GNAT

SYSTEM REFERENCE DOCUMENT

Welcome to the GNAT adventure system, a rules system for solo adventures that emphasises speed of play and minimal record keeping.

GNAT defines your adventurous character with two numbers: **Talent** and **Vitality**. Talent covers both your luck and expertise, while Vitality measures your will to survive and capacity to endure harm.

GNAT requires two six-sided dice.

Talent

Testing Talent

While playing a GNAT adventure you will frequently be asked to *Test your Talent*. Roll two dice and comparing the result to your current Talent score; you succeed if the result is less than or equal to your Talent. A natural roll of double 1 (a **critical**) always succeeds, while a double 6 (a **fumble**) always fails.

Sometimes you will be supplied with a modifier to the roll, (e.g. *Test your Talent at -3*). This modifier is applied to your Talent, rather than the dice roll, so a negative number makes it harder to succeed, while a positive number makes it easier.

Occasionally ill-luck or misfortune can result in a loss of Talent, as your will is eroded. In this case you will be told to *Lose 1 Talent*. Such a loss affects all your tests until you are able to rest, or good-fortune results in you being told to *Restore 1 Talent*. Restoring Talent will not raise your score above its maximum value.

Skills

While Talent measures your overall mastery of all areas of life, not every field of endeavour is equal. These areas are covered by **Skills**, which supply a bonus (+2) to your Talent if you possess them.

If you are asked to (for example) *Test Climbing*, then you *Test your Talent*, adding +2 if you have the Climbing Skill. Sometimes you can only make such a test if you possess the skill, at other times you will be allowed to *Test your Talent at -2* (a **Default Roll**). An adventure will tell you when a *Default Roll* is an option.

A starting character possesses one or more *Base Skills*, which are ones supplying a +2 bonus, but with experience you may acquire *Advanced Skills*. Advanced Skills supply a larger bonus, but still give a -2 penalty when you don't have them. (For more details, see Experience, below).

The basic skill list is: *Appraise*, *Climbing*, *Diplomacy*, *Linguistics*, *Naturalist*, *Occult*, *Search*, *Stealth*, *Swimming*, *Tracking*, *Trapfinding*.

- **Appraise**: Used to get better value for treasure
- **Climbing**: Climbing, balancing, and athletics
- **Diplomacy**: Used to negotiate with others
- **Linguistics**: Used to translate dead languages
- **Naturalist**: Knowledge of plants and animals
- **Occult**: The supernatural and spellcasting
- **Search**: Used to find hidden things
- **Stealth**: Sneaking and hiding
- **Swimming**: Used to swim and fight in the water
- **Tracking**: Follow trails and find people
- **Trapfinding**: Locate and disarm traps

Vitality

Your Vitality score measures your ability to push on and endure harm. Damage reduces Vitality, and when it reaches zero, your character is overcome — dead or severely injured. Damage to your Vitality is measured in **Wounds**. If you are told to *Take a Wound*, you reduce your Vitality by one. (Sometimes you may be told to *Take two Wounds*, or more).

You may sometimes also be told to *Lose one Vitality*. This is similar, except that the loss cannot be prevented by armour (see below). You may also be told to *Heal one Vitality*, which allows you to heal a point of lost Vitality.

Most adventures will tell you what to do if you reach zero Vitality. If they do not, your character dies and the adventure is over.

Some adventures offer opportunities to *Rest*, which generally involves consuming a **ration** (see Equipment, below). When you rest you will usually be told to restore some Talent and heal some Vitality. Sometimes, if you don't have a ration, you will lose Talent or Vitality instead.

Magic

Spells are magical rituals that must be inscribed on scrolls, tablets, or other items, because unleashing the spell destroys the item that contains it. Although a spell can be memorised and cast without an item, this damages the wizard's brain, and player characters never do this.

If you have a spell, you may cast it when instructed to do so in the text (e.g. *Cast Fly*) by *Testing Occult*. If you succeed, the spell is cast, otherwise the spell is destroyed without effect.

Standard Spells

The following spells have standard uses:

Dispel
Ends a magical effect on you, or something you touch.

Fireball
When fighting a group of enemies, automatically win a round.

Flight
Allows you to briefly take flight (for about a minute) and then land again.

Invulnerability
Cast after a failed *Fight* test to ignore the result.

Swim
Allows you to breath and move underwater for a short period (about ten minutes).

Teleport
Transports you instantly a short distance, possibly escaping a situation.

View
Allows you to view an adjacent area or peer inside a sealed container.

Rationale

Spells in GNAT are a consumable resource, treated much like items, but with predictable effects that encourage players to carry them from one adventure to another.

Combat

Combat is a special case of testing Talent. When you face combat, you will be told to *Fight*. To Fight, *Test your Talent*. If you pass, you win the fight. If you fail, you *Take a Wound*.

Many combats involve a penalty, to represent the strength of the opponent, and some last multiple rounds — which means you must test your Talent multiple times. For example if you are told to *Fight three rounds at -3*, that means you must test your Talent three times, with a -3 penalty on each roll, suffering one wound for each round you fail. If you are still alive at the end of the three rounds, you win the fight.

Weapons, Shields, and Armour

Your character can carry multiple weapons, a shield, and a suit of armour, each of which give bonuses in combat. If you are carrying more than one weapon, you choose which to use at the start of combat.

Normal Weapons require one hand to use (allowing you to also use a shield), and may give a bonus to your Talent in combat. e.g. you may find a **Sword (+1)**.

Two-Handed Weapons require both hands to use (so you cannot use a shield). In addition to any bonuses, a two-handed weapon allows you to re-roll the first 6 you roll each round when fighting — you must take the second result.

Long Weapons (such as spears) require both hands to use (so you cannot use a shield), but do not have the two-handed bonus. However, they may sometimes provide an extra bonus where their length is relevant.

Shields require one hand to use (so you cannot use a shield and a two-handed weapon). Shields reduce any combat penalty you suffer by 1, or by 2 if you face multiple opponents at once.

Magical Weapons can be one or two-handed. In addition to their normal bonuses, they also give you *Advantage* (see below).

Armour comes in Light (1 protection), Medium (2 protection), and Heavy (3 protection) varieties. When you *take a wound* while wearing armour, you may choose to ignore the wound — and you may do this a number of times per adventure equal to the protection value. Some adventures may offer the chance to *repair your armour*, which restores its protection value.

When wearing armour, you take a penalty to *Stealth* and *Climbing* skills equal to the undamaged protection value.

Advantage and Disadvantage

Sometimes you will be fighting with a distinct advantage — such as when you are flying and your target is not. When you have *Advantage* you may re-roll any one dice — you must take the second result. You make this re-roll after any other re-rolls (e.g. from a two-handed weapon).

Sometimes the opposite is true, such as when your target is flying and you are on the ground. In this case you have *Disadvantage* and must re-roll the first 1 or 2 you roll each round when fighting — taking the second result.

Equipment

During your adventures you may pick up many pieces of equipment, such as a **jewelled dagger**, a **ration**, a **flight spell**, or a **pickled serpent's head**. These will be marked in bold. You also have a *Coin Pouch* that holds any number of gold pieces (gp), which can be spent to buy other items.

You can carry as many of these normal items as you wish, but the same is not true of *Heavy Items*. The total number of heavy items you can carry is equal to twice your *maximum* Vitality.

Weapons, shields, and armour are all heavy items. If some other item is heavy it will be listed in the adventure where you find it, e.g. **barrel of ale (heavy)**.

You will sometimes find items marked as *treasure*, e.g. **gold ring (treasure, 40gp)**. You cannot spend these items directly, but can sell them for the indicated price at locations where you are told that someone will *buy treasure*.

> **Rationale**
>
> Many systems limit the number of items a player can carry to force choices. However, in a system where characters may travel from adventure to adventure, players may wish to keep items across games. By limiting only heavy items, choices can still be presented while items not relevant to the current adventure can be retained.

Standard Equipment Prices

- One-handed, or ranged weapon — 20gp
- Two-handed, or long weapon — 25gp
- Shield — 20gp
- Light Armour — 40gp
- Medium Armour — 100gp
- Heavy Armour — 250gp
- Rations (each) — 5gp
- View Spell — 100gp
- Flight Spell — 150gp
- Screen Spell — 50gp
- Rope (+1 Climbing) — 50gp
- Bestiary (weighs 1, +1 naturalist) — 200gp
- Tome (weighs 1, +1 occult) — 200gp
- Healing Potion (*Heal 3 Vitality*) — 100gp

Keywords and Titles

During your adventures you may gain vital clues, or participate in certain events, which are marked by **Keywords**, which are given in italics, e.g. "Gain the keyword *Arbalest*". Keywords are not equipment, and aren't lost if you lose your items.

You may also be awarded **Titles**, which are measures of respect and rank. Titles may give you access to certain restricted parts of adventures. Like keywords, titles are not equipment, but they *can* be removed by adventures. Some adventures record **Status**, which is a sort of title that has a numerical score: e.g. "Status 2 with Treysham".

You do not need to retain keywords after completing an adventure, but you may find a title awarded in one adventure referred to in another.

> **Rationale**
>
> Keywords are used to track progress within a given adventure. After an adventure is over, the player does not need to retain them. Titles provide a way to transfer progress from game to game.

Experience

If you are successful in your adventures, you will be awarded one or more *Experience Points (xp)*. You can spend these points to increase your abilities in one of the following ways:

Increase Talent: pay experience points equal to your current Talent to raise it by one level. For example, to increase from Talent 6 to Talent 7, pay 6xp.

Increase Vitality: pay experience points equal to twice your current Vitality to raise it by one level. For example, to increase from Vitality 3 to Vitality 4, pay 6xp

Advance a Skill: pay experience points equal to your current bonus in a Skill to raise it by one level. For example, to increase from Climbing +2 to Climbing +3, pay 2xp.

Gain a Skill: pay 2 experience points to buy a new *Basic Skill*.

Creating a new character

To create a new character:

- Set your *Talent* to 9
- Set your *Vitality* to 3
- Gain one *Basic Skill*
- Pick a *Normal or Two-handed Weapon*
- Gain 1 **ration**, and **10 gold pieces**

Optionally, you may reduce your Talent by one to gain another Basic Skill. You may do this up to three times.