Russwater RPG Ruleset

A fluffier RPG with less crunch

This ruleset is a way to play a narrative, less constrained, Gonzo homebrew version of popular roleplaying games compatible with d20 TTRPGs including Dungeons & Dragons 5e and Pathfinder 1e / 2e.

The PDF of this ruleset is available at
https://jaryd.com/russwater-rpg-ruleset.pdf

Um actually, loosey goosey, wibbly wobbly, timey wimey…

The mechanics of the system are kept simple to form a base upon which to allow the specifics of mechanics in this system to not work the same or even consistently as they do in other systems contributing ideas / concepts. This is on purpose.

PCs are encouraged to actively roleplay and contribute making things up to the combined world and storytelling of the game and that they get to influence the outcome of the game more.

Players drive the plot and what they want to do in the world, the GM plays the world the plot is taking place in.

Both players and the GM are not necessarily constrained by limits that may exist in other systems.

Players have more latitude to suggest how they would like something to work and that could happen, mechanics are allowed to be more flexible than some other systems but the GM is ultimately "roleplaying the world" and being the arbiter of what is happening in the moment.

Hub Location

Our PCs are adventurers and call it luck or determination, they are somewhat special, having powers and resources not usually available to the common folk of our setting. Our stories are based out of a hub location, stories can happen locally with potential to travel far, far, away.

Our base of operations is the local university in local town. PCs are usually somehow associated with the Adventuring Academy. The party is part of a larger squad and may encounter other friendly or rival squads from the Academy. The Academy is a safe place for PCs to venture from and return to at the end of a session. Players may have more than one PC in the setting but would normally use one at a time.

Character Sheet

Player:
Character Concept / Theme:
Character Name:
Class / Architype:
Ancestry:
Background:
STR
DEX
CON
INT
WIS
CHA
LVL:
HP:
Exhaustion:
Treasure:
Appearance:
Attack Styles:
Equipment / Spells / Abilities:

Character Creation

Core Concept or Theme

Describe in a few words the core concept or theme the character idea is based on.

Ancestries, Background, Class or Archetype

Choose an ancestry, background and class / archetype. The mechanics of this system are affected by the ability scores, the abilities chosen and how they are roleplayed more so than these narrative choices.

Common ancestries would be based on something from fiction and are biological in nature - Alien, Beast-folk, Celestial, Changeling, Construct, Dwarf, Elemental, Elf, Fey, Gnome, Goblin-kin, Halfling, Human, Insectoid, Kobold, Lizardmen, Lycanthropes, Minotaur, Occult, Orc, Ooze, Shadow, Undead.

Common backgrounds would be based on a previous profession or cultural aspects of a way of life. They suggest what the PC was doing before becoming an adventurer - Acolyte, Animal Catcher, Apprentice, Athlete, Bandit, Beggar, Con Artist, Courier, Courtesan, Courtier, Diplomat, Entertainer, Farmer, Fisherman, Gladiator, Guard, Guide, Healer, Hermit, Hunter, Investigator, Laborer, Merchant, Miner, Noble, Nomad, Pirate, Primitive, Scholar, Scribe, Seaman, Servant, Soldier, Squire, Stable hand, Thief, Woodsman

Character type, class or archetypes help describe the type of adventurer the PC is and the focus of their abilities - Adventurer, Alchemist, Artisan, Assassin, Barbarian, Bard, Cleric, Clerk, Courier, Druid, Engineer, Fighter, Knight, Medic, Mercenary, Merchant, Monk, Noble, Official, Pilgrim, Ranger, Rogue, Scholar, Scientist, Seer, Soldier, Sorcerer, Spy, Technician, Thief, Warlock, Witch, Wizard.

Core Roll Mechanic

When an outcome is in question, we mostly use a d20 roll mechanic potentially at advantage or disadvantage to determine the outcome. A variation on this is also used in most combat.

Only roll if there is both a chance they might succeed or fail. If they cannot succeed or fail, don't roll just state that they succeed or fail.

The GM interprets the outcome of the roll in the current situation.

- 20 = Critical Success or Very Hard DC
- 16 - 19 = Success or Hard DC
- 11 - 15 = Partial Success or Easy DC
- 6 - 10 = Partial Failure or Very Easy DC
- 2 - 5 = Failure or Trivial DC
- 1 = Critical Failure

Advantage / Disadvantage

The mechanical modifiers in the system are only advantage / disadvantage i.e. rolling two dice and taking the higher or lower number.

Generally if a PC does not know how to do something they will roll at disadvantage. If they know how to do something but are not skilled in it they will roll one d20 die straight. If they are skilled at the thing they are attempting then they can roll with advantage often whether they are deemed skilled at task will be determined by whether they have advantage or disadvantage on their ability scores.

Because advantage / disadvantage do not stack and often a scenario may include multiple sources of advantage or disadvantage, most of the time it will be a matter of seeing which cancel each other out and what is left.

Ability Scores

The six ability scores are Strength (STR), Dexterity (DEX), Constitution (CON), Intelligence (INT), Wisdom (WIS) and Charisma (CHA).

The mechanical modifiers in the system are only advantage / disadvantage.

Ability scores are important in this game because they effect many things like attacks, saving throws and skill checks, etc.

As PCs level, they get abilities. One of the abilities they can choose is to have advantage in a particular ability score.

Players can also choose to start with advantage in an ability score by choosing to have disadvantage on another.

For the sake of rolls that require a creature to have an ability score where one is not known, a score with advantage is seen as a 16, a flat roll 12 and disadvantage is 8.

Hit Points and Levels of Exhaustion

PCs get 10 Hit Points (HP) per level.

PCs can also get up to 6 levels of exhaustion before they die.

Hit Points are viewed as a creature's current stamina and levels of exhaustion measure of a creature's physical health.

Resting

PCs regain 10 HP per hour. Once every 24 hours their level of exhaustion reduces by 1. PCs with advantage in Constitution regain 15 HP per hour. PCs with disadvantage in Constitution regain only 5 HP per hour. PCs don't need to rest per se, they more so just need to stop doing activities that reduce their HP faster than they can accumulate them and give them levels of exhaustion!

Healing Ability

All PCs have the Healing Ability. A PC can spend their own HP to heal others up to 30 ft away. The ability takes one action and heals 1 HP. The Healing Ability can be performed in or outside combat.

Healing another transfer HP from one healing creature to the creature being healed. No additional HP are created in the process and the healer must have HP to give to perform the Healing Ability.

The description of a PC using the Healing Ability can be altered to suit the characters theme, for instance, a mothers love, a drill sergeant yelling, a divine blessing or using a technological device. The mechanical benefits remain the same.

Healing magic, Healing potions and Healer's kits

Healing magic does not create additional hit points, it only allows a healer to transfer their HP to the creature(s) they are healing faster than the standard healing ability. Healing potions, healing kits are used to restore 1 HP to an incapacitated creature without requiring the HP to come from the person attempting to heal. This could be a person healing themselves or another who have little to no HP to give.

Use of a Healing potion or a Healer's kit requires an action and returns 1HP. You can only benefit from 1 Healing potion or application of a Healer's kit per hour.

Levels of Exhaustion

For each level of Exhaustion, penalties are applied.

The penalties stack on top of each other.

The 6 levels of Exhaustion are as follows:

Level	Effect
1	Disadvantage on Ability Checks
2	Disadvantage on Attack rolls and Saving Throws
3	Movement Speed halved
4	HP maximum halved
5	Movement Speed reduced to 0
6	Death

Once every 24 hours a creatures level of exhaustion reduces by 1.

Death

When a creature sustains enough damage to end the round with a negative HP value equal to or bigger than their negative HP maximum value, they die instantly.

When a creature ends a round on between 0 HP and their negative HP maximum, they are deemed alive but now dying.

Their HP are set at 0 HP and the next round the creature can only take one of the following actions:

- Move
- Flee the battlefield
- Surrender or choose to be captured
- Receive healing or aid from another
- Try to stabilise themselves
- Use a healing potion or a healers kit
- Free actions like speaking, using a device
- Choose to become unconscious.

For each round the creature is dying they take one level of Exhaustion.

Without intervention or action in 6 rounds they will reach 6 levels of Exhaustion and die.

Any attack against a dying / incapacitated / unconscious creature, kills the creature outright.

A creature can choose to try and stabilise itself or another with a dc 15 medicine check.

On a successful stabilising medicine check the creature is stabilised at 1 HP.

On a failed check the creature falls unconscious.

Unconscious creatures remain on their current level of Exhaustion but are no longer dying.

Unless healed or killed in the meantime, unconscious creatures naturally regain consciousness in 1 hour at 1 HP.

Once a creature has been unconscious, they cannot re-join an ongoing combat.

If a creature is resurrected or revivified, they return with 5 levels of Exhaustion.

Killing dying / incapacitated / unconscious creatures

It is an active decision and an action to kill a dying / incapacitated / unconscious creature. You must decide to do so.

Why handle incapacitation and death in this way?

We feel the system has the following advantages:

- Allows for a longer period of exciting potential jeopardy
- Players are more actively involved trying to contribute to help themselves
- The Exhaustion mechanic means multiple incapacitations can compound
- Not allowing previously unconscious / dead players instantly being back into the fray avoids silliness

Leveling

PCs level up in milestones determined by the GM but usually these coincide with the start of a session. 20th level is the maximum level.

Each level PCs get a new major ability and 200 GP to spend on common standard abilities and equipment.

Influence

Players are encouraged to try and influence a situation narratively.

Players describe how some aspect of their PCs ancestry, background or class / archirype allows them to alter the story or outcomes during game play.

This narrative mechanic replaces small abilities an ancestry, background or class might usually have in lore or another system in a situation that makes sense without the player needing to have that ability specifically written on their character sheet. For instance, a halfling having a helpful relation in a halfling village, a Dwarf having knowledge about mines or stone construction, a Tiefling resisting fire damage, or a gambler being good at games of chance.

Attack Styles

In this game PCs attack and defend using the ability scores. Regardless of their weapon of choice, PCs can usually style the description of their combat / attacks to target different ability scores.

A melee fighter might usually attack using Strength, but they could also choose to attack with a different ability score for instance their intelligence ability score to target their opponent's intelligence ability score because in this particular combat they see this as an opportunity to outthink their opponent.

Player should think about how they can describe their attacks and how they defend based on their ability score. The descriptions do not affect the power of their attacks mechanically. The point is to have the players vary how they describe their actions in combat in interesting and clever ways.

When initially describing their character, having the players come up with at least two significantly different styles of attacks for their PC that target different ability scores will be useful. They help a player be able to understand they have options of attacks in various situations when a plan is not working in melee, at range, physically and mentally.

If shooting arrows at the heavily armoured knight is not working because it gives the player disadvantage on Strength and Dexterity attacks, having the ability to change tactic and start describing how you are using your intelligence instead to outthink the opponents Intelligence meaning they now have advantage might make a big difference. This could be described as feinting an attack, positioning an opponent to drop something on them, placing something under their feet to trip them. Or maybe psychically targeting their over inflated ego (Charisma) to damage their HP pool in that way instead.

Players should be rewarded for coming up with interesting ways they can vary their combat to describe how they are altering their attacks for a particular fight to take advantage of an opportunity to attack a targets weakness maybe using an ability score not usually chosen or out of the box thinking but within the arc of their PCs theme to make combat more interesting for everyone.

Attacks

There are 3 main styles of attack - Melee, Ranged and Spells.

Players can use their actions to make attacks.

In this combat model the standard "to hit" rolls and "damage" rolls are combined into standard combat roll of a d20.

The roll could be made at advantage or disadvantage depending on the status of the ability score being used.

The roll describes the damage you may do on your attack but also determines if you are potentially damaged yourself.

A standard combat roll on a d20 could have one of the follow outcomes:

- 20 = Critical success. The attack does double damage rolled and the attack breaks a targets concentration ending any spell or ability they are concentrating on.

- 16 - 19 = Success. The attack does the damage rolled and you sustain no damage.

- 11 - 15 = Partial Success. The attack does half the damage rolled rounded up and you sustain no damage.

- 6 - 10 = Partial Failure. The attack does the damage rolled, but you also sustain 5 HP of damage.

- 2 - 5 = Failure. The attack does no damage, and you sustain 5 HP damage.

- 1 = Critical Failure. No damage is done, you sustain 10 HP damage, loses an action next round and the PCs concentration is broken, ending any spell or ability being concentrated on.

Vision and Senses

Creatures within the setting often have one main type of vision or sensory perception available to them with maybe some access to another. The players can choose which they think is appropriate for them and the options have both advantages and disadvantages. The common ones are Light vision, Low Light vision, Darkvision and Keen Senses. PCs do not usually have access to more than two forms of vison / perception without magical or technological means like Googles of Night or Googles of Day, spells with names like Darkvision, Light vision, Eagle Sight or Hone Senses, etc. PCs will still likely want to have access to some kind of light source to better perceive the detail of things. How much these aspects come up at your table is up to the GM and the group, but it is an interesting concept that just in real life some aspects that can be advantageous in one way may come with limitations in another.

Light vision

Light vision describes the standard three colour perception of most diurnal (daytime) creatures have and we are familiar with as humans. Rods and three cones vision with full perception of colours up close and out to the horizon within standard daylight light ranges. Light vision creatures can have access to Low Light vision if they allow their eyes to acclimatise to the conditions over a period of 5 minutes or more. Their low light perception is monochrome and at disadvantage. They also are easily dazzled by being exposed to brighter light resetting their vision and needing to acclimatise again.

Low Light vision

Low Light vision describes vision that is common in creatures that are nocturnal or live in places with low light conditions. Their vision usually has rods and two cones (blue and yellow) with their monochrome rods having advantage on perception of movement and a higher range of light tolerance allowing them to see clearly with very little light present. The better a creature's vison is in low light can mean the more they are somewhat either short sighted or are poor at discerning colour detail with their vision regardless of light levels potentially past 120 ft could be increasingly blurred or their ability to discern small variance in colour tones or perceive colours in the red / green spectrum are at disadvantage.

Darkvision

Darkvision is common in creatures who live underground. They can see monochromatically using light but also thermal differences in the temperature of objects. Their other senses at short distances are improved with sensing stimuli from auditory, touch/movement, air pressure phenomena assisting them in building a more complete understanding of their surroundings. With this ability they can operate capability within complete darkness but are usually effectively blind past 120 feet besides some perception of movement.

Keen Senses

Many creatures, for instance animals, also have heightened abilities with senses other than sight. This could be auditory, smell, movement / touch, or vision in unusual frequency or light like infrared or UV. These senses can have various ranges and like a creature with great auditory perception could potentially hear at longer distances even with echolocation but also close up for noises not usually perceptible to humans. Movement or smell could be long distance tremor sense vibrations or following a scent trail as well fine detail at 10 feet. Being very sensitive in one of these senses could also mean that a creature could find over stimulation in that sense overwhelming at times.

Features / Abilities / Powers / Items

In this game, the features of a PC are not restricted by things like class or race and are available to all players. Any PC can have any type of ability / spell / skill / tool / language / equipment.

The GM helps guide these choices to try to keep them appropriate.

PCs get one major ability or power per level, with up to 20 at 20th maximum level. If you wanted to start a PC with 3 major abilities they would start at level 3.

Gaining advantage in an ability score is a major ability. Other character features, major abilities, special powers also usually cost 1 point.

Magic Items cost points depending on their rarity.

The special powers are often similar to racial traits, class abilities, feats or magic items found in D&D or other RPGs / fiction.

There is a table of example Character Features / Special Abilities later in the document.

The GM can decide whether the ability you want best matches a special power, a levelled spell like ability or simply a skill, tool, equipment, etc.

Common Standard Abilities

The other way to acquire more common abilities is to purchase them.

PCs get 200 GP each level to spend on common standard abilities and equipment.

Here are the costs to acquire a new ability.

Ability	GP
Cantrips	25
Spells / Ability	50 per level squared
Skills & Tools	50
Languages	50
Equipment	List Price

As the PCs adventure and gain resources, they will be able to purchase more abilities.

Acquiring New Capabilities

Besides the abilities chosen when first making a PC, abilities are acquired by questing, completion of a task, training or purchasing. They could be new spells / techniques / skills / tools / languages / knowledge / equipment.

All spells / techniques can be written down or remembered in some manner. These are usually recorded in some kind of book or device that could be found, purchased, stolen, examined, etc. The inscriptions are referred to as things like scrolls, arcane spells, divine prayers, primal incantations, manuals, or treatise, etc.

Acquiring a skill gives advantage on those challenge rolls.

Using a tool without proficiency is done at disadvantage. Acquiring proficiency in a tool gives advantage on those challenge rolls when using that tool.

Acquiring a language gives proficiency in that language and the ability to try and comprehend other languages in that language group (explained later) with disadvantage on a check.

Players can have their PC learn a spell or another standard technique that has the same mechanical effect as a spell which is more widely known but they flavour the ability to be in keeping with their theme and potentially be narratively derived from a different source of knowledge or power.

Non-magical spell like abilities are known as "Techniques" and can have their power come from a non-magical source of energy and knowledge. These non-magical equivalents have similar costs and requirements to spells based on their power. All PCs remain generally more similar mechanically regardless of where their power is derived from.

While spells are the traditional way of thinking about to collecting abilities through magic, it is envisaged that PCs could similarly collect other forms of knowledge and abilities whether they be academic, aberrant, martial, mercantile, political, scientific, technological, equipment, a spell component, a magic item, something to help solve a larger quest or specific knowledge concepts a player finds as an interesting form of progression.

This collecting mechanic is the core driver of the gameplay. The choice is theirs.

Skills

Acquiring a skill means a PC has advantage on this skill. Having advantage on the corresponding ability score will also give advantage on those skill checks.

You can choose to have no skills at all and only have the ability scores effect skill checks but many players like to collect proficiency in skills.

If you choose to have skills as part of your game, you can use a list from a game system you like like 5e, Pathfinder, etc and their corresponding ability score.

- D&D 5e SRD Skills
- Pathfinder 2e SRD Skills

Tools

If you are not proficient in a tool, rolls are made at disadvantage. Acquiring a tool proficiency means a PC gets the corresponding tool equipment and now has advantage on their rolls.

Having advantage on the corresponding ability score will give advantage on the corresponding tool checks but the tool equipment will also need to be somehow acquired to complete the checks.

Again you can choose to have no tool proficiencies at all and only have the ability scores effect checks but many players like to collect proficiencies.

If you choose to have tool proficiencies as part of your game, you can use a list from a game system you like like 5e, Pathfinder, etc and their corresponding ability score.

- D&D 5e SRD Tools

Standard Equipment

PCs can start with any clothes, weapons, armor and equipment that suits their character.

Weapons

In this system all weapons do a standard amount of damage, so choosing one(s) you like won't affect damage output.

Armor

PCs can choose to have armor either work narratively or mechanically.

PCs can wear armor up to a point where all melee and ranged attacks against them will be at disadvantage. But wearing this amount of armor would come at the cost that their dexterity, movement and spell casting checks are also made at disadvantage.

Because of the nature of the standard combat model in this system it may not be worth it to have it work mechanically. Consider that many opponents do not get to attack the PCs directly and having advantage in STR gives opponents disadvantage in melee and having advantage in DEX gives opponents disadvantage at range.

So PCs may choose to just improve their ability scores and have advantage in both STR and DEX and not have their armor make a difference mechanically. In this way having advantage in both STR and DEX effectively negate the penalty of wearing lots of armor has.

It would be nice that the player keeps their theoretical encumbrance in mind but if enough equipment is chosen that it would not normally be able to be carried - a mount, a pack animal or some other way of carrying the equipment could be acquired or it can be distributed throughout the party.

The aim of giving the players free access to these lists is allow them to have the opportunity to use them in interesting ways.

- [D&D 5e SRD Equipment](#)
- [Pathfinder 2e SRD Equipent](#)

Character Features / Major Abilities / Special Powers Examples

Here are some examples of abilities players could have. This is not a definitive list, just a set of examples for the types of major abilities players could choose to create. They can be based on features popular in Dungeons and Dragons or other fiction. Pathfinder 2e for example has a huge amount of [Features / Feats](#) of many different types and power levels that could be converted to be a feature or ability of some kind in this system if the player wanted to discuss it with the GM.

The aim here is for the players to come up with something they think is cool and exciting to them and the GM and potentially other players helping refine it into something that can work at the table.

Starting with ones like those in D&D or PF2e has the advantage that you can better assess their power level and whether they are going to be reasonably balanced. Of course, doing this relies on people working together to make PCs that are going to work in with the combined story.

Adamantine Blades (1HP) - You have the ability to control slashing and piercing weapons in unusual ways both in melee or at range. Your Attack Styles that use your blades as a component can do 1HP of additional damage per attack. You have access to a technique that is the equivalent of the Burning Hands spell but does non magical piercing and slashing damage. The player can rename these attacks to suit their character.

Additional Limb(s) - you have additional limbs not normally associated with your race.

Action Surge (5HP) - On your turn, you can take an additional action.

Alchemist - You can make potions and alchemic concoctions and always seem to have the right ingredients.

Battlesuit - You have access to a form of battle dress with special abilities that may grow over time. It is a magic / special technology item and uses those rules in regard to ability points.

Blind Fighting - You can fight combatants within 10 ft in melee without sight.

Chameleon (1HP/minute) – You can make yourself semi-transparent. As an action you can become invisible and are invisible when not moving. When moving you make Stealth checks at advantage, plus Perception and Investigation checks, attacks against you are at disadvantage.

Crafty - you have proficiency in 8 tools of your choice.

Cybernetics / Technological Enhancements - You have technological equipment built into your body that adds to or alters your abilities. They are magic / special technology items and uses those rules in regard to feature slots.

Danger Sense - You cannot be surprised and have advantage on avoiding traps.

Elemental Forms (1HP/minute) – Transform into an elemental form. You gain movement types and damage resistances related to that element. Similar to a beast form, you lose your other abilities while in this form.

Energy / Elemental Control (1HP) - You have the ability to control elements or a damage type in some way. You choose an Attack Style that uses an elemental damage type. As an action for 1HP per round you can have your body take on the elemental type of you chose. While in this form your attacks do an additional 1HP of elemental damage and you do 1HP damage of that elemental damage type to those within 5 feet of you.

Fit - you have advantage on all physical skills.

Firearms - You have access to firearms of some kind. One of your Attack Styles uses firearms. You have access to technology that are the equivalent of the following spells but they do non magical bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage instead of their normal damage type: Burning Hands, Scorching Ray and Fireball. The player can rename these attacks to suit their character.

Grappler - You are an expert grappler and you have advantage on grapple checks when wrestling with opponents in a way that gives you the upper hand.

Heightened Senses - You have unusual levels of perception in one or more of your senses others can barely understand. You gain an additional Influence point per day that you can use by describing how you are using your extraordinary senses.

Holy Diver - You can turn undead and any planar beings. In combat you have advantage on your attacks against them and they have disadvantage against you.

Influence - You can alter other creatures emotions to come to your aid and inspire them to perform great acts themselves. You gain an additional Influence point per day that you can give to an ally to use by you both describing how your Influence assisted them to achieve a task.

Jack of all Trades (1HP) – with 1 hour preparation you can improvise equipment and gain proficiency in any tool. Only one tool can be buffed in this way at a time.

Lay on Hands – As an action, you touch a creature and expend 9 HP to cure or neutralize one disease, infliction, curse or condition affecting it.

Magic or Technology item – you can exchange ability points to be able to choose a special item available from the Russwater Adventuring Academy Stores. You can return the item at any time to receive your points back.

Marksman - you have advantage on all ranged attacks but disadvantage on all melee.

Martial Arts - You have knowledge of martial arts. You do not require equipment or magic to do serious physical damage. Your unarmed attacks do weapon damage and have access to all manoeuvres.

Movement type (1HP/minute) - you can have one of the following movement types at a base speed of 30 feet per round. Climbing, Swimming, Burrowing, Gliding, Leaping (Wuxia), Flying, Blinking, Teleporting.

Nature - You are so in tune with the natural environment that you can call on it to protect you as you protect it.

Necromancy – You can transfer your life energy into your undead minions to maintain their undead state. Upon raising the dead you can reduce your HP maximum and place the HP into a minion(s) instead. Once a minion is dispelled or slain the HP maximum can return to you but the HP will need to be regained in the normal 1 HP per hour manner. This power could be flavoured in other ways but using the same mechanic.

Plant Forms – You can transform into different plant based forms at will for one hour based on a cost of HP limiting the maximum size of form you can assume. A stationary plant of size tiny at the cost of 1HP per hour, Barkskin at the cost of 1HP per hour, Small size Dryad at 4HP per hour, Medium size Dryad at 9HP per hour, Large size Treant at 16HP per hour, Huge size Treant at 25HP per hour, Gargantuan size Treant at 36HP per hour. You have the physical stats of the form except the form has the same amount of HP as the form cost to cast.

Plasticity (1HP) - Your body can stretch or alter shape. You can squeeze through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide, provided you are wearing and carrying nothing. You have advantage on ability checks you make to initiate or escape a grapple. As an action for 1HP for the round, you can make one of your limbs 6 inches wide and 10 feet long.

Quick Wit - You can use your wit and comedic knowledge of language to alter a situation.

Ram - You can turn the tide of victory with your ability to physically dominate others on the battlefield.

Sensory Versatility – You have access to multiple forms of vision or perception by ways of some biological, magical, or technological means.

Scribe - You can create scrolls and have advantage on casting from scrolls.

Seer - you have advantage on perception, insight, investigation skill checks and casting and resisting all spells from the divination school.

Shield Bearer (1HP) - You have exceptional skill with shields that gives you abilities. As an action for 1HP per round all melee and ranged attacks

have disadvantage against you. You can use your shield as a Attack Style in melee and throw it as a ranged attack up to 60 feet, with it returning to you at the end of the round.

Silver Tongue - you have advantage on performance, all social skills and casting and resisting all spells from the enchantment school.

Smite - when you hit a creature with a melee weapon attack, as an action you can deal radiant damage to the target, in addition to the weapon's damage. The extra damage is 1HP for a 1st-level spell cost, plus 1HP for each spell level cost higher than 1st, to a maximum of 5HP. The damage increases by 1HP if the target is an undead or a fiend, to a maximum of 6HP.

Speed - You have access to speed of movement not available to other humanoids.

Steel Trap - you have advantage on all intelligence and wisdom skills.

Sturdy - You have an uncanny ability to take a blow and remain upright.

Super-Strength - You can perform feats of strength not found in normal humanoids. You have advantage on Strength checks. Your Attack Styles that have physical strength as a component do 1HP of additional damage per attack.

Tactical Mastery (1HP) - Your grasp of the battle tactics allows you to create victories out of the circumstances presented to you. As an action you can give yourself and all allies advantage on their Attack Styles.

Thieves Toolkit – You have advantage on the following set of skills: Using Thieves Tools, Open Locks, Find or Remove Traps, Pick Pockets, Sleight of hand, Stealth, Move Silently, Hide in Shadows, Investigation, Surveillance, Climbing.

Tough – You have an exceedingly high level of fitness. You have advantage on Constitution ability checks.

Turn Undead (1HP/creature CR) - As an action, you present your holy symbol and speak a prayer censuring the undead. Each undead that can see or hear you within 30 feet of you must make a Wisdom saving throw. If the creature fails its saving throw, it is turned for 1 minute or until it takes any damage.

Up close and personal - you have advantage on all melee attacks but disadvantage on all ranged.

Weather Control (1HP) - You can alter and control the forces of nature to control the weather. As a standard action you can alter your Signature Attack Styles to use a damage type associated with nature.

Wild Shape – You can transform into different beast-based forms at will for one hour based on a cost of HP limiting the maximum size of form you can assume. Tiny at the cost of 1HP per hour, Up to Small at 4HP per hour, Up to Medium at 9HP per hour, Up to Large at 16HP per hour, Up to

Huge at 25HP per hour, Up to Gargantuan at 36HP per hour. You have the physical stats of the form except the form has the same amount of HP as the form cost to cast.

Wild Companion – You call a beast companion. Tiny at the cost of 1HP per hour, Up to Small at 4HP per hour, Up to Medium at 9HP per hour, Up to Large at 16HP per hour, Up to Huge at 25HP per hour, Up to Gargantuan at 36HP per hour. The companion has the stats of the form except the form has the same amount of HP as the form cost to cast.

Ze Powerz! Biggerize my Numberz!!1! – Add +1HP damage to all standard attacks.

Spells / Abilities commonly available

There are spells / abilities like those in other ttrpgs that are commonly available to be learned at the Adventurers Academy. PCs can usually convince someone to teach them a spell or spell like ability up to 3rd level by completing a short quest / task or for a standardised fee. Spells and spell like abilities with a power level of 4th and above are harder to come by and may require something special to find and learn.

There is no technical restriction on PCs purchasing and learning any spell or ability but generally NPCs will not normally teach a PC a spell or ability that they are not confident they will be able to cast regularly successfully.

Spells can be flavoured to be different or non-magical in nature to suit a PC or creature's concept / theme. Spells from other systems usually take 2 actions to cast.

Popular Spell Lists

D&D 5e SRD Spell List

Pathfinder 2e SRD Spell List

Common Spell Names

Here is a list of common spell names and concepts from various versions of D&D over the decades. Exactly how these spells work at your table is up to you.

Cantrips Orisons (0 Level)

Acid Splash, Chill Touch, Dancing Lights, Detect Magic, Light, Mage Hand, Mending, Minor Illusion, Prestidigitation, Produce Flame, Ray Of Frost, Shocking Grasp

1st Level

Air Bubble, Alarm, Bane, Bless, Burning Hands, Charm, Command, Comprehend Languages, Create Water, Fear, Feather Fall, Find Familiar, Grease, Identify, Illusory Disguise, Illusory Object, Illusory Script, Jump, Longstrider, Mage Armor, Pass without Trace, Pest Form, Purify Food and Drink, Sanctuary, Sleep, Summon Animal, Unseen Servant, Ventriloquism

2nd Level

Aid, Animal Form, Animal Messenger, Arcane Lock, Augury, Barkskin, Blur, Calm Emotions, Darkness, Darkvision, Dispel Magic, Entangle, Faerie Fire, Hideous Laughter, Humanoid Form, Illusory Creature, Invisibility, Knock, Levitate, Magic Mouth, Magic Weapon, Mirror Image, Misty Step, Obscuring Mist, Phantom Steed, Restoration, Shatter, Silence, Spider Climb, Spiritual Weapon, Suggestion, Warding Bond, Water Breathing, Water Walk, Web

3rd Level

Blindness, Earthbind, Fireball, Fly, Gaseous Form, Haste, Hypnotic Pattern, Illusory Scene, Lightning Bolt, Meld with Stone, Paralyse, Revivify, Send Message, Slow, Spirit Guardians, Tongues, Vampiric Touch, Wall of Wind, Zone of Truth

Creating New Spells

Although Academy adventurers often use spells and abilities originally developed in other worlds, many prefer to create their own spells and abilities from scratch.

This can be done with the assistance and confirmation of the GM.

To create their own spell or ability the PC needs to identify the following details:

Spell / Ability name, Level, Ability Score, Disciple(s), Activation time, Range, Requirements, Duration and Description.

Creating a spell / ability in this way does not incur a GP cost like purchasing an existing one but the PC does need to go through the learning a new spell / ability process explained later in the document until they have perfected it and can write down their own inscription.

Spell / Ability name

The PC can name the spell anything they want. It is not unusual for certain arrogant adventurers to include their own name…

Ability Score

The Ability Score you are using to activate the spell or ability.

Level

The power level of the ability is determined by the parameters. The larger, longer and more complex the effect the higher the level.

Disciple

These could be related to an ability type, element, damage type, condition, creature type, plane, power source, vocation, school of magic, skills or something made up.

The more disciples required the higher the level.

Examples could be:

Attack, Defend, Utility, Air, Earth, Fire, Water, Force, Bludgeoning, Piercing, Slashing, Heat, Cold, Radiant, Lightning, Psychic, Acid, Necrotic, Thunder, Poison, Blinded, Charmed, Deafened, Exhaustion, Frightened, Grappled, Incapacitated, Invisible, Paralysed, Petrified, Poisoned, Prone, Restrained, Stunned, Unconscious, Aberration, Beast, Celestial, Construct, Dragon, Elemental, Fey, Fiend, Giant, Humanoid, Monstrosity, Ooze,

Plant, Undead, Material, Astral, Ethereal, Shadow, Academic, Alien, Martial, Mercantile, Political, Scientific, Social, Technological, Abjuration, Conjuration, Divination, Enchantment, Evocation, Illusion, Necromancy, Transmutation, Arcane, Divine, Primal, Occult, Acrobatics, Arcana, Athletics, Deception, Endurance, History, Intimidation, Insight, Investigation, Medicine, Nature, Perception, Persuasion, Performance, Religion, Sleight of Hand, Stealth, Survival, Fabrication

Activation time

How long it takes to active the ability. Minimum would be one action, up to in the case of rituals it could hours or repeated applications.

Range

Examples would be: Self, one creature, multiple creatures, melee, a range in feet, a shaped area of a stated size, a plane of existence.

Requirements

Is the activation or effect limited by using your verbal, sematic, a material component or circumstance?

Duration

Is the effect brief or instantaneous, a period of time or indefinite?

The longer the effect the higher the level.

Examples

Putting all these aspects we could create a cantrip or a high level spell:

Bozo's Fire Blast
Level: Cantrip 0
Ability Score: Intelligence
Discipline(s): Element, Attack
Activation: one action
Range: 120 feet
Requirements: verbal, sematic,
Duration: one action
Description: You attack an enemy with a blast of fire.

Resurrection of the Ancients
Level: 9
Ability Score: Wisdom
Discipline(s): Necromancy, Utility
Activation: one hour
Range: touch
Requirements: verbal, sematic, material (25,000 GP Diamond)
Duration: indefinite
Description: You perform a ritual to raise a being that has been dead for centuries.

Abilities - Rolling for success

This system does not use spell slots.

Spells and spell like abilities cost HP to activate instead.

A d20 is rolled to determine whether the attempt at using the spell or ability was successful. It is possible to fail, and the attempt have unforeseen outcomes or consequences especially when using magic.

Ability / Spell Level	HP Cost
0	0 (no attempt roll required)
1	1
2	4
3	9
4	16
5	25
6	36
7	49
8	64
9	81

You can choose use the standard d20 roll mechanic to determine how successfully the spell or ability was attempted especially in relation to spells that have saving throw etc or you can just purely have all rolls 2 and above succeed and only a 1 being a failure. If you are going to have the d20 roll have varying levels of success you might also consider having it effected by advantage / disadvantage. If you purely having to that only 1 is a failure then they would make those rolls straight.

Rolling a natural 1 is always a critical failure. The spell / ability did not work as intended, having either no effect or an unintentional effect.

Something negative happens to the caster or someone / something near or dear to them. The GM chooses what occurs. This could be for example:

- caster or someone "close" to them takes levels of Exhaustion equal to half the spell level rounded up;

- caster takes a condition from the [D&D 5e SRD Madness](#) or [PF2e Madness](#) or another ttrpg.

- caster takes an effect from one of the many random effect tables available on the internet or in other ttrpg systems to help determine the nature of what occurred like the Net Libram of Random Magical Effects version 2.00 By Orrex
https://centralia.aquest.com/downloads/NLRMEv2.pdf

Rolling a natural 20 is a critical success and the GM may determine that the spell or ability includes an unforeseen beneficial effect.

Using this system players may gain access to spells and abilities they are interested in earlier than they would be available to equivalent level players in other ttrpgs. This can be **very risky / deadly** to their PCs but also **failure can be fun** leading to bizarre new twists in the narrative watching them on their journey. Because of the roll to attempt, the potential implications of something going wrong rolling a 1 is as much a limit on spamming spells as the HP cost. Attempting to use higher level spells and abilities in this world also does not go unnoticed. If the PCs don't blow themselves up first, powerful beings will sense the movement / disruption in the flow of energies. They will become interested and start to pay close attention to those that are trying such things. You all have been warned.

Attempting a spell / spell like ability you do not know

You can attempt to cast a spell or attempt a technique you don't know.

If you do not have the spell requirements and / or don't know what you are doing, nothing happens.

If you have the spell requirements and have a rough idea of how the spell is cast and seen the spell successfully cast before, you can properly try.

The DC is 11 plus spell level.

If you have the inscription you will not take levels of exhaustion if you succeed on the roll. It is also a good idea to have assistance so you can try with advantage.

Without the inscription whether you succeed or fail you will take the HP cost and levels of Exhaustion equal to the spell level.

If the attempt to cast is unsuccessful any required material components are consumed / destroyed.

Learning a spell and casting it for the first time

Learning a new spell or spell like ability and casting it for the first time can be a very dangerous pursuit, not to be done without preparation, precaution and assistance. For instance, you are likely to die at least once learning spells of level 6 – 9 for the first time. If you have the inscription and successfully cast the spell once by this method, you have successfully learnt the spell, and can now use the regular spell casting rules. If you do not have the inscription you will need to successfully attempt 5 times by these new spell / ability rules before you can write your own inscription and start casting by the regular spell casting rules.

Concentration

Some spells or techniques require concentration. Rolling a critical failure natural 1 on a standard action or attack will break your concentration. Being attacked with a critical hit natural 20 also breaks concentration.

Spell Adaptability

There is no concept of spell preparation. If a spell is known to a PC, they have access to it.

Potions

There are also some potions that are more commonly available to would be PCs for a fee.

- Healing – 50 gp
- Spider Climb – 100 gp
- Water Breathing – 100 gp
- Enlarge / Reduce – 100 gp
- Levitate – 100 gp
- Gaseous Form – 300 gp
- Invisibility – 200 gp

Scrolls

Spell scrolls are relatively common and can be used by anyone.

Using a scroll requires an ability check based on spell level.

Ability / Spell Level	DC
1	4
2	6
3	8
4	10
5	12
6	14
7	16
8	18
9	20

The aim of this is so scrolls of obscure rarely used spells can be given by the GM to the party as a temporary consumable toy, they can try and find

a use for adding variety to their abilities without them avoiding them to conserve resources on more common choices.

Weird obscure scrolls are the ones that are often found because no one found a use for them previously and they collect laying around for long periods of time waiting for someone to cast them or care to add them to their spell books.

Magic Items / Special Items

Wands

Wands are common in the setting but are mainly used by PCs to cast their Attack Style cantrips as well as a spellcasting focus.

Acquiring magic items

Magic items can be awarded by the GM instead of other abilities. How or when this occurs is up to the GM. Being in possession of an item counts against the players special ability maximum and costs by rarity. Uncommon = 1 ability points, Rare = 2, Very Rare = 3, Legendary = 6, Artifact = 12. You cannot use / attune to an item you don't have points for.

Some magic items can be acquired at the Adventuring Academy and can be returned to release the ability points used to acquire it. You can find a lists of magic items on the Archives of Nethys.

Wands are common in the setting but are mainly used by PCs to cast their Attack Style cantrips as well as a spellcasting focus.

You may also find an item while adventuring but whether you are willing to forgo your other powers to use it is questionable.

Creating a magic item requires the crafter to transfer their lifeforce energy into the item reducing the crafters HP maximum during creation. Transfer of the lifeforce takes quite a long time.

The HP are returned when the item finds a new owner to draw power from or is destroyed.

Uncommon	1 year
Rare	2 years
Very Rare	3 years
Legendary	6 years
Artifact	12 years

Manoeuvres

Manoeuvres are tactical actions taught to all adventurers when they join the Adventuring Academy. Manoeuvres can take one or two actions.

Manoeuvres have the advantage that they do not have a HP cost.

Some manoeuvres are going to work better than others for some PCs against certain creatures. Ideally you would be trying to use a manoeuvre that uses an ability score you are high in and / or the creature is low for the best chance of success.

At the discretion of the GM players could make up new custom manoeuvres but these are likely to cost an ability point to learn.

Ambush – 1 action

If all of your party start an encounter hidden you can use this manoeuvre to give all party members advantage on their damage in the first round of combat.

Bait and Switch – 1 action

When you're within 5 feet of a creature on your turn, you can switch places with that creature, provided the creature is willing and isn't incapacitated.

Blinding Strike – 2 actions

On a successful melee attack and Dexterity saving throw you temporarily blind an opponent making an attack giving the opponent disadvantage on their attacks next round.

Charm – 2 actions

On a successful Charisma saving throw you charm an opponent meaning they will not attack you next round.

Deafening Attack – 2 actions

On a successful melee attack and Constitution saving throw you can temporarily deafen your opponent meaning they can't hear and cannot participate in any action that requires hearing next round.

Defensive Stance – 1 action

You alter your combat style to fight in a defensive manner. All attacks made against you are at disadvantage.

Demoralize – 2 actions

On a successful Charisma saving throw you force an opponent to make a morale check and potentially leave the battle field next round.

Disarming Attack – 2 actions

On a successful attack and Dexterity saving throw your attack disarms the target, forcing it to drop one item of your choice that it's holding. The object lands at its feet.

Distracting Strike – 2 actions

On a successful attack and Wisdom saving throw, you distract the creature, giving your allies an opening. All attacks against the target are at advantage next round.

Evasive Footwork – 1 action

You move and attacks against you at disadvantage for the round.

This could be particularly useful when disengaging.

Feinting Attack – 2 actions

On a successful melee attack and Dexterity saving throw, you feint, your opponent loses an action next round.

Friendly Foe – 2 actions

On a successful melee attack and Charisma saving throw you flirt with your opponent temporarily charming them giving them disadvantage on their attacks against you next round.

Frighten – 2 actions

On a successful Wisdom saving throw you frighten an opponent meaning they will not attack you next round.

Goading Attack – 2 actions

On a successful melee attack and Wisdom saving throw you can goad the target into attacking you. The target must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target has disadvantage on all attack rolls against targets other than you next round.

Grapple – 1 action

On a successful Strength saving throw you grapple the target giving them the restrained condition.

Improvised Strike – 2 actions

You attack an opponent unarmed or with an improvised object from the environment for a melee or ranged thrown attack out to 20 feet.

Intimidate – 2 actions

On a successful Strength saving throw you intimidate an opponent meaning they will not attack you next round.

Knock Prone – 1 action

If the target is Medium or smaller, on a successful Strength saving throw the target is knocked prone.

Their only Movement option in the next round is to crawl. The creature has disadvantage on Attack rolls.

An Attack roll against the creature has advantage if the attacker is within 5 feet of the creature. Otherwise, the Attack roll has disadvantage.

Lunging Attack – 2 actions

On a successful melee attack and Dexterity saving throw you can attack an opponent at an additional 10 feet.

Manoeuvring Attack – 2 actions

On a successful melee attack and Intelligence saving throw you can manoeuvre one of your comrades into a more advantageous position. You choose a friendly creature who can see or hear you. That creature can move to a position where they are protected from attacks by the target of your attack.

Menacing Attack – 2 actions

On a successful melee attack and Wisdom saving throw you frighten the target for the next round.

Parley – 2 actions

On a successful Charisma saving throw you convince an opponent into talking with you next round.

Poisoned Tip – 2 actions

On a successful attack and Constitution saving throw you poison your opponent giving them disadvantage on their attacks and ability checks next round.

Precise Strike – 2 actions

You hold still and forgo movement and other actions this round. You focus on one attack of one opponent's weakness. This one attack for the round has advantage and the damage done is tripled to that one opponent. All attacks against you this round are also made with advantage.

Push - 1 action

You attempt to drive the target back. If the target is Medium or smaller, on a successful Strength saving throw you push the target up to 10 feet away from you.

Riposte – 2 actions

On a successful melee attack and Dexterity saving throw your opponent loses one action next round.

Repulse – 1 action

On a successful Constitution saving throw you repulse an opponent meaning they are unwilling to be within 5 feet of you next round.

Restrict Movement – 2 actions

On a successful melee attack and Dexterity saving throw you position yourself in a way that restricts your opponent's movement. Your opponent is unable to move from their current position next round.

Sweeping Attack – 2 actions

On a successful melee attack, choose three creatures within 5 feet of each other and within your reach. The creatures each take 1 point of damage from your successful attack.

Trip Attack – 2 actions

If the target is Large or smaller, on a successful melee attack and Dexterity saving throw you trip your opponent, and the target is knocked prone next round.

It is dangerous to go alone

If you feel vulnerable adventuring alone or in a very small group you could consider:

- **More people** – recruit more people to your party. These may be in the form of people like henchmen, sidekicks or maybe an apprentice. Will the townsfolk band together to help you cast your powers to save them? Or better still, teach Burning Hands to a bunch of school kids! What is the worst thing that could happen?

- **More creatures** – find a mount, an animal companion or familiar

More unconventional options include:

- **Becoming bigger** – larger creatures have larger HP pools. Consider becoming a dragon and shrug off the chains of a humanoid form?

- **Items & Devices** – there rumours that there are shadowy devices that can store lifeforce but you have never heard of anyone having one or talking about them in polite society.

- **Necromancy** – could you suck lifeforce out of people against their will or create unlife in the dead to use as lifeforce batteries?

- **Slavery and Subjugation** – could you force people to give you their lifeforce?

Combat

The Action Economy

Players always go first in a round. They state what they are doing and complete their turns. Then the enemies may have their turn.

A player can choose to have their turn after the enemies.

All actions in a 6 second round are seen as taking place at the same time.

All combatants get to finish their actions within a round regardless of the turn order or if actions occurring in the round mean they will become incapacitated next round.

PCs get two actions per a round.

Common actions and activities can take one or more action to complete.

They can include:

- Movement - you can move up to 30 feet in an action.
- Attack – a standard attack takes one action. Examples of these are attacks that use the standard combat model like weapons, cantrips and natural attacks.
- Activity – an activity can takes two actions
- Free actions don't require you to spend any of your actions

PCs combine these types of actions in the order of their choice in a round.

Attack actions, Manoeuvres and Activity actions can include up to 15 feet of movement as part of their action.

Reactions are not a different type of action they are just an action that happens after another action or later in the round.

Special note on D&D 5e actions - If you are converting over 5e actions to the system, 5e Standard actions take two actions, Bonus actions take one action, 5e Reactions take two actions.

The GM and players describe what they plan to do first and then dice are rolled and then the GM describes how the action in the round played out.

Damage and healing is calculated at the end of the round and most actions performed in a round that effect other combatants only take effect in the next round.

There are no attacks of opportunity. It is deemed that the combatants are too busy completing their actions to have the ability to do anything else.

Players can choose to use their actions to "react" something occurring in this round, they choose to have their turn after the enemies.

Common examples of this might be using actions like Dodge, Shield and Resistance. These are described later in the document.

Because everyone gets to complete their actions in a round, it is much more common in this ruleset for combat to end with both sides potentially being incapacitated or even dying. This can lead to very tense and interesting "what now?" moments.

Combat, Movement and Range

Play could be either theatre of the mind or on 1-inch square grid paper with each square representing 5 feet depending on the situation at the time. The combatants represented as figurines on a square and wooden 1 inch blocks used to approximate terrain.

Player Character Attacks

PCs use the standard combat roll mechanic described earlier for their general attacks. Besides this they can use their other spells and abilities.

With 2 actions in a round theoretically a PC can make up to 2 standard attacks in a six second round.

Enemies Attacking

Usually, standard enemies do not get normal attacks in standard combat. Their damage to the PCs is a product of the PCs own combat rolls.

It is usual for some enemies to have some kind of special attack(s) or action(s) that defines the encounter explained in the Encounters section later in the document. If a PC was engaging in combat in ways other than the standard combat mechanic then the enemies may attack them directly but that is not the norm for common standard encounters.

Minions

Often an encounter will have minions or the equivalent of "extras" in the scene besides the main npc(s) or creature(s). These additional actors usually do not have the same 2 actions per round that the main creatures have. They might have 1 or 2 actions per round, often have very low HP and could be downed within a hit or will flee in one hit. They could be the source of damage from failure on a PCs attacks but would not usually initiate combat. More often they are set dressing than a true threat.

Movement

Using the movement action PCs can move up to 30 feet in an action and up to 60 feet in a round by using both their actions to move.

Attack actions, Manoeuvres and Activity actions can include up to 15 feet of movement as part of their action.

There are 3 ranges:

- Melee Range
- Standard Ranged
- Long Ranged

Melee Range

Melee range is an attack within 15ft.

Standard Ranged

Standard ranged attacks are made within the stated range of the weapon or spell.

This is usually up to 120 feet depending on the weapon / attack.

An attacker that does not move within the round gains advantage on their ranged attacks.

You cannot attack someone with a ranged attack when they are behind cover. Attacks where the target is partially covered, for instance there are other combatants in the way, are made with disadvantage.

Long Ranged

Long ranged attacks are made within the stated maximum range of a weapon or double the stated range of a spell.

This could be up to 600 feet depending on the weapon / attack.

Long ranged standard attacks are made by rolling a d20 with only a "20" hitting and anything else is a miss.

The idea behind this is to make these attacks like volley fire or long-ranged sniper attacks.

Out of Range

Out of range is deemed that the target is too far away for the attack type.

Lethal and Non-lethal Combat

The system has both lethal and non-lethal combat in the system.

Damage Types

Combat is based on attacking and damaging the opponents HP pool. It is a measure of their energy, their ability to act and defend rather than a physical measure of health. An opponent's HP can be bought to 0 without them getting a scratch on them.

Damage types used could be Force, Bludgeoning, Piercing, Slashing, Fire, Cold (Heat), Radiant, Lightning, Psychic (non-lethal), Acid, Necrotic, Thunder, Poison or one of the players describing.

Players can have access to attacks from different damage types, applying conditions, so long as they can work them into their PCs overall theme. The aim is to keep their combat style iconic to them. They may learn new styles over time as part of their character arc. These growing capabilities would be part of the narrative of their campaign.

Multiple Targets

You can choose to attack multiple targets using your up to 2 actions a round to target different opponents.

Otherwise you would use a spell like ability with an area of effect. Burning Hands, Sleep and Web are good examples of cheap spells for dealing with multiple targets.

Non-Lethal Damage

Non-lethal damage can be chosen to be used at any time in lethal combat and can be very useful at potentially changing the outcome of a combat if used thoughtfully.

Non-lethal damage is calculated in the same way as lethal damage and goes against a creatures HP pool as per usual. The damage is done and the creatures current HP do go down, but no one will die as an outcome of the combat.

Psychic damage is the most common damage type for mental ability non-lethal attacks and is more common in this game than in other forms of Dungeons and Dragons.

For instance, a big, scary, intimidating creature with a strength of 16 can roar at you in combat and do non-lethal psychic damage to you. It won't physically injure you, but it can reduce your HP meaning you are more vulnerable and less able to fight back.

Also, a sweet, little grandma could command you to "stop fighting this instant!" and do non-lethal psychic damage to all combatants in the room.

Many forms of non-lethal combat are common in the setting – for practice, fun and entertainment, settling scores, determining the fates of nations or mugging people.

Non-lethal combat is usually a battle based on an ability score or a predetermined set of ability scores. Some could have standardised rules of engagement and could be known by names like "polite conversation", "serious business" or "professional wrestling".

Prior to starting non-lethal combat the rules of engagement are set.

This can be:
- one ability score - intelligence for puzzle solving
- a set of scores – the 3 mental scores for polite dinner party conversation or the 3 physical scores for wrestling
- all scores for a tavern brawl

In formal non-lethal combat:
- Abilities may also be allowed if they are non-lethal and fit within the rules of that engagement.
- You can call for parlay at any time.
- Any incapacitated or unconscious creature is out of the game.
- You cannot attack an incapacitated or unconscious creature.
- You can withdraw from the combat at any time but once you are out, you are out.
- You cannot re-enter combat once you withdraw, become incapacitated or unconscious.

Creatures who use non-lethal combat

There are many creatures that will choose non-lethal combat.

They may want to practice, take a foe alive, not risk repercussions of killing someone, lower their risk of death in a resolving conflict, etc.

Being successful at certain non-lethal combat pursuits can be very lucrative. There are many famous former adventurers that now make their income from "Sport" rather than potentially lethal quests, campaigns and treasure. PCs could choose to specialise in attack styles and abilities that are non-lethal.

Using Lethal Force in non-lethal contests

Anyone found to use lethal force in a non-lethal pursuit are universally shunned by all, especially if they kill an opponent.

Marked as an outcast, they become Unwelcome. Depending on the situation others may feel honour bound to kill the offender on the spot and can legally do so without impunity.

If you do kill someone in non-lethal pursuits, common consequences include being killed yourself, imprisoned or enslaved, being bound by a life debt to resurrect the individual you killed, and or to pay compensation to their family or companions for their loss.

Saving Throws

In this system saving throws are rolled by the attacker.

Saving throws target an ability score. The attacker tries to roll a d20 equal or higher than the defending ability score. If more than one creature is potentially affected by the attack, the roll is still made once but is applied to each creatures defending ability score.

Saving throws are usually only used for damage from abilities or from the environment, not standard attacks.

The Help Action

A creature can assist another individual creature on a check or challenge by using the help action. The roll is made at advantage.

As you may have worked out by now in this system it is relatively easy to get advantage on a roll. The point is that it is also uncommon to get much more mechanical adjustment than that.

Dodge, Shield and Resistance

Common ways of reducing damage are a combined into one mechanic. The action is available to all creatures and takes 1 action. Any attack roll or saving throw made has disadvantage.

Languages

There are standard root languages that other languages branch off from. If you understand the root language, then you are likely to be able to communicate in a rudimentary way with other languages in the group. The most widely used language of a world will be based on who initially colonised the system.

The language bases and their dialects are:

Common – Human, Dwarven, Halfling, Giant

Deep Speech – Aberrations Dialects

Draconic – Lizard / Reptile races

Sylvan – Elven (a modern form of Sylvan), Gnomish, Goblin, Undercommon

Primordial – the 4 elemental dialects

Celestial – Abyssal, Infernal

Dwarven Script is the most common form of script in the multiverse and is used for the written version of Common.

Currency

Standard ttrpg currencies and gems are common similar to other settings.

We live in Australia so use local coins at the table to stand in for the fantasy currencies. Because of their size and shape use $1 coin = 2 GP, $2 = 1 GP, 50c = 2SP, 20c = 1 SP, 10c = 0.5 SP, 5c = 2.5 SP, 2c = 1 CP.

We use polished semi-precious gemstone chips as our gems.

Randomising Resources

There are many great and inexpensive tools on the internet for assisting with randomised world building. Popular ones I like Stars Without Number, Sly Flourish Lazy DM Companion, the Tome of Adventure Design, Questing Beast's Knave, DM Scotty's EZD6 and randomised tables on DrivethruRPG.

Other Common Styles of Checks and Challenges

Rolling dice gives us an understanding of how random factors from things outside the players control and the PCs performance in the moment affect success in challenges players are trying to complete.

The player rolls dice, and the GM helps narrate the outcome.

Common types of rolls include:

Combat – the combat mechanics explained earlier.

Difficulty Class – Roll d20(s) for a value equal or higher to a number specified by the GM. Flat rolls DC 6+ (75%), 11 (50%), 15 (25%), 20 (5%), 15+/15+/15+ (2.7%), 18+/18+ (2.25%) 19+/19+ (1%) 19+/20 (0.5%) 20/20 (0.25%) are possible values required.

Scaled Outcomes - roll on a d20 could have an outcome on a scale for instance:

o   20 = a success better than expected

o   DC number or higher = success

o   Within 1 or 2 of DC = partial success with a potential minor issue

o   3 or 4 below DC = failure with an upside or success with tough choice

o   5 or more below DC = failure

o   1 = catastrophic / embarrassing failure

Ability Score Check – roll on a d20 equal or lower than your ability score to succeed.

Luck - This is a d20 roll where 20 is a success, 1 is a fail and depending on the purpose of the roll 2 – 19 can either be a success (for very easy), fail (for very hard) or no outcome (for very unlikely).

Rolling on a Group Challenge

On a Group Challenge the PCs work together on a challenge to roll equal or higher than a difficulty check number determined by the GM. All the contributing members roll their appropriate ability scores, and they are all added together. The check is made once, and the number could be higher than 20.

Effort – There is an amount of points that need to be accumulated to complete this challenge. An ability score or scores are chosen to use. Each player rolls a d20 to contribute to the task. If the roll is added to the total. Time could also be a factor depending on the task. Depending on the task completing 1 turn of providing effort could be a round, minute, hour or day. The party may also have a time limit. This could be anything from a 1 round time limit where all need to work together at once to move a large rock. To building a house with a target in the thousands that the players add to the total rolling each day over a large period of time but there is no limit.

Pitching an Outcome – how do you want to do this?

When a player rolls a critical success or failure, the GM may give the player an opportunity to pitch an outcome as to what happened. If the player chooses to do so they say what they envision happening and the GM either agrees it to be so or may provide an altered version of events based on what the player described. The player does not get to argue or debate the result.

Taking 10

When your PC is not in immediate danger or distracted, you may choose to take 10. Instead of rolling 1d20 for the skill check, calculate your result as if you had rolled a 10. For many routine tasks, taking 10 makes them automatically successful. Distractions or threats (such as combat) make it impossible for a PC to take 10. In most cases, taking 10 is purely a safety measure—you know (or expect) that an average roll will succeed but fear that a poor roll might fail, so you elect to settle for the average roll (a 10). Taking 10 is especially useful in situations where a particularly high roll wouldn't help.

Taking 20

When you have plenty of time, you are faced with no threats or distractions, and the skill being attempted carries no penalties for failure, you can take 20. In other words, if you roll a d20 enough times, eventually you will get a 20. Instead of rolling 1d20 for the skill check, just calculate your result as if you had rolled a 20.

Taking 20 means you are trying until you get it right, and it assumes that you fail many times before succeeding. Taking 20 takes 20 times as long as making a single check would take (usually 2 minutes for a skill that takes 1 round or less to perform).

Since taking 20 assumes that your PC will fail many times before succeeding, your PC would automatically incur any penalties for failure before he or she could complete the task (hence why it is generally not allowed with Skills that carry such penalties). Common "take 20" Skills include Disable Device (when used to open locks), Escape Artist, and Perception (when attempting to find traps).

Encounters

Plots, Places and People in a point crawl world

Plots

I create small short scenarios that can be the basis of an adventure plot usually 1-2 hours long.

The idea for this could come from one of the many great TTRPG source books, or from a piece of fiction or real life drama, but usually comes from looking at fantasy images.

I have a folder with thousands of fantasy images. I will choose 2 or 3 at random and see if I can make an idea that links them together.

Once I have the basis of the plot, I go searching the images for other ones that could either replace or add to those chosen to make the scenario better.

The plot may end up having roughly 3 to 7 images that may be revealed depending on how the party chooses play out the plot. Sometimes new images get chosen from the image bank when they are needed in the moment of gameplay to help illustrate a point.

Places

We play in a point crawl manner. We end up with point places that the party moves between. Random things can happen when moving from point to point but usually this is not the case. Our places are often taken from somewhere locally in real life like our local town or a big city or country area nearby or from famous fiction that we are all familiar with and can picture in our heads. Then we alter it to suit our purposes. We also sometimes use small fantasy map resources we have bought on the internet. Encounters can be either theatre of the mind or on 1 inch grid paper depending on what best suits the scene. The players map out the relationships between the points as the world story grows new points get added to the map.

People

Once we have chosen our main creatures / npcs for the story, one of the things we often do is the players get to choose who the "actor" will be that is playing that npc part in the story. Mostly they are people most of us are familiar with like family, friends or a famous person. We then in the moment they may name the npc and we start badly impersonating the character based on the personality and mannerisms of the person we know. The players help adding nuance to flesh out the character. Part of the fun is not knowing who will turn up for a "guest appearance" from session to session. Some npcs go on to become regulars. Another way things may occur is I as the GM might choose a famous scene / characters and describe it as best I can waiting for the players to work out who and where these people are from. An example of this could be

using the Central Perk Café and the cast of Friends. The plot could be completely unrelated or almost illogical for a normal Friends plot lines but that dissonance can often add to the fun.

Common Encounters, Actions and Damage

I also have an Excel spreadsheet of 700 Monsters Listed with Ability Scores.

Any ability score 16 or over would give disadvantage on attacks. Any ability score 8 or below would give advantage on attacks.

5e HP and attack damages where used would be divided by 5.

I have a list of conditions, encounter strategies, creature state and motivation which can see below.

I use a random number generator to combine a random image, stat block, condition, strategy, state and motivation to create an encounter the party would not have seen before.

Sometimes this is not balanced at all. I also use a rough default monster stat block of rolling 1d20 HP and doing 1HP damage per round as an average for each party member and tier of play.

An example of a CR 1 monster could be some kind of Ooze

- Hit Points = 30HP
- Speed 20 ft.
- Hit: 5HP, bludgeoning damage.
- Grappler: Tentacles, hooks, and grubby fingers. Victims use STR checks to avoid or break free.
- Condition: Grappled (roll below STR score to escape)
- Motivation: Feeding – feeding on something but you look tastier

Enemy Damage

In general, the monsters will have more HP than the players but will not hit as hard. Creatures usually do average damage. The aim is to have combat last an average of 3 – 5 rounds.

Any encounter where the number of HP / actions available to the enemies per round is similar to or larger than that of the party is potentially deadly to the party.

Special Attacks / Conditions

Some creatures can potentially use special attack mechanics that apply conditions in a similar way to players having spells and techniques.

Conditions are a d20 saving throw. Because player ability scores can be on the higher side you can threaten them with a special attack or condition quite often but they mostly likely to save.

Conditions only last one round and common conditions they may try to attack with instead of damage include: dazed, charm, fear, stun, blind, deafen, hypnotise, poisoned, restrained, prone, paralysed, petrified, bleeding, confusion, fatigued, nauseated, suffocating. The standard effect of this is the player loses an action or actions for the round.

Explanations of conditions:

https://roll20.net/compendium/dnd5e/Conditions

https://www.d20pfsrd.com/gamemastering/conditions/

Encounter Reactions

When the PCs encounter an creature whose reaction to the party is not obvious, the GM may roll 2d6 and consult the following table.

2	3-5	6-8	9-11	12
Hostile	Unfriendly	Unsure	Talkative	Helpful

Encounter Strategies

It is a good idea to consider where the encounter is taking place and how the terrain and other aspects of who and what is around the potential battlefield will affect how combat may progress.

It is also useful to consider that the creatures encountered may have other goals besides beating the party in combat. Having something that puts additional pressures on the party or something that works as a time limit can raise the stakes of an encounter.

I use random number generators on the following tables to choose an option and enhance your encounter. The following tables are collated and altered based on ones found in other great ttrpgs. These include the wonderful Index Card RPG and Deck Quest.

https://www.drivethrurpg.com/product/366519/Index-Card-RPG-Master-Edition

https://garagesofagames.com/deck-quest

1. **An Unlikely Foe:** Consider making monsters that aren't monsters. All kinds of weird objects, terrain, people, or magical entities can be foes to battle. Here's a Brain in a Jar. What can it do? How is it dangerous? Why must it be defeated? As you answer questions, it takes form!

2. **Armored:** It's tough as iron! Ignores any damage below 5HP

3. **Banish Foes:** With a spell, a monster can send an enemy to a mini dimension. There, the hero needs to do something to return to the fight.

4. **Behave In Cycles:** When monsters do the same action combos, players can learn their pattern and exploit it. That is a great fight.

5. **Bolster Defenses:** If a monster is just 'in the way,' then making it resilient can be fun. Use a turn to double your HP, or make attacks against it HARD.

6. **Charging:** When it moves, anything in its path makes a DEX check or takes double damage

7. **Confusing:** Where'd it go? Attackers must roll WIS checks to spot its actual location

8. **Control Them:** There's nothing worse than players killing players. A monster with mind control powers turns them against one another.

9. **Create Terrain:** Creating barriers or high pinnacles can disrupt a battle or make the target hard to reach. It is also really cool.

10. **Crusher:** When it locks on, it crushes bones and steel alike. Damage goes up by 1HP per round until STR check

11. **Destroy Gear / Lose Powers:** Wait, what? Give a monster the ability to destroy equipment, lose abilities and players will turn pale with fear. This effect is usually explained with corrosion, acid, or crushing jaws.

12. **Destroy Terrain:** If a foe smashes a doorway, it can have more gravity than killing a hero! Use this destructive power to scare or confine the heroes.

13. **Devious Intelligence:** We're being watched. It will retreat, use line of sight, or utilize minions to win

14. **Devour:** It ate Carl! If a hero takes 10+ damage, they are engulfed by the thing

15. **Fast:** Look out! It moves at speed and can phase straight through you.

16. **Firestarter:** Don't stand in the fire! Monster leaves areas of flame behind wherever it attacks

17. **Force Them To Move:** Tank and spank monster fights can be very dull. Use jumping, flying, or must-flee effects like fire pits to keep battles moving.

18. **Fort:** Shoot at that wall of junk! It will gather local materials to hide itself/deflect missiles

19. **Frighten Them:** Monsters are scary, but some are so scary, you just have to flee! Control the power by limiting how long the fear lasts - 1 round, until they save etc.

20. **Gigantic:** It's destroying the city! Monster cannot be damaged by human-sized creatures or conventional weapons

21. **Go Enraged:** At a certain threshold, maybe extremely low HP or having its eggs destroyed, enrage your monster. In this state it always does big attacks or has higher stats. Flee!

22. **Grappler:** Tentacles, hooks, and grubby fingers. Victims use STR checks to avoid or break free

23. **Have Only 1 Weakness:** A single weakness is not only great for making a fight perilous, but also fun for those players who track details about monsters. It makes all their work worth it, and they are considered 'monster experts.'

24. **Hellion:** Back to the pit! Monster always targets the holy or innocent but subject to holy rites

25. **Hit All Targets:** Monsters that attack whole areas are brutal! Unleash it with an attack roll, or force players to roll for avoidance.

26. **Hit Points:** This thing is beefy! Add more HP per PC party member

27. **Illusory:** Which is the real one! Multiple opponents but most are not real.

28. **Immune To:** Yetis don't mind the cold. Be sure to make immunities sensible so players aren't baffled why their sword doesn't work.

29. **Legion:** Gods! There are more! There are always more of them coming…

30. **Lots Of Actions:** Giving a monster 2, 3, or more Actions will give it a boss-like quality. Be sure to have the variety to back it up.

31. **Magical Effect:** Glowing with some arcane hex. Hits against the PC is at advantage

32. **Metagen:** It just keeps healing. Recovers 4 HP per round

33. **Move Twice:** Doubling the normal move rules can make your new monster very formidable, as players will waste time chasing rather than killing.

34. **Multiply:** Any time a monster becomes 2, things get hairy. You can multiply by dividing it like a starfish or by spawning from a nearby

source. When players figure out how to stop this process, the tide will turn in their favour.

35. **Negate Their Attacks:** Any monster Acton that costs players an action is very powerful, but can be disheartening, so be judicious with such abilities.

36. **Nova:** Take cover! Every 1D4 ROUNDS, it damages all within range, DEX or CON to avoid

37. **Paralyze:** Paralyzed heroes aren't totally useless, but they can be vulnerable. Use stinging barbs, poison, and the like, but always allow a CON check to break free.

38. **Part Human:** Faces! Faces in the skin! Advantage when persuading or beseeching enemies

39. **Poison:** Like fire, this kind of damage can keep hurting over time. For some monsters, even with a simple visual, poison feels like a perfect fit.

40. **Pursuit:** Flee! If heroes flee, it will pursue to the death

41. **Regenerate:** Either automatically or by an Action, the monster can regain a few HP, critical for climax monsters.

42. **Repel Them:** Use magic or muscle to shove enemies away. This ability can be especially deadly if combined with a ranged barrage.

43. **Rider:** Something is controlling it! Can only be defeated by killing the rider

44. **Smart:** It's looking right at me! Creature makes EASY WIS checks to spot party weakness

45. **Special Weapon:** Razor sharp, barbed, and toothy. Causes 1HP ongoing bleed damage per hit

46. **Stalker:** They're in the damn ceiling! It will wait patiently for an opportune moment to strike

47. **Steal Their Gear / Powers:** Destroying gear is hardcore. This version uses a roll to swipe stuff or a power, maybe use it against them, or maybe stash it to be searched for and found. Then it can be retrieved after combat and hugged.

48. **Tactical:** How can it cut the power? It's an animal! Create and/or destroy terrain to move

49. **Terrifying:** What in blazes? Any hero at close range must check with CHA or flee for their turn

50. **Tough:** Thud. Cannot be harmed with blunt weapons

51. **Toxic:** Venomous. Injured heroes continue taking 1D4 each round until making a CON check

52. **Trap Them:** The monster can grapple, immobilize, grab or incapacitate its foes. Usually countered with opposing STR rolls.

53. **Vanish/Reappear:** When players pin a monster down, it has little chance. Give one the ability to move without moving, and suddenly, the tables are turned.

54. **Volatile:** Don't stab it! When killed, explodes, doing double damage to all within melee range.

55. **It's EOAMOUR!!!** Reduces maximum HP of all in the party each round. Starts at 1HP, 2HP, 3HP etc growing each round. Does nothing else but monologue. Can they last it out to defeat before their time runs out?

Encounter Situation / Motivation

1. **Angry:** Creature(s) are obviously very angry for some reason.

2. **Attach:** Creature(s) are parasitic whose only concern is latching on to victim(s) and doing whatever it does next.

3. **Altered / Augmented / Cybernetic / Mutated:** Creature(s) have been altered or enhanced in some way with unusual probably unnatural things about their body.

4. **Camouflage:** Creature(s) are hard to see and have a way to blend in with the environment.

5. **Confused:** Creature(s) are baffled, unsure about something or the situation.

6. **Construction:** Creature(s) are building something.

7. **Crippled:** Creature(s) are injured in some way. Is it recent and temporary or more permanent?

8. **Dividing:** Creature(s) are dividing into multiple smaller entities.

9. **Dying:** Creature(s) are barely alive but are resolutely trying to hang on.

10. **Elemental:** Creature(s) are elemental in some way, effected by one of the elements in some way. Is it on purpose? How is it happening?

11. **Escape:** Creature(s) are desperately trying to escape from somewhere or something.

12. **Feeding:** Creature(s) are eating something. Are you next?

13. **Grow:** Creature(s) are significantly increasing in size for some reason.

14. **Guard:** Creature(s) are guarding somewhere or something and will stand their ground in one spot and never waiver.

15. **Heal:** Creature(s) are being healed, healing, or looking for healing.

16. **Hibernation / Shelter:** Creature(s) are tired, looking for or have found a private, quiet, safe place to rest.

17. **Hiding / Ambush:** Creature(s) are hidden waiting to surprise someone.

18. **Hoard:** Creature(s) have a lot of stuff or are here to collect a lot of stuff. Where is all the stuff?

19. **Hungry:** Creature(s) are trying to find food.

20. **Imprisoned:** Creature(s) are caged / restrained. But why and by whom?

21. **Imitate:** Creature(s) can take the form of others and uses its form to separate the foolish.

22. **Intimidate:** Creature(s) are bullies looking for someone to pick on to make them feel superior.

23. **Leroy Jenkins:** Kerbloowie! Creature(s) explode into the scene breaking through the terrain, a gate, wall, or door.

24. **Kill:** Creature(s) are here determined to kill a member of the party. Why?

25. **Metamorphosis:** Creature(s) are turning from one state to another. Is it natural, evolution or for some other external reason?

26. **Nest:** Creature(s) are creating or have created a home. Not sure how they feel about you being here.

27. **Patrolling:** Creature(s) are protecting a space, keeping guard, looking for intruders.

28. **Performance:** Creature(s) are involved in some kind of artistic, cultural or sporting event.

29. **Play Dead:** Creature(s) are pretending to be dead.

30. **Prey:** Creature(s) are bored looking for prey to play with for their amusement. Then maybe bite their head off and eat.

31. **Recon:** Creature(s) are far from home on a mission to watch or listen for their masters.

32. **Reproduce:** Creature(s) are very interested in making baby creatures.

33. **Ritual:** Creature(s) are performing some kind of ritual.

34. **Sacrifice:** Creature(s) are looking for someone or something to sacrifice for some not doubt unpleasant reason.

35. **Searching:** Creature(s) are looking for an object or maybe someone.

36. **Sleeping:** Creature(s) are dormant. Can you go undetected.

37. **Study:** Creature(s) are researching trying to learn about something here.

38. **Survive:** Creature(s) seem to have many things trying to kill them, can they live another day.

39. **Swarming:** Creatures are here in great number convulsing in a frenzy.

40. **Tattooed / Marked:** Creature(s) are marked in someway but what do the symbols mean and what is their purpose.

41. **Tormented:** Creature(s) are being experimented on or tortured for some awful purpose.

42. **Trade:** Creature(s) are here to do business. To buy, sell, exchange.

43. **Transport:** Creature(s) are moving something or someone from one place to another.

44. **Undead:** Creature(s) are already dead but somehow they still live.

Morale

The GM can decide to do a Morale check for creatures at any time to determine how they view the combat they are participating. Morale rolls can be triggered by defeating half of an enemy group, defeating a group's leader, or reducing a lone enemy to half HP. Other effects may trigger a morale roll at the GM's discretion.

Hirelings also make morale rolls when they aren't paid, their employer dies, or they face extraordinary danger. Morale may also be improved by paying hirelings more and treating them well. It is assumed that most creatures do not want to die and will try to avoid it.

There are many situations where creatures will choose to not to fight to the death. Some abilities may be designed to force a Morale check.

Roll a 2d6 morale check:

- 12 = Rallies and attacks with advantage out of desperation
- 10-11 = continues to fight
- 8-9 = calls for aid and continues to fight
- 6-7 = tries to talk / parley / negotiate
- 4-5 = surrenders / plays dead incapacitated
- 2-3 = run / flee

Milt n' Mour's Brand Products

Miles Milton and Elon Eoamour were childhood friends that grew up together and became business partners. They founded MM Magical - a magic item and supplies company now infamous across the Russwater / Landfall region. Originally technically named after Miles Milton as he was the older boy and used his famous Russwater Academy family's money to establish the business, the official brand name was Milt n' Mour's after their childhood nicknames for each other. Their famous logo on all of their products and packaging was a stacked double M (which looked like a double EE when read from the side).

Milton concentrated on his line of 100 inexpensive level-less spell scrolls based on spells devised and perfected by his family over centuries. Eoamour developed the line into a set of inexpensive (if poor quality) consumable magic items based on Milton's spell effects placed in random trinkets for a mass market.

All initially went well and in the early years their products were very popular earning the company large amounts of wealth and a superb reputation as game changes in magical circles.

But after great success and as time wore on Milton paid less attention to the day to day running of the business and began pursuing other interests. Eoamour initially loved being completely in charge and having free reign to try his more wild and experimental projects.

Although Eoamour greatly expanded production and output, the quality and safety of the products became questionable. It was at this time Eoamour gained his name as the "Mad Mage" in the media and social circles.

Things came a head when one day Eoamour announced all of Milt n' Mour's products would now be priced at the ongoing sales price of 55 GP and the products flew out of the stores. The foundry ran day and night for months and could never keep up with demand. The products flooded the market and practically everyone had access to powerful, ridiculously cheap magic. Needless to say this caused bedlum in Russwater / Landfall and any linked world close to Landfall / Russwater as the magic products were dumped on to their markets.

The products were unstable and no being could be in possession of 2 of their products at once else they would explode. Besides hemorrhaging money from constantly running unprofitably, now MM Magical was drowning in liability and insurance claims.

When Milton returned to find things in chaos, he supposedly confronted Eoamour and was never seen again. By the reports of people close to the company (although most are quite mad now) Eoamour had been going around the company ranting strangely for weeks and then the company

foundry exploded killing almost all within the vicinity. The location is now colloquially known as Area 55.

Picking up the pieces and Miltonian Magic Scholars

In the aftermath of the tragedy Russwater Academy was highly embarrassed to have been associated with MM Magical and the damage it did (not least to their other brands reputations). Miles Milton's niece Silvia was put in charge of trying to collect and dispose of the potentially faulty products. She volunteered for the position because centuries of Miltonian Magic pioneered by her family had been potentially lost. She is now trying to replicate a full list of all 100 of the original Miltonian Spells. If successful, this would be a wonderful boon to study at Russwater Academy. It also has changed the rule that no longer can any piece of knowledge by kept from the Academy by being deemed a "family secret."

Silvia offers a reward equal to the sticker price of 55 GP for any MM Magical product found in regardless of condition. These products are often found in key locations but are usually in the possession of or guarded by a formidable, possibly quite mad foe. There are others who are interested, some say obsessed, with these products and may be searching for them or will do anything to acquire them. Remember treat these products with care, do not use 2 at once, and whatever you do, do not 55. For the love of all things sacred, do not 55.

PCs can choose to assist the Miltonian Scholars by finding and returning products or they can become a scholar themselves and take on Miltonian Magic research themselves. Once a scholar they can purchase Miltonian Scrolls from Silvia found at random for 55 GP and add them to their spellbook, so long as they provide their notes also to Silvia.

They can purchase a random Miltonian Scroll once per day and the GM will roll for a new random spell effect they do not yet know from the d100 Miltonian Magic table. The ability can be cast for 5 HP.

Miltonian spells are level-less meaning they can be cast at their level for 1 HP or in some cases can be cast for more on "L" level for an additional 1 HP per level.

"L" in the description is a number equal to the caster's level, an **item** is an object able to be lifted with one hand, and an **object** is anything up to human size. Unless otherwise noted, all spells with ongoing effects last up to L×10 minutes duration, may require concentration and have a range of up to 30 feet. If a spell directly affects another creature, the creature may make a save to avoid it. Success reduces or negates the spell's effects.

These spell effects are based on the ones from Ben "Questing Beast" Milton's Knave RPG.

https://questingbeast.itch.io/knave

d100 Miltonian Random Magic Inscription

1. **Adhere:** Object is covered in extremely sticky slime.
2. **Animate Object:** Object obeys your commands as best it can. It can walk 15ft per round.
3. **Anthropomorphize**: A touched animal either gains human intelligence, human appearance or both.
4. **Arcane Eye:** You can see through a magical floating eyeball that flies around at your command.
5. **Astral Lockbox:** An object no bigger than a 1 ft cube is frozen in time and space within an astral lockbox until retrieved by casting the spell again.
6. **Attract:** 2 or more objects within 10 feet are strongly magnetically attracted to each other.
7. **Auditory Illusion:** You create illusory sounds that seem to come from a direction of your choice.
8. **Babble:** A creature must loudly and clearly repeat everything you think. It is otherwise mute.
9. **Beast Form:** You and your possessions transform into a mundane animal.
10. **Befuddle:** A creature of your choice are unable to form new short-term memories for the duration of the spell.
11. **Bend Fate:** Roll 2 d20s. Whenever you must roll a d20 after casting the spell, you must choose one of the two rolls and then use the other on the roll after that.
12. **Bird Person:** Your arms turn into huge bird wings.
13. **Body Swap:** You switch bodies with a creature you touch. If one body dies, the other dies as well.
14. **Catherine:** A woman wearing a blue dress appears until end of spell. She will obey polite, safe requests.
15. **Charm:** A creature treat you like a friend.
16. **Command:** A creature obeys a single, three-word command that does not harm it.
17. **Comprehend:** You become fluent in all languages.
18. **Control Plants:** Nearby plants and trees obey you and gain the ability to move at 5 feet per round.
19. **Control Weather:** You may alter the type of weather at will, but you do not otherwise control it.

20. **Counterspell:** Make an opposed Intelligence check against the Intelligence of the caster of a nearby spell. On a success, you cancel the spell. On a failure the full spell effect happens to you.

21. **Deafen:** All nearby creatures are deafened.

22. **Detect Magic:** You hear nearby magical auras singing. Volume and harmony signify the aura's power and refinement.

23. **Disassemble:** Any of your body parts may be detached and reattached at will, without causing pain or damage. You can still control them.

24. **Disguise:** You may alter the appearance of a willing character at will as long as they remain humanoid. Attempts to duplicate other Characters will seem uncanny.

25. **Displace:** An object appears to be up to 10ft from its actual position.

26. **Earthquake:** The ground begins shaking violently. Structures are not damaged but loose items move around.

27. **Elasticity:** Your body can stretch up to L×10ft.

28. **Elemental Wall:** A straight wall of ice or fire 40ft long and 10ft high rises from the ground.

29. **Filch:** A visible item teleports to your hands.

30. **Fog Cloud**: Dense fog spreads out from you.

31. **Frenzy:** A creature erupts in a frenzy of violence.

32. **Gate:** A portal to a random plane opens.

33. **Gravity Shift:** You can change the direction of gravity (for yourself only) up to once per round.

34. **Greed:** Near creatures develop an overwhelming urge to possess a visible item of your choice.

35. **Haste:** Your movement speed is doubled.

36. **Hatred:** Nearby creatures develop a deep hatred of another creature or group of creatures and wish to destroy it.

37. **Hear Whispers:** You can hear faint sounds clearly.

38. **Hover:** An object hovers, frictionless, 2ft above the ground. It can hold up a humanoid.

39. **Hypnotize:** A creature enters a trance and will truthfully answer a yes or no question you ask it.

40. **Icy Touch:** A thick ice layer spreads across a touched surface, up to L×10ft in radius.

41. **Illuminate:** A floating light moves as you command.

42. **Increase Gravity:** The gravity in an area triples.

43. **Invisible Tether:** Two objects within 10ft of each other cannot be moved more than 10ft apart.

44. **Knock**: A nearby mundane or magical lock unlock.

45. **Leap:** You can jump up to 100ft in the air.

46. **Liquid Air:** The air around you becomes swimmable.

47. **Magic Dampener:** All nearby magical effects have their effectiveness halved.

48. **Manse:** A sturdy, furnished cottage appears.

49. **Marble Madness:** Your pockets are full of marbles, and will refill every round.

50. **Masquerade:** A characters' appearance and voice becomes identical to a touched character.

51. **Miniaturize:** You and another touched creature are reduced to the size of a mouse.

52. **Mirror Image:** An illusory duplicate of yourself appears under your control.

53. **Mirrorwalk:** A mirror becomes a gateway to another mirror that you looked into today.

54. **Multiarm:** You gain extra arms.

55. **Night Sphere:** An 40ft wide sphere of darkness displaying the night sky appears. Praise Eoamour!!1!

56. **Objectify:** You become any inanimate object between the size of a grand piano and an apple.

57. **Ooze Form:** You become a living jelly.

58. **Pacify:** You cause a creature to have an aversion to violence.

59. **Phantom Coach:** A ghostly coach appears. It moves unnaturally fast over any terrain, including water.

60. **Phobia:** A creature becomes terrified of an object of your choice.

61. **Pit:** A pit 10ft wide and 10ft deep opens in the ground.

62. **Primeval Surge**: An inanimate object grows to the size of an elephant and becomes enraged in its temporarily awakened state.

63. **Psychometry:** The GM answers 3 yes or no questions about a touched object.

64. **Pull:** An object of any size is pulled directly towards you with the strength of 10 men for one round.

65. **Push:** An object of any size is pushed directly away from you with the strength of 10 men for one round.

66. **Raise Dead:** A skeleton rises from the ground to serve you. It is incredibly stupid and can only obey simple orders.

67. **Raise Spirit:** The spirit of a dead body manifests and will answer 3 questions.

68. **Read Mind:** You can hear the surface thoughts of nearby creatures.

69. **Repel:** Objects within 10 feet are strongly magnetically repelled from each other.

70. **Scry:** You can see through the eyes of a creature you touched earlier today.

71. **Sculpt Elements:** All inanimate material behaves like clay in your hands.

72. **Shroud:** A creature becomes invisible until they move.

73. **Shuffle:** Nearby creatures instantly switch places. Determine where they end up randomly.

74. **Sleep:** A creature falls into a light sleep.

75. **Smoke Form:** Your body becomes living smoke.

76. **Snail Knight:** 10 minutes after casting, a knight sitting astride a giant snail rides into view. He is able to answer most questions related to quests and chivalry, and may aid you if he finds you worthy.

77. **Sniff:** You can smell even the faintest traces of scents.

78. **Sort:** Inanimate items sort themselves according to categories you set. The categories must be visually verifiable.

79. **Spectacle:** A clearly unreal but impressive illusion of your choice appears, under your control. It may be up to the size of a palace and has full motion and sound.

80. **Spellseize:** Cast this as a reaction to another spell going off to make a temporary 1st level copy of it that you can cast next round.

81. **Spider Climb:** You can climb surfaces like a spider.

82. **Summon Cube:** Once per second, (6 times per round) you may summon or banish a 3-foot-wide cube of earth. New cubes must be affixed to the earth or to other cubes.

83. **Swarm:** You become a swarm of crows, rats, or piranhas. You only take damage from area effects.

84. **Telekinesis:** You may mentally move an item.

85. **Telepathy:** Nearby creatures can hear each other's thoughts, no matter how far apart they move.

86. **Teleport:** An object disappears and reappears on the ground in a visible, clear area up to 40ft away.

87. **Thaumaturgic Anchor**: An inanimate object becomes the target of every spell cast near it.

88. **Thicket:** A thicket of trees and dense brush up to 40ft wide suddenly sprouts up.

89. **Time Jump:** An object disappears as it jumps 10 minutes into the future. It reappears in the unoccupied area nearest to where it left.

90. **Summon Idol:** A carved stone statue the size of a 10 ft cube rises from the ground.

91. **Time Rush:** Time in a 40ft bubble move 10 times faster.

92. **Time Slow:** Time in a 40ft bubble moves 10 times slower.

93. **True Sight:** You see through all nearby illusions.

94. **Upwell:** A spring of seawater appears.

95. **Vision:** You completely control what a creature sees.

96. **Visual Illusion:** A silent, immobile, illusion of your choice appears, up to the size of a bedroom.

97. **Ward:** A silver circle 40ft across appears on the ground. Choose one thing that cannot cross it: Living creatures, dead creatures, projectiles or metal.

98. **Web:** Your wrists can shoot thick webbing.

99. **Wizard Mark:** Your finger can shoot a stream of multi-coloured paint. This paint is only visible to you, and can be seen at any distance, even through solid objects.

100. **X-Ray Vision:** You gain X-Ray vision.

Trinket Table

There are many trinket tables available on the internet.

Here is a link to the Omni Loot Table which is a meta "table of tables" collated by Tabletop Trinkets.

You can create one of Eoamour's Trinkets by combining a roll from this table with a roll on the Milton Spell Effect table.

Mass Combat Using Dice

Dice Combat - Optional Rules

Here are a couple of ways to run simple combats using only dice.

Using these mechanics can be fun way to run a fun, fast random encounter or larger mass combat battles with lots of creatures.

Random encounter mini game

Combat is played on a 1-inch square grid.

Each square represents 5 feet.

The combatants are represented as die or dice on each square.

Most creatures can move 30 feet in a round.

Wooden 1 inch blocks can also be used to approximate terrain.

A player character is a d20 and has a hit point maximum of 20HP.

Other creatures might be represented by 1 or more dice in a stack on a 1-inch square.

For instance - 1d4, 1d6, 2d6, 3d6, 1d8, 2d8, 1d10, 2d10, 1d12, 2d12, 1d20 or 2d20.

Large creatures could be represented by dice over multiple 1-inch squares.

These dice values represent both a creatures their hit point maximum and also the number and damage of their attacks.

For instance a 1d20 player character has 20HP and attacks for 1d20 and a stack of 3d6 is a creature with a hit point maximum of 18HP and 3 attacks of d6 each.

Creatures can attack at range if they have a form of range attack.

Range attacks made with other creatures in the way are made at disadvantage.

Large Army Combat

This is combat system I use for large faction army battles.

It uses dice as the representation of units.

The units can be d4, d6, d8, d10, d12 or d20.

Each side in the battle are going to grab a handful of random dice approximately 20.

A d20 represents the commanders of each side on the battle field.

Convincing units to fight on your side

Each unit / die needs to be "convinced" to fight on your side.

Choose a die.

Roll your d20 and the die.

If your roll is higher than that rolled on the unit die, it is convinced to serve fighting in your army and joins your pool.

If you roll the same or lower than the unit die, the unit is not convinced and will not fight for you so it is discarded.

Both sides go through this process until they have a set of units / die to represent their army.

Parley before battle

The armies take the field ready to do battle.

Each die is placed with its highest number facing up. That is its HP value.

When the 2 armies meet on the battlefield they parley.

They assess who has the stronger army and the weaker side makes an offer to settle without combat. This might be a number approximately 30% to 40% of the total armies HP total multiplied by 100 gp. For instance an army of 60 HP in total may offer 2000 gp to walk away without combat.

If the offer is not accepted, it is time for battle.

Battle

The players go first.

On your turn roll a d20 - that is how much you hit for on your turn.

You capture and remove that amount of HP of dice from the other sides army.

If a dice is wounded but not killed outright it is changed to the number of HP it has remaining.

Each combatant takes turns attacking until one side has only the commander d20 remaining. The commander surrenders.

Reparations

Once combat is completed, the victor rolls the surrendered commander d20 dice and doubles its value. Then all the captured dice and adds up the combined number. Dice that roll above half their maximum value are said to have been wounded and those that roll half their maximum value or below are said to be dead.

The defeated army is expected to pay the total rolled number multiplied by 100 gp in reparations to the victor.

The victor looks at their defeated allies die and will "pay" each die half its maximum value for its valiant service. Dice that roll above half their maximum value are said to have been wounded and those that roll half their maximum value or below are said to be dead.

The remaining winnings is split between the units still alive including the commander dice.

Compatible systems and campaign settings

It will work with most d20 TTRPG resources.

- [D&D 5e SRD](#)
- [Pathfinder 1e SRD](#)
- [Pathfinder 2e SRD](#)
- [Archive of Nethys](#) – Pathfinder 1e, Pathfinder 2e, Starfinder
- [Stars Without Number](#), [Worlds Without Number](#)
- [Esper Genesis](#)
- [Eberron](#)
- [Numenera](#)
- [Arcana of the Ancients](#)
- [Planebreaker](#)
- [Kobold Press - Midguard](#)
- [Ghostfire Gaming - Grim Hollow, Fables, Youtube Kickstarters, etc](#)
- [Critical Role – Tardorei](#)
- [Drivethrurpg - 5e Compatible](#)

System neutral resources and other cool systems

- [Sly Flourish Lazy DM Companion](#)
- [Tome of Adventure Design Revised](#)
- [Masks and Eureka: 1,000 NPCs and 501 Plots Bundle](#)
- [Questing Beast Knave](#)
- [Index Card RPG](#)
- [Deck Quest](#)
- [DM Scotty Runehammer EZd6](#)
- [Professor Dungeon Master's DeathBringer RPG](#)

Russwater RPG Ruleset – OGL 1.0a

This ruleset is a way to play a less constrained, Gonzo homebrew version of popular roleplaying games compatible with d20 TTRPGs including Dungeons & Dragons 5e and Pathfinder 2e.

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