

Into the Unknown



Book 4: Running the Game



Into The Unknown



Basic & Expert rules for roleplaying in fantastical worlds of fantasy!

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INTRODUCTION

"I challenge Destiny, yes, but I do not leap off cliffs." - Cugel (Cugel's Saga)

The rules from here are intended for the *Game Master (GM)* – If you are a player, you need not read any further in order to be able to play the game.

Into the Unknown is a free-form game, meaning that there are intentionally not very many rules. The GM is the one responsible for handling situations not covered by the rules, making fair calls of what the characters do and deciding what happens as a result.

This is not a game in which the players are "against" the GM or vice versa, even though the GM is responsible for creating tricky traps, dangerous situations, and running the monsters and other foes the PCs will encounter during the game.

In fact, the players and the GM cooperate with each other to create a fantasy epic, with the GM creating the setting and the players developing the story of the heroes. If they are not skillful and smart, the epic might be very short indeed!

• ROLE OF THE GAME MASTER •



The job of the GM is to provide interesting (and dangerous) challenges, and then guide the story fairly along the path that it takes– a path sure to contain twists and turns to surprise the GM and players alike!

As the GM of *Into the Unknown*, you don't have a character; instead, you're the one in charge of the game. You create the adventure, run the monsters, and ultimately you're the one who decides the results of all the decisions made by the players for their characters.

You don't tell the players what their characters do – that is *their* part – but you referee the results according to the rules, and you interpret what those rules mean.

It can take a bit of practice to referee a game smoothly, but once you get the hang of it, you will find that you can run a fast-paced game without getting caught up in every little detail. The three most important things to know about running a game of *Into the Unknown* are:

- The rules are just guidelines
- There is not a rule for everything.
- When in doubt, make a ruling.

If you are a beginner GM, and have never played a roleplaying game before, it is a good idea to stick to "the rules" for a few gaming sessions, just to learn how the game works. Nonetheless, "Rule Zero" of roleplaying also applies in *Into the Unknown*:

"What the Game Master says goes."

A close adjunct to this is "Rule One":

"Strive to give your players a good time."

In other words, the GM has license to re-interpret, alter, temporarily ignore or wholly discard any rules, or outcomes, as he sees fit, *to enforce the spirit of the game and let everyone have a good time.*

This book has resources for the two main GM tasks: creating the adventure, and running the adventure.

Preparing for Adventure is the job of dreaming up an places or situations of adventure ahead of time; drawing a map and deciding what dangerous things lurk there, just waiting for a party of adventurers to stumble across them.

Running Adventures is what happens when your friends are assembled around the gaming table; it is your job to describe the starting point and then to keep the game moving once the adventuring begins.

As you and your players get more familiar with the game, and their characters start to go up in level, you may want to add detail about the lands that surrounds your adventures; the world of your *Campaign*.

Players Should Feel empowered To Succeed

A golden rule of *Into the Unknown* is:

"Anyone can try anything."

Say 'yes' to your players more often than not. Let them feel that trying new things is worthwhile. Be willing to let the "Rule of Cool" give players a chance to succeed when they attempt the unexpected or even improbable, no matter your expectations or plans for the session.

If saying yes too often makes things too easy, make the next set of challenges harder, rather than just saying no. If you do end up saying 'no' instead of 'yes', then make it a "no; but..." Or simply roll dice for it instead.

Don't be afraid of giving the players what they want or letting them be awesome, as long as you find ways of challenging them alongside this. As often as not, giving players a bit of rope to try things with, is used by them to hang themselves anyway!

Players Should Feel Danger Is Real

While players should feel they can try anything, they should also know their choices have consequences.

This game is not designed to keep PCs alive at all costs. One reason character generation is so quick is so players can quickly get back in when a character dies!

Part of the roleplaying experience is open-ended outcomes. The world is not tailored to the PCs; unwise or reckless choices can have deadly consequences. Knowing your actions can have fatal consequences adds to the drama. And knowing one's choices

make a real difference adds to the sense of accomplishment.

In a game where death and loss are real to the players, their victories equally real. And treasure truly earned.

Of course, it doesn't mean the GM should look to deliberately kill his players, or set unreasonable challenges for them at every turn. It does mean the GM needn't go to special lengths to keep them alive, or put up bumper lanes on the world around them.

Not to mention, there are many ways of letting characters feel the consequences of danger without killing them.

Transformations, curses, dismemberment and various conditions should all be within the repertoire of the fantastical encounters to be faced (the horrors and mishaps one can be subjected to while alive can be far more threatening than death).

It's the players job to determine the "challenge rating" of encounters and know when to run – and the GM's job to lay out the challenges and paths that enable the players make meaningful choices about what to do.

Players Should Have Informed Agency

The flip-side of challenging players is to allow them more than one way to overcome, or evade, challenges.

Though the GM need not avoid encounters the PCs can't survive *by combat*, he *should* avoid bottleneck encounters that the players couldn't hope to overcome, survive or at least avoid, through good play.

Part of the open-ended play style is giving agency to the players to decide which direction the game goes.

This means giving them meaningful choices to shape the course of events. Players should have enough clues or knowledge to be able to make good decisions and enough options to decide their own paths.

Devices such as *dungeon levels* [p.7] and *Bands of Peril* [p.13] help players to make informed choices about the danger they wish to expose themselves to.

Avoid bottleneck scenarios that only allow for one solution or where players have no chance of knowing what they are getting into. The GM sets the scene – the actions of the players create the adventure!

Make sure the players know what your campaign involves. A player expecting balanced GM-driven scenarios to take him from 1st to 20th level, will be disappointed if a random encounter at 2nd level kills his PC, because he assumed all encounters were balanced for him to freely engage.

Let The Dice Make The Come World Alive

Rolling dice is not just random outcomes, but controlled variance. Dice and tables are springboards for the imagination and can help tell a story neither you nor the players could anticipate. They shake the mind out of the familiar, pushing imagination into new fertile soil.

Like the oracles of old, dice aren't prophets, but invitations to look at the world in a different way; demanding interpretation to unpack and make sense of it.

A dungeon stocked by rolling sometimes tells you what *it* wants to become, instead of what *you* had in mind. A monster reacting unexpectedly demands its own will.

Tables let you make free use of imagination in world building. You seed your setting with all the cool things you would *want* people to encounter in your game; and then watch it take on its own life with a roll of the dice. It will be born of your vision and creativity, but you get to explore *how* it unfolds alongside the players.

It allows the GM to have an experience similar to the players of exploring an independent world; whilst giving players a sense they are not just seeing the hand of the GM, but a world on its own terms.

· A LIGHT FRAMEWORK ·

The introduction in *Book 1* briefly introduces the merits of a simple rules light game in the old school style. Here we will discuss the old school approach a bit more to help the GM with both the *why* and the *how* of the old school approach.

Playing The Scene, Not The Rules

In many modern games, players are expected to make their choices in the game based on what mechanical options are available to them – The fiction is then adapted retrospectively to suit, if it all (“I *Trip Attack* the flying Eye-Stalker to knock it prone” “Well, you do have that class ability and the description doesn't say you can't trip attack flying creatures, so....”).

In *Into the Unknown*, the scene always comes first – the rules are meant only to support the resolution and outcome of your imagination, not be a guard rail for it. In other words, the fiction dictates the action and only when actions are decided do rules enter to help resolve the outcome.

To illustrate, here are two scenes, showing how playing the *rules* of the game vs playing the *scene*, and then using rules or rulings to help resolve it, might play out.

Scene 1: Searching For Traps (playing The Rules)

GM: “A 10 ft wide corridor leads north into darkness.”

Gray Goudal: “I'm suspicious. I check for traps.”

GM: (Determines the DC is 12) “Make an INT roll.”

Gray Goudal: “9. I am proficient though. So 13.”

GM: “You discover a pit trap in the floor.”

Gray Goudal: “I roll to disarm it.”

GM: (Determines the DC is 15) “That's a DEX roll.”

Gray Goudal: “12. I am also proficient here. So 18.”

GM: “You disarm the trap and can proceed.”

Scene 1: Searching For Traps

(playing The Scene)

GM: "A 10 ft wide dark corridor leads north into darkness."

Gray Goudal: "I'm suspicious. Can I see any cracks in the floor, maybe a square shape?"

GM: (Mulls this over, as there's a pit trap where he is looking. But it's too dark. So:)

"No, there are about a million cracks in the floor. You wouldn't see a pit trap in this light so easily, anyway."

(A different GM might decide that Gray Goudal sees the trap, since he's looking in the right place for the right thing).

Gray Goudal: "I pour some water on the floor. Does it trickle through the floor, or reveal a kind of pattern?"

GM: "Yeah, the water seems puddle a bit around a square shape a little higher than the rest of the floor."

Gray Goudal: "Like a covered pit trap?"

GM: "Could be."

Gray Goudal: "Can I disarm it?"

GM: "How?"

Gray Goudal: "A die roll to jam the mechanism?"

GM: "You can't see any mechanism. What will you jam?"

Gray Goudal: "Can we just walk around it?"

GM: "You see about a 2 ft. clearance on each side of it, so it seems possible."

(In this case, no rolls were needed, since the player credibly explained how to resolve it, but there could have been).

Scene 2: Ninja Jump (playing The Rules)

GM: "You're up on the ten-foot high ledge, and down below, the hobgoblin is about to attack Rikfred the Dwarf."

Gray Goudal: "I leap off the ledge, blade downward, to drive my sword into the goblin's back, using my body weight and fall to cause tons of extra damage!"

GM: "Are you using a class feature for that?"

Gray Goudal: "I don't think I have one... Untrained, baby!"

GM: "Then it's a normal attack. You do have to use the jumping rules to get down there."

Gray Goudal: "Fine. I roll a 4, plus DEX & Proficiency, that's 10, for jumping. And a 12 plus DEX & Proficiency, 18, for my attack."

GM: "The DC for the jump was 12. You take 1d6 falling damage and fall prone. You spent 10 feet move jumping down, but still have 15 feet move to get back up and the goblin is within 5 feet. So you can make the attack. It's a hit, roll for damage."

Scene 2: Ninja Jump (playing The Scene)

GM: "You're up on the ten-foot high ledge, and down below, the hobgoblin is about to attack Rikfred the Dwarf."

Gray Goudal: "I leap off the ledge, blade downward, to drive my sword into the goblin's back, using my body weight and fall to cause tons of extra damage!"

GM: (decides it's a good move, but risky) "It's pretty all-out, so it's all you can do this round. If you hit, you'll hit harder. If you miss, you'll hurt yourself falling a bit harder than usual and fall prone."

Gray Goudal: "I do it! Can I add my proficiency bonus?"

GM: "Normally I'd say no as you're a rogue and this is hardly a regular combat move, but it *is* good use of the environment and you *are* proficient in the acrobatics for the jump, so go ahead and add it."

(The GM decides that since the player could use DEX for both the landing and attack, he will only ask for one roll for both actions) "Go ahead and roll to hit."

Gray Goudal: "I hit armor class 18!"

GM: "That's a hit. Roll for double damage. And hell, the 'Rule of Cool' says it is also 'grappled' for one round by the sword you rammed through its guts!"

Gray Goudal: "Can I stab it off-hand with my knife?"

GM: "As I said before, that stunt is all you can do this round. No bonus action, reaction or move left for you to act with."

Rikfred the Dwarf: "Where's all this in the books?"

GM: "It's not. It was pretty awesome though and he took a good risk. If he'd missed, I would have doubled his falling damage and left him prone with no move."

Don't Let The Rules Constrain The Game

The rules aren't meant to define the boundaries or constraints of what can happen in the game. There may be no rules for how an NPC wizard made his reality-bending pocket dimension of monstrous experiments; or for speaking the Black Tongue out loud in Rivendell; or for 5-dimensional tentacle horrors attacking back time whilst assailing your consciousness - That doesn't mean such things shouldn't show up in your game!

If something comes up and you are not quite sure what the rule is, or if there is one, don't spend too much time on looking it up or deciding on the rule to be used.



Put Details Where The Heart Is

A strength of a light and basic rules framework is that it allows the GM to focus the level of rules where he wants to, letting rules doing the work of *showing* the world, instead of *telling*. *Into the Unknown* does have more detail than some modern games in these areas:

- **Time tracking rules** to maintain pacing
- **Journey rules** for overland travel
- **Procedural play**: Processes for generating content and outcomes during play, such as:
 - Morale & Reaction rolls to make encounters more than "fight to the death"
 - Event rolls to generate varied encounters and maintain pacing in the game.

This is because *Into the Unknown* provides a modern rules set for the old school playing style of procedural hexcrawl games. As such, it assumes your game will:

A/ Put a focus on exploration, and

B/ Be open-ended, with sufficient player agency that they will walk themselves into plenty of situations where the GM will not have everything pre-planned.

If you are using *ITU* for different purposes, where spending time on exploration would take up too much time compared to other parts of the game you would rather focus on, and random encounters in any shape or form is just not a thing, it makes sense to simply discard those rules. Maybe you'd

rather spend your time coming up with a framework for a city-based pointcrawl and social interaction. Or maybe ruling things on the fly will work just fine for that too.

And if you just love polearms, maybe it makes sense to have a dozen different polearms in your weapons list.

The inverse can also be the case - If your group enjoys puzzles and figuring out stuff, encourage use of the rule of "When Not To Roll" for describing one's course of action and let them tell how they search and investigate a room for traps, hidden compartments etc after you've set the scene.

If your group has little interest in this level of detail, it can be be abstracted with rules resolution and a simple die roll instead - or simply hand waived.

If players just can't take to mapping, you may want to let them just leave the dungeon when they want instead of asking them to retrace their steps.

At the end of the day, the core of the game is about the things you spend the most time doing. Spend it on what you enjoy most!

PREPARING FOR ADVENTURE

"And is adventure and sensation all we should seek?"

"Aye—why not? All is Chaos, there is no meaning to existence, there is only one advantage to living one's life and that is to discover all the sensations the human mind and body is capable of feeling." - The Runestaff

In roleplaying games, there are no pre-determined outcomes. Many issues of "bad GMing" boil down to GMs wanting too much control of how play unfolds.

When preparing adventures, bear in mind you're not preparing for telling a story, but for setting a *scene*. A good GM paints responsive environs, laying paths of adventure with breadcrumbs, not fences. The story is what's told afterwards about the actions of the *players*. Much of the GM's preparation in *ItU* is "preparation for improvisation", where content is procedurally gene-rated *in* play ('emergent play'), not in advance of it.

Location-based Adventures

Location-based adventures are an old school staple for good reason. It is the easiest format to run and the best way to ensure you are not creating bad scenarios.

Location-based adventures tend to be open-ended, with no fixed outcomes. The "plot" being simply what happens to the PCs when they arrive.

Location-based adventures can have plenty of dynamics, even a loose plot ("find out why the orcs of the Nether Hills are raiding local villages") but the point is that the adventure unfolds in response to the PCs arriving and interacting. There are no specific actions meant to be taken or pre-planned plot sequence to foil. Good examples from fiction are the classic

Star Trek episodes or *Firefly*, which follow a template of making contact with a new location and the adventure unfolding from their encounters and discoveries.

The Dungeon

The dungeon [p.9] is the quintessential adventure location of fantasy gaming. It makes for an ideal starting location for 'basic' adventures for beginning GMs, as it is a controlled environment with a smaller, more manageable, range of options for the players to move outside what the GM has prepared.

Yet, the allure of dungeon adventures has remained strong for players of many decades – It holds a timeless appeal.



The Wilderness: Sandbox Adventures

A sandbox is a open-ended style of play largely developed around player agency and emergent play.

The GM doesn't set out any pre-determined adventure path that the players are supposed to follow.

Instead it is the players who decide what to do and where to go, while the GM focuses on creating an open-ended and responsive setting with as many adventure options as possible for the players to act on.

A sandbox doesn't seek to tell a certain story, but offers an environment in which stories may take place.

A sandbox needs 3 elements of preparation:

- A basic prepared setting as a framework
- A steady stream of information for players to interact with and base their choices on.
- Procedures for generating content during play in response to players' actions.

SETTING Building the Wilderness [p.18] and Building the Settlement [p.22] has guidelines for developing a starting setting for a sandbox.

Having a handful or more of adventure sites prepared [*Points of Interest*, p.21] [*Building the Dungeon*, p. 9] also makes up part of the setting preparation.

As play develops, ask your players where they see themselves going next, and what their short- and long-term goals are, so you can focus your ongoing preparation in response to where action happens.

Besides this, focus should simply be on stocking the setting with low-prep, immediately gameable content.

INFORMATION A campaign with player agency needs information, and enough of it that players don't feel their actions are confined to a few narrow paths.

A major aspect of this is to supply a steady stream of rumors and news, sowing seeds and opportunities that players can dig into.

In sandbox play, risk & reward tend to correlate, so that the choice of weighing them against each other is meaningful.

Tales of great danger tend to go hand in hand with tales of great riches and vice versa.

As such, dangers are not necessarily adapted to the strength of the party. A sandbox relies on players making informed choices about the risks they take and rewards they want to pursue. Henchmen is one way of managing risk levels for a coveted reward. Devices such as *dungeon levels* [p.10] and *Bands of Peril* [p.19] are ways of giving information to the players to let them control the risks they want to take.

"Informed choice" does not mean that players should simply receive all information accurately, fully and up front. But they should receive reasonable hints along the way about the challenge level of their exploits.

GENERATING CONTENT A sandbox may seem to need a lot of preparation in advance, but this need not be the case. Much of it is in fact preparing for developing the sandbox setting in play.

Instead of developing each hex, you build encounter tables for the region [p.20], use mechanics to tie them to the world [*Encounter Bonds*, p.28] and make them more than 'random' [*Encounter Activity*, p.28].

Much of the work for a sandbox isn't necessarily about fleshing out good ideas, but simply having them, (*Points of Interest*, p.21), and then having procedures for inserting them into the environment (*News, Rumors & Legends*, p.23), so the players can choose how to interact with them and then developing them in play.

A loose framework helps to keep the game responsive to the actions of the players and to focus your efforts where the action is likely to happen.

The work is often in "post-prep" - taking proper notes, processing the developments after a session, and making sure to note potential follow-ups and hooks.

Event-based Adventures

Event-based adventures are driven by the actions of outside agents that the PCs are reacting to. When designing event-based adventures, a good tip is to focus on building open-ended *situations* and *hooks* – what NPCs *are* doing, *want* to and *can* do – rather than designing a playbook of pre-planned sequences of events that *will* unfold.

Fronts: Event-based Sandbox Adventures

It is possible to seed your sandbox with open-ended event-based adventures, leaving it wholly up to the players whether to pursue these or not, whilst also giving a sense of time passing, and events unfolding in your world, outside the sphere of the PCs.

This is done with what is called “Fronts”, a kind of ‘countdown plot-clock’. To create a front, you need:

A VILLAINOUS FACTION Anything from a single NPC to whole armies.

Example: “Zorana the Snow Witch and her ice trolls

AN END RESULT – What this faction will ultimately cause to happen if left unattended by the PCs.

Example: Find the Orb of Winter and use it to assert rulership with the threat of devastating ice storms.



Adventures for the starting GM

As a starting GM, you may want to start out Basic and ignore the rules for Wilderness adventures. Journeys from the home town to the dungeon can be covered with a simple travel montage. Dungeons are excellent scenarios for new GMs to start with, since they are confined environments where the players can't move into unprepared areas.

As you become more comfortable in the role of GM, you can begin to gradually expand your scope, detailing the town experience more, using the Journey rules to get to the next dungeon, and eventually expanding into an Expert approach, with a full-fledged living sandbox, complete with Fronts and a broader world beyond its edges.

PORTENTS – Visible steps the faction will take to reach their goals *if left alone*. 3-5 is a good number. List in reverse numbering as a countdown, to make it easier to track how far from the end result the front is.

Example: 3. “Ice trolls have been spotted in unusual numbers to the east, making the roads unsafe”.

2. “Ice trolls have sacked the town of Signville, looking for clues to the location of the Orb of Winter.”

1. “Her emissary, The Cold Rider, has been terrorizing locals near the town of McGuff”.

Let each portent offer a different opportunity for adventure if the players decide to pick up on it – And make sure the end result is a potential adventure too.

Since you will likely have multiple fronts advancing at different paces, there is no need to do more than basic preparation on them until the PCs start showing interest in one. See also “Downtime Events” [p.45].

· BUILDING THE DUNGEON ·

Many adventures will take place in dungeons. These locations, vary considerably in type and location.

Dungeons are usually underground caverns, passageways, and rooms filled with dangerous monsters, traps, riddles, and riches. It is usually a vast underground complex built in the distant past, abandoned and perhaps forgotten by civilization.

Over time, monsters have taken up residence in the echoing halls and narrow passages, hoarding Treasure stolen from the world above, or that was left behind by the ancient inhabitants of these deep catacombs.



Building a dungeon has five basic steps:

1. Decide on a scenario
2. Decide on a location
3. Decide on Special encounters
4. Draw the map
5. Stock the dungeon

1. Deciding On A Scenario

Decide on the hook(s) to entice the party to go into the dungeon, or roll randomly on the table below.

Dungeon Scenarios

1d8	Scenario	1d8	Scenario
1	Exploring the Unknown	5	Uncovering a lost shrine
2	Fighting the forces of Chaos	6	Destroying an ancient evil
3	Clearing a site	7	Rescue Mission
4	Fulfilling a quest	8	Magic Doorways

2. Deciding On A Location

Next, decide on a location, or roll on the table.

From the combination of scenario and location, you can then sketch out a brief backstory for the dungeon.

Dungeon Setting

1d6	Setting	1d6	Setting
1	Castle / Tower	4	Crypt / Tomb
2	Caves / Cavern	5	Ancient Temple
3	Abandoned Mine	6	Stronghold / Town

3. Deciding On Special Encounters

With a short background sketch, you may have an idea of the theme of the dungeon and certain special encounters you know you want to include, such as major villains, certain unique monsters, special sites, etc. Essentially, all the cool ideas you know you want to put in the dungeon already, you make note of here.

4. Drawing The Map

Draw the dungeon floor plan on graph paper. Each square on the graph paper is usually equal to 10 feet, though a larger scale may be used for very large dungeons. Number the rooms (or other important locations), and then write yourself a “key” to remind yourself what monsters, treasures, traps, and tricks are found in these numbered locations. The design of the dungeon will depend on the chosen setting. A cavern might have twisting tunnels, a dank labyrinth endless chambers, and a ruined castle be full of hallways and rooms.

Avoid linear designs, with only one path through. Giving the players many places to go, and paths not taken, provides a sense of exploration and lets their choices control the flow of the adventure.

Long, twisting passages with no visible end, dead ends (unfinished, or collapsed) can help set the tone and plays on the fear of what could happen if one were being chased through these corridors.

See also the *Dungeon Elements* table [p.13] for inspiration on how to shape the map.

Adding Deeper Levels

A basic dungeon may only have one level. Others can have several – These are usually set up so that each deeper level will have progressively greater threats and devious challenges (and richer treasures), the further you delve into the underworld, giving players an informed choice about the risks they want to take.

Some, so-called “mega-dungeons”, are vast labyrinths with so many levels, that entire campaigns can be spent plumbing the depths of a single mega-dungeon.

Sub-levels are isolated from the main level, usually only accessible through a secret door (think the hidden levels in *Super Mario*). They tend to be smaller, often have their own theme and may have dangers (and rewards) out of tune with the adjacent dungeon level. Sometimes they can even be (dangerous!) shortcuts.



5. Stocking The Dungeon

Once the map is drawn, key your special encounters from step 3 to the map. What remains is to stock the remaining parts of the dungeon with monsters, traps, treasure and interiors. The GM can choose where to place these, or roll on the *Dungeon Stocking* table. Roll on the table for each room in the dungeon.

Dungeon Stocking

1d20	Contents & Treasure	1d20	Contents & Treasure
1–6	Empty	11-13	Monster
7	Unguarded Treasure	14-16	Monster & Treasure
8-9	Trap	17–20	Special
10	Trap & Unguarded Treasure	-	-

Unguarded Treasure

When unprotected treasure is indicated in a room, it should seldom be lying about and easily seen. Generally, this kind of treasure has been hidden, usually by burial, a secret recess, or some other hiding place – or protected by a trap.

Unprotected Treasure

Level	SP	GP	Gems	Jewelry	Magic Items (1)
1	2d4 x 100	1d4 x 10 (50%)	1d4 (7%)	1d4 (5%)	3%
2	2d6 x 100	1d6 x 100 (50%)	1d6 (13%)	1d6 (8%)	5%
3	2d8 x 100	2d4 x 100 (50%)	1d6 (15%)	1d6 (10%)	7%
4-5	1d8x 1000	3d4 x 100	1d8 (20%)	1d8 (10%)	9%
6-7	1d8 x 2000	1d4 x 1000	1d8 (30%)	1d8 (15%)	15%
8+	1d8 x 4000	2d4 x 1000	2d6 (40%)	2d6 (20%)	20%

Trap

See p.14 in this chapter for more on traps.

Monster

Consult and roll on the *Dungeon Encounters* table [p. 31], or create new ones to fit your dungeon theme.

If treasure is present, it is based on the Treasure Type of the monster encountered [p.57], or from the *Unprotected Treasure* Table above, based on dungeon level.



Special

The GM should think out a special result carefully. This could include special encounters or areas that stand out from encounters in most other rooms.

These might be talking statues, puzzles, pits with slides down to other levels, magical illusions, secret doors, teleporting doorways, and mysterious water fountains.

Dressing The Dungeon

Adding a few terse descriptive and interactive details of each room and corridor helps the dungeon come alive. Consult the *Dungeon Elements* table for inspiration, or roll randomly a couple of times for each entry.

6. Finishing The Dungeon

The final part is to situate your entries in the dungeon, making a few basic notes to interpret and make sense of them in relation to each other. What is (or was) the purpose of each room? What does it mean if an ogre is a few rooms away from goblins? What is their relation? What do they want from the dungeon and others? Consult the Encounters guidelines [p.27] for more.

Factions

When populating a dungeon, consider if some of the encounters are allied into factions [p.28], and perhaps opposed to other factions in the dungeon, offering chances for smart play, dialogue, and "politics". Dungeons can have as much intrigue as a king's court, if the players are wise to take advantage of it.

The Mythic Underworld

Not all dungeons, are necessarily just naturalistic lairs or underground constructions, where design and ecology can be expected to make sense.

Some, mega-dungeons in particular, are sites of Chaos; *Mythic Underworlds*. Almost alive, they pulsate with an intent malicious to humanity and inimical to Law. Stones groan at intrusion and corridors seem to contract around interlopers.

Here the usual laws of reality may be bent, warped, or broken. The dungeon itself opposes and obstructs those brave enough to explore it.

Features of a Mythic Underworld

Beings of Chaos resonate with the dungeon and the dungeon favors those who share its Chaotic frequencies. For example, doors may be always open for them, but stuck for outsiders and must be forced open. There may be secret shortcuts that will only open for those welcome in the dungeon.

Denizens of the underworld always have darkvision, unless they serve the PCs (conversely, the darkvision of the PCs may not work in the underworld). Torches can light the way, but also light up the PCs for monsters; gusts of wind may appear from nowhere to blow out torches.

The Underworld is not linear or static. The layout may change or grow over time. Passages already cleared may be mysteriously re-populated.

These are just a few examples to show the PCs how the dungeon itself is working against them. It may even make sense to define the Dungeon itself as an NPC able to take certain actions in response to certain events, or at defined intervals.

The dungeon may be difficult and *unnerving*, but it shouldn't make itself insurmountable.

Clearing out, or defeating, a mythic dungeon may extinguish its touch of Chaos, making even the wilderness around it friendlier to mankind.

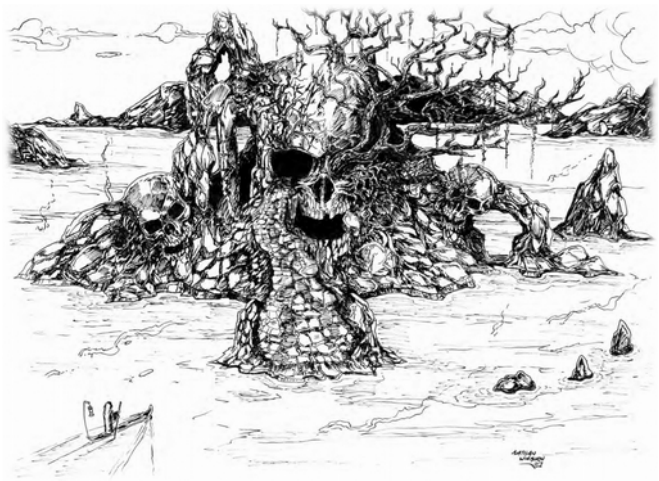
The Dungeon After The Adventure

Re-use a good dungeon. Most mega-dungeons weren't built in one go. Grow and develop it, building up lore with each visit. Creating new entry-points, unconventional access paths (fx, to lower levels) and new (potentially secret) areas makes the experience fresh for the players even with multiple expeditions.

Dungeons need not be static between expeditions – Factions might change, grow and move in response to player actions. New ones could move in. *Mythic* dungeons could summon or *grow* new ones, perhaps even re-animate or resurrect old ones.

Dungeon Elements

1d20	Room	Passage
1	Altar / Chapel	Rubble
2	Study / Library	Pillars / Columns
3	Fireplace	Stalactites
4	Water / Pool	Bridge
5	Forge / Workshop	Stairs Down / Up
6	Statue	Circular Staircase
7	Tomb / Graves	Sliding Stairs
8	Beds	Steps
9	Armory	Ladder
10	Audience Hall	Echo / Strange Sounds
11	Lever / Crank / Machine	Crawlway / Narrow Passage
12	Prison / Cages	Chasm
13	Dining Tables	Slope Up
14	Storage/ Pantry / Vault	Inscriptions / Tapestries / Mosaic
15	Gallery	Portcullis
16	Laboratory	Fountain Well
17	Kitchen	Line of Wall Niches
18	Cave Garden	Dead Body
19	Lair	Doors
20	Salon / Lounge / Den	Seeping Water



Traps

Traps can be either mechanical or magical in nature.

Triggering A Trap

Common triggers include stepping on a pressure plate or a false section of floor, pulling a trip wire, turning a doorknob, and using the wrong key in a lock.

Magic traps are often set to go off when a creature enters an area or touches an object.

Detecting And Disabling A Trap

Usually, some element of a trap is visible to careful inspection. Characters might notice an uneven flagstone that conceals a pressure plate, spot the gleam of light off a trip wire, notice small holes in the walls from which jets of flame will erupt, or otherwise detect something that points to a trap's presence.

A trap's description specifies the checks and DCs needed to detect it, disable it, or both.

A character spending a segment actively looking for a trap can attempt a WIS (Perception) check against the trap's DC. For anyone *scouting*, compare the DC to detect the trap with their passive WIS (Perception) to determine if they notices the signs of the trap.

You may call for an INT check to deduce what needs to be done and a DEX check using thieves' tools to do it.

Dispel magic can often disable magic traps.

You should allow a character to discover the signs of a trap without an

ability check if an action would clearly reveal the trap's presence. For example, if a character lifts a rug that conceals a pressure plate, the character has found the trigger and no check is required.

In most cases, a trap's description is clear enough that you can adjudicate whether a character's actions locate or foil the trap. As usual, you shouldn't allow die rolling to override clever play and good planning.

Use common sense, drawing on the trap's description to determine what happens. No design can anticipate every action that the characters might attempt.

Traps are often designed with mechanisms that allow them to be disarmed or bypassed. Intelligent monsters that place traps in or around their lairs need ways to get past those traps without harming themselves. Such traps might have hidden levers that disable their triggers, or a secret door might conceal a passage that goes around the trap.

Trap Effects

Where applicable, the attack bonus of a trap, save DC to resist its effects, and the damage it deals, can vary depending on the trap's severity. Use the *Trap Save DCs and Attack Bonuses* table and the *Damage Severity by Level* table for suggestions based on three levels of trap severity.

A **setback** trap is unlikely to kill or seriously harm characters of the indicated levels, whereas a **dangerous** trap is likely to seriously injure (and potentially kill) characters. A **deadly** trap will likely kill characters of the indicated levels.



Trap Save DCs & Attack Bonuses

Trap Danger	Save DC	Attack Bonus
Setback	10–11	+3 to +5
Dangerous	12–15	+6 to +8
Deadly	16–20	+9 to +12

Complex Traps

A complex trap turns the process of dealing with a trap into something more like a combat encounter.

When activated, it rolls initiative. On its turn, the trap takes an action.

It might make successive attacks against intruders, create an effect that changes over time, or otherwise produce a dynamic challenge. Otherwise, it can be detected and disabled or bypassed in the usual ways.

For example, a trap that causes a room to slowly flood works best as a complex trap. On the trap's turn, the water level rises until the room is completely flooded.

Damage Severity by Level

Character Level	Setback	Dangerous	Deadly
1st–4th	1d10	4d10	4d10
5th–10th	2d10	10d10	10d10
11th–16th	2d10	10d10	18d10
17th–20th	4d10	18d10	24d10



Sample Traps

The magical and mechanical traps presented here vary in deadliness.

Collapsing Roof

(Mechanical trap)

Spot: WIS 10 (tripwire)

Disarm: DEX 15 (Thieves Tools)

Save: DEX 15 (half damage)

This trap uses a trip wire, 3 inches off the ground, to collapse the supports keeping an unstable section of ceiling in place.

A character without thieves' tools can attempt the check to disarm with disadvantage using any edged weapon or edged tool. On a failure, the trap triggers.

Anyone who inspects the beams can easily determine they are merely wedged in place and can be knocked over to trigger the trap.

The ceiling above the trip wire is in bad repair. Anyone who can see it can tell that it's in danger of collapse.

When triggered, it collapses causing 22 (4d10) damage, or half that on a successful DC 15 DEX save, to anyone under it.

Once triggered, the area is filled with rubble and becomes difficult terrain.

Falling Net

(Mechanical trap)

Spot: WIS 10 (wire)

Disarm: DEX 15 (Thieves Tools)

Save: STR 10 (prone)

This trap uses a trip wire, 3 inches off the ground, to release a net suspended from the ceiling, hidden by cobwebs or foliage.

A character without thieves' tools can attempt to disarm with disadvantage using any edged weapon or edged tool. On a failed check, the trap triggers.

When triggered, the net is released, covering a 10-foot-square area. Those in the area are trapped *restrained*. Those that fail a DC 10 STR save are also knocked prone. Using its action to make a DC 10 STR check, frees itself or another creature within its reach.

The net has AC 10 and 20 hit points. Dealing 5 slashing damage to the net destroys a 5-foot-square section of it, freeing anyone trapped in that section.

Fire-Breathing Statue

(*Magic trap*)

Spot: WIS 15 (pressure plate, faint scorch marks on floor and walls)

Disarm: DEX 15 (Thieves Tools) / DC 13 (Dispel Magic)

Save: STR 13 (half damage)

Aa magical gout of flame is released from a nearby statue when a hidden pressure plate is stepped on.

The trap activates when more than 20 pounds is placed on the pressure plate, causing the statue to release a 30-foot cone of fire. Each creature in the fire takes 22 (4d10) fire damage on a failed DEX 13 save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Detect magic, reveals an aura of evocation magic around the statue.

Wedging an iron spike or similar under the pressure plate prevents it from activating. A successful *dispel magic* (DC 13) cast on the statue destroys the trap.

Pits

(*Mechanical trap*)

Four basic pit traps are presented here.

SIMPLE PIT

Spot: WIS 10 (cloth covered with dirt and debris)

A hole dug in the ground, covered by a cloth set on the pit's edge and camouflaged with dirt and debris.

Anyone stepping on the cloth falls through and pulls the cloth down into the pit, taking falling damage based on the pit's depth (usually 10 feet).

HIDDEN PIT

Spot: WIS 15 (absence of foot traffic) / INT 15 confirm

This pit has a cover constructed from material identical to the floor around it.

An absence of foot traffic over the section of floor that forms the pit's cover can be seen with a WIS (Perception) 10 check. A DC 15

INT check will confirm that the trapped section of floor is actually the cover of a pit.

When a creature steps on the cover, it swings open like a trapdoor. The pit is usually 10 or 20 feet deep.

Once detected, an iron spike or similar can be wedged between the cover and floor to prevent the cover from opening. The cover can also be magically held shut using the *arcane lock* spell or similar magic.

LOCKING PIT

Spot: WIS 15 (absence of foot traffic) / INT 15 confirm

Disarm: DEX 15 (Thieves tools - disable spring) / STR 20 (pry open)

Identical to a hidden pit trap, with one key exception: the trap door is spring-loaded. After a creature falls into the pit, the cover snaps shut to trap its victim.

A successful DC 20 STR check prys the cover open. It can also be smashed open. A character inside can disable the spring mechanism with a DC 15 DEX check using thieves' tools, provided the mechanism can be reached and the character can see.

In some cases, a mechanism (usually behind a secret door nearby) opens the pit.



SPIKED PIT

Save: CON 15 (half damage)

Some pit trap have sharpened spikes at the bottom. A creature falling into the pit takes 11 (2d10) damage from the spikes, in addition to falling damage.

Some have poison smeared on the spikes. Anyone taking damage from the spikes also takes 22 (4d10) poison damage, halved on a successful DC 13 CON saving throw.

Poison Darts

(Mechanical trap)

Spot: WIS 15 (tiny holes) / INT 15 confirm

When a creature steps on a hidden pressure plate, poison-tipped darts shoot from spring-loaded or pressurized tubes embedded in the surrounding walls.

The tiny holes in the walls are obscured by dust and cobwebs, or hidden amid bas-reliefs, or frescoes that adorn the walls.

The DC to spot them is 15. A DC 15 INT check lets a character deduce the presence of the pressure plate from variations in the mortar and stone used to create it, compared to the surrounding floor.

Wedging an iron spike or other object under the pressure plate prevents the trap from activating.

Stuffing the holes with cloth or wax prevents the darts contained within from launching.

The trap activates when more than 20 pounds is placed on the pressure plate, releasing four darts.

Each dart makes a ranged attack at +8 to hit against a random target within 10 feet of the pressure plate. A hit target takes 2 (1d4) damage and takes 11 (2d10) poison damage, or half as much damage on a successful DC 15 CON saving throw.

Poison Needle

(Mechanical trap)

Spot: INT 20 (Alterations to the lock)

Disarm: DEX 15 (Thieves tools)

A poisoned needle is hidden within a treasure chest's lock, or in something else that a creature might open. Opening the chest without the proper key or unsuccessfully attempting to pick the lock causes the needle to spring out, delivering a dose of poison.

When triggered, it extends 3 inches out from the lock. A creature within range takes 1 damage and 11 (2d10) poison damage, and must succeed on a DC 15 CON saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour.

Rolling Sphere

(Mechanical trap)

Spot: WIS 15 (trapdoor, pressure plate) / INT 15 (variations in the mortar and stone)

Disarm: DEX 15 (Thieves tools)

Save: DEX 15 (avoid damage and knocked prone)

When 20 or more pounds of pressure are placed on a pressure plate, a hidden trapdoor in the ceiling opens, releasing a 10-foot-diameter rolling stone sphere.

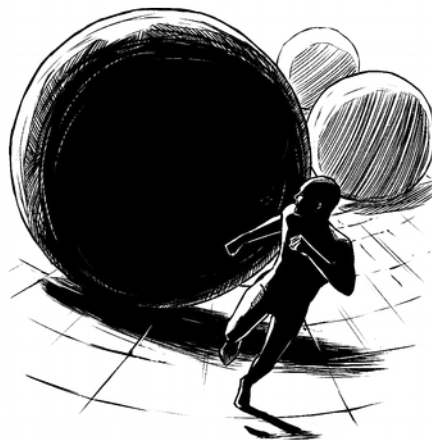
Wedging an iron spike or other object under the plate prevents the trap from activating.

Activating the sphere requires all creatures present to roll initiative. The sphere rolls initiative at +8. It moves 60 feet in a straight line each and can move through creatures' spaces. Creatures can also move through its space, treating it as difficult terrain.

Whenever it enters a creature's space or a creature enters its space while rolling, that creature must make DC 15 DEX save or take 55 (10d10) damage and be knocked prone.

The sphere stops when it hits a wall or similar barrier. It can't go around corners, but smart dungeon builders incorporate gentle, curving turns into nearby passages that allow the sphere to keep moving.

As an action, a creature within 5 feet can attempt to slow it down with a DC 20 STR check. On a success, the sphere's speed drops by 15 feet. If its speed drops to 0, it stops moving and is no longer a threat.



• BUILDING THE WILDERNESS •

After dungeon adventuring, the players will likely want to explore wildernesses, visit cities, and see the wonders of a fantasy world beyond the dungeon.

Wilderness adventures can take characters anywhere, from teeming cities, to dark forests and high peaks, even other dimensions, alternate worlds, and distant planets or moons, where odd life forms abound.

To build a setting beyond the dungeon, all you need is:

1. Imagine a setting
2. Draw a terrain map
3. Identify *Bands of Peril* on the map:
 - a) Home Areas (human lands) & towns
 - b) Borderlands
 - c) Deep Wilds
4. Locate Non-human *Encounter Zones*:
 - a) Identify the factions of your Encounter Zones and place the zones on the map
 - b) Make encounter tables for each zone
5. Create *Points of Interest* (POI)

1. Imagining A Setting

You will want to begin with a basic idea of the local setting to start in. Is it a temperate forested valley surrounded by hills and mountains or desert bordering the ocean? Is the culture mediaevalsque or exotic? What themes will be in use? Is it going to be picaresque free-booting, epic heroic adventure, bleak horror or folkloric coming-of-age tales?

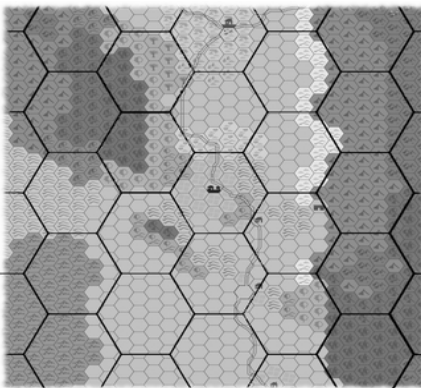
A good rule of thumb, that will also ease your preparations, is that the smaller your make your known world, the more mysterious it will be.

The spread of knowledge is often limited to the travelers daring to cross the wilderness. Consequently, what lies beyond the local terrain boundaries is as often subject to rumors and tales as faraway lands.

It can also be useful to assume a light population density - if the characters are always within one day's march of a village, the feeling of perilous journeys is lost.

Example: This is going to be a classic fantasy area, with tones of Sword & Sorcery. Themes will be exploration for gold and glory, battling the frontier of Chaos and eldritch remnants of an advanced past.

2. Drawing The Map



Find hex graph paper online and print on a home printer (or use software, such as Hexographer). Make it keyed, to reference your location notes to the map.

Scale depends on scope of the campaign to start with. A 6-mile scale is a good choice for a small to medium-sized region with a focus on exploration.

A 1-mile scale works better for developing the local area around a hometown. You can of course do both!

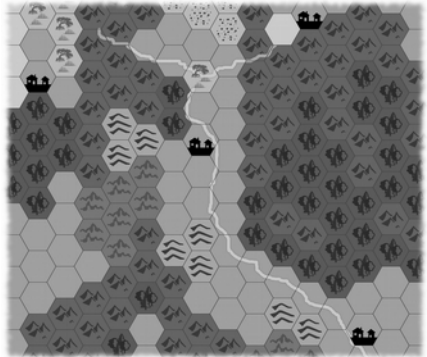
In either case, begin with the starting Hometown in the centre of your map. Then gradually fill in the surrounding hexes with mountains, grasslands, rivers, jungles, and other types of terrain or features.

Expand concentrically from the Hometown, developing the land from the perspective of how it unfolds as you move further and further away from the Hometown.

To begin with, it is much easier to describe a relatively small area. Many adventurers will spend their entire careers moving between only a few towns or villages. A small barony or valley is an excellent starting point.

Example: First a map of the wider region: A 16x12 6-mile hex map for a temperate region. A band of open land goes through the center with hard-to-cross wilderness on the rest of the map.

Next, a 1-mile hex map detailing two bands of 6-mile hex around the Home-town. This is the starting area for the party and will have plenty of adventure sites near.



3. Bands Of Peril : Home Areas, Borderlands & The Deep Wilds

Generally speaking it's safer near civilized settlements. The further you move into the wilderness, the more perilous it is. These bands can be designated respectively as *Home Areas*, *Borderlands* and *Deep Wilds* and should be relatively easy for players to identify when going there, as they enables them to control the risks they when exploring.

At this point, you can begin make a few cursory notes about the world beyond the map.

Home Areas

Home areas are developed human lands, the "known world" of farmland, pastures, rolling hills and light woods. Monstrous encounters should be rare here. Though dangers exist, they are typically mundane.

Borderlands

The borderlands are a mix of charted and unexplored territory. A frontier where mankind has only begun to take hold, it is the liminal zone between the civilized dominions of Law and the unknown realms of Chaos. Dangers to Home Areas are most likely to be found here, as the often monstrous forces of Chaos find the crossing-over into the world of men passable here.

Deep Wilds

The deep wilds are uncharted and unexplored terrain, in many ways

disconnected from the world of man. The dangers lurking here, though often greater than in the borderlands, exist in their own, almost otherworldly, spheres; unlikely to spill into the world of men, so long as they are left undisturbed.

Example: There are three other towns on the region map, each of them five days of travel on foot away, only one of them through relatively safe lands. The open southern lands are the only designated home area outside the town hexes.

The eastern mountains and woodlands are designated as Deep Wilds where men do not go, except for the northern and western ring of hexes of it which, like the rest of the map, is designated as wild Borderlands.

Beyond the map, the far east is even less known. Somewhere to the south lies the sea and the City-State of Spices, the main metropolis of the greater region.

4. Non-human Encounter Zones

Now it's time to come up with some broad encounter zones beyond the home areas.

Non-human Encounter Zones

These are regional, often defined by terrain, and define the ecology and non-human cultures of an area. You need an idea of the:

- General terrain of the zone (fx. Mountains with some woodland)
- Factions living there to be encountered

Example: The region was once ruled by elves that were torn down by an Atlantean magi-tech society before it self-destructed. Their Weird remnants dominate the region. The main foe of man is orcs, the gene-crafted warrior slave-caste of said society. Weird ruins, Orcs and other mutated monsters are decided to be so common, it makes for one Zone for most of the map. The Eastern region is the second Zone – the old heart of the elf woods that the (often wrathful) twilight fey have receded to.

Example: This table will use 1d6 for Home Areas, 2d6 for Borderlands and 2d8+2 for the Deep Wilds, meaning many entries have overlap in all Peril Bands.

The Re-roll entry allows for escalating dangers to creep into safer Peril Bands on occasion, while the bell curve of rolling 2 dice (+multiple entries) makes orcs the likeliest encounter by far. For multiple dice, If the pips are identical, roll again for an additional encounter.

The table for the old elven woods will be made later.

"Atlantean" Zone Encounters

1d6/2d6 /2d8+2	Encounter	1d6/2d6 /2d8+2	Encounter
1	Merchants	10	Dire Wolf
2	Halfling Gypsies	11	Religiously Fanatic Orcs †
3	Kingmaking Bandits	12	Owlbear
4	Outcast Orcs	13	An Articulate Manticore †
5	Adventurers*	14	Twilight Elf Lord
6	re-roll+1d6	15	Griffon Pack
7	Orc raiders	16	Troll
8	Saber-Toothed Tiger	17	Chimera †
9	Usurious Ogre (20% Mage) †	18	Dragon

** Roll 1d6 for numbers, 1d4 for class and 1d10 for level.*

† To be replaced by new fun/interesting ones when used. One reason the table is small; there may be many ideas to add, but only a few of them need to be developed.

Making Encounter Tables

In a game where traveling the wilderness is a regular feature, perhaps the most visible, and therefore significant, part of world building is encounter charts.

Encounter tables shouldn't just be "what one might reasonably expect to encounter in this terrain". They can also be your notebooks of "what I think would be a really cool/fun/interesting encounter in this area."

Arrange the encounters so that you have a table where high rolls are for the *Deep Wilds*, medium rolls for *Borderland* encounters and low rolls for *Home Areas*., so only one table for each Encounter Zone is needed and one can simply roll different dice, depending on the zone the characters are in.

5. Points Of Interest (POI)

By now, you have a terrain map with civilized and unexplored areas, complete with an ecology of non-human groupings. All that is missing now is the most fun part: Adding *Points of Interest* (POI) to the map.

This is where you draw up a list of all your ideas for majestic vistas to full scenarios - old ruins, crashed starships, wizard manses and extra-planar portals - and minor whimsies such as a night hag oracle, a floating tree or a borough of crazy gnome tricksters.

Points Of Interest To Put On The Map

Those which like to run full fledged adventures out of, or are relevant to the area, you can put on the map. Any pre-made or purchased scenarios that you'd like to run at some points can also fall into this category.

Build relations between the inhabitants of nearby POIs [*Building Encounters*, p.27]. Consider also how the factions in the area might perceive or respond to these.

In a sandbox campaign, starting with 5+ such POIs in the vicinity of the Home Town [p.23] is a good number for giving player's an impression of plentiful choice.

Making A POI Table

The rest, your "undeveloped ideas and good hooks" list, can go in a table, to be inserted during journeys as part of the *Journey Events* die Rolls [p.37].

This table can be designed in much the same way as your encounter tables, with the most fantastical sites being high rolls reserved for the *Deep Wilds* band, etc.

Example: Atlantean Weird magi-tech ruins and ancient elven sites predominate. Some entries (petrified storm giant) can be used only once. Others (sacked hamlet, faerie ring) can easily occur again.

"Atlantean" Zone Points of Interest

1d4/ 2d4/ 2d4+2	POI	1d4/ 2d4/ 2d4+2	POI
1	A hamlet with [roll]	6	Sacked Hamlet; sacked by [roll]
2	Shrine to a Popular God	7	Wizard's Tower (Atlantean Citadel)
3	Ruined Temple of a Forgotten God	8	Atlantean Starport Occupied by [roll]
4	Faerie Stone Ring	9	Timewarp Zone
5	1-page Dungeon (see Appendix A)	10	Otherworldly Portal

The Mythic Wilderness

The wilderness need not be just rolling hills and woods speckled with lairs and random encounters on the way to the dungeon.

Like the underworld, the deep wilderness also has traditional associations with the unknown, mystery, magic and spirits. The "Journey into Faerie" is one where time and space distort and the fantastical becomes common place.

The mythic wilderness has a sentience and other-worldliness to it. Touched by Chaos, its laws of reality more narrative than causal. The inhabitants, even the geography, may grow or change with the seasons, on special dates, or through eldritch rituals.

• BUILDING THE SETTLEMENT •

When placing human towns, it is useful to have a guide for how large different kinds of settlements are. Many settlements may be placed on the map, but only the starting home town (below) needs to be fleshed out to start with. The rest can be done later.

Size	Settlement
30-200	Village
201-1500	Town
1501-5,000	Keep
5,001+	City

1. Tags: Making Settlements Distinct

Settlements too often tend to look alike. At least in the eyes of the visiting PCs. Focus on a few exaggerated *Tags* special to that community, that are descriptive and interactive, for the PCs engage with – The tropes the settlement plays on. A basic 3-part tag to use is:

STATE/MOOD/PERSONALITY: 3 pithy adjectives that make up a visitor's first impression. *Examples: "Run-down, Gloomy & Pitiable"; or "Well-kept, Welcoming & Unremarkable."*

Additionally, pick 2 tags (or roll 2d3) as distinguishing features, to draw a basic sketch:

1 FEATURES:

1-2 special features, beliefs, customs, people or architecture, that sets it apart:

Examples:

Belief - Magic is heretical:

People - Has a district of anthropomorphic ducks;

Custom - A festival for every occasion;

Architecture - Built inside a dragon's skeleton.

2 FACTIONS & AGENDAS:

1-2 local factions and their (potentially rivaling) local agendas.

Examples: An aggressive religious movement wants to punish a nearby village for their heretical ways;

The local craftsmen want stable trade routes.

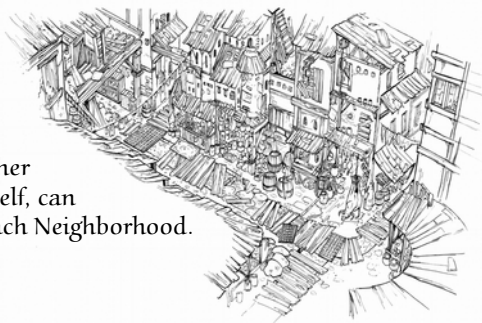
3 PROBLEMS:

1-2 Issues burden the settlement.

Examples: Recovering from a recent battle; Bandit raids in the local area; Crops have failed.

2. Neighborhoods

The Neighborhood, similar to the wilderness hex, is the main "area of interest" unit for players to navigate. This makes urban mapping easy: Don't bother charting streets and buildings. Mapping Neighborhoods and major landmarks relative to each other will suffice. *Tags*, as for the settlement itself, can be used to characterise and distinguish each Neighborhood.



3. Sites & People Of Interest

With your Neighborhoods charted, make a list, maybe tables for random encounters [p.40], of interesting people and places that one might find in each Neighborhood. For those that interact with other sites and people, note where they are relative to each other.

4. News, Rumors & Legends

An important part of visiting town is catching up on the latest news & rumors and local legends – This not only adds vibrancy to the setting, but also offers a source of hooks for the players to pursue to drive the action.

As such, rumor tables should reflect the adventure seeds and possible POIs nearby (and possibly *Fronts* from further away too). Some rumors may even be red herrings that turn into their own adventures as the PCs pursue them.

Example News, Rumors & Legends

1d6	Rumor / News
1	Weird sightings have been reported near the tower of a recluse wizard lately.
2	Ram the Bard is said to have been killed in a duel in another town. Yet he is here in town right now.
3	A local alchemist will pay handsomely for recovering his lost shipment of Cunnelwort, stolen by [roll].
4	Rosa the Beautiful Barmaid has been abducted by satyrs / run off to see the world.
6	Local legend holds that the tower of the recluse wizard is built on top of an old Hyperborean “star fortress”. Whatever that means.

5. The Hometown

The Hometown is the starting base for a campaign and the only settlement you need to map and develop to start with. It is a safe haven for characters to rest, sell/spend treasure and prepare for the next expedition and as such should provide basic services for a party:

- a place to stay
- opportunities for Downtime expenditures
- a local temple
- craft and supply shops
- henchmen for hire
- an inn or tavern for news and rumors
- perhaps a townguard or sheriff to keep peace

You can also flesh out a small cast of recurring NPCs (mayor, inkeep, smith) and their relations. This should include some who hire adventurers (and their reasons).



RUNNING ADVENTURES

"Better freedom and a chilly road than a warm hearth and servitude." -*Swords in the Mist*

This chapter offers rules to help the GM run encounters and adventures in dungeons, the wilds and towns.

• TIME •

Time is, in many ways, the primary resource to track for the GM in *Into the Unknown*. As per book 2, *Into the Unknown* has four phases of play:

1. Combat **Rounds** of 6 seconds each
2. Dungeon **Segments** of ca. 10 minutes each
3. Journey **Watches** (sometimes **Hours**)
4. Downtime **Weeks**

Combat **Rounds** are covered in the "Running Combat" chapter later in this book and in the "Combat" chapter of Book 2.

The Dungeon **Segment** is covered under "Exploring the Underworld" later in this chapter and the "Adventuring" chapter of Book 2.

Overland Journey **Watches** are covered under "Exploring the Wilds" later in this chapter and the "Adventuring" chapter of Book 2.

Downtime **Weeks** are covered under "Exploring the Settlement" later in this chapter, in the "Rewards & Advancement" chapter later in this book and the "Adventuring" chapter of Book 2.

Tracking Time

Tracking time is where a lot of elements come together in the game.

Resources, gear and treasure haul are limited by encumbrance. Encumbrance slows you down. Fail to bring enough torches to lighten the load and you may find yourself out of light sources instead.

The *Event Die* (below) keeps the clock ticking, producing random encounters and other developments to cut down player resources(hit points, class features).

Short rests can help recuperate these, but take further time, generating new events to deal with.

Tracking time in these phases maintains a sense of urgency for adventurers and give them hard choices to make between how much gear, treasure and resources they want to carry and how much time they want to spend on various activities – Every decision ticks the clock and has potential consequences.

Exhaustion

In the Old School, PCs are not just losing hit points to encounters. Once out in the wilds and dungeon, *Exhaustion* [b2, p.15] becomes a measure the GM should keep close track of outside of *Home Areas* to emphasize the attritional challenge of the adventure itself. Conditions such as:

- Falling unconscious [b2, p.16]
- Lacking food and water [b2, p.14]
- Going without sleep [b2, p.14]
- Failing to rest at resource depletion events in the dungeon [p.32]
- Forced march journeys [b2, p.15]
- Poor shelter [p.38]
- Failed ability checks [p.37] at hardship events on journeys

All cause exhaustion. The poorly prepared party may find that time itself is a worse enemy than any monster.

• EVENT DIE •

The Event Die maintains pacing in the game, creating a tangible sense of time passing (often to the PCs disadvantage). It can also enforce pacing at the table, if players are dawdling. A 1d12 roll tells them time is passing in-game as well! The Event Die is also a primary generator of emergent play content to create dynamic unexpected situations.

Using The Event Die

The Event Die is used in all phases of play save combat. Roll every *segment* during the exploration phase, every *watch* on journeys and every *week* during downtime.



Events

1d12	Adv.	Regular	Disadv.	Outcome
1	0.69%	8.33%	15.97%	Encounter
2-4	10.41%	25%	39.58%	Sign of Encounter
5-6	13.89%	16.67%	19.45%	Hardship
7-8	19.45%	16.67%	13.89%	Location
9-12	55.55%	33.33%	11.2%	Nothing

Modifiers that take the result below 1 or over 12 are rounded to 1 or 12 respectively.

The outcomes are prompts, not law. If a roll doesn't make sense or you have better ideas, go with that. The meaning of each entry varies depending on the phase of play. These are described in detail in the respective sections later. Below is a brief abstract.

Encounter

Roll on your encounter table or make something up.

Hardship

A *Hardship* refers to a physical or resource depletion of some kind, or an unexpected obstacle or complication.

Sign Of Encounter

Similar to above, but the players will have more latitude to decide whether to engage or not.

Location

Location can refer to an off-screen change, a site of special interest nearby or a special event at the site.

• RESOLVING THE SCENE •

Into the Unknown tracks time in discrete units, which roughly equates to a sequence of meaningful action taken by the party, at the scale of whichever phase of play is involved.

As such, it makes sense to think of each unit of time, whether it be a combat *Round*, dungeon *Segment*, journey *Watch* or downtime *Week* as a scene of actions to be described, resolved and played out.

Even empty passages or uneventful watches of travel, though they may be quickly resolved, help build the atmosphere, the sense of place and of time passing.

Later sections in this chapter tell you what to check for each unit of time, or scene, in different phases of play.

Describing A Scene

Here are some pointers for making a scene come alive:



3 FROM 5 Besides Vision try to include one or two from Hearing, Smell, and Touch. You don't need to touch something in order to intuit what it might feel like if you did. Touch can also include wind and temperature.

A COOL DETAIL Try to include an irrelevant-but-cool detail, that isn't necessary for the encounter/room to function. A broken cuckoo clock in the corner or the slightly noxious odor with no identifiable source.

KEEP IT TERSE Lengthy descriptions don't necessarily immerse players. 3 to 5 brief but evocative images is all players need to to realize the scene in their own minds, and about as much as they can take in before it becomes counterproductive and they begin to tune out.

SHOW , DON'T TELL *Telling* the players how they feel about a scene won't make them actually *feel* the mood. Painting an evocative image to *induce* atmosphere can speak a thousand words in this regard. Likewise, give the players observable clues and hints to make their own conclusions, rather than concluding things for them in your descriptions.

The Dungeon As A Scene

Dungeon crawls are 'crawls' for a reason. Exploration pace is slow and filled with the tension and paranoia of unseen dangers that can come at you from any angle.

Joined to this is the disturbing monotony of nothing happening – the underworld that seems to sleep timelessly until something from outside disturbs it.

To help frame the mood and atmosphere, focus on smells and sounds from near and far, and of time grinding slowly - the Event Die will soon show the players that time seems to be working against them.

The Wilderness As A Scene

A wilderness scene unfolds at a scale of *hours* or *Watches*. Focus on the horizontal point of view rather than the map's birds eye. A hex is its own point of interest to present – Think of it as a large room, with various features, being walked through.

WEATHER helps further immersion in the landscape.

SOMETHING SMALL, SOMETHING BIG

Paint a panorama that focuses on the small and the big ("lichen grows on the rocks as you pass; in the distance the pillars of heaven tower over the horizon") to give the scene a sense of both spaciousness and nearness.

The Settlement As A Scene

1st impressions count to make settlements be more than just a cardboard prop. Use **TAGS** [p.22] early and demonstrate the life of the settlement – beggars, entertainers, traders, that players can interact with. Think of each Neighborhood as a scene to describe.

Downtime As A Scene

Use Downtime Events [p.45] to foreshadow possible events and create the sense that the world moves ahead without the PCs as they take their downtime.

· ENCOUNTERS ·

Whether building encounters in advance or random ones on the fly, some detail applies.

Building Encounters

Encounters don't have to *be* 3-dimensional in order to *appear* so to the players.

When building an encounter, 3 simple questions can help situate it in the setting and make it interactive for the players, while distinguishing an encounter from similar ones:

- What Are They Doing?
- What Is Their Distinctive Feature?
- What Are Their Bonds?

What Are They Doing?

What motivation guides their current activity? Roll for both motivation and activity, using the first die listing for bestial encounters and the second for sentient ones.

These are intentionally left open to interpretation, but should help the GM for how to work the angle on the spot, even without any details filled in yet.

Encounter Motivation & Activity

Roll	Wants... [1 d6/1 d8]	Is... [1 d6/1 d8]
1	Rest / Shelter / Leisure	In Lair / At Home
2	Food / Valuables	Hunting / Raiding
3	Territory / Dominance / To Prove Itself	Fighting! (roll to see who)
4	To Go Somewhere Else	Stuck / Trapped / Hurt
5	To Avoid Contact	Fleeing / Lost
6	To Destroy / Kill / Take Something / Someone	Patrolling / Guarding
7	Help / Allies (re-roll see for what)	Traveling Somewhere Else
8	To Find Item / Place / Person / Knowledge	Exploring

What Is Their Distinctive Feature?

Giving an encounter a trivial, but distinctive and readily observable feature, such as a quirky behavior, physical mark, etc will stick in the mind of the observer.

What Are Their Bonds?

Building bonds creates dynamics for the players to interact with that last beyond the encounter itself.

When creating an encounter, roll on the Bonds table to determine relations to local creature(s) that the players might interact with.

If one is yet to be established (for example, if rolling for an encounter with an Event die in the wilderness), roll on the relevant encounter chart.

Encounter Bonds

1 d8	Encounter Ties
1	Is in open conflict with...
2-3	Would like to strike a blow against...
4-5	Stays away from / Doesn't even know about...
6-7	Has occasional trade or exchange with...
8	Is closely allied with...

Factions

Factions are essentially a group of creatures or NPCs that work together and will respond to the PCs, and other factions, in a largely uniform manner. Since they have the same goal it often makes sense to treat a faction like a single NPC when determining their bonds and motivations.

Running An Encounter Sequence

Encounters are initially resolved using the Combat phase of play, regardless of whether combat ensues.

Encounter Sequence Of Play

- 1. POSITION & DISTANCE** GM rolls 2d6×10 (dungeon) or 4d6×30 (wilderness) to determine distance in feet between the two sides.
- 2. SURPRISE** If any side is *Skulking*, the GM rolls for surprise [b2, p.17].
- 3. REACTIONS** The GM determines *Reactions* [p.28].
- 4. ACTION** All sides act and react to one another. In case of surprise, only one side acts initially.
 - If both sides decide to talk, the GM may roll again for reactions as needed [p.28].
 - If one side evades, a chase may ensue [“Retreats & Chases”, p.49]
 - If combat begins, the GM calls for initiative.

Surprised parties may not even realize the other party was there if the non-surprised one decides to evade.

When the encounter ends, play returns to the dungeon *Exploration Segment* phase of play [p.31] or wilderness Journey phase [p.35] as appropriate.

Reactions

Not all encounters involve combat. Although some monsters, such as certain types of undead, will always attack upon encountering PCs, when this is not given, the GM can roll to determine their initial reaction at first glance to encountering the characters on the *Reaction* table below – or simply decide on a response.

New developments (such as PCs attempting to influence reactions) might merit a re-roll, applying all relevant modifiers from the *Influencing Reactions* table below, and then checking the *Shift* column for how many categories the reaction result should be shifted.

Reaction

2d6	Result	Monster Reaction	NPC Reaction	Shift
2-	Worst	Attack on sight	Openly Hostile	-2
3-5	Bad	Hostile. Easily provoked to attack	Uncongenial	-1
6-8	Average	Uncertain. Confused	Neutral	0
9-11	Good	No attack. Approachable	Amenable	+1
12+	Best	Friendly	Favorably Kind	+2

The *Worst/Best* categories can only be shifted to and from its neighboring category. I.e. A +2 shift from Average will only shift the reaction to Good.

The modifiers given in the table below are suggestions only. If other factors apply, the GM should feel free to modify them or determine additional modifiers.

Rolling 2d6 “with advantage” means to roll 3d6 and discarding the lowest die. Vice versa for disadvantage. Halved bonuses are always rounded down.

Influencing Reactions

Influencing Factors	Modifier
Initial <i>Good</i> Reaction	Advantage
Initial <i>Bad</i> Reaction	Disadvantage
Doesn't understand the language	Disadvantage
Charmed condition	Advantage
Charisma modifier	Half Bonus
Proficiency Bonus	Half Bonus
Clear signs of weakness from PCs	-2
Bribe or promise of profit offered	+1/+2
Has reason to fear the PCs	+2
Clear ally/enemy	-/+1 Shift

“Social Combat”

The reaction roll is not a structured system, as combat rules, that should be rigidly interpreted and adhered to. It is meant as a creative inspiration to jolt the GM into thinking differently about encounters than one might habitually do. Nor are reactions just a DC for high rolls to beat, but a reflection of the NPC's agency, that players may attempt to influence but can't just overcome.

As such, social ‘rules’ favor the more gradated and advisory reaction table over ability checks. Social interaction is a good time for remembering “When not to roll” [B2, p.2] and “Ability Scores & Proficiency Areas as Narrative Modifiers” [p.76]. When die rolls are made, use them to *support* the players' social interaction, not replace it. Let fiction dictate the action.



Henchmen as Player Characters

Sometimes players would like to try something different to their usual character for a few sessions, to try out a different class or idea. Letting them play one of the regular henchmen in the entourage for a bit might be a good way of letting them change it up without much fuzz.

Henchmen

Henchmen are special NPCs hired by characters for help during adventures. The size of the party's entourage is limited to a finite number of henchmen before morale begins to drop. Although henchmen will share the risks of the PCs, they will not act as battle fodder willingly. In fact, if abused, henchmen will typically warn others of this.

Hiring Henchmen

The PCs can just walk up to strangers in pubs, or seek adventurer guilds. Alternatively, they may advertise by putting up fliers or other means.

The hiring PC needs to explain what the job entails and the rates of pay. This is typically around 2 gp per day and a percentage of any treasure recovered (typically half a share of what each PCs gets). After offers are made, the GM will roll 2d6 on the table below to decide the henchmen reactions:

Henchman Reactions

2d6	Result	Reaction
2	Worst	Refuses. Insulted. Spreads bad word.
3-5	Bad	Refuses
6-8	Average	Demands better offer
9-11	Good	Accepts
12	Best	Accepts. Impressed (+1 morale)

Though uncommon, dwarves occasionally make themselves available for hire, while it's rare for elves to do so. Henchmen can be of any class or level.

An NPC of same or higher level than the party will refuse any offers of hire.

Henchman Morale & Loyalty

Henchmen don't need morale checks [p.46] during adventures, unless there's an unusual level of danger at stake or they feel unreasonably compromised.

Normally, morale checks are made at the conclusion of an adventure. If the roll fails, the henchman chooses not to adventure with the party for now – He or she may be approached again later with new incentives.

Morale isn't always checked with dice. It is also a kind of ability score used to judge the loyalty and quality of service rendered to the PC (see "Ability Scores & Proficiency Areas as Narrative Modifiers" [p.76]).

Determining Morale & Loyalty

Henchmen' loyalty is measured by their Morale rating, which is equal to 3+one third of the Charisma score (rounded up) of the hiring PC. This rating can be adjusted, if the PCs have been particularly good to the henchman, or cruel or duplicitous, as per the suggestions in the table below.

Henchman Loyalty

Factor	Adjustment
Highly cruel or selfish master	-1 to -2
Different alignment	-1/degree
Master switched religions	-1
[Un-]popular Master	-1/+1
Successful, well executed expeditions	+1 per 2 expeditions
Expedition handled poorly	-1 to -2
Gave gift	-1 to +2
Highly protective or loyal master	+1 to +2

If a player has more henchmen in his entourage than his Charisma modifier (minimum 1), reduce the morale of all henchmen in the entourage by 2 for every henchman above that number.

Henchmen And Experience

Although henchmen are played by the GM, they acquire experience in the same way PCs do, can advance in level, and are affected by all of the same class rules. They receive only a ½ share from the experience points awarded to the party.

• EXPLORING THE UNDERWORLD •

The Dungeon Segment

A segment is not a strict reflection of actual time, but rather a fluid unit of time in which a character can perform *one significant action*. The real time of any given segment can vary from 5 to 20 minutes (GM's decision) but is on average 10 minutes.

Order of events during a dungeon segment:

1. GM should be aware of relevant party conditions at the start of every segment
2. GM rolls for and resolves Dungeon Events
3. The party decide on and play out their actions for this segment
4. The GM resolves the remaining scene of action, ends the segment and starts another.

Any combat sequence is always assumed to take a full segment, including time to regroup, clean weapons, bind wounds, recover ammunition, etc. afterwards.



1. Conditions

These might not need to be *checked* every segment, but the GM should be aware of them.

SPEED & MARCHING ORDER When on the move, this is needed for seeing how far the party advances on your map and for resolving potential encounters and traps.

LIGHT Note the party's range of *Bright Light* and *Dim Light* (which is *lightly obscured*) [b2, p.11] based on their light sources. Carrying light in a dungeon can be seen from afar and prevent most opportunities for surprise.

STEALTH When *Skulking* [b2, p.10], use the median result of everyone's totals for *group checks* [b2, p.3] to compare against any encounters' WIS (perception) for determining surprise. This check lasts until

the group stops being stealthy, after which a new check is needed.

PERCEPTION Note the passive WIS (perception) of each character for determining surprise, triggering traps, etc.

An active check from *Scouting* [b2, p.10] lasts until something meaningful has been spotted.

Anyone *working together* [b2, p.2] on Scouting uses the WIS (Perception) score of the one leading the effort.

Subtract 5 when disadvantage applies, such as light obscuration in dim light or surprise when not skulking.

2. Dungeon Events

Events should be introduced before the players take their actions for the segment.

Resource Depletion only begins after 1d4+2 segments.

Off-screen Change only come into play after another change has happened in the dungeon, such as combat or otherwise *causing a ruckus* (see next page).

Until then, treat these rolls as 'Nothing'.

Encounter

Roll on the *Dungeon Encounters* table [p.34], using the rules for Encounters [p.27] to build and run it.

Sign Of Encounter

Roll Encounter as above – but for signs of it instead. fx a lair, howls, sounds of movement, blood and fur, etc. A WIS check might identify the monster in question.

Resource Depletion

The Event Die handles much of the time dependent resource usage that would otherwise needs tracking.

The results average out so that over the course of 6 hours, 6 torches and a lamp go out and 25 minutes of rest are needed to avoid exhaustion.

Dungeon Events

1d12	Probability	Outcome
1	8.33%	Encounter
2-4	25%	Sign of Encounter
5-6	16.67%	<i>Resource Depletion (hardship)</i>
7-8	16.67%	<i>Off-screen Change (location)</i>
9-12	33.33%	Nothing

Roll on the table below:

Resource Depletion

2d6	%	Resource Depleted
2-6	41.67%	Short rest or gain a level of exhaustion
7-9	41.67%	1d4 torches go out
10-12	16.67%	A lamp goes out

If the results don't make sense, fx an all-lamp party or torch only, adjust to another similar resource (fx, 6 torches = 1 lamp) or simply ignore it.

Off-screen Change

Roll encounter to see who is taking actions elsewhere; blocking return routes, or catching up on as slow party.



3. Player Actions For The Segment

Remember the time a segment takes is fluid and largely defined by the actions the players take for that segment.

Common Significant Actions In the Dungeon

All these take on average one segment.

MOVE See "Exploration Pace" below.

SHORT REST See "Rest & Recovery [b2, p.14].

PICKING A LOCK See "locked doors" below.

SEARCHING FOR SECRET DOORS & TRAPS

Spending a full segment lets you search a 10x10 room or 20 ft of corridor. Each character can make an individual check.

DISABLING A TRAP See "Traps" [p.14].

Exploration Pace

The standard *Exploration Pace* in dungeons assumes *scouting* and *skulking* and as such starts at a *Slow* pace (1200 ft/segment) and gives the following benefits.

SCOUTING Allows passive WIS (perception) to spot the *signs* of traps & secret doors. It also allows active rolls for avoiding surprise, listening at doors and similar. Players may *Work Together* [b2,p.2] to avoid surprise.

SKULKING Anyone not skulking, besides forfeiting any chance of surprise, also have disadvantage on WIS (perception) for *avoiding* surprise in the dungeon.

4. Resolving The Dungeon Scene

The main challenge for the GM is to keep track of events and conditions, alongside any changes to them, to unfold and use these in play quickly and seamlessly.

Causing A Ruckus

Fighting, struggling with doors or otherwise drawing attention stirs up the dungeon, inviting new hazards.

In such a case, roll the next Event Die with disadvantage, treating 'Nothing' as 'Off-screen change'.

MAPPING One can map while walking at exploration pace and still gain the benefits of *working together* for Scouting, but can not be the one leading such an effort.

Opening Doors

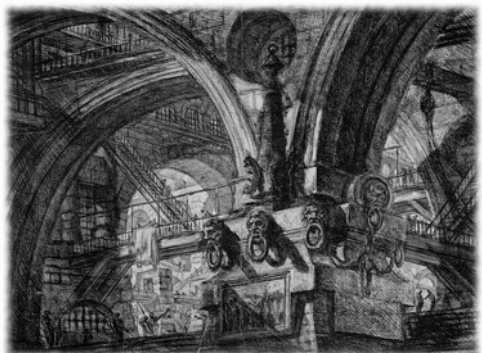
Doors in a dungeon are usually closed, and are often stuck (50% chance), if not locked,

STUCK DOORS Can be forced open (DC=3d4+5). If opened in the first go, surprise is possible. Else, use "Success at a Cost" [b2, p.2]. Outcomes include: alert those on the other side, taking a full segment, chance of *Causing a Ruckus* - depending on how bad the roll is.

LOCKED DOORS can be picked (DC=3d4+8), forced open (DC 20) or destroyed (AC 15, 18 hp). The latter always *Causes a Ruckus*.

Spotting Traps & Secret Doors

Someone *scouting* (passive check) should be told the *signs* for these as part of the description of the scene, but no hints as to their significance. Anyone spending a segment *searching* (active check) should get hints of its significance. Either case assumes a high enough WIS (perception) check to actually spot it in the first place



Sample Dungeon Encounters [1d20]

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4-5	Level 6-7	Level 8+
1	Giant Fire Beetle	Giant Bat	Hell Hound	Ghoul, Ghast	Basilisk	Ooze, Black Pudding
2	Giant Wasp	Hobgoblin	Ghoul, Ghast		Giant, Hill	Chimera
3	Giant Centipede	Animated Armor	Manticore	Demon, Whispering	Ooze, Black Pudding	Aboleth
4	Dwarf (lvl 1d3)	Panther	Bugbear	Doppel-ganger	Dragon, White	Dragon, Black
5	Cockatrice	Elf (lvl 1d4)	Berserker	Cultist	Gorgon	Dragon, Blue
6	Goblin	Ghoul	Basilisk	Ooze, Ochre Jelly	Chimera	Dragon, White
7	Ooze, Gray	Gnoll	Doppel-ganger	Manticore	Hydra	Dragon, Green
8	Halfling (lvl 1d3)	Ooze, Gray	Minotaur	Wereboar	Werebear	Dragon, Red
9	Kobold	Hobgoblin	Gargoyle	Bugbear	Troll	Ogre Mage
10	Giant Lizard	Giant Lizard	Ooze, Gelatinous Cube	Minotaur	Mummy	Stone Giant
11	Rust Monster	Lizardfolk	Harpy	Mummy	NPC Group	Golem, Clay
12	Orc	Swarm, Insects	Wererat	NPC Group	Medusa	Golem, Stone
13	Giant Rat	Ooze, Ochre Jelly	Lizardfolk	Ooze, Gelatinous Cube	Ogre Mage	Hydra
14	Poisonous Snake	Sprite	NPC Group	Owl Bear	Golem, Flesh	Werebear
15	Skeleton	Poisonous Snake	Mummy	Basilisk	Demon, Type I	Demon, Type II
16	Giant Wolf Spider	Giant Spider	Ogre	Werewolf	Hag, Black	NPC Group
17	Stirge	Rust Monster	Owl Bear	Ghost	Demon, Whispering	Purple Worm
18	Giant Toad	Shadow	Werewolf	Troll	Ghost	Chimera
19	Shrieker	Demon, Imp	Giant Scorpion	Wight	Troll	Demon, Type II
20	Zombie	Zombie	Wight	Swarm, Poisonous Snakes	Wraith	Vampire

· EXPLORING THE WILDS ·

Book 2 has the basic rules for overland travel for players. The GM has 4 steps to run through for each hex and 2 more when the 2 watches for overland travel are used up.

Daily Journey Sequence

1. GM applies any exhaustion gained from missed rest from the previous night.
2. Party decides on course, *Journey Actions*, and determines *Travel Pace* [b2,p.9]
3. GM checks for *Navigating & Getting Lost* [p.36] and party enters hex.
4. GM rolls *Journey Events* each watch [p.37]
5. GM *Resolves the Watch* [p.37] playing out encounters [p.27], hardship or discoveries for each watch the party travels that day.
6. Party makes camp, and decide on actions for the 'free' watch. GM resolves the watch.
7. GM applies any exhaustion for forced marching and missing food and water and resolves the double night watch.



1. Journey Actions

Below are additional details on *Scouting* and *Skulking*.

Scouting

Scouting allows for an active WIS (perception) roll to discover potential Encounters. It can be used for other purposes instead of the above:

HUNTING/FORAGING A DC 11 roll (depending on scarcity) will provide food and water for 1 person for one day. Each increment of 2 rolled above the DC provides food and water for an additional person.

FINDING A specific site, if in the hex and not explicitly hidden, is a DC 14 WIS check for most locations. Failure means a new WIS check, DC 12, is needed. This takes half the time needed to cross the hex.

Each increment of 3 rolled above the DC reduces this by 1 hour (min. 1 hour). Next check after that is DC 10, etc.

TRACKING Tracking is a DC 15 WIS check (varies with terrain, time elapsed, weather and creature(s) tracked), made for each hex. *Hardships* require a new roll.

EXPLORING Roll an extra *Journey Event Die*. The PC discover signs of this in the hex, but away from the party's route. It can be easily avoided or sought out.

Skulking

Skulking allows for evading notice and making surprise attacks. Use the passive WIS (perception) score of encounters as the DC to beat with a DEX (stealth) check. Make a group check if the entire party skulks. Roll once per hex.

Someone not skulking is automatically noticed before being able to make a surprise attack

Simplified Wilderness Travel Pace

If it seems like too much work to calculate Travel Pace vs. Journey Actions, Encumbrance, Terrain and other factors, here is a simplified model:

Assume the party is always *Skulking & Scouting*; heavily encumbered characters can't *Scout*;

1 hex overland travel= 1 day (2 Watches). In *Deep Wilds*, encumbered characters can't *Scout* and heavily encumbered ones gain the drawbacks of *Scuttling*. In *Home Areas*, or if forfeiting *Skulking & Scouting* to *Scuttle* through *Borderlands*, double the pace to 1 Hex=1 Watch

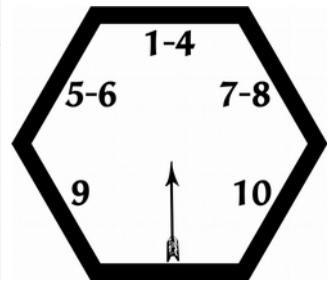
2. Navigating & Getting Lost

If the party is following a road, has a guide experienced with the area or have traveled there before themselves, they will not get lost. Otherwise, when traversing the wilderness the party's navigator must make a WIS (navigating) check per hex, using the guidelines in the *Navigating* table below.

Navigating

Terrain & Conditions	DC
Grasslands, meadows, flight	5
hills, desert, ocean or arctic	10
Forest, jungle, swamp, mountains	15
Hard Weather (snowstorm, heavy rain)	+3 to +5 to DC
Has accurate map or can navigate by the stars or clear landmarks	-3 to -5 to DC
Scuttling	Disadvantage

Getting Lost (1d8/1d8+2)



A critical success means the navigator found the quickest route and the group moves one pace faster. On a failed check, roll 1d8 on the *Getting Lost* table to see if the party veers off course from the direction of the hex they were aiming for. If the check is failed by 5 or more, roll 1d8+2 instead.

Finding Your Way Again

When lost, the first step is to realize it. A successful WIS (navigating) for the next hex after being lost will tell the navigator they are lost. This is made with disadvantage (roll the extra die in secret) unless the party encounters a landmark or terrain they did not expect to be there.

BACKTRACKING a new navigating roll can be made to to re-trace ones steps back through the hex(es) they got lost in, to the former hex where they were on track.

CHARTING A NEW COURSE to the desired destination from the current lost position, calls for a new WIS (navigating) check made with disadvantage.

CONFLICTING DIRECTIONS If several characters attempt to determine travel directions, make their WIS checks secretly and tell them individually which way they think is the correct direction to travel.

3. Journey Events

The *Journey Event Die* is rolled 4 times per day. Twice for the two watches of overland travel, once for the 'free' watch and once for the two nightly watches (the 'miscellaneous' watch, like elsewhere, is ignored).

Roll with advantage for *Home Areas*, a normal 1d12 for *Borderlands* and with disadvantage for *Deep Wilds*.

For the night watches, roll as if one Peril Band safer (same for Home Area), treating *Location* as *Nothing*.

Alternatively, make all 4 rolls at the start of the day and insert the results as you see fit.

Journey Events

1d12	Regular	Adv.	Disadv.	Outcome
1	8.33%	0.69%	15.97%	Encounter
2-4	25%	10.41%	39.58%	Sign of Encounter
5-6	16.67%	13.89%	19.45%	Hardship
7-8	16.67%	19.45%	13.89%	Location
9-12	33.33%	55.55%	11.2%	Nothing

Encounter

Roll on your encounter table based on the *Band of Peril* and *Encounter Zone* [p.19-20] the party is in, using the rules for Encounters [p.27] to build and run it.

Sign Of Encounter

Roll for Encounter as above – but instead of an actual encounter, the party sees signs of them instead, fx an abandoned site/lair, howls, etc. An encounter can be *Tracked* [p.35] from finding signs. A WIS check might identify the monster in question.

Location

A site of special interest is in this hex. Roll on your *Points of Interest* table to see what.

Hardship

Hard weather, a hazard or physical obstacle slows travel pace by one category for the hex and requires an ability check (which ability depends on nature of hardship and solutions) to avoid a level of exhaustion.

Roll 2d6+4 for DC, using advantage (drop lowest 1 of 3) for *Deep Wilds* and disadvantage for *Home Areas*.

If over half the group fail the check, it uses all remaining traveling hours for the day.



4. Resolving The Watch

Resolve the Scene [p.25] has some advice on how to describe the wilderness and each hex as a scene.

If any *Journey Events* happen, decide how you want to introduce them as part of the walk-through. Account also for how PCs' *Journey Actions* may influence the hex experience and any events happening in it.

A party force marching [b2, p.12] the 'free' watch may have *lightly obscured* vision from dim light [b2, p.11].

What Can You See

Clear weather always reveals things that are meant to be seen in the hex, such as major landmarks and signs of settlements. It is also possible to gauge the terrain of neighboring hexes, depending on type and distance:

**How Much Is In
a 6-mile Hex?**

A hex is considered “explored” after 4d4 watches of *Journey Event* rolls, spent *Scouting/ Exploring*.

Hex Visibility			
Terrain seen from afar	# hexes away	Terrain seen from afar	# hexes away
Rolling Lowlands (15')	0	Mountain Slopes(2500')	4
Treetops (100')	1	Mountain Peaks (5000-6000')	8
Foothills (1000')	2		

5. Survival - Food, Water & Rest

Breaking for night is time to tally resource usage and apply any exhaustion levels.

Resources In The Wilds

If the party has not found water and foraged food for the day, they will require provisions to not suffer exhaustion levels from starvation and dehydration [b2,p.14].

Making Camp

Secure shelter works much like *Skulking*. A WIS check is made to find shelter, which is compared to the passive WIS(perception) of any encounters to see if it evades notice.

A person can stand watch for 2 hours and still get the benefit of a long rest during the 2 nightly watches. Checks for surprise at night are with disadvantage without darkvision.

Exposure To The Elements

Anyone lacking a bedroll/blanket at night, or a campfire, will not gain the benefits of a long rest. In winter, both are required to be able to take a long rest.

If a campfire is burning at night, treat any *Location* event rolls as *Encounter* and give +5 to any passive WIS(perception) scores to locate a party's *secure shelter*, if any.

A *Hardship* event (bad weather) at night combined with a poor shelter (WIS roll for finding it less than 10), lack of tents or similar, results in an automatic level of exhaustion and no Long Rest.

Hex-” vs “Point-” Crawl Journeys

If the GM wants to devote special detail to a certain hex, a smaller scale 1-mile can be switched to, or even a point crawl (see below) for that particular hex.

Sometimes, as GM, you may feel that “hexploration” is going to take up too much time, or detract from the focus of an unfolding adventure. Instead, you can use

Pointcrawl Journeys

A pointcrawl assumes there is a limited number of locations a party would want to travel to, or through, and a limited number of paths connecting these.

This lets you make a map showing only these nodes, and the paths connecting them, without having to worry much about what lies between or outside these.

In a pointcrawl, one does not move omnidirectionally as in a hexcrawl. It is more

like a dungeon (with corridors and rooms), or “choose your own adventure” game books, with a narrower set of *Paths* and *Points of Interest* along the way.

PATHS A pointcrawl assumes that most wilderness travel follows some sort of path, even just a game trail, to move around the less passable parts of the terrain.

For paths, actual distance is not so important. Just make a dot on your line for every “6-mile distance equivalent” (or the scale you use), abstracting terrain modifiers (ie. in *Difficult Terrain*, the actual distance between dots would be 3 miles, not 6).

Determine *Travel Pace* [B2, p.9] similar to hexcrawl pace, to measure time and Events.

POINTS OF INTEREST break up the journey. They may be adventure sites like dungeons, an encounter site, or a special landmark.

• EXPLORING THE SETTLEMENT •

A scene of action in the settlement is more fluid than in dungeons or wilderness, as there are simply too many things to interact with. A GM resolving a settlement scene should focus on the the players' actions and events of interest they may encounter on the way.

1. Navigating Neighborhoods

A Neighborhood is the basic "area of interest" unit in a settlement that characters move through.

Things that would be difficult in dungeons and the wilds, such as getting from A to B, are easy in settlements. If players are looking for something in a Neighborhood and it isn't hidden, they simply find it.

If a Neighborhood is especially hard to navigate and/or dangerous, the GM can adapt the rules for "Getting Lost" [p.36] – The consequence of getting lost is time lost and triggering another roll of the Event Die at disadvantage, as per "Exploring" (below).



2. Time & Settlement Events

A Watch [b2,p.12] is usually a good unit of time for a *significant action* to unfold in settlements, triggering an Event Die roll. In high paced situations, or dense busy cities, a roll every hour may be more appropriate.

Entering a new Neighborhood (moving into a new "area of interest") should also be considered a significant action to trigger a roll of the Event Die.

Settlement Events

1d12	Probability	Outcome
1	8.33%	Encounter
2-4	25%	Sign of Encounter
5-6	16.67%	Hardship
7-8	16.67%	Location
9-12	33.33%	Nothing

Encounter

PCs will obviously encounter many people walking through a settlement. An encounter roll signifies an encounter of special interest that demands attention, usually due to directly approaching the PCs. Roll on an encounter table of your design or choice (next page), for *Motivation & Activity* [p.27] and a *Reaction* roll [p.28] to determine if their intentions are benign or hostile.

Sign Of Encounter

Roll for an encounter of special interest that draws attention as the PCs pass by, but does not directly involve the PCs as it happens.

Hardship

A chamber pot emptied on a PC from above, runaway carriage, thunderstorm, fire, etc. makes passage tricky. Roll 3d6 to determine potential DC for spotting, avoiding or overcoming the hardship.

Location

A festival, game, party, or procession is under way. Alternatively, a hidden or exotic site of interest is chanced upon (fx a pop-up magic shop, a thieves den).

3. Common Player Actions In The Settlement

Shopping

To haggle, use *reaction rolls* [p.28], using the *Shift* column x 10 to represent the percentile price shift. Roll with advantage if the buyer is known and reputable to the seller. Or disadvantage if he is a suspicious/ desperate outsider or gullible mark.

Exploring

Characters with eyes wide are more susceptible to encounters. Roll the Event die with disadvantage.

Gathering Information

Usually happens in taverns. 1 hour of light revelry (cost = ½ day of lifestyle costs) will turn up 1 local rumor or legend of note or clutch of latest news. Roll from your *News, Rumours & Legends* table [p.23] each time. The same item may well turn up several times. Can also turn up local customs if so desired.

For uncovering specific information about something, use the *Research* rules for Downtime [p.43].

4. Urban Campaigns

In campaigns where the settlement is a major focus of adventure, it is possible to make it into an event-based sandbox, by using well-defined *Factions* [p.28] and creating *Fronts* [p.8] for each of them, maybe even having portents in one front being triggered by portents in other fronts. For high-paced drama, consider adding portents to the *Settlement Events* table at certain points.

Sample Settlement Encounters

2d12	Encounter	2d12	Encounter
2	Wizard [lvl: 2d6]	13	Watchmen [2d4]
3	Spy	14	Beggars [2d4]
4	Slavers [2d8]	15	Thugs [2d6]
5	Harlots [1d4]	16	Peasant Mob [4d6]
6	Foreigners [1d3]	17	Religious Prophet
7	Cultists[2d8]	18	Fortune Teller
8	Magistrate	19	Mercenaries [3d4]
9	Tax Collector	20	Noble Dilettantes [2d4]
10	Merchant	21	Escaped Criminals [1d8]
11	Con Artist	22	Assassin [lvl: 2d6]
12	Pickpocket	23	Adventurers [2d3]
24	Disguised Monster (1d6; 1: Vampire 2: Doppelganger 3: Wererats [2d4] 4: Rakshasa 5: Devil 6: ghouls [1d6])		

Sample Settlement Locations

1d12	Location	1d12	Location
1	Sinkhole/portal to Undertown rips open	6-7	A religious procession/festival
2-3	There's a party in the streets and the PCs are invited!	8-9	A mummer's farce lampooning the players' last adventure.
4-5	Fighting ring. Who dares fight the: (1d6; 1: Barbarian 2: Troll 3: Dire Lion 4: Half Orc 5: Halfling 6: Dervish)	10-11	Public execution (1d3; 1: witch burning 2: criminal beheading 3: slave hanging)
12	An exotic tent selling magic items! Will be gone next time they look for it.		

• TAKING DOWNTIME •

Settlements are suitable “pause” locations, where the party can make a full recovery and enter the Downtime phase of play [b2, p.13] to pursue their own activities and possibly gain some XP to boot.

1. Downtime Activities

The “Downtime” rules in Book 2 [p.13] provide basic rules for spending gold to earn XP. Here are additional guidelines for how to run the suggested activities. See also “XP for Spending Gold” [p.55] for more on how gold spent earns XP and when it doesn't.

Cost Of Living

Use the rules in Book 2 [p.13]. Simply determine which lifestyles are available locally.

Carousing

A proper carousing is generally a carnivalesque public affair; tales are told and spread, outlandish things get said and done, and in the end it is all in good spirit.

The cost of carousing depends on the social class you carouse with. You must be already paying the lifestyle costs (or higher) of the class you are carousing with.

Minimum cost is (lifestyle cost*5)/day. Maximum is limited by highest available lifestyle. Carousing with aristocrats is only possibly for those with the highborn background or contacts with the local nobility.

In villages roll 2d4 for the # of days of carousing the settlement can sustain before running out of partying resources. In towns, roll 2d6. Cities have no limit.

After that, roll 1d4 for # of weeks it takes before a new bout of carousing can be readied.

At the end of the carousing, roll 3d6, add CON *or* WIS modifier (player's choice), subtract # of days spent and consult the table below for the outcome:

Carousing

3d6	Outcome
4-	Worst – You made a fool of yourself in public and become known in this town as an oafish drunken lout. -1 to all reaction rolls. Half XP.
5-6	Worse - You offended a local person of importance (fx. wealthy fiance of latest fling; high magistrate after disturbing the peace; or local spirit) and there will be a price to pay.
7-8	Bad - You've made promises, lost a wager or incurred gambling debts. You have a quest or job to do for someone you caroused with.
9-12	Par - A jolly good time was had by all. You gain a reputation as a proper so-&-so.
13-14	Good – As <i>Par</i> but you also make a significant ally (or amour) in the social group.
15-16	Better – As <i>Good</i> . also +1 to reaction rolls from the group you caroused with.
17+	Best – As <i>Better</i> , but the reaction bonus is +2. You receive 150% of XP.

Sowing A Tenor

Sowing a tenor is anything from spreading rumors, making sure tales of your exploits gain renown, to planting ideas among the masses.

Cost is (lifestyle cost*5)/day, with similar conditions to Carousing. “Comfortable” expenditure gives a 2d6 roll on the Tenor Sowing table, using modifiers as per a regular Reaction Roll [p.28].

“Modest” a roll “with disadvantage” (3d6, discard highest one) and “Wealthy” a roll “with advantage”.

Each week spent beyond the first gives +1 to the roll.

Tenor Sowing

2d6	Outcome
2-	Worst – You’ve been fingered as a rumor monger, gossip or outright liar. (-1 to all reaction rolls)
3-5	Bad – People react badly and rally against the message of the tenor for a while.
6-8	Par – The tenor is noted for a short while before being ignored or forgotten.
9-11	Good - Tenor takes hold enough to be moderately known and spread on its own.
12+	Best - the tenor becomes a popular trend in the community for at least a similar length of time as was invested in sowing the tenor.



Social Canvassing

Social canvassing means developing influence within a specific social circle, network or organization. It involves making appearances and suitable donations.

Cost is (lifestyle cost*5)/day, with similar conditions to Carousing. Lifestyle depends on the nature of the faction being canvassed. Roll 2d6 on the Social Canvassing table, using modifiers as per a regular Reaction Roll [p.28]. Paying one lifestyle higher than the faction’s gives a roll with “advantage” (3d6, discard lowest one) and one lower a roll with “disadvantage.” Each week spent beyond the first gives +1 to the roll.

Social Canvassing

2d6	Outcome
2-	Worst – You have wronged a superior. Only a major service will prevent losing a rank within the faction.
3-5	Bad – Roll with disadvantage on Reaction check for longterm reaction.
6-8	Par – You affirm your current standing, +1 on next reaction check with the faction.
9-11	Good – Roll with advantage on Reaction check for longterm reaction. Or curry 1 favor. Or offer of gaining rank in return for [GM decision].
12+	Best – You gain a rank within the faction

3 favors can usually be traded for one rank. Rank can be both formal or informal and is determined by size and structure of the faction.

Philanthropy / Religious Sacrifice

Roll 3d6 on the *Philanthropy / Religious Sacrifice* table. If more than 2d20 x10 gp for villages (x100 for towns, x1000 for cities) is donated, the roll is with “disadvantage” (roll 4d6, discard the highest one).

If more than twice that is donated, roll 5d6, and discard the two highest dice instead.

Dwarves, elves, and halflings with ties to their clan can donate to the clan hoard without rolling.

Situational modifiers for especially [in-]appropriate donations may apply. These should not go higher or lower than -2/+2/.



Philanthropy / Religious Sacrifice

3d6	Outcome
3-	Worst – As <i>Worse</i> , but your donation has de-stabilized a delicately balanced community, causing unrest, fights or even riots.
4-5	Worse – Your generosity attracts the ire of jealous nobles or others wishing to maintain status quo. Gain an enemy of high standing.
6-7	Bad – Your display of wealth attracts the attention of thieves (rival/hostile devotees).
8-13	Par – +1 to reaction rolls with the poor (or devotees of your religion) for 1d4 weeks.
14-15	Good – As <i>Par</i> , but you also make a significant ally from those sympathetic to the poor (or in your religious organization).
16-17	Better – As <i>Good</i> . Gain +1 to reaction rolls from the whole community for 1d4 weeks.
18+	Best – As <i>Better</i> , but the reaction bonus is +2.

Research

Research can be anything from determining the location of a legendary magic item, discovering which wizard has the spell you want to add to your spellbook (and what he might want in exchange for it), to finding out how to burgle the tower of a wealthy noble or learning what makes the mayor tick.

Lore Rarity

Rarity	DC	Time	Cost
Common	5	1 week	1d6x20 gp
Uncommon	10	1d2 week	1d6x50 gp/week
Rare/Secret	15	1d4 weeks	2d6x50 gp/week
Very Rare/Secret	20	2d4 weeks	2d6x100 gp/week
Legendary	25	3d4 weeks	2d6x200 gp/week

Availability of lore may be limited by community size. Cost, time and difficulty of the INT check required for the research depends on the rarity of the lore:

Paying the cost of one category per week higher grants advantage on the INT check, or lets another researcher spend the time and make the check instead of you.

Success let's you roll 2d6 on the *Research* table below. On a failure, roll with "disadvantage" (3d6, discard highest one). On failure by 5+, roll with "double disadvantage" (4d6, discard two highest dice). Success by 5+ lets you roll with "advantage". On a success by 10+, roll with "double advantage".

FAVOR In cases where 'untrue lore' don't make sense, consider replacing them with 'favor owed' to a source.

Research	
2d6	Outcome
2-	Worst – You learn 1 dangerously untrue piece of lore and 1 minor piece of lore.
3-5	Bad – Nothing is turned up (alternatively you learn 1 minor piece of lore and 1 minor untrue piece of lore).
6-8	Uncertain – You learn 1 piece of useful lore and 1 minor untrue piece of lore.
9-11	Good - You learn 1 major piece of useful lore and 1 minor piece of lore
12+	Best – You learn 1 major piece of useful lore and 1 secret piece of lore of special relevance.

ARCANE RESEARCH can only be done by magic-users and elves. Through a combination of research, divination and arcane experimentation, they may discover the properties of magic items. Using the *Research* table above, Arcane Research reveals an equivalent property of the item, *in addition* to any related lore uncovered about the item.

Minor "untrue" properties may fail to reveal cursed items (ignore for *uncertain* results) or suggest minor untrue 'cursed' properties. Dangerously untrue could wrongly suggest an un-cursed item is severely cursed.

Other Expenditures

Creative players can find many other ways to splurge, either by propping up their expenditures with exotica (a shipment of Black Lotus powder may cost a fortune to procure, but make for one hell of a carousing trip) or coming up with something new altogether.

Retrieved gold *must* be spent before the next adventure to grant XP, with the following notable exception:

If the players come up with expenditures that require a new quest to spend it, they are exempt from this rule, so long as they do not delay in undertaking this quest!

Journeying from the borderlands to the city to be able to spend one's wealth is also considered a quest for this purpose. As are the costs of the journey itself.

On such quests, ask the players involved to declare in advance how much they intend to spend on this and have them set this amount aside until it can be spent.



2. Downtime Events

Roll for *Downtime Events* for each week of downtime.

A Front Is Advancing (Encounter)

Roll randomly to determine which front has advanced. News of the portent arrives in town during downtime.

Front Rumored (Sign Of Encounter)

No portents advance, but new details on a portent may surface, or wild tales (maybe spun around new details) to give the impression that new events are afoot.

Hardship

A local complication of some sort has arisen for the party or a PC (roll random). This can, but need not, be related to the choice of downtime activities.

Make a Reaction roll [p.28] to determine severity.



Downtime Events

1d12	Probability	Outcome
1	8.33%	A Front is advancing (Encounter)
2-4	25%	Front Rumored (Sign of Encounter)
5-6	16.67%	Hardship
7-8	16.67%	News/People from Afar (Location)
9-12	33.33%	Nothing

News/People From Afar (Location)

A major development has happened in the wider world and reached the player's location now. Perhaps a king is dead, or war has started elsewhere. Alternatively, a new NPC noteworthy to the locals has arrived in town.

This doesn't usually impact the PCs directly, but may be personally relevant or snowball in the future.

3. Resolving Downtime

Downtime is when the GM moves things forward in the setting and *show* the players that the world is not static. Demonstrate time passing through seasonal changes, also in terms of how it affects the local community.

Much of the Downtime phase can easily be resolved between game session, by mailing list or similar, and then presented in summary format at the next session – Giving players time to get creative with their activities in the name of earning XP. If you are running a sandbox campaign, this is also a good time for players to indicate what they would like to focus on at the next table session, so the GM can prepare for it.



RUNNING COMBAT

*"Treasures are not won by care and forethought but by swift slaying and reckless attack."
- Elric The Stealer Of Souls*

• MORALE CHECKS •

Monsters have a listing for Morale, rated from 2-12, representing how likely they are to flee an encounter. A score of 12 indicates the monster will fight until killed, with no morale roll needed in either case.

The simplest way to handle Morale is to use the score as a guideline for interpreting how to play the scene.

Else, a GM usually makes a morale check in two cases: When a side loses a member, or half the side is down. For sides with a strong leader, roll when half the side is down or if the leader falls in battle.

For solitary opponents, roll at 50% and 75% of hp lost.

The GM rolls 2d6. If the roll is *higher* than the creature's morale, it runs away. If the result is *equal to or lower* than the morale score, it continues to fight.

If this roll is made successfully two times in one encounter, the monster will fight until killed.

The GM may apply bonuses or penalties, with a range of -2 to +2, depending on the circumstances. These never apply to monsters with a morale of 2 or 12.

Well drilled sides might re-group after running away, making use of hit'n'run tactics to wear down the PCs.

If a character attempts to **surrender**, the GM decides whether the opponent even listens. Usually, monsters or NPCs only surrender if there's no way to escape.

Triggering Morale Rolls

Players may realize that some fights are easier won by defeating morale than wearing down hit points. Let player creativity dictate the possibility of this.

An improvised finishing move, flashy spell or show of strength to intimidate a nearby foe ("you're next!"), or deception (an illusion spell of reinforcements arriving), or using an action to give a menacing speech, appeal to reason ("You're outnumbered. Surrender and we'll show mercy") or even a bribe, may all trigger a morale roll if the GM feels it's well done and makes sense.

In some cases, the GM may ask for an ability check to see how convincing it is. Outside of combat, use reaction rolls [p.28] instead.



• IMPROVISED STUNTS •

Combat in *Into the Unknown* is meant to be light to handle, fast to play and dramatic in execution. The intent is to encourage players playing the *scene* of combat as it happens, as opposed to only playing out the *rules* of combat (see “A Light Framework” in Chapter 1, for an example of how of this can work).

Rather than offering a pre-defined list of mechanical widgets for players to select from based on their rules-defined impact

(making the scene being played out secondary), *Stunts* encourage players to be creative, as the GM rules on the spot what this means mechanically in response to the scene as it happens.

Remember that fighters are proficient in all aspects of combat and receive their proficiency bonus for *any* rolls made for improvised attacks. As trained warriors, they have greater odds of pulling off the unexpected.

Adjudicating Stunts

Below is a proof-of-concept suggestion for how a GM might improvise rulings in combat.

There are 3 aspects to consider: **Difficulty** to pull off; **risk** to you if you attempt it; and/or **cost** in terms of actions and moves left.

DIFFICULTY A difficult stunt should give penalties to the roll, such as disadvantage or a simple minus. Targeting weaknesses or making good use of the situation should be easier to accomplish or give extra pay off.

RISK A stunt may leave you exposed (sometimes only on a miss). Examples include: Foe attacks with advantage; falling prone; foe gets opportunity attack.

COST If a stunt is more elaborate than a regular attack, have it use a bonus action and/or some move. Stunts on someone else's turn should be costly and generally only work for defensive actions. Penalizing move and/or disallowing attacks on the next turn is generally a fair trade-off for acting outside your turn.

Called Shots are usually just a dramatic effect of a normal attack roll. Calling shots for tactical gain should do less damage, but may have a chance of achieving a special effect (see example on next page).

Emulating Class Features

Players may want to improvise an action already covered by a feature from another class. Let them! Bear in mind one is a feat honed by hours and hours of specialized training and the other is just giving it a try

in the heat of battle. It is not likely to be as easy or effective (see Parry and Power Blow for examples).

Keep It Fresh!

If a player has found a favorite stunt and is now spamming the table with it, consider penalizing it with disadvantage or a penalty once foes have seen it once. Stunts are not trained moves like class features – They can be anticipated once seen. Moreover, encourage creativity – Give a small bonus to succeed if the action is especially creative and suitable. You may even want to vary the mechanic ruling from situation to situation.

Let It Ride

Stunts should be doable and fun! Reward tactical decisions made in response to the scene instead of the rules; and let the Rule of Cool trump every so often!

Don't get too bogged down figuring the best mechanic for a stunt. Knowing the combat rules and getting a feel for the impact of the numbers and action economy will help, but the best way of learning is seeing how your rulings work out in actual play at the table.

Say yes to your players; reward good and creative play; when in doubt, let it ride and roll some dice! Not all stunts need nifty mechanical resolutions. Playing the stunt with little rules fuzz can work just as well.

Sample Stunts

Here is a list of stunts that is neither exhaustive, nor in any way definitive for how to rule such stunts. They are shown primarily as inspiration for the GM.



Dirty Feint

"I kick the hot brazier towards the hobgoblin and rush to use the opening to stab him with my sword."

"Nice. The feint uses your *bonus action* but you have advantage on the next attack roll against him."

Power Blow

"Accuracy? Bah! I hit as hard as humanly possible!"

"Since you're swinging a heavy weapon.. OK, it'll cost a *bonus action*, but you can forfeit your STR bonus to hit in order to double your normal STR bonus to damage."

Chaaarge!

"I close the 20 feet gap running at full tilt and put all my pace and power into the first strike. Chaaarge!"

"Ok. It uses up your *bonus action*, but if you hit, you can follow up with a *shove*. The next attack on you before your next *turn* has advantage though."

Parry

"You're on your heels, but still the ogre bears down on you with his terrifying greatclub."

"<gulp> I want to commit everything to my parry!"

"How about this? You can use your *reaction* to add your proficiency bonus to AC on his attack, but you can't attack on your *action* in your next *turn* if so."

Disarm

"I flick my blade to disarm him of his shortsword."

"That's a contest of STR vs his highest of STR/DEX."

"My rapier is a fencing finesse weapon though."

"Ok, you can use DEX vs his STR or DEX instead."

"I also want to dashingly flick it into my henchman's hand just next to me."

"Roll with disadvantage then. Costs a *bonus action*. He'll use a *reaction* and a DEX roll to catch it."

Tactical Called Shot

"I target his ankle, so he can't pursue me next round."

"OK. You'll automatically do minimum damage if you hit, then. But roll damage anyway. That'll be the DC for a STR or DEX save, to see if, and by how much, you reduced his move."

I Cut Off His Head!

"Roll to hit as normal. If you hit and roll enough damage to reduce him to 0 hp, the head comes off!"

· RETREATS & CHASES ·

Sometimes you need to just run away. This happens in two ways – Retreat from a combat sequence, or a Chase to escape (or catch) someone out of combat.

Retreats

A retreat is used for getting out of combat reach of a foe. It ends when the retreator is no longer in reach of the opponent's attacks, or perceptible to the opponent. It may be followed by a Chase if the foe pursues.

Tactical Withdrawal

An orderly and careful withdrawal needs an ally to block foes while the other(s) can take a *Disengage* action to run behind and escape.

BLOCKING A FOE to prevent foes running past you requires a *Ready* action, and potentially *Move*, to maneuver in front of foes attempting a run-around to give chase.

It allows use of any remaining move to block a foe's path (making it impossible to move around the blocker, b2.p25) and use of any attacks, all on the foe's turn, as part of your *Ready* action – all *before* the foe can attack you.

Fleeing

Fleeing simply means taking a *Dash* action to put as much distance between you and your opponent on your turn, at the cost of risking opportunity attack(s).

At the GM's option, characters may abandon caution and use the element of surprise to gain some extra distance at the start of a flight sequence, using the special *Bolt* variant of the *Dash* action below. This can only be used once against the same opponents.

BOLT! When initiating a retreat with a *Dash* action, a character can opt to forfeit all Shield and DEX bonus to AC - *and* grant advantage on all attacks against him until his next turn - in exchange for extra movement that turn equal to half the character's speed.



Chases

A *Chase* happens when someone is out of combat reach and trying to get away from a pursuing enemy.

1. Determine distance in feet.
2. Determine difference in movement in feet between hunter and quarry. This is how much the distance will change each round without any other factors.

Chase ends when the pursuer has lost line of sight – or the pursuers *gives up*. The aim then, is for the slower party to take actions to compensate for speed.

GIVING UP Pursuers, or some of them, may just give up. Use Morale to check this, if the chase has gone on for 10 rounds and again at 50 rounds, or if the gap has expanded [morale÷2] times more than it narrowed.

Actions To Aid A Retreat/Chase

Chase actions are typically group checks [b2, p.3]. If the same player fails three times in a row, he drops behind.

DASH A character can take a *Dash* action 3+CON times during a chase. After that, use the *Sprinting* action.

SPRINTING A DC 12 STR check lets you increase your speed in feet for that round by your margin of success. A CON check against DC 8+[speed increase in feet] every round lets you keep it up. After a failure, a new sprint can be attempted after rounds equal to margin of failure on the failed CON check. Each takes an action.

FORCING OBSTACLES Usually requires DEX rolls against a DC. Measure margin of success and determine how many feet of gap are created by each point of margin of success one party had higher than the other (max gap = movement that round).

HIDING See b2,p.4. You can't hide from a creature that can see you clearly. But see next entry just below.

DROPPING FOOD. Low-intelligence creatures have a chance of stopping to consume it and let you go.

TIME Depending on the terrain, a different phase of play and measure of distance may be used [b2, p.8]:

Chases in thick wilderness (fx. forests) use segments instead of rounds and track distance in thousands of feet. In open wilderness (such as plains), hours and miles, even watches, may be used instead.



USING BURNING OIL. See b1,p.43 for details on oil.

RUNNING AROUND CORNERS A pursuer *dashing* or *sprinting* around a corner may leave himself open to *readied* attacks against him on his turn spent dashing.

Unexpected 'corner attacks' are made with advantage.

SPIKING DOORS SHUT. As an action, an iron spike can spike a door shut. Opening a spiked door is a DC 15 STR check. Additional spikes add +1 to DC up to +3.

SCATTER CALTROP See b1,p.42 for more on caltrops. Roll 1d10*10 to determine chance of monsters stopping. The chance goes up 10% per point of INT below 5.

DROPPING TREASURE. Intelligent creatures may stop the pursuit to gather it! Make a morale roll, modified by how many valuables (or how shiny it is) is dropped.

MAGIC Illusions can distract, and summonings hinder, a pursuer. *Invisibility* lets you hide. *Wall* spells can block a passage. Others can make difficult terrain.

• MAKING COMBAT EXCITING •

Once you've internalized the rules for combat and have a feel for rulings and stunts, while making decisions for monsters on the spot, you can look at more ways to make combat more engaging. No battle makes use of all the tips in this section. You can introduce them as you feel comfortable managing the scene of combat.

Use The Battlefield

The field of battle is rarely just a featureless plain where two groups square up to each other and fight. The environment can be a crucial factor for both sides.

Obscurations such as fog, shrouds or darkness can make combat more dramatic by limiting information about the opposition's movement and numbers.

Difficult Terrain such as rubble, river, broken floors and other ways of limiting mobility can have a strong impact on how combat unfolds.

Cover Positions and **Obstructions** such as trees, statues, or chasms can be of special strategic significance for mobility and ranged combat.

Chokepoints limit mobility even more than terrain and obstructions. To control one is to control the field.

Environmental factors are not just for the GM to make use of. Make sure your descriptions let the players become aware of battlefield features to allow them to make use of it too. If they don't take the hint, they will soon enough when they see their enemies doing so.

Consider **Distance** at the start of combat, especially in lieu of the above, to set the tone for the combat scene.

Hazards such as lava, stinging vines, boiling acid etc. are areas of the battlefield that might not fully obstruct move, but where moving through it still has a cost.

Props such as chairs, chandeliers and braziers might be of use to either side or simply mild obstructions.

It might help to sketch out a battlefield. You needn't be too meticulous with distances, if you can still eyeball things for your players and give them ideas for how to use the terrain, or how it might work against them.

Tactics

If the opponents know, or have prepared, the battlefield in advance, let them use to try to control the field of mobility to their advantage.

Repeating hit'n'run tactics by critters as fast as, or faster, than you, can be not just frustrating, but horrifying, if you know the enemy is close by, waiting to strike, yet still just out of sight and earshot.

Some packs of monsters are disciplined, almost moving as one, intelligent, and proactive in seizing advantages. Others may be scattered and haphazard.



Some play on the mental parts of combat, using threats and deception to coerce or fool PCs.

Others employ creative solutions, like caltrops, ball bearings or burning oil dropped in front of the choke points and then peppering with ranged attacks.

Give also some thought to motivation of foes [p.27] - what are they hoping to gain from the battle? Do they want the PCs dead? Want their gear? Protecting territory? Or do they simply want to get out of there alive?

Such objectives often have strong impact on the shape of tactics.

Attack From New Mechanic Angles

One way to make combat varied is monsters with different mechanics than normal.

Targeting Other Things Than Hit Points

Ability score drains, Conditions [b2, p.15], Lesser Wounds [p.82], or attacking or stealing equipment are all ways of hurting characters in different ways than they are used to and might unnerve more accordingly.



Different Forms Of Attack

Spells can be interesting as they often work differently than attacks – They have areas of effect, cones, force saves instead of damage. Some monsters might be able to achieve similar effects without spells.

Some monsters might make improvised attacks. To avoid players thinking you are making new rulings on the spot to favor the monsters, it is recommended to use pre-defined stunts or ones that PCs have already made use of themselves before.

Minding The Action Economy

The Bounded Accuracy of the system mean that even low-level combatants have decent chances of hitting. What that means is that a lot in combat comes down to numbers – Mainly, the number of attacks each side can make each round and how spread out those are, relative to hit points.

Too many low level foes could well take down a high level party. And a single high level monster can be taken down with ease if it can only attack one PC per round while all PCs each get to attack it.

When running a major villain, throwing some minions into the mix to occupy some PCs, and giving it multiple actions, maybe even on the player's turn as well, changes the battle significantly for such a foe. Legendary actions [b5,p.4] are a good tool for this. Combining it with certain triggers (fx, gains an extra turn per round, but only when all minions are gone or when at half hit points) can create battles with unexpected peaks and low.

'Breaking' The Rules Of Combat

PCs have maneuvers unique to each class that 'break' the normal rules of combat. Your encounters may have some too. Goblins, for example, can use bonus actions to *Disengage* or *Hide*; zipping around the battlefield to avoid hits, attacking from hiding when they can.

Consider special triggers for reactions and bonus actions, or 'mobility control' such as special grapples, different than damage.

Have fun with mechanics. Perhaps the frogs gain temporary hit points if they see their egg areas destroyed, turning what was a simple encounter into a challenging one.

Maybe when the red dragon is at half hit points, it recharges and uses its breath weapon as a reaction.

Perhaps the giant can grapple people and throw them – or use them as flails to hit other people with! Or perhaps it swings a tree like a mace, hitting many foes at once.



· BREAKING OBJECTS ·

Objects can be affected just like creatures. The GM determines an object's Armor Class and hit points, and might decide that certain objects have resistance or immunity to certain kinds of attacks. (It's hard to cut a rope with a club, for example.) Objects always fail Strength and Dexterity saving throws, and they are immune to effects that require other saves. When an object drops to 0 hit points, it breaks.

A character can also attempt a Strength check to break an object. The GM sets the DC for any such check. When characters need to saw through ropes or smash a vampire's coffin, the only hard and fast rule is: given enough time and the right tools, PCs can destroy any destructible object.

Use common sense when determining a character's success at damaging an object. Can a fighter cut through a section of a stone wall with a sword? No, the sword is likely to break before the wall does.

For the purpose of these rules, an object is a discrete, inanimate item like a door, sword, book, chair, or stone, not a building or vehicle composed of many objects.

Statistics For Objects

When time is a factor, you can assign an Armor Class and hit points to a destructible object. You can also give it immunities, resistances, and vulnerabilities to specific types of damage.

Object Armor Class

Substance	AC
Cloth, paper, rope	11
Crystal, glass, ice	13
Wood, bone	15
Stone	17
Iron, steel	19
Mithral	21
Adamantine	23

Huge And Gargantuan Objects

Normal weapons are of little use against many Huge and Gargantuan objects, such as a colossal statue or massive boulder.

That said, one torch can burn a Huge tapestry, and an *earthquake* spell can topple a colossus. You can track such objects' hit points or simply decide how long

it can hold. If you track hit points, divide it into Large or smaller sections, and track each section's hit points separately.

Destroying one section could ruin the entire object. For example, a Gargantuan statue might topple when one of its Large legs is reduced to 0 hit points.

Objects And Damage Types

Objects are immune to poison and psychic damage. You might decide that some damage types are more effective against certain objects or substances than others. For example, bludgeoning works well for smashing things but not for cutting. Paper is vulnerable to fire. Use your best judgment.

Damage Threshold

Big objects like castle walls are often extra resilient. This is called damage threshold.

An object with a damage threshold has immunity to all damage unless it takes damage from a single attack or effect equal to or greater than its damage threshold, in which case it takes damage as normal.

Hit Points

An object's hit points measure how much damage it can take before losing its structural integrity.

The *Object Hit Points* table provides suggested hit points for fragile and resilient objects that are Large or smaller.

Object Hit Points

Size	Fragile	Resilient
Tiny (bottle, lock)	2 (1d4)	5 (2d4)
Small (chest, lute)	3 (1d6)	10 (3d6)
Medium (barrel)	4 (1d8)	18 (4d8)
Large (cart)	5 (1d10)	27 (5d10)

· POISONS ·

Poisons are illegal in most societies but are a favorite tool among assassins, drow, and other evil creatures. Poisons come in the following four types.

Contact

Contact poison can be smeared on an object and remains potent until touched or washed off. A creature that touches contact poison with exposed skin suffers its effects.

Ingested

A creature must swallow an entire dose of ingested poison to suffer its effects. You may decide that a partial dose has a reduced effect, such as allowing advantage on the saving throw or dealing only half damage on a failed save.

Inhaled

Powders or gases that take effect when inhaled. Blowing the powder or releasing the gas subjects creatures in a 5-foot cube to its effect. Before dissipating immediately afterward. Holding one's breath is ineffective as they affect nasal membranes, tear ducts, and other parts of the body.

Sample Poison

Each type of poison has its own special effect.

Essence Of Ether (inhaled)

Succeed on a DC 15 CON save or become poisoned for 8 hours. The victim is unconscious, but wakes if it takes damage or someone takes an action to shake it.

Malice (inhaled)

Succeed on a DC 15 CON save or become poisoned for 1 hour. The victim is blinded.

Purple Worm Poison (injury)

Make a DC 19 CON saving throw, taking 42 (12d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Serpent Venom (injury)

Succeed on a DC 11 CON saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Injury

Injury poison can be applied to weapons, ammunition, trap components, and other objects that deal piercing or slashing damage and remains potent until delivered through a wound or washed off. A creature taking piercing or slashing damage from an object coated with the poison is exposed to its effects.

Sample Poisons

Item	Type	Price/ Dose
Essence of ether	Inhaled	300 gp
Malice	Inhaled	250 gp
Purple worm poison	Injury	2,000 gp
Serpent venom	Injury	200 gp
Torpor	Ingested	600 gp
Truth serum	Ingested	150 gp
Wyvern poison	Injury	1,200 gp



Torpor (ingested)

Succeed on a DC 15 CON saving throw or become poisoned for 4d6 hours. The poisoned creature is incapacitated.

Truth Serum (ingested)

Succeed on a DC 11 CON saving throw or become poisoned for 1 hour. The poisoned creature can't knowingly speak a lie, as if under the effect of a *zone of truth* spell.

Wyvern Poison (injury)

Make a DC 15 CON saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

REWARDS & ADVANCEMENT

"Notice: I drink wine, though I may not live to become drunk. Does this deter me? No! I reject the future; I drink now, I become drunk as circumstances dictate."

— Cugel the Clever

The assumed campaign style of *Into the Unknown* is that PCs are heroic freebooters in the style of the heroes of the sword & sorcery genre – Such as Conan the Barbarian, Turjan of Miir, Farhrd & the Gray Mouser – Adventurers whose exploits are often driven by personal gain, yet whose struggles are often against the causes of evil – Or at least the morally gray. They are opportunists of adventure first and heroes second.

• EXPERIENCE POINTS •

XP is awarded for three different targets – Each of which should be roughly distributed as follows:

- XP for Spending Gold (50%)
- XP for Adventuring (25%)
- XP for Facing Danger (25%)

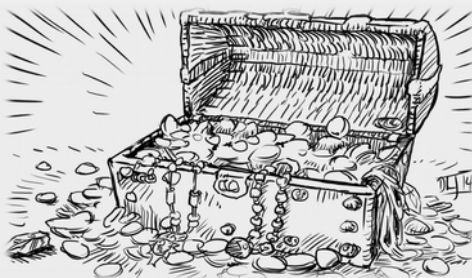
Using XP to set the Style of a Campaign

Awarding XP for gold may seem like an unrealistic method for a character to grow. XP awards aren't meant to simulate realistic advancement, but as a tool to incentivize certain behaviors and set the style of play.

For example, only giving XP for combat, can encourage a slugfest style campaign where the PCs effectively end up as big game hunters.

Gold for XP gives PCs a motivation for adventure and encourages different solutions towards your aims, making dungeon crawls closer to heists than murder raids. Gold itself may not give much experience, but what you had to do to get it *does*.

Encouraging a motivation that is more roguish than noble also gives incentive for players to seek out their own adventure, rather than sit around and wait for evil to happen, so they can stop it,



If you feel there is too much focus on combat, you can adjust the ratios for exploration and/or consider awarding XP for gold retrieved *and* spent, or downsize the awards for combat. And vice versa for changing focus in different directions.

In general the GM should feel free to award XP for things he wants to incentivize in his players – From taking on mapping duty, to quest awards for “neutralizing the threat of the Blackhand Orc tribe to the local village”.

In any case, XP rewards should be decided upon in advance of awarding it. It should be made clear to the players what does and does not grant XP in your campaign, so players can feel they have earned their XP fair and square.

XP For Spending Gold

Gold retrieved through adventuring is an easy to measure metric of success for adventuring expeditions.

Note the requirements for what can be spent to earn XP. It must be *treasure* (gold, jewels, etc) – Players hauling back junk looted from goblins should be told that junk will not generate any XP. Likewise, magic items aren't considered re-sellable for this purpose.

Additionally, it must be treasure retrieved from actual adventuring. This mechanism is meant to reward “cashing in on adventuring.” Mugging a local noble and spending the loot from that will not suffice.

See “Downtime Activities” [p.41] for how to spend gold. Retrieved gold *must* be spent before the next adventure to grant XP, except as noted under “other expenditures” [p.44]

XP For Adventures

XP awards for adventures should be awarded individually, rather than total for the group. It is up to the GM to determine what constitutes unexplored terrain and wondrous sites.

Certain actions and experiences also define the growth of adventurers from mundane people to mythic heroes and as such, grant XP. Here is a suggested, but non exhaustive, list of events that grant XP the first time they happen. The values are suggestions only:

Exploration

- Exploring a previously unexplored hex: 50 XP
- Discovering a new wondrous site: 50 XP
- Entering the underworld (dungeon): 50 XP
- Descending a level deeper in the underworld: (50 x level) XP
- Visiting another world: 500 XP
- Discovering ancient long lost lore: 50 XP

Wondrous Experiences

- Seeing a dragon or unicorn: 100 XP
- Flying a dragon: 500 XP
- Dancing with the fairies: 100 XP
- Watching a city burn: 150 XP
- Shipwrecked: 100 XP (0 if you sabotaged it)
- Pilgrimage to one of your deity's holy sites: 75 XP
- Meeting a deity or similar being: 250 XP

At least some of the items on the list should be shared with the players, to incentivize seeking them out. Such accomplishments need not just be rewarded with XP. Players might find peasants in the street whispering “There goes Arnulf the Flailer. The only man to ever cross the Crystal Desert and return!”

XP For Facing Danger

PCs grow not just from their achievements, but also by their adversities. XP is not awarded based on the *estimated* threat of the opponents faced, but on the actual threat posed and how well it was dealt with. You will need to keep a running total of how much damage the party as a whole suffers and deals out (or, if you dare, have the players keep track).

At the end of the session, convert the total damage *taken* and *dealt* by the party (including henchmen) according to this formula:

$$\text{XP} = \text{Damage taken} \times 10 + \text{Damage dealt} \times 5$$

And sum it. Then distribute XP shares evenly between the party members and henchmen.

•BOONS•

Boons are special abilities acquired outside the usual scheme of class and level progression. They should be granted only as a direct result of specific achievements during play such as special quests or favors earned.

For example, a rogue who has gained the favor of the river god may be granted the ability to breathe underwater. A fighter permitted to train archery with the best of elven archers thanks to saving their princess, may be given a special bonus to hit with bows,

When balancing against other rewards, boons are comparable to magic items that can not be stolen and should not be more powerful than the various *Focus* given in the class features of the four base classes.

Boons that increase a character's versatility (fx. water breathing) are much less likely to be unbalancing than ones that strengthen the existing peak competences of a character (fx. giving a bonus to hit to a fighter).

Boons should not be commonplace for PCs – As a rule of thumb, a character should not gain more than one or two boons per ten levels - Many never gain any!

If deemed appropriate to the achievements of PC, granting an especially powerful boon can be balanced by the player and GM agreeing to forfeit a class feature granted at the current or upcoming level instead.



•SOCIAL REWARDS•

Not all rewards can be measured in gold pieces or mechanical value. A consequence of player adventures will also be fame and infamy, favors owed and influence won. This gradual process of “king-making” shapes the choices of players and directions of campaigns as they advance towards high levels.

Let players enjoy the fruits of shaping the world around them, by having places named after them, being remembered in song and commoners swearing themselves as followers. Then set up *new* challenges based on the rewards they choose to act and build on.

When it comes to intangible rewards and player goals that are more plot-based, don't be afraid to simply give the players what they want, so long as they put in some effort to earn it. If they want land, or knighthoods, or powerful connections – make it accessible. It's a way for the players to steer the game in directions *they* want it to go – Just make sure it comes with new challenges – and rope enough to hang themselves with it too.

•TREASURE•

The coins, gems, jewelry and magic items the party finds constitute **treasure**. Except for magic items, these can be spent to earn XP (p.55).

Treasure will normally be found in monster lairs in dungeons or wilderness, sometimes unguarded. Such treasure are usually hidden and/or protected. Only treasure actually used by monsters are likely to be worn on their person when encountered.

Lair Treasure Types

Type	CP x1000	SP x1000	GP x1000	PP x1000	Gems	Jewelry	Magic
A	25% (1d6)	30% (1d6)	40% (2d6)	25% (1d2)	50% (6d6)	50% (6d6)	30% any 3
B	50% (2d4)	25% (1d6)	25% (1d6)	-	25% (1d6)	25% (1d6)	10% 1 sword/ armor/weapon
C	20% (1d12)	30% (1d4)	10% (1d2)	-	25% (1d4)	25% (1d4)	10% any 2
D	10% (1d8)	15% (2d6)	60% (1d6)	-	30% (1d8)	30% (1d8)	15% any 2 +1 potion
E	5% (1d10)	30% (1d10)	25% (1d12)	-	10% (1d10)	10% (1d10)	25% any 2 +1 scroll
F	-	10% (1d12+1d8)	50% (2d8)	30% (1d3)	20% (2d12)	10% (1d12)	30% any 3 (no weapons) +1 potion +1 scroll
G	-	-	50% (1d4x10)	50% (1d6)	25% (3d6)	25% (1d10)	35% any 4 +1 scroll
H	25% (2d12)	50% (1d100)	50% (1d8x10)	25% (5d4)	50% (1d100)	50% (1d4x10)	15% any 4 +1 potion, +1 scroll
I	-	-	-	30% (1d8)	50% (2d6)	50% (2d6)	15% any 1
J	25% (1d4)	10% (1d3)	-	-	-	-	-
K	-	30% (1d6)	5% (1d2)	-	-	-	-
L	-	-	-	-	50% (1d4)	-	-
M	-	-	40% (2d4)	50% (5d6)	55% (5d4)	45% (2d6)	-
N	-	-	-	-	-	-	40% 2d4 potions
O	-	-	-	-	-	-	50% 1d4 scrolls

Individual Treasure Types

Type	CP	SP	GP	PP	Gems	Jewelry	Magic
P	3d8*	-	-	-	-	-	-
Q	-	3d6*	-	-	-	-	-
R	-	-	1d6*	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	2d4*	-	-	-	-
T	-	-	-	1d6*	-	-	-
U	10% 1d100	10% 1d100	5% 1d100	-	5% 1d4	5% 1d4	2% any 1
V	-	10% 1d100	10% 1d100	5% 1d100	10% 1d4	10% 1d4	5% any 1

*amount is per individual

How To Roll For Treasure

Use these steps to randomly determine treasure.

- 1. Consult monster entry to find the treasure type.
- 2. Roll 1d100 for each treasure column to determine if that element is present.
- 3. If so, roll the indicated dice to determine amount
- 4. If magic is present, reference the relevant subtable

Treasure for types **A** to **O** are for full lairs. This means lairs where the **numbers encountered** (*No. Enc.*) uses the range in parenthesis (b5, p.3). Reduce or increase treasure accordingly, if the number of encountered monsters is fewer or greater than the average.

In campaigns using gold for XP, most treasure should be randomly generated to give a sense of fairness overall, whilst retaining variety on a case by case basis.

Gems & Jewelry

When gems are found, the GM rolls to determine their gold piece value. The GM may decide to swap out many small gems for fewer, but more valuable, ones.

Gem Values

1d100	Value (gp)	Examples
1-20	10	Quartz, Tourquoise
21-45	50	Onyx, Jasper, Moonstone
46-75	100	Amethyst, Jade, Zircon, Pearl
76-95	500	Plack Pearl, Topaz
96-100	1000	Opal, Ruby, Emerald, Sapphire

Each piece of jewelry is worth 3d6x100 in gold pieces.
Damaged jewelry, from fighting or other, is half normal value.

Jewelry Values

3d6x100 (gp value)	Examples
300-600	Bracelet, Pin
700-1000	Brooch, Earring
1100-1400	Pendant, Necklace
1500-1800	Crown, Sceptre

Jewelry can be swapped out similarly to gems.

Treasure Items

Not all treasure must be coins, gems or jewelry.
Some may be art or special objects requiring appraisal.

For every 1000 gp in total, there is a 5% chance that 2d4x10% of the loot is actually a single item. For example, ten 100 gp gems and two 1000 gp jewelries may be a single "golden crown set with a bright ruby, worth 2000 gp" kjh. Roll again once for remaining loot after the first treasure item turns up, but only once.



Deliberate Treasure Placement

When deliberately placing treasure, bear in mind their value as XP in relation to the challenges the PCs will have to overcome to obtain the treasure.

The table below gives the average worth for each Treasure Type in gold pieces.

Average Treasure Type Values

A	18k	G	23k	M	50k	S	5
B	2k	H	60k	N	0	T	17
C	1k	I	11k	O	0	U	160
D	4k	J	25	P	0.1	V	330
E	2k	K	180	Q	1	-	-
F	8k	L	240	R	3	-	-

Splitting the Loot

In gold-XP games, there are some things a party may consider when splitting loot (remembering also henchmen take their share). Some might offer to one PC “You get the magic sword, we’ll take the jewels.” Or the 1st level PC might get enough extra share to level up and catch up to the others faster. There are always trade-offs to be made.



Treasure as Setting Building

Sometimes random treasure can give results that seem improbable. Take them as an puzzle that demands further questions of the setting. *Why* is a band of hobgoblins carrying 5000 gp? *Why didn't* that dragon have any treasure? Or for that single valuable item that shows up – *Where* does it come from and why was it made?

If nothing comes to mind, a quick roll on the *Encounter Motivation & Activity* table [p.28] and/or the adjacent *Encounter Bonds* table might inspire.

These are good example of how *Letting The Dice Make The Come World Alive* [p.3] can contribute to *Emergent World Building* [p.73]. Deliberately placed treasure can of course be used for similar purposes.

Think of treasure as more than just rewards – It also holds, and reveals, information about the world Information that might well yield new adventures.

· MAGIC ITEMS ·

Generating Magic Items

In *HU* there are no fixed formulas for creating magic items. They are all unique reflections of their maker and the circumstances of their creation.

Generating a unique magic item has six basic steps:

1. Roll Type of Item
2. Roll Provenance, Purpose & Function
3. Roll Drawbacks
4. Roll Rarity
5. Define Abilities
6. Description & Legend

1. Type Of Item

The *type* of item has a strong influence on the type of magic it will be imbued with, its rarity and its subsequent power.

Weapon

Weapons often have destructive effects, such as being banes of certain creatures or unusual combat effects. Roll 2d4 when rolling on the *Function* table [p.63].

Magic Item Type

1d100	Type	Rarity Roll [p.64]
1-20	Scroll / Charm (70%/30%)	A-
21-40	Potion	A-
41-45	Wand / Rod/ Staff (1d100: 1-55 / 56-85 / 86-100)	B / C+ / D
46-55	Armour or Shield	C
56-65	Weapon	C
66-85	Sword	C+
86-95	Miscellaneous Wondrous Item	E
96-100	Ring	D+

Magic Weapon Type [1d8 + 1d10]

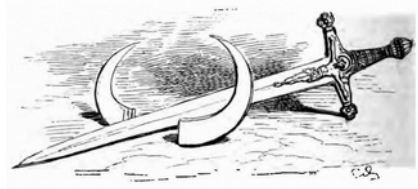
2	Sickle/Javelin	8	Long Spear	14	Polearm
3	Handaxe/Light Hammer	9	Battleaxe/Warhammer	15	Crossbow, Light
4	Axe	10	Greataxe	11	Flail
5	Mace	11	Longbow	17	Maul
6	Crossbow, Heavy	12	Heavy mace/War pick	18	Crossbow, Hand
7	Shortbow	13	Spear	-	-

Sword

As per weapons above – Swords are far more likely to be enchanted than other weapons and the most powerful enchantments are usually found in swords. Roll 2d4 when rolling on the *Function* table [p.63]

Magic Sword Type [2d4]

2	Shortsword	5	Longsword
3	Dagger	6/7	Broadsword/Rapier
4	Greatsword	8	Scimitar/Cutlass



Armour Or Shield

Armour often has protective properties. If the first roll on the *Function* table is for Weaken/Destroy/Harm or Create/Evoke, re-roll.

Ring

Rings are typically items of great power, made for significant effects with frequent or indefinite use.

Wand / Rod / Staff

Wands are thin 15 inch long lesser devices capable of discharging a single effect, typically a spell (no higher than 4th lvl) with charges. A typical wand has 7 charges and regains 1d6+1 charges at dawn.

Rods are 2-3 feet long cylinder typically used to activate extraordinary effects not easily replicated by spells.

Staffs are powerful devices, often capable of discharging multiple effects and spells. They are typically usable only by specific types of spellcasters.

Potion

Are always one use consumables, whether it be elixirs, ointments, oils, etc. They often mimic transmutation spell effects.

Magical Armour Type [2d8]

2	Leather	7	Half plate	13	Plate
3	Studded leather	9	Ring mail	14	Buckler
4	Chain shirt	10	Chain mail	15	Shield
5	Scale mail	11	Banded mail	-	-
6	Breastplate	12	Splint	-	-

Scroll / Charm

Spell scrolls have a magic spell written on them, typically by a magic-user (75%).

You can only decipher and use a scroll if the spell is on your class's spell list. *Deciphering* a scroll without using it takes one segment. *Using* the scroll casts the spell with only verbal components as an action, after which the inscription disappears.

Not all scrolls are inscribed on parchment. Some, such as runestones, are carved in stone but otherwise work the same way.

A Charm carries a single spell-like effect inside a brittle mundane item and can be activated by anyone, as action, by breaking it.

Miscellaneous Wondrous Item

All other items. The item's mundane function or appearance is typically related to its magical function.

Miscellaneous Wondrous Item [2d20]

2	Coin	15	Amulet	28	Lens/Goggles
3	Bag/Sack	16	Figurine	29	Bracers
4	Cloak/Cape	17	Cards/Dice	30	Bone(s)
5	Stone/Gem	18	Horn	31	Cards/Dice
6	Girdle/Belt	19	Banner	32	Mask
7	Gloves	20	Pouch/Purse	33	Crown
8	Boots/Shoes	21	Bottle/Flask	34	Circlet
9	Hat/Helm	22	Mirror	35	Orb
10	Cloak/Cape	23	Rope	36	Cane/Pole
11	Robe	24	Cauldron	37	Tunic/Vest
12	Artisan's Tool	25	Chest	38	Feather/Quill
13	Necklace/Pendant	26	Musical Instrument	39	Brooch/Scarab
14	Clockwork Apparatus	27	Household Item	40	Lamp/Lantern

2. Provenance, Function & Purpose

The *provenance* of an item often helps define its appearance, the character of its powers and can offer insight into the nature of its purpose and function.

The *purpose* of the item tells you what it was made to affect or why it was made.

The *function* of an item tells you what it was made to do and meant to accomplish.

Provenance, Function & Purpose

Roll	Provenance [2d6]	Function [1 d12]	Purpose [2d6]
1		Transmute	
2	Natural (druidic, fey, tribal shamanic, limb or organ from a magical creature)	Control	Water
3	Deeds (imbued by the deeds of epic heroes/ villains)	Warn/Avoid/Protection	Fire
4	Spirit (power granted by a trapped sentience)	Weaken	Law/Chaos/Ideal
5	Craftsmanship (enchantment by skill or rune)	Destroy/Harm	Racial
6	Divine (relics, pieces of dead gods)	Strengthen	Mind/Spirit
7	High Enchantment (wizards)	Knowledge/Sense	[Optional]
8	Racial (signature item of a certain race – dwarven-make, draconic, elven)	Influence	Body/Life
9	Extradimensional (demons, djinn, chaos lords or other outer beings)	Move	Nature/Plant/Animal
10	Exotic material (meteoric, orichalcum, mithril)	Create	Magic/Chance/Destiny
11	Event/Accident (ceremony, battle, catastrophe, Chaos wave)	Conjure	Earth
12	Science-as-Magic (far future, or deep past)	Restore/Repair	Air

3. Drawbacks

Drawbacks can be thought of as the price you pay for using a magic item, adding theme and depth to the item.

REQUIREMENT Typically Attunement [p.66] which may come with its own requirements. Others may be taking certain actions to make to work, such as a ritual, or conditions, such as "only when fighting without armor".

MINOR This should be distinct enough to notice without major inconvenience. For example, a strong odor after using it or similar personal quirks afflicted. Or a trade-off, fx turn invisible but with disadvantage on WIS (perception).

MAJOR These should be severe enough that the wielder will have to weigh up if it is worth the cost to use it. Perhaps it risks temporary insanity or takeover from a malevolent intelligence inside the item. Or a chance of failure with severe consequences.

CURSED. Cursed items should have positive uses that make people want to pick them up. The cost of it should simply clearly outweigh the benefits and be unavoidable (though not necessarily easy to discover). Most cursed items can not be discarded short of casting *Remove Curse* or fulfilling a specific quest (which might well be a malevolent one).

Item Drawbacks

1d100	Drawback
1-20	None
21-50	Requirement
51-70	Minor
71-90	Major
91-100	Cursed

4. Rarity

The number and level of abilities an item has are defined by its rarity.
Roll with advantage when a + is indicated for rarity. Likewise disadvantage when a – is.

Item Rarity & Abilities [1d20]

A	B	C	D	E	Rarity	Abilities
1-4	1-4	-	-	1-2	Common	1 minor
-	-	1	-	3-7	Common	1d2 minor
5-9	5-12	2-4	1-5	8-10	Uncommon	1 lesser
-	-	5-7	-	11-13	Uncommon	1d2-1 lesser & 1d2-1 minor
10-16	13-17	8-11	6-11	14-15	Rare	1 greater
-	-	12-15	12-13	16-17	Rare	1d2-1 greater & 1d3 lesser
17-19	18-20	16-17	14-15	18	Very Rare	1d2+1 greater
-	-	18-19	16-18	19	Very Rare	1 greater & 1d3+1 lesser & 1 minor
20	-	20	19-20	20	Legendary	1 epic or (50%/50%) 1d2-1 epic & 1d2+1 greater & 1d4-1 lesser & 1d2 minor

If less than 1 is rolled for an ability, apply one ability of a lower tier (fx 0 greater=1 lesser).
Some items, such as Potions, Scrolls, Charms and Wands, will typically only have one ability – Take the highest rolled and use the number of other abilities rolled to ballpark the power of that ability.

Defining Abilities & Drawbacks: Fiction Comes First

Now that you have an idea of its purpose, function, power and range of abilities and drawbacks, decide what that means in-game before giving thought to mechanics.

Don't feel constrained about making it fit with established game mechanics. The best effects are often more interesting than any mechanic. It is, after all, magic!
Mechanic effects should always follow from the stated in-game function and purpose. Similarly, don't let rolls hinder a good idea. If you have a vision of an item roughly in the ballpark of what's rolled, that doesn't quite fit what you rolled, go with it. The constraints of rolling on the tables are meant to stimulate creativity, not stifle it.

Abilities should, as a rule, not simply make you better at doing something you could already attempt. Magic should be less utilitarian than Weird, inspiring creative use over obvious ones. Think of it as a touch of Chaos caught in an item – Its weirdness sets you apart from the mundane. It should let you do what is otherwise impossible!

A good magic item is one whose flavor makes players want to keep it long after its mechanical advantages have been superceded. One that doesn't just make the wielder more powerful, but more *interesting*. It should be the stuff people tell tales about, that define the wielder in some way. Not "it hits harder and better than normal weapons".

When looking at mechanics, spells are an obvious place of inspiration (and for things like scrolls, a must) and if nothing else, a good way to gauge power level. Some abilities may duplicate spells but in a more powerful way (longer duration, no concentration), which should be reflected in the power of ability, or number of them, or rarity of item.

5. Abilities

An ability with limited uses has a number of *charges* (for items with multiple abilities of varying power, define more charges per use for the more powerful) - An item typically regains between one third and all charges at dawn every day (roll dice each day to see).

Minor Abilities

- A trivial effect with little impact on game mechanics, similar to the *Prestidigitation* cantrip, such as a cloak or armour that never dirties or a sword that jumps from its scabbard with a command word.
- For consumable items, the effect should be equivalent to a cantrip or 1st level spell.

Greater Abilities

- An effect, equivalent to 1st/2nd lvl spells in power, used indefinitely or at will.
- An effect, equivalent to 3rd to 5th lvl spells in power, usable 3-5 times per day.
- For consumable items, the effect should be equivalent to a 4th to 6th level spell.
- Any numerical bonus is a greater ability and only appears with at least one other greater ability. The bonus is defined by item rarity: +1 rare / +2 very rare / +3 legendary.

Lesser Abilities

- A non-damaging cantrip that can be used indefinitely or at will.
- An effect, equivalent to 1st/2nd lvl spells in power, usable 5-7 times per day.
- For consumable items, the effect should be equivalent to a 2nd to 3rd level spell.

Epic Abilities

- An effect equivalent to 3rd to 5th lvl spells in power used indefinitely or at will.
- An effect, equivalent to 6th to 7th lvl spells in power, usable 1-3 per day.
- An effect, equivalent to 8th to 9th lvl spells in power, usable 3-6 times after which the item losing all its abilities, or is at least extremely difficult to re-charge.
- For consumable items, the effect should be equivalent to a 7th to 9th level spell.

6. Description, Name & Legend

Decide on appearance based on provenance and abilities. Magic items rarely look just like mundane items. A *Potion of Gaseous Form* may be more mist than fluid. An *Efreeti Bottle* may be heavily burnt clay with markings in the primordial language, and so forth.

Noteworthy magic items should be add to the legend of its wielder. Does it have a unique name? A body of legend and lore? Perhaps its history comes with the burden of expectation, or even destiny. Look at magic items as opportunities for world building.

Think also on possible adventure hooks such history might generate for the wielder. History with ties into the present is more interactive than "old enough to be long forgotten".

As always, brevity trumps lengthy backstories for playability. 1-3 bullet points of history and legend, and one 'hook' bullet point on how it might tie into the present, is all it takes.

Taking Your Time with Magic Items

Discovering the properties of magic items is not a simple matter. They often require downtime research and/or attunement to use. This gives the GM time to develop any magic items generated during the session more thoroughly for the next session.

It is helpful for the players to be aligned with expectations that usually one will not be able to use a magic item to its fullest, or at all, in the same session it is discovered.

Some properties may be easier to discover than others. This of course can be made to coincide with the abilities you have developed already and are ready for players to use.

Wielding Magic Items

In most cases, a magic item that's meant to be worn can fit a creature regardless of size or build. Garments magically adjust themselves to the wearer, with obvious exceptions.

Attunement

Some magic items require a creature to attune to them before they can be used.

The GM decides what requirements there are for attunement, fx. character class, level, knowing the item's history and/or name, a special ritual or a deed to be performed.

The GM may also decide that there are levels of attunement that unlock different properties based on various conditions.

If nothing particular is specified, assume an uninterrupted *short rest* focused on the item such as weapon practice, meditation, etc.

Upon attuning, one gains intuitive understanding of how to activate its properties, including any command words.

An item can be attuned to only one creature at a time. A creature can attune as many items as half their proficiency bonus+1 (round up) at a time. To attune to a new item beyond that, one must end attunement to an item first. Additionally, you can't attune to more than one copy of an item.

One can end attunement by spending a short rest with the item, unless it is cursed.

Multiple Items Of The Same Kind

Use common sense to determine whether more than one of a given kind of magic item can be worn. A character can't normally wear more than one pair of footwear, one pair of gloves, one pair of bracers, one suit of armor, one item of headwear, and one cloak. You can make exceptions; someone may be able to wear a circlet and a helmet.

Paired Items

Items that come in pairs work only if both items of the pair are worn.

Activating An Item

Some magic items require a user to do something special, such as holding the item and uttering a command word.

If an item requires an action to activate, that action **isn't** a function of the *Use an Item* action, so features such as the Rogue's *Fast Hands* can't be used for this.

COMMAND WORD is a word or phrase to be spoken for an item to work. They can't be activated where sound is prevented.

CONSUMABLES Some items are used up when they are activated. A potion or elixir must be swallowed, or an oil applied to the body. The writing vanishes from a scroll when read. Unless otherwise stated, this uses a *Use an Item* action.

Spells

Some magic items allow the user to cast a spell. The spell is cast at the lowest possible spell level, doesn't expend the user's spell slots, and requires no components, unless the description says otherwise.

It uses its normal casting time, range, and duration, and requires concentration if the spell does. Many items, such as potions, bypass the casting and confer the spell's effects, with their usual duration. Certain items make exceptions to these rules, changing the casting time, duration, etc

A magic item, such as certain staffs, may require you to use your own spellcasting ability when you cast a spell from the item. If you have more than one spellcasting ability, you choose which one to use. If you don't have a spellcasting ability—such as a rogue with the *Use Magic Device* feature—your spellcasting ability modifier is +0 for the item, plus your proficiency bonus.

Charges

Some magic items have charges that are expended when activated. The number of charges remaining is revealed through attunement or Arcane Research [p.44]. When an item regains charges, an attuned creature learns how many it regained.

Sample Magic Items

Below are a sample of items for further inspiration, usable in a pinch.

POTIONS

Potion Of Animal Speech (Rare)

This potion let's you speak with animals for the next hour after drinking it.

Elixir Of Thaumalogical Vim

This potion, made from the blood of a dead magic-user of suitable power, restores a used spell slot. The maximum level of the slot restored, depends on the potion's rarity, as shown in the table below.

Potions of Arcane Vitality

Spell Slot Level	Rarity
1st	Common
3rd	Uncommon
5th	Rare
7th	Very rare
9th	Legendary

Potion Of Diminution (Rare)

When you drink this potion, you gain the "reduce" effect of the *enlarge/reduce* spell for 1d4 hours (no concentration required). The red in the potion's liquid continuously contracts to a tiny bead and then expands to color the clear liquid around it.

Potion Of Flying (Very Rare)

When you drink this potion, you gain a flying speed equal to your walking speed for 1 hour. If you're in the air when the potion wears off, you fall. Clear liquid floats at the top of its container with cloudy white spots.

Potion Of Giant Strength

When you drink this potion, your STR score changes for 1 hour. The type of giant determines the score (see the table below). The potion has no effect on you if your STR is equal to or greater than that score.

This potion's transparent liquid has floating in it a sliver of fingernail from a giant of the appropriate type.

Potion Of Growth (Rare)

When you drink this potion, you gain the "enlarge" effect of the *enlarge/reduce* spell for 1d4 hours (no concentration required). The red in the liquid continuously expands from a tiny bead and then contracts.

Potion Of Healing

Healing potions are produced in many places in unusual numbers. You regain hit points when you drink this potion, depending on the potion's rarity, as shown in the table below

Potions of Healing

Potion of ...	Rarity	HP
Healing	Common	2d4+2
Greater healing	Uncommon	4d4+4
Superior healing	Rare	8d4+8
Supreme healing	Very rare	10d4+20

Potion Of Invincibility (Rare)

You feel invincible and gain +2 to hit & -2 to AC. Additionally, no damage is registered when hit. The effects last for 1 hour.

In actuality, the drinker 'only' gains 1d8*level temporary hit points, and the GM secretly records damage taken. When the potion expires, or the drinker drops to 0 hp, any damage taken becomes clear.

Potion Of Invisibility (Rare)

This potion's container looks empty but feels as though it holds liquid. When you drink it, you become invisible for 1 hour. Anything you wear or carry is invisible with you. The effect ends early if you attack or cast a spell.

Type of Giant	Strength	Rarity
Hill giant	21	Uncommon
Frost giant	23	Rare
Fire giant	25	Rare
Cloud giant	27	Very rare
Storm giant	29	Legendary

WEAPONS & SWORDS

Foe Hammer (Rare)

This +1 warhammer lets you make a *shove* with advantage on your target as a bonus action immediately after a successful hit.

Once per short rest, the *Foe Hammer* can mimic the effects of the *Knock* spell, breaking the object opened in the process.

The item is mildly sentient. Attempting anything other than hitting a foe you attacked the previous round, requires a WIS save (DC 13) if it's standing up on your turn.

Goblin Shank (Rare)

(Requires Attunement) Wounds taken from this +1 dagger made from goblin bone can only heal with magic or during a long rest.

Any attacks made with the shank against a foe with an unhealed wound from this shank are made with advantage.

Furthermore, the last target wounded by the shank can be tracked by the wielder, as per the *Locate Creature* spell, across any range, provided the target is still wounded.

If a target has other wounds, wounds from the shank are always the last ones to heal.

Nosferatu Blade (Very Rare)

(Requires Attunement) Upon hitting a living creature with this +2 shortsword the wielder may heal as many hit points as the target lost from the attack, as a bonus action

Whenever you roll the maximum on any damage die with this sword, you may roll an additional die of damage.

When the blade has healed as many hit points as the wielder's hit point maximum, the following effects kick in, regardless of whether the blade is worn or not:

- The wielder requires no food or water, no longer ages and is immune to disease.
- The wielder can no longer heal hit points in any way other than by the sword's power.
- Attunement to it can now only be ended by dropping to 0 hp and becoming stable, without any aid from magic or other people.

Sage Sword (Very Rare)

(Requires Attunement by a fighter) This +2 longsword contains the spirit of an ancient sword sage (INT 16) who will mentor you in dreams at night and can offer tactical guidance in and out of combat.

Once per short rest, you can observe a single foe's weakness for a round as an action. Afterwards you gain advantage for 1d4 rounds against that foe.

Once per long rest, you can let the sword sage direct a single attack, which automatically is a critical hit.

The sword sage can withdraw any of its abilities from the wielder to bargain, or even blackmail, the wielder into following its designated *Function & Purpose*. It is not above subterfuge to manipulate the wielder.

Additionally it can attempt to cast *Dominate Person* (DC 18, 1 hour duration) on the wielder once per week. This can even be cast when the wielder is asleep, in which case the wielder has no recollection of it. If used on the same turn as the sword sage directs an attack for an automatic critical hit, the wielder gets no save to resist.

Thrall Spear (Very Rare)

(Requires Attunement) When this +2 spear strikes the chest of a foe (requires an intentional attack, hit with disadvantage), you may attempt a *Dominate Person* on the target (DC = damage + 8) as a bonus action on the same turn.

This lasts as long as the wound remains unhealed (If the target has other wounds, the wound from this hit is always the last one to heal). Only one target at a time can be dominated in this way.

If the target dies from this hit instead, you may immediately animate it as a zombie under your control as a bonus action. There is no limit to how many zombies can be animated this way. They last as long as you remain attuned to the spear.

ARMORS & SHIELDS

Breastplate Of The Tormented God (*Rare*)

When hit, the wearer of this +1 breastplate may use its reaction to inflict agony upon its attacker and oneself. Both must roll a DC 18 CON save. If both fail, both are *Stunned* and the attacker takes the same amount of damage as it dealt. Else nothing happens.

Each may attempt a new save on their next turn to end the effect every round afterwards. The other remains stunned until making its own successful save.

Fanged Scale (*Rare*)

This +1 scale mail is made only from fangs.

Once per short rest, when you take a hit, you may use your reaction to let the teeth try to grab the weapon that struck you, effectively initiating a grapple on your foe's turn using your STR and proficiency bonus.

If successful, the foe can always end the grapple by releasing the grappled weapon.

Glamoured Armor (*Rare*)

This +1 armor comes in various forms. Speaking the command word as a bonus action causes the armor to look like a normal set of clothing or some other kind of armor, all according to your choice. The armor retains its normal bulk and weight. This lasts until you use this property again or remove the armor.

Scoundrel's Leather (*Uncommon*)

This studded leather gives disadvantage on all attacks against the wearer whenever the wearer is using its action to *Dash* or *Hide* and grants advantage on all attacks the wearer makes with surprise.

It also causes disadvantage on all attacks the wearer makes against a foe that has attacked and injured the wearer since its previous turn, unless the wearer first takes some action to lessen the likelihood of being attacked again (fx. hiding or dashing).

CHARMS

Candle Of Communion (*Rare*)

Lighting and inhaling the smoke from this candle for 1 segment lets you cast the *Commune* spell if you are a priest, or *Contact Other Plane* if you are not.

Cloudkill Flask (*Rare*)

When opened or smashed as an action, this flask instantly releases a 5th level *Cloudkill* spell (save DC 16) centered on the flask, lasting 1 segment and staying in place.

Opening the flask, immediately causes 2d8 damage to the opener who may attempt a DC 16 DEX save to re-seal it before it gets out, preserving the effect for later.

Gold Scarab (*Uncommon*)

A gold scarab that animates (one time only) when touched to gold. It then eats all gold it can find in a 30 feet radius at a rate of 1 item (100 gp) per minute (move 10 feet).

When broken, it releases a gem worth 1d100 gp plus the value of any gold it ate.

Sovereign Glue (*Very Rare*)

This viscous, milky-white substance can form a permanent adhesive bond between any two objects. When found, the specially prepared container holds 1d6+1 ounces.

One ounce can cover a 1-foot square surface. It takes 1 minute to set. Afterwards, the bond it creates can be broken only by universal solvent or a wish spell.

Universal Solvent (*Very Rare*)

This tube holds milky liquid with a strong alcohol smell. As an action You can pour the contents onto a surface. It instantly dissolves up to 1 square foot of adhesive it touches, including sovereign glue.

Ink Of Imagistic Egress (*Very Rare*)

If this ink is used to paint a doorway on a vertical surface for a segment, it turns into an actual door for 1 minute that will lead anywhere in the multiverse the artist can name on the door.

RINGS

Naiad Ring (*Rare*)

This ring, given by naiads to mortal lovers to live with them in lakes, lets you breathe, see and hear underwater as if in open air and daylight, and gain a swimming speed equal to your land speed. You also do not age while underwater.

Null Ring (*Legendary*)

This ring makes your person immune to all magic, harmful and beneficial alike. You can't receive magical healing, teleport, burn from a fireball, be recognised by divination magic or use a magic item.

The only way to remove the ring is to cut off the finger it is worn on. A finger severed while wearing the Null Ring can never be restored, not even by a Wish spell.

Ring Of Chaos (*Rare*)

This ring lets you identify creatures of chaotic alignment as being chaotic on sight. Anyone you speak to of chaotic alignment instinctly believes you are also chaotic and sees you as a potentially kindred spirit.

Ring Of Invisibility (*Very Rare*)

You, with anything you are wearing or carrying, can turn invisible as an action. You remain so until the ring is removed, you attack or cast a spell, or until you use a bonus action to become visible again.

When invisible, you become visible to ethereal creatures (and can see them if they are invisible), can be harmed by them and harm them in turn. Incorporeal undead find your ethereal presence offensive.

RODS, STAVES & WANDS

Rod Of Rulership (*Rare*)

(Requires Attunement) You can use an action to present the rod and command obedience from each creature of your choice that you can see within 120 feet.

Each target must succeed on a DC 15 WIS save or be *charmed* by you for 8 hours. Anyone so charmed regards you as its trusted leader. If harmed by you or your companions, or commanded to do something contrary to its nature, a target ceases to be charmed in this way. The rod can't be used again until the next dawn.

Wand Of Polymorph (*Very Rare*)

(Requires Attunement by a spellcaster) This wand has 7 charges. You can use an action to expend 1 charge to cast the polymorph spell (save DC 15) from it.

The wand regains 1d6+1 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand crumbles into ashes and is destroyed.

Staff Of Walking (*Rare*)

(Requires Attunement) The wielder of this plain quarterstaff ignores natural difficult terrain and harsh weather, never experiences fatigue or exhaustion from walking, including forced march, and can also *Scuttle* without negative effects.

In the hands of a Magic-User, it has 8 charges and the following spell-like abilities:

- Expeditious Retreat (1 charge)
- Misty Step (2 charges)
- Water Walk (3 charges)
- Dimension Door (4 charges)
- Planewalking* (8 charges)

These will not work if the wielder is unable to walk, such as when prone or grappled. At dawn, the staff regains 2d4 charges per day.

**Planewalking:* By walking at a *moderate* or faster pace through wilderness for 1 watch, the wielder, and up to five companions who keep pace with the wielder for the full watch, transition into another plane of existence. To enter a plane, the wielder must have either visited it personally before, or carry an item originating from that plane.

MISCELLANEOUS WONDROUS ITEMS

Bag Of Devouring (Very Rare)

A normal-looking, small sack. Anything put in the bag is devoured and vanishes from existence after 1d4+1 rounds. When part of a creature is placed in it, there is a 50% chance it is pulled inside. A successful DC 15 STR check allows escape as an action. Another can use an action to reach in and pull out the creature with a successful DC 20 STR check (provided it isn't pulled inside the bag itself first).

Bag Of Holding (Uncommon)

A normal-looking, small sack that can magically contain large objects and weights. Objects of up to 10'x5'x3' can fit inside. Up to 50 stone of weight can be placed in the bag. When full, the bag weighs 1 stone.

Orb Of Goetic Sagacity (Rare)

(Requires Attunement) This orb allows communication with a powerful demon as an action. It is always truthful and apparently helpful. Will bargain and subtly manipulate the user towards Chaos. Smashing the orb summons the demon.

Mask Of Somatic Dissimulation (Rare)

By spilling a drop of humanoid blood inside this featureless leather mask, the wearer assumes that humanoid's appearance, complete with scent, voice and clothes worn from the time the blood was drawn.

Armor will appear and feel real, but give no real added benefit (any armor worn prior to donning the mask will have AC no higher than the armor the impersonated wore).

The mask grafts itself on to the wearer's face when donned. Removing it causes 1d6 points of damage and means that the wearer's blood is now the last spilled into it for the purpose of impersonation.

Pendant Of Hope (Uncommon)

In full darkness, this lawful pendant shines like a candle. The light is invisible to darkvision and in the underworld points the way to the most direct route to the surface.

Rope Of Climbing (Uncommon)

This 60-foot long rope can hold up to 200 stone in weight. When you hold the rope at one end and speak the Command Word as an action, it animates. As a bonus action, you can command the other end to move up to 10 feet per turn in any direction, to fasten securely to an object, to unfasten, to knot or unknot itself, or coil for carrying.

If you tell it to knot, it shortens to 50 feet and large knots appear at 1-foot intervals, granting advantage on climbing checks.

The rope has AC 20 and 20 hp. It regains 2 hp every segment as long as it has at least 1 hp. If it drops to 0 hp, it is destroyed.

Tongue Of Argent Phraseology (Rare)

This tongue of pure silver only works when placed in a mouth with no tongue, where it attaches itself and grants the wielder a sonorous and pleasant voice. The wielder can then speak and understand any spoken tongue, including animal speech, and may cast *Suggestion* (DC 15) once per long rest.

The tongue can only be recognized as silver if intentionally stuck out from the mouth.

Master Key Of Omniformity (Uncommon)

(Requires Attunement) This simple slim key can unlock any lock, but will only ever work for one lock per user. Though it requires attunement to work, it doesn't count against the number of items one can attune to.

Troll Hat (Very Rare)

(Requires Attunement) A shrunken flattened troll head that, after being worn for at least 24 hours, regenerates 1d6 hit points per segment. It is ineffective against injury caused by fire.

If using *Grievous Wounds* [p.82], it heals Lesser Wounds in 24 hours and Major Wounds in 1d4 weeks.

Additionally, it must be doused in the fresh blood of an intelligent creature once a month or lose its powers until so doused.

THE CAMPAIGN



"Know oh prince, that between the years when the oceans drank Atlantis and the gleaming cities, and the years of the rise of the Sons of Aryas, there was an Age undreamed of, when shining kingdoms lay spread across the world like blue mantles beneath the stars – Zamora with its dark-haired women and towers of spider-haunted mystery, Zingara with its chivalry, Koth that bordered on the pastoral lands of Shem, Stygia with its shadow-guarded tombs, Hyrkania whose riders wore steel and silk and gold. But the proudest kingdom of the world was Aquilonia, reigning supreme in the dreaming west." – The Phoenix on the Sword

A campaign is the fabric of gaming sessions over time. It is about the world beyond the adventure, the cities forests and kingdoms of the fantasy world. The players will almost certainly want their characters to explore wildernesses, visit cities, and do all

sorts of things in the fantasy world.

As players move their characters around from adventure to adventure, you can expand your wilderness map into an entire world—with continents, kingdoms, and great empires at your disposal.

The possibilities are endless, and since the party's direction is up to them you will never quite know what they're going to do. (This is why it can be a good idea not to plan too much for the campaign's expansion until it starts to happen.)

Creating a large and expansive world is not strictly necessary to create an immersive world of wonder. You can also add a sense of wonder to your world by making the known world *small*. A setting where a journey of a single 6-mile hex is a quest for discovery. A world where none really know what lies beyond past the mountains has its own sense of mystery and life.

Be clear about the expectations of a campaign – Make sure everyone knows the basic assumptions, such as:

- **Genre:** Will this be a game of picaresque sword & sorcery, or epic paladins & princesses? Will there be much magic or little? Is it a game of realism or do more mythic rules of nature apply?
- **Style:** Will this be an wholly open-ended sandbox driven only by player initiative, or will the campaign have a red plot thread? Or a mix?

As GM, review these assumptions and see how your rules support these. A game of epic heroes may not care much about tracking rations or awarding gold for xp. A horror game may require a new sanity rule system. Etc.

Much of the advice given on sandboxes [p.7] and *Building the Wilderness* [p.18] will also apply to the grander designs of the campaign and the wider setting it takes place in.

• EXPLORING THE WORLD •

Building a setting can be a quick way to create a lot of work that players will either: completely ignore, *or*, simply destroy. There are therefore two things to focus on:

- The broad strokes
- Sowing the seeds for emergent world building

The Broad Strokes

As a general rule, the more detail about a world you give your players, the more it will be ignored.

Focus instead on a bullet-point presentation with key words that will convey the tone, feel and imagery of the setting in as few words as possible. For example:

Precis: Fantasy Russian frontier under Byzantine occupation; Law vs. Chaos; Amazons fight mammoths on smilodons; Deep woods full of dark fey; Brothers Grimm - horror style; Ruins of a lost Elven empire gone bad - Elric style; Decadent Conan-land to the south; Many neutral savage "old gods" vs One sun god of Law.



The Emergent World

As has been mentioned previously, emergent play can prove to be as much an experience of discovery for the GM as it is for the players. An emergent world is no different. Once you have an overall idea of what the world is like, you need not fret too much over detail.

Focus rather on putting all your ideas that you would like to feature in the world somehow, into a format that they can emerge from – tables! Then, as they arise in play, you will find that the sum of your own creation becomes more than what you put into it. A world created from the seeds of your own imagination taking on a life of its own beyond your imagination. A place of exploration for both players and GM.

Player World-building

Part of the old school style is encouraging players to invest in the *world* they are exploring, over the *characters* doing the exploring. Part of that is adding to the texture of the world with their deeds, but this can also be done creatively.

Let the player of a northern barbarian decide what the culture to the north is like, as he develops his character. Let the cleric player make up his own god(s), develop the church he is part of and its theology.

• FANTASTIC OTHERWORLDS •

The Otherworlds are the Mythic Wildernesses [p.21] and Mythic Underworlds [p.12] writ large – Realms where the rules of the mundane world no longer apply and the Weird and fantastical become commonplace. There is no need to wait for PCs to become high level before undertaking otherworldly journeys or otherwise engage with the truly fantastical and bizarre. Even 1st level PCs are 'special' enough that they could find themselves treating with Lords of Chaos, traversing five-dimensional Overworlds, journeying to Hades to retrieve a dead soul, crossing into Faerie, or exploring the far future or past.

The level of extra ordinariness in a campaign is nothing to do with character level or challenge ratings – it is purely a function of the GM's imagination and taste!

• PARTY COMPOSITION •

A feature of sandbox play is that players choose their own challenges. Sometimes, they pick challenges they know are beyond them. In old school play, this is simply a reason to retain an entourage of hirelings and henchmen and make a proper expedition of it. [p.30]

Since in the old school, encounter balance is secondary to players choosing their own challenges, there are no suggested guidelines for distribution of classes within the party or numbers, except: Whatever composition ensures everyone has fun! The rest falls under the remit of the players and their skill in assessing challenges.



• CHARACTER DEATH •

In old school play, emphasis is placed on the *adventures* players have, over the *characters* having the adventures. Posthumous tales have a gravitas that backstories can't match.

It happens that players choose poorly in assessing challenges, or simply have bad luck with the dice. – A good death, from a GM's point of view, is one where the players *know* they brought this on themselves, through the own decisions, before any dice were rolled.

Cheating Death

As characters level up, death becomes less likely. At the higher levels of Expert play, spells such as *Raise Dead* may become available – As GM, you must decide on the availability of such spells; whether they can be performed by NPCs for a fee (or at all by PCs) or if they require divine quests, even journeys to the underworld.

The Next Player Character

Many old school tables start new characters at 1st level; other tables at half XP from before. Either Way, new characters quickly catch up if they can stay alive long to earn XP with the rest of the party. Other tables make XP a feature of the *player*, not the character.

Old School games traditionally do not put much emphasis on differences in power level, since the onus of old school games is on player driven solutions more so than abilities listed on your sheet. With clever thinking, even a 1st level part can slay a dragon!

As with "*Using XP to set the Style of a Campaign*" [p.54], it ultimately depends on the type of campaign. If there's a strong focus on player challenge, death as a loss condition may be appropriate. If death feels like punishment enough, be lenient.

The genre convention is to introduce new characters as quickly as possible (the quick character creation rules support this). The new PC might be a prisoner in the next dungeon room, or catching up to the party from behind. Or simply a party henchman turned PC!

GM'S TOOLBOX

"The Game has no rules, only rule suggestions"

The following chapter serves as inspiration for improvisation, offering pointers for how to make rulings or new houserules. All of it is suggestive only. Even setting DC should be seen as just one way of resolving an outcome. This chapter shows there are many other.

• CHALLENGES & OUTCOMES •

Determining Difficulty & Modifiers

The "Typical DC" table on page 1 of Book 2 gives basic guidelines for DCs. The Determining DC table below adds a bit more granularity and also gives suggestions for how different circumstances, such as better tools, or an unusually clever idea, might affect the roll.

Circumstance modifiers should not go higher than -3/+3, a full category of difficulty; the difference between well trained and untrained; or between very talented and average.

Determining DC

Task Difficulty	DC	Circumstances	Modifier
Trivial	4	Terrible	-3
Simple	7	Lousy	-2
Moderate	10	Poor	-1
Challenging	12	Regular	0
Hard	15	Good	+1
Formidable	20	Excellent	+2
Nearly impossible	25	Superb	+3

Modifiers Vs Advantage/Disadvantage

When should you as GM grant a bonus or grant advantage (and vice versa)?

Use bonuses for things that statically make you better (ie. help reach a higher DC) and is re-usable in other contexts, fx. good equipment. Use advantage for *situational* things that improve odds in your favor, fx. attacking while unseen, or a clever idea.

As a rule of thumb, if the modifier is small (+/-2 at most) and singular, use the bonus.

When many bonuses apply, it's often simpler to group them into advantage than tracking multiple numbers.

Rolling To Determine DC

If you are not entirely sure of the DC but have a rough idea of the ballpark, or simply feel the difficulty is uncertain and could be swingy, you can roll dice to establish the DC instead, using the table below:

Rolling DC

Task Difficulty	DC
Trivial ~ Simple	2d4+1
Simple ~ Moderate	2d4+4
Moderate ~ Hard	3d4+5
Hard ~ Formidable	3d4+10

Handling Extended Challenges

For tasks over long periods of time, such as a long swim or climb, asking for rolls every round eventually makes failure inevitable.

For such challenges, consider if the DC should be a bit higher due to the length of the task, then ask the player to roll twice. Use the *higher* roll to determine overall success and the *lower* roll to determine if any complications happened along the way.

Ability Scores & Proficiency Areas As Narrative Modifiers

Ability Scores & Proficiency Areas do not just modify numbers. They should also be used as descriptors that modify the *fiction* when dice aren't being rolled.

When a Mountebank Rogue with 17 Charisma and Charisma Mastery sweet talks a tavern wench, no rolls should be needed to determine that it will be received differently to the surly 9 Charisma wizard doing so.

B2, p.2 describes when not to roll for things.

You can also opt not to roll for things that *are* risky, but narratively appropriate. This can be used for secondary actions by a character who is *supposed* to be good at something, but where a failed roll would undermine that for little or no good reason.

If a heavy beam needs to be lifted as part of an escape, and there are other actions in play, you can simply rule "he lifts it" when it is the Strong Guy in the party that comes over to make the lift.

Different Dice For Different Challenges

Making Challenges Less Random

The singular d20 roll reflects dangerous and risky ventures with swingy outcomes.

In challenges where the GM feels skill and innate capability should be more predictable, he can opt to replace the d20 with multiple dice, to favor more average results than the even spread of a single die. This gives fewer very good or very bad rolls.

Example: an arm-wrestling contest between a STR 14 PC (+2 to roll) and a STR 10 PC (no modifier). On a d20 roll, the STR 14 PC would win only 60% of the time and lose 40%. The GM thinks that STR 14 should matter more than chance in this case and rules 3d6 will be used instead of 1d20. The odds are now significantly stacked !

This never applies to combat as it already uses multiple dice rolls to even the odds!

Making Challenges More Random

In some cases, the GM may want to allow the impossible to become just improbable by turning static modifiers into dice rolls:

Variable Modifiers

Modifier	Equivalent Die
+1/+2	N/A
+3	1d4
+4	1d6
+5	2d4
+6	1d4+1d6
+7	2d6
+8	1d6+1d8

Example: Brawd the Fighter attempts to lift a fallen pillar to save an elf lady. This is the stuff of giants, DC 28, and Brawd only gets +4 from STR and +2 from proficiency.

The GM rules that this is suitably epic that Brawd can roll 1d20+2d5 instead. It's unlikely, but he now has a chance!

The Right Ability for the Job

Overcoming DCs with *Ability Checks* should rarely just be a pre-defined "STR vs DC 15 to overcome this task". Rather than setting DC based on just the difficulty of a task and then defining which ability applies, think of Ability Checks, and their difficulty, as something to determine based on the *solution* the player presents to resolve a task.

One player might try to intimidate an NPC with a show of strength, another with sheer malevolent presence and tone of voice. As GM, you may decide the NPC is more receptive to one over the other, or better roleplayed, and set different DCs accordingly.

Let the fiction of players' action dictate game effects, not the other way around!

Failure & Trying Again

Failing an ability check should be meaningful (else don't roll [b2,p.2]). Making a roll already represents one's best efforts and should not allow for a re-roll, unless conditions have changed (fx. tools). In cases where the most qualified character in the party has already attempted a task

and failed, assume that die roll also applies to any further attempts from less qualified characters attempting the same task. In other words, a party can't stack the odds by having everyone roll to see if a lucky roll comes up ("Working Together" [b2,p.2] is the way to do that).

All-Purpose Resolution Track

The Reaction table, and many other tables in *ITU* generally follow a 5-step track from 'worst' to 'best', using 2d6 to create a bell curve so that outcomes tend to fall closer to the middle. This can be extrapolated into an all-purpose resolution table for any situation

General Resolution

2d6	Outcome	Probability	Mod.	Circumstances	Difficulty
2-	Worst	2.78%	-2	Lousy	Very Hard
3-5	Bad	25%	-1	Poor	Difficult
6-8	Uncertain	44.45%	0	Regular	Average
9-11	Good	25%	+1	Good	Easy
12+	Best	2.78%	+2	Excellent	Trivial

Whenever there is an outcome to be resolved, roll 2d6.

Apply modifiers (generally not higher/lower than 2).

If you want it to be more swingy, roll 1d12.

If you want it to swing towards *uncertain* to *good* results with worse results still possible, roll 2d6 "with advantage" (ie, roll 3d6 and discard the lowest one).

If you want it to swing towards *good* to *best* results, roll 1d12 with advantage. Vice versa with disadvantage for bad results.

This can even be used in place of ability checks or for adjudicating stunts, if you want more gradated outcomes:

If ability modifiers apply, halve them (rounding up) for this roll. If Proficiency applies, roll with advantage.

Making New Tables

The advice on the *General Resolution* table above can also help create new tables. Below is an example of different dice creating different likelihoods:

5-track example table

Outcome	2d6	Probability	1d12	Probability
Worst	2	2.78%	1	8.33%
Bad	3-5	25%	2-4	25%
Uncertain	6-8	44.45%	5-8	33.33%
Good	9-11	25%	9-11	25%
Best	12	2.78%	12	8.33%

Where more granularity is called for, a 7-track table using 3d6 is also used in the book:

7-track example table

3d6	Outcome
3	Worst
4-5	Worse
6-8	Bad
9-12	Par / Neutral / Uncertain
13-15	Good
16-17	Better
18	Best

7-track progression example table

Level	Effect
1	Disadvantage on ability checks
2	Speed halved
3	Disadvantage on attack rolls and saves
4	Advantage on attack rolls against you
5	Hit point maximum halved
6	Speed reduced to 0
7	Death

Compare the *Philanthropy / Religious Sacrifice* table [p.43] with the *Carousing* table [p.41] for examples on how the 7-track is used with different numbers.

Tables can also track stages of progress, fx *Exhaustion* [b2, p.15]. Above is an alternative example. Keeping an outcome or progression track around 5 (+/- 2) makes it manageable.

• ADJUDICATING RESTS •

As GM, the decision for how long a short or long rest takes (see also “Variable Rests Periods”, p.81) , if it is even possible, lies with you. As such, it helps to have an overview of what is gained from rests and by whom. Some classes suffer more from lack of short rests, while others from lack of long rests The table below shows all effects gained from rests.

Rest Effects

Short Rest		Long Rest	
Spending Hit Dice to recover hit points		Regain spent Hit Dice	
-		Recover from one level of Exhaustion	
<i>Fighter</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Magic-User Elf & Priest</i>	<i>Level</i>
Regain <i>Second Wind</i>	1 st	Preparing spells (Wizard & Priests)	1 st
Regain <i>Mighty Deeds</i> (Fighting Style)	1 st	Regain Spell slots	1 st
Regain <i>Action Surge</i>	2 nd	Regain Arcane Recovery	1 st
Regain <i>Indomitable</i>	9 th	<i>Magic-User (Warlock & Sorcerer only)</i>	<i>Level</i>
<i>Priest</i>	<i>Level</i>	Regain <i>Pact Magic</i> (Warlock)	1 st
Regain <i>Channel Divinity</i>	2 nd	Regain <i>Intuitive Magic</i> (Sorcerer)	1 st
<i>Magic-user</i>	<i>Level</i>	Regain <i>Improvised Magic</i> (Sorcerer)	2 nd
Use <i>Arcane Recovery</i>	1 st	<i>Halfling</i>	<i>Level</i>
Regain <i>Arcane Study</i> (Wizard)	1 st	Able to benefit from Gourmet	3 rd
Regain <i>Spellcraft</i>	10 th	-	-

• OPTIONS & VARIANTS •

Variant: Old School Numbers

This variant offers options for even lower numbers, typical of old schools games, than the bounded accuracy already used by *Into the Unknown*, and a more restricted improvement scale, where the PCs' original ability scores are more significant.

- Always roll 3d6 in order for ability scores for new player characters.
- No characters receive any ability score improvements at 4th and 8th level. The Fighter's Ability Score Improvement II at 6th level and the Rogue's Ability Score Improvement III at 10th level are still given.

Old School Modifiers

Ability Score	Ability Score modifier	Indicator
0-2	-3	Weakest
3-5	-2	Weaker
6-8	-1	Weak
9-11	0	Normal
12-14	+1	Strong
15-17	+2	Stronger
18-20	+3	Strongest

The following rule modifications should always be used together:

- Use the *Old School Modifiers* table above to determine ability modifiers instead of the usual.
- Reduce the proficiency bonus of all characters and creatures by 1.
- Base AC is 8 instead of 10 (ie. subtract 2 from all AC).
- Reduce all save DCs by 2 (except for save DCs already generated with proficiency and ability modifiers from these rules, such as spell saves).

Variant: Race-as-Background

If, in your campaign, diversity and adaptability is not a defining feature of humanity alone, or you simply wish to use only the four core classes, you may want your dwarves and elves to have clerics, druids, or rogues, instead of (or in addition to) race-as-class.

If so, you can try this simple variant instead: Allow players to select one of the four core classes and choose a new racial background to represent race. For example, Player 1 wants to play an elven fighter – So he chooses Fighter as class and Elf as his background.

To create a racial background, take the following from the racial class description:

The racial feature "Claim to Hospitality";

Use proficiency area as a background proficiency area;

Choose two from any languages and tool proficiencies;

Equipment selections that aren't weapons or armor.

Alternatively, if you want to make an elven Highborn fighter, choose the highborn background and choose as your Narrative that you are an *Elven* highborn, essentially making choice of race a special effect.

If you want to provide even more granular distinctions, you may even look creating new class features only available for those with certain racial backgrounds!



Variant: No Backgrounds (Emergent Proficiency)

From an old school point of view, backgrounds may feel like too much baggage to start a fresh character with, and proficiency areas too much like 'skills', limiting character concepts. In this variant, neither backgrounds nor proficiency areas are used.

Instead, the GM simply grants proficiency bonus whenever certain actions make sense for a given character, based on how players play their characters.

It is then up to the players to make distinct characters emerge in play, so the GM has rich material for his judgments on when to give a proficiency bonus.

Starting characters choose 2 languages besides common; choose equipment as per class and roll 4d4x4 for starting gp (or ignore class equipment and roll 5d4x10 gp).

If you wish only to use the four core classes but still allow demi-human races, choice of race is simply a special effect when using this variant.

Variant: Rolling Under For Ability Checks

With this simpler old school variant, ability scores have more use. Instead of setting a DC to roll against, the GM asks players to roll 1d20 and match their ability score or under to succeed at a task. "Advantage" here means taking the *lowest* of two rolls and vice versa for disadvantage. Rogues with Mastery at a task get a re-roll if the outcome failed.

Rolling Under - Task Difficulty

Difficulty	Regular	Proficient
Simple	Advantage	Automatic
Moderate	Normal	Advantage
Hard	Disadvantage	Normal
Formidable	Disadvantage -5	Disadvantage



Variant: No At-Will Cantrips

Some groups may feel that casters having an infinite spell resource is not sufficiently old school. These variant rules give alternative options.

The GM may also want to apply these to certain types of casters – Fx using one variant for wizards, another for druids and standard rules for sorcerers.

Spell Pool

Casting a cantrip uses up a 1st level slot, but otherwise work as normal. The caster gains 'open' spell levels equal to its proficiency bonus per short rest. These can be used as one spell or several. For example, a +3 proficiency bonus could be used a 1st level spell and a 2nd level. These can't be used to

cast a spell of a higher level than the caster knows or any spells higher than 2nd level.

Frequent But Few Cantrips

Cantrips can be cast a number of times equal to one's proficiency bonus per short rest. Further cantrips may be cast by expending spell slot. Additionally, the caster gains a 1st level spell slot.

Variant: Scavenging Freebooters

In this variant, characters start out poor, wealth is harder to come by and gear more significant. Divide starting wealth and all treasure handed by 10 (use silver instead of gold etc. as needed). List prices for equipment remain the same. Award XP this way:

1 XP = 1 silver piece.

Option: Variable Rests Periods

This rule makes the resource management game between dungeon exploration and journeys more streamlined and adds more dramatic tension to journeys as something that attritionally drains you, the longer you stay in the wilds.

With this variant, after the first day outside of Home Areas, short rests take 1 Watch and long rests 24 hours when in Borderlands or Deep Wilds.

You can also designate certain "safe havens" in the wilds; settlements or sites that are especially peaceful (Rivendell is a good example from fiction of such a haven) where 8 hour long rests can be taken.

Option: Borrowing From Other Sources

Into the Unknown is designed to be 100% compatible with the "Advanced" 5th edition of the world's most popular roleplaying game. Introducing new rules from those rule sets should be as simple as "drag and drop".

This includes using characters made with the 'advanced' rules as well as multi-classing characters made with *Into the Unknown* with classes from other sources and vice versa!

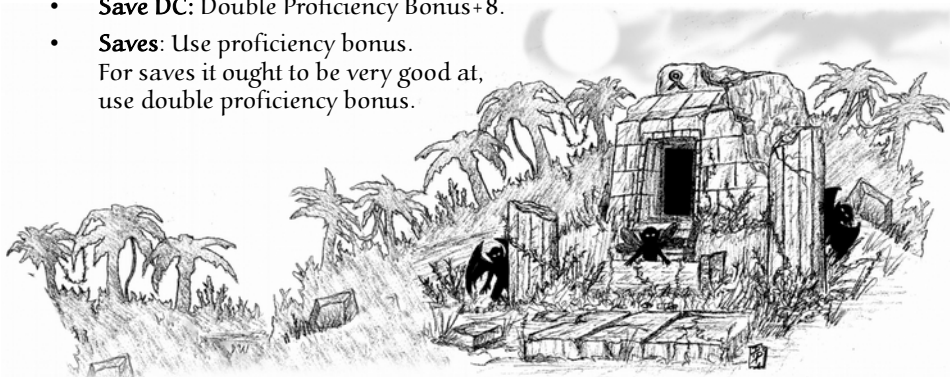
Option: Converting From Old Editions

Many GMs may wish to convert old school adventures to run with *Into the Unknown*. Here's a few guidelines:

- Bonuses in *Into the Unknown* tend to cap at +3.
Convert magic bonuses to 2/3 (rounded up) of their listed value.

For monsters already statted in Book 5, simply use the statistics given for *Into the Unknown*. Otherwise, use the following formula + discretion & common sense:

- **Hit points:** Maximum possible for listed hit dice (using the *hit dice by size* table [b5, p.2]) + number of hit dice added to this total. (fx. a medium 3 HD creature would have $3 \times 8 + 3 = 27$ hit points)
- **Damage:** Maximum possible (/whichver dice has that maximum as its average roll - fx. 1d6+1 has a maximum damage of 7. 7 is the average roll of 2d6).
- **Armor Class:** 19, minus the listed AC (negative AC adds to Armor Class).
- **Proficiency Bonus:** Treat hit dice as Challenge Rating (b5, p.3) to find proficiency bonus.
- **To hit:** Double Proficiency bonus found above.
- **Save DC:** Double Proficiency Bonus+8.
- **Saves:** Use proficiency bonus.
For saves it ought to be very good at, use double proficiency bonus.



• COMBAT VARIANTS •

Variant Rule: Grievous Wounds

The rules for dying in Book 2 may leave some groups thinking there is no consequence to taking lots of damage or dropping to 0 hp, as long as you don't die. Soon enough, characters are as good as new anyway.

This optional rule gives a wider range of dramatic effects between being fine and being dead.

In this variant you don't fall unconscious when dropping to 0 hit points, but

otherwise follow all the rules for *Dropping to 0 Hit Points* [B2,p.27], including when to make death saving throws.

When you drop to 0 hit points, and every time you take damage after that, you gain a level of exhaustion and roll on the *Death & Dismemberment* table.

Interpret the nature and severity of the result by the damage type and amount of damage taken in excess of dropping to 0 hit points.

Death & Dismemberment

2d6	Outcome
2-	Adrenaline Surge: you gain temporary points equal to one hit die+CON modifier. These are lost at the end of the battle.
3-5	Lesser Wound: An extremity (roll 1d8), or part of it, is temporarily disabled.
6-8	Knocked Out: You fall unconscious.
9-11	Major Wound: An extremity (roll 1d8), or part of it, is (non-fatally if head) crushed, disabled or dismembered.
12+	Fatal Wound: You die an especially graphic and gory death, preventing <i>Raise Dead</i> and forcing a morale check for all allies.
Extremity (1d8): 1-2: leg; 3-4: arm; 5-6: hand; 7: feet; 8: head	

A **Lesser Wound** remains until 1d4 weeks of Downtime have been taken, or *Lesser Restoration* is cast on it. Only *Major Restoration* can heal a **Major Wound**.

Healing & Recovery

When using *Grievous Wounds*, it makes better sense to have more generous rules for healing during rests.

SHORT REST A character can spend one or more Hit Dice at the end of a short rest, up to the character's maximum number of Hit Dice (equal to the character's level). For each Hit Die spent, roll the die and add CON Constitution modifier to it. The character regains hit points equal to the total. The player can spend an additional Hit Die after each roll. Spent Hit Dice are regained upon finishing a long rest, as per below.

LONG REST At the end of a long rest, a character regains spent Hit Dice equal to half its total number of them, rounded down (minimum of one hit die).

For example, if a PC has nine HD, he or she can regain four spent Hit Dice after a long rest.



Variant Rule: Lasting Critical Hits

This variant should only be applied to critical hits scored against PCs and can be used in conjunction with the variant above or stand-alone.

When a critical hit is landed on a PC, roll damage as for a normal hit (do not roll the dice twice, as usual) and instead, take the damage off both the PC's current hit points *and hit point maximum*. Current hit points heal as normal, but hit point maximum is regained at a rate of CON modifier+level per long rest.

Greater Restoration will restore a PC's original hit point maximum (but will not restore current hit point total). *Cure Wounds* applied at the end of a long rest will heal both current and maximum hit point total, but can only be applied once per long rest for the purpose of restoring a character's hit point maximum.

Variant Rule: Harsher Healing

This variant, which can also be used with the "Grievous Wounds" variant above, makes healing a more limited resource. Whenever a character receives healing, such as from spells or potions, he uses up his own hit dice, instead of the die the regular description stipulates. This uses up hit dice that can only be regained with a long rest – Essentially making healing magic draw from the same resource pool as natural healing, but allowing for fast healing outside of long and short rests.

Optionally, characters can choose to take a level of exhaustion to regain an additional hit die instead of using his own hit dice for such healing.

Variant Rule: Simplified Damage

This old-school variant rule offers less tactical variation between weapons, making weapon selection essentially a special effect. The upside is that it's simpler and players can freely choose weapons based on what they think is cool and fits their character.

The rule is as follows:

Light weapons, which can be dual-wielded, deal 1d4 damage and cost 3 gp. They can be finesse weapons.

Regular 1-handed weapons deal 1d6 damage and cost 10 gp. They can be finesse weapons.

Heavy weapons deal 2d4 damage, require 2 hands and cost 20 gp. Only fighters are proficient in them.

Finesse weapons are twice the cost and can't be heavy.

Determining which weapons are *Light*, *regular*, *Heavy* and *Finesse* is decided by preference and a dose of common sense.

Option: Critical Stunts

Normally, improvised attacks are declared before rolling to hit.

With this option, the GM can allow anyone rolling a critical hit to opt to forfeit their extra damage dice in favor of pulling off an impromptu stunt.

Monsters with unusual body parts and physiologies might perform also biologically determined stunts!



Option: The Event Die In Combat

Use the *Event Die* for all phases of play for even more pacing and unexpected developments. Roll at the start of each round. Odd rolls favor the PCs, even rolls their foes. The listed effects are only suggestions to give a feel for each type.

Combat Events

1d12	Probability	Outcome
1-2	16.67%	Encounter – Reinforcements arrive / Second Wind (temporary hp = 1 HD) / Morale roll forced.
3-4	16.67%	Sign of Encounter – Strategic opening. Advantage on next attack. Special setup possible.
5-6	16.67%	Hardship – An effect fizzles. Exhaustion. Drop initiative to last. Disadvantage.
7-8	16.67%	Location – Battlefield change.
9-12	33.33%	Nothing

Option [Fighter Only]: Tactical Dicing

“Different dice for different challenges” [p.76] has rules for turning static modifiers into dice rolls. This option lets fighters always turn their attack and damage modifiers into dice rolls, giving greater tactical flexibility to professional warriors.

If someone playing a fighter wants to start using this option, convert the fighter’s *to hit* bonus (proficiency + ability modifier + other bonuses) and *damage* bonus respectively into “Attack Dice” and “Damage Dice”. Any situational or temporary modifiers (such as from *Bless*) are applied normally and not converted into these dice.

The fighter rolls both at the start of each turn and uses these values for all attacks until its next turn.

Fighters using Tactical Dicing will, on average, hit slightly less frequently. Instead, they can “spike” attacks and know when it happens in advance; letting them choose the time for difficult improvised stunts; or know when to take *Dodge* or *Help* actions instead of attacking when the rolls are against them; or help decide whether to attack a mook or a hard hitter that turn.

A player opting for this variant can’t pick and choose when to use it – It is all or none.

Below are high-level conversions:

Higher Variable Modifiers

Modifier	Attack/Damage Dice
+9	+2d8
+10	1d8+1d10
+11	2d10
+12	1d10+1d12
+13	2d12

Variant: Dicing Stunts

With the GM’s approval, a player using Tactical Dicing may use this variant for making Improvised attacks, putting the onus on the difficulty and scale of the stunt attempted on the player rather than the GM’s ruling.

Prior to making an attack roll, a fighter using Dicing Stunts may opt to declare for any attack that one or both (if the player has two) of the rolled Attack Dice are being used for a stunt, instead of adding to the fighter’s *to hit* for that attack.

The GM then uses the value of the dice assigned to the stunt to determine how epic the outcome of the stunt attempted is, *if* the attack is successful.

APPENDIX A: GAMING RESOURCES

Being a selection of free and non-free products to further inspire your games.

[FREE] **One Page Dungeons:** Never run out of side-treks and quickly inserted locations.
<https://www.dungeoncontest.com/>

[FREE] **Errol Flynn as Robin Hood battling Sir Guy:** This was the scene Gygas sought to imitate when he worked on the original combat system. An excellent inspiration for stunts:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L10fR31jC1w>

[FREE] **AnyDice.com:** Calculate probabilities of any kind of dice roll.

[FREE] **Links to Wisdom:** A comprehensive guide to the best of the OSR on many topics:
<https://campaignwiki.org/wiki/LinksToWisdom/HomePage>

[FREE] **On Tricks, Empty Rooms, and Basic Trap Design:** Free resource for designing and stocking dungeon rooms.
<http://hackslashmaster.blogspot.dk/2011/02/on-tricks-empty-rooms-and-basic-trap.html>

[FREE] **West Marches** the story of the most celebrated style of open sandbox gaming.
<http://arsludi.lamemage.com/index.php/78/grand-experiments-west-marches/>

[FREE] **Blackmarsh:** A old school hexed sandbox setting
<https://www.rpgnow.com/product/89944/Blackmarsh>

[FREE] **Miscellaneum of Cinder:** A creative take on what you can do with random tables to inspire your game: <https://www.are.na/block/808115>

[FREE] **The Dungeon Dozen:** An endless array of fun and interesting d12 tables to roll on.
<http://roll1d12.blogspot.com/>

[FREE] **Jeff's Gameblog:** The definitive blog for fun old school gaming.
<http://jrients.blogspot.com/>

[\$3] **The gardens of Ynn:** Adventure in a Weird extradimensional sandbox
<https://www.drivethrurpg.com/product/237544/The-Gardens-Of-Ynn>

[\$5] **The Vanilla Adventure:** A wilderness crawl in the OD&D flavor.
<http://www.drivethrurpg.com/product/205032/The-Vanilla-Adventure>

[\$6] **Many Gates of the Gann:** Imaginative old school dungeon done right
<https://www.drivethrurpg.com/product/105975/Many-Gates-of-the-Gann>

[\$6.99] **Blades Against Death:** A situational adventure for use to resurrect a dead player character, for campaigns that do not use *Raise Dead*.
<http://www.drivethrurpg.com/product/108984/Dungeon-Crawl-Classics-74-Blades-Against-Death>

[\$10] **Wonder & Wickedness:** Alternative magic system for spells without levels with an excellent selection of creative magic items done right:
<https://www.rpgnow.com/product/145647/Wonder-Wickedness>

[\$21.99] **Tome of Adventure Design:** The definitive resource for creating new adventures:
<https://froggodgames.com/frogs/product/tome-of-adventure-design/>

HOUSE RULES

Into the Unknown