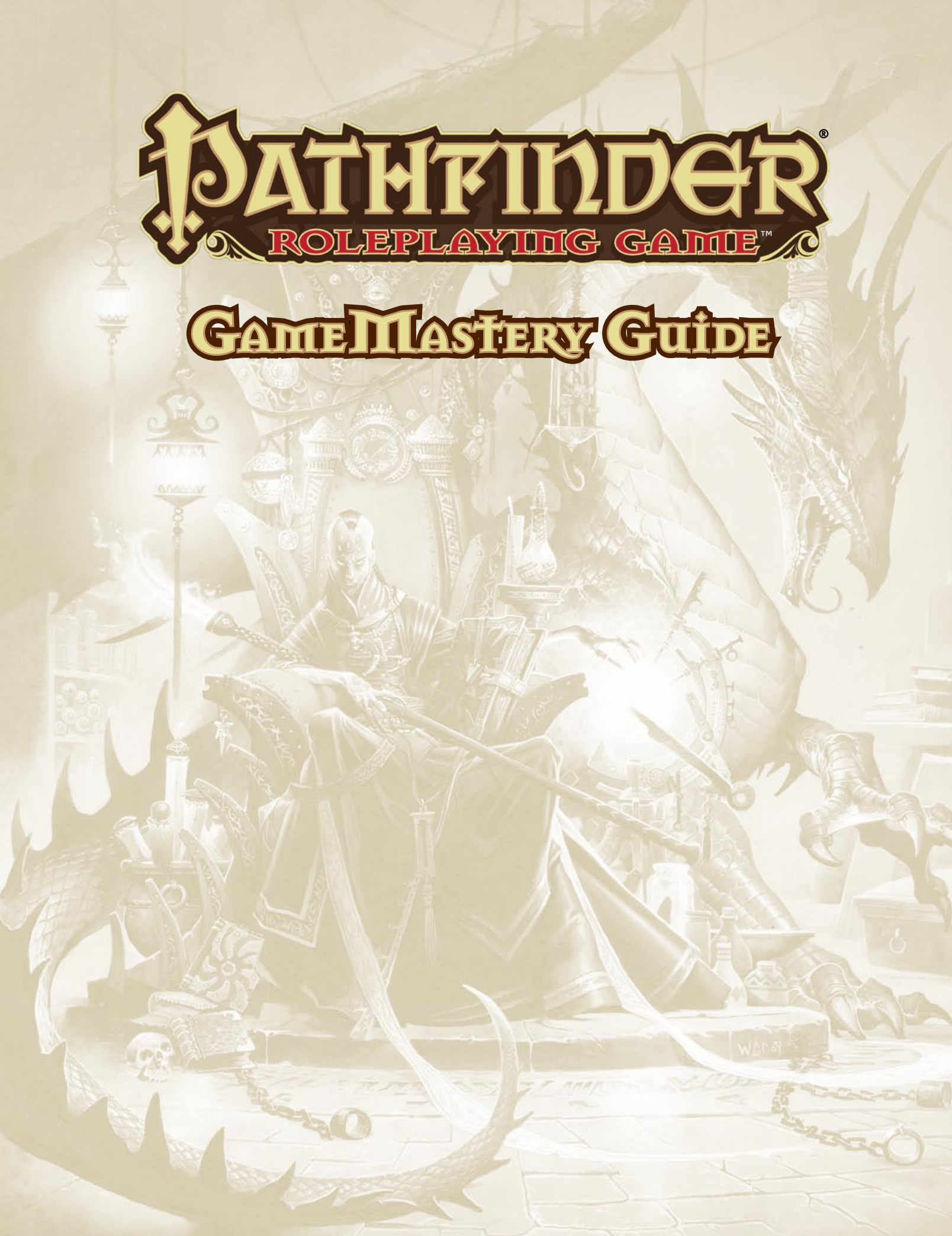



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This game is dedicated to Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

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Introduction

Welcome, Game Masters, to a collection of advice and inspiration, tools and rules, designed for a game like none other: your own. Within the pages of this book, the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*, awaits guidance and mechanics to help you use the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game to tell the tales you've always imagined. Whether you're a new player excited to take your first steps into the limitless world of fantasy roleplaying or a veteran Game Master with decades of experience, the following pages offer far more than just advice on using funny voices and inventing quirky characters—they contain a vast arsenal of tools and techniques designed to improve the gaming experience for both you and your players, from the moment inspiration strikes to the finale of any campaign.

For the novice Game Master, this book provides suggestions on how to begin a game and make it as fantastical as you can imagine, recommendations on how to find players and keep them coming back, tips on dealing with player- and adventure-related problems, and details on creating everything your game needs, from characters, to settings, to entire campaigns.

For adept Game Masters, this guide aims to save you time, fuel your creativity, and help every game you play run more smoothly. Within wait not only pages of suggestions and advice from some of the most talented Game Masters in the world, but also dozens of random idea generators, treasure charts, wandering monster tables, new rules subsystems, and stat blocks for the types of NPCs that appear most often in Pathfinder Roleplaying Game campaigns. Also expect aids to help you keep track of your characters, world, and campaign, tools to help you introduce new players to your game, and suggestions for books, music, and movies to help inform and inspire ever greater adventures.

All of this lies within, organized and cross-referenced with the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* and *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* to keep your attention on your stories and players, not on hunting through books. So turn the page—your next great story awaits.

Defining the Game Master

You might already know what a Game Master is. The likely definition, if you're holding this book, is "you." But if you don't know, a Game Master (or GM) is the Pathfinder RPG player who arbitrates the rules of the game and controls the actions of every game element that isn't explicitly controlled by the other players. But as any experienced Game Master knows, being a GM is also much, much more.

Host: Game Masters are the unifying force behind most of the game, not just organizing a social event but providing excitement and entertainment for those who participate. **Chapter 1: Getting Started** focuses on the GM's role as a host, presenting considerations on how to start a game, how to prepare for a session, and how to select a tone and rules that players will be eager to explore.

Mastermind: GMs work to keep a game's momentum moving in directions that entertain all the players while exploring the stories and settings they desire. To such ends, a GM manipulates dozens of elements, from how narrative components unfold to what rules are used and how they function in every situation. **Chapter 2: Running a Game** addresses a variety of topics that help GMs handle some of the most complicated aspects of their duties, from the details of how a GM actually performs in-game and frames a story to ways to create adventures and juggle the myriad aspects of a campaign.

Mediator: Just as GMs make sure all of a game's plots and rules work together to entertain, they must also ensure that the players themselves mesh and cooperate. From tips on handling unusual characters and common PC problems to the delicate tasks of introducing new players and addressing the needs of several gamer archetypes, **Chapter 3: Player Characters** offers GMs a host of suggestions to help them avoid, ease, and handle the wide variety of challenges that arise from both in-game characters and their real-world players.

Actor: Through the GM, the cast of entire fantasy worlds takes the stage. In a given session, a Game Master might play a generous peasant or a conniving king, a rampaging dragon or an enigmatic deity. Whatever the persona, the GM's characters are only as convincing, endearing, despicable, or memorable as the person who portrays them. **Chapter 4: Nonplayer Characters** deals with designing and depicting nonplayer characters, encouraging players to take a vested interest in NPCs, creating sinister villains, and many more suggestions to bring even the smallest role to life.

Patron: While GMs constantly confront their players with all sorts of dangers, they also serve as the source of every reward the PCs ever gain, from each experience point to treasures of legend. **Chapter 5: Rewards** aids GMs in creating and managing a wide variety of rewards, and includes ways to handle common challenges presented by character wealth and bring new life and adventure to old treasures.

World Builder: Whether running games on Golarion, home of the official Pathfinder campaign setting, or on a world of their own creation, GMs control nearly every aspect of an entire fantasy reality. With not just one world, but perhaps even multiple planets, planes, or even stranger settings under the GM's direction, the more insight and forethought invested into the ways and workings of locations, the more believable these become. Details on these elements, along with considerations on societies, time, technology, and more fill **Chapter 6: Creating a World**.

Storyteller: Among a GM's most important tasks is imagining and telling engaging stories. To aid in this task, **Chapter 7: Adventures** presents expansive discussions on several of the settings most common in the Pathfinder RPG, focusing on considerations and helpful rules GMs can employ wherever their tales might take them. In addition, numerous idea-generating charts and random encounter tables assure that GMs never lack for details or excitement once their stories reach their destinations.

Game Designer: Even with the vast range of options presented in the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*, only GMs know what threats their players might face or powers they might come to control. Just as GMs arbitrate the rules within their games, so can they manipulate, repurpose, and wholly invent new rules to improve their games. **Chapter 8: Advanced Topics** not only offers GMs a variety of new rule subsystems and considerations for running challenging types of adventures, but also expands upon several existing rules elements and demonstrates how GMs can customize the rules they already know to perfectly fit the types of adventures they want to run.

Director: Over the course of a campaign, Game Masters have need of dozens of characters and hundreds of encounters, choosing and customizing each and presenting them however best aids the overarching plot. Yet creating these elements can prove a repetitive and time-consuming task. To aid in this process, **Chapter 9: NPC Gallery** unveils a gallery of dozens of stat blocks for the types of NPCs most commonly encountered in the Pathfinder RPG. These characters can be used however the GM wishes, allowing him to focus on other, more exciting aspects of his campaigns.

Regardless of skill or experience as a Game Master, it's likely that every GM can identify one of these roles as an area in which she lacks experience or confidence. This *GameMastery Guide* seeks to address such needs, counseling on challenging aspects of campaigns, contributing new options and inspirations, and refreshing the game's classic elements. Most importantly, the countless tools herein are designed not to change games or tell GMs how they should play, but rather to inspire new stories and save effort, leaving GMs with more time to run exactly the adventures they and their groups want to play—or have been playing for years.



1 Getting Started



Hold tight, everyone. I think they're coming through." Steel rasped on leather as the big sword came off Amiri's back.

"Maybe they'll be friends!" Lini offered cheerily. Beside her, the big cat growled deep in his throat.

"I don't think so, little one," Sajan said. Beyond the portal, glowing eyes were opening. Too many eyes.

"Oh. Okay then." The gnome drew a thumb across her sickle, blood beading on its edge. "The ground looks a little dry here anyway."

From the shadows of the doorway, a taloned arm stretched forth.

Duties of a GM

While everyone at the table plays the game, the Game Master creates the world, breathing life into it in front of a small audience enraptured by his story. The Game Master works the hardest of everyone, spending night upon night before each game session carefully weaving the strands of fate and plotting the course of the adventurers' lives, working in twists, building encounters and monsters, and pouring blood, sweat, and tears into his creation. To use a common analogy, roleplaying games are like movies where the actors get to improvise and alter the script as they go, working off prompts from the Game Master. Extending this comparison, if the players are the actors, then the Game Master is the director—and often the screenwriter, even when basing the story on a published adventure. While this is a generic comparison, it illustrates some of the multiple roles the Game Master fills. The position can also be broken down into a number of other duties and responsibilities as follows.

Storyteller: Weaving plots involving the player characters and any number of nonplayer characters, leading dialogue, and unfurling a vast tapestry of ideas, stories, and adventure, the Game Master is a storyteller first and foremost. While the game is a collaborative narrative told from all sides of the table, the Game Master paves and maintains the road along which the adventurers walk.

Entertainer: Despite the best-laid plans and most intricate plots, if the game isn't fun and engaging, it isn't worth the effort. It's the Game Master's job to do whatever's necessary to keep the players' energy and interest up, immersing the group in the story through the use of strange voices, animated gestures, and generally making a fool of himself in the most classic sense. In order to fulfill the role of every individual the player characters encounter, the Game Master needs to be impressionist, comedian, and thespian all in one. In the role of the entertainer, the Game Master is the steward of every player's experience, keeping everyone at the table involved and the story moving along at the proper pace.

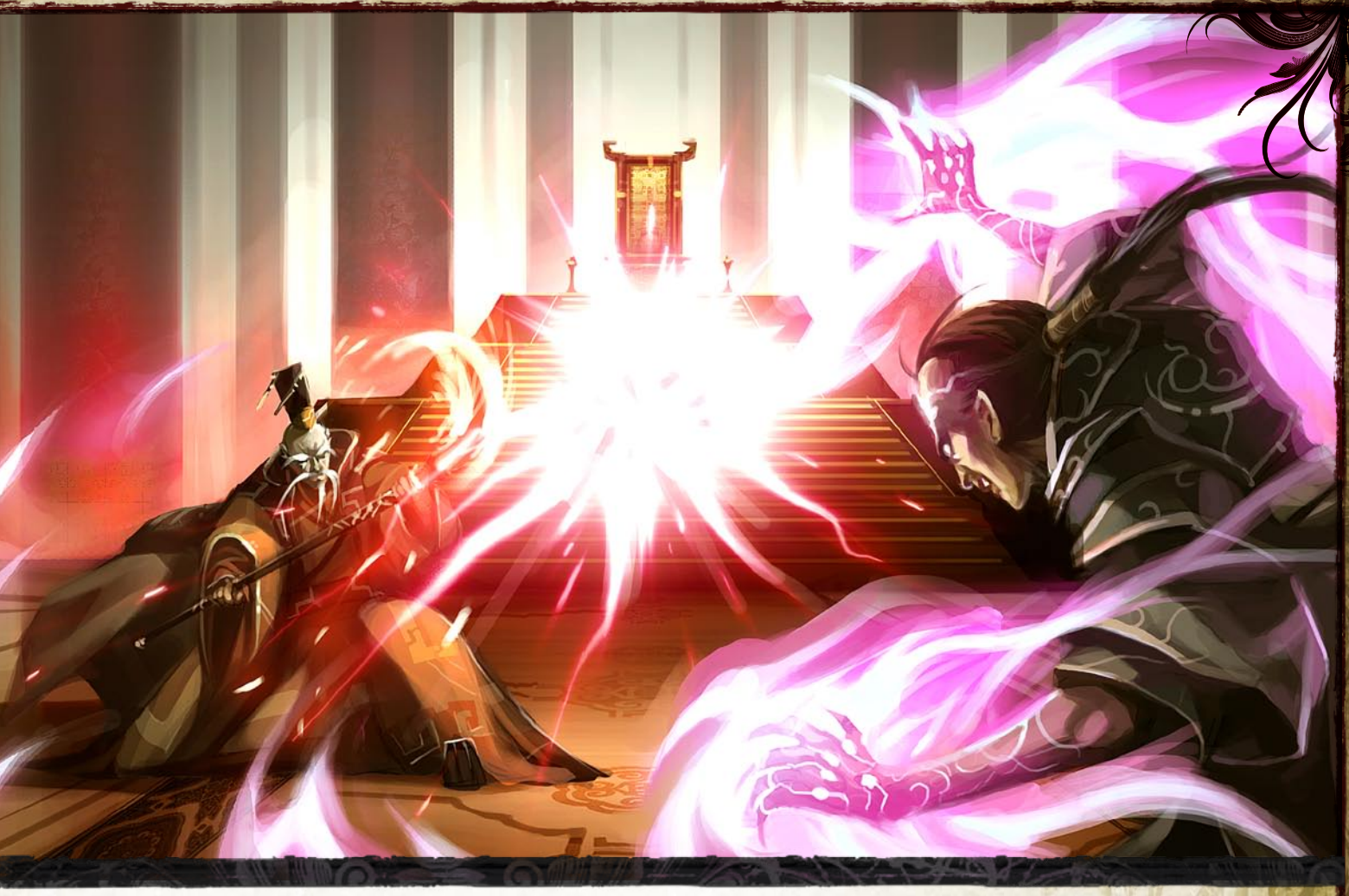
Moderator: While important in any game, the role of moderator becomes even more important in games with new players unfamiliar with the rules, or situations where the Game Master might be running a game for strangers, such as "organized play" sessions at gaming stores and conventions. Many players enjoy the tactical aspects of the game and make the most of the rules in and outside of combat. The Game Master should know what each character is capable of, as well as the abilities of the nonplayer characters and monsters, and should be prepared to pass judgment on any contradictory or disputed interpretations of the rules. And while it's important for the Game Master to be fair and hear out players' opinions and arguments, a good Game Master has the confidence and resolve to hold firm once he's made a decision.

Creator: Not only does the Game Master bring stories to the table, but many times he is also the creator of entire worlds. More often than not, he spends more time preparing for the session than the session actually takes to play. When not using a published setting or adventure, the Game Master must take the time outside of the game to create the plot, build enemies, construct encounters, develop magic items and spells, design monsters, and flesh out the world of adventure the players will soon inhabit.

Instructor: Not everyone is going to show up to the table with an equal—or even sufficient—understanding of the rules. Some of these players will be young, the new generation of gamers eager to enter into the ranks, and others will be friends you've encouraged to learn the joys of roleplaying games; some may even be fresh recruits at conventions or game stores. Everyone has a different aptitude for the admittedly complex rules of roleplaying games, and many people are intimidated by them. Part of a Game Master's role is to guide players in learning the game—after all, the majority of Game Masters playing today learned from another Game Master who was patient with them.

Player: Despite a pervasive myth, roleplaying games are not about pitting the Game Master against the players. They are not competitions, and the Game Master does not lose when the players succeed—rather, if the players leave the table feeling tested but triumphant, then the Game Master has achieved the best possible result. Though one person guides the game, everyone is a player in some sense. Game Masters must be as convincing with the nonplayer characters they control as the players are with their own characters, if not more so.

In addition to these roles, the Game Master might also fill a handful of others. Many groups maintain a set of house rules for their games, and the Game Master has the final say on particular interpretations and arbitrations of rules (though everyone in the group should be aware of any house rules beforehand). The Game Master may also act as host for the game. At the least, the host provides an ample place to play. While some extraordinary Game Masters might provide all materials, including books, character sheets, pencils, dice, miniatures, and a battlemat, groups should decide upon those details themselves. As the host for a game, it is important to provide a surface large enough to play upon, a place for everyone to sit, reasonable facilities, and the desire to get a good game going. Whether played at a Victorian dining table lit with candelabras, on the floor of a spartan apartment, in the library during recess,



or in the back of a van on the way to a family camping trip, roleplaying games can be tailored to most any situation, as long as there's excitement and a desire to play.

A Game Master's Glossary

Listed below are a few terms with which all new Game Masters should be familiar. These terms are mentioned throughout the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* and, beyond those presented in the Common Terms section (page 11 of the *Core Rulebook*), are among the most important in the Game Master's lexicon.

Adventure: An adventure is a self-contained storyline the PCs experience. An adventure is composed of a series of encounters furthering the storyline.

Campaign: A collection of stories weaving into an overreaching narrative. It may be a string of published adventures, a chain of homebrewed material, or an Adventure Path designed to be played as a series. A campaign may or may not have a definitive or predefined end point.

Campaign Arc: A sequence of adventures that mesh well with each other, usually part of a larger campaign. Game Masters often run these shorter arcs to create a story that's more concise than a full campaign but longer than a single adventure.

Encounter: An encounter is a short scene in which the PCs are actively doing something. Examples of encounters include a combat with a monster, a social interaction significant to the adventure's plot, an attempt to disarm a trap, or the discovery of a mystery or clue requiring further investigation.

Metagaming: This is when characters act on information that they don't have access to, but which their players know from the real world. Metagaming comes into play when players fail to maintain a divide between in-character knowledge and out-of-character knowledge. That could include anything from uncannily accurate in-character predictions from a player who's already read the adventure, players recognizing monsters when their characters wouldn't, low-Intelligence characters accessing well-educated players' knowledge and talents, etc.

Session: A session is a single bout of gaming. Not every session ties up an adventure; many adventures require multiple sessions to complete. The duration of sessions varies from group to group, from a few hours to a weekend.

Tone and Maturity

Players come to games to feel larger than life, and each brings a character that has aspirations, desires, abilities, and unique ways of looking at the world. The Game Master's job is to help guide the story and involve each character in a way that makes her actions feel meaningful. This means listening to the players while simultaneously keeping your own preferences in mind. No two gaming groups are the same, so groups that discuss their preferences for styles of play, tone, and group dynamics are more likely to enjoy long-running, trouble-free games.

Style of Play

Finding the right fit with a group depends on a shared preference of styles of play and the willingness to compromise. Does your group prefer to focus more on combat or roleplaying? The former style moves quickly through the story and centers primarily on fun tactical situations. If it's the latter, games should highlight character development and storyline, and it wouldn't be unusual to have an entire session pass without combat. Most groups fit somewhere in the wide middle of this spectrum, but knowing what your players enjoy most is crucial to keeping everyone entertained.

Tone and Setting

Once your players decide what style of game they're looking for, it's time to consider tone and setting. A group that's more interested in lighthearted silliness will disappoint a Game Master wanting to run a creepy horror campaign. Setting and tone determine whether you're running a complex, gritty political game in which the PCs unravel conspiracies or a high-magic and high-action fantasy epic involving bizarre monsters and divine mandates. Setting encompasses the central themes and tropes of your world, and tone is the feel, whether that's gritty realism or fairy-tale derring-do. The desired magic level is also worth discussing early on, as some players like readily available magic, while others prefer it to be exclusive and rare, only finding a handful of magic items throughout their entire career. A short meeting before launching the campaign allows you to tailor the experience for your players, and most players appreciate the effort to satisfy everyone's tastes.

Group Styles

In addition to focusing on the game-specific themes and styles, consider the group of players sitting around the table. Are they looking for a casual "beer and pretzels" game, or are they committed roleplayers looking for a deeply immersive campaign? Have you been playing with the same group for years? Is everyone at the table a complete stranger in a session you're running at a convention or a game store? Each of these different group styles requires a different performance from the Game Master. Casual groups require less focus and can often be more forgiving of mistakes, glossing over problematic situations in favor of hanging out and enjoying a shared hobby. Committed roleplayers can demand significantly more focus and attention, as each player brings a complex and interesting character in need of development within the game. Some Game Masters find convention play or hobby store play difficult because they lack a point of reference for the newly formed group. In these cases, a bit of small talk before the game begins often offers cues as to players' interests. Use time before play begins to ask a few focused questions about not only the players, but also their characters.

Retaining Interest

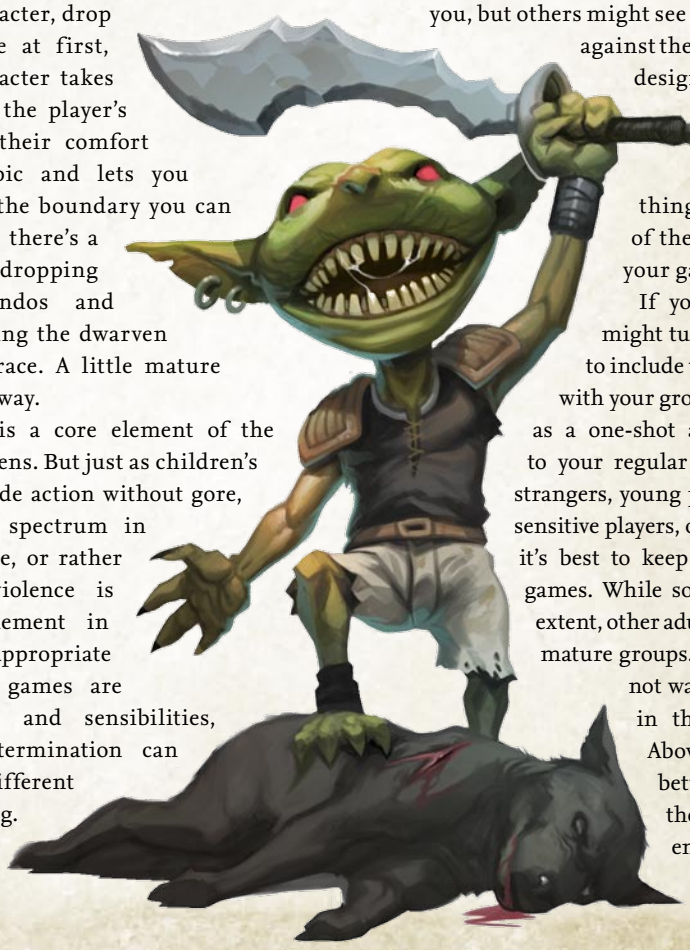
Listening to your players is important not only when looking to start a new campaign but also during the course of the story. From your seat at the game table, you can tell who's engaged and who's not. The goal should always be to figure out what's going to grab the bored, distracted, or annoyed players and get them back in the game (without sacrificing the fun of the others, of course). If during the last game session a particular player seemed bored when it wasn't her turn at combat, make a point to chat with her about the reasons why. Maybe she doesn't feel like her character is performing well or getting enough of the spotlight outside of combat. It often only takes a slight tweak or a single encounter tailored to her skill set to make a disenfranchised player feel like a valuable part of the group.

Always be open to switching things up. Players inevitably throw wrenches into the Game Master's plans, despite how obvious a lead seems or how convincing a hook sounds. Don't be afraid to play off their creativity the same way they do with yours. If you have a plot the characters are trying to unravel, and the solutions they come up with make more sense than your prepared ones, try ignoring the original resolution from your notebook or a published adventure and turning the story in a new direction—the players never need know about the original version, and you can take full credit for their enjoyment. Similarly, if the players keep going off track and getting involved in events outside of your planned story, that might be a sign that your players are interested in a different sort of game than you originally crafted. And even if you have great empathy with your gaming group and give them everything they want, remember that tastes can change over time. Remember what your players enjoyed and try to perform in that way again, but

realize your players likely have varied palates and can enjoy a wide range of game types.

Sensitive Topics

Mature themes like cannibalism, drug use, gory violence, profanity, prostitution, and various forms of sexuality sometimes come up in the game, and not every group deals with them in the same way. Knowing the group of people you're playing with and accurately gauging their comfort zone is crucial to keeping a session enjoyable. If you anticipate anyone at your table being uncomfortable with certain mature themes, talk to your players beforehand. Determine their preferred treatment of the issues, and respect their preferences when deciding how heavily you want to play up those themes. If your group openly discusses sexuality, fondly recalls the gruesome scenes from a favorite horror film, or makes frequent off-color jokes, then it's probably fine including those themes in your campaign (though not necessarily—the player with the filthiest mouth or biggest slasher-movie collection might still be sensitive to certain issues). Instead of deciding everything ahead of time, you can also seed given elements into your adventure bit by bit to determine players' comfort level. For example, if you have a lecherous nonplayer character attempting to seduce a player character, drop a few hints, subtle at first, and see if the character takes the bait. Watching the player's reaction indicates their comfort level with the topic and lets you know how close to the boundary you can play. And of course, there's a difference between dropping hints and innuendos and graphically describing the dwarven lovers' sweaty embrace. A little mature content goes a long way.



Because combat is a core element of the game, violence happens. But just as children's TV shows can provide action without gore, so too is there a spectrum in roleplaying. Violence, or rather how graphically violence is portrayed, is one element in determining how appropriate movies and video games are for different ages and sensibilities, and a similar determination can be made for different styles of roleplaying. Depending on the context, you can describe the same combat with a simple "you hit him with your sword," or create a more visceral description of the same action: "Your blade slashes across his stomach; his skin parts like thin lips and vomits his entrails onto the floor."

Adult themes can be an excellent way to get the characters to react to a villain or event. A foul villain who uses men and women as sexual playthings before strangling them in the carnal act can produce fear, anger, and a thirst for vengeance in even the most peaceful of characters. The level of comfort regarding violence can also change depending on the victim. While it may be perfectly acceptable for some groups to murder a bugbear villain, murdering a child—even for the greater good—is probably pushing the boundaries too far. In fact, involving children, animals, or other innocents at all can be a dangerous game—you might think that a villain who abuses animals is the ultimate example of depravity (and hence a great antagonist), but your players might not be prepared to talk about such things, even in the context of fighting against them. It's also important that, if you enjoy a game involving a lot of questionable morality and "lesser of two evils" plots, your party has similar inclinations. Allying with an obvious evil character in pursuit of mutual goals might feel like gritty realism to you, but others might see it as in poor taste, or completely against their characters' alignments. If you design an encounter that strains your paladin's commitment to his beliefs, make sure the player enjoys that sort of thing. In all situations, be mindful of the group's sensitivity and design your games accordingly.

If you feel certain styles or topics might turn off your players but still want to include them, consider testing the waters with your group by running that style of game as a one-shot and not something destructive to your regular campaign. When playing with strangers, young people, or with other potentially sensitive players, or when playing in a public place, it's best to keep any adult content out of your games. While society tolerates violence to some extent, other adult topics better suit more private, mature groups. Remember, some players might not want to see gritty real-world topics in their lighthearted weekly game. Above all, know your players—the better you know the preferences of the group you play with, the more enjoyable the game will be for everyone involved.

The GM as Host

The GM's primary job is to run the game, but there's more to that task than just rolling dice and orchestrating in-game challenges. As the group member most responsible for the game's success, the GM is also the de facto host for each session, in charge of handling or delegating the logistics behind the fun.

The social side of a session is at least as important as the quality of the game itself. Adult gamers might rarely get time to socialize, given the pressures of jobs, families, and homes, so game night becomes a welcome chance to spend time with friends, no different than a night of board games, movies, or poker. And like any party, there's work to be done both before and after.

Some of the following issues can be delegated to a willing player, but ultimately, all of them are the GM's responsibility.

Number of Players

Before a game ever begins it's up to the GM to decide how many players to invite to play. While there is no firm minimum or maximum limit to how many players a game can accommodate, this choice is largely a matter of how many players the GM expects he can comfortably manage and what limitations a game's expected play space present. Although most published adventures present challenges for parties with four characters, any encounter can easily be customized to suit the needs of any size group.

Small Groups

Groups of two or three can allow for more intense roleplaying, but they require you to carefully craft your challenges to be appropriate for fewer players. You'll also need to compensate for any major abilities that may be missing from the party.

A simple way to accomplish the latter is to eliminate the need for those abilities. For example, if the party lacks a rogue, you may wish to remove traps and locks from the party's path. Another method is to introduce an NPC who has the needed abilities—just so long as that NPC doesn't steal the spotlight. Alternatively, you can give the characters magic items that perform the necessary function, such as healing potions and wands for the party without a healer. Last but not least, if the players are experienced enough to handle it, you might enjoy letting each player play two characters to round out the group.

Large Groups

Groups of more than six players offer more character options, but they also tend to be louder and harder to manage. The more characters there are, the more complex combat becomes and the longer each person has to wait for his turn, making it easier for distractions and side conversations to get out of hand or for naturally shy players to be overlooked. It's generally best not to take on more than six players at a time unless you're experienced enough to make combat move along smartly without looking up a lot of rules. Game aids like the *GameMastery Combat Pad* also make it easier to keep track of things like initiative with a large group.

Finding Players

Once you know how many players you'd like to have, it's time to organize a group. Start by talking to friends and family members you'd like to include. Mixing ages is fine so long as there are enough common interests.

If there's still room at your game table, you can consider people you don't yet know or know only tangentially. Coworkers and friends of friends are usually the first to be included in this set, especially if your players have sung the praises of your game to other people.

Outside of such personal contacts, there are a number of other ways to find players. Try contacting a local game store about putting up a flier with your contact information, or see if there's a gaming club at your school or the local college. The Internet offers instant access to thousands of gamers via free classified ads or message boards, and there are several websites specifically devoted to helping local gamers connect, such as the Gamer Connection forum on **paizo.com**. (Of course, safety always comes first—you should meet strangers in public places with plenty of people around and should never give out more personal information than an email address until you trust someone.)

Last but not least, when in doubt, go where the gamers are. Attend a local game convention, science fiction movie opening, or other event that might be of interest to gamers. Talk to people there, and if you find a gamer who lives nearby, mention that you're looking for players and provide contact information.

If you don't want to do the recruiting yourself, you can allow one or more players to handle it, but it's a good idea to ask that they run any potential new players past you—or even the whole group—for approval before inviting them to a session.

A word of warning: As with any party, it's important to make sure that everyone you invite to your game gets along with the rest. While you can't predict every conflict, you can do your best to avoid obvious problems—this might be a player whose style doesn't match the rest of the group (see Problem Players in Chapter Three), or a player with a more obvious conflict, such as a current player's ex-spouse. A lot of gaming groups fall apart because of interplayer

conflict. As a result, when taking a chance on a new player, it's generally best to issue a limited invitation, such as for a single adventure, and then decide from there. Don't let a party member who's friends with a potential player—or worse, the potential player himself—pressure you into inviting him back if he isn't right for your game.

Where to Play

The optimum gaming space has the following features.

- A low-traffic room, where the game won't be disturbed by nonplayers or noise from other areas.
- A comfortable place for everyone to sit, with a good view of the gaming surface, plus space for rolling dice and writing notes.
- A large, flat playing surface with room for a battlemat and miniatures.
- Extra space for rulebooks, maps, notes, and other essentials.
- Bookshelves to hold reference materials.
- Easy access to snacks, beverages, and a bathroom.

The Building

It's often most convenient for you as GM to play in your own house, since all your gaming stuff is already there. Players usually have fewer books and tend to depend on GM copies for reference during games. If you and your players use a great many books and supplements, it's hard to lug them all to someone else's house—and if you take only a few, you'll almost certainly forget one that someone wants. Yet setting up shop at whichever member's house is best suited for it works as well, especially if there's room to store gaming materials between games.

Some groups successfully rotate houses, and there's a lot of merit in such an arrangement—no one is always stuck with cleaning up the inevitable post-game mess, and the disruption to any single household's routine is minimal. Furthermore, you can delegate some of the hosting duties to the player who lives there—particularly the snacks, beverages, and physical comforts. The key to making such an arrangement work is to either ensure that all the households have ready access to the needed materials, or else delegate players to bring them each time.

Some groups play in the local game shop, either out in the open or in a back room. If the shop caters to roleplayers, the owners might consider it good business to have a regular campaign running where customers can see it. This arrangement requires some patience on the part of everyone at the table, since the party will likely be expected to greet watchers pleasantly and answer their questions during the game. It also requires keeping the game family-friendly, as parents with children may be watching. If you've been looking for more players, a public game can be a great recruiting tool. If your game is closed, the back room of the game store may be a better bet.

In nice weather, playing outside in a barn or gazebo, or even at a picnic table or on the grass can be fun too—just be sure to weight down character sheets and notes so you don't have to chase them when the wind picks up.

The Room

The traditional gaming space is a table big enough to seat all the players and the GM, but that's not strictly necessary. The dinner table is often the surface of choice because it provides enough space for a battlemat and minis, plus plenty of seating. However, the dining room tends to be a central, high-traffic space in a house, and it usually isn't where a game library is kept. A small room where everyone can easily see and hear everyone else, with a bit of floor space for a map and minis, can work just as well. If you share your abode with other people, make sure that your presence won't disturb the rest of the household and that its regular activities won't disturb you.

When to Play

Sometimes games aren't hard to schedule. If you and your players all live near each other in college dorms, you might have no trouble getting a game together every night. But if you or your players have other responsibilities, scheduling can become a major headache.

One of the easiest ways is to have a regular schedule. Some campaigns are played weekly, others biweekly, and still others monthly. More frequent games are rare and usually unsustainable, as are games with more than a month between them, since players tend to forget what's going on after a while. A weekly game is optimal for many people since it's easy to remember. Weekends tend to be better for working people, but constant weekend availability is probably impossible for any one person. Weekdays after school may work for parents and students, but choosing a day can be tricky, since sports and club meetings may interfere for long periods.

If you do decide to go for biweekly or monthly games, you may want to make the sessions longer. Try scheduling an entire day for a monthly game—or even a weekend, if your household is up to overnight guests. For a game with low meeting frequency, be sure to remind everyone when the next session is coming up. You'll also need to prepare a good recap of what happened in the previous adventure so the players know where the characters were when you left off.

If you opt for an irregular schedule, you'll need to schedule every session, which can be more difficult, as players don't have the option of always leaving certain days open. Scheduling an irregular game can happen at the end of each session or via group emails and phone calls.

Rules of the House

Once you have a place to play and a date for your first session, it's time to decide what "house rules" are needed for your campaign. While the term normally refers to modifications to the mechanics of the game, house rules can also be the literal rules of the house, covering the basic courtesies and dynamics of the game table. Some typical house rules are discussed below, but this list is by no means exhaustive. Discuss the issues and the options for handling them with your players before play begins, and make sure everyone agrees to abide by the final decision. If you see a need for a new house rule as play proceeds, talk to your players outside of the game, then implement the new rule at the next session, reminding the group about it before play begins.

Player Absence

What happens to a character when its player is absent from a session? Below are some of the most common solutions.

Another player plays the character. This is a simple solution, but be warned that the other player may be unskilled with the class or simply unable to think of appropriate actions. If the character dies, the absent player is inevitably distressed—and legitimately so. Even if the character survives, the other player will almost certainly play it differently, which may result in unfortunate consequences for the character or the party. This arrangement has the best chance of working when each player designates a specific person to play her character, with no holds barred.

The GM plays the character as an NPC. This solution presents some of the same problems as giving the character to another player. As GM, you have enough to handle—you don't need the additional hassle of trying to run a PC in the game. Though you may be more cautious with the character than another player and are less likely to get the PC killed (since you know what challenges she will face), you won't be able to give as much attention as the regular player would, and any negative consequences are likely to bring resentment from the player.

The character leaves the group to do something behind the scenes. This solution is usually workable, though the party may keenly feel the lack of that character's skills during the session. Sometimes you might have to play the character for a bit to finish a combat, but a short-term withdrawal usually works. The main problem with this technique is that you must provide a logical in-game exit and re-entrance opportunity, and tie those in with the storyline.

The character disappears from the group, reappears when the player does, and no notice is taken of the event. This solution is quite simple, but it requires a degree of maturity to pull off. The character was there, then simply is not. After a time, she's there again. The GM does not need to find something else for her to do or stage an exit and re-entrance. When she reappears, the character may know what happened in her absence, or may not, depending on the group's preference.

Calling Off a Session

After how many bail-outs do you call off the game for the night? The answer to this question may depend on the size of your group. Obviously, if you have only one or two players, then a single absence makes play infeasible. With a larger group, you have more flexibility. Some GMs make it a rule to run for no fewer than two or three players. Others require a larger percentage of the party.

One way to deal with a session that only half the players can attend is to split the party and allow those present to pursue a side adventure for an evening. In this case, it pays to keep a small-group adventure available.

If absences become a chronic problem, some GMs may choose to invite slightly more players into a campaign than they need, with the assumption that one or two will always have scheduling conflicts. While it can be fun to have a rotating cast, this method can also require both the players and the GM to play fast and loose with continuity and bookkeeping... and requires the GM to be comfortable running a big group if everyone shows up.

Food at the Game Table

While it's possible to insist that players not eat or drink at the game table, it's hard to enforce such a rule. Roleplaying sessions take a long time, and people get hungry and thirsty. You can set up snacks on a separate table or in a different room, but they're likely to find their way to the game table anyway.

If you decide to allow food at the table, you'll have to prepare for the inevitable messes. Keep towels at the table to quickly clean up spilled beverages, and encourage the use of plastic page protectors for character sheets. It's a good idea to keep reference books off the table for the same reason.

Also note that food and beverages aren't free. If you rotate locations, you can agree that snacks are the responsibility of the house where the game occurs, ask that everyone bring a snack or beverage to share, or simply pass the hat at each session for contributions to the snack fund.

Children and Pets

If the house where you play has very young children, it's best to keep them out of the game room altogether. If this isn't possible, then everyone must be sure to keep dice and minis off the floor, as such objects may constitute choking hazards.

Pets can likewise cause problems at the game table. If anyone is allergic to animal fur, courtesy demands that

the animals be kept out of the room. This solution also prevents a random doggy tail swipe from clearing the battlemat, or a kitty from turning the minis into cat toys. Still, if everyone enjoys the company of the animals, it may be fine to allow their presence.

Other Activities at the Game Table

Despite your best efforts, you won't always be able to keep all your players engaged with the action. Large combats may drag, and if you have a lot of people at the table, it may take quite a while for a player's next turn to come up. Furthermore, the party may split, requiring you to divide your attention between groups.

In such situations, players may want to fill the time between turns with other activities. Someone might bring a book, a knitting project, or some figures to paint. Others might spend the time creating new characters. Finally, some players might sit and chat about out-of-game topics. As long as the alternate activities aren't distracting either the player involved or the other players from the game, it's probably fine to allow them. If they start distracting the player involved to the point where he can't follow what's happening in-game, however, the group may want to ban those activities, or simply ask him to find another.

If the alternate activities are disturbing the other players, you can ask that those involved move to another area, away from the table. Just moving over to the living room couch may suffice—those involved can still hear the action, but the other players won't see what they're doing. Alternatively, those not involved with the action could make the popcorn, refill people's beverages, and pick up the snack debris. Doing so can provide them with an opportunity to chat in another room for a while.

Out-of-Character Talking

Roleplaying requires lots of in-character conversation, but plenty of out-of-character chatter happens at the game table as well. It's not usually difficult to separate them when the table talk is about the science homework or the plumber's impending visit. But when the players are talking about what to do with the orc prisoner, it can be tough for the GM to determine whether they're actually making threats or just theorizing, which can lead to problems if the NPCs show their hands by reacting to something a player didn't intend to say in character.

One option is to simply require a player to stand up or make a specific hand gesture when talking out of character. Alternatively, you could have everyone use an accent when speaking in character. As long as everyone understands the convention, it should take the group only a few sessions to become used to it.

Interplayer Conflict

Though the members of adventuring parties usually have common goals, they don't always get along. Some party disputes arise from in-character conflicts, such as alignment or history. Others happen because the players behind the characters are angry at one another.

Most party bickering isn't harmful, and some may even be entertaining. However, if party members draw steel against one another, it's probably time to intervene. A house rule that mandates an out-of-game discussion when such a situation occurs is highly recommended, as are rules discouraging intraparty duels and theft and encouraging players to work as a team rather than splitting off into groups, which results in less game time for everyone.



Preparing to Run a Game

Great Game Masters make running a game look easy, weaving memorable characters, breathless action, and vivid descriptions into unforgettable tapestries of fantasy. Players in a well-run game have a sense of danger (and a sense of accomplishment in overcoming it), plus a general feeling of spontaneity as events unfold and the characters rise to meet new challenges.

Such magical experiences require plenty of preparation, even a sense of spontaneity—it's tough to seem spontaneous when you're shuffling though notes.

Things to Have at the Table

Supplies and materials on the list that follows keep the game from derailing as you fumble for what you need.

Rulebooks and Other Game Materials: You need copies of whatever rules are in use, plus a copy of any supplement or expansion that deals with player character abilities. If it's a book that's referenced frequently by players, it's often appropriate to ask players to provide their own copies.

Dice: An inadequate supply of dice can slow a game to a crawl. At minimum, make sure each player has a full set of the dice most commonly used in the game: d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, and d20.

Writing Materials: Everyone needs a pencil and some notepaper. In addition, it's a good idea to keep a supply of blank character sheets handy.

Miniatures: Many GMs use miniatures to keep track of the action. These work best on a scale map of the adventure scene, typically a gridded battlemat suitable for use with erasable markers (such as GameMastery Flip-Mats), though the right computer equipment can project or print maps to scale.

Props and Associated Supplies: Props and player handouts, such as sketches of important items, maps for player reference, and written notes, can speed play and help hold the players' interest.

Seven Essentials for Good Preparation

Exactly what kind of preparation is needed varies from game to game. If you follow this checklist, however, you'll be ready for just about anything.

Know the Characters and Players

Sit down with all the character sheets and look them over carefully. Consider what each character can do in the game—major powers, secondary powers, special abilities, and inherent traits. This helps you anticipate what your players might do in any given situation.

Pay special attention to powers that work automatically or passively—for example, an ability to detect impending danger or notice concealed doors. It falls to you to make sure such abilities work when and how they should.

Knowing your players can prove as important as knowing their characters. Many players develop favorite tricks and stunts with their characters' powers, or well-ingrained misconceptions about what their characters can or cannot do. Knowing these quirks can help you keep the players engaged and challenged and can deflect problems before the dice hit the table.

Know the Scene

Get familiar with the scene where the action will occur. If you're running a published adventure, read through it carefully. Not only should you know the answers to basic questions ("How high is the ceiling here?"), but you should also be able to convey sensory details.

Next, take a moment to get familiar with each adventure site's layout. Note the major features and where they lie in relation to each other. Pay special attention to entrances, exits, stairwells, and other features that the characters will use to move around.

Know the Story

Some games don't have much story—the characters simply endure whatever you decide to throw at them. But even such straightforward adventures will run a little better if you take time to consider how the adversaries came to be in the party's way, what they're doing when the party appears, and how they might react to intrusion.

Other games place the characters within an unfolding story. Before running such a game, stop to consider the story's beginning, middle, and end. Note the key events and turning points in the tale, and pay special attention to events and developments that turn on character decisions or actions. Consider how you will present those turning points so that you can create a seamless narrative that flows naturally from the party's actions.

Know the Adversaries

Think about the foes your characters must face and any other obstacles they must overcome. Consider how those adversaries will act toward the characters.

Creatures and NPCs can often react to characters when they're still some distance away, thanks to their hearing, sight, or other senses. How these foes respond depends on their nature, temperament, and intelligence, as well as why they're on the scene and what they're doing when the party arrives.

Animals and creatures with a similar level of intelligence are usually present simply because they live in the area or because someone else has brought them there; they often don't pay much heed to the characters unless they perceive them to be some kind of threat. Many animals would

rather flee than fight, but even a timid animal can become ferocious when cornered, and some are highly territorial and aggressive.

Any creature smarter than a common animal generally tries to assess the situation before acting. Very few simply sit in rooms or lairs waiting for the party to come and attack. What they do depends on the weaponry and powers they have available, and what they have at stake.

Creatures that have something to defend (property, livelihood, family, reputation, and so on) likely won't hesitate to confront the party in some fashion. That doesn't always mean an immediate attack. Consider how the creature thinks of intruders or visitors. Is it curious or prone to negotiation? Does it think of the group as a threat or an opportunity? Has it made plans for dealing with intruders? Also think about how well the creature knows its ground, what risks it's willing to take, and how quickly and accurately it can assess its situation.

Not all responses need to be tactical. The creature might just want to chat with the newcomers or might send someone else to do so. Alternatively, it might try to scare away intruders or perhaps misdirect them. A creature with nothing to gain probably won't fight at all if it can avoid doing so.

You should also think about what might make the creature surrender or flee. Few creatures fight to the death if there's an alternative available.

Published or Homegrown?

Published adventures can be a great investment. Reading through such a scenario can give you an idea of how an adventure is put together, what challenges are suitable for your group's power level, and what sorts of rewards are appropriate. The *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* deals with these subjects, but there's nothing like seeing all the elements put together. More importantly, a close look at adventures someone else has thought through can give you new ideas for constructing your own. It's easy to fall into a rut, especially when you're running games regularly, and adventures like Paizo's Pathfinder Adventure Paths and Pathfinder Modules can help dig you out.

Similarly, there's a wealth of prepackaged campaign settings available, including Paizo's own Pathfinder Campaign Setting. Consider mining concepts from them for your own world, or adopting locations from them that inspire adventure concepts.

No matter how many published adventures or settings you own, it's up to you to decide whether you'll use them. If you merely lift an idea from them now and then, you're still getting your money's worth, but using them to a greater extent allows GMs to run sweeping, intricate campaigns with minimal preparation.

Know the Rules

You don't need encyclopedic knowledge of the Pathfinder RPG rules set to run a quality game. You do, however, need to be comfortable with those parts of the rules that come up frequently in play. This means the rules for determining initiative, how creatures attack and defend, and how to resolve noncombat challenges like skill checks (such as picking a lock or noticing bad guys sneaking up on the party's camp). It doesn't hurt to mark your rulebooks to help you find your way around—a few self-adhesive tabs can prove indispensable.

Also be on the lookout for any character ability that uses a complex, difficult, or unfamiliar game mechanic and take a moment to study it. Do likewise for any creatures, traps, or hazards the party might encounter.

If you can't quite figure out some aspect of the rules, and time permits, consult another Game Master, or the messageboards at **paizo.com**, which contain a wealth of helpful information and rules discussions. If all else fails, decide how you want the rule in question to work and use it that way—such decisions have a way of working out if you think them through ahead of time.

Don't Overdo It

Remember that you're preparing so that things proceed smoothly at the game table. Over-preparation can ruin that. Instead, prepare just enough so that you can quickly deal with situations that you expect to arise, and so that you can handle the unexpected. Don't script your game so tightly that the players lose their sense of freedom or that your game's whole structure falls apart if your players fail (or refuse) to accomplish what you expect them to.

Likewise, don't create so many notes that you can't keep them organized. One page for each major encounter, event, or personality is generally plenty, and often less will do.

Lay a Few Alternate Plans

There's an adage in military circles: no plan survives contact with the enemy. Sometimes players head off in directions you didn't anticipate, defeat your primary villain with a few rolls, miss an obvious clue, or lose a key battle. You can take such developments in stride by considering a few contingencies that can set your plot back on track. Start by thinking about how things might go astray. Does some key individual drive your plot? Do the characters need to learn something before they can succeed? Is there a danger that, if overlooked, can defeat your party? Once you've identified the key stumbling blocks, think of plausible ways to repair the damage if the worst happens.

Of course, sometimes you still won't be able to prepare for player actions. When things go astray, it's generally

Sharing the Load

Even though you're the GM, you don't have to do everything yourself. You can pass along any number of tasks to your players.

Bookkeeping: This covers all the little tasks necessary to keep your group organized. You might ask one player to be the recorder, keeping notes on what the group accomplishes in each game. The recorder can keep tallies of party loot and foes defeated, saving you effort when it's time to divide the spoils. You can also ask this player to note key pieces of information the PCs discover, names of important people they meet, and places they go. These notes can help your group get back up to speed when they return after a break.

Rules Knowledge: If you have a fair-minded player with a talent for explaining the rules, use her as a resource. When you expect to tackle an unfamiliar rule, discuss how it works with this player. When disputes about the rules arise during a game, get her opinion. It's also frequently helpful to team her up with rookie players as an advisor, keeping the game moving.

Round-Robin Campaigns: No one says you have to GM every session. Sometimes a team of GMs can rotate the responsibility of running the game, each GM taking up the game where the previous one left off each week, while the other GMs play. This requires significant coordination, and expert roleplaying (as some players already know the plotlines), but the chance to play in your own campaign and regularly experience different GM styles can be extremely entertaining and rewarding.

the most fun for everyone to play along, exploring the new story and using it to gently nudge the game back onto the original track. Sticking without exception to a prepared plot makes players feel powerless, and part of the fun of being a GM is being surprised by your players. Go with it.

One-Shot Games

A one-shot game is a scenario intended to last for a single play session. These scenarios might be "standalone," with little or no connection to other campaigns you run, or merely a diversion for your regular characters to give you extra time to put together the next major challenge. Paizo's Pathfinder Society Scenarios are designed for just such situations, and can be downloaded from **paizo.com**. Keep in mind that the characters in these sessions can be the usual PCs, affiliates such as hirelings, or totally new characters intended only for a single game—one-shots are often perfect for unusual character ideas that might fail or grow stale in a longer game.

Characters

Unless you've got a very short scenario to run or a very long game session planned, create new characters ahead of time. In a time crunch, you might create them yourself and allow your players to pick from the bunch. In this case, you should make a few more than you'll need so that nobody feels stuck with the leftovers. If you decide to have players create their own characters, be clear about the power level, gear, and other game details you'll allow and reserve the right to review and edit characters to better fit the group. You might even want to meet up with players one-on-one or have them submit characters early for review.

Getting Started

Introduce the scenario in a way that engages the players. Don't give away any secrets, but let the players know why each of their characters is getting involved—having several "adventure hooks" allows you to pick which one would be most compelling for a given character. You can also always start the action with the party already committed to the adventure or facing a situation that leads in to the rest of the scenario, so as not to waste any playing time.

The concept of the macguffin often proves useful here. A macguffin is some element that drives your plot forward, but that you can ignore once it's served its purpose. Your macguffin might be a rumor, a mission or request from a friend, a cryptic message, a treasure map, or anything else that piques the group's interest without giving away too much.

Wrapping Up

Consider how the party's activities, successful or not, might end, and be ready to sum up when the last die stops rolling. Because your players might never play these characters again, you can plan unusual rewards or endings that would be awkward in a regular campaign. Of course, more than one adventure that began as a one-shot has stretched into a campaign when both players and GMs found the plots and characters too much fun to retire...

Campaigns

A campaign offers something more than a series of adventures. A campaign gives context and depth to a group's activities, making them part of a larger world. A properly constructed campaign also provides you with story elements, locations, personalities, and conflicts that serve as springboards for your creativity as you create adventures. Campaigns can be completely plotted out ahead of time, such as the 6-part *Pathfinder Adventure Path* series, which give GMs all the adventures and supplemental material they

need to run a complete campaign, or they can be crafted on the fly, with GMs stringing adventures together just a session or two in advance. A Campaign Sheet is included in the back of this book, which you can use to plan and record all of the relevant details of your campaigns.

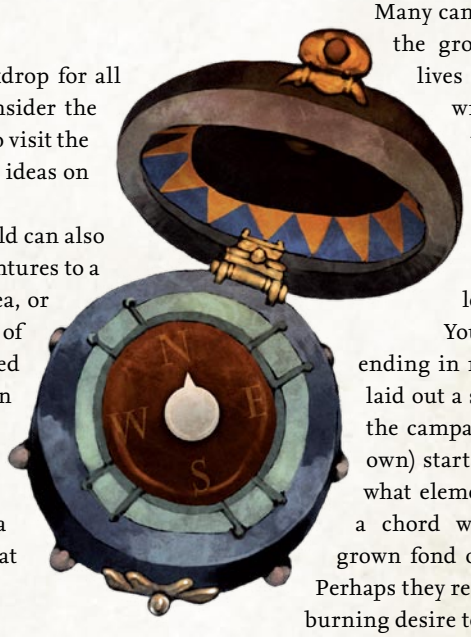
Essentials of Good Campaigns

Most advice in the section on preparing for a one-shot game applies to campaigns as well—only the scale is different. Below are a few elements to consider.

Setting and Scope

Your campaign world provides the backdrop for all your adventures. Take some time to consider the lay of the land and what it might be like to visit the place—Chapter 6 provides some specific ideas on creating a setting.

The sheer scope of your campaign world can also affect play. You can confine all your adventures to a single country or similar geographic area, or even to a single town or city. The kinds of adventures you can run in such a confined setting, however, will be different than what you can do with a whole continent. An epic, world-spanning campaign offers an endless variety of adventure sites, while a localized campaign offers a more intimate feel and a strong sense that the characters are part of the world.



Story

Your campaign need not have an overarching storyline, but having one (or more) continuing plots can help tie your adventures together into a continuous narrative, and inspire new ones.

Don't overdo this element. Your goal isn't to script your campaign, but rather to explain how and why things happen. Keep the story general, with an eye toward details your characters can notice and perhaps change through their actions. Choose something that can unfold slowly so that the story can move along even when your player characters aren't actively involved in it. Consider how the player characters might shape or redirect the story, but also establish what happens if they don't get involved.

Movers and Shakers

Decide who's who in your world. This includes not only the beings that hold the reins of power, but also everyone who's involved in driving the campaign forward. If you've laid out a story for your campaign, identify the entities behind the major threads. Ask yourself who's pulling the strings and who stands to gain and lose with each twist and turn.

Not every important character in your world need be terribly influential. Every locale with people has a few memorable characters, so sprinkle the neighborhood where your PCs live with a few of those. Some of these might become valuable assets to the characters, providing them with information, introductions to more influential people, or protection in times of need. Others might simply offer the occasional bit of comic relief.

Campaign Endings

Many campaigns run on indefinitely until the group breaks up due to changing lives and priorities. There's nothing wrong with that, so long as running the campaign—and playing in it—don't become chores. Still, it's pleasant when a campaign comes to a natural end that allows you and your players to leave with a sense of completion.

You might plan a campaign with an ending in mind—a fairly easy task if you've laid out a story. Or you might decide to end the campaign when player interest (or your own) starts to flag. In either case, consider what elements in the campaign have struck a chord with the group. Perhaps they've grown fond of a particular town or character. Perhaps they really despise some villain or have a burning desire to obtain a certain item. Craft your ending so things end on a high note, with main conflicts resolved and the loose ends tied up. It's often fun to create an epilogue that lays out each character's later career and retirement and looks ahead to the general state of your game world during the surviving characters' sunset years.

Winging It

Preparation is great, but sometimes you just want to play. Published adventures are perfect for this, but even those require a bit of reading ahead of time. If you want to truly wing it, with nothing more than a few notes and some dice, try flipping through some completed adventures for stat blocks you can use—at the very least, you're going to need to know things like hit points, AC, and saves—or tag some creatures in a monster book. Sketch out as much of the plot as you feel you need; it could be a whole adventure, or just the first scene. Consider throwing in a big decision requiring party deliberation whenever you need a minute to figure out the next encounter, and remember that a fun roleplaying encounter with an oddball NPC can provide extensive entertainment without any math involved. For more tips on emergency game prep, see pages 48–49. And when in doubt—roll initiative!

Creating a Campaign Guide

In television series and similar ongoing media, there is the concept of the "story bible," a document setting forth the essential information about the characters, story, and setting of the series so that later writers can produce scripts with some amount of consistency. In a similar vein, Game Masters can create a campaign guide to help keep track of their creation and to supply players with an overview of an ongoing campaign. This way, the players have some idea what to expect and can create and play their characters to best fit into the overall setting. The most important function of a campaign guide is to make your players excited to delve into the setting and play the game! Consider the following when preparing a campaign guide.

System

The default assumption is that your game will use the rules as presented in the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*. Many GMs customize the Core Rules to fit their preferences, play style, and players, and the campaign guide is the perfect place to set out these custom house rules so the players know what to expect and so customizations or exceptions remain consistent throughout the campaign. You'll also want to lay out character creation guidelines for the game and clarify what is expected or prohibited, so players know their choices going into the process of designing their characters.

For example, you might ban a particular sorcerer bloodline or other character option simply because it doesn't fit into the setting and does not exist there (at least so far as anybody knows). On the other hand, you can set up a rule that PCs cannot be assassins or choose evil as their alignment because you'd rather not deal with the complications those possibilities entail. That doesn't necessarily mean assassins and evil alignments don't exist in the setting; they're just not an option for the players.

Setting

The meat of a campaign guide is the description of the setting: where and when the campaign takes place, and in particular, the "base state" or status quo with which the characters should be familiar. Doing this effectively can be more difficult than it sounds, so follow these guidelines to keep this interesting and on point.

Broad Strokes: You don't need to hand your players a 200-page document detailing every corner of the campaign world and every major event in its history. Even if you do have such a document, it's probably best to hit new players with just the highlights. Focus on where the campaign starts and, if you describe other parts of the world at all, do so in generalities. You can always fill in more information as the campaign progresses.

Focus on the Present: Historical context is good, particularly historical events that have an impact on the present day, but focus on giving the players the status quo as it will be when the game starts. Don't focus too much on irrelevant historical detail; if an account of a particular battle hundreds of years ago doesn't impact the present day, summarize or cut it altogether.

Enliven with Detail: Try to give the players some essential details about daily life in the setting. What do people eat? What kind of clothes do they wear? What do they do for fun? What is a typical day, week, or year like? What are some expressions people use? These details form valuable hooks players can use to get into character during the game.

Story

You may or may not want to include story content in your campaign guide, depending on the type of game you want to run. You may find it helpful to fill the players in on the type of story you want to tell, so they can assist with their character concepts. Is this an epic fantasy wherein local heroes discover a terrible threat to the world at large, or a focused struggle for domination over the guilds and noble houses of a single city?

Some GMs prefer a freeform campaign, starting the players off with just a setting and their characters' backstories, letting the rest unfold as play progresses. The story is written as the players choose what their characters do and the dice determine the outcome of those actions. Other GMs have a particular kind of story in mind and try to deftly steer the players, allowing them a wide range of choice within the bounds of the story, but keeping it focused on a particular field of play; for example, a player who wanted his character to go off exploring some lost ruin in a campaign about warring guilds might discover something hidden in the ruins that has some bearing on the main conflict, bringing things back around to that story.

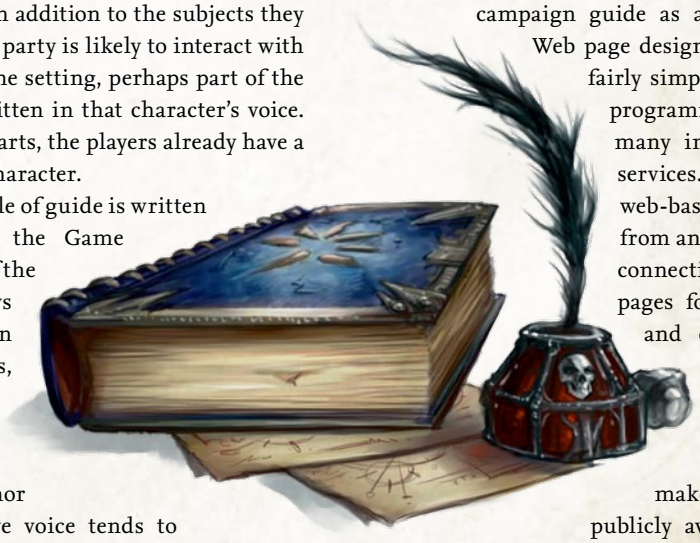
Voice

Voice is how the guide conveys the content to the reader. It includes choices like viewpoint, tone, and style, which can not only affect how the content is conveyed, but can also provide additional information and insight for players in and of itself. The two main approaches to voice are an "inside" or subjective voice, or an "outside" or objective voice.

Subjective Voice: This method presents some or all of the content of the campaign guide in the form of fictional documents or dialogues, such as travelogues, journals, letters, or scholarly works written by people in the setting. Subjective voice documents are heavy with setting-specific flavor and present a strong point of view, a fictional window into the world for the reader. On the other hand, they can be biased or incomplete, and they tend to provide less information in the same amount of

space than documents written in objective voice. These qualities can be good things, especially if you want players to initially receive somewhat biased or inaccurate information about things, but crafting such documents typically involves more work. Subjective voice presentation can serve double duty by introducing players to the fictional authors of the documents in addition to the subjects they discuss. For example, if the party is likely to interact with a certain sage or noble in the setting, perhaps part of the campaign guide can be written in that character's voice. This way, when the game starts, the players already have a feeling of "knowing" that character.

Objective Voice: This style of guide is written from the perspective of the Game Master and exists outside of the setting. This approach allows for a broader perspective in campaign guide materials, in which you can provide comparisons to modern examples and discuss things a subjective author might not know. Objective voice tends to be more concise because you can say exactly what you mean without having to phrase it in terms an in-setting character would use. This lets you provide more information in less space, saving time and effort if they are at a premium.



Combining Voices: Of course, you can also mix subjective and objective voice in your guide. You might use a primarily objective voice to provide the bulk of the information and then put the information into context with snippets or examples of subjective voice, such as quotations from in-setting characters or even more involved things like sketched-out maps.

Publication

Once the campaign guide document is prepared, you need to consider how to get it in front of the players. Modern media and desktop publishing create a wide range of options for sharing a campaign guide.

Print

The first and simplest option is to print the campaign guide and give each player a copy. It could be printed out at home or produced professionally at a copy shop. Larger campaign guides might be held in binders or report covers, and print shops offer a variety of binding options, from square tape-bound to plastic spiral binding (with or without cardstock or plastic covers). These options add durability and quality to your guide, making it easy for players to use and reference over time, but might make you less inclined to make changes as you go.

Electronic

You can also publish a campaign guide as an electronic document, easily shared via e-mail or hosted online. With laptops or handheld devices, players can still reference these documents during play.

The other main electronic option is to publish your campaign guide as a web page or website. Web page design programs make this a fairly simple matter even for non-programmers, and there are many inexpensive web-hosting services. Players can access a web-based campaign guide from anywhere with an Internet connection, can save or print the pages for their own reference, and can even actively edit the guide (if the GM allows it). Unless the site is secured, web publication also makes your campaign guide publicly available to anyone who wants to view it, allowing other Game Masters to benefit from your ideas.

Even if you publish your campaign guide in print for your players, you may want to have an electronic version as well for backup, further additions, and ease of reference, especially if you want to make the guide publicly available.

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Other Media

Game Masters have taken advantage of desktop and online multimedia in recent years to create other ways of providing information to players. If you have musical talent, opening each session with custom theme music can be a powerful way of getting players into the right mindset. You can also create audio podcasts for your campaign, or even take things a step further and use video editing to create a "campaign trailer," like a trailer for a film, which you can then distribute among your players or share online. This doesn't have to involve a lot of original video; you can use still images and artwork and give them motion through effects like pans or zooms, with different dissolves and transitions between images.



2 Running a Game



Valeros reached up to the ring in the dragon's nose and yanked hard to his left. The beast screamed, and a jet of hissing flame roared past him, setting his cloak ablaze.

"That's right!" he crowed. "Not so fun now, is it?"

In reply, the dragon simply swung its great neck sideways, knocking Valeros almost off the tower's edge. The swordsman looked down. Far below, Seoni was struggling to cast a spell while floating in midair. The dragon stretched its pierced and pinioned wings and roared.

"Fine," Valeros grunted. "We'll do it your way." Then he leapt up and out, grabbing for the dragon's ring as he fell.

How to Run a Game

A roleplaying game is only as good as its GM. The GM sets the tone for the game, keeps the action moving, adjudicates situations, and tailors the storyline to the player's tastes. In this chapter, you'll find all the information you need on how to run the best game you possibly can, from tips and tricks to the tools of the trade, plus primers on avoiding common problems, the math behind the game, and how to design different types of adventures.

GMing Style Choices

Before you run your first session, there are a number of decisions you need to make regarding the nature of your game. Is your table a serious roleplaying experience, with players staying in character at all times? Is it an immersive experience with painted miniatures, three-dimensional terrain, soundtracks, and mood lighting? Is it a zany get-together with friends, where half the fun is the in-game banter? Or is it some combination of those, or perhaps something else altogether? There's no best answer, but such decisions have a vast impact on the experience you and your players have. Noted here are a few of the more common decisions a GM needs to make when running a game.

Miniatures vs. Freeform: The Pathfinder Roleplaying Game presumes you're playing with miniatures and using a gridded mat to keep track of character locations during combat. This isn't the only method, though—you can also try charting things out on graph paper or drawing it on a white board, or utilize paper minis and combat tokens that can be printed out and discarded as needed. Yet you may decide that focusing on where everybody is and how far they can move in a round ruins the cinematic drama that you wish to create. In this case, you might prefer a more freeform style of play, where the GM keeps track of the action in his head, players describe the actions they wish to take, and the GM adjudicates the results. In this type of game, many rules take a backseat to flavorful flourishes and cinematic descriptions from both players and GM.

In Character vs. Out of Character: Do your players need to remain in character during the game, or can they speak as themselves, strategizing and giving advice to other players? Some GMs allow the latter only if there's a mechanism for determining when someone's in character (see page 15), while others allow a casual blurring of the lines.

GM Tracking vs. Players Tracking: There's a large amount of information to keep track of during a game. The Pathfinder RPG rules imply that this work should be split, with the players keeping track of their characters, hit points, abilities, ongoing effects, and so forth, and GMs tracking the same information for the NPCs. Yet some GMs prefer to keep everything a secret from their players, tracking even their experience points, hit points, spell durations, and other information, only giving the players vague, lifelike information—such as telling them that they feel weak from blood loss rather than how many hit points they have left. While this can help enhance both the game's mystery and its sense of danger, the sheer amount of bookkeeping required on the part of the GM makes it easy for such games to bog down and overwhelm the GM.

Taking Back Mistakes: Almost every game session, a player does something they didn't mean to do, whether it's stepping on the wrong square or forgetting to add a bonus that means the difference between success and failure. Some GMs have a rule that once it's left your mouth or you've moved your miniature on the mat, you're committed, even if the end result isn't what you would have normally done. Other GMs allow players to retroactively add bonuses to rolls, or take back poorly planned spells and other mistakes, letting them make the best moves possible for their character. This is a difficult balance—too much leeway and there's no risk, but being too strict can ruin the fun for your players. Remember, though, that the standard used for your players should apply to you as well, and such "rewind" moments can be anything from a misplaced miniature to letting a clue slip out too early.

Pregame Preparation

While this topic is covered in depth in Chapter 1, below are a few key points to remember.

Read the Adventure: If you're playing a published adventure, read through it at least once. It also helps to reread the parts of the adventure you expect the players to tackle in the upcoming session, to keep it fresh in your mind.

Predict Player Actions: Try to guess what your players might do in a given situation. If you think they might go to a tavern to get info, think about what NPCs will be encountered there, and what information they may have to impart. Likewise, if you think they might use subterfuge to get into a fortress, consider how the inhabitants might react to various plots. A little foresight goes a long way.

Adapt to Players: Consider tailoring your adventure to take into account the backstories of certain PCs, or incorporate a subplot that players initiated in a previous adventure. If one of your players is a paladin who hates devils, think about changing the generic cleric villain to a priest of Asmodeus to get your PC more invested. By tying your characters into the plot, your story naturally has more impact.

Review Relevant Rules: As you're reading through the upcoming portion of the adventure, take time to



familiarize yourself with relevant monsters, feats, spells, magic items, and rules subsets. Part of your job as the GM is to play NPCs and monsters to the best of their ability, which means being as familiar with the NPCs' options as your players are with their own characters'.

Prepare Stats and Strategies: Make sure the adventure's challenges are appropriately balanced for your party's level and composition. Think about the locations where the encounters take place, and how NPCs can turn the location and their particular abilities to their advantage. It can also be good to copy the stats for each NPC and monster for ease of reference, allowing you to make notations on spells used, hit points lost, and other information without marking up a book.

Prepare Additional Tools: If you use props in your game, preparing in advance helps the game flow smoothly. Pick the miniatures and any three-dimensional terrain you want to use in a given session and put them in an easily accessible place. Put any pictures you want to show in a folder on your computer or print them onto sheets. If the players have the map to a dungeon level, think about drawing the level on the battlemat ahead of time.

Running the Game

Even once the adventure is prepped and the players are gathered, the GM's work is just beginning. There are a few things to pay special attention to during a game session.

Initiative: Keeping track of whose turn it is during combat can be complicated. While a simple written list helps, such can get cluttered and complicated as characters hold actions and delay. The *GameMastery Combat Pad* allows you to keep track of initiative order by arranging the characters and their adversaries on erasable magnets and moving them as needed. You might also manage initiative by using a stack of index cards with the name of a characters or opponents written on each one—maybe even with notes for easy reference.

Dice Rolling: Some dice rolls need to be made in secret, such as when a rogue looks for a trap or a monster attempts a Perception check. At other times, you may want to roll in front of the players, such as when a pivotal save is being made during combat which could potentially kill a player character. Making rolls in the open adds a sense of drama and fairness to the moment, and your players can see the result as they root for the outcome they desire. Yet

doing so can also tie your hands unnecessarily, interrupt the flow of the narrative, and generally detract from the sense of mystery. For this reason, physical barriers like the *Pathfinder RPG GM Screen* come in handy.

GM Subterfuge: You don't want your players to know when something important is happening by watching for you to roll your dice. As such, many GMs roll dice unnecessarily every so often, pretending to look something up in their notes. This makes it harder for players to guess when something significant has happened, such as a failed Perception check. It's equally important for things like finding secret doors—if you don't call for a Perception check simply because there's nothing to see, the PCs quickly learn that rolling dice means something is up, whether they made their roll or not.

Tracking Hit Points: During battles, you'll sometimes have more than one of the same type of monster on the table, so keeping track of which one has all its hit points and which one is barely holding on is important. Whether you track hit points on a sheet of paper, a dry erase board, or via some other method, make notes about which creature is which and any damage or conditions it may have acquired.

Corpses: If you use miniatures in the game, what do you do with the miniature when the monster dies? Some GMs immediately remove dead or unconscious creatures to avoid clutter. Others leave the bodies where they fall, providing terrain obstacles. With the ability to use channel energy to heal friends and foes in an area of effect, leaving monsters on the board could require you to track hit points of monsters well into the negatives on the off chance that the PC cleric unintentionally catches them in a healing wave. This is just one of many situations in which a GM must choose between the game's realism and the ease of actually running the game.

Dead Characters: Sometimes player characters die in combat. This is often a traumatic event for players, and how you handle it as GM has enormous bearing on whether those players continue to have fun or not. First off, determine whether there's a chance for those characters to be revived via *raise dead* or some similar spell. If they're likely to be revived at a later date, you can keep them engaged by having them play the role of NPC allies, cohorts, or even familiars or animal companions. Then when the combat is over and the characters get returned from the dead, they can resume their usual roles. If they're not likely to come back, having them start rolling up new characters is a good way to keep them busy for the rest of the session. For more information on this issue, see Death of a Hero in Chapter 3.

Time Management: Keep an eye on the clock to help you wind up your game on time. If you know your game needs to end at midnight, don't start the triumphant battle with the main villain at 11:30pm. Know when to gloss over less-important encounters in order to reach a good stopping point, but also don't be afraid to pad things out and leave some goodies for next time. Finding a cliffhanger to stop on—the revelation of a piece of information, or a villain's dramatic entrance—makes for both a dramatic conclusion and a hook to keep the players excited for the next session.

Keeping the Game Moving: One of the biggest dangers in a game session is the risk of getting bogged down. Sometimes it's the result of the GM not being prepared and needing to read over something during the game. Other times, it is because of a player not being prepared or taking too much time to make a decision. These slowdowns can ruin the mood, tension, and drama of a game. Preparation as the GM helps minimize these risks on your end. For players, sometimes a decision merely takes a moment, and having a bit of patience is fine. Should long turns and side conversations regularly detract from the action, however, give players a time limit to declare their actions, after which they're considered to be delaying, and you move on to the next character in the initiative order. Of course, new players naturally require more time to make decisions than experienced ones, which is why it can be useful to assign one of your more adept players as a mentor.

Post Game

Once the game session is done, there are still several tasks that need to be taken care of. First, award the players any experience earned during play, and allow them to divide up any loot earned. Having your players come up with an equitable wealth distribution system they can all agree on is vital to the long-term health of the campaign, so help them come up with a system that works for all involved. Last but not least, have the players help you clean up the gaming area.

Once the players have gone home, it may be a good idea to do some basic record-keeping, such as writing down what happened that session in case you need to refresh your memory later, or plot ideas to revisit in future sessions.

Example of Play

Lisa the GM is running her group through "The Hook Mountain Massacre," the third installment of the Rise of the Runelords Adventure Path. Her players are approaching the homestead of the Grauls, a family of depraved ogrekin.

Elsid (human ranger): I check to see what kind of creatures have moved through this area and how recently.

Elsid rolls a Survival check and gets a 22.

GM: There seems to be a decent amount of traffic in this clearing. Mostly humanoid, with large feet, but a

few canine tracks, too. The path was used as recently as a couple of hours ago.

Elsid: It looks like that creature we killed back there wasn't the only one of its kind. Be careful.

Karnak (human barbarian): I move out into the clearing with my ranseur at the ready.

The GM knows that there's a sneaky ogrekin hiding in the nearby vegetation, and asks Karnak to make a Perception check. Karnak's roll of 14 is worse than the ogrekin's Hide roll of 16, meaning he doesn't notice the lurking monster.

GM: Nothing happens.

Karnak: OK, then I'll head toward the house.

GM: As you move forward, an 8-foot-tall creature suddenly charges out of the rows of corn to your right, his head a mass of tumors. He charges at you and swings a massive metal hook!

Since Karnak is surprised, the GM rolls an attack of 23 versus Karnak's flat-footed AC of 16 and scores a hit.

GM: The brute's hook took a piece out of your side, Karnak! Take 15 damage. Everyone roll for initiative.

The party rolls initiative. The GM rolls for the ogrekin, who scores poorly with a 6.

GM: Elena—you're up!

Elena (human rogue): I move to the side of the monster opposite Karnak so I can flank and get my sneak attack damage!

Elena rolls an 18 and beats the ogrekin's AC of 16, rolling her weapon's damage dice and dealing 19 points of damage, which the GM subtracts from the ogrekin's 61 hp.

GM: That seemed to hurt him. Sevashti—what do you do?

Sevashti (human sorceress): I cast *glitterdust* on him.

The GM checks glitterdust*'s area of effect to make sure it doesn't catch any other players—it doesn't—then makes a Will save for the ogrekin, who fails.*

GM: Your spell catches the deformed thing right in the face, and he blinks rapidly to try to regain his sight. Your turn, Elsid!

Elsid: I rain arrows down on him!

Elsid fires three arrows—all hits—and the ogrekin goes down. Because the party cast a number of spells with short durations before entering the clearing, and in order to keep the drama up since she knows there are more ogrekin around, the GM decides to keep initiative order. She rolls a Perception check to see if the ogrekin inside the barn hear the sound of combat, but her roll of 12 minus modifiers for the barn walls and the monsters' roughhousing means they fail.

GM: The poor guy didn't know what hit him! Marbury, it is your turn.

Marbury (human cleric): As usual, it looks like only Karnak is hurt. You can handle it, big fella. I'm heading toward the house.

Karnak: Gee, thanks pal!

GM: Alright Jamek, you and Furball are finally up.

Jamek (half-orc druid): I send Furball ahead to scout.

Furball, the druid's lion animal companion, approaches the house.

GM: Have Furball make a Perception check.

Jamek's player rolls a 16 for Furball. Instead of calculating the exact DC, the GM decides to save time and estimates that 16 is enough to hear ogrekin moving around in the barn.

GM: Furball stiffens suddenly and looks toward the barn opposite the house.

Jamek: OK, I move up and see if I can make out what he hears or sees.

Jamek rolls a Perception of 14—not great, but thanks to Furball's previous success, the GM deems it enough to pick out noise coming from the barn.

GM: Jamek, you hear noise coming from the barn, but you can't make out anything distinct. Elena, we're back to you.

Elena: I move up to the house and check for traps on the main door.

The GM rolls the Perception check for Elena, since she doesn't want the player to know if she succeeds or fails. A result of 15 reveals nothing, as there is no trap present.

GM: Nothing.

Elena: It looks like the door is clear!

GM: Sevashti, your turn.

Sevashti: I'm going to delay until we know whether we're going to the barn or the house. Besides, I don't want to get too close to the action.

The GM marks that Sevashti is delaying, and points to Karnak.

Karnak: Don't worry, little lady, I'll get us some action. I head over to the barn door and throw it open!

Elsid: No! Karnak—wait!

GM: OK, Karnak, you head over to the barn and burst through the doors. Inside, you see a two-story barn with a catwalk around the top and stairways leading up from either side of the door you just kicked in. Three smaller versions of the monster you just killed are wrestling each other here, the smell of stale beer permeating the air. As the door clatters open, all three freeze, staring at you, then roar and move to attack...



The Art of GMing

As a Game Master, you already know what's expected. You have some players, you've designed an adventure full of cunning threats, wild terrain, and a big clever twist, and you're ready to entertain. That should do it, right? Yet the best-laid plans of every storyteller sometimes go awry. There's a range of reasons, but while the Pathfinder RPG is a form of group entertainment, it still depends on you as the GM in order to succeed. You are the scriptwriter and director for this production, but you're also the chief performer. How you choose to approach the role makes a huge difference.

It's not that players aren't important; on the contrary, they're both your audience and your fellow performers, and in many ways everything you do is for them. But they also have less control over the world, and play more limited parts. You lead the band. If you bring gusto to the adventure, your players will respond in kind. If you show up unprepared and harried, they may not invest much effort either. Delivering the best possible performance as a GM depends on how you see yourself when you game, how well you prepare, and what tricks and techniques you use to keep your campaign moving smoothly.

Making It Happen

With great power sometimes comes a sense that maybe your players don't appreciate your efforts enough.

You spend time drawing world maps, imagining plots and places, setting up ambushes, and devising schemes for villains. As GM, you have a certain responsibility for everyone's good time. You strive to challenge the party, but never to break it. You offer a sandbox of a million choices, but guide the party to the juiciest elements.

And yet things don't always go smoothly. Sometimes, all you want is for the players to embark on the quest you've spent all week on, but instead the party accidentally goes off in another direction—or worse, sees the hook for your quest and deliberately decides not to bite because it doesn't interest them enough, or doesn't offer enough of a reward. When such things happen, you have several options.

Forcing Things

In many cases, it's entirely reasonable to say, "Hey folks, this is the adventure I've prepared—work with me." Many groups of players respond positively if asked for help—after all, they want the game to go smoothly, too. Perhaps they just need a stronger hook for their characters, the promise of a bigger reward, or a change of pace from something too similar to what they did last time.

Canny GMs, though, won't force it more than absolutely necessary. It's often worth it to ask your players after the game (or one-on-one later, if that's easier) to tell you why they didn't buy into your original adventure premise, and what sort of adventure they'd prefer. If they want more gold and glory, or to find out what's beyond the western mountains, find a way to make that an option. Player feedback allows you to craft a game that's more satisfying for everyone.

Follow the PCs' Lead

If you enjoy improvisational play, the best move may be to temporarily drop the planned plotline (or at least the planned plot hook) and follow your players' lead. Are they more interested in the dark, brooding mage with a zombie-filled *bag of holding* than the murder the prince of the city has asked them to investigate? Very well, then: the necromancer is the new patron of the adventuring party, and boy does he know about some dark doings—the prince of the city has sent his best troops out on a suicide mission, and the mage would like the PCs to bring back some heads for a quick *speak with dead*.

This approach requires you to think on your feet and make up NPCs and encounters on the spot, but it also means that the players are fully engaged; they're guaranteed to be doing the things they want, rather than following a plot dictated by you. And you get the additional fun of improvising and reacting to the players' ideas, plus the chance to be pleasantly surprised by yourself as ideas flow fast and furiously.

If you're especially fortunate, you can probably turn some of your existing encounters, NPCs, or plot elements into elements of the adventure that the party wants to pursue—or use their new direction to steer them subtly onto the adventure you had planned—but it's not always possible. When forced to think on your feet, one helpful trick is to listen to player speculation and then elaborate on their fears or suspicions to make the plots feel even more complex. If the players say "I'll bet the duke's involved!", a simple option is to take the cue and have the duke actually be behind the nefarious plot they've uncovered, thus making players feel satisfied for having figured it out. On the other hand, if it turns out that the duke is actually an unfortunate innocent, with his daughter held as a pawn of the true villains—then the players get both the satisfaction of being partially correct and the thrill of uncovering something new, and your adventure feels meatier and more intricate with almost no additional effort.

The Illusion of Free Choice

This is the finest of techniques when it works, though it can be overplayed. The illusion of free choice is really a matter of the GM convincing the PCs to do exactly what he wants while making them think it's their idea. The simplest method in theory is often the hardest in practice: giving the players several choices, all of which lead to the

same adventure. This might be as easy as simply changing a hook—the PCs didn't know that the old man they ignored in the bar was about to tell them the same thing as the ancient treasure map they discover in the town graveyard. The ancient dungeon can be uncovered by order of the king, as the party is marching off into the wilds, or as the only hope for a town surrounded by enemies—once they go there, the adventure is the same, regardless of how they got there.

Sometimes, of course, the party has a reasonable idea what the adventure is and still decides to avoid it. In these cases, it's sometimes best to subtly make the adventure more and more compelling until *of course* the players decide to go after the big treasure hoard guarded by their arch-nemesis—they've finally learned his weakness, and they only have a few days to exploit it!

That's a bit of a hard sell, but notice three things about the example. First, it involves a pre-established nemesis; by tying the adventure into the PCs' goals as characters, you've made the same basic adventure seem far more appealing. Second, it provides a lure in the form of cash—because in this case, you've watched your players enough to know that this particular party loves loot more than glory or doing the right thing. Third, the hook relies on a change in circumstances that is time-dependent. If the party doesn't act now, ready or not, this opportunity will not come again. Limited-time offers have a way of selling things, whether it's adventures or refrigerators.

Above all, put yourself in the player's shoes. Don't think about how cool the villain is, how clever the traps are, or how smart the backstory is—think about what's in it for your players, and why an adventure would appeal to them personally, and you'll never go wrong.

GM as Actor

As both performer and director, a good GM needs some of the skills of the stage, from use of accents to scene management.

Volume and Style

Stage presence is as important to GMing as dice. Though many GMs hide behind their screens and only venture out to move minis, others are animated, gesturing and using strange accents to demand attention.

While it's certainly possible to overdo it, the latter style is far more exciting and memorable. The GM doing those things is performing; he's fully engaged and driving the game with his desire to entertain. Yet not everyone is a natural performer, and many of the most bombastic GMs are shy and quiet in everyday life. Just like the rules and adventure design, the performance aspect of GMing is a skill that can be learned. Below are a few tips.

Stand up: Standing tends to make you more forceful and keeps you looking at your players, not fiddling with your dice. It also has the added benefit of letting you glance at players' character sheets or move miniatures faster and more easily. Try standing up during the most action-oriented sequences, when you have combat or other sources of immediate tension in play.

Gesture: Point at a player to get his attention. Put him on the spot, and make it clear that the NPC you're roleplaying expects an immediate response. This tends to push players into responding in character as well.

Make Eye Contact: Look at your players. If you're roleplaying the major villain, don't blink—literally stare them down.



Dialogue: Maybe you prefer to say "He speaks with the voice of the grave" rather than attempting to do so yourself. But even if you aren't comfortable showing off, that doesn't mean you can't put a little spin on things, modulating your pitch or whispering instead of speaking. Hiss a little. Ham it up. Push your limits, and see what works.

Even without accents, a character's word choices say a lot about his personality. Is he a noble dandy who refers to himself in the third person and sometimes uses big words improperly? Or is he an arcane scholar who knows *exactly* what those big words mean, and uses them to the exclusion of all others? Is his language dirty and lowbrow, much like the character himself, or prissy and precise, refusing to debase itself with contractions? The words you choose are every bit as important as the manner in which you say them.

Of course, if you're interested in working up accents to make your NPCs more memorable, there are numerous ways to improve your skills. First and foremost, take risks—even if your accent falls flat after the first few lines, it'll still be more interesting to players than if you used your normal speaking voice. Next, try thinking of familiar actors, cartoon characters, or (if you're feeling daring) friends and family with speech patterns different than your own. Speak your lines as if you were that person—the odds of you mimicking them perfectly are low, at least at first, which means what comes out will be attributed solely to your NPC in the players' minds, and having a person whose voice you're already familiar with in mind allows you to maintain consistency. For further creativity, try borrowing from real-world regional accents, slang terms uncommon to your area, or a wide array of speech impediments like lisps and stutters.

While all of these options can be combined at random, it can often be easiest and most effective to identify a single speech trait that characterizes each character. Spend some time thinking about what most represents each NPC. A voice that cracks frequently makes people think of someone young, inexperienced, and comical. Someone who speaks in a rapid-fire chatter often sounds anxious or like they're trying to sell something, and characters who speak slower than normal often sound dull and unintelligent. Everyone has certain ingrained associations and prejudices tied to specific patterns of speech—identify yours and your players', and use them to your advantage. Not only can you paint a clearer picture, but you can also create interesting roleplaying encounters by occasionally playing against type.

If the Party Talks, Sit Down: Last but not least, when the players talk among themselves, withdraw. Let them plan—while they do, you can check your notes, update the map, and think about the next encounter. It's good to perform, but not all the time. The players deserve some stage time as well.

Giving Direction

As GM, you want the most out of your players, and you know them as well as anyone. Some deal well with setbacks. Some love to hog attention. Some only shine when things are clear; others are leaders when things are thoroughly muddled.

One way to handle these differences is to acknowledge them. Sometimes simply saying, "Hey, you're hogging the spotlight" is a better solution than trying to passively-aggressively give more attention to everyone else. As long as you confront the behavior rather than the person, it's often possible for a given player to learn to play in sync with the group's style.

PRESENTATION

Presentation, as they say, is everything, and some GMs go that extra mile to make their game immersive with a cool handout, perfect soundtrack, or premade maps of every dungeon room. Below are a few quick and easy ideas for adding more goodies to your game.

Handouts and Props

Handouts are extremely valuable for two reasons: they give players information about the adventure, and they are tangible, focusing attention on that information in a way that just saying it doesn't. Whatever information you put on that handout is information that the party is more likely to pay attention to or act on, simply because it's sitting in front of them. So write or sketch that diary entry, cargo manifest, treasure map, ambassador's report, or shopping list for the golem artificer. If the players can't figure out the story hook hidden in it, give them some Knowledge rolls to help them along, but know that every handout you spend time on will almost always pay dividends at the game table.

Fun, authentic-looking handouts are quite easy to make. For an old treasure map, for instance, try dipping white, unruled paper in coffee to make it resemble parchment, then drawing on it when it dries. You can also crumple it up a few times, tear and tatter the edges, and even smear a little dirt or ash on it. Other options include:

- Rolling up paper to make a scroll (and decorating a cardboard paper towel roll as a scroll case)
- Writing "TRAPPED WITH GLYPHS" on the scroll presented above, to punish incautious players
- Tearing a handout in half, so PCs have to find both pieces
- Writing in a foreign language or unusual font to represent the need for *read magic*
- Using an image or replica of a real medieval manuscript page (with your text in English on a separate page)
- Using real parchment or shell gold to make a fancy proclamation

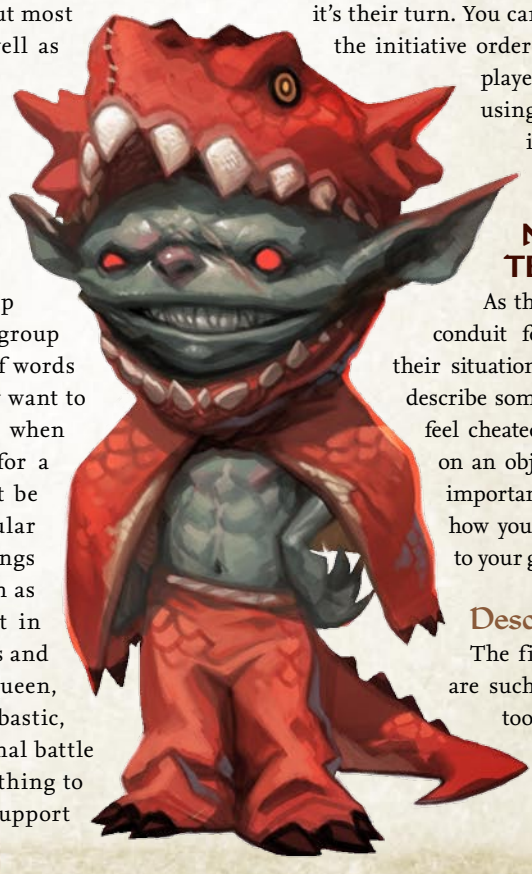
Props are much the same sort of thing, but taken to broader ideas. Old pennies or just metal slugs can be put into a dice bag and thrown on the table for a solid thud when the party is offered 200 gp for the job. You can show a wand, crystal ball, staff, or dagger when you play the part of certain NPCs; likewise with hats. And best of all are the "real treasure" props. Throw down an old necklace to represent the Medallion of Rozxanatan the God-Smiter; if you have some costume jewelry with glass or paste gemstones, that usually does the trick.

In general, props are worth digging out for artifacts, for special NPC audiences that you know are coming up, and for particular impact with players who might be a bit jaded or easily distracted. One or two props per game sessions is plenty; you don't need to turn into an amateur magician just to make a point.

Music

Watch a movie sometime with subtitles instead of sound, and you'll quickly realize just how much emotional weight the music carries. The acting, images, and words are important, but the music pulls at your heartstrings, and gives you cues about how the filmmaker wants you to feel during a certain sequence.

Sometimes you want that extra emotional impact for a game. And for those special occasions, it's worth digging around your music collection to build a playlist. It may seem a little trite, but most fantasy movie soundtracks work well as background music for a fantasy game, so long as you stay away from overly recognizable themes that will jar your players out of the moment. Most of the time, it's best to use fairly subtle soundtracks (though there's nothing wrong with some heavy metal beats to keep the momentum, if that's what you group loves, so long as there aren't a lot of words to distract people). But if you really want to knock a game out of the park (say, when doing a special "send-off" game for a player leaving town), then it might be worth it to ascribe themes to particular characters or, better yet, choose songs to go with specific encounters, such as heavy industrial noises for a fight in the dwarven smithy, soft mandolins and violins for the visit to the elven queen, a dirge for a dead NPC, or a bombastic, brassy symphonic charge for the final battle against the villain. The important thing to remember is that the music should support the scene subtly, without taking center stage—for this reason it's often best to avoid popular music or things with comprehensible lyrics, and it's important to have the songs cued up and ready so you don't waste valuable game time and dramatic tension by searching for the proper track.



Lighting

Lighting is like music; it's easy to overdo it. But a single candle or dimmer switch can get people to focus, or at least get their attention off their phone or laptop and onto the gaming table. The main thing lighting can do is help minimize distractions. A single spotlight on the center of the GM screen and battlemat usually does very well, if you can set up a table lamp to do so while still allowing enough light for people to see their character sheets.

Attention and Distractions

Just as effective (and less dramatic) is removing distractions directly. You're the GM—it's okay to tell players at the start of the game to put away the game system or music, cell phone or laptop. And it's also okay to tell them right at the start of the session that if they're not paying attention when it's their character's turn, you'll skip them that round. That usually does the trick, but if the carrot works better than the stick, you could also give additional XP to the players who are most engaged and prepared when it's their turn. You can also help them out by writing the initiative order down on the battlemat so the players know who's acting next, or using a *GameMastery Combat Pad* or initiative tracker that everyone can see.

Narrative Techniques

As the GM, you are the one and only conduit for the players to learn about their situation in the game. If you forget to describe something, the players quite rightly feel cheated. If you focus your description on an object, they sense that it might be important. As a result, your choices on how you convey information are crucial to your game's success.

Description

The first thing to know is that there are such things as being too loud and too quiet as the GM. If you spend the whole game talking, with players barely squeezing in hit and damage information,

you're likely overbearing and boring your players. But just as dangerous is the GM that's too quiet; if you're intimidated or underprepared, you won't have enough description to really give the players a sense of place, and one room of the castle or dungeon will feel pretty much like another.

There are ways to get across evocative information without writing out reams of text ahead of time. For instance, you might write down three or five words to describe each room, and then riff on those when the time comes to describe it. The words "purple tapestry, enormous fireplace, owlbear pelt on floor" set up a very different room than "bloodspattered walls, black candles, rusty manacles." In each case, you've got enough to fix an image in the players' minds, without going overboard on description.

Once you have that, you'll probably also want to add any pertinent notes on treasure, unusual terrain or interactive elements (such as a well or a dangerously weak support stanchion), or hidden terrain elements like traps or secret doors.

This same approach works well for NPCs, though in most cases you need more than just physical description. If you boil it down, most NPCs need a name, a speaking style, a general appearance, weapons and armor, and a motivation or goal. If you have all those, it's often possible to play a roleplaying scene without generating further stats for the NPC.

Spotlight

There are many in-game tricks that a GM can use to convey information or rework elements of his game, including those mentioned above. The most powerful technique, though, is simply describing a monster, person, or item in detail. Anything that a GM devotes playtime to rises in the awareness of the players.

In most cases, that just means mentioning an item more than once. Players pick up on GM references very quickly. If you want a particular character to draw the party's attention, mention them as someone they see when they return to a particular location. Anyone they see more than once, or anyone they "notice" because the GM tells them they notice them, is bound to get extra scrutiny from experienced players. Of course, less experienced players might not pick up on it, and it's certainly okay to go from mentioning something to the more direct, "This guard seems to want something from you," or even "That painting seems bigger than the others, and the frame makes it look more important."

The point of using the GM spotlight is to get the action moving again. Be brutally obvious only if you must, but don't let the adventure derail just because someone failed a Perception roll.

Backstory

In-world continuity and stories from a setting's history are usually a GM's darling—and sheer boredom for the players. No one wants to hear the GM drone on about events from centuries ago, or the complex relationships of NPCs, or elements of the setting's culture that have nothing to do with the adventure at hand. This historical material is justified only in two particular cases:

- When the players ask about it or show interest
- When it's relevant to the adventure

In the second case, relevant doesn't mean "the GM thought it was interesting." The lore actually needs to matter in the present day, and help a player make a decision at some point in the adventure. If the backstory never matters to the adventure outcome, then it's best ignored.

Cliffhangers

Leaving the outcome of any suspenseful moment in doubt is a time-honored technique from the early days of movies and literature, and the same trick works just as well for RPGs. When time's running out, and the party is ready to wrap up for the week's game, it's always nice to leave them wanting more. The idea is to present just enough of a hint to make the party curious how events turn out, without requiring them to immediately roll initiative. Some ideas include:

- An injured NPC claws his way out of a nearby passage
- A messenger arrives with bad news just as the party thinks all is well
- A monster bursts in on the party
- The party is falsely accused
- A villain arrives to gloat
- A defeated foe shows up prepared to settle old scores

The point is that a new plot thread starts as soon as the old ones drop, and if you're still in the middle of a story, freezing the frame on the cusp of a battle or huge revelation keeps player excitement high all the way until the next session.

Cut Scenes

When you flash from the main party scene to a secondary view (a lone PC scouting, or events happening somewhere else entirely) you can create tension by flipping back and forth between the two. This works especially well if one scene is fraught with danger and mayhem, or if there's a race against the clock.

While this might seem like an ideal way to handle split parties and introduce historical events, it doesn't work for all groups. Impatient players might want to "get back to the adventure" rather than learn about events happening 1,000 miles away.

Flashbacks

Like cut scenes, flashbacks pause the action to show the party pertinent information from another time. The best use of a flashback is usually one of the exact same location, but much earlier. The sight of blood on a throne room floor

might trigger a flashback to a murder scene, or a magical phrase spoken by the vizier might kick off the memory of a fight to bind a genie.

Better still, the flashback could feature the PCs as earlier heroes whose failure led to the present calamity: the tomb raiders who set loose the Lich Lord, or even guards who failed as the prince was assassinated. Above all, keep it short—flashbacks have very specific uses, and a single scene in this style is usually plenty to get the point across.

Foreshadowing

The best payoff is sometimes the one that takes a long time to set up. The henchman hired at 4th level who betrays the party at 7th level is a long con, but it can have a huge impact if you've foreshadowed the betrayal in a way that seems obvious in hindsight (but which is tough to figure out ahead of time).

More practically, foreshadowing is often a clue that drops one or two sessions before the event you're foreshadowing occurs. Some possible techniques:

- Meeting a villain before anyone knows he's a villain
- Fortune-telling with a *Harrow Deck*
- Telling the paladin that a certain town seems dangerous, even heretical
- Having a madman complain about a certain locale or event in an over-the-top way
- Having a sharp-eared PC hear something suspicious
- Introducing omens and portents, such as dead birds or fiery comets

The idea is to make the foreshadowing creepy or unsettling, and vague enough that it doesn't allow the party to prevent the foreshadowed event. The sense of horror when a PC realizes that he could have stopped something if he'd only put the pieces together sooner is a highly effective emotion, and one that roots the PC firmly in the game world.

When done right, foreshadowing ties in heavily with the idea of continuity. Instead of inventing a new villain every game, why not bring back an old one—appropriately leveled during his time away, of course—who already has reason to hate the PCs? Or you could throw a twist into the storyline by making the sweet maiden they saved in the first adventure turn out to be the major villain of the campaign. Such recurring figures make it feel like all the events in your campaign and even your world are somehow tied together, the story leading to some grand and inevitable conclusion.

Secrets

Sometimes a player may split off from the group, or you might want to give information secretly to a certain player because of a successful Perception check. Perhaps an NPC only trusts one character enough to impart her dangerous secret, or the players suspect a traitor in their midst. Similarly, sometimes a player may seek to give you information privately, especially if she's working on her own secret agenda or a rogue attempting to steal from her companions. In instances where you need to box out most of your party, there are several options.

Simply taking the player aside and leaving the room, or passing a note, is perfectly adequate, but knowing another player is getting secret knowledge often eats at other players and can tempt even the most steadfast gamer into metagaming. Talking to the player in question between game sessions is a far safer option, but isn't always possible. Though there are any number of sneaky ways to let a player know something important without alerting the rest of the party—for instance, covertly sending them a text message if you allow cell phones at the table—in general the best way to handle secrets is to either flat-out ask your players to respect the fact that they don't know a given piece of information, or—better still—manipulate the game to avoid the need for intraparty secrets altogether. And remember that any time you spend with one player is time you aren't spending with the rest.

Cheating

Though it's considered more polite to call it "fudging," cheating happens—sometimes a GM will be tempted to alter a die roll to make the story go a certain way, or to save a player character from a blow that would kill them and knock a fun personality out of the game. Should the GM give in to the temptation to cheat? And if the GM is truly in control of the world, and making his or her rolls in secret—is it really cheating at all?

There are several schools of thought on the matter. One side says that the dice are there to assist the story, not determine it—if a GM needs to occasionally alter or totally fabricate some die rolls for the sake of making an encounter a perfect challenge for the players without killing them, then he's just doing his job. Others say that it's the randomness which creates the realism and sense of danger, and that PCs who believe the GM won't let them die lose half the fun. And a third notes that GMs who clearly cheat or have too many coincidences—the party's powerful new items always getting stolen by sticky-fingered halflings, or villains being saved by miracle rolls when a player comes up with an unexpectedly effective strategy—undermine the players' enjoyment, and subtly encourage the players to cheat as well.

Where you fall on the spectrum is a personal call, but if you do decide to fudge rolls for the sake of the game, it's best done in secret, and as infrequently as possible. And only—*only*—if it results in more fun for everyone.

The Science of GMing

Mastering the arts of narrative and group storytelling is crucial to running a good game. Yet game mastering has a practical side as well. The following pages address certain fundamental mechanics and tools that all GMs should familiarize themselves with.

Basics

While the heart of a roleplaying game is the story cooperatively created by the Game Master and the players, the physical tools used to play the game have an effect on the experience.

Dice Mechanics

The Pathfinder Roleplaying Game uses dice to resolve events during the course of a game, such as whether the fighter hits the vampire or the vampire makes its save against the wizard's spell. However, the type and number of dice used determines the statistical probability for each numerical outcome, and fiddling with these probabilities can introduce interesting effects.

A single die has an equal chance to produce any of its results; if you roll a d20, there is a 1-in-20 chance for a 1, or a 2, or a 20, and so on. That means those dreaded fumbles and beloved crits come up just as often as an unremarkable 7, 11, or 16. This type of roll result is called a **discrete uniform distribution**.

Two dice added together do not create an equal distribution of results; if you roll 3d6, there is only a 1-in-216 chance for an 18 (by rolling three 6s), but a 27-in-216 chance to get an 11 (from multiple combinations of 3 3 4, 2 4 5, 2 3 6, and so on). That means the extreme values at the low and high end are much rarer than the middle values. This type of roll result is called a **normal distribution**, commonly known as a **bell curve** because graphing the results gives a line with a hump in the middle that tapers off toward the ends. The more dice you have in a roll, the more probable the middle results become (in the bell curve, the "bell" becomes taller and more narrow, and the rest of the curve is shorter and flatter).

Note that even though a d% is normally generated by two d10s, the result is still a discrete uniform distribution rather than a bell curve because the numbers on the two dice aren't added together. It's also worth noting that, when estimating average values such as damage, the average of a d6 is 3.5 rather than 3, as the lowest value possible on most dice is 1, not 0.

Game Accessories

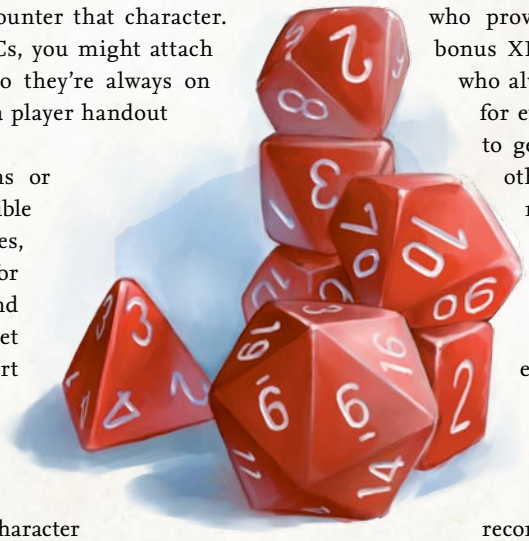
There are many game aids that help make sessions smoother and more memorable.

Art: In a fantasy world where terrible beasts crush villages and flying cloud castles eclipse the sun, an evocative photo or painting can help set the mood or provide a backdrop for an encounter, or even an entire campaign. With millions of vacationers posting their photos to the internet and professional photographers displaying samples of their work online and in magazines, it's possible to find free inspiration for almost any game scene, whether a castle, desert, island, or volcano. Most modern fantasy artists have online galleries featuring beautiful illustrations of fantastic creatures and locations, and many artists sell "coffee table books" of their artwork for easy browsing. Art books, history books, and travel books are rich sources for great photos, as are web pages of concept art from movies and television.

Combat Grid: Many aspects of combat in the Pathfinder RPG assume the use of a grid to determine the relative positions of different creatures. You can simply use graph paper for battles, erasing and redrawing each creature's location as it moves. However, most gamers prefer larger-scale squares that are big enough to contain a token or miniature for each creature. Many groups use wet-erase "battlemats" with 1-inch grids; these durable mats roll up for easy storage or travel. Office supply stores carry easel pads with 1-inch grid paper, which are especially handy when you want to reuse a particular map multiple times (such as a prominent street or the PCs' favorite tavern); laminating the pages or using a Plexiglass overlay (which is safe for dry-erase and wet-erase markers) extends the utility of these pages. Paizo's GameMastery Flip-Mats are laminated, full-color, eight-panel mats of terrain or locations (desert, dungeon, forest, jungle, tavern, and so on), usable with wet-erase and dry-erase markers. Paizo's Map Packs are collections of full-color 5" × 8" themed map cards (including generic structures for things like caravans, cities, farms, forests, towns) which you can use singly or to build larger areas or combine them with Flip-Mats. Many companies sell three-dimensional terrain, such as high-quality painted resin or fold-up paper models, and several companies sell inexpensive mapping software for creating your own gridded fantasy maps.

Critical Hit/Fumble Decks: If you prefer a little more randomness and excitement in your games, augmenting critical hits and fumbles is a fun way to introduce chaos and extra bloodshed into combat. Dozens of tables with random results for critical hits and fumbles exist, but an easy, durable, and versatile way of handling this sort of thing is with Paizo's *Critical Hit Deck* and *Critical Fumble Deck*. Each card in these decks has a different result depending on whether the relevant attack is bludgeoning, piercing, slashing, or magic, and the flavorful results vary from extra damage to ability score penalties to even more humiliating consequences.

Face Cards: A picture is worth a thousand words, and even the most descriptive GM may have to deal with players who have a hard time remembering a specific NPC, as it's a person they've never seen. To remedy this problem, you can use index cards with the name of the NPC and a photograph or an illustration, and show the card whenever the PCs encounter that character. For major or recurring NPCs, you might attach them to your GM screen so they're always on display, or paste them into a player handout about the campaign setting.



To find good illustrations or photographs, look at collectible card games, magazines, and roleplaying games for appropriate historical and fantasy characters. Internet image searches for concept art generate good results, and can be further fine-tuned by adding race names to the search criteria. Given a large enough library of character illustrations, you can create a card for every significant NPC in your game—and the cards provide handy places for the players to record notes about that NPC. Of course, if that sounds like more work than you're interested in, Paizo's GameMastery Face Cards are specifically designed for this purpose: a deck of full-color, illustrated characters with a large, blank, writable area on the back for recording the character's name and salient information.

Miniatures: The ancestors of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game are tactical wargames that used tokens or miniature figures (once called "figs" by gamers, though "minis" is the most common term now). Many players still find miniatures an invaluable asset for gaming. Miniatures exist for almost every type of character, from gnome wizards to elven bards or orc barbarians, in any combination of weapons, armor, and body types. Monsters are just as prevalent, and come in all shapes, sizes, and poses. A trip to a craft or toy store presents dozens of toys, plastic figurines, and action figures suitable for gaming; even if the scale isn't quite right, the visual impact of a PC or monster miniature on the tabletop can help the players better visualize their allies and opponents—and placing an 8-inch-tall monster action figure in the middle of a party of 1-inch-tall PC minis can set the mood for a dangerous and exciting encounter. Weird monster action figures from movies, television, or other games can also spark the imagination for new creatures in a home campaign.

For decades, most miniatures were sold as unpainted metal or plastic, and painting and customizing miniatures required time and effort to create a visually appealing tabletop setup. While this is still popular, nowadays there are also companies that produce pre-painted plastic miniatures or printable paper miniatures in PDF form. Even if you're not interested in collecting or painting miniatures, consider rewarding a player who provides miniatures for the game with bonus XP (just as you might reward a player who always hosts the game, or provides food for everyone). Painting minis is also a way to get a non-gamer spouse or significant other peripherally involved in the hobby; more than one "gamer widow" has earned kudos for painting miniatures without ever touching dice.

Initiative Tracker: Combat is the most complex part of the game, and the easiest place for a session to bog down. Anything that helps speed up combat means everyone gets more done and has more opportunities for fun. The simplest way of handling this is to record each PC and monster name on a card; when combat starts, write each creature's initiative score on its card and sort them into the initiative order. Thereafter, determining who's next to act is just a matter of cycling through the cards. Ambitious GMs can add info to the monsters' cards, such as hit points, special attack DCs, and other information relating to what the monster can do on its turn. (This can also be a useful place to record PC Perception checks and saves, so that you can make secret checks without asking players for their statistics.) Especially detailed initiative cards that resemble character sheets, with room for all of a creature's relevant data, can remove the need to refer to a book.

Another method is using a larger surface like a cork board, marker board, or dry-erase board to track PC and monster initiative and status. If positioned so the players can see it as well, this also lets them know when their turns are coming up so they can plan ahead. Paizo's *GameMastery Combat Pad* is a handy page-sized version of this—a magnetic dry/wet-erase board with dry/wet-erase magnets to indicate PCs and monsters. While it fulfills the same function as a pad of paper, the creature magnets make it easy to adjust initiative order for readied and delayed actions, and saves the GM the time and effort of rewriting all the PC names for every combat.

Item Cards: Kill the monsters, take their treasure, and sort it all out later—it's a standard tactic of most adventuring groups. So what happens when the players want to identify a stockpile of magic items from their last adventure? Just as face cards help players remember NPCs, a physical card describing an item (and perhaps

Linear Adventure



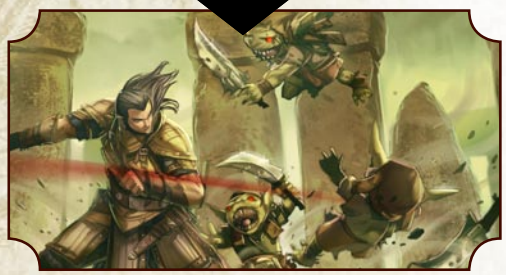
Monsters attack town



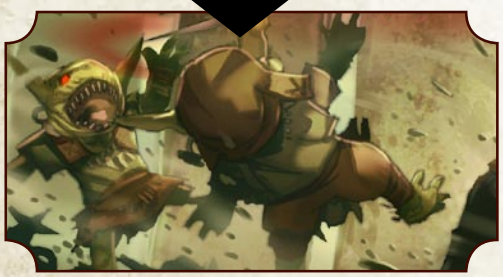
Witness gives directions to monster lair



Discover monster lair



Monster ambushes adventurers



Defeat the monster!

a note about who it was taken from) helps the players remember the unusual items their PCs carry—and helps a busy GM keep track of what that bubbling green potion, smoking longsword, and bleeding gauntlet actually do. Paizo's GameMastery Item Card line covers all the basics—weapons, armor, magic items, adventuring gear, and more, each with a full-color illustration and an erasable blank space on the back for keeping notes.

Gaming without Accessories: Of course, sometimes you don't want or need accessories at all—perhaps you're gaming in a car, at a campsite, or somewhere else with limited space or materials. Many campaigns don't use miniatures or a grid, even for combat. You can describe items verbally and not refer to cards or pictures. Crits are just extra damage and fumbles are misses. Character initiative is clockwise from the GM. Random results are determined by playing pick-a-number or rock-paper-scissors. The appeal of roleplaying games is the shared experience of storytelling (whether the story is an epic quest or a monster bash), and humans have been telling stories together for thousands of years just with their minds and voices. Each gaming group is different; some like all the bells and whistles, some prefer simplicity and abstraction, and many fall somewhere in between. Just as the sort of campaign each group prefers is different, how they choose to play that campaign can vary from group to group or game to game.

Creating Adventures

It's the GM's job to plan and predict the course of an adventure. Depending on you and your players' play style, this may be an easy endeavor or require a lot of work. The basic types of adventures are linear, unrestricted, and nonlinear.

Linear: A linear adventure scenario is pretty straightforward; the PCs begin at point A, travel to point B, then C, and so on until they reach the end of the adventure. What exactly those points are, and which of them are combat encounters, roleplaying encounters, or merely places to rest and buy new equipment varies from adventure to adventure. For example, a scenario may start at a village where orcs just attacked, follow a survivor's directions toward the orc lair, deal with the orcs in the lair, and end with the PCs returning triumphantly to the village; there isn't much room for deviation from the expected plot. Most published adventures are linear adventures simply because a book only holds a limited amount of information—it's impossible to account for every possible character motivation, wild goose chase, or wrong turn that the PCs may take during the course of one or more nights of play.

With linear adventures, the GM has to be ready to steer the PCs back to the task at hand; one of the easiest ways is

to use a timed event to encourage the PCs to stay on track (such as a prisoner held captive in the next location who must be rescued before the monsters kill him), but some GMs fall into the trap of using brute force, such as an army of lizardfolk that coincidentally appears whenever the PCs try to go a different direction. Linear adventures are often called "railroads" because there's only one place the PCs are supposed to go—but this isn't always a bad thing. If you're just running a one-shot game—say if an old friend is in town for a long weekend or the gaming group wants to play a single game with high-level characters—it's perfectly acceptable to railroad the characters; the expectation is that everyone wants to finish the adventure, and wasting time looking for clues in the wrong place just makes it more likely the group won't finish in the allotted time. In these situations, it's okay for the GM to say, "you don't think this has anything to do with the Dungeon of Bloody Death, and heading to Black Blood Mountain is clearly the way to deal with this threat." In the same way that your group can use their imaginations to see ex-quarterback Bob as a female gnome rogue, they can accept a gentle push in the direction of the actual adventure when things get too far off track.

In an ongoing campaign, you have to be prepared for the PCs to go off the rails and stay off the rails for extended periods of time. Even if your plan is to run a linear adventure, it's a good idea to have some mini-adventures, random encounters, or interesting locations for the PCs to visit should they detour from the plot of the adventure. With careful planning, these deviations can help steer the PCs back toward the main adventure—a random encounter with an orc raiding party that's fresh from cooking and eating some peasants may inspire the PCs to deal with the lair; an old ranger needing help fighting a dire wolf may have a few *+1 orc bane arrows* he was saving for a special occasion, and so on. Of course, the best solution is to have several linear adventures planned, seeding the PCs with information about each, and letting them pursue whichever one they want—which actually works much like the next adventure type.

Unrestricted: In an unrestricted adventure, the PCs can go anywhere and do anything; they may not even be aware of your initial ideas for the first adventure. This sort of gaming is often called a "sandbox" because there are no limits to what the PCs can do, like children on a playground creating their own imaginative stories with toys. Running a sandbox game requires a GM with a lot of prepared game material or the ability to create multiple story elements on the fly. An easy way to "cheat" at running a sandbox game is to have several parallel adventures planned so if the PCs wander away from one 3rd-level dungeon, you can insert another one in the path of the PCs. Another trick is to "re-skin" one adventure with a

Unrestricted Adventure



Monster attacks town



Exploration



Discover monster lair



Explore dungeon

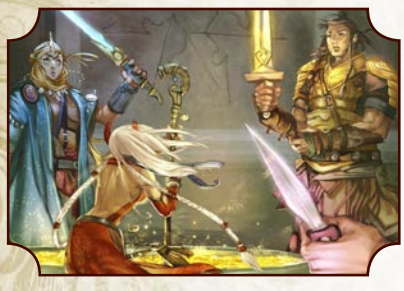


Defeat the monster!

Nonlinear Adventure



Monster attacks town



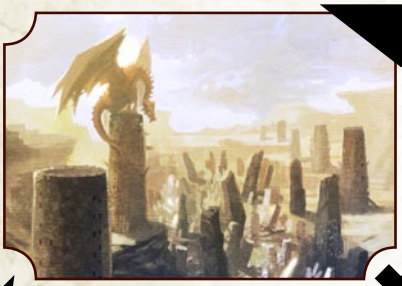
Seek out weapons to battle monster



Witness gives directions to monster lair



Rebuild town's defenses



Discover monster lair



Await monster's return



Monster ambushes adventurers



Adventurers ambush monster



Defeat the monster!

different flavor, such as taking a fire-themed temple and changing all encounters, spells, and monsters from fire to cold as the players go through it. If you're running a sandbox campaign and you get stuck, either because the PCs have lost track of adventure hooks or they're heading toward something you haven't thought much about, use the same tactics you'd use in a linear or nonlinear adventure (see below)—steer them in a new direction, tell them where they're headed isn't ready yet or is too powerful for them, or ask them what they expect to find there and use that to inspire what's actually there.

The one big potential trap of a sandbox game is that because there's so much to do, some players may split off from the main group for extended periods, leaving you to GM one group of players while the rest have to sit and wait until it's their turn. If this happens, steer the wandering PCs back to the main group, as dividing your attention for too long leads to bored players. Sometimes it's best to arrange a short session (or even a series of emails or messageboard posts) for just those PCs to let them deal with their plot elements and get back on track with the main plot. Sometimes the most drastic and mysterious action is best—if the wandering PCs turn up near the main group, disoriented and with no memory of the last few days except a sense of horror, you can move on with the main plot and plant seeds for what happened to that "missing time." For more information on dealing with split parties, see pages 65–66.

Nonlinear: If an unrestricted adventure is a blank page, a nonlinear adventure is a flow chart, as when the PCs have multiple options for engaging a storyline, they feel more in control, and the adventure starts to look more like a flow chart or series of crossroads than a straight railroad—this is the core of a nonlinear adventure. In many cases you're able to bend or add to the developments of a linear adventure based on the actions and desires of the PCs, turning it into a nonlinear adventure.

For example, in the aftermath of an orc raid on a village, the PCs may decide that tracking the orcs back to their lair is too difficult without a ranger and decide their abilities are better suited to building defenses for the town and waiting until the orcs come back. Instead of the PCs dealing with the monsters room by room, you can use those area-based monster encounters to attack the town in waves, or (if you think the PCs are up for it) to attack from two different directions. The PCs don't need to know that the encounter with the orc monster tamer and his worg pet was supposed to be area 4 of the orc lair, and perhaps the increased mobility of an open area brings an interesting twist to what may have been an otherwise routine encounter.

Nonlinear adventures require you to plan ahead for what the PCs may do, and think on your feet in case they come up with something you weren't expecting. For example, if the PCs are intimidated by your description of the damage from the orc raid and ask about finding better weapons to help deal with the orcs, you may be momentarily caught off-guard because this sort of action wasn't in the original idea of the lair-based adventure. However, developing a stable of secondary characters and side treks lets you quickly insert an appropriate NPC for this purpose, such as the aforementioned old ranger with the *+1 orc bane arrows*—who no longer needs help with a dire wolf, and is now willing to trade the arrows for a favor to be named later (which you can use as a plot hook for the next adventure). If you're stuck for ideas when the PCs make an unexpected shift, don't be afraid to ask the players what their characters are looking for; if they ask about *orc bane arrows*, that may inspire you about a hermit ranger, but if they ask for potions or scrolls, it may inspire the idea of a lonely, half-mad cleric living at a ruined shrine, and the players don't need to know that their suggestion as to what they're looking for helped define the course of the adventure.

Running Smooth Combats

Combat is the slowest and most complex part of the game, with issues of timing, multiple creatures acting at once, and many, many dice rolls. Here are some tips for speeding up combat—things you can do and things your players can do to help.

Be Prepared: This sounds like a no-brainer, but the greatest source of combat slowdowns is not knowing what a creature can do or how its special ability functions. It's hard enough for the players to keep track of what their PCs can do, but as a GM you're usually running multiple creatures at once and have to keep in mind how the results of this combat affect other events in the session. Read over the stat blocks for all creatures you're using that session; if any of them have special abilities or use a universal monster rule, be sure you're familiar with those as well. If a creature has a complex spell or spell-like ability, note its page number or print out the ability to save time referencing it.

Display the Combat Order: See page 35 for descriptions of initiative trackers such as Paizo's *GameMastery Combat Pad* and initiative cards. If a PC knows what the current tick of the initiative clock is and knows when the participants get to act, he knows when his turn is coming up and can plan for what he wants to do. This means instead of hemming and hawing for a minute at the start of his turn, he can hem and haw during the previous player's turn and be ready when it's his turn. It also lets the PCs coordinate their actions together—while stingy GMs may see this as cheating or metagaming, remember that the turn-based initiative system is just a tool to simulate real-time combat in a way that doesn't take forever, and in

a real combat, people on the same side wouldn't be locked into only acting in a specific order without awareness of each others' intent.

Five Second Rule: If the players can see who's up next in the initiative order, they have no excuse for not knowing what's going on or what their characters want to do. If a PC's turn comes up and the player takes more than a few seconds to announce his character's action, skip him as if he had chosen to delay his action (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* page 203) and move on to the next creature's turn—after all, combat is hectic, and sometimes in the thick of battle you need a second or two to focus. This doesn't cost the PC any actions, so they're only penalized their position in the initiative, and it hopefully encourages them to pay more attention to what's happening. Note that speeding up combat in general means players get to act more often and are less likely to get distracted between their turns, so the rest of these tips should make this one less necessary. Note also that you should let players know in advance that you're going to do this, as springing it on them unexpectedly can seem vindictive.

Plan and Combine Dice Rolls: Rolling attacks and damage separately takes twice as long as rolling them all together. Save time by coordinating your attack roll dice with your damage roll dice so you can roll them at the same time, and encourage players to do the same. For example, if the PCs are fighting four orcs, each with a falchion, get four different-colored d20s and a pair of matching d4s for each orc, then roll all 12 dice at the same time; if the red d20 and green d20 are hits, you know to look at the red d12s and the green d12s and ignore the blue d12s and purple d12s. If the PCs are fighting a dire lion, you can color-coordinate the bite's d8 die with one d20 and two claw d6 dice with two other d20s, and roll all the dice at once.

Be aware, however, that while rolling attack and damage at the same time is always a good idea, rolling all your attacks at once can be problematic if you (or your players) want to split the attacks between multiple opponents—if you don't carefully assign each attack before you roll, it's tempting to say that two of those three attacks which would have missed the main villain were actually directed at his weaker henchmen, whether or not that was your original intention.

Tokens: There are dozens of conditions in the game that can affect a creature's behavior, possible actions, or combat stats, and it's easy to lose track of them during gameplay. One way to help with this is using tokens next to or underneath a creature on the battlefield or the displayed initiative tracker. The simplest tokens are torn pieces of paper with the condition written on them. Alternatively, you can use glass beads, colored plastic disks (possibly even magnetic ones for easy stacking), flat wooden squares, or even fancier tools. Several companies make variants of these, allowing you to customize them to your needs, such as a yellow marker for panicked, green for nauseated, red for enraged, and so on. Tokens also let you single out unusual creatures when unique miniatures are unavailable ("the orc with the purple marker has tentacles instead of arms") and help the players identify targets in combat without having to ask which opponent is which ("I attack the panicked orc before he runs away and alerts anyone to our presence").

Building Encounters

One of the ironies of being a GM is that it's not your job to create a fair fight between the PCs and monsters—if it were a fair fight, the PCs would lose half the time, and that makes for a very short adventuring career. Consider a "fair" fight between four 6th-level PCs and four 6th-level NPCs; the NPCs are a CR 9 encounter, which has a good chance of killing one of the PCs, but the PCs are likely to kill *all* the NPCs. This is how it should be—your job is to create encounters that are *challenging*, which means the PCs are expected to win, but should have to work for it. The following section gives advice on building encounters that are challenging, memorable, effective, and interesting.

Play to the PCs' Strengths

As a GM, you should know your players and their PCs, and create encounters that suit their play style and show off what their characters can do. If the fighter's player likes to jump into the middle of groups of monsters and hack away, be sure to include such encounters every so often so that player gets to do what he likes best. If he has the Cleave feat, set up situations where he can cleave an adjacent foe; if he has Great Cleave, make sure every now and then he can go cleave-crazy on a horde of weak opponents. If the sorcerer's player is a tactician and likes to use ranged spells and enchantments, put her against charm-vulnerable opponents using ranged attacks so she has perfect targets for her style of play. If the monk's player is a fan of Wuxia films and likes the extreme-cinematic style of combat, put opponents on ledges so he can use high jump, or enemies at the bottoms of cliffs so he can get there quickly using slow fall, and make sure some enemies aren't immune to stunning fist.

This means you should keep an eye on what feats and spells your players select as their PCs level up, and on what magic items you award them or they create. If the fighter takes Great Cleave at level 5 and only gets to use it once by the time he's reached level 10, it's as if he wasted that feat choice, and that's not fun. You want the players to use the abilities that make them excited about the game. Reward them for playing well by letting their characters flex their muscles.

This is not to say that you shouldn't challenge the players to try different tactics. Put the fighter who likes being surrounded in a situation where he has to guard a narrow bridge and can't let anyone get past him, or have him fight monsters that get flanking bonuses or sneak attacks that make him rely on terrain or the other PCs to avoid getting killed. Let the tactician-sorcerer take control of a minion. The trick is to teach other styles of play (or at least present them as options) without them feeling forced.

High- and Low-CR Encounters

The game expects that for about half of the encounters the PCs face, the CR of the encounter is equal to the average party level (APL). Obviously the rest of the encounters are higher or lower than the average party level, but what is too low or too high?

Table 12–1: Encounter Design (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* page 397) only covers encounters from APL –1 to APL +3, so that CR range is the usual limit for most encounters. After all, for a party of four 6th-level PCs, an "easy" encounter (APL –1) is a "rival" group of four 2nd-level NPCs (CR 1 each, +4 for 4 creatures = CR 5); if beating up NPCs one-third your level is easy, beating up even weaker creatures is more like bullying than adventuring. The risk of using very easy encounters is that the players may grow bored—they know their characters can deal with the monsters, but have to go through the motions of making attack and damage rolls without the excitement or risk from a "real" encounter. (Much like a "god mode" setting in a video game, the novelty of easily destroying all opponents gets old after a few encounters.) In some cases it's acceptable or even a good idea to lead off an adventure with a very easy encounter—for example, if the players need a morale boost or have power-boosting abilities that require some kills to start functioning—but in most cases you don't want to create encounters below APL –1.

The value of APL +3 should be a fairly hard limit for difficult encounters unless you want there to be a considerable risk of PC death. Once you're beyond APL +3, the PCs' ability to pose a threat to a monster dwindles, especially if the encounter is a single powerful creature rather than multiple ones on par with the APL. In most cases, this is because using a higher-CR monster may cross one of the invisible "break points" in monster design where the creature's defenses and abilities assume the PCs are a certain level and have access to certain spells or gear, such as magic weapons, spells to remove ability damage, items neutralizing poisons or disease, or even simple things like being able to hit the monster's AC or meet its saving throw DCs. If the PCs lack a critical spell or piece of gear, a difficult encounter may be nearly impossible.

For example, a succubus is a CR 7 encounter, and is an "epic" encounter for a group of four 4th-level PCs. Most PCs at that level lack cold iron or good weapons, and thus have to deal with the demon's DR for every attack. The PCs may have difficulty overcoming her SR 18, energy resistances, and immunities, thus spellcasters will be frustrated. The PCs have even odds at best of resisting her at-will *charm monster* and *suggestion* (usually taking one PC out of the fight), and have to work very hard to make up for the temporary hit points from her at-will 6d6 *vampiric touch*.

It's entirely possible to have an exciting and challenging fight (CR equal to APL +1 or +2) without overwhelming the PCs. An "epic" fight may last two or three hours of real time—a memorable fight if the PCs win, but a depressing slog if they can't. It's generally better to keep combat encounters to about an hour—that way you can get two or three encounters into one night of gaming, and make more progress in the adventure or campaign than a single, longer fight. If the fight you've given the PCs ends up too tough for them, don't forget to remind them that they can run away, or you can cheat a little bit and suddenly treat the monster as if it had the young creature template (–2 on all rolls), which might be enough to turn the tide in the PCs' favor—after all, you want the PCs to win, because that means everyone gets to keep playing. Killing them with an accidentally-too-hard encounter is no fun for anyone.

Solo Monsters vs. Groups of Monsters

Sometimes there's the temptation to use one powerful monster instead of multiple weaker monsters. The main drawback to this encounter-designing tactic is that the PCs outnumber the monster; even in the optimal situation where the monster attacks first, a group of four PCs gets to attack four times before the monster gets another turn, and with good planning it's entirely possible for the PCs to kill the monster in one round. Using multiple monsters forces the PCs to either focus their attention on one opponent (giving the remaining opponents more opportunities to attack) or engage all of the opponents (preventing an immediate slaughter). Using multiple monsters also lets you set up special abilities like sneak attack that are difficult to implement with a single monster, and means you can distribute the monsters' actions throughout the round (whether by rolling separate initiatives or using the delay or ready actions) and react more than once per round to what the PCs do.

Remember that, as a GM, you have tricks up your sleeve, and if the PCs are having an easy time dealing with a solitary monster, it's all right to send in reinforcements. An intelligent NPC may have bodyguards en route. A brutish monster may have a handler or trainer within earshot of its cries for help. Even an unintelligent creature like an ooze or big zombie may benefit from the arrival of wandering monsters.

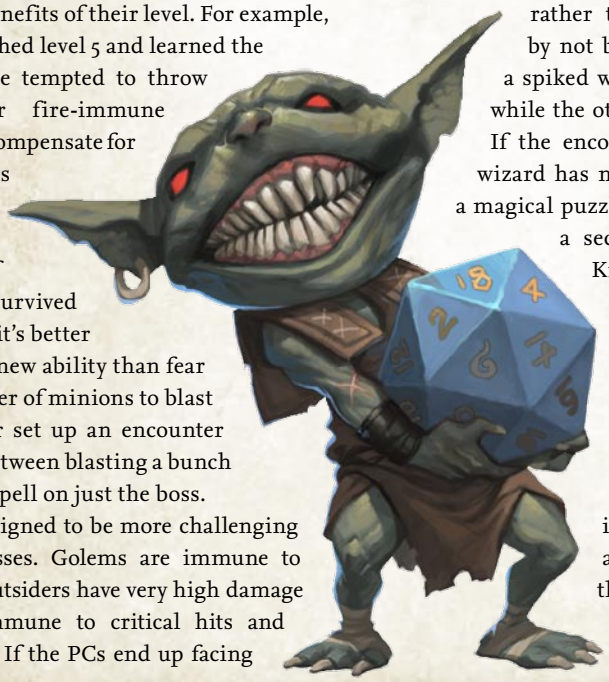
Winning Monster Combos

Some monsters are best used in groups or with other creatures that complement or augment their abilities. A single derro probably has a hard time using its sneak attack, but a group of them can easily set up flanking situations. Tieflings have fire resistance 5, making them handy allies for a fire priest with *burning hands* or a fire mephit; alternatively, a tiefling cleric controlling a gang of burning skeletons is all but immune to their area damage. Creatures with spell-like abilities can cast them on minions or on a leader. For example, a dark naga or spirit naga can cast *cat's grace*, *invisibility*, or *displacement* on its allies; a spirit naga can even turn itself invisible and cast cure spells on its allies. Given time, a succubus's profane gift ability can bolster every single guard, priest, and lieutenant in an evil fortress.

Monster abilities can also complement hazards or traps; a flying monster ignores difficult terrain, floor pits, or patches of green slime. Monsters with damage reduction are immune to arrow traps and most spear traps; those immune to poison can ignore the danger of poisonous traps or even rooms with inherently toxic air, such as a sulfurous volcanic vent. Using monsters intelligently like this helps create fun and memorable encounters, as well as challenges PCs to try new tactics.

Don't Stymie the PCs

This is another way of saying "play to the PCs' strengths," but is worth reiterating. Part of the fun of playing is leveling a character and gaining new abilities. If you create encounters that circumvent the PCs' newest abilities, it takes away some of the fun of the game because it's like they didn't gain all the benefits of their level. For example, if the PC wizard just reached level 5 and learned the *fireball* spell, you may be tempted to throw some fire-resistant or fire-immune encounters at the PCs to compensate for this ability—which makes the 5th-level wizard feel like a 4th-level wizard. However, thousands of RPG campaigns have survived PCs who can cast *fireball*; it's better for a GM to embrace the new ability than fear it. Give the wizard a cluster of minions to blast so he feels powerful—or set up an encounter where he has to choose between blasting a bunch of minions or using the spell on just the boss.



Some monsters are designed to be more challenging to certain character classes. Golems are immune to almost all magic, some outsiders have very high damage reduction, oozes are immune to critical hits and sneak attacks, and so on. If the PCs end up facing these kinds of creatures over and over again (especially in a short amount of time), the stymied players can easily get frustrated—after the third encounter with stone golems, the sorcerer and wizard are likely to give up and want to stop playing. If you're going to use a lot of these creatures (say, in a themed dungeon), you have two options to prevent player frustration.

Give the Character a Tool: There are dozens of limited-use items in the game, plus consumables like potions and scrolls. If you know one PC is going to have a problem with an upcoming encounter, drop a helpful item into an earlier encounter or even an earlier adventure—an item that lets the character be useful in the battle despite the monster's resistances. If a PC druid has no magic weapons and you're planning an iron golem encounter, give her a *golembane scarab* so she can better attack it in wild shape. If a PC rogue has no bludgeoning weapons to use against a black pudding, let her find a low-level *wand of magic missile* and blast away using Use Magic Device. Many items and spells in the game are designed to deal with unusual encounters, but don't see play very much because PCs prefer general-utility magic; introducing a cheap or expendable item like this gives smart players something to fall back on if their primary strategy isn't effective or if they run into an encounter where the unusual tool is exactly what they need.

Present Other Options: Just because the encounter involves a monster doesn't mean that all the PCs have to focus on defeating that monster. Create another task that helps overcome the monster, prepares for the next encounter, or disables a parallel threat during the fight. For example, in a fight against a bunch of black puddings, rather than having the rogue frustrated by not being able to use sneak attack, add a spiked wall trap that the rogue can disable while the other characters deal with the oozes. If the encounter has an iron golem and the wizard has no electricity attacks to slow it, put a magical puzzle-crystal in the room that unlocks a secret room if the wizard makes a Knowledge (arcana) check. If the party cleric channels negative energy and the other PCs are fighting undead (meaning the cleric would heal enemies if she tried to channel), include a door made of fused bone that only opens from a focused blast of negative energy. If the opponent is resistant to physical attacks, put a chained prisoner in the room that the barbarian, fighter, or paladin can rescue while the spellcasters deal with the threat.

Unusual Campaigns

Most GMs eventually toy with the idea of running a theme campaign, such as an all-dwarf or all-elf campaign. While most of these have no game effect, below are several variant campaigns that require special consideration when building encounters.

No Healers

Whether you're running a low-magic campaign or just have a group of players uninterested in playing healers, a lack of curative magic in the party is a big deviation from the norm. Without a healer, monsters that deal high damage have a greater risk of killing a PC—there's no healer to step in and compensate for a critical hit—so you should rely on weaker monsters that don't deal damage in large increments. If there is magic in the campaign, the PCs can at least rely on potions (and scrolls and wands, given an adequate Use Magic Device bonus), but this forces them to decide between attacking and healing each round. Without reliable access to any healing magic (such as in a historical campaign), the PCs must resort to nonmagical methods like the Heal skill, or perhaps limited-use legendary items or quasi-magical items derived from unusual monster parts. They should also consider using more defensive tactics, such as taking the Dodge and Combat Expertise feats, in order to raise their Armor Classes and reduce the number of successful attacks against them. Keep in mind that without healing, PCs generally have no way to deal with curses, diseases, poisons, and other afflictions, so use creatures with those abilities sparingly or make mundane methods of overcoming such dangers a more significant and readily available part of your campaign.

No Spellcasters

Though technically a broader example of the "no healers" variant, a campaign with no spellcasters at all has an entirely different set of problems. Most adventures assume that a typical party has one arcane caster and one divine caster; without any magic at their disposal, the PCs may have a hard time dealing with monsters that are resistant to physical damage but vulnerable to magic. Even something as simple as a swarm (immune to weapons but vulnerable to area attacks) becomes a significant challenge when the PCs don't have magic. Conversely, an otherwise challenge-appropriate monster that has a high spell resistance may actually end up weaker than a "normal" creature because its CR assumes the PC spellcasters are going to have trouble—a hindrance a no-spellcaster party completely ignores. Keep an eye out for monsters with high DR, high SR, or vulnerabilities to magical attacks (including cold and fire vulnerability); these are likely to be more or less difficult than expected.

All Spellcasters

This section is more about a party with no melee classes, rather than a party where every PC is a spellcaster—a group of four clerics or paladins is technically an all-spellcaster party, but they don't have the sort of problems that four sorcerers, wizards, or even bards face. Such a party is the opposite of the no-spellcasters group; DR is less important, SR and resistances are more important, and creatures with nearly universal magic immunity are a serious problem. Golems, for example, can't be damaged by most direct-attack spells, and even though a stone golem is CR 11, it may be able to eliminate an entire party of 12th-level wizards, especially given a wizard's low AC and hit points compared to a melee class. The golem is an "easy" challenge on paper, but more dangerous in execution. Of course, smart players will use summoned monsters and charmed enemies to take the brunt of physical attacks, and a smart GM can stave off a lot of player frustration by providing such things to the PCs (even in the form of scrolls or wands) if the players don't think of it themselves; even a few summoned orcs at the start of an adventure can help an all-caster party survive.

Small Party

Sometimes you have a player who can't make it to this week's session; sometimes you only know two other gamers in your area. Either way, having a small party presents you with some unique challenges. With fewer characters, a battle can shift against them very quickly—one unconscious, charmed, or held PC in a group of three is a loss of 33% of the party's resources compared to 25% in a standard party. Often, one or more PCs may have to take on multiple roles (melee character, skill character, arcane damage-dealer, or divine healer), and as the game rewards specialization, this means these hybrid characters are slightly less effective at either task than two focused characters would be. Fewer characters means it's more likely they're clustered together, and thus are more vulnerable to area attacks. When dealing with a small party, temperance is the key—start with smaller, weaker encounters, and give the players time to get the feel of their group's vulnerabilities. Once the players have an idea about their party dynamics, test them with encounters closer to their average party level, and eventually you'll find a good CR range that suits their abilities and is still challenging.

Large Party

A party of eight PCs is a much different "problem" for a GM: they're able to handle more difficult encounters and more of them per day, often by expending disproportionately fewer resources than a four-person party. It would be

easy to make the assumption that because doubling the number of monsters in an encounter adds +2 to the CR, a party of double the normal number of PCs can routinely handle encounters where the CR is equal to the APL +2. This isn't always true, however, mainly because higher-CR monsters tend to have built-in assumptions about party gear (see High- and Low-CR Encounters on page 41). These differences are especially evident with a large number of weaker PCs.

A good low-level example of this is the barghest; it's only CR 4, and in theory, if four 2nd-level PCs can handle a CR 2 encounter, eight 2nd-level PCs should be able to kill a CR 4 monster. However, most 2nd-level characters aren't going to have a magic weapon, and therefore the barghest's DR 5/magic absorbs a lot of incoming damage. Also, a barghest's average damage per round is 20.5, assuming it hits with all three attacks (and with a +10 attack bonus for all three, that's a safe bet against 2nd-level PCs); while that's dangerous for 4th-level PCs (where a typical fighter has about 40 hit points), it's murder for 2nd-level PCs (where a typical fighter has about 22 hit points). In this case, the battle becomes a race to wear down the monster as soon as possible because it's killing a PC almost every round.

It's perfectly fine for a large group of PCs to have an easier time dealing with challenges where the CR is equal to the APL. In general, it's better to use multiple weak monsters than one powerful monster. This gives each PC multiple opponents to choose from, gives you more creatures to play with, and keeps PC mortality low.

Variant Play Experiences

Not every game session involves half a dozen people sitting around a table, with dice and character sheets in hand. Other popular play experiences include solo campaigns, convention play, and online games.

Solo Campaigns

A solo campaign—sometimes called a duet campaign—consists of one GM and one player. Such an arrangement is often perfect for spouses, roommates, siblings, and any other situation where players are scarce. In addition, a solo campaign is ideal for pursuing the kind of plotline that excludes other players—for example, an in-character romance, or a character who wants to build a business or carry out nefarious activities.

For better or worse, a solo campaign centers on the player's character. Thus, it's best to start with the character concept and build a storyline around that. For example, if your player wants a seafaring character, your campaign should focus on the ocean. You and the player should agree on the basics, then you can design adventures accordingly.

While this kind of campaign obligates you to cater to the tastes of your player, it also frees you from worrying about whether the other players are having fun—if your player's enjoying it, you're 100% successful. Still, this doesn't mean you need to focus exclusively on things you know your player likes, as that can rob you of the chance to find new things he or she might enjoy. Lay your campaign's foundation on known tastes, but feel free to explore.

Having only one PC poses some difficulties with standard adventures. A solo PC is incredibly vulnerable, not just to combat encounters, but to simple problems like falling into a pit—if the PC can't make the required Climb check or get out of the pit with magic, he's basically stuck. Likewise, a party of four PCs can deal with a monster that casts *charm person* on one party member, but a solo PC who fails that save is done for (unless you have a plan for dealing with the charmed PC shaking off the effect later and escaping). A good example to follow is a movie where there's just one protagonist; combat encounters are usually either multiple weak opponents that are only a threat to the hero in numbers (and the hero often controls the battlefield so he can deal with them one or two at a time) or a single, more difficult opponent such as a lieutenant or the main villain.

One way to compensate for the lack of other party members is to expand the character's range of abilities beyond what the game normally allows. As long as the character won't ever be played in a "normal" campaign, there's really nothing wrong with this tactic. Another option is to introduce one or more NPCs with the appropriate abilities, friends or sidekicks of the hero which can be played by either you or the player. You could also use magic items to help fill the gap. At some point, however, you may still need to adjust your adventure to eliminate challenges that the player simply cannot meet.

Stealth, skill, and roleplaying encounters are much more common in solo play. Just remember to have a backup plan should the PC fail to accomplish a goal, such as an alternate route around a trap, a quick combat resolution to a failed stealth situation, or a temporary way to neutralize or contain a dangerous opponent.

Convention Play

Conventions are hotbeds of gaming opportunity. While many RPG events available at game conventions are single-session adventures, timed dungeon runs, or tournaments, others are run through organized play groups like the Pathfinder Society which allow players to keep the same character over the course of several games (or conventions!), accumulating experience, gear, and notoriety. Campaigns that operate via game conventions and other public events lose a great deal of the camaraderie of a standard campaign

due to the infrequency of sessions and the variable player mix, but such events can be perfect for players without a lot of free time or other players nearby. For more information on Pathfinder Society, the official organized play group for the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, visit **paizo.com/pathfindersociety**.

Online Games

Since the birth of the Internet, GMs have been successfully taking their campaigns online. With an online campaign, you can play with people from anywhere in the world without leaving your own home. You can once again game with friends who have moved away, or make new friends from faraway places.

The two most common formats for online campaigns are messageboard games (which can also be conducted over email, if less conveniently) and live chat. In a messageboard game, the GM posts a description of events and asks for actions, and players post their replies. Though this method is slower, it carries no scheduling problems—players simply log on when they can and add their responses.

Live chat brings the play experience closer to that of a tabletop game. Everyone logs into the same chat channel at the same time. A live chat game moves slower than a tabletop one, but much faster than a messageboard game. Chat-based games require scheduling, however, and can be a significant headache when you have players from different time zones. Furthermore, absences may be more frequent until you get a solid group, as players are often less committed to an Internet game than an in-person engagement, but logs of missed game sessions allow absentees to quickly catch up on the action.

Fixing a "Broken" Game

Roleplaying games require flexibility and must be open to interpretation. Sometimes this means one element of a campaign can overshadow the rest of it, or a simple mistake can grow over time until it's too big to ignore. Fortunately, there are ways to fix these problems and get your game back on track. Remember that while this section is about things you can to do fix a broken game, you and the players are partners in the storytelling, and talking to the players about the problem can give you solutions you may not have thought of yourself.

Too Much Treasure: This trap is the easiest for a GM to fall into, but fortunately is also the easiest to correct. A few too many encounters with treasure-rich opponents such as NPCs with classes can mean that the PCs end up with significantly more wealth than the suggested value for their level. Too much wealth means they can afford to buy or craft multiple magic items to enhance their characters beyond the expected power level, allowing them to more easily defeat other opponents and collect even more treasure. See Chapter 5: Rewards for more information on how to solve this problem.

Gamebreaker Element: Maybe the druid's spell-enhanced animal companion is more deadly than the party fighter, or the wizard's new staff allows the PCs to easily bypass or decimate encounters. Maybe the bard's new feat is letting him use his astronomical Diplomacy score to talk NPCs and enemies into almost anything. This sort of thing can make the game boring because there's no challenge, or risky for other PCs because you have to make encounters engaging for the most powerful character. For tips on how to handle this, see Overpowered PCs on pages 50–51.

No Motivation to Adventure: If the PCs all have good alignments, it's easy to motivate them to go on an adventure; just dangle an evil overlord, undead army, or threatened village in front of them and let nature take its course. However, without altruistic motivations, sometimes PCs have to be prodded into action. Greed is always a powerful motivator; the lure of incredible wealth is a draw for many PCs, and throwing out a few plot hooks relating to a fabulous treasure should get them started. Other PCs want power; a frontier castle that's been taken over by monsters, a strange cult, or an enemy nation is a nice prize, especially if the local ruler is willing to grant land and title to those who reclaim it. Other PCs want fame; give them the opportunity to slay a fell beast that has been murdering folk for generations, or break the back of the thieves' guild. Look to history, fiction, television, and movies for other motivations—love, jealousy, vengeance, and fear are all common story elements that drive characters to their destinies. If you're not sure what would motivate the PCs, ask the players what their characters want and find a way to incorporate that into the campaign.

When PCs Miss a Clue: Any time you leave the course of an adventure to a die roll, you risk PCs—and thus players—missing something important, whether it's a secret door, a hidden panel in a treasure chest, or a failed Knowledge roll. Fortunately, you control the entire game world, and it's easy to point the PCs at the clue again. If the PCs missed a secret door, let them find a rough treasure map of the dungeon with the door clearly marked (on the back of a scroll they found earlier is a nice trick), or they can hear about it from another group of adventurers. Cohorts are good for spotting overlooked secret compartments in treasure chests, as is a sharp-eyed town merchant. A forgotten reference to an ancient king, priest, or wizard can turn up in an old prayer book or during spell research. While the PCs may be the focus of the campaign world, there are countless secondary characters and events that can put them back on the right track if they get lost.

GM Considerations

One of the game's delights—and frustrations—is that it changes over time. Every session runs a little bit differently, and whether it's new abilities, new characters, or changes to the gaming group itself, a good GM needs to know how to roll with the punches.

Game Changers

When you play a campaign long enough, the rules change. The characters that once limped into the village to beg for healing now use magic to cross continents, consult with extradimensional powers, and rescue their allies from death itself.

Alertness is your best tool as a Game Master. Keep one eye on what's ahead—what abilities you'll need to account for as you plan your future machinations. Whenever you're dealing with new mechanical elements, you should have three goals:

- Don't get surprised
- Don't let the new ability run amok
- Don't render the new ability useless

Players are inherent "surprise generators," and being surprised by their ingenuity is one of the joys of being a Game Master. You don't need to consider every possible power combination. But when you see a game-changing power coming down the road, take a moment to think like a player. What will Bob want to do once he can turn invisible? Once you answer that, you won't be surprised (or at least *as* surprised) and can move on to the other two goals.

"Don't let the new ability run amok" and "don't render the new ability useless" are two sides of the same coin. Your fundamental job as Game Master is to provide entertainment, challenge, and above all, balance. Players have a natural desire to play with their new toys—you helped instill that desire in them when you put all those interesting challenges in their way in the first place. Now you have a responsibility to make sure that one player doesn't trivialize the game's challenges, for himself or for the whole table.

Below are some potentially difficult game elements, and some thoughts on how to manage them.

Invisibility: There's an inherent mischief to invisibility. Consider *The Invisible Man*, or the iconic example of Bilbo in *The Hobbit*. Let the players have their mischief—it frequently costs you nothing, and they're having a good time—and deploy the traditional countermeasures (divination magic, traps, creatures that don't use sight) only at points where you want to preserve the challenge. If invisibility isn't available to everyone in the party, that helps puts a brake on their invisible ambitions in two ways. First, invisible means invisible—the other party members can't find the invisible PC for healing, communicate silently, or know where she actually went when she said she'd scout ahead. Second, for every sneaky gal in the party, there's usually a guy buried under layers of clanking plate armor as well. That guy is the Game Master's best friend, providing warning to enemies. The invisible player can probably choose her position and get a surprise attack in, but the presence of loud, visible companions ensures that the advantage of invisibility will be fleeting unless the group splits.

When the whole party can turn invisible, brace yourself for the entire table choosing to sneak past encounters you spent hours preparing. As long as they're truly quiet and don't run into monsters who can counter their invisibility, let them do so. You can recycle those encounters later, and it's probably better for everyone's fun to respect the party's choice to bypass. It's possible they're using invisibility to tell you they'd rather be doing something else. So move along, but save those encounters for later use.

Flying: Your immediate concerns are more tactical when flying shows up at your table—do melee-only monsters get slaughtered like bison on the Great Plains? You'll need to consider the monster mix in your encounters more carefully so that the players don't just fly above the dire wolves and drop rocks on them. But there's nothing wrong with letting the aerial advantage be an advantage every once in a while. Let the flying PC trivialize an encounter or a trap—there are always more of both coming down the line.

Unlike most other game-changing powers, flying comes with a hidden danger to players: altitude. When a ground-bound player gets stunned, knocked out, or dropped to negative hit points, he slumps to the ground. Depending on the exact nature of the flight power, the consequences for a flying character might be far more severe. If a character runs out of hit points and can't fly anymore, impact with the ground will almost certainly finish him off.

When a player learns to fly, it's worth a brief conversation with that player. Show him the math: "If you reach 0 hit points when you're *x* feet in the air, you'll take *y* damage on average, which leaves you at negative *z* hit points—dead, in other words." Once he's got a grasp on the inherent danger, the player can take calculated risks, and it adds even more drama to a desperate battle in the sky.

Teleportation: Teleportation raises an issue similar to invisibility: once the whole group can do it, they can bypass content. And as with invisibility, if the players have done a proper job of playing by the rules, let them have their way. It's likely not that the players want to skip the encounters you've made, but rather that they're abundantly eager to get to the other encounters you've made. Tap into that eagerness! (And don't forget to recycle the work on those skipped encounters later.)

Teleportation can also challenge your preparation and ability to improvise. If your players can open a portal to the throne rooms in any of the Hundred Sacred Kingdoms, how do you cope with the mountains of preparation that come with unfettered, instant travel?

You improvise and cheat, of course. You don't have a hundred throne rooms (with a hundred high-level monarchs, royal guard complements, and sets of court intrigues) prepared. You have one prepared, notes for a second, and a good idea for a third. You rename your prepared stuff on the fly—the Peaceable Kingdom of Jarrach becomes the Shadow Duchy of Sindrauta. Prince Karelius becomes Countess Kar'than'draya. The royal guards become elves—and you just describe them as having pointy ears, because nobody really cares that their Perception scores are +2 higher. You've got better ways to spend your precious time, and your players will never know the difference.

For that second kingdom the PCs teleport to on a lark, go with your notes. Steal stat blocks as needed, from any source. A devil's stat block works just fine for the sinister seneschal who's rumored to consort with dark powers. Likewise for the third kingdom. And if you feel like the PCs are teleporting around too rapidly for you to keep up—well, you have a whole book full of monsters right in front of you, don't you?



Lie/Evil Detection: This magic can be exceedingly troublesome, especially in mystery adventures, yet instead of banning it outright, your best alternative is to stick with the three goals. First, don't be surprised. When your NPC schemers start scheming, consider how the players will put divination magic to use. Second, make sure that *discern lies* and *detect evil* don't run amok. You have magical countermeasures, of course, but save those for "this guy absolutely must be able to fool the PCs" moments. When you can, use low-key solutions such as:

- The NPC can use nonmagical but expert means (high Bluff score, natural defenses against divination) to thwart the PCs.
- The NPC can tell half-truths and leave the really incendiary stuff unsaid.
- The NPC gets caught lying, but that doesn't help the PCs uncover the truth.
- The NPC is serving evil under duress or is otherwise sympathetic.
- The PCs spot the lie, but jump to the wrong conclusion—they know that "troops are marching to Declanburg" is a lie, but it's a lie because the troops are already there, not because they're marching elsewhere.

NPCs—at least some of them, anyway—know how the world works. It's reasonable to assume that just as you thought about what your players would do with divination magic, so too will an NPC consider what meddling PCs might do and prepare accordingly.

Third, let the magic work—as a clue delivery system for you. PCs sometimes make astounding deductive leaps, but sometimes they ignore the blindingly obvious. Use *discern lies* and *detect evil* to get important information in the players' hands fast. Players might find a traditional interrogation of an NPC riveting, but they're unlikely to find the fifth such interrogation as interesting. Put a little divination magic to work, and watch your table quickly get the information it needs to get on with the fun.

More information on the use of spells in mystery adventures can be found in Mysteries and Investigations in Chapter 8, pages 246–247.

Remote Viewing: *Clairvoyance/clairaudience* and other scrying magic poses many of the same issues as teleportation. On the one hand, remote viewing is less work for you because the PCs aren't interacting with the NPCs and places they're observing. But on the other hand, remote viewing is generally easier and less risky than teleportation, so PCs are more likely to employ it.

By now, you're likely accustomed to the familiar refrain of "think like the players," and are largely concerned about remote viewing in two ways:

Reconnaissance: PCs use *clairvoyance* and similar spells to get a look at adventure sites beforehand. On balance, this usually works in your favor, because players will then plan a route (often when you're within earshot) that tells you exactly what they want to experience. That makes your job easier—now you just provide encounters that either support or confound their expectations. That's the beauty of

remote viewing—it's more of an information trade than the players realize.

Espionage: Players love to scry on the Big Bad Evil Guy when he's going about his sinister business in his chambers. This is a test of your ability to improvise—you've got to describe an interesting scene on the spot. Espionage-style spying can also be a clue delivery system for you. Decide what information you want to impart, surround it with enough dialogue and detail to make it believable, then get on with the fun.

But what if you don't have specific information to deliver, and in fact you're trying to keep the PCs and the antagonist separated for a while? If you don't want PCs tuning in at the dramatic moment, then you have two choices: describe a realistic but utterly mundane scene in the villain's life, or come up with a scene that refers at least obliquely to the ongoing narrative.

When the PCs are scrying, the players are pure spectators—a recipe for boredom for everyone but you. It might be realistic for most espionage-style scrying to reveal the mundane, day-to-day life of the villain (and a nice reminder if the players seem to be overusing it), but that doesn't do anyone any good. So accept the blow to realism and give the PCs tangible—if sometimes obscure—information with each scrying attempt. Even a mundane conversation about troop movements can have a little hook (it takes 2 hours to reach the northern watchtower) that makes the players say "Aha!" They might never go to the northern watchtower, but in that moment, they get a little "I know something I'm not supposed to know" feeling—and that can propel them into action.

Portents and Omens: Few things are as difficult as predicting the campaign's future. How can you tell a player her future when the campaign's conclusion might make her a demigod—or a string of bad rolls might make her a halfling-kebab on an ogre's spear?

First, do what real-life oracles and fortune-tellers do all the time: couch your predictions in symbolism and metaphor. Don't say "Your father won't give up the throne for you." Say "Winter refuses to acknowledge spring." It sounds more ominous—in the literal sense of the word—and gives the campaign's plot some much-needed elbow room.

Next, be specific, not general. At first, this advice seems counterintuitive. Isn't a general prophecy easier to keep than a specific one? That's true, but specific details are easier to insert into the narrative. Don't say "You shall become the king of the elves." Say "When winter's moon is nigh, the fey will dance to the tune you call." You have a likely fulfillment of that prophecy in mind (a formal dance at the coronation ceremony), but if the campaign goes off the rails, there are other ways to make that prediction come true. Specific details have another benefit: they make the players feel like they're getting their money's worth out of the prophecy. If you try too hard to leave yourself room with a prophecy, you risk a prophecy so vague that the players find it useless or feel deliberately cheated. You're smart enough to engineer something interesting involving the fey near a full moon in winter—even if you aren't sure what it is yet. But based on that detail, the players will think that the oracle—and by extension you—has it all figured out.

If you have to hit the reset button, make it obvious that you're doing so. The campaign may have gone in a bold, player-driven direction that you weren't anticipating. And when it did, all that talk of destiny from the crazy lady back in the starting village was invalidated or became completely irrelevant. If you feel like you'd have to stretch the narrative too far to cover an out-of-date portent, then make it clear in the story of the world that the old destiny no longer applies. Perhaps the stars rearrange themselves in the sky (due to the PCs' actions, ideally), and now everyone's fate is uncertain, or can be perceived anew. Maybe the goddess of destiny appears and says that the trickster god has stolen threads from her loom of fate—including the threads that represent the PCs. You're operating in a realm where anything is possible, so avail yourself of that power.

Emergency Game Prep

Sometimes day-to-day life conquers even the most committed Game Master. You meant to get that dungeon ready, but then the boss/spouse/kids/friends/lottery office called, and now everyone's gathering at the table. It's time for emergency game preparation.

Sometimes you'll need emergency game prep in the middle of a session, too. The party may get an urge to visit the Astral Plane. They may give the all-powerful scroll to the obviously disguised villain, just because he asked to look at it.

When this happens, don't try to find the right section of the book to reread. Every minute counts! In these situations, it's good to have an emergency game kit containing raw adventure fuel. That's stuff like:

Stat Blocks: Any opposition appropriate for the PCs works, even if it doesn't "belong" in that part of the campaign world. Coming up with reasons for monsters to hang out together and fight the PCs takes less time than flipping through the books to find the perfect monsters. That's particularly true in an emergency situation where you're likely going to "re-skin" the monsters anyway. That armored knight? You can just describe him as a hill giant and your players will never know. Then you can make him into a dire wolf, or a swarm of killer bees, and still your players may never know. Sure, you'll know that the damage dice should have been different, the skills were completely irrelevant, the Armor Class was wrong, and the special abilities were made up on the spot, but you're the only one who sees the stat block. Everyone else is just rolling dice and having fun.

Ten Proper Names: Write down 10 names out of thin air—names that have a "mouth feel" appropriate to the setting. You've now got your answer when the PCs ask what the name of the bartender is, or the name of the river they just crossed, or the magic words that open the portal. Nothing makes you look like you've prepared more than a confident answer to the "What's his name?" question.

A Basic Flow Chart: Take a blank piece of paper and draw roughly 10 bubbles on it, scattered around the paper. Then draw some lines between them, trying to make interesting clusters but not connecting everything to everything else. Now you've got a rudimentary dungeon map and a basic event flowchart—whatever you need in the next few hours. If you use the flow chart as a map, of course it won't have proper dimensions and everything laid out in proper architectural fashion. But your concerns are more basic. You want to keep track of the rooms so that when the PCs retreat from the map room, they come back to the observatory, not the barracks they visited two encounters ago.

Remember, thrust matters more than direction. As you improvise your way through a session, it's tempting to worry about whether you're making decisions—especially plot and setting decisions—that will come back to haunt you later. Ignore those concerns; you'll have plenty of time to tie up loose ends, patch over plot holes, and bring the players back to the main plotline later. You care that the PCs are doing something interesting. The pause while you figure out the perfect encounter diminishes everyone's fun more than the out-of-place detail or the tangential plotline ever could.

TPKs

It's a constant threat, but every so often it happens for real: every single PC is dead, petrified, or possessed by demon lords.

That's a TPK—a total party kill.

The good news is that, as a Game Master, you'll probably see the TPK coming before the players will, simply because you've got more information. You're seeing all the dice and stat blocks. But the bad news is that the players will be demoralized, and possibly angry with you or each other—and they'll be looking to you, the guy at the head of the table, for guidance. You have the power to "fix" the broken table while making sure that the TPK stings a little so that the PCs might be more cautious next time.

For starters, give everyone a break once the last PC falls. Either end the session or at least send everyone to the kitchen for snacks. Some "Monday morning quarterback" analysis is inevitable and probably cathartic, but the players don't need to do that in front of you.

Besides, you've got work to do. You want consequences to matter at your table—that's one of the great things about RPGs. But you also want your friends to have fun, and you don't want them to stop playing. So you're looking for a way forward that makes the TPK matter, but keeps the momentum and desire to keep playing alive.

Send in the Next Party: The stereotypical solution to a TPK is to have everyone make up new characters on a mission to find out what happened to the original group. That gives the new group direction and a basic reason for cohesion. The players might be eager for a rematch—and it's probably a good idea to soften the table's stance on player knowledge/character knowledge in this instance so they don't just repeat the fate of the first group.

When the second group succeeds and finds out what happened to the first group, the players can pick up the ongoing narrative where they left off. If resurrection is possible in your world, you can have the second group bring the first group back to life. It's possible that some players at the table will like their new characters better than the old. Mix it up—let a composite group tackle the challenges of your campaign together.

Meet Your New Boss: If new characters don't work with your story (or players balk at creating new PCs), it's time to call in the cavalry. Have a powerful patron or mysterious presence somehow resurrect the PCs (or restore them from petrification, etc.) for some greater purpose. The resurrecting agent might be on the up and up, wanting the PCs to continue their campaign efforts (though you should make sure the players know they won't always be bailed out). But the mysterious power might also have a divergent or sinister agenda, or demand tremendous compensation.

I Want Them Alive: Perhaps your villains were actually swinging for non-lethal damage on their last rolls, and instead of being dead the players wake up hours later in cells, stripped of their gear and forced to engineer a daring escape.

Let Failure Be Failure: If the PCs failed at a climactic moment, consider letting evil seize the day—let the players see the consequences of failure when they make up their



new characters. If mid-level characters suffer a TPK when investigating the actions of a demon cult, tell the players to show up at the next session with high-level characters. Then reveal that those characters have recently been taken out of suspended animation by a ragtag band of humans—scattered remnants in a world utterly ruled by demons and their army of tortured slaves. The demons conquered and enslaved the world due to the actions of the cult the PCs couldn't stop. Now your players get to see the consequences of their previous failure, and the new PCs have their work cut out for them.

Rewind: Sometimes accidents happen. Someone reads a rule wrong, you design an encounter that's unfairly lethal, or the game otherwise goes off the rails. If a fundamental misunderstanding or error led to the TPK, don't feel like you have to let it stand. Just hit the rewind button and play the encounter over again. You want decisions at your table to have consequences, but simple errors shouldn't steal everyone's fun.



Overpowered PCs

Characters naturally accumulate power over time. And in a game that relies on random resolutions of complex interactions, that power accumulation isn't always smooth. If one PC—or all the PCs—at your table makes a quantum leap in power, it's worth taking a good, hard look at whether that power is disruptive to the ongoing narrative and sense of fun.

Consider the Cooperative Dynamic: The Pathfinder RPG differs from most games in that it's fundamentally cooperative. Because you aren't playing "against" anyone in a meaningful sense, it might not matter that the PCs suddenly became much more powerful. You aren't likely to run out of powerful monsters. You might have to alter encounters to compensate, but once you've done so, your game continues unimpeded.

When You Need to Rein It In: By the same token, the cooperative nature of the game is why you sometimes need to "nerf" a character's power. Do so when one PC is too powerful relative to everyone else at the table. Before you take action, though, consider the following steps:

Provide early warning. Say a player comes up with a devastating combo—something that takes a monster out of a fight with a high success rate and no countermeasure. Let it happen the first few times, but tell the player, "I'll let you know when that combo gets tired." The player can still feel clever, but you've delivered notice and the whole table knows you take the balance of power seriously. Sometimes the problem power doesn't emerge at the table anymore—and you've got time to plan further. And the player might volunteer to be part of the solution, a "negotiated settlement" you can work out at the end of the session.

Know what you're nerfing, and why. After the session where something overpowered emerges, it's time to hit the books. Read everything relevant, even if you think you know the rules backward and forward. Think like a player and explore the problematic power, then put your Game Master hat back on and search for countermeasures. A complex game system has lots of moving pieces, and it takes effort to isolate which components and combinations are actually overpowered.

Nerf it to the ground, but make it a surgical strike. Once you've isolated the problematic element, bring it back into line with similar powers available at that level. Do your homework in terms of rules study and arithmetic; you want to make sure that the overall technique is no longer overpowered, not just the specific application you saw at the table. But make sure the PC still has viable options—and that the player still has interesting choices to make during an encounter.

Explain it outside the game. It's tempting to solve a balance issue on the spot, but consider the other players at the table. They might be bored by a rules discussion about somebody else's character. They might leap to the player's defense, or recommend a harsher nerf because they're tired of being second banana. Talk to that player away from the table before the next session begins, so that everyone's got time to pore over rulebooks and consider alternatives. It's also a good time to tell the player that you're acting for the good of the table, not to save your monsters. Most players respond better to a nerf when they realize they're diminishing others' fun and the change isn't driven by Game Master competitiveness.

What you break, rebuild. Overpowered situations rarely emerge overnight. They're often an intentional or serendipitous collection of smaller elements acquired over time. Spell *x*, magic item *y*, and feat *z* are fine by themselves, but you've got a problem once a player has all three. When you change the rules to make something less powerful, it's only fair—and certainly doesn't hurt anyone at the table—to let the player retroactively make different character advancement choices to compensate, so they haven't wasted half the game achieving a build that's no longer viable.

Overpowered Monsters: Sometimes the proverbial shoe will be on the other foot, and a monster will be unexpectedly powerful. At first, let it play out a bit. Once the power disparity is clear to everyone at the table, take action—either nerf the monster on the spot and tell the players (in general terms) what you've done and why, or forego use of that monster, telling the players that "the dragon turtle has some problems, which I'm going to fix before our next session."

Personalizing Published Adventures

It's not easy to be a Game Master; of all the roles in the game, the GM has to put in the most work, and sometimes you'll want to relax and use a published adventure instead of creating your own. While many such adventures are ready to go straight out of the box, so to speak, the key to integrating one seamlessly into an existing campaign or setting is adapting the adventure to suit your campaign and your PCs, and this means you have to recognize whether or not the adventure is a good fit for you and your party.

Presuming the theme or feel is suitable for your campaign, you need to look at the game mechanics in the adventure, particularly the monsters and how they compare to your PCs' abilities. It's possible that the party composition may make an adventure too easy—a party with a paladin, good cleric, and good necromancer is going to blow through an undead-heavy adventure with little trouble (though that isn't a bad thing, as letting the PCs feel powerful is nice now and then). You should always feel free to adjust the power level of an adventure's monsters (using the simple templates in the back of the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* is the easiest way) or swap them out for other monsters with similar CRs.

What it comes down to is that you have to make the adventure your own—whether a Pathfinder Module, a one-session Pathfinder Society Scenario, or a third-party adventure. If you're lucky and choose well, you can save yourself a lot of work. Make changes to the story if you have to, embrace tangents the PCs introduce, and always feel free to point the story in the general direction of your campaign's primary plot if the PCs decide to abandon the story in the published adventure.

Converting Content from 3.5 or Other Systems

Roleplaying games have been around for over 30 years, and there's a huge library of materials out there for other games which you can use in your campaign. One particularly easy conversion is from the 3.0 or 3.5 edition of the world's oldest roleplaying game to the Pathfinder RPG.

The Pathfinder RPG was designed to be backward-compatible with the 3.5 rules set. It's possible to integrate the two seamlessly with almost no work; the only big difference in most games is that Pathfinder PCs are a little stronger overall than 3.5 PCs, so your PCs may have an easier time battling things from the old rules. You can run with that, or apply one of three simple fixes below to balance things out:

Reduce the CR by 1: Treat anything from 3.0 or 3.5 as 1 CR value lower.

Add the Advanced Creature Simple Template: Use the easy "+2 to everything" version rather than rebuilding all the old stat blocks.

Add Improved Initiative and Toughness: Pathfinder creatures get more feats than 3.0/3.5 creatures (every odd level rather than ever 3 levels). Adding these two feats for mid-to-high-level creatures helps make up the slight power difference between the two systems.

Of course, you can also look to other game systems for ideas and adventure materials, it just requires more work on your part. In most cases, searching the internet for fan-made conversion suggestions is a timesaver; most of these suggest skill DCs, replacement spells and magic items, and rough stat blocks or simple replacements (such as swapping the tcho-tcho people of the Lovecraftian mythos for goblins). Use the Pathfinder RPG rules as a resource—the *Bestiary* includes a wide variety of monsters so you can create the sort of fantasy that you want, and by trading a few proper nouns, you can convert even a superhero, space opera, or hard SF scenario into a fantasy plot.

Tools for Game Masters

The following pages supply a host of inspirational charts, suggestions, and other quick references to help inspire GMs both before and during a game session.

Table 2-1: Plots

d%	Plot
1–2	**Greed or Glory**: PCs hear about a dungeon nearby and how no one dares enter it.
3–4	**Raiding Monsters**: Monsters or evil humanoids attack farmsteads and must be stopped.
5–6	**Treasure Hunt**: An NPC has a treasure map.
7–8	**Guards**: PCs hired to protect merchant caravan through dangerous terrain.
9–10	**Seek**: Locate missing important NPC.
11–12	**Destroy**: Purge a dungeon of monsters.
13–14	**Underwater Exploration**: Map area of sea and explore inland for suitable settling areas.
15–16	**Mine**: Search underground for rich vein of ore or a legendary cache of gems.
17–18	**Protect**: Enhance village defenses and train locals to defend themselves from an impending threat.
19–20	**Ruins Stir**: Secret but good NPCs are searching for holy relic and accidentally stir up undead.
21–22	**Spies**: The PCs are hired to collect information on a nearby group or kingdom.
23–24	**Investigate**: PCs brought in to solve a crime.
25–26	**Bait and Switch**: Monster far beyond the PCs is allegedly behind the plot—can it be true?
27–28	**Sacrilege**: Confront zealots allegedly carrying out human sacrifices.
29–30	**Salvage**: The crew of a listing merchant ship row ashore claiming that somehow their cargo scuttled the vessel, and that they want nothing more to do with it.
31–32	**Steal**: Work for good-fronted merchant group to steal an object they stole in the first place.
33–34	**Capture**: A rival merchant or guild wishes monster intact to serve as guard.
35–36	**Escape**: During routine adventure PCs are trapped by a rockfall which unleashes horror.
37–38	**Roundup**: A rancher needs extra hands to protect his herd from rustlers as he heads to market.
39–40	**Execution**: The PCs or an ally face a harsh punishment for breaking an unjust or arbitrary law.
41–42	**Exploration**: The PCs quest to explore a new realm, whether it be a continent, underground expanse, plane, or other locale.
43–44	**Kinslayer**: A relative of the ruler plans to claim the throne for his or her own.
45–46	**Watch**: PCs hired by town watch to uncover spies.
47–48	**On the Run**: The PCs must help a goodly creature escape those who hunt it.
49–50	**Monstrous**: The locals decide the newly arrived PCs are behind the deaths.
51–52	**Alliance**: Prevent a marriage intended to unite two monster clans without them realizing the sabotage.
53–54	**Precious Cargo**: Someone must keep a monster's egg safe until it hatches.
55–56	**Dead Man Walking**: A long-dead ally or personality reappears, seemingly alive and unharmed.
57–58	**Chainbreaker**: Find the slaver's base by getting captured and then escape to get reinforcements.
59–60	**A Little Knowledge**: Someone keeps trying to kill the hapless storyteller; which of his tall tales is actually true?
61–62	**Unexpected Event**: Earthquake or volcano unleashes horrors onto countryside or settlement.
63–64	**Reagent**: A powerful magic user needs the PCs' help in tracking down a rare component or ingredient.
65–66	**Menagerie**: Creatures have escaped from a private collection and the PCs are hired to return them.
67–68	**Courteous Killer**: An assassin sends a letter suggesting that the target put his affairs in order.
69–70	**Plague Run**: Find the ingredients that cure the disease and get them back before too many more people die.
71–72	**Deadly Waters**: The river has turned black and toxic—what's going on upstream?
73–74	**Feathered Apocalypse**: All the birds are dying and the druids are looking for someone to blame.
75–76	**Prophecy**: A prophecy is due for fulfillment. The PCs must work to fulfill or prevent it.
77–78	**Animal Enemies**: All the usually peaceful animals become killers.
79–80	**Political**: PCs assist local leaders in rooting out evil in their own halls.
81–82	**Festival**: PCs infiltrate performers to uncover a killer.
83–84	**From Beyond**: PCs must prevent plot to summon a powerful outsider.
85–86	**Incursion**: Creatures from another plane infest town and take hostages to experiment upon.
87–88	**Revenant**: Do the PCs stand in the way of an evil avenging spirit intent on wiping out an entire family?
89–90	**The Strange Child**: Is the changeling really behind the nightmares like the locals say?
91–92	**Doppelganger**: The PCs or others are seen murdering and stealing and the locals want revenge.
93–94	**Righteous Indignation**: A local tribe of non-evil monsters threatens a community that has trespassed upon their land or otherwise offended them.
95–96	**Surrounded**: PCs find themselves hunted in wilderness. Can they escape and survive?
97–98	**Hunted**: For some reason everyone thinks the PCs are someone they aren't. As the city mobilizes to capture and execute them can the PCs get to the bottom of the plot?
99–100	**Dragon**: A dragon appears in a city and demands tribute. Can the PCs defeat it? Is it real?

Table 2-2: Plot Twists

d20	Plot Twists
1	**Altered**: PCs undergo some sort of magical transformation during the course of the adventure, and must seek to return to normal (or defend themselves from newly jealous rivals).
2	**Burden**: Something fragile (whether an NPC or object) is vital to the completion of the adventure, such as a delicate crystal or a prophesied child.
3	**Controlled**: Someone is secretly under the influence of another, either as an agent of the enemy or keeping an eye on the group for their patron.
4	**Deception**: A critical piece of information about the adventure is deliberately false. Old friends become enemies, and enemies become friends. Or is it all just an elaborate act?
5	**Doubles**: One or more of those characters appearing in the adventure (including possibly the PCs) has an imposter or duplicate.
6	**Dual Nature**: Someone in the adventure has a second nature or form unknown at the start.
7	**Extraordinary Arena**: Some or all of the adventure takes place in an unusual environment.
8	**Impairment**: The PCs suffer some sort of disadvantage relative to their foes.
9	**Love Interest**: An NPC encountered in the adventure forms a romantic attachment to one of the PCs, not necessarily reciprocated.
10	**Mistaken Identity**: One or more of the PCs resembles, or gets treated as, another person.
11	**Natural Obstacle**: A formidable barrier stands between the PCs and completing the adventure.
12	**Negotiation**: The PCs must make a deal with someone in order to complete the adventure.
13	**Peaceful**: Some portion of the adventure requires that the PCs find a non-violent way to solve their problems.
14	**Rivals**: A group with similar abilities sets out to oppose the PCs.
15	**Role Reversal**: Some portion of the adventure turns out the exact opposite of the PCs' expectations.
16	**Secret Ally**: Someone in the adventure offers aid to the PCs.
17	**Time Limit**: The PCs must complete the adventure within a specified duration in order to succeed.
18	**Transported**: The PCs are taken somewhere against their will and must return on their own.
19	**Undercover**: The PCs must assume new identities and remain "in character" in order to gather information or complete their objective.
20	**Watched**: Someone observes the PCs during the course of the adventure, and may interfere with their progress, or attempt to guide them.

Table 2-3: Macguffins and Quest Items

d%	Macguffin or Quest Item
1–2	Kidnapped royalty
3–4	Religious idol
5–6	Lost spellbook
7–8	Fountain of youth
9–10	City of gold
11–12	Pirate treasure
13–14	Lost culture
15–16	Weapon of the gods
17–18	Dangerous technology
19–20	Claimant to the throne
21–22	Ancient tomb
23–24	Dragon hoard
25–26	Imprisoned loved one
27–28	Legendary warrior (possibly deceased)
29–30	Placation for angry spirits
31–32	Signet proving noble birth
33–34	Rare spell component
35–36	Forbidden magic
37–38	Ressurection for a slain innocent
39–40	Godhood
41–42	Cure for a plague or curse
43–44	Land grab
45–46	Enlightenment
47–48	Stolen property
49–50	State secrets
51–52	Mythical beast
53–54	Unlimited power source
55–56	Embezzled funds
57–58	Designs for a new weapon
59–60	Ghost ship
61–62	Lich's phylactery
63–64	Jade statue of a bird
65–66	Long-lost twin
67–68	Lost soul
69–70	Flying machine
71–72	Treasure map
73–74	Sunken island
75–76	Shipwreck
77–78	Lost culture
79–80	Relic from religious figure
81–82	Death (for self or others)
83–84	Hidden master
85–86	New home for displaced people
87–88	Sleeping prince or princess
89–90	Unexplored territory
91–92	Destruction of evil item
93–94	Prophecy and revelation
95–96	Dangerous fugitive
97–98	Portal to another world
99	True love
100	Answers

Table 2-4: Cultural Titles

Byzantine	Chinese	Dutch	English
Basileus, Porphyrogennëtos	Huangdi	Keizer, Keizerin	King, Queen
Kaisar	Gong	Koning, Koningin	Prince, Princess
Kouropalatës	Hou	Groothertog, Groothertogin	Duke, Duchess
Proedros	Bo	Hertog	Earl/Count, Countess
Magistros	Zi	Prins	Viscount, Viscountess
Vestarches	Nan	Markies, Markgraaf	Baron, Baroness
Anthypatos	Qing	Graaf	Baronet
Exarchos	Daifu	Burggraaf	Knight

Ethiopian	Finnish	French	German
Negus	Kuningas, Kuningatar	Empreur, Imperatrice	Kaiser, Kaiserin
Leul	Suuriruhtinas, Suuriruhtinatar	Duc, Duchesse	König, Königin
Ras	Herttua, Herttuatar	Marquis, Marquise	Großherzog
Dejazmach	Ruhtinas, Ruhtinatar	Comte, Comtesse	Herzog, Herzogin
Fitawrari	Markiisi	Vicomte, Vicomtesse	Fürst, Fürstin
Enderase	Kreivi, Kreivitär	Baron, Baronne	Markgraf, Markgräfin
Reise Mekwanint	Vapaaherra, Vapaaherratar	Baronnet	Graf, Gräfin
Basha	Ritari	Chevalier	Freiherr, Freifrau

Indian	Italian	Middle Eastern	Ottoman/Turkish
Maharaja	Re, Regina	Caliph	Khalifa
Raja	Principe, Principessa	Sultan	Sultan, Padishah
Thakur	Duca, Duchessa	Khedive	Kaymakam
Nawab	Marchese, Marchesa	Pasha	Khedive
Janab	Conte, Contessa	Emir	Wali
Sardar	Visconte, Viscontessa	Mirza	Pasha
Jagir	Barone, Baronessa	Bey	Bey
Zamindar	Baronetto	Sheik	Effendi

Persian	Polish	Roman	Russian
Shah	Cesarz, Cesarzowa	Caesar, Imperator	Tsar, Tsaritsa
Argbadh	Król, Królowa	Rex	Korol, Koroleva
Artabid	Wielki Ksiaze, Wielka Ksiezna	Magnus	Velikiy Knyaz
Khshathrapava, Satrap	Ksiaze, Ksiezna	Princeps Elector	Ertsgertsog
Istandar	Markiz, Markiza	Dux	Kurfyurst, Kurfyurstina
Databara	Hrabia, Hrabina	Marchio	Boyar, Borarina
Vuzurgar	Wicehrabia, Wicehrabina	Vicecomes	Graf, Grafinya
Aztan	Baron, Baronowa	Liber Baro	Rytsar

Scandinavian	Spanish	Spartan	Thai
Keiser, Keiserinne	Emperador, Emperatriz	Polemarch	Chao Fa
Kong, Drottning	Rey, Reina	Lochagos	Mom Rajawongse
Storhertug, Storhertuginne	Príncipe, Princesa	Pentekoster	Mom Luang
Hertug, Hertig	Duque, Duquesa	Enomotarch	Na Ayudhya
Fyrst, Furste	Marqués, Marquesa	Phylearch	Somdej Chao Phraya
Marki, Markis	Conde, Condesa	Perioikoi	Phraya
Jarl, Greve	Vizconde, Vizcondesa	Hypomeiones	Muen
Friherre	Barón, Baronesa	Helots	Pan

Words Every Game Master Should Know

Abase, abash, abattoir, abhorrent, ablution, abscess, abstemious, abstersion, abstruse, accoutre, acephalous, acrid, aesculapian, affusion, ague, alembic, alluvium, amanuensis, ambergris, ambrosia, ambry, amorphous, amphora, anchorite, anfractuous, anodyne, anserine, antechamber, antediluvian, anthelmintic, antic, aquiline, ardent, argot, ascians, asperity, astomatous, atavistic, ataxia, augean, autarch, avuncular, bacchanal, badinage, bagatelle, baksheesh, balderdash, baleful, baleen, ballyhoo, banal, bannock, banns, bantam, barque, barmy, baroque, bashi-bazouk, bas-relief, bathos, bawdy, bayard, beadle, beatitude, bede, begum, beldame, beleaguer, belfry, beltane, belvedere, benefice, benison, benjamin, beshrew, besot, bete noire, bewray, bibliolatry, bibulous, bier, bijou, bilbo, billingsgate, biltong, biretta, bivouac, blague, blain, blandish, blarney, blaspheme, blowzy, bodkin, boeotian, bombast, boreal, bouffant, bourse, bower, braggadocio, bravo, bretwalda, brine, bruin, bucolic, bursar, cache, cachinnate, cad, cadaverous, cadge, cadre, caitiff, calumny, camarilla, canard, canny, canticle, caparison, caper, carillon, castigate, casuistry, cataphracts, cateran, caudle, caustic, cavil, celerity, cenobite, chancellery, chary, churl, chyme, cinerary, circumvallate, cistern, clamber, clamor, cockade, cognate, cognomen, coif, collet, colporteur, comely, commodious, compurgation, concatenate, condign, condottiere, connubial, conterminous, contretemps, conundrum, convalesce, convivial, coomb, coppice, coquette, corban, cornucopia, coronach, coruscate, cosset, coterie, coven, covenant, coxcomb, coxswain, cozen, crannog, crenellated, crepuscular, croft, crone, crony, crotchet, cruciform, cubit, cuckold, cuirass, cur, cuspidor, cyclopean, cynosure, dacoit, damask, dastard, dauphin, debauch, decuman, defenestrate, deglutition, demesne, desiccate, diadem, diarchy, dictum, dirge, distaff, dobbin, dodder, dolmen, dolor, dotterel, doughty, dowager, doyen, dragoman, dross, dudgeon, duffer, durbar, ebullient, eclat, eidolon, efface, effigy, elan, eldritch, eleemosynary, elegy, empyreal, ensanguined, epicure, epigraph, equerry, escutcheon, eviscerate, excoriate, factotum, falderal, fallal, fardel, farrago, fasces, fester, filament, firmament, fitz, flagellate, flagitious, foozle, fop, formic, fracas, fresco, friable, frippery, frolic, fulgent, fulgurate, fuliginous, fulminate, fumarole, fustigate, gaffer, galleass, gallipot, gallowglass, gammer, gardyloo, gentry, genuflect, geophagy, gewgaw, gibbet, gimcrack, glaucous, gloaming, glower, gossamer, gralloch, grippe, hagiography, halcyon, halidom, harangue, harbinger, harlequin, harridan, hauteur, hebdomadal, hecatomb, helot, heriot, hermetic, hircine, hirsute, hoary, hoyden, humbug, hussar, hydrargyrum, ichor, idolater, ilk, imbroglio, indurate, ineffable, inexorable, infrangible, iniquity, inosculate, insouciant, intaglio, inveigle, invidious, irascible, irk, itinerant, jabber, jackanapes, janissary, jaundice, jeer, jejune, jeremiad, jingo, jocund, jongleur, jorum, joss, jougs, jowl, jubilee, juggernaut, ken, kern, khamsin, kine, kirk, kirtle, kittle, knacker, knell, knout, kowtow, kulak, laager, lachrymal, lackadaisical, lacuna, lade, laggard, laird, lambent, lampoon, lanceolate, lancet, languor, lank, lanyard, lapidary, lares, lariat, larrikin, lascivious, lassitude, laud, laureate, lazar, lazaretto, leal, leaven, lector, lees, legate, legerdemain, leman, lesion, liege, liniment, lissome, lithe, littoral, liturgy, loam, logogram, loll, lour, lucre, lupine, macerate, machinate, madrigal, maelstrom, mafficking, malediction, mammon, mandarin, mange, martinet, mawkish, medicament, mendacious, mendicant, métier, miasma, missive, monomachy, mordant, mulct, nadir, naphtha, narcissism, narcosis, nascent, naught, navicular, neap, nebulous, necromancy, necrophagous, necropolis, necropsy, necrosis, nectar, ne'er, neuter, nexus, nightshade, nihilism, nirvana, nitrate, noctule, node, nostrum, noxious, noyade, nubile, nucleus, nugatory, nullify, obeisance, obese, oblate, oblique, oblivion, obloquy, obsequious, obstinate, obstreperous, obtrude, obdurate, obtuse, obverse, occult, ocular, offal, officiate, offspring, ogle, olfaction, omen, ominous, onerous, onslaught, opaline, opiate, ordinal, ordure, orgy, orpine, oscular, ossify, ostracize, ovoid, ozone, pact, palpable, palpitate, palsy, panacea, pandemonium, pang, pannage, parabolic, paradox, paragon, parallax, paranoia, paraphernalia, parasite, pare, pariah, particularism, partisan, pathetic, paunch, pawky, pediment, penchant, pendant, pendulum, penitent, penology, pensile, pentacle, pentagram, penumbra, penury, peptic, perdition, perfidy, perpendicular, perpetual, persecute, pervert, pestilence, petty, phalanx, phallus, phlegm, phosphorus, pillage, pinion, piteous, plague, placid, plead, plenitude, plight, pock, polemic, pollard, polyglot, pompous, pontiff, porcine, potash, potent, primal, profane, prolate, propagate, prostrate, pulverize, pumice, purgatory, purulent, pustule, pygmy, quagmire, quarantine, quarrel, quasi, quench, quoin, quotient, rabid, rake, rampage, rampant, ramshackle, rapacious, ravage, reap, reave, reckoning, recluse, redolent, refute, regicide, regorge, regret, relapse, relic, relish, remorse, resinous, resurgent, retribution, revenant, reverie, revive, rhapsody, rhetoric, rictus, rigmarole, rime, rind, riparian, rookery, ruinous, runt, sable, sabotage, sacrilege, salve, samite, sanctify, sargasso, scabious, scallywag, scalpel, scandalize, scapegoat, scathe, scion, sclerosis, scour, scrag, scrimshank, sebaceous, secession, secretion, secular, semblance, seminal, seminary, senile, sepulture, serpentine, serrate, servile, shade, sham, shamefaced, shanty, shoddy, shorn, shrill, shun, silage, silvanus, simulacrum, sinuous, sitar, skewbald, slander, sluice, smattering, smock, sneer, snide, sordid, spawn, speculum, splay, spume, stagnant, stagnate, stake, strangulate, strigil, stub, subjugate, suction, sulphur, supernaturalness, supremacy, surge, suture, swagger, swamp, swank, sweat, swill, syringe, taboo, taint, tallow, tangible, tardy, tariff, tatty, temerity, temperance, tenuity, terret, terrify, tether, thane, theurgy, thews, thorn, thou, threshold, throb, throng, thuggery, thy, titillate, topsy-turvy, torpid, tortuous, totem, toxin, tractable, transform, trauma, tremulous, trigon, trotter, truncate, truss, tumulus, turgid, tyrant, ugly, ulcer, ululate, umbral, undulate, unhallowed, unman, unravel, unspeakable, uproar, usury, utter, vainglory, valgus, vapid, vault, vegetal, venerable, vengeance, verdigris, vigilance, violate, viridescent, virus, viviparous, voiceless, volition, voluble, vulgar, vulnerable, waif, wan, wangle, warn, watchfulness, waxen, wean, wheedle, whorl, widow, widower, wince, wreath, writhe, xanthous, xenophobia, xiphoid, xylograph, xylophagous, yearn, yule, zeal, zealot, zenith, ziggurat, zounds.



3 Player Characters



The creature burst through the wall teeth-first, sending the monk flying backward almost to the stairs. Beady eyes fixed on the dwarf.

"Try to get behind it," Harsk said calmly. "Aim for the soft spot under the fin."

"How?" Amiri called back.

"Just wait for the charge," the dwarf replied. Not shifting position, he began passing his axe from hand to hand. The monster pawed the floor, leaving furrows in the stone.

"This is not the shark I was led to expect," Sajan observed.

"How so?" Harsk asked. He sounded genuinely puzzled. "What did you think I meant?"

The monster charged.

Starting Characters

While the Game Master takes on numerous responsibilities vital to the smooth running and group enjoyment of a roleplaying game, his efforts focus on only half of a game's aspects. The other half—the creation of characters, the narrative drive of the campaign, and a thousand other major decisions—rest to a large extent on the shoulders of the players. the

If the game were a movie and the GM its director, then the players would be both starring actors and audience. All the fearsome monsters, nasty traps, elaborate dungeons, and sinister plots in the world are wasted without a dynamic band of players to confront them and aid in developing an exciting story. By sharing a measure of responsibility with the GM for a game's story and the group's greater enjoyment, players go beyond the role of mere bystanders, and become both the stars and the co-authors of their heroic epic.

This chapter details the part of a Pathfinder game the Game Master does not directly control, discussing the elements of an adventuring party, players' rights and responsibilities, ways to involve newcomers and reengage veterans, and suggestions for how to work with gamers of all types toward the creation of more exciting stories and more enjoyable games.



The Face of the Enemy

The Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, at its simplest level, begins with an easy animosity: one player controls the "bad guys" while the others control the "good guys." Add to this the fact that GMs control behind-the-scenes elements, actively concoct schemes to challenge the players, and hold the final say on rules arbitration, and there's ample opportunity for competition, frustration, and hurt feelings. In the best roleplaying groups, both the GM and players figure out ways to avoid these problems.

All participants—especially new players—should be made aware that the GM-player relationship is not a competitive one, and that the players have roles just as important as the GM. While the GM serves in part as judge, his or her rulings should strive toward fairness, the continued flow of the game, and group enjoyment. At the same time, players share the responsibility for the group's entertainment—including the GM's—and should remain aware that time disproportionately spent on their characters, rules concerns, or out-of-game digressions potentially detracts from other players' opportunities to participate.

Should a player have a concern about the game, a GM's rules arbitration, or any other game-related quandary, he should be encouraged to bring such matters up at a time when it doesn't detract from the group's fun, perhaps immediately following the current game session. In the best campaigns, players should feel like they have a stake in the ongoing story, and a good Game Master keeps in touch with what game elements the players enjoy most, tailoring the campaign to take advantage of their preferences. In the end, though the GM always has the final say, it's important for everyone invovled to remember that it's only a game, and a bit of flexibility here and there results in a more enjoyable experience for everyone in the end.

Before the Game

Prior to sitting down to create characters, the players and GM should have a discussion about what sort of game they want to play. Although most campaigns using the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game fall within the sword and sorcery genre, other options abound, and the GM should make sure the players are aware of what sort of game they're headed into. If that means a world where wizardry is outlawed, or all druids have been driven underground by the depredations of an industrial revolution, they should know this before the game begins. Getting a sense of the types of characters each player would enjoy running helps the GM tailor the game from its outset—for more information on this aspect, see Chapter 6.

Group Composition

The traditional fantasy adventuring party includes four characters: a fighter, a cleric, a rogue, and a wizard. Such a party allows for a balance of abilities, complimentary class

features, and distinct roles wherein each character shines. Though the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game offers a much wider selection of classes, the respective roles these archetypal classes represent—combat, healing and divine casting, stealth and skill mastery, and arcane casting—are still a good checklist for making sure the party can handle a wide range of challenges.

This group structure is not the only possibility, however, and player preference often leaves one or more of these roles unfilled. With a little foresight from the GM, a nontraditional group can flourish. While it might take some effort to adjust to the group's strengths and account for any weaknesses, unusual parties can result in unique and memorable campaigns. How much strategy players put into rounding out party composition is often best left to them, so long as no one is pressured into playing a character he isn't interested in solely for "the good of the party."

Occasionally, a GM might restrict available character types. In these campaigns, such as the example mentioned above where wizardry is outlawed, it's important to decide whether or not you're interested in allowing exceptions. A sorcerer on the run from government officials who think he's a wizard makes for a great PC, but ultimately players must abide by the tropes of your world.

Character Creation

When it finally comes time to create characters, players face several big decisions, and it's the GM's job to help guide them. When designing their characters, players and GMs should consider not just what characters people want to play, but also how those characters might mesh with a larger adventure group in a thematic rather than mechanical sense. Some of the most common inter-party conflicts, both in character and out, stem from issues of disparate alignments, inflexible viewpoints or goals, class prejudices, or racial enmities. While no player can be expected to create a character that meshes perfectly with all the others in his party—and indeed, a bit of tension between characters makes roleplaying more interesting—every player should seek out ways and reasons for a group to work together, rather than focus on bickering that detracts from the adventure.

During the pre-campaign discussion, the GM should make sure that all players are on the same page regarding character creation basics such as how to generate statistics and what, if any, special character options might be used. This is the time for GMs to discuss what material beyond the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* new characters might employ. Unless an option clearly conflicts with the tone of the game, or the GM feels the power level is unbalanced, it's often a good idea to honor player requests, but ultimately the GM makes the call as to what rules can be used, and this information needs to be available to all players up front to avoid disappointment. When in doubt, you can always allow a power on a provisional basis, with the understanding that you'll help the player rebuild his character if you later reject the rule.

Character Backgrounds

Every player is different when it comes to creating character backgrounds. Some like to write whole novels, while others just want a name and a weapon. Both approaches are completely valid, but come with their own particular pitfalls. The player who writes out an overly complex history might be possessive and irritated when the GM tries to work that twists and revelations that manipulate that history. At the same time, the character with no background runs the risk of being bored or feeling disconnected from the campaign.

In general, a good character background serves two functions: getting the player excited about roleplaying, and giving you as the GM something to latch onto at the beginning of the story. As a result, regardless of how much extra work they want to do, encourage each of your players to give you a physical description (to inform NPC reactions), a basic reason for adventuring, and at least one hook involving an old vendetta, personal ethos, relative, or other core detail you can weave into the campaign.

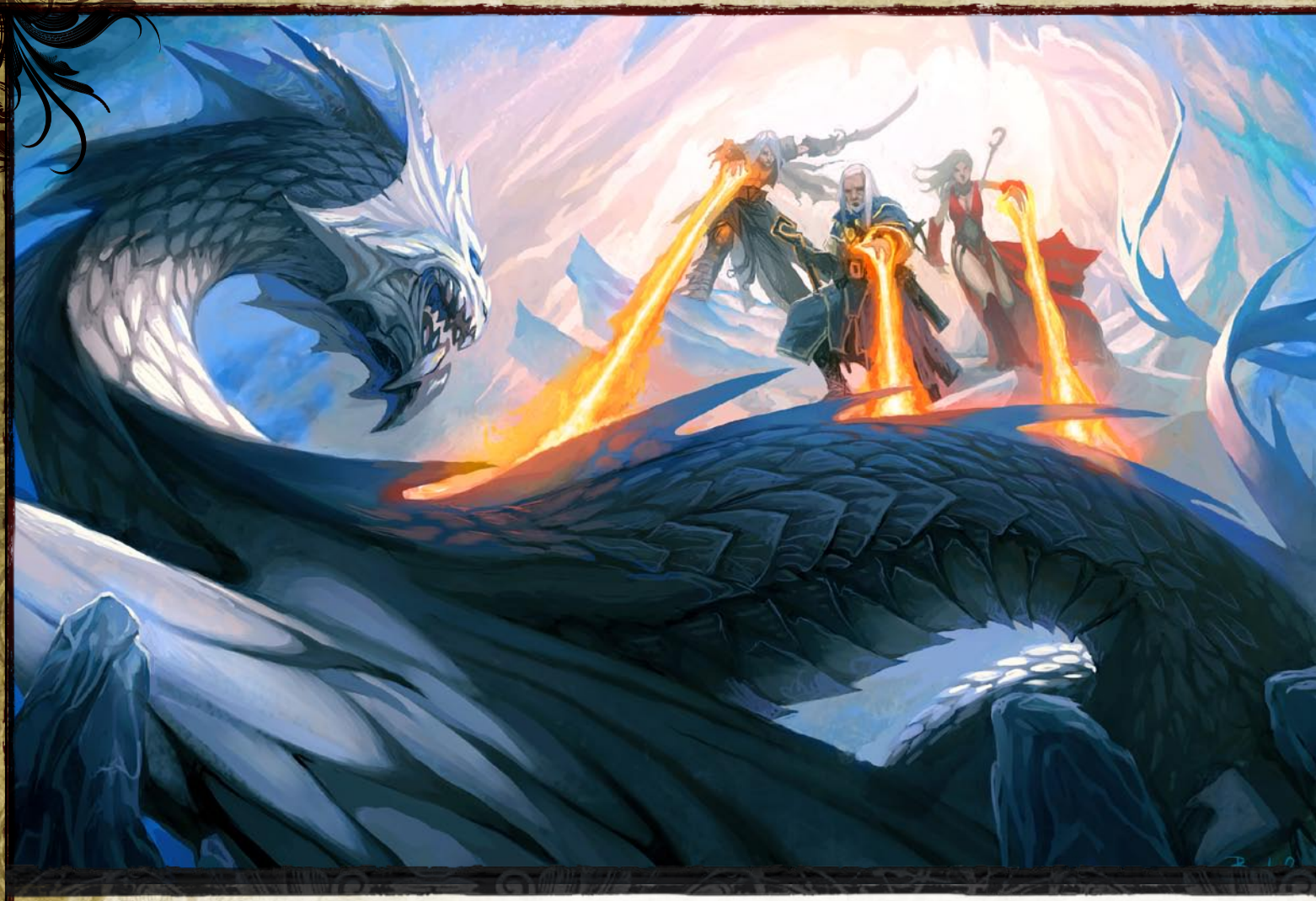
During the Game

It's been stated before, but it bears repeating: as long as everyone's enjoying themselves, the game is working. Some groups want nothing but combat after cobat, while others crave in-depth roleplaying or elaborate plots. Each player around the game table brings his own unique skills and preferences, and it is the job of the Game Master to play to each player's interests while balancing the needs of the whole group—including himself as world-builder and chief storyteller—to make sure everyone is having fun.

Fair Gameplay

In a game featuring as many rules and options as the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, the concept of "fairness" has a number of different interpretations. For players, though, fairness largely relates to their interaction with the Pathfinder rules and the group at large.

In terms of the rules of the game, the same aphorisms that held true in grade school remain true during gameplay: No one likes a cheater. In most games with experienced players, the GM doesn't need to check over every player's character sheet or double-check the math on every bonus. A game operating on dozens of different subsystems requires honesty and goodwill, as the fun of the game lies in the simulation, not the calculations behind it. Misreporting



dice rolls, ignoring a vulnerability, or bending the rules in any of a thousand other ways puts the game's integrity in jeopardy, and is ultimately pointless— a character's story is made interesting by the failures as much as by the successes. The danger lies in losing the other players' trust, forcing the game to slow down when the GM inevitably does note discrepancies, and even potentially being asked to leave a game. Yet even though players may give lip service to these ideas, or the fact that there's no such thing as "winning" a roleplaying game, sometimes players succumb to temptation, and it's the GM's duty to deal with such players quietly, gracefully—and firmly.

Beyond simply obeying the rules, however, fairness can also mean sharing the spotlight equally, and ensuring that all players are getting the chance to perform. While not every player is going to be on the edge of his seat every minute, it's a GM's job to watch and see if anyone is hogging the spotlight or being left out. Compromise and sacrifice are needed to keep the game going smoothly, and you should avoid letting players monopolize your attention with their characters' individual needs or interests. Similarly, sometimes characters are knocked out of combat or killed. Although it's no fun to sit out for a portion of a session, players should remain positive and understand that sometimes the dice roll against them—and that you as GM will get them back into the action as soon as possible.

Player Knowledge

Separating the information a player knows from the facts a character possesses regularly proves one of the most difficult challenges players face. "Metagaming," or making decisions based on player knowledge as opposed to character knowledge, quickly erodes the group's belief in the world the GM creates. It often frustrates both the GM and other players when an interesting adventure cracks because a given PC acts on information the character has no way of possessing, and such issues should be dealt with quickly and calmly when they come up.

To determine if a character's action is appropriate, have the player justify his decision using only information the character knows. For example, if no one in-game has mentioned anything about vampires, but

the player knows the GM loves vampires or was looking at vampire miniatures earlier, it's metagaming to have his character stock up on wooden stakes and holy water. If, however, the character remembers the strange marks on the victims' necks and the fact that all the attacks occurred at night (and perhaps makes a skill check to recall any information he has about monsters fitting those criteria), buying wooden stakes is a perfectly justifiable action.

Metagaming isn't always intentional. If a player isn't certain where the line between player knowledge and character knowledge falls, have him explain in-character why he's making a decision. If he resorts to using game terms or vague statements (or sophisticated concepts that clash with the voice of his Intelligence 7 barbarian), the information likely comes from player knowledge.

This certainly doesn't mean that characters have to be as dumb as posts, never making decisions unless they are blatantly obvious, but rather that players should strive to process information in the same way their characters would. This is the essence of roleplaying. For example, suppose a wizard character says, "The orc used sneak attack on us—therefore, he's got to be a rogue, so I won't cast *fireball*. I'll cast *charm person* instead; he probably has a weak Will save." This is clearly player knowledge: the player described his reasoning using game terms and rules knowledge. Contrast this with the player instead saying: "The orc is wearing light armor and doing an awful lot of damage with just a short sword. This reminds me of the wererat murderer we fought in Korvosa. That wererat avoided my *fireballs* like they weren't even there, so I'm going to try *charm person*." Here the player performs exactly the same action, using the same information, but justifies it with character knowledge instead of directly metagaming. Of course, this isn't an excuse for players to fast-talk their way into metagaming, and if a character has too many justified epiphanies, you may still want to have a talk with the player.

One particularly sticky area of metagaming has nothing to do with game mechanics, but rather real-world knowledge and intelligence. Sometimes the player who's a genius at solving puzzles and riddles wants to play a dumb brute of a swordsman. This is great—so long as his character isn't still solving all the puzzles. In this situation (or the reverse, where the player who's terrible at puzzles has an Intelligence score of 22), let all the players work together to solve the puzzle, but use skill checks and Intelligence checks to offer hints or determine who actually comes up with the solution. Similarly, don't fall into the trap of letting a player's knowledge base inform the character's beyond what's reasonable. Just because your player knows how to make gunpowder out of bat guano doesn't mean his uneducated halfling cleric does.

Plot Development

In real life, players might be justifiably suspicious if a stranger approached them at a bar and offered them money to perform a dangerous task. In a game, however, players who scrutinize plot hooks too closely can cause a GM a lot of stress. These players sometimes make the case that blindly accepting a plot hook (or rushing into battle, or delving into the dungeon) when their character wouldn't likely do so goes against the whole idea of roleplaying. If the player knows the GM wants him to follow the hook and the player accepts, isn't that metagaming?

In a way, yes. While a good GM is often capable of presenting incentives and circumstances that allow PCs to float seamlessly and justifiably from encounter to encounter, sometimes the GM needs a little help. In these situations, it's important for the players to remember that the rule against metagaming is subordinant to the rule about having fun, and if you as the GM need them to work with you, it's their responsibility to do so.

Thankfully, no matter what the situation, there's never a time when a creative GM can't help his players find a believable way to undertake a given action. Though it can be frustrating to deal with a player who stubbornly proclaims, "My character would never do that!", take a moment to look at the character's backstory and see if there's a potential rationalization, or a previously "unrevealed" aspect of the situation that can get the character invested once more. A paladin might normally reject a sinister dark elf's offer, but perhaps in this case she pretends to accept in order to find out what the dark elf is up to. Conversely, maybe the drow forgot to mention that there's several innocent lives at stake, making accepting her offer the only righteous option.

This doesn't mean that players should always bend over backward to accommodate the GM—if none of the players take to the adventure hook for some unforeseen reason, you've failed to adequately read your party, and it's up to you to repackage the adventure in a more appealing way. Alternatively, if a player genuinely can't think of a good reason for a character to work toward an adventure's ends, saying so might spark a lively in-character discussion and lead other characters to convince him.

Obstinancy, however, is one of the quickest ways for a player to kill a campaign. A player who refuses to play his character any way but his own, fails to accommodate other players' wishes and interests, or insists on heading off on his own is forgetting the cooperative nature of the game. In this case, it's the GM's responsibility to intervene and speak privately to the player. If working together to add additional plot elements, or coaching the player in more team-based play, doesn't succeed in bringing him back in line with the rest of the group, then it might be best for him to create a new character or resign from the gaming group altogether—perhaps taking his headstrong character on a solo adventure.

After the Game

Between sessions, players still have plenty of opportunities to contribute to a game's success. Engaging in good record keeping, maintaining up-to-date characters, participating in game-related projects, and giving feedback all help games run smoothly, take work off your shoulders, and keep a campaign fun even between sessions.

Keeping Current

As soon as a session ends, all players should consult their notes to ensure that all experience points, treasure, and important information has been accurately recorded. Some groups appoint one player to track treasure, another to list NPC names and descriptions, and yet another to note plot and adventure hooks. These duties might rotate, but every player should understand her responsibilities to the group, lest valuable details or resources be lost. Often players keep their own notes, sometimes in character, and these narratives form contrasting viewpoints that can make for fun campaign journals. Additional documentation, such as map sketches, tallies of slain enemies, folders of item cards, and lists of shared adventuring gear, helps keep the players focused and adds to the fun.

Players should also ensure that their character sheets stay up to date, adding and removing equipment, accounting for long-term effects, and updating character level adjustments as soon as possible. Decide ahead of time if you have any specific preferences regarding leveling, such as not allowing the players to level in the middle of the session, or insisting that they roll their hit points in front of a witness. Players should always arrive for a session with an up-to-date character sheet so valuable game time isn't consumed by last-minute preparation.

Feedback

Gaming groups thrive on feedback. Enthusiastic players spur the GM to continue creating exciting adventures and make the daunting task of running a game worthwhile, while the GM complimenting a player on his roleplaying, strategy, or teamwork can help educate and make the party more cohesive. A GM or player who compliments others also inspires others to share positive feedback and are most likely to be taken seriously when offering criticism.

Constructive criticism is just as important as positive reinforcement, but it should be handled more carefully. When possible, raise any individual issues with players in private. Phrasing such criticism as a request for assistance often makes the process easier. For example, if a player is getting caustic toward a teammate over the latter's limited rules knowledge, you might ask that he help educate the neophyte player. Similarly, if one player's character is constantly disrupting the game by heading off in different directions, you could ask that player to help you keep the group on track—many players understand the difficulties of GMing, and may play differently if they see themselves as sharing that responsibility.



Creativity Between Sessions

Just because the session ends, that doesn't mean the game can't follow a player home. Many players make their most meaningful contributions to a game between sessions. Literary-minded or artistic players often keep some manner of in-character campaign journal or sketchbook, depicting the party's exploits from their characters' point of view. This might take the form of notes, an actual pen-and-ink diary, or posts to an online journal or forum, and can be anything from letters to another character, reports to a related organization, a scholarly work, or a bardic epic. Making such records accessible to the other players (or even the wider gaming community) allows others to share in the group's adventures.

Although campaign journals serve as the most common creative activity between sessions, no GM should underestimate the imagination of her players. Artistic players might create sketches of their characters, portraits of their enemies, or illustrations of their exploits, while more craft-focused players might help the GM make maps or props of important items, or might fashion costumes or adornments based on their characters. If you have a player looking for such a project, consider bringing them in on one of the creative aspects you don't have time for, whether it's painting miniatures, making maps, or creating a playlist for the game's soundtrack.

It's not just artists and writers who can help the GM between sessions, either. If you have a trusted player who's particularly adept with the rules (or maybe even GMs himself), feel free to use him as a resource, perhaps vetting rules supplements proposed by other players and advising you on tricky balance issues, or educating other players in particularly confusing aspects of the game.

New Players

Even a group that's been playing together for years occasionally finds itself in need of new players. Teaching newcomers, rather than finding established players, brings several challenges but also has the potential for great rewards. This can be particularly challenging when an individual has never played a tabletop roleplaying game before and therefore has no point of reference for such an experience. Whether you find yourself looking for new members, trying to introduce a friend to roleplaying games, or teaching someone who has just become interested, consider the following topics.

Meeting New Players: New players come most readily from your group's extended circle of friends, where potential newcomers' interest and compatibility with the rest of the group is already known or can be reasonably estimated. Beyond existing circles of friends, game stores, gaming conventions, and organized play programs (like Paizo's Pathfinder Society) make great places to meet new players. Many gaming related websites, college campuses, libraries, and coffee houses also host forums where local gamers might network. While all of these options can help bring together fantastic groups, you should always remain aware of the potential dangers of meeting strangers. Always arrange to meet in a public space (such as a local game store, mall, or coffee shop), let loved ones know where you are going, share your contact's information, and never go alone.

Introducing Players: If your group is interested in introducing someone to roleplaying for the first time, the best way to start is by inviting that person to a session. What the new player does at this first session is up to her. If she's most comfortable watching and asking questions, she should do so. If she prefers to learn by doing, playing existing side-characters like allied NPCs, familiars, or animal companions allows her to jump in on the side of the PCs; alternatively, the GM might hand over control of a monster to teach her the basics. And of course, there's no better way for her to start than jumping in with a new character, created with the GM's help. If this first session goes well and the new player seems interested in learning more, perhaps it's time to formally invite her to join the group.

Teaching New Players: Learning a roleplaying game's rules is the greatest challenge facing any new gamer, especially when contending with an entire group spouting lingo like a second language. Experienced gamers can do a lot to make the learning process easier. First and foremost, make the new player feel welcome. As GM, you already have a lot on your plate in a given session, and it's often helpful to ask a willing, experienced player to act as a "buddy" for the new player, explaining game terms and suggesting actions. Encouragement is especially important during this learning period, and it's crucial that you ask the new player for input in party decisions, as it's easy for newcomers to be overwhelmed by a party already used to working together. Keep in mind that it's not important for the new player to know every rule or option from the start. New players should be made aware of the basics, which can later be added to once they're more comfortable with the game. Other players should also avoid jumping in, as having suggestions offered from multiple directions can prove confusing and frustrating. Providing the player with a cheat sheet of common terms and rules also helps her learn the game. And as helpful as it is for a new player to receive advice and support, it's important to step back periodically and give her a chance to demonstrate what she's learned. With each passing session, she'll need less help, and in time she'll playing like a veteran.

A Basic Rules Cheat Sheet is included in the back of this book. Feel free to photocopy it and give it to your new players to assist them in learning the rules and terminology of the game.

Beginner's Game: If you're trying to find a number of new players, or if you know multiple people interested in roleplaying but don't want to interrupt the momentum of an ongoing campaign by bringing inexperienced players up to speed, you might consider running a game just for beginners. Such a game allows all the new players to start at the same point and with about the same base of knowledge. New players don't have to worry about learning both the Pathfinder RPG rules and the details of a long-running campaign at once, as optimally the game starts a new story. They also don't have to feel inexperienced or like a drag on the more adept members of the group—with a beginner's game, new players can take their time with the rules, ask questions, and learn from questions asked by others.

GMs who choose to run a game for beginners should decide whether they want to make it open to the public or restricted to a select group of friends. While inviting a few interested potential players is usually the easiest course, many game stores and conventions welcome GMs willing to teaching new roleplayers. As with any new game or topic, the GM should be patient with beginners, receptive to their questions, and interested in making sure everyone understands what's going on. Not every rule and option needs to be presented from the start; ensuring that everyone is comfortable with the basics before gradually introducing new elements helps to avoid overwhelming anyone. Remember that, first and foremost, the Pathfinder RPG is a game and ismost fun when played, so demonstrations, simple combats, and keeping an open forum for questions can not only make for a fun adventure, but can also quickly expand a GM's pool of potential players.

The Life of a Party

Once a group has its players, the elements of the game are decided upon, and characters are made, it's time for adventure! The importance of the players doesn't end when the GM's story begins. The ways players cooperate, characters play off of each other, and an adventuring party functions together can determine not just the success or failure of an adventure, but also the fortune of a gaming group as a whole. This section focuses on elements of the game GMs—and their players—should consider to improve the quality of their parties, make running the game easier, and generally spend more game time roleplaying and less time squabbling. Keeping in mind some of the issues and sticking points most commonly faced during roleplaying games can help you steer your party away from problems, frustrations, and wasted time.

Gathering a Group

There's an important step between creating characters and having that first adventure: forming an adventuring party. Unless your players have discussed connections between their characters in advance, you might find yourself with a disparate group of individuals seemingly unlikely to work toward the same goal. This can prove an extremely daunting task, and may require some quick and clever improvisation, though experienced players are likely to try and make the job easier for you by responding receptively to potential common interests. The less hand-waving a GM has to do, however, the stronger a story feels. To help a group deal with the often-awkward first encounter, the following options aid in transforming a group of strangers into a cohesive adventuring party.

Shared Past

One of the easiest ways to deal with the first time characters meet is to make it their hundredth time. Working with players to create characters who know each other from the start alleviates much of the hassle of trying to entwine them with one another. Characters may be childhood friends, students of the same master, or relatives who have shared countless experiences before the adventure even begins. Working with the group to create a uniting factor makes explaining why the characters are in the same place at the same time straightforward. Knowing one another doesn't have to mean the characters are friends. Passing acquaintances, respectful peers, or even longstanding rivals might be shoved together by circumstance.

If it seems too implausible for every character in a group to know every other member, or a shared background element seems illogical or can't be decided upon, having even two or three related characters goes a long way toward bringing the entire group together. Two or more groups of PCs coming together, or a larger group meeting an outsider, decreases the number of factors the GM needs to wrangle to bring the party together.

The shared past method can also work well beyond first level—just because a PC never mentioned an old acquaintance, for example, doesn't mean she doesn't exist, and more than one replacement character has come searching for her recently deceased sibling, only to pick up her sister's quest where the late adventurer left off. Shared pasts also provide an excellent means of introducing villains with a connection to the PCs, making the adventure a personal vendetta from the very first encounter.

Shared Goal

Perhaps one character shows up at the entrance to a recently uncovered dungeon looking for her missing niece, and soon after a robed figure also approaches the entrance tracking down a kobold who stole his master's book of arcane research. Both need to clear out the same dungeon, so they might as well work together. It's the PCs' objective, not their history, that brings them together in this case. While such happenstance can easily stretch credulity if numerous adventurers show up at a site all at the same time, chancing upon a character or another group with a similar destination or goal can be made to feel natural if it's done thoughtfully. Unlike the shared past method, the characters must learn to trust one another over time, providing ample opportunities for roleplaying as characters feel each other out and create friendships and rivalries.

In Media Res

Few things energize a new gaming group more than sitting down for their first adventure and immediately being told, "Roll initiative!" Novels rarely begin at the most boring part of the story, and neither should adventures. Starting the party in the midst of an ambush on their caravan, fighting a fire at their inn, imprisoned in a dungeon, or hearing screams from down the hall begins the adventure immediately. The characters might already be aware of each other, but it's their reactions to the event facing them that initially draws them together, giving the GM a starting point from which to weave a lasting connection.

As stirring as this method can be, it risks taking a measure of character control out of the players' hands, as it assumes prior actions, and can be especially frustrating if a player doesn't believe her character would be involved in the situation presented. Thus, it's often helpful for the GM to include the players in a measure of the setup, perhaps asking each member to come up with a reason for why his character might be in a specific place or be interested in

some event. They don't need to know how the GM plans to start things off, but they'll already know why they're around when the excitement begins.

Flash Forward

By far the easiest way to get characters together is to skip past the introductions and straight to the adventure. Having the players decide upon how the characters met, develop a few connections or rivalries, and determining what shared goals they already have allows a group to forgo the introductory period. While this glosses over many nuances of character motivation and potentially memorable first meetings, it also means that the GM can start an adventure at the first encounter of the adventure and start the story moving forward from there. This method tends to work best for one-night adventures, where specifics of characterization and motivation prove secondary to the excitement of the game, but can also be useful for groups where players are keen on weaving an elaborate group backstory.

Party Composition

As long as every player is participating and having fun, there's no right or wrong number of players in a gaming group. Yet times arise when the number of characters and the choices they make have a significant effect on an adventure, and can potentially compromise the enjoyment of all involved.

Splitting the Party

"Don't split the party" is practically an RPG mantra. But sometimes players do it anyway, or a split is forced upon them by a sudden avalanche, a *teleport* spell gone awry, or the chance to sneak into the palace in a halfling-sized crate.

When you find yourself running multiple groups, it's worth remembering why you're at the front of the table: to give your friends a challenging, fun time, not to relentlessly enforce realism. You don't want to utterly break everyone's suspension of disbelief, but it's not the end of the world if you engineer events for the party to be reunited sooner rather than later. Is it really so bad if the avalanche gets dug away quickly or the palace loading dock has a bunch of different-sized crates?

In these situations, the GM often needs to adjust the flow of the session to compensate and keep things both logical and fun. When faced with such a situation, you have several different tactics at your disposal.

Split Screen: Some GMs have little problem keeping track of the events of two small groups at once. If you're comfortable with it, you can try to continue to run events as normal, dealing with each group while the other one is considering its next move so that neither side feels neglected. For instance, this might work well in a combat that spans two different rooms (or two simultaneous combats), and keeping both groups operating as part of the same initiative order during these periods can help ensure that no one is left out for an unfair period of time. In general, though, this is by far the most difficult way to handle a split party.

Jump Cuts: It's natural to go back and forth between two groups, and that back-and-forth provides its own dramatic momentum, like a movie that cuts back and forth between two different scenes.

Decide in the moment when you want those "cuts" to occur, choosing them based on your sense of pacing. Don't feel like you need to switch between team A and team B every round; that will leave everyone disjointed and bring play to a crawl. Nor should you fully resolve an encounter with team A, because then team B might as well go to the kitchen and have a pizza. Time those "cuts" between the groups for the big moments—the scouts see something fascinating, the rear guard brings down the ogre, and other natural turning points.

Deputize Your Players: If one group is doing a lot while the other group is waiting around, put the players in the less-active group to work for you. They can control a monster or an NPC guard. It's not the end of the world if a player sees a stat block, and many players relish the vicarious thrill of attacking their friends.

Extra Scene: If the separation is sure to go on for an extended period, the group might arrange an extra session focusing on only the relevant characters. While a session that includes only some of the characters can sometimes help a campaign (for example, when multiple players know they're going to be absent, or a subgroup wants to go off on a side quest), it can also leave certain players feeling left out of the action. In such cases, a more creative solution might be required. You might have the players whose characters are not being focused on create temporary characters, newly introduced to their companions, or else take control of important NPCs; this approach allows them to accompany their companions for the duration of their side adventure while still maintaining continuity with their existing characters. This method means no players get left out of an adventure, and the entire group remains in tune with all of the story's events.

One Man Show: In cases where a lone character decides to run off on his own, the GM should do what she can to keep the game fun for the player, but by the same token shouldn't feel that she needs to split game time evenly between the majority of the group and the party of one. If a player chooses to take his character away from the central narrative, receiving less of the GM's attention might just be part of the price. Alternatively, a separate solo session or email narrative might be exactly what the player needs to satisfy his character goals without sacrificing any fun for the rest of the group.

Go With the Flow: When the two parties reunite, let it happen. Don't worry that 10 minutes passed for one group and only 5 minutes passed for the other. It's probably not worth it to award experience points differently—few people really care that they get 150 more XP than someone else, and making such distinctions is more likely to foment discord than prevent it.

Adjusting for Limitations

Before a game even begins, players have the opportunity to work with the GM to create the characters that they want to play and that best serve the game. Occasionally, though, a group's particular mix of character classes leaves it with limiting weaknesses in need of reconciliation. Below are several options to help you address such issues.

Character Adjustment: Sometimes the players can handle the potential problem for you by cannily readjusting magical items, rethinking the group's tactics, or taking levels in specific classes that help address the party's needs. While such options have the benefit of allowing the party itself to control every aspect of how its weaknesses are accounted for, buying new equipment is expensive and the leveling process takes time, meaning numerous sessions might pass before a player's newly adopted techniques or character options actually begin to help.

Cohorts: The Leadership feat gives a character the option to attract subordinates drawn to his personality and legend. Just because that character might be a wizard doesn't mean he has to attract spellcasting associates; attracting other cohorts gives him a perfect opportunity to balance his own limitations with a whole other set of abilities. In this situation, work with your players to create NPCs that are both valuable to the group and interesting and plausible within the ongoing story.

How cohorts and followers are run in a game warrants discussion before a character simply takes this feat, however. Are cohorts independent entities—meaning NPCs controlled by you as the GM—or simply appendages of the character who hires them? Most GMs prefer to let the player control the tacical and mechanical aspects of the cohort, while maintaining control of the NPC's personality, loyalties, and mannerisms. This can make for fun and rewarding interplay between the player and the GM, but it's important to remember that one player running an entire mini-party of his own risks detracting from other players' chances for participation, and the more cohorts and hirelings a GM must control, the more likely their presence will slow down and complicate the campaign. Before allowing a player to take the Leadership feat you should discuss such concerns with the player and make sure you're both on the same page regarding how the feat functions, and how to keep a bevy of followers from becoming a burden.

Hirelings: In many fantasy settings, it's wholly plausible that a group of adventurers might hire porters, guides, mercenaries, or even other adventurers to fulfill any number of needs. Page 159 of the *Core Rulebook* presents costs for a number of typical services, and you can use these prices to suggest salaries for other professionals, whether they be sages or swordsmen.

Secondary Characters

While most gaming groups adhere to the basic convention of one player per character, there's no rule to prevent players from running multiple characters if you're comfortable with it. As mentioned earlier, the Leadership feat offers perhaps the most obvious option for this, potentially drawing a small army into a single character's employ. Yet there's nothing to say that a player can't play two totally independent PCs at once. This option is particularly useful for small groups that would otherwise have significant holes in their abilities and skill sets. In extreme cases, a game with only one player might see the player running an entire party.

Handling Treasure

Over the course of any adventure, there are treasures to find and rewards to win. While the shape of these rewards can vary wildly (see Chapter 5), the way PCs handle such rewards can create a host of issues, the most common being how to divide treasure fairly. Groups should work out how their party divides treasure early on to avoid tensions mid-adventure, and GMs should watch for signs of growing resentment and offer advice as needed, keeping in mind the following factors.

By Need: While it's easy enough to give every PC an equal share of the coins found or gained by selling art, jewelry, and easily liquidated items, desirable magic items and other unique treasures pose their own problems. If the group finds an item that would be beneficial to a certain character, most groups will allow that character to use it, for the good of all. If two characters want the same item, they can resolve who gets it by determining who would receive the greater benefit. Should this prove unclear or even, the players can determine who gets it by whatever method pleases them—high die roll, sharing the item, or even paying the other person for the privilege of using it—as long as the game keeps moving along. This is a simple system for the players, but relies on you providing equally useful items for every member of the party, which may stretch credulity.

By Value: In a more complex method of handling treasure, the characters collect their loot and wait to divide it until they're safely out of harm's way. Then the gp value of all the items is totaled, and every character

takes a turn choosing an item. The value of that item is then subtracted from the character's share of the overall treasure. This system ensures that characters who don't find items they want among the treasure have money to buy other items, while characters who do want treasure items have proportionately less money.

NPC Shares: Seldom discussed, NPCs have their own motives. Does a cohort get a share of the treasure? A hireling or follower? An NPC who's tagging along? An animal companion? Before splitting up treasure, the entire group—and any avaricious NPCs—should be on the same page about where the loot goes in the end (and such issues can conveniently resolve the problem of the character with too many hirelings or cohorts).

Death of a Hero

Inevitably, whether in a dramatic sacrifice or merely through bad luck with the dice, player characters die. How the group reacts to the death—and what the now-characterless player does about the situation—can say a lot about your game. In most cases, the focus of all parties involved changes to making sure the recently deceased character can get back into the action as soon as possible. But should the circumstances of the character's death render him beyond the party's reach, it might be time to create a new character.

When to Resurrect

Just because a companion has fallen and the party can afford to restore him doesn't mean the player necessarily wants his character to come back. Death gives many players the perfect opportunity to abandon an old character for something new, or remedy a weakness in the party. The player of the deceased should always have a voice in determining whether or not his character is brought back to life, as no one benefits from bringing back a character who doesn't want it.

By the same token, players with dead characters should understand that their companions are not obligated to restore them, especially if doing so would require hocking every item and using every gold piece the party possesses. The game should not be made less enjoyable—and the party crippled—just to reverse the unfortunate fate of a single character.

Back from the Grave

Sometimes a group's favorite character dies and for one reason or another can't be resurrected. While there's nothing preventing a player from tacking a "II" to the end of his character's name and recreating him stat for stat, encourage your players to exercise a bit more creativity in making replacement characters.

A player looking for ways to get reinvolved in a game after his character's death might look to individuals in his deceased character's backstory, NPCs traveling with the group, or other story-based opportunities to add a new PC to the game. Ideally the player creates a new character distinctive from his last, but even if not, most character backstories provide reasons for such similarities. At the same time, a new character with his own unique reasons to pursue the party's goals can mesh easily with an existing party and might have reason to know much of the plot of an ongoing campaign.

Forcing characters to cope with the loss of a party member, however, isn't the only option to dealing with in-game deaths. If a character proves absolutely vital to a game, is the hinge that keeps a player invested, or was slain through an unfair technicality, the GM might consider finding a way to return the character to life. While openly ignoring the rules can feel weak and arbitrary, the GM might concoct a special deific favor or even an adventure-worthy plot to restore the deceased character. Doing so can strengthen a party, rewarding members for their reliance on and willingness to sacrifice for one another, and even give the group new reasons to adventure, but this tactic should be used sparingly lest a group lose its fear of death altogether.



Alignment

Alignment is easily one of the most debated topics in roleplaying, and straddles the line between descriptive element and rules element. How it is treated varies wildly; for some GMs it's merely a two-letter description, while for others it's a web of permissions and restrictions. Sorting out how this system works is important; it determines how players portray their characters, and how you as GM adjudicate certain aspects of the game.

Alignment exists primarily to define and summarize the moral and ethical tendencies of characters in a game, for both PCs and NPCs, and finds its roots in the fantasy literature that inspires most roleplaying games. Many characters in such stories easily fall into the camps of good or evil, but others straddle the line and seem good in one instance and evil in the next. Additionally, the relationship and outlook of these characters toward matters of law, justice, freedom, and anarchy further divides them. Just as one character might ignore society's rules in order to do what he knows is right, another might work great evil by manipulating laws to his own ends. Alignment is summarized on page 166 of the *Core Rulebook*, but the interpretations are endless, and ultimately lie with you as the GM at a mechanical standpoint, and with your players in how they define their characters' morality. Some gamers favor strict alignments and black-and-white judgments, while others prefer a gritty, "realistic" game in which morality is relative, and well-intentioned "good" characters are capable of terrible atrocities.

Many of the debates spawned by alignment arise as the system moves beyond mere description to taking on a role that affects the game's rules. While no real-world humans can say they're entirely good or law-abiding, there exist creatures in the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game that are fundamentally good, evil, lawful, or chaotic, and some magic depends on judging a character by its alignment. Because game effects are associated with an ultimately subjective system, you should make sure your players understand your interpretation of alignment ahead of time. The following are a few ways you might handle alignment in your game or use it to help players develop their characters.

Predestination

The simplest way to view alignment is as nine literal personalities. If a character is lawful good, he always obeys the law and always does the "right" thing, while a chaotic evil character always shirks the law and acts maliciously. This is a system of absolutes, where free will and context mean little, everything is pre-ordained, and every creature has a path. Players who view alignment as predestination might wear alignments like straitjackets, but at the same time, they always know how to roleplay their character's reaction to situations. This proves both helpful and comforting to many players new to or ill at ease with roleplaying. This approach also renders alignment-based rules easy to arbitrate, turning every matter of determining alignment into a simple yes-no question. Problems with this method tend to arise when a game ventures into sketchier moral and ethical situations. A player might become uncomfortable when his lawful good character feels forced to obey the laws of an evil society, or might have trouble in a campaign that requires him to work with those whose alignments differ from his own.

Free Will

Many players tend to focus more on creating characters with consistent, specific personalities rather than alignments. These players envision their heroes' backgrounds, personality traits, attitudes, and goals, and only then choose an alignment that best reflects these facets. A character's alignment then becomes a way of categorizing his personality, rather than defining him and channeling his actions. As long as the player understands the impact of his choice on gameplay, this approach works smoothly. For example, a player who chooses the chaotic neutral alignment needs to understand that certain elements within the game world will judge him based on this decision (as with any other alignment). Some temples might deny him healing because the biggest threat in the region is chaotic monsters, viewing her alignment as grounds for suspicion. This method is also problematic when it becomes too general. Accepting alignment as a broad category can render it almost meaningless and make it difficult for you as the GM to judge whether a character is acting outside of her alignment and arbitrate any game effects associated with doing so.

Defining Deeds

Another way to see alignment is as a series of concentric rings. In the center ring are all the behaviors that are obviously acceptable according to a character's alignment. Around that is a middle circle that covers the gray areas—actions that might be allowed under certain circumstances or are unclear. On the outside is the forbidden area of extreme actions that obviously violate the alignment. Taking prisoners offers examples of all three circles. Accepting an opponent's honorable surrender is clearly good. Torturing that prisoner for information might be in the forbidden area for a given good character. But what about threatening torture, if the PC doesn't intend to carry out the threat? That falls into the middle circle. Taking this route means players must remember their characters' alignment and act accordingly. At the same time, while this route goes far toward suggesting how characters might act in specific situations, debates might arise when group members don't see eye-to-eye about which acts are permissible. Additionally, some characters might have varying access to the gray areas of their alignment, and GMs should discuss where this line exists for characters who face repercussions for deviating from their moral code.

Changing Alignment

While alignment is often a static trait, options and effects exist that might cause it to change, and players might seek to change their PCs' alignments for a variety of reasons.

Voluntarily: Aside from merely having misunderstood what a specific alignment means, PCs might seek to change their alignment in light of game events or to qualify for some alignment-related goal. How this change takes shape should be determined by the player and GM. Often, some quest, trauma, rehabilitation, or other life-changing event triggers the alignment change. Players should be sure of their decision, as changing alignment should be the result of an extraordinary effort, not a whim, and a PC with a shifting personality risks losing definition as a character and might begin to seem like he's trying to exploit the rules.

Involuntarily: All manner of events might lead a character to have an involuntary alignment shift. Some are truly involuntary, as some force overrides or corrupts the PC's personality. The GM should work with the player in such cases, perhaps making an unnaturally compromised PC a confederate in an ongoing story. Stepping out of the norm and playing her own character in a contradictory fashion can be fun for a player and delightfully unnerving for the rest of a group.

Characters also risk having their alignment changed if they continually act in accordance with an alignment other than the one they chose. For many characters, this matters little, but in the case of characters bound to a specific alignment for rules-related purposes, an alignment change might mean having to reimagine their entire character. Instead of springing this on a player, make it clear when an action risks violating an alignment-related requirement. Sometimes this will be seen as the voice of the character's conscience, and allow the player to refrain from the action or suitably justify it to themselves (and you) to bring it into accordance with their values.

Evil Characters

Many GMs refuse to allow players to create characters with evil alignments, as is their prerogative if they feel such a character might disrupt the game or hinder the story. Occasionally, though, your players might have intriguing ideas for antiheroic characters, or you might have a great idea that requires evil characters to play out.

Evil characters present more than just an excuse to engage in offensive behavior or play homicidal maniacs; rather, they allow players to mimic some of the classic cads and antiheroes of legends and fantasy literature. Just like good characters, evil characters have goals and desires and understand the consequences of their actions. Those who do whatever they want without consideration for the rest of the party risk undesirable repercussions. Adventurers who routinely steal from their companions or betray their compatriots are likely to find themselves abandoned or slain. But evil characters who are more than just psychopaths can prove to be valuable members of a group should their goals parallel those of a party. Talk with your players and discuss what makes their characters evil, their goals, and how allying with other adventurers might aid those goals. At the same time, players of good characters should think about why they might travel with such ne'er-do-wells (perhaps out of desperation, responsibility, or the hope of rehabilitation).



Player Interactions

The wisest of the wise will never make a crab walk straight.
—Aristophanes

One of the great things about roleplaying games is that they tend to bring together a wide variety of players, each with his or her own unique passions, play style, and traits. This witch's brew of personalities can create some truly memorable game experiences, with each player adding her own flavor to the game. Like a world-class chef, it's the GM's job to manage these game elements—stirring one pot while another simmers—to create a game experience that leaves all players breathless in anticipation of the next session.

It's important for GMs to accept that all of these different personalities make a campaign better. While some types of players are more difficult to handle than others, each has his own role to play on the grand stage that is the campaign, and working with each can help you improve as a GM.

This section details 14 different and archetypal player personalities, along with the challenges and preferences they might exhibit. While this list does not cover every type of player, it gives enough of an overview for GMs to recognize these stereotypes as they manifest during the game and have a good idea how to interact with them. Don't be surprised if the same player exhibits multiple traits; gamer psychology is just as complex as any other, and people are frequently a dash of this and a pinch of that. Though it's important not to pigeonhole your players, many people will tend to have certain specific habits that cast them more into a particular category than another. This section is intended to help you interact with potentially frustrating player types in a manner that is fun and productive for you and them.

Recognize that labels can be a negative, and that you shouldn't casually assign one of these personality types to a player, nor even mention your mental designations unless you're sure the player will take it with grace and not see it as dismissal or name-calling. You may find that some players freely embrace their type ("I strictly adhere to the rules; I guess that makes me a rules lawyer"), while others have a different conception of their behavior, or believe they are much too psychologically complex to ever fall into a particular category ("I am not a diva! I'm just keeping the game interesting!"). Use your best judgment when discussing these archetypes with your group.

The GM's role is to ensure fun for all, not to force everyone to march in lockstep toward the next page of the adventure. The quote by the Greek playwright Aristophanes that begins this section alludes to the challenges that await you as you lead your group toward its next great adventure. Just as the crab eventually finds its way back to sea, so too will players embark on fun-filled evenings of epic quests and daring-do. The GM should allow them to zigzag their way from one encounter to the next by playing the way they like to play, even if their course seems surprising or inefficient compared to the one you expected.

Player motivations can be a tricky thing to manage. In order to keep things running smoothly, you may need to embrace some of your "problem player's" desires, which can mean extra work coming up with new rules systems for economics or extra sessions to make the needy player feel like he has a chance to shine. Whenever possible, work with your players and embrace their quirks as what they likely are—enthusiasm for the game you both enjoy. Your experience will be the better for it.

Dangerous Combos: As you assess the composition of your gaming group, take special note of potentially explosive combinations. The GM serves as referee between players, especially when their motivations place them in diametrically opposed roles, so if you see trouble brewing, try discussing with your players how they would like to handle the situation ahead of time, before people have gotten heated. (Some of these potentially problematic combinations are mentioned on the following pages.) Also, if you have particular pet peeves or anticipate issues before a game begins, you may want to talk with your group ahead of time, so they can be mindful of their own tendencies and take care to sidestep potential issues.

Know Your Group: There's a difference between being a Game Master and mastering the role of the GM. The more experienced you are and the better you know your players, the less apt you are to need the advice on the following pages. Remember that this advice doesn't take the individual quirks and preferences of actual players or groups into account, so you should always feel free to make any adjustments and changes that are best for the game. It's your campaign and world, and you're the one to judge what works and what doesn't. And of course it's possible that you might even fall into one of these categories yourself, in which case dealing with a particular archetype might not seem like a problem.

Respect: Although the GM controls many aspects of the game, one thing she can't control—and shouldn't attempt to—is the players. Tailoring the game to better suit the players shouldn't feel subversive or manipulative. Ideally, everyone at the game table is there to have a good time and a GM should make clear her attempts to minimize conflicts and improve the game for everyone. Players should also take responsibility—the more they respect and understand each other, the less the GM needs these suggestions.

Antagonist

No prudent antagonist thinks light of his adversaries.

—John Wolfgang von Goethe

Inter-party strife presents one of the most dangerous kinds of tension, and the antagonist is often at the heart of it. This player has elected to create a character at odds with one or more members of the party. It might be that the antagonist has decided he's an atheist in conflict with the party cleric. Perhaps he's the lone evil character in a group of good-aligned characters. He might be the dwarf who is untrusting of the party's elf members, or a rogue who enjoys stealing from teammates. Whatever the reason, he's setting himself up as the lightning rod. While rivalry and good-natured butting of heads can bring an entertaining element to a campaign, outright animosity should be addressed. Three steps can often help diffuse such situations:

1. Determine the Source: Most inter-character conflicts are intentional and have been specifically defined by the players. Such clashes aren't always negative elements, especially when they don't interfere with the game and keep a measure of levity. A source of antagonism can add to a campaign; the challenge lies in managing the intensity of the conflict and the likely outcome. Some potential sources of antagonistic conflict include alignment (good and evil; law and chaos), prejudice (against magic or certain races), moral values (caste system, role of women), political beliefs (national or guild-level strife), religion (opposing religion or non-believer), inter-party lies or theft, and xenophobia.

2. Determine the Level of Antagonism: What does the antagonist do when confronted by the source of the conflict? Can the players (both the antagonist and the other group members) still work together when the source of tension arises? If the answer is no, then the player should reduce the level of antagonism, even if it means modifying his character concept. A group whose members can't trust each other or are unwilling to come to one another's aid is an adventuring company that's headed toward early retirement.

3. Identify Possible Resolutions: One player should never be allowed to create a situation that's only fun for him. One of the most dangerous sources of antagonism is a character of an opposing alignment or organization whose primary goal is the destruction of another party member. No one really wins in that situation, and it's likely that the distrust carries over to the next time everyone rolls up characters. In this situation, lay out the problem clearly for the antagonist, and be polite but firm in offering to help the player modify his character or create a new one capable of working within the group.

Continuity Expert

Things alter for the worse spontaneously, if they not be altered for the better designedly.

—Francis Bacon

The continuity expert keeps up-to-date with the latest published novels and game supplements. She can cite historical facts buried in small type hundreds of pages into a supplement, and note each diversion from established canon. The moment the new supplement hits the shelves at the local hobby shop, she has devoured its contents and wants to use it in the upcoming game session.

Unless you are yourself a continuity expert, this can be frustrating. You may want to head off any problems at the pass and simply announce that your version of the setting is your own, and not beholden to any other continuity. If you're trying to play closer to canon, however, it's important that your group know what liberties, if any, your campaign plans to take with the source material. Perhaps your game makes significant changes to a setting or moves forward from a snapshot in a setting's history, meaning that certain existing or future supplements might not seamlessly apply to the campaign's version of a world. That doesn't mean you need to ignore all supplements you aren't already familiar with, merely that players should understand that you'll need time to review such information—and that whether or not you incorporate it is solely your decision.

During the course of the game, the continuity expert might note deviations from canon or even continuity established during the course of a campaign. Whether this proves helpful, distracting, or completely irrelevant hinges largely on when such comments are presented. Few things can derail a GM's narrative faster than being constantly contradicted about matters of story. In these cases, it often helps to table the discussion and let the expert know that you'll discuss it after the game, or over e-mail. Above all, never forget that you control your game world, not the continuity expert or a game publisher, and what you say goes.

Like a rules lawyer, a continuity expert can be a great help to a GM. Most prove eager to research elements of a campaign setting and enthusiastically help prepare for upcoming sessions. Canny GMs might find ways to have such a player research multiple useful topics without giving away the intended course of upcoming adventures. During a session, a continuity expert's knowledge can prove exceedingly useful if it has an in-character outlet—encouraging such a player to adopt a knowledgeable class, purchase tomes of relevant lore, or be the group researcher gives her opportunities to exploit and display her knowledge in character and without interrupting the game.

Diva

My life is a lovely story, happy and full of incident.
—Hans Christian Andersen

The diva is the center of attention, the focus of all roleplaying interactions that occur in the campaign world. Every conversation, introduction, and event is another opportunity for her to shine, while the rest of the group struggles to get a word in edgewise. No matter is too small or insignificant for her; she's ready for the spotlight! Unfortunately, the rest of the players are bored to tears.

While having a player totally immersed in and excited about the game is every GM's goal, it should never happen at the cost of other players' enjoyment. The diva can truly shine during her turn and those encounters specifically aimed at engaging her character—but when it's someone else's turn, she needs to learn to hang back and give other players chances to take the stage as well.

In combat, initiative does a good job of keeping the focus moving, but if a character monopolizes NPC interactions, a good counter during heavy roleplaying sessions is to break each conversation up into minute-long spots. You as the GM can then move around the table much like you would during a combat encounter to allow everyone a chance to interact. If the diva interrupts, remind her that this is all occurring at the same time, and that she's busy talking to that other NPC right now. If there's a single NPC and the diva is doing all the talking for the group, have him fixate on someone else or ask for an introduction to her friends.

In the end, if subtlety doesn't work, you might need to be blunt with the diva in order to get the message across that everyone needs a chance to play. A diva can be a strong party leader, but shouldn't be allowed to dominate group decisions. If the other players seem to be merely following along, ask them directly for their characters' thoughts.

The Diva-Loner: This is a particularly dangerous combination, as the diva wants to take the spotlight while doing something on her own. She might charm a young prince into a moonlit walk along the canals, or decide that she wants to go fight crime after the rest of the party goes to sleep. Whatever the rationale, the solution is the same as for the loner player type: it splits the party and creates a new story that needs to take place off-scene.

Off-scene encounters can be discussed before or after a gaming session, over email during the week, or whenever other players aren't waiting. As long as the diva isn't doing something crazy or suicidal, there's no reason to punish her, but neither should you have these solo escapades reveal key plot points or allow yourself to be distracted from the rest of the party.

Entrepreneur

A person is born with a liking for profit.
—Xun Zi

The economic heart of most pseudo-medieval campaigns is their businesses, each creating revenue for the local lord and providing specialty shops, guilds, taverns, and other structures needed by adventurers and the common folk. Players generally fall into one of two molds as entrepreneurs, each of which has an impact on local businesses. The first is the player who seeks to sell everything acquired from the bodies of fallen enemies. The second is the businessman who sees an opportunity and wants to stake his claim.

For both types of entrepreneurs, the GM should follow simple rules to ensure that everyone at the gaming table is having fun. Don't let yourself get locked into rolling on charts for long periods while other players wait, or let the minutiae of the items collected slow down the game. Instead, presume the characters choose the most valuable items—and only the most valuable items—and quickly move the adventure along. While your players might be eager to loot all of the soldiers' short swords, collecting their old boots for sale later is a waste of adventuring time. If a character is big on appraising things, have him roll at the end of each session to ensure that he takes the most valuable possessions with him. Don't slow down the game determining the value of the gilt on a doorframe or the darts in a disabled trap.

Next, determine how much the player can reasonably recover from the dungeon. Calculating the weight and mass of items can be tedious, but saying that everything in a dungeon is bolted down is unrealistic. The game already has rules for encumbrance, but an easier house rule might be that the character can carry one vaguely defined item (the pieces of a disabled trap, the limbs of a destroyed golem, the brasswork off a vampire's coffin) per point of Strength, with accommodations for any magic items like *bags of holding*. This speeds the game along and helps prevent stopping every time the GM describes a shiny bit of room dressing. And don't forget that the character's weapons and armor count toward the total—if the entrepreneur wants that third tapestry, he's going to have to leave his sword behind.

The value of mundane loot is closely tied to the magic level of your campaign, the size of the city the players deliver the goods to, the need for those goods, and the quality and quantity of the goods. Delivering 20 suits of chainmail to a sleepy village likely floods the market and earns a pittance, while that same armor in a town scrambling to arm itself would earn significantly more. As a general rule, try assuming a 10–20% payout where there is a moderate need for the items and then adjust from there.

Flake

They whose guilt within their bosom lies,
imagine every eye beholds their blame.
—Shakespeare

The flake player is one that proves his type over a period of time. He might initially show up on time, fired up and ready to take on the world, but by the fourth game session he's apologizing for not showing up the week before. Suddenly he's showing up every third session, probably late, and looking to pick up where he left off.

Now the GM has a potential conflict. While the flake has been gone, the other players have advanced their characters a few levels and he's behind them with an unresolved subplot. What should you do?

First off, talk privately to the player to determine the reasons he hasn't been showing up. Sometimes life demands that we shift our attention elsewhere, and other players are generally understanding of those situations. Maybe there are interparty conflicts or a particular storyline that's been making the game less appealing. It's all about communication; no player should make other players wait 30 minutes to see if he's going to show up this week. Respecting other people's time goes a long way toward cultivating goodwill.

Since any player can potentially turn into a flake, it's useful to avoid creating adventures that revolve around every player being present. It's fine to assume that a particular character participates in the adventure (run by you, if need be), but hinging everyone's fun on any one character makes it easy to be disappointed.

It's good to have explicit rules for how you want to handle missing players. You might assign a penalty on earned experience if a player misses a game session, while letting him stay fairly close to the rest of the group in terms of advancement even when circumstances conspire to keep him away. This generally balances itself out over time, and everyone ends up fairly close in experience (making it much easier for you to plan encounters).

To be respectful of others, try using e-mail or other electronic means to have players RSVP to the gaming session. This lets everyone know who is showing up. And if something happens at the last minute, players can contact everyone to let the group know.

If a player missing out on sessions truly cripples a group, consider using NPCs to fill the same role. The rest of the party can temporarily adopt or hire these NPCs to make up for missing skills, and the NPC's wages are a small price to pay for a well-timed *fireball* or backstab—especially if they come out of the missing character's share of treasure.

Glass Jaw

The weakness of the enemy makes our strength.
—Cherokee Proverb

Some characters have a weakness that constantly reveals itself or is easily exploited in virtually every encounter. Examples include characters with ultra-low ability scores, those unable defend themselves in combat, characters cursed with the lowest possible number of hit points, and the like.

Many sorts of glass jaws appear during character creation, giving the GM the opportunity to drill down into the player's real motivations before play begins. While it can be fun to occasionally include glass jaw characters as an opportunity to add additional roleplaying elements to the campaign, serious design flaws can handicap the rest of the party's enjoyment, and are best caught early. This is not to say that every character must be optimized to the fullest extent of the rules, but characters with crippling deficiencies—like a wizard unable to cast 2nd-level spells, or a bard with no Perform skill—should be addressed. Find out why that particular player has created the character with such a glaring weakness. For example, if the wizard player wants to play a sickly character for added drama, you could always adjust his Constitution score back into the normal range and instead let him roleplay through a less crippling affliction like a disease or curse.

It's possible that the player isn't looking for a roleplaying opportunity. Depending on the creation method and the player's level of experience, he might just have rolled poorly or not know the rules well enough to make his character viable. If that's the case, working with the player to build the character and re-rolling or using a point-buy system for ability score generation is likely to resolve the situation.

If none of the above suggestions fix the problem, it's best to talk to the player privately and determine what he intends to do with this character. Explain your concerns about what you perceive as the character's glass jaw and the impact it might have on the rest of the group. Together, you and the player should explore creative solutions to help improve everyone's time around the gaming table, modifying the character concept as necessary.

Power Gamers and Glass Jaws: As players finish character generation, level up, or make other choices related to their character's statistics, encourage your players who are skilled at using the rules to offer suggestions to those less adept. While the final choices in such collaborations lie with the player running the character, having someone else point out potential problems or advantages can make the game's sometimes daunting rules and options more manageable.

Loner

He who would do great things should not attempt them all alone.

—Native American Proverb

The loner can be one of the most disruptive forces around the gaming table. She has little regard for group cohesion, and seizes every opportunity to go off alone, heedless of the effect on other players. This might be when the rest of the characters are expecting to rest and recover their spells, during combat in order to explore some dark side tunnel, or any time her interests diverge from the party's.

There are really two issues here. First, what goals does the player have for her character that she doesn't feel can be met as part of the group experience? It may be that she feels bound by the character concept she's created, and needs help figuring out how to make it work within the party structure. Second, is the character's role in the group dynamic essential for the heroes to overcome their obstacles? If she's leaving when other players need her, this presents a serious problem that needs to be addressed.

As the GM, you may want to work with the loner between sessions to help achieve her character's goals. Avoid the temptation to split your attention during the game—giving one player fully half of your game time simply because she wandered off is no fair to the rest of the players. Handle any side adventures that happen away from the group off camera, not when it wastes the whole group's time. And if the loner gets tired of sitting out simply because her character wandered away from the group, perhaps she won't be as likely to wander off again.

You might also use the loner's meanderings to introduce new plot elements. In taking her leave, does the loner stumble into a group of wandering monsters that attack the party? Set off a trap? These effects don't have to be immediate—if your player wants to sneak out of the tavern in the middle of the night, you might quickly gloss over her escapade, but use the opportunity to explain how the orcs were able to locate the group's campsite. The idea isn't to punish a player for her loner tendencies, but rather to create the greatest amount of fun for the greatest number of players.

Of course, you're not the only one likely to be irritated by a loner's galavanting, and regular abandonment of the group eventually causes inter-party strife. Other characters—and players—might become upset and seek to confront the loner's character. This can be a great opportunity for roleplaying, but it risks alienating the loner. Make sure that the loner knows that while running her character in such a manner isn't "wrong," going off alone can have a negative impact of the other players' enjoyment, and that you want to make sure everyone—including her—is getting their needs met.

Lump

As long as you're enthralled by a lifeless form, you're not free.

—Bodhidharma

The lump just takes up space at the gaming table, rolling dice when instructed or performing actions when other players ask him to do something. There's no passion here; the lump is more of an automaton awaiting its next orders. Many times, the lump is a player new to the game or an experienced player outside of his comfort zone.

One of the GM's primary goals is to ensure that everyone is having fun during the game. For most people, lumpish behavior is the definition of boredom, and it's your job to reach out and bring the lump into the campaign for real.

For new players, lack of familiarity with the rules is a frequent source of confusion. Not knowing exactly what to do, they shut down and wait for more experienced players to instruct them. They might be confused about their class role or the ebb and flow of the encounters, worried about wasting their abilities at the wrong time, or simply intimidated by lowder and more experienced players. Aside from considering the advice found on page 65 and reminding new players that they can do anything, let your experienced players know that they need to encourage the new player to spread his wings. If he doesn't know the rules or the campaign setting, let him borrow a book to read up between sessions. Remember that people tend to best learn the rules by playing, though—focus on letting neophytes do things on their own, and at their own speed.

In-Game Advice: If you want to take a more direct approach, the easiest way to get a lump roleplaying is to engage him directly via NPCs or situations that don't allow him to defer to other players. Mouthy NPC assistants and sentient items (especially those that can speak) can also work wonders at getting a lump out of his shell, as giving a PC an in-game source of advice (even faulty advice) can prompt roleplaying opportunities and manipulate the player into thinking about his acts and making his own decisions. Humor also helps many awkward players feel more at ease. Setting a lump up with an even less experienced NPC sidekick can help him feel more confident and capable.

Lump vs. Diva: In many ways, the diva loves the lump player—he allows the diva to take all the limelight for herself while the lump does what he always does. But as the lump slowly emerges from his shell, suddenly there's less time in the sun for the diva. Jumping back and forth between these two player types can be a challenge; focus on fanning the flames of the lump until he becomes comfortable enough with the game that the diva won't be able to shove him back into his shell.

One-Trick Pony

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.

—Aristotle

A player who falls into the one-trick pony type has a preference for playing a particular character or filling a specific role. She might always be the paladin, standing on the front lines and charging evil every time she sees it. Or maybe she's the wizard specialized in evocation who blasts enemies to bits. She has a play style she likes, and she tends to stick with it.

The one-trick pony tends to keep a certain role locked down, preventing other players from experiencing the game from that perspective. Her insistence also has the effect of forcing other players to approach the campaign in a certain way. For example, players can never sneak in to attack the boss by surprise if the paladin always charges forward into every combat.

Of course, there's nothing inherently wrong with indulging a one-trick pony as long as everyone is having fun and you're able to take your campaign to its final destination. But at the same time, you aren't required to maintain the status quo just because that's the way it's always been. When the time comes to shake things up, embrace the change and communicate it to everyone.

One way to address this situation is by announcing the main campaign story before players roll up characters, and requiring everyone to come up with characters that fit into it. If you're running a thieves' guild campaign that requires stealth and trickery, it's fine to disallow certain classes or require select skills.

A second type of one-trick pony is the player who uses a specific tactic against enemies again and again during the campaign. This player has found an effective combo or strategy and uses it whenever possible, to the exclusion of all others. Again, while not technically wrong, this play style can quickly get old, and there are a few ways to address it. Before you do so, however, stop and make sure there's actually a problem. Is the player's strategy boring the other party members? Or are you merely frustrated by its effectiveness? Don't punish players for being good at what they do—instead, try exploring counter strategies, and enlist other players and GMs outside of the game if you need tactical help. If you have recurring villains, it only makes sense that they'd quickly learn to defend against their enemies' greatest weapons, or turn the party's pet tactic around and begin using it against them. There's no strategy for which a defense cannot be devised, and if the one-trick pony complains that the enemy seems unduly prepared, let him know that's the danger of predictability.

Multitask Master

The true art of memory is the art of attention.

—Samuel Johnson

Distractions come into the game room from a variety of sources: phone calls, family, the pizza guy—you name it. Once they start being generated by the gamers themselves, however, you may need to act quickly to keep your game under control and focused. The multitask master is the source of many such distractions around the table, as he e-mails friends from his laptop, sends text messages on his cell phones, and tells this week's joke to those next to him between initiative rounds.

The first thing to do when confronted with multitaskers is to ask yourself why they're doing it. Are your players falling asleep because you're plotting out every possible location that a caltrop could land? Speed things up. Are you spending all your time on a diva's personal subplot, or waiting for a slow player to find the correct damage dice? Move on to the next player. Evenly distributing your attention and keeping the game moving is crucial.

If you don't think you're fostering the distractions, then it's time to talk to the player (or the group at large) and explain your concerns. If you're having to reread encounters or explain to each player what the guy before him did, there's clearly a problem. Part of the problem might stem from unavoidable slowdowns, such as in a group where several players don't know the rules well yet, but there may be something else you can do to keep players' attention during the game. Ask them for ideas.

Unless players are using laptops or cell phones to keep track of their characters, it's fine to ban them from the gaming table. If a player gets a call he must respond to, he should leave the table and take care of it. If he wants to text friends, he should do it away from the table during breaks. Such rules shouldn't feel draconian, but rather emphasize organization and respect for everyone around the table. Some groups even go so far as to specify what is allowed on the table (dice, character sheets, and pencils) instead of targeting what they don't like.

Like most situations, this one is best handled in private at first. If you need to discuss the issue with the group, make sure not to single out a particular player. Instead, focus on the distractions that prevent the game from being fun and come up with a solution the entire group can accept. When possible, it's generally best to start a gaming group with such rules in place than to try and add them later after a problem arises. But distraction is contagious, and the slower the game gets, the more temptation there is for players to multitask.

Power Gamer

Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.

—Abraham Lincoln

The power gamer focuses on maximizing her character's strengths while minimizing her weaknesses. She focuses all her character choices to enable her to be highly effective in certain areas, without being correspondingly weak in others. She knows exactly which combinations work best for her character type, thrives under home rules that haven't been thoroughly balanced, and can easily wreak havoc on a GM who is less experienced with rules, seeks to appease all players, or emphasizes roleplaying over statistics.

The power gamer tends to focus on combat, expertly manipulating the rules to create engines of destruction that few of her companions (or enemies) can match. The standard monsters from various rules supplements stand no chance against her unless they're many levels higher than the rest of the group. While the power gamer likely sees her actions as merely playing the game to the best of her ability, her proficiency makes creating challenging encounters for the entire party very difficult; monsters introduced to challenge the power gamer might well kill the other characters.

In such situations, the first thing to do is to take a look at the rules in question. As a GM, you should reserve the right to vet new rules content from any source before it's allowed into your game, and if some of the power gamer's abilities are based on rules you don't approve of or house rules you hadn't thought through entirely, you can change them at the end of an adventure—provided players impacted by the change are allowed to go back and rebuild their characters.

The most important thing when dealing with a power gamer is avoiding an adversarial relationship. Instead, try to learn from her, filing away her tactics for use by future villains. If a player is so effective in combat that it's ruining your game, take her aside and ask for her assistance. Congratulate her honestly on her prowess—she spent a lot of time devising those strategies—then explain the situation. Maybe she can help your other players maximize their characters—a group of all power gamers is easier to deal with than a mixed batch. If that doesn't work, perhaps she or another player can help you devise effective counter strategies, or maybe she'd enjoy the challenge of playing a character a few levels lower than everyone else. In the end, it's possible she may need to retire or redesign the character, but the more transparency you can have about this process, and the less it feels like punishment, the better. And if the character is only slightly too powerful, or the other players prefer to focus on roleplaying, there are always noncombat encounters to help give other players the chance to shine.

Rules Lawyer

The strictest law often causes the most serious harm.

—Cicero

All players like to know that there are universal rules to level the playing field, but the rules lawyer takes it a step farther. He knows every obscure rule, and insists that each one work exactly as written—especially if it's in his favor.

While of course the rules should work the same for villains as they do the heroes, the GM's challenge is ensuring that the game runs smoothly and everyone has fun. Sometimes it's acceptable for the letter of the law to fade a bit, especially if such sacrifices keep an adventure moving smoothly or to make the game more enjoyable. The following techniques can keep the game on track when confronted with a rules lawyer. If you're constantly being contradicted about rules, consider the following steps.

Establish House Rules: If your house rules differ from the main rules, make sure everyone knows about it. Also, be sure to let your players know that this isn't a sport, and that you reserve the right to bend or break the rules for the sake of the game from time to time, with the understanding that your intention isn't to be unfair, but rather to make things more fun for the group as a whole.

When to Question: As in the case of the continuity expert, let the rules lawyer know when and how it's appropriate to cite the rules. Openly contradicting is counterproductive unless it's a matter of life and death for a character, in which case you should spend a moment to quickly verify key points, but that's it. After the game or between sessions, you can discuss the rules in depth. Alternatively, if you're shaky on a particular rule and it's important to get it right, don't be afraid to ask the rules lawyer for help to keep the game moving. Making an ally of the rules lawyer validates him and likely makes it easier for him to accept when you're forced to overrule him.

Use Maps and Minis: Groups that generalize the locations of their individual characters tend to have more problems with rules lawyers. It's difficult for players to understand the tactical layout of an area without actually seeing the area, and can lead to comments like, "I didn't walk up to that chest; I skirted the edge of the wall." An established grid and physical markers prevent a lot of arguments.

Even if you follow these rules, you may still have trouble with rules lawyers. Not everyone views rules the same way. The important thing is to stand behind your rulings, and when certain things break the rules—for good reason—don't feel like you have to reveal world secrets just because the rules lawer demands answers. GMs work in mysterious ways, and with any luck history will vindicate your choice.

Tagalong

You wish to multiply yourself tenfold, a hundredfold? You seek followers? Seek zeros!
—Friedrich Nietzsche

The tagalong isn't so much a player type as he is a distraction. He might be the significant other of one of the players that shows up each week to spend quality time with his gaming better half. Perhaps he's a player's best friend from high school who is stopping over. Maybe he's even one of the players' children. No matter the relationship, the tagalong is by definition bored by the game and serves as a distraction to the rest of the players. Here's how to prepare for that eventuality.

If the tagalong proves interested in gaming but has never played before, have him observe a game session or take on a minor role, such as the squire, familiar, or assistant of another player, or one of your minor NPCs. If gradually teaching him the game and encouraging this interest works, he may eventually want to create his own character and join the campaign, and chances are good that at least the player who brought him is excited to have him at the table.

If the tagalong has no interest in gaming, even after watching the proceedings for a bit, it's probably best to find some other activity to keep him entertained over the course of the game. If there is a separate room where he can watch TV or read a book, the chances of keeping everyone's attention on the game are much higher. Find out what the tagalong likes to do, and if possible provide him with the resources and equipment he needs to stay entertained. Ultimately, the responsibility for keeping the tagalong happy and distractions to a minimum lies with the player who brought him. Don't be afraid to privately enforce this responsibility.

Children too young to join the game are the most challenging form of tagalongs, as they require both supervision and attention, not to mention a good degree of childproofing for the gaming area. Polite parents should ask the group whether their children are too distracting for gaming, and if it's clear that young children aren't welcome, quietly excuse themselves during the weeks when they can't find a babysitter. But if a group is willing to try—particularly if multiple players have tagalong children—you may be able to play through the distraction caused by children. The important thing is to make sure everyone's on board, as the presence of children can drive some gamers away from the game permanently. Approach this topic respectfully, but be sure to hear from all players before determining the best course of action.

Thespian

I love acting. It is so much more real than life.
—Oscar Wilde

It's hardly surprising that actors would be drawn to roleplaying games. After all, while some roleplayers are interested solely in leveling up and getting cool new abilities, many take it to the next level, establishing dialects, mannerisms, catch phrases, and so on to bring their characters to life. They speak in character all the time, and relish the opportunity to add their drama skills to a social setting.

Make no mistake about it—this is a good thing. As a GM, you're probably already doing many of these things to help set the stage, and having a few thespian player types to play off of can help you make the world that much more vivid.

Yet like the diva, the thespian can easily come to dominate your sessions, especially if your other players are quieter or less interested in the roleplaying side of things. In such cases, the same techniques used to combat the diva apply here, namely switching back and forth between different NPCs and players to ensure that everyone gets equal time. Keep in mind that members of your gaming group likely embrace different depths of roleplaying, and even if they're not hamming it up themselves, some players might take great enjoyment out of watching the thespian roleplay her heart out. As long as everyone's having fun, go with it. (For advice on acting tricks to up your own performance as a GM, see pages 28–33.)

If tangentially related roleplaying encounters begin to dominate a game, however, or certain players seem bored by the clever dialogue, it might be time to rein back on the roleplaying and throw in a few more combat encounters to accommodate everyone's play styles. Because they tend to involve less dice rolling than other types of encounters, social interactions between characters and NPCs can easily happen between games (though it should be noted that email tends to lose a lot of the flair and fun for thespians). Conversely, if some of your players are bored whenever they're not rolling dice, try incorporating more dice rolls into your social interactions. After all, your players put ranks into Bluff, Diplomacy, Sense Motive, and other social skills for a reason, and you shouldn't give away your biggest secrets to the thespian instead of the Diplomacy-heavy bard just because the thespian player likes to do all the talking. As with other metagame questions of personal knowledge versus character knowledge, it's important to remember that a great performance by a player doesn't necessarily indicate the same from his character.



4 Nonplayer Characters



Merisiel glided up silently behind the dark elf. She didn't recognize the priestess's bone regalia, but she didn't need to. They were all the same, down here.

"Do you really believe that?" The voice in Merisiel's head was low, throaty.

Suddenly the bone midden at Merisiel's feet erupted in writhing green tentacles. Merisiel slashed wildly, but even as she swung she could feel stinging barbs piercing her leather armor. Across the pit, the priestess laughed, her right hand twisted into a glowing copy of the tentacular horror.

"Stupid surface dwellers. You're all the same..."

Cast of Characters

While player characters provide the focus and driving force of a game's plot, over the course of even a single adventure dozens or even hundreds of other characters take their entrances and exits, sometimes aiding, sometimes threatening, yet always contributing something to the tale. These are nonplayer characters, the populations of the entire campaign worlds, the monsters and villains of plots crude and nefarious, allies and agents, royals and shopkeeps, and the limitless arsenal of a storyteller's imagination. For every player character with complete statistics and volumes of background there exist countless NPCs, some just as nuanced and well developed as veteran heroes, others two-dimensional and stereotyped, destined to speak but once before fading back into anonymity. Regardless of their role or impact on a campaign, a GM's legion of NPCs enables him to weave the tale he has to tell. Some swiftly become favorites, either of the players or GM, and take on roles bordering on the PCs' significance. Others are challenges to be avoided or overcome, whether reoccurring opponents or ravenous things straight from a bestiary's pages. Still others exist merely to give color and life to a world, commoners and passersby who merely brush against the PCs in their adventures, aiding, hindering, or simply living their lives as natives of a shared fantasy. Whether recurring or transitory, helpful or menacing, NPCs serve as the living descriptions of a campaign world, each eliciting a reaction from the collected players, and each helping to take the tale beyond the realm of one-sided narrative and into the experience of a vibrant, living adventure.

This chapter delves into the world of nonplayer characters: from designing the types of characters a GM might want to include in his story to making even the most peripheral personalities memorable. Beyond such advice and toolboxes of character creation also comes advice on detailing those most important of NPCs: villains. As with many sections in this book, this chapter can serve as a reference and toolbox for GMs during the course of their games, making use of the tables at the end of the chapter either as aids to give unanticipated characters a little extra flair or resources to provide your favorite NPCs the details they need to be truly memorable. In addition, an NPC Sheet is included in the back of this book for you to record the details of the NPCs you create.

Designing NPCs

NPCs are a pivotal element in many Pathfinder adventures, especially those in which the PCs must deal with crucial non-combat situations or act in a civilized area. Like the supporting cast in a movie, NPCs cover a variety of roles with different degrees of importance, from second leads to extras, and the way the GM designs them is open to a wide range of possibilities. Besides being potential opponents, NPCs can be an exciting source of support, information, and intrigue during an adventure. As dramatis personae in their own rights, important NPCs become the mouth and hands of the GM in the game world, allowing him to break from descriptive and rules-based talk in order to speak and act in first person. When acting out NPCs, the GM can roleplay fantasy characters as players do, sometimes putting on dozens of different personas in a single game session. Designing NPCs outside of gaming sessions is a task the GM should dedicate some time to as he creates his stories, although improvisation can be the source of unexpected and excellent ideas. In addition to time and imagination, the creation of NPCs requires good judgment, accuracy, and economy in generating a balanced set of abilities, writing a correct stat block, and giving the right amount of detail. Designing NPCs thus becomes an exercise of creativity, which the GM can cultivate by reading fantasy literature or watching fantasy on the screen.

While there is no right or wrong process for designing NPCs, creating interesting, useful, and memorable characters can be a daunting task. Chapter 14 of the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* addresses the creation of NPCs from a rules standpoint—what one might consider the "science" of NPC creation. As this chapter delves into the "art" of creating NPCs, it's up to the GM to decide for himself—often on a case-by-case basis—the best methods for designing new characters. For villains and other major characters, this often means coming up with a concept and then devising unique statistics to support it. When building more mundane characters, utility and ease of use often take priority, with the GM adding personality to preexisting stats. In either case, the path to creating a valuable NPC begins with determining the character's role in a game.

NPC Roles

The functions performed by a character in a story are a way to define her role, as linear or complex as it may be. A character might constantly perform a single function, which makes for a linear role (like the cruel and unforgiving tyrant who does nothing but harass the heroes), or multiple functions, which makes for a complex role (the official that initially helps the heroes, but at some point turns against them after being bribed). These functions easily apply to prominent NPCs in Pathfinder adventures, and translate into the game as follows.

The Villain: Almost on a par with the hero, the villain is a necessary figure in a story-oriented Pathfinder adventure. More than any other NPC, the villain gives the GM the opportunity to exercise his creativity, thespianism, and deviousness.

In most campaigns, villains are predominantly characters with evil alignments. Since alignment is a required element in the game profile of an NPC, it can be a focus in the creation of the villain herself. Choosing one of the three tones of evil (chaotic, lawful, or neutral) and making a villain distinctive by adhering to that tone instead of just assigning her a generic "bad person" label can be a challenge for the GMs. For a storyteller who values the interpretative and narrative elements of the game, maintaining this ethical aspect can be as important and tricky as consistently keeping up an NPC's accent or mimicking one's low intelligence in strategic situations. Villains need not be merely characters with evil alignments, though. Modern fantasy literature, while deeply influenced by ancient myth, tends to characterize evil in subtler ways. Often bad guys are not ultimately corrupt, destructive, and terrifying evil beings. Eschewing the traditional concept of "pure evil," modern villains often find themselves toned in different shades of gray rather than being a solid black in their nefariousness. A wizard who resorts to forbidden magic to restore a lost loved one, a leader who warmongers in the hopes of reclaiming his people's ancient empire, or a cleric who hunts down non-believers in the name of righteousness—all of these offer basic examples of good ideals turned to evil ends. Of course, the nuances of a villain's character and goals might ultimately prove as varied and rich as those of any PC, giving the GM limitless opportunities to exercise his imagination and deviousness in the crafting of all manner of exciting schemes.

In folktales, the villain is the source of woe in all its forms, and the Old English substantive for "evil" (yfel) was used by the Anglo-Saxons to mean "harm," "crime," "misfortune," or "disease." In keeping with these definitions, a villain's possible functions might vary widely, her modus operandi defining her as much as her personality or goals. In crafting a villainous NPC, the GM might consider what type of game he wants to run and what abilities he needs his villain to possess, considering these variables to shape the antagonist's aspect and attributes. If a villain needs to spy upon the heroes, she probably needs *scrying* magic, stealth, or a scouting minion; if she needs to impersonate a PC or NPC ally, she probably needs to be a transmuter, a shapeshifer, or the employer of a doppelganger; if she needs to provoke an accident, she must be able to curse the PCs, poison their food, bribe their associates, or the like. Behind the entire sequence can lurk a powerful, masterminding villain (often a devil, dragon, or magic-user in folktales), while different functions are assigned to different minions (the sneaky one who spies, the strong one who charges, the cunning one who deceives, and so on). Such elements need not be set in stone at a villain's creation, and might be altered during the course of a campaign, but should help frame a GM's thoughts when deciding what villains he needs for his game.

The Donor: A typical character in folktales, often appearing as a wise and subtly powerful figure, the donor is usually limited in her actions, either because she is old or because she is a mystical or pacifist creature detached from mundane conflicts. Sometimes the heroes encounter the donor by chance, and sometimes the search for a donor is an intentional step in their quest. The donor is called such because she provides the heroes with something of value: special training (a fighting technique, a magic song), information (a hint to a riddle, a secret about a PC's ancestry), or a talisman (a magic item, a helpful creature). The donor is usually good and benevolent, but might exact a high price for her help or put the heroes through a trial to test their mettle. In any case, donors usually keep their distance from the PCs, and the players seldom, if ever, get to know everything about them. A donor is the kind of ally that helps with information, shelter, and

Good to Read, Good to Play

A good RPG session plays like a piece of good fiction reads. Although it may sound a little philosophical, this adage is reasonably accurate. The similitude between gaming and reading is subtle and hints at the importance of a story within the game. While the act of roleplaying might be compared to impromptu theater (in at least the time actively spent playing at the table), the reference to reading recalls the preparation work that precedes it. More than actual play itself, it is the backstage of the game that benefits from the GM being well read and imaginative, since knowing or researching a wide range means being able to summon additional details at the gaming table. Among the things found in books, of course, are interesting models for NPCs. In fantasy, these models come in literally thousands of shapes and sizes, but this variety proves much less substantial than it might look on the surface as most fantasy characters fall within the range of a relatively small number of archetypes. Yet for all the basic similarities of such characters, be they PCs or NPCs, it's the nuances that set them apart. While King Conan and King Arthur occupy much the same role in their respective story cycles, their specifics distinguish them, creating distinct and memorable heroes despite any similarities. GMs become better storytellers by exposing themselves to such characters, whether in fiction, film, history, or any number of other pastimes. Taking inspiration from the works of other storytellers thus proves one of the surest ways a GM might add depth to his own characters and ultimately improve his game.

equipment, not one that accompanies the PCs on their adventures. Used with moderation and cleverness, the donor is the most likely figure to appear when the heroes need to be rescued. In this case, the intervention of the well-known but unpredictable donor (especially if the heroes have some way to summon her help) works much better than an awkward deus ex machina. Powerful, good, and wise monsters—such as gold dragons, angels, or lammasu—are ideal donors, as well as any high-level NPC of a magic-using or knowledgeable class.

The Helper: Helpful and supportive, as the name implies, the helper tags along with the PCs on an adventure, or frequently encounters them during it. Once met, the helper remains a constant presence in the story (as opposed to the donor who is met only rarely or once). The helper can be a magical creature or expert companion that allows the heroes to face a particularly difficult situation or an "NPC object," like a sentient weapon or a genie-summoning device. The helper is usually good, although mercenary helpers or intelligent magic items with annoying twists are common in fantasy stories. A compelled helper is entirely possible (such as the tenant of an efreeti bottle), with no limit to alignment whatsoever. Due to her constant presence at a PC's side, the helper probably needs a more detailed development by the GM than any other allied NPC, especially when she does not belong to the category of "bound creatures," like familiars, animal companions, and special mounts. When the GM introduces a helper, especially one with a rich background and a detailed personality, she is likely to give lots of information about herself to the players, perhaps even her stat block for use in a battle. Whereas the donor remains mostly a mystery, the helper is much like a fellow PC in terms of amount of knowledge gained about her. Helpful, skilled, or magical monsters—usually less powerful than donor-like ones—can be excellent helpers, fey creatures, fragile outsiders, and magical beasts being the some of the more suitable types. Even a weak NPC-class character who possesses a key ability or magic item might be an excellent helper.

The Patron: This NPC directly sends the heroes on their quest or sponsors them somehow. Above all, the patron is interested in his goal and wants to achieve it via the PCs. The patron is usually a notable exponent of some established rule (the archetypical patron in folktales being the king of the land), and an important element of his function is maintaining an honorable deal with the PCs. Patrons usually have goals aimed at improving their own or their community's fortunes and are often generous in their deals with the PCs. When the patron is good, his role can merge with the donor, as he provides something useful for the heroes and supports them with his resources. The patron can also be evil, though, and his role can merge with that of the villain, as he deceives the PCs about his purpose, sends them on a suicide mission, or uses them as scapegoats or *agents provocateur* against their will. A patron does not need particular skills or magic powers, as his power and potential to reward are what really matter. For this reason, the patron function can easily be performed by non-spellcasters and NPC-class types, the aristocrat being the most iconic.

The Victim: This NPC is the direct target of the villain's woe. His role can merge with the helper if he lends a hand to the heroes during the adventure, or with the patron should he possess the ends but not the means to aid himself. Most probably, the victim is good and evokes sympathy from the PCs. Without the need of a donor's wisdom, a helper's skill, or a patron's wealth, the victim can simply be an embodiment of weakness and vulnerability, but he can also share the characteristics of one or more of the aforementioned roles. It is also possible to conceive of a victim as an evil being. For example, an evil witch might be exposed to the threats of a dragon neighbor (a thing that makes her a genuine victim), and put on the traditional disguise of the good old woman to coax the heroes into helping her. In some situations, the NPCs can become victims of the PCs, the most classic case being the prisoner dilemma, where the heroes must decide what to do with captured foes.

NPC Basics

Once a GM knows what role his NPC needs to fulfill, the character's details can begin taking shape. While not every NPC needs to be a unique masterpiece of imagination, every character the PCs interact with—those important enough to have a speaking role—should have at least three core elements: appearance, motivation, and personality. These aspects answer three questions fundamental to every NPC, from shopkeeps to kings: how do they look, what do they do, and how do they do it? How much effort the GM puts into detailing and refining the answers to these questions relates proportionately to the NPC's importance to a story and his time spent interacting with the PCs. As such, an NPC who appears but once probably only deserves a few notes or a moment's improvisation to convey the most basic traits, while a major character benefits from greater details, which might be revealed or evolve as the PCs interact with him. Thus, GM should consider the following character aspects as they design their NPCs.

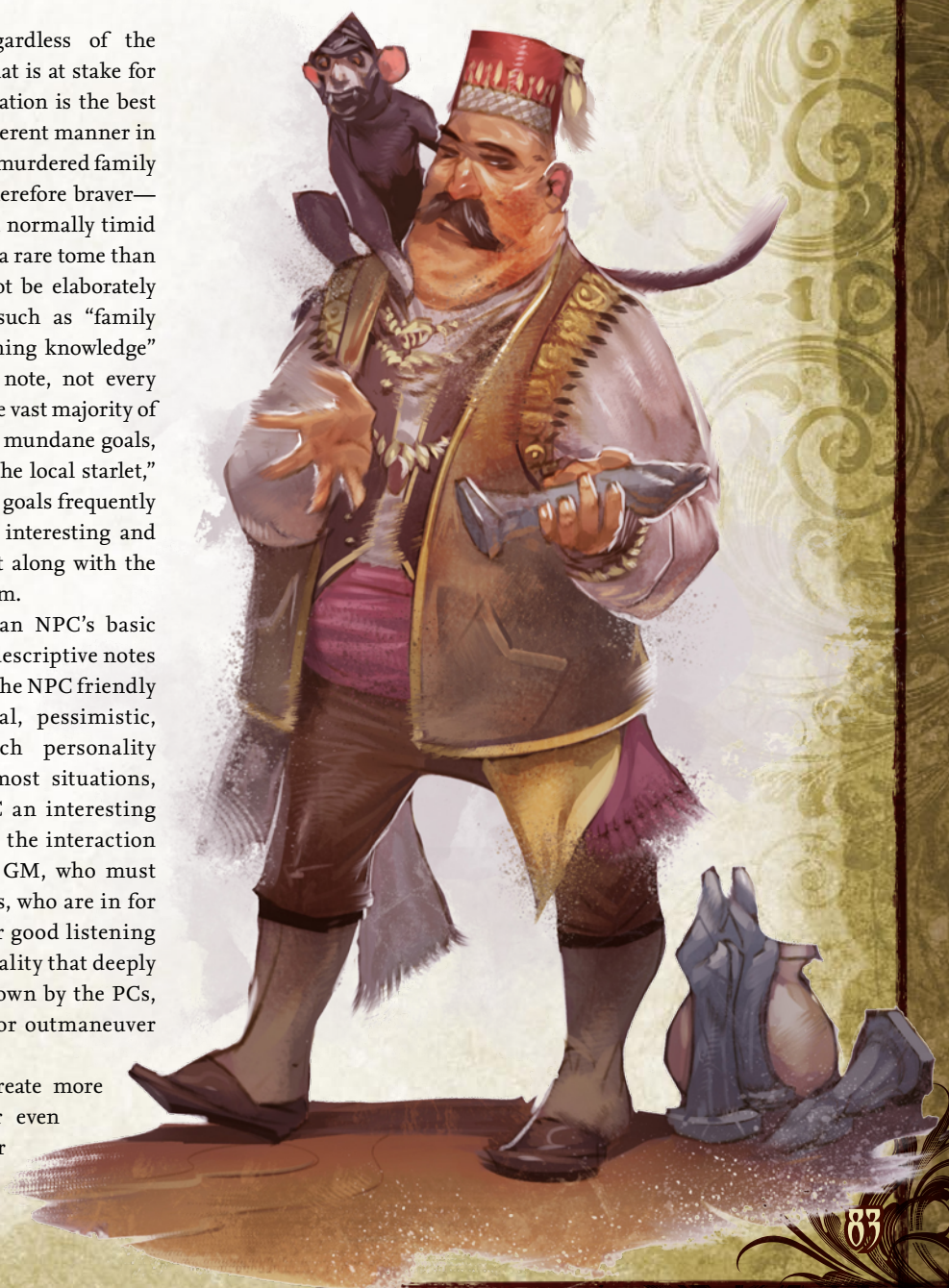
Appearance: Every NPC worth describing has an appearance, something that sets the character apart and distinguishes her from the faceless masses as a unique individual. This might be nothing more than reference to the color of an NPC's hair and noting her age, or it might be a detailed account of her beauty or ugliness. A detailed description can do much to determine whether an NPC is memorable but might also suggest deeper elements. Some of an NPC's physical traits dictate rules aspects (race,

blindness, a limp, and so on), others can be merely cosmetic, and still others might reveal clues in a well-planned plot. For GMs wishing to delve past the superficial, some traits might even prove portentous. In folktales and myths, a typical example is the "mark of the hero," which allows others to know her true identity. Such traits can lead to identification (like Odysseus's leg scar) or provoke some kind of reaction in a monster. In the past, it was a common belief in some cultures that evil people are somehow marked, but also that a hero is born with a distinctive sign on the body or receives it during her initiation or adventures. Fantasy literature features innumerable examples of such traits used as plot devices, and whether meaningful or random, a unique description of an NPC is among the primary elements that help a character standout in the players' minds.

Motivation: With any character, regardless of the storytelling medium, it's vital to know what is at stake for that individual. Knowing an NPC's motivation is the best way to have her behave in a logical and coherent manner in the game. An NPC who is out to avenge her murdered family members will be more motivated—and therefore braver—in situations where that goal is at stake. A normally timid scholar might take greater risks to recover a rare tome than to rescue a princess. Motivations need not be elaborately detailed for most characters; one line such as "family murdered by orcs" or "obsessed with gaining knowledge" proves is often sufficient. By the same note, not every motivation needs to be dramatic either. The vast majority of NPCs met in a campaign likely have quite mundane goals, such as "move to a new town," "romance the local starlet," or "work for weekly pay." While many such goals frequently prove beneath a party's notice, the more interesting and unusual objectives typically come to light along with the extraordinary character who possesses them.

Personality: This element describes an NPC's basic outlook on life, and typically one or two descriptive notes to this purpose are all that are needed. Is the NPC friendly and helpful? Or is he gullible, cynical, pessimistic, sarcastic, lazy, or hot-tempered? Such personality traits govern how the NPC reacts to most situations, commands, or requests. Giving an NPC an interesting and dynamic personality means making the interaction with him more enjoyable, both for the GM, who must impersonate the NPC, and for the players, who are in for a pleasant chat, compelling argument, or good listening experience. An aspect of an NPC's personality that deeply affects his behavior and decisions, if known by the PCs, can be exploited to win his confidence or outmaneuver her, depending on the situation.

In recurring NPCs, the GM might create more elaborate and nuanced personalities, or even change a character's attitude slowly over time—novelists and screenwriters call this character development, and the history of literature and film is filled with works themed solely around events leading to a single change in a character's outlook. Thus, a character who might begin with no more than the note "conniving and ill-tempered" can evolve dramatically with details like "distrustful of elves" and "sympathetic toward youths who remind her of her lost son." How much work a GM puts into detailing an NPC's personality should relate directly to the character's importance to a campaign. Few PCs will care if the local smith aspires to move to the big city if he never has a speaking role, while a major villain with no greater personality than "heartless and hateful" will likely feel two-dimensional after the third or fourth meeting.



Making NPCs Unique

Assuming that the GM decides to give an NPC some depth, he will likely want to make her as memorable and entertaining as possible, and might consider the following points to help raise an NPC above a two-dimensional stereotype.

Alignment: Is the NPC's alignment coherent with her actions? Does her alignment give her any advantages or disadvantages? Alignment should be an effective guideline in defining the behavior and choices of an NPC. Most often, a rigid adherence to a good and evil alignment makes for more memorable characters, but characters whose goals and deeds vary through shades of gray help lend an air of realism to the game world.

Ally: Who is the NPC's best friend? What is her relationship with the NPC and the PCs? Like the PCs, NPCs often have someone at their side to help them. Designing an NPC's cohort, hireling, or bound creature as a special ally with a unique personality and cool abilities can be a way to make her master more interesting.

Background: What happened to the NPC in the past? Does that affect the PCs in the present somehow? Designing a background for an NPC, the GM can give an explanation for her appearance, behavior, and characteristics, and perhaps for class abilities, special powers, or unique features. An NPC's background can merge with that of the adventure itself (especially if the NPC belongs to a long-lived race), making her an interesting source of information or even a living witness to some key event in the past.

Object: Does the NPC possess an object that sets her apart somehow? What is this object like and how does it affect the game? An object such as a magic item can work much like an ally in giving an NPC more flair and weight, and can do it with more subtlety and effectiveness than a living creature. In fantasy, a totally unassuming character can become the protagonist of a story only because she possesses an artifact. Borrowing or acquiring the object from its owner can be a goal of the PCs, of course, and can be done through persuasion, bribery, or combat.

Quirks: A quirk can be anything that sets a particular NPC apart: a fondness for garlic, a distrust of elves, the habit of telling the same story over and over, or even a catchphrase such as "my old gran always used to say..." One or two quirks do a lot to convey personality, but beware, too many and the character becomes cartoon-like and ridiculous.

Secret: Does the NPC have a secret? How can it be revealed and what might be the effects of the revelation? The secret can be knowingly kept by the NPC or something unknown to her. In any case, a twist in a major NPC's background usually entails a twist in the story, and the GM can reveal the NPC's secret not only to add excitement, but actually to change the course of an adventure. A secret can also be seen as a focal point in an NPC's background that might shape the character into more than she initially seemed to be.

Voice: An NPC's voice—accent, tone, and choice of words—is an invaluable tool in conveying personality. Not every GM has the acting talent to present pitch-perfect NPCs by voice alone, but most GMs can surprise themselves—and their players—with a little effort.

Naming NPCs

Creating interesting and authentic-sounding fantasy names is a constant challenge for GMs. Even if monsters and NPC extras can remain anonymous, the slightest amount of non-combat interaction immediately triggers the need for a name. With the flourishing of the fantasy genre, almost all fictional names have been repeated, twisted, and anagrammed ad infinitum, and like NPCs themselves, names constantly run the risk of making a lame impression on the players. The GM should not be excessively afraid to make such mistakes, as lousy names are often an aspect of real life, but he should nonetheless ponder the following possibilities.

Real Names: Sounding familiar and open to variations, real names are often a good place to start. Fantasy literature provides many examples of characters with real-life, common names, although such real-world names are rarely used alone, and are more often coupled with a fictional family name or a title that hints at a character's occupation, aspirations, or qualities.

Cultural Names: If the GM's world, or a region of it, reproduces a historical culture, using names from that culture's language is an obvious choice for local NPCs. If the fantasy culture is analagous to a historical culture from Earth, like ancient Egypt, the GM can research basic information about that culture's language, find out its most common component syllables, and combine them to create new names that sound and feel like the real thing. Countless books and online resources offer lists of names by country or culture, and often include various inspirational meanings. Such names at best feel authentic and at worse fantastical, yet should work either way.

Kennings: Kennings, poetic words that express a metaphor, are a great choice for fantasy names. The GM can combine telling words about a character in a single word and use it alone (such as "Knife-eater") or in connection with a distinctive first name (such as "Nuada Silverhand"). Archaic forms of common words might also be used to create kennings to great effect. GMs should be thoughtful when granting an NPC a name that obviously doesn't suit the character (like a seamstress with the name "Redblade"), as the name might prove comedic or, in some

cases, prophetic. Regardless, such names tend to be all the more memorable for the incongruity.

Invented Names: The GM is, of course, free to throw vowels and consonants in the lottery wheel and see what happens. In this case, the sequence of certain letters and the length of the name can be used to convey a suitable verbal image. Savage creatures might have guttural names, full of hard and grunting sounds, while more elegant beings might use soft, lilting vowel sounds. GMs might go so far as to try to invent names tied to an NPC's race or culture, like the sounds in a mermaid's name being reminiscent of the rush of the surf, or a stone giant's name sounding as though it were full of breaking rocks. In any case, the GM should make sure to say his newly invented name out loud several times with several variations to avoid any laughable mistakes—or obvious rhymes—mid-game.

Stereotypes

One danger a GM might encounter when designing NPCs is to rely too heavily on the stereotypes drawn from well-known characters in fantasy stories. Myths and folktales prove rife with repetition and overly familiar characters, leaving GMs with quite a challenge in coming up with original NPCs. The key is to take the old building blocks and arrange them as differently, imaginatively, and yet as reasonably as possible. If groan-worthy and tired NPC tropes cannot be avoided, they should be worked into something fresh and palatable, or traditionally pleasant. Is it bad for the innkeeper to be an ex-adventurer? Not that bad if we have an innkeeper with an interesting personality or secret. Is it bad for the good king's advisor to be sly and scheming? Not that bad if she turns out to be the clever, if shady, opponent of a greater villain manipulating the throne. As long as his creation is balanced, functional, and believable, the GM should think of originality as a welcome addition rather than a necessity.

Monstrous NPCs

The concept of NPC includes any and all creatures not controlled by a player, although NPCs are commonly associated with a measure of deliberateness and design work, while monsters are more likely drawn whole cloth from the pages of the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* or similar ready-made resource. Any creature has the potential to be an NPC, though. Anything the PCs decide to talk with instead of slay might have a reaction: something to say, views shaped by its culture, and an attitude toward the PCs dependant on its alignment and the PCs' actions. Many monsters are simply NPCs whose purpose is to be an opponent for the PCs, but spells like *charm monster* can change all that very quickly, and so can other actions on the part of the PCs, such as not simply killing everything they encounter. Turning monsters into NPCs creates some great roleplaying opportunities. For example, all orcs and kobolds are not alike—at least in their own opinion—and they have goals of their own beside standing in a dungeon location waiting for PCs to come and kill them.

GMs should remain aware of a creature's setting and believability when considering monstrous NPCs. Although a conversation with a hobgoblin might prove novel in the right circumstance, the surest way to make the local green grocer interesting is not to make him a bugbear, while having the true villain of a campaign be an awakened pigeon can shatter the believably of even the most outlandish fantasy campaign. An unusual race should never be considered a replacement for the work of creating an interesting personality and motivation for a character, and monstrous NPCs should be thought through just as thoroughly as normal NPCs.

Avoiding NPC Overwork

A lovingly crafted, fully realized NPC can take almost as long to create as a player character. While the players only need to create one character each at any time, the GM might need to create several NPCs for each adventure. Here are a few tips for GMs to help avoid NPC burnout.

Efficiency: If an NPC only needs generic "townsperson" stats, there is no need to calculate every skill point for a given NPC or to roll stats for every soul in a village. Some NPCs—such as the anonymous voice at the back of the crowd shouting, "Burn the witch!"—do not need stats at all. Although the rules exist to create every commoner in complete detail, creating full statblocks should be saved for NPCs who really need a significant level of detail.

Go Generic: A selection of generic NPC stats might require work at the start of a campaign, but they will be used again and again. Adjusting a point here and a point there is enough to fit most NPCs for their purpose in a particular adventure. Chapter 9 provides complete statistics for many regularly occurring fantasy NPCs, though highly specialized games might be well served by filling in any expected gaps.

Repurpose: Game stats never go bad. If an adventure calls for specific stats and the GM has access to them from another source—past campaigns, published adventures, this guidebook—repurposing those statistics can save a great deal of effort, and with a few changes, the players will never know they weren't custom-built for the current adventure.

A Word Is Enough: There is no need to create a detailed life story, even for a major recurring NPC. Where backstory is important, a few short notes usually provide everything the GM needs.

Life of an NPC

Once a GM knows what roles he needs NPCs to fill in a game and has a few notes about their specifics, its time to let the NPCs loose in the venue of an actual game. Transforming an NPC from an idea into an actual personality interacting with or facing off against the PCs proves one of the most challenging and rewarding aspects of any roleplaying game, often being one of the surest differences between a mediocre game and an extraordinary one. However, it requires not just a measure of acting talent but also fine judgment on the part of the GM to make an NPC feel like an active individual while avoiding common traps that such characters can present.

Building Connections

In order to help the players see NPCs as actual characters and not just conveniences or cardboard opponents, the GM must work to build relationships. In the real world, people get to know other people through mutual connections or repeated contact. The more contact, the more a connection grows—for better or worse. In the game world, PCs might get to know NPCs the same way.

NPC Friends and Family: Giving player characters NPC dependents and family members is often an unpopular move, as players can readily see them as nothing but a liability. They are sometimes overused to drive adventure plots: the kidnapped sweetheart, the accident-prone brother or cousin, the gambler buddy who is forever needing to be rescued from his creditors, and so on. For players (and therefore PCs) to regard an NPC with any kind of affection, she has to be useful at least as often, and to the same degree, as she is a liability. Otherwise, as in real life, patience becomes exhausted and friends and relatives are disowned.

Many adventurers are rootless wanderers, either far away from home and family or separated from them by war, tragedy, or death. If a PC has relatives in the game, they should to be established right at character generation, as part of the character's backstory and with the involvement of the PC. A barbarian has fellow tribesfolk, a cleric has brothers or sisters in faith from a seminary or novitiate temple, and so on. It's a weak and potentially frustrating move to merely have an NPC appear in a session and claim connection to or entitlement with a PC without the player's consent. When built into a character's story and gradually developed (usually over the course of an entire campaign) to be a useful and interesting addition to a story, such NPCs can swiftly become favorites, worth both running to and protecting when need be.

NPC Contacts and Traders: Often shopkeepers and simple townsfolk get overlooked in a campaign, but even in such seemingly mundane interactions clever GMs can find opportunities to forge connections and have the fates of PCs and NPC intertwine. Such supplementary characters have every bit as much potential to be interesting and useful NPCs as those integral to an adventure. Giving these characters even basic personalities encourages PCs to cultivate contacts with them, potentially building a foundation for a growing business relationship or friendship. Once a sense of value is established, the GM can begin to use such NPCs as means of passing along information, routes into future adventures, or even simple boons (see pages 88–89).

NPC Allies, Followers, and Hirelings: It has been said that the primary duty of a leader is to be a fit person for others to follow, and it is the duty of every PC to nurture good relations with NPCs in their employ or under their command. The attitude of any NPC toward the PCs (both individually and as a group) is something the GM should note and track, and that should be reflected back in the NPC's attitudes and actions. Several options exist for PCs to interact with helpful NPCs and hangers-on. While many such NPCs follow the PCs for payment or their own reasons, when there is a clear chain of command linking the PCs to an NPC, the Leadership feat likely comes into play. These rules should make it easier for PCs to get what they need out of specialized NPCs in terms of service and obedience, but it does not entail carte blanche to mistreat an NPC or routinely put him into unreasonable danger. Eventually a mistreated follower will desert the PCs, or harbor a grudge that leads to sloppy work, vulnerability to overtures by an enemy, or even an attempt on the life of one or more PCs.

Dead Ends

Sometimes the death of an NPC leaves the player characters at a dead end, especially if the NPC dies before passing along some information that is vital to the progress of the adventure. The PCs might kill an NPC they were supposed to interrogate, or an unlucky die roll might claim the NPC's life too soon. This situation is not so much of a nightmare as many GMs might think, and there are many ways to deal with it.

Dying Words: If an NPC has information to give the PCs—and if she regards them as friends and allies—the information can be passed on with the NPC's dying breath. A message like this will be short—probably no more than a half-dozen words—and there will be no opportunity for the PCs to ask questions. "Look behind the altar" or "Beware the third pillar" work well as dying words, but "The leader of the Merchants' Guild is secretly the high priest of an evil cult" does not.

Searching the Body: Searching a dead NPC's body can provide the PCs with a handwritten note or some vital object that might allow them to piece together the information they might otherwise have gained from the living NPC. Again, there is no opportunity to ask questions, and the PCs

will have to make sense of the information for themselves. In the event of death by particularly destructive means, a page or two might be blown clear. The PCs will have to act quickly but might be able to recover some information.

Speak with Dead: If the PCs are able to recover a dead NPC's body, the spell *speak with dead* allows them to ask a number of questions, depending on the caster's level.

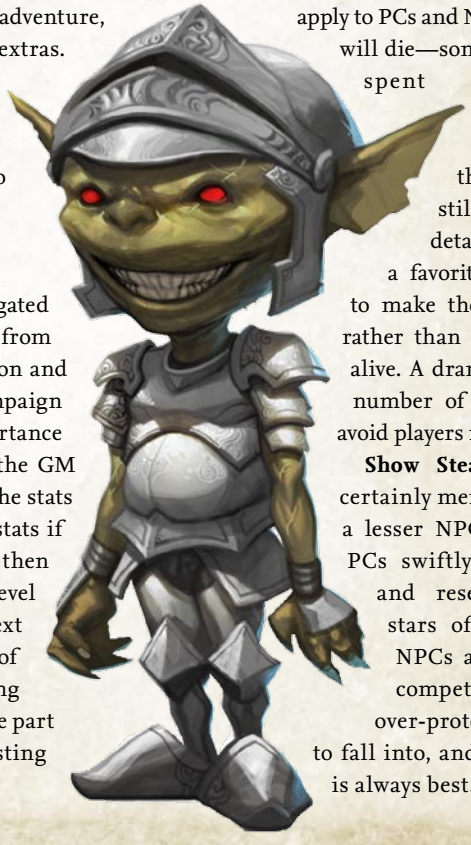
Ghostly Visitations: If all else fails, the PCs might receive a visit from the dead character's ghost, or have a vision in a dream, which conveys about the same amount of information as dying words. Such supernatural messages should be brief and rarely used, lest they lose the feeling of supernatural portentousness.

Who's In Control?

The term "nonplayer character" suggests that NPCs are characters played by the GM, but according to circumstances and GM preference, they might also be played by one or more assistant GMs, or by players whose characters have died in situations where it is not feasible for the party to meet a replacement PC. PCs who gain devotees might also take on the role of playing one of their followers. Who plays which NPCs is ultimately up to the GM, but often making a secondary character a player's responsibility allows the GM to remain focused on the story and keeps him from giving a single character and her retinue an unfair amount of attention. Regardless of who plays an NPC, the important distinction is that PCs play the "starring roles" in a roleplaying adventure, while NPCs are secondary characters and extras. Yet remember that just because NPCs are usually played by the GM, they don't always have to be and can afford new or guest players a unique opportunity to participate in the game.

Beyond Expectations

Occasionally a throwaway NPC, one relegated to a limited role and with few expectations from the GM, comes to life, captures the attention and interest of the PCs, and grows into a campaign regular. If an NPC starts to assume an importance beyond that planned for in her creation, the GM should not be concerned. Continue to use the stats created for the character (or generic NPC stats if necessary) until the gaming session ends, then make it a priority to create the required level of detail for the character before the next session. NPCs that grow organically out of a challenging adventure, an entertaining interaction, or merely player enthusiasm are part of what keeps a campaign vital and interesting for even the most farsighted GM.



NPC Traps

As NPCs make up one of the most pervasive and important parts of any campaign, they also present an opportunity for some of the greatest problems. Where faulty rules can make challenges unbalanced, a misused NPC risks ruining a game's believability or causing player frustration. Therefore, GMs should bear a few common NPC traps in mind.

Competitiveness: Although NPCs are usually played by the GM and some have goals conflicting with the PCs, the GM should not make the mistake of competing with the players. Roleplaying is a collaborative experience, not a competitive one, with an adventure's story being told by the very act of the PCs overcoming challenges. If an NPC impedes this fundamental arrangement, the story doesn't progress and the players might grow frustrated and disinterested. While this doesn't mean the PCs have to win all the time, any failure should be temporary and feel as though it adds to the story or is rooted in the rules of the game, not in the favoritism of the GM for his pet creations. After all, the game ends if the NPCs ever "win."

Over-Protectiveness: While players can (and should) become very attached to their characters, a GM can sometimes become too attached to a particular NPC. The GM might become so invested in such characters that rules are bent or broken and the players' suspension of disbelief is threatened. Nothing is more harmful to a game than accusations—or even suspicions—of GM bias, and groups have even been known to disband over them. The rules apply to PCs and NPCs with equal force, and NPCs will die—sometimes even NPCs that the GM spent a great deal of effort creating or for whom he had greater plans. If an NPC's death leaves the PCs at an impasse, the GM still has a number of options as detailed earlier. If the NPC is simply a favorite, then the GM should strive to make the character's death memorable rather than trying desperately to keep her alive. A dramatic death is preferable to any number of improbable survivals and can avoid players nursing grudges over GM bias.

Show Stealers: While a major villain certainly merits some time in the spotlight, a lesser NPC who regularly upstages the PCs swiftly garners the players' dislike and resentment. The PCs are the stars of the show, so to speak, and NPCs are supporting characters, not competitors for screen time. As with over-protectiveness, this is an easy trap to fall into, and erring on the side of caution is always best.

NPC Boons

Fantasy literature is filled with examples of characters with wondrous powers who have no interest in being heroes or villains. Sages content to watch events unfold as they will, clerics imbued by the gods with special powers, herbalists with knowledge of special concoctions, all have unique abilities and insights that are theirs alone and, should such characters come to favor friendly adventurers, might use their special influence and abilities to turn the course of entire campaigns. To represent the unique skills and powers of individual NPCs and to grant PCs an occasional rules-related benefit for their interaction with the characters of a campaign's setting, the GM might devise boons to have certain important NPCs grant those PCs they come to favor.

In short, a boon is a quantifiable, non-monetary way an NPC might help the PCs. This might take the form of a discount on goods or services, a one-time bonus on a specific skill check, or even a simple magical benefit that only that character can provide. The nature of a boon depends more on an NPC's role in a campaign world than any statistical element. As position in society doesn't necessarily correlate with class levels or specific rules, boons are largely based on a GM's sense of logic and campaign believability. A young prince who is merely a 1st-level aristocrat might thus be able to grant a far more favorable boon—granting a pardon, financing a voyage, decreeing a law—than a baker statted out as an 11th-level commoner.

Boons are not wantonly granted, and PCs should not expect to gain useful aid from every NPC they meet. Only NPCs with an attitude of helpful grant such benefits, and usually even then only to PCs they've come to trust over a significant period of time or those who have done them meaningful personal services. In such relationships, NPCs are more likely to favor an individual than an entire adventuring party, making it possible for only one party member to be granted a boon while less favored members are overlooked. PCs shouldn't expect all NPCs to grant boons; some just might not have anything special to provide or aren't important enough to have much to offer. The success of those who try to extort boons from characters using mind affecting magics is largely up to the GM, as the effects of mundane boons might easily be guessed, while more unique ones might only be known to the NPC. Regardless of the effect, PCs should never have direct control over the granting of boons—PCs never get boons they can grant and cannot force even the closest allies to grant benefits against their will.

What a boon entails varies widely, depending not just on the NPC who provides it, but the tastes of the GM and needs of a campaign. At their heart, boons are intended to be a simple way for GMs to provide PCs with a minor rules-related benefit in reward for developing bonds with NPCs. Boons are never monetary, though they often have a monetary value, and should feel like favors between friends, not something that would change the life of either the characters or NPC. They might occasionally involve established elements of the rules—like a discount on equipment or adding a bonus on a skill check in a specific situation—but such occurrences should prove minor. Boons tend to take three forms: favor boons, skill boons, and magical boons.

Favor: Any character of any class or social level might seek to aid their friends, with favors embodying such benefits. A shopkeeper granting a 10% discount on his goods, a nobleman using his influence to set up a meeting with a local lord, or a retired adventurer loaning someone his masterwork longbow all count as favors.

Skill: Certain NPCs can share their expertise in specific fields or pass their influence on to others. Skill boons are minor bonuses on skill checks that an NPC might pass on to a favored PC. As a guideline, skill bonuses usually grant either a +2 bonus on a skill in a very specific situation—never on all uses of a skill—or a one-time +4 bonus on a specific skill check. For example, a famous merchant might give a character his signet ring, providing a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks made with other merchants in his home city's marketplace; a scholar of a lost city's lore might instruct a PC, granting her a +2 bonus on Knowledge (history) checks made regarding that ruin; or a guardsman might even allow a friendly PC to call in a favor he has with a local pickpocket, granting a one-time +4 bonus on an Intimidate check made against that individual.

Unique: The rarest of all boons, unique boons are special powers an NPC might grant that are exclusive to that character and fall outside the purview of his class's typical abilities. Unique boons are special abilities too minor to be part of a character's class abilities or so specific to a story's details as to require a GM's customization. A ghost who can grant a favored PC the power to see through her evil illusionist husband's illusions; a cleric of the god of light who can grant a blessing that causes an ally's weapons to deal an additional +1 point of damage on all attacks made against the shadowy creatures haunting the nearby catacombs; or an alchemist who can concoct a potion making the drinker immune to brown mold for 24 hours, all might be example of unique boons. As such boons have the most flexibility and the widest potential for exploitation, GMs should limit unique boons to be useful only once or to prove relevant for but a single adventure.

What follows is a list of boons that might be offered by members of each of the NPC classes in the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*. As it would be impossible to cover all

the possibilities of NPC situations and potential boons, the rest of this section should be considered a guide to creating your own boons or a shopping list from which you might choose boons to add to NPCs in a campaign. GMs looking for more specific examples should see Chapter 9, as each NPC therein includes an example boon that might be granted by such a character. Although the boons listed here detail some granted by characters with specific NPC classes, any NPC of any class can grant a boon.

Adept

While users of divine magic are often regarded simply as healers, their wisdom and vaunted positions mean they can have much more to offer.

Favor: Free healing on a single occasion.

Favor: Letter of recommendation to lower-ranking priests, ordering them to help the PCs as required (granting the aid of a 1st-level adept hireling for 3 days).

Skill: Favorable introductions to contacts in a local church, providing a PC a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks made to influence members of that specific church.

Skill: Proves especially knowledgeable in mysterious alchemical techniques, granting a PC a +4 bonus on one Craft (alchemy) check made to create an alchemical item.

Unique: Can brew 4 unique potions that instantly heal the disease filth fever.

Unique: Allows the PC to commune with the spirit animal of his tribe, granting the PC the ability to *speak with animals* of a specific regional species once per day.

Aristocrat

Aristocrats vary in rank from village squires to emperors, with most having wealth and position that grants them great influence in a community.

Favor: Provides and invitation to an aristocratic event, such as a estate party, royal gala, or public celebration.

Favor: Use of influence to save the PCs from prosecution for a crime.

Skill: Offering a day-long primer on local courtesy, granting the PC a +2 bonus on a Knowledge (nobility) check for the city or region.

Skill: Attends a character on his visit to the royal court, granting the PC a +4 Sense Motive check on interactions with the court's members during that outing.

Unique: Loans a ship and provides a crew for a voyage to a distant land.

Unique: Grants a PC a minor, landless title that affords him access to certain local rights.

Commoner

Although not usual famous or wealthy, commoners have a wide variety of skills and can usually come up with creative ways to repay favors.

Favor: Provides room and prepares an elaborate feast in a PC honor.

Favor: Provides a 50% discount on a high quality, non-magical item made using one of his Craft skills.

Skill: Freely uses his highest Craft or Profession skill for the PC for a month of service (perhaps crewing a vehicle or ship, tending to a rare plant, or training an animal) .

Skill: Shares rural remedies, granting the PC a +2 bonus when using Heal to treat diseases.

Unique: Creates a map or leads a PC through the local wilderness to a secret location only he knows about.

Unique: Competently manages a home or business for an absentee PC.

Expert

Skilled craftsmen, professionals, and learned members of society regularly have a wide range of specific talents and obscure information that can prove useful to PCs.

Favor: Provides material for a PC, cutting the price to create a non-magical item in half.

Favor: Can find a seller to buy any non-magic item or a buyer for any magic item.

Skill: Grants access to an exceptionally well outfitted workspace, granting a PC a +4 bonus on a specific Craft or Profession check.

Skill: Teaches a PC a trick of the trade, granting a perpetual +1 bonus on one Craft or Profession check that the PC and expert share.

Unique: Obtains membership in a regional guild, providing a PC with a 10% discount on a certain kind of goods in a wide region.

Unique: Can create a special tool that opens an ancient lock, circumvents an impassible trap, or replaces a part of a fabulous broken mechanism.

Warrior

Professional warriors typically have a wide range of experience and useful contacts among other career combatants, those they serve, and those they oppose.

Favor: Gifts a PC one non-magical weapon, piece of armor, or adventuring gear.

Favor: Can guard a precious object or hide it where none will find it.

Skill: Relates his experience patrolling the local sewers, granting a PC a +2 bonus on Knowledge (dungeoneering) checks in the city sewers.

Skill: Provides information with which to blackmail a local criminal, granting a PC a +4 bonus on Intimidate checks against local street thugs.

Unique: Can form a posse, bringing together a group of 2d4 low-level warriors to aid in one specific plan.

Unique: Grants the secret of a specialized fighting style, providing a PC with a +1 bonus on initiative.

Villains

A good villain has to be more than just an evil, high-level NPC or monster at the end of a dungeon bash. While the basics of NPC creation covered earlier in this chapter offer advice in developing NPC personalities, no NPC deserves more careful and detailed development than a major villain. To be memorable, a villain has to have a personality, a powerful and believable hold over her minions, and an evil plan that threatens an area significant to the PCs—a settlement, country, continent, or even the world. Villains are arguably the most important type of NPCs—as, after the PCs, they likely receive the most time "on screen"—and the GM should detail them as thoroughly as possible, with complete statistics and full descriptions and understanding of their appearances, personalities, motivations, and every other feature that makes them unique, as all of these elements will likely come up in one way or another as a plot unfolds.

Not every local thug or monster chieftain needs to be a fully realized villain, though. While the PCs will likely face and defeat numerous opponents over the course of a campaign, only the most significant ones or those the GM plans to return to time and time again need to be fleshed out into extensively detailed characters. A villain's character often proves important to the type of campaign being run and the threats therein—brutal villains typically have brutal means, while more cunning opponents tend toward more subtle plots. In many ways, an adventure is embodied by its main villain or villains, and GMs should take the time to prepare accordingly. GMs hoping to run effective and memorable villains in their campaigns should consider some of the following advice.

Villainous Archetypes

A strong concept is the first step in designing a memorable villain. Several of the most basic villainous archetypes are presented here, and with a bit of imagination a GM might create countless permutations of such characters.

Crime Lord

Crime lords are usually rogues or multiclassed characters with their highest level in the rogue class. A crime lord sits at the heart of a shadowy web, taking a cut from all illegal activity within his domain and dispensing rough justice to those who transgress whatever rules she imposes. They usually operate in cities. Crime lords are typically lawful evil or neutral evil, and can be of any race.

Personality: Most crime lords see themselves as entrepreneurs whose business does not happen to be legal. They are pragmatic and ruthless, but not necessarily evil or unreasonable.

Followers: Crime lords rule mainly over rogues, and may affect a title like "Master of the Guild" or "King of Thieves." Their inner circles almost always include a few warrior types as muscle and at least one assassin. They usually rule their followers by fear, making grisly examples of anyone who crosses them.

Plans: Most crime lords do not have grand plans beyond holding and expanding their turf and maintaining a decadent lifestyle. Occasionally, a crime lord might attack the local authorities—often in response to an official crackdown on the bribery and corruption that keeps eyes looking the other way. A successful crime lord may eventually take on the role of an evil overlord or create an anarchic "city of thieves" where almost anything goes.

Evil Overlord

The evil overlord is a powerful ruler, often of a martial class, who has established control over an area in the campaign world. She rules with an iron fist, taxing the locals to death and exacting harsh penalties for the most trivial of crimes. Evil overlords can be of almost any race, and tend toward lawful evil alignment.

Personality: "Might makes right" is the evil overlord's motto. The peasants suffer because they are weak, and the overlord's minions live well because they are strong enough to take from the weak. The evil overlord is the strongest of all, and rules by right of that strength.

Followers: The evil overlord's followers are ruled by strength or fear. Those who rebel or fail are made into gruesome examples. Higher-level followers are kept suspicious and resentful of each other so they do not think of joining forces against their mistress. Instead, each one vies for favor while scheming to bring down the others. Most of an evil overlord's followers are fighters or warriors. She probably also has one or two special retainers: a torturer or executioner who carries out the overlord's brutal justice, a wizard or cleric who uses magic and spies to ensure the rank and file are kept obedient, a pet monster, or perhaps a champion—strong but very loyal (and perhaps also very stupid). High-level fighters make good champions, but so do combat-oriented monstrous races like ogres and trolls.

Plans: A typical evil overlord values wealth and power more than anything else, and most of her plans revolve around trying to acquire more of both. Short-term objectives might include finding or taking powerful magical weapons and other items, killing neighboring rulers and taking their lands, robbing temples and other sources of wealth, and executing anyone who objects. Longer-term objectives typically involve conquest: from the local area to the entire world. Any ruler or other character who is more powerful than the overlord is seen



as a threat and must be killed or brought under control until he can be dealt with once and for all.

Evil Priest

An evil priest is typically a cleric or adept, although he may have some levels in other classes in keeping with the interests of his patron deity. Evil priests can be of any race or evil alignment. They can operate in one of three basic ways, according to their personality and the status of their religion: a tyrant who rules an area and burns anyone who objects as a heretic, a vizier who manipulates political power and acts as the power behind the throne, or a cultist who commands a subversive congregation from the shadows.

Personality: Not all evil priests are religious fanatics. Some are simply ambitious and unscrupulous. Others may be sadists, megalomaniacs, or psychotics. Just as evil overlords justify their actions by strength, evil priests always have some religious rationale, which might make sense only to them.

Followers: The followers of an evil priest include lower-level clerics, guards, and others of all classes who might be fanatically devoted or simply frightened into obedience. New followers are often recruited with promises of power, wealth, or pleasure, according to the nature of the priest's deity. Special followers might include an inner circle of acolytes, creatures from other planes, and undead. If the priest is the power behind a throne, he might also have a network of spies, assassins, even an army at his command.

Plans: A tyrant might plan to spread the faith by conquest, with increased wealth and power as pleasant side effects. A vizier could scheme to gain and keep political power, and then set the country on the path to war and the conquest of infidel lands. A cultist might want to destroy all of a region's forms of authority so his cult can take power or—especially in the case of chaotic cults—summon their patron to wreak havoc and destruction.

Mad Wizard

The mad wizard (or any other magic user) offers a useful villain archetype for dungeon adventures, as few question that insane geniuses build elaborate underground

lairs stocked with monsters and traps. Some powerful wizards use their magic overtly, setting themselves up as petty rulers, while others work more subtly, lurking in the shadows as advisors to powerful individuals. Mad wizards might be of any race or alignment, but are seldom good.

Personality: A mad wizard's insanity or obsession has a significant role in determining his plots. Megalomaniacs want power (all the way up to divine power), paranoids want to eliminate everything they see as a threat, whereas the slighted want revenge for some real or imagined injury. A host of phobias and obsessions can also add color or themes to the means by which they pursue their objectives.

Followers: Those who follow mad wizards either share the wizard's obsession or are terrified of what might happen to them if they do not obey. In addition to lesser spellcasters, mad wizards may employ warrior types as guards and commoner types as servants. Perhaps more than any other kind of villain, mad wizards are prone to collecting monsters, often trusting them more than their humanoid minions.

Plans: A mad wizard's plans are often grandiose. Taking over a kingdom is just the first step in taking over the world, and then the universe. Dealing with demons might be part of a larger scheme to bring down a demon lord and establish the wizard as overlord of an infernal realm. Mad wizards dream big, and dismiss accusations—and even undeniable proof—of their twisted minds.

Scheming Noble

A scheming noble is an ideal villain for a campaign highlighting political action. This type of villain is normally an aristocrat, though typically multiclassed to provide a greater challenge. Scheming nobles are usually lawful and of the same race as the regional sovereign and other nobility.

Personality: Nobles are raised on intrigue, decadence, and manipulation. Outwardly, they might affect the personality of a loyal retainer or of boon companions who have a ruler's ear. Beneath the facade, they scheme for ways to advance themselves and eliminate rivals.

Followers: Scheming nobles are often attended by a number of paid servants, guards, even assassins. Ultimately, if someone sells a service, they might be on the noble's payroll. Some followers might motivated by actual loyalty or personal ambitions, but most are well compensated both for their service and for their silence.

Plans: These villains envy what others possess. Less ambitious schemes might include engineering scandals and planting evidence to bring down rivals, while grander plans might include ruling the kingdom, either by stealing the throne or by turning the sovereign into a puppet.

Advanced Villainy

Some GMs might seek challenges and variety beyond what mere archetypes can offer. While sometimes this merely means using villains in different ways, it could also mean drawing upon the hundreds of different races and rules elements that the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game affords creative GMs. Noted here are a few suggestions to keep a campaign's villains both despicable and unpredictable.

Recurring Villains: Only the very greatest villains should be able to come back from defeat, and this should happen very rarely. Otherwise the players might develop a feeling of futility, along with suspicions about the GM's impartiality—which can severely disrupt a campaign. The notes on the "pet NPC" from earlier in this chapter apply with particular force to major villains.

In order for a comeback to be possible, the villain must have escaped in such a way that the players do not feel cheated. There are some exceptions to this, but they are few: the villain might come back in undead form, for example, or in a resurrected but still somehow damaged body. In most cases, however, if the PCs killed the villain fair and square, she should remain dead—end of story.

A villain should never come back from death more than once. If the players start to feel that nothing their characters do can put an end to the villain, frustration and suspicions of cheating grow. The reappearance of a defeated challenge should be greeted with shock and surprise, not with knowing groans.

Stacking Villains: An alternative to villains coming back to life is to stack them, one behind the other. For example, a psychotic killer might be a religious fanatic under the partial influence of an anti-paladin, who in turn is the protégé of an evil priest intent on starting a holy war. The killer is removing members of a noble house to bring it down and create a power vacuum that could lead to civil war. The anti-paladin plans to take advantage of the chaos to attack one barony after another rather than facing a united realm. This is a limited example, but enough to demonstrate the principle that defeating one evil only sets the PCs on the path of a greater threat. This is much more intriguing to most players than a villain who is resurrected again and again.

Monstrous Villains: Villains are not necessarily humanoid, and everything in this chapter applies equally to villains of all races and species. Some races lend themselves better to providing particular types of villains—an orc makes a good evil overlord, for example, although some imagination is needed to make such a creature into a scheming noble—but playing against type can be very rewarding. The main thing to keep in mind is intelligence. A villain, almost by definition, is an

evil creature with a plan, and if a creature does not have the intelligence to formulate an evil plan, it cannot be a convincing villain.

Nonliving Villains: What if an intelligent sword dominated a dim (but very strong) owner and became the brains of the operation? What if a cursed helm or some other item changed a character's alignment and turned him into a villain? A villain that is not a living creature can provide some surprises and plot twists that will keep the PCs very busy—especially if one of them slays the supposed villain, loots the intelligent sword, and instantly falls under the weapon's thrall.

Playing Villains

The time and effort that goes into the creation of a major villain is wasted if the villain does not get enough time with the player characters. Every GM knows the frustration of spending hours crafting a great villain, only to have him cut down in a few rounds with scarcely a word exchanged. Every villain deserves a moment to defy or mock the PC, and there are a number of ways to arrange this without fudging dice rolls or railroading the players.

Hands-On Management

As every villain knows, minions cannot be trusted. Some are disloyal, many are incompetent, and the rest are too lazy to do a good job. This gives the PCs a chance to see the villain before the final showdown and become familiar with his personality. The villain can be present while the PCs are chewing through lower-level minions—shouting orders and threats, casting spells and other long-range attacks, taunting the PCs, and escaping before they can get within reach. Depending on the layout of a particular area, the villain can be standing at the back of the troops (and cutting down any who try to flee), looking down on the action from a balcony with a bodyguard or two, and so on. No matter the circumstances, the villain will always have an escape route planned, and a fine sense of timing about when to use it.

Secret Villains

Spells like *detect evil* are the bane of any villain whose identity needs to be a surprise. There are spells and magic items that can conceal a character's alignment and even make an evil character appear to be good, but the greatest defense is a crowd. At a royal court, for example, there should be a cross-section of people, many of them neutral. Inevitably, though, some will be evil or chaotic. Are the PCs going to scan the alignment of everyone in the castle, or the city? What will they do about those who read as chaotic or evil? If the villain keeps his head down, it could take the PCs forever to work through the list of suspects—time which the true villain can use to great advantage.

The Villain's Escape Kit

Sometimes a villain needs to appear and then get away. With all the versatility and options at the hands of a capable party of adventurers, this can prove quite difficult for the villain and dangerous to the plot should she get trapped. At the same time, PCs should never feel incapable of opposing the villain or suspect the GM of unfairly favoring the antagonist. If it's important that a villain escape, consider some of the following spells when planning her contingencies.

Airborne Escape: *Air walk, elemental body, feather fall, gaseous form, levitate, overland flight, spider climb, wind walk*

Barriers: *Acid fog, animate plants, antilife shell, blade barrier, black tentacles, cloudkill, entangle, fog cloud, incendiary cloud, interposing hand, magic circle, minor creation, obscuring mist, plant growth, prismatic wall, spike growth, spike stones, solid fog, stinking cloud, storm of vengeance, wall, web, wind wall*

Hindrances: *Dimensional lock, hold person, hold portal, hypnotic pattern, power word blind*

Instant Egress: *Blink, dimension door, ethereal jaunt, etherealness, phase door, teleport, transport via plants, tree stride, word of recall*

Illusory Escape: *Hallucinatory terrain, illusory wall, invisibility, minor image, mirror image, mislead, persistent image, programmed image, project image, silent image, simulacrum*

Rapid Retreat: *Expeditious retreat, haste, longstrider, mount, phantom steed, time stop*

The Disembodied Voice

Spellcasting villains can use magical means to taunt and provoke the PCs without exposing themselves to any danger. *Scrying* and *clairvoyance* spells allow the villain to keep an eye on the PCs and adjust the minions' tactics accordingly, while *magic mouth*, *whispering wind*, and similar spells let the villain give orders and issue taunts. Various illusion spells allow the villain to appear before the PCs without any risk.

A Bolt-Hole

Every good villain has an escape route prepared for use if the final showdown goes in the PCs' favor. Only fools, fanatics, and psychotics ever fight to the death—most others will try to escape as soon as it becomes apparent they cannot win. There are plenty of spells and magic items that a villain can use to escape and live to fight another day. The sidebar lists some of the spells, and with a little imagination it is possible to come up with more. The keys are planning (some spells will need to be cast in advance) and keeping a close eye on casting times and saving throws. A low-level spell with no saving throw can often be more useful than a higher-level spell that does have a saving throw.

NPC Creator's Toolbox

The following pages present hundreds of options to help inspire or randomly generate interesting and nuanced nonplayer characters of all types, from simple townsfolk to stern guardsmen to notorious archvillains. GMs might use these one or more of these tables to create interesting and realistic NPCs on the fly during a game or when looking for more ideas to flesh out a campaign's major characters.

Table 4-1: NPC Backgrounds

d%	Background
1–3	Military veteran
4–6	Reformed criminal
7–9	Comes from a long line of tanners
10–12	Once owned an inn that was burnt down by bandits
13–15	Former alchemy lab assistant
16–18	Disgraced noble
19–21	Fought on losing side of civil war/revolution
22–24	Former prostitute
25–27	Refugee from land overrun by evil
28–30	Pious member of a notorious family
31–33	Ran away from a duel
34–36	Left at the altar
37–39	Criminal who retired after betraying rest of gang
40–42	Orphaned
43–45	Recovering addict
46–48	Childhood playmate of somebody important
49–51	Killed someone in self-defense
52–54	Escaped slave
55–56	Falsely convicted and then escaped from jail
57–58	Former indentured servant
59–60	Ran away as a youth and joined the circus
61–62	Abandoned spouse and children
63–64	Former sickly child who overcompensates as an adult
65–66	Failed priest
67–68	Failed merchant
69–70	Passed a guild test but too disillusioned to practice
71–72	Outwitted powerful monster
73–74	Practiced magic before a traumatizing accident
75–76	Died but came back through magic
77–78	Lost a magic item with potent abilities
79–80	Ran for office and suffered a humiliating defeat
81–82	Inadvertently saved the life of a future villain
83–84	Lost a spouse or child
85–86	Used to have to beg for food
87–88	Former artist suffering from a creative block
89–90	Raised by members of a different race
91–92	Former witch hunter
93–94	Pledged to keep a fantastic secret
95–96	Wanted for serious crime
97–98	Oppressed for race, sexuality, religion, etc.
99–100	Monster reincarnated as a human

Table 4-2: NPC Goals

d%	Goal
1–2	Get a good night's sleep
3–4	Sire a child
5–6	Prove noble heritage
7–8	Visit the next village
9–10	Solve a mystery no one else really cares about
11–12	Earn enough money to retire
13–14	Climb a mountain
15–16	Get a different, and better, reputation
17–18	Make friends with the PCs
19–20	Erase past failures with a single dramatic act
21–22	Move out of parents' house
23–24	Get in better shape and learn to fight
25–26	See the ocean
27–28	See a particular holy text, fresco, or building
29–30	Find a new home for a mistreated animal
31–32	Get into the history books
33–34	Return home despite obstacles
35–36	Overcome a significant personal vice
37–38	Get proof that the afterlife exists before dying
39–40	Travel
41–42	Get married
43–44	Humiliate a rival
45–46	Find a missing child
47–48	Learn to gamble
49–50	Carry on a family tradition, like enlisting in the army
51–52	Go on a pilgrimage
53–54	Marry a childhood sweetheart
55–56	Commit a holy text to memory
57–58	Complete some sort of creative work (write a play, carve a statue, etc.)
59–60	Find a better job
61–62	Avoid bankruptcy
63–64	Impress a disapproving parent
65–66	Impress a love interest
67–68	Achieve a higher social rank
69–70	Start own business
71–72	Help child get a good start in life
73–74	Become the recipient of an actual miracle
75–76	Redeem family name
77–78	Hunt and kill a particular sort of monster
79–80	Continue to live in family estate despite danger
81–82	Solve a murder
83–84	Cross an ocean
85–86	Discover the meaning of life
87–88	See an angel
89–90	Murder someone
91–92	Get cured of a disease or other affliction
93–94	Become a monster
95–96	Become a hero
97–98	Marry a prince/princess
99–100	Rule a country

Table 4-3: NPC Physical Characteristics

d%	Characteristic	d%	Characteristic	d%	Characteristic	d%	Characteristic
1	Warts	26	Sweats a lot	52	Laughs nervously	78	Moustache
2	Bad breath	27	Giggles	53	Lisps	79	Beard
3	Big nose	28	Hobbles	54	Limps	80	Stubbly
4	Long fingers	29	Jolly looking	55	One eye	81	Obscenely fat
5	Stubby fingers	30	Cracks knuckles	56	Missing a finger	82	Strangely tall
6	Boils	31	Whistles when talking	57	Scarred face	83	Unusually short
7	Very clean	32	Cross-eyed	58	Picks teeth nervously	84	Double-chinned
8	Very white teeth	33	Harelipped	59	No teeth	85	Thin-lipped
9	Dazzling eyes	34	Rotten teeth	60	No fingers on one hand	86	Very hairy
10	Sweet smile	35	Generally filthy	61	Bald	87	Eyebrows meet
11	Beautiful curves/muscles	36	Tattoo	62	Comb-over bald patch	88	Wide mouthed
12	Dirty nails	37	Many tattoos	63	Shaved head	89	Missing a hand
13	Dirty hands	38	Covered in tattoos	64	Curly hair	90	Club-footed
14	Calloused hands	39	One pierced ear	65	Long hair	91	Missing a leg
15	Eye patch	40	Pierced ears	66	Short hair	92	Missing an arm
16	Glass eye	41	Pierced nose	67	Blonde hair	93	Horrible facial scars
17	Glasses	42	Pierced lip	68	Black hair	94	Clawed hands
18	Enormous sideburns	43	Tribal scar on forearm	69	Red hair	95	Webbed hands
19	Yellow teeth	44	Winks a lot	70	Gray hair	96	Scarred from pox
20	Scratches a lot	45	Hacking cough	71	Big ears	97	Terrible facial disease
21	Sneezes a lot	46	Spits	72	Fat	98	Covered in cysts
22	Compulsive blinking	47	Dreadlocks	73	Tall	99	Covered in pustules
23	Bites nails	48	Different colored eyes	74	Thin	100	Major deformity
24	Obviously dyed/unnaturally colored hair	49	Missing teeth	75	Short		
		50	Scarred	76	Homely		
25	Avoids making eye contact	51	Twitches	77	Handsome/beautiful		

Table 4-4: NPC Personality Characteristics

d%	Characteristic
1	Always agrees (but changes mind just as easily)
2	Asks how much everything costs
3	Likes to act mysteriously
4	Makes snap judgments about people or situations and tries to diminish any later evidence contradicting that first impression
5	Makes token bets about minor things
6	When talking to someone says that person's name a lot
7	Haggles over everything
8	Brings own food and drink
9	Says everything in a profound way
10	Know-it-all
11	Polite, but calls attention to it with elaborate bows or other gestures
12	Constantly apologizes as a verbal tic
13	Makes lots of threats but swiftly backs down if challenged
14	Very mellow; advises people to take a philosophical approach to both success and failure
15	Says as little as possible
16	Snickers or laughs at the misfortune of others
17	Gives people nicknames or uses terms of endearment
18	Prays a lot
19	Gives people treats (cookies, candy, etc.)
20	Often appears surprised and slightly offended when spoken to
21	Tosses a coin to make decisions
22	Has a list of numbered rules or maxims covering different situations and quotes them when appropriate
23	Tells people the "real" reason they do things
24	Asks for advice or opinions about very unlikely situations
25	Speaks with great formality; never uses contractions and employs bigger words than necessary
26	Easily distracted by minor events in the area
27	Usually needs someone to explain a joke or metaphor
28	Has a particular core belief, potentially a rather odd one, and steadfastly looks at everything through the lens of that opinion
29	Likes to count things and have fun with numbers
30	Always tries to find a compromise
31	Always eating
32	Very bad liar
33	Asks rude questions without realizing they cause offense

34	Grumbles and complains about the difficulties involved in any requested activities
35	Very sensitive to criticism or conflict
36	Absent-minded
37	Blames trolls for every trouble he encounters
38	Intellectual bully
39	Makes allusions to events from history or mythology without bothering to explain them
40	Doesn't kill insects or other pests, gently moves them out of the way instead
41	Sniffs or tastes things
42	Makes lists and checks things off
43	Cannot keep a secret
44	Seems slightly surprised whenever anyone else has a good idea or does something productive
45	Easily moved to tears
46	Easily angered
47	Terrified of disease and sick people
48	Has a stock phrase and an accompanying gesture
49	Habitually mumbles a word that rhymes with the final word other people speak before they pause
50	Delighted by puns and other sorts of word games
51	Makes animal noises when feeling threatened or excited
52	A connoisseur of fine food and drink who insists on lecturing about it
53	Very superstitious; insists on carrying out elaborate practices to attract good luck and avoid bad
54	Never turns down a dare or challenge
55	Never uses one word when ten will do
56	Propositions any even remotely attractive person encountered but makes panicked excuses should someone accept the offer
57	Always has a reason why something won't work
58	Careless about possessions, spends lots of time searching for overlooked nearby objects
59	Tells boring stories about children or other beloved young people
60	Constantly suggesting ways to make activities more "fun" and "exciting"
61	Collects small, relatively worthless objects like spoons, salt shakers, or wine corks; enthusiastically inspects any encountered and extols their "unique" qualities
62	Dotes on an obnoxious pet
63	Ignores a loyal pet
64	Self-loathing to an almost violent degree
65	Occasionally chants annoying little rhymes
66	Acts like someone from a lower social class as a sign of solidarity but comes across as offensive instead
67	Openly scornful of organized religion and believes all gods are selfish liars
68	Gets angrier and more determined with each setback
69	Thinks most objects are magical wondrous items
70	Seems to lack a moral compass when making plans (though not in everyday life); often proposes horrific solutions to minor problems
71	Quietly makes personal sacrifices to help others, including forgoing meals, "losing" warm clothing, and repaying nonexistent loans
72	Suffering from some terminal illness
73	Name-drops constantly
74	Does a terrible job rather than refuse an unpleasant or unwanted task
75	Never tires of learning new and interesting bits of knowledge
76	Complains about smells no one else notices
77	Can't stop drinking once starts
78	Trying to master some kind of performance skill like juggling or ventriloquism but not very good at it yet
79	Is a failed actor and blames everyone else for it
80	Has a seemingly endless font of gossip; never stops chattering about various rumors and scandals
81	Is a very distant noble and treats lower orders with disdain
82	Very cheerful; tries to raise downcast spirits with songs, jokes, and uplifting stories
83	Grows more and more relaxed the worse things get; conversely, on edge and nervous when things seem to go well
84	Carries around a notebook to write down important information but has trouble reading own handwriting
85	Makes up seemingly arbitrary rules of etiquette ("Redheads always sit on the left side of the table!")
86	Avoids making any kind of physical contact; grows noticeably repulsed if touched and tries to clean self as soon as possible
87	Always tries to be the center of attention
88	Is a little unhinged when the moon is full
89	Questions others about their background in order to determine if they are "suitable"
90	From a place with different customs; often asks for explanations of everyday things
91	Very jealous and possessive about a particular object or person; tends to view others as rivals and treat them as such
92	Continually mentions a heroic battle he was in and how nothing else compares
93	Gives people little colored cards to represent the emotional state they are creating (blue for sad, red for angry, etc.)
94	Explains simple things that don't need explanations
95	Wishes was a cat and seeks someone to polymorph him/her into one
96	Refers to self in third person
97	Has an imaginary ethereal friend
98	Has a habit of eating live insects without realizing it
99	Compulsively wipes or cleans things
100	Asks a kobold glove puppet its opinion at inopportune moments

Table 4-5: NPC Occupations

Acrobat	Chandler	Groom	Mourner	Scaffolder
Actor	Chaplain	Guard	Mummer	Shepherd
Alchemist	Chimneysweep	Guide	Navigator	Sheriff
Almoner	Chronicler	Haberdasher	Nun	Shipwright
Ambassador	Cleaner	Harlot	Nursemaid	Shoemaker
Animal Keeper	Clerk	Harpist	Oarsman	Siege Engineer
Animal Trainer	Clothier	Healer	Officer	Sign Maker
Apothecary	Clothworker	Hedge-layer	Orator	Silversmith
Appraiser	Cobbler	Helmsman	Organist	Sineater
Archer	Coffinmaker	Herald	Ostler	Singer
Architect	Coin minter	Herbalist	Pack Handler	Skinner
Armorer	Composer	Hermit	Painter	Slaver
Artillerist	Constable	Historian	Parchmenter	Smith
Artist	Cook	Hornmaker	Pardoner	Smuggler
Assassin	Cooper	Hospitaler	Peddler	Soapmaker
Astrologer	Courier	Hunter	Philosopher	Solicitor
Bailiff	Courtesan	Infirmarer	Physician	Soldier
Baker	Custodian	Innkeeper	Pilot	Soothsayer
Bandit	Deckhand	Interpreter	Pimp	Spy
Banker	Diplomat	Jester	Pitch Maker	Squire
Barber	Doomsayer	Jeweler	Playwright	Stablehand
Bard	Dowser	Judge	Poacher	Steward
Barkeep	Dung Sweeper	Juggler	Poet	Stonecarver
Barker	Dyer	Keeper	Porter	Stonemason
Barrister	Embalmer	Knight	Potter	Storyteller
Bearer	Engineer	Laborer	Precentor	Surgeon
Beggar	Engraver	Lackey	Prelate	Swineherd
Bishop	Entertainer	Lady in Waiting	Priest	Tailor
Blacksmith	Executioner	Lamp Lighter	Prostitute	Tanner
Boat Builder	Falconer	Launderer	Puppeteer	Tax Collector
Boatswain	Farmer	Leatherworker	Quarryman	Taxidermist
Bookbinder	Farrier	Limner	Ranger	Teamster
Bouncer	Ferryman	Linkboy	Rat Catcher	Thatcher
Bounty Hunter	Fire Eater	Locksmith	Rent Collector	Tinker
Bowyer	Fisherman	Lookout	Roofer	Tobacconist
Brassworker	Fletcher	Madam	Roustabout	Tool Maker
Brewer	Footman	Magic Item Trader	Rope Maker	Torturer
Bricklayer	Forester	Magistrate	Sacristan	Tradesman
Builder	Fortune Teller	Maid	Sage	Turner
Busker	Fowler	Masseuse	Sail Maker	Valet
Butcher	Furrier	Master	Sailor	Verderer
Butler	Gaoler	Master-at-Arms	Sapper	Vicar
Candle Maker	Gamekeeper	Mercenary	Scholar	Vintner
Captain	Gardener	Mercer	School Teacher	Wainwright
Carpenter	Gatekeeper	Messenger	Scribe	Waller
Carpet Weaver	Gemcutter	Midwife	Scrivener	Warrener
Cartographer	Gentleman	Milkmaid	Scullery Maid	Watchman
Cartwright	Glassblower	Miller	Sculptor	Water Carrier
Cask Maker	Goldsmith	Miner	Scop	Weaver
Castellan	Governess	Minstrel	Seer	Weaponsmith
Chamberlain	Gravedigger	Moneylender	Seneschal	Weapons Dealer
Chambermaid	Grocer	Monk	Servant	Wheelwright

Table 4-6: NPC Secrets

d%	Secret
1–2	Knows where a magic item is buried
3–4	Knows the best fishing spot
5–6	Knows who the murderer is
7–8	Is making liquor illegally
9–10	Knows why no one swims in the millpond anymore
11–12	Knows how to safely cook a poisonous fish
13–14	Is having an affair
15–16	Steals from his neighbors
17–18	Is a habitual liar
19–20	Is secretly related to another NPC
21–22	Knows what happened to all the rats
23–24	Is being blackmailed
25–26	Drinks heavily
27–28	Has a secret stash of funds
29–30	Is beaten by his/her spouse
31–32	Knows proper way to read a treasure map
33–34	Is an obsessive collector or hoarder
35–36	Beats offspring regularly
37–38	Is quietly religious
39–40	Knows location of a bandit hideout
41–42	Knows a particular monster's favorite snack
43–44	Is a spy
45–46	Hears voices in the graveyard
47–48	Knows who really runs the neighborhood
49–50	Knows where to contact the fey
51–52	Is an assassin
53–54	Has a secret illness
55–56	Knows why no one in the village eats meat anymore
57–58	Knows how to get the oracle to answer truthfully
59–60	Engages in some deviant behavior
61–62	Knows command word for a magic item
63–64	Owes the local moneylender substantial funds
65–66	Worships an evil deity
67–68	Knows some local secret
69–70	Has a secret identity
71–72	Was a very different creature prior to reincarnation
73–74	Knows how to placate an angry ghost
75–76	Is a member of a secret local cult
77–78	Is wanted for a crime
79–80	Murdered spouse
81–82	Makes secret donations
83–84	Lost paladinhood due to cowardice
85–86	Is a paladin working undercover
87–88	Is the bastard child of a noble
89–90	Knows when the heir to the throne sneaks away to visit an attractive peasant
91–92	Is terrified of a particular monster type
93–94	Has some orc blood in their family
95–96	Has some troll blood in their family
97–98	Knows where the meteor landed
99–100	Knows someone is not what appears to be

Table 4-7: NPC Rewards for Heroic Deeds

d%	Reward
1–2	Wash or mend your clothes and equipment
3–4	Perform a skill check for you
5–6	Offer you a pet (dog, cat, pig, etc.)
7–8	Pray for you
9–10	Tend your mount
11–12	Pay for your lodgings
13–14	Buy you a small gift
15–16	Invite you to dinner
17–18	Sharpen your weapons
19–20	Gather supplies for you
21–22	Carry your belongings
23–24	Compose a poem praising your prowess
25–26	Compose a song praising your heroic qualities
27–28	Praise you loudly in public
29–30	Pay for your meals
31–32	Introduce you to a friend
33–34	Provide shelter
35–36	Write a letter or make some other sort of appeal to an authority figure on your behalf
37–38	Buy you a reasonable gift
39–40	Boycott one of your rivals or enemies
41–42	Look after your home while you are away
43–44	Provide you with an alibi
45–46	Carry a message for you
47–48	Follow someone for you
49–50	Loan you property
51–52	Call in an important favor and use it on your behalf
53–54	Cast a spell for you at no cost
55–56	Wait for a specific event and then light a signal fire
57–58	Organize a festival or other public event
59–60	Train an animal for you
61–62	Buy you a substantial gift
63–64	Become your friend
65–66	Sell you goods at a discount
67–68	Bury or hide something dangerous
69–70	Lie or cheat for you
71–72	Name a child after you
73–74	Start a fight for you
75–76	Publicly protest against a ruler or other powerful being
77–78	Sabotage a bridge, road, or something equally important
79–80	Raise a child or care for another relatively helpless creature
81–82	Spy on your behalf
83–84	Agree to work off a major debt that you cannot pay
85–86	Take the blame (and punishment) for a minor crime
87–88	Become your servant
89–90	Become your follower
91–92	Become your squire
93–94	Become your henchman/woman
95–96	Become your cohort
97–98	Offer the hand of a relative in marriage
99–100	Marry you

Table 4-8: Random Adventuring Party Name Generator

Roll on the first and third columns to create a suitable name, making additional rolls on any combination of other columns as desired.

d%	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5
1–2	Mighty	Ebon	Lions	Swords	and Slayers
3–4	Quiet	Black	Dragons	Spears	and Merciless Inquisitors
5–6	Valorous	Green	Giants	Weapons	and Vanquishers
7–8	Undaunted	Blue	Angels	Scythes	and Slaughterers
9–10	Questioning	Violet	Tigers	Halberds	and Talkers
11–12	Selfish	Shade	Wolves	Daggers	and Avengers
13–14	Foolhardy	Shadow	Wolverines	Blades	of Justice
15–16	Brave	Pearly	Warriors	Scimitars	and Revengers
17–18	Noble	Blood-red	Fools	Lancers	for the Victims
19–20	Questing	Crimson	Monsters	Archers	of the Vendetta
21–22	Great	Brown	Aberrations	Swordsmiths	of the Endless Feud
23–24	Ignoble	Ochre	Outsiders	Crossbowmen	and Vindicators
25–26	Pious	Bright	Revenants	Monster-Slayers	and Payers
27–28	Strong	Moonlight	Snakes	Invincibles	and Punishers
29–30	Studious	Shadowy	Rats	Thrusters	and Torturers
31–32	Incredible	Dusky	Mad Dogs	Stars	and Gloaters
33–34	Stout	Rainbow	Demons	Gorgers	and Sinners
35–36	Sturdy	Pitch	Devils	Puddings	of Unspeakable Terror
37–38	Unbreakable	Tar	Beasts	Bows	with the Witch-Hunters
39–40	Fearless	Coal	Savages	Flails	for the Pilgrims
41–42	Blinded	Nadir	Griffins	Axes	for the Glorious Masses
43–44	Fearsome	Mold	Banshees	Gauntlets	of Murderers
45–46	Potent	Jade	Wyverns	Oozes	and Gibbeters
47–48	Commanding	Sage	Carnivores	Spines	and Merciless Questioners
49–50	Superior	Amethyst	Vultures	Sticks	the Tools of the Gods
51–52	Impressive	Coral	Sharks	Biters	the Speakers of Truth
53–54	Meddling	Tiger Eye	Panthers	Fists	the Wayfinders
55–56	Lucky	Obsidian	Vipers	Staves	of the Path
57–58	Contagious	Mithral	Spiders	Pikes	of the Way
59–60	Loud	Gold	Trolls	Iron Maidens	of the Faith
61–62	Holy	Silver	Ogres	Racks	of the Spirit
63–64	Unholy	Platinum	Crows	Burning Torches	of the Day
65–66	Ascendant	Copper	Ravens	Hunters	of the Night
67–68	Gripping	Adamantine	Eagles	Tramplers	of Gods
69–70	Fascinating	Steel	Dogs	Wounders	in the Dark
71–72	Infectious	Iron	Scorpions	Smashers	in the Sunlight
73–74	Eminent	Forged	Octopuses	Breakers	in the Shadow of Angels
75–76	Grave	Snow	Krakens	Fire	from Outside Reality
77–78	Compelling	Dark	Apes	Smoke	with the Right
79–80	Hypnotic	Light	Bears	Flames	with Righteousness
81–82	Persuasive	Day	Boars	Clubs	with the Gods
83–84	Irresistible	Night	Crocodiles	Guisarmes	with the Moon
85–86	Alluring	Deep	Cats	Whips	with the Angels
87–88	Fascinating	High	Lizards	Tridents	by the Side of Heaven
89–90	Magnetic	Long	Hyenas	Javelins	by the Hand of the Gods
91–92	Predominant	Gray	Hornets	Warhammers	as Whispered to by Things from Beyond
93–94	Magic	Stone	Raptors	Slings	as Commanded
95–96	Reputable	Ultramarine	Toads	Saps	by Faith
97–98	Famous	Mauve	Weasels	Falchions	for Glory
99–100	Beautiful	White	Wasps	Nets	in Sureness



5 Rewards



Tyla levered the dagger backward, and the gem popped free with a satisfying crunch. She held it up to the light—not a scratch. It was real, alright. No colored glass for this monkey.

Behind her, Anderi and Kapos were arguing again. Useless, both of them. If she hadn't lost her bag of holding, she would gladly have knifed them both and left them as an offering to the temple spirits. It was the least she could do.

Anderi's voice cut through her musings. "Snake!" she was yelling. "Tyla! Snake!"

"Now now," Tyla called back. "No need for name-calling. You'll get your share."

The Role of Rewards

Much of the famously addictive appeal of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game and its predecessor games lies in its variety of reward mechanisms. These most obviously include experience points, treasure, and magic items, but also such in-story advantages like information, property, status, titles, even the possibility of eventual godhood.

Rewards mark the PCs' victories. The act of scribbling down a new item or quantity of coins on a character sheet solidifies one of the game's key pleasures. These moments cement the players' commitment to the game by connecting them emotionally to what has just happened, while at the same time hooking them with the promise of future gains. Players revel in the success they've just scored, while also looking forward to the future triumphs their characters will be able to rack up after leveling up, using new gear, or making use of a long-forgotten scrap of lore.

Expect responses to rewards to vary from group to group and between individual players. Some players enjoy constant rewards and actively alter their play styles to maximize the benefits they receive. Others regard them as a bookkeeping necessity they'd rather keep in the background. Observe your players' responses to see where they fit on this continuum. As you make decisions affecting reward distribution, seek out the sweet spot of compromise that makes the experience as compulsively entertaining as possible for the majority of your players.

Generalizations don't always hold but can be useful as a starting point in determining what your players will enjoy. Younger or less experienced players often tend to prefer frequent rewards, with no benefit too small to lovingly describe. Even the most jaded players can remember their first few sessions, when a measly clutch of copper coins wrenched from a stinking kobold warren seemed like the most awesome haul ever. Older players, especially ones who are squeezed for time and can only meet for short sessions, may prefer to move the rewards process to the background. In this mode, shopping, swapping, and leveling up usually occurs outside of precious session time.



Whatever their amount of experience, some players remain more oriented toward rewards than others. Players heavily invested in their characters' abilities and in slaying monsters tend to want their rewards as soon as they can get them. Becoming more powerful is their biggest thrill. A steady stream of small power boosts suits them just fine. They don't want to go into the next fight until they know they've squeezed every last iota of potential ability from their past accomplishments.

Players more focused on characterization or story progress may look at reward management as a form of homework. They're more interested in seeing what's on the other side of that hill, or talking to the crazy hermit, than stopping every scene to add up their XP totals or divide treasure. They'll find it easier to stay engaged with the game if you bundle rewards together, dealing with them all at the same time.

The diagram on the next page lays out in graphic form the various considerations to take into account when deciding how much emphasis to give to rewards over the course of a session. Factors on the left side of the continuum lead to giving out awards in occasional bundles. Factors on the right side argue in favor of giving out rewards throughout the session.

Experience

Experience points are the lifeblood of the Pathfinder rewards system. They determine the rate at which the PCs progress, and form the currency with which the most spectacular and reliable abilities are acquired. By deciding when and how to give out XP, you're establishing the expectations the players will bring to the rest of the game's reward system.

Backgrounded Experience

Track experience points throughout the session, without mentioning it to your players. Announce awarded XP at the end of each session, after the evening's narrative has concluded. Players may level up only between sessions, even if they pass the level mark during a game session. They're expected to arrive at the next session ready to go with all of their character changes. Players who don't own the rules set should show up early to update their character sheets.

This timing scheme suits groups at the bundled (left) end of the rewards continuum. It preserves session time and keeps participants focused on the fictional proceedings. Backgrounded awards remove the temptation for players to undertake ridiculous, tangential, or out-of-character actions just to acquire the last few XP they need to level up.

The Rewards Continuum

Experienced Players	Bundled	New Players
Short Sessions		Long Sessions
Story-Focused Players		Combat-Focused Players
Characterization-Focused Players	Frequent	Power-Focused Players
PCs Pivotal to Sweeping Events		PCs as Scroungers, Traders, Crafters



Downtime Experience

Track experience points as they accrue. Whenever the party stops in a safe haven, or the story leaps forward in time and place, announce a period of downtime. All of the XP accumulated since the last period of downtime is awarded and characters may level up. When the PCs leave downtime, the normal story resumes. Again track experience points while they are accrued, and hold off awarding it until the next downtime phase.

Downtime experience suits groups falling in the middle of the rewards continuum. It compromises between players who live for rewards and those who view them as an occasion for homework. Downtime awards make leveling up seem like something that happens in the world. The characters only become visibly better at their tasks after taking some time to rest, reflect, contemplate, and train.

One danger with downtime awards is that they can tempt players to take otherwise poorly motivated rest stops just to gain their XP awards and level up. Depending on the pacing of a given session, a break for downtime might completely deflate the game's momentum and make it hard to recapture your players' attention. On the other hand, it might give you a much-needed break to work out an upcoming encounter, dream up fresh story events, or simply let your brain idle for a few minutes.

If players seek out downtime at an ill-placed moment, you can always deter them with a plot development requiring immediate action. This interruption might range from a simple wandering monster attack to an elaborate new wrinkle in the campaign's ongoing storyline.

Immediate Experience

Award players experience points as soon as they earn them. Allow the characters to level up at the end of any scene, as soon as they have accumulated enough XP.

Immediate experience suits a group at the frequent (right) end of the rewards continuum. It focuses the game more obviously, for good and for ill, on the acquisition and expenditure of experience points. As the name suggests, this system gives the players immediate gratification when they succeed.

When using this timing scheme, be prepared for the game to stop at a moment's notice, shifting into rules-scanning mode while the players level up. Characters also risk becoming unsympathetic or unbelievable as they chase the biggest XP results at the lowest risks.

Handwaved Experience

Ignore XP altogether. Decide how many sessions you want the group to spend at each level. Allow your players to level up each time they hit that milestone. This option suits groups at the far left side of the rewards continuum.

Ad Hoc Experience

Many players recall with great fondness sessions where the dice were never rolled. When a game spends considerable time developing plot and character and places fighting monsters and accumulating XP in the background, however, some players may feel that they're being penalized. In these situations, reward out-of-combat successes with ad hoc experience awards.



When the group takes part in an entertaining scene that takes 15 minutes or more, consider awarding ad hoc XP. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Did the scene move the group toward an important, identifiable objective?
- Did the group face significant negative consequences if the events portrayed in the scene went against them?
- Did the players take an active role in the scene, as opposed to listening to your descriptions or NPC dialogue?
- Did most of the players make a noteworthy contribution to the scene?
- Did all of the players appear attentive and entertained?

If you can answer at least four of these questions in the affirmative, you should award ad hoc XP. The following steps can be used to determine a baseline figure for ad hoc awards:

- Roughly determine the amount of real time it takes you, on average, to run a challenging encounter.
- Divide this into 15-minute increments. So if it takes you an hour, more or less, to run a challenging fight, you have four increments.
- Take the XP award the group would normally get for a challenging encounter (usually APL+1) and divide it by the number of increments. This is your baseline ad hoc award.

Once you have decided to award ad hoc experience for a scene, roughly estimate the amount of real time the sequence took. Award your baseline amount multiplied by the number of 15-minute increments as ad hoc XP.

Revise the baseline as the group increases in level. Take into account any increases in the average length of encounters, as well as the experience awards the characters garner. Additional individual ad hoc experience points can also be awarded to players for particularly good roleplaying. If you decide to use individual awards, be careful not to show favoritism. All of the characters should have opportunities to receive such rewards at some point.

Players on the right side of the rewards continuum probably prefer heavily action-oriented games. If your game consists mostly of exciting combat sequences with a minimum of plot to connect them, it's probably not worth bothering with ad hoc awards.

Treasure

Game balance depends on rewarding the treasure values as given on Tables 12–4 and 12–5 on page 399 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*. Award too much, and the PCs will unpredictably tear through encounters. Too little, and they'll be unable to keep up. Within the limits of these charts, however, you can dole out treasure in various ways, depending on your group's position on the rewards continuum.

Groups toward the left end of the continuum tend to favor a broader storyline and epic action over a game that casts them in the role of petty coin-counters. In these cases, don't spend a lot of time describing coins, currency transactions, the sale of looted antiquities, or other money issues. Nor should you worry about minor expenses. The cost of living guidelines on page 405 of the *Core Rulebook* provide an easy way to quantify such expenditures. You can place specific treasures in particular encounters, making sure that the overall amount equals the recommended character wealth by level by the time the characters reach a new level.

In extreme cases for the left side of the continuum, you can handwave treasure altogether. As characters level up, award them the cash they need to bring them in line with Table 12–4. The assumption is that they've picked this up along the way, but in a way that wasn't interesting enough to make a big deal about. Similarly, assume that the characters spend enough to keep themselves in reasonable comfort while in towns and leave it at that.

On the other hand, more reward-focused groups on the right side of the continuum often enjoy tracking treasure. To please them, you can research historical economies and describe each treasure horde in loving detail. For variety, include art objects, gems, and notable or valuable mundane equipment. For example, in the medieval era, items of luxury clothing were among the most highly valued trade goods. A little later, spices became wildly desirable.

Some groups prove particularly cash-obsessed, more interested in leveraging the economic system than killing monsters. If so, assume that they'll go the extra mile to get a higher than usual percentage of the base price, and build that into your game. Peg the ultimate cash values of their treasures to the amount they can get if they coax, haggle, and swindle maximum prices out of their merchant partners. Use this interest to build in plot elements. They might happily spend more time spying on rivals, muscling out competitors, and fending off bandits than they do fighting orcs and demons. Rather than discouraging this behavior, you can go with it, building your treasure values and plot elements around it. The profit motive may not be traditionally heroic, but it does provide an easy source of story hooks. For example:

- The Skull of the Crimson Khan might fetch little in the farming community surrounding the dungeon, requiring a dangerous overland journey to the Bazaar of the Silver Kingdoms.
- The corpse of a bizarre aberrant creature, if properly preserved and maintained, might fetch a pretty penny from the crazy wizard-sage of the Spiral Tower—if his automaton rivals don't swoop in and steal the coffin first.

Magic Items

Magic items are an integral part of treasure calculation in the Pathfinder RPG. The system determines a baseline treasure haul per character for each level, assuming that most of the treasure will be used to buy magic items.

Rewards-oriented groups, on the right end of the continuum, enjoy finding, trading, and selling magic items. Often they'll enjoy the economic aspect of the game so much that they'll set up lucrative side businesses making and selling enchanted objects. Let them feel rewarded for these activities, while subtly reducing dungeon treasure hauls to keep the group's overall access to cash in line with Table 12–4. They might face early successes only to see the value of manufactured items drop as they contribute to an oversupply. Let them get away with what seems like a score or two, then add complicating factors that can also act as story hooks, such as:

- Other shady adventurers come after the characters, as easier sources of treasure than dungeons.
- Competing enchanters target the PCs for elimination.
- Supplies of raw materials dry up, requiring quests into the dangerous wilds.

Keep detailed treatment of magic items low for groups on the left side of the continuum. Ask them for wish lists of items they desire for their characters. Use these as the items they find while dungeon crawling, adding in just enough variation to maintain a sense of surprise. These groups usually want to use their magic items without fussing over them. The odd item might serve as an epic plot device, but most magic items should remain quietly in the background.

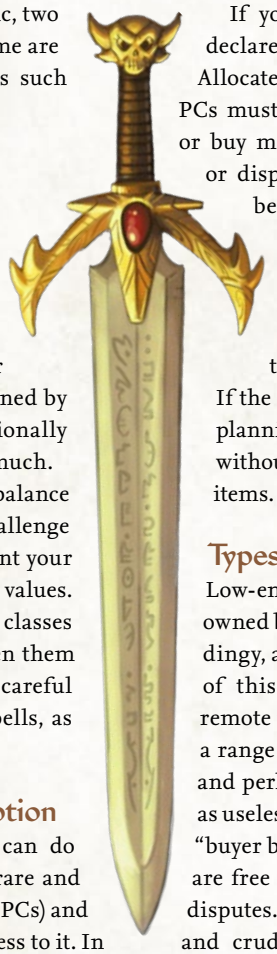
High or Low Magic?

Fantasy game fans often speak of high- or low-magic settings. High-magic settings feature powerful and commonly available spells and magic items. Low-magic settings make magic rarer and less effective.

In fantasy literature, especially works by writers like Robert E. Howard and J. R. R. Tolkien written before roleplaying tie-in novels began to influence the field, powerful magic tends to be scarce. Even in settings we tend to think of as having high magic restrict it to its rare and remarkable leading heroes and villains. Where magical gear is concerned, the hero might have one or two very special items, rather than an entire kit-bag loaded with devices for every occasion.

The default fantasy setting is usually one of very high magic. Magic items are widely available. They're manufactured by retired magicians, traded by merchants, and found lying around in dungeons. This conceit trades epic atmosphere for gaming convenience. The rules as written assume that characters get magic items in line with their levels, and that when an adventurer desires a piece of magical gear, he need only pony up the cash and it's his.

But these default assumptions do not appeal to everyone. If you want a setting with lower magic, two ways of adjusting the level of magic in your game are presented below, as well as the repercussions such changes can have on the game itself.



Reducing Magic with Rules Adjustments

Certain classes, like spellcasters, lose some of their effectiveness when deprived of magic items. If you restrict PC access to magic items, be sure to revisit all other aspects of the game system with which they interact. At lower levels, when magic users are somewhat outshined by weapon wielders, you already have a functionally low-magic game and don't have to change so much.

But limits on magic can change game balance dramatically at higher levels. Monster Challenge Ratings will need adjusting, to take into account your group's reduced damage output and lower AC values. Altering the rate at which the magic-wielding classes acquire spells also changes the balance between them and their weapon-wielding counterparts. Be careful when reducing access to healing items and spells, as this will make the PCs frailer.

Reducing Magic with World Description

As an alternative to altering the rules, you can do what fantasy authors do—establish magic as rare and remarkable, then portray the protagonists (the PCs) and their opponents as the few people who have access to it. In this model, you have high-magic PCs operating in a low-magic world. They retain ready access to magic items, but that doesn't mean that every wealthy or accomplished NPC they meet is likewise dripping with them. People gasp in awe when they see the heroes walk down the street. The open display of these items in public makes the PCs a target for thieves. Be careful not to overdo this last point, however; having rare items should make the players feel special, not hounded.

High-magic PCs in a low-magic world can't easily trade items and wouldn't dream of selling them. Use the wish list method of magic treasure allocation, described above, to ensure that players get the gear they need and want.

Magic Shops

No issue epitomizes the advantages and drawbacks of a high-magic game like the question of whether to place magic shops in your world. Players, especially those toward the right end of the rewards continuum, love ready access to stores where they can purchase items they need, sell the ones they make, and trade the ones they find and don't want. On the other hand, this makes magic items seem as prosaic and interchangeable as modern consumer goods.

If you consider this a problem, you can simply declare that magic shops don't exist in your setting. Allocate items according to the wish list method. The PCs must always overcome plot obstacles to swap, sell, or buy major items they don't find themselves. Minor or disposable items, like potions and scrolls, might be available for sale from itinerant traders or at general stores.

Alternatively, you can assume that magic shops exist in the background of the world, entering into a social contract with players not to focus on them or make them a part of the story. If the PCs pay too much attention to them, including planning heists, they go away, leaving the group without a way of buying, selling, or trading desired items.

Types of Magic Shops

Low-end shops are small, dingy operations, usually owned by a sole proprietor. They're often disorganized, dingy, and filled with marginally useful clutter. Shops of this grade frequently appear in undesirable or remote neighborhoods. They offer minor magic items, a range of common magical components, occult texts, and perhaps the occasional mighty relic misidentified as useless junk. Most low-end shops follow an inflexible "buyer beware" policy, offering no guarantee that items are free from defects, curses, hauntings, or ownership disputes. For security, these shops rely on traps, curses, and crude but effective fortifications. Low-end shop owners tend to be reclusive, eccentric, or truculent.

Mid-range shops are larger and cleaner, usually with a small staff that courteously caters to customers. Shops of this type frequently nestle on cozy side streets not far from a city's commercial district. Many double as informal social clubs for the mystically inclined. Mid-range shops offer a fuller array of merchandise: in addition to a wide range of well-labeled components and large collections of scholarly tomes, they sell both minor and medium items. Items are guaranteed free from curse or defect, though the customer's only remedy is a full refund. Skilled mercenaries, some of whom are spellcasters, provide security. Magical traps supplement the fortifications.

High-end shops are located alongside a city's purveyors of luxury goods, in heavily guarded districts. These top-range shops often specialize exclusively in major items, and reliably vouch for the quality of their wares, including freedom from curses or other ill effects. Security such shops is top of the line, with powerful spells and traps, and highly skilled and well-paid guards, some of whom may not be entirely mortal. They might be trained monsters, ingenious automatons, or summoned outsiders. The identities of a high-end shop's true owners are often shrouded in rumor and mystery. They might be phantasmal surrogates, disguised dragons, or even powerful entities from the Great Beyond.

Trouble Items

Magic items are not as rigidly tethered to the advancement system as spells, feats, and other benefits of leveling up. For this reason, it occasionally happens that a magic item unbalances your campaign. It might be an item of your own devising, or an insufficiently playtested bit of gear from a published product. Even classic items can disrupt certain campaigns, especially ones with non-standard premises. For example, unrestricted access to divination items can ruin a heavily investigative campaign.

Beware of magic items so powerful that they allow their users to consistently outperform the rest of the group. Likewise, look out for items that violate the exclusivity of a character concept out of combat. When players choose their classes, they expect to be better at the core tasks associated with those classes than other group members. If an item does a better job of healing than your group's cleric, and it winds up in another PC's hands, the cleric's player might feel eclipsed. Avoid this either by adjusting or removing the trouble item or by making it an item usable only by the class whose abilities it duplicates.

When an item proves troublesome, you can handle it within the storyline, or step out of character to negotiate an adjustment with the player. In the first option, something happens to get the item out of the character's hands entirely, or change what it can do. The character might be called on to sacrifice it to fulfill a quest or achieve some greater story objective. The item might be damaged, magically altered, stolen, or reclaimed by a previous owner. This approach allows you to maintain an illusion of fictional reality. To avoid player resentment, make sure to contrive in the other direction, too, adding in a compensating plot development or more appropriate item as a replacement for lost treasure.

It may be easier to step out of character to handle trouble items. Propose an adjustment that fixes the problem, perhaps suggesting several options. Solicit the player's input. Some players will accept a toned-down version of the current item, while others might prefer a completely new piece of gear.

Story Items

Magic items in fantasy literature often have a narrative attached to them. When the group gets a powerful item, you can use it as a springboard for story developments.

Any item can be used as the focus of a story. Using a term made famous by Alfred Hitchcock, screenwriters refer to an object that serves as the motivating factor to drive a storyline as a macguffin. Famous macguffin include the Maltese Falcon, from the book and movie of the same name, and *Pulp Fiction*'s glowing suitcase. Mythological macguffin include the Golden Fleece and Holy Grail.

Any mission that sends the PCs to find a particular item is a macguffin story, whether a former owner dispatches them to find it or the group finds reference to it in an old tome. Once the group finds the macguffin, it might fade into the background as just another item of treasure, or gradually lead to a more sweeping narrative. Alternatively, you can introduce your big storyline sneakily, by having the item appear as just another piece of dungeon loot. Only after they begin to use it do the adventurers find themselves in a swirl of epic events.

With or without a macguffin, you can gradually build your magic item storyline until it reaches sweeping proportions. Classic magic item storylines include the following:

- *The object to be destroyed.* The item is a work of evil. Disaster looms if it falls into the wrong hands. The PCs must undergo an extensive quest, at the end of which they must destroy the item. Along the way, they must evade pursuers who seek to take it from them. The object grants power if used, but tempts those who employ it to become its slaves.
- *The royal symbol.* Like King Arthur's Excalibur, the ability to wield this item and awaken its powers indicates that the owner is some kind of chosen one. By taking possession of the item, the group embroils itself in a wider conflict to defend a kingdom, empire, or secret society.
- *The weapon of destiny.* The item (which need not be a literal weapon) will turn the tide of a great war—if only the heroes can find it and use it correctly. As with the object to be destroyed, enemy pursuers complicate matters, trying to stop the item's arrival at the pivotal battle.

By making an item central to your storyline, you're granting extra attention to the player whose character wields it. If you make an item usable only by one hero, find reasons for the other characters to also have a stake in the overall objective. You might give the item to a quiet or hard-to-motivate player to draw them into the story, while tying it into existing plot lines for PCs who have already established clear goals. Alternatively, use items that multiple PCs can make use of. Depending on the makeup of your group, a relic could grant one power to a fighter and another to a cleric.

Starting Treasure

By default, we tend to think of starting characters as inexperienced beginners who have scraped together a few coins to equip themselves with mundane items for a new life of adventure. By adjusting what beginning characters start with, you can use starting treasure to define the characters, making them part of the world they're about to explore.

Starting with Magic Items

Giving each of the PCs a starting magic item makes them more robust and capable from the jump, and can be useful for smaller groups. Campaign concepts in which the characters already enjoy wealth, status, or recognition might also be reinforced with starting magic. For example, the PCs might be the younger generation of a land's great trading houses. It makes narrative sense for their families to give them a leg up over other adventurers.

One option is to grant the players a collective budget of 1,500 gp per person, which they can use to buy any number of magic items. Leave them alone to agree on a distribution; they might get one mighty item, used by only one of them, or many lesser ones, so everybody gets something. The budget can only be spent on magic; they don't get to keep leftover cash.

Keep a close eye on what the players purchase, and veto anything that might break the game from the beginning. Also be prepared to adjust encounter difficulties to account for the increased competence of magically equipped parties.

Be careful starting young or inexperienced players with magic items. Giving the stuff away can devalue the classic moment when a player finds her first piece of magical gear out in the wild.

Heirloom Items

When characters start play with magical items, ask players to create a brief story explaining how they got them. The story should not only reveal something about the item, but also about the person who carries it. Avoid bogging down the introductory adventure with a recitation of each description. Instead, space them out by waiting until the items see use in play, prompting each player to supply his own anecdote.

We're calling these heirloom items, because the most obvious story is that the item was handed down in the character's family. This explanation humanizes the character and creates a supporting cast the GM can bring into narrative moments. No longer are the PCs rootless vagabonds; they have a history, and people they care about.

Alternative explanations are as varied as your players' creativity. An item might be a loan from an organization or patron, which you can weave into your campaign as it develops. Characters might tell of finding the item themselves, in a moment predating their adventuring careers. A rogue might have stolen her item, implying an enemy character who may appear later looking to get it back. Consider ways to build on each mini-narrative, crafting them into a broader story.

Non-magical equipment can also be treated as heirlooms, especially for characters from impoverished backgrounds. That scuffed-up suit of leather armor might be a hand-me-down from a roguish uncle, or a precious bit of loot from a terrible battle that took place nearby a generation ago.

Setting Items

Another way to add flavor to starting magic items is to use them to introduce details of your world, whether you're using the Pathfinder world of Golarion or a setting you have created. Make a list of each treasure item selected, or the most notable piece of standard gear carried by each PC. Avoid consumable items, which are unlikely to have survived long enough to have interesting histories attached to them. Develop quick snippets of narration referring to their histories. For example:

- "Your sword's blade is new, but the haft is a crude, cast-iron handgrip bearing the runes of the fell king who ruled a duergar kingdom in Nar-Voth 2 centuries ago. The haft gives your sword its magic."
- "Faint hieroglyphs on the *hand of the mage* you wear around your neck date it to ancient Osirion. The mummified appendage might have belonged to a vizier of a god-king, who lived and breathed 5,000 years ago."

Highlight facts about the world you expect to take on greater significance in the course of play. Alternatively, you might choose random setting details and then use them as inspiration for adventure hooks. The first example above suggests that the party will eventually meet duergar or journey to Nar-Voth, while the mummified owner of the third item might eventually come back to repossess it.

As with heirloom items, slip setting items into your narration at suitable moments as the action progresses rather than front-loading them into your opening session preliminaries. Be ready to collaborate with players on modified descriptions in case they decide that your suggestions don't fit their character concepts.

Plot Items

Plot items work like setting items, except that, instead of referring to great events of the past, they set up future developments in the PCs' personal stories. Introduce them to the players before the action begins, perhaps with a brief description on an index card. Be careful not to impose choices that alter a player's character background. Work with the player until you have a hook that works for

you, and a personal detail that fits her vision. Although secrets occasionally lead to interesting play, backstories the players are willing to share with the rest of the group are more likely to take an active role in play.

At a suitable moment in the action, invite the player to describe the item and its backstory to the other players. Examples include:

- "I found this magical feather in a red vellum envelope, slipped under my door at the inn the day before I set out for the big city. A note inside was signed only, 'Your benefactor.'" (The gift establishes a mystery, the identity of the benefactor, which you can slowly develop and finally reveal.)
- "This darkwood shield was given to me by my uncle, who said it saved his hide several times, back during the gnoll raids." (This detail introduces a mentor figure who can give the PCs crotchety advice, and sets up the possibility that the gnolls will rise again to terrorize the area.)

Mighty Items

Under ordinary circumstances, avoid giving starting PCs magical weapons that would normally be reserved for much higher-level characters. Overpowered items can wreak havoc with your ability to scale encounters to the characters' capabilities.

As a change of pace, though, a powerful item can drive the premise for a campaign or a series of linked adventures within a campaign. Getting an item that outclasses them leads the PCs into a series of crises. Entities better equipped to use the item hunt them down and try to take it away from them. Political leaders treat them as a destabilizing threat to public order. Do-good sages try to capture the dangerous item and lock it in a vault forever. Meanwhile, the characters realize that they have a goal to achieve or duty to perform that requires them to hold onto the item until certain events occur or conditions are met.

For starting PCs, a major item may be mighty enough to make the plot work. Relics or artifacts, however, carry more cachet and are more likely to be received with a mixture of glee and fear. Create a new artifact for the purpose, or modify an existing one. Limit its number of uses so that the characters can occasionally use it to blow through superior opposition, but can't rely on it to overcome every obstacle they run up against. The players should have to think hard before pulling it from their arsenal. It might cause additional problems whenever it is used. The item might do collateral damage to surrounding people and buildings, or its use might alert pursuers to the party's presence.

Wealthy Characters

Princes, scions of mighty trading houses, and other characters of wealth and influence bring a ready supply of plot hooks to your game. But the modest starting budget given to player characters would seem to rule out certain background concepts. World logic says that their vast resources ought to include any piece of gear available for sale, but game balance requires that treasure must be earned in the course of play.

This can be addressed in the character's background. Perhaps the character is proving a point to doubting elders, stealing away from familial duties to lead a footloose life, or has been banished from the fold, justly or not.

During play, you might also acknowledge the characters' wealth in areas other than the equipment list. Ordinary citizens fawn over them. They have many contacts and enjoy access to the highest levels of society. Their non-combat garb might be expensively impressive—though of course, social rules forbid them to sell it to buy useful adventuring gear.

Alternatively, if other players consent, a player with a character concept that logically demands it might get a 10–20% bonus to their starting budget.



What is a Reward?

With a little added effort, treasure can be much more than just numbers temporarily penciled onto a character sheet. You can also extend the definition of treasure by making a variety of intangible benefits available to the characters.

Making Basic Treasure Interesting

Each time you place a major treasure hoard in your game that includes coins or goods, look for a way to make the experience of discovering, transporting, or trading it somehow interesting or memorable. One general point to bear in mind when fleshing out any aspect of your world is that engaging details compete with one another. Players tend to recall one or two salient moments from any given session. They form strong memories of items and incidents that carry an emotional charge or promise to affect future events. If you lovingly add texture and history to every single item of treasure, all of this detail will blend together. This technique is more powerful when used sparingly.

Be prepared to be flexible when introducing special treasure details. You may find yourself about to bring in a vividly detailed treasure when the players are preoccupied with other concerns, like chasing down an escaped enemy, saving a dying comrade, or charging onward to the next plot development. If something else has already captured their interest, turn the treasure into a nondescript pile of coins and save the vivid details for an otherwise uneventful moment.



The most memorable treasure details are those that relate in some way to other events in the campaign, including the characters' backstories. This might be as simple a matter as specifying that a cache of coins was minted in Celwynvian, when one of the PCs is exploring her elven heritage. When customizing basic treasure, ask yourself the following questions.

Does the item reinforce a PC's characterization?

If a player has described his character as obsessed with books, make sure that your campaign's treasure troves turn up more than their share of rare and antique tomes.

Can the item reflect the adventure's theme?

In an adventure where the heroes are questioning their identities, they could discover a precious mirror. During a quest for political power, they might find a crown or scepter.

Would the item foster an interesting debate or conflict within the party?

If one PC hates demons and wishes to destroy anything associated with them, and the other is interested in studying dark arts in order to defeat them, give them a golden demon statuette to argue over. Aim for conflicts that define the characters, rather than ones that set them at each other's throats.

Is there a detail that will become important later?

Foreshadow a future adventure into the ruins of a forgotten civilization by letting the adventurers discover a tapestry depicting the rise and fall of that society. This allows you to spread out the history lesson over several game sessions.

Can an item of treasure be used to subtly introduce an NPC?

Often you want the party to meet a supporting player in a casual context before they discover his or her true importance in the story. The NPC might later be revealed to be an evil conspirator, a prince unaware of his birthright, or a predatory monster in disguise. If so, introduce an item of treasure that character will want to buy, examine, or attempt to steal. For example, make your conspirator a rug merchant, and the item of treasure a rare and valuable carpet.

Would an item lead the characters to interact nonviolently with an enemy who wouldn't ordinarily talk to them?

A precious memento or object of art might attract the attention of a cruel and powerful entity who wants it enough to negotiate a fair transaction under neutral circumstances. This allows the PCs to converse with the dragon, bandit king, or demon lord they'll wind up fighting later, when they have enough experience to tackle the foe.

When none of these questions help you to customize a treasure item, find a random interesting detail. Turn to a random page of the *Pathfinder Campaign Setting*, or another setting sourcebook you happen to be drawing on, and look for a detail that inspires a unique item of non-magical treasure. If you're not using a setting book, any edition of *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* makes a fine source of random mythological and fantastic inspiration.

For example, let's say that your random page takes you to the section of the Campaign Setting detailing the Red Mantis Assassins. Using this as inspiration, you decide that the treasure includes a fabulously expensive brooch given to top members of the organization after performing an exemplary kill. In order to trade this in for cash, the party will either have to find a merchant who doesn't fear the wrath of the Red Mantis, or seek out a high-ranking member of the group. One of the PCs might do something rash, like use the brooch to pass herself off as a member of the Red Mantis.

Burdensome Treasure

The difficulty of moving treasure out of a dungeon and back to home base might in itself inspire scenes of challenging adventure. Large or unwieldy furnishings, antiquities, or art objects may require the hiring of carts, wagons, or entire trade caravans. Chunks of precious ore or extremely large coin hoards could also require huge transportation efforts. Delicate items, though easily carried, might also be tough to safely move through long stretches of treacherous terrain. Bandits and nomadic wilderness monsters often prey on slow-moving caravans. The party might end up battling as many enemies while taking a burdensome treasure back to civilization as they did to acquire it in the first place.

Although such problems are realistic and logical, they can be overused. Players think of treasure as theirs once they've found it and may resent it when it's taken away from them.

Special Treasures

Art objects include paintings, sculptures, ceramics, tapestries, and so on. Heavily ornamented weapons and armor may be useless in the field but highly valuable as art objects. Everyday objects from ancient civilizations may also be regarded as desirable collectibles, especially when well made. Ostentatious garments were central to the luxury trade of the Middle Ages, but textiles are easily damaged. If found in good condition, a heavily ornamented cloak or tunic could fetch more than a chest full of coins. Books are always rare and valuable in a pre-print society, and may be of value to scholars, collectors, monasteries, or universities. All of these luxury items are salable to knowledgeable and specialized dealers located in large civilized centers.

Art objects may be delicate or burdensome. Use of the Appraise skill is necessary to separate valuable objects from dross. Condition affects value; a badly deteriorated work fetches a low price, no matter how renowned the artist. Works by known artists increase in value if accompanied by documentation establishing their histories, but this is rarely found when objects have been stolen or looted.

Services, Franchises, & Property

Rather than hauling treasure hoards from the dungeon hideouts of defeated foes, adventurers may be granted boons or gifts by patrons assigning them to perform dangerous tasks. Example assignments can include rescuing hostages, gathering information, defeating military foes, or clearing a landholding of hostile occupants.

Artisans, merchants, and others of middling means may offer free future services in exchange for adventurous deeds. These can range from free lodgings or repair work to discount magical services. Churches might gift worthy adventurers with credits for free spells, up to and including resurrections. Local authorities or wealthy non-nobles may grant franchises or licenses to perform lucrative business operations, such as textile-weaving, bookmaking, glass-blowing, or leather-tanning.

Non-Adventuring Magic Items

The magical objects detailed by the game rules are, for obvious reasons, restricted to items useful to adventurers. It stands to reason, though, that in a world of readily available enchantment, many items would be broadly useful in everyday life and of little or no interest to explorers and freebooters. These items are memorable and unique but players will inevitably trade them for cash or use them to solve plot dilemmas. You don't need detailed rules for them because they don't affect the world of adventure in which the characters operate. Categories of non-adventuring enchantments include:

- **Agricultural**: enhanced plows, fertility potions for livestock, or magic beans
- **Decorative**: art objects, architectural features, furniture, or garments made more beautiful and wondrous by magical means
- **Tools**: enhanced hammers, leather-curing vats, never-dull scissors, rope-making devices, or self-heating forges

Coins

Most of the time, a coin should be a coin—a background object the PCs quest for, but that warrants little attention. Occasionally, though, you can add a sense of reality and nuance to your world by describing certain coin hoards as possessing special properties.

Antiquity: Coins may have been struck hundreds or thousands of years ago. They might date to a past era of a still-extant nation, or to an extinct civilization. They may contain images of long-dead rulers, or symbols of vanished religions. Figures on the coins can be inhuman or monstrous.

Distance: The coins might be contemporary but originate from a far distant land. Physical clues found nearby might explain the past presence of foreign adventurers or traders.

Unusual Forms: Old or foreign coins might have unexpected shapes. They could have holes in the center, so they can be stringed as necklaces. Triangular, spherical, square, or rectangular shapes might replace round coins, perhaps to suit the peculiar hands of non-human races.

Bullion: Large quantities of precious metals are sometimes found not in coin form, but as bricks or wafers. For symbolic reasons, other cultures might store them as cylinders, cones, or other less efficiently stacked shapes.

Superficial Magic: Coins of lost or fabulous civilizations might be imbued with decorative magic. They could glow, change color, or contain moving images. Enchanted coins might produce sounds, ranging from soothing hums to dramatically chiming music. They might emit separate aromas for each denomination, suggesting that the people who minted them relied on smell over sight.

Unusual coins might carry a value higher than their metal content suggests. Magical coins whose functions prove useful to adventurers should not count as cash, but as magical treasure far above their face value.

Outright ownership of land by commoners may be rare in a pseudo-medieval society, but noble patrons often grant property rights. Adventurers typically gain management rights over a section of arable land, which belongs to a noble either as an ancestral claim or a similar feudal grant from a ruler. When it comes to managing and working such land, adventurers may prefer to take a hands-off approach, hiring a bailiff or sheriff to oversee production and taxation. These details may then be left in the background, except when land ownership generates the occasional story hook or perhaps the occasional small profits (nothing rivaling the rewards of adventuring, of course). The PCs may periodically be called on to deal with marauders, repel invading rivals, or quell peasant rebellions.

Intangible Benefits

Other rewards provide benefits with no cash trade-in value.

Kings or other rulers might confer noble titles, granting the characters status and specific legal rights forbidden to commoners. These may include various story benefits, including the right to be present at royal court. There the PCs can wield political influence, gather useful information, and find ways to enhance their holdings and franchises. Letters of marque grant the legal right to attack designated enemies, and in exchange the PCs get to keep financial proceeds without fear legal reprisal within the king's borders.

Other authorities may confer honors and privileges valid within their own spheres of influence. A bandit king may grant rights of command and passage valid on his turf. A clerical order might recognize a PC as a defender of the faith. An honorary degree at a university allows access to libraries and knowledgeable NPCs.

Certain experiences, usually arising during successful encounters, may grant a character a bonus on checks related to a highly specific situation. The situation to which the bonus applies should reflect the original experience in some fashion. For example:

- Noble titles grant characters a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks when dealing with NPCs of inferior rank.
- Subduing the famed Golden Bull grants the character a +2 bonus on Handle Animal involving beasts of burden.
- By slaying the Lich of Gwyndor, the character gains a +2 bonus on all Spellcraft checks concerning necromancy.

To avoid overload, these "situational bonuses" might be limited to three such awards per character. Characters who reach their limit can drop old bonuses to gain new ones.

Story Benefits

Some adventures can confer additional benefits to make it easier for the characters to overcome upcoming obstacles. Often you can describe these story benefits in advance, increasing the players' investment in the proceedings.

- "By driving the orcs out of the valley, you'll make it safe for the peasants who live on your landholding."
- "By capturing the Golden Cornucopia, you can save the besieged residents of High Castle from starvation."
- "By disarming the astral cannon, you can stop the priests of Urgathoa from decimating the paladin army."

Sometimes story benefits become obvious after the characters overcome a crucial obstacle. The PCs may discover only in retrospect that they've saved farmers, lifted the siege of High Castle, or shielded a paladin army.

Story benefits can provide information, grant political influence, or allow NPC allies to overcome rivals and enemies. They allow adventurers to meet or solidify connections to important NPCs. As with any exciting ongoing story, a success often leads to a new challenge, and additional obstacles and encounters for the heroes to overcome.

Treasures as Adventures

Treasures usually appear as the capper to a successful encounter or adventure. Though their appearance may mark the end of one story, they can also serve as springboards to further events.

You can draw out the sense of emotional reward treasure brings by making its acquisition a multi-step affair. Anticipated rewards are sweeter than surprise treasures. By completing one encounter, the heroes may obtain a map, document, or verbal description pointing to a treasure's actual location. This should be an impressive haul of cash or magic the entire group will look forward to claiming.

Alternatively, the treasure itself might be assembled from several parts, each gained after a separate encounter. Magical relics might accumulate additional powers as the pieces are put together. A group of dispersed art objects—for example, a chess set or a collection of royal jewels—may have a greater value if sold together than piecemeal. Linked treasures can unify an otherwise unrelated series of combat and exploration sequences.

Intelligent magic items give you wide latitude to launch adventures. Give the item an agenda of its own. It works to persuade its owner to perform missions furthering its goal. It might unlock new powers as its agenda is served, in effect making it a multi-step treasure. Like any influential NPC, an intelligent item may have past enemies who come gunning for it. Its owners might simply evade them, or counter by actively seeking and defeating their newly acquired foes.

Story events may be triggered not only by the discovery of items but also by their use. When the heroes solve problems using mighty magic items, the unintended consequences of their actions may spawn further adventure plots. For example, magical wishes may alter the world in unexpected ways. After unwittingly skewing the cosmic balance, the adventurers may have to undertake further tasks to put matters right.

Exit Rewards

As your campaign reaches a final climax, you may choose to lay the groundwork for story rewards that change the characters forever, bringing closure to their personal narratives. You may do this when you know a player is leaving your game for good, or when you want to wrap up the entire campaign. The latter is a natural choice as PCs reach the game's highest levels.

Given enough advance notice, you can create a series of adventures leading to an indispensable position for a departing hero. This impressive new role in the world precludes the PC from embarking on further adventures—though the character might make occasional cameo appearances as an NPC, played by you. The exiting hero might take on political power as a king, emperor, or elected ruler. She might be granted military authority as a general, or rise to heights of clerical power as a pontiff or high priestess.

The ultimate exit reward is apotheosis, an ascension to godhood or similar immortal status. Perhaps in the wake of plane-shattering events that leave holes in the known pantheon, the heroes achieve victories so great that they depart the mortal world. Now vastly powerful but unable to intervene directly in mortal events, they accept worship, dole out divine spells to their followers, and hold court in their newly acquired celestial realms. Incorporate these new gods into your next campaign, allowing players' new characters to worship their former ones as deities.

Be careful to avoid favoritism when concluding a PC's career with exit rewards. Give everyone a chance to shape his favored glorious end state. Collaborate with players to successfully bring the closure they envision to their exiting heroes. If they see their characters retiring to blissful obscurity, that can be just as satisfying a reward as godhood.



PCs Controlling Rewards

In some cases, the PCs themselves can take on the responsibility of providing their own rewards, using character abilities and resources gained from their adventures to create exactly the weapons, armors, tools, and treasures they desire. While mundane items might be created using various Craft skills, many PCs set their sights upon more extraordinary goals, such as researching and designing new spells and crafting magic items.

Research and Designing Spells

The subject of designing spells is touched on only briefly in the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*. While some guidance on cost and time is provided, a GM needs to consider balance and design factors before allowing a PC to introduce a new spell into the game. As a first step, request a detailed write-up of the spell using the Pathfinder RPG rules. Based on this write-up, you can determine whether or not the spell is balanced for its level and appropriate for the game.

Spell Categories: When considering a new spell, first determine the category into which it fits. Spells can be divided into the broad categories of offensive magic (spells that deal direct damage, enhance combat abilities, or summon allies to fight), defensive magic (spells that protect the caster or her allies, control or impede enemies, or heal damage), and utility magic (spells of general use outside of combat, such as travel magic and most divinations). Some spells fit into multiple categories, such as *teleport*, with both defensive and utility applications.

Level-Appropriate: Compare the new spell to other spells in the same category and at or near the desired spell level. Pay close attention to "must have" choices like *fireball*, *dimension door*, and *wall of force*. If the spell is more powerful or more useful than other spells of the desired level, increase the level. If it seems weak, consider lowering the level. If there is already a similar spell in the game, pay particularly close attention to the new spell's relative power.

Saving Throw or Attack Roll: Most spells that are usable against others should require either a saving throw or an attack roll (generally touch or ranged touch). Spells that are quite powerful for their level, like *disintegrate* or *phantasmal killer*, may require both, or allow two saving throws. Watch out for spells that effectively take the target out of the fight and are negated by a saving throw. Consider adding a minor effect even on a successful save, and toning down the result of a failed save. Spells that automatically affect the target should be higher level or limited in their consequences.

Components: Unless there's a particularly good reason, almost all spells should require both verbal and somatic components, and most divine spells should require a divine focus. Spells with no verbal component are particularly rare. If the spell-as-designed lacks them, consider adding material component or focus requirements as a means of adding flavor. Expensive components and foci are a good way to adjust the effective power of a spell without changing the level.

Good Spells and Bad Spells

The best spells do something interesting even when the casting isn't fully successful. They should have fairly simple mechanics without many ambiguities, special cases, or qualifications. If a spell takes a half-page or more to describe, it is probably too complicated and should be rejected or revised.

Watch out for spells that counter or otherwise render useless equal- or higher-level magics. For defensive spells, countering an equal-level spell is fine (like *shield* negating *magic missile*), but an offensive spell generally should only overcome lower-level defenses or higher-level spells that duplicate those defenses (like *disintegrate* destroying both *wall of force* and *forcecage*).

Good spells expand upon the existing themes of magic, but in a novel manner. The game doesn't really need more ways to throw damage around, but a spell that hurls adjacent enemies away from the caster is both interesting and useful. Watch for spells that break the implied limits of the game. Most arcane casters have poor healing abilities, and divine spells rarely excel at direct damage. With rare exception, spells shouldn't duplicate existing class features or feats.

While as a general rule overly specialized spells are a bad idea, there's much to be said for researching specialized spells like a brewer's blessing or a charm to hold a shoe on a horse. If a player is particularly excited about the spell, consider approving it even if doesn't have much in-game application.

Creating a Spell

Successfully researching a new spell requires time and expensive research. An optional system for researching new spells is outlined below. The research should cost at least 1,000 gp per spell level (or even more for particularly exotic spells) and require both the Spellcraft skill and a Knowledge skill appropriate to the researcher's class. Wizards and bards use Knowledge (arcana), sorcerers use a Knowledge skill appropriate to their heritage (usually arcana, nature, or planes), druids and rangers use the Knowledge (nature) skill, and clerics and paladins use Knowledge (religion). The actual research process varies by the type of spell, often involving magical experimentation,

the purchase and study of moldy scrolls and grimoires, contact with powerful magical beings or outsiders, and extensive meditation or rituals.

For each week of research, the caster makes separate Knowledge and Spellcraft checks against a DC of 20 plus twice the level of the spell being researched, modified according to Table 5–1. To successfully research the spell, the caster must succeed at both checks. Failure indicates the week was wasted. Spells of 4th–6th level requires 2 weeks of successful research, while spells of 7th–9th level require 4 weeks. The researcher may employ up to two assistants in the research process to assist on the skill checks using the aid another action (see page 86 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*).

Table 5-1: Spell Research Modifiers

Condition	DC Modifier
Caster already knows a similar spell	–2
Per material component required	–2 (maximum –6)
Focus required	–2 to –5, based on cost and rarity
No verbal component	+10
No somatic component	+5
Additional research materials	–1 per 100 gp per spell level (maximum +5)

Spell Components

The Pathfinder Roleplaying Game handles most spell components in a fairly abstract fashion: the components are purchased as part of a spell component pouch, which is assumed to contain the required quantity of any components for any spell of which the caster has knowledge. For many GMs, this suits their needs, and other than having the player mark off some gold when his PC uses a more expensive component like diamond dust, that is the extent of attention spell components receive. The virtue of this system is speed and simplicity. A GM desiring more verisimilitude can instead require the PCs track down or prepare individual components, and even allow PCs to obtain enhanced components that improve their spells.

Even when tracking individual components, many reagents are so common they can be assumed to be easily found. Save the legwork for commissioning tiny silver whistles (for *mage's faithful hound*), finding dragon scales (for *form of the dragon*), and things of that nature. Yet even then, don't go overboard—while finding rare components can be a fun opportunity for side-quests, your players go grocery shopping often enough in real life, and obsessing over whether their leaves are fresh or their eggshell components got cracked in the last fall is a good way to bore your players and ensure nobody wants to play a caster in your game.

Components for New Spells

Two principles of magic to remember when considering spell components are that of contagion (a part retains a connection to the whole) and sympathy (like produces like). A component can be linked to its source, manipulating or drawing power from that source, or it can produce effects based upon its nature.

Historically, components such as blood carried both the life and strength of a creature, and the potential to bind two lives together; coffin nails could be pounded or bound into a weapon, making it strike true; hair and nails rendered the original owner vulnerable to hostile magic even at great distances; and animal horns and tusks provide protection to their wearer, not to mention the healing properties of a unicorn's horn.

Most spell components in the Pathfinder RPG are based on sympathy, either duplicating the desired outcome of the spell (gauze and a wisp of smoke for *gaseous form*) or having properties related to the spell (an owl's feather for *owl's wisdom*). The latter sort of component may utilize contagion as well, as the single feather retains the nature of the whole.

When adding material components or a focus to a new spell, consider what forces the spell is shaping, and select components that reflect those forces. Good components don't necessarily need to be literally appropriate—the handful of earth required for *detect undead* is an example of a more symbolic fit. Humorous spell components are tempting (and well represented in the game), but should be used sparingly.

Enhanced Components

An enhanced component is a specialized reagent used to improve a spell. The exact effects of such a component are up to the GM, but may include a small increase to save DC, caster level, damage, range, or duration. Particularly rare enhanced components may even provide the benefits of metamagic feats. In addition, enhanced components used in long-duration spells often make them significantly harder to dispel.

The power of a component is strongly influenced by the means by which it was obtained. For most magic, the most powerful components are those freely given, rather than taken by force, thievery, or magical compulsion. A vial of dragon's tears wept during a masterful performance may well hold more magic than a vial of blood taken from that same dragon's ravaged corpse. The same is not true for darker magics. For such spells, components obtained in profane and blasphemous rituals are the most powerful by far.

Symbolism is key in obtaining enhanced components. A wizard seeking the last light of an eclipse to enhance a *sunburst* might catch the sun's rays in a mirror, while

a druid might gather the nectar of morning glories that bloomed in the day's light and shut in the darkness of the eclipse for the same spell. Neither is literally the last light of the sun, but the principle of contagion suffices to enhance the spell.

Before introducing enhanced components into your game, consider the implications of allowing casters to increase their abilities without investing in metamagic feats or permanent magic items. To preserve their rare and exotic feel, enhanced components should not be easily obtainable or fixed in price. Finding a source for an enhanced component is an adventure in itself, and the quantities available should be limited to just a few castings. Two examples are as follows:

Dragon's Tears: These yellowish drops extend the duration of any spell that influences emotion, such as *heroism* or *rage*. If the tears are both genuine and freely given, the duration is increased by 50%. If obtained by trickery or magic, the increase is only 20%.

Vampire Dust: The carefully sifted dust of a destroyed vampire enhances spells fueled by negative energy. A single vampire yields only 1d4+1 uses of dust. Spells infused with vampire dust receive a +1 bonus to caster level. If the caster personally slew the vampire, the dust increases save DCs by +1 as well.

Wishes

The monstrous four-armed demon spoke in a surprisingly pleasant tenor voice. "And what, pray tell, is it you so desire?" Setiyel paused, steeling his resolve. "I wish suffering for my family, tenfold for each wrong visited upon myself. I wish the lord mayor's daughter and rank, and his head resting beneath my boot. I wish for such wealth that even a Qadiran merchant would weep with envy." The demon's laugh boomed throughout the cavern. "Is that all, little one? I expected ambition."

More so than almost any other ability, *wish* and its cousin *miracle* have the potential to drastically change a campaign. When your players reach the upper echelons of the game at 15th level and beyond, you should consider whether or not you want to allow your players access to *wishes*, as even if they can't buy them, they'll soon enough be able to cast the *wish* spell themselves.

The easiest way to control *wish* is to restrict it to those options listed in the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*. None of these uses are game-breaking. However, by expanding the boundaries of *wish* and *miracle*, you open up roleplaying and story opportunities that can keep your high-level game fresh and exciting for many adventures to come.

Types of Wishes: One of the first boundaries to set is whether or not all wishes are created equal, and have similar constraints. Treating all *wishes* the same has the virtues of consistency and simplicity, and helps keep your game under control. Having a hierarchy of *wishes* gives fodder for the story in your game, letting PCs alter their local reality with their wishes, but leaving the option of seeking out higher powers to grant the wishes spoken of in legends. A suggested hierarchy is *wishes* from spells or magic items, followed by *miracle*, *wishes* granted by artifacts and relics, *wishes* granted by powerful outsiders like the efreet and djinn, and finally those *wishes* bestowed directly by gods and other entities beyond mortal ken.

Making Good Wishes: The best *wishes* are short, unambiguous, related to matters immediately at hand, and usually aimed at a simple (if powerful) task. A *wish* for a sundered *mirror of mental prowess* to be made whole or a *wish* to reveal the identity of the thief of the crown jewels is unlikely to go awry.

Making Bad Wishes: *Wishes* born of greed or vengeance have a way of turning sour. Attempts to guard against mishap with a list of conditions and qualifiers are rarely successful, most often resulting in partial fulfillment of the *wish*. *Wishes* that stretch the limits of the power granting them are always ill advised. If the *wish* is from a spell or magic item, failure or backlash is likely, while if the *wish* is from an outside source, the granter of the *wish* may be angered by mortal temerity and twist the *wish* or otherwise seek retribution against the wisher.

Twisting Wishes: Folklore is filled with tales of *wishes* gone awry, bringing heartbreak, misery, and perhaps eventually wisdom to the hapless wisher. The *wishes* most likely to be perverted away from the wisher's intent are *wishes* granted by hostile outsiders, *wishes* from cursed objects, and bad *wishes* as described above. Evil outsiders in particular are loath to grant *wishes* that don't serve evil ends, and take every opportunity to twist them toward harm and suffering. A *wish* for eternal life may leave the wisher imprisoned in a decrepit yet still undying body. A *wish* for a powerful magic item can be granted by stealing the item from a powerful and vengeful lord. *Wishes* are best turned awry by adhering closely to the letter of the *wish*, but violating the spirit.

Deferred Results: Rather than denying a particularly powerful *wish*, such as for the throne of a kingdom, the *wish* can be granted over an extended period. The *wish* subtly reshapes reality, guiding the wisher through seeming coincidence, good fortune, and the timely appearance of helpful NPCs. Success is not assured unless the PC takes advantage of her opportunities.

Making Magic Items

In every campaign, there comes a time when the PCs are no longer satisfied with the magic items available to their characters. Whether looking for a power to complement their skills, a new twist on an old favorite, or just the sheer

joy of invention, creating a new magic item opens up new venues for a PC. It is also a great way to leave a mark on the campaign—after all, even the oldest magic items were once new to the world.

Pricing a magic item is more art than science. Guidance on item pricing is given in Table 15–29 on page 550 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*, but a trip through the magic item section shows the formulas are often not applied exactly. An example is the *ring of invisibility*, with a calculated price of 10,800 gp, but a book value of 20,000 gp. This is because the at-will nature of the ring offsets the biggest drawback of *invisibility*, namely that it ends after attacking. When pricing new magic items, watch out for any item that counteracts a basic weakness of an ability, class, or spell.

The best test for item pricing is to compare it to "must have" items in the game, like weapons, armor, and stat-boosting gear. Also compare it to other items that share the same slot, and items with similar powers. As a rule of thumb, if you'd take the item in a heartbeat over a more expensive standard item, it is probably too cheap. And if you'd never consider taking a 10,000 gp ring over a *belt of physical might +2* or even a *+2 battleaxe*, it might just be overpriced. However, it is safer to price items too high rather than too low. After all, the PC gets a new, custom magic item out of the arrangement, and that's worth paying a bit extra.

Ad-Hoc Pricing

If there's no effect in Table 15–29 that matches the new item's powers, try looking through existing magic items for something that's close. For example, Seltyiel wants to add the bladethirst ability to his longsword, a power he's come up with that lets him draw the weapon as a free action. This is essentially the Quick Draw feat, but tied to a single weapon. Even though it's a weapon enhancement, Seltyiel wants it as a flat cost, like adding fire resistance to a suit of armor. Looking over the ability, the GM decides that this fits well, since it doesn't really scale up with a more powerful weapon. *Gloves of arrow snaring* are a 4,000 gp item that grants a feat, so the GM uses this as the base price. Multiple different abilities on a magic item would normally increase this cost by 50%, but since the Quick Draw feat would allow drawing items other than just a single weapon, the GM splits the difference and makes it a 5,000 gp weapon enhancement.



Keeping the Balance

Watch out for magic items that provide benefits beyond the calculated price. Keep an eye toward preserving the existing power level of magic items in the game.

Disadvantages That Aren't: Be wary of items that are designed with a class or alignment restriction in order to lower the price. Since the item's restriction doesn't restrict the character who is going to use it, it isn't really a drawback at all and shouldn't reduce the price.

Slotless Items: The Pathfinder RPG is designed with assumptions about how many magic items a character can reasonably use at the same time, requiring players to make hard choices about which magic items their PCs acquire. Slotless items like *ioun stones* are usually either relatively low-powered or specialized in purpose. Think carefully before allowing a new magic that essentially duplicates an old one, but without using up an item slot.

Good Item, Bad Formula: Take a look at what the magic item actually does, and compare it to the formula used. Consider tweaking the cost or powers to match the provided benefit. A ring that provides *mind blank* calculates to 153,000 gp, while one that casts *mind blank* once per day (at 24 hours per use) comes out to 55,080 gp. In truth, there's not a large difference in utility between the two items, and the first ring is a better fit for the theme of continuous mental protection.

Random Item Generators

The following tables allow GMs to randomly generate a wide variety of specific magic items, and complement the item generation tables found in the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*. Note that these tables create masterwork versions of armor and weapons—if you want to roll up normal, non-masterwork items, simply subtract the masterwork cost from the base prices listed. If generated items prove too powerful (or not powerful enough!) for your PCs' levels, simply roll again!



Table 5-2: Random Items

Minor[1]	Medium[1]	Major[1]	Item	Consult Table
1–25	—	—	Mundane equipment (worth 10 gp or less)	6–9: Goods and Services[2]
26–36	—	—	Mundane equipment (worth 11–50 gp or less)	6–9: Goods and Services[2]
37–42	1–5	—	Mundane equipment (worth 51–100 gp or less)	6–9: Goods and Services[2]
43–46	6–16	—	Mundane equipment (worth 100 gp or more)	6–9: Goods and Services[2]
47–56	17–19	—	Armor or shield (non-magical masterwork)	5–4: Random Armor and Shields
57–69	20–23	—	Weapon (non-magical masterwork)	5–11: Random Weapons
70–77	24–35	1–10	Potion	5–19: Random Potions and Oils
78–83	36–45	11–22	Scroll	5–24: Random Scrolls
84–88	46–53	23–26	Minor wondrous item	15–18: Minor Wondrous Items[2]
89–91	54–68	27–38	Armor or shield (magical)	5–4: Random Armor and Shields
92–96	69–83	39–56	Weapon (magical)	5–11: Random Weapons
97–98	84–91	57–66	Wand	5–47: Random Wands
99–100	92–95	67–74	Ring	15–13: Rings[2]
—	96–100	75–84	Medium wondrous item	15–19: Medium Wondrous Items[2]
—	—	85–90	Rod	15–14: Rods[2]
—	—	91–94	Staff	15–16: Staves[2]
—	—	95–100	Major wondrous item	15–20: Major Wondrous Items[2]

[1] Average values: minor, 1,000 gp; medium, 10,000 gp; major, 40,000 gp.

[2] See the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*.

Table 5-3: Random Armor

d%	Armor[1]	Price	Special Materials[2]
1–5	Padded armor	155 gp	—
6–13	Leather armor	160 gp	—
14–22	Studded leather armor	175 gp	Metals
23–30	Chain shirt	250 gp	Metals
31–38	Hide armor	165 gp	Dragonhide
39–46	Scale mail	200 gp	Metals
47–54	Chainmail	300 gp	Metals
55–62	Breastplate	350 gp	Dragonhide, metals
63–70	Splint mail	350 gp	Metals
71–78	Banded mail	400 gp	Dragonhide, metals
79–86	Half-plate	750 gp	Dragonhide, metals
87–94	Full plate	1,650 gp	Dragonhide, metals
95–97	Armor with armor spikes; roll again for armor type	+50 gp	—
98–100	Armor with locked gauntlet; roll again for armor type	+8 gp	—

[1] For magic armor, consult Table 5–8: Magic Armor and Shields.

[2] Consult Table 5–6: Armor Special Materials.

Table 5-4: Random Armor and Shields

d%	Armor Category	Consult Table
1–55	Armor	5–3: Random Armor
56–100	Shield	5–5: Random Shields

Table 5-5: Random Shields

d%	Shield[1]	Price	Special Materials[2]
1–16	Buckler	165 gp	Wood, steel
17–32	Shield, light wooden	153 gp	Wood
33–48	Shield, light steel	159 gp	Steel
49–64	Shield, heavy wooden	157 gp	Wood
65–80	Shield, heavy steel	170 gp	Steel
81–95	Shield, tower	180 gp	Wood
96–100	Shield with shield spikes[3]; roll again for shield type	+10 gp	—

[1] For magic shields, consult Table 5–8: Magic Armor and Shields.

[2] Consult Table 5–7: Shield Special Materials.

[3] Reroll buckler and tower shield, which cannot have spikes.

Table 5-6: Armor Special Materials

Category[1]	Normal	Adamantine[2]	Dragonhide[3]	Mithral[4]
Dragonhide	01–90	—	91–100	—
Dragonhide, metals	01–90	91–94	95–98	99–100
Metals	01–90	91–97	—	98–100

[1] For magic armor, consult Table 5–8: Magic Armor and Shields.

[2] For adamantine armor, add +4,850 gp to light armor, +9,850 gp to medium armor, +14,850 gp to heavy armor.

[3] For dragonhide armor, double the item's cost.

[4] For mithral armor, add +850 gp for light armor, +3,850 gp for medium armor, +8,850 gp for heavy armor.

Table 5-7: Shield Special Materials

Category[1]	Normal	Darkwood[2]	Dragonhide[3]	Mithral[4]
Steel	01–90	—	91–95	96–100
Wood	01–90	91–100	—	—
Wood, steel	01–90	91–95	—	96–100

[1] For magic shields, consult Table 5–8: Magic Armor and Shields.

[2] For darkwood shields, add +10 gp per pound.

[3] For dragonhide shields, double the item's cost.

[4] For mithral shields, add +850 gp.

Table 5-8: Magic Armor and Shields

Minor	Medium	Major	Item	Base Price
01–80	01–10	—	+1 armor/shield	1,000 gp
81–87	11–30	—	+2 armor/shield	4,000 gp
—	31–50	01–16	+3 armor/shield	9,000 gp
—	51–57	17–38	+4 armor/shield	16,000 gp
—	—	39–57	+5 armor/shield	25,000 gp
—	—	—	+6 armor/shield[1]	36,000 gp
—	—	—	+7 armor/shield[1]	49,000 gp
—	—	—	+8 armor/shield[1]	64,000 gp
—	—	—	+9 armor/shield[1]	81,000 gp
—	—	—	+10 armor/shield[1]	100,000 gp
88–89	58–60	58–60	Specific armor[2]	—
90–91	61–63	61–63	Specific shield[3]	—
92–100	64–100	64–100	Special ability and roll again[4]	—

[1] Armor and shields can't have enhancement bonuses higher than +5. Use these lines to determine price when special abilities are added in.

[2] Consult Table 15–6: Specific Armors (*Core Rulebook* 464).

[3] Consult Table 15–7: Specific Shields (*Core Rulebook* 467).

[4] Reroll specific armor, specific shield, or special ability. Consult Table 5–9: Magic Armor Special Abilities or Table 5–10: Magic Shield Special Abilities, as appropriate.





Table 5–9: Magic Armor Special Abilities

Minor	Medium	Major	Special Ability	Base Price Modifier
01–25	01–05	01–03	Glamered	+2,700 gp
26–32	06–08	04	Fortification, light	+1 bonus[1]
33–52	09–11	—	Slick	+3,750 gp
53–92	12–17	—	Shadow	+3,750 gp
93–96	18–19	—	Spell resistance (13)	+2 bonus[1]
97	20–29	05–07	Slick, improved	+15,000 gp
98–99	30–49	08–13	Shadow, improved	+15,000 gp
—	50–74	14–28	Energy resistance	+18,000 gp
—	75–79	29–33	Ghost touch	+3 bonus[1]
—	80–84	34–35	Invulnerability	+3 bonus[1]
—	85–89	36–40	Fortification, moderate	+3 bonus[1]
—	90–94	41–42	Spell resistance (15)	+3 bonus[1]
—	95–99	43	Wild	+3 bonus[1]
—	—	44–48	Slick, greater	+33,750 gp
—	—	49–58	Shadow, greater	+33,750 gp
—	—	59–83	Energy resistance, improved	+42,000 gp
—	—	84–88	Spell resistance (17)	+4 bonus[1]
—	—	89	Etherealness	+49,000 gp
—	—	90	Undead controlling	+49,000 gp
—	—	91–92	Fortification, heavy	+5 bonus[1]
—	—	93–94	Spell resistance (19)	+5 bonus[1]
—	—	95–99	Energy resistance, greater	+66,000 gp
100	100	100	Roll again twice[2]	—

[1] Add to enhancement bonus on Table 5–8: Magic Armor and Shields to determine total market price.

[2] If you roll a special ability twice, roll again. If you roll two versions of the same special ability, use the better.

Table 5–10: Magic Shield Special Abilities

Minor	Medium	Major	Special Ability	Base Price Modifier
01–20	01–10	01–05	Arrow catching	+1 bonus[1]
21–40	11–20	06–08	Bashing	+1 bonus[1]
41–50	21–25	09–10	Blinding	+1 bonus[1]
51–75	26–40	11–15	Fortification, light	+1 bonus[1]
76–92	41–50	16–20	Arrow deflection	+2 bonus[1]
93–97	51–57	21–25	Animated	+2 bonus[1]
98–99	58–59	—	Spell resistance (13)	+2 bonus[1]
—	60–79	26–41	Energy resistance	+18,000 gp
—	80–85	42–46	Ghost touch	+3 bonus[1]
—	86–95	47–56	Fortification, moderate	+3 bonus[1]
—	96–98	57–58	Spell resistance (15)	+3 bonus[1]
—	99	59	Wild	+3 bonus[1]
—	—	60–84	Energy resistance, improved	+42,000 gp
—	—	85–86	Spell resistance (17)	+4 bonus[1]
—	—	87	Undead controlling	+49,000 gp
—	—	88–91	Fortification, heavy	+5 bonus[1]
—	—	92–93	Reflecting	+5 bonus[1]
—	—	94	Spell resistance (19)	+5 bonus[1]
—	—	95–99	Energy resistance, greater	+66,000 gp
100	100	100	Roll again twice[2]	—

[1] Add to enhancement bonus on Table 5–8: Magical Armor and Shields to determine total market price.

[2] If you roll a special ability twice, roll again. If you roll two versions of the same special ability, use the better.

Table 5–11: Random Weapons

d%	Weapon Category
01–45	Table 5–12: Simple Weapons
46–80	Table 5–13: Martial Weapons
81–100	Table 5–14: Exotic Weapons

Table 5–12: Simple Weapons

d%	Weapon[1]	Price	Special Materials[2]
01–05	Blowgun	302 gp	—
06–08	Darts, blowgun (10)	6 gp	Metals
09–13	Club	300 gp	Wood
14–16	Crossbow, heavy	350 gp	—
17–21	Crossbow, light	335 gp	—
22–24	Bolts, crossbow (10)	61 gp	Metals
25–29	Dagger	302 gp	Metals
30–34	Dagger, punching	302 gp	Metals
35–39	Dart	300 gp	Metals
40–44	Gauntlet	302 gp	Metals
45–49	Gauntlet, spiked	305 gp	Metals
50–54	Javelin	301 gp	Metals, wood
55–59	Longspear	305 gp	Metals, wood
60–62	Mace, heavy	312 gp	Metals
63–67	Mace, light	305 gp	Metals
68–72	Morningstar	308 gp	Metals
73–77	Quarterstaff	600 gp	Wood
78–82	Shortspear	301 gp	Metals, wood
83–87	Sickle	306 gp	Metals
88–92	Sling	300 gp	—
93–95	Bullets, sling (10)	60 gp	Metals
96–100	Spear	302 gp	Metals, wood

[1] For magical weapons, consult Table 5–16: Magic Weapons.

[2] Consult Table 5–15: Weapon Special Materials.

Table 5–13: Martial Weapons

d%	Weapon[1]	Price	Special Materials[2]
01–02	Axe, throwing	308 gp	Metals
03–04	Battleaxe	310 gp	Metals
05–06	Falchion	375 gp	Metals
07–09	Flail	308 gp	Metals
10–11	Flail, heavy	315 gp	Metals
12–13	Glaive	308 gp	Metals
14–16	Greataxe	320 gp	Metals
17–19	Greatclub	305 gp	Wood
20–22	Greatsword	350 gp	Metals
23–24	Guisarme	309 gp	Metals
25–26	Halberd	310 gp	Metals
27–29	Hammer, light	301 gp	Metals
30–32	Handaxe	306 gp	Metals
33–34	Kukri	308 gp	Metals
35–37	Lance	310 gp	Metals
38–41	Longbow	375 gp	Wood
42–45	Longbow, composite	400 gp	Wood
46–48	Arrows (20)	121 gp	Metals
49–51	Longsword	315 gp	Metals
52–53	Pick, heavy	308 gp	Metals
54–56	Pick, light	304 gp	Metals
57–58	Ranseur	310 gp	Metals
59–61	Rapier	320 gp	Metals
62–63	Sap	301 gp	—
64–66	Scimitar	315 gp	Metals
67–69	Scythe	318 gp	Metals
70–78	Shortbow	330 gp	Wood
79–82	Shortbow, composite	375 gp	Wood
83	Armor spikes[3]	+50 gp	—
84–86	Shield spikes[4]	+10 gp	—
90–91	Starknife	324 gp	Metals
92–94	Sword, short	310 gp	Metals
95–97	Trident	315 gp	Metals, wood
98–100	Warhammer	312 gp	Metals

[1] For magical weapons, consult Table 5–16: Magic Weapons.

[2] Consult Table 5–15: Weapon Special Materials.

[3] Consult Table 5–3: Random Armor. There is a 10% chance the armor is magical; if so, consult Table 5–8: Magic Armor and Shields.

[4] Consult Table 5–5: Random Shields; reroll buckler and tower shield (which cannot have spikes). There is a 10% chance the shield is magical; if so, consult Table 5–8: Magic Armor and Shields.



Table 5-14: Exotic Weapons

d%	Weapon[1]	Price	Special Materials[2]
01–05	Axe, orc double	660 gp	Metals
06–10	Bolas	305 gp	—
11–15	Chain, spiked	325 gp	Metals
16–20	Crossbow, hand	400 gp	—
21–23	Bolts, hand crossbow (10)	61 gp	Metals
24–26	Crossbow, repeating heavy	700 gp	—
27–29	Crossbow, repeating light	550 gp	—
30–32	Bolts, repeating crossbow (5)	31 gp	Metals
33–37	Curve blade, elven	380 gp	Metals
38–42	Flail, dire	690 gp	Metals
43–47	Hammer, gnome hooked	620 gp	Metals
48–52	Kama	302 gp	Metals
53–55	Net	320 gp	—
56–60	Nunchaku	302 gp	Wood
61–65	Sai	301 gp	Metals
66–70	Shuriken (5)	31 gp	Metals
71–74	Siangham	303 gp	Metals
75–79	Sling staff, halfling	320 gp	Wood
80–82	Bullets, sling (10)	60 gp	Metals
83–86	Sword, bastard	335 gp	Metals
87–90	Sword, two-bladed	700 gp	Metals
91–93	Urgrosh, dwarven	650 gp	Metals
94–96	Waraxe, dwarven	330 gp	Metals
97–100	Whip	301 gp	—

[1] For magical weapons, consult Table 5–16: Magic Weapons.

[2] Consult Table 5–15: Weapon Special Materials.



Table 5-16: Magic Weapons

Minor	Medium	Major	Weapon Bonus	Base Price[1]
01–70	01–10	—	+1	2,000 gp
71–85	11–29	—	+2	8,000 gp
—	30–58	01–20	+3	18,000 gp
—	59–62	21–38	+4	32,000 gp
—	—	39–49	+5	50,000 gp
—	—	—	+6[2]	72,000 gp
—	—	—	+7[2]	98,000 gp
—	—	—	+8[2]	128,000 gp
—	—	—	+9[2]	162,000 gp
—	—	—	+10[2]	200,000 gp
86–90	63–68	50–63	Specific weapon[3]	—
91–100	69–100	64–100	Special ability and roll again[4]	—

[1] For ammunition, this price is for 50 arrows, bolts, or bullets.

[2] A weapon can't have an enhancement bonus higher than +5. Use these lines to determine price when special abilities are added in.

[3] Consult Table 15–11: Specific Weapons (*Core Rulebook* 471).

[4] Consult Table 5–17: Magic Melee Weapon Special Abilities or Table 5–18: Magic Ranged Weapon Special Abilities, as appropriate.



Table 5-15: Weapon Special Materials

Category	Normal	Adamantine[1]	Cold Iron[2]	Darkwood[3]	Mithral[4]	Silver[5]
Metals	01–90	91–92	93–95	—	96	97–100
Metals, wood	01–90	91–92	93–94	95–96	97–98	99–100
Wood	01–90	—	—	91–100	—	—

[1] For adamantine weapons, add +2700 gp; for ammunition, add +54 gp per missile.

[2] For cold iron weapons, double the item's base cost.

[3] For darkwood weapons, add +10 gp per pound.

[4] For mithral weapons, add +500 gp per pound.

[5] For silver weapons, add +2 gp for ammunition, +20 gp for light weapons, +90 gp for one-handed weapons, and +180 gp for two-handed weapons.

Table 5–17: Magic Melee Weapon Special Abilities

Minor	Medium	Major	Special Ability	Base Price Modifier[1]
01–10	01–06	01–03	Bane	+1 bonus
11–17	07–12	—	Defending	+1 bonus
18–27	13–19	04–06	Flaming	+1 bonus
28–37	20–26	07–09	Frost	+1 bonus
38–47	27–33	10–12	Shock	+1 bonus
48–56	34–38	13–15	Ghost touch	+1 bonus
57–67	39–44	—	Keen[2]	+1 bonus
68–71	45–48	16–19	Ki Focus	+1 bonus
72–75	49–50	—	Merciful	+1 bonus
76–82	51–54	20–21	Mighty cleaving	+1 bonus
83–87	55–59	22–24	Spell storing	+1 bonus
88–91	60–63	25–28	Throwing	+1 bonus
92–95	64–65	29–32	Thundering	+1 bonus
96–99	66–69	33–36	Vicious	+1 bonus
—	70–72	37–41	Anarchic	+2 bonus
—	73–75	42–46	Axiomatic	+2 bonus
—	76–78	47–49	Disruption[3]	+2 bonus
—	79–81	50–54	Flaming burst	+2 bonus
—	82–84	55–59	Icy burst	+2 bonus
—	85–87	60–64	Holy	+2 bonus
—	88–90	65–69	Shocking burst	+2 bonus
—	91–93	70–74	Unholy	+2 bonus
—	94–95	75–78	Wounding	+2 bonus
—	—	79–83	Speed	+3 bonus
—	—	84–86	Brilliant energy	+4 bonus
—	—	87–88	Dancing	+4 bonus
—	—	89–90	Vorpal[2]	+5 bonus
100	96–100	91–100	Roll again twice[4]	—

[1] Add to enhancement bonus on Table 5–16: Magic Weapons to determine total market price.

[2] Piercing or slashing weapons only (slashing only for vorpal). Reroll if randomly generated for a bludgeoning weapon.

[3] Bludgeoning weapons only. Reroll if randomly generated for a piercing or slashing weapon.

[4] Reroll if you get a duplicate special ability, an ability incompatible with an ability that you've already rolled, or if the extra ability puts you over the +10 limit. A weapon's enhancement bonus and special ability bonus equivalents can't total more than +10.

Table 5–18: Magic Ranged Weapon Special Abilities

Minor	Medium	Major	Special Ability	Base Price Modifier[1]
01–12	01–08	01–04	Bane[2]	+1 bonus
13–25	09–16	05–08	Distance[2]	+1 bonus
26–40	17–28	09–12	Flaming[2]	+1 bonus
41–55	29–40	13–16	Frost[2]	+1 bonus
56–60	41–42	—	Merciful[2]	+1 bonus
61–68	43–47	17–21	Returning	+1 bonus
69–83	48–59	22–25	Shock[2]	+1 bonus
84–93	60–64	26–27	Seeking	+1 bonus
94–99	65–68	28–29	Thundering[2]	+1 bonus
—	69–71	30–34	Anarchic[2]	+2 bonus
—	72–74	35–39	Axiomatic[2]	+2 bonus
—	75–79	40–49	Flaming burst[2]	+2 bonus
—	80–82	50–54	Holy[2]	+2 bonus
—	83–87	55–64	Icy burst[2]	+2 bonus
—	88–92	65–74	Shocking burst[2]	+2 bonus
—	93–95	75–79	Unholy[2]	+2 bonus
—	—	80–84	Speed	+3 bonus
—	—	85–90	Brilliant energy	+4 bonus
100	96–100	91–100	Roll again twice[3]	—

[1] Add to enhancement bonus on Table 5–16: Magic Weapons to determine total market price.

[2] Bows, crossbows, and slings crafted with this ability bestow this power upon their ammunition.

[3] Reroll if you get a duplicate special ability, an ability incompatible with an ability that you've already rolled, or if the extra ability puts you over the +10 limit. A weapon's enhancement bonus and special ability bonus equivalents can't total more than +10.



Table 5-19: Random Potions and Oils

Minor	Medium	Major	Spell Level[1]	Caster Level
01–20	—	—	0	1st
21–60	01–20	—	1st	1st
61–100	21–60	01–20	2nd	3rd
—	61–100	21–100	3rd	5th

[1] Consult Tables 5–20 through 5–23.

Table 5-20: 0-Level Potions and Oils

d%	Potion or Oil	Price
01–14	*arcane mark*	25 gp
15–28	*guidance*	25 gp
29–44	*light*	25 gp
45–58	*purify food and drink*	25 gp
59–72	*resistance*	25 gp
73–86	*stabilize*	25 gp
87–100	*virtue*	25 gp

Table 5-21: 1st-Level Potion and Oils

d%	Potion or Oil	Price
01–02	*animate rope*	50 gp
03–06	*bless weapon*	50 gp
07–16	*cure light wounds*	50 gp
17–20	*endure elements*	50 gp
21–26	*enlarge person*	50 gp
27–29	*erase*	50 gp
30–32	*goodberry*	50 gp
33–34	*grease*	50 gp
35–38	*hide from animals*	50 gp
39–42	*hide from undead*	50 gp
43–44	*hold portal*	50 gp
45–48	*jump*	50 gp
49–52	*mage armor*	50 gp
53–56	*magic fang*	50 gp
57–60	*magic stone*	50 gp
61–64	*magic weapon*	50 gp
65–68	*pass without trace*	50 gp
69–71	*protection from chaos*	50 gp
72–74	*protection from evil*	50 gp
75–77	*protection from good*	50 gp
78–80	*protection from law*	50 gp
81–84	*reduce person*	50 gp
85–88	*remove fear*	50 gp
89–92	*sanctuary*	50 gp
93–96	*shield of faith*	50 gp
97–100	*shillelagh*	50 gp

Table 5-22: 2nd-Level Potion and Oils

d%	Potion or Oil	Price
01–02	*aid*	300 gp
03–04	*align weapon*	300 gp
05–06	*arcane lock*	300 gp
07–10	*barkskin*	300 gp
11–15	*bear's endurance*	300 gp
16–17	*blur*	300 gp
18–22	*bull's strength*	300 gp
23–26	*cat's grace*	300 gp
27–36	*cure moderate wounds*	300 gp
37	*darkness*	300 gp
38–40	*darkvision*	300 gp
41–43	*delay poison*	300 gp
44–46	*eagle's spendor*	300 gp
47–49	*fox's cunning*	300 gp
50–51	*gentle repose*	300 gp
52–57	*invisibility*	300 gp
58–61	*levitate*	300 gp
62	*make whole*	300 gp
63–64	*obscure object*	300 gp
65–67	*owl's wisdom*	300 gp
68–69	*protection from arrows*	300 gp
70	*reduce animal*	300 gp
71–73	*remove paralysis*	300 gp
74	*resist energy, acid*	300 gp
75	*resist energy, cold*	300 gp
76	*resist energy, electricity*	300 gp
77	*resist energy, fire*	300 gp
78	*resist energy, sonic*	300 gp
79–83	*rope trick*	300 gp
84–86	*shatter*	300 gp
87–90	*spider climb*	300 gp
91–92	*status*	300 gp
93–94	*undetectable alignment*	300 gp
95–96	*warp wood*	300 gp
97–98	*wood shape*	300 gp
99–100	*continual flame*	350 gp



Table 5-23: 3rd-Level Potion and Oils

d%	Potion or Oil	Price
1–10	*cure serious wounds*	750 gp
11–12	*daylight*	750 gp
13–14	*dispel magic*	750 gp
15–18	*displacement*	750 gp
19–20	*fire trap*	775 gp
21–22	*flame arrow*	750 gp
23–28	*fly*	750 gp
29–34	*gaseous form*	750 gp
35–36	*good hope*	750 gp
37–42	*haste*	750 gp
43–48	*heroism*	750 gp
49–52	*keen edge*	750 gp
53–56	*magic fang, greater*	750 gp
57–59	*magic vestment*	750 gp
60–62	*neutralize poison*	750 gp
63	*protection from energy, acid*	750 gp
64	*protection from energy, cold*	750 gp
65	*protection from energy, electricity*	750 gp
66	*protection from energy, fire*	750 gp
67	*protection from energy, sonic*	750 gp
68–71	*rage*	750 gp
72–75	*remove blindness/deafness*	750 gp
76–79	*remove curse*	750 gp
80–83	*remove disease*	750 gp
84–85	*shrink item*	750 gp
86–87	*stone shape*	750 gp
88–91	*tongues*	750 gp
92–95	*water breathing*	750 gp
96–98	*water walk*	750 gp
99–100	*nondetection*	800 gp



Table 5-24: Random Scrolls

d%	Spell Type
01–70	Arcane scroll[1]
71–100	Divine scroll[1]

[1] Consult Table 5–25: Number of Spells on scroll.

Table 5-25: Number of Spells on Scroll

d%	Spells Stored on Scroll
1–80	One spell[1]
81–95	Two spells[1]
96–100	Three spells[1]

[1] Consult Table 5–26: Scroll Level.

Table 5-26: Scroll Level

Minor	Medium	Major	Spell Level[1]	Caster Level
01–05	—	—	0	1st
06–50	—	—	1st	1st
51–95	01–05	—	2nd	3rd
96–100	06–65	—	3rd	5th
—	66–95	01–05	4th	7th
—	96–100	06–50	5th	9th
—	—	51–70	6th	11th
—	—	71–85	7th	13th
—	—	86–95	8th	15th
—	—	96–100	9th	17th

[1] For arcane spells, consult Tables 5–27 through 5–36. For divine spells, consult Tables 5–37 through 5–46.

Table 5-27: 0-Level Arcane Spells

d%	Spell	Scroll Price
01–06	*acid splash*	12.5 gp
07–10	*arcane mark*	12.5 gp
11–13	*bleed*	12.5 gp
14–18	*dancing lights*	12.5 gp
19–23	*daze*	12.5 gp
24–30	*detect magic*	12.5 gp
31–37	*detect poison*	12.5 gp
38–44	*disrupt undead*	12.5 gp
45–48	*flare*	12.5 gp
49–52	*ghost sound*	12.5 gp
53–58	*light*	12.5 gp
59–62	*mage hand*	12.5 gp
63–68	*mending*	12.5 gp
69–76	*message*	12.5 gp
77–79	*open/close*	12.5 gp
80–82	*prestidigitation*	12.5 gp
83–88	*ray of frost*	12.5 gp
89–91	*read magic*	12.5 gp
92–95	*resistance*	12.5 gp
96–100	*touch of fatigue*	12.5 gp

Table 5-28: 1st-Level Arcane Spells

d%	Spell	Scroll Price
01–02	*alarm*	25 gp
03	*animate rope*	25 gp
04–06	*burning hands*	25 gp
07–09	*cause fear*	25 gp
10–11	*charm person*	25 gp
12–14	*chill touch*	25 gp
15–16	*color spray*	25 gp
17–19	*comprehend languages*	25 gp
20–22	*detect secret doors*	25 gp
23–25	*detect undead*	25 gp
26–28	*disguise self*	25 gp
29–31	*endure elements*	25 gp
32–33	*enlarge person*	25 gp
34	*erase*	25 gp
35–37	*expeditious retreat*	25 gp
38–39	*floating disk*	25 gp
40–42	*grease*	25 gp
43	*hold portal*	25 gp
44–46	*hypnotism*	25 gp
47–49	*identify*	25 gp
50–51	*jump*	25 gp
52–54	*mage armor*	25 gp
55	*magic aura*	25 gp
56–58	*magic missile*	25 gp
59–61	*magic weapon*	25 gp
62–63	*mount*	25 gp
64–66	*obscuring mist*	25 gp
67–68	*protection from chaos*	25 gp
69–70	*protection from evil*	25 gp
71–72	*protection from good*	25 gp
73–74	*protection from law*	25 gp
75–76	*ray of enfeeblement*	25 gp
77–78	*reduce person*	25 gp
79–81	*shield*	25 gp
82–84	*shocking grasp*	25 gp
85–87	*silent image*	25 gp
88–90	*sleep*	25 gp
91–93	*summon monster I*	25 gp
94–96	*true strike*	25 gp
97–98	*unseen servant*	25 gp
99–100	*ventriloquism*	25 gp



Table 5-29: 2nd-Level Arcane Spells

d%	Spell	Scroll Price
01–02	*acid arrow*	150 gp
03–04	*alter self*	150 gp
05–06	*bear's endurance*	150 gp
07–08	*blindness-deafness*	150 gp
09–10	*blur*	150 gp
11–12	*bull's strength*	150 gp
13–14	*cat's grace*	150 gp
15–16	*command undead*	150 gp
17–18	*darkness*	150 gp
19–20	*darkvision*	150 gp
21	*daze monster*	150 gp
22	*detect thoughts*	150 gp
23–24	*eagle's splendor*	150 gp
25–26	*false life*	150 gp
27–28	*flaming sphere*	150 gp
29–30	*fog cloud*	150 gp
31–32	*fox's cunning*	150 gp
33–34	*ghoul touch*	150 gp
35–37	*glitterdust*	150 gp
38–39	*gust of wind*	150 gp
40–41	*hideous laughter*	150 gp
42–43	*hypnotic pattern*	150 gp
44–46	*invisibility*	150 gp
47–49	*knock*	150 gp
50–52	*levitate*	150 gp
53	*locate object*	150 gp
54	*make whole*	150 gp
55–56	*minor image*	150 gp
57–59	*mirror image*	150 gp
60–61	*misdirection*	150 gp
62	*obscure object*	150 gp
63	*owl's wisdom*	150 gp
64–65	*protection from arrows*	150 gp
66–67	*pyrotechnics*	150 gp
68–69	*resist energy*	150 gp
70–72	*rope trick*	150 gp
73	*scare*	150 gp
74–76	*scorching ray*	150 gp
77–79	*see invisibility*	150 gp
80–81	*shatter*	150 gp
82	*spectral hand*	150 gp
83–85	*spider climb*	150 gp
86–87	*summon monster II*	150 gp
88–89	*summon swarm*	150 gp
90–91	*touch of idiocy*	150 gp
92–93	*web*	150 gp
94–96	*whispering wind*	150 gp
97	*magic mouth*	160 gp
98	*arcane lock*	175 gp
99	*continual flame*	200 gp
100	*phantom trap*	200 gp

Table 5-30: 3rd-Level Arcane Spells

d%	Spell	Scroll Price
01–02	*arcane sight*	375 gp
03	*beast shape*	375 gp
04–06	*blink*	375 gp
07	*clairaudience/clairvoyance*	375 gp
08–09	*daylight*	375 gp
10–11	*deep slumber*	375 gp
12–15	*dispel magic*	375 gp
16	*displacement*	375 gp
17	*explosive runes*	375 gp
18–21	*fireball*	375 gp
22–23	*flame arrow*	375 gp
24–26	*fly*	375 gp
27–29	*gaseous form*	375 gp
30	*gentle repose*	375 gp
31–32	*halt undead*	375 gp
33–35	*haste*	375 gp
36	*heroism*	375 gp
37–39	*hold person*	375 gp
40–42	*invisibility sphere*	375 gp
43	*keen edge*	375 gp
44–46	*lightning bolt*	375 gp
47–48	*magic circle against chaos*	375 gp
49–50	*magic circle against evil*	375 gp
51–52	*magic circle against good*	375 gp
53–54	*magic circle against law*	375 gp
55	*magic weapon, greater*	375 gp
56–57	*major image*	375 gp
58–60	*phantom steed*	375 gp
61–63	*protection from energy*	375 gp
64	*rage*	375 gp
65–67	*ray of exhaustion*	375 gp
68–69	*secret page*	375 gp
70	*shrink item*	375 gp
71–72	*sleet storm*	375 gp
73–75	*slow*	375 gp
76	*stinking cloud*	375 gp
77–78	*suggestion*	375 gp
79–81	*summon monster III*	375 gp
82–84	*tiny hut*	375 gp
85–86	*tongues*	375 gp
87–89	*vampiric touch*	375 gp
90–91	*water breathing*	375 gp
92–93	*wind wall*	375 gp
94–95	*illusory script*	425 gp
96–97	*nondetection*	425 gp
98–100	*sepia snake sigil*	875 gp

Table 5-31: 4th-Level Arcane Spells

d%	Spell	Scroll Price
01–02	*arcane eye*	700 gp
03–04	*beast shape I*	700 gp
05–07	*bestow curse*	700 gp
08–09	*black tentacles*	700 gp
10–12	*charm monster*	700 gp
13–16	*confusion*	700 gp
17–18	*contagion*	700 gp
19–20	*crushing despair*	700 gp
21	*detect scrying*	700 gp
22–25	*dimension door*	700 gp
26–29	*dimensional anchor*	700 gp
30–31	*elemental body I*	700 gp
32–34	*enervation*	700 gp
35–36	*enlarge person, mass*	700 gp
37–38	*fear*	700 gp
39–40	*fire shield*	700 gp
41–43	*geas, lesser*	700 gp
44–46	*globe of invulnerability, lesser*	700 gp
47	*hallucinatory terrain*	700 gp
48–50	*ice storm*	700 gp
51	*illusory wall*	700 gp
52–55	*invisibility, greater*	700 gp
56	*locate creature*	700 gp
57	*minor creation*	700 gp
58–59	*phantasmal killer*	700 gp
60–61	*rainbow pattern*	700 gp
62–63	*reduce person, mass*	700 gp
64	*remove curse*	700 gp
65–66	*resilient sphere*	700 gp
67–68	*scrying*	700 gp
69–70	*secure shelter*	700 gp
71–72	*shadow conjuration*	700 gp
73–74	*shout*	700 gp
75–77	*solid fog*	700 gp
78–79	*stone shape*	700 gp
80–81	*summon monster IV*	700 gp
82–84	*wall of fire*	700 gp
85–87	*wall of ice*	700 gp
88–91	*fire trap*	725 gp
92–95	*mnemonic enhancer*	750 gp
96–97	*stoneskin*	950 gp
98–100	*animate dead*	1,050 gp

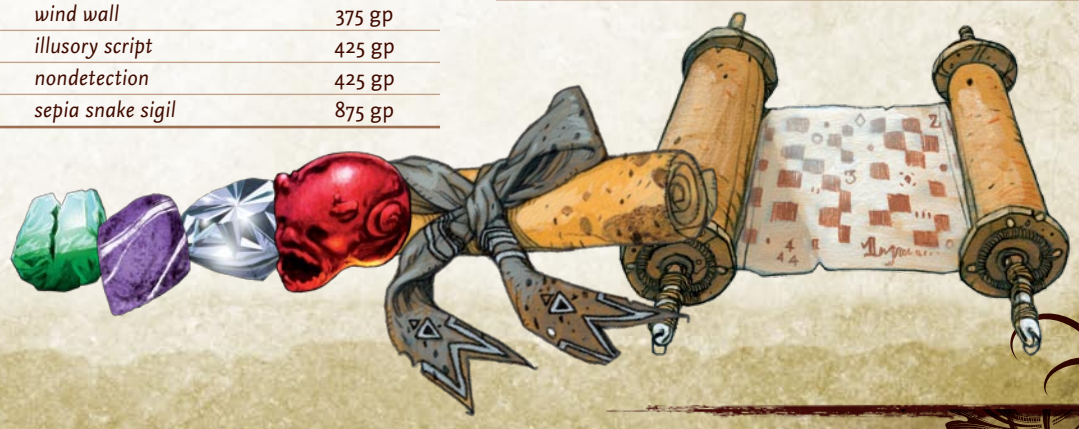


Table 5-32: 5th-Level Arcane Spells

d%	Spell	Scroll Price
01	*animal growth*	1,125 gp
02–05	*baleful polymorph*	1,125 gp
06–07	*beast shape III*	1,125 gp
08	*blight*	1,125 gp
09–10	*break enchantment*	1,125 gp
11–14	*cloudkill*	1,125 gp
15–17	*cone of cold*	1,125 gp
18–20	*contact other plane*	1,125 gp
21–22	*dismissal*	1,125 gp
23–25	*dominate person*	1,125 gp
26–27	*dream*	1,125 gp
28	*elemental body*	1,125 gp
29	*fabricate*	1,125 gp
30–31	*feeblemind*	1,125 gp
32–34	*hold monster*	1,125 gp
35	*interposing hand*	1,125 gp
36–37	*mage's faithful hound*	1,125 gp
38–39	*mage's private sanctum*	1,125 gp
40–42	*magic jar*	1,125 gp
43	*major creation*	1,125 gp
44–45	*mind fog*	1,125 gp
46	*mirage arcana*	1,125 gp
47–48	*nightmare*	1,125 gp
49–50	*overland flight*	1,125 gp
51–52	*passwall*	1,125 gp
53–54	*permanency*	1,125 gp
55	*persistent image*	1,125 gp
56–58	*planar binding, lesser*	1,125 gp
59	*plant shape I*	1,125 gp
60–62	*polymorph*	1,125 gp
63–64	*prying eyes*	1,125 gp
65	*secret chest*	1,125 gp
66	*seeming*	1,125 gp
67–69	*sending*	1,125 gp
70–72	*shadow evocation*	1,125 gp
73–75	*summon monster V*	1,125 gp
76–78	*telekinesis*	1,125 gp
79	*telepathic bond*	1,125 gp
80–83	*teleport*	1,125 gp
84	*transmute mud to rock*	1,125 gp
85	*transmute rock to mud*	1,125 gp
86–88	*wall of force*	1,125 gp
89–90	*wall of stone*	1,125 gp
91–92	*waves of fatigue*	1,125 gp
93–94	*false vision*	1,375 gp
95–97	*symbol of pain*	2,125 gp
98–100	*symbol of sleep*	2,125 gp

Table 5-33: 6th-Level Arcane Spells

d%	Spell	Scroll Price
01–02	*acid fog*	1,650 gp
03–04	*analyze dweomer*	1,650 gp
05–07	*antimagic field*	1,650 gp
08–09	*bear's endurance, mass*	1,650 gp
10	*beast shape IV*	1,650 gp
11–12	*bull's strength, mass*	1,650 gp
13–14	*cat's grace, mass*	1,650 gp
15–17	*chain lightning*	1,650 gp
18–19	*contingency*	1,650 gp
20	*control water*	1,650 gp
21–24	*disintegrate*	1,650 gp
25–28	*dispel magic, greater*	1,650 gp
29–30	*eagle's splendor, mass*	1,650 gp
31	*elemental body III*	1,650 gp
32–33	*eyebite*	1,650 gp
34–36	*flesh to stone*	1,650 gp
37–38	*forceful hand*	1,650 gp
39–40	*form of the dragon I*	1,650 gp
41–42	*fox's cunning, mass*	1,650 gp
43	*freezing sphere*	1,650 gp
44–45	*geas/quest*	1,650 gp
46–48	*globe of invulnerability*	1,650 gp
49–50	*guards and wards*	1,650 gp
51–52	*heroism, greater*	1,650 gp
53–54	*mage's lucubration*	1,650 gp
55–57	*mislead*	1,650 gp
58	*move earth*	1,650 gp
59	*owl's wisdom, mass*	1,650 gp
60–61	*permanent image*	1,650 gp
62–64	*planar binding*	1,650 gp
65	*plant shape II*	1,650 gp
66–67	*repulsion*	1,650 gp
68–69	*shadow walk*	1,650 gp
70–71	*stone to flesh*	1,650 gp
72–74	*suggestion, mass*	1,650 gp
75–76	*summon monster VI*	1,650 gp
77–78	*transformation*	1,650 gp
79–81	*veil*	1,650 gp
82–83	*programmed image*	1,675 gp
84–85	*wall of iron*	1,700 gp
86–87	*create undead*	1,750 gp
88–89	*legend lore*	1,900 gp
90–92	*true seeing*	1,900 gp
93–95	*circle of death*	2,150 gp
96	*undeath to death*	2,150 gp
97–98	*symbol of fear*	2,650 gp
99–100	*symbol of persuasion*	6,650 gp



Table 5-34: 7th-Level Arcane Spells

d%	Spell	Scroll Price
01–03	*arcane sight, greater*	2,275 gp
04–06	*banishment*	2,275 gp
07–08	*control undead*	2,275 gp
09–10	*control weather*	2,275 gp
11–13	*delayed blast fireball*	2,275 gp
14–15	*elemental body IV*	2,275 gp
16–18	*ethereal jaunt*	2,275 gp
19–22	*finger of death*	2,275 gp
23–24	*form of the dragon II*	2,275 gp
25–26	*giant form I*	2,275 gp
27–28	*grasping hand*	2,275 gp
29–31	*hold person, mass*	2,275 gp
32–33	*insanity*	2,275 gp
34–36	*invisibility, mass*	2,275 gp
37–38	*mage's magnificent mansion*	2,275 gp
39–40	*mage's sword*	2,275 gp
41–42	*phase door*	2,275 gp
43–45	*plane shift*	2,275 gp
46–47	*plant shape III*	2,275 gp
48–51	*polymorph, greater*	2,275 gp
52–53	*power word blind*	2,275 gp
54–56	*prismatic spray*	2,275 gp
57–58	*reverse gravity*	2,275 gp
59–61	*scrying, greater*	2,275 gp
62–63	*sequester*	2,275 gp
64–66	*shadow conjuration, greater*	2,275 gp
67–69	*spell turning*	2,275 gp
70–71	*statue*	2,275 gp
72–74	*summon monster VII*	2,275 gp
75–76	*teleport object*	2,275 gp
77–80	*teleport, greater*	2,275 gp
81–83	*waves of exhaustion*	2,275 gp
84–85	*project image*	2,280 gp
86–87	*vision*	2,525 gp
88–90	*forcecage*	2,775 gp
91–92	*instant summons*	3,275 gp
93–94	*limited wish*	3,775 gp
95–96	*symbol of stunning*	7,775 gp
97–98	*symbol of weakness*	7,775 gp
99–100	*simulacrum*	8,775 gp

Table 5-35: 8th-Level Arcane Spells

d%	Spell	Scroll Price
01–02	*antipathy*	3,000 gp
03–05	*charm monster, mass*	3,000 gp
06–07	*clenched fist*	3,000 gp
08–09	*clone*	3,000 gp
10–12	*demand*	3,000 gp
13–16	*dimensional lock*	3,000 gp
17–19	*discern location*	3,000 gp
20–21	*form of the dragon III*	3,000 gp
22–23	*giant form II*	3,000 gp
24–26	*horrid wilting*	3,000 gp
27–28	*incendiary cloud*	3,000 gp
29–30	*iron body*	3,000 gp
31–33	*irresistable dance*	3,000 gp
34–37	*maze*	3,000 gp
38–40	*mind blank*	3,000 gp
41–42	*moment of prescience*	3,000 gp
43–45	*planar binding, greater*	3,000 gp
46–48	*polar ray*	3,000 gp
49–52	*polymorph any object*	3,000 gp
53–55	*power word stun*	3,000 gp
56–58	*prismatic wall*	3,000 gp
59–61	*prying eyes, greater*	3,000 gp
62–64	*scintillating pattern*	3,000 gp
65–66	*screen*	3,000 gp
67–68	*shadow evocation, greater*	3,000 gp
69–70	*shout, greater*	3,000 gp
71–73	*summon monster VIII*	3,000 gp
74–75	*sunburst*	3,000 gp
76–79	*telekinetic sphere*	3,000 gp
80–81	*create greater undead*	3,150 gp
82–84	*protection from spells*	3,500 gp
85–86	*sympathy*	4,500 gp
87–89	*symbol of death*	8,000 gp
90–91	*symbol of insanity*	8,000 gp
92–95	*temporal stasis*	8,000 gp
96–97	*binding (chaining)*	13,000 gp
98–100	*trap the soul*	23,000 gp

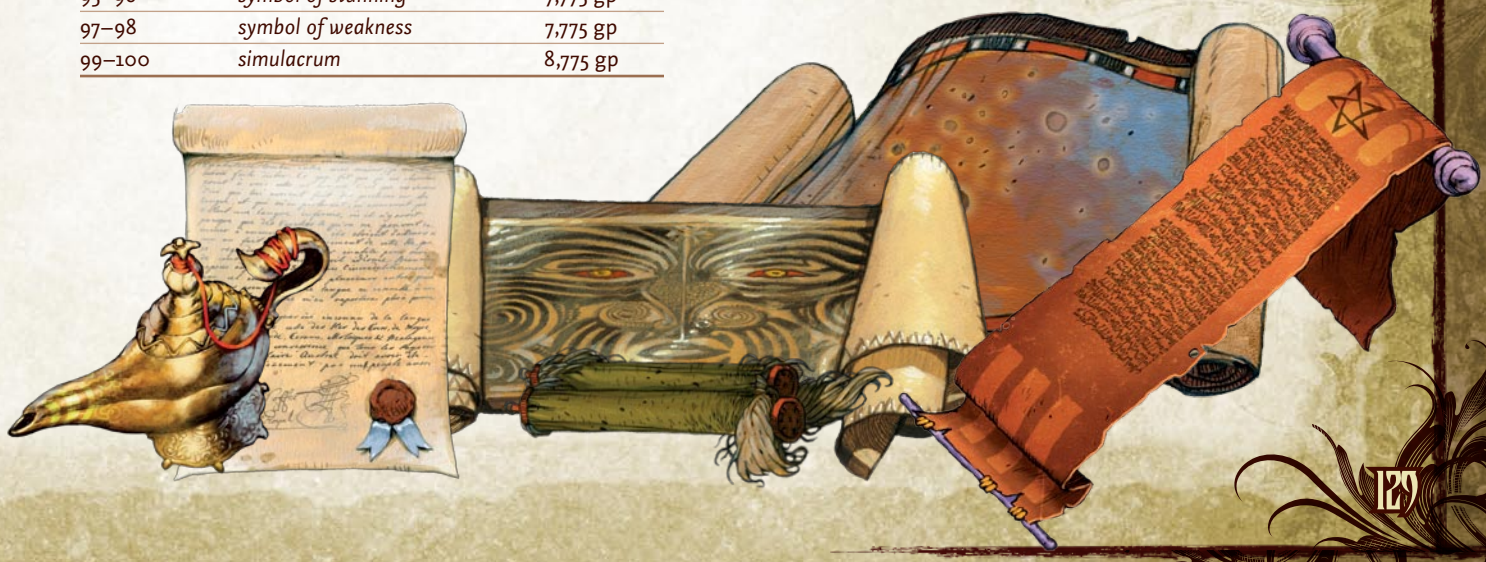


Table 5-36: 9th-Level Arcane Spells

d%	Spell	Scroll Price
1–2	*crushing hand*	3,825 gp
3–7	*dominate monster*	3,825 gp
8–12	*energy drain*	3,825 gp
13–16	*etherealness*	3,825 gp
17–19	*foresight*	3,825 gp
20–25	*freedom*	3,825 gp
26–30	*gate*	3,825 gp
31–33	*hold monster, mass*	3,825 gp
34–37	*imprisonment*	3,825 gp
38–43	*mage's disjunction*	3,825 gp
44–51	*meteor swarm*	3,825 gp
52–55	*power word kill*	3,825 gp
56–58	*prismatic sphere*	3,825 gp
59–61	*shades*	3,825 gp
62–65	*shapechange*	3,825 gp
66–67	*soul bind*[1]	3,825 gp
68–72	*summon monster IX*	3,825 gp
73–78	*time stop*	3,825 gp
79–81	*wail of the banshee*	3,825 gp
82–85	*weird*	3,825 gp
86–87	*refuge*	4,325 gp
88–90	*astral projection*	4,825 gp
91–94	*teleportation circle*[2]	4,825 gp
95–100	*wish*[3]	28,825 gp

[1] Requires gem

[2] This scroll affects up to 20 HD, but is still only CL 17th.

[3] Additional cost

Table 5-37: 0-Level Divine Spells

d%	Spell	Scroll Price
01–05	*bleed*	12.5 gp
06–13	*create water*	12.5 gp
14–23	*detect magic*	12.5 gp
24–32	*detect poison*	12.5 gp
33–37	*flare*	12.5 gp
38–44	*guidance*	12.5 gp
45–49	*know direction*	12.5 gp
50–58	*light*	12.5 gp
59–63	*mending*	12.5 gp
64–71	*purify food and drink*	12.5 gp
72–81	*read magic*	12.5 gp
82–86	*resistance*	12.5 gp
87–94	*stabilize*	12.5 gp
95–100	*virtue*	12.5 gp

Table 5-38: 1st-Level Divine Spells

d%	Spell	Scroll Price
01–02	*bane*	25 gp
03–05	*bless*	25 gp
06	*calm animals*	25 gp
07–10	*cause fear*	25 gp
11–12	*charm animal*	25 gp
13–15	*command*	25 gp
16–18	*comprehend languages*	25 gp
19–23	*cure light wounds*	25 gp
24–25	*deathwatch*	25 gp
26	*detect animals or plants*	25 gp
27–28	*detect chaos*	25 gp
29–30	*detect evil*	25 gp
31–32	*detect good*	25 gp
33–34	*detect law*	25 gp
35–36	*detect snares and pits*	25 gp
37–38	*detect undead*	25 gp
39–40	*divine favor*	25 gp
41–43	*doom*	25 gp
44–45	*endure elements*	25 gp
46–48	*entangle*	25 gp
49–50	*entropic shield*	25 gp
51–52	*faerie fire*	25 gp
53	*goodberry*	25 gp
54	*hide from animals*	25 gp
55–56	*hide from undead*	25 gp
57–58	*inflict light wounds*	25 gp
59–60	*jump*	25 gp
61–62	*longstrider*	25 gp
63–65	*magic fang*	25 gp
66–67	*magic stone*	25 gp
68–70	*obscuring mist*	25 gp
71–72	*pass without trace*	25 gp
73–75	*produce flame*	25 gp
76–77	*protection from chaos*	25 gp
78–79	*protection from evil*	25 gp
80–81	*protection from good*	25 gp
82–83	*protection from law*	25 gp
84–85	*remove fear*	25 gp
86–87	*sanctuary*	25 gp
88–90	*shield of faith*	25 gp
91	*shillelagh*	25 gp
92–93	*speak with animals*	25 gp
94–95	*summon monster I*	25 gp
96–97	*summon nature's ally I*	25 gp
98–99	*bless water*	50 gp
100	*curse water*	50 gp



Table 5-39: 2nd-Level Divine Spells

d%	Spell	Scroll Price
01–02	*aid*	150 gp
03–05	*align weapon*	150 gp
06–08	*animal messenger*	150 gp
09	*animal trance*	150 gp
10–13	*barkskin*	150 gp
14	*bear's endurance*	150 gp
15	*bull's strength*	150 gp
16–17	*calm emotions*	150 gp
18	*cat's grace*	150 gp
19–21	*chill metal*	150 gp
22–26	*cure moderate wounds*	150 gp
27–28	*darkness*	150 gp
29–30	*death knell*	150 gp
31–33	*delay poison*	150 gp
34–35	*eagle's splendor*	150 gp
36–37	*enthrall*	150 gp
38–40	*find traps*	150 gp
41–42	*flame blade*	150 gp
43–44	*flaming sphere*	150 gp
45–46	*fog cloud*	150 gp
47	*gentle repose*	150 gp
48–49	*gust of wind*	150 gp
50	*heat metal*	150 gp
51–52	*hold animal*	150 gp
53–54	*hold person*	150 gp
55–57	*inflict moderate wounds*	150 gp
58	*make whole*	150 gp
59–60	*owl's wisdom*	150 gp
61	*reduce animal*	150 gp
62–63	*remove paralysis*	150 gp
64–65	*resist energy*	150 gp
66–68	*restoration, lesser*	150 gp
69	*shatter*	150 gp
70–71	*shield other*	150 gp
72–74	*silence*	150 gp
75	*soften earth and stone*	150 gp
76	*sound burst*	150 gp
77	*spider climb*	150 gp
78–79	*spiritual weapon*	150 gp
80	*status*	150 gp
81–82	*summon monster II*	150 gp
83–84	*summon nature's ally II*	150 gp
85–86	*summon swarm*	150 gp
87	*tree shape*	150 gp
88	*undetectable alignment*	150 gp
89	*warp wood*	150 gp
90	*wood shape*	150 gp
91–93	*zone of truth*	150 gp
94	*augury*	175 gp
95–96	*consecrate*	175 gp
97–98	*desecrate*	175 gp
99–100	*fire trap*	175 gp

Table 5-40: 3rd-Level Divine Spells

d%	Spell	Scroll Price
01–02	*bestow curse*	375 gp
03–04	*blindness/deafness*	375 gp
05–06	*call lightning*	375 gp
07–08	*contagion*	375 gp
09–10	*create food and water*	375 gp
11–14	*cure serious wounds*	375 gp
15–16	*daylight*	375 gp
17–18	*deeper darkness*	375 gp
19	*diminish plants*	375 gp
20–23	*dispel magic*	375 gp
24	*dominate animal*	375 gp
25	*helping hand*	375 gp
26–28	*inflict serious wounds*	375 gp
29–31	*invisibility purge*	375 gp
32–33	*locate object*	375 gp
34–35	*magic circle against chaos*	375 gp
36–37	*magic circle against evil*	375 gp
38–39	*magic circle against law*	375 gp
40–41	*magic fang, greater*	375 gp
42–44	*magic vestment*	375 gp
45	*meld into stone*	375 gp
46–47	*obscure object*	375 gp
48–49	*plant growth*	375 gp
50–51	*poison*	375 gp
52–54	*prayer*	375 gp
55–58	*protection from energy*	375 gp
59	*quench*	375 gp
60–62	*remove blindness/deafness*	375 gp
63–65	*remove curse*	375 gp
66–68	*remove disease*	375 gp
69–70	*searing light*	375 gp
71–72	*sleet storm*	375 gp
73–74	*snare*	375 gp
75–77	*speak with dead*	375 gp
78–79	*speak with plants*	375 gp
80–81	*spike growth*	375 gp
82–83	*stone shape*	375 gp
84–85	*summon monster III*	375 gp
86–87	*summon nature's ally III*	375 gp
88–89	*water breathing*	375 gp
90–91	*water walk*	375 gp
92–93	*wind wall*	375 gp
94–95	*continual flame*	425 gp
96–97	*glyph of warding*	575 gp
98–100	*animate dead*[1]	625 gp

[1] Up to 10 HD worth



Table 5-41: 4th-Level Divine Spells

d%	Spell	Scroll Price
01–02	*air walk*	700 gp
03–04	*antiplant shell*	700 gp
05–06	*blight*	700 gp
07–08	*chaos hammer*	700 gp
09–10	*command plants*	700 gp
11–12	*control water*	700 gp
13–16	*cure critical wounds*	700 gp
17–19	*death ward*	700 gp
20–23	*dimensional anchor*	700 gp
24–26	*discern lies*	700 gp
27–30	*dismissal*	700 gp
31–33	*divine power*	700 gp
34–37	*flame strike*	700 gp
38–40	*freedom of movement*	700 gp
41–42	*giant vermin*	700 gp
43–45	*holy smite*	700 gp
46–47	*ice storm*	700 gp
48–49	*imbue with spell ability*	700 gp
50–52	*inflict critical wounds*	700 gp
53–56	*magic weapon, greater*	700 gp
57–58	*neutralize poison*	700 gp
59–60	*order's wrath*	700 gp
61–62	*poison*	700 gp
63–65	*reincarnate*	700 gp
66–67	*repel vermin*	700 gp
68–69	*rusting grasp*	700 gp
70–71	*scrying*	700 gp
72–73	*sending*	700 gp
74–77	*spell immunity*	700 gp
78–79	*spike stones*	700 gp
80–82	*summon monster IV*	700 gp
83–85	*summon nature's ally IV*	700 gp
86–88	*tongues*	700 gp
89–90	*unholy blight*	700 gp
91–92	*divination*	725 gp
93–96	*planar ally, lesser*[1]	1,225 gp
97–100	*restoration*	1,700 gp

[1] May have additional costs

Table 5-42: 5th-Level Divine Spells

d%	Spell	Scroll Price
01–02	*animal growth*	1,125 gp
03–04	*atonement*	1,125 gp
05–07	*baleful polymorph*	1,125 gp
08–11	*break enchantment*	1,125 gp
12–15	*breath of life*	1,125 gp
16–17	*call lightning storm*	1,125 gp
18–19	*command, greater*	1,125 gp
20–21	*commune with nature*	1,125 gp
22–23	*control winds*	1,125 gp
24–26	*cure light wounds, mass*	1,125 gp
27–28	*death ward*	1,125 gp
29	*dispel chaos*	1,125 gp
30	*dispel evil*	1,125 gp
31	*dispel good*	1,125 gp
32	*dispel law*	1,125 gp
33–35	*disrupting weapon*	1,125 gp
36–37	*inflict light wounds, mass*	1,125 gp
38–39	*insect plague*	1,125 gp
40–41	*mark of justice*	1,125 gp
42–44	*plane shift*	1,125 gp
45–47	*righteous might*	1,125 gp
48–50	*scrying*	1,125 gp
51–53	*slay living*	1,125 gp
54–56	*spell resistance*	1,125 gp
57–59	*summon monster V*	1,125 gp
60–61	*summon nature's ally V*	1,125 gp
62	*transmute mud to rock*	1,125 gp
63	*transmute rock to mud*	1,125 gp
64–65	*tree stride*	1,125 gp
66–67	*wall of fire*	1,125 gp
68–69	*wall of thorns*	1,125 gp
70–71	*wall of stone*	1,125 gp
72–73	*stoneskin*	1,375 gp
74–77	*true seeing*	1,375 gp
78–80	*commune*	1,625 gp
81–82	*hallow*[1]	2,125 gp
83–85	*symbol of pain*	2,125 gp
86–88	*symbol of sleep*	2,125 gp
89–90	*unhallow*[1]	2,125 gp
91–92	*awaken*	3,125 gp
93–94	*hallow*	6,125 gp
95–98	*raise dead*	6,125 gp
99–100	*unhallow*	6,125 gp

[1] No additional spell included



Table 5-43: 6th-Level Divine Spells

d%	Spell	Scroll Price
01–02	*animate objects*	1,650 gp
03–04	*antilife shell*	1,650 gp
05–06	*banishment*	1,650 gp
07–08	*bear's endurance, mass*	1,650 gp
09–10	*blade barrier*	1,650 gp
11–12	*bull's strength, mass*	1,650 gp
13–14	*cat's grace, mass*	1,650 gp
15–18	*cure moderate wounds, mass*	1,650 gp
19–22	*dispel magic, greater*	1,650 gp
23–25	*eagle's splendor, mass*	1,650 gp
26–29	*find the path*	1,650 gp
30–31	*fire seeds*	1,650 gp
32–33	*geas/quest*	1,650 gp
34–37	*harm*	1,650 gp
38–42	*heal*	1,650 gp
43–45	*heroes' feast*	1,650 gp
46–48	*inflict moderate wounds, mass*	1,650 gp
49–51	*ironwood*	1,650 gp
52–54	*liveoak*	1,650 gp
55–56	*move earth*	1,650 gp
57–59	*owl's wisdom, mass*	1,650 gp
60–61	*repel wood*	1,650 gp
62–64	*spellstaff*	1,650 gp
65–66	*stone tell*	1,650 gp
67–69	*summon monster VI*	1,650 gp
70–71	*summon nature's ally VI*	1,650 gp
72–73	*transport via plants*	1,650 gp
74–75	*wind walk*	1,650 gp
76–77	*word of recall*	1,650 gp
78–80	*create undead*	1,750 gp
81–83	*glyph of warding, greater*	2,050 gp
84–87	*undeath to death*	2,150 gp
88–90	*symbol of fear*	2,650 gp
91–94	*planar ally*[1]	2,900 gp
95–97	*forbiddance*[2]	4,650 gp
98–100	*symbol of persuasion*	6,650 gp

[1] May have additional costs

[2] One 60-foot cube



Table 5-44: 7th-Level Divine Spells

d%	Spell	Scroll Price
01–02	*animate plants*	2,275 gp
03–07	*blasphemy*	2,275 gp
08–09	*changestaff*	2,275 gp
10–12	*control weather*	2,275 gp
13–15	*creeping doom*	2,275 gp
16–20	*cure serious wounds, mass*	2,275 gp
21–24	*dictum*	2,275 gp
25–29	*ethereal jaunt*	2,275 gp
30–33	*fire storm*	2,275 gp
34–38	*holy word*	2,275 gp
39–41	*inflict serious wounds, mass*	2,275 gp
42–46	*regenerate*	2,275 gp
47–50	*repulsion*	2,275 gp
51–54	*scrying, greater*	2,275 gp
55–58	*summon monster VII*	2,275 gp
59–61	*summon nature's ally VII*	2,275 gp
62–65	*sunbeam*	2,275 gp
66–67	*transmute metal to wood*	2,275 gp
68–71	*word of chaos*	2,275 gp
72–75	*destruction*	2,775 gp
76–77	*refuge*	3,775 gp
78–85	*restoration, greater*	7,275 gp
86–88	*symbol of stunning*	7,275 gp
89–91	*symbol of weakness*	7,275 gp
92–100	*resurrection*	12,275 gp

Table 5-45: 8th-Level Divine Spells

d%	Spell	Scroll Price
01–03	*animal shapes*	3,000 gp
04–09	*antimagic field*	3,000 gp
10–14	*cloak of chaos*	3,000 gp
15–17	*control plants*	3,000 gp
18–22	*cure critical wounds, mass*	3,000 gp
23–28	*dimensional lock*	3,000 gp
29–30	*discern location*	3,000 gp
31–34	*earthquake*	3,000 gp
35–37	*finger of death*	3,000 gp
38–42	*holy aura*	3,000 gp
43–45	*inflict critical wounds, mass*	3,000 gp
46–48	*repel metal or stone*	3,000 gp
49–51	*reverse gravity*	3,000 gp
52–53	*shield of law*	3,000 gp
54–58	*spell immunity, greater*	3,000 gp
59–61	*summon monster VIII*	3,000 gp
62–64	*summon nature's ally VIII*	3,000 gp
65–70	*sunburst*	3,000 gp
71–75	*unholy aura*	3,000 gp
76–78	*whirlwind*	3,000 gp
79–85	*create greater undead*	3,150 gp
86–92	*planar ally, greater*[1]	5,500 gp
93–96	*symbol of death*	8,000 gp
97–100	*symbol of insanity*	8,000 gp

[1] Additional bargaining cost

Table 5-46: 9th-Level Divine Spells

d%	Spell	Scroll Price
01–03	*antipathy*	3,825 gp
04–09	*elemental swarm*	3,825 gp
10–14	*energy drain*	3,825 gp
15–22	*etherealness*	3,825 gp
23–25	*foresight*	3,825 gp
26–35	*gate*	3,825 gp
36–39	*heal, mass*	3,825 gp
40–44	*implosion*	3,825 gp
45–52	*miracle*	3,825 gp
53–57	*shambler*	3,825 gp
58–67	*shapechange*	3,825 gp
68–70	*soul bind*	3,825 gp
71–74	*storm of vengeance*	3,825 gp
75–80	*summon monster IX*	3,825 gp
81–87	*summon nature's ally IX*	3,825 gp
88–90	*astral projection*	4,825 gp
91–93	*sympathy*	5,325 gp
94–100	*true resurrection*	28,825 gp

Table 5-47: Random Wands

Minor	Medium	Major	Spell Level[1]	Caster Level
01–05	—	—	0	1st
06–60	—	—	1st	1st
61–100	01–60	—	2nd	3rd
—61–100	01–60	3rd	5th	
——	61–100	4th	7th	

[1] Consult Tables 5–48 through 5–52.

Table 5-48: 0-Level Wands

d%	Wand	Price
01–04	*acid splash*	375 gp
05–07	*arcane mark*	375 gp
08–10	*bleed*	375 gp
11–14	*create water*	375 gp
15–18	*dancing lights*	375 gp
19–22	*daze*	375 gp
23–26	*detect magic*	375 gp
27–29	*detect poison*	375 gp
30–32	*disrupt undead*	375 gp
33–36	*flare*	375 gp
37–40	*ghost sound*	375 gp
41–44	*guidance*	375 gp
45–47	*know direction*	375 gp
48–51	*light*	375 gp
52–54	*lullaby*	375 gp
55–58	*mage hand*	375 gp
59–62	*mending*	375 gp
63–65	*message*	375 gp
66–69	*open/close*	375 gp
70–73	*prestidigitation*	375 gp
74–77	*purify food and drink*	375 gp
78–81	*ray of frost*	375 gp
82–85	*read magic*	375 gp
86–89	*resistance*	375 gp
90–93	*stabilize*	375 gp
94–96	*touch of fatigue*	375 gp
97–100	*virtue*	375 gp

Table 5-49: 1st-Level Wands

d%	Wand	Price
01	*alarm*	750 gp
02–03	*animate rope*	750 gp
04	*bane*	750 gp
05	*bless*	750 gp
06	*bless weapon*	750 gp
07	*burning hands*	750 gp
08	*calm animals*	750 gp
09	*cause fear*	750 gp
10	*charm animal*	750 gp
11	*charm person*	750 gp
12	*chill touch*	750 gp
13	*color spray*	750 gp
14	*command*	750 gp
15	*comprehend languages*	750 gp
16	*confusion, lesser*	750 gp
17–21	*cure light wounds*	750 gp
22	*deathwatch*	750 gp
23	*detect animals or plants*	750 gp
24	*detect chaos*	750 gp
25	*detect evil*	750 gp
26	*detect good*	750 gp
27	*detect law*	750 gp
28	*detect secret doors*	750 gp
29	*detect snares and pits*	750 gp
30	*detect undead*	750 gp
31	*disguise self*	750 gp
32	*divine favor*	750 gp
33	*doom*	750 gp
34–36	*endure elements*	750 gp
37–39	*enlarge person*	750 gp
40	*entangle*	750 gp
41	*entropic shield*	750 gp
42	*erase*	750 gp
43	*expeditious retreat*	750 gp
44	*faerie fire*	750 gp
45	*feather fall*	750 gp
46	*floating disk*	750 gp
47	*goodberry*	750 gp
48	*grease*	750 gp
49	*hide from animals*	750 gp
50	*hide from undead*	750 gp

51	*hideous laughter*	750 gp
52	*hold portal*	750 gp
53	*hypnotism*	750 gp
54	*identify*	750 gp
55	*inflict light wounds*	750 gp
56	*jump*	750 gp
57	*longstrider*	750 gp
58	*mage armor*	750 gp
59	*magic aura*	750 gp
60	*magic fang*	750 gp
61–63	*magic missile*	750 gp
64–66	*magic stone*	750 gp
67	*magic weapon*	750 gp
68	*mount*	750 gp
69	*obscure object*	750 gp
70	*obscuring mist*	750 gp
71	*pass without trace*	750 gp
72–74	*produce flame*	750 gp
75	*protection from chaos*	750 gp
76	*protection from evil*	750 gp
77	*protection from good*	750 gp
78	*protection from law*	750 gp
79	*ray of enfeeblement*	750 gp
80	*reduce person*	750 gp
81	*remove fear*	750 gp
82	*sanctuary*	750 gp
83	*shield*	750 gp
84	*shield of faith*	750 gp
85	*shillelagh*	750 gp
86–88	*shocking grasp*	750 gp
89	*silent image*	750 gp
90	*sleep*	750 gp
91	*speak with animals*	750 gp
92	*summon monster I*	750 gp
93	*summon nature's ally I*	750 gp
94	*true strike*	750 gp
95	*undetectable alignment*	750 gp
96	*unseen servant*	750 gp
97	*ventriloquism*	750 gp
98	*magic mouth*	1,250 gp
99	*bless water*	2,000 gp
100	*curse water*	2,000 gp

Table 5-50: 2nd-Level Wands

d%	Wand	Price
01	*acid arrow*	4,500 gp
02	*aid*	4,500 gp
03	*align weapon*	4,500 gp
04	*alter self*	4,500 gp
05	*animal messenger*	4,500 gp
06	*animal trance*	4,500 gp
07	*barkskin*	4,500 gp
08–09	*bear's endurance*	4,500 gp
10	*blindness/deafness*	4,500 gp
11	*blur*	4,500 gp
12–13	*bull's strength*	4,500 gp
14	*calm emotions*	4,500 gp
15–16	*cat's grace*	4,500 gp
17	*chill metal*	4,500 gp
18	*command undead*	4,500 gp
19–24	*cure moderate wounds*	4,500 gp
25	*darkness*	4,500 gp
26	*darkvision*	4,500 gp
27	*daze monster*	4,500 gp
28	*death knell*	4,500 gp
29	*delay poison*	4,500 gp
30	*detect thoughts*	4,500 gp
31–32	*eagle's splendor*	4,500 gp
33	*enthrall*	4,500 gp
34	*false life*	4,500 gp
35–36	*find traps*	4,500 gp
37	*flame blade*	4,500 gp
38	*flaming sphere*	4,500 gp
39	*fog cloud*	4,500 gp
40	*fox's cunning*	4,500 gp
41	*gentle repose*	4,500 gp
42	*ghoul touch*	4,500 gp
43	*glitterdust*	4,500 gp
44	*gust of wind*	4,500 gp
45–46	*heat metal*	4,500 gp
47	*hold animal*	4,500 gp
48	*hold person*	4,500 gp
49	*hypnotic pattern*	4,500 gp
50	*inflict moderate wounds*	4,500 gp
51–52	*invisibility*	4,500 gp
53	*knock*	4,500 gp
54–55	*levitate*	4,500 gp
56	*locate object*	4,500 gp
57	*make whole*	4,500 gp
58	*minor image*	4,500 gp
59	*mirror image*	4,500 gp
60	*misdirection*	4,500 gp
61–62	*owl's wisdom*	4,500 gp
63	*protection from arrows*	4,500 gp
64	*pyrotechnics*	4,500 gp
65	*reduce animal*	4,500 gp
66	*remove paralysis*	4,500 gp
67	*resist energy*	4,500 gp
68	*restoration, lesser*	4,500 gp
69	*rope trick*	4,500 gp
70	*scare*	4,500 gp
71	*scorching ray*	4,500 gp
72	*see invisibility*	4,500 gp
73–74	*shatter*	4,500 gp
75	*shield other*	4,500 gp
76	*silence*	4,500 gp

77	*soften earth and stone*	4,500 gp
78	*sound burst*	4,500 gp
79	*spectral hand*	4,500 gp
80	*spider climb*	4,500 gp
81	*spiritual weapon*	4,500 gp
82	*status*	4,500 gp
83	*summon monster II*	4,500 gp
84	*summon nature's ally II*	4,500 gp
85	*summon swarm*	4,500 gp
86	*tongues*	4,500 gp
87	*touch of idiocy*	4,500 gp
88	*tree shape*	4,500 gp
89	*warp wood*	4,500 gp
90	*web*	4,500 gp
91	*whispering wind*	4,500 gp
92	*wood shape*	4,500 gp
93	*zone of truth*	4,500 gp
94	*arcane lock*	5,750 gp
95	*augury*	5,750 gp
96	*consecrate*	5,750 gp
97	*desecrate*	5,750 gp
98	*fire trap*	5,750 gp
99	*continual flame*	7,000 gp
100	*phantom trap*	7,000 gp

Table 5-51: 3rd-Level Wands

d%	Wand	Price
01	*arcane sight*	11,250 gp
02	*beast shape I*	11,250 gp
03	*bestow curse*	11,250 gp
04	*blink*	11,250 gp
05–06	*call lightning*	11,250 gp
07	*clairaudience/clairvoyance*	11,250 gp
08	*contagion*	11,250 gp
09	*create food and water*	11,250 gp
10–15	*cure serious wounds*	11,250 gp
16–17	*daylight*	11,250 gp
18	*deep slumber*	11,250 gp
19	*deeper darkness*	11,250 gp
20	*diminish plants*	11,250 gp
21	*dispel magic*	11,250 gp
22	*displacement*	11,250 gp
23	*dominate animal*	11,250 gp
24	*explosive runes*	11,250 gp
25–26	*fireball*	11,250 gp
27–28	*flame arrow*	11,250 gp
29–30	*fly*	11,250 gp
31	*gaseous form*	11,250 gp
32	*halt undead*	11,250 gp
33	*haste*	11,250 gp
34	*helping hand*	11,250 gp
35	*heroism*	11,250 gp
36	*inflict serious wounds*	11,250 gp
37	*invisibility purge*	11,250 gp
38	*invisibility sphere*	11,250 gp
39	*keen edge*	11,250 gp
40–41	*lightning bolt*	11,250 gp
42–43	*magic circle against chaos*	11,250 gp
44–45	*magic circle against evil*	11,250 gp
46–47	*magic circle against good*	11,250 gp
48–49	*magic circle against law*	11,250 gp
50	*magic fang, greater*	11,250 gp
51	*magic vestment*	11,250 gp
52	*magic weapon, greater*	11,250 gp
53	*major image*	11,250 gp
54	*meld into stone*	11,250 gp
55	*neutralize poison*	11,250 gp
56	*phantom steed*	11,250 gp
57	*plant growth*	11,250 gp
58	*poison*	11,250 gp
59	*prayer*	11,250 gp
60	*protection from energy*	11,250 gp
61	*quench*	11,250 gp
62	*rage*	11,250 gp
63	*ray of exhaustion*	11,250 gp
64–66	*remove blindness/deafness*	11,250 gp
67–69	*remove curse*	11,250 gp
70–72	*remove disease*	11,250 gp
73	*searing light*	11,250 gp
74	*secret page*	11,250 gp
75	*shrink item*	11,250 gp
76	*sleet storm*	11,250 gp
77	*slow*	11,250 gp
78	*snare*	11,250 gp
79	*speak with dead*	11,250 gp
80	*speak with plants*	11,250 gp
81	*spike growth*	11,250 gp
82	*stinking cloud*	11,250 gp
83	*stone shape*	11,250 gp
84	*suggestion*	11,250 gp
85	*summon monster III*	11,250 gp
86	*summon nature's ally III*	11,250 gp
87	*tiny hut*	11,250 gp
88	*vampiric touch*	11,250 gp
89	*water breathing*	11,250 gp
90	*water walk*	11,250 gp
91	*wind wall*	11,250 gp
92	*illusory script*	13,750 gp
93	*nondetection*	13,750 gp
94	*glibness*	15,750 gp
95	*good hope*	15,750 gp
96	*heal mount*	15,750 gp
97	*sculpt sound*	15,750 gp
98	*glyph of warding*	21,250 gp
99	*animate dead*[1]	23,750 gp
100	*sepia snake sigil*	36,250 gp

[1] User cannot cast at a higher level than wand's caster level.

Table 5-52: 4th-Level Wands

d%	Wand	Price
01	*air walk*	21,000 gp
02	*antiplant shell*	21,000 gp
03	*arcane eye*	21,000 gp
04	*beast shape II*	21,000 gp
05	*black tentacles*	21,000 gp
06–07	*blight*	21,000 gp
08	*chaos hammer*	21,000 gp
09	*charm monster*	21,000 gp
10	*command plants*	21,000 gp
11	*confusion*	21,000 gp
12	*control water*	21,000 gp
13	*crushing despair*	21,000 gp
14–18	*cure critical wounds*	21,000 gp
19	*death ward*	21,000 gp
20–21	*detect scrying*	21,000 gp
22–23	*dimension door*	21,000 gp
24–25	*dimensional anchor*	21,000 gp
26	*discern lies*	21,000 gp
27	*dismissal*	21,000 gp
28	*divine power*	21,000 gp
29	*elemental body I*	21,000 gp
30	*enervation*	21,000 gp
31–32	*enlarge person, mass*	21,000 gp
33	*fear*	21,000 gp
34–35	*fire shield*	21,000 gp
36–37	*flame strike*	21,000 gp
38	*freedom of movement*	21,000 gp
39	*geas, lesser*	21,000 gp
40	*giant vermin*	21,000 gp
41	*globe of invulnerability, lesser*	21,000 gp
42	*hallucinatory terrain*	21,000 gp
43	*holy smite*	21,000 gp
44	*ice storm*	21,000 gp
45–46	*illusory wall*	21,000 gp
47	*imbue with spell ability*	21,000 gp
48	*inflict critical wounds*	21,000 gp
49–50	*invisibility, greater*	21,000 gp
51	*locate creature*	21,000 gp
52	*minor creation*	21,000 gp
53	*mnemonic enhancer*	21,000 gp
54	*order's wrath*	21,000 gp
55	*phantasmal killer*	21,000 gp
56	*rainbow pattern*	21,000 gp
57	*reduce person, mass*	21,000 gp
58	*reincarnate*	21,000 gp
59	*repel vermin*	21,000 gp
60	*resilient sphere*	21,000 gp
61	*rusting grasp*	21,000 gp
62	*scrying*	21,000 gp
63	*secure shelter*	21,000 gp
64	*sending*	21,000 gp
65	*shadow conjuration*	21,000 gp
66	*shout*	21,000 gp
67	*solid fog*	21,000 gp
68–69	*spell immunity*	21,000 gp
70	*spike stones*	21,000 gp
71	*summon monster IV*	21,000 gp
72	*summon nature's ally IV*	21,000 gp
73	*unholy blight*	21,000 gp
74	*wall of fire*	21,000 gp
75	*wall of ice*	21,000 gp
76	*divination*	22,250 gp
77–79	*restoration*	26,000 gp
80	*animal growth*	30,000 gp
81–82	*break enchantment*	30,000 gp
83	*commune with nature*	30,000 gp
84–85	*dispel chaos*	30,000 gp
86–87	*dispel evil*	30,000 gp
88	*dominate person*	30,000 gp
89–90	*hold monster*	30,000 gp
91	*holy sword*	30,000 gp
92	*mark of justice*	30,000 gp
93	*modify memory*	30,000 gp
94	*tree stride*	30,000 gp
95	*zone of silence*	30,000 gp
96	*legend lore*	33,500 gp
97–98	*stoneskin*	33,500 gp
99	*planar ally, lesser*[1]	46,000 gp
100	*restoration*	71,000 gp

[1] Extra cost





6 Creating a World



Sing the songs with us, oh bastard prince!" The keketar's voice was high, euphoric. Several of the words formed shapes in the air, one turning to a centipede that writhed as it drifted away.

"Join us in the dance and we will remake you/make you so beautiful. We will sing the stars from the sky/sea."

"I'll pass," Seltyiel grunted. Beneath them, the islet was already crumbling. It wouldn't last another minute under the keketar's influence.

The hell with it. He'd only get one shot anyway. Summoning the last of his magic, Seltyiel leapt backward, out into empty space...

World Building

While running games within a published campaign setting or a favorite fictional universe is a lot of fun, many GMs enjoy creating an entire setting from scratch—a world in which every idea, NPC, and location, is an expression of your creativity. It's a powerful feeling, one that can give you countless hours of enjoyment even outside of the game session.

Yet creating a setting from scratch can also be intimidating. This chapter provides you with tools to help take the guesswork out of world building, breaking down monumental considerations into small, manageable chunks. While this section (and indeed this book) presumes you're creating a fantasy setting for use with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, most of this advice can be applied to any game genre or system. Keep in mind that not all of these questions need to be answered ahead of time, and creating as you play allows you to keep things fresh and fun for both you and your players.

Defining a Setting

When beginning work on a setting, it's useful to start with a concise description of your idea—a mission statement of sorts. Try to keep to the essentials. If the setting is derivative of something else, don't be afraid to note that. Every artist pulls inspiration from existing work, and this is just a starting point—by the time you're done, your setting will likely have evolved into something completely different. Moreover, if you try too hard to make a setting unlike anything your players have ever seen before, it might leave them confused and disconnected—having to confront a 60-page synopsis just to be able to create a character gives players a major incentive to go play something else. Drawing from the real world or fictional universes familiar to your players gives them an easy entry point, and when a player can visualize the world you're presenting, it's easier for him to get caught up in it. This initial premise is also a good place to note any fundamental rules you intend to follow, such as a lack of intelligent non-humanoids or a quirk in the way magic works. Your entire concept might be something as simple as "an alternate history Europe, but with a Viking empire bigger than Rome's."

When working on this setting definition, remember that a setting is not a world. Focus your attention on where you expect to spend most of your time in the campaign. Later on, you can always expand outward—this is often known as the "bullseye" method—and leaving blank space around the edges of the map creates a sense of mystery key to exploration.

More than establishing any concrete facts, your fundamental concept for your setting needs to capture what makes it special and different from other settings. Try to answer questions like the following: What is the single most defining aspect of this setting? What is the one-sentence hook that would make players want to play in it, and what aspect are you most excited to work on? It also helps to write down what type of game you're hoping to run. Is it a swashbuckling sword and sorcery adventure? Complex political intrigue? Wild magic in the wilderness? A good setting should encompass and facilitate multiple types of play, but defining the game you want to run can steer you toward setting choices that compliment it.

Tools of the Trade

Every GM has his own preferred method of world creation. For some, this process starts and ends with pen and paper, in which case it's often useful to have graph paper to help judge scale and create miniatures-ready maps, or a small notebook to carry around and record ideas as inspiration strikes. Yet not even those are necessary—part of the beauty of pen-and-paper RPGs lies in the freedom from material components.

For some GMs, technology can be a huge asset in world design. Programs such as dungeon-building and mapping software, name generators, and the like can be found for sale or for free on the Internet, and spreadsheets and wikis can be invaluable when keeping track of important names, dates, and other world details. More importantly, the Internet offers convenient access to a wealth of information and inspiration, such as online encyclopedias, atlases, and more. It's the rare fantastical concept that hasn't already been dreamed up or carried out by some real-world historical culture, and cribbing off real-world maps can be a godsend when you're new to mapping or strapped for time. If you don't have computer access, a local library can fulfill most of the same functions.

The following pages cover a number of questions you should consider when designing a setting, but sometimes the easiest place to start is with a single setting element, such as the city your players find themselves in at the start of the campaign.

Building a City

Even if you decide to take a broad-strokes approach to campaign design, eventually you'll need to get down and gritty and start creating an environment on the level at which your PCs will interact with it. Likely the best place to start is the major city or town closest to your campaign's focus—as with every aspect of building a setting, how much work you spend on a location should be commensurate with how likely players are to spend time there, and it's nice for both the GM and PCs to have a base of operations. Along with the natural

lures of healing, buying gear, and selling loot, you can use memorable characters like mentors or patrons and favored restaurants and taverns to help make the city feel like home. (These detail also raises the stakes significantly if you later threaten the city's existence—it always helps if the PCs have some sentimental attachments to give them a personal stake in a region's defense.) Bear in mind that players are fickle and may become attached to unexpected people or entirely ignore characters you expected to become linchpins. Don't be afraid to roll with the punches if they prefer the halfling pickpocket to your paladin laden with adventure hooks. In fact, it's often best to wait until you see where player characters focus before fully exploring any particular NPC.

Creating a city can follow a pattern similar to that used when creating nations. Start with the natural geography and the locations of the borders and the most important elements, which are likely inherently tied together (see pages 146–147 for further information on how geography informs a city or nation's layout). From there, work out the government, cultural institutions, economy, and so on. Try working on your city both from the top and bottom, letting the middle shape itself out as you go. For example, while you should know who the highest potentates in the city are, unless your players will be interacting with them immediately, it's probably best to put this aside and spend more time on the level of the common people, the streets where most people live and work.

If you're just starting a campaign, this city may be the best place for you to introduce the underlying themes of your setting. Figure out how to immerse your players in it—how can these themes play out in the first session? How can their early interactions foreshadow and set them up for their coming adventures?

Once you've got the big picture for your city, it's time to start filling in details. Don't panic! A city has a lot of space to fill, but you don't need to know what every dot on your map is. Create a number of colorful locations, characters, and connected plot threads—but don't pin them down. Remember, you only have to detail as much of the city as your characters can interact with. If your characters head east from the town square looking for an inn, give them a few choices. If they instead head west—give them the same choices, but turn that waterfront bar into the best inn on the hilltop. If you want them to run into a certain character, they can do so whether they head to the market or the boatyard. While such tactics might feel like "cheating" to some GMs, roleplaying has an element of solipsism to it, and if your players never experience a given location, it effectively doesn't exist. Change names and ad-lib where you need to—in this manner, you can populate an entire city with just a handful of businesses and characters, and ensure that your favorite creations (whether NPCs or adventure hooks) get the airtime they deserve.

For more information on building cities, as well as important questions to consider, see pages 156–157 and page 209.



Detailing Your World

Game designers work for months on setting sourcebooks, novelists agonize for years over how their world might work, and screenplay writers have production designers and art directors helping them present a movie's backdrop to the audience. You, on the other hand, may not have much time to create the world your players will adventure in, and you definitely won't have a huge production staff to help you.

Luckily, you won't need it. With just an hour or two of considering the following questions, you should have all the answers you need to kick things off with a bang. What follow are 30 of the most important questions in setting design to help you formulate a quick world-building cheat sheet.

The Heroic Details

First things first: What do the heroes do in this new world of yours? The first thing players do when you start a new campaign is create characters, so it's a good idea to think first about what the heroes of your world need to know.

Look over the character generation rules of the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* and see what jumps out at you. What do fighters fight? What principles do paladins champion? Who do clerics pray to? Where do rogues do their sneaking around? It may seem strange to think of these things first, but consider this—your players are probably going to start thinking about what characters they want to play long before they ask you about the coins in the Empire of Fulbar, or even if there *is* an Empire of Fulbar.

The questions don't stop at character generation, either. What sorts of adventures are the new heroes going to go on? What are they going to run into? What can they do with all that loot? Even in an established campaign setting, looking ahead to the middle and higher levels of play can help iron out potential wrinkles before they start.

The following list covers 10 questions every hero is likely to wonder.

What's my base of operations?

A pastoral shepherd village with farms and nearby wilderness is going to inform entirely different character concepts than a cosmopolitan city. While the characters might be outsiders or new arrivals, they're still going to want to know where their base of operations is, if only in terms of size, profile, or geography. Is it high in the mountains? Is it on a trade route? Is it a mile beneath the waves? Pick a likely spot and be ready to give the players a sentence or two describing it. The details can be fleshed out later.

Do I look different from everybody else?

Adventurers are often just homegrown heroes, raised in unremarkable communities with ordinary backgrounds. Yet they're just as often members of strange and mysterious races or outcasts from far-off places. You should consider what races and backgrounds your players might choose when the game begins, and how these will affect their interactions with the NPCs in the starting location. Allowing offbeat or colorful races that aren't standard also means you need to understand those races and how they work in your society.

How do I make a living?

This question isn't just asking for the list of allowed character classes, which you should decide in advance. Rather, it asks how the heroes keep themselves in room and board (or ale and companionship). Are heroes in your world paid to do what they do? Are they mercenary dungeon delvers, or is this a part-time gig for a group of city guards and scholars? The answer might differ from character to character, but once you settle on what the heroes are actually doing to put bread on the table, you haved formed a clearer picture of the role of heroes in your new world.

Have I been doing this long?

A great many campaigns assume the heroes start off as 1st-level adventurers, but that's not the only option. Consider whether you're building a world for low-level heroes or higher-level veterans, because this choice affects the presence of wise mentors, young sidekicks, wealthy patrons, and ruthless villains.

Are we at war or at peace?

This is the basic level of political information the heroes need. Is some awful nation sitting at the border ready to invade, or does the world enjoy relative peace? You don't need to tell them who the duke is, or if his dastardly brother is the wicked leader of that awful nation. Your answer could be as simple as, "There was a war hundreds of years ago, but everything's been fine lately," or "The country is constantly being raided by barbarians." Players can then make the classic choice of playing dangerous foreigners, or if there's peace at the start of the campaign, they can play up their characters' backgrounds as innocents heedless of the threats that lurk on the horizon.

What am I doing with these other guys?

Do the player characters already know each other from their days in the Citizen's Guard? Are they old friends from the College of Delvers? Perhaps they're all related: brothers, sisters, or cousins. Or, as is often the case, maybe they're complete strangers who meet in the bar in the first session and get thrown together by common circumstances. As a world-building detail, these connections suggest organizations, guilds, mysterious patrons, or significant families, and can also determine a player's choice of character. As hard as it might be to explain a dwarf PC in a family of elves, even that choice spawns plenty of setting conceits.

How are lives affected by magic?

Most fantasy game worlds have magic of the arcane kind as a staple. Players who are looking to play wizards or sorcerers need to know what it means to be a wizard or sorcerer, even if they don't initially have to know the source or origin of magic itself. This is also true of the other heroes, who should have a fairly good understanding of what society thinks of people casting *fireballs* and summoning demons. You're also going to have to tell the players whether they should expect to have access to healing magic, or if the world is more gritty and dangerous.

How are lives affected by religion?

You don't need to go into much detail about the gods for the benefit of the players, but you should decide the basics and what this means for clerics, paladins, and other characters bestowed with divine power. Essentially, decide what divine patrons they can choose for their characters, even if the answer is just "There's the goddess of cities, and the gods of the four seasons, and the god of thieves."

Who or what is going to try to kill me?

It's always good to know what the major threats are, but you don't have to go into much detail for the players on this score. Primarily, you need to be able to tell the ranger player that choosing evil outsiders as his favored enemy is a good idea, or if he should instead go for something like goblinoids. In answering this question, you're also making some decisions about mood and theme: if most of the bad guys are human or half-human, this suggests a different kind of world than one in which the villains are all Lovecraftian horrors and their unfortunate minions.

Where can I sell this loot?

Assuming your world is one in which piles of gems await the heroes in subterranean mazes, what do the heroes do with them when they get back to town? Is there a Crazy Yorick's Magick Shoppe in every large city, or do the heroes have to craft their own magical wands, potions, and gear? Can they invest their winnings in stock or property? Is there some kind of fence or underground black market to move goods?

The Mundane Details

Once you have the key heroic details figured out, you have a rough sketch of an adventuring world. Now you're going to have to think about the run-of-the-mill folk who populate it. Some NPCs may be just a funny accent and a handful of stats, but they still exist independently of the heroes. Think about the sorts of things the player characters might ask the innkeeper or the town guard.

These details are often the things people think of first when they start building new worlds. It's not a bad idea to have them in the back of your mind, but it's also a lot easier to fill these in once you have the broad strokes already settled. None of this information is hidden or secret; as characters within the world, the PCs might know it, too.

Who's in charge?

Who holds the reins of power? Consider what difference it makes to have a single monarch as opposed to a council of mages or a monolithic church. What do the citizens think about their government? How do neighboring nations or societies get along with this authority? Has it always been this way, or is the ruling power only newly ascended?

Who has the biggest army?

As a follow-up to the last question, who controls the military? Is there a standing army, or does the government send out calls to militias (or bands of brave adventurers)? Is there a legendary troupe of knights that leads the army into battle, or is the army made up entirely of clockwork soldiers? Deciding what the military looks like and who controls it not only gives your players somebody to fear, hate, or respect, but also seeds your campaign with hooks for higher-level play—as the heroes get sufficiently experienced, they might acquire armies of their own.

Who has the most money and power?

This is often connected to the first two questions, but it doesn't have to be; indeed, it often makes things more interesting when nobility and wealth are not synonymous. Does your world have a merchant class? Are high-level adventurers the wealthiest members of society, or are they paid to do what they do out of the deep pockets of aristocrats? While you're thinking about money, you should also decide whether to go with the gold piece standard or experiment with different economic systems.

Who maintains law and order?

What laws and regulations are in place in your world, and who enforces them? Some settings, such as wild and untamed lands of mystery and danger, might leave this task in the hands of rangers; others, especially those that feature high magic, should provide some explanation of how laws are applied to wizards and sorcerers.

How hard do poor people have it?

Nothing produces a cunning and ruthless population of scum and villainy—or heroic rogues and swashbucklers—like an impoverished background. How do the lower classes live? Is there any oppressed or subjugated minority or group that the average townsfolk look down on? The presence of multiple races, for instance, or a division of magical haves and have-nots, often suggests tiers of wealth or poverty. What if the elves were poor and orcs were their cruel masters? What about the other way around?

As in our own world, wealth is the chief producer of societal friction, and the way it moves through your society can inform everything from social norms and values to crime and military engagements, as well as provide unlimited seeds for adventure.

How do people travel, and how easy is it?

In some worlds, the open space between civilized areas is wild and untamed, making travel highly dangerous. Others feature enormous urban sprawls or patchwork villages and farms. The availability of magic also affects the manner of travel. Think about how travel works in your world as a result of these choices. Are horses and wagons common? Do people walk to their destinations, or fly on griffon-back?

What are the best-known landmarks?

You can bring a world alive through the use of extraordinary and fantastic locations, but they don't have to be limited to the places the heroes explore. What's noteworthy back in town? What can the average citizen of the world see out of his or her back window? Could your starting location be named after such a landmark? Consider what major institutions, legends, or heroes may have some connection to a geographical feature or ancient ruin nearby.

Why is everybody celebrating?

Holy days, feast days, and anniversaries are all essential world-building elements that you should consider sketching out when you're working on your new setting. For more information on designing holidays, see page 162.

What do people do for a good time?

Give some thought to how the average person cools her heels at night when the day's work is done. What form does entertainment take? Are there traveling minstrels, or bards appointed by the Emperor to mock his family? Do taverns and bars stay open all night, or do people spend their time reading books?

How weird does it get around here?

Memorable worlds aren't made up solely of ordinary people living ordinary lives in ordinary towns. Does another plane intersect with the area somewhere close by? Do ghosts walk around carrying on their daily business? At times, your players should be equally surprised by the strange things locals have grown used to and no longer think about, or by the apparent lack of weirdness.

THE SCHOLARLY DETAILS

Now we come to the information that perhaps only a sage would need to know, but which forms the underpinning of your world's physics—and metaphysics. Such details include how the world was formed, how magic works, and where dead heroes go when they fall in battle; many are fleshed out further starting on page 160.

Like the other considerations, these aren't necessarily outside the comprehension of the player characters. Most people have a basic understanding of them, albeit colored by their backgrounds. It's been said that sometimes the most exciting and rich worlds are those that don't answer all the questions, but you're the final arbiter on that score.

How did the world come to be?

The answer to this question is your world's creation myth. You can have more than one answer to this, especially if you have multiple races and they don't all share the same worldview. You can choose one of them as the "real" story, or you might suggest that they are all aspects of the truth. This question leads in turn to questions such as how old the world is, what role the gods played in creation, and possibly even when the world is going to end. There's a lot of room for mythology.

What is the nature of the gods?

This is the question that your clerics are going to want to know more about eventually. Are the gods omnipotent and omniscient beings far above the world? Are they capricious superhuman beings, like the gods of Greek myth? Is there a pantheon, or a single creator figure? There are many options here, but you should at the very least know for yourself what level of detail you want to maintain for divinity.

What is the source of magic?

The easiest answer to this question is to simply have magic be a part of your world's physics, a natural force that wizards and sorcerers somehow draw upon to work their spells. But you might also consider having arcane magic stem from the gods or be left over from a deific war. Are there multiple sources of magic? How does this affect the magic of creatures like dragons, fey, and outsiders?

What happens when you die?

Think about whether your world has an afterlife, a place of eternal reward or suffering. Do souls travel the planes, becoming servants of the gods, or do they reincarnate, with the legacy of heroes extending back to the earliest days? Do people even have souls at all? Among the many reasons to consider this question is the existence of spells like *resurrection* and *speak with dead*, as well as the nature of undead. If you depart this world for your next life after death, what's that ghost's story? Why is it still around?

What cycles or events define the calendar?

One characteristic of a world is the cycle of seasons, the weather, and the passage of time. For more information on this subject, see Time on pages 162–163.



What do you see when you look at the sky?

What are the stars? What about the moon and planets? You can leave most such questions unanswered for a long time, but when the player characters achieve the kind of power or freedom to venture to other worlds, you'll want to know what they find. For more on this topic, see pages 164–165.

What constitutes cutting-edge technology?

Setting a world's tech level can be an excellent defining characteristic. Where does alchemy fit in? Does the printing press exist? What about rudimentary steam power? For more on this subject, see pages 160–161.

Where do monsters come from?

While it's easy to assume the presence of monsters, questions like this one open doors to adventure hooks and new monsters. Was there some event in the history of the world that spawned monsters like chimeras, hydras, and dragons? Are monsters an accident of nature or an integral part of the ecosystem? Thinking about these things can also suggest the origins of PC races like elves, dwarves, and gnomes.

Which is strongest: magic, gods, or nature?

Fantasy worlds often hang in the balance between opposing forces. Is your world all a grand design, woven by cosmic beings? Is arcane magic in opposition to the power of the gods and their clerics? Does nature battle magic's transforming nature, or do the forces of order and chaos battle for domination? It's possible that a nonstandard answer to this question can form the heart of a world or campaign.

If I drop this off the balcony, what happens?

This question is actually about verisimilitude, and the answer is usually, "It falls and hits the person standing beneath it on the head." So the real question is, other than "accepted" weirdness like magic and demons, is there anything you want to change or alter about the physical world? If so, how can you do it without losing the players' suspension of disbelief? Your world needs to make its own kind of sense to bind the strange and fantastic in a way that feels natural—at least to the world's residents—thus creating a stage for the PCs' wondrous adventures.

Geography

One of the greatest joys of creating your own campaign setting is the thrill and challenge of crafting an entire world, shaping it out of the primordial clay and setting it spinning in the void. Yet as much fun as this can be, it can also be a complicated and frustrating endeavor if you aren't already an expert in the things that make our own planet what it is. When you run up against something outside of your knowledge base, it's often tempting to simply say, "This is a magical world—rivers and mountains and deserts can go wherever they want."



Tempting—but lazy. Your players deserve better. Take the steps to make your world realistic, and when you do want to break fundamental laws of reality and put a desert in a swamp, make sure you come up with a reason. After all, if you take pains to ensure that the rest of your world is realistic, those magical regions that break the rules will feel all the more fantastic and unique.

If you're familiar with the real world's geology, you've already got a leg up in designing a realistic world. It's no fun to spend weeks or months creating the perfect setting map, only to have a geologist or cartographer friend point out something you did wrong. Yet if your game group includes specialists like this, you're lucky! Don't be afraid to ask your geology enthusiast friend to help you decide where to put mountain ranges, or to ask your meteorologist pal to help you define your world's trade winds. At the very least, using your gaming group in this way keeps them from ambushing you with errors later on.

But let's face it—most GMs don't have access to these resources. In this case, a little research can go a long way. Read up on geology, meteorology, astronomy, and other earth sciences. Watch documentaries and educational shows on these subjects. Most of all, study maps of the real world, not just game products—as any student of geology can tell you, it's shocking just how many scientific errors appear in maps from the most beloved fantasy games and novels.

Creating a World Map

The first thing to accept when you sit down to draw a map of your campaign world is that it doesn't need to be beautiful. As long as you can understand your own scribblings, you'll be able to maintain consistency and versimilitude when running your game. If you don't think of yourself as particularly artistic, buy some tracing paper and crib shapes and designs from maps you like. Try reproducing a favorite map by hand, or extending an existing map beyond its edge in the same artistic style.

When creating your world, you can use color as a handy way to keep track of forests, deserts, or oceans, or develop your own system of simple cartography symbols. These symbols can be extremely simple: inverted "V" shapes for mountains, crosshatching for forests, scattered dots for deserts, etc.—whatever makes the most sense to you. Some GMs prefer to draw their world maps on blank paper, sharing them with players as "in-world" handouts. Others prefer to use graph or hex paper, the better to precisely track distances and travel times. Still others use professional cartography software. The "right" method is the one that feels most natural to you, and the following advice applies no matter what media you use.

Starting Size

The kind of campaign you want to run should inform the scope of the map you need to create. If your game focuses entirely on a small valley in a mountain range, you might not even need to create a world map. On the other hand, if you're intending to include long overland journeys, you might need to create a sprawling map of an entire continent, or even a whole planet! The important thing to keep in mind is that you don't need to finish everything before the first game. Focusing only on the parts of the map that are directly connected to the next session not only eases your workload, but makes it easier to keep track of things. You're learning about your new world as you create it, and if you do so in small patches over the course of months or years, your knowledge will grow organically.

Terrain Hierarchy

When it comes to drawing your map, keep in mind that the world's shape follows a specific hierarchy. As you draw your map, it's best to follow the steps below and make your decisions in this order—after all, it's tough drawing rivers without knowing where the mountains and coastlines are.

Step 1: Coastlines

The first step is to divide land from water—draw in the region's coastlines, remembering to add bays and harbors here and there (these make great locations for major cities). Scatter islands, inland seas, and lakes here and there, bearing in mind that a chain of islands extending off a coast might indicate an extension of a mountainous region into an ocean or sea. Unless you're an expert on geology or cartography, don't worry about things like plate tectonics or trying to map the curve of the planet, especially if the region you're mapping is only a single continent or smaller. (Of course, it can't hurt to freshen up on these topics.) One way to make this easier is to vaguely base the shapes of your continents on the shapes of Earth's continents, a tactic used by many game designers and fantasy novelists.

Step 2: Elevations

Once your coastlines are set, draw in the outlines of where you want your region's major mountain ranges to run. A mountain range outline should generally be long and narrow, perhaps with multiple "fingers" extending from its length, since mountains often form as continental plates push together to "wrinkle" the surface of a world. Mountain ranges that roughly follow a region's coastline are common, as seen along the west coasts of North and South America. Volcanic activity can also cause mountains to rise—now's a good time to place some volcanoes (preferably in a line along a mountainous coastline or a range of mountains). Once you have your mountainous regions placed, you can draw an increasing number of outlines around those mountains to show gradual changes in elevation as you work your way down to the coastline. Don't be afraid to make these lower regions wide and large—you'll need somewhere to put your deserts and large forests. Also remember that mountain ranges extending into oceans are an excellent source of realistic island chains.

Step 3: Rivers

Once you have the elevations of your region marked, you'll be able to place rivers. Start near the centerline of a mountain range and wind downward on whatever curving course you want as you approach a coastline. Make sure that your rivers don't double back across an elevation line once they cross it, since water has a hard time flowing uphill. One important thing to keep in mind is that, as a general rule, water wants to flow together rather than apart—as a result, you should avoid having your rivers "split" as they flow downward from the mountains, save to create a delta like those at the mouths of the Mississippi or the Nile. Likewise, make sure that you don't have multiple rivers emptying out of a lake!

Geologic Touchstones

Below are several handy bits of trivia about the real world that can help with fantasy map design.

- Deserts and forests each cover approximately a third of the Earth's land surface.
- Oceans cover approximately 70% of the Earth's total surface.
- The peak of Mount Everest, at 29,028 feet, is the highest point above sea level on Earth. (The tallest mountain on Earth, on the other hand, is Mauna Loa, which from seabed to peak rises 33,500 feet.)
- The lowest point in the ocean is the Mariana Trench, at a depth of 35,797 feet.

Step 4: Vegetation

Sketch in major woodlands or jungles, placing them along coastlines and in lowlands, perhaps up to the edges of your highest elevations in places. Vegetation near a large water source like a delta often forms a marshland or swamp. Don't go too overboard with these regions, though! Remember that areas you don't turn into woodlands or swamps can be hilly regions, plains, steppes, badlands, or other relatively clear terrains. Deserts are a special case—place them in areas where there are few rivers (it's okay to have one or two) and where there's a mountain range to block the path of precipitation—this area is known as a "rain shadow."

Step 5: Tags

Now you're ready to start naming your regions and placing spots of interest like cities, dungeons, and other notable features. Keep in mind some simple rules here—cities are almost always found on rivers or shorelines, and you'd expect to see cave entrances in hilly or mountainous areas. If you're drawing in national borders, remember that such divisions commonly fall along convenient geographical features, such as rivers or mountain ranges. Make sure to place plenty of intriguing adventure sites, too—it's a good rule to place three adventure sites within a few day's travel of each of your cities.

Breaking the Rules

While these guidelines stress the importance of realism, don't forget that you're designing a fantasy world! Anything goes—feel free to have rivers flowing uphill, mountains that float on the ocean, deserts or forests that move, or swaths of ocean where the water drops away to expose portions of the sea bed. As long as you realize that these locations are unrealistic, you can design for them and explain them however you wish.

Cultural Considerations

While such things are undeniably important, creating a world is more than merely drawing realistic geography and political lines and then slapping down analogues of real-world societies. World building is, at its core, about creating cultures and showing how those cultures have shaped the world, from simple farmers laboring for a lordly knight to fantastic sky aeries of winged elves or plane-shifting cities of ethereal horrors. But what is culture? Culture is not merely the social environment of a village or the quaint customs of the locals.

Culture is, in essence, the evolution of thought, and can span regions or even nations. It's about the way that people have described their history and experiences and their continued growth as a people. It's about creating a cultural "personality," a quick sketch for understanding—but keep in mind that not everyone from a culture will have exactly the same personality.

One can approach culture building in multiple ways:

- By looking at and adapting real-world cultures.
- By choosing a desired culture as an end point and retroactively deducing the historical factors that led to it.
- By starting from the emergence of the people, and following their growth logically and persistently along a timeline.
- By any combination of these approaches.

All of these methods are valid, though each has its pitfalls and its benefits. A creative GM can certainly use real-world cultures as a starting point or base when creating new cultures for the game world; after all, these are proven points of history, and provide easy access points for players. The other options require significantly greater creative involvement. The following tips can help a GM get started.

Core Elements of the People

The GM can place each of the following elements on a spectrum; religion, for instance, can produce both fanatics and agnostics, and trade can consist of simple barter or complex financial instruments used to move vast sums of hypothetical money. Where a culture falls on each question is up to the world builder, but keep in mind that none of these elements exists alone, and the position of one may influence that of another.

Survival: The first things a GM should consider are the world's people and their basic assumptions about life and survival. At the most fundamental level, their physiology defines their core needs: shelter, food and drink, mates, and a relatively tenable environment. Combine their physiology with their environment (both past and present), and one can begin to draw a picture of how the people have adapted to the world around them. How do they acquire food? What threatens them? What advantages do they secure by living here? What food do they eat? What do they drink? All of these also help to inform what character traits a society values—one culture might call itself clever, quick-witted, and fast to seize an advantage; its enemies might call members of that culture duplicitous backstabbers who would sell their children for a momentary gain.

Language: Once one can define a culture's character, one can define the culture's language. What sparks the language? It isn't necessary to spell out the language, but rather to imagine its core. Language and culture are inextricable; concepts core to a people's identity may be expressible only in their language, with translations grasping the idea only loosely. Is the language pure, with few words borrowed from outsiders, or is it a trader's language, a complex tongue with origins in a variety of cultures? Is the language primarily oral or written, and if it is written, what is it written on and how? Does it share an alphabet with another language? Keep in mind that high literacy rates tend to combine with rapid invention, as knowledge becomes easy to transmit. How do the people tell each other stories about their past? Do they have methods for communicating with far-off friends? Are they telepaths, or do they use sound beyond the threshold of ordinary human hearing? Do they travel, and if so, by what method? Each answer has its own implications, and can help tease out a sense of a particular people.

Religion: What sort of relationship do people have with their god or gods, and why do they have it? Are the people devoted to their gods as worshipers, familiar with them as acquaintances and comrades, or contemptuous of them? Do the people require priestly intermediaries to hear the words of the gods, or do they have a direct relationship with their gods? How much influence do the religious exert in this society? How well do they tolerate the beliefs of others?

Foreign Relations: Is this a homogenous group, having lived and intermarried within a relatively small group of people, or the product of a series of invasions and raids? How much contact and commerce do people have with outside cultures, and is travel beyond the hereditary home feasible and encouraged? How are outsiders viewed, and who are the enemies and allies of this culture?

Government and Law

When cultures break down into nations, whether from tribal loyalties or other shifts in thinking, or grow too large for simple meetings or councils to oversee, they require more formal governance. Broadly speaking, there are three types of government: anarchic, or rule by consent of the governed; authoritarian, or rule by the few; and democratic, rule by voice of the people. In general, most fantasy nations fall into the first two categories, either too small or disorganized to have a central authority, or possessing a ruling class that keeps the rest of the nation firmly in line.

Authoritarian governments come in many forms, and each of these can combine with the other forms to create a different kind of government. Each culture has its own twists, and the world builder should consider the culture and decide which of the following is the most logical outgrowth of the people's history. This style of government accords most strongly with the lawful alignments.

- **Aristocracy**: The rule of the "best," in which the most accomplished members of society make decisions to help guide the rest. This often begins as a meritocracy, but frequently devolves into a plutocracy.
- **Kleptocracy**: A corruption-based government, generally based on a fallen version of other models of rule.
- **Magocracy**: Rule by mages, wizards, or shamans.
- **Monarchy**: Rule by a single person, with varying degrees of absolutism and heredity involved.
- **Plutocracy**: Rule by the wealthy.
- **Theocracy**: Rule by priests or by the church.

Anarchic governments are, by their very nature, limited in size. When people need to work together, they must do so by choice, rather than being forced through the threat of a greater government's might. Some of these societies involve smaller tribal units, answering to a chief or matron, who sits on a (mostly) allied council of similar representatives. Members cannot (or do not) force each other into anything, except perhaps by threats of force or economic embargo. This form of government tends to give way to charismatic and ambitious leaders who establish an authoritarian government of one sort or another, and thus it usually exists for a relatively short time. But it can also arise in cultures with strong notions of individual liberty—both in expecting freedom and demanding it from others—which may make it more stable.

Democratic governments are a matter of definition. How free is the society, and who is free to vote? In ancient Greece, the birthplace of democracy, the councils were open only to male citizens; no slaves or women had a voice in the assembly. It is up to the world builder to determine who receives a vote in these democratic societies. Does the democracy extend across more than a single grouping of people, as in a small nation, or is it confined to a people in one area? Do the people gather in citywide assemblies? How often do these assemblies meet? Do the people send representatives (as in a representative democracy), or do they vote by mass acclamation?

The laws of a culture grow out of its values, and the government grows from its laws. For the most part, law springs from one of the bedrock concepts of the culture: honor, religion, kinship, loyalty, money, power, tradition, and others. Using the cultural character developed earlier, the world builder should examine what this culture values and what behaviors it uses to reinforce these values. Who sets the laws? Who interprets them?

Another consideration: Do the laws permit precedent, meaning they build on previous judicial interpretations, or is every case decided afresh based on the statutes in ancient tomes? If it's the latter, then the outcomes of similar cases may bear no resemblance to each other. If the former, then every case heard in court adds another wrinkle to the law that must be considered, and a new breed arises to deal with these interpretations: lawyers, advocates, or solicitors. Keep in mind also that a broad, national law with established precedent makes trade easier, since merchants no longer have to learn the vagaries of law in far-flung towns and counties—and this in turn strengthens the nation.

Economics

Every civilization that rises does so via the use of resources: goods that have both utility and scarcity. As noted above, people require shelter, food, clothing, and other goods simply to survive. Basic innovations help store food and create clothing faster, and these innovations free members of society to help produce still more inventions. At some point, communal wealth tends to move toward private ownership, which then requires trade. The earliest form of trade is barter, or the exchange of one good or service for another (or for social status). But what happens when one party needs something and the other doesn't require his resources?

This leads to the introduction of commodity money, or trading for an agreed-upon middle resource such as obsidian, cocoa beans, bushels of wheat, or other useful goods. In time, intermediate forms of broadly accepted currency develop, based on stored value—in our world, a shekel indicated 1 bushel of barley, and basic coins were used as storage chits. With the invention of mining, metals could be extracted and used, and in time, the metal coins created came to represent stored value themselves. Thus the English pound came to represent 1 pound of silver. The appropriate coin could then be used to claim the value indicated from governments or banks.

An economy is a dynamic system, and what goes into it must affect another part. Using metal coins as money functions only as long as the supply remains relatively constant. If a major new silver mine introduces too much silver into the economy, the value of a silver coin decreases correspondingly. If a dragon hoards thousands of coins, they have essentially disappeared from the economy, causing the value of the remaining coins to increase; their reintroduction upon the dragon's death causes the devaluation of the rest of the coins in circulation. That is to say: Too great a supply of anything decreases demand and therefore decreases value; too little increases the demand and thus increases value. It is the world builder's job to determine what goods and services are valuable in the culture—be they hard coins, precious gems, or ephemera such as honor.

The following pages outline several types of societies.

The Primitive Society

All historical cultures—and nearly all fantastical ones—spring from primal forebears. Though creation myths sometimes tell of people springing full-formed from the earth (or the sky, the clouds, the seas, the blood of a god, and so on), culture in general procedes from a primitive state to a more advanced one. In this case, "advanced" means a fixed agrarian base, a shift away from the hunter-gatherer model, the development of technological innovations, and a step toward an integrated economy, where the method of trade moves beyond simple barter or communal requirements. It's certainly possible to see an advanced culture devolve into primitivism, though it's much less common. In these cases the memories of lost glories likely end the primitive era more quickly.

What makes a culture primitive? Is it because the environment in which the people eke out a living is so harsh that they must focus all their energies on survival? Or are the people so isolated, by choice or otherwise, that the exchange of ideas is small, and progress slows to a snail's pace?

The term "primitive culture" is one determined by outsiders, existing only in contrast to more "advanced" societies, and as such comes laden with the potential for bias and prejudice. It can encompass a huge range of potential behaviors, from cave-dwelling, pre-language savages in familial tribes to peaceful nomads with rich and vibrant oral traditions who have chosen to reject the trappings of the modern world. Remember that simply because the culture is primitive does not mean its people are stupid. They may be cowed initially by displays of might and power, but they have not survived in their land by being oblivious, and many a "civilized" visitor has been taken aback (or apart) by the quick thinking and natural cunning of his supposed inferiors.

Since many primitive cultures are nomadic or migratory, without permanent homes, they tend to be masters of adaptation, a trait that comes in handy if one of these so-called "savages" is thrust into the midst of civilization. Whether this means becoming a fearsome warrior, an incomparable tracker, or a natural magician or shaman—or simply fleeing deeper into the wilderness—is a matter for the GM to decide.

Some examples of "primitive" culture include:

- The archetypal cave dwellers, possibly just now discovering basic tools.
- Hunters and gatherers, chasing down game on arid savannahs.
- Nomadic horsemen of the steppes, the terror of their neighbors.
- Migratory tribes, living among the trees or great plains of their continent, following the great beasts, and moving with the seasons.
- Polar nomads, hunting seals, whales, and polar bears.
- Jungle dwellers defending themselves against constant warfare by rival tribes.
- Barbarian tribes dwelling in rough huts, slowly becoming a more settled civilization.

Defining Primitive Culture

A primitive culture is one that relies mainly on its connection with the land for subsistence. Its people do not engage in large-scale and complex organization, nor are they complex toolmakers. They may travel frequently, following herds of animals or escaping marauding predators. Their clothing is of cured animal skin or crudely woven plant fibers. Their tools and weapons range from simple stone and wood bound together with leather strips to crudely worked iron at best. Their craftsmanship, on the other hand, can range from rude to exquisite, depending on how much time they can devote to this work outside of the more basic necessities of survival.

Such cultures' living units tend to be tribal and communitarian, focusing on the pragmatic rather than the ideal. Depending on their disposition toward outsiders, members may have established certain rituals for trading with others of their kind. When trade occurs, it's most frequently skins, weapons, or knowledge, though certain cultures may trade stones, beads, or other items of ceremonial value that indicate status and wealth. However, rather than an economy comprised of money, this economy is primarily gift-based or enhanced barter, as it has no basis for currency.

Primitive wisemen and wisewomen know the local herbs and plants, and they make use of natural medicines and, in some cases, potent hallucinogenic drugs. Visions from the latter sometimes guide them, as do divine beings or ancestor spirits called forth in elaborate rituals.

The peoples of primitive cultures must frequently be superb warriors and survivalists, at least within their specific environments, and such cultures often have astronomically high childhood mortality rates.

Leadership and Control

A primitive culture rewards strength and intelligence in its leaders. Smart leaders show the people how to prosper. Strong leaders bring plunder and security. Different cultures place different values on their leaders, but they inevitably follow those who give them the greatest chance for survival. If raids and brutality are the means by which a culture survives, bloodthirst becomes a virtue. If guile and cunning prove more efficacious, then the culture develops them as its primary traits. Leaders, then, must demonstrate their abilities to earn and defend their positions, whether by leading war bands, luring enemies into snares and ambushes, or devising better methods for hunting and raising food. Those with aptitudes for magic or the divine can often lead as well, whether directly or through an advisory role.

Religion, Taboos, Rituals, and Superstitions

The religions of early people tend to be simplistic and animistic, ascribing spirits and thought to objects and phenomena. Their lives are full of portents and omens, and whn they read the wind and follow the stars, they see the hands of the unknown in the world around them and so invent rituals, beliefs, and sacrifices to placate such spirits.

Because of this, shamans frequently hold powerful positions in these cultures. They are the men and women able to speak to spirits and ancestors and commune with strange creatures. The shamans advise the chiefs, and sometimes even become chieftains themselves. They lead the tribe to water in times of drought, read the signs of migrations, and teach the children the lore and history of the tribe. In more difficult times, if the shaman cannot produce results, the tribe may turn on him, exiling him or sacrificing him to the now-silent mysteries of the earth.

The burial mounds of ancestors may become pilgrimage sites, and legends of older times fill the oral histories. People tell stories of creation, of the gods and their tricks and triumphs, stories that are invariably mirrors of the qualities the tribe wishes to adopt.

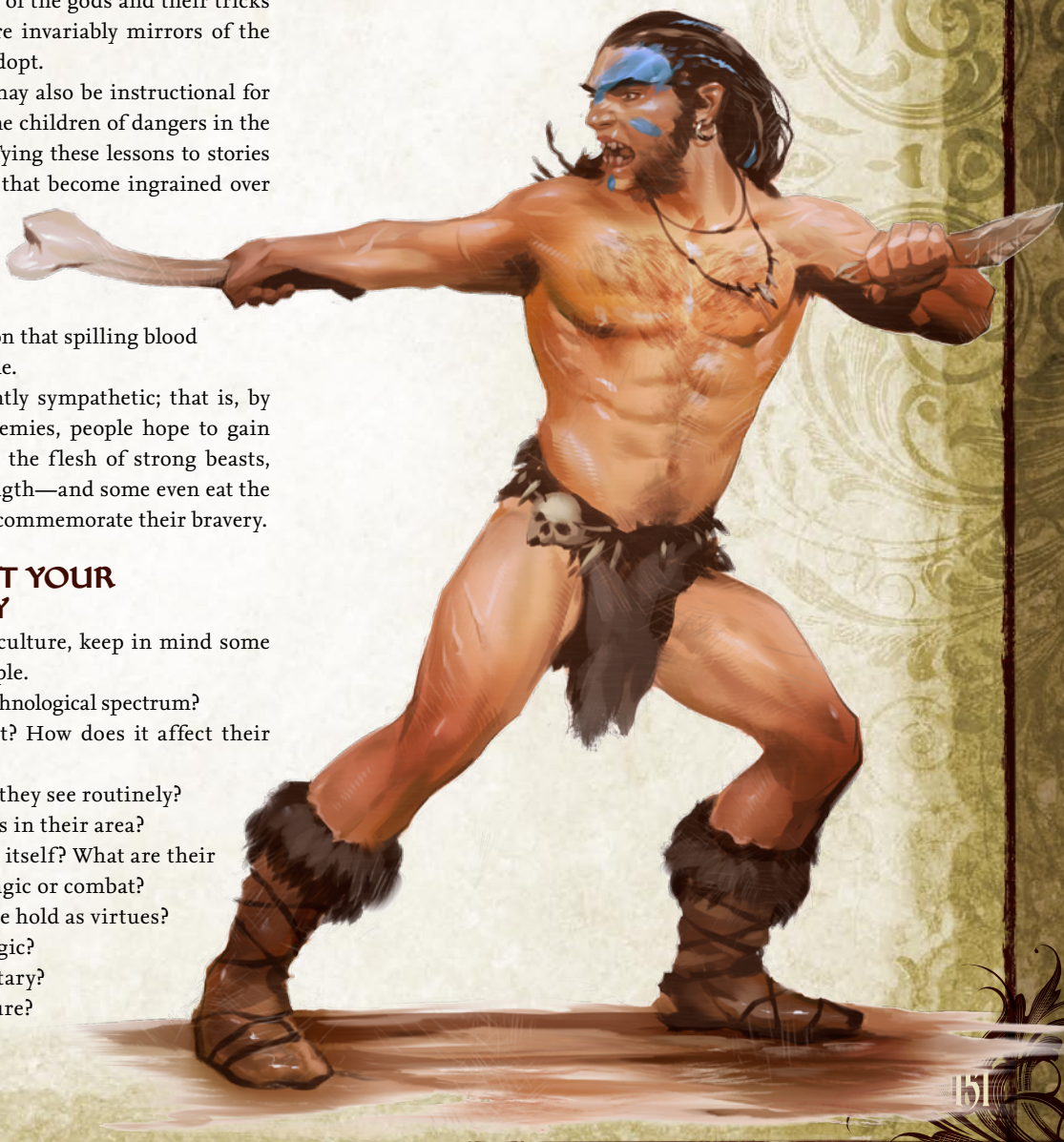
The stories the tribe tells may also be instructional for younger members, warning the children of dangers in the area and behaviors to avoid. Tying these lessons to stories can give rise to superstitions that become ingrained over the years: telling a child not to eat the red berries of a certain bush may lead to a belief that red is an unlucky color, thus spawning the notion that spilling blood unnecessarily brings ill fortune.

Primitive magic is frequently sympathetic; that is, by drawing pictures of their enemies, people hope to gain control over them. By eating the flesh of strong beasts, they hope to absorb that strength—and some even eat the flesh of worthy opponents to commemorate their bravery.

Questions About Your Primitive Society

When designing a primitive culture, keep in mind some basic questions about the people.

- Where do they fall on the technological spectrum?
- What is their environment? How does it affect their worldview?
- What sorts of monsters do they see routinely?
- What are the major dangers in their area?
- How does the tribe protect itself? What are their special skills regarding magic or combat?
- What traits does the culture hold as virtues?
- How do they feel about magic?
- Are they nomadic or sedentary?
- What is their social structure?
- Do they live in comparative ease or hardship?
- What are the major obstacles to their advancement?
- If they are nomadic, how far do they typically travel in a week, and by what means? Do they leave traces behind or do they try to vanish when they travel, and why?
- What is their attitude toward outsiders? What about trade or intermarriage?
- What goods does the tribe use for trade or commerce?
- Does the shaman hold power outright in the tribe?
- What rites do they observe?
- Does the culture hold any interesting beliefs?
- What are the superstitions and taboos of the society?
- What happens if someone violates them?
- What are the tutelary deities of the tribe?
- Who rules, and how is the ruler determined?
- How powerful is the average tribe member? What about the weakest and the strongest?
- What do they eat? How does the group store food?



The Feudal Society

As cultures emerge from ignorance into knowledge, as the people band together for mutual protection, certain leaders—whether strong, smart, or charismatic—rise to guide, lead, and protect. In a fantastic feudal society, such protection is paramount. With hordes of orcs nearby or a dragon's lair within flying distance, those without skill in arms or magic must depend on those who do have it—and those who have it must expend their energy on maintaining their abilities, rather than scratching the earth or chopping wood. Thus, leaders arise.

These leaders gather strength by bringing together other powerful people. Advisors and warriors earn power and prestige, and as the society expands, so too does the land (or the ambition) required to support it. The trusted advisors become vassals, sworn to commit their warriors in defense of the commonweal, and in turn, the leader becomes the liege, who likewise swears a solemn oath to uphold the sanctity of the realm. This structure is feudalism.

The feudal system is thus a pyramid of bodies, controlled by the warrior aristocracy. At the bottom of the pyramid labor the serfs, who compose the vast majority of the feudal population. In the earliest stage of a feudal society, the fruit of their work supports nearly the entirety of the rest of the society; they act as woodsmen, farmers, hunters, trappers, miners, smiths, millers, carpenters, and more. Serfs are the property of the lord who controls the land on which they work, and most of them never see the world 20 miles past their birthplace. They are expected to serve their lord faithfully and without question; his word is their law, and in return, he protects them, administers justice, feeds them in times of famine, and serves as the mouth of the king.

Above the serfs are the freemen, who pay rent on land overseen by the local lord. Their service to the lord begins and ends with the moneys due him, but many choose a more active role as free mercenaries, smiths, innkeepers, and more. Because the lord of the land to whom they pay rent has no obligation to them in lean times, freemen must create their own fortunes, save their money, and rely on themselves.

Both freemen and serfs might be called to serve in the levies and militias of their kingdom.

To manage their land, the landowners deputize vassals of their own: lesser judges, sheriffs, guardsmen, and more. These men might be serfs as well, or they might be freemen who have sold their services to the lord, but they wield power in the name of the lord, and their word is law unless someone higher up the social ladder says otherwise.

Above these vassals are the nobility, both greater and lesser. In many feudal societies, the nobility are knights, their status dependent on their skill with the blade or the spell. For the most part, they are also landowners, sworn to their liege lord's defense and sworn to the defense of the citizens who depend upon them. These knights are warriors or magicians, and in certain cases, the religious hierarchy of the kingdom. Those with castles or keeps have more of a duty to their kingdom than simply waiting at the king's call. They must also adjudicate matters in their fiefs, raise and support a troop of knights to contribute to their lord's defense, and keep current with the politics of the court and their neighbors. Additionally, they must also tax their peasants, maintain the fief's infrastructure (since technically this land belongs to their liege), and stamp out uprisings, rebellions, and monstrous incursions. They can pass their titles to their children, if their liege allows it; many titles begin as granted titles but later turn into hereditary titles, with the holder being responsible for the fief's tithe. At the top of this pyramid sits the all-powerful monarch.

Ruling a Feudal Society

The primary responsibility of a feudal lord is protection for his or

her vassals. This protection is both physical and legal, including aid if a vassal comes under attack as well as swift justice under the law. Though more advanced kingdoms tend to rely on precedent and established common law, kings and queens can override these at will. Their word literally is the law, often bolstered by a supposed divine mandate (and their allies within the church).

Protection comes in many forms. The very purpose of the kingdom is to stand united against enemy invasion, and this is the reason the vassals have sworn to provide warriors and service to the king. Yet the king must also protect the kingdom against internal threats, such as rebellions, bandits, thieves and murderers, mercantile fraud, and dissident or ambitious nobles. Much of the time, this means passing responsibility to the local lords and trusting them to do their work; and in most cases the vassals have extraordinary latitude to interpret the king's wishes, and direct appeal to the ruler is rare and discouraged by his underlings. Feudal justice at the uppermost levels tends to be pragmatic, rather than idealistic, meaning that any disputes are settled according to which party is of most use to the king himself. Occasionally, as in the case of the Holy Roman Emperor, a monarch may be selected by a group of peers rather than inherited through his bloodline, in which case he's both absolute ruler and beholden to his underlings, a fact reflected in his rulings. In a feudal society, justice is far from blind.

The Feudal Hierarchy

A sample feudal hierarchy, from top to bottom, is as follows. Note that the nobility holds the land in trust for the crown and does not own it outright. Certain exceptions, called allodial holdings, can be granted to anyone by the crown, but they usually quickly revert to the crown via trickery or conquest. As a feudal society doesn't leave a lot of leeway for travel, adventurers might be freemen out to improve their station through great deeds, or the youngest progeny of the nobility, eager to win their own titles through force of arms.

Title	Lands	Hereditary?
King/Queen	Kingdom	Y
Prince/Princess	Principality	Y
Duke/Duchess	Duchy	Y
Margrave/Margravine	Marquisate	Y
Count (or Earl)/Countess	County	Y
Viscount/Viscountess	Viscounty or Shire	Y
Baron/Baroness	Barony	Y
Knight/Dame/Lord	Manor	N
Merchant	—	—
Freeman	—	Y
Serf	—	Y

Religion's Role

Faith plays a huge role in many feudal societies, especially in monotheistic belief systems whose churches are structured in a similar fashion. In a fantasy setting, with multiple pantheons and the favor of the gods manifesting in physical phenomena, all bets are off. Will a monarch want to ally with a church? Early members of the royal family may find these alliances convenient, but when a priest can cast *detect evil* or *know alignment*, rulers no longer have the option of hiding their true beliefs. Giving such power to a church might spell disaster for a royal house. When priests speak of a ruler having the divine right, the people can rest assured that this is so. One question, then, is what happens when a hereditary monarch doesn't have that favor. Does he corrupt the priesthood, or do the priests help to replace him? In a feudal society, these are not small tasks.

Depending on the society you design, the churches may be more or less woven into the framework of society, with churches of a lawful bent naturally appealing to a monarch from whom all laws stem. In such situations, the monarchy generally works with its spiritual advisors in much the same way as it does with its vassals—though in theory the church answers to itself, in practice power begets power, and those churches deeply enmeshed in feudal politics tend to spend much of their effort enforcing the social order, maintaining orthodoxy, and rooting out heresies.

Questions About Your Feudal Society

When designing a feudal society, consider the following:

- Who rules the society? How does the ruler maintain power and control?
- What factions plot against the ruler? Why?
- How is the ruler selected?
- How does the ruler keep order?
- How involved is the ruler in the affairs of the realm?
- What are the external threats to this society?
- What are the internal threats to this society?
- How corrupt is the nobility?
- How rigid is the social system?
- What do the social classes think of each other?
- How well does the nobility provide for its serfs?
- How does the society feel about traveling adventurers?
- What is the role of religion in this society? What deities are prominent?
- Do priests wield power? How much?
- Is there a hierarchy within the church that mirrors that of the society at large?
- What is the role of wizards in this society? Do they work with, against, or alongside the monarch?
- How do people of the society feel about magic?
- Which are the most prominent cities, and do they have major works like cathedrals, bridges, and fortresses?

The Rural/Agrarian Society

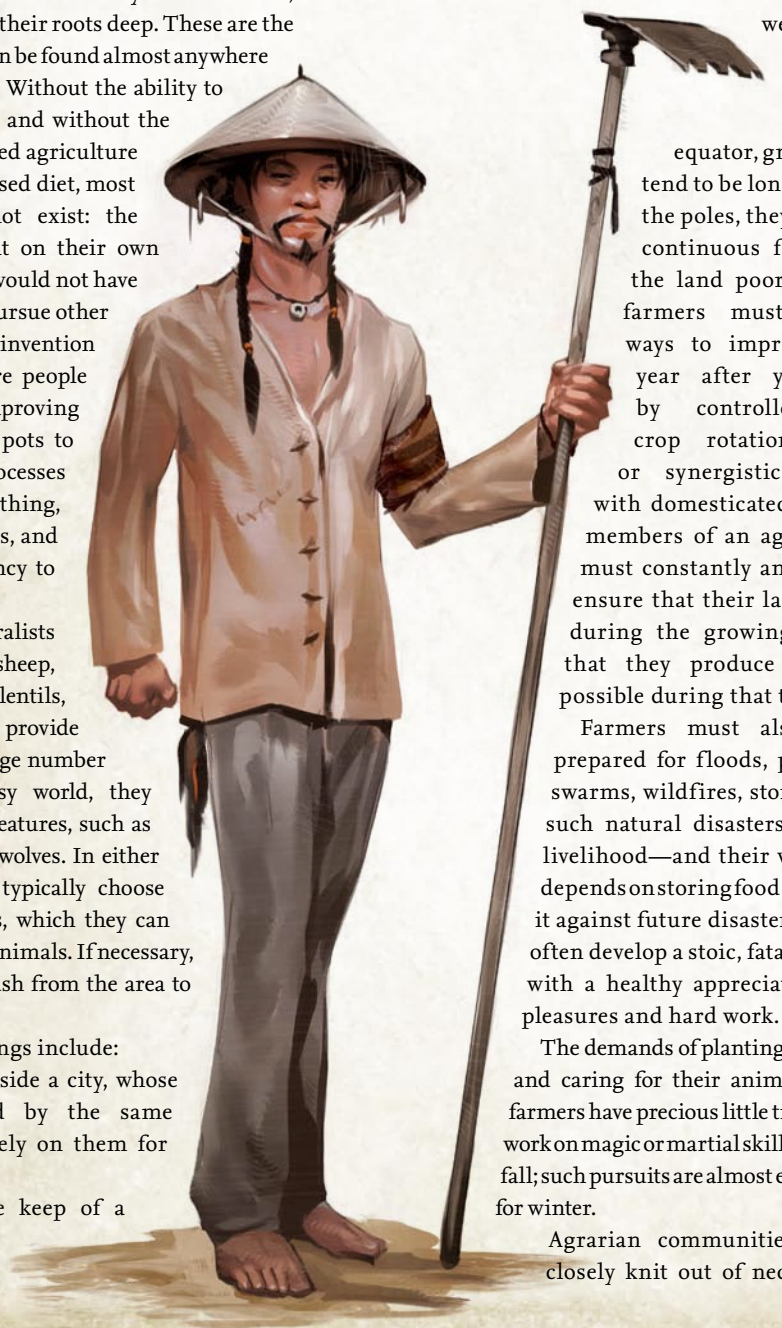
In general, civilization hinges on a people's ability to move beyond the hunter-gatherer model, to settle into a place, learn to understand, and it harness its resources. In most cases, this is the result of a primitive people first domesticating wild animals—either as hunting companions or as food, clothing, or milk sources—and learning to plant crops for survival. Many cultures eventually move on from that base, focusing instead on technological innovation, conquest, or higher magic.

Some, though, choose to live in harmony with the earth, to keep their heads down and their roots deep. These are the agrarian societies, and they can be found almost anywhere civilization spreads its cloak. Without the ability to grow large amounts of food, and without the aid of beasts of burden to speed agriculture and provide a richer, meat-based diet, most advanced societies could not exist: the citizens would be dependent on their own skills to raise food, and they would not have the energy or inclination to pursue other avenues of thought. After the invention of agriculture, however, more people can devote their lives to improving society as a whole: creating pots to store the food, refining processes to cure hides and create clothing, building more durable houses, and creating standardized currency to expedite trade.

In a realistic world, pastoralists might raise cattle, horses, sheep, or goats and farm wheat, lentils, barley, or maize—staples that provide labor, fiber, and food for a large number of people. In a high-fantasy world, they might raise more fantastic creatures, such as griffons, hippogriffs, or dire wolves. In either case, farmers and ranchers typically choose locations near rivers or lakes, which they can use to irrigate fields or water animals. If necessary, they often clear trees and brush from the area to create open fields or pastures.

Some broad agrarian settings include:

- The fertile farmlands outside a city, whose inhabitants are mocked by the same snobbish city folk who rely on them for survival.
- Serfs toiling around the keep of a once-proud noble, who offers them protection.
- Rural farmlands, feeding a distant empire embroiled in an ancient war.
- A pastoral paradise far from urban society, where the citizens want for nothing.
- A walled farm town, perched high on a peninsular bluff, defending its goods and lifestyle against pirates and raiders alike.



Life in an Agrarian Society

In most settled lands, there is a limited growing season. Whether this is because of harsh winters or blazing summers, lack of or too much water, or monster activity, farmers must plan well ahead to gain the most from their land. Near the equator, growing seasons tend to be longer, while near the poles, they're shorter. As continuous farming leaves the land poor in nutrients, farmers must figure out ways to improve the yield year after year. Whether by controlled burning, crop rotation, irrigation, or synergistic fertilization with domesticated animals, the members of an agrarian society must constantly and consistently ensure that their lands are fertile during the growing season, and that they produce as much as possible during that time.

Farmers must also always be prepared for floods, plagues, insect swarms, wildfires, storms, and other such natural disasters. Their entire livelihood—and their very survival—depends on storing food and preserving it against future disaster. As such, they often develop a stoic, fatalistic mindset, with a healthy appreciation of simple pleasures and hard work.

The demands of planting and harvesting and caring for their animals means that farmers have precious little time or energy to work on magic or martial skills from spring to fall; such pursuits are almost exclusively saved for winter.

Agrarian communities are usually closely knit out of necessity, though

there may be tension and antagonism among the members. Such societies require mutual cooperation to survive, and as a result, their interactions often revolve around group activities, such as a shared religious services or barn raisings.

The Religion of Farmers

Being so closely tied to the land naturally directs these cultures toward nature-based deities or the worship of nature itself. Druids and the gods of fertility receive sacrifices of thanks and prayer; the gods of death, disease, and famine receive supplications to keep their distance. The reproductive cycles of various domesticated animals are incredibly important, and other holy days might be built around harvests, solstices, equinoxes, plantings, and other annual tasks. Such events are often marked with fertility rites, bonfires, celebrations, and sacrifices to assure greater yields, more children, and the blessings of the gods.

Superstitions and taboos may also play a strong role in the society. As with the primitive society (see page 132), many real-world taboos arise as ways of passing on practical lessons, such as dietary restrictions on animals that eat unclean foods and could therefore pass along disease. Other superstitions might hold that placing hex signs and horseshoes on barns prevents bad luck, or farmers might keep goats with their cows to prevent sickness, then sacrifice the goats to drive away plague.

Social Structure and Economy

Since farms are an integral part of any civilization, the question for a world-builder is just how much of the society focuses on agriculture. In an early feudal society, most of the peasants and serfs work on farms. As farming methods and means of distribution improve, some peasants become freemen and can move toward other professions, creating a burgeoning middle class. In the beginning, though, these post-farming professionals tend to be oriented toward pastoral crafts, such as weavers, potters, and smiths.

No one specific type of government best fits an agrarian society. Some societies might have inherited monarchs who rule by fiat, while others might elect reluctant leaders or councils of elders, and still others might come together only in mutual self-defense. Within the home, the father is usually the landowner and head of the household, working the fields from sunrise to sunset. While the wife often works beside him during harvest time and handles the food preservation, an important goal for most women is to bear and raise as many strong children is possible, for more children mean more hands to help with the fields.

Challenges

Far from the protecting arm of a liege lord (if they have one at all), most rural societies must rely on themselves. Along with the normal race against time and nature to produce enough food to survive, raiders and monsters are a constant threat, especially during the winter, when farmer's stores are full and foraging is difficult. As a result, farmers are as likely to be suspicious or hostile as they are to welcome the protection of adventurers. War is another great destroyer of rural communities—though rarely involved as fighters themselves, farmers see their fields trampled and animals infected by unburied corpses. Warlords of all alignments are notorious for commandeering and slaughtering farm animals for their sustenance, and billeting their troops in homes even if they are uwelcome.

Questions About Your Rural/Agrarian Society

When designing a rural or agrarian society, keep in mind some of the following basic questions about the people.

- How advanced are they technologically?
- Where did these people originally come from, and why did they come?
- What did they do when they arrived in this land? Were they friendly or antagonistic toward the creatures and people already here?
- Did they bring seeds and animals from their homeland with them?
- What terrain do they inhabit?
- Who are their enemies and allies?
- How fertile is the land? What happens to any excess crops that are harvested—are they traded or stockpiled against future shortages?
- How do the farmers fertilize their land, and with what materials? (Examples: manure, compost, blood, corpses of enemies, magic, prayers.)
- What is their primary food crop or animal?
- What is their primary beast of burden?
- How do they store their food?
- Do they have currency, and if so, what is it? Who issues it, and by what authority?
- What is the weather like, and what kinds of clothing do they wear?
- How clean are they, and how do they maintain that level of hygeine?
- How do they feel about magic and wizards?
- What is their relationship with their gods?
- What is their relationship with travelers, merchants, and other foreigners?
- How do they protect their land?
- What monsters and fey live near this society, and how do these people deal with them?

The Cosmopolitan Society

While countrysides, farmlands, mountaintops, forests, and tundras all have their place in a well-developed world, the city is where the heart of civilized culture beats. As trade hubs, military fortifications, artistic centers, intellectual havens, and seats of government, cities are repositories of history and cultural knowledge. But what makes a city? How does it form, and how does it attract its people?

As a rule, cities form around water sources, whether that's a single oasis or a lake, river, or sea that provides the additional boon of fisheries and convenient transportation of people and goods. Once water is accounted for, cities frequently form near tracts of fertile land or rich veins of ore—or junctions of the roads along which such things are transported. They may form at key strategic locations, like mountain passes that control movement between fertile valleys (thus allowing easy taxation), or just before a difficult stretch of a major thoroughfare, giving weary travelers a place to rest (or give up their burdens and put down roots, enlarging the city). Whatever the reason, a city grows and thrives by becoming a hub, attracting trade, visitors, and new residents. As it grows, it changes, and residents can often see the shape of the old city underneath the gleaming streets, with the old buildings coexisting with or being slowly supplanted by the new. A city's architecture is typically reflective of the people who created it, and immigrants frequently bring the aesthetics (and cultural practices) of their homelands, making a city's buildings and structure a physical record of its history.



City Requirements

While smaller settlements like towns and forts can sometimes exist in barely tenable situations, often for strategic military reasons, most realistic cities have a few basic requirements that must be met.

- Access to sufficient food and fresh water (for both drinking and sanitation).
- Centralized authority, whether king or council, to provide protection, and taxes levied by those authorities to help pay for walls, guardsmen, weaponry, and other defenses against invasion.
- Infrastructure to provide food and basic necessities.
- Craftsmen and specialists, and importation of raw materials for those artisans.
- A reason to exist: Why is the city here, and not 20 miles down the road? Does it have strategic importance or natural resources, or is it a crossroads for trade?

Urban Planning

The first question the GM must ask about a city is what drew the original settlers to this specific spot, and why they stayed. Was it the protection offered by a mountainous bluff? Proximity to a river? Or merely the closest they could reasonably get to an easily exploited natural resource?

Early on, building infrastructure is a communal effort, requiring little management. But as a city grows, someone eventually needs to take charge. Who rules your city, and how are they appointed? Are the leaders mayors, elected by the people, or are they viceroys, ruling in place of a king? How do they make laws, and with what strength do they back those laws? How far are they willing to go to enforce them? Is this a free city, where citizens can speak their mind without fear, or is it a heavily guarded fort where any hint of insubordination is immediately crushed under the governor's iron heel? If it's the latter, why do traders run that risk in order to trade there?

Every city requires trade in order to grow. Some grow from fur-trapping settlements, while others rise near especially productive mines. Some are merely waypoints along caravan routes, set alongside natural springs in the desert. What they all have in common is that they are centralized locations for people of varying backgrounds to come together and distribute their goods to others who might need them. Trade is a city's lifeblood; its tolls and taxes provide support for the infrastructure, its coins enter and help to stabilize the local economy, and its cultural mores quickly come to dominate local customs. But trade requires markets, and markets require marketplaces. What sort of trade defines your city? Is it all based around the same basic good, with businessmen attempting to undercut each other in an effort to sell to outsiders, or is it varied and catering primarily to its own populace? What are the marketplaces like? The larger the city, the more markets it needs, centrally located for business and residential districts, and these markets need distribution channels—which is to say: roads.

Unless a city is planned in advance—a relatively rare occurance, usually the result of government decree or religious mandate—city streets tend to grow up around existing structures and the paths of the original settlement; as a result, most cities have winding, narrow streets, suitable for foot traffic or small carts, with buildings pressing in above. As the city expands, the streets of the city often change and expand as well depending on their traffic and their usage patterns. If the streets see frequent use by heavy carts, the city leaders might pave them to prevent them from turning into trenches every time it rains. Smaller streets may remain unpaved, and the residents may even toss their chamber pots directly into the gutters, waiting for the rains to wash away the filth.

Cities frequently house a mix of social classes. Some people inevitably become wealthy and develop different living patterns, requiring people of lower station to help manage and maintain their estates. How much of your city do the wealthy command? Is there a middle class? How do the various races mix, and what do residents in general think of those who are different from them? What sorts of political groups or religions does the city have, and how do they interact?

Most of these groups will be interested in power, and many will imagine they can do a better job protecting the city than the current ruling clique. But from what does the city need protection? The *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* contains helpful lists of monsters grouped by their environment and habitat; these are invaluable tools for outlining the possible monsters that lair near the city. Of course, the presence of monsters also attracts adventurers seeking glory or wealth. The more monsters or other physical threats near a city, the more likely the city will have extensive stocks of adventuring supplies, weapon shops, armories, and the like.

Questions About Your City

Designing a city can seem like an overwhelming task, but in a roleplaying game, the key to designing a compelling city is to consider those aspects that are most likely to affect your adventure or the PCs. Before you start writing your city, develop a familiarity with the more practical elements of your locale by answering the following questions (many of which are useful in designing smaller settlements, as well).

- Who rules the city?
- How does the ruler maintain power?
- What factions or personalities plot against the ruler? Why do they do so?
- What four enemy types are common to campaigns set in this city?
- Which local NPCs are the PCs likely to befriend? Why?
- What three things about your city make it unique?
- What monsters lurk in the city?
- How powerful are the city's trade guilds?
- Is there a wizards' guild?
- Is there a thieves' guild?
- What deities have temples in the city?
- What is the most popular religion? What about your city's character makes this religion popular?
- From whom are the PCs likely to seek healing?
- Where can the PCs buy weapons, armor, and equipment?
- What's the best inn or tavern in town?
- Which tavern is most likely to be the site of a bar fight?
- Where would the PCs buy, sell, and trade magic items?
- How does social class affect the lives of citizens in your city?
- What do the social classes think of each other?
- How corrupt is the city watch? The courts?
- How dangerous is the city at night?
- What are the three most beautiful things in the city?
- How does the city protect itself?
- What does the city smell like?
- What do the citizens do to have a good time?
- What do the citizens fear more than anything else?
- What would a bard like about the city?
- What would a barbarian, druid, or ranger like about the city?
- What would your significant other or spouse like about the city?
- Why do adventurers come to your city?

Other Societies

The cultures presented in the preceding sections are broad categories, and certainly not the only ones available to a fantasy world. Others have flowered from similar beginnings and taken dramatically different paths. The societies listed below are merely a few other possibilities; taken with the advice from previous chapters, these sketches can be used by world builders to begin creating cultures from whole cloth. Whether your new society is inspired by real-world civilizations or completely alien, consider the following questions about it:

- How do adventurers rise from this society, and what are they like?
- What is the most common attitude toward adventurers within this society?
- What attitudes do these cultures have toward outsiders?
- Are there customs that outsiders might easily break? These might range from simple etiquette to required ritual cleansings. If so, what is the usual reprimand for breaking them?
- How does the society communicate? How do members pass along their knowledge?
- Where does the culture fit on the chaotic/lawful spectrum—that is, from anarchist to authoritarian?
- What do members of this society trade, and on what do they subsist?
- How are the rulers determined, and on what basis do they pass on their authority?

Bureaucracy: Emerging from a feudal or authoritarian society, bureaucracy generally requires both literacy and a codified set of laws. The culture can be ancient or advanced, but it must be large enough or complex enough that the rulers of the country have elevated those who understand and interpret its laws to a greater position of responsibility. When applied judiciously, bureaucracy is a rational and controlled way to compartmentalize and reign over a sprawling empire. When taken too far, one discovers why it is the preferred government of Hell. It grinds both slowly and exceedingly fine.

The head of state in a bureaucracy might be a king, a councilman, a priest, or a mere figurehead, but beyond the leader, the power of the nation lies with the bureaucrats, who interpret the laws and apportion resources across the land. More than simple government functionaries, they are the hands that steer the ship of state. They control the regulations, the ministries, and the fates of the citizens under their purview. Nobility may exist, but its power largely lies in influence over the ministers who oversee the bureaucracy. Those nobles who fall out of favor may find their land assigned to others, their taxes raised, their titles mysteriously downgraded, and more. And woe to the commoner who angers a bureaucrat, for a small amount of power sometimes does strange and wicked things to a bureaucrat's thinking.

Try combining bureaucratic governance with another societal trope for strange results. A pastoral bureaucracy, for instance, might see farmers told what to grow, whose fields are to lie fallow and when, and which farmers are expected to fight in the militias. Bureaucratic feudalism might result in something that resembles medieval China.

Caste System: This is similar to the feudal system. The most famous real-world example is that of historical India, in which society became stratified into broad classes: Brahmins, the teachers and priests; the Kshatriyas, warriors and kings; the Vaishyas, traders and farmers; and the Sudras, craftsmen and servants. Beneath these lay the Dalits, or untouchables, who performed menial and "impure" jobs, such as waste collection, street sweeping, or butchery.

Each caste carries its own duties and responsibilities to itself and to other castes. Members cannot marry outside their caste, nor can they easily change the caste into which they are born, but they are equal within their caste, advancing in their professions by merit and ability. The castes work interdependently with each other, and without one, the others fail. The system of obligation and counter-obligation keeps the society functioning, and few who receive its benefits rail against it—but others often see it as a means to subjugate others without hope of change. The whole culture may resonate with this tension.

Decadent: Societies rise, and societies fall. Lesser societies simply fade away and vanish under the relentless tread of history or conquering armies. Greater societies, though, are more likely to slip, notch by notch, into the darkness. Is this effect due to the corrupting influence of money? The over-extension of the military into ill-advised ventures? The widening gap between the upper and lower social classes, or perhaps the exaggerated effects of various fads, drugs, or religions? Whatever the cause, the once-great society loses its power and watches its territories fall away. Its enemies seize their chances and strip away outlying lands. Strong provinces declare independence. Former allies take the opportunity to snatch weaker provinces or rich trade routes.

In the cities and towns, malaise sets in. The citizens oscillate from one extreme to another, seeking ways to restore their power and former glory. They may divide into factions, seeking to gather as much power as possible for themselves so that they can enjoy the fruits of empire before they die, or to help shape what they see as the possible rebirth of their land. Either way, the ruling class and the classes beneath are fractured, suspicious, and frequently ready for violence. Though the infrastructure that holds the empire together still exists, it falls into greater disrepair, and the poor become more feral even as

the wealthy become more indolent. The decadent culture, once reliant on law, is spiraling into chaos and anarchy—a fertile ground for adventurers.

Magocracy: Similar to an aristocracy, a magocracy is a society in which wizards, sorcerers, and other magically imbued beings control the government. Those who have magic at their fingertips are at an immediate advantage in this country, though they may have to prove themselves against others, depending on the local codes. Those who do not have magic tend to be the underclass, serving the whims of their masters. These cultures often orient themselves more toward research into powerful and esoteric magics than day-to-day politics, and thus they may slide more quickly into decadence. The leaders may enact brilliant policies and create a utopia for all, or the elite may dabble constantly in the lives of their citizens, experimenting and choosing wildly disparate means to test their theories. Some of these societies will be blasted wastelands; some will be paradises. The trade from these countries is likely rich in magic and power, but their trading partners may be concerned about fraud and justice. These lands tend to be open to adventurers, just as the rulers tend to be open to new experiments and new ideas, but there are always exceptions, and some will have their borders sealed by magical energies. Adventurers from a magocracy might be low-magic outcasts who have fled to find themselves a greater place in history, wizardly apprentices or journeymen who travel as ambassadors and spies, or scholars in search of undiscovered knowledge.

Matriarchy: A matriarchy is a system in which women rule and men may be subjugated to a greater or lesser extent. The populace could be warlike, as with the Amazon civilization, in which women used men as slaves and fathers but not as husbands, and could not be mothers until they had killed a man in battle. Alternatively, the society could be gentle and nurturing, with women permitting men to help with defense, but otherwise dominating the political scene, industry, and the arts through a combination of communal rule, and utilitarian care for the good of all. Consider the society's origins—is the matriarchy a violent, revolutionary response to a history of male oppression, or a natural evolution over the course of generations, about which no one now thinks twice?

When creating a matriarchy, the world builder should address the roles of both women and men in the society, and whether the rulers welcome men as visitors and near-equals or enslave them on sight.

Monstrous: Many monstrous societies are low on the technological spectrum, living in caves and subsisting primarily as raiders, rather than as creators or farmers, but some of them make the leap to more advanced civilizations, usually far from human lands. Sometimes these societies are splintered from the rest of their kindred and have been exiled from the lands they once thought to rule. They may prey upon more civilized societies, raiding for slaves to work their crude farms and to replace those who fall, or they may wish only to live and let live, pursuing the advancement of their species in peace but unafraid to defend their realms with fang and claw. Both because of their natures and due to the persecution they often find at the hands of "normal" races, monstrous cultures often take a dim view of outsiders. They may tolerate visitors but rarely welcome them.

Theocracy: In a world where the gods not only exist but manifest their existence through direct action, their spokespeople will naturally assume a greater degree of control in some societies. Some folk are more deeply religious than others, and in these societies, priests can easily take control of the levers of government, existing not just alongside but in place of the temporal authorities. They dictate the laws based on their holy teachings and expect the populace to fall in line. The priests of chaotic gods rarely take control of governments like this; they believe in individuality, not the rule of law.

If a priesthood assumes power by entering an existing power structure, its members may simply place themselves at the top and control the ministries or courts of the nobles by edict and fiat. If they instead choose to replace the previous power structure, they might establish a government as a mirror (or branch) of church hierarchy. Priests assume the power of bureaucrats, scribes, courtiers, and judges, interpreting the words of their deities as law. Until their god-given powers disappear, it likely seems reasonable to both them and their constituents to assume that their actions have the blessing of their god—a divine mandate in the most literal sense.

By their nature, priests in a fantasy world must be faithful to reap the benefits of the power of prayer. Those who rise to power within the church hierarchy are therefore the most faithful of the faithful—their detractors might even call them extremists and zealots. Moderates might exist peacefully within a theocratic government, but they also might be hounded out and driven away from the ship of state. Outsiders may be welcome, or they may be required to convert or tithe to the church while within the borders. Priests from these lands might be more devout, seeing their rule as a privilege, or they might be sycophantic politicians cloaking themselves in the barest shreds of faith. Adventuring priests from such lands might act as missionaries and envoys, and how expansionist the government is likely depends on the teachings and interpretations of their holy texts. Such a society may choose to remain within its borders and attract followers by virtue of its shining goodness, or it might choose to launch crusades to bring nonbelievers to the truth.

Technology

One of the most important factors in building a world is its level of technological advancement. Technology affects every aspect of the game, from what gear PCs carry to what kinds of adventures a GM can run. Though many fantasy games presume a level of technology based on medieval Europe, this is far from the only option—even leaving aside those subgenres that might qualify as science fiction, fantasy can still run the gamut from steampunk and magic-infused technocracy to the hardscrabble world of primitive barbarian tribes. So how do you decide what's right for your world?

Contentious Technology

Many fantasy RPGs assume a medieval or Renaissance baseline, a level of technology in which castles, swords, and armor are at their peak. Yet if your world follows the same trends as Earth's history, several technological revolutions are just around the corner, and you should give some thought to how they interact with your setting, if at all.

Airships: Various historical accounts claim that the first winged gliders appeared in the medieval period or even earlier—albeit with minor success and massive injuries—and the technology behind hot air balloons potentially predated them by several centuries. In a world where creatures as large as dragons soar through the skies, it only makes sense that mankind might seek to do the same. Yet airships, while exotic and useful for transporting PCs, carry their own set of complications. Are a castle's walls still useful when the enemy can drop bombs from a thousand feet up? How rare are airships, and who has access to them?

Firearms: Of all the technology that can be introduced to a campaign setting, none has so polarizing an effect as gunpowder. Some GMs view the thought of a fighter with a pistol as heresy, while others happily dive into the world of primitive flintlocks and blunderbusses, and still others would love nothing more than a barbarian with a sword in one hand and an assault rifle in the other. Beyond simply the flavor aspect, guns can present a tricky game balance issue, as it's important that the addition of firearms doesn't make existing player characters obsolete. If you choose to include guns in your world, be sure to consider the natural evolution of the technology and draw your lines accordingly—large-scale cannons and simple bombs are easier to design than handheld firearms, and even once gunsmithing has been refined to incorporate muzzle-loading pistols and muskets, there's still a long way to go before the invention of cartridges and other advancements that allow guns to be reloaded quickly. Until those late-stage inventions come to bear, the musketeer that misses with his first shot may find himself peppered with arrows while he searches for powder and wadding.

Medicine: Throughout history, medical advances have come at different times in different locations. Middle Eastern cultures were the first to develop hospitals (an idea taken back to Europe during the crusades), South Asian dentists were drilling teeth over 9,000 years ago, ancient Egyptians recorded the first medical texts, and Greek surgeons experimented with daring manipulations that we're only now perfecting. While magical healing and the Heal skill may cover all your bases in-game, it's good to know what level of medical technology exists in your world. If a PC gets sick, do the local villagers soothe his fevered brow or beat him with sticks to drive the demons out, while simultaneously draining his blood? Your PCs may know everything about slaying dragons, but do they understand germs and why they shouldn't drink downstream from the battlefield? How common are plagues in your world? Do its people understand drugs and antiseptics?

Printing Press: Printing presses spread literacy and help people organize and disseminate information, yet they can cause distinct problems for GMs (not to mention those feudal lords who depend on keeping their serfs ignorant and isolated). If you introduce the printing press to your world, who has access to it and what sorts of things does it print? Does it get used for religious texts or revolutionary pamphlets? Can it print magical texts like spellbooks and scrolls, and if so, how do you keep suddenly cheap magic from destroying the economy?

Sanitation: The real medieval world was a disgusting place, rife with filth and disease. While those GMs seeking authenticity might have everyone in the city emptying their chamber pots into the streets, privies, aqueducts, and other such sanitation aren't actually anachronistic, depending on the culture. (And what wizard capable of traveling the planes wants to constantly worry about stepping in human waste?)

Steam Power: Entire genres—especially steampunk—have been built around steam power and the idea of "industrial revolution fantasy." Steamboats, steam trains, mechanized factories—the advancement a simple steam engine can bring to a world is immense, and in such a setting, it's easy for steam power to become the focus. Steam-powered vehicles streamline transportation of troops, civilians, and goods, making it easier to build vast empires. Steam-powered factories turn out perfect machined goods at a rate far above traditional cottage industry. Steam-powered war machines might even make appearances on the battlefield. Next to firearms, steam power has the most potential to change the flavor of your campaign setting, for good or ill. Use it carefully.

Multiple Levels of Technology

One of the best things about creating an entire setting is giving yourself several different regions with wildly different societies, and that includes regions with differing levels of technology. While some GMs argue that such variances break a game, a glance at Earth shows that it's possible to have neighboring nations operating under extremely different conditions, and the farther apart the societies lie, the less likely there is to be crossover. Hence, it's entirely possible to have both guns and swords in your world, or a futuristic race with inventions too advanced for the primitive barbarians next door to replicate on their own. While less fortunate cultures likely lust after such innovations, it's not hard to stem the flow of technology, especially if the only people capable of constructing the wonders keep the secrets to themselves and sell their wares at incredibly inflated rates.

This brings up another important issue: futuristic technology. Though it can be argued that, to a caveman, a sword constitutes future technology, most people think of futuristic science in terms of ray guns and laser swords, the treasures of invading aliens, or the post-apocalyptic remnants of lost civilizations. Such items are often persona non grata in a fantasy setting, but the question remains: in a world where a wizard can make his wishes reality, is there any functional difference between a ray gun that shoots fire and a *wand of scorching ray*?

Magic and Technology

The question of how magic and science interact in your world is worth asking. Not just in terms of the laws and logic that each follows—though that helps—but how each is viewed and utilized by society. In a world with magic, is there any need for conventional science? If so, what factors determine which scholars pursue which? Which one is cheaper for the average peasant with a problem, and which is more reliable? How do the various churches view science? Do scientists and arcanists get along, or do they see each other as rivals? If they coexist, do the same individuals study both, and how do the different fields inform each other? Why bother with expensive, dangerous scientific experiments when you can cast a divination spell and have a deity personally verify or disprove your hypothesis?

In the end, neither magic nor science can truly replace the other, for every archer needs a basic understanding of physics, and the doctor who cures disease with moldy bread is every bit a magician to the uninitiated onlooker. By figuring out how the two interact and balance out, you can flesh out your cultures and be prepared when a player decides he wants to foster a scientific revolution in-game.

Anachronisms

Anachronisms, meaning things that seem out of place in a given time period, are always an issue in fantasy. Any time you try to draw from the past, your base assumptions as a resident of the present make it easy to accidentally introduce modern conventions. Every GM should be prepared to deal with players calling him on anachronisms she hadn't noticed (or worse, on things like eyeglasses and clocks which feel anachronistic but in fact far predate the medieval period). So how should you deal with anachronisms?

Simple: don't bother.

The first thing to remember in designing a campaign setting is that it's your world, not Earth. Random chance plays a major role in science, and the fact that a given Earth culture didn't make a specific discovery until a certain date doesn't mean your culture has to follow the same timeline, so long as the progression is internally consistent. On Earth, different cultures advanced in different fields at different rates—the Chinese had cannons, flamethrowers, and land mines before Europe discovered gunpowder. Don't let history tie the hands of your imagination.



Time

Even the most superficial treatment of a campaign setting needs to deal with history and the passage of time. Every ancient ruin, powerful artifact, and court intrigue is rooted in the past, and history brings context to adventures. Your decisions on such things as the age of the world, the nature of the calendar, and even the length of the seasons have significant impacts on the stories that unfold.

The Role of Time

Time creates continuity and strings together what would otherwise be a collection of random events, dungeon crawls, and journeys. A world is much more than a vague stage for the adventurers to act upon. To bring depth to the setting, you need to look into the past and establish at least a loose framework for history. How many generations ago did people first arrive in the area? How far back does the current ruling family trace its lineage? How long ago was the port city founded? And what do all of these have in common, if anything?

Time also acts as a pacing mechanic, both during the adventures you run and when connecting them together. The use of downtime for healing, recovery, and crafting items (to say nothing of adventurers who have family or business obligations) is made more real when you know what being away from the story for that length of time means. Does a villain have time to recover his forces after the last battle, or is he still weakened? Does the war in the neighboring kingdom get worse, or do diplomats forge a peace accord? To this end, it might be useful to establish a campaign calendar that allows you to track time in-game, and that can also be filled out ahead of time with major holy days, festivals, and other time-sensitive events to give your campaign added verisimilitude and easy adventure hooks.

The Role of Time

In most fantasy settings, time is a linear construct, a series of dates on a line. This is the standard construct, but it can also be tweaked. Do the people of your world think of time as a series of never-ending cycles or in terms of ages defined by a common theme, such as the Dark Ages or the Age of Reason? Does history repeat itself? If so, is this repetition what leads to prophecy, and how does it affect the role of sages, historians, and storytellers? Alternatively, you might decide that time happens all at once, a singular, shared hallucination—this obviously becomes complicated and makes great demands on your world's cosmology, but it can be a fun conceit nonetheless.

Assuming time is linear and cause leads to effect, how long are your world's years, seasons, months, or weeks? In most cultures, these are labels for meteorological or cosmic events that can be reliably tracked. The sun goes down every day, the moon goes through its phases every month, the seasons come in cycles of four, and so forth. Any and all of these could be altered or eliminated, so long as you think of some reasonably sensible explanation for it.

Changing such things as the length of the day is more significant than the length of a season or even a month, because it can directly impact an adventure. If a day in your world is 32 hours long, how much of that is night? How does this change the length of a typical "business day" for markets, farmers, craftsmen, or guards? What about magic users whose abilities refresh each day?

A common world-building twist is adding moons or perhaps some other great cosmological object. If you do this, you provide your world with another reliable marker for time's passing, so be sure to consider its effects. Is the smaller moon faster or slower? When a comet manifests in the heavens, does it signal the changing of kings or the beginning of a ritual war?

Finally, you should think about how tightly you want to bind such things as government, religion, or magic to the marking of time. Do people think of time in terms of the emperor's reign? Is each day of the week connected to a religious practice or observation?

Celebrating Time

Holidays, festivals, and other calendar-based events provide easy world flavor and adventure hooks.

Holy days are connected to religious events, often signifying anniversaries of important events. This might be the birth of a religious leader, the foundation of the religion itself, a period of abstinence, or a day of miracles and portents. If your world has many gods, then almost every day might have some religious significance. Don't go overboard, however, or you'll lose that sense of drama that comes with the observation and its associations. Holy days also make great deadlines, such as the heroes needing to return a missing magic artifact to its temple before the holy day arrives.

Festivals usually take place over several days. Anything can be used as an explanation for a festival, from the celebration of the new harvest to an annual coming-of-age rite for the town's youth. Because they can extend over more than a single day, they're an excellent backdrop for an intrigue or a lengthy episodic adventure.

Don't forget the extraordinary events that the heroes themselves have a role to play in, either. If the player characters liberate a town from years of domination, then that's cause for a new celebration!

Crafting Time

When answering the questions in this section, don't be afraid to start simple and add more as you run adventures.

Write up a few important events in your setting's history, shuffle those around, and when you're happy with the story, you can set their dates and lay them out into a timeline. Even if you only have five important dates, that's enough to provide context for dozens of potential adventures. And as the game progresses, you simply flesh things out more.

Some people really get into this aspect of world building, and that's great. It's important to remember, though, that unless an event has some value to the stories and games you plan on running, it isn't worth burdening yourself or your players with it. If you are especially detail-oriented, you can go so far as to set up multiple timelines, keyed to specific topics: religion, politics, and technology, for instance. You could also transition this to a digital document, making it even easier to link events together. Be careful with this, though, as the complexity of such systems can snowball rapidly.

This last point cannot be stressed enough: one of the most common player complaints about a setting is an overzealous backstory. Don't fall so in love with your world's history that you marginalize your players. Historical facts should be presented in a manner that's fun, exciting, and useful—or else ignored altogether.

The Age of the World

Time isn't just about holidays, calendars, and politics. On a more cosmic level, the tone of the campaign may depend on how old or young the world is, and what this means to the people, places, and plots that play out upon it. While the standard fantasy world assumes such things as ancient empires and lost races as an explanation for the many dungeons, artifacts, and legends that feature in adventures, this is merely a default. Consider these other options.

Youthful Worlds

A young world is one that has only recently given rise to a civilized society, one in which many races are in their infancy or have yet to achieve cultural maturity. There are no ruined remnants of a lost age (or they may be buried so deep as to be yet undiscovered by the current residents). In such a world, magic may feel raw and untamed. The gods may yet walk the earth, or they have only recently inspired the creation of cults and churches. Military orders have yet to be founded. Races have not been divided by civil war or strife. The player characters are the heroes that future generations will tell stories about. Depending on how young the world is, you might decide some rules elements may be entirely absent—no iron weapons, no spells greater than 3rd level in power, and so on.

Ancient Worlds

In contrast to a young world, an ancient world has already hit the peak of its civilizations and is fast approaching its end. In the twilight of this setting, some races have been lost to history or have moved on to other shores in the multiverse. Technology may have come and gone, giving the setting either a dystopian, post-apocalyptic theme or a pastoral, back-to-nature aesthetic. Or it may have advanced to a truly astounding level, marrying the traditional fantasy elements to steampunk or cyberpunk tropes. If the world is ancient, tradition might be even more dominant over the lives of individuals. Sorcerers may no longer exist, having had their magical traits codified into the power of wizards. Barbarians and druids might no longer have a place, or perhaps their role is changed to that of degenerate savages.

Traps and Opportunities

While creating calendars and timelines is a lot of fun, it also carries with it a few design risks that can end up coming back to haunt you if you don't take care.

Dates: Fantasy naturally lends itself to epic adventures, and the temptation with dates is to make the numbers large and sweeping—cities 10,000 years old, legends stretching back a hundred generations. Avoid this impulse! History is a lot shorter than you might think, and it doesn't take long for people and legends to rise and disappear again. The United States itself is barely over 200 years old. Christianity has only seen 2 millennia. Ten thousand years ago, *Homo sapiens* were just starting to think about planting crops. And if it only took the march of technological process 150 years to go from the first internal combustion engine to a man on the moon, how come nobody's invented a better plow in the 7 millennia the serfs have been tilling your kingdom's fields?

While of course a fantasy world doesn't need to correspond to the real world, there is still physics to consider. How old can your ruins really be, when stone and metal degrade without magical protection? For reference, scholars believe it would only take a thousand years without human upkeep for plant life and the elements to erase almost all trace of modern New York City.

Names: When writing up their worlds' calendars, many GMs realize that our own calendar (with both months and days named after historical and mythological figures) seems out of place in-game. While making up your own names for the months or days of the week seems like the obvious solution, it can also be aggravating to players trying to keep track of time when the adventure begins on the third Blargday of Skurbgin. If you want to create new names, it might help to have the definitions readily available, to name them after your own gods or historical figures, or cheat a little and have the first letters stay the same (such as a work-week running from Mournday through Fireday).

The Cosmos

Space. In many fantasy games, it's not even the final frontier, but rather completely beyond the bounds of the campaign setting. Yet mankind has always looked to the sky for escape and adventure, and why should your PCs be any different? By answering a few questions regarding the nature of your world's cosmos, you can expand your setting and greatly increase its verisimilitude.

Creating Your Planet

The first question every GM should ask about a world is whether or not it's a planet. This is by no means a foregone conclusion—planets are a relatively recent concept, and in the millennia before Earth's shape was proved, various cultures had widely varying theories. Many believed that the Earth was flat, a disc floating in an endless ocean or supported on the back of an elephant (in turn riding on a huge turtle). Others believed the world was square, the slopes of an enormous mountain, or bound by the roots of a colossal tree that held up the sky. Who's to say that any of these isn't true for your world? Perhaps your setting is a giant mobius strip, or a facet on the many-sided gem of the universe. You're the GM, and what you say goes.

That said, however, creating a world so wildly different from our own can capture players' imaginations and raise questions that you'd rather gloss over. If your world is flat, how far away is the edge? Can you fall off, and what keeps the ocean in place? Who lives on the flip side, and is it possible to dig a tunnel through to them? As with everything in this section, the farther you stray from the Earth standard, the harder you have to work to maintain your players' confidence.

Yet even using Earth as a model, there are still several factors you should take into consideration.

Size: For many GMs, the temptation when designing a planet is to make it larger than Earth, the better to increase the mystery and provide unlimited canvas. Yet this carries problems both logistical and physical: If your planet is larger than Earth, does its gravitational pull get stronger? Your horizon will also be much farther away than ours—how does it affect your siege adventure if the defenders can watch the raiders approaching for a week? Even on Earth, it took a long time for the various regional cultures to expand and make contact—if distances double or triple on your world, what does that do to social demographics or political relations? Do the various populations and ecosystems of your world even interact?

Composition: What your planet's made of is important. For instance, if your planet is hollow and full of dinosaurs, what does that do to its gravity? How do volcanoes work if the planet's core isn't molten? What keeps the seas from draining into large-scale networks of caverns and tunnels? A planet's composition is also important to its magnetic fields and thus to navigation—if compasses don't point north, what do they point to? A city of wizards? A guiding star? God?

Movement: Does your planet rotate, and if so, how long are your days? How long is 1 year (meaning a single orbit around the sun)—or does your planet revolve around the sun at all? Perhaps the crystalline spheres of the ancient geocentric model are literal truth in your world.

Moons: Earth's moon is responsible for its tides—if your world has no moon, does it still have tidal action to stir its oceans? What about lycanthropy or other magic inherently tied to the moon? Conversely, if your world has an enormous moon or multiple satellites, do you have enormous and erratic shifts in your tides? Are the moons close enough to reach, and what effects do they exert on each other? Are they lifeless rocks or thriving worlds?

Other Worlds

While solitary planets are common in our universe, why restrict yourself to one world? Try roughing in some other planets in your solar system—such worlds spawn strange beasts and give you entirely new campaign settings to explore. In creating these planets, remember that rocky worlds like Earth form close to the sun, and gas giants farther out. But that doesn't mean you can't have playable worlds all the way out to the system's edge—captured bodies like asteroids and planet-sized moons around gas giants make wonderful solid worlds. A full solar system lets you play with planetary characteristics that are likely too extreme for your base world, such as the following.

Tidal Lock: A tidal lock is when a celestial body keeps the same side facing another body, such as Earth's moon with its visible face and mysterious "dark side." If a planet always kept its same face to the sun, one side might boil while the other froze. Would cultures live solely on the line between night and day? Would creatures and cultures evolve separately on the light and dark halves, and what would happen if they came into conflict?

Tidal Heating: For tidally heated worlds, the pull of another gravitational field (such as that of another planet) warps the planet's shape, causing stress and friction to create massive outpourings of heat in the form of steam and lava.

Eccentric Orbit: Some planets have eccentric, elliptical orbits that make their seasons drastically uneven. If your planet slingshots quickly around the sun and then passes back out into the darkness for a thousand-year winter, what sort of creatures and societies would evolve?

Orbital Interactions: A planet that passes through a cloud of dust, comet tail, or asteroid belt at the same time every year might have anything from regular meteor

showers to a rain of fire or even an extinction-level impact. Likewise, two planets passing close together in their respective orbits might offer a chance for interplanetary travel (both benign and destructive), communication, and so on.

Atmospheric Conditions: On Venus, the atmosphere is so thick that the wind is like a brick wall slowly scraping across the landscape. How would characters survive on a world whose very air crushes them, or whose air is thinner than on the highest mountaintop?

Transient Object: Perhaps a world is just passing through, an object pulled off-course by the sun but still bound for distant stars. What strange discoveries might it offer, and how would its residents treat the worlds it passes near, knowing they'll never be back this way again?

Dying Sun: All things have their end—even the stars. Perhaps your sun is on its way out, and while your primary planet hasn't been affected, its neighbors are suffering. This might mean a society falling into anarchy as reduced light cripples its agriculture, or a race for escape as the red-giant sun reaches out to consume nearby worlds.

Space Travel

If your solar system has multiple worlds, the next question is how beings can travel between them.

Portals: Perhaps the easiest method to manage from a GM perspective, magical or scientific portals between worlds allow players to transport themselves to locations chosen by the GM, giving her natural adventure hooks and allowing her to keep a tight rein on interplanetary travel.

Vessels: Whether powered by magic or science, spaceships add a whole new flavor to a game. Do your starships operate via massive thrusters or diaphanous sails that catch the sun's light? Do they fold space and time, or are they giant space-faring creatures that passengers stow away inside like Jonah and the whale? And does it take days, years, or generations for the vessel to reach another world?

Spells: Teleportation spells are important to consider when establishing extraplanetary locations. Can a wizard simply cast *greater teleport* or *wish*, or is more required to reach the stars? Be warned that easy access to the galaxy brings a host of concerns—such as why, if interplanetary travel is easy, aliens aren't thronging your base world.

Extraterrestrials

When creating alien races, first decide how alien you want them to be. Strangely colored humanoids serve their purpose, but given the biodiversity on even one world, why not try something bizarre? Are they blobs of floating protoplasm, built for grazing on gas giants? Sentient viruses? Bug-like cyborgs? Once you've come up with a basic idea, consider how the aliens' evolution informs their society and thought processes. Do they have a sense of right and wrong, or life and death? Do they have a sense of property? Are they part of a hive mind, and if so, are they capable of understanding free will and individual culpability? Most importantly, what are their intentions toward your PCs' world—are they benevolent "angels," or planet-killing Old Ones? By making your aliens different from the races of your base world, you create a chance for your players—and yourself—to boldly go where you've never gone before.



The Planes

Perhaps the most prominent question in any society is that of what happens to us when we die. In a roleplaying game featuring larger-than-life heroes, this is a practical as well as philosophical consideration, for many spells are capable of returning the dead to life, and more than one group of daring PCs has followed the path of Orpheus and ventured into the underworld to reclaim a fallen comrade. Fantasy RPGs have long been attached to the idea of the multiverse, the concept that the world in which the players reside is merely one (and often the most mundane) of a number of different planes of existence. Many real-world religions follow the same principle to a lesser extent, often viewing death as the natural transition from one plane to the next. When designing your world, it's important to give thought to the worlds that lie beyond, and how souls and the various cycles of existence play into them.

The Purpose of Planes

If you're pouring all your efforts into developing a vibrant, self-contained world for your campaign setting, why should you bother introducing planes at all? The simplest answer is that many rules systems expect you to. Monsters like devils and angels—and in fact, all creatures of the "outsider" type in the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game—are presumed to stem from different planes than the PCs, often ones tied to specific alignments. In addition, it can be difficult to challenge high-level PCs within the boundaries of the same world that housed their low-level adventures. By having your players travel to other planes, you gain the opportunity to reinvent the natural laws of the setting and introduce both creatures and characters powerful enough to keep the PCs on their toes. Most importantly, however, planes fill out your world and help to answer the biggest of spiritual questions.

Planar Models

The Pathfinder Roleplaying Game presumes a multiverse in which each alignment has its own plane. After death, individual souls travel via disparate means to the plane that most closely matches their alignment, or else the domain of the primary god they worshiped in life. Within this model there's room for great variety—every plane is yours to design as you will, and the organizational structure might be anything from concentric shells like nesting dolls to a great wheel or islands floating in an astral sea. Yet the alignment system is far from the only means of dealing with the afterlife. Below are a few other models drawn from real-world beliefs. (Note that each of these deals in some way with the progression of souls—for information on alternate dimensions and other secular diversions from reality, see Parallel Worlds on pages 168–169.)

Heaven and Hell: Many religions opt for a two-party moralistic system, with saved or good-aligned souls going to Heaven and all others condemned to Hell, which in an RPG comes with the added bonus of explaining both good and evil outsiders. Yet several questions arise in such a situation: does your world have a Purgatory, in which those in-between or not-yet-judged souls wait out eternity? Where do neutral outsiders live? Do multiple deities exist in such a situation, or is there simply a single god (and perhaps that god's adversary)? Traditional visions of Heaven and Hell vary by culture, with Heaven anything from stately cities and Valhalla-style feast halls to battlefields and untouched wilderness, and Hell ranging from a burning pit of torments to the lonely absence of creation.

Underworld: Perhaps you don't want to bother with sorting the good from the bad, and all souls travel to the same underworld to while away eternity. For many cultures, this kingdom of the dead exists deep underground, often ruled over by stern but honorable gods charged with keeping the living and the dead apart. Sometimes the corralling of dead souls is the underworld's sole purpose, while in other legends, such as those of the Egyptian Duat, this goal is secondary to another, like providing the tunnels through which the sun rolls during its journey from west to east each night. As such a realm likely serves as the destination of both the wicked and the just, the conditions often prove neutral or little different from those in the world of the living, though such might vary wildly.

Distant Worlds: In some belief systems, a soul freed from the body by death is transported to a realm on another planet rather than a different plane, sometimes in its original form, in others reincarnated.

Elemental: The four elements of earth, fire, air, and water play a significant role in many cosmologies. Rather than merely harnessing energy, do spellcasters calling upon the elements in your world actually bind beings and spirits from elemental planes of existence? And if so, do their own souls break down into those same fundamental elements when they die?

Structure: Some planar systems are held together by a single object or structure, such as a world-tree whose branches and roots connect and support a number of different planes, or a vast mountain with each plane of existence representing a terrace along its sides. Variations on this theme are endless, and when constructing such a system, be sure to note whether the connections are visible to outsiders—does a traveler between planes literally climb the mountain's slopes or walk the tree's branches?

Order and Chaos: Just as Heaven and Hell divide the planes along one axis, order and chaos divide them along

another. Perhaps your universe rejects moralism in favor of organization versus entropy. In this case, consider whether your PCs' native plane is the epitome of order and everything beyond it is the howling dark, or if your world instead follows in the footsteps of Scandinavian myth and exists at the balancing point between the two extremes, the line at which the generative forces of light and order meet chaos and crystallize into a world.

Deific Realms: Rather than instituting any overarching organizational principle, it's entirely reasonable to say that every god in your world possesses its own realm, to which it draws the souls of petitioners after their deaths. This realm may be merely a manifestation of the god's will, a tiny island of creation the deity has claimed as its own, a purely metaphorical place representing a merging with the god's essence, or whatever else strikes your fancy.

None: Who says you need an afterlife, or alternate realities? While it requires more footwork to explain how some creatures and magic work in the absence of the presumed planar model (and perhaps the absence of gods as a whole), there's no reason you can't build your setting to focus exclusively on a single world. Players may gain an entirely new and more harrowing experience if they learn that death is final and that not even magic can return the dead to life.

Location and Travel

Once you've decided what sorts of planes your setting needs—whether a thousand tiny fiefdoms, two massive planes where souls roam before birth and after death, or something else entirely—it's time to address some basic logistical factors likely to come in handy if your PCs ever decide to visit. Start with the spatial: Is each plane infinite, and if so, how does even a god handle organization, communication, and travel when there's literally always someone else just over the horizon? If not, what's beyond the plane's horizon (and beyond that, and beyond that...)?

Equally important is the question of how the planes are arranged and connected. Does Heaven share a border with Hell, a constantly shifting battlefield of impaled devils and dying angels? Are they coterminus, with any point as close as any other for those with sufficient magical power, or separated by unimaginable gulfs of nothingness? Do some planes connect with others to form vast patterns, and if so, can you walk from one to the other, fly up into heaven, or dig a tunnel to the underworld? Travel is by far the most crucial consideration in constructing a cosmology, as it's the only way your players will ever interact with your creations. Assuming mundane means are insufficient to access the planes—that it's not merely a challenge of building a new Tower of Babel or finding the right cave entrance—the most common methods are through plane-shifting spells, magical portals, and strange and deadly interstitial realms and passages. You should feel free to make certain planes off-limits or reachable only through other planes, forcing your players into a mind-bending cosmological walkabout—for if ever there were a place for a GM to blatantly play god, this is it.

Sample Cosmological Shapes

The overarching structure by which individual planes are connected to each other can take any form. Below are merely a few suggestions.

- Nested spheres or shells, with each plane a new onion-like layer.
- A great wheel with planes linked to form the rim or emerging from the central hub of the Material Plane like spokes.
- A mobius strip connecting all the planes, similar to the great wheel, save that the mobius strip may be twisted to bring distant planes closer together.
- A world-tree whose roots and branches provide conduits between worlds.
- Islands in an ocean of chaos, or mountaintops poking above the clouds, beneath which lies the underworld.
- A living creature, with the planes forming its limbs or carried on its back.

Other Considerations

One of the biggest questions that comes up in creating planes of super-powerful (and in some cases deific) entities is why those beings don't already control the players' comparatively weak homeworld. Is it that plane-shifting is forbidden, or too difficult for the creatures to attempt it on their own, or simply that it's not worth the effort? Certainly some of the gods have managed to exert themselves on the Material Plane, and perhaps it's these same gods that keep the borders from becoming too porous. Regardless, it also brings up the issue of the gods—do they reside on particular planes, and can you visit their shining cities in person? Or do they exist here and there, as ideas or manifestations, omnipotent but unconcerned with creating a physical home? Do they all reside in the company of their peers, looking down like the Greek pantheon at plots they've set in motion, or do they seek solitude in the farthest reaches of their chosen plane, bored with the constant streams of petitioners seeking their favor? For that matter, did the gods create the planes, or did some mysterious force beyond even them set the current celestial order in motion? Dealing with the infinite and omnipotent always begets such questions, yet it's within these very tangles of cause and effect that a GM can unleash the most creativity.

Parallel Worlds

In physics, a theory called the "many-worlds interpretation" asserts that for any given choice or event, a separate reality is created for each possible outcome. Under this model, history is not a straight line but rather an endlessly branching tree, in which the viewer is only conscious of the limb he's standing on (though alternate versions of him exist on other branches).

Alternate realities give GMs an unlimited sandbox in which to create new adventures for their players. Bored with your current setting, or its natural laws? Throw your party into a new dimension, one so strange that it's an adventure just surviving, or so similar that the players only slowly come to understand what's happened. Whether it's a dream world, an alternate history, a parallel dimension, or some entirely new creation, alternate realities offer possibilities unavailable anywhere else.

Creating a Parallel World

To create an alternate reality, simply take the existing world and change any one event or factor, past or present. From that point, it's a matter of extrapolation, tracing down the many routes that history could take given your change and picking the resulting world that seems like the most fun to play in.

For example, let's say you want to create a parallel world in which the evil wizard-king, a recurring antagonist in your campaign, was never born (or better yet, was killed early on in his career by alternate versions of the PCs). Upon entering the world and discovering its difference, the PCs may initially rejoice. Yet perhaps they haven't ever stopped to consider that, without the strong king to hold things together, his many dukes and barons would launch a war of succession that would kill thousands. Perhaps wizardry has been outlawed by zealots determined to never suffer such oppression again, and even good-aligned wizards are burned at the stake. And can the farmers and townsfolk defend themselves from monsters without the harsh but effective royal guard? Any time you make a change to your world, ask yourself what could go right, and what could go wrong—many times, the best challenges come from changes that, on the surface, seem positive. In this example, not only have you created a new world for your PCs, but you've also forced them to revise some of their basic beliefs.

While for most games it's not necessary to explain the theory behind a parallel universe, such considerations can be fun for you as a GM. Did some cataclysm tear reality in two, creating parallel worlds evolving separately? Is it a naturally occurring phenomenon, or intentionally caused by some great wizard? Perhaps spells like *wish* create alternate realities to accommodate the caster's flagrant breach of probability. All of these are academic questions, except for one: how to travel between the worlds. If you want to create a magical or scientific portal for your PCs to jump through, and follow it with another allowing them to return home, that's perfectly valid. Yet you may want to make jumping between realities more complicated, the better to lead your party on quests and adventures, and to this end it helps to know the underlying structure of your realities.

As mentioned above, one model is to think of reality as a tree, with the PCs marking the end of a given branch. Every choice, event, natural law, or other discernible characteristic for its timeline has caused a branching, and the seemingly linear path back to the tree's root is their history. Yet while that route is all they can perceive, every road their world didn't take exists alongside them in the tree's canopy, just waiting for them to jump between branches. As with an actual tree, those realities that branch closest to the PCs' end point are easiest to reach—a world in which the events of yesterday turned out differently is comparatively easy to jump to compared to a world in which the PCs' home nation was never founded, and the latter might require more powerful magic or a series of jumps through interstitial realities. This model also reinforces one piece of GM advice: while it may be tempting to alter a number of factors in your world at once, the ramifications of a single change are usually more than enough to keep you busy, and changing too many runs the risk of overwhelming your players. Keeping the worlds' point of divergence identifiable is half the fun of alternate realities.

Sample Parallel Worlds

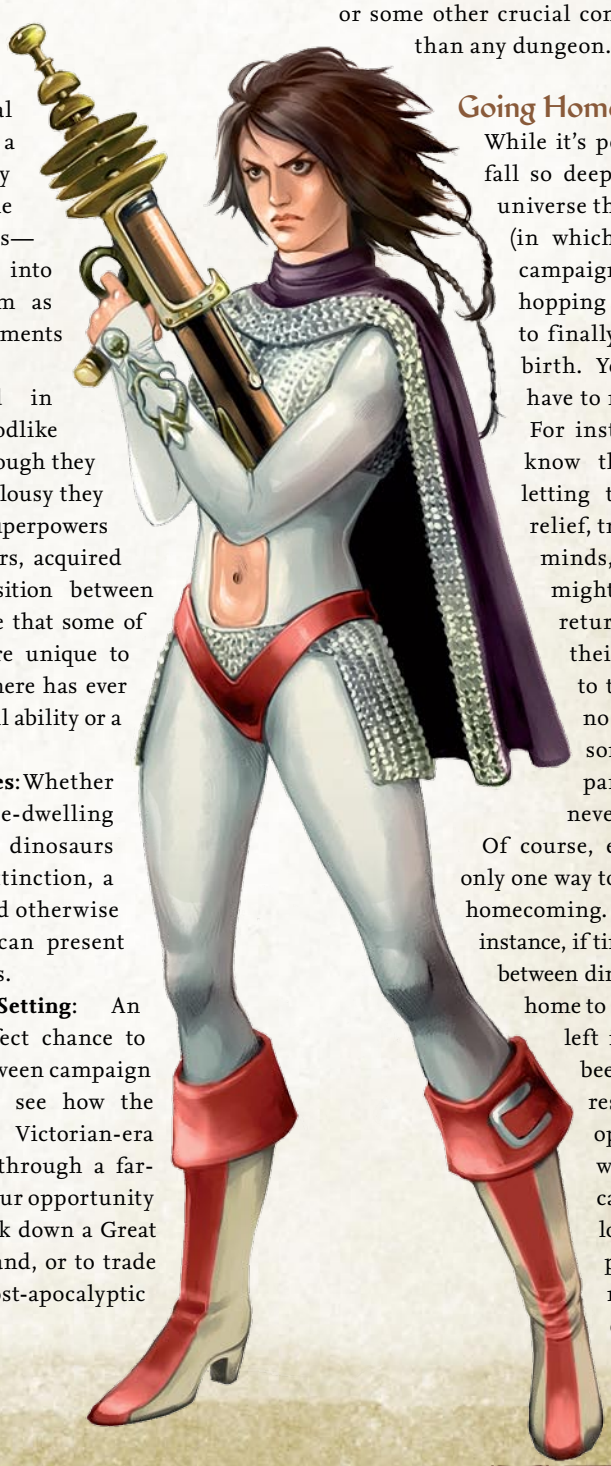
The following are several alternate reality archetypes. Of course, these are just a smattering of different possibilities to get you thinking—literally any world you could want to play in is possible using the parallel world model.

Time Travel: Moving up and down the timestream offers PCs a glimpse of the future or a chance to observe (and possibly change) important moments in history. By far the most fun and frustration involved with time travel, however, comes from paradoxes and the unintended consequences of PC actions. If they've gone to the future, does their foreknowledge make it possible for them to prevent that future—and if so, have they retroactively made it impossible for themselves to have visited it? What if they bring something back, introducing it to the world before it's even been invented? Traveling into the past is even more dangerous, as the PCs have no idea which actions will have major repercussions farther along the timestream. From accidentally preventing her

parents' wedding to stepping on the prehistoric bug that eventually evolves into an intelligent species, there's no end to the trouble a PC dabbling in chronomancy can cause, and the return home from a visit to the past is a perfect time to introduce an alternate history setting.

Alternate History: This term usually refers to a world in which a single historical event of some importance doesn't occur, or plays out differently than in the PCs' own timeline.

Mirror Universe: Popularized in modern science fiction, a mirror universe can range the spectrum from a literal realm of reflected doppelgangers (including opposite-alignment versions of PCs) to a surreal Alice-style Wonderland. For a different take on this idea, try creating a world in which the gods have different alignments—forcing PC worshipers into conflict or converting them as well—or changing the alignments of a few key NPCs.



Superpowered: A world in which the PCs acquire godlike powers can be a lot of fun, though they might be surprised by the jealousy they suddenly inspire. These superpowers might be genuine new powers, acquired mysteriously in their transition between worlds, or it might simply be that some of the PCs' normal abilities are unique to their new world, as no one there has ever encountered a monk's slow fall ability or a bard's magical songs.

Different Dominant Species: Whether it's cities of peaceful, surface-dwelling drow or hyperintelligent dinosaurs that never suffered mass extinction, a new dominant race in a world otherwise identical to the PCs' own can present PCs with a host of challenges.

Different Campaign Setting: An alternate reality is the perfect chance to move existing characters between campaign settings. Always wanted to see how the barbarian would fare in Victorian-era England, or run the party through a far-future space opera? This is your opportunity to make your characters track down a Great Old One in 1800s New England, or to trade in your classic fantasy for post-apocalyptic mercenary work.

Different Natural Laws: The most fundamental change you can make to your world is altering the natural laws on which it runs. Though revising gravity might be too extreme, what about a world in which magic simply doesn't work, or spells work in unexpected ways? Similarly, what about a world in which all the gods are dead—or weirder yet, never existed in the first place? Making such changes can be dangerous to the balance of the game—after all, few spellcasters enjoy losing their abilities entirely—but when done correctly, a world that's identical save for the loss of magic, deities, or some other crucial constant can be more terrifying than any dungeon.

Going Home

While it's possible that your players may fall so deeply in love with your parallel universe that they don't want to go home (in which case, you now have a new campaign setting!), for most dimension-hopping adventurers, the whole point is to finally return to the world of their birth. Yet this homecoming doesn't have to mean the end of the madness. For instance, how do the characters know they're actually home? After letting the party breathe a sigh of relief, try placing some doubt in their minds, little inconsistencies that might indicate that they've only returned to a similar world, not their true home. If the front stairs to the characters' favorite tavern no longer creak, is it because someone fixed them while the party was away—or because they never creaked at all?

Of course, extradimensional paranoia is only one way to have fun with the characters' homecoming. Others are more blatant—for instance, if time doesn't pass at the same rate between dimensions, the PCs might return home to a world 30 years after than they left it, during which time they've been vilified for abandoning their responsibilities. Once you've opened the door to parallel worlds, you've given yourself carte blanche to play fast and loose with your world and your players' expectations, and nothing will ever again be quite what it seems.

Pathfinder
Roleplaying Game



7 Adventures



"Were you planning on helping?" Valeros called. Steel clanged against steel as he met the first cultist's blade. He could hold them on the stairs, but not forever. And where there was one cultist, there were a hundred.

"I thought you didn't need help from a 'little slip of a thief,'" Merisiel sang back. Valeros howled in frustration.

"Will you let it go already? We don't have a lot of time for apologies, here." A blade bit into his thigh, its bloody spray emphasizing his point.

Merisiel nodded absently, looking toward the flaming braziers. "Don't worry," she said. "I have an idea..."

Elements of Adventure

Past the elaborate details and fantastical beasts, beyond the schemes of villains and works of strange magic, lies the culmination of the Game Master's craft: the development and harmonizing of numerous characters, plots, creatures, and settings into a single vibrant, dangerous, and enthralling experience: a Pathfinder Roleplaying Game adventure. More than simply the sum of its parts, a great adventure transcends any host of villains, arsenal of cunning traps, legion of monsters, or stack of stat blocks. Brought to life by the interplay of a creative GM with dynamic players, a great adventure is something akin to a living fantasy story, thrilling and captivating in a way that—like an epic work of fiction—draws participants into the tale, makes them integral parts of the excitement, and leaves them yearning to see how the story unfolds. Such an adventure is both the pinnacle and the goal of the Game Master's art.

Yet building such an adventure proves no mean feat, and it relies on a variety of factors. While the previous chapters of this guide have laid the groundwork to help GMs choose and create many of the elements that go into crafting a great gaming experience, these elements all come together in the adventure and the act of storytelling itself. To help GMs in the sometimes daunting task of pulling together a great fantasy adventure, this chapter presents a storehouse of advice, inspiration, and tools for GMs to plan and create adventures in a wide variety of settings. From advice on managing staple elements of nearly any plot, to helpful new rules elements to enhance campaigns venturing into classic RPG locales, to random encounter tables easily customized for use in nearly any setting, this chapter is designed to be a constant aid to GMs, no matter what types of campaigns they decide to run.

What Makes a Great Adventure?

The question of what defines a great Pathfinder Roleplaying Game adventure conjures to mind a wide variety of potential answers, from artistic ideas regarding the combination of great storytelling and enthusiastic players to more literal mixtures of planning, plot, and rules. In the end, though, the answer tends to be subjective: a great adventure is any blend of preparation, storytelling, roleplaying, and strategy that keeps both the GM and players involved, entertained, and coming back for more. Whether the adventure is custom-designed or drawn directly from printed products, there is no right or wrong way to play, as long as the entire group is having fun.

Yet as simple as this golden rule of gaming might seem, creating and running a fantastic adventure can involve lots of work and a significant investment of time. Even running a published adventure module can mean hours of reading to familiarize yourself with the content, as heading into a game session only half prepared and trusting in improvisation can lead a game into unforeseen and possibly undesired territory. The better prepared a GM is, or at least appears to be, the more time PCs can spend playing. The best GMs prepare for an adventure by doing what they must to present a seamless roleplaying experience. For those knowledgeable of a campaign's setting and comfortable with creating content on fly, this might mean very little. For others, this could mean hours of reading and crafting ancillary plots and characters in case an adventure takes an unanticipated course. Neither course nor any other method of preparation is necessarily favorable over others, as each GM should find a method that keeps him entertained and lets him comfortably tell the stories he chooses. The major goal, though, is seamlessness, the appearance that the GM has accounted for every eventuality the PCs might arrive at or, even better, that the GM is simply the mouthpiece of a world where all things are possible. Such is always an illusion, though, a mask for the GM's preparation and imagination. Yet, the less time a GM needs to spend digging through rulebooks, pausing to think up character names and traits, or not appearing to know what's gong in his own game, the more believable and ultimately the more successful the adventure. To aid in all this, the current chapter highlights several general locations common to Pathfinder RPG adventures. Each section features considerations a GM preparing for his adventure might take into account, as well as a wide variety of tables to aid in making interesting and evocative choices spontaneously should the PCs take some unexpected route or to merely help add a bit more detail.

Choosing Your Adventure

Specifics of storytelling style and ongoing plots aside, all adventures find common elements in the settings where their action unfolds. In the Pathfinder RPG, certain settings come up again and again: taverns where heroes meet for the first time and rest between adventures, dungeons rife with traps and monsters, untamed wilds full of mystery and danger, cities teeming with cutpurses and political subtlety, vast seas where swashbucklers and cutthroats sail into the unknown, and otherworldly planes where the impossible takes shape. While adventures certainly might occur in other venues, most conform in one way or another to the general settings described here—including the microcosm of the tavern, due to its traditional importance in the game. When planning or playing an adventure, it often helps to have an understanding of what type of locale forms the setting for your adventure. Most of the time this proves obvious—when the PCs are shopping and



carousing, they're likely in an urban setting, but when they're exploring the back country, they're probably in the wilderness. Such settings bring with them a variety of concerns and rules elements that the GM should be familiar with (or at least have on hand) as the adventure unfolds. If an adventure calls for the PCs to fight against privateers, for example, the GM should have the rules for swimming and drowning handy; it can also be helpful to know the parts of a ship and what creatures might randomly appear from the water. A major goal of this chapter is to collect these details and point the GM toward other useful pieces of information, providing much of the relevant details he needs to run a convincing adventure.

Just because an adventure takes place in a standard setting doesn't mean that location always acts like a typical example of its kind. If the PCs find themselves slinking through the alleys of a drow city, the location likely functions much more like a dungeon than a city. By the same token, a forest under the effects of powerful fey magic might behave less like part of the wilderness and more akin to a plane unto itself. In such cases, rules not commonly associated with that type of setting might apply, driving home a sense of strangeness or menace that can help a setting feel all the more distinct. Thus, some of the most interesting and memorable uses of such elements might occur when they arise outside their typical settings.

Once the GM knows what type of adventure he wants to run, consulting the details and special rules in this chapter and the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* can help highlight those aspects that make the chosen location unique. Players should be able to feel that adventuring in a dungeon, underwater, and on the planes are all distinctly different experiences, presenting unique challenges and choices. Melding the descriptions of such settings with game components that help drive home the feel and personality of an adventure site can add variation and detail to any story. If the GM can meld both the descriptive and rules elements of the game—whether through creativity, rules knowledge, well-reasoned improvisation, quick reference, or a combination of these traits—the players' roleplaying experiences will be all the richer.

Dungeons

One of the most beloved and common adventuring sites in the game is the dungeon. In the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, the word "dungeon" has a much wider definition than merely an underground prison cell—instead, "dungeon" in this chapter refers to a connected series of rooms and hallways within which are scattered numerous encounters with monsters, traps, and other challenges. A dungeon, under this definition, could be the underground levels of a fortress, the fortress itself, a series of caverns, a basement under a house, the house itself, a lonely tower in the woods, a shipwreck, a treasure vault, an abandoned crypt, or any other location that has a series of hard boundaries to limit exploration. Generally, these boundaries are represented by solid walls, but in some cases they can be dense vegetation (such as in a hedge maze), treacherous cliffs (for a series of mountain ledges), or even fence enclosing a large area (like a graveyard). The key defining feature of a dungeon is simply that the encounter areas are connected and self-contained.

There's a reason that dungeons are so common in the game—they represent the simplest method of constructing an adventure, since a dungeon map really is nothing more than a flow chart. At their most basic, the chambers of a dungeon represent decision points and the hallways represent paths between those points. The layout of a dungeon removes many variables from the game, allowing the GM to focus on a limited number of areas that he knows the PCs are likely to visit. Since you know what rooms and what routes are available before the game even begins, you can prepare for encounters much more easily than you can for an adventure set in a city or the wilderness, where the flow chart concept is no longer literally represented by the solid stone walls and becomes more of an abstract guide for plotting purposes.

The Dungeon Concept

Just because dungeons are some of the simplest adventure sites to build and run doesn't mean that they need to be simplistic. A dungeon can be quite complex, filled with intrigue and dynamic elements. The first thing to do when creating a dungeon for your players to explore is to decide on the dungeon's basic concept—what kind of dungeon it is. Are you building an underground complex of chambers below a ruined castle occupied by a tribe of goblins? Is the dungeon a series of caves burrowing through a volcanic mountain ruled by fire giants? Is it an immense shipwreck at the bottom of the sea? A wizard's tower that has sunk into a swamp? A haunted mine? A partially collapsed manor? A dragon's lair? Choosing a basic concept for your dungeon at the beginning helps guide the creative process of mapping and populating it.

Drawing a Dungeon Map

For the same reasons it's good to outline a story before writing it, it's good to create the map of your dungeon before populating it with encounters. The map is the outline of the dungeon adventure, after all—in drawing the map, you set the boundaries of what your adventure will contain. You should certainly have a general idea of the types of encounters your dungeon will need when you start, but don't be afraid to let the dungeon drawing itself inspire you as well.

One important thing to realize at the outset is that your dungeon map doesn't have to be pretty—it merely has to be legible and understandable to you or whoever will be using the map. Nonetheless, cultivating some skill at cartography can really help you keep yourself organized—it's easier to come back to a legible map you drew years ago than it is to one that's barely more than chicken scratchings.

A good way to build skill at mapping dungeons is to copy them from published products. Get yourself a big pad or notebook filled with graph paper. Whenever you see a nice map in one of those products, pick up a pen or pencil and try to duplicate that map. Before long, you'll be drawing your own maps—and it can't hurt to keep drawing maps even when you aren't preparing for a specific game.

Sketching the Map

Using a pencil, sketch out the basic shape of your map. You can indicate the position and relative size of rooms by simply drawing rough shapes and circles and then labeling each—"kitchen," "library," "owlbear lair," and so on. If your dungeon is in an aboveground structure or other location with a definite border, draw this in to constrain your design. Once you're happy with the basic shape, go ahead and start drawing rooms and hallways, then drop in symbols for dungeon features. Make notes in the margins or in rooms to remind you of ideas for the rooms' contents as you create them.

Here are several things to keep in mind while you're creating your map:

Map Symbols: Use symbols to represent common features found in most dungeons—doors, stairs, traps, pillars, and more. Using these standardized map symbols keeps your maps from becoming too cluttered with written notes and tags. Common map symbols are shown on page 175.

Avoid Empty Rooms: Unless you're specifically designing a dungeon that is partially abandoned or you're trying to lull your PCs into a false sense of security, don't add too many empty rooms, as they can clutter your map.

Don't Overdraw: If you have an idea of how many encounters you want or how long you want a session of dungeon exploration to run, don't build a dungeon that's too small or too big. Take note of how long it generally takes your group to play through an average encounter (whether

Map Symbols

1 Door
2 Double Door
3 Secret Door
4 One Way Door
5 False Door
6 Archway
7 Concealed Door
8 Illusionary Wall
9 Ladder
10 Portcullis or Bars
11 One Way Secret Door
12 Window
13 Arrow Slit
14 Fireplace
15 Locked Door
16 Wall Carving
17 Sarcophagus
18 Upright Sarcophagus
19 Rubble
20 Cage
21 Fountain
22 Altar
23 Pool
24 Well
25 Pillar
26 Covered Pit
27 Open Pit
28 Trap Door–Ceiling
29 Trap Door–Floor
30 Secret Trap Door
31 Trap
32 Spiral Stairs
33 Stairs
34 Slide Trap
35 Table
36 Chest
37 Cabinet
38 Barrel
39 Box
40 Chair
41 Throne
42 Chimney
43 Brazier
44 Statue
45 Railing
46 Curtain
47 Bed
48 Dais
49 Campfire
50 Stalactite
51 Stalagmite
52 Sinkhole
53 Natural Stairs
54 Submerged Path
55 Lake
56 Stream or River
57 Depression
58 Elevated Ledge
59 Ledge
60 Natural Chimney

10 minutes, a half-hour, an hour, or whatever) and design with that timeframe in mind. If your group generally clears one room an hour and you want the dungeon to take up two 5-hour sessions, make sure the dungeon contains only about 10 rooms.

Leave Room for Expansion: Unless you're certain you don't want to return to your dungeon later or want it to serve as a truly enclosed area, it's usually a good idea to include some sort of concession toward future expansion. A tunnel running off the edge of the map, a river or large underground pool, or a large pit can all lead the way to new areas just beyond the boundaries of your creation.

Avoid Symmetry: Refrain from creating symmetrical dungeons in which one half is an exact mirror image of the other—not only is this somewhat unrealistic, but it robs the players of the thrill of exploration once they realize that they only have to explore half of a dungeon to see it all.

Vary Room Shapes: Just as symmetry is bad, so is over-reliance on square or rectangular rooms. By including strangely shaped rooms, alcoves, multilevel rooms, irregular caverns, and other variations in room size and shape, you not only provide each room's combat encounters with different tactical elements, but your map becomes a more interesting location to draw, look at, and play in.

Wide Corridors: Remember that combat in the Pathfinder RPG is based on 5-foot squares. If you fill your dungeon with 5-foot-wide hallways, you're not only forcing many prospective battles to narrow down to one-on-one conflicts between one monster and one player, you're also making it more difficult for monsters of Large size or bigger to live in or move about in your dungeon. Also keep the size of the dungeon's inhabitants in mind—if your dungeon is a cloud giant's floating castle, for example, the rooms and corridors should be giant-sized, not human-sized.

Inking the Map

Once you're happy with your map sketch, grab your pens and start inking it. You can use different pens to denote different features on your map; a wide felt-tip pen works well for thick walls, for example, while a fine-tipped pen works better for details like doors and map symbols. Once you've inked the map, erase extraneous pencil lines

(keeping any notes you want to save, of course). Next, get your coloring supplies and add color as necessary—blue for water, green for vegetation, or whatever works best. If you color in nothing else, use black to fill in areas of solid stone to help define the actual parts of the map your players can explore.

You can scan your map at this stage as well and use a paint program to color larger areas. Scanning a map and using image manipulation software is also a great way to correct errors you made during the inking process.

Tagging the Map

Once your map is inked and colored, it's essentially ready for play. All that's left is to tag it with number locations that key the map to the encounter descriptions in your notes. Using a number key helps to keep your map's details from being obscured by descriptive words. If possible, use a pen of a different color than anything else on your map so the number tags stand out and are easy to see—alternatively, you can circle the number tags or mark them with a highlighter.

Adding Details to the Map

While not strictly necessary, adding additional elements to your map can make it more attractive. Details such as furniture (tables, chairs, beds, and chests are all good examples), light sources (fireplaces or firepits, windows, skylights, and so on), and architectural features add a touch of realism to inhabited dungeons. Be careful not to add too many extra details to the map, however—not only can they clutter your map and obscure important information, but they can have a detrimental effect on combat as well. Remember that characters and monsters need room to fight and maneuver, and a room filled with superfluous furniture can make combat overly complex.

Dungeon Ecology

Once you've created your dungeon map, you're ready to populate it. If you're building a static dungeon, you can simply fill it with traps and guardians and other challenges as you wish, with little concern as to how each area interacts with the others.

But if you're building a living dungeon, there are more considerations you'll want to address. In particular, if your dungeon is the lair for a number of living creatures, keep in mind that they don't just sit in their rooms in stasis waiting for a group of heroes to blunder into their clutches—at least, dungeon denizens don't always behave this way. Usually, you'll want to design your dungeon with its ecology in mind.

Food and Water: If there's not a constant source of food in or nearby your dungeon, your monsters will need storerooms in which to stockpile their food. Even if there is a handy supply of food, monsters whose territories are blocked from access to these ready supplies will need some sort of concession toward food and water. A river running through a dungeon is a handy way to supply both of these necessities, as are magic items like *decanters of endless water*, *rings of sustenance*, and *sustaining spoons*. Finally, including a cleric of at least 5th level in a group gives that group access to *create food and water* spells.

Shelter and Access: All of your dungeon denizens need somewhere to live. The main thing to keep in mind here is that a monster's lair should be sized appropriately for the monster. The larger the monster, the larger its lair needs to be. As a general rule, it's good to give a monster living space that's at least nine times its own space. And unless you want your monster to be trapped in its lair, make sure it can access other parts of the dungeon, including an exit (by squeezing, at minimum).

Encounter Archetypes

Most dungeons feature a variety of encounter archetypes. By including encounters from as many of these archetypes as possible, you can keep your dungeon from feeling repetitive and give different characters the opportunity to shine. Even better, it's a lot easier to keep your players' attention if they're not sure how the next room around the corner will challenge them. Listed here are seven different encounter archetypes.

Combat: In a combat encounter, the PCs are faced with a foe or foes that bar progress—in order to complete the encounter, the PCs must defeat the foes in combat. A combat encounter can be with a single opponent or a group of foes. In most dungeons, combat encounters are the rule. Rules and guidelines for building balanced combat encounters can be found on pages 397–399 of the *Core Rulebook*.

Hazard/Obstacle: This kind of encounter presents the characters with a dangerous condition they need to navigate in order to proceed. A room filled with yellow mold, a chasm with a rotten rope bridge, a pool of lava, an unstable chamber with a crumbling ceiling, or even something as simple as a barricaded door can serve as a hazard or obstacle. Generally, a hazard or obstacle is an encounter that is solved not through combat but through a combination of skill checks, saving throws, attack rolls, and the application of magic spells.

Puzzle: A puzzle encounter presents the players, not the characters, with a challenge. These can be riddles, shifting tiles, mazes, word puzzles, or anything else that must be solved by brain power, logic, or experimentation. Often a puzzle encounter can be enhanced by giving the players a handout or prop that lets them directly manipulate or study the puzzle. A puzzle generally can't be solved with die rolls, but if your group gets stuck on a puzzle, you should

consider letting them make appropriate skill checks to learn clues (or even the solution) from you.

Random Encounter: A random encounter is an unusual encounter that isn't tied to a specific location in your dungeon. The classic method of building random encounters is to create an encounter table of possible encounters (see pages 182–183 for several sample dungeon encounter tables). Then, when a random encounter is called for, you can simply roll the dice and let fate determine what the PCs run into. Traditionally, checks for wandering monsters from a random encounter table are made every so often (either once per hour, four times a day, every time the PCs rest, or whatever works best for you) by rolling d100. A heavily populated area with lots of potential encounters might have a 20% or higher chance of a random encounter occurring at each check, while a remote or relatively empty area might have only a 2% chance per check. It's important not to let random encounters become the adventure, though—an endless parade of wandering monsters can quickly turn into a dull slog through forgettable combats, and a poorly timed or unlucky roll can impose a powerful foe on a party when they're in no shape to cope with it. Random encounters should be used as sparingly as possible—they're a great tool to use when play bogs down (such as if the PCs insist on resting after every encounter or exhaustively searching a huge, empty room), but they shouldn't become the dungeon's defining theme.

Story Encounter: Since story encounters rarely involve any actual danger or impediment to physical progress through a dungeon, they are often forgotten during the design process. Yet in some ways, story encounters are the most important encounter type of them all, for they allow the players to learn about your dungeon and world. There's no point in creating a multi-page history for a dungeon if there's no way for your players to learn about it! A story encounter can come in the form of a roleplayed conversation with a friendly dungeon denizen or talkative ghost, a carving on a wall, an old journal, or even just an opportunity for a player to make a Knowledge check when faced with a particularly unusual scene in a dungeon to learn more about the dungeon's story.

Trap: These classic encounters are similar to hazards and obstacles in that they are generally dangerous and can be defeated with a combination of skill checks, saving throws, attack rolls, and the application of magic spells. Their primary difference from hazards is that traps are hidden from view and, unless the player characters are careful, can strike without warning. As a general rule, you should use traps sparingly, since randomly springing traps on a group only serves to slow down the course of play as increasingly paranoid players check every 5-foot square and every doorknob for hidden perils. Often, it's a simple matter of giving the players some kind of warning beforehand that they're heading into a trapped area—story encounters are great for this purpose.

Special Encounters: Finally, you can include special encounters. The easiest way to make a special encounter is to combine two or more of the archetypes listed above into a single encounter—a battle against fire elementals in a burning building is a combination combat and hazard encounter. A riddling sphinx that attacks any group that can't answer her riddle within 24 seconds is a combination puzzle and combat encounter. A chase can serve as a special encounter, as can purely roleplaying encounters. One particularly important special encounter that every dungeon should have is the "climactic" encounter, where the PCs confront one of the dungeon's rulers or reach the goal of their delve. A climactic encounter should usually be a deadly or epic encounter (typically with a CR of 3 or 4 above the average party level), and often combines three or more of the above archetypes (usually combat, hazard, and story).

Resting in the Dungeon

It happens to every adventuring party—you power through half dozen or so encounters and suddenly the prospect of facing the tougher encounters at the end of the dungeon with your depleted resources seems foolish. Often, the party has progressed far enough into the dungeon that merely leaving the dungeon and coming back isn't an option—especially if there are a lot of deadly hazards or traps along the way, or if the dungeon's denizens are likely to repopulate rooms with reinforcements.

In such situations, a group of adventurers often chooses to rest inside of a dungeon. Don't let this rattle you! In fact, you should consider putting a few rooms in your dungeon (especially if it's a large complex) that can be easily defended or work well as campsites. When a group of PCs decides to rest in a dungeon, decide if the threats that remain will challenge the adventurers—if you know that they need to recover their strength, you should let them rest (but only after instilling a little bit of paranoia by getting a schedule of watches and details on how they fortify their campsite). But if you know that the group still has the resources to forge ahead, feel free to have wandering monsters come by to harass the characters while they relax.

If your PCs are habitual dungeon relaxers who rest after every encounter, the dungeon's inhabitants should catch on after a few naps and set up some ambushes or assaults on the characters' campsite. The goal is to keep the PCs challenged without making things hopelessly difficult, and to allow them time to recover when you feel they really need it—don't let them dictate when they'll have the luxury of a full night's sleep!

Dungeon Toolbox

An innocent facade can often hide a dark secret, and who knows what lurks behind that stuck door or beyond that rusty portcullis? When looking for a lair for your villains or the inspiration to create a new trap-filled vault, consider using the ideas below, or simply use the following tables to generate a home for a villain you didn't expect the PCs to follow.

Table 7-1: Places to Find Dungeons

d%	Dungeon Setting
1–3	An underground river
4–6	Within a river dam
7–9	Amid the ruble of a ruined citadel
10–12	Below a graveyard
13–15	In an insane asylum
16–18	Inside an ice floe
19–21	In another dimension/demiplane
22–24	Within earthquake-plagued caverns
25–27	In a hollow mountain
28–30	Deep in a desert of shifting tunnels
31–33	Abutting to a secret escape route
34–36	In a pyramid
37–39	Below a mausoleum
40–42	Within a museum
43–45	Under a castle
46–48	Part of a menagerie
49–51	In a lighthouse
52–54	Under a tower
55–57	In a prison
58–60	Within a cathedral
61–63	Under the docks
64–66	In the sewers
67–68	Amid an underground canal
69–70	Built into an arena
71–72	Part of forgotten labyrinth
73–74	Connecting to a beast's den
75–76	Under a tavern
77–78	In a cliff village
79–80	Inside a giant tree
81–82	Part of a frozen city
83–84	Inside a painting
85–86	In a gigantic statue
87–88	Under a roc nest
89–90	Within a sunken ruin
91–92	Hidden inside a giant egg
93–94	Formed within a massive fossil
95	Amid the rubble of a ruined giant city
96	Inside a crashed space vessel
97	Unearthed by a giant ant nest
98	Grown within a deity's corpse
99	On an island in a volcano
100	Inside a moon, star, or another planet

Table 7-2: Types of Dungeons

d%	Dungeon Setting
1–2	A hedge maze
3–4	A riverboat
5–6	A wizard's tomb
7–8	A bandit lair
9–10	A vast former mine now long abandoned
11–12	An abandoned casino
13–14	An old theater
15–16	Fog-shrouded dungeon that traps the PCs
17–18	Chambers where gravity regularly reverses
19–20	Moving clockwork dungeon
21–22	Incredibly narrow limestone gorges
23–24	Planes linked by portals
25–26	The belly of a ship-swallowing sea creature
27–28	A perilous bog and quicksand-filled mire
29–30	A slavers' headquarters
31–32	Rapids and river channels sweeping through a valley
33–34	A giant tree riddled with many crevices and hollows
35–36	A melting iceberg
37–38	A monster infested palace of glass
39–40	A slowly flooding dungeon
41–42	The afterlife
43–44	A dream
45–46	Sunken ancient green byways linking fey lands
47–48	A nightmare
49–50	An iron obelisk of great size
51–52	A floating bog containing sunken tombs
53–54	An evil giant's castle
55–56	A partially submerged clock tower
57–58	A floating castle that appears only at night
59–60	A massive, partially hollow, slowly melting candle
61–62	A graveyard of giant skeletons
63–64	A glacier of poisoned water
65–66	An undead town where life goes on
67–68	The massive skull of an ancient dragon
69–70	A sunken iron ship below a fenland
71–72	A tangled forest of thorny trees
73–74	A giant insect-infested temple
75–76	A volcanic tomb
77–78	A living iron ship
79–80	A sinking maze
81–82	Endless stone bridges across a void of purple fog
83–84	A huge web
85–86	Giant rat tunnels
87–88	A colossal walking iron man
89–90	A living iron maze
91–92	What's down the plug-hole of a wizard's sink
93–94	A garden of poisonous living fungi
95–96	A sentient tomb
97–98	A solid storm cloud
99–100	A giant hourglass slowly filling with sand

Table 7-3: Dungeon Entrances

d%	Entrance
1–2	A well
3–4	A mineshaft
5–6	A rope-bridge between tidal stacks
7–8	In a tavern cellar
9–10	A cave shaped like a skull
11–12	A chimney
13–14	The mouth of a large statue
15–16	A slide
17–18	A cold, bottomless pit
19–20	A ruined road descends into an ivy covered hole
21–22	A mausoleum
23–24	A knight's sarcophagus
25–26	An ancient door carved with warnings
27–28	A stone valve covered in runes
29–30	A grinning demon mouth
31–32	A portal filled with shimmering green light
33–34	An almost-impossible-to-reach cave in a cliff
35–36	A bulette skull
37–38	Heavy rain seeps into a hidden slough
39–40	A sunken greenway
41–42	An iron puzzle door
43–44	A volcano vent
45–46	A tidal cave
47–48	A church steeple rising out of the ground
49–50	An arch of huge thorns
51–52	An oven with a collapsed back wall
53–54	A large wine barrel clawed open from the inside
55–56	A slippery metal ladder nailed behind a waterfall
57–58	A fountain that reaches down to an underground river
59–60	A door reached via a giant set of scales
61–62	A pit of quicksand
63–64	A whirlpool
65–66	A hole suddenly opens in the city streets
67–68	Mist
69–70	A snapping dragon turtle skull
71–72	A mudslide opens up a hidden cave system
73–74	Hurricane in huge doorway appears once a year
75–76	A summoned imp can lead the way to portal
77–78	A doorway that can only be summoned by incantation
79–80	A building collapses overnight into hidden dungeon
81–82	A stone that draws aside at midnight
83–84	A maelstrom deep at sea
85–86	A catapult that throws person through a portal
87–88	A magic mirror
89–90	A wall safe opening onto an extradimensional vault
91–92	Magical wood that, when burned, creates a staircase
93–94	A magically animated maw
95–96	A lighthouse that casts a solid beam
97–98	A bridge made from rainbows
99–100	A moonbeam reveals a door in a stone circle

Table 7-4: Dungeon Rooms

d%	Room
1–2	Antechamber
3–4	Armory
5–6	Audience chamber
7–8	Banquet hall
9–10	Barracks
11–12	Bestiary/menagerie
13–14	Choke point (ambushes, controlling flow of invaders)
15–16	Closet
17–18	Cold room (storage of perishable goods)
19–20	Common room
21–22	Crypt
23–24	Dining hall
25–26	Elevator
27–28	Gallery
29–30	Garbage pit
31–32	Great hall
33–34	Greenhouse
35–36	Guard room
37–38	Guest room
39–40	Infirmary
41–42	Jail
43–44	Kennel
45–46	Kitchen
47–48	Laboratory
49–50	Library
51–52	Living quarters (communal)
53–54	Living quarters (family)
55–56	Living quarters (personal)
57–58	Map room
59–60	Nursery
61–62	Observatory
63–64	Pantry
65–66	Pool
67–68	Privy
69–70	Shrine
71–72	Slave pit
73–74	Smithy
75–76	Spring
77–78	Stable
79–80	Storeroom
81–82	Target range
83–84	Temple
85–86	Throne room
87–88	Torture chamber
89–90	Training hall
91–92	Trophy room
93–94	Vault
95–96	Well
97–98	Workroom
99–100	Workshop

Table 7-5: Mundane Room Characteristics

d%	Characteristic
1–2	Slopes (up or down)
3–4	Dampness on walls/floor
5–6	Steady drip from ceiling
7–8	Puddles on floor
9–10	Covered in bite marks
11–12	Slippery
13–14	Chocked with webs
15–16	Open crevice or pit
17–18	Littered with bones
19–20	Full of strange echoes
21–22	Bridge or plank
23–24	Littered with broken pottery
25–26	Curtain
27–28	Lots of dried blood
29–30	Filled with droppings
31–32	Wreathed in strange black ivy
33–34	Full of unsettling fungi
35–36	Filthy
37–38	Infested with vermin
39–40	Pipes drip slimy brackish water onto floor
41–42	Covered in lichens
43–44	Small, rusty-iron section of wall
45–46	Covered in mold
47–48	Walls made of curious hexagonal stones
49–50	Cobbled floor made of gravestones
51–52	Slimy
53–54	Very slimy
55–56	Has butcher's hooks hanging from ceiling
57–58	Wall exude yellowish, foul smelling discharge
59–60	Scratches on walls
61–62	Covered in graffiti
63–64	Water can be heard rushing immediately below
65–66	Chalk warnings appear on walls
67–68	Half filled with water
69–70	Full of rusty weapons and skeletons
71–72	Secret door behind fireplace
73–74	Burned
75–76	Cracks across floor
77–78	Cracks across ceiling
79–80	Cracks along walls
81–82	Held up by pit-props that look very weak
83–84	Has an overbearing smell of rotting fruit
85–86	Strange tapping sounds heard behind walls
87–88	Weeping heard occasionally
89–90	Full of empty gibbets
91–92	Iron maidens that line the walls are rusted shut
93–94	Floor moves in one direction
95–96	Floor drops suddenly by 5 feet for no obvious reason
97–98	Totally submerged
99–100	Full of flames

Table 7-6: Exotic Room Characteristics

d%	Characteristic
1–2	Fresco depicts grisly death of viewer
3–4	Filled with the sound of sobbing, coming from a crypt
5–6	Carved with faces depicting different alignments
7–8	Candelabrum sheds black light from violet candles
9–10	Statue on rotating pedestal
11–12	Is a huge trap
13–14	Walls like a rib cage
15–16	Crammed with mummified frogs
17–18	Iron spears rise randomly from a sieve-like floor
19–20	Fire bursts randomly from a floor covered in holes
21–22	Covered in pictures of evil peacock eyes
23–24	Has a huge violet eye fresco in its center
25–26	Appears to be the roots of some vast tree
27–28	Boiling mud crossed by very narrow stone bridges
29–30	Filled with giant spider husks of increasing size
31–32	Is filled with a huge cage
33–34	Has doors in the ceiling
35–36	Fountains carved to resemble hydras
37–38	Floor appears like a black lake but is actually glass
39–40	Raised terraces lead to central carving of bat-god
41–42	Slips sharply into a black pit of nothingness
43–44	Filled with the sounds of thunder
45–46	Is a huge shaft crossed by boughs of trees
47–48	Faceless statues point at one PC upon entry
49–50	Roof is a stained glass window depicting spiders
51–52	Black fog appears suddenly
53–54	Iron weights drop from roof at random times
55–56	Endless stairway descends in room's center
57–58	Waterfall in room's center powers waterwheel
59–60	Magical voices sing hymns as the PCs enter
61–62	Is filled with explosive gas that is otherwise harmless
63–64	Is completely covered in tentacle carvings
65–66	Has eight huge bells suspended above the floor
67–68	Has a carving of a black devil-headed elephant
69–70	Every inch covered in angels
71–72	Iron devil statue speaks
73–74	Goes up and down
75–76	Entire floor pivots, dropping those who enter
77–78	Ceiling begins to sink upon entry
79–80	Archways lead to other places
81–82	Sculptures of gargoyles tearing apart angels
83–84	The walls are covered in mirrors that reflect nothing
85–86	Rotates faster and faster once entered
87–88	Gargoyles along ceiling shout abuse
89–90	Randomly dimension doors those that cross it
91–92	Altar attacks characters with magic
93–94	Has a magic pool
95–96	Is the stomach of a creature
97–98	Weeps to itself
99–100	Is alive

Table 7-7: 100 Pieces of Minor and Major Dungeon Dressing

d%	Minor Objects	Major Objects
1	Abacus	Alcove
2	Ashtray	Altar
3	Astrolabe	Anvil
4	Barrel	Archway
5	Basin	Balcony
6	Basket	Bar
7	Bellows	Bed
8	Blanket	Bell/gong
9	Bloodstain	Bench
10	Bones	Bookcase
11	Books	Brazier
12	Boots	Bridge
13	Bottle	Bunk
14	Box	Cabinet
15	Broken weapons	Cage
16	Brush	Candelabrum
17	Bucket	Carpet
18	Calendar	Casket
19	Candle	Cauldron
20	Cane	Chair/stool
21	Cards	Chair with straps
22	Carrying case	Chandelier
23	Chamber pot	Chariot/wagon
24	Clothing	Chest
25	Cobwebs	Chimes
26	Cosmetics	Clock
27	Dice	Cot
28	Dishes	Couch
29	Dried blood	Crate
30	Dust	Crib
31	Fan	Crucible
32	Fire starting kit	Cupboard
33	Fishing rod	Curtain/tapestry
34	Flask	Dais
35	Food (edible)	Dome
36	Food (spoiled)	Door
37	Fungus	Divan
38	Game board	Dresser
39	Glass	Drysink
40	Globe	Fetters
41	Gloves	File cabinet
42	Hair	Fireplace/fire pit
43	Hammer	Font
44	Hand mirror	Forge
45	Hat	Fountain
46	Helm	Fresco
47	Horseshoe	Furnace
48	Hourglass	Gallows/guillotine
49	Ink	Gibbet
50	Insects	Grindstone
51	Key	Hogshead
52	Knife	Hookah
53	Kettle	Horn
54	Lamp	Idol
55	Lantern	Instrument (large)
56	Letter opener	Iron maiden
57	Leash	Keg
58	Lock	Ladder
59	Manacles	Loom
60	Model ship	Mat
61	Mop	Millwheel
62	Mud	Mirror
63	Nest	Mosaics
64	Oil	Mounting block
65	Paint	Pallet
66	Pen/paper	Pedestal
67	Pipe/pouch	Pentagram
68	Plate	Pew
69	Pole	Pillar
70	Portable instrument	Pillory
71	Pots and pans	Pit
72	Pottery fragments	Podium
73	Papers	Pool
74	Parasol	Rack
75	Pouch	Rubble
76	Prosthetic limb	Saddle
77	Rope	Safe
78	Rusty chain	Sconce
79	Rusty nails	Screen
80	Sack/bag	Shelf
81	Scissors	Shrine
82	Scale	Sideboard
83	Shaving kit	Spiral stair
84	Shovel	Stand
85	Spent torch	Statue
86	Straw bedding	Steeple
87	Ruler	Stool
88	Tray	Stove
89	Tongs	Table
90	Torch	Tapestry
91	Toy	Throne
92	Tuning fork	Torture equipment
93	Urn	Trunk
94	Utensil	Tub
95	Vase	Tun
96	Wall fixtures	Urn
97	Wall markings	Washstand
98	Wax	Well
99	Wheelbarrow	Winch
100	Whistle	Wood bench

Table 7-8: Dragon's Lair

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–3	1d4 pseudodragons	3	*Bestiary* 229
4–8	1 gelatinous cube	3	*Bestiary* 138
9–10	1 violet fungus	3	*Bestiary* 274
11–17	1 mimic	4	*Bestiary* 205
18–19	1d6 darkmantles	4	*Bestiary* 55
20–24	1 minotaur	4	*Bestiary* 206
25–29	1d6 cave fishers	5	*Bestiary* 41
30–32	1 giant frilled lizard	5	*Bestiary* 194
33–38	1d4 rust monsters	5	*Bestiary* 238
39–41	1d8 spider swarms	5	*Bestiary* 258
42–43	1d6 monitor lizards	5	*Bestiary* 194
44–47	1d6 giant scorpions	6	*Bestiary* 242
48–50	1d8 giant leeches	6	*Bestiary* 187
51–56	1 black pudding	7	*Bestiary* 35
57–60	1d6 cloakers	8	*Bestiary* 47
61–67	1d6 basilisks	8	*Bestiary* 29
68–70	1 intellect devourer	8	*Bestiary* 180
71–75	1d4 salamanders	8	*Bestiary* 240
76–82	1 young red dragon	10	*Bestiary* 98
83–88	1 hezrou	11	*Bestiary* 62
89–92	1 adult red dragon	14	*Bestiary* 98
93–97	1d6 ropers	15	*Bestiary* 237
98–99	1 marilith	17	*Bestiary* 63
100	1 ancient red dragon	19	*Bestiary* 99

Table 7-9: Goblin Den

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–4	1d6 lizards	1/3	*Bestiary* 131
5–10	1d4 goblins	1	*Bestiary* 156
11–16	1d6 dire rats	1	*Bestiary* 232
17–20	1d4 giant centipedes	1	*Bestiary* 43
21–24	1d4 hobgoblins	1	*Bestiary* 175
25–27	1d4 mites	1	*Bestiary* 207
28–31	1d8 fire beetles	1	*Bestiary* 33
32–34	1 bugbear	2	*Bestiary* 38
35–36	1 choker	2	*Bestiary* 45
37–40	1 rat swarm	2	*Bestiary* 232
41–44	1 dire bat	2	*Bestiary* 30
45–48	1 monitor lizard	2	*Bestiary* 194
49–51	1d4 giant frogs	3	*Bestiary* 135
52–55	1d4 venomous snakes	3	*Bestiary* 255
56–63	2d6 goblins	3	*Bestiary* 156
64–69	1d4 goblin dogs	3	*Bestiary* 157
70–73	1d4 spider swarms	3	*Bestiary* 258
74–78	1d4 wolves	3	*Bestiary* 278
79–82	2d4 stirges	3	*Bestiary* 260
83–86	1d6 giant spiders	4	*Bestiary* 258
87–89	1d4 worgs	4	*Bestiary* 280
90–91	1 barghest	4	*Bestiary* 27
92–94	1d6 shocker lizards	5	*Bestiary* 248
95–100	3d8 goblins	5	*Bestiary* 156

Table 7-10: Graveyard/Necropolis

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–8	1d10 zombies	3	*Bestiary* 288
9–13	1 gelatinous cube	3	*Bestiary* 138
14–17	1d6 spider swarms	4	*Bestiary* 258
18–23	2d10 skeletons	4	*Bestiary* 250
24–27	1d6 skeletal champions	5	*Bestiary* 252
28–31	1 gibbering mouther	5	*Bestiary* 153
32–36	1d8 ghouls	5	*Bestiary* 146
37–40	1d4 vampire spawn	6	*Bestiary* 271
41–44	1d4 gray oozes	6	*Bestiary* 166
45–48	1d4 mummies	7	*Bestiary* 210
49–52	2d4 wights	7	*Bestiary* 276
53–54	1 shadow demon	7	*Bestiary* 67
55–58	1d4 brute wights	7	*Bestiary* 276
59–62	1d6 wraiths	8	*Bestiary* 281
63–68	2d6 shadows	8	*Bestiary* 245
69–72	1d4 spectres	9	*Bestiary* 256
73–75	1d4 black puddings	9	*Bestiary* 35
76–79	1d6 ghosts	10	*Bestiary* 144
80–83	1d4 clay golems	10	*Bestiary* 159
84–88	1d4 greater shadows	10	*Bestiary* 245
89–92	1d4 vampires	11	*Bestiary* 270
93–95	1 stone golem	11	*Bestiary* 163
96–98	1d6 mohrgs	11	*Bestiary* 208
99–100	1 lich	12	*Bestiary* 188

Table 7-11: Lost Jungle City

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–5	Poisoned dart trap	1	*Core Rulebook* 420
6–10	1 dire bat	2	*Bestiary* 30
11–13	1 assassin vine	3	*Bestiary* 22
14–19	Pit trap	3	*Core Rulebook* 420
20–25	Camouflaged pit trap	3	*Core Rulebook* 420
26–33	1d4 gorillas	4	*Bestiary* 17
34–36	1 minotaur	4	*Bestiary* 206
37–39	1 army ant swarm	5	*Bestiary* 16
40–42	1 basilisk	5	*Bestiary* 29
43–46	1 basidirond	5	*Bestiary* 28
47–50	1d6 darkwood cobras	5	*Bestiary* 182
51–55	1d4 giant wasps	5	*Bestiary* 275
56–60	1d6 dire apes	6	*Bestiary* 17
61–64	1 ankylosaurus	6	*Bestiary* 83
65–70	1d4 gargoyles	6	*Bestiary* 137
71–75	1 girallon	6	*Bestiary* 154
76–80	1d8 velociraptors (deinonychus w/young creature template)	6	*Bestiary* 84
81–84	1d6 giant stag beetles	7	*Bestiary* 33
85–88	1d4 mummies	7	*Bestiary* 210
89–92	1 dire tiger	8	*Bestiary* 265
93–95	1 tyrannosaurus	9	*Bestiary* 86
96–98	1 guardian naga	10	*Bestiary* 212
99–100	1 stone golem	11	*Bestiary* 163

Table 7-12: Planar Stronghold

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–4	1 hound archon	4	*Bestiary* 19
5–9	1d6 vargouilles	5	*Bestiary* 272
10–15	1d4 barghests	6	*Bestiary* 27
16–19	1d6 hell hounds	6	*Bestiary* 173
20–25	1 kyton	6	*Bestiary* 185
26–27	1 salamander	6	*Bestiary* 240
28–31	1 xorn	6	*Bestiary* 284
32–34	1 invisible stalker	7	*Bestiary* 181
35–41	2d4 yeth hounds	7	*Bestiary* 286
42–47	1 lillend	7	*Bestiary* 26
48–51	1d6 bearded devils	8	*Bestiary* 73
52–58	1d6 xills	8	*Bestiary* 283
59–65	1d6 phase spiders	8	*Bestiary* 226
66–69	1d4 shadow demons	9	*Bestiary* 67
70–72	1d4 succubi	9	*Bestiary* 68
73–75	1 nessian warhound	9	*Bestiary* 173
76–80	1d4 erinyes	10	*Bestiary* 75
81–82	1 hezrou	11	*Bestiary* 62
83–87	1d4 bebiliths	12	*Bestiary* 32
88–92	1d4 retrievers	13	*Bestiary* 234
93–95	1d6 rakshasas	13	*Bestiary* 231
96–97	1 nalfeshnee	14	*Bestiary* 65
98–99	1 marilith	17	*Bestiary* 63
100	1 pit fiend	20	*Bestiary* 80

Table 7-13: Underwater Ruin

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–3	2d6 skeletons	3	*Bestiary* 250
4–8	1d4 octopi	3	*Bestiary* 219
9–12	1d4 electric eels	4	*Bestiary* 119
13–17	1d6 giant crabs	5	*Bestiary* 50
18–21	1d6 Med water elementals	6	*Bestiary* 126
22–24	1d4 sea hags	6	*Bestiary* 243
25–28	2d6 lacedons	6	*Bestiary* 146
29–33	2d4 skums	6	*Bestiary* 253
34–37	1d4 crab swarms	6	*Bestiary* 50
38–43	2d6 sahuagins	7	*Bestiary* 239
44–47	1d4 giant moray eels	7	*Bestiary* 119
48–55	2d6 sharks	7	*Bestiary* 247
56–58	1 aboleth	7	*Bestiary* 8
59–62	1d6 Large water elementals	8	*Bestiary* 126
63–66	1d6 scrags	8	*Bestiary* 268
67–72	1d8 orcas	9	*Bestiary* 88
73–76	1d4 elasmosauruses	9	*Bestiary* 84
77–80	1 greater water elemental	9	*Bestiary* 126
81–85	1d4 dire sharks	11	*Bestiary* 247
86–89	1d4 giant squids	11	*Bestiary* 259
90–91	1 hezrou	11	*Bestiary* 62
92–95	1d6 giant octopi	11	*Bestiary* 219
96–98	1 sea serpent	12	*Bestiary* 244
99–100	1 kraken	18	*Bestiary* 184

Table 7-14: Unholy Temple

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–4	1d4 iron cobras	4	*Bestiary* 182
5–9	1d6 cultists	5	see page 278
10–14	2d8 zombies	5	*Bestiary* 288
15–17	1d4 dire apes	5	*Bestiary* 17
18–21	1d6 mithril cobras	6	*Bestiary* 182
22–27	1d8 quasits	6	*Bestiary* 66
28–30	2d4 vargouilles	6	*Bestiary* 272
31–35	1d4 mummies	7	*Bestiary* 210
36–40	1d4 archaeologists	8	see page 297
41–43	1d4 girallons	8	*Bestiary* 154
44–46	1 ogre mage	8	*Bestiary* 221
47–49	1d6 bearded devils	8	*Bestiary* 72
50–55	1d6 lamias	9	*Bestiary* 186
56–61	1d4 medusas	9	*Bestiary* 201
62–64	1d4 succubi	9	*Bestiary* 68
65–69	1 rakshasa	10	*Bestiary* 231
70–74	1d4 efreet	10	*Bestiary* 140
75–77	1d4 dire tigers	10	*Bestiary* 265
78–82	1 cult leader	11	see page 279
83–86	1d4 spirit nagas	11	*Bestiary* 213
87–89	1 barbed devil	11	*Bestiary* 72
90–94	1d4 clay golems	12	*Bestiary* 159
95–98	1d4 stone golems	13	*Bestiary* 163
99–100	1 glabrezu	13	*Bestiary* 61

Table 7-15: Wizard's Laboratory

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–3	1d8 dogs	1	*Bestiary* 87
4–7	1 cockatrice	3	*Bestiary* 48
8–12	1d4 iron cobras	4	*Bestiary* 182
13–16	1d4 gorillas	4	*Bestiary* 17
17–21	1 mimic	4	*Bestiary* 205
22–27	1d8 homunculi	5	*Bestiary* 176
28–33	1d4 animated objects	5	*Bestiary* 14
34–35	1 gibbering mouther	5	*Bestiary* 153
36–38	1d6 vargouilles	5	*Bestiary* 272
39–42	1d4 gelatinous cubes	5	*Bestiary* 138
43–47	1d4 gargoyles	6	*Bestiary* 137
48–52	1d8 wererats	6	*Bestiary* 197
53–58	1 flesh golem	7	*Bestiary* 160
59–61	1d4 basilisks	7	*Bestiary* 29
62–63	1 black pudding	7	*Bestiary* 35
64–67	1 dracolisk	7	*Bestiary* 170
68–72	1d6 ice golems	8	*Bestiary* 161
73–75	1 intellect devourer	8	*Bestiary* 180
76–78	1d6 wood golems	9	*Bestiary* 164
79–84	1d4 chimeras	9	*Bestiary* 44
85–89	1 clay golem	10	*Bestiary* 159
90–94	1 stone golem	11	*Bestiary* 163
95–97	1 retriever	11	*Bestiary* 234
98–100	1 iron golem	13	*Bestiary* 162

Planar

Beyond the mundane world of humans, elves, gnomes, and dwarves lie vast realms known as the planes of existence. Almost limitless in size and potential, the various planes embody the fundamental aspects of reality: alignments, elements, energies, and so on. Each plane is a universe unto itself; it follows its own natural laws and has its own unique inhabitants—the outsiders that occasionally visit or are summoned to the mortal world, be they gods, angels, demons, devils, or even stranger creatures. Literally anything is possible on the planes, making them a perfect location for exotic, terrifying, wondrous, and deadly adventures.

What Is a Plane?

The planes of existence are different realities with interwoven connections. Except for rare linking points, each plane is effectively its own universe, with its own natural laws. The planes break down into a number of general types: the Material Plane, the transitive planes, the inner planes, the outer planes, and the demiplanes.

Material Plane: The Material Plane is the most Earthlike of all the planes, and operates under the same set of natural laws that our own world does. This is the default plane for most adventures.

Transitive Planes: These three planes have one important common characteristic: each is used to get from one place to another. The Astral Plane (although technically an Outer Plane) is a conduit to all other planes, while the Ethereal Plane and the Shadow Plane both serve as means of transportation within the Material Plane, which they're connected to. These planes have the strongest regular interaction with the Material Plane and can be accessed using various spells. They have native inhabitants as well.

Inner Planes: These six planes are manifestations of the basic building blocks of the universe. Each is made up of a single type of energy or element that overwhelms all others. The natives of a particular inner plane are made of the same energy or element as the plane itself. The Negative Energy Plane, the Positive Energy Plane, the Plane of Air, the Plane of Earth, the Plane of Fire, and the Plane of Water are all inner planes.

Outer Planes: The deities live on the outer planes, as do creatures such as celestials, fiends, and other outsiders. Each of the outer planes has an alignment representing a particular moral or ethical outlook, and the natives of each plane tend to behave in agreement with that plane's alignment. The Outer Planes are also the final resting place of souls from the Material Plane, whether that final rest takes the form of calm introspection or eternal damnation. Abaddon, the Abyss, Elysium, Heaven, Hell, Limbo, Nirvana, Purgatory, and Utopia are all outer planes.

Demiplanes: This catch-all category covers all extradimensional spaces that function like planes but have measurable size and limited access. Other kinds of planes are theoretically infinite in size, but a demiplane might be only a few hundred feet across.

Planar Traits

Each plane of existence has its own properties—the natural laws of its universe. Planar traits are broken down into a number of general areas. All planes have the following kinds of traits.

Physical Traits: These traits determine the laws of physics and nature on the plane, including how gravity and time function.

Elemental and Energy Traits: The dominance of particular elemental or energy forces is determined by these traits.

Alignment Traits: Just as characters may be lawful neutral or chaotic good, many planes are tied to a particular morality or ethos.

Magic Traits: Magic works differently from plane to plane; magic traits set the boundaries for what magic can and can't do on each plane.

Physical Traits

The two most important natural laws set by physical traits are how gravity works and how time passes. Other physical traits pertain to the size and shape of a plane and how easily a plane's nature can be altered.

Gravity

The direction of gravity's pull may be unusual, and it might even change directions within the plane itself.

Normal Gravity: Most planes have gravity similar to that of the Material Plane. The usual rules for ability scores, carrying capacity, and encumbrance apply. Unless otherwise noted in a plane's description, assume that it has the normal gravity trait.

Heavy Gravity: The gravity on a plane with this trait is much more intense than on the Material Plane. As a result, Acrobatics, Climb, Ride, and Swim checks incur a –2 circumstance penalty, as do all attack rolls. All item weights are effectively doubled, which might affect a character's speed. Weapon ranges are halved. A character's Strength and Dexterity scores are not affected. Characters that fall on a heavy gravity plane take 1d10 points of damage for each 10 feet fallen, to a maximum of 20d10 points of damage.

Light Gravity: The gravity on a plane with this trait is less intense than on the Material Plane. As a result, creatures find that they can lift more. Characters on a plane with the light gravity trait take a +2 circumstance bonus on attack rolls and on Acrobatics and Ride checks. All items weigh

half as much, and weapon ranges double. Strength and Dexterity don't change as a result of light gravity, but what you can do with such scores does change. These advantages apply to travelers from other planes as well as natives. Falling characters on a light gravity plane take 1d4 points of damage for each 10 feet fallen (maximum 20d4).

No Gravity: Individuals on a plane with this trait merely float in space, unless other resources are available to provide a direction for gravity's pull.

Objective Directional Gravity: The strength of gravity on a plane with this trait is the same as on the Material Plane, but the direction is not the traditional "down" toward the ground. It may be down toward any solid object, at an angle to the surface of the plane itself, or even upward. In addition, the direction of "down" may vary from place to place within the plane.

Subjective Directional Gravity: The strength of gravity on a plane with this trait is the same as on the Material Plane, but each individual chooses the direction of gravity's pull. Such a plane has no gravity for unattended objects and nonsentient creatures. This sort of environment can be very disorienting to the newcomer, but it is common on "weightless" planes.

Characters on a plane with subjective directional gravity can move normally along a solid surface by imagining "down" near their feet. If suspended in midair, a character "flies" by merely choosing a "down" direction and "falling" that way. Under such a procedure, an individual "falls" 150 feet in the first round and 300 feet in each succeeding round. Movement is straight-line only. In order to stop, one has to slow one's movement by changing the designated "down" direction (again, moving 150 feet in the new direction in the first round and 300 feet per round thereafter).

It takes a DC 16 Wisdom check to set a new direction of gravity as a free action; this check can be made once per round. Any character who fails this Wisdom check in successive rounds receives a +6 bonus on subsequent checks until he or she succeeds.

Time

The rate at which time passes can vary on different planes, though it remains constant within any particular plane. Time is always subjective for the viewer. The same subjectivity applies to various planes. Travelers may discover that they gain or lose time while moving between planes, but from their point of view, time always passes naturally.

Normal Time: Describes how time passes on the Material Plane. One hour on a plane with normal time equals 1 hour on the Material Plane. Unless otherwise noted in a plane's description, assume it has the normal time trait.

Erratic Time: Some planes have time that slows down and speeds up, so an individual may lose or gain time as he moves between such planes and any others. To the denizens of such a plane, time flows naturally and the shift is unnoticed. The following is provided as an example.

d%	Time on Material Plane	Time on Erratic Time Plane
01–10	1 day	1 round
11–40	1 day	1 hour
41–60	1 day	1 day
61–90	1 hour	1 day
91–100	1 round	1 day

Flowing Time: On some planes, the flow of time is consistently faster or slower. One may travel to another plane, spend a year there, and then return to the Material Plane to find that only 6 seconds have elapsed. Everything on the plane returned to is only a few seconds older. But for that traveler and the items, spells, and effects working on him, that year away was entirely real. When designating how time works on planes with flowing time, put the Material Plane's flow of time first, followed by the flow in the other plane.

Timeless: On planes with this trait, time still passes, but the effects of time are diminished. How the timeless trait affects certain activities or conditions such as hunger, thirst, aging, the effects of poison, and healing varies from plane to plane. The danger of a timeless plane is that once an individual leaves such a plane for one where time flows normally, conditions such as hunger and aging occur retroactively. If a plane is timeless with respect to magic, any spell cast with a noninstantaneous duration is permanent until dispelled.

Shape and Size

Planes come in a variety of sizes and shapes. Most planes are infinite, or at least so large that they may as well be infinite.

Infinite: Planes with this trait go on forever, though they may have finite components within them. Alternatively, they may consist of ongoing expanses in two directions, like a map that stretches out infinitely. Unless otherwise noted in its description, assume that a plane is effectively infinite.

Finite Shape: A plane with this trait has defined edges or borders. These borders may adjoin other planes or be hard, finite borders such as the edge of the world or a great wall. Demiplanes are often finite.

Self-Contained Shape: On planes with this trait, the borders wrap in on themselves, depositing the traveler on the other side of the map. Some spherical planes are examples of self-contained, finite planes, but they can also be cubes, tori, or flat expanses with magical edges that teleport the traveler to the opposite edge when she crosses them. Some demiplanes are self-contained.

Morphic Traits

This trait measures how easily the basic nature of a plane can be changed. Some planes are responsive to sentient thought, while some respond to physical or magical efforts. Others can only be manipulated by extremely powerful creatures.

Alterable Morphic: On a plane with this trait, objects remain where they are (and what they are) unless affected by physical force or magic. You can change the immediate environment as a result of tangible effort. Unless otherwise noted in a plane's description, assume it has the alterable morphic trait.

Divinely Morphic: Specific unique beings (deities or similar great powers) have the ability to alter objects, creatures, and the landscape on planes with this trait. They may cause these areas to change instantly and dramatically, creating great kingdoms for themselves. Ordinary characters find these planes similar to alterable planes in that they may be affected by spells and physical effort.

Highly Morphic: On a plane with this trait, features of the plane change so frequently that it's difficult to keep a particular area stable. Some such planes may react dramatically to specific spells, sentient thought, or the force of will. Others change for no reason.

Magically Morphic: Specific spells can alter the basic material of a plane with this trait.

Sentient: These planes respond to a single entity's thoughts—those of the plane itself. Travelers might find the plane's landscape changing as a result of what the plane thinks of the travelers, becoming either more or less hospitable depending on its reaction.

Static: These planes are unchanging. Visitors cannot affect living residents of the plane or objects that the denizens possess. Any spells that would affect those on the plane have no effect unless the plane's static trait is somehow removed or suppressed. Spells cast before entering a plane with the static trait remain in effect, however. Even moving an unattended object within a static plane requires a DC 16 Strength check. Particularly heavy objects may be impossible to move.

Elemental and Energy Traits

Four basic elements and two types of energy combine to make up everything. The elements are earth, air, fire, and water; the types of energy are positive and negative. The Material Plane reflects a balancing of those elements and energies—all are found there. Each of the Inner Planes is dominated by one element or type of energy. Other planes may show off various aspects of these elemental traits. Many planes have no elemental or energy traits; such traits are noted in a plane's description only when they are present.

Air-Dominant: Consisting mostly of open space, planes with this trait have just a few bits of floating stone or other solid matter. They usually have a breathable atmosphere, though such a plane may include clouds of acidic or toxic gas. Creatures of the earth subtype are uncomfortable on air-dominant planes because they have little or no natural earth to connect with. They take no actual damage, however.

Earth-Dominant: Planes with this trait are mostly solid. Travelers who arrive run the risk of suffocation if they don't reach a cavern or other pocket within the earth. Worse yet, individuals without the ability to burrow are entombed in the earth and must dig their way out (5 feet per turn). Creatures of the air subtype are uncomfortable on earth-dominant planes because these planes are tight and claustrophobic to them, but suffer no inconvenience beyond having difficulty moving.

Fire-Dominant: Planes with this trait are composed of flames that continually burn without consuming their fuel source. Fire-dominant planes are extremely hostile to Material Plane creatures, and those without resistance or immunity to fire are soon immolated.

Unprotected wood, paper, cloth, and other flammable materials catch fire almost immediately, and those wearing unprotected flammable clothing catch on fire. In addition, individuals take 3d10 points of fire damage every round they are on a fire-dominant plane. Creatures of the water subtype are extremely uncomfortable on fire-dominant planes. Those that are made of water take double damage each round.

Water-Dominant: Planes with this trait are mostly liquid. Visitors who can't breathe water or reach a pocket of air likely drown. Creatures of the fire subtype are extremely uncomfortable on water-dominant planes. Those made of fire take 1d10 points of damage each round.

Negative-Dominant: Planes with this trait are vast, empty reaches that suck the life out of travelers who cross them. They tend to be lonely, haunted planes, drained of color and filled with winds bearing the soft moans of those who died within them. There are two kinds of negative-dominant traits: minor negative-dominant and major negative-dominant. On minor negative-dominant planes, living creatures take 1d6 points of damage per round. At 0 hit points or lower, they crumble into ash.

Major negative-dominant planes are even more dangerous. Each round, those within must make a DC 25 Fortitude save or gain a negative level. A creature whose negative levels equal its current levels or Hit Dice is slain, becoming a wraith. The *death ward* spell protects a traveler from the damage and energy drain of a negative-dominant plane.

Positive-Dominant: An abundance of life characterizes planes with this trait. Like negative-dominant planes,

positive-dominant planes can be either minor or major. A minor positive-dominant plane is a riotous explosion of life in all its forms. Colors are brighter, fires are hotter, noises are louder, and sensations are more intense as a result of the positive energy swirling through the plane. All individuals in a positive-dominant plane gain fast healing 2 as an extraordinary ability.

Major positive-dominant planes go even further. A creature on a major positive-dominant plane must make a DC 15 Fortitude save to avoid being blinded for 10 rounds by the brilliance of the surroundings. Simply being on the plane grants fast healing 5 as an extraordinary ability. In addition, those at full hit points gain 5 additional temporary hit points per round. These temporary hit points fade 1d20 rounds after the creature leaves the major positive-dominant plane. However, a creature must make a DC 20 Fortitude save each round that its temporary hit points exceed its normal hit point total. Failing the saving throw results in the creature exploding in a riot of energy, which kills it.

Alignment Traits

Some planes have a predisposition to a certain alignment. Most of the inhabitants of these planes also have the plane's particular alignment, even powerful creatures such as deities. The alignment trait of a plane affects social interactions there. Characters who follow other alignments than most of the inhabitants do may have a tougher time dealing with the plane's natives and situations.

Alignment traits have multiple components. First are the moral (good or evil) and ethical (lawful or chaotic) components; a plane can have a moral component, an ethical component, or one of each. Second, the specific alignment trait indicates whether each moral or ethical component is mildly or strongly evident. Many planes have no alignment traits; these traits are noted in a plane's description only when they are present.

Good-Aligned/Evil-Aligned: These planes have chosen a side in the battle of good versus evil. No plane can be both good-aligned and evil-aligned.

Law-Aligned/Chaos-Aligned: Law versus chaos is the key struggle for these planes and their residents. No plane can be both law-aligned and chaos-aligned.

Neutral-Aligned: These planes stand outside the conflicts between good and evil and law and chaos.

Mildly Aligned: Creatures who have an alignment opposite that of a mildly aligned plane take a –2 circumstance penalty on all Charisma-based checks. A mildly neutral-aligned plane does not apply a circumstance penalty to anyone.

Strongly Aligned: On planes that are strongly aligned, a –2 circumstance penalty applies on all Intelligence-, Wisdom-, and Charisma-based checks made by all creatures not of the plane's alignment. The penalties for the moral and ethical components of the alignment trait stack.

A strongly neutral-aligned plane stands in opposition to all other moral and ethical principles: good, evil, law, and chaos. Such a plane may be more concerned with the balance of the alignments than with accommodating and accepting alternate points of view. In the same fashion as for other strongly aligned planes, strongly neutral-aligned planes apply a –2 circumstance penalty on Intelligence-, Wisdom-, or Charisma-based checks made by any creature that isn't neutral. The penalty is applied twice (once for law/chaos, and once for good/evil), so neutral good, neutral evil, lawful neutral, and chaotic neutral creatures take a –2 penalty and lawful good, chaotic good, chaotic evil, and lawful evil creatures take a –4 penalty.

Magic Traits

A plane's magic trait describes how magic works on that plane compared to how it works on the Material Plane. Particular locations on a plane (such as those under the direct control of deities) may be pockets where a different magic trait applies.

Normal Magic: This magic trait means that all spells and supernatural abilities function as written. Unless otherwise noted in a plane's description, assume that it has the normal magic trait.

Dead Magic: These planes have no magic at all. A plane with the dead magic trait functions in all respects like an *antimagic field* spell. Divination spells cannot detect subjects within a dead magic plane, nor can a spellcaster use *teleport* or another spell to move in or out. The only exception to the "no magic" rule is permanent planar portals, which still function normally.

Enhanced Magic: Particular spells and spell-like abilities are easier to use or more powerful in effect on planes with this trait than they are on the Material Plane. Natives of a plane with the enhanced magic trait are aware of which spells and spell-like abilities are enhanced, but planar travelers may have to discover this on their own. If a spell is enhanced, it functions as if its caster level was 2 higher than normal.

Impeded Magic: Particular spells and spell-like abilities are more difficult to cast on planes with this trait, often because the nature of the plane interferes with the spell. To cast an impeded spell, the caster must make a concentration check (DC 20 + the level of the spell). If the check fails, the spell does not function but is still lost as a prepared spell or spell slot. If the check succeeds, the spell functions normally.

Limited Magic: Planes with this trait permit only the use of spells and spell-like abilities that meet particular qualifications. Magic can be limited to effects from certain schools or subschools, effects with certain descriptors,

or effects of a certain level (or any combination of these qualities). Spells and spell-like abilities that don't meet the qualifications simply don't work.

Wild Magic: On a plane with the wild magic trait, spells and spell-like abilities function in radically different and sometimes dangerous ways. Any spell or spell-like ability used on a wild magic plane has a chance to go awry. The caster must make a caster level check (DC 15 + the level of the spell or spell-like ability) for the magic to function normally. Failure means that something strange happens; roll d% and consult Table 7–16: Wild Magic Effects.

The Great Beyond

In the cosmology of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, the planes are collectively known as the Great Beyond, and form a vast, nesting sphere. At the heart of the sphere lie the Material Plane and its twisted reflection, the Shadow Plane, bridged by the mists of the Ethereal Plane. The elemental planes of the Inner Sphere surround this heart. Farther out, beyond the void of the Astral Plane, sits the unimaginably vast Outer Sphere, which is itself surrounded and contained by the innumerable layers of the Abyss

The planes that make up the Great Beyond are briefly detailed below. For additional information on these planes, see *Pathfinder Chronicles: The Great Beyond*.

Material Plane

The Material Plane is the center of most cosmologies and defines what is considered normal. It is the plane most campaign worlds occupy.

The Material Plane has the following traits:

- **Normal Gravity**
- **Normal Time**
- **Alterable Morphic**
- **No Elemental or Energy Traits**: Specific locations may have these traits, however.
- **Mildly Neutral-Aligned**: Though it may contain high concentrations of evil or good, law or chaos in places.
- **Normal Magic**

Shadow Plane

The Shadow Plane is a dimly lit dimension that is both coterminous to and coexistent with the Material Plane. It overlaps the Material Plane much as the Ethereal Plane does, so a planar traveler can use the Shadow Plane to cover great distances quickly. The Shadow Plane is also coterminous to other planes. With the right spell, a character can use the Shadow Plane to visit other realities. The Shadow Plane is a world of black and white; color itself has been bleached from the environment. It otherwise appears similar to the Material Plane. Despite the lack of light sources, various plants, animals, and humanoids call the Shadow Plane home.

The Shadow Plane has the following traits:

- **Magically Morphic**: Parts of the Shadow Plane continually flow onto other planes. As a result, creating a precise map of the plane is next to impossible, despite the presence of landmarks. In addition, certain spells, such as *shadow conjuration* and *shadow evocation*, modify the base material of the Shadow Plane. The utility and power of these spells within the Shadow Plane make them particularly useful for explorers and natives alike.
- **Mildly Neutral-Aligned**
- **Enhanced Magic**: Spells with the shadow descriptor are enhanced on the Shadow Plane. Furthermore, specific spells become more powerful on the Shadow Plane. *Shadow conjuration* and *shadow evocation* spells are 30% as powerful as the conjurations and evocations they mimic (as opposed to 20%). *Greater shadow conjuration* and *greater shadow evocation* are 70% as powerful (not 60%), and a *shades* spell conjures at 90% of the power of the original (not 80%). Despite the dark nature of the Shadow Plane, spells that produce, use, or manipulate darkness are unaffected by the plane.
- **Impeded Magic**: Spells with the light descriptor or that use or generate light or fire are impeded on the Shadow Plane. Spells that produce light are less effective in general, because all light sources have their ranges halved on the Shadow Plane.

Negative Energy Plane

To an observer, there's little to see on the Negative Energy Plane. It is a dark, empty place, an eternal pit where a traveler can fall until the plane itself steals away all light and life. The Negative Energy Plane is the most hostile of the Inner Planes, the most uncaring and intolerant of life. Only creatures immune to its life-draining energies can survive there.

The Negative Energy Plane has the following traits:

- **Subjective Directional Gravity**
- **Major Negative-Dominant**: Some areas within the plane have only the minor negative-dominant trait, and these islands tend to be inhabited.
- **Enhanced Magic**: Spells and spell-like abilities that use negative energy are enhanced. Class abilities that use negative energy, such as channel negative energy, gain a +4 bonus to the save DC to resist the ability.
- **Impeded Magic**: Spells and spell-like abilities that use positive energy (including cure spells) are impeded. Characters on this plane take a –10 penalty on saving throws made to remove negative levels bestowed by an energy drain attack.

Positive Energy Plane

The Positive Energy Plane has no surface and is akin to the Plane of Air with its wide-open nature. However,

Table 7-16: Wild Magic Effects

d%	Effect
01–19	The spell rebounds on its caster with normal effect. If the spell cannot affect the caster, it simply fails.
20–23	A circular pit 15 feet wide opens under the caster's feet; it is 10 feet deep per level of the caster.
24–27	The spell fails, but the target or targets of the spell are pelted with a rain of small objects (anything from flowers to rotten fruit), which disappear upon striking. The barrage continues for 1 round. During this time the targets are blinded and must make concentration checks (DC 15 + spell level) to cast spells.
28–31	The spell affects a random target or area. Randomly choose a different target from among those in range of the spell or center the spell at a random place within range of the spell. To generate direction randomly, roll 1d8 and count clockwise around the compass, starting with south. To generate range randomly, roll 3d6. Multiply the result by 5 feet for close-range spells, 20 feet for medium-range spells, or 80 feet for long-range spells.
32–35	The spell functions normally, but any material components are not consumed. The spell is not expended from the caster's mind (the spell slot or prepared spell can be used again). Similarly, an item does not lose charges, and the effect does not count against an item's or spell-like ability's use limit.
36–39	The spell does not function. Instead, everyone (friend or foe) within 30 feet of the caster receives the effect of a *heal* spell.
40–43	The spell does not function. Instead, a *deeper darkness* effect and a *silence* effect cover a 30-foot radius around the caster for 2d4 rounds.
44–47	The spell does not function. Instead, a *reverse gravity* effect covers a 30-foot radius around the caster for 1 round.
48–51	The spell functions, but shimmering colors swirl around the caster for 1d4 rounds. Treat this as a *glitterdust* effect with a save DC of 10 + the level of the spell that generated this result.
52–59	Nothing happens. The spell does not function. Any material components are used up. The spell or spell slot is used up, an item loses charges, and the effect counts against an item's or spell-like ability's use limit.
60–71	Nothing happens. The spell does not function. Any material components are not consumed. The spell is not expended from the caster's mind (a spell slot or prepared spell can be used again). An item does not lose charges, and the effect does not count against an item's or spell-like ability's use limit.
72–98	The spell functions normally.
99–100	The spell functions strongly. Saving throws against the spell incur a –2 penalty. The spell has the maximum possible effect, as if it were cast with the Maximize Spell feat. If the spell is already maximized with the feat, there is no further effect.

every bit of this plane glows brightly with innate power. This power is dangerous to mortal forms, which are not made to handle it. Despite the beneficial effects of the plane, it is one of the most hostile of the Inner Planes. An unprotected character on this plane swells with power as positive energy is forced upon her. Then, because her mortal frame is unable to contain that power, she is immolated, like a mote of dust caught at the edge of a supernova. Visits to the Positive Energy Plane are brief, and even then travelers must be heavily protected.

The Positive Energy Plane has the following traits:

- **Subjective Directional Gravity**
- **Major Positive-Dominant**: Some regions of the plane have the minor positive-dominant trait instead, and those islands tend to be inhabited.
- **Enhanced Magic**: Spells and spell-like abilities that use positive energy are enhanced. Class abilities that use positive energy, such as channel positive energy, gain a +4 bonus to the save DC to resist the ability.
- **Impeded Magic**: Spells and spell-like abilities that use negative energy (including inflict spells) are impeded.

Plane of Air

The Plane of Air is an empty plane, consisting of sky above and sky below. It is the most comfortable and survivable of the inner planes and is the home of all manner of airborne creatures. Indeed, flying creatures find themselves at a great advantage on this plane. While travelers without flight can survive easily here, they are at a disadvantage.

The Plane of Air has the following traits:

- **Subjective Directional Gravity**: Inhabitants of the plane determine their own "down" direction. Objects not under the motive force of others do not move.
- **Air-Dominant**
- **Enhanced Magic**: Spells and spell-like abilities with the air descriptor or that use, manipulate, or create air (including those of the Air domain and the elemental [air] bloodline) are enhanced.
- **Impeded Magic**: Spells and spell-like abilities with the earth descriptor or that use or create earth (including those of the Earth domain, spell-like abilities of the elemental [earth] bloodline, and spells that summon earth elementals or outsiders with the earth subtype) are impeded.

Plane of Earth

The Plane of Earth is a solid place made of soil and stone. An unwary traveler might find himself entombed within this vast solidity of material and crushed into nothingness, with his powdered remains left as a warning to any foolish enough to follow. Despite its solid, unyielding nature, the Plane of Earth is varied in its consistency, ranging from soft soil to veins of heavier and more valuable metal.

The Plane of Earth has the following traits:

- **Earth-Dominant**
- **Enhanced Magic**: Spells and spell-like abilities with the earth descriptor or that use, manipulate, or create earth or stone (including those of the Earth domain and the elemental [earth] bloodline) are enhanced.
- **Impeded Magic**: Spells and spell-like abilities with the air descriptor or that use or create air (including those of the Air domain, spell-like abilities of the elemental [air] bloodline, and spells that summon air elementals or outsiders with the air subtype) are impeded.



Plane of Fire

Everything is alight on the Plane of Fire. The ground is nothing more than great, ever-shifting plates of compressed flame. The air ripples with the heat of continual firestorms and the most common liquid is magma. The oceans are made of liquid flame, and the mountains ooze with molten lava. Fire survives here without needing fuel or air, but flammables brought onto the plane are consumed readily.

The Plane of Fire has the following traits:

- **Fire-Dominant**
- **Enhanced Magic**: Spells and spell-like abilities with the fire descriptor or that use, manipulate, or create fire (including those of the Fire domain or the elemental [fire] bloodline) are enhanced.
- **Impeded Magic**: Spells and spell-like abilities with the water descriptor or that use or create water (including spells of the Water domain, spell-like abilities of the elemental [water] bloodline, and spells that summon water elementals or outsiders with the water subtype) are impeded.

Plane of Water

The Plane of Water is a sea without a floor or a surface, an entirely fluid environment lit by a diffuse glow. It is one of the more hospitable of the inner planes once a traveler gets past the problem of breathing the local medium.

The eternal oceans of this plane vary between ice cold and boiling hot, and between saline and fresh. They are perpetually in motion, wracked by currents and tides. The plane's permanent settlements form around bits of flotsam suspended within this endless liquid, drifting on the tides.

The Plane of Water has the following traits:

- **Subjective Directional Gravity**: The gravity here works similarly to that of the Plane of Air, but sinking or rising on the Plane of Water is slower (and less dangerous) than on the Plane of Air.
- **Water-Dominant**
- **Enhanced Magic**: Spells and spell-like abilities with the water descriptor or that use or create water (including those of the Water domain or the elemental [water] bloodline) are enhanced.
- **Impeded Magic**: Spells and spell-like abilities with the fire descriptor or that use or create fire (including spells

of the Fire domain, spell-like abilities of the elemental [fire] bloodline, and spells that summon fire elementals or outsiders with the fire subtype) are impeded.

Ethereal Plane

The Ethereal Plane is coexistent with the Material Plane and often other planes as well. The Material Plane itself is visible from the Ethereal Plane, but it appears muted and indistinct; colors blur into each other and edges are fuzzy.

While it is possible to see into the Material Plane from the Ethereal Plane, the latter is usually invisible to those on the Material Plane. Normally, creatures on the Ethereal Plane cannot attack creatures on the Material Plane, and vice versa. A traveler on the Ethereal Plane is invisible, insubstantial, and utterly silent to someone on the Material Plane.

The Ethereal Plane has the following traits:

- **No Gravity**
- **Alterable Morphic**: The plane contains little to alter, however.
- **Mildly Neutral-Aligned**
- **Normal Magic**: Spells function normally on the Ethereal Plane, though they do not cross into the Material Plane. The only exceptions are spells and spell-like abilities that have the force descriptor and abjuration spells that affect ethereal beings; these can cross from the Material Plane to the Ethereal Plane. Spellcasters on the Material Plane must have some way to detect foes on the Ethereal Plane before targeting them with force-based spells. While it's possible to hit ethereal enemies with a force spell cast on the Material Plane, the reverse isn't possible. No magical attacks cross from the Ethereal Plane to the Material Plane, including force attacks.

Astral Plane

The Astral Plane is the space between the inner and outer planes, and coterminous with all of the planes. When a character moves through a portal or projects her spirit to a different plane of existence, she travels through the Astral Plane. Even spells that allow instantaneous movement across a plane briefly touch the Astral Plane. The Astral Plane is a great, endless expanse of clear silvery sky, both above and below. Occasional bits of solid matter can be found here, but most of the Astral Plane is an endless, open domain.

The Astral Plane has the following traits:

- **Subjective Directional Gravity**
- **Timeless**: Age, hunger, thirst, afflictions (such as diseases, curses, and poisons), and natural healing don't function in the Astral Plane, though they resume functioning when the traveler leaves the Astral Plane.
- **Mildly Neutral-Aligned**
- **Enhanced Magic**: All spells and spell-like abilities used within the Astral Plane may be employed as if they were improved by the Quicken Spell or Quicken Spell-Like Ability feats. Already quickened spells and spell-like abilities are unaffected, as are spells from magic items. Spells so quickened are still prepared and cast at their unmodified level. As with the Quicken Spell feat, only one quickened spell or spell-like ability can be cast per round.

Abaddon (Neutral Evil)

A realm of vast wastelands under a rotten sky, Abaddon is perpetually cloaked in a cloying black mist and the oppressive twilight of an endless solar eclipse. The poisoned River Styx has its source in Abaddon, before it meanders like a twisted serpent onto other planes. Abaddon may be the most hostile of the Outer Planes; it is the home of the daemons, fiends of pure evil untouched by the struggle between law and chaos, who personify oblivion and destruction. Daemons, which are ruled by four godlike archdaemons, are feared throughout the Great Beyond as devourers of souls.

Abaddon has the following traits:

- **Divinely Morphic**: Deities with domains in Abaddon can alter the plane at will.
- **Strongly Evil-Aligned**
- **Enhanced Magic**: Spells and spell-like abilities with the evil descriptor are enhanced.
- **Impeded Magic**: Spells and spell-like abilities with the good descriptor are impeded.

The Abyss (Chaotic Evil)

Surrounding the Outer Sphere like the impossibly deep skin of an onion, the layered plane of the Abyss begins as gargantuan canyons and yawning chasms in the fabric of the other Outer Planes, bordered by the foul waters of the River Styx. Coterminous with all of the Outer Planes, the infinite layers of the Abyss connect to one another in constantly shifting pathways. There are no rules in the Abyss, nor laws, order, or hope. The Abyss is a perversion of freedom, a nightmare realm of unmitigated horror where desire and suffering are given demonic form, for the Abyss is the spawning ground of the innumerable races of demons, among the oldest beings in all the Great Beyond.

The Abyss has the following traits:

- **Divinely Morphic and Sentient**: Deities with domains in the Abyss can alter the plane at will, as can the Abyss itself.
- **Strongly Chaos-Aligned and Strongly Evil-Aligned**
- **Enhanced Magic**: Spells and spell-like abilities with the chaotic or evil descriptor are enhanced.
- **Impeded Magic**: Spells and spell-like abilities with the lawful or good descriptor are impeded.

Elysium (Chaotic Good)

A vast land of untamed wilderness and wild passions, Elysium is the plane of benevolent chaos. Freedom and self-sufficiency

Other Names

While the planar descriptions in this book present the names most commonly used on the Material Plane to refer to the planes, many of them are also known by other names. The following list is just a sampling of other common names occasionally used for these planes.

Plane	Other Names
Material Plane	the Universe
Shadow Plane	the Netherworld, Plane of Death
Negative Energy Plane	the Nothing, the Void
Positive Energy Plane	Creation's Forge, the Furnace
Plane of Air	the Endless Sky, the Firmament
Plane of Earth	the Eternal Delve, the Foundation
Plane of Fire	the Everlasting Flame, the Inferno
Plane of Water	the Boundless Sea, the Deep
Ethereal Plane	the Ghost World, the In-Between
Astral Plane	River of Souls, the Silver Path, the Soulstream
Abaddon	Gehenna, Hades, Niflheim
The Abyss	Pandemonium, the Outer Rifts, Tartarus
Elysium	Asgard, Olympus, Valhalla
Heaven	Arcadia, Paradise, Seven Heavens
Hell	Acheron, the Pit
Limbo	Entropy, the Primal Chaos
Nirvana	Great Wilderness, Happy Hunting Grounds
Purgatory	Duat, the House of Dust
Utopia	the Eternal City, the Perfect City

abound here, personified in the azatas native to the plane. In Elysium, selfless cooperation and fierce competition clash with the violence of a raging thunderstorm, but such conflicts never overshadow the lofty concepts of bravery, creativity, and good unhindered by rules or laws.

Elysium has the following traits:

- **Divinely Morphic**: Deities with domains in Elysium can alter the plane at will.
- **Strongly Chaos-Aligned and Strongly Good-Aligned**
- **Enhanced Magic**: Spells and spell-like abilities with the chaotic or good descriptor are enhanced.
- **Impeded Magic**: Spells and spell-like abilities with the lawful or evil descriptor are impeded.

Heaven (Lawful Good)

The soaring mountain of Heaven towers high above the Outer Sphere. This ordered realm of honor and compassion is divided into seven layers. Heaven's slopes are filled with planned, orderly cities and tidy, cultivated gardens and orchards. Though they began their existences as mortals, Heaven's native archons see law and good as indivisible halves of the same exalted concept, and array themselves against the cosmic perversions of chaos and evil.

Heaven has the following traits:

- **Divinely Morphic**: Deities with domains in Heaven can alter the plane at will.
- **Strongly Law-Aligned and Strongly Good-Aligned**
- **Enhanced Magic**: Spells and spell-like abilities with the lawful or good descriptor are enhanced.
- **Impeded Magic**: Spells and spell-like abilities with the chaotic or evil descriptor are impeded.

Hell (Lawful Evil)

The nine layers of Hell form a structured labyrinth of calculated evil where torment goes hand in hand with purification. A plane of iron cities, burning wastelands, frozen glaciers, and endless volcanic peaks, Hell is divided into nine nesting layers, each under the malevolent rule of an archdevil. Torture, anguish, and agony are inevitable in Hell, but they are methodical, not spiteful or capricious, and serve a deliberate master plan under the watchful eyes of the disciplined ranks of Hells' lesser devils. The nine layers of Hell, from first to last, are Avernus, Dis, Erebus, Phlegethon, Stygia, Malebolge, Cocytus, Caina, and Nessus.

Hell has the following traits:

- **Divinely Morphic**: Deities with domains in Hell can alter the plane at will.
- **Strongly Law-Aligned and Strongly Evil-Aligned**
- **Enhanced Magic**: Spells and spell-like abilities with the lawful or evil descriptor are enhanced.
- **Impeded Magic**: Spells and spell-like abilities with the chaotic or good descriptor are impeded.

Limbo (Chaotic Neutral)

A vast ocean of unrestrained chaos and untapped potential surrounds and is coterminous with each of the Outer Planes. This is Limbo—beautiful, deadly, and truly endless. From its unplumbed depths were born all the other planes, and to its anarchic deeps will all creation eventually return. Where the formless sea of Limbo laps against the shores of other planes, its substance takes on some measure of stability, and it is within these borderlands that travel is safest, though it is still fraught with danger from Limbo's chaos-warped inhabitants. Deeper into the plane, Limbo's native proteans cavort in the Primal Chaos, creating and destroying the raw stuff of chaos with unfathomable abandon.

Limbo has the following traits:

- **Subjective Directional Gravity and Normal Gravity**: On the few islands of stability within Limbo, gravity is more likely to be normal (down is toward the center of mass). Everywhere else, gravity is subjective directional.
- **Erratic Time**
- **Highly Morphic**

- **Strongly Chaos-Aligned**
- **Wild Magic and Normal Magic**: On the few islands of stability within Limbo, magic is more likely to be normal. Magic is wild everywhere else.

Nirvana (Neutral Good)

Nirvana is an unbiased paradise existing between the two extremes of Elysium and Heaven. Its stunning mountains, rolling hills, and deep forests all match a visitor's expectations of a pastoral paradise, but Nirvana also contains mysteries that lead to enlightenment. Nirvana is a sanctuary and a place of respite for all who seek redemption or illumination. Nirvana's native agathions have willingly postponed their own transcendence to guard Nirvana's enigmas, while celestial beings fight the forces of evil across the planes.

Nirvana has the following traits:

- **Divinely Morphic**: Deities with domains in Nirvana can alter the plane at will.
- **Strongly Good-Aligned**
- **Enhanced Magic**: Spells and spell-like abilities with the good descriptor are enhanced.
- **Impeded Magic**: Spells and spell-like abilities with the evil descriptor are impeded.

Purgatory (Neutral)

Every soul passes through Purgatory to be judged before being sent on to its final destination in the Great Beyond. Vast graveyards and wastelands fill its gloomy expanses, along with dusty, echoing courts for the judgment of the dead. Purgatory is home to the aeons, a race who embody the dualistic nature of existence and who are constantly both at war and at peace with each other and themselves.

Purgatory has the following traits:

- **Timeless**: Age, hunger, thirst, afflictions (such as diseases, curses, and poisons), and natural healing don't function in Purgatory, though they resume functioning when the traveler leaves Purgatory.
- **Divinely Morphic**: Deities with domains in Purgatory can alter the plane at will.
- **Strongly Neutral-Aligned**
- **Enhanced Magic**: Spells and spell-like abilities with the death descriptor, or from the Death or Repose domains, are enhanced.

Utopia (Lawful Neutral)

Utopia is a bastion of order against the chaos of Limbo and the countless demonic hordes of the Abyss. A great city of eternal perfection, Utopia's streets and buildings are paragons of architecture and aesthetics; everything is ordered and nothing happens by chance. While no one race rules Utopia, axiomites and inevitables make their homes here, forever striving to expand their perfect city.

Utopia has the following traits:

- **Finite Shape**
- **Divinely Morphic**: Deities with domains in Utopia can alter the plane at will.
- **Strongly Law-Aligned**
- **Enhanced Magic**: Spells and spell-like abilities with the lawful descriptor are enhanced.
- **Impeded Magic**: Spells and spell-like abilities with the chaotic descriptor are impeded.



Planar Toolbox

The planes offer limitless possibilities for destinations, inhabitants, and adventures. What PCs might find on the other side of a portal might be an exotic foray in a wondrous land, or a campaign-changing expedition into the impossible. In either case, the following tables should help GMs planning adventures beyond the realms of mortals.

Table 7-17: Random Planar Destinations

d%	Plane
01–04	Material Plane
05–09	Ethereal Plane
10–14	Shadow Plane
15–21	Astral Plane
22–23	Plane of Air
24–25	Plane of Earth
26–27	Plane of Fire
28–29	Plane of Water
30–37	Utopia
38–44	Hell
45–52	Heaven
53–59	Limbo
60–66	Abyss
67–74	Elysium
75–81	Abaddon
82–89	Nirvana
90–97	Purgatory
98	Negative Energy Plane
99	Positive Energy Plane
100	Random Demiplane

Table 7-18 Demiplanes

d%	Demiplane
1–5	**Utamuck:** Demiplane of spiritual journeys
6–10	**Cathus:** Demiplane of intelligent cats
11–15	**Kenrin:** Demiplane of natural alchemy
16–20	**Morto:** Demiplane of guilt made manifest
21–25	**Grasbin:** Demiplane of pleasant memories
26–30	**Caglin:** Demiplane of insect collective intelligence
31–35	**Dispan:** Demiplane of unwritten books
36–40	**Sackon:** Demiplane of lost of misplaced objects
41–45	**Stais:** Demiplane of living diseases
46–50	**Oremo:** Demiplane of hungry zombies
51–55	**Octlamber:** Demiplane of living crystal
56–60	**Belnatil:** Demiplane of minor prophecies
61–65	**Marrowmal:** Demiplane of forgotten words
66–70	**Kinara:** Demiplane of sentient magical tumors
71–75	**Nallen:** Demiplane of regret and injustice
76–80	**Destor:** Demiplane of innate teleportation
81–85	**Carticus:** Demiplane of hunting spiders
86–90	**Marsus:** Demiplane of inherent minor magic
91–95	**Thache:** Demiplane of lost children
96–100	**Hastovan:** Demiplane of false pleasures

Table 7-19: Portal Descriptions

d%	Portal
1–2	A cascade of silver and copper coins
3–4	A rectangle of deepest blue that ripples like a flag
5–6	A carved circular hole in a great dolmen
7–8	A circular opening covered by rusted swords that open on demand
9–10	A huge mouth with a gale rushing from within
11–12	A giant keyhole
13–14	A great tome filled with pictures of exotic locations
15–16	A shimmering pool of greenish light
17–18	A black swirling fog with dancing lights within
19–20	A fountain of sparkling motes of light
21–22	A fresco
23–24	A giant drawer which tugs back strongly
25–26	A waterfall of singing angels
27–28	A horizontal oval of crystal-clear water
29–30	An ornate wardrobe
31–32	A curtain of dripping wax
33–34	A well that seems to descend forever
35–36	A gaping hole that oozes strands of sticky goo
37–38	A wicker man
39–40	A doorway that disappears if viewed directly
41–42	A cave entrance wreathed in moss-covered statues
43–44	A curtain of tiny ivory flakes carved to look like snow
45–46	A stone arch carved with runes
47–48	A triangle that glows and emits the faint odor of fruit
49–50	A dancing globe of ball lightning
51–52	A shadow of a door that looms tall on a nearby wall
53–54	A clockwork puzzle door
55–56	A carriage
57–58	A magical cabinet that seems impossible to open
59–60	A golden haze that smells of baking bread
61–62	An ornate mirror held by three stone golems
63–64	A table-sized ball of almost blinding light
65–66	An opening in an ancient hedgerow
67–68	An empty picture frame floating in mid-air
69–70	A black whirlpool
71–72	An orb that cycles through images of the constellations
73–74	A gate made of screaming severed heads
75–76	A lighthouse that casts a beam of solid light
77–78	An oily black chute with the sound of sobbing below
79–80	A pool of frantically waving severed arms
81–82	A statue of a yawning, grotesquely bloated old woman
83–84	A floating red egg about the size of a rearing horse
85–86	An iron tower with only one high window
87–88	A vivid, ever-changing landscape
89–90	A stone maw of grinding teeth
91–92	A giant stylized scroll that matter passes through
93–94	A corridor of whirling blades leading to a black slit
95–96	A whirlpool of bubbling chocolate
97–98	A black rainbow
99–100	An iron mouth that snaps shut at irregular intervals

Table 7-20: Astral Plane

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–4	1d4 hound archons	6	*Bestiary* 19
5–7	1d8 lantern archons	6	*Bestiary* 20
8–10	1d6 half-celestial unicorns	7	*Bestiary* 169
11–15	1 invisible stalker	7	*Bestiary* 181
16–21	1d4 half-fiend minotaurs	8	*Bestiary* 171
22–26	1d6 bralanis	9	*Bestiary* 24
27–29	1d4 lillends	9	*Bestiary* 26
30–34	1 spirit naga	9	*Bestiary* 213
35–42	1d6 ghosts	10	*Bestiary* 144
43–48	1d6 spectres	10	*Bestiary* 256
49–54	1d4 night hags	11	*Bestiary* 215
55–57	1d4 bone devils	11	*Bestiary* 74
58–60	1 devourer	11	*Bestiary* 82
61–62	1d4 nessian hell hounds	11	*Bestiary* 173
63–67	1 lich	12	*Bestiary* 188
68–72	1 ghaele	13	*Bestiary* 25
73–77	1 astral deva	14	*Bestiary* 10
78–81	1 trumpet archon	14	*Bestiary* 21
82–85	1 planetar	16	*Bestiary* 11
86–90	1 horned devil	16	*Bestiary* 76
91–95	1 marilith	17	*Bestiary* 63
96–97	1 balor	20	*Bestiary* 58
98–99	1 pit fiend	20	*Bestiary* 80
100	1 solar	23	*Bestiary* 12

Table 7-21: Ethereal Plane

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–5	1d4 lantern archons	4	*Bestiary* 20
6–9	1 mimic	4	*Bestiary* 205
10–13	1d4 shadows	5	*Bestiary* 245
14–15	1 nightmare	5	*Bestiary* 216
16–20	1 phase spider	5	*Bestiary* 226
21–25	1d4 barghests	6	*Bestiary* 27
26–27	1 kyton	6	*Bestiary* 185
28–30	1d6 Medium air elementals	6	*Bestiary* 120
31–36	1d6 yeth hounds	6	*Bestiary* 286
37–40	1 spectre	7	*Bestiary* 256
41–45	1 invisible stalker	7	*Bestiary* 181
46–49	1 greater shadow	8	*Bestiary* 245
50–57	1d6 wraiths	8	*Bestiary* 281
58–63	1d4 dread wraiths	8	*Bestiary* 281
64–65	1d4 lamias	8	*Bestiary* 186
66–71	1 night hag	9	*Bestiary* 215
72–73	1 spirit naga	9	*Bestiary* 213
74–78	1d6 xills	9	*Bestiary* 283
79–85	1d6 ghosts	10	*Bestiary* 144
86–87	1d6 greater barghests	10	*Bestiary* 27
88–89	1 cauchemar nightmare	11	*Bestiary* 216
90–93	1d4 vampires	11	*Bestiary* 270
94–98	1 lich	12	*Bestiary* 188
99–100	1 trumpet archon	14	*Bestiary* 21

Table 7-22: Shadow Plane

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–4	1d4 vargouilles	4	*Bestiary* 272
5–9	2d6 zombies	4	*Bestiary* 288
10–14	1d4 wights	5	*Bestiary* 276
15–18	2d4 ghouls	5	*Bestiary* 146
19–25	1d6 shadows	6	*Bestiary* 245
26–31	1d8 skeletal champions	6	*Bestiary* 252
32–36	1 will-o'-wisp	6	*Bestiary* 277
37–41	1 kyton	6	*Bestiary* 185
42	1d4 mummies	7	*Bestiary* 210
43–45	1d6 barghests	7	*Bestiary* 27
46–49	1d6 gargoyles	7	*Bestiary* 137
50–55	1 shadow demon	7	*Bestiary* 67
56–61	1 greater shadow	8	*Bestiary* 245
62	1 mohrg	8	*Bestiary* 208
63–66	1 dark naga	8	*Bestiary* 211
67–71	1d6 wraiths	8	*Bestiary* 281
72–74	1d4 lamias	8	*Bestiary* 186
75–77	1 night hag	9	*Bestiary* 215
78–81	1d4 spectres	9	*Bestiary* 256
82–86	1d4 ogre mages	10	*Bestiary* 221
87–91	1 rakshasa	10	*Bestiary* 231
92–96	1d6 ghosts	10	*Bestiary* 144
97–98	1 lich	12	*Bestiary* 188
99–100	1d4 retrievers	13	*Bestiary* 234

Table 7-23: Chaos-Aligned Plane

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–6	2d6 tieflings	4	*Bestiary* 264
7–10	1d6 yeth hounds	6	*Bestiary* 286
11–14	2d4 dretches	6	*Bestiary* 60
15–21	1d4 satyrs	6	*Bestiary* 241
22–27	2d4 unicorns	7	*Bestiary* 269
28–31	1d6 harpies	7	*Bestiary* 172
32–36	2d4 pegasi	7	*Bestiary* 225
37–39	1d6 half-celestial unicorns	7	*Bestiary* 169
40–42	1d4 bralanis	8	*Bestiary* 24
43–46	1d6 babaus	8	*Bestiary* 57
47–50	1 spirit naga	9	*Bestiary* 213
51–55	1d6 nymphs	10	*Bestiary* 217
56–58	1 white dragon (adult)	10	*Bestiary* 100
59–64	2d4 lamias	10	*Bestiary* 186
65–69	2d4 succubi	11	*Bestiary* 68
70–73	1d6 marids	12	*Bestiary* 142
74–77	1d4 bebiliths	12	*Bestiary* 32
78–81	1 ghaele	13	*Bestiary* 25
82–84	1 glabrezu	13	*Bestiary* 61
85–89	1 crag linnorm	14	*Bestiary* 190
90–93	1d4 storm giants	15	*Bestiary* 152
94–96	1 copper dragon (ancient)	17	*Bestiary* 106
97–98	1 shoggoth	19	*Bestiary* 249
99–100	1 balor	20	*Bestiary* 58

Table 7-24: Evil-Aligned Plane

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–7	1d8 quasits	6	*Bestiary* 66
8–11	1d6 yeth hounds	6	*Bestiary* 286
12–19	2d8 lemures	7	*Bestiary* 79
20–24	2d6 vargouilles	7	*Bestiary* 272
25–28	1d6 bearded devils	8	*Bestiary* 73
29–33	1d8 nightmares	8	*Bestiary* 216
34–37	1d6 half-fiend minotaurs	9	*Bestiary* 171
38–43	2d6 hell hounds	9	*Bestiary* 173
44–47	1d4 efreet	10	*Bestiary* 140
48–50	1d8 salamanders	10	*Bestiary* 240
51–54	2d4 xills	10	*Bestiary* 283
55–60	1d6 nabasus	11	*Bestiary* 64
61–64	1d6 dark nagas	11	*Bestiary* 211
65–67	1 retreiver	11	*Bestiary* 234
68–72	1d6 vrocks	12	*Bestiary* 69
73–75	1 lich	12	*Bestiary* 188
76–78	1d6 night hags	12	*Bestiary* 215
79–82	1d4 hezrous	13	*Bestiary* 62
83–86	1d4 devourers	13	*Bestiary* 82
87–89	1d6 black dragons (adult)	14	*Bestiary* 92
90–93	1 horned devil	16	*Bestiary* 76
94–96	1 marilith	17	*Bestiary* 63
97–98	1 red dragon (adult)	19	*Bestiary* 98
99–100	1 pit fiend	20	*Bestiary* 80

Table 7-25: Good-Aligned Plane

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–8	2d6 aasimars	4	*Bestiary* 7
9–12	1d4 giant eagles	5	*Bestiary* 118
13–16	1d6 dryads	6	*Bestiary* 116
17–21	1d6 unicorns	6	*Bestiary* 269
22–25	1d4 half-celestial unicorns	6	*Bestiary* 169
26–29	2d6 lantern archons	7	*Bestiary* 20
30–35	1d4 djinn	7	*Bestiary* 139
36–39	1d6 hound archons	7	*Bestiary* 19
40–44	2d4 pixies	8	*Bestiary* 228
45–48	1 copper dragon (young)	8	*Bestiary* 106
49–52	1d4 lillends	9	*Bestiary* 26
53–56	1d6 bralanis	9	*Bestiary* 24
57–62	1d4 treants	10	*Bestiary* 266
63–65	1d4 djinn nobles	10	*Bestiary* 139
66–69	1 gold dragon (young)	11	*Bestiary* 108
70–73	1d4 guardian nagas	12	*Bestiary* 212
74–77	1 bronze dragon (adult)	13	*Bestiary* 104
78–81	1 astral deva	14	*Bestiary* 10
82–84	1 phoenix	15	*Bestiary* 227
85–88	1d4 ghaeles	15	*Bestiary* 25
89–91	1 planetar	16	*Bestiary* 11
92–95	1d4 trumpet archons	16	*Bestiary* 21
96–98	1 silver dragon (ancient)	19	*Bestiary* 110
99–100	1 solar	23	*Bestiary* 12

Table 7-26: Lawful-Aligned Plane

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–6	1d6 imps	5	*Bestiary* 78
7–10	1d4 barghests	6	*Bestiary* 27
11–16	1d4 mummies	7	*Bestiary* 210
17–21	1d6 hound archons	7	*Bestiary* 19
22–28	1d4 kytons	8	*Bestiary* 185
29–31	2d4 wraiths	9	*Bestiary* 281
32–34	1d6 xills	9	*Bestiary* 283
35–38	1d4 spectres	9	*Bestiary* 256
39–42	1d4 aboleths	9	*Bestiary* 8
43–46	1d4 ogre mages	10	*Bestiary* 221
47–50	2d6 manticores	10	*Bestiary* 199
51–55	1d6 medusas	10	*Bestiary* 201
56–59	1d6 ghosts	10	*Bestiary* 144
60–65	2d4 shaitans	11	*Bestiary* 143
66–69	1d4 nessian warhounds	11	*Bestiary* 173
70–74	1d4 rakshasas	12	*Bestiary* 231
75–78	1d6 couatls	13	*Bestiary* 49
79–81	1d8 bone devils	13	*Bestiary* 74
82–86	1d6 guardian nagas	13	*Bestiary* 212
87–90	1d4 barbed devils	13	*Bestiary* 72
91–93	1d6 ice devils	16	*Bestiary* 77
94–96	1d4 trumpet archons	16	*Bestiary* 21
97–98	1 blue dragon (ancient)	18	*Bestiary* 94
99–100	1 gold dragon (ancient)	20	*Bestiary* 108

Table 7-27: Neutral-Aligned Plane

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–7	1d6 merfolk	1	*Bestiary* 204
8–12	1d6 aasimars	2	*Bestiary* 7
13–16	1 mephit (any)	3	*Bestiary* 202
17–22	1d4 pseudodragons	3	*Bestiary* 229
23–27	1d8 tieflings	3	*Bestiary* 264
28–31	1d4 giant ants	4	*Bestiary* 16
32–36	1 gibbering mouther	5	*Bestiary* 153
37–41	1d4 giant scorpions	5	*Bestiary* 242
42–44	1d4 yeth hounds	5	*Bestiary* 286
45–47	1d6 rust monsters	6	*Bestiary* 238
48–53	1d6 ankhegs	6	*Bestiary* 15
54–60	1d6 jann	7	*Bestiary* 141
61–64	1 invisible stalker	7	*Bestiary* 181
65–66	1d8 giant mantises	7	*Bestiary* 200
67–69	1d6 phase spiders	8	*Bestiary* 226
70–74	1 gynosphix	8	*Bestiary* 257
75–77	1d4 dracolisks	9	*Bestiary* 170
78–80	1 roc	9	*Bestiary* 236
81–86	1d6 wyverns	9	*Bestiary* 282
87–91	1d4 dire tigers	10	*Bestiary* 265
92–95	1d4 dragon turtles	11	*Bestiary* 112
96–97	1 cloud giant	11	*Bestiary* 147
98–99	1 purple worm	12	*Bestiary* 230
100	1 sea serpent	12	*Bestiary* 244

Table 7-28: Air-Dominant Plane

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–7	1 dust mephit	3	*Bestiary* 202
8–12	1d4 ice mephits	5	*Bestiary* 202
13–17	1d4 pegasi	5	*Bestiary* 225
18–24	1d6 air mephits	6	*Bestiary* 202
25–28	1 white dragon (young)	6	*Bestiary* 100
29–30	1d6 giant eagles	6	*Bestiary* 118
31–36	1d8 Medium air elementals	7	*Bestiary* 120
37–42	1 invisible stalker	7	*Bestiary* 181
43–45	1d6 half-celestial unicorns	7	*Bestiary* 169
46–49	1d6 Large air elementals	8	*Bestiary* 120
50–56	1d6 djinn	8	*Bestiary* 139
57–59	1d8 harpies	8	*Bestiary* 172
60–62	1d4 will-o'-wisps	8	*Bestiary* 277
63–65	1d8 griffons	8	*Bestiary* 168
66	1d4 amir jann	9	*Bestiary* 141
67–70	1 roc	9	*Bestiary* 236
71–75	1d4 vizier djinn	10	*Bestiary* 139
76–79	1d4 greater air elementals	11	*Bestiary* 120
80–84	1 storm giant	13	*Bestiary* 152
85–88	1d6 couatls	13	*Bestiary* 49
89–93	1d6 cloud giants	14	*Bestiary* 147
94–97	1 astral deva	14	*Bestiary* 10
98	1 planetar	16	*Bestiary* 11
99–100	1 silver dragon (ancient)	19	*Bestiary* 111

Table 7-29: Earth-Dominant Plane

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–6	2d4 duergar	2	*Bestiary* 117
7–13	1 salt mephit	3	*Bestiary* 203
14–18	1d6 svirfneblin	4	*Bestiary* 261
19–24	1d4 Medium earth elementals	5	*Bestiary* 122
25–30	1d4 earth mephits	5	*Bestiary* 202
31–34	1d4 violet fungi	5	*Bestiary* 274
35–37	1d6 morlocks	5	*Bestiary* 209
38–40	1 copper dragon (young)	8	*Bestiary* 106
41–44	1d8 gargoyles	8	*Bestiary* 137
45–46	1 giant slug	8	*Bestiary* 254
47–50	1d6 cyclopes	8	*Bestiary* 52
51	1 behir	8	*Bestiary* 34
52–57	1 greater earth elemental	9	*Bestiary* 123
58–64	1d6 xorns	9	*Bestiary* 284
65–66	1d4 hill giants	9	*Bestiary* 254
67–70	1d6 Huge earth elementals	10	*Bestiary* 122
71–76	1d6 shaitans	10	*Bestiary* 143
77–81	1d4 stone giants	10	*Bestiary* 151
82–86	1 stone golem	11	*Bestiary* 163
87–90	1d4 clay golems	12	*Bestiary* 159
91–92	1 purple worm	12	*Bestiary* 230
93–95	1 roper	12	*Bestiary* 237
96–98	1 blue dragon (adult)	13	*Bestiary* 94
99–100	1 pasha shaitan	13	*Bestiary* 143

Table 7-30: Fire-Dominant Plane

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–5	1 steam mephit	3	*Bestiary* 203
6–11	2d6 fire beetles	3	*Bestiary* 33
12–13	1 janni	4	*Bestiary* 141
14–17	1 nightmare	5	*Bestiary* 216
18–25	1d6 magma mephits	6	*Bestiary* 202
26–29	1 pyrohydra	6	*Bestiary* 178
30–34	1d6 hell hounds	6	*Bestiary* 173
35–40	1d6 Medium fire elementals	6	*Bestiary* 124
41–47	1d8 fire mephits	7	*Bestiary* 202
48	1d8 giant scorpions	7	*Bestiary* 242
49–52	1d4 salamanders	8	*Bestiary* 240
53–54	1 sphinx	8	*Bestiary* 257
55–60	1d4 Huge fire elementals	9	*Bestiary* 124
61–65	1 malik efreeti	10	*Bestiary* 140
66–71	1 gold dragon (young)	11	*Bestiary* 108
72–74	1 cauchemar	11	*Bestiary* 216
75–77	1d4 nessian warhounds	11	*Bestiary* 173
78–81	1 elder fire elemental	11	*Bestiary* 125
82–88	2d4 efreet	12	*Bestiary* 140
89–92	1d6 fire giants	13	*Bestiary* 148
93–95	1 red dragon (adult)	14	*Bestiary* 98
96–97	1d4 iron golems	15	*Bestiary* 162
98–99	1 phoenix	15	*Bestiary* 227
100	1 brass dragon (ancient)	16	*Bestiary* 103

Table 7-31: Water-Dominant Plane

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–5	1d8 merfolk	2	*Bestiary* 204
6–13	1d6 Small water elementals	4	*Bestiary* 126
14–15	1 janni	4	*Bestiary* 141
16–17	1d6 boggards	5	*Bestiary* 37
18–22	1d8 octopi	5	*Bestiary* 219
23–27	1 cryohydra	6	*Bestiary* 178
28–31	1d4 sea hags	6	*Bestiary* 243
32–36	2d4 ooze mephits	7	*Bestiary* 203
37–41	1d4 Large water elementals	7	*Bestiary* 126
42–45	1d6 water mephitis	7	*Bestiary* 203
46–51	1d4 ice golems	7	*Bestiary* 161
52–54	1 chuul	7	*Bestiary* 46
55–58	2d6 sahuagin	7	*Bestiary* 239
59–62	1d6 orcas	8	*Bestiary* 88
63–66	1 elder water elemental	11	*Bestiary* 127
67–71	1 shahzada marid	11	*Bestiary* 142
72–76	1d4 giant squids	11	*Bestiary* 259
77–80	1d4 frost giants	11	*Bestiary* 149
81–88	1d6 marids	12	*Bestiary* 142
89–92	1 sea serpent	12	*Bestiary* 244
93–95	1 bronze dragon (adult)	13	*Bestiary* 104
96–97	1d4 ice devils	15	*Bestiary* 77
98–99	1 black dragon (ancient)	16	*Bestiary* 93
100	1 kraken	18	*Bestiary* 184

Taverns

It's an understatement to say that the tavern is a staple location in the fantasy genre. It's the perfect place for the PCs to meet up, conduct business, and wind down after an adventure. Shady characters abound in taverns and all manner of activities, legal or otherwise, can take place beneath their smoke-filled ceilings. Unfortunately, the tavern's ubiquity is such that players may treat it as something of a running joke. Unless you're willing to inject some variation into your taverns, the PCs will continually run into the same staple of surly bartenders, busty barmaids, and drunken patrons itching to get into a brawl at the drop of a hat.

This chapter looks at ways to add some variety into your campaign's taverns, inns, and restaurants, making them into memorable experiences that can liven up the phrase "So, you all meet in a tavern..."

SERVICES

By definition, a tavern is a business where customers can purchase alcoholic beverages. Sounds simple enough, right? But just as with modern bars, a fantasy tavern can be far more than just a place to get a flagon of ale. Defining what characters can find within a particular tavern goes a long way toward giving the place a unique feel.

Setting and Quality

One of the first aspects to determine is what sort of setting a tavern presents. Is it small and cramped, with greasy smoke obscuring the faces of the patrons? Perhaps it's enormous, with vaulted ceilings and multiple fireplaces providing light and flame for slowly-roasting boars on spits. You can also play against stereotype and have a clean and well-appointed country inn in an otherwise destitute area, or a worn and spartan tavern, with merely a bench or two to sit upon, in a wealthy part of town. Consider that in some places, a tavern may very well be the only entertainment around, meaning that most of its regular patrons might consider it a second home and treat it accordingly.

Table 7–32: Unique Tavern Traits table on page 200 can be used to give a tavern, inn, or restaurant some unusual flavor. Roll 1d3 different traits or simply choose a trait or two from the list.

Drinks

The vast majority of taverns serve drinks (whether alcoholic or not) made from local ingredients. In a temperate climate, wheat, hops, and barley are the most likely ingredients, and a tavern in such an area probably serves beer and ales. If bees are present, mead is another option. In more arid locales, grapes are more likely to grow well, and wine is probably more prevalent. In places where crops or arable land is scarce, however, a tavern may serve fermented goat's milk, cactus juice, or even more exotic drinks.

But why stop there? Perhaps a tavern stocks truly unusual or rare drinks crafted from unique plants or even monsters. A tavern along a swampy track may distill a special liquor from ambulatory plant creatures, which gives it a potent kick. Depending on how prevalent magic is in your campaign, it's even possible that a tavern has an alchemist on staff who dabbles in the creation of remarkably strong, tasty, or even dangerous drinks. Drinks could be carbonated or flaming, could have an outward effect on imbibers (such as turning a drinker's hair blue), or could contain mild (or not so mild) hallucinogenic ingredients.

Food

Many taverns, and certainly most inns, offer food to their customers. As with drinks, menus typically consist of local fare, although more upscale restaurants, particularly those in urban settings, may offer food from farther away—ranging from mildly unusual dishes from the barony a few leagues away to exotic dishes from the farthest reaches of the globe. See page 159 in the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* for different types of common meals and their prices.

Offering exotic or bizarre food on a menu is another great way to make a tavern or inn more memorable. The players will quickly forget the tavern that just serves mutton, but they will probably remember the inn that serves poached drake eggs in firebrandy sauce.

Entertainment

Taverns primarily serve local customers, and the best way to keep them coming back is to provide some form of entertainment while they quaff their beer and dine on mutton or quail. While a simple singing minstrel is the stereotype, a tavern could also host a full band of musicians or possibly even a house band.

If the tavern is large enough, it may boast a small stage, allowing plays or other performances. Given the prevalence of magic, small-time illusionists can perform their coin tricks with full visual and auditory displays. Bards can tell tales of old or create new stories on the fly.

Remember that tastes in entertainment vary wildly from place to place. One town's tavern may boast extremely bawdy songs and "performances" that would make even a barbarian blush, while other, more conservative areas may restrict entertainment to hymns or morality plays. Taverns and inns often serve as convenient sites for prostitution, either from among its clientele or as a service of the establishment itself. Such services can be either open or covert, depending on the tavern's location.

Bedding

With the possible exception of a back bedroom used by the owner, taverns generally do not provide rooms to their patrons (the exception being taverns that also tolerate prostitution). Inns, of course, make their income by providing a place for people to sleep for the night. Even then, the quality of an inn dictates the privacy and comfort of its rooms. Poor quality inns offer little more than a spot on the floor or possibly a large, straw-filled mattress in a communal room with other patrons. Average inns have individual rooms capable of hosting two people in a single shared bed. Superior inns have private rooms, often with an adjoining antechamber, sitting room, or balcony.

Other Amenities

Taverns and inns serve as the focal points of most communities. The front of a tavern may boast a board with wanted posters, local decrees, available jobs, or requests for help, which the PCs might find of interest. The local sheriff or constable may use the tavern as second base of operations, deputizing any able-bodied citizens (or the PCs) as he sees fit.

STAFF AND PATRONS

Once you've determined the services of a tavern or inn, you need to populate it. Usually it's not necessary to create game statistics for the staff or patrons. If your players have a penchant for starting brawls, however, you can find stat blocks for some common bar staff and customers in Chapter 9. To determine what staff and patrons are working at or patronizing a tavern or inn, use the Tavern random encounter table on page 213 and adjust the numbers according to the size of the establishment.

Staff

Unless the business is closed, there is always at least one person running a tavern or inn (in most cases the owner of the business). Beyond that, the tavern needs bartenders, barmen, or barmaids, and, if it serves food, at least one cook. Most busy or popular taverns also employ one or more bouncers to keep the patrons in line. Depending on the size of the tavern, however, a single staff member could fill one or more of these roles—the owner might tend the bar and cook if necessary, or a barmaid could break heads if things get out of hand.

Patrons

Usually, the quality of a tavern or inn defines the type of people who patronize it. If a tavern serves as the hub of a community, its patrons are typically far more respectful of the staff and the facilities than those of a watering hole in a major city that caters to travelers or transients who come in for a single drink or bit of business and never return. Remember that not every tavern should be the headquarters of the local thieves' guild—farmers, craftsmen, merchants, and even nobles all come to taverns just to have a drink or two and fraternize with their fellow citizens.

Describing Personalities

While every staff member of patron might not need a full stat block, it's a good idea to come up with a list of personality types and quirks and assign them to the characters that the PCs engage with. Merely adding a lisp to the bartender or giving the waitress a severe limp while she hobbles around the tavern with numerous full tankards of ale can go a long way toward making a tavern memorable.



Tavern Toolbox

Over the course of a campaign, the PCs might seek solace in a blur of inns and taverns. But with a little effort and the help of the following charts full of details, the PCs may soon develop essential stopping places and favorite watering holes.

Table 7-32: Unique Tavern Traits

d%	Trait
1–3	Only opens on public holidays
4–6	In a former church
7–9	In a former theater
10–12	In a farmhouse
13–15	In a cellar
16–18	Partly ruined
19–21	Stocks or gallows inside
22–24	Magical lighting that slowly shifts hues
25–27	Full of the owner's dogs
28–30	Previous owner is buried in the cellar
31–32	Full of cats
33–34	Mounted monster head
35–36	Haunted grandfather clock that strikes thirteen
37–38	Recently was partially burnt down
39–40	Central pit for entertainment
41–42	A fortified keep with its own armory
43–44	Furniture is made from stone
45–46	Drinks delivered by magical or mechanical means
47–48	In a lighthouse
49–50	Extremely low ceilings
51–52	Bar is made from a sunken warship
53–54	Stuffed heads and antlers on every wall
55–56	Run by five sisters
57–58	Haunted
59–60	Once run by a succubus
61–62	Holds prayers every day
63–64	Unusual beverages bubbling behind the bar
65–66	Assigns seats at random
67–68	Adorned with numerous banners and weapons
69–70	Full of small caged animals
71–72	Collectively owned by the locals
73–74	Pentagram is carved on one wall
75–76	Every stranger who arrives must sing to be served
77–78	Mummified remains of a local hero are on display
79–80	Requires bar tabs signed in blood
81–82	Has an unusual mascot
83–84	Small, labyrinthine halls and rooms
85–86	Permanent recurring illusion
87–88	Patrons must spin the wheel to choose their drink
89–90	Original owner stuffed and mounted above bar
91–92	Home of "endless stew" (kept simmering for 30 years)
93–94	Fruit growing just outside is free for the plucking
95–96	Obnoxious patrons get thrown off the balcony
97–98	Lit with magic lanterns or bioluminescent creatures
99–100	Has a tree growing through the taproom

Table 7-33: Random Tavern Name Generator

d%	First Name	Second Name
1–2	Blind	Cat
3–4	Three	Fire
5–6	King's	with Eight Tails
7–8	Black	Cow
9–10	Fearsome	Spectacles
11–12	Yew	Burnt Down
13–14	Maid	Minotaur
15–16	Green	Hag
17–18	Blasted	Nightcap
19–20	Broken	Ankheg
21–22	Meg's	Chamber
23–24	Donkey	Blind Mice
25–26	Five	Ale
27–28	Dead	Honey
29–30	Jolly	Full Moon
31–32	Brass	Moon
33–34	Buxum	Rainbow
35–36	Six	Storm Clouds
37–38	Pirate's	Pipe
39–40	Carrots	Trousers
41–42	Burnt	Waif
43–44	Deviant	Hat
45–46	Thrice	Helmet
47–48	Empty	Kraken
49–50	Fearsome	Giant
51–52	Red	Cockerel
53–54	Yellow	Slug
55–56	Supine	Dryad
57–58	Thirsty	Pig
59–60	Fat	Rack
61–62	Thin	Iron Maiden
63–64	Burnt	House
65–66	Queen's	Barn
67–68	Captain's	Church
69–70	White	Well
71–72	Murdered	Manticore
73–74	Large	Haystack
75–76	Tiny	Hill
77–78	Round	Ferret
79–80	Hollow	Lurcher
81–82	Catapult	Lobster
83–84	Snail	Cliff
85–86	Nag's	Tarragon
87–88	Blunt	Slippers
89–90	Outrageous	Witch
91–92	Quiet	Gull
93–94	Noisy	Caravel
95–96	Boozy	Wagon
97–98	Magenta	Carriage
99–100	Stork	Moose

Table 7-34: Menu Items

d%	Food	Cost
1–2	Apple cake	2 cp
3–4	Aunt Polly's pudding	1 sp
5–6	Boiled eels	2 sp
7–8	Boiled rabbit	1 sp
9–10	Boiled salmon	3 sp
11–12	Boiled trotters	1 sp
13–14	Boiled turnips	5 cp
15–16	Bread and butter pudding	3 cp
17–18	Broiled mackerel	3 sp
19–20	Clear soup	2 cp
21–22	Crab, whole fresh	3 sp
23–24	Crayfish soup	4 cp
25–26	Fried cow-heel	8 cp
27–28	Fried woodcock with wine sauce	4 sp
29–30	Game pie	5 sp
31–32	Gosling with damson cheese	5 sp
33–34	Grouse with gooseberry jam	4 sp
35–36	Haggis	2 sp
37–38	Hare soup	6 cp
39–40	Hashed mutton	1 sp
41–42	Hotch potch	1 sp
43–44	Jugged hare	3 sp
45–46	Lamb cutlets	3 sp
47–48	Leg of mutton	4 sp
49–50	Marrow dumplings	8 cp
51–52	Meat pie	1 sp
53–54	Mutton pudding	1 sp
55–56	Oxtail soup	8 cp
57–58	Oyster soup	2 sp
59–60	Pie	1 sp
61–62	Potted partridge	4 sp
63–64	Ptarmigan	5 sp
65–66	Rissoles of game	4 sp
67–68	Roast fowl	6 sp
69–70	Roast goose with apple sauce	7 sp
71–72	Roast landrail	4 sp
73–74	Roast ribs of beef	3 sp
75–76	Roast suckling pig	1 gp
77–78	Rumpsteak and mushrooms	5 sp
79–80	Sausages	1 sp
81–82	Simmered gurnet	3 sp
83–84	Skate in caper sauce	3 sp
85–86	Stew	5 cp
87–88	Stewed kidneys	4 sp
89–90	Stewed pigeons	2 sp
91–92	Trout	3 sp
93–94	Turbot with truffles	2 gp
95–96	Veal cutlets	1 gp
97–98	Vegetable broth	3 cp
99–100	Whole local cheese	1 gp

Table 7-35: Amenities

d%	Amenity	Nightly Cost
1–4	Bath, cold (hot)	2 cp (6 cp)
5–6	Blanket, extra (loan of)	5 cp
7–8	Camping/caravan pitch (per tent/wagon)	1 sp
9–10	Chamber pot (loan of)	2 cp
11–12	Chest hire, with very simple lock	2 sp
13–14	Chest hire, with average lock	4 sp
15–16	Chest hire, with good lock	8 sp
17–18	Chest hire, with superior lock	15 sp
19–20	Coach house (coach storage)	5 sp
21–22	Cobbling	2% cost of clothing
23–24	Companionship	1 gp+
25–26	Feather mattress (loan of)	2 sp
27–28	Feather pillow (loan of)	1 sp
29–30	Fire in room	5 cp
31–32	Guard dog (loan of)	2 sp
33–34	Guard (1st level warrior)	3 sp
35–36	Guide (per day)	3 sp
37–38	Hot water, bucket/pan (loan of)	3 cp
39–40	Ironing (per item)	2 cp
41–42	Lamp (loan of)	1 cp
43–44	Massage	1 sp
45–46	Meals in room	1 sp
47–48	Mirror (loan of)	1 sp
49–50	Paddock (per horse)	5 cp
51–52	Private room for meetings (per hour)	5 sp+
53–54	Room, common	2 sp
55–56	Room, shared	5 sp
57–58	Room, private	1 gp
59–60	Room, private, with very simple lock	15 sp
61–62	Room, private, with average lock	2 gp
63–64	Room, private, with good lock	4 gp
65–66	Room, private, with superior lock	8 gp
67–68	Sewing kit (loan of)	1 sp
69–70	Sleeping space, floor, away from fire	1 cp
71–72	Sleeping space, floor, next to fire	5 cp
73–74	Soap (loan of)	1 sp
75–76	Stabling, self-service	1 sp
77–78	Stabling, part livery (grooming, feeding)	2 sp
79–80	Stabling, full livery	5 sp
81–82	Suite, small (with good lock, fire)	4 gp
83–84	Suite, average (as above but bigger)	8 gp
85–86	Suite, good (as above but with superior lock)	16 gp
87–88	Suite, luxurious (as above but with servants)	32 gp+
89–90	Tailoring (per item)	2% cost of clothing
91–92	Warming pan (loan of)	5 cp
93–94	Washing (per item)	3 cp
95–98	Washstand with cold water (hot water)	3 cp (7 cp)
99–100	Writing set (loan of)	2 sp

Urban

None would deny that opportunities for great adventure lie within the dank dungeons, winding caves, and sprawling wildlands of the world. However, the place where the PCs come back to sell their treasures, rest, and live their lives can hold excitement as well. Urban settings shouldn't be overlooked as a place of adventure. Filled with people, businesses, intrigue, and secret locations, cities can provide adventure hooks on literally every street corner.

This section looks at how settlements are put together, how the PCs move around them, what business can be conducted there, and how to craft your own adventures within a city, taking into account both real life elements and the incredible possibilities that magic affords to fantasy settings.

The Shape of Civilization

If you're building a settlement from scratch, you'll first need to determine how many people live there. Is it a tiny collection of houses along a lonely stretch of road? Is it a bustling village that sits at the crossroads of several major thoroughfares? Or is it a full city that serves as the hub for an entire region? Chapter 6 of this book contains a wealth of advice on how societies and civilizations function, but what happens when your PCs actually want to adventure in the city?

Before running an adventure in your city, you must decide what it looks and feels like. The first thing your PCs see as they approach a new city is its skyline. Unless you have a reason to avoid it, consider giving your city's skyline at least one notable landmark. If a city's skyline is shown in silhouette, a knowledgeable traveler should be able to recognize it. The landmark could be an unusually shaped building, a huge tower (such as a cathedral's bell tower), a castle atop a hill, an immense statue of a dragon, a decommissioned warship protruding from a too-small waterfront, or anything else you can imagine, but being able to remind the PCs what city you're talking about by mentioning this unique landmark gives you an incredibly useful resource.

The bulk of the buildings within any settlement are the homes of the people that live there. Many businesses merely present a storefront, with the rooms above or behind it serving as the owner's home. If you're following a medieval model for your city, then the typical home is host to a large number of people crammed into a relatively small space. The average peasant or freeman might only be able to afford a single room or two within a house, living cheek-to-jowl with his neighbors to either side and possibly above and below.

Buildings themselves are products of their environments and are built from materials readily available in the area. The terrain and climate of the land surrounding a city determines what that city is made of. A city in a temperate coastal area might have mostly wooden buildings with some stone structures. A desert town would have adobe or stone buildings, or even structures dug into the earth itself to create dark, cool places for people to live. Cities built in swamps or wetlands might have massive levees and dams to keep the water at bay.

If you're having trouble visualizing the size and population of a village, town, or city, compare it to real-life locations and gauge accordingly. For example, at its height at the end of the 2nd Century, Rome boasted over a million people (although census records were sketchy—some report nearly 10 times that number!). During the 14th Century, Rome's population had declined drastically to around 50,000 people. Although these numbers might not seem particularly impressive compared to modern cities, Rome was considered massive and teeming with people.

A heavily populated city does not necessarily translate to urban sprawl. For example, when London reached the 80,000 mark in the 14th Century, the populace was still squeezed within the confines of the ancient walls built by the Romans several centuries earlier, resulting in atrocious living conditions.

Another way to help conceptualize such huge numbers of people is to look at sports arenas, some of which can hold the population of a small or medium-sized town within a single vast structure. The famous Coliseum in Rome could hold 50,000 people at a time. Modern Yankee Stadium can hold nearly 60,000 people.

You should also consider the settlement's level of sanitation and the presence of sewers. A city with decent sanitation copes with disease considerably better than those where people simply dump sewage in the streets. Settlements with sewers and other sanitation infrastructure also provide ready-made locations for your players to explore, hunting down criminals and cultists or searching for lost treasure, all beneath the feet of the unaware citizens walking the streets above.

Streets and Traffic

How do people get around in the town where they live? What are the streets and avenues of your settlement like? Is the town open, with wide avenues, or is it cramped, with houses crammed together, casting the streets and alleyways below into perpetual shadow?

Assuming that the settlement doesn't contain some sort of wide-ranging magical transport network, most people get around the old-fashioned ways—by foot, mount, or carriage. In most cities, these are the only options available. However, depending on the city and the level of technology and/or magic available, how the populace gets from Point A to Point B could be far more interesting.

Adult humans have a walking speed of around 3-1/2 miles per hour. Thus, walking across a small, open town

may take only a matter of minutes. Yet as cities grow in size, they become more difficult to swiftly navigate because of the density of people, animals, and vehicles on their winding streets. In large cities or metropolises with moderate-to-high population density, people on foot move at the rate of a single mile per hour.

Rather than walking, those who can afford the fare may also travel in animal-drawn vehicles, such as wagons, carriages, or hansom cabs. They might also travel in rickshaws or something equivalent. This method is probably more common in places where people are plentiful and horses, mules, and other beasts of burden are either rare, expensive, or both. Does your city sit on a river, or is it interlaced with canals? If so, then gondolas, barges, canoes, or other flat-bottomed boats are probably used as a major form of transportation. Cities and towns built in confined spaces may be far more vertical than less densely-built cities; the populace might make use of bridges, ladders, and even lifts to haul people up and down the several stories they need to traverse.

Beyond these mundane methods of movement, magic and technology can create truly bizarre or fantastic conveyances. In a high-magic game, magic carpets or the equivalent may be employed by the wealthy to travel within a city. Alternately, the city (or independent entrepreneurs) may possess its own "fleet" of specially trained griffons or other flying creatures capable of carrying one or more people to specific locations. In extreme cases, teleportation may even be relatively common, with special booths or "stepping portals" scattered throughout the city, allowing instantaneous transportation within the confines of the settlement or beyond. Take care to limit these magical methods in your game, though, unless you want a game where the wondrous becomes commonplace.

Keep in mind that the PCs can encounter danger and excitement even as they travel through a town or city. Besides the occasional assault by thieves, gangs, or other ruffians, the PCs may have to deal with animals run amok, riots, duels (mundane or magical) in the streets, fires, agitators, and any number of other interesting events. If a pickpocket manages to snag an item from one of the PCs, a rooftop chase might ensue as the PCs pursue the thief. A procession of nobles may stop and question the presence of the adventurers in their fair city. A random corpse in the gutters bearing the signs of a ritual murder may open up an investigation or mystery.

The city's streets themselves bear consideration as well, for it is here that many of your urban-themed encounters will begin or end. A typical city street should be wide enough to allow two horse-drawn carriages to pass each other, with a little bit of additional room for foot traffic—as a result, well-traveled city streets should never be less than 30 feet wide, with major thouroughfares being 60 feet wide or wider. Back streets might be only 15 or even 10 feet wide—anything narrower than 10 feet will be difficult to navigate on horseback or via carriage. These narrow lanes are usually your city's alleyways, only 5 to 10 feet across and often taking complex, winding routes between buildings.

Additional rules for city streets, for moving through crowds or across rooftops, and for cities in general can be found on pages 433–437 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*.

Settlement Population Ranges

A settlement's population is left to the GM to assign, but you can use a settlement's type to help you determine just how many folks live in the city. Since the actual number of people who dwell in a settlement has no impact on game play, the number you choose is largely cosmetic—feel free to adjust the suggested values below to fit your campaign.

Settlement Type	Population Range
Thorp	Fewer than 20
Hamlet	21–60
Village	61–200
Small town	201–2,000
Large town	2,001–5,000
Small city	5,001–10,000
Large city	10,001–25,000
Metropolis	More than 25,000

Settlements in Play

The best way to handle a settlement in your game, of course, is to plan it out, placing every shop and every home, naming every NPC, and mapping every building. Yet settlements are the most complicated locations you're likely to ever feature in your game, and the prospect of fully detailing one is daunting, especially if your PCs are likely to visit multiple settlements.

Presented on the following pages are basic rules for a more streamlined method of handling settlements in your game. Essentially, these rules treat settlements almost as characters of their own, complete with stat blocks. Using these rules, you can generate the vital data for a settlement quickly and efficiently, and with this data you can handle the majority of your players' interactions with the settlement.

Note that for particularly large cities, you can use multiple settlement stat blocks to represent different districts within a city. This allows you to have neighborhoods with distinct characteristics inside one city's walls. GMs should feel free to add other new elements to create the cities they desire. A Settlement Sheet is included in the back of this book to record the details of your own settlements.

Guards! Guards!

It's inevitable—sooner or later, the PCs will want to call upon the town guard or cause a situation where citizens do so instead. Calling for the guard requires a Diplomacy check modified by the settlement's law modifier. It's only a DC 5 check to call for the guard—with a success, the guards generally arrive on the scene in 1d6 minutes. Every 5 points by which the Diplomacy check exceeds DC 5 (rounding down) reduces the arrival time by 1 minute—if this reduces their arrival time below 1 minute, the increments of reduction instead change to 1 round. For example, Ezren is being mugged by thugs and calls for the guard. The result of his Diplomacy check is a 23, and the GM rolls a 2 on 1d6 to determine how long it'll be before the guards arrive. Since Ezren rolled three times the amount he needed, the 2-minute wait time is reduced to 8 rounds.

The Settlement Stat Block

A settlement stat block is organized as follows.

Name: The settlement's name is presented first.

Alignment and Type: A settlement's alignment is the general alignment of its citizens and government—individuals who dwell therein can still be of any alignment, but the majority of its citizens should be within one step of the settlement's overall alignment. Alignment influences a city's modifiers (see page 206). The type is the size category the settlement falls into, be it thorp, hamlet, village, town (small or large), city (small or large), or metropolis. In most cases, rules play off of a settlement's type rather than its exact population total. A settlement's type determines many of its statistics (see Table 7–36: Settlement Statistics).

Modifiers: Settlements possess six modifiers that apply to specific skill checks made in the settlement. A settlement's starting modifier values are determined by its type. This value is further adjusted by the settlement's alignment, government, qualities, and disadvantages. Note that introducing settlement modifiers to your game will somewhat increase the complexity of skill checks by adding a variable modifier each time the PCs visit a new town or city—consider the use of these modifiers an optional rule. For a list of modifiers, see page 205.

Qualities: All settlements have a certain number of qualities that further adjust their statistics—think of qualities as feats for settlements. A settlement's type determines how many qualities it can have. For a list of qualities, see page 207.

Danger: A settlement's danger value is a number that gives a general idea of how dangerous it is to live in the settlement. If you use the urban encounters charts on pages 212–213 for random encounters in your city (or any similar wandering monster chart that uses percentile dice and ranks its encounters from lowest CR to highest CR), use the modifier associated with the settlement's danger value to adjust rolls on the encounter chart. A settlement's base danger value depends on its type.

Disadvantages: Any disadvantages a settlement might be suffering from are listed on this line. A settlement can have any number of disadvantages you wish to inflict on it, although most settlements have no disadvantages. For a list of several possible disadvantages, see pages 207–208.

Government: This entry lists how the settlement is governed and ruled. The type of government a settlement follows affects its statistics (see pages 206–207).

Population: This number represents the settlement's population. Note that the exact number is flexible; a settlement's actual population can swell on market days or dwindle during winter—this number lists the average population of the settlement. Note that this number is generally used for little more than flavor—since actual population totals fluctuate, it's pointless to tether rules to this number. After the settlement's total population, a breakdown of its racial mix is listed in parentheses.

Notable NPCs: This section lists any notable NPCs who live in the city, sorted by their role in the community, followed by their name and then their alignment, gender, race, class, and level in parentheses.

Base Value and Purchase Limit: This section lists the community's base value for available magic items in gp (see pages 460–461 of the *Core Rulebook*). There is a 75% chance that any item of this value or lower can be found for sale in the community with little effort. If an item is not available, a new check to determine if the item has become available can be made in 1 week. A settlement's purchase limit is the most money a shop in the settlement can spend to purchase any single item from the PCs. If the PCs wish to sell an item worth more than a settlement's purchase limit, they'll either need to settle for a lower price, travel to a larger city, or (with the GM's permission) search for a specific buyer in the city with deeper pockets. A settlement's type sets its purchase limit.

Spellcasting: Unlike magic items, spellcasting for hire is listed separately from the town's base value, since spellcasting is limited by the level of the available spellcasters in town. This line lists the highest-level spell available for purchase from spellcasters in town. Prices for spellcasting appear on page 159 of the *Core Rulebook*. A town's base spellcasting level depends on its type.

Minor Items/Medium Items/Major Items: This line lists the number of magic items above a settlement's base value that are available for purchase. In some city stat blocks, the actual items are listed in parentheses after the die range of items available—in this case, you can use these pre-rolled

Table 7-36: Settlement Statistics

Type	Modifiers	Qualities	Danger	Base Value	Purchase Limit	Spellcasting
Thorp	–4	1	–10	50 gp	500 gp	1st
Hamlet	–2	1	–5	200 gp	1,000 gp	2nd
Village	–1	2	0	500 gp	2,500 gp	3rd
Small town	0	2	0	1,000 gp	5,000 gp	4th
Large town	0	3	5	2,000 gp	10,000 gp	5th
Small city	+1	4	5	4,000 gp	25,000 gp	6th
Large city	+2	5	10	8,000 gp	50,000 gp	7th
Metropolis	+4	6	10	16,000 gp	100,000 gp	8th

resources when the PCs first visit the city as the magic items available for sale on that visit. If the PCs return to that city at a later date, you can roll up new items as you see fit. See page 461 of the *Core Rulebook* for the number ranges determining how many items can be found in a community.



Settlement Modifiers

Life in a settlement is represented by six modifiers, each of which adjusts the use of specific skills within the city.

Corruption: Corruption measures how open a settlement's officials are to bribes, how honest its citizens are, and how likely anyone in town is to report a crime. Low corruption indicates a high level of civic honesty. A settlement's corruption modifies all Bluff checks made against city officials or guards and all Stealth checks made outside (but not inside buildings or underground).

Crime: Crime is a measure of a settlement's lawlessness. A settlement with a low crime modifier is relatively safe, with violent crimes being rare or even unknown, while a settlement with a high crime modifier is likely to have a powerful thieves' guild and a significant problem with violence. The atmosphere generated by a settlement's crime level applies as a modifier on Sense Motive checks to avoid being bluffed and to Sleight of Hand checks made to pick pockets.

Economy: A settlement's economy modifier indicates the health of its trade and the wealth of its successful citizens. A low economy modifier doesn't automatically mean the town is beset with poverty—it could merely indicate a town with little trade or one that is relatively self-sufficient. Towns with high economy modifiers always have large markets and many shops. A settlement's economy helps its citizens make money, and thus it applies as a modifier on all Craft, Perform, and Profession checks made to generate income.

Law: Law measures how strict a settlement's laws and edicts are. A settlement with a low law modifier isn't necessarily crime-ridden—in fact, a low law modifier usually indicates that the town simply has little need for



protection since crime is so rare. A high law modifier means the settlement's guards are particularly alert, vigilant, and well-organized. The more lawful a town is, the more timidly its citizens tend to respond to shows of force. A settlement's law modifier applies on Intimidate checks made to force an opponent to act friendly, Diplomacy checks against government officials, or Diplomacy checks made to call on the city guard (see sidebar).

Lore: A settlement's lore modifier measures not only how willing the citizens are to chat and talk with visitors, but also how available and accessible its libraries and sages are. A low lore modifier doesn't mean the settlement's citizens are idiots, just that they're close-mouthed or simply lack knowledge resources. A settlement's lore modifier applies on Diplomacy checks made to gather information and Knowledge checks made using the city's resources to do research when using a library.

Society: Society measures how open-minded and civilized a settlement's citizens are. A low society modifier might mean many of the citizens harbor prejudices or are overly suspicious of out-of-towners. A high society modifier means that citizens are used to diversity and unusual visitors and that they respond better to well-spoken attempts at conversation. A settlement's society modifier applies on all Disguise checks, as well as on Diplomacy checks made to alter the attitude of any non-government official.

Settlement Alignment

A settlement's alignment not only describes the community's general personality and attitude, but also influences its modifiers. A lawful component to a settlement's alignment increases its law modifier by 1. A good component increases its society modifier by 1. A chaotic component increases its crime modifier by 1. An evil component increases its corruption modifier by 1. A neutral component increases its lore modifier by 1 (a truly neutral city gains an increase of 2 to its lore modifier). Alignment never modifies a settlement's economy modifier.

Settlement Government

Just like nations, towns and cities are ruled by governments. A settlement's government not only helps to establish

the flavor and feel of the community but also adjusts its modifiers. Choose one of the following as the settlement's government.

Autocracy: A single individual chosen by the people rules the community. This leader's actual title can vary—mayor, burgomaster, lord, or even royal titles like duke or prince are common. (*No modifiers*)

Council: A group of councilors, often composed of guild masters or members of the aristocracy, leads the settlement. (*Society +4; Law and Lore –2*)

Magical: An individual or group with potent magical power, such as a high priest, an archwizard, or even a magical monster, leads the community. (*Lore +2; Corruption and Society –2; increase spellcasting by 1 level*)

Overlord: The community's ruler is a single individual who either seized control or inherited command of the settlement. (*Corruption and Law +2; Crime and Society –2*)

Secret Syndicate: An unofficial or illegal group like a thieves' guild rules the settlement—they may use a puppet leader to maintain secrecy, but the group members pull the strings in town. (*Corruption, Economy, and Crime +2; Law –6*)

Settlement Qualities

Settlements often have unusual qualities that make them unique. Listed below are several different qualities that can further modify a community's statistics. A settlement's type determines how many qualities it can have—once a quality is chosen, it cannot be changed.

Note that many of the following qualities adjust a town's base value or purchase limit by a percentage of the town's standard values. If a town has multiple qualities of this sort, add together the percentages from modifiers and then increase the base value by that aggregated total—do not apply the increases one at a time.

Academic: The settlement possesses a school, training facility, or university of great renown. (*Lore +1, increase spellcasting by 1 level*)

Holy Site: The settlement hosts a shrine, temple, or landmark with great significance to one or more religions. The settlement has a higher percentage of divine spellcasters in its population. (*Corruption –2; increase spellcasting by 2 levels*)

Insular: The settlement is isolated, perhaps physically or even spiritually. Its citizens are fiercely loyal to one another. (*Law +1; Crime –1*)

Magically Attuned: The settlement is a haven for spellcasters due to its location; for example, it may lie at the convergence of multiple ley lines or near a well-known magical site. (*Increase base value by 20%; increase purchase limit by 20%; increase spellcasting by 2 levels*)

Notorious: The settlement has a reputation (deserved or not) for being a den of iniquity. Thieves, rogues, and cutthroats are much more common here. (*Crime +1; Law –1; Danger +10; increase base value by 30%; increase purchase limit by 50%*)

Table 7-37: Available Magic Items

Community Size	Base Value	Minor	Medium	Major
Thorp	50 gp	1d4 items	—	—
Hamlet	200 gp	1d6 items	—	—
Village	500 gp	2d4 items	1d4 items	—
Small town	1,000 gp	3d4 items	1d6 items	—
Large town	2,000 gp	3d4 items	2d4 items	1d4 items
Small city	4,000 gp	4d4 items	3d4 items	1d6 items
Large city	8,000 gp	4d4 items	3d4 items	2d4 items
Metropolis	16,000 gp	*	4d4 items	3d4 items

* In a metropolis, nearly all minor magic items are available.

Pious: The settlement is known for its inhabitants' good manners, friendly spirit, and deep devotion to a deity (this deity must be of the same alignment as the community). (*Increase spellcasting by 1 level; any faith more than one alignment step different than the community's official religion is at best unwelcome and at worst outlawed—obvious worshipers of an outlawed deity must pay 150% of the normal price for goods and services and may face mockery, insult, or even violence*)

Prosperous: The settlement is a popular hub for trade. Merchants are wealthy and the citizens live well. (*Economy +1; increase base value by 30%; increase purchase limit by 50%*)

Racially Intolerant: The community is prejudiced against one or more races, which are listed in parentheses. (*Members of the unwelcome race or races must pay 150% of the normal price for goods and services and may face mockery, insult, or even violence*)

Rumormongering Citizens: The settlement's citizens are nosy and gossipy to a fault—very little happens in the settlement that no one knows about. (*Lore +1; Society –1*)

Strategic Location: The settlement sits at an important crossroads or alongside a deepwater port, or it serves as a barrier to a pass or bridge. (*Economy +1; increase base value by 10%*)

Superstitious: The community has a deep and abiding fear of magic and the unexplained, but this fear has caused its citizens to become more supportive and loyal to each other and their settlement. (*Crime –4; Law and Society +2; reduce spellcasting by 2 levels*)

Tourist Attraction: The settlement possesses some sort of landmark or event that draws visitors from far and wide. (*Economy +1; increase base value by 20%*)

Settlement Disadvantages

Just as a settlement can have unusual qualities to enhance its statistics, it can also suffer from disadvantages. There's

no limit to the number of disadvantages a community can suffer, but most do not have disadvantages, since a settlement plagued by disadvantages for too long eventually collapses. A disadvantage can arise as the result of an event or action taken by a powerful or influential NPC or PC. Likewise, by going on a quest or accomplishing a noteworthy deed, a group of heroes can remove a settlement's disadvantage. Several disadvantages are listed below.

Anarchy: The settlement has no leaders—this type of community is often short-lived and dangerous. (*Replaces settlement's Government and removes Government adjustments to modifiers; Corruption and Crime +4; Economy and Society –4; Law –6; Danger +20*)

Cursed: Some form of curse afflicts the city. Its citizens might be prone to violence or suffer ill luck, or they could be plagued by an infestation of pests. (*Choose one modifier and reduce its value by 4*)

Hunted: A powerful group or monster uses the city as its hunting ground. Citizens live in fear and avoid going out on the streets unless necessary. *(Economy, Law, and Society –4; Danger +20; reduce base value by 20%)*

Impoverished: Because of any number of factors, the settlement is destitute. Poverty, famine, and disease run rampant. (*Corruption and Crime +1; decrease base value and purchase limit by 50%; halve magic item availability*)

Plagued: The community is suffering from a protracted contagion or malady. (*–2 to all modifiers; reduce base value by 20%; select a communicable disease—there's a 5% chance each day that a PC is exposed to the disease and must make a Fortitude save to avoid contracting the illness*)

Sample Settlements

While it's nice to be prepared, and planning out cities can be fun in and of itself, it's not always possible to generate specific settlement stat blocks for every town and city that the PCs might visit. Sometimes the PCs decide to venture off in search of supplies instead of heading straight for the next dungeon, other times they make selling their newly acquired loot their highest priority. The following sample settlements are designed for precisely such occasions. Rather than a specific name, each of these sample settlements bears a generic title that indicates what kind of settlement it is or where it might be located.

CAPITAL CITY

N large city

Corruption +0; **Crime** +2; **Economy** +5; **Law** +2; **Lore** +5; **Society** +2

Qualities academic, holy site, prosperous, strategic location, tourist attraction

Danger +10

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government autocracy

Population 18,000 (14,000 humans; 1,000 dwarves; 1,000 halflings; 500 elves; 1,500 other)

Notable NPCs

Captain of the Guard Jiranda Hollis (LN female human fighter 5)

High Priest Fallor Pollux (LG male human cleric 10)

Lord Mayor Alton Ralderac (N male human aristocrat 4)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 12,800 gp; **Purchase Limit** 75,000 gp; **Spellcasting** 9th

Minor Items 4d4; **Medium Items** 3d4; **Major Items** 2d4

CITY OF THIEVES

CN small city

Corruption +3; **Crime** +5; **Economy** +4; **Law** –6; **Lore** +3; **Society** +1

Qualities academic, notorious, racially intolerant (halflings), tourist attraction

Danger +15

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government secret syndicate

Population 10,000 (6,000 humans; 1,500 halflings; 1,000 half-orcs; 750 dwarves; 750 other)

Notable NPCs

Crimelord Kamus Rix (NE male half-orc fighter 2/rogue 6)

Headmistress of the Wizards' Academy Alamandra Talais (N female human wizard 13)

Puppet Mayor Pavo Tumbor (LE male human aristocrat 2)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 6,000 gp; **Purchase Limit** 37,500 gp; **Spellcasting** 7th

Minor Items 4d4; **Medium Items** 3d4; **Major Items** 1d6

CITY-STATE OF INTRIGUE

LE metropolis

Corruption +7; **Crime** +5; **Economy** +2; **Law** +0; **Lore** +5; **Society** +1

Qualities holy site, notorious, prosperous, rumormongering citizens, strategic location, superstitious

Danger +20; **Disadvantages** anarchy

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government anarchy

Population 55,000 (31,000 humans; 10,000 halflings; 8,000 elves; 2,000 half-elves; 1,000 gnomes; 3,000 other)

Notable NPCs

Backbiting Socialite Viviana Dartmoor (LE female human aristocrat 4/sorcerer 3)

Powerless Queen-Regent Cordella I (NG female human aristocrat 3)

Social Critic Narcil Sharptongue (CN male half-elf bard 6)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 27,200 gp; **Purchase Limit** 200,000 gp; **Spellcasting** 8th

Minor Items all available; **Medium Items** 4d4; **Major Items** 3d4

CREEPY BACKWOODS HAMLET

NE hamlet

Corruption +1; **Crime** –5; **Economy** –2; **Law** +1; **Lore** –1; **Society** –8

Qualities insular

Danger –5; **Disadvantages** cursed

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government overlord

Population 23 (23 humans)

Notable NPCs

Patriarch Father Humms (CE male human ranger 3)

Village Idiot Junior Humms (CN male human barbarian 1)

Witch Mother Twixt (NE female human adept 4)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 200 gp; **Purchase Limit** 1,000 gp; **Spellcasting** 2nd

Minor Items 1d6; **Medium Items** —; **Major Items** —

DWARVEN TRADE TOWN

LG large town

Corruption +0; **Crime** +0; **Economy** +2; **Law** –1; **Lore** –2; **Society** +5

Qualities pious, prosperous, strategic location

Danger +5

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government council

Population 2,500 (2,000 dwarves; 400 humans; 100 other)

Notable NPCs

Forgefather Gundar Dorgrun (LG male dwarf cleric 12)

Guildsmistress Bilda Keldam (LN female dwarf aristocrat 3/expert 3)

Militia Captain Karnag Thosk (NG male dwarf fighter 4)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 2,800 gp; **Purchase Limit** 15,000 gp; **Spellcasting** 6th

Minor Items 3d4; **Medium Items** 2d4; **Major Items** 1d4

ELVEN TOWN

CG small town

Corruption –2; **Crime** +1; **Economy** +0; **Law** +0; **Lore** +2; **Society** –1

Qualities magically attuned, racially intolerant (dwarves, half-orcs, humans)

Danger +0

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government magical

Population 1,300 (1,000 elves; 100 gnomes; 100 half-elves; 100 other)

Notable NPCs

Archwizard Talandrel Illarion (NG male elf wizard 14)

Dungsweeper Hrak (CG male half-orc druid 4)

Famous Thief The Crimson Rose (CN female half-elf rogue 7)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 1,200 gp; **Purchase Limit** 6,000 gp; **Spellcasting** 7th

Minor Items 3d4; **Medium Items** 1d6; **Major Items** —

FAILING FISHING VILLAGE

LN village

Corruption +0; **Crime** –4; **Economy** –1; **Law** +2; **Lore** +1; **Society** +0

Qualities rumormongering citizens, superstitious

Danger +0; **Disadvantages** impoverished

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government autocracy

Population 70 (63 humans, 6 halflings, 1 half-elf)

Notable NPCs

Mayor Tanner Basken (LG male human expert 3)

Sheriff Ira Skeen (LN female human fighter 1/ranger 3)

Soothsayer the Beachcomber (N male human druid 2)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 250 gp; **Purchase Limit** 1,250 gp; **Spellcasting** 1st

Minor Items 1d4; **Medium Items** 1d2; **Major Items** —

SLEEPY CROSSROADS THORP

NG thorp

Corruption –4; **Crime** –4; **Economy** –4; **Law** –6; **Lore** –5; **Society** 1

Qualities strategic location

Danger –10

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government council

Population 16 (13 humans, 2 halflings, 1 dwarf)

Notable NPCs

Landlord and Innkeeper Jaycen Halls (NG female human bard 4)

Smith Erlan Urnst (LN male dwarf expert 4/warrior 1)

Trading Post Owner Mr. Harlen Gnoat (NE male human expert 2)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 55 gp; **Purchase Limit** 500 gp; **Spellcasting** 1st

Minor Items 1d4; **Medium Items** —; **Major Items** —



Urban Toolbox

Whether as a place to rest between adventures or the setting of an entire campaign, cities offer the PCs a vast number of options and the potential to draw unanticipated elements into a campaign. Whether the GM is designing an entirely new community, adding details to an existing city, or adding new elements on the fly, the following tables can help better describe and define the next urban adventure.

Table 7-38: Unique City Decorations

d%	Decoration
1–3	Six-headed gargoyle fountain
4–6	Two huge feet, all that remains of a toppled statue
7–9	Iron column 20 feet high
10–12	Ancient, decaying elm tree
13–15	Large bathing pool fed by lion-faced outflows
16–18	Hot spring with a marble statue of a white dragon rising from its center
19–21	Three bronze horsemen looking west
22–24	Roadside shrine to a local saint
25–27	Bust of the local mayor
28–30	Gilded statue of the sun goddess
31–33	A stone carving of the god of magic standing over 20 feet tall
34–36	Black stone pyramid 10 feet high
37–39	Huge weathered sphinx
40–42	Line of 20 stylized stone faces
43–45	Bronze colossus of the city's patron god
46–48	Marble statue commemorating a local hero, showing him on a chariot pulled by eight white chargers
49–51	Fresco depicting a natural disaster
52–54	Three trees intertwined to create a crude throne
55–57	Golden orb on a plinth held aloft by stone rocs
58–60	Ancient, weathered statue of a mysterious woman in otherworldly garb
61–63	Stone platform jutting from the roof of the tallest building from which criminals are thrown
64–66	Small, bronze courtyard fountain
67–69	Street fountain and watering trough
70–72	Statue of a dwarf riding a griffon
73–75	Washing fountain decorated with carved oak leaves
76–78	Fountain held aloft by eight lions
79–81	Alley with 100 fountains
82–84	Fountain depicting six seahorses
85–87	Weathered dolmen
88–90	Sarcophagus carved with one-eyed crows
91–93	Stone altar
94–96	Marble statue of a scholar instructing a trio of admiring students
97–99	Retired guillotine
100	Large metal copy of a holy book; a novice turns the page each day with a key

Table 7-39: Shop Names

d%	Shop
1–2	Jabe, Mulwithickle, and Fayeid, Tea Merchants
3–4	Sacril's Tobacconist
5–6	The Swordsharp Man
7–8	Hatter's Halberds
9–10	Whittlewood's Grocery Emporium
11–12	J.E. Jebs and Sons, Undertakers
13–14	Quottle and Partners, Quality Distillers and Alchemists
15–16	Urah Quell Brewers
17–18	H.R. Lobb and Daughter, Antiquarian Maps and Tomes
19–20	Jogg's Butchers
21–22	Alanna's Answers, Full Service Divination
23–24	Peppermint Palace Pastries
25–26	The Crow's Nest Ropes and Rigging
27–28	Hugor's Statuary and Memoria
29–30	Tuttle and Weft, Ladies' Quality Garments
31–32	The Wine Warehouse
33–34	Dor and Totter Junkyard
35–36	Cakran, March, and Spade's Spices from Far Shores
37–38	Dobber Cartwright's Carts, Carriages, and Coaches
39–40	Milk and Dairy Farmers' Hall
41–42	Elnore's Copy Shop, Skilled in Five Languages!
43–44	The Shark Tooth Seller
45–46	Manem's, Jewelers by Royal Appointment for 400 Years
47–48	Yuran's Knife and Blade Sharpening Shop
49–50	Lavender and Perfumes
51–52	Murran's Self-Defense Academy
53–54	Dorrie's House of Discreet Delights
55–56	Urgin's Hair and Tooth Removal
57–58	Warred's Perfumery and Incense Emporium
59–60	Dokk and Gyorgi, Royal Wig Makers
61–62	Told's Tannery and Leather Goods Warehouse
63–64	Mother Cotter's, Seamstress
65–66	Trackady's Curios and Components
67–68	Artham's Runners, Linkboys, and Messenger Firm
69–70	Hardware, Metalware, and Household Emporium
71–72	The Sealing Wax Company
73–74	Grig's Hourglass Bazaar
75–76	The Flea Market
77–78	J.M. Wortley's Healer and Chirurgery Suppliers
79–80	Optical Objects Trading House
81–82	P.P. Partwill's Weapons and Wares
83–84	Purple Crescent Puppet Theater
85–86	The Portable Ram Shop
87–88	The Oil and Coal Barrow
89–90	J. Hartlin's Snuff Shop
91–92	Maps by Maurice
93–94	Books, Tomes, and Ledgers
95–96	Wood Paneling by Mennel Doorbry
97–98	Gentleman's Furnishing Entrepot
99–100	Three Coppers Secondhand Goods

Table 7-40: 100 City Locations

d%	Location
1	**Abattoir:** slaughterhouse
2	**Abbey:** large religious building
3	**Alchemist:** shop specializing in alchemical items
4	**Amphitheater:** large open air stadium
5	**Apiary:** collection of beehives for production of honey
6	**Apothecary:** the business premises of a medical man
7	**Aqueduct:** channel to move and deliver water
8	**Arboretum:** garden for exotic plants
9	**Arena:** stadium for sports and other entertainments
10	**Armory:** military building housing weapons and armor
11	**Asylum:** hospital for the treatment of the mentally ill
12	**Aviary:** building housing rare or useful birds
13	**Baker:** workroom or shop selling baked goods
14	**Bandstand:** open-air stage for concerts
15	**Bank:** secure building for the storage of valuables
16	**Barber:** business offering haircutting and dentistry
17	**Barn:** agricultural storage building
18	**Barracks:** military building housing soldiers
19	**Basilica:** religious meeting place
20	**Bazaar:** type of market
21	**Bathhouse:** building for public bathing and cleansing
22	**Blacksmith:** shop for worked metal goods
23	**Brewery:** building used to manufacture beer and ale
24	**Bridge:** structure connecting two separate areas
25	**Brothel:** building housing prostitutes
26	**Bullring:** arena for bullfighting
27	**Butcher:** workshop for the killing and cutting of meat
28	**Canal:** man-made watercourse
29	**Carpenter:** workshop where wood is worked
30	**Cartographer:** shop where maps are sold
31	**Castle:** large defensive structure
32	**Cathedral:** huge center of worship
33	**Chapel:** small religious building
34	**Church:** place of worship
35	**Cistern:** artificial reservoir
36	**Citadel:** fortress for protecting a large settlement
37	**Coaching House:** superior inn specializing in customers traveling by coach
38	**Convent:** religious establishment housing nuns
39	**Cottage:** small residence
40	**Courthouse:** official building for the judgement of law
41	**Crematorium:** building for the disposal of dead bodies
42	**Distillery:** building used to manufacture liquor and spirits
43	**Docks:** point of embarkation and unloading for ships
44	**Dump:** area for the disposal of garbage
45	**Drying Room:** building used to dry fish, meat, and so on
46	**Embassy:** official representative of a foreign nation
47	**Exchange:** place where traders meet to buy and sell
48	**Flea Market:** market specializing in secondhand goods
49	**Folly:** building made purely for decorative purposes
50	**Forum:** public meeting place
51	**Fortress:** large fortified military building
52	**Gaol:** prison or jail
53	**Garden:** space for growing flowers, vegetables, and so on
54	**Gatehouse:** defensive structure built around a gate
55	**Granary:** storehouse for grain or animal feed
56	**Graveyard:** place where the dead are buried
57	**Hippodrome:** stadium for horse or chariot racing
58	**Hospice:** guesthouse for travelers
59	**Hospital:** place where the sick are treated
60	**Horse Mill:** horse-powered mill for grinding grain
61	**Inn:** house providing food and lodging
62	**Keep:** defensive structure often built as part of a castle
63	**Library:** building housing a collection of written texts
64	**Lighthouse:** towering light used to warn ships of danger
65	**Longhouse:** timber structure used as a meeting place
66	**Magic Shop:** shop for the sale and trade of magic items
67	**Manor:** large residential building
68	**Manse:** large residential house
69	**Market Square:** communal area for commerce
70	**Menagerie:** collection of exotic animals
71	**Mint:** building where official money is made
72	**Monastery:** building where a religious community lives
73	**Museum:** building housing objects of historical interest
74	**Pagoda:** multi-tiered tower with overhanging eaves
75	**Palace:** opulent home of rich and important local people
76	**Park:** open space set aside instead of being developed, often landscaped and sometimes public
77	**Pawnbroker:** shop that exchanges money for items
78	**Pigpen:** agricultural building for raising pigs
79	**Plaza:** open urban public space
80	**Poorhouse:** place where the destitute are forced to work for room and board
81	**Pyramid:** massive pyramidal tomb
82	**Rectory:** home of a religious minister or cleric
83	**Shanty/Slum:** a badly built or maintained structure
84	**Smokehouse:** building for smoking meats
85	**Souk:** market and neutral ground
86	**Square:** open public space
87	**Stable:** shelter for horses and mounts
88	**Tannery:** workshop where leather is made
89	**Tavern:** premises selling alcohol
90	**Temple:** place of religious worship
91	**Tenement:** building made up of several smaller residential units
92	**Theater:** building used for the performance of plays
93	**Tower:** tall structure with multiple levels
94	**Town Hall:** administrative center of a district or town
95	**Townhouse:** superior urban residence
96	**University:** center for education
97	**Vomitorium:** passage from an amphitheater or stadium
98	**Warehouse:** large building used for bulk storage
99	**Water Mill:** mill powered by flowing water
100	**Windmill:** wind-powered mill, often for making flour

Table 7-41: Arena

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–5	1 ettercap	3	*Bestiary* 129
6–11	1 lion	3	*Bestiary* 193
12–15	1 ogre	3	*Bestiary* 220
16–22	1 minotaur	4	*Bestiary* 206
23–27	1 tiger	4	*Bestiary* 265
28–29	1 yeti	4	*Bestiary* 287
30–33	1d4 giant mantises	5	*Bestiary* 200
34–37	1d6 sahuagins	5	*Bestiary* 239
38–42	1d4 giant scorpions	5	*Bestiary* 242
43–45	1 troll	5	*Bestiary* 268
46–50	1d6 wolverines	5	*Bestiary* 279
51–55	1d6 worgs	5	*Bestiary* 280
56–57	1 basilisk	5	*Bestiary* 29
58–59	1d4 centaurs	5	*Bestiary* 42
60–61	1 wood golem	6	*Bestiary* 164
62–68	1 girallon	6	*Bestiary* 154
69–73	1d4 owlbears	6	*Bestiary* 224
74–77	1d4 rhinoceroses	6	*Bestiary* 235
78–81	1d8 prisoners	6	see page 272
82–83	1d4 dire lions	7	*Bestiary* 193
84–87	1 gorgon	8	*Bestiary* 165
88–92	1d4 lamias	8	*Bestiary* 186
93–98	1d6 gladiators	8	see page 264
99–100	1 champion	9	see page 265

Table 7-42: Castle/Estate

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–5	1 squire	1/3	see page 270
6–11	1d4 noble scions	4	see page 290
12–17	1d6 guards	4	see page 262
18–20	1 medium	4	see page 301
21–26	1 minstrel	5	see page 275
27–31	1d6 guard officers	6	see page 263
32–34	1 holy warrior	6	see page 271
35–41	1 princess	6	see page 294
42–43	1 watch captain	6	see page 263
44–46	1d4 cavalry	7	see page 289
47–52	1 knight	7	see page 291
53–54	1 mayor	8	see page 308
55–58	1 merchant prince	9	see page 287
59–63	1d4 priests	10	see page 307
64–68	1 celebrity bard	10	see page 275
69–71	1 general	10	see page 289
72–74	1 guild master	10	see page 269
75–77	1 queen	10	see page 295
78–82	1 saint	11	see page 271
83–88	1d6 nobles	11	see page 291
89–92	1 captain	11	see page 297
93–95	1 sage	11	see page 299
96–98	1 high priest	12	see page 307
99–100	1 king	14	see page 295

Table 7-43: Menagerie/Museum

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–3	1d8 skeletons	1	*Bestiary* 250
4–8	1 animated object	3	*Bestiary* 14
9–14	1 giant mantis	3	*Bestiary* 200
15–19	1d4 pseudodragons	3	*Bestiary* 229
20–24	1 unicorn	3	*Bestiary* 269
25–30	1 dire wolverine	4	*Bestiary* 279
31–35	1 griffon	4	*Bestiary* 168
36–39	1 tiger	4	*Bestiary* 265
40–42	1 mummy	5	*Bestiary* 210
43–45	1d4 cockatrices	5	*Bestiary* 48
46–50	1 giant frilled lizard	5	*Bestiary* 194
51–55	1 manticore	5	*Bestiary* 199
56–61	1d4 pegasi	5	*Bestiary* 225
62–64	1d6 iron cobras	5	*Bestiary* 182
65–67	1d6 skeletal champions	5	*Bestiary* 252
68–72	1d4 owlbears	6	*Bestiary* 224
73–75	1d4 rhinoceroses	6	*Bestiary* 235
76–82	1 chimera	7	*Bestiary* 44
83–84	1 behir	8	*Bestiary* 34
85–87	1 gorgon	8	*Bestiary* 165
88–91	1d4 elephants	9	*Bestiary* 128
92–95	1d6 girallons	9	*Bestiary* 154
96–98	1 clay golem	10	*Bestiary* 159
99–100	1 iron golem	13	*Bestiary* 162

Table 7-44: Rooftop

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–4	1 tiefling	1/2	*Bestiary* 264
5–7	1 cannibal	1/2	see page 308
8–13	1d4 dogs	1/2	*Bestiary* 87
14–19	1 drunkard	1	see page 305
20–24	1 doomsayer	1	see page 300
25–27	1 storyteller	1	see page 274
28–33	1 doppelganger	2	*Bestiary* 89
34–39	1 werewolf	2	*Bestiary* 198
40–44	1d6 bandits	2	see page 260
45–49	1d4 giant spiders	3	*Bestiary* 258
50–52	1d4 street thugs	3	see page 267
53–55	1d4 vagabonds	3	see page 293
56–61	1 shadow	3	*Bestiary* 245
62–65	1 giant eagle	3	*Bestiary* 118
66–72	1d4 burglars	4	see page 267
73–77	1d6 cultists	4	see page 280
78–81	1d6 dark creepers	5	*Bestiary* 53
82–84	1d6 rat swarms	5	*Bestiary* 232
85–87	1d4 dark stalkers	6	*Bestiary* 54
88–91	1d6 gargoyles	7	*Bestiary* 137
92–93	1 ghost	7	*Bestiary* 144
94–96	1 rakshasa	10	*Bestiary* 231
97–98	1 bandit lord	11	see page 261
99–100	1 cult leader	11	see page 281

Table 7-45: Sewer

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–5	1 bat swarm	2	*Bestiary* 30
6–10	1 wererat	2	*Bestiary* 197
11–13	1 rust monster	3	*Bestiary* 238
14–19	2d6 dire rats	3	*Bestiary* 232
20–23	1 gelatinous cube	3	*Bestiary* 138
24–28	1d4 goblin dogs	3	*Bestiary* 157
29–30	1 ooze mephit	3	*Bestiary* 203
31–34	1 centipede swarm	4	*Bestiary* 43
35–41	1d4 rat swarms	4	*Bestiary* 232
42–43	1d4 chokers	4	*Bestiary* 45
44–46	1d6 giant frogs	4	*Bestiary* 135
47–51	1 gray ooze	4	*Bestiary* 166
52–55	1 hydra	4	*Bestiary* 178
56–62	1 otyugh	4	*Bestiary* 223
63–67	1d6 crocodiles	5	*Bestiary* 51
68–72	1 gibbering mouther	5	*Bestiary* 153
73–76	1 ochre jelly	5	*Bestiary* 218
77–79	1d8 giant leeches	6	*Bestiary* 187
80–82	1 black pudding	7	*Bestiary* 35
83–85	1 flesh golem	7	*Bestiary* 160
86–89	1d6 leech swarms	7	*Bestiary* 187
90–94	1d4 chuuls	9	*Bestiary* 46
95–98	1 dire crocodile	9	*Bestiary* 51
99–100	1 froghemoth	13	*Bestiary* 136

Table 7-46: Slum

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–6	1 pickpocket	1/2	see page 264
7–9	1 barmaid	1/2	see page 302
10–14	1 drunkard	1	see page 303
15–19	1 beggar	1	see page 300
20–23	1d6 dire rats	1	*Bestiary* 232
24–26	1d4 tieflings	1	*Bestiary* 264
27–33	1d6 dogs	1	*Bestiary* 87
34–39	2d4 cats	1	*Bestiary* 131
40–42	1 wanderer	2	see page 290
43–44	1 burglar	2	see page 265
45–51	1 rat swarm	2	*Bestiary* 232
52–56	1d6 tengus	2	*Bestiary* 263
57–59	1 storyteller	2	see page 272
60–65	1d4 prostitutes	3	see page 301
66–68	1 dealer	3	see page 301
69–70	1 shadow	3	*Bestiary* 245
71–74	1d4 doomsayers	3	see page 298
75–79	2d4 bandits	3	see page 258
80–81	1 turnkey	3	see page 271
82–87	1 barkeep	3	see page 303
88–90	1d6 street thugs	4	see page 265
91–95	1d4 wererats	4	*Bestiary* 197
96–98	1 fortune teller	5	see page 299
99–100	1d6 cultists	5	see page 278

Table 7-47: Tavern

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–5	1 village idiot	1/3	see page 308
6–10	1 squire	1/3	see page 268
11–15	1 barmaid	1/2	see page 302
16–18	1 pickpocket	1/2	see page 264
19–22	1 farmer	1/2	see page 309
23–27	1d4 foot soldiers	1	see page 286
28–32	1 storyteller	1	see page 272
33–36	1 prostitute	1	see page 301
37–39	1 shopkeep	1	see page 284
40–43	1d6 shipmates	2	see page 294
44–51	1d4 drunkards	3	see page 303
52–57	1d4 vagabonds	3	see page 291
58–60	1 barkeep	3	see page 303
61–62	1 trapper	3	see page 276
63–65	1 guard officer	3	see page 261
66–67	1 dealer	3	see page 301
68–70	1 turnkey	3	see page 271
71–76	1d6 guards	4	see page 260
77–80	1 fortune teller	5	see page 299
81–84	1 minstrel	5	see page 273
85–89	1 traveling merchant	5	see page 285
90–94	1 sellsword	7	see page 283
95–97	1 first mate	8	see page 295
98–100	1 celebrity bard	10	see page 273

Table 7-48: Thieves' Guild

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–4	1d4 pickpockets	1	see page 264
5–9	1 street thug	1	see page 265
10–14	1d6 bandits	2	see page 258
15–18	1d6 tieflings	2	*Bestiary* 264
19–21	1 dark creeper	2	*Bestiary* 53
22–25	1d4 prostitutes	3	see page 301
26–28	1 dealer	3	see page 301
29–32	1 slaver	3	see page 266
33–37	Acid arrow trap	3	*Core Rulebook* 420
38–43	1d8 tengus	3	*Bestiary* 263
44–48	Wall scythe trap	4	*Core Rulebook* 420
49–52	1 mimic	4	*Bestiary* 205
53–56	Electricity arc trap	4	*Core Rulebook* 420
57–60	1 tomb raider	5	see page 275
61–68	1d8 burglars	6	see page 265
69–73	Flame strike trap	6	*Core Rulebook* 421
74–76	1d4 dark stalkers	6	*Bestiary* 54
77–80	1 medusa	7	*Bestiary* 201
81–85	1d4 highwaymen	8	see page 259
86–90	Shocking floor trap	9	*Core Rulebook* 421
91–94	1 rakshasa	10	*Bestiary* 231
95–97	1 guild master	11	see page 267
98–99	1 bandit lord	11	see page 259
100	1 pirate captain	11	see page 281

Water

Water is both a great enabler and great destroyer of civilization. Life can't exist without it. Trade and travel are made much easier by its presence. Yet water can also kill, from drowning on a personal level to floods and tsunamis on a mass scale. Terrestrial life is dependent on water but at the same time fears it, as evidenced by tales as old as the sea itself, of monsters and the hideous fates that await travelers who dare to sail out of sight of land. What better place to set an adventure than on a twisting river, upon the high seas, or deep in the briny world below?

Aquatic Adventures

An aquatic adventure can take place anywhere that water is the primary terrain feature. This includes marshlands, rivers, lakes, pools, oceans, the Plane of Water, and the like. Aquatic adventures don't require the PCs to have the ability to breathe water, of course—the inclusion of water hazards for lower-level adventurers to navigate can add a nice bit of suspense and peril to an adventure.

Adapting to Aquatic Environments

The rules presented in the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* for underwater combat apply to creatures not native to this dangerous environment, such as most PCs. For extended aquatic adventures or for particularly deep explorations, PCs will doubtless need to use magic to continue their adventures. *Water breathing* is of obvious use, while *endure elements* can help with temperature. Pressure damage can be avoided entirely with effects such as *freedom of movement*. Polymorph spells are perhaps the most useful in water, though, if the form assumed is aquatic in nature.

Natural Adaptation: Any creature that has the aquatic subtype can breathe water easily and is unaffected by water temperature extremes that are found in that creature's typical environment. Aquatic creatures and creatures with the hold breath ability are much more resistant to pressure damage; they do not suffer damage from pressure unless they are moved instantaneously from one depth to another in the blink of an eye (in which case they adapt to the pressure change after successfully making five successive Fortitude saves against the pressure effects).

Nautical Adventures

Water can also provide the setting for a different and unique game experience—the nautical adventure. In such a scenario, the effects and dangers of underwater adventuring are replaced by surface hazards as the PCs and their opponents use vehicles like ships and boats to navigate the terrain. For the most part, shipboard adventures can be resolved normally, with a combat taking place aboard a ship functioning almost identically to one that occurs on land. If the combat happens during a storm or in heavy seas, treat the ship's deck as difficult terrain. Remember to take into account the effects on spellcasters' concentration checks due to weather or the motion of the ship's deck (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 206–207).

Fast-Play Ship Combat

When ships themselves become a part of a combat, things get more unusual. The following rules are not meant to accurately simulate all of the complexities of ship-to-ship combat, only to provide you with a quick and easy set of rules to resolve such situations when they inevitably arise in a nautical adventure, whether it be a battle between two ships or between a ship and a sea monster.

Preparation: Decide what type of ships are involved in the combat (see Table 7–49: Ship Statistics). Use a large, blank battle mat to represent the waters on which the battle occurs. A single square corresponds to 30 feet of distance. Represent each ship by placing markers that take up the appropriate number of squares (miniature toy ships make great markers and should be available at most hobby stores).

Starting Combat: When combat begins, allow the PCs (and important NPC allies) to roll initiative as normal—the ship itself moves and attacks on the captain's initiative result. If any of the ships in the battle rely on sails to move, randomly determine what direction the wind is blowing by rolling 1d8 and following the guidelines for missed splash weapons (*Core Rulebook* 202).

Movement: On the captain's initiative count, the ship can move its current speed in a single round as a move-equivalent action for the captain (or double its speed as a full-round action), as long as it has its minimum crew complement. The ship can increase or decrease its speed by 30 feet each round, up to its maximum speed. Alternatively, the captain can change direction (up to one side of a square at a time) as a standard action. A ship can only change direction at the start of a turn.

Attacks: Crewmembers in excess of the ship's minimum crew requirement can be allocated to man siege engines. Rules for siege engines can be found on pages 434–436 of the *Core Rulebook*. Siege engines attack on the captain's initiative count.

A ship can also attempt to ram a target if it has its minimum crew. To ram a target, the ship must move at least 30 feet and end with its bow in a square adjacent to the target. The ship's captain then makes a Profession (sailor) check—if this check equals or exceeds the target's AC, the ship hits its target, inflicting damage as indicated on the ship statistics table to the target, as well as minimum damage to the ramming ship. A ship outfitted with an actual ram siege engine inflicts an additional 3d6 points of damage to the target (the ramming vessel suffers no additional damage).

Table 7-49: Ship Statistics

Ship Type	AC	hp	Base Save	Maximum Speed	Arms	Ram	Squares	Crew
Raft	9	10	+0	15 feet	0	1d6	1	1/4
Rowboat	9	20	+2	30 feet	0	2d6+6	1	1/3
Keelboat	8	60	+4	30 feet*	1	2d6+6	2	4/15+100
Longship	6	75	+5	60 feet*	1	4d6+18	3	50/75+100
Sailing ship	6	125	+6	60 feet* (sails only)	2	3d6+12	3	20/50+120
Warship	2	175	+7	60 feet*	3	3d6+12	4	60/80+160
Galley	2	200	+8	90 feet*	4	6d6+24	4	200/250+200

Sinking

A ship gains the sinking condition if its hit points are reduced to 0 or fewer. A sinking ship cannot move or attack, and it sinks completely 10 rounds after it gains the sinking condition. Each hit on a sinking ship that inflicts damage reduces the remaining time for it to sink by 1 round per 25 points of damage inflicted. Magic (such as *make whole*) can repair a sinking ship if the ship's hit points are raised above 0, at which point the ship loses the sinking condition. Generally, nonmagical repairs take too long to save a ship from sinking once it begins to go down.



Ship Statistics

A vast variety of boats and ships exist in the real world, from small rafts and longboats to intimidating galleons and swift galleys. To represent the numerous distinctions of shape and size that exist between water-going vessels, Table 7–49 categorizes seven standard ship sizes and their respective statistics. Just as the cultures of the real world have created and adapted hundreds of different types of seafaring vessels, races in fantasy worlds might create their own strange ships. GMs might use or alter the statistic above to suit the needs of their creations, and describe such conveyances however they please. All ships have the following traits.

Ship Type: This is a general category that lists the ship's basic type.

AC: The ship's base Armor Class. To calculate a ship's actual AC, add the captain's Profession (sailor) modifier to the ship's base AC. Touch attacks against a ship ignore the captain's modifier. A ship is never considered flat-footed.

hp: The ship's total hit points. In addition, all ships have a hardness rating based on their construction material (hardness 5 for most wooden ships). At 0 or fewer hit points, a ship gains the sinking condition as described above.

Base Save: The ship's base save modifier. All of a ship's saving throws (Fortitude, Reflex, and Will) have the same value. To determine a ship's actual saving throw modifiers, add the captain's Profession (sailor) modifier to this base value.

Maximum Speed: The ship's maximum tactical speed in combat. An asterisk indicates the ship has sails, and can move at double speed when it moves in the same direction as the wind. A ship with only sails can only move if there is some wind.

Arms: The number of siege engines (*Core Rulebook* 434–436) that can be fitted on the ship. A ram uses one of these slots, and only one ram may be fitted to a ship.

Ram: The amount of damage the ship inflicts on a successful ramming attack (without a ram siege engine).

Squares: The number of squares the ship takes up on the battle mat. A ship's width is always considered to be one square.

Crew: The first number lists the minimum crew complement the ship needs to function normally, excluding those needed to make use of the vessel's weapons. The second value lists the ship's maximum crew plus additional soldiers or passengers. A ship without its minimum crew complement can only move, change speed, change direction, or ram if its captain makes a DC 20 Profession (sailor) check. Crew in excess of the minimum have no effect on movement, but they can replace fallen crewmembers or man additional weapons.

Water Toolbox

From adventures on the open ocean or under the sea, upon uncharted coasts or in maze-like river country, the potential for peril and discovery upon the waves is endless. The tables here present not just ideas and suggestions for elements GMs might include in their aquatic encounters, but details, personalities, and destinations ready for ocean-going adventures.

Table 7-50: Undiscovered Islands

d%	Island
1–4	Island with beaches full of smooth, multi-colored glass pebbles instead of sand
5–8	Coral atoll that absorbs sunlight during the day and then glows at night
9–12	Reef ruled by warring kingdoms of sentient crabs
13–16	The rocs' graveyard
17–20	Island filled with ruined temples dedicated to forgotten gods from every corner of the world
21–24	Island almost entirely made up of old shipwrecks
25–28	Frigid island in the far north filled with countless misshapen monsters trapped within its ice
29–32	Island with many spouts and jets of colored flame
33–36	Floating island that travels wherever the wind blows
37–40	Island where sentient beings and their possessions get shrunk down to 1/60 their normal size
41–44	Iceberg topped with an ice castle
45–48	Island whose inhabitants languish in a dreamy haze from a powerful narcotic plant grown there
49–52	Island filled with huge stone idols of unknown origin and purpose
53–56	Sandy islet filled with buried skeletons that rise up and attack anyone landing on the beaches
57–60	Island of cannibal apes
61–64	Island formed from the rotting corpses of two giant dragons who crashed while locked in combat
65–68	Northern island where ice and snow have all the colors of the rainbow
69–72	Island with trees that behave like natural siege artillery, firing enormous nuts and fruit at ships passing too close to shore
73–76	Caldera with bubbling sea-geysers inside its rim
77–80	Island that is one giant cathedral
81–84	Isle of the Dead, necropolis island occasionally glimpsed by travelers
85–88	Fey island that occasionally rises from the depths of an isolated loch
89–92	Island where the ghosts of fallen stars wait until the end of the world
93–96	Island of impossibly high cliffs whose interior has never been explored
97–100	Iceberg with a ship trapped within it

Table 7-51: Pieces of Interesting Flotsam

d%	Flotsam
1–2	An empty raft
3–4	A message in a bottle
5–6	A ship in a bottle
7–8	A bloated, decaying kraken carcass
9–10	A dragon turtle shell
11–12	A ship's figurehead depicting a bloated green frog
13–14	A mermaid caught in a fisherman's net
15–16	An island of shipwrecks occupied by gargoyles
17–18	A raft with two mummies aboard
19–20	A charred oar
21–22	A coracle containing three skeletons
23–24	A rowing boat with two gibbeted corpses
25–26	The remains of a keelhauled ogre
27–28	Three dead trolls choked with seaweed
29–30	A corked, empty *potion of water breathing* vial
31–32	The remains of a howdah
33–34	A complete caravel, seemingly abandoned hastily
35–36	A corroded copper teakettle
37–38	A model clipper ship filled with lead miniatures
39–40	A wicker sofa frame with a single cushion still attached
41–42	A fire-seared totem pole
43–44	A buoy with the word "Help!" scratched on it
45–46	A clothesline, linens, and two cracked poles
47–48	A maiden's ransacked hope chest
49–50	A wooden cage filled with drowned homing pigeons
51–52	A wooden scabbard wrapped in white silk
53–54	A floating ship's nameplate: *The Lucky*
55–56	A basket bearing a single mewling kitten
57–58	A lifeboat containing hundreds of waterlogged wigs
59–60	A severed arm chained to a broken oar.
61–62	A lute with the inscription, "Let the Heavens weep"
63–64	A scroll case inscribed with the letters "SofV"
65–66	A chest filled with shards of cuneiform tablets
67–68	A wooden ship's altar defaced with a shamrock brand
69–70	An upturned leather hat occupied by a spider
71–72	A hollowed bottom of a pumpkin the size of carriage
73–74	Gulls feeding on a drying rack filled with rotten fish
75–76	A small wharf, complete with a deckchair
77–78	A wooden steeple, its bell still chiming
79–80	A washed-away bridge
81–82	A floating isle of lashed flotsam
83–84	A lobster trap, with 1d4 lobsters inside
85–86	A set of false teeth sized for a giant
87–88	A thick board hung with common carpentry tools
89–90	A copper bathtub
91–92	A healer's kit labeled "Seasickness Pills"
93–94	A pair of leathery wings
95–96	A set of man-made wings, with roc feathers attached
97–98	An inflated pig's-bladder ball
99–100	A sail with a large, perfectly round hole in its center

Table 7-52: Ghost Ships and Shipwrecks

d%	Ship Name and Description
1–2	**The Angry Drake**: a half-sized kobold warship
3–4	**The Sparrow**: a colossal axe lies buried in the hull of this ship
5–6	**The Luckless**: rotten carcasses litter the beach while broken remnants of this ship wash ashore
7–8	**The Endless**: the zombie crew of a shipwrecked ghost ship stagger in a storm
9–10	**The Vile Axe**: an orc warship lies broken on the cliffs, her vampire captain nowhere to be seen
11–12	**The Funerary Barge**: why has no one tried to retrieve the obvious gold and jewels littering this ship's deck?
13–14	**The Visitor**: some say this fey boat emerges from the tide some days, while others claim it sails on dark seas
15–16	**The Storm**: this dhow has completely broken in two, as if it was bitten in half
17–18	**The Blue Ferret**: seemingly crushed, this ship has a kraken's tentacle mummifying on its mast
19–20	**The Green Misery**: this broken ship lies strangled by ivy in a lagoon
21–22	**The Dragon's Spine**: how did the broken remnants of this caravel wash up 20 miles inland?
23–24	**The Peacock and Leopard**: this hag's ship looks like a torture chamber—is it as empty as it seems?
25–26	**The Javelin**: the charred mast suggests a lightning storm, but the log claims it happened on a clear night
27–28	**The Hogshead**: this eerily silent plague ship drifts ever closer to shore
29–30	**The Splenterwill**: this goblin frigate lies upside down on the beach
31–32	**The Night Belle**: gnawed remains indicate that the crew ate one another, but still had plenty of supplies
33–34	**The Broadsword**: mutiny tore this warship apart before her wizard captain blew it to pieces
35–36	**The Libertine**: the wreck of a harem boat occupied by hags and zombie harlots
37–38	**Urloo's Fate**: every living creature on this vessel was changed into a glass statue too fragile to move
39–40	**The Robust**: the hands and feet of every member of the crew have been nailed to the prow
41–42	**The Dalmatian**: the ghost of a wrongfully hanged sailor killed the rest of the crew and now waits for fresh victims
43–44	**The White Herald**: royals fled from the revolution but could not elude the fiend sent to slaughter them
45–46	**The Sprat**: a wide barge cursed by underwater harpies lies ruined beneath the waves
47–48	**The Crystal Ball**: fire killed the crew, but most of the ship's structure remains relatively intact, if charred
49–50	**The Graycloak**: convicts managed to take control of this prison ship, but not before the guards triggered the failsafe that trapped and sunk the ship
51–52	**The Constellation**: a collision with an iceberg left the crew of this frozen barque trapped and starving
53–54	**The Saucy Strumpet**: pirates lost a fight and the victors set them adrift after hanging the survivors
55–56	**The Broken Bough**: the ghost of the dryad whose tree became the mast haunts this flowering wreck
57–58	**The Cutlass**: nothing but clothes remain of the passengers and crew of this abandoned hooker
59–60	**The Titan**: the anchor and anchor chain refuse to move; eventually the crew abandoned ship in disgust
61–62	**The Miracle**: an enormous mimic-like creature that drifts into port and eats any crew that claims it
63–64	**My Heart's Desire**: thieves took over the local lighthouse and lured this ship into a reef
65–66	**The Foamfriend**: the crew managed to beach this ship before it sank
67–68	**Gordor's Hammer**: this warship took out two of the enemy before crashing into a third; debris from all four now mingles in an island lagoon
69–70	**The Percival**: a strange artifact might offer a clue as to how this vessel managed to crash miles from any water
71–72	**The Lightbringer**: the holy symbols on the sail didn't preserve this ship from sacrilegious pirates
73–74	**The Tider**: glimpsed through murky water, the crew are still at their posts and moving on this sunken cog
75–76	**The Wildcard**: creeping vines hint at how long this floating casino has lain abandoned on the river bank
77–78	**The Independence**: this scourge of slavers met its end through treachery in a supposedly safe harbor
79–80	**The Sandspider**: the lich who rules the island where this ship lies actually creates the treasure maps that lure so many adventuring bands to their doom
81–82	**The Cornucopia**: pleasure ship whose hull is intact, but everything inside has been eaten
83–84	**The Docent**: this menagerie transport vessel crashed onto an island now legendary for deadly beasts
85–86	**Nefas Pedimin**: this schooner, made from bones, terrorized the seas until a sorcerer broke its magic
87–88	**The Festering Vaid**: this ship is completely covered in cankerous black lichens
89–90	**The Last Laugh**: tainted food drove the crew of this pleasure yacht mad, causing most to jump overboard
91–92	**The Open Book**: the university that sponsored this vessel lost its investment when cannibals attacked
93–94	**The Glimmer**: this fishing vessel caught something with a blade, which cut the net and slaughtered the crew
95–96	**The Poniard**: the warriors laid to rest on this ship never got their proper funeral since it failed to burn
97–98	**The Twilight Eternal**: this plane-shifting galleon returned from its dimensional shortcut without its crew
99–100	**The Maltmainge Tomorrow**: still, silent crows perch upon every part of this well-preserved ship

Table 7-53: Sailors and Boatmen

d%	Name and Description
1–2	**Sing-Song Sane:** the singing ferryman who knows 100 songs; sings a different one for every passenger
3–4	**Cruel Kate:** harlot with a heart of steel; foul-mouthed whore who operates the riverboats
5–6	**Zanus the Troubadour:** poetry-quoting gnome who punts customers up and down the river
7–8	**Pike Pilkly:** the human fish, a champion swimmer rumored to have gills
9–10	**Big Dill:** strongest dockhand in the world, said to have hill giant blood in his veins
11–12	**Ancient Hubert:** the 200-year-old man, as full of stories as his mouth is empty of teeth
13–14	**Captain Rhun:** mad pirate captain (retired); only his mangy ship's dog will sit with him
15–16	**Bletko Brothers:** former acrobats, their work in the rigging is something to see
17–18	**Blind Jake:** blind old sailor who knows the rigging like the back of his hand
19–20	**Bilgewater Bully:** sailor who searches slops and bilges for lost treasure
21–22	**Hobble:** lost his legs to a shark, but says he can do anything a whole man can
23–24	**"Coffin" Janu:** morbid crewman who brings his casket with him whenever he goes to sea
25–26	**Old Bonesy:** skeleton of former shipmate no one has the heart to throw overboard
27–28	**Nassain Lastleaf:** grim elf wanderer who claims his homeland disappeared beneath the waves
29–30	**"Mister" Smarts:** 10-year-old midshipman who never hesitates to order floggings for sailors who displease him
31–32	**Brionny Fortin:** would-be mermaid who spends her off hours gazing dreamily into the depths
33–34	**Argus No-Beard:** disgraced dwarf harpooner who shaves daily but never misses his target
35–36	**Xericuse:** gloomy stargazer who spends his nights studying the skies
37–38	**Wavrin:** murderous cook who poisons selected crewmates as secret sacrifices to an evil sea god
39–40	**Lasselle:** peg-legged mutineer who blames the captain for his injury and plots a mutiny as revenge
41–42	**Kristot:** merchant logger who pilots a raft of fresh timber and trade goods downstream
43–44	**Jinit Beiderdan:** runaway bride who fled an arranged marriage to sail around the world
45–46	**Skerrit Scalesinger:** fish charmer; fish actually leap up onto the deck when he sings
47–48	**Eldrea Porto:** misguided missionary who lectures the crew and people in port about the "truth"
49–50	**Bintrin Whist:** harmonica virtuoso who earns his keep with music rather than sailing skills
51–52	**Flora Kain:** amateur naturalist who collects and preserves insects from every port of call
53–54	**"Blessed" Prig:** lucky halfling; no one ever dies so long as he remains on board
55–56	**Moira DeLang:** ship-wife who offers comfort to lonely sailors for a fee
57–58	**Dask:** half-orc brawler who takes on all comers but demands one copper from each spectator
59–60	**Ophaira Yimmer:** sarcastic puppeteer who entertains crew but negatively portrays officers
61–62	**Saladin Greel:** fearless marine who boards enemy ships with a bloody cutlass in each hand
63–64	**Samdin Garah:** half-elf spy sent by the government to investigate reports of officers abusing sailors
65–66	**Twilla Gorn:** peerless navigator who never gets lost but refuses to explain her secret
67–68	**Dravin Corst:** murderous riverman who strangles passengers with the silk cord he keeps wrapped around his pole
69–70	**"Doc" Ferrin:** amateur medic; a bankrupt tailor who learned how to stitch up his fellow sailors when he put to sea
71–72	**Great Gabwell:** huge man who looks like a pig, and eats like one too
73–74	**Starg the Survivor:** sailor who has survived no less than three keelhaulings
75–76	**Gorus Bain:** connected gondolier who knows which boats and wharves cater to which vices
77–78	**"Heartbreak" Hinsin:** sailing lothario who has a love interest in every port of call
79–80	**Argin Willster:** story-telling boatman who has an endless supply of stories about his vast family
81–82	**Voris Uld:** master carver who makes beautiful pieces of scrimshaw and wood but only while at sea
83–84	**Mesner Taim:** entrepreneurial boatman who offers a wide range of additional services to passengers
85–86	**Brenn:** exploration addict who always wants to get to a new destination
87–88	**Burlon Afarn:** joke wizard; crewmates enjoy teasing him about his imaginary magical powers and bilge rat familiar
89–90	**Labella Loor:** sneak thief who steals small valuables with her trained raven
91–92	**Shandir Zim:** plague carrier, chosen by the god of disease to spread contagion wherever he goes
93–94	**Captain Simms:** once wrestled a kraken
95–96	**Captain Flashwell:** the biggest boaster on the Seventeen Seas
97–98	**Captain Thonn:** dwarf captain with gold teeth and two hooks for hands
99–100	**Captain Z'gark:** legendary hobgoblin sea captain; not an inch of his flesh is unscarred

Table 7-54: Types of Boats and Ships

d%	Boat Type and Description
1–2	**Barge**: flat-bottomed freight boat
3–4	**Barque**: large ship with multiple masts
5–6	**Bireme**: ship with two tiers of oars
7–8	**Brig**: ship with two masts with square sails
9–10	**Canoe**: small, light boat propelled by paddles
11–12	**Caravel**: maneuverable sailing ship with multiple masts
13–14	**Carrack**: seagoing ship with three or four masts
15–16	**Clipper**: fast ship with multiple masts
17–18	**Coracle**: small wickerwork boat
19–20	**Curragh**: hide-covered version of coracle
21–22	**Cutter**: small ship with single mast
23–24	**Dhow**: coastal vessel with lateen sails
25–26	**Dinghy**: small sailing vessel
27–28	**Dory**: small, flat-bottomed fishing vessel
29–30	**Dragon boat**: long, narrow canoe
31–32	**Dugout**: canoe made from hollowed out tree trunk
33–34	**Fireboat**: firefighting boat
35–36	**Galleon**: large multi-decked sailing ship
37–38	**Galley**: large ship propelled by oars
39–40	**Gondola**: flat-bottomed boat worked by single oar
41–42	**Hooker**: sailing and fishing boat designed for high seas
43–44	**Houseboat**: boat outfitted as a floating house
45–46	**Jolly boat**: small clinker-built boat
47–48	**Junk**: flat-bottomed seagoing vessel
49–50	**Kayak**: one-man canoe with light frame
51–52	**Keelboat**: flat-bottomed river vessel
53–54	**Koch**: sailing ship designed for icy conditions
55–56	**Knaar**: seagoing merchant vessel with single mast
57–58	**Lifeboat**: boat designed to aid vessels in distress
59–60	**Longboat**: boat used to reach shore from larger vessels
61–62	**Longship**: long, narrow ship with single mast
63–64	**Lugger**: small ship with four sails
65–66	**Narrow-boat**: canal boat with narrow beam
67–68	**Pinnace**: small vessel with two masts
69–70	**Pontoon**: flat-bottomed boat used to support structures
71–72	**Punt**: flat-bottomed boat for shallow rivers
73–74	**Raft**: collection of logs fastened together
75–76	**Sampan**: small river and coastal boat
77–78	**Schooner**: small, seagoing fore-and-aft rigged vessel
79–80	**Scow**: large, flat-bottomed, square-ended boat
81–82	**Skiff**: small, light boat for rowing and sculling
83–84	**Sloop**: small, fore-and-aft rigged vessel with one mast
85–86	**Tall ship**: large, traditionally rigged sailing vessel
87–88	**Trireme**: warship with three tiers of oars
89–90	**Trawler**: vessel used for fishing with trawling net
91–92	**Warship**: ship built for combat
93–94	**Whaleboat**: ship used for hunting whales
95–96	**Windjammer**: large sailing ship with iron hull
97–98	**Yacht**: recreational boat
99–100	**Yawl**: sailing vessel with one mast

Table 7-55: Captains and Ships

d%	Captain	Ship
1–2	"Coral Mouth" Kate	*Adventurous*
3–4	"Gullmouth" Garault	*Arcadia*
5–6	"Piebald" Paultz Patches	*Avalanche*
7–8	"Ruddernack" McGee	*Bilgerat*
9–10	Ace "Birdbelly" Stogen	*Bluewater*
11–12	Aggie Gams	*Bunyip*
13–14	Amalia "Huntress" Steerwright	*Dagon's Bastard*
15–16	Anthropius “Fox” Maciason	*Emperor*
17–18	Antoine Seabourne	*Faith Wife*
19–20	Arvey Blacktongue	*Flotsam*
21–22	Bartz Boilston	*Fogbringer*
23–24	Benson the Hulled	*Gallant*
25–26	Bilge-Splash Becks	*Garland*
27–28	Bilgewater Pete	*Gestalt*
29–30	Chesk Wilverton	*Gold Fever*
31–32	Cidian Whitch	*Gorum's Hammer*
33–34	Eldam Alamansor	*Hale & Hearty*
35–36	Givvi Meanteeth	*Hangman*
37–38	Groman Flanck	*Heron*
39–40	Harval Spue	*Hook*
41–42	Higg Ribbelby	*Koriander's Wrath*
43–44	Hosk "Sevenfingers" Legrau	*Largeness*
45–46	Ijora "The Storm Seer" Ettzi	*Madeleine*
47–48	Ilana Whistler	*No News*
49–50	J. E. Ritter	*Penora's Pride*
51–52	Jivvis "Codhead" La Rupe	*Pharasma's Messenger*
53–54	Keelboat Bill	*Pinkbelly*
55–56	Kelps Muggin	*Rabid Kraken*
57–58	Lady Amyretha Quintalian	*Ravenscar*
59–60	Larz Rivengob	*Riptide*
61–62	Luthron "The Pelican" Abele	*Ruby Porpoise*
63–64	Mucks Fallahan	*Ruddy Wreck*
65–66	Myra "The Carver" Sinsashi	*Rum Runner*
67–68	Orem "Fishlips" Yenessi	*Scurvy Crab*
69–70	Papa Barnacle	*Sea Weasel*
71–72	Peg-leg Peggy Potts	*Silver Bird*
73–74	Rip Carrington	*Skora's Ire*
75–76	Rufus Longwater	*Splinter*
77–78	Sags Sureslung	*Squaller*
79–80	Shanks Guffy	*Starsail*
81–82	Sherven Twobeards	*Starsinger*
83–84	Sir Apeldine Gantry	*Sunfish*
85–86	Skriv Tentooth	*Three Sheets*
87–88	Spits Bascap	*Typhoon Lotus*
89–90	Taggart Brockson	*Undaunted*
91–92	Thalina "Sea-Bitch" Andyll	*Walrus*
93–94	Theodore the Stained	*Waterstrider*
95–96	Westin Gale	*Waveraker*
97–98	Xobost Ietzam	*Western Promise*
99–100	Zhar Slitshanks	*Winter's Bite*

Wilderness

Game Masters frequently use wilderness travel simply as a means for the PCs to get from point A to point B, with an occasional random encounter thrown in to liven up the proceedings. But the wilderness has more to offer than just a path through the wasteland and a few wandering monsters. The GM's responsibility is to bring the wilds to life. Once he has a living, breathing wilderness, the GM can start to set a variety of adventures in the wild and across the world.

What sets a wilderness adventure apart? First, the obvious answer: the terrain is more open and traversable. The party may travel through declivities, valleys, and gorges, but in general, they'll have a wider, broader range for their trek. They will not be constrained by dungeon walls or cavern tunnels, and can choose their own pathways to their destination, but with these benefits come a wide variety of additional hazards and a potential for adventure.

Climate and Weather

Any world that supports life should contain a wide range of environments: diversity in the ecosystem helps support a diversity of life, though of course a fantasy world is subject to its own governing rules of physics and ecology. Still, to maintain a believable fantasy setting, a world-builder should make some effort to ensure the world conforms to known reality: most rivers should flow downhill, toward the sea, and boiling, sunbaked deserts should not be situated next to glaciers. Use common sense when transitioning between environments to retain believability in an adventure, unless you purposely want the party to notice the abrupt transition due to some localized arcane or metaphysical phenomenon.

The GM might consider penalizing PCs for wearing inappropriate attire in various climates and terrains: increased DCs on Acrobatics checks or additional movement penalties for heavily armored PCs in bogs, for instance, or even Survival checks with increasing DCs as the party moves into ever-more inhospitable climes. Suggested encounters are listed with many of these sections.

Climate

Each of the standard terrain types varies by climate. Climate differs from weather, though it affects the weather significantly. Climate describes the generally prevailing atmospheric conditions of a particular region on a planet and usually defines the seasonal temperature extremes. Note that weather and temperature can change dramatically between terrains even within a particular climatic zone—a warm summer evening in a temperate grassland may be a bone-chillingly cold night on a temperate mountain. The following climatic zones are therefore presented as guidelines, from the poles to the equator.

Arctic: The coldest climates surround the poles. These arctic regions are frequently frozen and covered with snow; they have with bitterly cold, dark winters and cool summers. The types of terrain found in arctic climates range from the taiga (the northern or southernmost forests, which extend to the farthest limit trees can grow) to tundra to trackless snowy steppes. The terrain types can be mountainous and glacier-bound, thickly forested, or flat and snow-covered. Despite the harsh conditions, a variety of hardy creatures live in the arctic.

Temperate: The temperate zone consists of two major subgroups: oceanic and continental. The coastal oceanic zones enjoy a largely steady temperature, regulated by the weather patterns across the ocean, whereas the inland continental zones are warmer in the summer and colder in the winter. How much warmer and how much colder depends on the various landmasses and prevailing weather patterns. The temperate zone covers fertile farmland, high mountains, verdant forests, grasslands, swamps, and many more terrain types. Temperate lands are highly desirable and travelers must be on the lookout for more than just monsters—brigands prey on caravans, armies wage war, and the politics of kingdoms and duchies make their own troubles.

Subtropical: Warmer than the temperate zone, the subtropics also vary widely in terrain type, from hot deserts to vast savannas to dense, broadleaf forests. Rainfall patterns vary widely in these regions, from dry to humid, and while the subtropics rarely see snow or frost, they can suffer intense cold snaps. As the climate tends toward moderation, the weather in the subtropics depends on the terrain to a greater extent.

Tropical: The tropics are the hottest part of a planet; lying along the equator, they come directly under the sun's glare for the entirety of the year. Rather than winter or summer, the tropics have a dry season and a wet season, based on the movement of the rain belt from south to north and back again. Again, however, terrain makes a difference: lush, verdant jungles enjoy frequent rainfall, enormous mountains can sport snow at high altitudes, and the sands of massive deserts shift back and forth on the winds.

Weather

Weather is a topic that rarely receives much attention in adventures, but it can make encounters much more memorable. A fight while ascending a cliff becomes more treacherous if the party must climb a mud-slicked donkey path. Perhaps the ominous chants of savage cultists rise above and intertwine with the thunder, and rain spatters in the blazing torches as the fell worshipers prepare their living sacrifices. The weather itself can be an enemy, as the party races for shelter in the face of a roaring tornado or frantically steers a ship to safe harbor as a hurricane lashes



the waves higher around them. Snowfall erases the tracks of kidnappers, and fog hides the breath of a dragon lurking in the brackish waters of a swamp.

A good GM considers the weather as an addition to regular adventures. How many days are routinely sunny, partly cloudy, or even merely overcast? How frequently does it rain? What are the major weather events that take place in a particular region, and how can travelers avoid them? These considerations include rain, thunder, lightning, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, cyclones, and more. The weather can also combine with terrain to create truly deadly conditions, such as bogs, mudslides, and avalanches.

Another question to consider is what the locals do to protect themselves. Note that in a fantasy world this doesn't necessarily entail just dressing more warmly or finding shelter—it may also mean appeasing the spirits of nature or the gods through propitiatory sacrifices. Safeguarding oneself from the weather—be it scorching sun or howling blizzard—is a crucial part of traveling or living in the wilderness, and the best protection against the weather may not be the best defense in combat.

Types of weather that may factor into encounters include blizzards, severe cold or extreme heat, fog, hurricanes and typhoons, monsoons, dust storms, hailstorms, sandstorms, snowstorms, and thunderstorms (with or without lightning), tornadoes, and windstorms (see *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* pages 437–440).

Environment

In addition to climate and weather, the environment itself can have an impact on adventures. The environment includes both landscapes and ecosystems. Landscape varies widely and is generally a function of both geology and geography—that is, the natural structure and substance of the land, and the physical features within a region. An ecosystem refers to the type of biological life in a region, rather than topology. The following terrain types can appear in virtually any climate, and each has its own unique hazards and considerations to take into account when used as the setting for an adventure. Remember that the possibility of becoming lost (*Core Rulebook* pages 424–425) exists in any terrain!

Deserts

Deserts are defined not by climate, but rather by the amount of rainfall a region receives; they can be cold, temperate, or hot. They exist in weather shadows, blocked from ordinary precipitation patterns. Desert vegetation is tough and sparse, able to store water for long periods, which means in turn that the soil in a desert is loose and barren, if not entirely rocky. Desert animals tend to be smaller insects, arachnids, mammals, and lizards, with some predatory birds. Venomous creatures are common. In hot deserts, the days are scorching; but at night the heat dissipates quickly, and those who don't have proper cover or clothing can suffer from exposure.

The following sections of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* can help flesh out desert terrain. Desert terrain is described on pages 430–431, but encounters in the desert might also include exposure to either severe heat or cold (pages 442, 444); storms, whether blizzards (page 438), sandstorms (page 431), or thunderstorms (page 438), which can lead to flash floods in the higher deserts in particular (pages 432–433); and thirst, when water stores eventually vanish (pages 444–445).

Forests/Jungles

Forests and jungles are, in the broadest possible terms, places where a significant number of trees grow and where a wide variety of other plants and animals live and thrive. The type of forest changes by latitude and terrain, ranging from sparse evergreens and other conifers in the coldest and highest parts of the world to dense, broadleaf jungle in the tropics. The strength of a forest's canopy should be determined—if the canopy creates too much shadow on the ground below, it can prevent the growth of underbrush. Leafier and more mature trees cast greater shadows, and thus more of the forest's inhabitants may live in the trees.

The following sections of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* can help flesh out forest or jungle terrain. Forest terrain is described on pages 425–427, but when adventuring in the forest or jungle, some possible encounters might also incorporate darkness (pages 442–443), falling branches or trees (pages 443–444), fog (page 439), forest fires and smoke (pages 426, 444), or swampy terrain (page 427). In addition, trees and undergrowth can provide cover and concealment (pages 195–197, 425–426).

Hills

Hills can be of many different types. They might be rolling hills in a broad grassland, or they can be the transitional point between plains and more rugged mountains. They could be small, craggy bluffs or smooth, gentle slopes. Much depends on the terrain surrounding the hilly area. Streams or rivers may wind between the hills, cutting their banks. If the hills are the tallest features in an area, they are of immense strategic value: anyone who occupies them can see farther than would-be enemies.

The following sections of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* can help flesh out hills terrain. Hills terrain is described on pages 427–428; hills also provide a good setting for both natural caves (page 428) and dungeons (pages 410–416). Additional environmental hazards for hill encounters include avalanches (page 429), the danger of falls (page 443), icy terrain (page 442), inclement weather (pages 437–440), rivers and streams (page 432), and rubble (page 430). Hills used as defensive positions might also incorporate trenches and berms (page 431).

Marshes, Swamps, and Bogs

Swamps are forested lowland marshes that sit at the junctures of multiple sources of water, maintaining a constant seep and flow that filters water from higher elevations. Bogs differ from swamps in several important regards: they lie in declivities that do not drain easily, and they are fed by rainfall, snowmelt, or acidic springs rather than by active streams or rivers. Bogs form when dead vegetation is prevented from fully decaying by the surrounding acidic water, forming a layer of peat, which inhibits further drainage of the area. All swamps support a huge variety of plant, animal, and insect life, though trees tend to be less plentiful. Swamps are humid, dank, and full of treacherous footing: shallow pools give way quickly to deeper pools, and woe to the heavily laden traveler who steps into quicksand without companions nearby.

The following sections of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* can help flesh out marshes, swamps, and bogs. Marsh terrain is described on page 427. When traveling through swamps, one should always be wary of rotten vegetation, which can break suddenly under too much weight and cause falls (page 443), as well as quicksand (page 427) and deep pools of water, which can be spotted in the same manner as quicksand. Falling into such a pool requires a DC 10 Swim check and carries the possibility of drowning (page 445). The deep water in swamps, while providing cover, can also hamper movement (page 170).

Mountains

As with hills terrain, mountains come in a variety of shapes and sizes. In places where tectonic activity has for the most part stabilized and the rock is exposed to the upper air, the mountains are smoother and more eroded. In places where the earth is still relatively unstable, the mountains are harsher and more jagged and pose a greater (and more dangerous) challenge to climbers. Caves, chasms, cliff faces, and dense rubble are all common in mountains, to say nothing of the animals and monsters that make their homes in the peaks. Mountains flank strategic passes and overlook fertile valleys, which makes them common locales for fortresses and brigands.

The following sections of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* can help flesh out mountain terrain. Mountain terrain is described on pages 428–430. Remember the effects of high altitude on those not acclimated to it (page 430). Mountain encounters might also include rockslides or avalanches of snow, mud, or rock (page 429), low clouds that function as fog (page 439), and ice sheets (page 430). Volcanic mountains add dangers of smoke and lava (page 444).

Plains

Plains are large swaths of flat terrain with few trees. Several types of plains exist in different climates: prairie, savanna, steppe, and the like. The most common place for people to live, plains serve as farmlands, enabling the growth of culture on a huge number of levels. Because plains are so valuable, they are frequently contested, and those who rule the plains defend their turf ferociously. Because they are relatively flat and easy to traverse, plains also make convenient battlefields, as they afford the room needed for large-scale maneuvers. Lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, irrigation ditches, and other natural and man-made features divide plains and serve as impediments to travel.

The following sections of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* can help flesh out plains terrain. Plains terrain is described on pages 431–432. With few terrain features to shield them, plains are often beset by high winds (pages 439–440), causing dust storms (page 438) and even tornadoes (page 439–440). Grassfires are also a danger (treat as forest fires, page 426), and they can cause normally placid herd animals to stampede, effectively granting them the stampede and trample special abilities (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 174, 305).

Underground

Caves form under a huge variety of circumstances: by the action of waves along the shore, internal erosion from underground streams, or acidic air and water, as well as by tectonic action. Unless frequently used as a passageway by cave dwellers, a cave has rough and erratic floors, and its passages expand and contract along their lengths. Drop-offs are frequent—travelers without safety lines are almost guaranteed to suffer falls. Even worse are cave-ins, which come with little warning and are occasionally the result of traps set by cave-dwelling creatures. Movement underground is difficult without a light source, and subterranean creatures will either be attracted to the light or squirm away from it as quickly as possible. Food is difficult to find in caves unless a creature has evolved specifically to eat subterranean lichens and molds—a prime reason for most creatures to live aboveground. Creatures that have adapted to the perpetual darkness learn to navigate by touch, smell, taste, and sound, and they are extraordinarily aware of intruders in their realm.

Dungeons are described in greater detail on pages 410–416 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* and pages 174–183 of this chapter. Hazards in the *Core Rulebook* that can help liven up underground encounters include cave-ins (page 415), suffocation (page 445), falling rocks (pages 443–444), darkness (pages 442–443), and dangerous molds and fungi (pages 415–416).

Encounters on a Journey

Depending on how they're handled, cross-country journeys, voyages by sea, or treks between communities can be time consuming and difficult to run. Properly managed, though, they can be an integral part of an adventure, or even adventures unto themselves. In general, there is little reason to require the party to live through each moment of a long journey, leaving GMs to judge when to focus on day-to-day minutiae and when to fast forward to the next encounter. Adopting elements of the following techniques can help make a long journey more interesting and eventful.

Nothing Happens: Rarely should a day of travel pass where nothing happens. Some GMs and PCs in the midst of an intense story line might seek to rush past unrelated encounters on the road, glossing them over as an author might summarize a trek of days or weeks with a few words. While glossing over whole journeys should probably be avoided—what's the benefit of spells like *teleport* after all if travel by foot is no different?—GMs shouldn't feel like they have to slog through weeks of extra encounters just because the PCs chose to visit another city.

Daily Checks: If a GM chooses to have encounters occur during a journey, but doesn't want to run every step along the path, he might make a number of checks per day to keep the players on their toes. Occasional Perception checks as the party travels might allow them to notice specifics, from interesting landmarks and other travelers to dangerous beasts and ambushes. Each time they make a check, describe the area in a few quick words, and be ready to discuss the area further if they choose to investigate. Other challenges might call for the use of other skills, such as Climb, Handle Animal, Ride, Survival, or Swim, as appropriate. GMs should be mindful of when they call for checks to be made. Should a journey's narrative only pause for ambushes and dangers, the PCs will swiftly begin to dread every stop and description of the path ahead.

Ongoing Encounters: While definitely the most labor-intensive route, a GM might create specific encounters for a trip and have secondary spin-off adventures available for the party to pursue or ignore. This requires significantly greater preparation time but has the added benefit of creating new stories for the campaign and cutting down on the GM's need to craft impromptu content. The party might even choose to come back later to revisit interesting sites or plot lines.

Wilderness Toolbox

The wilderness presents a vast range of opportunities for adventure, not just as far as setting and locations go, but also in terms of hazards one might encounter, creatures to be faced, and natives or travelers also venturing through such areas. The following charts should help GMs add additional details to their adventures in the wilds, whether suggesting discoveries to make along the road, or serving as a reminder to mention the weather.

Table 7-56: Things Found on the Roadside

d%	Item or Location
1–3	An abandoned cartwheel
4–6	A holy man meditating at a roadside shrine
7–9	A newly constructed traveler's waystation
10–12	A caravan of gypsies waiting for a birth
13–15	A statue of a two-headed goat
16–18	A covered well
19–21	A squashed hedgehog
22–24	A hermit's cave
25–27	A teahouse
28–30	An abandoned barn
31–33	The remnants of a campfire
34–36	A dead sheep
37–39	An old road, now overgrown and abandoned
40–42	A footpath leading away
43–45	A tumbled-down rock wall
46–48	A tree adorned in prayer flags
49–51	An oak tree split by lightning
52–54	The ruins of a croft
55–57	A standing stone
58–60	A tiny roadside tavern
61–63	An old blind woman begging for alms
64–66	A coin
67–69	Signs of a fight
70–71	A totem depicting foxes and wolves chasing owls
72–73	A boarded-up mineshaft
74–75	An overgrown graveyard
76–77	A broken, rusty halberd
78–79	A scarecrow
80–81	Three dead foxes strung up in a tree
82–83	A mangy old dog
84–85	The carcass of a giant, picked clean by vultures
86–87	An abandoned child
88–89	A gallows with a dead victim
90–91	A coaching inn
92–93	The corpse of a criminal in a hanging cage
94–95	A road repair gang
96–97	A pile of flagstones waiting to be laid
98–99	A milestone
100	A huge footprint

Table 7-57: Types of Weather

d%	Weather
1–2	**Balmy**: mild and pleasant weather
3–4	**Blizzard**: a dense snowstorm
5–6	**Bluster**: strong wind
7–8	**Breeze**: light wind
9–10	**Calm**: no wind
11–12	**Chill**: unpleasantly cold
13–14	**Cool**: moderately cold
15–16	**Cyclone**: violent, destructive storm
17–18	**Damp**: moisture in the air
19–20	**Deluge**: sudden heavy rainfall
21–22	**Dew**: condensation forming just above the ground
23–24	**Downpour**: heavy rainfall
25–26	**Draft**: current of air
27–28	**Drizzle**: fine rain
29–30	**Drought**: continuous dry weather
31–32	**Dust storm**: severe windstorm lifting dust and sand
33–34	**Fair**: pleasant weather
35–36	**Fog**: thick mist or cloud
37–38	**Freezing rain**: rain that freezes when it lands
39–40	**Frigid**: intensely cold
41–42	**Frost**: frozen dew
43–44	**Gale**: strong wind
45–46	**Hail**: pellets of frozen rain
47–48	**Haze**: condensing ground vapor caused by heat
49–50	**Heat wave**: prolonged period of warm weather
51–52	**Humid**: warm, moist air
53–54	**Hurricane**: windstorm moving around a central point
55–56	**Mild**: moderately warm weather without rain
57–58	**Mist**: water vapor in the air
59–60	**Monsoon**: heavy, prolonged seasonal rain
61–62	**Muggy**: damp, warm, oppressive weather
63–64	**Overcast**: heavy cloud cover
65–66	**Pea soup**: thick yellow fog
67–68	**Rain shower**: short period of rainfall
69–70	**Rainfall**: prolonged period of rain
71–72	**Sleet**: ice pellets mixed with rain or snow
73–74	**Smog**: smoky fog
75–76	**Snow flurry**: short period of light snow
77–78	**Snowstorm**: prolonged heavy snow
79–80	**Squall**: sudden, localized storm
81–82	**Storm**: violet wind and rain
83–84	**Sunny**: bright, clear weather
85–86	**Temperate**: without extremes of warm or cold
87–88	**Thunderstorm**: storm with thunder and lightning
89–90	**Tornado**: destructive, rotating windstorm
91–92	**Tropical storm**: cyclonic storm from the tropics
93–94	**Typhoon**: violent cyclonic storm
95–96	**Warm**: moderately hot temperature
97–98	**Whirlwind**: violent wind moving in a circular motion
99–100	**Whiteout**: heavy snow, causing visibility problems

Table 7-58: Scenic Spots

d%	Location
1–2	A tumbling waterfall cascades into a deep pond
3–4	A bent willow tree provides shelter
5–6	A ruined bridge carved with dancing angels
7–8	A quaint wishing-well
9–10	A limestone gorge filled with ancient trees
11–12	A lone tree upon a moor
13–14	Mighty stones have weathered into incredible shapes
15–16	Carved millstones lie abandoned in a flower meadow
17–18	A stone outcropping that looks like a dragon
19–20	The ruins of a once-majestic manor house
21–22	A crumbling hillside
23–24	A farmed valley with lush grass
25–26	The still waters of a pool reflect an ancient dolmen
27–28	A natural tower of broken, weathered stone
29–30	Sunlight suddenly strikes the purple heather
31–32	The sun picks out the hillside in a blaze of color
33–34	A ruined croft with the chimney still intact
35–36	A crumbling gatepost leading to a ruined croft
37–38	A cobbled track worn smooth with age
39–40	A standing stone in a hollow
41–42	Curious weathered stones tumble down the hillside
43–44	An old ruined chapel wreathed in ivy
45–46	A shallow cave with a moss-covered floor
47–48	A stone trough filled with flowers, overlooking a lake
49–50	An old stone bridge with a small religious shrine
51–52	A cairn with a wide panorama of the countryside
53–54	A weathered flagstone path leads to a rustic barn
55–56	A ruined tower surrounded by heather
57–58	Ancient trees gather on a small knoll
59–60	A fine bridge over a cool swimming hole
61–62	A stone circle in a forest clearing
63–64	An empty old burial cairn on the edge of a hillside
65–66	A forest clearing bathed in sunshine
67–68	An abandoned house by a river
69–70	A ruined mill surrounded by cascading waterfalls
71–72	A mighty oak towers over the path
73–74	A village pond with ducks and dragonflies
75–76	A holly bush with a ruined house within
77–78	A statue of a man with a cloak of flowers
79–80	A meadow filled with buttercups
81–82	An old graveyard at the foot of a cliff
83–84	A flagged ford across a river
85–86	An outcrop of rock that looks like an owl
87–88	Three intertwined apple trees
89–90	A curious rocky tor rising from a small copse of trees
91–92	A pond clogged with watercress and lilies
93–94	A green lane surrounded by ancient sycamore trees
95–96	A natural seat under a cliff, draped with kudzu
97–98	Bright red berries swing from the arch of a tree
99–100	A hollow holds three graves, surrounded by ivy

Table 7-59: Terrain Types

d%	Terrain
1–2	**Antarctic:** southerly area of extreme cold
3–4	**Arctic:** northerly area of intense cold
5–6	**Basin:** tract of land drained by a river
7–8	**Beach:** shoreline along a body of water
9–10	**Bog:** wet ground made up of decayed vegetation
11–12	**Butte:** isolated hill with steep sides
13–14	**Caldera:** cauldron-like bowl caused by a volcano
15–16	**Canyon:** deep gorge or ravine with steep sides
17–18	**Cave:** small subterranean opening
19–20	**Cavern:** large subterranean chamber
21–22	**Cliff:** steep-sided rock formation
23–24	**Coast:** tidal shore
25–26	**Crater lake:** lake formed in crater of a volcano
27–28	**Desert:** arid, barren land
29–30	**Dunes:** hills of sand in deserts
31–32	**Farmland:** agricultural land, often enclosed
33–34	**Fen:** low marshy or flooded area of land
35–36	**Forest, coniferous:** chiefly evergreen forest
37–38	**Forest, deciduous:** forest of trees that shed leaves
39–40	**Glacier:** slow-moving mass or river of ice
41–42	**Hills:** landforms that rise above the surrounding land
43–44	**Icecap:** permanent covering of thick ice
45–46	**Isthmus:** narrow strip of land connecting two areas
47–48	**Jungle:** land overgrown with vegetation
49–50	**Knoll:** small natural hill
51–52	**Lake:** large, inland body of water
53–54	**Limestone upland:** exposed limestone outcrop on hill
55–56	**Meadow:** land that periodically floods
57–58	**Mesa:** elevated area of flat land
59–60	**Mire:** swampy ground
61–62	**Moors:** upland landmass usually covered in heather
63–64	**Mountain:** prominent landmass of exposed rock
65–66	**Mountain, high:** mountain with permanent glaciers
67–68	**Mountain pass:** saddle point between mountains
69–70	**Ocean:** large body of water
71–72	**Oxbow lake:** U-shaped body of water
73–74	**Peninsula:** point of land almost surrounded by water
75–76	**Plains:** level tract of land
77–78	**Plateau:** elevated tract of relatively flat land
79–80	**Ravine:** small valley
81–82	**Ridge:** a continuous elevated crest
83–84	**River:** large watercourse
85–86	**Scree:** broken rock fragments at a mountain's base
87–88	**Stream:** small watercourse
89–90	**Subterranean:** below the surface, usually caverns
91–92	**Swamp:** wet, spongy ground
93–94	**Tundra:** vast, treeless region in arctic or antarctic area
95–96	**Valley:** long depression or hollow between hills
97–98	**Volcanic:** region with volcanic activity
99–100	**Wetlands:** wet, soggy, seasonally waterlogged area

Table 7-60: Beach/Coast

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–3	2d4 lizards	1/2	*Bestiary* 131
4–8	1d6 merfolk	1	*Bestiary* 204
9–11	1d4 poison frogs	1	*Bestiary* 135
12–17	1d4 eagles	1	*Bestiary* 118
18–22	1 monitor lizard	2	*Bestiary* 194
23–29	1d8 hawks	2	*Bestiary* 131
30–34	1d8 shipmates	3	see page 294
35–40	1 pteranodon	3	*Bestiary* 85
41–43	1d4 giant frogs	3	*Bestiary* 135
44–47	1 giant eagle	3	*Bestiary* 118
48–51	1 crab swarm	4	*Bestiary* 50
52–57	1 sea hag	4	*Bestiary* 243
58–64	1d6 giant crabs	5	*Bestiary* 50
65–67	1 giant frilled lizard	5	*Bestiary* 194
68–69	1 cyclops	5	*Bestiary* 52
70–71	1d6 skum	5	*Bestiary* 253
72–74	1d4 griffons	6	*Bestiary* 168
75–79	1d8 sahuagin	6	*Bestiary* 239
80–82	1d4 giant stag beetles	6	*Bestiary* 33
83–85	1d6 harpies	7	*Bestiary* 172
86–89	1 giant octopus	8	*Bestiary* 219
90–94	1 first mate	8	see page 295
95–98	1 roc	9	*Bestiary* 236
99–100	1 pirate captain	11	see page 281

Table 7-61: Eldritch Forest

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–5	1 pseudodragon	1	*Bestiary* 229
6–9	1 werewolf	2	*Bestiary* 198
10–12	1 yellow musk creeper	2	*Bestiary* 285
13–17	1 assassin vine	3	*Bestiary* 22
18–21	1 ettercap	3	*Bestiary* 129
22–24	1 giant mantis	3	*Bestiary* 200
25–31	1 owlbear	4	*Bestiary* 224
32–34	1 hydra	4	*Bestiary* 178
35–39	1d4 worgs	4	*Bestiary* 280
40–45	1 basilisk	5	*Bestiary* 29
46–51	1d4 dryads	5	*Bestiary* 116
52–56	1d4 unicorns	5	*Bestiary* 269
57–59	1d6 centaurs	6	*Bestiary* 42
60–61	1 girallon	6	*Bestiary* 154
62–67	1d4 half-celestial unicorns	6	*Bestiary* 169
68–70	1d4 satyrs	6	*Bestiary* 241
71–73	1 shambling mound	6	*Bestiary* 246
74–75	1 dire bear	7	*Bestiary* 31
76–81	1 nymph	7	*Bestiary* 217
82–85	2d4 pegasi	7	*Bestiary* 225
86–90	1d6 pixies	7	*Bestiary* 228
91–95	1 treant	8	*Bestiary* 266
96–98	1 gorgon	8	*Bestiary* 165
99–100	1 couatl	10	*Bestiary* 49

Table 7-62: Oasis

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–5	1 giant leech	2	*Bestiary* 187
6–8	1 monitor lizard	2	*Bestiary* 194
9–12	1d4 vagabonds	3	see page 291
13–18	1d4 cheetahs	4	*Bestiary* 40
19–22	1 mimic	4	*Bestiary* 205
23–30	1d6 wanderers	5	see page 290
31–35	1 traveling merchant	5	see page 285
36–39	1d4 Medium water elementals	5	*Bestiary* 126
40–42	2d4 hyenas	5	*Bestiary* 179
43–44	1d4 giant scorpions	5	*Bestiary* 242
45–46	1d6 aurochs	5	*Bestiary* 174
47	1 lamia	6	*Bestiary* 186
48–53	1d6 lions	6	*Bestiary* 193
54–56	2d6 gnolls	6	*Bestiary* 155
57–63	1 chuul	7	*Bestiary* 46
64–68	1 stegosaurus	7	*Bestiary* 85
69–72	1 medusa	7	*Bestiary* 201
73–75	1 brass dragon (young)	7	*Bestiary* 102
76–80	1d6 bison	7	*Bestiary* 174
81–82	1d6 mummies	8	*Bestiary* 210
83–87	1 sphinx	8	*Bestiary* 257
88–93	1d4 elephants	9	*Bestiary* 128
94–96	1 clay golem	10	*Bestiary* 159
97–100	1 rakshasa	10	*Bestiary* 231

Table 7-63: Polar

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–4	1d6 owls	1	*Bestiary* 132
5–10	1 ice mephit	3	*Bestiary* 202
11–13	1 dire wolverine	4	*Bestiary* 279
14–18	1 polar bear (advanced bear)	5	*Bestiary* 31, 294
19–22	1 ice golem	5	*Bestiary* 161
23–25	1d4 yetis	6	*Bestiary* 287
26–33	2d6 wolves	6	*Bestiary* 278
34–36	1 cyrohydra	6	*Bestiary* 178
37–38	1 white dragon (young)	6	*Bestiary* 100
39–42	1 remorhaz	7	*Bestiary* 233
43–49	1d8 dire wolves	7	*Bestiary* 278
50–55	1d4 woolly rhinoceroses	8	*Bestiary* 235
56–57	1d8 frost wights	8	*Bestiary* 276
58–61	1 dire tiger	8	*Bestiary* 265
62–64	1d6 monster hunters	8	see page 257
65–69	1d4 beast masters	8	see page 263
70–73	1 frost giant	9	*Bestiary* 149
74–78	2d6 winter wolves	10	*Bestiary* 280
79–86	1d6 vikings	10	see page 281
87–91	1d6 frost giants	12	*Bestiary* 149
92–95	1d6 mastodons	12	*Bestiary* 128
96–97	1 silver dragon (adult)	14	*Bestiary* 110
98–99	1 white dragon (ancient)	15	*Bestiary* 100
100	1 ice linnorm	17	*Bestiary* 191

Table 7-64: Sky

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–4	1d4 eagles	1	*Bestiary* 118
5–6	1d6 owls	1	*Bestiary* 132
7–9	2d6 hawks	3	*Bestiary* 131
10–14	1d12 ravens	3	*Bestiary* 133
15–20	1 wasp swarm	3	*Bestiary* 275
21–25	1 half-celestial unicorn	4	*Bestiary* 169
26–29	2d6 stirges	4	*Bestiary* 260
30–35	1d4 pteranodons	5	*Bestiary* 85
36–40	1d4 giant wasps	5	*Bestiary* 275
41–45	1 manticore	5	*Bestiary* 199
46–49	1d6 cockatrices	6	*Bestiary* 48
50–52	1d4 gargoyles	6	*Bestiary* 137
53–58	1d4 griffons	6	*Bestiary* 168
59–65	1d8 giant eagles	7	*Bestiary* 118
66–70	1 huge air elemental	7	*Bestiary* 120
71–74	1 dracolisk	7	*Bestiary* 170
75–80	1d6 harpies	7	*Bestiary* 172
81–85	2d4 pegasi	7	*Bestiary* 225
86–88	1 green dragon (young)	8	*Bestiary* 96
89–92	1 roc	9	*Bestiary* 236
93–95	1d6 wyverns	9	*Bestiary* 282
96–97	1 couatl	10	*Bestiary* 49
98–99	1 gold dragon (young)	11	*Bestiary* 108
100	1 phoenix	15	*Bestiary* 227

Table 7-65: Temperate Plains

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–3	1d8 cats	1	*Bestiary* 131
4–7	1 venomous snake	1	*Bestiary* 255
8–12	1 bat swarm	2	*Bestiary* 30
13–16	1 ankheg	3	*Bestiary* 15
17–21	1 cockatrice	3	*Bestiary* 48
22–26	2d6 goblins	3	*Bestiary* 156
27–28	2d4 ponies	3	*Bestiary* 177
29–32	1d6 horses	4	*Bestiary* 177
33–37	1d4 giant ants	4	*Bestiary* 16
38–40	1d4 ghouls and 1 ghast	4	*Bestiary* 146
41–44	1d4 dire bats	4	*Bestiary* 30
45–50	1d6 aurochs	5	*Bestiary* 174
51–52	1d4 centaur	5	*Bestiary* 42
53–57	1d4 pegasi	5	*Bestiary* 225
58–60	2d4 wolves	5	*Bestiary* 278
61–67	1d4 bison	6	*Bestiary* 174
68–71	1d6 giant scorpions	6	*Bestiary* 242
72–78	1d8 worgs	6	*Bestiary* 280
79–84	2d6 gnolls	6	*Bestiary* 155
85–89	1d6 rhinoceroses	7	*Bestiary* 235
90–93	1 dire tiger	8	*Bestiary* 265
94–96	1 gorgon	8	*Bestiary* 165
97–98	1 mastadon	9	*Bestiary* 128
99–100	1 guardian naga	10	*Bestiary* 212

Table 7-66: Volcano

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–4	2d6 duergar	3	*Bestiary* 117
5–9	1 basilisk	5	*Bestiary* 29
10–15	1 pyrohydra	6	*Bestiary* 178
16–20	1 half-fiend minotaur	6	*Bestiary* 171
21–23	1 wyvern	6	*Bestiary* 282
24–26	1 chimera	7	*Bestiary* 44
27–28	1d4 cyclopes	7	*Bestiary* 52
29–33	1d4 manticores	7	*Bestiary* 199
34–38	2d6 shocker lizards	7	*Bestiary* 248
39–41	2d4 yeth hounds	7	*Bestiary* 286
42–46	1 behir	8	*Bestiary* 34
47–52	1 copper dragon (young)	8	*Bestiary* 106
53–55	1d6 giant frilled lizards	8	*Bestiary* 194
56–60	1d6 salamanders	9	*Bestiary* 240
61–63	1 tyrannosaurus	9	*Bestiary* 86
64–68	1 roc	9	*Bestiary* 236
69–75	1 red dragon (young)	10	*Bestiary* 98
76–80	1 elder fire elemental	11	*Bestiary* 125
81–84	1d4 greater earth elementals	11	*Bestiary* 123
85–90	1d6 fire giants	13	*Bestiary* 148
91	1 storm giant	13	*Bestiary* 152
92–96	1 red dragon (adult)	14	*Bestiary* 98
97–98	1 phoenix	15	*Bestiary* 227
99–100	1 red dragon (ancient)	19	*Bestiary* 99

Table 7-67: Wasteland

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–3	1d4 wights	5	*Bestiary* 276
4–8	2d4 dire bats	6	*Bestiary* 30
9–13	1d4 centipede swarms	6	*Bestiary* 43
14–16	2d4 ghasts	6	*Bestiary* 146
17–19	1d4 minotaurs	6	*Bestiary* 206
20–24	1 spectre	7	*Bestiary* 256
25–30	2d4 rust monsters	7	*Bestiary* 238
31–36	1 nabasu	8	*Bestiary* 64
37–41	1 erinyes	8	*Bestiary* 75
42–45	1d8 gargoyles	8	*Bestiary* 137
46–48	1d4 half-fiend minotaurs	8	*Bestiary* 171
49–51	1d8 harpies	8	*Bestiary* 172
52–54	1d6 wraiths	8	*Bestiary* 281
55–60	1 mohrg	8	*Bestiary* 208
61–65	1d6 mummies	8	*Bestiary* 210
66–70	1d6 ghosts	10	*Bestiary* 145
71–74	1d4 dark nagas	10	*Bestiary* 211
75–78	1d6 vrocks	12	*Bestiary* 69
79–81	1 lich	12	*Bestiary* 188
82–88	1d6 spirit nagas	12	*Bestiary* 213
89–93	1 purple worm	12	*Bestiary* 230
94–96	1d4 hezrous	13	*Bestiary* 62
97–99	1d6 devourers	14	*Bestiary* 82
100	1 shoggoth	19	*Bestiary* 249



8 Advanced Topics



The brass golem's sword missed Valeros's head by inches. Unable or unwilling to check its swing, the golem didn't even turn as the blade sliced a hand from one of the buxom women by the fire. The quartet screamed, revealing long fangs.

"Hey!" Valeros shouted, his tone deeply offended. "I liked that one!"

Seoni grimaced and rose into the air, fists surrounded by nimbuses of pale light.

"To be fair," she said, "I'm pretty sure they intend to suck out your soul."

"So?" Valeros hefted his shield. "Two can play that game. Maybe three or four."

Customizing Your Game

Roleplaying games are, at their cores, simulations, with most rules focusing on how to perform epic feats and participate in the fantastic adventures of legendary heroes. Thus, games like the Pathfinder RPG highlight the most common elements of fantasy stories: battle, magic, monsters, and the like, detailing facets of the simulation that benefit from or require more detail than a GM might comfortably arbitrate on his own. The *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* gives GMs the tools they need to run countless adventures, and serves as a toolbox to help you create nearly any fantasy situation imaginable. Yet no rules set can anticipate every specific situation. Rather than just glossing over situations not discussed in the rules, in many cases, GMs employ specialized subsystems to add new layers of excitement and precision to their adventures. Thus, adjudicating a pursuit through a crowded city might become an exhilarating new game within the game while a fortune-telling session takes on new realism by drawing upon well-known tricks of the trade.

In an attempt to better equip GMs with more exciting options for their campaigns, this chapter presents a variety of new subsystems, as well as advice to make running common fantasy encounters easier. While some sections offer more detailed explanations and uses of existing rules, others present altogether new rules, while still others explain the methods behind creating common story elements. In any case, this chapter strives to aid GMs seeking to craft more exciting and evocative games, but does not claim to be inclusive of all the situations that might arise in an adventure. Rather, GMs should utilize these new rules and details in the same way they might use those in the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*, employing them as written when possible or altering them to serve as departure points customized to specific stories, or as the basis for wholly unique subsystems.

When to Design?

Part of a GM's fun is not just coming up with exciting adventures, but devising new ways to present his adventures. While Chapter 2 discusses many techniques a GM might use to make his campaign more captivating, good organization, tracking tools, handouts, and the like aren't always enough. Sometimes, a GM might find that there's no perfect fit within the existing rules for an encounter, creature, or other element he'd like to include. Yet rather than being deterred and having to reimagine his adventure, it's completely within the GM's purview to get creative with the rules to make what he wants or a campaign needs. Ultimately, while the Pathfinder RPG's rules are designed for ease of use and to promote fairness in a game, they exist to help a GM tell his story, and should never be a hindrance to play. If revising the rules or reworking them to better suit a situation improves an adventure, the GM is within his rights to make any adjustments he sees fit. At the simplest level, such changes might be purely cosmetic—using the stats of an existing monster while describing some new threat, or describing a magic item differently from its typical interpretation, for example. In other cases, actual rules might be altered as the GM chooses, though the balance and fairness of the game should always remain a consideration. There's nothing wrong with increasing the hit points of a major villain or monster if the PCs risk breezing through a campaign's climax, or increasing the DC of a disease meant to be especially virulent. In such cases, though, the GM should consider if not making a change is actually bad for a game. Sometimes real heroes slay a dragon in a single round or shrug off the world-ravaging plague, and such things make the players feel special and remain memorable long after the adventure ends.

Occasionally, though, an adventure might call for a change that a cosmetic alteration or a random adjustment won't satisfy. In such cases, GMs have the option of creating their own simple subsystems to handle exactly the circumstance they desire. Aside from what a GM determines, there's no other authority that a rule or subsystem must appease for use in a game. While published rules typically have the benefit of professional design and extensive playtesting, there's nothing preventing any GM from designing his own components. This could be basic, like using existing rules to create magic items or monsters; more complex, like using existing spells as guidelines to create new ones; or wholly new, like many of the subsystems in this chapter. While GMs uncomfortable with the details of a game may want to keep things simple or mimic existing rules, those more experienced might attempt to design any element they feel could improve their game.

Designing new elements for one's game doesn't need to be daunting, and taking cues from existing examples serves as a fantastic departure point. A GM might design wandering monster tables for his specific adventure, customize a new kind of staff for a villain, or create a new kind of flaming tornado hazard for a side trek onto the Plane of Fire. In each of these cases, templates or components exist for such elements, requiring just a bit of customizing on the part of the GM, yet feeling completely unique to the players—which is all the matters. On the other side of the spectrum, should the GM have need of complex rules for arguing in court, climbing on titanic beasts, or firing a laser canon, he might be forced to rely on his own ingenuity. In such cases, simple, flexible systems tend to work best, especially when they rely upon established rules. In the case of courtly arguments, one might devise a scale for a king's opinion, and have the actions and urgings of PCs and NPCs affect the scale in one way or



another, creating a more nuanced system for argument than a mere Diplomacy check. GMs should try to test their rules systems before games begin, compare them to existing rules, and then let the players know that they're trying rules the GM has created himself. If things go poorly, the GM can adjust elements on the fly or even abandon the system in favor of more standard rules—and go back to the drawing board after the game. If things go well, though, the GM might solicit feedback and make additional adjustments, tinkering until he's devised a useful new tool.

When to Disguise?

Often the appearance of a rule works just as well as a rule. For a GM faced with a situation for which there seems to be no obvious reference in the game's rules, yet who also lacks the time or interest needed to create a new subsystem, good storytelling, even-handed arbitration, and a bit of deception can typically solve the problem and keep a game moving along. When need for a new rules element unexpectedly comes up mid-game, that's rarely the time to stop and begin designing new rules. While you can easily make a few cosmetic changes to existing rules and stat blocks if you know of elements that might serve as good stand-ins, sometimes players come up with plans no rules system could account for. Say a PC wishes to run, leap off a cliff, and attack a dragon soaring past, digging in his axe to maintain a hold on the soaring beast. While rules exist for elements of the action, sticking and hanging onto a weapon embedded in another creature is not part of the game system. Yet rather than denying a character the opportunity to attempt a heroic feat, you could easily rely on the results of the rules you do know to arbitrate those you don't. For example, if the same character rolls high on his Acrobatics skill check and significantly exceeds his target's AC with his attack, you could declare that her plan works and she's now being dragged along by the dragon. Alternatively, if the PC botches either roll, she might be in for a long fall. Either way, interpreting existing rules in an unconventional way, or even just calling for an ability check to suggest either a good or poor result, can save you from paging through volumes of rules trying to find a nonexistent perfect fit. And with some shuffling of notes and hidden dice roles, no player should be the wiser to such an improvised ruling.

Chases

While chases are a signature action scene in countless stories, they present a singular challenge in the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, thanks to static movement rates. Since every creature in the game has a set movement rate, it might seem like you'd either automatically (or never) catch up to a fleeing foe! Obviously, this isn't the case, because there's more to catching a foe or avoiding being caught than simple speed.

Building a Chase

To simulate a chase, you'll need to do a little bit of prep work. Take about 10 small pieces of paper—pieces the size of playing cards or sticky notes work perfectly. These "chase cards" represent the chase's route, like the route a board game takes. Using 10 cards works well for a standard chase, but you can use more cards for a longer chase.

When laying out your chase into a "track" you should decide if there's a preset ending (a "finish line"), be it a contested resource, an escape vehicle, a portal that whisks away the pursued foe to an unknown location before winking out, or some similar goal that the fleeing character is trying to reach before he gets caught by the pursuers. If the chase has a finish line, mark one of the cards as such. If the pursuers haven't caught the fleeing character by the time he reaches this card, the chase ends. If your chase doesn't have a finish line, and it's merely a race of attrition, you should lay your chase cards out in a square, circle, or similar shape so that there's no obvious beginning or ending. You can even lay out chase cards in a grid pattern, allowing the participants to move about a field of obstacles in any direction they wish.

Pick two chase obstacles for each card. Not every card needs obstacles—there's no need to place obstacles on the finish line card, and if you want a faster chase, you can place obstacles on fewer cards—but if a card has obstacles, it should have two choices.

When the chase begins, place miniatures or tokens representing the creatures involved in the chase on the cards as described by the following starting conditions.

Sudden Start: In a chase that assumes that everyone begins at the same starting point, all participants start on the same card.

Head Start: If a participant has a head start on the other creatures involved in the chase, he begins three cards ahead of the rest of the participants.

Long Shot: If one participant is so far ahead that he has practically already won the chase, he begins the chase either three cards from the end of the chase or 10 cards away from the rest of the chase's participants, whichever is the greater distance between the two sides.

Chase Obstacles

You should tailor your chase's obstacles to match the location where the chase takes place. A rooftop chase might include things like crumbling rooftops, narrow gaps to leap across, tightropes to run along, or steep roofs to clamber up. A chase through a crumbling ruin in a swamp might involve crumbling walkways, narrow passageways, grasping vines, leaps over quicksand, or stinking clouds of nauseating miasma. Try to mix up the flavor of the obstacles as well as the types of checks and DCs needed to navigate them.

Assign each obstacle a DC to successfully navigate or overcome. A trivial obstacle is DC 10, a simple obstacle is DC 15, a standard obstacle is DC 20, a difficult obstacle is DC 25, and a very difficult obstacle is DC 30. For high-level chases, feel free to assign correspondingly high-level DCs. When assigning obstacles, it's best to have the DCs of both obstacles on a card be within 5 points of each other, but never identical—this forces participants to make tactical choices.

As a general rule, obstacles should be overcome by physical skill checks, such as Acrobatics, Climb, Escape Artist, Ride, or Swim. Perception can be used for obstacles like short cuts, Stealth can be rolled for obstacles requiring someone to move through a square quietly, or Bluff might be required to navigate a square by convincing a city guard you should be allowed to pass. You can even use saving throws to resolve obstacles (a Fortitude save to avoid being sickened by passing through a pool of filth, for example, or a Will save to evade the strange wailing spirits haunting that area). Be creative! It's okay to reuse obstacles, but try to vary them between cards and remember not to get bogged down with repetitive DCs or certain types of checks!

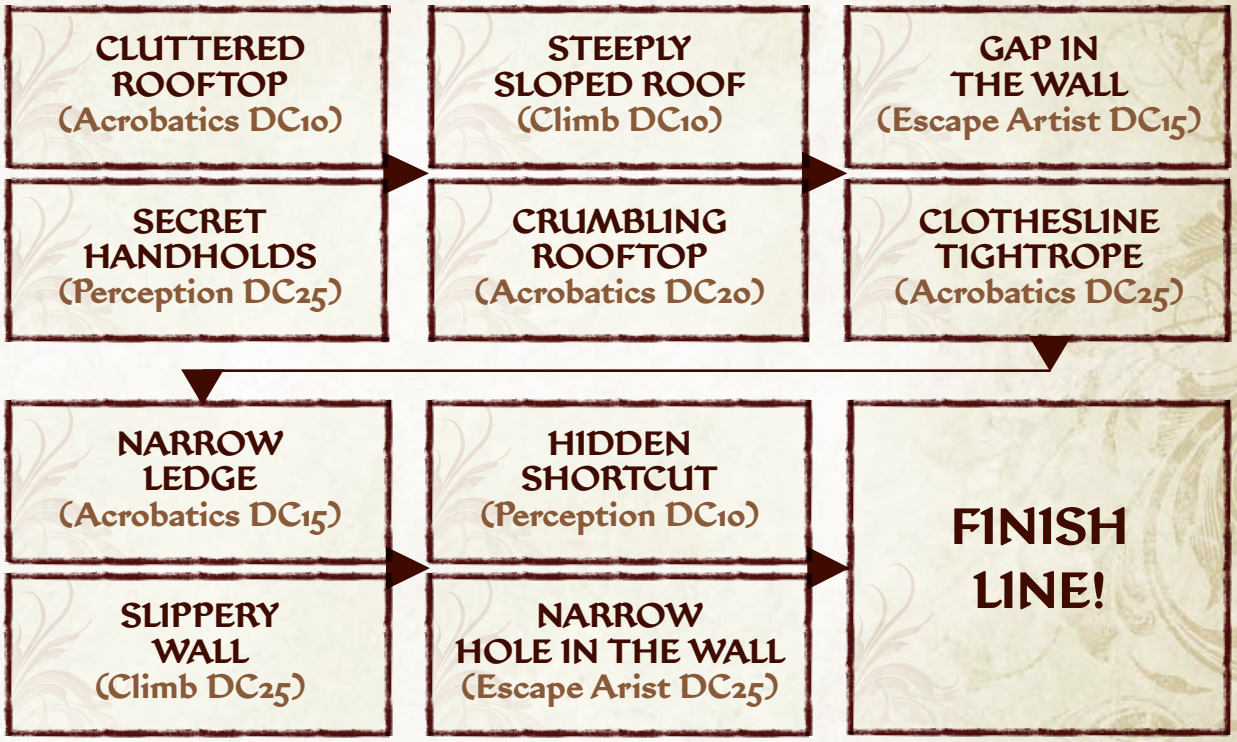
Running a Chase

The first thing to do when a chase starts is to determine the baseline speed—the movement rate of the majority of the chase's participants. In most cases, this is a land speed of 30 feet, but in some cases you'll start out with different assumptions. This base speed sets the "distance" of each chase card, so in most cases, each card represents 30 feet of space.

In some instances, such as a chase between two sailing ships racing to reach a distant island, or a long overland journey through a desert that separates a bounty hunter from his quarry, you'll want to adjust the timing of a chase. Doing so alters the distance of each card, and also gives the participants multiple options each turn to do things like cast spells. You can still use these chase rules, though—simply decide on how long each round of the chase takes and adjust the distance of each card as appropriate.

At the start of a chase, each participant makes an Initiative check to determine the order in which he

Example Progression



moves. (If a participant triggers the chase with an initial action, such as a prisoner suddenly making a mad dash for freedom, that participant gets to go first in a surprise round if he successfully surprises the other creatures.)

While a character's actual speed doesn't directly affect how often he moves between cards, it does affect how quickly he navigates obstacles. For each 10 feet slower than the chase's baseline speed a character moves, he suffers a cumulative –2 penalty on any check made to navigate obstacles. Likewise, for every 10 feet faster than the baseline speed he moves, he gains a cumulative +2 bonus on these checks. Significant mobility advantages over the baseline speed type (such as flight) grant an additional +10 bonus on checks made to avoid obstacles, simulating the character's use of enhanced movement to bypass obstacles entirely. Used properly, extremely powerful effects (such as teleportation) allow a character to instantly move forward a number of cards (use each card's distance to determine ranges).

Using the base assumption of 30-foot cards, it takes a move action to move through a single card. When a character exits from a card, he must choose one of that card's two obstacles to face as a standard action before moving to the next card. Success means the character moves to the next card, while failure means the character must face the obstacle again on the next round. Instead of exiting a card, a character can choose to take another action not directly related to navigating the chase's course, such as casting a spell or drawing a weapon.

A character who wants to attempt to move three cards during his turn can do so by taking a full-round action. That character must overcome both obstacles on the card he is leaving. In this case, if a character fails either obstacle check by 5 or less, he only moves one card forward and his turn ends. If a character fails either obstacle check by more than 5, he cannot move at all that turn. A character unfortunate enough to fail two obstacle checks in a turn becomes mired in his current square (he might have fallen from a ledge, gotten a foot stuck amid roots, or got caught in a crowd, for example). A character who is mired must spend another full-round action becoming unmired and effectively loses his next turn in the chase. In some cases, becoming mired might impart additional penalties (such as falling damage).

A character can also choose to make a ranged attack or cast a spell during his turn in a chase. If the action is a full-round action, he can't move at all. Use the number of cards and their established distances to determine ranges as necessary. The terrain where the chase takes place might provide the target partial or even full cover or concealment, as you wish. A character can only choose to make melee attacks against targets that are on the same card.

Disasters

Natural disasters go far beyond any mere environmental hazard, leaving death and devastation in their wake. Supernatural disasters can be even more disruptive, with the potential to forever scar a world. A disaster is much more like an adventure than an encounter, and does not have a specific Challenge Rating. Rather, each portion of the disaster should be treated as a separate encounter designed with a CR appropriate to the PCs.

Presented below are rules for handling the effects of three different types of disasters, both natural and supernatural. Some disasters happen quickly, like earthquakes and tsunamis, while others progress through several stages, like forest fires, volcanoes, and undead uprisings. Adjust the pacing of the adventure to fit the disaster, allowing the events to unfold over mere minutes or over several days as your needs require.

Volcanoes

When the world's crust ruptures and expels its molten heart, one of the most dramatic natural disasters results: a volcano. Volcanic eruptions offer a wide range of options for the GM, including lava, lava bombs, poisonous gases, and pyroclastic flows. GMs might also consider presaging a dramatic volcanic eruption with existing hazards, like avalanches and minor earthquakes (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 429 and 275).

Lava

Lava flows are usually associated with nonexplosive eruptions, and can be a permanent fixture of active volcanoes. Most lava flows are quite slow, moving at 15 feet per round. Hotter flows move faster, achieving speeds up to 60 feet per round. Lava in a channel such as a lava tube is especially dangerous, moving as fast as 120 feet per round (a CR 6 hazard). Creatures overrun by a lava flow must make a DC 20 Reflex save or be engulfed in the lava. Success indicates that they are in contact with the lava but not immersed (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 444).

Lava Bombs (CR 2 or 8)

Blobs of molten rock may be hurled several miles from an erupting volcano, cooling into solid rock before they land. A typical lava bomb strikes a point designated by the GM and explodes in a 30-foot radius. All creatures in the area must make a DC 15 Reflex save or take 4d6 points of damage. Creatures under cover or capable of covering themselves (like with a shield) gain a +2 bonus on this save. Particularly large lava bombs might sometimes occur, dealing 12d6 points of damage. Normal lava bombs have a CR of 2, large lava bombs have a CR of 5.

Poisonous Gas (CR 5)

One of the more insidious threats of a volcano is toxic gas, often escaping notice amid the fire and destruction. A wide variety of poisonous vapors can result from a volcanic eruption, some visible, some unseen. Poisonous gas causes 1d6 points of Constitution damage per round if inhaled (Fortitude DC 15 negates, the DC increases by 1 per previous save), and visible gases also function as heavy smoke (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 444). Poisonous gas clouds flow toward low ground, and are typically 50 feet high. Gale-force winds can divert gas clouds, as can high barriers—provided the gas has somewhere else to go.

Pyroclastic Flows (CR 10)

Some volcanic eruptions create a devastating wave of burning ash, hot gases, and volcanic debris called a pyroclastic flow that can travel for miles. Treat a pyroclastic flow as an avalanche (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 429) traveling at 500 feet per round, combined with the effects of poisonous gas listed above. Contact with the searing-hot debris of the flow causes 2d6 points of fire damage per round, while any creature buried in the flow suffers 10d6 points of damage per round. Only reality-warping magic like *miracle* or *wish* can turn aside or impede a pyroclastic flow.

Tsunamis

Tsunamis, sometimes referred to as tidal waves, are crushing waves of water caused by underwater earthquakes, volcanic explosions, landslides, or even asteroid impacts. Tsunamis are almost undetectable until they reach shallow water, at which point the mass of water builds up into a great wave.

Depending on the size of the tsunami and the slope of the shore, the wave can travel anywhere from hundreds of yards to more than a mile inland, leaving destruction in its wake. The water then drains back, dragging all manner of debris and creatures far out to sea.

The exact damage caused by a tsunami is subject to the GM's discretion, but a typical tsunami obliterates or displaces all temporary and poorly built structures in its path, destroys about 25% of well-built buildings (and causes significant damage to those that survive), and leaves serious fortifications only lightly damaged. As much as a quarter of the population living in the area (including animals and monsters) perishes in the disaster, either swept out to sea, drowned on shore, or buried under rubble.

A creature can avoid being pulled out to sea with a DC 25 Swim check; otherwise it is pulled 6d6 × 10 feet away from shore. Waters after a tsunami are always treated as rough or stormy, barring magical influence. A creature caught in a collapsing building takes 6d6 points of damage (DC 15 Reflex save for half), or half that amount if the building is particularly small. There is a 50% chance that the creature is buried (as for a cave-in,

see page 415 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*), or the tsunami may tear the building apart, freeing the creature from the rubble.

Undead Uprising

Whether from an ancient curse or fell necromancy, one of the most terrifying of all supernatural disasters is the undead uprising—the dead emerging from their graves to claim the living. This disaster can strike any area where the dead have been laid to rest, not just towns and cities. More than one blood-soaked battlefield has given rise to a legion of desiccated undead warriors.



Undead uprisings occur in waves, with the timing varying according to the underlying forces at play. The events may happen over the course of only a few days, devastating a city, or be spread out over weeks as the terrified populace cowers behind locked doors and struggles to survive. During the day, life often returns to some semblance of normalcy, as the light of day briefly suppresses the power of the undead.

The Unquiet Dead

On the first nights of an undead uprising, the bodies of the recently dead rise as zombies. Those interred in consecrated ground remain at rest, but bodies left unburied or in mass graves lurch out into the streets, wreaking havoc. At first, only a few corpses are able to free themselves from their coffins and tombs, but each night, more bodies return to walk the land of the living. When dawn breaks, the dead seek safety in their graves or other hidden places. Any caught in the daylight flail about confused, as per the condition (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 566) until they are destroyed or manage to stagger into shelter. At the GM's discretion, non-humanoid corpses may rise as undead on subsequent nights.

Skeletal Awakening

As the uprising progresses, older and older corpses join the shambling ranks of the undead. Skeletons wearing traces of long-rotted funeral garb claw their way out of graveyards and crypts, and act with a malevolence and organization rarely encountered among their ilk. The undead remain mindless, but the magical power behind the incursion gives them the efficiency and tactical acumen of a living army. The skeletons seek out weapons and armor to gird themselves for battle. Elite skeletal champions lead the troops, wielding magic items scavenged from abandoned graves. Eventually, ghouls and wights prowl the streets after dark as well, along with other lesser, free-willed undead.

Lost Souls

As the uprising gathers strength, the unquiet souls of bodies long since turned to dust awaken as well. Ghosts, shadows, wraiths, and even spectres arise to prey upon the living. A handful of the ghosts might be free from the malevolent influence of the uprising, and enterprising PCs may be able to glean valuable intelligence from these troubled spirits.

The infusion of negative energy strengthens the undead within the area of the incursion, providing the benefits of a *desecrate* spell. Areas that were once consecrated are now treated as normal ground, and may well provide new sources of corpses for the undead armies, but hallowed ground remains inviolate.

As the undead grow stronger, the growing flood of negative energy brings the Shadow Plane closer, leaving colors muted or gray except during the brightest hours of daylight. Even those undead most vulnerable to light can move about with impunity from late afternoon to mid-morning.

Necropolis

If the flow of negative energy is not reversed, darkness finally claims the area, cloaking it in perpetual shadow. The entire area of the undead uprising functions as if under the effects of an *unhallow* spell (with no additional spell effect tied to it). Hallowed ground remains a rare sanctuary, but only until destroyed by the malevolent forces without.

Heroes who perished in the battle against the uprising return as fearsome undead generals. The few living survivors are enslaved as thralls. The area becomes a city of the dead, or construction begins if no such city existed or survived. Free-willed undead flock to this new sanctuary, and only the greatest of heroes can return this now-blighted area to the world of the living.

Drugs and Addiction

Hard-drinking heroes, deities of wine and celebration, and the hazy halls of oracles and wise men stand alongside the most memorable tropes of myth and classic fantasy literature. Thus it's no surprise that the adventures of fantasy roleplaying games are filled with similar characters and locales. After all, countless campaigns have been launched around a tavern table and all adventurers know the infamous potency of stout dwarven ale.

For better or worse, all things that one might find in the real world multiply and take on wondrous and lethal qualities in fantasy settings, and the vices of alcohol and chemical abuse are no different. While many games have no place for realistic bouts of drunkenness or the soul-scouring depths of addiction, such elements hold great potential for adventure. Whether one seeks to reenact a feat of fortitude like the drinking contest between Hercules and Dionysus, have an encounter with lotus-eater-like decadents, or recreate the entheogens of religious mysteries, these rules cover the highs and lows.

Drugs

Drugs are alchemical items that grant effects to those who make use of them. What sets them apart from similar items is that a drug's effects manifest as both a short term (usually beneficial) effect and an amount of ability damage. In addition, those who take drugs also risk addiction, a type of disease of varying severity depending on the type of drug used.

When a character takes a drug, he immediately gains the effects, an amount of ability damage, and must make a Fortitude save to resist becoming addicted to that drug (see Addiction). While the initial effect represents the physical or mind altering effects of the drug, the drain represents both its side effects and the amount of time a dose remains active in a character's body. As ability score damage heals at a rate of 1 point per day, a drug that causes 1 point of ability score damage remains in a character's system for 1 day, though some might cause greater damage and thus remain active for longer. While taking multiple doses of a drug at once rarely has any benefit, taking additional doses as the effects wear off renew those effects but increase the ability damage and potential for addiction.

Drugs can be manufactured using Craft (alchemy). The DC to make a drug is equal to its addiction DC. Rolling a natural 1 on a Craft skill check while making a drug exposes the crafter to the drug.

Addiction

Anytime a character takes a drug he must make a saving throw, noted in the drug's description, to resist becoming addicted. If a character makes the save, he is not addicted and the effects of the drug persist as normal. If he fails the save, he contracts the noted form of addiction (see below). Should a character take multiple doses of the same drug in a short period of time addiction becomes more difficult to resist. The DC of a drug's saving throw increases by +2 every time a character takes a another dose of that drug while still suffering from ability damage caused by a previous dose. Keep track of how high this DC rises, even for characters already addicted to a drug, as it determines the DC necessary to overcome the disease.

Addiction manifests in three different degrees of severity: minor, moderate, and severe. Each drug notes what type of addiction failing a save against it results in. E ach addiction causes a persistent penalty to ability scores, lasting for as long as the character has the disease. In the case of moderate and severe addictions, the character also cannot naturally heal ability damage dealt by the drug that caused the addiction.

Each form of addiction encourages sufferers to continue making use of the drug they are addicted to. While a character is benefiting from the effects of the drug he is addicted to, he does not suffer the penalties of his addiction disease. While he still receives the benefits of the drug and takes ability damage as normal, the disease's effects are mitigated. As soon as the drug's benefits expire, the disease's effects return.

Minor Addiction

Type disease, variable; **Save** variable
Onset 1 day; **Frequency** 1/day
Effect –2 penalty to Con; **Cure** 2 consecutive saves

Moderate Addiction

Type disease, variable; **Save** variable
Onset 1 day; **Frequency** 1/day
Effect –2 penalty to Con and Str, target cannot naturally heal ability damage caused by the drug that caused this addiction; **Cure** 3 consecutive saves

Severe Addiction

Type disease, variable; **Save** variable
Onset 1 day; **Frequency** 1/day
Effect –2 penalty to Dex, Con, Str, and Wis; target cannot naturally heal ability damage caused by the drug that caused this addiction; **Cure** 3 consecutive saves

Curing Addiction

As addictions are diseases, they can be cured as such, through the use of spells like *remove disease* or by succeeding at Fortitude saves over time. Unlike with other diseases, an addicted character can only make a Fortitude save to overcome his addiction after a day of not taking the drug

he is addicted to. The DC of this Fortitude save is equal to the highest addiction DC his drug use has reached (not necessarily the DC that addicted him if he has continued to make use of the drug while addicted). This DC decreases by –2 for everyday the character does not make use of the drug, to a minimum of the drug's base addiction DC. Depending on the severity of the character's addiction, it might take two or three consecutive successful Fortitude saves to overcome the disease. Should a character take a dose of the drug he's addicted to, he immediately relapses, causing the addiction DC to instantly return to its highest DC and negating any successful past saves.

Sample Drugs

Numerous types of drugs exist, both in the real world and fantasy worlds. Presented here are several samples with a variety of effects. All drugs have the following features.

Type: This notes how the drug is introduced into the system. These types equate to the types most common to poisons: contact, ingestion, inhalation, injury.

Addiction: This is the severity of the addiction disease the drug causes, followed by the base DC of the save a character must succeed at to resist an addiction and potentially overcome an addiction. This DC can increase through multiple uses of the drug.

Price: The common price of 1 dose of this drug.

Effect: The duration and effect of the drug.

Damage: The amount and type of ability damage caused.

Aether

Type inhaled; **Addiction** moderate, Fortitude DC 16
Price 20 gp
Effect 1 hour; +1 caster level
Effect 1d4 hours; user must make a caster check to cast spells, DC 15 + spell level
Damage 1d2 Con damage

Dwarven Fire Ale

Type ingested; **Addiction** moderate, Fortitude DC 20
Price 50 gp
Effect 1d4 rounds; *rage* as per the spell
Effect 1 hour; cold resistance 5
Damage 1d2 Con damage

Elven Absinthe

Type ingested; **Addiction** moderate, Fortitude DC 16
Price 500 gp
Effects 1 hour; +1d4 Cha
Damage 1d4 Con damage

Flayleaf

Type inhaled or ingested; **Addiction** minor, Fortitude DC 12
Price 10 gp
Effects 1 hour; +2 alchemical bonus on saves against mind-affecting effects, fatigue
Damage 1 Wis damage

Opium

Type inhaled, ingested, or injury; **Addiction** major, Fortitude DC 20
Price 25 gp
Effects 1 hour; +1d8 temporary hit points, +2 alchemical bonus on Fortitude saves, fatigue
Damage 1d4 Con and 1d4 Wis damage

Pesh

Type ingested or inhaled; **Addiction** moderate, Fortitude DC 20
Price 15 gp
Effects 1 hour; +1d2 alchemical bonus to Strength, –2 penalty on saves against illusions and mind-affecting effects
Effect after 1 hour; 1d2 hours of fatigue
Damage 1d2 Con and 1d2 Wis damage

Scour

Type ingested or inhaled; **Addiction** major, Fortitude DC 24
Price 45 gp
Effects 3 hours; +1d4 alchemical bonus to Dexterity, –1d4 penalty to Wisdom
Damage 1d6 Con damage

Shiver

Type injury or ingested; **Addiction** major, Fortitude DC 18
Price 500 gp
Effects variable; 50% chance to sleep for 1d4 hours or gain immunity to fear for 1d4 minutes
Damage 1d2 Con damage

Zerk

Type injury; **Addiction** minor, Fortitude DC 18
Price 50 gp
Effects 1 hour; +1 alchemical bonus to initiative. If addicted, the user also gains a +1d4 alchemical bonus to Strength for as long as he is addicted
Damage 1d2 Con damage

Drunkenness

Just like drugs, alcohol can be abused and have significant negative effects. In general, a character can consume a number of alcoholic beverages equal to 1 plus double his Constitution modifier before being sickened for 1 hour equal to the number of drinks above this maximum. Particularly exotic or strong forms of alcohol might be treated as normal drugs. Those who regularly abuse alcohol might eventually develop a moderate addiction.

Fortune-Telling

Fortune-telling conjures images of hazy tents, mysterious women shrouded in shawls, and portents wafting through the air like incense.

So how do you, in your modern game room that is probably noticeably lacking in crystal balls and mysterious tents, use the illusion of fortune-telling to give your players the same excited trepidation, as well as both hope and fear for their characters' destinies?

No matter how the fortune-telling enters your campaign, you as the Game Master have options. You can choose to roll some dice behind a screen and simply tell your players the result—or you can choose to use the moment to create dramatic tension and the feeling that the players' characters are integral to the fortune-telling. While the second option is likely a lot more fun for all involved, it does require some work on your part.

Basic Fortune-Telling Methods

Many fortune-telling methods exist, and each has its pros and cons in terms of use in a roleplaying game. What follow are some of the more easily integrated fortune-telling methods and their strengths and weaknesses for a Game Master.

Cold Readings: A cold reading is when you decide to plunge into a fortune-telling situation without much—if any—preparation. This might occur because the players suddenly seek out a fortune-teller or because it suddenly seems right in your campaign.

For a cold reading, you can either revert to reading the palms of your players' characters, throwing stones, using cards or dice, or other mystical-feeling methods. The critical thing with a cold reading is not to commit too anything too concrete or detailed in the fortune-teller's answers. You haven't prepared and committing to a possible game changer or other critical game element on the fly can come back to haunt you.

With such readings, attempt to give vague answers or ones filled with symbolism that the players can interpret ("I see a red hawk at your shoulder. Its left foot is crippled, a black ribbon tangled in its claws."). While such prophecies might have little meaning initially, you can work manifestations of such revelations into future adventures—or not, depending on the legitimacy of your fortune-telling NPC.

True Randomness: With this method of fortune-telling you let the sticks, dice, cards, or stones fall as they may. Then it is up to you to interpret the results in a way that is useful and potentially meaningful for your players. This method works best if you write down a few possible results for each player. You can do this by listing several positive and negative results (say, having the upper numbers on dice tell something positive and the lower numbers mean a negative future). Doing so allows you to create a few vague and optional fates that work with your campaign and your characters' abilities, but still afford the excitement of leaving the results up to chance.

False Randomness: Many fortune-telling methods can be made to look random while allowing you to remain in total control of the outcome. This is easiest to do with a prop like a spirit board, but can also be done easily with cards. The advantage to false randomness is that it allows you to give players specific information you want to impart about their futures. By spelling out words on a spirit board or stacking a deck so certain cards are revealed, you can impart meanings specific to the needs of your game. The disadvantage of this technique is that, if you mess up, players know you rigged the results and don't feel as excited or as invested in the results as they might otherwise.

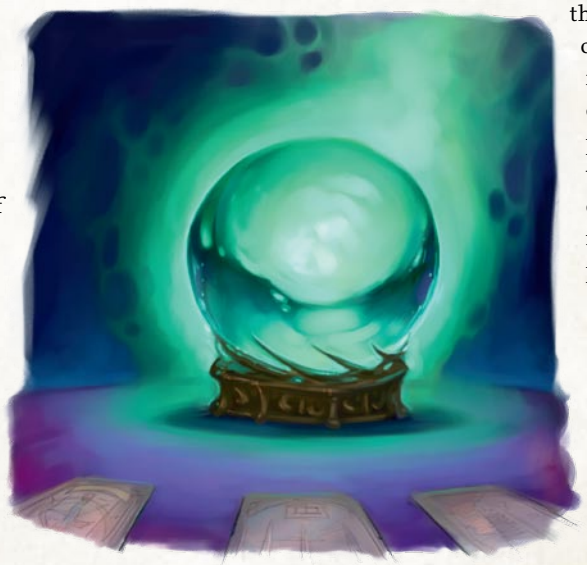
Fortune-Telling Props

It is usually helpful to use props in the course of a fortune-telling. You can simply use a player's palm as a prop, but players tend to get more excited when they feel that an element of randomness and fate are involved, which rolling dice or drawing cards provide. Of course, you also have to be prepared to deal with that randomness and come up with appropriate responses for the answers, which often require some preparation or research. Certain tools, like tarot cards, imply particular interpretations, and familiarizing yourself with these can help guide your fortune-telling by suggesting results.

There are far more fortune-telling methods in the world than can be addressed here, but the following often prove easiest to integrate into a fantasy roleplaying campaign. If you're interested, the library and Internet have a wealth of information on other fortune-telling methods such as the *I-Ching*, pendulum reading, horacy, crystalmancy, chiromancy, and countless others.

Cards: These can be used either as single cards drawn from a deck or in more complicated fortune-telling spreads. You should have an idea of what each card means in fortune-telling or in your world before doing such a reading, as being able to interpret each card off the top of your head or with only a quick reference of your notes goes a long way to increasing the verisimilitude of the experience. The *Harrow Deck* offers cards designed specifically for use in the Pathfinder RPG, dealing with RPG-related themes, and can be useful in shortening your research time to convert real-world answers to your fantasy world.

Dice, Sticks, or Stones: Dice are something every Game Master has readily available. Many also have shiny stones of different colors and types. The GM reveals fortunes using thse props by interpreting either marks on their surfaces or how they fall in relation to one another. While such items typically prove vague enough that only the "fortune-teller" can decipher them, they offer little in the way of thematic suggestions, and thus prove difficult to ad-lib with unless the GM already has an idea of how he wants the prophecy to play out. They do, however, lend an air of action, mysticism, and randomness that simple palm reading or staring into a crystal ball does not.



Crystal Ball, Fire, Foci: When using a crystal ball, fire, or any other prop that offers no visible result, you need to use a more theatrical style. These readings tend to be more scripted (see Fortune-Telling as Theater, below), although you can still add player interaction into such encounters by asking the players questions, such as "What animal comes to mind as you stare into the fire?" You must then be ready to assign a meaning to the animal or whatever other factors you decide have relevance.

Fortune-Telling as Theater

With a bit of preparation, you can give a truly theatrical fortune-telling session using palm reading, a crystal ball, or any other interpretive method where you, as the fortune-teller, are telling the players what you "see" in their future. First off, try to set the mood. Dimming the lights and insisting that everyone stay in character can go far toward eliminating disruptions.

In addition, make sure you have a good message in mind, one using metaphor and/or allegory liberally. Sometimes it helps to actually write a brief script for yourself ahead of time. For example, let's say the message is that the characters will wind up trapped in a magical labyrinth, and the only way out is to find the labyrinth's guardian who has a golden key. Instead of saying this straight out in a reading, you might instead phrase it more mysteriously, such as, "I see you lost, trapped in an endless series of choices… Do not allow yourself to spiral out of control or all is lost. Darkness… confusion… grief and terror. All this I see, but there is a glimpse of golden hope, a spider spinning a golden web of safety. Find her or find oblivion."

The technique here is to not simply spoon feed your players the information they need. You want to give them clues they must unravel as they adventure forward. Also, be sure that whatever scenario your fortune-teller is describing is one you're pretty sure the players will soon face.

You can, of course, combine this theatrical reading style with one of the more random fortune-telling elements. The combination can be particularly powerful. And always remember that, even in the most directed of readings, you want to integrate the players into the process. This will provide them with the most powerful and enjoyable experience, and will also give them things to look forward to—or dread—in the coming adventure. That kind of emotional engagement and suspense can turn a run-of-the-mill adventure into a truly magical experience.

Mundane and Magical Fortune-Telling

One of the first things PCs are likely to wonder before or after having their fates revealed is whether or not their fortune-teller's words are true. Some fortune-tellers are complete con artists, devoid of any kind of mystical power, using the same techniques as real-world mystics. If a fortune teller is scamming the PCs, you should roll a Bluff check to determine the effectiveness of her performance. Don't call for a Sense Motive check from the characters unless they raise the question of their seer's legitimacy. Part of the effectiveness of fortune-telling is the recipient's belief in the medium's miraculous insights. Only once a character doubts these powers does the illusion risk breaking down.

The Pathfinder RPG also presents many magical options for fortune-telling. The spells *augury*, *contact other plane*, and *vision*, along with a host of other divination spells, all prove useful in giving characters insights into the future, where classic magic items like *crystal balls* and *medallions of thoughts* allow seers to demonstrate their uncanny insights. A variety of illusion-based spells and magic items, such as a *wand of major image* or a *deck of illusions*, help bring flair to a fortune-teller's readings, regardless of actual truthfulness. *Pathfinder Campaign Setting World Guide: The Inner Sea* also presents the harrower prestige class, which employs the aforementioned *Harrow Deck* and allows characters to play a kind of adventuring fortune-teller.

Gambling and Games of Chance

Gambling is a staple of fantasy roleplaying, from elaborate games of chance in a glittering high-end casino in the wealthy part of the city to a dangerous high-stakes card game in a tavern's back room. RPG rules aside, the players and the Game Master can play a gambling game between themselves, without the interference of wildly disparate levels and skill modifiers—just get some dice or cards, and play.

However, no one coming to your house for an RPG session is going to be satisfied if you just play croupier all night long. You need to make your players' trip to the Gold Goblin Gaming House rich in fantasy if you're going to have a successful gaming experience, in both senses of the word "gaming."

Creating the Right Atmosphere

Characters don't walk into gambling halls for the thrill of a slightly worse-than-average chance of breaking even. They come in for the camaraderie, the tasty beverages, and the much smaller-than-average chance of winning very big. Thus, your gambling environments should be fun and rich in character. A high-end casino can have elven dancing maidens on stage, specialty dwarven drinks, and rich patrons sitting at the tables offering wild adventures. A low-end gaming hall can be wall-to-wall with reprobates, staffed with ogre bouncers, and carry the ever-present threat of a table-tipping bar brawl.

When the player characters walk in, describe the action. Have the house wizard cast *detect magic* as they enter, all-knowingly wagging a finger at the PC with the *crystal ball* in her backpack. Show a halfling noble leaping with joy as he hits the jackpot at 3-crown imperial poker. Let them see a goblin tableboy chucked out the window for smuggling players' winnings out between his pointy teeth. Make the characters want to be there.

When they sit down to play, make sure it's something they can win. Long slogs are fine at the nickel slots, but they're no fun in an RPG. Play something with wild swings, chances of devastating losses, and the occasional powerhouse victory.

In the end, offer them an adventure no matter how it turns out. If they lose big, have the club owner give them a chance to win back what they've lost by taking out the kobolds in the nearby sewer. If they win big, have some half-orcs attempt to jack their winnings in the alley. There are many types of gambles in the world.

Types of Gambling Games

There are thousands of gambling games, but all of them fall into a few basic categories or types. Many games combine elements of these types. Different players like different kinds of games, so it's a good idea to have a wide array available.

Beat-the-bank: In games like baccarat, the house determines a certain result for itself, and the player must endeavor to beat it. Sometimes a judgment call must be made, such as in blackjack, where both the player and the bank could go above a 21 and fail.

Bluffing: The only true skill on this list, bluffing requires a player to guess what another player has, and judge whether he should try to beat it. Poker is a bluffing game, and thus is not a gambling game in the true sense. Luck is important, but in the long run, skill is much more significant.

Lottery: Each player buys one or more stakes in a large pool. Randomly, one stake is determined the winner, and most of the wagered money goes to the owner(s) of that stake.

Match game: The player wins when certain preset patterns appear, such as on a slot machine. Some may be more valuable than others, so in a game where 3d6 are rolled and the goal is to hit triples, 1-1-1 may be less valuable than 6-6-6.

Pick-a-number: In a game such as roulette or keno, each player picks one or more target numbers, and then a result number is determined. If the result is the same as a player's target number, the player wins; otherwise, the player loses.

Proposition betting: Prop bets are bets on the outcomes of events for which one has imperfect knowledge. Sports bets are the best known of these types of bets. The house sets a line on which it believes half the bettors will pick one side and half will pick the other. The proposition then happens, and the people who picked correctly are paid off.

Gambling and Skill Checks

There is a reason you don't see the word "Gambling" in the Pathfinder RPG skill list, and that's because gambling is not a skill. With the exception of mislabeled skill games such as poker, a gambling game is by its very definition based on seeing what lucks brings you. You cannot bring your own luck, unless you cheat. And since the house always has an edge, you cannot make money gambling against the house.

There is, however, the Profession (gambler) skill. Like all Profession skills, this Wisdom-based skill is about making money over the course of a week, not about winning a particular spin of a roulette wheel. It's about figuring out where to play, when to play, and whom to play with. A character with high ranks in this skill is playing a lot, minimizing his losses, and probably using many other skills.

In a hand of a skill game like poker, you can use a player's Profession (gambler) skill to adjudicate it, in the

same way a character's Profession (fisherman) skill might be used to catch a fish for dinner. However, it need not be the only skill a player could use. Bluff, Intimidate, Sense Motive, and (for cheating) Sleight of Hand can all be used to win a single hand of cards. These rolls, along with some roleplaying, can make a card showdown into an interesting encounter.

Games of Chance

In games of pure chance, luck should rule the day. Neither the player nor the house is in control—the dice are, and no ranks in Profession (gambler) will help a character win. But this is as it should be. Players don't want to win at craps because their characters have high Dexterity scores—they want to win because the dice are hot tonight.

Of course, cheating is the only way to change your luck in a game of chance. If someone at the table wants to cheat, Sleight of Hand is the most useful skill, but Disable Device might also be allowed. In addition, magic can be quite useful for cheating. Spells like *mage hand*, *silent image*, and *modify memory* can turn bad results into good results. Getting caught, however, can turn these good results into much, much worse outcomes.

Designing a Gambling Game

A gambling game has five distinct elements: the house, the equipment, the mechanic, the odds, and the payout.

House: The house is the source of the game, and determines the game's style. A "tight" house runs games where the house edge is higher, and where player influence is minimized. A "loose" house wants much more gambling to occur, and is willing to maximize its risks so that players will bet more. The standard deviation of loss or gain is higher if the house is loose. As long as the house has an advantage in all games, the other important number the house must care about is its exposure, which is how much it can lose if everyone suddenly wins at once. A house that can't cover all its bets won't be successful for long.

Equipment: This is what you need to play the game. It's not just dice or cards—you often need markers, coins, and even miniatures. You should also determine how many people are necessary to run the game. Usually it's just one dealer, but a game like craps requires four people to run it: a boxman, two base dealers, and a stickman.

Mechanic: The mechanic is how the game is played. A mechanic should be simple and easy to grasp: place a chip on the board and roll a pair of dice, choose a number and spin a wheel, use some of your hole cards and some of the ones on the table. However, the variation of results can be much less simple; the sheer number of possible places to put your money on a craps table is dazzling.

Sample Game: Twentybone

Twentybone is a beat-the-bank game played with 20-sided dice, based on the familiar roll for attacks and skill checks.

The house: Twentybone originated in a casino deep in the back alleys of a major city. The casino's owner favors exciting games with lots of randomness, and his oft-inebriated patrons appreciate that too. Bones are rattled all night long, and cheaters who sneak in loaded dice find that some of their bones get rattled as well.

The equipment: To play, you need some d20s. A whole lot of them. A dealer and a "dice girl" run the game.

The mechanic: On each round, players can buy any number of d20s they want. The standard peasant's-wage cost for a d20 is a copper piece, though at some tables a player can spend a silver piece, a gold piece, a platinum piece, or even more for a die. When all dice have been purchased, the players all roll their dice. Then the house rolls a die. Every player die that beats the house die gets paid off with two coins for every one coin it was bought for. For the player, a 1 always loses, and a 20 always wins.

The odds: The player has a 47.75 percent chance of winning. 1's don't beat anything, 2's only beat house 1's, 3's beat house 1's and 2's, and so on. The exception is player 20's, which have a special advantage of beating house 20's.

The payout: The player will win 9.55 coins for every 10 coins he bets. The fact that a player is paid two coins on every win obscures the fact that the player gave over a coin to buy the die. Accounting for this, every successful bet's payout is 1-to-1.

Odds: The odds are the percentage chances that a player will win money. A player's percentage chance of winning should be somewhat less than 50 percent for the house to make money. In any casino, the house will retain some "edge," which is the profit the house will make on a long series of bets. So if a player plays a game where he wins 9 silver pieces for every gold piece he gives the house, the house edge is 10 percent.

Payout: The payout is the rate of return a player gets when he wins, usually double the odds. It's important to understand that for a game of pure chance, all choices must lead to the same payouts over time. Think of the roulette board. A straight-up bet on a single number has a 37-to-1 chance of hitting, and pays 35-to-1. A bet on all of the numbers 1–12 has a 2.167-to-1 chance of hitting, and pays 2-to-1. A bet on red has a 1.111-to-1 chance of hitting, and pays 1-to-1. Doing the math on these bets show that they all have the same rate of return: a player loses 5.3 cents for every dollar bet.

Haunts

The distinction between a trap and an undead creature blurs when you introduce a haunt—a hazardous region created by unquiet spirits that react violently to the presence of the living. The exact conditions that cause a haunt to manifest vary from case to case—but haunts always arise from a source of terrific mental or physical anguish endured by living, tormented creatures. A single, source of suffering can create multiple haunts, or multiple sources could consolidate into a single haunt. The relative power of the source has little bearing on the strength of the resulting haunt—it's the magnitude of the suffering or despair that created the haunt that decides its power. Often, undead inhabit regions infested with haunts—it's even possible for a person who dies to rise as a ghost (or other undead) and trigger the creation of numerous haunts. A haunt infuses a specific area, and often multiple haunted areas exist within a single structure. The classic haunted house isn't a single haunt, but usually a dozen or more haunted areas spread throughout the structure.



Haunt Rules

Although haunts function like traps, they are difficult to detect since they cannot be easily observed until the round in which they manifest. *Detect undead* or *detect alignment* spells of the appropriate type allow an observer a chance to notice a haunt even before it manifests (allowing that character the appropriate check to notice the haunt, but at a –4 penalty).

A haunt can infuse a maximum area with a 5-foot radius per point of CR possessed by the haunt, but the actual area is usually limited by the size of the room in which the haunt is located.

When a haunt is triggered, its effects manifest at initiative rank 10 in a surprise round. All characters in the haunt's proximity can attempt to notice the haunt at the start of this surprise round by making a notice check). All haunts detect life sources and trigger as a result of the approach of or contact with living creatures, but some haunts can be tricked by effects like *hide from undead* or *invisibility*.

On the surprise round in which a haunt manifests, positive energy applied to the haunt (via channeled energy, cure spells, and the like) can damage the haunt's hit points (a haunt never gains a Will save to lessen the damage done by such effects, and attacks that require a successful attack roll to work must strike AC 10 in order to affect the haunt and not merely the physical structure it inhabits). Unless the haunt has an unusual weakness, no other form of attack can reduce its hit points. If the haunt is reduced to 0 hit points by positive energy, it is neutralized—if this occurs before the haunt takes its action at initiative rank 10, its effect does not occur.

A haunt can have virtually any effect identical to an existing spell effect, but often with different—and distinctly more frightening or unnerving—sensory or physical features than that spell effect normally has. (A haunt that has an effect not identical to an existing spell is certainly possible, but this requires designing a new spell effect.) A haunt might cause a room to explode into flames (duplicating *fireball* or *fire storm*), infuse a chamber with fear (duplicating *cause fear*, *scare*, or *fear*), or try to frighten a target to death (duplicating *phantasmal killer* or *slay living*). How the haunt's effects manifest are left to you to determine.

A neutralized haunt is not destroyed, and can manifest again after a period of time—to destroy a haunt, a specific action must be taken in the region to end the effect forever (such as burning a haunted house to the ground or burying the bones of the slaves who died on the site to create the haunt). This specific act is different for every haunt (although a number of nearby haunts often share the same destruction act).

Some haunts are persistent, and their immediate effects continue beyond the surprise round into actual full rounds. Persistent haunts continue to trigger their haunt effects once per round on their initiative rank until destroyed or they no longer have a target.

All primary effects created by a haunt are mind-affecting fear effects, even those that actually produce physical effects. Immunity to fear grants immunity to a haunt's direct effects, but not to secondary effects that arise as a result of the haunt's attack.

Elements of a Haunt

Haunts are presented in the following format.

Haunt Name: The haunt's name is followed by its CR.

XP: This is the amount of XP to award the PCs for surviving the haunt, as determined by its CR.

Alignment and Area: This line gives the haunt's alignment and the dimensions of the area it infuses (up to 5 feet per CR). If a haunt is persistent, this is noted here as well.

Caster Level: This is the haunt's effective caster level for the purposes of dispelling any ongoing effects with *dispel magic*, and for determining the results of spell effects it creates.

Notice: This indicates the skill check and DC required to notice the haunt in the surprise round before it manifests. The sensory input for what a successful check notices—such as a faint ghostly wailing, a smell of burning flesh, or fresh blood oozing from the walls—is listed in parentheses after the DC.

hp: This lists the haunt's effective hit points for the purposes of resolving positive energy damage. A haunt's hit points are equal to twice its CR, except in the case of a persistent haunt, in which case its hit points are equal to its CR × 4.5 (round fractions down).

Weakness: Any weaknesses the haunt might have, such as for haunts that can be tricked by effects like *hide from undead* or can be damaged by effects other than positive energy, are listed here.

Trigger: The conditions that can cause the haunt to manifest are given here. Proximity-triggered haunts occur as soon as a creature enters the haunt's area. A haunt triggered by touch does not activate until a living creature touches a specific object or location in its area, but it can sense (and thus target with its effects) any creature in its area.

Reset: This is the amount of time that must pass before a haunt can attempt to reset. Until it is destroyed, a haunt can reset after this period by succeeding on a DC 10 caster level check—failure indicates the haunt must wait that amount of time again before making another attempt to reset.

Effect: This details the haunt's exact effects, including a description of how the haunt manifests.

Destruction: This describes the act needed to permanently destroy the haunt.

Creating a Haunt

To make a haunt like the example below, follow these steps.

Step 1—Determine Base CR: A haunt's base CR is equal to 1 + the level of the spell it duplicates.

Step 2—Determine Actual CR: Select the elements you want the haunt to have and add up the adjustments to its CR to arrive at the haunt's final CR (see Table 8–2: CR Modifiers for Haunts).

Table 8–1: CR Modifiers of Haunts

Feature Type	CR Modifier
Persistent	+2
Notice DC	
15 or lower	–1
16–20	—
21–25	+1
26–29	+2
30 or higher	+3
Reset Time	
1 minute	+2
1 hour	+1
1 day	+0
1 week	–1
Example Weaknesses	
Slow (manifests at Initiative rank 0)	–2
Susceptible to an additional type of damage	–1 per additional type
Tricked by *hide from undead*	–2
Tricked by *invisibility*	–1
Tricked by Stealth*	–3
Triggered by touch	–2

* The haunt makes a caster level check instead of a Perception check to notice someone using Stealth.

Step 3—Determine Caster Level: A haunt's caster level is equal to its actual CR score.

Step 4—Determine Hit Points: A haunt's hit points are equal to twice its CR (or equal to its CR × 4.5 if the haunt is persistent).

Step 5—Calculate Attacks and Save DCs: A haunt's attack modifier (if one is needed) is equal to its CR. If a haunt's spell effect allows a saving throw to resist or negate the effect, the save DC is equal to 10 + the level of the spell + the ability modifier of the minimum ability score needed to cast that level of spell.

BLEEDING WALLS **CR 5**

XP 1,600

CE haunt (5 ft. by 20 ft. hallway)

Caster Level 5th

Notice Perception DC 20 (to hear the sound of soft sobbing)

hp 10; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Effect When this haunt is triggered, thick rivulets of blood course down the walls accompanied by the shrill shriek of a woman's scream. All creatures in the hallway are targeted by a *fear* spell (save DC 16).

Destruction The body of the maid entombed behind the walls must be extracted and given a proper burial.

Hazards

The adventuring world is filled with dangers beyond dragons and ravening fiends. Hazards are location-based threats that have much in common with traps, but are usually intrinsic to their area rather than constructed.

Hazards fall into three main categories: environmental, living, and magical. Environmental hazards include subterranean threats like cave-ins and wilderness dangers like forest fires. Living hazards are creatures that are generally too passive to be considered monsters, but are still a threat to unwary adventurers, such as dangerous molds, slimes, and fungi. Magical hazards are the most unpredictable, and can be the legacy of arcane experimentation, strange underground radiations, or ancient enchantments gone awry.

Hazards have challenge ratings like traps or monsters. A typical hazard triggers if a creature ventures near or into it, causing hit point damage, ability damage or drain, or some other harmful effect. Most can be detected by wary and knowledgeable PCs. Every hazard should have a means of escape or a way to eliminate the hazard, if not both.

Sample Hazards

Presented here are a variety of unusual hazards.

Accursed Pool (CR 3)

The lingering effects of ancient curses or harmful energy leaching from a submerged cursed magical item can turn a simple pool of water into a dangerous magical hazard. An accursed pool lures passersby into its depths with a *silent image* (DC 16 Will save to disbelieve) of glittering treasure at the bottom of its 10-foot depth. Any creature that reaches the treasure triggers the curse. A creature within the pool must make a DC 16 Will save or be affected by the curse, which warps its perception of the pool. The water seems to thicken into viscous goo, while the pool appears to distort to a depth of 40 feet. Swim checks in the pool suffer a –10 penalty and are at half normal speed as a result of these effects, and spellcasting within the pool requires a concentration check with a DC of 15 + the level of the spell being cast. An accursed pool radiates strong magic, and is destroyed by *dispel magic* or *remove curse* (caster level check DC 15).

Bad Air (CR 1 or 4)

An invisible hazard, pockets of low-oxygen gas present a danger to miners and spelunkers as well as cavern-delving adventurers. Nonflammable gases such as carbon dioxide or nitrogen are CR 1 and require a DC 25 Survival check to notice. Creatures breathing the air must make a Fortitude save (DC 15 + 1 per previous check) each hour or become fatigued. After a creature becomes fatigued, slow suffocation sets in (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 445). Creatures holding their breath can avoid these effects.

Flammable vapors such as coal gas are much more dangerous (CR 4). The gases displace breathable air in the lungs, causing fatigue as described above. In addition, any open flame or spark causes an explosion for 6d6 points of damage (Reflex save DC 15 for half) to all in the cavern or within 5 feet of an entrance. The fire burns away the oxygen in the air, leaving it unbreathable for 2d4 minutes. After an explosion, flammable gas usually takes several days to build up to dangerous levels again.

Dweomersink (CR 6)

Zones of magical entropy that disrupt spells, dweomersinks are occasionally formed at the sites of great magical duels, by the destruction of powerful artifacts, or by vortices of eldritch energy at the fringes of antimagic zones. They vary in size from small bubbles only a few feet across to large areas the size of a town. A successful DC 20 Spellcraft check detects a tingling in the air that heralds the presence of a nearby dweomersink. An active spell brought into a dweomersink may be dispelled, and any spell cast inside a dweomersink is subject to an immediate counterspell (both as *dispel magic*, caster level 8th). The resulting release of magical energy inflicts 1d6 points of damage per spell level in a 5-foot burst centered on the bearer of the spell entering the area or the caster of a new spell (Reflex save DC 15 for half damage). If multiple overlapping bursts hit the same target, only the most damaging applies. Once a spell effect has survived a dispel attempt, it is not affected again unless it leaves and reenters the dweomersink. More powerful dweomersinks are even more disruptive. Each +1 increase in CR increases the caster level of the dispel check by 2 and the save DC for the damaging burst by 1.

Ear Seekers (CR 5)

Ear seekers are tiny, pale-colored worms that dwell in rotting wood or other organic detritus. They can be noticed with a DC 15 Perception check. Otherwise, a living creature poking about their lair inadvertently transfers one or more ear seekers to its body. The seekers then search out a warm location on the creature, especially favoring the ear canal. Once there, they lay 2d8 eggs before dying. The eggs hatch 4d6 hours later and the larvae devour the surrounding flesh. Upon the death of their host, the new ear seekers crawl out and seek a new host. *Remove disease* kills any ear seekers or unhatched eggs in or on a host. Some ear seekers favor living in intact wood, often hiding in dungeon doors. The small pinholes left by this variety are particularly hard to spot (Perception DC 20).

EAR SEEKERS

Type infestation; **Save** Fortitude DC 15
Onset 4d6 hours; **Frequency** 1/hour
Effect 1d6 Con damage

Magnetized Ore (CR 2)

The strange energies of the subterranean world can charge rocks and veins of ore with powerful magnetic fields, creating a hazard for anyone carrying or wearing ferrous metals. Any steel or iron brought within 20 feet of the ore is drawn toward it. Medium-sized creatures carrying 30 or more pounds of ferrous metal are pulled toward the ore as if by the pull special ability (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 303). The ore has an effective CMB of +7 and CMD 17. Small creatures are pulled if they have 15 pounds of metal, Large if they have at least 60 pounds. For creatures of other sizes, modify the weight required as per the rules for carrying capacity (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 170). Creatures wearing metallic armor suffer a penalty to their CMD to resist the pull (–2 for medium armor, –4 for heavy armor). Affected creatures are pulled up to 20 feet and slammed against the rock for 2d6 points of damage and gain the grappled condition. Creatures not carrying large amounts of metal but holding metal items in their hands are affected by a disarm maneuver as the items are ripped free. Freeing a stuck item requires a successful grapple check against the ore's CMD.

Mnemonic Crystals (CR 3)

Mnemonic crystals are large (2–4 feet tall) clusters of violet quartz crystals that radiate a strong abjuration aura. They can be identified with a DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) check. Attuned to the unique energies of spellcraft, mnemonic crystals harvest magical energy for growth and defense. The crystals drain prepared spells from spellcasters within 30 feet, who must make DC 22 Will saves each round while in the crystals' area. Failure results in the loss of one prepared spell, chosen randomly. Spontaneous spellcasters such as sorcerers are unaffected.

Damaging or breaking the crystals causes them to release their absorbed spells in a burst of mental energy that does 1d6 points of Wisdom damage to all creatures in a 10-foot radius. Mnemonic crystals are exceedingly fragile (hardness 0, 1 hit point). In areas thick with the crystals, creatures passing through must make DC 10 Acrobatics checks to avoid stepping on or brushing against the crystals and breaking them.

Poison Oak (CR 1 or 3)

Contact with poison oak (CR 1) causes a painful rash, and the resulting itch leaves the hapless victim sickened until the damage is healed. Full body contact or inhaling the smoke from burning poison oak is particularly dangerous, and can be fatal (CR 3). A DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check reveals this seemingly innocuous plant for what it is. This hazard can also be used for similar noxious plants such as poison ivy, poison sumac, and stinging nettles, the latter not being hazardous when burned.

Infestations

Parasites such as ear seekers or rot grubs cause infestations, a type of affliction similar to diseases. Infestations can only be cured through specific means; no matter how many saving throws are made, the infestation continues to afflict the target. While a *remove disease* spell (or similar effect) instantly halts an infestation, immunity to disease offers no protection, as the infestation itself is caused by parasites.

POISON OAK

Type poison, contact; **Save** Fortitude DC 13
Onset 1 hour
Effect 1d4 Dex damage, creature sickened until damage is healed; **Cure** 1 save

POISON OAK (SEVERE EXPOSURE)

Type poison, contact or inhaled; **Save** Fortitude DC 16
Onset 1 hour; **Frequency** 1/hour
Initial Effect 2d4 Dex damage and 1d4 Con damage, creature sickened until damage is healed; **Secondary Effect** 1 Con damage; **Cure** 1 save

Rot Grubs (CR 4)

Rot grubs are nauseating parasites that feed on flesh and nest in corpses. Generally, a handful of the grubs infest a single corpse at a time, and a DC 15 Perception check is enough to notice and avoid the grubs. Otherwise, 1d6 grubs swiftly burst from the carcass to burrow into the creature, which can attempt a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid the grubs (but only if the creature is aware of the grubs' presence). Any amount of damage reduction is enough to provide immunity to infestation.

Once rot grubs have infested a living body, they burrow toward the host's heart, brain, and other key internal organs, eventually causing death. On the first round of infestation, applying flame to the point of entry can kill the grubs and save the host, but this inflicts 1d6 points of fire damage to the victim. Cutting the grubs out also works, but the longer the grubs remain in a host, the more damage this method does. Cutting them out requires a slashing weapon and a DC 20 Heal check, and inflicts 1d6 points of damage per round that the host has been infested. If the Heal check is successful, one grub is removed. *Remove disease* kills any rot grubs in or on a host.

ROT GRUBS

Type infestation; **Save** Fortitude DC 17
Onset immediate; **Frequency** 1/round
Effect 1d2 Con damage per grub

Mysteries and Investigations

A favorite weapon inexplicably stained in blood, a treasure purloined despite the best defenses, a locked room with a mangled corpse within—such elements might seem more at home in tales of crime and suspense than in the sword-swinging quests of most roleplaying games, but just as the literary genres of fantasy and mystery have a long and overlapping tradition, so too do aspects of crime and detective work hold the potential for memorable adventures. In fantasy, mysteries often take on puzzling new angles, as magic, the abilities of monsters, and other wondrous elements vastly enlarge the spectrum of possibilities. Yet fantasy opens up not just new avenues of crime, but also those of detection, and many classic capers might be solved in an instant merely by speaking a simple spell. Thus, the arena of crime, mystery, and investigation changes completely with the introduction of magic, forcing GMs interested in creating enigmatic adventures to think beyond the tropes of classic detective stories and consider the logic of impossible realms in their schemes.

When planning an adventure based around a mystery, a GM needs to consider the plot from two angles, conceiving both the mystery's elements and the investigative techniques of the detectives (typically the PCs).

The Fantasy Mystery

At the root of any fantasy mystery is a puzzle that needs to be solved. In laying such a foundation, a GM can take inspiration from traditional tales of conspiracy and deception. Once he has a basic plot, adding details relevant to a fantasy setting makes the mystery more believable, more difficult to solve, and better tuned to the elements of a magical world.

Create Levels: The best mysteries have more than one mystery going on. If someone is murdered, it might be fairly easy for the PCs to track the killer down. Creating extra layers gives the PCs more to work with and reduces the efficacy of divination spells. One person wants another dead, so he hires a thug to commit the murder. On his way to the victim's house, the murderer runs into a city guard, panics, and kills the guard. The next day he returns to the house and successfully murders the victim. Now the PCs have two murders to investigate, the second of which is the intended murder. And the murderer is not the instigator of the crime.

Consider Multiple Villains: When creating levels, consider having multiple villains playing roles in the crime. This can apply to non-criminal mysteries as well: if the local cleric is plagued with nightmares, it might have as much to do with the evil cult operating beneath the tavern as it does with the strange mushrooms his housekeeper has been putting in the soup. When a combination of factors contribute to a mystery, it's more difficult for the PCs to skip straight to the end.

Secrets upon Secrets: In a mystery, it's easy to consider everyone who isn't guilty as "innocent"—knowing nothing and holding nothing back. But anyone connected to a mystery might know secrets they don't wish to share for various reasons. Witnesses and suspects might hold clues they don't realize are clues: small incidents they can't imagine being connected to the mystery. They also have secrets of their own they wish to protect, which can act as red herrings.

The Truth: When creating an adventure based on a mysterious occurrence, it's vital to sketch out the timeline of events. Once the GM knows exactly what happened, it becomes easier to handle PCs who take unexpected tracks. What incidents led up to the mystery, who is involved, who knows details of the incident, how much time elapsed between events?

Running a Mystery

Running a mystery can also prove very different from a more linear, site-based adventure, as investigative adventures typically grant the PCs greater freedom to pursue their theories to multiple ends. When running a mystery adventure, keep the following in mind to make sure the adventure stays interesting and on track.

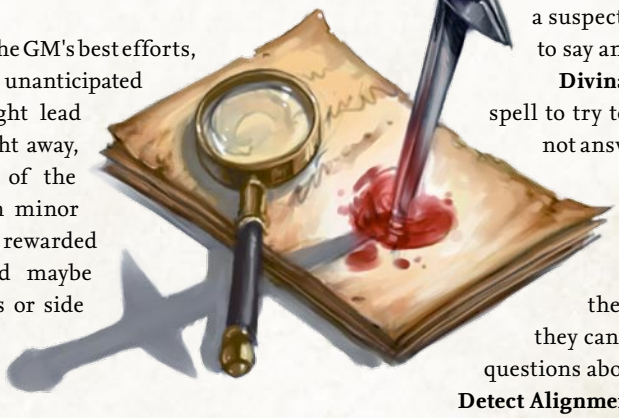
Clues: Details are the breadcrumbs by which a GM leads the PCs through a mystery adventure. Just because a mystery lacks literal dungeon walls to guide a party from encounter to encounter doesn't mean the GM loses any control. Sometimes a clue offers a direct guidepost from one encounter to the next, while other times they require more detail or investigation, changing their suggestions as information builds up. Clues allow GMs to guide the PCs from point to point while providing them with the illusion of choice. The characters can surely go anywhere they please and pursue all the routes of inquiry they like, but the adventure doesn't progress until they reach the next point.

Give the Right Details: In detective stories it's not uncommon for an investigator to crack a case based on his expansive field of knowledge or familiarity with a single detail. Yet even though characters in an adventure might be intimate with the specifics of a world, the players might not be. Few players can be expected to realize and act upon clues requiring in-depth knowledge of the world or continuity details that haven't already been highlighted in a campaign. In such cases, the GM might call for skill checks, giving the PCs opportunities to have revelations or realizations about the clues before them. This grants the players access to their characters' insights to motivate the investigation's progress, proving more satisfying than NPCs having all the big breakthroughs in a plot.

At the same time, it's very possible that a group might miss a clue completely or the adventure lacks a detail the GM didn't realize. It's up to the GM to make sure the PCs' investigations always have a direction. If all the clues lead to

brick walls or leave the party bogged down in argument and inaction, then it's time to introduce a new clue or NPC with a bit of extra insight. Sometimes even just having an NPC subtly remind the PCs of a forgotten facet of the mystery is enough to spark a new revelation, without having the players feel like they're being spoon-fed the plot.

Let the PCs Drive: It's tempting to negate all of the PCs' mystery-busting abilities to preserve a mystery's secrecy. In a mystery, more than other adventures, it's vital for the GM to be reactive. Let the PCs make use of their abilities. Let them find clues and decide where to go next—even if it means bumbling off course or into a red herring. The NPCs involved in the mystery should have their own agendas and take sensible precautions to protect themselves; the GM, however, shouldn't negate PC abilities across the board to make things harder.



Sleuth-Proof: Despite the GM's best efforts, a gaffe early on or an unanticipated line of investigation might lead the PCs to a solution right away, bypassing some or all of the clues and encounters. In minor cases, the PCs should be rewarded for their cleverness and maybe get to skip a few dangers or side encounters. In more significant instances, the GM can be reactive with his plot. Perhaps the PCs arrive at the criminal's house and find him dead, letting the GM create a new master villain and reuse clues and incidents the PCs skipped over the first time. Or perhaps the GM sows the seeds of a new mystery; a cryptic letter, evidence of magical coercion, or an ominous map all might hint at a greater plot. The PCs might think the mystery was straightforward, but the sown clues indicate the adventure is merely a setup for a more complex incident.

Sub-Adventures: A detailed mystery doesn't need to exclude the elements of more traditional adventures. Interspersing an investigation with combats, challenges, and even related dungeons can bolster a group's excitement and keep the mystery feeling like an adventure and not merely a drawn-out roleplaying encounter.

Magical Investigations

When formulating a mystery adventure, a GM needs to account for the realities of a fantasy world—primarily magic. While some crimes and criminals might prove vulnerable to the right spells, true masterminds will know about such magics and expend resources to stymie investigations relying upon them. GMs should also be familiar with the effects of common divination spells, as well as what spells might confound them.

Detect Thoughts: *Detect thoughts* is a useful spell when questioning witnesses. The GM should not place the criminal among the witnesses if the PCs are likely to use *detect thoughts*. However, witnesses will likely have opinions and dark thoughts that may seem suspicious and send the investigators in the wrong direction—making most realize the imprecision of the spell in group settings.

Discern Lies: By uncovering lies, the PCs can focus their investigations on what is being concealed—usually, the truth about the crime. There are other reasons that people lie, though. A suspect or witness might lie for a number of reasons, such as shame over what she was doing, fear of retribution, or to protect someone else. And a suspect can always deny lying and refuse to say anything more.

Divination: PCs can use the *divination* spell to try to solve the mystery. The GM need not answer their question plainly, however. In addition, multiple *divinations* about the same topic reveal the same advice, so unless the PCs follow the advice and learn what they can from that course of action, they cannot learn more by asking different questions about the crime.

Detect Alignment: Just because an NPC has an evil alignment doesn't mean he's a mystery's architect or even a villain. In common society, there are untold numbers of petty evils, but the crimes of a petty cheat probably have nothing to do with a greater plot. Thus, *detect alignment* can't be relied upon as the perfect villain detector. However, one of the surest ways to convince a group of a character's guilt is to have *detect alignment* fail when he's scrutinized. A clever villain with *undetectable alignment* could obscure the alignment of one or several innocents, throwing a hurtle in the way of magic-reliant investigators.

Modify Memory: Witnesses, suspects, and even criminals might not recall pertinent information if their minds have been tampered with. The GM should not use the spell too frequently, however. As with other clue-negating spells, the PCs should learn something from the fact that they learned nothing. At the very least, they might suspect compulsion magic—and thus the involvement of a spellcaster.

Speak with Dead: *Speak with dead* allows the characters to speak with a corpse, but the corpse knows only what it did in life. If the victim was attacked from behind, he may not have seen his murderer. *Speak with dead* also fails if the corpse has been a target of the spell within the past week, or if the corpse doesn't have a mouth. Be sure to give the PCs some clue for their efforts, however.

Puzzles and Riddles

While ancient ciphers and cunning sphinxes fill the pages of great fantasy tales, crafting a workable and believable puzzle that adds an air of mystery can be a challenge. What makes a great puzzle in a newspaper is rarely right for a puzzle in a dungeon. Puzzles in such publications are usually solved by one person, with no time limit, and modern-day knowledge. None of those things are true in most Pathfinder adventures. In such roleplaying situations you have a team of solvers, often pressed for time, and with only their characters' knowledge. Just as you customize encounters to your PCs' skills, you should customize a puzzle to both your players' skills and their PCs' characteristics. When putting together a puzzle, riddle, or similar knowledge-based challenge for your campaign, consider the four parts of a well-orchestrated puzzle: the setup, the mechanism, the clues, and the answer.

The Setup

Giving your puzzle a reason to exist is a crucial step to making sure the players are interested in your game. Any puzzle needs to feel like an important part of an adventure, not a barrier preventing the players from enjoying the experience. There should also be a reason players actually want to solve a puzzle, with at least an implied benefit and penalty if they do or don't.

Characters who select a life of adventure are not necessarily puzzle solvers, but they are good at getting out of dangerous situations. So when you introduce a puzzle, play to the characters' strengths—that is, have it matter to the plot of the adventure, or even threaten their lives. Having a dragon promising to roast the PCs alive if they can't answer its riddles makes finding the proper solution imperative.

Alternatively, not every puzzle needs to have a resolution immediately. A meaningful map or pictograph found in a strange ruin might hint at a campaign-spanning plot even though the PCs have no way of knowing that when they discover it. By feeding the PCs more information, through either their own research or later adventures, the GM gives the PCs the tools they need to make revelations without having a plot spoon-fed to them.

Whether a puzzle demands immediate attention or stretches out over several sessions, keep in mind that the game should not stop while it's being solved. Sometimes impending doom makes solving a puzzle necessary to survive, other times allowing an enigma to baffle players for several sessions makes it a more significant part of the plot. You should also consider the consequences should the PCs fail, and make sure your game can still progress if they do. While coming up with the wrong solution might deny the party some detail, piece of treasure, or option, it should never mean that the adventure comes to a halt.

The Mechanism

There are dozens of puzzle types, but not all of them are great for every adventure. When designing a puzzle, consider the story and environment, and decide whether the mechanism fits.

Logic Puzzles: These puzzles are popular, but be careful: when confronted by a logic puzzle, fears of middle-school math class haunt many players' brains, intimidating them away from even looking at the problem. In addition, all the rules of logic in the real world don't necessarily apply to a fantasy world. Having such a puzzle be half solved can help players know what state of mind to consider the problem in, and hint at the right path.

Mazes: Complex labyrinths are difficult to use, especially when employing a map and miniatures makes revealing a maze boring and obvious. At best, mazes should be simple, preferably nothing more than a single intersection or two, with the correct choices offering a safe path and the wrong ones leading to peril. Giving the PCs forewarning of the safe path earlier in an adventure or by means of another riddle rewards them for their cleverness, but only penalizes them with traps and additional challenges.

Physical Puzzles: The best types of puzzles are those you can hand out, giving your players something directly from the adventure to manipulate. If they face a door that must be opened, give them a sketch of a combination lock with letters on it and make them remember the name of the centuries-old lich's lost love. Or just give them a design with seven colored studs that need to be pressed in a hurry—are the buttons random, or does the rainbow shape in the background have some meaning? Physical puzzles can take any form you can imagine, and while they might be labor intensive to create, they can also prove the most memorable.

Riddles: Elusive questions can be the basis for entire adventures. One of the most important parts is to make sure that the answers are comprehensible to the PCs, not just the players. While players know a lot about monsters, treasure, and locations in their universe, not every PC does. Questions with answers that both players and PCs might reasonably know and understand often prove best, as it allows the players to wrack their brains just as their characters world, and not trust in purely real-world knowledge. Thus, if the PCs need to figure out which temple in a massive city contains their foe, a riddle like "I make wolves from men when I arrive, and men from wolves when I depart" could lead to the temple of the moon god.

Wordplay: Assuming your players are comfortable speaking English, you can use puns, anagrams, hidden words, and the like to befuddle them. Often such puzzles come off as being cute or quirky, so make sure that dour wordplay doesn't undermine your adventure and villains—while a sprite might naturally spout rhyming riddles, the same approach instantly robs a vampire of his menace.

The Clues

There's a significant distinction between clues and hints. A clue is something that's necessary to solve the puzzle. A hint, on the other hand, is something that helps open up an entirely solvable puzzle. While a clue might be meted out by the GM, often in the form of additional details found along with the puzzle, later in a adventure, or from a loose-tongued henchman, hints should be the domain of the PCs and bridge the gap between characters and players. While optimally players should strive to answer a puzzle using only the knowledge their characters possess, this can be a challenge for even the most experienced players. While formulating puzzles with answers that both the players and PCs can solve fixes this problem to a degree, so does having the players work with their PCs to gain hints. It's wholly possible, even likely, that a character possesses knowledge and insights a player doesn't. Depending on the complexity of a puzzle, calling for a skill check (typically Perception or a Knowledge skill) or even an Intelligence ability check might provide a hint. While such information might hint at the solution, it shouldn't blatantly answer the puzzle. This allows a GM to interject some backstory, forgotten detail, or element of his own reasoning into the solving process without merely giving up the answer. Also bear in mind that many spells can read thoughts, reveal hints, or otherwise affect or circumvent puzzles. Never deny PCs use of their abilities when faced with puzzles. Should those abilities make a puzzle less challenging than anticipated, reward the party for their cleverness, and perhaps consider such factors in future puzzles.

The Answer

Regardless of the type of puzzle, the answer should mean something. Perhaps the answer is the command word to a powerful wand, or the riddle of the three gems results in the players ending up with a magical treasure. An unmemorable answer is easy to spot, such as a number or piece of unrelated trivia. If your answer is unmemorable, the puzzle leading up to it might seem pointless. Make the players need the answer and they'll be excited about getting it.

It helps if the answer is something the players might think of when they're trying to figure out what type of brainbender you've thrown at them. A pirate's riddle might have a nautical theme, for example, or a sphinx's might concern the desert or ancient ruins. Just make sure the solution's possibilities aren't too broad or too narrow. For example, there are lots of animals, but not many seasons, making the latter the source of more achievable answers.

Sample Puzzles

Noted here are three classic types of fantasy riddles. If you're looking for more riddles, a simple online search for fantasy puzzles and riddles can reveal hundreds more.

Brainteaser Riddles: Here are a few basic question-and-answer riddles.

What question can you ask all day and get a different correct answer every time? *Answer*: "What time is it?"

What falls every day but never breaks? *Answer*: "Night."

What can you put in a wood box that will make it lighter? *Answer*: "Holes."

I Never Lie Puzzle: This is a simple and famous logic puzzle, wherein two guards protect two pathways, one to danger and one to safety. They present the conundrum that one always lies and one always tells the truth. Now have the PCs decide which is which. While a spell like *detect lies* might easily reveal this, so can posing questions with blatantly true answers (like simple equations), or a question like "If I asked you if the door you're guarding leads to safety, would you say yes?" wherein the guard is forced to answer truthfully.

Sequence Riddles: Riddles like this require the solver to find the next in a sequence, though many might require a hint or visual que.

What are the next 3 letters after "O, T, T, F, F, S, S"?

Answer: E, N, T. The first seven letters stand for: "one," "two," "three," "four," "five," "six," "seven."



Sanity and Madness

Insanity is an affliction inflicted upon those who suffer from extraordinary physical, mental, or spiritual anguishes and trials. Insanity can also be caused by exposure to particularly potent sources of unhinging horror, madness, or alien natures, such that the mind simply cannot withstand them. Insanity is a mind-affecting effect.

Going Insane

In-game, a person has a chance of going insane every time he suffers a tremendous shock to one of his mental ability scores—Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma. Every time a creature is reduced to a score of 0 in one of these scores, there's a chance he goes insane. (Note: Wisdom damage is particularly likely to cause insanity, since a 0 Wisdom score imparts a –5 penalty on all Will saves.) Either roll on the table on this page or select an insanity appropriate to the cause of what reduced the victim's score to 0. You should make the victim's saving throw in secret—he should not know the result, nor the type of insanity that might afflict him. These effects should play out naturally—some insanities (like phobias) take days or even months to trigger or have effects, while others (such as paranoia) are immediately obvious.

At your option, a creature can run the risk of going insane under extremely unusual situations, even when his mental ability scores are unharmed. A character suffering from long imprisonment might have to make a save against developing agoraphobia or claustrophobia. Someone repeatedly betrayed by allies might have to make a save against developing paranoia. And a poor soul whose mind is possessed by a powerful demon might have to make a save upon being exorcized to keep from becoming psychotic. The causes of such insanities are left to you as the GM to determine.

Insanity can also be inflicted via magic. Consider allowing the spell *insanity* to merely inflict 1 randomly determined insanity per 5 caster levels on its victim rather than causing permanent confusion. *Bestow curse* can also inflict a single insanity on a foe, although in this case the insanity is also a curse.

It's possible to suffer from multiple forms of insanity. If you become afflicted with a form of insanity you are already suffering from, the current DC of that insanity increases by +5.

Curing Insanity

All insanities have a DC that represents the insanity's strength. An insanity's DC indicates the Will save you need to roll in order to resist contracting the insanity when you are initially exposed to it, but also the DC you need to make to recover. Recovering from an insanity naturally is a lengthy process—once per week, you make a Will save against the insanity's current DC. If you succeed on this save, the insanity's DC is reduced by a number of points equal to your Charisma bonus (minimum of 1). You continue to suffer the full effects of the insanity until its DC is reduced to 0, at which point you are cured and the insanity vanishes completely.

Lesser restoration has no effect on insanity, but *restoration* reduces the current DC of one insanity currently affecting a target by an amount equal to the caster's level. *Greater restoration*, *heal*, *limited wish*, *miracle*, or *wish* immediately cures a target of all insanity.

Types of Insanity

When a creature goes insane, roll on the following table to determine what form of insanity strikes. Alternatively, you can assign the insanity to match the cause.

d%	Insanity
1–11	Amnesia
12–48	Mania/Phobia
49–68	Multiple Personality Disorder
69–78	Paranoia
79–84	Psychosis
85–100	Schizophrenia

Amnesia

Type insanity; **Save** Will DC 20

Onset immediate

Effect –4 penalty on Will saving throws and all skill checks; loss of memory (see below)

Description

A character suffering from amnesia cannot remember things; his name, his skills, and his past are all equal mysteries. He can build new memories, but any memories that existed before he became an amnesiac are suppressed.

Worse, the amnesiac loses all class abilities, feats, and skill ranks for as long as his amnesia lasts. He retains his base attack bonus, base saving throw bonuses, combat maneuver bonus, combat maneuver defense, total experience points, and hit dice (and hit points), but everything else is gone until the amnesia is cured. If a character gains a class level while suffering from amnesia, he may use any abilities gained by that class level normally. If the class level he gained was of a class he already possess levels in, he gains the abilities of a 1st-level character of that class, even though he is technically of a higher level in that class. If his amnesia is later cured, he regains all the full abilities of this class, including those gained from any levels taken while he was suffering from amnesia.

Mania/Phobia

Type insanity; **Save** Will DC 14

Onset 1 day
Effect target is sickened (if manic) or shaken (if phobic) as long as the source of the mania or phobia is obvious; chance of becoming fascinated or frightened (see below)

DESCRIPTION

A mania is an irrational obsession with a (usually inappropriate) particular object or situation, while a phobia is an irrational fear of a (usually commonplace) object or situation. Additionally, if a manic or phobic character is directly confronted by his obsession (requiring a standard action), he must make a Will save against the insanity or become fascinated (if manic) or frightened (if phobic) by the object for 1d6 rounds.

MULTIPLE PERSONALITY DISORDER

Type insanity; **Save** Will DC 19
Onset 2d6 days
Effect –6 penalty on Will saving throws and Wisdom-based skill checks; multiple personalities (see below)

DESCRIPTION

This is a complicated disorder that manifests as 1 or more distinct and different personalities within the same body and mind. The number of additional personalities the victim manifests equals the DC of the insanity divided by 10 (round down, minimum of 1 additional personality). Should the insanity worsen in some way (such as by the save DC increasing), the number of additional personalities increases as well. Likewise, the number of additional personalities decreases as the sufferer recovers and the insanity's DC decreases. The GM should develop these additional personalities.

Every morning, and each time the afflicted character is rendered unconscious, he must make a Will save against his insanity's DC. Failure indicates that a different personality takes over. A character's memories and skills remain unchanged, but the various personalities have no knowledge of each other and will deny, often violently, that these other personalities exist.

PARANOIA

Type insanity; **Save** Will DC 17
Onset 2d6 days
Effect –4 penalty on Will saves and Charisma-based skill checks; cannot receive benefit from or attempt the Aid Another action; cannot willingly accept aid (including healing) from another creature unless he makes a Will save against his insanity's DC

DESCRIPTION

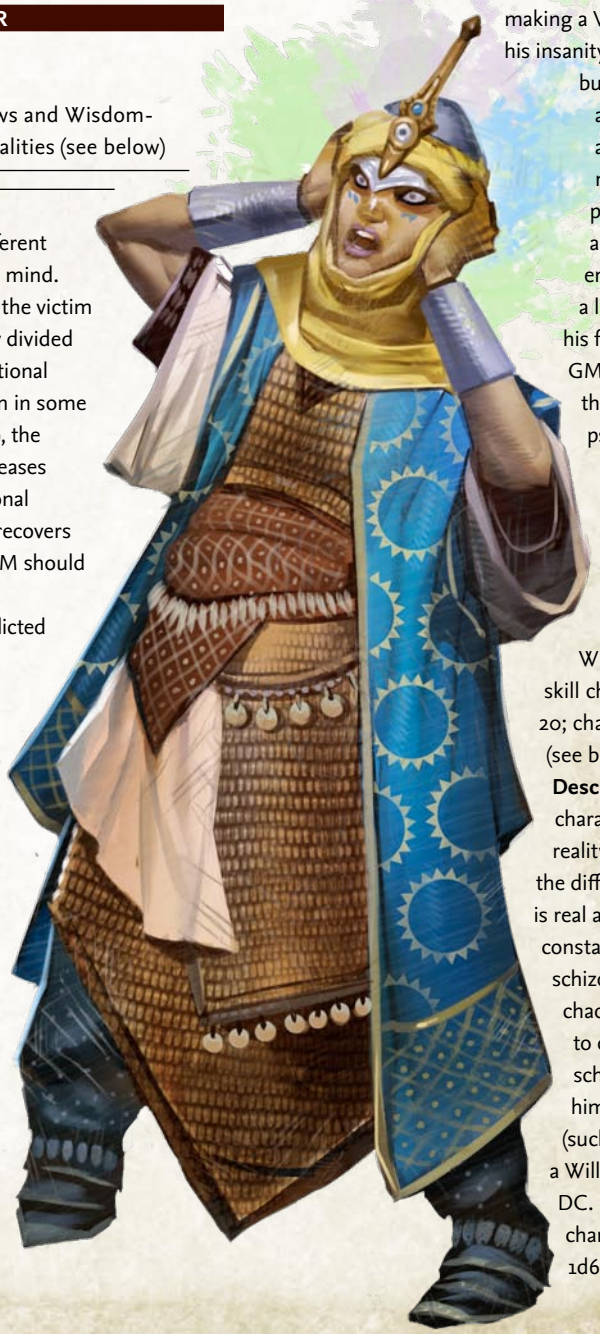
The paranoid character is convinced that the world and all that dwell within it are out to get him. Paranoid characters are typically argumentative or introverted.

PSYCHOSIS

Type insanity; **Save** Will DC 20
Onset 3d6 days
Effect character becomes chaotic evil; gains +10 competence bonus on Bluff checks to hide insanity

DESCRIPTION

This complex insanity fills the victim with hate for the world. He may suppress his psychosis for a period of 1 day by making a Will save against the DC of his insanity, otherwise he cannot help but plot and plan the death and destruction of his friends and enemies alike. For the most part, the impact of psychosis must be roleplayed, although not all players find entertainment in roleplaying a lunatic who's trying to do in his friends. In such cases, the GM should assume control of the character whenever his psychosis is in control.



SCHIZOPHRENIA

Type insanity; **Save** Will DC 16
Onset 1d6 days
Effect –4 penalty on all Wisdom and Charisma-based skill checks; cannot take 10 or take 20; chance of becoming confused (see below)
Description A schizophrenic character has lost his grip on reality, and can no longer tell the difference between what is real and what is not. These constant hallucinations cause the schizophrenic to appear erratic, chaotic, and unpredictable to others. Each time a schizophrenic character finds himself in a stressful situation (such as combat) he must make a Will save against his insanity's DC. Failure indicates that the character becomes confused for 1d6 rounds.



9 NPC Gallery



Raiders burst up from the ground, screaming their ululating challenge. The dun-colored tarps under which they'd been hiding caught the wind, flapping and filling the air with stinging sand. Unsurprisingly, they raced straight for Seoni. Valeros patted his camel affectionately.

"And here I thought you were going to be the ugliest part of this journey," he said. The camel, unmoved, spit.

"You okay up there, Seo?" he asked, drawing his sword.

"Next time," she said, "we're paying for a teleport." Then she stretched out her hand, and the wind rose to a howl, racing toward their attackers.

NPC Gallery

For every player character adventuring through a fantasy world, there exist dozens if not hundreds of nonplayer characters, each existing to provide vital services to characters, progress important story lines, or just add flavor between sagas. From the local farmer to the tavern storyteller and from the highest king to the poorest urchin, these characters are the residents of the worlds and stories all GMs craft. They are the allies and hindrances, the employers and victims, the cheering throngs and the booing crowds. Whenever the PCs need aid, have business, or venture off the beaten path, these are the characters ready to come to life.

Yet, for all the importance of the lords of the land, the business owners, and the ever-imperiled commonfolk, the meat of most adventures focuses on the monsters, villains, and dangers beyond familiar streets. Thus, when something inevitably goes awry at the local tavern, diplomacy breaks down at the royal court, or any of countless other unanticipated events arise, most GMs find themselves faking dice rolls or leafing through pages for statistics to adapt to the moment's needs. This chapter exists to serve GMs in those times, when they need statistics they didn't anticipate, one more encounter is required on the fly, or players zig when they were expected to zag.

The following pages present more than 80 NPCs common to the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*. The majority are not meant to be challenges in direct combat against groups of seasoned adventurers, but rather represent generic statistics to serve in any of a party's myriad less adventurous interactions. Should the GM need to know what the Appraise skill is of an average shopkeep or just how capable a sailor actually is at the wheel of a ship, these statistics offer a baseline for a wide variety of everyday characters. That's not to say that a host of dangerous encounters can't arise from these characters. Just as a group of monster-fighting gladiators or military troops prove lethal, so too could a torch-bearing mob of farmers and craftsmen turn deadly. Many of these NPCs also hold the potential to take on far greater roles in a campaign, as there's nothing stopping a GM from making a lethal bounty hunter or a notorious pirate captain the main villain of an entire series of adventures. Alternatively, this chapter might also serve as a shopping list of NPCs characters might employ as hirelings, henchmen, even temporary PCs should they find themselves in a pinch. Ultimately, these characters provide GMs with increased tools and options, remove the need for ad hoc statistics generation and many other game interruptions, and free GMs to focus their time and creativity on the most exciting parts of their games: their own adventures.

An NPC by Any Other Name

This chapter provides statistics for all manner of travelers and shopkeeps, guardsmen and drunkards, princesses and high priests, and dozens of other fantasy world residents. Yet, absent are characters such as explorers, mountain climbers, armada admirals, dragon riders, and countless other NPCs a party might encounter in the course of their adventures. The reasons for this are twofold: First, no list of characters could hope to satisfy all the occupants of every GM's imagination, and thus only a sampling of those that appear most often in *Pathfinder RPG* adventures appear here. Second, even though a stat block might be titled "guide," there's no reason a GM can't appropriate those statistics for an explorer, outrider, cowboy, or any other similar character he might require.

Thus, along with each NPC comes a description of what the character is, how it might be used in its basic form or as a variety of alternative characters, and even what other NPCs it might be found with (along with increased CRs for such groupings). Equipment suites typical of these characters' professions and appropriate to the GP value of characters of their level are also provided. Often, the descriptions contain suggested ideas for alternate equipment or replacement feats to better customize the NPCs for varied roles and different campaigns. As with any other aspect of these characters, these elements can be adjusted however the GM sees fit.

In addition, each NPC is grouped into a family of similar characters, both for ease of organization and so GMs seeking a specific type of character find a variety at their disposal (for example, while a CR 1/2 pickpocket might not fit the bill for an encounter, a CR 2 burglar might). Such also serves to make generating encounters using these characters easier, as NPCs with the same backgrounds or from the same walks of life are often found and faced together.

GMs are also encouraged to change the NPCs presented here to better suit their individual campaigns. Most of these characters have abilities suiting archetypical views of their roles and bear neutral alignments. Alignments, of course, are easily altered and skills—especially Craft, Knowledge, and Profession—can be exchanged on the fly to create characters of varying expertise.

The chart on the facing page also lists all of the archetypical characters in this chapter along with their class levels, organized by CR so GMs can more easily find and create challenges appropriate to their party's level. Overall, just as these characters are presented without personalities or agendas, their presented statistics can be molded by GMs to suit whatever roles they require.

Thus, from the dozens of NPCs presented, the true number of characters and encounters that can be based on them is limited only by a GM's imagination.

NPC Boons

Chapter 4 presents an optional system for boons—minor in-game bonuses and benefits specific NPCs can grant to PCs who befriend them. This system of favors and benefits encourages PCs to invest greater interest in working with NPCs and creates a way to reward characters with something other than experience and treasure. At the end of the statistics for each of the following NPCs is a suggestion for a minor benefit that is appropriate to the NPC and that works within this system. GMs who wish to employ these favors or create their own boons might use those presented here as guides for new benefits. At the same time, GMs should not feel that every one of the following NPCs has to offer exactly these boons, or any boon at all. Those interested in designing their own boons or customizing them to their game should feel free to modify these effects however they feel best suits their needs. A complete explanation of boons and how PCs might gain them appears on page 88.

Table 9–1: Pregenerated NPC Statistics

Archetype	Class	CR	Page
Foot Soldier	Warrior 1	1/3	286
Squire	Aristocrat 1	1/3	268
Village Idiot	Commoner 1	1/3	308
Acolyte	Cleric 1	1/2	304
Bandit	Warrior 2	1/2	258
Barmaid	Commoner 2	1/2	302
Farmer	Commoner 1/Expert 1	1/2	309
Pickpocket	Rogue 1	1/2	264
Shipmate	Expert 1/Warrior 1	1/2	294
Beggar	Commoner 1/Rogue 1	1	300
Cannibal	Barbarian 2	1	306
Caravan Guard	Fighter 2	1	282
Doomsayer	Adept 3	1	298
Drunkard	Commoner 1/Warrior 2	1	303
Guard	Warrior 3	1	260
Initiate	Monk 2	1	274
Prostitute	Expert 1/Rogue 1	1	301
Shopkeep	Expert 3	1	284
Storyteller	Bard 2	1	272
Street Thug	Fighter 1/Rogue 1	1	265
Vagabond	Commoner 2/Warrior 1	1	291
Burglar	Rogue 3	2	265
Cultist	Cleric 3	2	278
Wanderer	Bard 1/Rogue 2	2	290
Noble Scion	Aristocrat 4	2	288
Prisoner	Expert 4	2	270
Barkeep	Expert 4/Warrior 1	3	303
Dealer	Expert 1/Rogue 3	3	301
Guard Officer	Fighter 4	3	261
Pilgrim	Commoner 5	3	291
Slaver	Fighter 2/Ranger 2	3	266
Trapper	Ranger 4	3	276
Turnkey	Warrior 5	3	271
Battle Monk	Monk 5	4	275
Hedge Wizard	Commoner 2/Wizard 3	4	296
Medium	Cleric 5	4	299
Battle Mage	Evoker 6	5	256
Cavalry	Fighter 6	5	287
Fortune Teller	Bard 3/Sorcerer 3	5	299
Gladiator	Barbarian 3/Fighter 3	5	262
Minstrel	Bard 6	5	273
Monster Hunter	Ranger 6	5	257
Raider	Barbarian 6	5	280
Shaman	Adept 7	5	307
Tomb Raider	Rogue 6	5	257
Torturer	Expert 5/Fighter 2	5	271
Traveling Merchant	Expert 7	5	285
Archaeologist	Rogue 7	6	297
Beast Master	Ranger 7	6	263
Conjurist	Conjurer 7	6	279
Hermit	Druid 7	6	277
Highwayman	Fighter 4/Rogue 3	6	259
Holy Warrior	Paladin 7	6	269
Princess	Aristocrat 8	6	292
Watch Captain	Fighter 7	6	261
Guide	Expert 9	7	277
Knight	Aristocrat 2/Paladin 6	7	289
Sellsword	Fighter 8	7	283
Viking	Barbarian 2/Fighter 6	7	281
First Mate	Expert 4/Fighter 5	8	295
Mayor	Aristocrat 3/Expert 7	8	309
Noble	Aristocrat 10	8	289
Priest	Cleric 9	8	305
Slayer	Ranger 5/Assassin 4	8	267
Champion	Barbarian 5/Fighter 5	9	263
Merchant Prince	Expert 4/Rogue 6	9	285
Celebrity Bard	Bard 11	10	273
Chieftain	Warrior 12	10	307
General	Fighter 11	10	287
Guild Master	Rogue 11	10	267
Queen	Aristocrat 12	10	293
Bandit Lord	Fighter 8/Rogue 4	11	259
Bounty Hunter	Ranger 12	11	283
Captain	Expert 3/Fighter 9	11	295
Cult Leader	Cleric 10/Rogue 2	11	279
Pirate Captain	Fighter 7/Rogue 5	11	281
Sage	Expert 7/Abjurer 5	11	297
Saint	Paladin 12	11	269
High Priest	Cleric 13	12	305
King	Aristocrat 16	14	293
Master	Monk 15	14	275

Adventurers

Rapscallions, hired hands, monster hunters, tomb raiders, champions, and scoundrels, adventurers come with all manner of skills and agendas. While they might be questing heroes seeking to thwart villains and right wrongs, they might also be dangerous thieves seeking to make a fortune in valuable relics. These NPCs can serve as allies for a PC party or even as hirelings for a day or a single dungeon crawl. Alternately, they could be rival adventurers seeking to thwart the PCs in their own mission. Whether as allies or rivals, these NPCs might appear any time a party comes to realize they aren't the only adventurers around.



Battle Mage CR 5

XP 1,600

Human evoker 6

N Medium humanoid

Init +6; **Senses** Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+4 *mage armor*, +2 Dex)

hp 33 (6d6+12)

Fort +5, **Ref** +4, **Will** +5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +2 (1d4–1/19–20) or
wand of shocking grasp +2 touch (1d6 electricity)

Ranged dagger +5 (1d4–1/19–20)

Special Attacks intense spells +3

Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +9)
6/day—force missile (1d4+3)

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 6th; concentration +9)
3rd—*dispel magic*, *fly*, *haste*, *fireball* (2) (DC 17)
2nd—*flaming sphere* (DC 16), *glitterdust* (DC 15), *mirror image*, *protection from arrows*, *scorching ray* (DC 16)
1st—*burning hands* (DC 15), *color spray* (DC 14), *expeditious retreat*, *mage armor*, *shocking grasp*
0 (at will)—*dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *light*, *message*
Prohibited Schools enchantment, necromancy

STATISTICS

Str 9, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 17, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 17

Feats Combat Casting, Defensive Combat Training, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (evocation)

Skills Craft (Armor) +10, Craft (Weapons) +10, Fly +11, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (engineering) +7, Knowledge (geography) +7, Knowledge (history) +7, Perception +6, Ride +6, Spellcraft +12

Languages Common, Draconic, Elven, Giant

SQ arcane bond (wand)

Combat Gear *scrolls of fly* (2), *invisibility* (2), *minor image* (2), *wand of magic missile* (CL 5, 50 charges, arcane bond item), *wand of shocking grasp* (50 charges), tanglefoot bags (3); **Other Gear** daggers (2), 20 gp

Boon A battle mage can create scrolls at a 10% discount.

A battle mage is always ready for a fight. She knows that the one who strikes first strikes best. Never lacking in firepower, her versatility on the battlefield is always appreciated. Battle mages make excellent military fire support and magical bodyguards. They can be found alone, guarding a traveling merchant (CR 7) or guide (CR 8) or adventuring with a medium or minstrel, monster hunter or gladiator, and tomb raider (CR 9). A squad of four battle mages (CR 9) might be attached to an army.

Monster Hunter CR 5

XP 1,600

Human ranger 6

N Medium humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 shield)

hp 45 (6d10+12)

Fort +6, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk battleaxe +10/+5 (1d8+3/×3) or dagger +9/+4 (1d4+3/19–20)

Ranged +1 *composite longbow* +10/+5 (1d8+4) or Rapid Shot +1 *composite longbow* +8/+8/+3 (1d8+4/×3) or dagger +9 (1d4+3/19–20)

Special Attacks favored enemy (magical beasts +4, monstrous humanoids +2)

Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +3)

1st—*speak with animals*

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 16, **Con** 13, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 22

Feats Endurance, Far Shot, Improved Precise Shot, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Rapid Shot, Self-Sufficient

Skills Climb +11, Handle Animal +8, Heal +8, Knowledge (nature) +5, Perception +10, Ride +11, Stealth +11, Survival +12 (+15 to follow tracks), Swim +7

Languages Common

SQ hunter's bond (animal companion [hawk]), favored terrain (forest +2), track +3, wild empathy +5

Gear masterwork chain shirt, masterwork buckler, masterwork battleaxe, dagger, +1 *composite longbow* (+3 Str) with 40 arrows, cold iron arrows (10), alchemical silver arrows (10), light horse (combat trained), saddle, 4 gp

Boon A monster hunter can locate and track a particular wild beast or monster, leading the PCs to its lair.

A monster hunter is a clever, experienced hunter, riding the forest trails with her faithful hawk serving as her eyes above. Whether seeking a reward or bounty, an impressive trophy, or simply an epic fireside tale of the hunt, a monster hunter seldom rests or tarries long when she hears whispered tales of wild things on the prowl. Monster hunters can be outriders and protectors of the wilderness or skilled hunters. Different types of monster hunters can be easily created by changing the monster hunter's favored enemy, favored terrain, or animal companion.

A merchant prince often has a pair of monster hunters on payroll (CR 10) to dispose of threats to business. Patrols of four monster hunters (CR 9) might serve as wilderness border guards A monster hunter may also adventure with a battle mage, a medium or minstrel, and a tomb raider (CR 9).

Tomb Raider CR 5

XP 1,600

Human rogue 6

N Medium humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +1 shield)

hp 45 (6d8+18)

Fort +6, **Ref** +8, **Will** +2

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee shortsword +7 (1d6+1/19–20)

Ranged mwk shortbow +8 (1d6/×3)

Special Attacks sneak attack +3d6

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 17, **Con** 14, **Int** 14, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 18

Feats Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (Disable Device), Stealthy, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +12, Appraise +11, Bluff +5, Climb +10, Disable Device +20, Escape Artist +14, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +11, Knowledge (local) +6, Linguistics +6, Perception +14 (+17 to find traps), Sleight of Hand +12, Stealth +14, Swim +5, Use Magic Device +8

Languages Aklo, Common, Terran, Undercommon

SQ rogue talents (fast stealth, rogue crawl, trap spotter), trapfinding +3

Combat Gear antitoxin; **Other Gear** masterwork studded leather, masterwork buckler, masterwork shortbow with 20 arrows, short sword, *eyes of the eagle*, magnifying glass, masterwork thieves' tools, sunrod, 18 gp

Boon A tomb raider could agree to appraise the PCs' goods or to travel with them and disable a trap.

Tomb raiders are cunning explorers of ruined delves and trap-haunted dungeons and daring looters of ancient, treasure-laden crypts. They are invaluable allies, helping any would-be explorers get in and out without falling prey to lurking death and hidden danger. Of course, if a tomb raider should happen to find and keep the choicest bits for himself, who would know? He would never tell. A tomb raider might also be found as a rival inside a dungeon, perhaps seeking to loot the treasure inside before the PCs can. Replacing his Sleight of Hand skill with Craft (trapmaking) makes him an even more dangerous foe.

Tomb raiders make excellent burglars and scouts. A tomb raider often works alone, but he may also cooperate with an archaeologist and a pair of burglars (CR 8). A tomb raider scout might be found with a monster hunter (CR 7) or even with a group of four raiders (CR 9). Adventuring tomb raiders often travel with a medium or minstrel, a battle mage, and a gladiator or monster hunter (CR 9).

Brigands

All sorts of dangers stalk the roads and frontiers of untamed lands. Aside from monsters, uncouth thugs and dangerous miscreants unfit for life among civilized folk beat their living out of travelers and settlers daring to find their own paths. Whether lone highwayman or bands of ambush-laying robbers, these pirates of the trade ways are more than unthinking beasts—they're cunning bandits who know their prey and deadly art all too well.



Bandit CR 1/2

XP 200

Human warrior 2

CN Medium humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** Perception –1

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 shield)

hp 11 (2d10)

Fort +3, **Ref** +2, **Will** –1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee rapier +3 (1d6+1/18–20) or sap +3 (1d6+1 nonlethal)

Ranged composite longbow +4 (1d8+1/×3)

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 14, **Con** 11, **Int** 10, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 16

Feats Dodge, Point Blank Shot

Skills Climb +4, Handle Animal +3, Intimidate +3, Ride +5, Stealth +2

Languages Common

Gear studded leather, buckler, composite longbow (+1 Str) with 20 arrows, rapier, sap, light horse (combat trained)

Boon Bandits can allow the PCs to pass without robbing them and can alert them to ambush sites within a day's travel, granting a +2 circumstance bonus on Perception checks to notice ambushes. They might also be able to get the PCs an audience with a powerful local bandit lord.

Bandits are the scourge of the highway, robbing the rich and poor alike. Freebooting scoundrels simply out for a good time, bandits care only about themselves and their band of rogues. They accost and shake down innocent travelers, hijack poorly-guarded merchant caravans, charge tolls at remote bridges, or simply plunder isolated farmsteads and villages.

Bandits can be deserters from an army, disaffected huntsmen, rootless drifters with no taste for hard work, cattle rustlers or horse thieves, or even folk-hero freedom fighters who rob from the rich to feed the poor.

Bandits can be used as low-level archer soldiers (N alignment, replace Dodge feat with Weapon Focus [longbow]) or crossbowmen (replace longbow with light or heavy crossbow), or as guards manning city walls (LN alignment, replace rapiers with longswords and replace Dodge feat with Weapon Focus [longsword]). They can also be used as bored young nobles or dandies out on a hunt or as low-level scouts or outriders.

Bandits are usually found in pairs (CR 1) or in a gang of a dozen accompanying a highwayman (CR 8). They often make up the rank-and-file members of a bandit lord's gang (CR 12).

Highwayman CR 6

XP 2,400

Human fighter 4/rogue 3

CN Medium humanoid

Init +4; **Senses** Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +4 Dex)

hp 53 (7 HD; 4d10+3d8+18)

Fort +8, **Ref** +9, **Will** +2; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1, evasion, trap sense +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *spiked chain* +12/+7 (2d4+4) or sap +10/+5 (1d6+1 nonlethal)

Ranged mwk composite longbow +11/+6 (1d8+1/×3)

Special Attacks sneak attack +2d6

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 18, **Con** 14, **Int** 13, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +10 (+14 when tripping); **CMD** 21 (23 vs. trip)

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Combat Expertise, Deceitful, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain), Greater Trip, Improved Feint, Improved Trip, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (spiked chain), Weapon Specialization (spiked chain)

Skills Acrobatics +14, Appraise +5, Bluff +12, Climb +5, Disable Device +11, Disguise +14, Escape Artist +10, Intimidate +4, Perception +7 (+8 to find traps), Ride +9, Sleight of Hand +8, Stealth +14, Swim +5

Languages Common, Halfling

SQ armor training 1, rogue talent (finesse rogue), trapfinding +1

Combat Gear *potion of invisibility*; **Other Gear** +1 *chain shirt*, +1 *spiked chain*, masterwork composite longbow (+1 Str) with 20 arrows, sap, *cloak of resistance* +1, disguise kit, light horse (combat trained) with saddle, silk rope, smokestick, thieves' tools

Boon Highwaymen can allow the PCs to pass without being robbed, or they could attempt to steal an item or deliver a secret message directly to an NPC.

Highwaymen are notorious outlaws or flamboyant criminals who flaunt the law, prey upon innocent travellers, and revel in the discomfiture their predations have upon the local constabulary. Highwaymen love deception and trickery and elevate taunting to an art form. For highwaymen, the humiliation of an enemy can be more important than a successful heist. Highwaymen can be used as expert spies or scouts, or even as agile gladiators.

Two highwaymen might be the bodyguards of a guildmaster (CR 11), while a trio of highwaymen may serve as the henchmen of a bandit lord or bounty hunter (CR 12). A lone highwayman may lead a gang of a dozen bandits (CR 8) or travel with a minstrel and a pair of cavalry for his gang (CR 9).

Bandit Lord CR 11

XP 12,800

Human fighter 8/rogue 4

CN Medium humanoid

Init +6; **Senses** Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 18, flat-footed 18 (+5 armor, +1 deflection, +6 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 shield)

hp 74 (12 HD; 8d10+4d8+12)

Fort +9, **Ref** +13, **Will** +4; +2 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +2, evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *frost keen rapier* +20/+15/+10 (1d6+6/15–20 plus 1d6 cold) or sap +17/+12/+7 (1d6+2 nonlethal)

Ranged mwk composite longbow +18/+13/+8 (1d8+2/×3)

Special Attacks rogue talent (bleeding attack), sneak attack +2d6, weapon training (light blades +1)

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 22, **Con** 13, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 31

Feats Bleeding Critical, Blind-Fight, Critical Focus, Dazzling Display, Dodge, Improved Critical (rapier), Mobility, Shatter Defenses, Spring Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier), Weapon Specialization (rapier)

Skills Acrobatics +20, Appraise +3, Bluff +10, Climb +6, Diplomacy +5, Disable Device +12, Escape Artist +10, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (local) +5, Perception +10 (+12 to find traps), Ride +10, Sense Motive +5, Stealth +21, Survival +4

Languages Common

SQ armor training 2, rogue talent (finesse rogue), trapfinding +2

Combat Gear *potion of disguise self*; **Other Gear** +1 *chain shirt*, +1 *buckler*, +1 *frost keen rapier*, masterwork composite longbow (+2 Str) with 20 arrows, sap, *belt of incredible dexterity* +2, *boots of striding and springing*, *cloak of resistance* +1, *ring of protection* +1, light horse (combat trained) with saddle, thieves' tools

Boon Bandit lords can grant safe passage from bandit attacks for the PCs and their allies for up to 3 days. They can also arrange the purchase or sale of goods as if the gp limit was for a community one size larger.

Bandit lords are the daring masterminds of entire gangs of bandits, often ruling over camps in the centers of trackless woods or the equally trackless warrens of a slum or sewer inside a great city. Some hide their identity behind disguises or a nom de guerre, while others strive for fame or infamy. Bandit lords can be used as assassins, duelists, or royal swordmasters. Bandit lords may have a pair of sellswords as bodyguards and sparring partners (CR 12), or may travel with a battle mage, sellsword, and a gang of eight bandits (CR 12).

City Watch

Whether a lone constable minding a sleepy burg or officers of a highly trained force in a vast metropolis, members of the city watch patrol their beats, staving off the criminal elements and keeping innocents safe from harm. The best-organized city watches employ members with a variety of skills, from expert combatants to spell-casters, and often organize them in ranks similar to military orders. Yet as often as guards serve as welcome allies, crooked watchmen abound, and even the best only serve those who prove they're on the right side of the law.



Guard CR 1

XP 400

Human warrior 3

LN Medium humanoid

Init +0; **Senses** Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18 (+8 armor)

hp 19 (3d10+3)

Fort +4, **Ref** +1, **Will** +1

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee halberd +5 (1d10+3/×3) or heavy flail +5 (1d10+3/19–20) or sap +5 (1d6+2 nonlethal)

Ranged heavy crossbow +3 (1d10/19–20)

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 11, **Con** 13, **Int** 9, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5 (+7 sunder); **CMD** 15 (17 vs. sunder)

Feats Alertness, Improved Sunder, Power Attack

Skills Intimidate +5, Perception +3, Ride –3, Sense Motive +2

Languages Common

Combat Gear *potions of cure light wounds* (2); **Other Gear** half-plate, heavy crossbow with 10 bolts, halberd, heavy flail, sap, 5 gp

Boon A guard can give accurate directions to any non-secret location in the city and can allow a PC to enter or leave through a gate after hours or without paying a gate tax.

Guards of the city watch are vigilant soldiers, dedicated to keeping the peace and maintaining order. They defend the city walls and gates against external threats, but they also stand ready to break up fights and brawls, disarming or sundering weapons drawn in anger, forcing unruly citizens apart, and tending the wounded.

Different types of guards may be created with lighter armor (breastplates and heavy shields) and one-handed weapons (battle axes or longswords). Replacing guards' halberds with glaives, guisarmes, or ranseurs gives them a reach attack. Outfitting guards with pikes makes a group of pikemen, while giving them tower shields and short swords creates crossbowmen for a siege. Temple guards can replace Improved Sunder with Exotic Weapon Proficiency (two-bladed sword). Prison guards might replace Improved Sunder with Improved Unarmed Strike and Power Attack with Exotic Weapon Proficiency (whip). Four guards and a turnkey (CR 6) or a torturer (CR 7) can provide security for a small prison or dungeon.

Guards may be encountered alone, in pairs (CR 3), in groups of four (CR 5), or as a patrol of six accompanied by a guard officer (CR 7), depending on how dangerous their city or neighborhood is.

Guard Officer CR 3

XP 800

Human fighter 4

LN Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19 (+9 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 34 (4d10+12)

Fort +6, **Ref** +2, **Will** +1; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee mwk guisarme +9 (2d4+5/×3) or sap +7 (1d6+3 nonlethal)

Ranged net +5 ranged touch (entangle) or javelin +5 (1d6+2)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with guisarme)

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 18

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dazzling Display, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (net), Skill Focus (Intimidate), Weapon Focus (guisarme), Weapon Specialization (guisarme)

Skills Intimidate +11, Perception +3, Ride +2, Sense Motive +2

Languages Common

SQ armor training 1

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*; **Other Gear** full plate, masterwork guisarme, javelin, nets (2), sap

Boon A guard officer can alert the PCs to local customs, traditions, tricks, and suspicious activity, granting a +2 bonus for 24 hours on opposed Perception and Sense Motive checks within the city. She can also arrange a meeting with a watch captain for the PCs.

Guard officers supervise guards in their duties and respond to major disturbances, using their grim demeanors and skill at arms to quell conflict. They coordinate well in battle with the guards under their command, rounding up troublemakers and preventing their escape.

Guard officers can also be used as highly skilled gladiators or flamboyant bounty hunters. They might even be found as royal guardsmen in a king's throne room. In an evil society, guard officers may wear spiked armor and be outfitted with scythes or spiked chains instead of guisarmes and poisoned hand crossbows instead of nets.

Guard officers usually patrol with four guards (CR 6), or three guard officers may serve as adjutants to a watch captain (CR 8). Two guard officers can escort a battle mage (CR 7) to respond to magical threats. Four guard officers and a champion (CR 10) form an elite arena fighting team, while two guard officers and two slavers (CR 7) might guard a valuable shipment of slaves.

Watch Captain CR 6

XP 2,400

Human fighter 7

LN Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19 (+9 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 57 (7d10+19)

Fort +8, **Ref** +4, **Will** +4; +2 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +2

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *halberd* +14/+9 (1d10+10/×3) or sap +11/+6 (1d6+4 nonlethal)

Ranged composite longbow +8/+3 (1d8+4/×3)

Special Attacks weapon training (pole arms +1)

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 13, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +11 (+15 trip); **CMD** 22 (24 vs. trip)

Feats Alertness, Combat Expertise, Dazzling Display, Greater Trip, Improved Trip, Iron Will, Persuasive, Weapon Focus (halberd), Weapon Specialization (halberd)

Skills Diplomacy +5, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (engineering) +5, Perception +6, Profession (soldier) +5, Ride +2, Sense Motive +8

Languages Common, Halfling

SQ armor training 2

Combat Gear *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2), tanglefoot bags (2); **Other Gear** masterwork full plate, *+1 halberd*, composite longbow (+4 Str) with 20 arrows, sap, *cloak of resistance* +1, 35 gp

Boon A watch captain may detain an NPC of up to 9th level for 24 hours and allow a single PC access for questioning, or he could assign one patrol of guards to assist the PCs inside the city for up to 1 hour.

Watch captains are stern and canny veterans, experienced soldiers who have seen it all on the battlefield and lived to tell the tale. Quick of mind and naturally suspicious, they are thorough and professional in leading investigations yet also tactful when dealing with highborn and lowborn alike.

Watch captains might also be used as high-ranking officers or low-ranking generals in an army, while a single watch captain can serve as the castellan of a fortress. Replacing the halberd and Improved Trip feat with a ranseur and Improved Disarm creates a watch captain who disarms opponents instead of tripping them.

Watch captains may be encountered leading an investigative team of a guard officer and a battle mage (CR 8) or leading larger patrols in force (CR 8 for one patrol of an officer and four guards; +1 CR per additional patrol). A watch captain might also be encountered as the non-noble companion of a holy warrior or knight (CR 8).

Coliseum

Whether exotic warriors hired to perform as entertainers or skilled criminals forced to fight for survival, the combatants of coliseums face dire threats for the enjoyment of throngs of spectators. Such characters might serve a variety of roles, and one day's allies might be the next day's opponents. In all cases, these characters live to do battle and survive only by their brutality and skill, spreading blood upon arena sands, prison yards, or savage battlefields, or wherever they pass.



Gladiator CR 5

XP 1,600

Human barbarian 3/fighter 3

N Medium humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+7 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, –2 rage, +2 shield)

hp 57 (6 HD; 3d12+3d10+21)

Fort +9, **Ref** +5, **Will** +5; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee mwk trident +13/+8 (1d8+5) or mwk trident +11/+6 (1d8+5) and +1 *light steel shield* with mwk shield spikes +10 (1d6+5)

Ranged mwk trident +11 (1d8+5) or javelin +9 (1d6+5)

Special Attacks rage (9 rounds/day), rage powers (knockback)

TACTICS

Base Statistics When not raging, the gladiator has **AC** 23, touch 14, flat-footed 19 (+7 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 shield); **hp** 45; **Fort** +7, **Will** +3; **Melee** mwk trident +11/+6 (1d8+3) or mwk trident +9/+4 (1d8+3) and +1 *light steel shield* with mwk shield spikes +8 (1d6+3); **Ranged** mwk trident +11 (1d8+3) or javelin +9 (1d6+3); **Str** 16, **Con** 13; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 23; **Skills** Climb +6, Swim +6

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 16, **Con** 17, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 25

Feats Dodge, Double Slice, Improved Shield Bash, Shield Focus, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (trident)

Skills Acrobatics +10 (+14 jump), Climb +8, Intimidate +5, Perception +10, Swim +8

Languages Common

SQ armor training 1, fast movement

Gear +1 *breastplate*, +1 *light steel shield* with masterwork shield spikes, javelins (5), masterwork trident, 1 gp

Boon Gladiators can provide free access to the arena even after hours and can help PCs purchase non-magical exotic weapons at a 10% discount.

Gladiators are as varied in their combat styles as are the nations of their birth, but all seek to trade blood for gold and glory. Many emphasize quickness and defense over brute strength, sizing up their foe before leaping into a blood fury with sword and shield. Gladiators can be used as bodyguards, riot police in a city, or elite military skirmishers. Replacing Dodge with Exotic Weapon Proficency creates an exotic weapon master. Outside the arena, gladiators are rarely found without a pair of drunkards to help celebrate their latest victory (CR 6).

Beast Master CR 6

XP 2,400

Human ranger 7

N Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (+5 armor, +1 Dex, +1 shield)

hp 59 (7d10+21)

Fort +7, **Ref** +6, **Will** +3

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *warhammer* +12/+7 (1d8+5/×3) or +1 *warhammer* +10/+5 (1d8+5/×3) and +1 *handaxe* +10/+5 (1d6+5/×3)

Ranged composite longbow +8/+3 (1d8/×3)

Special Attacks favored enemy (humanoid [human] +4, animal +2)

Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 4th; concentration +5)

1st—*longstrider, speak with animals*

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 22

Feats Diehard, Double Slice, Endurance, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Lunge, Step Up, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting

Skills Climb +11, Handle Animal +9, Heal +5, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +5, Knowledge (nature) +5, Perception +11, Ride +10, Stealth +10, Survival +11 (+14 to follow tracks), Swim +10

Languages Common

SQ favored terrain (urban +2), hunter's bond (animal companion), track +3, wild empathy +6, woodland stride

Gear +1 *chain shirt*, +1 *handaxe*, +1 *warhammer*, composite longbow with 20 arrows, 26 gp

Boon Beast masters can assist the PCs for the duration of a single hunt of a humanoid or animal target.

Beast masters are exotic warriors and beast-tamers who delight the crowds with the help of their wild accomplices, as they are matched in tandem against larger beasts. This often ends poorly for their animal companion, but there are always more beasts to tame and train. Beast masters can be used as lower-level bounty hunters (fighting with paired saps), royal gamekeepers, or big game hunters in the wild.

Typical animal companions for beast master gladiators include apes, bears, big cats, crocodiles, dinosaurs, hyenas, monitor lizards, rhinoceroses, and wolves. Beast masters mounted on roc animal companions can make an elite aerial strike force.

Beast masters and their animal companion may be encountered alone, hunting or simply swapping stories with a monster hunter and a trapper (CR 8), or as a trio working with a bounty hunter (CR 12).

Champion CR 9

XP 6,400

Human barbarian 5/fighter 5

CN Medium humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 15 (+7 armor, +2 Dex, –2 rage)

hp 105 (10 HD; 5d12+5d10+45)

Fort +12, **Ref** +4, **Will** +4; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1, improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +1

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +1 *adamantine vicious greatsword* +19/+14 (2d6+13/17–20 plus 2d6 vicious) or spiked gauntlet +16/+11 (1d3+6)

Ranged javelin +12 (1d6+6)

Special Attacks rage (14 rounds/day), rage powers (intimidating glare, strength surge +5), weapon training (heavy blades +1)

TACTICS

Base Statistics When not raging, the champion has **AC** 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17; **hp** 85; **Fort** +10, **Will** +2; **Melee** +1 *adamantine vicious greatsword* +17/+12 (2d6+10/17–20 plus 2d6 vicious) or spiked gauntlet +14/+9 (1d3+4); **Ranged** javelin +12 (1d6+4); **Str** 18, **Con** 14; **CMB** +14 (+18 sunder); **CMD** 26 (28 vs. sunder); **Skills** Climb +8, Swim +7

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 14, **Con** 18, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +16 (+20 sunder); **CMD** 28 (30 vs. sunder)

Feats Dazzling Display, Greater Sunder, Improved Critical (greatsword), Improved Sunder, Intimidating Prowess, Power Attack, Shatter Defenses, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword)

Skills Acrobatics +13 (+17 jump), Climb +10, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +18 (+20 when raging), Perception +4, Ride +4, Survival +5, Swim +9

Languages Common

SQ armor training 1, fast movement

Gear +1 *breastplate*, +1 *adamantine vicious greatsword*, javelins (5), spiked gauntlet, 15 gp

Boon A champion can introduce the PCs to a general, merchant prince, or noble who is a fan, granting a +10 bonus on Diplomacy checks with that person. She can also order a gladiator to assist the PCs for 24 hours.

The champion is mistress of the arena, leaving in her wake a trail of wrecked armaments, battered bodies, and shattered dreams. Raising her bloodied blade, she exults in the roar of the crowd and the terror she inspires in her foes. Champions can also be used as barbarian chieftains or mercenary captains. A champion is usually encountered alone or in the company of a pair of lesser gladiators (CR 10).

Criminals 1

The lowest criminals haunt the alleys and slums of even the proudest cities. Slinking from their dives and basement lairs to prey upon the weak and unwary, they take what they can, making meager livings that only afford them the opportunity to go on living their violent lives, while ever hoping to make a big score. These lesser criminals often organize into gangs or, under a more influential leader, into whole guilds, becoming significantly more dangerous and daring then they ever could be alone.



Pickpocket CR 1/2

XP 200

Human rogue 1

N Medium humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+1 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 5 (1d8+1)

Fort +1, **Ref** +5, **Will** –1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee sap +0 (1d6 nonlethal)

Ranged dart +3 (1d4)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 17, **Con** 12, **Int** 13, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +0; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 13

Feats Deft Hands, Skill Focus (Sleight of Hand)

Skills Acrobatics +7, Appraise +5, Bluff +6, Disable Device +9, Disguise +8, Escape Artist +7, Knowledge (local) +5, Perception +3 (+4 to find traps), Sense Motive +3, Sleight of Hand +12, Stealth +7

Languages Common, Halfling

SQ trapfinding +1

Combat Gear bag of caltrops; **Other Gear** padded armor, darts (4), sap, disguise kit, thieves' tools

Boon A pickpocket can attempt to steal a small item for the PCs or plant a small item on a target.

Pickpockets are the bane of the marketplace—innocuous waifs with innocent smiles and deft hands who can cut a purse in an eyeblink. Pickpockets could also serve as any of the countless street urchins or guttersnipes found on the streets of any large city.

Adding a dagger or short sword turns a pickpocket into a desperate mugger. Replacing Deft Hands with Deceitful and changing Skill Focus from Sleight of Hand to Bluff can make a con artist pickpocket, while changing Skill Focus to Disable Device makes for a good apprentice lock-picker or trapspringer. Replacing the Appraise skill with Perform creates common acrobats, jugglers, or mummers, perhaps members of a troupe that engages in a little larceny on the side.

In pairs (CR 1), one pickpocket usually provides a distraction for her partner to take advantage of. In large cities and markets, pickpockets often work in gangs of six (CR 4) or even more. A wanderer might employ a pickpocket assistant (CR 3), while a storyteller or minstrel might employ half a dozen pickpockets to help "work" the crowd (CR 5 or 6). A shady barkeep might keep two pickpockets on staff disguised as serving girls, along with his two regular barmaids, to supplement his tavern's income (CR 5).

Street Thug CR 1

XP 400

Human fighter 1/rogue 1
NE Medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +2 Dex)
hp 16 (2 HD; 1d10+1d8+6)
Fort +3, **Ref** +4, **Will** +0

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee quarterstaff +4 (1d6+3) or
quarterstaff +2/+2 (1d6+3/1d6+1) or
dagger +4 (1d4+3/19–20) or
sap +4 (1d6+3 nonlethal)
Ranged dagger +3 (1d4+3/19–20)
Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 15, **Con** 13, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 12
Base Atk +1; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 16
Feats Skill Focus (Intimidate), Toughness, Two-Weapon Fighting
Skills Climb +8, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (local) +4, Perception +5 (+6 to find traps), Stealth +7
Languages Common
SQ trapfinding +1
Gear masterwork studded leather, daggers (2), quarterstaff, sap, manacles (2)
Boon A street thug could attempt to kidnap or threaten a particular NPC, deliver a message, or create a disturbance with a street brawl whose distraction causes a –2 penalty on opposed Perception checks for 1 minute.

Street thugs are the alleybashers and bullyboys of the streets. They are the crude muscle employed by other criminals to keep rivals at bay and shake down hapless shopkeeps and business owners. Innocent townsfolk live in fear of a street thug slipping out of the shadows to administer a brutal beating.

In more lawless cities, street thugs can serve as corrupt guardsmen or as a vigilante militia. Street thugs can also be used as bouncers in a tavern or casino. Replacing Two-Weapon Fighting with Intimidating Prowess makes a street thug a better extortionist. Outside of cities and towns, street thugs can also be used as bandits or brigands, or as low-level guards for a merchant caravan.

A single street thug can be a prostitute's pimp (CR 3) or the intimidating partner of a pickpocket (CR 2). A pair of street thugs might operate with a slaver (CR 5) or torturer (CR 6), or they might work as bodyguards for a dealer acting as a minor crimelord (CR 5). Six street thugs might form a riot-busting brute squad (CR 6).

Burglar CR 2

XP 600

Human rogue 3
N Medium humanoid
Init +3; **Senses** Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +3 Dex)
hp 16 (3d8+3)
Fort +2, **Ref** +6, **Will** +1
Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee sap +3 (1d6+1 nonlethal) or
dagger +3 (1d4+1/19–20)
Ranged mwk composite shortbow +6 (1d6+1/×3) or
dagger +5 (1d4+1/19–20)
Special Attacks sneak attack +2d6

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 17, **Con** 12, **Int** 14, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8
Base Atk +2; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 16
Feats Deft Hands, Skill Focus (Perception), Stealthy
Skills Acrobatics +9, Appraise +8, Bluff +5, Climb +9, Disable Device +13, Disguise +5, Escape Artist +11, Knowledge (local) +8, Perception +9 (+10 to find traps), Sleight of Hand +11, Stealth +11, Swim +7
Languages Common, Elven, Halfling
SQ rogue talent (quick disable), trapfinding +1
Combat Gear *potion of expeditious retreat*, *potion of feather fall*, tanglefoot bag; **Other Gear** leather armor, dagger, sap, masterwork composite shortbow (+1 Str) with 20 arrows, *universal solvent*, climber's kit, 50-ft. silk rope with grappling hook, masterwork thieves' tools
Boon A burglar can open a trapped item for PCs or search a building for traps. She might break into a house to recover an item for the PCs or break a PC out of jail.

Burglars are prowlers of cities and towns, dancing cat-like along rooftops and slipping quietly into homes and shops by night.

Changing Skill Focus (Perception) to Skill Focus (Disable Device) turns a burglar into an expert safecracker, while replacing Deft Hands and Skill Focus (Perception) with Point Blank Shot and Weapon Focus (shortbow) makes a skulking sniper. Replacing Skill Focus (Perception) with Skill Focus (Acrobatics), and changing the quick disable rogue talent to ledge walker or stand up creates a thief-acrobat. Changing a burglar's rogue talent is a good way to customize further.

Burglars usually work alone but will sometimes hire a pickpocket as a lookout (CR 3). A trio of burglars might cooperate to rob a large house or bank, with three street thugs for muscle and a pickpocket lookout (CR 7). A burglar may also work in concert with a barkeep and barmaid (CR 5) to rob patrons' rooms of valuables.

Criminals II

The artists and masterminds of all manner of illicit ventures, these criminals make a career of their lawless trades, flaunting the law and gambling with the lives of others for their own gain. While not always outright evil, such characters prove more concerned with themselves than any matter of morality or legality, and they possess the cunning, force of will, or foresight to either dupe or avoid agents of the law. Typically groups of less organized or skilled criminals serve these kingpins, though in some cases, true masters of the illicit arts prefer to work alone.



Slaver CR 3

XP 800

Human fighter 2/ranger 2
NE Medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +2 Dex)
hp 30 (4d10+8)
Fort +8, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1; +1 vs. fear
Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee mwk guisarme +9 (2d4+3/×3) or
mwk sap +8 (1d6+3 nonlethal) or
spiked gauntlet +7 (1d4+3)
Ranged bolas +7 (1d4+3)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with guisarme)
Special Attacks favored enemy (humans +2)

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8
Base Atk +4; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 19
Feats Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bolas), Precise Shot, Step Up, Weapon Focus (bolas), Weapon Focus (guisarme)
Skills Climb +12, Handle Animal +3, Knowledge (geography) +4, Perception +8, Ride +7, Stealth +9, Survival +8 (+9 to follow tracks), Swim +8
Languages Common
SQ track +1, wild empathy +1
Combat Gear *feather token* (whip), tanglefoot bags (2); **Other Gear** masterwork studded leather, bolas (3), masterwork guisarme, masterwork sap, spiked gauntlet, climber's kit, drow poison (2 doses), manacles
Boon Slavers can provide information on slave-trading routes, major customers, and the likely location of specific enslaved individuals, providing a +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy checks to gather information about such topics.

Slavers are the scourge of free societies, sneaking into towns and villages by night and capturing the innocent, spiriting them away to underground slave markets or taking them by ship to mines, plantations, and pleasure palaces across the sea.

Slavers can also be used as riot police, low-level bounty hunters, exotic gladiators, or any kind of guard or soldier who prefers to capture opponents rather than kill them.

Slavers will sometimes employ a pair of prostitutes to inveigle their victims into a compromising position (CR 5) or a pair of street thugs to help overpower victims (CR 5). Slavers might also be found with captured slaves; these slaves could be any of the NPCs in this chapter, such as commoners or aristocrats.

Slayer CR 8

XP 4,800

Human ranger 5/assassin 4

NE Medium humanoid

Init +8; **Senses** Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 18 (+4 armor, +4 Dex)

hp 63 (9 HD; 5d10+4d8+18)

Fort +7, **Ref** +10, **Will** +1; +2 vs. poison

Defensive Abilities uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *kukri* +13/+8 (1d4+3/15–20) or
+1 *kukri* +11/+6 (1d4+3/15–20) and mwk kukri +11/+6 (1d4+1/15–20)

Ranged +1 *composite shortbow* +13/+8 (1d6+3/×3) or
shuriken +12/+7 (1d2+2) or
shuriken +10/+5 (1d2+2) and shuriken +10/+5 (1d2+1)

Special Attacks death attack (DC 15), favored enemy (humans +4, elves +2), sneak attack +2d6, true death

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 18, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 24

Feats Deadly Aim, Endurance, Improved Critical (kukri), Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Point Blank Shot, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +15, Bluff +5, Climb +15, Craft (alchemy) +5, Disable Device +10, Disguise +10, Escape Artist +10, Intimidate +10, Perception +10, Sleight of Hand +15 (+19 to hide weapons), Stealth +21, Survival +10 (+12 to follow tracks), Swim +6

Languages Common, Elven

SQ favored terrain (urban +2), hidden weapons, hunter's bond (allies), poison use, track +2, wild empathy +5

Combat Gear *potions of disguise self* (2), *potion of expeditious retreat*, *potion of gaseous form*; **Other Gear** +1 *studded leather*, +1 *kukri*, +1 *composite shortbow* (+2 Str) with 20 arrows, masterwork kukri, shuriken (20), *cloak of elvenkind*, climber's kit, disguise kit, giant wasp poison (2), large scorpion venom (2), masterwork thieves' tools

Boon Slayers can obtain poisons for the PCs at a 20% discount. They can also arrange to kill or capture targets for the PCs' for 20% less than their usual fee (as determined by the GM).

Slayers are cold-blooded killers, assassins for hire. They are cunning tricksters, deadly snipers, masters of the knife in the back and the storm of shuriken whistling from either hand. Slayers may also be used as ninjas, spies, or particularly deadly enforcers.

Slayers often work alone, sometimes as chief enforcer for a guild master (CR 11), but many work with accomplices, such as three burglars (CR 9), a pair of highwaymen (CR 10), or a half-dozen slavers (CR 10).

Guild Master CR 10

XP 9,600

Human rogue 11

N Medium humanoid

Init +5; **Senses** Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 22, **touch** 15, **flat-footed** 17 (+5 armor, +5 Dex, +2 shield)

hp 60 (11d8+11)

Fort +5, **Ref** +13, **Will** +8

Defensive Abilities evasion, improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +3

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *rapier* +14/+9 (1d6/18–20) or
sap +13/+8 (1d6–1 nonlethal)

Ranged +1 *light crossbow* +14/+9 (1d8+1/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +6d6 plus 6 bleed

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 20, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 22

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Deadly Aim, Deceitful, Iron Will, Rapid Reload, Stealthy, Vital Strike, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +19, Bluff +20, Diplomacy +15, Disable Device +30, Disguise +22, Escape Artist +22, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (local) +10, Linguistics +5, Perception +15 (+20 to find traps), Sense Motive +15, Sleight of Hand +10, Stealth +23

Languages Common, Halfling, Undercommon

SQ rogue talent (bleeding attack, finesse rogue, resiliency, slippery mind, trap spotter), trapfinding +5

Combat Gear *feather token* (whip); **Other Gear** +1 *mithral chain shirt*, +1 *buckler*, +1 *light crossbow* with 10 bolts, +1 *rapier*, sap, *belt of incredible dexterity* +2, *cloak of resistance* +1, *elixir of truth*, *goggles of minute seeing*, disguise kit, masterwork thieves' tools

Boon A guild master can arrange to smuggle people or items into or out of secured areas, can command a robbery, break-in, or assault on a target, or can arrange to buy or sell illegal items (treat gp limit as that of a community one size category larger).

Guild masters are crime lords par excellence. They are masters of every criminal art and have worked their way up from being common hoods to become cunning masterminds of their own organization. Guild masters can serve as spies, assassins, or master safecrackers, or as bandit lords or shady merchant princes.

A guild master often keeps a slayer or two as bodyguards and enforcers (CR 11 or 12), but some with more flamboyance prefer to keep a gladiatorial champion and sellsword (CR 12) or half a dozen sellswords (CR 13). A guild master may also be found in the company of a pair of nobles or merchant princes of uncertain morals (CR 11).

Crusaders

Champions of righteous quests and agents in the direct service of deities, crusaders hunt the enemies of their faith wherever they lurk. While servants of holy groups might seek out cultists, witches, evil mages, and all manner of other heretics—on missions either righteous or misguided—the minions of foul divinities too might hunt down those who oppose their faiths. Whatever their association, crusaders are driven by their beliefs and can prove to be among the most devoted allies or fanatical enemies.



Squire CR 1/3

XP 100

Human aristocrat 1

N Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Perception –1

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12 (+1 armor, +1 Dex, +1 shield)

hp 5 (1d8+1)

Fort +1, **Ref** +1, **Will** +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee lance +1 (1d8+1/×3) or
light pick +1 (1d4+1/×4)

Ranged shortbow +1 (1d6/×3)

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 13, **Con** 12, **Int** 9, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +0; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 12

Feats Animal Affinity, Mounted Combat

Skills Craft (armor) +3, Craft (weapons) +3, Handle Animal +6, Knowledge (nobility) +3, Ride +6

Languages Common

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*; **Other Gear** padded armor, light wooden shield, lance, light pick, shortbow with 20 arrows, light horse (combat trained) with riding saddle

Boon A squire can make a personal introduction to a knight or help the PCs buy a combat trained mount or riding gear at a 5% discount. A squire might also agree to serve a fighter, paladin, or ranger PC, either for a limited time, or until granted knighthood.

Squires are aspiring knights, robust youths who train in skill at arms but also busy themselves with tending and caring for their master's gear, keeping it sharp, clean, and ready to use. Squires also learn the courtly arts and etiquette. After proving their loyalty and skill in battle, squires usually become knights. In lands where knighthood is only granted by a king or other monarch, some squires remain so for their entire lives.

Squires can be used as heralds, standardbearers, scouts, or royal messengers. They might also be used as skirmishers or light cavalry, or perhaps as the guards of a minor noble's manor house. A group of squires could also serve as a noble hunting party.

Simply giving a squire heavier armor can make a more formidable mounted combatant, while replacing the pick with a scimitar or longsword creates a nomadic horselord warrior.

A squire often accompanies a knight (CR 7), or a pair of squires may accompany a noble scion (CR 3). Six squires can make a patrol of scouts or a hunting party (CR 3). Three squires can serve as outriders for a caravan, along with three caravan guards (CR 5), or six squires might work with a highwayman (CR 7).

Holy Warrior CR 6

XP 2,400

Human paladin 7

LG Medium humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +4

Aura courage (10 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+7 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 51 (7d10+13)

Fort +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +6

Defensive Abilities divine grace +2; **Immune** disease, fear

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 *greatsword* +10/+5 (2d6+4/19–20) or lance +9/+4 (1d8+3/×3) or dagger +9/+4 (1d4+2/19–20)

Ranged +1 *composite longbow* +11/+11/+6 (1d8+3/×3) or dagger +10 (1d4/19–20)

Special Attacks smite evil (3/day, +2 attack and AC, +7 damage)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +9)

At Will—*detect evil*

Paladin Spells Prepared (CL 4th; concentration +6)

2nd—*eagle's splendor*

1st—*bless weapon*, *divine favor*

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 17, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 22

Feats Deadly Aim, Manyshot, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Rapid Shot

Skills Craft (armor) +4, Craft (weapons) +4, Diplomacy +6, Handle Animal +6, Heal +4, Knowledge (nobility) +4, Knowledge (religion) +4, Perception +4, Ride +10, Sense Motive +4

Languages Common

SQ aura of good, channel positive energy (DC 15, 4d6), divine bond (weapon +1), lay on hands (3d6, 5/day), mercies (fatigued, dazed)

Gear +1 *breastplate*, +1 *greatsword*, +1 *composite longbow* (+2 Str) with 20 arrows, 10 cold iron arrows, and 10 alchemical silver arrows, dagger, lance, silver holy symbol, light horse (combat trained) with military saddle

Boon A holy warrior can accompany the PCs for up to 3 days on a mission consistent with his alignment or can send a squad of up to four temple guards (as guards) for 1 day.

Holy warriors are divinely sanctified and anointed warriors, raining death with bow and blade upon the forces of darkness and bringing hope and rescue to the desperate. Holy warriors are versatile combatants and could be masters of a temple or monastery. A holy warrior might command ten temple guards (as guards, CR 9), while a pair of holy warriors might escort a priest (CR 10). A half dozen could be a saint's honor guard (CR 13).

Saint CR 11

XP 12,800

Human paladin 12

LG Medium humanoid

Init –1; **Senses** Perception +6

Aura courage (10 ft.), justice (10 ft.), resolve (10 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 9, flat-footed 22 (+9 armor, –1 Dex, +4 shield)

hp 92 (12d10+26)

Fort +15, **Ref** +8, **Will** +13

Defensive Abilities divine grace +5; **DR** 5/magic; **Immune** charm, disease, fear

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 *evil outsider bane scimitar* +15/+10/+5 (1d6+3/15–20) or light hammer +14/+9/+4 (1d4+2)

Ranged light hammer +11 (1d4+2)

Special Attacks channel positive energy (DC 21, 6d6), smite evil (+5 attack and AC, +12 damage)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +17)

At Will—*detect evil*

Paladin Spells Prepared (CL 9th; concentration +14)

3rd—*dispel magic*, *magic circle vs. evil*

2nd—*bull's strength*, *resist energy*, *shield other*

1st—*bless weapon*, *divine favor* (2), *lesser restoration*

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 8, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 23

Feats Alignment Channel, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Extra Channel, Improved Critical (scimitar), Magical Aptitude, Power Attack

Skills Diplomacy +20, Handle Animal +10, Knowledge (religion) +10, Perception +6, Perform (oratory) +6, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +20, Use Magic Device +21

Languages Celestial, Common

SQ aura of good, divine bond (weapon +3), lay on hands (6d6, 15/day [4 for channeling only]), mercies (sickened, diseased, nauseated, stunned)

Combat Gear *scrolls of expeditious retreat* (4), *see invisibility* (1), and *true strike* (4); **Other Gear** +1 *half-plate of invulnerability*, +2 *heavy steel lion's shield*, +1 *evil outsider bane scimitar*, cold iron light hammers (2); *headband of alluring charisma* +2, silver holy symbol

Boon A saint can craft or commission a good-aligned magical item for the PCs at a 20% discount, arrange an audience with a good-aligned NPC of any level, or obtain a response to a single question to her deity as if using a *commune* spell.

A saint is the embodiment of the crusader ideal. A saint might head a crusader temple or order or could be matriarch of her own religious tradition. A saint usually keeps a priest and holy warrior as advisors (CR 12), or a saint with a squad of four holy warriors might accompany a king (CR 15).

Dungeon

While dungeons often conjure images of deadly traps and lurking monsters, they first and foremost serve as places to confine criminals and captives. Whether locked away and forgotten in the oubliettes of evil lords or serving out just punishments in heavily guarded cells, a prisoner must acquire unique skills to survive incarcerated life. By the same token, the guards who watch over dangerous wards gain their own expertise, both at dealing with sneaky captives and wresting what they desire from even the most uncooperative convict.



Prisoner CR 2

XP 600

Human expert 4

N Medium humanoid

Init –1; **Senses** Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 9, touch 9, flat-footed 9 (–1 Dex)

hp 26 (4d8+8)

Fort +3, **Ref** +0, **Will** +5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee improvised dagger +2 (1d4)

STATISTICS

Str 9, **Dex** 8, **Con** 14, **Int** 13, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 11

Feats Catch Off-Guard, Diehard, Endurance

Skills Craft (choose one) +8, Climb +5, Escape Artist +5, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +8, Knowledge (engineering) +8, Perception +8, Profession (choose one) +8, Sleight of Hand +5, Survival +8, Swim +5

Languages Aklo, Common

Boon A prisoner can impart secrets of a prison they have inhabited, granting a +2 circumstance bonus on Perception, Survival, and Knowledge (dungeoneering or engineering) checks within that prison. A prisoner can also draw a map of a prison, or might have information about other prisoners or know which guards are corrupt.

Prisoners are hapless wretches who have spent uncounted years locked away in the deepest cells. Battered and bruised, their minds assaulted by the endless imprisonment and the mad ravings of weak-minded cellmates, prisoners endure through sheer force of will and the hope that one day they shall see their freedom. Prisoners may be found in town jails, large prisons, or underground dungeons, either as convicted criminals, political prisoners, or wretched captives.

Prisoners can be used for escaped convicts, beggars, galley slaves, shipwreck survivors, escaped slaves, or similar outlaws or desperate folk. Giving a prisoner the Throw Anything feat makes a prisoner skilled with improvised melee and ranged weapons. Giving him a Skill Focus feat makes an expert being held prisoner for his skill or knowledge, perhaps someone the PCs are hired to rescue. Prisoners might have Great Fortitude, Iron Will, or Lightning Reflexes to represent the hardships they have overcome.

Prisoners may be found alone or in a work gang of a half-dozen under the watchful eye of a slaver (CR 6). Five prisoners can serve as the crazed flock of a cultist (CR 7). A dozen prisoners outfitted with pitchforks and other farm implements makes an angry peasant mob (CR 9).

Turnkey CR 3

XP 800

Human warrior 5

N Medium humanoid

Init +0; **Senses** Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19 (+9 armor)

hp 37 (5d10+10)

Fort +5, **Ref** +1, **Will** +0

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee mwk guisarme +9 (2d4+4/×3) or
spiked gauntlet +8 (1d4+3) or
sap +8 (1d6+3 nonlethal)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with guisarme)

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 11, **Con** 12, **Int** 8, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +8 (+10 bull rush); **CMD** 18 (20 vs. bull rush)

Feats Alertness, Improved Bull Rush, Intimidating Prowess, Power Attack

Skills Intimidate +10, Perception +4, Sense Motive +4

Languages Common

Combat Gear tanglefoot bags (2); **Other Gear** +1 *half-plate*, masterwork guisarme, sap, spiked gauntlet

Boon A turnkey can allow the PCs to locate and speak to prisoners, and potentially even release them. Like prisoners, turnkeys possess detailed knowledge of specific prisons.

Turnkeys are jailers and wardens, walking through prison halls and keeping the inmates in line with public beatings. Though dim-witted, most turnkeys are experienced enough to see through attempts to deceive them unless the talker is quite clever.

Turnkeys can also be used as armed porters, gate guards, or well-armored warehouse guards. In non-good cities, turnkeys might be used as thuggish city guards or brute squads.

Changing a turnkey's feats creates a variety of different NPCs. A turnkey with Skill Focus (Sense Motive) instead of Improved Bull Rush is an even more canny judge of character, while Skill Focus (Intimidate) creates an even scarier jailer. Replacing Improved Bull Rush with Improved Overrun or Improved Sunder gives turnkeys alternate combat maneuvers to use. The Blind-Fight feat allows turnkeys to operate more effectively in dark dungeons, and Combat Reflexes combined with Stand Still makes turnkeys almost impossible for escaped prisoners to slip by.

A turnkey will usually have a pair of guards to assist in his patrols (CR 5), or four guards in particularly dangerous prisons (CR 6). Four turnkeys might be found together in a well-staffed guardroom (CR 7). A slaver might be accompanied by two turnkey guards (CR 6), and a torturer often has two turnkeys as guards for her charges (CR 7).

Torturer CR 5

XP 1,600

Human expert 5/fighter 2

NE Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18 (+8 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 52 (7 HD; 2d10+5d8+19)

Fort +6, **Ref** +2, **Will** +5; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 *heavy flail* +10 (1d10+7/19–20) or
unarmed strike +9 (1d3+4 plus Scorpion Style) or
mwk whip +10 (1d3+4 nonlethal)

Reach 5 ft. (15 ft. with whip)

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +9 (+11 grapple); **CMD** 20 (22 vs. grapple)

Feats Exotic Weapon Proficiency (whip), Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Intimidating Prowess, Persuasive, Scorpion Style, Skill Focus (Profession [torturer])

Skills Craft (traps) +4, Diplomacy +6, Heal +6, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +3, Perception +11, Profession (torturer) +19, Sense Motive +11

Languages Common

Combat Gear vials of acid (2), alchemist's fire (2), greenblood oil (2 doses), tanglefoot bags (2); **Other Gear** +1 *banded mail*, +1 *heavy flail*, masterwork whip, masterwork torturer's tools (+5 competence bonus on Profession [torturer] checks)

Boon A torturer can question an individual delivered by the PCs, arrange for an NPC of up to 6th level to be detained for 24 hours, or release an individual from the torture chambers.

Torturers, hated by nearly everyone, are kept in the dark corners of tyrannical lords' castles to subject their prisoners to unspeakable torments with fire, acid, persuasion, intimidation, delicate instruments, or even their bruising fists. Sometimes these encounters are quests for truth, other times merely grim entertainments, but they always involve inflicting pain.

Torturers can be used as pit fighters, royal headsmen, gladiatorial trainers, or drill sergeants in cruel armies. Torturers might also be sadistic castle guards or even members of the city watch in especially brutal cities. The dungeons beneath a temple to an evil god could also have torturers on hand for sacred rituals.

A torturer often has a turnkey or a pair of street thugs as brutish assistants (CR 6). Some torturers are accompanied by four guards or two slavers instead (CR 7). A torturer might be paired with a slayer (CR 9), or two torturers could serve a guild master (CR 11).

Entertainers

Performers of all walks lighten the daily burden of common folk with tales and song, comedy and drama. Yet, within the power of such skilled players also lies the ability to spread news and knowledge, rally the spirit, or incite revolution. Entertainers take a wide variety of forms, from comedians and wandering bards, to evangelists and skilled orators, to fools and scholars. Whatever their path, when entertainers talk, the people listen.



Storyteller CR 1

XP 400

Human bard 2

N Medium humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 shield)

hp 11 (2d8+2)

Fort +1, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2; +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee rapier +1 (1d6/18–20) or whip +1 (1d3)

Ranged shortbow +3 (1d6/×3)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (15 ft. with whip)

Special Attacks bardic performance 9 rounds/day (countersong, distraction, fascinate [DC 14], inspire courage +1)

Bard Spells Known (CL 2nd; concentration +5)

1st (3/day)—*comprehend languages*, *hideous laughter* (DC 14), *ventriloquism*

0 (at will)—*dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 13), *ghost sound* (DC 13), *message*, *prestigiditation*

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 13, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 14

Feats Dodge, Skill Focus (Perform [Oratory])

Skills Bluff +8, Diplomacy +11, Disguise +10, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (local) +7, Perception +4, Perform (act) +8, Perform (oratory) +11, Sense Motive +11, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +6

Languages Common, Elven

SQ bardic knowledge +1, versatile performance (oratory)

Gear masterwork studded leather, buckler, rapier, shortbow with 20 arrows, whip, disguise kit, light horse (combat trained) with riding saddle

Boon A storyteller can pass along a small bit of lore or gossip that grants a +2 circumstance bonus on a PC's next Knowledge (history or local) check.

A storyteller is a traveling raconteur, a collector and performer of tall tales, epic poems, and ancient history. They move from town to town reciting their repertoire and picking up new bits of lore and gossip to pass on at the next town. Taverns and inns frequently contain a storyteller entertaining patrons, but storytellers can also be found performing on the street or in market squares. A storyteller could be used as a town crier or herald, or as a revolutionary or rabble-rouser working to stir up public opinion.

A storyteller can be found working for a barkeep (CR 4) or traveling with an out-of-work caravan guard (CR 3).

Minstrel CR 5

XP 1,600

Human bard 6

N Medium humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +1 shield)

hp 30 (6d8+3)

Fort +2, **Ref** +7, **Will** +4; +4 vs. bardic performance, language–dependent, and sonic

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk rapier +6 (1d6+1/18–20)

Ranged +1 *light crossbow* +7 (1d8+1/19–20)

Special Attacks bardic performance 24 rounds/day (countersong, distraction, fascinate [DC 17], inspire competence +2, inspire courage +2, suggestion [DC 17])

Bard Spells Known (CL 6th; concentration +10)

2nd (4/day)—*calm emotions*, *enthrall* (DC 16), *sound burst* (DC 16), *tongues*

1st (5/day)—*charm person* (DC 15), *cure light wounds*, *expeditious retreat*, *grease* (DC 15)

0 (at will)—*ghost sound* (DC 14), *light*, *lullaby*, *mage hand*, *resistance*, *summon instrument*

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 14, **Con** 10, **Int** 13, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 17

Feats Extra Performance, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Skill Focus (Perform [String])

Skills Acrobatics +10, Bluff +18, Diplomacy +18, Knowledge (nobility) +9, Linguistics +5, Perception +8, Perform (oratory) +13, Perform (sing) +13, Perform (string) +18, Sense Motive +13, Sleight of Hand +11, Spellcraft +10, Stealth +10

Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven

SQ bardic knowledge +3, lore master 1/day, versatile performance (oratory, string)

Combat Gear *scrolls of cure light wounds* (2), *disguise self* (2), *remove fear* (2), *pyrotechnics*; **Other Gear** masterwork chain shirt, masterwork buckler, +1 *light crossbow* with 10 bolts, masterwork rapier, masterwork harp

Boon A minstrel can write and publish a song or story lauding the PCs and their accomplishments, granting them a +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy checks for 1 week.

A minstrel is a professional bard, an accomplished performer used to playing at festivals and lordly tables. He is a versatile performer but specializes in song, story, and especially the playing of the lute, lyre, harp, and other stringed instruments.

A minstrel down on his luck might play for a barkeep (CR 6). Two minstrels could be the apprentices of a celebrity bard (CR 11), while a troupe of three minstrels might play for a noble (CR 10) or even a king and queen (CR 15).

Celebrity Bard CR 10

XP 9,600

Human bard 11

N Medium humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +2 Dex, +2 shield)

hp 79 (11d8+30)

Fort +6, **Ref** +10, **Will** +8; +4 vs. bardic performance, language–dependent, and sonic

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +10/+5 (1d4–1/19–20)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +11 (1d8/19–20)

Special Attacks bardic music 30 rounds/day (countersong, dirge of doom, distraction, fascinate, inspire competence +4, inspire courage +3, inspire greatness, suggestion)

Bard Spells Known (CL 11th; concentration +17)

4th (3/day)—*dominate person* (DC 20), *greater invisibility*, *rainbow pattern* (DC 20)

3rd (5/day)—*charm monster* (DC 19), *crushing despair* (DC 19), *haste*, *slow* (DC 19)

2nd (6/day)—*cure moderate wounds*, *hold person* (DC 18), *minor image* (DC 18), *silence* (DC 18), *tongues*

1st (7/day)—*charm person* (DC 17), *cure light wounds*, *disguise self*, *expeditious retreat*, *hideous laughter* (DC 17), *identify*

0 (at will)—*dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 19

Feats Arcane Strike, Craft Wondrous Item, Greater Spell Penetration, Magical Aptitude, Spell Penetration, Vital Strike, Weapon Finesse

Skills Linguistics +5, Perception +10, Perform (act) +20, Perform (dance) +20, Perform (sing) +20, Sense Motive +5, Sleight of Hand +10, Spellcraft +19, Stealth +15, Use Magic Device +24

Languages Common, Draconic, Elven

SQ bardic knowledge +5, jack-of-all-trades (use any skill), lore master 2/day, versatile performance (act, dance, sing)

Combat Gear *scrolls of align weapon*, *see invisibility*, *mount*, *wand of shocking grasp* (CL 4, 50 charges); **Other Gear** +1 *chain shirt*, +1 *buckler*, masterwork light crossbow with 10 bolts, daggers (2), *cloak of resistance* +1, *headband of alluring charisma* +4, 2,500 gp in jewelry

Boon Knowing a celebrity bard can give PCs a +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy checks in a region for 1 month.

A celebrity bard is a legendary performer, and the wealthy and powerful clamor for her to grace them with a performance. Celebrity bards often entertain at the request of a queen or general (CR 12).

Fighting School

Favoring students with strong arms and disciplined souls, fighting schools pass on secrets of martial finesse to those with the talent and ability to be trained. Whether taking the form of monasteries hidden high in misty mountains or underground fighting pits secreted beneath city streets, fighting schools hone their students into living weapons. While many fighting schools focus on exotic martial arts, some students learn their skills from the brutality of the streets, the ways of beasts, or the techniques of long-dead warrior sages.



Initiate CR 1

XP 400

Human monk 2

LN Medium humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 Wis)

hp 13 (2d8+4)

Fort +4, **Ref** +5, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +3 (1d6+2) or
unarmed strike flurry of blows +2/+2 (1d6+2) or
mwk shortspear +4 (1d6+2)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +4 (1d8/19–20) or
mwk shortspear +4 (1d6+2)

Special Attacks flurry of blows, stunning fist (2/day, DC 13)

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 18

Feats Combat Reflexes, Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Improved Unarmed Strike, Stand Still, Stunning Fist

Skills Acrobatics +7, Climb +6, Escape Artist +7, Perception +7, Sense Motive +7, Stealth +6

Languages Common

Combat Gear *oil of magic fang* +1, *potion of cure light wounds*, alchemist's fire (2); **Other Gear** masterwork light crossbow with 10 bolts, masterwork shortspear, 3 gp

Boon Initiates can assist the PCs in a single fight or offer the PCs free temporary lodging at their academy.

Initiates are the novice members of martial arts academies or monasteries, learning hand-to-hand fighting, agility, meditation, and humility at the hands of their masters. They may spend their entire lives in the monastery, honing their minds and bodies to perfection.

Initiates can serve as bodyguards in areas where weapons are forbidden or as unconventional foot soldiers and skirmishers. They could also be used as unarmed brawlers, boxers, gladiators, or pit fighters.

Exchanging an initiate's monk bonus feats creates NPCs with different combat abilities, such as Catch Off-Guard and Throw Anything for an improvised weapon master, Improved Grapple for a wrestler, or Scorpion Style for different unarmed combat flavor.

An initiate may be found escorting a pair of acolytes (CR 3), or four initiates could be responsible for protecting a group of six pilgrims on a pilgrimage to a distant temple (CR 9). A group of six initiates might be encountered traveling between two monasteries (CR 6), or five initiates could form a training class under the tutelage of a battle monk (CR 7).

Battle Monk CR 4

XP 1,200

Human monk 5

LN Medium humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 18, flat-footed 16 (+1 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 monk, +4 monk)

hp 32 (5d8+10)

Fort +6, **Ref** +7, **Will** +9; +2 vs. enchantment

Defensive Abilities evasion; **Immune** disease

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +5 (1d8+1) or unarmed strike flurry of blows +5/+5 (1d8+1) or kama +5 (1d6+1) or kama flurry of blows +5/+5 (1d6+1)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +6 (1d8/19–20)

Special Attacks flurry of blows, stunning fist (5/day, DC 16, fatigued)

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 22

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Improved Unarmed Strike, Scorpion Style, Stunning Fist, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +10 (+19 jump), Climb +7, Escape Artist +7, Perception +12, Sense Motive +12, Stealth +10

Languages Common

SQ fast movement, high jump, *ki* pool (6 points, magic), maneuver training, slow fall 20 ft., high jump

Combat Gear alchemist's fire, smokesticks (2); **Other Gear** masterwork light crossbow with 10 bolts, kama, *bracers of armor* +1, *cloak of resistance* +1

Boon A battle monk can assist the PCs in a single fight (or send several initiates) if it serves the interest of her academy or her master. A battle monk could also introduce the PCs to the master of her academy or to a diplomat, merchant, or other NPC from the land where her martial art originated.

Battle monks are the instructors in fighting schools and monasteries, teaching the arts of agility and swift perfection to their students. They are also the honor guard for their masters, the messengers and emissaries of the school and its methods.

Battle monks make excellent thief-takers and mid-level bounty hunters, catching and disabling their quarry and bring them back for questioning. A battle monk can also serve as an unarmed, but still dangerous and effective, bodyguard.

A battle monk often has a trio of initiates with her (CR 6), or two battle monks might accompany a holy warrior affiliated with the school (CR 8).

Master CR 14

XP 38,400

Human monk 15

LN Medium humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +23

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 24, flat-footed 22 (+1 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +5 monk, +5 Wis)

hp 112 (15d8+45)

Fort +12, **Ref** +13, **Will** +15; +2 vs. enchantment

Defensive Abilities improved evasion; **Immune** disease, poison; **SR** 25

OFFENSE

Speed 80 ft.

Melee unarmed +15/+10/+5 (2d10+3/19–20 plus 1d6 electricity) or unarmed flurry of blows +17/+17/+12/+12/+7/+7 (2d10+3/19–20 plus 1d6 electricity) or kama +14/+9/+4 (1d6+3) or kama flurry of blows +16/+16/+11/+11/+6/+6 (1d6+3)

Ranged +1 sling +15 (1d4+4)

Special Attacks flurry of blows, quivering palm (DC 22), stunning fist (16/day, DC 22, fatigued, sickened, staggered)

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +18 (+22 to trip); **CMD** 38 (40 vs. trip)

Feats Gorgon's Fist, Greater Trip, Improved Critical (unarmed strike), Improved Trip, Improved Unarmed Strike, Improved Vital Strike, Lunge, Medusa's Wrath, Power Attack, Scorpion Style, Skill Focus (Acrobatics), Snatch Arrows, Spring Attack, Stunning Fist, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike)

Skills Acrobatics +25 (+60 jump), Climb +10, Escape Artist +10, Heal +10, Knowledge (history) +5, Knowledge (religion) +5, Perception +23, Profession (gardener) +10, Sense Motive +20, Stealth +20, Survival +6, Swim +10

Languages Common

SQ abundant step, fast movement, high jump, *ki* pool (12 points, lawful, magic), maneuver training, slow fall 70 ft., wholeness of body

Combat Gear *oil of align weapon* (2), *potion of cure light wounds* (2) **Other Gear** kama, *+1 sling* with 10 bullets, *amulet of mighty fists* (shock), *belt of physical perfection* +2, *bracers of armor* +1, *cloak of resistance* +1, *headband of inspired wisdom* +2, *monk's robe*, *ring of protection* +1

Boon Masters can lend their own and their school's reputation to the PCs, granting a +2 bonus for 1 month on Leadership checks to attract followers or to attract a monk cohort.

Masters are the undisputed champions of unarmed combat, able to focus their inner strength into a single devastating blow or a barrage of attacks that leave their enemies dazed and reeling. A master can be a unique arena champion or an emissary from a distant empire. Masters may travel with a cohort of 10 battle monks from their academy (CR 16).

Frontier

At the edge of civilization, grim individuals scrape a harsh life from unforgiving lands. These masters of the wilderness learn the ways of their chosen lands, forgoing the comforts of cities and cultured company for peace and simplicity among beasts and nature. While some are mere visitors to frontier lands, guiding others or hunting for resources, others are true denizens of the wilds, as at home in nature as any untamed beast—and in many ways, just as dangerous.



Trapper CR 3

XP 800

Human ranger 4

N Medium humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 shield)

hp 30 (4d10+8)

Fort +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk battleaxe +7 (1d8+2/×3) or handaxe +6 (1d6+2/×3)

Ranged mwk composite longbow +7 (1d8/×3) or throwing axe +6 (1d6+2)

Special Attacks favored enemy (animals +2)

Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 1st; concentration +2)

1st—*charm animal* (DC 12)

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 15, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 19

Feats Deadly Aim, Dodge, Endurance, Mobility, Point Blank Shot

Skills Climb +10, Craft (traps) +9, Handle Animal +6, Heal +8, Perception +7, Profession (trapper) +8, Ride +6, Stealth +8, Survival +8 (+10 to follow tracks), Swim +6

Languages Common

SQ favored terrain (woods +2), hunter's bond (badger animal companion), track +2, wild empathy +4

Combat Gear black adder venom (1 dose), *scrolls of cure light wounds* (2), *scrolls of speak with animals* (2); **Other Gear** masterwork studded leather, masterwork buckler, masterwork battleaxe, masterwork composite longbow (+1 Str) with 20 arrows, throwing axes (2), climber's kit, healer's kit, masterwork trapmaking tools

Boon Trappers can provide food for the PCs for 1 week and can tell them secrets of the wild lands where they live, granting a +2 circumstance bonus on Survival checks within a 20-mile radius.

Trappers are roving hunters who wander the woods. They take any animal they can safely hunt or trap, but they are best known as the heart of the fur trade, making a variety of handcrafted but deadly effective traps to catch the unwary beasts of the forest. Trappers could be used as royal game wardens, as scouts, or as hunters for a nomadic tribe.

Trappers are typically loners but will sometimes pair up with another trapper (CR 5), a monster hunter (CR 6), or a beast master (CR 7) for companionship.

Hermit CR 6

XP 2,400

Human druid 7

N Medium humanoid

Init +0; **Senses** Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 11, touch 10, flat-footed 11 (+1 armor)

hp 38 (7d8+7)

Fort +7, **Ref** +3, **Will** +10; +4 vs. fey and plant–targeted effects

Defensive Abilities resist nature's lure

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee quarterstaff +4 (1d6–1)

Special Attacks wild shape 2/day

Druid Spells Prepared (CL 7th; concentration +11)

4th—*air walk*, *flame strike* (DC 18)

3rd—*call lightning* (DC 18), *speak with plants*, *stone shape*

2nd—*flaming sphere* (DC 18), *hold animal* (DC 18), *resist energy*, *tree shape*

1st—*cure light wounds*, *endure elements*, *hide from animals*, *longstrider*, *produce flame*

0 (at will)—*create water*, *guidance*, *mending*, *purify food and drink*

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 10, **Con** 13, **Int** 14, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 14

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Casting, Craft Wand, Natural Spell, Self-Sufficient

Skills Fly +10, Handle Animal +11, Heal +18, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +5, Knowledge (geography) +10, Knowledge (nature) +12, Linguistics +5, Perception +10, Profession (gardener) +10, Profession (herbalist) +10, Spellcraft +6, Survival +18, Swim +4

Languages Aquan, Auran, Common, Ignan, Sylvan, Terran

SQ nature bond (owl animal companion), nature sense, trackless step, wild empathy +8, woodland stride

Combat Gear *wands of cure light wounds*, *detect animals or plants*, *faerie fire*, *lesser restoration*, *speak with animals* (50 charges each); **Other Gear** quarterstaff, *bracers of armor +1*, *cloak of resistance +1*, antitoxin (2) healer's kit, wooden holy symbol

Boon A hermit can offer healing, food, and shelter for up to a week. A hermit can also arrange a meeting with a sentient creature or wilderness NPC with a +5 bonus on related Diplomacy checks due to the hermit's reputation.

Hermits are lonely dwellers in the wilderness, eking out an existence in harmony with nature and delighting in their solitude, far from the noise and bustle of civilization. Hermits can act as woodland sentinels, spying on trespassers. Hermits rarely have companions other than animals, but they may occasionally have a pilgrim or a pair of vagabonds as guests (CR 7) or take counsel with a shaman and beast master (CR 9) whose tribe lives nearby.

Guide CR 7

XP 3,200

Human expert 9

N Medium humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 40 (9d8)

Fort +3, **Ref** +5, **Will** +8

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk shortspear +7/+2 (1d6) or dagger +6/+1 (1d4/19–20)

Ranged *+1 light crossbow* +9 (1d8+1/19–20) or mwk shortspear +9 (1d6) or dagger +8 (1d4/19–20)

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 10, **Int** 11, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 18

Feats Animal Affinity, Endurance, Far Shot, Mounted Combat, Point Blank Shot, Skill Focus (Survival)

Skills Climb +8, Handle Animal +12, Knowledge (geography) +12, Knowledge (local) +5, Knowledge (nature) +5, Linguistics +9, Perception +14, Ride +15, Stealth +13, Survival +17, Swim +4

Languages Common, Elven, Gnoll, Gnome, Halfling, Orc, Sylvan

Combat Gear *potion of spider climb*, smokestick, tanglefoot bags (2); **Other Gear** *+1 chain shirt*, *+1 light crossbow* with 20 bolts, dagger, mwk shortspear, climber's kit, heavy horse (combat trained) with studded leather barding and *horseshoes of speed*, tindertwigs (5), 5 gp

Boon A guide can track a particular creature or lead the PCs safely through a wilderness area for up to 3 days.

Guides are trailblazers and pathfinders, master trackers and experts at finding their way through the wilderness. They are outriders and scouts par excellence, but they leave the heavy fighting to others, preferring to snipe from long range while keeping well out of harm's way.

Guides might also be used as highly-skilled long-range messengers, or perhaps members of a specially trained royal courier corps. Guides might also serve as elite dragoons or mounted infantry in a powerful army.

A single guide may be encountered escorting two pilgrims (CR 8) or a pair of traveling merchants and their sellsword bodyguard (CR 10), or she might lead an entire caravan, with eight caravan guards and eight vagabonds (CR 10). A guide might also partner with a monster hunter or minstrel (CR 8) or two knights hunting evil in the wilderness (CR 9). A wise guide frequently works with a pair of trappers who are intimately familiar with an area (CR 8).

Heretics

Those who indulge in dark mysteries and commune with powers from fell realms beyond the veil of reality find themselves shunned by fearful folk and branded heretics. Although not all who call upon the powers of the planes are evil, the subversive call and tempting offers of immortal fiends prove overwhelming to many heretics, corrupting even the best intentions to foulness. Often, such corruption takes the form of perverse, fiend worshiping religion binding together nefarious sorts into secretive cults.



Cultist CR 2

XP 600

Human cleric 3

NE Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+6 armor, +1 Dex, +1 shield)

hp 16 (3d8+3)

Fort +4, **Ref** +2, **Will** +5

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee mwk sickle +3 (1d6)

Ranged dart +3 (1d4)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 6/day (DC 14, 2d6)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +5)

6/day—rebuke death (1d4+1), touch of evil (1 round)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +5)

2nd—*cure moderate wounds*[D], *death knell* (DC 14), *hold person* (DC 14)

1st—*bane* (DC13), *cause fear* (DC 13), *cure light wounds*[D], *doom* (DC 13)

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 12), *guidance*, *light*, *resistance*

D domain spell; **Domains** Evil, Healing

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 13, **Con** 12, **Int** 8, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 13

Feats Alignment Channel, Combat Casting, Selective Channeling

Skills Knowledge (planes) +4, Knowledge (religion) +4, Linguistics +4, Perception +3, Sense Motive +6, Spellcraft +3

Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal

Combat Gear bloodroot poison (1 dose), vials of unholy water (2); **Other Gear** chainmail, light steel shield, darts (4), masterwork sickle, silver unholy symbol

Boon A cultist can hide the PCs or others they designate within a secret cult sanctuary for up to 3 days. They could also plant false evidence implicating an NPC as a cult member.

Cultists are members of secret societies, meeting hooded and masked in dark masses and unspeakable, blasphemous rites. They gather the lay cult members and lead them in their maledictions, channeling for them the shadowed powers of the nether planes.

Cultists can be found leading small cult cells or congregations of a half-dozen farmers, shipmates, bloodthirsty cannibals, or even misguided acolytes (CR 5). A pair of cultists might lead a larger cult of nine doomsayers or initiates (CR 8).

Cultists might also serve as disciples of more powerful spellcasters. A pair of cultists can be acolytes of an evil medium (CR 6), three cultists might be apprenticed to a shaman (CR 7), four could follow a conjurist (CR 8), or up to a dozen cultists might follow a cult leader (CR 12).

Conjurist CR 6

XP 2,400

Human conjurer 7

N Medium humanoid

Init +5; **Senses** Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 45 (7d6+21)

Fort +5, **Ref** +4, **Will** +6

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee cold iron or alchemical silver dagger +2 (1d4–1/19–20)

Ranged cold iron or alchemical silver dagger +4 (1d4–1/19–20)

Arcane Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +12)

8/day—acid dart (1d6+3 acid)

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 7th; concentration +12)

4th—*dimension door*, *summon monster IV*

3rd—*haste*, *stinking cloud* (DC 18), *summon monster III*

2nd—*glitterdust* (DC 17), *invisibility*, *minor image* (DC 17), *summon monster II*

1st—*grease* (DC 16), *mage armor*, *magic missile* (2), *protection from good*, *summon monster I*

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 15), *mage hand*, *ray of frost*

Prohibited Schools enchantment, necromancy

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 20, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 17

Feats Augment Summoning, Craft Wondrous Item, Defensive Combat Training, Improved Familiar, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (conjuration)

Skills Appraise +10, Craft (traps) +15, Craft (jewelry) +10, Fly +10, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +10, Knowledge (planes) +15, Knowledge (religion) +10, Linguistics +10, Perception +5, Spellcraft +15

Languages Abyssal, Aquan, Auran, Celestial, Common, Ignan, Infernal, Terran

SQ arcane bond (quasit familiar), summoner's charm (3 rounds)

Combat Gear *lesser metamagic rod* (silent), *scrolls of expeditious retreat*, *obscuring mist*, *see invisibility*, *black tentacles*; **Other Gear** alchemical silver dagger, cold iron dagger, *cloak of resistance +1*, *headband of vast intellect +2*

Boon A conjurist can provide hidden lore about one type of outsider, granting a +2 circumstance bonus on the next Charisma-based check PCs make with that type of creature.

Conjurists are arcanists who have studied the planes, irresistibly drawn to forbidden lore that shatters mind and morality. Conjurists may be exotic court mages or unusual war wizards. A conjurist will often keep a battle monk bodyguard or may have a hedge wizard or medium as an assistant (CR 7).

Cult Leader CR 11

XP 12,800

Human cleric 10/rogue 2

NE Medium humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 14, flat-footed 22 (+6 armor, +2 deflection, +2 Dex, +4 shield)

hp 83 (12d8+29)

Fort +10, **Ref** +9, **Will** +13

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee *+1 human bane morningstar* +10/+5 (1d8+2)

Ranged dagger +10 (1d4+1/19–20)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 5/day (DC 15, 5d6), scythe of evil (5 rounds, 1/day), sneak attack +1d6

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th; concentration +15)

8/day—rebuke death (1d4+5), touch of evil (5 rounds)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 10th; concentration +15)

5th—*breath of life*[D], *mass cure light wounds*, *righteous might*, *summon monster V*

4th—*air walk*, *cure critical wounds*, *dismissal* (DC 19), *divine power*, *unholy blight*[D] (DC 19)

3rd—*cure serious wounds* (2), *dispel magic*, *magic circle against good*[D], *prayer*

2nd—*aid*, *cure moderate wounds*[D], *death knell* (DC 17), *silence* (DC 17), *spiritual weapon*, *undetectable alignment*

1st—*command* (DC 16), *cure light wounds*[D], *deathwatch*, *divine favor*, *obscuring mist*, *remove fear*, *shield of faith*

0 (at will)—*create water*, *guidance*, *light*, *purify food & drink*

D domain spell; **Domains** Evil, Healing

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 21, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 23

Feats Channel Smite, Combat Casting, Command Undead, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Extra Channel, Forge Ring, Vital Strike

Skills Bluff +5, Diplomacy +5, Heal +10, Knowledge (history) +3, Knowledge (local) +3, Knowledge (planes) +10, Knowledge (religion) +10, Linguistics +5, Perception +10, Profession (any one) +10, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +10

Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal, Terran

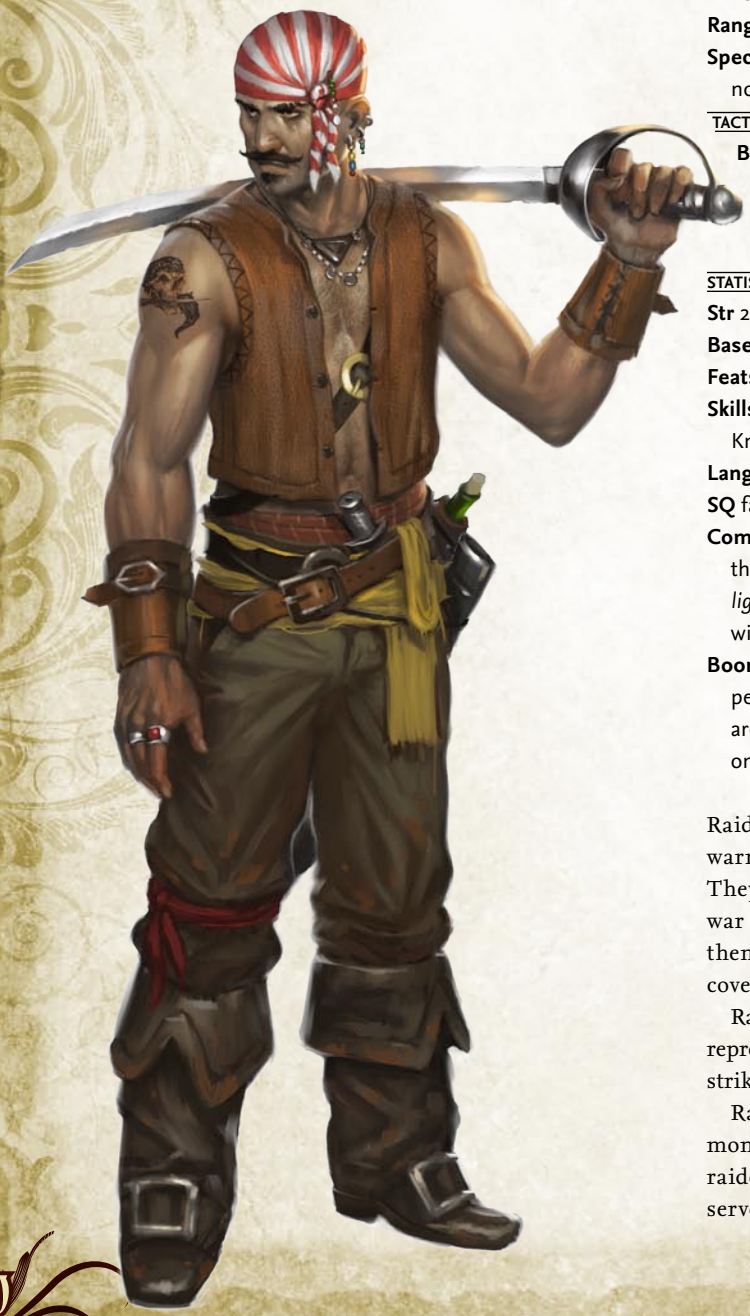
SQ aura, healer's blessing, rogue talent (combat trick), trapfinding

Combat Gear *scroll of invisibility purge*, alchemist's fire (2); **Other Gear** *+2 chain shirt*, *+2 heavy wooden shield*, *+1 human bane morningstar*, cold iron dagger, *cloak of resistance +1*, *elemental gem* (earth), *headband of inspired wisdom +2*, *ring of counterspells* (dispel magic), *ring of protection +2*, *robe of bones*, silver unholy symbol

Boon A cult leader can bind a planar ally for the PCs, send a pair of cultists to assist with a task, or trade a good-aligned magical item she has taken for an evil one she could use.

Marauders

Raiders and bloodthirsty savages who prey upon the fringes of empires, marauders view themselves as the unbridled lords of land and sea. From horseback, grim vessels, or on foot, these deadly warriors strike back against the encroachments of law and civilization, wresting food, wealth, and whatever other spoils they please from proud or unwary victims. Many marauders find themselves spearheading a clash between cultures, a conflict not pursued for evil reasons but due to misunderstandings, expanding borders, or dwindling resources, and they refuse to stand down without a fight.



Raider CR 5

XP 1,600

Human barbarian 6

CN Medium humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 12 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, –2 rage)

hp 67 (6d12+28)

Fort +9, **Ref** +4, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +2

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee mwk spear +12/+7 (1d8+7/×3) or kukri +11/+6 (1d4+5/18–20)

Ranged mwk composite longbow +9/+4 (1d8+3/×3)

Special Attacks rage (16 rounds/day), rage powers (animal fury, no escape, scent)

TACTICS

Base Statistics When not raging, the raider has **AC** 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; **hp** 55; **Fort** +7, **Will** +3; **Melee** mwk spear +10/+5 (1d8+4/×3) or kukri +9/+4 (1d4+3/18–20); **Str** 17, **Con** 14; **CMB** +9; Climb +9, Swim +7

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 14, **Con** 18, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 22

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Shot on the Run

Skills Acrobatics +11 (+15 jump), Climb +11, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (nature) +6, Perception +8, Survival +7, Swim +9

Languages Common

SQ fast movement

Combat Gear *oil of magic weapon*, *potion of expeditious retreat*, thunderstone; **Other Gear** +1 *studded leather*, *javelin of lightning*, kukri, masterwork composite longbow (+3 Str) with 40 arrows, masterwork spear, 1 gp

Boon Raiders can assist the PCs in ascending high mountain peaks, cliffs, or passes, while warning them of dangerous areas and hidden locales (+2 circumstance bonus for 1 week on Perception and Survival checks within a 10-mile radius).

Raiders are the children of the raging storm, wild warriors from the wrinkled hills and jagged mountains. They descend from their aeries with moods as foul and war cries as terrifying as the wild weather that drives them, leaping, scaling the heights, diving from cover to cover, and raining death upon their enemies.

Raiders can be used as skirmishers or scouts, or they can represent any sort of bandits or wild men from the hills who strike the outlying bastions of civilization without warning.

Raiders are often found alone but may travel with a monster hunter (CR 7) or in pairs with a viking (CR 9). Six raiders might form a raiding party with a chieftain, or serve as a chieftain's honor guard (CR 12).

Viking CR 7

XP 3,200

Human barbarian 2/fighter 6

CN Medium humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 18 (+7 armor, +2 Dex, +3 shield, –2 rage)

hp 64 (8 HD; 2d12+6d10+34)

Fort +14, **Ref** +4, **Will** +7; +2 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +2, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +1 *battleaxe* +16/+11 (1d8+9/19–20/×3) or shortspear +14/+9 (1d6+6)

Ranged throwing axe +11 (1d6+7) or shortspear +10 (1d6+6)

Special Attacks rage (14 rounds per day), rage power (quick reflexes), weapon training (axes +1)

TACTICS

Base Statistics When not raging, the viking has **AC** 22, touch 12, flat-footed 20; **hp** 64; **Fort** +12, **Will** +5; **Melee** +1 *battleaxe* +14/+9 (1d8+6/19–20/×3) or shortspear +12/+7 (1d6+4); **Ranged** throwing axe +11 (1d6+5) or shortspear +10 (1d6+4); **Str** 18, **Con** 14; **CMB** +12 (+16 to overrun); Climb +6, Swim +10

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 14, **Con** 18, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +14 (+18 to overrun); **CMD** 24 (26 vs. overrun)

Feats Athletic, Extra Rage, Great Fortitude, Greater Overrun, Improved Critical (battleaxe), Improved Overrun, Iron Will, Power Attack, Vital Strike

Skills Acrobatics +6 (+10 jump), Climb +8, Craft (ships) +5, Intimidate +5, Perception +10, Profession (sailor) +5, Survival +5, Swim +12

Languages Common

SQ armor training 1, fast movement

Combat Gear *potion of bull's strength*, *potions of divine favor* (3); **Other Gear** +1 *chainmail*, +1 *heavy wooden shield*, +1 *battleaxe*, shortspear, throwing axes (2), *boots of the winterlands*, *feather token* (anchor), 5 gp

Boon Vikings can provide fairly safe sea passage to any port within a 1-week sail and can grant a +2 circumstance bonus on the PCs' Survival checks during that voyage.

Vikings are riders of the waves, marauding plunderers from the frozen northern lands who are always ready to pillage with axe and spear and blazing torch. They are boastful and proud, shouting battle cries to their savage gods for the glory of combat. Vikings can serve as elite marines or mobile shock troops. A lone viking may travel with a minstrel to chronicle his journeys (CR 8) or with a first mate and captain (CR 12), while five vikings might serve as honor guard to a chieftain (CR 13).

Pirate Captain CR 11

XP 12,800

Human fighter 7/rogue 5

N Medium humanoid

Init +10; **Senses** Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 16, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +6 Dex)

hp 80 (12 HD; 7d10+5d8+19)

Fort +7, **Ref** +12, **Will** +4; +2 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +2, evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *dagger* +19/+14 (1d4+6/17–20) or 2 +1 *daggers* +17/+12 (1d4+6/17–20) and +17/+12 (1d4+5/17–20) or +1 *dagger* +17/+12 (1d4+6/17–20) and mwk whip +17/+12 (1d3+1 nonlethal)

Ranged mwk composite longbow +17/+12 (1d8+2/×3)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5ft. (15ft. with whip)

Special Attacks sneak attack +3d6, weapon training (light blades +1)

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 22, **Con** 13, **Int** 12, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 28

Feats Dazzling Display, Exotic Weapon Proficiency, Improved Critical (dagger), Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Iron Will, Shatter Defenses, Skill Focus (Acrobatics), Skill Focus (Intimidate), Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (dagger), Weapon Specialization (dagger)

Skills Acrobatics +30, Appraise +5, Bluff +10, Climb +10, Craft (ships) +5, Diplomacy +4, Disable Device +14, Disguise +5, Escape Artist +10, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (local) +5, Perception +13 (+15 to find traps), Profession (sailor) +10, Ride +10, Sleight of Hand +10, Stealth +20, Survival +5, Swim +10

Languages Aquan, Common

SQ armor training 2, rogue talents (finesse rogue, weapon training), trapfinding +2

Combat Gear *potion of disguise self*, *potion of spider climb*; **Other Gear** +1 *chain shirt*, +1 *daggers* (2), daggers (2), masterwork composite longbow (+2 Str) with 20 arrows, masterwork whip, *belt of incredible dexterity* +2, *boots of elvenkind*, *cloak of the manta ray*, magnifying glass, spyglass, masterwork thieves' tools

Boon A pirate captain can arrange safe passage to virtually anywhere in the world reachable by ship.

Pirate captains are the deadly mistresses of pirate bands, villainous cutthroats who have cursed, looted, ravaged, betrayed, and carved their way to the top. These steel-handed stingrays lead their crews by sheer force of will. Pirate captains make excellent champion pit fighters and deadly assassins. A pirate captain is usually found with a first mate and a dozen shipmates (CR 12).

Mercenaries

Sellswords and hired muscle, those possessing skill with steel and strength of arms never long want for work. Often such warriors serve as simple guardsmen for a set term, though those with special skill might become hunters of men or monsters. Martial forces—from campaigning armies, to royal defenders, to criminal syndicates—often supplement their ranks with hired combatants, as there's no reason to risk their own forces when there are those willing to bleed for gold.



Caravan Guard CR 1

XP 400

Human fighter 2

N Medium humanoid

Init +5; **Senses** Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18 (+7 armor, +1 Dex, +1 shield)

hp 16 (2d10+5)

Fort +5, **Ref** +1, **Will** +1; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee lance +5 (1d8+3/×3) or
longsword +5 (1d8+3/19–20) or
kukri +5 (1d4+3/18–20)

Ranged heavy crossbow +3 (1d10/19–20)

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 16

Feats Alertness, Animal Affinity, Improved Initiative, Rapid Reload

Skills Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +3, Perception +4, Profession (drover) +5, Ride +1, Sense Motive +3, Survival +5

Languages Common

Gear banded mail, buckler, heavy crossbow with 10 bolts, kukri, lance, longsword, light horse (combat trained) with saddle, 1 gp

Boon Caravan guards can arrange for PCs to travel with a caravan to a destination of their choice, either as guests or as guards.

Caravan guards are sturdy veterans with an eye for troublemakers. Often surly and pugnacious, they ride alongside pack and wagon trains with crossbows at the ready, but if real danger threatens most are more comfortable fighting with their boots safely on the ground and sword and shield in hand.

Caravan guards can serve as scouts, messengers, or outriders. Replacing a caravan guard's Alertness and Animal Affinity feats with Mounted Combat and Mounted Archery makes him more adept at fighting from horseback. Replacing Rapid Reload with Ride-By Attack or Trample, coupled with the Mounted Combat feats, creates a low-level nomadic horse warrior. For better flavor, exchange his longsword and heavy crossbow for a scimitar and composite shortbow.

Two slavers might use four caravan guards to watch their chattel (CR 7), while a squad of six caravan guards might accompany a highwayman (CR 8), or guard a group of six vagabonds (CR 8) or five pilgrims (CR 9). A troop of eight caravan guards is usually led by a sellsword (CR 9), or a traveling merchant or merchant prince can hire eight caravan guards to guard his caravan (CR 8 or 10).

Sellsword CR 7

XP 3,200

Human fighter 8

N Medium humanoid

Init +6; **Senses** Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 12, flat-footed 25 (+10 armor, +2 Dex, +3 shield)

hp 80 (8d10+36)

Fort +10, **Ref** +5, **Will** +6; +2 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +2

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *bastard sword* +14/+9 (1d10+7/17–20) or spiked gauntlet +11/+6 (1d4+3)

Ranged javelin +10 (1d6+3)

Special Attacks weapon training (heavy blades +1)

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 14, **Con** 16, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 23

Feats Cleave, Improved Critical (bastard sword), Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Power Attack, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (bastard sword)

Skills Intimidate +7, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +5, Perception +8, Profession (soldier) +5, Ride +8, Survival +10

Languages Common

SQ armor training 2

Combat Gear *potions of align weapon*, *cure light wounds* (2), *divine favor* (2), *shield of faith* (2); **Other Gear** +1 *full plate*, +1 *heavy steel shield*, +1 *bastard sword*, spiked gauntlet, javelins (5), *cloak of resistance* +1, 40 gp

Boon A sellsword may use her connections to help PCs buy +1 weapons or armor at a 10% discount, or lend her reputation to a PC with Leadership, granting a +1 Leadership score bonus for 1 month to recruit warrior followers.

Sellswords are the ultimate soldiers of fortune, owing loyalty to no one and nothing save cold, hard coins. Their only law is that once they are bought, they stay bought; there are no more paydays for a sellsword who proves treacherous. Still, even that law can fade when one's employer is on the losing side, and a bit of opportunism may help the sellsword live to fight another day.

Sellswords can be used as elite imperial guards or shock troops, royal swordmasters, or the heads of fighting academies. Wealthy and powerful individuals might also hire sellswords as expensive bodyguards.

A canny sellsword may travel with a battle mage (CR 8), or a medium and two acolytes (CR 8). A squad of four sellswords might find employ with a merchant prince (CR 11) or bandit lord (CR 12). A bounty hunter can also hire a pair of sellswords to help bring down a dangerous foe (CR 12).

Bounty Hunter CR 11

XP 12,800

Human ranger 12

N Medium humanoid

Init +5; **Senses** Perception +16

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 15, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +5 Dex, +2 shield)

hp 98 (12d10+32)

Fort +10, **Ref** +13, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk rapier +18/+13/+8 (1d6+2/18–20) or mwk sap +18/+13/+8 (1d6+2 nonlethal)

Ranged +1 *merciful composite longbow* +18/+13/+8 (1d8+3/×3 plus 1d6 nonlethal) or +1 *merciful composite longbow* +16/+16/+11/+6 (1d8+3/×3 plus 1d6 nonlethal)

Special Attacks favored enemy (humanoids [human] +6, humanoids [elf] +2, humanoids [halfling] +2), quarry

Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 9th; concentration +10)

3rd—*plant growth*

2nd—*barkskin*, *protection from energy*

1st—*delay poison*, *entangle* (DC 12), *longstrider*

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 20, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 29

Feats Deadly Aim, Endurance, Improved Precise Shot, Improved Vital Strike, Manyshot, Pinpoint Targeting, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Vital Strike, Weapon Finesse

Skills Climb +10, Craft (traps) +10, Handle Animal +14, Heal +5, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (geography) +5, Knowledge (local) +1, Knowledge (nature) +5, Linguistics +2, Perception +16, Ride +12, Stealth +24, Survival +16 (+22 to follow tracks), Swim +6

Languages Common, Elven, Halfling

SQ camouflage, favored terrain (urban +4, underground +2), hunter's bond (tiger animal companion), swift tracker, track +6, wild empathy +11, woodland stride

Combat Gear *wand of cure light wounds* (CL 1, 50 charges), *wand of speak with animals* (CL 1, 50 charges), tanglefoot bags (2); **Other Gear** +1 *chain shirt*, +1 *buckler*, +1 *merciful composite longbow* (+2 Str) with 20 arrows, masterwork rapier, masterwork sap, *belt of incredible dexterity* +2, *cloak of elvenkind*, blue whinnis (6 doses), purple worm poison (1 dose), 11 gp

Boon A bounty hunter can arrange to kidnap an NPC of 10th level or less for the PCs at half his usual fee.

Bounty hunters rarely hunt animals or beasts. Instead, they make not only sport but a lucrative business of capturing humanoid targets at the behest of wealthy patrons. Bounty hunters often work alone, but may lead a press gang of a sellsword, torturer, and two slavers (CR 12).

Merchants

Trade overcomes all barriers. In countless lands and a thousand languages, money changes hands between members of all races and religions. Businesses of innumerable types, from tiny market vendors to continent-spanning mercantile cartels, range across the world, trading in goods both mundane and fantastic. Whether simple shopkeepers or wealthy merchant lords, those with coin and a willingness to do trade form a symbiotic relationship with adventurers of all walks, with both types willing to risk everything for a chance at fortune.



Shopkeep CR 1

XP 400

Human expert 3

N Medium humanoid

Init +0; **Senses** Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10

hp 13 (3d8)

Fort +1, **Ref** +1, **Will** +4

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +1 (1d4–1/19–20)

Ranged dagger +2 (1d4–1/19–20)

STATISTICS

Str 9, **Dex** 10, **Con** 10, **Int** 11, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 11

Feats Alertness, Deceitful, Skill Focus (Profession [merchant])

Skills Appraise +6, Bluff +9, Diplomacy +7, Disguise +6, Knowledge (local) +6, Linguistics +6, Perception +8, Profession (merchant) +10, Sense Motive +9

Languages Common, Dwarven, Gnome, Halfling

Combat Gear smokestick, tanglefoot bag; **Other Gear** dagger, disguise kit, heavy horse and wagon, 433 gp worth of trade goods

Boon A shopkeep can give a 10% discount on any item of equipment less than 400 gp.

Shopkeeps operate a city's trade emporiums, a town's shops, a village's general store, and the frontier's isolated trading posts. Whether a canny traveling peddler, a wheeling and dealing bazaar stallholder, or a respected businessman with a position on the town council, shopkeeps are found across the world, forming the backbone of a settlement's economy as they keep the river of trade flowing freely through its gates.

Shopkeeps can be used to represent a variety of minor occupations in villages, towns, and cities. Changing the focus of a shopkeep's Profession skill can create a wide variety of characters, from bakers to fishermen to millers. Replacing a shopkeep's Profession skill with a Craft skill creates a craftsman rather than a salesman, whether it be an alchemist, weaver, or smith. Exchanging Profession for a Knowledge skill or two makes a sage or scholar. In this case, the trade goods listed in the stat block above can represent books, maps, or scrolls.

Shopkeeps are not skilled in combat, but could be used to represent a citizens' militia mobilized in times of war. In this case, adding padded or leather armor, and perhaps replacing the dagger with a club or spear, or even a crossbow, can make them into more effective combatants.

A shopkeep will often partner with another shopkeep or a vagabond (CR 3) for long journeys, sometimes hiring a guard if they deal in expensive commodities (CR 4).

Traveling Merchant CR 5

XP 1,600

Human expert 7

N Medium humanoid

Init –1; **Senses** Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 10, touch 9, flat-footed 10 (+1 armor, –1 Dex)

hp 31 (7d8)

Fort +2, **Ref** +1, **Will** +5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +4 (1d4–1/19–20)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +5 (1d8/19–20)

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 9, **Con** 10, **Int** 14, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 13

Feats Alertness, Combat Expertise, Deceitful, Persuasive, Skill Focus (Profession [merchant])

Skills Appraise +12, Bluff +14, Diplomacy +12, Disguise +6, Handle Animal +10, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (geography) +10, Knowledge (local) +10, Knowledge (nobility) +3, Linguistics +12, Perception +12, Profession (merchant) +13, Ride +6, Sense Motive +12

Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Giant, Gnome, Goblin, Halfling, Orc, Sylvan

Gear padded armor, dagger, masterwork light crossbow with 10 bolts, *bag of holding type I*, *ring of sustenance*, disguise kit, light horse, 302 gp of trade goods

Boon A traveling merchant can enable PCs to make a purchase or sale of items as if the community was one size larger than normal or allow them to accompany a caravan as guards or guests.

Traveling merchants wander the world, peddling their wares, seeking out new markets for their goods, and journeying into distant lands in search of new trade routes to open and exotic commodities to take back home to turn a tidy profit. Many traveling merchants join large trade consortiums or are masters of their own caravans, but they sometimes venture alone (or more usually, with guards) into the wilds carrying small items of high value.

Traveling merchants make excellent diplomats, spies, and information brokers, or even knowledgeable and socially skilled nobles or gentlemen.

A delegation of four traveling merchants might be sent as a trade mission or ambassadors from a far-off land (CR 9), while two traveling merchants can serve as deputies for a merchant prince (CR 10). Lone traveling merchants typically travel with four caravan guards (CR 7), while those with a merchant train share the company of a guide, four vagabonds as drovers, and eight caravan guards (CR 10).

Merchant Prince CR 9

XP 6,400

Human expert 4/rogue 6

N Medium humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +17

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 58 (10d8+13)

Fort +6, **Ref** +11, **Will** +8

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +10/+5 (1d4–1/19–20)

Ranged *+1 hand crossbow* +11 (1d4+1/19–20) or dagger +10 (1d4–1/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +3d6

Spell-like Abilities (CL 6th, concentration +8)

3/day—*detect magic*

2/day—*charm person* (DC 13)

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 14, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 19

Feats Alertness, Craft Wondrous Item, Magical Aptitude, Master Craftsman, Skill Focus (Profession [merchant]), Weapon Finesse

Skills Appraise +17, Bluff +17, Diplomacy +17, Disable Device +12, Disguise +15, Handle Animal +10, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (local) +10, Linguistics +8, Perception +17 (+20 to find traps), Perform (act) +10, Perform (sance) +10, Perform (oratory) +10, Profession (merchant) +21, Ride +10, Sense Motive +16, Sleight of Hand +10, Spellcraft +19, Stealth +10, Use Magic Device +23

Languages Common, Dwarven, Gnome, Halfling

SQ rogue talent (major magic, minor magic, resiliency), trapfinding +3

Combat Gear *wand of identify* (50 charges), *wand of ray of enfeeblement* (50 charges), *wand of shocking grasp* (CL 3rd, 50 charges); **Other Gear** *+1 chain shirt*, *+1 hand crossbow* with 10 bolts, dagger, *circlet of persuasion*, *cloak of resistance +2*, *handy haversack*, *hat of disguise*, disguise kit, magnifying glass, masterwork thieves' tools

Boon A merchant prince can arrange the purchase or sale of an item as if the local community were two categories larger than normal. A merchant prince can also sell any item under the community's base value at a 10% discount.

Merchant princes are the captains of commerce, canny mercantilists who deal with nation-spanning trade contracts in bulk commodities as well as backroom deals over baubles of great price. They are clever negotiators and can serve as highly skilled spies, diplomats, or charlatans emulating true magicians. A merchant prince often retains a sellsword as a bodyguard (CR 10).

Military

Trained soldiers might take up arms for nearly any cause imaginable. Whether the champions of heroic kingdoms fighting off monstrous legions or the denizens of a bleak realm invading their neighbors, vast legions arise to do the will of lords both fair and foul. Yet the real strength of such soldiers lies not in personal skill, but in sheer numbers or deftly implemented tactics. Professional combatants might also find a variety of roles beyond the battlefield, whether as guardians, raiders, or even adventurers.



Foot Soldier — CR 1/3

XP 135

Human warrior 1

N Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 8 (1d10+3)

Fort +2, **Ref** +1, **Will** +0

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee longspear +3 (1d8+3/×3) or greatsword +3 (2d6+3/19–20) or dagger +3 (1d4+2/19–20)

Ranged javelin +2 (1d6+2)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with longspear)

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 12, **Con** 11, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 14

Feats Step Up, Toughness

Skills Craft (weapons) +3, Profession (soldier) +4, Survival +1

Languages Common

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*; **Other Gear** chainmail, greatsword, dagger, javelin, longspear, 2 gp

Boon Foot soldiers can help PCs buy normal (non-masterwork) simple or martial weapons at a 10% discount, or may agree to accompany the PCs as men-at-arms for a 10% share of the treasure.

Foot soldiers are the backbone of any army, stout soldiers who "hold the line" in the face of the enemy's charge with a bristling wall of pikes, decimate an opposing force's ranks with a hail of javelins, or hew with their swords in the bloody grind of close combat. Foot soldiers close the gap when their foes try to flee the field, and are tough enough to shrug off blows that would fell a common man.

Changing a foot soldier's character class from warrior to fighter creates a professional veteran soldier. This necessitates a number of changes, the foremost of which is using the heroic numbers for his ability scores (see *Core Rulebook* page 451). In addition, the foot soldier receives a bonus fighter feat such as Combat Reflexes, Power Attack, or Weapon Focus.

Different varieties of foot soldier can be easily created by exchanging weapons and armor. For example, replacing the longspear and greatsword with a shortspear, longsword, and heavy steel shield increases the foot soldier's AC by 2.

Foot soldiers can serve as bodyguards or hired muscle for mid-level NPCs, or as the rank-and-file guards at a city gate, in front of a temple, or manning a castle's walls.

Foot soldiers are usually found in squads of six (CR 3), sometimes accompanied by a guard sergeant (CR 4).

Cavalry CR 5

XP 1,600

Human fighter 6

N Medium humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 12, flat-footed 21 (+8 armor, +2 Dex, +3 shield)

hp 42 (6d10+9)

Fort +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +3; +2 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +2

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee mwk lance +12/+7 (1d8+6/×3) or shortspear +10/+5 (1d6+4) or dagger +9/+4 (1d4+3/19–20)

Ranged mwk composite shortbow +10/+5 (1d6+3/×3) or shortspear +10/+5 (1d6+3)

Special Attacks weapon training (spears +1)

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 16, **Con** 13, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 22

Feats Animal Affinity, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack, Spirited Charge, Trample, Weapon Focus (lance), Weapon Specialization (lance)

Skills Craft (weapons) +3, Handle Animal +11, Profession (soldier) +5, Ride +9, Survival +5

Languages Common

SQ armor training 1

Combat Gear *oil of magic weapon*, *potion of cure light wounds*; **Other Gear** +1 *banded mail*, +1 *heavy wooden shield*, masterwork lance, composite shortbow (+3 Str) with 20 arrows, dagger, shortspears (2), heavy horse (combat trained) with military saddle and leather barding, 18 gp

Boon Cavalry can offer to train an animal at no cost, or to help PCs buy a combat trained animal at a 10% discount.

Cavalry are the pursuit and shock troops of professional armies, relying on speed and reach to savage the flanks of enemy formations while protecting their mounts, or running down and grinding underfoot enemies who become isolated from their fellows. They are also skilled mounted archers, firing volleys of arrows at opposing forces, then riding out of range of return fire.

Cavalry make excellent royal couriers, elite guards for nobility, well-equipped scouts and outriders for an army, or knights errant more interested in gold and glory than chivalry.

A single cavalryman may travel with a squad of six foot soldiers (CR 6) or lead a troop of four caravan guards (CR 7). Cavalry are usually grouped in lances of four (CR 9), often with a guide or knight officer (CR 10). Four or five cavalry might also serve as a mounted honor guard for a mayor, noble, or merchant prince (CR 11 or 12).

General CR 10

XP 9,600

Human fighter 11

N Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 13, flat-footed 21 (+10 armor, +1 deflection, +1 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 85 (11d10+25)

Fort +11, **Ref** +6, **Will** +5; +3 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +3

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *glaive* +19/+14/+9 (1d10+9) or armor spikes +15/+10/+5 (1d6+4)

Ranged composite longbow +13/+8/+3 (1d8+5/×3)

Special Attacks weapon training (polearms +2, bows +1)

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 14, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 28

Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Disruptive, Dodge, Improved Vital Strike, Lunge, Mobility, Spellbreaker, Spring Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (glaive), Weapon Specialization (glaive), Whirlwind Attack

Skills Diplomacy +5, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +6, Knowledge (engineering) +10, Knowledge (history) +4, Knowledge (local) +4, Knowledge (nobility) +4, Perception +10, Profession (soldier) +14, Ride +9, Sense Motive +5, Survival +4

Languages Common, Goblin, Orc

SQ armor training 3

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, *potion of expeditious retreat*; **Other Gear** +1 *full plate* with cold iron armor spikes, +1 *glaive*, composite longbow (+4 Str) with 20 arrows, *belt of giant strength* +2, *cloak of resistance* +2, *ring of protection* +1, heavy horse (combat trained) with chain shirt barding and military saddle

Boon Generals can provide access to trustworthy mercenary troops. A character with Leadership gains a +2 bonus to Leadership for recruiting followers for 1 month. Other PCs can hire mercenaries at a 20% discount.

Generals are the masters of the battlefield, expert and veteran soldiers who conceive and execute tactical plans and inspire their troops on to victory. Generals may command from a rearward vantage point, but when needed, may dive into the fray with sword in hand to turn the tide through sheer puissance. Generals can be used as arena champions, masters of fighting schools, or elite warriors trained to fight with or against spellcasters. A general is usually accompanied by a knight adjutant, with a lance of four cavalry as bodyguards and messengers (CR 12).

Nobles

Lords and ladies of the land, rulers of nations, and famed personalities, nobles rise above the common folk as people of wealth, influence, and esteem. While the positions of many distance them from everyday folk, making them arrogant and aloof, others are philanthropists and heroes of the people who know the plight of the common man and seek to share their good fortune. The trappings and titles of nobility vary widely from nation to nation, and the barons and dukes of one country might equate to the pashas, denka, or ritters of the next.



Noble Scion CR 2

XP 600

Human aristocrat 4

N Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +1 Dex, +2 shield)

hp 20 (4d8+2)

Fort +1, **Ref** +2, **Will** +3

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk longsword +5 (1d8+1/19–20) or
mwk lance +5 (1d8+1/×3) or
dagger +4 (1d4+1/19–20)

Ranged shortbow +4 (1d6/×3) or
dagger +4 (1d4+1/19–20)

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 12, **Con** 11, **Int** 10, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 14

Feats Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack, Trample

Skills Bluff +5, Diplomacy +8, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (history) +4, Knowledge (local) +4, Knowledge (nobility) +5, Linguistics +5, Perception +3, Perform (dance) +5, Ride +6, Sense Motive +3

Languages Common

Combat Gear *potion of invisibility*; **Other Gear** masterwork chain shirt, masterwork heavy steel shield, masterwork lance, masterwork longsword, dagger, shortbow with 20 arrows, noble outfit, light horse (combat trained) with military saddle and studded leather barding, 32 gp

Boon A noble scion might pass on an especially juicy bit of palace gossip, granting a +5 bonus on a Knowledge (nobility) check or Diplomacy check to gather information, or could arrange a face-to-face meeting with a noble, prince, or princess.

Noble scions are the haughty and proud offspring of aristocratic sires, full of the fresh vigor of youth and all the hauteur of those born in a manor. They have received fine education and know a modicum of social graces, but typically practice them only when other highborn are present. Noble scions are scornful of commoners and vagabonds, who return the sentiment toward these peacocks strutting in their finery.

If used as minor court functionaries and sycophants, noble scions can be sources of palace gossip and intrigue. They can also be used as experienced squires who have not yet risen to the knighthood, or as aristocratic cavalry.

A noble scion might be appointed to lead a lance of cavarly (CR 9). A pair of noble scions might dog the footsteps of a princess (CR 7), three noble scions could make up a knight's entourage (CR 8), or eight noble scions can form a gang of rakes with a noble (CR 10).

Knight CR 7

XP 3,200

Human aristocrat 2/paladin 6

LG Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +5

Aura courage (10 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 11, flat-footed 22 (+10 armor, +1 Dex, +2 shield)

hp 61 (8 HD; 2d8+6d10+19)

Fort +9, **Ref** +5, **Will** +9;

Defensive Abilities divine grace +2; **Immune** disease, fear

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee mwk lance +12/+7 (1d8+4/×3) or
+1 *longsword* +12/+7 (1d8+5/19–20) or
dagger +11/+6 (1d4+4/19–20)

Ranged dagger +8 (1d4+4/19–20)

Special Attacks channel positive energy (DC 15, 3d6), smite evil 2/day (+2 attack and AC, +6 damage)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +8)
At will—*detect evil*

Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +5)
1st—*cure light wounds*, *divine favor*

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 22

Feats Improved Bull Rush, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack, Unseat

Skills Diplomacy +10, Handle Animal +8, Heal +5, Knowledge (history) +5, Knowledge (nobility) +5, Linguistics +5, Perception +5, Ride +6, Survival +5

Languages Celestial, Common, Sylvan

SQ aura of good, divine bond (heavy horse), lay on hands (3d6, 5/day), mercies (fatigued, shaken)

Gear +1 *full plate*, masterwork heavy steel shield, +1 *longsword*, masterwork lance, dagger, silver holy symbol, heavy horse (combat trained) with chain shirt barding and military saddle, 420 gp

Boon A knight can vouch for a PC, the knight's sterling reputation enabling the character to avoid or lessen a punishment. The knight can also grant a character entry into a tourney or a meeting with his liege with a +5 bonus on one Diplomacy check.

Knights are noble warriors, proud of bearing and lineage and yet humble in service to their liege. Though merciful and generous of spirit, a true knight is always ready to level lance or bare steel in pursuit of justice and to protect the innocent. Knights may also serve as local lord-stewards, judges, or fortress commanders. Knights are usually found singly or accompanied by a squire, escorting a pair of pilgrims (CR 8), guarding two nobles (CR 11), or leading a lance of four cavalry (CR 10).

Noble CR 8

XP 4,800

Human aristocrat 10

N Medium humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+5 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 shield)

hp 60 (10d8+15)

Fort +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +8

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk rapier +10/+5 (1d6–1/18–20) or
silver dagger +9/+4 (1d4–1/19–20)

Ranged +1 *longbow* +10/+5 (1d8+1/×3)

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 19

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Persuasive, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Vital Strike, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +16, Diplomacy +27, Disguise +10, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (history) +4, Knowledge (local) +4, Knowledge (nobility) +10, Linguistics +6, Perception +5, Perform (dance) +10, Perform (sing) +10, Perform (string) +10, Ride +6, Sense Motive +10

Languages Common, Elven, Gnome, Halfling

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, *potion of invisibility*; **Other Gear** +1 *glamered chain shirt*, masterwork buckler, +1 *longbow* with 20 arrows, masterwork rapier, silver dagger, *circlet of persuasion*, *cloak of resistance* +1, 17 gp

Boon A noble can arrange the loan of noble or royal outfits (and even make a gift of them if sufficiently impressed), or can make a Diplomacy check on behalf of the PCs.

A noble is a titled aristocrat of a noble house, whether a lesser branch or perhaps the high seat of the family line. A noble might also be a member of a royal family, probably not in line for the throne, but still with a high position in society. Whether baroness, countess, duchess, or margravine, a noble is proficient in all of the courtly arts (including with a fine blade) and is well acquainted with news, rumors, fashion, and etiquette in her lands and those that surround it.

Nobles may serve as diplomats, high courtiers, appointed castellans or seneschals of royal castles, or even spies.

A noble may often be found with a knight bodyguard and three noble scions to show off at court (CR 10). A noble might also accompany two princesses in disguise (CR 10), while two nobles may be present at a celebrity bard's concert (CR 12). A traveling noble could be accompanied by a battle mage or minstrel (CR 9), or two watch captain bodyguards (CR 10).

Road

Part of the adventure inherent in any journey lies in not knowing whom one might meet around the next bend. A variety of characters make their homes on the highways between cities. Some travel to get from one destination to the next, some are hucksters and con artists constantly on the run, and some wander out of necessity, as they have no place to call their own. In any case, few paths are truly deserted, and with each passerby comes the potential for all manner of adventures.



Wanderer CR 2

XP 600

Human bard 1/rogue 2

N Medium humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 16 (3d8+3)

Fort +1, **Ref** +7, **Will** +1

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +2 (1d4+1/19–20)

Ranged dagger +3 (1d4+1/19–20)

Special Attacks bardic performance 7 rounds/day (countersong, distraction, fascinate [DC 13], inspire courage +1), sneak attack +1d6

Bard Spells Known (CL 1st; concentration +4)

1st (2/day)—*silent image* (DC 14), *sleep* (DC 14)

0 (at will)—*dancing lights*, *lullaby* (DC 13), *mending*, *prestidigitation*

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 15, **Con** 13, **Int** 10, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 15

Feats Deceitful, Deft Hands, Dodge

Skills Acrobatics +7, Bluff +11, Disable Device +12, Disguise +13, Escape Artist +6, Handle Animal +4, Knowledge (local) +5, Perception +5, Perform (dance) +8, Perform (percussion) +10, Sleight of Hand +10, Stealth +8

Languages Common

SQ bardic knowledge +1, rogue talent (stand up), trapfinding +1

Combat Gear *scrolls of cure light wounds*, *disguise self*, *invisibility* (2), smokesticks (2), tanglefoot bag, thunderstones (2); **Other Gear** leather armor, daggers (5), disguise kit, masterwork tambourine, masterwork thieves' tools, mule and wagon, 25 gp

Boon A wanderer can smuggle an item or person into or out of a guarded city or encampment in their wagons or as part of their troupe.

A wanderer is a member of a band of traveling folk who ply the back roads and alleys of more settled lands, often chased by rumors of thievery or kidnapping, mending pots and knives and giving exotic performances that arouse the ire of the staid.

Wanderers are often excellent entertainers, whether musicians, dancers, or actors, but can also serve as exotic cutpurses and charlatans.

Wanderers often travel in troupes of four entertainers (CR 6), or in larger groups of a dozen or more (CR 9+). A lone wanderer might accompany a vagabond (CR 4) or hedge wizard (CR 5), while a troupe of five or six might work with a fortune teller (CR 8) or highwayman (CR 9).

Vagabond CR 1

XP 400

Human commoner 2/warrior 1
N Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +1 Dex, +1 shield)
hp 15 (3 HD; 2d6+1d10+3)
Fort +3, **Ref** +1, **Will** –1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee battleaxe +3 (1d8+1/×3) or
dagger +3 (1d4+1/19–20)
Ranged mwk composite longbow +4 (1d8+1/×3) or
mwk composite longbow +2/+2 (1d8+1/×3) or
dagger +3 (1d4+1/19–20)

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 13, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 9
Base Atk +2; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 14
Feats Alertness, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot
Skills Climb +3, Handle Animal +3, Knowledge (geography) +1, Knowledge (local) +1, Perception +7, Ride +3, Sense Motive +2, Survival +1, Swim +3
Languages Common
Gear masterwork chain shirt, buckler, battleaxe, dagger, masterwork composite longbow (+1 Str) with 20 arrows, mule, saddle
Boon A vagabond can give accurate directions to any known landmark or settlement within 50 miles (+5 on Survival checks to avoid getting lost) and general information about likely dangers (terrain or hostile creatures) along the way.

Vagabonds are drifters who wander the roads, picking up odd jobs but rarely letting the sun set on them in the same place twice. Vagabonds have a few skills that can help them get odd jobs in communities they pass through, but often possess skills in combat as well, as no road is ever truly safe.

Vagabonds serve well as hunters, woodsmen, and herders who live on the fringes of society. A vagabond might also work as a traveling peddler or merchant, or serve as a scout for a town militia.

Vagabonds make good low-level archers, and this skill can be improved by replacing the Alertness feat with Far Shot, Precise Shot, or Weapon Focus (longbow). Alternatively, you can replace the archery feats with Power Attack and Toughness to make a vagabond better in melee combat.

Vagabonds are usually loners, but may partner with a caravan guard, storyteller, or pair of farmers (CR 3). Two vagabonds might join a troupe of four wanderers (CR 7), or occasionally travel in small groups of four, accompanied by a single wanderer, pilgrim, or trapper (CR 6).

Pilgrim CR 3

XP 800

Human commoner 5
NG Medium humanoid
Init +0; **Senses** Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 11, touch 10, flat-footed 11 (+1 armor)
hp 17 (5d6)
Fort +1, **Ref** +1, **Will** +4

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee spear +2 (1d8/×3)
Ranged spear +2 (1d8/×3)

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 10, **Con** 11, **Int** 13, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10
Base Atk +2; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 12
Feats Alertness, Endurance, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Heal)
Skills Handle Animal +5, Heal +10, Knowledge (religion) +5, Perception +7, Perform (sing) +5, Profession (midwife) +5, Ride +5, Sense Motive +7, Swim +5
Languages Common
Combat Gear *potions of cure light wounds*, *neutralize poison*, *remove blindness/deafness*, *remove disease*, and *sanctuary*; vial of holy water; **Other Gear** padded armor, spear, healer's kit, wooden holy symbol, mule
Boon A pilgrim will tend the wounds of injured PCs with her Heal skill or one of her healing potions if the need is great or if the PCs make a donation to her church of at least half the potion's price.

Pilgrims are religious mendicants who roam the long roads visiting shrines, temples, and other places sacred to their faith. They are ordinary folk, little trained in formal theology but with a passion for spreading their religion through their travels, being of service to all that they meet, and healing the hurts of a sad and lonely world.

Pilgrims can serve as lay priests, common healers, or village wise women in settlements too small for a formal temple or full cleric. A pilgrim might also be found on a battlefield, pressed into service to make up for an army's lack of divine healers.

Replacing one of the pilgrim's commoner levels with a level of adept creates a healer that has at least limited access to healing magic. Hit Dice, hit points, base attacks bonus, and skills don't change, but the pilgrim's Will save increases to +6.

A pilgrim often works alone, but two or three might staff a remote clinic (CR 5 or 6). Pilgrims can also be found in groups of four, often accompanied by four caravan guards or eight acolytes (CR 8). A single pilgrim may be served by a guard, caravan guard, or pair of acolytes (CR 4). A pilgrim in turn might serve under a shaman (CR 6), while an evil pilgrim may work with a torturer, helping to keep prisoners alive (CR 6).

Royalty

Bestowed with the right to rule by blood, blade, or the mandate of deities, royal families preside over many fantasy kingdoms. In many cases, the success and disposition of an entire country might be summarized by the personalities and agendas of its rulers, and few things can change the fate of entire empires like the decrees or deaths of their leaders. Whether leading armies to war, being held hostage by tyrants, or brooding in crumbling keeps, members of royalty often incite or end the most epic of quests and can reward their champions like no other.



Princess CR 6

XP 2,400

Human aristocrat 8

N Medium humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+5 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 shield)

hp 40 (8d8+4)

Fort +3, **Ref** +6, **Will** +6

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk rapier +10/+5 (1d6–1/18–20) or mwk rapier +8/+3 (1d6–1/18–20), mwk dagger +8 (1d4–1/19–20)

Ranged mwk dagger +10 (1d4–1/19–20)

STATISTICS

Str 9, **Dex** 16, **Con** 10, **Int** 12, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 19

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +13, Diplomacy +13, Disguise +13, Escape Artist +4, Handle Animal +8, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (nobility) +10, Perception +8, Perform (dance) +10, Perform (string) +10, Ride +8, Sense Motive +5, Sleight of Hand +4, Stealth +4

Languages Common, Elven

Gear +1 *chain shirt*, masterwork rapier, masterwork dagger, *circlet of persuasion*, *cloak of resistance* +1, disguise kit

Boon A princess can make a gift to PCs of up to a 300 gp value or get PCs out of minor legal trouble. A princess can also arrange a meeting with her royal parent, a knight, a noble, a minstrel or celebrity bard, or a merchant prince whose favor she has, with a +5 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy checks with them.

A princess is occasionally a ruler in her own right but is most often the daughter of a king and/or queen. In many societies, princesses come behind any princely brothers in the line of succession, and may even be treated like a commodity to be brokered between noble houses through marriage alliances. Small wonder, then, that princesses often find ways of sneaking away from their gilded homes and out into the world to find a taste of adventure.

Naturally, a princess's stats can also be used to model any high-level noble, male or female. Princesses also make good aristocratic duelists, perhaps joining together in a noble "gangs" of four members (CR 10).

A princess may be accompanied by four female noble scions as her ladies-in waiting or noble-born friends (CR 8), or by her mother and father, the king and queen (CR 15). Alone, a princess may keep a guard officer bodyguard (CR 7) or battle monk for protection (CR 8), possibly adding a minstrel as well for the company (CR 8 or 9).

Queen CR 10

XP 9,600

Human aristocrat 12

N Medium humanoid

Init +5; **Senses** Perception +19

DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 11, flat-footed 11 (+1 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 54 (12d8)

Fort +6, **Ref** +7, **Will** +14

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +9/+4 (1d4–1/19–20)

Ranged mwk dagger +11 (1d4–1/19–20)

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 12, **Con** 10, **Int** 12, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 22

Feats Alertness, Defensive Combat Training, Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Persuasive, Skill Focus (Sense Motive)

Skills Bluff +14, Diplomacy +22, Intimidate +22, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (nobility) +16, Linguistics +5, Perception +19, Perform (dance) +9, Perform (sing) +9, Perform (string) +9, Ride +6, Sense Motive +27

Languages Common, Draconic, Elven

Gear masterwork dagger, *bracers of armor +1*, *brooch of shielding*, *cloak of resistance +2*, *elixir of truth*, *elixir of vision*, *figurine of wondrous power* (silver raven), *headband of mental prowess +2* (Wis, Cha)

Boon A queen can arrange an audience with any noble in her land, including the king, and her favor provides a +10 bonus on Diplomacy checks with them. A queen who rules in her own name can also grant knighthoods, lordships, and dispense royal justice as a king.

A queen may be a monarch in her own right, or may be the wife of a king. Even in the latter case, she shares many of the duties of rulership, including managing affairs of state while the king is absent. A queen is generally wise and thoughtful, carefully considering the health of her nation as well as her royal house.

In countries or empires with a large number of titled families, a queen could simply be a duchess, baroness, or head of a great noble house, without royal privilege. A queen might also be used as a spymistress or the conniving seductress who holds the reins of power behind the throne.

Queens are often accompanied by a knight or sellsword bodyguard (CR 11), or four princesses or two nobles serving as their ladies-in-waiting (CR 12). A queen might also have a celebrity bard with her, or a priest and noble as her advisors (CR 12). A queen may often be found with her husband, the king, along with their royal guardsmen, either eight guards or four guard officers (CR 15).

King CR 14

XP 38,400

Human aristocrat 16

N Medium humanoid

Init +0; **Senses** Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 20 (+10 armor)

hp 80 (16d8+8)

Fort +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** +10

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee *+1 longsword* +14/+9/+4 (1d8+2/19–20) or mwk dagger +14/+9/+4 (1d4+1/19–20)

Ranged mwk dagger +13 (1d4+1/19–20)

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 10, **Con** 10, **Int** 14, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 27

Feats Alertness, Defensive Combat Training, Great Fortitude, Improved Great Fortitude, Improved Vital Strike, Mounted Combat, Persuasive, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Vital Strike

Skills Bluff +15, Diplomacy +32, Intimidate +26, Knowledge (geography) +10, Knowledge (local) +10, Knowledge (nobility) +15, Linguistics +8, Perception +13, Perform (oratory) +22, Ride +14, Sense Motive +23

Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, Halfling, Sylvan

Combat Gear smokestick; **Other Gear** *+1 glamered full plate of light fortification*, *+1 longsword*, masterwork dagger, *cape of the mountebank*, *medallion of thoughts*, *rod of splendor*

Boon A king can grant knighthood or even lordship, along with lands and titles, if sufficient service is rendered to the kingdom. A king may also pardon criminals or order the exile or execution of the guilty. He can grant a monetary reward of up to 1,000 gp to PCs.

A king is the ruler of a nation, usually a hereditary monarch schooled in the arts of statecraft and leadership, but no stranger to the sad necessities of steel and blood. Alert for treachery but possessed of all the courtly graces, a king leads his people. Whether or not he leads them well depends on his alignment, his goals, and the motives of his advisors.

A king can also be used as a high-ranking general or powerful warlord, or even a wealthy and influential captain of industry.

A king usually has a retinue of four knights (CR 15) but may travel with a dozen knights in times of war (CR 16). Kings may also be found in the company of a general, two noble advisors, and a high priest (CR 16). At court, a group of 10 nobles and a merchant prince might try to gain the favor of a king and his queen (CR 17). A king who fears for his safety while traveling in disguise might have two champions with him as bodyguards (CR 15).

Sailors

Plying the seas and facing danger in pursuit of wealth, adventure, or merely the freedom of the waves, professional sailors arise from every port and ship upon nearly every ocean. Whether as salty sea dogs, hardened marines, sailing traders, seasoned captains, or deadly pirates, those with experience before the mast and skill at reading the tempers of the seas might find new journeys wherever the tides sweep them. The sea breeds colorful characters and seems to harden those who ride its waves, bringing some to nobility and sinking others to the black-hearted depths of cruelty.



Shipmate CR 1/2

XP 200

Human expert 1/warrior 1

N Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +1 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 11 (2 HD; 1d8+1d10+2)

Fort +3, **Ref** +1, **Will** +2

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee scimitar +2 (1d6+1/18–20) or dagger +2 (1d4+1/19–20)

Ranged composite longbow +2 (1d8+1/×3)

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 13, **Con** 12, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 14

Feats Dodge, Skill Focus (Profession [sailor])

Skills Acrobatics +5, Climb +5, Craft (ships) +3, Perception +4, Profession (fisherman) +4, Profession (sailor) +8, Survival +4, Swim +5

Languages Common

Gear masterwork studded leather, daggers (2), composite longbow (+1 Str) with 20 arrows, scimitar

Boon A shipmate can smuggle a small item onto or off of a ship, or help PCs get on or off of a ship by creating a distraction for any other watchers (–4 on Perception checks to notice the PCs for up to 1 minute).

Shipmates are ordinary sailors, the rank-and-file deckhands who keep any vessel, great or small, afloat and moving. They are alert for danger and quick on their feet, weathered by wind and wave and sun, but always with an eye for what waits beyond the horizon.

Shipmates can be used as low-level marines, rivermen, bargefolk, or even swamp rats living in stilt-houses.

Replacing a shipmate's Dodge feat with Athletic reduces his AC and CMD by 1, but increases his Climb and Swim skills by 2 each. Replacing his Profession (fisherman) skill with ranks in Linguistics or a Knowledge skill creates a sailor who has traveled the world and has knowledge of distant lands or languages.

On board a ship, shipmates might serve as crew for a variety of characters: eight shipmates could work for an evil slaver (CR 6), a seagoing traveling merchant (CR 7), a marauding viking (CR 8), or a pirate captain and her first mate (CR 12).

Away from seagoing vessels, six shipmates could form a press gang looking for easy prey to add to a pirate ship's crew (CR 4). A single shipmate might be found in the company of a barmaid (CR 1), or with a vagabond or storyteller (CR 2). A pair of shipmates might take up with a drunkard or prostitute while on shore leave (CR 3).

First Mate CR 8

XP 4,800

Human expert 4/fighter 5

N Medium humanoid

Init +4; **Senses** Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 14, flat-footed 17 (+7 armor, +4 Dex)

hp 63 (9 HD; 4d8+5d10+18)

Fort +7, **Ref** +6, **Will** +6; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee *+1 shortsword* +15/+10 (1d6+6/17–20) or *+1 shortsword* +13/+8 (1d6+6/17–20), *+1 shortsword* +13/+8 (1d6+5/17–20) or *+1 shortsword* +13/+8 (1d6+6/17–20), mwk whip +11 (1d3+1 nonlethal)

Ranged mwk heavy crossbow +13 (1d10/19–20)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (15 ft. with whip)

Special Attacks weapon training (light blades +1)

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 18, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 24

Feats Athletic, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (whip), Improved Critical (shortsword), Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Quick Draw, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (shortsword), Weapon Specialization (shortsword)

Skills Acrobatics +13, Climb +10, Craft (ships) +5, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (geography) +3, Knowledge (nature) +3, Linguistics +3, Perception +10, Perform (sing) +4, Perform (wind) +4, Profession (sailor) +12, Survival +5, Swim +13

Languages Aquan, Common

SQ armor training 1

Combat Gear *potion of water breathing*, *feather tokens* (anchor, fan); **Other Gear** *+1 breastplate*, *+1 shortswords* (2), masterwork heavy crossbow with 10 bolts, masterwork whip, *ring of swimming*, everburning torch, musical instrument (concertina or fife)

Boon A first mate can arrange for PCs to meet with a captain or merchant prince of their acquaintance, with a +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy checks because of the first mate's reputation. He can also accompany PCs with a longboat and crew of four shipmates for up to 1 day.

A first mate is the loyal assistant to a ship's captain. He oversees duties and discipline aboard ship, feared but always respected; he is able to entertain with a sea shanty one moment and ply his trusty lash or flashing cutlasses the next. A first mate could also be the warden of an exotic island prison. Away from their ships, first mates can be found with a traveling merchant quartermaster (CR 9), or a captain (CR 12).

Captain CR 11

XP 12,800

Human expert 3/fighter 9

N Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 11, flat-footed 24 (+10 armor, +1 Dex, +1 natural, +3 shield)

hp 89 (12 HD; 3d8+9d10+26)

Fort +11, **Ref** +5, **Will** +8; +2 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +2

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee *trident of warning* +22/+17 (1d8+11) or starknife +18/+13 (1d4+7/×3)

Ranged *+1 composite longbow* +14/+9 (1d8+7/×3) or starknife +14 (1d4+7/×3)

Special Attacks weapon training (thrown +2, bows +1)

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 27

Feats Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Greater Weapon Focus (trident), Master Craftsman, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Profession [sailor]), Step Up, Strike Back, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (trident), Weapon Specialization (trident)

Skills Acrobatics +10, Climb +10, Craft (ships) +5, Diplomacy +10, Knowledge (engineering) +5, Knowledge (geography) +10, Knowledge (history) +5, Knowledge (local) +5, Knowledge (nature) +10, Knowledge (nobility) +5, Linguistics +5, Perception +10, Perform (keyboard instruments) +5, Profession (merchant) +5, Profession (sailor) +21, Spellcraft +16, Survival +10, Swim +10

Languages Aquan, Auran, Common

SQ armor training 2

Combat Gear *elemental gem* (water); **Other Gear** *+1 full plate*, *+1 heavy wooden shield*, *trident of warning*, *+1 composite longbow* (+5 Str) with 20 arrows, starknife, *amulet of natural armor +1*, *belt of giant strength +2*, *cloak of resistance +2*, *gloves of swimming and climbing*, musical instrument (harpsichord or small pipe organ), spyglass

Boon A captain can arrange sea passage for PCs or cargo to any navigable destination, and can help PCs find directions to obscure destinations (+5 bonus on Knowledge [geography] or other related checks). Captains working for a larger group can also issue legal decrees in their name.

A captain is mistress of a ship at sea. She may be the legal authority and representative of her nation, company, faith, or faction, or she may be an independent captain owing allegiance to none and claiming no home but the sea itself. Captains may be used as pirates, admirals, or master merchants. A captain is usually accompanied by a first mate and a traveling merchant as quartermaster (CR 12).

Scholars

More than merely elusive sages and hermetic wizards, academics and intellectuals might be found anywhere secrets wait to be uncovered. From universities of higher learning to the ruins of forgotten civilizations, researchers endlessly pursue new discoveries, either for the sake of scholarship or for their own personal fame. Tenacious mages test the boundaries of magic, risking their lives and sanity for the chance at greater power. No matter the mystery, one can rest assured that somewhere experts wait to test their minds against new challenges.



Hedge Wizard CR 4

XP 1,200

Human commoner 2/wizard 3

N Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex)

hp 22 (5d6+5)

Fort +3, **Ref** +3, **Will** +6

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +2 (1d4/19–20)

Ranged dagger +3 (1d4/19–20)

Special Attacks hand of the apprentice (7/day)

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +7)

2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 16), *glitterdust* (DC 16)

1st—*charm person* (DC 15), *color spray* (DC 15), *unseen servant*

0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 13, **Con** 12, **Int** 18, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 16

Feats Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Defensive Combat Training, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Craft [alchemy])

Skills Appraise +12, Craft (alchemy) +15, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +10, Knowledge (geography) +10, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (local) +10, Perception +6, Profession (herbalist) +10, Spellcraft +12

Languages Aquan, Common, Elven, Gnome, Sylvan

SQ arcane bond (raven familiar)

Combat Gear *potions of alter self*, *darkvision*, *expeditious retreat*, *invisibility*, *protection from arrows*, *resist energy*; **Other Gear** dagger, *cloak of resistance* +1, alchemy kit

Boon A hedge wizard can make alchemical items, brew potions, or scribe scrolls for the PCs at half cost. A hedge wizard can also share knowledge about the local area, granting a +2 circumstance bonus on Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (history), Knowledge (local), or Profession (herbalist) checks made in the local region.

A hedge wizard is a local dabbler in magic, sometimes a hermit or recluse wanting only privacy, but often a local loremaster or apothecary whose studies include both the natural and the supernatural.

Hedge wizards can serve as alchemists, sages, and scholars, or operate a curiosity shop or trading post dealing in magical and mundane items.

A hedge wizard might apprentice with a conjurist or hermit (CR 7) or partner with a medium as mystical advisors to a mayor (CR 9). Two cultists might be found working with a hedge wizard (CR 6), or a hedge wizard may work with a pilgrim and two acolytes to administer to a remote village (CR 6).

Archaeologist CR 6

XP 2,400

Human rogue 7

N Medium humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +1 shield)

hp 38 (7d8+7)

Fort +3, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee shortsword +8 (1d6–1) or whip +8 (1d3–1 nonlethal)

Ranged hand crossbow +8 (1d4/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +4d6 plus slow reactions

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (15 ft. with whip)

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 16, **Con** 13, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +8 (+10 to trip); **CMD** 17 (19 vs. trip)

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Improved Trip, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +12, Appraise +12, Climb +5, Disable Device +15, Escape Artist +10, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +10, Knowledge (engineering) +10, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (local) +10, Knowledge (religion) +5, Linguistics +10, Perception +10, Profession (architect) +10, Profession (librarian) +10, Sleight of Hand +7, Spellcraft +7, Stealth +10, Use Magic Device +10

Languages Aklo, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Giant, Terran, Undercommon

SQ rogue talents (ledge walker, slow reactions, trap spotter), trapfinding +3

Combat Gear *scrolls of comprehend languages*, *detect secret doors*, *erase*; **Other Gear** masterwork studded leather, masterwork buckler, hand crossbow with 10 bolts, shortsword, whip, *hand of the mage*, *handy haversack*, *rope of climbing*, *unguent of timelessness*, everburning torch

Boon An archaeologist can tell PCs secrets of ruins and relics of a specific ancient culture, granting a +2 circumstance bonus on Appraise, Spellcraft, and Use Magic Device checks to identify items relating to that culture, as well as Knowledge (engineering), Perception, and Disable Device checks when dealing with traps or secret doors in a ruin from that culture.

An archaeologist is a cunning scholar and explorer of ancient texts and ruins. She is knowledgeable in a wide range of fields, as quick with a quip or quotation as with a blade, bolt, or lash. An archaeologist might partner with a medium to placate the spirits of the dead disturbed in her explorations (CR 7), or supply a traveling merchant with exotic relics (CR 8).

Sage CR 11

XP 12,800

Human abjurer 5/expert 7

N Medium humanoid

Init +0; **Senses** Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14 (+4 *mage armor*)

hp 61 (12 HD; 7d8+5d6+12)

Fort +5, **Ref** +4, **Will** +12

Defensive Abilities protective ward 10/day (+2 deflection, 7 rounds), resistance

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee quarterstaff +6/+1 (1d6–1)

Ranged dart +7 (1d4)

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 5th; concentration +12)

3rd—*magic circle against evil*, *sepia snake sigil* (DC 20), *stinking cloud* (DC 20), *suggestion* (DC 20)

2nd—*glitterdust* (DC 19), *locate object*, *protection from arrows*, *touch of idiocy*, *whispering wind*

1st—*charm person* (DC 18), *color spray* (DC 18), *feather fall*, *mage armor*, *shield*, *unseen servant*

0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *detect magic*, *message*, *read magic*

Prohibited Schools evocation, necromancy

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 10, **Con** 12, **Int** 24, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 21

Feats Arcane Strike, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Defensive Combat Training, Magical Aptitude, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Knowledge [history]), Skill Focus (Use Magic Device), Spell Mastery

Skills Appraise +14, Diplomacy +6, Heal +6, Knowledge (choose one) +28, Knowledge (all others) +20, Linguistics +22, Perception +10, Profession (scribe) +10, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +26, Use Magic Device +26

Languages Common, plus 19 other languages

SQ arcane bond (*ring of sustenance*)

Combat Gear *wands of acid arrow* (50 charges), *cure light wounds* (50 charges), *identify* (50 charges), *light* (50 charges); **Other Gear** quarterstaff, darts (2), *brooch of shielding*, *broom of flying*, *cloak of resistance +1*, *headband of vast intellect +4* (Spellcraft, Use Magic Device), *ring of sustenance*, magnifying glass, merchant's scale

Boon A sage can translate any foreign language for PCs or make up to five skill checks (including identifying magic items) for PCs. A sage can also craft magic items at a 10% discount.

A sage is an academic of the first order. Both a polyglot and polymath, a sage can be consulted to answer any number of questions by anyone wealthy enough to afford her considerable fees. A sage is often accompanied by a merchant prince who procures all the research materials she desires (CR 12), and together they may sit on the small council of a queen (CR 13) or king (CR 15).

Seers

Beyond the world of the mundane lie truths and mysteries veiled from mortal eyes. Yet some possess the insight and art to gaze past the veneer of supposed reality, taking in realms both wondrous and terrible. Touched by the gods, magic, or madness, these seers stand apart from other mortals, viewing their powers as blessings or curses even as they explore the interweaving threads of fate and treat with the powers of realms beyond.



Doomsayer CR 1

XP 400

Human adept 3

N Medium humanoid

Init –1; **Senses** Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 11, touch 9, flat-footed 11 (+2 armor, –1 Dex)

hp 10 (3d6)

Fort +1, **Ref** +0, **Will** +5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee sickle +1 (1d6)

Ranged dart +0 (1d4)

Adept Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +5)

1st—*bless*, *burning hands* (DC 13), *obscuring mist*

0—*ghost sound* (DC 12), *guidance*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 12)

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 9, **Con** 10, **Int** 8, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 10

Feats Persuasive, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Intimidate)

Skills Diplomacy +4, Heal +6, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (religion) +3, Perception +5, Perform (oratory) +2, Profession (scribe) +6, Sense Motive +4, Spellcraft +3, Survival +6

Languages Common

SQ summon familiar (toad)

Combat Gear *scrolls of cause fear* (4), *command* (4), *cure light wounds* (4), *sleep* (4); **Other Gear** leather armor, sickle, darts (4)

Boon A doomsayer can spread word of the party's fearsome reputation, granting a +2 circumstance bonus on Intimidate checks in that community for 1 week. A doomsayer can also scribe scrolls for PCs at a 10% discount.

Doomsayers are ranting demagogues who continuously predict doom, cataclysm, and ruin, crying in the town square and distributing pamphlets in literate communities. A doomsayer may build up a cult of personality, but they are happiest when they can ensure that others are miserable.

Doomsayers can be used as primitive witch doctors or shamans, dark cultists, witches, or rough frontier "priests" in remote villages or other areas without organized clergy.

A doomsayer often keeps a pair of acolytes or beggars as disciples (CR 3 or 4), or works with a group of three wanderers or cultists (CR 6). A doomsayer might also be apprenticed to a hedge wizard (CR 5), while an urban doomsayer could partner with a gang of four pickpockets (CR 4) who work the crowd that gathers to hear the doomsayer speak. Replacing Skill Focus (Intimidate) with Skill Focus (Heal) creates a lay healer who might be found with a pilgrim (CR 4).

Medium CR 4

XP 1,200

Human cleric 5

N Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20 (+7 armor, +1 Dex, +3 shield)

hp 22 (5d8)

Fort +5, **Ref** +3, **Will** +8

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee light mace +2 (1d6–1)

Ranged dart +4 (1d4–1)

Special Attacks channel positive energy 7/day (DC 14, 3d6)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th; concentration +8)

6/day—calming touch (1d6+5 nonlethal), gentle rest

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 5th; concentration +8)

3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 16), *helping hand*, *speak with dead*[D]

2nd—*augury*, *gentle repose*[D], *silence* (DC 15), *spiritual weapon*

1st—*bless*, *command* (DC 14), *comprehend languages*, *deathwatch*[D], *sanctuary* (DC 14)

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *guidance*, *light*, *read magic*

D domain spell; **Domains** Community, Repose

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 12, **Con** 10, **Int** 14, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 13

Feats Alertness, Extra Channel, Shield Focus, Turn Undead

Skills Diplomacy +10, Heal +11, Knowledge (planes) +9, Knowledge (religion) +9, Perception +8, Profession (midwife) +9, Sense Motive +13, Spellcraft +6

Languages Celestial, Common, Infernal

Gear +1 *chainmail*, heavy wooden shield, light mace, darts (2), *cloak of resistance* +1, silver holy symbol, augury focus

Boon A medium can cast *augury*, *speak with dead*, or *gentle repose* at no charge, or magical healing at a 10% discount.

A medium is a speaker who bridges the worlds of the living and the dead. She proclaims rest and blesses gravesites, ushering in birth and consigning the dead to the ground, yet it is also her seance that recalls the shades of the lost and ensures the continuity of a community's past, present, and future.

A medium could be a village priestess or wise woman, or can simply be used as a generic wandering cleric, or one of many low-to-mid-level priests staffing a temple.

A medium might be accompanied by two acolytes or a doomsayer (CR 5), or two cultists (CR 6). A medium and hedge wizard (CR 6), hermit (CR 7), or conjurist (CR 7) could preside over a forest oracle or be traveling mendicant mystics. A medium and two acolytes might accompany a priest (CR 9), while five or six mediums could form the entourage for a saint (CR 12) or high priest (CR 13).

Fortune Teller CR 5

XP 1,600

Human bard 3/sorcerer 3

CN Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex)

hp 23 (6 HD; 3d8+3d6)

Fort +3, **Ref** +6, **Will** +8; +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +2 (1d4–1/19–20)

Ranged dagger +4 (1d4–1/19–20)

Special Attacks bardic performance 18 rounds/day (countersong, distraction, fascinate [DC 15], inspire competence +2, inspire courage +1)

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +7)

7/day—laughing touch

Bard Spells Known (CL 3rd; concentration +7)

1st (4/day)—*cure light wounds*, *hideous laughter* (DC 17), *silent image* (DC 15), *ventriloquism* (DC 15)

0 (at will)—*ghost sound* (DC 14), *know direction*, *mage hand*, *message*, *read magic*, *resistance*

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 3rd; concentration +7)

1st (6/day)—*charm person* (DC 15), *entangle* (DC 15), *hypnotism* (DC 17), *mage armor*

0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *daze* (DC 16), *detect magic*, *ray of frost*, *prestidigitation*

Bloodline fey

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 13, **Con** 10, **Int** 14, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 13

Feats Eschew Materials, Extra Performance, Magical Aptitude, Skill Focus (Perform [act]), Skill Focus (Sleight of Hand)

Skills Bluff +16, Diplomacy +10, Disguise +16, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (nature) +7, Knowledge (planes) +7, Knowledge (religion) +7, Linguistics +6, Perception +5, Perform (act) +16, Perform (oratory) +12, Sense Motive +10, Sleight of Hand +13, Spellcraft +10, Use Magic Device +15

Languages Aklo, Common, Draconic, Sylvan

SQ bardic knowledge +1, bloodline arcana, versatile performance (act), woodland stride

Combat Gear *scrolls of animate rope*, *comprehend languages* (4), *erase*, *magic aura*, *magic mouth*; *wand of unseen servant* (50 charges); smokesticks (2); thunderstones (2); **Other Gear** daggers (2), *cloak of resistance* +1, non-magical crystal ball, tarot cards, augury focus

Boon A fortune teller could advise PCs on the best ways to trick those in a particular community, granting them a +2 circumstance bonus on Bluff and Intimidate checks in that area for 1 week.

Street

Beyond castle walls and the regularly patrolled paths of the elite run the muddy walks of the common folk, where the desperate people of the street scrape what lives they can from debris and dust. Some criminals, some hopeless castoffs, some unlucky, broken, or crazed, these are the true inhabitants of cities and those most knowledgeable of its people, ways, and secrets. Often viewed as dangerous and deceitful, these desperate folks merely do what they must to survive, denied the luxuries of honor or pride in the daily fight for survival. Charity, compassion, and a few coins often goes far with those forced to make their living off the streets, and while many exploit such a simple truth, others might win a devoted ally or informant.



Beggar CR 1

XP 400

Human commoner 1/rogue 1
N Medium humanoid
Init +3; **Senses** Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10 (+3 Dex)
hp 13 (2 HD; 1d8+1d6+5)
Fort +2, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee club +1 (1d6+1)
Ranged club +3 (1d6+1)
Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 17, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8
Base Atk +0; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 14
Feats Endurance, Skill Focus (Survival)
Skills Climb +6, Knowledge (local) +5, Perception +6, Sleight of Hand +8, Stealth +8, Survival +6
Languages Common
SQ trapfinding +1
Gear club, begging bowl
Boon A beggar can watch a particular location or person in their city or town for 1 day and report back to the PC on what they observed.

Beggars are the homeless and hopeless wretches that eke out a meager existence at the fringes of society in cities and towns. Some are once farmers, craftsmen, or other working folk stricken blind or lame, while others are orphans from birth, subsisting on alms and charity so long they have known nothing else.

Beggars can serve as apprentice thieves and pickpockets (and not a few beggars supplement their begging this way). They might also be used as urchins, link boys, the inhabitants of a leper colony, or even cultists of a dark god of disease, thievery, or murder. Exchanging a beggar's Skill Focus (Survival) with Skill Focus (Sleight of Hand) or Skill Focus (Stealth) creates a better pickpocket or thief. Replacing Endurance with Weapon Finesse, as well as adding some light armor or an additional weapon, makes a beggar more effective in combat, as does replacing both of a beggar's feats with Dodge and Mobility.

A beggar might be accompanied by a village idiot (CR 2), or may team up with a street thug or a pair of pickpockets (CR 3). A pair of beggars may also trail after a dealer or pilgrim (CR 5), or work with a troupe of four wanderers (CR 7). Beggars working as thieves or pickpockets might form gangs of six (CR 6), while four thieving beggars might add their skills to a gang of eight bandits (CR 7).

Prostitute CR 1

XP 400

Human expert 1/rogue 1
N Medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex)
hp 11 (2d8+2)
Fort +1, **Ref** +4, **Will** +2

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee dagger –1 (1d4–1/19–20) or sap –1 (1d6–1 nonlethal)
Ranged dagger +2 (1d4–1/19–20)
Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 14, **Con** 13, **Int** 12, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 17
Base Atk +0; **CMB** –1; **CMD** 11
Feats Deceitful, Skill Focus (Profession [courtesan])
Skills Acrobatics +6, Bluff +10, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +11, Knowledge (local) +5, Perception +5, Perform (act) +8, Perform (dance) +8, Profession (courtesan) +8, Sense Motive +5, Sleight of Hand +7
Languages Common, Elven
SQ trapfinding +1
Gear dagger, sap, *elixir of love*, disguise kit
Boon A prostitute can set up a meeting with a current or former client. Because the PCs know of the client's connection to the prostitute, they suffer a –2 penalty on Diplomacy checks with that person, but gain a +2 bonus on Intimidate and Sense Motive checks.

Prostitutes are workers for hire in the field of love. From cheap trollops to brazen strumpets, saucy tarts to haughty courtesans, they work the streets and backroom brothels of cities and towns, tending to the wants, needs, and dark desires of their clients, often in elaborate costume and makeup for erotic roleplay. Most prostitutes have at least a little larceny in their hearts, however, and those who procure their services would be well advised to keep a close eye on their purses.

Prostitutes could be used as members of a harem or an actors' troupe. A prostitute might also be a noble's or wealthy businessman's mistress, or even a barmaid looking to make a little money on the side. Prostitutes also make good low-level spies or undercover agents.

A dealer might serve as pimp for a group of four prostitutes (CR 6), or eight prostitutes might be performers in a minstrel's show (CR 8). A harem of six prostitutes is usually guarded by a eunuch slaver (CR 7). A barkeep might have a prostitute on his staff, along with two barmaids (CR 5), or a prostitute may be found in the company of a pair of noble scions (CR 5).

Dealer CR 3

XP 800

Human expert 1/rogue 3
N Medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +2 Dex)
hp 22 (4d8+4)
Fort +2, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2
Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee mwk dagger +5 (1d4+1/19–20) or mwk sap +5 (1d6+1 nonlethal)
Ranged mwk hand crossbow +5 (1d4/19–20)
Special Attacks sneak attack +2d6

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 15, **Con** 12, **Int** 14, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 14
Base Atk +2; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 15
Feats Deceitful, Quick Draw, Skill Focus (Craft [alchemy]), Weapon Finesse
Skills Appraise +6, Bluff +11, Craft (alchemy) +12, Disable Device +6, Disguise +12, Escape Artist +9, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (local) +9, Perception +6, Profession (herbalist) +6, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +9, Stealth +9
Languages Common, Halfling, Orc
SQ rogue talent (finesse rogue), trapfinding +1
Combat Gear bloodroot posion (2 doses), oil of taggit (2 doses), striped toadstool poison (2 doses); **Other Gear** leather armor, masterwork hand crossbow with 10 bolts, masterwork dagger, sap, alchemy kit, disguise kit, thieves' tools
Boon A dealer can provide alchemical substances or poisons costing less than 500 gp at a 10% discount. He can also arrange for PCs to meet a more powerful crime boss or to plant illicit substances on a person or place.

Dealers are purveyors of drugs, toxins, poisons, and all manner of proscribed and questionable alchemical substances. Operating from hidden laboratories and kitchens, they import and concoct their wares to rule the streets through the power of their sweet seduction. (See page 236 for a variety of drugs dealers might push.)

Dealers can be used as low-level poisoners and assassins, traveling charlatans or snake-oil salesmen, or even semi-honest alchemists, apothecaries, and street physicians.

A corrupt dealer may work together with a slaver and two prostitutes to lure and kidnap victims (CR 6) or run a gang of four beggars and four pickpockets (CR 7). A dealer might partner with an unscrupulous shopkeep (CR 4) or sleazy barkeep (CR 5), or may be engaged in illicit business with a noble scion (CR 5). A dealer might also be accompanied by two street thugs for protection (CR 5). An honest dealer might be apprenticed to a hedge wizard (CR 5).

Tavern

Amid the press of the crowd, the din of raised voices, and the music of clanking mugs bustle the patrons and proprietors of the local common house. Whether the staff of a sleepy village's inn and tavern, a shadowy city club, a feasting lord's longhouse, or any other place there's reason for celebration or ale to be poured, tavern denizens do more than serve, taking in all the best tales and gossip of a community and thoughtfully attending to the confessions of any with the coin to pay for another glass.



Barmaid CR 1/2

XP 200

Human commoner 2

N Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex)

hp 7 (2d6)

Fort +0, **Ref** +1, **Will** –1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee serving tray +1 (1d4) or
frying pan +1 (1d6 plus 1 fire [if hot])

Ranged drinking glass +2 (1d4 plus dazzled 1 round [drink in eyes])

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 12, **Con** 11, **Int** 10, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 12

Feats Catch Off-Guard, Throw Anything

Skills Perception +4, Perform (dance) +3, Profession (barmaid) +4, Profession (cook) +3, Sleight of Hand +2

Languages Common

Combat Gear antitoxin (2); **Other Gear** serving tray or frying pan, drinking glasses (2 to 4)

Boon A barmaid can get PCs a free round of drinks or whisper the local gossip (granting a +2 bonus on the PCs' next Diplomacy check to gather information in that community).

Barmaids are serving wenches, dancing girls, and even harried cooks in inns and taverns throughout the cities and towns of the world. Although usually young, some barmaids are older goodwives working in the family business.

A barmaid might also be used as a farmer's, fisherman's, or shopkeep's wife, or any type of servant, whether in an inn or a noble's manor. Changing a barmaid's Profession skills can create any type of servant needed. Profession (courtesan) creates an inexperienced prostitute, or simply a serving girl who works in a brothel.

While skilled in improvised weapons, changing a barmaid's feats can create a servant with other useful skills. Alertness or Skill Focus (Perception) makes a barmaid good at overhearing conversations, while a barmaid working in a dangerous dive might carry a concealed dagger and have the Improved Unarmed Strike and Weapon Finesse feats.

A typical small tavern may have only a barkeep and a pair of barmaids (CR 4), while a large inn might have half a dozen barmaids serving the barkeep, with a street thug bouncer for protection (CR 6). A barmaid is often found in the company of a pair of farmers or shipmates (CR 2) or a noble scion (CR 3), or two barmaids might serve a pair of drunkards, street thugs, or vagabonds (CR 4).

Drunkard CR 1

XP 400

Human commoner 1/warrior 2
N Medium humanoid
Init +0; **Senses** Perception –1

DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor)
hp 23 (3 HD; 1d6+2d10+9)
Fort +7, **Ref** +0, **Will** –1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee club +3 (1d6+1) or
dagger +3 (1d4+1/19–20)
Ranged club +2 (1d6+1) or
dagger +2 (1d4+1/19–20)

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 11, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 8
Base Atk +2; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 13
Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack
Skills Climb +5, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +5, Profession (choose one) +3, Ride +4, Swim +5
Languages Common
Gear leather armor, club, dagger, gallon jug of ale
Boon A drunkard can be persuaded to make a loud, obnoxious disturbance as a distraction, imposing a –2 penalty on opposed Perception checks (as against Stealth or Sleight of Hand) for up to 1 minute for any NPCs who can see and hear him.

As ubiquitous as the barkeeps and serving wenches who serve them, drunkards may be found in almost every tavern in every town. Drunkards are wine-sodden louts who frequent pubs far too often, sousing away their meager earnings and often becoming surly and belligerent, especially against those from outside their home community. These are the men who leap up to start or join bar brawls, provided they're not passed out in the corner, sleeping off their latest binge.

Drunkards might be used as common sailors on shore leave, young country boys visiting town for the first time who can't hold their liquor, or drunk and disreputable off-duty guardsmen. A drunkard could even be used as a surly barkeep who samples his own wares a little too often.

A drunkard may be found alone, or a pair of down-on-their-luck drunkards might try to mug lone vagabonds for coin for their next drink (CR 3). A table of four drunkards might be sitting in a tavern (CR 5), possibly with a barkeep (CR 6), or perhaps listening to tales from a trapper (CR 6) or minstrel (CR 7). A pair of drunkards might also be found carousing on the street with a couple of shipmates (CR 4), two caravan guards on leave (CR 5), or a pair of slovenly prostitutes (CR 5), or trying to buy some illicit substances from a dealer (CR 5).

Barkeep CR 3

XP 800

Human expert 4/warrior 1
N Medium humanoid
Init +0; **Senses** Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor)
hp 23 (5 HD; 4d8+1d10)
Fort +5, **Ref** +1, **Will** +6

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee sap +3 (1d6–1 nonlethal) or
dagger +3 (1d4–1/19–20)
Ranged mwk heavy crossbow +5 (1d10/19–20)

STATISTICS

Str 9, **Dex** 11, **Con** 10, **Int** 12, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 10
Base Atk +4; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 13
Feats Great Fortitude, Quick Draw, Rapid Reload, Skill Focus (Profession [barkeep])
Skills Bluff +8, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (local) +9, Linguistics +6, Perception +10, Perform (comedy) +6, Perform (oratory) +6, Profession (barkeep) +13, Ride +5, Sense Motive +10, Sleight of Hand +5
Languages Common, Dwarf, Halfling
Gear *+1 leather armor*, masterwork heavy crossbow with 10 bolts and one *+1 human bane bolt*, dagger, sap
Boon A barkeep can arrange free room and board for PCs for up to a week. He can also share local rumors and customs with PCs, granting a +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy and Sense Motive checks in his community for 1 day.

A barkeep is the proprietor of an alehouse, saloon, or tavern, often with an inn attached. While some are sly, weasel-like, and unfriendly, most are garrulous raconteurs, seeking to entertain their customers with a story or joke and keep them happy and drinking. With patrons from across the world visiting their taverns, most barkeeps know a smattering of other languages to communicate with foreigners from far-away lands.

Barkeeps are used to trouble in their establishments, for drink often brings out the worst in their customers, and most barkeeps are used to facing down and intimidating drunks and bullies. For times when words fail, a good barkeep keeps a weapon beneath the bar, and is not afraid to use it.

Changing a barkeep's Profession skill to (innkeep) creates an innkeeper, possibly with Diplomacy instead of Intimidate, and his Perform skills changed to other Profession skills, such as cook.

An average barkeep has four barmaids on staff, with two guards or street thugs working as bouncers (CR 6). A barkeep might also be found swapping stories over a pint with a shopkeep (CR 4) or guard officer (CR 5).

Temple

Devoted to powers and philosophies of the divine, the servants of organized religion live as their faith dictates and seek to spread the tenets of their beliefs to all with spirits that want and ears ready to listen. Whether in glorious temples, cathedrals, or mosques of widespread religions or the secretive sanctuaries of cults, mysteries, and esoteric orders, those of the faith provide a variety of services both to the faithful and those with the gold to further glorify their beliefs.



Acolyte CR 1/2

XP 200

Human cleric 1

LN Medium humanoid

Init +0; **Senses** Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +2 shield)

hp 5 (1d8+1)

Fort +3, **Ref** +0, **Will** +4

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee shortspear +1 (1d6+1)

Ranged shortspear +0 (1d6+1)

Special Attacks channel positive energy 7/day (DC 12, 1d6)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st; concentration +3)

5/day—rebuke death, touch of law

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 1st; concentration +3)

1st—*bless*, *command* (DC 13), *cure light wounds*[D]

0 (at will)—*guidance*, *resistance*, *virtue*

D domain spell; **Domains** Healing, Law

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 10, **Con** 13, **Int** 10, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +0; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 11

Feats Extra Channel, Selective Channeling

Skills Diplomacy +6, Heal +8, Knowledge (religion) +4, Sense Motive +6

Languages Common

Combat Gear *scroll of protection from chaos*, *scroll of sanctuary*; **Other Gear** scale mail, heavy wooden shield, shortspears (2), healer's kit, silver holy symbol

Boon An acolyte can tend a character's wounds or provide a free wooden holy symbol or sacred tract (granting a +2 circumstance bonus on Knowledge [religion] checks about the acolyte's faith). An acolyte can also make holy water for PCs at a 20% discount.

An acolyte is a priest in training, often a callow youth fresh from the cloisters, loaded with zeal but not much practiced in proselytism. They are found in temples and monasteries throughout the world, and their enthusiasm and devotion makes them eager to take up arms and armor to defend their faith and flocks.

Acolytes of different faiths can be easily created by simply changing their domains, spells, armor, or weapons. Evil acolytes might have the Death and Evil domains, for example, and channel negative energy instead. An acolyte of nature could have the Animal and Plant domains, and wear leather armor.

Acolytes can be temple caretakers or messengers, attendants at small roadside shrines and chapels, or assistants to more experienced priests. A pair of acolytes may accompany a temple guard (CR 3), a pilgrim (CR 4), or a medium (CR 5).

Priest CR 8

XP 4,800

Human cleric 9

LN Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 11, flat-footed 25 (+11 armor, +1 Dex, +4 shield)

hp 70 (9d8+30)

Fort +9, **Ref** +5, **Will** +11

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 *merciful morningstar* +9/+4 (1d8+3 plus 1d6 nonlethal) or dagger +8/+3 (1d4+2/19–20)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +8 (1d8/19–20) or dagger +7 (1d4+2/19–20)

Special Attacks channel positive energy 5/day (DC 14, 5d6), staff of order (4 rounds, 1/day)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th, concentration +13)
7/day—rebuke death, touch of law

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 9th, concentration +13)
5th—*breath of life*[D], *righteous might*
4th—*air walk*, *freedom of movement*, *order's wrath*[D] (DC 18), *spell immunity*
3rd—*daylight*, *dispel magic*, *magic circle against chaos*[D], *prayer*, *searing light*
2nd—*aid*, *bull's strength*, *cure moderate wounds*[D], *delay poison*, *spiritual weapon*, *status*
1st—*bless*, *detect chaos*, *divine favor* (2), *protection from chaos*[D], *shield of faith*
0 (at will)—*create water*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *stabilize*
D domain spell; **Domains** Healing, Law

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 19

Feats Armor Proficiency (heavy), Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Extra Channel, Shield Focus, Toughness, Vital Strike

Skills Diplomacy +5, Heal +10, Knowledge (religion) +10, Perception +8, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +11

Languages Common

SQ healer's blessing

Gear +2 *full plate*, +2 *heavy wooden shield*, +1 *merciful morningstar*, masterwork light crossbow with 10 bolts, dagger, *cloak of resistance* +1, healer's kit

Boon A priest can accompany PCs or send a patrol of four temple guards to assist them for up to 3 days. She can also craft magical arms and armor at a 10% discount.

A priest is a leader within his church, spreading the faith by any means necessary, even through conversion at swordpoint when argument fails. A priest can be a crusader, warpriest, or divine champion. A priest might be advisor to a noble (CR 10), or travel with a retinue of a dozen temple guards (CR 10).

High Priest CR 12

XP 19,200

Human cleric 13

LN Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15 (+3 armor, +2 shield)

hp 90 (13d8+32)

Fort +13, **Ref** +7, **Will** +18

Defensive Abilities unity (2/day)

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +8 (1d4–1/19–20)

Ranged light crossbow +9 (1d8/19–20)

Special Attacks channel positive energy 5/day (DC 18, 7d6)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th; concentration +20)
10/day—calming touch, inspiring word (6 rounds)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 13th; concentration +20)
7th—*dictum* (DC 24), *repulsion*[D] (DC 24), *summon monster VII*
6th—*banishment* (DC 23), *heal*, *heroes' feast*[D], *word of recall*
5th—*breath of life*, *flame strike* (DC 22), *summon monster V*, *telepathic bond*[D], *true seeing*
4th—*air walk*, *dimensional anchor*, *discern lies*[D], *greater magic weapon*, *order's wrath* (DC 21), *tongues*
3rd—*create food and water*, *dispel magic*, *magic vestment*[D] (2), *prayer*, *protection from energy*, *searing light*
2nd—*aid*, *calm emotions* (DC 19), *enthrall*[D] (DC 19), *hold person* (DC 19), *sound burst* (DC 19), *spiritual weapon*, *status*
1st—*command* (DC 18), *comprehend languages*, *divine favor*[D], *hide from undead* (DC 18), *protection from chaos*, *sanctuary* (DC 18), *shield of faith*
0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *guidance*, *light*, *read magic*
D domain spell; **Domains** Community, Nobility

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 10, **Con** 15, **Int** 12, **Wis** 24, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 18

Feats Augment Summoning, Craft Rod, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Leadership, Selective Channeling, Spell Focus (conjuration), Spell Penetration, Turn Undead

Skills Diplomacy +11, Heal +11, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (local) +10, Knowledge (nobility) +10, Knowledge (religion) +16, Linguistics +10, Perception +15, Sense Motive +15, Spellcraft +16

Languages Aquan, Auran, Celestial, Common, Ignan, Infernal, Sylvan, Terran

Combat Gear *lesser metamagic rods* (extend, silent), *wand of eagle's splendor* (50 charges), *wand of silence* (50 charges); **Other Gear** masterwork studded leather, +1 *buckler*, cold iron dagger, light crossbow with 10 cold iron bolts, *belt of mighty constitution* +2, *cloak of resistance* +3, *eyes of the eagle*, *headband of inspired wisdom* +4, *incense of meditation*

Boon A high priest may cast a spell at no cost (except for material components) or craft a magical item at a 10% discount. He may also be able to secure the PCs an audience with a ruler.

Tribe

In the wildest reaches of dark jungles, hidden mountains, vast plains, frigid tundra, or innumerable other wild expanses live people with ways uninfluenced by civilized lands. Wary of intruders and defensive of their ancient traditions, tribal folk adhere to beliefs mysterious to outsiders and understand secrets of their lands beyond the savviest intruder. More than barbarians, such people are lords, servants, and kindred of their environments, and demand the respect of all who would trod upon their lands.



Cannibal CR 1

XP 400

Human barbarian 2

CN Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 9, flat-footed 12 (+4 armor, +1 Dex, –2 rage)

hp 25 (2d12+12)

Fort +8, **Ref** +1, **Will** +3

Defensive Abilities uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee greatclub +6 (1d10+6) and bite +1 (1d4+2) or unarmed strike +6 (1d3+4) and bite +1 (1d4+2) or bite +6 (1d4+4 plus +2 bonus on grapple)

Ranged throwing axe +3 (1d6+4)

Special Attacks rage (9 rounds/day), rage power (animal fury)

TACTICS

Base Statistics When not raging, the barbarian's statistics are **AC** 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; **hp** 21; **Fort** +6, **Will** +1; **Melee** greatclub +4 (1d10+3) or unarmed strike +4 (1d3+2), no bite; **Ranged** throwing axe +3 (1d6+2); **Str** 15, **Con** 16; **CMB** +4 (+6 grapple); **Climb** +4, **Swim** +4

STATISTICS

Str 19, **Dex** 13, **Con** 20, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +6 (+8 grapple); **CMD** 15 (17 vs. grapple)

Feats Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike

Skills Climb +6, Handle Animal +4, Perception +6, Survival +6, Swim +6

Languages Common

SQ fast movement

Gear hide armor, greatclub, throwing axes (2)

Boon A cannibal can assist the PCs by tracking a single sentient creature (or a single group of sentient creatures) through the wilderness for up to 3 days.

Cannibals are ferocious, savage humanoids, feral people with a taste for sentient flesh. In battle, they charge with savage war cries, often tossing their weapons aside to hurl themselves onto their foes with hunger and abandon, eager to taste the blood and flesh in the ecstatic heat of battle.

Cannibals can also be used as regular barbarian tribesmen. In these cases, they might have different rage powers (such as intimidating glare, powerful blow, or superstition), and their feats can be replaced with Endurance and Diehard, or Power Attack and Cleave. A cannibal with the scent rage power makes a skilled tracker, while one with swift foot can easily run down prey.

Cannibals are usually found in hunting parties of four to six (CR 5 or 6), often accompanied by an equal number of half-tamed large dogs (CR 6 or 7). Eight cannibals might accompany a shaman (CR 8) or a chieftain (CR 11).

Shaman CR 5

XP 1,600

Human adept 7

N Medium humanoid

Init –1; **Senses** Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 9, flat-footed 12 (+3 armor, –1 Dex)

hp 31 (7d6+7)

Fort +3, **Ref** +1, **Will** +6

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk sickle +4 (1d6)

Adept Spells Prepared (CL 7th; concentration +8)

2nd—*cure moderate wounds*, *web* (DC 13)

1st—*bless*, *command* (DC 12), *cure light wounds*, *obscuring mist*

0—*guidance*, *stabilize*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 11)

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 8, **Con** 12, **Int** 12, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 12

Feats Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Wand, Improved Familiar, Self-Sufficient

Skills Craft (alchemy) +10, Heal +12, Knowledge (history) +6, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (nature) +6, Knowledge (religion) +6, Profession (herbalist) +10, Spellcraft +6, Survival +13

Languages Common, Ignan

SQ summon familiar (smoke mephit)

Combat Gear *wand of burning hands* (CL 5, 50 charges), *wand of cure moderate wounds* (50 charges), alchemist's fire (2); **Other Gear** masterwork studded leather, masterwork sickle, wooden holy symbol, 4 gp

Boon A shaman can craft potions for PCs at a 10% discount or make up to three knowledge checks on their behalf. A shaman can also give them a sacred token that grants a +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy checks with tribes within a 20-mile radius.

Shamans are the keepers of wisdom, myth, and medicine, the watchers over birth, life, and death within primitive tribes. They keep the ancient rites and appease the nature spirits, reading the signs in the smoke and tending the pyres of the honored dead while calling down a burning wrath upon those who would violate the tribe's territory and way of life.

Shamans may tend to good or neutral tribes with long histories and heroic traditions, or might be sinister witch doctors urging depraved cannibal tribes to darker evils. They are usually found in the wilds, but may be encountered in towns or cities, particularly if drawn there by visions or the voices of the spirits.

A shaman may keep a gladiator, monster hunter, or raider as her bodyguard (CR 7), or might have two doomsayers as apprentice shamans (CR 6).

Chieftain CR 10

XP 9,600

Human warrior 12

N Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 102 (12d10+36)

Fort +9, **Ref** +5, **Will** +3

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee *+1 human bane greatsword* +17/+12/+7 (2d6+7/17–20) or *+1 human bane greatsword* +19/+14/+9 (4d6+9/17–20) vs. humans or handaxe +16/+11/+6 (1d6+4/×3)

Ranged longbow +13/+8/+3 (1d8/×3)

STATISTICS

Str 19, **Dex** 12, **Con** 12, **Int** 8, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 27

Feats Critical Focus, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Critical (greatsword), Intimidating Prowess, Lunge, Toughness

Skills Climb +7, Handle Animal +6, Intimidate +19, Perception +2, Ride +4

Languages Common

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*; **Other Gear** hide armor, *+1 human bane greatsword*, handaxe, longbow with 20 arrows, *belt of giant strength* +2, 18 gp

Boon A chieftain can grant safe passage through lands within 20 miles; no tribes within that area will attack the PCs.

Chieftains lead cannibal tribes and other savage groups through raw strength, fierce cunning, and sheer force of will. A chieftain holds a mighty weapon as a symbol of his leadership and as a warning to those who would challenge him, for the blade has tasted the blood of as many rivals within the tribe as that of enemies from without.

As with shamans and cannibals, chieftains can rule either proud, noble barbarian groups or bestial, degenerate cannibal tribes. A chieftain who claimed his position by virtue of his heroic deeds might have a *dragon bane* or *magical beast bane greatsword* instead of the listed weapon, while a powerful cannibal chief might wear the heavier armor and wield the foreign weapons of defeated (and consumed) foes.

Chieftains can also be used as simple, direct gladiators, or even as high-level guardsmen, perhaps in charge of an entire castle's or city's guard force. Such guard generals wear heavier armor, usually banded mail or full plate (AC 18 or 20, respectively), and might possess the Power Attack and Cleave feats instead of Endurance and Diehard.

Chieftains are usually found with two raider bodyguards, a shaman, and a dozen cannibals (CR 12). A chieftain might also lead a raiding party of 10 raiders (CR 13) or nine vikings (CR 14).

Villagers

Living apart from the walled edifices of bustling cities or the politics and plots of lordly palaces, simple townsfolk work hard and live simply, depending on one another for survival in their secluded burgs. The pioneers of far-flung frontiers, the farmfolk of rural countrysides, and the everyday people of sleepy hamlets, most common folk seek only quiet lives among their families and neighbors and care little for excitement or danger. Suspicious of strangers and wary of threats, these country folk preserve the traditions of their communities but readily do business with those bringing gold and the promise of greater things.



Village Idiot CR 1/3

XP 100

Human commoner 1

N Medium humanoid

Init +0; **Senses** Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10

hp 6 (1d6+3)

Fort +2, **Ref** +0, **Will** –1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee improvised club +1 (1d4+1)

Ranged sling –1 (1d3+1)

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 11, **Con** 15, **Int** 4, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +0; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 11

Feats Catch Off-Guard, Endurance

Skills Climb +5, Perception +3

Languages Common

Gear improvised club, sling with 10 stones, turnip

Boon The village idiot can lead PCs to something secret or hidden inside the town that he has come across, granting a +5 bonus on one Perception check to search an area.

The village idiot is an amiable simpleton, eking out a meager existence through charity, begging, odd jobs, or occasionally bringing down small game with his sling. While usually a gentle soul, the village idiot is prone to anger if provoked, and may lash out blindly with whatever item is at hand.

Giving a village idiot the Skill Focus feat in place of Endurance creates an idiot savant, displaying great knowledge in one specific area, usually a Craft or Knowledge skill. Switching an idiot savant's Constitution and Charisma scores, and giving him Animal Affinity, Skill Focus (Handle Animal), and the Handle Animal skill instead of Climb, creates a horse whisperer or someone who relates better to animals than to humans (hp 4, Fort +0, Handle Animal +11). A village idiot might also carry a crude knife, or could have learned to defend himself from the taunts of cruel villagers with his fists (and the Improved Unarmed Strike feat).

Village idiots can also be used as prisoners, galley slaves, or incarcerated lunatics in an asylum. A village idiot can also represent any simple commoner, by replacing his Climb skill with an appropriate Craft or Profession skill. A stableboy might have the Ride skill instead, while a dock rat may possess the Swim skill. An urchin runner might have the Fleet and Run feats instead.

A village idiot is usually encountered alone, but may also be found tagging along with an acolyte, drunkard, farmer, or shopkeep.

Farmer CR 1/2

XP 200

Human commoner 1/expert 1
N Medium humanoid
Init +0; **Senses** Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10
hp 9 (2d6+2)
Fort +1, **Ref** +0, **Will** +3

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee club +0 (1d6) or
sickle +0 (1d6)
Ranged sling +0 (1d4) or
club +0 (1d6)

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 10, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 9
Base Atk +0; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 10
Feats Animal Affinity, Skill Focus (Profession [farmer])
Skills Craft (carpentry) +5, Handle Animal +6, Heal +5, Knowledge (local) +4, Knowledge (nature) +4, Profession (farmer) +9, Ride +7
Languages Common
Gear club, sickle, sling with 10 bullets, heavy horse, wagon
Boon A farmer can provide enough food and drink for the PCs for 1 week free of charge, or offer them a place to sleep for the night in his barn.

Farmers are the backbone of any economy, producing the foodstuffs and livestock for the world. A typical farmer is fair-minded, sensible, and trustworthy, but suspicious of outsiders. A farmer can be a good source of local gossip, and knows the area around his farm like the back of his hand.

Farmers in particularly dangerous areas might have a shabby suit of leather armor to don in times of trouble (AC 12), and often have an old spear or crossbow somewhere in the house, left over from militia training. A retired veteran farmer, or one who has had to defend his lands too many times from the creatures of the wilds, could have a level of warrior instead of commoner. Such a farmer has the same skills, but his hit points increase to 11, his Fortitude saves to +3, and his Base Attack Bonus to +1. He also normally has a suit of light armor and better weapons he can use to protect his house and family.

Farmers are usually found in families of two to six (CR 1 to 4). Outside, a farmer might be found working with his three stout farmer sons in the fields (CR 3). In town, a farmer could be haggling with a shopkeep (CR 2), or three farmers may be conversing with a lovely barmaid at the local tavern (CR 3). A dozen farmers outfitted with torches and pitchforks (treat as spears) creates an angry peasant mob (CR 6).

Mayor CR 8

XP 4,800

Human aristocrat 3/expert 7
N Medium humanoid
Init +0; **Senses** Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +2 shield)
hp 44 (10d8)
Fort +3, **Ref** +3, **Will** +8

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee +1 *rapier* +7/+2 (1d6/18–20) or
dagger +6/+1 (1d4–1/19–20)
Ranged dagger +7 (1d4–1/19–20)

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 10, **Con** 10, **Int** 14, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 14
Base Atk +7; **CMB** +6 (+10 disarm); **CMD** 16 (18 vs. disarm)
Feats Alertness, Combat Expertise, Greater Disarm, Improved Disarm, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Skill Focus (Knowledge [local])
Skills Bluff +15, Diplomacy +21, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (geography) +8, Knowledge (history) +8, Knowledge (local) +21, Knowledge (nobility) +15, Linguistics +8, Perception +10, Perform (oratory) +15, Profession (choose one) +13, Ride +8, Sense Motive +17
Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, Halfling, Sylvan
Gear +1 *studded leather*, +1 *buckler*, +1 *rapier*, dagger, *feather token* (bird), *periapt of health*, *unguent of timelessness* (2), light horse with riding saddle
Boon Mayors can provide detailed information on their community, major power groups or individuals, and secret or hidden locations. They can also free PCs from legal trouble or arrest NPCs of up to 12th level and detain them for 24 hours.

Mayors are civil authorities in towns and cities. While a small village might be ruled by a single wealthy citizen or small council of commoners, a mayor is keenly aware of the doings throughout a large community, able to work effectively with both the common folk and the rich and powerful. Because of her position, she can mingle among the landed gentry and blooded aristocracy even without a noble title of her own.

A mayor can be found in any sizable town or city, or even in charge of a small village of strategic or economic importance. Large cities might have several mayors as district administrators, serving together on a city council. A mayor could serve as the head of a college or guild, or as the ambassador of a titled lord.

Mayors often keep a pair of guard officer bodyguards with them (CR 9), and can be found in company with a noble (CR 10) or a merchant prince and his sellsword guard (CR 11).

Appendix

The *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* presents a list of suggested reading that helped inspire those rules and the fantasy RPGs that preceded the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game. The following lists include and expand upon those suggestions, drawing also upon a variety of sources inspirational to fantastic adventures and even useful during play.

Recommended Literature

Alighieri, Dante: *The Divine Comedy*
Barker, Clive: *The Hellbound Heart, Imagica, Weaveworld*
Barlowe, Wayne: *God's Demon*
Beowulf (anonymous)
Blackwood, Algernon: "The Willows," "The Wendigo," et al.
Brackett, Leigh: *The Sword of Rhiannon,* Skaith series, et al.
Burroughs, Edgar Rice: Pellucidar, Mars, and Venus series
Campbell, Ramsey: Ryre the Swordsman series, et al.
Carter, Lin: ed. *The Year's Best Fantasy, Flashing Swords*
Clarke, Susanna: *Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell*
Cook, Glen: Black Company series
Cook, Hugh: Chronicles of an Age of Darkness series
Dunsany, Lord: *The King of Elfland's Daughter,* et al.
Epic of Gilgamesh (traditional)
Farmer, Philip José: World of Tiers series, et al.
Feist, Raymond: Riftwar saga, et al.
Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm: *Grimm's Fairy Tales*
Gygax, Gary: Gord the Rogue series, et al.
Homer: *The Odyssey*
Howard, Robert E.: Conan series, *Almuric,* et al.
Hugo, Victor: *Les Misérables*
King, Stephen: Dark Tower series, et al.
Kuttner, Henry: *Elak of Atlantis, The Dark World*
James, M. R.: *Ghost Stories of an Antiquary*
Le Fanu, Sheridan: *In a Glass Darkly*
Leiber, Fritz: Fafhrd & the Gray Mouser series, et al.
Lovecraft, H. P.: Cthulhu Mythos tales, et al.
Machen, Arthur: "The White People," et al.
Malory, Sir Thomas: *Le Morte d'Arthur*
Martin, George R. R.: Song of Ice and Fire series
Merritt, A.: *The Ship of Ishtar, The Moon Pool,* et al.
Miéville, China: Bas-Lag series
Moorcock, Michael: Elric and Kane of Old Mars series, et al.
Moore, Alan: *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen,* et al.
Moore, C. L.: *Black God's Kiss*
Morgan, Richard: *The Steel Remains*
Offutt, Andrew J.: ed. *Swords Against Darkness*
One Thousand and One Nights (traditional)
Ovid: *Metamorphoses*
Poe, Edgar Allan: "The Fall of the House of Usher," et al.
Rosenberg, Joel: *Guardians of the Flame,* et al.
The Ramayana (traditional)
Saberhagen, Fred: *Changeling Earth,* et al.
Saunders, Charles: Imaro series, et al.
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Wilde, Oscar: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*
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The Dictionary of Imaginary Places, by Alberto Manguel and Gianni Guadalupi
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Great Tales of Jewish Occult and Fantasy, by Joachim Neugroschel
Guns, Germs, and Steel, by Jared Diamond
The Illustrated Directory of Dinosaurs and Other Prehistoric Creatures, ed. Ingrid Cranfield
Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology, by Robert Graves

Mapping the World: An Illustrated History of Cartography, by Ralph E. Ehrenberg
Military History series, by Osprey Publishing
Minerals Encyclopedia, by Petr Korbel and Milan Novak
The Mythical Creatures Bible, by Brenda Rosen
National Geographic (periodical)
People's Names, by Holly Ingraham
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The Voynich Manuscript (anonymous)
Warrior: A Visual History of the Fighting Man, by R. G. Grant
Weapons: A Pictorial History, by Edwin Tunis

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Arkenstone, David; Bush, Tracy; Duke, Derek; Hayes, Jason: various *Warcraft* soundtracks
Beal, Jeff: *Carnivale, Rome*
Bell, Joshua: *The Red Violin*
Carpenter, John: *Halloween,* et al.
D'Ambrosio, Marco: *Vampire Hunter D: Bloodlust*
Dead Can Dance: *Dead Can Dance,* et al.
Elfman, Danny: *Red Dragon, Sleepy Hollow,* et al.
Fiedel, Brad: *Terminator*
Giacchino, Michael: *Cloverfield, Lost*
Goldsmith, Jerry: *The 13th Warrior, The Mummy,* et al.
Grieg, Edvard: *In the Hall of the Mountain King*
Herrmann, Bernard: *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad,* et al.
Holst, Gustav: *The Planets*
Horner, James: *Aliens, Avatar, Braveheart*
In the Nursery: *Engel*
Jablonsky, Steve: *Transformers*
Jones, Trevor: *From Hell, Merlin*
Kilar, Wojciech: *Bram Stoker's Dracula*
Kronos Quartet: *Dracula, Ghost Opera,* et al.
Kyd, Jesper: *Assassin's Creed 2*
Mansell, Clint: *The Fountain, Requiem for a Dream*
McCreary, Bear: *Battlestar Galactica* scores, et al.
McKennitt, Loreena: *The Mask and Mirror,* et al.
Morricone, Ennio: *The Good, the Bad & the Ugly, The Thing*
Navarrete, Javier: *Pan's Labyrinth*
Newman, David: *Serenity, The Phantom*
Nine Inch Nails: *The Fragile,* et al.
Orff, Carl: *Carmina Burana*
Pelican: *City of Echoes*
Poledouris, Basil: *Conan the Barbarian*
Saint-Saëns, Camille: *Bacchanale, Danse Macabre*
Schubert, Franz: *Death and the Maiden*
Serra, Éric: *The Fifth Element*
Shore, Howard: *Lord of the Rings*
Uematsu, Nobuo: *Final Fantasy series,* et al.
Vangelis: *Blade Runner,* et al.
Williams, John: *Raiders of the Lost Ark, Star Wars,* et al.
Yamane, Michiru: *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night*
Zimmer, Hans: *Batman Begins, Gladiator,* et al.

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The 7th Voyage of Sinbad, dir. Nathan H. Juran
Aguirre, the Wrath of God, dir. Werner Herzog
Alice in Wonderland, dir. Tim Burton
Army of Darkness, dir. Sam Raimi
Big Trouble in Little China, dir. John Carpenter
Braveheart, dir. Mel Gibson
Brotherhood of the Wolf, dir. Christophe Gans
Clash of the Titans, dir. Desmond Davis
Conan the Barbarian, dir. John Milius
Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, dir. Ang Lee
The Dark Crystal, dir. Jim Henson and Frank Oz
The Descent, dir. Neil Marshall
Dragonslayer, dir. Matthew Robbins
Elizabeth, dir. Shekhar Kapur
Excalibur, dir. John Boorman
The Exorcist, dir. William Friedkin
From Hell, dir. Albert Hughes and Allen Hughes
Gladiator, dir. Ridley Scott
Interview with the Vampire, dir. Neil Jordan
Jaws, dir. Steven Spielberg
Jason and the Argonauts, dir. Don Chaffey
House of Flying Daggers, dir. Zhang Yimou
Kingdom of Heaven, dir. Ridley Scott
Ladyhawke, dir. Richard Donner
The Last Winter, dir. Larry Fessenden
Lawrence of Arabia, dir. David Lean
The Legend of Boggy Creek, dir. Charles B. Pierce
***Lord of the Rings* Trilogy**, dir. Peter Jackson
Master and Commander, dir. Peter Weir
The Mummy, dir. Stephen Sommers
The Name of the Rose, dir. Jean-Jacques Annaud
The Neverending Story, dir. Wolfgang Petersen
Night of the Demon, dir. Jacques Tourneur
Ninja Scroll, dir. Yoshiaki Kawajiri
The Omen, dir. Richard Donner
Pan's Labyrinth, dir. Guillermo del Toro
***Pirates of the Caribbean* Series**, dir. Gore Verbinski
The Princess Bride, dir. Rob Reiner
Princess Mononoke, dir. Hayao Miyazaki
Record of Lodoss War, dir. Akinori Nagaoka
Rogue, dir. Greg McLean
Seven Samurai, dir. Akira Kurosawa
Sleepy Hollow, dir. Tim Burton
Spirited Away, dir. Hayao Miyazaki
Stargate, dir. Roland Emmerich
Suspiria, dir. Dario Argento
The Thing, dir. John Carpenter
The Thirteenth Warrior, dir. John McTiernan
Trilogy of Terror, dir. Dan Curtis
The Wicker Man, dir. Robin Hardy
Yojimbo, dir. Akira Kurosawa
Vampire Hunter D, dir. Toyoo Ashida

Pathfinder Roleplaying Game — Campaign Sheet

Campaign Title

Themes

Plotlines

	Resolved?
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐

Mysteries

	Solved?
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐

Campaign Elements

Important Locations:	Villains:	Allies:

Important Organizations:	Recurring NPCs:	Monsters:

Outline

Player Characters

Character	Relations
Subplots/Secrets	

Character	Relations
Subplots/Secrets	

Character	Relations
Subplots/Secrets	

Character	Relations
Subplots/Secrets	

Character	Relations
Subplots/Secrets	

Character	Relations
Subplots/Secrets	

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Pathfinder Roleplaying Game™ Settlement Sheet

Settlement Name | AKA | Alignment

Campaign Role | Type | Danger

Modifiers

CORRUPTION ☐ | CRIME ☐ | ECONOMY ☐ | LAW ☐ | LORE ☐ | SOCIETY ☐

Qualities

Disadvantages

Demographics

Government

Population

Marketplace

Base Value	Purchase Limit	Spellcasting

Minor Items	Value	Medium Items	Value	Major Items	Value

Economics

Notable NPCs

Locations

Groups/Factions

Adventure Hooks/Rumors

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Pathfinder Roleplaying Game NPC Sheet

Name | Nickname/Alias | Alignment

Race | Class/Level | Gender | Role

STR Strength | DEX Dexterity | CON Constitution
INT Intelligence | WIS Wisdom | CHA Charisma
Ability Scores

First Impressions

Distinguishing Features

Mannerisms

Appearance

Personality

History

Boons

Disposition

Starting Attitude | Diplomacy DC

Reactions

Goals

Immediate

Short-term

Long-term

Allies

Enemies

Quests/Rumors

Subplots

Notes

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Basic Rules Cheat Sheet

The following terms and actions are some of the most commonly used around a game table.

Roleplaying Shorthand

Below are several common abbreviations used when talking about the game.

GM: Game Master. The game's storyteller, referee, and director.

PC: Player Character. A character controlled by you or one of the other players.

NPC: Nonplayer Character. A character run by the Game Master, such as townsfolk, villains, monsters, and so on.

1d4, 1d20, 2d6, etc: How many dice of what type you need to roll; 1d20 translates into "1 die with 20 sides," while 2d6 means "2 dice with 6 sides each."

DC: Difficulty Class. The number you must match or roll higher than to succeed on a die roll.

Character Elements

Every character has the following traits, which reflect their capabilities with regards to things like combat and interpersonal interactions.

Abilities: The six traits that define your character: Strength, Constitution, Dexterity, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. The higher the related number, the more significant the ability. Each ability has a modifier that influences many other rolls.

Initiative: Your ability to react to danger. Initiative is a d20 roll + Dexterity modifier + any bonus modifiers. The higher the result, the earlier you can act.

Movement: How many feet you can move with a single move action on your turn. Each square on a battle grid represents 5 feet.

Saving Throw: Your skill at avoiding negative effects, such as poisons, effects that target a wide area, or mental attacks, divided into three categories: Fortitude, Reflex, and Will. A saving throw is a d20 roll + your relevant saving throw bonus + the relevant ability modifier (Constitution, Dexterity, and Wisdom, respectively).

Skill Check: Your ability to do something, from lying to climbing a wall or healing wounds. A skill check is a d20 roll + your skill modifier from the related skill (if any).

Combat Basics

These are some of the most common terms that arise during battle.

AC: Armor Class. This is the target number enemies need to hit you. Your basic AC is 10 + Dex modifier + armor bonus + shield bonus + spells or magic items that grant an AC bonus.

hp: Hit points. These represent your character's health, based on your Hit Dice. Damage subtracts hit points, while healing restores hit points.

Melee attack: An attack in hand-to-hand combat. A basic melee attack is a d20 roll + base attack bonus + Strength modifier + any related or magical bonuses.

Ranged attack: An attack with a projectile weapon, such as a bow and arrow. A basic ranged attack is a d20 roll + base attack bonus + Dexterity modifier + any related or magical bonuses .

Damage: Damage is determined by rolling the dice listed with the weapon. Melee weapons deal their listed damage + Strength modifier. Ranged weapons usually do only their listed damage. Some weapons gain additional bonuses from magic or other effects. Spells do their listed damage.

Actions During Combat

These are the most basic types of actions available during combat. A typical round involves one standard action and one move action per combatant, representing about 6 seconds in the game world. A complete list of types of actions can be found in the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*, page 183.

Standard Actions: One attack roll, one spell with a casting time of 1 standard action, drinking one potion, using most special abilities.

Move Actions: Traveling your movement speed, drawing a weapon, opening a door, dismounting a steed, loading a light or hand crossbow, getting something out of a pack.

Full-Round Actions: Making more than one attack, charging an enemy, loading a heavy or repeating crossbow, running.

Free Actions: Can be done at any time during your turn for free. Includes speaking and dropping an item.

Advanced Combat Actions

You can do more in battle than simply swing or shoot a weapon. On your turn you might attempt any of the following actions to hinder your opponents or aid your allies.

Aid Another: Sometimes the best way to defeat a foe is to help an ally. To do this, you must be in a position to attack your ally's opponent and make an attack roll against AC 10. If you succeed, your ally gains your choice of either a +2 bonus on his next attack roll against that opponent or a +2 bonus on his AC against that opponent's next attack.

Charge: You rush at an enemy in a reckless rush. By moving at least 10 feet in a straight line at your foe, you gain a +2 bonus on one attack roll but take a -2 penalty to your AC until the start of your next turn.

Combat Maneuvers: There's more to combat that just striking a foe with your weapon. The following are maneuvers any character might perform. Your Combat Maneuver Bonus (CMB) influences your ability to perform these attacks, while your Combat Maneuver Defense (CMD) determines your skill at resisting them. (See pages 198–201 of the *Core Rulebook* for more details)

- *Bull Rush*: A charge that forces an enemy backward.
- *Disarm*: A strike that knocks an item from an enemy's hands.
- *Grapple*: An attempt to grab and hold an enemy.
- *Overrun*: A dash carrying you through an enemy's space.
- *Sunder*: An attack that breaks something held or worn by an enemy.
- *Trip*: A strike that knocks an enemy down.

Combat Maneuver Bonus (CMB): Attempts to use combat maneuvers rely on a character's Combat Maneuver Bonus (or CMB). Your CMB is your base attack bonus + Strength modifier + special size modifier. This number is added to a d20 roll whenever you attempt one of the combat maneuvers noted above.

Combat Maneuver Defense (CMD): To succeed at a combat maneuver (or for a foe to succeed at a maneuver against you) you must make a combat maneuver roll that equals or exceeds your target's Combat Maneuver Defense. Your CMD is 10 + base attack bonus + Strength modifier + Dexterity modifier + special size modifier.

Flanking: When a character or enemy is in battle with foes directly on opposite sides of him (directly in front and behind for example), he is considered "flanked." Those who attack a flanked foe gain a +2 bonus on melee attack rolls against that foe.

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