



Flux Engine

THIS IS A DRAFT DOCUMENT AND WILL CHANGE!

Please do not redistribute at this stage.

CC BY 4.0

The Flux Engine

Writing by Marcus Burggraf

Cover designed with assets from Freepik

Rules Consulting: Phil Garrad, Riccardo Lenzi,

Fonts Used: Eczar, Karla, Dicier

Special thanks to: Jack, Toby and Carlyle from the Dice So Nice I Said Dice Twice Podcast!

Inspired by:

24XX	The One Ring	Maze Rats
ICRPG	Savage Worlds	Household
Barebones Fantasy	Beyond the Wall	Genesys

Changelog:

- 10.02.2023: New Setting Neutral version. Rules Complete Beta 1.0
- 14.07.2024: Fixed some Typos, Fixed references to Fortune to the now used Resolve Beta 1.01
- 15.07.2024: More fixes and general cleanup/revision of the Action Check Section Beta 1.02
- 16.07.2024: More fixes and revisions. Changed the speed of Grit recovery from 1 / 10 Minutes to 2 / 10 Minutes. Clarifications on Advantage/Disadvantage. Clarified Initiative and Actions. Modified Resolve Spends. Beta 1.03
- 17.07.2024 Completely revised the Combat section for clarity. Beta 1.04
- 18.07.2024: Reworked Resolve into Adrenaline. Small changes regarding how Adrenaline is gained. Restructured Challenges Beta 1.05
- 19.07.2024: Revised Challenges. Changed Boon/Bane Adrenaline behaviour. Surge requirement lowered to 2. beta 1.06
- 22.07.2024 Adjusted Difficulty to Easy 8, Normal 10 and Hard 12 Beta 1.07
- 27.07.2024 Removed Assisting, renamed Support to Helping Beta 1.08
- 28.07.2024 Massive rewrite of the Bond section, giving it more mechanics and introducing straining your Bond as well as a Bond Check. Beta 1.09
- 31.07.2024 Review of Zones Section and General Cleanup, Redefined Drives into Goals & Drives. Rules Section Complete. Beta 1.10
- 01.08.2024: Review and rewrite of Character Section. Beta 1.11
- 09.08.2024: Big change, Ancestries are gone, the system uses Origins now. This prompted another pass to make Archetypes fit the new format.
- 10.08.2024: More Archetype Changes, Knacks are called Talents now.

Introduction

Hello, dear reader,

This roleplaying game assumes you have prior experience with tabletop RPGs. I offer a light and accessible rules system that makes it simple for the GM (Game Moderator) to adjudicate any situation. The game requires collaboration between all the players. While the GM has special responsibilities, they are players like everyone else. Fun for all should be the most important goal.

Before you start playing, I advise you to familiarise yourself with various safety tools for TTRPG to ensure everyone has a good time at the table. I suggest the [TTRPG Safety Toolkit](#) by Kienna Shaw and Lauren Bryant-Monk.

Thank you for your interest in The Flux Engine, and I wish you fun and great adventures with this game. I would love to hear from you. You can find me at <https://chaosmeister.games>

Marcus “Chaosmeister” Burggraf

About the Game

The Flux Engine invites you to explore worlds of adventure and danger. Your characters have a safe home base—be it a quaint village nestled in a verdant valley, a bustling space station humming with activity, a gritty urban neighbourhood where everyone knows your name, a run down office above a restaurant, or any other place you can dream up. This is your sanctuary, it is where you plan your next moves, tend your wounds and forge bonds with each other.

From your home base, you'll venture forth into a world teeming with peril and possibility. Perhaps you'll delve into ancient ruins crackling with chaotic magic, negotiate tense standoffs in neon-lit cyberpunk alleys, explore uncharted alien worlds, or investigate a crime no one else will. Out there, every breath could be your last.

With fun mechanics like the **d12 Flux Dice** and the **Adrenaline** system, you'll weave memorable tales of courage, friendship and adventure.

This free rulebook presents you with all the setting neutral rules you need to know to play games in any world you can imagine. Expansions with content tailored to specific genres and settings can be obtained separately to add to and enhance your games, but are not necessary to fully enjoy The Flux Engine

Glossary

TBD

The Rules

How to Play

In this game, you and your fellow players' Characters are the stars of the story. You'll describe your character's actions, make tough decisions, and roll dice to determine the outcome of risky actions. One of the players, the GM (Game Moderator), brings the world to life around you, setting the scene, portraying allies and enemies, and decides when it's time to test your Abilities.

Action Checks

The air is thick with tension as three heroes face their moment:

- In a neon-lit alley, Nova's fingertips dance over her holo-interface, attempting to hack the megacorp's security grid.

- Aboard the starship *Celestial Wanderer*, Captain Zara grips the controls, manoeuvring through a dangerous asteroid field as enemy vessels close in.
- Deep in a mist-shrouded forest, Thorne the druid whispers an ancient incantation, trying to calm an enraged earth elemental before it destroys a nearby village.

As dice clatter across tables in living rooms, basements, and online platforms around the world, players hold their breath. These rolls will determine not just success or failure, but the very course of their shared stories...

When your character attempts something risky, when failure has consequences, it's time for an Action Check. Only players roll - the GM sets the stage and helps interpreting the results. Let's see how this works.

Rolling the Dice

All actions are player-facing, so only the players roll. To make an Action Check:

1. Pick up a d12, thereafter called a **Flux Dice**
2. Grab your relevant **Ability Dice**
3. Roll them both and add the results
4. Compare to the **Target Number (TN)**

Sidebar: The higher you roll above the TN, the better the outcome will be.

The Flux Dice

The d12 **Flux Dice** is the heart of The Flux Engine. It adds tension to every roll and makes the game exciting.

- 1-10: Add to your **Ability Dice** as normal
- 11 (**Bane**): Automatic Failure. Everyone gains 1 Adrenaline (p. XXff)
- 12 (**Boon**): Automatic Success with 1 Surge!

SIDEBAR - With a 16.67% chance of automatic Success or Failure, each action has the potential for an unexpected turn. Why such high odds? This design ensures your character's Abilities remain crucial while leaving room for those exhilarating, unexpected outcomes that create unforgettable stories. It keeps the game unpredictable, where skilled characters can face surprising challenges, and underdogs have a shot at amazing feats.

Embrace the Flux Dice!

Ability Dice

During character creation, you select several **Abilities** with dice values from d4 to d10. These are the things your character is good at, what they can do and what they learned. For the full rundown on **Abilities**, please refer to the chapter on character creation.

Sidebar: The dice chain d4-d6-d8-d10

Your abilities will improve over time, climbing this chain of dice!

Lucky & Unlucky

The **Lucky** and **Unlucky** mechanic can add an unexpected twist to a check, creating exciting and memorable moments. On a Boon or Bane, the result is an automatic Success or Failure, due to that you do not add the Ability Dice to the Flux Dice. Instead, you check if your Ability Dice was even or odd:

- **Even:** You get **Lucky!** Something unexpectedly good happens. This can also make the following check **Easy** or even provide **Advantage** (p.XX ff.).
- **Odd:** You're **Unlucky.** A complication arises. This can also make the following check **Hard** or introduce **Disadvantage** (p xx ff)

Boon & Bane Examples:

- Agent Tanner rolls a **Boon** (12) while infiltrating a high-security research facility. His **Ability Dice** shows a 6 (even).
 - Success: He smoothly bypasses the retinal scanner
 - Lucky: ...and discovers that his cover identity has been granted unexpected high-level clearance!
- Xill the Diplomat rolls a **Bane** (11) while attempting to negotiate a peace treaty with an alien diplomat. Their **Ability Dice** shows a 3 (odd).
 - Failure: The diplomat vehemently disagrees to the terms.
 - Unlucky: ...and a rival alien faction enters the hall, accusing Xill of intentional sabotage!

- Aurora, a modern witch, rolls a **Boon** (12) while brewing a complex potion in her downtown apartment. Her **Ability Dice** shows a 7 (odd).
 - Success: The potion turns out perfectly
 - Unlucky: ...but the magical fumes have brought every stray cat in the neighborhood to her fire escape, yowling for attention!
- Maxine, a wasteland scavenger, rolls a **Bane** (11) while attempting to hotwire an ancient pre-war vehicle. Their **Ability Dice** shows an 8 (even).
 - Failure: The vehicle's rusty engine refuses to start
 - Lucky: ...but the failed attempt dislodges a hidden compartment, revealing a cache of rare and valuable fusion cells!

Difficulty & Target Numbers

The GM sets the Difficulty based on the task itself:

- **Easy:** TN 8 (Scaling a crumbling wall, hot-wiring a car, recalibrating a scanner)
- **Average:** TN 10 (Calming a spooked horse, negotiating a hostage release, repairing a malfunctioning droid)
- **Hard:** TN 12 (Deciphering an ancient code, hacking a megacorp database, piloting through an asteroid field)

SIDEBAR - Other Difficulties are possible, but these three tend to be enough for most games and are quick to memorize.

Surges

For every 2 points above the **TN**, you gain a **Surge**. These represent exceptional success:

- In combat: Inflicting extra damage or avoiding extra hits
- Outside of combat: Extra benefits as determined by the GM
- Always: Can be exchanged for 1 **Grit** (p. XX ff).

Surges Examples

- Your hacker not only cracks the encryption but also discovers a backdoor into the casino's main server.
- Your negotiator not only defuses the hostage situation but also gains valuable intel on the terrorist group.
- Your starship pilot not only evades the enemy fighters, but also discovers a hidden, friendly, base.

SIDEBAR: Spending a **Surge** will yield similar results as rolling **Lucky**.

Advantage & Disadvantage

While **Difficulty** is just looking at the task itself, **Advantage & Disadvantage** are there if circumstances are especially punishing or supportive of the action the player wants to take. If either applies you roll an extra **Ability Dice** and keep the best or worst result between the two.

- You only roll one additional **Ability Dice**, regardless of how many sources of **Advantage** or **Disadvantage** you have.
- **Advantage** and **Disadvantage** do not stack. If you have multiple sources of **Advantage** or **Disadvantage**, you still roll only one extra **Ability Dice**.
- If both **Advantage** and **Disadvantage** apply to the same roll, they cancel each other out, regardless of how many sources of **Advantage** or **Disadvantage** there are, resulting in a regular **Action Check** without any extra dice.

How to roll with Advantage

When your character has **Advantage** due to a **Talent** or other favourable circumstances, you roll an extra **Ability Dice**. Keep the most beneficial of the two results, which does not necessarily mean the highest.

- If you rolled a **Boon** or **Bane**, a 5 is higher than the 2, but the 2 in this instance is more beneficial as it makes your roll **Lucky**.

The GM should grant **Advantage** when external circumstances or good planning by the players benefits the action in a significant way. A source of **Advantage** can only be used once per player.

Advantage Examples:

- The pilot tries to Navigate an Asteroid field (**Hard**), using their mapped route (**Advantage**), rolls 2 and 4 on their **Ability Dice**. Keeping the 4 and Adding 9 from

the **Flux Dice**, their total of 13 allows them to skillfully navigate through the asteroid field.

- The detective interrogates a street punk (**Normal**), armed with evidence (**Advantage**), rolls 3 and 6 on their **Ability Dice**. Keeping the 6 and with 4 on the **Flux Dice**, their total of 10 breaks the suspect's resolve, extracting a full confession.
- The frost mage summons an Ice Elemental (**Hard**), and draws energy from the blizzard raging around him (**Advantage**) rolls 7 and 4 on their **Ability Dice**. The **Flux Dice** comes up 11, a **Bane!** Keeping the 4 this is a **Lucky** roll and while the summoning fails he is now in tune with the blizzard and that will keep the **Advantage** on the next check.

How to roll with Disadvantage

If your character has **Disadvantage**, roll an extra **Ability Dice** and keep the least beneficial result, which is not necessarily the lowest.

- If you rolled a **Boon** or **Bane**, a 4 is lower than the 7, but the 7 in this instance is less beneficial as it gives you an **Unlucky** roll.

The GM should add **Disadvantage** to any **Action Check** where external factors hinder the action in an extraordinary way.

Disadvantage Examples:

- The machinist repairs an engine (**Normal**) in a steam-filled room (**Disadvantage**), rolls 5 and 2 on their **Ability Dice**. Forced to keep the lower 2 and

adding 8 from the **Flux Dice**, their total of 10 barely allows them to complete the repairs before the steam overwhelms them.

- The scholar tries to study a new Relic (**Average TN10**) while being entranced from a faery spell (**Disadvantage**), rolls 7 and 3 on their **Ability Dice**. Keeping the 3 and adding 6 from the **Flux Dice**, their total of 9 only reveals a fragment of the elven text's meaning.
- The telepath attempts to read the Villain's surface thoughts (**Normal**), in the middle of a crowd causing mental disturbance (**Disadvantage**), rolls 2 and 9 on their **Ability Dice**. The Flux Dice comes up 12, a **Boon!** Keeping the 9 this is an **Unlucky** roll. So while the telepath can read even more than the surface thoughts, the Villain knows who invaded their mind.

Helping

The **Help Action** can be done both in and out of combat, boosting another character's chance for success. A character can only benefit from one **Help Action** at a time. To help your ally you can use any viable Ability that fits the narrative and makes sense. The GM may impose modifiers on the Action Check depending on the situation and your description of the action.

- When Helping:
 - Declare who you want to Help. The **Help Action** happens in your turn.
 - Make your **Action Check**
 - On a failure face any results on your own.

- On a success and for every **Surge**, reduce the **TN** of the **Action Check** for the helped character by 2.
 - A **Hard** 12 becomes a 10
 - The **Normal** 10 becomes an 8
 - An **Easy** 8 becomes a 6.

SIDEBAR - The reduction in TN allows the Help Action to easily stack with Advantage or Disadvantage.

Helping Examples

- Grym, the warrior, is fighting against a fearsome monster. Davine, the cleric, wants to support their ally's attack. Davine's player describes how they call upon their deity, shouting words of encouragement and a divine blessing. The GM decides that this fits the cleric's **Inspire Ability** and sets it as an **Easy** check (**TN 8**) due to the cleric's connection to their faith. If successful, Grym's upcoming **Fighting Check** against the monster will have its **TN** reduced by 2.
- Neuro is attempting to breach a megacorp's secure database. Wrench, a tech specialist, decides to support this action. She describes how she uses her **Engineering** ability to analyze the corporation's firewall structure in real-time, feeding data to the netrunner. The GM calls for a **Hard (TN 10)** Engineering check due to the advanced nature of the security. On a success, the **Difficulty** of the netrunner's **Hacking** check is reduced by 2.

Group Roll

Sometimes everyone in a group rolls the same Action Check, for example while sneaking around. In these situations you don't treat every roll individually. You just need more successes than failures. Surges can help mitigate failures.

Retry

Typically, you can attempt an action only once and only try again when the situation changes significantly. In cases where repeat attempts are allowed, such as in combat, the character's next Action Check for the same action after a failed attempt is always *Easy*.

*SIDEBAR - Keep this in mind as it is a key mechanic of the game.
Repeat attempts at the same task are always Easy.*

Bonds

Bonds measure the strength of your character's connections with the other characters in the group. In some settings it might be a tangible force, while in others just normal relationships.

Gaining Bonds

You gain your first Bond at d4 during character creation (p. xx ff). You can create further Bonds with other characters during play by spending an Advance. (See Advancement page XX)

SIDEBAR - It is also possible for the GM to award Bonds for special scenes, but this should be done sparingly.

Improving Bonds

To increase your character's Bond strength with another by one step (d4->d6->d8), you need to use your Help Action to actually help the prospective Bondmate a number of times depending on the dice rating of the current Bond. Track Help Actions next to your Bond entry on the character sheet. You can mark only one progress per Session.

- d4= 4 Help Actions to improve to d6
- d6 = 6 Help Actions to improve to d8

A d8 is the highest Bond achievable. Bonds do not need to be reciprocated. There is no limit to the number of Bonds the characters within the group can have with each other. However, you cannot have two Bonds with the same Character.

Bonded Help

When helping your character's bondmate, you can roll your Bond Dice in addition to your Ability Dice and keep the better of the two to determine the outcome.

- If you roll a Boon or Bane choose the Dice that will give you a Lucky result.
- If your Help Action would suffer from Disadvantage your Bond Dice just cancels out the Disadvantage and you roll a normal Ability Check.

Straining your Bond

Sometimes you need an extra push and Bonded Help is not enough. If there is a critical situation that involves your Bondmate, you can decide to Strain your Bond as a Free Action by permanently reducing the rating by one dice step. You need to improve it again to get back to the old strength. The decision to Strain your Bond can be made after the result of an Action check is known. In exchange, you get to do the following:

- Use the dice on your Action Check or give it to your Bondmate to use, rolling it in addition to any other dice they have already rolled, summing it with the Ability Dice.
- Can be done on a Bonded Help Action, allowing you to add the result to the Action Check.
- It stacks with Advantage. Add the Bond dice to one of the Ability Dice to create the most beneficial result.

- Straining your Bond will also cancel out any Disadvantage on a check and allow you to roll both the Bond Dice and Ability Dice.

Doing this should not be a light decision. You should roleplay out why and how the relationship suffers from this action.

Losing Bonds

If a major disagreement or other rift appears between two Bonded characters during roleplaying, the GM can ask for a Bond Check.

- Roll your Bond Dice. If you roll the maximum value of the Dice, the Bond decreases one step.
d8->d6->d4->none.

SIDEBAR - I suggest to use this sparingly. It is much better to have players discuss and decide together if a Bond should weaken after a major conflict.

Losing Bonds Example

- Larius and Sheena get into a massive fight about the moral implication of something Larius did. There is no agreement in sight. The GM asks for a Bond Check. Sheena has a d6 Bond with Larius as her old mentor. She rolls it and it lands on a 6. The Bond strength decreases from d6 to d4.

SIDEBAR - If your group is up for it, forgo the Bond Check and decide between the Players in such situations if the Bond is reduced. A Bond can be removed entirely due to such a situation if all parties agree. This is strictly optional of course.

GOALS & DRIVES

Drives and Goals motivate your character, pushing them to action and shaping their decisions. Use them as guidelines, but don't let them restrict your roleplaying or force you into actions that don't make sense for the situation. In The Flux Engine, Goals are short-term and Drives long-term motivations.

Goals

These motivations are usually achievable within a single game session. They represent your character's current focus or desires. When you fulfil your Goal:

- Gain 1 Adrenaline (p XX ff)
- Tick a Progress Mark (p XX ff)
- Remove the current Goal
- Decide on a new Goal before the next session

Goals can also change between sessions when you do not reach them, just let the GM know when you choose a new one.

SIDEBAR - The GM should always be advised of your current Goal. They can use them to build adventures and scenes.

Example Goals

- Gather crucial information without being detected.
- De-escalate a volatile situation without violence.
- Jury-rig a solution to a technical problem.

- Bring someone Joy who needs it.
- Protect someone from danger.
- Uncover a vital clue to an ongoing investigation.
- Successfully navigate a treacherous environment.
- Mediate a dispute between rival factions.
- Acquire a rare or restricted resource through legal means.
- Free someone of their actual or metaphorical chains.

Drives

Drives are overarching objectives that may take multiple sessions or even an entire campaign to complete. They represent your character's deeper motivations and life ambitions.

Drives don't provide immediate benefits but substantial rewards once you fulfil them. When you fulfil your Drive:

- Immediately get a Milestone. Select two of the following:
 - Increase a Bond up to d12
 - Increase an Ability up to d12
 - Learn a Talent, ignoring the 6 Talent cap.
 - Gain a Unique Relic.
- Remove your Drive
- Before the next session, create a new Drive

Drives should only change after major character developments or story events. Discuss any changes with your GM.

SIDEBAR - Drives are the cornerstones of the campaign, and fulfilling them is a pivotal moment in a character's life. Discuss them with your GM so they can work your Drive into their World. Multiple characters can share a drive or be individual to each character. In a typical campaign, characters should gain 2-3 Milestones.

Example Drives

- Expose and dismantle a far-reaching conspiracy.
- Achieve a groundbreaking scientific or technological advancement.
- Establish a lasting peace between long-standing enemies.
- Redeem yourself in the eyes of those you've wronged.
- Rebuild, make or defend something of enduring worth.
- Solve an infamous "cold case" that has baffled others for years.
- Transform a struggling community into a thriving society.
- Discover and contact an unknown civilization or species.
- Preserve a dying culture or critically endangered ecosystem.
- Revolutionize a society for the better.

Grit

All Characters start with a Grit Pool of 6. Grit represents your character's ability to avoid hits, remain resilient and their willpower.

You spend Grit to avoid being hit. Some Talents also allow you to spend Grit on special effects. Reducing your Grit to zero gives you one Adrenaline (p XX ff), and does not immediately affect the character. But it exposes them to injury and possibly death. Details on this are found in the Combat chapter.

Recovering Grit

Characters recover Grit in the following ways:

- After each scene: Characters below their maximum recover 2 Grit.
- A Full night's rest: Restores Grit to maximum.
- Visiting the Home: Time spent at the group's Home fully refreshes Grit.
- Converting 1 Surge to 1 Grit
- Spending an Adrenaline

Grit recovery cannot exceed a character's maximum.

Adrenaline

It sets the player characters apart from the other inhabitants of your game's universe: their Adrenaline, the burst of inner strength and determination they tap into when it is needed most. By managing their Adrenaline wisely, players can turn the tide in critical moments, recover from setbacks, and enhance their power. Every character starts each session with at least 1 Adrenaline.

Gaining Adrenaline

Characters can gain additional Adrenaline during their adventures. There are two primary ways:

- When anyone rolls a Bane, everyone gains an Adrenaline
- If your character loses their last Grit they gain 1 Adrenaline.
- Upon completing a Goal
- At the GM's discretion for notable events.

SIDEBAR - Why Adrenaline for all on a Bane? A Bane is something going incredibly wrong and increasing the stress for the whole party, hence increasing Adrenaline.

Notable events could be:

- Defeating a powerful enemy
- Losing a friend
- Solving a great mystery

- Reaching important milestones
- Performing an heroic act
- Demonstrating exceptional teamwork

Players can also suggest when they feel another player deserves an Adrenaline reward.

Sidebar - As the GM do not feel limited by this list, freely award Adrenaline whenever you feel it is earned. Every Character should get at least 1 Adrenaline per Session.

Spending Adrenaline

As a free action, characters can spend Adrenaline in the same turn it is gained for powerful effects:

- Reduce an injury's duration by 1d6 days.
- Immediately regain 1d6 Grit
- Reroll any one Check, regardless of who made it.
- Activate some Talents (p XX ff)
- Add 1d6 to a Check.
- Immediately gain an extra Action

You can spend more than one Adrenaline in a turn but can only select each of the above options once in the same turn.

Resetting Adrenaline

Any Adrenaline earned above 1 is removed when the group returns to their home base to recuperate.

Staying at a Motel, camping in the woods and resting in general during the adventure will not reset Adrenaline. Any adrenaline gained carries over between sessions during an ongoing adventure.

Combat

During regular play, the characters' actions are only limited by what is reasonably possible. In conflict, this changes. You play in rounds and turns, each a few seconds long. The round ends once everyone, including the opposition, has completed their turn. A new round begins at the top of the Initiative order until the conflict is resolved.

Initiative

At the start of combat, all Characters make a Battle Ability Action Check. Circumstances can make the Check Easy or Hard. For Example, if the characters are aware of the attack coming, it will be Easy. If they are being ambushed instead, it's a Hard Check.

- Succeeding at the Battle Check lets you act before the enemies.
- Everyone who doesn't succeed goes after the enemies.
- If you roll a Boon, you go first, and all your Checks are Easy during the first round of combat.
- If you roll a Bane, you go last, and all your Checks are Hard during the first round of combat.

The Initiative order stays the same throughout the combat unless you take an Action to reorient yourself.

Actions

Every Turn, a character has 2 Actions and can also take several Free Actions.

As one Action, you can:

- Attack an enemy
- Aim: Gives you Advantage on your first attack in the next round.
- Help another Character
- Move between Zones
- Use a Zone Feature to gain it's benefit (p XX ff)
- Reorient yourself and re-roll your Initiative
- Take a miscellaneous action, such as standing up from a prone position, drawing a weapon, reloading a weapon, or using an Ability.
- Hold an Action until a specific trigger occurs and immediately take the Action when triggered, regardless of the initiative order.
- Reserve it for Defence.

Every Action can be taken more than once. For example, in one Turn, you can choose not to move but to make two attacks. Or you decide to use both actions for Movement. Make use of your creativity and Abilities in combat. Not everything requires a Fighting Check to defeat.

Free Actions

These are little things like pulling a lever, letting go of an item, falling prone or shouting something. The GM is the arbiter of what is reasonable as a free action and what isn't.

Attacking

To attack an enemy, perform an Action Check using a relevant combat ability, usually Fighting or Ranged. The GM may adjust the TN based on circumstances in advance. For example, ranged attacks at night are Hard, and if an enemy is close enough to attack, you may also suffer from Disadvantage. Conversely, Players are encouraged to think creatively and use their character's surroundings and abilities to gain an upper hand in combat.

- On a successful Action Check, you inflict 1 Wound, regardless of your weapon.
- Each Surge causes an additional Wound.

Sidebar - NPCs in The Flux Engine do not have Grit and thus cannot avoid Hits like player characters. However, they may carry gear that can Break (see Defense & Hits).

Defense & Hits

All actions are player-facing. The player makes an Action Check to defend the character from attacks using an appropriate Ability.

Defending against the first attack in a round is done without modifiers. Any defence check in the same round after the first one is done with Disadvantage, unless you reserved an Action for Defence. Every Action reserved for Defence allows another Defence Action Check without Disadvantage.

When your Defence Action Check is a failure, the enemy attack succeeds and you suffer one or more Hits, depending on the enemy. One of the following occurs:

- Spend 1 Grit per Hit to avoid it.
- Break a significant item to absorb all Hits from one attack.
- If neither of the above actions are available, suffer an Injury.

SIDEBAR - A Boon on Defence gives a Surge to avoid an extra Hit. A Bane just counts as a normal failure. Lucky and Unlucky should not effect Hits but rather have a narrative impact by changing the environemnt or future Actions.

Injury

When you suffer an Injury all your Ability Dice are stepped down once until you receive treatment.

After combat or when you receive treatment describe the Wound.

o

After your character has suffered an injury in combat, roll a Flux Dice once combat is concluded to determine the number of days required for the injury to heal (1-10 days). Keep a record of the type of injury based on what happened in combat.

- If the Injury check was a Bane (11), the character suffers a permanent Scar that cannot be healed by any means during an Adventure. Remove the Injury and write down a Scar, like “Lost Eye”, “Mangled Arm”, etc., fitting the narrative. From now on, any action roll affected by the Scar is Hard. Removing a Scar can be an Adventure in itself.
- If the roll was a Boon (12), you got lucky. It looked worse than it was. The superficial Injury doesn’t trouble you; you can remove it immediately at the end of combat without consequence.

Healing

An Injury requires time and/or medical attention to heal properly. Natural healing reduces the duration of the Injury by 1 day for each day that passes.

Additionally, one ally can attempt a Healing Check once per day to speed up the healing process. For each Success and Surge rolled during a Healing Check, reduce the injury duration by 1 day. If the Action Check was a Boon, reduce it by 2 days.

A Healing attempt cannot worsen the Injury unless the healer rolls a Bane and is Unlucky. This catastrophic failure adds one day to the duration of the injury.

Death

When your character has no more gear to break or Grit to avoid hits and suffers a second Injury, they die. If your character dies, make a new one and introduce them quickly into the adventure. The group should favour a fast return to the game for the affected player over the realism of the situation.

SIDEBAR- It might be useful for every player to have a backup character ready to go in case of an unforeseen character loss.

Zones

d12 Core uses Zones instead of detailed battle map movements by inches, hexes or grids. A Zone is an abstract representation of an area and does not correlate to a specific scale. Make it as big as required. Each Zone should have interesting details for the player characters to interact with. A single Zone is at least big enough for two people to engage directly, such as by exchanging blows, but can be as big as is needed.

Creating and using Zones

To establish zones, you can draw a quick sketch or write on index cards. A typical combat scenario should have between two to four Zones. Each Zone should have an evocative and clear name and a few features that can influence combat.

Zone Features

Creating interesting Zones is key to fun combat scenarios. An empty zone would be incredibly boring. To turn a generic zone into something players want to engage with, The Flux Engine uses Zone Features. These are the things that have an actual gameplay effect.

Here are some things to consider when thinking about Zone Features::

- **Elevation:** Incorporate high and low features. A raised platform or a dip in the terrain can offer tactical advantages or challenges. Never give up the high ground.
- **Cover:** Add objects like walls, pillars, crates or overturned furniture. These provide some protection and affect the line of sight, influencing both ranged attacks and stealth.
- **Environmental Hazards:** Elements like unstable ground, slippery surfaces, or areas of extreme temperature or other hazards add risk and require strategic movements.
- **Interactive Elements:** Introduce objects that players can manipulate. A lever that changes the environment or a breakable support beam can offer creative

solutions in combat that can change Zone features during combat.

- **Varied Terrain:** Mix different ground types. Dense vegetation might slow movement but provide concealment, while open areas allow faster travel at the cost of exposure. Some terrain, like rivers, may make movement between zones impossible or create chokepoints like bridges.
- **Lighting:** Alter visibility conditions across Zones. A well-lit area might make stealth attempts more challenging, while shadows could enable surprise attacks but hinder accuracy.

SIDEBAR - Let players have a say! Use the Zone Names as a reference point, and let players suggest Zone Features, too.

By adding some of these features to Zones, they can be dynamic, interactive battlefields that challenge players to adapt their strategies and use their environment effectively. But do not overdo it, 2-3 Features per Zone is plenty.

- Zone Features can make Checks Easy or Hard, or provide Advantage or Disadvantage. But they do not have to. Always make sure to integrate them into your narration.

Example Zone

The group is ambushed in a forest. A fallen tree blocks the road ahead, and on the right side, a steep rockslide makes moving to the other side difficult. On the left, Bushes and undergrowth hinder movement and sight.

- **Zone 1:** "*Blocked Forest Road*" - Features: Large Fallen Tree, Open Road
- **Zone 2:** "*High Ground*" - Features: Steep Rockslide, Huge Rocks
- **Zone 3:** "*Thick Undergrowth*" - Features: Dense Underbrush, Dangerous Thorns

During a combat scene, players can use Zone Features to gain an Advantage if possible. They can also create a new Feature through their actions.

Example in Action:

- **The Setup:** The GM describes the scene, detailing the Zones and their Features. They inform the players that those on "Blocked Forest Road" have Disadvantage when defending against attacks from "The High Ground." Moving to "The High Ground" from "Blocked Forest Road" requires two Actions due to the "Rock Slide."
- **Player Actions:** Player A takes cover behind the "Large Fallen Tree" in the "Blocked Forest Road" Zone. This does not require a Move Action as it is within the same Zone.
- **Combat:** Player A uses their Actions to draw their weapon and fire at the attackers in "The High Ground," where they have taken cover behind the "Huge Rocks," making the attack Hard.
- **Attackers Turn:** Everyone still in "Blocked Forest Road" must defend at Disadvantage against attacks from "The High Ground", except for Player A, who was smart enough to take cover behind the "Large Fallen Tree". This gives him Advantage on Defence Checks

and cancels out the Disadvantage the other characters must contend with.

A quick sketch map of the same situation could look like this:

XX TO BE DESIGNED

Movement between Zones

With one Move Action, you can traverse to an adjacent Zone. Moving between zones with difficult terrain or other movement-impairing effects requires two Move Actions instead of one. Movement within the same Zone is a Free Action.

Challenges

Not everything can be solved by combat. Challenges are tasks or obstacles that require a group effort to overcome. They can represent various situations, from escaping an avalanche to rescuing people from a sinking ship, building a doomsday device or arguing your case in front of a court. Players should think creatively and use their Abilities (p. XX ff) in innovative ways.

How a Challenge plays

Challenges are divided into rounds and each challenge typically plays out over three rounds. During each round, the players describe their character's actions and make relevant

Ability Checks. Each successful Check earns Tokens, representing overcoming the Challenge.

Structure of a Challenge

Most Challenges are separated into these three Rounds:

- **Round 1:** Examining the Situation
- **Round 2:** Implementing a Plan
- **Round 3:** Overcoming final Obstacles

Any complications encountered during a challenge are also solved within it. Encountering enemies during a challenge will not trigger combat.

SIDEBAR - The descriptions of the three rounds are meant to guide you as the GM and give ideas on how to set up a challenge. You can run challenges differently and treat each round more free form.

Challenge Types

There are three types of challenges of increasing difficulty.

- **Basic Challenge:** Simple obstacles requiring 2 tokens for each participant in three rounds.
- **Tough Challenge:** More complex, requiring 3 tokens for each participant in three rounds.
- **Extreme Challenge:** Large-scale obstacles require 4 tokens for each participant in three rounds.

Earning Tokens

How many Tokens are earned in a Round depends on the outcomes of the character's Ability Checks.

- As in combat, every Character has 2 Actions per round of a challenge.
- Each successful Ability Check generates one Token.
- Surges earned from exceeding the TN can be exchanged for extra Tokens on a 1:1 basis.
- A Boon generates one extra token for 2 total
- A Bane removes a token
- When you get Lucky, the next check will be Easy
- If you get Unlucky the next check will be Hard

Resolving a Challenge

At the end of the third round, the GM assesses the number of accumulated Tokens. If the group has earned enough tokens to meet or exceed the Challenge threshold, they succeed. If not, they face the consequences. However, the more tokens it earns, the better the result. Partial successes based on the Tokens earned compared to the Threshold are a good solution.

Example Challenges

Crossing a Raging River

- **Round 1:** Assessing the Situation
 - **Scenario:** The party arrives at a wide, fast-flowing river blocking their path. They need

to find a way to cross safely to continue their journey.

- **Actions:** Players describe their characters' initial actions to understand the situation, such as scouting for a crossing point, gauging the river's depth and speed, or looking for natural resources to use.
- **Relevant Ability Checks:** Perception, Survival, Engineering.
- **Success:** Earns Tokens for identifying ways to cross the river, like the location of a shallower part of the river, materials to construct a raft, or a narrow stretch with less turbulent water.
- **Round 2: Implementing the Plan**
 - **Scenario:** With a plan in place, the party begins their efforts to cross the river. This might involve constructing a raft, setting up a rope bridge, or finding a way to swim across safely.
 - **Actions:** Players take actions based on their plan, such as gathering materials, tying ropes, building rafts, or preparing themselves for a swim.
 - **Relevant Ability Checks:** Strength, Crafting, Athletics.
 - **Success:** Earns Tokens for advancing the crossing effort, such as successfully building a sturdy raft, securing a rope bridge, or safely reaching the midpoint of the river.
- **Round 3: Overcoming Final Obstacles**
 - **Scenario:** Just as they are about to complete the crossing, the party encounters unexpected challenges, like a sudden increase in water flow,

a broken raft section, or dangerous wildlife appearing near the riverbank.

- **Actions:** Players respond to these final obstacles by performing emergency repairs, helping each other stay afloat, or defending against threats.
- **Relevant Ability Checks:** Coordination, Reflexes, Leadership.
- **Success:** Earns Tokens for overcoming the final hurdles and ensuring that everyone reaches the other side of the river safely.

Resolving the Challenge

If the party earns enough Tokens to meet or exceed the Challenge threshold, they successfully cross the river and can continue their journey. If not, they face consequences such as losing gear, suffering injuries, or facing delays.

Navigating an Asteroid Field

- **Round 1: Assessing the Situation**
 - **Scenario:** The crew's spaceship encounters an unexpected asteroid field while travelling through space. They need to navigate through it to reach their destination safely.
 - **Actions:** Players describe their characters' initial assessments and preparations, such as scanning the asteroid field, calculating trajectories, or boosting the ship's shields.
 - **Relevant Ability Checks:** Astrogation, Engineering, Perception.

- **Success:** Earns Tokens for identifying the safest path and potential hazards within the asteroid field.
- **Round 2: Implementing the Plan**
 - **Scenario:** Armed with their initial assessments, the crew begins to navigate the asteroid field, manoeuvring the ship to avoid collisions and maintain course.
 - **Actions:** Players take actions such as piloting the ship, making course adjustments, and managing the ship's power distribution.
 - **Relevant Ability Checks:** Piloting, Mechanics, Coordination.
 - **Success:** Earns Tokens for successfully manoeuvring through the field and avoiding major obstacles.
- **Round 3: Overcoming Final Obstacles**
 - **Scenario:** Just as they near the edge of the asteroid field, the crew encounters unexpected challenges, such as a rogue asteroid on a collision course or a sudden power failure.
 - **Actions:** Players respond to these final obstacles by performing emergency maneuvers, repairing critical systems, and coordinating crew efforts.
 - **Relevant Ability Checks:** Reflexes, Technical Repair, Leadership.
 - **Success:** Earns Tokens for successfully navigating the final stretch of the asteroid field and ensuring the ship's integrity.

Resolving the Challenge

If the party has earned enough Tokens to meet or exceed the Challenge threshold, it successfully navigates through the asteroid field and continues its journey unscathed. If not, it faces consequences such as hull damage, crew injuries, or delays in its mission.

Securing a Safehouse from Zombies

- **Round 1:** Assessing the Situation
 - **Scenario:** The group has found an abandoned building that could serve as a safehouse, but it's surrounded by zombies and potentially rigged with traps. They need to secure it quickly to find shelter for the night.
 - **Actions:** Players describe their initial actions to assess the building and the surrounding area, such as scouting for roaming zombies, checking for structural weaknesses, or identifying potential entry points.
 - **Relevant Ability Checks:** Perception, Survival, Engineering.
 - **Success:** Earns Tokens for identifying safe paths to the building, spotting traps or alarms, and finding weak spots in the structure that need reinforcement.
- **Round 2:** Implementing the Plan
 - **Scenario:** With a plan in place, the group begins their efforts to clear the area and secure the building. This involves eliminating nearby zombies, disarming traps, and fortifying the building's entrances.

- **Actions:** Players take actions based on their plan, such as stealthily taking out zombies, using tools to disarm traps, and barricading windows and doors.
- **Relevant Ability Checks:** Stealth, Mechanics, Strength.
- **Success:** Earns Tokens for successfully neutralizing threats, securing the building, and making it defensible against potential zombie attacks.
- **Round 3: Overcoming Final Obstacles**
 - **Scenario:** Just as they are about to finish securing the safehouse, the group encounters unexpected challenges, such as a horde of zombies drawn by the noise, a structural collapse inside the building, or hostile survivors trying to take over the safehouse.
 - **Actions:** Players respond to these final obstacles by performing emergency repairs, fighting off the horde, or negotiating with or defending against the hostile survivors.
 - **Relevant Ability Checks:** Combat, Reflexes, Leadership.
 - **Success:** Earns Tokens for overcoming the final hurdles and ensuring the safehouse is secure and habitable for the night.

Resolving the Challenge

If the group earns enough Tokens to meet or exceed the Challenge threshold, they successfully secure the safehouse and can rest safely for the night. If not they face

consequences such as injuries, only partial fortification of the safehouse, or an imminent zombie attack.

Conditions

In The Flux Engine, the GM can apply effects that either cause Advantage or Disadvantage on Action Checks or makes them Easy or Hard. Disadvantage and Advantage are stronger than making something Easy/Hard. It is better to start with Easy/Hard, so things can get worse.

- Easy/Hard is better for longer-term Conditions.
- Advantage/Disadvantage is more impactful in the short term but can get frustrating fast.

Every group has different difficulty preferences; keep that in mind and choose accordingly.

- Some Effects will make certain actions impossible. For example, someone blinded will not be able to see anything. Use your fair judgement.
- Some Conditions can be resisted with either Willpower, Toughness, or Reflexes. Resisting is a Free Action. Remember that the second action after a failed attempt is always Easy.
- Some Conditions can only be resisted once. For example, to avoid being blinded by the Flash Bang, you must perform a Reflexes Check when it goes off. After failing, you cannot try again. Use your best judgement.

- A condition usually only lasts for one Scene, but the GM may rule in special cases that they linger for longer or until a specific Action is performed.
- Conditions applied in combat should last until resisted or 1d6 turns.

Example Conditions

- **Blinded:** All Checks requiring Vision have Disadvantage. Resist with Reflexes.
- **Poisoned:** All Checks are Hard. Resist with Toughness.
- **Grappeled:** Victims' Defence is at a Disadvantage and they cannot move. Resist with Strength-Feat.
- **Befuddled:** Any Mental Checks are Hard. Resist with Willpower.
- **Frightened:** All Checks made while the source of fear is visible are Hard. Resist with Willpower.
- **Slowed:** Only one Action per turn instead of two. Resist with Toughness.
- **Enraged:** Ranged attacks and magic are Hard, but melee attacks have Advantage. Resist with Willpower.
- **Exhausted:** Physical Ability Checks have Disadvantage. Resist with Toughness.
- **Hobbled:** Movement between and in zones costs an extra Action.
- **Bloodied:** Loose 1 Grit at the start of your turn. Resist with Toughness

The above list is not complete. Every genre has different requirements and can use a custom condition list.

SIDEBAR - You do not have to define conditions in advance, feel free to make them up during play when needed.

Advancement

After each Session, Check the list below to see what your character has accomplished. For each one you experienced you can tick a Progress Mark. You can only get one Progress Mark per session for each listed option. To Advance, your character needs 6 Progress Marks.

- Attended the Session
- Learned or discovered something new
- Achieved their Goal
- Helped another Character
- Spent an Adrenaline
- Broke a Significant Item
- Used your Origin's Benefit

When you have accumulated 6 Progress Marks, you Advance and wipe the progress track to be filled again. You gain:

- 1 C or 1 Improvement Point

Also choose one of the below benefits for your Advance.

- Increase a single Ability by one step.
(d4->d6->d8->d10)
- Select a new Talent, up to a maximum of 6.
- Gain a new Bond at d4

Characters

Before creating characters, discuss with the group what you want to play. Ensure there is not too much overlap between character concepts. Ensure the characters fit the campaign style, tone and idea. Then, follow these steps to create your characters .

Character Creation Summary

1. Choose or create an Origin and note down the details on your sheet
2. Choose or create an Archetype and note down the details on your sheet
3. Improve 2 Abilities by one step each.
4. Select or design a Talent
5. Come up with and write down a Goal
6. Envision a Drive and write it down.
7. Choose a Bond
8. Write down additional Gear
9. Choose or make up a Name and any other details you think are relevant to your Character.
10. Create the Home

Origins

Your character's background is shaped by where they came from and how they were raised. Origins represent the diverse cultures, environments, and experiences that exist in your game world. They provide a foundation for your character's personality, skills, and worldview.

Each Origin offers a unique perspective and a special ability that can be used once per session. Additionally there are optional background questions you can answer as a starting point for your character's story. These Origins are intentionally broad, allowing them to fit into any genre or setting your group creates.

During character creation, choose one of the following Origins or work with your GM to create a custom one that fits your character concept and the world you're building together. Remember, these are just the beginning - your game world should be full of diverse cultures and backgrounds. Feel free to expand on these or create entirely new Origins that reflect the unique aspects of your setting.

The Anatomy of an Origin

Each Origin in The Flux Engine consists of several components:

1. **Name:** A concise title that encapsulates the essence of the background.

2. **Description:** A short, evocative paragraph that paints a picture of the Origin, helping players understand its core concept.
3. **Trait:** A unique Origin Trait that can be used by spending Grit, reflecting the practical advantages of the character's background.
4. **Optional background questions:** Two thought-provoking questions that help players flesh out their character's past and personality.

Example Origins

Urban Dweller

The bustling streets are your home, the city's heartbeat your lullaby. You've learned to navigate both the gleaming towers and shadowy alleys, understanding that in the urban jungle, connections are currency.

- **Trait:** When you are in a new settlement you can declare you have a useful contact for 1 Grit. You can do this only once per settlement only.
- **Optional background questions:**
 - What urban legend or city secret do you know that most don't?
 - How did navigating the complexities of city life shape your worldview?

Wilderness Survivor

Nature's harsh beauty has been your constant companion. You've learned to read the land like others read books, finding sustenance and shelter where the uninitiated see only hostility.

- **Trait:** Once per scene for 1 Grit, you gain Advantage on a check to find food, water, or shelter in any environment.
- **Optional Background Questions:**
 - What's the most valuable lesson the wild has taught you?
 - What creature or natural phenomenon do you feel a special connection with?

Academic Institution

Knowledge is your greatest weapon, honed in great halls of learning. Whether bent over ancient tomes or cutting-edge tech, you've cultivated a mind that craves understanding.

- **Trait:** Once per Scene for one Grit you gain Advantage on a Knowledge check by citing your formal education.
- **Optional Background Questions:**
 - What unconventional field of study fascinated you most?
 - How has your academic background clashed with "real world" experiences?

Nomadic People

The horizon has always been your home, never staying in one place for long. Your life is a tapestry of diverse experiences, each new encounter adding another vibrant thread to your story.

- **Trait:** Once per Scene for 1 Grit, you can declare that you've previously visited or heard tales about a location the group encounters, providing a useful piece of true information.
- **Optional background questions:**

- What's the most unusual custom or tradition you've encountered in your travels?
- What keeps you moving rather than settling down?

Isolated Community

Raised apart from the wider world, you see things others miss. Your unique perspective, shaped by your community's traditions and values, often provides insight where others see only the familiar.

- **Trait:** Once per Scene for 1 Grit, you can draw upon your community's unique perspective to gain Advantage on an Awareness check when encountering unfamiliar situations or environments.
- **Optional background questions:**
 - What aspect of the outside world surprised you most when you first encountered it?
 - What unique practice or belief from your community do you still hold onto?

Cultural Crossroads

You grew up in a melting pot of cultures, languages, and ideas. This diverse upbringing has given you a chameleon-like ability to adapt and connect across social boundaries.

- **Trait:** Once per Scene for 1 Grit, you can tap into your diverse experiences to gain Advantage on an Influence check when dealing with unfamiliar cultures or social situations.
- **Optional background questions:**

- How has your diverse background helped you in an unexpected way?
- What conflicting cultural values do you struggle to reconcile?

Customizing Origins

The Origins provided in this book are intentionally broad, serving as a foundation for character backgrounds across various settings. However, you may find that your specific game world calls for more tailored options. When customizing Origins, consider the unique cultural, environmental, and historical aspects of your setting. For example, a post-apocalyptic world might have Origins like "Bunker Dweller" or "Wasteland Scavenger," while a high-fantasy realm could include "Fey Raised" or "Temple Trained" Ensure that each custom Origin provides a distinct perspective and experience for your world. When creating the Origin Trait, aim for abilities that are flavorful and occasionally useful, but not so powerful that they overshadow other character choices.

The optional background questions should prompt players to flesh out their character's personal history and connection to the world.

SIDEBAR - I recommend that every world you create should have at least 6 Origins to give enough variety, but not too many to avoid overwhelming players with choice. I suggest keeping below 12.

Archetypes

Archetypes represent the path they've chosen or the role they've embraced in society. They embody the skills, knowledge, and experiences that define your character's expertise.

Each Archetype offers a unique perspective on the world and a special set of Abilities that showcase their particular talents. These provide a strong foundation for your character, but they're just the beginning of your journey. As you adventure and grow, you're free to expand beyond these initial boundaries, shaping your character's development in any direction you choose.

Your choice of Archetype works in tandem with your Origin, creating a background that brings your character to life. Whether you're a Worker from the cultural crossroads or a Healer raised in an isolated community, the combination of Origin and Archetype helps create a unique individual with a story to tell.

When creating your game world, consider offering a diverse range of Archetypes that reflect the various roles and professions important in your setting. I recommend between 6 and 12 options to provide ample choice without overwhelming players. Remember, these are just the beginning - the real story begins when your characters step into the world and start making it their own.

Anatomy of an Archetype

Here's a breakdown of what each section means:

1. **Name and Introduction:** The Archetype's title, followed by a brief description that captures its essence and role in the world.
2. **Ability Increases:** This section lists which two Abilities you can increase to d6 when choosing this Archetype, reflecting your character's specialized training or natural aptitudes.
3. **Starting Gear:** A list of equipment your character begins with, representing tools of their trade or profession.
4. **Starting Talent:** A Talent that showcases your Archetype's particular expertise.
5. **Optional Background Questions:** A set of questions designed to help you flesh out your character's background, personality, and motivations within the context of their Archetype.

Example Archetypes

Adept

Reality bends to your will, and the impossible becomes possible at your fingertips. Where others see immutable laws, you perceive malleable forces. Your mind and spirit channel powers beyond ordinary comprehension, shaping the world to your design.

- **Increase:** Any 2 of Mastery, Knowledge, Willpower to d6

- **Starting Gear:** Gain a Power, plus one for every Mastery Ability Increase.
- **Starting Talent:** *Metaphysical Acuity* - You gain Advantage on checks to identify or understand supernatural effects, artifacts, or phenomenon.
- **Optional Background Questions:**
 - What was the first Power you mastered, and how did it change your life?
 - What incident taught you the importance of caution when wielding your powers?

Fighter

In the chaos of battle, you are the storm's fury. Your body is a weapon, your mind a relentless strategist. While others falter, you charge forward, unleashing destruction upon your enemies.

- **Increase:** Any 2 of Fighting, Ranged, Battle to d6.
- **Starting Gear:** 1 weapon, 1 armor
- **Starting Talent:** *Piercing Strike* - When an attack succeeds gain an extra Surge.
- **Optional Background Questions:**
 - What battle changed your perspective on conflict?
 - What personal code or ethos guides your actions in combat?

Healer

Life's thread is delicate, and you're the one who mends its frays. Your compassionate touch and decisive mind stand between vitality and oblivion. Where others see hopelessness, you offer a chance at renewal.

- **Increase:** Any 2 of Awareness, Healing, Willpower.
- **Starting Gear:** 1 tool, 1 armor
- **Starting Talent:** "Caretaker" - When using the Help action to assist an injured ally, you can use your Healing die instead of your normal Ability dice.
- **Optional Background Questions:**
 - How do you cope with the inevitable losses that come with your profession?
 - What unconventional treatment or cure did you discover, and how did it change your approach to healing?

Investigator

The world is a puzzle, and you're the one who finds the missing pieces. Where others see coincidence, you spot patterns. Your keen mind and sharp senses unravel mysteries, turning whispers and clues into undeniable truths.

- **Increase** Any 2 of Awareness, Influence, Knowledge to d6
- **Starting Gear:** 1 Tool, 1 Armor
- **Starting Talent:** *Elementary* - When using evidence to help another character's check, you can use your Awareness die instead of your normal Ability dice for the Help action.
- **Optional background questions:**
 - What personal cost has your relentless pursuit of the truth extracted from you?
 - What unconventional method do you use in your investigations?

Pathfinder

The horizon is your home, the unknown your constant companion. In a world full of dangers, you are the first to see, first to know. Where others hesitate, you forge ahead, charting the path for those who follow.

- **Increase:** Any 2 of Awareness, Survival, Covert to d6
- **Starting Gear:** 1 weapon, 1 tool
- **Starting Talent:** *Guide* - When leading a group through difficult or dangerous terrain, you can spend 1 Adrenaline so they all can use your Survival dice instead of their Ability dice.
- **Optional Background Questions:**
 - What's the most wondrous sight you've stumbled upon in your travels?
 - How do you balance self-reliance with the need for companionship?

Scholar

Knowledge is your weapon, curiosity your shield. In a world of mysteries and marvels, you are the seeker of truths. Where others see the unknown, you see an opportunity to expand the boundaries of understanding.

- **Increase** Any 2 of Influence, Knowledge, Willpower to d6
- **Starting Gear:** 1 Tool, 1 Armor
- **Starting Talent:** *Bookworm* - You gain Advantage to Knowledge checks when using books, databases or similar tools for research.
- **Optional Background Questions:**
 - What groundbreaking theory are you working to prove?

- How do you bridge the gap between academic knowledge and practical application?

Worker

Your calloused hands tell a story of determination. In a world that demands sweat and toil, you stand resilient. Where others see insurmountable tasks, you see challenges to overcome, your strength and skill shaping the world around you.

- **Increase:** Any 2 of Fitness, Toughness, Tradecraft to d6.
- **Starting Gear:** 1 Tool, 1 Armor
- **Starting Talent:** *Jack of All Trades* - You can use your Tradecraft dice for any check involving manual labor or craftsmanship, regardless of the specific trade.
- **Optional background questions:**
 - What great work are you most proud of?
 - What dream or ambition drives you to persevere through the toughest jobs?

Customizing Archetypes

Archetypes represent the various roles and professions that exist within your game world. When customizing Archetypes, think about the types of characters that would naturally emerge in your setting. A cyberpunk world might have Archetypes like "Netrunner" or "Corp Exec," while a nautical adventure could feature "Ship's Navigator" or "Sea Witch." Consider the core competencies and specialized knowledge each Archetype would possess, and reflect these in their

Ability Increases and Starting Gear. The Starting Talent should exemplify a unique skill or technique associated with the Archetype.

When crafting Optional Background Questions, focus on aspects that highlight the Archetype's place in society, their motivations, or the challenges they face. Aim for a range of Archetypes that cover different playstyles and narrative roles.

SIDEBAR - When creating custom Archetypes for your world try to keep it to 6. You can do more, but as these are not classes that restrict growth it is not important to create a huge amount. Keep in mind that after creation characters grow freely.

Abilities

These are the skills and attributes that define how your character interacts with the world.

- Every character starts with a base of d4 in all Abilities. This represents the average skill level for an average person.
- As your Abilities improve they follow this dice chain: d4 → d6 → d8 → d10
- During character creation the highest dice you can reach is d8

SIDEBAR - Abilities not only enable you to do things, they also represent the knowledge on a subject. For example someone with a high rating in Ranged can use it to find out if he knows something about a specific gun or mystical arrow.

Core Abilities

These Abilities represent the list for a basic game using The Flux Engine. The rules assume these are available to all characters. They represent the overall capability of a character in an area. To specialise your character choose an appropriate Talent.

Combat Abilities

Combat Abilities represent a character's proficiency in violent conflict, including tactical planning, melee fighting, and ranged combat.

- **Battle:** Tactical awareness and leadership in combat. Used for Initiative.
- **Fighting:** Melee combat and close-quarters weapon proficiency.
- **Ranged:** Distant warfare and projectile weapon expertise.

Resistances

Resistances are abilities that represent a character's capacity to withstand various physical, mental, and environmental dangers or conditions in the The Flux Engine system.

- **Reflexes:** Avoid sudden dangers and traps. Defence against Ranged Attacks.
- **Toughness:** Endure physical hardships and resist ailments. Defence against melee attacks.

- **Willpower:** Resist mental influences and psychological stress. Defence against Powers and mental attacks.

Skills

Skills are a diverse set of abilities that cover general expertise, representing a character's proficiency in various practical, social, and knowledge-based tasks.

- **Awareness:** Perception and intuition. Detect clues, ambushes and discern lies.
- **Covert:** Stealth, subterfuge, and fine manipulation like lockpicking or pickpocketing.
- **Fitness:** Physical prowess, Athleticism and carrying capacity. Dice value represents slots (p. XX ff)
- **Healing:** Medical knowledge and treatment. See Injuries & Healing (p. XX ff)
- **Influence:** Social interaction and manipulation.
- **Knowledge:** General learning and information recall. Also for Library use.
- **Mastery:** Your ability to manifest various powers depending on setting. Magic, PSI, Divine intervention etc.
- **Piloting:** This ability represents your character's skill in controlling and manoeuvring various forms of transportation or large machinery appropriate to the game's setting. This could include riding horses, driving a car, piloting an aircraft or spacecraft, or operating any other form of transportation.
- **Survival:** Wilderness proficiency and tracking.
- **Tradecraft:** Vocational and craft expertise.

Customizing Abilities

Tailor your game's Abilities list to fit your campaign by adding, removing, or adjusting them as needed. For instance, in a socially-focused setting, you might split the Influence ability into Persuade, Intimidate, and Inspire. Conversely, you could merge the Resistance abilities if conditions only play a minor role.

Exercise caution when modifying abilities tied to core mechanics, such as Battle (which determines Initiative) or Fitness (which affects carrying capacity). Keep in mind that a longer Ability list allows for more diverse characters and greater growth potential, while a shorter list might lead to faster advancement across all abilities.

SIDEBAR - I recommend maintaining between 12 and 24 Abilities for balanced gameplay.

Talents

These are unique talents for your character, giving them various ways to focus and improve. Talents are one of the main ways to differentiate your character from the others in the group. Use them to bring your character concept to life.

How Talents Work

Talents typically function in one of three ways, but there are exceptions:

- They make certain tasks *Easy*, reducing the TN of specific actions.
- They provide *Advantage* in particular situations.
- They allow for special actions by spending Grit or Adrenaline.

If you possess multiple Talents that apply to the same action, you can benefit from all of them simultaneously. For instance, if one Talent makes an action *Easy* and another provides *Advantage* on that same action, you'll get the benefits of both.

SIDEBAR - Every character gets at least one Talent. You cannot have more than 6 Talents at any one time. However, you can replace a Talent the character already knows with a different one during Advancement. The forgotten Talent is lost and not refunded.

Example Talents

Combat Talents

Battlefield Command

Once per combat, you can spend 1 Adrenaline and give yourself and all allies within the same Zone *Advantage* on their next Check.

DEFENDER

Use an Action to protect another character, their Defence Checks are *Easy*.

RAGE

Spend 1 Adrenaline to immediately cause 1d4 Hits to a single enemy in the same Zone.

SWIFT

Once per round, you can spend 1 Grit to immediately get an extra Action.

Second Wind

Once per Scene, when you're reduced to 0 Grit due to avoiding a Hit, immediately regain 1 Grit.

VETERAN

Battle Checks are never Hard for you.

Social Talents

INSPIRE

Once per scene give a pep talk or comfort and spend 1 Adreanline to allow any allies in the same zone to add your Influence Ability Dice to their next check. You don't share any risk on that roll.

NOTORIOUS

Discuss with the group what deed you're known for. Depending on the circumstances, this can give you Advantage or Disadvantage in interactions.

SOCIAL BUTTERFLY

Social Interactions have Advantage.

Exploration Talents

Keen Senses

Once per scene when making an Awareness check, you can reroll the Ability dice. You keep the new result.

Trap sense

Reflex checks to avoid traps have Advantage.

PARKOUR

Movement tasks like jumping or climbing have Advantage.

SCOUT

Exploration tasks are never Hard for you.

Utility Talents

APOTHECARY

You can spend a day in nature gathering herbs or use the time to scrounge other ingredients and create a poultice or first aid patch. This does not require a check. You can apply a poultice/patch once to reduce an injury's duration by one day.

CRAFTSMAN

Earn income at your group's Home during downtime:

- Make a Hard Tradecraft Check.
- Gain 1 \mathcal{C} for each Success and Surge rolled

CROOK

Criminal activities are always Easy for you.

FLUX GAMBLER

Once per Check, you can spend 1 Adrenaline to reroll the Flux Dice. You must keep the new result.

Miracle Worker

Once per session, you can attempt to revive a character who has just died. Make a Hard Healing check. Success brings them back with 1 Grit.

PREPARED

Spend 1 Grit to have any mundane item you need in your pack.

SACRIFICE

Spend 1 Grit to take the full consequences of a failed Action Check for another character if you are in a position to do so.

TACTICIAN

After a rest, spend 1 Adrenaline and roll 2d4 to create a pool of Tactical Points you can share with your allies.

- You cannot use them on yourself.
- One Tactical Point manipulates an Ability or Bond Dice result by 1 point up or down.
- This cannot change the result of the Flux Dice.

Using Tactical Points requires an action from you while you issue commands or offer advice, but is a Free Action for the recipient. Any left over Tactical Points are lost when you roll the Tactical Dice the next time.

Mind Reader

Once per Session, spend 1 Adrenaline to ask an NPC a question. They cannot lie.

UNREMARKABLE

When hiding in crowds, shadows, or other cover, spend 1 Adrenaline to be invisible for one scene, until you leave the shadows/crowds, or until you interact with a person or object.

Creating New Talents

Get creative and make something up that would fit your character or that you are missing for your campaign. When creating new Talents, keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Talents should provide a clear, specific benefit.
- They should be balanced against existing Talents.
- New Talents should fit the tone and style of your campaign.

SIDEBAR - Discuss any new Talents with your group before implementing them.

Choose a Goal

For your first session it is a good idea to look at your Abilities and Talents and choose a Goal involving one of them. You can get more creative once you are more comfortable with the game.

Choose a Drive

Because these are long term projects that will impact the whole campaign it is important to discuss these with the group. They should be anchored in your character's concept, background and the campaign world.

- Drive will always establish a truth in the setting. If your goal is to bring the evil necromancer or CEO to justice, they now exist and impact the gameworld.
- Since your GM should build the Campaign around your Drives they also get to Veto any unfitting Drives.

SIDEBAR - For some campaigns it can be totally fine to establish a Drive later, once characters are more familiar with the universe, NPCs and story.

Choose a Bond

Talk among yourselves to learn a bit about the other Characters. Then choose one other Character for your Character to be bonded with. Note their name on the Character Sheet in the Bond section and write down a d4 Bond with them. You consider this person a close ally, or friend, or are indebted to them somehow. If you Help them, you roll the Bond Dice with your Ability Dice and sum the two to determine the result.

Example Bonds:

- One saved the other's life.
- One trained the other.
- You are family.
- You are or were lovers.
- You share a dark secret.
- You are great friends.

NO CHANGES AFTER THIS POINT, REVISION STILL IN PROGRESS GEAR

A note on currency: The game uses a shorthand for valuables, favours, and debts, and a character uses it to acquire equipment. 1 ℄ is just an abstract and not related to our real-world currencies.

► Everyone starts with a basic gear pack depending on the game setting, any gear from the Archetype, and 2℄ to purchase additional equipment.

Example Fantasy Pack: A Backpack, a Water Skin, a Blanket

Example Sci-Fi Pack: Canister, Nutri-bars, Wrist Computer

Example Modern Pack: Couriers Slingbag, Smartphone, Public Transport Card

Load

Your Fitness Ability Dice determines how much you can carry. Every character has two lists to write their belongings in. Ready Items and Carried Items. Each line on a list is referred to as a Slot. Everything you carry needs to go on one of these lists. An Item occupies at least one Slot.

Ready Items: This list contains everything relevant you wear on your body, like functional clothing, a Backpack and Armor. Also, everything else, usually at least weapons, that you want to access with a single Action. The list has slots equal to your Fitness Dice type. Someone with d6 in Fitness has 6 Slots for Ready Items. Ready Item slots cannot be extended.

Carried Items: This list contains all the items you carry in containers like sacks and Backpacks. To access anything on this list, you need to spend your entire Turn scrounging for it, no matter how many Actions you take.

This list has slots equal to twice your Fitness Dice type. Someone with d6 in Fitness has 12 Slots for Carried Items. You can increase the available Carried Item slots by adding a number of slots equal to your Fitness Dice type. The first time you do this, and a slot in this extension is filled, all your Actions are Hard. The second time you extend the Slots and carry anything in those, you additionally suffer Disadvantage on all Actions because you are massively over-encumbered. You cannot extend

the slots a third time. The maximum number of Carried Item Slots for Characters with d6 Fitness is 24.

Most Items take up a single slot. Bulky Items take up an extra slot and can cause Disadvantages when in confined spaces. Heavy Items also need an additional Slot. So a Heavy Weapon or a Plate Armor takes up 3 Slots on a list! 1 is the minimum for a Significant Item, plus 1 for being Heavy and/or plus 1 for Bulky. Normal clothing does not require a slot. Heavy winter clothing may take 1-2 Slots, though. Small items do not need to go into a slot. A single healing portion doesn't need a slot, but 3 or 4 of them need to be securely stored and so need a slot. You can store up to 4 Items marked "Small" in a single slot, though only one type of item per slot.

Significant Items

Broken Items Repair Tradecraft The skill represents all the expertise and knowledge relating to the chosen Vocation. If the character has a relevant Vocation Ability and tools available, they can use them to mend Broken equipment while on an adventure. A successful Check can repair one broken item during a day's work.

Armour

Protective gear can take Hits from a failed defence Action Check so that you can avoid an Injury.

Examples:

<i>Type</i>	<i>Hits</i>	<i>Slots</i>	<i>Tags/Notes</i>	<i>Cost</i>
<i>Light</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	-	<i>1℄</i>
<i>Medium</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>DIS on Sneak</i>	<i>1℄</i>
<i>Heavy</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>Bulky, DIS on any Movement Checks</i>	<i>2℄</i>
<i>Shield</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>1℄</i>
<i>Large Shield</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>Bulky</i>	<i>2℄</i>

Light Weapons

Weapons allow you to defend yourself in combat or attack someone. They can take 1 Hit, require 1 Slot and Cost 1℄ .

Examples: Dagger, Katana, Baseball Bat, Hand Crossbow, Scimitar, Knuckleduster, Shortbow, Spear, Pistol etc.

Heavy Weapons

Using a heavy weapon needs two hands and provides an Advantage in situations where their size, weight and calibre are

beneficial, for example, against heavily armoured or big foes or when using it to intimidate someone. However, they can also provide a Disadvantage when their bulk hinders you, for example, in enclosed spaces or against small and/or fast enemies.

They can take 1 Hit, require 2 Slots, are Bulky and cost 1℄
Examples: Greatsword, Laser Rifle, Lamp Post, Huntingbow, Crossbow, Shotgun, etc.

Tools

They require 1 Slot, cost 1℄ and allow you to do things you otherwise cannot. A Tool cannot break for defence.

Examples: Lock-picks, First Aid Kit, Climbing Gear, Hunting Traps, Camping Kit, Herbalist Set, Chemist Supplies, etc.

Masterwork Tool

These pinnacles of craftsmanship require 1 Slot and cost 2℄. In addition to the typical tool properties, a masterwork tool allows you to reroll your Ability Dice once on a check when using the tool. However, doing so uses precious materials or damages tools in the Kit. It still works as a normal tool, but before you can use the Reroll again, it must be refit in the Home by paying 1℄

Common Items

Common Items have no cost. Just write down what makes sense for your character. Each Item still occupies at least one Slot. They cannot break to avoid a Hit. Here is an example list of common items.

Examples: Backpack, Sleeping Bag , Candles, Military Ration, Jar, Mapping Kit, Mirror, Flashlight, Parchment, Pouch, Quiver with ammo (Heavy), Rope, Sack, Shovel, Tent (Bulky), Tinder & Flint, Torches, Water Skin, etc.

Jewelry & Clothes

Non-magic and purely decorative jewellery and clothing do not take up slots. If the item is a Relic with special or magical effects, however, it does require 1 Slot from the Ready List to be active.

XX Add a section on Tags to different items more.

THE HOME BASE

► Describe a location and an NPC at your Home Base.

The worlds the characters live in is always dangerous. However, there is one place they can always return to that is familiar and usually safe. The Home Base can be many things. The Village all the characters grew up in together. A Space station that is a central hub where the characters meet their contacts. Or a street corner where the character's favourite bar is located.

First, discuss as the group what the home base should be. The place needs to be big enough for several locations and NPCs. Then take turns. Every player creates a location in the Home Base. Doesn't need much, just a name and a single line of description.

Then the person to your left will describe one NPC residing in the location you just created. This NPC can be an ally, rival, contact, or whatever you think is fun. Write down some information on the NPC, so the GM and other players know something about them. Again, a Name and a short one or two-line description are enough.

Finally, your Bond will add a single detail to your Location. This can be some trivia, a secret, special events, NPCs, etc. they know about. Whatever they come up with, it should add to the Location and not change it dramatically.

The place you all created together will be the central hub of your game, which you will return to repeatedly.

GM SECTION

The Flux Engine is a collaborative RPG where the players have a voice in creating the world.

Home

Remember the Home the players created? Use it! Make sure the characters have plenty of reasons to return here. Keep it alive. It can change over time and be threatened, but in the end, it should remain a safe haven for the player characters no matter what.

THE WORLD

If you go full homebrew or use an established setting, I encourage you to go through the following procedure with your players so they have an input on the world too. It works best for sandbox games but can also give good anchors for traditional campaign play. This process will take time, so I recommend reserving a full session. But it is worth it as it generates player buy-in and interest and lessens GM workload.

The group does this together. Once completed, the GM takes the resulting map and finalises its contents. However you go about it, players need to have finished their Characters before this can be done.

To start you need to establish the genre and set some guidelines with your players. Is it Fantasy, Sci Fi, Espionage? As the player

characters should already be done, this can be relatively quick, as most of this should have already been determined.

Once you are comfortable that everyone understands what the game should be about, take a blank sheet of paper and draw the Home Base at the center. You can also use the template provided in the Appendix(tbd). Then, in turns, every player gets to add an important location to the map. It works best if every player creates at least two, but do it however long it is fun for your group.

Important Locations

The first player picks a general direction from the Home. North, West, whatever they prefer. Then decide on a distance. We use abstract distances of Near, Moderate and Far. *Near* is around a days journey away, *Moderate* 2-3 Days and *Far* a week and longer. From these distances you can tell the area you are mapping is just a fraction of the whole campaign world. And thats enough for most games. Instead of mapping an entire continent or universe you focus on a limited area of around a weeks worth of travel around the Home Base. These rules assume an average campaign spanning a large area; for smaller-scale games that happen in a single city or similar confined space, adjust the travel times as needed. XX[ADD TABLE WITH EXAMPLES]

It would be best to use these distances evenly, so there can't be another Near location until there is a Moderate and Far one too.

Now roll a dice on the following table to generate a general idea of the location. If the player already has a strong idea, let them use that. Rolling on the table is optional and meant to inspire and not restrict. XX[REWORK TO SEED MORE GENRE EXAMPLES]

1 Major Hub

This could be a large City, an enormous Space Station, a colossal corporate complex or something similar. This bustling hub is the largest in the region, offering endless opportunities for urban adventures, technological marvels, and industrial intrigues.

Usually, there is only a single Major Hub on a map. You can ignore subsequent results. If you can come up with an interesting explanation as to why there are two locations of this scale on the campaign map, you can also place a second one. But not more.

2. Age Old Ruins

Remnants from a long-lost age or a distant or alien civilization, such as a major gravesite, lost colony, dungeon, or ghost town. These ancient sites teem with dangers, such as rogue AI, malfunctioning defence systems, monsters, unpredictable magic, or reactivated artefacts. Valuable relics can be found in these places.

3. Settlement

A vital village, small space station, or remote outpost is crucial for strategic reasons or resource extraction. Its significance could be from its location, advanced technology research, secretive experiments, the people inhabiting it, or a long-forgotten secret within.

4. New Ruins

These places are fresh ruins. They may have been gone for generations already or just a few days ago. Monster Raids, War, Natural Catastrophes or simple neglect are all reasons such a ruin exists.

5. Unusual Settlement

This place is home to beings unlike any of the player characters. A frontier base of an unknown alien species, a fairy court, or a place of vastly advanced technology or magic.

6. Creature Den

This is either home to a very large group of monsters or a Behemoth. It could be a planet eating celestial being's nest, a dragon's lair or even the home of a god.

7. Source of Power

This is a dangerous and coveted place of power. It could be a major magic node, a planet with a unique substance only found there, a world-destroying space laser, or a secret place under a city that controls all the spirits haunting the streets..

8. Weird

A bizarre location that seems out of place in the universe, like a portal to the fey realm distorting its surroundings, a twisted alien planet, a tunnel to the Earth's core, or a seaside village corrupted by evil forces.

9 Battlefield

A desolate landscape littered with remnants of war—craters, trenches, and rusted weapons—haunted by the ghosts of fallen soldiers, or worse.

10 Military Outpost

Ranging from a transient army campsite to a permanent fortress defending the local area, crucial for military operations and security.

11 Hidden Refuge

A secretive sanctuary like a pirate base in an asteroid belt, a hideout for outlaws, or a temple to a forgotten deity still tended by loyal followers.

12 Natural Wonder

A breathtaking marvel of nature, such as a majestic waterfall, an ancient forest, a crystal-clear lake, or a towering mountain range, inspiring awe and wonder.

After this is determined the player considers how the Character knows about this location. Have they *seen* it, only *heard* about it from someone or somewhere, or *learned* about it in some book or database? Every player can only select each of these options once.

Knowing this information come up with a short vignette or hook for it. Feel free to talk with the other players about your ideas but make it your own location. Describe the process of how they seen, heard or learned of the location. What does it look like? What does the area around it look like? Are there people there? Anything unusual or interesting?

XXX[EXAMPLE TBD]

After the Location is put on the map and the vignette written down, the GM will make a secret Action Check to determine how accurate the characters knowledge of the location is.

- If the Character has *seen* it: The GM makes an Awareness Check.
- If the Character has *heard* about it the GM makes an Influence Check.
- If the Character has *learned* about it the GM makes a Knowledge Check.

The check determines the accuracy of the assumptions.

The result is a Bane: The Character is terribly wrong about the location. The GM will rewrite the details significantly.

The result is a Failure: The Character is mostly correct but is missing some important detail. The GM adds it to the description.

The result is a Success: The Characters information is entirely correct, but there may be surprising details the character doesn't know yet.

The result is a Boon: The Characters information is absolutely correct. Not only that they know even more than they thought! Once the GM has fleshed out the location they provide additional, useful information to the player.

All these checks should be done in secret, so the players never really know what to expect when they decide to travel to a location.

When the first player is done with their location go to the next player and on around the table, until every player has created two locations.

As the last step every player gets to add a small bit to the vignette and story of one Important Location. They should choose the one they find most interesting, but it cannot be their own. It is best if every player adds to a different location but it is not mandatory. If there is a place everyone wants to add to because it is so interesting that just means it will be more important in the game. Remember to work collaboratively and not overwrite another's ideas. Add to it but don't destroy or change it too much. The accuracy of this information is still determined by the earlier roll, so uncertainty remains.

Expanding the Map

With all the earlier work the GM already has a base map to work from with some fun and interesting locations. The GM takes it with them and uses it to build the setting around it or integrate it into an already existing world. To make a proper map Hexpaper or a map drawing tool is always good, but you can keep it abstract if you like. No need to be a map artist. Make some general notes about the geography of the campaign area so you have an idea it looks like.

Now add some minor locations, points of interest or factions to the map between the Home Base and the Important Locations the players created. These should fill gaps and add mystery, excitement and danger to the world. However they should never overshadow the locations the players have created. Create as many of these as you want and have the energy to make, do not overdo it. You can always come back later and add more once the game has begun. Do not force yourself to flesh out an entire Kingdom, Planet or Space Sector right now. If you have some

prewritten adventures you want to run, feel free to place them on the map now or link them to already existing locations.

RELICS

The term “Relic” describes any item with special abilities or powers. They can be magic by nature or high-tech. Usually, these are not for sale but are special rewards.

Let enemies wield these Items against the characters first, so they know how they work and have been on the receiving end of them where appropriate. Below you will find some examples of Relics. They are purposefully generic and can be flavoured to whatever suits your campaign.

- Throwing Weapon with Ranged. Returns to Thrower. Spend 1 Grit to have it attack twice.
- An Item that Mends itself by 1 Hit per Hour of Rest.
- Item that reduces Injury time by 1d4 days
- A Bomb: Throw with Ranged, Hits everyone in a Zone 2d4 times. A successful Reflex Check halves the Hits.
- A Luck Coin: Once per session, you can flip the Coin when you fail a Check. On Heads, you have the effect of a Boon and lose the Coin. On Tails, you have the effect of a Bane but retain the Luck Coin.
- Extra Limb: Can be attached and gives the wearer an additional action in the first round of combat and any other benefit an extra arm may bring.
- An Armour or item of Clothing that slows your fall to be as slow as a feather.
- A Melee weapon that can shape into any other melee weapon on command.

- A Weapon that, on a Hit, also restrains an enemy for one turn. Attacking the creature or defending against its attacks is easy for one turn.
- A Piece of Jewellery or Tech with engravings/symbols of a toolset (eg Alchemist Supplies, Doctors Kit, Thieves tools etc.). Once per day, after touching this engraving/symbol, the character has Advantage on any Ability Check done with this type of tool for one hour.

CREATURE CODEX

In The Flux Engine there are four types of enemies, as shown below. Specific gear or armour is irrelevant to them and should be described as what makes sense in the situation and sounds fun. All Creatures can have Tricks. These give them particular actions or attributes, diversifying them. They are strictly optional and described later in this Chapter.

GRUNT

Creatures, or NPC of this type, can only take 1 Wound before they are out. They have only 1 Action and cause 1 Hit if the Character cannot defend. They can have 1 Trick at most.

Basic Stats for a Grunt / 1 Action/ 1 Wound / 1 Hit / No Trick

Needle Goblin -Creature with a blowgun, harassing from afar.

1 Action/ 1 Wound / 1 Hit /

◆REACH The Creature can use an Action to attack any Creature in any Zone.

Rotor Drone - a round drone attacking with short-range weaponry.

1 Action/ 1 Wound / 1 Hit /

◆ *FLYING* This creature can move freely between zones without using an Action, and is not hindered by obstacles.

Armoured Guard- Wearing heavy armour and handing out Beatings.

1 Action/ 1 Wound / 1 Hit /

◆ *TOUGH* All attacks against this creature or NPC are Hard.

COHORT

Creatures, or NPC of this type, can take 2 Wounds before they are out. They have 2 Actions and cause 2 Hits if the Character cannot defend. They can have up to 2 Tricks.

Basic Stats for a Cohort / 2 Actions / 2 Wounds / 2 Hits

Rotworms - A Men-sized mound of worms engulfing and digesting their prey.

2 Actions/ 2 Wounds / 2 Hits /

◆ *CONDITION GIVER* When a Character is Injured, they will also suffer a Condition. Alternatively, the Creature can use an Action to apply the Condition to a Character. Each Turn, the player can try to rid themselves of the Condition: *Hold Victims'* Defence is at a Disadvantage and they cannot move. Resist with Strength-Feat.

◆ *RETALIATE* The first melee Hit against the creature each round is reflected back on the attacker.

Drugged Up Ganger - On a brutal rampage .

3 Actions/ 2 Wounds / 3 Hits /

◆BRUTAL Causes 1 extra Hit on a failed Defence.

◆QUICK Has an extra action in combat

Morphed Cultist- Shaped by cosmic horrors, ready to die for their gods.

2 Actions / 2 Wounds /2 Hits

◆HORRIBLE Character must make a Willpower Check when encountering the creature for the first time. On Success can Act normally. On a Failure, all Actions against this creature are made with a Disadvantage.

◆SELF-SACRIFICE When another creature in the same zone takes a Hit, this creature can take the Hit instead.

LEADER

Creatures, or NPC of this type, can take 3 Hits before they fall. They have 3 Actions and cause 3 Hits if the Character cannot defend. They can have up to 3 Tricks. There should only be one Leader per group of enemies.

Leader/3 Actions/3 Wounds /3 Hits

Secret Society Assassin - A highly trained killer on a mission.

3 Actions/ 4 Wounds / 3 Hits

◆TOUGH All attacks against this creature or NPC are Hard.

◆LARGE The Creature has one extra Wound

◆MOMENTUM For every Hit the creature lands, it gains another Action.

Mindeater - Humanoid with a giant head looking like a squished Bug, wailing.

3 Actions / 3 Wounds / 3 Hits

◆ *HORRIBLE* Character must make a Willpower Check when encountering the creature for the first time. On Success can Act normally. On a Failure, all Attacks against this creature are made with a Disadvantage.

◆ *SPELLCASTER* This creature has 3 random Incantations. They can use one per round for free. Any more cost an Action as normal.

◆ *RESISTANT* Affecting this creature with an Incantation always requires a Wizard Check in addition to a Resolve spend.

Holographic General: Made of light and energy, shouting orders.

3 Actions/3 Wounds /3 Hits

◆ *COMMANDER* Once per Turn gives a Command to their allies as an Action. All Creatures/NPCs that can follow it immediately. The commander needs an Action. For those that carry out the command, it is a Free Action.

◆ *REGENERATING* The Creature heals 1 Wound at the beginning of its turn

◆ *SPECTRAL FORM* This creature can move freely between zones without using an Action and is not hindered by obstacles.

BEHEMOTH

Creatures of this level are rare and the highlight of an Adventure. A single one should be able to challenge a group of players. They have between 6-12 wounds. They do not inflict more than 3 Hits at once for a failed defence. They can have any Tricks desired, but 4 is a good limit to keep it manageable for you as the GM. They also have something no other NPC has: Behemoth Actions. In

each round of combat, they can do things that will require the Characters to use a variety of Abilities to defeat them.

A Behemoth can act several times during a Round using these Actions, even on the player's turns! There are two types: Reactions and Vile Actions

Some Tricks, like Retaliate, are examples of Reactions. It's an Action the Behemoth can take in response to something happening to them.

Vile Actions are free, depending on the combat turn and type, and can occur at any time, regardless of turn order. Every behemoth has one Villain action of each type linked to a specific Trigger. That could be a certain Turn number, the number of Wounds remaining, or anything else. The most common types of vile actions are:

Maneuver -The first Vile action of the Behemoth will get them where they need to be. A Worm burrows under a Character, A Mage may teleport away from enemies, The Machine transforms the battlefield to its advantage etc.

Reposition - The second Vile action allows the Behemoth to escape a dangerous position and move into a more favourable or defensible position. Can also mean it reduces the character's effectiveness.

Burst - The Behemoth is likely in serious trouble at this point. This action will make sure everyone regrets ever having faced it.

Reaction: Any - These are actions the Behemoth takes in reaction to something happening. A Character getting Injured, the Behemoth getting Hit, someone else getting Hit, something in the

area happening etc. A Behemoth should have at least 2 of these and can use 1 per round for free.

There is no standard array because every Behemoth is a unique encounter and should be treated as such.

Eldritch Skull: Disembodied hovering Giant's Skull engulfed in sickening flames

3 Actions/6 Wounds /3 Hits

◆**SPELLCASTER** This creature has 3 random Incantations. They can use one per round for free. Any more cost an Action as normal.

◆**UNDYING** When the skull has lost all its Wounds, it shatters into a hundred pieces. After one Round the pieces begin to reignite and move towards each other, attempting to reform the Skull. Each turn it regains 1 Wound. When it regained 6 Wounds, it reforms to attack again. Only an Incantation or ingenious idea will be able to stop this process.

◆**REACH** The Creature can use an Action to attack any Creature in any Zone

Vile Actions:

FIERY GREETING

Trigger: First Turn of Combat, unless the skull is suprised, then Second Turn.

Blinding Light: The Fires quickly intensify until they hurt the eyes. Every Character, regardless of Zone, needs to succeed on a Reflex Check or suffer the Blinded Condition until after their next turn.

Blinded: All Checks requiring Vision have Disadvantage. Resist with Reflexes.

Noxious Cloud: The Flames around the Skull begin to smoke terribly, filling the Zone where the Skull resides. Every PC caught in it must succeed on a Toughness Check, or all their Checks are hard if they are in the same zone as the Skull.

FURIOUS ATTACK

Trigger: Reduced to 3 Wounds.

Ghastly Roar: All Characters must make a Willpower Check. On Success can Act normally. On a Failure, all Attacks against this creature are made with a Disadvantage.

Revenge: The Character causing the wound is attacked by a fiery ray. Can only be defended with Reflexes. On a Failure, take 4 hits. A Success and each Surge reduces the damage by one, to a minimum of 1 Hit.

FINAL WORD

Trigger: Reduced to 0 Wounds

Goodbye: The Skull begins to shake, and the fire and light intensify. The Skull acts first and explodes at the start of the next round. Everyone in the same Zone as the Skull must succeed on a Reflex Check or suffer 2 Hits. With Success, they still suffer 1 Hit.

Bone Shrapnel: Everyone, regardless of zone or distance, takes 1 Hit from the thick cloud of bone shrapnel flying from the explosion.

XXX ADD MORE BEHEMOTH EXAMPLES

TRICKS

Tricks are the NPC equivalent of Character Talents. However, they usually do not require an Action unless the Trick says so. If a Trick changes a creature's statistics, change the statistics directly. See some example Tricks below. Remember, you can reskin them easily. For example, Slippery is used as Flying in one of the example creatures. Choose one of these or invent some for your NPCs.

QUICK

Has an extra action in combat

BRUTAL

Causes 1 extra Hit on a failed Defence.

HORRIBLE

Character must make a Willpower Check when encountering the creature for the first time. On Success can Act normally. On a Failure, all Attacks against this creature are made with a Disadvantage.

SELF-SACRIFICE

When another creature in the same zone takes a Hit, this creature can take the Hit instead.

TOUGH

All attacks against this creature or NPC are Hard.

RETALIATE

The first melee Hit against the creature each round is reflected back on the attacker.

CONDITION GIVER

When a Character is Injured, they will also suffer a Condition. Alternatively, the Creature can use an Action to apply the Condition to a Character.

Each Turn, the player can try to rid themselves of the Condition with a fitting Ability Check (Toughness, Willpower, Strength-Feat etc). See some examples below and invent new ones when required.

Examples:

Blinded: All Checks requiring Vision have Disadvantage. Resist with Reflexes.

Poisoned: All Checks are Hard. Resist with Toughness.

Hold: Victims' Defence is at a Disadvantage and they cannot move. Resist with Strength-Feat.

Befuddled: Cannot use Incantations and any Mental Checks are Hard. Resist with Willpower.

COMMANDER

Once per Turn gives a Command as an Action. All Creatures/NPCs that can follow it immediately, regardless of remaining Actions.

SNEAKY

Detecting these Creatures or NPCs is Hard.

SLIPPERY

This creature can move freely between zones without using an Action, and is not hindered by obstacles.

RESISTANT

Affecting this creature with an Incantation always requires a Wizard Check in addition to a Resolve spend.

LEECH

When the creature causes an Injury, it immediately restores all Wounds

REGENERATING

The Creature heals 1 Wound at the beginning of their turn

LARGE

The Creature has one extra Wound

REACH

The Creature can use an Action to attack any Creature in any Zone

MOMENTUM

For every Hit the creature Lands it gains another Action.

SETTING OPTION: CHAOTIC MAGIC

Some Settings will have magic in some form. These rules are for a world where magic is strange, wild and hard to control.

NEW ABILITY

Wizardry

The Ability to manipulate and understand the mysterious and occult. Each step above d4 in this Ability gives you access to one additional Incantation.

When you receive Incantations, you can make an Ability Check to switch a word of one Incantation with another to suit you better.

You can also create a spellbook. To do so, you must succeed on a *Hard* Wizardry Check and spend 1 \mathcal{C} on materials. On a success, you can inscribe one Incantation you currently have access to into your book. On a Lucky Boon you can use the Incantation twice before the weaving breaks.

The Book can never hold more Incantations than the dice value of your Wizardry Ability. Using an Incantation from the book replaces one you received for the day. It also destroys the arcane weaving that binds it into the book and removes the Incantation from it, freeing the slot for another to be written in.

New Talent

GIFTED

Receive an additional Incantation. Can be chosen up to three times.

New Relics:

- An Item that can store an Incantation with a Wizardry Check. It has 1 charge for a Success and each Surge. Charges can be spent to cast the Incantation or to avoid a Hit. Usual Items: Staff, Bracers, Gambeson, Robe.
- A Ranged weapon that will erase an Incantation on a Hit. If the target has no Incantations, it acts as a standard ranged weapon.
- **Weapon of Incantations:** Contains a random Incantation that releases on the first successful hit with the weapon. Gets a new Incantation the next day.

New Trick:

SPELLCASTER

This creature has 3 random Incantations. They can use one per round for free. Any more cost an Action as normal.

New Advancement Option:

- Gain an additional Incantation.

Rest:

If these optional Magic rules are in use, a character can also reroll and refill their Incantations during a Rest once daily.

INCANTATIONS

The weave of magic is strange and hard to control. People sensitive to mystic powers gain Incantations through a process that still needs to be understood. They appear in dreams, omens, clouds, messages from animals or as whispers into a Spellcasters ear.

► All Characters start with d4 in Wizardry and receive at least 1 Incantation.

Determine your total number of Incantations. One for each dice Step in the Wizardry Ability, plus any from Archetypes, Ancestry or Talents. Roll that many times with 3 d20 on the table below to create yours, determining each columns result separately. All three words combined create one Incantation. They are available until you use them.

Using an Incantation costs 1 Grit. If you do not want to pay Grit, you can make a Hard Wizardry Check instead. Be warned, on a failure, the spell may backfire on the caster in an unforeseen and devastating way.

Using an Incantation removes it from your mind. Once per day, after a Rest, any spent Incantations are replaced with fresh, randomly created ones. You can also willingly drop an Incantation you still have if you want a new one during that time.

ROLL	EFFECT	MEDIUM	FORM
1	Animating	Amber	Armor
2	Avenging	Bark	Arrow
3	Banishing	Blood	Aura
4	Binding	Bone	Beam
5	Charming	Crystal	Beast
6	Crushing	Fire	Blade
7	Deceiving	Fog	Circle
8	Hastening	Earth	Cloak
9	Maddening	Light	Cloud
10	Paralyzing	Moss	Crown
11	Piercing	Rot	Field
12	Reflecting	Shadow	Gate
13	Restoring	Soul	Gaze
14	Revealing	Stasis	Mask
15	Screaming	Stone	Ray
16	Shielding	Thunder	Root
17	Silencing	Vine	Shard
18	Soothing	Water	Shield
19	Summoning	Wind	Wall

20	Warding	Worm	Word
----	---------	------	------

It is up to you and your group to interpret the resulting Incantations and determine their effects. Use the components as a guide on how they manifest in the world.

The Words used in the table give a strong sense of theme to your world and its magic. Consider changing words to different ones to better reflect the world you have envisioned.

GM RESSOURCES

As the Game Moderator, you have a lot of responsibilities. It can be daunting, but the truth is, it is easier than one might think. Don't sweat rules and mechanics too much. When in doubt, make a ruling and keep the game going.

I am not one of the best GM out there, just an average one. So instead of trying to write a GM section that won't do anyone any good, I will point you towards some fantastic resources to help you GM your best game, regardless of the system! In alphabetical order:

Ginny Di

Her YouTube Channel focuses on DnD. Nonetheless, her advice for players and GMs alike is good, even if you do not play that system.

ICRPG

The Index Card RPG by Runehammer is a great inspiration to me. Besides being a fun game, the GM sections and tools for

adventure design are excellent and valuable for any TTRPG. If I am stuck in prep, I grab this and find an example to help me get started.

Play Dirty

A lot of this advice by John Wick is written to provoke and not necessarily to use. While some of the things in here may work at your table, I found it invaluable to me for a different reason. It helped me think about why and how I GM. I learned what I want from a game as a GM and where my boundaries are from this book. You will have a gut reaction to what he proposes. Use that as your guide.

Return of the Lazy DM

Sly Flourish wrote, to me, the ultimate guide on how to prep your games in the most efficient way. The method works fantastic in any genre. One hour before the game, and I am good.

Seth Skorkowsky

This YouTube channel mixes RPG reviews and GM /Player advice. Always fun to watch.

The Alexandrian

There is a website and a YouTube Channel by Justin Alexander. He has solid GM advice Throughout on many topics.

Robin's Laws of Good Game Mastering

While some of this is a bit aged nowadays, it is still a valuable book to read and look at your players and your game differently. Just don't take it as gospel but as inspiration.

Worlds without Number

Really, any game by Kevin Crawford. Besides being fun games, the GM sections are always choke full of unique random tables. I use them for other systems too.

APPENDIX

TBD