

# HackMaster

Unofficial QuickStart Guide







# QuickStart Guide

*For those who have nowhere to go but up  
as quickly and brutally as possible.*



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**A Special Note on this Guide:** Within the full-color pdf version of the unofficial QuickStart Guide, you will observe that there are a wide array of inter-document links. Simply scroll your mouse over a term you need clarification on, click on it and you will be taken to the glossary or relevant section of the QSG



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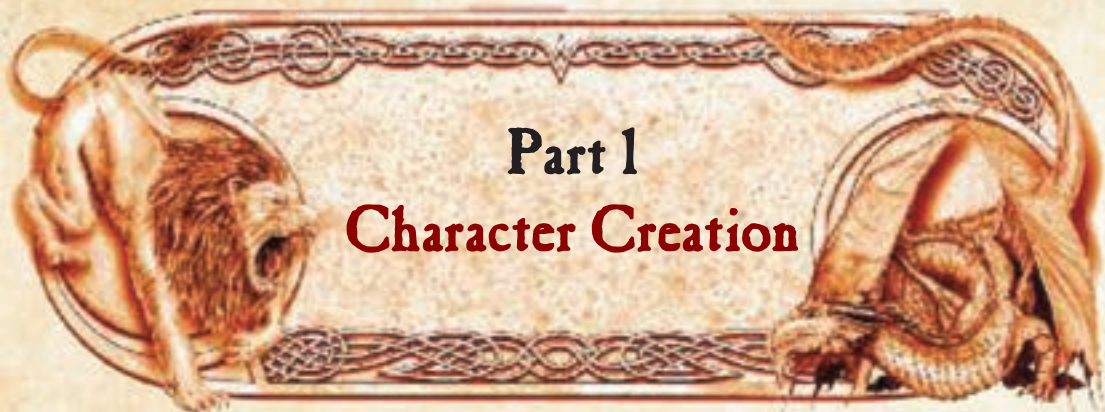
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# Part 1

## Character Creation

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### 1.1 Introduction

If this is your first outing to the World of Tellene, you may wish to quickly generate a character with which to Get Your Hack On™. Later on, as you become more familiar with the mechanics of the game – not to mention the myriad of options presented by the Advanced rules – you will likely want a more fleshed out and well-developed character, one with a variety of talents, proficiencies, quirks, flaws and so-forth. Developing such a character is simple enough, and you may do so using the methods presented in the recently released **HackMaster Player's Handbook** (PHB), or in the **HackMaster Basic** (HMB) rules set which is affordable, has complete rules (including monsters and treasure) and is compatible with this guide and all Advanced books which are being released (i.e., the **Hacklopedia of Beasts**, the aforementioned PHB and the upcoming **GameMaster's Guide**.)

But if you want to simply try the game for the first time and don't want to spend a big block of your initial session developing the most intricate and awesome character of your gaming career, then there's no need to worry – this supplement will give you everything you need to play your first hero, and quickly.

#### Before you read on – what you need to know

HackMaster is a fantasy **Roleplaying Game (RPG)**. This game mixes strategy and skill with fortune, as your wit and the luck of your dice may determine if your character lives or dies. If you have never played a RPG before, do not worry – this chapter should explain all you need to know. However, if you remain confused, then consult a more experienced player. Perhaps this “experienced player” is your **GameMaster** (the person who runs the game for you and your friends), or even simply somebody who has played before. But if you have never played a RPG before and don't have a GameMaster, then here's a short rundown of what you'll need.

■ A set of dice, including a d20, d12, d10 (preferably two of these), d8, d6 and d4. You can get these from the same place where you got this book, be it a gaming webstore, your friendly local gaming shop, or your sleeping best friend whose stuff you are in the process of stealing – er, “borrowing”

■ A character sheet or blank paper, pencils and erasers

■ A rudimentary grasp of the rules

■ An active imagination

If you are indeed the **GameMaster (GM)** of your group, then you may eventually find yourself consulting the QuickStart Rules (QSRs) on page 23. However, they alone are not enough – you must also read (and be comfortable with) the player rules as well. But don't panic – the concise information in this QuickStart Guide (QSG) is all you need to know for your first session slinging the dice!

#### What you can do with this guide

You can quickly generate a character and, with the aid of a GM, run a multi-session adventure. There are free adventures available on [www.kenzerco.com](http://www.kenzerco.com) that can suit this purpose. Otherwise, you can always use this material to simply “practice” combat with your GM and players, or you can rely upon your GM to write up a compelling scenario based on the information presented in the Rules Section of this supplement.

#### What you can't do

You cannot run a multi-month campaign with the information presented within. Well, you might be able to but it'd get boring pretty fast. There is no information on how to level up and a myriad of detailed encounters are absent. The **QSG** is designed specifically for you to test the game.

If HackMaster whets your appetite, run – do not walk – to the nearest friendly local gaming shop (FLGS) and buy a copy of



**HackMaster Basic**, which contains all the rules you need and is typically available for under \$20. Or you can go to [www.kenzercos.com](http://www.kenzercos.com), buy the **Player's Handbook**, talk your GM into the **Hacklopedia of Beasts**, and begin playing one of the most detailed, exciting Fantasy Roleplay Games ever made!



## 1.2 Basic Character Classes

In the **Advanced Game**, you have the ability to choose not only from a vast list of character races, but also an impressive number of player classes. For the sake of speed, these have been streamlined – you may choose a class and a “preferred race” associated with that class. Each choice offers costs and benefits, so look closely before making a decision.

***A Note on Quirks and Flaws (Q&F's)** - HackMaster isn't only a game of roll 'n play - it is also a game of Role Play. You aren't just a collection of numbers and statistics - you're playing a role, as a character with a sordid history and a hopeful eye on a gleaming future. The game helps provide you with roleplay cues through Quirks and Flaws - i.e., characteristics (both mental and physical) that give your character personality (and, to be fair, that also gives your GM an opportunity to make your life extremely challenging).*

In the **Advanced Game**, you are able to either pick and choose your own **Q&F's** or you get to roll randomly and take whatever the fates deal you. For this introductory game, your **Q&F's** have been cherry picked for you. There's a reason for that – in **Advanced**, you receive **Build Points** and can customize your **Character (or PC, short for Player Character)** in any way possible, allowing your character to have a number of **talents, proficiencies, specializations and skills**. In the **QSG**, we've done the math for you.

***A Note on Basic Classes:** Each class presented in this section includes a number of stats and categories. These correlate with your PC Record Sheet (more commonly known as a “character sheet”) which is included in the back of this guide.*

*Simply follow these steps and, as you go, fill in the corresponding information on your record sheet.*

To prep your character...

**1. Pick the class/race combo that you want.** (Assuming you are playing with your friends, you might want to discuss your choice with them to better ensure that you're not all picking the same one.)

The **QSG** contains some pre-rolled characters, so all you need do is pick your class/race and write down the correlating information on your record sheet. Fill in your Strength (STR), Intelligence (INT), Wisdom (WIS), Dexterity (DEX), Constitution (CON), Looks (LKS), Charisma (CHA) and Honor (HON). Make a note on your quirks and/or flaws. Write down your weapon and armor proficiencies. You also might want to correlate your stats with their corresponding bonuses. (i.e., if you have a STR of 16, you have a Damage modifier of +3!)

Don't worry - if you are confused about how to calculate your final bonuses, you can just consult the step-by-step guide which starts on page 30.

**2. Choose the Skills Package that best fits your character.** Once you've done this, again fill in the information under the skills section of your character sheet.

*Note – some skills are considered “universal.” That means anybody can learn them and they are on everybody's character sheets. Other skills are not universal but you can still have them at Character Creation. If a skill isn't on your character sheet, just fill it in where there's space.*

Additionally, some skills available in a Skills Package are also Bonus Skills that are assigned at character creation. These are accounted for – simply follow the directions in the Bonus Skills section (such as “+7 if skill is taken in a Skill Package”).

**3. Roll up your hit points.** Information on how to do this is in each character description.

**4. Give yourself an awesome name,** like Mephisto “Phist” Stringfellow or Zadok MaGruger. Be warned that you may find yourself getting mocked by friends if you mistakenly choose a lame name for your character, such as Sir Killsalot or The Night Stalker.

**5. Get your Hack on!**

**Picking your class/race.**

Listed in this section are 8 options for your character. You can play a dwarf, elf, halfling or human, and you can be a fighter, thief, mage or cleric. Each character has already been detailed – you'll have quirks or flaws, weapon proficiencies, talents, specializations and, in some cases, you'll even have spells.

However, each character also starts with the following:

*Sandals (1 pair); trousers and tunic, wool; belt, rope; sack, large canvas; wineskin (2 quart capacity); rations, standard (3 days supply).*

In other words, everybody has food, clothes, a sack to put your loot in and a belt to hold your trousers up. It's probably more than you deserve – but, just the same, each character gets a handful of items specific to his needs. Be sure to record them on your character sheet, and take special note of your **Bennies** (weapon specialization, talents, etc.) that might help improve your fighting ability.

**Rolling your Abilities:** In the **Advanced Game**, players most commonly roll their abilities through rolling a straight 3d6. This step has been skipped for the **QSG**, but it can be a tremendously fun aspect of the game. (Will you roll a hero or a dud destined to become a shop-keeper?) In the **QSG**, characters have extreme abilities - with highs of 18 and lows of 5 in some cases. This is actually quite uncommon.



## The Basic Fighter

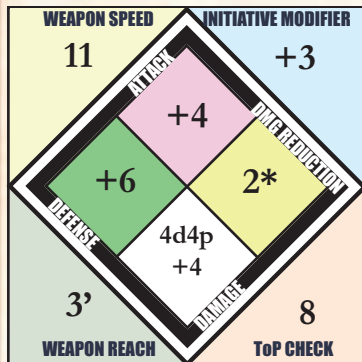
He's the toughest, meanest son'gun in the game. The fighter ain't going to win a popularity contest – how could he when he's so damn ugly? But while after the encounter everybody's high fiving the thief for seducing the Baron's wife, or buying drinks for the mage for that timely fireball, when the sod hits the whirling deathtrap it's the fighter who everybody clusters around. There's a reason for that.

A house will collapse without a foundation, and the fighter fortifies a party with the sinew of his muscle and the strength of his steel.

The Basic Fighter comes in two options: mean and nasty. **The dwarven fighter** is tough. He can give and take a hit like nobody else – and that's exactly what he'll do. Not one for defense, this hairy little killing machine is one part Hit 'Em and two parts Hit 'Em Again. His pal **the human fighter** is a different case. He doesn't have the guff of his dwarven comrade and must instead rely on his ability to occasionally duck a blow or two. He's still tough, but he just isn't the same kind of wrecking ball as the dwarf option.

## The Dwarven Fighter

### Combat Profile for Battle Axe



\*DMG Reduction is 8 if your M shield takes the hit

**Starting Honor:** 7

**Hit Point Roll:** d10+26

**Proficiencies:** Armor (light, medium, heavy); shield; battle axe; great axe

**Specializations:** battle axe: attack +1, damage +1, defense +1, weapon speed -1

*"Mebbe ye've heard of me? Lost king of the Under Mountain am I. ...no? Well, ye scrawny bastard, in about five minutes yer gonna find me hard to forget!"*

**Starting Equipment:** battleaxe – DMG 4d4p; Speed 12; Size M; Reach 3'; Type Hacking  
Leather armor – Damage Reduction 2; Defense Adjustment -2; Initiative Modifier 0; Speed Modifier 0; Type Light

Medium Shield – Defense Bonus +6; Damage Reduction 6; Cover Value 16 (11 if actively crouching)

A dinged-up tin that is in roughly the same shape as a crown

**Talents:** *Improved Reach* – So you're a little guy, but everybody knows you're a wrecking ball of wrath and anger! Maybe it's just your nature, or all that practice you've had, but your reach is as good as any human's. You have no negative to reach, even though you've got shorter arms cuz yer a dwarf.



any human's. You have no negative to reach, even though you've got shorter arms cuz yer a dwarf.

**Bonus Skills:** Language (Dwarven) 80; Language (Kalamaran) 26; Appraisal (Armor and Weaponry) 25 (or +6 to Appraisal when taken in conjunction with any Skills Package); Mining 30 (or +10 to Mining when taken in conjunction with any Skills Package)

**Quirk:** *Delusional* – It turns out that you ain't just another dwarf. You're a dwarven king. Sure, it's inconvenient that all the paperwork got lost, and that nobody from home seems to remember you came from a royal line, but screw 'em. *You know that you are a member of dwarven royalty, and if the idiots you travel with don't treat you as such, just beat on 'em till they come around.*

**Racist** – you hate – you outright HATE – those dirty nasty humans. They stole your crown, enslaved your people, and all those bastards deserve to die! *Consequently, you suffer a -10 penalty on all skill rolls when dealing with them (and all other non-dwarves, for that matter).*

**Flaw:** *Trick knee* – your knee has the misfortune of giving out at inopportune times. When climbing, jogging, running, sprinting or carrying a heavy load, you have a 1 in 12 chance of your knee causing you to lose your balance and fall to the ground. If you're making sharp, rapid movements – such as dancing or dodging – your chance of falling increases to 3 in 12. (Lucky for you, dwarves don't cotton to dancing and aren't likely to sacrifice their testicular fortitude in order to dodge.)

**Other Bennies:** Magic Resistance – +5 to all Saving Throws vs. magic; Poison Resistance – +5 to all Saving Throws vs. poison

| STR   | Damage Modifier     | Feat of Strength | Lift (lbs.)      | Carry (lbs.) | Drag (lbs.) |
|-------|---------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|-------------|
| 16.51 | +3                  | +10              | 318              | 118          | 795         |
| INT   | Attack Modifier     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 16.45 | +2                  |                  |                  |              |             |
| WIS   | Initiative Modifier | Defense Modifier |                  |              |             |
| 10.49 | +2                  | 0                |                  |              |             |
| DEX   | Initiative Modifier | Attack Modifier  | Defense Modifier |              |             |
| 12.55 | +1                  | +1               | +1               |              |             |
| CON   |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 16.32 |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| LKS   |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 7.08  |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| CHA   |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 5.10  |                     |                  |                  |              |             |



# The Human Fighter



*Gosh! The Emperor's boots! Can you believe it?"*

**Starting Equipment:** *Scimitar* – Damage 2d8p; Speed 9; Size Medium; Reach 3'; Type Hacking

*Leather armor* – Damage Reduction 2; Defense Adjustment -2; Initiative Modifier 0; Speed Modifier 0; Type Light

*Small shield* – Defense Bonus +4; Damage Reduction 4; Cover Value 19

*A pair of old, worn boots* that apparently once belonged to Emperor Kabori

**Talents:** *Maintenance/Upkeep* – Put a tool in your hand and a broken implement at your feet and you're a happy man. You are generally handy – fix a broken wagon wheel, keep a dwelling in good repair, construct an elaborate and handy device for carrying a fully loaded crossbow, with enough time, tools and money you can do it all.

*Local History (Village of \_\_\_\_\_)* – You know

pretty much all there is to know about your hometown. You can regale folks with your knowledge of droughts, famines, floods, marriages, divorces, you name it.

**Bonus Skills:** Language (Kalamaran) 65; Appraisal (Armor & Weaponry) 17 (or +7 to Appraisal taken in conjunction with any Skills Package)

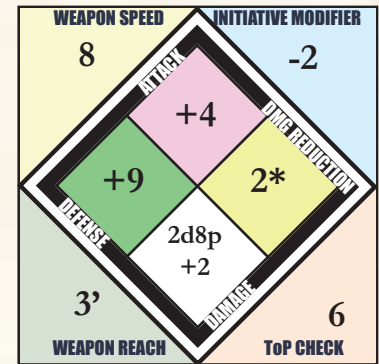
**Quirk:** *Fear of Heights* – If the gods wanted you to fly, they would've given you wings. If they wanted you to climb the tower and fight the villain to save the girl, then they wouldn't have bestowed you with the cunning to just burn the complex down. The problem is, sometimes you can't help it. Maybe the dungeon is across a bridge up on the mountain pass. *Just pass a wisdom check anytime you are dealing with a steep change of heights of 10 feet or more and you'll be fine – otherwise, forget it.*

Let your friends die in there without you and chill in the tavern. *And if you happen to attempt that mountain pass and some orcs ambush you? Your fear of falling forces you to fight defensively.*

**Gullible** – The world is an amazing place. You know it because folks tell you. Hell, you've just begun your career as a treasure hunter and already you have a pair of boots that once belonged to the Emperor! Or maybe they're just old, junky boots. You can't tell, and you tend to believe just about anything anybody tells you. Consequently, *you pay 2d10% higher than the asking price for any item you purchase and you cannot differentiate between quality items and pure junk... at least, not until after the money's changed hands and the merchant is long gone.*

**Flaw:** *Blunderer* – Usually you're fine. A nimble fighter, a talented dancer (or so your mother convinced you – you are gullible after all), watching you in action is a thing of beauty. Although ... well ... it turns out that you're a bit clumsier than the average person. *On an unopposed skill check, you have an accident on a roll of 91-100 (01-10 for opposed checks). On an ability check, you fumble on a 19 or 20. If you are running or dodging you must pass a Dexterity check or you stumble and fall. When in combat, you fumble on a roll of a 1 or a 2.*

Combat Profile for Scimitar



\*DMG Reduction is 6 if your S shield takes the hit

**Starting Honor:** 10

**Hit Point Roll:** d10+22

**Proficiencies:** Armor (light, medium, heavy); shield; scimitar, light crossbow

**Specializations:** *Scimitar* - attack +1, damage +1, defense +1, weapon speed -1

| STR   | Damage Modifier     | Feat of Strength | Lift (lbs.)      | Carry (lbs.) | Drag (lbs.) |
|-------|---------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|-------------|
| 12.90 | +1                  | +2               | 220              | 61           | 559         |
| INT   | Attack Modifier     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 10.65 | 0                   |                  |                  |              |             |
| WIS   | Initiative Modifier | Defense Modifier |                  |              |             |
| 16.32 | 0                   | +2               |                  |              |             |
| DEX   | Initiative Modifier | Attack Modifier  | Defense Modifier |              |             |
| 16.51 | -2                  | +3               | +4               |              |             |
| CON   |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 12.08 |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| LKS   |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 9.03  |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| CHA   |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 8.01  |                     |                  |                  |              |             |





## The Basic Thief

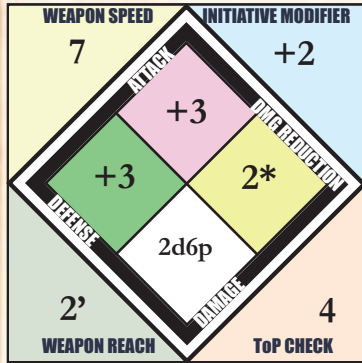
Greedy, sneaky, tricky – all of these things describe the thief. In the Basic game, you can play one of two types – the charming, seductive human thief or the fast, nearly-unhittable halfling.

**The human thief** is *that* guy. You know the one – he's a braggart. A scallywag. A scoundrel, if you will. He's the dude who hilariously seduces a newlywed bride while he's sneakily cutting the diamond sapphire off her neck. And when the husband shows up and catches

the thief with his tongue down her throat and hand in her purse? This is the guy who'll talk his way out of it.

**The halfling thief**, meanwhile, isn't as cute, nor as clever as his human friend. He is, however, wise enough to avoid a sticky situation – and if he fails to be inconspicuous, good luck trying to hit him as he makes a line for the door, or window, or whatever else is readily available for him to use while making a speedy escape.

### Combat Profile for Shortsword



\*DMG Reduction is 6 if your S shield takes the hit  
**Starting Honor:** 19

**Hit Point Roll:** d6+18

**Proficiencies:** Armor (light); shield; club; sap; garrotte; dagger; shortsword; throwing knives

**Specializations:** *Shortsword* – speed -1; attack +1

*"I did not do that thing that you caught me in the act of doing. Nope. Not me. Must've been a twin."*

**Starting Equipment:** *shortsword* – DMG 2d6p; Speed 8; Size S; Reach 2'; Type Piercing

*Dagger* – Damage 2d4p; Speed 7; Size Small; Reach 1'; Type Piercing

*Throwing Knives (2)* – Damage 1d6p; Rate of Fire 6; Size Small; Range (See Ranged Combat); Type Piercing

*Leather Armor* – Damage Reduction 2; Defense Adjustment -2; Initiative Modifier 0; Speed Modifier 0; Type Light

*Small shield* – Defense Bonus +4; Damage Reduction 4; Cover Value 19

*A shiny mirror* to better look at yourself with before you seduce the lovely tavern wenches

**Talents:** *Local History (Village of \_\_\_\_\_)* – You know pretty much all there is to know about your hometown. You can regale folks with

## The Human Thief



your knowledge of droughts, famines, floods, marriages, divorces, you name it.

**Style Sense** – You are one who keeps his ear to the ground. Although you can't make something fashionable to save your life (your talent is in thievery and seduction, remember) *you can easily recognize a popular style of architecture, art, music and fashion.*

**Bonus Skills:** Language (Kalamaran) 69; Climbing/Rappelling 20 (or +7 to Climbing/Rappelling when taken in conjunction with any Skills Package); Disarm Trap 22; Hiding 22; Identify Trap 19; Listening 20 (or +7 to Listening when taken in conjunction with any Skills Package); Lock Picking 25 (or +10 to Lock Picking when taken in conjunction with any Skills Package); Pick Pocket 18; Sneaking 22

**Quirk:** *Greedy* – Money is not enough. *You always want more* – a better dagger. Nicer armor. A pile of jewels and gems to roll around in and then gamble away later. You'll rob a temple, you'll steal from your friends, you'll even find out where your own mam has been hiding her life savings – like she needs 'em anyway – and you'll steal that too.

**Other Bennies:** -1 to Initiative Modifier; 21 luck points; 1 in 3 chance of finding secret doors; when backstabbing with a dagger, damage penetrates on a 3 or a 4; may backstab a fleeing opponent with any weapon when foe is fleeing combat; enemies lose 1 DR per every 2 levels of the thief when struck from behind; receives near perfect defense, or NPD on a roll of 18 or 19 (this is an **Advanced Option** rule); may dispatch helpless opponents in 3 seconds via a Coup de Grace.

| STR   | Damage Modifier     | Feat of Strength | Lift (lbs.)      | Carry (lbs.) | Drag (lbs.) |
|-------|---------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|-------------|
| 10.22 | None                | None             | 194              | 44           | 485         |
| INT   | Attack Modifier     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 12.56 | +1                  |                  |                  |              |             |
| WIS   | Initiative Modifier | Defense Modifier |                  |              |             |
| 10.33 | +2                  | 0                |                  |              |             |
| DEX   | Initiative Modifier | Attack Modifier  | Defense Modifier |              |             |
| 12.62 | +1                  | +1               | +1               |              |             |
| CON   |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 8.40  |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| LKS   |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 16.30 |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| CHA   |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 18.08 |                     |                  |                  |              |             |



# The Halfling Thief



*"I ain't half of nothin'!"*

**Starting Equipment:** *Shortsword* – Damage 2d6p; Speed 8; Size Small; Reach 2'; Type Piercing

*Dagger* – Damage 2d4p; Speed 7; Size Small; Reach 1'; Type Piercing

*Throwing Knives* (3) – Damage 1d6p; Rate of Fire 6; Size Small; Range (See Ranged Combat); Type Piercing

*Medium Shield* – Defense Bonus +6; Damage Reduction 6; Cover Value 16 (11 if actively crouching)

*A list of names* – these are your asses to kick.

**Talents:** *Etiquette/Manners (Kalamaran)* – You know how to act in polite company – you are able to act “proper” around members of high society. You know which funny little fork to start eating with at a big formal dinner. You also know when somebody is being rude toward you – it's the sorta thing that makes you feel touchy – and your

manners are otherwise so superb that they never see it coming when you start pocketing the silverware.

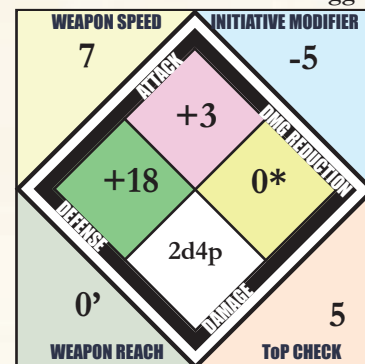
**Laborer** – Not that you enjoy doing it, but *if your comrades need some help digging a ditch, or building a wall, or harvesting a crop, then you are their go-to guy* (as long as you have proper supervision – just because you know which end of a hammer to hold doesn't mean you can just go off and build a bleedin' citadel).

**Bonus Skills:** Language (Kalamaran) 70; Climbing/Rappelling 20; Disarm Trap 21; Hiding 32; Identify Trap 28; Listening 26 (or +4 to Listening when taken in conjunction with any Skills Package); Lock Picking 17 (or +4 to Lock Picking when taken in conjunction with any Skills Package); Pick Pocket 25; Sneaking 33

**Quirk:** *Touchy* – Okay, so you're little, you're chubby and maybe you're not the best in a fight. But that doesn't mean you have to take crap from anybody – they stick you in the bottom bunk when you wanted the top? You're gonna break the whole stupid bed and trash the room to boot. Somebody swindle you at a game of cards? Throw the entire table over and stab them in the ear while they're bent over picking up their pocket aces. You don't deserve their crap, and *you won't take it, either.*

**Other Bennies:** -1 to Initiative Modifier; +4 Defense bonus; 21 luck points; 1 in 3 chance of finding secret doors; rolls 1 better initiative die (i.e., when everybody else rolls a d12 for initiative, the halfling rolls a d10); when backstabbing with a dagger, damage penetrates on a 3 or a 4; may backstab a fleeing opponent with any weapon when foe is fleeing combat; enemies lose 1 DR per every 2 levels of the thief when struck from behind; receives near perfect defense, or NPD on a roll of 18 or 19 (this is an **Advanced Option** rule); may dispatch helpless opponents in 3 seconds via a coup de grace; +50% to hiding in natural surroundings. The halfling thief also receives an additional -1 to his Initiative Modifier as he is not wearing any armor.

Combat Profile for Dagger



\*DMG Reduction is 6 if your M shield takes the hit

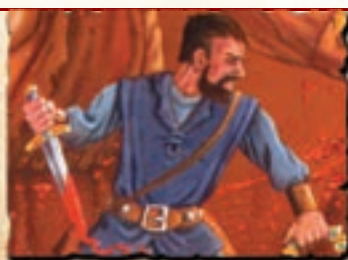
**Starting Honor:** 12

**Hit Point Roll:** d6+15

**Proficiencies:** Armor (light); shield; club; sap; garrotte; dagger; shortsword; throwing knives

**Specializations:** *shortsword* defense +1; *dagger* defense +1

| STR   | Damage Modifier     | Feat of Strength | Lift (lbs.)      | Carry (lbs.) | Drag (lbs.) |
|-------|---------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|-------------|
| 10.30 | None                | None             | 194              | 44           | 485         |
| INT   | Attack Modifier     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 10.90 | 0                   |                  |                  |              |             |
| WIS   | Initiative Modifier | Defense Modifier |                  |              |             |
| 18.12 | -1                  | +3               |                  |              |             |
| DEX   | Initiative Modifier | Attack Modifier  | Defense Modifier |              |             |
| 16.61 | -2                  | +3               | +4               |              |             |
| CON   |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 10.24 |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| LKS   |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 10.21 |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| CHA   |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 10.12 |                     |                  |                  |              |             |





## The Basic Mage

Any dolt can brandish a sword, or bring death and havoc upon entire crowds of people. But only one person can set that killing machine on fire with a mere gesture – the mage. In the **Advanced game**, the mage slowly ascends, eventually becoming a being of power under whose boot the very earth shakes. Here, the mage is still soft and only starting, although he can still certainly cause destruction.

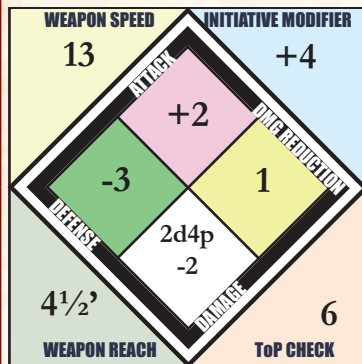
The human mage is poor in a fist fight but can take a punch or

two. His comrade **the elven mage**, on the other hand, has one distinct advantage: although a single physical blow would cause him to cave in like a wet cardboard box, he is a master of the bow.

One day – sometime far from now, hopefully long after you’ve rolled up your own mage using the **Advanced rules** – these acolytes of magic are going to hold a mastery of spells that would put most common folk in awe. For now, they are best equipped to hide behind the meat shield and hope that the line holds.

## The Human Mage

### Combat Profile for Staff



**Starting Honor:** 15

**Hit Point Roll:** d4+21

**Proficiencies:** Staff; dagger; magical transcription

**Specializations:** none

**Starting Spell Points:** 140

*"I don't understand why I'm always the center of attention! Don't you know that when all eyes are on me, it just makes me want to run away? Hey! Where the hell do you think you're going? You should be hanging on my every word!"*

**Starting Equipment:** Staff – Damage 2d4p; Speed 13; Size Large; Reach 4 1/2 feet; Type Crushing  
Dagger – Damage 2d4p; Speed 7; Size Small; Reach 1'; Type Piercing

Thick Robes – Damage Reduction 1; Defense Adjustment -1; Initiative Modifier 0; Speed Modifier 0; Type None  
Spell Book – (Apprentice) Repair; (Journeyman) Perimeter Alarm; (1st) Scorch

A journal filled with the names of the places you’ve been and run away from

**Talents:** *Less Sleep* – You are fully rested after only three hours of sleep and receive a +12 saving throw bonus against sleep spells. *Hiking/Road Marching* – You are used to walking – a lot. It's not that you're into taking long journeys. In truth,

you've just discovered that, more often than not, your welcome is quickly worn out wherever you

are. Thanks to your proficiency in hiking, you can cover 25 miles per day in open terrain, 15 miles per day in impeded terrain and 8 miles per day in restricted terrain. If you pull up gimpy, you can still move at hiking speeds, which makes you just a little harder for folks to catch up with you.

*Long Distance Running* – Life is hard for a young mage. Casting spells exhausts you. You can only summon the magical energies a few times a day – and it's all downhill from there after that. The good news for you is that you have perfected the art of running away. In open plains, you can cover 40 miles in a day. At the end of each day's run, pass a Con check and you can keep on runnin' the following day. Just don't fail your check by too much – a critical failure results in a pulled muscle, forcing you to rest 1d4p days before you can run again.

**Bonus Skills:** Language (Kalamaran) 82; Literacy (Kalamaran) 27 (or +10 to Literacy when taken in conjunction with any Skills Package); Arcane Lore 22

**Quirk:** *Selfish* – The fighter is jealous of you. The cleric hides his desire to be your closest friend behind a wall of stoicism. (Sure, he says he's praying to his god every morning but you know he's really trying to figure out how to get your attention!) Your followers (they call themselves "adventurers" and joke that you are merely a member, rather than a leader, those clowns!) win a battle and find some loot.

Of course you should get the shiny magical ring. As for that incredible sword ... well, don't they know that you'd get much more value from selling it and using the proceeds to buy some more scrolls? Idiots! In all cases, in all situations, it's all about you. Things happen for your benefit. You should get all the good loot. Everyone else is either just jealous or intensely attracted to you.

**Note:** At 1st level, all mages receive a +2 penalty to their Initiative Modifier.



| STR   | Damage Modifier     | Feat of Strength | Lift (lbs.)      | Carry (lbs.) | Drag (lbs.) |
|-------|---------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|-------------|
| 7.03  | -2                  | -5               | 149              | 36           | 373         |
| INT   | Attack Modifier     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 15.61 | +2                  |                  |                  |              |             |
| WIS   | Initiative Modifier | Defense Modifier |                  |              |             |
| 15.52 | 0                   | +2               |                  |              |             |
| DEX   | Initiative Modifier | Attack Modifier  | Defense Modifier |              |             |
| 10.11 | +2                  | 0                | 0                |              |             |
| CON   |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 11.01 |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| LKS   |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 13.15 |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| CHA   |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 15.12 |                     |                  |                  |              |             |



# The Elven Mage



*“Yellow’ cape. Purple’ robe. Garishly pink’ boots. These descriptors mean little to me, but they sound beautiful when said - and worn! - together!”*

**Starting Equipment:** *Staff* – Damage 2d4p; Speed 13; Size Large; Reach 4½ feet; Type Crushing  
*Short Bow (12 arrows)* – Damage 2d6p; Rate of Fire 12; Size Small; Range (See Ranged Combat); Type Piercing

*Thick Robes* – Damage Reduction 1; Defense Adjustment -1; Initiative Modifier 0; Speed Modifier 0; Type None

*Spell Book* – (Apprentice) Fire Finger; (Journeyman) Aura of Protection; (1st) Planar Servant

*Outrageously pink boots, blood red stockings, and a plaid kilt.* And before you even think to ask - no. Nobody will buy them from you.

**Talents:** *Diminish Spell Fatigue* – Casting spells is tiring work. Any time you channel the arcane, you feel like

you’ve been on a week-long bender. The good news is that you’re starting to get tolerant. *You can cast a spell and recover from Spell Fatigue one second sooner than normal.*

**Charm Resistant** – You’ve been there and seen it – so you know a thing or two about a charm spell. Consequently, *you have exceptional resistance to magical charms to the tune of a +12 bonus to saving throws.*

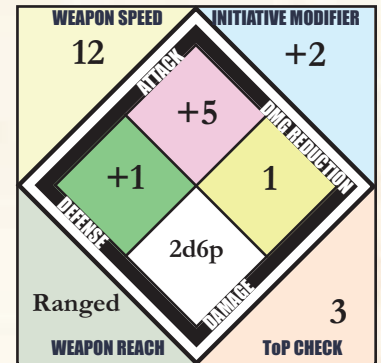
**Bonus skills:** Language (elven) 80; Literacy (elven) 34 (or +15 to literacy when taken in conjunction with any Skills Package); Arcane Lore 37; Listening 18 (or +7 to Listening when taken in conjunction with any Skills Package); Observation 16; (or +6 to Observation when taken in conjunction with any Skills Package); Sneaking 24

**Quirk:** *Colorblind* – Your comrades mock you because of how you dress. You’re not to blame – you can’t tell that your ridiculous purple tunic clashes with your outlandishly bright yellow trousers. Besides, your blood red boots and pretty pink stockings were the only ones available to you! There’s nothing you can do about it – *you have full grayscale vision and simply cannot distinguish between colors.*

**Other Bennies:** +2 defense; 1 better initiative die (i.e., when everybody else rolls a d12 for initiative, the elf rolls a d10)

**Note:** At 1st level, all mages receive a +2 penalty to their Initiative Modifier.

Combat Profile for Short Bow



**Starting Honor:** 17

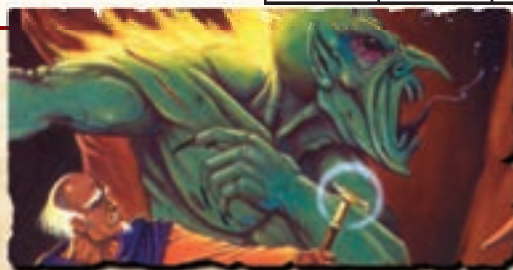
**Hit Point Roll:** d4+11

**Proficiencies:** Staff; dagger; magical transcription; shortbow

**Specializations:** none

**Starting Spell Points:** 140

| STR   | Damage Modifier     | Feat of Strength | Lift (lbs.)      | Carry (lbs.) | Drag (lbs.) |
|-------|---------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|-------------|
| 7.90  | -2                  | -4               | 157              | 38           | 393         |
| INT   | Attack Modifier     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 16.51 | +2                  |                  |                  |              |             |
| WIS   | Initiative Modifier | Defense Modifier |                  |              |             |
| 10.07 | +2                  | 0                |                  |              |             |
| DEX   | Initiative Modifier | Attack Modifier  | Defense Modifier |              |             |
| 17.22 | -2                  | +3               | +4               |              |             |
| CON   |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 6.32  |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| LKS   |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 14.20 |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| CHA   |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 16.18 |                     |                  |                  |              |             |





## The Basic Cleric

It's not easy to imagine an effective cleric. Go on – try it. Close your eyes and the first thing that comes to mind is the bumbling Friar Tuck; a chubby bald dimwit who provided comic relief between Robin Hood's awesome action scenes.

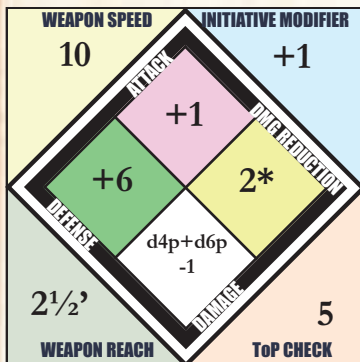
Maybe that's why nobody wants to play a cleric in fantasy RPGs, because they have a false assumption about a HackMaster player class that can be best described as a divine-icon toting badass. In the QSG, two cleric types are made available to the discerning player.

The first, a faithfully devout **Cleric of the Caregiver**, is a Healbot extraordinary. Her high wisdom, in tandem with her devout service toward HackMaster's own Wussgod affords her healing powers beyond those of most first level clerics.

Alternatively, **the Cleric of the True** is a walking, talking kicker of asses and taker of names (when he's not giving blessings and healing the wounded, that is.) He's not quite as effective as a fighter, but he is not to be taken lightly, either.

## The Cleric of the Caregiver

### Combat Profile for Staff



\*DMG Reduction is 6 if your S shield takes the hit

**Starting Honor:** 15

**Hit Point Roll:** d8+20

**Proficiencies:** Armor (light); shield; staff; club; sling

**Specializations:** none

*"Oh goodness, you seem terribly hurt, you Koraki scumbag! Hold still while I heal you. Is that better, you traitorous lapdog? Oh, don't thank me - thank Emperor Kabori for not laying waste to your pathetic self!"*

**Starting Equipment:** *Club* – Damage d4p+d6p; Speed 10; Size Medium; Reach 2½ feet; Type Crushing  
*Sling (12 stones)* – Damage d4p+d6p; Rate of Fire 10; Size Small; Range (See Ranged Combat); Type Piercing  
*Leather Armor* – Damage Reduction 2; Defense Adjustment -2; Initiative Modifier 0; Speed Modifier 0; Type Light  
*Small Shield* – Defense Bonus +4; Damage Reduction 4; Cover Value 19

*The Holy Book of the Caregiver*

*A Kalamaran flag, sewn onto your travel sack*

**Talents:** *Parry Bonus* – So you aren't a fighter. You can't even get involved in combat until things have gotten really dire, since half the time you'll even feel obligated to heal the idiots who were trying to kill you. Good news is, if some idiot comes charging into kill you, you're pretty good at defending yourself – you receive a +1

bonus defense when using your staff.

**Laborer** – The Caregiver works in mysterious ways. One thing you know for sure about him – he wants you to build stuff. Not design, but build. *You can build houses, fences, walls, moats, you name it. As long as somebody is there to show you what to do, you can do it.*

**Bonus Skills:** Language (Kalamaran) 62; Literacy (Kalamaran) 27 (or +10 to Literacy when taken in conjunction with any Skills Package); Cooking/Baking 20 (or +10 to Cooking/Baking when taken in conjunction with any Skills Package); First Aid 26 (or +5 to First Aid when taken in conjunction with any Skills Package); Religion (the Caregiver) 30; Divine Lore 28

**Quirk:** *Loyalist (Kalamar)* – So you're a cleric of the Caregiver and you'll heal any mope with a wound. Big deal – if he's not Kalamaran, that doesn't mean you have to like it. After all, you know that your country is better than all the others out there. Be sure to let that idiot know that his leaders are traitors, his comrades are cowards and he should personally be kissing Emperor Kabori's shiny gold-plated ass for crushing all the evil empires that have made the mistake of crossing Kalamar's path.

**Other Bennies:** Immunity to fear; provides +1 bonus against fear effects to allies within a 10 foot radius; may cast healing spells as if one level higher. (Note that in the **Advanced Game**, clerics also have the power to Turn or Command Undead)

**Known Clerical Spells:** (Note that you can pray for any spell in the book, but these are suggestions for QuickStart play, and consult the clerical spells section starting on page 14 for details)

*Alleviate Trauma, Bless and Cure Minor Wound*

**Note:** At 1st level, all clerics receive +1 penalty to their Initiative Modifier.



| STR   | Damage Modifier     | Feat of Strength | Lift (lbs.)      | Carry (lbs.) | Drag (lbs.) |
|-------|---------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|-------------|
| 9.11  | -1                  | -2               | 187              | 43           | 468         |
| INT   | Attack Modifier     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 10.52 | 0                   |                  |                  |              |             |
| WIS   | Initiative Modifier | Defense Modifier |                  |              |             |
| 18.58 | -1                  | +3               |                  |              |             |
| DEX   | Initiative Modifier | Attack Modifier  | Defense Modifier |              |             |
| 12.36 | +1                  | +1               | +1               |              |             |
| CON   |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 10.29 |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| LKS   |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 13.05 |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| CHA   |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 13.40 |                     |                  |                  |              |             |



# The Cleric of the True



*"I am sorry, my old friend. Your wounds are too great for even I to heal. But I shall not allow our comrades to loot your remains. I promise to return your cooking pot to your son!"*

**Starting Equipment:** *Longsword* – Damage 2d8p; Speed 10; Size Medium; Reach 3½'; Type Hacking  
*Leather armor* – Damage Reduction 2; Defense Adjustment -2; Initiative Modifier 0; Speed Modifier 0; Type Light

*Medium Shield* – Defense Bonus +6; Damage Reduction 6; Cover Value 16 (11 if actively crouching)

*The Holy Book of the True*

*A beaten up, slightly-rusted cooking pot which he must deliver to the son of a fallen torchbearer*

**Talents:** *Local History* (Village of \_\_\_\_\_) – You know pretty much all there is to know about your hometown. You can regale folks with your knowledge of droughts, famines, floods, marriages, divorces, you name it.

**Bonus Skills:** Language (Kalamaran) 84; History (Ancient) 26; Literacy (Kalamaran) 28 (or +8

to Literacy when taken in conjunction with conjunction with any Skills Package); Tracking 17 (or +4 to Tracking when taken in conjunction with any Skills Package); First Aid 15 (or +2 to First Aid when taken in conjunction with any Skills Package); Religion (the True) 18; Divine Lore 20

**Quirk:** *Nagging Conscience* – It's hard business being a cleric of the True. Everything you do has to shine a little bit. You can't drink at the tavern with your friends and bail on your tab without feeling like a jerk. And don't even think about looting the corpse of your torchbearer – you know he had a family and they deserve that money. *Any time you make an unlawful act or lose honor you must pass a Wisdom check or suffer a -1 to all die rolls (attack, defense, etc.) and a -5% on all percentage rolls (skills, opposed skills) until you remedy the situation. This is cumulative so long as you continue to act in an unlawful manner and fail Wisdom checks.*

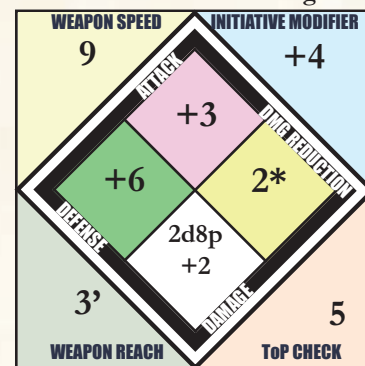
**Other Bennies:** 5% chance per level to detect lies (up to a maximum of 90%); +4 bonus to saves against spells that fool, mislead, or have other deceptive (Note that in the **Advanced Game**, clerics also have the power to Turn or Command Undead)

**Known Clerical Spells:** (Note that you can pray for any spell in the book, but these are suggestions for QuickStart play, and consult the clerical spells section on page 14 for details)

*Cure Trifling Injury*

**Note:** At 1st level, all clerics receive +1 penalty to their Initiative Modifier.

Combat Profile for Longsword



\*DMG Reduction is 8 if your M shield takes the hit

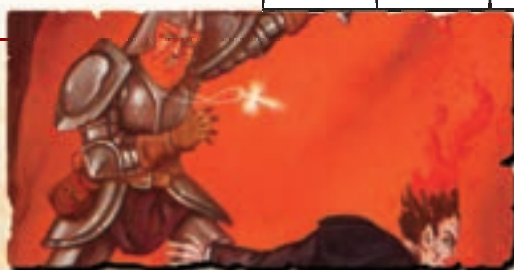
**Starting Honor:** 14

**Hit Point Roll:** d8+21

**Proficiencies:** Armor (light, medium); shield; longsword

**Specializations:** *Longsword* attack +1, damage +1, defense +1, speed -1

| STR   | Damage Modifier     | Feat of Strength | Lift (lbs.)      | Carry (lbs.) | Drag (lbs.) |
|-------|---------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|-------------|
| 12.80 | +1                  | +2               | 220              | 61           | 550         |
| INT   | Attack Modifier     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 17.32 | +2                  |                  |                  |              |             |
| WIS   | Initiative Modifier | Defense Modifier |                  |              |             |
| 12.18 | +1                  | +1               |                  |              |             |
| DEX   | Initiative Modifier | Attack Modifier  | Defense Modifier |              |             |
| 10.20 | +2                  | 0                | 0                |              |             |
| CON   |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 11.20 |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| LKS   |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 10.53 |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| CHA   |                     |                  |                  |              |             |
| 15.27 |                     |                  |                  |              |             |







### 1.3 QuickStart magical spells

Listed in this section are the spells available to QuickStart mages. There are literally hundreds of more spells in the **HackMaster Player's Handbook**, but these should be enough to get you started.

*Mage spells are cast through the expenditure of **Spell Points**. Spell Points increase with level, allowing a mage to summon the magical energies several times in a day.*

*Your mage begins the game with 140 Spell Points at Level 1 - listed below are the details of the spells that are available in the **QuickStart Guide**.*

*These Spell Points are regenerated every 24 hours after a full night's rest. If your mage doesn't sleep, then he doesn't regenerate Spell Points. If your mage runs out of spell points, he better be able to fight or run. In other words - **use them wisely**.*

*To cast a spell in combat, you must roll a d4 to determine the number of seconds it takes on top of the casting time to prepare your components.*

#### *Additional Spell Point Schedule:*

*Maximum amount of SPs that can be spent: 90 (30 base cost +60 for bonuses)*

*Increase Volume of Effect: 15 SP/additional cubic foot, max effect 4 cubic feet (60 SPs)*

This spell mends fractures in a metal object or rips and tears in woven cloth, leather or similar items. Shattered pottery or glass vessels can be entirely repaired, provided there are no pieces missing. This spell can also stitch together two similar objects, such as two pieces of rope. In all cases, the amount of material to be mended or joined must be less than one cubic foot. Magical items cannot be repaired with this spell.

#### **Fire Finger** Base SP Cost 30

*Components:* Verbal, Somatic (you must say the words and make the gestures)

*Casting time:* 1 second (Spell Fatigue: 5 seconds)

*Range:* 5 feet

*Area of Effect:* Personal

*Duration:* Instantaneous

*Saving Throw:* Half damage

*Additional Spell Point Schedule:*

*Maximum amount of SPs that can be spent: 90 (30 base cost +60 for bonuses)*

*Increase Damage:* 10 SP/HP, max damage bonus +6 (60 SPs)

*Increase Range:* 5 SP/foot, maximum of +12 feet (60 SPs)

This spell is just like it sounds – your finger conjures forth a 5-foot rod of flame that may be directed at any one target. They can't duck – you cast it, they get hit and burn. (Nasty bit of work, that.) Your target suffers a base damage of 1d3p+2. But here's the mean bit – everything they have also gets set on fire. The character, the bag full of his food, his coin purse, his bundle of magical scrolls, everything. The target has to make a choice – spend 1d6p seconds patting himself out (or suffer 1d3p points of damage every 10 seconds) or spend 1d6p seconds patting out everything else he's carrying, *1 item at a time*.)

### Apprentice Level Spells

#### **Repair** Base SP Cost 30

*Components:* Verbal, Somatic, Material (you gotta say the words and make the gestures, while holding a needle with its tip covered in dried glue)

*Casting time:* 1 second (Spell Fatigue: 6 seconds)

*Range:* Touch

*Volume of Effect:* 1 cubic foot

*Duration:* Permanent

*Saving Throw:* None



## Journeyman Level Spells

### Aura of Protection Base SP Cost 40

*Components:* Verbal, Somatic, Material (you must say the words and make the gestures while holding a pure white shawl)

*Casting time:* 1 second (Spell Fatigue: 5 seconds)

*Range:* Touch (you basically need to run up and slap the guy)

*Volume of Effect:* One Individual

*Duration:* 2 minutes

*Saving Throw:* None

*Additional Spell Point Schedule:*

*Maximum amount of SPs that can be spent:* 115 (40 base cost +75 for bonuses)

*Increase Duration:* 15 SP/minute, max duration 7 minutes (75 SPs)

This spell allows you to envelop yourself – or somebody else – with an invisible barrier through which supernatural evil creatures cannot physically pass. They can still try to take you out from a distance (at the cost of a -2 attack penalty) or spells (against which you get a +2 saving throw bonus). Ordinary evil creatures may still physically attack the recipient of this spell, but are subject to the -2 attack penalty.

### Perimeter Alarm Base SP Cost 40

*Components:* Verbal, Somatic, Material (you gotta say the words and make the gestures while holding a small bell)

*Casting time:* 1 second (Spell Fatigue: 6 seconds)

*Range:* 30 feet

*Volume of Effect:* Hemisphere with 10 foot radius

*Duration:* 4hours

*Saving Throw:* None

*Additional Spell Point Schedule:*

*Maximum amount of SPs that can be spent:* 140 (40 base cost +100 for bonuses)

*Increase Volume of effect:* 5 SP/1 ft radius, max 30 foot radius (100 SPs)

*Increase Duration:* 1SP/10 minutes, max duration 800 minutes (80 SPs)

Casting this spell creates an invisible, intangible hemisphere whose outer perimeter is sensitized to contact. Should any creature contact this protective shell, a loud warbling sound pierces the air. The blare is loud enough to wake all but the soundest sleepers within the security perimeter (and incidentally audible to everyone within a 300 foot radius, though some stone walls and intervening doors will serve to dampen the effective radius). This alarm lasts for as long as someone is in contact with the shell and for one minute afterwards.

Creatures less than three inches in height or length or weighing less than one pound will not trip this alarm. To avoid the signal sounding every time a friendly character enters the boundary, the caster must choose a password that must be spoken aloud before entering the area. Of course, these can be overheard and subsequently used by the eavesdropper...

## 1st Level Spells

### Planar Servant Base SP Cost 50

*Components:* Verbal, Somatic, Material (you must say the words and make the gestures while holding a single copper piece)

*Casting time:* 5 minutes (Spell Fatigue: 5 minutes, 4 seconds)

*Range:* 30 feet

*Volume of Effect:* 30 foot radius

*Duration:* 6 hours

*Saving Throw:* None

*Additional Spell Point Schedule:*

*Maximum amount of SPs that can be spent:* 150 (50 base cost +100 for bonuses)

*Increase Duration:* 1 SP/5 minutes, max duration 500 minutes (100 SPs)

*Increase HP Capacity:* 12 SP/HP, max capacity 8 HPs (96 SPs)

Casting this spell conjures a ghostly creature from another plane. The link established by the spell forces the creature to follow the caster's direction just like a normal, obedient servant would. This planar servant may not speak, but it may try to communicate through non-verbal methods. Further, it can only perform minor tasks, such as opening doors, fetching, carrying, holding or cleaning. It cannot lift or carry items weighing more than 20 pounds and cannot move over 40 pounds even by pushing or pulling. This servant disappears when the spell duration ends, if the spell caster prematurely ends the spell or if the servant suffers more than 6 points of damage.

### Scorch Base SP Cost 50

*Components:* Verbal, Somatic (you gotta say the words and make the gestures)

*Casting time:* 1second (Spell Fatigue: 6 seconds)

*Range:* Personal

*Area of Effect:* 10 feet

*Duration:* Instantaneous

*Saving Throw:* Half Damage

*Additional Spell Point Schedule:*

*Maximum amount of SPs that can be spent:* 150 (50 base cost +100 for bonuses)

*Increase Damage:* 10 SP/point of damage, max damage+10 (100 SPs)

This spell allows you to direct a 10-foot-long arc of fire from your palm that engulfs all creatures within an adjacent 10x10 area. Anyone struck by the fire (automatic, no attack roll needed) suffers 1d3p+6 points of damage. Flammable items (such as a parchment, cloth or wood) catch fire as well, but a creature may spend a few seconds (1d6p second delay) to extinguish the flames of a single item. Note this last line – it's important. *They get to put out a single item!!* As in, other items are still burning! Including themselves!

If someone is dumb enough to not spend d6p seconds patting out their burning clothes, they suffer 1d3p points of damage every 10 seconds they remain on fire. The somatic gesture for this spell is the caster's hand thrust forward, with fingers spread.

## 1.4 QuickStart clerical spells

Listed in this section are the spells available to QuickStart clerics. As with the mages in 1.3, there are literally hundreds of more spells in the **HackMaster Player's Handbook**, but these should be enough to get you started.

*Clerical spells are granted through the power of prayer. If you want your cleric to learn a new spell, he only needs to be the appropriate level. Let your GM know which spells you are praying for and those are the ones which you are permitted to use on that day of adventure.*



## 1st Level Spells

### Alleviate Trauma

*Components:* Verbal, Somatic

*Casting Time:* 3 seconds

*Range:* Touch

*Area of Effect:* Creature touched

*Duration:* See text

*Saving Throw:* None

There's nothing scarier than being in a battle and watching your fighter take one to the face and fall over moaning in pain. Luckily, your god gave you a spell for just the occasion – Alleviate Trauma allows you to relieve the incapacitated character. The recipient of this spell immediately recovers from his debilitating condition and may take any action he desires (after taking a second to get on his feet). This spell does not restore any lost Hit Points nor does it provide protection against subsequent traumatic injuries.

### Cure Trifling Injury

*Components:* Verbal, Somatic

*Casting Time:* 3 seconds

*Range:* Touch

*Area of Effect:* Creature touched

*Duration:* Instantaneous

*Saving Throw:* None

Casting **Cure Trifling Injury** enables a priest to fully or partially heal a damaged individual's wound by restoring 1d3p Hit Points. Anointed followers (see the **Player's Handbook** for information on being Anointed) of the cleric's deity receive more potent healing (1d4p). This spell does not function on nonliving creatures or non-corporeal creatures and actually harms undead if cast upon them.

## 2nd Level Spells

### Bless

*Components:* Verbal, Somatic

*Casting Time:* 5 seconds

*Range:* Touch

*Area of Effect:* One living creature

*Duration:* 5 minutes

*Saving Throw:* None

This spell imparts a small measure of divine favor upon the recipient. If engaged in combat, he may add +1 to all attack and defense rolls while blessed. He may also add +1 to saving throws and improves his chance of succeeding at a skill check by +5. Anointed followers of the priest's deity receive a blessing of twice normal duration.

### Cure Minor Wound

*Components:* Verbal, Somatic

*Casting Time:* 4 seconds

*Range:* Touch

*Area of Effect:* Creature touched

*Duration:* See text

*Saving Throw:* None

Casting **Cure Minor Wound** enables a priest to heal a damaged individual restoring 1d4p Hit Points in so doing. Anointed followers of the priest's deity receive more potent healing (1d6p Hit Points). This spell does not function on nonliving creatures or non-corporeal creatures and actually harms undead if cast upon them.

## 1.5 QuickStart Skills

Listed in this section are eight options for starting skills. Look them over closely – maybe some make more sense for your character concept, and maybe others contradict what you have in mind. The choice is yours, and you only have yourself to blame when you're playing the racist dwarven fighter who apparently relies on tact and diplomacy when dealing with those bastard humans what stole his crown.

To see how skills work, consult the **QuickStart Rules** section.

### Skills Package 1 – The Negotiator

Sometimes the only good solution is a peaceful one. While he still has a lot to learn, your PC is the sort who desires to find non-violent solutions as often as possible. But don't be confused – your PC is not an idiot. He's not going to try to bargain with orcs, unless the terms of negotiations are "you'll stop attacking people and I'll make your death a quick one." But whenever a chance to negotiate springs up, a character with this Skills Package has the right stuff to find a peaceful resolution – or at least, he'll buy time for the rest of the party to spring some kind of insane sneak attack.

*Current Affairs* 23; *Diplomacy* 35; *Glean Information* 27; *Listening* 26; *Observation* 28; *Recruiting* 22; *Resist Persuasion* 25



### Skills Package 2 – The Intimidator

A PC with this skills package is pretty much at the polar opposite of The Negotiator. These skills are very useful for a character who wants to bring hurt and pain to the world. Maybe he's the guy you want standing behind the Negotiator. Or maybe he's doing the real work while the Negotiator is off in some other room trying to strike a peace accord with a hapless lackey. In either case, if your PC doesn't start out with a set of pliers and "exceptionally sharp and dangerous cheese knives" (at least, that's what he describes them as when in polite company ...), then it'll be an early objective to find some.

*Glean Information* 21; *Interrogation* 28; *Intimidation* 29; *Listening* 25; *Observation* 33; *Resist Persuasion* 24; *Torture* 29

### Skills Package 3 – The Survivalist

These skills are the first step your PC will ever take toward becoming a true bad ass. After all, anybody can survive a bar fight in a dangerous city (just hide under the table, try not to spill your ale and make up elaborate stories later on about how you punched out some Conan wannabe). The real trick is getting dumped in the wilderness with nothing but your weapons and your wits, with thousands of miles – and millions of monsters – between you and civilization. A survivalist craves that kind of action.



These skills ensure that he's got a fighting chance of actually making it back.

*Climbing/Rappelling 23; Cooking/Baking 27; Direction Sense 22; Fire Building 23; Listening 26; Observation 24; Rope Use 21, Survival 32, Swimming 23; Tracking 22; Weather Sense 26*

#### Skills Package 4 – The Observer

Okay, okay, so your eyes have already glazed over before you've even begun to read about the "most boring Skills Package ever." Look at it another way – that guy over there behind the GM's screen has a plan. Maybe he wants you to go talk to the Magistrate whose name he mentioned once, 5 minutes into the session while you were half ignoring him to finish your character sheet. Or perhaps he's expecting you to do something totally ridiculous, like figure out that you need to strike the village water fountain with your hammer at midnight. The point is, there's a pretty good chance that his connection with reality is tenuous at best and having a character whose skills package aids you in figuring out whatever crazy thing it is that the GM is hoping you'll do... well, that's priceless.

*Current Affairs 22; Glean Information 22; Listening 25; Literacy (core language) 28; Observation 34, Monster Lore 26; Reading Lips 24; Scrutiny 26*

#### Skills Package 5 – The Escapist

This package goes hand-in-hand with thief types, but isn't exclusive to them. If you enjoy mixing it up with NPCs, putting yourself in outrageous situations with nary an escape path in sight, then this Skills Package is right up your alley. You can use these skills to scale a wall, to untie those wicked knots that are binding your wrists, to talk your way out of a room filled with angry dudes brandishing deadly weapons, you name it.

*Climbing/Rappelling 25; Distraction 21; Escape Artist 37; Fast Talking 26; Lock Picking 20; Rope Use 21; Scrutiny 27; Seduction, Art of 26*

#### Skills Package 6 – The Criminal

Nobody starts out running their own criminal empire. Your PC is just another hopeful thug with big dreams and an even more extraordinary appetite for wealth and murder. Or maybe you just want to get on the "wrong side of the law" for a while to help bring down some greater force of evil. In any case, this Skills Package is an ideal starting point ... even if the finish line is somewhere behind a stockade, where a brute with a lash is waiting expectantly. One helpful note – if you're playing the Cleric of the True (y'know, the one who's Lawful Good and has a guilty conscience) then taking this Skill Set is basically inviting your GM to make your life unbearable and your career as an adventurer very short.

*Appraisal (gems) 25; Forgery 26; Gambling 23; Intimidation 24; Literacy (native language) 35; Listening 25; Observation 28; Reading Lips 21; Torture 20*



#### Skills Package 7 – The Handyman

There's something endearing about being Cliff Claven. You're the guy with all the remedial knowledge. So the wagon wheel is broken – no biggie, just apply a mallet at a good 45 degree angle with enough stopping force to drop an ox and bingo, she'll be as good as new. If your party needs to fortify a room from brain-eating zombies, they need look no further than you. You can drop a tree on an Owlbeast from 40 paces, cook up the monster's meat in a delicious stew, tan its hide into an incredible leather cloak and, hell, while you're at it you can turn its skull into an ashtray. Who wouldn't want these skills?

*Blacksmith/Metalworking 38; Carpentry/Woodworking 25; Cooking/Baking 34; First Aid 37; Forestry 31; Leatherworking 33; Mining 29; Pottery 30*

#### Skills Package 8 – The Monster Hunter

Like Steve Irwin on steroids, you make a living by dashing off into the wilds, having near encounters with really scary monsters and coming back to tell the tale. But it's not easy. Comparatively, this Skills Package is the worst – you only get four skills and, frankly, your Observation is about as good as that of a distracted child. But monster lore is the player's true advantage – if you use this skill correctly your chances of survival increase drastically.

*Cooking/Baking 29; Listening 31; Observation 22; Monster Lore 44*

#### A Note on Universal Skills

If you look closely at your character sheet, you may identify a number of skills that are not available in your QSG Player Class nor your Skills Packages. These are called "Universal Skills," as it is assumed that everybody has picked up a rudimentary knowledge of how to do these things without training or instruction.

For the purposes of limiting the size of this QSG, some of these skills simply did not make the cut. Don't let that deter you from using them - ask your GM to pick up a copy of the *HackMaster Basic* for additional details on how these skills work, or simply rely on the GM's judgement call based on a common sense understanding of what these skills entail.

#### Finalize Your Character Sheet

Once you've chosen your skills package, you should be ready to Hack! It's really that easy. Double check that everything is filled in, then give your GM an expectant look as if he should be ready to do his worst right now. Oh – and you might want to look over the rules.



## QuickStart skills descriptions

### Basic definitions and how the GM should use them

Listed in the player classes and the skills packages sections are a number of skills that help make HackMaster more than just the most intricate wargame ever. These skills may be used for Roleplay scenarios, combat precursors and more. Listed in this section are each of those skills and a brief descriptor about what they should be used for. However, take note – in the Advanced game, there are many other skills that are available for you. We only mention this fact to serve as a reminder that you are looking at only the tip of a massive iceberg of RPG excellence.

### APPRAISAL

You can estimate the value of certain items, but cannot identify if an item is magical, nor can you identify how much an item may aid its user in combat (i.e., its “+” to attack or defense)

| Mastery Level | You can estimate worth within... |
|---------------|----------------------------------|
| Novice        | d20+30% of its true value        |
| Average       | d20+20% of its true value        |

### ARCANE LORE

You know a small amount of magical theory, but have enough practical experience to deal with the basic challenges of low level spells. You can Identify Spell Components (Easy Check), Identify Spells through viewing the physical manifestation of them (Trivial Check), Identify Magic Items (Difficult Check, or Very Difficult if you have taken precautions to avoid exposure to a cursed item, and this takes a full day to do no matter what) or Decipher Magic Scrolls (this takes 1 day if you have passed an Average Check).

### BLACKSMITH/METALWORKING

You can craft simple tools and other items from bronze or iron.

| Mastery Level | You know how to...  |
|---------------|---|
| Novice        | operate blacksmithing tools and equipment; craft simple round or rectangular objects (balls, wedge, piton, chisel, nails, etc.) |
| Average       | craft simple tools and horseshoes; supervise assistants   |

### CARPENTRY/WOODWORKING

You are familiar with many aspects of woodworking. You require 4+1d4 hours to create Easy items, 8+2d4 hours for Average items, 4+1d4 days for Difficult items and at least 2+1d4 weeks for a Very Difficult item.

| Mastery Level | You can...  |
|---------------|---|
| Novice        | craft a broom or basket, build simple furniture                                 |
| Average       | build a simple structure (cabin); construct doors; supervise unskilled laborers |

### CLIMBING/RAPPELLING

You use this skill to climb or descend trees, buildings and fence, as well as rock walls. If an object changes significantly (i.e., a cliff face changes from sturdy rock to loose shale), or if you change direction, you must make another skill check. One failed check means you cannot progress any further. Two failed checks means you fall.

| Mastery Level | You can...  |
|---------------|---|
| Unskilled     | climb ladder, climb trees with many branches                    |
| Novice        | climb the side of a standard building that has many protrusions |
| Average       | climb a masonry wall  |

| Difficulty     | Examples  |
|----------------|---|
| Trivial        | using a ladder  |
| Easy           | using a knotted rope  |
| Average        | using an unknotted rope, using pitons                       |
| Difficult      | climbing without aid of rope or tools                       |
| Very Difficult | climbing without aid of rope or tools on a slippery surface |

### COOKING/BAKING

You can make a nutritious meal out of just about any edible substance and can produce hot meals even out of the wilderness. A failed check means your food is inedible.

| Mastery Level | You can...  |
|---------------|---|
| Novice        | perform basic frying, roasting and cooking  |
| Average       | make cakes or pies; bake bread; properly preserve meats and fishes; supervise unskilled helpers |

| Difficulty     | Examples  |
|----------------|---|
| Trivial        | preparing a meal in a proper kitchen with a well-stocked pantry   |
| Easy           | preparing a meal on the trail with adequate food stores           |
| Average        | preparing a meal from game and locally gathered roots or berries  |
| Difficult      | preparing nutritious and tasty meals from unfamiliar wild sources |
| Very Difficult | preparing nutritious and tasty meals from vermin (rats, insects)  |

### CURRENT AFFAIRS

This helps you know the goings-on in the world around you. You are informed on many of the latest developments in your region (this is all public information; not secret or classified)

| Mastery Level | You are aware of...   |
|---------------|---|
| Unskilled     | major developments (wars, well-publicized events) occurring in your local area, local rumors                                    |
| Novice        | names and faces of prominent local citizens, major local developments (i.e., in a 10 mile radius)                               |
| Average       | with whom local citizens associate with and how frequently; major developments over a large area (i.e., about a 50 mile radius) |



## DIPLOMACY

You can use this skill to attempt negotiations, be it with a small band of humanoids or a secret treaty between rival cultures.

| Difficulty     | Examples                                      |
|----------------|---|
| Trivial        | negotiate for a very likely result            |
| Easy           | negotiate for a plausible result              |
| Average        | negotiate for a possible, if unlikely, result |
| Difficult      | negotiate for a very unlikely result          |
| Very Difficult | negotiate for a ludicrous/outlandish result   |

## DIRECTION SENSE

Thanks to an understanding of topography, folk wisdom, terrain association and the discipline to maintain an accurate pace count, you are far less likely to become inexorably lost in the wilderness. This skill only works when you are outdoors.

| Mastery Level | You can...   |
|---------------|--|
| Novice        | determine which direction is North; reduce chance of becoming lost |
| Average       | accurately gauge distance traveled; reduce chance of becoming lost |

| Difficulty     | Examples                             |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| Easy           | possess an accurate map              |
| Average        | possess a crude or semi-accurate map |
| Difficult      | heavy rain, snowpack                 |
| Very Difficult | night                                |

## DISARM TRAP

This skill is highly dependent on the character's knowledge and exposure to mechanical traps. Successfully identifying the trap is key to disarmament.

| Skill Check          | Result  |
|----------------------|---|
| Pass                 | trap disarmed   |
| Fail by less than 20 | you falsely believe the trap is disarmed  |
| Fail by more than 20 | you screwed it up so badly that you are aware that you've not disarmed the trap (point of fact – at your GM's discretion, you set it off) |

## DISTRACTION

You can force everybody within 40 feet to look at you and suffer a delay to their next action. If a character knows about your action in advance, he may ignore you with a successful Opposed Resist Persuasion check (with a +20 bonus to the roll).

| Mastery Level | You can...  |
|---------------|---|
| Unskilled     | make others glance at you (suffer a 1 second penalty)                   |
| Novice        | make others look at you briefly (suffer a 1d2 second penalty)           |
| Average       | make others look at you for a few moments (suffer a 1d4 second penalty) |

## DIVINE LORE

You have received rudimentary training in faith-based magic. As such, you are capable of perusing clerical writings, scrolls and other religious items. You are capable of Identifying Religious Icons (Easy skill check), Identifying Clerical Spells (Trivial skill check), Identifying Magic Items (Difficult skill check, or Very Difficult if you are taking precautions to avoid being exposed to a cursed item) and Deciphering Clerical Scrolls. The skill check for deciphering varies...

| Difficulty     | Time needed to spend deciphering |
|----------------|----------------------------------|
| Very Difficult | 10 Minutes                       |
| Difficult      | 2 hours                          |
| Average        | 1 day                            |
| Easy           | Fortnight                        |
| Trivial        | 3 months                         |

Even if you fail, you may try again at a -15% penalty to your check.

## ESCAPE ARTIST

You are able to escape from shackles, ropes, nasty tentacles, man-catchers, constrictor snakes or other immobilizing confinement. On a successful skill check you escape your bonds. On a failure, you remain trapped and may not attempt another escape.

## FAST TALKING

This skill permits you to initiate or respond to inquiries with a confident, rapid-fire flurry of seemingly valid jargon and B.S. meant to confuse your target, giving you a bit of time to take an action such as slip past a checkpoint or run away from an encounter.

| Mastery Level | With your quick lips, you can...  |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| Novice        | gain 1d4p seconds in which to act |
| Average       | gain 2d4p seconds in which to act |

## FIRE BUILDING

You know how to start a fire. (Thus making you the defacto MVP of your party – try delving into a dungeon with a bunch of idiots who don't know how to strike flint with steel and let me know how far ya get!) With the proper materials plus a successful skill check, you can start a fire in 2d12 minutes (3d12 minutes for a Difficult or higher check).

| Mastery Level | You can...  |
|---------------|---|
| Unskilled     | Ignite a very flammable object (i.e. a torch, lamp wick or that obnoxious dwarf's greasy beard) with the use of flint and steel (when there is no wind) |
| Novice        | Start a small fire with dry tinder using flint and steel, or above in windy conditions  |
| Average       | Start a small fire with dry tinder and dry sticks to rub together   |
| Master        | Ignite an object with your eyes*  |

(\*wild claim *may* be untrue - please consult the Players' Handbook to be safe)

## FIRST AID

This skill allows you to properly tend to the sick and injured. This is predominantly done as you'd expect, providing care via keeping the patient hydrated while tending to his wounds (such as through



applying the patient's bandages, and watching for infections and excessive bleeding).

First Aid providers can also perform critical care (a.k.a. battlefield medicine). If they can tend to a wound within an hour of it being inflicted (and make a successful Average difficulty skill check), their palliation restores 1 hp of damage from that wound. Note that each individual wound may only be treated once - if the remedy is botched no subsequent aid is possible. Injured characters under the care of a First Aid provider (of at least Novice mastery) heal their wounds significantly faster, reducing the number of rest days required by 1 from the longest heal period (a full day cannot be reduced below 1).

For example, a 4 Hit Point wound ordinarily takes 10 days ( $4+3+2+1 = 10$ , with 4 being the "longest heal period") to heal. A First Aid provider can reduce this to 7 days by making the longest heal period 3 days instead of 4 ( $3+2+1+1 = 7$ ). As a character with First Aid goes up in mastery, then his ability to reduce recovery time increases as well. This information is available in the **Advanced Game**.

## FORESTRY

This skill encompasses a knowledge base specific to the active management of woodlands as a sustainable economic resource. You can capably – and responsibly – use forests as an invaluable source of building materials, heating fuel, use in metalworking trades and habitat for game and important plant species.

| Mastery Level | You can...   |
|---------------|--|
| Novice        | safely fell trees, rate quality of timber and appropriate usage (cutting timber into beams or planks requires the carpentry skill) |
| Average       | identify a variety of tree species (including nature and quality), may create localized fire breaks.                               |

## FORGERY

This skill enables you to detect forgeries and to duplicate duplicate documents/handwriting. On a successful check, a forgery passes as genuine except by other characters who are intimately familiar with the genuine article or by other persons with the Forgery skill. Forging a signature takes 1d4 hours of practice, while forging a long document takes 4+4d6 hours.

| Item is a...     | Discovered by a...                      |
|------------------|---|
| Novice forgery   | trivial check (+90 to your roll)        |
| Average forgery  | easy check (+80 to your roll)           |
| Advanced forgery | average check (+40 to your roll)        |
| Expert forgery   | difficult check (+0 to your roll)       |
| Master forgery   | very difficult check (-10 to your roll) |

An individual with the forgery skill may also detect a forgery.

| Mastery Level | You can...   |
|---------------|--|
| Novice        | Ascertain the authenticity of any document; forge a signature                              |
| Average       | Forge a short document (e.g., military orders) with handwriting not specific to one person |

## GAMBLING

This skill allows you to win games of chance far more often than the odds should allow. When engaged in a game of chance – i.e., craps or poker – each participant should roll a d% and add his Gambling skill mastery to the tally. The highest number is the winner.

## GLEAN INFORMATION

This skill helps you eavesdrop on others and home in on secretive information. More directly, you can accomplish this by talking directly to the person you'd like to get your information from. Further, you must make a small investment of money when seeking to glean information or suffer a +15 penalty to your check.

A typical effort lasts d4 hours and costs d10 silver pieces; this money is spent whether or not the desired information is obtained.

| Mastery Level | You can glean...                |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| Unskilled     | facts well-known to most locals |
| Novice        | vague rumors                    |
| Average       | general rumors                  |

| Difficulty     | Examples  |
|----------------|---|
| Trivial        | gleaning information from a family member   |
| Easy           | gleaning information from a friend or ally  |
| Average        | gleaning information from a stranger/guard  |
| Difficult      | gleaning information from a member of a hostile race, tribe or kingdom  |
| Very Difficult | gleaning information from a sworn personal enemy; gleaning information from someone who speaks an unintelligible foreign language |

## HIDING

You use this skill to hide from a casual observer using available concealment and/or cover. In essence, you remain motionless and crouched down or prone so as not to draw attention.

| Difficulty     | Examples                                |
|----------------|---|
| Trivial        | hiding in complete darkness; 100% cover |
| Easy           | 90% cover; poor lighting and some cover |
| Average        | very poor lighting and no cover         |
| Difficult      | torchlight and some cover               |
| Very Difficult | torchlight and some shadows             |

## HISTORY (ANCIENT)

You know specific legends, lore and history of a time and place. This skill allows you to recognize things you encounter from your era of expertise with a successful skill check.

## IDENTIFY TRAP

You are able to identify the nuances of a device or object in order to determine if it's trapped. Identifying traps is never a sure thing. Instead of a simple yes/no skill check, there are three potential outcomes upon making a Skill Check: 1) successfully identify if a trap is present (Pass); 2) mistakenly identify a trap where there is none or when one exists (Fail by less than 30) and 3) activate the trap (Fail by more than 30).



## INTERROGATION

You use this skill to persuade uncooperative people to reveal information against their will. This generally involves the use of threats, coercion or other successful methods (though not physical torture). A successful opposed skill check is necessary (Resist Persuasion).

| Mastery Level | The character can...   |
|---------------|--|
| Unskilled     | determine that the target knows something and refuses to tell            |
| Novice        | convince target to tell a secret that has no consequences for himself    |
| Average       | convince target to tell a secret with almost no consequences for himself |

## INTIMIDATION

You use this skill to cause others to back down in a contest of wills, to make others afraid to fight or to help with Interrogation checks. A successful opposed skill check is necessary (Resist Persuasion); if you succeed, then you gain a 10% bonus to subsequent Interrogation skill checks against the intimidated individual.

| Mastery Level | The character can...  |
|---------------|---|
| Unskilled     | convince target to temporarily back down when there are no consequences for himself |
| Novice        | convince target to back down when there are no consequences for himself             |
| Average       | convince target to back down when there are almost no consequences for himself      |

## LANGUAGE (VARIOUS)

You know how to speak a particular language. A successful skill check indicates that you are able to speak and understand the language, while a failed check means that you have forgotten the correct words, or cannot understand somebody else's spoken words. Typical language choices include Dwarven, Elven, and racial/regional human languages (Kalamaran, Brandobian, Dejy, etc.) as well as an international trader's language known as Merchant's Tongue.

| Mastery Level | You can...   |
|---------------|--|
| Novice        | speak a few common words correctly, communication must be augmented by pantomime   |
| Average       | communicate in the language, vocabulary is limited and idioms are difficult to grasp. Pronunciation is non-standard and may require repetition to comprehend |
| Advanced      | speak and understand most normal topics of conversation  |
| Expert        | speak and understand conversations   |

## LEATHERWORKING

With the proper tools (awl, hammer, knife, needle, thread, measuring tape), you can treat leather to craft clothing and other items (e.g., backpacks, reins, saddles, saddlebags). It takes d4 hours to create Easy items, 4+d4 hours for Average items, one day for Difficult items and 4+d4 days of work for Very Difficult items.

| Mastery Level | You can...   |
|---------------|--|
| Novice        | operate leatherworking tools; repair leather items                                   |
| Average       | craft simple leather objects (straps, bands, bags); supervise apprentices or helpers |

## LISTENING

You use this skill to focus your sense of hearing. Any time you stop to carefully listen in order to "hear something," you get a skill check to do so.

## LITERACY (SPECIFY LANGUAGE)

You can read and write a single language.

| Mastery Level | You can...  |
|---------------|---|
| Novice        | read and generally comprehend documents for a general audience; your writing is rife with spelling and grammatical errors   |
| Average       | read and comprehend documents meant for a general audience, write documents with occasional spelling and grammatical errors |

## LOCK PICKING

Lock picking is the use of tiny picks and levers to simulate the action of a designated key in order to open a lock. It takes d10p minutes of interrupted concentration to pick a lock. On a failed check the lock is simply too hard to open and you can't pick the lock again until you improve your skill.

| Mastery Level | You can...                 |
|---------------|----------------------------|
| Novice        | pick a Shoddy quality lock |
| Average       | pick a Good quality lock   |

## MINING

You are skilled at tunnelling beneath the earth. A novice miner can do little more than the backbreaking job of excavation and attacking stone with picks and chisels. With more experience, you can act as foreman and direct the labor of other miners. Miners can only work an eight-hour shift before becoming ineffective. During this shift, you can excavate 2 tons of rock (about 25 cubic feet). Soft rock mining (through loam, clay, coal or salt) allows you to be doubly effective.

| Mastery Level | You can...  |
|---------------|---|
| Novice        | excavate 25 cubic feet/day  |
| Average       | act as foreman, implement rudimentary structural improvements (shoring up tunnels with beams) |

| Difficulty     | Examples                                   |
|----------------|--|
| Trivial        | detecting a grade or slope in a passage    |
| Easy           | detecting new tunnel/passage construction  |
| Average        | determine approximate depth underground    |
| Difficult      | detect sliding/shifting walls or rooms     |
| Very Difficult | detect stonework traps, pits and deadfalls |

## MONSTER LORE

You have accumulated a great deal of knowledge regarding the myriad of foul creatures that prowl the lands of Tellene. With this skill, you are allowed to ask one or more questions regarding any monster you encounter. Questions can take the form of "Is it vulnerable to certain spells," or "does it fear fire."

Skill checks on Monster Lore vary based on whether or not you have access to a library. When no book/library is present (assuming you)



can even read), any skill check is Difficult. If you fail by less than 20, the GM should relate false (and possibly even dangerously misleading) information.

## OBSERVATION

This skill allows you to focus certain powers of observation, such as sight, smell, taste and touch. A GM may roll an Observation skill check for the PC any time there is something subtly askew that you might notice, even if you didn't specifically state that you are scrutinizing your surroundings. Observation reveals only facts, not motivation.

## PICK POCKET

You can use the Pick Pocket skill to steal small and accessible items from another person. To succeed in this endeavor, you must covertly approach a mark and successfully cut his purse or lift a small object off his person. A Pick Pocket attempt is a competitive d100 roll against the target's Observation skill. If your roll is higher, you gain the item. If you fail but by less than 15%, then the victim has not noticed your attempt. Failure by greater than 15% results in the victim noticing your failed attempt.

| Difficulty     | Examples  |
|----------------|---|
| Trivial        | victim is asleep  |
| Easy           | victim is drunk   |
| Average        | victim is awake but distracted; victim is in a large and bustling crowd                   |
| Difficult      | victim is awake; victim is in a small and open gathering; victim knows character is there |
| Very Difficult | victim is alert and expecting trouble; victim can see the character                       |

## POTTERY

You use this skill to create containers or decorative objects. It takes 4 hours to create an item less than 3 feet tall, 6 hours to create one 3-4 feet tall and 12 hours to create a larger item. Each piece must then be fired into the kiln for about one day before it is usable. You must have a kiln and pottery wheel, as well as materials, to use this skill. Failure in a check results in a ruined piece.

## READING LIPS

If you are fluent in the language they are speaking, you can tell what other characters are saying, even if you cannot hear them. The speaker must be mostly facing you (at least a three-quarter view). A failure means nothing is learned.

| Mastery Level | You can understand...         |
|---------------|-------------------------------|
| Unskilled     | a word or two                 |
| Novice        | about 10% of the conversation |
| Average       | about 20% of the conversation |

## RECRUITING

You can use this skill to recruit henchmen, hirelings and mercenaries or to raise a mob to action. Of course, any henchmen or hirelings must be paid, so success doesn't entirely depend on your skill. However, if the pay is good and terms are fair, you can recruit the best men available for your adventuring party and convince them to swear an oath of loyalty to you. A successful skill check means you have convinced a particular person to sign on with you. A failure means

they refuse, and you cannot attempt to recruit that individual again for one full week.

## RELIGION (SPECIFY FAITH)

This skill allows you to learn about a particular religious faith. With increased knowledge, you are able to quote scripture and prayers, to the point of becoming a scholar with the ability to debate almost any issue of importance to the church.

| Mastery Level | You have...   |
|---------------|---|
| Novice        | basic knowledge of the church's teaching  |
| Average       | full knowledge of "open" church doctrine including ceremonies, days of observance, raiment, holy books (with the ability to quote selected passages) and local church leaders |

## RESIST PERSUASION

Your mastery level in this skill is indicative of your ability to resist various persuasive efforts from another person. Any time a persuasion would compel you to either perform actions or reveal information, you can attempt to resist by making an Opposed Skill Check against whatever form of persuasion is being attempted.

## ROPE USE

With this skill, you become progressively more adept at using rope, from identifying compromised strength and 'whipping' rope ends to a broad knowledge of knots and their appropriate employment.

| Mastery Level | You can...   |
|---------------|--|
| Novice        | tie basic knots, including hitches, bends, loop knots and friction hitches                                     |
| Average       | securely bind prisoners, evaluate quality of rope (especially with regard to compromised load bearing ability) |

## SCRUTINY

Unlike the Observation skill, which is more applicable to real-time situations involving movement, this skill permits you to notice small details that a less careful person may not have noticed or considered relevant.

| Mastery Level | You can...   |
|---------------|--|
| Novice        | note subtle variations in weight or color                    |
| Average       | discern wear patterns, judge when an object was last handled |



## SEDUCTION, ART OF

Seduction can serve as a distraction (allowing for other characters to perform actions without being noticed) or as an attempt to sway the will of a person. Proper use demands subtlety. Ham-fisted attempts to abuse the skill (such as trying to "seduce" a foe into killing himself or using the skill in combat) will always fail and bar further seduction attempts on anyone witnessing this lunacy.



| Mastery Level | You can seduce...   |
|---------------|---|
| Unskilled     | the target into performing a simple favor (looking out a window, passing a message to a friend, etc.) |
| Novice        | a character into loaning a small amount of money  |
| Average       | seduce a character into giving away a small amount of money   |

| Difficulty     | Examples  |
|----------------|---|
| Trivial        | seducing a friendly person with lesser Looks and Charisma; seducing somebody in an unhappy relationship |
| Easy           | seducing a friendly character with lesser Looks or Charisma   |
| Average        | seducing a stranger or acquaintance   |
| Difficult      | seducing a hostile of greater Looks or Charisma   |
| Very Difficult | seducing a sworn enemy; seducing a happily married person of greater Looks and Charisma                 |

### SNEAKING

This skill allows you to move without being heard. Although you can easily be seen (unless employing some form of concealment), a successful check avoids the attention of observers, and thus you can sneak past them if not in their line of sight. Failure by up to 25 points means that you believe you are moving silently when, in fact, you are making noise. Greater failure than by 25 points means that the sound was so obvious that even you know you aren't fooling anybody.

### SURVIVAL

This skill gives you a better chance of surviving in hostile environments. You know the dangers that each environment presents, particularly the weather. You also know the proper steps to lessen the risk of exposure and the methods to locate and gather potable water and how to find basic food. A successful survival check means you have found enough food to survive on. A failure means you can make no more Survival checks that day.

### SWIMMING

This skill gives you knowledge on how to swim. With a successful check, you are able to swim. On a failed check, you cannot move (unless you can stand and walk out of the water) and must tread water while making another Swimming check. If you fail this second check, you begin to drown, taking 1d3p points of damage for every 10 seconds you remain under water.

| Mastery Level | You can estimate worth within...   |
|---------------|--|
| Novice        | tread water (1 min); back float, use floatation device (log, etc.) to swim 25 feet on stomach                            |
| Average       | tread water (5 min); front/back crawl or breast stroke 100 ft at crawling speed; swim underwater 25 ft at crawling speed |

### TORTURE

With this skill, you cause extreme pain while minimizing physical injury, typically in order to retrieve information, though there may be other reasons for the use of such force. No skill check is needed unless the tormentor wishes to learn some specific information. In such a case, you must make an Opposed Skill Check (against Resist

Persuasion) to learn anything the victim knows. The victim's roll should be made in secrecy because "everybody talks" and failed attempts always procure false information. Note that this skill is only effective against a captive subject.

### TRACKING

With this skill, you can follow the trail of animals and other persons. A successful check means you found a trail, while a failure means you did not. If you fail a check you may attempt another, provided that you spend at least 30 minutes trying to pick up the trail again. If you fail the second check you simply can't find that particular trail.

Further checks may need to be made, even on a success, depending on changing factors such as darkness, falling rain/snow, a dust storm, changing terrain, or the trail splitting into two.

| Mastery Level | You can determine...  |
|---------------|---|
| Novice        | if an area is heavily trafficked; roughly identify the number of creatures being followed or passed                   |
| Average       | the approximate height of the creatures leaving tracks (based on the length of their stride); determine age of tracks |

| Difficulty     | Examples  |
|----------------|---|
| Trivial        | tracking a large group through snow   |
| Easy           | tracking through thick brush, vines or needs; tracking on soft ground   |
| Average        | tracking occasional signs (on dust, dirt, etc.)   |
| Difficult      | tracking on hard ground or wood floor; with poor lighting (moonlight, starlight, or torchlight); over 12 hours since the trail was made |
| Very Difficult | tracking a single person over rocky ground; tracked party attempts to hide trail; over 24 hours since trail was made                    |

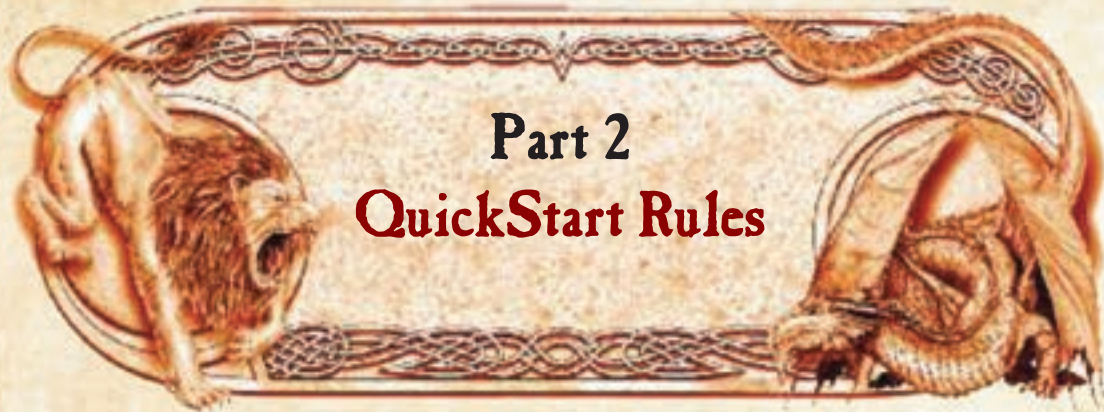
### WEATHER SENSE

This skill enables you to observe both atmospheric phenomenon and, with greater skill, subtle changes in flora or animal behavior in order to deduce upcoming weather conditions. A failed check cannot be rerolled as you will be convinced of your prediction and dogged in your misinterpretation.

| Mastery Level | You can...   |
|---------------|--|
| Novice        | make a prediction for the next few hours – will the current weather remain steady or change for the better or worse? |
| Average       | make a prediction for the next day – will it be warmer or cooler with any precipitation?                             |

| Difficulty     | Situation                                     |
|----------------|---|
| Average        | character is outdoors in natural surroundings |
| Difficult      | character is in a settled area                |
| Very Difficult | character is in a large town or city          |





## Part 2

# QuickStart Rules

### 2.1 Learning The QuickStart Rules (QSRs)

Maybe you are a long-time player of RPGs, or maybe you are new to the intricate world of pen-and-paper gaming. In either case, you're going to feel like a sad participant if you don't have a group to game with.

Ideally, this group consists of 3 or 4 other people, preferably your friends who you've gamed with in the past. In any case, one of you is going to need to grab your stones and get behind the proverbial GM screen – otherwise, you're just a group of players sitting around, talking about a bunch of cool rules.

If you think this is a daunting prospect, well, don't. The HackMaster rules are as complex as you make them. Presented in this section is a barebones set of rules that you can add onto at your leisure, and at the burning desire of your players. And believe me, they will desire more rules. As players and GMs master the current rules set, they become eager for more detail in the form of rules.

What is overwhelmingly complex at first is simple later. It's the natural evolution of games. Just be sure to add the Advanced Rules slowly, once you are comfortable with them. Also never be afraid to drop a rule if it impedes play/upsets your group. Their happiness is more important, even if it means they're more suited to play in the Junior Hack League™ rather than the HackMaster Tournament of Champions™!

#### The GM vs. player attitude

In previous editions of the game, the developers went to great lengths to propagate an attitude of conflict between the GameMaster and the players. Actually, that's not true – they wrote a few hilarious jokes implying that this “attitude of conflict” existed, and some people took it way, way too seriously.

*In reality, please note the following:*

GMs – the player is your *friend*. His existence justifies the insane amount of money that you've spent on supplements and sourcebooks. You must challenge him but do not make the game unfair. Likewise, he must make sure you are properly adhering to the rules – after all, it takes a long ass time to roll up a good character and, before long, a player might have hundreds of hours invested in the character that you are callously trying to kill with your elaborate – but nonsensical – underwater spike trap. It's hard work, but you must always strive to present a fair playing field which is littered with warnings of certain death. That way, they have no reason to complain.

Players – the GM is *your* friend. You just gotta show up with some dice and – if you're nice – snacks for your GM. He has to spend his free time thinking about stuff for you to do. He needs to weave metaphorical tapestries, to spin complex stories, and to develop

dungeons, roleplay scenarios and more. If he gets lost in the story sometimes – and tries to shoehorn you toward certain death – be patient with him and help him understand the error of his ways (note that this is not gamer code for “beat him with a tire iron”). The game is not designed for you two to be at odds – unless you agree in advance that this is the kind of game you want to play.

And that's the point, really. Agreement in advance is key. You don't need to use every niggling rule, but you need to agree in advance as to what rules you are using. Not to mention you need to also agree about trusting the GM to make a call on the fly.

There aren't rules for every impossible situation. Sometimes the GM is going to make a gut call on a rule (like how many seconds does it take to climb that 20 foot wall over there). Unless his call is ridiculous, go with it. But make sure that what is ruled once is ruled again, so when the hobgoblin you are fleeing from gets to climb the same wall in ½ the time, the player is well in his rights to call the GM on making a mistake (and only *then* do you go for the tire iron).

### 2.2 Miscellaneous Rules

#### The “p” stands for “Penetration”

You may notice a lot of numbers that have a “p” in them – d20p; d12p; d8p; and so-on. Any dice roll with a p means that, if you roll the maximum number, then you have penetrated and must keep on rollin'.

In the case of any subsequent penetrating roll, you subtract 1 from the final result. Therefore, if you roll a d4p and penetrate, and roll another 4, then the result is 3 (4-1). But you keep on rolling because any 4 keeps penetrating. It's an awesome mechanic that allows for the possibility of any mundane stabbing to turn into a legendary slaying.

#### Saving throws

There are a number of affects - both poisonous and magical in nature - which may require a character to pass a Saving Throw.

Certain QuickStart characters - such as the dwarf and any character that's charm resistant - receives additional bonuses when rolling a Saving Throw, as is noted in their character pages.

In the **Advanced Game** characters receive various additional bonuses when making Saving Throws which, naturally, is all the more reason to learn them as quickly as dwarvenly possible.

In order to determine a character's chances, roll a d20 plus his level (in the case of all 1st Level QuickStart PCs, that's a +1) against an Opposed Roll plus a Difficulty Modifier as arbitrated by the GM. (For example, if Brom the human fighter was poisoned, he'd roll a d20+1 against a d20+the poison's virulence factor (which can range from 5 to 25, depending on how deadly the toxin is).



## Feat of strength

Under your character's STR totals is a category called "Feat of Strength." This mechanic allows for you to make heroic attempts to do implausible things, like lift a gate, or bend an iron bar, or kick down a mighty door. The character attempting the FoS rolls a competing d20p against the object he's trying to muscle, adding any bonuses from his STR against any bonuses due to the difficulty of moving the object. See chart 2.2-1 for specifics.

Chart 2.2-1 Feat of strength

| Scenario                            | Difficulty |
|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Kicking open a stuck door           | d20p       |
| Lifting a heavy gate                | d20p+10    |
| Bending an iron bar with bare hands | d20p+20    |

If the result of a door-opening FoS exceeds the Opposed Roll, the door opens. Following a failed attempt, a character can waste time and make further tries, but each attempt takes time (10 seconds), gets harder as the character gets tired (-1 per roll, cumulative) and makes a lot of monster-attracting noise.

In the case of a bar or gate, if the attempt fails then the character can never succeed at that task (unless his strength were to increase by some means, in which case, the character will receive one more chance at the improved modifier level).

## 2.3 Skill Checks

A note on how skills work: the skills system in HackMaster works off of a roll of a d100. The more skillful you are, the more likely you succeed in an attempt to do something.

In order to successfully perform a task, you need only roll below your skill added to the Difficulty level as determined by your GM.

There are five Difficulty levels in HackMaster.

| Difficulty     | Modifier to Skill Check Roll |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| Trivial        | +90 to any skill check       |
| Easy           | +80 to any skill check       |
| Average        | +40 to any skill check       |
| Difficult      | 0 to any skill check         |
| Very Difficult | -10 to any skill check       |

Therefore, if you are attempting a Trivial Skill Check, then you have to roll a d100 and come up with a result that is below your Skill Level +90. Similarly, a Very Difficult check must be rolled below your skill level -10. In other words, if you have a Diplomacy skill level of 35, a Trivial Check means you'd have to roll below a 125 (90+35) to succeed (in other words, it's a no brainer!), while a Very Difficult check means you'd have to roll below a 25 (35-10) to succeed.

Some skills are universal, allowing you to attempt them even if you haven't been trained. For example, **Climbing/Rappelling** is a universal skill with two relevant abilities – STR and DEX. Even if you've never received any training in this skill, you can still pass a check. Merely add your lowest relevant ability to the Difficulty modifier and roll beneath that total to succeed.

*For example, if you are trying to climb a 10 foot wall, your GM might tell you that it's an Average check. If you've not trained in Climbing/Rappelling and your lowest relevant ability is a STR of 10, then you add 10+40 (with 40 being the Average Difficulty modifier). When you roll a d100, you need only roll beneath 50 to succeed. On the other hand, if you've been trained in Climbing/Rappelling, you obviously have a higher chance of success – so if you plan on becoming the king of the wall climbers, choose wisely when looking at the skill packages!*

### A Note to the GM on Skill Checks

*In general all universal skills may be attempted at any point, although here's a basic (but perhaps essential) tip on using skill checks: any time a player wants to do something that would give him an advantage in the form of more information, better positioning, or getting something from a person or monster, a skill check may be made. From bargaining with a merchant to talking one's way out of trouble, make 'em roll for success!*

As briefly mentioned in the Players' Section, there are two types of skill checks in HackMaster – standard and opposed. A standard check offers the PC a modifier based on Difficulty. If he rolls below his skill ability+modifier, he succeeds – no bubbles, no troubles.

For an opposed roll, the player must roll a d100 and add the result to his ability, while his opponent does the same. In this case, the highest result wins.

#### Typical Opposed Roll Skill Checks

| Skill             | Is Opposed By                         |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Acting            | Observation                           |
| Appraisal         | Forgery                               |
| Current Affairs   | Resist Persuasion                     |
| Diplomacy         | Resist Persuasion                     |
| Disguise          | Observation                           |
| Escape Artist     | Rope Use (if rope is involved)        |
| Fast Talking      | Resist Persuasion                     |
| Forgery           | Appraisal                             |
| Glean Information | Resist Persuasion                     |
| Hiding            | Listening or Observation              |
| Interrogation     | Resist Persuasion                     |
| Intimidation      | Resist Persuasion                     |
| Listening         | Hiding or Sneaking                    |
| Observation       | Acting, Disguise, Hiding, Pick Pocket |
| Pick Pocket       | Observation                           |
| Recruiting        | Resist Persuasion                     |
| Resist Persuasion | Various                               |
| Rope Use          | Escape Artist                         |
| Salesmanship      | Resist Persuasion                     |
| Seduction, Art of | Resist Persuasion                     |
| Sneaking          | Listening or Observation              |
| Torture           | Resist Persuasion                     |

The two most important skills are, perhaps, Listening and Observation. Unless a PC sees or hears his opponent, he cannot roll for initiative. If a PC fails to observe or hear, he may end up getting ambushed.



## 2.4 Combat Rules

Some people enjoy the diplomatic solution. They calmly sit down, talk out any problems with their “enemy,” and hand shake on a viable action that solves all problems. Those people don’t play HackMaster.

In HackMaster, combat is the final resolution to most problems in life. The baron is taxing your PC too much? Combat. The beautiful maiden is being forced to marry her second cousin instead of you? *Combat*. A dangerous brigand has ambushed you from the road and seeks to rob you of everything you own? Peaceful negotiations – just kidding, **COMBAT!!!**

What separates HackMaster from other games<sup>1</sup> is how this combat is resolved. Players do not take turns – they take action, second by second. Once combat begins and a character’s initiative has been reached, that character may move freely. Players may use strategies to engage – or disengage – in melee combat. (There are a wide variety of strategies available in the **Advanced Game**; a handful are discussed herein.) Characters can help support a friend who is likewise caught up in battle, or turn and run. They can strategically maneuver their opponents, or they can just stand around and hammer it out. The options are limitless.

In any case, combat occurs in real time, second-by-second. The GM’s responsibility is to keep track of what second it is. He may do so by simply writing it out on a paper and keeping track that way, or through use of counters, spreadsheets, score cards, whatever. It should only take a handful of combats before your group becomes comfortable with this innovative action system.

### 2.4.1 How to Roll for Initiative

Combat occurs like this: two forces encounter each other. Once one has observed or heard (Listen/Observation) the other, that force may roll initiative. If neither force notices the other, they may continue rolling Listen/Observation checks every 5 seconds – or until the first to see the other springs an ambush.

| Example   | Die |
|---|-----|
| Standard encounter  | d12 |
| Declared ready for trouble and have evidence of an ambush ahead, but don’t know where or when               | d10 |
| Can hear opponents in a concrete direction, but not see them  | d8  |
| Going through a doorway, with absolute knowledge that an opponent is on the other side                      | d6  |
| Leaping around a corner, with absolute knowledge that an opponent is there (or awaiting an opponent’s leap) | d4  |

Remember - all elves, halflings and 2nd level (or higher) thieves may roll one die smaller than everybody else. This means that when the party fighter is rolling a d12 for initiative, an elf, halfling or 2nd level thief rolls a d10. (But halfling thieves do not roll d8’s - each character is afforded only one bonus thanks to his background.) Further, a PC’s Dexterity, Wisdom and the weight of his armor affects his roll. This is known as the **Initiative Modifier**.

### 2.4.2 The Count Up

Once a character or monster rolls Initiative, the GM begins counting from ‘1’ and up (each unit represents a second in time ticking away), as “1... 2... 3...4...” and so on.

When the Count Up reaches a character’s Starting Initiative number, the controlling player may announce an action. This action can be an attack, turning to run away, the casting of a spell, simple movement, or a variety of other options. (The GM needn’t announce actions taken by NPCs or monsters, but he should note them mentally or physically).

Any character that has a Starting Initiative number higher than the current Count Up number is in a state of **surprise** or otherwise caught unaware and flatfooted.

#### GM’s Note

*There may be times when you wish for intelligent monsters to ambush your PCs. (There may also be times when your PCs get the jump on the monsters and may wish to ambush them.) In the case of an Ambush, the attacking party strikes on Count 1.*

Once you roll your initiative, you may determine what your next action will be. But be warned – until you reach your turn in the count, you do not get to act. If you were walking before initiative was rolled, you must continue to walk. If you were standing still, you must continue to stand still. Basically, you are startled, surprised or otherwise unable to process what’s going on around you until your Count is reached.

If a clueless character is attacked, whether he is hit or missed he is added to the initiative 2 counts later (i.e., attacked on 5, may respond on 7). Similarly, if a character who’s slated to move for the first time on Count 12 is attacked on 5, he may also respond on 7 (shaving a cool 5 seconds off his surprise-time).

In the **Advanced Game** this rule is a little more complicated – a ranged attack may or may not result in an unwitting player getting to roll for initiative, but he has to be hit – or attacked in melee – to see his reaction time improve.



<sup>1</sup> some would say that this not only separates HackMaster, but in fact makes it a better game. You can be the judge of that – what’s important is that you are having fun, whatever game you play



### 2.4.3 Movement in Combat

To understand how combat works, one must first remember this Hackism: *only suckers stand still*. Movement during the second-by-second unfolding of combat is not only possible, but it is encouraged. Once your PC springs into action, he can move at the following speeds:

|        | Humans, Elves,<br>Size M and L<br>creatures | Dwarves, Halflings,<br>size S and T<br>creatures |
|--------|---|--|
| Walk   | 5 ft  | 2½ ft  |
| Jog    | 10 ft                                       | 5 ft   |
| Run    | 15 ft                                       | 7½ ft  |
| Sprint | 20 ft                                       | 10 ft  |

| Action                                | Time                           |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Halt run/sprint                       | jogging distance over 1 second |
| Change facing to side                 | 1 second*                      |
| Change facing to rear                 | 1 second*                      |
| Sit/kneel/stand from prone or reverse | 1 second*                      |
| Pick up dropped weapon at feet        | 1 second                       |
| Draw/ready weapon, small              | 0 seconds                      |
| Draw/ready weapon, medium             | 1 second                       |
| Draw/ready weapon, large              | 2 seconds                      |

\*Free when combined with another movement or action

**Advanced Rules:** In the advanced game, movement allows for strategic benefits. So unless you want to stand there and get pummelled like a sucker, flip to page 113 of the **HackMaster Basic**, learn what terms like “charge,” “aggressive attack” and “fighting defensively” mean, and persuade your GM to add them to your game!

The first person who gets to attack is the one whose **Initiative** is reached first.

If two-or-more have the same initiative, then combat procedure is resolved by **Reach** – i.e., he whose weapon is longest hacks first! If both combatants have the same initiative and the same reach, then they are swinging at each other simultaneously!

Once two-or-more combatants have attacked each other, reach no longer matters. Combat order is now determined by **Weapon Speed**, and if a tie exists (e.g., you both attack on Count 15) then **Combat is Simultaneous**, regardless of your weapon's length! Even if the character hits the monster so hard on Count 15 that it kills him, the monster still gets to attack one last time before expiring.

### 2.4.4 Engagement Rules

Engagement - it ain't just the thing you don't want to have with your ball-and-chain significant other. Once you are engaged in combat, you cannot become disengaged unless...

• You or your foe turn and run (allowing anybody else within combat range a free attack on the coward)

• You slowly perform a **fighting withdrawal** (allowing you to move away from your opponent at Walk speed while giving you a -2 to your next attack for so long as you are withdrawing) and your foe chooses not to follow

• You kill your foe or, if you are using Advanced rules, you force a Threshold of Pain check (or ToP)

• Your opponent is victim to the optional knock-back rule and you declare that you are breaking off combat.

### 2.4.5 Rolling for Attack or Defense in Melee Combat

Combat is resolved by opposed rolls. In all cases, the attacker rolls a d20 and adds any bonuses. However, the defender may roll with a variety of options.

#### Defense rolls in HackMaster

| Roll   | Situation   |
|--------|---|
| d20p   | in a standard encounter, the defender rolls a d20 plus and minus all defensive bonuses and penalties. Bonuses might include a high DEX, WIS and shield plus proficiencies; penalties may include a low DEX, WIS and armor |
| d20p-4 | you are fighting without a shield. In this case, you may add your other defensive bonuses and penalties (such as from DEX, WIS and armor) to this roll independently of the -4  |
| d12p   | if the defender is surrounded by 4-or-more opponents and is attacked from the front or sides, he rolls a d12p plus all defensive bonuses and penalties. He does not add a -4 penalty even if shieldless                   |
| d8p    | if the defender is surprised or is surrounded by 4-or-more opponents and is attacked from behind, he rolls a d8p and adds no bonuses from DEX, WIS or his shield, nor penalties for lacking a shield                      |

If your foe's **Roll To Hit** is greater than your **Defense Roll**, then your shield is useless and you take full damage without your shield's **Damage Reduction**, or **DR** for short.

If your foe's **Roll to Hit** is less than your **Defense Roll**, then he deals ½ damage (you may apply your shield's **Damage Reduction (DR)** as well as your armor's **DR** when calculating this, meaning that a *medium shield* and *leather armor* would absorb *8 points of damage*).

However, if your **Defense Roll** with a shield is **10-or-better** than your opponent's to-hit, then it is a clean miss. You may be asking why – the answer is simple: when carrying around a 20 pound wooden plate, it is simply harder to fully dodge an attack. And getting walloped, even with that implement successfully blocking the blow, can hurt. But if your attacker is so bumblingly incompetent that he misses an attack by more than 10, then you are able to sidestep his attempted strike.



### On Shield and Armor Use in HackMaster

*If you are an old hand at RPGs, you may be asking yourself - why the sudden essentiality of shields?*

*HackMaster strives to be the most realistic combat system yet written and part of that gritty reality is that those without proper armor end up as meat. If running around waving about two flashing scimitars was really such a great idea, then the development of weapons throughout history would have had a very different bent.*

*In higher levels, while squaring off against nasty monsters like hill giants and dragons, a shield's a much less-useful weapon as it is likely to break (or melt). But for low levels, the use of a shield accurately reflects one's increased ability to survive a crushing blow.*

*Also accurately reflected is just how ridiculously slow it is to run around in combat while wearing 40-pound leather armor and carrying around a 20-pound wooden plate attached to your arm via a grip and strap. Thus, while your chances of survival increase thanks to your shield and armor, your chances of getting hit repeatedly increases dramatically ... again, thanks to your shield and armor.*

**Advanced option:** If your opponent attacks you with a short sword or any other piercing weapon, if you are able to absorb the attack with your shield then only 1 point of damage (plus STR bonuses) is dealt.

### 2.4.6 Ranged Attack

- Similar to melee, ranged attack is resolved through opposed rolls.
- The attacker rolls a d20p modified by distance (see chart).
- If unaware of the ranged attack, the defender rolls a d12p with no defensive modifiers. **Examples of being unaware:** he is being ambushed or rolled a crappy Initiative and hasn't reached his first action of the combat, or if standing still.
- The defender rolls a d20p (with no defensive modifiers) if aware of the ranged attack or actively dodging. If declaring that he is using his shield for cover, he rolls a d12p.
- If engaged in melee, the defender rolls a d20p+size modifier (+8 for small, +6 for medium, +4 for large sized creatures).

In all cases, if hit, the defender makes a cover check. If the defender rolls a d20 above the Cover Value of his shield, then the shield is struck instead of the character.

Bottom line – shields are incredibly useful, especially against ranged attacks.

| Shield Type | Defense Bonus* | Damage Reduction | Cover Value                             |
|-------------|----------------|------------------|---|
| Bucker      | +2             | 4hp              | 20                                      |
| Small       | +4             | 4hp              | 19                                      |
| Medium      | +6             | 6hp              | 16 (11 if actively crouching behind it) |
| Large       | +6             | 6hp              | 11 (6 if actively crouching behind it)  |

\*applied only to melee combat; shields provide a cover value in ranged combat

**Advanced ranged combat option** – If the attacker fires into melee and misses his target, all other combatants engaged in the battle within 15 feet of the target must roll a d20p+size to determine if the errant arrow struck them. At the same time, the GM must determine which of these PCs (and their monstrous opponents) are standing closest to the original target. The closest target whose defense roll is less than the ranged attack is struck. It's possible that the arrow may strike an unintentional (read: friendly) target.

### Shortbow & Throwing Knife Range of Attack

| Shortbow      |            | Throwing Knife |            |
|---------------|------------|----------------|------------|
| Distance (ft) | Attack Die | Distance (ft)  | Attack Die |
| 5-50          | d20p       | 5-20           | d20p       |
| 51-80         | d20p-4     | 21-30          | d20p-4     |
| 81-120        | d20p-6     | 31-40          | d20p-6     |
| 121-150       | d20p-8     | 41-50          | d20p-8     |

### Advanced Firing Time Considerations:

A Shortbow's rate of fire is 1 arrow every 12 seconds

Shortbow Load Time:  
-pull arrow from quiver 5 seconds  
-nock arrow 2 seconds  
3 seconds  
(3+2=5 seconds)

Draw: 2 seconds

Take Aim: 4 seconds

Fire Bow: 1 second

Note that an arrow can be fired without aiming at a penalty of -6 to hit.





### 2.4.7 Spells in Combat

When casting spells in combat, you must drop your weapon and declare your spell. It takes d4p seconds to fish out your spell components, plus the casting time. While spell casting, you may only roll a d8p for defense.

Once your spell's been cast, you are **fatigued** for a small amount of time (the base is 5 seconds + your casting time, but this is modified by certain talents).

When fatigued, you may only move at ½ a walk and roll a d20p-6 (d20p-10 if you have no shield) for defense. You cannot begin prepping for another spell until fatigue is over.

*Note that clerical spells do not cause fatigue.*

### 2.4.8 Taking Wounds

By now you've had a good amount of exposure to HackMaster. Hopefully, you've noticed a recurring theme or two, predominantly centering around a gritty realism that is unlike what most people see when playing a Fantasy Roleplaying Game. One aspect of this realism is how wounds are taken, and how long they heal.

Each time a character takes damage, he records it as a separate wound on his character sheet. If he takes more damage than he has hit points, he dies. (The **Advanced Option** is, as usual, something your players should flock to like a groupie at a Beatles concert, as it allows characters to go into negative Hit Points. This may be one of the first things you'll wish to add to your game. They are available in the **Player's Handbook**.)

Wounds heal very, very slowly. For every hit point lost in a wound, that many days are spent recuperating in order to reduce the wound by 1. In other words, if you have suffered a 10 hit point wound, it takes 10 days for it to heal into a 9 hit point wound. Then it takes 9 days for it to heal into an 8 hit point wound. Luckily, there are a lot of things that increase the speed in which a wound heals – primarily, clerical healing and first aid.

**First Aid** works as described in its skill definition on page 18. Clerical healing, meanwhile, is applied to any one wound of the cleric's choice. Any excess healing carries over to another wound, again of the cleric's choice.



### 2.4.9 Using Luck and Honor in the Game

#### Honor

In HackMaster, a PC can alter the fates through the use of luck and honor points. In the advanced game, there are a number of ways that these points may be spent. For the **QSG**, you may...

- receive a +1 to one roll per session (Honor)
- spend 10 honor to force any reroll (such as if a critical hit would've killed you)

*Note that if your honor drops to 5-or-less, you receive a -1/-10% on all rolls.*

If your honor drops to 0, your character becomes notorious and loses 20% of all gained experience until he can earn enough honor to put an end to his shameful stigma.

#### Luck

All thieves receive luck to the tune of 20 plus their level (so, level 1's get 21; level 2 thieves have 22). They may...

- spend 1 luck point to modify a defense roll by 1 (you can spend as many as you like)
- spend 1 luck point to modify a skill check by +/- 5%.

*Note that luck does not regenerate until you reach level 2.*

### 2.5 Advanced Option Combat Rules

#### Knock back

If, during combat, you unleash a fierce blow upon your opponent, you have a chance of causing him to lose his balance and stumble backwards. This allows the attacker a choice – stay engaged and finish off the schmuck or disengage and beat up on some other guy who's nearby.

Note that a knockback occurs based on the damage dealt, not on the damage received. (So if a dude is wearing good armor and has a shield but takes a 10 point hit, even though his armor will reduce the amount of damage he takes he's still going to get knocked back.)

| Size of creature         | Damage required for knock-back |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Small<br>(halfling, elf) | 10                             |
| Medium<br>(human)        | 15                             |
| Large<br>(dwarf)         | 20                             |

#### Threshold of pain

Here's an obvious statement – getting hit hurts. And unless you're Rocky Balboa, it's not really possible to take a massive, bone crushing hit and automatically shrug it off and deal an even bigger punch right back at the guy who popped you one. In HackMaster, taking substantial amounts of damage causes Threshold of Pain checks. A failure of one of these checks often spells the end of an adventuring career – you drop to the ground like a big baby and start howling in pain, giving your foe plenty of time to do pretty much whatever he likes, like cave in your skull, or slit your throat, or dance a mocking jig across your face.

ToP is calculated by class and hit points. Consider this handy chart when figuring out the ToP of your character:



### Threshold of Pain checks

|                        |                                 |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Fighters ToP . . . . . | 30% of hit points +2% per level |
| Other PCs . . . . .    | 30% of hit points +1% per level |
| Monsters . . . . .     | 40% hit points                  |

If a character receives enough damage to cause a ToP check, he must roll a d20 beneath ½ his Constitution. A failure results in the character being incapacitated for the difference between a success and a failure times 5. (i.e., Bruno needs to roll a 6 or lower to pass his ToP. He rolls a 10. Because he failed by 4, he falls to the ground grimacing in pain for 20 seconds (5x4=20))

A ToP'd character can be dispatched via a coup de grace in 10 seconds, or 3 seconds if the person performing the coup de grace is a thief.

### Alignment in HackMaster

In the **Advanced Game**, alignment plays a big part in the progression of a campaign. HackMaster characters run the gamut - from Lawful Good to Chaotic Evil. This serves several purposes, apart from helping the GM craft his adventures - alignment adherence also determines if a character receives or loses those exceptionally useful **Honor Points**.

But to clarify - evil characters are not penalized for being evil, but an evil character might lose Honor Points for doing something good, like save a drowning child. (Unless the child had an incredibly rare and valuable piece of jewelry, at which point the evil character very well might save him only to cut his throat and toss him back in the drink once the necklace has been stolen!) However, for the sake of the QuickStart Game, the GM should simply have a rudimentary idea of what kind of characters he wants to run for and, perhaps, he should also have a personal concept of what alignment means and how the players should adhere to it.

### Where to go from here

Congratulations on reading the QuickStart Guide - give yourself 100 Experience Points! As mentioned previously, this supplement was designed as an introduction to HackMaster. You can certainly play a game or three with the materials within, but to create a long-term campaign you may wish to purchase the **HackMaster Basic** (available for under \$20) and, if the promise of more rules and greater deals intrigues you, the **HackMaster Player's Handbook**, **Game Master's Guide** and **Hacklopedia of Beasts**. HackMaster Basic alone can be used to take a group from Levels 1-5, while the PHB advances them as far as level 20 and includes amazing details on training rules, hirelings, items and equipment and much, much more.

Further, don't be afraid to sign up for the KenzerCo forums. The HackMaster community is strong there and welcomes rules discussion, debate and suggestions.

In all cases, whatever you do and wherever you go ... **HACK ON!**

## 2.6 Running Encounters in HackMaster

In the **QSG**, your options are fairly limited in terms of what your players can encounter, but don't be misled - Encounters of a varying nature are the bread and butter of the full game. Still, in this guide you are presented with enough information to stretch into several game sessions, which hopefully is more than enough time for you and your friends to decide if HackMaster is your kind of game.

### Non-combat encounters

A non-combat encounter typically consists of two types: a **trap** or **roleplay scenario**.

A **trap scenario** can consist of a variety of mechanisms, from a trip wire, to a spiked pit, to mechanically triggered crossbows and so-on. In general consider these pieces of advice:

- Death traps are unfair unless players receive plenty of warning
- Your trap should deal up to approximately ½ damage of a 1st Level Party's average hit point total - thus, somewhere in the vicinity of 12 points of damage is appropriate
- If you choose to design a trap, the Difficulty to Find and Disarm should be proportionate to how much damage it does. High damage traps should require no more than an Average check to find
- A trap should be worth between 67 and 125 Experience Points, depending on how much damage it does

A **roleplay scenario** may be one in which players interact with one or more NPCs, such as a desperate Baron hopeful to be rid of a plague of kobolds, or perhaps with simple tavern-goers who have a myriad of problems, stories and even adventure scenarios. If the players agree to perform a duty on the behalf of an NPC, then they may be rewarded a number of EPs depending on the difficulty of the task coupled with their efficiency in completing it. (*Note that, while we are being rather vague in terms of EPs allotted, all of this information is elaborated upon in the full game.*)

A **combat scenario** may involve a fight between the PCs and a monster, demi-human or humanoid, or even amongst the actual players! Included within this guide are some very basic Combat Profiles for a handful of encounters, as well as the complete entry for a 1st level encounter - Kobolds.

*GMs, when preparing your encounters, consider the number of players at your table. If you only have 2 or 3 players, you need to consider cutting back on the encounter strength. Kobolds are worth 17 EP each.*

|                 |             |
|-----------------|-------------|
| 2 PCs . . . . . | 1-2 Kobolds |
| 3 PCs . . . . . | 2-3 Kobolds |
| 4 PCs . . . . . | 3 Kobolds   |
| 5 PCs . . . . . | 3-4 Kobolds |

When preparing your encounters, think of how to get the PCs interested in hunting the kobold infestation. Negotiate with them a price, and allow them to play their characters to the hilt. The encounters themselves should vary - perhaps they stumble across a poorly-made kobold trap. Maybe they fight Kobolds in different group sizes as they explore their lair. Eventually, the PCs should find themselves in a final stand-off against the largest group of kobolds, including a Kobold chief.

And once the PCs have cleared the lair and discovered any hidden treasure, the adventure need not end. Perhaps the Baron never intended to pay them and they must now collect their reward the hard way!



Listed in this section are the combat profiles of unique kobolds, as well as of standard NPC humans. If you see a term you are not familiar with, assume it is part of the full game and ignore it. The full Kobold entry is listed on Page 35, after the Appendix.

### Kobold Pack Leader

**HIT POINTS:** 15+d6  
**SIZE/WEIGHT:** S/60 lbs.  
**TENACITY:** Steady  
**INTELLIGENCE:** Slow  
**FUDGE FACTOR:** -1/0

**MOVEMENT**

**CRAWL:** 1½  
**WALK:** 2½  
**JOG:** 5  
**RUN:** 7½  
**SPRINT:** 10

**SAVES**

**PHYSICAL:** +3  
**MENTAL:** +2  
**DODGE:** +2

**ATTACK:** Kobold pack leaders will wield the best weapons available to the kobold band (typically a human-made short sword). Combat statistics reflect this fact.

**SPECIAL DEFENSES:** Shield use (e.g., small shield increases Defense to +4).

**EPV:** 30



### Kobold Alpha Male

**HIT POINTS:** 20+d8  
**SIZE/WEIGHT:** M/100 lbs.  
**TENACITY:** Brave  
**INTELLIGENCE:** Slow  
**FUDGE FACTOR:** -1/0

**MOVEMENT**

**CRAWL:** 2½  
**WALK:** 5  
**JOG:** 7½  
**RUN:** 10  
**SPRINT:** 15

**SAVES**

**PHYSICAL:** +5  
**MENTAL:** +4  
**DODGE:** +4

**ATTACK:** Kobold alpha males will wield the best weapons available to the kobold band (typically a human-made long sword) and wear studded leather armor. Combat statistics reflect this fact.

**SPECIAL DEFENSES:** Shield use (e.g., medium shield increases Defense to +8).

**EPV:** 50

### HUMAN: SEDENTARY (SCRIBE)

**HIT POINTS:** 18+1d4  
**SIZE/WEIGHT:** M/140 lbs.  
**TENACITY:** Cowardly  
**INTELLIGENCE:** Bright  
**FUDGE FACTOR:** -1

**MOVEMENT**


**CRAWL:** 2½  
**WALK:** 5  
**JOG:** 10  
**RUN:** 15  
**SPRINT:** 20

**SAVES**

**PHYSICAL:** 0  
**MENTAL:** 0  
**DODGE:** 0

**ATTACK:** Sedentary humans are not usually proficient in any weapons; statistics represent a scribe utilizing a knife to defend himself.

**SPECIAL DEFENSES:** none



## 3.1 Appendix

### Filling Out your PC Record Sheet

At a glance, filling out your first character sheet might be a bit daunting. However, most of the work has already been done on your behalf on the QuickStart PreGen pages of this guide.

If confused at all, reference this section for specific details.

#### Step 1 - Pick your character

Different pre-generated characters have different strengths. Consider these guidelines when choosing what type of character you want to play:

The fighters are, for obvious reasons, the best choices for front-line offense and defense. The **Dwarven Fighter** easily deals the most damage of any character, but the **Human Fighter** is hard to hit and talented at battle.

The thief characters are very different in their talents - the **Human Thief** should be chosen by the kind of player who enjoys to talk his way out of scrapes. The **Halfling Thief**, meanwhile, makes for a good front-line distraction until the Fighters can get their acts together and start hacking.

The mages should be chosen by players who enjoy taking a cautious approach. Spell Points are limited for 1st level characters - and, worse, neither the **Human** nor **Elven Mage** is particularly adept at surviving a solid hit.

Meanwhile, the **Cleric of the Caregiver** with all her quirks and flaws may make for excellent roleplay fodder, while the **Cleric of the True** is a fine choice for combat and modest healing.

In any case, you must remember that HackMaster is designed to be a game in which heroism is a goal, not a promise. Your characters will die if they are not played intelligently. But don't let that deter you from wading in and chopping heads - a PreGen is just another piece of paper away!

#### Step 2 - Choose your Skills Package

Before you simply pick a package willy-nilly (although you could always just roll a d8 and pick what fate decides) consider the implications of your choice. How you play your character should be, to some extent, directed based on his skills. If you are the **Human Thief**, making him a Monster Hunter might not seem like a sensible option - after all, comparatively that character would struggle to fight his way out of any trouble, so why would he go looking for it?

#### Step 3 - Fill out your abilities and skills

This should be pretty easy. Each QuickStart PC has his ability stats listed on his page. Simply fill in the correlating information onto your PC Record Sheet. You may notice that there are some terms on the character sheet which you aren't familiar with - such as **Turning Mod** or **HON Window**. These are stats which are relevant to the **Advanced Game**.

As for your Skills, your character sheet lists all Universal Skills. Non-Universal Skills must be penciled in, so if you don't see a skill you picked up in a Skills Package, simply pencil it in and record your mastery percentage.

| Universal Skills   | Non-Universal Skills                                    |
|--|---|
| <div> <div>Intelligence (Int)</div> <div>Intimidation (Int)</div> <div>Listening (Int)</div> <div>Observation (Int)</div> <div>Pick Pocket (Int)</div> <div>Reading Lips (Int)</div> <div>Remembering (Int)</div> <div>Secret Persuasion (Int)</div> <div>Sight Use (Int)</div> <div>Talksmanship (Int)</div> </div> | <div> <div>Other Skills</div> <div>Mastery</div> </div> |



#### Step 4 - Fill out your armor and weapon profiles

Included with each PreGen character is a **Combat Profile** for his most common weapon. This profile takes into account the character's bonuses and negatives for each stat. In short, if you are confused about how the bonuses are calculated, remember the following pieces of advice:

☛ **Good Initiative and Weapon Speed Modifiers** are represented by Negative Numbers. A -1 on your Initiative is good, because that means that you'll be attacking 1 second sooner than you would've been otherwise. A +1 on your Initiative is bad, as that means it takes you a little more time to get your ducks in a row.

*Stats that Affect Initiative:* **Wisdom, Dexterity.**

*Stats that Affect Weapon Speed:* **None.**

*Other Things that Affect Initiative and Weapon Speed:*

**Proficiencies** (these are listed with the PreGen characters).

**Armor** (heavier armor types may impact a character's Initiative, but do not have an effect on Weapon Speed).

☛ **Good Attack and Defense Modifiers** are represented by Positive Numbers. A +1 is good, as that means you are either more adept at hitting or defending, based on what you are rolling for. A -1 is bad, as that means you'll be subtracting from your total roll in combat.

*Stats that Affect Attacking:* **Intelligence, Dexterity.**

*Other Things that Affect Attacking:* **Proficiencies.**

*Note that, unlike in conventional games, Strength has nothing to do with one's ability to-hit. A long-time player of RPGs may at first rebel against this concept, but consider the logic behind this designing choice. If you asked some hulking dude to chop off someone's head, would he have a better chance of success than someone who can actually calculate the best angle from which to strike? What is true is that the Hulking Dude would bury the sword deeper into the target, but muscle does not equal precision!*

*Stats that Affect Defending:* **Wisdom, Dexterity.**

*Other Things that Affect Defending:* **Proficiencies.**

**Shield use** (a shield allows a defender a bonus to his Defense roll, although using a shield means that the attacker can come within 10 of the Defense Roll and still deal ½ damage, while a shieldless defender is able to dodge any attack if he so much as ties the To-Hit Roll).

**Armor** (armor allows for damage reduction, -2 to Damage for leather, but is heavy and makes it more difficult to dodge a blow, causing the defender to add a -2 to his defense roll).

**Racial Bonuses:** halflings receive a +4 to Defense rolls; elves receive a +2.

In the **Advanced Game**, characters can have Talents which also improve their offensive and defensive abilities, and may also receive bonuses from high quality - and magical - items.

Once you have identified your stats and various bonuses, you need to simply fill them into the Combat Profile for your weapon of choice. (Or you can simply use the primary weapon of each PreGen and copy over each stat.)

| COMBAT PROFILE WITH WEAPON #1: |   |                               |                               |                               |                               |       |
|--------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------|
| TOTAL                          | Level                                   | Abilities                     | SPECIALIZATION                | Talents                       | RACIAL BONUS                  | Armor |
| Attack Bonus                   |   |                               |                               |                               |                               |       |
| Speed                          |   |                               |                               |                               |                               |       |
| Initiative                     |   |                               |                               |                               |                               |       |
| Defense                        |   |                               |                               |                               |                               |       |
| Damage                         |   |                               |                               |                               |                               |       |
| Base Weapon Speed: _____       |   | Base Weapon Damage: _____     |                               | Reach: _____                  |                               |       |
| Specialization                 | +1                                      | +2                            | +3                            | +4                            | +5                            |       |
| Attack                         | <input type="radio"/> (x BP)            | <input type="radio"/> (2x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (3x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (4x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (5x BP) |       |
| Speed                          | <input type="radio"/> (x BP)            | <input type="radio"/> (2x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (3x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (4x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (5x BP) |       |
| Defense                        | <input checked="" type="radio"/> (x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (2x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (3x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (4x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (5x BP) |       |
| Damage                         | <input type="radio"/> (x BP)            | <input type="radio"/> (2x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (3x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (4x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (5x BP) |       |
| Notes: _____                   |   |                               |                               |                               |                               |       |

Above is an example of what a Combat Profile looks like. There are many categories, such as Level, Abilities, Specialization, Talent, Racial Bonus, Armor, Shield and Magic. If you fill out a combat profile and leave a lot of blanks - don't worry. It's still very probably right. PreGen characters have the stats on their most commonly-used weapon already filled out via the Combat Profiles in their character descriptions.

#### Step 5 - Roll up your hit points and record miscellaneous stats (such as Honor or Luck points)

As with previous cases, you need only look at the information presented in the QuickStart PreGen section to identify various categories, such as whether or not your character has Honor (all), Luck (thieves), Spell Points (mages), and so-on.

#### Step 6 - Start killing things

'nuff said!





## Glossary

### Standard terms you need to know for any RPG

**Dice:** Polyhedron devices used to determine random outcomes. Most commonly, a six-sided dice (like what you find in a game of Monopoly) is a d6. In RPGs, common dice are d4's, d6's, d8's, d10's, d12's, and d20's.

**Gary Speak:** A stylistic narrative or "voice" written in an over-the-top manner as a style choice, often done with tongue in cheek, as inspired by the writing style of Gary Gygax, creator of D&D.

**GM, or Game Master:** The person who figures out scenarios and adventures for players to experience. He creates NPCs, develops plot twists, and is generally responsible for knowing the rules and coming up with things which interest the players.

**Mechanic:** A method of devising a scenario through the role of the dice. Every RPG is built around a system of mechanics in order to resolve combat, roleplay, skill checks and more.

**Player:** A participant in the game who preferably comes prepared with paper, pencils and food. It's not as important for the player to know the rules as the GM, but rules knowledge is definitely a plus.

**RPG, or Roleplaying Game:** A game in which you assume the role of a character, preferably a hero or perhaps a villain whose actions either gain him renown or get him brutally killed

**Roll:** The act of cupping a die – or dice – in one's hand and tossing it to the table with the intent of creating a random result. (I know, you're probably thinking "do they really think I don't know this" but, like we said, this is a comprehensive glossary of terms. Comprehensive.)

### General HackMaster terms

**Abilities:** A character's physical and mental limits. Ability scores encompass Strength, Intelligence, Wisdom, Dexterity, Constitution, Looks and Charisma and can range from a low of 3 to a high of 20. Characters with low ability scores may struggle to survive, while characters with high ability scores may suffer from the reckless, nearly-suicidal nature that accompanies the burden of having near-physical and mental perfection. (Pgs 5-12)

**Strength:** The physical measurement of how much you lift and how hard you can hit.

**Intelligence:** Your ability to retain information and your capability of calculating an object's point of weakness (or strength).

**Wisdom:** Your functional understanding of the way the world works, and your ability to anticipate an event which has yet to occur (such as a roundhouse right headed for your blind side).

**Dexterity:** Your reflexes and general physical flexibility.

**Constitution:** Your endurance and general toughness.

**Looks:** Your physical attractiveness.

**Charisma:** Your general physical magnetism (not attractiveness; as even hideous monsters can, at times, be oddly compelling) – people may be attracted to (or repelled from) you.

**Alignment:** A guideline for your character's ethics and behavior. In the Advanced Game, a character's alignment can span from

Lawful to Chaotic and Good to Evil (with Neutral in between). The Advanced Game has an elaborate guideline for what one's alignment means in game-terms. (Pg 29)

**Bennies:** Short for "benefits," this represents a positive bonus that a character receives due to its race or class. (Pg 4)

**Build Points:** The in-game reward for gaining experience, of which players also receive a large number at the beginning of character creation. These serve as a currency which players can spend to improve their skills or combat prowess. (Pg 4)

**Class:** Player Characters in HackMaster are classified based on their talents, specializations, and abilities. They can be thieves, fighters, mages or clerics. In the Advanced game, additional classes include rogues, assassins, barbarians, rangers, knights, paladins, fighter-thieves, fighter-mages, or mage-thieves. (Pg 4)

**Experience Points or EPs:** The intrinsic learning experience that you receive from surviving combat, defeating enemies, outthinking foes, figuring out secrets, diffusing traps, etc.. In the Advanced Game, the accumulation of EPs results in an increase in your character's level.

**Hit Points:** The total amount of damage that your character can take before dying or, in Advanced, falling unconscious. Hit point totals increase as you go up in levels. (Pg 4)

**Honor Points:** A tangible in-game reward for playing your character as you designed him. This is not honor in the traditional definition – if you created a vulgar, chaotic evil character with an inappropriate sense of humor, then you can be rewarded in-game for playing him as such. Accumulated honor points give you bonuses to your rolls (and even allows for a single free reroll each game), while a low honor score causes penalties to incur. (Pg 28)

**Level:** The total accumulated experience of your PC. As you gain experience points you increase in levels, resulting in an allotment of additional Build Points, Hit Points, and bonuses in combat. (Pg 29)

**Luck Points:** Similar to Honor, Luck is given to thieves in order to allow them a slightly increased chance of surviving should they roll poorly. While Luck does not regenerate, upon levelling up thieves receive 20 luck points plus their level. (Pg 28)

**Modifier:** A bonus or penalty that is added to a number of different kinds of rolls, including combat and skills checks. (Pg 31)

**NPC or Non-Player character:** A character created by the GameMaster. An NPC is not likely to have as detailed a background as a Player Character, however he should have a number of skills and abilities which make him unique.

**Opposed Roll:** The core mechanic of HackMaster. An Opposed Roll occurs when two-or-more opponents are attempting to triumph in either combat or a Skills check. (Pg 24)

**PC or Player Character:** A character created by a player. If a pre-gen is not used, this character is likely to be very randomized and have a number of quirks, flaws, talents, proficiencies and skills which, when combined, make him wholly unique. (Pg 4)



**PC Record Sheet:** The piece of paper in which you record all information about your character. (Pgs 30-31)

**Proficiencies:** Similar to a skill, differing in that there are no appreciably enhanced capabilities that accrue from additional mastery of the proficiency. Taking a proficiency ensures that you can capably perform the task to standard whereas untrained characters either cannot do so or suffer some (egregious) penalty. (Pgs 4-12, 30)

**Quirks and Flaws (or Q&Fs):** In the Advanced Game, Q&Fs are optional impediments that you can take for your character for the reward of additional Build Points. Quirks represent mental issues that your character has – from something as minor as being a late sleeper to something as major as being obsessive-compulsive. Flaws represent physical deficiencies, from something as minor as being colorblind to something as major as being totally blind. (Don't worry, you can reroll if you don't like a flaw that you received randomly.) (Pgs 4-12)

**Race:** Different species of human-like creatures, known also as demi-humans. Races include humans, elves, dwarves and halflings. In the Advanced game, races also include gnomes, gnome titans, grel (grunge elves), half-orcs, half-hobgoblins, half-elves and pixie-fairies. (Pgs 4-12)

**Skills:** Your character's ability to perform particular tasks is represented by a percentage mastery in its corresponding skill. Skill mastery can range from Unskilled to Master, depending on the amount in which a character has trained. (Pg 15-22)

**Specialization:** A specific area in a weapon in which your character has spent extra time training, which allows you bonuses to attacking, dealing damage, defense and weapon speed. (Pg 4-12)

**Spells:** Magical energy which is conjured through an evocation of words, while often incorporating materials and somatic gestures.

**Clerical Spells:** Divine magic which is given to clerics through their deities. A HackMaster cleric may pray for 1 spell per level each morning. Additional spells can be learned based on a cleric's Wisdom. Unlike a mage, the cleric does not suffer from Spell Fatigue after casting a spell. (Pgs 14-15)

**Mage Spells:** Arcane magic which is channelled through a mage. A HackMaster mage starts off knowing 1 Apprentice, 1 Journeyman, and 1 1st Level Spell. The total number of spells he can know per level is based on his Intelligence. A magic spell is not forgotten once cast, but may be cast repeatedly until the daily Spell Point total is exhausted. (Pgs 13-14)

**Spell Fatigue:** The aftermath of channelling magic. A mage who casts a spell suffers spell fatigue for 5 seconds plus the casting time. (Pg 28)

**Spell Points:** The origin of magical energies as channelled by HackMaster mages, who begin with 140 at 1st Level. As a mage increases in level, so increase his total number of spell points. (Pg 13)

**Talents:** An inherent knack of your character. A talent might include being naturally specialized in the use of a weapon, or having a tough hide, or being difficult to affect with magics or poisons. (Pgs 4-12, 30)

## HackMaster Rules Definitions

**Combat:** The final resolution between two opposing forces. Combat is fought either through ranged or melee battle. (Pg 25)

**Combat Profile:** Your character's overall ability to attack and defend himself. (Pgs 4-12, 31)

**Attack (Roll to Hit):** A modified number that you add to any dice roll To-Hit. This modifier can be a bonus (i.e., +1) or a penalty (i.e., -1) (Pg 26)

**Damage:** The amount of damage which is dealt by the weapon you are wielding, which often is modified by a bonus or penalty (i.e., 4d4p+4) (Pg 4-12)

**Damage Reduction:** When your character is attacked, your Damage Reduction represents the amount you subtract from your opponent's Damage roll. (i.e., if you are wearing leather armor, subtract 2 from any damage that is dealt to you. If your medium shield absorbs the hit, subtract an additional 6) (Pg 26)

**Defense (Defense Roll):** The modifier that you add to – or subtract from – any defensive roll while in a melee combat (Pg 26)

**Initiative Modifier:** The modifier that gives a bonus or penalty to when you can take your first action. Unlike most other modifiers, a negative number represents a bonus while a positive number represents a penalty (Pg 25)

**ToP Check:** A ToP check is ½ of your Constitution. When, in the Advanced game, you receive enough damage to force a ToP check, you must roll this number or beneath it in order to avoid falling to the ground, rolling around in pain (Pgs 28-29)

**Weapon Speed:** Your character's best chance to hit an opponent. It is implied that there are additional attacks between each roll to-hit (jabs, feints, strikes, etc.) which are ineffectual (Pg 26)

**Weapon Reach:** The length of your weapon. Length of weapon is important when combat is being initiated between two adversaries whose initiatives have been reached. The longest reach strikes first in this case (Pg 26)

**Count (or Count Up):** The second-by-second rate of action in which HackMaster combat is fought. Unless impeded (like, say, if he is surrounded or surprised) a PC can move on every second of combat. (Pg 25)

**Difficulty Modifier:** A number added to a Skill Check or Saving Throw which adds or detracts from a challenge's difficulty. (Pg 24)

**Engagement:** When one opponent is within jogging distance of striking another opponent, then these two forces are considered to be "engaged." At this point, they can only attack others or themselves based on their weapon speed. (Pg 26)

**Feat of Strength:** An Opposed test of strength in which a character attempts to move, lift or break a durable, heavy object. (Pg 24)

**Fighting Withdrawal:** Attempting to disengage from combat while moving at walking speed. For so long as he is attempting to break engagement, he suffers a -2 to his next hit. (Pg 26)

**Initiative:** A roll of dice (commonly a d4, d6, d8, d10 or d12) which determines how fast a character can act on the Count Up. (Pg 25)



**Knock Back:** When a character takes a certain amount of damage-based on his size, he is knocked back 5-or-more feet. (Pg 28)

**Magic:** See Spells.

**Melee Combat:** Fighting which occurs via handheld weapons, rather than ranged weapons. (Pg 26)

**Movement:** The number of feet in which a character can walk, jog, run or sprint in HackMaster. This total is often modified by the character's size as well as by the items he is carrying (Pg 26)

**Penetration:** A die with a "p" explodes when the maximum result is rolled (i.e., a 20 on a d20, a 12 on a d12 and so-on). This die is then re-rolled with the following result, minus 1, added to the total. A penetrating die can explode for so long as the maximum number is rolled. Note that any time a die roll is listed without a "p," then it is non-penetrating. (Pg 23)

**Ranged Combat:** Fighting which occurs from a distance via ranged weapons, rather than handheld weapons. (Pg 27)

**Cover Check/Cover Value:** When defending from a ranged attack with a shield, this is the total you must roll above in order for the arrow of an otherwise successful attack to strike your shield instead. (Pg 27)

**Ranged Attack:** See combat profile definition of Attack (Roll to Hit)

**Ranged Damage:** The amount of damage which is dealt by the weapon you are wielding, which is not modified by Ability scores

**Ranged Defense:** Any defensive roll while in a ranged combat. DEX and WIS bonuses are not applied unless you have the Dodge talent (this is not available in the QSG) (Pg 27)

**Size Modifier:** The bonus that is given to a combatant who is engaged in melee combat while fired upon by a ranged attacker. Pg 27)

**Saving Throw:** A roll of the dice – often measured against an Opposed Roll made by the GM – that determines if a character has survived against a magical or poisonous attempt to harm his person. (Pg 23)

**Skills Check:** A roll of a d100 to determine success in performing a task. The GM's duty is to arbitrate a difficulty level. If the player succeeds in rolling beneath the Difficulty Modifier, then he achieves his goal. (Pg 24)

**Opposed Skills Check:** A roll of a d100 between two-or-more PCs, or one-or-more PCs and one-or-more NPCs. In this situation, those competing to win the Skill Check must roll a d100 and add that result to their Skill Total. (i.e., if a PC with a Diplomacy of 40 rolled a 33, he'd add the roll to his skill for a total of 73.) (Pg 24)

**Surprise:** Surprise occurs when one opponent attacks another opponent who is unaware. The unaware opponent cannot adequately defend himself and must roll a d8 with no bonuses. (Pg 25)

**Threshold of Pain (ToP)/ToP Check:** The maximum amount of damage a character can take without being forced to make a ToP check. This is specifically in reference to damage taken, not damage dealt as it is assumed that armor will reduce the total amount of damage that is received by a defending target. (Pg 28-29)

**Wounds:** The amount of hit points you have lost from damage taken by combat or carelessness. Each wound is recorded separately on a character's PC Record Sheet, and each wound heals simultaneously at the same rate. (Pg 28)

## What's in the Full Game

A brief, incomplete list of Advanced rules that you may eventually wish to learn:

- More than 100 Quirks and Flaws that you may roll for randomly or cherry-pick for your character
- A comprehensive Priors and Particulars section that aids you in developing a detailed backstory for your character
- Detailed rules on Alignment, Honor, Fame and Luck
- An extensive list of weapons and gear
- An extensive list of magical potions, scrolls, items and weapons
- Dozens of Skills, Proficiencies and Talents
- Extensive information on more than a dozen Clerical classes
- Combat rules for hand-to-hand fighting
- Detailed combat rules for a number of tactical maneuvers that make combat fluid and realistic, including Charges, Aggressive Attacks, Full Parry, and many others
- Mounted combat rules
- Rules on death and dying
- Human body shields!
- More than half a dozen fighting styles, from Weapon and Shield to Shield Only
- Called shot rules
- A Critical Hits chart and Critical Fumbles unlike any other
- Hundreds of Mage and Clerical spells
- Rules on Hirelings, Followers, Cronies, Henchmen, Sidekicks, Mentors, Hangers On and other NPCs
- And much, much more





# KOBOLD

Also Known As: Dovurin

I've heard plenty of explorers boast about slaying kobolds. They say the critters are nothing but sword fodder; they're just nuisances that get in the way of the big game, and so on. Well, that's not wrong, but that's fighting man talk – a thief's perspective is different.

See, I'm in this business for the loot, not the battle. A good job is when I can slip across an open courtyard under cover of darkness, shimmy up a wall, slip along through dimly-lit corridors and hide in shadows until I reach the treasury. Then I just pick the lock, grab the goods and make my way out again without being detected. I don't need to bloody my blade at all.

Guards are usually the greatest variable. In my experience, most wealthy folk figure that the bigger a guard is, the fewer they need. Well, that just makes it easier for me. There's less pairs of eyes and ears that might spot me.

With kobolds, though, there's always so damn many of them. As soon as you alert one, it starts howling and yowling for reinforcements and pretty soon you've got a whole pack nipping at you. Then there's the fact that you're not just hiding from their eyes or sneaking past their ears. They've got a pretty good sense of smell, and a mere whiff of your scent might send them curiously trotting over to see what the new odor is. I recommend rubbing yourself with lemon juice or spices like red pepper. From my experience, they don't much care for those.

True, they don't have much worth robbing on their own, but dark wizards and other near-human monsters sometimes keep them as slaves to guard their lairs. Many's the time I've stumbled across a pack of kobolds where I least expected them. After all, you expect to find kobolds in a kobold den, but if you don't (or can't) reconnoiter properly, you won't expect them in that mage's tower or some other odd location. Remember – always do the best scouting you can! – ✱



*These clever dog men often shy away from a straight-on fight and rely heavily on tricks and traps.*

**K** The smallest of the humanoid races, this hairless canid stands a mere 3 feet tall and weighs in at about 40 to 50 pounds. A kobold has a short, canine snout, largish ears and two small, impish bone protrusions or rounded horns adorn the top of his head. Its mouth contains a full set of sharp, lupine teeth used to eat raw meat, but are not large enough to be used effectively in combat (other than in a near-perfect defense situation). Its front limbs end in a strange combination of vestigial paw pads, four fingers (ending in small pads) and a dew claw along the wrist. It stands bipedal so that its odd hand-paw combinations can be used to hold tools and wield weapons. A kobold's long, snaky, hairless

tail, which helps balance the creature, ends in a devilish point. Skin is dark brown, reddish brown or black. Kobold eyes are dark brown with large black pupils.

Kobolds make their dens in burrows, natural caves and gloomy woodlands. They prefer hilly landscapes with marshy valleys, but also live in mountainous terrain, bleak swamplands and lightly wooded meadowlands (where they will likely dig an underground burrow). Sometimes kobolds can be found in the Netherdeep, but they dislike mining and are not suited to that type of labor and the underground lifestyle, despite their natural low-light vision.

These creatures hate all other sentient life forms, but in

SIGN/TRACKS



RANGE ON TELLENE



SIZE COMPARISON





particular, they hate halflings, whom they attack on sight in preference to other targets. Sages tend to believe it is jealousy over the halfling success with canine labor on their farms and occasionally as mounts that breeds this intense hatred. Their choice of habitat also frequently brings them into conflict with gnomes, although, they dislike them slightly less than their portly cousins, but still attack them on sight. They also despise pixie-fairies, brownies, leprechauns and all small fairy and pixie-kin, and seek to capture and torture such creatures.

Kobolds dislike humans and their demi-human allies, and seek to harm them if given an opportunity with reasonably low risk. They even hate other humanoids, as those races tend to enslave and/or eat kobolds when the groups meet, even if they begin a venture as cooperative equals against a mutual foe. Gnoles are the sole exception; kobolds relate well to them as gnoles apparently dislike the taste of kobold and thus generally leave them alone after joint raids. Kobolds, like gnoles, are not far along the evolutionary path beyond animals.

Like gnomes, they enjoy the company of wild animals and can communicate directly with them. Unlike gnomes, kobolds are particularly interested in predators; foremost being dogs and weasels of all types. They are quite skilled at breeding and training them for various activities, often giving the animal free reign among the den or lair. As to the cute, smaller woodland creatures, kobolds enjoy torturing, then devouring them.

Because of their small size and quickness, kobolds are rather difficult to hit cleanly. That said, once a blow hits, it usually causes considerable effect as, owing to their undersized stature, kobolds have few Hit Points and an easily-overcome Threshold of Pain. Further, their natural hide only affords one point of Damage Reduction, and their armors tend to be thick tunics with padding sewn in or bits and pieces of animal hide (typically layers of squirrel or rabbit skins) providing just one additional point of damage protection (but easily donned in but d6p seconds). Kobolds are physically weak by human standards and suffer a -3 penalty to damage, a reason why they prefer light crossbows if they can find them. Their short arms result in poor Reach against all but equally tiny foes.

Favorite weaponry includes short swords, clubs, daggers, short spears, hand axes, small morning stars, short bows, javelins and light crossbows. Kobold hunting and war parties look for easy prey and shy away from heavily armed and armored foes unless it appears they have the upper hand.

For every 20 kobolds there is a pack leader with the equivalent of studded leather armor, a human-made weapon, a 1-point penalty to Damage (instead of -3) and 15+d6 Hit Points.

If 100 or more are encountered, there are an additional 3d12p pack leaders plus an alpha-female (with the same

## KOBOLD

|                 |              |
|-----------------|--------------|
| HIT POINTS:     | 13+d4        |
| SIZE/WEIGHT:    | 5/40-50 lbs. |
| TENACITY:       | Nervous      |
| INTELLIGENCE:   | Slow         |
| FATIGUE FACTOR: | -1/0         |

### MOVEMENT

|         |    |
|---------|----|
| CRAWL:  | 1¼ |
| WALK:   | 2½ |
| JOG:    | 5  |
| RUN:    | 7½ |
| SPRINT: | 10 |

### SAVES

|           |    |
|-----------|----|
| PHYSICAL: | +2 |
| MENTAL:   | +1 |
| DODGE:    | +2 |

|                                      |                              |                      |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>SPEED</b><br>6                    | <b>ATTACK</b><br>+2          | <b>INIT</b><br>3     |
| <b>DEFENSE</b><br>+4                 | <b>DAMAGE REDUCTION</b><br>2 | <b>DAMAGE</b><br>4   |
| <b>REACH</b><br>by weapon<br>-1 foot | <b>by weapon</b><br>-3       | <b>TOP SAVE</b><br>▲ |

### ATTACK:

Most kobolds attack with daggers (2d4p-3 due to low Strength) but may wield other weapons, especially short swords.

### SPECIAL DEFENSES:

Shield use (e.g., small shields increase Defense to +8); Kobolds have a natural (unarmored) DR of 1

## GENERAL INFO

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| ACTIVITY CYCLE:   | Crepuscular                                    |
| NO. APPEARING:    | 2-8 (hunting); 3d4p+8 (warband); 20d20p (clan) |
| % CHANCE IN LAIR: | 35%  |
| FREQUENCY:        | Frequent                                       |
| ALIGNMENT:        | Lawful Evil                                    |
| VISION TYPE:      | Low Light Vision                               |
| AWARENESS/SENSES: | Excellent <sup>1</sup>                         |
| HABITAT:          | Burrows, caves, trees and buildings            |
| DIET:             | Omnivorous                                     |
| ORGANIZATION:     | Pack   |
| CLIMATE/TERRAIN:  | Any, save arctic                               |

## YIELD

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| MEDICINAL:              | nil   |
| SPELL COMPONENTS:       | nil   |
| HIDE/TROPHY:            | none worthy of a hero                                     |
| TREASURE:               | 3d8p trade coins each <sup>2</sup> ; various junk in lair |
| EDIBLE:                 | yes, but tastes like gamey dog meat                       |
| OTHER:                  | nil   |
| EXPERIENCE POINT VALUE: | 17  |



stats) and an alpha-male (size Medium, 20+d8 Hit Points and no penalties to Damage).

If 300 or more are encountered, the pack leader is 5 feet tall, and has combat statistics that approximate that of a gnomel.

Kobolds rarely have witch-doctors, with only a 10% chance of one existing in the tribe. If so, he is a mage of moderately low level (roll a d12p-4 and divide by 2 for level, with results less than one equal to one).

Kobolds make lousy miners, but can mine if required or forced. They are generally incapable of properly working a smithy, whether armor, weapon or black (the only kobold smiths known are from the legendary kobold city of Shrogga-Pravaaz). All of their tools and weapons are either stolen or crafted from wood or stone or from parts of captured implements. They craft most of their weapons from wood and are fair-to-poor bowyers and fletchers, but they excel at weaving wicker items and can make adequately-performing shields from sticks as well as baskets and the like. They are surprisingly capable at building traps using natural surroundings, such as pits covered in sticks and leaves, vine traps, swinging logs and so on, but lack the skill to engineer homes (other than digging burrows, which they accomplish by hand sans tools).

When not chopping or killing plant life out of spite, kobolds are actually very good at nurturing them; they make decent farmers and grow their own crops to supplement their diet 35% of the time. They can also cultivate locally-native brambles and thorny briars, trimming them to fit their usage.

### **Combat/Tactics:**

These scrappy little curs have an obvious disadvantage in combat due to their size. They prefer to lie in wait and ambush enemies, pelting them with arrows or bolts, and then fleeing through the underbrush. Sometimes they intentionally lay down tracks hoping to lure the unwary into a kill zone or elaborate trap. If forced into combat, they will fight savagely with small, wicked swords and daggers, or short spears. They can employ shields, generally of poor construction or of the wicker variety (DR4; useless after one battle) and do so to avoid suffering the full force of a blow or to catch ranged attacks. Kobolds are cowardly and try to use numbers to surround their foes.

Those facing the front of enemies put on a full defense, while those at the unguarded flank or behind nip or hack at the heels of their foes. If an enemy turns to attack their assailants, they change roles, harrying from the back whenever possible. When armed with spears, kobolds also attack from the back rank, easily poking over the heads of their allies and at the torso and head of larger opponents.

Kobolds have plenty of savage pets bred and trained to fearlessly attack their enemies and for use as an alarm system. Kobolds can communicate with these animals across long distances using yips, howls and barks of various sorts. They can also use body language for non-verbal

communication if within line-of-sight, although this latter method can convey little more than emotion and danger.

Kobold favorites include weasels and dogs. They are 60% likely to have 2d4p wild dogs, 30% likely to have bred and trained 50% of them to become full-fledged war dogs; 70% likely to have 2d12p weasels; 35% likely to have 2d4p giant weasels; and 50% likely to have d4p wild boars (roll for each independently; they are not mutually exclusive). They use these animals as watch dogs/sentries, scouts, guards and shock troops. Such beasts are often more dangerous to the invader than the kobolds themselves.

### **Habitat/Society:**

Kobolds prefer to dwell in hillside burrows, natural near-surface cave formations, dismal swamps and thickets and gnarly forests with plenty of tangled underbrush. However, their top preference is to live in an abandoned or captured halfling or gnome community; after all, the best burrow is one dug by another. They even occupy formerly cozy cottages if available. As a last resort, they dig their own burrow or build a shelter of some sort for their pack.

Kobolds share their dwellings with their pets, including boars, so they are thick with the stench of animal filth, fur and the remains of kills. Aside from food preparation tables and piles of hides used as bedding, kobold lairs are unfurnished with the sole exception of any accessories captured from gnomes or halflings (including the entire lair itself in some cases). Kobolds have no appreciation for beauty and art and toss such items aside, mark it or worse.

From their lair, kobolds launch raids and send hunting parties to the surrounding territory in search of plunder and game (in that order). Kobolds mark their home territory by leaving fecal and urine scent traces on trees, bushes, rocks and the like. They harass invaders relentlessly, but may not attack aggressively, unless they believe themselves to have the upper hand.

Kobolds have a surprisingly structured social order, with the alpha-male and alpha-female in charge of the community. Each pack consists of several extended families of kobolds, working as an integrated whole. While it is their nature to bully and enslave others, this orderly social structure and relatively peaceful order is required for such weak beings to survive in the face of opposition from larger, more powerful creatures.

Kobolds have their own language and can converse with gnomes. They are 30% likely to also speak one or more of the neighboring human, demi-human and/or humanoid languages, depending on who lives in proximity, whether ally or foe. Aside from verbal language, Kobolds also communicate with each other, with gnomes, and with other canids, by visual gestures and movements, by scent signals (left by urine, for example), and by vocalizations such as yips, barks, howls, growls and yowls. Kobolds can communicate with their pets in a similar manner. Note, relations of these types are limited to emotions and simple things such as food, water,



danger and so on, including information about interlopers.

Kobolds live to be about 40 years old, although some venerable ones have lived to be 65 or more. Bitches comprise 50% of the population, fighting and sharing work with male sires, but not quite as equals. Sires are slightly larger than bitches, but aside from an inch in height and 3 to 5 pounds of weight, and the two rows of four to five nipples running down the she-torso, are otherwise indistinguishable.

Most bitches have a short mating season in late fall and bear young once a year in early spring, the typical gestation period being approximately 140 days. Litters range from 4 to 12, but typically only two to four will survive to adulthood. The young are born small and helpless and require weaning for a solid 16 weeks.

The infant mortality rate is very high, with the runts suffering until being killed by the others. The mother keeps the surviving pups in a den, most often dug into the ground for warmth and protection from the various trained animals that might eat the young if given the chance.

Until they can begin eating solid food, adults of both sexes regurgitate their meals so that the pups can lap up the half-digested foods. When they begin eating solid food, both parents and other pack members bring food back for them from the hunt. These young canids may take anywhere from 16 to 24 months to grow enough to fight for scraps among the rest of the pack. By six years they are fully grown and sexually mature.

In the female group, the oldest has alpha status over the others, so a mother retains her alpha status over her daughters until she is too weak to maintain dominance, usually around 35 years of age. For the males, in contrast, the youngest male or the sire of the other males is the strongest and most dominant. Dominance is established largely without bloodshed, as most kobolds know their place in the hierarchy, but sometimes fights to the death result from challenges. Most kobolds are cowardly enough to avoid this situation – a needed result since kobolds require superior numbers to compete effectively with the other sentient races.

### **Ecology:**

Kobolds occupy the lowest rung on the power ladder of the sentient races. Most humanoid races consider them food or slaves, while the demi-human races regard them a nuisance to be exterminated. Because of this, they have learned to keep a tight-knit, organized group. If kobolds ever get the upper hand on any race or being, they take advantage of it, killing, maiming, torturing or capturing the creature with glee. The entire pack comes out to defile the prisoner with a wide variety of bodily fluids. Kobolds always attack halflings and gnomes on sight and with great prejudice, seldom taking prisoners, but sure to bring home a carcass if possible.

Kobolds prefer the company of their own kind and their pets, but some kobold packs trade with nearby humanoid neighbors (usually goblins and occasionally gnoles, if they

happen to have anything decent to trade). They avoid bugbears for that race inevitably enslaves any kobold visitors in the area.

Sometimes they even trade with hobgoblins and orcs. Although the latter can be almost as bad as bugbears, they are not as apt to set successful ambushes and are generally too clumsy in thought and deed to pose a similar threat. They avoid grel and are deathly afraid of grevans, although that latter race generally ignores kobolds (considering them noncombatants at best and mere weak animals at worst).

### **Subraces:**

While the majority of this entry covers the standard kobold, there is one subrace of kobold that bears mentioning – the primitive kobold. These beasts actually have a fur coat and are only found in very remote locations; they never appear in warmer-than-temperate climes. One variety even wears a thick, white fur coat and inhabits mountaintops and other frigid locations.

Primitive kobolds are a tad bigger than the common kobold, having 15+d6 Hit Points, but are still size Small. They are also stronger than standard kobolds (with only -1 Damage), but do not use weapons beyond javelins, clubs and spears and do not employ shields. They are otherwise similar to standard kobolds.

### **Religion:**

Kobolds tend, like their alignment, towards the lawful evil religions, with the god being worshipped often depending on the pack's status among other local creatures. For instance, where kobolds rule themselves, the Overlord is a favorite, but when kobolds are slaves they seem to prefer the Corruptor or the Flaymaster. The Dark One is rarely worshipped.

### **On Tellene:**

Kobolds have many small communities dispersed throughout the known lands, generally living in the hills on the fringes of human society, near halfling or gnomish settlements so they can most easily steal livestock and other valuables from the outlying farmhouses. Kobolds live in more remote areas as well, especially when driven out of a civilized area by a determined force. The two largest known packs are in the Arajyd Hills, and the wealthy city-state of Shrogga-Pravaaz, which is completely controlled and run by kobolds.

<sup>1</sup>Kobolds have an excellent sense of smell and hearing, along with eyesight designed to detect motion, but cannot perceive all colors and can only taste salts.

<sup>2</sup>Kobolds carry 3d8p local trade coins each. Their lairs can contain small amounts of wealth in the form of trade, copper coins (in the thousands), gems, and many mundane items taken in raids.



## Character Record

Character: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Level: \_\_\_\_\_ Alignment: \_\_\_\_\_

Race: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_ Hair: \_\_\_\_\_ Eyes: \_\_\_\_\_

Patron God(s): \_\_\_\_\_ (Anointed? Y ☐ N ☐) Handedness: \_\_\_\_\_

## ABILITIES

|                             |            |              |              |                    |             |            |
|-----------------------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------|-------------|------------|
| / %                         | <b>STR</b> | DMG. MOD.    | FEAT OF STR. | LIFT (LBS)         | CARRY (LBS) | DRAG (LBS) |
| / %                         | <b>INT</b> | ATTACK MOD.  |              |                    |             |            |
| / %                         | <b>WIS</b> | INIT MOD.    | DEFENSE MOD. |                    |             |            |
| / %                         | <b>DEX</b> | INIT MOD.    | ATTACK MOD.  | DEFENSE MOD.       |             |            |
| / %                         | <b>CON</b> |              |              |                    |             |            |
| / %                         | <b>LKS</b> |              |              |                    |             |            |
| / %                         | <b>CHA</b> | TURNING MOD. |              |                    |             |            |
| <b>Honor</b>                |            | HON WINDOW   |              | HON PENALTY WINDOW |             |            |
| HONOR BONUSES OR PENALTIES: |            |              |              |                    |             |            |

## Armor Worn

Body: \_\_\_\_\_ (damage reduction = \_\_\_\_)

Shield: \_\_\_\_\_ (+ \_\_\_\_ defense, absorbs \_\_\_\_ hp)

## ASSOCIATES/ALLIES/CONTACTS:

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ACCUMULATED  
BUILDING POINTS

## EXPERIENCE

FOR NEXT LEVEL:

2ND = 400

3RD = 1200

4TH = 2200

5TH = 3400

## COMBAT PROFILE WITH WEAPON #1:

| TOTAL        | LEVEL | ABILITIES | SPECIALIZATION | TALENTS | RACIAL BONUS | ARMOR | SHIELD | MAGIC |
|--------------|-------|-----------|----------------|---------|--------------|-------|--------|-------|
| Attack Bonus |       |           |                |         |              |       |        |       |
| Speed        |       |           |                |         |              |       |        |       |
| Initiative   |       |           |                |         |              |       |        |       |
| Defense      |       |           |                |         |              |       |        |       |
| Damage       |       |           |                |         |              |       |        |       |

Base Weapon Speed: \_\_\_\_\_ Base Weapon Damage: \_\_\_\_\_ Reach: \_\_\_\_\_

| Specialization | +1                           | +2                            | +3                            | +4                            | +5                            |
|----------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Attack         | <input type="radio"/> (x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (2x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (3x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (4x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (5x BP) |
| Speed          | <input type="radio"/> (x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (2x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (3x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (4x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (5x BP) |
| Defense        | <input type="radio"/> (x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (2x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (3x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (4x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (5x BP) |
| Damage         | <input type="radio"/> (x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (2x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (3x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (4x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (5x BP) |

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

## COMBAT PROFILE WITH WEAPON #2:

| TOTAL        | LEVEL | ABILITIES | SPECIALIZATION | TALENTS | RACIAL BONUS | ARMOR | SHIELD | MAGIC |
|--------------|-------|-----------|----------------|---------|--------------|-------|--------|-------|
| Attack Bonus |       |           |                |         |              |       |        |       |
| Speed        |       |           |                |         |              |       |        |       |
| Initiative   |       |           |                |         |              |       |        |       |
| Defense      |       |           |                |         |              |       |        |       |
| Damage       |       |           |                |         |              |       |        |       |

Base Weapon Speed: \_\_\_\_\_ Base Weapon Damage: \_\_\_\_\_ Reach: \_\_\_\_\_

| Specialization | +1                           | +2                            | +3                            | +4                            | +5                            |
|----------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Attack         | <input type="radio"/> (x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (2x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (3x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (4x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (5x BP) |
| Speed          | <input type="radio"/> (x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (2x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (3x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (4x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (5x BP) |
| Defense        | <input type="radio"/> (x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (2x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (3x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (4x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (5x BP) |
| Damage         | <input type="radio"/> (x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (2x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (3x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (4x BP) | <input type="radio"/> (5x BP) |

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Specialization cost depends on class. Replace 'x' with these values based on character class: 5 Fighter, 7 Thief, 8 Cleric & 10 Mage

## HIT POINTS:

| POINTS   | DAYS TO HEAL | POINTS    | DAYS TO HEAL |
|----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| Wound #1 |              | Wound #6  |              |
| Wound #2 |              | Wound #7  |              |
| Wound #3 |              | Wound #8  |              |
| Wound #4 |              | Wound #9  |              |
| Wound #5 |              | Wound #10 |              |

## PREVIOUS HIT POINT ROLL:

| LEVEL | SPRINTS AVAILABLE |
|-------|-------------------|
| Appr. | _____             |
| Jrnm. | _____             |
| 1     | _____             |
| 2     | _____             |
| 3     | _____             |
| 4     | _____             |
| 5     | _____             |

Luck Points

Threshold of Pain

## SPELLS MEMORIZED\*

| LEVEL               | SPELL(S)                 | Base BP                  | Range                    | Area                     | Speed                    | Duration                 | Damage                   |
|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| APPRENTICE          | _____                    |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| JOURNEYMAN          | _____                    |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| 1                   | _____                    |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| 2                   | _____                    |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| 3                   | _____                    |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| 4                   | _____                    |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| 5                   | _____                    |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| TOTAL SPELL POINTS  | _____                    |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| SPELL POINT TRACKER |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| TENS                | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/>    |
| SINGLES             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

\*Clerics do not have Apprentice or Journeyman level spells nor do they employ Spell Points. Deal with it.



| TREASURE STOWED (in packs, bags, etc.) |    |    |    |          |
|--|----|----|----|----------|
| TRADE COINS                            | CP | SP | GP | LOCATION |
|  |    |    |    |          |
|  |    |    |    |          |
|  |    |    |    |          |

| PROFICIENCIES |
|---------------|
|               |
|               |
|               |
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|                         |
|-------------------------|
| <b>GEMS:</b>            |
|                         |
|                         |
|                         |
| <b>JEWELRY:</b>         |
|                         |
|                         |
|                         |
| <b>OTHER VALUABLES:</b> |
|                         |
|                         |
|                         |

| QUIRKS & FLAWS | ROLE-PLAYING NOTES: |
|----------------|---------------------|
|                |                     |
|                |                     |

| TALENTS & RACIAL ABILITIES | BENEFITS: |
|----------------------------|-----------|
|                            |           |
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|                            |           |
|                            |           |
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|                            |           |
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|                            |           |

| LANGUAGES | MASTERY LEVEL | LITERATE?                |
|-----------|---------------|--------------------------|
|           |               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|           |               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|           |               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|           |               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|           |               | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Magic Items or Spell Component(s) | Effects/Notes |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|
|                                   |               |
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| Mundane Item | Location | Mundane Item | Location |
|--------------|----------|--------------|----------|
|              |          |              |          |
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|  |  |                            |  |         |                     |                |
|--|--|----------------------------|--|---------|---------------------|----------------|
| <b>S<br/>K<br/>I<br/>L<br/>L<br/>S</b> | <b>Universal Skills</b>                                      | <b>Mastery<sup>†</sup></b> | Interrogation (Wis, Cha)   | _____ % | <b>Other Skills</b> | <b>Mastery</b> |
|  | Acting (Lks, Cha)  | _____ %                    | Intimidation (Str, Cha)  | _____ % |                     | _____ %        |
|  | Animal Husbandry (Wis)                                       | _____ %                    | Listening (Wis)  | _____ % |                     | _____ %        |
|  | Animal Mimicry (Wis)   | _____ %                    | Observation (Wis)  | _____ % |                     | _____ %        |
|  | Boating (Wis)  | _____ %                    | Pick Pocket (Dex)  | _____ % |                     | _____ %        |
|  | Cartography* (Int)   | _____ %                    | Reading Lips (Int)   | _____ % |                     | _____ %        |
|  | Climbing/Rappelling (Str, Dex)                               | _____ %                    | Recruiting (Cha)   | _____ % |                     | _____ %        |
|  | Current Affairs (Wis)  | _____ %                    | Resist Persuasion (Wis)  | _____ % |                     | _____ %        |
|  | Diplomacy (Cha)  | _____ %                    | Rope Use (Dex)   | _____ % |                     | _____ %        |
|  | Disguise (Int, Cha)  | _____ %                    | Salesmanship (Int, Wis, Cha)   | _____ % |                     | _____ %        |
|  | Distraction (Cha)  | _____ %                    | Seduction, Art of (Cha, Lks)   | _____ % |                     | _____ %        |
|  | Escape Artist (Int, Dex)                                     | _____ %                    | Sneaking (Dex)   | _____ % |                     | _____ %        |
|  | Fire-Building (Wis)  | _____ %                    | Survival (Wis, Con)  | _____ % |                     | _____ %        |
|  | Glean Info. (Int, Wis, Cha)                                  | _____ %                    | Torture (Int)  | _____ % |                     | _____ %        |
|  | Hiding (Int, Dex)  | _____ %                    | Tracking (Wis)   | _____ % |                     | _____ %        |
|  | * Cartography is Universal for those with the Literacy skill |                            | † Mastery is equal to lowest relevant ability unless additional BP spent |         |                     |                |