

B/X ESSENTIALS

Core Rules



Necrotic Gnome Productions

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Core Rules



Compilation, editing, additional writing, and layout by
Gavin Norman

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Foreword

My love for Basic/Expert-style fantasy adventuring was reignited with the publication of *Labyrinth Lord* and the rise of the old-school renaissance / whatever-you-like-to-call-it. Over the years, I've run all sorts of campaigns with the Basic/Expert rules—everything from classic dungeon hacks, to dying Earth science fantasy, to Lovecraft-inspired, Victorian age horror. Of course, all these campaigns have added their own twists to the rules: alternate classes, new spells, monsters, equipment, treasures, and so on. Nonetheless, the core rules of the game remained constant. And I think that's the real treasure of the Basic/Expert rules: their timeless elegance, concision, and very wide (I wouldn't go *quite* so far as to say universal) applicability.

Through all these years of play, though, what I've always missed is a cleanly presented, easy-to-reference rendition of the core rules of the game separated from the associated “accoutrements”—the classes, spells, monsters, magic items, etc. Neither the original Basic/Expert books nor the various modern clones exactly satisfy this requirement.

That's what this book is about.

We are very fortunate that the original Basic/Expert rules are now available to purchase again (albeit in PDF form only) and, while they are inspiring in their brevity and the elegance of their layout, they are built around the assumed presence of the traditional set of classes, thus not exactly what I was looking for. Furthermore, one has to contend with the nature of the presentation: the Basic rules are separated from the Expert rules. No combined edition was ever created.

All of the various retro-clones and Basic/Expert-inspired games which exist today, on the other hand, present a combined rule set, but vary greatly in readability and usefulness as a reference during play. Some provide a very clean presentation of the rules, with a focus on usability, but deviate in too many ways from the traditional rule set to make them useful.

Eventually, not finding my holy grail Basic/Expert reference anywhere, I was inspired to create this book.

So, what you will find in these pages is a core rules reference for the combined Basic/Expert game, split into seven sections:

1. **Ability scores.** One page describing the ability scores and their modifiers; another page containing the related charts.
2. **Sequence of play.** A reference for the basic sequence of events in an encounter, a dungeon turn, and a wilderness day, on a single page.
3. **Adventuring rules.** The procedures for various non-combat game rules, collated into short sections, arranged alphabetically.
4. **Basic combat procedure.** A two-page reference for the basics of combat, including the sequence of play in a combat round and details on movement, attacking, initiative, and spell casting in battle.
5. **Other combat issues.** Two further pages of rules for other combat-related situations, ordered alphabetically.
6. **Standard combat charts.** The attack and saving throw charts for monsters, normal humans, and the standard character classes, presented on a two-page spread.
7. **Magic.** Rules relating to spells and spell casting, spell books, magical research, and magic items.

Aside from the inclusion of combat charts for the standard classes (which are required for monsters, as well), no reference is made to any specific character classes. Likewise, aside from the (optional) encumbrance rules, no specific equipment lists are assumed. This information may be found in the companion volume—*B/X Essentials: Classes and Equipment*—or in any number of other books inspired by this rule set.

It is my hope that this book will play some small part in the furtherance of this timeless and beloved game and prove useful as a reference for those already familiar with its charms.

Gavin Norman, Summer 2017, Berlin.

Ability Scores

Charisma

Charisma (CHA) measures a character's force of personality, persuasiveness, personal magnetism, physical attractiveness, and ability to lead. This ability has an influence on how NPCs or monsters will respond to a character in an encounter. Charisma also determines the number of retainers a character may have and their morale.

- **Reaction adjustment** applies when hiring retainers and when interacting with monsters (see *Encounters, p11*).
- **Max # of retainers** and **retainer morale** determine the number of **Retainers** (see *p18*) a character may have in his or her pay at any one time and their loyalty to the character.

Constitution

Constitution (CON) represents a character's health and stamina. A Constitution bonus increases a character's hit points, making this ability important for all classes.

- **Standard adjustment** applies when rolling a character's hit points (i.e. at 1st level and every time a level is gained thereafter). A character always gains at least 1 hit point per Hit Die, regardless of CON modifier.

Dexterity

Dexterity (DEX) measures hand-eye coordination, agility, reflexes, and balance. This ability is important for combat-oriented classes, as it affects Armour Class, and for characters who focus on missile combat.

- **Standard adjustment** is applied to attack rolls (but not damage rolls) made with a ranged weapon and modifies the character's Armour Class (a bonus lowers AC, a penalty raises it).
- **Initiative adjustment** modifies the character's initiative roll, if the optional rule for individual initiative is being used (see *Basic Combat Procedure, p22*).

Intelligence

Intelligence (INT) determines how well a character learns, remembers, and reasons.

- **Language ability** denotes the character's ability to speak, read, and write in his or her native tongue and other languages.
- **Bonus languages** determines the number of additional languages the character can choose during character creation.

Strength

Strength (STR) rates a character's brawn, muscle, and physical power. This ability is especially important for characters who focus on melee combat.

- **Standard adjustment** is applied to attack and damage rolls with melee weapons and to attempts to force open a stuck door (see *Doors, p10*).

Wisdom

Wisdom (WIS) encompasses a character's willpower, common sense, perception, and intuition. While Intelligence represents one's ability to analyse information, Wisdom represents being in tune with and aware of one's surroundings.

- **Standard adjustment** is applied to **Saving Throws** (see *p19*) versus magical effects. This does not normally include saves against breath attacks, but may apply to any other saving throw category.

Prime Requisite

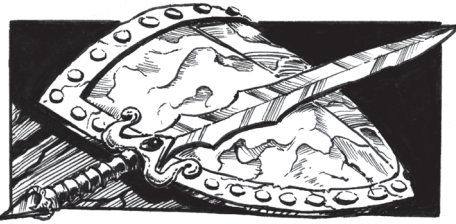
Each character class has one or more prime requisites, that is, an ability score or scores that are of especial importance to characters of that class. A character's score in his or her class' prime requisite(s) affects how quickly the character is able to gain experience points.

- **XP Adjustment** is applied to all experience points awarded to the character, unless otherwise noted in the description of the class.

Standard Adjustments

Ability	Standard Adjustment
3	-3
4-5	-2
6-8	-1
9-12	None
13-15	+1
16-17	+2
18	+3

The Standard Adjustment is used for CON modifiers to hit points, DEX modifiers to missile fire and AC, STR modifiers to melee attacks/damage and forcing doors, and WIS modifiers to magic saves.



Prime Requisite Adjustments

Prime Requisite	XP Adjustment
3-5	-20%
6-8	-10%
9-12	None
13-15	+5%
16-18	+10%

Dexterity Adjustments

DEX	Initiative Adjustment
3	-2
4-5	-1
6-8	-1
9-12	None
13-15	+1
16-17	+1
18	+2

Charisma Adjustments

CHA	Reaction Adjustment	Max # of Retainers	Retainer Morale
3	-2	1	4
4-5	-1	2	5
6-8	-1	3	6
9-12	None	4	7
13-15	+1	5	8
16-17	+1	6	9
18	+2	7	10

Intelligence Adjustments

INT	Language Ability	Bonus Languages
3	Unable to read or write, broken speech	0
4-5	Unable to read or write	0
6-8	Can write simple words	0
9-12	Can read and write native languages	0
13-15	Can read and write native languages	1
16-17	Can read and write native languages	2
18	Can read and write native languages	3

Sequence of Play

One Dungeon Turn

1. The referee checks for *Wandering Monsters* (p20), if applicable.
2. The party decides what action to take (e.g. moving, searching, listening, entering rooms).
3. The referee describes what happens.
4. If no encounter occurs, the turn is over, continue to step 5. If monsters are encountered, first follow the encounter sequence, below.
5. The turn ends. The referee should update time records, with special attention to light sources, spell durations, and the party's need to rest.

One Wilderness Day

1. The players decide on their course of travel for the day.
2. The referee determines whether the party gets lost (see *Losing Direction*, p16) and, if the party is travelling at sea, determines the weather conditions (see *Water Travel*, p21).
3. The referee checks for *Wandering Monsters* (p20), if applicable.
4. The referee describes the terrain passed through and any sites of interest that the party comes across, asking players for their actions, as required.
5. If no encounters occur, the day is over, continue to step 6. If monsters are encountered, first follow the encounter sequence, below.
6. The day ends. The referee should update time records, with special attention to rations, spell durations, and the party's need to rest.

Encounters

1. The referee rolls for surprise, if applicable, and determines how far away the monsters are.
2. Any sides that are not surprised roll initiative (see *Basic Combat Procedure*, p22) to determine who acts first.
3. The referee determines the monsters' reaction to the party. The players decide how they will act:
 - a. If both sides wish to talk, the negotiation may be role-played. The referee may make reaction rolls, as applicable.
 - b. If the players decide to flee, the referee determines whether the monsters pursue.
 - c. If combat breaks out, follow the steps listed in *Basic Combat Procedure* (p22).



See *Encounters*, p11, for a full description on all elements of running an encounter, including encounter distance, surprise, and monster reactions.



Adventuring Rules

Ability Checks (Optional Rule)

Sometimes, the referee might require a test against an ability score, instead of a saving throw, to determine if a character succeeds in a task or escapes a danger. For example, DEX might be used to jump over a pit or STR might be used to push an object.

The player rolls 1d20 and, if the result is less than or equal to the ability, the check succeeds. If the roll is greater than the ability, the check fails.

Bonuses or penalties to the roll may be applied, with a modifier of -4 being a relatively easy ability check and +4 being very difficult. Of course, any modifier between these extremes can be applied.

An unmodified roll of 1 should be treated as a success and a 20 treated as a failure.

Air Travel

When travelling by air, the total number of miles a character can travel in a day is twice the distance he or she could travel overland (see **Movement**, p17).

This rate might be reduced if there are adverse conditions such as very high mountains, storms, or thick fog. There are many magical items that grant characters the ability to fly, as well as spells and winged mounts.

Mounts

In general, a winged beast may carry riders or other burdens based on its Hit Dice:

- 3 HD creatures may carry a being about half the size of an adult human.
- 6 HD creatures may carry an adult human.
- 12 HD creatures may carry a large animal like a horse or four adult humans.
- 24 HD creatures may carry a very large animal, or four horses, or eight adult humans.

Chases

When the party encounters monsters and one side decides to flee, the other may wish to pursue them.

Generally, this is possible in two situations:

- Combat has not commenced.
- One side breaks away from combat.

(See *Encounters*, p11, for details.)

Surprise

If one side is surprised, the other side may be able to flee without the possibility of being chased—the surprised side may not even be aware that the encounter occurred. In the wilderness, where greater distances are involved, this is always possible.

Group Movement Rate

It is common for monsters to chase the whole party, as a group. In this case, it is important to note that a side's movement rate (see *Movement*, p17) is usually determined by the speed of the slowest member.

Chases in the Dungeon

One side can always successfully flee if its movement rate is higher than the other side's and if combat has not commenced. A pursuit is possible if the pursuing side's movement rate is greater than or equal to the fleeing side's.

Time in a chase is measured in rounds (see *Time*, p20), with each side assumed to be running at full speed (see *Movement*, p17). Most monsters will not continue a chase if the characters manage to get out of the monster's range of vision.

If the monsters enjoy treasure, there is a 3-in-6 probability that they will stop pursuit to collect any treasure the characters drop. Hungry or less intelligent monsters may do the same if the characters drop food. Burning oil or other obstacles may also slow or stop a pursuit.

Chases in the Wilderness

With the open spaces and (generally) good visibility in the wilderness, a chase is assumed to play out over an extended period—time is not tracked round by round. The probability that one group can escape from another is determined by the relative size of the two sides. The more members in the pursuing side there are relative to the fleeing side, the greater chances the fleeing side has of escaping. This is because larger groups cannot move as fast or as quietly.

The basic chance of escape is determined by consulting the table opposite. The referee may modify the probabilities based on the conditions and environment. For example, if one side has time to flee within a densely wooded area, the referee may give a bonus of 25% to escape. If one side's movement rate is double that of the other, the chance to escape may be modified by 25% in its favour. There is always at least a 5% chance of escape, except when surprise is involved.

The following procedure is followed, day by day, until the chase is over:

1. Roll for escape (see table, opposite). If the roll succeeds, the fleeing party has escaped; the chase is over.
2. If the roll fails, the fleeing party must choose either to be caught (ending the chase) or to flee in a random direction, determined by the referee (no mapping is possible).
3. If the chase continues, compare the speeds of the fleeing and pursuing sides:
 - a. If the fleeing side is at least as fast as the pursuing side, it has another chance to escape; return to step 1.
 - b. If the pursuing side is faster, there is a 50% chance of it catching up. If the roll succeeds, the fleeing side has been caught; the chase is over. If the roll fails, the fleeing party has another chance to escape; return to step 1.



Wilderness Escape Table

Fleeing group size	Chance of Escape by Number of Pursuers					
	10%	25%	35%	50%	70%	90%
1-4	—	—	—	1 pursuer	2-3 pursuers	4+ pursuers
5-12	—	—	1-3 pursuers	4-8 pursuers	9+ pursuers	—
13-24	—	1-6 pursuers	7-16 pursuers	17+ pursuers	—	—
25+	1-10 pursuers	11-30 pursuers	31+ pursuers	—	—	—



Waterborne Chases

When two waterborne sides (ships or swimming monsters) encounter one another, one side may choose to flee.

First, the initial distance between each side is determined as normal for an encounter. Next, the fleeing party rolls on the chart below. Success depends on luck and the difference between the two groups' movement rates.

If the roll to escape succeeds, the pursuers cannot attempt to catch up with the fleeing side until the next day—and then only if a random encounter roll indicates an encounter.

If the roll to escape fails, the distance between the two sides will decrease by the pursuer's movement rate each round (or a minimum of 30' per round, if the pursuer has a slower movement rate than the fleeing side).

Waterborne Escape Table

Fleeing Side's Movement Rate	Chance of Escape
Faster than pursuer	80%
Equal movement rate or up to 30' per round slower than pursuer	50%
Up to 60' per round slower than pursuer	40%
Up to 90' per round slower than pursuer	35%
Up to 120' per round slower than pursuer	24%
More than 120' per round slower than pursuer	10%

Climbing

When characters are climbing in a difficult or tense situation, the referee may specify a chance of failure (as a percentage or an x-in-6 chance) or may require an ability check versus DEX (if the optional *Ability Checks rule*, p7, is being used).

Note that very steep or sheer surfaces are normally impossible to climb without specialised equipment. Some characters may have class abilities which allow them to attempt to climb such surfaces unaided.



Distance and Measurement

When characters are adventuring in a dungeon, all ranges and movement rates are measured in *feet*. However, the wilderness is not cramped like a dungeon and characters can usually see further ahead and need not be as wary of obstacles. For this reason, ranges and movement rates are measured in *yards*, rather than feet, in the wilderness.

Note that areas (such as the area of a spell effect or a breath weapon) are *always* measured in feet, both in dungeons and in the wilderness.

Doors

Dungeons often have many doors, some secret and others obvious. Many are locked and many are stuck.

Locked Doors

Locks must be picked by a character proficient with lock picks or opened by magic.

Stuck Doors

There is a base 2-in-6 chance of being able to force open a stuck door. Strength adjustments apply, but cannot take the success range above 5-in-6 or below 1-in-6.

A failed attempt to force open a door eliminates any possibility of surprise (see *Encounters*, p11) that the party may have against any monsters on the other side of the door.

Note that monsters resident to the dungeon are often able to pass through stuck doors unhindered.

Secret Doors

Secret doors can only be spotted if characters are specifically looking for them.

See *Searching*, p19.

Wedging Doors

Doors opened by adventurers (by whatever means) are likely to swing shut after they pass. To prevent this, doors may be held open using iron spikes or other wedges.

Likewise, players may wish to wedge doors *shut*, to hinder monsters' movement.

Listening at Doors

PCs have a 1-in-6 chance of detecting subtle sounds beyond a door. (Some types of adventurer may have an increased chance of success.)

The referee should always roll for the character listening so that the player never knows if the roll failed or if there simply is no sound behind the door.

This attempt may only be made one time at any door by a character. Note that some creatures, such as undead, do not any make noise.

Encounters

An encounter begins when the characters stumble onto a monster, either because the referee has planned an encounter in the area the PCs are exploring or because a random die roll indicates an encounter (see **Wandering Monsters, p20**).

Time in Encounters

When an encounter begins, action is measured in rounds (see **Time, p20**). Rolls for surprise (see right) and initiative (**Basic Combat Procedure, p22**) determine which side acts first.

Surprise

Checks for surprise are made whenever an encounter is unexpected by at least one side. For instance, if the player characters are making a lot of noise, a monster may not have a chance to be surprised, but the characters might be, if the monster was waiting quietly.

Each side that is not already aware of the other's presence rolls 1d6. The referee rolls for monsters and one player rolls for the adventuring party as a whole. A result of 1 or 2 means the side is surprised and cannot act for one round. If both sides are surprised, there is simply a momentary confusion—neither side has any advantage. If one side is surprised but the other is not, then the side that is not surprised gains a one round advantage.

Note that aquatic monsters are usually not surprised by ships. Special circumstances (e.g. thick fog) may alter this.



Encounter Distance

The situation in which the encounter occurs often determines how far away the monster is. If there is uncertainty (for example, in the case of **Wandering Monsters, see p20**):

- **In a dungeon**, the monster encountered is $2d6 \times 10$ feet away, moving in the direction of the party.
- **In the wilderness**, the monster is $4d6 \times 10$ yards away. If either side is surprised, this is reduced to $1d4 \times 10$ yards.
- **At sea**, monsters are encountered at the same distance as in the wilderness (see above). Ships may be sighted and identified at 300 yards on a clear day or as little as 40 yards in dense fog.

Monster Reactions

Very often, circumstances make it obvious how a monster will react when encountered. However, sometimes the referee may wish to roll on the table below to determine how a monster reacts to encountering the party. If one specific character attempts to interact with monsters, that character's CHA score is used to modify the reaction roll.

2d6	Result
2 or less	Hostile, attacks
3-5	Unfriendly, may attack
6-8	Neutral, uncertain
9-11	Indifferent, uninterested
12 or more	Friendly, helpful

Evasion

One side may decide they are outmatched and flee an encounter. If characters flee, the referee will decide whether the monsters give chase. A low roll on the **Monster Reactions** table may be taken to indicate that the monsters will pursue. See **Chases, p8**, for complete rules on handling pursuit.

Encounter Duration

An encounter is assumed to take at least one full turn to complete, including time to rest, regroup, clean weapons, bind wounds, and so on, afterwards.

Encumbrance (Optional Rule)

It is important to keep track of how much player characters are carrying, because this affects how much treasure they can haul from a dungeon. Groups who wish different characters to have different movement rates (see **Movement, p17**), based on the amount of equipment or treasure they are carrying may use one of the following rules. The same rule should be applied to all characters.

As coins are the most common form of treasure found by adventurers, both encumbrance systems are based on weight measured in coins. Ten coins are equivalent to one pound.

Option 1: Encumbrance by Armour Type

This rule may be used by groups who want a simple system for determining the movement rates of different characters.

A character's movement rate is determined by two factors: the armour he or she is wearing and whether he or she is carrying a significant amount of treasure or not (at the referee's discretion).

The maximum amount of treasure any character can carry is 1,600 coins or equivalent. For this reason, the weight of treasure carried must be tracked. The encumbrance of common types of treasure is shown in the table above. The weight of the character's standard adventuring gear (including armour and weapons) is *not* counted.

Armour	Movement Rate	
	Without Treasure	Carrying Treasure
Unarmoured	120'	90'
Leather armour	90'	60'
Metal armour	60'	30'

Treasure Encumbrance in Coins

Treasure	Weight in Coins
Coin (any type)	1
Gem	1
Jewellery (1 piece)	10
Potion	10
Rod	20
Scroll	1
Staff	40
Wand	10

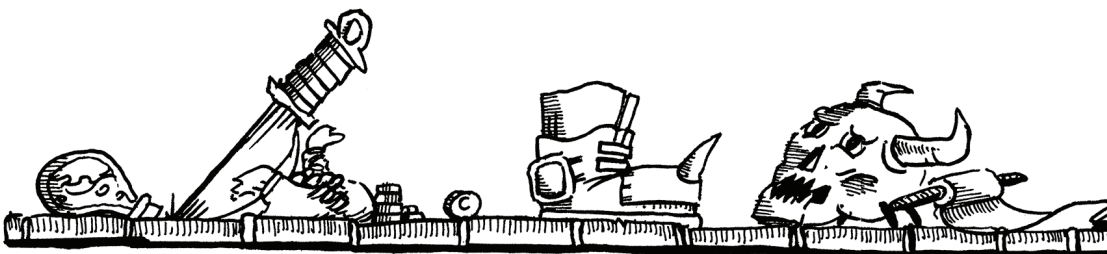
Option 2: Encumbrance by Weight Carried

This rule may be used by groups who want to make sure characters carry more realistic amounts of equipment and treasure.

A character's encumbrance value is calculated based on adding the weights of all significant items carried, including treasure (see table above), weapons, and armour (see tables opposite). The character's movement rate is then based on the total encumbrance value. Miscellaneous adventuring gear (backpack, spikes, sacks, etc.) may be counted as 80 coins of weight.

The maximum any character can carry is 1,600 coins.

Encumbrance	Movement Rate
Up to 400 coins	120'
Up to 600 coins	90'
Up to 800 coins	60'
Up to 1,600 coins	30'



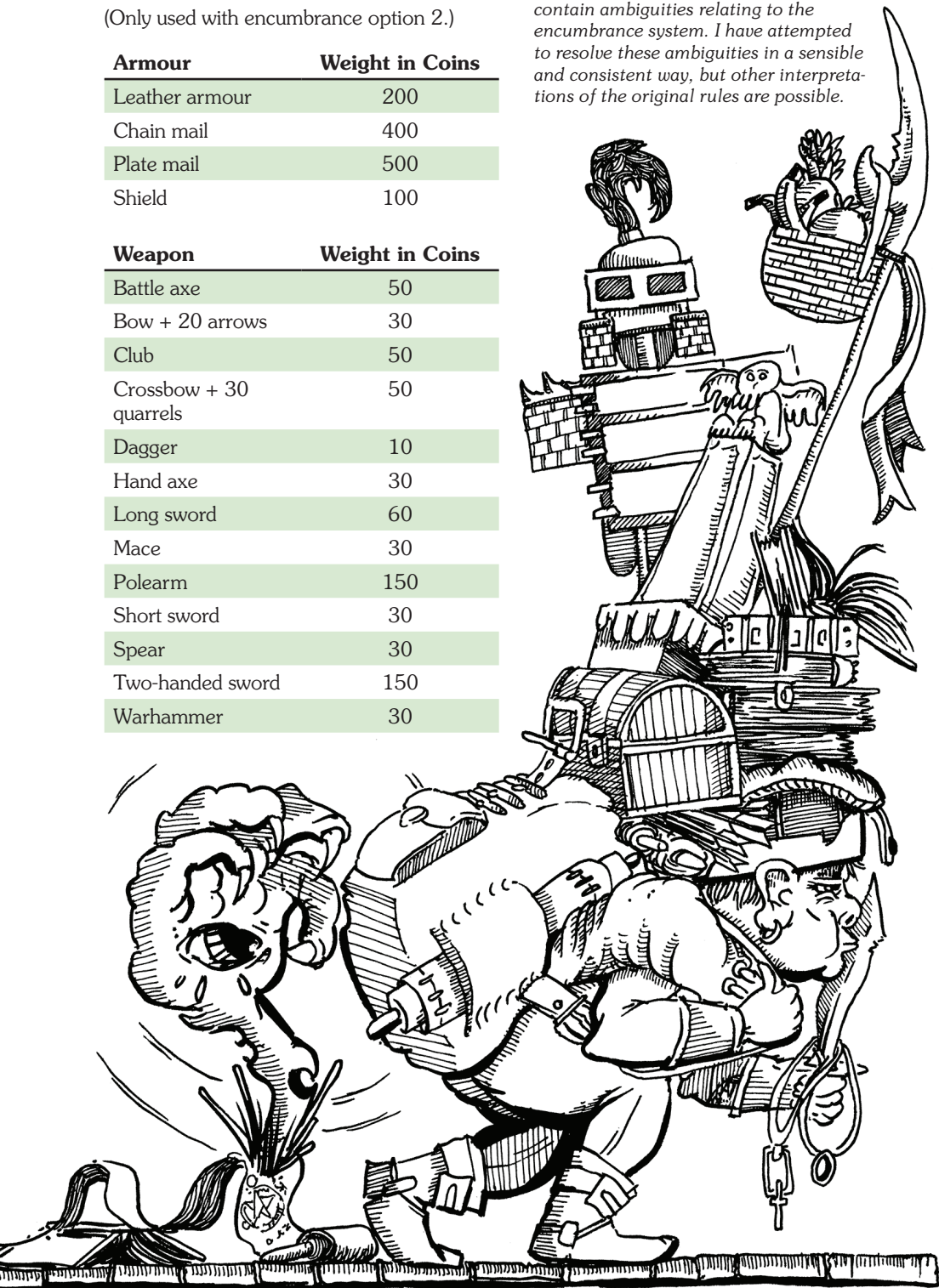
Equipment Encumbrance in Coins

(Only used with encumbrance option 2.)

Armour	Weight in Coins
Leather armour	200
Chain mail	400
Plate mail	500
Shield	100

Weapon	Weight in Coins
Battle axe	50
Bow + 20 arrows	30
Club	50
Crossbow + 30 quarrels	50
Dagger	10
Hand axe	30
Long sword	60
Mace	30
Polearm	150
Short sword	30
Spear	30
Two-handed sword	150
Warhammer	30

Author's note: The original Basic rules contain ambiguities relating to the encumbrance system. I have attempted to resolve these ambiguities in a sensible and consistent way, but other interpretations of the original rules are possible.



Experience Points

All characters that make it through an adventure alive receive experience points (XP). XP is gained from two sources: treasure recovered and monsters defeated.

Recovered Treasure

Characters gain XP from treasure at the rate of one XP per gold piece value of the item. The values of all items are added together and converted to gold piece units. Only treasure of a non-magical nature grants XP in this way.

Defeated Monsters

All monsters defeated by the party (slain, outsmarted, captured, scared away, etc.) grant XP based on how powerful they are. The XP value of a monster is determined by its Hit Dice plus a bonus for each special ability it has (e.g. breath attacks, spell-like abilities, etc.). See the chart to the right. A monster defeated under especially dangerous circumstances may be treated as one Hit Dice category higher on the chart.

Division of Experience

The XP awards for treasures recovered and monsters defeated are totalled and divided evenly between all characters who survived the adventure. Note that total XP is divided evenly between all party members (including **Retainers**, see p18), irrespective of how the players decide to divide the treasure.

Discretionary Bonuses and Penalties

The referee may grant XP bonuses to players who did particularly well. Likewise, players who did not do their share of the work in an adventure may be penalized.

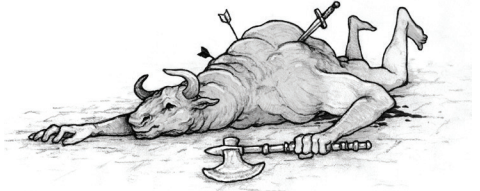
Prime Requisite Modifiers

In addition, characters receive XP bonuses or penalties based on their score in their class prime requisites, as described in **Ability Scores**, p4.

All bonuses or penalties to experience are applied to the grand total XP a particular character receives at the end of an adventure.

Maximum XP in One Session

Characters should not be given enough experience to advance two or more levels in one adventure. Any additional points that would take a character to a level *two* above his or her current level are lost.



Monster XP Values

Monster Hit Dice	Base XP	Bonus XP/ Ability
Less than 1	5	1
1	10	3
1+	15	4
2	20	5
2+	25	10
3	35	15
3+	50	25
4	75	50
4+	125	75
5	175	125
5+	225	175
6	275	225
6+	350	300
7	450	400
8	650	550
9-10+	900	700
11-12+	1,100	800
13-16+	1,350	950
17-20+	2,000	1,150
21+*	2,500	2,000

* For monsters of HD 22 and higher, add a cumulative 250 XP to the Base and Bonus categories.

Falling

Falling from a height onto a hard surface inflicts 1d6 damage per 10' fallen.



Foraging and Hunting

When adventuring in a dungeon, there may be very little available to eat. Characters must take rations with them to cover the extent of time they expect to be away from town. However, they may occasionally kill an edible monster. When in the wilderness, characters can hunt or forage for food.

Foraging

Foraging for food is an activity that can be accomplished without hindering travel speed by gathering fruit, herbs, nuts, or small animals along the way. For each day of travel while foraging, characters have a 1-in-6 chance of acquiring food sufficient for 1d6 human-sized beings.

Hunting

Hunting must be engaged in as the sole activity for a day—no travelling or resting is possible. When hunting, there is a 1-in-6 chance of encountering animals which may be suitable for eating (if they can be caught!). This is in addition to the normal chance of random encounters (see *Wandering Monsters*, p20).

Healing

For each full day of complete rest, a character or monster recovers 1d3 hit points. If the rest is interrupted, the character or monster will not heal that day.

Healing may also occur through magic, such as potions or spells. This kind of healing is instantaneous. Magical healing and natural healing can be combined.

Hirelings

Hirelings are NPCs hired by a character to perform certain services. Hirelings differ from *Retainers* (p18) in that they do not accompany characters on adventures. For this reason, they do not count toward a character's maximum number of retainers, since they are not the same kind of hired help.

The most common types of hireling are:

- **Mercenaries:** Hired soldiers who will guard, patrol, and otherwise serve in wilderness settings, but only as part of a larger force, not an adventuring party.
- **Specialists:** Hired individuals who have a particular trade or who have special knowledge. These individuals are usually hired for a specific task.

Like hiring retainers, mercenaries and specialists can be located by frequenting pubs or through posting notices of help wanted. Also, in the case of professional specialists, these individuals may have shops or a reputation that the characters can follow. There may also be guilds of certain professions which can act as a contact point for locating specialists.

Some of the most common kinds of hirelings that can be found are described in the companion booklet, *B/X Essentials: Classes and Equipment*.

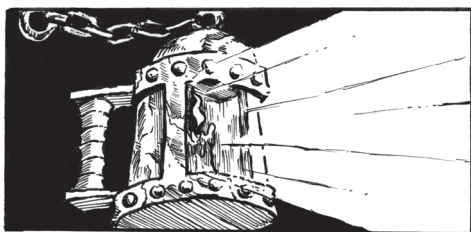


Light, Vision, and Visibility

In the Dungeon

Characters will usually want to bring a source of light with them on underground expeditions. Typical light sources enable normal vision within a 30' radius.

The adventuring equipment lists in the companion booklet, *B/X Essentials: Classes and Equipment*, provide full information.



In the Wilderness

Characters can usually see for three miles around them, in open terrain. This range may sometimes be reduced (e.g. in overgrown terrain such as a forest) or increased (e.g. looking out from the top of a mountain).

At Sea

On a clear day, land can be spotted at a distance of 24 miles. This may be reduced based on light and weather conditions.

Light and Surprise

Characters or monsters that carry a light in a dark environment are usually unable to surprise opponents (see *Encounters*, p11), because the light gives them away.

Infravision

All non-human monsters and many demi-human races have infravision. Characters who have infravision can see the heat energy that radiates off of living things. Generally, living things will be visible as bright tones, while cool items are grey and very cold objects are black. It is not possible to read in the dark with infravision, because fine detail cannot be perceived.

Infravision works within a limited range (60' for monsters) and only functions in darkness. Visible light (normal or magical) and large heat sources will disrupt it.

Losing Direction

At Sea

Getting lost at sea is a serious risk. When in sight of land, the chance of getting lost is 2-in-6. Once out of sight of land, the chance of getting lost is 100%, unless a navigator is aboard—the chance of getting lost is then 2-in-6 per day.

In the Wilderness

Characters can confidently follow trails, roads, and other well-known landmarks without fear of becoming lost. However, when travelling through untracked wilderness, it is easy to lose direction. At the start of each day of travel, the referee will roll to determine if the group loses direction. The probability depends on the terrain being traversed:

- Clear, grasslands: 1-in-6.
- Barren lands, hills, mountains, ocean, woods: 2-in-6.
- Desert, jungle, swamp: 3-in-6.

Effects of Being Lost

If the roll indicates that the party is lost, the referee will decide which direction they are actually travelling in. One option is to pick a direction only slightly off course. For example, if the group intended to go south, they are actually headed southwest or west.

It may take some time for a lost party to realize that it is moving in the wrong direction.



Movement

See also: *Air Travel* (p7), *Climbing* (p10), *Swimming* (p19), *Water Travel* (p21).

Each character has a base movement rate. The default is 120', but this may be modified by a character's class or by the amount of gear carried (if the optional *Encumbrance rules*, p12, are used).

If the group wants to stay together, they may only move as quickly as the slowest character.

Dungeon Exploration

A character can move his or her movement rate in feet in one turn (see *Time*, p20) when exploring unknown areas of a dungeon. This (very slow!) rate of movement takes account for the fact that PCs are exploring, watching their footing, mapping, and taking care to be quiet and to avoid obstacles.

When moving through dungeon areas they are familiar with, the referee may allow characters to move at a faster rate. For example, the referee may allow characters to move at three times their base movement rate, when moving through familiar areas. Thus, a character whose base movement rate is 120' could move 360' in a turn.

Movement in Encounters

During encounters, a character can move up to one third of his or her movement rate per round in feet (in the dungeon) or yards (in the wilderness). For example, a character whose base movement rate is 120' could move 40' per round during a dungeon encounter. Characters may move at this rate for at most 60 rounds (one turn).

Running

During encounters, a character may choose to run at up to his or her full movement rate per round in feet (in the dungeon) or yards (in the wilderness). Characters may only move at this rate for 30 rounds before becoming exhausted: suffering a -2 penalty to attacks, damage, and Armour Class (AC is increased by 2). The penalties for exhaustion last until characters have rested for three full turns.

Clearly, it is not possible to maintain a map while running.

Overland Travel

When travelling in the wilderness, the distance a character can travel in a normal day's march is determined by dividing his or her base movement rate by five. This is the number of miles travelled in a day. For example, a character whose base movement rate is 120' could travel up to 24 miles in a day.

Some types of terrain modify the speed at which characters can travel:

- Broken lands, desert, forest, hills: 33% slower.
- Jungle, mountains, swamp: 50% slower.
- Maintained roads: 50% faster.

Forced March

If they need to travel further in one day, characters may engage in a forced march. A forced march is a day of hard, tiring, overland travel, but increases travel speed by 50%. For example, a character who can normally travel 24 miles in a day can travel 36 miles on a forced march. After a forced march, the characters must rest for a full day.

Resting

In the Dungeon

Characters can explore, fight, or otherwise remain active for five turns before needing to rest for one turn.

In the Wilderness

During wilderness travel, characters must rest one day per six days of travel.

After a Forced March

After a forced march, characters must rest for a full day.

After Running

Characters who have been running for more than 30 rounds must rest for three full turns to recover.

Penalty for Not Resting

If characters press on without resting, they suffer a penalty of -1 to hit and damage rolls until they have rested for the required length of time. After running, this penalty is increased to -2 and additionally applied to Armour Class (AC is raised by 2).

Retainers

Retainers are NPCs that are hired by characters for extra hands during an adventure. Each character is limited to a finite number of retainers, which is indicated by the character's Charisma score (see **Ability Scores, p4**). Retainers are not mindless slaves and, although they will usually share the party's risks, they will not willingly act as battle fodder. If abused in any way, retainers will typically warn others of this and the PCs will soon find it difficult to hire other retainers.



Locating

A PC who wants to hire a retainer must first locate possible candidates. The PC might simply walk up to strangers in taverns, might contact adventurers' guilds, or might advertise by putting up fliers or by other means.

Hiring

Retainers are recruited through negotiation, with the referee playing the roles of the NPCs a character attempts to hire. The PC should explain what the job entails and the rates of pay: for example, a percentage of any treasure recovered or a flat rate of pay. The hiring PC must also typically pay for the retainer's daily upkeep (food and lodgings) and for any new adventuring gear, weapons, or mounts the retainer will require for the adventure.

Reactions

After an offer is made, the referee rolls 2d6 on the table above to decide the potential retainer's reaction. The roll is modified by the hiring character's CHA and the referee may apply a bonus or penalty, depending on the attractiveness of the deal (+1 or +2 for generous offers, -1 or -2 for poor offers).

Retainer Hiring Reactions

2d6	Result
2 or less	Offer refused *
3-5	Offer refused
6-8	Roll again
9-11	Offer accepted
12 or more	Offer accepted **

* The potential retainer reacts so negatively to the offer that he or she spreads negative rumours about the PC, which results in a -1 penalty on any further hiring reaction rolls while recruiting in the same town or area.

** The offer is accepted in very good spirits and the retainer's morale is increased by one.

Class and Level

Retainers can be of any class (including normal humans of level 0), but must be of equal or lower level to the PC who has hired them.

Morale

Retainers have a morale rating, determined by the hiring character's CHA (see **Ability Scores, p4**). This rating may be adjusted at the referee's discretion: it may be increased if the PC has been particularly good to the retainer (e.g. repeatedly given additional treasure) or reduced if the PC has been cruel or contrary to his or her word.

To make a morale check, the referee rolls 2d6 and, if the result is lower than or equal to the retainer's morale rating, accounting for any adjustments, the roll has succeeded.

Morale rolls are made in two circumstances:

- Each time the retainer is exposed to a particularly perilous situation. If the roll fails, the retainer will likely flee.
- At the end of an adventure. If the roll fails, the NPC will not work for the PC again.

Experience

Although retainers are "played" by the referee, they acquire experience in the same way PCs do, can advance in level, and are affected by all of the same class rules. Because retainers follow instructions when on an adventure, thus not directly engaging in problem solving, they suffer a penalty of -50% to XP.

Saving Throws

All characters and monsters can make *saving throws* to avoid the full effects of spells or certain attacks. Characters and monsters have a rating for each saving throw category (death ray or poison; magic wands; paralysis or turn to stone; dragon breath; rods, staves, or spells). Saving throw tables for the standard classes (also used by monsters) are given in ***Standard Combat Charts, p26***.

The appropriate saving throw to make and the effects of a success or failure will be indicated in the description of the spell, monster attack, or adventure scenario.

Rolling a Saving Throw

When affected by a spell or attack form which requires a saving throw, the player or referee must roll 1d20. A result that is greater than or equal to the value listed for the saving throw is a success. A result of less than the listed value is a failure.

Successful Saves

A successful saving throw against an effect that causes damage means that the damage is halved. A successful saving throw against an effect that does not cause damage means the effect has been entirely avoided or negated.

Saves vs Poison

A failed save against poison is usually fatal. If a poisonous attack also inflicts damage, the damage is not affected by the success or failure of the saving throw.

Item Saving Throws

If a character is killed by a destructive spell or special attack (e.g. a *lightning bolt* spell or dragon's breath), his or her equipment is assumed to be destroyed. Magic items may be allowed a saving throw, using the character's saving throw values. Items which grant a bonus in combat (e.g. magical weapons and armour) may also apply this bonus to the saving throw.

Searching

Dungeons often include hidden features and mechanisms such as secret doors and traps. Adventurers can spot these by searching. The player must declare the particular object or 10' × 10' area to be searched. Searching takes one turn.

If a character is searching in the right location, there is a base 1-in-6 chance of finding a secret door or trap. (Some types of adventurer may have an increased chance.) The referee should always roll for the character searching, so that the player never knows if the roll failed or if there simply are no hidden features in the area searched.

Each character can only make one attempt to search any given object or 10' × 10' area.

Starvation

If characters go for a full day or more without food or water, the referee may begin to apply penalties to attack rolls and movement rate, require more frequent rests, or even begin to deduct hit points, in extreme cases.

Swimming

Characters move at half their normal movement rate when swimming.

It is assumed that every character knows how to swim, unless there is some obvious reason why a character could not have learned.

Drowning

Characters that are encumbered or in treacherous water conditions have a probability of drowning, at the referee's discretion. Heavily encumbered characters—wearing plate mail armour and/or carrying a large amount of treasure—will likely have above 90% chance of drowning. Characters carrying less treasure or wearing lighter armour may have as little as 10% chance of drowning.





Time

Aside from normal time increments (minutes, hours, days, and so on), the following special units are used in the game. In all matters of time and movement, the referee is the final authority on what may be accomplished in a given period of time.

Turns

When in the dungeon, characters take actions in time increments called turns. One turn is equal to 10 minutes. Character actions that take one turn include looking for secret doors or traps in a 10' × 10' area (see **Searching**, p19) or moving up to the party's full movement rate (see **Movement**, p17).

Rounds

Rounds are ten seconds of game time each, so there are 60 rounds in a turn. Time is only measured in rounds during encounters, especially in combat (see **Encounters**, p11, and **Basic Combat Procedure**, p22).

Traps

Triggering

Each trap is triggered by a specific action (e.g. opening a door or walking over a particular area). Every time a character makes an action that could trigger a trap, there is a 2-in-6 chance of the trap being sprung. Some traps may be more or less likely to trigger, if the referee wishes.

Searching for Traps

Adventurers may choose to search objects or areas for traps. See **Searching**, p19.

Wandering Monsters

Besides the monsters specifically placed in certain regions of a dungeon or wilderness, the party may randomly encounter monsters on the move between areas. These are known as "wandering monsters". The chance of a random encounter occurring depends on the type of area being explored (e.g. dungeon region or level, type of wilderness terrain). Each type of area should have its own table of wandering monsters, which the referee rolls on when an encounter takes place.

In the Dungeon

The typical chance of encountering a wandering monster is 1-in-6, rolled every two turns. The chance of wandering monsters may be higher or lower in certain parts of the dungeon and the actions of the party can also affect this. For example, making a lot of noise or light should increase the chance, while resting quietly in an out-of-the-way location should decrease the chance.

In the Wilderness

It is usual to check for random encounters once per day, though the referee may make more checks: up to three or four per day. The chance of encounters depends on the terrain being explored:

- City, clear, grasslands, settled lands: 1-in-6.
- Aerial, barren, desert, forest, hills, ocean, river: 2-in-6.
- Jungle, mountains, swamp: 3-in-6.

Aquatic encounters may occur either on the open water or on land, if the party docks at some point during the day.

Water Travel

The distance travelled in a day is determined by the type of vessel being used and by the prevailing wind and water conditions.

When travelling upon **rivers**, the current may increase (moving downstream) or decrease (moving upstream) the distance travelled by 1d6+6 miles per day.

At sea, there are many possible conditions that might impact a vessel's movement rate. The referee should check conditions at the start of each day by rolling 2d6:

- A result of 2 means that the day is completely devoid of wind and a ship that is incapable of rowing cannot move all day.
- A result of 12 indicates a gale (see right).

Gales

During a gale, any seaworthy vessel with sails can attempt to move with the wind to avoid damage. The vessel travels at three times its normal speed in a randomly determined direction. (The referee may roll 1d6, with 1 indicating the intended direction of travel, 2 indicating 60° to the right, 3 indicating 120° to the right, and so on.)

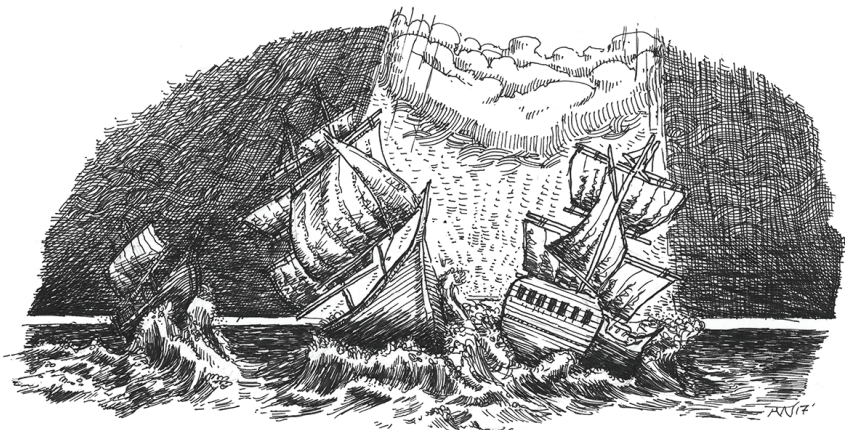
If the ship encounters land during this travel, there is a 75% chance of it wrecking against the shore.

Variable Wind Conditions (Optional Rule)

Groups who prefer a slightly more detailed system of sea travel may use the following chart, which adds additional detail to the daily 2d6 roll to determine wind conditions.

Variable Wind Conditions Table

2d6	Wind	Effect
2	No wind	Movement is only possible by oar. Oarsmen fatigued: movement reduced to one third.
3	Faint breeze	Movement rate reduced to one third normal.
4	Gentle breeze	Movement rate reduced to half normal.
5	Moderate breeze	Movement rate reduced to two thirds normal.
6-8	Fresh breeze	Normal movement rate.
9	Strong breeze	Movement rate increased by one third.
10	High wind	Movement rate increased by half.
11	Near gale	Movement rate doubled. 10% chance of taking on water (speed reduced by one third until repaired at a dock).
12	Gale	Movement rate tripled. See Gales , above.



Basic Combat Procedure

Sequence of Events

The sequence of actions in each round is broken down as follows:

1. Characters who wish to cast a spell or perform a full retreat from melee must declare it.
2. Initiative: 1d6 is rolled by each opposing side.
3. The winner of initiative acts first:
 - a. The referee may check **Morale (p24)** for monsters.
 - b. Movements are made.
 - c. Missile attacks are made, accounting for DEX modifiers, cover, range, and magic adjustments.
 - d. Spells are cast and applicable saving throws are made.
 - e. Melee combat and other actions occur; attacks are made, accounting for STR modifiers and magic adjustments.
4. Other sides act through step 3, in order of initiative.
5. When all sides of a conflict have acted, the round is over. If the combat has not come to an end, the sequence begins again at step 1.

Initiative

At the start of each round, each side rolls 1d6 to determine initiative. The side with the highest result on 1d6 acts first for that round. Other sides in a conflict will react in order from highest to lowest roll.

Tied Initiative

If initiative is a tie, each side in the tie acts at the same time. All actions are completed, unaffected by opposed actions. For example, two opponents in melee may both inflict enough damage to kill the other. As the initiative is tied, both attacks occur simultaneously, resulting in both characters being killed.

Two-Handed Weapons

Characters wielding two-handed weapons always act last in the round, as if they had lost initiative.

Individual Initiative (Optional Rule)

Instead of an initiative roll per side, a roll may be made for each individual PC or monster involved in a battle, modified by DEX. The referee may determine an initiative bonus or penalty for monsters which are very fast or slow, instead of applying a DEX modifier.

Movement in Combat

With Another Action

A character can move up to one third of his or her normal movement rate every round and can also attack (if an enemy is within that distance) or perform another action (except spell casting) during a round.

Without Another Action

A character who performs no other action in a round may run, moving up to his or her full movement rate.

Retreating From Melee

When in melee with a foe, free movement is not so simple. Breaking away from melee is possible in two ways, as follows.

A **fighting retreat** allows a character to move backwards at up to half his or her encounter movement rate (i.e. one sixth of his or her base movement rate). However, there must be a clear path for this movement.

A **full retreat** occurs when a character moves backwards at a rate faster than half of his or her encounter movement rate. The character making the movement forfeits attacking this round and the opponent gains a +2 bonus to all attacks against the character this round. In addition, if the retreating character is carrying a shield, it does not apply to the character's Armour Class during the retreat.

Actions in One Round

Characters can generally move and perform one action in a round. The most common actions are attacking, casting a spell, or using an item that is easily to hand, but many other actions are possible and must be adjudicated by the referee. The referee has the final say on what can or cannot be done in one round. Note that, when casting a spell, the character may *not* move as well.

Attacking

A character may attack if there is an enemy within striking range. Player characters can normally only attack once per round, but some monsters have multiple attacks.

Range For Melee vs Missile Attacks

Melee attacks are possible when opponents are 5' or less from each other. Missile attacks are possible when opponents are more than 5' from one another.

Attack Rolls

The player or referee rolls 1d20, modified by STR for melee attacks or DEX for missile attacks. The result is compared to the appropriate attack table (see *Standard Combat Charts, p26*). A result that is equal to or above the attack value corresponding to the attacker's level or Hit Dice and the opponent's Armour Class results in a hit.

Natural 1s and 20s

- An attack roll of 20 always hits, unless the target cannot be harmed by the attack (e.g. a normal weapon used against a foe which can only be harmed by magic).
- An attack roll of 1 is always a miss.

Damage Rolls

Upon a successful attack, damage is inflicted, taking into account any bonuses or penalties. Player character attacks inflict 1d6 damage; monster attacks deal the damage indicated in the monster's description.

An attack which hits always deals at least one point of damage, even when damage modifiers reduce the number rolled to 0 or less.

A character or monster reduced to 0 hit points or less is killed.

Variable Weapon Damage (Optional Rule)

Some groups may prefer different weapons to inflict different amounts of damage. In this case, rather than rolling a flat 1d6 for all PC attacks, the die type indicated for the weapon in the equipment lists should be rolled.

Missile Weapon Ranges

All missile weapons have ranges, which must be taken into account when trying to strike an opponent at a distance:

- If an opponent is within the distance listed for **short range**, the attacker gets a +1 to hit.
- There are no bonuses or penalties for striking an opponent at **medium range**.
- There is a penalty of -1 to strike an opponent at **long range**.
- If an opponent is further away than the long range listed, the missile weapon cannot hit that opponent.

Casting a Spell

Requirements

1. The caster must be able to speak and to move his or her hands, in order to bring a magic effect into being. As a result, a spell caster cannot cast spells if gagged, bound, or in an area of magical silence.
2. Spell casters may take no other actions (including movement!) during the same round they intend to cast a spell.
3. Unless otherwise noted in a spell's description, a spell caster must have the intended target (a specific monster, character, or area of effect) within visual range.

Disrupting Spells

If a spell caster loses initiative and is successfully attacked or fails a saving throw before his or her turn, the spell being cast is disrupted and fails. The spell is removed from the caster's memory as if it had been cast.

Other Combat Issues

Attacking from Behind

Attacks made on a character from behind ignore the influence of the attacked character's shield, if any.

Boarding Vessels

When the occupants of a vessel wish to board another vessel, there is a 2-in-6 chance of being able to successfully manoeuvre the vessel into a boarding position and clamp onto the other vessel with grappling hooks. If the occupants of *both* vessels wish to board one another, their mutual intent makes the action succeed with no chance of failure. Once crew-members come into contact with one another, combat ensues following the standard combat rules. Characters who are in the act of boarding another vessel suffer a penalty of -2 to attack rolls and Armour Class for one round.

Cover

Cover is an important factor that can influence missile attacks. An attacker cannot hit an opponent that is entirely behind a barrier. If the target is only partly behind cover, the referee may apply attack penalties of between -1 and -4. For example, if a character were attempting to strike an opponent through a small window, the referee might call for a penalty of -4. If the opponent were only partly covered, such as by small furniture, the penalty might only be -1.

Helpless Opponents

Helpless opponents, such as those sleeping, bound, magically frozen, etc., are automatically hit by any melee attacks in combat. Only a roll for damage is required.

Magical Monsters

Some monsters may only be damaged by magical or silver weapons. The referee may, optionally, allow such monsters to *also* be harmed by attacks from:

- Another such monster.
- A monster with 5 HD or greater.

Morale (Optional Rule)

Players may always decide whether they will fight, surrender, or run away in an encounter. The referee decides whether monsters or NPCs surrender or run away.

Monsters have a listing for morale, rated from 2 to 12, which represents how likely they are to fight or flee when in an encounter. A score of 2 means the monster never fights (unless absolutely cornered) and a score of 12 means the monster will fight until killed, with no morale check necessary in either case.

Morale Checks

The referee rolls 2d6 and, if the roll is higher than the morale of the monster, the check is a failure and the monster will either surrender or attempt a full retreat or a fighting retreat. If the result is equal to or lower than the morale score, a monster will continue to fight.

When to Check Morale

The referee usually makes a morale check for monsters under two conditions:

1. When one side of the encounter first loses a member due to death.
2. When half the monsters are either killed or otherwise incapacitated.

If a monster makes two successful morale checks in an encounter, it will fight until killed.

Adjustments to Morale

The referee may decide to apply bonuses or penalties to morale, with a range of -2 to +2, depending on the circumstances. For example, if one side of an encounter is losing or winning, they might receive a penalty or bonus to morale of -1 or +1, respectively.

Adjustments are never applied to monsters with a morale of 2 or 12.

Retainer Morale

Retainers signed up to work as adventurers, so are not frightened off at the first sign of danger. They only check morale in combat when confronted with extraordinary danger. See **Retainers, p18**, for details.

Multiple Attackers

The referee should use discretion in determining how many attackers can strike at one opponent. Usually only two characters may fight side-by-side in a 10' wide hallway, unless all of the attackers are small.

Non-Lethal Combat

Any characters that wish to subdue an opponent must announce that they are attacking without intent to kill. All hand weapons with a blade may be employed to deal blunt blows with the flat of the blade.

Combat and damage are calculated normally, noting how much damage is non-lethal, “subdual” damage. A character or monster that reaches 0 hit points due to subdual damage is knocked unconscious.

Monsters may only be subdued in this way at the referee’s discretion.

Unarmed Attacks

Unarmed combat is the same as melee combat, but all damage is 1 to 2 + STR modifiers.

Unstable Surfaces

Characters on an unstable surface, such as a ship in rough seas or riding a flying animal such as a griffon, are affected as follows:

- Spells cannot be cast because the intricate hand gestures are not possible in that shaky environment.
- Missile attacks suffer a penalty of -4 to hit.
- Magic items do not require the same concentration and gestures, and can be used as normal.

Note that magical means of flight (e.g. a magic broom, carpet, or the *fly* spell) generally provide a smooth ride and do not count as unstable.

Water

Characters fighting in or beneath water should have a penalty applied to their attack rolls. Damage from successful hits should also be reduced. Most missile weapons do not work underwater.



Standard Combat Charts

Adventurer Attack Chart By Class and Level

Fighter			Attack Roll to Hit AC												
Dwarf	Cleric	Magic-	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Elf	Thief	User													
Halfling															
1-3	1-4	1-5	20	20	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10
4-6	5-8	6-10	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8
7-9	9-12	11-15	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5
10-12	13-16	16-20	15	14	12	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3
13-15	17-20	21-25	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	2

Monster Attack Chart By Hit Dice

Monster	Attack Roll to Hit AC												
Hit Dice	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Up to 1	20	20	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10
1+ to 2	20	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9
2+ to 3	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8
3+ to 4	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7
4+ to 5	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6
5+ to 6	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5
6+ to 7	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4
7+ to 9	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3
9+ to 11	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2
11+ to 13	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	2
13+ to 15	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	2	2
15+ to 17	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	2	2	2
17+ to 19	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	2	2	2	2
19+ to 21	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	2	2	2	2	2
21+ or more	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

Normal Human Attack Chart

Attack Roll to Hit AC												
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
20	20	20	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11

Saving Throw Charts

“Death” also includes poison, “Paralysis” also includes petrification,
 “Spells” includes magic rods and staves.

Cleric	Level	Death	Wands	Paralysis	Breath	Spells
	1-4	11	12	14	16	15
	5-8	9	10	12	14	12
	9-12	6	7	9	11	9
	13-16	3	5	7	8	7
Dwarf/Halfling	Level	Death	Wands	Paralysis	Breath	Spells
	1-3	8	9	10	13	12
	4-6	6	7	8	10	10
	7-9	4	5	6	7	8
	10-12	2	3	4	4	6
Elf	Level	Death	Wands	Paralysis	Breath	Spells
	1-3	12	13	13	15	15
	4-6	10	11	11	13	12
	7-9	8	9	9	10	10
	10	6	7	8	8	8
Fighter	Level	Death	Wands	Paralysis	Breath	Spells
	1-3	12	13	14	15	16
	4-6	10	11	12	13	14
	7-9	8	9	10	10	12
	10-12	6	7	8	8	10
	13-15	4	5	6	5	8
Magic-User	Level	Death	Wands	Paralysis	Breath	Spells
	1-5	13	14	13	16	15
	6-10	11	12	11	14	12
	11-15	8	9	8	11	8
Thief	Level	Death	Wands	Paralysis	Breath	Spells
	1-4	13	14	13	16	15
	5-8	12	13	11	14	13
	9-12	10	11	9	12	10
	13-16	8	9	7	10	8
Normal Human		Death	Wands	Paralysis	Breath	Spells
		14	15	16	17	18

Magic

Spells

Some character classes have the ability to memorize and cast magical spells. There are two types of magic: **divine magic**, which a deity or higher power grants, and **arcane magic**, which is learned by esoteric study.

Memorizing Spells

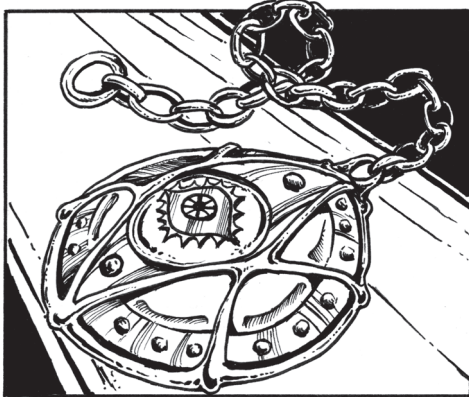
A spell consists of a pattern of magical energy stored in a character's mind. A spell caster is able to memorize a certain number of spells of different spell levels, depending on his or her experience level. A character can memorize the same spell more than once if he or she is capable of memorizing more than one spell of the given level.

Arcane spell casters memorize spells from spell books and are thus limited to choosing from the spells in their spell book, which must be to hand.

Divine spell casters do not study from books, but instead receive the knowledge of how to cast spells through prayer to their gods. When praying for spells, divine spell casters have access to all spells in their class' spell list that they are of high enough level to cast.

Rest and Time Requirements

All spell casters can memorize new spells after an uninterrupted night's sleep. It takes one hour to memorize all spells the character is capable of learning.



Casting Spells

A memorized spell may be cast by precisely replicating the required set of hand gestures and mystical spoken words. When a spell is cast, knowledge of the spell is erased from the mind of the caster.

Spell Casting Constraints

All spell casters need to be able to move their hands and speak in order to make the gestures and speak the magical phrases that bring magic effects into being. As a result, a spell caster cannot cast spells if gagged, bound, or in an area of magical silence.

When casting spells in combat, it is possible for spell casting to be disrupted. See **Basic Combat Procedure, p22**.

Reversible Spells

Some spells are reversible; this is indicated in each spell's description.

For arcane spell casters, the normal or reversed form of a spell must be selected when the spell is memorized. An arcane spell caster may memorize both forms of a spell, if he or she is able to memorize more than one spell of the given level.

A divine spell caster can use either form of a spell without having to pray for the different versions separately; the character may decide which version (normal or reversed) to use when the spell is cast. However, a divine spell caster may draw dissatisfaction from his or her deity when casting spells (or their reversed versions) whose effects go against the deity's alignment.

Cumulative Spell Effects

Multiple spells cannot be used to increase the same ability (e.g. bonuses to attack rolls, Armour Class, damage rolls, saving throws, etc.). Spells that affect *different* abilities can be combined. In addition, spells can be combined with the effects of magical items.

Spell Books

Arcane spell casters record the spells that they know in a spell book (or set of spell books). A character's spell book contains exactly the number of spells that the character is capable of memorizing. For example, a character who is able to memorize two 1st level spells and one 2nd level spell would have exactly that number of spells in his or her spell book.

Lost Spell Books

Sometimes a spell book will either be lost or destroyed. An arcane spell caster can rewrite the spells through research and memory at a cost of 1 week of game time and 1,000 gp for each spell level. For instance, if two first level spells and one 2nd level spell are replaced, it will take 4 weeks and 4,000 gp. This activity requires complete concentration and a character doing this work may not engage in any other activity for the time required.

Captured Spell Books

Each arcane spell caster's spell books are written in such a way that only the owner is able to read the spells without the use of *read magic*.

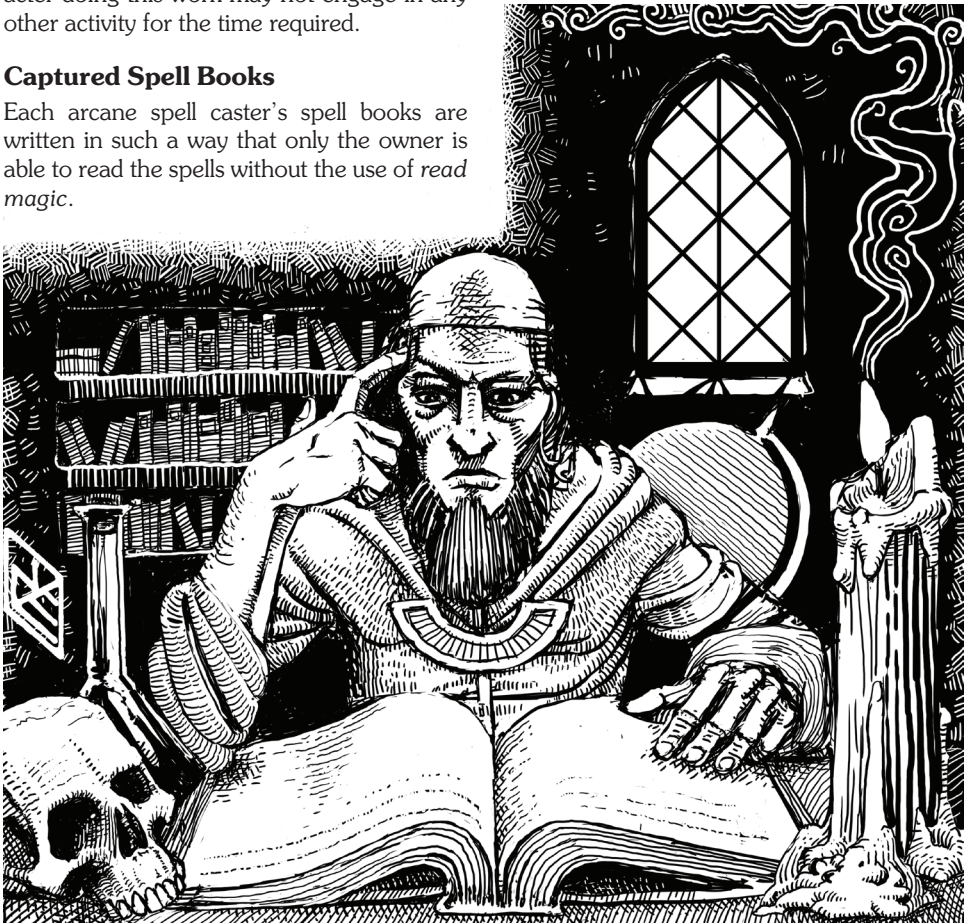
Beginning Spells

Arcane spell casters begin play with one 1st level spell in their spell book. The referee may choose this spell or may allow the player to select one.

Adding Spells

When an arcane spell caster gains a level, he or she may consult a wizard's guild or mentor to learn new spells. In this way, the character can add spells to his or her spell books, so that the books contain the same number of spells the characters is able to cast. This process takes about a week of game time. (The spells a character learns in this way are determined by the referee, who may decide to let the player to choose.)

It is also possible to add spells to a spell book by means of *Magical Research* (p31).



Magic Items

Identifying

Most magic items are not labelled, so characters must discover their exact properties through trial and error. Powerful wizards may be able to identify magic items, but it can take many weeks to do so. Alchemists are also able to identify some items, such as potions.

Using

In order to use a magic item, a character must follow the procedures indicated in the item's description. The item must be worn or held in the usual manner. Some magic items (e.g. an enchanted suit of armour) are always active, but others must be consciously activated—this requires a round of concentration, during which the character may do nothing else. Some items have special activation conditions, such as command words.

Charges

Some magic items have limited uses, called "charges". Each charge can be spent to bring about one instance of the item's magical effect. A character cannot know how many charges an item has and, when the charges are all spent, the item becomes a normal, non-magical object—it cannot be recharged.

Cursed Items

Cursed items, once possessed by a character, can only be disposed of if the curse is dispelled by magic. The owner of a cursed item will not believe the item is cursed and will resist efforts to get rid of the item until the curse is dispelled.

Magic Weapons

Magic weapons follow the same class restrictions as normal weapons. A magic weapon has a "+" value, indicating the degree of its enchantment. This value is applied to attack and damage rolls using the weapon.

Cursed Weapons

Cursed weapons have the opposite effect, incurring *penalties* to attack and damage equal to the "+" value specified. The possessor of a cursed weapon will prefer to use this weapon in combat above any other weapon.

Magic Armour

Magic armour follows the same class restrictions as normal armour. A suit of magical armour has a "+" value indicating its degree of enchantment. The wearer's AC is improved (i.e. reduced) by the "+" value.

Magic armour is also lighter and less cumbersome than normal. When using the optional rule for encumbrance by weight carried (see *Encumbrance, p12*), enchanted leather armour weighs 75 coins, chainmail 150 coins, and plate mail 200 coins.

Cursed Armour

Cursed armour appears to be armour +1, but actually has an Armour Class rating of 9. It has the same weight as normal, non-magical armour of the same type.

Potions

Most potions are found as a single dose that imbues the potion's effects on one individual. Potions usually bear no label and vary in their appearance, aroma, etc. Even two potions of the same type will differ. A potion may be identified by sampling a small amount.

Unless a potion's description specifies otherwise, potions take effect in the same round as their consumption and last for 1d6+6 turns.

Mixing Potions

If a potion is consumed while the character is still under the effects of another potion, the effects of both potions are nullified and the character becomes sick, unable to do anything for three turns.

Scrolls

Scrolls are pieces of parchment, imbued with potent magical writings. Simply pronouncing the words releases their power.

Some scrolls can be deciphered and read by any class, while others have restrictions. Scrolls that contain arcane spells can only be read by an arcane spell caster employing the spell *read magic*. Scrolls with divine spells can be read without special deciphering, but are usable only by divine spell casters.

Once a scroll is used, the magical writing disappears. (In the case of scrolls containing multiple spells, only the spell cast disappears.)

Rings

Magical rings are usable by any character class. They must be worn on a finger or thumb. It is only possible to wear two magical rings: one on each hand. If more than two are worn, none of them will function.

Cursed Rings

Cursed rings are always active. Their effects are not nullified, no matter how many other rings are worn.

Rods, Staves, and Wands

Rods are generally usable by characters of any class. Wands are only usable by arcane spell casters. Staves are only usable by spell casters—either divine or arcane, depending on the item.

These magic items generally have a limited number of “charges” which are spent to trigger the item’s magical effect. When found, a rod has 1d10 charges, a wand has 2d10 charges, and a staff has 3d10 charges.



Magical Research

Creating New Spells

Spell casting characters of any level are able to research and create new spells. The player must describe in detail the kind of spell he or she wants to create and the effects it has. The referee will then decide if the spell can be created and, if so, what the spell level will be. The character must be capable of casting spells of the spell level the potential new spell will be, otherwise the player must wait until the character attains a high enough level to research and cast the spell. If the character can create the spell, it will take two weeks of game time and 1,000 gp per spell level.

Magic Item Creation

A spell casting character of 9th level or higher may attempt to create magical items. Divine spell casters may only create items usable by their class, while arcane spell casters may create any item except those that may only be used by divine spell casters. The player should inform the referee of the item that he or she wishes to construct and the referee will decide whether this is possible and, if so, what kinds of materials are required. Materials will often include rare components such as expensive and hard to obtain gems or ingredients from rare animals and monsters. Often, the character will have to go on adventures just to acquire these materials.

Many magic items duplicate the effects of a spell, generally costing one week of game time and 500 gp per level of the mimicked spell. If the item created can replicate the spell effect multiple times (for example a wand with charges), the cost in time and money is multiplied by the number of uses.

Some magic items do not mimic spell effects precisely and for these the referee will have to use discretion. The more powerful the item, the more difficult it should be to construct. As a general rule, items should cost from 10,000 to 100,000 gp and from 1 month to 1 year of game time to complete. Some examples are: a dagger +1 (2 months, 10,000 gp), chainmail armour +1 (4 months, 10,000 gp), a displacer cloak (100,000 gp, 1 year).

Other Magical Research

Other kinds of magic effects—for which a magic item or spell is not appropriate—may be researched. Creating magic traps, magical constructs, magical portals, or other effects will need to be given a gp cost and time cost at the referee’s discretion.

Chance of Failure

No attempt to create a magic item, spell, or other effect is guaranteed to succeed. There is a minimum probability of 15% that any such endeavour fails. This chance may be raised depending on the circumstances. The referee rolls for failure after the character has spent the money and time on the project—these are lost regardless of the result.

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