



THE ARCHMAGE ENGINE



SOURCE MATERIAL
Rob Heinsoo
Jonathan Tweet

SYSTEM REFERENCE DOCUMENT
Chad Dylan Long

Pelgrane Press



Character Rules

These rules are for the character you create, your PC (playable character).

Race

Every character has a race (see Races). Pick one for your character. If you want to make a non-standard race for your character, the rules won't hinder you. The system is designed to be flexible enough to allow for improvisation.

Each race provides a +2 bonus to one of your ability scores.

Class

Every character has a class (see Classes). Pick one of these too.

Each class provides a +2 bonus to one of your ability scores.

Abilities

Your character can be assigned ability scores in various ways. Here are two ways.

Roll 'em

Roll 4d6 for each of the six ability scores (Strength, Constitution, Dexterity, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma). Drop the low die in each roll. Put the scores into any order to best fit the character you want to play.

Point Buy

You get 28 points to buy your abilities using the chart below.

Ability	Cost
18	16
17	13
16	10
15	8
14	6
13	5
12	4
11	3
10	2
9	1
8	0

Combat Stats

For details on how combat works, see Combat Rules.

Although Armor Class, Physical Defense, and Mental Defense are based on a single ability score, the score each defense uses depends on the character. In each case, you look at three ability modifiers and use the middle value (not the highest or the lowest). If two or more modifiers are tied, you use one of those tied scores as the middle score.

1st Level Hit Points

1. Find the base value for your class (6, 7, or 8) in the Starting Stats for 1st Level Characters chart.

2. Add your Con modifier to get your “hit point value.”
3. Multiply your hit point value by 3 to get your total hit points at 1st level.

Armor Class

1. Find the base AC value for your class (10 to 16) in the Starting Stats for 1st Level Characters chart.
2. Find the middle value among your Con modifier, Dex modifier, and Wis modifier. That value is your AC modifier.
3. Add the AC modifier to your base AC value.
4. Add +1 at 1st level (and increase by +1 at each additional class level).

Physical Defense

1. Find the base PD for your class (10 to 12) in the Starting Stats for 1st Level Characters chart.
2. Find the middle value among your Str modifier, Con modifier, and Dex modifier. That value is your PD modifier.
3. Add the PD modifier to your base PD.
4. Add +1 at 1st level (and increase by +1 at each additional class level).

Mental Defense

1. Find the base MD for your class (10 to 12) in the Starting Stats for 1st Level Characters chart.
2. Find the middle value among your Int modifier, Wis modifier, and Cha modifier. That value is your MD modifier.
3. Add the MD modifier to your base MD.
4. Add +1 at 1st level (and increase by +1 for each class level).

Initiative

Your Initiative bonus is a d20 check, not a static value.

1. Start with your Dexterity modifier.
2. Add +1 at 1st level (and increase by +1 at each additional class level).

Recoveries & Recovery Dice

Most characters start the game with 8 recoveries. (See Recoveries.) Some classes and talent choices may give you more recoveries.

Each class also has a different recovery die, usually a d6, d8, or d10, as specified in the class write-up. When you roll a recovery, you’ll roll a number of recovery dice equal to your level and add your Constitution modifier.

Attacks and Powers

You calculate attack and damage rolls based on the ability scores favored by your class or by the specific powers you choose within your class. Most classes use one specific ability score for most of their attacks. See Classes for more information.

One Unique Thing

Your character’s One Unique Thing (their *unique*) is a special feature invented by you, the player, which sets your character apart from every other hero. It is a unique and special trait to your player, and markedly unusual. The intent is that it provides a special flavor to the

campaign and can assist the GM in determining how your character can interact with characters and story in the campaign.

Your character's *unique* should not provide general practical value in combat. That is not the intent. The intent is to open up story arcs and fun roleplaying opportunities.

Icon Relationships

Your character's relationship with icons is an important way to draw him or her into your game world. An icon may have its own champions and heroes (including you) to advance its cause in the game world.

Relationship Points

At 1st level, each character gets 3 relationship points. Each point represents one d6 to be used when trying to leverage your connection to the icon. (See Using Icon Relationships.)

The number of points you invest in a relationship with an icon doesn't necessarily correlate with the closeness of the connection or the strength of the relationship. It does correlate with the utility of the relationship. It's not necessarily about how well the icon knows you or how strong the icon feels about you. Instead, the points reflect the chance that your relationship will be helpful to you.

The Icons Relationships Master Chart summarizes the likely roleplaying and story-oriented consequences of positive, conflicted, and negative relationships with heroic, ambiguous, and villainous icons.

Icon Relationships Master Chart

Icon	Positive Relationship	Conflicted Relationship	Negative Relationship
Heroic Icon	<p>Spend 1, 2, or 3 points.</p> <p>As far as this icon is concerned, you're one of the good guys, a white-hat hero. Authorities often help you, and civilians often trust you. On the down side, you may be called on to serve representatives of the icon even when you have other plans. You might also be a target of villainous icons or this heroic icon's rivals.</p>	<p>Spend 1, 2, or 3 points.</p> <p>You're probably one of the good guys, but for some reason you're suspect to the icon. Maybe you're a convict who has served his time, or an imperial soldier who was too good and got drummed out of his legion. You have insider knowledge and allies who are in good with the icon, but you also have enemies associated with the icon.</p>	<p>Spend 1 point.</p> <p>In the icon's eyes, you're a dissident, opponent, rival, or foe. You may have contacts or inside knowledge that you can use to your advantage, but some form of trouble waits for you wherever this heroic icon has influence.</p>
Ambiguous Icon	<p>Spend 1, 2, or 3 points.</p> <p>Thanks to your relationship with the icon, you are a hero to some, a villain to others, and possibly even a monster to a few. The enemies of your friends may turn out to be your friends, and vice versa. Advantages and complications will come from all sides.</p>	<p>Spend 1, 2, or 3 points.</p> <p>Your relationship with the icon is complex, an uneven relationship with an icon who's a hero to some and a villain to others. One way or another, you can find help or hostility anywhere. You don't just live in interesting times—you create them.</p>	<p>Spend 1 or 2 points.</p> <p>Your enmity with this icon makes you some enemies, but it also makes you some useful friends. You may be a dissenter, unwanted family member, or even a traitor in some way.</p>
Villainous Icon	<p>Spend 1 point.</p> <p>You are able to gain secrets or secretive allies, but your connection to this icon brings trouble from</p>	<p>Spend 1 or 2 points.</p> <p>You mostly work against the icon, but you're also connected to the icon in a way you can't</p>	<p>Spend 1 or 2 points.</p> <p>You mostly work against the icon, but you're also connected to the icon in a</p>

	<p>people associated with the heroic icons who oppose the villain. Be prepared to justify why you're not imprisoned, interrogated, or otherwise harassed by the heroic icons and their representatives whenever they encounter you. Or for that matter, by the other PCs.</p>	<p>deny. Your connection sometimes gives you special knowledge or contacts, but it also makes you suspect in the eyes of many right-minded would-be heroes.</p>	<p>way you can't deny. Your connection sometimes gives you special knowledge or contacts, but it also makes you suspect in the eyes of many right-minded would-be heroes.</p>
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This chart assumes that you're playing a heroic character. A villainous character will need to swap the maximums between heroic and villainous icons.

Rolling Icon Relationship Dice

To check your icon relationship (your relationship with a particular icon), roll a d6 for each point you have in the relationship. This means that you will usually roll 1, 2, or 3 dice. (At epic level, it may be 4.)

If any die is a 6, you get some meaningful advantage from the relationship without having complications. If two or three dice come up 6, that's even better.

If any die is a 5, your connection to the icon is going to work out as well as a 6 would, but with some unexpected complication. If it's a good icon, you might be drawn into some obligation. If it's a villainous icon, you might attract unwanted attention.

Rolling 5s when you also rolled 6s should make life both interesting and advantageous!

Icons' Organizations

Icons are usually not directly part of the campaign. They rarely make an appearance personally, except perhaps at epic level. Most of the time, interacting with an icon means that you're actually interacting with his or her lower-level functionaries, acolytes, disciples, bureaucrats, lieutenants, barons, priests, etc. In fact, any level of relationship with an icon can be enough to get you noticed by other people who are connected to that icon.

Using Icon Relationships

The most straightforward way to use your relationship points is on positive or conflicted connections that generally provide you with outright assistance and useful information.

Negative relationships usually provide inside knowledge, special skills, opportunistic allies, and possibly some sort of supernatural advantage against a villain.

Often you might find that enemies of your rival see you as an opportunity to strike against that mutual enemy. You might get help, wealth and resources, and even magic items from quite unexpected sources, some of which may not be entirely to your liking.

In addition to aid from others, icon relationships provide characters with special knowledge.

A negative relationship with a thoroughly villainous icon is more in keeping with the heroic lifestyle, but you should expect that the assistance you get from a negative relationship may end up being more directly confrontational than more conventional conflicted and positive relationships.

Changing Relationships

When your character achieves champion level (5th), you gain an extra relationship point. Use it to increase an existing relationship by one die or gain a 1-point relationship with a new icon to match your character's story thus far. You can save the extra relationship die and decide to apply it later.

At 5th level, or any time thereafter, you can switch an existing relationship point from one icon to another, including to a new icon. You owe the GM and other players an entertaining explanation of what this big change represents for your character personally, of course.

When you reach epic level (8th), you gain another relationship point, which you can use to increase an existing icon relationship by one die, including up to 1 point over maximum. As at 5th level, if switching a relationship point from one icon to another makes sense for your 8th level character, go for it.

Backgrounds & Skill Checks

Backgrounds represent pieces of your character's history that contributes to your character's history as well as their ability to succeed with non-combat skills.

Each character has a number of points to allocate to a set of backgrounds. These are broad categories of experience (cat burglar, for example) rather than specific implementations of that experience (climbing and hiding).

Backgrounds don't sync to a specific ability score, though some backgrounds obviously may get used more often with certain ability scores than others.

Assigning Background Points

Each character gets 8 background points, plus any extra that your class's talents award. Assign your background points to as many backgrounds as you want, up to your total points. You can assign a maximum of 5 points to a single background (and minimum of 1).

Making Skill Checks

When you roll a skill check to find out if you succeed at a task or trick, the GM tells you which ability score is being tested. Then you choose the background you think is relevant to gain the points you have in that background as a bonus to the skill check.

Most skill checks require you to equal or beat a Difficulty Class (DC), set by the environment you are operating in, to succeed.

To make a skill check, use this formula:

D20 + relevant ability modifier + level + relevant background points

Vs.

DC set by the environment

You can't apply multiple backgrounds to the same check; the background with the highest (or tied for highest) bonus applies.

Choosing Your Backgrounds

Choose backgrounds that help you make sense of your characters past, jobs, and settings. Background and skill use is meant to be about fun in-character methods of attempting to advance the plot.

A few possible backgrounds include: acrobat, alchemist, animal trainer, architect, aristocratic noble, assassin, chef, con-woman, goblin exterminator, hunted outlaw, knight errant, magecraft, priest, refugee, scout, shepherd, soldier, spy, temple acolyte, thief, torturer, transformed animal, traveling martial arts pupil, tribal healer, tunnel scout, wandering minstrel, warrior poet, and so on.

Choose the Relevant Ability Score

For players, the point of this background/skill system is to encourage roleplaying and creative solutions to problems. Not every problem can be solved by your dominant abilities. For the GM, it's the chance to make all of the ability scores matter at one time or another.

Natural 20s and Fumbles with Skill Checks

When a PC rolls a natural 20 with a skill check, the GM should feel free to give that character much more success than the player expected.

When a PC rolls a 1 with a skill check, the skill check fumbles and fails, perhaps in a particularly bad way. But a failure isn't always entirely terrible....

Fail Forward!

Outside of battle, when failure would tend to slow action down rather than move the action along, instead interpret it as a near-success or event that happens to carry unwanted consequences or side effects. The character probably still fails to achieve the desired goal, but that's because something happens on the way to the goal rather than because nothing happens. In any case, the story and action still keep moving.

Background/Skill Advancement

All your skill checks increase by 1 when you level up. If you want even better skill checks, take the Further Backgrounding feat.

If you just want to move around the bonuses you already have to show how your character is changing, you can move one background point around among your current backgrounds each time you gain a level, or swap the point into an entirely new background, with the GM's permission.

Feats

Characters choose a feat at 1st level, and at every subsequent level.

Feats appear in three tiers: adventurer feats, champion feats, and epic feats. Adventurer feats are available to any character between level 1 and level 10. Champion feats are available starting at level 5. Epic feats are available starting at level 8.

Feats per Level

Level	Player Character
1	1 adventurer
2	2 adventurer

3	3 adventurer
4	4 adventurer
5	4 adventurer 1 champion
6	4 adventurer 2 champion
7	4 adventurer 3 champion
8	4 adventurer 3 champion 1 epic
9	4 adventurer 3 champion 2 epic
10	4 adventurer 3 champion 3 epic

Since humans start with an additional feat at 1st level, add one to the number of adventurer feats humans possess all the way up the chart.

Most of the feats in the game are attached to specific class talents, attacks, and spells. If a feat is attached to a talent, power, or spell, you must have the talent, power, or spell in order to choose the feat. When there is more than one feat attached to a specific talent or power, you have to choose the lower tier feats before you pick up the higher tier feats.

General Feats

These are general feats available to any character. A character can't take a specific feat more than once. A few general feats only have adventurer-tier versions; others also have champion- and epic-tier versions that can be added later in your career.

Further Backgrounding

Adventurer Tier

Add a total of 2 points to backgrounds you already have, or choose 2 points of new backgrounds that make sense for your character. You still can't go over the 5-point-per-background maximum.

Champion Tier

Add a total of 3 points to backgrounds you already have, or choose 3 points of new backgrounds that make sense for your character. You still can't go over the 5-point-per-background maximum.

Epic Tier

Add a total of 2 points to backgrounds you already have, or choose 2 points of new backgrounds that make sense for your character. These points can take one of your backgrounds over 5, to a maximum of 7.

Improved Initiative

Adventurer Tier: Gain a +4 bonus to Initiative checks.

Linguist

Adventurer Tier: This feat allows you to speak enough arcana, dwarven, elven, gnomish, gnoll, goblin, orcish, and other standard humanoid languages to comprehend enough of what most other humanoids are saying or screaming during battle. You are not fluent in all these languages, no one will mistake you for a native speaker, and your vocabulary is adventurer-centric (heavy on words connected to danger rather than philosophy or emotions).

You can also read enough to get by in all these languages.

Champion Tier

You can speak, read, and write all the humanoid languages fluently. Stranger languages are no problem for you either. If someone is speaking it, you can figure it out.

Precise Shot

Adventurer Tier: When your ranged attack targets an enemy who is engaged with an ally, you have no chance of hitting that ally.

Rapid Reload

Adventurer Tier: Reloading a heavy crossbow now takes only a quick action. Reloading a hand or light crossbow is a free action.

Reach Tricks

Once per battle, tell the GM how you are using your weapon's reach to perform an unexpected stunt with a reach weapon such as a long spear or halberd. To use the stunt, you must roll a 6+ on a d20.

Ritual Casting

Adventurer Tier: You can cast any spells you know as rituals. Classes that are already ritual casters (cleric, wizard) don't need this feat. (See Rituals for ritual casting rules.)

Skill Escalation

Adventurer Tier: Twice per day, you can add the escalation die to one of your skill checks. Choose after you roll the check.

Strong Recovery

Adventurer Tier: When you roll recovery dice, reroll one of the dice and use the higher result. At 5th level, reroll two of the dice. At 8th level, reroll three.

Toughness

Adventurer Tier: You get additional hit points equal to half your baseline class hit points (rounded down). At 5th level, the total hp bonus increases to your baseline hp value. At 8th level, the total hp bonus increases to double your baseline hp value.

Gear

Every character has a set of gear. Each class lists the type of gear a member of that class normally uses. You can equip non-magical gear as your backgrounds and character history suggest.

As a guide to what costs what, use the Equipment Price Guide.

Armor Categories

Armor is classified as either light or heavy.

Light armor includes: Heavily padded vest, leather armor, studded leather, cured hide.

Heavy armor includes: Heavy chainmail, ring armor, scale mail, half-plate, plate armor, most dragonscale armor.

Melee Weapon Categories

These are the categories of melee weapons:

- Small, one-handed: club, dagger, knife
- Small, two-handed: big club, scythe
- Light/simple, one-handed: hand axe, javelin, mace, shortsword, big knife
- Light/simple, two-handed: spear
- Heavy/martial, one-handed: bastard sword, battleaxe, flail, hammer, longsword, morningstar, scimitar
- Heavy/martial, two-handed: dire flail, greataxe, greatsword, halberd, polearms, heavy warhammer

Ranged Weapon Categories

Ranged weapons can be reloaded as part of the standard action in which they are used in an attack. Hand and light crossbows require a quick action to reload. Heavy crossbows require a move action to reload.

Nearby Targets Only

- Small, thrown: club, dagger, knife
- Small, crossbow: hand crossbow

Nearby Targets Okay; Far Away Targets -2 Atk

- Light/simple, thrown: axe, javelin, spear

Nearby and Far Away Targets Okay

- Light/simple, crossbow: light crossbow
- Light/simple, bow: shortbow, sling
- Heavy/martial, crossbow: heavy crossbow
- Heavy/martial, bow: longbow

Economy

One platinum piece (pp) equals 10 gold pieces. One gold piece (gp) equals 10 silver pieces. One silver piece (sp) equals 10 copper pieces (cp).

Equipment Price Guide

Characters start with armor, weapons, and standard traveling gear; prices are included for reference.

Standard Traveling Gear

Item	Price
Flint and tinder box	1 sp
Money pouch (small)	3 sp

Pack/traveling satchel	1 gp
Rain cloak	3 sp
Road rations (5 days)	25 sp
Sleeping roll	1 sp
Water/wine skin or flask	7 sp

General Goods

Item	Price
Arrows/bolts/sling bullet	1 sp/each
Blanket (wool)	5 sp
Candle	1 cp
Chain, dwarven forged (10 ft)	10 gp
Chain, iron (10 ft)	5 gp
Clothing, simple	2 sp
Clothing, good	1 gp
Clothing, expensive	10-100gp
Clothing, rain cloak (elven)	5 gp
Crowbar (iron)	3 gp
Flask (crystal)	5 gp
Flask (glass)	5 sp
Flask (pottery)	5 cp
Grappling hook (iron)	1 gp
Hammer, small	3 sp
Holy symbol/implement (adv)	10 gp
Holy symbol/implement (chp)	100 gp
Holy symbol/implement (epic)	1000gp
Iron spike	1 sp
Lantern (common)	8 sp
Lantern (hooded)	5 gp
Lantern oil (4 hrs)	1 sp
Magnifying glass	25 gp
Mirror, large	5 gp
Mirror, small	2 gp
Musical instrument (intricate)	5-25 gp
Musical instrument (simple)	1-5 gp
Pipeweed (1 use)	2 cp
Prayer book	2 gp
Rope, 50 ft elven	3 gp
Rope, 50 ft good	6 sp
Rope, 50 ft poor	2 sp
Spellbook (adventurer)	10 gp
Spellbook (champion)	100 gp
Spellbook (epic)	1,000 gp
Tent, large	5 gp
Tent, small	2 gp
Tent, wood elven	10 gp
Thieves' tools (adventurer)	2 gp
Thieves' tools (champion)	20 gp
Thieves' tools (epic)	200 gp

Torch (1 hr.)	1 gp
Torch (6 min)	1 sp

Food/Lodging

Item	Price
Road rations (1 day)	5 sp
Meal, common	1 sp
Meal, good	3 sp
Meal, excellent	8 sp
Meal, feast (for 5)	8 gp
Ale/beer, poor (pitcher)	2 cp
Ale/beer, good (pitcher)	6 cp
Ale/beer, dwarven (pitcher)	1-3 gp
Wine, poor (bottle)	4 cp
Wine, good (bottle)	1 sp
Wine, elven (bottle)	1-5 gp
Inn (per person per day)	
Poor, common room	1-3 sp
Good, shared room	8-14 sp
Excellent, private room	2-5 gp
Suite (sleeps 4 to 8)	5-20 gp

Mounts (including gear)

Item	Price
Dog, guard	10 gp
Dog, riding	15 gp
Donkey/pack mule	10 gp
Horse, riding	20 gp
Horse, battle trained	80 gp
Feed for mount (per day)	2-4 cp

Weapons, Melee (average quality)

Item	Price
Battle gauntlets	4 gp
Battleaxe	6 gp
Club	5 sp
Dagger/knife	1 gp
Double axe	12 gp
Flail	6 gp
Greataxe	10 gp
Greatsword	10 gp
Handaxe	3 gp
Longsword	7 gp
Mace	5 gp
Maul	10 gp
Morningstar	4 gp
Pick	4 gp
Polearm	8 gp
Rapier	10 gp

Sap	5 sp
Scimitar	5 gp
Shortsword	4 gp
Spear	2 gp
Staff	1 gp
Trident	4 gp
Two-bladed sword	15 gp
Warhammer	7 gp

Weapons, Ranged (average quality)

Item	Price
Bow: Longbow	14 gp
Bow: Shortbow	9 gp
Crossbow: Hand crossbow	8 gp
Crossbow: Light crossbow	10 gp
Crossbow: Heavy crossbow	15 gp
Javelin	2 gp
Net, weighted	3 gp
Sling	2 sp
Shuriken	7 sp
Throwing axe	3 gp
Throwing hammer	3 gp

Armor (average quality)

Item	Price
Cloth/padded	1 gp
Leather	10 gp
Studded leather	15 gp
Hide	10 gp
Light chain	20 gp
Heavy chain/ring	30 gp
Scale	40 gp
Half-plate	45 gp
Plate	50 gp
Shield	5 gp

Services

Item	Price
Bath, with servants	1 gp
Bodyguard (d)	2 gp
Carriage/coach, one ride	2 sp
Carriage/coach	2 gp
Courier (intercity)	5 sp
Courier (long distance)	5 gp
Courier (urchin)	5 cp
Courtesan	1-100 gp
Guide, urban (d)	1 gp
Guide, wilderness (d)	5 gp
Herald (in city only)	1 gp

Lantern bearer (in city) (d)	5 sp
Mercenary, soldier (d)	5 gp
Mercenary, thug (d)	1 gp
Moneylender (cost per 100gp)	5 gp
Oracle/seer/fortune teller	5 cp to 100 gp
Personal chef (d)	1 gp
Sage	5-50 gp
Valet/manual laborer	5 cp to 5 gp
Cleric (divine spells/rituals)	Varies
Wizard (arcane spells/rituals)	Varies