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The Guild of Blades Publishing Group Presents:™

Dark Realms Epic Adventure Game ™

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Introduction

Welcome to what we like to call the 2nd Edition of the Dark Realms role playing game. It's not exactly the 2nd edition because it's not really much of the same gaming system. Back in the day, during the early years of the Guild of Blades, the company published two role playing game systems. The first was the Dark Realms, a class and level based system designed to be multi-genre in nature. The second was the W.H.A.T.? (Worlds of Heroes & Tyrants) Customizable role playing game, which was more or less initially published on a lark. As time past, what we found was that people like the multi-genre nature and backstory to the Dark Realms game and elements of its Magic and Skill systems and how unique metal types affected the game. However, it was the experienced based, level and class less system of the W.H.A.T.? system that people enjoyed the most and that line quickly balooned up to 15 books. W.H.A.T.? however, had never been designed to support multiple genres and had a few serious flaws in its game mechanics when players advanced to more powerful states.

The Dark Realms Epic Adventure Game is actually a merger of those two systems. It uses the experience based, customizable and free form base of the W.H.A.T.? game system, but has added the unique elements from the Dark Realms system that people enjoyed. It is now the best of both.

The Dark Realms Epic Adventure Game has been designed to be both easy to learn and fun to play. It has a free form system that allows the rules to be adapted to your liking and to fit nearly any adventure setting. With a skill based design you can customize the Dark Realms Epic Adventure Game to meet the exact needs of your campaign. You can even design your own skills and spells using a simple point based system, outlined in these rules.

If you have never played an Epic Adventure Game before, make sure to read the "What Is An Epic Adventure Game" section below, otherwise feel free to skip that section.

In addition to this rule booklet, you will need the following materials before game play can begin:
  1) 1 Six sided die.
  2) Pen or pencil.
  3) A Character Sheet for each player (see rear of this book)
  4) An active imagination & desire for adventure.

What is an Epic Adventure Game?

An Epic Adventure game is a set of guidelines and rules that allow any number of players and a "Realm Master" to create a sort of "Interactive Storytelling Game". The Realm Master assumes the role of the storyteller and adventure creator and will introduce the story to the players, unfolding elements as the game progresses. But the Realm Master is no mere storyteller telling a story to a passive audience. For each part of the story that is provided by the Realm Master, the player have their own make believe characters that are placed inside that story and the players may choose to have those characters react to and do whatever they want within the story landscape (within the limits of those characters' abilities as defined by the game). In this way, the story as initially presented by the Realm Master becomes unpredictable as its course is changed by the millions of choices each player has and the Realm Master must adapt the story as it unfolds to account for the choices made by the players.

An Epic Adventure game is often a sort of living campaign, where the "game" doesn't end at the end of a single game session. As the Realm Master builds and expands the interactive story and the players chart the course within it for each of their fantasy characters, a sort of make believe story world begins to emerge, growing from a simple interactive story to the beginnings of an epic fantasy universe. This universe is something that the players and Realm Masters may return to many times, allowing the players to grow their characters experience with each new adventure.

The "adventures" can be about anything. The player characters might be a band of treasure hunters exploring long forgotten dungeons or caves. They might be mercenaries hiring themselves out for missions involving political intrigue, espionage, etc. They might be holy warriors working for the local temple or perhaps rebels fighting an evil dark empire in a galaxy far far away. The Dark Realms Epic Adventure Game has been created to be a multi-genre game platform, allowing play in fantasy type worlds, modern day settings, far futuristic intergalactic settings and everything in between. This core rules book for the game has the basic information need to get started in general "fantasy" style game setting. Other genre books may be required to provide more information for play in other setting types.

Ok, So How "Exactly" Do You Play?

Generally, the first step in an Epic Adventure game will be for the players to generate their fictional characters. Cops and Robbers, Cowboys and Indians, etc; it was as simple as picking one or the other. However, the Dark Realms game provides more structure. Each player may define the characteristics, personality, and abilities of the characters. Additionally, the Realm Master must also spend some time designing the "adventure" that he will guide the players through. This booklet will only attempt to provide the Realm Master and players with all the basic information they will need to get started. The Dark Realms Realm Master Guide book will be fully dedicated towards assisting Realm Masters in the creation of new adventure materials and Realm Mastering in general. You will be able to purchase the Realm Master Guide at your local gaming retailer or at the Guild of Blades web site.

Example of Play:

It is a Saturday night and everyone is at Eric's house. Eric is the Realm Master (RM) and the players are Mike, Ryan, Bruce and Al.

RM (Eric): You are walking down a dark hall. The light from the torch you are holding only gives you enough light to see about 8 feet in front of you. There are spider webs near the ceiling and a few rats scurry in and out of the light every so often.
Bruce: These aren't mutant rats right?
RM: Nope, they are regular rats.
Bruce: What about the spiders, they aren't mutants either?
RM: No, these are just regular spiders.
Ryan: I have my long sword out and I'm ready for an attack.
RM: No attack. You guys all travel close to 50 feet and the hall forks off into two other halls.
Al: I'm getting out my crystal ball, does it give me any hints?
RM: Ok, roll your die (the RM gives finding the threat a 4; Al rolls a 2)
RM: No, you don't get anything from it.
Mike: I'm going to cast a spell.
RM: Ok, what spell?
Mike: I'm going to cast my glow spell, this spell makes everything within 20 feet on me glow.
RM: Well, roll for it (it is a zero cast spell and Mike puts 1 spell point into it and rolls a 5). It works VERY well. It appears that about 30 feet around you is now glowing. And because of the glow you can see several Holes (see creature section in this book) waiting for you guys down the hall to the right.
Bruce: Are they mutant Holes?

RM: No, they are normal Holes.

Mike: Nothing to the left?

RM: No, you guys don't see anything.

Ryan: I'll go first, you guys stay right behind me.

Mike: I have a spell ready to heal you in case you are attacked.

Bruce: I will go last and make sure nothing comes at us from behind.

RM: You get about 30 feet and you can see something lying on the ground.

Al: What is it?

Ryan: I'm going to get as close as I feel I can without putting my character in danger.

RM: Your character gets to within 20 feet and you can tell that it is a pile of bones in the middle of the hall.

Bruce: Any mutant bones?

RM: Nope, they look like they belong to a normal human.

Ryan: I'm going to get close, to within 3 feet and see what happens.

RM: Nothing.

Ryan: "It looks like it is just some old bones" I'll have my character say.

RM: As your character says "old bones" the bones begin to whirlwind and within a second you see a skeleton with a short sword.

Ryan: Crap.

Mike: Go ahead Ryan, I have a healing spell ready for you.

Al: I'm all for Ryan taking him on, if he dies I call his equipment and money first.

Ryan: Hey guys, I'm still right here!

RM: Ok Ryan roll initiative; the hall is too close for more than one character to fight the Skeleton. (the RM rolls a 4 with the skeleton having a 2 initiative for a total of 6. Ryan rolls a 6 and on the second roll has a 2 with his characters initiative of 4 for a total of 12).

RM: Ryan, you win, so what are you doing?

Ryan: I've had my long sword out, so I'm going to take a swing at it.

RM: Roll for it Ryan (Ryan rolls a 5. with the attack level of a long sword at 3 and Ryan's character having 3 weapon masteries for a total attack level of 6 along with the roll (of 5) would make the attack an attack of 11)(the RM rolls the defense level for the skeleton, he rolls a 2 along with the defense level of 1 that a skeleton has for a total of 3)(the RM now delivers the damage to the skeleton so he takes the 3 defense off the 11 attack for a total of 8 points and that is how many hit points the skeleton loses)(the RM makes a few notes such as how many Hit Points the skeleton has left <17>).

Al: Good hit man.

RM: Now it is the skeleton's turn (first the RM has to figure out the attack level of the skeleton. The skeleton has a weapon mastery of 3 and the short sword has an attack Level of 2 for a total of 5. The RM rolls the die for the skeleton and rolls a 6. The RM then rolls the three weapon mastery dice for the skeleton and rolls a 3, 2 & 5. The RM then rolls the non-weapon mastery die and rolls a 4. That makes the total attack level 25 against Ryan's character).

Ryan: I hope you have that spell for me Mike.

Mike: I have it right here, but it won't work if you are already dead.

RM: Ryan, time for you to roll your defense. (Ryan rolls a 5 and his plate mail armor has a defense of 6 for a total of 11. So the RM takes away 11 from the skeleton attack of 25 for a total of 14 hit points lost for Ryan's character, Ryan makes a note on his character sheet so he can tell how many hit points he has left).

Mike: I'm casting my spell: healing.

RM: Give me a roll then (Mike puts 5 spell points into the spell and rolls a 5). Ryan, your character gets 10 hit points back.

Ryan: All right, I have him now.

RM: Anyone else want to do anything?

Bruce: Just waiting for the mutants

Al: Nothing.

RM: Ok, lets roll for initiative (Ryan rolls a 1 and the RM rolling for the skeleton rolls a 5). The Skeleton has an initiative of 7 and Ryan has an initiative of 5 for this round. The Skeleton goes first. (The RM rolls a 3 + 3 for weapon mastery + 2 attack level of short sword for a total attack of 8). Ok, Ryan roll defense (Ryan rolls a 6 and then a 5 along with his armor rating of 5 for a grand total of 16). The attack does NO damage because Ryan's defense level was above the attack level of the skeleton.

Ryan: My turn (Ryan rolls a 5 for his attack +3 for weapon masteries and +3 for long sword for a grand total of an 11 attack level).

RM: I'll roll for Bones (the RM rolls a 1 with the skeleton's defense of 2 for

a grand total of 3, and that means the skeleton takes 8 hit points of damage and the skeleton has <9> left).

Al: I have an attack spell I want to use now.

RM: Fine, everyone has acted pretty much.

AL: I want to use my disintegration spell (Al has a level 10 spell level is disintegration and puts 10 spell points into the spell and rolls a 5 for a total of 15 attack level VS. the skeleton)

RM: Wait, he could still live. (The RM rolls a 6 and then a 1 for a grand total of 9, the skeleton takes 6 hit points of damage and now has <3> hit points left.)

Mike: Since we have him on the run, I'm going to throw a dagger at him (Mike rolls a 5 and with the dagger attack level of 1 for a grand total of 6).

RM: OK, I'll roll defense to see if you guys get him (the RM rolls a 3 with the skeletons defense of 2 for a grand total of 5, so the skeleton loses 1 hit point and has <2> left.

Bruce: Ok, I will rescue you guys. I'll throw my hand axe at it (Bruce rolls a 5 and +2 for the hand axe and +1 for the 1 weapon mastery that he has in hand axe for a grand total of 8).

RM: Well….. you guys seem to want him gone really bad. I'll roll his defense (the RM rolls a 3 with +2 for the defense level of the skeleton for a total of 5 defense level VS. an attack of 8 and the skeleton loses 3 hit points. The skeleton is at –1, the negative number means death even for a dead skeleton).

RM: The skeleton crumbles and turns to dust. There seems to be nothing left.

Bruce: I'm glad that's over.

RM: Now, you guys see mutants coming down the hall.

Bruce: Did you say Mutants??

And so our adventurers defeat evil wherever it might be.

Creating a Character

Before play can begin, each player will need a character to adventure with. If they have a character already, the Realm Master should look the character over to make sure it will be compatible enough with the other characters the other players have brought or will be making.

Making a new Dark Realms character is a seven-step process. Follow each step as outlined below and this book will guide you through the character creation process.

Step 1: Chose a Race:

As a fantasy game, the Dark Realms allows players to select one of a variety of humanoid races. Each race has its strong points and weak points, both in physical and mental attributes. You'll note that every race begins with a free skill, traditionally acquired by the character during his youth. See "Skills & Using Skills" for further details on skills.

Each character will also begin with two free Language Skills. The first of these will be a Language Skill at Level 6. This represents the language which the character was raised around the most.

The second free Language Skill the character will have will be at Level 3. This is the language he has had the second most exposure to when being brought up.

Dwarf:

The Dwarf is short and stocky, typically stronger than the average race. They tend to favor long unkempt hair and beards. They are an ornery folk who are only truly happy when they are being chall- enged to their physical limits. Dwarven soceities tend to be clan oriented with rivalries between the leading clans as a fact of life. Additionally, Dwarves favor caves and underground dwellings and often base their economy on mining, tunneling, and general construc- tion jobs.

Free Skills: Mining: Level 5
Dark Vision: Level 5

Attribute Modifications at Character Creation:
+1 Strength, -1 EXP to buy additional Hit Points
-1 Luck

Avg. Height M/F	Avg. weight(lb.)M/F	Avg. Life Span
4'8" / 4'4"	160 / 125	85

Elf:

Elves are short and slender with pointy ears and noses. They are a nature- loving race and prefer solitude to interaction with other races. Elves place high value on honor and social skills with much emphasis placed on their social status. Elven communities tend to be in secluded areas within the deep wilds of a forest or mount- ainous region. Elven economies are traditionally fairly isolated from those of the other races and are self-sufficient.

Free Skill: Hunting: Level 5
Weapon Mastery:
  Long Bow: Level 1

Attribute Modifications
at Character Creation:
+1 Dexterity, -1 Strength
+1 EXP to buy addl. Hit Points
Small Sized

Avg. Height M/F
5'2" / 4'6"

Avg. weight(lb.)M/F	Avg. Life Span
115 / 70	130
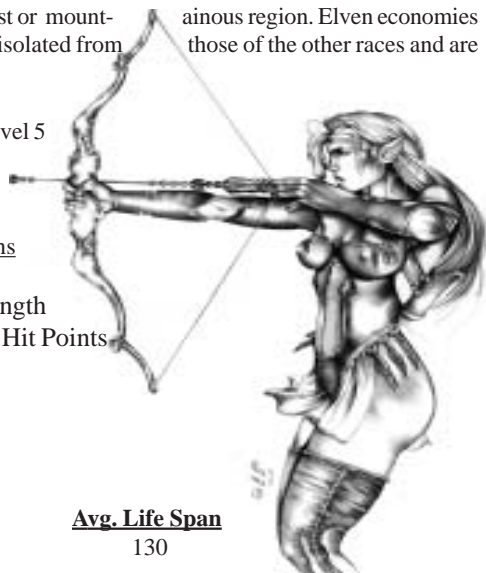
Giant:

Giants are large, awkward people who resemble the classic picture of the Neanderthal man, only larger. They are not as dumb and barbaric as many legends would have us believe. Giants typically avoid other races and travel in desert or forest lands in roving bands; though more from fear of being hunted than any natural shyness. Once far more numerous, Giant civilizations have become more scarce. Fear of these skilled warriors has made them a target for most of the other races.

Free Skills:
Wilderness Survival:
Forests: LV 5
Deserts: LV 3

Attribute Modifications at Character Creation:
 +2D6 Hit Points, +2 Strength , Over-Sized
 -1 Health, -1 Dexterity, No starting luck.

Avg. Height M/F	Avg. weight(lb.)M/F	Avg. Life Span
9'6" / 8'8"	600 / 480	60

Gnome:

The Gnome is typically short and chubby, with a bright and cheery disposition. They are a simple folk who live in peaceful rural communities. Gnomish societies tend to be quiet farming communities with limited governments, often centered around a respected wise man. Though not natural warriors, Gnomish armies have proven fairly successful and rely upon smart tactics and close formations.

Free Skill:
Farming: Level 2
Engineering: Level 4

Attribute Modifications at Character Creation:
+1 Intelligence, -1 Dexterity
Small Sized

Avg. Height M/F	Avg. weight(lb.)M/F	Avg. Life Span
4'5" / 4'2"	130 / 130	80

Goblin:

The Goblin is a tribal creature. Despite their small stature, they are quite fierce. Goblin tribes usually are located along well-traveled trade routes, though as far between major settlements as possible. Goblins hold all other races in contempt. Goblin settlements typically are sprawling wood fortresses, often poorly constructed, positioned to dominate trade and / or run bandit operations from.
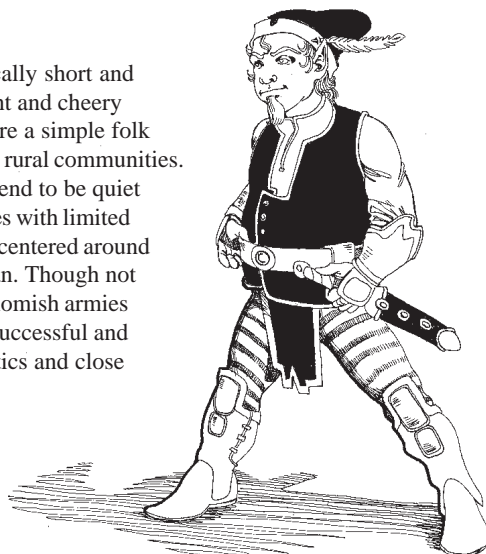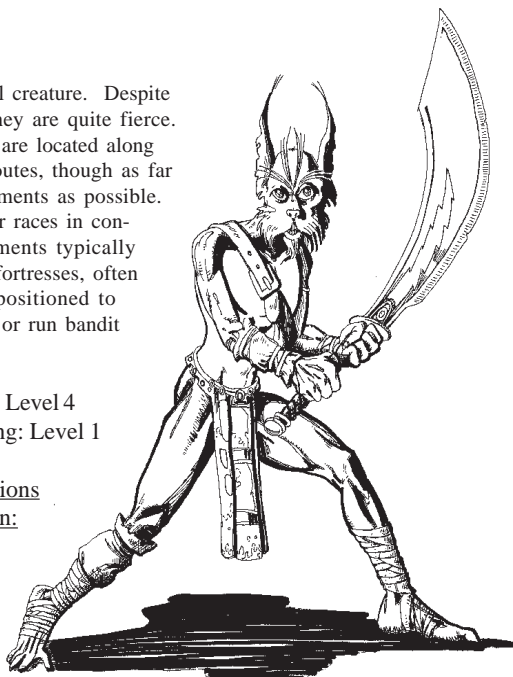
Free Skill: Tracking: Level 4
Engineering: Level 1

Attribute Modifications
at Character Creation:
+1 Dexterity
-1 Intelligence
Small Sized

Avg. Height M/F	Avg. weight(lb.)M/F	Avg. Life Span
4'4" / 4'7"	100 / 90	50

Human

This race is fairly self-explanatory; We're sure you've met a few of them in your time. Human settlements tend to be built upon industry and trade. Human craftsmen produce goods of all kinds to trade with other human settlements and (where possible) other races. Most human settlements are well fortified, with the larger ones typically walled cities. Of the races, human settlements tend to grow larger and more organized than those of the other races, though are often filled with graft.

Free Skills:
Engineering: Level 2
Farming: Level 2
Hunting: Level 2
Tracking: Level 1

Attribute Modifications at Character Creation:
No Adjustments.
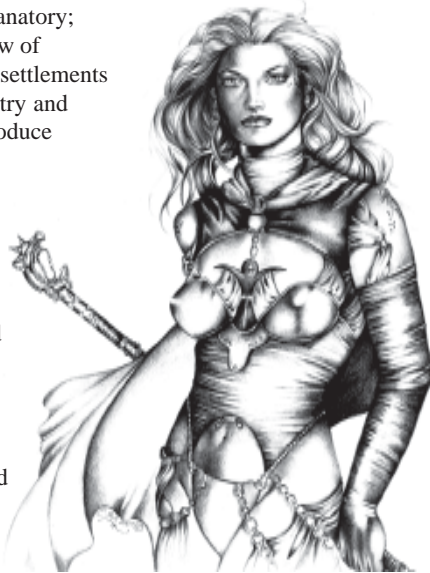
Avg. Height M/F	Avg. weight(lb.)M/F	Avg. Life Span
5'8" / 5'3"	160 / 120	55

Orc:

The Orc is another tribal race that often plagues civilized lands. They are large creatures; big, ugly, and stupid. Unlike Goblins, Orcs tend to live near large settlements for the purpose of raiding and plundering them. Orcs often take everything more seriously. What humor they can manage generally leans towards the sarcastic.

Free Skill:
Weapon Mastery:
 Club or Mace: Level 1
Hunting: Level 3

Attribute Modifications
at Character Creation:
+1 Strength, +1 Health
-2 Intelligence
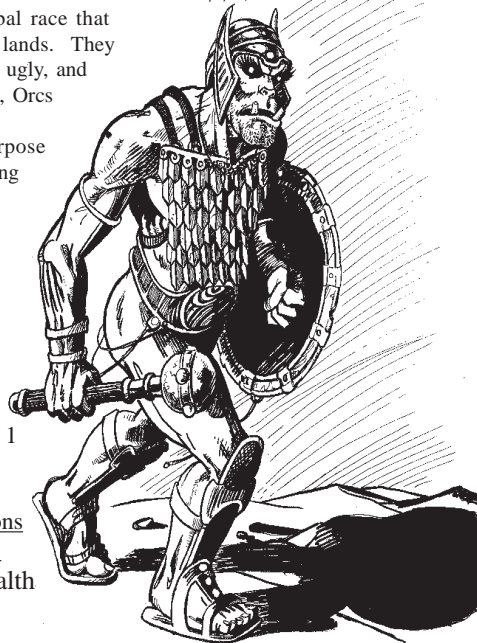
Avg. Height M/F	Avg. weight(lb.)M/F	Avg. Life Span
6'3" / 5'10"	230 / 185	50

Orion

The Orion are a warrior race, said to have been originally spawned by magic. Orions tend to take little seriously, often not even mortal combat; this despite the fact they excel in the use of weapons. Though fairly human in appearance, the Orion is actually a cold-blooded race and only thrives in warm weather climates. Orion villages, though rare, can typically be found in tropical lands or swamps. In severe cold, the Orion suffers half normal movement rate and are -3 to -5 on all Initiative rolls depending on how cold it is. The few Orion living in cold climates will actually hibernate during the winter months.

Orion have four arms and a large serpent-like tail instead of legs. They move/run at 1/2 the typical movement rate, as based on their Dexterity (and half again in severe cold). They are ambidexterous, meaning they can wield more than one weapon without suffering the usual penalties (all weapons beyond the first are considered to be secondary weapons).

Free Skills: Ambidexterity: Level 2, Climbing: Level 5

Attribute Modifications at Character Creation:
+2 Dexterity   -2 Strength   -2 Hit Points

Avg. Height M/F	Avg. weight(lb.)M/F	Avg. Life Span
6'8" / 6'6"	210 / 180	100
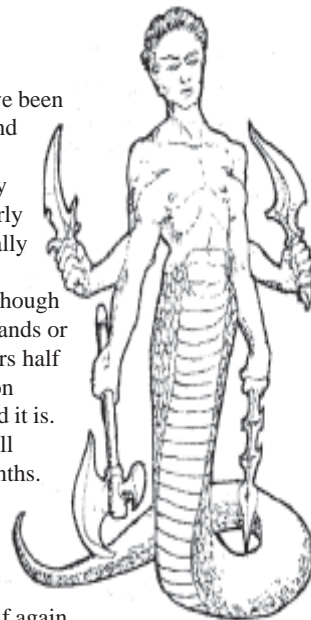
Rylar:

The Rylar are an aquatic race; tall and scaly. Rylar have both lungs and gills; thus can live above or under the water. They must soak their bodies every few days or their scales will begin to dry out and become brittle suffering 10 hit points of damage a day. Rylar prefer solitude, even from their own kind, and will generally only suffer through the companionship of others when striving for some personal gain or goal. Once each year, Rylar feel compelled to return to their original spawning waters to mate. Failure to due so will distract the Rylar (-3 Awareness and Initiative) until a full month after the spawning period.

Free Skills: Swimming: Level 8
                    Deep Sea Diving: Level 6
                    Fishing: Level 6

Attribute Modifications at Character Creation:
+1 Health
-1 Dexterity   -1 Charm

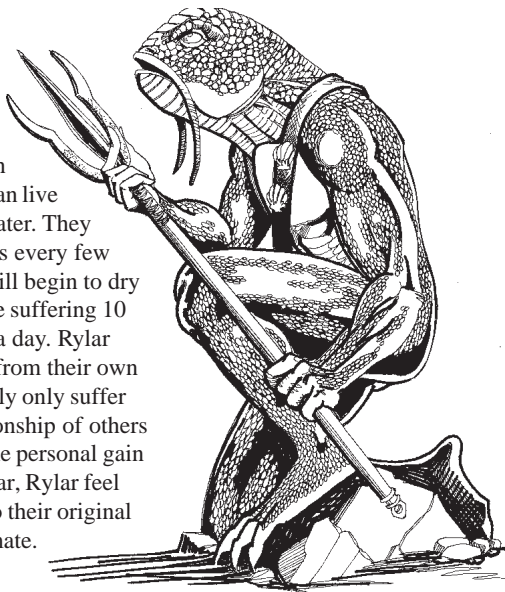| Avg. Height M/F	Avg. Weight(lb.)M/F	Avg. Life Span
6'2" / 5'0"	235 / 160	70

Step 2: Core Attributes:

Every character is partially defined by a set of core attributes that represent their natural physical and mental capabilities. To get the starting point value for each Core Attribute simply roll a six-sided die one time (1d6) for each attribute. Game Masters may opt for players to roll 1D6 a number of times (1 time for each core attribute), but then players may assign dice, one dice roll from the pool of results they rolled to each attribute, chosing which die result to match with each attribute.

Then distribute a total of 3 additional points among the attribute or attributes of your choice. Apply the appropriate race adjustments to the Core Attributes based on the race selected for the character.

Lastly, a player may now opt to reduce an attribute by two points to raise a different attribute by 1 point. If Charm or Beauty are lowered in this fashion, they must be lowered 3 points to raise another attribute 1 point. No attribute may be lowered to below 1.

Below you will read a basic description of each Core Attribute.

Core Attribute "Adjustment Ratings":

As a function of the Dark Realms game system, each core attribute a character has is also assigned an "Adjustment Value". The Adjustment Value is used to determine certain combat and mental capabilities as well as potential bonuses the character might receive. They "adjust" a good number of features about the character.

The adjustment value will be determined by the current rating of the Core Attribute and is found by referencing the following table (See Below). Attribute Adjustments typically apply in one of two ways (though they can apply in others). The first is that the Attribute Adjustment rating is a

Attribute Adjustment Table	+1 to adjustment at attribute score 50, 60, 70, etc. Every 10 is another +1											
Attribute	1	2-3	4-5	6-7	8-9	10-11	12-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40+
Adjustment	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8	+9	+10

Races At a Glance

Race	+ Adjust	- Adjust	Free Skills	Avg Ht	Avg Wt	Avg Age
Dwarf	+1 STR, -1 EXP to buy HPs	-1 Luck	Mining: LV 5 Dark Vision: LV 5	4'8" / 4'4"	160 / 125	85
Elf	+1 DEX Small Size	-1 STR +1 EXP to buy HPs	Hunting: LV 5 Weap Mastery: Bow LV 1	5'2" / 4'6"	115 / 70	130
Giant	+2D6 Hit Pts +2 STR	-1 Health, -1 DEX No Luck, Over-sized	Wild Surv: Forest LV5 Wild Surv:Desert LV3	9'6" / 8'8"	600 / 480	60
Gnome	+1 INT, Small Size	-1 DEX	Farming: LV 2, Engineering LV 4	4'5" / 4'2"	130 / 130	80
Goblin	+1 DEX, Small Size	-1 INT	Tracking LV 4, Engineering LV 1	4'4" / 4'7"	100 / 90	50
Human	No adj.	No adj.	Engineering LV 2, Farming LV 2 Tracking LV 2, Hunting LV 2	5'8" / 5'3"	160 / 120	55
Orc	+1 STR, +1 Health	-2 INT	Weap Mast: Club or Mace LV 1 Hunting LV 3	6'3" / 5'10"	230 / 185	50
Orion	+2 DEX	-2 STR -2 Hit Pts. 1/2 Movement	Ambidexterity LV 2, Climbing LV 5	6'8" / 6'6"	210 / 180	100
Rylar	+2 Health	-1 Charm -1 DEX	Swimming LV 8 Deep Sea Diving LV 6 Fishing LV 6	6'2" / 5'0"	235 / 160	70

direct bonus to or the starting foundation to some other game number. For instance, a character's Strength Adjustment is a bonus to a player's "Attack Level". The second is that the Attribute Adjustment is a random chance on a D6 for a bonus of some sort. For instance, whenever you spend Experience Points to buy a Hit Point to add to the character's maximum Hit Points, the character's Health Adjustment is a chance on 1D6 to get a second Hit Point added to their maximum for free. So yes, an Attribute Adjustment of 6 would thusly be an automatic bonus Hit Point. If a character's Adjustment for the Attribute is higher than a 6, then they get the automatic point, and each point above 6 becomes a chance for a second bonus point. So a character with a Health of 20 would have a Health Adjustment of +7, so when the character would spend Experience to buy a new Hit Point, they would automatically get a 2nd Hit Point for free, then also have a 2 in 6 chance of getting a 3rd Hit point for free.

Strength:

Strength is the character's physical prowess. It represents the character's brute strength and their knowledge of how to apply that strength. A character can lift (30 x Strength) +100 pounds when his lifting is tested. If a character has a Strength Attribute greater than 10, each point of Strength beyond 10 can lift 50 pounds and each point beyond 20 can lift 100 pounds. See examples below.

9 Strength = 370 lbs	(30x9=270+100)
17 Strength = 750 lbs	((30x10)+(50x7)+100)
25 Strength = 1400 lbs	((30x10)+(50x10)+(100x5)+100))

Additionally Strength will allow the character to deal more damage in combat. The Strength Adjustment is added directly to the character's attack level. (See Step Four: Combat Attributes).

Health:

This is the character's physical stamina and constitution. It represents their ability to withstand physical exhaustion as well as their natural defenses to sickness and disease. Whenever the character spends experience points to buy a Hit Point (see Combat Attributes), his Health Adjustment is the chance on a D6 that an additional Hit Point will be gained for free. A negative adjustment cannot cause the character to lose a Hit Point.

A character's Health score is also typically their defensive roll against poisons and diseases.

Health also represents a character's ability to heal lost Hit Points. For every full night of rest a character should be able to heal their Health score plus 1D6 worth of Hit points. This doesn't mean that if a character got cut yesterday and that cut made them lose 3 Hit Points that by tomorrow morning the cut will be healed, just that the character will have healed "enough" for them to not be functionally slowed down by the wound.

Awareness:

This is the character's alertness; their ability to quickly notice events happening around them. The Realm Master would use this attribute score when doing a test to see if the character notices small details that other characters might miss.

A character's Awareness Adjustment is added to their Initiative score and Defense Levels. When a character spends Experience Points to buy a Luck Point, the character's Awareness Adjustment is their chance to get bonus Luck Points.

Beauty:

The character's physical attractiveness and skill at flaunting it.

Charm:

This is the character's charisma, persuasiveness and general leadership ability. This attribute can heavily influence the loyalty of underlings and friends the character has. Charm is also how well a speaker the character is, how well they are able to charm the opposite sex and in general how socially adept they are.

Intelligence:

This is the character's ability to reason as well as their accumulation of knowledge. The Intelligence Adjustment is added to all Spell Ratings (See Spells & Spell Casting). Whenever the character purchases a Spell Point, his Intelligence Adjustment is the chance for getting additional spell points. A negative adjustment cannot cause the character to lose a Spell Point.

Dexterity:

This is the character's agility, reaction, and movement speed. A character's Dexterity score is their base Dodging score (see Combat Attributes).

The character's Dexterity Adjustment represents how many times per combat round they may attempt to Dodge attacks aimed on them (limit one Dodge attempt per separate attack)

Dexterity also represents how many "movement" points the character is able to move in a single game round / combat turn.

Lastly, when it comes to the skill of wielding weapons (Weapon Masteries) most characters can only achieve a maximum Weapon Mastery Level equal to their Dexterity Adjustment (excepting a handful of large and heavy weapons whose Weapon Mastery level limit is based on a character's Strength Adjustment instead). A character may attain at least a Level 1 Weapon Mastery skill with any weapon, regardless if they have a zero Dexterity (or Strength) adjustment.

Using the Core Attributes:

At various points during game play the character's abilities will be tested. This may be a test of knowledge, a physical challenge (jumping a stream for instance), or a social problem (gaining an informer's trust). The character's skill or attribute to be used for a given situation will, naturally, be up to the Realm Master based upon the particular circumstances at hand.

Whether it is a core attribute or a skill being tested, the method for determining the outcome is the same. The challenging action, event or opposing element is given a number based upon its general difficulty. This will be termed the Difficulty Factor or DF. An extremely easy DF would be zero. An average DF is four and a very difficult challenge would be seven or higher for the average starting character. There is no limit to the DF range.

The player rolls the d6 once and adds the characters core attribute or skill rating (whichever is being tested) to the result. If a "6" is rolled then an additional d6 is rolled and added to the first result. 1D6 is also rolled for the opposing task and is added to the DF. Again if a 6 is rolled, then an

additional D6 is rolled and added to the DF. Note that continually rolling 6 will allow more D6 rolls; so with sufficiently great luck, there is no limit to the potential results.

If the player's total was greater than that of the Difficulty Factor's total then the character succeeded, at least marginally, in whatever was being attempted. The higher the player's total is above the total for the DF, the greater the success will be. Likewise, if the DF total is equal to or higher to the player's total, the character will have failed. The greater the difference between the opponents's and character's totals, then the greater the failure.

Step 3: Miscellaneous Attributes:

Miscellaneous Attributes are those characteristics that have no meaningful impact on the game rules, yet clearly add to the detail and flavor of the character.

Luck:

Sometimes people just flat out get lucky, or unlucky. Every once in a while, despite excellent game play, those dice will just conspire against you. For such occasions, the character can utilize a Luck Point to try and change that luck. Characters begin play with (1D6+3) Luck Points. A Luck Point is basically a "save your butt" point. A Luck Point may be spent to make any die result be re-rolled. Once a Luck Point is spent, it is gone forever. Luck points cannot be used to re-roll die results during character generation.

During the course of play, characters will have the option to spend some of their earned Experience Points to acquire new Luck Points. Remember, a character's Awareness Adjustment is their chance at gaining bonus Luck Points for free when buying one with Experience.

Personality Traits:

This is a set of single words and/or short phrases that are used to describe the character's attitude, mind set, beliefs and everything psychological and philosophical. The character will receive experience points based on how accurately the player role-plays the Personality Traits chosen for the character (See Step Five: Experience). Any number of Traits may be chosen, though avoid those which duplicate the same meaning.

Height, Weight, Age:

These are statistics that, while important to your character's description, rarely play an integral part in game mechanics. Assign your character the necessary descriptive attributes to better describe his or her physical traits. Keep your character's Race in mind when deciding what numbers to use (See Step One: Races).

Size: Player character races come in three size categories. Small, regular and over-sized. Small sized races will get a +1 to Dodge againt the larger two sizes and over-sized races get a -1 to Dodge and -1 to Initiative.

Additionally, size may have an impact on the cost of gear, food, access to adequate lodging and other game factors; as judged by the Realm Master on a case by case basis.

Step 4: Combat Attributes:

Combat Attributes are those game characteristics which are used to determine a character's combat prowess. These attributes are not usually rolled for, but are rather a tally of other factors. Factors such as: the weapon and armor the character has, his skill with the weapon, his strength, dexterity, and other combat specific skills. Each Combat Attribute and how to determine its rating is described below.

Hit Points:

These represent the character's ability to withstand physical damage. If the character gets injured, they will temporarily lose Hit Points. If their Hit Points total ever reaches zero, the character will become unconscious. Once unconscious, the character will regain one Hit Point per turn until they reach a total of one and become conscious again.

> Critically Wounded:
>
> If the character's Hit Point total falls into the negatives, with a negative total equal to or below the character's Health, the character is considered critically wounded. Once critically wounded, once per hour the character will need to make a "Health Check" with the Difficulty Factor being the number of Hit Points below zero the character is at. A success will let the character regain a number of Hit Points equal to their Health Adjustment. A failure will cause them to lose 1D6-1 Hit Points. Do this check once per hour until the character's Hit Points has healed so that it is greater than (Neg. character's Health) or until the Hit Point total has dropped to negative the character's Health x 3. If the Hit Point total hits negative (Health x 3), then the character is dead. While critically wounded, a character will not heal the standard amount of Hit Points from a night's rest.

Any evening where the character's current Hit Point total is less than their Maximum Hit Point Total, then with a full night of rest (typically a full 8 hours of good sleep) the character will be able to "heal" their Health score plus 1D6 Hit Points. Healing, natural or otherwise, cannot raise the character's Hit Points above their normal Hit Point Maximum.

To determine the character's starting Hit Points, roll two six-sided dice (2D6), adding the results together. Add a number of additional D6 equal to the character's Health Adjustment. Once initially determined, from that point forward, the Character's Hit Point Maximum can only be raised by using Experience Points to purchase additional Hit Points or via certain magical effects.

Spell Points:

Spell Points represent the character's mystical stamina. Spell Points are used to cast spells. To determine a character's number of starting Spell Points, roll 1D6. Add a number of additional D6 rolls equal to the character's Intelligence Adjustment. Once initially determined, from that point forward the Character's Spell Point Maximum can only be raised by using Experience Points to purchase additional Spell Points or via certain magical effects. Spell Points used to cast spells during the course of a day are only temporarily gone. A character's Spell Point total will return to maximum once they have received a full night's rest. Failing to get a full night's rest would only allow the character to partially replenish spent Spell Points.

When buying a Spell Point to increase the character's Maximum Spell points, the character has a chance to receive bonus Spell Points based on their Intelligence Adjustment.

Initiative:

This is how quickly the character is able to react. Initiative rolls will determine who gets to act first in combat and can determine if a character is acting quickly enough to take more than one action within a combat round. The character's Initiative is a combination of a number of factors. The "Base" initiative is a combination of both the character's Dexterity Adjustment and their Awareness Adjustment. Things that can modify or adjust a character's initiative:

1) Weapon Masteries:

A character's Weapon Mastery Level with their primary weapon being used is added to the character's Initiative.

2) Intelligence Adjustment for Spell Casting:

If a character is casting a spell rather than using a weapon, add their Intelligence Adjustment to the character's Initiative.

3) Weapons & Armor:

Some weapons, armor and other equipment are heavy and will slow the character down. If a weapon or item has a listed Initiative Adjustment, this will also modify the character's Initiative.

4) Initiative Bonus Skill:

A character may attempt to learn the special skill of Initiative Bonus. It is difficult to advance (Experience Table 3)

At the start of a combat round (or any round where it becomes important to determine the order in which the characters and non-player characters or creatures will be able to act), Initiative will need to be rolled. To roll Initiative, each player will roll 1D6 and add the result to their character's current Initiative (based on the factors above). The Realm Master rolls a 1D6 for each non-player character/creature and adds the result to their Initiatives. Any time a "6" is rolled, it becomes an opened ended roll, allowing the "6" to be counted, plus you then roll another 1D6 and add its result to the result of the first die. Do this as many times as a "6" keeps being rolled. The total result of the Initiative die roll (rolls) is added to the character's Initiative score for their Initiative for this round of action. The one with the highest score gets to take first action, the one with the second highest score can take second action, etc.

Multiple Actions Per Turn:

Characters or creatures of exceptional speed and skill may be able to take more than one action in a single combat round. This is determined by their Initiative scores. Anyone with an Initiative outcome of 20 or greater will be able to take more than one action this combat round. An Initiative result of 40 or greater would let the character take 3 actions this turn, 60 would allow for 4 actions, 80 would allow for 5 actions, etc. Every full 20 Initiative result would allow for an additional action. An "action" for this purpose would include anything the character would normally be allowed to do within the round if they had a single action (ala, cast a spell, do an attack, etc).

If a character has an Initiative result high enough to allow them more than one action, then each action will need to be put into the order of actions being taken by all for the turn. The first action would go at the speed of the highest result and each additional action would be put 20 Initiative less than that. Example:

Initiative result of 27

First action goes at 27. Second action goes at 7.

So anyone with a score higher than 27 will go before the character's first action. Anyone with a score higher than 7 will go before their second action.

Dodging:

Dodging is the character's ability to avoid being hit. The character's Dodging rating is pitted against the attacker's Attack Level, with both sides rolling a D6 and adding it to the result. As usual if a "6" is rolled, add the result and add an additional D6. If the character's Dodge result is higher, then the character successfully dodges the attack, does not need to roll for Defense and will receive no damage from the attack. If it is a tie, then +3 is added to the character's Defense Level for the purpose of rolling the Defense VS. that attack. Otherwise, the character is hit and combat proceeds to dealing damage.

The character's base Dodging rate is equal to their Dexterity plus Awareness Adjustment. Things that can adjust a character's Dodging:

1) Weapon Masteries:

A character gets to add their Weapon Mastery level from their primary weapon in use to their Dodge rating.

2) Weapons:

Weapons can have Dodge adjustments. Some might subtract from a character's dodge while other may increase it.

3) Armor:

Armor can have Dodge Adjustments. Many will subtract from a character's Dodge, but since "blocking" an attack is also a part of dodging (general avoidance), some armor types may provide Dodge bonuses.

4) Dodging Bonus Skill:

A character may attempt to learn the special skill of Dodging. It is a difficult skill to increase (Experience Table 3).

A character may attempt to Dodge attacks at least once per turn, but never more than one Dodge attempt per attack. A character may attempt Dodging attacks a number of times equal to their Dexterity Adjustment. If a character is attacked and has no Dodge attempts remaining, bypass the Dodge rolls and move directly onto Damage Dealing and Defense rolls.

Attack Level:

This is a combination of the character's ability to hit an opponent and to deal damage. Several factors go into creating the character's Attack Level. These are:

1) Weapon Type:

> The type of weapon (together with the metal or material the weapon is made out of) and level of craftsmenship all come together to give each weapon a base Attack Level.

2) Weapon Mastery Level:

> The character's Weapon Mastery Level in the weapon being used is added to the weapon's base Attack Level.

3) Strength Adjustment:

> A character's Strength Adjustment is also added to a weapon's base attack level.

To determine the Attack Level for an attack, a player rolls 1D6 and adds the result to their Attack Level with the weapon being used. Per usual, if the attacker rolls a "6" on the attack an additional D6 is rolled and added to the previous result. Furthermore, when a six is rolled, if the attacking character has one or more Weapon Mastery levels with the weapon in use, then an addition 1D6 is also rolled for each and every Weapon Mastery level. Unlike most rolls in the Dark Realms system, the bonus Weapon Mastery D6 rolls are NOT open ended. Which is to say, if a "6" is rolled on the Weapon Mastery bonus dice, then no extra bonus dice above and beyond the initial bonus dice are received.

Once an Attack Roll has been determined, the defender must decide if they use a Dodge attempt to try and avoid it. The defender may make this decision after the Attack Roll has been made and the total Attack Level for the Attack has been determined. If the defender chooses to Dodge, then they must roll 1D6 (open ended) and add it to their Dodge score and the total must be greater than the Attack Level in order to avoid the attack. If the two numbers are tied, then the Defender will simply get a +3 to their Defense Level.

If the defender failed to Dodge, then the defender will then have to roll defense against that: 1D6 (open ended) plus their Defense Level against the Attack Level. A Defense Level score that is equal to or greater than the Attack Level score means the attack will do no damage to the defender. An Attack Level score that is greater means the attack will do damage and the amount of Hit Points damage inflicted upon the defender is the difference between the Attack Level score and the Defense Level score.

The defender, should they see a very powerful (ala, potentially very deadly) attack coming thier way (a high Attack Level), the defender may give up all additional Dodge attempts this turn and skip their next action to add an additional 1D6 (open ended) to their Dodge roll in a desperate attempt to avoid the deathly blow.

Example For Calculating Attack Level:

Dorf is a warrior. He carries a big axe which is made of a higher quality material (let's just say its base Attack Level is a 7). Dorf has a Strength of 8 giving him a Strength Adjustment of 3. And lastly, Dorf is fairly skilled in the use of that deadly axe, having 3 Weapon Mastery levels in its use. So:

> Base Weapon Attack Level: 7
> +3 for STR Adjust
> +3 for Weapon Masteries
> Dorf's Attack Level with his axe is 13.

Defense Level:

Defense Level is a combination of the character's ability to minimize the impact of an attack and the strength of their armor and other defensive items worn. Like Dodging, a result from a D6 is added to the character's Defense Level. As usual this is an open ended roll; meaning that on a roll of "6", the six gets added to the Defense Level and then an additional dice is rolled to be added to that result. Defensive items are most often things such as a suit of armor, but can also include a shield, perhaps a staff, or even mystical defenses. A character's Defense Level is made up of:

1) Armor and other defensive gear:

> Various items a character might be wearing will add points to their Defense Level. Suits of armor, shields and other protective gear.

2) The character's Awareness Adjustment:

> The best warriors are alert ones. Warriors aware of even the smallest details on the battlefield. You are fighting someone in front of you and a second attacked comes at you from the side, longsword about to hit you. No time to Dodge the attack and you are not fast enough even if you wanted to try. But that's ok, you know if you turn your body slighty to one direction that longsword will strike your armor's shoulder pad instead of its soft side, greatly reducing its impact on you. So you take the hit, but its greatly minimized. This aspect of a character's Awareness adds to their Defense Level.

Weapon Masteries do **NOT** add to a character's Defense Level, but beyond a weapon's ability to keep an attacker at bay (Dodging) a weapon when used right can also blunt or block attacks. So in combat, when rolling defense, whenever a character with one or more Weapon Masteries rolls a "6", they then also roll a bonus D6 to add to their overall Defense Level score for each level of Weapon Mastery they have with their primary weapon. This is in addition to the usual open ended bonus dice.

Example For Calculating Defense Level:

Going back to our warrior Dorf, we find he is wearing a simple set of leather armor, which has a base Defense Level of 2. Dorf has an Awareness attribute score of 6 which gives him an Awareness Adjustment of +2. Thus, Dorf's has a Defense Level of 4.

Step 5: Experience Points:

Experience Points are the primary measure of skills and abilities in the Dark Realms Epic Adventure Game. All starting characters receive 50 Experience Points with which to initially purchase skills, spells, and improvements to their core attributes and select combat attributes. Players may opt to spend all of their starting Experience Points or save some of them to be applied to their character later.

Through adventuring and training, the character will earn additional Experience Points, which are a mark of the character's improvement. Experience Points may be spent to improve attributes or skills as well as acquire new skills and spells. As a character gains more Experience Points, it is important that the player keep track of total Experience Points gained and total Experience Points as of yet, unspent.

Gaining Experience Points:

There are basically four different ways for the characters to gain experience points. These are determined by the Realm Master through the course of an adventure and awarded to the players at the end of each game session.

1) Personality Traits:

Award 2 Experience for each Personality Trait the player accurately roleplays. This means if the player selected "greedy" as a personality trait, then their character will earn 2 Experience Points in any adventure where that character acts greedy.

2) Strength of Foe:

Award 1 Experience Point per 25 Experience Point Strength of a defeated foe. In this, a foe can be defined by anyone who has chosen to oppose the player characters, be it in direct combat, trickery, or even simply political opposition. "Defeating" a foe can mean anything from merely thwarting a political or business rival to physically overcoming monsters or other enemies in combat. Experience from defeated foes are earned by the individual character responsible for the defeat, though if a single foe is defeated truly thru a team effort, the Experience Points to be awarded may be divided any way the Realm Master chooses amongst the characters; ideally based on the value of their contribution towards the defeat.

3) Hours Played:

Award 1 point per hour the player actively participated in the game.

4) Realm Master Bonus:

Ream Masters can award bonus Experience Points based on anything they wish to promote as good play in the games they run. This could be the honesty of the players, creative thinking, thematically playing their character well, simply showing up on time, etc. This allows the Realm Master to encourage play in the manner best suited for the overall group.

Spending Experience Points:

The following is a list of all things Experience Points may be spent on. How much experience is needed to advance an attribute, skill, spell, magical ability or anything else will depend on the current rating of the field being modified. Everything that may be purchased with Experience Points is given a classification that will indicate which of the following tables will be used to chart its advancement (noted in parenthesis beside the heading). The number listed under each level rating indicates how many Experience Points must be spent to raise the field 1 point.

A handful of character attributes or special skills may be advanced at a flat rate of Experience Point expenditure per level. This number shall remain a constant and none of the Experience Tables will be needed needed.

Experience Table 1: Core Attributes

Rating	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Experience	3	5	8	12	17	23	30	38	47	57	68	80

Rating	12	13	14	15-16	17-19	20-24	25-29
Experience	93	108	125	145	170	210	245

Rating	30-39	+1 for each point above 39
Experience	285	350

Core Attributes: (Experience Table 1)

Core Attributes may be raised by spending Experience Points on Experience Table #1. When raising an Attribute, first look at the character's current score in that Attribute. The number below that score indicates the amount of Experience Points that must be spent to raise the Attribute up 1 point.

> *Example:*
> Godfrey has a strength of 3 and wants to increase it to 4. He knows that he needs to reference Table 1 (above) in order to find how much experience must be spent. In this case, it requires 12 Experience Points to advance. This is the number listed under rating 3 on Experience Table 1, which is the table used for advancing Core Attributes.

All "Mortal" characters are limited to a maximum attribute score of 15, plus or minus the natural modifier to the attribute for the race of the character. For example, a Giant has a Strength modifier of +2, so a character that is a Giant would have a maximum mortal Strength Core Attribute of 17. Without the character advancing to become an "Immortal" character and / or without an attribute being modified in some other fashion, the mortal maximum is the highest Core Attribute a character may achieve.

Experience Table 2: Skills and Spells

Rating	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Experience	10	3	4	5	7	9	11	13	15	17	19

Rating	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Experience	21	24	27	30	33	36	39	42	45	48

Rating	21	22	23	24	25+
Experience	51	54	56	58	60

Skills: (Experience Table 2)

Skills are the character's ability to apply knowledge through any physical and/or mental means available to the individual. Skills represent the application of a character's attributes using life knowledge (i.e. attempting to lift a boulder is a use of the Strength attribute, but to throw it accurately is a skill). Simply put, if an action is not magic and the testing of an action can't be covered by one of the Core Attributes, or any other attribute, then it is the character's "Skill" pertaining to that which is being tested. See "Skills & Using Skills". Skill ratings have no limit to how high they may go. Rating points must be individually purchased for each and every skill.

Generally speaking, a character cannot "learn" a new Skill without being taught it in some fashion. For this reason, in order to learn Level 1 in a new Skill, besides needing to spend the necessary Experience Points, a character will need a teacher or means of education to learn the basics of the new Skill. Some Skills, however, the Realm Master may deem the character is able to self educate through practice. Once level 1 in the Skill has been acquired, the character is able to advance their skill further simply by spending the Experience Points needed to gain the next level of proficiency.

Spells: (Experience Table 2)

Spells are the use of mystical energies to accomplish a desired effect. Each desired "effect" must be learned by the spelltwister as a separate spell. Every spell cast will require the use of Spell Points (See Spells & Spell Casting). If a character does not have the required Spell Points to cast a spell, then the spell cannot be cast.

Like Skills, new Spells can be difficult to learn by the character without help, especially for characters with limited worldly experience at creating new spells. It should not be considered impossible for the character to create a new Spell by themself without aid, but if they have created none to very few new Spells on their own so far, it should require a significant amount of time to create and then test the functionality of the new Spell until they can be considered to have it working reliably enough for them to effectively use it as intended.

Learning a new Spell that is actually an existing spell already known to someone else (either thru reading or by way of it being taught to them by another spelltwister), is considered to be a much easier task. Either way, the character must spend the necessary Experience Points to acquire the new Spell, but the difference between inventing your own unique spell or simply learning an existant spell can be from a few hours to a few months.

Experience Table 3: Weapon Masteries & Special

Rating	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Experience	8	17	29	45	70	110	160	220	290

Rating	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Experience	370	460	560	670	790	920	1060

Rating	16	17	18	19+
Experience	1210	1370	1540	1800

Weapon Masteries: (Experience Table 3)

These are skills which involve wielding weapons with greater than average proficiency. A separate rating must be learned for each and every weapon that is to be mastered. Weapon Masteries are then added directly to the three combat attributes of **Initiatve**, **Dodging** and **Attack Level**. This makes Weapon Masteries very powerful, but they are also among the hardest skill sets to advance within the game.

In addition to adding the Weapon Mastery Level to the three above mentioned combat attributes, on any Attack or Defense roll of "6" rolled in combat indicates that a character not only receives the "standard" open ended bonus D6, but also receives additional, non-open ended D6 for each level of the Weapon Mastery. A Weapon Mastery rating may not exceed the character's Dexterity Adjustment (Weapon Mastery Level 1 is always allowed regardless of character's Dexterity).

Dodging Bonus: (Experience Table 3)

A character's base Dodging attribute is equal to their Dexterity plus their Awareness Adjustment with the Weapon Mastery Level of the weapon in use. This rating is further adjusted by any Dodge Adjustment ratings from the weapons, armor and/or other equipment the character is using/wearing.

Base Dodge = (Dex + Awareness Adjust. + Weapon Mastery Level) Adjust for weapons, armor and equipment in use.

A character may buy Dodging Bonus points with Experience Points. Dodging Bonus points are purchased using Experience Table #3. Dodging Bonus Points are then added to the character's Base Dodge. A character can have a maximum Dodging Bonus equal to their Dexterity Adjustment.

Initiative Bonus: (Experience Table 3)

Initiative is the means we use to measure how fast a character can act in combat. For this purpose, a higher score is better. A character with a high enough score will be able to take more than one action in a turn. A character's base Initiative is their Dexterity Adjustment plus their Awareness Adjustment plus either their Weapon Mastery level (if they are using a weapon) or their Intelligence Adjustment (if they are casting a spell).

Base Initiative = (Dex Adjust + Awareness Adjust + WM or Intel Adjust)

A character's Base Initiative can also be adjusted by the weapons, armor and other equipment they are using or wearing.

A character may buy Initiative Bonus points with Experience Points. Initiative Bonus points are purchased using Experience Table #3. Initiative Bonus points are then added to the character's Base Initiative. A character can have a maximum Initiative Bonus equal to the lesser of their Dexterity Adjustment and their Awareness Adjustment.

Ambidexterity: (Experience Table 3)

Ambidexterity is the unique ability of learning how to use your strong hand and your weak hand equaly well and both at the same time. Almost everyone is typically born with a strong hand; and for most people, that is their right hand. A character with the Ambidexterity skill would learn how to use both hands with equal skill at the same time, most often applied in the form of wielding two weapons at once. See "Combat" in the

Realm Mastering section for complete details on how this skill works. A character cannot raise their Ambidexterity skill above their Dexterity Adjustment.

Magic Smithing: (Experience Table 3)

This is the ability of creating mystical items. See "Spells & Spell Casting" for full details on the Magic Smithing skill. A character's Magic Smithing level has a maximum equal to the lesser of their Intelligence Adjustment and Awareness Adjustment.

Permanent Magical Smithing: (Special)

This skill is much like that of Magic Smithing except the magic being placed into the item is permanent (see "Spells & Spell Casting" for full details). A character must have a rating of 6 in Magic Smithing before any ratings may be learned in Permanent Magical Effects. The experience required to advance ratings in this ability are double that listed for Experience Table 3. i.e., to go from level 2 to 3 would cost 58 Experience Points.

The Fortunate: (Special)

The Fortunate is both a bit of skill and a bit of a special power or form of divine blessing, depending on how you want to look at it. The Fortunate is the skill of acquiring unusual luck. Each point a character has in this ability allows them to the power of a Luck Point once per day without actually expending a Luck Point. So, a character with a Skill Level of 4 in The Fortunate would thus recieve 4 free usages of Luck Points each day, though any points that do not get used in a day do NOT carry over to be used in future days.

The Experience required to advance ratings in this ability are double that listed for Experience Table 3 (i.e., to go from level 3 to 4 would cost 90 Experience Points). In addition, when first buying into this skill, a set 20 Experience Points must be spent prior to paying the normal Experience Points needed to acquire Level 1. Having The Fortunate as a skill in no way limits a character from being able to purchase or expend regular Luck Points.

Hit Points: (Special)

A character can purchase Hit Points to raise their maximum number of Hit Points. A Hit Point can be purchased with 5 Experience Points. Whenever experience is spent to gain a Hit Point, the character has a chance to gain one or more additional Hit Points for free, with that chance based upon the character's Health Adjustment (see Page 6: Core Attribute Adjustment Ratings).

Hit Points gained are always additions to the character's Maximum Hit Point total. When gained they will add Hit Points both to their Maximum Hit Point total and their current Hit Point total.

Once a character reaches a Maximum Hit Point total of 200, the cost to buy additional Hit Points raises to 10 Experience per Hit Point purchased.

Example:

Dorf spends 5 Experience Points to go from 9 hit points to 10. His Health attribute is 7, making his Health Adjustment a 2. Thus a roll of 1 or 2 on the 6 sided die earns Dorf 2 Hit Point instead of just 1.

Spell Points: (Special)

Spell Points are used to cast spells. The number of Spell Points required to cast each spell is defined by the design elements of each spell (See Spells & Spell Casting).

A character may raise their Maximum Spell Point total by buying additional points with Experience. A Spell Point may be purchased with 4 Experience Points. Whenever experience is spent to gain a Spell Point, the character has a chance to gain one or more additional Spell Points for free. The chance to gain additional Spell Points is based on the character's Intelligence Adjustment.

Luck Points: (Special)

Additional Luck Points may be purchased for 4 Experience Points. When purchasing a Luck Point, the character may recieve bonus Luck Points based on their Awareness Adjustment.

Step 6: Equipment:

Money and Valuables:

Each character starts with 65 money. Use whatever money system you prefer: gold, silver, dollars, rocks, bottle caps, etc. With money, the characters may buy weapons, armor, shields and other items. During the course of play, characters will have the opportunity to gain more money with which to purchase additional items, weapons, etc.

Special Metal Types (see page 16) are metals often used for their special properties and ability to make stronger weapons and armor. These special metals are often valued as money as well. Their monetary value is typically the value of one gold piece (or whatever money standard you are using) multiplied by their cost modifier.

Weapons & Armor:

Each item has 4 listings in the tables below. They are: Attack or Defense Level, Initiative Adjustment, Dodge Adjustment and Cost. Additionally, weapons and shields will have a listing that tells how many hands (1 or 2) are needed to use that item.

Attack Level: The offensive power of a weapon. This is a part of a character's base Attack Level.

Defense Level: The defensive protection an armor or piece of protective gear affords its wearer. This is a part of a character's base Defense Level.

Initiative Adjustment: This is the modifier that using the weapon or wearing the armor will apply to the character's Initiative.

Dodge Adjustment: This is the adjustment to a character's Dodge Attribute when using the weapon or wearing armor.

Cost: This is the average cost to purchase the item at a retail establishment. This cost may vary widely from place to place depending on an item's usefulness or scarcity. It should be noted that most items are made to a particular size where that is the most common size for the most common races in the area. So, for instance, if Humans or standard sized races are the most common in an area then most weapons and armor will be made an appropriate size for them. Larger-sized and small-sized weapons and armor will be more rare and therefore cost more money. Larger-sized items will typically cost an additional amount more due to the need for greater amounts of metal or other material needed to construct them.

Fixing Damaged Weapons & Armor: Weapons and armor can be damaged in battle. For a weapon this often means that it becomes cracked or even broken in half and largely unusable. For armor, the first damage done to it may simply reduce its Defense Level by 1, though additional damage may eventually render it useless. Broken weapons typically cannot be repaired, or repairing them cost as much (if not more than) buying a new one. Armor often can be repaired, with the cost relative to the damage it sustained. Fixing armor can range in cost from a mere 10% of its original cost right up to about 90%.

Caring for Weapons and Armor: Adventurers often collect a great deal of wealth thru their journeys and a part of that wealth is their most valued weapons, armor and other vital travelling gear. Very often an adventurer will learn the necessary skills to keep their armor kept in good condition, their swords sharpened and leather travelling bags oiled and protected against the elements. Should a charactrer chose to acquire such a skill, even at a most basic level, a Realm Master should allow them to tend to the equipment and keep it in nice condition.

Characters that do not have such a skill will slowly see their items and equipment degrade and become less functional or perhaps break or simply fall apart. They can usually find craftsmen in most major settlements that will be willing to perform upkeep on their equipment for a modest fee.

Armors List

Armor	Defense Level	Initiative Adjust	Dodge Adjust	Cost
Hides/Skins	1	0	0	8
Leather Armor	2	0	-1	14
Chain Jerkin	3	-1	-1	20
Full Chain	4	-2	-2	35
Banded Mail	5	-3	-3	55
Plate Mail	6	-4	-4	80

Weapon List

Weapon	Attack Level	Hands	Initiative Adjust	Dodge Adjust	Cost
Dagger	1	1	0	0	5
Staff	1	2	1	1	5*
Lance	2	2	-2	1	12
Hand Axe	2	1	-1	0	11
Mace	2	1	-1	0	10
Short Sword	2	1	-1	0	11
Spear	2	1	0	1	8
Long Sword	3	1	-2	-1	23
Bastard Sword	4	2	-3	-2	30
Battle Axe	4	3	-3	-2	33
Horseman Lance	4	1	-3	-1	30
Giant Sword	5	2	-4	-3	45
Great Axe	5	2	-4	-2	55

*A staff also provides its wielder with a +1 to defense.

Shields

Shield	Defense Lv	Hands	Initiative Adjust	Dodge Adjust	Cost
Buckler	1	1	0	0	7
Medium	2	1	-1	-2	16
Full Body	4	2	-3	-5	30

Ranged Weapons:

Weapon	Attack Level	Hands	Initiative Adj	Dodge Adj	Range	Cost
Long Bow	4	2	-4	1	180'	28
Short Bow	2	2	-1	1	55'	15
Cross Bow	5	2	+2/-5	1	80'	23

A Quiver can hold up to 25 arrows or bolts and cost 5 money. Arrows and cross bolts cost 4 money per dozen. A crossbow has an initative bonus if it begins a combat round pre-loaded, otherwise it has an initiative negative.

Non Combat Equipment:

Gear and Services	Cost	Animals:	Cost
Dry Rations (1 week)	5	Riding Horse	50 (Att 0, Def 1, HP 10, D 0, I 1)
Tinder Box	2	Medium Horse	75 (Att 0, Def 1, HP 16, D 0, I 1)
War Horse Armor (Def 3)	45	War Horse	1000 (Att 3, Def 1, HP 20, D 0, I 1)
Rope 50'	3	Dog	15 (Att 2, Def 0, HP 4, D 3, I 3)
First Aid Kit	3	Hawk	1000 (Att 2, Def 0, HP 2, D 5, I 5)
Stabling Fees (per day)	3	Elephant	3500 (Att 6, Def 2, HP 35, D 0, I 0)
Meals (per meal)	2-5	Tiger	1500 (Att 5, Def 1, HP 20, D 2, I 3)
Lodging (per night)	2-10	Pegasus	7000 (Att 0, Def 1, HP 16, D 1, I 2)

—(Att=Attack Level, Def=Defense Level, HP=Hit Points, D=Dodge, I=Initiative)—

Special Metals Table

Metal	LV Adjust	Cost Mod.	Special Features
Wood/Leathers	0	x1	Must be protected from elements (water) or will degrade fairly rapidly.
Iron	0	x1	Will rust and degrade over time if not kept from too much exposure to water.
Bronze	+1	x4	A heavy metal. Weapons will have a -1 Initiative Adjust and Armor a -2.
Steel (basic)	+2	x10	
Baby Dragon Scale	+2	x25	Mending Level 1, Magic Supression Zone of 10'.
Vulcanite	+3	x30	Jet black color. Foes are -1 to Dodge Vulcanite weapons in dark surroundings.
Saber	+3	x30	Illuminous. Project bright lights from 5 feet to 60 feet, depending on volume of metal.
Steel (medium)	+4	x60	
Antion	+4	x80	Energy Absorption. Absorbs LV 5 if a weapon or Level 10 if armor. Light red color.
Mind Material	+4	x100	Power with mystic energy. Spend 5 Spell Pts, get Intelligence Adjust as LV bonus.
Illion	+4	x80	Energy Reflection. Reflects all energy based contact or weapons. Puke green in color.
Force	+5	x200	If forged by LV 10 smith, 99% invisible. Weapons -4 to Dodge against.
Adryiate (Steel High)	+5	x175	
Diamond/Crystal	+6	x450	Can only be smithed by magic. Can be data storage device by hi-tech societies.
Adult Dragon Scale	+6	x700	Mending LV 5, Magic Supression Zone of 25'.
Duralium	+6	x400	Deep Orange in color. Dissipates any amount of radtion up to 30'.
Lectron	+7	x1500	"Wizards' Curse". Magic Dead Zone of 5' per pound of the metal. Black color.
Star Material	+7	x1100	Crumble LV 6 for weapons, Level 10 for armor. Dull yellow in color.
Zionic	+8	x3000	Non-Organic Deterioration LV 25 with contact. Tan in color.
Ashen	+9	x4000	Blood Red color. (Embedded with Angel & Demon Blood). Bane to Angels & Demons.
Chipsian	+10	x5000	Bright pink in color. Organic Deterioration LV 25 with contact.
Ancient Dragon Scale	+11	x7000	Mending LV 10, Magic Supression Zone of 100'.
Qualin	+12 +	x8000 +	"God's Bane". Embedded with god's blood. See below.
Space Dragon Scale	+14	x10000	Mending LV 25. Magic Supression Zone 1000'.

Special Metal Types:

The universe is a massive place and among it there are many different metals and elements that can be used to forge into weapons and armor. Some of these will have unique and special properties, others will simply be stronger than others and make stronger swords, armor, etc. Each metal type and its adjustment to a weapon or armor's Attack/Defense Level is detailed on the following page. Under no circumstance will the level bonus from a Special Metal be greater than the Attack Level of the weapon (or armor) itself without the Special Metal bonus. Hence, a Great Axe with an Attack Level of 5 would only get a +5 extra bonus if it were made out of Star Material, in spite of the the level bonus of Star Material being a 7. All other special properties of the special metal would still apply.

Wood/Leathers:
Not actually a "metal" type, but substances that can be used to make weapons and armor to wear. These items are soft and will be more likely to be destroyed in combat. Wooden swords, while they can be made sharp, are easy to break or cut and leather armors are cut more easily by sharp weapons. Wooden objects subject to too much water will rot and leathers will soften to be point of offering no protection. Characters using items made out of these substances should expect to need to replace them semi-regularly if they see a lot of combat.

Iron:
The most basic of metals that can be used to forge weapons and armor. Weapons and armor are automatically assumed to be made of either Iron or wood/leather at their most basic Attack and Defense Levels. If the metal type of an object is not stated, then the item is made out wood, iron or leather and the Attack or Defense Levels of the item shall be as listed on the weapons and armor tables shown on the previous page. Items made of stronger materials will get a bonus to their Attack and Defense Levels equal to the special metal bonus listed on the table above.

Example:
A iron or wooden longsword would have an Attack Level of 3 (see weapons table on the previous page). That same longsword made out of Bronze would get a +1 Attack Level added the sword's base of 3, making it an Attack Level 4 weapon. If the sword were made of Saber it would get a +3 bonus and be an Attack Level 6 weapon.

Steel (Basic):
Steel alloys can have a wide variety of strengths depending on what combination of things are used to construct them. Theory says there could be steels with a special metal strength at each and every level bonus, depending on the society making the steel. Only 3 steel types (basic, medium and high) are listed on the chart above to represent a place holder for basic levels of steel making technology. Basic would be fairly low level technology at the most basic steel making; medium would represent a more modern society and some more advanced steel making knowledge; and Adryiate (Steel, High) representing futuristic space faring levels of forging technology.

Dragonscale:
While organiclly grown, dragonscales come from the hides of dragons, have a composition much like a metal and can be forged and reshaped into weapons and armor. Dragonscale has the power of "Mending", a semi-magical ability to self heal.

Mending:
Mending at Level 1 can heal one cubic inch worth of damaged structure per hour, healing outward from each point of damage. Thusly, a platemale suit with a large 2 inch wide gash thru the chest, but made out of Baby Dragonscale (Mending 1) would fully heal itself within 1 hours time. Each "Level" of the Mend ing power is a speed multiplier above this base rate. Ala, Mend-

ing Level 10 would self heal 10 cubic inches outward from each edge where there had been damage. So a piece of armor shattered into a thousand smaller pieces would eventually reform itself back into a fully-intact, fully-functional and undamaged suit of armor. If an item with Mending is broken into more than one piece, the Mending ability will stay with the largest surviving piece, no matter how small, but all other smaller surviving pieces will not receive the Mending ability.

Because Dragonscales have Mending and come in a fixed form, early attempts at forging them into different items always failed, as they would always reshape themselves back into the form of a dragonscale. Eventually smiths learned that if they forged Dragonscale into a sword, axe, piece of armor, etc, then left it molded into that shape for a long time (often months), the Dragonscale substance would eventually adapt to the new shape and its mending power would cease trying to revert its shape back into a dragonscale. Instead, the Mending power would then apply to the new shape. It is because of this extreme length of time that items made of Dragonscale must always cost more, not just for their properties, but for the difficulty and cost of forging the substance into different items. Items forged from Space Dragonscale, due to its powerful Mending, must often be left in molds for years or even decades before the Dragonscale will finally adapt to their new shape.

Dragonscales also project a Magic Supression Field a distance out from themselves. That distance will depend on the age of the Dragon that the Dragonscales came from. This Magic Supression Field will prevent any mortal spells from being cast within the field and terminate any spell or temporary magical affects currently running. The suppression field cannot, however, limit the magical ability of permanent magical affects embedded into items. Hence, a spelltwister trying to cast a fireball would have their spell fizzle and do nothing inside the Magic Supression Field or if the spell were cast outside the field but its affect projected into one; but a suit of armor magic smithed with the permanent magical ability of (lets say) Mending, would retain that power. Additionally, a Magic Supression Field cannot "undo" changes made to people or objects caused by magic, but where the changes have been completed and are not being sustained by an active magic.. For instance, if you had been wounded and the pary cleric had cast a healing spell on you which healed your wounds right away, then later that day you came inside the influence of a Magic Supression zone, your wounds previously "healed" would not suddenly "unheal". The magic that healed you had come and gone, doing its thing, and had long since running as an active magic.

Vulcanite:
Simply a harder material. When forged and kept properly polished, this metal is pitch black in color. Persons wearing armor made out of this material will be extremely difficult to see in the dark; and if someone is fighting someone armed with a Vulcanite weapon in the dark, the defender will be -1 to all attempts at Dodging attacks made against that weapon.

Saber:
Saber Material is a harder metal that has a natural illuminous quality to it. As little as a few coins would light up several feet around those coins while an amount needed to make a sword would likely illuminate an area as much as 15-20 feet away. Enough for a suit of armor and, well, it will pretty much seem like high noon on a sunny day from 40-60 feet outward from that armor.

Antion:
Antion has the natural ability to absorb and contain electrical charges like a battery. Truly small objects could hold small electrical currents similar to

batteries. Swords or other weapon sized items could can absorb up to Level 5 currents and larger objects like armor can absorb currents up to Level 10. These levels represent the maximum current that the metal can absorb at one time. Actual storage capacity of the metal is at least 100 times its maximum absorbption rate. Energy absorbed by Antion is generally safe to humans in contact with the metal. It takes a particular wire or crystaline connection to the metal to draw upon its stored energy.

Mind Material:
Mind Material is a metal that can get stronger with mystical stimulation. A character using a weapon or wearing armor made out of Mind Material can spend 5 Spell Points to stimulate the metal. When done the Mind Material will get a bonus to Attack or Defense Level equal to the character's Intelligence Adjustment. This bonus shall last approximately 1 hour.

Other magics that come into contact with Mind Material can also cause the metal to become temporarily enhanced. For eample: someone casting a spell upon the metal itself or upon a person in possession of the material. The bonus the metal would receive would be roughly 1/3rd of the spell level of the magic it came into contact with. The duration of this effect would still be about 1 hour. Mind Material is naturally a light brown in color but changes to a deep brown when mystically charged.

Illion:
Illion is a metal impervious to any form of energy. Laser, Blaster and other forms of energy-based attacks will always reflect off Illion upon contact with it (having no impact on the Illion), but also not diminishing the strength of the energy at all. Due to its resistence to energy, Illion also cannot be instilled with any Magic nor have any magic cast upon it.

Force:
Force is a semi translucent material that, when forged my a master craftmen, can be made 99% invisible. It takes a blacksmith of Level 10 skill or above to properly work Force material to make it nearly invisible. Persons wearing Force armor properly-smithed will appear not to be wearing any armor at all. Only a very close inspection of the person wearing the armor would allow them to notice a rough outline of the armor. A foe trying to dodge any weapon made out of properly-smithed Force Material will get a -4 to dodge that attack.

Diamond / Crystal:
Diamonds or other similarly hard crystaline substances can be very hard and can make excellent weapons and armor, but they are almost impossible to forge using conventional methods. It requires either a very advanced technological society or magic to craft these substances into items or weapons of any use.

Crystaline structures such as these are capable of holding a great deal of electronic data, but it generally requires fairly sophisticated technology to know how to put data on or take data off the structure.

Duralium:
Duralium is a deep orange color. Duralium dissipates any mount of radiation. Even the smallest amount of Duralium will render all radiation harmless for a range of 30'. For this reason, in many space faring settings and less advance societies where solar radtion may influence parts of the world, Duralium is sought after as a means of protection. The metal will be made into small coins or trinkets so they be carried for protection against radiation.

Lectron:
Most often known as "Wizard's Curse", Lectron is a strong metal that projects a Magic Dead zone of 5' for every pound of the metal clustered together. The Magic Dead zone caused by Lectron is greater than the Magic Supression zone of Dragonscale. The Magic Dead zone does everything that a Magic Supression zone does, but also prevents any magics from permanent magical items as well. Additionally, magical items with "charges" in them that fall inside a Lectron's Magic Dead Zone will lose all of their charges.

Thus far, all know attempts at blending Lectron with other metals to create a steel compound have failed. Other metals don't want to bond with Lectron. This had made it difficult to utilize the small amounts of Lectron in ciculation towards larger scale projects like ships, buildings, etc.

Star Material:
Star Material is a rare heavy metal that is forged inside the corona of stars. It is generally only harvested by highly advanced civilizations with technology capable of making ships able to survive time inside stars. On rare occasion, small amounts of Star Material survives a supernova and can be found in space or even on planets or astroids that form in the supernova's wake.

Star Material resonates an ultra-sonic wave of energy that essentially rapidly vibrates anything that it comes into contact with. For softer objects with a soft or flexible structure, the impact of contact with Star Material is lessoned or negated entirely. But objects with greater density and rigid structures are likely to crumble apart due to the exposure. The larger the volume of Star Material the greater the strength of the resonate vibration. In general, a sword or axe-sized item will have a Crumble power of Level 6 and a suit of armor would have a Crumble power of Level 10. Larger objects will have greater Crumble effects.

Zionic:
Whenever this metal comes into contact with non-organic substances, it causes them to rapidly break down on a molecular level. This effect is called "Deterioration" and Zionic's Deterioration Level is 25. This equates to roughly 1 cubic inch of deterioration per level per round of contact.

To determine the ability of an object to resist deterioraton, simply find its own level and roll that level plus 1D6 (open ended) against Zionic's Level 25 Deterioration plus 1D6 (also open ended). Zionic's ability to deteriorate an object ceases when direct contact ends.

Ashen:
Ashen is an alternate form of Adryiate (steel) that is forged together with both angel blood and demon blood. This combination gives Ashen a blood-red color. Ashen weapons have both angel and demon blood; this means that whenever such a weapon does damage to either an angel or demon it does that much damage times two.

Chipsian:
Chipsian is almost the exact opposite of Zionic. It is an even stronger metal and far, far more dangerous. Chipsian has a Deterioration ability of Level 25 against Organic materials. This makes it extremely deadly for anyone to wield weapons made out of the stuff, as it can be as dangerous to its user as the foe it would be struck against. There have been tales of crazy people actually finding a means to smith weapons made out of a mixture of both Chipsian and Zionic, but it would be almost impossible to wield by anyone or anything without suffering its effects. Not to mention that the Chipsian material itself would naturally deteriorate when blended with the Zionic unless somehow magically prevented from doing so.

Qualin:
Qualin is the rarest of materials and can be wildly different each time that it is found. No one knows quite which materials comprise the physical components to Qualin, but most people suspect they are of far less importance than the supernatural elements. What makes Qualin so rare that it can not be made at all, except by an Overlord (a god) and even then without the Overlord themselves sacrificing a part of their power to create it.

Just to be able to create Qualin, the smith must be an Overlord and have a Blacksmithing skill of Level 25 or more and a Permanent Magic Smithing skill of Level 6 or greater. No less than two Overlords must willingly let their blood be added into the creation of the Qualin, plus each Overlord must forever surrender one or more Essence Points (see the Power Mongers section later in this book) to embed that Essence into the metal. The minimum Essence that needs to be surrendered is 1 point per contributing Overlord, which will give the Qualin its base attack/defense bonus of +12. However, for every two additional Essence Points (in total, not each) surrendered by the Overlords, the Qualin will get a Level bonus of +1 above its base of +12.

Qualin naturally has both Immportal and Overlord bane properties. This means when a Qualin weapon does damage to either an Immportal or an Overlord, double the damage dealt. The material has a Mending Level equal to the number of Essence Points embedded into it at the time of creation, plus it has half that number of Essence Points itself, which can be used each day by the wearer/user of the Qualin item. See the Power Monger section for an overview on Immortals, Overlords and Essence.

Qualin has no set color and actually looks a bit like a swirling vortex, with lighting, color and even phsyical substance seeming to be in a state of constant fluxx.

Step 7: Character Backgrounds:

The players should now invent a history for their character. This should include things such as place of birth, family, and any other important peoples from their childhood and more recent past. Players are encouraged to create full and rich histories for their characters so the Realm Master can use that information as a source to provide the character both friends and ties to the world being played in, potential foes and problems from the character's past.

Keep an eye out for the sourcebook "Character Backgrounds" for a guide to building rich (and/or random) complete character backgrounds.

Overview of Combat:

Ok, so if you have been paying attention so far, we have been detailing all of the attributes, skills and other factors that comprise all of the relevant figures you will need to be able to resolve armed conflicts in the Dark Realms game system. Below will be a quick run-down on everything plus a few extra bits that should let you resolve attacks, defenses and combat overall.

Attack Level:

A character's or creature's general "attack" rating. The higher the number the more powerful the attack. An Attack Level is comprised of:

1) A Weapon's Attack Level (Weapon + Special Metal Bonus)
2) A character's Strength Adjustment (or Dex Adjustment for particular weapons)
3) The wielder's Weapon Mastery Level skill with the weapon.

Defense Level:

A character's Defense Level is comprised of two elements:

1) The armor and other defensive gear they are wearing (Armor + Special Metal Bonus)
2) The character's Awareness Adjustment.

Initiative:

This is the speed at which a character can act. It also determines if a character is fast enough to be able to take two or more actions in a single turn instead of just 1. A character's Initiative is comprised of:

1) Base Initiative is Dex Adjustment + Awareness Adjustment.
2) Weapon Mastery level they have with their weapon.
3) Intelligence Adjustment instead of weapon mastery if the character is casting a spell instead.
4) Initiative Skill Bonus.
5) Initiative modifiers from weapons, armor and other gear being used.

Dodging:

A character's ability to avoid attacks against them. A character's Dodging ability is based on:

1) Dexterity (full attribute) + Awareness Adjustment.
2) Weapon Mastery Level of a weapon being used.
3) Dodging Bonus Skill points.
4) Dodging modifier from weapons, armor and equipment.

Hit Points:

The amount of damage a character or creature can take before being knocked unconscious. When Hit Points are listed for a creature or character the number given is assumed to be their "Maximum Hit Points". As they take damage or if they had taken damage from a previous encounter and not had time to heal from it, this number will be lower. This lower number is considered their "Current Hit Points".

Spell Points:

A character's "magical strength" or ability to channel mystical energies into the form of spells. These are like Hit Points and the total given assumes it is their "Maximum Spell Points", but (when used for the day) the lesser amount they may have is their "Current Spell Points".

Luck:

At any time a character may use a Luck point (gone forever) to force a re-roll of any die roll. They can have one of their die rolls be re-rolled, one of their friends or one of their enemies'. Of course, the dangerous side of Luck is sometimes the foes will have them to use also.

Movement:

A character's ability to move on the battlefield. Generally, this is equal to their Dexterity score. A character is assumed to "occupy" a 5 foot by 5 foot square around themselves in combat. Each point of movement would be a movement of 5 feet (one square).

Ambidexterity:

Mentioned earlier, this is where a character can learn to use both their strong hand and their weak hand equally well and gain the ability to utilize more than one weapon in combat. This is a difficult skill to learn, but a potent one. Ambidexterity skill helps a character to offset the typical "penalties" applied to their Attack Levels when trying to wield more than one weapon in combat.

Multi-Weapon Use Penalties:

Typically this is something few people can do and even few people can do well; but there is nothing stopping one from trying, even if it is often unwise. Without the Ambidexterity skill, the following penalties apply when wielding more than one weapon:

1) Both weapons being used must be single handed weapons.

2) The larger of the two weapons will be considered to be held by the character's dominant hand and be the "primary" weapon. The other weapon will be the secondary one.

3) The character gets a -1 to Dodging. This is in addition to any Dodge penalties that would apply from each weapon.

4) The character is -3 to Initiative with the primary weapon and -6 to Initiative with the secondary weapon. This is in addition to any Initiative penalties that would apply from each weapon.

5) The character is -2 Attack Level with the primary weapon and -4 to Attack Level with the secondary weapon.

6) Yes, if they have 3 or more arms, there can be multiple "Secondary Weapons".

7) The character receives no Weapon Mastery bonus they would otherwise recieve with both of the weapons being used.

When a character has the Ambidexterity skill each point in this skill reduces one of the penalty points to each weapon otherwise given to Initiative and Attack Levels. Additionally, at Level 1 with Ambidexterity the character no longer receives the -1 Dodge penalty.

The character will still find it difficult to utilize their Weapon Masteries, but not impossible. With each weapon, the character will be able to use 1 level of their Weapon Mastery skill with that weapon for each level of Ambidexterity skill they have; Up to their maximum Weapon Mastery skill, of course.

Steps to Combat:

Step 1: Initiative:

All characters, creatures, mosters, etc that would act this turn must roll for Initiative. For each, roll 1D6 (open ended) and add the result to their Initiative score. Remember that "Open Ended" means if they roll a "6", keep that result and then roll another 1D6 and keep doing so until they stop rolling a "6", add all dice roll results to the Initiative score.

The character or creature with the highest score will get to make the first action/attack. If someone gets a result that is 20 or more, they will get to take an additional action. A result of 40 or more a 3rd action, 60 or more a 4th action, etc, etc.

If someone were to get a 24 as a total Initiative roll, then they would get 2 attacks or actions (henceforth just called attacks). Their first attack would go on 24, then counting downward thru slower peoples' initiatives and actions, the character's second attack would go on 4 (each subsequent action is 20 points slower than the one before it until an action would be at zero. If it were below zero, no additional actions would be allowed).

Step 2: Movement:

A character may both move and then also attack or cast a spell, but moving before taking an action will affect the character's Initiative. For each point of movement a character would move, reduce their Initiative result by 2 points. For instance, using that Initiative result of 24 from above, let's say the character had a Dexterity of 7 which also translates into a movement of 7. If the character opted to move and go all 7 squares, it would reduce their Initiative result of 24 down to just 10 (24 less (7 x 2)). This means their attack would actually go "on 10" rather than 24 so anyone with an Initiative result of greater than 10 would actually get to take their action first (unless those person also then used movement that would then lower their Initiaive to below 10). A secondary result of the character having moved and their Initiative having lowered to below 20 is that they would no longer have sufficient Initiative to be able to take two actions.

It is also possible to move after doing one or more actions; however, each action used is assumed to use up 20 Initiative, so movement would only be possible if the character had Initiative remaining after doing those actions.

Step 3: Attack:

Once it is a player's turn to act, they can do pretty much anything the player would like them to try. In a combat sequence, this is known as their attack phase, though it does not need to be an "attack". A character could cast a spell, attack the opponent or do any of a thousand different actions the player might concieve. Should they know a spell and want to cast one, they should do it now (see Spells and Spell Casting for how this is done). If they opt to do an attack, then the player must be within 1 square (5') of of their target, move to become within 5' of their target or be in possession of some sort of ranged weapon that can shoot far enough to hit the target. If an attack is possible, determine what weapon is to be used and the character's attack level with it, then roll 1D6 (open ended) and add the result to the Attack Level. If the character has Weapon Masteries with the weapon in use and the initial 1D6 die result was a "6", then roll and extra D6 for each level of the Weapon Mastery, though these extra dice are not open ended.

Step 4: Dodge:

The target of an attack has the potential to avoid that attack by Dodging it. Dodging is a combination of avoiding an attack, blocking the attack or even managing to put something in between themselves and the attack to prevent it from hitting them. A character (or creature) may attempt to dodge a limited number of times per turn, with that number equal to their Dexterity Adjustment. Given this limitation, the target of an attack must decide whether they will try to dodge an attack or save that attempt to try dodging a different attack instead. If they attempt to Dodge, roll 1D6 (open ended) and add it to their Dodge rating. If the total result is higher than the Attack Level of the attack, then the Dodge was successful and the attack missed. If the result is a tie, then the Dodge has failed but the defender will recieve a +3 bonus to their Defense Level. A character may only use one Dodge attempt per attack against them.

Should the character see a very powerful (ala, potentially very deadly) attack coming thier way (a high Attack Level), they may give up all additional Dodge attempts this turn and skip their next action to add an additional 1D6 (open ended) to their Dodge roll in a desperate attempt to avoid the deathly blow.

Step 5: Defense Level:

If an attack has "hit" a defender, either by way of them opting not to Dodge or failing in a Dodge attempt, then we must move on to see if the attack will do any damage to the defender. The defender now rolls for defense. They roll 1D6 (open ended) and add the result to their Defense Level. If they rolled a "6" on that defense roll and if they own Weapon Mastery skill levels in a weapon they are using, also roll 1D6 (not open ended) for each level of the Weapon Mastery skill and add those results to the result.

Compare the overall Attack Level against the overall Defense Level. Subtract the Defense Level from the Attack Level. If the number that remains is still a positive one, then that number is the number of Hit Points in damage the attack has dealt to the defender. That many Hit Points are removed from the defender's "Current Hit Point Total".

Movement, Zone of Control and other Fiddly Bits:

Generally speaking, an Epic Adventure Game is a game of ideas and a game of thought. It requires no game board and is not a board game. It is entirely possible to play the game without any visual aids whatsoever. The Realm Master's descriptions of events, locations, distances and the overal surroundings for the players needs no "help". That said, there are a few cool little things that could be used as visual aids and could assist in illustrating the details of combat a bit more.

Battle Mats:

A battle mat can be used to draw the landscape being illustrated by the Realm Master's descriptions of things and events. It is best if a battle mat was gridded so that each square in the grid can represent a 5 foot square zone each player occupies in battle. Gridded paper can be used, regular paper can be used and have the grids drawn upon it or even fancy vynil type battle mats that are dry and wet erasable.

Movement options on a battle mat: If you were a character in position "A", on the example below, you could move into any of the 8 possible squares surrounding your square as a normal movement point.

Sample Battle Mat Grid

	1	2	3	
	8	A	4	
	7	6	5	

Figurines or Markers:

There exists a wide array of different figurines, miniatures, tokens and other accessories you can use to populate the battle mat. These are tools that you use to represent each character, non player character, creature, etc on the battle mat so as to mark their location and relative distance from each other.

Zone of Control: Zone of Control is a concept that suggests that a character has some influence not only over the immediate space they are occupying, but also over the space around them. A person is considered to have entered another person's "Zone of Control" when they enter into a square next to a foe. In combat, this has two affects:

1) If someone is moving and moves into a foe's zone of control and attempts to move out of that zone of control in the same turn, the foe will get a free physical action or attack against that someone. By free, I mean this action or attack will not take away from that character's number of actions, affect their Initiative score in any way, etc.

2) Moving out of a foe's zone of control will consume 1 extra movement point.

Flank or Rear:

Generally speaking, a character must be facing a particular direction. It is typically assumed you are facing towards the object or creature that was the focus of your last action or attack, unless otherwise stated by a player. When facing a direction, on a battle mat, this means that you will have 5 squares in your sight and 3 squares will be towards your back. For instance, if on the example on the left you are in zone "A" and facing towards zone "2", then you would also be facing zones 1, 3, 8 and 4. Zones 7, 6 and 5 would be towards your rear.

When at attack is directed at you from your rear, you must subtract your character's Awareness Adjustment from both your Dodge and Defense Level ratings.

Being attacked from the rear can also have other implications where someone has skills or special abilities where being at your rear will be to their advantage.

Crowded Zones:

In reality, a 5 foot by 5 foot square area is large enough to stand more than one adult person within that. A 5' square area is designated as the space a single character takes up during combat because in combat people need room to manuever, else they cannot swing weapons well for attacking, move to attempt to dodge an attack, etc. But sharing a square is not impossible and can even be desirable (if you are hopelessly out numbered, sharing a square can reduce the number of people that can surround the each of you).

Sharing a combat zone, however, comes with penalties. Characters sharing a square would suffer the following penalties;

1) -3 to Initiative   2) -3 to Dodge
3) -1 to Attack Level   4) -2 to Spell Levels.

These penalties assume that a square is being shared by just 2 people. If a third person were to attempt to share the same square, the penalties would thusly double for each of the three people, triple if there were four people, etc.

Spells and Spell Casting:

This section will cover the use of magic, from the design and effects of spells to the creation of mystical items.

Designing a Spell:

Magic can achieve nearly any given task. How effective the spell is depends on the caster. Spells with greater ranges and longer lasting effects are tougher to learn and require more spell points to achieve their desired effect.

In the Dark Realms, players design their own Spells. In order to do so, the players determine the desired effect of a certain spell, then work with the Realm Master to calculate what is required to make the spell work. All Spells start with a zero difficulty. Add one "Difficulty Factor" to the spell for each one of the listed circumstances the spell needs to function. Spells which thusly target a large number of persons or items, have long lasting durations and may be cast at great ranges will be much more difficult to cast successfully and effectively as compared to spells without those aspects.

If the spell involved does not involve any of the following circumstances (see chart on following page), the Spell Difficulty Factor (SDF) remains zero.

Players should be encouraged to design spells with as many details fleshed out as possible. For instance, how does Dorf's Fire Ball spell launch the fire ball forward? Does it simply shoot forth from Dorf's hand? Perhaps from his elbow, chest, or maybe even his foot? Or maybe the Fire Ball forms in Dorf's hand and it requires him to physically throw it. These details can be important to game play as it provides everyone a clearer idea of what is happening and allows the Realm Master to effectively judge the effects of and respond to the player's decisions on how they use the spell. Also keep in mind that Realm Masters may add additional Spell Difficulty Factors for nearly any reason, but usually for spells that attempt to circumvent the existing rules and limitations somehow.

See the Difficulty Factor chart on the following page.

Dorf decides to create a Fire Ball spell. He only wants it to affect 1 target, be able to launch it up to 10 yards, and have a duration of only one round. This spell only has 2 Difficulty Levels (+1 for having 1 target, zero for duration and +1 for distance).

Dorf spends the 10 Experience Points needed to attain a level 1 Skill Level for his Fire Ball spell. When casting the spell he subtracts the SDF (Spell Difficulty Level) of 2 from his Skill Level of 1 to find he still has a Casting Ability of -1. He would then add his Intelligence Adjustment to his Casting Ability with this spell and then finally a 1D6 (open ended) to arrive at the Attack Level of the spell.

Spell Difficulty Factor Levels:

Every spell is comprised of three difficulty components. This is unavoidable. Each spell component may raise a Spell's Difficulty Factor by as few as zero levels and as many as 25. The three components to a Spell's Difficulty Level are:

Number of Targets (up to):
+1   for 1 Target. (A Spell must have at least 1 target)
+2   for 3 Targets.
+3   for 5 Targets.
+4   for 10 Targets.
+5   for 15 Targets.
+6   for 20 Targets.
+7   for 30 Targets.
+8   for 40 Targets.
+9   for 50 Targets.
+10   for 75 Targets.
+12   for 100 Targets.
+15   for 250 Targets.
+20   for 500 Targets.
+25   for 1000 Targets.

For Maximum Distance:
+0   For zero distance (cast on self or at touch)
+1   for up to 50 Feet.
+2   for up to 100 Feet.
+3   for up to 200 Feet.
+4   for up to 300 Feet.
+5   for up to 500 Feet.
+6   for up to 750 Feet.
+7   up to the maximum extent of eyesight.
+8   up to a Half Mile.
+9   up to 1 Mile.
+10   up to 5 Miles.
+12   up to 10 Miles.
+15   up to 50 Miles.
+20   up to 100 Miles.
+25   up to 500 Miles.

For Maximum Duration:
+0   for spells with instant affects (no duration)
+1   up to 10 Minutes.
+2   up to 30 Minutes.
+3   up to 1 Hour.
+4   up to 3 Hours.
+5   up to 12 Hours.
+6   up to 1 Day.
+7   up to 3 Days.
+8   up to 1 Week.
+9   up to 2 Weeks.
+10   up to 1 Month.
+12   up to 3 Months.
+15   up to 6 Months.
+20   up to 1 Year.
+25   up to 10 Years.

Add all Difficulty Factors of a spell together to arrive at its overall Difficulty Factor. Hence a spell that targeted 1000 targets, reach up to 500 miles and were to last up to 10 years would have a Difficulty Factor of 75!

Spell Types:

All Spells fall into one of three types of spells. When a character is first purchasing the Spell they must chose which type it will be. Once chosen, the Spell shall forever be that type. The three types are:

Standard Spells:
With a standard spell, a Spelltwister is assumed to be using both vocal commands and the movement of their arms, hands, body, etc. together to manipulate the mystical energies needed to make the Spell happen. This is the standard way of casting a Spell and gets no modifiers.

Voice Spells:
A Voice Spell is a spell where the Spelltwister need only use a vocal command or sequence to cast the spell and therefore requires no freedom of hands, arms or the rest of the body to cast. A Voice Spell will get +3 to its Difficulty Factor and will be limited in range to the maximum distance the Spelltwister's voice can carry.

Motion Spells:
A Motion Spell is a Spell that a Spelltwister is able to cast using motions only. It requires no vocal components to cast it. Motion only spells also get a +3 to their Difficulty Factor plus will get additional Difficulty Factors equal to the Spelltwister's Dodge penalties from weapons, armor and equipment they are wearing/using.

Spell Casting:

The SDF (Spell Difficulty Factor) of a spell is subtracted from a character's Skill Level to arrive at the Casting Ability of a spell. Casting Ability can be positive or negative numbers, or even zero. Thus, if a character has a Plant Growing spell that can affect any plant within 100 feet (+2 SDF), affect up to 50 targets (+3 SDF) and last up to an hour (+3 SDF) it will have a Spell Difficulty Factor of 8. Say, through spending experience points, the character advances his Plant Growing spell up to a Skill Level of 5. That would give the character a Casting Ability of –3. Also affecting the Casting Ability is the character's Intelligence Adjustment. We'll assume the character has an Intelligence of 5, and thus an Intelligence Adjustment of +1. This +1 is added to the Casting Ability of –3 to give the character an actual Casting Ability of -2 when casting the Plant Growing spell. When the spell is cast, 1D6 (open ended) is rolled and the result is added to the Casting Ability of -2. In most cases when a spell is cast, whether it be at a person, or simply to gather information, the player's roll will be facing a difficulty factor rolled by the Realm Master.

Casting a spell will use a character's action (20 Initiative Points) for the turn. Whenever a spell is cast, the player must spend Spell Points to power the spell. To cast a Level 10 spell a character must cast expend 10 Spell Points. The amount of Spell Points required to cast a spell is NOT the character's Casting Ability with that spell, but rather their Skill Level with that spell prior to any modifiers.

A character does not need to cast a spell at his/her maximum Skill Level if they do not wish to. Any number of Spell Points may be spent, ranging from zero up the character's Skill Level for a particular spell, when casting a spell. The number of Spell Points used will represent the actual Skill Level when determining the Casting Ability for a spell. For instance, if a Spelltwister knew a spell at Level 16, but chose only to cast a Spell with

10 Spell Points, then the effective Skill Level for the Spell will be 10 (Because he is only using 10 Spell Points) prior to any modifications. So why would a character opt to use less Spell Points than the maximum possible? Well, sometimes the maximum would simply be overkill and waste of valuable (and limited) Spell Points. If a character with a Skill Level 15 Spark Fire Spell merely wanted to light a torch, he would likely only use 0, 1, or 2 Spell Points in order to cast a spell at levels 0-2 and use only that many Spell Points. If he cast it using all 15 Spell Points he would merely be wasting 12 or more Spell Points and instead of just lighting the torch, odds are he would set the entire room ablaze with such a powerful spell. If a character spends zero Spell Points to cast a spell, then the Skill Level is automatically considered to be negative 2.

> Spell Casting Example #1:
> Dorf gets ambushed by a Thief who steals his money bag and is now running away from him. Dorf knows he is slow so decides to use his Fire Ball spell to try to stop the Thief. The Realm Master decides that since the Thief is running away and has his back turned to Dorf that the Thief should get a penalty to his Dodging. Dorf's player rolls a 4, adding that to his Casting Ability of 1 with this spell, to get a result of 5. Dorf's player remembers to subtract 1 Spell Point from Dorf's "Current Spell Point" total on his character sheet. The Thief has a Dodge of 2, which the Realm Master reduces to 1 due to the penalty he chose to apply to the situation. He then rolls a 2, giving the Difficulty Level a result of 3. Dorf got lucky and hit the Thief. Since the Fire Ball spell also has the potential to do damage, the Realm Master now looks at the Thief's Defense Level of 1 (he is wearing Hides). The RM rolls a 3, adding that to the Defense Level of 1 to get a total defense roll of 4. The Thief only takes one Hit Point of damage (att 5 – Def 4 =1) and keeps on running, successfully getting away. Better luck next time Dorf.
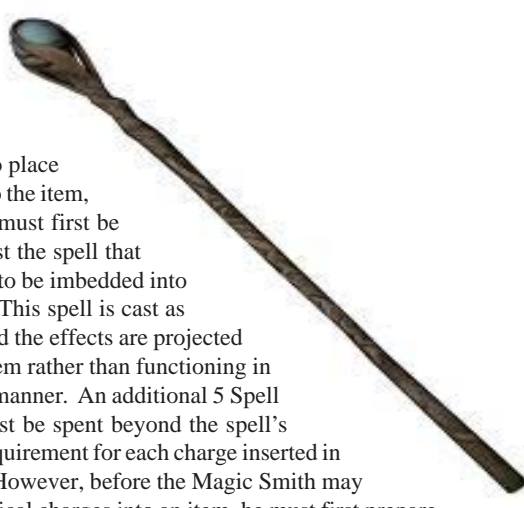
Using Spells Situationally:
Spells are designed to behave generally the same way each time they are cast. That means, if Dorf's "Fireball" Spell was designed in such a way that is is a standard spell and that the fireball always releases from his hand, then those aspects of the spell can not change. The Spell can not later be cast as a Motion Only Spell or Voice Only Spell. The fireball also can not be released from Dorf's mouth, foot, etc.

Beyond those aspects of a Spell that must remain fixed, how a spelltwister used a spell can be adapted situationally. Lets say Dorf's fireball Spell was designed to be cast at just a single target and at a specific distance. Dorf now finds a situation where it would be nice if he could hit two targets and also needs to throw it a shorter distance. These changes to the Spell will change it's Spell Difficulty Factor, so the new Spell Difficulty Factor will now be used. However, this new Spell Difficulty Factor will automatically recieve an additional +1 to the SDF because this is not specifically how Dorf designed the Spell and he has far less practice trying to use it in this way. The Realm Master should also consider the situation at hand when deciding if the SDF should be modified further. A spell originally designed for 1 target and now used to target 2 might be much harder to cast successfully if those two targets are also not particularly near each other.

Magic Smithing:

This is the ability to create magical items. The Smith does not actually create the magic item, but rather projects magic into an item. Nearly any item can be instilled with magic in this fashion. This will be represented by magical charges. Each charge used reduces the remaining charges by one. Once used up there will be no magic left in the item.

In order to place magic into the item, the smith must first be able to cast the spell that is desired to be imbedded into the item. This spell is cast as normal and the effects are projected into the item rather than functioning in the usual manner. An additional 5 Spell Points must be spent beyond the spell's normal requirement for each charge inserted in the item. However, before the Magic Smith may place magical charges into an item, he must first prepare the item. It will take 8 full hours of work for each spell level to be placed into the item, multiplied by the number of charges to be placed into the item. Hence, to place a spell with a final Spell Level Rating of 7 into an item, with 6 charges (number of times the magic may be used), it would take the Magic Smith 336 hours to prepare the item to receive the magical charges (8 hours x LV 7 = 56 x 6 charges = 336)

> Example:
> Roi the Magic Smith attempts to give a rope the ability to stand straight so it can be climbed at any time. He casts a telekinesis spell with a final Spell Level Rating of 5 (SDF of zero) on the rope and pays 10 spell points (5 for the spell +5 for Smithing it) per charge. Putting the necessary smithing time in, he then has a magic rope.

The magical effect that will placed into the item will have a maximum rating equal to either the Spell Level Rating or the Magic Smithing rating, whichever is lower. Thus, in the previous example, Roi must also be a level 5 Smith in order to put the spell in. If he were to Smith level 4, then the embedding would still cost 10, but only install a level 4 magic spell into the item.

Permanent Magical Effects:

This skill is much like that of Magic Smithing except the magic being placed into the item is permanent. A character must have a minimum rating of 6 in Magic Smithing before any ratings may be learned in Permanent Magical Effects. Like Magic Smithing, the rating of the magic to be installed into the item is limited to the lower of the Spell Level Rating and the Permanent Magical Effects level.

Permanent bonuses may also be added to weapons and armors. A +1 to the Attack Level of a weapon or to the Defense Level of armor may be added for every 2 points a character has in this skill.

Like Magic Smithing, placing permanent magical effects into an item is very difficult and time consuming, but even more so. It will take one month of continual work (assuming a full days work) for each level of the magic to be smithed into the item. Hence, to add a permanent level 5 telekinesis to the rope would take the Magic Smith five months worth of solid work. Because of the extreme time commitment and how rare it is to find smiths truly experienced in higher level Permanent Magic smithing, any items with a permanent magical property will be rare and items of greater power extremely rare.

Skills and Using Skills:

Skills are treated somewhat like spells, only they are of a non-magical nature. Skills represent the ability to accomplish certain tasks, or to know certain knowledge. Some examples of skills would be farming, blacksmithing, carpentry, cooking, hunting, tracking, first aid, tanning, basic math, geometry, architecture, etc. All characters are automatically assumed to know a few basic skills; skills such as: 1) the ability to speak the language of their birth, 2) basic cooking, 3) the basic lore and/or religion of their people, etc. If a Realm Master is nice, he or she may even allow the characters to begin knowing how to read and write the character's native language, swim, and a few other mundane skills. Others may require players to purchase such skills with their starting experience if the player wants their character to have those skills.

Skills may not be selected in an attempt to circumvent or replace existing game attributes. For instance, the skill of weight lifting would not make the character's Strength increase, though it could become handy when lifting extremely heavy items and the Realm Master would probably grant the character bonuses to do so. The Skill of Weapon Mastery could not be studied using the Skills advancement table, as Weapon Mastery Levels are clearly purchased using Experience Table III. If a character has no Skill Level in a given skill, then they are automatically assumed to have a negative 2 Skill Level with that skill. This makes it possible, though unlikely, for a person without the specific knowledge of a particular skill, to still successfully do that skill.

It is usually recommended when a character is first being created that the players and Realm Master work together to forge a historical background on the character, to define their upbringing and general life experience up to this point. What they did when they were younger and who they knew and were friends with will play an important part if what they know today and what skills they might have. Look towards the sourcebook "Character Backgrounds" for a quick reference guide book to roll up interesting and unique backgrounds for the characters. Though this is also certainly something players and Realm Masters can hammer out between them as well.

Making Skills:

A player may attempt to create any Skill they desire. There are no limitations on what Skills that may be conceived. Only limitations put onto Skills by the Realm Master as to what a Skill can and can't do. A Skill will have 3 basic things. They are:

1)   A Descriptive Name: For instance, the skill of stealthily removing a mans coin purse from their belt or pocket might be named "Pick Pocket" The Skill of quickly climbing a tree "Tree Climbing", forging metal into objects and weapons "Black Smithing", etc. No name can be wrong so long as the Skill's name helps everyone to know what the Skill does

2)   A description of what the Skill actually does.

3)   A linking attribute. All Skills are linked to one of the character's Core Attributes. For instance, the skill of "Moving Silently" would seem best linked to Dexterity, "Weight Lifting" to Strength, "Advanced Mathematics" to Intelligence. Pick what seems most appropriate.

A Skill's linked attribute helps to show if the character will have a natural ability to learn and be better at doing the skill. Hence, when figuring out a character's "Ability" at using a Skill, their "Ability Score" shall be their Skill Level plus their Attribute Adjustment with the Attribute that is linked to the skill. Hence, using the Advanced Mathematics Skill, if a character had a 5 Skill Level in Advanced Mathematics and also a +3 Intelligence Bonus from the Intelligence attribute, their Ability Score with this Skill would be 8.

When using a Skill, the Realm Master will have to determine the "Difficulty Factor" of how the Skill is to be applied. So, while the math problem of 2 + 2 might only have a Difficulty Factor of 1, Einstein's theory of relativity might come with a Difficulty Factor of 20. To figure out if a character is successful at using a Skill to accomplish the task at hand, the player rolls 1D6 (open ended) and adds their Ability Score to a Skill to the result. Compared against that will be the Realm Master rolling 1D6 (open ended) plus the Difficulty Factor that task was assigned. A result of zero or less will mean failure. A result of 1 or more will mean some degree of success, though to what degree will depend on just how much above zero was achieved.

> ### Skill Use Example #1:
> Dorf is traveling between towns. It is time to pitch camp for the night so Dorf selects a clearing and pitches his tent. He would like to conserve his dry food rations, so Dorf goes into the woods and tries to hunt. Dworf has a Hunting Skill Level of 4 and the skill is linked to his Awareness with which Dorf has an Awareness Adjustment of a +1, giving Dorf an Ability Score in Hunting of a 5. Dorf's player rolls the die, getting a 3, so Dorf has a hunting attempt of 8. The Realm Master decides this particular area of forest is well populated with wild animals, so sets the Difficulty Level at only 2. The Realm Master rolls a 2, giving him a total Difficulty result of 4. Dorf beat that, so looks like he'll have caught dinner. The RM decides he caught a wild boar.

> ### Skill Use Example #2:
> Dorf just finished dragging his wild boar back to his campsite. Dorf butchers the boar in preparation to cook it. He has no skill at tanning and the player decides that to roll for it at a –2 would be a waste of time, so he doesn't even try. Thus, Dorf will get no value from the boar's hide. That's ok, he just wanted Dinner anyway. Dorf has a Skill Level of 1 in Cooking (linked Attribute being Intelligence where he has a zero Adjustment). Dorf's player rolls a 1, adding that to his Skill Level of 1 to get a cooking attempt of 2. The Realm Master decides that Dorf has no spices and a poor campfire in which to cook the pig, so gives this cooking attempt a Difficulty Level of 4. The RM rolls a 3. (skill result 2 – difficulty result of 7, = -5) Looks like Dorf failed his cooking attempt by a long shot. That'll be some poor tasting food. Being Pork, the RM may even roll to see if it was under cooked and will end up making Dorf sick.

In order to acquire a skill, the player must first spend Experience Points to get Level 1 in the skill. Many skills may be self taught and so the player need only have the character strive to learn the Skill and then spend the necessary Experience to get it. Other Skills, however, may be extremely complicated and may require teaching by someone already fairly experienced in the Skill in order for the character to get the skill themselves. Such Skills the Realm Master will have to decide on a case by case basis.

Power Mongers:

Power Mongers are those characters that have advanced in skills and abilities so much that they are no longer mortal; having joined the ranks of the Immortals and the Overlords (gods). Becoming an Immortal or an Overlord is NOT easy and requires a great deal of successful adventuring. It is a level of advancement that most characters will never achieve. It also represents an epic level of game play, with extremely powerful characters and enemies; the stuff of legend, which can impact entire worlds. Some players and game masters may enjoy epic level play while others; perhaps, will not. It will be up to each group to decide if they wish to play with characters far enough to join the ranks of the Power Mongers.

The powers that Immortals and Overlords are capable are many and extremely powerful. To adequately cover them all, it will take a sourcebook each for Immortals and Overlords. In this manual, we will go over just the most basic of abilities and powers that Immortals and Overlords have.

Immortals:

Immortals are highly evolved characters that are no longer mortal at all. They have reached a state of mental, physical, and possibly magical advancement that has brought them one major step closer to becoming an Overlord. To become an Immortal, a character must have a 12 or higher in at least 3 core attributes and have no more than one attribute score lower than 5. The character must have accumulated at least 5,000 Experience Points and have a minimum of 150 Hit Points. Once a character has met these requirements, they may spend 500 Experience Points to become an Immortal. Below are the benefits of Immortality:

1) Immortals regain 25 Hit Points per full night of rest, plus an additional number of Hit points equal to the character's Health Adjustment. Healing cannot raise the character's Hit Points above their normal Hit Point Maximum.

2) Immortals have tremendous willpower and this willpower will create an invisible aura of protective energy around the Immortal whenever they are conscious. This aura will provide the character bonuses to their Defense Level, with the bonus equal to the character's Intelligence Adjustment.

3) Immortals do not age, will never become ill from natural means and can't be affected by non-magical poisons.

4) Immortals will instantly sense the aura of another Immortal or Overlord if within a mile of that person. Immortals can also sense all magic within 100 yards and get +5 to Determine Magic skills.

5) Immortals do not become unconscious when their Hit Points fall into negative numbers. They do not die until their Hit Points are reduced to a negative number equal to negative three times their Health attribute – (3 x Health). However, if their Hit Points fall below the negative equivalent of their Health, then they will lose 1 point to their Health attribute.

6) Immortals also have the potential to be partially empathic to the thoughts of others. If they spend 350 experience points, they will gain the ability to always sense the true emotions that another person or animal is feeling. Additionally, once this ability has been purchased, Immortals have the potential to learn Weapon Masteries beyond level 6. Immortals may advance a Weapon Mastery up to level 9, though must still meet their Dexterity Adjustment requirements before advancing to each level. (see Experience Table 3).

Additionally, as an Immortal with Weapon Mastery levels above 6, when attacking an Immortal only need roll a 5 or 6 to get an "open ended" attack result, giving them an additional 1D6 (also open ended) and their bonus 1D6 (non open ended) for each level of Weapon Mastery skill.

7) Immortals have the potential to be much faster than normal mortals. This can allow them to have two actions per round where normal mortals only have 1. This could be used to cast two spells, attack twice, or conduct any two actions. This ability cost 750 Experience Points. Once purchased, it will automatically add 20 Initiative Points to all of their character's Initiative rolls

8) Immortals have a number of Essence Points (see below) equal to their Intelligence Adjustment.

Essence Points:

Essence Points are really the power of the soul, or for Overlords, the power of many souls being channeled and shaped to their will. Essence can, like magic, accomplish nearly anything. Experienced Immortals and overlords learn entire skill crafts around the manipulation of and use of Essence Points. Since we are just going over the basics of the Power Mongers here, we'll only cover the default things that can be done with Essence Points. Each point can be a potentially powerful feat and can be done by using just one Essense Point. Essence Points are replenished just like spell points. They are used throughout the course of a day and replenish after a full night's rest. Essence can be used for the following:

1. Halve damage from a single attack or spell.
2. Add 1D6 + 5 Attack Levels to a single attack attack.
3. Use instead of a Luck Point.
4. Heal 1D6 x 10 Hit Points to a single target.
5 Heal 1D6 x 2 Hit Points for up to 6 targets.
6. Restore 1D6 x 10 Spell Points to self.
7. Dispel any non-permanent mortal magic.
8. Resurrect any mortal life form. (see below)
9. Read any mortal's mind.
10. Cast one spell without using Spell Points (see below)

Essence is NOT magic, regardless how similar it may seem and even when Essence is being used to cast a spell. So the affects of Essence are completely non-magical. Anything that would affect magic (for good or bad) will have no affect on powers generated through the use of Essence. All abilities with a target assume the target or targets must be within eyesight.

Essence to Resurrect:

Essence may bring back to life anyone that has been killed. This resurrection will bring the dead life form back to life, giving them current Hit Points of 1. The resurrection, however, does nothing to fix the dead body or heal any illness or wound that caused the death in the first place. So a person with a mortal would, resurrected and left unhealed will die again within moments. Trying to reserrect a person long dead and buried with a high level of decomposition would see the revived person die again within seconds, as the body is not in a state to naturally support life.

Essence to Cast Spells:

An Essence Point may be used to cast any spell, though this Spell must already be one known by the spelltwister. The Spell may be cast at its highest known Spell Level (or any lower level) without the use of any Spell Points. The Spell will be duplicated in every way, the same as if it were powered by magic (Spell Points), but it is not magic. Any target of such a spell remotely familiar with magic will be able to sense that it was not normal magic and was cast by some greater power.

Overlords:

Overlords are extremely powerful creatures and are as far above Immortals as Immortals are above mortals. They are often worshiped as gods by less advanced civilizations. Overlords are naturally more comfortable in the Upper Realms (a series of mystically sustained alternate dimensions) than they are in the realms of mortal men. In fact, Overlords draw substantial power from the Upper Realms and can grow weaker among the realms of men until such a time as they return to the Upper Realms.

To become an Overlord, a character must have an 18 in at least 3 core attributes and have no more than one attribute score lower than 7. The character must have accumulated at least 20,000 Experience Points, have a minimum of 350 Hit Points, and already be an Immortal. Once a character has met these requirements they may spend 1200 Experience Points to become an Overlord. Overlords have all the abilities of an Immortal, plus the following enhanced and/or additional skills & powers.

1) Overlords regain 100 Hit Points per full night of rest (compared to an Immortal's 25), plus an additional number of Hit points equal to the character's Health Adjustment x 10. Healing cannot raise the character's Hit Points above their normal Hit Point Maximum.

2) Overords have tremendous willpower and this willpower will create an

invisible aura of protective energy around the Overlord at all times. This aura will provide the character bonuses to their Defense Level, with the bonus equal to the character's Intelligence Adjustment x 2 (compared to just x1 for Immortals)

3) Overlords may shape change into any alternate form, living or otherwise, at will. They must, however, maintain the same mass as their true self.

4) Overlords will instantly sense the aura of another Immortal or Overlord if within ten miles of that person.

5) Overlords do not become unconscious when their Hit Points fall into negative numbers. They do not die until their Hit Points are reduced to a negative number equal to negative five times their Health attribute – (5 x Health). However, if their Hit Points fall below the negative equivalent of their Health, then they will lose 1 point to their Health attribute.

6) Overlords have the potential to learn Weapon Masteries beyond level 9. Overlords may advance Weapon Mastery levels supported by their Dexterity Adjustment (see Experience Table 3). An Overlord with Weapon Mastery levels above 9 (when attacking and defending) only need roll a 4, 5 or 6 to get an "open ended" attack result, giving them an additional 1D6 (also open ended) and their bonus 1D6 (non open ended) for each level of Weapon Mastery skill.

7) Overlords have the potential to be much faster than Immortals. This allows then to potentially have many additional actions per turn. First, they must have acquired the extra action (see Immortal power #8 on previous page); then they may buy an additional action (another 20 bonus Initiative Points) for a cost of 1500 Experience Points. Additional actions beyond that may also be purchased, with the next one costing 3000 Experience, then 6000 EXP, 12000 EXP, etc. There is no limit.

8) Overlords may teleport anywhere among the realms of men at will. They may do this an unlimited number of times. Only locations protected from teleportation with at least Level 6 magic can deny an Overlord access via teleportation. This does consume an action to do so.

9) In addition to those Essence Points they had as Immortals, upon becoming an Overlord the character receives +5 Essence Points. They also gain additional Essence Points based upon the number of mortal worshipers they have. An Overlord gets +4 Essence Points per exponent of 10 number of worshipers they have.. Thus, 10 worshippers give +4 Essence Points, 100 worshippers give +8 Essence, 1,000 worshippers +12, 10,000 worshippers +16, 100,000 worshippers +20, etc.

10) Overlords can only draw the Essence Points from their worshippers while in the Upper Realms. When in the realms of men they may still use Essence Points, but a nights rest will not replenish them (see below), except for a number equal to their Intelligence Adjustment (those they would have had as Immortals). Overlords may open a portal between somewhere in the Upper Realms and the realms of men only once per week. Overlords are the only powers capable creating such a portal. Mortals and Immortals, however, may travel to the Upper Realms if a portal is opened for them to travel through. Also, any Overlord in the Upper Realms, if they know when an Overlord in the realms of men will try to open such a portal, may utilize their weekly portal capacity to prevent the overlord in the realms of men from successfully opening a portal to the Upper Realms. This potential to be blocked from returning to the Upper Realms is of great concern to many Overlords and the primary reason most Overlords rarely venture into the realms of men.

Realm Masters Section:

The position of the Realm Master is not an easy one. The Realm Master plays the critical roll of being the adventure and storyline creator, the arbitrator of events, and in general overlord of all things in the game; a complete dictator of a sorts. How much fun everyone has is largely in the Realm Master's hand. This critical role is so important, an entire book will be dedicated to guiding Realm Masters through all aspects of running a Dark Realms game. You'll be able to get the Realm Masters Guide book at the Guild of Blades website or at a local retailer near you. Until then, however, we have compiled a short summary of important notes to get you started.

Character Creation: The first task a Realm Master faces is guiding players through the character creation process. The Realm Master should be **VERY** familar with the rules so as to assist new players with this process. It is important that the players design fully detailed characters, including a full set of Personality Traits, a Character Background and Skills. These things will help define each character more clearly and supply the Realm Master with ideas for which to center adventures around. Realm Masters should also keep an eye out for cheaters in the character creation process as one over-powered character compared to the others will make adventuring more difficult and less fun for all the other players.

Adventure Creation: The most challenging task for most Realm Masters is the creation of the adventures that the players will guide their characters through. The possibilities here are endless, though that very fact can be somewhat overwhelming for new Realm Masters. What adventures to toss at your players? We don't have room to cover all of these possibilities here, or even the scratch the surface, so merely visit the Guild of Blades website for a comprehensive list of adventure and plot ideas.

All adventures, regardless of theme, should have a few common traits. A good adventure will be challenging, though not so challenging that they are impossible to overcome. Adventures should be thought provoking or have an element of mystery. There should be danger to the characters, whether that danger come from physical challenges, legal or intellectual pitfalls, or mystical sources. As a general rule, fast-paced adventures tend to be more exciting. A truly fast-paced adventure can also challenge the players' wits, as it gives them little time to make decisions and plot overly complex and devious responses to problems.

A nemesis that can become known to the players and encountered multiple times can add a lot of flavor to an adventure and provide a sense of continuity from one adventure to the next. Adventures which are all linked by a common storyline are known as a campaign. Campaigns can be a great means to wrap the players into an extended storyline and provide them longer term goals to be achieved.

Choosing Foes for the Characters to Confront: It's never easy to figure out how tough an opponent to have the characters confront. As a general rule, if the characters are confronting multiple foes at once, each should be about equal in strength to the characters, or perhaps a bit weaker. If there is only one foe, then a much tougher opponent can be selected as a major challenge for the players as a group to confront.

Player Character Deaths: It's typically a very bad thing to have one of the player characters get killed. It means one player has no character to control for the duration of the game session, and worse yet, they may need to create a new one which is not equal to the other characters being played. Realm Masters should let the characters get knocked unconscious, or get captured, etc; before simply letting them die. Even if this means fudging the results of a combat dice roll from time to time. Though once in a while a player may simply be playing so foolishly that you you'll have to let their character die, if only as an object lesson.

Experience Points & Other Rewards: One of the major goals for players is the advancement of thier characters. These advancements can come in a number of forms. Experience Points to increase the characters attributes and skills; money, weapons, and riches; noble titles and other honorary bestowments. Such awards should be awarded gingerly by the Realm Master. Each gain made by the players should seem precious. Unless you are intentionally running a magically rich world, then each magical weapon or item gained by the characters should be rare. If magical items are used against the characters, then most should contain a limited number of charges and be completely or nearly out once the characters gain possession of the item. Money can be gained in large sums at times by daring adventurers, but so may it be spent equally quickly. Food, lodging, weapons and armor repairs, tolls, taxes, information...all common things a travelling adventuring may need, and each capable of costing a lot of money once added up. In short, make the player work for everything they gain. In the end, they'll feel a lot more pride in those accomplishments.

Ideally advancements in status will also come with responsibilities and other attachments that will allow the Realm Master to spin new adventure plots off of. Players acquire property; its needs to be upkept. Henchmen and hirelings may be needed to maintain manors, keeps and/or castles. A militia or town guard as well. All these people can come with their own personalities and baggage; and can come bundled with a whole mess of politcal intrigue.

The Great Conflict

Since the beginning of time, the eternal war between Order and Chaos has raged. The struggle has existed on a monolithic scope, with only a select few of its combatants realizing the extent of the war in which they fought. Only the elite have truly understood the conflict and its importance to the future of the Universe. These powerful overlords, like players in an eternal game of chess, have "overseen" the war, guiding and manipulating its constituents. For eons people have been pawns being set and pushed into their respective positions they liked to call "destinies". The war was endless. Battle after battle came and went, some passing quietly, while others left behind legacies of devastation. Sometimes the forces of Order triumphed; at other times Chaos prevailed. More often than not, no victor could be claimed, leaving only the aftermath of war to cleanse the arena of death. All and all, a balance was maintained.

Marking the end of the First Age, the forces of Order and Chaos agreed to a peace settlement set before them by a non-aligned council of overlords. The council proposed the building of two seperate planes of existance; one for Order and one for Chaos, as well as offered aid in the construction. These planes of existance would become the homes for these two great ideologies. It was believed that this would provide each faction with a limitless expanse where they could create a utopia to fit their ideology. Construction of the two dimensions proved a daunting task. Overlords from across the Universe came to offer their assistance in constructing the two dimensions. During this period, the Universe was graced by a period of peace and prosperity, free of any all encompassing conflicts. Upon completion, the Lords of Order dubbed their new domain the Realms of Light. As the final touches were being placed on the dimension set aside for the forces of Chaos, those forces splintered, sparking a multi-faction

war for dominion over the new realm. As rumors of bizzare and twisted battles surfaced from this realm, it ignited the imaginations of countless mortals. Soon, many names were being used to describe the dominion of chaos. The Realms of Chaos; the Realms of Darkness; the Realms of Majestic Chaos and many others. Though, among the elite Overlords who had helped create the dimension, they settled upon the name "The Dark Realms"; feeling it suited the opposite of the Realms of Light.

It didn't take long for the forces of Chaos within the Dark Realms to begin the transformation of the realm into something alien. Nature itself within the realm began to adapt to some unknown chaotic pattern; the deeper in the realms you ventured, the more bizzare and dangerous the landscape became. Of course, despite the dangers, the Realms of Chaos marked a land of adventure previously unknown to the Universe, and mortals and overlords alike flocked into the realms to explore. When the first few adventurous souls returned, having brought back great powers and wealth, people began flocking to the Dark Realms en mass. Little did people know, despite the many factions and wars within the Dark Realms, the Lords of Chaos had a firm grasp on their domain. They had intentionally let the first visitors to their realm walk away with riches and extraordinary powers, to intice many more to visit; and venture into the Dark Realms they did, but few ever returned. Once there, the strong chaotic magics within the realm itself began to subvert the visitors, twisting their form and nature to become exotic war-like beasts, subserviant to the Lords of Chaos. And thus, the forces of Chaos had a new army, more numerous and more potent than ever before.

Peace was shattered as the new armies of Chaos Beasts ventured forth from the Dark Realms back into common space, where they spread chaos like wildfire across a prairie. The Lords of Light wasted little time in coming forth from the Realms of Light to engage the armies of Chaos once more. This (the second great war) proved more terrible than the first. The forces of Order and Chaos used their new realms merely as staging grounds from which to launch offensives into common space. Few to no races were spared the effects of the conflict, as entire civilizations were crushed in wide sweeping battles, and the survivors enslaved by one side or the other to aid in the war effort. The future of all civilization was on the brink of oblivion.

A second council of non-aligned overlords gathered to discuss what to do about the war. There, the overlords decided that they should rule their own regions of common space, free of the mandates of either Order or Chaos; free to choose the balance of Order and Chaos that suited their needs, and the needs of the mortals they governed. Hence an organization was put into existance with the pupose of freeing the Universe from the clutches of the Lords of Light and Lords of Darkness. This new organization, named the Cystar, began to raise an army of its own, and soon was engaging both the forces of Order and Chaos wherever they tried to exert their dominion in common space. The war raged on. Trillions died. Eventually more races flocked to the Cystar cause, and the armies of Order and Chaos began loosing their grip on the Universe. Determined to be rid of the Lords of Light and Lords of Chaos once and for all, once the armies of Order and Chaos had been pushed back into their home dimensions, the Cystar did not bring the conflict to a close. Instead, they drove their armies onward, bringing the war directly to the Realms of Light and Realms of Darkness.

This later stage of the Second Great War became known as the War of the Realms. As costly as the first stage of the war had been, Cystar soldiers began dying in ever increasing numbers as their offensives into the realms slowed to a painful crawl. A Universe-wide draft was initiated, as the Cystar began to force any and every combat-capable entity in common space to join the ranks of their army. Progress continued in the Realms of

Light, as the Cystar pushed its way into the core of the Lords of Light's domain, preparing for the final battle against the Lords of Light themselves. In the Dark Realms, the Cystar armies were fairing far worse. While they still had the armies of Chaos on the defensive (and executing a slow withdrawal ever deeper into the realms) the unpredictable chaotic nature of the Realms of Darkness took a heavy toll on the Cystar army.

The Lords of Light, seeing their fate to be sealed by the Cystar, came to the conclusion that the Cystar armies would not be able to complete the conquest of the Dark Realms. So they came to the bargaining table with the solution that would allow them to maintain an equal footing with the Dark Realms. An offer of peace was made, where the most powerful of the Lords of Light would sacrifice themselves to create extremely powerful magical locks on the Dark Realms. These magics, they assured the Cystar, would be powerful enough to prevent all but the most powerful Lords of Darkness from being able to leave the Dark Realms. And only those same Lords of Darkness would stand a chance of destroying the magical locks. So, the Lords of Light said, kill the most powerful Lords of Darkness and the minions of Chaos would forever be locked out of common space. The Cystar agreed. In short order, the Cystar armies within the Realms of Light began pouring into the Dark Realms, allowing the Cystar offensive there to see new life. It was the edge the Cystar needed to be able to win the War of the Realms in the Dark Realms. As the war progressed and the Cystar armies closed in on the lower realms (the heart of the Dark Realms and home to the Lords of Chaos) the Cystar overlords began to realize the toll on their armies to achieve victory would leave them barely able to handle a renewed conflict against the Armies of Light, should that become necessary.

So the Cystar presented the Lords of Darkness with an ultimatum: they would spare the Dark Realms from total conquest if the most powerful of the Lords of Darkness sacrificed themselves to create a chaos version of the Lords of Light's promised mystic lock on the Dark Realms. The Chaos lock would be placed over the Realms of Light, and in theory, prevent the minions of Light from venturing forth into common space. The Lords of Chaos seeing no other choice, agreed. And so it was that the Second Great War came to a close, with the Realms of Light and Realms of Darkness shut away from the Universe, and the Cystar in charge of everything, ruling with an iron grip.

Peace reigned for a period after the war. No one dared challenge Cystar authority. However, a Universe with one all mighty, ever-present, government began to prove almost as undesirable as being dictated by pure Chaos or pure Order. In time, some races began requesting to depart from the Cystar union. These, the Cystar internal police dealt with cruel brutality. This fueled the hatred of more races, and soon there were outright rebellions in the making. More importantly, some of the overlords on the Cystar council had come to realize that with the Realms of Light and Realms of Darkness defeated, the need for a Cystar dominated Universe no longer existed. They began to speak of a break up of the Cystar army and turn over of government to the local authorities. Others on the council, who could not envision losing their positions of power, had the overlords in favor of breakup removed from the council. The ousted overlords went on to lead the growing rebellions, and a new war was spreading across the Universe. In time, the freedom movement grew in power and the Cystar organization shattered under the presure. Some Cystar overlords went on to build and govern impressive empires in their own right. Others tried to hang on to regional control of lands previously controlled by the Cystar, and were eventually overthrown. The vast majority of the overlords on the Cystar council simply vanished, never to be seen again. Most thought they had simply gone underground for a much deserved retirement. But rumors persisted that the overlords had secretly spread

out across the Universe to serve as watchmen, awaiting the day they felt the Cystar would be needed once again. And thus ended the Second Age of the Universe.

The Third Age ushered in a period of individualization across the Universe, with many civilizations coming and going, never having felt the looming threats from the Realms of Light and Realms of Darkness. Wars large and small waged in various places, but none so large to effect more than a small percentage of the Universe's citizens. The Universe was indeed free to follow its own path. But trouble was brewing in the Realms again. The Lords of Light discovered that while they were shut away from common space, that travel directly to and from the Realms of Light and Realms of Darkness was possible. The war between Order and Chaos could continue. The Lords of Light knew an invasion of the Dark Realms would surely meet with failure. Each faction was secure within its own domain; short of another Universe wide organization such as the Cystar rising again. So it was decided that the Lords of Light would infiltrate the Dark Realms and begin to subvert the minions of Chaos to the path of Order. Two Lords of Light trained to impersonate Lords of Darkness were sent into the Dark Realms and sucessfully assumed positions as new Lords of Darkness. Though the true identity of the two Lords of Light remained undiscovered, the plan still failed. The power of the Realms of Darkness itself subverted the two Lords of Light. Hence, the two Lords of Light, had in fact, become Lords of Darkness. They were, however, a different breed of Chaos Lord, having retained much of their knowledge of the principles of Order and the magics springing from it. Soon, they discovered that their Order magic could effect the magical locks on the Dark Realms. Not as powerful as the great Lords of Light which had sacrificed themselves to create the mystic barrier, the new Lords of Darkness could not outright destroy the barriers, but could alter its nature enough to effect a new type of travel, through Chaos Gates.

Chaos Gates allowed lesser Chaos Minions to venture forth into common space again. These Chaos Minions, working secretly, began to undermine the natural forces of Order in the Universe, trying to spread Chaos wherever they went. They lacked the numbers or power to attempt a direct invasion as had been tried in the past. So, the Universe slowly slipped into a period of destabalization, as the Minions of Chaos began to cultivate pawns and forces in common space. The Lords of Chaos also learned that they could use the Chaos Gates to bring creatures from common space into the Dark Realms, providing them the opportunity to begin creating an all new army of Chaos Minions. Worse, they learned that by strategically placing a ring of Chaos Gates around two regions, that the territory and everything within, could be effectively switched. What had been in one location would now sit at the other location, and vice versa. So the Lords of Chaos began shifting the locations of any orderly, organized resistance to their efforts, to new locations elsewhere in the Universe. These shifted nations would be placed in a new area, where usually they would find aggressive neighboring kingdoms, bent on their destruction. And thus, entering the middle of the Third Age, the Universe is once again threatened by the Lords of Chaos, and their attempts to spread chaos over all of existence. The Lords of Light, their traditional nemesis, are still locked away within the Realms of Light, and the Cystar has not existed for eons. Each race, each civilization, now must confront the darkness by itself, maintaining order within their own land, while defending it from the hostile neighbors the Lords of Chaos are likely to shift nearby.

Sample Non Player Characters

In the listings below each character is given two Experience Point values. The first is the total EXP value of the character or monster and can be used to gauge how tough the opponent is in relation to the characters. The

second value represents the number of Experience Points earned by the character when defeating the non player character.

NPC Spells are listed without Spell Diffiuclty Factors, only overall Skill Level with the Spell. Realm Masters should make up whatever base configuration the NPC would have for their Spell and adjust it for use as needed for the situation.

Low Experience Fighter: Human

					Skills:
Strength:	5 (+1)	Attack LV:	6		
Intelligence:	2	Defense LV:	2		Weap Mastery: Long Sword 1
Health:	4 (+1)	Initiative:	-1		Horse Riding 2
Dexterity:	4 (+1)	Dodging:	3		Leather Working 2
Awareness:	3	Hit Points:	11		Tracking 1
Beauty:	2	# of Attacks:	1		Hunting 2
Charm:	3	Luck:	3		Farming 2
Exp Value: 50/2					Enginnering 2

Bronze Long Sword (Att Lv: 4, -3 Init., -1 Dodge),
Leather Armor (Def Lv: 2, -1 Dodge). 34 money

Low Experience Thief: Elf

					Skills:
Strength:	2	Attack LV:	2		
Intelligence:	3	Defense LV:	1		Weap Mastery: Dagger 1
Health:	3	Initiative:	4		Weap Mastery: Long Bow 1
Dexterity:	6 (+2)	Dodging:	8		Pick Pockets 3
Awareness:	4 (+1)	Hit Points:	8		Appraising 2
Beauty:	2	# of Attacks:	1		Move Silently 2
Charm:	3	Luck:	5		Spell: Illusion 1
Exp Value: 50/2		Spell Points:	4		Hunting 5

Iron Dagger (Att Lv: 1), Longbow (Att Lv: 4, -4 Init. +1 Dodge). Lock Picking Kit. 12 Wooden Arrows & Quiver, Hides (Def Lv: 1), 45 money.

Low Experience Mage: Orc

					Skills:
Strength:		Attack LV:			
Intelligence:	3	Defense LV:	5		Weap Mastery: Mace 1
Health:	5 (+1)	Initiative:	3		Reading and Writing 2
Dexterity:	3	Dodging:	0		Detect Magic 1, Hunting 3
Awareness:	4 (+1)	Hit Points:	3		Spell: Heal 1
Beauty:	3	# of Attacks:	9		Spell: Detect Persons 1
Charm:	1 (-1)	Luck:	1		Spell: Ignite Fire 1
Exp Value: 50/2 2		Spell Points:	2 9		Spell: Turn Stone to Mud 1
					Spell: Binding Rope 1
					Spell: Translate Writings 1

Basic Steel Mace (Att Lv: 4, -1 Init.).
Iron Chain Jerkin (Def Lv: 3, -1 Init., -1 Dodge). 12 Money.

Mid Experience Fighter: Human

					Skills:
Strength:		Attack LV:			
Intelligence:	6 (+2)	Defense LV:	13		Weap Mastery: Great Axe 3
Health:	2	Initiative:	11		Tracking 6, Farming 2
Dexterity:	6 (+2)	Dodging:	-2		Hunting 2, Engineering 2
Awareness:	8 (+3)	Hit Points:	4		Horse Riding 2
Beauty:	3	# of Attacks:	30		Leather Working 2
Charm:	2	Luck:	1		Addl. Languages x 2
Exp Value: 373/15			6		

Antion Great Axe (Att Lv: 10, +1 Magic Att Lv. -4 Init., -2 Dodge).
Basic Steel Medium Shield (Def Lv: 4, -1 Init., -2 Dodge)
Basic Steel Banded Mail Armor (Def Lv: 7, -3 Init., -3 Dodge).
War Horse with Steel Armor (Att 3, Def 6, HP 20, Init. 1, Dodge 0)
Magical Staff: Healing Lv 5 (4 charges). 750 Money. 2 Gems (worth $500 ea.).

Mid Experience Thief: Elf

			Skills:
Strength:	3	Attack LV: 10	
Intelligence:	5 (+1)	Defense LV: 3	Weap Mastery: Long Bow 4
Health:	3	Initiative: 11	Weap Mastery: Staff 4
Dexterity:	10 (+4)	Dodging: 17	Hunting 5, Climbing 7
Awareness:	6 (+2)	Hit Points: 21	Pick Locks 10, Forgery 5
Beauty:	4	# of Attacks: 1	Appraising 7, Move Silently 5
Charm:	6	Luck: 7	Disguise 6, Black Marketing 6
Exp Value: 776/31		Spell Points: 13	Spell: Sleep 7

Force Staff (Att Lv: 6, +1 Dodge, +1 Init., Foes -4 Dodge, Mending lv1).
Longbow (Att Lv: 4, Init. -4, Dodge +1). 12 arrows & quiver.
Thick Black Long Coat (Def. Lv 1). Magical Ring (Charm +5. 8 charges).
Quill & ink jar, 4 Gems (worth 100, 500, 650, 2000). 120 Money.

Mid Experience Mage: Gnome

			Skills:
Strength:	4 (+1)	Attack LV: 8	
Intelligence:	10 (+4)	Defense LV: 7	Weap. Mastery: Short Sword 3
Health:	3	Initiative: 3	Weap. Mastery: Buckler 2
Dexterity:	5 (+1)	Dodging: 8	Detect Magic 5, Read/Write 5
Awareness:	4 (+1)	Hit Points: 34	Determine Magic Type 4
Beauty:	3	# of Attacks: 1	Farming 2: Engineering 4
Charm:	4	Luck: 4	Spell: Ignite Fire 2
Exp Value: 525/11		Spell Points: 28	Spell: Turn Stone to Mud 3
			Spell: Binding Ropes 2

Basic Steel Buckler (Def Lv: 2)   Spell: Decipher Language 2
Basic Steel Short Sword (Att Lv: 4, Init. -1)   Spell: Fire Ball 9
Money 350, 2 Gems (250, 400)   Spell: Heal 2
Magical Orb of Farseeing (lv 8. 6 charges)
Riding Horse (Att 0, Def 1, HP 10, Dodge 0, Init. 1)
Basic Steel Chain Jerkin (Def Lv: 4, Init. -1, -1 Dodge).

Dragons: There exists a large variety of different types of Dragon. From the Frost dragons of the frozen north to the Fire dragons of the lava waste-lands, dragons are feared the world over. Dragons are kings of all draconian species and live upwards of 2,000 years. The ancient dragons become immensely powerful, both in physical size and mystical spell casting ability. Even younger dragons are fierce creatures to be feared by the humanoid races. And while many draconian races are peacefully inclined, those few evil breeds cause enough terror and destruction to give all dragons a bad name and give all humanoids nightmares.

The information below details the "average" dragon breed at its young and adult age categories. Understand that these are "generic" dragon listings and not specific to any one dragon type. We've left out ancient dragons for a later day, when you are more likely to have characters with the remotest chance of surviving them.

Young/Baby Dragon: Dragons are hatched from eggs, typically in quantities of 2-10 at a time, depending on the species. Dragons are very vulnerable the first few months of their life, during which time they are growing their killer teeth and claws and learning to fly. After the first few months they are taught how to fight and defend themselves, how to speak, fly, and even cast their first spell or two at low levels.

Strength:	8 (+3)	Attack LV: 5/5/1/special	Spell Points: 12
Intelligence:	7 (+2)	Defense LV: 5	
Health:	8 (+3)	Initiative: 5	EXP Value: 575/23
Dexterity:	6 (+2)	Dodging: 9	
Awareness:	7 (+3)	Hit Points: 20 + 6D6	
Beauty:	4 (+1)	# of Attacks: 4 (see below)	
Charm:	1 (-1)	Luck: 2	

Dragons can attack 4 times per turn. The first two are claw attacks. The third is a lashing with its tail. The fourth attack is either a bite from its massive fangs, the use of a breath weapon or spell. A Young Dragon's bite attack would be an attack level of 6-8. Breath weapons will vary by dragon type, from fire, an ice blast, acid, etc, and have an attack 3-5 and be able to hit

multiple targets nearby each other. At this age, a dragon will typically know 1-3 spells at skill levels of 1 or 2. Sleep, Heal, Teleport, Read Minds, etc. The Realm Master should chose for each dragon individually.

Dragons will be unlikely to have any money or items on them when on the move, but if found in their lair, it probably will have a small pile of items gathered up from the people they have killed. This may include weapons, armor, travelling items, money, etc. Though given the wearers of such items fell to the dragon, its very possible weapons and items may have been broken or damaged. The real value from a Dragon would be the salvage of its dragon scales, taken from its body. If fully stripped, a young dragon's body would yield enough dragonscale material to build a full platemail suit of armor plus several smaller items. However, due to the dragonscales having the power of Mending, they will be difficult to remove from the slain dragon's body. Baby dragonscales give the dragon a Magic Suppression zone of 10'. Dragon's casting spells are unaffected by their own Magic Supression field.

Adult Dragon: Dragons reach adulthood after approximately 50 years, with their adulthood stage lasting for several hundred more. At this stage, dragons begin to become truly capable of using their bodies as weapons and to master spell-use skillfully. Most dragon breeds reach lengths of 200 feet or more as adults and can fly at speeds of over 100 miles per hour.

Strength:	12 (+5)	Attack LV: 10/10/8/special (+ Weap Mast for all)	
Intelligence:	12 (+5)	Defense LV: 10	Spell Points: 95
Health:	10 (+4)	Initiative: 14	EXP Value: 3750/150
Dexterity:	13 (+5)	Dodging: 22	
Awareness:	10 (+4)	Hit Points: 150 + (2D6x10)	
Beauty:	2	# of Attacks: 4 (see below)	
Charm:	2	Luck: 5	

As adults dragons become much more efficient at dive bombing attacks, where they can fly-by at high speeds and use both claw attacks and their bite/breath/spell attack, though they usually need their tale for flight and thus can't attack with it. These fast fly-by attacks leave only a brief moment where persons on the ground can actually attack the dragon. Adult dragons also become very proficient in spell-use, typically knowing 10 or more spells, with some learned up to skill levels of 15 or greater. They have Weapon Mastery levels of 4-6 in their claw, bite, and tail attacks. Breath weapons reach attack levels of 8-10 and bite attacks 12-15.

Adult dragonscales will be extremely difficult to remove due to having a Mending lv. 5 and give the dragon a Magic Supression zone of 25'.

Mutants: Mutants are very ugly, strong, dumb and smelly. They typically live in caves and hunt for food that might be available in the area. Most of the time they like to hunt living people and eat flesh without cooking it. A few will know magic (1 out of 100) and that will (most likely) be the chief of the tribe. No one knows if mutants came into being through some evolutionary fork or if by twisted magic. There have been mutants with appearances similar to many different races (human, dwarves, elves, etc)
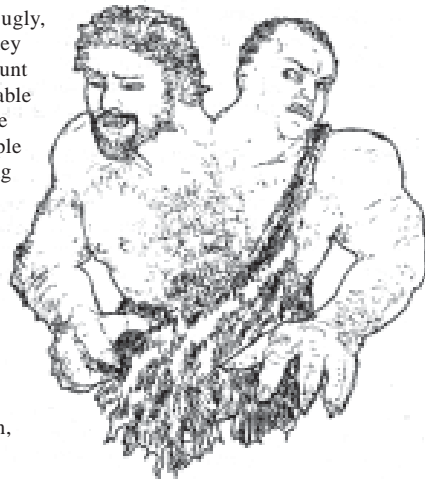
Strength:	15 (+6)	Attack LV: +7(Club Only)	Spell Points: 1
Intelligence:	1 (-1)	Defense LV: 1	
Health:	6 (+2)	Initiative: 0	EXP Value: 200 / 8
Dexterity:	4 (+1)	Dodging: 4	
Awareness:	2	Hit Points: 50+(3D6)	Money:
Beauty:	1 (-1)	# of Attacks: 1	2D6
Charm:	1 (-1)	Luck: 1	

Wooden Club (Att Lv: 1, Init -1). Hides/Skins (Def Lv: 1).

Mutants, when attacking, typically attack as a tribe (this means that 50 to 150 attack). All but the chief will use clubs. Most of the time, mutants will attack roving bands of adventurers and, once in a great while, they will attack a village or small city (the last one if several tribes get together). The chiefs are as smart as the normal human and they give the orders to the others who follow as best that a mutant can. One becomes a chief not by fighting but by besting the others in a game of wits called "quo". This game is taught to young mutants that the chief says are smart. Many times the chiefs can be paid off not to attack a village or city.

Hole: Holes are rather interesting creatures that live in dungeons and dark forests or swamps. The size of a hole is directly representative of its recent diet, so the more a Hole eats, the larger it grows, taking on its natural grayish-brown hue. As it slowly starves awaiting its next victim, it gradually shrinks and, concurrently, assumes the shape and texture of its surroundings. Using this camouflage, a Hole almost never moves, but instead waits patiently for something alive and juicy to inadvertently stumble across it; whereupon the Hole will instinctively grab hold of its meal with its clawed appendages and proceed to stuff the unfortunate passerby down its gullet.

|				
Strength:	4 (+1)	Attack LV:	6/2	Spell Points: 0
Intelligence:	0 (-1)	Defense LV:	2	
Health:	2	Initiative:	3	EXP Value: 25 / 1
Dexterity:	3	Dodging:	0	
Awareness:	2	Hit Points:	4D6	Money:
Beauty:	0	# of Attacks:	1	1D6+2
Charm:	0	Luck:	0	

Entrenched and hidden in this manner, a Hole is difficult to spot (a character must roll less than his or her Awareness on 3d6 to detect). As the Hole attacks, each character within its reach gets one Dodge attempt against an Attack Level of 12. If the character fails the Dodge, however, damage is dealt based on the Hole's normal Attack Level of 6. After this initial reflexive action by the Hole, combat proceeds as normal. Holes have been known to attach themselves to ceilings, but are most commonly encountered spread across floors. The most interesting aspect of Hole biology is its inability to digest gold. This works out quite well for the Hole, as the gold lays exposed in its gaping maw, which sometimes has the effect of luring tasty morsels to the precise spot the Hole wants them.

Holes are sometimes kept as "pets" by the wealthy wishing to remain wealthy; these Holes are used as living traps and are bound by magical means to resist attacking their owners. Unless the treasure it protects is constantly sought after, a Hole in this environment needs to be fed approximately once a week; and are often given sheep or pigs for nourishment. A captured Hole in good condition (subdued with blunt weapons) can expect to command a price of 100-200 coins on the open market, though this sort of trading has been outlawed by a number of kingdoms.

Skeletons: Skeletons are undead creatures, typically animated by magic. The raised skeletons will serve the spelltwister in whatever capacity able. Most spelltwisters can only animate a skeleton for a limited period of time.

Strength:	1 (-1)	Attack LV:	0+ Weapon	Spell Points: 0
Intelligence:	1 (-1)	Defense LV:	0+ Armor	
Health:	0 (-1)	Initiative:	0	EXP Value: 25 / 1
Dexterity:	2	Dodging:	2	
Awareness:	2	Hit Points:	1D6	Money:
Beauty:	0 (-1)	# of Attacks:	1	None
Charm:	0 (-1)	Luck:	0	

How strong an animated skeleton is depends on how strong that person had been in life. An imprint of a person's spirit is linked to a person's skeleton after death and this imprint is what empowers the animated skeleton to a certain degree. The vast majority of skeletons will merely belong to peasants or unskilled warriors or guards. A few might have belonged to a skilled soldier or local hero, and far fewer yet to famous warlords. The more powerful the spirit imprint associated with skeletal bones, the more challenging it will be for the spelltwister to animate and control the skeleton. The fighting skill and other skills owned by the skeleton will be equal to a portion of the skill of the person who the bones had belonged to in life. On rare of occassions, a skeleton may be animated that is still able to cast spells; so long as those spells may be cast using physical motions alone. The animation fails once a skeleton's hit points are reduced to zero.
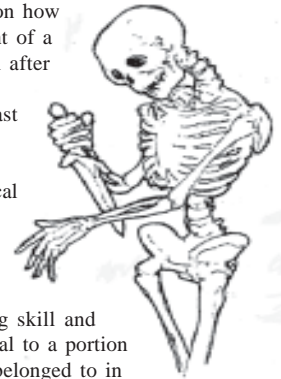
Skeletal Warrior:

Strength:	6 (+2)	Attack LV:	2+ Weapon + 2 Weap Mastery	
Intelligence:	3	Defense LV:	1+ Armor	
Health:	0 (-1)	Initiative:	4	EXP Value: 75 / 3
Dexterity:	5 (+1)	Dodging:	8	
Awareness:	4 (+1)	Hit Points:	12 +3D6	Money:
Beauty:	0 (-1)	# of Attacks:	1	None
Charm:	0 (-1)	Luck:	0	

Larve: Larve are repulsive little magical parasites. They possess soft translucent bodies with moist skin. Their skeletal system is composed entirely of a cartilage-like material, excepting more hardened claws on their hands, feet, and fangs. Larve stand at one to one-and-a-half feet tall and will be found in small bands of 2D6 creatures. They are very intelligent and will actively hunt any creatures that possess magical skills, spell points, or mystical items. Larve are patient hunters and will wait for the most opportune time to attack a magical creature or character with magic. They will set traps when possible, or wait to ambush the creature when it is sleeping or otherwise non-attentive.

Strength:	1 (-1)	Attack LV:	3/2	Spell Points: 1D6+2
Intelligence:	5 (+1)	Defense LV:	0	
Health:	3	Initiative:	1	EXP Value: 25 / 1
Dexterity:	5 (+1)	Dodging:	5	
Awareness:	3	Hit Points:	1D6	Money:
Beauty:	0 (-1)	# of Attacks:	2 (see below)	1D6+2
Charm:	0 (-1)	Luck:	1	

Larve attack twice per combat round. The first attack is with their large fangs, with which the Larve try to bite onto any magical character or items. They will target a character with spell points first. If no such characters exist, then the Larve will attempt to bite into any magical items instead. If the characters have no magic at all, then the Larve will have no interest in them. If the Larve successfully attacks its target with a bite, they will latch onto the character or item and not let go. Each round the Larve is attached it will drain 5 Spell Points, 1 magical charge from an item, or reduce a permanent magical item's magic level by one. This "sucking" of magic will allow the Larve to regenerate 1D6 of Hit Points per turn. It also gives the Larve 1D6 Spell Points per turn to power its energy claws or cast spells.
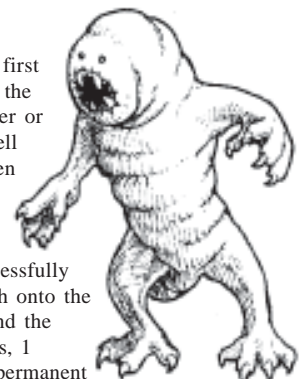
Larve will use their claws as their second attack. Their claws have an attack level of 2. If a Larve has sucked magic from a creature or item, it may use 2 Spell Points to electrify their claws, adding +1 attack level for each 2 Spell Points spent in this manner. Rarely some Larve learn actual spells. Most leaders of a Larve clan or tribe, will have 5-50 spell points with which to cast spells, above and beyond what they are able to drain from others. These Larve will know 1D6 spells at levels 1D6 for each spell.

Dark Realms Character Record Sheet

(Permission granted to photocopy this page for game play purposes only.)

Player Name

Character Name

Character Race

Age	Gender	HT	WT

Personality Traits

Character Background

Money, Gems & other Valuables

Weapon Masteries	Level

Spell Points		Essence Points	
Max / Current		Max / Current	

Miscellaneous Items

Core Attribute	Rating	Adjust.
Strength		
Intelligence		
Health		
Dexterity		
Awareness		
Beauty		
Charm		

Hit Points
Max / Current

Dodging | **Luck**

Experience Points
Total / Unspent

Current Attack Lv:_____   **Current Defense Lv:** _____

Base Initiative: _____   Init Mods [ ]   Dodge Mods [ ]

Armor, Shields, & Other Defensive Items

Item	Def Lev	Dodge Pen.	Init Pen.

Weapons

Item	Att Lev	Dodge Pen.	Init Pen.	Hands

Skill	LV	Skill	LV

Spell	LV	DF	Spell	LV	DF

Epic *Adventure* Begins Here!

The Dark Realms Epic Adventure Game is an easy to learn role-playing game where one player assumes the role of the Realm Master and guides a group of players, with their fictional characters, through an ongoing campaign of quests and adventures. Through this gaming process, the players get to develop and advance their characters, and together with the Realm Masters and players get to unfold and experience an evolving interactive epic adventure story. The players will develop their characters' personalities and build grand stories around their adventuring exploits and the Realm Master will get to develop an entire fictional world and see it unfold and evolve as the player-characters experience it and change it through their adventures.

The Dark Realms Epic Adventure game system has been designed to be both extremely simple to learn and flexible to adapt and expand to meet the growing needs of Realm Masters and players as their own gaming experiences grow. The game system is completely playable with just these game rules, a six-sided die and active participation from the Realm Master and players. Born out of the merger of two of the Guild of Blades' earlier games (the W.H.A.T.? Customizable RPG and the Dark Realms RPG Universe), the Dark Realms Epic Adventure Game captures the best of both, with its easy to learn and adapatable system and its epic and far reaching universe setting, allowing the game to be played in a multitude of settings and genres.

This core game book includes everything players will need to begin adventuring in fantasy game settings.

The Dark Realms Epic Adventure Game Core Rules Includes:
1) Character Creation rules, including 9 different races to choose from.
2) Weapons, Armor and Equipment lists and costs.
3) Skill creation guidelines.
4) Spell creation guidelines.
5) Rules for character exerience gaining and advancement.
6) Realm Mastering tips and guides.
7) Sample Non-Player Characters and Creatures.
8) Blank Character Sheet. (permission to photocopy as needed for personal use)

Recommended for ages 10 and above.

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