

The Hack 1.0

The Hack is a tabletop RPG inspired by the venerable computer RPGs *Rogue* (1980), *Hack* (1984), and *Nethack* (1987), along with their many “roguelike” computer RPG descendants.

The roguelike genre is typified by the turn-based exploration of a procedurally-generated fantasy dungeon guarded by deadly monsters and traps. While there are thousands of modern roguelike games, ranging from *Darkest Dungeons* to *FTL*, the original roguelike games, *Rogue*, *Hack*, and *Nethack*, are still widely played themselves, partly due to the open source licenses under which they are released.

In *The Hack*, I’ve simplified those games’ mechanics while trying to stay true to their fundamentals: monsters and characters with AC, HP, levels, and attributes; dungeons; the *Rogue* family of monsters and spells, from ghoul and dragon to force bolt and fireball; and the grim permanency of death.

Besides being partly based on the game *Hack*, *The Hack* is also a hack, and an invitation to hack! While it’s a stand-alone dungeon-crawling game, you can also use *The Hack* as a lightweight, open-source engine for running materials for other RPG genres and systems. Everything in *The Hack* is merely a placeholder! You are encouraged to replace and expand the rules and options. I’ll keep hacking as well. If there is interest, I’ll add rules for Game Runners—dungeon generation and more monsters and treasure—in a version 2.

You can copy, modify, and distribute *The Hack* 1.0 in your own commercial or noncommercial games. If you do, use this license in your game.

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Glossary

I’m putting *The Hack 1.0* glossary first so you can see right away if this is the kind of game you want to play.

Abilities: Special advantages or powers possessed by a creature.

AC: See Armor Class.

Advantage: A circumstantial bonus on a roll.

Armor: Protective clothing that increases Armor Class.

Armor Class: The target number for hitting a creature with an attack.

Action: An activity a creature can perform on their turn, such as making an attack or casting a spell.

Attack: An attempt to physically hurt an opponent with a weapon or the body.

Attack roll: An attack roll is a challenge made against Armor Class and is a d20 plus the attacker’s weapon skill, Dexterity or Strength depending on the weapon, and other relevant modifiers.

Attribute: One of the six numbers (strength, dexterity, constitution, intelligence, wisdom, dexterity) that define a creature's abilities.

Blind: A condition that prevents sight.

Bonus action: see Extra Action.

Breaking: An action taken to break an object.

Challenge: An attempt to succeed at a task by rolling a d20 and beating a target number.

Character: A player's fictional persona.

Charisma: An Attribute defining likeability.

Class: See Role.

Climbing: An action taken to ascend or descend.

Confused: A condition that hampers action.

Constitution: An Attribute defining health.

Cosmopolitan: A character Heritage.

D notation: An expression for rolling dice. "2d6" means, for instance, "2 rolls of a 6-sided die."

Damage: A number defining the extent of an injury.

Defense: A target number for affecting a character with an ability or attack.

Dexterity: An Attribute defining agility.

Difficulty class: See Target number.

Disadvantage: A circumstantial penalty on a roll.

Divine: A spellcasting Role.

Dwarf: A character Heritage.

Dying: A character that has been reduced to 0 hit points but has not yet died.

Elf: A character Heritage.

Experience level: A rating for a character's power.

Experience points: A number that defines a character's progress in earning an Experience Level.

Explorer: A sneaky Role.

Extra action: Some abilities or circumstances allow a creature to take more than one action on their turn. These are called extra actions.

Follower: A pet or henchman that obeys a character's orders and can act on their turn.

Game runner: The player who designs and runs an adventure.

Gnome: A character Heritage.

Healer: A Divine Specialization.

Heritage: A character's lineage or culture. Each grants an Ability.

Hit points: The amount of Damage a creature can survive before dying.

HP: See Hit Points.

Human: A character Heritage.

Immune: Invulnerable to damage from a certain source, or to a certain condition.

Initiative roll: A roll that determines the first character to take a turn in combat or other competition.

Insta-killed: Killed irrevocably without passing through the Dying state.

Intelligence: An Attribute defining book smarts.

Job: See Role.

Jumping: An action taken to leap over an obstacle.

Knight: A Warrior Specialization.

Language skill: A skill that allows a character to learn new languages.

Locksmithing: An action taken to pick a lock or disarm a trap.

Mage: A spellcasting Role.

Maximum hit points: A character's hit points while unwounded.

Miscellaneous skills: The list of non-weapon, non-spell skills a character can learn.

Modifier: See attribute.

Monster level: A rating for a monster's danger.

Negotiation skill: A skill that allows you to bargain with shopkeepers or otherwise persuade creatures.

Noble: A character Heritage.

Orc: A character Heritage.

Paralyzed: A condition that prevents movement.

Pet: See Follower.

Proficiency: See Skill.

Race: While some games use Race to describe species, this game uses the word Heritage.

Rest: A period of inactivity during which a character may eat, heal, and restore magical energy.

Reaction: See Triggered Action.

Riding skill: A skill that allows you to fight effectively on horseback.

Rogue: An Explorer Specialization.

Role: A character's profession.

Roll: 1) any roll of the dice. 2) See Challenge.

Save: A challenge roll made to avoid danger.

Scared: A condition that prevents effective action and movement.

Search skill: A skill that helps a creature Search.

Searching: An action taken to discover hidden secrets.

Sick: A condition that hampers rolls.

Skill: Focused training in a certain task.

Specialization: A subrole within a role.

Speed: The number of Squares a creature can move on their Turn.

Spell skills: The list of spell categories in which a player must gain skills in order to cast spells. (The specific skills are not listed in the glossary.)

Spell slot: The energy cost of a spell.

Spellcasting roll: A spellcasting roll is a challenge made against one of a creature's defenses and is a d20 plus the attacker's relevant spell skill, Intelligence or Wisdom depending on the spell, and other relevant modifiers (such as a penalty for wearing armor).

Square: An area of the ground big enough for one character to inhabit.

Petrifying: A condition that leads to being turned to stone.

Strength: An Attribute defining physical prowess.

Stunned: A condition that prevents effective action.

Target number: A number which must be reached or exceeded on a Roll to succeed at a Challenge.

Tool: An object that allows or helps with the performance of a noncombat task

Tourist: A character Heritage.

Triggered action: An action which a creature can take as a reaction on a different creature's turn.

Turn: Enough time for a character to move and act once.

Two-weapon fighting skill: A skill that allows characters to take an extra attack with a second weapon.

Unconscious: Asleep.

Upcast: Casting a spell using more than the minimum energy required in order to unlock extra effects.

Use an object: open or close a door, pick up an item, draw a weapon, activate a magic item, etc.

Warrior: A fighting Role.

Weak: A condition that reduces strength.

Weapon: Weapons are used in attacks and deal damage.

Weapon skills: The list of weapon categories in which a player can gain skills in order to improve their attack rolls.
(The specific weapon skills are not listed in the glossary.)

Wisdom: An Attribute defining spiritual strength.

Wizard: A Mage Specialization.

XL: See Experience Level.

XP: See Experience Points.

Chapter 1: *The Hack* Basics

The Hack is a roleplaying game. One player, the **game runner**, creates a dungeon adventure (more information on this process may be given in other documents). The other players create **characters** to explore that adventure.

To create a character, you choose a Role, set Attributes, and then decide on a Heritage.

ROLES

Roles, also called **classes** or **jobs**, describe your character's training and shape your starting attributes. *The Hack 1.0* presents four roles:

Divine: a spellcaster with starting Wisdom +3.

Explorer: a sneaky character with starting Dexterity +3.

Mage: a spellcaster with starting Intelligence +3.

Warrior: a fighting character with starting Strength +3.

Each role has several possible **specializations** that grant new abilities at certain levels.

A divine can specialize as a **healer** or **priest**.

An explorer can specialize as an **archaeologist** or **rogue**.

A mage can specialize as a **wizard**.

A warrior can specialize as a **knight**.

These are discussed further in Chapter 2: Experience, Roles, and Specializations. Beyond these roles, you are encouraged to invent more!

ATTRIBUTES

An **attribute**, also called a **modifier**, determines how good a character is at a certain task.

Starting attributes for a character range from +0 to +3. The highest possible attribute is +10, representing titanic strength, godlike intelligence, etc. Negative attributes can go as low as -5.

Each character has 6 attributes:

Strength
Dexterity
Constitution
Intelligence
Wisdom
Charisma

One of your attributes has already been determined by your choice of role. In addition, you have 5 attribute points which can be distributed among the other five attributes. No attribute can be raised higher than 3 during character creation. For example, Brin the warrior is guaranteed to have a Strength of +3, and might also choose to have +2 in Constitution and Charisma, +1 in Dexterity, and +0 in Wisdom and Charisma—or simply put +1 into each non-Strength attribute.

HIT POINTS

Hit points (HP) represent how much damage you can take. Most characters start with **maximum hit points** equal to 10 + their Constitution attribute. You can lose hit points by taking damage. When your hit points reach 0, you may die (see DEATH).

You can gain hit points through resting, magic healing and other means, but your hit points can't be raised higher than their maximum. Your maximum hit points are raised when you gain an experience level (see EXPERIENCE LEVEL) and under some other special circumstances; whenever you gain maximum hit points, you gain the same number of hit points.

Whenever your constitution attribute changes, your maximum hit points change. For every point of constitution you gain or lose, your maximum hit points are respectively raised or lowered by an amount equal to your level.

HERITAGE

Heritage is a description of where you come from, and represents something important about either your lineage or your culture. In *The Hack*, default lineage-based heritages include human, elf, dwarf, gnome, and orc. Instead of being defined by your ancestry, you might instead choose a cultural heritage like tourist, cosmopolitan, or noble.

Each heritage typically comes with one or more **abilities** (game rules that expand a creature's capabilities). For instance:

Humans gain a +1 bonus when using weapon skills or spell skills in which they are untrained.

Elves gain sleep immunity (see IMMUNITIES); they don't need sleep, though they do need rest.

Dwarves gain extra hit points equal to their experience level.

Gnomes need to eat half a food ration to gain a ration's full effect.

Orcs gain poison immunity.

Tourists gain +1 to their speed.

Cosmopolitans know one extra skill of their choice.

Nobles start the game with an extra 300 coins.

Heritages may have story implications at the game runner's discretion. For instance, a dwarf or noble character might have an easier time fitting in at the court of a dwarf king.

DICE

Rogue CRPG games and their descendants use **D notation** to describe dice rolls: "2d6" means, for instance, "2 rolls of a 6-sided die." While CRPGs have no limitation on the number of sides of a die (you can roll 1d71!) *The Hack* mostly limits itself to commonly available polyhedral dice: d4, d6, d8, d10, and d20. Sometimes *The Hack* uses an odd-numbered die, such as d3, d5, d7, or d9. For an odd die, roll the next-largest even die, rerolling the highest number on the die. For instance, for a d3, roll a d4 and reroll any results of 4.

CHALLENGES

Each adventure includes **challenges**, such as combats, negotiations, traps, and puzzles. Each challenge tests one of a character's attributes. To try a challenge, a character rolls d20 and adds the appropriate attribute. For instance, to try a strength challenge, a level 1 warrior rolls d20 and adds +3 for their strength. If the result is *greater than* a **target number** selected by the Game Runner (also called its **difficulty class**), the challenge is successful. Challenges are also called **rolls**, as in "attack roll", "strength roll" and so on.

Typical target numbers:

5	easy challenge
10	average challenge
15	hard challenge
20	heroic challenge

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

While the target number for the same challenge might not change, circumstances might grant characters a particular **advantage** or **disadvantage** in performing the task. For instance, if a monster is off balance, a game runner might decide that characters have an easier time hitting them. When a character has one or more advantages on a challenge, they roll d20 twice and take the higher roll. When a character has one or more disadvantages, they roll d20 twice and take the lower roll. When a character has both advantages and disadvantages, they roll normally.

DEFENSES AND SAVES

Some challenges involve beating another creature. In this case, the target number, called a **defense**, is equal to 10 + one of the opponent's attributes. For instance, a warrior's strength

defense is 10 plus the warrior's strength (+3), for a total of 13. To beat a warrior at a feat of strength, a character must roll a 14 or higher.

Besides the six attribute defenses, a character has an **Armor Class** (also called **AC**) defense which is used against weapon and unarmed attacks. A character's Armor Class is their Dexterity defense plus any bonus granted by their armor (see ARMOR).

Some players prefer to roll the dice themselves when their defenses are attacked. In this case, the defender makes a challenge roll using the defending attribute, and the target number is 10 + the attacker's relevant attribute. This is called a **save**. For example, instead of a monster making a Charisma roll against a character's Wisdom defense to charm them, the defender can make a Wisdom save against the monster's Charisma defense to avoid being charmed.

SKILLS

Skills, also called **proficiencies**, are areas of specialization within a specific attribute. Being skilled or proficient allows you to add a bonus when you try certain challenges to which your skill applies.

As in *Nethack*, there are four levels of proficiency in a skill, each of which grants a different bonus:

+0	Unskilled
+2	Basic
+3	Skilled
+4	Expert

Characters start with certain basic skills as determined by their role; they are unskilled in all other skills. As characters level, they can improve their skill level.

The skills, with the attribute they modify, are as follows:

Weapon Skills:

- axes (strength)
- bows (dexterity)
- bludgeons (strength)
- daggers (dexterity)
- polearms (strength)
- slings (dexterity)
- staffs (strength)
- swords (strength)
- unarmed attacks (strength)
- whips (dexterity)

Spell Skills:

- attack spells (intelligence)
- healing spells (wisdom)
- divination spells (highest of intelligence or wisdom)
- enchantment spells (highest of intelligence or wisdom)
- clerical spells (wisdom)
- escape spells (intelligence)
- matter spells (intelligence)

Miscellaneous Skills:

- language (intelligence)
- locksmithing (dexterity)
- negotiating (charisma)
- riding (charisma)
- search (wisdom)
- two weapon fighting (dexterity)

Weapon skills allow a character to add their skill bonus to attack and damage rolls with a weapon from that category (or with unarmed attacks). Untrained attacks are possible but gain only an attribute bonus and no skill bonus.

Spell skills are required to cast a spell of a certain type. For instance, a character that isn't proficient in attack spells can't cast Fireball. A proficient spellcaster's skill bonus is added to their challenge roll when one is required by the spell.

Besides weapon and spell skills, a few miscellaneous skills are given here:

-Language allows a creature to communicate with others. When a character tries to talk to a member of an intelligent monster species for the first time, they can make an Intelligence challenge against target 10, adding their Language skill, to see if they know that species' language. On a success or failure, the character permanently knows or doesn't know that language. An untrained character never knows extra languages.

-Locksmithing allows a creature to add their skill when holding the appropriate tool (such as a lockpick) and using the locksmithing action.

-Negotiation allows a character to try to sway another through conversation. A successful negotiation challenge against a merchant's Wisdom defense allows a character to sell goods for their full value instead of half their value. The game runner may allow other uses of negotiation.

-Riding allows a character to cause their mount to jump, and can be added to attack rolls in addition to weapon skill when a rider attacks a creature that's afoot.

-Search allows a creature to add their skill when using the search action.

-Two-weapon fighting allows a creature to take an extra action to attack with a second weapon held in their off hand, as long as neither weapon is two-handed. When fighting with two weapons, both weapons add the *lesser* of their appropriate weapon skill or their two-weapon

fighting skill to attack challenges and damage rolls. An untrained character can't fight with two weapons.

Besides this list of skills, the players and Game Runner are encouraged to expand this list with new skills that might allow characters to express themselves in and out of combat. For instance, a character might decide that a Pickpocketing (dexterity) miscellaneous skill would be useful for their rogue. Likewise, a Game Runner might add a Guns (dexterity) weapon skill.

DISTANCE AND TIME

In the *Nethack* CRPG, distance is measured in **squares** and time is measured in **turns**. The exact distance in feet of a square, or duration of a turn in seconds, is not defined.

For the purposes of making rulings on game questions such as “how tall am I in squares?” I’ve decided that in *The Hack*, a square is 10 feet a side, and a turn is 10 seconds. However, if you’d prefer a square to be a square yard, a turn to be 5 seconds long, or some other measurement, that’s fine too!

SQUARES

In *The Hack*, one person can be in a square at a time. A square is considered to be “next to” adjacent and diagonal squares. A creature can attack an opponent next to them, or move to a square next to them.

SPEED

In *The Hack*, each character and monster has a **speed**. Most characters have a speed of 3 squares (by default, 30 feet per turn). On their turn, a creature can move through a number of squares equal to their speed. If a creature moves their maximum speed, they can't do anything else. If they move through fewer squares than their maximum speed, they can also perform another action, such as opening a door or drinking a potion. For instance, a creature with a speed of 3 can move 3 squares, or move 0–2 squares and take an action.

ACTIONS

On its turn, a creature can usually take one **action** (unless it has moved its full speed or it is disabled in some way, such as by being unconscious). Some activities require multiple actions, and thus multiple turns, to perform.

By default, a creature can only take one action per turn, but some creatures can take specific **extra actions**, also called **bonus actions**. For instance, on its turn, a dragon can make a bite attack as its action and two claw attacks as extra actions. If a creature is able to take an action on its turn, it can also use all the extra actions it has available.

Some creatures have **triggered actions**. These are reactions that are taken in response to a different creature's action. For instance, a floating eye's paralysis gaze is triggered when a creature attacks the floating eye. A creature's reaction can be triggered no more than once on each creature's turn.

Some common actions:

-Attacking (see ATTACKS)

-**Breaking** an object, such as a locked door. Delicate items can be automatically broken, and tougher ones require a strength challenge against a fixed target. For instance, a typical wooden door or chest can be broken with a strength roll of 10. Breaking an object is usually loud.

-Casting a spell (see CASTING AND SPELLS)

-**Climbing**. Ascending or descending a ladder or stairs, usually to another dungeon level, succeeds automatically. Climbing walls and other smooth objects requires a Dexterity challenge against a fixed target.

-**Jumping**. A creature can use their action to jump a number of squares equal to or less than their speed. A creature can't otherwise move in a turn in which they jump.

-**Locksmithing** to unlock a lock, or to disarm a trap that they have discovered. Failure jams the lock (causing its difficulty to increase by +1 per failure) or sets off the trap. A simple trap or lock has a target number of 10.

-**Searching** checks the squares next to a character, as well as the square the character occupies, for secret doors, traps, invisible monsters, or other hidden features. Most items are automatically found, but sometimes a Wisdom challenge is necessary vs. a fixed target number for a well-hidden secret. Some secrets can only be found with a specific course of action: for instance, a magical secret door might only be discovered when a magic word is spoken.

-**Using an object** (opening or closing a door, picking up an item, drawing a weapon, activating a magic item, etc). Dropping an item or sheathing a weapon can be done as an extra action.

INITIATIVE

When several creatures wish to do things at the same time, such as in combat, they take turns. At the beginning of the combat or contest, each character and monster makes an **initiative roll** by rolling a d20 and adds its speed. The creature with the highest roll goes first. All creatures tied for the highest result reroll.

Once the creature with the highest initiative roll has taken their turn, play proceeds clockwise around the table, with the game runner controlling all the monsters when play passes to them. Thus, if the game controller controls 3 monsters and one of them rolls the highest initiative, all of the game controller's monsters go first!

In a situation where there is no table, such as a Zoom call or online chat, players might go in alphabetical order by name or choose some other fixed order that allows each player to easily determine when their turn is coming up.

ATTACKS

The most common combat action is the **attack**, either with empty hands or a **weapon** such as a sword. To hit an opponent, a creature must beat a strength challenge (if attacking with a weapon that uses strength, or with no weapon) or a dexterity challenge (if using a weapon that uses dexterity), using the opponent's Armor Class as the target number. For instance, to hit a monster with Armor Class 13, a level 1 warrior rolls 1d20 and adds +3 for their Strength attribute, and an additional +2 if the warrior is skilled with their weapon. If the total is 14 or higher, the attack is a hit.

On a hit, the attacker rolls a die based on the type of weapon used, such as a d4 for a dagger (see WEAPONS below). To this die roll, the character adds all the same bonuses or penalties to damage as they did to their attack roll: attribute, skill, any circumstantial advantages and disadvantages, and so on (but not the result of the d20 roll). The total is the attack's **damage**, which is subtracted from the opponent's hit points.

Most attacks can only be made against adjacent creatures, though long weapons, thrown weapons, or missile weapons can attack farther creatures.

DEATH

In *The Hack*, as in *Rogue* and its successors, there are many ways to die, including being drowned, poisoned, turned to stone, or reduced to 0 hit points. The most common way to die is to be reduced to 0 hit points via damage.

When a character is reduced to 0 hit points, they are **dying** and allies have one turn to save them. An ally can feed the dying character a healing potion or cast a healing spell. Once a creature has regained at least 1 hit point, they are no longer dying. At the start of a creature's turn, if it has 0 hit points, it dies permanently. In *The Hack*, no magic item or spell can restore a dead character to life.

When a character is **insta-killed** without taking damage (such as through poison), death is generally permanent and irrevocable.

RESTING

Characters may rest whenever they wish. A single **rest** may be from 1 to 24 hours long. In order to gain any benefit from a rest, a character must eat one ration of food during the first hour of the rest.

For each hour rested, a character regains a number of hit points equal to their experience level (see EXPERIENCE LEVEL), and 1 energy (see Chapter 4: Casting and Spells).

Beware! While you are resting, monsters may be resting and recovering their hit points as well—or worse, they may be hunting you! If a rest is interrupted early, such as by a monster

attack, a character benefits from only the uninterrupted hours of the rest. Furthermore, resting characters always have an initiative of 0 in combat. Therefore, when in a group, some hurt or tired characters may choose to rest while some act as sentries.

CONDITIONS

Various magical and other effects can inflict various conditions onto monsters and characters, including the following:

-Blind: A blind creature (such as one closing its eyes) can't see but can use the Search action to determine the contents of the squares next to it by touch. A blind creature can attack without penalty, but they waste their attack if there is no creature in their targeted square.

-Confused: A confused creature can't cast spells. Each time they try to attack or enter a square, they must roll a d6. On a 1 or 2, they move or attack in a random direction.

-Paralyzed: While paralyzed, a creature can't move, speak, or take actions.

-Petrifying: A petrifying creature is in the process of being turned to stone. A petrifying creature's speed is reduced by 1. At the end of each of their turns, they must succeed on a Constitution challenge with a target of 10 or be turned to stone (dying instantly). While a character is petrifying, they can be cured by the *stone to flesh* spell. Taking any acid damage also cures the condition.

-Scared: A scared creature can't take actions. It can't move next to another creature, and if it is next to another creature it must move away if it can.

-Sick: A sick creature is weak (it has a -3 disadvantage applied to all challenges).

-Stunned: A stunned creature can't talk or cast spells. Each time they try to attack or enter a square, they attack or move in a random direction.

-Unconscious: An unconscious creature is asleep and unable to perceive, move, or take actions. Unless otherwise noted, an unconscious creature can be awoken by loud noises or by damage.

-Weak: A weak creature has a -3 disadvantage applied to all challenges.

IMMUNITIES

Some characters are **immune** to certain effects. For instance, the elf heritage is immune to the Unconscious condition. Some monsters might be immune to certain types of damage, such as fire or damage from slashing weapons.

FOLLOWERS AND PETS

In *The Hack*, characters can start the game with or gain a **follower**, such as a **pet**. A follower is a monster that follows your orders on your turn. An unintelligent follower is called a pet.

A character usually has one follower at a time; when they obtain a second, they must decide which to release. A released follower is under the control of the game runner.

A character with a follower gains an extra action, Command, which they can use to grant their follower a turn. On this turn, the follower can move and take actions as normal, but a follower can't use triggered actions or extra actions! (So a follower can't command a follower of their own!)

A follower's maximum hit points are always equal to their leader's maximum hit points. Furthermore, whenever a follower makes an attack, spellcasting roll, or damage roll, their leader's Charisma attribute is added. Otherwise, their statistics are appropriate to their monster type.

At the game runner's discretion, a character can sometimes turn a non-hostile monster into a follower through personal charm and good treatment, often involving a suitable gift and a Charisma challenge against the creature's level plus 10.

Chapter 2: Experience, Roles, and Specializations

As a character grows more experienced in adventuring, they gain power. A character's role determines the way that a character's power grows.

EXPERIENCE LEVEL

The Hack characters have an **experience level (XL)**. A character's XL starts at 1, and can advance as they become more powerful.

You gain an experience level by accumulating 5 **experience points (XP)**. You gain an XP from the following actions:

- participating in a combat containing at least one enemy whose monster level equals or exceeds your experience level
- completing a quest or goal (as determined by the Game Runner).

At level 1, you have 10 + Constitution hit points, and you have equipment and starting abilities based on your role (see below). Each time you gain an experience level, you gain the following benefits:

- you gain maximum hit points equal to 5 + your constitution attribute
- If the level gained is *even*, you may increase two of your attributes by 1 point each, to a maximum of 10
- If the level gained is *divisible by 5*, you may increase your skill level in two skills of your choice by one level each (from unskilled to basic, basic to skilled, or skilled to expert)
- At level 7 and 15, if you are using one of the four roles presented in this guide, you gain a new special ability based on your role.

While there is no cap to a character's level, it becomes harder to earn experience above level 25 or so, since there are few monsters of that level!

ROLES

The Hack 1.0 introduces four roles: the divine, explorer, mage, and warrior. Each role has certain starting attributes, skills, and equipment, and learns new abilities as they gain levels.

Additionally, this document presents one or two specializations for each role. More specializations are possible! Each specialization unlocks new abilities at certain levels.

DIVINE

Divines devote themselves to a deity.

Starting Wisdom: +3

Basic Skills: dagger, healing spells

Starting Equipment: knife, 5 rations, 4 potions of healing, 1 of the following (roll 1d4:)

1 potion of extra healing

2 scroll of healing

3 wand of sleep

4 +1 leather gloves

Divines gain the following abilities:

Level 1: Spellcasting: You gain 1 energy (see Chapter 4: Casting and Spells). Your energy increases by 1 whenever you gain an experience level. You know the Healing spell.

Level 2: Specialization ability.

Level 5: Poison immunity: You are immune to poison.

Level 7: Specialization ability.

Level 10: Warning: While not resting, you are aware of the location, but not necessarily the identity, of all creatures within 2 squares of you.

Level 15: Specialization ability.

DIVINE SPECIALIZATIONS

HEALER

Healers favor curative magic to combat. They gain the following abilities:

Level 2: Quick Heal: Once per turn, you can cast the Heal spell as an extra action instead of an action.

Level 7: Healing Training: You increase your skill level in healing spells by one level.

Level 15: Quick Cure: Once per turn, you can cast any healing spell as an extra action instead of an action.

PRIEST

Priests wade into combat. They gain the following abilities:

Level 2: Battle Priest: You can wear a piece of armor that incurs a -1 spellcasting penalty without suffering the penalty.

Level 7: Clerical Training: You increase your skill level in clerical spells by one level.

Level 15: Fire Immunity: You gain fire immunity.

EXPLORER

Explorers are agile and stealthy.

Starting Dexterity: +3

Basic Skills: daggers, lockpicking

Starting Equipment: shortsword, 5 daggers, leather armor, lockpick, 5 rations, 1 of the following (roll 1d4):

1 potion of sickness

2 skeleton key

3 studded leather armor

4 100 coins

Explorers gain the following abilities:

Level 1: Stealth: Monsters are unaware of you unless you approach within 1 square of them, attack them, or make noise. Whenever you move to a square next to a monster, you can try a Dexterity challenge against the monster's wisdom to avoid its notice.

Level 2: Specialization ability.

Level 5: Automatic Search: The first time you are next to a square, you automatically search it without needing to spend an action.

Level 7: Specialization ability.

Level 10: Warning: While not resting, you are aware of the location, but not necessarily the identity, of all creatures within 2 squares of you.

Level 15: Specialization ability.

EXPLORER SPECIALIZATIONS

ARCHAEOLOGIST

Archaeologists sneak through ruins looking for ancient treasure.

Level 2: Swashbuckler: When you hit a monster with a weapon, you deal extra damage equal to your experience level. You can hit creatures 3 squares away with a whip attack.

Level 7: Whip Training: You increase your skill level in whips by one level.

Level 15: Trapsmith: You take half damage from traps.

ROGUE

Rogues use stealth to assassinate foes.

Level 2: Backstab: On your turn, when you attack an adjacent opponent that is unaware of you, you attack with a bonus equal to twice your experience level. On an opponent's turn, when they move from a square next to you to a farther square, as a triggered action you can attack with a bonus equal to twice your experience level.

Level 7: Dagger Training: You increase your skill level in daggers by one level.

Level 15: Multishot: When you use your action to throw a dagger, you can use up to two extra actions to throw additional daggers.

MAGE

Mages use magic as a tool and a weapon.

Starting Intelligence: +3

Basic Skills: staff, attack spells, enchantment spells

Starting Equipment: staff, 5 rations, 1 of the following (roll 1d8):

- 1 scroll of Jumping
- 2 scroll of Knock
- 3 scroll of Light
- 4 scroll of Sleep
- 5 potion of Gain Energy
- 6 ring of Protection
- 7 a pet (a cat)
- 8 wand of Magical Missile

Mages gain the following abilities:

Level 1: Spellcasting: You gain 1 energy (see Chapter 4: Casting and Spells). Your energy increases by 1 whenever you gain an experience level. You know the Force Bolt spell.

Level 2: Specialization ability.

Level 5: Research: You learn a spell of your choice that you can cast.

Level 7: Specialization ability.

Level 10: Teleportation: As an action, you can spend 3 energy to teleport to another square on the dungeon level you're on that's within 20 squares. You must have been on that square before. If the square is currently occupied, you spend the energy and the teleportation fails.

Level 15: Specialization ability.

MAGE SPECIALIZATIONS

WIZARD

Wizards specialize in inflicting magical damage.

Level 2: Oomph: Whenever you roll 1d10 for spell damage, you roll 1d12 instead.

Level 7: Attack Training: You increase your skill level in attack spells by one level.

Level 15: The cost of casting attack spells is reduced by 1 energy per spell, to a minimum of 0.

WARRIOR

Warriors stand on the front line of battle.

Starting Strength: +3

Basic Skills: sword, polearm, riding

Starting Equipment: longsword, ring mail, helm, small shield, leather gloves, 5 rations, 1 of the following (roll 1d4):

1 +1 two-handed sword

2 3 potions of healing

3 a pet (a horse) and a lance

4 250 coins

Warriors gain the following abilities:

Level 1: Critical Hit: Once per turn, when you hit with attack with a roll of 25 or higher, you can take a second attack as an extra action.

Level 2: Specialization ability.

Level 5: Extra Critical: You can use Critical Hit twice per turn.

Level 7: Specialization ability.

Level 10: You increase your training in all weapon skills by one level.

Level 15: Specialization ability.

WARRIOR SPECIALIZATIONS

KNIGHT

Knights support their martial abilities with divine training. They gain the following abilities:

Level 2: Holy Warrior: You gain 1 energy, and an additional energy at each even-numbered level. You increase your training in clerical spells by one level. You learn the spell Turn Undead, which is for you a level 1 spell.

Level 7: Avenger: You increase your training in swords by one level.

Level 15: Holy Shield: Spellcasting rolls made against you are made with a -3 disadvantage.

Chapter 3: Equipment

This chapter contains the nonmagic equipment (**armor**, **weapons**, and **tools**) available to buy and sell when outside of the dungeon (and occasionally in the dungeon). Characters can usually sell an item for half its value.

The coin of the realm is a gold coin called the zorkmid.

Although *Rogue* and similar games make extensive use of encumbrance, *The Hack* 1.0 doesn't track how much you carry. If the game runner thinks you can't pick something up, they will tell you. As a guideline, a character can probably carry an object that weighs 100 pounds, plus 100 pounds per point of strength.

ARMOR

A character can wear armor and other clothing to improve their AC. There are five armor slots: suits, gloves, shields, helmets, and boots. A character can't wear multiple items on the same slot, such as two pairs of boots at once. Wearing some armor imposes a penalty to a character's dexterity attribute (but can't reduce it below 0). Other armor penalizes a character's spellcasting challenge rolls (but spells that don't require a roll can be cast without penalty).

ARMOR	AC BONUS	COST	EFFECT
SUITS			
Clothing	+0	5	
Leather	+1	10	-1 spellcasting
Studded leather	+2	15	-1 spellcasting
Ring	+3	50	-1 dex, -1 spellcasting
Scale	+4	100	-1 dex, -1 spellcasting
Chain	+5	200	-1 dex, -1 spellcasting
Splint	+6	400	-2 dex, -2 spellcasting
Plate	+7	600	-2 dex, -2 spellcasting
Dragon scale	+8	10,000	-1 dex, -1 spellcasting
GLOVES (give immunity to attacks that target the hand)			
Gauntlets	+0	10	-1 dex, -1 spellcasting
SHIELDS (require one hand)			
Small shield	+1	30	-1 spellcasting
Shield	+2	100	-1 dex, -2 spellcasting
HELMES (give immunity to attacks that target the head)			
Helm	+1	30	-1 dex, -1 spellcasting
BOOTS (give immunity to attacks that target the feet)			
Leather boots	+0	10	
Iron boots	+1	50	-1 dex, -1 spellcasting

WEAPONS

When you hit with a weapon, you deal damage based on the die size of the weapon plus the same bonus you used for the attack roll (for instance, if you add +4 to your d20 roll when making an attack roll, you also add +4 when rolling the attack's damage die). Some weapons have other properties:

Long: This weapon can attack a creature 1 or 2 squares away.

Missile: This weapon can't be used against an adjacent creature but can attack a creature up to 20 squares away. Ammunition costs 1 coin per piece and can be recovered after a battle.

Mounted: Can only be used while mounted.

Thrown: This weapon can be used against an adjacent creature or thrown to make an attack on a creature up to 5 squares away. Thrown weapons can be picked up.

Two-handed: A character must use two hands to attack with this weapon.

WEAPON	DAMAGE	COST	EFFECT
AXES (use strength; slashing damage)			
Axe	1d6	8	Thrown
Battleaxe	1d8	40	
BOWS (use dexterity; piercing damage)			
Bow	1d6	60	Two-handed, Missile
Crossbow	1d8	100	Two-handed, Missile
BLUDGEONS (use strength; blunt damage)			
Club	1d4	1	
Mace	1d6	5	
Morning star	1d7	10	
Rock	1d3	0	Thrown
Flail	1d8	15	
War hammer	1d10	20	Two-handed
DAGGERS (use dexterity; piercing damage)			
Knife	1d3	2	Thrown
Dagger	1d4	4	Thrown
Short Sword	1d6	15	
POLEARMS (use strength; piercing damage)			
Javelin	1d6	5	Thrown
Spear	1d6	10	Long, Thrown
Partisan	1d7	15	Long, Two-Handed
Fauchard	1d8	20	Long, Two-Handed
Guisarme	1d9	25	Long, Two-Handed
Halberd	1d10	50	Long, Two-Handed
Lance	1d12	50	Long, Mounted
SLINGS			
Sling	1d4	10	Missile
STAFFS (use strength; blunt damage)			
Staff	1d6	5	Two-Handed

SWORDS (use strength; slashing damage)

Broadsword	1d7	15	
Longsword	1d8	20	
Two-Handed Sword	1d10	50	Long, Two-Handed

UNARMED ATTACKS (use strength; blunt damage)

Unarmed attack	1	0	
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WHIPS (use dexterity; slashing damage)

Whip	1d3	10	Long
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TOOLS

Miscellaneous dungeon tools can be discovered in the dungeon or bought from traders or storekeepers.

Gem: (1d10 + current dungeon level) x 100 coins. A gem can be thrown like a rock or used as a sling stone.

Grappling hook: 50 coins. A grappling hook can be thrown up to 10 squares. If it has something to catch onto, it can be used to make a path for climbing either vertically or horizontally.

Lantern: 20 coins. When used with oil, a lantern allows a creature to see up to 3 squares away.

Lockpick: 20 coins. Allows the use of the lockpicking skill.

Mirror: 10 coins. If you use an action to point a mirror at a non-blind creature with a gaze attack, you can cause them to gaze at themselves.

Oil flask: 1 coin. An oil flask can be used to light a lantern for 8 hours, or can be thrown (as if it were a rock) to douse a creature with oil. The first time an oil-doused creature takes fire damage, it takes an extra 1d6 damage. An oil flask can also be used up to repair a rusty item.

Ration: 1 coin. Eating a ration of food allows you to benefit from a rest. Rations made of monster corpses may have special characteristics (see monster descriptions).

Skeleton key: 30 coins. A skeleton key automatically opens one locked door and then disappears.

Tinning kit: 30 coins. During a rest, a tinning kit can be used to turn a monster's corpse into one ration of food. A tinning kit can be used 10 times.

Torch: 1 coin. When lit and held aloft, a torch allows a creature to see up to 2 squares away (and be seen from any distance) for 1 hour.

Chapter 4: Casting and Spells

Energy, also called **power**, **spell points**, or **mana**, is required to cast **spells** and use other arcane abilities.

Each spell has a **spell level**. Casting a spell costs energy equal to the spell's level. The energy cost for a spell is also known as its "**spell slot**." In *The Hack* 1.0, the highest spell level is 7, but higher-level spells may exist.

In order to cast a spell, a character must know the spell. The divine and the mage start with 1 energy and the knowledge of one level 1 spell; any other spells must be learned later.

In order to learn a spell, a character must find a scroll bearing that spell. During a rest, the character can learn the spell, which causes the writing on the scroll to disappear, leaving behind nothing but a blank page. In order to learn the spell, the following must be true:

- The character has an appropriate spell skill. For instance, Cause Fear is an enchantment spell, so a character must have at least basic skill in enchantment in order to learn the spell.
- The character's experience level must be at least twice the spell's level. For instance, a mage can't learn a new level 1 spell until they reach level 2.

Spells that target a subject against their will require a spellcasting roll. This is a challenge roll which uses either the caster's Intelligence or Wisdom, depending on the spell skill used. Attack, escape, and matter spells use intelligence; healing and clerical spells use wisdom; and divination and enchantment spells use the higher of the caster's intelligence or wisdom. The caster's appropriate skill bonus (for instance, attack spell skill) is added to the roll. Other modifiers may be added or subtracted as well; for instance, many armors impose a penalty to spellcasting rolls. Unless otherwise specified, spellcasting rolls are made against a subject's wisdom defense, and a caster must have a direct path to a creature to target them with a spell.

Some spells can be **upcast** using extra energy. Whatever the spell's level, the total energy used to cast a spell (its spell slot) can't be higher than half the caster's level, rounding up.

Although weapon damage usually adds the attack roll bonus, spells' damage rolls don't add the caster's spellcasting roll bonus unless otherwise specified.

SPELL LIST

CANCELLATION

Level 7 matter spell

When cast on a magical object, the object loses its magic (and scrolls become blank).

When cast on a creature, the caster makes a spellcasting roll. On a success, the creature can't use any magical abilities, magical attacks, or spells for 24 hours.

CAUSE FEAR

Level 3 enchantment spell

The caster makes a spellcasting roll against their choice of creatures within 5 squares. Each creature that fails is scared for 1 minute or until it takes damage.

CHARM MONSTER

Level 3 enchantment spell

The caster makes a spellcasting roll against a monster within 3 squares that has a monster level equal or less than the caster's experience level. On a success, the creature becomes the caster's follower. (Note: casting this spell doesn't tell the caster what level the target monster is.)

Cast with extra energy: For each extra energy, the caster can charm a monster 1 level higher.

CLAIRVOYANCE

Level 3 divination spell

Clairvoyance shows the caster a map of the dungeon level within 20 squares, with large objects marked. If the caster's divination spell skill is +4, the locations of secrets and hidden creatures are revealed.

CONE OF COLD

Level 4 attack spell

The caster chooses an orthogonal or diagonal direction and makes a spellcasting roll against each creature in that direction for 3 squares, dealing 4d10 cold damage on a success.

Cast with extra energy: For each extra energy, the damage increases by 1d10.

CONFUSE MONSTER

Level 2 enchantment spell

The caster makes a spellcasting roll against a monster within 3 squares. On a success, the creature is confused for 1 minute.

CREATE FAMILIAR

Level 6 clerical spell

The caster chooses an unintelligent monster with a monster level equal to or lower than 6 + the caster's clerical spell skill. This monster appears next to the caster and becomes the caster's pet. When the pet is released or dies, it disappears.

CREATE MONSTER

Level 2 clerical spell

A random monster of the same level as the caster, or one level lower, appears next to the caster. It may be friendly or unfriendly as its nature dictates.

Cast with extra energy: For each extra energy, the level of the monster increases by 1.

CURE BLINDNESS

Level 2 healing spell

The caster or willing adjacent creatures are cured of the Blind condition. The caster can affect a number of creatures up to their healing spell skill bonus.

CURE SICKNESS

Level 3 healing spell

The caster or willing adjacent creatures are cured of the Sick condition. The caster can affect a number of creatures up to their healing spell skill bonus.

DETECT FOOD

Level 2 divination spell

The caster learns the location (distance and direction) of all food (including edible corpses) within 20 squares on the same dungeon level. If the caster's divination spell skill bonus is +3 or higher, The caster also learns whether detected food is poisoned or otherwise harmful.

DETECT MONSTERS

Level 1 divination spell

For a number of turns equal to the caster's divination spell skill bonus, the caster learns the location (distance and direction), but not the type, of all creatures within 20 squares on the same dungeon level.

DETECT TREASURE

Level 4 divination spell

For a number of turns equal to the caster's divination spell skill bonus, the caster learns the location (distance and direction), and the general type, of portable objects within 20 squares on the same dungeon level that are worth at least 1 coin. The spell doesn't reveal hidden, worthless, or fixed-in-place objects. The spell reveals the general type (such as weapon, furniture, clothing, etc) but not the specific nature of the item or whether it is magical. It only shows one item per square (thus a pile of 100 coins, 3 gems, and a scroll might show up as either a coin, a gem, or a scroll).

If the caster's divination spell skill bonus is +4, the spell reveals which detected items are magical (and if several items are in the same square, it prefers to show a magic item).

DETECT UNSEEN

Level 3 divination spell

For 1 turn, the caster sees invisible items, finds traps and secret doors, and learns the true nature of monsters such as mimics that take a false form. The spell's effects work within a distance from the caster equal to the caster's divination skill bonus in squares. Within that area, the caster can see in the dark but not through objects.

DRAIN LIFE

Level 2 attack spell

The caster makes a spellcasting roll against a monster within 3 squares. On a success, the creature's hit points and maximum hit points are reduced by 2d10, and the creature is weak until it takes a rest.

DIG

Level 5 matter spell

Within an area next to the caster, the size of a square, and 10 feet high, all nonmagical stone and dirt is permanently destroyed. This destroys, for example, a square of wall, or creates a hole in the floor or ceiling. A second pit in the floor or ceiling might create a hole to another level, if there is a connecting room or corridor.

FINGER OF DEATH

Level 7 attack spell

FIREBALL

Level 3 attack spell

The caster chooses a square within 5 squares and makes a spellcasting roll against each creature in or next to that square. A creature that fails takes 3d10 fire damage. A creature that succeeds takes half that much damage.

Cast with extra energy: For each extra energy, the damage increases by 1d10.

FORCE BOLT

Level 1 attack spell

Casting this spell does not expend energy.

The caster makes a spellcasting roll against a monster within 5 squares. On a hit, the monster takes damage equal to the caster's attack roll bonus (Intelligence + attack spell skill + any other modifiers).

HASTE SELF

Level 3 escape spell

For a number of turns equal to the caster's escape spell skill, the caster can take a second full action after their normal action.

HEALING

Level 1 healing spell

The caster restores hit points equal to the caster's wisdom to themselves or a creature next to them.

Cast with extra energy: For each extra energy used, the spell restores additional hit points equal to the caster's wisdom.

IDENTIFY

Level 3 divination spell

The caster touches items and learns whether they are magical and everything about how their magic operates (including whether it is cursed). The caster can affect a number of items equal to their divination spell skill.

INVISIBILITY

Level 4 escape spell

The caster, or a willing creature next to them, becomes invisible for a number of turns equal to the caster's escape spell skill.

JUMPING

Level 1 escape spell

For one hour, when the caster jumps, they can move a number of extra squares equal to their escape spell skill.

KNOCK

Level 1 matter spell

The caster chooses a closed door, lid, closed trap, or other portal of their choice within 3 squares. The caster makes a spellcasting roll. If the result is greater than the target number to unlock or open the portal, the portal opens.

LEVITATION

Level 4 escape spell

For a number of hours equal to the caster's escape spell skill, the caster, or a willing creature they touch, gains the ability to move without touching the ground. The creature can fly up to 5 feet above the ground (or liquid) and can thus avoid many traps and dangers. A levitating creature doesn't take damage from falling.

Cast with extra energy: The creature can levitate 10 feet higher for each extra energy used.

LIGHT

Level 1 divination spell

A light near the caster illuminates areas within a number of squares equal to the caster's divination spell skill.

MAGIC MAPPING

Level 5 divination spell

The caster gains a parchment map of everything within 20 squares on the current dungeon level. The map doesn't show hidden features. (Some areas are not mappable, in which case the spell fails and the energy is wasted.) If the caster's divination spell skill is +4, the map shows traps, hidden doors, and hidden passages and rooms.

MAGICAL MISSILE

Level 1 attack spell

The caster automatically hits a monster within 3 squares. The monster takes damage equal to 2 plus the caster's attack spell skill.

Cast with extra energy: The monster takes extra damage equal to 2 plus the caster's attack spell skill.

POLYMORPH

Level 6 matter spell

The caster chooses a creature, including themselves, within 2 squares. If the creature is unwilling, the caster must succeed on a spellcasting check against the creature or the spell fails.

Otherwise, the chosen creature changes form into a randomly chosen monster. The creature retains their intelligence, wisdom, memories, and personality. Possessions are absorbed into the creature's body and have no effect while the creature is polymorphed.

The spell ends and the creature returns to their true form, with their original hit points and equipment, after 1 hour or when their polymorphed form is reduced to 0 hit points by damage. A creature with the ability to change form, such as a werewolf, can change form to end the spell early.

PROTECTION

Level 1 clerical spell

Until the next time the caster rests, the caster's AC improves by an amount equal to the caster's clerical spell skill.

REMOVE CURSE

Level 3 clerical spell

The caster touches an object and permanently removes a curse from it (whether or not they are sure a curse is present).

RESTORE ABILITY

Level 4 healing spell

The caster touches another creature (or themselves) and restores one point of Strength, Constitution, Dexterity, Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma that was lost through any means.

Also, magically lowered maximum hit point totals are restored to their original values.

Cast with extra energy: The caster restores one extra lost attribute point per extra energy used.

SLEEP

Level 1 enchantment spell

The caster makes a spellcasting roll against a monster within 3 squares that has a monster level equal or less than the caster's experience level. On a success, the monster falls asleep. At the end of each of its turns while asleep, roll 1d6; on a 6, the creature wakes up.

Cast with extra energy: Cast with extra energy: For each extra energy, the caster can affect a monster 1 level higher.

SLOW MONSTER

Level 2 enchantment spell

The caster makes a spellcasting roll against a monster within 3 squares. On a success, for 1 minute the monster's speed is reduced by 1 and it can't take extra actions.

STONE TO FLESH

Level 3 healing spell

The caster can end the petrifying state on a creature within 3 squares. Additionally, a creature that has been killed by being turned to stone is restored to life.

If the caster's healing spell skill is +3 or higher and the spell is cast on a square containing no petrified or petrifying creature, all the nonmagical stone in the area turns to meat.

TELEPORT AWAY

Level 6 escape spell

The caster chooses a creature, including themselves, within 2 squares. If the creature is unwilling, the caster must succeed on a spellcasting check against the creature or the spell fails.

Otherwise, the creature is teleported to a random, non-deadly square within 20 squares on the same dungeon level.

If the caster's escape spell skill is +4, the caster can choose the square to teleport to within range. The caster must have been on that square before. If the square is currently occupied, the spell fails.

TURN UNDEAD

Level 2 clerical spell

The caster makes a spellcasting check against an undead creature within 3 squares. On a success, the undead creature takes 2d10 damage and is afraid for 1 minute or until the next time they take damage.

Cast with extra energy: The undead creature takes 1d10 extra damage for each extra energy used.

WIZARD LOCK

Level 2 matter spell

The caster closes and locks a door or lid within 3 squares. The caster makes a spellcasting roll. The target number for picking or breaking the door is the result of the roll.

Chapter 5: Example Magic Items

The *Hack* family of games contains dozens of magic items. A few (especially those available to first-level characters) are detailed here.

A character can't benefit from two or more identical items. For instance, wearing a second Ring of Protection has no effect.

ENCHANTED ARMOR

Any type of armor can be enchanted to grant it greater protection. Only the suit can be enchanted, not boots, helms, gloves, or shields. Enchanted armor can have a bonus of +1, +2, or +3. This bonus is added to its wearer's AC.

ENCHANTED WEAPON

Any type of armor can be enchanted to deal greater damage. Enchanted weapons can have a bonus of +1, +2, or +3. This bonus is added to its wielder's attack roll (and therefore to damage as well.)

Ammunition can also be enchanted. If an enchanted weapon fires enchanted ammunition, both bonuses are added to the attack roll.

POTIONS

Potions are found in vials. A creature can use an action to drink a potion; alternatively, a potion can be thrown (as if it were a rock) to douse a creature with the potion. Being doused in a potion has the same effect as drinking it.

POTION OF EXTRA HEALING

This potion heals 6d10 hit points.

POTION OF GAIN ENERGY

This potion permanently raises a character's maximum Energy by one point. If this raises a character to 1 maximum Energy, they are now capable of casting spells (if they gain the appropriate skill).

POTION OF HEALING

This potion heals 2d10 hit points.

POTION OF SICKNESS

This potion causes its drinker to be sick for 1 hour.

RING OF PROTECTION

A ring of protection may be a +1, +2, or +3 ring. Its bonus is added to its wearer's Wisdom defense. Its bonus is also added to its wearer's AC if the wearer isn't wearing enchanted armor.

SCROLLS

Most scrolls are inscribed with a single spell each. A character can spend an action to read a spell, casting the spell without needing to use Energy or be trained in a spell skill. When a spell is cast from the scroll, it's cast as if the caster has a +2 in all spell skills and has attributes equal to those of the reader.

Instead of reading a scroll, a spellcaster can learn the spell if they are able to do so (see Chapter 4: Casting and Spells). A scroll must be identified to be learned.

Some scrolls may have effects that don't match any spell. Such spells can be read but not learned.

Either reading or learning a spell causes the writing on the scroll to disappear, leaving behind a blank page.

WANDS

Wands act like multi-use scrolls. Most wands are inscribed with a single spell each. A character can spend an action to use a wand, casting the spell without needing to use Energy or be trained in a spell skill. When a spell is cast from the wand, it's cast as if the caster has a +2 in all spell skills and has attributes equal to those of the reader. A spell can't be learned from a wand.

Some wands may have effects that don't match any spell.

Each wand can be used once per day without fail. On the second and all later uses in a day, the user rolls 1d20. On a result of 1-10, the action is wasted and the wand can't be used again that day. On a result of 11-20, the wand functions normally.

Chapter 6: Example Monsters

The dungeons of the *Hack* CRPGs swarm with hundreds of monsters. A few starting monsters—especially pets—are detailed here.

CAT/DOG (animal)

Level 1 Speed 4

AC 11 HP 5

Dex +1, Int -1, Cha +1

Melee Attack: Bite: +0, 1d4 piercing

Edible: Yes but eww

GHOUL (undead)

Level 3 Speed 2

AC 10 HP 15

Str +2

Immunities: sickness

Attack: Claw: +2, 1d4 piercing and +2 roll vs. subject's constitution or subject is paralyzed for 1 turn

Edible: No (eater is sick for 1 hour)

GRID BUG (bug)

Level 1 Speed 3

AC 11 HP 5

Int -1

Melee Attack: Bite: +0, 1d4 electricity

Edible: No (deals 1 electricity damage to eater)

HORSE (animal)

Level 3 Speed 5

AC 10 HP 27

Str +4, Con +4, Int -1

Melee attack: Kick: +4, 1d4 blunt

Edible: Yes but eww

KOBOLD (person)

Level 1 Speed 3

AC 11 HP 5

Dex +1

Melee attack: Dagger (thrown): +1, 1d4 +1 piercing

Edible: No (deals 1d4 poison to eater)

Treasure: 1d6 coins

YELLOW DRAGON (dragon)

Level 15 Speed 4
AC 21 HP
Energy 3
Str +7, Con +7, Int +4, Wis +7
Immunities: acid, petrification
Melee attack: Bite (long), +11, 2d10
Magic attack (costs 1 energy): Acid breath: 3-square line, spellcasting roll +11, 4d10 acidic*
Extra action: melee attack: claw (long), +11, 2d6
Edible: Yes (cures petrifying condition)
Treasure: yellow dragon scales (ingredient for dragon-scale armor that grants acidic immunity),
2d10 gems, 2d10 * 1000 coins, 1d6 random magic items
*magic attacks, unlike normal attacks, don't add their spellcasting modifier to damage!

DESIGNING MONSTERS

When designing further monsters, you can use these as guidelines:

Level: up to 30 Speed up to 10
AC: around 10 + half level HP: around 5 x level
Attributes: lowest is -1, highest is typically half level but may be higher
Attacks and extra attacks: damage typically 2.5 x level

Chapter 7: Beyond the Dungeon

When your heroes ascend the stairs and leave the dungeon, what do they find? A nation of industrious towns and shops? A doomed world in its death throes? A trackless wasteland?

While *The Hack* details dungeons, adventures on the surface world lie beyond their confines. When you leave the dungeon, you might sail seas and overthrow kingdoms, or ascend to the heavens to dethrone an evil god. Like all of *The Hack*, the world is ripe for you to explore, expand, and change to make it your own.