

OPENQUEST

3RD EDITION

Preview

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Note this is an unedited preview, and will change before final publication.

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(Which is a long winded way of saying, don't use the new OQ content as OGC yet ;))

INTRODUCTION

ETHELRED SIGHTS LAND

Ethelred the Reckless stands tall at the prow of the dwarven steamship as it plunges over the waves. He gazes across the grey sea before him, acutely conscious he and his companions are far from the comforts of home. His youth and inexperience are hiding beneath fine mail armour and a full metal helm, and at his hip rides his father's longsword. Beside him, the ship's Master, Wuzan, stares through his magic looking glass as the imp-driven paddles of the iron-hulled 'Black Bess' drive them towards their final destination, an uncharted island of which they have heard only rumours.

"Land ahoy!" shouts Wuzan. Ethelred's companions rush to the fore and push Wuzan aside. The hopes and expectations of each are excited by the vision of the black line slowly expanding to take its place across the horizon.

The slender sorceress, Lura, sees through the mists that shroud the island. She dreams of the ancient and magical knowledge left behind by the Old Empire. Her quest to become the world's greatest living sorcerer seems achievable at last.

Beside her stands Mancala, the illegitimate son of a senator. He clenches his jaw as he gazes upon the land and fingers the hilt of his sword. Foremost in his mind is the revenge he will soon have upon his father's murderer, a renegade hiding on the island.

Behind them, more-polite but still excited, stands Abnon, an austere, grey-robed priest. His thoughts are only of the evil he must slay and the souls he will save when he steps off the boat into this godless and forsaken land.

Ethelred's simple dreams of riches and glory are interrupted by a frustrated yell and the sound of swooping wings. A huge flying reptile dips down and scrapes the starboard hull of the Black Bess with razor-sharp talons. It rises again into the sky and a dark green shape that blots out the sun.

Ethelred turns to face Wuzan. "Dragon?" he asks.

"No! A wyvern! Out for food for its young on yonder coast, no doubt," replies the hardened sea dwarf. He points towards the coastline where forbidding cliffs reach for the sky.

The wyvern lazily banks, then gains speed as it swoops over the waist of the ship. The dwarven deckhands scatter across the main deck, thankful it has missed once more. Ethelred watches as it soars into the sky, fascinated by its graceful, slender form. It has a green, snake-like body as long as the ship. Two leathery wings, halfway down its length, are slightly in front of a pair of sturdy legs with razor-sharp talon claws. Its long, serpentine tail ends in a vicious crown of spikes.

Ethelred's trance ends as the wyvern cuts short its circling doubles back and dives straight towards the group standing at the prow!

So, What Do You Do Now?

If this were a novel or a movie we'd be reading or seeing what the author or director intends to happen next to Ethelred and his companions. Perhaps how the dwarfen captain is snatched up by the wyvern as Ethelred, Lura, Mancala and Abnon come to their senses and prepare to fight the wyvern in a suitably epic battle? But we're not passively reading this in a book or sitting on the sofa watching the screen and thinking 'I wouldn't do that!'. You are seated around a table with three of your friends who are taking the roles of Lura, Mancala and Abnon while another friend, who is the appointed Referee, has just finished describing the dive of the wyvern. The above scene is a description from a roleplaying game, and your Referee is asking you as the player, playing the role of Ethelred:

"So what do you do now?"

How do you answer? That's for you to decide. Ethelred is your character in the game.

Perhaps...

- Ethelred pulls out his sword and steels himself to face the diving wyvern?
- Or maybe he prepares a spell to distract the beast while everyone escapes into the metal hold of the steamship?
- Or cowardly Ethelred grabs Lura and shouts to the wyvern 'Eat her instead of me!'?

It's up to you. You can tell the Referee whatever you want based upon what you know about Ethelred's abilities and personality, and then you and the Referee narrate the result of your decision. Play and the story continue, with more decisions, rewards and risks, until the adventure comes to its natural conclusion, and everybody agrees the story is over.

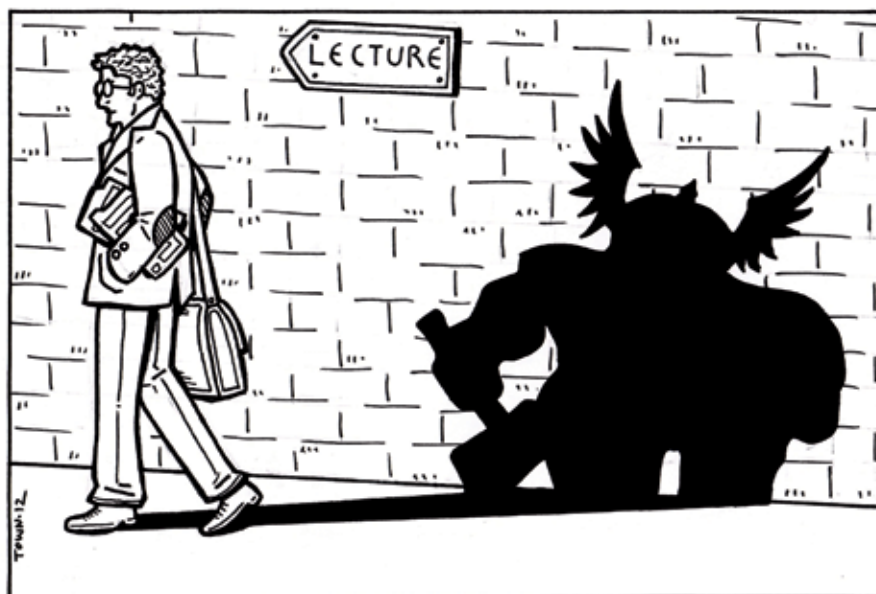
HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Players should skim read chapters one to seven and then get stuck in and work through character generation to create a character.

The Referee is the final arbiter on game rulings. Therefore, they should skim through the entire book and then read in detail chapters two (Character generation), three (Skills), four (Equipment), five (Combat), six (The Quest), and seven (Battle Magic). Read other chapters when they arise in play. For example, you only need to read sections of the Divine Magic chapter in detail if either the players or creatures are using magic from that chapter. If all the characters are beginners who only know a smattering of Battle Magic, and are facing opponents of similar skill, then you need not burden yourself with memorising this long and detailed chapter.

As well as the main rules text, there are also examples and asides, which further illustrate and explain the rules in play. Also dotted around the main rules text are 'Referee's Advice' highlight boxes, which describe what the Referee should know about that rule. The players are free to read these as well, to gain a deeper understanding of the game.

Some of the rules flagged up as '*Optional*'. Players and the Referee should decide which of these '*Optional*' rules to use in the game before the start of play.



Off to the realm of imagination

WHAT'S THIS FANTASY ROLEPLAYING GAME ABOUT?

OpenQuest is a game of fantasy adventure. It takes place in the imagination of its players, in worlds where dragons live, and magic exists and works! The players can take on the roles of brave warriors, crafty thieves, mysterious sorcerers and any other type of fantasy character.

There's a massive hint in the name "Open" + "Quest".

"Open". Since this is a game, there are rules to guide play when the outcome of a character's actions is less than sure. In OpenQuest, these rules are kept to a minimum and are straightforward to understand, to make the game run smoothly and keep the players' options as 'open' as possible. Also, the 'Open' part of the name is a way of flagging up the fact that the rules are available under the Open Gaming License. This licence means you can re-write and release the text to form the basis of your games even for commercial purposes.

"Quest". Players go on adventures via their in-game alter egos, known as characters, who gain fame, fortune, and achieve their personal goals. These 'quests' which are the focus of play, involve danger and risk in the form of villains, monsters, traps and dangerous locations.

There are two types of players in OpenQuest.

The players. Who each take on the role of a single character, known as a player character or simply character. This character becomes their alter ego in the fantasy world they are playing in and has a set of numbers that describe their abilities, written down on a character sheet. Otherwise, they exist only in the imagination of the player and come to life during the game. How elaborate and different from the player this character becomes is up to the player and is the very essence of roleplaying.

The Referee. Who is in charge of running the fantasy world and the non-player characters that the characters encounter during their adventures.

Typically the Referee describes the scene that the characters find themselves in, including details of the location and the non-player characters that are present and what they are doing. The players take turns in describing their characters actions, and the Referee tells them the results.

See the example at the end of the chapter to see how the game plays.

FEATURES OF THE RULES

FLEXIBLE CHARACTER CREATION AND ADVANCEMENT

In OpenQuest, you decide what your character will be like and choose the skills, weapons and magic that they are proficient. As the character grows during play, the player chooses which areas the character should advance in. At no point does the character get tied down to a set path determined by the boundaries of a predefined character type or class.

PERCENTILE ROLLS

The core game mechanic is the percentile roll. The character's chance to succeed at any given task give as a percentage.

For example, Ethelred, the Reckless's chance to hit with his Sword is 55%. To see if Ethelred hits with his sword in combat, two ten-sided dice of different colours thrown together with one as tens and one as units (known as a D100), and the result compared against the skill value. If Ethelred's player character rolls equal or less to 55% on a D100 then Ethelred hits, more than 55% Ethelred misses. The skill test procedure also applies to non-combat skills as well.

SIMPLICITY

While other D100 roleplaying games modify the chance of success by adding a 10% here and taking a 5% away there, OpenQuest avoids this complexity. If a roll is modified, then it is by adding a meaningfully huge modifier, such as 20% or even 50%. Not only does this remove the number of fiddly additions and subtractions, players have to do, but it means that when modifiers are meaningful and have a significant effect on play.

Other D100 roleplaying games may also ask a player to roll not once but twice to attempt some tasks, as far as possible OpenQuest tries to keep dice rolling down to a bare minimum so that the system stays in the background and the players and Referee can enjoy their storytelling and roleplay.

RISKY AND DANGEROUS COMBAT

Weapon and armour rules are kept to a minimum to preserve the game's goal of keeping things simple. The game models a world where combat is always a risk and the character faces grievous and permanent damage if they take the violent option.

THREE APPROACHES TO MAGIC

In OpenQuest there are three magic systems, which model different belief systems commonly held by fantasy spellcasters.

Battle Magic is the primary type of magic, representing the personal magic system that all player characters have access to at the beginning of their careers. Of all the approaches, it is the least powerful and least flexible.

Divine Magic comes straight from the gods! It is a robust approach, but only available to those characters that piously follow the ways of their chosen deity.

Sorcery is the magic of wizards and sorcerers, which draws upon the arcane magical laws that govern how the world works. Sorcery spells are potentially the most powerful and the most flexible magic. Still, it requires even more dedication and skill to manipulate the laws of magic to achieve the desired results than any of the other approaches.

MONSTERS ARE PEOPLE TOO

Creatures in OpenQuest have access to the same magic and skills that a player character does, so their abilities are just as detailed and authoritative. Like the player characters, they have hopes, dreams and a personality. Monsters are not mere sword fodder, waiting patiently in some underground complex. In OpenQuest they are the allies, adversaries, foils and followers that the player characters interact with on their adventures.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED TO PLAY

A SET OF POLYHEDRAL DICE

Available from either online suppliers or your local game store. As well as the ordinary six-sided dice that come with most board games, you will need dice with four, eight, ten, twelve and twenty sides. Dice have the notation of as Dx in the rules, where x is the number of sides of the dice. For example, $D10$ relates to a ten-sided die.

The most commonly used dice are $D100$, not a hundred-sided die but two $D10$'s rolled together. Before the dice roll, it is decided in advance, which will be tens and which will be units.

For example, I have a red $D10$ which I use as tens and a white $D10$ which I use as units. When I roll them, and the red comes up two, and the white comes up three, then this means my result is twenty-three. A roll of 00 equals 100.

PAPER

You'll need paper for note-taking, drawing maps and any other quick explanatory pictures or diagrams that either the player characters or the Referee want to draw to help describe what is going on during the game. If you haven't printed off a character sheet (available online at <http://www.D101games.com>) you'll need paper to write one out.

TIME

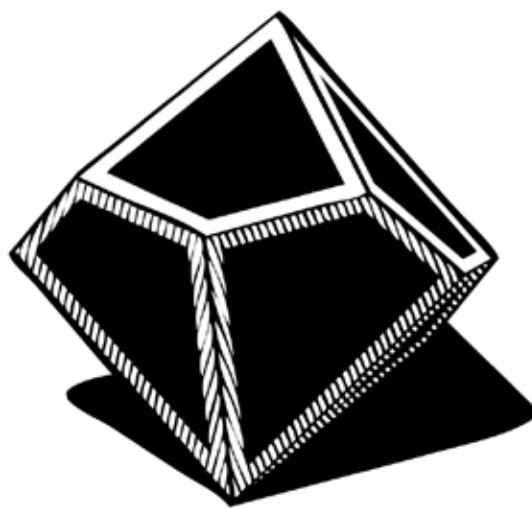
Gameplay usually happens in 'sessions' of three to four hours. Sessions can take more or less time and are generally determined by such factors as player characters concentration and enjoyment, coming to a natural end of the adventure, or reaching a climactic cliffhanger where play can be picked up again quickly after a short recap at the next session.

SOME FRIENDS

Roleplaying games are inherently social, so you need at least two players; one to play the protagonists of the story and the other to be the Referee. More player characters can join as the game progresses, and the usual number is four to six player characters and one Referee. Any more than six player characters and it becomes difficult for the Referee to get around the table to find out what each player wants to do.

IMAGINATION

OpenQuest takes place in the imagination of the player characters and Referee. Although metal miniatures, available online and at games shops, can be used to help the player characters visualise the action (especially during combat), at the end of the day the game stands or falls on how much the player characters and Referee use the power of their imagination to fuel the story they are co-creating.



AN EXAMPLE OF PLAY

The following shows how a game of OpenQuest works. You will get to see how the game progresses as a conversation between the players and the Referee, with the occasional dice roll where the action is less than clear. Do not worry at this stage where the numbers come from, or how the rules work. Explanations will follow in the chapters that cover the rules.

The group sits around a table at John's house. John is the Referee. Rob is playing Ethelred the Reckless, a brash young warrior, Janet is playing Lura, a sorceress, Sarju is playing Mancala, a highwayman with a murky past and Helen is playing Abnon a stern and righteous priest.

John: So, we left it last session with the wyvern diving towards the prow of the Black Bess, which is where all your characters are now standing along with the dwarf captain, Wuzan.

Sarju: We are so toast!

John: Not necessarily, it all depends on what you do next. So, what do you want to do? Everyone gets to do one thing before the wyvern crashes down to the deck.

Janet: Lura fires off a Protection 4 spell.

John: Give me a Battle Magic Casting skill roll.

Janet: Lura's Battle Magic Casting is 85%, let's roll the dice then!

Janet rolls two ten-sided dice, one red which is tens and one white which is units. Red comes up five, and the white comes up four. A result of 54%

Janet: Ok, I rolled 54, which is under 85%, which is a success. The spell works and a bubbling liquid of silver acting as a second skin surrounds Lura to shield her from the wyvern's attacks.

Helen: Abnon sets his spear against the incoming charge of the wyvern shouting "I fear you not, worm of hell!!".

Rob: Ethelred draws his sword and climbs up the front mast of the ship to get a vantage point ready for when the wyvern lands.

John: Ah Rob, that's two actions, you've not got time to do both, what do you want to do?

Rob: Er, Ethelred will climb up the mast without stopping to think about drawing his sword. He is reckless, after all!!

Sarju: How far is the ship from land?

John: About twenty metres or so.

Sarju: So, it's swimmable?

John: Yes, I think I can see where this is going.

Sarju: Yup. Mancala jumps overboard and starts to swim to land!

Rob: The coward!

Sarju: Well, that's what Mancala would do; he's always had his own best interests at heart.

John: Ok, so Mancala jumps over the side. Give me a quick Athletics roll, to make sure that he doesn't sink like a stone when he hits the water.

Sarju: [Rolls dice] My athletics is 65% I rolled 23, no problem. Mancala is slowly swimming to land and should get there in a couple of minutes or so. Guess that's him out of trouble.

John: We'll see. Ok, so the rest of you are on the ship when the wyvern crashes down. Since it's going to attack you, we'll move into combat rounds to keep track of time. Remember each round is about five seconds, which gives you enough time to do about one thing. Characters act in skill order. The wyvern is attacking you using a Close Combat skill of 85%. Can anyone do better than that?

Sarju: Mancala has an Athletics of 65%, but he's too busy swimming away to do anything else.

John: How about everyone else?

Rob: Nope

Helen: No.

Janet: Nah.

John: Ok so the wyvern has the highest skill score so gets to go first. It dives down and tries to grab Lura, bite Ethelred on the mast and lash out at Abnon on the deck with its tail.

Rob: That's a lot of attacks!

John: Well that's what the rules say, it's got three modes of attacks, and it's agile enough to use them all at once.

Sarju: Ha, ha!

John: Ok, let's work this out.

John rolls dice against the monster's weapon skills.

John: It lashes out at Abnon but misses completely. Similarly, it snaps at Ethelred but doesn't judge the distance well enough and bites too short, but it's going to hit Lura with its claws unless she does anything about it.

Janet: Lura's going to jump out of the way. She's got a Dodge of 45%; I roll 3 and 4, 34!

John: Great, so the wyvern goes crashing into the deck, but Lura gracefully jumps out of the way.

Rob: Ethelred's next, he draws his sword, which is his action for this round.

Helen: Remember, Abnon was setting his spear against the diving wyvern.

John: Yes, that's +20% on Abnon's Close Combat skill.

Helen: So that's Close Combat at 55% plus 20% a total of 75%

Helen rolls her D100 and gets 76!

Helen: Nah he just missed, because the wyvern took a swing at him, Abnon moved out of the way, and his attack was distracted and ineffective as a result.

Janet: Lura next! She runs across the deck towards the stairs down below. She's making sure that there's more distance between her and the wyvern. She doesn't like the look of those claws!!

John: Lura's halfway across the deck, she'll make the stairs next round.

John: Ok, so that's everyone had a go. Onto round two. The wyvern is soaring back into the sky. What are people doing?

Janet: Lura carries on running towards the stairs.

Helen: Abnon resets his spear and waits for the wyvern to dive again.

Rob: Ethelred is going to swing at it with his sword as it goes past.

Sarju: Keep swimming, of course!!

John: Ok so the wyvern flies ten metres up into the sky. It whizzes straight past Ethelred before he gets a chance to hit it. Rob, you want to do something else?

Rob: No, I'll wait until it comes down again.

John: The rest of your characters do what they said they were doing. Onto round three.

John: Ok, the wyvern reaches the top of its rise into the air and stops momentarily. Intelligently taking in the scene below, it sees Ethelred and Abnon's weapons drawn on the ship below. It can't see Lura because she's run below decks. But does it see Mancala swimming in the sea below?

Sarju: Uh, oh!

John: I'll roll against its Perception of 70% to see if it does.

John rolls the dice and comes up with 55, a critical result!!

John: Oh no, it rolled a critical!! Not only does it see Mancala all on his own unprotected, but it decides that it is a more comfortable meal than the food with weapons and starts diving towards him!

So, what are you going to do now?



CHARACTERS

WHAT IS A PLAYER CHARACTER?

A character is your representation in the game. Your eyes, ears, touch, feel and smell in the imaginary world that you and your fellow players create.

On the one hand, the character is a collection of numbers which describe his/her characteristics, skills and magic spells written down on a character sheet. This chapter will explain how you create these numbers in a process known as 'Character Generation'.

But that's only half of what a character is.

The other half exists mainly in the imagination of the player, with perhaps some quick notes on the character sheet. This half is the personality of the character and other intangibles such as goals and history. These are the things that you can't express in cold hard numbers, which bring the character to life and give the player guidelines on how the character acts and thinks.



The Adventuerrrs: At the start of theri r careers. fresh faced and excited.

CHARACTER GENERATION

The process of creating a character is known as *Character Generation*. OpenQuest character generation is a seven-step process, and at each step, the player makes decisions about what their character is like at the beginning of the game when the character is just starting on their adventuring career.

STARTING CHARACTER GENERATION WITH A CHARACTER CONCEPT

A character concept is a one-sentence summing up of what the character is all about.

For example:

- *Ethelred* is “A determined and foolhardy warrior seeking excitement and adventure.”
- *Lura* is “A mysterious and elegant sorceress.”
- *Mancala* is “The illegitimate son of a murdered Noble, who survives through being a rogue.”
- *Abnon* is “A pious priest who smites evil and protects the innocent.”

Having a clear concept of what you want your character to be like at the beginning of character generation guides the whole process as you make choices to generate the numbers that you will roll against during play. **For example**, for *Ethelred*, it states that he is a warrior. Therefore when choosing skills, *Ethelred* puts points into Dodge and Unarmed combat, both skills that will be highly useful when he gets into a fight, rather than any of the Lores.

You are free to change the concept as you generate the character. Generally, as a rule, the stronger the character concept, the easier it is to create an exciting character.

Your Referee may ask you what your character concept is before you start Character Generation, to make sure that it fits in with the sort of game that he has prepared. **For example**, creating a warlike barbarian may not be a good idea for a game that is going to revolve around a series of magical mysteries where the characters will need strong investigative and magic skills.

Compare concepts with the other players before diving into character generation any further. Your character will be part of an adventuring group made up of the other players' characters. These characters work together, even if they don't like each other, towards a common goal of solving the mysteries and dilemmas thrown up by the Referee during the adventures that they play through. The game is unlikely to be any fun if all the players have similar or near-identical concepts, as compared with a game with a group made up of characters with different concepts that can work together to create interesting roleplaying and tactical opportunities.

Concepts also change as the characters develop and grow during the game. So it might be worth checking your character's concept at the end of each adventure and updating it if needs be.

Step 1: Determine Concept

In one sentence, sum up what your character is all about. Use the guidelines above to give yourself ideas. Ask the other players what their character concepts are to make sure the group has an exciting selection of characters.

Check with your Referee that your character concept fits in with the type of game that the group is going to be playing.

CHARACTERISTICS

These are the primary building blocks of the character. All characters and creatures have seven characteristics, which give the necessary information about the character's physical, mental and spiritual capabilities. As well as being useful indicators of how to roleplay the character (see below) these are the scores used to work out the base value of skills.

The characteristics are:

Strength (STR): A character's brute force, strength affects the amount of damage they deal, how much they can lift and so on.

Constitution (CON): A measure of the character's health, constitution affects how much damage they can sustain in combat, as well as his general resistance to disease and other illnesses.

Dexterity (DEX): This is the character's agility, coordination and speed of reaction. Dexterity aids them in many physical actions, including combat.

Size (SIZ): This is an indication of the character's mass and, like strength and constitution, can affect the amount of damage a character can deal with and how well they can absorb damage.

Intelligence (INT): A character's ability to think around problems, analyse information and memorise instructions.

Power (POW): Power is a measure of the character's life force, the strength of their willpower, and a measure of how much magic power they have. It is a beneficial characteristic for characters interested in becoming accomplished spellcasters.

Charisma (CHA): This quantifies a character's attractiveness and leadership qualities.

Step 2: Generating Characteristics

Using the Points method

Each characteristic starts with a value of 8. You next have thirty points to distribute amongst them. The maximum value of a characteristic during character generation is 18. You may also lower a characteristic to gain extra points. **For example**, reduce STR 8 to 6 to gain 2 points, but INT and SIZ have a minimum value of 7. Other characteristics have a minimum value of 3, although this indicates that the character has a severe disadvantage in this area.

The Points method is better if you already have a clear idea of your character concept as it gives you precise control of the relative strength of each characteristic. You are not at the mercy of random dice rolls (see “Random Character Generation (Optional)” on page ??) nor do you have to negotiate with your Referee about switching the random rolls around so that the characteristic scores match your concept.

For example:

Rob is playing Ethelred, who is a rough and ready warrior, and spends his 30 points in the following way.

STR 18 CON 12 DEX 12 SIZ 16 INT 10 POW 8 CHA 10

He adds ten, four, and eight to STR, CON and SIZ respectively to get a higher damage bonus and hit points total and for the ‘big bruiser’ element of the character concept, and four to DEX is the base for many essential skills for warriors. Finally, he adds two points to both INT and CHA, to make sure Ethelred is average for intelligence and sociability. He chooses not to increase POW at character creation since he doesn’t see Ethelred as much of a magician at the start of the game.



Random Generation of Characteristics (Optional)

If you prefer a more traditional method of rolling dice to create characteristics, follow this process.

For humans

STR, CON, DEX, INT, POW and CHA roll 3D6,

SIZ and INT roll 2D6+6

Re-roll any 1s or 2s; this creates suitably above-average characters.

Maximum Value of Characteristics

For any race, the maximum value of any characteristic is the maximum dice roll plus three. For humans, this is 21.

Having Characteristics at High and Low Extremes of the Possible Ranges

One feature of the points buy system is that it tends to produce characters that are close to the ‘average’ score unless you choose to reduce one of your characteristics from the initial allocation of eight or leave it unmodified. By taking that approach, you will have some weak characteristics, such as a DEX of 8 indicating that your character is a bit slow and clumsy. Still, you will also have a few strong characteristics, such as an INT of 18, which shows your character is a natural-born genius.

You can also end up with characters with high and low characteristics using the random method as well.

Such characters may at first glance look undesirable, because of how base skills are affected. Still, they present excellent opportunities for roleplaying the flaws of the character and makes the character more interesting as a result.

Using Characteristics in Roleplaying

As well as being numbers used to calculate the skills and attributes that influence the dice rolls made during the game, characteristics give a rough idea as to what the character is like as a person. The average human has values between 10 and 11 in most characteristics, except Size and Intelligence, which weigh in around 13. So, a character with Strength of 16 will be of above-average Strength and a toned physique. A character with a Charisma of 7 is well below average, perhaps being shy or obnoxious and socially inept.

ATTRIBUTES

Attributes are a set of secondary scores that define the character's potential to do and take physical damage, how quickly they move, and the amount of magical energy available to the character. The character's characteristic scores determine the value of their attributes.

Damage Modifier (DM): The Damage Modifier applies whenever the character uses a melee or thrown weapon. They calculated It by adding the character's strength and Size together and refer to the table below. The modifier gets more significant with the sum of Strength and Size since bigger, stronger, characters deal out more damage than smaller, weaker characters.

Damage Modifier table

Total of STR and SIZ	Damage Modifier
1-10	-1D6 *
11-15	-1D4 *
16-25	+0
26-30	+1D4
31-45	+1D6
46-60	+2D6
61-75	+3D6
76-90	+4D6
Every additional + 15	+1D6

*If after you have taken away the rolled damage modifier and the damage is under 0, increase it to 1.

Hit points (HP): These determine how much damage the character can sustain before reaching unconsciousness or death.

Magic points (MP): A measure of the character's magical energy. Used to activate any spells the character knows.

Movement rate (MR): This is the amount in metres that a character can move in a five-second Combat Round.

Step 3: Determine attributes

To work out your character's Damage Modifier, add Strength and Size together and look at the Damage Modifier table.

Hit points equal Size plus Constitution divided by 2, rounded up.

The character's starting magic points will be equal to the character's POW.

Human characters have a Movement rate of 15 metres.



SKILLS

Skills are things that the character can do. They represent particular areas of expertise. In-game, the percentage value of the skill is rolled against using a D100 to work out if a character completes a task in the game. A roll equal to or less than the skill percentage indicates a success.

For example

Ethelred has a Dodge of 52%, which means that in combat he has to roll 52 or under on D100 to avoid the incoming blows of his opponent.

What do the Numbers Mean?

The following table translates the skill percentage into a 'real world' description of the level of expertise.

Skill Expertise

Skill	Expertise	Description
0-25%	Novice	No experience with the skill and is relying on raw talent and beginners luck.
26-50%	Apprentice	This level of expertise represents someone actively learning the skill.
51-75%	Veteran	The character is competent with the basic uses of the skill, which they use in everyday life.
76-99%	Expert	This character is a local expert within the skill, who can perform it under most conditions with ease and elegance.
100+	Master	They are acknowledged best in that skill, and regularly performs the impossible in challenging conditions.

From looking at the above table, you can see that Ethelred with his Dodge of 52% is quite proficient, having an expertise level of Veteran, probably from being in actual combat as a warrior in the Ducal Wars and learning by necessity to get out of the way of weapon attacks.

100% is the limit for skills, either through improvement or by being modified before a skill roll. Characters with skills at 100% are Masters/Mistresses of their skills, and always succeed. Roll the dice to see if they get critical results. Masters never fumble their skill tests.

Skill Lists

The following tables list all the skills that every character possesses, and the characteristics used to determine the skill's base score. The tables also give each skill a brief description of what the skill does, but for a fuller description look in the Skills chapter.

Skills categorised for easy reference.

Resistances are skills that get the character out of harm's way.

Combat skills measure the characters' skills in physical violence.

Knowledge skills measure the intellectual abilities of the character.

Practical skills measure the characters' ability to perform a variety of everyday and specialist tasks.

Magic skills cover either casting magic or knowledge of religious practices.

Resistances

Skill	Base	Description
Dodge	DEX+10	Gets you out of the way of physical threats, such as an incoming axe or dragon breath
Persistence	POW+10	This skill Is a measure of your character's willpower and resistance against hostile magic and to resist attempts to influence the character against their will.
Resilience	CON+POW	This skill Is a measure of your character's health and their ability to survive exposure, hunger and thirst, and to resist the effect of diseases.

It's worth putting most of your points into Dodge if you are going down the route of the warrior with your character. If you are thinking more of a magic-using character, Persistence is probably more appropriate. Resilience is good for strong characters that can shrug off disease and stay conscious when they take damage.

Combat Skills

Skill	Base	Description
Close Combat	DEX+STR	Skill with melee weapons, such as swords, axes, daggers, spears and shields.
Ranged Combat	DEX+INT	Skill with missile and thrown weapons.
Unarmed Combat	DEX+STR	Natural weapons and techniques such as bite, fist, kick, grapple and claws.

All these skills are appropriate for characters who want to be warriors. A few points however in either close or unarmed combat are useful even for non-combative characters for self-defence.

Knowledge Skills

Skill	Base	Description
Culture (Own)	INT+10	What a character knows about the history, politics, geography of their land and society.
Language (Own)	INT+50	How fluent a character is at speaking and potentially reading and writing their language.
Natural Lore	INT+10	A skill that represents predicting the weather, recognising and caring for animals and plants, geology and survival in the natural world.
Culture (Other)	INT	What a character knows about the history, politics and geography of a foreign land.
Language (Other)	INT	How fluent a character is at speaking and potentially reading and writing a foreign language.
Lore (Type)	INT	These are other areas of knowledge not already covered by other knowledge skill—for example, Lore (Herbalist) and Lore (Heraldry).

Knowledge skills are useful for characters that are sages or scholars and who make their living from obscure information that other people do not have the time to learn. Culture (other) and Language (other) are also useful to characters whose abilities revolve around communications, such as merchants and diplomats.

Practical Skills

Skill	Base	Description
Athletics	DEX+STR	This skill measures the character's ability at running, lifting, jumping, swimming and climbing.
Craft	INT+10	This skill allows you to make things, such as pots, weapons, and buildings.
Deception	DEX+INT	Stealth, hiding and picking pockets are all handled by this skill.
Driving	DEX+INT	This skill covers ancient-medieval period vehicles such as carts, chariots and wagons.
Engineering	INT+10	This skill is employed when dealing with large-scale construction, and siege engines.
Healing	INT+10	Healing wounds and treating disease using First aid and surgery.
Influence	CHA +10	Used when the character wants to persuade another to do something against their usual interests.
Mechanisms	DEX+INT	This skill covers locks and anything with complex moving parts.
Perception	INT+POW	Use this skill when spotting hidden objects and other small details in the character's immediate environment.
Performance	CHA+10	Acting, playing instruments, dancing and singing are all covered by this skill.
Riding	DEX+POW	Tested when riding beasts and trying tricky manoeuvres.
Sailing	DEX+INT	This skill covers the use of ships and boats.
Streetwise	CHA+POW	How well the character operates in a city environment. Used to find out information and navigate around the streets and find a fence for stolen goods are all covered by this skill.
Trade	INT+10	The skill is used by merchants and traders to value and sell goods.
Wealth	INT+CHA	This optional skill measures a character's ability to manage their resources.

On the face of it, it is tempting to see the Practical category as a big grab bag of different skills. However, it is worth spending some points on one to three of the skills, even if you want to be a big muscled warrior. These skills allow the character to do things in the game, and Athletics, Influence and Perception get called upon reasonably frequently. Also, if your character's concept is that of a rogue Deception, Mechanisms and Streetwise deserve some points. If your character is someone who makes stuff, Craft and Engineering are skills to increase. If your character has a background of entertaining people, Performance is a skill to pick. If your character concept is any form of merchant Trade is a must buy.

Magic Skills

Skill	Base	Description
Battle Magic Casting	POW X 3	This skill allows you to use basic personal magic known as Battle Magic .
Sorcery Casting	INT	When you are casting or manipulating the traits of Sorcery spells, test this skill. For the non-magician, it is your chance to use talismans and scrolls and other sorcerers' items.
Religion (Own Religion)	INT+10	In Divine Magic most characters will be at least 'lay' members of the religion local to them, taking a passing interest in its mythology and rituals. For more devoted characters, this skill is the key to advancement in the religion's hierarchy.
Religion (Other Religion)	INT	This skill covers the knowledge of another religion in Divine Magic , where other is the name of that religion.

Magic is explained below, in Step 5, but for now, note that the four types of skill related to the three types of magic.

A Note on Skills with Descriptors in Brackets: Lore (Type), Religion (Other Religion) and Culture (Other) all have a descriptor in brackets after the main skill name. **For example**, Religion (Other) could be Religion (Earth Mother) or Religion (Burning Heart) in the Empire of Gatan Setting.

Step 4: Calculate Skills

For each skill, calculate the starting skill value, the base score, from the calculation provided. Then write it down on the character sheet next to the skill.

During character generation, the player gets a pool of points to spend on each group of skills. Distribute points between the skills, with a limit of no more than 30 to be allocated to any one skill.

Resistances: Spend 50 points between the three skills.

Combat: Spend 50 points between the three skills.

Knowledge: Spend 50 points between the skills.

Practical: Spend 75 points between skills.

Magic: is special, refer to 'Generating a Character Step 5' below.

MAGIC

The existence of magic in fantasy worlds is one of the defining aspects of the genre.

How widespread the use of magic depends on the world that the game is taking place. OpenQuest takes as the default that all player characters have access to a basic type of magic called Battle Magic at the beginning of their adventuring careers.

Battle Magic

Battle Magic is a type of magic that draws its power from the very spirit of the character. Each time a caster casts a spell, the caster must spend magic points equal to the spell's power, or 'Magnitude'.

To determine if Battle Magic is successfully cast the player rolls against the character's Battle Magic Casting skill, which starts at a Base of POW X 3.

Generating a Character Step 5: Work out what Magic Spells the Character has

Look at the Basic Magic spells in the Basic Magic chapter and pick-six points of Magnitude worth. Also work out Battle Magic Casting Skill, which starts at POW X 3.

Starting with Divine Magic or Sorcery

As well as Battle Magic, there are two other systems of magic: Divine and Sorcery. These have their chapters later in the book.

By default, Divine Magic and Sorcery are not available as an option to advance at character generation, where both Religion and Sorcery casting skills start at their base values and do not qualify them for the minimum requirements to learn these types of magic.

Normally players decide that their characters want to

use these types of magic during play. Both are advanced magic systems that are slightly less straight forward than Battle Magic, and it is more effective if the player chooses to join a Religion (Divine) or become a student of Sorcery when they have experience of the world they are playing.

Experienced players or players who have a strong desire to be magicians from the start should read the following sections, which explains how to start as magicians.

Starting with Divine Magic

Characters cannot start as Initiates of a Religion, because they usually do not meet the 40% requirement in the Religion skill. They can, however, pave the way through becoming a lay member of a religion, noting down the name of the religion for the Religion (Own) skill. For adventurers in the Empire of Gatan setting, this is Religion (Imperial Way) by default (see page xx for more details). They can then choose magic from the Battle Magic list for that deity.

See the Divine Magic chapter for the Universal Earth Mother cult (page xx) and the Empire of Gatan Chapter (page xx) for cults that a character can join in games set in the Empire of Gatan.

The other option is to choose the Initiate of the Imperial Way ready-made concept (see page xx)

Starting with Sorcery

If the player wants his character to start with Sorcery, choose the Downtrodden Sorcerer's Apprentice, ready-made concept (see page xx). It sets up the character for a journey down the path of Sorcery. A player choosing this option should familiarize themselves with the way that Sorcery works (see page xx) because it is quite different from Battle Magic in the way it works.

EQUIPMENT

Each character typically starts with some money and the tools of their trade.

Step 6: Work out starting cash and write down starting equipment.

Starting cash is 4D6 x 10 in silver pieces.

Each character starts with one of the two arms and armour packages below.

Leather armour, ranged weapon, close combat 2H weapon and dagger.

Or Leather armour, shield, ranged weapon, close combat 1H weapon and dagger.

Also, each character starts with the following equipment:

A Backpack, rope, two weeks' worth of travelling

provisions, flint and tinder, and a waterskin.

Further information about equipment and game economics is given in “In-game Economics” on page xx.

Your Referee may allow you to buy additional equipment before the game starts from the character’s starting cash.

FINISHING OFF THE CHARACTER

By this stage, all the hard decisions on making your character are over. All that remains is to note down a few numbers on the character sheet and ponder about the character’s background and motives.

General Information

Age: Human characters start at any age between 18 and 28 unless using the optional Veteran character rules. To randomly determine this, roll 2D6 and add 16.

Hero Points: Every character starts with two Hero Points.

What are Hero Points?

Hero points are what distinguishes the player character from the average stay at home type folk. They represent their good fortune and ability to escape life-threatening situations with ease.

They allow the player character to:

- Re-roll any failed dice roll.
- Flip the existing dice result for a failed test so that the units are now the tens and the tens are now the units so that it is a success.
- Avoid character death. Instead of dying the character, reduced to zero or fewer hit points, is merely unconscious. The character remains in such a state until the combat is over at which point they awaken with one Hit Point.
- If the character uses Divine Magic, they can spend a Hero Point invoke their deity and regain a cast spell of their choosing.

Hero Points once spent are gone. The Referee awards Hero Points at the end of the game session for moments of outstanding heroic play (see Chapter 6 The Quest page xx).

Background, Appearance and Personality

Even if you don’t create a fully written up background, it is worth making a mental note of what the character is like as a person and roughly what their background is previous to play, as well as visualising what they look like.

The Character’s Background

The background is useful not only to give the character history before the game starts but also as a way of noting

all the intangible elements of the character’s personality. Ethelred’s story later in this chapter is an example of a background.

Writing down a background is optional and can be done either before or after character generation or can even emerge during play.

Motives

Motives are what drives the characters’ actions. They are the character’s goals, both short and long-term.

Long-term motives are things that are life motives and are only achievable throughout a linked set of adventures, commonly known as a ‘campaign’ or Saga as OpenQuest calls it.

Example long-term motives.

- Become King of the Amber Lands.
- Defeat the evil Sorcerer Zanab Khan.
- Become the richest man in Red Hat County.
- Avenge my Father’s death.

Short term motives are usually relevant to the adventure currently being played and are determined near the beginning of the session by the players.

For example a set of short-term motives coming out of a royal monster hunt in the bleak ice deserts of Zhaind;

- Kill the biggest monster on the hunt.
- Secure the rights to trade the hides of the monsters.
- Use the hunt to impress the King and improve their social standing at court.
- Map the ice deserts of Zhaind to increase the body of knowledge of the Royal Library.

At the end of character generation, choose one long-term motive for your character and at the beginning of the adventure, choose a suitable short-term motive.

Every time a motive brought into play, the character earns one improvement per session.

Review short term motives at the end of a gaming session. If they are complete, earn an additional two improvement points.

When a long-term motive has been completed, remove it from the player’s character sheet and the character earns five improvement points. A new long-term motive can then be written down when the player feels that they have an appropriate one.

As well as giving player inspiration on how to roleplay their character, motives also drive the direction of play as players try to bring into play motives to earn

improvement points (“Improving Characters” on page xx). The Referee makes a note of motives and creates events which provide an opportunity for the player to bring their motives into play.

Generating a Character Step 7: Finish off the Character

Note down Hero Points and age.

For humans, this is 18-28 (2D6+16) respectively for starter adventurers.

Hero Points start at 2.

Create at least one long-term motive for the character

If you want to include a background narrative, then do this now.

Finally, if you haven’t done so already, write the character’s name on the character sheet.

Congratulations!

You are now ready to play.

EXAMPLE CHARACTER GENERATION: ETHELRED THE RECKLESS

Step 1: Determine Concept

Rob is about to generate a player character for a game of OpenQuest he is about to play in. He thinks about the type of character he would like to play and comes up with the following concept about his character, Ethelred.

Ethelred is “*A determined and foolhardy warrior seeking excitement and adventure*”.

Step 2: Generating Characteristics

Rob decides to use the points method to determine Ethelred’s characteristics and spends his 30 points in the following way.

He adds ten, four and eight to STR, CON and SIZ respectively to get a higher damage bonus and hit points total and for the ‘big bruiser’ element of the character concept. He then decides to add four to DEX as this characteristic determines when he acts in initiative and is the base for many essential skills for warriors. Finally, he adds two points to both INT and CHA, to make sure Ethelred is average for Intelligence and sociability. He chooses not to increase POW at character creation since he doesn’t see Ethelred as being much of a magician at the start of the game.

Therefore, Ethelred’s final characteristics are:

STR 18 CON 12 DEX 12 SIZ 16 INT 10 POW 8 CHA 10

Step 3: Determine Attributes

Ethelred’s Strength and Size added together is 34 so from the Damage Modifier Table he gets a Damage Modifier of +1D6.

Size 16 + Constitution of 12 equals 28, divided by two gives hit points equal to 14.

Ethelred’s POW is 8, so his magic points total is also 8.

As Ethelred is human, his Movement Rate is 15 metres.

Step 4: Calculate Skills

Resistances: Spend 50 points between the three skills.

Skill	Base	Base %	Points spent	Final %
Dodge	DEX+10	22	30	52
Persistence	POW+10	18	20	38
Resilience	CON+POW	30	0	30

Rob spends 30 points, the maximum allowed, on Ethelred’s Dodge figuring that as a warrior this is a beneficial skill to have. He also increases Ethelred’s Persistence to reflect his strong-willed nature.

Combat: Spend 50 points between the three skills.

Skill	Base	Base %	Points spent	Final %
Close Combat	DEX+STR	30	25	55
Ranged Combat	DEX+INT	22	13	35
Unarmed Combat	DEX+STR	30	12	42

Rob decides to give half of the 50 points to close combat, since he wants Ethelred to be good with sword and shield, and then split the remainder between the other combat skills to give a good spread of ability.

Knowledge: Spend 50 points between the skills.

Skill	Base	Base %	Points spent	Final %
Culture (Own)	INT+10	20	30	50
Language (Own)	INT+50	60	0	60
Natural Lore	INT+10	20	20	40
Culture (Other)	INT	10	0	10
Language (Other)	INT	10	0	10
Lore (Type)	INT	10	0	10

Rob decides to spend 30 points on Ethelred's Culture (Own) and pays 20 points on Natural Lore since these are the skills that Ethelred picked up working and living on a farm while growing up.

Practical: Spend 75 points between skills.

Skill	Base	Base %	Points spent	Final %
Athletics	DEX+STR	30	30	60
Craft	INT+10	20	15	35
Deception	DEX+INT	22	0	22
Driving	DEX+INT	22	0	22
Engineering	INT+0	20	0	20
Healing	INT+10	20	0	20
Influence	CHA+10	20	10	30
Mechanisms	DEX+INT	22	0	22
Performance	CHA+10	20	20	40
Perception	INT+POW	18	0	18
Riding	DEX+STR	30	0	30
Sailing	DEX+INT	22	0	22
Streetwise	CHA+POW	18	0	18
Trade	INT+10	20	0	20

Rob spends his 75 points in the following way. Athletics gets the max allowed (30) to reflect both Ethelred's physical nature, but also because it's a useful skill for adventurous living. He spends 10 points on Influence to give it a reasonable score, figuring it is helpful for Ethelred to have a fighting chance to talk himself out of the trouble that he will inevitably get into. Twenty points are spent on Performance, mainly for colour, since Rob decides Ethelred has a sensitive side and likes to sing and compose poetry during his downtime. He spends fifteen points on Craft, to reflect the handyman skills Ethelred learnt while living on his father's farm.

Step 5: Work Out What Magic Spells the Character has

Rob is not expecting Ethelred to be a good magician at this point, so sticks with the basic Battle Magic Casting skill that Ethelred's rather weak power gives him: 24%. For his six points of Battle Magic spells, Rob chooses Weapon Enhancement 2, Coordination 1 and Heal 3.

Step 6: Work out Starting Cash and Write Down Starting Equipment

Rob rolls five for Ethelred's starting cash, so Ethelred starts to play with a small amount of only 50 silvers.

This is not enough to spend on additional equipment, so Ethelred starts with the basic equipment that all player characters start with;

Leather armour + Target Shield + Longsword + dagger, backpack, rope, two weeks' worth of travelling provisions, flint and tinder, waterskin.

Step 7: Finish Off the Character

Rob writes the down Ethelred's Hero Points of 2 and age of a relatively young twenty years of age.

At this point, he also creates Ethelred's backstory, see "Example Character Generation: Ethelred the Reckless" on page xx, and writes it down on the back of the character sheet.

ETHELRED'S STORY

Ethelred was born on a farm in the gentle rolling fertile plains of Western Gatan. His father was a freeman, who gained his lands as a grant from the local Duke for fighting in the wars against the barbarians of the neighbouring Darklands.

That life behind him, Ethelred's father settled down and raised his family. From an early age, Ethelred was forever champing at the bit to follow in his father's footsteps. He got a reputation for being reckless through childhood exploits of tree climbing, fighting against the neighbouring village's kids and exploring the dark and forbidding woods at the edge of his father's lands. His father, in the meantime, wanted his eldest son to inherit his farm, take up the plough and marry a lovely local girl with whom he would raise many grandchildren. But the lad was not to be dissuaded. When he reached fourteen, he was snapping at the heels of the local part-time militia, and by fifteen he was a full-time member. "Let him get it out of his system," thought his father, "when he reaches manhood he'll be ready to take over the farm".

At sixteen his family and village had laid on a Coming of Age party for him. But Ethelred had other ideas. Rather than accept a life of peace and boring hard work as a farmer, he ran off with his father's sword to the nearest city. There he joined one of the recruiting mercenary companies and the next day was marching off to fight in one of the minor wars between competing Dukes. Five years later, sick of fighting for Dukes who didn't care for the common man or even pay on time, he struck off on his own and boarded a ship bound for an adventure across the sea.

A NOTE ON GROUP BALANCE AND SURVIVABILITY

OpenQuest's skill and magic systems are open, both at character generation and during character advancement, in that they don't tie a character down to a predestined path of skill and magic increases dictated by the type of character that the Player chooses during character generation.

Character generation produces characters that have skills in all the basic areas of expertise, a couple of especially advanced skills, some starting personal magic and some skill in at least one or two weapons. Most OpenQuest characters start out being able to do most things, a skill area or two that they excel at, have a decent chance in a fight and have some magic to even out the odds.

Because OpenQuest characters start more rounded, there is less of an issue about getting the right mix of skills for the group so it can survive the adventure.

What are Beginning Characters like in OpenQuest?

Starting player characters generated using these rules tend to be well rounded as characters. All starting OpenQuest characters have the following features.

They have abilities above the average man in the street. The player characters are the main protagonists of the story that the players and Referee are co-operatively going to play, and even at the start of the game, they are better than the folk who stay at home.

Characters have a reasonable chance of doing the basic things that everyone knows, such as riding a horse and speaking their native language.

They have a good to excellent chance of doing the things that their character should be more than competent at. **For example**, Ethelred is a warrior who has a 55% in Close Combat, which means he is proficient with a sword and uses it to make a living.

Some magic. Fantasy worlds are usually rich in magic and OpenQuest takes the view that even non-magicians have some personal magic, known as Battle Magic. Ethelred, for example, knows the spells, 'Weapon Enhance', which makes it easier to hit with his sword and causes more damage when it does, and 'Coordination', which increases his speed of reaction when cast.

ROUNDING

Always round up from 0.5 and round down from below 0.5. **For example**, 4.1 becomes 4, while 5.5 becomes 6.

NON-HUMAN ADVENTURERS (OPTIONAL)

With the Referee's permission, your character may be one of the creatures found in the Creatures chapter.

Use the random method to determine characteristics and roll the dice.

or

Take the value in brackets as the starting point and add ten points amongst them.

Make a note of the special abilities, traits, movement rates, natural armour and the natural weapons of the creature; damage base is as given, and skill starts at Base Value.

Then determine skills and magic as normal, perhaps using the weapons and skills on the creature description which depict an average member of the species as a guide.



READY-MADE CONCEPTS

Ready-made concepts give quick ideas for players who are struggling to decide which skills and magic to choose.

Follow the Character generation process up to the section on spending points on skills and choosing magic (steps 4 & 5) Instead use the skill points and magic spells allocation as listed for the concept. Roll for money as normal but write down all the suggested equipment on the character sheet instead of the normal default adventuring starting equipment.

Each Concept has the following components.

A name, one-sentence summary of the concept.

- Skills.
- Battle Magic.
- Equipment.

So here we go, ten Ready-made Concepts for players who are stuck for ideas.

Adventurous and Knowledge-Hungry Scholar

Skills:

Resistances: Dodge +30, Persistence +10, Resilience +10.

Combat: Close Combat+20, Ranged Combat+10, Unarmed Combat +20.

Knowledge: Language (Other) +20, Lore (Ancient Dead Civilisations) +30.

Practical: Athletics + 25, Influence +20, Perception +30.

Battle Magic: Coordination 2, Protection2, Second Sight.

Equipment: Scholar's robes over leather armour, staff or dagger, and sling & stones.

Downtrodden Sorcerer's Apprentice

Skills:

Resistances: Dodge +10, Persistence +30, Resilience +10.

Combat: No extra points on these skills. Instead, these skill points added on to the Sorcery Casting skill.

Knowledge: Language (Magical) +20, Lore (Sorcery) +30.

Practical: Craft +20, Healing +20, Influence +10, Perception +25.

Magic: Sorcery Casting +50.

Sorcery Spells: Damage Boosting, Damage Resistance, Neutralise Magic, Mystic Vision, Treat Wounds, Summon Other World Creature (Demon/Elemental/Undead – choose type).

Equipment: Robes over leather armour, staff or dagger, sling & stones.

Note the magic of a Sorcerer's Apprentice is primarily Sorcery, and the spells are from the Sorcery chapter. Their magical world view makes casting Battle Magic and Divine Magic impossible. Reduce Battle Magic Casting to 0% to reflect this. Make sure you are familiar with the basics of how Sorcery works, it is quite different from Battle Magic.

Fast-Riding Nomadic Raider from the Steppes

Skills:

Resistances: Dodge +10, Persistence +10, Resilience +30.

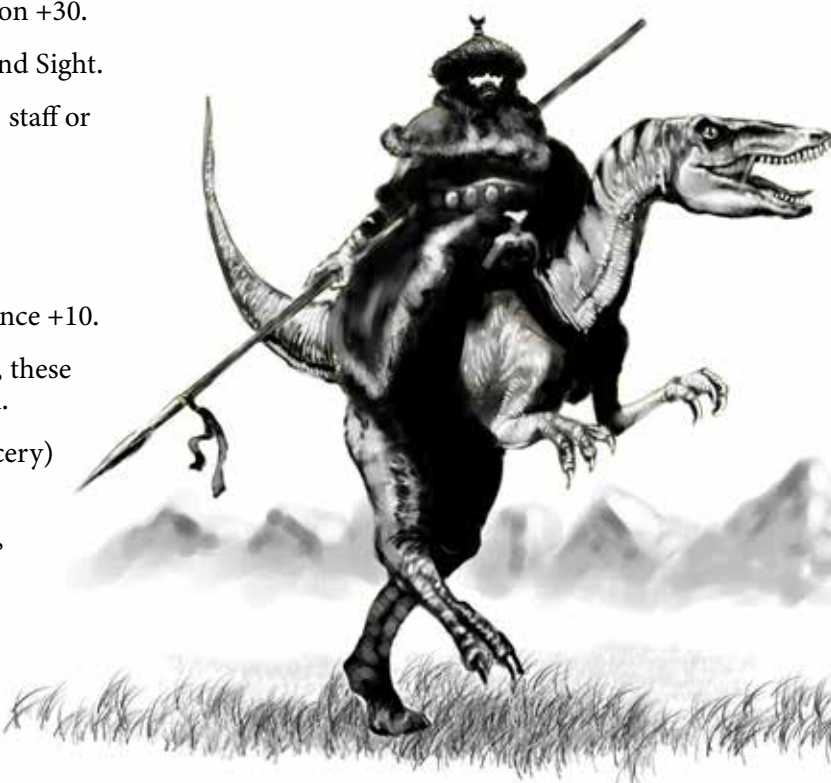
Combat: Close Combat+10, Ranged Combat+20, Unarmed Combat +10.

Knowledge: Natural Lore +30, Language (other)+20.

Practical: Athletics + 25, Perception +20, Ride +30.

Battle Magic: Clear Path 1, Mobility 2, Multimissile 3.

Equipment: Nomad bow, spear, dagger, leather armour, waterskin, warm animal pelt jacket and hat.



Flamboyant and Daring Travelling Entertainer**Skills:**

Resistances: Dodge +30, Persistence +10, Resilience +10.

Combat: Close Combat+10, Ranged Combat+20, Unarmed Combat +20.

Knowledge: Culture (Own) +30, Culture (Other) +20.

Practical Athletics +20, , Deception +10, Influence +20, Performance +25.

Battle Magic: Befuddle, Coordination 2, Enhance Skill (Performance) 2.

Equipment: Travelling clothes, appropriate costume for acting, leather armour, any weapons that the character is skilled.

Grizzled Veteran of the Imperial Guard**Skills:**

Resistances: Dodge +20, Persistence +10, Resilience +20.

Combat: Close Combat+20, Ranged Combat+20, Unarmed Combat +10.

Knowledge: Culture (own) +20, Lore (Military Tactics) +30.

Practical: Athletics + 25, Craft +20, Influence +10, Perception +20.

Battle Magic: Fanaticism, Protection 2, Weapon Enhance 2.

Equipment: 1H sword and shield or 1H spear and shield or 1H axe and shield, plus bow and dagger, leather armour, waterskin, rations.

Initiate of the Imperial Way**Skills:**

Resistances: Dodge +20, Persistence +20, Resilience +10.

Combat: Choose one of the following at +20, Close Combat, Ranged Combat or Unarmed Combat/

Knowledge: Customs (Gatan)+10, Religion (Imperial Way) +30.

Practical: Healing +30, Influence +25, Perception +20.

Battle Magic: Protection 2, Weapon Enhance 2, Light.

Divine Magic: Imperial Might

Equipment: Leather armour, Shield and Long sword, backpack, the Book of the Imperial Way.

In the Gatan setting, these wandering initiates are loosely affiliated with the Temples of the Imperial Way and go from imperial settlement helping the local authorities capture troublemakers and uphold law and order.

Unlike other Ready-Made concepts, 30 points from the Combat Skills have added to Religion (Imperial Way), so they can meet the requirements for an initiate. All the Battle Magic spells come from the Religion's Battle Magic list, except one point which is the Divine Magic spell of Imperial Might (see page xx in the Empire of Gatan chapter).

Opportunistic Trader Looking for New Markets**Skills:**

Resistances: Dodge +10, Persistence +20, Resilience +20.

Combat: Close Combat+20, Ranged Combat+20, Unarmed Combat +10.

Knowledge: Culture (Other) +20, Culture (Own)+10, Language (Other) +20.

Practical: Influence +20, Perception +20, Trade +30, Wealth +15.

Battle Magic: Back Eyes, Far Sight 1, Fist of Gold 1, Tongues.

Equipment: Travelling clothes over leather armour, appropriate weapons, waterskin, large backpack or mule.



Savage and Tough Barbarian Warrior

Skills:

Resistances: Dodge +10, Persistence +10, Resilience +30.

Combat: Close Combat+30, Ranged Combat+10 , Unarmed Combat +10 .

Knowledge: Natural Lore +30, Culture (own) +20

Practical: Athletics +25, Healing +20, Perception +20, Deception +10.

Battle Magic: Fanaticism, Farsight, Weapon Enhance 2.

Equipment: Battleaxe or long sword with, leather armour, warm animal furs, waterskin.



Stealthy and Sneaky Thief

Skills:

Resistances: Dodge +30, Persistence +10, Resilience +10.

Combat: Close Combat +10, Ranged Combat +30, Unarmed Combat +10.

Knowledge: Culture (Own) +20, Language (Thieves Tongue) +30.

Practical: Athletics+10, Deception +30, Perception +10, Mechanisms +10, Streetwise +15.

Battle Magic: Befuddle, Coordination 2, Multimissile 2.

Equipment: 1H sword or 1H mace, dagger, five throwing daggers or short bow, leather armour, hooded travelling cloak, set of lockpicks.

Widely-Travelled Sailor

Skills:

Resistances: Dodge +20, Persistence +10, Resilience +20.

Combat: Close Combat+20, Ranged Combat+10, Unarmed Combat +10.

Knowledge: Natural Lore +30, Culture (Sea) +20.

Practical: Athletics + 25, Perception +20, Sailing +30.

Battle Magic: Coordination 2, Firearrow, Water Breath 2.

Equipment: Cutlass, shield, dagger, leather armour. Peg-leg or eye patch optional.

IMPROVING CHARACTERS

As characters go on Quests, they grow and improve. As a game, this is the goal for the players.

The main currency for achieving this and indicator of how well the character is doing in-game terms are improvement points. These are handed out by the Referee at the end of a game session or the conclusion of an adventure (see page xx for more information).

SPENDING IMPROVEMENT POINTS

Players may spend improvement points in the downtime between Quests when their characters who are badly injured are healing. The default downtime period is three months, although maybe days if the flow of time of the series of Quests, known as a Saga (see page xx for more information), requires it.

IMPROVING SKILLS

A player can choose to spend one improvement point to increase one known skill.

Select the skill and increases by +5% points.

There is no limit to the number of improvement points spent on one skill at once, but no skill may go above 100%.

IMPROVING CHARACTERISTICS

A player can choose to spend three improvement points to increase one characteristic by one point.

SIZ never increases using improvement points.

The maximum a human character can increase a characteristic to is 21. For non-humans, the maximum for a characteristic is equal to the maximum possible starting score for the characteristic plus three.

Summary of Improvements

Cost	Improvement
One	+5% to Skill
Three	+1 to any characteristic except SIZ
One	Learn a Battle Magic spell (see Chapter 8)
Two per Magnitude	Learn a or an increase Divine Magic spell (see Chapter 9)
Two	Learn a Sorcery Spell (see Chapter 10)

IMPROVING OUTSIDE OF QUESTS: PRACTICE & RESEARCH

The characters may often experience long stretches of downtime between Quests. Group members may need to heal from wounds suffered during the last Quest, the characters may engage in some activity that takes time, or life may simply return to normal until the next danger to face the player characters appears.

During such downtime, the characters may improve their characters. The players might request downtime between Quests to learn new skills, and it is up to the Referee to determine if this is appropriate.

For every three months of practise or research, a character may gain 1 Improvement Point.

IMPROVING IN MAGICAL RANK

There are improvement point costs when a character increases their rank in the Religions and Sorcery, and when they become a specialist caster using Battle Magic—explained in more detail in the relevant chapters, along with the benefits.

UNLEARNING SPELLS & CHANGING MAGICAL PATH

If characters change religions or even magic path, they may want to free up previously learnt magic spells, to learn the more powerful spell—especially the case when magician characters graduate from being Battle Magic users to either Sorcery or Divine.

Characters may do this during downtime between adventures. The player describes how their character is spending time unlearning the spell and then as long as they have a teacher or source of the new spell they can learn it. Also, extra improvement points from the character's current pool added to the improvement points freed up by unlearning the spell, to make up the total improvement points to learn the new spell.

Also, they may return the improvement points they spent to become a specialist caster (such as Shaman, Wise, Priest or Adept). They can then spend this on spells, or more likely on becoming a specialist caster in their new magical path.



The Adventuerrrs: Several Quests later, more powerful and wiser?

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