



# Swordbearer™

## Book Two

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# 12. Intelligent Races

*Swordbearer* encompasses many races. Unlike some role-playing games, a player may select a character from any intelligence race, excepting those races the gamemaster has prohibited (many gamemasters limit the racial variety in their world). Most races have unique advantages and disadvantages, compared to the human 'norm'.

Each race prefers to live in certain climates, and has certain social expectations. The players and gamemaster should keep these in mind, to keep characters within proper 'bounds' of behavior. What one race considers comfortable and proper may seem unreasonable to another. Unless a character has appropriate general knowledge skills, understanding the variations between races is unlikely. A character with such knowledge should take the appropriate general knowledge skill. Such knowledge gives one the ability to deal properly with other races.

As always, players must separate what they (as players) know from what their character knows. Often a player understands things the character does not. One of the duties of the gamemaster is to help keep players 'in character'.

The intelligent races listed here are limited to those with a 'natural' existence somewhere in the world (including above it or beneath it). Races that need magic to survive, or conjured by magic, etc., are a separate concept and not considered races per se. The gamemaster may apply common sense to the nature of races, but detailed application of physics and biology should not be demanded in a fantasy game. For example, wingspread and muscle power of many flying races is technically insufficient to permit flight on earth. However, fantasy worlds may have somewhat thicker atmospheres, lower gravity, or the race may have an internal bladder holding a light gas, etc. If a gamemaster finds a certain race offends his or her sense of reality, that race can be disallowed in his/her world.

The racial listing here is not engraved in stone. In beginning campaigns, a gamemaster is advised to limit activities to regions where two to four races exist (the 'classic' races of humans, elves, dwarves and halflings are popular). As the campaign continues, and adventurers travel, new races can be added.

If the gamemaster designs additional intelligent races with special attributes, the race overall should end up with slightly weaker averages — this is necessary to insure that 'super races' don't upset the balance of the game system.

## 12.1 Key to Racial Data

See *Creating a Character* for the procedure used in generating a character. The racial data in this book summarizes the dice rolls used, and provides supporting information. The material deals with humans, while the material here deals with all races. In any debate over apparent contradictions, the procedures in this book should govern.

Each race is introduced with a general description of appearance, habitat, and basic society. There are always exceptions, and a few rare individuals may even be judged "insane" by their peers, due to peculiar habits or preferences. Truly insane characters are uncommon, and are often recognized as such, even by members of other races. Eccentric characters (for their race) should suffer in social status, and insane ones will suffer considerably in social status (have difficult rising beyond 6 or 7). The gamemaster must be the judge of such situations.

**Movement Rates:** Combat movement options and distances are listed using the following format: type of move, paces per instant/paces per period (bloccs per period). Regional travel rates are noted last. Winged races have both ground and flying rates given.

**Mass, Strength, Agility, Intelligence:** The appropriate dice roll is listed, with notes on the range of results and the average. Decline due to age is given for each, including the age it begins, die to use, how often to roll, and what result means a decline (of one point).

**Age** gives the standard roll, with reference information on the range of dice results, average, typical age of adulthood, and life expectancy. Life expectancy is based on the natural lifespan of a person who sur-

vives early childhood. It includes natural risks appropriate to the culture of the race, but not death by violence. Races prone to violent activity are therefore unlikely to reach normal life expectancy. Historically life expectancy here is greater than that of ancient or medieval times. This is because the high rate of infant mortality is ignored (survival through childhood is presumed in the game).

**Experience** indicates the rolls for experience points, which vary with the age of the character. Intelligence may adjust the overall experience points received.

**Social Status** indicates the roll made for initial status level, with range of results and average provided for reference. Age can effect the status level received.

**Natural Weapons** indicates which bodily weapons receive the 'natural weapon' skill bonus (use skill for natural weapons is strength plus agility, rather than just strength alone). It also indicates which body weapons are available.

**Natural Armor** indicates if the body has any intrinsic armor. This armor (if present) provides extra protection, above and beyond any armor worn by the character.

**Elemental Magic** indicates which elements the race has at an advantage or disadvantage. If advantaged, the race has the automatic ability to identify the element and knows its basic spells. If disadvantaged, the race can never identify it or learn the spells.

**Spirit Magic** indicates the number of spirit nodes, their location, and the dice roll used to determine the humor of those nodes. The 'humor' is only determined when spiritual knowledge or other spirit magic skills are actually used. A person without such skills will not know even his or her own humor!

In addition, many races have various special advantages or disadvantages.

## 12.2 Size & Shape of Races

*Swordbearer* presumes that the dominant culture of the 'world' is humanoid oriented, with tools, weapons, armor, buildings, etc. designed for races of roughly human size and shape. As a result, races with a different size or shape may have problems. Of course, the gamemaster may have special regions in the world where alternate races are dominant and humanoids have difficulties.

One example is giants, who have difficulty using 'tiny' humanoid tools, and sometimes can't fit inside buildings!

Another example is unicorns, centaurs, and other quadruped races. Some cannot handle tools for lack of hands, most need horse-type armor, instead of or in addition to humanoid armor, to achieve full protection. Note that horse-type armor isn't as strong as humanoid, which is yet another disadvantage.

Races that require specially shaped tools, armor, etc. either need a well-developed arts/crafts industry, or realize that appropriate items are hard to find. This can be represented by increasing the social status requirement by one or more levels for such items. Exactly which items require special manufacture for a certain race, and the effect on social status, is left to the discretion of the gamemaster.

A special race may have trouble manipulating things (e.g., dragons, griffins) or can hardly do it (unicorns). Skills that require considerable manipulatory ability include weapon use (other than natural weapons), disarm trap, pickpocket, scribe, tailor, pottery & glassblowing, jeweler, locksmith, leatherworker, armorer, bowyer, and artist.

## 12.3 Racial & Regional Languages

Characters living in the same area, who have day-to-day dealings with each other, inevitably develop a common language. Ancient or racial languages rapidly atrophy in favor of a common tongue. However, if races or peoples are hostile, one oppresses another, etc. separate languages may remain strong. Unless continual trade exists, it is unlikely that similar languages will exist in regions distant from one an-



other. Even if peoples were originally of similar origin, accent or dialect will develop into different languages within a few generations.

How this theory is manifested in the game is at the discretion of the gamemaster. Generally, it is easiest to assume that all characters come from the same general area, which is also the area of the adventure, and a common tongue is spoken by all. Races or groups that remain separate from society may have a 'secret language' still in use, or have developed a slightly different tongue.

Voyages or travels to different regions, encounters with NPCs from distant parts, especially if normal trade and travel is rare, may mean a language barrier exists. The gamemaster can complicate the issue with regional dialects, having two hostile groups with separate customs and languages, etc. These situations are best avoided at first.

## 12.4 Biology & Races

The description of the individual races includes notes on biological and cultural differences. Eyesight and disease carrying are two biological differences that commonly appear.

**Eyesight Variations:** Normal humans see well in daylight, but poorly in darkness. Other races are assumed similar unless otherwise indicated. Of course, the gamemaster is free to adjust abilities for individual characters, races, and conditions.

Normal eyesight allows a character to see many leagues in good conditions. However, the ability to discern details at a distance drops off rapidly. Human-sized individuals are difficult to see in a normal landscape at distances beyond a league. Poor eyesight or difficult visibility conditions reduces character-spotting range to 100 paces, perhaps less. The face of a character can be recognized at perhaps 100 paces in good conditions 10 paces or less in bad.

Darkness is considered a difficult (or bad) visibility condition for normal eyes. Characters with superior eyesight in darkness would treat darkness as a good condition (like daylight to them), but might find daylight is a bad condition!

**Disease Carrier:** Diseases and carriers are discussed in Wounds chapter. Most diseases require contact, often intimate, to be transmitted. The most dangerous of those that simply require close physical proximity, but not necessarily contact. The gamemaster should establish the chance of a race catching a disease from a carrier, and whether the disease is proximity or contact.

If the gamemaster is at a loss to make such decisions, the following general system is offered: a carrier's disease has a 10% chance of being proximity, otherwise it is contact. The only exceptions are lung rot and sleeping sickness, which have a 20% chance of being proximity diseases.

The chance of catching a disease from a carrier is 2d10+10 percent, or 12 to 32% (average 21%). Elves and other races especially vulnerable to disease have double the normal chance of catching the disease from the carrier. The chance of catching is determined once — if the character does not catch it then, he or she are safe from that carrier (but not from a new carrier).

Finally, if any character catches a disease from a carrier, there is a 20% chance the disease is contagious. If so, then all those who caught it become carriers for 2d6 days thereafter.

## 12.5 Alternate Player Characteristics

The standard character generation system in *Swordbearer* includes an element of luck. Extremely lucky rolls will result in a character superior to one with extremely unlucky rolls. After a few adventures this superiority disappears, since proper acquisition and use of skills greatly outweighs inherent characteristics (with the possible exception of intelligence in a character heavily involved with magic).

However, some players are unwilling to live with the dictates of luck (fate?) in any form, and desire systems for creating characters that are exactly equal. At the discretion of the gamemaster, one of the systems below can be used to produce a 'fairness' in player characters.

**Average Characteristics:** A player's character is assumed to start with average mass, strength, agility, intelligence, age and social status for his or her race — no dice rolls are made. If the average is between two values (such as 3½, 7½, etc.) a 1d6 roll determines whether it is rounded down (1,2,3 result) or up (4,5,6 result).

Next, in each characteristic category, a 1d10 roll is made to see how far the starting characteristic may be adjusted. This is the maximum amount that can be added or subtracted to that characteristic. No characteristic can exceed the normal minimum or maximum for that race, regardless of the 1d10 result. Points can be removed from one characteristic and transferred to another, provided this limit is obeyed. Age is an exception, it cannot be changed by adjusting points, and the gamemaster may wish to have players dice for age in the normal fashion, rather than simply using the average age.

Finally, initial experience is determined by the age of the character. Each 1d6 experience roll automatically counts as 3½ experience points, no actual dice roll is made unless the final result includes a half point to be rounded. To provide a fairer and more reasonable experience result, the gamemaster may wish to create a 'sliding scale' chart that shows experience point by experience point what age is required, rather than using the more-generalized categories given in this book.

**Average Characteristics Plus:** This is a variant of the system above. In addition to average characteristic values, the gamemaster 'gives' each character one or more 'bonus' characteristic points, to be assigned as desired. Individual characteristics still cannot exceed the 1d10 limit of bonuses (or losses). The use of these bonus points makes characters above average, and possibly better suited to adventurous living. A bonus assignment of four to eight points is not unreasonable, but an allowance of over 12 is unwise.

Many role-playing games require an adventurer to be above average to survive. *Swordbearer* is unusual in that ordinary people who gradually learn skills can have enjoyable adventures. Therefore, use of 'bonus' characteristic points often swings the game out of balance; and once used, the gamemaster will be unable to easily return to any other system.

**Balancing by Experience:** In this system, all normal characteristics are determined by dice roll except experience. The number of experience points is *computed* from the other values of the character. Thus a character with poor values will receive extra experience, while a character with good values will have less experience. Decline in characteristics due to age should be computed before calculating experience. Experience points themselves are never adjusted for intelligence in this system (ignore the intelligence modifiers to experience).

Experience points are computed using the following equation:

$$\text{Experience Points} = (90 - 0.8M - 0.8S - 1.0A - 1.2I - 0.9T)/5$$

Where M=mass, S=strength, A=agility, I=intelligence, T=social status. Explained, this equation means you start with 90, subtract 80% of the mass (mass times 0.8), 80% of the strength, the full agility, 120% of the intelligence (intelligence times 1.2), and 90% of the social status. The remainder is divided by five. If the result is a negative number, there is no experience available. If the result has a fraction, round off to the nearest whole number.

This system may result in experience points outside the normal range for that race. This is permissible.

**Standardized Experience Awards:** The skill increases received from experience points are variable (see, Skills, Experience and Activity Spheres chapter, Selecting Skills: Initial Experience). When 'balancing by experience' players may prefer fixed and standard skill increases, rather than trusting their fate to dice rolls. If so, the following standard values for an experience point are used:

- 'Yes' in specialized sphere skill costs one (1) experience point (as before).
- 'Yes' in unspecialized sphere skill costs two (2) experience points (as before).
- +15 in an arts/crafts skill costs one (1) experience point if specialized in the sphere, and the current rating for the skill is 59 or less (originally 3d10).
- +7 in an arts/crafts skill costs one (1) experience point if not specialized in the sphere, and/or the current rating for the skill is 60 or more (originally 2d6).
- +11 in any other skill costs one (1) experience point if the character is specialized in that skill's sphere (originally 2d10).
- +5 in any other skill costs one (1) experience point if the character is not specialized in that skill's sphere (originally 1d10).

### 12.5.1 STRENGTH VARIATION (OPTIONAL RULES)

**Strength Variations:** Normally, the strength of a character depends on the mass, and rarely is there any chance involved. Using this optional rule, after computing strength normally, roll 1d6 and apply the result indicated below as well:

- 1 — strength is two less (-2) than normal.
- 2 — strength is one less (-1) than normal.
- 3,4 — strength is normal, no effect.
- 5 — strength is one greater (+1) than normal.
- 6 — strength is two greater (+2) than normal.

If the result takes strength out of its normal range, use the normal range limit instead.



## 12.6 Racial Index

### Bugbears, Gnolls, and Troglodytes

These three semi-intelligent barbarian races have similar attributes, although their appearance and habitats vary considerably. Bugbears are coarsely furred creatures who prefer cool climates, such as cold plains, high mountains, northern forests, and even arctic regions. Their fur is normally dark brown or black, although some polar clans have greyish white. Gnolls prefer the generally moderate temperatures of the steppe or veldt. Only a few appear in forests. They dislike high altitudes or extreme heat, but can withstand cold well. Gnolls are covered with a short, smooth, tan-colored fur which looks remarkably like tanned human skin at a distance. Troglodytes like the warm, wet climate of a swamp or jungle, and its heavy vegetation. They have lizard-like bodies with glistening grey-green scales.



Each of these races lives in loose tribal groups that form around the strongest male. Most of their time and efforts are spent collecting food, and all prefer still-warm flesh for a diet. The more intelligent are attracted by shiny metals and gems, and may develop valuable treasure hordes. All are extremely 'animalistic' and violent. They rarely hesitate to attack when they are threatened, or see something they want. Craftsmanship is rare, and generally limited to crude implements. Most advanced tools, weapons, and armor are stolen or captured from others.

**Movement:** crawl 1/5 (¼), step 1/5 (¼), walk 9/45 (2¼), trot 20/100 (5), run 40/200 (10), regional travel uses foot rate.

**Mass:** d10 + d6 + 5, humanoid (bugbears, gnolls) or lizard (troglodytes) shape. Ranges from 7 to 21, average 14. After age 35 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 roll each year).

**Strength:** mass - 1, ranges from 6 to 20, average 13. After age 35 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 roll each year).

**Agility:** 2d10 - 1, ranges from 1 to 19, average 10. After age 30 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Intelligence:** 2d6 - 1, ranges from 1 to 11, average 6. After age 35 decline begins ('10' on 1d10 each year).

**Age:** [2d6 x 2] + 7, ranges from 11 to 31, average 21. Age of adulthood is 8 to 12, average life expectancy is 35.

**Experience:** 1d6 if age 20 or less, 2d6 if age 21-29, 2d6 + 2 if age 30 or more. If intelligence 2 or less, -1 to experience.

**Social Status:** 2d6 + 1, ranges from 3 to 13, average 8. Age modifiers are -1 if age 20 or younger, +1 if age 30 or older.

**Natural Weapons:** small claws on hands and feet, fangs, only troglodytes have a tail weapon.

**Natural Armor:** thick hide or scales absorbs/deflects 1 wound point anywhere except the head.

**Elemental Magic:** bugbears and troglodytes advantaged with crystal, disadvantaged with fire; gnolls advantaged with crystal, disadvantaged with wood.

**Spirit Magic:** 2 nodes in jaw, roll 1d10 for humor: 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6-choleric, 7,8-melancholy, 9,10-roll again.

**Special Advantages:** automatically specialized in Fighting and Country spheres. In all country skills except riding minimum skill rating is double normal value. Riding skill has minimum of zero (0) always.

**Special Disadvantages:** can only select one sphere for specialization (in addition to the two automatic ones above). Town sphere cannot be a specialization. The number of skills counted for specialization within the chosen sphere cannot exceed the intelligence of the character (other skills in the sphere count as unspecialized).

### Bunrabs

This race of furry humanoids stands about half the height of a man,

They are covered with brown fur and resemble a cross between a bloodhound and a rabbit. Although able to adjust to a variety of climates, they prefer areas of moderate to dense vegetation, and a moderate climate.

Bunrabs live in large families of 5 to 10, headed by an adult male. Families usually live together in small clans, and often form towns, cities, etc., like humans. Their society and attitudes are as varied and unique as humanity. However, Bunrabs are wary of most larger races, and often travel or act in groups for self-protection.

Bunrabs use tools and have a full range of arts and crafts with workmanship equal to any, but are not renowned (aside from the rare craftsman of genius). Bunrab arms, armor, and other tools are all undersized. They cannot fit someone with a mass greater than 13.



**Movement:** crawl 2/10 (½), step 1/5 (¼), walk 8/40 (2), trot 16/80 (4), run 32/160 (8), regional travel uses foot rate.

**Mass:** 2d6, humanoid form, ranges from 2 to 12, average 7. After age 35 decline begins ('10' on 1d10 each year).

**Strength:** mass + 1, ranges from 3 to 13, average 8. After age 35 decline begins ('10' on 1d10 each year).

**Agility:** 2d10 + 3, ranges from 5 to 23, average 14. After age 30 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Intelligence:** 2d10, ranges from 2 to 20, average 11. After age 40 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Age:** [2d6 x 2] + 6, ranges from 10 to 30, average 21. Age of adulthood 7 to 11, average life expectancy 40.

**Experience:** 1d6 if 10 or younger, 2d6 if 11 to 18, 3d6 if 19 to 26, 4d6 if 27 or older. Intelligence modifiers are -1 if intelligence is 2 or less, +1 if intelligence 9-13, +2 if intelligence 14-17, +3 if intelligence 18 or more.

**Social Status:** 2d10, ranges from 2 to 20, average 11. Age modifiers are -1 if 13 or younger, +1 if 28 or older.

**Natural Weapons:** kick.

**Natural Armor:** none.

**Elemental Magic:** no advantages or disadvantages.

**Spirit Magic:** 3 nodes in ears (on head); roll 1d10 for humor: 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6-choleric, 7,8-melancholy, 9,10-roll again.

**Special Advantages:** automatically specialized in stealth sphere, and may select two normal spheres of specialization beyond that.

**Special Disadvantages:** unless part of a trusted group (normally of other bunrabs, often family), a character becomes cowardly if threatened. A non-fighter (not specialized in fighting) must pass an intelligence test to avoid retreat or flight, this test becomes hard if mortal harm is threatened. If a courage check is used, subtract two (-2) from the non-warrior dice roll. If the character is a fighting specialist an easy intelligence test must be passed to avoid retreat or flight, which becomes a normal test if mortal harm is threatened. When using courage checks, subtract one (-1) from the warrior dice roll.

### Centaur

This race of horse-sized quadrupeds have a human head, torso and arms in place of the horse's usual head and neck. The race has a coat of hair over the whole body except head, chest and arms, where human flesh color (tanned or bronzed) appears. Elsewhere the horsehair is various shades of tan, brown, grey or black, with legs often having two to four white 'stockings'. Centaurs are surprisingly nimble for their size, and have exceptional arm strength that allows them to climb with some facility, although true vertical climbing is beyond them. Centaurs love the open plains of the steppe or veldt. They are quite hardy, and can stay outdoors in a variety of climates.

Centaur live in families of 4 to 6, sometimes more, and may travel



in groups of many families for convenience and fellowship. Centaurs will freely breed with either humans or horses. Although human in many attributes, they love the carefree life and freedom of the plains more than wealth or power. Centaurs prefer a good joke to serious business, and almost never cooperate in large, complex ventures. They are known to have a violent temper when frustrated, whereupon the antagonist usually gallops away laughing! Centaurs have trouble in human towns or cities, since they are considered tricksters, but unable to take a joke. When found at all, they are usually at bazaars and caravan stops, trading for goods and tools.

Centaurs are capable craftsmen and tool-makers. Often older family members make various hand goods. However, these hand-made items and skins, or food from hunting often is sold for more sophisticated tools from towns and cities.

**Movement:** crawl not possible, step 1/5 (¼), walk 12/60 (3), trot 28/140 (7), run 52/260 (13), gallop 72/360 (18), regional travel uses mounted rate.

**Mass:** 2d10 + 2, see below for hit location. Range from 4 to 22, average 13. Decline begins after age 40 ('6' on 1d6 roll each year).

**Strength:** mass - 1, ranges from 3 to 21, average 12. After age 40 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 roll each year).

**Agility:** 1d10 + 1d6, ranges from 2 to 16, average 9. After age 30 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Intelligence:** 2d10, ranges from 2 to 20, average 11. After age 50 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Age:** [2d6 x 2] + 10, ranges from 14 to 34, average 24. Age of adulthood is 12 to 15, average life expectancy is 50.

**Experience:** 1d6 + 1 if age 20 or younger, 2d6 + 1 if age 21-29, 3d6 + 1 if age 30 or older.

**Social Status:** 1d10 + 1d6, ranges from 2 to 16, average 9. Modifiers for age are -1 if age 20 or younger, +1 if age 30 or older.

**Natural Weapons:** fists, quadruped kick.

**Natural Armor:** none.

**Elemental Magic:** advantaged with wood or water (player's choice), disadvantaged with metal.

**Spirit Magic:** 3 node soul in nape of backbone (where human and horse backbones connect); roll 1d10 for humor, 1,2,3-vitriolic, 4,5-phlegmatic, 6,7-choleric, 8,9-melancholy, 10-roll again.

**Special Advantages:** automatically specialized in leatherworker skill, with minimum skill level equal to agility (rather than zero).

**Special Disadvantages:** one specialization sphere must be country. Stalk & slink and miner skills can never count as specialized. Climbing skill is always zero.

In addition, if a centaur fails in a social interaction, such as diplomacy or haggling, he or she must pass an intelligence test to avoid flying into a brief rage. While enraged a centaur will stamp about, insult others, and often perform acts of minor violence (smash things, punch or kick someone, etc.). An enraged centaur normally will not attempt to seriously harm or kill anyone.

**Centaur Hit Location:** use a 1d10 roll for hit location: 1-head, 2-right arm, 3-left arm, 4-torso, 5,6-forelegs, 7,8-hindbody, 9,10-hind legs.

## Dragons

These rare and powerful reptiles are quadruped lizards with wings and tail, but can sit back to use their foreclaws for limited manipulation. Dragons have shiny scales of all hues, and normally prey on other intelligent races. They live in almost any climate, but need a cave or similar enclosed lair for psychological reasons.

Dragons are normally solitary. Every few decades a mating urge

comes on males to take wing and find a female. After mating they part, the female protecting her eggs and youngsters until grown. Dragons are extremely selfish and greedy. They respect nothing but raw physical power, although with experience they learn to use and fear magic. Aside from eating other races, Dragons are in love with treasure — their idea of heaven is to sleep off a good meal inside their cave, lying on a huge pile of treasure.

Dragons do not create tools, learn arts and crafts, or use artifacts. However, they are superb fighting machines, and greatly feared by all other races.



**Movement (on ground):** crawl 3/15 (¼), step 2/10 (½), walk 12/60 (3), trot 28/140 (7), run 54/270 (13½), gallop 72/360 (18), regional travel as mounted.

**Movement (flying):** glide 24/120 (6), 'walk' 32/160 (8), 'trot' 54/270 (13½), 'run' 80/400 (20), 'gallop' 140/700 (35), regional travel ¼ hr per league.

**Mass:** 3d10 + 10, see hit location below. Ranges from 13 to 40, average 26½. After age 700 decline begins ('10' on 1d10 every 5 years).

**Strength:** mass - 5, ranges from 8 to 35, average 17. After age 650 decline begins ('10' on 1d10 every five years).

**Agility:** 1d6, ranges from 1 to 6, average 3½. After age 600 decline begins ('10' on 1d10 every 20 years).

**Intelligence:** 2d10 - 2, ranges from 0 to 18, average 9. After age 750 decline begins ('10' on 1d10 every 10 years).

**Age:** [2d10 x 40] + 4d10, ranges from 84 to 840, average 462. Age of adulthood traditionally 100, average life expectancy about 900.

**Experience:** 1d6 + 1 if age 110 or less, 2d6 + 2 if age 111 or more. Intelligence modifiers are -1 if intelligence 2 or less, +1 if intelligence 9-13, +2 if intelligence 14 or more.

**Social Status:** 0, but value of treasure (in status) is age/50 + 1d10 roll.

**Natural Weapons:** fangs, large claws on fore and hind legs, tail.

**Natural Armor:** entire body armored to absorb/deflect wound points. Wings stop 4 points, belly stops 5 points, rest of body stops 7 points.

**Elemental Magic:** advantaged with fire and crystal, disadvantaged with metal and wood.

**Spirit Magic:** 1 node in eyes (both only) which has within it a 3-power fire node and a 1-power crystal node; roll 1d10 for humor: 1,2,3-vitriolic, 4-phlegmatic, 5,6,7-choleric, 8,9,10-melancholy.

**Special Advantages:** fire and crystal nodes in spirit allow dragon to know and cast all fire spells and all 1-power crystal spells. The spirit node may be used simultaneously for normal spirit magic purposes. If an elemental cast from the spirit results in exhaustion of the elemental node, it and the spirit node are exhausted until the dragon has had a full meal and a good sleep.

Dragons are automatically specialized in fighting, with double the normal minimum level in all fighting skills.

**Special Disadvantages:** dragons cannot specialize in any other spheres, cannot wear armor, and their maximum skill level in any manual skills other than fighting with natural weapons is half normal (drop fractions). Dragons are very attached to their treasure, and females to their eggs or youngsters. Loss of either can lead to insane rampages.

A dragon will sleep 1d10 days after a normal meal, 2d10 days after a big meal. This is considered 'proper' sleep for a dragon — the normal six hours is not sufficient. Once a dragon awakes, it remains awake constantly until it feeds, getting hungrier and more irritable. Dragons eat once every two to four weeks.

**Dragon Hit Location:** roll 1d10 for hit location: 1-head, 2-forelegs, 3,4,5-wings, 6,7-body, 8-belly, 9-hindlegs, 10-tail.



**Note:** adult dragons prey on other races, and thus cannot be player characters (unless playing alone, or the gamemaster wishes to permit dragons with strange tastes). However, young dragons (age d100 + 10) could be players' characters — if brought up as 'pets' of another race, or otherwise acclimated in and educated to an 'un-dragonish' way of life. Such a dragon would begin to think like another race. It is still carnivorous, and has the same instincts (love of treasure, sleeping habits, preferring a cave for home and sleeping, having a rare but powerful mating urge — that would bring it into contact with 'normal' dragons to cause personality conflicts, etc.).

The gamemaster and player should both appreciate the wide variety of problems a dragon would encounter as an outcast from its own race, and feared by all others. The gamemaster must insure that these psychological problems are powerful enough to balance the formidable physical traits of a dragon.

### Dwarves

This race is shorter than humans, but thicker, with 'plain' looks. Dwarven skin is normally red-brown, bronzed, or light brown with dark hair that turns light grey with age. They prefer dry, cool areas such as caves in mountains, stonework buildings, etc. Dwarves often trade their workmanship for food, goods, and other items.

Dwarves live in clans of 30-60 members, with about 20% adult males. A clan sometimes has more than one leader, but leaders are usually male. Clans are united under a noble, and live together for long periods. Dwarves rarely travel or live alone, they prefer clan company. They have a reputation for selfishness, and the clan will hoard precious metals, gems, and other valuables. A dwarf places clan interest and this hoard above all else — most will die rather than reveal the location of the hoard.

Dwarves are excellent craftsmen, with superb tools of all sorts. Dwarven workmanship is a byword for excellence. Although dwarves reserve the best for themselves, they are willing to trade everyday items for food, etc. Dwarves may or may not be involved in actual merchant activity.



**Movement Rates:** crawl 2/10 (1/5), step 1/5 (1/4), walk 7/35 (1/5), trot 15/75 (3/10), run 30/150 (7/10), regional travel uses foot rate.

**Mass:** 2d6 + 1, humanoid form. Ranges from 3 to 13, average 8. After age 80 decline begins ('10' on 1d10 each year).

**Strength:** mass + 1d6 + 1, ranges from 5 to 20, average 12½. After age 60 decline begins ('10' on 1d10 each year).

**Agility:** 2d10, ranges from 2 to 20, average 11. After age 50 decline begins ('10' on 1d10 each year).

**Intelligence:** 2d10, ranges from 2 to 20, average 11. After age 80 decline begins ('10' on 1d10 each year).

**Age:** [3d10 x2] + 10, ranges from 16 to 70, average 43. Age of adulthood from 18 to 25, average life expectancy 90.

**Experience:** 1d6 if age 29 or less, 2d6 if age 30-42, 3d6 if age 43-56, 3d6+2 if age 57 or older. Intelligence modifiers are -1 if intelligence 2 or less, +1 if intelligence 9-13, +2 if intelligence 14-17, and +3 if intelligence 18 or more.

**Social Status:** 2d10 + 1, ranges from 3 to 21, average 12. Age modifiers are -1 if 29 or younger, +1 if 57 or older.

**Natural Weapons:** fist.

**Natural Armor:** none.

**Elemental Magic:** advantaged in metal, disadvantaged in wind.

**Spirit Magic:** 3 nodes in backbone, roll 1d10 for humor: 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4,5-phlegmatic, 6,7-choleric, 8,9-melancholy, 10-roll again.

**Special Advantages:** counts as already specialized in the specific skills of jeweler, armorer, builder, miner, detect concealment (indoors

only), disarm trap (indoors only), and climbing. These specialties are in addition to the two normal spheres of specialization. Dwarves have exceptionally good eyesight in darkness.

**Special Disadvantages:** minimum skill is zero (0) in riding, swimming, bowyer, and dancer, no specialization advantages are allowed in any of these skills. If a dwarven clan is broken up, and its treasure lost, the clan disintegrates and all members lose about two (-2) in social status. Dwarves normally prefer to die before they betray their clan, or reveal the location of its hoard.

### Eagles, Harpies, and other Aerial Races

A variety of aerial races exist, most in the shape of a winged humanoid. Generally, they have a human head, arms, and torso, but feathered wings and legs, the latter appearing similar to bird legs. Family structure and preferred living conditions vary from race to race. The most common in a small family of 4-6, and living conditions most typical are moderate climate and open terrain, with a nest on a mountain cliffside.

The gamemaster will often define the specific traits of an aerial race. If no specifics are provided, it can be assumed the race has a society similar to a human one, but with greater emphasis on hunting, and little settled agriculture or tool-making. The race will have few craftsmen, and may often trade for tools and other equipment.



**Movement (on ground):** crawl 1/5 (1/4), step 1/5 (1/4), walk 6/30 (1/5), trot 13/65 (3/10), run 26/130 (6/10), regional travel uses foot rate.

**Movement (flying):** glide 20/100 (5), 'walk' 30/150 (7/10), 'trot' 60/300 (15), 'run' 90/450 (22½), 'gallop' 160/800 (40), regional travel is 1/4 hr per league.

**Mass:** 2d6, winged humanoid form. Ranges from 2 to 12, average 7. After age 50 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Strength:** mass + 1, ranges from 3 to 13, average 8. After age 45 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Agility:** 2d10 + 2, ranges from 4 to 22, average 13. After age 40 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Intelligence:** 2d10, ranges from 2 to 20, average 11. After age 55 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Age:** [2d10 x2] + d10, ranges from 5 to 50, average 27½. Age of adulthood is 10 to 13, average life expectancy is 55.

**Experience:** 1d6 if age 18 or less, 2d6 if age 19-26, 3d6 if age 27-33, 4d6 if age 34 or older. Intelligence modifiers are -1 if intelligence 2 or less, +1 if intelligence 9-13, +2 if intelligence 14-17, +3 if intelligence 18 or more.

**Social Status:** 1d10 + 1d6 + 1, ranges from 3 to 17, average 10. Age modifiers are -1 if 20 or younger, +1 if 30 or older.

**Natural Weapons:** small claws on feet.

**Natural Armor:** none.

**Elemental Magic:** normally no special advantages or disadvantages, some races may be advantaged with wind and disadvantaged with fire.

**Spirit Magic:** 3 nodes in root of tailfeathers; roll 1d10 for humor: 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6-choleric, 7,8-melancholy, 9,10-roll again.

**Special Advantages:** can fly regional distances routinely.

**Special Disadvantages:** when making long regional flights, carrying capacity is limited to six items. While flying a character cannot wear half plate, full plate, or a closed metal helmet. When flying in battle, a character with any type of metal armor, or armor that covers the whole body (even if not metal), will become exhausted after one period. If armor covers more than one location of the body, regardless of type, the character becomes exhausted after two periods of battle.



## Elves

This race stands a bit taller than average, but are more lightly built, with features considered fine, even delicate. Their skin is smooth and soft, usually pale pink to nearly white, with blond hair of varying shades. They prefer woodlands with moderate climate, and are primarily vegetarians.

Elves normally live in families of 3 or 4, based around a senior male or female. They live in loose associations in woodland areas, sometimes with permanent residence, governments, etc., similar to humans. Elves have long life spans, but a low birth rate and great vulnerability to disease. As a result, they avoid other races, but are often sought because of their reputation for wisdom. This is true to some degree, as elves acquire a detachment and understanding greater than most races, due to their long life.

Elves generally restrict themselves to natural tools and materials of their habitat. They have a reputation of looking toward magic when attempting great feats, rather than using additional people and tools.



**Movement Rates:** crawl 2/10 (¼), step 1/5 (¼), walk 9/45 (2¼), trot 18/90 (4½), run 35/175 (8¾), regional travel uses foot rate.

**Mass:** 2d6 + 3, ranges from 5 to 15, average 10. After age 200 decline begins ('10' on 1d10 every 10 years).

**Strength:** equal to mass, ranges from 5 to 15, average 10. After age 200 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 every 10 years).

**Agility:** 2d10 + 1, ranges from 3 to 21, average 12. After age 150 decline begins ('10' on 1d10 every 8 years).

**Intelligence:** 2d10, ranges from 2 to 20, average 11. After age 300 decline begins ('10' on 1d10 every 10 years).

**Age:** [1d10 x25] + 2d10, ranges from 27 to 290, average 148½. Age of adulthood is normally 50, life expectancy is about 300+ years.

**Experience:** 2d6 + 1 if age 49 or younger, 3d6 + 1 if age 50-99, 4d6 + 1 if age 100-149, 4d6 + 3 if age 150 or older. Intelligence modifiers are +1 if intelligence is 9-13, +2 if intelligence is 14-17, +3 if intelligence is 18 or more.

**Social Status:** 1d10 + 1d6 + 2, ranges from 4 to 18, average 11. Age modifier applies, -1 if child (age 49 or less).

**Natural Weapons:** none.

**Natural Armor:** none.

**Elemental Magic:** advantaged with wood and light, disadvantaged with fire and darkness. However, when an elf reaches social status 17 and is accepted into elven nobility (normally automatic at status 17) he or she can learn fire spells, but cannot learn to identify that element.

**Spirit Magic:** 3 nodes in mind (in skull), roll 1d10 for humor: 1,2,3-vitriolic, 4,5,6-phlegmatic, 7,8-choleric, 9,10-melancholy.

**Special Advantages:** considered specialized in following skills: doctor/druggist, bowyer, artist, musician, riding, tracking, wild food, and dancing. Elven bowyers are normally familiar with methods for making longbows.

**Special Disadvantages:** cannot specialize in Town sphere. Elves are extremely vulnerable to disease. They have double the normal chance of catching one from a carrier, and a disease progresses 1d6 + 1 times faster than normal. For each month an elf spends in the company of any other race, there is a 2% chance of catching a disease. To determine the disease caught, roll 1d6: 1-Lung Rot, 2-Gut Spasm, 3-Sleeping Sickness, 4-Strength Drain, 5-Flesh Parasites (1d10+1), 6-Blood Poisoning. If an elf gets flesh parasites, blood poisoning begins 1d10 hours later.

## Fauns

These are humanoids whose lower body resembles that of a deer or goat, with double-jointed legs, hooves, and a fine covering of hair. Fauns are smaller and more delicate than normal men, and are usually

a tan or light brown color, sometimes with white dapple markings or stockings. They only live in forests and woodlands, although a quick migration to a new forest is not unknown. They need peace, quiet, and opportunities for solitude to remain sane.

Fauns live in small, informal clans of 5 to 10 with no leadership. Instead, consensus decisions are reached through love and regard for other clan members. Solitary fauns are not uncommon. Fauns live in a symbiotic relationship with the forest, and seem to communicate with the animals within it, as well as sense the moods of the plants. Fauns are vegetarians, with a horror of violence, and avoid large groups, especially groups of other races. Fauns almost never learn martial arts — instead of fighting, they usually run away to find a new forest home. Fauns who know fighting and are willing to do it are considered mentally unbalanced.

Fauns are good at woodcraft of all sorts, but generally shun 'industrialized' arts and crafts. Faun workmanship is very good and much prized because it is so rare — fauns make what they need, but almost nothing more for trade or sale.



**Movement:** crawl 1/5 (¼), step 1/5 (¼), walk 9/45 (2¼), trot 20/100 (5), run 40/200 (10), regional travel uses mounted rate.

**Mass:** 2d6, humanoid form. Ranges from 2 to 12, average 7. After age 45 decline begins ('10' in 1d10 each year).

**Strength:** same as mass, ranges from 2 to 12, average 7. After age 40 decline begins ('10' on 1d10 each year).

**Agility:** 2d10 + 3, ranges from 5 to 23, average 14. After age 30 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Intelligence:** 2d10 + 1, ranges from 3 to 21, average 12. After age 50 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Age:** [2d10 x2] + 1d10, ranges from 5 to 50, average 27½. Age of adulthood is 7 to 10, average life expectancy is 55.

**Experience:** 1d6 if age 12 or less, 2d6 if age 13-22, 3d6 if age 23-32, 4d6 if age 33 or older. Intelligence modifiers are +1 if intelligence is 9-13, +2 if intelligence is 14-17, +3 if intelligence is 18 or more.

**Social Status:** 2d6 - 2, ranges from 0 to 10, average 5. Modifiers are -1 if age 12 or less, +1 if age 40 or older.

**Natural Weapons:** kick.

**Natural Armor:** none.

**Elemental Magic:** advantaged with wood, water, or light/darkness (choice of any two), disadvantage with metal.

**Spirit Magic:** 4 nodes in vestigial horns (on head); roll 1d10 for humor: 1,2,3-vitriolic, 4,5,6-phlegmatic, 7-choleric, 8-melancholy, 9,10-roll again.

**Special Advantages:** can communicate on emotional level to woodland animals (words and ideas possible if animal has intelligence). Automatically specialized in country and arts/crafts sphere. Minimum initial skill and all experience gained in stalk & slink, concealment, tracking, and wild food are doubled. Maximum skill level for these skills remains normal.

**Special Disadvantages:** only one specialization sphere can be chosen (in addition to automatic specializations), but it cannot be fighting or town. The following skills never count as specialized, regardless of sphere; Initial level, experience awards, and maximum skill level for all these are half normal: pickpocket, underworld, haggling, bribery, hunting, fishing, armorer, miner, and warlord.

## Gargoyles

These winged humanoids are smaller than normal men. They have a red-orange to bronze cast to their skin, some are greyish or blackish instead. The wings are leathery skin of a similar color, and the head

often has vestigial horns. They prefer a cool climate with protected nests on rocky eyries, cliff-top caves, and other areas outside of direct sunlight. Subfreezing conditions and very high altitudes bother them. A female gargoyle is often called a succubus, especially if beautiful.

Gargoyles live in families of 4 to 5, with a rudimentary clan or tribal society composed of all the families living in a general area. They are nocturnal, with a crafty and cunning disposition, and a taste for complex ploys. They are normally hunters, and are selfish. Honesty is not considered a virtue by gargoyles.

Gargoyles use tools, but tend to steal them, or trade stolen items for them. Arts and crafts are not highly regarded, although older family members may stay 'at home' and perform rudimentary crafts while the younger adults hunt.



**Movement (on ground):** crawl 1/5 (¼), step 1/5 (¼), walk 6/30 (1½), trot 13/65 (3¼), run 26/130 (6½), regional travel uses foot rate.

**Movement (flying):** glide 20/100 (5), 'walk' 30/150 (7½), 'trot' 60/300 (15), 'run' 90/450 (22½), 'gallop' 160/800 (40), regional travel ¼ hr per league.

**Mass:** 2d6 + 1, winged humanoid form. Ranges from 3 to 13, average 8. After age 50 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Strength:** mass + 1, ranges from 4 to 14, average 9. After age 45 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Agility:** 2d10 + 2, ranges from 4 to 22, average 13. After age 40 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Intelligence:** 2d10, ranges from 2 to 20, average 11. After age 55 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Age:** [(1d6 + 1d10) x 2] + 7, ranges from 11 to 39, average 25. Age of adulthood is 10 to 13, average life expectancy is 55.

**Experience:** 1d6 if age 16 or less, 2d6 if age 17-24, 3d6 if age 25-31, 4d6 if age 32 or older. Intelligence modifiers are -1 if intelligence 2 or less, +1 if intelligence 9-13, +2 if intelligence 14-17, +3 if intelligence 18 or more.

**Social Status:** 1d10 + 1d6 + 1, ranges from 3 to 17, average 10. Age modifiers are -1 if 19 or younger, +1 if 29 or older.

**Natural Weapons:** small claws on feet.

**Natural Armor:** none.

**Elemental Magic:** advantaged with wind and darkness, disadvantaged with metal and light.

**Spirit Magic:** 3 nodes in shoulder blades (back of torso, at wing joints); roll 1d10 for humor: 1,2,3-vitriolic, 4,5-phlegmatic, 6,7-choleric, 8,9,10-melancholy.

**Special Advantages:** may fly regional distances, usually gliding much of the way. Gargoyles have a special suspended animation ability (see below).

**Special Disadvantages:** when flying regional distances, gargoyles can only carry five items (instead of the usual ten). One of the two specialization spheres selected must be stealth. Gargoyles cannot fly wearing half plate, full plate, or a closed metal helm. In combat, they become exhausted after one period if wearing over two pieces of armor (armor covering more than two parts of the body), or if wearing any pieces of metal armor.

**Suspended Animation:** gargoyles may voluntarily enter this state; typically a whole clan or tribe enters and leaves the state together. The duration of the suspended animation may be selected, but if the period selected is 20 days or less, a 2d20 dice roll determines the period in days instead. While in suspended animation the entire body of the gargoyle seems to turn to stone (or something indistinguishable from it). It is unknown how or why gargoyles do this, but the ability seems to be biological rather than magical, and cannot be taught or transferred.

Note: the gamemaster is free to determine his or her own rationale

for this ability, and the degree of control a gargoyle has over the process.

## Giants & Titans

Both titles are used for this race of huge humanoids. Giants have an appearance and proportions similar to men, but are double or more the size of normal men. Skin color is tinted with a shade appropriate to the type of giant (see below). Each type of giant has a preferred residence, hunting more than farming from there.

Giants live in single small families or clans, well away from other giants and other races. They are sensitive because their hugeness makes them outcasts, while their low intelligence often makes them pawns of others. Giants are therefore distrustful of other races.

Giants are usually good workmen, but most of their craftwork is scaled for their own use, and thus of little value to others.



**Movement Rates:** crawl 1/5 (¼), step 2/10 (½), walk 11/55 (2¼), trot 22/110 (5½), run 52/260 (13), regional travel uses mounted rate.

**Mass:** 3d10 + 8, humanoid form, ranges from 11 to 38, average 24½. After age 40 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 twice per year).

**Strength:** mass - 6, ranges from 5 to 32, average 18½. After age 35 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 twice per year).

**Agility:** 2d6 - 1, ranges from 1 to 11, average 6. After age 30 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Intelligence:** 2d6, ranges from 2 to 12, average is 7. After age 50 decline begins ('6' on 1d6).

**Age:** [2d6 x 2] + 9, ranges from 13 to 33, average 23. Age of adulthood is 10 to 13, average life expectancy is 50.

**Experience:** 1d6 if 19 or younger, 2d6 if age 20-28, 3d6 if age 29 or older. Intelligence modifiers are -1 if intelligence 2 or less, +1 if intelligence 9 or more.

**Social Status:** 3d6 - 1, ranges from 2 to 17, average 9½. Age modifiers are -1 if 19 or younger, +1 if 29 or older.

**Natural Weapons:** fists.

**Natural Armor:** none.

**Elemental Magic:** see below for advantaged and disadvantaged element(s).

**Spirit Magic:** 2 nodes in heart, roll 1d10 for humor: 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6-choleric, 7,8-melancholy, 9,10-common humor for that type (see below).

**Special Advantages:** automatically specialized and one bonus experience point in (choose one): leatherworker, armorer, bowyer, builder, or miner.

**Special Disadvantages:** one specialization sphere must be country, the other cannot be town. Any interaction with another character, unless a giant of the same type, requires a successful intelligence test before the interaction skill can be used. Failure of the test means the giant avoids the interaction and is distrustful.

Giants of mass 20-24 exceed human size but can fit into normal habitats, furniture, and use human tools. Giants of mass 25-29 have difficulty inside normal buildings, using furniture, and lose half their skill in using human-sized tools. Giants of mass 30 or more cannot fit inside any normal size building, and cannot use any normal furniture or tools.



## CHARACTERISTICS OF GIANTS

type of giant	advantaged element	disadvantaged element	common humor	typical residence	skin tint/color
Cloud Giant	.wind	.crystal	.vitriolic	.overlooks, clifftops, low mountaintops	.white-grey
Fire Giant	.fire	.wind	.choleric	.volcanoes, hot springs, desert mountains	.orange-red
Frost Giant	.crystal	.fire	.melancholy	.ice wastes, glaciers, snow-bound peaks	.blue-white
Hill Giant	.wood	.light/dark	.phlegmatic	.wooded hills, rolling countryside	.brown-tan
Iron Giant	.metal	.fire	.phlegmatic	.caves, mines, fissures, iron-rich areas	.black
Sand Giant	.light/dark	.water	.vitriolic	.sandy deserts, salt flats	.white-tan
Sea Giant	.water	.crystal	.melancholy	.coastlines, large lakes, major rivers	.blue-green
Stone Giant	.metal	.water	.melancholy	.barren, rocky wastes, barren mountains	.blue-grey
Storm Giant	.water or wind	.metal	.choleric	.windy, exposed cliffs, mountains, plains	.purple

## Goblins

This race has many similarities to dwarves, and may have a common ancestry in prehistory. Goblins are short, thick, with bulbous faces and a greyish or greenish skin. They are considered unattractive by most (including other goblins). They prefer cool, damp and dark areas for living, especially caves, ancient forests, etc., but can survive in a wide variety of climates.

Goblins normally live in clans of 15 to 50, with respect, obedience, and organization only insofar as a leader's strength and cunning can maintain it. Individual goblins are often lazy and unefficient, which actually lends stability in a well-led clan. They prefer raiding, plundering, and hunting to agriculture. Therefore, dense population of goblins are soon raiding each other. As a result, clans normally spread out, with larger cities or kingdoms extremely rare.

Goblins are poor craftsmen, and generally steal goods of value. However, they appreciate the value of tools and crafted items. Like dwarves, they are extremely selfish and greedy.



**Movement Rates:** crawl 2/10 (¼), step 1/5 (⅕), walk 8/40 (2), trot 16/80 (4), run 30/150 (7½), regional travel uses foot rate.

**Mass:** 2d6 + 1, humanoid form. Ranges from 3 to 13, average 8. After age 40 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Strength:** mass + 3, ranges from 6 to 16, average 11. After age 35 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Agility:** 2d10, ranges from 2 to 20, average 11. After age 30 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Intelligence:** 2d10 - 1, ranges from 1 to 19, average 10. After age 40 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Age:** [2d6 x2] + 10, ranges from 14 to 34, average 24. Age of adulthood 10 to 15. Average life expectancy 45.

**Experience:** 1d6 + 1 if age 20 or less, 2d6 + 1 if age 21-29, 3d6 + 1 if age 30 or older. Intelligence modifiers are -1 if intelligence is 2 or less, +1 if intelligence is 9-13, +2 if intelligence 14-17, +3 if intelligence 18 or more.

**Social Status:** 2d20 - 1, ranges from 1 to 19, average 10. Modifiers are -1 if age 17 or less, +1 if age 30 or older.

**Natural Weapons:** small claws on hands and feet.

**Natural Armor:** none.

**Elemental Magic:** advantaged with wood or metal (choice), disadvantaged with crystal. Normally goblins are advantaged with darkness and disadvantaged with light, but a few are born ('6' on 1d6 roll) without any light/dark advantage or disadvantage.

**Spirit Magic:** 3 node soul in collarbone; roll 1d10 for humor: 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6-choleric, 7,8,9-melancholy, 10-roll again.

**Special Advantages:** automatically specialized in skills of: detect concealment, disarm trap, underworld, climbing, miner. Goblins advantaged in darkness element have superior eyesight in the dark.

**Special Disadvantages:** cannot specialize in arts/crafts sphere (except

for miner skill noted in advantages, which is an automatic speciality). If disadvantaged with light element, eyes are blinded by direct sunlight and eyesight is inferior in any day light.

## Gnomes

This race is related to dwarves but are smaller and lighter. Gnomish skin is normally tan or light brown, with dark hair. They prefer to live outdoors, in open countryside that is relatively dry, with a moderate climate. Gnomes are good farmers and hunters, and often trade extra foods for items of high craftsmanship.

Gnomes live in a small family unit of 4 to 5, with an adult male or female leading it. Families normally live in loosely scattered areas, without much structure, as gnomes are both retiring, and reticent to become involved in politics. They are sometimes enslaved by dwarves either as food producers, or at times forced to live in dwarven halls, where they do menial tasks and have a short life expectancy.

Gnomes have an affinity for creatures of the wild, and are respected for their woodcraft. Although longer lived than many races, they have a reputation for merriment rather than wisdom. Gnomes protect themselves by concealment and cunning — their homes are normally well hidden underground, with various entrances.



**Movement Rates:** crawl 2/10 (¼), step 1/5 (⅕), walk 7/35 (1¼), trot 15/75 (3¼), run 30/150 (7½), regional travel uses foot rate.

**Mass:** 2d6 - 1, humanoid form. Ranges from 1 to 11, average 6. After age 70 decline begins ('10' on 1d10 each year).

**Strength:** mass + 2, ranges from 3 to 13, average 8. After age 65 decline begins ('10' on 1d10 each year).

**Agility:** 3d6 + 2, ranges from 5 to 20, average 12½. After age 60 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Intelligence:** 2d10, ranges from 2 to 20, average 11. After age 70 decline begins ('10' on 1d10 each year).

**Age:** [3d10 x2] + 7, ranges from 13 to 67, average 40. Age of adulthood is 18 to 25, average life expectancy is 80.

**Experience:** 1d6 if age 25 or less, 2d6 if age 26-39, 3d6 if age 40-53, 4d6 if age 54 or older. Intelligence modifiers are -1 if intelligence 2 or less, +1 if intelligence 9-13, +2 if intelligence 14-17, +3 if intelligence 18 or more.

**Social Status:** 1d10 + 1, ranges from 3 to 11, average 6½. Age modifiers is +1 50 or older.

**Natural Weapons:** fists.

**Natural Armor:** none.

**Elemental Magic:** advantaged in wood, disadvantaged in fire.

**Spirit Magic:** 3 nodes in backbone, roll 1d10 for humor: 1,2,3-vitriolic, 4,5-phlegmatic, 6,7-choleric, 8,9-melancholy, 10-roll again.

**Special Advantages:** automatically specialized in concealment, detect concealment, disarm trap. Gnomes have superior eyesight in darkness as well as daylight.



**Special Disadvantages:** minimum skill is zero (0) in riding, and they can never count as specialized in this skill. Gnomes may not specialize in the town sphere.

## Griffins

This rare race has the head, forebody, forelegs and wings of a hawk or eagle, and the hindbody and hindlegs of a lion or similar great cat. The forebody feathers are shades of black and white, sometimes tipped red, while the hindbody hair is generally a pale tan, sometimes grey or black. Some variation in color is known. Griffins prefer to live in mountains, in cliffside caves, ledges, etc. in a moderate to cool climate. They can withstand high altitudes and cold extremely well.

Griffins live in families of 3 to 5, headed by an adult male or female, usually the latter. They are fiercely protective and devoted to their own family, reserved with other Griffins, and avoid other races. Griffins prefer a diet of horses and similar large herbivores. This means they are at odds with many other races, who dislike having their livestock eaten. Griffins live mainly by hunting, and have only vague culture or social organization.

Griffins rarely develop friendship with other races. If they do, it is usually toward a specific individual whom they consider an 'honorary Griffin'. Griffins are very proud, so another race using a Griffin for a mount is only found in tall tales. Griffins can manipulate tools to a small degree in their foreclaws, but not well, and therefore use few arms or armor.



**Movement (on ground):** crawl - none, step 1/5 (¼), walk 10/50 (2½), trot 24/120 (6), run 40/200 (10), gallop 60/300 (15), regional travel uses mounted rate.

**Movement (flying):** glide 22/110 (5½), 'walk' 30/150 (7½), 'trot' 56/280 (14), 'run' 84/420 (21), 'gallop' 148/740 (37), regional travel is ¼ hr per league.

**Mass:** 2d10 + 1, see hit location below. Ranges from 3 to 21, average is 12. After age 40 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Strength:** mass + 1, ranges from 4 to 22, average 13. After age 35 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Agility:** 2d10 - 1, ranges from 1 to 19, average 10. After age 25 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Intelligence:** 1d10 + 1d6, ranges from 2 to 16, average 9. After age 45 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Age:** [2d6 x2] + 4, ranges from 8 to 28, average 18. Age of adulthood is 4 to 6, average life expectancy is 40.

**Experience:** 1d6 + 1 if 18 or less, 2d6 if 19 or older. Intelligence modifiers are -1 if intelligence 2 or less, +1 if intelligence 9-13, +2 if intelligence 14 or more.

**Social Status:** 1d6 + 1, ranges from 2 to 7, average 4½, no modifiers.

**Natural Weapons:** beak is equivalent to fangs, large claws on forelegs, small claws on hindlegs.

**Natural Armor:** none.

**Elemental Magic:** advantaged with wind, disadvantaged with water.

**Spirit Magic:** 3 nodes in beak; roll 1d10 for humor: 1,2-vitriolic, 3-phlegmatic, 4,5-choleric, 6,7-melancholy, 8,9,10-roll again.

**Special Advantages:** automatically specialized in fighting, stealth and country spheres. Minimum fighting skill with natural weapons (both use and speed) is always triple (three times) the current age of a Griffin, except that the minimum cannot exceed the normal maximum. Ambush, hunting and climbing skills are all double the normal minimum.

**Special Disadvantages:** cannot select any spheres for specialization (must use the automatic ones indicated above). However, additional skills outside the town sphere may be selected for specialization. The

maximum number of such skills is one third of the Griffin's intelligence (round fractions down). Any skills that require manipulation have half the normal minimum, gains from experience, and maximum rating.

**Griffin Hit Location:** roll 1d10: 1-head, 2-forelegs, 3-forebody, 4,5, 6-wings, 7,8-hindbody, 9-hindlegs, 10-tail.

## Halflings

Halflings are similar in appearance to humans, but smaller — about the size of a young human child. They typically have ruddy-bronze flesh, and prefer to live underground in areas with a moderate climate. They are good farmers and fairly good hunters, with mediocre craft skills. Halflings are famous for their resolve and endurance.

Halflings typically live in families of 3 to 5 members, led by adult male. Like humans, they sometimes live in towns, sometimes in scattered farmsteads. Halflings tend to have extended clans, and normally live close enough so a clan can remain in contact, as they are very gregarious. Halflings normally do not travel, and tend to keep their affairs private.

Halfling are not above using ingenuous devices or tools, but their separatist tendencies make them rather conservative, and thus technologically 'behind' similar human-style cultures.



**Movement Rate:** crawl 2/10 (½), step 1/5 (¼), walk 7/35 (1¼), trot 14/70 (3½), run 28/140 (7), regional travel uses foot rate.

**Mass:** 2d6, humanoid form. Ranges from 2 to 12, average 7. After age 70 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 every two years).

**Strength:** mass + 2, ranges from 4 to 14, average 9. After age 65 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 every two years).

**Agility:** 1d10 + 1d6 + 4, ranges from 6 to 20, average 13. After age 60 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 every two years).

**Intelligence:** 2d10, ranges from 2 to 20, average 11. After age 80 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 every two years).

**Age:** [2d10 x3] + 10, ranges from 16 to 70, average 43. Age of adulthood normally 30 to 33, but after age 20 most halflings are considered 'semi-adult' and allowed considerable independence. Normal life expectancy is 100.

**Experience:** 1d6 if age 28 or less, 2d6 if age 29-42, 3d6 if age 43-55, 4d6 if age 56 or more. Intelligence modifiers are -1 if intelligence 2 or less, +1 if intelligence 9-13, +2 if intelligence 14-17, +3 if intelligence 18 or more.

**Social Status:** 1d10 + 1d6 + 1, ranges from 3 to 17, average 10. Age modifiers are -1 if age 32 or younger, +1 if age 56 or older.

**Natural Weapons:** fists.

**Natural Armor:** none.

**Elemental Magic:** advantaged with water, disadvantaged with fire.

**Spirit Magic:** 4 nodes in heart, roll 1d10 for humor: 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6-choleric, 7,8-melancholy, 9,10-roll again.

**Special Advantages:** automatically specialized in stealth sphere, in addition to the two normal spheres that can be chosen.

**Special Disadvantages:** character cannot initially specialize in the fighting sphere. However, one specialization sphere can be left unchosen if the character starts adventuring at age 32 or less. Then, when any one weapon use or speed skill rating (other than fists) reaches 50 or higher, the 'unchosen' sphere becomes a fighting specialization, and from that point onward all additional skill increases are treated as if fighting were specialized. This is because halflings are not normally prone to war or trained in violence unless they gain practice in such outside of normal halfling society at an early age.

## Hellborns

These creatures, somewhat larger than humans, are from the pit fires

of the netherworlds. They are exo-skeletal (bones on the outside, covered and linked by a heavy hide), appear red and slightly glowing, often tinged with yellow and/or orange. They live on heat, eating coals and other burning items. They live both in the fiery depths, and in active volcanoes, sulphurous hot springs, etc. They smell of sulphur, and are burned by cold (ice especially).

Hellborns live in loose associations, or gaggles, and reproduce sexlessly like insects, laying eggs in molten rock. A gaggle will have a number of leaders, and generally acts by consensus and instinct, tempered with reason. If there is no agreement, the gaggle will split temporarily — there is no respected or customary unit (no families, clans, etc.). Hellborns are sometimes united under a particularly powerful leader, especially one from another race who proves superior to hellborns. They rarely fight each other, but are most ferocious toward other races, to whom their attitude seems 'kill first, ask questions later'.

Hellborns use tools, some of which can withstand the extreme heat of their habitats, suggesting that either hellborn craftsmen exist, and/or they trade with specialists in the netherworlds. They have been seen using tools and weapons made of surface dwellers even though such items burn or melt eventually.



**Movement Rates:** crawl 2/10 (½), step 1/5 (¼), walk 9/45 (2¼), trot 18/90 (4½), run 36/180 (9), regional travel uses foot rate.

**Mass:** 1d10 + 1d6 + 3, humanoid form, ranges from 5 to 19, average 12. After age 50 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Strength:** mass + 1, ranges from 6 to 20, average 13. After age 45 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Agility:** 1d10 + 1d6 + 1, ranges from 3 to 17, average 10. After age 40 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Intelligence:** 1d10 + 1d6, ranges from 2 to 16, average 9. After age 50 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Age:** [2d10 x2] + 11, ranges from 15 to 51, average 33. Age of adulthood 10 to 15, average life expectancy 60.

**Experience:** 1d6 if age 25 or less, 2d6 if age 26 to 36, 3d6 if age 37 or older. Intelligence modifiers are -1 if intelligence 2 or less, +1 if intelligence 9-13, +2 if intelligence 14 or more.

**Social Status:** 1d10 + 1d6 + 1, ranges from 3 to 17, average 10. Modifiers are -1 if age 20 or less, +1 if age 40 or more.

**Natural Weapons:** small claws on hands and feet.

**Natural Armor:** exo-skeleton absorbs/deflects 2 wound points anywhere. A hellborn is never burned by fire, instead it is burned by ice.

**Elemental Magic:** advantaged with fire and metal, disadvantaged with wood and crystal.

**Spirit Magic:** 2 nodes, each with a 2-power fire elemental node in it; each spirit node (with elemental node inside) is in one of the hellborn's eyes. Spirit nodes can be used for all normal purposes, and in addition can be used to cast one-power or two-power fire spells from the elemental node within. If the elemental node is exhausted, both it and the spirit node are exhausted until the hellborn gets a good sleep.

Roll 1d10 for humor of a hellborn's spirit node: 1,2,3-vitriolic, 4,5-phlegmatic, 6,7,8-choleric, 9,10-melancholy.

**Special Advantages:** has integral fire node in spirit nodes (see spirit magic, above).

**Special Disadvantages:** body is very hot, singes most combustible materials, will weaken and ultimately destroy most normal tools artifacts, arms, armor, etc., if it uses them for long — to avoid this it must have specially crafted items. Hellborns cannot ride normal mounts (will burn them). The following skills can never be learned (always are at zero): all town skills except underworld and diplomacy, all country skills except climbing and riding, and the skills of tailor, leatherworker, and bowyer.

## Hobgoblins

These are a mutant strain of goblins, which appear 2-10% of the time in males, and more rarely in females. Hobgoblins are larger and stronger than normal goblins, but generally are less intelligent and agile. Skin color may vary considerably from the normal grey or green, and can include shades of purple and orange. Of course, accumulated dirt and grime often conceal the true color.

Normally each goblin clan will have one or two hobgoblins, sometimes more. At times they are leaders and at other times followers. Some are driven out of clans and wander alone, or with a small family of followers. Hobgoblins are even found in some orc clans. Entire clans or families just of hobgoblins are virtually unknown, since even when two hobgoblins breed together, the usual result is a goblin.

Hobgoblins have little interest in crafts or other activities. What they desire, they try to take.



**Movement Rates:** crawl 2/10 (½), step 1/5 (¼), walk 8/40 (2), trot 16/80 (4), run 32/160 (8), regional travel uses foot rate.

**Mass:** 1d10 + 1d6 + 4, humanoid form. Ranges from 6 to 20, average is 13. After age 40 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Strength:** equal to mass, ranges from 6 to 20, average 13. After age 40 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Agility:** 1d10 + 1d6, ranges from 2 to 16, average 9. After age 30 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Intelligence:** 1d10 + 1d6 - 1, ranges from 1 to 15, average 8. After age 40 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Age:** [2d6 x2] + 12, ranges from 16 to 36, average 26. Age of adulthood is 11-13, average life expectancy is 45.

**Experience:** 1d6 if age 21 or less, 2d6 if age 22-30, 3d6 if age 31 or older. Intelligence modifiers are -1 if intelligence 2 or less, +1 if intelligence 9-13, +2 if intelligence 14 or more.

**Social Status:** 1d10 + 1d6 + 2, ranges from 4 to 20, average 11. Age modifiers are -1 if age 18 or less, +1 if age 33 or older.

**Natural Weapons:** fangs, small claws on hands and feet.

**Natural Armor:** thick hide absorbs/deflects 1 wound point anywhere on body.

**Elemental Magic:** advantaged with wood or metal (player's choice), disadvantaged with crystal.

**Spirit Magic:** 3 nodes in front fangs; roll 1d10 for humor: 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6,7-choleric, 8,9-melancholy, 10-roll again.

**Special Advantages:** automatically specialized in underworld skill, and any one weapon use skill of choice. Hobgoblins have superior eyesight in darkness.

**Special Disadvantages:** cannot specialize in Arts/Crafts, nor in Magic sphere; regardless of specialization spheres neither dancer nor cook skills can ever be specialties. In daylight hobgoblins have inferior eyesight.

## Humans

Humans are the most numerous and diverse of all races. They stand an average height, with relatively smooth, soft skin ranging in color from pale pink, through yellow or olive, to a brownish color (light or dark); the skin darkens with prolonged exposure to sunlight. Although they prefer warm, dry climates, they in fact live in a wide range of conditions with appropriate clothing and housing. Fresh water and the ability to farm or hunt are the only conditions for continued living in an area, and often complex civilizations are developed to permit living in areas where these essentials can be acquired only through trade.

Humans typically live in family groups of 4 or 5 members, based around a middle-aged male. However, many exceptional forms exist. They often live in close proximity to their fellows, in hamlets, villages,



towns or cities. Humans can work together, often under direction of their fellows. Human emotions and motives vary so greatly that no assumptions or rules can be offered about their behavior, and in any group or society there are exceptions.

Humans frequently use tools and devices, probably because their complex social organization encourages this. Humanity is an extremely flexible race, and undertakes all types of endeavors.



**Movement Rates:** crawl 2/10 (1/5), step 1/5 (1/4), walk 8/40 (2), trot 16/80 (4), run 32/160 (8), regional travel uses foot rate.

**Mass:** 1d10 + 1d6 + 2, humanoid form. Ranges from 4 to 18, average 11. After age 50 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Strength:** equal to mass, range from 4 to 18, average 11. After age 40 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Agility:** 2d10, ranges from 2 to 20, average 11. After age 30 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Intelligence:** 2d10, ranges from 2 to 20, average 11. After age 60 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Age:** [2d10 x2] + 10, ranges from 14 to 50, average 32. Age of adulthood is 13 to 17. Average life expectancy is 60.

**Experience:** 1d6 if age 21 or less, 2d6 if age 22-31, 3d6 if age 32-41, 4d6 if age 42 or more. Intelligence modifiers are -1 if intelligence is 2 or less, +1 if intelligence 9-13, +2 if intelligence 14-17, +3 if intelligence 18 or more.

**Social Status:** 2d10, ranges from 2 to 20, average 11. Age modifiers are -1 if age 21 or younger, +1 if age 42 or older.

**Natural Weapons:** fists.

**Natural Armor:** none.

**Elemental Magic:** normally neither advantaged nor disadvantaged with any element.

**Spirit Magic:** 3 nodes in heart, roll 1d10 for humor: 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6-choleric, 7,8-melancholy, 9,10-roll again.

**Special Advantages:** none.

**Special Disadvantages:** none.

**Note:** certain racial groups may have special characteristics that vary from the above.

## Kobolds

This unique race is considerably smaller than humans, and have a dirty orange skin with yellowish eyes. Kobolds may have originated as a race of the netherworlds, and prefer to live in the depths of the earth. They exist on the mineral by-products of rocks, as they burrow in search of especially tasty veins. Naturally, they prefer a hot, dusty, gritty climate underground, and feel ill-at-ease in the open spaces and fresh air of the surface. However, light does not bother them, and some kobolds have been found living in desert chasms. Kobolds have an extraordinary sense of smell, and are thought to communicate by it at times.

Kobolds live in families that range from small (4-5) to extended (9-15). Families live together in hive-like tunnel complexes, cheerfully serving under the most skilled, powerful, and/or intelligent of the family. Kobolds prefer teamwork to individuality, and families, groups of families, etc. work well together. Decisions are reached through consensus, and a leader leads only as long as he or she can command sufficient confidence to create such a consensus.

Kobolds are excellent miners and builders, and excel in crafts where natural rocks and minerals are used. A form of mica chip is commonly used for armor and shields, along with various types of volcanic glass, and a wide variety of gems. Kobolds view gems as simply hard minerals that are useful in various ways.



**Movement Rates:** crawl 3/15 (1/5), step 1/5 (1/4), walk 7/35 (1/5), trot 14/70 (2/5), run 27/135 (2/5), regional travel uses foot rate.

**Mass:** 2d6, lizard form. Ranges from 2 to 12, average 7. After age 40 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Strength:** mass + 1, ranges from 3 to 13, average 8. After age 35 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Agility:** 2d10 + 1, ranges from 3 to 21, average 12. After age 30 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Intelligence:** 2d6 + 2, ranges from 4 to 14, average 9. After age 45 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Age:** [2d6 x2] + 8, ranges from 12 to 32, average 22. Age of adulthood 10-14, average life expectancy 45.

**Experience:** 2d6 if age 18 or less, 3d6 if age 19-25, 4d6 if age 26 or older. If intelligence is 9+, then +1 to experience. Kobolds raised outside normal family/hive have 1d6 less experience than normal.

**Social Status:** 2d6 + 1, ranges from 3 to 13, average 8. Age modifiers are -1 if age 17 or less, +1 if age 28 or older.

**Natural Weapons:** tail, and small claws on hands and feet.

**Natural Armor:** skin absorbs up to 2 wound points in burns (only) anywhere.

**Elemental Magic:** advantaged with fire and metal (choice), disadvantaged with wood.

**Spirit Magic:** 3 nodes in lungs; roll 1d10 for humor: 1,2,3-vitriolic, 4,5-phlegmatic, 6,7-choleric, 8,9-melancholy, 10-roll again.

**Special Advantages:** automatic skill 99 as miner. Automatically specialized in climbing, mining and building skills with a minimum of 2d10 in each (instead of the normal minimum value). Excellent sense of smell gives a bonus of 2d10 to tracking skill, plus the ability to track other kobolds and know them individually by scent for months to years afterward, especially if underground. Smell can be used as a sense as accurate as sight in small, enclosed areas, but not in the open air.

Kobolds in a group of three or more will pool their intelligence - the three may act as one, with an intelligence one greater (+1) than the greatest single intelligence rating of any kobold in the group. For example, if a group of four has intelligence values of 6,9,10 and 12, then when acting together, using a single intelligence, the group counts as an individual with an intelligence of 13. This can be applied toward skill use by any one of the individuals in the group (not necessarily the one with the highest intelligence).

**Special Disadvantages:** cannot specialize in the country sphere, and always have zero (0) skill in hunting, wild food, and riding, regardless of experience. Kobolds have poor eyesight in day or night, are unable to see long distances at all. They require a diet of pure rock, unsullied by weather or other surface elements.

## Lizards

Popularly known as 'lizard men,' this reptile race of tailed humanoids walks erect, with a scaled skin of greenish, greyish, or brownish color. They must keep their hide damp, and therefore live in very wet, relatively warm climates. They are cold-blooded and suffer accordingly from extreme heat or cold. They are normally hunters, but do some farming also.

Lizards live in clusters of 35 to 150, with no specific families or clans, since their young are hatched from eggs and make their own way. Pre-adult lizards have underdeveloped intelligence, but are formidable fighters. As a result, adults are good fighters too, highly competitive, and rarely have scruples toward their own race or others. Lizards do understand the value of cooperation, but civilizations are rare.

Lizards are not known for their tools, although craftsmanship with natural materials is common. They neither prize nor use metal (due to their preferred living conditions), but do appreciate gems of all types.



Obsidian and other volcanic glass are important raw materials, and all lizards carry on considerable trade for such items.



**Movement Rates:** crawl 3/15 (¼), step 1/5 (¼), walk 7/35 (1¼), trot 15/75 (3¼), run 28/140 (7), regional travel uses foot rate.

**Mass:** 2d10 + 1, lizard form. Ranges from 3 to 21, average 12. After age 60 decline begins ('10' on 1d10 each year).

**Strength:** equal to mass, ranges from 3 to 21, average 12. After age 55 decline begins ('10' on 1d10 each year).

**Agility:** 1d6 + 1d10 + 1, ranges from 3 to 17, average 10. After age 40 decline begins ('10' on 1d10 each year).

**Intelligence:** 2d10 - 1, ranges from 1 to 19, average 10. After age 70 decline begins ('10' on 1d10 each year).

Lizard intelligence cannot be more than half the character's current age, in years. For example, an intelligence result of '11' means the lizard achieves full intelligence at age 22. At age 15 the lizard would only have intelligence 7.

**Age:** [2d10 x2] + 2d10, ranges from 6 to 60, average 33. Age of adulthood is age when full intelligence is achieved, plus one additional year. Average life expectancy is 75 years.

**Experience:** 1d6 if intelligence two or more below full, 2d6 if intelligence one below full to two years beyond full, 3d6 if full intelligence achieved 3-10 years earlier, 4d6 if full intelligence achieved 11 or more years earlier. Experience is modified by the actual value of full intelligence (not current intelligence), -1 if full intelligence is 2 or less, +1 if full intelligence is 9-13, +2 if full intelligence is 14-17, +3 if full intelligence is 18 or more.

**Social Status:** 1d10 + 1d6 + 1, ranges from 3 to 17, average 10. Age modifier is -1 if not yet an adult (lacks full intelligence).

**Natural Weapons:** claws on arms and legs, fangs in head, tail.

**Natural Armor:** scales over entire body absorb/deflect up to 2 wound points of each hit.

**Elemental Magic:** advantaged with water, disadvantaged with metal.

**Spirit Magic:** 3 nodes contained in base of tail; roll 1d10 for humor: 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6,7,8-choleric, 9,10-melancholy.

**Special Advantages:** automatic swimming skill of 99, automatically specialized in fighting and country spheres.

**Special Disadvantages:** can only select one sphere for specialization (in addition to the advantages above). Riding skill only applies when riding reptiles, never warm-blooded animals (where skill is zero, as they dislike the touch of a lizard).

Lizards are cold-blooded, and normally live in 75-85°F regions with constant dampness on their hides. For every 10°F above or below this range, subtract one from mass, strength, and intelligence, and subtract two (-2) from agility. Cold at 30°F or below causes their hide to crack and fracture, inflicting one smash wound point per hour to the body as a whole. Cold weather clothing protects a lizard from 10°F worth of cold weather, a Keepwarm (Crystal) spell protects against any type of cold. Lying or swimming in water protects against any heat, provided the water itself is below 95°F (very likely in nature). Note that a Chill (Crystal) spell will make a lizard feel like he or she is in about 30°F weather, but since the spell lasts only two minutes, wounds due to fracturing hide will not occur.

## Minotaurs

These humanoid are large, powerfully built and resemble a bull with a human torso and arms, covered with brown or black hair. The legs are double-jointed with hooves, and the head has horns. Minotaurs with above average intelligence tend to have a human-looking head, those below average have on that looks more like a bull. Some minotaurs have little or no intelligence. They prefer to live on temperate to

cool plains, including steppes and veldts.

Minotaurs live in large families of 6 to 9, with one adult male and a number of adult females, plus children. When young males become adults they are cast out, and must compete using ritual combat for females, to form their own family. This can leave scars, but rarely results in death. Minotaurs are combative, but reluctant to fight to the death unless provoked greatly, or in mortal danger. Less intelligent minotaur families will roam the plains grazing and hunting, more intelligent ones may practice some agriculture, and trade with other races travelling through or on the borders of the area.

Minotaurs with intelligence sometimes practice rudimentary arts and crafts, but they are not known for any excellence in this area.



**Movement Rates:** crawl 1/5 (¼), step 1/5 (¼), walk 8/40 (2), trot 18/90 (4½), run 36/180 (9), regional travel uses mounted rate.

**Mass:** 2d10 + 2, humanoid form. Ranges from 4 to 22, average 13. After age 40 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Strength:** mass - 1, ranges from 3 to 21, average 12. After age 35 decline begins ('10' on 1d6 each year).

**Agility:** 2d6 + 1, ranges from 3 to 13, average 8. After age 30 decline begins ('10' on 1d10 each year).

**Intelligence:** 1d10 + 1d6 - 2, ranges from 0 to 14, average 7. After age 40 decline begins ('10' on 1d10 each year).

**Age:** [2d6 x2] + 1d10, ranges from 5 to 34, average 19½. Age of adulthood 5 to 9, average life expectancy 40.

**Experience:** 1d6 if age 10 or younger, 2d6 if age 11-20, 3d6 if age 21-30, 4d6 if age 31 or older. Intelligence modifiers are -1 if intelligence 2 or less, +1 if intelligence 9 to 13, +2 if intelligence 14 or more.

**Social Status:** 2d6 + 1, ranges from 3 to 13, average 8. Age modifiers are -1 if age 10 or younger, or if any strength or mass has been lost due to decline by age.

**Natural Weapon:** fists, quadruped kick (with either leg).

**Natural Armor:** none.

**Elemental Magic:** advantaged with wood or water (choice), disadvantaged with light/darkness.

**Spirit Magic:** 3 nodes in horns on head (only 2 nodes if intelligence is 0 or 1), roll 1d10 for humor, 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6-choleric, 7,8-melancholy, 9,10-roll again.

**Special Advantages:** automatically specialized in country sphere, in addition to two normal specialization spheres. A good long-distance runner, it takes twice the normal time for a running minotaur to become exhausted.

**Special Disadvantages:** cannot specialize in the town sphere.

## Moonspiders

This race of intelligent spiders, who are nearly human size, are both hunted and feared by other races. Moonspiders come in all colors and markings, from silver-grey to tan/orange. They are covered with fine hairs, and resemble an oversize tarantula. They can survive in hot or moderate climates, and if necessary in cold as well.

Moonspiders live in large clans, but their primary loyalty is to their lifetime mate. Moonspiders go through a mating period one month each year, during which they can spin moonsilk (originally used for nests and webs). The period of year varies from spider to spider. Moonsilk is extremely valuable, so moonspiders have been hunted by many. This has made them paranoid toward other races. However, mateless moonspiders, or insane ones, have been known to live with other races. Moonspider clans devote much attention to hiding themselves from other races, and are extremely difficult to find.

Moonspiders use tools and are good craftsmen, but excel at the use of their moonsilk. In times of need they have been known to trade their silk.



**Movement Rates:** crawl 3/15 (¼), step 2/10 (½), walk 10/50 (2½), trot 18/90 (4¼), run 35/175 (8¼), gallop 70/350 (17¼), regional travel uses foot rate.

**Mass:** 2d6 + 2, insect form. Ranges from 4 to 14, average 9. After age 30 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Strength:** mass + 2, ranges from 6 to 16, average 11. After age 25 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Agility:** 3d10, ranges from 3 to 30, average 16½. After age 20 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Intelligence:** 2d10 - 1, ranges from 1 to 19, average 10. After age 35 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Age:** 3d10 + 3, ranges from 6 to 33, average 19½. Age of adulthood 6 to 8, average life expectancy 35.

**Experience:** 1d6 if age 12 or less, 2d6 if age 13 to 19, 3d6 if age 20 to 26, 4d6 if age 27 or older. Intelligence modifiers are -1 if intelligence 2 or less, +1 if intelligence 9-13, +2 if intelligence 14-17, +3 if intelligence 18 or more.

**Social Status:** 1d10 + 1d6, ranges from 2 to 16, average 9. Age modifiers are -1 if 9 or less, +1 if 30 or older.

**Natural Weapons:** fangs, which inflict one poison wound whenever one or more normal wounds are inflicted. This is a paralyzing poison that reduces strength and agility by one (-1) per poison wound, and lasts for 2d10 days or until an antidote is given. Moonspiders with doctor/druggist skills know how to prepare such an antidote, and any moonspider in a clan has access to such freely.

**Natural Armor:** none.

**Elemental Magic:** no special advantages or disadvantages; some are advantage with light and disadvantaged with darkness, or vice versa.

**Spirit Magic:** 3 nodes in body joint between head and torso, roll 1d10 for humor, 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4,5-phlegmatic, 6,7-choleric, 8,9-melancholy, 10-roll again.

**Special Advantages:** automatic climbing skill of 99, can 'spin' a rope naturally whenever they wish, as long as they wish, and 'throw' it up to 20 paces. Moonspiders can spin moonsilk itself one month each year, during the mating season (see general description, above).

**Special Disadvantages:** hunted by most other races, weak eyesight has trouble seeing long distances, regardless of elemental advantages. During the mating season intelligence is halved (round fractions up) and nothing but finding a mate (or staying with one's current mate) seems important.

**Moonsilk:** an extremely strong and flexible webbing that has a silvery look, akin to woven silk, but as strong as iron. Originally used to make flexible homes, its most popular use is in clothing, as moonsilk absorbs/deflects 5 wound points of any type, including burns, and has virtually no weight (does not count as an item). An excellent tailor can sometimes dye or color it as well. Moonsilk can also be made into whips, with 1d6+1 damage value (instead of 1d6-1) and a breakage of 14.

## Ogres

This peculiar race is a cross between humans and trolls, now evolved into a separate race. Ogres appear like large, thick humans, but in reality have more in common with trolls. Their skin is human-colored and without scales, but they have a powerful smell and nasty habits, as well as the general size, strength, intelligence, and clumsiness of trolls. Ogres dislike sunlight, and prefer dark hovels with a fulsome odor to hide their smell.

Ogres sometimes live among trolls, or sometimes alone. They can be found in the worst sections of towns or cities, doing unsavory jobs, and perhaps connected with the local underworld. Normally they inhabit abandoned or collapsed buildings.

Ogres rarely have the patience for arts or crafts, but in a few cases,

where they are 'brought up correctly' among humans, they can be found in trades where strength is valuable.



**Movement Rates:** crawl 2/10 (½), step 1/5 (¼), walk 10/50 (2½), trot 18/90 (4¼), run 34/170 (8¼), regional travel uses foot rate.

**Mass:** 2d10 + 6, humanoid form. Ranges from 3 to 26, average 14½. After age 50 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Strength:** mass - 1, ranges from 2 to 25, average 13½. After age 50 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Agility:** 2d6 + 2, ranges from 4 to 14, average 9. After age 40 decline begins ('10' on 1d10 each year).

**Intelligence:** 2d6, ranges from 2 to 12, average 7. After age 60 decline begins ('10' on 1d10 each year).

**Age:** [2d10 x3] + 1d6, ranges from 7 to 66, average 36½. Age of adulthood 11 to 14, average life expectancy 70.

**Experience:** 1d6 if age 19 or younger, 2d6 if age 20-35, 3d6 if age 36-51, 4d6 if age 52 or older. Intelligence modifiers are -1 if intelligence 2 or less, +1 if intelligence 9 or more.

**Social Status:** 3d6 - 6, ranges from 0 to 12, average 4½.

**Natural Weapons:** fists, kick.

**Natural Armor:** none.

**Elemental Magic:** advantaged with wood and darkness, disadvantaged with fire and light.

**Spirit Magic:** 2 nodes in stomach, roll 1d10 for humor: 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6,7-choleric, 8,9-melancholy, 10-roll again.

**Special Advantages:** has superior eyesight in darkness.

**Special Disadvantages:** strong stench prevents it from counting ambush or concealment skills as specialties, has poor eyesight in bright daylight.

**Disease:** ogres are natural carriers of diseases 3% of the time. Roll 1d6 to determine the disease: 1-lung rot, 2-gut spasm, 3-sleeping sickness, 4-strength drain, 5-flesh parasites, 6-blood poisoning. Only have natural immunity to disease carried.

## Orcs

Orcs are roughly human size, but slightly more massive, with bowed backs, longer arms, hairy bodies, and a general disdain for personal hygiene that gives them and their rags a perpetually 'dirty' color. Skin color is greenish brown to brown, grey in cold climates or in old age. They are covered with dark brown or black hair, often including their face. Orcs prefer to live indoors in cool, damp climates, such as old



buildings, caves, underground, etc. They can survive heat, but dislike living in it.

Orcs live in clans of 12 to 40, of which 20-25% are adult males. Orcs are infamous for their selfish, greedy, cruel and violent natures. They respect only force (physical or magical). With a strong leader, sometimes of a different race, a clan can become well organized and even have other clans serve it. More often leaders are weak, rapidly replaced by others, and the clan itself remains in chaos. Clans may live apart, or within a few leagues of each other. When clans are close, and also chaotic, each may split up, recombine with neighbors, in a complex political ballet incomprehensible to outsiders.

**Movement Rates:** crawl 2/10 (½), step 1/5 (¼), walk 8/40 (4), trot 16/80 (4), run 32/160 (8), regional travel uses foot rate.

**Mass:** 1d10 + 1d6 + 3, humanoid form. Ranges from 5 to 19, average 12. After age 40 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Strength:** equal to mass, ranges from 5 to 19, average 12. After age 35 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Agility:** 2d10 - 1, ranges from 1 to 19, average 10. After age 30 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Intelligence:** 1d10 + 1d6, ranges from 2 to 16, average 9. After age 40 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Age:** [2d6 x2] + 12, ranges from 16 to 36, average 26. Age of adulthood is 10 to 15, average life expectancy is 45.

**Experience:** 1d6 if age 21 or less, 2d6 if age 22-30, 3d6 if age 31 or older. Intelligence modifiers are -1 if intelligence 2 or less, +1 if intelligence 9-13, +2 if intelligence 14 or more.

**Social Status:** 2d10, ranges from 2 to 20, average 11. Age modifiers are -1 if age 18 or less, +1 if age 33 or older.

**Natural Weapons:** fangs, small claws on hands and feet.

**Natural Armor:** thick hide absorbs/deflects 1 wound point anywhere on body.

**Elemental Magic:** advantaged with fire or metal (choice), disadvantaged with wood or water (choice). Some races are advantaged in darkness and disadvantaged in light also.

**Spirit Magic:** 3 nodes in front fangs, roll 1d10 for humor: 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6,7-choleric, 8,9,10-melancholy.

**Special Advantages:** automatically specialized in underworld skill, and any one weapon use skill of choice; has superior eyesight in darkness, very superior if advantaged in darkness element also.

**Special Disadvantages:** cannot specialize in Arts/Crafts sphere unless intelligence or agility is 12 or higher; cannot specialize in magic sphere unless intelligence and social status are both 14 or higher. Regardless of specialties, can never count as specialized in dancer or cook skills. Orcs have poor eyesight in daylight, and are blinded by direct sunlight if disadvantaged with the light element.

## Pixies

This race of very small winged humanoids is remarkably similar to tiny men and women, with gauzy wings. Their skin is very pale, and sometimes seems translucent. Pixies prefer a moderate climate and areas with plenty of vegetation.

Pixies live in families of 3 to 6, similar to humans, and often a number of families live together in a small town or village. Interests, needs, desires, and general social organization are also basically human. They are less serious than humans, and have a whimsical sense of humor. To many races pixies are a myth, since with their small size and blinding speed, they can quickly 'disappear' if they wish.

Pixies have developed tools, artifacts, etc. suitable for their own needs. Humans of mass greater than seven (7) cannot use Pixie artifacts and items, as they are too small and light.



**Movement (on ground):** crawl 1/5 (¼), step 1/5 (¼), walk 6/30 (1½), trot 12/60 (3), run 24/120 (6), regional travel uses foot rate.

**Movement (flying):** glide 18/90 (4½), 'walk' 30/150 (7½), 'trot' 60/300 (15), 'run' 92/460 (23), 'gallop' 156/780 (39), regional travel ½ hour per league.

**Mass:** 1d6, winged humanoid form. Ranges from 1 to 6, average 3½. After age 60 decline begins ('10' on 1d10 each year).

**Strength:** mass + 1, ranges from 2 to 7, average 4½. After age 50 decline begins ('10' on 1d10 each year).

**Agility:** 3d10 + 20, ranges from 23 to 50, average 36½. After age 40 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Intelligence:** 2d10, ranges from 2 to 20, average 11. After age 70 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Age:** [2d10 x30] + 10, ranges from 16 to 70, average 43. Age of adulthood is 20, average life expectancy is 75.

**Experience:** 1d6 if age 29 or less, 2d6 if age 30-43, 3d6 if age 44-59, 4d6 if age 60 or older. Intelligence modifiers are -1 if intelligence 2 or less, +1 if intelligence 9-13, +2 if intelligence 14-17, +3 if intelligence 18 or more.

**Social Status:** 2d6 + 1, ranges from 3 to 13, average 8. Age modifiers are -1 if 19 or younger, +1 if 60 or older.

**Natural Weapons:** none.

**Natural Armor:** none.

**Elemental Magic:** no special advantages or disadvantages.

**Spirit Magic:** 3 nodes in heart, roll 1d10 for humor, 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6-choleric, 7,8-melancholy, 9,10-roll again.

**Special Advantages:** automatically specialized in country sphere, in addition to two normal spheres of choice.

**Special Disadvantages:** poor eyesight (have difficulty seeing long distances), cannot fly in any metal armor except for an open helmet.

## Satyrs

These humanoids have a lower body that resembles a goat, bull, or similar with double-jointed legs, hooves, and a covering of thick hair. Satyrs have a human head, arms and torso with pinkish-tan flesh color, their hair on the lower parts is normally brown. They prefer woodlands or rolling countryside of a moderate climate, since they normally live outdoors, and are vegetarians.

Satyrs are solitary, but have a special 'homing sense' that may attract them to members of the opposite sex, including those of other races. However, they are gracious creatures who live for music, dance and joy - they have little interest in status, wealth or violence. Satyrs dislike large crowds, and when the homing instinct is upon them will approach individuals with sexual advances bordering on a frenzy. At other times they travel in the forest, tend various garden areas, visit acquaintances, and generally enjoy life. They may casually visit other races beyond the forest, usually in areas of low population density.

Satyrs are similar to fauns, but satyrs are larger, stronger, and are willing to fight if necessary. Like fauns, they are good in woodcraft, but avoid the more 'industrial' arts and crafts, and rarely make anything for trade or sale. Satyr workmanship is adequate, but not nearly as beautiful as that of fauns.



**Movement Rates:** crawl 1/5 (¼), step 1/5 (¼), walk 9/45 (2¼), trot 19/95 (4¼), 40/200 (10), regional travel uses the mounted rate.

**Mass:** 1d10 + 1d6 + 2, humanoid form. Ranges from 4 to 18, average 11. After age 45 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Strength:** same as mass, ranges from 4 to 18, average 11. After age 40 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Agility:** 1d10 + 1d6 + 2, ranges from 4 to 18, average 11. After age 35 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).



**Intelligence:** 2d10, ranges from 2 to 20, average 11. After age 50 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Age:** [2d6 x2] + 1d10, ranges from 5 to 34, average 19½. Age of adulthood is 7 to 10, average life expectancy is 50.

**Experience:** 1d6 if 10 or younger, 2d6 if age 11 to 20, 3d6 if age 21 to 30, 4d6 if age 31 or older. Intelligence modifiers are -1 if intelligence 2 or less, +1 if intelligence 9-13, +2 if intelligence 14-17, +3 if intelligence 18 or more.

**Social Status:** 1d6 + 2, varies from 3 to 9, average 5½. Modifiers are -1 if age 10 or less, +1 if age 21-30, +2 if age 31 or older.

**Natural Weapons:** fist, kick with +1 damage and +1 breakage.

**Natural Armor:** none.

**Elemental Magic:** no special advantages or disadvantages.

**Spirit Magic:** 3 nodes in horns (on top of head), roll 1d10 for humor, 1,2,3-vitriolic, 4,5-phlegmatic, 6,7,8-choleric, 9,10-melancholy.

**Special Advantages:** automatically specialized in country sphere, in addition to two normal spheres. Automatically specialized in wild food, musician, and dancer skills, regardless of sphere specialization.

**Special Disadvantages:** may not specialize in the town sphere. During the full moon (one day in every 28) the 'homing sense' comes upon a satyr 50% of the time. A successful hard intelligence test will overcome this instinct, although satyrs don't normally attempt to resist it (continued resistance leads to psychological problems). If the sense is not resisted, a normal intelligence test determines if the satyr remains rational and finds a compatible partner (test passed) or if he/she loses control and makes indiscriminate advances toward any solitary person.

Regardless of whether a satyr remains 'reasonable' or not, the homing instinct mentally 'contagious' to the object of the advance, who needs a hard intelligence test to avoid acquiring the frenzy too. Involvement in a satyric frenzy has no physically harm effects beyond the loss of rest that night. However, it can cause psychological problems and/or a drop in social class if local morals, religion, etc. disapprove of such activities.

## Selkets

This insectoid race has six legs. The hind pair is for walking and running, the middle pair very light and dextrous for grasping and manipulating, while the fore pair is middle-weight for either fighting, simple grasping, or galloping with four legs. Selket chitin (armor-like skin) is normally tan or greyish in color, sometimes with redish bands or markings. They live in desert climates, prefer heat, but can withstand cold amazingly well too. However, all but a few rare greenish colored species are 'burned' by water.

Selkets normally live in a hive, with their town resembling a huge insect castle, half underground, half above ground. Although individuals have a separate consciousness, socially they form a hive, with a queen and princesses who lay eggs in special nursery areas, while males form the warrior caste. Low status males and females serve as workers, nursery tenders, craftsmen, etc. Selkets are instinctively obedient to their superiors, disobedience is considered insanity, individuality and creativity are considered undesirable traits.

Selkets are exceptionally good builders, and skillful in working natural materials. However, their craftsmanship tends toward the traditional and conservative, and are thus often inferior to more progressive civilizations. Because the selket body is naturally adapted to many purposes, tools are viewed as specialty instruments, rather than everyday items.



**Movement Rates:** selkets can move 'erect' on just their hind legs, or 'canter' on the forelegs and hindlegs combined. In regional travel they

normally use a mixture of both, and are considered moving at a mounted rate.

**Erect Rates:** crawl - none, step 1/5 (¼), walk 9/45 (2¼), trot 16/80 (4), run 30/150 (7½).

**Canter Rates:** crawl 1/5 (¼), step 1/5 (¼), walk 10/50 (2½), trot 24/120 (6), run 48/240 (12), gallop 64/320 (16).

**Mass:** 2d6 + 1, insect form. Ranges from 3 to 13, average 8. After age 40 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Strength:** mass + 3, ranges from 6 to 16, average 11. After age 40 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Agility:** 2d10 + 1, ranges from 3 to 21, average 12. After age 30 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Intelligence:** 2d10, ranges from 2 to 20, average 11. After age 45 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Age:** [2d6 x2] + 2d10, ranges from 6 to 44, average 25. Age of adulthood 7 to 9, average life expectancy is 50.

**Experience:** 1d6 if 13 or younger, 2d6 if age 14-24, 3d6 if age 25-34, 4d6 if age 35-44. Intelligence modifiers are -1 if intelligence 2 or less, +1 if intelligence 9-13, +2 if intelligence 14-17, +3 if intelligence 18 or more.

**Social Status:** 2d6, ranges from 2 to 12, average 7, but often higher because of modifiers. Modifiers are +1 if mass 10 or higher, +1 if strength 11-13, +2 if strength 14 or higher, +1 if agility 14-17, +2 if agility 18 or higher, +1 if intelligence 13-16, +2 if intelligence 17 or higher, +1 if age 25-34, +2 if age 35 or more. These modifiers reflect the way selket society is ordered biologically.

**Natural Weapons:** small claws on forelegs (can only be used if erect), stinger on tail.

**Natural Armor:** chitin over entire body absorbs/deflects 1 point of thrust wounds, 2 points of any other type of wound, except poison wounds (which inflict normal damage if one or more wound points of non-poison wounds occur).

**Elemental Magic:** advantaged with wind, disadvantaged with water (metal instead of the rare green-colored species that can survive water).

**Spirit Magic:** 3 nodes in eyes, roll 1d10 for humor: 1,2,3-vitriolic, 4,5-phlegmatic, 6,7-choleric, 8,9-melancholy, 10-roll again.

**Special Advantages:** needs little water (quarter of normal) in very dry climates. Counts as automatically specialized in mining and building skills with intelligence as minimum skill rating. Natural weapon advantage is not in weapon use, but in weapon speed instead (due to insectoid nature).

**Special Disadvantages:** allergic to water, full immersion causes 1d6/2 burns per period (20 seconds) with no armor protection. Light rains cause 1 burn per 5 minutes, heavy rains 1 burn per 2 minutes. Falling snow is normally similar to light rain, but walking in any snow greater than a dusting causes 1 burn per 2 minutes to the hindlegs. Selkets normally burrow into the ground to avoid rain, which can be done in 1d6/2 minutes in an emergency, and if the ground is soft. Selkets who travel often carry waterproof gear (equivalent to cold-weather gear).

Selkets never count as specialized in drinking or bowyer skills, and are always at zero (0) skill in swimming. To disobey orders, or make a creative interpretation of them, a selket must pass a hard intelligence test (normal if the order came from a non-selket race), as well as having a good reason.

Green selkets who are not hurt by water compose only 1% of the race, a player's character has only this percentage of being green.

## Trolls

These semi-reptilian creatures have a dirty and slimy appearance. The hide beneath is of flexible but remarkably strong greenish or brownish scales. Trolls prefer damp, musky areas with moderate vegetation and moderate to hot temperatures. Their favorite living quarters are swampland caves.

Trolls live alone or in very small families (six or less). Only a very strong leader can hold together a clan of two or more families. They are extremely quarrelsome, among their own kind and with other races. Trolls are greedy, with no sense of compassion, and little interest in working for the common good. Trolls sometimes are found in the worst parts of towns or cities, where they are typically hired for very unsavory jobs of a short-term nature.

Trolls have little interest in the arts or crafts, and rarely have any skill in them. Generally, trolls tend to be unsophisticated and direct.

**Movement Rates:** crawl 2/10 (¼), step 1/5 (¼), walk 10/50 (2½), trot 18/90 (4½), run 34/170 (8½), regional travel uses foot rate.

**Mass:** 3d10 + 1, humanoid form. Ranges from 4 to 31, average 17½. After age 50 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Strength:** mass - 2, ranges from 2 to 29, average 15½. After age 50 decline begins ('6' on 1d6 each year).

**Agility:** 2d6 + 1, ranges from 3 to 13, average 8. After age 40 decline begins ('10' on 1d10 each year).



**Intelligence:**  $2d6 - 1$ , ranges from 1 to 11, average 6. After age 60 decline begins (10' on 1d10 each year).

**Age:**  $[2d10 \times 3] + 1d10$ , ranges from 7 to 70, average 38½. Age of adulthood 10-12, average life expectancy is 75.

**Experience:**  $1d6 + 1$ , if age 28 or younger,  $2d6 + 2$  if age 29 or older. Intelligence modifiers are -1 if intelligence 2 or less, +1 if intelligence 9 or more.

**Social Status:**  $3d6 - 6$ , ranges from 0 to 12, average 14½. There are no age modifiers.

**Natural Weapons:** fangs, small claws on hands, large claws on feet.

**Natural Armor:** scaled hide absorbs/deflects 2 wounds per hit anywhere.

**Elemental Magic:** advantaged with water and darkness, disadvantaged with fire and light.

**Spirit Magic:** 2 node soul in stomach (in torso), roll 1d10 for humor, 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4,5-phlegmatic, 6,7-choleric, 8,9,10-melancholy.

**Special Advantages:** the hide heals from cuts and thrusts at an abnormally fast rate: first wound point heals in two hours (instead of one day), second in four more hours (instead of two more days), etc. Smash, burn and poison wounds heal at the normal rate. Trolls have exceptionally good eyesight in darkness.

**Special Disadvantages:** limited manual dexterity means that all the following skills are at half their normal minimum, improvement is halved, and maximum is halved: ambush, concealment, disarm trap, pickpocket, cooking, dancing, and all Arts/Crafts sphere skills. Trolls cannot specialize in Arts/Crafts sphere. They have poor eyesight in bright daylight.

**Disease:** Trolls are natural carriers of diseases 20% of the time, and are themselves always immune to the disease they carry, and whether a carrier or not, immune to all diseases 99% of the time. If a carrier, roll 1d6 to determine the disease carried: 1-lung rot, 2-gut spasm, 3-sleeping sickness, 4-strength drain, 5-flesh parasites, 6-blood poisoning (only applies if troll wounds someone with natural weapon).

## Unicorns

This exceptionally rare race appears as an extremely beautiful quadruped, not unlike a horse, but with a single horn on the forehead. Unicorns are normally white, but a few are golden, silver-grey, or black. They prefer to live in forest meadows of a moderate to cool temperature, and often favor hidden alpine valleys and other remote spots of great beauty.

Unicorns are born magically, in ways they don't understand. They are immortal unless killed by an act or accident. Unicorns are always solitary creatures, with no need or interest in mating. They are extremely wise, but have a faintly wistful and lonely attitude. They avoid other races (for good reason, usually!), but may reveal themselves and attempt to make friends if they judge a person exceptionally compassionate, moral, trustworthy, and pure.

Unicorns lack hands, although some rudimentary manipulation with mouth and hooves is possible. They do not use tools, and have no manual skills. Instead, their interests are normally mental, including the nature of the races, philosophy, knowledge for its own sake, etc.



**Movement Rates:** crawl - none, step 1/5 (¼), walk 13/65 (3¼), trot 32/160 (8), run 62/310 (15½), gallop 90/450 (22½), regional travel uses mounted rate.

**Mass:**  $2d10 + 1$ , quadruped form. Ranges from 3 to 21, average 12. There is no decline due to age.

**Strength:** mass - 2, ranges from 1 to 19, average 10. There is no decline due to age.

**Agility:**  $2d10 + 1$ , ranges from 3 to 21, average 12. There is no decline due to age.

**Intelligence:**  $1d10 + 1d6 + 6$ , ranges from 8 to 22, average 15. There is no decline due to age.

**Age:** immortal naturally, but can be killed by violence or disease, if curious roll  $[1d10 \times 100] + d100$  for current age.

**Experience:**  $2d6 + 3$ . Ranges from 5 to 15, average 10.

**Social Status:** always zero (0).

**Natural Weapons:** quadruped kick, can use horn as weapon (equivalent to spear used in two hands, unbreakable while unicorn lives).

**Natural Armor:** none.

**Elemental Magic:** advantaged with light, disadvantaged with darkness (the opposite for black unicorns, no advantage or disadvantage if silver-grey unicorn).

**Spirit Magic:** 4 nodes in horn, roll 1d10 for humor, 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6-choleric, 7,8-melancholy, 9,10-roll again.

**Special Advantages:** automatically specialized in magic and general knowledge spheres, may select one additional sphere as well. Automatically knows the spiritual knowledge sphere. Concealment skill has double normal minimum, double normal improvements, as a maximum that is automatically 99 (regardless of intelligence).

The body of a unicorn is magical, and can act as any number of containers for any number and variety of nodes (elemental and/or spiritual). A unicorn has a superior sense of sight in daylight if light advantaged, at night if dark advantaged.

**Special Disadvantages:** cannot specialize in fighting, nor in town spheres. A unicorn has no hands, and automatically has zero (0) minimum skill in any activity that requires the use of hands. Such skills can be improved, but at one quarter the normal rate, and with a maximum that is half the normal.

Unless insane, a unicorn is not materialistic, and will remain at social level zero (0) forever. Unicorns will defend themselves and others who need defending if unable to escape a fight, or if they pass an intelligence test. Offensive action is extremely rare (must pass very hard intelligence test, or courage check for non-warrior if NPC, and also have a very good reason).



# 13. Animals

## 13.1 All About Animals

'Animals' includes creatures of little or no intelligence, including unintelligent 'monsters'. As a result, animals cannot be player characters, since rational activity, communication, and interaction are not really possible. Instead, animals may either be domesticated to act as servants or pets of intelligent characters, or they are wild and potentially hostile enemies that characters could encounter.

The animals listed here are simply a basic selection for any fantasy world, and represent the types most characters have heard about, and perhaps already encountered. A great variety of additional animals, including extremely fearsome ones, animals with specific magical powers or abilities, etc., can be created by the gamemaster for special situations. Such dangers can be created by using the format here as a guideline, and simply assigning appropriate characteristics, etc.

**Size:** animal size is rated in general terms, and also by the size of base used for a standard 25mm miniature. This indicates how many animals can fit into a square one pace by one pace (or how many such squares are needed for the animal).

tiny . . . . .	.5x5mm base . . . . .	9 per square (held in human hand, fits into small sack)
small . . . . .	.8x8mm base . . . . .	4 per square (lifted by normal human, fits into large sack)
normal . . . . .	.15x15mm base . . . . .	1 per square (similar in size to normal human)
large . . . . .	.15x30mm base . . . . .	2 squares (similar in size to a horse)
very large . . . . .	.30x30mm base . . . . .	4 squares (similar in size to a small room)
gigantic . . . . .	.30x60mm base . . . . .	8 squares (similar in size to elephant or medium room)

**Skills:** animals have fighting skills in weapon use and weapon speed. They do not use tools, and thus have only their natural weapons. Natural weapons are listed in order of preference. In combat an animal starts with the weapon of preference first, but will shift to the next lower preference if the current one fails to hit, or is unable to hit (or inflict any damage when it does it, due to insufficient wound ability). Animals with LO weapons will attempt to grapple and wrestle to use them (leap onto the character) when that weapon is the one of preference.

The skill rating for an animal depends on whether it is simply bothered and striking normally, attacking for food (because it is hungry), or fighting fanatically for some special reason. Herbivores do not attack using the 'hungry' skill level, obviously. The 'fanatic' attack normally occurs if the animal is cornered and badly frightened, defending its nest or lair, defending its young, etc. Animals that actively seek combat will normally charge, especially carnivores and omnivores.

To determine the actual skill level, add the characteristics indicated, plus the dice roll, and use that value throughout the combat situation:

Situation	Weapon use skill	Weapon speed skill
normal . . . . .	.strength + agility + 15 + 3d10 . . . . .	[agility x2] + 10 + 2d10
hungry . . . . .	.strength + agility + 20 + 4d10 . . . . .	[agility x2] + 15 + 3d10
fanatic . . . . .	.strength + agility + 30 + 6d10 . . . . .	[agility x2] + 25 + 5d10

**Other Skills** for animals are determined by the gamemaster. If the animal would need the skill for survival (such as climbing, swimming, ambush, tracking, etc.) it is presumed to have it at maximum level (or no more than 2d10 below that). If the animal doesn't need the skill for survival, it is usually at zero (0) level, but the gamemaster may allow minimum skill if the animal would use the skill at times.

**Parry:** animals with L1 or longer cut or thrust natural weapons will use them for parries in combat if either (a) 50% of the time if the animal has already been wounded and is not fighting fanatically, or (b) 100% of the time if the animal can parry as well as strike, etc. Animals will not dodge unless attempting to escape (due to morale).

**Morale:** carnivores and omnivores are considered 'warrior' types for moral and courage purposes, herbivores 'non warriors' for courage purposes. If an animal is cornered and unable to escape, but a courage check requires it, the animal becomes fanatic instead.

**Habits & Habitats:** these determine where the animal is likely to be

found, and what it is likely to be doing when found. Eating habits suggest the overall attitude of the animal. Herbivores usually avoid combat unless cornered, or much larger than their foe. Herbivores also fight for mates, or to protect territory (if territorial). Carnivores attack if hungry, usually from ambush, but if they have recently eaten or lack a prepared ambush, they only attack if attacked, to protect territory (if territorial), or family (if they have one). Omnivores eat anything, and are usually always collecting food. In addition, many are territorial, or far-ranging hunters that do not need an ambush. As a result, omnivores almost always are prepared to attack. However, omnivores fresh from recent combat (victory or defeat) are less likely to attack, especially if the target appears formidable.

Living habits are based on preferred temperature range and climate, the level of vegetation, and general topography.

Temperature reflects those in which the animal is comfortable and active. This may only be at day or night, and in certain seasons an animal might hibernate, migrate, or become less active due to climate. Typical temperature classes used here are frozen (below 25°F), cold (24-40°F), cool (40-55°F), moderate (55-70°F), warm (70-90°F), hot (90-110°F), and burning (over 110°F). Often an animal can fit into a number of temperature classes without difficulty.

Vegetation is important to herbivores, since the amount also suggests the type, and most herbivores are biologically specialized and able to eat only certain types (the giraffe is an extreme example). Carnivores typically pursue certain types of herbivores, and thus are adjusted to an appropriate vegetation as well. Omnivores may have unique dietary requirements that demand access to certain types of vegetation, but many are more flexible than either herbivores or carnivores. Vegetation for animal purposes is classed generally, either as none (sand or rock desert, rocky badlands, mountains above treeline, ice or snow, etc.), light (grass and brush, perhaps an occasional tree), medium (light or medium forests, with some open areas), or heavy (dense and continual forest).

Topography is important because some animals may be specialized to flatlands or relatively vertical environments, require a certain degree of dampness or dryness, firm or soft ground, etc. Topography is classed in two ways. First, it is either wet (rainfall common, continual at times of the year, ground constantly holding water) or dry (rainfall occasional to rare, ground moist at best, water mainly found in streams, rivers, etc. if at all). The contours of the land may be rated as typically flat (changes in elevation are very gradual, with the exception of gullies, wadies, or similar), rough (countour changes common, but elevation changes not too great), or mountainous (elevation changes are radical, slopes often steep to impossible).

**Grouping:** animals are typically found in either families or herds. Families normally have two adults and a small group of children (either 1d6 or 2d6). Adults from a family may separate themselves and look for food in solitary fashion, while the other guards the children. Young adults and/or any adult in the 'off season' may be solitary. Herds, on the other hand, typically have many adults and children (children are usually less than 50% of the herd), and stay close together. Young males (or sometimes females) may be excluded from the herd at a certain age to find a mate — usually in another herd. Older adults that lose their mate may wander from the herd and become solitary. If herds or similar large groups are carnivores, the herd may break up when hunting into two or more parts, or sometimes into individual hunters, and then regroup at a central point every night (or day).

**Intelligence:** animals may have a chance of low intelligence (1d6/2 — 1 usually represents this), or may frequently have a low-level intelligence (1d6, or 1d6 — 1 is typical). This means an animal has some chance of passing an easy intelligence test, and may learn from events in a limited, slow fashion. Animals without any intelligence typically rely on instinct, and when adult cannot be taught anything new — which makes domestication impossible. By definitions, animals are never capable of rational communication, although races with unique communication abilities may be able to 'tune in' or even affect animal emotions.

**Animal Spirit Nodes:** there is a chance that an animal may contain one spirit node. This chance (if any) and the type of humor are listed.

**Diseases from Animals:** if there is a chance an animal can communicate a disease this is given, although with the type(s). This danger is a random event that characters cannot normally avoid, except by avoiding animals entirely. The chance of disease presumes characters take normal care when handling animals live and dead. The chance of disease



can increase with sickly animals, especially vulnerable characters, etc.

**Fears:** most animals are afraid of fire, of their natural predators, and of anything that is unexpected and unusual. Wild animals normally avoid civilization. Additional fears, or lack of fear, may be noted also.

### Alligator, Crocodile

A wild, carnivorous lizard that lives alone or in small groups (1d6 + 1). It prefers warm to hot temperatures, medium to heavy vegetation, and wet, flat terrain such as swamps, marshes, etc. It is amphibious, but normally hunts in the water. It is a reptile, and thus suffers loss of abilities outside the body heat range of 70-90°F; see Lizards (Intelligent Races) for details.

**Movement Rates:** crawl 3/15 (¼), step 1/5 (½), walk 6/30 (1½), trot 12/60 (3), run 24/120 (6), gallop 48/240 (12), regional travel uses foot rate.

**Mass & Strength:** 2d6 + 4, lizard form, large. Ranges from 6 to 16, average is 11.

**Agility:** 2d6 + 1, ranges from 3 to 13, average 8.

**Intelligence:** none.

**Preferred Weapon:** L0 bite with head, 1d6+1 cuts (at strength 4).

**Secondary Weapon:** L2 whip with tail, 1d6-1 smash (at strength 5).

**Armor:** hide absorbs/deflects 2 wound points anywhere.

**Fears:** feels insecure on land, tries to avoid being attacked there.

**Disease:** 3% chance, roll 1d6, 1-lung rot, 2-gut spasm, 3-sleeping sickness, 4-strength drain, 5-flesh parasites, 6-blood poisoning.

**Spirit Nodes:** 8% chance of one, found in entire head, roll 1d10 for humor, 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4,5-phlegmatic, 6,7-choleric, 8,9-melancholy, 10-roll again.

### Army Ants

A wild, omnivorous 'army' of millions of ants that move and act like one. They prefer temperatures at least warm, medium to heavy vegetation, and any non-mountainous terrain.

**Movement Rates:** crawl 3/15 (¼), step 3/15 (¼), walk 4/20 (1), regional travel uses foot rate.

**Mass & Strength:** 6d6, ranges from 6 to 36, average 21. Army has no specific form or hit location, it is one item, one pace wide, and 3 paces long for every point of mass.

**Agility:** one (1).

**Intelligence:** none.

**Weapon:** L0 biting, overrun by the swarm, inflicts 1d6 cuts automatically (will not miss at L0 range), armor protection is halved (ants crawl in through the chinks).

**Armor:** none.

**Disease:** 1% chance, will always be blood poisoning from wounds.

**Spirit Nodes:** no change of any.

**Notes:** there are no hit locations to the swarm, swarm is only affected when its mass is destroyed.

### Giant Ant

A wild, omnivorous insect that has a nest of hundreds, like normal ants. Individual worker-scouts may be encountered, or a small party of workers (1d10 + 2) and/or warriors (1d6 + 2). They prefer moderate to hot temperatures, live in any vegetation, but often in areas with light or no vegetation, prefer dry terrain, usually flat.

**Movement Rates:** crawl 4/20 (1), step 2/10 (½), walk 8/40 (2), trot 18/90 (4½), run 34/170 (8½), gallop 68/340 (17), regional travel uses mounted rate.

**Mass:** 2d6 + 1, insect form, normal size. Ranges from 3 to 13, average 8.

**Strength:** mass + 5, ranges from 8 to 18, average 13.

**Intelligence:** none.

**Warrior Weapon:** L3 claws on grasping forelegs, 1d10 - 2 cuts (at strength 8).

**Worker Weapon:** L0 mandibles on head, 1d6-1 cuts (at strength 8).  
**Armor:** warrior's chitin absorbs/deflects 3 wound points anywhere, worker's 2 wound points anywhere.

**Fears:** completely fearless.

**Disease:** 1% chance of blood poisoning from wounds.

**Spirit Nodes:** 4% chance of one, found in joint between head and body, roll 1d10 for humor, 1,2,3-vitriolic, 4,5,6-phlegmatic, 7,8-choleric, 9,10-melancholy.

**Notes:** prefer to build nests in areas with gold-bearing rock, underground caverns can go hundreds of feet deep (creating a 'ready made' mine of sorts).

### Great Ape

A wild, omnivorous mammal that lives in a family structure, and often with a number of families (1d6) nearby. It prefers warm or better temperatures, but variants are known to live in moderate or cool cli-

mates at times. It can survive as long as any vegetation is present, but prefers heavily vegetated areas. It lives in almost any type of terrain.

**Movement Rates:** crawl 2/10 (½), step 1/5 (¼), walk 8/40 (2), trot 14/70 (3½), run 28/140 (7), regional travel uses foot rate.

**Mass & Strength:** 3d6 + 5, humanoid form, normal size, ranges from 8 to 23, average 15½.

**Agility:** 1d6 + 1d10 + 1, ranges from 3 to 17, average 9.

**Intelligence:** 1d6.

**Preferred Weapon:** L1 fist by either arm, 1d6-3 smash (at strength 2).

**Secondary Weapon:** L0 bite with head, 1d6-2 cut (at strength 8).

**Armor:** none.

**Disease:** 3% chance, roll 1d6, 1-lung rot, 2-gut spasm, 3-sleeping sickness, 4-strength drain, 5-flesh parasites, 6-blood poisoning from wounds.

**Spirit Node:** 10% chance, found in heart, roll 1d10 for humor, 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6-choleric, 7,8-melancholy, 9,10-roll again.

### Basilisk

A wild, carnivorous lizard that lives a solitary life. It can survive in almost any temperature, and prefers regions with no vegetation and dry, flat terrain such as deserts, underground caverns, etc.

**Movement Rates:** crawl 4/20 (1), step 2/10 (½), walk 6/30 (1½), trot 10/50 (2½), run 20/100 (5), gallop 30/150 (7½), regional travel uses foot rate.

**Mass & Strength:** 2d10 + 10, lizard form, large size, ranges from 12 to 32, average 21.

**Agility:** 2d6 + 2, ranges from 4 to 14, average 9.

**Intelligence:** zero (0).

**Preferred Weapon:** L3 bite and claw with forebody and head, 1d10 cut (at strength 12), will use gaze (see below) if this is out of range.

**Secondary Weapon:** paralyzing gaze, basilisk ignores normal hit procedure, will 'hit' if it passes an agility test. Any target can avoid this hit by passing a hard agility test or hard intelligence test (the only possible defense). If the target fails to avoid it, it is paralyzed, motionless, for 2d6 minutes.

**Armor:** head armor absorbs/deflects 4 wound points, armor elsewhere absorbs/deflects 5 wound points.

**Disease:** 4% chance, roll 1d6, 1,2-sleeping sickness, 3,4-strength drain, 5,6-blood poisoning from gaze or bite-and-claw effects.

**Spirit Nodes:** 90% chance of one, found in eye, roll 1d10 for humor, 1-vitriolic, 2,3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6,7-choleric, 8,9,10-melancholy.

### Bear

A wild, omnivorous mammal that lives in widely separated families. Bears prefer cold to moderate temperatures, but can survive in others, including frozen climates. Any level of vegetation except dense is possible, and any sort of dry terrain.

**Movement Rates:** crawl 1/5 (¼), step 1/5 (¼), walk 6/30 (1½), trot 12/60 (3), run 22/110 (5½), gallop 34/170 (8½), regional travel uses foot rate.

**Mass & Strength:** 3d6 + 6, humanoid form, normal size, ranges from 9 to 24, average 16½.

**Agility:** 2d6 + 1, ranges from 3 to 13, average 8.

**Intelligence:** 1d6/2.

**Preferred Weapon:** L0 bearhug with both arms, 1d10-1 smash (at strength 9).

**Secondary Weapon:** L1 claws on either arm, 1d6-1 cut (at strength 7).

**Armor:** heavy fur and fat absorbs/deflects 1 wound point anywhere except on the head.

**Disease:** 3% chance, roll 1d6, 1-lung rot, 2-gut spasm, 3-sleeping sickness, 4-strength drain, 5-flesh parasites, 6-blood poisoning.

**Spirit Node:** 5% chance, found in heart, roll 1d10 for humor, 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4,5-phlegmatic, 6,7-choleric, 8,9,10-melancholy.

**Note:** when moving at run or gallop, bear will drop to all fours. If charging in this fashion, it will attempt to grapple and wrestle the opponent, although if the range is shorter, it normally trots or walks into battle with arms free.

### Birds of Prey

These hawks, eagles, condors, etc. are carnivorous, hunt alone, but live in families that are located in remote places. They prefer to live in cool to hot temperatures, in areas with not too much vegetation (so they can see their prey from above), and preferably in rough or mountainous terrain. Some breeds are scavengers.

**Movement Rates (on ground):** crawl 1/5 (¼), step 1/5 (¼), walk 2/10 (½), trot 3/15 (¾), run 4/20 (1).

**Movement Rates (flying):** glide 20/100 (5), 'walk' 30/150 (7½),



'trot' 60/300 (15), 'run' 94/470 (23%), 'gallop' 164/820 (41), regional travel is ¼ hour per league.

**Mass & Strength:** 1d6 + 1, winged form (arms are wings, has tail, for hit location purposes), small size, ranges from 2 to 7, average 4%.

**Agility:** 3d6 + 6, ranges from 9 to 24, average 16%.

**Intelligence:** 1d6/2.

**Preferred Weapon:** L1 beak on head, 1d6-1 cut (at strength 2).

**Secondary Weapon:** L0 claws on legs, 1d6-2 cut (at strength 1).

**Armor:** none.

**Disease:** 2% chance, roll 1d6, 1-lung rot, 2-gut spasm, 3-strength drain, 4,5-blood poisoning from wound, 6-roll again.

**Spirit Node:** 50% chance, found in beak, roll 1d10 for humor, 1,2,3-vitriolic, 4,5-phlegmatic, 6,7-choleric, 8,9-melancholy, 10-roll again.

### Blob

This thick, jelly-like creature is a solitary carnivore and scavenger. It prefers a moderate to cool temperature, little or no vegetation, and lives indoors, usually in caves, ruins, etc. It avoids direct contact with civilization, but tends to live in abandoned areas.

**Movement Rates:** crawl 2/10 (½) only, regional travel at one quarter the normal foot rate.

**Mass & Strength:** 3d10 + 5, amorphous form (no hit location, any hit is to the mass as a whole), very large size, ranges from 8 to 35, average 21%.

**Agility:** 1d6, ranges from 1 to 6, average 3%.

**Intelligence:** zero (0).

**Preferred Weapon:** L0 acid burns inflict 2d6 wound points, which is assimilated into the blob's body.

**Secondary Weapon:** L4 pseudopod from body, inflicts 1d6 acid burns if it hits (no change with strength).

**Armor:** none, but due to acid body, weapon breakage values are reduced by two (-2).

**Disease:** 10% chance, roll 1d6, 1-lung rot, 2-sleeping sickness, 3,4-strength drain, 5-blood poisoning in any acid wound, 6-roll again.

**Spirit Node:** 15% chance, found in any part of the body, which must be frozen, roll 1d10 for humor, 1-vitriolic, 2,3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6-choleric, 7,8,9-melancholy, 10-roll again.

### Boar

A strong, herbivorous animal that is extremely ferocious. It lives in a family, but often hunts alone. Boars prefer cold to moderate temperatures, medium to heavy vegetation, and dry, flat or rough terrain. Boars are considered tasty by many races.

**Movement Rates:** crawl 1/5 (¼), step 1/5 (¼), walk 7/35 (1%), trot 19/95 (4%), run 27/135 (6%), gallop 90/450 (22%), regional travel uses foot rate.

**Mass & Strength:** 4d6 + 1, quadruped form, normal size, ranges from 5 to 25, average 15.

**Agility:** 2d6 + 2, ranges from 4 to 14, average 9.

**Intelligence:** zero (0).

**Preferred Weapon:** L1 tusk on head, 1d6+1 thrust (at strength 5).

**Secondary Weapon:** L0 trample with all legs, 1d6-1 smash (at strength 5).

**Armor:** none.

**Fears:** completely fearless, will charge with the least provocation.

**Disease:** 2% chance, roll 1d6, 1-gut spasm, 2-sleeping sickness, 3-strength drain, 4-flesh parasites, 5-blood poisoning, 6-roll again.

**Spirit Node:** 13% chance, found in tusks, roll 1d10 for humor, 1,2,3-vitriolic, 4-phlegmatic, 5,6,7-choleric, 8,9-melancholy, 10-roll again.

### Bull or Ox

A strong herbivore that may be domesticated. In the wild, it lives in

families. Various breeds exist, most prefer moderate to warm temperatures, medium to heavy vegetation, and any flat terrain (wet or dry).

**Movement Rates:** step 1/5 (¼), walk 9/45 (2%), trot 20/100 (5), run 30/150 (7%), gallop 44/220 (11), regional travel uses mounted rate.

**Mass & Strength:** 1d6 + 13, quadruped form, large size, ranges from 14 to 19, average 16%.

**Agility:** 2d6 - 2, ranges from 0 to 10, average 5.

**Intelligence:** zero (0).

**Preferred Weapon:** L1 horns on head, 1d10 thrust (at strength 14).

**Secondary Weapon:** L0 trample with all legs, 2d6+1 smash (at strength 14).

**Armor:** none.

**Fears:** Bulls are dangerous and very territorial in nature. Oxen are castrated bulls, and are relatively docile.

**Diseases:** 2% chance, roll 1d6, 1-lung rot, 2-gut spasm, 3-sleeping sickness, 4-strength drain, 5-flesh parasites, 6-blood poisoning.

**Spirit Node:** 12% chance, found in horns, roll 1d10 for humor, 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6-choleric, 7,8-melancholy, 9,10-roll again.

### Camel or Dromedary

A herbivore that is often domesticated, although in places wild families or herds can be found. Camels survive in a wide range of temperatures, from very cold to hot, depending on breed. They prefer dry, flat terrain with little or no vegetation. They are famous for their ability to go days without water, in climates that normally require plenty of water just for survival.

**Movement Rate:** step 1/5 (¼), walk 11/55 (2%), trot 26/130 (6%), run 40/200 (10), gallop 56/280 (14), travel uses mounted rate.

**Mass & Strength:** 1d6 + 11, quadruped form, large size, ranges from 12 to 17, average 14%.

**Agility:** 2d6 - 1, ranges from 1 to 11, average 6.

**Intelligence:** zero (0).

**Preferred Weapon:** L1 kick with forelegs or hindlegs, 1d10 - 3 smash (at strength 9).

**Secondary Weapon:** L1 bite with head, 1d6 - 2 cut (at strength 11).

**Armor:** none.

**Disease:** 2% chance, found in hump, roll 1d10 for humor, 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6-choleric, 7,8-melancholy, 9-roll again, 10-elemental water node instead (see Clerics, Nodes & Magic, Finding Elemental Nodes, for details on how to determine strength of this node).

### Great Cats

These are feline hunting carnivores, including lions, tigers, bobcats, mountain lions, leopards, cheetahs, etc. Cats usually live in families, sometimes in larger groups. They can live in a variety of temperatures from cold to hot, in almost any vegetation conditions, and any type of terrain where large, warm-blooded prey is available.

There are three general classifications for these cats: typical, powerful, and very powerful.



**Movement Rates:** crawl 2/10 (½), step 2/10 (½), walk 12/60 (3), trot 24/120 (3), run 48/240 (12), gallop varies with the type of cat: typical is 76/380 (19), powerful 70/350 (17%), very powerful 62/310 (15%), regional travel uses mounted rate.

**Mass & Strength:** 2d6 + 2 (+1 additional if powerful, +2 additional instead if very powerful), quadruped form, normal size.

**Agility:** 1d6 + 1d10 + 8 (-1 additional if powerful, or -2 additional if very powerful).

**Intelligence:** 1d6/2.

**Preferred Weapon:** L1 claws on any leg, 1d6 - 2 cut (at strength 1).

**Secondary Weapon:** L0 bite with head, 1d6 - 1 cut (at strength 4).

**Armor:** none.

**Disease:** 2% chance, roll 1d6, 1-lung rot, 2-gut spasm, 3-sleeping sickness, 4-strength drain, 5-flesh parasites, 6-blood poisoning.

**Spirit Node:** 5% chance, found in hump, roll 1d10 for humor, 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6-choleric, 7,8-melancholy, 9-roll again, 10-elemental water node instead (see Clerics, Nodes & Magic, Finding Elemental Nodes, for details on how to determine strength of this node).

### Cockatrice

This colorful but rare half-bird, half-reptile is usually found alone, since it only nests and has a family a few times during its lifetime. The cockatrice prefers a warm to hot temperature, heavy vegetation, and a wet climate with any type of terrain. It is most common in rain forests and jungles.

**Movement (on ground):** crawl 1/5 (¼), step 1/5 (¼), walk 5/25 (1¼), trot 14/70 (3½), run 26/130 (6½).

**Movement (flying):** glide 20/100 (5), 'walk' 30/150 (7½), 'trot' 58/290 (14½), 'run' 90/450 (22½), 'gallop' 162/810 (40½), regional travel is ¼ hour per league.

**Mass & Strength:** 1d6 + 2, winged form (for hit location, arms count as legs, legs count as stinger-tail), normal size ranges from 3 to 8, average 5½.

**Agility:** 2d10 + 9, ranges from 11 to 29, average 20.

**Intelligence:** 1d6/2.

**Preferred Weapon:** L2 stinger on tail, 2d6 poison wound (at any strength).

**Secondary Weapon:** L1 beak on head, 1d6 - 1 cut and 1d6 poison wound both (cut at strength 3, poison at any strength).

**Armor:** reptile-type hide absorbs/deflects one (1) wound point anywhere except on wings.

**Disease:** 3% chance, roll 1d6, 1-lung rot, 2-gut spasm, 3,4-sleeping sickness, 5-strength drain, 6-blood poisoning.

**Spirit Node:** 75% chance, found in feathers on chest, roll 1d10, 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6-choleric, 7,8-melancholy, 9,10-roll again.

### Deer, Antelope, Stag, etc.

This common herbivorous mammal travels in herds. They prefer cold to moderate temperatures, any type of vegetation, and any type of dry terrain.

**Movement Rate:** step 1/5 (¼), walk 11/55 (2¼), trot 22/110 (5½), run 54/270 (13½), gallop 80/400 (20), regional travel uses mounted rate.

**Mass & Strength:** 3d6 + 1 (additional +1 for stags), quadruped form, normal or large size, ranges from 4 to 19, average 11½.

**Agility:** 1d6 + 1d10 + 6 (additional -1 for stags), ranges from 8 to 22, average is 15.

**Intelligence:** zero (0).

**Preferred Weapon:** L2 antlers on head (L3 if stag), 1d6 thrust (at strength 4).

**Secondary Weapon:** L1 kick by forelegs or hindlegs, 1d10-2 smash (at strength 9).

**Armor:** none.

**Disease:** 2% chance, roll 1d6, 1-lung rot, 2-gut spasm, 3-sleeping sickness, 4-strength drain, 5-flesh parasites, 6-blood poisoning.

**Spirit Node:** 4% chance, 7% if stag, found in antlers, roll 1d10 for humor, 1,2,3-vitriolic, 4,5-phlegmatic, 6,7-choleric, 8,9-melancholy, 10-roll again.

### Dog

This canine omnivore is commonly domesticated, but sometimes can be found wild in packs. Dogs can live in warm to cool temperatures, nearly any type of vegetation except very dense, and almost any sort of dry terrain, although they do have difficulty in major mountain areas.

**Movement Rate:** crawl 1/5 (¼), step 1/5 (¼), walk 9/45 (2¼), trot 23/115 (5½), run 34/170 (8½), gallop 62/310 (15½).

**Mass & Strength:** 2d6 - 1, quadruped form, normal size, ranges from 1 to 11, average 6.

**Agility:** 2d10 + 2, ranges from 4 to 22, average 13.

**Intelligence:** 1d6/2 - 1, ranges from 0 to 3, average 0.67.

**Weapon:** L0 bite with head, 1d6 -2 cut (at strength 1).

**Armor:** none.

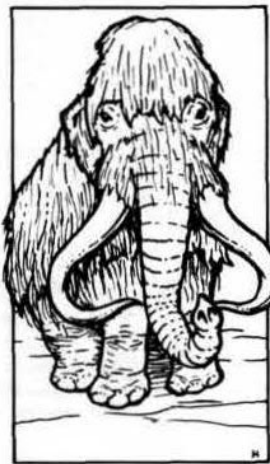
**Disease:** 2% chance, roll 1d6, 1-lung rot, 2-gut spasm, 3-strength drain, 4-flesh parasites, 5,6-blood poisoning.

**Fears:** even if wild, can tolerate and survive in civilized areas.

**Spirit Node:** 2% chance, found in leg bone; roll 1d10, 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6-choleric, 7,8-melancholy, 9,10-roll again.

### Elephant or Mammoth

These huge herbivores are rare in most parts of the world. Elephants can be domesticated, and rumors of domesticated mammoths, exist.



Elephants prefer warm to hot temperatures, mammoths cold to freezing. Elephants like areas of medium to heavy vegetation, while mammoths are acclimated to areas with little or none. Both need flat terrain, as they are poor at ascending or descending steep slopes.

**Movement Rates:** step 2/10 (¼), walk, 10/50 (2¼), trot 20/100 (5), run 52/260 (13), gallop 66/330 (16½), regional travel uses mounted rate.

**Mass & Strength:** 3d6 + 15 (if mammoth + 1d6 additional), quadruped form, gigantic size.

**Agility:** 1d6 - 1, ranges from 0 to 5, average 2½.

**Intelligence:** 1d6 - 1, ranges from 0 to 5, average 2½.

**Preferred Weapon:** L1 tusks on head (L2 for mammoth), 1d10 + 1 thrust (at strength 15).

**Secondary Weapon:** L0 trample with any leg, 2d6 + 2 smash (at strength 5).

**Armor:** none.

**Fears:** avoids combat where possible, but if goaded or young is threatened, will fight.

**Disease:** 2% chance, roll 1d6, 1-lung rot, 2-gut spasm, 3-sleeping sickness, 4-strength drain, 50-flesh parasites, 6-blood poisoning.

**Spirit Node:** 30% chance (35% for mammoths), found in tusks; roll 1d10 for humor: 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4,5-phlegmatic, 6,7-choleric, 8,9,10-melancholy.

### Hornworm

These large, carnivorous snakes prefer to dig pits, cover themselves, and ambush prey. They are solitary, prefer moderate to hot temperatures, areas with little or no vegetation, and a dry terrain, such as the desert.

**Movement Rates:** crawl 15/25 (1¼), step 2/10 (¼), trot 10/50 (2¼).

**Mass:** 2d10 + 2, snake form (see hit location below), very large size, ranges from 4 to 22, average 13.

**Strength:** mass + 4, ranges from 8 to 26, average 17.

**Agility:** 2d10 + 3, ranges from 5 to 23, average 14.

**Intelligence:** zero (0).

**Preferred Weapon:** L3 fangs in head, 1d6 + 2 poisonous (at any strength).

**Secondary Weapon:** L4 horns on head, 1d10 - 1 thrust (at strength 8).

**Tertiary Weapon:** L0 crushing with body, 1d10 smash (at strength 8).

**Armor:** scales absorb/deflect four (4) wound points anywhere.

**Disease:** 3% chance, roll 1d6, 1,2-lung rot, 3-gut spasm, 4-strength drain, 5,6-blood poisoning.

**Spirit Nodes:** 35% chance, found in fangs, roll 1d10, 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6,7-choleric, 8,9-melancholy, 10-roll again.

**Hornworm Hit Location:** roll 1d10, 1-head, 2-10-body. Body is considered similar to torso for serious wounds purposes.

### Horse

These large, herbivorous mammals are commonly domesticated for riding and beasts of burden. A few wild herds of horses exist, mainly in cool to warm temperatures, light to medium vegetation, in flat, dry terrain.

There are three main varieties of horse: draft/riding horse, courser, and warhorse. Wild horses are normally considered coursers.

**Movement Rate (draft/riding horse):** step 1/5 (¼), walk 12/60 (3), trot 26/130 (6½), run 56/280 (14), gallop 68/340 (17), regional travel uses mounted rate.



**Movement Rate (courser):** step 1/5 (¼), walk 12/60 (3), trot 30/150 (7½), run 60/300 (15), gallop 80/400 (18), regional travel uses mounted rate.

**Movement Rate (warhorse):** step 1/5 (¼), walk 12/60 (3), trot 26/130 (6½), run 50/250 (12½), gallop 70/350 (17½), regional travel uses mounted rate.

**Mass & Strength:** 1d10 + 10 (+1 more if warhorse or +3 more if draft horse), quadruped form, large size.

**Agility:** 2d6 (+1 if courser).

**Intelligence:** zero (0).

**Weapon:** L1 kick by forelegs or hindlegs, 1d10—2 smash (at strength 9).

**Armor:** none.

**Disease:** 2% chance, roll 1d6, 1-lung rot, 2-gut spasm, 3-sleeping sickness, 4-strength drain, 5-flesh parasites, 6-blood poisoning.

**Spirit Nodes:** 3% chance, found in hoof, roll 1d10 for humor, 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6-choleric, 7,8-melancholy, 9,10-roll again.

## Giant Lizard

These reptiles can either be carnivores or omnivores, and a few are herbivores. All tend to be solitary and strongly territorial. They prefer warm to hot temperatures, can live in any vegetation conditions from none to very dense, and although they are more common in wet terrain, dry suits them too. Due to their size, mountainous terrain is usually difficult for them. Some forms are domesticated by Lizards, as beasts of burden or riding animals.

**Movement Rates:** crawl 3/15 (¼), step 1/5 (¼), walk 6/30 (1½), trot 16/80 (4), run 22/110 (5½), gallop 40/200 (10), regional travel uses foot rate.

**Mass & Strength:** 3d6 + 7, lizard form, gigantic size, ranges from 10 to 25, average 17½.

**Agility:** 2d6 — 1, ranges from 1 to 11, average 6.

**Intelligence:** zero (0).

**Preferred Weapon:** L1 bite with head, 1d6 cut (at strength 9).

**Secondary Weapon:** L2 whip with tail, 1d6 + 1 smash (at strength 10).

**Armor:** scales absorb/deflect three (3) wound points anywhere.

**Disease:** 3% chance, roll 1d6, 1-gut spasm, 2-sleeping sickness, 3-strength drain, 4-flesh parasites, 5,6-blood poisoning.

**Spirit Nodes:** 15% chance, found in tail, roll 1d10 for humor, 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6-choleric, 7,8-melancholy, 9,10-roll again.

## Poisonous Lizard

These reptiles are normally solitary carnivores with strong territorial instincts. They prefer warm to hot temperatures, live in any vegetation conditions, and prefer flat or rough terrain (either wet or dry), but avoid mountains.

**Movement Rates:** crawl 1/5 (¼), step 1/5 (¼), walk 6/30 (1½), trot 14/70 (3½), run 18/90 (4½), gallop 32/160 (8).

**Mass & Strength:** 2d6, lizard form, normal size, ranges from 2 to 12, average is 7.

**Agility:** 1d6 + 1d10 + 4, ranges from 6 to 20, average 13.

**Intelligence:** zero (0).

**Weapon:** L1 fangs on head, 1d6 + 3 poison (regardless of strength).

**Armor:** scales absorb/deflect two (2) wound points anywhere.

**Disease:** 2% chance, roll 1d6, 1-lung rot, 2-gut spasm, 3-sleeping sickness, 4-strength drain, 5-flesh parasites, 6-blood poisoning.

**Spirit Nodes:** 5% chance, found in fangs, roll 1d10 for humor, 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6-choleric, 7,8-melancholy, 9,10-roll again.

## Manticore

This peculiar lizard is solitary and carnivorous. It can survive in cool to warm temperatures, prefers areas of no or little vegetation, and dry terrain of any type. It is known to exist in caves, ruins, etc.

**Movement Rates:** crawl 2/10 (¼), step 2/10 (¼), walk 12/60 (3), trot 24/120 (6), run 48/240 (12), gallop 66/330 (16½), regional travel uses mounted rate.

**Mass & Strength:** 2d6 + 4, lizard form, large size, ranges from 6 to 16, average is 11.

**Agility:** 1d6 + 1d10 + 5, ranges from 7 to 21, average 14.

**Intelligence:** 1d6/2, ranges from 0 to 3, average 1½.

**Preferred Weapon:** L1 bite with head, 1d6 — 1 cut (at strength 6).

**Secondary Weapon:** L2 stinger on tail, 1d6+1 poisonous\* (regardless of strength). \*Poison is non-lethal, wears off after a good rest.

**Missile Weapon:** tail spines can be fired like darts, doing 1d6+1 non-lethal poison damage each if they hit. The tail has 1d6+3 spines overall. The missile weapon may be used in addition to the primary weapon.

**Armor:** scales absorb/deflect three (3) wound points anywhere.

**Disease:** 3% chance, roll 1d6, 1-lung rot, 2-gut spasm, 3-sleeping sickness, 4,5-strength drain, 6-blood poisoning.

**Spirit Nodes:** 35% chance, found in tail stinger, roll 1d10 for humor, 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6-choleric, 7,8,9-melancholy, 10-roll again.

## Mule, Donkey, or Ass

This herbivore is normally found domesticated, but the wild ass can be found in large families or small herds. It prefers cool to warm temperatures, areas of light vegetation, and dry terrain. It is best known in steppe or plains areas.

**Movement Rates:** step 1/5 (¼), walk 12/60 (3), trot 22/110 (5½), run 36/180 (9), gallop 48/240 (12), regional travel uses mounted rate.

**Mass & Strength:** 1d6 + 9, quadruped form, large size, ranges from 10 to 15, average 12½.

**Agility:** 2d6, ranges from 2 to 12, average 7.

**Intelligence:** zero (0).

**Weapon:** L1 kick by hind legs, 1d10—2 smash (at strength 9).

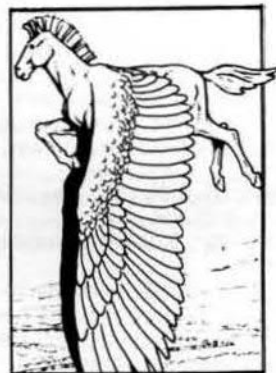
**Armor:** none.

**Disease:** 2% chance, roll 1d6: 1,2-gut spasm, 3,4-strength drain, 5-flesh parasites, 6-blood poisoning.

**Spirit Node:** 3% chance, found in tongue; roll 1d10 for humor: 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6-choleric, 7,8-melancholy, 9,10-roll again.

## Pegasus

This winged horse is herbivorous and sometimes domesticated. When wild it flies in herds. It survives in cool to warm temperatures, prefers moderate to little vegetation, and is mainly found in dry rough or mountainous terrain.



**Movement (on ground):** step 1/5 (¼), walk 12/60 (3), trot 26/130 (6½), run 50/250 (12½), gallop 68/340 (17), regional travel uses mounted rate.

**Movement (flying):** glide 20/100 (5), 'walk' 30/150 (7½), 'trot' 56/280 (14), 'run' 82/410 (20½), 'gallop' 144/720 (36), regional travel is at ¼ hour per league.

**Mass & Strength:** 1d10 + 11, winged quadruped (see hit location table below), very large size due to wingspread, ranges from 12 to 21, average is 16½.

**Agility:** 2d6, ranges from 2 to 12, average 7.

**Intelligence:** zero (0).

**Weapon:** L1 kick by fore or hind legs, 1d10 — 2 smash (at strength 9).

**Armor:** none.

**Disease:** 1% chance, roll 1d6, 1-lung rot, 2-gut spasm, 3,4-strength drain, 5-flesh parasites, 6-blood poisoning.

**Spirit Node:** 10% chance, found in wingfeather at base of wings, roll 1d10 for humor, 1,2,3-vitriolic, 4,5-phlegmatic, 6,7-choleric, 8,9-melancholy, 10-roll again.

**Hit Location:** 1-head, 2-forebody torso, 3,4-forelegs, 5,6,7-wings, 8-hindbody torso, 9,10-hind legs.

## Rats

Small omnivorous mammals that normally live as scavengers. Rats travel in large packs (2d6+6 to 2d10+10), and if hungry can be extremely dangerous. They can live in virtually any conditions except cold or frozen, and are common in civilized areas as well. There are said to be larger rats that are intelligent and have a complex, secret society.

**Movement Rate:** crawl 3/15 (¼), step 1/5 (¼), walk 6/30 (1½), trot 14/70 (3½), run 20/100 (5), gallop 34/180 (8½), regional travel uses foot rate.

**Mass & Strength:** Normal rats have mass/strength of 1. Exceptional rats have mass/strength of 1d6 + 1. Quadruped form, small size, ranges from 2 to 7, average 4½.

**Agility:** 2d6 + 10, ranges from 12 to 22, average 17.

**Intelligence:** zero (0).

**Weapon:** L0 fangs on head, 1d6 — 1 cut (at strength 2).

**Armor:** none.

**Disease:** 5% chance, roll 1d6, 1,2-sleeping sickness, 3,4-strength drain, 5-flesh parasites, 6-blood poisoning.

**Spirit Node:** 1% chance, found in skull, roll 1d10 for humor, 1,2,3-vitriolic, 4-phlegmatic, 5,6,7-choleric, 8,9,10-melancholy.

### Rhinoceros

This herbivore lives in families, but often wanders alone. It prefers warm to hot temperatures, light to medium vegetation, and dry, flat terrain. It is famous for its bulk and armored head. It's poor eyesight is compensated by an excellent sense of smell.

**Movement Rate:** step 1/5 (¼), walk 9/45 (2¼), trot 22/110 (5½), run 44/220 (11), gallop 68/340 (17), regional travel uses foot rate.

**Mass & Strength:** 2d6 + 26, quadruped form, very large size, ranges from 28 to 38, average 33.

**Agility:** 1d6 + 1, ranges from 2 to 7, average 4½.

**Intelligence:** zero (0).

**Preferred Weapon:** L2 horn on head, 1d10 + 1 thrust (at strength 28).

**Secondary Weapon:** L0 trample with legs, 2d6 + 2 smash (at strength 28).

**Armor:** head armor absorbs/deflects six (6) wound points, hide on rest of body absorbs/deflects three (3) wound points.

**Disease:** 3% chance, roll 1d6, 1-lung rot, 2-gut spasm, 3-sleeping sickness, 4-strength drain, 5,6-flesh parasites.

**Spirit Node:** 15% chance, found in nose horn, roll 1d10 for humor, 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6,7-choleric, 8,9-melancholy, 10-roll again.

### Giant Snake

This very large reptile is carnivorous and usually is found alone. Rarely a large number will take up residence together in a very attractive place. It prefers warm to hot temperatures, any type of vegetation, and any type of terrain.

**Movement Rates:** crawl 5/25 (1¼), step 2/10 (½), trot 10/50 (2½), regional travel uses the foot rate.

**Mass & Strength:** 3d6 + 5, lizard hit location, legs considered part of body, very large size.

**Agility:** 1d6 + 1d10 + 3, ranges from 5 to 19, average 12.

**Intelligence:** 1d6/2 — 1, ranges from 0 to 2, average 0.67.

**Weapon (biting type):** L1 fangs in head, 1d6—1 thrust (at strength 4) or 1d6+2 poisonous (regardless of strength).

**Weapon (crushing type):** L0 crushing with body, 1d10 smash (at strength 7).

Note: snakes either prefer to bite, or crush, with the other weapon as the secondary one. Some biting ones are poisonous (especially those with a lower mass).

**Armor:** head scales absorb/deflect two (2) wound points, scales on the rest of the body absorb/deflect three (3) wound points.

**Disease:** 2% chance, roll 1d6, 1-lung rot, 2-gut spasm, 3-sleeping sickness, 4-strength drain, 5-flesh parasites, 6-blood poisoning.

**Spirit Node:** 10% chance, found in fangs or tongue, sometimes on tail, roll 1d10 for humor, 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6-choleric, 7,8-melancholy, 9,10-roll again.

### Giant Spider

This carnivorous arachnid normally lives alone, but sometimes is found in families. It can live in any temperature above freezing, any vegetation, and any terrain. The term 'giant' is used to compare it to normal spiders, not normal men.

**Movement Rate:** crawl 4/20 (1), step 2/10 (½), walk 8/40 (2), trot 12/60 (3), run 27/135 (6¾), gallop 54/270 (13½), regional travel uses foot rate.

**Mass & Strength:** 2d6 — 1, insect form, normal size, ranges from 1 to 11, average 11.

**Agility:** 2d6 + 8, ranges from 10 to 20, average 15.

**Intelligence:** 1d6/2 — 1, ranges from 0 to 2, average 0.67.

**Weapon:** L0 bite with head, 1d6+3 poison wound (regardless of strength).

**Armor:** none.

**Disease:** 2% chance, roll 1d6, 1-lung rot, 2-gut spasm, 3-sleeping sickness, 4-strength drain, 5-flesh parasites, 6-blood poisoning.

**Spirit Node:** 1% chance, found in web silk, roll 1d10 for humor, 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6-choleric, 7,8-melancholy, 9,10-roll again.

**Notes:** spider can spin web, either laying it behind, or throwing it to sides or in front, up to 5 paces. The web can be used as a missile weapon, equivalent in accuracy to a normal spear, or as an L4 striking weapon. Targets hit by the web are immobilized until a full instant is spent trying to break it, with a successful strength check. Multiple hits with the web add two (+2) per hit to the difficulty value of the check. The web can be laid in areas to entrap the unwary, or used as a rope for the spider crawl along. Only a freshly laid web is a potential source for a spirit node.

### Wolf

A carnivorous quadruped canine that normally lives in packs. It prefers cool to moderate temperatures, and can survive in any type of vegetation or terrain.

**Movement Rate:** crawl 1/5 (¼), step 1/5 (¼), walk 9/45 (2¼), trot 23/115 (5¾), run 36/180 (9), gallop 66/330 (16½), regional travel uses mounted rate.

**Mass & Strength:** 2d6 + 1, quadruped form, normal size, ranges from 3 to 13, average is 8.

**Agility:** 2d10 + 2, ranges from 4 to 22, average 13.

**Intelligence:** 1d6/2, ranges from 0 to 3, average 0.67.

**Preferred Weapon:** L0 bite with head, 1d6 — 1 cut (at strength 3).

**Secondary Weapon:** L1 claws on forelegs, 1d6 — 2 cut (at strength 2).

**Armor:** none.

**Disease:** 2% chance, roll 1d6, 1-lung rot, 2-gut spasm, 3-strength drain, 4-flesh parasites, 5,6-blood poisoning.

**Spirit Node:** 4% chance, found in heart, roll 1d10 for humor, 1,2-vitriolic, 3,4-phlegmatic, 5,6-choleric, 7,8-melancholy, 9,10-roll again.

# 14. Elementals

Elementals are magical entities summoned by magicians, or at times may even appear spontaneously in regions where their element is extremely common. Although summoning magicians try to control their creations in most cases, some escape, while others may continue to execute ancient commands. The size and power of an elemental depends on the number of elemental nodes used to create it. Naturally, smaller elementals are more common (and less dangerous) than larger elementals. See Spirit Magic, Spells of the Choleric Humor, for details.

Elementals have proper names, depending on the magic element used to create them. These are Crescent (light or darkness), Flamma (fire), Chalbis (metal), Gelu (crystal), Haima (water), Widu (wood), Aura (wind).

**Form & Size:** elementals have a vaguely humanoid appearance, and hit location. If made from a 1-power node they are small, if 2-power node normal size, if 3- or 4-power node large, if 5- 6- or 7-power node very large, if 8-power node or more gigantic.

**Movement Rates — Metal, Crystal, Wood Elementals:** crawl 2/10 (½), step 1/5 (¼), walk 4/20 (1), trot 8/40 (2), run 12/30 (3), regional travel is half the foot rate.

**Movement Rates — Fire or Water Elementals:** crawl 6/30 (1½), step 2/10 (½), walk 12/60 (3), trot 24/120 (6), run 48/240 (12), gallop 80/400 (20), regional travel uses mounted rate. If fire attempts to travel over water or ice, or water attempts to travel over sand or fire, use rate for metal/crystal/wood above instead.

**Movement Rates — Wind or Light/Dark Elementals (flying):** glide 24/120 (6), 'walk' 36/180 (9), 'trot' 60/300 (15), 'run' 90/450 (22½), 'gallop' 160/800 (40), regional travel is ¼ hour per league.

**Mass & Strength:** 1d10 + 1 per node in the elemental, ranges from 2 to 11 per node, average of 6½ per node.

**Agility:** 3d10 + 3, divided by the number of nodes in the elemental (agility therefore drops as the power of the nodes increases).

**Intelligence:** 1d6 per node in the elemental, but see habits below.

**Preferred Weapon:** normal human fist, crystal and light/dark inflict cut wounds, fire inflicts burn wounds, all others inflict smash wounds.

**Secondary Weapon:** normal humanoid kick, crystal and light/dark inflict cut wounds, fire inflicts burn wounds, all other inflict smash wounds.

**Missile Weapons:** an elemental may throw a small piece of itself, equal in damage and range to a small rock, and inflict 1d6 wounds per point of mass lost. Normally it throws one point of mass, at a time until it scores a hit that fails to stop the enemy, then throws two-point mass pieces, etc. Missile weapon is only used if the opponent successfully evades or avoids normal preferred weapon by staying beyond its range (and at the same time hurting the elemental).

Missile wound types similar to normal weapon wound types (see above).

**Weapon Skills:** elementals have special weapon skill ratings:

Weapon Use = strength + agility + 5d10 + (15x nodal power in creature).

Weapon Speed = (agility x2) + 5d10 + (10x nodal power in creature).

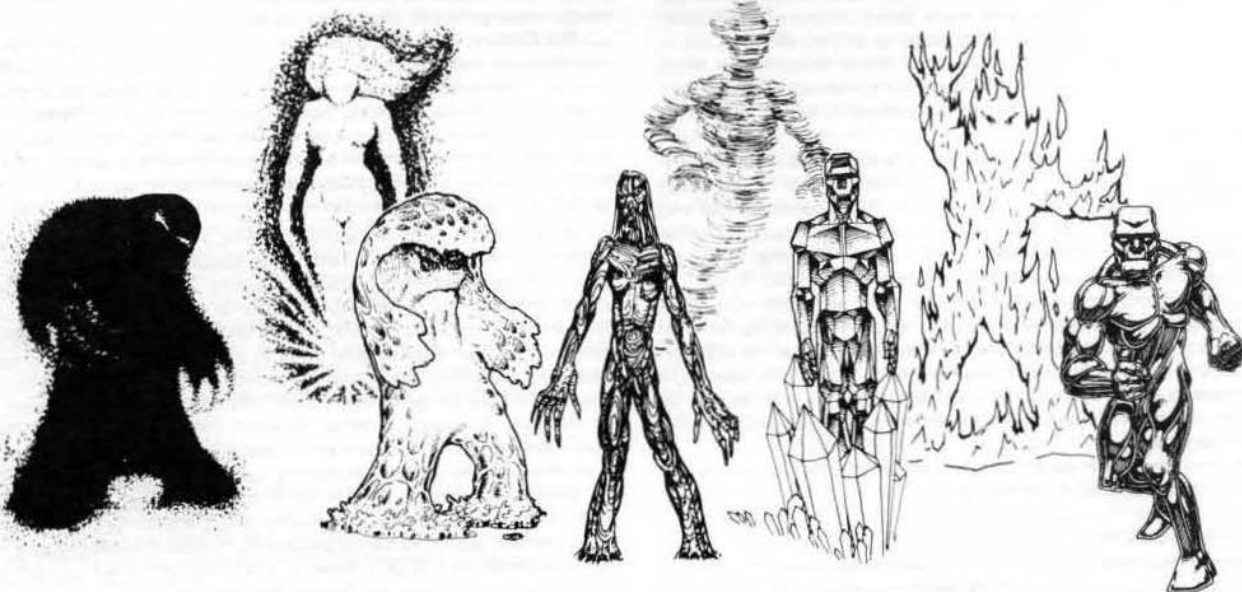
**Armor:** elemental has one point of armor (deflects/absorbs 1 wound point) per point of nodal power in it. In addition, metal elements have three (3) extra points of armor, crystal elementals two (2) extra points, and wood elementals one (1) extra point. This extra amount is a fixed value, regardless of the nodal power.

**Diseases:** none.

**Spirit Nodes:** none, aside from the use of spirit magic to create the elemental.

**Habits:** elementals that break free of controls have the following general habits and inclinations.

- Fire Elementals tend to slowly travel from place to place, as they will become uncomfortable and eventually weaken if they stay in one location too long. They are extremely aggressive, and tend to attack anything in or near their path.
- Metal Elementals prefer to remain in the same place as much as possible, but will attack those who come close to this 'territory'. Furthermore, when defending such a territory, their normal parry (weapon use) skill is doubled if they make no strikes.
- Crystal Elementals also prefer to remain stationary, and ignore all outside effects unless touched, which provokes a very violent reaction.
- Water Elementals will ebb and flow in a generally low area, remaining in constant, sluggish motion over a limited area. Anyone who enters this area is normally grabbed and wrestled to the depression's center, with a killing intent.
- Wood Elementals prefer to remain stationary in an area with natural vegetation, and preferably some sunlight (which they will seek slowly). Wood elementals react depending on the actions shown by those nearby — they ignore those who ignore them, but will attack any who attack them.
- Wind Elementals desire constant motion, and like to travel vast distances as quickly as possible. They normally flee attacks, but any blockage of their travels is normally met with an immediate attack.
- Light Elementals prefer to move rapidly about, but enjoy exploring an area before moving to a new one. They are capricious, and may attack 50% of the time, avoiding battle the remainder of the time.
- Darkness Elementals avoid living things, and prefer to hide stationary in corners, depressions, and shadowy areas in general. If someone gets too close to their hiding place they will attack from ambush.





# 15. Gamemaster's Guide

## 15.1 The Rudiments of Adventuring

### 15.1.1 GAMESMASTER DUTIES

**Scenarios:** the gamemaster is responsible for creating and administering the adventure. This means he or she must start by deciding 'where' the adventure will occur, making notes about the particular region or locale, as well as the fantasy world overall. Some sort of map, if only a sketch map, is recommended. He must then develop scenario information for the specific adventure to be played. This includes a variety of motivations, encounters, and then one or more climaxes. A selection of NPCs (non-player characters) must be generated, to serve as potential encounters, friends, enemies, etc. If the gamemaster has information in advance about the players' characters, he can 'tailor' the scenario to the abilities and interests of those players. Typically, a gamemaster needs an evening of 'preparation time' before an evening's adventure is ready.

**Rule Interpretations:** the gamemaster must select any special rule adjustments or interpretations he plans to use, and inform the players. Typical items are changes in the character generation process (such as having players roll 2d6 for social status, instead of 2d10). A variety of additional adjustments to normal character generation are given in Intelligent Races.

**The Adventure Session:** once the adventure begins, the gamemaster presents the players with a situation. This includes telling them where they are, what they see, and perhaps 'speaking' through the guise of one or more NPCs in the area. The players now decide what they'll do, and the gamemaster reasons out appropriate changes to the situation, NPC reactions, etc. Typically, a gamemaster calls on each player in turn regarding actions of his or her character, in quickness order in battle situations (see Combat).

Most gamemasters like to 'push' players in certain directions — namely those for which they have created material! This is accomplished by holding out the lure of treasure, putting them into tight spots where options are limited, or having an NPC guide them. In a totally 'free form' adventure, where players can go anywhere and do anything, the gamemaster will be hard pressed to come up with interesting situations 'on the spot.' On the other hand, most players like the illusion of free will, and resent a gamemaster who 'pushes' them in too obvious a manner. The gamemaster must remain flexible, willing to recognize his adventure and let events go in a new direction when players' actions require it.

**Battles:** when hostile NPCs actually attack the players' characters, or vice versa, a battle ensues. The gamemaster takes the role of the hostiles, and 'fights against' the players. As a general rule, the gamemaster should reduce the number or effectiveness of the NPC opposition if the characters are weak, but should exercise extreme caution in increasing NPC power. Players rarely mind massacres provided NPCs are on the receiving end! However, few players enjoy being victims of a massacre. Of course, some battles must be about even, so players feel they are in truly risky, dangerous situations. Especially dumb actions may bring about serious NPC opposition. In this case, the gamemaster can arrange surprises, etc. so the player's character is captured (either by surrender, or by quick knock-out).

**Goals:** the gamemaster's job is to make the adventure session enjoyable, entertaining, and challenging for *all* the players. He or she is *not* in the business of killing players' characters. The illusion of risk and possible death is quite sufficient. Many players can enjoy travelling about, interacting with various NPCs, without ever fighting. However, younger players and more swashbuckling sorts will soon start fights.

The gamemaster must be fair and impartial at all times, striving to make things seem reasonable and realistic. When interpreting rules, or allowing variations and modifications, one must guard against a 'super-weapon' that makes a particular character invincible. If this happens, a new interpretation of the rules, or a sudden change in the 'world' (in the form of a natural disaster, like a magic storm, if magic becomes too powerful), may occur.

Overall, the more the players enjoy the adventure, the better the gamemaster has performed his or her task.

### 15.1.2 PLAYER DUTIES

**Character Generation:** a player is normally responsible for creating his or her personal character before the adventure session starts. Ideally,

this should be done a few days in advance, and the gamemaster informed of the result. This helps the gamemaster design an appropriate adventure. Absolute novices may wish the gamemaster to create a character for them, for the first adventure. Player characters with slaves, servants, or hirelings should ask the gamemaster to create these (with their appropriate outfits). In some cases, the gamemaster may trust the 'good sense' and 'proper role-playing spirit' of an especially experienced player to create realistic supporting NPCs. Similarly, the gamemaster decides whether he/she controls such NPCs, or allows the player to direct their activities.

**The Adventure Session:** a player must remember that the gamemaster is 'god' and therefore always right. A player can politely point out alternate rule interpretations, or suggest the gamemaster may have overlooked a game procedure. However, no player can demand the gamemaster do this or that. In *Swordbearer*, as in all role-playing games, the gamemaster has the privilege of modifying or adjusting any rules. If a player demands rules be interpreted this way or that, he or she is no longer a player, but instead trying to be the gamemaster.

A player should remember that there are other players in the game. Everyone must have a fair opportunity to participate with their character. It is impolite to always have your character at 'center stage' dominating the action.

**Playing in Character:** a player must remember that his or her knowledge, as a player, may be quite different from what his/her *character* knows. For example, the player may know that two other characters found a treasure in the tavern basement, but are now in desperate straights trying to fight their way out. However, the player's character is sitting next door, enjoying a meal and a good haggle with a rug merchant, oblivious to the fate of his/her companions.

Similarly, a player should try to establish a definite personality for his or her character, and then keep within the nature of this personality. As things happen to a character, the personality can change, but some reason should be offered.

### 15.1.3 DESIGNING AN ADVENTURE SCENARIO

A good adventure starts with a 'motivator' (a reason for embarking on the adventure), followed by one or more 'encounters,' and eventually ends in a 'climax' where players' characters meet their ultimate nemesis, and either succeed or fail in their goal. After the climax, there is a short 'what you do afterward' period. In continuing adventures or campaigns, characters add to skill ratings (due to experience in that session), determine occupations, etc.

**Design Methods:** a suggested procedure for designing scenarios is to start with the climax and work backwards. This is because the climax is the most interesting and complex event, and is best done early, while one still has plenty of energy and enthusiasm. Then, with the ultimate goal arranged, various encounters and motivations will suggest themselves, making the rest of the task easier.

**The Climax:** typically, a climax is a battle situation where characters overcome an arch-enemy, or nasty situations. The climax might be a raid on a castle to perpetrate an assassination or rescue, destruction of some bandit band, escaping from a town, city or palace after a theft, etc. The gamemaster often needs a display of the battle area. Indoor areas and outdoors areas can be arranged on sheets of posterboard, or a miniature tabletop battle area. This allows characters to be positioned, moved, etc. and helps everyone visualize the situation accurately.

A climax will require a group of NPCs. A few are important NPCs — leaders of the opposition — and these should be fully developed characters. Their lieutenants, retainers, guards, servants, etc. need only be listed, with warrior types having appropriate basic characteristics, weapons, armor, and skills as well. If the players have magic available, the gamemaster may wish to give some to the opposition as well. Finally, a 'standard operating procedure' for residents, guards, etc. at the climax location should be established. This tells what they do at various times of the day. If players attempt to scout the area, the gamemaster will thus have appropriate information ready. When the climax actually occurs, this will also determine starting locations for most of the NPCs.

**Encounters:** on the way to the climax, characters will have encounters. If travelling through the countryside, encounters would include wild animals, scattered farms, shepherds, normal travellers (from nobles to vagabonds), etc. If in a town or city, encounters will be with inhabitants (NPCs), city guards, thieves, etc. An encounter need not mean a

battle. Characters can fall into conversation, exchange information or rumors, buy and sell, and perhaps acquire NPC allies. The gamemaster must organize a group of three to six possible encounters for the adventure, and develop ways to introduce them. Not all may be used, depending on the course of events.

**Motivators:** the gamemaster must provide players with a reason to move toward the climax he arranged. For example, if the climax is rescuing a prisoner from a castle dungeon, then the players must be employed to make the rescue attempt somehow, or induced to free all the dungeon prisoners, or some such. The 'stranger offers job to characters in local tavern' ploy may be sufficient. Alas, players eventually become wary of such proposals, or adopt such dishonest courses of action as to warn the castle's guard (for a reward), or perhaps rob the stranger offering the job, leaving him unconscious or dead in a back alley! Therefore, the gamemaster must have a variety of 'motivator' rumors, encounters, and propositions for the players, each of which points them at the climax. In addition to the prisoner in the dungeon, there may also be a treasure room there, and the players can be 'pointed' toward acquiring that treasure instead. This would allow the same climax materials to be used, with a slightly different goal.

After a few adventures, a gamemaster may add deceit and similar falsehoods to the motivators. For example, the rumor that starts characters on the adventure may be inaccurate, or a deliberate lie. The truth could be stranger still, and perhaps lead to yet larger lies and greater problems. Political situations of byzantine complexity can be very interesting, and provide continual challenges for even the most advanced players.

**Larger Adventures:** a very large, complex adventure may have a number of 'mini' climaxes, and end in a final super-climax. Each session is designed to end with one of these climaxes. For example, once the characters 'bite' on the initial motivator, and have a few encounters, they might be captured by the opposition — with escape as the first climax. Then they might have to acquire some item or ally (the second climax) before returning to make the big assault against the opposition (another climax), only to find the arch-enemy escaped, with a pursuit and final battle as the climax which ends the adventure.

#### 15.1.4 TIME SCALES

The gamemaster 'sets the pace' of an adventure by asking players for their activities — during a certain period of time. In other words, he or she asks for a character's activities for the next minute, hour, day, or whatever. The length of time requested indicates the type of information needed. For example, activities for an entire day will be necessarily rather general, while activities in the next minute will concentrate on rather detailed actions.

The gamemaster should only ask for enough information to advance the adventure to the next event. Avoid asking for details that have no effect, and discourage players from giving unnecessary detail. As a result, if players aren't sufficiently detailed in their answers, request more detail — don't penalize them by inflicting unnatural or unfortunate occurrences.

For example, in an adventure to a city, the gamemaster might wish to pass over the travel portion quickly, and have most of the action occur in the city. Therefore, the gamemaster would simply request the route of travel to the city, and depending on the route, perhaps indicate one or two simple encounters 'along the road.' The time scale for adventurer choices would be 'whatever it takes to get to the city.' Once at the city, the gamemaster might then ask for their activities for that morning, afternoon, or evening. If an encounter develops during this time, the gamemaster could then request players to say how their character will act during the encounter. If this causes a battle, then combat rules are used, and actions are determined by period (20 seconds) or instant (4 seconds). Generally, period by period combat is recommended if characters are at a distance from their enemy and exchanging missile fire, involved in a chase, etc. Instant by instant combat is recommended if characters are within a few paces of the enemy, and engaged in hand-to-hand combat, with strikes, parries, etc.

The gamemaster must adopt a flexible attitude toward time, so that characters can interact with the situation around them. It is the duty of the gamemaster to keep track of elapsed time. Having a calendar for the fantasy is very useful in campaigns, since otherwise one tends to forget exactly how many days, weeks, or months have elapsed between one session and the next.

#### 15.1.5 ACTION & REACTION

The 'art' of gamemastering is the ability to describe situations and then ask for character activities — in a way that encourages the proper level of responses. As players hear questions and give responses, they must be able to follow a logical connection from the situation, to their actions, to the new situation.

As a result, the gamemaster should not spring trivial traps because a character forgot to mention some tiny detail in their activities. Otherwise, players will soon describe every tiny detail, causing ridiculous delays, and destroying all hope of finishing even one encounter in a session!

**Skill Use:** the gamemaster should always think in terms of skills a character might use, or what type of characteristic test might be needed. For example, if characters enter a threatening situation, appropriate detect danger tests should be allowed, and those who use that skill successfully can make detailed decisions about their actions. Those who fail the test, and aren't warned in time by friends, may have surprises sprung upon them. However, the failure of the test and lack of warning will help the player 'understand' why his or her character was captured, or whatever.

Players inevitably find new and original ways of reacting to situations. The gamemaster should resolve these in terms of existing characteristics and skill as much as possible. Characters may also begin to exploit certain tactics or magic spells to make them nearly invincible in certain cases. Here the gamemaster must study the rules to see if alternative and more reasonable interpretations exist. If none can be found, he or she should strongly consider a new interpretation of the rules that requires some additional skill or characteristic test, or other qualifications that make the tactic not quite so foolproof.

**Selection of Skills:** the nature of the situation, and the kind of responses the gamemaster desires, will affect the skills and characteristics to be tested. For example, if adventurers come across a clearing with a still warm campfire, they might investigate the clearing and try various skills. If the situation is just a minor distraction, designed to worry the characters, there will be no danger to detect, no concealments to uncover, etc. Use of these skills will fail, and cannot count toward advancement. On the other hand, there might be a concealed ambush nearby, in which case these skills become important.

#### 15.1.6 BATTLES

Actual combat can be conducted on two levels. First is the long-range ambush or running fight. Typically this is resolved period by period, with movement in blocs and range in the same measurement. Often adventurers or their opponents will move in groups, and thus a simple pencil mark on a map is sufficient to note positions, from which range can be measured.

When characters get within a period or less of movement from the enemy, and physical contact appears possible, the gamemaster may wish to shift to a scale of instants (4 seconds) and paces. Initial encounters indoors, face-to-face in conversation, etc., almost always lead to instants-and-paces scale if fighting occurs, since a quick charge of an instant or two is sufficient to cross virtually any room.

Detailed hand-to-hand combat can be handled in a simple and abstract fashion, or on a detailed square grid map. The abstract method simply requires each character (or NPC) to select his/her opponent, and then resolve strikes instant by instant. Metal figures are placed to show the individual duels in progress, with those hanging back or retreating moved slightly away (d10 dice can show distance in paces, if missile ranges are important). Note that movement distances are large enough so that most characters can charge a dozen or two paces without effort — which often makes precise measurement of movement distances unnecessary.

In climactic battles, explorations through buildings, etc., it is often easier to use a square grid map. In important battles positioning, tactics, relative distances, etc., can be vital. In fact, the moves selected by the players very often determines whether they survive. In such situations, using gridded maps and moving figures square by square is very useful. It is possible to count each pace as one centimeter (cm) or inch, and use a ruler to measure distances. This method is similar to that employed by traditional miniature wargamers, and is handy in outdoor area battles.

**Large Group Actions:** sometimes the gamemaster will have a large number of NPCs fighting against the players' characters. For simplicity, the NPCs might be moved and fire missiles as a group, with individuals only identified and noted when they are hit, or get into hand-to-hand fighting with specific player-characters. When a group of NPCs fire, total the weapon use percentages of all characters with the same weapon. For example, four characters might have weapon use values of 23, 47, 50 and 52 respectively. Their total firepower would be 172%, or one hit and a 72% chance of a second hit. If the players' characters are in a group, a dice roll can be used to randomly select who receives the hit, and who receives the 72% chance of a hit. If the NPCs are under fire at the same time, the weapon speed skill of the NPC and his opponent can be compared if the NPC is hit — to determine if the NPC gets off a shot before being hit. If the NPC doesn't get off a shot, then the overall percentage would be reduced by that amount.



**Battle Time:** although a battle might only take a few instants to a few periods, inevitably the survivors need time to catch their breath, reorganize their thoughts, and decide what to do next. The gamemaster will often observe players performing 'post mortems' on battles during the game itself. This is a natural reaction, and should be remembered when computing the true time taken by the fight. Most serious fights last at least 15 minutes, counting time for rest and mental reorganization. Characters who go directly from one battle to another, nonstop, will begin to experience physic fatigue and 'shell shock' even if their bodies are still in good shape. A general reduction of skills, especially those based on intelligence, is very likely. Characters with plenty of fighting experience are less vulnerable to this effect.

### 15.1.7 BETWEEN ADVENTURES

Typically, an adventure session will occupy an afternoon and/or evening, with one or more such sessions composing an adventure. About one session per week is the preferred form of play by many, although sessions more often are not unknown.

In 'game' time, the gamemaster usually ends a session at a convenient point — one where characters could rest a few days to a week at least, to pursue occupations and replenish pocket change, meet living expenses, etc. Between whole adventures at least two weeks to two months is advised, and periods as long as a year or more are not unreasonable. This allows characters to return to more 'normal' walks of life, makes the skill acquisition process more reasonable, and allows characters to actually grow old!

## 15.2 Campaign Worlds

If players continue using the same characters in adventure after adventure, a 'campaign' begins, where characters are now part of a larger ongoing story. If he hasn't already, the gamemaster must begin a 'world' for these characters and their adventures. It is wisest to start with a single continent, or a section of a continent separated by a large natural barrier (like many leagues of super-tall mountains, huge swamplands, etc.). If the campaign becomes boring, or the characters have become too powerful for simple swashbuckling affairs, they can always be induced to cross this barrier and journey to a different part of the world, where they are much weaker. Alternately, a new campaign could begin elsewhere on the world (perhaps with a different gamemaster), and later the worlds and characters interact in various ways.

**World Map:** a sketch map of the campaign continent, or piece of continent, can be very basic. The major mountain chains, rivers, and general topography (arid, lightly wooded, jungle, farmlands, or whatever) should be noted. Location of major cities and fortresses are given, as well as the boundaries of major kingdoms and empires. Sketch maps of this sort are commonplace in fantasy novels. In fact, many gamemasters freely 'borrow' from their favorite authors.

**Populations & Cultures:** the gamemaster should prepare general notes about the populations in various areas of the campaign world. These notes should indicate dominant races, general level of civilization (often related to density of population), and the type of political and social systems present. For example, a central human region might have densely populated cities and an imperial system like Rome or Byzantium; on its borders dwarven races might be common, with a feudal aristocracy akin to early medieval Europe; in a desert area selkets might be common in wandering tribes and clans, like arabs, or the turks and mongols of the steppes prior to Genghis Khan. The gamemaster will find general books on ancient and medieval history, especially those dealing with social history, very helpful when creating new and interesting societies.

**Recent History:** the gamemaster should prepare notes about recent political events in his 'world,' including information about who is at war (or peace) with whom, major trade routes, whether the government is young or old, strong or weak, and whether the local economy is growing or failing. These situations will suggest all sorts of possible adventures, as well as create problems for adventurers. For example, adventurers enter an area with a failing economy, they may be caught up in food riots, or peculiar laws.

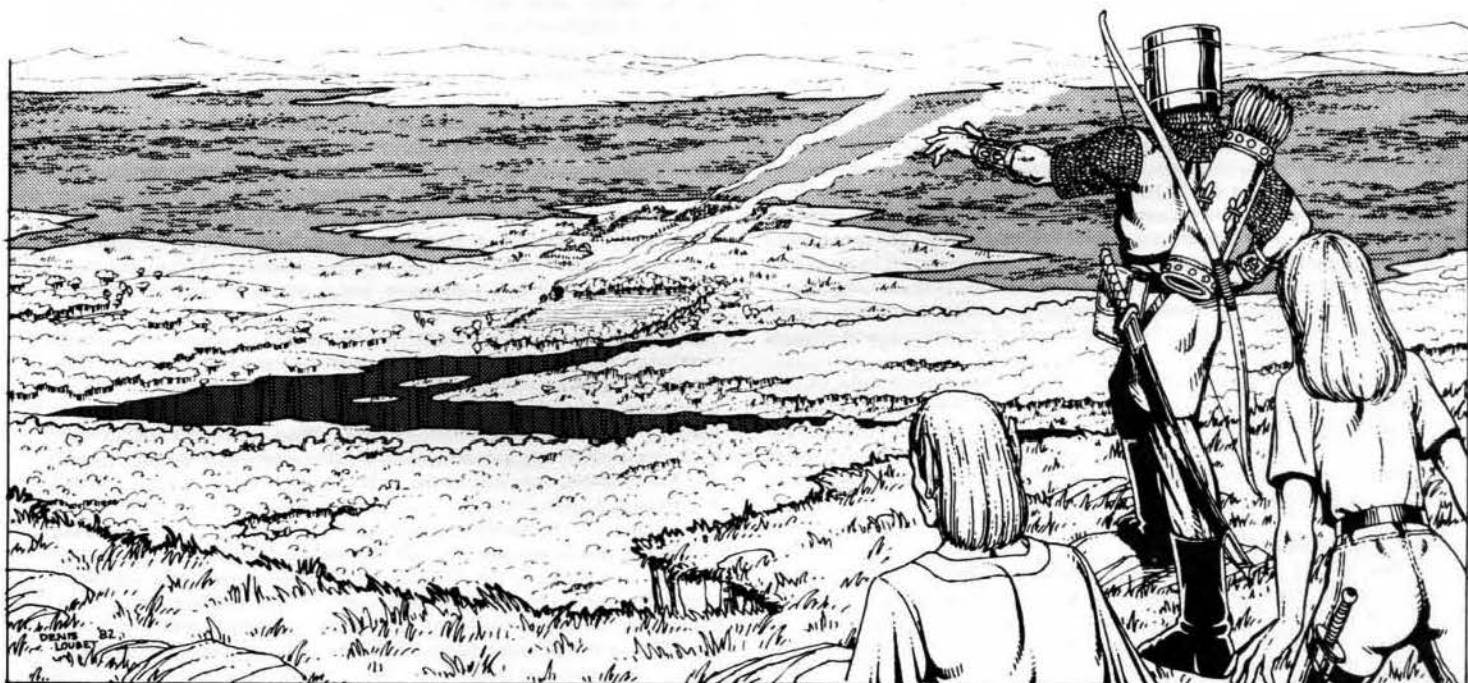
**Limits:** it is wise to keep the campaign world simple and limited at first. Don't attempt to develop NPCs for every major figure, or map every continent. With general notes on an area equivalent to western Europe, or about half of the USA, the gamemaster can have enough material for dozens of adventures. Then, when those near an end, he or she can use that experience to expand the world and develop more and better information for future adventures.

## 15.3 Maps & Travel

The gamemaster decides how to administer the travel of characters from one place to another. The method chosen often depends on the adventure — some require long journeys over the countryside, others take place in or around a town, and yet others can occur entirely within a single building, castle, or city block.

As a general rule, the gamemaster should keep members of the party within general hailing distance of each other, or at worst no more than a few minutes apart (in travel time). If the party splits further, two separate and simultaneous adventures begin, making the gamemaster's job twice as difficult. Furthermore, if one group gets into trouble, it may be unable to request help from the other, and thus half the players become involved in detailed tactical activities, while the other half have nothing to do, and simply watch. Therefore, a gamemaster should 'push' the players and plan adventures that encourage a party to stay together. Ever-present danger is one good reason for unity, another is a playmaster who demands the presence of everyone, all the time.

Typically, a gamemaster prepares one master map for him/herself,





often with notes about various incidentals, possible encounters, etc. From this, a tracing is made for players and general use in the game. The traced map may omit certain features, and will certainly not show many of the special notes. The position of the party on the map can be marked in pencil, and the gamemaster can then put the tracing over his/her master map whenever a precise comparison of location to a special note is made. Art supply stores have heavy white board (useful for master maps), and tracing paper in large rolls or pads.

Two general types of maps are frequently used for role-playing. The first is a large scale 'regional' map covering a few hundred miles, more or less. Travel over this takes a party days, perhaps a couple weeks. The second is a smaller scale 'locale' map covering a few miles at most, and often just showing a town, city block, or a few buildings. On these local maps the position of characters can be marked to show movements every few minutes (as opposed to regional maps, where the only movement visible is every few hours). Distance on local maps is commonly measured in blocs (of 20 paces) to facilitate long-range firing measurements.

Before starting maps for adventures, many gamemasters make a general sketch map of the world. This need not be accurate or detailed, it is purely for a larger perspective. Later, when a variety of regional adventure maps are finished, the gamemaster can go back and make a better, more accurate map for part or all of the world.

### 15.3.1 REGIONAL MAPS

Regional maps use the 'league' as a standard unit of distance. Although leagues historically varied from two to four miles, the one used in *Swordbearer* is exactly 6,000 paces long (which translates into 5,000 yds, or 15,000 feet, or about 2.841 miles, or about 4.572 kilometers). Typically, a league takes a man on foot an hour to cross, using reasonable roads over relatively flat terrain. Flying creatures can typically cover four leagues per hour.

**Scaled Maps:** this type of map is like a 'real' one, without any grid of hexes, squares, etc. Instead, each league is one inch, one centimeter, or any other convenient amount. One centimeter per league, on a large sheet of 20x30" or 30x40" board is suggested. This provides a region that adventurers can spend a week or more crossing, and much longer exploring. To measure travel and visibility distance, simply use a ruler with a centimeter scale (2.54cm equals one inch).

**Hex Maps:** this type of map is similar to that found in many board-games. Each hexagon is one league (across flats). Adventurers move from hex to hex, arriving at the edge of the new hex when they have spent sufficient time to cross the league of terrain in the old hex. Terrain obstacles that require extra time to cross are normally marked along the hexsides. The smallest common hex map is 16mm across flats, so that a league is in effect 1.6cm. This means a hex map will tend to show less area than 1cm/league scaled map, since on the hex map a league takes up more space. Hex maps also require the gamemaster to mark terrain in each hex, which can be time consuming. However, if the hex map has numbers in each hex, one can simply call out the hex number to communicate the party's location, special terrain features, etc., without need for tracing paper. Hex maps also discourage detailed fraction-of-a-league measurements (since one is either in the hex, or not). Scaled maps require more precise measurements, and more time spent to determine relatively distances, times, etc.

**Regional Background:** before, during and after the map-making process, many gamemasters will create a page or two of notes describing the salient aspects of the region. This includes a general description of the geography, climate in each season, and the major races present. A note about population density is wise, as well as the common types of animals. The political system, including type of government, military and police forces, level of popular content, powerful families, groups, guilds, etc. are all important. Economic data, including trade routes, major imports and exports (if any), sources of food and building materials, and general state of the economy are all of interest, as well as how the economic system is regulated (if at all), and whether any groups are dominant in it (such as merchant associations, the government, etc.). Finally, a note about local religions, churches, monasteries, and popular beliefs may be helpful. Of course, a religion's strength may not be related to the churches and monasteries present, and powerful 'underground' religions might exist (such as Christianity throughout Imperial Rome).

### 15.3.2 TERRAIN CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

As an aid to gamemasters working with regional terrain, the following classification system is suggested. These terrain types can be marked on areas of a scaled map, or hex by hex (and along hexsides) on hex-grid maps.

**Elevation Classes:** this shows the state of the land, and usually represents its elevation (highest point) as well. High peaks (A) are tall

mountaintops, usually very steep, and often high enough to have snow for most or all of the year, similar to the Alps, Andes, and Himalayas. Major mountains (B) are lower, and may be the lower portions of high peaks, both above and below treeline. Hills or broken country (C) includes old, gentle mountains entirely below treeline, foothills, badlands, and other areas with major up-and-down country, but where the actual change in vertical elevation is not too large (a few thousand feet, usually). Lightly rolling (D) countryside is typical open lands, with gentle ridges, hills, etc. assumed also. Flat land (E) is just that, with very gentle rolls and changes in elevation, resulting in long horizons unless vegetation is fairly heavy. Shallow water (F) is land that lies below sea level, or the usual water level, resulting in marshes and swamps.

**Watercourses:** major (RR) rivers are very wide or very swift, and too deep to attempt fording. Swimming or a vehicle is necessary to cross, and the size or swiftness of the river could make even that dangerous or impossible. Minor (r) rivers are not so wide, and not too swift. Although a league of length they usually have at least one ford (shallow spot) where a man could cross without absolute need of swimming skills. Both types of river are navigable, but minor rivers require shallow-draft vessels such as small boats, barges, rafts, canoes, etc. Major rivers are navigable to most ocean-going craft. Rapids or falls may be marked on rivers — points impassable to river traffic.

Major (SS) streams are swift-running, and have cut a bed into the land that leads to soft sides, rocks in the streambed, etc. Although water is rarely up to hip deep, the banks contribute to the crossing problems. Minor (s) streams are even shallower, and the streambed is easier to cross, although care with horses or vehicles may be required. Streams are not navigable in any sense.

**Cliffs:** high cliffs (CC) are very tall, steep drops that require technical climbing skill to surmount (unless on a trail, road, etc.). They are tall enough to have thousands of feet of vertical drop, similar to major mountains. Low cliffs (c) are not as tall, and can be climbed by men and animals without special skills. The increase in time is because they must pick their way up — a direct route would often require some technical climbing skills at points. The vertical drop of a minor cliff is in hundreds of feet, and is similar to that in hills or broken country.

**Vegetation:** the degree of ground cover is rated on a scale from zero (0) to eight (8), with higher numbers representing denser cover, more vegetation, growing both taller and thicker. Vegetation beyond level eight is impassable without extensive effort (such as a small army hacking its way through, aided by magic, flash-burning, and similar techniques).

Level zero (0) vegetation represents flat, smooth plains of snow, ice, sand or salt, with virtually nothing to interrupt line-of-sight. The presence of snow, sand, etc. will add softness or depth, and perhaps slow travel in some cases.

Level one (1) vegetation represents barren ground that is somewhat more broken, such as rocky areas, icefields, cracked ice sheets, and similar items that affect travel and provide intermittent cover for a crouching man.

Level two (2) vegetation represents significant ground cover, but limited to grasses of various types, normally no more than a pace tall, perhaps a pace and a half.

Level three (3) vegetation mixes small bushes and other brush with the grasses, with some of these bushes perhaps being two, even three paces tall. Stunted trees at high elevations are similar.

Level four (4) vegetation adds short to medium height trees in clumps, sometimes a lone large tree, in areas of grass and brush (the brush tends to thicken at and around the tree clumps in many climates and environments).

Level five (5) is light woods, where many medium and a few tall trees are spaced about openly, with glades, and the ground under the trees relatively clear; light woods are typical in populated areas, where the underbrush is cleared for kindling, or trees have overgrown farmland used a few centuries ago.

Level six (6) is normal forest, with medium and large trees close enough together to screen the sky from view at most times. The forest floor is relatively clear, with only moderate brush and fallen timber. Again, it may have been cleared by a dense local population, or it may be land cleared many centuries ago, and now fully overgrown.

Level seven (7) is a dense forest with large trees and a jumbled, difficult forest floor. Fallen trees have accumulated for centuries, brush has grown up, and very often no 'flat' floor exists, as the decaying vegetation produces highly irregular ground contours.

Level eight (8) is true jungle, with very tall trees, and various sorts of vegetation on them (vines, creepers, etc.), plus a second or even third lower level of vegetation equivalent to dense brush, growing up and around the fallen trees on the jungle floor. Often parts of the jungle floor vegetation are so dense and irregular that pools of water or even small ponds may be hidden in it, with thick mud other places. Moving

along the floor of the jungle is often more difficult than moving from branch to branch on the trees.

**Habitation & Communication:** small farming settlements or hamlets exist primarily for safety. Homes cluster together, with cleared farmland (class 2-4 vegetation) around them. In very peaceful areas, or where expansionist pressure on farmers is strong, individual farmsteads in the middle of their own lands may exist.

Typical routes of travel between settles, to navigable rivers, harbors, or more civilized areas will start as trails. A trail can be negotiated by most animals, including men and horses, but are rarely suitable for carts, wagons, and other wheeled vehicles. Trails may grow larger in time, and become roads. However, unless surfaced with stone, roads rapidly deteriorate under wheeled traffic, and become nearly impassable in bad weather. Surfaced roads are only likely in or near major cities. Finally, a 'high road' or 'imperial highway' can be constructed with a roadbed of sand and gravel, and built up with stone. These roadways are built to withstand years of weather and use, but are extremely expensive to build. Normally only a large and powerful empire can finance such projects. Examples are the ancient royal highway of Persia, or the road system of the Roman Empire.

Larger villages, towns and cities grow up on convenient trade sites, a major travel nexus (such as a good harbor), or areas where intensive agriculture turns small settlements into major cities. Walls are often added for defense. If the city continues to grow, 'suburbs' just outside the walls are common, and eventually acquire sufficient economic and political power to demand a new wall be built that encloses them too. The population size of urban centers depends on what local agriculture can support. In medieval Europe cities were rarely larger than 25,000 to 50,000 persons, if that. In China, with far more sophisticated agriculture and often better conditions, cities might exceed a million. Using the European model, towns are 5,000 to 10,000 persons, villages 1,000 to 3,000, and hamlets or settlements measured in the hundreds. Remember that a typical human family is composed of 4 to 5 persons, of which only one or two are adults in their prime.

### 15.3.3 REGIONAL TRAVEL

To simplify calculations by the gamemaster for a party travelling over the countryside, the Regional Terrain & Travel Table (RTTT) lists various combinations of elevation and vegetation. The table then shows the time (in hours) needed to cross one league of such terrain, on foot or horse. The table is based on normal human travel speeds in 'uncivilized' terrain. Note that crossing streams, rivers, cliffs, and passing through large inhabited areas can impose additional delays.

Road rates distinguish between unsurfaced (unimproved) and surfaced (improved) types of roads. Old roads surfaced long ago, but without a good roadbed, may have decayed to unsurfaced status in part or whole; the gamemaster may wish to determine the percentage of good road remaining, which is the percentage chance of the next league counting as improved roadway.

Wheeled vehicles on surfaced (improved) roads use horse travel rates. On unimproved roads and negotiable trails they use foot travel rate. Wheeled vehicles cross country cannot exceed half the foot rate, and will be prone to breakdown (gamemaster should set a percentage chance for this, ranging from 2-3% in good terrain to 90% or more in very difficult terrain). Often trails will not be negotiable to vehicles, forcing them to use cross-country speeds and risks.

Overall travel time in a day is simply the number of daylight hours available. Travelling at night is possible, but unless the entire group has superior eyesight at night, travel takes twice as long and requires artificial lighting as well.

Any almanac, including the pocket 'Farmer's Almanac' versions available at nearly any supermarket, will provide a gamemaster with sunrise and sunset times for any time of the year, and adjustments for latitude (which can be major if very close to the equator or poles).

**Marches:** any group of people needs time to organize themselves and break camp each morning, take at least one break during the day (typically around noon), and set camp in the evening. A 'march' is any period of continuous movement, in the case of most small groups, a morning or an afternoon march. Larger groups, or in bad conditions, more marches of shorter duration are needed (i.e., more breaks). A small group will take about a half hour to prepare for the first march of the day, and for breaks between marches. Making camp in the evening takes twice as long, or a full hour.

Larger groups typically need more time before, between, and after marches. Preparing for the day and breaks between marches might be an hour, or more, and camp at the end of the day would be double that, or two hours or more. The gamemaster should decide the times involved, bearing in mind that his choices determine how much slower a larger group will travel.

Continuous marching without breaks is possible, but leads to exhaustion.

**Example:** a party is moving on foot through lightly rolling forest (D6 terrain). Each league takes 3¼ hours cross-country, 2¼ hours following a trail, 1½ hours on a road, or 1 hour on an improved road. Assuming latitude is about 40° north (that of Philadelphia, Denver, Madrid, Samarkand, or Peking), and it is the middle of April, the party has over 13 hours of daylight. The gamemaster decides that it takes a half hour to wake and break camp in the morning, a half hour for lunch break, and an hour to make camp in the evening, for a total consumption of two hours, leaving 11 hours for travel. The party is on a trail, so it travels 5 leagues that day.

**Delays:** bad weather conditions, persons or mounts who are very young or old, infirm, or sick can all substantially increase travel times, not to mention simple exhaustion. The following general topics are typical sources of delay, but the gamemaster may discover or need others. Each delay factor that applies doubles again the normal time to traverse an area, *and* also adds one extra break (thus one extra march) to those needed each day:

- any in party are exhausted
- any in party are poor travellers (old, young, sick, etc.)
- extreme temperatures (very hot or cold)
- raining, snowing, or similar precipitation
- poor ground conditions (mud, snow, etc.)

If one of the above applies, travel time would be doubled for each league, and an extra break during the day would probably mean a half hour less time available for travel. If two applied, travel time would be four times normal, and two extra breaks would cost an hour more overall. If all five conditions applied, travel time would be 32 times normal (2x2x2x2x2), and five extra breaks would mean an extra 2½ hours subtracted from the day for a small group. Note that as a result, travel may become excruciatingly slow for small groups, and the accumulated delay of breaks may make it impossible for a large group to move!

**Justification:** the travel rates given here are based on wilderness walking and hiking experience in unpopulated areas of the USA by small groups, and information on travel times for such provided by various walking, hiking, and mountaineering groups. This is probably a fairer test of typical travel rates than military values, since very few groups of casual adventurers and travellers function with military discipline or fitness, but yet few are plagued by military bureaucracy!

### 15.3.4 REGIONAL VISIBILITY

When travelling in unknown lands, the ability to survey the countryside and get some idea where you're going is important! Adventurers normally lack a magnetic compass, and few have a good sense of direction. In dense vegetation, without a trail, it is very easy to get detoured and lose one's sense of direction.

The RTTT includes visibility notes, indicating how many leagues a character can see in such terrain. If the terrain is further away than the listed visibility limit, the adventurer cannot see through it (but might see to it, unless other terrain with a shorter visibility value was in the way).

For example, E3 flat brush steppes have a visibility of 3 leagues. An adventurer could see terrain about him or her for that distance, provided it remained brush steppe, or terrain with an equal or higher visibility. However, a forest (type 6 vegetation) has no visibility, which means the adventurer is unable to see into it. A forest one league away would be visible, but could not be seen into.

The 'zero visibility' of all type 6 and denser terrain means that line of sight only runs a few hundred paces, if that — virtually nothing compared to leagues of distance.

**Elevation:** if a character is on a higher elevation, overlooking lands lower, normal visibility limits do not apply. The character is able to see over the lower elevation, until either equal or higher elevations again block the line of sight, or weather conditions impose an ultimate limit. On a bright, clear, sunny day a character can see up to 20 leagues if on a mountain, 12 leagues if lower. If the day is overcast, these distances are halved. If it is raining, snowing, foggy, or similar as well, distances are halved again. Bright moonlight is not quite as good a condition as overcast daylight. If one's eyesight is superior in darkness, moonlight provides illumination similar to bright sunlight.

**Note:** characters overlooking terrain with moderate to heavy vegetation (type 5 or higher) will be unable to see trails, roads, streams, and minor rivers beyond a few leagues, as trees will conceal these. Note that cliffs may block visibility also. Signs of habitation, especially in moderate or cool temperatures, are easy to spot, because of the woodsmoke coming from chimneys.



## 15.3.5 LOCAL MAPS

These sketch maps are used for two purposes. First, they are a memory aid for the gamemaster, and allow him or her to plan areas where encounters and interesting fights might occur. Typically, a gamemaster will prepare a local map for the adventure's climax. Second, the map allows characters to maneuver themselves across a town, city, castle, etc. considerably larger than one a gamemaster could actually build, or draw in scale.

Large-area local maps can use a scale of 1mm for 1 bloc, so that 300mm (11.81 inches) equals 300 blocs, or one league. A single sheet of paper (8½x11") is over half a square league, and about a league long across diagonals — enough for an entire city! However, moving characters and firing missile weapons period by period, using blocs for

range, will require very fine and exact pencil marks, since moves and ranges are just a few millimeters! Therefore, this type of map is best used for reference, showing a general outdoors area.

Small-area local maps can use a scale of 1cm equals 1 block, with the master map 20x30" to 30x40" (on a large art board), and the gamemaster providing a tracing paper overlay to the players. Overall distances vary from 50 blocs (about 20") to 100 blocs (about 40"), and are suitable for castle interiors, underground 'dungeon' complexes, small towns, etc. Here pencil marks can be made easily on the tracing overlay to show the position of each character, all moves, etc. If characters get close enough, melee positions can be computed too, since each millimeter is 2 paces. Of course, when this happens, use of miniature figures is recommended; it becomes almost impossible to keep track of moves with a pencil.

## Regional Terrain &amp; Travel Table

Elevation Class (code) title	Vegetation Class (code) description	Visibility (in leagues)	Travel Rates, in hours per league							
			Cross Country		Trail		unimproved Road		improved Road	
			foot	horse	foot	horse	foot	horse	foot	horse
(A) High Peaks	(0) Snow & Ice Peaks . . . . .	.2 leagues		climb	.7½	X	.5	.5	.4½	.4½
	(1) Barren Rock Peaks . . . . .	.2 leagues		climb	.6½	X	.4¼	.4¼	.3½	.3½
(B) Major Mountains	(0) Snow & Ice Mountains . . . . .	.2 leagues	.6	.5%	.5%	.5	.4¼	.3%	.3%	.3%
	(1) Barren Mountains . . . . .	.2 leagues	.4½	.4%	.4	.3½	.3½	.3	.3	.2½
	(3) Above Treeline on Mountains . . . . .	.3 leagues	.5	.4%	.4	.3%	.3%	.2%	.2%	.2%
	(4) At Treeline on Mountains . . . . .	.2 leagues	.5%	.5	.4¼	.3%	.3	.2½	.2½	.2
	(5) Lightly Wooded Mountains . . . . .	.1 league	.5%	.5%	.4%	.4	.3	.2½	.2½	.2
	(6) Forested Mountains . . . . .	.0	.6%	.6%	.4%	.4%	.3½	.3	.2½	.2
	(7) Densely Forested Mountains . . . . .	.0	.7%	.7%	.4%	.4%	.4	.3%	.3%	.2%
	(8) Jungle Mountains . . . . .	.0	.9	.9	.6	.6	.5	.5	.4	.3½
(C) Hills or Broken Country	(0) Snow-covered Hills . . . . .	.4 leagues	.3%	.3	.3%	.3	.2¼	.1%	.1%	.1%
	(1) Rocky Badlands/Broken Icefield . . . . .	.3 leagues	.3%	.3	.2%	.2%	.2	.1%	.1%	.1
	(2) Grassy Hills . . . . .	.4 leagues	.2%	.2	.2%	.1%	.2	.1%	.1%	.1
	(3) Brush Hills . . . . .	.3 leagues	.3	.2%	.2%	.1%	.2	.1%	.1%	.1
	(4) Open Hilltops & Sheltered Groves . . . . .	.2 leagues	.3	.2%	.2%	.1%	.2	.1%	.1%	.1
	(5) Lightly Wooded Hills . . . . .	.1 league	.3%	.3	.2%	.2%	.2	.1%	.1%	.1
	(6) Forested Hills . . . . .	.0	.4%	.3%	.3	.2%	.2	.1%	.1%	.1
	(7) Densely Forested Hills . . . . .	.0	.5	.5	.4	.3%	.3%	.3	.1%	.1%
	(8) Jungle Hills . . . . .	.0	.6%	.6%	.5	.5	.4%	.3%	.2%	.2
(D) Lightly Rolling	(0) Sand Dunes, Wadis/Snow on Ice . . . . .	.5 leagues	.3%	.2%	.2%	.2%	.1%	.1	.1%	.¾
	(1) Rock Gullies/Icefield . . . . .	.5 leagues	.3	.2%	.2%	.1%	.1%	.¾	.1	.¾
	(2) Broken Grassland . . . . .	.5 leagues	.2%	.1%	.1%	.1%	.1%	.¾	.1	.¾
	(3) Brushland . . . . .	.4 leagues	.2%	.1%	.1%	.1%	.1%	.¾	.1	.¾
	(4) Veldt (grass with clumps of trees) . . . . .	.3 leagues	.2%	.1%	.1%	.1%	.1%	.¾	.1	.¾
	(5) Light Woods . . . . .	.1 league	.2%	.2	.2	.1%	.1%	.¾	.1	.¾
	(6) Forest . . . . .	.0	.3%	.2%	.2%	.2	.1%	.¾	.1	.¾
	(7) Dense Forest . . . . .	.0	.4	.4	.2%	.2%	.2%	.1%	.1	.¾
	(8) Jungle . . . . .	.0	.5%	.5%	.4	.4	.3	.2%	.2	.1½
(E) Flat Land	(0) Sand or Salt Pan/Snowfield . . . . .	.3 leagues	.3%	.2%	.2%	.1%	.1%	.1	.1%	.¾
	(1) Hard, Rocky Plain/Ice Sheet . . . . .	.3 leagues	.2%	.2	.2	.1%	.1%	.¾	.1	.¾
	(2) Grass Steppe . . . . .	.3 leagues	.2	.1%	.1%	.1	.1%	.¾	.1	.¾
	(3) Brush Steppe . . . . .	.3 leagues	.2%	.1%	.1%	.1	.1%	.¾	.1	.¾
	(4) Veldt (grass with clumps of trees) . . . . .	.2 leagues	.2	.1%	.1%	.1	.1%	.¾	.1	.¾
	(5) Light Woods . . . . .	.1 league	.2%	.2	.1%	.1%	.1%	.¾	.1	.¾
	(6) Forest . . . . .	.0	.3	.3	.1%	.1%	.1%	.¾	.1	.¾
	(7) Dense Forest . . . . .	.0	.3%	.3%	.2%	.2%	.2%	.1%	.1	.¾
	(8) Jungle . . . . .	.0	.5%	.5%	.3%	.3%	.2%	.2%	.1%	.¾
(F) Shallow Water	(2) Grass Marsh . . . . .	.2 leagues	.4%	.3%	.3%	.2%	.2%	.1%	.1%	.1
	(4) Flood Plain Marsh with Trees . . . . .	.2 leagues	.4	.2%	.3	.2%	.2	.1%	.1%	.¾
	(6) Swamp . . . . .	.0	.6	.5%	.4%	.3%	.3	.2%	.1%	.1%
	(7) Dense Swamp . . . . .	.0	.8%	.8	.5%	.5%	.4%	.3%	.2%	.2
	(8) Impenetrable Swamp . . . . .	.0	X	X	.7	.6%	.5%	.5	.4	.3½
Streams	(s) Minor Stream . . . . .	—	.¼	.¼	.0	.¼	.0	.0	.0	.0
	(SS) Major Stream . . . . .	—	.½	.½	.¼	.½	.0	.0	.0	.0
Rivers	(r) Minor River . . . . .	—	.2	.1%	.¾	.½	.0	.0	.0	.0
	(RR) Major River . . . . .	—	swim		swim		.¼	.¼	.¼	.¼
Cliffs	(c) Low Cliff, elevation C . . . . .	.blocks upward	.3	.4	.2	.2	.1%	.1%	.1	.1
	(CC) High Cliff, elevation B . . . . .	.blocks upward		climb	.3	.4	.2%	.2%	.2	.2
Inhabited	Large Town or City (elevation E) . . . . .	.0		climb	.4	.5	.3	.3	.2	.2
	Fortress Wall (elevation D) . . . . .	.blocks		climb		secret door	.2	.2	.2	.2

Key: X=impassable, 'climb'=must use technical climbing skill, 'swim'=must use swimming skill, '—'=no effect, 'secret door'=typical entrance is secret door from a trail.

## 15.4 Player Characters

### 15.4.1 CHARACTER CREATION LIMITS

The gamemaster is free to impose limits on players, to simplify the options when creating characters. These limits are very useful if the gamemaster and/or players are new to *Swordbearer*.

**Characteristic Limits:** social status is the characteristic commonly limited, usually to 12 (if a player receives a higher result, roll again; alternately, dice rolls that allow higher results are changed to 2d6 rolls instead). Keeping social status low initially makes retinuees very unlikely, and insures that players begin 'poor' in money and equipment — thus providing a motive for adventure. Later, the full range of social status can be allowed starting characters. Note, however, that a high status character may end up using other players' characters as retainers, and the gamemaster must be careful to avoid having the high status character dominate the adventure.

The gamemaster may allow a player to 'discard' a character who has mass, agility and intelligence all below average (a true 'oaf' - see below). Although playing a weak character can be interesting, if not comic, some players dislike such challenges.

**Racial Limits:** the basic character generation system, is for humans. The gamemaster may limit characters to just this race for the first few adventures, and then add additional races. When this method is used, the best approach is to add quasi-human races first, such as bunrabs, dwarves, elves, goblins, halflings, hobgoblins, ogres, orcs, and trolls. Unless both the players and the gamemaster are well-versed in *Swordbearer* it is unwise to allow any and all races as players' characters at the start.

**Magic Limits:** magic is one of the more complex aspects in *Swordbearer*. For starting gamemasters and players, it may be best to ignore it (prohibit use of initial experience in gaining magic skills). A good compromise, useful if players wish to have magician characters at the start, is to allow experience acquisition of elemental magic skills, but not spirit magic skills. This means both the gamemaster and players need only deal with elemental magic at first.

If the gamemaster does allow initial experience gain for elemental and spirit magic, one common device is to 'split' the magic sphere into two separate spheres: one for elemental magic (with its 14 skills), and one for spirit magic (with its 5 skills). This prevents a character from specializing in all fighting and all magic at the same time.

**Additional Prior Occupations:** in Skills, Occupations - Life before Adventuring, a variety of typical pursuits are given. The gamemaster may wish to expand these occupations with more variety, to encourage a broader range of characters.

### 15.4.2 ADDITIONAL CHARACTER RULES

Additional options are included for use with characters (see Intelligent Races, Alternate Characteristics). If any of the following options are in use, the gamemaster should so inform the players:

**Average Characteristics:** this is the system where characters start with average characteristics, and then 'trade off' inferiority in one category for superiority in another. Although an interesting variation, and useful in tournament play, this system is not recommended for extended campaigns.

**Balancing by Experience:** in this system, experience points are not dced, but instead established by formula. This is an excellent method for 'balancing' players' characters at the start, and works well in campaigns.

In fact, the gamemaster may wish to expand this variation by allowing players to voluntarily reduce their mass, agility, intelligence, and/or social status by a 1d6 amount (separate 1d6 roll made for each category, to determine maximum reduction). In this way, the player can gain more experience at the price of other abilities. However, for every two (2) experience points gained in this way, the player should add one year to the character's age.

### 15.4.3 SUPERCHARACTERS

In *Swordbearer*, as in many role-playing games, players' characters will eventually improve, and will require stronger and stronger opposition in their adventures. The gamemaster can 'clue in' players about this, by having their 'reputation' grow in the campaign world. Characters of high repute attract more difficult job offers, and will be both sought and hated by more and more.

It is also worth noting that in both combat and magic, it is possible for superior numbers to overcome almost anyone, no matter how powerful. Adventurers working together soon discover this compensates for individual weakness. Therefore, as players become superior in their own right, they will begin to find the situation reversed — they are now outnumbered by hordes of weaker enemies, one of whom is always trying to sneak up behind and clobber them!

**Skills & Spheres:** initially, most players concentrate on fighting and magic skills, as these appear the most direct and obvious route to power. An inexperienced gamemaster who turns every adventure into one big battle will rapidly discover that all the players' characters are fighter-magicians. Boredom begins.

The best solution is to expand adventures so that other skills become important (as they are in real life). Frequent encounters with NPCs and various social institutions encourage town sphere skills. Characters poor in those skills will be at the mercy of merchants, con men, police, and at a disadvantage in talking to everyday citizens. A fighter-magician in such straits may resort to violence or spells, which attract the attention of police, who will eventually show up with sufficient strength and magic to subdue or kill the character.

If the party is travelling through the wilds, country sphere skills can be important. Although the party may start the adventure well-provisioned, a few battles and/or natural disasters may cost the adventurers much of their equipment and food. Suddenly hunting, fishing, and wild food skills are important, and perhaps tracking as well. In wet areas or at sea swimming can be important, and in the mountains climbing might be very useful.

Stealth sphere skills have an obvious application, and can be encouraged by requiring the adventurers to penetrate areas so well defended that it is suicide to fight one's way in or out.

The other spheres are secondary to most adventurer's concerns. However, a player who starts in the nobility, with ambitions of overlordship, might strongly consider specialization in leadership/administration. The gamemaster should encourage such specialties, and skills in the arts/crafts or general knowledge area, but giving characters with those skills plenty of advantages. If the players initially lack such skills, having encounters with NPCs who do have the skills, and show how they are effectively used, is a handy educational device.

**Success as a Problem:** as a player's character improves in skill and gains fame from successful adventures, his or her social status tends to increase (from treasure, gifts from grateful patrons, association with the upper classes, etc.). Often the rising in rank will promote jealousy, even enemies, among those already at such levels. On the other hand, refusing the honors is generally considered an insult by the benefactor, especially if done in public.

When a character gains higher status, time and skills are needed to manage the lands, retinue, finances, etc. Otherwise, disasters and crises will run unchecked and status will begin to fall again. A character finds he or she has less and less free time for adventuring. These problems grow exponentially with status, so a middle or high ranking noble may discover that almost any adventure will mean a reduction in status due to problems 'back home.' In this case, the character will probably stop adventuring personally, and instead attempt to hire or otherwise use other adventurers for these tasks. The player's character gradually turns into an NPC, and the player creates a new character to execute the tasks assigned by the old character! After years of campaigning, a fantasy world may be full of NPCs who were originally a player's character.

### 15.4.4 OAFS

An 'oaf' is a character with poor characteristics and/or low skills. Such characters have difficulty surviving, much less improving. They are so inept that they rarely contribute to an adventuring party. Some players hate oafs, and if forced to play them make the game miserable for all.

Actually, an oaf, or any character without sufficient abilities to do anything positive, can still be fun to play. Oafs can provide lots of comedy — a player can take ridiculous risks, do stupid things, and engage in various idiotic pratfalls. If an oaf has low agility, the player can have him or her constantly tripping over things, falling down, bumping into people at inconvenient times, etc. If an oaf has low intelligence, he or she can be constantly trusting, showing misplaced affection (or conversely, be insanely paranoid and mistrustful).

Oafs can develop into fascinating characters, who antics make them much in demand. Other times, an oaf is only good for a session or two, and if he or she survives that, the player has the oaf 'discover' a good job, lover, or special task that causes him/her to leave the group. The oaf is thus 'retired' and the player creates a new character (see Life After Death, below). After years of campaigning, a fantasy world may have dozens of retired oafs scattered around, ready to make life interesting to anyone who happens that way!

### 15.4.5 LIFE AFTER DEATH

If a player's character is killed during an adventure session, the gamemaster should have him or her immediately begin creating a new character. Meanwhile, the adventure session continues with the surviv-



ors. The gamemaster keeps a close eye for situations in which the survivors can encounter a new character as a potential ally. Often a gamemaster will have a half dozen 'stock encounters' on file for just this purpose. These include chance meetings on the road, in a tavern, in the market district, etc. An extremely useful ploy is to have the adventurers meet someone recently robbed, mugged, imprisoned, or otherwise just released from the hands of unpleasant sorts. The 'rescue' insures friendly relations between the adventurers and the new character, and eliminates the problems of outfitting the new character — since he or she survived without any money or normal gear!

This method helps keep all the players active in the game, and thus makes players willing to risk death. However, since a player must start again, and perhaps without money and/or equipment, death remains something a sensible player tries to avoid!

## 15.5 Non-Player Characters

### 15.5.1 INTRODUCTION

Non-player characters (NPCs) are extremely important in *Sword-bearer*, or in any role-playing game. The NPCs are the 'personae' through which the gamemaster guides, interacts with, and challenges the players. On a very simple level, NPCs are the villains and monsters for players to fight. However, one slaughter after another can become boring. The gamemaster will find a greater variety of NPC roles can vastly improve the game.

The gamemaster should see himself as creating a script for a movie, TV show, or novel. Action and events occur by and to the characters, including both players' characters and NPCs. For example, if the gamemaster wishes to warn players that going up the mountain is dangerous, at the next roadside stop or tavern he can have them overhear another traveller telling terrible tales about the mountain. The teller-of-the-tale is just a 'bit part' with a few 'walk on' lines, but his existence helps add realism to the adventure, and is far superior to the gamemaster simply informing the players that it will be dangerous!

Most NPCs are spur-of-the-moment creations, to serve some minor function. They exist because somebody must exist at a certain place and time. Occasionally, events require an NPC to be 'fleshed out' and details added. As a rule, the gamemaster should create only what he or she will need, since creating a complete character for every 'bit part' is boring, time consuming, unnecessary, and unappreciated. After a discussion of the various types of NPCs, some short cuts to determining NPCs and their attitudes are given in the later part of this chapter.

Typically, NPCs serve four functions: extras, informants, patrons, villains.

### 15.5.2 EXTRAS

**Basic Extras:** the 'extra' is an unimportant NPC who exists purely because the players' characters must communicate with someone at that point. If characters enter a tavern, the tavern keeper, serving maid, and various customers are probably 'extras.' Extras can simply be 'four farmers' or a 'large crowd of townspeople,' or they might be more individualized and developed. For example, characters in a tavern might get into a game of dice. The other players in the game are 'extras,' and the gamemaster simply determines the social status and gambling skill of each. Other information is relatively unimportant, and can be added later if needed.

**Spear Carriers:** these are companions or 'helpers' who travel with the players' characters. Any hirelings, assistants, servants, or slaves with a character are spear carriers. These NPCs add special skills to the group, provide extra fighting strength, and in their death create the impression of danger without actually killing a player's character. Spear carriers are more developed NPCs, and usually require all basic characteristics and the primary skills (skills they are hired for).

A good gamemaster has a 'stable' of a few dozen spear carriers, suitable for various duties, to add as needed during an adventure. For example, if a gamemaster has planned a climactic battle with a large band of thugs, and the players' characters are heading toward it and clearly a poor match, the gamemaster might add a small group of militia (low quality soldiers), or a superswordsmen, or a magician, to give them sufficient strength for a fair fight.

The ultimate spear carrier is a high-powered NPC who can rescue the players' characters if they get into an impossible situation. The 'nick of time' rescuer may actually be on another mission entirely, and in the process of accomplishing this just happens to help the adventurers out of a jam!

### 15.5.3 INFORMANTS

Players' characters have rudimentary knowledge of life and various regions, due to automatic General Knowledge skills. This type of information can be provided by the gamemaster, saying 'you remember

that. . . ' and then telling players directly what they 'know.' However, in many situations players would not logically know things, and the gamemaster would like to provide either information, mis-information, or local rumors to begin, continue, improve, and/or complicate an adventure. Providing information realistically is especially important when players are searching for information — which occurs rather often.

The best way to provide information is to create NPCs with it. Characters then acquire it by chance meetings, overheard conversations, or by searching out appropriate NPCs. Simple informants are like extras, created spontaneously to serve a particular need as it occurs. A list of potential informants is helpful, with brief notes about why the informant knows this, and why he will 'spill the beans.' If the gamemaster anticipates an informant travelling with the adventurers for a period, more detailed characteristics must be developed. These characters also may be, or come from contact with patrons (see below).

### 15.5.4 PATRONS

Patron NPCs are characters who need a job done, and while they have high status or items of value, they are unable or unwilling to do the job personally. The patron therefore hires (or otherwise convinces) the adventurers to do the job. Patrons can include merchants looking for guards or partners, a politician looking for a spy, assassin, or 'dirty tricks' squad, a military leader looking for scouts or a special-mission team, a magician or cleric trying to find a special item, etc. Patrons are always handy, and every good gamemaster should have a 'stable' of them, ready to start new adventures, or complicate existing ones (by tempting characters with new jobs before they finish the old!)

Patrons need basic characteristics, some idea of their better skills, and a bit of personal background that explains what they want, and why. The motivations of a patron doesn't tell the adventurers the whole story — if he did, they might lose interest! A very intelligent and/or powerful patron may just 'use' the adventurers as pawns in a larger 'game,' include as sacrificial diversions and similar ploys designed to get the adventurers into a serious jam. Obviously, the gamemaster must have some idea of this 'larger game' and must leave various hints and clues about during the adventure for the players (thus giving them a chance to realize their danger and effect an escape). The gamemaster should also have a 'rescue' or two in the pocket, in case the adventurers fall head first into disaster.

Also bear in mind that patrons may well commission other activities, and these might influence future events also. For example, a group hired as assassins might meet returning spies of the same patron, and not know both were in the service of the same person! Any sort of secret undertaking can lead to plenty of complexity, confusion, and mistaken identity. If the gamemaster enjoys puzzling players, many wonderful opportunities exist with patrons and their schemes.

### 15.5.5 VILLAINS

Villain NPCs are the opponents of the players' characters. In the simplest role, a villain is any thug, thief, bandit, hostile animal, or local monster that the players encounter (and usually fight) during the adventure. A gamemaster should always keep a thick file of these 'nasties' with basic characteristics, fighting skills, and fighting gear listed. These rudimentary villains usually tend toward obvious violence, so no attention to character, etc. need be made.

Basic villains of this sort can be independent operators, or they may be in the service of a master villain. Every region should have a selection of master villains, some known and some secret, whose activities are mainly evidenced by the dark deeds of their henchmen. For each master villain the gamemaster usually needs the name of various 'lieutenants' who control various facets of the master's operations. Each lieutenant's 'department' will include a few lower-level 'riff raff' NPCs who the players' characters might encounter in public situations. This allows for encounters that might give the players information. Remember, not all these encounters need be violent, or all that illuminating at that time.

If the players themselves are acting in evil, nasty or despicable ways, the 'villains' of the game become local law enforcement, including nobles with their armed retainers, constables and their deputies, and various military patrols or garrisons. While the players plot raids, heists, kidnappings, etc., the gamemaster works out the details of the forces arrayed against them, including all of the above, plus potential chase groups of enraged citizens, or even bounty hunters.

Remember that villains of any ilk may be disguised, and perhaps travel with the players' characters to serve some purpose of their own. They might use the players' characters as a smokescreen, as victims, fall guys, or whatever. As a gamemaster, though, beware of 'villainitis' — having too many villains too often! Not every NPC should be a villain. If players' characters only meet bad guys, they will quickly become murderous cut-throats in self defense!

The final type of 'villain' creates non-combat obstacles and problems that characters must 'think their way out of.' These include customs officials who impound objects or even characters at gates or docks, tax collectors at bridges or in mercantile areas, guards along borderlands regions, defensive posts in mountain passes, etc. Nearly any government official, including law enforcement officers, can act as a 'villain,' as well as representatives of religious groups who enforce certain codes. The main duty of the gamemaster is to insure that violence is a poor solution to these problems, either because the opposition is too strong, or because it can call down terrible retribution on the players' characters. Villains of this type help 'train' players to act in a 'civilized' manner, and encourage the development of non-combat skills.

**15.5.6 FAST SKILLS FOR NPCs**

Deciding skills and applying experience toward them is difficult for NPCs. This is because the experience point system is designed for 'everyday' non-violent citizens with no special background, and a life without adventure. Many NPCs will have superior experience or exceptional abilities in certain skills — to explain why they are doing what they're doing right now! One easy method is given below.

First, use the normal system to generate the basic characteristics of the NPC, including mass, strength, agility, intelligence, age, and social status. Age and/or social status may be arbitrarily revised to create the type of NPC needed. If the NPC has a special occupation, three different rolls can be made in each key area, and the gamemaster can select the most appropriate.

Next, in a skill where a rating is needed, decide the NPC's general skill level to perform in his or her job. Minor or adequate skills are typical for basic workers, good to superior skills for leaders or noted experts, and 'super' abilities if the NPC is famous throughout the land in that particular job. As an NPC gained his/her skill and experience, he or she would gain a reputation as well. A 'good' rating is for characters whose abilities have been recognized, either by peers, and/or by the employer. A 'superior' rating is appropriate to characters best in that skill (or one of the best) in that locale or region. Such NPCs often become key assistants to powerful lords, or sometimes a powerful lord in their own right. The 'super' NPC mainly exists to counter supercharacters, or to demonstrate to players the problems inherent in supercharacters. A 'super' NPC is famous (or infamous) throughout the land, and provokes reactions wherever he or she is known.

To determine the actual skill rating, find the general skill level, and read across for the dice roll used. Note that all dice rolls and fixed amounts are added to the minimum skill value of that character:

No Skill . . . . .	0 + minimum skill
Minor Skill . . . . .	2d10 + 5 + minimum skill
Adequate Skill . . . . .	.3d10 + 15 + minimum skill
Good Skill . . . . .	.4d10 + 25 + minimum skill
Superior Skill . . . . .	.5d10 + 35 + minimum skill
Supercharacter . . . . .	.5d10 + 50 + minimum skill

For statistically oriented gamemaster, the average addition to minimum skill is 16 for minor, 31½ for adequate, 47 for good, 62½ for superior, and 77½ for super.

**Dicing Skill Levels:** the gamemaster may wish to introduce greater variety into his NPC generation by simply deciding if a particular skill is important to his or her work, useful (but not critical), or of no importance. Using these simple categories, a d100 roll can then be used to determine the general level of skill, and that in turn can determine the specific rating (as above). To use the table below, find the proper column, roll d100, read down to find your number in that column, and then read across to find the general skill level that results.

<i>important</i>	<i>useful</i>	<i>unimportant</i>	<i>general level result</i>
1-9 . . . . .	.1-52 . . . . .	.1-68 . . . . .	no skill
10-35 . . . . .	.53-77 . . . . .	.69-90 . . . . .	minor skill
36-74 . . . . .	.78-90 . . . . .	.91-97 . . . . .	adequate skill
75-92 . . . . .	.91-96 . . . . .	.98-99 . . . . .	good skill
93-98 . . . . .	.97-99 . . . . .	.100 . . . . .	superior skill
99-100 . . . . .	.100 . . . . .	— . . . . .	supercharacter

**15.5.7 NPC REACTIONS**

Often the gamemaster must decide how an NPC reacts to an approach by a player's character — before any skills are used. Although the gamemaster may select a response, he or she may wish to give an image of fairness by rolling 2d6 and consulting the table below. The dice roll can be modified by circumstances, including additional modifiers for specific situations imposed by the gamemaster.

NPC reactions, on the basest level, determine whether violence is likely. Reactions can adjust the normal use of skills, or instead the gamemaster can make skill use competitive (i.e., if NPC is unfriendly,

player's character must beat the NPC at that skill). The 2d6 roll for reactions may be modified by various circumstances. The 'fairest' way to gamemaster is to build in additional modifiers for special situations, but let the final 2d6 result rule the NPC's reaction. However, a strictly fair way at all times can ruin adventures, so the gamemaster must exercise some judgement and discretion.

<i>2d6 roll</i>	<i>NPC reaction and attitude</i>
2 or less . . . . .	instant enemy, is grossly insulted, will attack if possible
3 . . . . .	very hostile, insulted, draws weapon and ready to fight, other skills or interaction not possible
4 . . . . .	hostile, sneers, makes sure weapons are at hand, draws if you draw other skills -75, interactions competitive
5 . . . . .	uncooperative, negative response, not insulting other skills -50, interactions competitive
6 . . . . .	restrained and cautious, provides no information, but not impolite other skills -25, interactions may be competitive
7 . . . . .	neutral, non-committal, tries to remain uninvolved other skills normal if forced commit him/herself, roll again with extra -1 modifier
8 . . . . .	cautiously receptive, answers questions in a restrained manner, other skills normal, interactions not competitive
9 . . . . .	casual friendliness, provides simple answers to casual questions, evades difficult or serious questions, other skills +25, interactions not competitive
10 . . . . .	response, provides full answers to questions, ready to be friends other skills +50, interactions not competitive
11 . . . . .	friendly, will volunteer information, will join party for reasonable pay, other skills +75, interactions not competitive
12 or more . . . . .	genuinely friendly and helpful, volunteers detailed information may give gifts, wishes to join party (for very little in return at times) other skills and interactions with this NPC are always successful

<i>Reaction Modifiers</i>	<i>(add and subtract all that apply, to the 2d6 roll above)</i>
+1 . . . . .	character has family, residence, or common background with NPC
+1 . . . . .	character successfully uses diplomacy skill to promote trust
+1 . . . . .	meeting occurs in social gathering for 'better society' in civilization
-1 . . . . .	meeting occurs in wild, dangerous or uncivilized place
-1 . . . . .	character has weapon(s) ready (but not drawn) and is armored for battle
-2 . . . . .	character has drawn weapon(s) in hand, armored or not
-2 . . . . .	character is of race or cultural group naturally hostile to NPC

The term 'character' above refers to the player's character.

**15.5.8 NPC OPERATOR**

In an ongoing campaign world, where the same players participate in adventure after adventure, the gamemaster can add in other players in a 'NPC Operator' role. The NPC Operator player takes an NPC (or two, or three) created by the gamemaster, and plays that role for that game only. In effect, the NPC Operator is an 'assistant gamemaster' with a limited scope. The NPC Operator can either guide the NPCs allied and assisting the players' characters, or he can operate some or all of the NPC opposition, especially useful in large battles.

The NPC Operator must be willing to act and perform in ways that further the gamemaster's plans and interests. If an NPC Operator adopts a casual attitude, the entire adventure may bog down or go 'off the rails' in unhappy ways. On the other hand, an NPC Operator is often handling interesting, powerful, or multitudes of characters, with a much wider variety and scope of action than the usual player character.

Overall, the role of NPC Operator is perfect for an experienced player who cannot be a 'regular' in a campaign, but can play from time to time. Novices should master a single player character before attempting the role of NPC Operator.

**15.6 Equipment, Weapons & Combat**

'Social Status' includes listings of various standard items of equipment for adventures, armor, and weaponry. The lists reflect items commonly available in iron age Western Europe and the Mediterranean basin during the ancient and medieval period (roughly 500 BC to 1450 AD). A few items from other areas have been included, as well as some items typical to fantasy, but not yet common by 1450 AD (such as the rapier). The system assumes that quality ironwork was common, but the secret of steel was not. Steel is represented by adding the temper spell to metal items.



Above all else, the gamemaster should remember that in different cultures, different items acquire value. Therefore, variations in social status level costs for items should be expected, and in some cases can vary widely. The gamemaster may wish to create entirely new cost lists in extreme cases, note the change in cost (or unavailability of an item) in other situations.

### 15.6.1 EQUIPMENT

**Variety:** the various types of clothing, armor, travel gear, and adventuring equipment listed are by no means comprehensive. The gamemaster can expand the lists, using good sense and extrapolation to determine appropriate social levels.

**Size & Quality:** the equipment lists assume that for the social status given, items are plain, functional, and ordinary. It is possible to get inferior items at one or possibly two status levels below normal, but there is substantial risk (1d6 x 10%) of the item failing, falling apart, or otherwise turning out to be worthless.

If equipment above the social status listing is acquired, it may be better quality, may evidence superior craftsmanship or beauty, be decorated with higher quality materials (such as silver, gold, gems, etc. in very high status cases), etc. An example of qualitative improvement is a tent, which at the basic status level (4) is designed for two people. At status 6 a similar functional tent designed for three might be available, at status 8 a tent for four, etc. These tents might in fact also be made of better materials, include rugs, cushion, etc.

**Availability:** large industry did not exist in the ancient or medieval world. Goods were made by independent craftsmen, often assisted by family members, and/or an apprentice or two. Craftsmen produced sufficient items to serve local needs, often on a 'special order' basis (where the local resident would return a few days after placing the order to pick up the item). Craftsmen tried to have a variety of 'staple' items available for immediate sale, of course, but nowhere near the selection typical in modern stores.

More importantly, purchases in quantity are particularly difficult. Craftsmen are not oriented to mass production. The best way to buy in quantity is to buy a few items each from a large number of craftsmen!

Another consideration is local knowledge. Craftsmen rarely had reference books. They made copies of what their original teacher taught them, plus any variations they personally added. With successful application of intelligence, a craftsman could attempt to copy anything in their field — provided a sample is available. Whether the copy would be successful depends on whether any 'secrets' were involved, and whether the craftsman was successful in using his or her skill. On the other hand, craftsmen are often interested in new items for their trade, since such allow them to 'discover' the secrets of others, and perhaps improve their own skills.

### 15.6.2 ARMOR

The types of armor listed represent typical European forms in the high and late middle ages. Naturally, many other varieties of armor are possible, and many people hold strong opinions about the effectiveness of each sort. The entire system of armor protection in *Swordbearer* is deliberately simplified for playability, and the gamemaster should bear this in mind.

As a general rule, alternate types of armor are possible, but should provide inferior protection in some or all circumstances. For example, asiatic steppe nomads often used horn lamellar or scale armor, instead of metal. Such should be similar to metal mail, but absorb/deflect one point less of damage. Quilted cotton armor and padding is similar to leather, but more vulnerable to cuts, so that it protects with one less point of absorb/deflect ability against such hits.

The gamemaster should avoid creating superior forms of armor. The combination of good armor, protective magic, magic designed to disable attackers, and healing (naturally or by magic) gives the defense many advantages. Extra high-value forms of armor are very unwise.

One popular variation in the armor statistics is to eliminate the decline in armor protection as it absorbs hits, or to reduce it to half the normal rate (two hits of 2+ damage points in a location are needed to reduce armor protection by one). The rate at which armor can be torn apart is a subject of heated debate.

### 15.6.3 WEAPONS

The weaponry listings cover a wide variety of variants in each category. Distinguishing between the various types and forms of blades on the halberd is not within the province of this game. Of greater importance is the quality of the workmanship in the weapon — since that can directly affect breakage, and in extreme cases damage ability (if the blade dulls quickly). Bronze and copper weapons should be rated inferior to the listing values in both damage and breakage.

The gamemaster should feel free to introduce additional weapons

that are truly exotic. A huge variety of asiatic weaponry has been ignored, although many of the common Japanese and Chinese weapons fall within the categories given (the katana — Japanese 'samurai sword' — is a hand-and-a-half, etc.).

The gamemaster may of course prohibit certain weapons in certain areas, especially if the 'secrets' to their design is unknown. Longbows and composite bows are classic cases where the proper materials (for a longbow) or requisite craftsmanship (for a composite bow) were often lacking. Throwing knives or daggers are another category of weapon that requires special skill and ability for construction (because good balance is critical).

Generally, local armorers will be familiar with the design of standard, local military weaponry, plus typical civilian sidearms (such as knives and daggers). Beyond that, it is often 'pot luck' whether the armorer knows more.

### 15.6.4 CUSTOM WEAPONS

The gamemaster may allow superior armorers and bowyers to make customized weapons. These are weapons designed to match the strength of the user. Craftsmen need a skill of 50 or better, and plenty of spare time, to attempt a custom job.

A custom weapon 'costs' at least one social status level higher than normal, and often the cost is closer to 1d6 more. The gamemaster should have the players' characters search and work toward getting a custom weapon, rather than simply being able to get one on demand. For example, craftsmen with the requisite skill might be 'rumored' to exist in another town, a craftsman might attempt the job but bungle it, producing an inferior weapon, and finally, when the proper person is found, good diplomacy and performing a special service might be required.

**Custom Hand-held Weapons:** custom swords, axes, maces, hammers, etc. are achieved by adding one or more to the normal strength requirements (for both one-handed and two-handed use). For every four (4) points added to the strength requirement, or fraction thereof, an extra +1 is given to the damage die roll, and the breakage number is increased by one. If at least 5 points are added to the strength requirement, the weapon's length can be increased one class if desired (from L2 to L3, for example); L4 remains the maximum. If the weapon's length is increased one class, breakage value must be reduced by one.

The gamemaster may permit lightweight custom weapons. For every three points (or fraction thereof) reduced from the strength requirement, an extra -1 is applied to damage, and breakage number is reduced by one. If the strength requirement is reduced by four or more points, the length class must be reduced one also.

When a custom weapon is finished, an overall skill check by the craftsman is necessary. If the craftsman fails this check, the weapon is somewhat inferior, reduce the breakage number by one. This is because any departure from traditional methods entails a large risk of error or unexpected weakness.

**Custom Simple/Compound Bows:** these are designed to match a character's strength, with a light version for characters with strength 5 to 8 (inclusive), medium versions for characters 9 to 12 inclusive, and if recurved bow design is known (typical of the middle east and asia) the medium version can be extended to strengths 13 or 14 also. Characters of any greater strength must content themselves with the largest bow (12 or 14), or look for the custom long/composite bow.

Damage values from these weapons are the same as those of normal light and medium bows. Recurved bows designed for strength 14 have a 1d6+1 damage value. However, the ranges for all these bows will vary, depending on the designed strength. *Short range* runs from 2 paces to 4x designed strength, *medium range* runs from 4x designed strength +1, to 10x designed strength, *long range* runs from 10x designed strength +1, to 17x designed strength, *extreme range* runs from 17x designed strength +1, to 25x designed strength.

**Custom Long/Composite Bows:** these are also designed to match a character's strength, and use multi-arm construction (as in asiatic composite bows) or rare woods with special craftsmanship (as in English or Japanese longbows). A minimum strength of 11 is required, and the maximum strength is 18. Designs beyond strength 18 are possible, but only by races whose maximum strength could exceed 18 (human bowyers are therefore incapable of it, since human strength does not exceed 18, and therefore human bowyers have no experience or ability to test such massive weapons).

Damage values for long/composite bows designed for strength 11-14 are 1d10, for strength 15-17 1d10+1, and for strength 18 1d10+2. Ranges depend on the designed strength, as follows. *Short range* runs from 2 paces to 4x designed strength, *medium range* runs from 4x designed strength +1, to 12x designed strength, *long range* runs from 12x designed strength +1, to 20x designed strength, *extreme range* runs from 20x designed strength +1, to 30x designed strength.

**Notes on Custom Bows:** custom bows require custom arrows. If a normal arrow is used, the bow is reduced to normal range and damage value for its type, regardless of the original design. Therefore, characters with custom bows must pay attention to their ammunition supply, and may have to wait for a bowyer to custom-make any resupply!

**Other Custom Missile Weapons:** in other cases, greater strength by a character with a missile weapon normally means greater damage inflicted by the missile (such as javelins, rocks, thrown spears, etc.). Actually, range may also increase, but this adds so much complexity that gamemasters are advised to avoid range modifications for other missiles. Crossbows and arbalests, being mechanical devices, are mass produced and almost never have custom versions. Indeed, one of their prime virtues in historical reality was their simplicity — less training and skill was needed for accurate shooting (at short or medium ranges).

### 15.6.5 THE COMBAT SYSTEM

The Combat Rules are relatively comprehensive, and for proper use require some study by players as well as the gamemaster. However, the system is deliberately designed for all types of actions, indoors and outdoors, mounted and dismounted, in the air, etc. The gamemaster can insert additional modifiers, special charts, tables, or rules to cover unique situations.

**Simplified Combat:** the gamemaster can simplify the combat system by simply asking the players for the general tactical activities of their characters, and then interpreting these thoughts in terms of the combat system's mechanics. In other words, the player says 'I'm coming through the door and will attack the dwarf in the corner.' The gamemaster interprets this as a charge into the dwarf, with appropriate moves and strikes. The charge would be at the slowest speed possible, to reduce the problem of momentum on later instants.

Similarly, exact positioning and move distances in combat situations can be interpreted in a flexible manner. The gamemaster may shift to unique time scales, such as two or three instants in each 'declaration', if characters are involved in situations close to combat, but not actually in it. Whatever the gamemaster feels moves the game along in a simple, fair, and reasonable manner is appropriate — when inexperienced players are present.

A gamemaster should make some effort to teach the rudiments of the combat system to players in a campaign, since trying to 'wing it' in every battle will soon become more trouble than its worth.

**Combat Mechanisms:** the gamemaster should be aware of how the mechanics of the combat system interact with each other. For example, although the parry and shield rules may seem confusing at first, they are crucial mechanisms to permit fencing matches, or to allow a skillful, well-equipped fighter to cut his way through much larger numbers. Weapon breakage is important, especially in parries, since weak weapons like knives or daggers often break when used to parry. Accumulated damage to shields is also important, since they gradually fall apart. Shoves and wrestling occur more often than expected. Shoves are not uncommon if a character charges into an enemy, and due to consecutive-instants-of-movement rules, must try to 'roll over' the target on the next turn. Wrestling occurs whenever one character attempts to subdue another without killing them!

The gamemaster can allow characters to 'pull' their hits, and do less than normal damage with any hand-held striking weapon. Thus a good fighter can aim a blow at the head, and do just enough damage to knock the enemy unconscious, but not enough to kill him or her. The gamemaster can also allow characters to arrange their blows so the damage effect is temporary (stunning damage), with the target recovering from the wounds faster than one wound point per day.

Rules are not included for very specific targeting of hits (or spells), such as to an eye, mouth, finger, etc. The hit location system, and its effects, are deliberately generalized for simplicity. The gamemaster should not allow special bonuses for more specific targeting — advantages of this sort will rapidly destroy the usefulness of the current hit system. For example, an open metal helmet gives the head an armor value of 4, in general. Players may wish to aim for the uncovered part of the head, and thus avoid all armor whatsoever. In the current system, this is represented by comparing the damage points to the armor. If the damage is higher, it means the weapon hit an unarmored part, caused concussion damage, etc. If the weapon damage was insufficient to penetrate the armor, it means it hit the metal, although a blow of 2 or more damage points would dent, crack, or otherwise damage the armor — making the character more vulnerable the next time.

## 15.7 Clerics, Nodes & Magic

### 15.7.1 THE BALANCE OF MAGIC

*Swordbearer* permits the gamemaster to exercise a wide range of judgement with magic. The game system for acquiring and using magic

is deliberately flexible, so magic can be increased until it is constantly in use, or decreased until it is so rare its appearance is a surprise. In fact, the degree of 'fantasy' in a world, and the game, depends largely on magic level. A game with little magic moves toward a 'historical' situation, similar to ancient or medieval life, while more and more magic moves the game toward 'fantastic' realms that only an insane novelist could create. Of course, the number of races, animals, cultures, and equipment contribute to either an impression of 'historical realism' or 'high fantasy'. However, even in high fantasy a sense of logic and realism is needed, hence the complexities of the magic system — which are designed to provide checks and balances.

The wisest course for a starting gamemaster is to use minor amounts of elemental magic, and no spirit magic. Elemental magic can be introduced via nodes and enchanted objects, or an occasional NPC magician. Later, villains with some control of spirit magic can appear, and when defeated players begin to learn the secrets of their opponents — thus introducing spirit magic.

It is very tempting to 'spice up' a game with extra nodes, spells, and enchanted objects. Remember that once powerful tools are available, it is hard to deprive players of them without protests and discontent. The powerful items cause an 'escalation' effect where former opponents become walk-overs, meaning the gamemaster must conjure up new and more formidable regions of the world. Eventually such a game becomes one of superheroes and supervillains, with ordinary mortals having nothing but walk-on parts, and cataclysmic events occurring daily! Furthermore, if a player's character is killed, the replacement character must be provided with tons of superior equipment and magic, in order to take a fair and equal place among the surviving superheroes of the other characters.

Spirit magic must be carefully handled also, since many of its effects are powerful, unique, and often without a counter or reversal. A beginning gamemaster is advised to introduce spirit magic through NPCs, rather than simply making it available to the players. In this way, the gamemaster can perceive the strengths and weaknesses involved, and illustrate the same to the players.

Enchanted items are very powerful tools in *Swordbearer*. The gamemaster should not make them too available to players' characters. Remember that if a villain has an enchanted item, and is defeated, the item may well fall into the hands of the players' characters. To avoid this, the villain needs sufficient protection and good sense to make an escape before he or she is 'done in', or to have sufficient guards, retainers, etc. so that the adventurers are prevented from plundering the body. If powerful artifacts do get into the hands of the players, remember that they will rapidly attract the covetous eyes of others, who will try to steal it, return it to a former owner, etc.

### 15.7.2 THE CLERICAL QUESTION

Unlike many fantasy games, *Swordbearer* does not have a specific 'cleric' class, nor does it specify a certain type of religious structure. The gamemaster is free to decide the role of religion (or religions) in his world. Various religions can simply be organizations and institutions (much like historical ones), or they can have specific relationship to certain types of magic, or a combination of the two. As a result, the term 'cleric' will mean different things in different worlds — depending on the taste of the gamemaster.

**Religious Organizations & Institutions:** regardless of whether a religion has special magic or supernatural powers, it may have an organization. This means the religion owns buildings, lands, and the loyalty of its priests, monks, and lay believers. A large religion will have a status structure (the one used by medieval Christianity is given in 'Social Status'). The church, as a religious institution, may be concerned with power and prestige over vast areas (like medieval Christianity), or it may be a young religion full of zeal in spreading the word across the world (like ancient Christianity or early medieval Islam). Reading about the structure of ancient or medieval religions will provide useful models for a gamemaster.

Membership in a organized religion has many interesting aspects. First, as a monk or priest it provides an independent method of gaining social status. Church superiors act as patrons, and may give one 'missions', 'quests', or 'tests of faith.' Churches that expect missionary zeal can force one to venture into all sorts of unknown and possibly unpleasant situations. On the other hand, a church could provide a missionary with a bodyguard, guide, or helper(s) with special skills — even though the missionary himself or herself lacked proper social status for such a retinue in normal circumstances. Finally, belonging to a religion tends to dramatically affect the way one views the world. A general idea of the religion's code and ethics, and how it views various societies, will help the player and gamemaster decide the standards and bias a religious 'believer' should adopt.

**Religions & Magic:** a religion, in a fantasy world, may actually have



certain magical knowledge, or secrets. The most potent form of this is unique knowledge: one religion (and only that religion) has the knowledge of spells for an element, or spells for a humor. To acquire this magic knowledge, a character must join the religion, or find a renegade from that religion who will provide the instruction. If the knowledge is unique, members of that religion will naturally attack any non-member who shows evidence of using that magic (they are heretics who 'pervert' the true word, have stolen the revealed truth, etc.).

A milder form of magical influence is to have a religion specialize in one or more areas of magic, but for it and others to accept the fact that others can have that knowledge also. These religions use magic as an aspect of the larger whole (philosophically speaking), and perhaps at various abbeys or monasteries some additional spells have been discovered, etc.

Spirit magic fits well within certain types of religious rites and forms, especially the more bloodthirsty ones (which were common in the ancient and medieval world beyond the borders of the major religions such as Christianity and Islam). Spirit magic is especially appropriate to 'Voodoo' type religions, human sacrifice religions such as those in Central America, etc. Elemental magic spells in crystal, water, and wood produce spells and effects that people associate with the major religions such as Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, etc.

### 15.7.3 BASIC DECISIONS ABOUT MAGIC

The gamemaster can make various decisions about aspects of magic. The game (including systems given here) presents a 'middle of the road' method, so the gamemaster can adjust various parts for more or less, depending on taste.

**Skill Availability:** identifying elements may be gained by initial experience, adventure experience (a successful alignment), or apprenticeship. Knowledge of spells can be gained from the same sources, plus study (if proper books or scrolls are available, and can be read). Spiritual magic knowledge can be gained by initial experience (if the gamemaster permits), apprenticeship, or study.

The gamemaster can eliminate some sources of these skills, or add additional ways to gain a skill. The most common modification is to prohibit initial experience in gaining spiritual magic knowledge. Note that by adjusting the availability of these skills (knowledge), the ability of characters is affected — actual use of spells still depends on having a node. If nodes are plentiful, but knowledge rare, then a very limited group of characters (those with knowledge) will be extremely powerful. On the other hand, if knowledge is common, but nodes (and spirits) rare, long searching or good luck is needed to use magic.

**Availability of Nodes:** the suggestion below (see Finding Elemental Nodes) make nodes difficult to acquire, and high-powered nodes very rare. The gamemaster can make magic far more available by simply adjusting the suggested system to reduce the 'finding time' for nodes, and develop a new dice rolling system to determine the power of the node. If nodes are easy to find, they may even be found for sale in a market district, like any other commodity. On the other hand, if nodes are hard to find, they will be jealously guarded, and largely retained for enchantments or carefully cast spells that won't consume them.

**Consumption of Nodes:** using elemental magic includes a possibility of node 'consumption.' The chance is very high for a hastily cast spell. Retaining some chance of consumption is important for game balance, but the probability can be reduced if desired. To reduce the power of 'battle magic,' the best solution is to raise the chance of node consumption.

**Availability of Spirit Nodes:** the number of spirit spells available, and the overall potency of spirit magic, can be affected by making dead spirit nodes more difficult to contact. The easiest adjustment is to add an extra multiplier to the end of the equation. For example, if this multiplier is 0.5 then the normal percentage for success is multiplied by 0.5, reducing the chances to half the original, and thus making contact much more difficult. Multipliers from 0.1 to 0.9 can be considered, depending on the taste of the gamemaster.

**Using Spirit Magic:** spirit magic spells can be very powerful, but the gamemaster may also wish to make them less reliable than elemental magic. Alignment casting success can be easily adjusted by reducing the 'n constant.' The current success equation is '20n + Intelligence.' The number multiplied by 'n', in this case 20, is the 'n constant.' If this number is reduced, success becomes more difficult (and intelligence plays a proportionately greater role). The n constant should not be increased by very much at all, unless the gamemaster wishes to encourage alignment-casting (with a strong chance of success) with just one or two unassigned spirit nodes.

Spells bound into a living spirit node can also be subject to chance when used. Normally success is automatic, with a 1% chance of exhaustion. Instead, success may require an easy, normal, or even hard intelligence test before being used. Using intelligence tests to reduce the

chance of success is more 'realistic' than simply introducing an arbitrary percentage chance of success (such as 50%, 70%, or whatever).

Note that even if a spirit magic spell fails, penalties in spirit node exhaustion, etc., apply just as if the spell had succeeded.

### 15.7.4 FINDING ELEMENTAL NODES

A character with the skill to identify an element has the ability to consciously search for nodes of that element. A character can only search for nodes of one element at a time, so when a search for a new element begins, any previous searches still in progress must be halted. The search itself takes a certain number of hours, secretly determined by the gamemaster. When the character has accumulated enough search hours, the gamemaster rewards the character by announcing that he or she has found a magic node. Players should keep track of accumulated search hours for an element, but the gamemaster should approve all 'credited' hours.

Characters involved in normal occupations may find 1d10 hours of free time each day to search. A character whose occupations may find 1d10 hours of free time each day to search. A character whose occupation is 'magician' may have perhaps 1d6 extra hours per day for searches. If a character has servants to take care of daily activities and affairs, he or she could spend up to 15 hours of day searching, which represents the spending of virtually 'every waking hour' in the task — here neglect of normal activities could lead to problems.

During adventures characters can only count time completely devoted to node search, with no use of other skills, no travel, and no adventuring activities. The gamemaster may permit travel time to be credited, in part, to node search if the character passes a successful intelligence test, does nothing else, etc. Usually each hour of travel time that qualifies is worth a third or a quarter hour of node search time.

To determine the actual time, in hours, for a successful search the gamemaster rolls a dark-colored 1d6, a light-colored 1d6, and d100.

If the 1d6 rolls are equal, ignore them both — the d100 roll indicates the hours needed to find the node.

If the darker 1d6 is higher, multiply its result by the d100 result — the result is the hours needed to find the node (the lighter 1d6 result is ignored).

If the lighter 1d6 is higher, divide the d100 result by the lighter result — the result is the hours needed to find the node (darker 1d6 result is ignored).

The overall result can vary from 600 hours (darker 1d6 higher, rolls '6', while d100 is a '100'), to 10 minutes (lighter 1d6 is higher, rolls '6', and d100 roll is a '01').

**Rich & Depleted Areas:** some areas reputed to be 'rich' in a certain magic element will halve the normal search time (each hour spent searching counts double), while other areas reputed to be 'depleted' in that element will double the normal search time (each hour spent searching only counts as a half hour toward the accumulated time). Although players' characters just travelling through are unlikely to determine whether an area is rich or depleted in certain elements, local residents who can identify that element will know (although they might not be truthful about it). The geography and climate of an area may suggest to the gamemaster which elements should be rich or depleted, if any. Well-known rich areas should be a long distance away, in areas too harsh for normal living — to prevent players' characters from going there to live!

**Power of Nodes:** once a node is found, the gamemaster determines its power with a d100 roll, interpreted as follows.

01-51 a 1-node, 52-75 a 2-node, 76-87 a 3-node, 88-93 a 4-node, 94-96 a 5-node, 97-98 a 6-node, 99 a 7-node, 100 means roll again with 1d6, 1-4 a 8-node and 5-6 a 9-node.

Note that the power of the node is not revealed to the finder unless he or she has once aligned a node of that power or greater.

### 15.7.5 RANDOM NODES

There is a 1% chance per day, per character, of encountering a random node. At the start of each day the gamemaster can make a secret d100 roll for this, or a series of checks can be made for the next week or month for each players' character. If a node or node does appear, consult the section above (under Power of Nodes) for its power, and make a 1d10 roll for its type: 1-light/darkness, 2-fire, 3-metal, 4-crystal, 5-water, 6-wood, 7-wind, 8-element rich in that region (if any), 9,10-roll again.

The gamemaster should wait for an appropriate situation during the day, and then have the random node 'appear' to the player in the form of a 'loaded' description, such as 'it was an exceptionally dark night — nothing in the sky is visible' (darkness node present), or perhaps 'the stream is exceptionally clear and bright, the water seems to leap over and around the boulders' (water node present), etc. A sneaky gamemaster may introduce a few false situations from time to time, so a

character spends a bit of fruitless time searching, and is therefore less inclined to drop everything to find the node. If the gamemaster finds the appearance of a node inconvenient to his adventure, it can appear at a difficult moment, such as a fire node appearing as a spark when two swords cross.

During days of banal travel, routine occupations, or simple waiting, the gamemaster can shorten the whole business and simply tell the character that he or she found a node.

#### 15.7.6 PLANNED NODES

In certain adventures, the gamemaster may design a particular obstacle or trap, and then 'plant' a node of appropriate power for the characters to find — to give them the means to overcome the problem. The gamemaster may have to provide an NPC companion with the appropriate spell knowledge in some cases.

Similarly, if the characters through bad luck or stupidity have gotten themselves into some fatal fix, the gamemaster can use the 'planted node' as one device to aid in their escape. The node might even be found among their possessions or equipment, having drifted in and become apparent in the nick of time! Again, this sort of plot device will only work if a magician with the necessary skills is also present. Strangely enough, few players facing death object to this sort of help.

Finally, the gamemaster can adjust or ignore the results of a normal node search or random node result, especially if they ruin a nicely honed problem. However, every time a gamemaster 'eliminates' an inconvenient node, he should keep score, and later introduce a 'planted' node to make up the difference. Keeping score is advised, since it insures that nodes continue to appear in a roughly fair proportion, and the gamemaster cannot be accused of excessive bias.

#### 15.7.7 MAGIC STUDY

**Learning Spells:** a character with proper magic books or scrolls can study them to learn spells. Often such manuscripts are written in arcane or dead languages, so the character will first need to acquire the appropriate read/write skill. Books or scrolls may not contain a full body of knowledge (i.e., only some of the basic spells, rather than all), or they may contain knowledge not generally known (such as a new spell conjured by the gamemaster).

Studying a book or scroll should take about a month, with a hard intelligence test needed to make the time profitable (very hard if not specialized in magic). If the character fails, another month can be spent and another test allowed, with the 'passing grade' one point lower than before (magic specialist only needs a score of 25, instead of 26, with the intelligence test). The gamemaster may wish to vary the study time, especially for books or scrolls that contain numerous spells.

**Learning Elemental Composition:** a character may wish to enchant an object that is a mixture of elements. Study is needed to determine just which elements, and in what proportions, compose that object. This means the character must have the object (or a sample from it) in his or her laboratory, or if this is impossible camp out at the object with an appropriate set of tools and materials (equivalent to a journeyman's tool set). After each week to month of study (depending on the complexity of the problem), the character makes an intelligence test (a hard one if not specialized in magic). Success means one of the elementals in the object is determined (another success is needed to learn the next, etc.). If an attempt fails, nothing was learned that time, but the magician could try again.

At the start of such study, the gamemaster should secretly determine the number of elements in the object. Typically, a 1d6+1 roll is a good method. The gamemaster should select the elements that best represent the object from this group. If the object has a great many elements, some of them are probably just traces, but nonetheless important from a magic standpoint. If the magician fails to discern all the elements in the object, any enchantment is sure to fail.

#### 15.7.8 MAGIC STORMS

Eventually, the gamemaster may find his or her world simply has too much magic, and it is destroying the game. A 'magic storm' is a device to reduce this. In a magic storm, there is a percentage chance of a node being destroyed. Living spirit nodes are unaffected. Other nodes may be unaffected too, if the gamemaster desires. Storms can vary from the mild (5-20% destruction) to severe (40-50%+ destruction). Storms can be introduced gradually, or they can be rare by catasphoric occurrences. In the latter case, a very mild 'harbringer' storm is advised for fairness.