

Witch

You are *skilled at magic*. You can *cast spells*.

Choose one of the 4 *Spheres of Magic*—

- ◇ *Astral* (“**Blue Magic**”)—healing, flight, and divination
- ◇ *Vital* (“**Green Magic**”)—plants, animals, and weather
- ◇ *Tellurian* (“**Yellow Magic**”)—control of the elements
- ◇ *Infernal* (“**Red Magic**”)—death and teleportation

You have deep knowledge of magic and can *perceive magical energy*. Test WIS to detect nearby magic. You can tell its Sphere and relative power by the color and intensity of its aura. Test INT after detailed examination (1d6x10 minutes) to identify specific magical effects.

Witches gain *+1 Blood every 3 levels* and *+1d6 Breath every 2 levels*.

Witch Features

Level	Blood	Breath	Paths
1	+0	+0	1
2	+0	+1d6	2
3	+1	+1d6	3
4	+1	+2d6	4
5	+1	+2d6	5
6	+2	+3d6	6
7	+2	+3d6	7
8	+2	+4d6	8
9	+3	+4d6	9
10	+3	+5d6	10

Each Witch level gives you *one level of a Path* from your Sphere. Path levels must be learned in order, but you don't have to finish one Path before starting another. You can take the Witch class more than once to learn other Spheres. Track Witch class levels separately for each Sphere (e.g. Blue 2, Yellow 1) for purposes of Experience and Paths known, but total them for Blood and Breath.

Witch Starter Package: One weapon of your choice. A grimoire with fundamental theory and practical instruction for one Path. One toolkit of your choice. You may be a generic *hedge wizard*, but if you are a more typical witch of your Sphere, you gain extra benefits—

—**Blue Witch Extras:** You are Church or Temple clergy. You have a prayer book, holy symbol, and a religious vocation with a title.

—**Green Witch Extras:** You are a shaman of a pagan faith. Describe your faith and a talisman you possess. You may have a wild animal that follows you. It respects you, but does as it wishes. It does not have to obey you though you can try to convince it—it's a friend, not a pet.

—**Yellow Witch Extras:** You are a scholar. Describe your *alma mater* and field of study. You have an extra toolkit, a set of reference books, and an academic institution that provides limited logistical support for field research but demands you regularly publish.

—**Red Witch Extras:** You are a warlock. Describe the spirit that mentors you in the dark arts and your fetter—the artifact that binds them to you (e.g. *an ancient sorcerer-king's ghost who whispers to you through his skull*). You may test CHA to consult your mentor for advice through your fetter—success costs 1 Breath, failure costs 1 Blood.

Action Rules

The Core Mechanic

Every action with an *uncertain outcome* and *consequences for failure* is resolved with an ability test (or “check”). Roll a d20 and compare the result to the most relevant ability score and any extra difficulty.

If the d20 roll is equal to or below the ability score and over the difficulty, the action is successful. Rolling the *ability score exactly* is the character’s peak performance and may be treated as a *critical success*.

A roll of *20 always fails* regardless of ability—but the GM may rule that characters with relevant expertise can succeed without a roll.

Most tasks outside of combat have a Difficulty of 0. Difficulty sets the minimum value for success. For example, a character trying to *knife* an armored target needs not only to hit the foe, but also to *hit* a place that is not armored.

Monsters and NPCs don’t make ability checks—PCs test to *affect* or resist them. The GM need only roll for a monster’s *damage*.

On rolling dice...

You only need 20-sided dice (d20) and 6-sided dice (d6). When the rules call for other dice, roll a d20 or d6 and divide, rounding up (d10 = d20/2, d3 = d6/2, etc.). 1d6[+] means roll two dice and take the highest. 1d6[-] means roll two and take the lowest. 1d6[*] means if you roll a 6, roll another d6 and add it to the total result.

Saving Throws

A “Save” or “saving throw” is an *Ability check* that negates or reduces an undesired effect. Which *Ability* you use depends on how you resist.

- ◇ **STR saves** use your *sturdy mass* to resist being moved or crushed.
- ◇ **DEX saves** use your *agility* to dodge hazards.
- ◇ **CON saves** use your *vigor* to resist things like poison or disease.
- ◇ **INT saves** use your *concentration* to resist confusion or magical effects *not* covered by other Abilities.
- ◇ **WIS saves** use your *perception* to pierce illusions and deceptions.
- ◇ **CHA saves** use your *willpower* to resist compulsions and curses.

Advantage & Disadvantage

If you have a substantial advantage for a roll, roll two dice and choose the better result. If you face an overwhelming disadvantage, roll two dice and use the worse result. Because PCs make most of the rolls, an enemy action with disadvantage means the PC rolls with advantage to resist it (and vice versa).

Almost every roll in the game that could be subject to advantage or disadvantage normally uses only 1 die—a d20 for actions and a d6 for results like damage. More potent effects usually apply a bonus to one die rather than add more dice—for example, 1d6+4, not 2d6. If a roll with two dice is effected by advantage or disadvantage, roll 3 dice and drop one as appropriate for the situation.



Breath and Blood

You have 5 Blood and 5 Breath before bonuses from class levels. Whenever you gain a level, **roll all your Breath dice** and add the result to your starting 5 points to get your new maximum Breath. If the new total is lower, keep the previous value and increase it by 1.

Breath represents your mental and physical energy and focus. As long as you have Breath, you can exert yourself to dodge or defend yourself. When you are out of Breath, you are exhausted.

Blood represents your vitality and well-being. You lose blood when you are hurt and you will most likely die without it.

When you take damage, subtract it from your Breath.

If you are out of Breath, subtract damage from your Blood.

Mark each lost Blood in an inventory slot—*wounds encumber you*.

If you are *out of Blood*, make a CON save vs death.

- ◇ If you fail, you pass out and will die without help.
- ◇ On a critical failure (a roll of 20), you die immediately.
- ◇ If you succeed, you pass out—check CON on your go each Round and wake up with 1 Blood if you succeed.
- ◇ On a critical success, you regain 1 Blood and 1d6 Breath.

Rest and Healing

After a short rest—about 15 minutes—you restore Breath points equal to 1 plus the number of Breath dice you have. A successful CON check will double your Breath recovery and a critical success will triple it. A long rest—several hours of sleep and a meal—restores all Breath.

Resting cannot raise Breath higher than your Blood unless your Blood is at its maximum.

Wounds—and lost Blood points—can be healed without magic by a surgeon. In a secure settlement with an adequate hospital, it takes 50gp and a full day of rest for each Blood restored. Recovering in more primitive facilities or while traveling greatly slows healing.



Carrying Things

You have inventory slots equal to your CON score. Weapons, armor, treasure, and wounds occupy these slots.

Weapons occupy slots equal to the number of hands required to wield them. Armor occupies slots equal to its Armor Class. One slot can hold up to 200 loose coin-sized objects. Each lost Blood point is a wound that occupies an inventory slot until it heals.

Other gear takes up slots based on how it is carried:

Pouches occupy 1 slot and hold 1 item—*accessing them is a free action*.

Bags such as satchels and saddlebags occupy 4 slots but can hold 5 items. *Retrieving an item from a bag is a move action*.

Packs such as backpacks and duffles occupy 8 slots but can hold 12 items. *Retrieving an item from a pack is a full round action* that may require an Ability check in stressful situations.

Supplies

While in a settlement, you may pay 5gp to dedicate an inventory slot to Supplies for a particular purpose such as Survival, Navigation, Ammo, or Fuel.

At any time, you may fill an assigned Supply slot with any appropriate piece of mundane gear, as if the item had always been there—you are a professional who plans ahead. A slot of Survival Supplies might be food, water, or a tent; Ammo Supplies might be pistol or rifle rounds or shotgun shells; Fuel could be fuel oil, kerosene, or even coal.



Helpers & Hired Hands

Most people are “0-level”: they have 5 Blood and a vocation, but no Breath or class levels. Non-player characters (NPCs) with even 1 level are a cut above. Hired hands are NPCs who work for PCs for money. Hired hands are commanded by a PC but controlled by the GM.

Helpers are more than employees—they are sidekicks, comrades, assistants, acolytes, or apprentices. Hired hands become Helpers when PCs role-play the formation of a relationship with them. Helpers don’t have to begin as hired hands—they may be met and recruited during play or even assigned to a PC by their superiors in an organization.

Helpers have a sort of intermediate status between PC and NPC. The GM shares control of the Helper with the player of the PC they serve. If a PC is out of action, the player can use a helper as a temporary PC. If a PC is killed or retired, a helper can be promoted to full PC status.

Typical Hired Hands

- ◇ **Mechanic/Machinist:** 20gp per week to repair or build machinery.
- ◇ **Mercs, grunts (0-level):** 15gp per week to fight (light armor, small melee weapon, medium ranged weapon).
- ◇ **Mercs, elite (Warrior 1):** 30gp per week to fight (medium armor, melee weapon, and ranged weapon).
- ◇ **Technician (0-level):** 5gp/week to maintain and operate basic equipment—drivers, cooks, radio operators, animal wranglers, etc.
- ◇ **Specialist:** 50gp/week to perform highly-skilled tasks—surgery, research, lead a team of technicians (surveyor, field scientist, mine foreman). (100gp per week to travel).

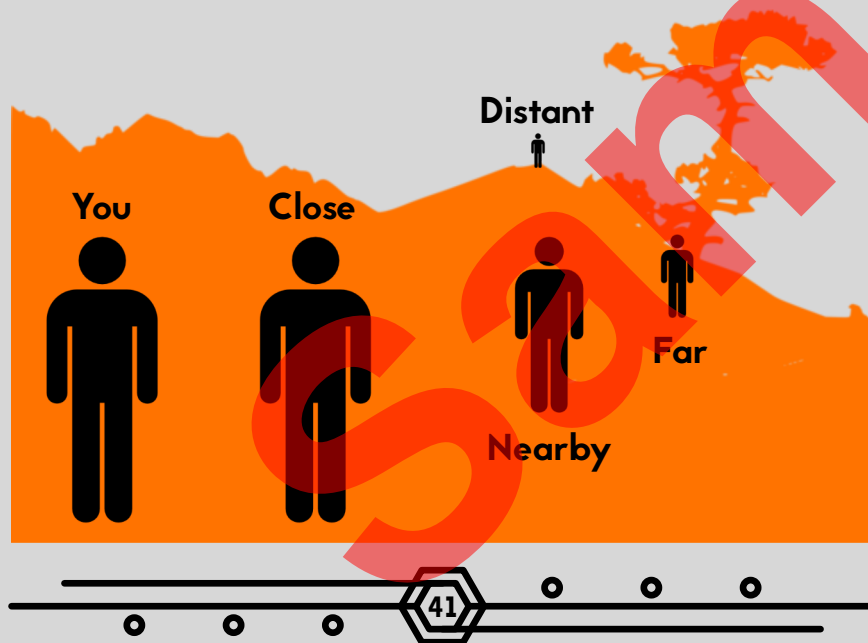


Action & Violence

Range

Ranges for combat or other action scenes are divided into four bands:

- ◇ **Close:** A few steps away—about 5 to 10 feet. This is melee range—you can reach it with a couple steps or a lunge.
- ◇ **Nearby:** The same room or next door—20-30 feet. You can reach it with a minor move action.
- ◇ **Far:** Shouting distance—100-200 feet. Major move action to reach.
- ◇ **Distant:** Hundreds of feet away. Reaching it in one Round on foot requires a skill check.



Combat Rounds

At the start of a battle, each PC tests WIS. The highest successful check chooses who goes first. If the PCs all fail, the GM chooses. After each combatant acts, the controlling player chooses who goes next among all those in the conflict—on either side—who have not yet acted in the round. Groups of minor NPCs or weaker enemies may act as a unit. The last to act in a round chooses who goes first next round.

On your go in a combat round, you may take **one minor action**

—moving Nearby, retrieving an item from a bag, reloading most weapons—
and **one major action**

—attacking, casting a spell, or running to a Far position—

and any number (but be reasonable) of **free actions**

—drawing a knife, reloading a pistol, shouting, dropping a held item, etc.

Design Note

This action order system is often called “popcorn initiative” for the way it bounces around instead of going in order of speed. It encourages dynamic group tactics—“I’ll get its attention and try to draw it toward me, then you get behind it when it comes after me”—instead of individuals taking separate actions according to their physical speed. *“Witches & War Rigs”* uses WIS as the initiative ability—quick reflexes are less important than knowing when it is time to act and having the will to do so.

Free Attacks

You may make a free attack against an enemy in melee with you who does anything other than make a melee attack—moves away, casts a spell, retrieves an item, makes a ranged attack, etc.

Minor NPCs get one free attack per round; major NPCs and monsters get two. PCs get one free attack per Warrior level (minimum 1).

Melee Attacks

Test STR when you attack in melee. If the d20 result is less than or equal to your STR and above the target's AC, you hit. Roll damage.

If the result is higher than your STR, you miss. If it is equal to or lower than the AC, your blow bounces off armor—effectively a “miss”.

If you roll your STR exactly, it's a critical hit: apply damage directly to Blood, bypassing Breath.

Ranged Attacks

Ranged combat works like melee but **tests WIS** instead of STR.

When firing at targets in melee with you or beyond your weapon's listed range, attack with disadvantage. Weapons are ineffective past double their listed range. When firing into a melee, determine targets randomly. Firing out of melee incurs a Free Attack against you.

If you roll a 20 to hit with a ranged weapon, you are out of ammo. Use a slot of Ammo Supplies to reload.



Defense

When an enemy attacks you, test an Ability to defend against it: **CON for melee** and **DEX for ranged** attacks. If the test succeeds, you avoid the attack—block, parry, dodge, take cover, etc.

If you fail a Defense roll, you are hit. If you have armor, roll an armor save on a d6—roll equal to or less than half the armor's AC value to deflect the attack. If the armor save fails, you are hurt—roll damage.

(You can roll Defense and Armor together to save time, but don't roll damage until necessary so you don't mix up those d6s.)

If you **roll your ability exactly** for Defense, you may gain an additional benefit at the GM's discretion. For example, you riposte and get a Free Attack on an enemy that attacked you in melee or an enemy that shot at you runs out of ammo.

If you **roll a 20** for Defense, choose one of the following consequences:

- ◇ Take damage directly to Blood, bypassing Breath.
- ◇ An item in a random inventory slot is destroyed.
- ◇ Your armor is damaged*—reduce AC by 2 (and deflection by 1).

*At AC 0, armor is destroyed beyond repair. Damaged armor can be repaired in a settlement for 5gp × the AC it is being repaired to and 1 day of work for each point repaired. For example, a suit of AC6 armor that is reduced to AC 2 can be restored to AC 4 for 20gp in 2 days then to AC 6 for 30gp in 2 more days of work.



Special Attacks and Defense

If you attack from a significantly superior position (flanking, high ground), you have advantage on attack and damage rolls.

When attacking a defenseless enemy, bypass Breath and apply damage directly to Blood.

Instead of doing damage with a successful attack, you may choose to apply another effect: push, trip, grapple, disarm, or feint/aim to make two attacks with advantage next round instead of one without. The GM also may choose to have NPCs or monsters apply these effects against you instead of damage.

Luck Tests

Sometimes you might need to choose a random character: *Who finds the clue? Who steps on the snake? Who gets hit when bandits spray your truck with submachine guns and hit a passenger?*

Among other things, Charisma (CHA) is a measure of how much you assert yourself upon the universe. In addition to social influence and magical will-working, you can also test CHA to determine who is lucky or not as the random factors of the world align for or against them. The highest success—or the lowest failure, if all the PCs fail—is the luckiest. The lowest success—or highest failure—is the unluckiest. If all PCs succeed and avoid bad luck then the tragedy may default to a helper or hired hand to take a hit. Being ablative “plot armor” for PCs is one of their unofficial duties, after all.



Vehicles and Violence

Characters in vehicles get an extra 2AC against attacks from outside. Melee attacks against moving vehicles have disadvantage.

Attacks directly on vehicles are made against an AC of 2 plus the vehicle's Hull rating. Attack rolls equal to or less than the AC only do cosmetic damage—holes in body panels, broken windows, etc. A PC driver in a vehicle under fire may test INT to evade serious hits—rolls under the AC may still incur cosmetic damage.

When a vehicle takes a damage roll of 4 or more, it loses a Hull point. If it's out of HP, roll on the **Vehicle Damage** chart. On a critical success, a PC may choose the result.

Vehicle Damage

- 1 **Cargo:** a random slot is damaged, destroyed, or lost
- 2 **Crew:** an unlucky person is hit
- 3 **Fuel:** start losing 1 slot of fuel per round
- 4 **Tires:** driver tests INT or spins out
- 5 **Engine:** heavy smoke, sputtering, disadvantage to drive and dies on a failure. Repairs take 1d6 units of time (roll a second d6 for **hours** (1-4), or **days** (5-6))
- 6 **Catastrophic breakdown:** fire, screaming, total wreck only good for scrap



Magic in Combat

Casting spells in combat is dangerous.

You cannot cast a spell and move in the same Round. You must stay still as you gather magical energy around you to build the *gearglyphs*—the interlocking circles and symbols of glowing energy that surround a witch while casting a spell.

If you take damage before your action in a Round, check CON with a difficulty equal to the damage you took or be unable to cast a spell that Round. You may still do another action, but your magical focus is lost.

Casting Spells

You can use your grimoire to cast any spell appropriate for the Paths you know. Casting a spell costs Breath based on the level of the Path used to cast it:

Level	1	2	3	4	5
Breath	1	1d3	1d6	1d6+2	2d6

You can cast a spell as a full Round action—test INT against your own AC as the difficulty to control the magic.

On a success, you cast the spell as intended—pay the cost in Breath.

On a critical success, the spell is free.

On a failure, the spell is still cast but the casting cost doubles (which may cost you Blood) and you gain a Corruption as unchecked energy tears through you. On a roll of 20, you gain two Corruption effects.



Corruption & Cleansing

Record each Corruption effect in an inventory slot—just like a wound. Corruptions are magical side effects related to the spell that caused them—glowing eyes, horns, tears that leave rusty streaks, a crackling aura of elemental energy, or being haunted by whispering ghosts.

If you cast no spells for an entire day, you may clear one Corruption slot by testing CHA with 1 difficulty for each Corruption you have.

On a critical success, you may clear two Corruption slots. On a roll of 20, you gain another Corruption.

Ritual Casting

To avoid Corruption, you can cast a spell as a ritual that takes 1 hour of concentration per Path level—test CON to maintain concentration.

If you succeed, you automatically control the spell. If you fail, you lose focus and the magical energy unwinds and dissipates harmlessly.

