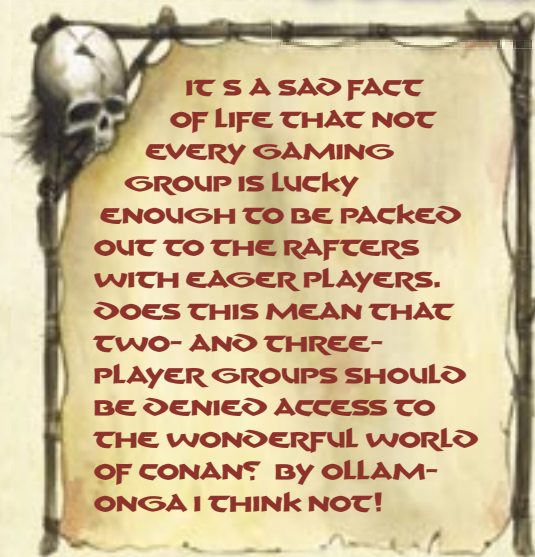


CONAN

Roleplaying in the Hyborian Age

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Solo and Duo Play



The swords-and-sorcery genre in which the Conan stories so firmly fall does not usually have quite such large numbers of player characters as most fantasy roleplaying games. Rather than associating with the usual 'party' of perhaps four or five adventurers, Conan usually works alone, or with the assistance of one other main character (along with great armies of henchmen on occasion).

For *Conan the RPG* groups of small size, with only a Games Master and one or two players, it is probably a good deal more rewarding to run games with only one or two characters rather than having each player run several characters, or using Non-Player Characters to make up the numbers.



CHARACTERS

The Games Master and player or players should work very carefully together when creating characters for solo or duo play. It is recommended that characters be designed as a group effort, rather than generated in the normal manner. If all parties involved can reach a consensus as to each character's statistics, that is probably the ideal.

One important difference between play when there is a balanced party, and when there are only one or two player characters, is that the party of several adventurers will usually be sufficiently versatile to cope with almost any situation in which they find themselves. This is down to the better balance of classes, and as a result, of skills, in the larger party.

There are two main ways to circumvent this in a 'party' of only one or two characters.

The first is careful choice of classes and multiclassing. *Conan the RPG* is designed to be very forgiving of multiclass characters, so combining combat-capable classes with skills-heavy classes works quite well. It is not usually necessary to have a scholar, even in a larger party; in a smaller party of only one or two, it is perhaps more heroic not to have a scholar, though a few Counterspells are useful so the Dabblers feat might be a worthwhile investment.

The second way is the alternate skills system presented over the next few pages. With this system, not only do most characters advance in their specialist skills every level, but all characters also advance in most other skills at least every couple of levels.

If you do use the alternate skills system, you may also wish to give solo characters more feats than usual, again with the aim of ensuring they are well rounded. Rather than the usual feats at 1st level, 3rd level and every three levels thereafter (6th, 9th, etc.) it is suggested that you allow feats at 1st level, 3rd level, and every two levels thereafter (5th, 7th, etc.).

Note that Conan, like the other characters presented in Chapter 10: Adventurers and Notables of the Hyborian Age, has not been created using the system here. This allows him to be reasonably balanced against player characters in most cases (other than his truly heroic ability scores). However, if you are running a solo campaign, you may wish to boost his skills and feats somewhat according to the guidelines given here.

SKILLS

This is done by simply allotting characters two ranks at first level, then half a rank per level thereafter, in each of a wide variety of skills, including all their class skills and several others. These half ranks are allotted before the character spends



the skill points each character class gains each level. See Table 1.1: Skills by Class, along with the example below, for precisely how this works.

Note that under this system, the characters do not gain any background skills for race. This system replaces the usual background skills system.

This system may seem complex at first, as it adds an extra stage to the process of determining how many ranks in each skill a character has. However it has several advantages for gaming in the Conan genre and should prove easy enough for experienced d20 players to grasp. If not, see the sidebar 'Half a What?' for a way to achieve the same effect with less maths.

Half a What?

For easier generation and advancement of single-classed characters without having to bother with adding up half skill points, follow these steps:

1. Work out how many skill points you gain at each level beyond first.
2. Choose twice that many class skills to specialise in.
3. You have (your level +3) ranks in each of these skills.
4. Note down all the skills which you did not choose from Table 1.1: Skills by Class, but which have either a 'C' or a '1/2' in the appropriate column.
5. You have (your level +3)/2 ranks in each of these skills, rounded down.

TABLE I.1: SKILLS BY CLASS FOR SOLO AND DUO PLAY

Skill	Barbarian	Commoner	Borderer	Noble	Nomad	Pirate	Soldier	Scholar	Thief	Key Ability
Appraise	½	½	½	C	½	C	½	C	C	Int
Balance	½	½	½	½	½	C	½	½	C	Dex*
Bluff	½	½	½	C	C	C	½	C	C	Cha
Climb	C	C	C	½	C	C	C	½	C	Str*
Concentration	½	½	½	½	½	½	½	C	½	Con
Craft (alchemy)	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	C*	cc	Int
Craft (herbalism)	C*	cc	C*	cc	C*	cc	cc	C*	C*	Int
Craft (any mundane)	C*	C*	C*	cc	C*	C*	C*	C*	C*	Int
Decipher Script	½	cc	½	½	½	½	½	C	C	Int
Diplomacy	cc	cc	cc	C	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	Cha
Disable Device	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	Int
Disguise	½	cc	½	½	½	C	½	½	C	Cha
Escape Artist	½	cc	½	½	½	C	½	½	C	Dex*
Forgery	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	C	Int
Gather Information	½	½	C	C	C	C	½	C	C	Cha
Handle Animal	C	C	C	C	C	½	½	½	½	Cha
Heal	½	cc	½	½	C	½	½	C	½	Wis
Hide	C	½	C	½	C	½	½	½	C	Dex*
Intimidate	C	½	½	C	½	C	C	C	C	Cha
Jump	C	C	C	½	½	C	½	½	C	Str*
Knowledge (arcana)	½	cc	½	½	½	½	½	C	C	Int
Knowledge (geography)	½	cc	C	½	½	C	C	C	½	Int
Knowledge (history)	½	cc	½	C	½	½	½	C	½	Int
Knowledge (local)	½	½	C	C	C	½	C	C	C	Int
Knowledge (nobility)	½	cc	½	C	½	½	½	C	C	Int
Knowledge (religion)	½	½	½	C	½	½	½	C	½	Int
Listen	C	C	C	½	C	½	½	½	C	Wis
Move Silently	C	½	C	½	C	C	½	½	C	Dex*
Open Lock	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	Dex
Perform	½*	½*	½*	C*	½*	C*	C*	C*	C*	Cha
Profession	C*	C	C*	cc	cc	C*	C*	C*	C*	Wis
Ride	C	C	C	C	C	½	C	½	½	Dex
Search	½	½	C	½	C	C	C	C	C	Int
Sense Motive	½	½	½	C	½	½	½	C	C	Wis
Sleight of Hand	½	cc	½	½	½	½	½	C	C	Dex*
Spot	C	½	C	C	C	C	½	½	C	Wis
Survival	C	½	C	C	C	C	½	½	½	Wis
Swim	C	C	C	½	½	C	½	½	½	Str
Tumble	½	cc	½	½	½	C	½	½	C	Dex*
Use Rope	½	C	C	½	½	C	½	½	C	Dex

(Ability)*	This skill is affected by the Armour Check Penalty of any armour worn.
C	Class skill, and you gain 2 ranks in this skill at 1 st level, then ½ a rank in this skill each level thereafter, always before spending any of your own skill points.
C*	Class skill, and you gain 2 ranks in any one sub-skill of this skill at 1 st level, then ½ a rank in the sub-skill each level thereafter, always before spending any of your own skill points.
Cc	Cross-class skill.
½	Cross-class skill, but you gain 2 ranks in this skill at 1 st level, then ½ a rank in this skill each level thereafter, always before spending any of your own skill points.
½*	Cross-class skill, and you gain 2 ranks in any one sub-skill of this skill at 1 st level, then ½ a rank in the sub-skill each level thereafter, always before spending any of your own skill points.

SKILL POINT EXAMPLE:
Starting Character

Jackie decides to generate a character for a solo campaign. She will be Mabb, a 1st level barbarian. Her Intelligence is 13, probably more than that of most barbarians, but she hopes at some point to take some levels in the thief class and so wants to ensure she will gain a reasonable selection of skills when she does so.

Her skill points at 1st level are (4 + Int bonus) x4, or 4x5 = 20.

However, before spending these skill points, she determines her base skill points.

As a barbarian, she gains 2 ranks in each of the following skills, before spending any skill points:

Appraise, Balance, Bluff, Climb, Concentration, Craft (herbalism or any one mundane), Decipher Script, Disguise, Escape Artist, Gather Information, Heal, Hide, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (history), Knowledge (local), Knowledge (nobility), Knowledge (religion), Listen, Move Silently, Perform (any one), Profession (any one), Ride, Search, Sense Motive, Sleight of Hand, Speak Language, Spot, Survival, Swim, Tumble, and Use Rope.

She decides that her sub-skills in Craft, Perform and Profession will be as follows: Craft (swordsmith), Perform (song), and Profession (sailor). She is the daughter of a swordsmith, and has spent some time

aboard the riverboats of her Vanaheim home – which was also where she picked up some shipboard work songs.

At this point she spends her 16 skill points as follows: 2 each on Craft (swordsmith), Spot, Jump, Intimidate, Profession (sailor), Perform (drum), Ride, Move Silently, Listen and Survival. Note that although Perform is a cross-class skill for barbarians, Mabb has sufficiently high Intelligence that she can simply spend her Int bonus skill points on Perform.

So, after spending all her skill points, Mabb has the following ranks in her skills:

Appraise +2, Balance +2, Bluff +2, Climb +2, Concentration +2, Craft (swordsmith) +4, Decipher Script +2, Disguise +2, Escape Artist +2, Gather Information +2, Heal +2, Hide +2, Intimidate +4, Jump +4, Knowledge (arcana) +2, Knowledge (geography) +2, Knowledge (history) +2, Knowledge (local) +2, Knowledge (nobility) +2, Knowledge (religion) +2, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Perform (sing) +2, Perform (drum) +2, Profession (sailor) +4, Ride +4, Search +2, Sense Motive +2, Sleight of Hand +2, Spot +4, Survival +4, Swim +2, Tumble +2, and Use Rope +2.

SKILL POINT EXAMPLE:
Level Advancement

When Mabb reaches 2nd level, it turns out that she has spent much of her time fighting as a mercenary in the army of Koth, rather than thieving as Jackie had planned. It seems more appropriate to give her a level of Soldier than anything else.

As a soldier she gains ½ a rank in each of the following skills:

Appraise, Balance, Bluff, Climb, Concentration, Craft (swordsmith), Decipher Script, Disguise, Escape Artist, Gather Information, Heal, Hide, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (history), Knowledge (local), Knowledge (nobility), Knowledge (religion), Listen, Move Silently, Perform (any one), Profession (sailor), Ride, Search, Sense Motive, Sleight of Hand, Speak Language, Spot, Survival, Swim, Tumble, and Use Rope.

She also gains 2 + 1 = 3 skill points. She spends these as follows: ½ a point on each of the following: Climb, Craft, Intimidate, Knowledge (geography), Profession (sailor) and Ride.

Her skill ranks are now as follows:

Appraise +2.5, Balance +2.5, Bluff +2.5, Climb +3, Concentration +2.5, Craft (swordsmith) +5, Decipher Script +2.5, Disguise +2.5, Escape Artist +2.5, Gather Information +2.5, Heal +2.5, Hide +2.5, Intimidate +5, Jump +4.5, Knowledge (arcana) +2.5, Knowledge (geography) +3, Knowledge (history) +2.5, Knowledge (local) +2.5, Knowledge (nobility) +2.5, Knowledge (religion) +2.5, Listen +4.5, Move Silently +4.5, Perform (sing) +2.5, Perform (drum) +2.5, Profession (sailor) +5, Ride +5, Search +2.5, Sense Motive +2.5, Sleight of Hand +2.5, Spot +4.5, Survival +4.5, Swim +2.5, Tumble +2.5, and Use Rope +2.5.

