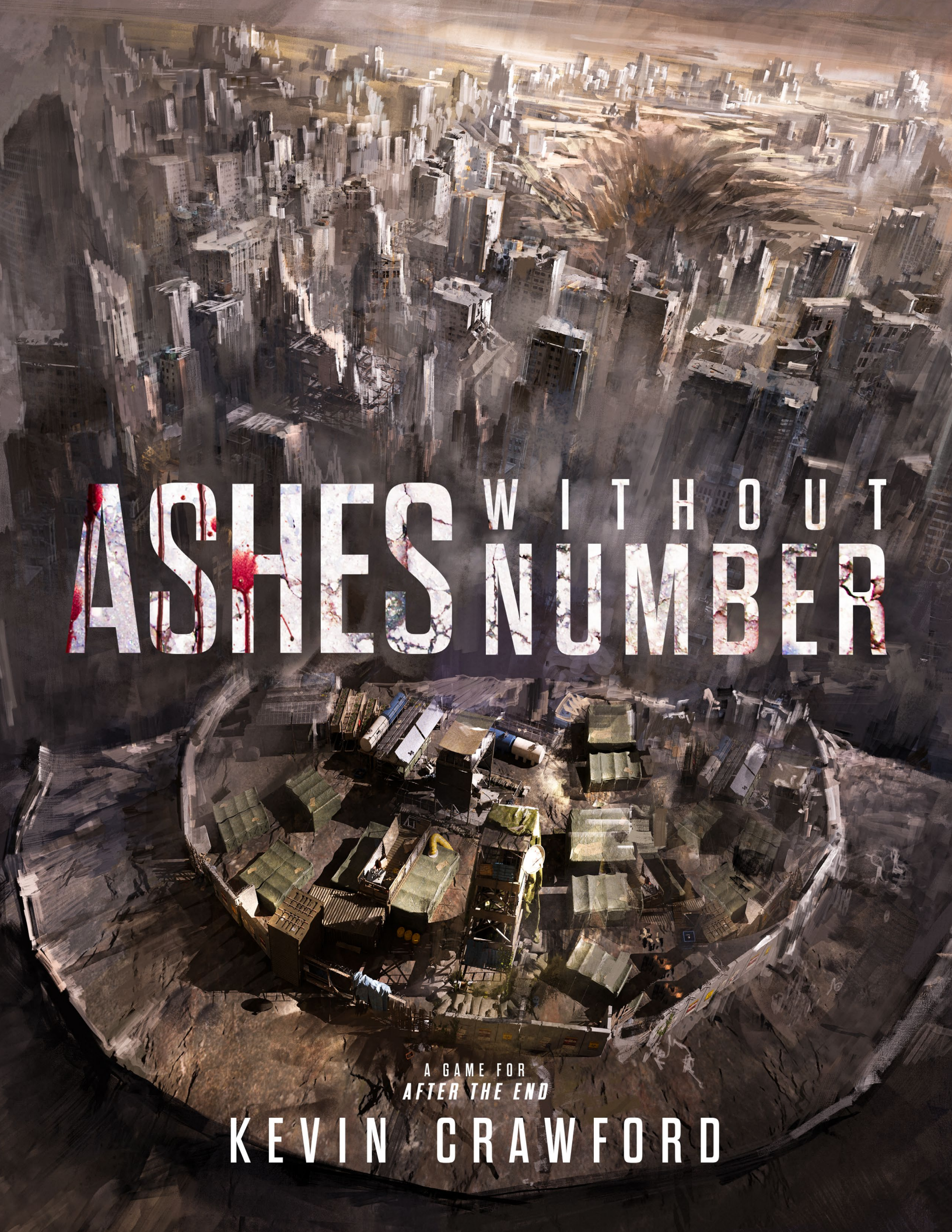

ASHES WITHOUT NUMBER
A GAME FOR
AFTER THE END
KEVIN CRAWFORD

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THE FIRES THAT CONSUME

For all things there is a fire.

Matches for kindling, oil-soaked rags for a loyalist's house, cans of gas for his family who tried to get out. Burning tires for rebel necks, hot irons for the ones who stay silent, quicklime for after they have talked. Searing images to burn peaceful streets and nuclear flames to burn nations. There are no heroes in a pile of dry kindling, only twigs that burn quick and those that are slow to take flame.

You are a survivor, a brand snatched from the burning. You were quicker than the walking dead, subtler than the state informers, stronger than the mutants of the waste. Whatever the conflagration that charred your world, you remained standing amid the ashes. What, then, was the fire that you faced?

Was it the fall of your society? Perhaps it was a civil war, or a foreign invasion, or a savage uprising from within. You hide from loyalist soldiers and rebel guerrillas both, an enemy of one and an acceptable loss to the other. Which is which? Not even they know, and not one of them could even begin to care.

Was it the fall of your sky? The seasons changed beyond enduring, wastelands grown in place of wheat. Stones fell from the sky, cities erased by a handful of void-tossed pebbles. Perhaps it was even war from the hostile lights in the heavens and the faceless minions of an alien invader. Your world could not bear it, and it broke.

Was it the mushroom cloud of a nuclear pyre? Two hundred years after the old world vanished in radioactive fire, the bones of their dead are still precious. Their ancient guns and forgotten technology are all that keep your hungry tribe from a hideous end. Mutant beasts, cannibal raiders, mad remnants of a dead world… all of them hunt, and you are the prey. Scrap metal spears and tarnished power armor will make you more than they can swallow.

Or was it the rise of the unquiet dead? They drowned the living in an exponential swarm, each screaming death a new recruit to their forces. It was only through blind luck and desperate action that you escaped those first hideous days. Now you must find enough supplies and trustworthy companions to survive amid the rulers of this new world, all the while evading their sleepless, ravenous hunger.

You are not stronger than the flames. The world has already ended, and there is no saving it. You can't stop the disaster, you can't avert the chaos, and you can't be the shining hero that saves the world that was. It's far too late for that, and you never were that kind of miracle anyway.

All you can do is fight for what is left. Some survivors still have family, loved ones who need them for protection and providence. Others have places dear to them, communities that might just be able to make it through if they don't collapse into chaos and desperate need. And some, rare as they are, have causes and ideals that have survived even the end of the world. Maybe they see a fresh canvas for their dreams, and maybe they just see a purpose that even armageddon can't take from them.

You'll need friends if you want to last long. Not even sleep is safe without a watchful guard, and a broken leg or a high fever mean death when there's no one to take care of you. The bandits see lone refugees as so much meat, but a few armed vagrants might last long enough to shoot back. The cannibals won't risk it without better odds.

They might even deal with you if you look strong enough, trading the loot of their kills for what you've scavenged. You don't have to like it, but that bottle of insulin can keep your wife from a slow death. It's got someone else's name on it, but it's nobody you knew, and they won't be needing it any more.

You'll need to decide the terms on which you'll accept survival. Some will do anything to make it through another night, while others prefer a bullet or a long drop to a day in this new world. Maybe you've got some things you'll never do, and maybe you'll reconsider when it's your daughter's life on the line. Every day is a journey of self-discovery when you're crawling through the rubble of the end times.

So go out there and discover Hell. Everything you ever relied on is burning away, but there are treasures still to be snatched from the pyre. Tools to make it another day, food to last another meal, and hope to dream of something better to come. Your world only ends when you do, and you have the friends and the will to delay that hour. You will be tempered in the fire.

You will be tempered, or you will be ash.

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What This Game is About

Ashes Without Number is a game about worlds that have ended and those who refused to end with them. Whether this destruction came with nuclear fire, horrifying plagues, catastrophic natural disasters, or sheer human folly, nothing secure remains. The heroes of this age are those who have evaded the death that waits for so many, their cunning and courage sufficient to overcome the innumerable perils of this nighted fall. Some fight for their own glory. Others fight only that they might live. And some few fight to strike the sparks of a new and better dawn.

A Box of Sand and Ruin

Ashes Without Number is meant to provide both a fully-functional Old School Renaissance-informed game system and a toolbox full of resources for any Game Master who wants to develop and run an apocalypse-flavored campaign of desperate heroism. Individual readers will take what they can use from this game, whether that means using the provided system for their campaign or merely scavenging the tables, tools, and resources for a system that better suits them.

The adventures in *Ashes Without Number* revolve around surviving the horrors of a post-apocalyptic world while still building something better for the PCs and those they care about. It may be that the heroes struggle to protect a vulnerable enclave of exiled mutants from the horrors of the wastes, or fight to avoid starvation and plague in the aftermath of a global disaster, or scavenge for precious resources amid the terrifying ruins of a zombie-infested city.

Whatever the flavor of apocalypse, their world is no friend to them. Easy assurances of food, safety, and law are no more. Every mouthful of food and hour of peaceful sleep must be won by hard effort and careful thought. Things that PCs in other campaigns could take for granted are rare luxuries to the survivors of *Ashes Without Number,* and common necessities become treasures worthy of murder and desperate deeds.

Sandboxes and You

Ashes Without Number is written specifically to support a "sandbox" style of play. Whereas many role-playing adventures involve playing through a mutually-agreed story line, a sandbox campaign is driven exclusively by the choices and goals of the player characters.

This style of campaign is not as common as it once was, and there are good reasons for that. Sandbox campaigns sometimes have the reputation of being very difficult for a GM to build or run. It can be overwhelming to think about all the various people, places, and situations that a GM might need to have over the course of a campaign, and players can get frustrated by a seeming lack of direction in play.

These objections are real, but they are not insurmountable. The *Without Number* series of games are all written to provide specific guidelines, content creation methods, and GM procedures for handling the special challenges of a sandbox campaign.

The key to good sandbox preparation lies in knowing what to create and what to intentionally leave aside. The heart of good sandbox play is in PCs that have active ambitions in the world and a GM who knows how to make their world answer those ambitions. *Ashes Without Number* will give you the tools you need to accomplish both ends.

And in having them, you will be rewarded with the special pleasures that this style of play can provide. The players can play with the confidence that their choices matter, that the world around them will change and move with the decisions they make. The GM can run the game and still be surprised by it, leaving the PCs situations and events with no idea how they will overcome their troubles, or even if they'll want to try. A campaign will belong to the players and the GM in the way a pre-written story line never could, and the triumphs and reverses of your adventures will be yours and yours alone.



What Players and GMs Need to Bring

As novel as sandbox gaming is to many GMs and players, it's important to lay out some basic expectations before we get to the game itself.

What GMs Need to Do

The Game Master has the biggest part of the work involved in playing this game, but they also have the largest amount of influence on its content. A good *Ashes Without Number* GM needs to do a few things in particular.

GMs need to listen. As the final arbiter of your campaign world, you need to listen to what the players are trying to do and pay attention to what they find interesting. It's up to the GM to build a campaign setting that interests and excites them, and if it's one that none of the players enjoy it's going to be a very short game.

GMs need to prep. You need to have an evening's worth of content ready when it's time to play. At the end of every session, you'll be asking the players what they mean to do next and their answers will help you prepare what you need for the next evening's game. You never need to be more than one session ahead of your players, but you need to have that lead.

GMs need to react. When players do something, you need to make the world around them respond accordingly. It can be a great temptation at times to push PCs on the "correct" track, to elbow them onto a path that you've prepared and that you're comfortable running. Doing so robs you of one of the great pleasures of a sandbox GM, however; the pleasure of not knowing what's going to happen next. If you just let the situation respond logically to what the players have done, you teach them that what their PCs do matters and that their fates are ultimately in their own hands.

GMs need to be fair. This fairness doesn't have to do with the innate malice and hazard of a post-apocalyptic world, but the GM's willingness to let random rolls and logical consequences play out without interference. Even if changing a roll seems like it would be "more fun" or "more appropriate", the default assumption is that the GM will let the result stand. In the same vein, if the PCs do something that would have a particular logical consequence, that consequence will happen whether it's helpful to the narrative or not.

In the short term, this commitment to honest dice and untweaked causality can cause problems. It can be frustrating to have sudden tragedy strike due to a bad roll, or to have a thoughtless action play out into some logical catastrophe. This kind of bitter chance is appropriate to the post-apoc genre, however, and sticking to it will eventually help players feel like their victories and successes are honestly earned. If they won, it was because they were smarter and stronger than mere chance could overcome. No plot armored them and no narrative twist gave them their success.

What Players Need to Do

Assuming the GM plans to run a sandbox-style campaign, the players need to bring certain things to the game as well. One of these points may be a little unfamiliar to players more accustomed to storyline-style campaigns, so it's worth spelling it out clearly.

Players need to have goals. Crucially, every PC needs to have some sort of driving goal. Whether to impose order on the chaos around them, to become the mightiest warlord in the wasteland, to avenge their slaughtered companions, or simply to see what lies over the next radioactive dune, they need to want something out of the world and be ready to go get it. This goal can change, and a PC can let it wait while they help a comrade seek their own end, but a sandbox campaign only works if the PCs have a reason to dig in it.

Players need to be there to play. Phones and electronics get put away, televisions get turned off, and lengthy side conversations about the Local Sports Team are put aside. Players need to pay attention to the game and what's going on, even when it's not their time in the spotlight. There's little more frustrating to a GM than to put work into preparing a game session only to have it overshadowed by a smartphone.

Players need to play together. Every PC needs to be willing to cooperate with the other PCs. There needs to be enough trust among them to function as a party, and while it's not required that they get along like best friends they need to be willing to trust each other. Lone wolves and amoral backstabbers don't make for acceptable character concepts unless the group is intentionally aiming for that kind of play. It's up to each player to come up with individual reasons for this cooperativeness, but they have to have *some* reason to adventure together.

What Both Need to Do

Ultimately, both GM and players need to participate in the game. The GM has to be engaged with events, creating interesting situations and opportunities that are relevant to the PC interests. The players have to chase those opportunities, responding to the world they're given with something more engaged than sullen apathy or cowardly cringing. Everyone involved needs to be ready to *play the game*, and if that takes a little flexibility then that flexibility should be granted.

Not everything is going to go smoothly all the time. Decisions will be mistaken, good ideas will turn out to be flawed, and some assumptions will prove in error. These bumps are natural and inevitable in any campaign that lasts, and it's up to everyone involved to have a certain degree of patience and toleration for the human limits of the participants.



CHARACTER CREATION



The first step in venturing out into the hellish wasteland is to create your player character, or "PC". Your PC is a ***survivor***, someone who has faced the grim reality around them and found some special resource for fighting against it. Some survivors are ferocious warriors. Others are skilled technicians, capable healers, silver-tongued diplomats, or simple badlanders too mean to die easy. Every survivor is good for something, even if that something may not be very civilized.

Yet good as they are, survivors are mortal. An unlucky bullet, raider spear, or untended fever can kill them as quickly as any other man or woman. If your survivor is to prosper in this new and desolate world they're going to need all the cunning and luck you can muster.

The Form of Your Destructor

Ashes Without Number is made to support numerous flavors of global destruction, but most campaigns will fall under one of three different main headings. Various rules and options in this book will reference these campaign genres, because some rules may not be suitable for some genres.

Mutant Wasteland campaigns may or may not involve actual nuclear exchanges, but will feature fearsome mutants, lost technology, rampaging raiders, hardscrabble villages, and half-understood mysteries of a fallen civilization. PCs usually begin as natives or sojourners in a particular village or settlement and face the problems that threaten that society. The default setting of the Albuquerque Death Zone provided in this book is an example of a Mutant Wasteland.

Deadlands campaigns cover the classic zombie apocalypse genre, with ravenous undead or horrifically-transformed humans serving as a constant threat. Society has usually broken down into pockets of survivors, all of them beset by the hungry dead or plague-driven monstrosities. Survivors in these campaigns are usually a motley assortment of men and women thrown together by chance, who may or may not begin play with an established home base.

After the Fall campaigns are about societal disintegration and the chaos of the immediate aftermath. A global pandemic, a meteor strike, a climate shift, a civil war, or some other massive catastrophe has swept over the nation and the PCs experience the transition from safe normalcy to grim ruin. These PCs are usually normal men and women with some particular mutual tie of trust that pulls them together when events start to compel desperate measures.

Individual campaigns might borrow pieces from multiple genres, such as an After the Fall campaign that becomes a Mutant Wasteland after the mutagenic bombs start going off. The specifics of such hybrids are up to the GM and the group to decide.

The Enclave and You

Most campaigns will begin in a specific ***enclave***, a settlement, tribal village, refugee camp, or collapsing city that forms the start point of the campaign. The PCs may move on rapidly from this beginning, but the type of enclave and nature of the campaign will determine what sort of PC you should be making. The GM will give you details about the enclave, but you should feel free to make suggestions for adding to it if you have your own ideas.

A lot of different people could end up wandering into the typical post-apocalyptic village, and a wide slice of society could be found in a hastily-assembled refugee camp. Most enclaves will have a lot of room for generating the character you want to play, but you should still take care to explain why or how your PC ended up living there.

Your character probably had to do something useful for their neighbors to be permitted to live wherever they are. Think of some worthwhile service they could provide; they probably did this in order to earn their share of the food resources or their place at the fire.

Some campaigns will start without an enclave. Particularly in an After the Fall campaign the PCs might just be ordinary citizens of a particular town or city, blissfully unaware of the disaster about to break on them. In a Mutant Wasteland game they might all be the scattered survivors of some regional disaster who happen to fall in together. So long as the PCs all have a clear tie to pull them together once the game begins, this manner of beginning is perfectly serviceable.

Playing as a Team

Remember, any character you create has to be able and willing to cooperate with the other PCs in the group. They need their own goals and motivations, of course, but these goals shouldn't be in direct conflict with the rest of the party or provoke your PC into being a problem for the group.

"It's what my character would do." is not a valid excuse when you're the one who made the character that way. Not every party will get along perfectly, and some PCs might genuinely dislike each other, but when the boots hit the radioactive sand the group needs to be ready to pull together.

The apocalypse is a dangerous place. It's not at all unlikely that more than one PC will end up dead in a ditch somewhere, or in the belly of some fanged mutant horror, or coughing out their lungs in the grip of some hideous plague. A party that can work together and use their own particular talents wisely has a much better chance of avoiding such unfortunate ends. A little strife is natural, but remember your real enemy is the world that awaits you out there.

Attributes

The first step in creating a character is to determine the character's six ***attributes***. Attributes describe how strong, quick, clever, perceptive, hardy, or charming your survivor might be. Attributes are measured by scores ranging from 3 to 18, with 3 reflecting an attribute so weak that the PC is barely fit for a survivor's life and an 18 marking the maximum possible aptitude for a human.

To generate a character's attributes, roll 3d6 six times and assign the results in order to Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. You may then change one attribute of your choice to 14 if you wish to ensure that your new survivor is gifted in at least one way.

If you prefer not to roll, you may instead assign the following scores to your attributes in any order you wish: 14, 12, 11, 10, 9, and 7. If you assign your scores, you cannot replace one of them with a 14.

Once you've assigned your attributes, record the ***attribute modifier*** for each of them. This modifier is applied to relevant skill checks or other rolls related to the attribute. Mutations sometimes boost or lower a character's attribute modifiers, if you're playing in a campaign where such things exist. Make sure to note down any such alterations.

Attribute	Affects....
Strength	Physical prowess, melee combat, carrying gear, brute force
Dexterity	Speed, evasion, manual dexterity, reaction time, combat initiative
Constitution	Hardiness, activating certain types of mutations, enduring injury
Intelligence	Memory, reasoning, technical skills, general education
Wisdom	Noticing things, making judgments, reading situations, intuition
Charisma	Commanding, charming, attracting attention, being taken seriously

Attribute Score	Modifier
3	-2
4—7	-1
8—13	+0
14—17	+1
18	+2

Skills

Your hero's learned capabilities are ***skills***, and every survivor has their share of them. A survivor can usually attempt to do anything, whether it's foraging for food in the wastelands, hammering scrap into a usable spear, or talking down an enraged tribal warrior, but having the right skill can make a vast difference in results.

Skills are measured in a rating from level-0 for competent practitioners to level-4 for one of the best in the world. Novice survivors start with level-0 or level-1 in their skills. You'll choose or roll skills in the next section, when you select a background.

Skill Level	
Level-0	Basic competence in the skill, such as an ordinary practitioner would have
Level-1	An experienced professional in the skill, clearly better than most
Level-2	Veteran expert, one respected even by those with considerable experience
Level-3	Master of the skill, likely one of the best in the region
Level-4	Superlative expertise, one of the best in the world

Skill Checks

Your survivor is assumed to be competent at all the ordinary tasks of their past life and role. A tribal herbalist is never going to mistake a common plant, a road bandit won't ever fail to change a tire, and a military medic won't ever botch splinting a broken leg. They will never fail at the sort of tasks they'd have performed all the time in their background life, even if someone else with a similar skill level might need to make a check.

Sometimes, however, the PC will be faced with a situation outside their usual experience, or will try to accomplish a normal task while under considerable strain or disadvantage. In those cases, you'll need to roll a ***skill check***.

To roll a skill check, roll 2d6 and add the most applicable attribute modifier and skill level. If the total is equal or greater than the difficulty of the check, you succeed. If less, something goes wrong, or you fail outright in the attempt, or something unexpected happens.

If you haven't even got level-0 in the relevant skill you take a -1 penalty to the roll. Some particularly technical or difficult feats might not be achievable at all without some grounding in the skill.





The Skill List

The following skills are standard choices for most post-apocalyptic campaigns. The particular scope of a given skill may vary depending on the specific genre of your campaign; if you're running a game about mutant-riding nomads, the Drive skill might only be relevant to handling riding beasts.

Skills are general, and some of them may overlap in some situations. A survivor trying to unjam a salvaged combat shotgun before a mutated buffalo rams through the door might plausibly check either Fix to repair it or Shoot to represent their familiarity with weapons maintenance. Assuming the GM agrees, you can roll whichever skill is better for you.

Administer: Manage an organization, handle paperwork, analyze records, and keep an institution functioning on a daily basis. Roll it for bureaucratic expertise, organizational management, legal knowledge, dealing with government agencies, and getting answers from old files or records.

Connect: Find people who can be helpful to your purposes and get them to cooperate with you. Roll it to make useful connections with others, find people you know, know where to get illicit goods and services, and be familiar with foreign cultures and languages. You can use it in place of Talk for persuading people you find via this skill. Note that the people you meet via Connect are not necessarily inclined to work with you without a good reason. Gifts can often be that reason.

Drive: Drive vehicles, sail ships, fly planes, ride animals, or otherwise use vehicles or riding beasts, including basic repairs or mount care. The particular scope of a PC's skill depends on their background, but someone with a good Drive skill can quickly pick up other modes with a little practice. Primitive campaign worlds might substitute Ride for this skill.

Exert: Apply trained speed, strength, or stamina in some feat of physical exertion. Roll it to run, jump, lift, swim, climb, throw, and so forth. You can use it as a combat skill when throwing things, though it doesn't qualify as a combat skill for other uses.

Fix: Create and repair devices both simple and complex. Building gear out of salvaged components generally requires the Fix skill when creating anything of significant complexity.

Heal: Employ medical and psychological treatment for the injured or disturbed. Roll it to cure diseases, stabilize the critically injured, treat psychological disorders, or diagnose illnesses.

Know: Know facts about academic or scientific fields. Roll it to understand academic topics, remember relevant history, solve science mysteries, and know the basic facts about rare or esoteric topics. For tribal societies, it also covers tribal law, custom, and lore.

Lead: Convince others to also do whatever it is you're trying to do. Talk might persuade them that following you is smart, but Lead can make them do it even when they think it's a bad idea. Roll it to lead troops in combat, convince others to follow you, or maintain morale among your followers when the situation looks grim.

Notice: Spot anomalies or interesting facts about your environment. Roll it for searching places, detecting ambushes, spotting things, and reading the emotional state of other people.

Perform: Exhibit some performance skill. Roll it to dance, sing, orate, act, or otherwise put on a convincing or emotionally moving performance.

Program: Operating or hacking computing and communications hardware. Some campaigns may have more opportunities to use this skill than others, so you may want to check with your GM first to find out how common functional computers are in whatever apocalyptic waste you're going to be entering.

Punch: Use it as a combat skill when fighting unarmed. If your PC means to make a habit of this rather than as a recourse of desperation, you should take the *Unarmed Combatant* Focus described later.

Shoot: Use it as a combat skill when using ranged weaponry, whether thrown weapons, bows, pistols, combat rifles, or heavy artillery.

Sneak: Move without drawing notice. Roll it for stealth, disguise, infiltration, manual legerdemain, pickpocketing, and the physical defeating of security measures such as locks, including electronic locks for PCs with some justification for being familiar with such things.

Stab: Use it as a combat skill when wielding melee weapons, whether primitive or complex. It can also be used when throwing weapons in lieu of Shoot.

Survive: Every post-apocalyptic survivor is likely to know the basics of daily subsistence, but Survive skill gives the PC the knowledge to find food, avoid natural perils, track targets, and identify plants and animals in their familiar regions.

Talk: Convince other people of the facts you want them to believe. What they do with that conviction may not be completely predictable. Roll it to persuade, charm, or deceive others in conversation.

Trade: Find what you need on the market and sell what you have. Roll it to sell or buy things, figure out where to purchase hard-to-get or illicit goods, and discern the local value of salvage.

Work: This is a catch-all skill for professions not represented by other skills, such as farmers or fine artists. Pick a profession; you have the technical skills associated with that role and can roll Work as Connect when dealing with others associated with your line of work.

Choosing a Background

Every PC is a survivor, but they had to have done something in the past to have earned their continued breathing rights. To determine your hero's past experience, you need to choose or roll a ***background***.

A background is simply a thumbnail description of the kind of life your character has lived up until this point. This past doesn't necessarily have to be closely associated with your current situation; maybe your PC was born a slave to some savage wasteland tribe, but these days you're a feared and respected warrior who's earned their freedom with blood. If you're playing a zombie horror campaign, you might have been a data analyst for a local bank until you were drafted as an extremely stealthy scout for your enclave of survivors. Don't feel obligated to make your PC's future the same as their past.

After you've chosen or rolled a background, take a few moments to think about why your PC left it behind to live the life they do now. They're a survivor now, bound to adventure and driven to pursue whatever goal forced them out of their past habits. Was it a decision they made on their own, or have circumstances forced them into this new life?

There are twenty example backgrounds here to roll or choose, but you may need to adjust them to fit the specifics of your own campaign. A slave in a post-nuclear wasteland may be literally that, while a PC living through the collapse of modern society might have been a debt-bound laborer before the crash.

Backgrounds, Skills, and Growth

Once you pick a background, your survivor gains several skills associated with their past.

First, you get the free skill associated with the background. Every member of that role or profession needs this skill to function competently, so your survivor gets it as well.

Next, you may either pick two other skills from the Learning table for your background, or make three random rolls divided between the Growth and Learning tables. If you pick skills, you can select exactly the talents you want for your hero, while going with random rolls allows your character a little wider range of competence and the option of attribute improvements at the cost of perfect control over their development. If you pick skills, you may pick the same skill twice if you wish, to improve its starting proficiency.

If you're not sure what to pick, just take the two skills listed under "Quick Skills" for your background. They're the ones most critical to the profession.

If you're making up a custom background and want to roll randomly on the Growth and Learning tables instead of making specific picks, either pick existing tables that best fit your concept or make up some new ones with the GM's approval.

Training Skills and Attributes

When your character is allowed to pick or roll a skill, you learn it at level-0 expertise the first time you receive it. If you receive it a second time, it becomes level-1. If some mechanic or skill choice allows or obliges you to pick it a third time, you can instead choose any other skill in its place.

No survivor can start with a skill level above level-1. No matter how many different ways you get a skill pick, level-1 is the maximum starting skill level.

Sometimes you're allowed to pick "Any Skill". This means you can choose any skill to improve. Other entries that read "Any Combat" mean that you can pick either Stab, Shoot, or Punch as you choose.

Rolls on the Growth table that improve your basic attributes can boost them up to a maximum of 18. A bonus that applies to "Any Stat" can be applied to any attribute. If the roll says to add the bonus to Physical attributes, you can add the bonus to either Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution. If the roll says to add a bonus to your Mental attributes, you can apply the points to either Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma. If the bonus is +2, you may split the points between two different attributes of the appropriate type if you wish.

Characters who use the Underdog Rule must do so after they make any Growth table rolls.

d20	Background
1	**Courtesan**, odalisque, streetwalker, leman
2	**Crafter**, artisan, technician, builder
3	**Diplomat**, swindler, lawyer, negotiator
4	**Entertainer**, dancer, storyteller, jester
5	**Farmer**, peasant, herdsman, hydroponicist
6	**Healer**, physician, shaman
7	**Hunter**, trapper, big game slayer
8	**Noble**, official, leader, officer
9	**Outcast**, criminal, thief, low-caste
10	**Priest**, demagogue, prophet, healer
11	**Raider**, bandit, highwayman, robber
12	**Rider**, nomad, trucker, carter, sailor
13	**Savage**, barbarian, feral survivor
14	**Scavenger**, looter, salvager
15	**Scholar**, wise man, elder, scientist
16	**Scout**, spy, recon soldier
17	**Slave**, indentured laborer, debt peon
18	**Trader**, peddler, broker, fence
19	**Wanderer**, last survivor, loner, hermit
20	**Warrior**, enforcer, thug, soldier



Courtesan

You traded your company for protection or profit. You may have been a sophisticated and platonic companion, a common pre-collapse streetwalker, a "friend" to everyone in your post-apocalyptic tribe, or a favored consort to someone important. The skills you developed in managing sometimes-dangerous clients have a broad scope of application.

Free Skill
Talk-0

Quick Skills
Perform-0
Connect-0

d6	Growth
1	+1 Any Stat
2	+1 Any Stat
3	+2 Physical
4	+2 Mental
5	Talk
6	Any Skill

d8	Learning
1	Talk
2	Perform
3	Connect
4	Trade
5	Sneak
6	Notice
7	Heal
8	Any Skill

Crafter

Whether a post-nuclear scrapsmith stitching debris into functioning gear or a talented modern-day engineer thrown into a collapsing world, you know how to make something out of very little, if not exactly nothing. Your skills are valuable in any time of crisis, though you may need allies to help you obtain the precious parts and raw materials you need for your creations.

Free Skill
Fix-0

Quick Skills
Trade-0
Connect-0

d6	Growth
1	+1 Any Stat
2	+2 Mental
3	+2 Mental
4	+2 Physical
5	Fix
6	Any Skill

d8	Learning
1	Fix
2	Trade
3	Connect
4	Notice
5	Sneak
6	Know
7	Program
8	Any Skill

Choosing a Background for a PC

Bob is rolling up a new character for an After the Fall campaign where the PCs are apartment neighbors in a city that's rapidly falling to an alien invasion. The PCs are expected to all be ordinary people, though they've got the seeds of potential greatness in them… if they live.

Bob has already rolled up the character's attributes for "Jimmy Green", getting Strength 14, Dexterity 15, Constitution 6, Intelligence 12, Wisdom 10, and Charisma 10. As he rolled his stats, he can swap one score with a 14. He considers doing so with Constitution to eliminate his one weak spot, but decides it'd be more fun to be a graying fifty-something with bad joints, asthma, and Wisdom 14.

At this point, Bob could simply pick a background, but he decides that it'd be more interesting to roll it. He picks up a twenty-sided die and rolls a 4, for Entertainer.

This presents something of a puzzle for Bob, since Jimmy is by no means particularly charismatic. He's strong and nimble, so perhaps he did dance or some other physical performance, or he could risk the random Growth table for Entertainer to see if he could pump his Charisma a bit more. But after thinking about it, Bob has a better idea.

It seems that Jimmy Green was actually a stand-up comedian, but one who could never make it work. He's been doing construction labor to pay the bills and making the rounds on the local comedy clubs for decades now, never getting more than a few crumbs of success. His day job has broken down his health even as it's improved his muscles, and he's learned a lot of things in life the hard way.

Jimmy gets Perform-0 skill as an automatic free skill as an Entertainer, and Bob decides to roll randomly for the rest of his benefits, with one roll on the Growth table and two on the Learning. The dice are flung, and he gets the Lead skill twice and +2 Mental Attribute. His Lead skill becomes Lead-1, the maximum level for character creation. He puts the +2 into Charisma, giving him Charisma 12.

From these random results, it looks like Jimmy was the crew boss for his construction team, and pretty good at it even without much natural talent. As part of the final touches of the character, Bob will be able to pick one more skill of his choice, and he plans to pick Fix-0 to reflect Jimmy's construction expertise. He might end up with additional skill picks through his Edges or Foci choices, but these basics are enough for now.

Diplomat

Negotiator, salesman, political activist, or tribal envoy; you survived by your persuasiveness and your ability to find common ground in an unfriendly world. The apocalypse might have made violence a more practical option for a lot of your interlocutors, but it has also dispelled any illusions about how dear its cost can be.

Free Skill
Talk-0

Quick Skills
Lead-0
Connect-0

d6	Growth
1	+1 Any Stat
2	+2 Mental
3	+2 Mental
4	+2 Mental
5	Talk
6	Any Skill

d8	Learning
1	Lead
2	Talk
3	Connect
4	Perform
5	Know
6	Sneak
7	Notice
8	Any Skill

Entertainer

Even the most desperate refugee camp or hardscrabble tribal village has need for diversion from their unhappy lives. You provided that, whether as a pre-collapse comedian or singer, a tribal storyteller, an impresario for arena fights, or someone else worth keeping fed for the pleasure of their company. Your talents may seem trivial in the face of this wretched new world, but they offer an escape from a reality that many find unbearable.

Free Skill
Perform-0

Quick Skills
Lead-0
Connect-0

d6	Growth
1	+1 Any Stat
2	+1 Any Stat
3	+2 Mental
4	+2 Physical
5	Perform
6	Any Skill

d8	Learning
1	Perform
2	Lead
3	Connect
4	Talk
5	Trade
6	Sneak
7	Any Combat
8	Any Skill

Farmer

Before the collapse, you might have been an agribusiness worker, an enthusiastic homesteader, or a hard-pressed family farmer working ancestral land. After the apocalypse, you became the foundation of human survival. Knowing how to raise a crop with nothing more than hand tools and backbreaking labor is the difference between a spare survival and a thin and hungry grave.

Free Skill
Work-0

Quick Skills
Survive-0
Exert-0

d6	Growth
1	+1 Any Stat
2	+2 Physical
3	+2 Physical
4	+2 Physical
5	Any Skill
6	Any Skill

d8	Learning
1	Any Combat
2	Survive
3	Work
4	Notice
5	Exert
6	Heal
7	Fix
8	Any Skill

Healer

Modern-day physicians, therapists, nurses, and paramedics have their match in post-apocalyptic shamans, healers, and priests. Every society needs someone skilled in tending to the sick, even if the resources available may be limited to local herbs and a handful of scavenged medical tools. With the constant danger and regular injuries to be found in a post-apocalyptic world, there are few enclaves that would not welcome a skilled healer.

Free Skill
Heal-0

Quick Skills
Notice-0
Know-0

d6	Growth
1	+1 Any Stat
2	+2 Physical
3	+2 Mental
4	+2 Mental
5	Heal
6	Any Skill

d8	Learning
1	Heal
2	Notice
3	Know
4	Talk
5	Administer
6	Connect
7	Drive
8	Any Skill





Hunter

Present-day game wardens, poachers, professional guides, and avid recreational hunters might all have the skills of a hunter. After the apocalypse, some primitive tribes might be able to survive chiefly off the game their able-bodied members harvest, assuming that game doesn't harvest them first.

Free Skill
Survive-0

Quick Skills
Shoot-0
Sneak-0

d6	Growth
1	+1 Any Stat
2	+2 Physical
3	+2 Physical
4	+2 Mental
5	Survive
6	Any Skill

d8	Learning
1	Shoot
2	Survive
3	Sneak
4	Notice
5	Drive
6	Heal
7	Any Combat
8	Any Skill

Noble

Most societies have some sort of recognized elite. The modern caste of CEOs, high-ranking politicians, and old-money gentry have their match in a post-collapse world's more literal nobility or sacred lineages. Few post-apocalyptic communities have so much ease as to afford a purely ornamental ruling class, however, and their young scions are often expected to make something of themselves before they can expect any respect.

Free Skill
Lead-0

Quick Skills
Notice-0
Connect-0

d6	Growth
1	+1 Any Stat
2	+2 Physical
3	+2 Mental
4	+2 Mental
5	Lead
6	Any Skill

d8	Learning
1	Lead
2	Connect
3	Notice
4	Any Combat
5	Trade
6	Administer
7	Talk
8	Any Skill

Outcast

Every society has its outcasts and lurkers around the margins. Homeless vagrants, petty criminals, low-caste workers in despised professions, and a cloud of beggars, junkies, and disgraced offspring can be found in almost any city. Such a life forces its subjects to learn hard lessons quickly, for it has little pity for those who cannot.

Free Skill
Survive-0

Quick Skills
Sneak-0
Any Combat-0

d6	Growth
1	+1 Any Stat
2	+1 Any Stat
3	+2 Physical
4	+2 Mental
5	Survive
6	Any Skill

d8	Learning
1	Any Combat
2	Survive
3	Sneak
4	Connect
5	Heal
6	Exert
7	Talk
8	Any Skill

Priest

Modern-day clergy find ample work after the end of the world, with countless desperate survivors craving some message of hope and meaning. In far-future radioactive wastelands, mutant shamans and apostles of the holy ancients bring word from unseen powers and guidance for a world that remains a terrible mystery to most.

Free Skill
Lead-0

Quick Skills
Talk-0
Connect-0

d6	Growth
1	+1 Any Stat
2	+2 Mental
3	+2 Mental
4	+2 Mental
5	Connect
6	Any Skill

d8	Learning
1	Lead
2	Talk
3	Connect
4	Perform
5	Know
6	Heal
7	Notice
8	Any Skill



Raider

It's easier to take than to make, and raiders in every era are all too glad to take the easier route. Modern robbers, hijackers, and back-country bandits have their post-apocalyptic heirs in leather-clad marauders and savage bands of pillagers. As hated as raiders are by most survivors, raider bands still have better prospects for food and safety while the world remains too disordered to deal with them.

Free Skill
Any Combat-0

Quick Skills
Survive-0
Notice-0

d6	Growth
1	+1 Any Stat
2	+2 Physical
3	+2 Physical
4	+2 Mental
5	Any Combat
6	Any Skill

d8	Learning
1	Survive
2	Notice
3	Fix
4	Lead
5	Sneak
6	Connect
7	Any Combat
8	Any Skill

Rider

Modern truckers, sailors, pilots, and other transport specialists are accustomed to getting their cargo delivered despite the hardships of the road. These troubles are significantly greater for post-apocalyptic haulers and outriders. With the dearth of functioning vehicles, riders of the mutant wastes trust in a fast equimorph and a keen sense of danger to keep them alive.

Free Skill
Drive-0

Quick Skills
Any Combat-0
Survive-0

d6	Growth
1	+1 Any Stat
2	+2 Physical
3	+2 Physical
4	+2 Mental
5	Drive
6	Any Skill

d8	Learning
1	Drive
2	Any Combat
3	Survive
4	Notice
5	Trade
6	Exert
7	Connect
8	Any Skill



Savage

Some people are wholly beyond the reach of modern civilization, even after the end of the world. These ferals, tribals, radical hermits, or esoteric subculture members rely on nothing more than primitive tools and their own extensive survival skills. After the apocalypse, savage tribes can often be found living in environments that would quickly kill off any softer populace.

Free Skill
Survive-0

Quick Skills
Any Combat-0
Sneak-0

d6	Growth
1	+1 Any Stat
2	+2 Physical
3	+2 Physical
4	+2 Physical
5	Survive
6	Any Skill

d8	Learning
1	Any Combat
2	Sneak
3	Survive
4	Exert
5	Notice
6	Heal
7	Survive
8	Any Skill

Scavenger

You made your living by fixing or repurposing things that others threw away. You may have been a junkman or repair tech before the apocalypse, while scavengers afterwards often dare far more dangerous surroundings to plunder the treasures of the lost world. Most enclaves rely heavily on the skills of their scavengers to make up for the myriad things too complex for them to make new.

Free Skill
Notice-0

Quick Skills
Fix-0
Survive-0

d6	Growth
1	+1 Any Stat
2	+2 Mental
3	+2 Physical
4	+2 Physical
5	Notice
6	Any Skill

d8	Learning
1	Survive
2	Drive
3	Fix
4	Trade
5	Sneak
6	Notice
7	Any Combat
8	Any Skill

Scholar

Even after the apocalypse, knowledge remains a precious resource for any community. Modern-day professors, teachers, students, and private enthusiasts may find it necessary to focus on more pragmatic fields than they would like, but there remain mysteries enough in the world to demand someone versed at puzzling them out.

Free Skill
Know-0

Quick Skills
Talk-0
Administer-0

d6	Growth
1	+1 Any Stat
2	+2 Mental
3	+2 Mental
4	+2 Mental
5	Know
6	Any Skill

d8	Learning
1	Know
2	Talk
3	Administer
4	Connect
5	Heal
6	Fix
7	Program
8	Any Skill

Scout

Your PC made their living through careful reconnaissance, whether as a wilderness guide, military recon specialist, surveyor, fire watcher, or other sharp eye. After the collapse, any survivor with a well-honed ability to sneak through dangerous territory and bring back useful reports is sure to become a valuable asset for their community, even if their longevity may be somewhat lacking.

Free Skill
Sneak-0

Quick Skills
Notice-0
Survive-0

d6	Growth
1	+1 Any Stat
2	+2 Mental
3	+2 Physical
4	+2 Physical
5	Sneak
6	Any Skill

d8	Learning
1	Any Combat
2	Sneak
3	Notice
4	Survive
5	Connect
6	Exert
7	Drive
8	Any Skill

Slave

The chained thralls of savage bandit clans, wretched tribal outcasts forced to labor for their betters, and downtrodden mutant untouchables subsisting at the fringes of a settlement are all common enough faces of slavery in a radioactive wasteland. For campaigns set before the end, your PC may simply have been a laborer trapped in debt indenture or the hapless minion of some tyrannical boss. Whatever the details, you learned to labor and to endure — and to escape when the opportunity came.

Free Skill
Exert-0

Quick Skills
Sneak-0
Survive-0

d6	Growth
1	+1 Any Stat
2	+1 Any Stat
3	+2 Mental
4	+2 Physical
5	Exert
6	Any Skill

d8	Learning
1	Exert
2	Sneak
3	Survive
4	Talk
5	Heal
6	Perform
7	Any Combat
8	Any Skill

Trader

Even in the ashes of an apocalypse, trade remains preferable to lead for most survivors. Your PC knows how to cut deals with strangers without ending up on the wrong end of a bargain or of a gun. Whether you were a salesman before the collapse, or a shopkeeper, or a freelancer forced to make their own way in the world, you still know how to spot opportunities and how to exploit them to the full.

Free Skill
Trade-0

Quick Skills
Notice-0
Connect-0

d6	Growth
1	+1 Any Stat
2	+2 Mental
3	+2 Mental
4	+2 Physical
5	Trade
6	Any Skill

d8	Learning
1	Trade
2	Notice
3	Connect
4	Fix
5	Talk
6	Administer
7	Any Combat
8	Any Skill

Wanderer

The first months of societal collapse send forth waves of desperate refugees in search of food and safety. The overwhelming majority leave their bones by the road, but you somehow survived. You may have led a hard life before as a vagrant or a restless drifter, but you know how to eke a living out of a barren land. In later ages, you might be the last survivor of an extinguished village, or a refugee from the losing side of some struggle.

Free Skill
Survive-0

Quick Skills
Sneak-0
Any Combat-0

d6	Growth
1	+1 Any Stat
2	+1 Any Stat
3	+2 Physical
4	+2 Mental
5	Survive
6	Any Skill

d8	Learning
1	Any Combat
2	Survive
3	Sneak
4	Talk
5	Connect
6	Notice
7	Exert
8	Any Skill

Warrior

A simple profession that wears many faces, your role was that of a fighter. Whether street thug, soldier, boxer, bouncer, templar, or tribal spearman, your place was to fight and win. There is no lack of fresh violence after the collapse, and many are the ordinary men and women who discover their only relevant talent in this new world is their ability to add to the killing.

Free Skill
Any Combat-0

Quick Skills
Exert-0
Lead-0

d6	Growth
1	+1 Any Stat
2	+2 Physical
3	+2 Physical
4	+2 Physical
5	Any Combat
6	Any Skill

d8	Learning
1	Any Combat
2	Exert
3	Lead
4	Notice
5	Survive
6	Heal
7	Drive
8	Any Skill



Edges

You know where your PC came from, but where are they now? What special talents or aptitudes do they have that have helped them survive the horrors of the fallen world? In this part of character creation, you decide what kind of tools your PC uses to make it to another day. These talents are their ***Edges***.

Every PC picks two Edges when they create their character. A survivor who persists long enough to reach the fifth level of experience can pick a third Edge. Once an Edge is picked, it cannot normally be changed, and the same Edge cannot usually be picked twice.

The Edges in this section are divided by genre flavor. Some are applicable to almost any campaign, while others are specific to mutant-raddled post-apocalyptic hellscapes, zombie-infested ruins, or societies rapidly collapsing from some global disaster or civil chaos. It's for the GM to decide which categories best fit the campaign they're running, and they may specifically add or remove particular Edges to suit their needs.

The Underdog Rule

Some players who randomly roll attributes for their PC have impressively bad luck. Yet despite their sub-normal aptitudes, these characters have somehow endured the grim perils of the harrowed world around them. There must be *something* special about them if they've managed to get this far without getting themselves killed.

Because of this, ***PCs whose total attribute modifiers are negative get a bonus Edge***. If a PC's attribute modifiers after any modifications or Growth table rolls total up to -1 or less, they can pick one more Edge as part of character creation. If taking the ***Forged By Fire*** Edge, they gain this bonus Edge at first level, beginning play with it despite the usual limits of ***Forged By Fire***.

Being an underdog comes at a cost, however. The PC cannot spend skill points to improve their attributes during character advancement, as described on page 65. The PC can still improve their modifiers in other ways, such as with certain mutations, cybernetics, or Foci.

Optional Rule: Gifted Survivors

These rules are meant to create PCs who are normal men and women who still have a decent chance of dealing with a savage, fallen world. They're slightly weaker than the baseline heroes created in the other *Without Number* games, who either have more heroic assumptions or easier access to augments such as cybernetics.

If your GM prefers to have a closer baseline to these other PCs, they may grant a bonus Edge when the character reaches third level. Thus, they would have two at first level, three at third, and four at fifth.

Universal Survivor Edges

The Edges below are general choices applicable to most campaign settings and genres.

Beacon of Hope: Something about you inspires others, convincing them that a better future can exist. Gain Lead as a bonus skill and +1 bonus to your Charisma attribute modifier, up to a +2 maximum. Your personal followers gain a +1 to their Morale score. Once per game session, tell an NPC something that speaks to their hopes, whether it's true or not; they will believe you unless it's physically impossible, proven false, or would put them in unacceptable personal danger.

Comrade: You are a pillar of your group, a source of strength and encouragement. Once per day per PC ally or good NPC friend, as an Instant action, allow them to reroll a roll they just made of any kind. Your or another's ***Comrade*** Edge can't help you, however.

Educated: You may pick a bonus skill of your choice. Whenever you gain skill points from character level advancement, you get a bonus skill point.

Focused: You begin play with an extra Focus pick. You may choose this Edge more than once.

Ghost: You are uncannily elusive. Gain Sneak as a bonus skill and the *Fighting Withdrawal* combat action is an On Turn action for you. Once per scene, reroll a failed Sneak check related to sneaking or going unseen. Once per game day, as a Move action, move up to 10 meters without anyone around you seeing you move. If you use this movement to get behind cover, you might seem to vanish outright to onlookers.

Hard To Kill: Instead of rolling 1d6 per level for your hit points, you roll 1d6+2. If using Traumatic Hit rules for your campaign, your base Trauma Target increases by +1, turning the base 6 into 7.

Killing Blow: Gain a combat skill as a bonus skill. Whenever you inflict hit point damage on something, whether by weapon, special ability, or any other source, the damage is increased by 1 point per two character levels, rounded up. If using Traumatic Hit rules, any Trauma Die you roll gains a +1 bonus.

Masterful Expertise: Once per scene, as an Instant action, reroll a failed check for a non-combat skill.

On Target: Gain a combat skill as a bonus skill. Your basic attack bonus is equal to your character level, instead of the usual half level, rounded down.

Prodigy: Pick an attribute other than Constitution; its score becomes 18 and it grants a +3 modifier instead of +2. Characters benefiting from the Underdog Rule can't take this Edge.

Survivor's Fortune: You may or may not be good, but you are undeniably lucky. Once per game session as an Instant action, when something bad happens to you such as an injury, a failed save, or a botched skill check, test your luck and roll 1d6. On a 1, the bad event is unaffected. On a 2-5, you somehow avert the consequences by blind chance. On a 6, it actually lands on an enemy or rival of the GM's choice, if that's possible. Only events that happened in this same round can be averted.

Veteran's Luck: Once per scene, as an Instant action, trigger this ability to gain one of two effects: an attack roll that just hit you is instead treated as a miss, or an attack roll you just made that missed is instead treated as a hit. This ability can be applied to vehicle weapons used by the survivor, but it cannot protect against environmental damage, vehicle crashes, falls, or other harm that doesn't involve an attack roll.

Mutant Wasteland Edges

These Edges are suitable for classic nukes-and-ruins campaigns, such as the default Albuquerque Death Zone setting provided in this book. PCs in these campaigns are often mutants of some kind.

Hardened Genetics: You cannot be mutated by radiation or other mutagenics and gain a +4 bonus on radiation saving throws. You cannot choose or gain the ***Mutant*** Edge. Pick an attribute of your choice; its modifier increases by +1, to a maximum of +2.

Mutant: You gain 2 mutation points to spend as described in the Mutations section on page 16 after you pick your Edges. If a negative mutation spoils an Edge, such as an attribute penalty to a ***Prodigy***, you may pick a different Edge. After you've spent the points and acquired any mutations you might be due, pick one attribute of your choice that has a modifier of -1 or better. It suffers a -1 penalty to its attribute modifier as mutations are seldom wholly healthy for the possessor.

Mutation Acceleration: You must have the ***Mutant*** Edge to pick or acquire this Edge. You gain 2 additional mutation points to spend.

Deadlands Edges

These Edges are for games revolving around zombie infestations, transformative plague outbreaks, or other settings of the hunted-human-survivors genre.

Systemic Immunity: You gain both levels of the *Natural Immunity* Focus and are immune to zombie infection or the other major pathogenic threat of the campaign. Your Constitution modifier increases by +1, to a maximum of +2.

They're Here: You have an intuitive danger sense that alerts you before a zombie attack or impending catastrophe. Gain Notice as a bonus skill and a +1 bonus to your Wisdom modifier, to a maximum of +2. You cannot be surprised, and you have an instinctive sense of whether or not there are zombies, raiders, or other enemies in your general surroundings. If some attack or disaster is about to happen to your home enclave, you may get a day or two of intuitive warning, though not any specifics of the threat.

After the Fall Edges

These Edges are meant for games set during the immediate collapse of a society under the pressure of war, natural disaster, or global catastrophe. Depending on how fresh the chaos is in the other genres, they might be appropriate for them as well.

Cold Blood: You've acclimated to the horror of your new existence. You no longer gain Stress as described in the rules on page 56. If this Edge is taken after first level, you lose any psychic scars you may have developed. This Edge isn't relevant in campaigns that don't use the Stress rules.

Faceless: You appear to be a totally unremarkable, nonthreatening non-entity amid the general chaos, a person not even worth robbing. Your Charisma modifier becomes +0 regardless of attribute scores or adjustments. You gain both levels of the *Gray Man* Focus, and once per day can reroll a failed Sneak check as an Instant action.

Forged By Fire: This Edge is a special option that can only be taken during character creation by a PC meant to start the game as a perfectly ordinary member of their society. If a PC takes this option, however, they don't actually get any beginning Edges. Instead, when they reach the second, third, and fourth levels of experience they can pick an Edge that reflects something they did, experienced, or studied during the past level. They still gain the bonus Edge at level five that all PCs get, for four Edges in total, and they start play with the same free Focus that all PCs receive.



Mutations

Mutants are a given in most post-apocalyptic wastelands, and the men and women touched by the warping power of nanites, altered radioactivity, or enigmatic chemicals are marked by it. The specific justification for these mutant powers will vary with the setting, but most of them have little to do with more realistic consequences of mutagenic exposure. Instead, mutants wield their altered flesh as a weapon against the perils of a hostile waste and its often-fearful populace.

Becoming a Mutant

PCs become mutants by choosing the ***Mutant*** Edge. Usually, this happens during character creation, though a PC might mutate later in their career by taking ***Mutant*** as their fifth-level Edge. Conventional exposure to radioactivity, nanites, or other mutagenic forces might possibly mutate a character further, as given in the Radiation rules on page 55.

Mutations are rolled or picked after Edges are chosen. If a negative mutation spoils or hinders the benefits of an Edge, such as a ***Prodigy*** suffering an attribute penalty to their specialty, the player may choose a different Edge.

Once a PC becomes a mutant, they gain ***mutation points***. Mutation points are used to buy their special powers. The ***Mutant*** and ***Mutation Acceleration*** Edges grant mutation points, as does accepting negative mutations. Mutation is a one-way process; once the changes take hold, there is no known way to revert to baseline humanity.

Gaining a Stigma

Every mutant has some physical mark that sets them off from baseline humanity, a sign known as a ***Stigma***. Societies that fear and hate mutants have been known to kill even perfectly normal humans who happen to have some deformity, while other enclaves revere the power that their altered members wield.

To choose a Stigma, pick or roll on the following tables to come up with some altered element of your PC. You can interpret the roll as you wish, describing the way in which your PC's body has been changed. The change may or may not have to do with your other mutant powers, and you might decide to tweak or change it after you've found out what your abilities are.

If your Stigma is so minor that it can be concealed by normal clothing, you must pay 1 mutation point. Very subtle changes that can be easily hidden are a distinct advantage around people who despise altered humans.

Gaining/Spending Mutation Points	MP
Take the ***Mutant*** Edge	+2
Take the ***Mutation Acceleration*** Edge	+2
Take a negative mutation (at most three)	+2/ea
Your Stigma can be easily concealed	-1
Roll one positive mutation randomly	-1
Roll two from the same category	-3
Pick any one positive mutation	-3

Taking Negative Mutations

Not every alteration is positive. While truly cursed mutants die young, your PC may suffer some drawbacks or debilities from their powers. Before choosing positive mutations, you must decide how many negative mutations to accept.

Each negative mutation adds 2 mutation points for you to spend on positive abilities. You cannot accept more than three negative mutations; any more, and your PC would never have survived their alteration.

Negative mutations must be randomly rolled with a d00 in the following section. If it were possible to pick them, it would be too great a temptation to select penalties that have nothing to do with the character's intended focus. Negative mutations must also all be rolled before any positive mutations are gained, because some of them limit the kinds of positive benefits the PC can receive.

If the same negative mutation is rolled twice, the player should reroll.

Gaining Positive Mutations

Once your Stigma and negative mutations are set, you can pick or roll your positive mutations. Choosing specific mutations is more costly than accepting random rolls, and a PC who wants more control over their mutant powers will have fewer of them than one who lets genetic whim determine their abilities.

Spend 3 points to pick a positive mutation. You can select any positive mutation you wish this way.

Spend 3 points to roll two positive mutations from the same category. You can choose the category on the following table, such as Structure, Sense, Hybrid, or so forth. This allows you to pick a general focus for your PC's mutations, though you can't be entirely sure what their abilities will be.

Spend 1 point to roll a positive mutation. If you're willing to accept what the dice give you, you can spend a single point to randomly roll a mutation.

If you randomly roll the same mutation twice, or one that you cannot take due to a negative mutation, you should reroll until an acceptable result is given.

Stigmas

These tables offer suggestions as to the nature of your PC's Stigma. You can choose or pick from them as you see fit. Stigmas can change a mutant greatly, but they will generally remain within normal human ranges of mass and height unless specifically mutated otherwise.

Optionally, you might want to roll your mutations first and then pick one or more of them to visually emphasize. A PC with ***Arboreal Aptitude*** might decide to make their arms long and ape-like, with finger-long toes for gripping surfaces. If additional oddness is desired then rolls from these tables can be mixed in to create a flagrantly mutated form.

The alterations the Stigma makes are cosmetic in nature, and do not confer particular benefits or debilities. If you decide to work them into the mutations you rolled, however, they may be more consequential. A mutant with tentacular arms for their Stigma can lift or carry things normally, but one with the ***Venom Glands*** mutation might have microscopic toxin injectors on the surface of their tendrils.

d6	Mutated Body Part
1	Head
2	Arm or Arms
3	Leg or Legs
4	Torso
5	Eyes, Ears, or Hands
6	Roll again and add that extra part

d6	Nature of the Mutation
1	Odd appearance or texture
2	Animalistic structure
3	Abnormal size or proportion
4	Plant-like structure
5	Amorphous or tentacular structure
6	Inorganic or mineralized structure

d12	Textures	Appearance	Animal Influence	Plant Influence
1	Chitinous	Bright Solid Hue	Beetle	Bark
2	Feathered	Chromed	Bird	Flowers
3	Fibrous	Gemlike	Bovine	Fragrance
4	Finned	Gradient Hue	Canine	Fronds and tendrils
5	Furred	Iridescent	Equine	Fungal masses
6	Glassy	Luminescent	Feline	Gnarled tissues
7	Metallic	Neon	Fish	Insect infestation
8	Plated	Opalescent	Lizard	Leaf growth
9	Scabrous	Patchy Coloring	Mollusk	Mosses or lichens
10	Scaled	Strobing Colors	Snake	Pollen growth
11	Slimy	Transparent Skin	Spider	Sap exudation
12	Stony	Whorled	Turtle	Vegetative texture





Negative Mutations

The specific details of a negative mutation's physical appearance are up to the PC, and might be connected to the mutant's Stigma. Some negative mutations may have no outward indicia at all.

Some negative mutations apply a penalty to a particular attribute's modifier or score. These penalties cannot reduce an ability modifier below -2. If a mutation forbids the PC from gaining a skill, any existing levels of that skill are re-allocated as the GM thinks plausible, perhaps in some skill used to compensate.

Other negative mutations make it impossible to augment particular senses or aspects of the mutant. If an invalid positive mutation is rolled for such a PC later, it should be rerolled.

Negative mutations stack. Multiple penalties or debilities are added together up to the limits listed; no combination of attribute penalties can reduce a modifier below -2, for example.

To generate a negative mutation roll 1d100 and check the list below.

(1-2) **Animalistic Mentality**: You have psychological traits of some kind that make it difficult to deal with normal humans, including other mutants. Your Charisma modifier suffers a -1 penalty.

(3-4) **Anosmia**: You have no sense of smell or taste. Your Wisdom modifier takes a -1 penalty and you fail all skill checks reliant on either sense. You cannot identify poisoned or contaminated food or water unless it is visually obvious.

(5-6) **Awkward Mouth**: Your mouthparts are altered in ways that make it impossible to speak. Your allies understand your vocalizations and sign language, but you can only communicate by gestures with unfamiliar strangers. You cannot gain the Talk or Lead skills, but you gain the ***Crushing Jaws*** positive mutation for free.

(7-8) **Bestial Hunger**: You need to consume twice as much food and water as a normal human being in order to avoid privation. You cannot gain mutations that lower your food or water intake requirements.

(9-10) **Bleeder**: You die at the end of your third round after becoming Mortally Wounded, instead of after the sixth. Devices, abilities, and powers that would automatically stabilize you when you are Mortally Wounded simply do not work for you.

(11-12) **Blindness**: You are completely blind. After rolling all negative mutations, pick one free non-visual Sensory positive mutation of your choice that you presumably use to compensate. You cannot gain a Sensory mutation that improves your vision.

(13-14) **Chronic Seizures**: Whenever you roll a natural 1 on a hit roll or a natural 2 on a skill check, you must make a Physical save or suffer a seizure of some kind, dropping anything you're holding and becoming unable to act for the rest of the scene. You can temporarily resist the seizure by accepting 1 System Strain for each round you delay it. You can't suffer a seizure more than once per week.

(15-16) **Clumsy Paws**: Your hands or hand-equivalents are clumsy compared to human digits. You cannot manipulate any object more delicate than an oversized gun trigger.

(17-18) **Constant Secretions**: You exude secretions of some kind that triple your required daily water intake and double the Readied Encumbrance of any armor. You roll all skill checks to resist or escape grapples twice and take the better.

(19-20) **Deafness**: You are deaf, but can lip-read well enough to understand most others. You cannot gain a mutation that improves your hearing.

(21-22) **Deficient Polycephaly**: You have an additional head and brain, placed where you wish. Unfortunately, it is an idiot, and the stress of containing its impulses and thoughts applies a -1 modifier penalty to either your Intelligence or Wisdom, at your choice. If you roll a natural 2 on a social skill check, it will say the worst possible thing.

(23-24) **Distorted Speech**: You are unable to communicate clearly, whether due to a speech impediment, cognitive impairment, or an uncontrollable verbal tic. Your friends have learned to understand you, but you can't communicate more than basic ideas to others. You cannot gain the Talk or Lead skills.

(25-26) **Distracted Mind**: You have difficulty maintaining a single line of thought. You suffer a -1 skill check penalty on any activity that takes more than five minutes to complete.

(27-28) **Energy Sink**: You passively absorb the energy of energy cells and powered devices on your person. Each day, any energy cells or powered devices you carry have a 1 in 6 chance of having been drained when you first try to use them at a critical moment. You ignore the first 10 points of electrical damage you take each round.

(29-30) **Feeble Joints**: Your musculature is poorly anchored. Your Strength modifier suffers a -1 penalty and you are entirely incapable of jumping.

(31-32) **Feral Mind**: You have a hard time dealing with abstract ideas. Your Intelligence modifier suffers a -1 penalty.

(33-34) **Fragile System**: You are exceptionally susceptible to environmental toxins. You take a -2 penalty to all saving throws versus poisons and diseases and your maximum System Strain is decreased by 2, to a minimum of 3.

(35-36) Glowbug: Some significant part of you glows constantly, illuminating out to 10 meters and concealable only under whole-body wraps. The drain on your system applies a -1 Constitution modifier penalty. You automatically fail any Sneak checks involving unobtrusiveness, whether veiled or not.

(37-38) Hemovore: You must drink several liters of mammalian blood each week in addition to normal food or you begin to starve. A sheep-sized mammal is enough to feed you, or thirty or so humans taking turns to donate.

(39-40) Insensate Flesh: You have an extremely muted sense of touch, including sensing heat or pressure. You suffer a -1 penalty to your hit point roll each level, to a minimum of 1 point, as you are less capable of noticing injuries and aggravate them easily.

(41-42) Light Sensitivity: You can see normally in low-light conditions, but daylight is blinding to you without goggles or other protective gear, and you suffer 1 System Strain in sunburn for each hour of sun exposure without an enveloping cloak. Laser weapons roll damage twice against you, taking the higher result.

(43-44) Loose Limbs: Your limbs break off and regrow. You suffer a -1 Dexterity modifier and when Mortally Wounded or you intentionally break it off, you lose a randomly-chosen arm or leg. It regrows in 1d4 weeks.

(45-46) Low Resistances: The first time you make a Physical, Mental, or Evasion save in a day, roll it twice and take the worst result.

(47-48) Memory Damage: You're prone to losing chunks of memory not relevant to your current interests or activities. Your Intelligence modifier takes a -1 penalty and you cannot develop the Know skill.

(49-50) Miasmic Stench: You exude a stench that defies all conventional perfumes and fragrances, though your allies might eventually become numb to it. You fail any Sneak checks against creatures capable of smelling things and take a -1 penalty on all social skill checks. Insects and predatory animals will not recognize you as edible, though they may attack if you threaten them.

(51-52) Misshapen: Strangenesses of proportion and jointing make it impossible to wear armor or clothing that has not been tailored to you.

(53-54) Musclebound: Your physiology complicates movement. Your Dexterity modifier is reduced by 1.

(55-56) Narrow Focus: You have difficulty paying attention to your surroundings. Your Wisdom modifier suffers a -1 penalty and you cannot develop the Notice skill.

(57-58) Overtaxed Physique: Your mutations are more than your body can handle safely. Your maximum System Strain is lowered by 3 points, to a minimum of 3.

(59-60) Place Blindness: You have profoundly poor navigational skills. While you can find your way around familiar places you've lived in for at least a week, you will invariably become lost when traveling outside those areas unless guided.

(61-62) Poor Eyesight: Your eyes are too weak to make out anything more than 10 meters away from you. You cannot gain a positive Sensory mutation that improves your eyesight.

(63-64) Primitive Cognition: When you advance a character level, you gain one fewer skill point.

(65-66) Sensitive Skin: Your external integument can't handle heavy pressure or chafing. You can't wear armor of more than 1 Encumbrance and you gain 1 System Strain each day you wear any armor at all.

(67-68) Short Lifespan: Once you reach adulthood, your physical aging processes accelerate, though you do not become decrepit until your final year of life. At age 18 and each birthday afterwards, roll 1d100 and add your age. If the total is over 100, you're going to die in 1d4 years.

(69-70) Sleep Dependence: Adequate sleep is critical for you. If you don't get a good night's sleep for some reason, you gain 2 System Strain.

(71-72) Slow Development: You have great difficulty matching the skills of others. Pick a favorite skill; all others have a maximum skill level 1 less than usual for your level, to a minimum of level-0.

(73-74) Spindly: Your body is not built for raw power. Your Strength modifier is reduced by 1 and you cannot gain the Exert skill.

(75-76) Vexation Field: Subsonic or electro-neural emissions subconsciously irritate everyone around you. Friends and allies can ignore it. You suffer a -1 Charisma modifier penalty and cannot gain the Lead or Connect skills.

(77-78) Voracious: If you don't consume at least two food rations a day, you are so distracted by hunger that you must make a Mental save to resist spending at least one round eating anything edible you encounter, including enemy bodies.

(79-80) Weak Heart: Sharp exertion quickly exhausts you. Your Constitution modifier suffers a -1 penalty, and all Exert skill checks are rolled twice and the worst taken.

(81-90) Attribute Deficiency: Your lowest attribute suffers a -1 modifier penalty. If the lowest is tied, pick one. Reroll this mutation if its modifier is already at -2.

(91-00) Lightly Touched: Roll another negative mutation. It manifests so lightly, however, that it has no meaningful effect on you and applies no penalties.



Positive Mutations

To generate a random positive mutation, roll a d6 and d10 together and consult the table below. To roll within only a single category, just roll a d10.

Structure mutations tend to alter the gross physical format of the mutant, often increasing their strength and agility.

Sense mutations enhance the mutant's senses, occasionally granting entirely new modes of awareness to the possessor.

Hybrid mutations reflect those changes that make a mutant more bestial or plant-like.

Cognition mutations increase the mutant's mental prowess, giving them cognitive abilities beyond those of normal humanity.

Pseudo-psychic mutations mimic psionic abilities, though the mutant is not actually a psychic.

Exotic mutations are a catchall for those changes that have no clear association.

d6	d10	Positive Mutation
		Structure Mutations
1	1	Augmented Muscle
	2	Explosive Exertion
	3	Hypercontortion
	4	Improved Joints
	5	Leaper
	6	Redundant Organs
	7	Regenerator
	8	Reinforced Tissues
	9	Sealed Systems
	10	Stamina Reserves
		Sense Mutations
2	1	Accelerated Perception
	2	Acute Hearing
	3	Acute Olfaction
	4	Echolocation
	5	Empathic Sensitivity
	6	Night Vision
	7	Panoptic Vision
	8	Tactile Analysis
	9	Telescopic Sight
	10	Thermal Vision
		Hybrid Mutations
3	1	Aquatic Adaptation
	2	Arboreal Aptitude
	3	Centauroid
	4	Crushing Jaws
	5	Digitigrade Legs
	6	Functional Wings
	7	Prehensile Limb
	8	Savage Claws
	9	Thick Hide
	10	Venom Glands

d6	d10	Positive Mutation
		Cognition Mutations
4	1	Augmented Cognition
	2	Ballistic Calculator
	3	Eidetic Memory
	4	Internal Map
	5	Intuitive Leap
	6	Memory Eater
	7	Mental Bifurcation
	8	Mind Over Body
	9	Omniglot
	10	Predictive Analysis
		Pseudo-Psychic Mutations
5	1	Force Field
	2	Induce Confusion
	3	Limited Precognition
	4	Mental Domination
	5	Mind Reader
	6	Neural Lockdown
	7	Panic Wave
	8	Spatial Displacement
	9	Telekinetic Reach
	10	Thermokinesis
		Exotic Mutations
6	1	Chameleon Field
	2	Electrical Generation
	3	Hemovore
	4	Image Projection
	5	Metamorph
	6	Molecular Phasing
	7	Natural Projectiles
	8	Pheromone Cloud
	9	Photon Manipulation
	10	Sound Generation

Accelerated Perception: You process your sensory input at an inhumanly fast rate. You cannot be surprised or suffer Execution Attacks, and your Snap Attacks do not suffer the usual -4 penalty to hit. Once per day, accept one System Strain to take your next Main Action immediately as an Instant response to someone else's action. Your action resolves before theirs.

Acute Hearing: Your hearing is acute enough to give you a clear picture of your surroundings within 10 meters, including positioning accurate enough to allow attacks. You can identify people by their breathing and heartbeat. By focusing on a location within 100 meters, you can listen as if you were standing there, if no obstacles intervene.

Acute Olfaction: You have a clear olfactory picture of your surroundings within 10 meters, including positioning accurate enough to allow attacks. You can identify any person you've met by smell, as well as objects they've handled within the past day. You can faultlessly track any trail left within an hour unless it has been carefully erased; in that and other cases you simply get a +4 bonus on all Wis/Survive or similar tracking skill checks.

Aquatic Adaptation: You can breathe and function normally underwater, ignoring normal extremes of temperature and pressure and seeing clearly underwater out to 30 meters even in the absence of light. Your Move rate increases by 5 meters per Move action when swimming.

Arboreal Aptitude: You are an unnaturally nimble climber, able to scale all but perfectly smooth surfaces as if they were flat ground. You can hang from vertical or overhead surfaces so long as one hand has purchase. All falling damage you take is halved, rounded down.

Augmented Cognition: Your brain is simply superior to that of a baseline human. Your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma modifier increases by +1, chosen as you wish, to a maximum of +2.

Augmented Muscle: Your Strength ability score is treated as four points greater for Encumbrance purposes and you gain a +1 bonus to your Strength modifier, to a maximum of +2.

Ballistic Calculator: You have an intuitive grasp of distances, vectors, and other ballistic calculations. Gain Shoot as a bonus skill and ignore any penalty for shooting at long range. Once per scene, accept one System Strain as an Instant action to reroll a missed ranged attack.

Centauroid: You have a quadrupedal lower body, though you are not necessarily much larger than a normal human. Your base Move rate increases by 10 meters per Move action and you gain a +2 skill check bonus to resist grapples by human-sized foes. You can only wear armor specially crafted for you.

Chameleon Field: You can change your body and clothing's color and texture at will. While you cannot become invisible, you gain Sneak as a bonus skill and a +1 bonus on all Sneak skill checks. When motionless, you can make an opposed Sneak versus Notice skill check to avoid notice even when an observer is directly in view of you. When more than 30 meters distant from a normally-sighted viewer, you cannot be detected visually unless you draw attention somehow.

Crushing Jaws: Your jaws or mandibles are meant for crushing hard or fibrous substances. Your bite attacks use Punch and do 1d12 damage with no Shock, using the better of Strength or Dexterity to modify the attack. If using Traumatic Hit rules, your bite has a 1d8/x2 Trauma Rating. As with other Punch attacks, you may add your skill level to the damage roll. You can chew through up to twenty centimeters of hard wood or similar substances with one minute of gnawing.

Digitigrade Legs: Your animalistic legs grant you unusual speed. Your base Move rate increases by 5 meters per Move action and you can jump up to 10 meters horizontally or half vertically as a Move action.

Echolocation: You emit inaudible sonic pings that give you a clear image of the surroundings in front of you out to a thirty meter distance. The resolution is fine enough to distinguish people and small details, but cannot make out details smaller than one centimeter in size.

Eidetic Memory: You can remember every sensory detail you experienced in the past 48 hours, and never forget matters of importance to you. Gain one bonus skill of your choice and gain one additional skill point when advancing a level.

Electrical Generation: You can charge your unarmed or conductive metal weapon attacks with electrical energy, adding 2d6 damage plus your character level as an Instant action. After the first use of this bonus in a scene, additional uses add 1 System Strain. Optionally, you can recharge a Type A energy cell at a cost of 1 System Strain. You ignore the first 10 points of damage from any electrical harm done to you.





Empathic Sensitivity: You intuitively notice subtle physiological signifiers when speaking to another creature, identifying its current emotional state as a Main Action. Gain a +1 to all social skill checks. You can communicate with other intelligent creatures even in the absence of a shared language, though only via basic ideas and concepts.

Explosive Exertion: As an On Turn action, gain a tremendous boost of strength. Your next roll this round treats your Strength modifier as +2, or +3 if it's already +2. For the rest of this round, you can lift, break, or carry anything an ogre-sized humanoid could, smashing through ordinary doors and non-reinforced walls. After the first use of this mutation in a scene, additional uses add 1 System Strain.

Force Field: As a Main Action, you can generate a force field around yourself that absorbs up to 10 points of damage plus your character level before failing. The field vanishes at the end of your next round unless you spend a Move action sustaining it each round or accept 1 System Strain to maintain it to the end of the scene. Damage done to the shield regenerates at the end of each scene. If the shield is destroyed entirely, any overflow damage is done to you and you cannot re-summon it that scene.

Functional Wings: You have wings of some kind, though it's difficult for them to lift you. You can fly at twice your standard Move rate, but it takes a Main Action to do so instead of a Move action. You cannot hover, so you must fly each round or land. You cannot fly when encumbered beyond your usual Strength maximum, and you cannot wear high-tech sealed-suit armor not built for a winged user. You can fly for up to ten minutes at a time before needing to spend an equal amount of time resting.

Hemovore: You can feed on the life force of others, usually in a manner that involves blood drinking or other close physical contact. The victim must be an intelligent creature who is either helpless or cooperative. With one Main Action, you can drain 1d6 hit points and use them to heal damage you have suffered. If they cooperate, you can choose how many of their hit points to drain; if they resist, you might accidentally kill them. You cannot drain more hit points than they have. Draining a human to death will negate any need you may have for food or water for the next week.

Hypercontortion: Your musculature and skeletal system are both abnormally flexible. You can fit yourself through any hole big enough to admit your head and gain a +2 bonus to all grapple-related skill checks and +1 to all motion-related Perform checks. Attempting to escape from a grapple is an On Turn action for you once per round.

Image Projection: As a Main Action, create a visual illusion within 30 meters that can fit in a 5-meter cube. The image can involve sound up to normal conversational volume and can move and act so long as you spend a Move action concentrating on it each round. The illusion persists for one round per character level after you stop concentrating on it. It is entirely intangible, and objects cannot be made invisible by the illusion, though they can be concealed by another image. After the first time you use this mutation in a scene, additional uses add 1 System Strain.

Improved Joints: You add 5 meters to your base Move rate and you gain a +1 bonus to your Dexterity modifier, to a maximum of +2.

Induce Confusion: As a Main Action, focus on a living creature within 30 meters. Your target must make a Mental save; on a failure they suffer intense mental confusion for 1d6 rounds. While confused, a creature that does anything but remain stationary that round has a 50% chance of actually doing the opposite of what they intended to do with their Main Action: attacking the wrong target, moving in the wrong direction, using the wrong ability, or so forth. The GM decides specifics, but their confusion is never helpful to their cause. A creature can be targeted by this mutation only once per scene. Creatures with more hit dice than the user has levels get a Mental save to throw off the confusion at the end of each of their rounds. After the first time you use this mutation in a scene, additional uses add 1 System Strain.

Internal Map: You are always aware of your location and facing in relation to a point known to you. You cannot become lost or Go Astray as described on page 61 and can navigate known spaces normally even in perfect darkness.

Intuitive Leap: You are capable of drawing remarkable insights from seemingly trivial observations. Your Wisdom modifier increases by +1 to a maximum of +2 and you gain Notice as a bonus skill. Once per game session, you may accept one System Strain as a Main Action and ask the GM a question. The GM then gives a one-sentence answer as if the PC were Sherlock Holmes or some other hyper-capable literary detective, along with a brief description of how the PC's inhuman abilities of deduction produced the result.

Leaper: Subtract 20 meters from any falling damage taken. As a Move action, jump to any location with 20 meters. You cannot jump two rounds in a row. This jump does not count as a *Fighting Withdrawal* for purposes of escaping melee engagements.

Limited Precognition: As an Instant action, accept 1 System Strain before performing an action that would take no more than a few seconds, such as pushing a button, drinking a liquid, or opening a door. You immediately sense the next six seconds of consequences that the GM thinks most likely to happen, observing them from your own perspective. If you wish, you may trigger this precognitive ability just before an otherwise-successful ambush or Execution Attack, foiling either.

Memory Eater: By consuming the brain tissue of an intelligent creature no more than one hour dead, you can share fragments of its memory. After eating part of a subject's brain, you can ask it one question and gain a one or two-sentence answer from their memories. This ability works only once on any given brain. Your Intelligence modifier increases by +1 for 24 hours after eating an intelligent creature's brain, up to a maximum of +3, and brain-eating feeds you for one day.

Mental Bifurcation: You can maintain two separate trains of thought at once. You cannot be surprised or suffer Execution Attacks and one half of your mind can sleep while the other remains awake, though you must rest quietly to recover as normal. Once per round, as an Instant action when you fail a Mental save, you may accept one System Strain to reroll the save.

Mental Domination: As a Main Action, focus on a living creature within 10 meters. The target must make a Mental save; if it succeeds, nothing happens, though they are aware of your attempt to control them. If it fails, roll 1d6 per character level; if the total equals or exceeds their current hit points, they become totally physically subject to your will so long as you can see them and spend a Move action each round maintaining control. Thralls cannot be made to exercise judgment or answer questions, but will perform physical actions to the best of their ability even if they are suicidal. Domination ends at the end of the scene, only one creature can be dominated at a time, and only one attempt may be made to dominate a given creature per scene. This mutation does not work on creatures with more hit dice than the user has levels. After the first time you use this mutation in a scene, additional uses add 1 System Strain.

Metamorph: As a Main Action, alter your physical shape to any other humanoid form within 50% of your height or weight. You can mimic clothing and armor as part of this shift, but such mimicked items grant no AC or other benefits. You can perfectly impersonate another person if you've spent at least ten minutes personally interacting with them or have at least ten grams of their blood, hair, or other tissues.

Mind Over Body: Your mind has an abnormal degree of control over your physical processes, driving them to exceed their normal level. You may substitute either your Intelligence or Wisdom modifiers for your Strength or Constitution modifiers when the latter are called for, even for your hit point rolls each level. You can intellectually ignore pain and other physical sensations, though you still suffer the mechanical penalties, and you automatically stabilize when Mortally Wounded.

Mind Reader: As a Main Action, accept one System Strain and target a visible creature. The target gets a Mental saving throw; if they succeed, you simply get a one-sentence description of what they're thinking about right now. If they fail, you get that description and can ask their memories one question, getting a one or two-sentence answer if the question is one their memories could answer. A creature can be targeted by this mutation only once per day, and will not normally notice it even if they succeed in their save.

Molecular Phasing: As a Main Action, accept 1 System Strain and alter your molecular composition to be slightly out of tune with mundane reality. Until the start of your next turn, you can move at your normal movement rate in any direction, passing through solid objects. You cannot affect or be affected by mundane matter or energy while phased. If you re-materialize while fully or partially embedded in something else, you are ejected into the nearest space that can contain you. Both you and the object you intersected take 1d6 damage per character level you possess.

Natural Projectiles: You have some sort of natural projectile or energy weapon that has the same combat statistics as a rifle on page 78, can be used without penalty in melee, and never runs out of ammunition under normal combat usage. You gain the Shoot skill as a bonus skill. Your natural projectiles get a +1 damage and hit bonus at level 3, +2 at level 6, and +3 at level 9.





Neural Lockdown: As a Main Action, focus on a living creature within 10 meters. They must make a Mental save; on a success, nothing happens but they are unaware of your attempt. On a failure, roll 1d6 per character level; if your total is equal or higher than their current hit points, they become paralyzed and insensate until you release them or the scene ends. They remember absolutely nothing that happened during the scene, filling in any blanks with their own natural assumptions. This mutation can target a given creature only once per scene. After the first time you use this mutation in a scene, additional uses add 1 System Strain.

Night Vision: Your visual senses function perfectly even in the complete absence of light. Due to your visual sensitivity to the high-energy particles involved, you can also see dangerous zones of radiation.

Omniglot: You have a natural ability to communicate with other intelligent creatures in a way they will find comprehensible. Your Charisma modifier increases by +1. You can speak to any intelligent creature as if you spoke their native language. You can learn to speak, read, and write any language with a day of practice with a native speaker.

Panic Wave: As a Main Action, emit a wave of psychic terror in a 10-meter radius. Your allies can resist it, but all other living creatures must make a Morale check. A creature may choose to continue fighting even if it fails the check, but it then takes 1d6 damage per 2 character levels you possess, rounded up. If reduced to zero hit points this way, it regains one HP and flees. You may trigger this wave only once per scene. If used out of combat, this power grants a +2 bonus to any social skill checks reliant on intimidation.

Panoptic Vision: Your visual senses function in a 360-degree circle and maintain awareness even while you are asleep or unconscious. You cannot be surprised or suffer Execution Attacks and you can awake from normal sleep instantly to respond to something you see.

Pheromone Cloud: You emit subtle pheromones that tweak the reasoning of intelligent creatures around you. As an On Turn action, accept one System Strain before making a request or suggestion to someone else. They must make a Mental save; if it fails, they will agree unless the request would bring them harm or be very contrary to their nature. A creature can be targeted by this mutation only once per scene.

Photon Manipulation: You can instinctively modulate the light level around you. You can create visible light within a 10-meter radius or shroud up to a 2-meter radius in inky darkness that resists all illumination. While shrouded, you gain an Armor Class bonus of +2 due to your obfuscation. You can see normally regardless of the light level around you. When you or an ally within 10 meters are hit by a laser weapon, accept one System Strain as an Instant action to negate the damage.

Predictive Analysis: You have the ability to predict what others around you are about to do. Your Intelligence or Wisdom modifier increases by +1. Once per game session, accept one System Strain as an Instant action after someone else acts; events rewind to the beginning of your last turn, as what played out was simply what you predicted would happen. By predicting it, you changed it, and you may now act differently. This rewind ability only works in response to a creature's actions, and cannot be used to undo natural events or accidents.

Prehensile Limb: You have one or more tails, tentacles, or other extremities that can manipulate objects with your normal strength and manual dexterity. Once per scene, as an On Turn action, accept one System Strain to have a prehensile limb do something that wouldn't take more than a Main Action to perform, such as make an attack or manipulate a device.

Redundant Organs: Once per week, as an On Turn action, get up after being Mortally Wounded by physical injury and regain 25% of your maximum hit points, rounded up. This mutation cannot save you from unavoidably certain death. If using Trauma rules, your Trauma Target increases by +1.

Regenerator: You automatically stabilize if Mortally Wounded and regenerate 2 hit points of damage every hour. If mutilated, you can regrow missing limbs or organs in one week, assuming you can survive their absence that long. You cannot recover from effects that instantly kill you.

Reinforced Tissues: Your flesh is abnormally dense. You treat your Constitution as 18 for attribute modifier purposes when rolling hit points and you gain a +2 bonus to your Armor Class that stacks with any armor or other AC benefit you may have. As a consequence of your density, you cannot swim and roll all fall damage twice, taking the worst result.

Savage Claws: You have murderously effective body weaponry of some kind, and your Punch attacks do 1d6 plus your character level in damage, have a Shock rating of half your level rounded up against AC 15, and may use either Dexterity or Strength as the modifying attribute. If using Traumatic Hit rules, they have a 1d6/x3 rating. As with other Punch attacks, you may add your skill level to the damage die, but not the Shock.

Sealed Systems: You do not need to breathe and are immune to toxic gases, extremes of high and low atmospheric pressure or natural temperature, aerosol-transmitted diseases, and anything else a modern hazmat suit would resist. You can rest comfortably in any non-damaging environment.

Sound Generation: You can produce any sound you wish up to the volume of a shout originating from a visible point within 30 meters. As a Main Action, you can focus on a target within 30 meters and make a sonic attack that inflicts 2d6 plus your level in non-lethal damage to any non-deaf creature. After the first use of this sonic attack in a scene, additional uses add 1 System Strain.

Spatial Displacement: As a Move action, teleport up to 10 meters to a location you can see. This movement counts as a *Fighting Withdrawal* for purposes of avoiding melee attacks. After the first use of this mutation in a scene, additional uses add 1 System Strain.

Stamina Reserves: You do not sleep, and can maintain a modest level of exertion indefinitely. You can recover daily System Strain as normal with four hours of comfortable, well-fed rest, during which you can perform light activity. You have +2 on all skill checks involving continuous exertion.

Tactile Analysis: Your sense of touch is hyper-acute, granting you a +2 bonus on all skill checks related to manual dexterity such as crafting, trauma care, lockpicking, playing musical instruments, or the like. Your awareness of air pressure and minute drafts gives you a sensory picture of your visually-unobstructed surroundings within 10 meters, including positioning accurate enough to allow attacks.

Telekinetic Reach: As a Main Action, you can manipulate objects within 10 meters per character level as if handling them with your own two hands. You cannot lift yourself or manipulate objects being touched, worn, or driven by hostile living creatures. You can move manipulated objects at a maximum speed of 10 meters per activation.

Telescopic Sight: Any visible point within one kilometer can be observed as if you were standing adjacent. You suffer no penalties for using a ranged weapon at long range.

Thermal Vision: You can see heat gradients, allowing you a somewhat blurry vision that functions even in perfect darkness or clouds of dust. This thermal vision is precise enough to distinguish individuals, but cannot make out fine details. As a Main Action, you can emit ocular heat rays that do 2d6 damage plus your character level to a target within 30 meters, with an Evasion save to negate it. Each use of this ability after the first in a scene adds one System Strain.

Thermokinesis: As a Main Action, target a living creature or flammable object within 30 meters. Objects targeted cannot be carried by a creature and large objects only have one cubic meter of their mass affected. Objects targeted by this power either freeze solid or burst into flame, and living creatures will suffer 2d10 heat or cold damage plus your character level, with a Physical saving throw for half. After the first time you use this attack in a scene, additional uses add 1 System Strain.

Thick Hide: Whether from dense skin, scales, thick fur, chitin, or some other body covering, your base Armor Class is equal to 15 plus half your level, rounded down. Armor worse than this does not help you, but you gain benefits from shields normally. Any Shock you suffer is lowered by 1 point, to a potential minimum of zero.

Venom Glands: You may exude venom as an On Turn action at the cost of one System Strain. If imbibed or applied by a bladed weapon attack or body weaponry, it does 1d8 damage plus the user's level to subjects susceptible to poison for the rest of the scene. The user may make the toxin non-lethal simply by lessening the dosage. Envenoming a weapon with this toxin takes a Main Action and the toxin spoils after a scene, though it can last through multiple hits. A given victim can be harmed by this poison only once per scene.



Foci

Your survivor's Edges define the basic aptitudes that have kept them alive thus far. Your character is more than their minimal competencies, however. Each survivor has their own set of aptitudes and knacks which may or may not be related to their main role. These aptitudes are their ***Foci***. Foci mark the difference in capabilities between PCs who might have the same Edges or same general theme for their abilities.

A Focus grants a PC some special ability or unusual aptitude. Some sharpen a survivor's existing talents, like the ***Specialist*** Focus, while others grant entirely new options and talents, like the ***Iron Stomach*** or ***Apex Predator*** Foci.

A beginning PC can pick one Focus. If you've taken the ***Focused*** Edge, you can make a second pick, or take the second level of your initial Focus. You'll gain additional Focus picks as you rise in character level.

Most Foci come in two levels, though a few of them have only a single level of aptitude. Each time you pick a Focus, you gain one level of it. A given Focus level can only be taken once unless the Focus says otherwise.

A survivor's Foci don't need to be in line with their Edges. Your former cam idol might have never realized her technical talents as a Scrapsmith until she was forced into it by the end of the world and a crashed network center. You can choose any Focus you wish so long as you can explain how your survivor's special gifts came to light.

Bonus Skills From Foci

Some Foci grant a bonus skill. These grant you level-0 in the skill, or level-1 if you already have it at level-0. If you have the skill at level-1 already, you can instead pick any other skill.

If a Focus is taken later on, after character creation, a bonus skill counts as three skill points spent on improving the skill, as explained in Character Advancement on page 65.

Gaining Foci Later

Characters gain additional Foci as they advance in experience and gain character levels. At levels 2, 5, 7, and 10 a PC can add a level to an existing Focus or pick up the first level in a new Focus.

NPCs and Foci

Non-player characters aren't built the same way as PCs, and don't usually have Foci, just as they don't usually have Edges or other PC-specific abilities. Special NPCs or those with unusual knacks might have such uncommon perks, however, or might have innate abilities that amount to the same effect. NPCs can often have abilities that have no specific PC equivalent, either due to their special nature, unusual training, unique mutations, or the hard experience of their lives. A prudent band of post-apocalyptic freebooters is always alert for the possibility of such unpleasant surprises.



Focus List

Alert

You are keenly aware of your surroundings and virtually impossible to take unaware. You have an instinctive alacrity of response that helps you act before less wary persons can think to move.

Level 1: Gain Notice as a bonus skill. You cannot be surprised, nor can others use the Execution Attack option on you. When your group rolls initiative, your vigilance allows them to roll twice and take the higher roll.

Level 2: In addition to the benefits of level 1, you always act first in a combat round unless someone else involved is also this *Alert*.

Apex Predator

You have extensive experience in hunting or handling dangerous wild animals, and know how to avoid, intimidate, or kill such beasts.

Level 1: Gain Survive and Shoot as bonus skills. Once per scene as an On Turn action, force any hostile beasts in combat with the party to make a Morale check. Add half your level, rounded up, to any damage or Shock done to sub-sapient beasts.

Level 2: Once per scene, as an Instant action, force a beast you've hit to make a Physical saving throw at a penalty equal to your Survive or combat skill, whichever is higher. On a failure, it takes your maximum hit points in extra damage.

Armsmaster

You have an unusual competence with thrown weapons and melee attacks. This Focus' benefits do not apply to unarmed attacks or non-thrown projectile weapons. This Focus' bonuses also don't stack with ***Deadeye*** or other Foci that add a skill's level to your damage or Shock.

Level 1: Gain Stab as a bonus skill. You can Ready a Stowed melee or thrown weapon as an Instant action. You may add your Stab skill level to a melee or thrown weapon's damage roll or Shock damage, assuming it has any to begin with.

Level 2: The Shock from your melee attacks always treats the target as if they have AC 10. Gain a +1 bonus to hit with all thrown or melee attacks.

Assassin

You are practiced at sudden murder, and have certain advantages in carrying out an Execution Attack as described in the rules on page 27.

Level 1: Gain Sneak as a bonus skill. You can conceal an object no larger than a knife or pistol from anything less invasive than a strip search, including normal weapon detection devices. You can draw or produce this object as an On Turn action, and your point-blank ranged attacks made from surprise with it cannot miss the target.

Level 2: You can take a Move action on the same round as you make an Execution Attack, closing rapidly with a target before you attack. You may split this Move action when making an Execution Attack, taking part of it before you murder your target and part of it afterwards. This movement happens too quickly to alert a victim or to be hindered by bodyguards not directly in your path.

Authority

You have an uncanny kind of charisma about you, one that makes others instinctively follow your instructions and further your causes. Where this Focus refers to followers, it means NPCs who have voluntarily chosen to be in your service. PCs never count as followers.

Level 1: Gain Lead as a bonus skill. Once per day, you can make a request from an NPC who is not openly hostile to you, rolling a Cha/Lead skill check at a difficulty of the NPC's Morale score. If you succeed, they will comply with the request, provided it is not harmful or very uncharacteristic.

Level 2: Those who follow you are fired with confidence. Any NPC being directly led by you gains a Morale and hit roll bonus equal to your Lead skill and a +1 bonus on all skill checks. Your followers will not act against your interests unless under extreme pressure.

Close Combatant

You've had all too much practice at close-in fighting and desperate struggles with pistol or blade. You're extremely skilled at avoiding injury in melee combat, and at level 2 you can dodge through a melee scrum without fear of being knifed in passing.

Level 1: Gain any combat skill as a bonus skill. You can use pistol-sized ranged weapons in melee without suffering penalties for the proximity of melee attackers. You ignore Shock damage from melee assailants, even if you're unarmored at the time.

Level 2: The Shock damage from your melee attacks treats all targets as if they were AC 10. The *Fighting Withdrawal* combat action is treated as an On Turn action for you and can be performed freely.





Deadeye

You have a gift with ranged weapons. While this talent most commonly applies to guns, it is also applicable to thrown weapons or other ranged weapons that can be used with the Shoot skill. For thrown weapons, you can't use the benefits of the ***Armsmaster*** Focus at the same time as ***Deadeye***.

Level 1: Gain Shoot as a bonus skill. You can Ready a Stowed ranged weapon as an Instant action. You may use a rifle or two-handed ranged weapon even when an enemy is within melee range, albeit at a -4 hit penalty. You may add your Shoot skill level to a ranged weapon's damage roll.

Level 2: You can reload guns, crossbows, or other slow-loading weapons as an On Turn action, provided they don't take more than a round to reload. You can use ranged weapons of any size in melee without penalty. Once per scene, as an On Turn action when target shooting at an inanimate, non-creature target, you automatically hit unless you roll a 2 on your Shoot skill check or the shot is physically impossible.

Diplomat

You know how to get your way in personal negotiations, and can manipulate the attitudes of those around you. Even so, while smooth words are versatile, they'll only work if your interlocutor is actually willing to listen to you.

Level 1: Gain Talk as a bonus skill. You speak all the languages common to your area and can learn new ones to a workable level in a week, becoming fluent in a month. Reroll 1s on any skill check dice related to negotiation or diplomacy.

Level 2: Once per game session, shift an intelligent NPC's Reaction Roll one step closer to friendly if you can talk to them for at least thirty seconds.

Gray Man

You are uncannily unremarkable. No one thinks to look twice at you, and you always seem an unprofitable mark for violence or theft.

Level 1: Gain Sneak as a bonus skill. You know how to conceal your carried belongings so that you never appear to have anything worth stealing. Enemies will not target you in combat unless you are the only practical target or you are making yourself an immediate threat.

Level 2: You can dress and carry yourself to blend into any group unless it's so small that all members know each other. Once per day, as an On Turn action, gain two System Strain to be forgotten or ignored by everyone around you for the rest of the scene until you act in such a way as to draw attention. This ability can't be used if someone is already paying specific attention to you.

Healer

Healing comes naturally to you, and you're particularly gifted at preventing the quick bleed-out of wounded allies and comrades.

Level 1: Gain Heal as a bonus skill. You may attempt to stabilize one mortally-wounded adjacent person per round as an On Turn action. When rolling Heal skill checks, roll 3d6 and drop the lowest die.

Level 2: Pharmaceuticals or other technological healing devices applied by you heal twice as many hit points as normal. Using only basic medical supplies, you can heal 1d6+Heal skill hit points of damage to every injured or wounded person in your group with ten minutes of first aid spread among them. Such healing adds no System Strain, but can be used on a given target only once a day.

Henchkeeper

You have a distinct knack for picking up lost souls who willingly do your bidding. You might induce them with promises of money, power, excitement, sex, or some other prize that you may or may not eventually grant. A henchman obtained with this Focus will serve in loyal fashion until clearly betrayed or placed in unacceptable danger. Henchmen are not "important" people, and are usually tribal outcasts, low-status enclave workers, or other people with few prospects in their own society.

You can use more conventional pay or inducements to acquire additional henchmen, but these extra hirelings are no more loyal or competent than your pay and treatment can purchase.

Level 1: Gain Lead as a bonus skill. You can acquire henchmen within 24 hours of arriving in a community, assuming anyone is suitable hench material. These henchmen will not fight except to save their own lives, but will go with you on missions and risk great danger to help you. Most peaceful modern citizens will fight as Peaceful Civilians as listed on page 215, using whatever gear they're given. Wastelanders, civil war survivors, and other hardened souls will fight as Tribal Warriors on the same page. You can have one henchman at a time for every three character levels you have, rounded up. You can release henchmen with no hard feelings at any plausible time and pick them back up later should you be without a current henchman.

Level 2: Your henchmen are remarkably loyal and determined, and will fight for you against anything but clearly overwhelming odds. Whether through natural competence or their devotion to you, they're treated as Tough Survivors from page 215. You can make faithful henchmen out of skilled and highly-capable NPCs, but this requires that you actually have done them some favor or help that would reasonably earn such fierce loyalty.

Iron Stomach

You are capable of eating even the most unappetizing, badly-contaminated, and semi-rotten foodstuffs without incurring harm, though you still can't eat outright poison or other wholly inedible substances.

Level 1: Gain Survive as a bonus skill. You do not need to make a disease check when drinking unfiltered water and you need only one ration of food every two days. You gain a +2 bonus on all saves versus poison or diseases.

Level 2: Your System Strain maximum increases by +2, to a maximum of 20. By constant casual foraging of insects, grasses, bark, and other semi-edible substances you can feed yourself in any natural environment. You become immune to poisons short of military-grade engineered toxins.

Natural Immunity

You have a remarkably strong immune system and are impervious to most ordinary sicknesses.

Level 1: Your maximum System Strain increases by 2 points, up to a maximum of 20. You gain a +4 bonus on all saving throws versus diseases, and any diseases you incur are reduced one level of severity, with Mild diseases automatically resisted.

Level 2: As level 1, but your maximum System Strain increases by a further +2 to a maximum of 22. You are immune to all normal diseases.

Pathfinder

Even without navigation gear you have an instinctive knack for directions and safe routes of travel.

Level 1: Gain Survive as a bonus skill. You always know what direction you're facing. Groups you lead cannot Go Astray as explained on page 61, and gain bonus movement equal to two hours of travel without actually taking that time.

Level 2: Scouting a hex takes half the ordinary time. You're so good at choosing routes and muffling noise that your group is not considered Exposed even if you follow a road or drive a vehicle.

Road Warrior

You pair enormous natural talent at driving with a zest for highway bloodshed. This Focus benefits only the driver of a vehicle, and for sci-fi campaign settings it does not include starships or non-atmospheric craft.

Level 1: Gain Drive as a bonus skill. Once per scene, as an Instant action, reroll a Drive skill check. Any vehicle you drive has bonus hit points equal to twice your character level. You take no hit penalty for shooting from a moving vehicle and gain a bonus Main Action each round that can only be used to attack with a weapon while driving or fire a vehicle-mounted weapon.

Level 2: Any vehicle you drive gains a +1 Speed bonus. Allies riding with you suffer no penalty for shooting from a moving vehicle. Once per scene, gain the benefits of the ***Veteran's Luck*** Edge applied only to vehicle weapons or hits by weapons against the vehicle you're driving.

Robot Whisperer

You have an intuitive knack for dealing with robotic entities or AIs, whether diplomatically or otherwise.

Level 1: Gain Fix or Program as a bonus skill. Once per day, as an Instant action, reroll any social skill check made involving an expert system robot, VI, or AI. Gain a +2 bonus on all Reaction Rolls involving robots. Gain a +4 bonus on hit and damage rolls toward robots, and you can harm them even with primitive weapons or unarmed attacks.

Level 2: You have mastered esoteric override codes. Once per scene, as a Main Action, issue a command to an expert system robot that is no longer than two sentences. The robot gets a Mental save to resist at a penalty equal to your Fix or Program skill level; on a failure, it obeys that command for up to a scene, even if suicidal. VIs and AIs cannot be controlled this way.

Scrapsmith

You find use in the smallest fragment of salvage, and can build things far more efficiently and effectively than other technicians.

Level 1: Gain Fix as a bonus skill. Building devices from scrap costs half as much scrap as it normally would, rounded up. Once per game session, you can declare that you actually have any device, weapon, or object your skills and resources would have allowed you to make during recent downtime, though it costs no scrap and can't be larger than a suit of armor. Any weapon using ammo is fully loaded. This device or object functions until you use this ability again, after which it breaks down due to lack of maintenance.

Level 2: You can repair damaged weapons, armor, or personal equipment without needing to use scrap, and can fix a whole party's gear in fifteen minutes. When you break down an object for scrap, you get 50% more scrap from it, rounded down.

Shocking Assault

You're extremely dangerous to enemies around you. The ferocity of your melee attacks stresses and distracts enemies even when your blows don't draw blood.

Level 1: Gain Punch or Stab as a bonus skill. The Shock damage of your weapon treats all targets as if they were AC 10, assuming your weapon is capable of harming the target in the first place and the target is not immune to Shock.

Level 2: In addition, you gain a +2 bonus to the Shock damage rating of all melee weapons and unarmed attacks that do Shock. As usual, regular hits never do less damage than this Shock would do.





Skilled Combat Rider

You were meant to fight from beast-back. You can always find a horse or setting-equivalent riding beast with a week of searching if any are to be had in the area. This may be a self-broken wild mustang or an "acquired" animal. Only you can ride this mount.

Level 1: Gain Drive or Ride as a bonus skill. Your mount shares your AC, if better, and once per round you can take damage in lieu of harm to your mount. Any beast you ride counts as a combat-trained animal in terms of the mounted combat rules on page 50.

Level 2: Any beast you ride counts as a war beast for training purposes. You suffer no penalty for ranged mounted attacks. Your mount gains 10 bonus hit points to their maximum. These bonus hit points are refreshed at the start of each fight.

Slippery

You are remarkably hard to grapple or restrain, either due to natural nimbleness, flexible joints, or blind luck.

Level 1: Gain Punch or Exert as a bonus skill. You gain a natural +4 bonus on all rolls to resist grappling attempts and can slip out of any restraints short of a full-body straitjacket as a Main Action. You can make a *Fighting Withdrawal* as an On Turn action.

Level 2: As level 1, but you cannot be grappled against your will. Your Dexterity modifier increases by +1, to a maximum of +2.

Sniper's Eye

You are an expert at placing a bullet or arrow on an unsuspecting target. These special benefits only apply when making an Execution Attack with a gun, bow, or thrown weapon, as described on page 30.

Level 1: Gain Shoot as a bonus skill. When making a skill check for a ranged Execution Attack or target shooting, roll 3d6 and drop the lowest die.

Level 2: You don't miss ranged Execution Attacks. A target hit by one takes a -4 penalty on the Physical saving throw to avoid immediate mortal injury. Even if the save is successful, the target takes double the normal damage inflicted by the attack.

Spark of Brilliance

Whether a grizzled veteran who can still perform when the chips are down or a young prodigy with flashes of genius, you demonstrate sudden moments of superlative skill.

Level 1: Gain any skill as a bonus skill. Pick three skills relevant to your background or concept. Once per day as an Instant action, treat one of those skills as level-4 for the rest of the scene. This insight doesn't last long enough to undertake prolonged efforts such as gear construction or mod maintenance, but it's time enough for surgery or repair. Any time you advance a level, you may choose to swap out this Focus for a different one.

Specialist

You are remarkably talented at a particular skill. Whether a marvelous cat burglar, a natural athlete, a brilliant engineer, or some other savant, your expertise is extremely reliable. You may take this Focus more than once for different skills.

Level 1: Gain a non-combat skill as a bonus. Roll 3d6 and drop the lowest die for all skill checks in this skill.

Level 2: Roll 4d6 and drop the two lowest dice for all skill checks in this skill.

Strong Back

You can carry a remarkable amount of gear for someone of your size and strength, gaining special benefits in Encumbrance as explained on page 71.

Level 1: Gain Exert as a bonus skill. Your Strength is treated as 18 for purposes of Encumbrance. You can carry a downed teammate as if they were 6 points of Encumbrance, and it does not slow down your overland travel.

Level 2: Your Strength modifier increases by +1, to a maximum of +2. You can use your Stowed Encumbrance as if it were Readied, and it takes you no extra time to break open bundled gear.

Survivalist

You are a grizzled survivor of harsh environments and bitter privation. A lifestyle that would rapidly kill an office worker is no more than daily living for you.

Level 1: Gain Survive as a bonus skill. You can sleep without fire or shelter without suffering privation, barring midwinter conditions. A foraging party you are with rolls all foraging skill checks and results twice and takes the better roll. You can find enough food and water to sustain yourself while traveling normally through any non-desolate landscape.

Level 2: Your Constitution modifier increases by +1, to a maximum of +2. You sleep so lightly that you count as being awake for purposes of detecting danger or unusual events around the campsite.

Tinker

You have a natural talent for modifying and improving equipment, as given in the rules on page 30.

Level 1: Gain Fix as a bonus skill. Your Maintenance score is doubled, allowing you to maintain twice as many mods. Vehicle and gear mods cost only half their usual price or scrap requirements, rounded up, though experimental component requirements remain the same.

Level 2: Your Fix skill is treated as one level higher for purposes of building and maintaining mods and calculating your Maintenance score, up to a maximum of Fix-5. Advanced mods require one fewer experimental components to make, down to a minimum of zero.

Unarmed Combatant

Your empty hands are more dangerous than knives in the grip of the less gifted. Your unarmed attacks are counted as melee weapons when it comes to binding up opponents wielding pistols, rifles and similar ranged arms, though you need at least one hand free to do so.

Level 1: Gain Punch as a bonus skill. Your unarmed attacks become more dangerous as your Punch skill increases. At level-0, they do 1d6 damage. At level-1, they do 1d8 damage. At level-2 they do 1d10, level-3 does 1d12, and level-4 does 1d12+1. At Punch-1 or better, they have the Shock quality equal to your Punch skill against AC 15 or less. While you normally add your Punch skill level to any unarmed damage you inflict, don't add it twice to Shock damage. If using the optional Traumatic Hit rules, your attacks have a Trauma Die of 1d6 and a Trauma Rating of x2.

Level 2: Even on a miss with a Punch attack, you do an unmodified 1d6 damage, plus any Shock that the blow might inflict on the target. Your Trauma Die becomes 1d8 for lethal attacks.

Unnumbered Friends

You have an astonishing ability to find or make friends in the most unlikely places.

Level 1: Gain Connect as a bonus skill. Once per game session, when dealing with a group or organization, the GM picks someone among them as a friend of yours or one who takes a great liking to you. They'll do favors that don't expose them to serious danger or loss, and the friendship will continue unless you or your allies directly harm them or things they love.

Level 2: Your Charisma modifier increases by +1, to a maximum of +2. Once per session, spend an hour socializing with someone. They become your good friend unless they have a very good reason not to be, and will remain so until you or your allies betray the friendship.

Unstable Mutant

Your mutations are prone to shifting randomly over time as your body seeks a stasis it never quite achieves. This Focus is available only to PCs with the ***Mutant*** Edge.

Level 1: You gain one randomly-rolled positive mutation. This mutation is rerolled at the start of each month. Once per day, as a Main Action, accept four points of System Strain to reroll the mutation right then and there.

Level 2: When you reroll this Focus's mutation, roll twice and pick whichever you prefer. Once per week, as a Main Action, accept four points of System Strain and shift this mutation to any positive mutation of your choice. This change lasts one scene, after which it reverts to its prior roll.

Unique Gift

Your PC has a unique type of mutation, an exceptional human ability, or some experimental genetic modification that grants them some benefit that isn't covered under existing options.

This benefit shouldn't be a simple bonus to something you already do; it should be a power or ability that gives you options that you just wouldn't have otherwise. It also shouldn't be used to simply optimize an existing character concept, but instead should allow you to make a character who wouldn't make sense without this special ability.

It's up to the GM to decide what's reasonable and fair to be covered under this gift, and whatever they allow should be roughly equivalent to the existing Focus options in overall power. If an ability is particularly powerful or a mutation is especially draining, it might require the user to take System Strain to use it, as described on page 31.

As a general rule this ability should be better than a piece of gear the PC could buy. The player is spending a very limited resource when they make this Focus pick, so what they get should be good enough that they can't just duplicate it with a fat bank account.

Whirlwind Assault

You are a frenzy of bloody havoc in melee combat, and can hack down numerous lesser foes in close combat… assuming you survive being surrounded.

Level 1: Gain Stab or Punch as a bonus skill. Once per scene, as an On Turn action, apply your Shock damage to all foes within melee range, assuming they're susceptible to your Shock.

Level 2: The first time you kill someone in a round with a normal attack, either with its rolled damage on a hit or with the Shock damage it inflicts, instantly gain a second attack on any target within range using any Ready weapon you have.

Zombie Smasher

Whether through long practice or sheer bloodthirst, you are incredibly efficient at putting down the dead. This Focus is inapplicable to non-Deadlands campaigns.

Level 1: As a Main Action, kill up to six zombies of 1 HD or less within range of your weapon. If using a gun, expend one bullet or charge per zombie. Each use of this ability in a scene after the first adds one System Strain.

Level 2: Your attack roll against zombies always counts as a natural 20. You do an additional 8 points of damage to zombies on a hit.



Hit Points, Attack Bonus, and Saves

Combat at the end of the world is lethal. One solid thrust of a scrap-metal spear or squeeze of a rusty trigger are enough to send a novice survivor to their grave, and even experienced wasteland roamers need to fear an unlucky shot or an angry mob.

Hit Points

A person's nearness to defeat is measured in ***Hit Points***. When a target's hit points reach zero, they're either dead, dying, or helpless, depending on the kind of harm that brought them there. A full explanation of injury and death can be found on page 52, in the Systems chapter.

Novice survivors roll 1d6 to determine their starting hit points, to which they add their Constitution modifier. Thus, if you have a Constitution of 7, you'd roll 1d6-1 to find your starting hit points. No hit point die can result in less than 1 hit point, even with a Constitution penalty.

If your survivor has the ***Hard to Kill*** Edge, they can roll 1d6+2 for their hit points, again adjusted by their Constitution modifier.

Don't worry too much if you get a low roll. Every time you advance a character level, you reroll all your hit dice and take the better result. You'll get another chance to roll your hit points when you reach second level, assuming your survivor can live that long.

Attack Bonus

Whenever your survivor tries to shoot, stab, punch, or otherwise harm a target, they need to make an attack roll, as explained on page 32. This attack roll is modified by their ***attack bonus***.

For a novice PC, their attack bonus is +0. If you've taken the ***On Target*** Edge, then your starting attack bonus is +1.

Saving Throws

Sometimes a PC's fate is uncertain. Does the mutant viper's poison overcome them? Do they dodge the ruin's crumbling floor? These ambiguous situations are resolved with a ***Saving Throw***.

To make a saving throw, roll 1d20 and try to equal or exceed one of the four the saving throw targets listed below. Good attributes can help improve your odds of surviving a peril.

Physical saves are made when your PC tries to resist poison, endure exhaustion, fight off a physical effect, or withstand bodily suffering. You subtract the better of your Strength or Constitution modifiers from your Physical save target.

Evasion saves are made when your PC tries to pull back from a yawning pit, dive out of a grenade blast, catch a plunging comrade, or otherwise use quick reflexes to avert some catastrophe. You subtract the better of your Intelligence or Dexterity modifiers from your Evasion save target.

Mental saves are made when your PC tries to resist brain-affecting mutations, fight off mental effects, or avoid psychological harm. You subtract the better of your Wisdom or Charisma modifiers from your Mental save target.

Luck saves are made when only blind luck can influence the outcome of a danger, and your only hope is that Death is looking for someone else. No attribute modifies your save target.

Saving throws are made to avoid unusual perils or exceptional dangers rather than the usual hazards of combat, so they won't help you dodge gunfire or avoid being slashed open by a mutant wolverine. The GM will tell you when to roll a saving throw, and will decide what category it should go under.

Level	Normal Hit Dice	*Hard to Kill* Hit Dice	Normal Attack Bonus	*On Target* Attack Bonus	Physical Save	Evasion Save	Mental Save	Luck Save
1	1d6	1d6+2	+0	+1	15+	15+	15+	15+
2	2d6	2d6+4	+1	+2	14+	14+	14+	14+
3	3d6	3d6+6	+1	+3	13+	13+	13+	13+
4	4d6	4d6+8	+2	+4	12+	12+	12+	12+
5	5d6	5d6+10	+2	+5	11+	11+	11+	11+
6	6d6	6d6+12	+3	+6	10+	10+	10+	10+
7	7d6	7d6+14	+3	+7	9+	9+	9+	9+
8	8d6	8d6+16	+4	+8	8+	8+	8+	8+
9	9d6	9d6+18	+4	+9	7+	7+	7+	7+
10	10d6	10d6+20	+5	+10	6+	6+	6+	6+

Final Touches

Your survivor is almost ready to stride forth into the wasteland. Just a few final touches need to be laid on before you'll be ready to send them into the world.

Pick a Free Bonus Skill

Most of a character's skills come from their background, Edges, and Foci, but there's always room for a little personal development. You can pick one skill of your choice to gain at level-0, or at level-1 if you already have it at level-0. You can't pick a skill that you already have at level-1.

Pick Starting Equipment

The section on the following pages will let you know what kind of gear might be held by your starting survivor. The specific options you have will depend on the kind of campaign your GM is running.

Record Armor and Weapons

Now that you know what kind of weaponry or armor your survivor has, take a moment to record the total hit bonus for your weaponry. This is equal to your base attack bonus plus your relevant Stab, Shoot, or Punch skill, and the relevant attribute modifier for the weapon given on the tables starting on page 33. If two attributes are listed for a weapon, use whichever is better for you. If you lack even level-0 skill in the weapon, take a -2 hit penalty with it.

For each weapon's damage and Shock, note down the information from the table. You add your attribute modifier to both damage dice and Shock. Punch weapons or unarmed attacks can also add your Punch skill to the damage die.

For your PC's Armor Class, record the AC of the armor you usually wear. Unarmored humans have an AC of 10. Armor Class is modified by your Dexterity modifier, improving it on a bonus and worsening it on a penalty.

Choose Starting Languages

Characters begin with fluency in their home city or enclave's most common language and the native language of their particular local society or neighborhood, if that's a different tongue.

PCs also have fluency in additional languages based on their Connect and Know skill levels. Level-0 in either grants one more language and level-1 grants two. Thus, a PC with Connect-1 and Know-1 skills would start fluent in their native tongue, the city's common language, and four additional languages of their choice. Increasing Connect or Know skills later can allow them to learn one more language for each level they gain, as can spending a few months immersed in a culture.

Pick a Name, Goal, and Ties

Lastly, make sure your character has a name, a specific goal, and workable ties with the other PCs.

Your survivor needs a goal to drive them through the horrors of the broken world. Even if their ambition is nothing grander than a full belly and a safe place to sleep, they need to be willing to take risks and dare dangers to get it. Their goals may change over time, but they always need to be pushing for *something*. Apathetic or cowardly survivors who are determined to huddle around the enclave campfire aren't fit to be PCs.

Aside from personal motivation, the PC also needs to have some kind of ties with the other player characters in the group. Spend a few minutes talking with your fellow players and figure out why your PC trusts and wants to work with the other characters in the party. They may have prior friendships, family ties, or shared goals, but they need some reason to trust each other amid the perils of the new world.

Once this final step is complete, your PC is ready to face the wastes. Trust your companions, keep your spear sharp, and you might just last long enough to make your mark on the dust.



Starting Equipment

The equipment your new survivor begins with will depend on the kind of campaign your GM is running. Baffled survivors on the first morning of a zombie outbreak will not have the same gear as a band of young mutant tribals setting out into the wastelands for the first time.

With that being the case, the GM will tell you which of the following three beginning equipment options to use. Items are listed along with their usual Encumbrance burden, as explained on page 71.

Hapless Innocents

Inventory your own pockets right now. That is what your survivor has on their person. If you have car keys, your survivor has a car, and in it is whatever happens to be in your car right now.

With regard to other possessions, your GM will give you one of two options.

You're cut off. For whatever reason, you can't get back to your dwelling right now. Until and unless you can get back there, you've got to work with what you have right now and what you can immediately acquire.

You can go home. Your home is close enough to reach during the first session of play, and it contains whatever the GM thinks would be reasonable for a PC with your background.

This option is most suited to a sudden-onset catastrophe campaign, where the PCs are suddenly plunged into a disaster situation and haven't got the time to reasonably prepare for the event. There may be plenty of supplies available around them, but if the situation is too chaotic to allow for regular trade they may need to do some ugly things to get them.

Money After the End

Your GM will let you know if dollars, euros, yen, rubles, or bottlecaps are still valid tender after the collapse of civilization. The downfall might be so fresh that people are still accepting paper money for goods, but it's usually not long into the apocalypse before people start demanding more practical forms of payment, like food, ammo, or medical supplies.

The Equipment chapter of this book provides baseline prices for goods in ration-days of food, silver rounds, or whatever other default currency exists in your GM's campaign setting. Just because there's a price attached to it, however, don't assume that your PC can just saunter down to the market square and buy it. Even finding the goods at all can be a challenge in a ruined world, and persuading their owner to give them up can take more than a few MREs and a smile.

You Saw It Coming

You either foresaw impending trouble or you make readiness a natural part of your life. You may not be completely armed against disaster, but you have what you thought was most important.

You have the belongings from the Hapless Innocents option and any residential possessions that allows. You can also pick four choices from the list below.

Gear Choices	Enc
A heavy or light pistol and two loaded magazines, if ownership of it is legal.	1+1
A rifle or shotgun with two loaded magazines, if ownership of it is legal.	2+1
A non-military firearm of your choice and two loaded magazines, if you are a criminal.	?+1
A knife usable for utility or fighting	1
A fully-charged smartphone	1
7 days worth of packed preserved food	4
A kit with cooking utensils and a hobo stove	2
A well-stocked first aid kit	1
A two-person tent	3
Toolbox with hand tool assortment	3
Flashlight with 6 hour battery charge	1
Cold weather clothing and footwear	2~
A sleeping bag	1
A roll of $1,000 or equivalent in small bills	*
A fully-charged laptop computer	1
A pair of walkie-talkies and batteries	1 ea.
A solar charger and a set of rechargeable batteries; one sunny day to refresh them	2
A portable ham radio rig that your PC knows how to use, plus batteries	2
A lockpicking kit	1
A case of 20 disposable lighters	*
A bottle of 100 water purification tablets	*
One item or tool associated with your background that the GM thinks reasonable	1
Unremarkable backpack	1
A pair of binoculars	1
A water purification device that purifies 1 liter of water per half hour	2

~: These items have no Encumbrance while worn.
*: No Encumbrance for any reasonable amount

Wasteland Warrior

You're a hardened wasteland survivor who's been at this life for some time. You might be a tribal warrior setting forth on a new adventure, or a grizzled zombie hunter who's had time to pare their possessions to the essentials.

You get the following possessions automatically:

- A primitive melee weapon or a primitive bow and 20 arrows.
- A knife, backpack, sleeping bag, tinderbox, and three torches.
- One set of clothing appropriate to the local climate.
- 1d4 days worth of food and water

In addition, you can either pick one item or roll randomly for three from the appropriate table below. Weapon statistics start on page 78, while armor details are provided on page 76. Far-future PCs may get to roll a random high-tech item of loot from the appropriate table on page 94 if they pick that choice or acquire it through a random roll.



d20	Near-Future Survivor	Enc
1	A light pistol and two loaded mags	1+1
2	A camping kit with cooking tools	2
3	A hand tool such as an axe or saw	1
4	A plate carrier (AC 14)	1
5	A crowbar	1
6	A lockpicking kit	1
7	A pair of binoculars	1
8	A flashlight with 6 hours of batteries	1
9	A rifle and two loaded mags	2+1
10	A pair of walkie-talkies+batteries	1 ea.
11	1d4 frag grenades	1 ea.
12	A once-valuable piece of jewelry	*
13	Protective sporting gear (AC 14)	1
14	1d4 days of preserved rations	1 ea.
15	A first aid kit	1
16	A toolbox with basic hand tools	3
17	A semi-auto shotgun and 2 mags	2+1
18	A spare set of rechargeable batteries	1
19	20 meters of nylon rope	1
20	An item from your old profession	1

~: These items have no Encumbrance while worn.
*: No Encumbrance for any reasonable amount

d20	Wasteland Wanderer	Enc
1	A primitive bow and 20 arrows	2+1
2	Leather clothing (AC 13)	1
3	20 rounds of ammo	*
4	A first aid kit	1
5	A stack of 1d6+4 TL2 scrap units	1 ea.
6	A camping kit with cooking tools	2
7	A charged Type A power cell	1
8	An exceptionally fine clothing set	2
9	Lantern and 2 oil flasks	1+2
10	A suit of scrap mail (AC 15)	2
11	A TL2 melee weapon of your choice	1/2
12	A sentimental token of the past	*
13	A TL4 perpetual lighter	*
14	A toolbox with basic hand tools	3
15	A random high-tech household item	-
16	A random high-tech tool/hardware	-
17	A random high-tech art object/effect	-
18	1d4+2 days of fresh rations	1 ea.
19	20 meters of fiber rope	2
20	A shotgun and one shell	2

~: These items have no Encumbrance while worn.
*: No Encumbrance for any reasonable amount

THE RULES OF THE GAME



Some things in life are both obvious and inevitable. A survivor who falls off a skyscraper dies, a village without food starves, and a tech with no tools can't fix a broken circuit board. Sometimes, however, situations arise where the outcome isn't quite so clear, and rules are needed to determine a reasonable result.

This chapter contains the rules for *Ashes Without Number*. With the characters made in the prior chapter and the guidelines given here, a GM should have all the tools they need to handle the more common situations that might befall post-collapse survivors.

The Basic Systems

There are a few basic systems in the rules that every GM and player should understand. These particular systems come up regularly during play, and it can slow down the game considerably if they need to be explained too often. Some players may want to print out the system reference on the facing page beforehand.

Skill checks are used whenever the PCs are attempting some feat of skill that doesn't involve combat. When the PCs try to sweet-talk a village headman, wrench a defunct engine into turning over, or do something else that requires expertise, a skill check is in order. This section also describes those situations in which a skill check is not necessary, such as when the feat is something ordinary for a character's background or too uninteresting to merit the roll.

Saving throws are rolled when the heroes try to dodge some dire fate. Poisons, radiation, oppressive mutant mental powers, and diving for cover against an exploding grenade might all call for a saving throw. Not every misfortune allows a save; a spear in the gut must be evaded with efforts in combat, and not with an Evasion save. Even so, a GM can always call for a particular save to give a survivor a chance to escape the worst of some other calamity.

Combat is something almost inevitable to most campaigns, though it can be lethal for novices and scarcely less dangerous for more experienced survivors. PCs in After the Fall or Deadlands campaigns are often perfectly ordinary men and women, and they're going to need to pick their fights carefully if they mean to survive the chaos of a collapsed world. Even the bold wanderers of a Mutant Wasteland campaign often need to show discretion in their choice of targets.

Players familiar chiefly with more modern games are encouraged to give the combat section a careful read. The survivors of *Ashes Without Number* have nothing in the way of plot armor. Confident daring that might be perfectly appropriate to more narrative-based games can be fatal in this one. The post-apocalyptic genre tends to be unkind to the brash, and this game is no exception.

Using These Systems in Play

While every player is encouraged to read and understand the basics of the foregoing systems, a practical GM must recognize that the great majority of players will read and digest no more of a rulebook than they absolutely must, and often not even so much as that. A GM needs to know how to use these systems, and how to handle certain issues that are likely to crop up.

Be willing to translate actions into rolls. There is a certain breed of player who is fun to play with, engaged in the game, and a credit to the group… but quite unable to master specific rules. They may just not be very good at it, or they may have so little free time that they really can't afford to spend it studying rulebooks.

For players like these, just let them say what they're trying to do and then tell them what to roll. If they say they're shooting their pistol, just tell them to roll 1d20, see if they hit, and then tell them what damage die to roll. The player may or may not pick up the rules eventually, but you'll keep things moving quickly.

The GM decides what is rolled. The players always decide what their characters are trying to do, but the GM decides what they roll for it, or if any roll is possible or needed at all. A PC with Talk-4 skill may be great at persuading others of things, but they can't just decide that they're going to talk a bandit chief into surrendering and then reach for their dice to roll a skill check. The GM is the one who decides if a particular action is plausible, whether it can be accomplished by a skill check at all, and if so, what the skill and difficulty will be. A PC's manner of action might make a roll harder, or easier, or even omit it entirely if their actions are particularly apposite or hopeless.

The GM makes the rules. While this chapter has many rules in it, not all of them will be right for every game table. Groups will dislike certain rules, and forget others, and reinterpret a few more. Just because a rule is in this book does not mean it has to exist at your table. The GM and the group know best what kind of game they want to have, and if they think a different rule ought to be used, then they're probably right. Ultimately, the GM's decision about which rules best suit the group they're working with are final, and no contradiction in this book can make them wrong.

Lastly, ***hold these rules lightly***. If you can't remember a rule mid-game, then make a call that sounds reasonable and keep going. Spending five minutes digging through the chapter for an edge-case rule isn't as good as taking ten seconds to make a judgment call and playing on. There will be time to look it up afterwards and decide if the printed rule is better for future use in your game.

System Quick Reference Sheet

Skill Checks

- Roll 2d6 + the skill level + most relevant attribute modifier and equal or exceed the check's difficulty
- The easiest checks are difficulty 6, most are 8+, the most difficult are 12+
- Without even level-0 skill, take a -1 penalty if the skill can be attempted at all by the totally untrained
- Bad or good circumstances or tools can apply up to a -2 to +2 penalty or bonus to the roll
- Allies can aid with their own skill use at the same difficulty, granting a +1 bonus if any helper succeeds.

Saving Throws

- Roll 1d20 and equal or exceed your saving throw score to succeed
- Roll Physical saves against poison or bodily stresses
- Roll Evasion saves against perils you can dodge or duck
- Roll Mental saves against mental effects or strains
- Roll Luck against things only blind luck can forfend
- Creatures and NPCs have a single saving throw of 15 minus their halved and rounded-down hit dice

Injury and Healing

- A creature dies or is mortally wounded at zero hit points
- Minor NPCs, PCs with the Frail quality, or creatures hit by unsurvivable injuries die instantly
- Others are Mortally Wounded and die six rounds later
- An ally can stabilize the Mortally Wounded with a Dex or Int/Heal check at a difficulty of 8 plus the number of full rounds since the target was felled
- Stabilized creatures stop dying and revive in ten minutes with one hit point and the Frail quality
- Creatures lose the Frail quality after high-tech healing or a week of bed rest
- First aid after a battle heals 1d6 HP plus the healer's Heal skill. This can be done multiple times, but each use adds 1 point of System Strain to the target
- A creature's maximum System Strain is equal to their Constitution score, and if maximized they can no longer benefit from any effect or healing that would add strain
- A creature that is not Frail recovers their level or hit dice in lost hit points after each good night's rest and also loses one accrued System Strain point

Morale Checks

- A Morale check is rolled on 2d6. If it's higher than the target's Morale score, they rout, retreat, or surrender, depending on the situation and their overall discipline
- PCs never check Morale. NPCs do so when an ally first is downed, when half of them are down, or when shaken by some great reverse or terrifying foe.
- Regardless of Morale, only mindless, oblivious, or desperate foes fight on in the face of certain defeat.

Combat Rounds

- A combat round lasts about six seconds
- At the start of combat, each side rolls initiative once on 1d8 and adds the best Dexterity modifier on their side. The highest-rolling group goes first; ties go to the PCs.
- At the GM's discretion, each individual combatant can roll initiative and then all act in descending order
- On their turn in the round, a creature can take one Main Action, one Move action, and as many On Turn or Instant actions as the GM thinks reasonable.
- Main Actions are attacks or other activities that would eat up most of six seconds
- Move actions allow the PC to move 10 meters or do similar short, simple actions
- On Turn actions allow the PC to say a few words, drop prone, or do other reflexively simple things
- Instant actions can be taken at any time, even during someone else's turn, or even after dice have been rolled. Instant actions are usually special powers the PC can use or the result of holding an action in combat

Hitting and Damage

- An attack is made with a hit roll of 1d20 plus the attack bonus, weapon skill, and the weapon's attribute modifier
- If the resultant roll is equal or higher than the target's Armor Class, the attack hits
- A roll of 1 always misses and a roll of 20 always hits
- ***On a hit***, the attacker rolls the weapon's damage die and adds their relevant attribute modifier. That much damage is done to the target's hit points
- Weapons or unarmed attacks that use the Punch skill can also add the wielder's Punch skill to the damage total
- If using Traumatic Hit rules, roll the weapon's Trauma Die. If equal or greater than the target's Trauma Target, which is usually 6 for a human, multiply the total damage done by the weapon's Trauma multiplier.
- ***On a miss***, melee attacks may do Shock damage. If the target's Armor Class is less than or equal to the weapon's Shock value, then Shock damage is done. Thus a weapon with "Shock 2/13" does 2 points of damage even on a miss to a target with an AC of 13 or less
- The wielder's attribute modifier and any Shock-specific damage bonuses are added to the Shock damage done
- Shields negate the first instance of Shock that a target would take each round. The ***Total Defense*** action makes the target immune to Shock for the rest of the round
- A successful hit can't do less damage than the weapon's Shock would do on a miss



Scenes, Rounds, and Mission Time

Sometimes it's not necessary to track passing game time all that closely. If the PCs are just handling their business outside of a time-sensitive situation or pressing event, they take however much time they need to do whatever it is they're trying to do.

In other situations, it becomes very important to track the passage of time in order to know how long the PCs are taking to barricade the windows before the zombie horde arrives.

Scenes

A ***scene*** is a time measurement used to determine how often certain abilities or actions can be taken. Some mutant powers can be triggered only so many times per scene, while some class special abilities only function once per scene.

A scene is one particular fight, event, activity, or effort that usually doesn't take more than ten or fifteen minutes. A fight is a scene. A chase is a scene. A tense backroom negotiation is a scene. So long as the PCs are doing the same general activity in the same general location, it's probably one scene.

Most scenes don't last more than fifteen minutes, though a GM can stretch this if it seems logical. They can also shrink the time if the PCs are in some particularly action-packed situation.

Turns

A ***turn*** is a unit of time used when the PCs are exploring ancient ruins, plundering abandoned office buildings, or skulking quietly through the halls of a bandit-ridden post-collapse warehouse.

A turn ***generally takes ten minutes***, and is enough time for a party to carefully search a room, quietly sneak from one location in a ruin to another spot in the site, bandage wounds and loot bodies after a fight, or otherwise do one thing in a thorough and careful fashion.

A turn counts as one scene for the purpose of using mutant or class abilities. Thus, someone with the *Masterful Expertise* Edge could use it every turn on some roll of importance to them.

Rounds

A ***round*** measures a character's turn during combat or some other high-pressure situation, and ***usually lasts six seconds***. A single combat scene might cover numerous rounds of fighting until the brawl is decided.

Saving Throws

Terrible things tend to happen to survivors in a post-collapse world, but sometimes there's a slim chance to avoid a dire outcome. In those cases, a person can make a ***saving throw*** to avoid the calamity.

To make a saving throw, a person rolls 1d20 and tries to get equal or higher than their saving throw target. Sometimes a save might have bonuses or penalties applied to the roll, but a natural roll of 1 on the die always fails the save, and a natural roll of 20 is always a success.

Saving Throw Types

There are four types of saving throws. Usually it will be obvious which type is most appropriate for a threat, but the GM can decide in marginal situations.

Physical saves resist exhaustion, poisons, diseases, or other bodily afflictions. A PC's Physical saving throw target is equal to 16 minus their character level and the highest of their Strength or Constitution modifiers.

Evasion saves apply when dodging explosions, avoiding traps, reacting to sudden peril, or other occasions where speed is of the essence. A PC's Evasion saving throw target is equal to 16 minus their character level and the highest of their Dexterity or Intelligence modifiers.

Mental saves apply when resisting mutant mental powers, psychotropic influences, psychological trauma, and other mental hazards. A PC's Mental saving throw target is equal to 16 minus their character level and the highest of their Wisdom or Charisma modifiers.

Luck saves are used when only blind chance can save a PC, regardless of their native abilities. A PC's Luck saving throw target is equal to 16 minus their character level, unmodified by their attributes.

Thus, a first-level PC with a Strength score of 14 and a Constitution score of 7 would have a Physical save target of 14; 16 base, minus one for their level, minus one for their +1 Strength modifier, as it's the best between their Strength and Constitution. If that same PC had a Dexterity of 6 and an Intelligence of 7, their Evasion save target would be 16: 16 base, minus one for their level, and minus negative one for their equally bad -1 modifier to Dexterity or Intelligence.

NPC Saving Throws

To spare GM effort, non-player characters have simplified saving throws. They use only one saving throw target, which is equal to 15 minus half their rounded-down hit dice. Thus, a 3 HD NPC guard would have a universal saving throw target of 14 against all perils.

Skill Checks

Even perfectly normal PCs are capable, competent men and women who can handle the daily challenges of their ordinary lives. Sometimes, however, they are faced with a situation or challenge beyond the usual scope of their role and the GM calls for a skill check.

To make a skill check, roll 2d6 and add the most relevant skill level and attribute modifier. If the total is equal or higher than the check's difficulty, the check is a success. On a failure, the PC either can't accomplish the feat at all, bad luck cheats them, or they achieve it at the cost of some further complication. The GM determines the specific consequence of a failure.

If the character doesn't even have level-0 in the pertinent skill, they suffer a -1 penalty to the roll. In the case of particularly technical or esoteric skills they might not even be able to attempt the skill check at all.

Some checks might be suitable for more than one skill. A stone-throwing contest might use Exert for being an athletic contest or Stab for using a thrown weapon. In such cases the PC can use the best applicable skill. In other situations, a skill might seem peripherally relevant; Drive isn't really meant to cover repairing a wrecked vehicle the way Fix is, but it's got some bearing on jury-rigging a car together. In such peripheral cases, the check difficulty usually increases by 2, and the results may not be as good at the GM's discretion.

Difficulty	Skill Check
6	A relatively simple task that is still more than the PC would usually be expected to manage in their regular background. Anything easier than this isn't worth a skill check.
8	A significant challenge to a competent professional that they'd still succeed at more often than not.
10	Something too difficult to be expected of anyone but a skilled expert, and even they might fail.
12	Only a true master could expect to carry this off with any degree of reliability.
14+	Only a true master has any chance of achieving this at all, and even they will probably fail.

Particularly helpful or hostile circumstances might give a bonus or penalty to the skill check. As a general rule, extremely bad circumstances or tools would apply up to a -2 penalty to the skill check, while a very good situation or the perfect set of tools might give up to a +2 bonus to the roll. Usually, no combination of modifiers should add more than +2 or -2 to any given skill check.

When To Call for a Check

The GM calls for skill checks, but they should only be called for challenges that fall outside the PC's background and common experience. A PC with the background of a petty criminal should not be rolling skill checks to identify street drugs or to spot poorly-secured suburban houses. As a general rule of thumb, if failure at a particular task would make the PC seem incompetent at their role in life, then they shouldn't have to roll a skill check for it. In addition, if failure or success at a check really doesn't matter, if it won't produce some interesting result either way, then don't roll a check.

Even concept-related feats might require a skill check, however, if the situation is especially bad or the circumstances particularly hostile. That same criminal might have to make a Talk or Connect check to get an audience with a local crime boss, as it's not something in the ordinary scope of their activities.

Aiding a Skill Check

Sometimes one PC will want to lend a hand to another as they attempt a difficult feat. To do this, the player first describes what sort of action they are taking to help their comrade. If the GM agrees that their effort makes sense and would be helpful, the player then rolls a relevant skill check against the same difficulty as the original check.

If it's a success, the other PC gets a +1 bonus on their roll. Multiple PCs can try to help, but the acting PC can't earn more than a +1 total bonus.

If it's a failure, there are no negative consequences. A less-skilled PC can thus try to help without risking harm to the more talented PC's efforts.

The helping skill doesn't necessarily have to be the same skill the PC is checking. If a player can think of a way to help a Sneak check with Talk, then so be it.

Opposed Skill Checks

Sometimes a PC wants to accomplish something that another character wants to prevent. When two efforts clash, an opposed skill check is needed.

In such cases, all participants roll their relevant skills and the highest score wins, with ties going to the PC. To make the NPC's roll, check their listed skill bonus; they can add it to any skill check appropriate to their role or profession. If the NPC has no reason to be particularly good at the challenge, they simply roll 2d6 and add nothing.

In most cases, the relevant skills are obvious. A character trying to skulk past a vigilant guard would be rolling their Dex/Sneak against the guard's roll, while one trying to out-tentacle a mutant would be rolling Str/Exert. When in doubt, the GM decides.



Combat

Whether in a radiation-scoured wasteland or a camp full of desperate refugees, violence is a part of post-apocalyptic life. Even so, survivors are normal men and women with no predestined protection from quick death or lingering trauma. A quick recourse to gun or knife makes for a short career in the wastes.

Life or Death

In many role-playing games, combat is the basic pastime of adventurers. PCs tend to move from one battle to the next, exploring and negotiating with NPCs in between random encounters and setpiece conflicts that are calibrated to their own capacity for violence. If the PCs encounter a fight they can't reasonably win, it means they've done something foolish or the GM has failed to properly scale the adventure.

This is not the case in *Ashes Without Number*. Combat takes place much less commonly because the PCs and NPCs would very much prefer not to die. Billy the Skull Collector didn't get to be the boss of his cannibal raider band by inviting sucking chest wounds, and his minions are made up of those men and women who have proven most talented at not getting eviscerated by their prey. They aren't going to fight unless they think they can win, and can win without losing precious manpower. Ruthless or deranged enemies might be willing to shed their own blood carelessly or for a sufficiently grand prize, but most NPCs will not be starting any fights that seem likely to get them killed.

GMs should keep this general love of life in mind. No one who's made it this far in a broken world is going to be in any hurry to bleed to death, and combatants can be expected to think very hard about their mortality before firing the first shot.

The Risks of Violence

Combat in *Ashes Without Number* is on the lethal side even by common old-school game standards. If you're not playing a wasteland-heroic campaign and are using the optional rules for Major Injuries, it's entirely possible for a character who survives an unlucky gut shot to simply bleed out over the next few days, dying in camp for lack of medical care.

Campaigns with normal men and women as PC protagonists also often use the optional Stress rules on page 56, which add psychological consequences for violence and traumatic experiences. Even if a PC manages to physically survive a gunfight where half their friends died, they may not be in much of a condition to do anything afterwards until they've had time to deal with the event.

Because of this, players should be encouraged to remember the stakes of even minor engagements. They aren't action movie stars with plot-based protection from a horrific end. They're post-apocalyptic survivors, tough enough to survive the end of the world but not immune to a sudden, brutal death.

If players do choose to fight, they need to judge their engagements carefully. Unless they've been unlucky enough to be ambushed or forced into a sudden firefight, they need to do all they can to tilt the odds in their favor before they ever squeeze a trigger.

In this vein, a GM should be willing to give PCs easy victories if they've set things up properly. Murdering a half-dozen raiders in their bedrolls after sneaking into their camp may not be heroic, but it's the kind of tactic that helps keep PC viscera on the right side of their skins.



The Combat Round

Once the scrap-metal spears come out, a fight shifts into ***combat rounds***. A round generally lasts six seconds,and a full fight is considered to count as one scene for the purposes of tracking special ability usage or other abilities that can only be used once per scene.

The Combat Sequence

When combat begins, the engagement follows a set sequence of events.

1. If one side is completely surprised and not expecting any danger, their opponents get a free full round of actions before moving to step 2. People on active alert for danger cannot be surprised under normal circumstances.

2. Each side rolls initiative, rolling 1d8 plus the side's best Dexterity attribute modifier. NPCs usually have no modifier. The side that rolls highest goes first, and then the others in order. PCs win ties.

3. Each member of the side gets a turn to act. PCs can act in any order the group finds agreeable. NPC sides act in whatever order the GM thinks is reasonable.

4. During a turn, a person can take one Main Action, one Move action, and as many On Turn actions as the GM thinks is plausible. Instant actions can be taken at any time, even during someone else's turn or after a roll has been made. Common actions are listed on page 42.

5. If a combatant moves away from a foe in melee without taking a *Fighting Withdrawal* action, each enemy in melee gets a free out-of-turn attack against them as they turn and flee the fight.

6. Once every member of a side has acted, the next side acts. If they've taken losses or are facing defeat, they may need to make a Morale check to keep fighting, as explained on page 205. PCs never check Morale.

7. When all sides have had their turn, the round is over and the sequence repeats from step 3. Initiative is not re-rolled.

Making An Attach

To make an attack, spend your Main Action and follow the steps below.

1. Roll 1d20 for your attack. Add your base hit bonus, your weapon's relevant attribute modifier, and your relevant combat skill. Good gear or special situations may add modifiers

2. If your total equals or exceeds your target's Armor Class, you inflict damage. A natural 1 on your attack roll is always a miss, and a natural 20 is always a hit, if a hit is physically possible.

3. When using Traumatic Hit rules, if you hit, roll your weapon's Trauma Die, possibly modified by special abilities such as the *Killing Blow* Edge. If the roll equals or beats their Trauma Target, you've inflicted a Traumatic Hit, as explained on page 45. Most people have a Trauma Target of 6.

4. If you hit, roll your weapon's damage dice and add its relevant attribute modifier. Unarmed hits using the Punch skill can also add that skill level. If you've inflicted a Traumatic Hit, multiply the total by the weapon's Trauma Rating.

5. If you miss, and your weapon's Shock rating is equal or higher than their Armor Class, you still inflict Shock damage, as explained on page 44. Normally, only melee weapons have a Shock rating.

6. If you inflict Shock damage, it's equal to your weapon's base Shock, plus the weapon's relevant attribute modifier, plus any damage modifiers that explicitly add to Shock like the *Killing Blow* Edge. Shock never causes Traumatic Hits.

7. Subtract the damage you inflicted from the target's hit points. If they're reduced to zero hit points, they're either dead, mortally wounded, unconscious, or stunned and helpless depending on what kind of mayhem you inflicted on them. See the rules on page 52 for handling downed PCs and foes.

A successful hit doesn't always represent a direct impact on a target; it might be a glancing blow, a bullet that forces them to duck, or a tax on their luck. Lethal attacks that really do bring a PC down to zero hit points indicate an actual physical injury.



Actions in Combat

When time isn't of critical importance, a survivor doesn't need to worry about tracking individual actions. They can tell the GM what they want to do, and the GM will tell them how much time they need for their efforts.

In combat and other high-pressure situations, however, things become more tense, and time is usually tracked in ***combat rounds***. A person can only accomplish so much in a six-second round, and this section explains how to measure those frantic efforts.

Types of Actions

PCs and other creatures in combat or time-sensitive circumstances get a certain number of actions they can take each round.

Main actions include making an attack, using offensive mutant powers, manipulating an object, complex maneuvers, and anything else that the GM thinks shouldn't take more than six seconds to do. A combatant gets one Main Action each round.

Move actions allow the subject to move up to their full Move rate, which is 10 meters for a normal human. Some actions that are too complex for On Turn actions but not demanding enough for Main Actions might also be Moves, such as picking up an object or standing up from prone. A combatant gets one Move action each round, but can spend their Main Action as an additional Move if they wish.

On Turn actions are quick, simple acts that take no more than a moment of time and no real concentration. Speaking a few words, falling prone, or triggering certain mutant powers might all be On Turn actions. A combatant can make as many On Turn actions in a round as the GM thinks is reasonable; a quick shout is fine, but a lengthy soliloquy may not be acceptable.

Instant actions are responses so quick that they can be performed at any time, even during another person's turn. Instant actions can even be triggered after dice have already been rolled. Only certain abilities are Instant actions, like the *Veteran's Luck* Edge or the activation of certain mutant powers. A combatant can trigger as many Instant actions as they have available, up to the limit of what the GM finds plausible. If multiple Instant actions are triggered in response to each other they are resolved in the order the GM finds most logical.

Example Actions

The following actions are some of the most common that survivors and their foes will undertake while under fire. Other unlisted possibilities exist, and a GM should be ready to make on-the-spot decisions about what kind of action an effort will require if the PCs come up with something novel.

Make a Melee Attack — **Main Action**

The combatant attacks an enemy within melee range with a fist or Readied weapon, rolling a normal hit roll and inflicting damage on a successful hit. If the attack is unarmed, it can add the user's Punch skill to the damage roll, but not the Shock. Mutant claws and other body weaponry can use the Punch skill but do not add it to their damage. Most melee attacks inflict Shock damage on a miss, if the target's Armor Class is low enough, and no successful hit does less damage than the weapon's Shock would have done on a miss.

Make a Ranged Attack — **Main Action**

The combatant fires or throws a Readied ranged weapon at a target. The combatant can't *Make a Ranged Attack* with a two-handed weapon such as a rifle if there's a enemy armed with a melee weapon within melee range; it's too easy for the assailant to hinder the use of a rifle. One-handed ranged weapons and thrown weapons can still be used, albeit at a -4 penalty to hit.

Make a Snap Attack — **Instant Action**

A combatant with a Ready weapon can rush their attack, sacrificing accuracy for speed. The combatant must still have their Main Action impending or available. As an Instant, they can sacrifice it to make a melee or ranged attack against a foe, whether a snap shot with a bow or a quick thrust at an adjacent melee foe. This attack takes a -4 penalty to its hit roll. If multiple *Snap Attacks* go off at the same time, they are resolved simultaneously.

Snap Attacks are normally only possible for PCs and other very well-trained or talented combatants. If an opponent isn't significant enough to have been given a name, they probably shouldn't be using *Snap Attacks*.

Make a Swarm Attack — **Main Action**

Each assailant takes this action against a target in range of their current weapon, until up to four have done so. When the final participant has taken this action, one of the mob can elect to make an immediate melee or ranged attack against their target, gaining a +2 bonus to hit and +1 to damage for each other surviving attacker, up to +6/+3. This damage bonus does not add to Shock and it cannot drive the attack's damage over the maximum usually possible for the blow, but Shock from this attack always harms the target, even if they have a too-high AC, are using a shield, or have a Focus immunity to Shock. The sheer swarming numbers of foes are bound to inflict some kind of harm on the target provided they're not completely immune to the mob's weaponry.

Charge — **Special**

A combatant can make a wild charge before hurling a weapon or crashing into a foe, moving up to twice their normal move in a straight line before making a melee or thrown attack at +2 to hit. The charging attacker must be able to move at least 3 meters to gain momentum and suffers a -2 AC penalty for the round. Charging takes both a Move and Main Action.

Screen an Ally — **Move Action**

The PC moves up to their normal Move rate towards an ally and then physically blocks opponents from attacking them, provided they remain within 3 meters. Until the PC's next turn, enemies who wish to make a melee or ranged attack against the screened ally must succeed in a successful Str or Dex-based opposed skill check against the PC using the combat skill applicable to their weapon; on a failure, the attack roll is automatically directed toward the screening PC.

A PC can screen against a number of attackers in one round equal to their highest combat skill; thus, Stab-2 lets them block the attacks of two different attackers. PCs with level-0 or worse combat skills can't effectively screen. Multiple PCs can try to screen the same ally; in such a case, the attacker's skill check is compared against all blockers and the lowest-rolling successful blocker is attacked. PCs can only screen against foes and attacks they could plausibly physically parry or block with their bodies. Gunfire cannot normally be screened without high-tech powered armor.

Total Defense — **Instant Action**

As an Instant action, the combatant focuses on nothing other than avoiding knives, arrows, bullets, or other perils in the vicinity. Using *Total Defense* costs the user their Main Action for the round, and cannot be used if they've already employed their Main Action. They become immune to Shock damage for the round, including from *Swarm Attacks*, and gain a +2 bonus to their Armor Class until their next turn.

Run — **Move Action**

The combatant moves their normal combat movement rate, which is 10 meters for most humans. If they're engaged in melee combat with an armed foe as they take this action, they need to make a *Fighting Withdrawal* first as described below or each melee enemy gets a free attack on them as they turn and flee.

Make a Fighting Withdrawal — **Main Action**

The combatant disengages from any melee foes around them. They don't actually move away, but they can now move away from their assailants with a Move action without giving them a free melee attack as explained above.

Use a Skill — **Main Action**

The combatant uses a skill that could be plausibly applied in a few seconds. An Int/Heal or Dex/Heal skill check to stabilize a wounded comrade is one such potential use, as is firing up a car's engine, shouting out a stirring rallying cry to timorous NPC allies, or anything else that might be done in six seconds.

Ready or Stow an Item — **Main Action**

The combatant draws a weapon, extracts an item from their pack, digs a medical kit out of a belt pouch, or otherwise moves an object around on their person. They can Ready an item this way or Stow it, as explained in the Encumbrance rules on page 71.

Reload a Weapon — **Main Action**

The combatant reloads a weapon like a pistol or rifle with a Readied magazine or a quarrel from a Readied quiver. Modern bows and crossbows can be reloaded as an On Turn action, assuming the archer has a Readied quiver and Shoot-1 skill; otherwise it's a Move action.

Drop an Item — **Instant Action**

The combatant drops something they're holding. They can do this Instantly at any time to free up their hands.

Pick up an Item — **Move Action**

The combatant can scoop an object off the floor if they have a free hand, leaving it Readied in their grip.

Stand Up — **Move Action**

The combatant gets up from a prone position, gathering any dropped belongings. Most characters that have just been revived from unconsciousness must get up before they do much else.

Go Prone — **On Turn Action**

The combatant falls flat, forcing distant ranged attackers to take a -2 penalty to hit them. Adjacent ranged and melee enemies find them an easier target, however, gaining +2 to hit. The combatant's movement rate is halved while prone.

Hold An Action — **Move Action**

By choosing to *Hold An Action*, the combatant can delay taking the rest of their actions until later in the round, activating them as an Instant action. Thus, a survivor whose side wins initiative might use their Move action to *Hold An Action*. Later in the round, as an enemy rushes around a corner, he may Instantly elect to use his Main Action to *Make A Ranged Attack* with his readied pistol. If acting in response to someone else's impending action, the held action is resolved first.



Combat Maneuvers and Definitions

The basic combat and attack sequence cover most of what brawlers are going to be doing in a given round of combat, but sometimes the situation gets a little more complicated. When the party gets dry-gulched in the wasteland, a zombie grabs the slowest runner, or the team sniper wants to ventilate a marauder chief, the guides below can be helpful.

Initiative

When a side rolls initiative, they roll 1d8 and add the best Dexterity modifier among them. NPCs usually have no modifier, though the GM might give one to exceptionally quick or slow NPCs.

The side that rolls highest wins initiative, with PCs winning ties. Groups then act in initiative order, each member acting in the sequence the group chooses.

If a PC has some ability that allows them to automatically win initiative, they go first even if their side loses initiative. If two such boosted combatants oppose each other, they act in whatever order the initiative dice indicated.

While initiative by side tends to be fastest and simplest in play, some groups prefer to roll initiative individually, with each combatant rolling 1d8 and combatants acting in order from highest to lowest. As before, PCs win ties. This "individual initiative" option makes it less likely that NPC enemies will all get to go before the PCs, but it does make it harder for a team to coordinate their own actions.

Cover and Positioning

Prudent combatants tend to take cover during gunfights. The hit roll modifiers below apply in most such cases, though special situations are for the GM to judge.

When multiple penalties are applied for cover or positioning, use only the worst. Otherwise, penalties stack; trying to put a pistol round into a target who has half-ducked around a corner while his friend tries to stab you would have a hit penalty of -2 for half cover and -4 for shooting a pistol in melee for -6 total.

Situation	Mod
Shooting at a weapon's long range	-2
Shooting at a distant prone foe	-2
Attacking an adjacent prone foe	+2
Melee attacking while prone	-4
The target is at least half behind cover	-2
The target is almost completely in cover	-4
Making a thrown attack while in melee	-4
Shooting a one-handed gun while in melee	-4
Shooting a two-handed rifle while in melee	N/A

Shock Damage

Some melee attacks inflict ***Shock***, the inevitable harm that is done when an unarmored target is assailed by something sharp in melee range. Shock damage applies only on a miss in combat; on a hit, the weapon does its usual damage.

Shock for a weapon is listed in points of damage and the maximum AC affected. Thus "Shock 2/15" means that 2 points of damage are done to any target with AC 15 or less. More heavily-armored targets are immune to the weapon's Shock.

Assailants add their weapon's attribute modifier to Shock, along with any damage bonuses that are explicitly noted as adding to Shock. Damage bonuses that do not specifically add to Shock are omitted.

An attack never does less damage on a hit than it would do in Shock. Thus, if an attack that would normally do 4 points of Shock to AC 15 hits a target with AC 13 and rolls a 3 for damage, 4 points are done.

Combatants using a shield negate the first melee Shock damage they'd otherwise take each round.

Shoving and Grappling

To shove a target or force them back, the attacker must first make a successful melee hit, inflicting no damage, and then succeed in an opposed Str/Punch or Str/Exert skill check. If the attacker succeeds in the skill check, the target is either forced back up to 3 meters or knocked prone at the assailant's discretion.

To grapple a foe, the attacker must first hit with an unarmed attack, doing no damage, and then both must make opposed Str/Punch skill checks. If the attacker wins, the defender is grappled and remains that way until released or until they spend a Main Action and succeed in a new opposed check. An attacker can grapple only one target at a time, though multiple attackers can cling to one defender. In such cases, the defender's skill check is compared against all of their foes.

While grappling, neither attackers or defenders can move from their current location, nor can they fight with anything but unarmed attacks. At the end of each round in which a defender remains grappled, they suffer damage from each attacker as if hit with an unarmed attack from each foe grappling them.

If the attacker wishes to move the target, they must spend a Main Action and succeed in an opposed Str/Punch skill check. If they win, the target is moved 3 meters along with them, or thrown 2 meters and knocked prone. On a loss or tie, the defender escapes.

These rules assume both targets are man-sized. Grappling or shoving significantly larger but still humanoid targets is done at a -2 penalty on all skill checks by the attacker. Doing so to creatures only barely plausible for such wrestling is done at a -4 check penalty.

Dual-Wielding Weapons

PCs who want to dual-wield must have at least level-1 in the relevant combat skill; two pistols means Shoot-1, and a pistol and knife mean Shoot-1 and Stab-1 skills. When they attack, they must decide which of their two weapons to attack with; that weapon's modifiers will be applied to their attack roll and Shock rating. Ranged weapons expend ammunition normally for each round of dual-wielding, whether or not the wielder uses them for the attack roll.

Dual-wielding grants a +2 damage bonus on all hits on targets within range of both weapons; if using a knife and gun, this means foes in melee range, while dual pistols could get the bonus on anyone in range of the guns. This damage bonus applies only to successful hits, and not to Shock damage.

Managing both weapons is difficult, however, and all attack rolls made while dual-wielding take a -1 hit penalty.

Execution Attacks

Sometimes an assailant has the luxury of a completely unsuspecting victim. An ***Execution Attack*** gives the attacker the opportunity to take them down in a single swift strike, regardless of how tough and battle-hardened they might be.

A target is only vulnerable to an execution attack if they feel perfectly safe. A guard standing a tedious watch at some quiet post might qualify, but if she knows intruders are present she'd be too alert. A bandit chief surrounded by henchmen might feel at ease, but if shots have just been fired, they'll be too alert to danger to be caught sufficiently unawares.

If the target is vulnerable, the would-be assassin must spend a full minute setting up the hit. This may involve carefully aiming their rifle, drifting innocently closer amid a crowd, or watching their bodyguards for a moment of inattention. Any combat or other disturbance during this time will spoil the strike.

Once the hit is set up, the assassin can strike as a Main Action. Melee attacks automatically hit, regardless of the target's Armor Class. Ranged attacks require a Dex/Shoot skill check against difficulty 6 for point-blank shots, 8 for those at normal range, or 10 for one at a weapon's long range. A survivor can use the *Veteran's Luck* Edge with this shot, but it only allows a reroll on a failed check rather than a certain hit.

If the execution attack hits, the target must make an immediate Physical save at a penalty equal to the attacker's combat skill level. If they fail, they are Mortally Wounded on the spot, or knocked unconscious if the attacker was using a non-lethal attack.

If the save succeeds, they still take damage from the attack. If the Traumatic Hit rules are being used, successful execution attacks always count as Traumatic Hits, and the multiplied damage or Major Injury might well be enough to kill the target anyway.

Optional Rule: Traumatic Hits

High-powered weaponry and fragile human bodies do not mix. Sometimes, a particularly unlucky strike can inflict a ***Traumatic Hit***.

The odds of a lethal attack inflicting such a hit depend on the target's ***Trauma Target***. A normal creature's Trauma Target is 6; this can be modified by abilities or heavy armor.

Heavy armor and certain special abilities can modify the user's Trauma Target. For some weapons, this might mean there's no chance of inflicting a Traumatic Hit. Trauma Target bonuses from different sources stack, so a +1 from the *Hard To Kill* Edge stacks with the +3 from wearing a suit of powered vanguard plate for a final Trauma Target of 10.

Every weapon has a ***Trauma Die*** listed for it along with a ***Trauma Rating*** multiplier. When an attack hits a living creature, the assailant rolls this die. If the total is equal or greater than the victim's Trauma Target, it's a Traumatic Hit, and the total damage they inflict with the blow is multiplied by the Trauma Rating.

For example, if Bobby shivs an unarmored mutant and rolls a 6 on his knife's 1d6 Trauma Die, he's inflicted a Traumatic Hit. He rolls 1d4 for the knife's damage, adds his +1 Dexterity attribute modifier for the weapon, and adds an additional +2 damage from the custom monomolecular mod his friend installed on it. The total damage is 6, which is multiplied by the knife's x3 Trauma Rating for a total of 18 points of damage.

Non-lethal attacks don't roll the Trauma Die unless the attacker wants to do so, which turns the attack lethal.

Drones, vehicles, robots, and other large inanimate objects are immune to Traumatic Hits from weapons that could not plausibly inflict serious damage on them at the GM's discretion.

Someone brought to zero hit points in the same fight they took a Traumatic Hit runs the risk of suffering major injury, as explained on page 53. This applies even if the Traumatic Hit itself didn't put them down but they were felled by a later injury.

In general, After the Fall and Deadlands campaigns are very suited for the use of Traumatic Hit rules. Mutant Wasteland games might also use them, if the GM prefers to emphasize gritty danger.

Less-Lethal Attacks

To make a less-lethal attack, the assailant has to be using a weapon that could plausibly inflict non-lethal damage. Clubs, fists, shock prods, staves, or other weapons would be suitable, while combat rifle rounds would not.

Attackers striking to subdue a target this way make their attacks normally, but do not roll the Trauma Die. Victims brought to zero hit points this way are alive but unconscious, helpless, stunned, or otherwise incapacitated as the assailant wishes.



Examples of Combat

Samuel "Chimes" Benson is a former doorknocker for whatever local political campaign wanted to hire him. He had to run when the new provisional government started looking for "unreliable citizens", and now he's out in the Disputed Territories with a rifle and a price on his head. He's got very limited combat skills, with Shoot-0 being his only expertise, and as a 1st level PC his base attack bonus is +0. He's going to have to pick his fights carefully.

Cold-Blooded Murder

Chimes is drinking in a shabby tent, sharing a few bottles of rotgut with a pair of sullen raiders. One beds down in the corner while the other keeps drinking until his head finally nods to the table.

A glance at the bedroll shows the bandit on his back, sleeping. Chimes slides a screwdriver out of his toolkit, quietly rises from his chair, and leans over the sleeping man. One sharp swing puts the screwdriver through the man's eye and into his brain. He dies with no need for combat rounds, hit rolls, or skill checks, because scrambling a sleeping man's brain with a steel pick is seldom subject to the vagaries of chance.

Chimes pulls the dead bandit's knife from the corpse's belt and turns to the other. Now the only question is whether he can make this second death look like a suitably persuasive drunken brawl.

A Patient Sniper

Chimes has spent the last two days squatting in a hillside outflow pipe, perched on a small mound of trash safely back in the darkness. The sewage stopped flowing a month ago, but the stench is eternal. Chimes doesn't notice it anymore, his only interest being the cracked ribbon of asphalt far beneath the drain and the steady passage of raider traffic along the road.

At last, his prey appears. The electric-blue crest of Big Joanna shows in a cluster of laughing Devil Hog gangers sauntering down the road after a "tribute" run. Refugee slaves pull carts behind them, but Big Joanna only has eyes for her elegant new rifle.

If she were alert for danger, Chimes couldn't spend the minute he needs to lay her carefully in his rifle's sights, lining up the perfect shot on a wholly unsuspecting target. He sets his aim, chooses his moment, and fires.

As Big Joanna is not even contemplating the chance of danger, Chimes' shot counts as an Execution Attack. He rolls a Dex/Shoot skill check against a difficulty of 8 for an attack at normal rifle range and rolls an 8 exactly. Big Joanna's Armor Class doesn't matter for Execution Attacks.

The bandit boss needs to roll a Physical save or be Mortally Wounded on the spot. She succeeds, but this campaign is using Traumatic Hit rules, so that just means she takes a Traumatic Hit from the rifle. Chimes rolls 1d10+2 for the rifle's base damage, +1 for his Dex modifier, for a total of 10. He then multiplies it by the rifle's Trauma multiplier of x3, doing 30 points.

That's enough to drop Big Joanna, and since she was dropped in the same fight in which she took a Traumatic Hit, she needs to make a Physical save or suffer a Major Injury as well. She fails it, and the GM rolls 1d12 to see what happens to her. The result is 2, for lethal internal damage. It doesn't matter if her panicked crewmates manage to plug the hole Chimes put in her guts, she's going to die within an hour anyway. There are no emergency rooms in the apocalypse.

A Little Harmless Fun

Some strangers might have been a little careless with their opinions in the refugee camp bar, and now a lot of people are angry. Most of them are busy punching each other, but Chimes has caught the attention of a big bruiser with a cauliflower ear and itchy fists. Nobody's angry enough to kill, so nothing more lethal than bottles and haymakers is being thrown.

Both Chimes and the bruiser roll 1d8 and add their Dexterity modifier to determine initiative. Chimes rolls 1d8+1 for a 4, while the bruiser rolls a 1. Chimes acts first, as would his friends if he had any.

Having had a few drinks too many, Chimes thinks it's a good idea to throw a punch. He rolls 1d20 and adds his basic attack bonus of +0. He also adds his Dexterity modifier of +1, since fists use the best modifier between Strength and Dexterity. He then adds his Punch skill, except Chimes has absolutely no experience as a brawler, lacking even Punch-0. Because of that, he takes a -2 penalty on the hit roll, coming up with a final modifier of 0+1-2=-1. His roll is 7, which leaves his fist glancing uselessly off the big man's hasty block. Chimes' punch does no Shock damage, so he doesn't even get the consolation of that.

The bruiser is a good bar fighter, with a total attack bonus of +3. Being an NPC, he doesn't add statistics or skills to the roll; he's just got a flat bonus for every kind of attack he's logically be good at. His roll is 13; compared to Chimes' AC of 11, that's a hit. Because it's a non-lethal attack, there's no chance of a Traumatic Hit.

The GM decides that 1d2+2 is a good measure of the brute's bare-handed damage, and rolls a 4. Chimes only has 4 hit points, so that one clean punch knocks him flat on his back and leaves him helplessly dazed. The brawler isn't an unkind man, so he kicks the stunned adventurer under the nearest table before he gets stomped on by a careless participant.

Because the damage was non-lethal, Chimes is not Mortally Wounded and will come around in ten minutes with one hit point and a screaming headache.



The Last Stand

Chimes and his two friends Mona and Stinker got caught on Devil Hogs turf, a pack of gang thugs spotting them rifling through a ruined pharmacy's cabinets. The gangers offer to let the other two go if they hand over the man who sniped Big Joanna, but Mona and Stinker won't bite. Since they're not being cooperative, the Hogs decide to do things the hard way.

Both sides roll initiative, the PCs rolling 1d8+1 and the gangers rolling 1d8. The PCs win. There's only one open doorway out of the pharmacy, and the gangers are covering it, so Mona and Stinker grab a floor display stand and try using it as a battering ram to smash out the plywood covering a broken back window. Meanwhile, Chimes levels his rifle at the doorway, choosing to *Hold an Action* to shoot the first ganger who comes through. The GM decides that it'll take two rounds of smashing to break open the back window, since it seems the sort of thing that'd take more than six seconds but less than twelve.

On their turn, six gangers rush through the doorway and into the room. Chimes shoots the first one he sees, rolling 1d20+1 for the attack and 1d8 for the rifle's Trauma Die at the same time. The results are 14 and 6; a hit on the ganger's AC 10 and a Traumatic Hit against his base trauma target of 6. Even at minimum damage the goon would be at zero hit points, and as he's nobody special, he dies on the spot.

The rest of the gangers freeze for a moment as their friend is gunned down. The GM rolls a Morale check on 2d6, getting a 4; since it's equal or less than the ganger Morale of 8, they keep fighting. The raiders have used both their Move and Main Actions to move closer to the PCs, crossing 20 meters of ground and getting up in melee range with all of them, knives flashing in the murk.

It's now the PCs' turn, and Mona and Stinker know they're dead if they don't get out of here. With their Main Actions, both of them smash the plywood panel one more time and knock it loose. Both of them scrabble over the windowsill even as the gangers stab at their fleeing forms. Because neither of them had the spare Main Action to make a *Fighting Withdrawal*, the two gangers on each of them each get a free attack as they move away. Both of them hit Mona, gutting her as she tries to crawl away. One of them misses Stinker, but his knife's Shock rating of 1/13 still does 1 point of damage to Stinker's Armor Class of 13, and combined with the 1d4 damage from the other hit, it's enough to Mortally Wound him too. Both PCs will die in six rounds if no one patches them up.

Chimes is the last PC standing, and he can't use his rifle because the fifth and last ganger is too close for two-handed weapon use. He shifts his grip to club up the rifle and swings it like a bat as his Main Action; if he can drop this goon he can Move away without drawing an attack and get outside the building.

Unfortunately, Chimes has no melee-combat Stab skill, so his roll is 1d20-1. His 9 is just barely inadequate for hitting the man's AC 10, and his improvised club does no Shock damage, either.

Desperate, Chimes makes a break for the exit even with the man still standing. The raider gets a free knife attack on him and rolls a 5; a miss. The knife's Shock damage still inflicts 1 point on the survivor, but he's alive as he bursts out of the pharmacy.

The raider gunman posted outside squeezes off a shot, just like his buddies told him to do if that rat Chimes tried to run. With a roll of 15 to hit and 8 points of damage, Chimes' last thought is one of gratitude. After all, this is a faster death than the one the Hogs were planning to give him.

Optional Lethality Rules

Ashes Without Number is a relatively lethal game by most modern standards. However, for some flavors of the post-apocalyptic genre an even higher body count is needed. In other settings, a somewhat lighter hand on the gravedigger's shovel is preferred.

Ordinary Survivors

These After the Fall or Deadlands PCs are extremely ordinary, without even the minimal tools for survival that normal first-level PCs possess. They might survive to reach greatness but few will last that long. The GM might choose to use this optional rule for a death-heavy, desperate sort of campaign where new PCs need to be rolled up quickly.

When creating an Ordinary Survivor, stop character creation before picking Edges or choosing a starting Focus. These newbie PCs have no statistics but attributes, background skills, and the free skill pick of a first-level PC. Starting equipment is obtained normally.

After surviving one adventure, the PC can pick a Focus related to their survival experience. After another adventure, they can pick one Edge, and after yet another adventure, they can pick a second Edge. Only then do they start to earn experience points and become capable of advancing in character level.

Ordinary Survivors cannot choose the *Forged By Fire* or *Prodigy* Edges, as that degree of natural gift does not fit with the overall tone.

Fragile PCs

For some After the Fall or Deadlands campaigns, the GM may find high-level PCs too tough to inspire proper dread in them, even if the Traumatic Hit rules are used. With this option, even high-level PCs won't accumulate very many hit points.

With this rule, PCs reroll their hit points as usual at every character level, but only gain a hit die at odd levels. Thus, a PC with a 1d6 hit die would have 1d6 at first level, 2d6 at 3rd level, 3d6 and 5th level, up to 5d6 at 9th level. Any per-level bonuses to hit points, like the Constitution modifier, apply only to these hit dice.

Glass PCs

For some GMs, even the Fragile PCs rule isn't enough. These GMs are running games where every single bullet or knife is a potential life-ender for a survivor, no matter how skilled and capable they are.

A Glass PC who takes more than 10 points of damage from attacks in a single scene becomes Mortally Wounded, no matter how many hit points they have. They can take environmental damage or other hazards normally, but intentional attacks will always drop them quickly. Of course, most NPCs use this rule as well; this world is one where death comes quickly.

Sturdy PCs

Conversely, some campaigns call for more durable novice adventurers, either because the tone is more hopeful or because the group wants to be reasonably sure the PCs they've created will last for at least a few adventures.

A Sturdy PC starts with either 12 hit points or their Constitution score, whichever is higher. They still roll their hit dice as normal when advancing in character level, either replacing their HP with the new total or adding one hit point if it's equal or less.

Plot Armor

Some GMs run campaigns where the PCs simply aren't meant to die unless it's a narratively important moment. They may lose fights, fail in adventures, or suffer setbacks in their plans, but they won't actually die unless there's meaning in the situation.

Plot Armored PCs will somehow survive any bad situation they encounter, though they may lose allies, gear, or opportunities. If the party is ever completely wiped, some large stroke of bad luck will affect them or their friends, but they will still somehow come out of it alive and capable of continuing their adventures.

A player can "accept risk" as an On Turn action. If they do so, they can reroll all attack, damage, and skill checks they make that scene and take the better result. They become subject to normal death or Major Injury rules, however, until the end of the scene.

A player can "accept death" as an Instant action. Every attack roll, damage roll, or skill check they make for the rest of the scene is treated as the highest or best result possible, and they cannot be killed, restrained, or incapacitated for any reason for 1d6+4 rounds after triggering this. They *will* die within 24 hours, however, whether by enemy action, bitter circumstance, or the grim consequences of their courageous deeds.

Heroic Sacrifice

The post-apocalyptic genre is full of heroic personal sacrifices, and some GMs like to reify this trope in the form of a specific mechanical rule.

Whenever a PC or ally is killed or some disastrous event happens, a PC can choose to make a heroic sacrifice. They must explain how they could have theoretically averted the event, whether through a lucky shot, a flung body, a desperate struggle, or a sudden insight. The event is rewritten so that the PC accomplished that act, but they die as part of it or as an immediate sequel. PCs must choose to make a sacrifice immediately when the event happens; it cannot be done later.

For extra-grim settings, there is a 1 in 6 chance the heroic sacrifice turns out to be futile or fails to achieve its end.

Vehicle Combat

Combat between vehicles works much like personal-scale combat. Participating drivers roll initiative, gunners fire mounted weapons, and vehicles take hit point damage from successful hits. Even so, there are a few special qualities to keep in mind.

Vehicle Combat Sequence

Fights involving vehicles use a similar combat sequence to more human-scale brawls.

- ***Drivers roll initiative.*** Each vehicle is its own side in combat, with any passengers acting on their driver's initiative.
- ***Each vehicle's driver and their passengers act*** when their turn comes up in the round, in whatever order they choose.
- ***The driver must usually spend a Main Action maintaining control*** of the vehicle during each round of combat. If they can't and no one can grab the wheel in that same round, the driver must make a Luck save; on a failure, the vehicle crashes, while on a success merely halts.
- ***Each vehicle weapon requires a gunner.*** Somebody or something has to take a Main Action to fire a vehicle weapon. Firing unsecured personal weapons out the window takes a -4 hit penalty when the vehicle is moving.
- ***Vehicles have their own Armor Class***, applied to both ranged and melee attacks, and reflects both its defensive plating and its natural agility when driven at speed. This AC is increased by its driver's Drive skill when in operation. A stationary vehicle takes a -4 AC penalty.
- ***Some vehicles have an Armor rating.*** This rating is subtracted from any damage done to the vehicle. Even for unarmored vehicles, however, the GM is within their rights to decide that some weapons simply can't reasonably hurt the machine.
- ***Vehicles reduced to zero hit points by enemy weapons are destroyed***, as described below, and the passengers also take crash damage if the vehicle was in motion at the time.

Vehicle movement is abstracted, and it's assumed that all participating vehicles are close enough to shoot at each other. If one or more wants to flee, they use the pursuit rules on the facing page. Vehicles penned in by the terrain or enemy positions may need some fancy driving maneuvers to even get the chance to flee.

Vehicle Destruction

A vehicle that crashes or is reduced to zero hit points is destroyed. Any occupants take damage as if they were also hit by whatever took out the vehicle, with a Luck save for half. Thus, if a rocket launcher inflicted 18 points of damage on a car and blew it to pieces, the passengers would also take 18 points of damage, with a Luck save to halve it.

Vehicle Crashes

If the vehicle was moving at combat speeds at the time it was destroyed or goes out of control, the passengers also take ***crash damage***. Each rolls both a Physical save and a Luck save. If they make both, they survive largely unscathed. If they fail one, they take half their maximum hit points in damage. If they fail both, they are Mortally Wounded regardless of remaining HP.

Vehicles and Traumatic Hits

Assuming the campaign uses the option rules for Traumatic Hits, vehicles are immune to them from any weapon not specifically noted as being able to inflict them. In some cases, even that may not be sufficient; a GM is within their rights to decide that an ordinary anti-materiel rifle isn't going to be shooting out the engine block of a main battle tank.

Some weapons can reasonably inflict Traumatic Hits on a vehicle. Each vehicle type has its own Trauma Target, never less than 6 and often much higher.

A vehicle that takes a Traumatic Hit from such weapons takes the multiplied damage as usual, as do the passengers if the hit destroys the vehicle.

Vehicle Maneuvers and Ramming

A driver who wants to accomplish a stunt can do so as part of the Main Action they spend controlling the vehicle for the round. This is normally resolved with a skill check at a difficulty set by the GM. Checks made against a driver, such as an attempt to skid out of a vehicle's line of fire, may be made as opposed checks.

Ramming a human-sized target is generally only possible in confined areas such as narrow streets. The driver and target make opposed Dex/Drive and Dex/Exert skill checks. If the driver wins, the target must make an Evasion save or take the vehicle's maximum HP in damage, with a Trauma Die of 1d12/x3 for campaigns using Traumatic Hits. Ramming a vehicle also takes an opposed check, albeit with no Evasion save allowed. The ramming vehicle also takes damage as if the target vehicle rammed it in turn.

Ramming a horde of zombies inflicts 1d10 damage to both the vehicle and the zombie horde, unless the *Zombie Catcher* fitting is installed as described on page 91.



Mounted Combat

Campaigns set in modern periods are unlikely to have much in the way of riflemen on horseback, but Mutant Wasteland games not uncommonly include beast-riding mutant raiders or other mounted foes.

Mounted Combat Requisites

A would-be mounted combatant needs at least Drive-0 or Ride-0 skill and a combat-trained mount. The PC must also have some notional acquaintance with riding; a week or two of downtime training is generally enough for a PC with Drive skill to generalize their talent into riding animals, given the exceptional giftedness of most PCs. PCs without the skill or the mount can't effectively fight while mounted.

Types of Combat Mounts

Riding beasts fall in one of three categories for combat purposes.

Untrained mounts panic at gunfire, bloodshed, or predator attacks. The rider needs to make a difficulty 9 Cha/Drive or Ride skill check each round or the animal will flee that round. On a success, the animal acts as a combat-trained mount for one round.

Combat-trained mounts have been desensitized to gunfire and violence. They cannot attack independently, but will carry their rider as directed.

War beasts have been trained to fight in concert with their rider. They can attack normally on their rider's turn as their Main Action. These arts have long since been lost to most modern-day horse trainers, but mutant beastmasters may have revived the practice.

Mounted Combat Benefits

While fighting atop a trained beast, a rider can direct the animal as a Move action, allowing it to take its own Move, Main, and any On Turn actions it may have during its rider's initiative. If they choose not to control their mount, it acts on their turn as it sees fit.

Aside from that, mounted combatants can take certain special actions.

Mounted Attack — **Main Action**

You can make a melee or ranged attack at any time during your mount's movement. You gain +2 to hit with melee attacks, but -4 with ranged attacks.

Mounted Charge — **Main Action**

Your mount has to move in a straight line for at least its full normal movement rate before you can use this action. You make a melee attack with a bonus to hit, damage, and Shock of twice your Drive or Ride skill.

Mount/Dismount — **Move Action**

Get on or off your riding beast. At Drive-2 or Ride-2 skill, this becomes an On Turn action once per round.

Trample — **Main Action**

Usable only by war beasts. The mount moves its normal movement rate and makes one attack against each creature it passes through, up to once per Drive or Ride rider skill level. This movement is treated as if it were a *Fighting Withdrawal*.



Chases and Pursuit

Post-collapse survivors often find themselves fleeing from armed hostiles, whether they're an invading army, paranoid locals, or bandit marauders. In some cases the outcome of their flight will be obvious, given the circumstances, but in others a little finer judgment is required.

Foot Chases

One group can run from another whenever a moment's pause exists; when enemies have failed a Morale check, when patrollers suddenly come upon unexpected intruders, or when some distraction has bought the party a moment's inattention from their enemies.

- ***The fleeing party runs.*** The group member with the best Dex/Exert or Con/Exert rolls a skill check. The result is the fleeing group's pace, as it's assumed that they help and encourage the slower members.

- ***Other group members hinder pursuit,*** if they can think of something useful to do. Sometimes a skill check is needed, while other times a GM will simply decide it works. Each successful effort adds a +1 bonus to the pace, up to +3 maximum. Botched efforts are either unhelpful or apply a -1 penalty if they're actively harmful. If the fleeing group is made up of NPCs, it's the GM's judgment as to whether any of them try to do something clever to stall the PCs.

- ***The pursuing group makes a single Dex/Exert or Con/Exert skill check***, modified by the pursuit modifiers in the table below.

If the pursuers beat the fleeing group's modified roll, they catch up with them. If they fail, the fleeing party has escaped any immediate pursuit.

Foot Pursuer Check Modifiers	Mod
There are more pursuers than pursued	-1
The pursued have no head start at all	+2
" have one round's head start	+1
" have less than a minute's head start	+0
" have more than a minute's head start	-2
Who knows the local terrain better?	-2 to +2
The pursuit is half-hearted or obligatory	-1
The pursuers are enraged or vengeful	+1

Vehicle Chases

Vehicle chases work a little differently, as the entire group's progress rests entirely on the capability of their getaway driver.

- ***The fleeing vehicle runs.*** The driver makes a Drive skill check, usually modified by Dexterity. They add the vehicle's Speed rating to this roll.

- ***The fleeing vehicle does something to hinder pursuit***, if the driver or their passengers can think of something useful. Assuming any necessary skill checks are passed, the vehicle gains a GM-determined bonus to their roll, from +1 for most efforts, up to +3 for brilliant maneuvers.

- ***Each pursuing vehicle makes a Dex/Drive skill check***, adding their vehicle's Speed rating and any vehicle pursuit modifiers noted below. Any of them who don't equal or match the fleeing vehicle's roll fall behind and are lost from pursuit.

Successful pursuers catch up, and the situation likely shifts to vehicle combat until one side is halted, flees successfully, or surrenders.

Vehicle Pursuer Check Modifiers	Mod
The pursuer can't directly see the pursued	-2
The pursuer is flying but the pursued isn't	+3
The pursued is flying but the pursuer isn't	-3
A spotter is relaying the target's position	+1
Who knows the local terrain better?	-2 to +2
The pursuit is half-hearted or obligatory	-1
The pursuers are enraged or vengeful	+1

Hybrid Chases

If a group on foot is chasing a vehicle, they automatically fail unless the vehicle is somehow forced into tight confines, driven into obstacles, or otherwise hampered.

If a group in vehicles is chasing a group on foot, they'll automatically succeed unless the targets flee into buildings, narrow alleyways, sewer entrances, or other places that the vehicles can't go.



Injury, Healing, and System Strain

The end of the world is a bad time to have a sucking chest wound. Even so, PC survivors have a habit of getting into ugly situations like that, whether or not they're survivable.

Mortal Wounds and Stabilizing

A creature reduced to zero hit points by a lethal attack is dead or dying. Ordinary NPCs or unremarkable creatures will generally die on the spot. PCs and those NPCs important enough to have deserved a name will be ***Mortally Wounded***.

A Mortally Wounded creature is helpless, unable to do anything but scream, writhe, or lie unconscious. At the end of the sixth round after they were downed, they will die. They will die instantly if they take any further hit point damage.

An ally can attempt to stabilize a Mortally Wounded companion. Doing so is generally an Int/Heal or Dex/Heal skill check, one requiring a Main Action.

The difficulty for this skill check is 8 plus the number of full rounds since the target was downed. If the medic lacks a medkit, the difficulty for this skill check is increased by 2. Only one ally can try to stabilize a target in any given round, though others can attempt to aid their skill check, and a failed check can be re-attempted the next round.

Once stabilized, the target recovers with 1 hit point after ten minutes of rest, and can rise and act normally thereafter. They count as ***Frail***, however, and will remain Frail until they have had at least a week of comfortable bed rest. Frail PCs cannot heal damage through natural healing and will die immediately if brought to zero hit points again.

A medic can try to remove the Frail condition with a medkit, an hour's work, and a skill check against difficulty 10. They only get one chance to remove a given Frailty.

Natural Healing

A wounded creature can recover some measure of strength and vitality with a good night's rest. Provided they are fed, warm, and reasonably comfortable, a non-Frail creature will recover their character level or hit dice in HP each morning.

Frail creatures do not regain HP through natural healing, requiring a full week of bed rest and the regular care of a medic with Heal-0 skill and medical supplies in order to shake the condition. Those without this level of care must make a Physical save after a week; on a failure, they die in the next few days, while on a success, they need another month of recovery to lose their frailty.

Optional Rule: First Aid

In some campaign genres, it's appropriate for a battered wasteland wanderer to get back their strength by wrapping a few bandages around a limb and soldiering on. For these campaigns, first aid is an option.

By spending a few minutes tending an ally, a medic with basic bandages and tools can heal 1d6 HP of damage on a target, plus their Heal skill level. If they have no Heal skill at all, they roll 1d6-1 instead. Each such application adds one System Strain to the target.

One turn is enough time to apply as much first aid as is wanted. First aid can restore hit points to a Frail target, but cannot get rid of the Frail quality.

System Strain

A given human body can withstand only so much biochemical manipulation at once. Healing, mutant power use, certain poisons, some diseases, or even natural privation and hardship can all build up ***System Strain*** in a subject.

A character's maximum System Strain is equal to their Constitution attribute. Thus, someone with a Constitution of 13 could accumulate up to 13 points of System Strain. This strain is usually lost at a rate of one point for every night of good, refreshing sleep.

Healing often adds to a target's System Strain, whether as first aid or as the effect of some mutant power. If the target is already at its maximum System Strain, it can't handle the additional stress and gets no benefit from the effect or attempting healing.

Poisons

Most toxins force a victim to make a Physical saving throw to resist their effects or mitigate their harm. Weak perils might grant as much as a +4 to the saving throw, while dire threats might apply a -4 penalty.

If the save is failed, the poison takes hold. Most poisons act quickly, inflicting hit point damage, adding System Strain to the target, or applying long-lasting penalties.

A medic who gets to a poisoned person within a minute of the poisoning can use medical supplies to give them a better chance to resist. They may add twice their Heal skill level to the victim's saving throw roll, or +1 if they have only Heal-0 skill. Specialized antitoxins may be able to neutralize such poisons entirely.

Major Injuries

Usually, a PC who doesn't die from a mortal injury will recover normally once they stop being Frail. For particularly gritty campaigns, however, the GM may choose to use the optional Major Injuries rule.

Suffering a Major Injury

A PC will risk a Major Injury in two cases.

- If using the Traumatic Hit rules, they risk a Major Injury if they fall to zero hit points in the same fight in which they suffer a Traumatic Hit, even if the Traumatic Hit isn't what puts them down.

- If not using those rules, they risk a Major Injury if they're Mortally Wounded by a hit that does 5 or more points of damage more than they have hit points left.

If the PC is at risk, they need to make a Physical saving throw as soon as they drop. On a success, they're still Mortally Wounded but will suffer no extra consequences if someone can stop the bleeding before it becomes terminal.

If they fail the save, they need to roll on the adjacent Major Injuries table. Certain special effects or situations may add bonuses or subtract penalties from the roll. A roll less than 1 is counted as 1 and a roll greater than 12 is counted as 12.

Abilities and meds that stabilize a subject with a Major Injury can keep them from bleeding out immediately, but cannot prevent the consequences of the injury. A mutant healing factor may be able to seal a PC's guts back into his belly, but it's not going to regrow a liver in time to save him from death due to internal damage. Of course, if the PCs are using some hyper-advanced tech stolen from alien invaders or salvaged from a Before Times city, the GM may allow it to handle such grave injuries.

In the same vein, some campaigns with advanced cybernetics may allow a PC to replace a problematic organ or missing limb with something more serviceable. Cyber that replaces a destroyed or damaged body part also eliminates any penalty from the injury.

Injuries and Retiring PCs

If Major Injuries are used, it's not terribly unlikely that a PC might eventually suffer a crippling debility, or accumulate so many scars and old wounds that further adventuring is no longer a feasible option.

In this case, the PC should be allowed to retire to whatever outpost serves as the party's home base and a new survivor recruited. The new PC should be generated at whatever level and degree of wealth a normal replacement PC would receive.

Major Injuries

d12	Injury
1	**Instant Death:** Wrong place, wrong time. You're not coming back from this.
2	**Internal Damage:** You're dead in an hour if you don't receive difficulty 10 surgery and at least one dose of therapeutic drugs.
3	**Brain Damage:** You're in a coma. In 1d6 days, make a Physical saving throw at -4. On a success, you wake up with 1d4 attribute points lost in an attribute of your choice. Otherwise, you die.
4	**Eye Damage:** You're blind for 1d6 days. After that, make a Physical save at -4. On a success, your sight returns in 1d6 days. Otherwise, it's permanent.
5	**Gut Wound:** You're incapacitated for 1d6 days. After that, roll a Physical save; on a success, you take a permanent -1 Constitution modifier penalty. On a failure, you die.
6	**Right Leg Ruined:** You can crawl at best once stabilized. A crude prosthetic cuts your Move rate in half and applies a -1 Exert skill check penalty. A good prosthetic merely applies the penalty.
7	**Left Leg Ruined:** As above, but for your left leg.
8	**Right Arm Ruined:** You've only got one functional hand. Prosthetics may allow specific uses of your other limb, if properly designed for it.
9	**Left Arm Ruined:** As above, but for your left arm.
10	**System Damage:** The strain of your brush with death adds 1d4 permanent System Strain to you. If it puts you over your maximum, you die in 1d4 days.
11-12	**Just a Flesh Wound:** It's not that bad of a hit after all.



Disease

While violence is a dreadful specter during the collapse of a social order, it's disease that reaps the biggest harvest in times of crisis. In the absence of any organized medical services or functioning pharmaceutical supply lines, the sick and desperate are often left to a miserable fate.

The rules below offer an abstracted system for handling dangerous sicknesses. The GM might flavor the plague with specific symptoms if they wish, but most apocalypses have such a cocktail of plagues that individual diseases can be hard to distinguish.

Disease Checks

A disease check is made under the circumstances listed below. The GM rolls a die, and if the result is 1, 1d4 of the PCs have been exposed to a disease. The GM should pick a suitable plague for the occasion or roll on the adjacent table to find out what threatens them.

- Every day in a fetid swamp, charnel field, or other disease-ridden environment, roll 1d6.
- Every week in the wilderness, roll 1d6.
- Every week in a poor, crowded, dirty settlement, roll 1d6.
- During a major disease outbreak in a settlement, roll 1d4.
- PCs who drink untreated water roll 1d6.

Other situations might also call for a disease check at the GM's discretion.

Resisting Infection

A PC who has been exposed to a disease rolls a Physical saving throw. With all disease-related saves, the PC takes a -4 penalty if they are currently suffering privation due to hunger, thirst, or exposure.

If the PC succeeds, they gain 1d4 System Strain but throw off the infection.

If the PC fails, they become infected. Symptoms usually do not show up for 1d4 days.

Effects of Disease

Diseases are categorized into Mild, Severe, and Lethal strains depending on how likely they are to kill the PC.

Mild Disease: You are unable to recover System Strain and any Strain you do incur is doubled. Take a -2 penalty to all hit rolls and skill checks while sick.

Severe Disease: As Mild, but you are also unable to do anything but rest. If you take System Strain that would put you over your maximum, make a Physical save or die within 24 hours.

Lethal Disease: Your System Strain is maximized and you will die if you gain any more. You are incapacitated while sick, unable even to feed yourself.

Disease Types

d10	Intensity and Examples
1-6	**Mild Disease**: Cold, Fever, Strep Throat, Diarrhea, Back Pain, Allergies, Hay Fever
7-9	**Severe Disease**: Malaria, Dengue Fever, Typhus, Dysentery, Bubonic Plague, Yellow Fever, Cholera, Tuberculosis, Pneumonia
10	**Lethal Disease**: Pneumatic Plague, Ebola, African Sleeping Sickness, and aggravated cases of otherwise less-fatal diseases

Disease Duration and Recovery

After 2d6 days, the victim can make a Physical saving throw. If successful, Mild diseases end and the others become one step less lethal.

If the save is a failure, then…

- Mild diseases linger another 2d6 days before ending.
- Severe diseases last another 2d6 days. If the save is failed twice, the victim dies 1d4 days later.
- Lethal diseases kill the victim in 1d4 days.

Medical Intervention

A skilled medic can help a victim overcome a disease. Even without the help of advanced pharmaceuticals or a proper medical facility, a medic can add their Heal skill as a bonus to any saving throws made by those under their care. If multiple healers attend the same patient, only the best Heal skill among them is used.

If a victim has failed a Physical save, a medic can expend one dose of antibiotics to allow them to reroll the save. Common antibiotics can help Mild or Severe diseases, while powerful ones are needed for Lethal cases. This medication can be applied a number of times per patient equal to the medic's Heal skill, to a minimum of once. Multiple doses can be used to allow multiple rerolls on the same failed save.

A medic can generally tend up to ten patients at once. With at least one nursing helper, they can handle twenty. With an actual hospital and staff, each physician can handle forty.

Radiation

Zones of invisible death are a peril in any Mutant Wasteland, and some near-future campaigns involve rains of fire from the sky. Depending on the tone of your campaign, radiation may range from an insidious killer to a source of strange new mutant powers.

Radiation Sickness

When a PC is exposed to radiation, they must make a Physical save. The interval between saves depends on the strength of the radiation and the quality of any protective gear they may be wearing. Gear usually increases the interval between radiation saves; intervals greater than once per day can be ignored for stays of less than a week or so.

On a successful save, the PC gains 1d4 System Strain. If this would push them above their maximum, they instead fail the saving throw.

On an unsuccessful save, the PC loses 1d6 points of Constitution as they begin to feel nauseous and headachey. Any excess points of System Strain are also lost, but maximum HP may be reduced.

If the PC escapes the radiation zone before their Constitution drops below 3, they can recover lost Constitution points at a rate of one per day of complete rest and competent medical care, often suffering skin blotching, orifice bleeding, and hair loss in the process.

Radiation Saving Throw Rates

Intensity	Save
Mildly irradiated wasteland	1/day
Near nuclear impact point	1/hour
Near unshielded rad source	1/minute
Near strong unshielded source	1/round

Radiation burns will manifest in 3d10 days, but will heal if the patient lives that long.

If the PC's Constitution drops below 3, they are going to die in 3d12 hours. They may feel relatively fine during this period, but they will inevitably collapse and die unless treated with TL4 medical care or other super-science anti-radioactive medicines.

Optional Rule: Rad Mutation

For some Mutant Wasteland campaigns, it's appropriate for heavy radiation sources to potentially further mutate PCs and other living creatures. For these games, an optional rule can be used.

On a natural 20 radiation save, the PC gains a new random positive mutation. ***On a natural 1***, they instead suffer a new random negative mutation. Mutations gained this way cannot conflict with or spoil existing positive or negative mutations; reroll any result that would do so.



Stress

The world may be ending and chaos may run riot in the streets, but PCs from a peaceful modern culture are still subject to the instincts of their background. Acts of murderous violence, ruthless theft, and wholesale lawbreaking are still going to be emotionally difficult for such characters until they become hardened to the new reality of their world. Such emotional calluses often come at a cost.

These rules are meant for Deadlands or After the Fall campaigns featuring "normal" men and women, people from peaceful societies thrust into fundamentally terrible situations. Zombie apocalypses, widespread civil disorder, budding civil wars, or sudden invasion zones might all present these people with situations they'd never thought they'd encounter and decisions they never imagined they'd have to make. Stress is a mechanism to help player characters take into account the natural limits and hesitations these PCs would have, and how few of them would immediately leap into action as cold-blooded killers and ruthless raiders.

Mutant Wastelands campaigns and such other post-post-apocalyptic settings usually aren't a good fit for these rules. In those settings, PCs have probably already been faced with numerous situations where moral qualms would be suicidal, or have been raised in societies where casual violence and brutal plunder are normal behaviors. Tables that prefer to just freehand their moral degeneration in the wake of societal collapse might also choose to omit these rules.

Gaining Stress

When the party does or experiences something that is fundamentally repugnant or horrifying to people from their culture or background, every PC involved in the act gains one or more points of ***Stress*** at the end of the scene. The adjacent table lists some of the actions or events that might reasonably create Stress in a PC.

For combat-related Stress, it's applied to all PCs who actively participated in the fight. A PC who never fires his pistol might escape the guilt of gunning down a half-dozen ragged bandits, but if he blazes away and misses he's just as culpable in the Stress.

The GM might also apply Stress for other actions that are drastically contrary to a PC's normal moral compass. A player should be warned beforehand if they're about to do something that will weigh on them.

Stress is gained at the end of a scene, after the PCs have finished doing whatever it was that is about to traumatize them. In the heat of the moment, a PC can perform great enormities without breaking down; it's only after the reality sinks in that Stress starts to take its toll.

Gaining Stress	Stress
Killing another human being	2
- and it's your first kill	+1d6
- killing more than one in the scene	+1
- they were not threatening your life	+2
- they were helpless or non-violent	+2
A friend is Mortally Wounded	1
- and then dies	+2
You are Mortally Wounded	2
- and suffer a Major Injury	+2
You steal valuables from a non-enemy	1
- they'll probably die without it	+1
You witness a massacre site or atrocity	1
You commit an act of great cruelty	1 to 3
You suffer hunger or great privation	2/week

Losing Stress	Stress
Spend a day resting in a safe, familiar place, well-fed and comfortable.	-1
An evening of heavy drinking, feasting, or indulgence, gaining 1 System Strain instead of recovering any.	-1
Once per day, talk to a friend for an hour, who must make a Cha or Wis/Heal or Lead skill check against difficulty 9. On a success, lose 1 Stress. On a failure, *they* gain 1 Stress.	+/-1
Accomplish a major personal goal or community purpose, justifying the suffering. This must be a task worth at least one adventure to accomplish it.	-1d10

Losing Stress

Getting rid of Stress takes time. A survivor needs to come to terms with what they did, or drive it far enough out of their mind that they need no longer be distracted by the memory.

The table above gives four common ways of diminishing a PC's Stress. Lengthy periods spent in secure peace and quiet can help calm a survivor's heart, as can talking with a friend, drinking away the memory, or accomplishing some personal goal that helps justify all the terrible things that happened. Other means of shedding Stress might also be allowed if the GM thinks something would legitimately help.

Breakdowns

A PC can accumulate only so much Stress before there are consequences. When accumulated Stress exceeds the PC's Wisdom score they are in danger of a ***Breakdown***. When a new dose of Stress raises the total above their Wisdom score, they must make a Mental save at a -2 penalty at the end of the scene in which they gained the stress.

If they succeed, they hold it together. They might have nightmares, inappropriate emotional reactions, or a sudden craving for a stiff drink, but they suffer no mechanical penalties for their condition. Until they bring their Stress down to equal or less than their Wisdom score, however, each additional Breakdown check takes a further stacking -2 save penalty. Thus, the next one will be at -4, then -6, and so forth until they lower their Stress or suffer a Breakdown.

If they fail, they undergo a Breakdown. The PC can pick one of the following Breakdowns based on the nature of their Stress. While a Breakdown is in effect, a PC does not gain more Stress regardless of what happens. Breakdowns end when Stress is reduced to equal or less than the PC's Wisdom score.

Deathwish: You become utterly negligent of your own life and health. You cannot willingly retreat from combat and your maximum hit point total is decreased by 2 points per character level due to your recklessness, to a minimum of 1 HP per level.

Withdrawal: You draw into yourself and refuse to acknowledge the situation, taking refuge in calming thoughts and soothing delusions. You can fight only to defend your own life. You cannot do anything that would require a skill check, but can handle simple tasks.

Indulgence: You desperately seek solace in food, drugs, or other pleasures. You will eat or consume all food or recreational drugs you can obtain as quickly as physically possible and will spend all of your time in self-indulgent behaviors unless herded by your teammates. You can fight only to save your own life and make all skill checks at a -2 penalty. You cannot refuse a proffered drug or other indulgence while the Breakdown is in effect.

Cowardice: You are overwhelmed by the fear of death. You cannot fight and will flee or hide from all combat and other significant physical perils, and will do whatever you must to avoid danger or harm.

Confusion: You are dazed and horrified by what has happened, and can think only of the events that inspired this Breakdown. You cannot act on your own initiative; you must be told to do things by someone you trust, after which you may choose to carry out their request normally for up to a scene before your thoughts drown you again.

Stress and Hardening

However tender a PC's sensibilities, repeated brutal contact with necessity is apt to numb them over time. Unthinkable acts become all too easy to bear.

Whenever a PC would suffer a Breakdown, they may instead choose to become ***Hardened***. They give up something of their past self in exchange for coming to terms with what they've done, justifying it in whatever way they wish. Hardening has three effects.

1. The PC's Stress immediately drops to zero.
2. They ignore the first point of Stress they would normally gain in future scenes.
3. They choose a psychic scar to gain, explaining how it relates to their past actions.

It is possible for a PC to become Hardened multiple times, looping back to zero Stress each time, ignoring one additional point of Stress each scene, and adding one more psychic scar. A sufficiently callous PC might eventually hardly take Stress at all after becoming Hardened two or three times, though the psychic toll it will exact on them will be dear.

Psychic Scars

When a PC becomes Hardened, they can pick a scar from the list below and explain how they use it to cope with their past actions. A given scar can generally only be chosen once. New psychic scars might be developed by the GM or suggested by the player.

Self-Destructive: You've seen a lot of people die. You know your turn is coming, and maybe you deserve it. Your hit die takes a -2 penalty, to a minimum of 1 hit point per die. Your current maximum HP decrease by 2 points per character level.

Addicted: You're addicted to booze, recreational drugs, or unhealthy habits. Pick an appropriate addiction, gaining the benefits as noted on page 58 as well as ignoring the point of Stress granted by this psychic scar. You can change your addiction, but you can never shake it entirely.

Self-Doubting: You weren't good enough to escape doing what you did. You couldn't figure out another way. Your skills aren't enough to save you from this world. You automatically fail any skill check if you roll a natural 12 on the dice. Reroll abilities cannot save this check.

Loner: It's better if you don't get close to anyone. You can still function as part of the party, but you automatically fail all Lead skill checks, you cannot have henchmen or followers, and you suffer a -2 penalty to all other social skill checks not revolving around intimidation or hostility. You can't talk or listen to others to reduce Stress.





Nightmares: They don't happen every night, but they happen often enough that sleep is no friend. Your Constitution modifier decreases by 1, to a minimum of -2, affecting your maximum hit points. You also suffer a -2 penalty on all saving throws.

Delusional: You believe something that fundamentally isn't so, but that would justify or redeem your actions if it was true. You cannot be shaken in this belief, twisting every fact and observation into further confirmation of it. Your clouded reason results in a permanent loss of 3 Wisdom points, to a minimum of 3.

Bloodthirsty: Leaving live enemies behind you is sure to get you killed, so you make sure that doesn't happen. You cannot fight non-lethally and will kill any prisoners or surrendered foes if left alone with them. You don't gain any Stress from killing people, but any form of Stress recovery has a flat 50% chance of not working on any given occasion.

Penitent: You're not going to bloody your hands again. You can endure the violence of your allies, but you cannot personally, directly kill anyone, for any reason. If you do so, your Stress increases to two points more than your Wisdom score, you suffer a Breakdown, and you must trade this psychic scar for another. You can never choose this scar again after breaking its taboo.

Dependent: Your friends understand. They're the only ones who could. Your Hardening doesn't stop you from gaining Stress when your friends or party-mates are Mortally Wounded, and if one dies, you gain an additional 1d6 Stress. Your Charisma score decreases by 3 points as your self-reliance frays, to a minimum of 3.

Once Hardened, a PC can't go back. While it might be possible to shed a scar with sufficient time, security, and calm to adjust back to normal life, those conditions are extremely unlikely to obtain in the world the PCs live in. PCs who choose to become Hardened cannot change their psychic scars or undo the process later.

Addiction and Recovery

There are numerous possible reasons for a PC to fall prey to an addiction, but in the wreckage of a ruined world the most common reason is simple psychological strain. The instant mental relief of a hit, a drink, or a warm body can be desperately desired after enduring the horrors of the new world around them.

Addiction rules are usually only relevant when the campaign uses Stress rules. Without that factor driving them, few PCs have any reason to overindulge.

Becoming Addicted

A PC can resist addiction for as long as they choose to do so, even after using addictive substances repeatedly. The GM may insist on a habit if the PC constantly uses a drug, but normally it's up to the player as to whether or not their character takes permanent refuge in chemical relief.

Costs of Addiction

While addicted, a PC must spend at least an hour a day indulging in their vice, using one dose of their drug of choice. If they have multiple addictions, they need to spend multiple hours satisfying them. If their addiction involves a partner, they must make a Mental save after each day's indulgence; on a failure, that partner is no longer interesting, and can no longer serve to sate their hungers.

A PC can fight in self-defense if interrupted during their indulgence, but is otherwise useless.

Consequences of Sobriety

A PC who spends a day without indulging suffers privation. They cannot recover System Strain, hit points, or other resources with a night's rest and gain one point of Stress from their lack that is not negated by Hardening or other sources of Stress resistance.

Effects of Addiction

A PC who is constantly taking refuge in their indulgences more easily ignores the horrors around them. Each addiction decreases any incoming Stress by 1 point and automatically eliminates 1d4 points of Stress each day when the addiction is indulged. Multiple addictions provide stacking benefits.

They also come at a cost. After each month of addiction, the PC must make a Physical save. On a failure, they gain one point of System Strain that can't be lost while still addicted. If this would put them over their maximum, they've a month to get clean or die.

Breaking an Addiction

A PC who wants to get clean must strictly avoid all their addictions, suffering the daily penalties for their lack. After each week of denial, they can make a Physical or Mental save to shed the addiction. If attended by someone, they can add the medic's Heal skill to their saving throw roll.



Tracking

It's not uncommon for PCs to want to follow a band of marauders or hide their own trail from a swarm of pursuing mutants. For those situations, the rules in this section can be used as guidelines.

A tracking skill roll is normally a Wis/Survive skill check that takes a minute or two of examining an area for traces of passage. The difficulty of the check depends on the type of quarry being chased and the time since they last passed through an area.

On a successful check, the tracker picks up the trail and can follow it at half their usual overland speed, as they need to stop now and then to make certain that they're still on the right track. A hurried pursuer can move at full speed in a pinch, though this increases the tracking difficulty.

Some situations might force a tracker to make a fresh skill check if the trail is intentionally disrupted by the target, such as walking up or downstream in a creek, marching over concrete or asphalt that doesn't take tracks well, or other such tricks.

Trackers also need to make a fresh check each morning of a continuing pursuit. The difficulty may rise over time as the trail they're following gets older, until they finally catch up with their quarry.

Parties that are actively trying to throw off trackers lose an hour of travel time each day, but can add their best Survive skill or relevant NPC skill modifier to the tracking difficulty.

Tracking Situation	Diff.
They were here within the last hour	8
They were here within the last day	10
They were here within the last week	12
The trail is more than a week old	N/A
Targets are wholly ignorant of trailcraft	-2
They are actively hiding their trail	+Skill lvl.
The trackers have trained dogs	-2
Only one or two beings are tracked	+2
A party of a half-dozen or so is hunted	+0
About a dozen subjects are followed	-2
Vehicles or large groups are tracked	-4
Trackers are following at full speed	+2

Overland Travel and Scouting

Travel after the end is no longer an easy matter of safe roads and good maps. A simple journey to the next settlement can be the death of an unprepared party, and foul things wait beyond the light of homely fires. Even once-familiar streets and ordinary towns can become deathtraps for wayfarers who refuse to respect the new dangers of the age.

Hexes and Terrain

For convenience, maps are assumed to be gridded in five-kilometer hexes. Each hex has a predominant terrain type recorded on the map, though roads or rivers may pass through it.

Exposed and Stealthy Travel

PCs are assumed to travel in a stealthy fashion, keeping off ridge lines, avoiding open spaces, and staying away from roads and other ambush points.

PCs who want the convenience of an easy road march, who need to drive vehicles, or who are in too much of a hurry to be sneaky are considered ***Exposed***. Exposed parties have a higher chance of random encounters and will be spotted first by those they meet.

The Travel Day

The amount of time a party can travel each day depends on the general toughness and field experience of the group, but most PCs can be expected to harden up rapidly under the demands of the post-apocalypse.

- Most PC groups can travel for up to ten hours per day, assuming they're adequately dressed and reasonably hardened to hiking. Exceptionally poorly-outfitted or soft PCs might lose 1 to 4 hours of travel time until they get used to it or find suitable boots and gear.

- PCs can choose to make a forced march when beginning their day. They're counted as Exposed for the day and will take recovery penalties that night, but can travel an extra four hours.

The balance of time not spent marching or driving in a day is spent sleeping, making camp, taking rest breaks, or otherwise handling necessities.

Travel Encounters

Survivors have a chance of running into random encounters while journeying. Their particular nature will depend on the region and the campaign setting, but the odds of an encounter will vary depending on the stealthiness of the group.

An ***encounter check*** is usually rolled by the GM on a 1d8, with a 1 or less indicating some sort of encounter. The check is rolled under the following circumstances.

- Once per day of travel or period of foraging, whether a half or full day.

- Once each night, roll a check. If a cold camp is made with no fire, roll a die one size larger, such as 1d10 instead of 1d8. Humans and other diurnal creatures don't often move at night; if you roll such a result on the encounter table, reroll it once and take the second result.

- Once each day spent in camp, roll a check.

- If the party is Exposed at the time due to following a road, driving a vehicle, or force-marching during the day, apply a -1 to the roll to reflect the greater odds of drawing attention.

Travel encounters begin at sight range unless they involve an ambush or other surprise. On the plains, sight range may be a half-kilometer. In a ruined city, it might be the twenty meters between the party and the nearest building corner. The GM determines the distance based on the situation.

Both sides then roll their best Wis/Notice skill check. The side that rolls highest spots the other first, and can decide whether to approach, hide, flee, or otherwise react before the others can spot them. If the PCs notice the encounter first and quietly skulk away, the newcomers might not ever realize they were there. Conversely, a hostile group might take the chance to lay an impromptu ambush for the PCs.

Exposed groups always lose the skill check. They're too obvious or too loud to have any chance of escaping quick recognition. If both PCs and the encountered group are Exposed, the check is rolled normally.

Dangerous terrain may use a smaller encounter die. Particularly hostile territory might roll checks on 1d6 instead of 1d8, while a zone teeming with refugees, invading troops, mutant cannibals, or other hazards might roll it on 1d4.

Overland Travel and Scouting

Hex Terrain Type	Walking Hours	Vehicular Hours	Scouting Days Needed	Going Astray Difficulty
Plains or Scrubland	1	0.2	1	N/A
Light Forest, Suburbs, Sandy Desert	2	0.5	2	8
Heavy Forest, Hills, Intact Urban Cores	3	1	3	9
Jungle, Swamp, Destroyed Urban Cores	4	N/A§	4	10
Mountains	8	N/A§	8	11
Following a major road	x0.5 Min. 1 Hour	x1	-	N/A*

* A party cannot Go Astray when following a major road or river.
§ Vehicles cannot cross jungles or worse terrain unless they follow a road, taking 2 hours per hex.

Travel Times

The table above gives the number of hours needed for a party to travel into a new hex.

- Walking hours are for parties on foot or with riding beasts. Walking parties can follow a major road to cut their travel time in half, to a minimum of 1 hour per hex.
- Vehicular hours are for powered vehicles such as cars or trucks operating on post-collapse roads and driving through relatively open terrain. Ground vehicles cannot move through jungles or worse terrain unless they have a road to follow.
- Parties driving vehicles or sticking to roads count as Exposed for purposes of travel encounters.

Special terrain or obstacles might increase these listed travel times or make a conventional crossing entirely impossible.

Scouting a Hex

Simply traveling across a hex is enough to identify its main terrain type and any particularly obvious features. To really know the terrain, however, the party must spend significant time exploring and mapping the area. Such hexes are qualified as ***Scouted***.

Each terrain type requires one or more days to fully scout. Once the party spends the requisite time exploring the hex, it becomes Scouted.

A Scouted hex reveals all but the most carefully-hidden features to the party. Furthermore, it is not necessary to check for Going Astray when entering a Scouted hex.

PCs can trade maps and details of Scouted hexes with others, sharing their information if they wish.

GMs are advised to dot the hex map with a point of colored ink in each Scouted hex, to make clear how much of the map has been fully explored.

Going Astray

Each time a party enters a hex that is not Scouted, the party's pathfinder must make a Wis/Survival skill check at the listed difficulty if they're not following a major road or river. PCs with the *Masterful Expertise* Edge can re-roll this check once if they fail.

If the pathfinder fails, the party has ***Gone Astray*** in the hex. Their path has dead-ended, they've gotten turned around, or they've run into an obstacle they can't easily get past. The party remains Astray until they either....

- Spend 5 hours disentangling themselves and fixing their position.
- Fully Scout the hex. They can map it out until they know exactly where they are.

A party that is Astray can bull forward all the same, but their travel direction is determined randomly with a 1d6, using it as a hex clock face.

Water Travel

Some PCs prefer to barge down rivers or sail the open seas. As with other vehicles, boating PCs are automatically considered Exposed. Water travel can't Go Astray barring special circumstances.

Type of Water Travel	Hours /Hex
Sailing downstream on a navigable river	0.5
Poling upstream on a navigable river	2
Powered navigation up or down a river	0.25
Portaging around an obstacle	+2
Sailing on open water	0.5
Powered engines on open water	0.2



Hunger, Thirst, and Supplies

The basic materials of survival are hard to come by after the apocalypse. Ordinary considerations of food, water, and warmth can become desperately important to fleeing refugees or hungry wasteland wanderers, and details that might be easily glossed in a sci-fi or fantasy campaign can get a careless party killed in a world like this one.

Some groups may prefer not to pay close attention to issues of food and water. This is a reasonable choice, but the post-apocalyptic genre tends to lean heavily on themes of privation and hunger. A GM who makes players think hard about how much food they have in their packs can find a number of adventure hooks sprouting organically from that necessity.

Food, Water, Shelter, and Fire

Survivors need four things to avoid disaster on the trail. These necessities can be hard to come by even in some settlements, let alone on the open road.

Food is measured in days of food per person. Each day's needed food counts as one item of encumbrance.

Food rations can be carefully-chosen, well-preserved travel rations or they can be scavenged cans, foraged vegetables, or hunted game. Travel rations are nutrient-dense, lighter and easier to pack than random foodstuffs. A week's worth of such food can be carefully stored as four items of encumbrance.

As a general rule, food the PCs find or hunt will be counted as scavenged rations unless the GM decides that it's particularly compact and portable.

Water is usually available on the march, though sometimes it must be carried through dry areas. Drinking untreated water after the apocalypse is a hazard; if it's not boiled over a campfire or run through a water filter, each day's drinking forces a disease check as explained on page 54.

Shelter and suitable clothing are needed for the climate the PCs are in. Anyone with Survive-0 can put together a lean-to out of branches or debris in most areas, and that and a campfire are enough for most conditions. Deep winter, pelting rain, or other severe circumstances may require better shelter.

Supply Encumbrances

Type	Enc
One day of water	1
One day of travel rations	1
One day of scavenged rations	2
One week of carefully-packed travel rations	4
One night's load of firewood	4
One night's refined camping fuel	2
One day's fodder for a horse or large beast	4
One day's fodder for a mule or small beast	2
Daily water for a large beast	8
Daily water for a small beast	4

Fire is needed to cook food, boil water, and provide heat after the survivors stop moving for the day. Very gentle climates might spare the need for warmth, but unboiled water and uncooked game are hazards to any group of PCs. Even so, sometimes security requires a cold camp to avoid the notice of hostiles.

In most places, adequate firewood can be scavenged from debris or deadfalls. If PCs need to carry their own fuel, they can either bring bundles of firewood or find specialized lightweight camping fuels.

Pack Animals and Vehicle Loads

Some survivors may be lucky enough to have horses. The main advantage of mounted travel is the ability to rapidly flee from enemies on foot, but a sturdy pack horse or mule can carry a considerable load.

Pack animals in decent grazing areas can feed themselves during breaks, though their health will suffer after a few weeks of such ad-hoc grazing. Most such animals can navigate any terrain humans can.

PCs with access to a working vehicle and terrain easy enough to drive on can load trunks and truck beds with supplies. Most passenger vehicles have a limit on cargo given in Encumbrance points. Extremely large vehicles, such as a cargo truck, can carry as much personal-scale gear as the GM thinks reasonable. Such large vehicles are usually incapable of leaving a good road surface, however.

Pack Animal and Vehicle Loads

Type	Enc
Riding horse or warhorse with rider	5
Riding horse or warhorse, pack only	20
Heavy pack horse	30
Mule or donkey	15
Car trunk	20
Hand cart pulled by a person	15
Truck bed or horse-drawn cart	200
Small cargo truck	Special
Cargo in place of a vehicle passenger	+10

Starving, Thirsting, and Freezing

If the PCs don't have enough food, water, warmth, or shelter, they suffer privation. Each day without these necessities will apply the following penalties.

System Strain is gained. If this would put the PC over their maximum, they must make a Physical save or die by dawn if not fed, watered, and sheltered by a rescuer. On a success, they're helpless until death or rescue.

They can't recover System Strain or gain nightly hit point healing or other refreshments until they've had a day of proper food, water, and warm sleep.

Situations That Cause Privation

Circumstance	Sys. Str.
First day without enough food	+0
Consecutive day without food	+1
First day without enough water	+2
Consecutive day without water	+3
Night without adequate shelter or fire	+0
Harsh night without shelter or fire	+1

Foraging

It's hardly a post-apocalypse without desperate refugees rooting through abandoned houses or mutant wanderers lying in wait for prey. With supplies hard to come by in some settlements, it's likely the PCs will try to forage for at least some of their supper.

- Foraging requires either a 5 hour half-day or a 10 hour full day of effort, costing hunters that much travel time. The foraging group's most apt member makes a Wis/Survive check against the difficulty listed on the table, and on a success earns 1d6 units of forage plus the sum of the group's Survive skill levels, to a maximum of 10. Those without the skill at all subtract 1 from the total, to a minimum of one unit found by the group.

- Each forage unit is worth either a day of scavenged food for a person, a day of untreated water for a person in arid areas, or a night's firewood for the party, and the group can decide how much of each was found after the roll is made. Untreated water can be boiled over a fire.

Depending on the type of food found, the GM may let the PCs convert scavenged food into travel rations with a half-day of smoking, drying, or packing. Smoking a haunch of venison or turning a bag of wheat into hardtack may be reasonable, but converting the plundered contents of a sacked convenience store into something comfortable to carry around may not be so practical.

Foraging During a Collapse

The table difficulties assume a Mutant Wasteland campaign with long-abandoned cities and a largely empty wasteland between them. The table can also apply to Deadlands games or After the Fall campaigns where most of the local humans have died off after using up most, but not all, of their canned goods and other lasting supplies.

Foraging

Type of Foraged Terrain	Diff
Residential urban or suburban area	6
Industrial zone or city center	8
Woodlands or areas of heavy vegetation	8
Mountains, scrublands, savannas	9
Deserts, badlands, or normal barrens	12
Post-apocalyptic wastelands	14
A full day foraging rather than a half-day	-2
Each successive day foraging the same hex	+1
An active settlement exists within two hexes	+2
Urban foraging years after abandonment, after the area has been scavenged heavily	+3
On success, 1d6 units of forage are found, plus the total Survive skills of the foragers. Those without even level-0 skill in it subtract 1 from the total found.	

If the PCs are moving through an area of active collapse, however, things are different. The locals may not have abandoned their houses, and the wildlife and other edible wild provender has almost certainly been hunted and picked nearly to oblivion by desperate natives in search of something to eat.

When moving through an area where societal collapse is actually underway, and the surplus population hasn't died off yet...

Hunting and gathering is impossible. Any foraging attempts will have to involve looking for food caches stored in people's houses or in other structures.

Two encounter checks are rolled for each half-day spent foraging. If either roll 1, the PCs have run into another group of scavengers, been confronted by a local homeowner, or otherwise run into trouble. Careful selection of abandoned homes can prevent one of these checks, but the foraging difficulty increases by +3.



Character Advancement

When characters accumulate enough experience points, they advance a ***character level***. New survivors start out at level one and the most experienced, capable wanderers in world reach level ten. While even greater levels of skill may exist in some campaign settings, *Ashes Without Number* assumes that tenth level is as high as most games will go.

Gaining Experience Points

To advance in capability, PCs need to earn ***experience points***. Once they accumulate enough experience, they can advance to the next character level, representing their growing capabilities and the fruits of their own bitter experiences. Experience points earned are cumulative, and do not reset each level.

Survivors generally gain experience points by accomplishing tasks related to their overall group goals. Discovering food caches, driving out bandits, or forging alliances between survivor groups might all qualify. Most successful efforts grant 3 experience points to each PC, while failures are fruitless.

Other campaigns might grant XP for other activities, such as succeeding in personal goals, harming some campaign-wide nemesis, or obtaining fabulous troves of loot. The rewards section starting on page 200 discusses other possibilities that might suit a group.

The adjacent table indicates how many experience points need to be earned before a PC can advance to that level. Once the requisite number of XP are earned, the survivor gains their new level and all the benefits, improving them as soon as they get a day or two of downtime.

Experience Needed to Gain a Level

Level	Fast Leveling	Slow Leveling
1	0	0
2	3	6
3	6	15
4	12	24
5	18	36
6	27	51
7	39	69
8	54	87
9	72	105
10	93	139

Advancement Rates

The table above shows two different leveling rates. One is a "fast" rate meant for campaigns where the GM wants the PCs to rapidly grow in power and capability. The other is a "slow" rate more suitable for long-term campaigns where more time is desired between advancement opportunities.

The GM decides which table to use for their campaign, and may change the table based on their own experience and the preferences of the group. Choices should be made based on what best suits the table and their interests, and a GM should be willing to tweak things as needed. For example, some players prefer to move quickly into the mid-levels, but want to linger there instead of advancing rapidly to the endgame.

Benefits of Advancement

Once a PC has been awarded enough experience points to reach the next level, they gain the benefits of advancement after a day or so of downtime. No special training is required as their abilities are assumed to have been honed by their recent experiences.

Roll Additional Hit Points

First, they become harder to overcome in combat. To determine their new maximum hit points, they roll 1d6 for each character level they possess. If they have the *Hard to Kill* Edge, they roll 1d6+2 for each. To each of these dice, they add their Constitution modifier, whether a bonus or a penalty. If the total roll is greater than their current maximum hit points, they take the roll. If less or equal, their maximum hit points increase by one.

For example, Bob just made it to third level. He's a former accountant with a Constitution score of 6, giving him a -1 attribute modifier, but he's got the *Hard to Kil*l Edge for +2 on each hit point die. He'd roll 3d6+3 to find his new maximum. If it's greater than his current total of 10, he'd use it. If equal or less, his new maximum HP will be 11 instead.

Maximum hit points are rerolled each level in order to soften the consequences of a single level's bad roll. If your survivor can live long enough to advance, they always have a chance to undo their bad luck.

Improve Saving Throws

The PC becomes more capable of evading chance harms and perils. Their saving throw scores decrease by one, making it easier to succeed on saving throws by rolling equal or over it. As a first level character has saving throw scores of 15, reaching second level would lower them to 14, modified by their appropriate attributes.

Improve Attack Bonus

A PC's base attack bonus improves according to their level. Most characters have a basic attack bonus equal to half their character level, rounded down. If they have the *On Target* Edge, their bonus is equal to their full character level. The table below provides a summary of these numbers.

Character Attack Bonus

Level	Normal Bonus	On Target Edge
1	+0	+1
2	+1	+2
3	+1	+3
4	+2	+4
5	+2	+5
6	+3	+6
7	+3	+7
8	+4	+8
9	+4	+9
10	+5	+10

Gain and Spend Skill Points

A PC who advances a level gains three ***skill points*** they can spend on improving their skills or save to spend later. Survivors with the *Educated* Edge gain an extra bonus skill point to spend, giving them four points each time they advance.

Skills that are gained or improved on gaining a level are assumed to have been perfected over the past level and require no extra training time or teaching. If they save their skill points to spend them later then they'll need to find some teacher or other explanation for developing them in the meanwhile.

The cost for improving a skill is listed below. Every skill level must be purchased in order; to gain level-1 in a skill you need to pay one point for level-0 and then two points for level-1. A PC must be the requisite minimum level to increase a skill to certain levels. Less hardened survivors simply don't have the focus and real-life experience to attain such mastery.

A PC cannot "partially buy" a skill level. If they don't have enough skill points to buy a new level, they need to save them up until they can. A PC cannot develop skills beyond level-4.

Skill Level	Skill Point Cost	Minimum Character Level
0	1	1
1	2	1
2	3	3
3	4	6
4	5	9

Purchase Improved Attributes

A veteran survivor may have trained or honed their natural abilities well enough to improve one of their six base attributes. While even the most determined development isn't enough to turn complete ineptitude into gifted competence, a hard-working agent can hone their existing strengths considerably.

The first time a PC improves an attribute, it costs 1 skill point and adds +1 to an attribute of their choice. The second improvement to their attributes costs 2 skill points, the third 3, and so forth. Each improvement adds +1 to the attribute, potentially improving its modifier. A PC can only ever make five such improvements total, not five per attribute.

PCs must be a certain level before purchasing the third, fourth, or fifth attribute boost. No more than five attribute boosts can ever be purchased by a PC.

Attribute Boost	Skill Point Cost	Minimum Character Level
First	1	2
Second	2	2
Third	3	3
Fourth	4	6
Final	5	9

Choose new Foci or Edge

Finally, the PC might be eligible to pick an additional level in a Focus. At levels 2, 5, 7, and 10 a PC can add a level to an existing Focus or pick up the first level in a new Focus.

If this is the first level they've taken in the Focus, they might be granted a skill as a free bonus pick, depending on the Focus' benefits. During character creation, this bonus skill pick is treated like any other skill pick. If the Focus is taken as part of advancement, however, it instead counts as three skill points spent toward increasing the skill. This is enough to raise a nonexistent skill to level-1, or boost a level-1 skill to level-2. They may do this even if they aren't high-enough level to normally qualify for a skill level that high.

If the skill points aren't quite enough to raise the skill to a new level, they remain as credit toward future advances. If applied to a skill that is already at level-4, the PC can spend the three skill points on any other skill of their choice.

In addition, upon reaching fifth level, a survivor can pick a third Edge to add to their existing two. Any benefits this Edge grants are retroactive to first level, such as the bonus skill points from *Educated* or the hit point bonus of *Hard to Kill*.



Common GM Complications

Some issues tend to crop up regularly for GMs. While every table has their own preferences, there are certain time-tested responses for some of the most common of them.

Skill Checks

Players don't call for skill checks. Instead, they describe what their PC is trying to do and how they are trying to do it, and the GM decides what skill and attribute is most relevant, or if a skill check is appropriate at all. Especially good plans might be an automatic success, while doomed intentions might not get a roll.

Searching Places and Things

For exploration-heavy games like many Mutant Wasteland campaigns, it's common for PCs to have to toss a room or area in search of interesting things. The players should specify *where* they are looking in an area. If the GM knows that something is hidden in a specific place they're searching, the PC will find it automatically. If not, a Wis/Notice check by the best searcher in the group might be called for. Don't let every PC roll a check; sheer probability would overwhelm most difficulties. Also, remember that searching a place carefully takes time, usually no less than ten minutes or a full scene.

Persuasion and Intimidation

It's unreasonable to expect a player to be as glib as their social-specialist PC, but they still need to say what general line their character is using to persuade or intimidate an NPC. They need to give reasons the NPC should agree with them or why their suggestion would be helpful to the NPC's goals. After the player explains their choice of angles, the GM then decides how well it suits the NPC and sets the social skill check difficulty accordingly. Particularly excellent reasons might forego a roll entirely, while angles that are insulting or nonsensical might not merit a roll at all.

Generally, a party gets one shot to persuade an NPC of something in a given encounter. If they fail, they're going to need to try a different suggestion or improve the terms they're offering.

Character Death

The post-apocalyptic genre is hard on PCs, and it's normal for some or all of the party to meet the reaper eventually. In these cases, the GM should prioritize getting their new PC into play as quickly as possible, even if that requires a degree of heavy-handedness with the adventure. By the same token, the other PCs should quickly accept the new recruit without any undue standoffishness. The group is there to play the game, and keeping someone sidelined longer than strictly necessary is a waste of their time.

When it comes to making up new PCs, a GM has two common options.

The new PC starts with the minimum experience points for a character of one level less than their dead PC. Dying is a setback, but this new PC should enter play with basic gear and possibly a useful relic or weapon if those things are common to the other PCs.

The new PC starts at first level. In this alternative, the harsh penalty of death is starting over with a new PC. While stern, it's much faster to generate a first level player character and will get them back into play more quickly. To help catch them up, these replacements gain double the normal experience points until they reach their prior experience total.

In both cases, a GM who foresees a significant body count may want to have their players roll up some replacements before beginning the game session, the better to get them back into play quickly.

Forgetting Rules

While *Ashes Without Number* is not an especially complicated game, and a quick-print summary of important rules can be found on page 37, a GM is still likely to forget a rule from time to time. In those cases, a quick, reasonable adjudication by the GM is much better for the flow of play than taking five minutes to hunt down an edge case in the rules.

In such situations, the best thing is to just make a judgment call and keep playing. Even something as simple as "Roll 80 or better on a d100." can give a perfectly adequate representation of an outcome. After the game is over, the GM can look up the rule and keep it in mind for next time, if they decide they want to use it at all.

Going Off the Map

At the end of every gaming session, the players need to tell the GM what they plan to attempt next time. The GM needs this information so they can prepare content and make up material to occupy the PCs. Without this forewarning it would be impossible for a GM to keep ahead of the party without intense and lengthy improvisation.

Sometimes, however, the PCs go off the map. They decide mid-session to follow an angle or hare off on a scheme that points them toward parts unknown to the GM.

Don't try to improvise unless you feel very comfortable with it. It's perfectly acceptable to tell the players that you don't have the necessary material prepped for that, and they'll need to give you some downtime if they want to follow that angle. For short detours a ten-minute break might be enough to cook something up, but bigger departures might necessitate calling the game for the evening.

Mixing Sine Nomine Games Together

It's not uncommon that a GM might want to integrate material from other *Without Number* games in their post-apocalyptic campaigns. Eldritch beasts and artifacts from the fantasy *Worlds Without Number*, salvaged cyberware from *Cities Without Number*, and high-tech robots, mechs, and psionics from *Stars Without Number* all have their place in the right campaign, especially since all those games come in free PDF versions with much of the full content. The guidelines below offer some suggestions on how a GM can do that.

Choosing a Base Game

First, pick which game is going to be the base game, selecting whichever one fits the overall genre of your campaign. Whenever an ambiguous point comes up or a difference in rules you'll use the base game's interpretation, as it was the one built to support whatever basic genre you're running.

Adding New Classes

Worlds and *Stars Without Number* use character classes for PCs, while *Cities* and *Ashes* use Edges. Strong class definitions tend to fit best with broad genres, while flexible Edges offer more individual distinctions when every PC is a dystopian criminal malcontent or a desperate post-collapse survivor.

Even so, you can use classes and Edges together in your campaign if you wish, using the guidelines on the following pages. The important distinction at this stage is deciding *which* outside classes and Edges you'll allow in your game.

Don't feel obligated to include something just because it's in the game. You might be running an "Aliens invade Earth and induce a psychic awakening among humanity" campaign which allows PCs to pick up the Psychic class from SWN. Even so, this doesn't mean you have to add in the space magic options from that game's *Codex of the Black Sun* sourcebook, because that flavor of arcane power just doesn't fit your goals.

Be ready to talk with your players before making a final decision about these things. If no one shows any interest in playing a particular PC concept, you don't have to worry about importing its rules. Conversely, if someone's very excited about a particular idea, you might be charitable enough to allow it for a few sessions so you can see if it works out.

Money, Gear and Cyberware

Stars Without Number and its supplements have a good deal of high-tech equipment and *Cities Without Number* is stocked with dozens of cybernetic systems. Access to these goodies is gated behind large sums of cash, with PCs risking their lives and undertaking bold adventures to come up with the money for some shiny bit of chrome.

That model works well in settings that *have* money, but the radioactive badlands or post-collapse refugee camps might not have a stable currency. Almost any of these high-tech items are going to need a special favor or adventure to acquire, especially if the PCs are to find a medic or autodoc sophisticated enough to successfully implant cyberware. If the PCs are interested in unearthing an old Mandate cache of QECM tech or a stash of mint-condition neuroware, then they can undertake adventures and make contacts that might lead them closer to their goal.

For GMs who really need a hard currency conversion, the rough equivalent below can serve as a rule of thumb. Individual prices, of course, will vary drastically based on availability.

1 ration of food	=	5 Mandate credits
1 Mandate credit	=	1 Corporate dollar

Using New Creatures

Creatures from any Sine Nomine game can be imported into a Mutant Wasteland, with magical powers excused as mutant abilities or other eldritch technological arts. The statistics and combat abilities can be translated across without difficulty, as can most monsters from games compatible with pre-third-edition versions of the world's most popular role-playing game.

For the latter, subtract the creature's THAC0 from 20 to find its attack bonus and assign it a skill bonus that seems reasonable. Other attributes such as movement, damage dice, and Morale can be taken verbatim.

Using Traumatic Hits

Spells and magical damage do not normally inflict Traumatic Hits. If the *WN game you're using doesn't have ratings for individual weapons, copy the closest analog from this game or *Cities Without Number*, or use 1d6 for small weapons and pistols, 1d8 for big blades and long arms, and larger ratings for heavy gear.

Adding Mutations

If you want to add mutations to a game that doesn't have Edges, the simplest way is to make "Mutant" into a partial Expert class that the PC has to take during character generation. If they choose it, they get the benefits and drawback of the *Mutation* Edge, plus the ability to buy the *Mutation Acceleration* Edge afterwards by expending a Focus pick at any point.

Unlike an ordinary partial Expert, however, a Mutant doesn't get a bonus non-combat Focus pick or an additional skill point at each new level. They still count as a partial Expert for hit die and attack bonus purposes, however, and for any other rule relevant to Experts.





Using Classes From Other Sine Nomine Games

The *Without Number* games all share the same basic game system, so it's reasonable that a GM might want to allow classes from those other games to be included in their own campaigns. A GM can certainly do so, but there are a few things to keep in mind. At the very start, they need to decide whether they mean to allow these other classes as actual classes or as Edges.

Note that in both cases, it is always and entirely up to the GM to allow or deny any particular class combination. Even a combination which isn't intrinsically excessive might be too much for a particular campaign. GMs who give a PC the benefit of the doubt in allowing a combination should always feel free to retract it later if it turns out the mix is overshadowing the rest of the group or spoiling the fun of the table as a whole.

Classes as Classes

If a GM runs things this way, PCs who want to play outside classes do not use the Edge system in AWN. Instead, they use the rules in the other game for picking full or partial classes. If they want to be a Vowed with a martial bent, they play a partial Warrior/partial Vowed. If they want to fling High Magic, they might play a full High Mage. Would-be Psychics might choose to be a partial Expert/partial Psychic. No PC playing an outside class gets any Edges.

This method limits the flexibility of a PC slightly, but is easy to implement and likely to produce fewer unexpected interactions, as the classes were designed to work this way originally. This same principle can even be used to include classes from other OSR games, lifting them wholesale from their original setting.

Classes as Edges

With this method of running things, outside partial classes count as one Edge and outside full classes count as two Edges. Thus, a PC who wanted to be a partial Necromancer/partial High Mage would have to spend two Edges to do so.

This is a more flexible way of handling things, but it's also more prone to imbalances, as the original classes were not built to interact this way. With that in mind, you should keep two rules in place.

Class Edges must be bought at first level. You can't get to fifth level and then decide to become a wizard. If you want an outside class, you pick it at first level.

Full spellcasters, full Psychics, or dual partial spellcasters don't get a third Edge at fifth level. Magic is powerful, and a PC who chooses to devote their talents entirely to spellcasting needs to pay something extra to justify the ability. Non-spellcasting classes are less of an issue, so need not pay this extra price.

Specific Class Rules

Once you have decide whether you're going to use outside classes as actual classes or as Edges, there remain a few guidelines to keep in mind about specific classes in an AWN campaign world. The sections below call out a few things to keep in mind when including particular outside classes.

Psychics

It's possible to include the Psychic character class from SWN in a post-apocalyptic campaign, but a few limits should be kept in mind.

Psychics cannot cast spells. Do not let a Psychic PC pick some other class or Edge that has spellcasting abilities. The combination of readily-usable psychic powers with carefully-selected spells tends to allow too much flexibility. Magical classes that only have non-spell arts are less of a danger.

Teleportation is not available. In a sci-fi setting where fast long-distance travel is trivial and tech-based teleportation is not particularly shocking, the ability to pop in and out of places is not excessive. Trivializing travel in a post-apoc setting is much more significant, and often unbalanced.

Psychics cannot get Nerve cyberware. If you're using cybernetics from *Cities Without Number*, Psychics should not be allowed to implant Nerve-type cyberware. The skillplug cyber and extra-action cyber offer too many opportunities to cover for a PC's weak spots, as acquiring conventional psionic abilities requires that they spend their limited skill points on them.

Warriors

In a typical AWN campaign, PCs picking the Warrior class should use the one printed in *Stars Without Number*, not the one in *Worlds Without Number*. The latter includes the *Killing Blow* class ability to help compensate for the lower-tech weapons available in a fantasy setting. When everyone and their pet dog has a shotgun, this perk is no longer appropriate.

However, if your campaign baseline is a fantasy world or low-tech Mutant Wasteland, you should use the WWN version of the Warrior. Such settings don't have common firearms or other heavy weapons, so combat-focused Warriors need a little extra boost.

Experts

The Expert class can generally be used as-is regardless of the campaign setting. The PC who is good at skills is a broad trope and there's usually something worthwhile for them to burn their extra skill points on.

Mages

Spellcasting mages from *Worlds Without Number* tend to show up most often as antagonists in fantasy-apocalyptic settings, usually as sinister high-tech wizards in a Mutant Wasteland setting. They wield ancient science and modern secrets to work terrible marvels of blasphemous wisdom. While such figures work best as NPCs, some GMs want to allow players to join in the unholy fun. This is possible, but a few points should be kept in mind.

Don't mix psychics or spellcasters from different games. If you're a partial Necromancer from WWN, you can't take the *Mage* Edge from *Cities Without Number*. If you're a partial High Mage, you can't take a slice of Psychic from SWN. If your partial class casts spells or is a Psychic, you can't pick a similar spellcasting class from a different game.

The reason for this is to avoid overpowered synergies. It's all too easy for a PC to pick a class with a few very powerful spells, like a High Mage, and then round it out with a class that has a lot of flexible but weaker powers, like the *Mage* Edge from CWN. Obliging the PC to stick to a single game limits this risk.

Give powerful figures tools to resist magic. If potent spells are a known danger in your campaign world, major NPCs and powerful groups will either have their own wizards or know ways to mitigate the worst perils of spellcraft. The High Mage that can erase mundane rock with *Decree of Lithic Dissolution* is going to find the treasure-house of the Prince of the Glowing Dunes properly charmed against casual disintegration. These defenses shouldn't be ubiquitous, but if a given spell or power is an obvious threat to a powerful NPC, they're going to do something about it.

Mages can't use cyberware. Mage and partial Mage classes shouldn't be allowed to implant cyberware taken from the CWN rulebook. If the GM is feeling more generous towards non-spellcasting Mages, use that game's rules for cyber's interaction with the *Mage* Edge.

Old-School Magic-Users

Some GMs might want to bring in classic B/X Magic-Users or other old-school classes that rely on traditional Vancian spells from the earlier editions of the world's most famous fantasy RPG.

The same basic principles apply for these classic Magic-Users as are applied to Mages. Unlike WWN Mages, however, there's no convenient "partial Magic-User" class for those PCs who only want a taste of fell sorcery. GMs who want to allow partial old-school Magic-Users can use the class as written but limit their spells-per-day as if they were half their level, rounded up. Thus, a first-level partial B/X Magic-User could cast one first-level spell, while a tenth-level partial B/X Magic-User could cast two first, two second, and one third-level spell. They still count as their full level for spell effect purposes, so that latter wizard still throws a 10d6 fireball.



Other OSR Classes

Because the *Without Number* games use the same basic chassis as many other Old School Renaissance games do, it's generally possible to import classes from these other games without too much difficulty. If a game bills itself as being compatible with the early editions of the world's most famous fantasy RPG, you can probably strip it for parts.

When importing these outside classes, a GM is generally best off using them wholesale, with the "classes as classes" rules explained on the prior page. Trying to slice them up into Edges or part them out into partial classes is often more work than a GM wants to deal with, so it's easiest to just use them as written.

Keep in mind, however, that you shouldn't usually bother including anything your players don't actually ask for. You can have a hundred different specialist professions in your campaign world, but if none of your players ask to *be* one of them, it's not worth your time to try to turn it into a PC class. Don't spend your effort on it if it's not going to be rewarded at the table.



EQUIPMENT

Equipment plays a special role in the post-apocalyptic genre. In most settings, food, shelter, and medical care are not particularly challenging to obtain. It's assumed that the PCs aren't going to go hungry unless they've gotten in an especially bad situation. In the same vein, PCs who need a gun, or an axe, or a laptop computer can get one without much fuss. They scratch a little money off their character sheet and add the gear.

This is not how it works in a zombie apocalypse, or civil war, or mutant-infested wasteland. Having decent hiking shoes can be of enormous importance to a PC, but they're not going to get them unless they can find a pair in an abandoned house or loot them from the wreckage of a pillaged shoe store. Almost everything they need will have to be scavenged, crafted, or jury-rigged until civilization is reestablished.

Because of this, carefully tracking PC possessions becomes a very important part of the game.

Money and Trade

The currency used after a collapse will vary greatly depending on a society's stage of dissolution. In the first few months of a downfall existing paper currency might still be honored, though usually at an extortionate premium. Once a government is clearly disintegrating, hard currency in gold and silver might still be accepted by sellers, and this currency will be the first to show back up when things start to stabilize. If the situation gets truly horrific, with supplies running short and all hope of recovery gone, then only direct barter of food and useful equipment is likely to happen.

After an extended period of chaos, order of some sort will likely form among the survivors. Once the absolute necessities of survival are created in surplus, hard currency or some other limited, physical medium of exchange will spread out among survivors in a region. Even salvaged old-world petty coinage might be accepted as useful markers of value.

GMs should decide how money works in their campaign's beginning region, and set prices and trade methods accordingly.

For situations of ongoing crisis, gear is worth whatever the seller demands for it, whether it's dollars, gold, or equivalent useful equipment. GMs should set prices for things based on the willingness of the seller and their estimation of how much the PCs can afford to spare. There is no such thing as a "standard price" for anything, because the world is in chaos.

For stable post-collapse societies, where food and other necessities are being produced in at least semi-adequate amounts, the prices given in this section reflect how many daily rations of food, pristine bottlecaps, silver dimes, or warlord scrip a given piece of gear will usually cost in the open market, assuming it can be found for sale. Sellers might accept gear of equivalent value in barter, or the enclave might honor precious metal coinage, old world currency, or some locally-issued money.

Sci-Fi Gear in Your Campaign

By default, the equipment described in this chapter is largely meant for a near-future campaign setting where the technology is similar to that of our own modern day. Some campaigns, however, need a more expansive range of gear.

As such, sci-fi tech is also included in this chapter. Laser rifles, powered armor, and esoteric consumer devices are included on the equipment lists for the benefit of Mutant Wasteland campaigns, far-future homebrews, and the occasional secret government project or reclusive mad scientist.

Many of these high-tech items are related to the Terran Mandate described in the example setting starting on page 230. GMs using that setting can use the items as they stand, while others can simply reflavor the items to fit their own setting details.





Encumbrance and Gear Tracking

Gear is life in the wastelands, and every sane survivor will want as much of it with them as is possible. There is a limit to how much equipment a given PC can pack, however, and some parties will have to decide between life-saving gear and the plunder they seek to carry off.

Encumbrance

Item weight and bulk are abstracted as points of ***Encumbrance***. An item's Encumbrance varies with how hard it is to carry it.

Size of Item	Enc
Portable in a small pocket	0*
Portable in one hand	1
Requires two hands to carry or use it	2
Requires a whole-body effort to haul it	5+
Dragging an unconscious human	12

*: Any reasonable amount of these can be carried

When bulk weights of material are carried, such as a twenty-kilo bag of grain, the GM should just assign a plausible Encumbrance value based on its weight and bulk.

Stowed and Readied Items

A PC can carry up to half of their Strength score in ***Ready*** items, rounded down. Readied items are those held in the hands, worn suits of armor, pistols in accessible holsters, gear on quick-release harnesses, and other items that are immediately accessible for use. A PC can use a Ready item as part of an action without needing to spend extra time digging it out.

In addition, a PC can carry additional ***Stowed*** items up to their full Strength score. These items are packed away carefully for optimum portability, and take a Main Action to break out before use.

PCs can haul much heavier objects if necessary. If they push their limits for longer terms, they can carry an additional two Ready and four Stowed items. The first time they do this, their Move speed is cut by 30%, from 10m to 7m. The second time, it's cut by 50%, from 10m to 5m. More weight than this can't be practically hauled over significant distances.

Small, regularly-shaped objects such as grenades, pharmaceuticals, travel rations, and firearm magazines can be wrapped into bundles for easier portability. Three such items can be tied into a bundle that only counts as one item of encumbrance. Breaking into this bundle takes an extra Main Action, however.

Hauling Downed Allies

It's regrettably likely that the PCs will someday find themselves needing to haul a wounded or sick teammate to safety.

- If they have a stretcher of some sort, two people can carry the patient as a shared 12 points of Stowed Encumbrance, including the stretcher.
- One comrade can drag a body or litter or carry a small ally at a cost of 12 Stowed Encumbrance.
- Overland travel speed is halved while transporting a helpless person. This stacks with any slowing due to heavy encumbrance loads.

In neither case is their gear or equipment included in the load, so someone else is going to have to haul their pack if it's to be preserved.

Optional Rule: Packs and Pockets

In a post-apocalyptic game, it matters where you're carrying your gear. A gun tucked into a jacket pocket is going to go unnoticed the way a rifle slung across your back would not, and your sheer logistical ability to carry a load may matter as much as its bulk.

For campaigns where the group wants an extra level of granularity, they can use the following "packs and pockets" rule.

- Mark down your gear containers on your sheet. You have a "Pockets, Body and Belt" container for small objects, slung gear, or holsters and a "Hands" container for things you are carrying in your hands. You might have a "Backpack" container, a "Rolling Suitcase" container, a "Garbage Bag Slung Over My Shoulder" container, or whatever else you're using to haul gear in. Backpacks and other sturdy bags count as their own Stowed Encumbrance.
- When you pick something up, write it down under the container you're using to hold it. If the container couldn't plausibly hold it, you can't put it there even if you have the spare Encumbrance capacity for it.

With this rule, it becomes considerably more important for PCs to actually have transport gear such as backpacks or slings, and Readied items have to be in a plausibly accessible place. A gun slung over your shoulder or holstered at your belt could be plausibly Ready, but one stuck in your backpack couldn't reasonably be drawn quickly.



Tech Levels and Scrap

Post-apocalyptic campaigns often cover a wide range of technological sophistication. Machete-wielding marauder hordes can coexist with bolt-action rifles, and mutant warlords wielding salvaged laser rifles might clash with the stone spears of human tribals. ***Tech levels*** are a convenient way of describing the complexity of a given piece of equipment or the sophistication of a particular community's technology.

Tech Levels

The following tech levels are the ones most likely to be relevant in a post-apocalyptic campaign.

TL	State of Technological Advancement
0	Neolithic stone tools and wood implements
1	Medieval to Renaissance-level tech
2	Steam power, guns, and Victorian tech
3	Modern-day industrial society
4	Interstellar sci-fi technology
5	Ultra-advanced and mysterious tech

Most modern gear, including guns and body armor, will involve TL3 technology. Primitive tribals might have fallen back to TL1 spears and swords, while battered old TL2 revolvers or muskets might still be produced in some communities. Secret government black sites might have cracked the secrets of some TL4 sci-fi tech, and alien macguffins might contain powers that can only be described as TL5 science.

When estimating the tech level of a community, the levels below give some examples of suitable matches. Most communities can fabricate or repair any gear of their tech level or lower, though they may have limited stocks of more advanced tech that they've salvaged or stolen.

TL	Types of Appropriate Communities
0	Semi-sentient mutants, Animalistic beastmen, and other minimal tool users
1	Primitive tribals, Strict anti-technological Luddites, Modern-day refugees without a technical or engineering base for support
2	Organized modern-day survivors with basic tooling, Advanced post-apoc societies
3	Still-functional modern-day communities, Highly advanced, capable post-apoc cities
4	Enclaves of surviving pre-collapse technical experts and secret projects
5	Alien outposts, Communities built around some unfathomable genius and their hyper-advanced technical base

Tech Scrap and Salvaging

Spare parts and usable components are a vital resource after the end of modern industrial society. Many of these things, however trivial they may be, can no longer be produced in any significant numbers. With whole communities risking destruction from the collapse of vital infrastructure, the ability to repair and jury-rig gear is critical to a group's survival.

Rather than try to keep track of every washer, gasket, and sheet of copper that the PCs might scavenge, tech scrap is graded by tech level and measured in units. A bundle of copper wire might count as one unit of TL3 scrap, while a pile of aluminum billets might be measured as two units of TL1 scrap.

A unit of scrap is one point of Encumbrance. PCs can just record the units on their sheet and don't need to bother detailing the nature of every separate unit. For simplicity's sake, a unit of scrap is a unit of scrap, and can be used to repair, build, or maintain anything of the same tech level.

Items can be broken down into scrap. Usable gear can be taken apart into as many units of scrap as it has Encumbrance, of the same tech level as the item. Even ruined gear can be scrapped this way, but the process is one-way; once disassembled, the item can't be put back together.

Only useful loot can be scrapped. The PCs can't just walk into an abandoned suburban kitchen and start ripping every random appliance into TL3 scrap. If an object doesn't qualify as found, useful loot, it hasn't got anything useful in it to salvage.

Primitive scrap can be foraged. If the PCs need ideal knapping flints, just the right kind of bow wood, or the perfect piece of scrap metal, they can find it by foraging with the rules on page 63. Instead of finding food or water, one unit of TL0 or TL1 scrap is found for each unit of goods that are foraged.

Sometimes very large stores of scrap might be found, such as in a warehouse full of spare parts or a prepper's secret bunker full of repair materials. In that case, the PCs can usually load up with as many units of scrap as they wish.

Damaging and Repairing Gear

After the collapse of industrial civilization, it becomes progressively more difficult to keep its artifacts functioning. High-tech gear that only lacks a new spring or a fresh capacitor may end up as worthless junk due to the scarcity of such parts.

These rules, however, are *optional* rules. Some groups find plenty of desperation in the ordinary lives of their PCs, and see no need to worry about their guns breaking as well. It's up to the GM to decide whether or not these rules fit the flavor of their campaign.

For Mutant Wasteland campaigns, these rules are often suitable. PCs are often dealing with hyper-advanced ancient technology, and having it break on them is neither surprising nor unreasonable. Even mundane low-tech gear is often bashed together out of crumbling components and salvaged wrecks, so having it snap or dull is within reason.

For After the Fall and Deadlands campaigns, it's a bit less plausible that gear should start degrading quite so rapidly. It can fit if the GM wants to dial up the desperation of their campaign, but foregoing these rules is a reasonable choice as well.

Gear Condition

New, well-maintained gear is in Perfect condition. Each time it is damaged, it steps down one level, from Perfect to Worn, from Worn to Light Damage, and so forth until it is completely ruined.

Damaged weapons suffer a hit and damage roll penalty, though their Shock is not affected. Damaged gear and tools apply a penalty to any skill checks involving their use. High-tech devices that activate run a risk of failing to function when triggered at Moderate Damage or worse.

Armor can suffer damage, but it's built to be battered and will function normally until it becomes Broken.

Damaging Gear

Gear suffers damage in the following situations.

- On a roll of 1 or 2 on an attack roll, the weapon used suffers a level of damage.
- When hit by a hit roll of 19 or 20, the target's armor suffers a level of damage.
- If a 2 or 3 is rolled on a skill check, any equipment or vehicle being used for it takes a level of damage.

Items can only be damaged once per scene, though intentionally misusing items can wear them down much more rapidly. Using a sword to chop through a door may automatically damage it, for example.

Gear Condition Levels

Condition	Penalty
Perfect	No penalty to use.
Worn	No penalty to use.
Light Damage	-1 to hit or damage for weapons, -1 to skill checks using the item
Moderate Damage	-2 to hit or damage, -1 to skill checks using the item, 20% chance to fail
Heavy Damage	-3 to hit or damage, -2 to skill checks using the item, 50% chance to fail
Broken	The object is inoperable/unusable.
Ruined	It's broken beyond any repair.

Repairing Gear

Fixing damaged gear requires scrap of the same tech level as the item and an appropriate toolkit or set of implements. The would-be repairer must also have at least level-0 in an applicable skill. Fix could repair anything, while Shoot could plausibly mend a damaged gun, or Stab help sharpen a blunted blade.

The tech then expends the scrap and rolls an Int/Skill check against a difficulty of 5 plus the item's tech level. On a failure, the scrap is wasted but another try can be made. On a success, one level of damage is repaired.

Repairing a man-portable object usually takes one hour and one unit of scrap of the same tech level. Vehicles and larger objects usually take six hours and six units of scrap.

Broken Loot

Relics dragged out of a centuries-old ruin tend not to be in the best possible condition. GMs running a far-future Mutant Wasteland campaign might choose to roll on the table below to see what kind of condition a given piece of loot is in when planting it in an adventure.

d10	Loot Condition
1	Roll again; it looks like that condition, but will be ruined on first use if not first repaired
2	Heavy Damage
3-4	Moderate Damage
5-6	Light Damage
7-8	Worn
9	Perfect, but unloaded or discharged
10	Perfect and fully-charged or loaded



Building Gear

It's a time-honored post-apocalyptic tradition to patch together gear out of whatever random debris a survivor can get their hands on. In most campaigns, it's extremely likely that the PCs will want to put together at least some of their own equipment. In many settings, it may be the only way for them to actually get what they need.

Crafting Requirements

For someone to build their own gear, they need to have access to a few important things.

- They need tools or a workshop capable of building the gear. Crafting a TL0 bone-tipped arrow might require nothing more than a knife and somewhere to sit, but building a semi-auto rifle from scavenged debris will require considerably better tooling.

- They need scrap to salvage for necessary parts and raw materials. This scrap has to be of the same tech level as the item; a box full of TL3 circuit boards won't help you make a TL1 axe. The adjacent table gives guidelines for how many units of scrap the construction will require.

- They need the right skill. For most items this is Fix, though compounding medical goods might be Heal, and Know might cover chemical compounds. This skill must be at a level equal to the tech level of the item being made. An accurate and thorough technical manual on the item lowers the requisite skill to level-0.

Optionally, they may need a specific component. Most gear can be made out of any scrap of an appropriate tech level, but very rare or exotic tech might demand a specific item that can only be obtained through adventuring.

Universal Scrap

For playability's sake, it's assumed that a given unit of scrap can be used to build anything of an appropriate tech level. The specific nature of the scrap isn't tracked, just that it's so many units of it.

GMs who want to be more specific about tracking scrap can do so, but this often adds more overhead than it's worth in play. It can also end up frustrating crafter PCs, who find they need to go fetch several very specific types of salvage to make each of their intended projects.

Building Gear Guidelines

Item Type	Units	Days
Ammo or arrows (20)	4	1
Melee weapon or bow	8	2
Suit of TL2 armor	20	4
Suit of TL3 armor	30	8
TL2 firearm	20	6
TL3 firearm	30	8
One dose of pharmaceuticals	4	1
Hand-held equipment	8	1
Small vehicle	Varies	7
Medium vehicle	Varies	1 month
Large vehicle	Varies	2 months

Crafting the Item

Once all the necessary ingredients are in hand, the crafter can set about building the item. The table above gives an average time in days to create one item, one dose of pharmaceuticals, or twenty cartridges or arrows. There is no chance of failure under normal conditions.

The volumes of scrap required assume that the crafter is picking through the junk and sorting out individual useful components, rather than assembling an item out of a perfectly-suitable set of parts.

Building a vehicle is more demanding in time, scrap, facilities, and helpers. Full details are given in the vehicle section on page 88.

Making High-Tech Gear

These rules assume that the crafters are working with limited resources under contingent circumstances. Hammering out basic gear and relatively simple devices is plausible for such scrapsmiths.

Building laser rifles, powered armor, or alien technology is less feasible. Crafters generally can't build TL4 items even if they have plenty of TL4 scrap, as the processes are too refined and demanding to be replicated in a slightly radioactive workshop-hut. The best they can do is repair such gear and try to keep it functioning for as long as possible.

PCs who get their hands on a real TL4 fabrication lab or autoassembler might be able to overcome this limit. Functioning TL4 manufacturing tech will likely be extremely rare in those campaigns that involve sci-fi technology, so locating such a site and getting it back into working order is likely to absorb a considerable amount of a party's time and effort.

Modifying Gear

Every red-blooded wasteland scrapsmith has a fondness for tweaking and tuning their gear. Putting an exceptionally wicked edge on a scrap metal spear or dialing up a laser rifle's emitter is an excellent use of an afternoon. Even modern-day survivors often find it useful to adjust their salvaged gear and tune it to more perfectly fit their needs.

These adjustments are ***mods***. Installing them requires a capable technician, available scrap parts, and the occasional exotic component. Keeping them functioning requires maintenance at the hands of a skilled tech, as they're finicky and delicate enough to require regular recalibration and repair.

Modded gear is not normally available for trade. The upkeep on it is too demanding for random buyers to handle, so modded gear is usually the product of a survivor party's own technical experts. If the group doesn't have a skilled scrapsmith, they'll have to make do with off-the-shelf solutions.

Installing Mods

Building and installing a mod requires an adequate workshop for the kind of adjustments to be made. Sharpening a spear might need nothing more than a place by the campfire and a conventional toolkit, but customizing a rifle to a user might need a gunsmith's workbench and a rack of appropriate tools. It's up to the GM to decide if available resources are adequate to the purpose.

Mods have a minimum Fix skill required to install or maintain them; a *Customized* mod requires Fix-1, for example, while a *Flexible* mod takes Fix-2. Without this skill level, the tech can't build or install the mod, and they can't maintain it properly either.

Mods require large amounts of scrap of the same tech level as the item itself, down to a minimum of TL3. A primitive TL0 knife can be enhanced by a skilled scrapsmith, but just sticking on more TL0 bits of metal isn't going to help.

Not all of this scrap is actually used directly in the process, but the tech has to sift through it all picking out just the right parts and the specific components they need for the job. This uses up the scrap required for the mod, rendering it useless for other purposes.

Some mods require special components. These rare items of salvage might be a perfect ceraplast knife blade, a billet of rare alloy, a specific circuit board, or some other exotic component. Rather than track every billet of rare alloy or exotic microprocessor the PCs find, they're just treated as generic units, usable in any mod that requires special components.

Mods take time to build and install. It takes one week per minimum skill level of the mod to build and install it in the desired device. Thus, a *Customized* mod takes a week to put in, while a *Flexible* mod takes two. If a tech does nothing other than work, eat, and sleep, they can halve these times, and an additional assistant with at least Fix-0 skill can further halve the time.

Mods must be custom-built to specific objects. A tech cannot build a "generic" mod and then just attach it to a device; it must be carefully designed to fit exactly with that specific item, and sometimes even with a specific user.

Mods and Maintenance

Mods require ***Maintenance*** to keep functioning correctly. Overclocked hardware, shave-sharp edges, and experimental adjustments just don't have the field durability of more standard gear, so a tech must apply daily attention to the modded hardware if it's not to fail. A normal toolkit is required to maintain mods, but no special parts are needed.

A tech's Maintenance score is equal to the total of their Intelligence and Constitution modifiers plus three times their Fix skill level. The smarter and the longer a tech can work, the more maintenance they can perform, but their overall expertise as a technician is the most crucial element. A tech can maintain a number of mods equal to their Maintenance score without cutting into their adventuring time or otherwise encumbering their off-duty hours. This maintenance is assumed to take place during downtime and doesn't need to be tracked specifically in play. If they do nothing but maintenance, they can double their score, but this kind of dedication requires sixteen-hour workdays.

If a mod goes without maintenance for 24 hours, it stops working. If a mod goes without maintenance for a week, the entire device it's attached to stops working, as the untuned mod has made it useless or dangerous to use. Weapons can no longer be used in combat, armor no longer gives protection, seizes up, or is too dangerous to wear, and other devices simply stop functioning. A maintenance backlog on a device can be cleared by an hour of work by a technician capable of maintaining it.



Armor

From dented stop-sign breastplates to battered plate carriers, the apocalypse calls for a certain amount of protective equipment. The examples listed below range from the simplest, most primitive protective gear to the high-tech marvels of a lost golden age.

Each type of armor is listed with the Armor Class it grants, the Readied Encumbrance it imposes, and the Trauma Target modifier for campaigns that use the optional Traumatic Hits rule. Some armor also qualifies as "Subtle", in that it can generally be worn in social situations where armor would not pass.

Some armor is tagged as "primitive". Such armor grants no benefits against gunfire, explosives, or TL4+ melee weapons, counting only as AC 10 and not granting any Trauma Target mods for games that use Traumatic Hit rules.

Powered armor suits, including the assault suit, protection field, and vanguard plate, render the wearer immune to harm from unarmed attacks, grenades, or weapons of TL3 or lower. Only high-tech threats can harm wearers of such advanced protection.

Only one set of armor can be worn at a time.

Armor Types

Heavy leather jackets, boiled leather plates, multi-layered cloth armor, dirt bike gear, athletic kit, and thick furs can all serve as basic armor.

Scrap mail and ***scrap plate*** cover the various forms of jury-rigged armor fashioned from small pieces of metal. While still ineffective against bullets, enough battered plating can make a wearer very difficult to harm with less sophisticated tools.

Plate carriers and full ***military body armor*** are the best gear a modern-day scavenger can generally hope to get.

For far-future Mutant Wasteland campaigns, ***high-tech street clothing*** represents those ancient pre-collapse artifacts fabricated from exotic materials capable of resisting blades and punctures. Their style may be highly outlandish, but their durability makes them highly valuable to scavengers.

Terran explorer suits were rustic outfits fashioned in the latter years of the Mandate for those bold citizens who enjoyed roaming the relatively-more-dangerous uninhabited portions of Old Terra. The built-in suit tech keeps the wearer clean and dry regardless of the environment, can identify toxic foodstuffs on touch, and has micro-heating elements that keep then wearer warm in anything short of a blizzard.

Armor	AC	Enc.	Trauma Target Mod	Subtle?	Cost	Tech Level	Note
Normal Clothing/Unarmored	10	0	0	Subtle	N/A	0	
Leathers or Animal Hides	13	1	0	Subtle	25	0	P
Protective Sport Gear	14	1	0	Obvious	50	3	P
Scrap Mail	15	2	+1	Obvious	100	2	P, H
Plate Carrier	14	1	+1	Obvious	200	3	
Military Body Armor	16	2	+1	Obvious	300	3	H
Scrap Plate	18	3	+1	Obvious	300	2	P, H
High-tech Street Clothing	13	0	0	Subtle	200	4	
Terran Explorer Suit	16	0	+1	Subtle	500	4	
Insurgent Armor	18	1	+1	Obvious	1,000	4	
Harmony Armor	18	0	+1	Obvious	1,500	4	
Vacc Suit	13	1	0	Obvious	250	4	S
Assault Suit	18	2	+2	Obvious	N/A	4	S
Protection Field	18	0	0	Subtle	N/A	5	
Vanguard Plate	20	2	+3	Obvious	N/A	5	S
Shield	14/+1	1	0	Obvious	N/A	0	P

H: The armor is Heavy, and applies a -1 penalty to all Sneak or Exert skill checks.
P: This armor is Primitive, and gives no benefits against gunfire, explosives, or TL4+ melee weaponry.
S: This armor is sealed-suit armor, unusable by wearers without a basically human body plan.

Insurgent armor is a catch-all for the homemade suits of armor pieced together by rebels, malcontents, and other enemies of the Harmony Bureau. While inelegant, even the makeshift tech and repurposed materials of Old Terra make for an extremely sturdy suit of protective gear.

Harmony armor is the sinister glossy-black plate worn by the enforcers of the Mandate's Bureau of Harmony. The ultra-light materials of the suit shift slightly to obscure the wearer's body shape, and the blank faceplate and voice distortion module of the helmet conceal the wearer's identity.

Vacc suits provide a sealed, heated environment for the wearer lasting up to six hours on a tank of air and requiring one Type A power cell for every twelve hours of use. Primitive TL3 vacc suits do exist, but these bulky outfits count as 3 points of Encumbrance and are ruined if the user is hit by a bullet or edged weapon. The more advanced Mandate models in use on Old Terra have limited self-repair functionality and maintain pressure even after an injury. A vacc suit lowers radiation exposure somewhat, decreasing Radiation save intervals by one step.

Assault suits are the most common form of powered armor surviving after the collapse of the Mandate. They are voraciously power-hungry, requiring a Type B power cell for 24 hours of operation, but the suit has numerous built-in functions. It provides encrypted military comms, vacc suit functionality, low-light and infrared visuals, and an energy feed port. Any single device that runs on Type A cells can be plugged into the port, allowing it effectively infinite energy while the assault suit remains powered.

Protection fields are rare, exotic defensive screens once used by high-ranking Mandate officials. Their physical component consists of nothing more than a ring, bracelet, or other token. When worn, the field shields the wearer with an invisible force field that has vacc suit functionality. The shield is imperceptible under normal circumstances, only flashing briefly when struck by blows. These devices operate indefinitely on their own internal power sources.

Vanguard plate was once reserved for the personal guard of high-level Mandate functionaries, an imposing display of intimidating might to ensure their security. It has all the functionality of an assault suit, while increasing the wearer's effective Strength score to 18. During the first round of combat, the wearer gains a bonus Main Action on their turn as the suit's emergency response accelerators cut in. Unfortunately, Vanguard plate has the same Type B energy cell requirement as an assault suit, presumably to ensure that stolen suits could not be easily fueled by rebels.

Shields grant a base AC of 14 to a user, or add +1 to their AC if it's already equal or higher. They also prevent the first instance of Shock a user suffers each round. Shields count as primitive armor, however, and grant no benefits against bullets or high-tech blades.



Ranged Weapons

The weapons of choice for modern combatants, most survivors find it prudent to have a gun close to hand. Ammo requirements can become onerous, however, especially a few generations after the armories have stopped functioning.

Ranged Weapon Types

Primitive bows of wood, sinew, and horn are most often used by wastelander tribals who have no access to more sophisticated materials. More ***modern bows*** have features that make them considerably easier to use effectively, though they can be difficult to find in working order.

Pistols and rifles are the mainstays of modern firearms. Precise shots to a target's vitals are easier to land with smaller-caliber guns, but the consistent tissue-wrecking efficiency of large-caliber weaponry has its charms. Combat rifles and submachine guns are equipped with selective fire options.

Shotguns are a classic choice for their ubiquity, simplicity, and reliability. Whether a venerable double-barrel or a modern select fire combat shotgun, a load of shot can quiet more than zombies. Slug ammunition is also available, doubling the weapon's normal and maximum ranges but decreasing its damage by 1.

Sniper rifles are usually heavy bolt-action rifles with the reach to pick off targets at long range. Without a solid rest they perform no better than other rifles.

Automatic rifles are barely man-portable weapons meant to hurl vast amounts of lead. Each magazine round of automatic rifle fire costs the same as ten rounds of conventional ammo, where it can be bought.

Weapon Ranges

Ranged weapons have both a normal and a long range listed. Whenever shooting past normal range, a -2 hit roll penalty is applied. A bullet might still be dangerous past long range, but it has no real chance to hit.

Burst Fire

Weapons capable of burst fire can expend three rounds of ammunition to gain a +2 bonus to both hit and damage rolls. A weapon without a minimum of three rounds loaded cannot burst fire.

Suppressive Fire

Automatic rifles and other bullet hoses can be used to apply suppressive fire as a Main Action, drenching a zone in front of the gun with semi-discriminate fire.

Each round of suppressive fire costs two rounds of ammunition. The user must either be prone or bracing the weapon firmly against an appropriate rest to use suppressive fire.

The attacker can pick a 90-degree cone in front of the weapon. Any targets within the weapon's normal range who are not behind hard cover must make an Evasion save or suffer half the weapon's rolled damage.

If using the Traumatic Hit rules, each suppressive fire hit on a target has a chance of inflicting one, using the weapon's usual Trauma Die.

Suppressive fire counts as an area-effect source of damage when spraying into zombie hordes that are immune to single-target damage, as noted on page 223.

Firearm	Dmg	Range	Cost	Mag	Attr.	Enc	Trauma Die	Trauma Rating	TL
Light Pistol	1d6	10/80	100	15	Dex	1	1d8	x2	3
Heavy Pistol	1d8	10/100	100	8	Dex	1	1d6	x3	3
Primitive Bow	1d6	20/100	20	1§	Dex	2	1d8	x3	0
Modern Bow	1d8	30/200	50	1§	Dex	2	1d8+1	x3	3
Rifle	1d10+2	200/400	200	6	Dex	2	1d8	x3	2
Combat Rifle	1d12*	100/300	300	30	Dex	2	1d8	x3	3
Submachine Gun	1d8*	30/100	200	20	Dex	1	1d6	x2	3
Shotgun	3d4	10/30	100	2	Dex	2	1d10	x3	2
Semi-Auto Shotgun	3d4	10/30	200	6	Dex	2	1d10	x3	3
Combat Shotgun	3d4*	10/30	300	12	Dex	2	1d10	x3	3
Sniper Rifle¶	2d8	1,000/2,000	250	1§	Dex	2	1d10	x4	3
Automatic Rifle	2d8#	200/400	N/A	10	Dex	4	1d10	x3	3

*: This weapon may use burst fire when attacking, firing three rounds to gain +2 to hit and damage rolls
§: This weapon can be reloaded with a Move action, or an On Turn if the user has at least Shoot-1 skill
¶: If not fired from a stationary rest, this weapon's statistics are the same as a regular rifle
#: This weapon can fire to suppress if braced against a solid support or if the gunner is prone

Melee and Thrown Weapons

Not every collapsed nation has convenient racks of firearms in every suburban basement, and the mutant hordes of a radioactive future are often forced to settle for the simple weapons they can hammer out of salvaged scrap. Even survivors who can get their hands on firearms often find it wise to have a knife or two tucked away for a rainy day.

Weapon Types

Unarmed attacks such as punches and kicks are unique in that the attacker can add their Punch skill level to the damage done. The damage they inflict is always non-lethal unless the attacker actually wants to kill their target.

Knives, clubs, swords, and other primitive melee weapons are particularly common in Mutant Wasteland campaigns, but are sometimes found among the more improvisational modern survivors. Knives and similar light weapons can be thrown at the ranges given below, using the best of Stab, Shoot, or Exert skills.

TL4 weapons are special high-tech versions of primitive weaponry, usually incorporating monomolecular edges, integral thermal cutting surfaces, vibrating serrations, or other special tricks beyond modern-day science. Unlike conventional melee weapons, they are capable of harming targets in full-suit powered armor.

Grenades

Grenades always roll their attack rolls against AC 10. On a hit, the grenade lands where it was intended. On a miss, it misses by 1d10 meters in a random direction.

Flash grenades force victims within 5 meters without eye and ear protection to make a Physical save; on a failure, they lose their next Main Action and take a -2 penalty to AC and hit rolls for the next 1d6 rounds. Flash grenade effects don't stack, and a target who makes their save cannot be flashbanged again that round.

Frag grenades inflict 2d6 damage on all within 5 meters, plus the chance of a Traumatic Hit if those rules are being used. An Evasion save halves the grenade's damage, and that damage is reduced by 1 point for every AC point above 14 the target has, down to a minimum of zero damage.

Gas grenades create a 5-meter radius cloud of opaque, choking gas that disperses in one round. The damage they inflict is non-lethal, with a Physical save to halve it. They are useless against targets with breathing protection. The gas cloud provides everyone within it with full concealment.

Smoke grenades provide the same dome of opaque smoke that gas grenades do, but the smoke itself is harmless. IR or augmented visuals can see through it.

Melee and Thrown Weapons	Dmg	Range	Cost	Shock	Attr.	Enc	Trauma Die	Trauma Rating	TL
Unarmed Attack	1d2^	-	-	-	Str/Dex	-	1d6	x1	-
Knife	1d4	10/20	5	1/AC 15	Str/Dex	1	1d6	x3	0
Club	1d4^	10/20	N/A	1/AC 18	Str	1	1d6	x2	0
Spear	1d6	10/20	5	2/AC 13	Str/Dex	1	1d8	x3	0
Sword	1d8	-	30	2/AC 13	Str/Dex	1	1d8	x2	1
Axe	1d6	5/10	20	1/AC 15	Str/Dex	1	1d8	x3	1
Big Sword	2d6	-	50	2/AC 15	Str	2*	1d8	x3	1
Big Club	1d10^	-	3	2/AC 18	Str	2*	1d8	x3	0
Big Axe	1d10	-	40	3/AC 15	Str	2*	1d8	x4	1
TL 4 Knife	1d6	10/20	200	2/AC 15	Str/Dex	1	1d8	x3	4
TL4 Sword	1d10	-	300	3/AC 15	Str/Dex	1	1d8	x3	4
TL4 Big Sword	2d8	-	400	4/AC 15	Str	2*	1d8	x3	4
TL4 Club	1d8^	-	300	2/AC 18	Str	1	1d8	x3	4
Grenade, Flash	Special	10/30	10	None	Dex	1	-	-	3
Grenade, Frag	2d6	10/30	20	None	Dex	1	1d8	x2	3
Grenade, Gas	1d10^	10/30	10	None	Dex	1	-	-	3
Grenade, Smoke	-	10/30	10	None	Dex	1	-	-	3

^: This weapon's damage is always non-lethal, unless desired otherwise. Non-lethal hits don't roll the Trauma Die
*: This is a two-handed weapon, making it impossible to have a Readied item in the user's off-hand



High-Tech Weapons

The masters of the Terran Mandate went to great lengths to keep sophisticated weaponry out of the hands of the populace. Even so, vaults of Harmony Bureau arms and hidden caches of home-brew rebel tech are still unearthed centuries later. In most settings, these weapons can't be bought on the market.

For games set in a different universe, these statistics can be used to create sci-fi weaponry for alien invasions, secret government labs, or solitary works of engineering genius.

All of the weapons listed below use Type A power cells as ammunition, one cell filling the magazine. Energy weapons also gain an intrinsic +1 to hit due to their lack of recoil.

Weapon Types

Laser pistols and rifles were the standard weapons of most frontier-world armed forces. Cheap and simple, they are at a disadvantage when shooting into heavy smoke or other particles, suffering a -4 penalty to hit.

Shear rifles are elegantly silent weapons that cleave targets into neatly-sliced pieces. As they required sophisticated gravitic tech, simpler and much louder ***cutter rifles*** were rigged by insurgents. The ***heavy cutter*** they used was tuned for suppressive fire, though its great bulk was a disadvantage.

Mag weaponry accelerates its bolts through a pulse of staged magnetics. The need for physical ammunition discouraged its military use, but such weapons were still popular among big-game hunters.

Blackout rifles were non-lethal Harmony Bureau weapons for hitting targets with phased electrical charges that dropped them unconscious. Victims reduced to zero hit points wake up ten minutes later with 1 HP.

Thermal pistols and plasma projectors were for less cooperative targets. The spheres of coherent plasma they discharge often cause large-scale tissue destruction, even if the wounds tend to self-cauterize. Creatures resistant to heat damage resist plasma.

Whip beams were specialist tools for breaching hot insurgent bases. The pencil-thin plasma beam it projects can be used as a cutting tool, creating a man-sized hole in the average steel door or similar barrier as a Main Action. Car-sized vehicles or smaller hit by a whip beam roll 1d20 for its Trauma Die, or take double damage if those rules aren't used.

Spike throwers augment traditional shotgun mechanics with microforged mag-accelerated flechettes. While somewhat lacking in reach, they inflict horrific damage on anything in their way.

Neutron blasters were most often fabricated by rebel techs who needed to secure Harmony Bureau gear in undamaged condition. The heavy particles they project do no damage to unliving objects but tear apart living flesh. The beam is wide and indiscriminate, each shot targeting every creature in a one-meter-wide line out to thirty meters. Separate hit and Traumatic Hit rolls are made against each potential target.

Advanced Weapon	Dmg	Range	Mag	Attr.	Enc	Trauma Die	Trauma Rating	Tech Level
Laser Pistol	1d6	100/300	10	Dex&	1	1d6	x2	4
Laser Rifle	1d10*	300/500	20	Dex&	2	1d8	x2	4
Shear Rifle	2d8*	100/300	10	Dex&	2	1d8	x3	5
Blackout Rifle	2d6	100/300	6	Dex&	2	-	-	4
Cutter Rifle	1d12*	200/400	15	Dex&	2	1d8	x3	4
Heavy Cutter	3d6#	400/1.5k	10	Dex&	4	1d10	x4	4
Mag Pistol	2d6+2	100/300	6	Dex	1	1d8	x3	4
Mag Rifle	2d8+2	300/600	10	Dex	2	1d8	x3	4
Thermal Pistol	2d6	25/50	5	Dex&	1	1d10	x2	4
Plasma Projector	2d8	50/100	6	Dex&	2	1d12	x2	4
Whip Beam	2d6	30/60	6	Dex&	2	1d8	x4	5
Spike Thrower	3d8*	20/40	15	Dex	2	1d10	x3	4
Neutron Blaster	2d8	30/30	6	Dex&	2	1d8	x3	5

^: This weapon always inflicts non-lethal damage.
*: This weapon may use burst fire when attacking, firing three rounds to gain +2 to hit and damage rolls.
&: This energy weapon gains a natural +1 bonus to hit rolls due to the lack of recoil.
#: This weapon can fire to suppress if braced against a solid support or if the gunner is prone.

Heavy Weaponry

While it's unlikely that most accountants fleeing a zombie uprising would get their hands on hardware like this, some campaigns have need for details on heavy military gear.

Weapon Types

Anti-materiel rifles aren't overly popular these days, but the ability to shoot out a car's engine block is sometimes still needed despite the weapon's bulk.

Grenade launchers are usually accessories to conventional rifles, adding 1 Encumbrance to their bulk. Their special grenades can be fired with normal grenade effects and AC 10 hit roll out to the weapon's range. Such a modded rifle can fire either the launcher or the rifle itself on a given round, not both.

Demo charges must be hand-placed but can be remotely triggered. Anything within a cone out to its maximum range takes damage, with an Evasion save for half. If applied carefully to a vehicle or door, the object is destroyed.

Heavy machine guns are so bulky as to require a fixed position or prepared rest, and each magazine round of fire costs twenty times that of an ordinary round of ammo and weighs 1 Encumbrance. If a party can keep it fed, however, it can saw through reinforced concrete with enough time.

Mortars have a minimum range of 20 meters but can lob indirect fire. Mortars always target AC 20 at first, but each round of fire at the same target grants a +1 hit bonus if there's a forward spotter to adjust the aim. Mortar rounds act as frag grenades on the target point, but do 3d6 damage at base with a 10-meter radius. Armor doesn't lessen harm from mortar rounds.

Rocket launchers are single-shot disposable weapons that are somewhat imprecise against human-sized targets, suffering a -4 penalty to hit them directly. Even if it misses, it does frag grenade damage on anything within 5 meters. Specialized anti-armor warheads lose this damage but do double damage to vehicles or obstacles.

Land mines come in anti-personnel and anti-vehicle flavors. The first activates on any human-sized approach within 1 meter, inflicting damage in a 2-meter radius with an Evasion save for half. Anti-vehicle mines can only be activated by vehicular levels of ground pressure or vehicle-sized proximate metal masses, but do their damage in a 5-meter radius. Humans get an Evasion save for half damage in either case.

Railguns are upscaled fixed-emplacement mag weaponry, a favorite for defending Terran Mandate military positions.

Anti-vehicle lasers are large fixed lasers modulated to do exceptional damage to armor plate. Against vehicles or hard targets, damage is rolled twice and the better used. If Traumatic Hits are used, it rolls a d20 Trauma Die against vehicles.

Hydra arrays spam missiles; three hit rolls divided up among up to three targets. Hit and damage rolls are made normally, but a single target takes only the heaviest hit of any missiles that connect.

Wheatcutter belts are found largely on Mandate riot control vehicles and defensive fixtures. When detonated, all creatures within 10 meters of that side of the vehicle must make an Evasion save for half damage from the shrapnel. Those within 20m take half damage, and can make an Evasion save to take none at all.

Heavy Weapon	Dmg	Range	Mag	Attr.	Enc	Trauma Die	Trauma Rating	Tech Level
Anti-Materiel Rifle ¶	3d8!	1K/2K	5	Dex	3	1d12	x3	3
Grenade Launcher	Grenade	150/350	3	Dex	1	-	-	3
Demo Charge	3d10!	20/20	-	-	1	1d10	x3	3
Heavy Machine Gun ¶	3d6#!	500/2K	10	Dex	3	1d12	x3	3
Mortar	3d6	1K/2K	1	Wis	3	1d12	x3	3
Rocket Launcher	3d10!	2K/4K	-	Dex	2	1d10	x3	3
Land Mine, Anti-Pers.	1d8	-	-	-	1	1d10	x3	3
Land Mine, Anti-Vehic.	3d8!	-	-	-	2	1d20	x3	3
Railgun	3d8#!	4K/8K	20	Dex	N/A	1d20	x3	4
Anti-Vehicle Laser	3d10!	2K/4K	15	Dex	N/A	1d10/d20	x3	4
Hydra Array	3d6#	4K/8K	10	Dex	N/A	1d20	x2	4
Wheatcutter Belt	2d12	10/20	5	Dex	N/A	1d12	x3	4

¶: If not fired from a stationary rest or prone, this weapon's statistics are the same as a regular rifle.
#: This weapon can fire to suppress if fixed to a vehicle or stationary firing position.
!: This weapon's Trauma Die can inflict Traumatic Hits on drones, vehicles, and other machines.



Armor Mods

The mods listed below are simply some of the ones most likely to be installed by PC scrapsmiths. Others might be developed at a GM's discretion.

The scrap requirement listed is the number of units of scrap necessary to build the mod. The scrap must be of the same TL as the armor, or at least TL3. Special tech requirements are the rare and exotic components the mod requires. Special tech is generic, and any looted unit of it can be used as needed.

Armor Mods

Unless listed otherwise, a mod can only be applied once to any given piece of gear. No combination of mods can improve an armor's AC by more than +3.

Active Response: The armor has hyper-advanced reactive defenses that deflect and mitigate otherwise-critical injuries. Increase the wearer's Trauma Target by 1. This stacks with any existing Trauma Target bonus the armor may already confer on the wearer. This mod is only relevant in campaigns that use Traumatic Hit rules.

Biostabilizing: An integral biostatus monitor triggers emergency trauma drugs when the wearer is Mortally Wounded. As an Instant action, they roll 2d6+2 versus difficulty 8 to stabilize. Only one such attempt can be made before the suit needs an hour to recalibrate.

Customized: The armor is tailored to a specific wearer, granting them a +1 bonus to the armor's AC while it's worn.

Discreet Design: The armor is carefully tailored and adjusted to be less imposing. Obvious armor is made Subtle by this mod, though it suffers a -2 penalty to its AC. The armor retains its original bulk, but its lines, drapes, and fabrics now appear to be particularly voluminous fashion couture rather than protective equipment.

Flexible: Bulky armor is carefully cut and tailored to allow a wearer the optimal range of movement. The Heavy quality of a suit of armor is removed.

Lead Lined: The armor is lined with dense, radiation-resistant materials and equipped with a breathing filter. The time interval for radiation saves is increased by one step, but the suit's Encumbrance increases by 1 point as well.

Quickchange: The armor or clothing is designed with chroma-shifting fabrics, bi-facial texture panels, and removable accessories. As a Main Action, the wearer can shift its appearance to that of a different type of clothing or armor with the same level of obviousness. The details of this alternate appearance can be set with an hour of adjustment.

Sealed: The armor is equipped with a concealed filter hood and temporary pressure gaskets. As a Main Action, the user can seal the clothing against the external atmosphere, rendering them immune to gases and contact toxins. The seal and its integral air supply last 30 minutes, after which an hour of cleaning and purging will be needed to refresh the system.

Tailored Rig: Pouches, attachment points, holsters, and other rigging are designed for a particular wearer's body contours. They add 1 point of Readied Encumbrance and 2 points of Stowed Encumbrance to their maximum. These items are clearly visible to others, however, and cannot be concealed.

Whisperlight: The armor's bulk is cut down and conventional materials are replaced with more advanced composites. The armor's Encumbrance decreases by 1 point

Armor Mod	Skill	Scrap Required	Special Tech Required	Effect
Active Response	Fix-3*	30	2	*The armor increases a Trauma Target by +1.*
Biostabilizing	Fix-1*	20	0	*Roll 2d6+2 vs 8 to stabilize at zero hit points*
Customized	Fix-1	5	0	*A specific user gains +1 AC*
Discreet Design	Fix-2	15	1	*Make Obvious armor Subtle*
Flexible	Fix-2	20	1	*Remove the Heavy penalty from armor*
Lead Lined	Fix-1	5	0	*+1 Enc, but increase radiation save interval*
Quickchange	Fix-1*	10	0	*Change armor appearance as a Main Action*
Sealed	Fix-1	30	0	*Environmentally seal armor for 30 minutes*
Tailored Rig	Fix-1	20	0	*+1 Readied and +2 Stowed unconcealed items*
Whisperlight	Fix-2	30	1	*The armor's Encumbrance decreases by 1*

*: This mod is only appropriate for sci-fi settings or other campaigns with advanced tech.

Weapon Mods

Just as with armor, weaponry also comes in for special love at the hands of a diligent tech. The mods listed below are some of the ones most commonly installed in the wastelands.

Weapon Mods

Note that no combination of mods can improve a weapon's hit or damage die bonus by more than +3. As usual, a given mod can be applied only once.

Autotargeting: The weapon has kinetic sensors embedded in it that synchronize with onboard targeting chips. The user gains a +1 bonus to all hit rolls with the weapon.

Concealed: Materials are replaced, outlines are altered, and appearances are adjusted. Pistol-sized and smaller weapons now cannot be detected without a full minute of patting down the bearer, while anything no larger than a rifle can be concealed as if it were a pistol, unfolding to full size on use.

Customized: The weapon's balance and form are tailored to a specific user. That user gains a +1 bonus to all hit rolls with the weapon.

Extended Magazine: Caliber adjustments, feed assists, and magazine dimension alterations double a gun's magazine capacity while maintaining its reliability.

Heavy Sabot: Applicable only to projectile weapons, the gun is modified to fire heavy AP rounds that can plausibly land Traumatic Hits even on armored vehicles or heavy drones.

Integral Toxins: A melee or thrown weapon is impregnated with numerous microcells of an advanced hemotoxin, the cells rupturing on impact with a target. The weapon does +2 damage and Shock to subjects not immune to poison.

Predictive Guidance: An entire onboard computing core is augmented by advanced materials and cutting-edge kinetic analysis to increase the odds of landing a lethal blow. The weapon gains a +1 bonus to hit rolls, damage, and Shock.

Reel Wires: A thrown weapon is linked to a wrist spool with retractable wires that allow its retrieval as an On Turn action. The wires can be cut by a properly-timed attack with a sharp weapon, but are too thin and sharp to be easily grabbed. The wires can drag up to 20 kilos when retracting. Replacing broken wires takes 15 minutes.

Savage Impact: Usable only on melee weapons, augmented edges, vibrating serrations, or other after-market adjustments increase its damage and Shock by +1.

Shock Burst: Once per fight, as an On Turn action, the weapon can imbue itself or a round of ammunition with an electrical charge, inflicting an additional 2d6 damage on a hit, or +2 damage to melee Shock on the next attack. This damage is not affected by the +3 cap to mod hit and damage.

Stun Rounds: Usable only on firearms, the weapon's barrel and firing mechanism is altered to accept soft, electrically-charged stun rounds. The firearm's range is halved, it takes a -2 penalty to damage, and it loses its Trauma Die, but all damage it inflicts is treated as non-lethal. Stun rounds do no significant harm to inanimate objects.

Thermal Charge: Usable only on melee or thrown weapons, the mod adds a bank of heat cells to the weapon. The weapon then inflicts +2 damage and Shock to all creatures not impervious to heat. The cells are activated as an On Turn action, but last for only two fights before requiring an hour to let the elements cool.

Weapon Mod	Skill	Scrap Req.	Tech Req.	Effect
Autotargeting	Fix-1*	25	0	*Gain a +1 bonus to hit with the weapon*
Concealed	Fix-2	20	1	*Makes a weapon much harder to recognize*
Customized	Fix-1	10	0	*Gain a +1 bonus to hit with the weapon*
Extended Mag	Fix-1	10	0	*Doubles weapon mag size*
Heavy Sabot	Fix-1	35	0	*Allows Traumatic Hits on drones/vehicles*
Integral Toxins	Fix-2*	30	1	*Gain a +2 poison bonus to damage and Shock*
Predictive Guidance	Fix-3*	40	2	*Gain a +1 bonus to hit, damage, and Shock*
Reel Wires	Fix-1*	10	0	*Retrieves a thrown weapon as an On Turn act*
Savage Impact	Fix-1	15	0	*Gain a +1 bonus to damage and Shock*
Shock Burst	Fix-2*	20	0	*Once/fight, +2d6 electric damage, +2 Shock*
Stun Rounds	Fix-2	20	0	*-2 damage, half range, but non-lethal damage*
Thermal Charge	Fix-2*	30	0	*+2 heat damage and Shock for two fights*

*: This mod is only appropriate for sci-fi settings or other campaigns with advanced tech.



Survival Gear

As with the other equipment in this section, the survival gear here is given a price in food rations, silver coins, or perfect bottlecaps that reflect what it might cost in a post-apocalyptic society that still has enough surplus to trade. For more desperate or impoverished settings, this gear might not be available at all without personal favors or greatly increased costs in useful supplies.

Ammo: For simplicity's sake, ammo is considered fungible between guns without concern for caliber. While a large amount of loose ammo can be carried in bags and pouches, individual magazines need to be kept loaded if quick reloads are desired.

Backpack: Strength alone won't help a survivor carry their gear if they've got nothing to carry it in.

Batteries: These are non-rechargeable modern batteries in whatever format the PCs may need.

Binoculars: If something is close enough for a survivor to notice it, most binoculars will let a user get a good look at it.

Camping kit: Cooking gear, stakes, a tinderbox, cordage, and other small necessities make life more comfortable for a survivor. One without intense primitive-tech experience may not be able to make a fire or cook a meal at all without this gear.

Clothes: A near-future collapse usually won't lack for clothing with the vast surplus of long-lasting couture found in every first world closet. The example prices given here are for longer-term settings, where much of that surplus has decayed. Survivors without the right clothing for extreme climates might suffer privation until they get dressed correctly.

Compressed fuel: Most survivors can collect firewood as they march, or forage it with relative ease. When a party can't do that, compressed charcoal or other high-density fuels can warm a group for less cost in weight.

Crowbar: Breaking bars, demo axes, and other tools for prying through rubble are necessary kit for most post-apoc scavengers. They can also serve as makeshift clubs in times of need.

Dog, trained: This is a trained fighting dog, with stats given on page 207. A single PC can't manage more fighting dogs at once than the sum of their Charisma modifier and Lead skill, or Work if it's some animal-handling experience.

Drone, with controller: A simple civilian-grade flying observation drone with a range of 5 kilometers and a run time of 30 minutes on a single modern battery. They're easily spotted by wary observers, and are AC 20 when in flight. Any damage will bring them down. A tech with Fix-1 can rig a drone to carry a grenade, halving its flight time.

Survival Gear	Cost	Enc
Ammo, 5 rounds	1	*
Ammo, empty magazine	1	1
Backpack	5	1~
Batteries, modern-day	2	*
Binoculars	25	1
Camping kit	20	2
Clothes, basic	10	1~
Clothes, cold weather	30	2~
Compressed fuel for one night	1	1
Crowbar	10	1
Dog, trained	50	-
Drone, with controller	200	3
Energy cell, Type A	25	1
Energy cell, Type A+	N/A	1
Energy cell, Type B	100	3
Energy cell, Type B+	N/A	3
First aid kit	25	1
Flashlight	10	1
Gas mask	50	1
Hand cart	50	-
Hand tool	10	1
Horse, riding	250	-
Lantern	20	1
Lockpick kit	50	1
Mule	100	-
Night vision gear	150	1
Oil flask	2	1
Radio, long-distance	250	2
Radio, walkie-talkie	50	1
Rope, 20m	5	1
Scrap, TL2	10	1
Scrap, TL3	25	1
Sleeping bag	10	1
Surgical kit	500	3
Tarp	10	2
Tent	20	3
Torches, 3	1	1 ea.
Toolkit	50	3
Water jug	2	1

~: These items have no Encumbrance while worn.
*: No Encumbrance for any reasonable amount

Energy cell: Found in TL4 far-future settings, these energy cells are vital for powering sophisticated tech. Type A cells are small cylinders for personal-scale gear and can substitute for modern batteries in simple gear, while the large, heavy Type B cells fuel vehicles and heavy equipment. Due to security concerns, both types are non-rechargeable. Criminals and renegade techs did create rechargeable "A+" and "B+" variants of those cells that could be recharged with a day and a week of conventional mains power feeding, respectively, but the process also made them more fragile and prone to failure. As such, the plus variant cells are not commonly found for sale and must be looted from an intact cache.

First aid kit: Bandages, antibiotics, splints, and other tools of immediate lifesaving importance are packed in this case. A medic without such a kit will suffer significant penalties trying to treat injuries or diseases. After each use, roll 1d6; on a 1, the kit has run out of useful materials.

Flashlight: A modern battery will power this handheld light for 6 hours, allowing it to cast an effective beam of light 20 meters long and 3 meters wide. Dim shapes may be visible beyond that range.

Gas mask: This mask will filter out airborne toxins and inhaled gases, but it applies a -2 penalty to hit rolls and Notice checks due to the restricted vision.

Hand cart: Simple and reliable, this small cart can carry either 15 units of Encumbrance or one helpless rider without significantly slowing a party's overland travel, provided fresh hands are available to trade off the work of pulling it. A cart can't readily cross rough terrain, however.

Hand tool: Saws, wood axes, adzes, hammers, and other tools are in high demand when civilization needs to be rebuilt and the old manufactories are no longer making tools.

Horse: This horse is a riding horse with stats as given on page 207. Such animals are not trained for combat, and may panic during a fight as explained on page 50. Combat-trained steeds will cost twice as much where they can be had, and actual warhorses are eight times as much in the few societies that actually can raise them.

Lantern: A simple hooded oil lantern that casts light in a 10m radius when fueled by a flask of lamp oil. It burns for 4 hours on one flask of oil and is protected from rain or winds.

Lockpick kit: Carefully-bent wire picks, skeleton keys, and keycard spoofers allow lockpick attempts on mechanical and electronic locks.

Mule: Steady, stubborn, and slow, a mule can carry 15 items of Encumbrance while grazing for most of its needed food on a journey. They aren't useful in combat, but they seldom spook and are small enough to navigate human-sized corridors.

Night vision gear: Somewhat bulky, this tech applies a -1 penalty to Notice checks, but allows normal vision in dark environments for three hours per modern battery loaded into it.

Oil flask: Whether oil or kerosene, this flask can fuel a lantern or be spilled to create a 1 meter pool of flame that does 1d6 damage to any creatures caught in it, with an Evasion save to negate. The pool lasts 1d6 rounds.

Radios: Handheld walkie-talkies are simple to use, though they have a reliable range of only 1 kilometer in the open and 200 meters in a city. Long-range ham rigs require an appropriate background or Program-0 skill to operate effectively, but can reach for hundreds of kilometers if a few hours are given over to making the connection. Both types of radios function for about a week on one set of modern batteries.

Rope: Most survivors find a hundred uses for light, strong nylon rope, some of them even being legal.

Scrap: Most larger settlements will have at least one scrapsmith willing to barter salvaged debris. The sophistication of their offered goods will depend on the source of their supply. For far-future campaigns, TL4 scrap is so rare that it is almost never offered for mere sale.

Sleeping bag: While a minimally-adequate sleep can be gotten in warm climates without some sleeping kit, anything less friendly requires some sort of bedroll, long cloak, or sleeping bag.

Surgical kit: While this heavy case of tools and drugs is no substitute for an actual medical facility, it has enough variety and sufficient specialized tools to make complicated surgery a minimally feasible option rather than a certain death sentence. There's no risk of it running out if it's used only for the needs of a small PC party.

Tarp: This waterproof tarp is roughly 3 meters square and can serve as a makeshift tent or shelter cover at need.

Tent: A proper tent for two friendly survivors, sufficient to keep the rain and wind off.

Torches: Simple wooden sticks with pitch-and-cloth heads or other slow-burning substances. Each torch burns for an hour and casts light in a 10 meter radius.

Toolkit: A portable toolkit with the necessary implements to fix most TL2 or TL3 equipment or manufacture TL0 or TL1 gear from scrap. Crafting more elaborate items from salvage requires more sophisticated tooling, little of which is available for mere money.

Water jug: This plastic or metal container can hold enough water to sustain a person for one day in temperate climates.



Pharmaceuticals

Under the strain of a collapsing world and the horrors unfolding around them, some PCs take refuge in chemical relief. Other times, the availability of medical drugs can mean the difference between survival and a fresh grave. In all cases, a stash of pills or baggie of powder remain valuable trade goods.

Using Drugs

Applying a conventional drug takes a minute or two of undisturbed work, and is not generally practical in the middle of combat or other dramatic events.

Powerful drugs sometimes require expertise to properly apply. Drugs with a listed skill level require that level of Heal skill for successful application.

Modern Drugs

Rather than enumerate every single variety of street drug or medical substance the PCs might pillage, the drugs below are listed in general categories with abstract, general-case effects.

Modern Drugs	Cost	Skill
Alcohol, Common	1	-
Alcohol, Excellent	10	-
Antibiotics, Common	50	0
Antibiotics, Powerful	200	0
Depressant, Crude	1	-
Depressant, Refined	20	-
Hallucinogen, Crude	2	-
Hallucinogen, Refined	40	-
Opioid, Crude	1	-
Opioid, Refined	20	-
Stimulant, Crude	2	-
Stimulant, Refined	40	-
Therapeutic, Common	100	0
Therapeutic, Powerful	500	1

Alcohol: From prison rotgut to rare vintages, booze is universally valuable. One dose is generally enough alcohol to render a drinker pleasantly tipsy but not incapacitated. The effects last 1d4 hours and decrease any Stress gained during that time by 1 point, though users also take a -2 penalty to hit rolls and -1 to any skill checks they might make. Both common and excellent booze have the same mechanical effects.

Antibiotics: Including a wide range of antivirals and conventional antibiotics, these drugs are meant to treat diseases. Common antibiotics can benefit Mild or Severe diseases, while powerful ones can help even Lethal cases. Each application allows a subject to reroll a failed disease save. Multiple doses can be applied to allow multiple rerolls, but not more than the attending physician's Heal skill, to a minimum of once.

Depressant: Drugs that calm, relax, and soothe a user, these medications can temper Stress and ease the effects of Breakdowns. One dose of crude depressants removes one point of Stress, though the benefit only applies once per day. Powerful refined drugs instead remove 2 points of Stress and end any current Breakdown, though they add 1 point of System Strain to the user. PCs can generally function normally while on depressants.

Hallucinogen: Crude natural hallucinogens or weak synthetics incapacitate the user for 1 hour, but end any current Breakdown. Refined synthetic hallucinogens do the same, but last 1d4 hours, remove 1d4 points of Stress, and add 1 point of System Strain.

Opioid: Painkillers, euphorics, and other opium-like drugs can make a user feel far better than they actually are. Crude pain pills or black tar grant 1d10 temporary hit points for an hour that can bring a user's hit points over their normal maximum. At the hour's end, these points vanish but leave the user with at least 1 HP remaining. Powerful refined opioid drugs roll the d10 twice and take the higher hit point bonus. In both cases, the user adds 1 System Strain the first time they take damage while under the drug's effects.

Stimulant: From kitchen meth to crack to high-purity cocaine, stimulants banish fatigue and inspire often-unjustified confidence. Crude stimulants last for an hour; once during that time, as an Instant action, the user can add a +2 hit roll bonus or +1 skill check bonus, though they gain 1 System Strain if they use this feature. Refined military-grade stimulants extend the duration of this effect to 24 hours and make sleep both unnecessary and impossible during that time.

Therapeutic: These are various medical drugs used to handle the symptoms and complications of serious injuries. If applied to a person who has suffered a Major Injury within the past scene, a dose of common therapeutics allows a reroll of any failed saving throw that Major Injury forced, with a bonus equal to the attending physician's Heal skill. This reroll can only be made once. Powerful therapeutics can be applied up to a week after the injury to grant a reroll, assuming the victim has survived that long.

High-Tech Stims

In far-future settings, pharmaceuticals are applied via small tabs that are pressed against the subject's neck or wrist, or fed into a powered armor suit's medical ports. Unlike modern-day drugs, applying them requires only a Main Action and their effects are immediate. Even so, some of the more sophisticated stims still require a skilled physician to properly apply them.

Stims can be applied to unwilling targets, but the victim must be unsuspecting or helpless.

Common Stims

Bounce: A nano-fueled invisible force shield bubbles the user, protecting them completely from the next kinetic injury they would otherwise suffer in the next hour. This stim adds 2 System Strain.

Glow: Meant originally for cleanup crews and technical workers, a dose of Glow will cure up to 1d6 points of Constitution lost to radiation damage.

Lifestyle: These tabs had hundreds of different minor cosmetic and hygienic effects, from targeted depilation to temporary skin color changes or signature body fragrances. Their basic therapeutic substrate also heals 1d6+1 lost hit points. The user gains 1 System Strain if the stim heals them.

Morning After: Meant originally as a hangover cure and general well-being stim, the advanced tech in the tab will negate any non-lethal toxin in the user at the cost of 1 System Strain.

Panacea: This complex stim immediately cures any non-biowarfare disease. Due to the unstable nanite substrate of the stim, however, there is a 1 in 6 chance that it instead worsens the disease by one degree, or instantly kills the victim of a Lethal disease.

Smile: A social disinhibitor stim that increases relaxation, volubility, and confidence. It lasts for 1d6 hours and increases the user's Charisma modifier by +1 during that time up to a +2 maximum, for a 1 point System Strain cost. A natural roll of 12 on any social skill check in that time is an automatic failure, however, as the user does something excessively uninhibited.

Snooze: An over-the-counter sleep aid stim that grants 8 hours of restful sleep regardless of discomfort, hunger, or other privation, allowing full normal recovery of System Strain or hit points. The user falls asleep 1d6 rounds after taking the stim, and cannot be awoken early.

Thunderbolt: Dangerous even before the collapse, this black project combat drug lasts for one scene. As an On Turn action once per round, the user can take a bonus Main Action. Each use of this drug adds 1d4 System Strain, adding one cumulative die for each time it's triggered in the same scene. If the System Strain gained pushes the user over their maximum, their heart explodes after the action is completed, killing them instantly.

Advanced Pharmaceuticals	Cost	Skill
Bounce	100	-
Glow	500	1
Lifestyle	100	-
Morning After	50	-
Panacea	5,000	2
Smile	250	-
Snooze	50	-
Thunderbolt	500	1
Titan	250	0
Trauma Patch	50	-
Weeper	500	-
Zen	100	-

Titan: A performance drug handed out to Harmony Bureau enforcers, a dose of Titan lasts for one hour and grants a +2 bonus to hit rolls, a +1 modifier bonus to Strength and Dexterity up to a maximum of +2, and 6 extra temporary hit points that are lost before any others. The drug adds 1 System Strain to the user.

Trauma Patch: A ubiquitous emergency stim in pre-collapse medical supplies, a trauma patch can stabilize a Mortally Wounded victim on a successful Int or Dex/Heal skill check against a difficulty of 6 plus 1 for each full round since the subject went down. A failed attempt can be tried again with a fresh patch. The patch is useless after six rounds. Trauma patches can't revive victims downed by poison, explosives, or other massive trauma. Unlike most stims, trauma patches are bulky, and count as one item of Encumbrance.

Weeper: An emergency purge tab, this stim causes the victim to immediately weep, vomit, and sweat out any poisons in their body and also grants them an immediate Physical saving throw to cure any Mild or Severe disease. The user gains 2 System Strain, however, and is entirely incapacitated for 1d6 rounds while the stim takes effect.

Zen: A calming psychoactive tab occasionally forcibly prescribed by Harmony Bureau psychologists to "troubled" citizens, a dose of Zen temporarily suppresses any Breakdown or psychic scar the user may have for 24 hours, making it impossible to gain Stress during that time. The enforced calm compels them to make a successful Mental save before any violent action, however, with the action wasted if they fail.



Vehicles

Whether the dusty steel chariot of a lone hero or the swarming bikes of leather-clad marauders, vehicles have a role in most post-apocalyptic wastelands.

Acquiring or Building Vehicles

In some campaigns, getting a car might be as simple as hotwiring one of the hundreds of abandoned vehicles choking the roads around a desolate city. In others, functional internal-combustion vehicles might be the jealously-guarded emblems of a mutant nobility. Seldom can a vehicle be simply bought.

Each vehicle below is listed with the requisite amounts of TL3 or TL4 scrap needed to build it from scratch, assuming a sufficiently well-equipped workshop is available. Only half as much scrap is needed if the PCs are trying to revive some wreck they've looted.

Building a small vehicle from scrap parts takes one week, a medium one takes one month, and a large one takes two months. Rebuilding a wreck takes only half the time. If a full crew of a half-dozen competent workers is available, the time is halved once more.

Repairing Vehicles

Fixing a vehicle requires a *Tool Rack* fitting or a suitable workshop. A bike might be repaired on a sidewalk, but a truck is going to need heavier equipment.

Vehicles that have been reduced to zero hit points have been totaled and must be rebuilt from a wreck. Lesser damage can be repaired at a rate of 2 points per day, plus the technician's Fix skill and Drive skill. A would-be repairman must have at least Fix-0 or Drive-1 skill to repair a damaged vehicle.

Fixing a vehicle requires one unit of appropriate scrap for every 10 HP fixed, or fraction thereof.

Vehicle Overland Travel and Fuel

In post-apocalyptic conditions, a vehicle rarely has an open road or a chance to open up its throttle. Individual bikes or trucks might be faster or slower depending on their Speed score, but they all tend to cover the same amount of ground over the course of a day's travel. The overland travel rules on page 60 indicate how long it takes for a vehicle to cross a given hex of land.

The base travel time on a full fuel tank is given below. Next to it is the Encumbrance value of the gas cans needed to fill it up, or the Type B power cells needed to run a sci-fi vehicle for that amount of time. Actually acquiring the fuel needed is up to the PCs.

Vehicle Size	Run Hours	Fuel Load Enc
Small	12	4 gas / 1 Type B cell
Medium	6	12 gas / 1 Type B cell
Large	3	24 gas / 2 Type B cells

Vehicle Loads and Encumbrance

In the absence of the *Extra Cargo* fitting, the average vehicle can carry the loads listed below. Each crew member's space left unfilled adds 12 items of Encumbrance to the allowed load.

Small vehicles can carry up to 5 items of encumbrance strapped to the body or stowed in panniers.

Medium vehicles can carry up to 100 items of Encumbrance in a trunk, or 100 kilograms of cargo.

Large vehicles can carry any reasonable Encumbrance value of personal equipment, or up to 1,000 kilograms of bulk cargo.

Trailers pulled by Medium or larger vehicles can haul 1,000 kilograms as well, but few roads smooth enough to accommodate them still exist after the end.

Vehicle Statistics

A vehicle's qualities are measured by certain statistics. Some are self-explanatory, such as the ***Hit Points*** of damage it can take before being rendered inoperable or the ***Armor Class*** that must be hit with a melee or ranged weapon in order to damage it.

Scrap is the amount of scrap needed to build the vehicle. Only half this amount, rounded down, is needed to rebuild a wrecked or inoperable machine. Some vehicles are too complex to rebuild with scrap.

Speed is a combination of the vehicle's overall speed, maneuverability, and capability for handling bad terrain. It's added to any vehicle-related skill checks the driver might make for a maneuver.

Armor indicates the vehicle's general toughness and resistance to damage, as explained on page 49.

Trauma Target is the vehicle's target number for Trauma Die rolls by weapons capable of inflicting Traumatic Hits on such a vehicle. Campaigns that do not use the Traumatic Hits rule ignore this score.

Crew is the maximum number of people the vehicle is intended to carry, including the driver. More might be wedged into a truck bed or strapped to a roof rack, but they are very likely to be thrown free during sharp maneuvers.

Power and ***Mass*** measure the amount of additional fittings that can be mounted on the vehicle. Added hardware takes up electrical and computing Power, and it can't be fitted without enough free Mass.

Size is the general size class of the vehicle, whether small-sized like a motorcycle, medium like a car, small helicopter, or SUV, or large like a flatbed truck or tank. Some vehicle fittings can only be installed on vehicles of a certain size or larger.

Hardpoints are the number of normal or Heavy weapons the vehicle can mount. Vehicle combat is detailed on page 49, but every gun requires a gunner, and a driver can't fire more than one.

Modern Vehicle	Scrap	Spd	Armor	TT	AC	HP	Crew	Pow.	Mass	Size	Hrdpt.
Motorcycle	50	1	4	10	13	10	1	1	3	S	0
Micro Flyer	500	0	0	6	13	10	1	1	4	S	0
Car	100	0	6	12	11	30	5	3	7	M	1
Truck	300	0	6	12	11	35	2	3	14	L	1
Helicopter	N/A	3	6	10	14	20	6	4	9	M	1

Sci-Fi Vehicle	Scrap	Spd	Armor	TT	AC	HP	Crew	Pow.	Mass	Size	Hrdpt.
Hovercycle	50	2	3	9	13	10	1	1	5	S	0
Gravcar	100	2	4	11	11	25	5	3	8	M	1
Gravtruck	300	1	4	11	11	30	10	3	16	L	2
Atmoflyer	N/A	4	8	9	14	30	5	4	15	L	2

Modern Vehicle Types

The statistics given here are for typical post-apocalyptic vehicles patched into bare functionality by their owners. Better-preserved or more exotic models may have different statistics.

Motorcycle: Small and simple enough to be worked on without more than basic tools, motorcycles also have the advantage of being agile enough to navigate rubble-strewn streets and vehicle-choked roads.

Microlight Flyer: Not many of these ultralight flyers still exist after society's collapse, but their relative simplicity and minimal needs for a landing space make them very valuable, if a would-be builder can find enough scrap to isolate the rare lightweight components needed to build one. A microlight flyer takes only 0.2 hours to cross a hex regardless of its terrain type, but it can't fly at night or in less-than-clear weather.

Car: A general class including SUVs and small pickup trucks, cars are ubiquitous in most modern societies, and some of the easiest vehicles to find and salvage. Cars cannot leave roadways unless equipped with the Offroading fitting.

Truck: Flatbed trucks, delivery vans, panel vans, and other large work vehicles can haul vast amounts of salvage, but like cars, they can't leave the roads. Fitting them for off-road travel is usually impossible.

Helicopter: This relatively small helicopter is more likely than its larger brethren to have survived the collapse in operable conditions. It can cross a hex of terrain in 0.1 hours of travel and can land anywhere a flat surface is available. Helicopters are very finicky beasts, however, and require an hour of maintenance by someone with Fix-1 skill and ten units of scrap for every hour of operation.

Sci-Fi Vehicle Types

These vehicles are examples of some of the high-tech conveyances that might've been used by a fallen ancient civilization or a band of modern-day alien invaders.

Hovercycle: These gravitic cycles float a half-meter above the ground, and treat light forest, suburbs, and sandy desert terrain as if it were open plains. Like other grav vehicles, they are also capable of crossing calm water and briefly boosting their altitude to up to 10 meters for crossing walls and similar obstacles.

Gravcar: A common gravitic vehicle for individual drivers or light utility duty, gravcars share the terrain and boosting advantages of hovercycles.

Gravtruck: While these trucks are too big to navigate any sort of forest or urban rubble, their low-altitude float allows them to go offroad in open or swampy terrain without the benefit of a road, as well as cross calm water.

Atmoflyer: One of a variety of high-tech helicopters, VTOL aircraft, or jets, a properly maintained atmoflyer can reach any point on the planet within an hour and land on any reasonably flat patch of ground. In the example Terran Mandate campaign setting provided in this book, however, their use has been sharply curtailed by the planet's orbital defense grid, which automatically annihilates any inorganic flying vehicle that dares to leave the ground.



Vehicle Fittings

To add a fitting, the vehicle must have enough free Power and Mass to support it; a bike with 1 Power and 3 Mass can't mount more than 1 total Power and 3 total Mass of fittings.

Fittings are almost never available on the open market, as they must be customized to each vehicle. Usually, an owner will need to scavenge the necessary amount of scrap and then negotiate with a wrench jockey skilled enough to build the work.

Installing or removing a fitting usually takes a day or two of work in a suitably-equipped shop, and anyone with Fix-0 or better can bolt on or remove an existing fitting. Building a fitting from scrap takes a week and the minimum Fix skill listed below. A given fitting can normally be added only once.

Common Fittings

The equipment listed below are merely some of the most common designs. Most require a vehicle of a certain minimum size in order to support a fitting.

Advanced Sensors: The vehicle is equipped with night vision, infrared sensors, and short-range radar good up to twenty kilometers of airspace. It can be driven safely even in pitch darkness.

Afterburners: Once per scene, as an On Turn action, boost the vehicle's Speed by 1 for five rounds.

Armor Plating: Increase the vehicle's Armor rating by 3 points. Medium vehicles can apply this fitting twice, and Large ones can apply it three times.

Vehicle Fitting	Scrap	TL	Power	Mass	Min. Size	Min. Skill
Advanced Sensors	80	4	1	0	S	Fix-2
Afterburners	50	3	1	2	S	Fix-1
Armor Plating	50	3	0	3	S	Fix-0
Cargo Space	None	3	0	1	S	Fix-0
Crash Pod	25	3	0	2	M	Fix-2
ECM Emitter	100	3	2	0	M	Fix-2
Emissions Cloaking	100	4	1	2	S	Fix-3
Extra Durability	50	3	0	4	M	Fix-1
Extra Passengers	25	3	0	2	S	Fix-1
Field Portable	100	3	0	2	S	Fix-2
Firing Turret	25	3	0	1	M	Fix-2
Ghost Driver	25	4	1	1	S	Fix-3
Hardpoint Support	50	3	1	1	M	Fix-1
Jack Control Port	50	4	2	0	S	Fix-2
Limpet Mount	50/100	3	0	3 or 6	M	Fix-2
Living Quarters	80	3	0	4	L	Fix-1
Medbay	100	3	1	2	M	Fix-2
Offroad Package	50	3	1	3	M	Fix-1
Power System, Small	25	3	+2	2	S	Fix-1
Power System, Medium	50	4	+4	3	M	Fix-2
Power System, Large	100	4	+8	5	L	Fix-3
Rad Shielding	25	3	1	1	M	Fix-1
Sealed Atmosphere	50	4	1	1	M	Fix-2
Smuggler's Hold	100	3	0	1	S	Fix-1
Targeting Board	25	3	1	1	M	Fix-2
Tool Rack	25	3	0	2	M	Fix-1
Zombie Catcher	25	3	0	2	M	Fix-0

Cargo Space: This fitting can be taken multiple times. Each time it adds 50 kg of protected cargo space for Small vehicles, 500 kg for Medium ones, and 2 metric tons for Large ones.

Crash Pod: If the vehicle crashes, the occupants can each reroll one failed crash save. If they make any of their saves, their HP can't be reduced below 1 point by the crash.

ECM Emitter: On a successful hit roll by a headshot pod, rocket launcher, or other long-range guided projectile, the driver can make an opposed Int or Dex/Drive skill check against the attacker's combat skill. On a success, the attacker must reroll their hit roll and take the worst result.

Emissions Cloaking: Once per day, for one hour, the vehicle can become almost invisible to infrared or radar. This cloak becomes useless if the vehicle is visually spotted by defenders.

Extra Durability: The vehicle's maximum hit points increase by 25%, rounded up.

Extra Passengers: Small vehicles add 1 Crew, Medium ones add 2, and Large ones add 4. This fitting can be taken multiple times, and any vehicle amenities such as crash pods or living quarters extend to these additional Crew as well.

Field Portable: Only Small or Medium vehicles can take this option, allowing them to be broken down into easily-portable parts packages. Small vehicles turn into 30 items of Encumbrance and Medium ones into 150. Disassembly takes 30 minutes for a Small vehicle and 3 hours for a Medium one, with reassembly taking four times as long.

Firing Turret: A hardpoint is stabilized, granting a +2 to hit with the gun it mounts.

Ghost Driver: The driver can order the vehicle directly or by radio or phone to go to particular places at particular times or perform other simple, direct actions on a given schedule. The onboard expert system can handle traffic-related challenges, but has no real intelligence to process more complicated problems.

Hardpoint Support: Additional power and structural support enable the addition of a hardpoint.

Jack Control Port: For cybernetically-augmented settings, the vehicle can connect to a cranial jack. While jacked in, the driver need only use a Move action to control the vehicle rather than a Main.

Limpet Mount: An entire second vehicle can be mounted with this fitting, Medium vehicles taking Small parasites and Large ones taking Small or Medium. Adding a mount for a Small vehicle takes up 3 Mass while a Medium one takes 6. Modifying a vehicle to be mounted costs 10% of its base scrap, but it can be launched even while the parent vehicle is underway. These parasite vehicles are destroyed if the parent is; otherwise, they take only half the damage the parent takes.

Living Quarters: Basic, cramped quarters are provided for sleeping, sanitation, and cooking for all crew.

Medbay: Surgical tools and medical support are provided for up to one critically-injured patient at a time. A medbay counts as an emergency clinic for purposes of treating Major Injuries, if someone with at least Heal-0 is available to tend to the patient.

Offroad Package: While any modern vehicle can handle abandoned roads and mostly-flat terrain, this package includes winches, tire armor, chassis reinforcement, and other upgrades needed to go through all but the most impassible terrain. When they Go Astray from terrain, the driver can make a Dex/Drive skill check at difficulty 9 to negate it.

Power Systems: These fittings add extra Power in battery capacity and electronic support at the cost of an additional Mass burden.

Rad Shielding: The vehicle has shielding and positive atmosphere pressure pumps installed to decrease any radiation check intervals by two steps; rads less than one check per day are ignored.

Sealed Atmosphere: For up to two hours per day the vehicle can seal itself entirely from the outside atmosphere, with internal air tanks and positive pressure to keep out external toxins. At all times it can maintain a comfortable interior temperature in any terrestrial climate and ignore all radiation of an intensity less than one save per round. Aircraft do not need this fitting to function normally at high altitudes.

Smuggler's Hold: This fitting can be taken more than once, and adds 10 kg of concealed cargo space in Small vehicles, 100 kg in Medium ones, and 400 kg in Large ones. It can be detected only by taking the vehicle apart or by an acute, careful inspection with a difficulty 12 Wis/Notice or Wis/Drive skill check.

Targeting Board: A single unified targeting board allows one gunner to manage up to three vehicle weapons instead of the one gun per gunner that would usually be allowed.

Tool Rack: Any vehicle can carry a toolkit in the trunk, but this rack is equipped with welders, heavy tooling, winches, and room for up 40 HP worth of spare parts. It can repair any vehicle and can be used as a makeshift workshop for related efforts.

Zombie Catcher: The vehicle is reinforced to ram through crowds. As a Move action, the driver can inflict 2d10 damage on any zombie hordes they run into. Large vehicles add +2d10. The driver must make a Dex/Drive skill check at difficulty 7, +1 each additional time this is done in a scene; on a failure, the fitting clogs up and stops working for the scene.



Vehicle-Mounted Weaponry

Vehicles with hardpoints can mount weaponry, provided they have the spare Power and Mass to support the guns.

Mounting Vehicle Weapons

A vehicle can mount a number of weapons equal to its hardpoints. Each weapon takes up a certain amount of the vehicle's Power and Mass, just as a fitting does; the heavier and more computationally-demanding the weapon is, the greater its demands.

Some weapons also require vehicles of a certain size in order to support them; no one is mounting an autogun on a motorcycle when the recoil alone would be enough to send the bike skidding.

While most professionals prefer to mount heavy weaponry on their rides, it's also possible to mount smaller guns, such as rifles or shotguns. These weapons make minimal demands on a vehicle's structure, but still require at least a Medium-sized vehicle to provide a stable firing platform.

Vehicle Weapon Ammo and Attacks

Each mounted weapon can carry one normal magazine's worth of ammunition. A loader can reload a vehicle weapon's magazine as a Main Action.

Vehicle weapons each require a gunner, and any attacks made by the weapon are made with the gunner's attack bonus and Shoot skill. The driver can fire one weapon if it's built to be operated by the person at the wheel.

Shooting at enemy vehicles requires targeting the vehicle's Armor Class and overcoming its Armor with the weapon's damage. Armor is subtracted from any damage the weapon inflicts, after multiplying for Traumatic Hits for campaigns that use those rules. Shooting at targets on foot requires hitting their usual AC.

Mounted weapons don't take a hit penalty for firing from a moving vehicle, but passengers who are blazing away out the windows take up to a -4 circumstance penalty to such efforts.

Vehicle Weapon	Power	Mass	Size
Anti-Materiel Rifle	0	1	M
Drone Cannon	1	1	M
Grenade Launcher	0	1	M
Headshot Pod	3	2	L
Heavy Machine Gun	0	2	M
Main Tank Gun	1	4	L
Mounted Autogun	1	2	L
Other Small Arms	0	1	M
Rocket Launcher	1	1	M
Shrieker Gun	2	2	M

Vehicle-Only Weaponry

These weapons are too large and bulky to be mounted on anything but vehicles or non-portable drones.

Drone cannons are heavy automatic weapons too bulky for human portability. A round of firing costs 100 rounds of ammunition.

Headshot pods are a family of guided missiles meant for mounted deployment on vehicles or large drones. They always target AC 10 to hit, but require two full consecutive rounds of aiming at a visible target to get a target lock on them and prime for firing on the third round. Any bystanders within 5 meters of the impact take damage as if from a frag grenade. A headshot pod missile takes 20 TL3 scrap to build.

Main tank gun attacks always target AC 10, and anyone within 10 meters of impact takes 1d20 damage if not behind heavy cover. They cannot be mounted on aircraft or anything smaller than a tank or ground turret. Each round costs 10 units of TL3 scrap to build.

Mounted autoguns are a drone cannon's big brother, for larger platforms. Each round of firing costs 100 rounds of ammo.

Shrieker guns are sonic cannons used for crowd control and non-lethal suppression. While highly effective against unprotected targets, heavy ear protection is sufficient to render the weapon useless.

Vehicle Weapon	Dmg	Range	TL3 Scrap to Build	Mag	Attr.	Enc	Trauma Die	Trauma Rating
Drone Cannon	2d8!	200/1,000	50	10	Dex	N/A	1d10	x3
Headshot Pod	4d6!	1,000/2,000	200	1	Dex	N/A	1d20	x4
Main Tank Gun	4d12!	1,000/3,000	500	1	Dex	N/A	1d20	x4
Mounted Autogun	3d8#!	500/2,000	150	10	Dex	N/A	1d12	x2
Shrieker Gun	2d6^#	100/400	100	-	-	N/A	-	-

#: This weapon can fire to suppress if fixed to a vehicle or stationary firing position
^: This weapon's damage is always non-lethal, unless desired otherwise
!: This weapon can inflict Traumatic Hits on vehicles and drones, if those rules are used

Vehicle Mods

While fittings follow general blueprints and can be installed by any skilled scrapsmith, vehicle mods are more delicate, individualized tweaks that require an expert to implement properly. The mods below follow the usual rules on page 75 for Maintenance and required skill levels. Most require both Fix and Drive skills to install, as they require deep familiarity with a given vehicle's handling.

Some mods also require one or more special components that must be found as part of a targeted salvaging expedition, gained as a reward from patrons, or otherwise specially acquired.

Modding a vehicle costs a percentage of the vehicle's base scrap costs, rounded up. Thus, putting *Extra Seating* into a vehicle that cost 100 units of TL3 scrap to build will take 10 units of TL3 scrap. The mod can be removed later, but scrap expended on it is lost.

Augmented Armor: Increase the vehicle's Armor rating by 3 points.

Blast Reinforcement: Additional reinforcement reduces Speed by 1, but ignores the first 20 points of grenade, mine, or explosive damage each scene.

Extra Seating: Increase the maximum Crew size by 1 for Small vehicles, 2 for Medium, and 4 for Large.

Integrated Magazines: Mounted weapons gain one extra built-in magazine for Small vehicles, two for Medium, or four for Large. Reloading one vehicle magazine takes a Main Action.

Personalized Controls: The vehicle's controls are designed for the idiosyncrasies of a specific driver. Once per scene, as an Instant action, they can add +1 to a Drive skill check. Anyone else takes -1 to drive the vehicle.

Power System Upgrade: Increase the Power rating of the vehicle by 2 points for Small vehicles, 3 for Medium, and 4 for Large.

Q-Cladding: Disguise the vehicle as another vehicle of the same general type, and hide its mounted weaponry until they are used. Replacing the disguise after weapons are deployed takes five minutes.

Reactive Defenses: Increase the vehicle's Armor Class by 2 points, but subtract 2 points from its Armor, if it has any.

Reinforced Chassis: Increase the vehicle's maximum HP by 25% of its base, but subtract 2 Mass from its maximum.

Remote Sensors: The driver's smartphone or a custom receiver can tap the vehicle's sensors as an On Turn action, getting audio and visual from it if no special sensors are installed. This signal can reach up to five kilometers and can also serve as a cellular signal provider for phones in that range.

Slick Skin: All protrusions, gaps, and other easy opportunities for zombies to grab or gum up the vehicle are removed. The vehicle ignores the first 1d6+Drive skill rounds of zombie horde attacks each scene.

Supplementary Tanks: The vehicle can take on three full loads of liquid fuel at once.

Ultralight Components: Increase the vehicle's maximum Mass by 2 points for Small vehicles, 3 for Medium, or 4 for Large. Its maximum HP decreases by 20% of its base, rounded up.

Upgraded Speed: Increase the vehicle's Speed by 1, but lose 20% of its maximum Mass, rounded up.

Vehicle Mod	Skills	Cost	Special Tech Required	Effect
Augmented Armor	Fix-3/Drive-1	25%	1	Gain +3 Armor
Blast Reinforcement	Fix-2/Drive-1	20%	0	-1 Speed, Ignore 20 explosive damage
Extra Seating	Fix-0/Drive-1	10%	0	+1/2/4 Crew based on vehicle size
Integrated Magazines	Fix-1/Drive-0	10%	0	+1/2/4 magazines based on vehicle size
Personalized Controls	Fix-1/Drive-2	20%	0	Drive check bonus for specific driver
Power System Upgrade	Fix-2/Drive-2	25%	1	+2/3/4 Power based on vehicle size
Q-Cladding	Fix-1/Drive-2	20%	0	Disguise vehicle as something harmless
Reactive Defenses	Fix-2/Drive-2	25%	1	+2 vehicle AC but -2 vehicle Armor
Reinforced Chassis	Fix-2/Drive-1	25%	1	+25% maximum base HP but -2 Mass
Remote Sensors	Fix-1/Drive-0	10%	0	Driver can see through the car's sensors
Slick Skin	Fix-2/Drive-0	15%	0	Ignore zombie horde attacks briefly
Supplementary Tanks	Fix-0/Drive-1	10%	0	Triple the vehicle's fuel tank size
Ultralight Components	Fix-2/Drive-1	20%	1	+2/3/4 Mass but -20% base max HP
Upgraded Speed	Fix-2/Drive-3	25%	2	+1 Speed but -20% base Mass



High-Tech Tools and Consumer Goods

Strange pre-collapse consumer tech and esoteric ancient devices are a staple of most Mutant Wasteland campaigns, and even more modern-day settings might include some weird alien devices or secret government projects. The devices in this section are meant to offer a selection of possibilities for GMs when stocking ancient ruins or determining the pocket contents of successful wasteland marauders.

These items are not normally available for sale in most campaign settings. If the GM wants to entertain the possibility, check the patron pay rewards on page 201 and price it as being worth twice the cash reward given by the kind of NPC who'd give it as a job reward.

Some items are noted as having onboard AI. These AI systems are primitive and purpose-directed, allowing intelligent use of the object's abilities but not having a personality or other qualities of general AI.

Key to the Devices

Unless specified otherwise, all devices require a Main Action to trigger their activation.

Items are categorized as household goods, tools and hardware, and artworks or personal effects. A GM can use these categories as guidelines when stocking areas. Individual items are marked as being Common, Uncommon, or Rare in frequency to give GMs an idea of how often they might turn up in a ruin. If a device of a particular rarity is wanted, the GM can roll dice and just pick the next entry of the right rarity type.

***Devices marked with a** ** require a Type A energy cell to activate, and function for one scene per use.

Devices marked with a @ require a Type A energy cell to power them each time they're activated, and function for the listed duration, or one round or action if not indicated.

Devices marked with # do not need energy cells, but can be used only once before being consumed or depleted. If not indicated otherwise, their effects last for one scene.

Devices with no marking at all function indefinitely on their own power, though particularly abusive use might run them down prematurely.

Air filter*: A fist-sized cylinder that purges all dangerous gases or airborne infectious agents within 10 meters while active.

Analyzer flask: This one-liter flask of transparent plastic glows a faint red if it contains liquid that is dangerous to drink. Each time the alarm triggers, there's a 1 in 6 chance the analyzer visibly burns out and becomes inert.

Anti-obesity stim#: Once applied, this stim will remove any body fat over that necessary for basic health over the course of an extremely uncomfortable day. The user need not eat for 1d6 days.

Anti-theft imprinter#: Appearing as a simple plastic card, the imprinter can be tapped against an electronic device to link it. That device will then only function if the imprinter card is within 1 meter. Tapping it again deactivates the imprint, and only one device can be imprinted at a time.

Antiflam gel#: A pale amber gel that rapidly dries to a thin, flexible, air-permeable layer, one unit of gel can cover up to a human-sized object or person. Coated objects or people are immune to normal fire for 24 hours and take no damage from lasers or plasma.

Atmoscanner*: This handheld device runs for one day on a Type A cell, monitoring the nearby atmosphere for toxins, spores, and radiation. Under most circumstances, the user will be alerted by the scanner before they need to save against the dangers.

Atomic blender: This kitchen implement will finely dice or grind almost anything inserted into its two-liter container provided it is less durable than TL4 military-grade armor. It operates almost indefinitely without outside power.

Atomic flashlight: A simple yet perpetually-powered flashlight that casts a beam 20 meters long and 3 meters wide.

Atomic welder*: This heatless atomic welding rig can cut or join metal objects at a rate of 200 cm of cut/join per minute of use, or 3m per energy cell.

Autoperfume#: Found in single-use spray ampules, this nanotech fragrance can be applied to an object to radiate a pleasant 3m-radius scent that completely erases any unpleasant or even toxic gases within that range for 12 hours.

Barrier seed#: A small rectangular tablet that can be dropped on the ground as an On Turn action to create up to a 5m x 5m cubic transparent force field aligned with the tablet, conforming to any walls or obstacles around it. Breaking it takes 20 points of damage, and it lasts for a scene.

Beacon flare: A self-charging emergency flare that can be triggered once per day to emit a brilliant light pillar extending up to 10m that brightly illuminates everything within 100m. The effect lasts 4 hours.

Beam flexer*: A specialized construction tool, this pistol-shaped device can non-destructively bend or twist unattended metal or wooden objects within 5m, provided they are no larger than 5m in any dimension. It takes one minute to bend an object.

Beauty mask: A facial overlay that can be triggered to perfectly mimic any then-visible face when worn, including providing vocal mimicry. Each time it's triggered, however, there's a 1 in 6 chance it burns out, inflicting 1d6 damage on the wearer.

d100	Household Goods	Rarity	Enc
1-2	Air filter	U	1
3-4	Antiflam gel	C	*
5-6	Atomic blender	R	1
7-8	Atomic flashlight	U	1
9-10	Autoperfume	C	*
11-12	Beauty mask	C	*
13-14	Bug repeller clip	C	*
15-16	Cleaning paste	C	1
17-18	Dance buddy	U	*
19-20	Energy miser	U	2
21-22	Foldable plant	C	1
23-24	Grav hand	U	1
25-26	Grav satchel	U	1
27-28	Hair gel	C	*
29-30	Holoplayer	C	1
31-32	Holorecorder	U	1
33-34	Hyperthermos	C	1
35-36	Ladderpack	U	1
37-38	Lifter disc	C	*
39-40	Microfurniture	C	1
41-42	Monocable	C	1
43-44	Music player	C	*
45-46	Nuclear breadbox	U	3
47-48	Omniglue	C	*
49-50	Parser screen	R	1
51-52	Passcard	U	*
53-54	Permadye	C	*
55-56	Perpetual spice	U	*
57-58	Plant pal	C	1
59-60	Plastasolv	C	1
61-62	Portable stove	C	1
63-64	Portable window	U	2
65-66	Portakettle	U	1
67-68	Rain shield	U	*
69-70	Repair gel	C	*
71-72	Retracting rope	C	1
73-74	Robopet	U	2
75-76	Safety knife	U	1
77-78	Self-repairing tool	C	1
79-80	Sentry cube	U	1
81-82	Silence cube	U	1
83-84	Sleep torc	C	*
85-86	Smoke detector	U	1
87-88	Solar cell	R	1
89-90	Stitchbot	C	1
91-92	Tracer pin	U	*
93-94	Vibro-drill	U	1
95-96	Vitalizer necklace	R	*
97-98	Walker exoharness	R	2
99-00	Wall clamps	U	1

* : No Encumbrance for any reasonable amount

Tools & Hardware	Rarity	Enc
Analyzer flask	U	1
Anti-theft imprinter	C	*
Atmoscanner	U	1
Atomic welder	U	2
Barrier seed	C	1
Beam flexer	U	1
Camo tarp	U	2
Catch field	U	1
Cavity sensor	U	1
Charged fertilizer	C	1
Climate bubble	C	1
Core drill	R	1
Cryopaint	C	1
Cryoprojector	U	1
Delithicator	C	1
Earthing boots	C	1
Energy sink	C	1
Filter hood	U	1
Force gloves	R	1
Freeze stand	U	1
Geiger buddy	C	*
Glue chain	U	1
Grav jack	C	1
Grav mattock	U	1
Grav sled	R	1
Gravitic tweezers	R	*
Herbicidal fogger	C	1
Leap booster	U	1
Link boxes	R	1 ea.
Mass fractionator	U	1
Monosaw	C	1
Nega-drain	C	1
Personal protective suit	C	1
Polyglot signs	U	1
Portalock	U	1
Probe snake	R	1
Pyrolyzer gel	C	*
Revivifier paste	C	*
Shrink projector	R	1
Slide field gun	R	1
Spotter bug	C	1
Stasis bar	U	1
Stasis flask	U	1
Sticky boots	R	1
Support field	U	1
Vapor belt	R	1
Vapor condenser	U	1
Vortex fan	U	1
Water dehydrator	R	1
Zirkote	U	*

*: No Encumbrance for any reasonable amount

Art/Personal	Rarity	Enc
Anti-obesity stim	C	*
Beacon flare	U	1
Bot pass	C	*
Chromatic lenses	C	*
Clarity shades	R	1
Contraceptive band	C	*
Decorative limb	R	1
Depilation wand	U	1
Dictum stone	R	1
Doc-band	U	*
Fashion skin	C	1
Float shoes	R	1
Force umbrella	U	1
Generative content editor	U	1
Grav hopper	C	1
Gravitic posture brace	U	1
Hangover stim	C	*
Holomask	U	*
Holoporn	C	*
Holoportrait	U	1
Light pen	U	*
Linked wallet	U	*
Manibot	C	1
Metasculpture	C	1
Mood ring	R	*
Mood stim	C	*
Music generator	C	1
Naturist bangle	U	*
Omnipiercings	C	*
Personal BGM trinket	R	*
Plas-toupee	C	*
Pocket grav warp	R	*
Polyhat	C	1
Polymorphic keyring	U	1
Privacy bubble	C	1
Psychic intrusion alert	R	*
Quip generator	U	1
Rad sink	C	*
Recording cube	C	1
Religious icon	C	1
Rescue grav skid	U	1
Ritual clothing	C	1
Scrub fan	C	*
Skim board	R	1
Smart book	U	1
Somnus crown	U	1
Sport drink synther	R	1
Stomach bag	C	*
Teetotaler ring	R	*
Voxlator	U	1

*: No Encumbrance for any reasonable amount





Bot pass#: A collection of universal security codes, this card can be presented to a single expert system bot as a Main Action. The bot must make a Mental save or obey the bearer for one scene. Only one attempt is possible per bot.

Bug repeller clip@: Designed to clip on a belt, this repellent device keeps unintelligent insects 3m away from the wearer for one day per Type A cell used. Provoking the insects negates this shield.

Camo tarp: This 4m x 4m mimetic tarp blends perfectly with its background while remaining transparent from one side. Viewers more than 10m distant have no chance of spotting the tarp unless using TL4 tech in their search.

Catch field@: For one scene, this palm-sized disc creates a 5m-radius inertial pad that neutralizes all falling damage for whatever lands in it. It must be placed on the ground to function.

Cavity sensor@: For one scene, this detector alerts the user of any hidden cavities, containers, or secret doors in an area that aren't TL4-tech shielded.

Charged fertilizer#: This satchel of nanotech fertilizer can be spread over a 20m square area with a few minutes of work, causing any vegetation within to gain a year's growth in ten minutes.

Chromatic lenses: These fashion contacts can have their color, iris pattern, and other aesthetic qualities adjusted by the user. They provide built-in protection against flashes or glare.

Clarity shades: These fashionable sunglasses provide immunity to flashes and grant functional vision out to 20 meters even in total darkness.

Cleaning paste#: This tube of nanopaste can be applied up to a human-sized person or object to completely clean it of all dirt, rust, or corrosion and keep it immaculate for one week afterwards. Damaged gear regains one level of functionality if it's not ruined.

Climate bubble#: For twelve hours on activation, this belt device keeps out rain, normal climate extremes, and airborne toxins in a 5 meter bubble.

Contraceptive band: A discreet band that induces sterility in a creature while it is worn.

Core drill@: This drill uses gravitic shear tech to cut a 30 cm wide x 1m deep hole in all but milspec armor with 5 minutes of attunement, or three such holes per power cell.

Cryopaint#: This spray cannister can be applied to a person or smaller object as a Main Action, after which the subject is covered in a thermoablative paint layer. The next time it would suffer fire damage, it becomes immune to it for one scene, taking no damage from lasers or plasma as well. The paint flakes off in 24 hours.

Cryoprojector@: This small emitter freezes all open liquids in a 10m radius down to 20 cm depth over the course of five minutes. This cold does not affect other objects within that area.

Dance buddy: Fashionable jewelry with a discreetly hidden trigger. When activated, the user gains unusual flexibility and grace, gaining a +1 Dex modifier up to a +2 maximum for the scene. Unfortunately, they are forced to do nothing but dance for the first 1d6 rounds of activation. The device burns out on a 1 in 6 after each use.

Decorative limb: Also appearing as wings, fins, horns, or other extremities, these artificial additions adhere or release on command. They are aesthetic only, however, and cannot actually function as prostheses.

Delithicator#: Appearing as a hand-sized demo device, the delithicator turns all concrete, ceraplast, or other mineral construction material within a 1 meter radius around it into liquid mud.

Depilation wand@: This device has a range of 10 meters and can target one creature per charge. The subject can make an Evasion save to dodge it, otherwise losing all head and body hair for 1d6 weeks. Careful use allows more targeted depilation.

Dictum stone#: An ominous fragment of memetic symbology, the bearer can issue one order to a visible target that understands their speech. The order must be something they would at least consider doing under the circumstances, and they can make a Mental save to resist. On failure, they obey the order for a scene. The stone crumbles after use.

Doc-band: When triggered, this wristband provides a precise readout of the wearer's biostatistics and diagnostic information. It grants a +2 bonus to any Heal checks made on them.

Earthing boots#: Ablative damping wires in these boots can be triggered as an Instant action to allow the wearer to ignore electrical damage for one scene before they burn out.

Energy miser: This device accepts a depleted Type A or A+ energy cell and will recharge it over the course of five minutes. The recharged cell is ruined for further use after discharging again, however.

Energy sink#: This palm-sized patch can be attached to an object or vehicle to drain up to a Type B power cell instantly. The careful positioning required makes it take 2 rounds to apply, however.

Fashion skin#: This tube of liquid can be applied to completely conceal scars or skin-deep Stigmas. The false skin lasts until the user is Mortally Wounded.

Filter hood*: When worn and activated, this transparent filter hood will screen out any noxious gases or aerosol disease particles for one scene.

Float shoes: These micrograv shoes keep the wearer 2 cm above the ground surface they walk on, with no pressure applied to it and no chance of slipping. They do not function over liquids.

Foldable plant: These immortal plants come in sizes ranging from potted desk plants to 3m-tall ornamental trees, but all of them fold into palm-sized 1 Enc cubes without harm to them. They do not require water, sunlight, or fertilizer to live.

Force gloves*: These elbow-length gloves force-shield the user's hands and arms. They count as a shield for armor purposes and when used carefully can let the user handle any object or reach into dangerous or superheated materials without harm.

Force umbrella*: Appearing as a normal umbrella, when activated it will keep off rain in a 5m radius, filtering out smoke and air particulates too.

Freeze stand*: This palm-sized disc can be slapped against an object no larger than a car. For the rest of the scene, that object is stasis-frozen in place, regardless of forces placed on it. The object must not be moving when the disc is applied.

Geiger buddy#: A single-use clip-on device that rings an audible alarm at dangerous radiation levels. Once triggered, the user automatically ignores the next 1d4 Radiation saves in the next 24 hours.

Generative content editor#: This single-use cube can be pressed to any device containing audio-visual or holographic image information. An onboard expert system can accept vocal direction to change that information, editing the data to make it reflect whatever alterations are desired.

Glue chain*: This 10m length of ultra-strong ceraplast chain has attachment points on both ends that can be adhered to any solid surface when activated, forging a bond that lasts one scene.

Grav hand*: When activated, this glove allows the user to telekinetically manipulate unattended objects up to 20 meters away as if using one hand's strength.

Grav hopper#: These discreet leg bands can be triggered as a Move action to leap up to 30m horizontally or vertically. Otherwise, they activate automatically to negate fall damage of any distance. Their grav units burn out after one use.

Grav jack*: Appearing as a small grav disc, the jack can be attached to the bottom of an object to lift up to 10,000 kg by three meters for one scene. The automatic reinforcement field keeps fragile objects from falling apart when lifted.

Grav mattock*: Built-in gravitic pushers allow the mattock's user to manually dig or move up to a 5m cube of earth in one scene, shifting it up to 50m distant.

Grav satchel: This small wearable bag has gravitic supports integrated into it that make 4 Enc of contents count as only 1 Enc of burden. The actual volume of the satchel is not increased, however.

Grav sled@: This folding sled opens out into a 1m x 2m panel that can carry up to 200 kg for 1 day per Type A power cell. The sled floats 1m above the ground or liquid surface and can be easily pulled.

Gravitic posture brace: This wearable brace takes a scene to don or remove and keeps the user ramrod-straight at all times. They can sit, but they can't go prone or make Sneak checks. The grav boost does increase their Move rate by +5m per action, however.

Gravitic tweezers*: These fine tweezers allow the telekinetic manipulation of small objects within 2 meters when active, and grant a +1 bonus to any skill checks requiring careful manipulation of such objects.

Hair gel#: This tube of nanotech hair gel can color and fix hair in ways totally immune to dirt or dishevelment for one week. It also cures baldness and can grow out up to 1 meter of hair in a scene at the user's discretion.

Hangover stim#: A ubiquitous health stim in a prior age, it instantly purges alcohol or hangovers. Against other poisons, it allows a save reroll if applied within 1d6 rounds of the poisoning.

Herbicidal fogger#: This fogger lightly mists a 30m x 30m area when triggered, killing all normal plants in the zone and inflicting 5d6 damage on all plant-based monsters or creatures.

Holomask@: This mask functions for one day per Type A cell used, changing the user's voice or face as desired. The holo-effect can mimic specific other faces, but won't fool people who know the original well.

Holoplayer*: This household item will play data discs, holocrystals, or other recording media. It will provide almost infinite playtime off of one Type A cell.

Holoporn*: A self-contained cubical projector of salacious holographic content, the whole filling up a 3m cubical area when active, running for one scene per Type A cell. A given projector has a 1 in 6 chance of containing niche content too bizarre or horrific to even be understood as porn.

Holoportrait: A small projector that can be keyed to a user. When activated, it displays a subtly-flattering full-length 3D portrait of the user that is indistinguishable from a real person at distances of more than a meter.

Holorecorder: Usually found with 2d6 self-powered blank disks, this handheld recorder can capture holographic or audiovisual scenes of up to one hour per disc when used. These discs can be played back on either the recorder or a conventional holoplayer.

Hyperthermos: This simple 1 liter thermos bottle keeps non-living contents at their current temperature for several centuries. As a side effect, objects in the thermos do not undergo normal spoilage or decay.

Ladderpack: This 20m ladder capable of bearing up to 1,000 kg of weight can be folded down into a 1 Enc bundle as a Main Action.





Leap booster@: When charged with a Type A energy cell, the wearer of this device can target a visible point within 30m and leap there safely as a Main Action.

Lifter disc*: This self-adhesive disc makes an object it's attached to 300 kg lighter, to a minimum of 1 kg. Each Type A cell makes the disc last 24 hours.

Light pen*: When activated, the pen can be used to draw glowing multicolored graffiti in light traces that shine as bright as candlelight. The pen functions for a scene per activation, but the graffiti lasts for a year after being drawn unless abraded away.

Link boxes: Always found as a matched pair of small boxes, each holds up to 1 Enc of contents. They share the same internal space up to 5 km distant, with an object placed in one box being able to be drawn from the other. Detonations or other area effects from inside the box affect both locations.

Linked wallet: This high-tech wallet can be keyed to a user, lasting until their death. The user can summon it via teleportation from up to 2 km distant, and cards or small slips inside the wallet cannot be removed by anyone but the user.

Manibot#: A single-use, fist-sized bot that can be thrown at creatures within 10m. The AI-driven bot will instantly give a perfect manicure and pedicure to the target, which will incidentally nullify any natural claw attacks they may have for one week.

Mass fractionator#: This single-use projector can be applied to one inanimate object of less than 200 kg mass. For one year, it can be lifted and handled as if it was a 1 Enc weight.

Metasculpture@: A bundle of pale, clay-like material with a sensor patch on one end. By touching the patch and imagining an object of 1 Enc or less, the metasculpture becomes it over the course of one minute. It has the strength of steel, and can mimic objects with moving parts but not electronic ones.

Microfurniture: Found as chairs, beds, tables, and other pieces of functional furniture, these objects quickly fold down into 1 Enc slabs for easy transport.

Monocable: A transparent cable no thicker than fishing line, this 20m spool of thread is unbreakable by anything short of TL4 cutting devices or the trimmer-splicer unit on the spool itself.

Monosaw: A monobladed hand tool that has limited use as a weapon, but can saw through one cm of anything short of TL4 military armor with one minute of work. Cutting through large objects has a 1 in 6 chance of ruining the saw.

Mood ring: This ring can be triggered while the user studies a visible living target. It provides a silent description of the target's current emotional state to the wearer, but has a 1 in 4 chance of burning out after each use.

Mood stim#: This stim can be dialed to a specific emotional state. On use, the subject feels that emotion strongly for 24 hours. If using Stress rules, this stim can negate Breakdowns for 24 hours.

Music generator@: This AI-driven music composer works to the user's direction, providing the desired sort of music for up to 24 hours per energy cell.

Music player*: If a Type A power cell is inserted, this music player will play from a vast library of ancient tunes for a virtually indefinite period.

Naturist bangle: Popular among anti-clothing activists of a prior age, this wearable bangle uses force manipulation to maintain cleanliness and comfortable warmth regardless of natural climate extremes. It does not work if the user is clothed, however.

Nega-drain#: A baseball-sized silver sphere that can be triggered to act as a transdimensional liquid drain. All open liquid in a 3m radius around it drains away instantly. Over the course of a scene, it can empty a liquid volume equal to that of a small pond before wearing out.

Nuclear breadbox: While somewhat bulky, this breadbox holds up to 3 Enc of contents. Unliving organic matter inside the breadbox remain fresh and unspoiled indefinitely.

Omniglue#: This small tube of glue can be used to attach any two objects together, regardless of their material. After attachment, the objects are effectively welded together; living creatures take 1d4 damage in pulling free.

Omnipiercings: These decorative piercings appear in several forms, and can be attached or removed painlessly. Internal nanomeds can auto-purge Minor diseases once per month,

Parser screen: A handheld viewing screen that can be held over a text to automatically translate it, provided it is in a human language. The screen breaks on a 1 in 6 after each translation.

Passcard: One of a host of different ID cards, this passcard will allow authorized access to a nearby restricted site.

Permadye#: A spray-on applicator can be adjusted to any desired color or sheen before being used to change any object smaller than a car to the desired hue. The dye is permanent barring abrasion of the item's surface or a one-month duration for living creatures.

Perpetual spice: This modest jar of seasoning transforms atmospheric components and solar energy into a powder that can tuned to take on the taste profile of over 378 different herbs and seasonings. Enough is generated for any personal cookery.

Personal BGM trinket*: Onboard AI provides thematically-appropriate background music when activated, keying it to the user's activities. The music is loud, but grants a +1 bonus to hit rolls and skill

checks for the user while active, though they fail all hearing-based skill checks.

Personal protective suit: This tightly-folded bundle unspools into an ultra-light sealed suit with integral air supply lasting 12 hours. It can be worn over armor, but is ruined if any damage is taken.

Plant pal: A flowerpot-sized hydroponic bowl that requires only a little water and sunlight to provide a perfect environment for growing any seed placed within, regardless of climate or the seed's natural chance to fail. The plant thus grown will be kept in stasis once maturity is reached until it is removed.

Plas-toupee: This hairpiece blends perfectly with the user's remaining locks and can adjust its style, length, and color at the user's will over a few minutes.

Plastasolv#: This can of liquid can be applied to up to a human-sized amount of plastic to dissolve it in mere moments.

Pocket grav warp: This thumb-sized grav field emitter can be put into a container to decrease the Encumbrance burden of its contents by 2 points. Only one works per container.

Polyglot signs#: Found in a bundle of 1d4+1 blank signs, each about the size of a sheet of paper. Anything written on them is instinctively understood by all viewers mentally capable of comprehending the contents, even animals if the idea is simple enough.

Polyhat: This shapeshifting hat has several dozen then-fashionable forms dialed into its options. It cannot be removed from the wearer's head unless they choose to permit it, and it cannot be damaged or deformed by less than violent force.

Polymorphic keyring: Usually found with a dozen long-useless keys on it, it can be touched to an existing key or keycard to perfectly duplicate it. Up to a dozen such duplicates can be maintained at any one time.

Portable stove*: This small folding stove can provide cooking services for up to a week on one Type A power cell, including the boiling of water.

Portable window: This 30 cm glass disc can be held against a surface to look through it as a one-way window, skipping up to 2 meters of solid obstruction. After each use, it breaks on a 1 in 4.

Portakettle: The perpetual power cell in this kettle can boil 1 liter of water in one minute, purifying it of most biological contaminants.

Portalock: This stick-on lock assembly can be fixed to a door or portal as a Main Action to add a lock to it. It comes with a keycard for the lock, and can be removed entirely for re-use with the card.

Privacy bubble*: This targeted white noise hologenerator can be placed on the ground to create a stationary 5m bubble that is opaque from the outside and prevents any internal sound from escaping.

Probe snake*: This AI-augmented 20m self-deploying video cable has a camera and light on the end and will extend itself as instructed by the operator, relaying audiovisual signals from its tip.

Psychic intrusion alert: This wearable unit throbs a silent warning when user is targeted by a mental effect, granting a +2 bonus on any related saving throw. After each use, it breaks on 1 in 4

Pyrolyzer gel#: This silvery gel can cover up to one door-sized or smaller object, making it flammable as dry paper regardless of its composition. If a creature is significantly covered in it, they take triple damage from fire, lasers, or plasma for a scene.

Quip generator*: When aimed at a living target, the onboard AI hyper-analyzes them to say something that might have been considered witty or humorous before the collapse. The analysis sometimes is accidentally deep; on 1 in 6, the device instead reveals a secret they keep before it breaks.

Rad sink#: This rad-absorbent wrap will buzz loudly when the wearer is forced to make a Radiation save, negating the need for that save once before it becomes useless.

Rain shield: This small pin is usually worn through clothing, making the wearer immune to rain and impervious to having their belongings wetted even when submerged.

Recording cube@: When activated, the cube will perfectly holo-record events within 30 meters for two hours. Users can play back these recordings or erase them for re-use of the cube.

Religious icon: A high-end item of religious fervor, often an idol, symbol, or icon of some sort. These items are stainproof and durable as steel, and often quite valuable to surviving believers.

Repair gel#: This tube of nanogel can be spread over a TL3 or lower-tech object no bigger than a motorcycle. It will repair any structural damage short of complete destruction, but can't revive effaced text or other surface markings or details.

Rescue grav skid#: This flexible sheet can be unrolled to hold a human-sized burden, whereupon it floats 1 meter above the ground for the next 24 hours and allows one person to pull it easily. Mortally Wounded subjects put on the skid are automatically stabilized.

Retracting rope: This high-tech nanowoven rope comes in a coil that can extend up to 100 meters and can be cut with the spool's trimmer or a TL4 blade. Cut rope ends can be rejoined by holding them together.

Revivifier paste#: This emergency repair paste can be hastily smeared on any car-sized or smaller object as a Main Action. The object immediately repairs any damage, but is irreparably ruined when the paste wears off at the end of the scene.





Ritual clothing: This exotic and highly impractical-looking clothing was meant for religious or cultural purposes. Its advanced fabrics and micro-force generators grant AC 16 to the wearer and a Trauma Target bonus of +1 for tables using Traumatic Hit rules.

Robopet*: This cat-sized robot pet functions for one week per Type A cell. It behaves like a well-trained pet animal but its AI processors are smart enough to obey simple commands. It can manipulate objects with the dexterity and strength of a large housecat and has stats of 5 HP, AC 15, Move 10m, Save 15+, and Skill +1. It self-repairs 1 HP per day.

Safety knife: This microprocessor-equipped knife deforms its edge for safety when it's about to cut a living creature. It will cut dead tissue or inanimate matter with a +3 bonus to hit, damage, and Shock, but cannot harm living flesh.

Scrub fan#: This handheld decorative fan can be waved at a target to completely clean their person and clothing. Residual nanites keep them perfectly dry, neat, and clean for 1 week afterwards, regardless of the environment.

Self-repairing tool: Appearing as a normal hand tool such as a hammer, saw, crowbar, or the like, this nano-reinforced tool cannot be dulled or broken without being specifically targeted by a TL4 attack source or other overwhelming harm.

Sentry cube: This cube can be activated before its owner sleeps or becomes otherwise occupied. It acts as a constantly-vigilant sentry and will ping a silent alarm to the user if it spots an intruding creature larger than a mouse. It has an effective skill bonus of +3 for detecting stealthy intruders.

Shrink projector@: This pistol-shaped device can target an unattended, inanimate, non-robotic object of human-size or smaller within 20 meters. The object instantly shrinks to 1/4 size and 1/8 mass for the rest of the scene. If attached to some other object, it will break the attachments or the object, depending on which is stronger.

Silence cube*: When activated, all sound within 5 meters of the cube is completely stifled. The silence is faintly unnatural, but still grants a +2 bonus to Sneak checks where noise is relevant.

Skim board@: A gravitic skateboard that runs for 1 hour on a Type A power cell. The board's kinetic assist modules allow even novices to gain a 20 meter bonus to their Move rate, but they can only move in a straight line for each Move action. The board can't move over liquids.

Sleep torc: This neuro-integrating necklace ensures good and refreshing sleep even in the most unpleasant environment. The user can't suffer privation from poor sleep conditions.

Slide field gun@: Once used to skid large objects, this gun makes a 2m x 30m strip of ground low-friction for a scene. Extremely heavy objects can be dragged along it by the strength of one person, but the surface is too slick for anyone to stand on; all on it immediately go Prone.

Smart book*: When this book is triggered, its onboard AI immediately writes a fiction novel tuned to the user's stated specifications. If asked to write about a topic of practical interest to the reader, such as details about an old world ruin, there is a 4 in 6 chance it will convey one useful piece of information; otherwise, it will hallucinate a plausible lie.

Smoke detector*: This hyper-advanced smoke detector will give distance and direction details to the nearest fire within 5 kilometers when activated, down to campfire or candle levels.

Solar cell: This Type A+ cell has built-in solar capacitors that can recharge it with one day of exposure to even very weak sunlight.

Somnus crown: When this headwear is worn, the user must make a Physical save or fall deeply asleep in 1d4 rounds, becoming oblivious to the world for 12 hours or until kicked or slapped awake. Removing the crown stops the somnolence.

Sport drink synther: Once per hour, this 1 liter bottle can convert any liquid that is at least 51% water into a potable sports drink. The stuff can satisfy water needs, though it tastes vile.

Spotter bug#: These 2cm-long robotic beetles can fly at a rate of 5m per round out to a range of up to 200 meters. They can transmit audiovisual signals to the control unit found with them. The bug functions for one scene once activated.

Stasis bar*: Appearing as a rather high-tech crowbar, a stasis bar can function as a mundane, if almost unbreakable crowbar. When triggered, however, it remains frozen in place until deactivated or a scene has passed, even if it's hanging in mid-air.

Stasis flask#: This 1 liter flask has a single-use activation control that can bubble its contents in total temporal stasis until the flask is opened.

Sticky boots*: When activated, this footwear allows the user to walk up any vertical or overhanging surface strong enough to bear their weight for the rest of the scene.

Stitchbot#: This small repair bot can mend any piece of clothing or armor from any condition better than complete ruin. It can fix one suit of clothing or armor before its batteries die.

Stomach bag#: This transparent bag can be swallowed to line the user's stomach. For the next day, they can eat anything with no ill effects and regurgitate it unharmed afterwards.

Support field*: This projector is targeted at a 10m square area of floor, ceiling, or other surface to make it perfectly stable and solid despite any structural damage or lack of support. One activation lasts one hour.



Teetotaler ring: This ring causes any liquid the user drinks to become pure water. While it can manage minor impurities or occasional poisons without difficulty, drinking more than a liter or so of non-potable water in one day gives it a 1 in 8 chance of breaking.

Tracer pin: This fingernail-sized adhesive pin comes with a handheld scanner that can find its distance and direction any time it is within 10 kilometers.

Vapor belt#: When triggered, the wearer becomes a dense mist for 1d10 minutes. They can't move objects, but they can fly at half their normal move rate and can only be harmed by effects that would damage a cloud of mist.

Vapor condenser@: This water condenser can pull 4 liters of water out of all but the most desert-dry air. It breaks on 1 in 10 after every activation.

Vibro-drill*: This handheld drill can put 1 cm-wide holes through anything weaker than TL4 military armor, up to a depth of 12 cm, with one hole drilled per minute of work.

Vitalizer necklace@: Biostimulant effects can be triggered by the necklace to allow the user to go without a night's sleep. One Type A cell is required per activation, and no System Strain or other recovery is possible until real sleep is had.

Vortex fan*: Lasting for a scene per activation, this collapsible fan can be dialed up so high as to force a Physical save or be knocked prone for man-sized targets within a 2m x 20m wind path. The fan's direction is set once per activation and it must be stationary while running.

Voxlator*: This headset provides automatic translation for the user to and from a single spoken language for one scene per activation. The target language may or may not still be extant.

Walker exoharness@: This strap-on exoskeleton allows a paralyzed or otherwise incapacitated user to walk and run normally, operating for one week on a Type A cell. Unconscious wearers can be made to stand and follow their allies with the exoharness' onboard nav functionality.

Wall clamps: This pair of pads is equipped with large handgrips. When pressed to a solid surface, the clamps will fix solidly until intentionally detached, bearing as much weight as the surface itself can bear.

Water dehydrator@: Operating on rather obscure principles, when activated this dehydrator can turn 4 liters of water into featherlight powder that reconstitutes when dampened by a few drops of spittle, blood, or other water-predominant liquid.

Zirkote#: A glittering gel meant to be applied to a bladed item. The resultant sharpening puts an edge on the weapon almost as good as diamond. The item gets a +1 hit roll, damage, and Shock bonus that cannot improve it beyond +3 when other mods are taken into account.

Identifying Mysterious Tech

Some Mutant Wasteland settings are so far in the future that the weapons and equipment of the prior age are mysteries to the modern natives. In other campaigns, alien devices, secret government projects, or other exotic gear might not be easily comprehended by a naive user. These optional rules are for GMs who want to deliver weird and inexplicable devices for the PCs to meddle with.

Placing Mysterious Tech

Enigmatic tech should be intentionally placed, and the GM should label it with some specific note: "A bulb-ended pistol with the partial inscription '-ECH' on it.", for example. Ideas for the description can be generated from the table on the facing page, but it should be something specific and unique. The GM should also be careful to note down its real functionality in their own notes, because six weeks from now some player is going to drag it out of their pack and the GM is going to need to be able to remember what it actually does.

While placing it, generate a failure result to use if identification fails and note it down by the object. The GM won't want to have to flip back to this page and roll on the failure result table mid-play. Some failure results are non-destructive, and allow another chance to identify the device with a +2 bonus on the roll.

Identifying Tech

A PC who wants to identify the tech should make an attempt, describing how they manipulate it in order to figure out its function. A pistol-shaped device might be pointed at a rock and its trigger pulled, a vial of liquid might be sniffed and a drop touched to their tongue, or a tablet might have its buttons pressed.

The GM then makes a secret Wis/Skill skill check for the PC, using whatever skill is most appropriate for the item. If the PC has the *Masterful Expertise* Edge, the GM should apply it to the roll if necessary.

Simple pharmaceuticals, stims, or single-use tech rolls against difficulty 8.

Firearms, advanced armor, or permanent-use tech rolls against difficulty 9.

Complex tech with multiple functions or significant user skill required rolls against difficulty 10.

If the investigator misses by 3 or more, they have no idea what it does and cannot activate it effectively. If they succeed, they understand what the tech does and how to operate it.

If they fail by 1 or 2, they *think* they understand how to operate it, but the first time they try to trigger it, they'll get the result the GM rolled from the adjacent identification failure table.

Multiple attempts by different PCs to identify tech may be made until one succeeds, or seems to succeed.

d10	Why Isn't Its Use Obvious?
1	All the labels on the device have worn off.
2	It was meant for use with an authorizing fob or implanted chip.
3	The usual activation stud or trigger has broken off.
4	It's just the broken-off functional part of an otherwise larger device.
5	It was meant for a non-human or altered manipulatory appendage.
6	Its use was intentionally obscured so only a select few would know how to use it.
7	Someone patched it up with a jury-rigged activation method.
8	It was intentionally disguised as another kind of device.
9	It was melted, damaged, or otherwise bent, but without spoiling its functionality.
10	Someone put a lock or other restraint device on it.

d8	Identification Failure Result On Use
1	It melts, blows up, or short-circuits, doing 2d6 damage to the user.
2*	It completely drains its power cell and fails to function.
3	It buzzes or wails loudly for 1 to 3 rounds before exploding as in result 1.
4*	It is aimed or directed in a random direction, using 1d12 as a clockface.
5*	It does absolutely nothing for 1d6 rounds before it goes off.
6	It functions normally once before melting down. If a single-use item, it simply disintegrates.
7*	It functions, but shocks, burns, or otherwise damages the user for 2d6 damage.
8	It works perfectly for 1d6 uses before exploding as per result 1. If a single-use item, roll 1d6; on a 1, it fails to function and injures the user as per result 1.

*: The item remains intact and another identification attempt can be made with a +2 bonus.

One-Roll Gear Appearance and Usage

Far-future tech or alien gear might not come in a form conveniently comprehensible to wasteland wanderers or human resistance fighters. These tables offer some possibilities for what a given item might look like and how it might be activated. The device identification rules on the prior page can be used to handle PC efforts to figure out such things.

These tables work best for tools, devices, and other activated items, and not all of them may fit every object. Containers of gel or laser rifles may be too self-explanatory to require much confusion, and adding on details of activation and operating quirks can be too much of a burden for single-use elixirs or pastes. Even so, the occasional vexingly complicated grenade can be an amusing addition to a loot pile.

d6	How Do You Hold It?
1	Worn on an extremity
2	It has a grip attached to it
3	You put it down before using it
4	It's head-mounted or worn over the eyes
5	The entire object is gripped in a hand
6	It's twisted or manipulated with both hands

d8	How Is It Activated?
1	A button on it activates its effect
2	Dials on it must be tuned correctly
3	It's voice-activated
4	It must be twisted or aligned correctly
5	You need to slap or shake it to turn it on
6	A trigger must be held down in use
7	Several points must be pressed at once
8	A restraining bolt must be pulled loose

d10	What's its Basic Shape?
1	A flattened cylinder
2	A pistol-like shape
3	A rod or pole
4	A small flask or bottle-shape
5	A grippable cylinder
6	A sheet or tablet
7	Rectangular and boxlike
8	A spheroid or ovoid suitable for grasping
9	Conical, with a wide base
10	Tubular and convoluted

d4	How Bulky is the Object?
1	Very light or small, no Enc in small amounts
2	About palm-sized, counting as 1 Enc
3	Portable in one hand, counting as 1 Enc
4	Needs both hands or is bulky, at 2+ Enc

d12	Surviving Markings On It
1	A stylized depiction of its purpose
2	Faded ancient brand labeling
3	The trigger method is marked out visibly
4	A prior owner's decorations
5	Signs of past hard use or damage
6	Government warning or prohibition
7	Remnants of a bright original paint job
8	Exaggerated marketing image of its use
9	Repair marks from prior maintenance
10	Scars of missing decorative pieces
11	Ancient stains permanently bonded with it
12	A marking a prior owner scraped away

d20	A Detail of its Operation
1	It is extremely loud in operation
2	Its surface is garishly lit when powered
3	It only activates a round after triggering
4	It gets extremely hot in use
5	It sounds like it's breaking with each use
6	It binds to the user for a round after use
7	It needs credentials or a code to activate
8	Its aim point is off by one radius of its effect
9	It needs careful cleaning before its use
10	It emits a particular smell in use
11	It's extremely dense, with +1 Enc weight
12	It brightly illuminates anything it affects
13	It randomly loses power before 1 in 6 uses
14	When powered, it constantly buzzes
15	It aims precisely backwards
16	There's a safety that must be deactivated
17	Its internal debris needs emptying on use
18	It's unusually lightweight, at -1 Enc
19	Pieces fall off if they're not strapped on
20	It works uncannily well and conveniently



ENCLAVES AND SETTLEMENTS

After the end, human civilization is a fragile and temporary thing. Whether huddled refugee camps in the shadow of a global plague or shabby badlands villages in a mutagenic waste, communities find mere survival to be a challenge their pre-collapse ancestors could scarcely imagine. Even the strongest bastions of civilization must fight constantly to escape the doom that devoured the world before.

The enclave system in this chapter is meant to provide a GM with a basic backdrop of communities, resources, and ambitions to help them give life to their campaign setting. The world moves even in the absence of the heroes, and villages that suffer too much misfortune might vanish into the billowing dust. Perhaps the PCs will be able to avert whatever disasters threaten to consume these fragile motes, and perhaps the PCs will *be* the disaster.

The PCs might even be the founders of an enclave or choose one to support in its particular ambitions. The rules for building Features and constructing goods give PC leaders the option of focusing their settlement in directions most useful for their own interests, giving them access to resources and options that are otherwise hard to come by after the collapse of society. The quest for critical components and vital resources can drive the party to great deeds.

Even PCs who decide to have nothing to do with local politics will still need to deal with the traders, raiders, and common folk of the surrounding settlements. The right friends in the right places can make all the difference to a party's fate, and the unintended side-effects of PC activities can cast ripples far across the wastes.

Using These Rules

These rules are meant to provide background activity and regional events in a GM's campaign world. They aren't intended to be a stand-alone minigame or be something that can be "won". GMs shouldn't worry about making mechanically optimal choices for their enclaves, because that's just not what these tools are for. Real-life community leadership is not famous for making disinterestedly optimal choices, and they are not likely to improve much in the apocalypse.

If the GM decides to use these rules, they should take the following steps at the start of the campaign.

Pick a starting enclave. Choose a community that the PCs will begin play in or near. Give it enclave statistics, because its problems and ambitions are likely to influence the adventures that PCs have around it.

Pick up to five more enclaves near the starting one. Look at the surrounding communities that are likely to have contact with each other or the starting enclave and give them statistics as well. If there's a regional hegemon in the area, a powerful community that has a long reach, you might include it in this total. Don't bother with more than five additional enclaves, however, as you don't want to overburden yourself with enclave turn paperwork.

Other communities should be ignored. They have their own doings, but they're not likely to make any difference to the PCs. If the focus moves toward them you can stat them out, but avoid having more than a half-dozen active enclaves at once. More than that can be difficult to track, so just assume the excess communities occupy themselves with their own affairs.



Enclave Statistics

Every enclave is abstracted into several basic qualities. When creating an enclave, whether before the campaign begins or when the PCs decide to put down roots in a place, a GM uses the guidelines on page 110.

Power and the Action Die

An enclave's ***Power*** reflects its overall population, size, and significance in the campaign region, rated on a scale of 1 to 5. An enclave's Power determines its ***Action Die***, which is rolled whenever the enclave tries to accomplish something or resist some outcome.

Power	Example Enclave	Action Die
1	Refugee camp, small tribal village, Small rural village	1d6
2	Small town, military base, secured refugee settlement	1d8
3	Post-apoc city, Tribal stronghold	1d10
4	Major functioning city, center of surviving ancient power	1d12
5	Multi-regional hegemonic city or multi-city power	1d20

An enclave's Power only changes when the GM decides it's become sufficiently cohesive and powerful enough to justify moving up a step. Enclaves that suffer severe setbacks without actually collapsing may lose Power in the same fashion.

Cohesion

An enclave's ***Cohesion*** is a measure of how resilient the enclave is in the face of misfortunes and outside pressure. It's equal to the enclave's Power.

Cohesion can drop when an enclave is attacked by an outside power or suffers some serious calamity. If it ever drops to zero, the enclave will collapse as its members give up hope and scatter in search of a less doomed community.

Features

An enclave's ***Features*** are those special qualities, facilities, or members that give it an edge in overcoming problems and dealing with the dangers around them.

Features aren't measured numerically. Instead, they're usually expressed in a single sentence. "The camp is constructed around a large grain depot.", or "The tribe's warriors are exceptionally well-armed and disciplined."

Very large or deeply-rooted Features may be expressed in more than one sentence. "The village is led by a number of cybernetically-enhanced elders. These elders and their attendants maintain the skills and tools needed to implant cybernetics in their heirs or worthy citizens. A cache of ancient cybernetics is kept below the Hall of the Elders, along with the necessary tools for implanting them." This Feature is made up of three separate elements, and if a disaster or outside power wants to degrade it completely, each element will need to be destroyed before the Feature is useless for dealing with problems.

Features are scaled for the Power of the enclave they belong to. A functioning school would be a valuable Feature for a village or small town, but for a city, it's unlikely to make a significant difference.

Problems

Problems are the opposite of Features. Where the latter are used to overcome difficulties and resolve conflicts, Problems get in the way of whatever the enclave is trying to accomplish. They're constant, structural issues that the community just can't seem to permanently resolve.

Like Features, Problems are expressed as a single sentence. "Food supplies are inadequate, and people often go hungry." "The refugees fear and distrust each other, with little community spirit." Exceptionally dire or deeply-seated Problems might be expressed in more than one sentence.

Unlike Features, however, each Problem has a point rating as well. Most Problems are only worth 1 or 2 points, though extremely dire issues might merit a higher rating.

Trouble

An enclave's ***Trouble*** is a score equal to the total of all its Problems. A refugee camp with "There is no food." at 2 points and "Trauma and despair have left people numb." at 2 points would have a Trouble rating of 4.

If an enclave's Trouble score ever equals its maximum Action Die roll, the community will collapse.

Interest

An enclave can have points of ***Interest*** in other enclaves, representing their influence and ability to help or harm their neighbor. Interest is developed by planting spies, building trade routes, installing an occupying garrison, or other similar means.

An enclave can't have more points of Interest in a particular neighbor than twice their own maximum Action Die roll. There's only so much pull a small community can exert at a distance.

Dominion

An enclave's available social capital and citizen engagement is expressed in points of Dominion. An enclave spends them to build Features, quash Problems, or aid allies.



Enclave Mechanics

Enclaves use certain mechanics to handle their activities and interactions.

The Enclave Turn

Every in-game month or so, the active enclaves in a campaign each get an enclave turn. A GM shouldn't have more than a half-dozen active enclaves in any given enclave turn, as more than that number can be difficult to track. The GM randomly picks a sequence for them, and each enclave then gets to perform its actions for the turn.

Each enclave can perform one ***internal action*** per turn, as listed in the next section. Internal actions have to do with building up a Feature, handling a Problem, or dealing with some internal affair of the enclave.

An enclave can perform as many ***external actions*** as they have Power. Thus, a major post-apocalyptic city with Power 3 could perform three external actions to influence three of their neighbors, though only one action is allowed per target community.

Not all enclaves may actually do anything during an enclave turn. Quiescent settlements are assumed to just continue eking out their own survival, as are any enclaves in the region that aren't active for the turn.

Trouble Checks

Some actions require that the enclave make a ***Trouble check*** to succeed at their efforts. To do this, the GM rolls the enclave's Action Die; if it's equal or less than the enclave's Trouble rating, some Problem interferes with the effort and ruins it.

To find out what Problem was at fault, just compare the die roll with the list of Problems. If a refugee camp has a two-point hunger problem and a two-point bandit raid problem, a roll of 4 on the check means that a bandit raid probably swept in to spoil the camp's efforts, while a roll of 2 means that the workers got distracted by gathering food and gave up the project.

Contests

Some external actions involve direct conflicts between enclaves or outside perils. These ***Contests*** involve competing Features, with the attacker using one of their community's Features to accomplish something, and the defender using one of their Features to try to stop or mitigate the effort.

The attacker states what they are trying to accomplish and names the Feature they are using to do it. The Feature must actually have something to do with the effort; a magnificent school system isn't very useful if the attacker's goal is to burn down their enemy's granary, and a well-trained village militia isn't going to help ideologically subvert the children of a rival community's leadership.

The defender then picks a Feature they have and explains how they're using it to prevent the attack. As with the attacker, this Feature has to be plausibly useful in resisting the intended effect.

Both sides then roll their enclave's Action Die. The high roll wins the contest, with ties going to the enclave with the greater Power, or to the defender if they are equal.

If the defending side has absolutely no Feature of any use in contesting the assault, it automatically succeeds.

Unequal Contests

A normal contested Action Die roll is fine for modeling conflicts between roughly-equivalent powers, but sometimes the GM may find it implausible for a small village's merchants to shut out the caravans of the regional trade hub, or for a refugee camp to fight off an armored military unit turned bandit.

In most cases, imperfectly even struggles should still be rolled normally. A failure doesn't necessarily have to mean direct defeat, only that the attacker wasn't able to get their way for one reason or another. Maybe last-minute diplomacy saves the day, or a local crisis suddenly monopolizes the Feature, or the expeditionary commander gets radiation poisoning. A GM can have fun with these little surprises and reversals.

Even so, sometimes the GM will want to put a thumb on the scales when things really are uneven. In that case, a bonus can be added to the stronger side's Action Die. Some examples are given below.

- Add +1 if the Feature is on a much bigger scale than its opponent, such as a city-state's armed forces moving against a small village's militia.
- Add +1 if the Feature is very qualitatively superior to its opponent, such as airship-flying merchants trying to sail over the heads of earthbound tribal raiders.
- Add +1 if the Feature utilizes lost technology or super-tech, such as a wasteland village with an active recon satellite link trying to spot enemy scouting parties.

Other situations might merit additional nudges, as the GM's judgment recommends.

To keep an element of randomness, however, these bonuses do not apply on a natural roll of 1 on the Action Die. Sometimes even the best-equipped efforts fall prey to sheer bad luck, and there's no army or organization so perfect that it can't trip over its own feet on occasion.

Dominion and Changes

An impoverished community or one full of disputes and mutual hostility is in no position to build institutions or overcome outside threats. Enclaves that have more in the way of social and material resources measure them as points of Dominion.

Gaining Dominion

An enclave usually gains Dominion by taking the *Build Strength* internal action. They might dispatch scavengers, reconcile feuding families, purge corrupt officials, or otherwise do something to focus their community's strength and build up its resources.

The other way to gain Dominion is through PC actions. By finding and recovering troves of valuable resources or solving issues that face the community, a PC party can add Dominion to the enclaves they favor. An adventure should generally provide the same Dominion as it does average experience points for the participants, or 3 Dominion for most undertakings.

Spending Dominion

Several types of enclave actions cost Dominion, but the most important is the *Enact Change* internal action. Through this action, the community tries to establish a useful new Feature or mitigate an existing Problem.

As part of this action, the enclave must describe the Feature they're trying to create or indicate how they're attempting to solve a Problem. The base Dominion cost for this attempt is equal to the enclave's Power; it's easier to build a village schoolhouse than create a city-wide educational system.

If the enclave's ambition is only marginally plausible, this cost is doubled. If the village hasn't got any particularly educated members and is forced to make do with amateur instructors, it will have a harder time creating an effective school. Extra resources and time will be needed to see the project through.

If the enclave's goal is not reasonable, they can't even try to do it. That same village is never going to be able to build a fusion plant, so the *Enact Change* action won't let them do it. To change that they're going to need to have the PCs help them make their efforts at least semi-plausible, such as sending them out to find a quasi-mythical Fuse-O-Matic Lunchbox Reactor.

Resistance to Change

Sometimes a change will be opposed by an enclave's neighbors or rivals. This extra resistance increases the Dominion cost of pushing the effort through, as their interference complicates work and adds to the necessary overhead.

The adjacent table gives examples of certain kinds of opposition and the extra cost involved. If the desired change is implausible in the first place, this cost penalty is doubled.

Base Change Cost

Size of Enclave to be Affected	Base Cost
Refugee camp, small tribal village, Small rural village	1
Small town, military base, secured refugee settlement	2
Post-apoc city, Tribal stronghold	3
Major functioning city, center of surviving ancient power	4
Multi-regional hegemonic city or multi-city power	5

If the desired change is only marginally plausible for the enclave's abilities, double the cost.

Additional Cost for Resistance

Largest Force Opposed to the Change	Extra Cost
Village elder, important family head	+1
Town mayor, local noble, mercenary captain, rich merchant	+2
Merchant house leader, Bandit warlord, Post-apoc city leader	+4
Multi-city alliance, Bandit army general, High-tech enclave leader	+6
A figure of region-wide importance, a local tyrant of unquestioned power	+8

If the change is only marginally plausible, this extra cost is also doubled.

Only the biggest unresolved opposition to the change counts; if a village matriarch and the King of the Glowing Dunes both oppose a new market, only his Radioactive Highness' +8 penalty is applied.

Opposition from within a Problem being solved also doesn't count. If a village has "Bandits are raiding us." as a Problem they're trying to solve, the bandit chief in question doesn't add a penalty. If he's got an allied marauder warlord helping him, however, that warlord's +4 penalty would apply.

As with all enclave affairs, PCs can act to remove resistance or quell opposition as part of adventures or the exercise of their own personal authority. If they can bribe the matriarch and topple the trinitite throne of the King, the penalties can be negated. Some entire Problems might be solved this way if the PCs have the muscle and cunning necessary to crush a wasteland peril or subdue a local quarrel. No *Enact Change* action is necessary for such feats when they are accomplished as part of an evening's adventure; the efforts are automatically successful and do not require Dominion.



Enclave Actions

Each turn, an enclave can perform one of the internal actions below and a number of external actions equal to their Power rating. A given neighbor can be targeted by only one external action each turn.

Aid an Ally (External): A friendly enclave can send resources to help an ally, if doing so is logistically plausible. The enclave sends a chosen number of Dominion points to the target. The sender must make a Trouble check to do so; on a failure, the culprit Problem interposes and spoils the exchange, wasting the resources.

Attack Rival (External): The enclave makes a direct hostile move on a neighbor within their reach. The enclave picks a Feature and explains how they're using it to enforce a change on the unwilling target. A bandit crew might raid the target, a merchant house might force a trade embargo, and a church might send missionaries. Any Feature can be used to attack, provided the desired change is a plausible one.

Once the attacking Feature is chosen, the defender must pick a Feature to counter the attempt and explain how they're resisting it. If they have no Feature that could plausibly halt the change, the attack is automatically successful.

Attacker and defender then roll a Contest. If the Feature being used by either is only marginally relevant to the desired outcome or defense, their Contest die is rolled twice and the worst is taken.

If the defender wins, the change is repulsed. If the attacker wins, the defender must choose one of the outcomes below.

Lose a point of Cohesion as the enclave struggles to cope with the effects of the recent attack.

Sacrifice the defending Feature as it is ruined or disorganized by the defense.

Allow the attacker's change to occur, turning it into a one-point Problem or increasing a related Problem by one point. If the attacking enclave has a larger Power rating, add the difference in Power to the Problem caused. This may be enough to wipe the enclave out entirely if it's a large difference.

Some very large changes may need multiple *Attack Rival* actions to accomplish, particularly if the attacker is a peer power rather than a superior.

Build Strength (Internal): The enclave spends time organizing itself and building its resources. Make a Trouble check; on a success, it gains half its Power in Dominion points, rounded up.

Internal Actions	
Build Strength	*Work to build Dominion*
Enact Change	*Make a Feature/Fix a Problem*
Restore Cohesion	*Regain lost Cohesion points*

External Actions	
Aid an Ally	*Give Dominion to an ally*
Attack Rival	*Force a change on a rival*
Extend Interest	*Embed influence in a target*
Remove Interest	*Purge outside agents*

Special Actions	
Spend Interest	*Spend Interest to affect efforts*

Enact Change (Internal): The enclave tries to establish a Feature or solve a Problem. Doing either costs Dominion, with a total price depending on how plausible the change is as described in the Dominion and Changes section on page 107.

If the enclave wants to build a Feature, they must first spend the Dominion and make a Trouble check. On a failure, the Dominion is lost, and whatever Problem spoiled the effort increases by one point as the failure just makes things worse. On a success, the Feature comes into existence, but a related Problem or a new Problem associated with the Feature grows by one point. Growth inevitably comes with challenges.

If the enclave wants to solve a Problem, they must spend the Dominion and roll a special Trouble check, trying to roll *equal or below* the enclave's total Trouble. The more miserable the situation is, the easier it is to find something to fix. If the roll is equal or less than the total Trouble, the targeted Problem shrinks by one point, perhaps vanishing entirely.

Features created by *Enact Change* can add on to existing Features, creating larger and more firmly-rooted institutions and facts that may require multiple *Attack Rival* actions to destroy.

Extend Interest (External): The enclave works to build influence with a neighbor, whether openly or by subverting its members. This action works much like *Attack Rival*, but the attacker must explain how they're planting spies, agents, allies, or associates in the target with the Feature, and the defender needs to explain how their Feature is being used to keep the enclave's influence out.

If the defender wins the Contest, nothing happens. The attempt at building influence was repulsed.



If the attacker wins, they gain one point of Interest in the target enclave which they can later use to affect their actions with the *Spend Interest* special action. An enclave can't have more Interest with a neighbor than twice their own maximum Action Die. Thus, a 1d6 tribal village can't have more than 12 points of Interest with any single neighbor.

There are times when the target might *want* to be closely tied to the enclave, as Interest can be used to support an ally's efforts just as easily as it can spoil a rival's plans. In this case, the defender can simply allow the effort, making it an automatic success.

Remove Interest (External): The enclave works to purge the agents of its rivals and cut the ties that might allow them undue local influence. Both sides name their relevant Features and roll a Contest. If the enclave wins, their target's Interest in the community is reduced by one point. If the target wins, nothing happens.

If the target consents to the purge for diplomatic reasons, the Contest is automatically successful.

Restore Cohesion (Internal): After suffering an attack from a rival or a disaster within the community, the enclave takes time to pull itself together and reaffirm the bonds of the citizenry.

The enclave must name a Feature they're using to restore order and morale in the community. They must also spend Dominion; 4 points for a Power 2 village, doubled for each further point of Power. Thus, restoring a Power 5 regional hegemon would cost 32 Dominion.

Once spent, the enclave rolls a Trouble check. If successful, it regains one lost point of Cohesion. Whether successful or not, the Dominion is expended in the attempt.

Spend Interest (Special): Spending Interest is a special action in that it can be taken at any time, even during another enclave's turn, albeit it can only be used once on any given enclave each turn. The enclave must have at least one point of Interest in the target faction and can do one of three things.

They can steal Dominion, spending Interest to divert that many points of Dominion into their own coffers. If this is done in the middle of an action that requires Dominion, this might spoil the action if the target can't afford to make up the loss.

They can help an action, spending Interest to increase a Contest die or Trouble roll. They can't spend more Interest than their own Action Die, as there's only so much help a village can lend a city, however close their ties. If they choose to help before the die is rolled, they need spend only Interest. If they wait until after the die is rolled to make their contribution, they need to spend an equal amount of Dominion as well.

They can hinder an action, spending Interest to decrease a Contest die or Trouble roll. This works just as aiding an action does, albeit in reverse.



Creating an Enclave

To give a new enclave statistics, follow the steps below. Most such enclaves will be created at the start of your campaign, but the PCs might be responsible for founding one if they can pull together enough survivors or frustrated immigrants.

1. Roll or assign it Enclave Tags, if desired. The tags starting on page 112 can give you a few basic ideas or themes to help inform the Features and Problems you give the enclave later.

2. Assign it a Power rating from 1 to 5, graduated as explained in the table on page 105. Its Cohesion should equal its Power, unless it's recently taken some hard hits.

3. Assign it at least one Feature. If it's a reasonably healthy enclave, add one more. If it's of Power 3 or greater, add one more still. If it's a significant power in the region, add another one. These Features should reflect what the enclave is good at or strong in, and should be plausibly relevant to dealing with at least one kind of trouble they're likely to face.

4. Assign it Problems. It should have as many points of Problems as one-third to one-half of its action die size. Thus, if it's a modest town with a d8 action die, it should have three or four points worth of Problems, or more if it's facing some abnormally bad future. You should divide these points up into multiple Problems, each one being worth one or two points. These Problems are going to influence the enclave's goals and actions and might provide immediate adventure hooks for PC involvement.

5. Give it Dominion points. Most enclaves don't have any Dominion points to begin with. They'll need to *Build Strength* to get any, and the potential interference of their own Problems can ready-make adventure hooks for the PCs. Particularly strong enclaves might start with Dominion equal to twice their Power.

6. Give it Interest in other enclaves. For each neighboring enclave involved with it, roll its action die. That's how many points of Interest it has in its neighbor. This Interest might come from benign trade ties, diplomatic agreements, or family ties, or it may be the hostile work of spies, inside agents, and traitors.

7. Give it a goal. Write down a sentence about the enclave leadership's immediate goal. This goal is likely to change over time, but it will help you pick the most likely actions for the enclave to take in the next turn.

With that accomplished, your enclave is now ready for use in play.

Enclaves and PC Actions

PC actions and adventures are outside the scope of the enclave rules. If the party manages to blow up the Blind Prophet's reprogrammed warbot, the zealot's enclave will lose that Feature automatically. In the same vein, if they manage to haul back a truckload worth of pre-collapse agricultural tools to a hungry village, they might add a "Local farming tech is exceptionally productive and advanced." Feature to the village without needing to spend Dominion.

Major changes or efforts may require several adventures to carry out. As the whole purpose of the enclave rules is to create adventure-worthy situations, the GM should always be willing to let the PCs get what they want by adventuring for it. Seeking rare components, delving ancient ruins, and neutralizing hostile rivals are all part and parcel of this, and if the players are cooperative enough to want to achieve something, the GM should give them a path to getting there, however hard it may be.

If a GM isn't certain how much impact an adventure should have on an enclave, they can pick one or more of the closest approximate enclave turn actions and apply them as if they were automatically successful.

Thus, if the PCs want to set up agents in a rival community, they could have an adventure focused around doing secret favors for a needy local family. The GM decides that's worth two *Extend Influence* actions, and gives their home enclave two points of Interest in their rival. If the adventure was particularly difficult or involved multiple sessions, it might be worth three or even four successful actions.

Adventure-driven actions taken this way don't cost Dominion or exact any other usual price. Thus, a demoralized community can regain Cohesion without spending Dominion when the triumphant PCs return with the head of the warlord who so cruelly plundered them a month ago. Their victory counts as a free *Restore Cohesion* action, and is applied as such.

Sample Enclaves

GMs can use these examples as templates for statting out an enclave. The Features and Problems for each are just examples of some common possibilities, and a GM should be ready to swap them out for more location-specific choices as needed.

Military Base Turned Village

Power: 2 (d8) **Cohesion:** 2

Features: The citizens are very orderly, loyal, and easy to manage.
The military base's old weaponry is still at least partly functional.

Problems: The locals are paranoid about outside threats. (1 point)
Food shortages are common due to the base's poor soil. (2 points)
Their neighbors view them with hostility and fear. (1 point)

Warlord's Fortress-Town

Power: 3 (d10) **Cohesion:** 3

Features: The pre-collapse fortifications are almost impregnable.
The locals are hardened warriors.
Nearby enclaves are forced to submit tribute regularly.

Problems: The fortress creates very little but violence. (2 points)
Tributary villages tend to spawn rebels and saboteurs. (1 point)
The warlord's lieutenants trade corruptly on their authority. (2 points)

Major Post-Collapse City-State

Power: 4 (d12) **Cohesion:** 4

Features: They have the strongest military power in the region.
Their trade routes and spies reach throughout the area.
The city retains functioning pre-collapse manufacturing capabilities.
The citizens are fiercely proud and loyal to their great destiny.

Problems: Bitter rivals snipe constantly. (1 point)
The mayor's subordinates scheme destructively to seize the position (2 points)
Pampered elites demand that resources and efforts be diverted to maintaining their excellent quality of life. (1 point)

Doomed Refugee Camp

Power: 1 (d6) **Cohesion:** 1

Features: Refugees are still pouring in, some with valuable skills.

Problems: The strong in the camp are plundering the weak. (2 points)
Every resource is inadequate or entirely lacking. (2 points)
Camp leadership is paralyzed and doesn't know what to do. (1 point)

Post-Apocalyptic Tribal Village

Power: 1 (d6) **Cohesion:** 1

Features: The locals are tough and inured to hardship and danger.
The tribe has several powerful mutants among its members.

Problems: Dangerous mutant beasts prey on the villagers. (2 points)
The village war leader keeps trying to take control of the place. (1 point)

Marauder Den and Trading Post

Power: 1 (d6) **Cohesion:** 1

Features: All the residents are extremely well-armed and viciously violent.
The den boss is rich in supplies and plundered relics.

Problems: There is no law save that of brute violence. (2 points)
The local bandit gangs keep robbing each other. (1 point)
The other enclaves hate them and do them harm when possible. (1 point)

Prosperous Trading Town

Power: 2 (d8) **Cohesion:** 2

Features: Numerous merchants have a vested interest in the town's prosperity.
The locals are relatively wealthy and well-equipped.
Many mercenaries and adventurers are willing to hire out to solve problems.

Problems: The merchants collude to suppress rivals and threats to their rule. (2 points)
Marauders are eager to strike caravans from the town. (1 point)
Bitter outcasts and poor villagers hate and envy their wealth. (1 point)



Enclave Tags

Once you've placed an enclave in the wastes, you might choose to assign it a couple of tags. Tags are simply codified tropes that help you flesh out a place with its own personality and concerns. An enclave tag begins with a basic trope or concept for you to riff on. After that, three examples are given for five different elements.

Enemies are antagonists and foes that fit the tag. These people may not be personally opposed to the PCs, but their goals and methods are likely to put them at odds with survivors.

Friends are sympathetic figures that the PCs might be expected to view kindly. They can feed the survivors adventure hooks or give them an entrance into the enclave's society.

Complications are examples of twists to the situation that complicate the enclave's circumstances or subvert some of the more obvious assumptions. Of course, a GM can always play a tag perfectly straight, which can often be a more unexpected subversion than any twist.

Things are valuables, macguffins, or objects of importance to the enclave. An adventure might revolve around recovering them, stealing them, or getting them to a particular recipient.

Places are those places that fit the tag's tropes and are suitable for placing events in an adventure. If something has to happen, you can make it happen in a place.

To save space, these five heading types are abbreviated as "E", "F", "C", "T", and "P" in each tag entry.

Mixing Tags

The easiest way to personalize an enclave is to roll or pick two tags and then blend them together. An enclave composed of "Art Lovers" and "Robots" might consist of a band of survivors inhabiting an old pre-collapse art installation run by robots constantly shaping and welding metal structures in a long-dead artist's plan.

You could take the "Outsider art thief" Enemy element from the Art Lover tag and mix it with the "Aspiring general of a robot army" Enemy of the Robots tag, and come up with Joseph Lirez, a visiting scraptech who plots to seize control of the artbots and use them to conquer the surrounding lands.

Mixing two tags is usually optimal for any given enclave, providing sufficient variety without obliging you to juggle too many variables. You can also let your own ingenuity spark off a tag, coming up with your own elements or adjusting the given ones to better suit your needs.

Not all of the tags fit perfectly in every type of campaign. A Mutant Wasteland campaign might be fine with the "Mutant Dominance" tag, but a near-future After the Fall game might be a little too realistic. In those cases you can either re-roll the tag, or else interpret it metaphorically. Maybe the "mutants" referenced in the tag aren't actual radioactive spawn, but are instead a drastically deviant group of humans, perhaps with their own technological or material resources to help enforce their control. Even when tags don't fit at first blush, they can still spark ideas for a GM.



Enclave Tag List

d8	d10	Enclave Tag
1	1	Aliens
	2	Ancient Hate
	3	Ancient Settlement
	4	Art Lovers
	5	Bad Luck
	6	Bandit Allies
	7	Burning Grudge
	8	Cannibals
	9	Chokepoint
	10	Class Hate
2	1	Conquerors
	2	Contaminated Land
	3	Cruel Tribute
	4	Degenerates
	5	Diplomatic Ties
	6	Disorganized Mob
	7	Doomed
	8	Dreaded Folk
	9	Educated
	10	Evangelists
3	1	Exiles
	2	Expert Artisans
	3	Factional Strife
	4	Fallen Hegemon
	5	Food Supply
	6	Functioning Industry
	7	Great Plan
	8	Hidden Refuge
	9	Hunger
	10	Hydraulic Despot
4	1	Inbred
	2	Invasion Remnant
	3	Isolationists
	4	Lost Glory
	5	Luddites
	6	Lunatic Leader
	7	Mandate Heirs
	8	Medical Center
	9	Miasmatic Zone
	10	Militarists

d8	d10	Enclave Tag
5	1	Mutant Dominance
	2	Mutant Hatred
	3	Natural Fortress
	4	Nobility
	5	Overpopulated
	6	Pariahs
	7	Pastoralists
	8	Peaceful
	9	Podborn
	10	Psychic Cult
6	1	Psychic Masters
	2	Recent Settlement
	3	Reckless Complacency
	4	Reforming Zeal
	5	Religious Zealots
	6	Remnant Survivors
	7	Repurposed Structure
	8	Research Center
	9	Robots
	10	Sanctuary
7	1	Secret Masters
	2	Shared Delusion
	3	Shared Sacrifice
	4	Skilled Farmers
	5	Slavers
	6	Splinter Group
	7	Sterile
	8	Supremacists
	9	Sustained Technology
	10	Trade Hub
8	1	Tyrant
	2	Uncanny Power
	3	Underground Haven
	4	Unsteady Alliance
	5	Uplifted Beasts
	6	Warbeasts
	7	Warehouse Site
	8	Xenophobes
	9	Zombie Cultists
	10	Zombie Exploitation





Aliens

Some far-future settings once featured considerable alien commerce, while other settings might involve alien invaders or sinister outside infiltrators. Other mutated humans or crazed zealots may have so widely departed from human norms that they can no longer be said to be human in any meaningful way.

E Alien ruthlessly bent on using expendable humans, Brutal alien chieftain, Alien seeking conquests

F Curious young alien, Aged savant of alien tech, Alien diplomat seeking to make allies

C The aliens require salvaged tech to survive New Earth's environment, The aliens are degenerating on this world, The aliens require human protection

T Cache of bizarre alien tech, Precious relics from their homeworld, Limited stores of some vital and irreplaceable nutrient

P Hall decorated with faded alien artifacts, Alien ship crash site, Sealed complex with an alien atmosphere

Ancient Hate

The locals have a hate for a neighboring enclave or group that defies mere ordinary detestation. Something the others did or were imagined to have done has so offended and outraged the locals that they desire the complete extermination of the culprits.

E Local accusing the PCs of being allies of the foe, Chief wanting to use the PCs against the enemies, Local suspecting the PCs of being spies

F Local with secret ties to the enemy, Local with secret desire to make peace, Young lover smitten with an enemy

C The two groups were once united, The dispute is incomprehensible or trivial to outsiders, Both groups need to cooperate against a threat

T Proof that the original atrocity wasn't the enemy's fault, Plunder taken from the foe, Evidence of spies within the enclave

P Ancient massacre site, Dangerous no-man's land, Trophy hall full of the tokens of victory

Ancient Settlement

This enclave has managed to hold on to its current location since pre-collapse days. The current inhabitants are the direct descendants of the former dwellers, and often retain a surprising amount of relic technology and well-repaired buildings. An instinctive clannishness and suspicion of outsiders often goes with such security.

E Xenophobic elder, Young warrior keen to "harvest" outsiders' belongings, Grim priest of a deviant traditional religion

F Clever-tongued local diplomat, Proud local with a sense of noblesse oblige, Curious youth seeking a new life elsewhere

C The settlement is decaying beneath them, Outsiders are always seeking to conquer them, The locals are complacent and blind to danger

T Key to the settlement's defenses, Vital component of the local power supply, Half-understood ancient relic tech

P Immaculately-kept ancient building, Ossuary full of ordered bones, A well-maintained plaza with Old World signs

Art Lovers

The enclave is devoted to artistic pursuits of some kind, finding a religious or philosophical meaning in them. Some such enclaves merely have a strong tradition of such craftwork, but others may be so dedicated to it that their survival is threatened or extreme measures are taken to create more art.

E Violent-minded aesthete, Outsider art thief, Chieftain who sees PCs as active threats

F Experimental young artist, Trader who traffics their work, Tech who works on their tools

C The art has a very useful practical purpose, The enclave is or was protected and allowed to be impractical, The art they make is incomprehensible to outsiders

T Artistic tool that is actually a potent relic, The revered masterwork of the enclave, Valuable raw materials for the art

P Primitive gallery full of art, Workshop full of active artists, Obscure ritual site revolving around the art

Bad Luck

This enclave has recently had a lengthy spell of truly spectacular misfortune. Either one vast disaster befell them, or they've been suffering an unrelenting string of bad luck. A plan they had misfired terribly, an outside threat chose them as a target, or internal leadership suffered an unexpected and paralyzing blow. The locals are likely desperate to turn things around, whatever it might require.

- **E** Bitter priest blaming outsiders, Desperate chief willing to commit enormities, Secret author of the enclave's bad luck
- **F** Victim of the latest disaster, Leader struggling against the misfortune, Outsider looking to offer profitable help
- **C** The bad luck has seeds of great prosperity in it, The disaster is still looming, The locals don't realize how bad the situation really is
- **T** Valuable remnants of a ruined project, Lost piece of vital tech, Cache of goods lost in the recent disaster
- **P** Site of the misfortune, Ruined civic building, Chaotic temporary construction

Bandit Allies

The enclave is in league with a vicious pack of marauders. They may act as safe haven for the raiders, or produce important supplies for them, or provide manpower during the off-seasons for farming. This relationship is likely hidden from their neighbors, but the truth might be an open secret to knowledgeable locals.

- **E** Village chief moonlighting as a warlord, Secret coordinator of the alliance, Bandit leader who's gone violently rogue
- **F** Local who hates the ties, Victim of the bandits, Bandit with a score to settle
- **C** The alliance is not entirely voluntary, The bandits pretend to a legitimate claim to rule, The bandits are very protective of the enclave
- **T** Loot from bandit victims, Enclave-made goods for the bandits, Secret bandit plans
- **P** Hidden bandit camp, Secret cache for hiding plunder, Slave pen for bandit victims

Burning Grudge

The enclave nurses a savage grudge against another group in the area, blaming them for some past disaster or atrocity. The locals will go out of their way to harm their enemies and any allies they may have, even if it comes at a grim cost to the enclave. Their leadership can't expect to retain control unless they're actively working against this hated foe.

- **E** Outsider who profits by the grudge, Local taking advantage of the grudge, Obsessed chieftain who'll do anything for revenge
- **F** Hapless local peacemaker, Collateral victim of the violence, More temperate leadership candidate
- **C** The grudge is absolutely justified by events, The grudge was manufactured to conceal a worse crime, The grudged group doesn't actually realize the enclave hates it so much
- **T** Relic of the atrocity or disaster, Precious item lost in the event, Potent relic that will give the enclave its revenge
- **P** Memorial to the event, Mass gathering to ritually remember it, Facility where the enclave's avengers train

Cannibals

Cannibalism is an almost instinctive horror to most enclaves. To eat the flesh of a fellow human marks the culprit as something worse than a beast, an enemy to be killed or driven out before his example spreads. This enclave has accepted it through necessity, convenience, or philosophical belief, likely earning them the hate and fear of their neighbors.

- **E** Gluttonous chieftain, Slavemaster-cum-cook, Prophet preaching the wisdom of cannibalism
- **F** Prisoner seeking rescue, Reformer seeking to change the enclave, Local seeking a new food source
- **C** The locals are ashamed of their need for cannibalism, The locals conceal their hungers, The locals are determined to convert other enclaves
- **T** Cure for a parasitic disease induced by cannibalism, Tech to provide a new food source, Plunder from a meal
- **P** Slaughterhouse full of human parts, Pen full of slaves to be eaten, Gruesome feasting hall





Chokepoint

The enclave controls an important chokepoint. This may be a geographical point where travel around it is dangerous or difficult, or it may be a grip on some regionally-valuable resource or salvage. The enclave's prosperity depends on completely controlling access to the chokepoint, and it doubtless has many rivals who would prefer to hold it.

E Warlord seeking to seize the enclave, Outside agent working to take it from within, Over-zealous guardian of access

F Scout looking for a new way through, Merchant wrung out by transit fees, Local seeking a new source of prosperity

C It takes special tech to pass the chokepoint, The chokepoint is newly-developed, Smugglers have their own way through

T Secret access map, Valuable goods lost in the chokepoint, Tech for making a new route

P Grim death site of those who tried a more dangerous path, Heavily-guarded entrance to the chokepoint, Crowded bazaar in front of the chokepoint

Conquerors

The enclave is convinced that their ultimate destiny is to bring the surrounding region under their benevolent rule. The others may not appreciate this generous offer, but sufficient time, reasoning, and heavily-armed tourism will bring them to their senses. Their neighbors are obviously too weak, savage, stupid, inferior, or culturally incompetent to be trusted with self-rule.

E Rapacious chieftain, Arrogant captain of raiders, Militaristic salvager-scientist

F Local convinced that peace is better for all, Enemy of the ruling faction who wants help, Spy from neighboring enclave

C The enclave formerly ruled the others, The enclave is quite civilized aside from this urge, The enclave is convinced it fights in self-defense

T Ancient war-machine patched back to life, Old Terran handbooks on military organization, Ancient military cache

P Military training ground, Spacious barracks, Prison camp

Class Hate

The enclave is divided by a sharp, vicious hatred between two or more major subgroups. They might be divided by religion, Old World ethnicity, differing levels of wealth, or varying social castes. The hatred is not presently so intense as to devolve into outright civil war, but events are dangerously close to a sudden, final reckoning.

E Manipulator seeing catspaws in the PCs, Local who sees the PCs as allies of the hated foe, Outside enemy who wants to incite ruin

F Desperate local peacemaker, Local who sees the need for unity against impending disaster, Local related to both groups

C Both sides want to end the hate but don't dare relax, One side is actually far more culpable than the other, The hate is led by a small group of fiery demagogues

T Relic that legitimizes one group's dominance, Trophy of a long-deplored crime, The wealth that the groups fight over

P Barren disputed field, Burnt home of an unlucky victim, Sharply divided community festival

Contaminated Land

The land around the enclave has been befouled by toxins, radiation, nanites, pollutants, or some other ambient hazard that makes it largely worthless for any useful end. If the contamination is recent, the enclave may be facing its ruin. If not, they've doubtless discovered some way to cope with the poisons, or even find profit in them.

E Mutant who prospers in the new lands, Scavenger who profits by it, Trader seeking to squeeze the desperate

F Scholar trying to solve the contamination, Local working to bring in supplies, Researcher trying to make viable crops in it

C The contamination has a useful facet, The contamination can be turned off, An outside group benefits from the contamination

T Gear for surviving the toxins, Plant seeds that can grow in the soil, Valuable relics inside a particularly dense toxin region

P Barren crop field, Room full of sickened locals, Sinister source of the contamination

Cruel Tribute

Some outside power demands a painful tribute from the enclave. Food, salvage, and slaves are all common requisitions, usually enforced at spearpoint by some more powerful neighbor. Sometimes the oppressor is another enclave, while other times find a nomad tribe, raider band, mad cult, or rapacious scrap-sage as the culprit behind the exactions.

E Brutal tax collector, Local collaborator, Chieftain who'd sooner sacrifice the PCs

F Local recently deprived of their children, Rebel warrior, Outside enemy of the oppressor

C A local minority openly serves the oppressor, The cruel tribute is demanded only from an unpopular minority, The oppressor needs the tribute to hold back a worse danger

T Recent tribute collection, Prize collected long ago, Map of the oppressor's security

P Collecting plaza for the tribute, Hushed tavern as the collectors enter, Gibbet with the remains of the last rebel

Degenerates

Most enclaves have managed to retain some shadow of their former civilization. Degenerates have lost that remnant. Whether through nanite-induced neural damage or complete societal collapse, the locals are bestial savages who respect nothing but brute strength and terror. Outsiders are tolerated only so long as they remain dangerous, and every contemptible service and vile offering can be had here for the price of a meal or the thrust of a spear.

E Local jealous of their wealth, Headman fearful of their power, Xenophobic local warrior

F Local with glimmerings of a moral sense, Slave in search of help, Elder who wants to revive long-lost traditions

C The degenerates are outcasts from another enclave, The degenerates attract numerous raiders and nomads, Not all of the locals have degenerated

T Morally disgusting tech, Plunder from the dead, Relic of some older and nobler time

P Orgiastic festival, Bone-strewn feast hall, Defiled ancient church

Diplomatic Ties

The enclave relies on close diplomatic bonds with one or more of its neighbors. They may import some critical resource, offer value in service or slaves, or have some other exchange that the locals rely on. Such bonds usually come with obligations that can be difficult to fulfill.

E Chief who means to make outsiders pay his dues for him, Envoy of a power hostile to the PCs, Sinister manipulator of the apparent chief

F Professionally friendly diplomat, Outside envoy looking to make a deal, Native seeking help the enclave's ties prevent it from giving

C The enclave is being set up for a brutal betrayal, Both sides plan to betray the other, Something just happened to seriously threaten the alliance

T Relic token symbolizing the treaty, Tribute sent by the weaker group, Secret weapon kept against the dangers of betrayal

P Ambassador's residence in a foreign style, Local neighborhood of ally sojourners, Market with numerous goods from allied enclave

Disorganized Mob

The enclave is hopelessly disorganized, with no clear leadership and no coherent policies. Their former ruler may have died with no clear successor, or the environment around them may have been so peaceful that they were still able to survive without coordinated leadership. More than one local probably seeks to be the leader, but some situation is preventing them from securing the role.

E Envoy of a rival power keeping the locals divided, Aspiring tyrant with good backing, Powerful local taking cruel advantage of the lack of law

F Native suffering from the lack of order, Idealistic would-be leader, Elder looking for a good leadership candidate

C Everyone can see that the enclave's soon doomed without leadership, The enclave has philosophical reasons for the anarchy, The enclave has an outside "protector" keeping them securely disorganized

T Token of legitimate rule, Riches sufficient to win leadership, Cache of weapons to enforce rule

P Raucous public plaza, Empty government building, Abandoned work facility





Doomed

The enclave is facing certain and obvious doom. The locals may be stubbornly refusing to admit that reality, or they may have no place else to go, or they might imagine they can make some sort of terms with the oncoming end.

E Approaching marauder warlord, Deluded chieftain, Local leader who means to sacrifice the PCs for their enclave

F Desperate local trying to stop the end, Native looking to escape, Allied outsider trying to help their friends

C It's to the other nearby enclaves' advantage that this place die, Neighboring enclaves have a reason to reject refugees, The oncoming doom seems likely to only kill most of them

T Relic that can avert the doom, Supplies to make a new start elsewhere, Prize to buy citizenship in a different enclave

P First structure to be ruined by the doom, Futile fortress raised against it, Lab where the locals struggle to find a way out

Dreaded Folk

The enclave's neighbors fear and detest these people. They might be terrifying warriors, devotees of a dreaded creed, or heirs to some once-terrible tyranny. Their neighbors likely fear them too much to be overtly antagonistic, but they're unlikely to be friendly to those who appear to be allied with them.

E Savage war chieftain, Cruel pontiff of a bloody faith, Leader who profits by his peoples' dire reputation

F Curious and well-meaning local, Missionary from outside, Slave taken during one of their prior depredations

C The dread is actually a misunderstanding, They work hard to maintain the terror, Their fearsomeness comes from a dark bargain

T Relic related to their dreadfulness, Plunder taken from a prior victim, Tribute offered by a past potential target

P Structure dedicated to whatever makes them terrifying, Slave pen full of victims, Storage structure full of stolen loot

Educated

The locals have an unusual respect for education in all its forms, even learning without an immediately practical use. Many of the locals are literate, and the elders and leaders of the community are all accomplished in at least one sphere of learning. Education may be valued for its practical benefits, or the locals may find it to be a token of their right to enlightened rule.

E Jealously secretive sage, Arrogantly superior elder, Scholar needing new "volunteers"

F Curious young student, Defender of threatened archives, Bold explorer of ruined libraries

C The locals prize disciplines of no use to adventurers, The locals scorn the uneducated, The locals have encrusted their lore with superstition

T Functioning dataslab full of usable lore, Location of a hidden library, Pretech device only the learned can use

P Busy school, Field full of laborers singing mnemonic chants, Heavily-guarded library

Evangelists

The enclave is determined to spread the good word of a particular religion, ideology, or leader. Almost all of the locals are already dedicated to the idea, but they send out missionaries and work to make diplomatic ties to help bring the rest of the region in. Some with sufficiently strong military forces might be willing to convert others by the sword if reason does not prevail.

E Driven zealot determined to spread the word, Rival creed's ruthless leader, Cynical functionary taking advantage of the faith

F Idealistic young missionary, Oppressed local unbeliever, Worldly-wise backslider

C The enclave has to spread this word due to outside pressure, The enclave has agents in numerous other communities, The enclave's belief has a direct and powerful rival

T Sacred relic of the faith, Evidence of a grave error of belief, Tithe goods offered up

P Ornate temple or monument to the faith, Site of a supposed miracle or great deed, Street corner constantly occupied by preachers

Exiles

The locals were once members of another enclave before being violently expelled by their brethren. Some such exiles are driven out after unsuccessful political coups or attempts at military takeover, while others simply have the misfortune to be scapegoats for the powerful. It is not unknown for mutants to be driven out of their communities to seek refuge among their own kind, and such a place might be composed of castoffs from half a dozen different enclaves.

- **E** Chieftain pursuing mad dreams of revenge, Local suspecting the PCs of being spies, Local who sees PCs as tools to regain their place
- **F** Local needing to send a message back, Leader desiring new allies in their new home, Local wanting to make the new home better
- **C** The exiles really did commit a horrible crime, The exiles were forced to obey by crazed leaders, The exiles yearn for forgiveness
- **T** Prized relic from their former home, Token of rightful authority to rule, Revered artifact symbolic of the exiles' cause
- **P** Ramshackle habitation thrown together recently, Shrine with relics of their former home, Plaza constructed in echo of one they had before

Expert Artisans

This enclave is home to an unusual number of remarkably skilled artisans. It may be that the community is situated near an ideal source of scrap, or the locals may have access to pretech industrial tools. Such a skilled population is likely the subject of numerous greedy neighbors who would like to take control, and the locals may be somewhat paranoid about outsiders.

- **E** Paranoid craftmaster, Trader who controls outside contact, Rival who seeks their ruin
- **F** Eager young apprentice, Outsider seeking trade contacts, Mysterious keeper of lore
- **C** The construction requires human parts, The scrap source is controlled by a cruel tyrant, The enclave is cut off from trade
- **T** Pretech tools used for intricate construction, Lost cache of craftwork, Book with secret techniques
- **P** Busy workshop, Dangerous neighboring scrap-ruin, Marketplace with actual shops

Factional Strife

The enclave is riven into two or more factions that may only loosely cooperate against outside threats. The richer and more comfortable the enclave is, the more likely it is that the factions are based around ideological or intellectual disputes, while impoverished or imperiled groups are likely split regarding optimal survival strategies or questions of crisis morality.

- **E** Hypocritical faction leader who craves only power, Outsider profiting by the strife, Charismatic hero with an extremely bad plan
- **F** Harried elder peacemaker, Local patriarch with family split between factions, Victim of a failure caused by factional squabbling
- **C** The least appealing faction has the best plans, A rival is getting ready to take advantage, The wisest faction is too weak to be taken seriously
- **T** Token of legitimate right to rule, A stock of the resource everyone's arguing about, Powerful weapon that will let someone seize control
- **P** Angry community meeting, Drinking hole for one faction only, Burnt-out home of someone who didn't pick a side fast enough

Fallen Hegemon

The enclave used to be the premier power in the region, exerting its will through violence, prestige, or economic power. Something happened to cause it to collapse, however, whether that came from internal bickering over the spoils of rule or an external threat from unhappy vassals. Now the enclave is no more than one among many, dreaming of long-lost rule.

- **E** Deluded ruler who overestimates their strength, Mercenary chief selling remnant strength to others, Vengeful scion bent on punishing "rebels"
- **F** Elder remembering better days, Reformer seeking to cure the old cause of failure, Keeper of some treasured past relic
- **C** They were a just and benevolent hegemony, Their fall involved a serious overreach, They held back a peril that now runs free
- **T** Mighty relic of their past rule, Lost treasure from their glory days, Regalia of a dead ruler
- **P** Crumbling citadel they once ruled from, Broken monument, Abandoned border outpost





Food Supply

The enclave possesses an unusually reliable and abundant food source. Under most circumstances, such abundance would bring a wealth of wanderers, nomads, and small tribes to the enclave to share in the bounty, willingly or otherwise. Such enclaves tend to be quite populous and strong compared to their neighbors.

E Hoarding chieftain, Ravenous nomad leader, Scheming local food distributor

F Hard-pressed farmer, Starving refugee, Grizzled tribal defender

C The food supply is newly-found and the locals can't protect it, The food is running out, The food has unpleasant side-effects

T Large food stockpile, Vital replacement parts for local agriculture, Gengineered grain seed

P Functioning pretech factory farm, Cave full of gengineered food fungus, Complex full of algae tanks and neo-soy vats

Functioning Industry

Somehow, the locals have managed to preserve or put back into service some ancient industrial facility. In most cases, the raw materials these facilities require are hard to get and the output very limited compared to before the collapse, but even a crippled manufactory is a cornucopia by modern standards. In theory, these manufactories can make almost anything, but few enclaves have the lore needed to alter production and most tend to find alternate uses for the consumer products and light goods originally created by the machines.

E Ruthless "Foreman", Megalomaniac chief, Priest of the Great Machines

F Dedicated young technician, Keeper of secret industrial lore, Curious outsider seeking tech

C The products are "useless" consumer goods, The industry is breaking down, The locals have made too many enemies

T Critical spare parts, Template for new products, Vital catalyst stash

P Factory floor with lots of electricity and molten plastics, Grimy salvage pit full of raw inputs, Yard full of toxic byproducts

Great Plan

The enclave is driven by a grand plan or generational purpose. It may be the work of some religious zealot, an inspiring founder, or a prize so tempting that the locals are united in seeking it. They plan, work, and sacrifice toward the purpose, though not all members may share the same ideas on how to accomplish it.

E Zealous leader indifferent to costs, Schemer eager to offload the plan's price on others, Outside enemy of the plan's goal

F Earnest young laborer for the plan, Local crushed under the sacrifices demanded, Loud reformer with a better idea of how to gain it

C The plan's goal is actually a disaster in waiting, The goal is impossible but they refuse to admit it, The goal requires grave sacrifices by others

T A preliminary reward from their efforts, A potent relic that enables their plan, A cache of goods vital in pursuing the plan

P Teeming work site, Monument to future success, Training hall where people learn the work

Hidden Refuge

The enclave serves as a secret sanctuary for some otherwise-hated or hunted group. They may be concealed among the rest of the locals, hidden away in a hidden location, or the entire enclave might be concealed. The locals know they're likely to suffer alongside the refugees if the secret is discovered.

E Grim hunter of the hidden group, Vicious group member who takes advantage of their secret lair, Local bent on protecting the secret no matter the bloodshed required

F Sympathetic member of the hidden group, Local trying to survive the subterfuge, Local in love with one of the hidden group

C There's a good reason people hate the hidden group, The group is practically enslaved by their hosts, The refuge can only be accessed at specific times or circumstances

T A treasure brought in by the refugees, A relic somehow tied to their need to hide, A stock of goods created by the refugees

P False-front building hiding a lair, Cave complex with hidden path to the refuge, Hidden shrine to the refugee god

Hunger

Every enclave knows hunger from time to time, but the people here regularly suffer from famine. Something about the surrounding land must keep them here, either the prospect of rich salvage, safety from enemies, or fear of the unknown. Obtaining and dividing food consumes almost every waking hour for the locals, and most are scraped gaunt and desperate by their need.

E Voracious cannibal, Local despising "useless eaters", Leader fearing an outside threat to their power

F Man with a family to feed, Dreamer seeking a better life, Priest trying to hold civilized norms in place

C Outsiders are "taxed" out of their rations rapidly, Outside powers force the natives to stay, The locals stay to protect something

T Hidden cache of Old World rations, Proof that someone is a cannibal, Sacred relic that keeps the locals here

P Field of sickly crops, Kitchen with pitifully small stores, Scene of a lynching over food hoarding

Hydraulic Despot

The enclave's leadership controls a critical resource, and uses that control to exert their rule over the settlement and its surrounding area. Potable water, edible food, critical medical goods, functioning electrical power, or other staples might all be used as weapons against those who refuse to submit. Producing or trading this good without their permission is likely a death sentence.

E Cruel technician-ruler, Brutish inheritor of a productive apparatus they don't understand, Technocrat with grand and pitiless plans

F Rebel goods producer, Outside smuggler, Secretly sympathetic administrator in the despotism

C The supply of the good is steadily dwindling, The leader seeks to destroy all other sources even in other enclaves, The supply has suddenly dropped and the least favored are going without

T A relic that can produce the good, A hidden cache of the good, Valuables offered as tribute for the good

P Ancient production center, Crowded distribution site, Secret illicit manufactory





Inbred

The locals have received so little new blood that they are badly inbred, with deformities and congenital diseases rampant among them. Something about their society strongly discourages outside marriage. Conversely, their inbreeding might be intellectual, with a society stubbornly fixed on a single locally-made school of impractical or erroneous thought.

E Deranged chieftain, Local who hates and fears outsiders, Racial supremacist

F Curious youth, Diplomat seeking new citizens, Healer working on inherited illnesses

C The locals are physically weak, The natives are strangely beautiful, The natives intentionally inbreed to strengthen psychic potential or a line of mutations

T Pretech genetic therapy drugs, Symbol of their "purity", Ancestral treasures

P Plaza full of similar-looking people, Incestuous wedding, Family estate-turned-fortress

Invasion Remnant

This enclave is all that remains of a prior invasion by an outside group. Once a forward base, fortress, or seized local community, the rest of the invading force has melted away or been slaughtered, with little prospect of further support from home. Old enclaves of this type have likely made terms with their neighbors, while new ones might simply gutter out in raids and mutual bloodshed.

E Military leader who doesn't know how to quit, Vengeful chief determined to redeem the cause, Outside foe bent on wiping them all out

F Common trooper who just wants to live, Native displaced by the invaders, Outside trader trying to work out a deal with them

C They're convinced further support will come, They betrayed their former leaders, They have a weapon that makes others fear to face them

T Cache of valuable military goods, Plunder taken in the invasion, Secret weapon of the ancients

P Crude barracks-like structure, Hastily-built fortifications, Overtaken town citadel

Isolationists

The natives have no desire to involve themselves in the affairs of outsiders. They might be willing to conduct trade with strangers, or they could insist on absolute separation from the outside world. They might be totally confident in their ability to go it alone, or they may fear the rest of the world as being full of marauders, heathens, and savages.

E Paranoid chieftain, Researcher of things that must be kept hidden, Fanatical ruler certain of the outside world's impurity

F Insatiably curious native, Outsider prisoner kept from leaving, Local smuggler

C The locals really will suffer terribly if they have outside contact, The system that allows them to stay isolated is breaking down, A faction of locals is against the isolationism

T Relic that supports their isolation, Goods taken from intruders, A rare product made only in this enclave

P Heavily-defended wall or fortification, Secret path to the enclave, Quarantine house where outsiders must stay

Lost Glory

This enclave once held some grand distinction of art, science, military power, or political prestige. While relics and remnants of that age still linger, all the substance of it has since been lost to time, disaster, or decadence. The society may still pretend that it holds its former power and is apt to deal harshly with those who refuse to play along.

E Bitter lord animated by resentment, Chief obsessed with reviving the glory at any cost, Decadent ruler wallowing in the remnants

F Local trying to preserve what they can, Outsider seeking traces of the past, Elder who has retained certain secrets

C The glory was actually never real, Another faction stole it or abducted its keepers, The glory was lost in overcoming some disaster

T Relic related to the past glory, Wealth acquired in better days, Secret that would help bring back those days

P Faded edifice related to the glory, Local infrastructure too big for the remnants, Monument to a lost splendor

Luddites

As the old world perished in flame and horror, some among the survivors came to blame the very idea of advanced technology, and decided that such technology must be destroyed or reserved for the righteous. These enclaves generally refuse to use any technology beyond steam-era engines and weaponry, or restrict its use to the leadership caste and their enforcers.

E Conquering anti-tech chieftain, Native convinced the PCs are spreading tech, Priest teaching a hate of tech

F Secret tech sympathizer, Missionary teacher, Trader hungry for locked-away relics

C The locals are highly persuasive to their neighbors, Plotters scheme to use tech to kill rival leadership, A priest is convinced the PCs have some forbidden tech

T Cache of forbidden tech, Illicit medical stims, Store of hidden paper books

P Field worked by simple hand tools, Plaza with smashed tech for paving, Shrine dedicated to those who died to the evils of tech

Lunatic Leader

The enclave's leader is genuinely insane or delusional, but functions well enough to maintain their immediate control. Their madness may be intrinsic, or it could be the result of some great reverse or dangerous relic. For whatever reason, the enclave's elite find it profitable to leave them in place, or can't agree on who should replace them.

E Chief convinced of a fundamentally false delusion, Dangerously unstable ruler, Irrationally violent or sadistic leader

F Harried family member, Victim of their madness, Physician trying to treat them

C Their insanity is extremely well-hidden, By luck or plotting their delusions have actually worked out very well lately, Their madness is viewed as holy or as mystically inspired truth

T Drugs that can control the madness, Riches piled up for a deranged demand, Precious relic abandoned in a fit of unreason

P Their defaced and disordered private quarters, Extremely tense audience chamber, Bizarre edifice raised at their irrational command

Mandate Heirs

The locals are absolutely convinced that they are the duly-constituted representatives of legitimate pre-fall authority, and as such, they have the right and duty to do whatever is necessary to drag their benighted neighbors into the light of social harmony. Some such enclaves are the remnants of security outposts or the personal entourage or kinsmen of a powerful official.

E Half-savage half-tyrant chieftain, "Cultural Psychologist" with demented ideas about social harmony, Aspiring planetary ruler

F Idealistic leader,, Sympathetic "rebel criminal" slave, Determined reformer

C The locals have a very warped idea of the past, The locals are divided into conflicting factions, The locals guard a taboo ancient base

T Government facility passkey, Ancient peacekeeper tech, Location of hidden gear cache

P Decaying government building, House constructed in crude mimicry of ancient styles, Room lined with portraits of prior officials

Medical Center

Functional medical facilities remain available at this enclave, or else its members are abnormally skilled physicians and healers. Outsiders are eager to have medical care from locally-trained physicians, and some might make pilgrimages to use their medical tech. The enclave either has a powerful protector or is well-armed enough to defend their treasure.

E Physician with dark experimental ends, Enraged outsider chieftain who blames them for failing a sick loved one, Raider seeking to plunder the facility

F Exhausted local physician, Pilgrim seeking healing, Local tech in need of spare parts

C The healing comes at a dire cost, Only certain groups or religions are treated, The medical facilities are breaking down

T Parts to maintain the facility, Medical texts containing vital information, Stockpile of valuable drugs

P Heavily-fortified hospital, Religious structure full of patients, Resting-place for sick pilgrims





Miasmatic Zone

The enclave suffers from endemic disease due to dangerous insect life, mutated contagions, old world pollution, or a particular genetic weakness. The site must have some special appeal to explain why they haven't left, and outsiders may view the natives with wariness or disgust as potential disease vectors.

E Brutal researcher using the locals as raw materials, Scientist seeking to weaponize the disease against their enemies, Tyrant taking advantage of the sufferers and their frailty

F Earnest young healer, Trader who brings in medical supplies, Local maker of prostheses or other compensatory goods

C The disease has a distinct benefit as well, The enclave is quarantined by others, The locals view the sickness as something divine

T Medical goods to treat the illness, A relic that can end the plague, An ultra-contagious item used as a weapon

P Well-worn hospice, Workplace full of walking ill, Graveyard in regular use

Militarists

The natives are violent by nature and have a cultural enthusiasm for war. Status and wealth often derive from military prowess, and the enclave is likely constantly harassing its neighbors when it isn't strong enough to seek an outright conquest. Such enclaves often have vassal relationships with other settlements, fighting their enemies for due tribute.

E Cruel but gifted strategist, Priest of a violent creed, Ambitious young ruler bent on proving his mettle through war

F Grizzled and prudent old veteran, Struggling diplomat, Bitter survivor of a recent raid

C They're holding back an even worse threat, They just got a super-weapon they're eager to use, They feel justified in violence by past crimes or slights against them

T A large cache of weaponry, Loot taken in a recent raid, Tribute offered by a vassal

P Heavily-used training ground, Monument to the valiant dead, Spartan barracks full of young warriors

Mutant Dominance

The enclave is controlled by mutants. In some cases they may simply be the predominant group within the enclave, leading it by virtue of numbers and influence. In others, they form a superior caste, ruling over their unchanged brethren as lords and blessed chosen. Such communities take ample advantage of the strange abilities of those plagued by mutation, but they often draw mistrust and fear from neighbors.

E Savage mutant chieftain, Cruelly superior noble, Mutant slave harvester

F Ambassador to the normals, Young mutant eager to see the world, Cooperative idealist

C Rebels conspire against the mutants, The mutants all suffer from a bad physical flaw or sickness, Mutation is forced in some

T Mutagenic substance, Radioactive relics, Cure for dangerous mutation side-effects

P Sacred radioactive zone, Hall decorated with heroic statues of mutants, Temple devoted to mutation

Mutant Hatred

The locals have a bitter hatred towards mutants. Large communities might have enough spare hands to afford executing such unfortunates, while smaller ones might be forced to let them live as a downtrodden underclass. Most such enclaves are convinced that mutation inevitably brings along a host of negative traits. They need to be exterminated or kept down lest they run rampant and slaughter "real humans".

E Mutant hunter with dark suspicions, Prophet of "blood purity", Slaver in search of mutant stock

F Mutant with concealed stigma, Parent of a mutant child, Oppressed local mutant

C Their leaders are actually mutants with concealed stigmas, They were formerly enslaved by mutants, Local mutation strains often result in deranged mutants

T Poison that only affects mutants, Mutant-detecting sensors, Plunder taken from mutants

P Slave pit full of mutants, Execution ground with mutant corpses, Home decorated with colorful tanned mutant hides

Natural Fortress

The surroundings of the enclave grant it a superbly defensible position, making it extremely difficult to raid or conquer it. This may be a product of geography, ancient fortifications, or surviving high-tech defenses. Accustomed to such security, the locals may have reservations about venturing out into the dangerous world beyond.

E Raider chief taking advantage of it as a base, Aspiring conqueror building up forces, Supremacist leader scorning the outer savages

F Tech who helps maintain the defenses, Trader who has a pass, Local yearning to see the outside world

C The defenses were meant to keep something in, The enclave is getting dangerously crowded, The defenses are starting to fail

T Key to bypass the defenses, Valuable debris or byproduct of the defenses, Rich goods fashioned in the safety of the enclave

P Gate through the defenses, High defensive point with a view, Narrow access bridge

Nobility

The enclave is rich enough to have some sort of nobility, a caste of men and women who administer the labor of others and live by the local surplus. Some nobilities are descended from the founding core of a settlement, the latecomers assimilated as serfs and subjects. Others draw their authority from the local religion, or ancient government ties, or sheer red-speared violence.

E Paranoid lord, Sneering princeling, Toady seeking favor with his masters

F Downtrodden peasant, Noble in need of outside aid, Pretender to the throne

C The current nobles are usurpers and the fallen house plots their destruction, The autocratic nobles really are enlightened compared to the peasant leaders, The nobles are hideously inbred

T Artifact regalia of authority, Tribute exacted from the commoners, Control codes to a relic power source

P Barbarically splendid audience hall, Field worked by peasant labor, Large fortification of scrap and rubble

Overpopulated

The enclave has too many people for its resources to support. There's not enough food, not enough shelter, or not enough security to keep this many locals satisfied. There are already tensions over dividing up the inadequate stock, and traditional birth control or infanticide is either unacceptable, unavailable, or impractical.

E Desperate leader bent on survival, Brutal slaver using the excess as fodder, Demagogue promising bounty in exchange for submission

F Half-starved urchin, Exhausted farmer, Canny scavenger

C The overpopulation is from an influx of refugees, They've developed harsh social customs to deal with this, They recently lost a resource source that used to sustain them

T Waylaid cache of food, Stock of supplies secretly hoarded, Relic that will solve the resource dearth

P Market full of extortionately-costly goods, Overworked farm field, Black market for rationed supplies

Pariahs

The natives of the enclave are hated by the people of the surrounding area. Others will not enter their settlement, and if any of them are found outside their lands they can expect a spear in their belly. Something these people are or have done is so abhorrent that their neighbors will have nothing to do with them. PCs who are known for friendly dealings with the pariahs may well suffer for it at the hands of outraged neighbors.

E Bitter pariah chieftain, Outsider who thinks the PCs are in league with the pariahs, Ruthless local who preys on outsiders

F Pariah yearning to see the outside world, Far-distant outsider who doesn't understand the taboo, Redeemer laboring to earn forgiveness

C They really are as horrible as they are said to be, Their reputation is based on a mistake, They were once awful but are now better

T Hard-won cache of precious survival supplies, Totem of the faith or cause that is so hateful to outsiders, Plunder taken from their enemies

P Square full of suspicious locals, Shrine or museum dedicated to the past, Temple to their hated creed





Pastoralists

The enclave survives by herding, either as a nomadic band or as the central meeting point of a widespread network of herds and their keepers. Such societies need large amounts of land to feed their stock, but can get by on territory too dry or unwelcoming for conventional agriculture. Farming neighbors may be viewed with contempt or as convenient sources of plunder.

E Nomadic raider chief, Notorious cattle rustler, Mad researcher conducting dark livestock experiments

F Free-spirited cowboy, Weary veterinarian, Farmer with herd-trampled fields

C Their livestock is human or otherwise abhorrent, They have very little central coordination, A sickness or predator is decimating their herds

T A champion breeding stud, A rustled herd of livestock, Rare and precious drugs for animal medicine

P Massive livestock pen, Portable living tent, Festival with skilled riders

Podborn

At least some of the members of the community are cryogenically-preserved survivors, inhabitants of sealed underground creches, or otherwise living relics of the time before the world collapsed. They may have access to knowledge and tech long since lost to the surface world, but usually have a cripplingly poor understanding of how this new world actually works.

E Panicked "mayor" convinced the world's full of monsters, Aspiring world-conqueror, Vicious podborn criminal rejoicing in the death of law

F Utterly helpless podborn doomed to die without aid, Revived rebel leader seeking allies, Podborn thrilled at the prospect of a life of adventure

C The podborn think everyone else is a monster, The podborn have been enslaved by a local tyrant, The podborn count themselves the rightful rulers of the area

T Precious Old World tech, Passcodes to government base, Map to now-lost cache

P Cavernous emergency pod bay, Clumsily-fashioned camp of debris and survival tents, Room full of sick and wounded podborn

Peaceful

The people here are remarkably pacifistic and peaceful by current standards, perhaps too peaceful to live were it not for some protector. They shun violence, abhor force in dealing with others, and have a pious - or craven - dread of bloodshed. Such communities are almost never natural occurrences in the wastes, and are usually the product of a remarkably well-hidden home, strong outside protectors, or an inevitably brief mass delusion brought on by prophets or preachers.

E Brutal raider chieftain looking for prey, Local thug who bullies the natives viciously, Local convinced the PCs are going to ruin everything

F Outsider gone native among the locals, Restless local seeking adventure, Native anticipating destruction if things don't change

C The natives are recent converts who've just been lucky so far, A secret group of assassins keeps order with "accidents", The natives are slaves of a much more violent group

T Abundant supplies from the lack of fighting, Cache of mind-altering drugs, Abandoned store of high-tech military hardware

P Serene native festival, Unwalled village, Elaborate local religious rite

Psychic Cult

The enclave is devoted to the development of psychic powers, revering them on religious or philosophical grounds. In the New Earth setting, they may be devotees of the terrible Crazed and their mad cults. In settings that do not involve psychic powers, these poor wretches may have convinced themselves of their existence or built whole new schemes of supernatural lore around mummery and tricks.

E Demented cult high priest, Vicious cult enforcer, Honey-tongued preacher for the cult

F Rebel against cult domination, Heretic who seeks the downfall of the priests, Priest of the community's former religion

C The cult is concealed as a different faith, The cultists don't know the true enormities of their priests, The cult is merely a dangerous minority of the group

T Obscene psychic technology, Plunder from sacrifices, Tithes gathered from the locals

P Field of crucified unbelievers, Farm worked by a coffle of enslaved converts, Plaza during horrific religious rite

Psychic Masters

This enclave is in thrall to one or more powerful psychics, either openly or as secret kingmakers. In the New Earth setting, these masters are likely dangerously insane from the damage of untrained psychic development. In worlds without psychic powers, these charlatans rule by tricks or by careful employment of advanced technology.

E Paranoid psychic chieftain, Worshipful servant of the psychics, Sadistic bullying henchman

F Secret psychic researcher, Rebel reformer, Outside psychic-hunter

C The psychics are trained and sane, The psychics are megalomaniacal, Local rulers have cut deals with the psychics

T Ancient Old World psitech, Tribute gathered for masters, Loot from conquered population

P Austere meditation chamber, Ruins of some madness-induced atrocity, Site of a pitched battle with frightened outsiders

Recent Settlement

The enclave is a fresh one, founded only a few years ago at most. Something about the site is inviting enough to have drawn others together here. Perhaps an extended clan from a more overcrowded community made their way here, or exiles from a splintered enclave, or nomads who've given up their wandering. Such communities are hopeful, but often rife with factions and arguments that have yet to calm with time.

E Suspicious village elder, Faction leader convinced the PCs are on the other side, Former exile who should have stayed exiled

F Struggling farmer, Hungry artisan, Beleaguered guard captain

C Rough newcomers are turning the current denizens into slaves, A precious resource is suddenly discovered near the site, Civil war threatens among the factions

T Relic from their former home, Precious cache of survival supplies, Plans for vital tech

P Crudely-built new village hall, Jury-rigged gate in a crude fortification, Makeshift church of the old faith

Reckless Complacency

Some grim threat hangs over the enclave, but the locals are stubbornly convinced that everything is fine. Any resistance might disturb the present peace, and any warning is taken as a threat or spiteful troublemaking. The enclave's prosperity might depend on it doing nothing to interfere with the impending disaster, or the locals might be beguiled by agents of the crisis.

E Agent of the threat working to eliminate reactions, Self-satisfied chieftain who wants no trouble, Local leader bent on using outsiders to suffer the danger of the threat

F Local who's already been harmed by the threat, Elder who can foresee trouble, Prophetic social outcast

C The threat is very profitable up until it isn't, The enclave tried to do something before but it failed horribly, Nobody wants to be the first to deal with the problem

T Proof that doom is coming, Valuable loot produced by the threat, Trade goods the enclave isn't using to deal with the threat

P Cleaned-up location of threat damage, Poorly-defended village, Leader's ornate residence

Reforming Zeal

One or more of the locals has been seized with a fierce determination to reform an existing wrong, or at least, what they consider to be wrong. They've gathered enough allies in the community to be a serious factor, and they may be willing to use violence to purge the corruption. The problem may be a genuine injustice, or it may just be a point of prejudice cherished by the prophet.

E Corrupt chieftain, Fanatical reformer, Cynical outside manipulator

F Harried village elder, Sincere reformer, Local caught in the crossfire

C The injustice is real but the reformer is a cynical demagogue, The reform is just an excuse to cover a deeper hate between natives, The group's survival depends on the injustice

T Ill-gotten gains of corruption, Offerings made to the prophet's cause, Plunder stolen from rivals

P Riotous demonstration, Heavily-fortified regime stronghouse, Place where injustice is on full display





Religious Zealots

The locals are fanatical followers of a local faith, and insist that every aspect of life be made to forcibly conform to the dictates of their religion or philosophical belief. Outsiders might be grudgingly tolerated, but any lack of deference to the faith is sure to provoke a violent response. Zealots can be found for virtually any faith or ideology, and the scanty communication between wasteland enclaves ensures that each one tends to be unique and particular.

E Fanatical prophet, Grim-handed enforcer, Bloodless church bureaucrat

F Secret apostate, Reforming heretic, Trapped outsider

C The zealots are actually the nicest bunch in the region, The zealots are a minority but powerful, The fanaticism is a response to a recent crisis

T Precious religious artifact, Tithes from believers, Lost regalia of sacred office

P The church which is the grandest building in the enclave, Prison for holding sinners before punishment, School full of religious students

Remnant Survivors

This enclave is made up of survivors of the prior world, whether those are elite government officials, cryo-frozen podborn, or the heirs of ancient survivalists. The locals still think of themselves as belonging to that old order, and likely view the modern population as dangerous savages. Most such enclaves retain at least a limited amount of old technology, though they may no longer be able to build new examples of it.

E "Legitimate president" of the country, Leader ready to ruthlessly exploit their modern neighbors, Idealist planning to kill their way to a restored golden age

F Remnant who's curious about the outside world, Local who wants to make terms with the new reality, Outsider merchant bringing in critical supplies

C The remnants refuse to accept modern realities, They think of themselves as the only real humans, They're hopelessly naive and trusting in a newly-harsh world

T Precious ancient tech, Rare spare parts, Drugs long since lost elsewhere

P Unnaturally clean living space, Ancient building of concrete and steel, Quarantine zone for outsiders

Repurposed Structure

The locals here have repurposed an ancient structure to their own uses. An old apartment building may have been transformed into a crude arcology, a foundry might be reworked into a fortress, or an old observatory now serves them as a lookout point. The structure is likely valuable or useful enough to have justified the enclave's development.

E Crazed priest of a building cult, Technician who'd do anything to maintain the structure, Former owner resentful of the interlopers

F Fastidious maintenance tech, Dutiful servant of the structure's new purpose, Outside researcher studying the structure

C The structure hides a terrible secret purpose, The structure is collapsing from misuse, Part of the structure has yet to be reclaimed

T Key to entering a sealed area of the structure, Precious relic related to the site's former use, Supplies used to maintain the structure

P Secret entrance to the structure, Reworked control center, Jury-rigged residence

Research Center

A surprising degree of scientific research still goes on in this enclave, either conducted by a native circle of scientists or as a legacy of some old world research center. Most such research tends to be very practical in nature and related to salvaging, fixing, and repurposing old technology. Other "research" is purely demented, either pursuing delusional theories or working dark arts of mutation and grim experiments.

E Vivisectionist biology researcher, Amoral research AI, Outside raider bent on seizing the place's secrets

F Relative of a research victim, Earnest young scientist, Hard-bitten "research assistant" who does the dirty field work

C They're tampering with powers they do not understand, Vile research is being hidden from other scientists, They believe at least one fundamentally delusional theory

T Precious research papers, Powerful half-working relic, Research sample that would prove or disprove a theory

P Humming laboratory, Gory autopsy room, Cratered testing ground

Robots

The enclave has retained a number of functioning robots which they use for labor or protection. Most robots are purpose-built and equipped with expert systems that allow them to function in their role; very rarely, an actual AI is present in an enclave and capable of operating the robot hulls remotely. In some of these cases the robots are more lords and jailers than they are servants, the humans enlisted to maintain their pitiless iron masters.

E Tech who fears outsider theft, Aspiring general of a robot army, Paranoid AI who fears strangers

F Expert robot repair technician, Sheltered innocent local, Grizzled spare part scavenger

C The robots are wearing out, The locals are foolishly complacent behind their robot guards, The locals don't know how to control the bots

T Cache of robot spare parts, Functioning high-tech tools, Stockpile of robot-made goods

P Ancient robot workshop, Field tended by robotic laborers, Robot-operated hospital

Sanctuary

The enclave is a refuge for some hated and persecuted people, one either hidden from hostile outsiders or too defensible to be taken by storm. In some cases, sanctuaries are simply oases of peace and security in a remarkably hostile land, a patch of fresh water and fertile land in the midst of a glass desert or a redoubt in mutant-infested mountains. At other times, they are hiding places for a hated race of mutants or a despised local faith. Not all appreciate being discovered by potentially hostile outsiders, but many are in need of whatever help they can get.

E Vicious local who despises outsiders, Refugee who blames the PCs for what they suffered, Demagogue seeking to make an army

F Unjustly persecuted local, Scarred and world-weary native, Beleaguered local protector

C The sanctuary is crumbling, New refugees threaten to seize the sanctuary, Old enemies have discovered the sanctuary

T Prizes carried from former homes, Key to the sanctuary's defenses, Cache of vital supplies

P Narrow path along a precipice, Atop a high-walled fortification, A chamber of light and life inside a fortress





Secret Masters

Whatever their apparent government, the group is actually ruled by a secretive cabal. Savvy natives may know the truth or they might be innocent of their real masters, but outsiders are unlikely to realize the truth of things. These secretive figures might be powerful psychic cultists, mutants, or religious figures, or they may simply be ruthless political masterminds. The apparent leadership is never more than a mere figurehead for their machinations.

- **E** Cold-blooded Machiavellian conspirator, Holy man with fanatical minions, Enforcer who wants outsiders to keep moving
- **F** Fearful native who knows the truth, Target of the cabal, Secret rebel against the masters
- **C** The masters are actually benign, The masters hide to avoid an ancient grudge from another enclave, The masters masquerade as lowly drudges
- **T** Relic by which the masters exert control, Proof of the masters' real identities, Cache of weapons for the rebels
- **P** Hidden rebel camp, Ancient sanctum of the masters, Oddly stiff noble court

Shared Delusion

The enclave is driven by a mutual delusion about the world or their role in it. They may see themselves as destined rulers, or believe in a hidden utopia just over the next hill, or be convinced that alien saviors will come once the right signals are sent. They find confirmation of their delusion in every supposed disproof, and may treat unbelievers with pity, scorn, or vengeful wrath.

- **E** High priest of a lunatic faith, Demagogue who profits by encouraging the delusion, Cynical outsider preying on their error
- **F** Secretly heretical local, Native with a completely different delusion, Outsider trying to show them the truth
- **C** Their delusion is actually more or less true, The delusion is aiming them toward disaster, The delusion is relatively recent
- **T** Inescapable proof of the delusion's error, Loot offered up to pursue the delusion, Relic crucial to their plans for the delusion
- **P** Edifice constructed to pursue the delusion, Monument to the error, Remains of a prior failed attempt to advance the delusion

Shared Sacrifice

Everyone in the enclave is forced to make some sort of sacrifice, either one born of necessity or one demanded by an outside power. A tribute of slaves, a ritual mutilation, a tithe of children, or some other dire cost must be paid by the inhabitants. This sacrifice may be a sign of commitment to the group or it may just be a necessary cost of survival in the place.

- **E** Grim collector of the price, Outside tyrant exacting the sacrifice, Fanatic bent on expanding the price to others
- **F** Victim of the cost, Secret rebel against the sacrifice, Idealist seeking a better way
- **C** The sacrifice gives the enclave an unusual power, The sacrifice staves off a greater and worse cost, The sacrifice is totally pointless but cherished by the group all the same
- **T** Cure for the problem that the sacrifice meets, Tribute related to the sacrifice, Cache of loot stashed by long-vanished rebels against the practice
- **P** Ornate ritual shrine, Graveyard full of those who didn't survive the price, Prison or holding cell for unwilling victims

Skilled Farmers

The locals are remarkably talented farmers, or have soil that is abnormally fertile. They can support more natives at a better quality of life than most places, so they either have a strong protector or have enough able warriors to defend their riches. Such farmlands often have traders from afar, if sufficiently safe water routes are available for bulk food shipments.

- **E** Gluttonous tyrant ruler, Farmer making terrible sacrifices to the fields, Raider chieftain yearning for such valuable slaves
- **F** Wizened old farmer-sage, Soil researcher, Outside trader from a starving enclave
- **C** The food has subtle addictive or unhealthy properties, The farmers jealously guard their secret lore, The farms rely on tech that is wearing out or breaking
- **T** Functional ancient farming equipment, Huge cache of long-lasting foodstuffs, Vital fertilizer or soil chemical supply
- **P** Field of mutant crops, Full barn or silo, Processing facility for the crops

Slavers

Slavery is common in most post-apocalyptic settings, where manpower is harder to find than unused land. This enclave has built their entire society around buying and selling intelligent creatures, however, and is likely known in the region for being a center of the flesh trade. They either have enough empty land to soak up the labor of many slaves or trade routes secure enough to barter them afar.

E Cold-blooded trader in lives, Zealous "civilizer" of lesser folk, Savage conqueror who has more use for living vanquished

F Escaped slave, Relative of a prisoner, Local with qualms about the practice

C Slavery is actually preferable to the former life of the victims, Elite slaves belong to the enclave's ruling class, Other enclaves gladly welcome their manpower and convenient criminal disposal

T Token of ownership of a very valuable slave, Weapons for a slave uprising, Treasure taken from a new slave

P Reeking pen of the wretched, Field full of carefully-watched toilers, Elite residence with decorative servants

Splinter Group

The group originally belonged to another, larger enclave in the region, but some sort of conflict or dissent drove them away to found a new community. The sectarians might have adopted new faiths, or rejected the current leadership, or committed acts unforgivable by their former kin. Feelings between the two communities are usually hostile, and strangers must take care not to be friends of the wrong sort.

E Chieftain nursing old grudges, Local seeing the PCs as tools against their rivals, Zealot determined to overthrow the "usurpers"

F Peacemaker seeking reconciliation, Aspiring reformer, Local yearning to return

C The sectarians were the former ruling class, The two groups openly war with each other, The split was actually amicable

T Regalia of legitimacy, Holy relic of their faith, Stockpiled weapons for the "restoration"

P Village center made up like their old home, Museum-like house dedicated to the "truth", Freshly-built structure put into recent use

Sterile

For some reason the natives of this community cannot reproduce themselves in the normal fashion. Radiation and a pervasive nanite infection might be the cause, or the natives may be a last sad remnant of long-lived aliens, or they might belong to a creed that abhors natural reproduction. As no community can last long without new blood, they must either find different ways of introducing new members or suffer a gradual extinction. Not all recruits are given much choice in their new allegiance.

E Mad scientist creating altered life, Prophet of a self-mutilating cult, Bitter mutant seeking to taint outsiders

F Desperate defender of the enclave, Unwilling recruit to the group, Savant who seeks a cure

C The locals believe they deserve their lot, The natives forcibly impress outsiders, The natives aren't sterile but the environment kills children

T Unused obstetric supplies and medicines, The cure for the sterility, Cache of robotic children

P Empty houses, Structures built for much larger populations, A graveyard lined with tablets

Supremacists

The locals are adamantly convinced of their superiority over all their neighbors. Whether from greater tech, larger numbers, confident religion, useful mutations, lack of mutations, or ethnic extraction, they count others as little more than savages. Attitudes range from a sense of noblesse oblige to their sad inferiors to a dehumanizing contempt for their existence. Outsiders are rarely entertained for a moment longer than their utility lasts.

E Casually superior chieftain, Local slaver, Aspiring conqueror

F Mistreated slave, Open-minded local, Struggling outsider trader

C The locals were once lowly and downtrodden, The enclave means well toward its neighbors, The group performs some duty vital to the region

T Relic emblematic of their superiority, Inherited tech, Cache of insurgency supplies

P Hall of recorded glories, Slave pens full of neighboring tribals, Temple where their superiority is preached





Sustained Technology

Somehow, the natives have managed to hold on to a significant portion of their ancestral technological base. This fragment might not be enough to support the entire enclave, but their leaders and elites have access to advanced equipment and weaponry, and the enclave probably has such luxuries as electrical power and running water. Such enclaves tend to be ferociously protective of their remaining technical resources and paranoid about attempts to steal or sabotage them.

E Suspicious chief technician, Fanatical tech-priest, Incipient conqueror

F Harried maintenance tech, Grizzled defender, Spare-parts scavenger

C The enclave can produce only a trickle of gear, The gear has dangerous side-effects, The fabricators require terrible sacrifices

T Products of the enclave, Plans for high-tech gear, Advanced workshop tools

P Comfortable modern dwelling, Climate-controlled building, Town square lit with electrical lighting

Trade Hub

The vast majority of trade in the new world is crude barter or involves the communal sharing of goods. However, some enclaves are positioned so well that they can serve as markets for the surrounding settlements and nomad tribes. These trade hubs often produce useful goods of their own, whether livestock, abundant produce, or substantial scrap salvage. Their function as commercial hubs leaves them far more cosmopolitan and open to outsiders than most enclaves, and their respect for the property rights of strangers is remarkable in the wastes.

E Dishonest trader, Rapacious enclave elder, Raider chief plotting a big score

F Hard-pressed guardsman, Town magistrate, Ambitious young trader

C Raiders are strangling the hub, New rulers are oppressing the merchants, A rival enclave seeks the hub's ruin

T Stockpiled trade goods, Collected tariffs, Proof of dishonest dealing

P Bustling bazaar, Quiet caravanserai, Actual shop with goods to buy

Tyrant

The enclave is under the iron fist of a tyrant, whatever its normal governance might be like. Some power controls daily life in the community, and any hint of resistance is crushed. The lord might be a raider chieftain who has seized the place for a new seat of power, the chief elder of a vicious local family, a brute who has found powerful pretech artifacts for himself and his favorites, or any other suitably savage master. Most locals prefer to suffer under their oppressor than risk the dangers of the wastes.

E The tyrant himself, Vicious lickspittle courtier, Skulking informant

F Rebel leader, Abused local, Former ruler's heir

C The community invited in the tyrant against a worse external threat, A significant minority support the tyrant, The tyrant isn't as bad as the one he replaced

T Gathered "taxes", Cache of rebel supplies, Peasants' hidden food stores

P Gate with heads on pikes, Field worked by slaves, Burnt ruins of a rebel house

Uncanny Power

The locals possess some unique power or trait that their neighbors must reckon with. They might have a shared potent mutation, common psychic powers, access to old world technology, or a universal reputation for curses or divinations. Such power can rarely be stolen, but it can often be exploited by an outside manipulator or local tyrant.

E Ruler determined to push the power to its limits, Outside researcher victimizing subjects, Dark priest of a cult devoted to the power

F Gifted young possessor of the power, Aged guardian of the power's secrets, Outsider who came to gain the power's benefits

C Use of the power requires grim sacrifices, The power is failing and no one knows how to fix it, The locals are relying too much on the power

T Relic that can negate or replicate the power, Rich payment made to them to use the power on someone's behalf, Secret item that enhances the power

P Edifice created by use of the power, Ruins of a place where the power was used offensively, School for teaching locals to use the power

Underground Haven

The enclave is largely underground in a bunker or cave system, equipped by science or nature with adequate ventilation, water, and foodstuffs. The natives cannot be effectively sieged out, but limited space may harshly limit their numbers. They may have moved into the haven after a lucky discovery, or be the remaining heirs of an ancient group of survivors.

E Paranoid enclave chieftain, Religious leader preaching the iniquities of the outside world, Reformer who plans to force the locals out by making the haven uninhabitable

F Naive young underdweller, Outsider diplomat, Native who wants to explore the world

C The haven is luxuriously comfortable, The haven has a time limit before it becomes uninhabitable, The locals are physically adapted to the underground

T Box of functioning water chips, Weapons for security guards, Enigmatic piece of forgotten tech

P Fortified haven entrance, Twisting concrete tunnels, Hidden egress for leadership

Unsteady Alliance

The enclave is actually composed of two or more sharply distinct groups, perhaps of different cultures, lifestyles, religions, or mutation types. The locals are new to this circumstance and neither group particularly trusts the other. There may have been a legacy of skirmishing between the two, or simple strangeness, but the environment is forcing them to work together for mutual survival. Leadership is likely a bone of contention, with members of one group refusing to follow a leader of a different clan.

E Self-serving demagogue, Ethnic chauvinist, Outsider who profits by conflict

F Star-crossed lovers, Pragmatic peacemaker, Aspiring leader of all clans

C The groups used to raid each other, The outside pressure is temporary and the alliance will fade when it does, The groups' lifestyles are mutually incompatible

T Prized ancestral relics, Symbol of past cooperation, Evidence of an impending crisis that will require cooperation

P Clan-segregated meeting area, Debris of a drunken brawl, Contentious meeting of leaders

Uplifted Beasts

The enclave is populated largely or entirely by uplifted animals, either beastmen from the Bestiary chapter or full animals that have been mutated into sentience. Most of these enclaves have at least a crude semblance of human organization to them, leavened with decidedly animalistic traits. Some beastman settlements can be fairly advanced, but most lack the advantage of the ancestral tech base possessed by human communities. Their mentality is often shaped by their feral habits.

E Half-savage beastman warrior, Cunning beastman manipulator, Outsider seeking the beastmen as warriors

F Curious young beastman, Human trader seeking profit, Wise beastman elder

C The beastmen despise their feral natures, The beastmen consider humans to be prey animals, The beastmen keep human slaves

T Relics of Old World biotech, Beastman-creation serum, Device that controls feral minds

P Lush pasture, Meeting-place of simple stones, Hall in crude mimicry of human work

Warbeasts

The locals raise some kind of mutated animal as a warbeast, whether a type large enough to be ridden or one meant simply to fight beside its owner. Such powerful companions strongly influence the enclave's culture, with the most important families being those with the most or best warbeasts in their packs. Such large numbers of likely-carnivorous creatures require substantial hunting ranges, and such communities are often limited in their packs by the amount of food they can find for their stock.

E Mad beast-cultist, Chief with plans of conquest, Mutated intelligent warbeast

F Curious breeding researcher, Handler in need of help, Outsider slated to be eaten

C The beasts are as intelligent as humans, The locals feed troublemakers to the beasts, The beasts are maddened and controlled only by old tech

T Serum to create warbeasts, Toxin lethal to the beasts, Wealth traded for beasts

P Festive fight between beasts, Plaza full of locals and beasts, Pen full of hungry-eyed beasts





Warehouse Site

The enclave was built on top of a massive warehouse or supply depot. The locals have fortified it well enough to stand off the immediate threat of plunder, and likely encourage traders to help offload their supplies for more necessary goods. Such wealth is unlikely to be viewed kindly by hungry neighbors.

E Ruler paranoid about thieves, Aspiring regional hegemon, Outsider planning a huge theft

F Guardian of the warehouse, Technician who works with the wares, Trader in local goods

C The warehouse is full of only a single type or even item of goods, The goods are somehow perishable, The goods are running out

T Key to unlock an inaccessible part of the warehouse, Precious relic mixed in accidentally with the goods, Proof of theft by some important local

P Heavily-guarded freight bay, Market full of local goods, Residence lavishly decorated with local goods

Xenophobes

The locals hate or fear outsiders, and wish to have as little to do with them as they must. Some enclaves are violently isolationist, but most xenophobes must at least sometimes negotiate with strangers. The locals all have reasons for their xenophobia that seem very reasonable to them, though outsiders may disagree.

E Ruler bent on ensuring local purity, Crusader against heathen outsiders, Preacher spreading active hostility toward the outside world

F Victim of their xenophobic ways, Local who fell in love with an outsider, Trader who wants to make a profit with them

C They have an extremely rational reason for hating the outside world, Only the ruling group is particularly xenophobic, They hate the outside world but need it for some reason

T Loot taken from hated outsiders, Relic proving their superior worth, Goods fashioned for their exclusive use

P Massacre site related to their xenophobia, Fortification against outsiders, Shrine to their local faith

Zombie Cultists

The natives revere zombies or the power that created them, and are convinced that undeath is the final and ultimate state of being. For settings without zombies, the locals might revere mindless mutants, dangerous beasts, or other creatures normally hostile to humans. While not so reckless as to expose themselves to certain death, they tend to adopt mannerisms or traits of their totems.

E Horrific zombie tyrant, Mad priest of a dark faith, Scientist bent on stealing the secrets of undeath

F Soon-to-be sacrificed victim, Native heretic, Outsider zombie hunter

C They've learned to induce certain qualities of zombification, They have zombie protectors or allies, They are all complete lunatics sheltered only by their technology or distance from the hordes

T Device to induce zombification, Treasure left behind by a now-zombie, Offerings to the dead

P Shrine with caged zombie icon, Lab full of vile experiments, Monument to the glory of death

Zombie Exploitation

This enclave has somehow shackled or directed zombies toward their own ends, using them as laborers or shock troops. Settings without zombies might instead substitute mutants or dangerous creatures. The enclave almost certainly has developed some sort of control mechanism for the undead, or else is able to channel the hordes toward their desired targets through mundane means.

E Aspiring deadlands warlord, Zombie-obsessed researcher, Brutal slaver king demanding service even in death

F Reluctant zombie overseer, Relative of a victim of the horde, Agent of a threatened enclave

C The zombies will inevitably run loose eventually, The control requires a terrible sacrifice, The enclave can't stop exploiting them or else the zombies will turn on them

T Device to control the zombies, Goods built by zombie laborers, Plunder taken in the wake of a horde

P Workshop full of dead laborers, Pen full of zombie minions, Battlefield where the hordes overwhelmed a foe

An Example Enclave Turn

The GM is running the first enclave turn of an After the Fall campaign set in a post-ECM collapse with the global electrical grid hopelessly fried by a massive solar event. He's starting the PCs as visitors to the rural farming village of Napierville, the initial hub of the campaign. There are several other surviving enclaves in the area, but for the first turn, he decides that only the nearby FEMA camp at Branch Bottom is really significant. The enclave turn will just consist of it and Napierville's actions. The GM rolls randomly and has Branch Bottom go first.

The FEMA camp's immediate goal is acquiring enough food to survive the coming winter. Its leader, Director Yates, is convinced that the rest of the nation owes it to these desperate refugees to feed and protect them… and if they won't acknowledge their duty willingly it's justifiable to force it on them.

Napierville is the nearest plausible source of that food, and Yates has sent a communique to Mayor Frank requisitioning the contents of a grain silo. This is treated as an *Attack Rival* action with the goal of creating a "Napierville has to feed Branch Bottom." Problem for the town.

The mayor refuses to give up the stores; he's going to need far more seed grain next spring without modern fertilizers and the town can't afford to lose the grain. Yates won't back down and sends an armed crew of refugees to take control of the silo, using his "Camp leadership has dragooned the refugees into a raiding force." Feature to do so. Napierville doesn't have a Feature that can oppose a move like that, so Mayor Frank has no choice but to either lose a point of Cohesion from the losses in fighting off the raiders or let the Problem happen.

Napierville already suffered a loss of Cohesion from the chaos of the Crash. If it loses another, the entire village will disintegrate as everyone flees or tries to make private terms with Director Yates. Frank has no choice but to let Yates' goons take the silo and start shipping out the grain. Napierville gains a one-point Problem, leaving its total Trouble at four points.

Now it's Napierville's turn. Mayor Frank understands that the world has just gotten a lot more dangerous, and the civic spirit and tidy fields of his neighbors aren't going to be much use against desperate men with guns. He wants to start forming a Napierville militia to defend the town.

The GM decides that such a step is plausible, so the Dominion cost of doing so is 2 points, since Napierville is a Power 2 town. No powerful local or rival is opposed to the change; Branch Bottom doesn't count, because it's part of the problem the move is meant to answer. Unfortunately, Napierville doesn't have any Dominion at all, so it's going to need to muster its resources with a *Build Strength* action.

Branch Bottom FEMA Camp

Power:	1 (d6)	**Cohesion:**	1
Features:	Camp leadership has dragooned the refugees into a raiding force. A constant influx of new refugees lets them shrug off losses.		
Problems:	The refugees are desperate and undisciplined. (1 point) There are never enough resources or food supplies for all. (1 point)		

Napierville

Power:	2 (d8)	**Cohesion:**	1
Features:	Numerous skilled low-tech farmers are in the area. The locals look after each other and are willing to sacrifice for the town.		
Problems:	Napierville is small and doesn't have much for manpower. (1 point) The populace is scattered, easy to raid and hard to defend. (1 point) Local tech and vehicles are breaking down due to lack of parts. (1 point)		

To perform a successful *Build Strength* action, Napierville needs to make a Trouble check. It rolls its 1d8 action die and gets a 5; that's greater than its total Trouble score, so it's a success. If it'd been one point lower and a 4, it would have failed because of the town's new fourth point of Problem. The enforcers out at the silo would've gotten word of the exercises and moved to put a stop to them.

Still, a successful *Build Strength* action by Napierville only gives it one point of Dominion. It'll need at least one more turn to build the second, and then a third successful turn to *Enact Change* and create the new militia Feature. Even that won't get rid of the thugs at the silo, and Mayor Frank will need to either directly negotiate with Yates to pull his boys back or build up Dominion for another *Enact Change* that erases that particular Problem.

At the end of the first enclave turn, Napierville is balanced on the edge. There's not enough food for both next spring's planting and Branch Bottom's hungry mouths, and Yates is willing to do whatever he needs to do to feed his charges. PCs who step into this situation might try to figure out a way to get Yates' thugs out of the silo, or organize the locals into a counterforce, or even find some alternate source of food for Yates' people. Their adventures will directly create Features, solve Problems, or add Dominion and resources to those they aid. With luck, they'll be able to find solutions that everyone can live with. Without it, it's going to be a grim winter to come.



CREATING YOUR CAMPAIGN

Traditional old-school gaming is usually built around the ***campaign*** model. The GM is responsible for creating a particular world, region, or other larger context, and then builds individual adventures within that campaign world for players to experience. In a storyline-based game, these adventures might be loosely plotted from the very start on the assumption that the PCs will experience them all sequentially, with "the campaign" referring to the whole sequence. Background details and setting information are limited to only those parts of the world that engage with the expected storyline.

Building a sandbox campaign works a bit differently, and it has certain dangers for a naive GM. Without a single storyline thread to guide them, a GM can easily find themselves overwhelmed by the scope of their preparations. If the PCs could theoretically go anywhere or do anything within the campaign world, doesn't it mean that the entire campaign world has to be detailed beforehand?

It does not. Just as in any other craft, a prudent and skilled sandbox GM knows the tricks and techniques for constraining the amount of work they need to do in order to create a finished piece. This chapter is largely about teaching you these methods and giving you the procedures and tools you need to do the job yourself.

Many GMs find campaign creation to be one of the most enjoyable parts of the role. Exerting your own creativity to forge a setting and situations worth exploring is a special pleasure for a GM, and you should take full advantage of the opportunity.

The Basic Procedure

When you build your campaign, you're going to follow several steps as described in the following pages.

You'll establish themes. Certain tropes, stylistic choices, and creative themes will help inform your further decisions about the world.

You'll choose a campaign genre. What kind of apocalypse are you creating? Is this a near-future civil collapse, a zombie apocalypse, an alien invasion, a far-future mutated wasteland, or some other variety of global ruin?

You'll pick a campaign structure. Is your campaign going to be focused around surviving an immediate crisis, like a global plague or a collapsing society, or is it more about the exploration of the ruins of a post-apocalyptic world by a party that isn't necessarily facing impending personal doom?

You'll build a region to play in. Whether facing a crisis or scouting a wasteland, a sandbox campaign needs a backdrop for its adventures.

You'll stock the region with crises and encounter sites. Once you know where the PCs are going to be, you can start inserting crises into the area for them to endure and set up specific encounter sites of interest for them to explore.

Lastly, you'll set up an initial adventure. You have all the parts to hand, so you'll take some of them and fit them together into a short introductory adventure to pull the PCs together and introduce them to the setting. With a session's worth of content in hand, you'll be ready to begin your campaign.





Things to Think About

Before you begin creating your campaign setting, there are a few things you should stop to consider. GMing a sandbox campaign is all about efficient effort, so you can't afford to spend your creative energy carelessly.

Who are you running the game for? It's tempting to let the integration of the player characters into your campaign setting happen at the end of the process, but it often doesn't work well that way. It's important that the campaign's conceits be fun and engaging for the GM, but if it's something the players just aren't interested in then you're going to have a very short campaign.

It's not necessary that individual PCs be woven into the setting from the start, but the players involved need to be on board with the basic tropes and direction of the campaign. If they aren't excited about zombies then a Deadlands campaign had better have a different monstrous peril, and if they have no interest in maintaining a home base then a campaign revolving around the struggles of a desperate small town aren't going to hold their attention.

At this stage of campaign development, just give them a sketch of your general setting idea and see if it piques their interest. Try not to simply ask them "What sounds fun to you?" because a lot of groups will have a hard time answering that in a helpful way. Be specific about telling them what their PCs will probably be doing: looting ruins, evading fungal hordes, trying to keep a band of refugees alive, or so forth. Don't rely on them to simply intuit what kind of gameplay you expect to deliver.

What does the setting's scope need to be? Just how far-faring are the PCs expected to be, and how tightly bound will they be to specific places, people, or events? If you envision a Mutant Wasteland game of newly-awoken cryopod survivors exploring the blasted ruins of Des Moines, you're going to need to have a firm grip on Iowa's capital and be ready to populate it and its outskirts with interesting encounters. If your PCs are seafaring survivors of a roaming town-ship living off the ruins of port cities, you're going to need to have enough prepped material to handle a new destination every few sessions.

If you prepare correctly, you'll never need to be more than one session ahead of the PCs in terms of material you need to have prepped. Even so, if you don't want to spend all your creative effort on a single place or sequence of events, don't design your campaign to fundamentally revolve around it.

Is there a victory state? If you build your campaign around a ragtag group of refugees or a desperate urban neighborhood or a group of survivors trying to get their families to safety, the players are very likely going to want to solve their problems permanently. Temporary fixes for resource scarcity, external threats, or internal strife can make grist for adventures, but the PCs are going to want to fix things in a lasting way.

They're going to want to find a safe home for the refugees, build the neighborhood into a self-sustaining settlement, or bring their families to some secure outpost of civilization. If your campaign has or develops no other fundamental focus, it's going to end when and if they achieve their goal.

This may be entirely acceptable to you, as no campaign is meant to last forever and having a clear endpoint can help pace the adventures on the way. If you prefer a more open-ended setting, however, make sure to build in at least one focus that has no neat terminal point. An ominous unknown wilderness that vomits up new threats can provide considerable entertainment, as can a home base that never quite settles.



Campaign Themes

Post-apocalyptic campaigns tend to draw on a shared set of themes and motifs. By calling back to these themes when arranging events and choosing NPC outcomes, the GM can help maintain the tone they're aiming for in their own particular wasteland. Aversions or inversions of these tropes are also possible, especially when PCs start getting involved in events.

The prevalence of individual tropes will depend on the specifics of the campaign world you're creating. A post-fall civilization that rose from the ashes of a Mutant Wasteland may not have a heavy emphasis on Hunger, for example, as they've had time to sort out the basic mechanisms of survival. Conversely, Ignorance might play a much bigger role in such a setting, as no one yet alive can remember the truth about the fallen nations and technology they used. A GM should feel free to mix and match elements so as suit their own preferred aesthetic of doom.

Death: During a sudden collapse of societal infrastructure, it's not unreasonable to imagine that ninety percent of the population of most advanced countries would be dead within a year. Famine, plague, violence, infirmity, and sheer despair would ensure a civilizational death rate beyond any experienced in living memory. In population-dense areas such as urban cores the corpses would fill the apartment towers and litter the streets, the dying too weak to bury the dead. Survivors would watch this process in action, with teeming cities gradually emptying out over the course of a few months, and huge mobs of panicked locals giving way to furtive groups skulking in search of food. Almost every survivor would have multiple relatives or acquaintances die early in the process.

Despair: In the immediate aftermath of societal collapse, many of the survivors are going to be utterly despairing. The institutions and life they loved are gone and never returning, and they may have lost precious loved ones as well. With nothing to live for and no law to contain them, such survivors sometimes become dangerously self-indulgent, taking whatever pleasures they wish from this new life because no better future awaits them. Others become suicidal, taking irrational risks or ignoring impending disasters as they wait for death. Unlike most tropes in this list. Despair is rarely a theme in Mutant Wasteland campaigns and other farther-future settings. After the first generation of survivors dies off, the next have no memory of the old world and no sense of personal loss.

Exile: Ordinary pre-collapse life in most cities is predicated on working infrastructure and the functional long-distance transport of goods. If the trucks stop coming and the power goes out, urbanites around the globe will be forced to go in search of food elsewhere. Small towns might be wiped out by desperate interlopers, border villages crushed by mobs of refugees, and formerly-safe places turned into death traps by the new reality around them. Countless survivors will be forced to flee their former homes with little more than they can carry. Even during the more settled existence of a Mutant Wastelands campaign, villages and mutant sanctuaries are always at risk of forcible eviction by nearby dangers.

Fragility: Modern society is built on multiple layers of failsafes, fallbacks, and layered maintenance. If the power goes out, it's assumed that someone is working to fix it. If a shipment doesn't arrive at one store, another will have the goods. In a post-apocalyptic game, however, this security does not exist. If a critical piece of equipment is damaged, or a supply shipment does not come in, or the one skilled technician dies, the entire settlement could face certain doom. There are no replacements to be had and no substitutes to step in to cover for some critical lack. This trope is emphasized when the PCs absolutely must obtain a critical component or find someone with a vital skill, because no one else has a chance of succeeding and the consequences for failure are grim.

Hope: While the enormous loss inherent in an apocalypse brings despair to many survivors, a theme of hope and possibility also exists in such settings. If the old world is gone, a new one can be born, and there are many who will be eager to make the future into a more suitable shape. Sometimes this hopefulness is linked to a practical, useful, genuinely promising plan or leader. Other times, however, these would-be creators have a much less pleasant future in mind, or are taken with mad visions that could never work. Survivors of the fallen civilization are especially susceptible to the need for hope, as without the promise of something better, it can be unbearable to endure the privations of the current collapse.

Hunger: The survivors of this age are constantly worried about food. In an After the Fall or Deadlands campaign, the vast majority of survivors will have no idea how to farm at scale or produce basic foodstuffs and they will not have the requisite years in which to learn. Every bite of food they eat will have to be taken from limited stores, and with no simple prospect to ever replace those stores, there's no stockpile that could ever be big enough feel secure about. Communities will be desperate to establish farms and other food production sites before their limited supplies finally run out. Preserved food supplies are enormously valuable, and people will kill and betray to get them.

Ignorance: In the shadow of the end, most survivors simply will not know what is really going on. Once wide-scale communications infrastructure is gone, only a handful of competent radio operators will be able to get word over long distances. Most people will have no idea what's going on fifty kilometers distant, and rumors and suppositions will run wild. As the years pass, rare skills and technical expertise will start to vanish as skilled survivors die and the next generation has no use for such information. The grand buildings and monuments of their ancestors will recede into a mist of legend and malformed stories, and all that will be left to a tribe of survivors is their own immediate experience. One way to play this up is to have a group of survivors unwittingly meddle with some extremely dangerous past site or device, or have them take actions based on a confident but perilously mistaken idea.

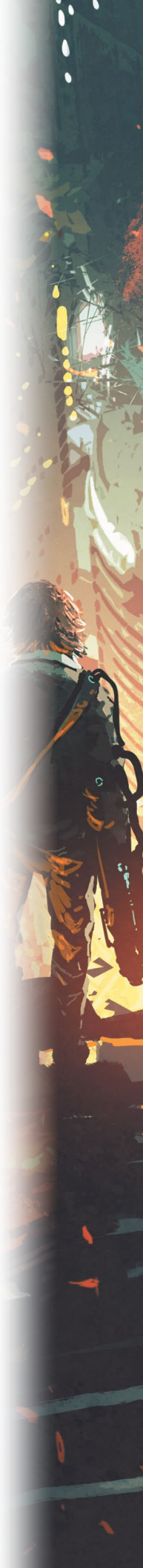
Improvisation: Survivors use what they have to get what they need. Old technology and structures are jury-rigged and repurposed to new ends, and formerly unimportant resources can become suddenly vital to a group's survival. Sometimes this improvisation is intentional, with survivors turning a hydroelectric dam into a power-producing fortress or a farm tractor into a makeshift siege vehicle. Other times, particularly in Mutant Wasteland campaigns, the survivors may not understand the original purpose of a device at all, but find its function useful, such as with a stop sign beaten into a breastplate, solar-powered yard lights turned into torches, or a butler-bot mounted with a remote-control gun as it approaches enemies for their drink order.

Paralysis: For near-future apocalypses, it's a given that large numbers of people simply will not be able to accept the gravity of the situation. They'll fall back on old habits, old laws, and old assumptions, and will fight to the death to maintain their bias towards normalcy. In this trope, people keep using old solutions and old expectations to meet new crises, waiting for the government to fix things or demanding "their rightful share" of limited resources or useful property. To play up this trope, have NPCs react in ways that would be reasonable under normal circumstances, but that are useless or dangerous under the new reality.

Privation: Food may be the most immediate lack for most survivors, but in the end, virtually everything will be in short supply. With survivors anxiously hoarding irreplaceable products of the former world, specific goods and specialized items will be very difficult to come by. Scrap-built makeshifts eventually take the place of most manufactured goods, simply because "the real thing" can no longer be had at any price. It can be enormously important to a group whether or not they have something as simple as fire-making tools, and if they don't, it's no longer a matter of just stepping into a convenience store to buy a lighter. The longer the distance from pre-collapse plenty, the more anxiously people will guard the tools and artifacts they still have.

Savagery: Post-apocalypses favor skulls, corpses, and senseless violence. Life is cheap and death is quick, and the more barbarous survivors might find more value in a stranger's meat than their diplomatic efforts. The most dangerous groups of survivors will prefer to leave corpses than potential competition in their wake, and bunkered-down hermits prefer to keep their safehouses unscouted by strangers.

Strife: It's a commonplace that the worst peril in a zombie apocalypse is other human beings. During any societal collapse, individuals will fight desperately for limited sources of safety, food, and authority. The most sociopathic and ruthless individuals will take full advantage of the desperate situations to gain as much as they can from those around them, and even good friends or loved ones might find themselves doing terrible things to each other to save their own lives. Conflicts within a survivor community will be ubiquitous, with desperate people quarreling over limited resources and harried leaders trying to keep their followers from killing each other or usurping their position.



Campaign Genres

The next step in creating your campaign is to decide what kind of campaign you want to run. *Ashes Without Number* is built to support three basic campaign styles, any of which can be mixed together for particular setting. Each campaign type below is listed with certain optional rules that may particularly support the flavor of the genre. GMs with specific tones in mind might add to these lists or subtract unsuitable elements to fit their own ideas.

Mutant Wasteland

These campaigns are built around post-nuclear apocalypses full of mutants and burnt-out cities. Radioactive badlands, marauding raiders, and lost technology of a wondrous prior age all feature in adventures that involve intrepid villagers, hardened wasteland wanderers, and the occasional cryo-frozen or subterranean survivor.

Most Mutant Wasteland campaigns take place long after the actual apocalypse, with the reality of life before the fall known only to the rare sage or specially-preserved survivor. Because of this, the immediate tensions of survival tend to be less pressing in these campaigns. The locals have had time to figure out how to obtain the basics of food and shelter and have learned how to make terms with the new fauna of their desolate world. Because of this, most Mutant Wasteland campaigns are built on the exploration structure explained in the section starting on page 143.

Certain optional rules are particularly good fits for Mutant Wasteland campaigns.

- ***Mutation*** rules are almost a given for this style of game. Even if the cause of the collapse was not an actual nuclear war, freakish deviations of form and ability are commonplace in this genre, usually explained by whatever strange energies were unleashed in the downfall.

After the Fall

These games focus on a "realistic" sort of societal collapse, playing out the immediate aftermath of some world-ending disaster or utter social upheaval. Games set in the wake of a Yellowstone volcanic eruption, a vast meteor strike, a lethal global pandemic, an all-consuming civil war, or a brutal invasion by some alien power might all fall under this genre. PCs are usually extremely normal men and women with no remarkable abilities.

After the Fall campaigns are often built using a crisis structure as explained in the section starting on page 142. The PCs face progressive terrible situations or threats, and their ability to deal with these disasters determines how many of them survive. Their ability to protect and provide for the people important to them is often tested by these circumstances, and they may be driven to terrible extremes in order to survive the brutal culling that goes on around them.

These campaigns tend to use all of the "gritty" rule options in this book, emphasizing the vulnerability and fragility of even the most heroic PC.

- ***Trauma Dice*** and ***Major Injuries*** are normal rules for these campaigns. Getting shot or stabbed is always a terrifying thing, and a PC who's saved from immediately bleeding out might still die a few days later from a lack of critical medical care.
- ***Stress*** rules on page 56 are also highly appropriate for most After the Fall campaigns, to add a cost for normal, well-adjusted PCs behaving in suddenly-savage ways.
- ***Disease*** rules are also appropriate, as sickness is likely to kill more NPC survivors than simple violence.
- ***Packs and Pockets*** rules on page 71 in the Encumbrance section are also suitable. Survivors often discover more supplies than they can feasibly carry away, and it can be very important to know exactly how the PCs are hauling a particular stash of goods.

Deadlands

The classic zombie apocalypse campaign is covered under the Deadlands genre style. Whether mindless undead that crave human flesh, fungus-raddled and violent human hosts, pathogen-crazed infected, or alien drones dispatched to genocide humanity, the PCs are facing an endless tide of remorselessly brutal foes.

Deadlands campaigns often start at the very beginning of the outbreak, playing out the swift collapse of society and the start of the new regime that follows. A few campaigns prefer to push things further along, starting the game after society has semi-stabilized in order to focus on the fight against the threat or the process of rebuilding. The former campaigns are usually best-served by a crisis structure, while the latter usually rest on an exploration structure.

Depending on the degree of grimness wanted for a Deadlands campaigns, most or all of the optional rules used for an After the Fall campaign can be used as well. Depending on the tone of the threat in question, Mutations might also fit as well, if PCs might be partially-infected by the syndrome or otherwise altered by events.

Structuring Your Campaign

Choosing a campaign structure is essentially about choosing what kind of adventures you want your players to usually experience. It's a decision that sets the baseline direction for gameplay, so it's important to understand the likely consequences of the two styles described in this section.

Reactive Crises

If you structure your campaign as a Crisis campaign, the PCs are going to be constantly barraged with problems they absolutely must resolve. They're liable to be hungry, unprotected, homeless, unskilled, and just as desperate as every other survivor in the campaign. They will not have the luxury of picking and choosing their larger goals because they're going to be too weak to move if they don't find some food in the next few days.

This style of campaign is well-suited for groups that may not have the most proactive players or have newbies who aren't accustomed to playing in open-ended sandboxes. Giving people an immediate problem to solve focuses their attention and tells them what they should be doing right now.

However, this structure requires that the players actually be interested in the crises and enjoy dealing with them. If your players don't *want* to be desperate, they may find this structure unsatisfying.

Proactive Exploration

Building an Exploration campaign revolves around giving the players an interesting world with interesting places in it and then letting them poke around in the rubble. The world out there has something the PCs want. They may have larger problems to deal with and face their own share of hardship and regional crises, but the main focus of the game is on exploring the world and pursuing their own goals in it.

This requires that the PCs *have* those goals. An Exploration campaign is not going to work if the PCs don't have a reason to go rooting around in the wreckage. The GM can prompt this by having the ruins contain resources or a macguffin that the PCs or their home require, or they can be sure that the players choose character motivations that get them out into the wilderness.

Just as with a Crisis campaign, however, there should be explicit player buy-in to the campaign's basic concept. If the players do not clearly sign on for venturing into a dangerous wasteland to explore lost ruins and encounter terrible dangers, then you're going to need to pick a different campaign structure. Getting everyone on the same page about the kind of play a campaign is going to offer is a critical part of building one.





Crisis Campaigns

Crisis-structured campaigns are sandbox campaigns that revolve around a sequence of vast, terrible problems that befall the PCs. Being a sandbox, the PCs are not required to solve these problems in any specific way, but if they don't resolve them to some degree both they and whatever they value will be harmed or killed by the consequences.

Crisis campaigns are built to emulate the flow of classic post-apocalyptic disaster fiction, where a few lucky survivors are forced to constantly surmount new problems and dire perils simply to make it to the next day. The world is collapsing around them, their neighbors are dying in legions, and simply avoiding death for the next few months will require enormous effort. Players should be willing to buy into this genre conceit. They need to understand that not everybody is going to make it, and the game will in large part be about what kind of sacrifices they're willing to make. To generate the campaign, follow the steps below.

1. Create a starting region as described on page 144.

2. Pick a starting location in that region. PCs will be from or in this place when the collapse begins. You may have them mutually agree on whatever ties brought them together, but you need to make sure they all have a reason to trust each other and want to stay together.

3. Identify the first crisis that the PCs will face as society starts to collapse, using the crisis tools starting on page 146. This crisis will form the touchstone of the introductory adventure you'll put the PCs through.

4. Choose another crisis and schedule it for about one or two weeks after the first one. There may be more disasters going on, but this crisis is the worst. Don't worry about developing it, just keep it in mind for later foreshadowing.

5. Create the introductory adventure with the tools starting on page 190. The adventure should include at least one possible solution to the crisis, but be open enough that the PCs could come up with their own ideas about how to deal with the situation.

6. Run the PCs through the adventure. While they play it, watch carefully for the things that the PCs care about. Do they care about their families? Their community? A particular group of NPCs encountered in the adventure? Find out who they consider worthy of sacrifice.

7. At the end of the adventure, foreshadow the next crisis and let the players know it's going to be a problem. If they've shown they care about some other group, mention explicitly the kind of dire effects the crisis might have on this group. Note, the PCs might come up with their own crisis to worry about; they might anticipate a particular problem and want to act quickly to resolve it. Don't fight this. You can push back your own crisis a week or two to give them breathing room if they are particularly enthusiastic about their own worry.

8. Once you've foreshadowed the next crisis, recap the effects of their last adventure in solving their current problem. Give details on how their actions have changed things for themselves or those they care about: numbers of people saved, days of food found, specific NPCs surviving or dying based on their choices. If the PCs have been aggressively self-absorbed, don't hesitate to let NPCs suffer for the lack of their help, particularly those who might've been useful allies.

9. At the end of the session, let the players come up with a basic idea of how they mean to deal with or investigate the next crisis, or what they might want to do in reaction to the recap you gave them.

10. During the downtime between sessions, develop an adventure around their plans. Once you have the adventure made, repeat step 4 and schedule a new crisis one or two weeks out. The specific time frame can vary, but keep it tight enough that the PCs don't have much time to relax between crises. If their solutions to past crises haven't been all that perfect, old problems might rear their heads again.

11. Repeat steps 6 through 10, feeding them crises at regular intervals until their adventures finally establish some kind of stability and security for their position. Once they've developed a critical mass of allies and support and have built an infrastructure capable of keeping them alive, their adventures can begin to become more proactive about accomplishing whatever goals they've developed over their past experiences. Crises can still happen, but you've hopefully generated enough engagement with the setting and its inhabitants to let the PCs generate their own goals and ambitions in this fallen world.

Exploration Campaigns

While a crisis campaign is fundamentally reactive in nature, an exploration campaign is directed by the players. The PCs have a starting situation and a largely unknown land around them, and it's up to them to discover whatever resources, allies, or foes they happen to be looking for. They may be pressed by the need for food, water, shelter, or other necessities, but the basic thrust of the game is the exploration of this strange land and the party's choice of how to deal with what they find.

Exploration campaigns work well when the PCs are post-apocalyptic villagers bent on exploring the dangerous wastes for valuable salvage and helpful allies. They can also be a good backdrop for modern-day campaigns that have progressed past the immediate chaos of societal collapse, with the party venturing out of their sanctuary to learn what has become of the old world around them.

The techniques of building an exploration campaign can also be used in miniature when a GM wants to provide some worthwhile exploration or looting options for PCs in a crisis campaign. If the survivors are in desperate need of food, for example, the GM can use the techniques below to sketch out the nearby environs and identify those places where edible reserves could be found.

To build an exploration campaign, follow the steps below.

1. Create a starting region as described on page 144.

2. Pick a starting location in that region. PCs will either be natives of that place or wayfarers who happened to end up there. They should all be willing to work together and trust each other, and each of them needs a personal reason to actually go out and adventure. These personal reasons will help motivate their exploration.

3. Create a GM hex map of the region. Place the major ruins and communities on this map, draw in major rivers and geographical features, and fully stock the hexes within three or four hexes of the starting location. As the PCs start venturing further from home, stock more hexes in directions they tell you they plan to travel in. Don't try to stock the entire map at once or else you risk exhausting yourself on content the PCs may never reach.

4. Prepare a PC map of the region. Given the usual state of post-apocalyptic cartography, this may be nothing more than a crude scrawl with the biggest and most important communities in the region marked out roughly. If the PCs want a better map, they can make one in the course of their own explorations. Do make a point of noting down at least a few interesting features or ruins near the starting location so the PCs have immediate targets for exploring.

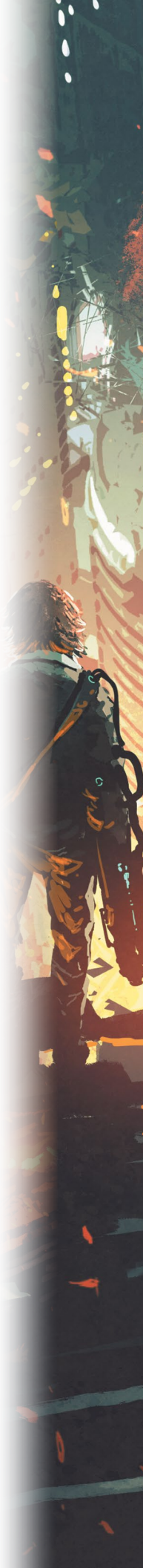
5. Use the adventure creation tools on page 190 to build an introductory adventure. This should be a short, one-session situation to help the players get used to the setting and game rules, without too many dangling threads to tie up.

6. Once the players have made their PCs, dump them immediately into the introductory adventure. Let them sort out the situation as best they can, and at the end of the adventure offer them three or four hooks for further action based on the interests and goals of the PCs.

7. Have the players pick one of the hooks or tell you what other, different plan they have for their next session's adventuring. They may decide to target a particular ruin you've marked out, or go quarrel with a raider gang, or do something that was sparked by the recent adventure. It doesn't matter what they pick so long as they clearly tell you what they're going to try to do.

8. Between sessions, use the adventure creation tools to flesh out whatever content you need to cover the very next session of play. Don't try to build beyond that unless you're having fun. All you need is enough material to keep them occupied for the next session.

9. After that next session, loop back to step 7 and make them tell you what they plan to do next. Your campaign can explore in any direction the PCs wish to go so long as they give you downtime between sessions to prep that specific content. If the PCs run wild during a session and are about to veer in a completely unprepared direction, just tell them flat-out that you're going to need some time to prep if they want to go there.



Creating Your Region

Once you've decided on the basic genre and structure of your campaign, it's time to start building your initial region. To do that, you begin with a map.

Creating the Base Map

Most campaigns can start with a region roughly twenty by thirty hexes, a scale that fits comfortably on a single sheet of letter-sized paper. Assuming the use of five-kilometer hexes, that region size allows room for exploration and the unknown while still keeping things within plausible marching distance for PCs. If your campaign scope expands later you can add to this region, but it's best to start with something basic.

There are several ways to get a base map for your campaign, but the steps below comprise one convenient method.

1. Use an online hex grid generator to create a printable letter-sized hex grid. Something with hexes about 0.15 inches wide is usually a good choice. Print this grid out.

2. Count the hexes horizontally and vertically. Multiply these numbers by your chosen hex scale to figure out how large your region map will need to be. Thus, if you have a .2 inch hex printout with 23 hexes horizontally and 28 vertically and are using five-kilometer hexes, you'll need a region 115 km wide and 140 km tall.

3. Go online and clip a suitably-sized screenshot of an online terrain map. If you're playing in a game set on Earth, leaving the city names and road information intact on the map can be helpful later on.

4. Import the clip into your image editor of choice and turn down the opacity of it, making it much lighter, though not transparent. Scale it to be the same printable size as your grid paper dimensions.

5. Feed your printed hex grid back into the printer and print your translucent regional map on top of it. Don't worry about getting it exact, as a rough approximation will do.

You now have your working campaign region map. You might make a prettier one in Hexographer or other mapping software later, but right now all you need is a template to scribble on.

Whether the PCs get a copy of this base map will depend on the nature of the campaign. Modern PCs will usually have much better maps than the dwellers in a primitive mutant village.

Placing Enclaves

Someone's probably living in your campaign region, and now's the time to note down established enclaves and give them some basic characterization. The number of enclaves to place will depend on the genre of campaign that you're running.

- ***For After the Fall and Deadlands campaigns*** there may not be any stable enclaves yet. The cities and communities of the old world may not have finished collapsing just yet, and people may still be wandering in desperate search of safety or clinging to makeshift camps and outposts. A few of these may be functional enough to qualify as real communities, but usually they're nothing but disorganized masses of frightened refugees just awaiting the dissolution of catastrophe. Part of the campaign's initial thrust might be the process of forming real communities capable of surviving the surrounding crisis.

- ***For Mutant Wasteland campaigns*** or a modern-day apocalypse that's a little further on from the collapse, there will have been time for these communities to get set up. In such cases, about four to six major enclaves is usually sufficient for a letter-sized regional map. That density allows room for empty spaces between the settlements that can be explored and plundered, while also having enough room for small villages and camps that don't need the full treatment of an enclave.

When choosing where to place these enclaves on the map, the usual place to put them is by a source of fresh water and usable resources. Most post-apocalyptic villages are forced to be largely self-reliant, and if they can't scavenge or farm an area, they can't live there. Very small towns or villages can be good nuclei for post-nuclear enclaves. Survivors will have fled the uninhabitable cities, and these small towns were often established near natural resources to begin with.

Once you've marked down enclave locations, roll two tags for each settlement from the Enclave Tags table on page 112. Mix these together to give the place some character, and write a few lines describing the place. Don't worry about fleshing it out just yet; all you need are the tags and a sentence or two.

Later, you might detail these enclaves with the Enclave rules on page 104, giving each of them statistics and goals. It might be worthwhile doing so for the PCs' starting community, but the others can generally be left loose until after the intro adventure, when you need to start thinking about adventure seeds.

Placing Major Ruins

With the current inhabited enclaves set, the next step is to place the major ruin hexes. These are the hexes that are choked with lootable structures, hazardous environments, and savage defenders. These are places where any sufficiently brave wastelander can expect to find something worth taking and something ready to kill the takers.

Major ruin hexes should be marked over the central areas of cities and other major population centers. Suburbs and other more lightly-populated areas can be omitted. Important areas such as military bases, major infrastructure sites, airports, and other large-scale, important points of interest should also be marked.

- ***For After the Fall and Deadlands campaigns*** these ruins may not have formed yet until the apocalypse has had some time to kill off the vast majority of the inhabitants. Even so, it's worth marking out the major city zones right now, as within a few months they're likely to be inhabited only by a few savage human survivors.

- ***For Mutant Wasteland campaigns***, these major ruin areas might be at least partially inhabited by sufficiently vicious natives. While they might have communities of a sort, it's not necessary to classify them as enclaves until and unless the PCs somehow manage to interact with them on a non-hostile basis.

The number of major ruin hexes will vary with the population density of your starting region, but at least ten or so hexes in total is a good minimum for an average-sized regional map with a major city or two.

Whether or not the PCs know about these ruins will depend on the premise of the campaign. Modern-day survivors are certainly going to know where the nearby cities and military bases are, but post-nuclear villagers may have only a vague notion of the wasteland a day's march beyond their hamlet.

Choosing a Starting Location

Now decide where the PCs will start the campaign. A starting position close to the center of the map is generally preferable, as it lets the group explore in any direction with the least amount of GM prep required.

After the Fall and Deadlands PCs are probably going to begin play in a city or town immediately before things start to collapse. While they might stay where they are, the initial campaign adventure is likely to propel them in some safer direction as their home community will probably collapse in the near future.

Mutant Wasteland PCs probably have some affiliation with a village or community that's survived this long, at least. They might move on relatively soon, but for their first adventure or two they'll probably use this site as a home base.

Creating Encounter Sites

The next step is to create two premade encounter sites with the tools starting on page 152, one urban and one rural. These premade sites will serve as emergency filler in case the PCs hare off in an unexpected direction or you find yourself in sudden need of content during a game session. You can create more of these sites if you find it fun, but you really only need two of these premade sites at any one time.

You will create additional encounter sites to flesh out hexes when you have reason to believe that the PCs might be exploring in that particular direction. This usually happens at the end of a gaming session, when the players tell you their plans for the very next evening of play. In general, don't bother doing it until you know you're going to need it for the next play session.

Making Travel Encounters

A wandering group of survivors runs a distinct chance of encountering strangers on the road. The travel rules on page 60 cover this in detail, but you'll need to create a random table with six to ten entries covering the sort of creatures and locals the PCs might meet.

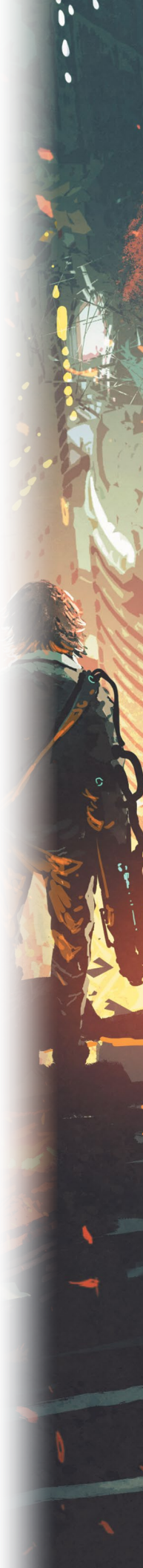
The tables on the following pages offer suggestions for the kind of entries you might write for this table. As the campaign progresses, you might edit the encounters to remove groups that have died off and add fresh faces from newer enclaves.

Creating the Intro Adventure

The final step in creating your region is to create the introductory adventure for the PCs. This adventure is meant for the first session of play, to help pull all the PCs together and get them acclimated to the campaign. It's usually not intended to take more than one session to resolve, and at its end it should offer several obvious adventure hooks. The PCs should either pick one of those hooks or choose their own course, whereupon the GM can spend the prep between sessions generating the necessary content.

A full set of adventure creation tools begin on page 190, but the campaign's initial adventure is often strongly influenced by the campaign's genre. After the Fall and Deadlands introductions usually start right at the initial moments of the collapse, and might cover several sessions of play as the PCs experience the immediate horrific events of the apocalypse. It could take three or four play sessions before the PCs have enough breathing room to start making decisions that aren't based purely on immediate survival.

Conversely, Mutant Wasteland campaigns usually start from at least a semi-secure enclave or base camp, with PCs inured to the ordinary hardships of the new world. Even so, they might be thrust into an immediate problem their home is facing, with their success or failure determining whether or not a new home will need to be found in short order.



Building Crises

An apocalypse becomes apocalyptic not through the immediate physical consequences of a disaster or calamity, but because of its effects on the basic infrastructure of a modern society. It's not necessarily the enemy soldiers or zombie onslaught that will kill the greatest masses of civilians, but the collapse of food supplies, the loss of critical electrical service, and the destruction of vital medical facilities.

Because of this, it's often necessary for a GM to think about the wider consequences of their societal collapse and pick some tangible, immediate disasters to befall the home region of the PCs. These problems can help shape the initial situation the PCs face and color the ways in which their formerly-quiet lives will rapidly degrade into chaos. Indeed, while an initial problem might be first and most obvious to the locals, it's very likely that other important infrastructure will collapse in turn in a sequence of societal ruin.

Points of Failure

Significant infrastructure is divided up into eight convenient categories in this section. Each category covers some component of modern society that is vital to its smooth operation. As each piece begins to stutter and fail, the rest will be dragged down in turn.

Communications cover cell phones, internet access, radio transmissions, and other tools of coordination. Without this infrastructure, government officials will freeze up or be forced to go independent, while civilians will tend to panic or conjure dire phantoms out of rumors and fears.

Food is likely to be one of the first pinch points in a collapse, with most urban areas utterly reliant on daily shipments of food. Even local elites may be caught short by a lack of long-term supplies, and the remnants of government will have a powerful incentive to "fairly distribute" remaining food stores.

Law enforcement is the tool by which those remaining governmental authorities can still impose their will. So long as there is a prospect of future normalcy, law enforcement is likely to stay obedient to their employers. Once the utter collapse of the old regime is clear, however, these men and women become well-armed, well-organized wild cards in the new order.

Medical services are vital for the continuing survival of a significant percentage of modern humanity. Without regular medication or skilled medical help, many people can count their remaining lifespan in weeks, or even days. These people will be desperate, and will act accordingly.

d8	What Infrastructure Collapsed?
1	Communications
2	Food
3	Law Enforcement
4	Medical
5	Power
6	Sewage & Waste
7	Transport
8	Water

Power and a functioning electrical grid is fundamental to the operation of present-day society. Virtually everything else runs off of electrical power, and anything that shuts down the power plants or breaks up the grid risks wrecking everything else as well.

Sewage and waste are unromantic, but a modern city rapidly becomes near-unlivable without trash pickup or sewage disposal. Makeshift pit latrines will befoul water and spread diseases, while mounds of heaped garbage beckon vermin. With compromised medical services, typhus outbreaks and other diseases of filth will run rampant.

Transport failures can come from gas shortages, blocked roads, frightened truckers, military cordons, or anything else that keeps people and goods from moving easily. Without a steady flow of transport, a city will rapidly face starvation even if the surrounding areas still have ample food.

Water is even more important than food, though it's also usually easier to obtain. Untreated water spreads disease and sickness, however, and urban areas are often short on the combustibles needed to constantly boil surface water. Even with boiling, chemically-contaminated water remains dangerous, and few locals likely have access to water filtration systems at the scale needed. For cities in arid regions, there may not even be any surface water to collect, forcing a desperate escape before the last drops of stored water are exhausted.

Using the Tables

To get a hint of what went wrong first for your collapsing city, roll on the table above. From there, consult one of the other tables on the following pages to see what exactly went wrong.

From there, you can weave the disaster into the first campaign session, using it as a foretaste of the collapse to come or a crisis campaign's central problem.



Communications

The coordination and functioning of a region's infrastructure depends on operational communications. Phone lines, radio waves, email, satellite phones, or some other means of fast communication are needed. Without it, responses will be misdirected, local authorities will freeze up in confusion, and rogue agents will fill the power vacuum.

Cell towers are usually equipped with some minimal backup power and can keep functioning for at least a few days after the grid goes down. Taking down central equipment nodes and telcom offices can bring a quicker silence. Important government officials likely have codes to obtain priority use of failing communications resources, but even those codes may not be able to get a signal through a completely trashed line.

Satellite phones will last longer, assuming the collapse hasn't swept the skies. Even so, satellite comms will erode with time as well as units go out of position or fall out of sync with silent ground stations. Survivors are unlikely to be able to rely on convenient GPS signals after a few months of decay.

Radio is likely to be the most durable medium, but radio comms beyond a few kilometers require both the right equipment and the right skills. Short-range transmissions are easier to manage, but also a far easier target for a canny hunter to track.

d8	What Went Wrong?
1	Some group has hijacked the local comms for their own purposes.
2	Scavengers have irreparably looted critical components.
3	Local fighting has severely damaged some vital control point.
4	Remnants of the local government have locked things down for their own use only.
5	It's collapsed due to lack of basic maintenance, but could be restored.
6	Someone's cut power to a vital node, but it could be reconnected.
7	Local fire, flood, or construction collapse has wrecked something important.
8	A relay or node collapse has turned local comms into one or more islands.



Food

Cities may produce much in the way of finished goods, but few produce any meaningful amounts of food. Bulky, cheap, and perishable, foodstuffs are usually trucked and freighted in daily to restock urban markets. Only a few days of consumption are actually on store shelves at any one time, as it's economically imprudent to devote expensive storage space to a low-value commodity that quickly decays.

When the apocalypse hits, food will be one of the first major shortages. A city's water distribution system can limp along on local resources for a while, but when the trucks stop delivering and the last cup of ramen gets pulled out of the cupboard, people will begin to get desperate.

Local governments often try to resolve the problem with edicts against hoarding or price gouging. Some will send enforcers door to door to confiscate "excess" food. If the locals still have some faith in the authorities, they might cooperate with these rules.

As soon as their children start starving, that patience will end. Some will flee the city in search of food in the countryside. Others will attack their neighbors to take their meager stocks. And some, of course, will seek to ally themselves with anyone who can feed their loved ones.

d8	What Went Wrong?
1	Fighting over a major food supply site has ended in burning or ruining it all.
2	Local food has been contaminated by a spill, disease, or sabotage.
3	A sudden population flux has eaten through local food supplies in a hurry.
4	Some group has taken control of several major food sites in the area.
5	Remnants of local government are seizing food supplies "for the common good".
6	Desperate, starving outsiders are raiding the area for anything edible.
7	A natural disaster or structural collapse has cut off access to the local food supply.
8	An enemy force is intentionally destroying food stocks to starve the locals.

Law Enforcement

Where civil cooperation with authorities cannot be obtained from the locals, law enforcement provides the stick of encouragement. Depending on the nature of the crisis, the local cops may or may not have had time to brace themselves for the current collapse… or to develop new conceptions of their future role in local government.

Depending on how quickly the situation devolves and how rapidly the local government loses its legitimacy, the cops might end up the de facto rulers of a place simply by virtue of being an armed, organized body. They have the guns, the bodies, and the habit of discipline to enforce a rough and ready peace on a populace that may be desperate for some sort of security, whatever its cost.

Most law enforcement agencies are built to enforce policies rather than develop them, however, and may not be able to enlist the necessary allies and expertise to keep the rest of the city running. Individual law enforcers are apt to break away when their own families and loved ones start getting threatened by the situation, placing their safety over their loyalty to the force. Others may give up when they decide that the situation is irretrievable, and that no degree of force can bring order to a city plunged into destruction.

d8	What Went Wrong?
1	The cops have devolved into a ruthlessly self-interested gang.
2	The police have splintered into multiple factions under different leaders.
3	Law enforcement has retreated to defend only itself and its immediate supporters.
4	Remnants of local government are using cops as ruthless enforcers of their rule.
5	The cops are taking advantage of the chaos to wipe out undesirables.
6	The police have declared themselves the de facto government of the area.
7	The cops now protect criminal groups that pay them off sufficiently.
8	The police have disintegrated as a cohesive group as their members flee.

Medical

The importance of medical infrastructure will vary with the type of apocalypse the area is facing. A zombie outbreak might find medical resources utterly useless in the face of an incomprehensible plague, or the sickness might have qualities that can actually be fought by a sufficiently expert medical staff. An invading army might produce massive casualties among the locals, while regional natural disasters could drive desperate patients to the area's only surviving medical centers.

Even in the slowest and quietest of ends, however, survivors are going to need medical attention. Modern medicine keeps a substantial percentage of the current population alive despite conditions that would kill them quickly if left untended. Once the hospitals shut down and the pharmaceutical shipments stop, those people are going to face a rapid die-off. Some of them might be desperate enough to go to extreme ends to find the treatment they need, having nothing left to lose without it.

A lack of medical resources also makes serious injuries that much more frightening. A deliriously ill ally or gut-shot comrade can do little more than die slowly if the PCs can't find someone with the expertise and resources to treat them.

d8	What Went Wrong?
1	An epidemic has broken out, whether of typhus, diphtheria, or some other disease.
2	A local group is holding medical personnel hostage or has seized control of hospitals.
3	Medical supplies have been looted by junkies, gangs, or remnant authorities.
4	Medical access has been restricted by remnant authorities to their favored pets.
5	Looting or fighting has critically damaged an important hospital or medical facility.
6	The medical personnel are too threatened or disorganized to do their jobs properly.
7	Medical services have been driven from hospitals into improvised facilities.
8	A group of medical personnel have organized to use their skills to exert control.

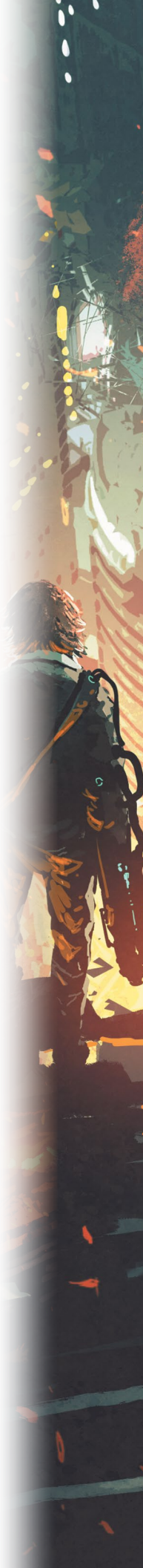
Power

Electricity is the lifeblood of modern society, powering virtually everything that most present-day people use or rely upon. Under ordinary circumstances, an entire legion of people devotes constant care to maintaining the electrical grid. Extended outages are a rare and temporary thing.

During an apocalypse, however, it's only a matter of time before that infrastructure collapses. A large-scale grid relies on steady, predictable consumption and generation of power. With major urban areas collapsing, lines being destroyed or scavenged, and workers fearing for their lives and those of their loved ones, this delicate balance cannot possibly be maintained. Progressively larger areas of the grid are cut off and isolated to preserve the rest, until a final lack of replacement parts and willing workers results in the collapse of the remaining generation resources.

Given the stakes of this, it's only natural for power generation to be a primary concern of local authorities. They may go to drastic lengths to preserve their available electrical power sources or discourage damage to the infrastructure. Maintaining a functioning local grid may be the only thing keeping them in power and the local survivors alive. A great deal of violence may be excused if it keeps the lights on.

d8	What Went Wrong?
1	Multiple sabotage or looting instances have left the grid a lethal mess.
2	Some group is holding critical power plant fuel hostage to their demands.
3	The power plant staff have seized the facility and are using it to exert influence.
4	Remnant authorities have cut most power to preserve it for their own needs longer.
5	There's enough usable grid left to support only some of the critical local infrastructure.
6	The grid is surging unpredictably and frying buildings and infrastructure.
7	Local gangs or remnant authority splinters are fighting to control the power plant.
8	Hostile groups are intentionally sabotaging the grid near rival areas.





Sewage & Waste

Few urbanites think much of trash until it stops getting taken away. The same carelessness also often applies to sewer lines and storm water drains, all of it infrastructure critical to a city's survival. Pre-modern cities regularly lost more population to disease than they gained in births, and that grim circumstance will be quick to arise once more once the toilets stop flushing.

Local trash-haulers may not be able to make their rounds, either because the streets are too dangerous, or their vehicles have been commandeered by local powers, or because diesel and other fuels are no longer available. Without their work, drifts of filthy debris will begin to build up around buildings and streets, creating fire hazards and vermin lairs to spread flame and disease among survivors.

A collapsed sewage system will cause an even faster spread of disease and filth. Desperate locals may resort to burn barrels and trash pyres to keep their homes habitable, but their inexperience will only add that many more fires to a city that's unlikely to be able to do anything about them.

d8	What Went Wrong?
1	Sewage has backed up all over the city, creating fetid spills everywhere.
2	Un-removed waste is attracting masses of dangerous or disease-ridden vermin.
3	A sanitation-related epidemic is breaking out all over the city.
4	Massive amounts of perishable foodstuffs and materials are rotting everywhere.
5	Fires are breaking out from runaway burn piles meant to dispose of waste.
6	Huge apartment buildings are being rendered uninhabitable by sewage failure.
7	A major waste spill has contaminated a part of the city where a facility collapsed.
8	People are starting to fight over access to now-valuable waste dumps of some kind.

Transport

Urban centers are wholly reliant on outside transport to bring in all the necessities of life, with few cities having more than a few days of supply in their stores and supermarkets. If something happens to cut off that supply, panic and looting are likely to happen as soon as the natives realize that what they have is all they're likely to get.

Bulk freight is usually carried via rail systems. Trains are extremely effective for that purpose, but they're also highly vulnerable to motivated looters willing to derail them in order to plunder their contents. Once the first few engines are seized, the remaining railway workers might not even be able to muster replacements, even if they're willing to take that risk.

Other critical goods move by truck, with big rigs unloading to local centers and smaller trucks spreading out to do last-mile delivery of supplies. A malicious actor who shuts down the right major arteries can block most trucks from reaching a city.

Perhaps the biggest threat to free movement are the very cars of the locals. Mass flight of a city's occupants will choke a road grid, and every abandoned car or impromptu roadblock is one more obstacle that no local government has time to clear away.

d8	What Went Wrong?
1	Major roads have been blockaded, cutting off inter-city truck access.
2	The subways have been seized by gangs or remnant authorities.
3	Train hubs have been sacked and destroyed by looters seeking goods.
4	Gasoline supplies have been impounded by someone, limiting vehicular travel.
5	Fleeing locals have been forced to abandon their cars amid massive jams.
6	A broken dike or viaduct has flooded or blocked a major area access point.
7	Bandits and looters are targeting trucks and other cargo vehicles.
8	Hostile locals in the surrounding area are firing on any traffic to or from the city.

Water

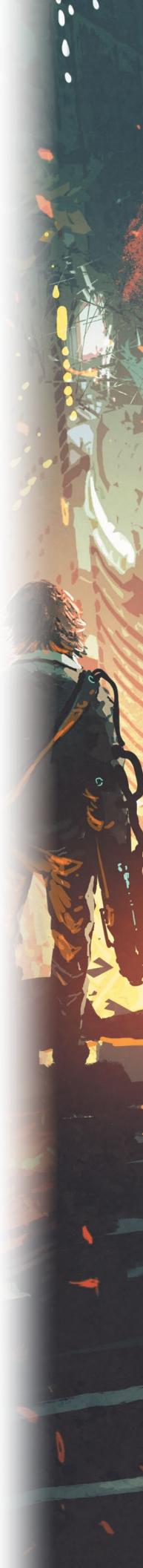
A city without water will be dead within days. A certain amount of bottled water can likely be found, but once the contents of pressure tanks and reservoirs are exhausted the inhabitants have very little time to find more before thirst will claim their lives.

Fortunately, many cities are built next to lakes or rivers, and while such water supplies will need to be purified before being safe to drink they should be enough to stave off death… assuming the locals can access these resources without hopelessly contaminating them with their own sewage.

Water pumps need power, and a collapse of the city's electrical grid will soon shut down its water system as well. On-site generators and emergency backup power might keep the facilities operating for a while, but a prolonged outage will ensure empty pipes.

For cities built in hostile terrain or too large for local water supplies, ones dependent on water piped in from elsewhere, a failure of that system can provoke a complete collapse of the city. It may be necessary to take desperate measures just to get enough water to survive the journey to nominal safety, and typical roads and routes outward might be hopelessly clogged by the abandoned vehicles of those who tried to get away in time.

d8	What Went Wrong?
1	The local water supply was contaminated by some chemical spill or disease.
2	The water purification facility was seized by a group using it for influence.
3	Damaged dikes or dams have allowed major flooding in the area.
4	Looters or local fighting have ruined the water distribution system.
5	Remnant authorities have cut off water to areas that do not cooperate with them.
6	Water purification chemicals and supplies are running critically low.
7	The water system is slowly but inevitably collapsing, area by area.
8	Local groups are seizing parts of the water infrastructure and holding them ransom.





Building Encounter Sites

Classic old-school fantasy campaigns often have a straightforward gameplay loop; the PCs gather together in the village, go to the dungeon, and loot it. The survivors then return to civilization, waste their plunder, and repeat the process.

This loop does not always translate well to post-apocalyptic campaigns. While far-future wastelands can have mutant-infested ruins and sinister underground bunkers in plenty, a modern game of civil war survival or zombie outbreak containment is shorter on both safe beacons of civilization and neatly-demarcated dungeons. Often the PCs have very little interest in material wealth or fame, and are merely desperately trying to survive whatever chaos is destroying the world around them.

Because of this, conventional dungeon-building tools aren't necessarily all that useful to a post-apocalyptic GM. The tools in this section are instead meant to help you create ***encounter sites***, places where something interesting can happen to the PCs through their exploration or engagement with the inhabitants.

Encounter sites exist at multiple levels of complexity. At their most basic, one might just be a semi-ruined gas station with a still-full fuel bunker and a paranoid service station attendant, something suitable for a brief portion of an evening's play. At their most complex, it might be a fully-mapped nuclear-powered government continuity bunker that the PCs have made the focus of months of regular play.

When To Build Encounter Sites

A GM needs to build two encounter sites at the start of the campaign: one urban in nature, and another that could be put in a rural setting. These sites are kept on hand to provide quick filler if the PCs start investigating in a direction the GM hasn't prepped.

Aside from that, a GM builds sites in two common situations.

- ***They're stocking a regional hex map.*** If the PCs tell you they're exploring north of the village during the next gaming session, you need to make up content for them to find north of the village.

- ***They're fleshing out a major ruin.*** A military base, sprawling cult compound, abandoned governmental bunker, or mazey urban core needs to be fleshed out, and the place needs sites of interest. Several related encounter sites can be glued together to create these sprawls.

Once the GM knows what they're trying to build, they're ready to fill in the blanks with the tools on the following pages.

Stocking a Hex Map With Sites

There are three ways to handle stocking a regional hex map with encounter sites, none of them exclusive to the others. Most GMs will use a mix of all three when stocking their map.

1. Create four or five premade encounter sites with the guidelines in this section. When PCs fully scout a hex as described on page 61, roll a d6. If the result is 1 or 2, choose the most applicable of your premade sites and place it in the hex. If the result is 3 or higher, they find nothing particularly interesting in the hex.

2. For each hex you're stocking during session prep, roll a d6; on a roll of 1 or 2, create an encounter site and place it in the hex. This requires far more preparation work, but it lets you tailor the site more perfectly to the environment and any nearby communities or resources. GMs who use this method will generally only stock the hexes that they expect the PCs to explore during the next game session.

3. Look at the hex map and put encounter sites only in the hexes where you think something interesting should be located, filling roughly a third of the hexes you stock. This method guarantees that you won't have "dead zones" of randomly-generated emptiness, but it can also be a bit predictable for explorers. As with method 2, you'd normally only stock those hexes that the PCs might reasonably explore during the next session.

It can be tempting for an ambitious GM to decide to prep their entire hex map, hand-placing suitable sites over the full region. Given a one-third encounter density and 644 hexes in a 23 x 28 hex map, however that can be a prohibitively vast undertaking to accomplish at once, even with the tools in this section.

Instead, focus only on that chunk of the map that the PCs might explore during the next session. How do you discover this? You ask the players. If they tell you that they want to scout the ruins of a Pittsburgh suburb during the next session, you prep the 36 hexes that make up the suburb. With a one-third density, that's twelve encounter sites at most. If PC exploration threatens to take them off-piste, simply tell them directly that you haven't prepped outside that section yet.

In the same vein, don't blush to recycle unused encounter sites if you need them. The unplumbed mysteries of Pittsburgh can move to Philadelphia in a hurry if you need to flesh that core afterwards.

Encounter Site Creation Steps

The guide below covers the sequential steps for creating a playable encounter site. The tables it references can be found in the following pages.

1. Get out a standard 3x5 index card. A basic site's information should fit on such a card, though more elaborate ones or those with detailed map keys may need more space.

2. Roll or choose the basic feature of the site from the table on page 172. This is the main building, structure, or natural feature of the site. Write its name on the front top left corner of the card, along with its location on the hex map.

3. Roll or choose two special descriptors from the table on page 173. These are qualities of the site that distinguish it particularly, and you can use them to flavor the site description, the occupants, or the hazards within. Write them down on the front top right corner of the card.

4. Decide on three or four characteristic locations for the feature and sketch a crude layout on the front of the card. A ruined car dealership might have a parking lot, a showroom, a mechanic's garage, and an office, for example. Make a one-minute sketch of how these locations relate to each other; these are the important places in the site where someone might be encountered or something interesting might be found. If their exact dimensions and layout become important during play, just draw something plausible for the players and call it good.

5. Determine the site's occupants, if any, with the tables starting on page 174. Try to tie in the occupants to nearby enclaves, raider crews, local fauna, or other entities that might have some reason for being in the area.

6. Logically distribute any occupants among the site's locations and give a one-sentence note on what they're doing when first encountered by the PCs. Write this down on the back left side of the card. If they're standard enemies with normal stat lines, don't bother to write down the combat stats, since you can just pull them from a quick reference sheet later. Only make special notes for leaders or other unusual enemies.

7. Use the loot tables on page 182 to determine what the most valuable plunder in the site might be. The occupants might have some gear or personal possessions worth taking, but this site loot is what's hidden here or is currently being plundered by the occupants. Write this on the upper right back of the card.

8. Finally, use the twist and hazard tables starting on page 178 to add some extra flavor, traps, or perils to the place, noting it down in the bottom right half of the back, beneath the site loot.

With that, you've finished a basic encounter site. If you need a bigger or more complex site, one capable of carrying an entire session or more with its exploration, you can create multiple encounter sites and attach them together into a large structure, or place them separately within a single campus or close area.



Encounter Site Tags

Encounter site tags work in much the same way as the enclave tags described on page 112. To spice up a given encounter site, you can roll twice on the tables below, merge the two tropes together, and use the Enemies, Friends, Complications, Things, and Places that come from it to flavor your site or give you ideas about its internal structure.

Tags are most applicable to large ruins and major complexes. It's usually not worth it to apply them to every abandoned diner and burnt-out supermarket, though a GM might use them as inspirational touchstones for a feature or two in such minor places.

In the same vein, not every tag is easily applicable to every campaign setting. A "Zombie Swarm" may not have immediate application to a civil collapse campaign, or a "Mutant Den" to a near-future world without mutants.

In such cases, a GM can either advance to the next applicable tag or just use the tag as a metaphor. Those "zombies" might be a desperate swarm of urban refugees spreading out to look for food, and the "mutant den" could be occupied by once-normal men and women who have horribly mutilated themselves in service to some apocalyptic cult.

d6	d10	Encounter Site Tag
1	1	Abandoned Traps
	2	Ancient Lore
	3	Autonomous Base
	4	Baited Trap
	5	Beacon Fire
	6	Beastmen Lair
	7	Berserk Robots
	8	Black Dust
	9	Black Site
	10	Broken Infrastructure
2	1	Buried Treasure
	2	Colony Site
	3	Cryogenic Pods
	4	Cult Stronghold
	5	Cyclical Threat
	6	Disguised Purpose
	7	Elite Haven
	8	Failed Community
	9	Fallen Throne
	10	False Hope
3	1	Flooded Ruins
	2	Forbidden Fruit
	3	Government Bunker
	4	Hidden Site
	5	Highshine Concentration
	6	Holy Ground
	7	Impending Doom
	8	Mad Scientist
	9	Mass Grave
	10	Military Outpost

d6	d10	Encounter Site Tag
4	1	Modern Castle
	2	Mutant Den
	3	Old Battlefield
	4	Overrun Sanctuary
	5	Pilgrimage Site
	6	Plague Site
	7	Political Gulag
	8	Prison Block
	9	Psychic Stronghold
	10	Radioactive Zone
5	1	Raider Base
	2	Refugee Lair
	3	Rich Tomb
	4	Sealed Horror
	5	Secret Base
	6	Secret Inhabitants
	7	Secret Weapon
	8	Sentient Plants
	9	Shattered Dream
	10	Slave Pit
6	1	Spy Lair
	2	Supply Dump
	3	Taboo Land
	4	Underground Site
	5	Unexpected Prize
	6	Unstable Construction
	7	Unstable Power Core
	8	Warlord Capital
	9	Waystation Camp
	10	Zombie Swarm

Abandoned Traps

At some point in the past, someone has set up a number of dangerous traps and snares in the ruin. The trapsmith has likely since died or been driven from the ruins, but the traps remain. Pit traps, walls set to collapse when a stone is disturbed, snares hidden in floor debris, rusted spikes beneath calf-deep murky water... any number of perils await in the ruins. Signs of these snares are usually obvious at the edges of the ruin, where the unwary have been killed and the prudent frightened away.

- **E** Mad trapsmith survivalist, Creatures that float or fly above the snares, Vermin too light to trigger traps
- **F** Relative of recent victim, Seeker of a valuable trap component, Heir of the original trapsmith
- **C** The traps are recent additions, A friend has been caught in the ruins, The traps are keeping something in
- **T** Valuable trap components, Loot of ensnared dead, Cache the traps were meant to protect
- **P** Corridor with a pit trap into a lower tunnel, Dark closet with grenade pin attached to interior doorknob, Basement rigged to flood with radioactive filth

Autonomous Base

This ruin was set up to run autonomously, either through a controlling AI or a set of interlocking expert system robots. The site actually has maintained this functionality, though likely not without degradation or warping of its original purpose. The site probably has some means of self-defense if it's survived looters this long, as well as its own definition of "self-defense".

- **E** Paranoid AI controller, Amoral resource collection director, Outside scrapsmith trying to seize control of the site
- **F** Scavenger living in the nooks and crannies, Local who steals from the site production, Scrapsmith seeking vital spare parts
- **C** The site's operation prevents a disaster, The site is turning hostile to human neighbors, The site's byproducts are poisoning the area
- **T** Huge cache of site-produced goods, Precious robotic repair parts, Manufacturing tech for old-world goods
- **P** Factory that is lethal to non-robotic workers, Massive dug-out resource collection zone, Vast recharging/repair structure for bots

Ancient Lore

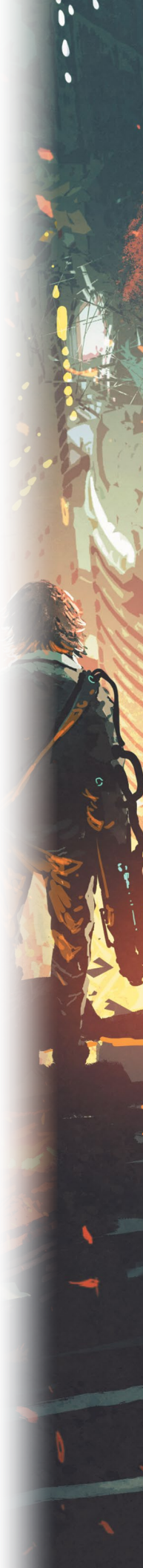
The ruin contains a precious cache of old world data, possibly including blueprints for high-tech devices or tools for advanced fabrication. This ruin has either printed, physical books or offline databanks that can be read by TL3 computing hardware or surviving old world interfaces. Recognizing these resources might be difficult, but those who realize what is to be had there doubtless maintain a vigorous interest in the ruin.

- **E** Demented scientist, Antiquity-worshiping cultist, Fanatical Luddite
- **F** Enclave local needing the data, Curious scrounger-sage, Robotic keeper of the lore
- **C** The data requires morally-suspect components to implement, The information is fragmented into several clusters, The data is encrypted with a long-lost key
- **T** Dataslabs capable of interfacing with the lore, Tools for advanced construction, Stockpiles of completed goods
- **P** Rebel workshop full of pirate printouts, Long-dead server room, Moldering library of an elite director

Baited Trap

The site is actually a trap for scavengers and looters. Some precious resource or treasure is clearly visible or present in the area, but any attempt to seize it is forestalled by traps, guardians, or ambushers. The occupants of the ruins profit by looting the looters, and may make sure knowledge of the treasure is spread around to newcomers to the area.

- **E** Cunning bandit chieftain, Ancient guardian of the site, Local tyrant who sends troublemakers to retrieve the bait
- **F** Survivor of an expedition, Occupant who wants out, Blithely curious outsider scavenger
- **C** The trap is the loot itself, The occupants let just enough newcomers succeed to keep the trap fresh, Some locals are in league with them
- **T** The bait itself, Loot from failed expeditions, Secret key to bypass the bait's defenses
- **P** Splendid chamber built to show off the loot, Distant vantage that shows a glimpse of the bait, Massacre site of a failed expedition





Beacon Fire

The site is a beacon of some sort that when activated will trigger a response. It might be a front-line watchpost for another enclave, an ancient satellite control site, a command site for local infrastructure, or a military launch site. Activating the site might be as simple as igniting a pre-placed beacon fire or as complex as decoding satellite targeting instructions.

E Robotic guardian of the site, Hostile enclave-sent commander, Outside agent trying to seize control of the beacon

F Curious scrapsmith studying the site, Sympathetic local who needs to activate it, Helpful site maintenance robot or staffer

C The site's response will be extremely ill-aimed, It'll actually activate some completely different response, The site will be destroyed too if it's activated

T Keycodes for activation, Spare parts for keeping it running, Warning document that reveals a hidden danger of using it

P Dusty control room, Swelteringly hot server center, High place stacked with prepared firewood

Berserk Robots

These ruins are infested with dangerously unstable bots. Most of these surviving automatons operate based on ancient expert systems rather than true AI, but the drastic change in environment often breaks their programming in potentially lethal ways. Security bots might take humans as dangerous vermin or unauthorized intruders, while even ostensibly harmless workbots might treat people as raw materials to be processed or contaminations to be purged.

E Secret AI mastermind, Mad scrapsmith, Aspiring robo-horde warlord

F Inquisitive scavenger, AI locked out of the system, Robotics researcher

C The robots have been intentionally perverted, The bots are radioactive, The robots are indistinguishable from humans

T Functioning robots, Stock of maintenance tools and parts, Robot-created goods

P Room of unmoving robots, Workshop with dismembered robots, Sterile and perfectly-maintained interiors

Beastman Lair

Unlike the beastmen of a more "civilized" enclave, these feral mutants are deeply in thrall to their animal natures. The ruin provides a lair from which they inflict their depredations upon the surrounding lands, along with a supply of salvage for those creatures intelligent enough to make use of it. Beastfolk of the ruins tend to be much more dangerous than their enclave-dwelling kindred, as even those tribes with fully human intelligence often turn it to cruel and hungry ends.

E Savage pack alpha, Diabolical scrapsmith of human leavings, Fanatical beast-shaman

F "Civilized" beastman from a nearby enclave, Desperate headman of neighboring enclave, Prisoner kidnapped for food or slavery

C The beastmen are commanded by a human, The beastmen are escaped and vengeful slaves, The beastmen are religious zealots

T Euphoric drug affecting beastmen, Plundered baubles, Relics of ruin's original inhabitants

P A stinking den full of bones, Room with clawed walls, Kennel for human slaves

Black Dust

The ruin is contaminated with violently mutagenic or dementing substances, perhaps those akin to the dreaded Black Dust nanites of the Albuquerque Death Zone. These substances horrifically warp their victims in mind and body, usually inflicting a tortured form on them that could not live without the cruel sustenance of the Black Dust. Short exposures are survivable if the virulence has died down, but extended contact will inevitably produce agonizing changes in a subject.

E Tyrant who exiles enemies to the site, Maddened arch-mutant within, Schemer seeking an army of tortured mutants

F Still semi-sane local victim, Healer trying to cure the changed, Frightened local chieftain

C The changes the Black Dust makes are purely mental, The changes are time-delayed, The changes seem beneficial to some

T Serum that gives Dust immunity, Device that controls the mutants, Loot left behind by changed victims

P Chamber of hideously-warped skeletons, Nanite-eroded construction, Gusts of nanite-blackened wind



Black Site

The ruin was once a governmental black site where illicit activities were undertaken. Secret prisons, off-book laboratories, unauthorized military bases, and other sites that the old world's rulers found useful could all come under this heading. Since the collapse, the inhabitants have likely made use of its resources, and might still be trying to maintain the site's original purpose against an eventual day of restoration.

- **E** Obsessed site commander, Captive who's taken over the place, Horrific creation of an unholy laboratory
- **F** Scavenger with a map to the place, Escapee from the site, Victim of the site's inhabitants
- **C** It's waiting for an order to unleash a disaster, It has secret deals with locals, Its owner aspires to rule over the area
- **T** Creation of forbidden science, Stockpile of military tech, Rare scientific tech
- **P** Stained concrete cells, Heavily-fortified entrance, Room full of forgotten files

Broken Infrastructure

The site was once a major piece of regional infrastructure, whether power plant, dam, rail nexus, power distribution center, or the like. While currently in ruins, there may be enough left to wring some utility out of it still, and likely enough scrap to draw the interest of scavengers from afar.

- **E** Aspiring regional warlord, Obsessive keeper of the site, Facility AI gone berserk from frustration
- **F** Curious scavenger, Tech dreaming of reviving the place, Local reliant on the ruin resources
- **C** It's still working but at a terrible cost in lives, If it shuts down completely it will induce a disaster, Removing a particularly precious piece of loot will set off a calamity
- **T** Rare maintenance components, Shipment sent there that was never unpacked, Valuable scrap from the facility itself
- **P** Cavernous and silent generator room, Crumbled receiving bay, Room full of massive unmoving machines



Buried Treasure

The ruin is known to contain a hidden treasure of some kind, most likely a particularly valuable piece of old world tech or a cache of precious supplies. This knowledge is relatively recent and limited in circulation, or else it probably would have been pillaged by now- and indeed, it's possible that the current residents of the ruin have already found the loot.

E Ruthless leader of rival salvage team, Treacherous guide, Self-proclaimed rightful owner

F Eager scavenger, Local desperately in need of the supplies, Ruin-dweller seeking help against invaders

C The treasure is dangerous to the possessor, The treasure is worthless in the new world, The treasure is too bulky to carry out without help

T The treasure itself, The gear of rival groups, The key to the cache's defenses, A false treasure

P A massive old world vault, A trap-laden corridor, A remote burial site

Colony Site

A nearby enclave is trying to set up an outpost colony in the site. The ruin might have valuable resources, or a strategically-important location, or the founding enclave might just need someplace convenient to dump its malcontents and schismatics. The colony is likely on the periphery of the site, unable to expand until the interior is cleared and secured.

E Ruthless colony leader, Ruin ruler who despises the interlopers, Outsider plant meant to sabotage the effort

F Naive young colonist, Desperate wanderer in search of a home, Ruin local willing to cooperate

C A new find suddenly puts the colony at the center of a gold rush, The colony was never meant to survive, The home enclave desperately needs the colony to produce something

T Initial startup supplies, Key to deactivating site defenses, The loot the colonists came for

P Tent camp outside the ruin, Colonist outpost inside the site, Remains of a massacre of unwary ruin scouts

Cryogenic Pods

Technology allowing, this site has cryogenic pods or stasis chambers containing pre-collapse survivors. These may have been important personages, imprisoned criminals, medical patients, or maintenance staff who happened to be close enough to use them. In other settings, this site may simply house a perfectly-preserved fragment of old world society, sealed off from the chaos outside.

E Unfrozen psychopath, Paranoid rebel leader, Megalomaniacal government official

F Helpless innocent, Deposed pacifistic leader, Bewildered podborn outcast

C The podborn all share a dangerous ideology, The podborn have all mutated recently, The podborn have been awake for some time

T Pod power source, Cache of old world emergency supplies, Forbidden rebel tech

P Room full of glowing cryogenic pods, Stuttering power core, Fortified bunker

Cult Stronghold

Cult strongholds are dominated by some virulent, dangerous ideology. It might take the form of some murderous religion, but it's just as likely to be a bloody-handed political creed seeded from a handful of dedicated survivors in the aftermath of the collapse. Whatever the specifics, the denizens are absolutely certain of their rectitude and the righteousness of their cause. The rest of the world consists only of potential converts and current prey.

E The Great Leader, Holy prophet, Cynical demagogue

F Cult renegade, Hapless prisoner, Schismatic rebel

C The cult has seductive principles, The cult is backed by a neighboring enclave, The cult had backers but got far out of their control

T Tribute from converts, Token of the cult's authority, Device of mass destruction

P Mass rally site, Dungeon for heretics, "Labor education" camp

Cyclical Threat

These ruins are never safe, but a certain local phenomenon produces a recurring threat in the area. During these periods, the ruins are swarming or blighted by some gruesome peril, one that often scourges neighboring communities. Of course, such times of peril are precisely those occasions when the neighbors are most desperate for outside aid. In some cases the threat might be dormant, and the local communities might be desperate to keep it that way rather than experience a new cycle.

E Cicada-like mutant swarm leader, Robotic taskmaster, Outside provoker of the cycle

F Afflicted enclave chieftain, Remorseful agent of incitement, Outsider trying to end the cycle

C Mutant insects lurk in larval form until the weather is right, Rivals mean to use the threat as a weapon, The threat is a cyclical plague

T Old world tech to end the cycle, Valuable by-product of the threat, Tool to control the threat

P Village destroyed by the last cycle, Beleaguered outpost of resistance, Wall with the threat's extent mapped on it

Disguised Purpose

The ruin was originally built to appear as if it were a particular sort of facility, but it actually conceals a much darker purpose. It might have been an illicit black-ops lab for genetic or psychic experimentation, a secret prison for government foes, a refuge for rebel leaders, a cover for secret cultists, or any one of a number of hidden lairs. In the years since, the natural defenses and secrecy of such places have likely left the neighboring enclaves oblivious to the sinister reality that lurks beneath its broken rubble.

E Crazed scientist, Psychic mastermind, Plunderer of foul secrets

F Relentless investigator, Curious local, Heir to the original operators

C The ruin is guarded by scions of its original users, The function of the ruin is incomprehensible to modern explorers, Local elites use the secrets to keep power

T Tech smuggled out of the site long ago, Passcodes to enter the concealed part of the facility, Files of similar hidden sites

P Room behind a sliding panel, Pale-lit tunnel into the earth, Crumbling facade over more sinister structures

Elite Haven

The site was originally intended as a safe haven for the old world's elite, whether government officials, celebrities, oligarchs, or religious leaders. That purpose may have changed when the site's security staff altered the deal, outsiders overran it, or the elite never managed to reach it. Many such havens have an innocent external appearance meant to throw off casual looters.

E Cruel heir of the original elite, Local warlord operating out of the haven, Robotic guardian of long-dead inhabitants

F Historian with a map, Local native explorer, Escapee from the haven's defenses

C The haven is a legendary paradise to locals, The elite planned to emerge afterwards as new rulers, The elite's heirs are trapped inside

T Luxuries brought in long ago, High-tech defensive gear, Token of legitimate government authority

P Well-manicured grounds, Obscured walls and electrified fences, Hidden sniper bunker overlooking the site

Failed Community

People tried to make an enclave in these ruins, drawn to them by some convenient resource or supply of salvage. Their attempt was a grim failure, and the bones of the dead litter the place. They might have been slaughtered by raiders, overtaken by a lethal Highshine contagion, or poisoned by some deathly emanation. Other aspiring villages are slaughtered by ruin inhabitants they failed to detect, or tear their own polities apart in fighting over some rich trove.

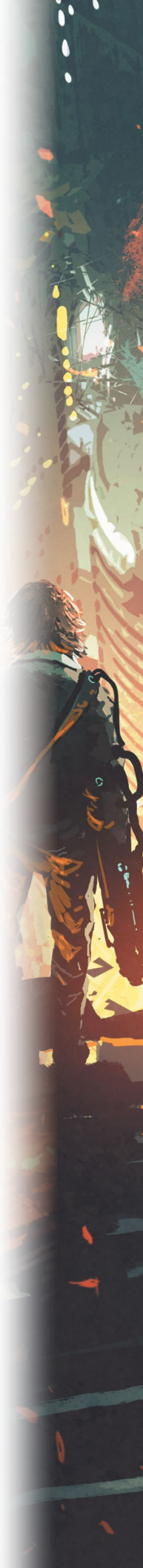
E Bandit chief nesting in the ruin, Hostile mutant denizen, Cultish leader of tiny fragment of survivors

F Survivor who fled the downfall, Family member of a dead settler, Ruin-picker seeking loot

C Someone wants to try again on the site, The settlers uncorked a mutant hive, The settlers are still fighting each other in the ruins

T Unused supplies, Hidden cache of valuables, Treasure they were fighting over

P Burnt town hall, Field littered with bones, Defaced monument





Fallen Throne

The site used to be the seat of regional authority, with its occupants holding power over the local enclaves. Some past disaster or political misstep led to their downfall, however, and now only the wretched remnants of those old rulers still gather around the place. The wreckage of a full-scale enclave may surround the site, or the ruin itself may be all that's left of it.

E Bitter heir of old rule, Outsider aspirant looking for a lost mythical weapon, Degenerate chief ruling over the remnants

F Friendly remnant local, Outsider scion curious about the past, Historian seeking the truth

C Their rule was actually heroic and wise, Their rule was purely mythical, Rival enclaves claim to be the true heirs of their right to rule

T Weapons used to enforce rule, Tribute received from subjects, Token of old legitimate rule

P Broken-down throne room, Defaced monument, Empty and vandalized barracks

False Hope

The ruin offers some deceptive promise of safety, resources, or knowledge for those who would venture into it. It may have been a famous fortress, factory, library, or storehouse, but events since the collapse have ruined it and left only dangerously corrupted or unusable wreckage behind. All the local enclaves know about the hope, but few realize the truth.

E Ruin tyrant who despoiled it, Mutant monster lairing within, Mad scavenger certain that the treasure awaits them

F Local yearning for the hope, Merchant seeking profit within, Scholar investigating rumors

C The hope's danger appears only after use, The hope is spoiled but another treasure is there, An enclave ruined the hope for its own profit

T An unspoiled resource cache, Tech to un-ruin the hope, Loot from a dead searcher

P Chamber full of ruined tech or supplies, Poisoned farm field, Power plant core with useless melted machines

Flooded Ruins

The ruins are at least partially flooded. This inundation need not necessarily be of water. It might be flooded with toxic waste, pervaded by a heavy, poisonous gas, or otherwise smirched with some sort of obstacle that makes it dangerous or cumbersome to reach other parts of the ruins. Explorers might be forced to use narrow walkways between building roofs, or risk dangerous, leaky passages beneath the murky water.

E Fish-mutant leader, Paranoid swamper chieftain, Vicious boat-raider warlord

F Scrap diver, Ambitious drainage engineer, Friendly water-dweller

C Passcodes to open an ancient dam, Strange nanite-grown pearls, Plunder seized by swamp pirates

T The locals have been dwelling in air-tight buildings since the collapse, The water is poisonous or acidic to flesh, Removing the water would flood a downstream village

P Airtight old world building below the surface, Crumbling tower jutting from the water, Fetid maze of rotting vines and muck

Forbidden Fruit

There are horrible things in the ruins, but these same things tempt outsiders with the promise of power and wealth. Unstable old world tech that consumes the user as he wields it, radioactive relics that kill those who bear them, horrible mutants that promise unholy favors to those who bring them just a few trifling things... all these temptations are possibilities in such a ruin.

E Whispering thing in the darkness, Demented devotee of the forbidden power, Thing that wants to escape the ruin

F Escaped former user of the power, Purger of the unclean, Investigator who must have the truth

C The locals need the ruin's favors desperately, The vile mastermind appears harmless at first, Rivals fight to access the ruin's power

T Nano-based tech with hideous side effects, Booster drug with grim consequences, Wholly useful and harmless stims made out of infants

P A darkened room with a whispering voice, A chamber walled in mutated flesh, An excessively perfect garden

Government Bunker

Beneath the ruins lies an old world government continuity bunker, meant to maintain communication and control over national assets in the case of some grand disaster. Depending on how quickly the catastrophe landed, its intended occupants might never have reached it. Distant sites might still be waiting for signals from the bunker that never came.

E Paranoid bunker chief, Would-be claimant of old authority, Deranged bunker AI unit

F Local in dire need of the bunker's contents, Aspiring bunker colonist, Bunker survivor in need of help

C The occupants are viciously divided between loyalists and rebels, Bunker facilities need credentials that are elsewhere, The bunker was actually built as a death trap by political enemies

T Passcodes for restricted gear, High-end military tech, Classified comm equipment

P Elaborate reception area, Spacious private room, Underground atrium made up to appear like a surface park

Highshine Concentration

This ruin positively crawls with infectious nanites. Even those living creatures without significant genetic damage run the risk of mutating if they are exposed too long to the surroundings. Provided the PCs don't stay more than a few days in the area they should be all right, but luckless bandits, beasts, and wanderers all make up a likely menagerie of mutant horrors within the ruins. In settings without nanotech, something about this place twists those near it.

E Mutant supremacist, Beast with an evil intelligence, Ambitious exile turned mutant

F Relative of someone trapped in the ruins, Zealous researcher, Intrepid explorer

C Neighboring communities use the ruins as punishment for outcasts, Nearby enclaves consider the ruins and its effects holy, The infestation is starting to expand

T Vials of beneficial nanites, Device that neutralizes Highshine nanites, Valuable excretions of a special mutant

P Greenhouse with plant-animal hybrids, Room furnished with things that were people once, Cells to hold prisoners while they transform

Hidden Site

The existence of the ruins has been lost to the confusion of the past, and its physical structure is concealed by earthen mounds, thick vegetation, rising water, or seemingly impassable trails. The denizens of the ruin live and prosper wholly unknown to their near neighbors. Bandit chieftains delight in such places as secure bases for their depredations, and cults and cabals favor them as strongholds and shrines to their dark masters. The inhabitants are united in their desire to preserve their anonymity, and intruders will be hunted with a ferocity born of desperation.

E Cunning bandit warlord, Secretive cabal leader, Bitter mutant chieftain

F Treasure-hunter with old rumors, Ruin-dweller desperate for help, Explorer hunted by the ruin-dwellers

C A false ruin conceals the true lair beneath or beyond it, Lethal false paths are meant to kill intruders, The ruin is self-sustaining and its natives hide from the world

T Map to the lost site, Untouched old world equipment, Fruits of secret raiding

P A seemingly blind canyon, An unusual earthen rise on an otherwise flat plain, A secret passage hidden behind a screen of brush

Holy Ground

The ruin is sacred to the enclaves that surround it. Perhaps it was the site of some heroic deliverance from a terrible scourge, or the place where the enclave's founder was martyred, or the source of the group's present religion. Whatever the specifics, they do not appreciate outsiders interfering with the ruin, albeit those that successfully navigate its perils might be credited with divine favor or special spiritual gifts.

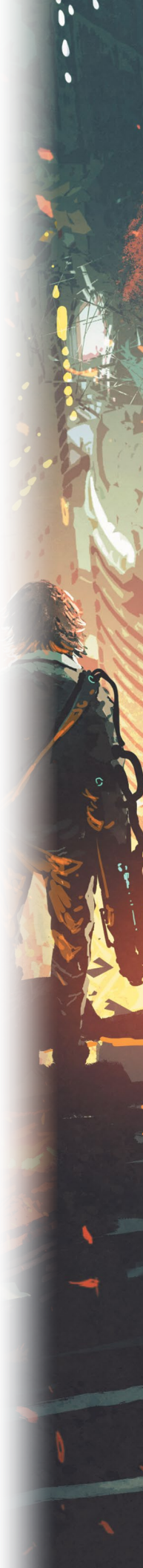
E Renegade prophet, Usurper seeking legitimacy, Savage expurgator of infidels

F Innocent seeking sanctuary from tormentors, Local elite wanting relics for legitimacy, Ruin guardian in need of aid

C The neighbors war over control of the ruins, The cruel inhabitants of the ruins are revered as holy figures, The ruins are held by violent sectarians

T Holy texts that prove the modern religion is corrupt, Tokens of rightful rule, Misunderstood "holy relic" that's actually old world tech

P Shattered chapel, Walls carved with religious symbols, Scrap-built shrine





Impending Doom

Something is going to destroy the ruin and everyone in it. Gradually-intensifying earthquakes, impending dam failure, tardy nuke detonation, eroding Black Dust containment, mutant horrors gnawing up from below... something is obviously going to doom this place, and the PCs can either be the agents of its salvation or hasteners of its quietus. The countdown usually starts after the first session in which the PCs seriously interact with the ruin.

- **E** Zealot convinced the destruction is actually a glorious uplifting, Bitter exile who wants the destruction, Local blaming outsiders for the ruination
- **F** Innocent dweller seeking help, Chief of neighboring enclave that will be destroyed too, Aged guardian of the agent of destruction
- **C** The destruction is inevitable, The disaster was provoked by others, The doom is actually beneficial to nearby communities
- **T** Technical data showing the imminent ruin, Key to reversing the destruction, Relics associated with the agent of ruin
- **P** Chamber with a glowing countdown, Atop a crumbling structure, In a hissing and crackling power core

Mass Grave

An enormous number of bodies are interred at this site, either as a graveyard or as the remains of a massacre. Corpses lie everywhere in the ruins, along with whatever grave goods or personal belongings have escaped scavengers since. Such sites are often viewed with dread by neighboring enclaves or counted as ground made holy by the dead.

- **E** Mutated corpse-eating monster, Grave robber boss, Robotic killing machine
- **F** Hapless gravekeeper, Heir seeking an ancestor, Tribal guardian of the site
- **C** The slaughter was extremely recent, The original cause of the killing is still present, Locals fight over access to the rich resources here
- **T** Precious grave goods, Relic lost with a victim, Map to a particularly rich grave
- **P** Tunnel lined with stacked bones, Open pit with tangled remains, Crumbling building full of huddled dead

Mad Scientist

The ruins are occupied by a mad scientist. It's possible the abundance of scrap has drawn the sage's attention, or the convenient supply of experimental subjects, or some still-functioning laboratory or technical equipment. The scientist is invariably set on some wild-eyed project unlikely to ever come to fruition, but their half-successful attempts usually involve gruesome abominations or the lethal discharge of toxic substances or ravenous energies.

- **E** Demented exiled scrap-sage, Scavenger obsessed with the ruins, Well-meaning maniac
- **F** Renegade servitor, Relative of experiment victim, Scientist's grieving mentor
- **C** The scientist is treated like a cult high priest, The scientist imagines he's doing the world a favor, The scientist only recently became deranged
- **T** Perfectly functional old world tech, Sheaves of valuable blueprints, Stocks of spare parts
- **P** Lab full of crackling devices, Abattoir for unsuccessful experiments, Workshop full of half-constructed devices

Military Outpost

The ruin serves as an important outpost for a local enclave's military forces or the raiding band of a marauder chief. Makeshift fortifications have likely been raised, and the occupants probably have a fairly disciplined watch schedule and alarm procedure. Something about the location is apt to be of strategic importance in controlling the surrounding area and its enclaves.

- **E** Vigilant garrison leader, Corrupt lieutenant, Infiltrating agent of a hostile enclave
- **F** Harried soldier, Mistreated local worker, Intelligence officer in need of eyes
- **C** They're expecting a major attack soon, Their leader is ignoring orders from home, They're badly undermanned for their job
- **T** Armory full of weapons, Powerful military tech, Secret documents about their real purpose
- **P** Parade ground full of marching troops, Lone watchtower, Winding path through fortifications

Modern Castle

At some point since the collapse, someone turned this site into a veritable fortress. Its original architecture might have made it especially suitable as a stronghold, and since then people have added concrete, timbers, and metal sheeting. It's common for the shacks and shanties of hangers-on to cluster around the structure, with a place inside the walls reserved for the elites.

E Latter-day conquering king, Bunker-building survivalist, Trapsmith hermit

F Shanty-dwelling peasant, Prisoner in the castle, Lord in need of aid

C Hostile factions share the castle, Autonomous defenses are still active within, The structure has a greater purpose that may yet function

T Key to bypass castle defenses, Treasure hidden by the builder, Critical repair component

P Brutalist courtyard turned killzone, Concrete apartment, Scrap-iron fence line

Mutant Den

The ruin is infested by dangerous mutant beasts or hostile sapients. Most such inhabitants respond with quick violence to intruders, but some might just be wary havens for an unwelcome breed. The environment will have been altered to suit the needs and habits of the inhabitants, some of which may not be miscible with baseline human life.

E Human-hating mutant chieftain, Hideous alpha beast, Mutant-purging outsider hunter

F Sympathetic mutant, Baseline relative, Spouse of a mutant victim

C The mutants quite recently were friendly or harmless, The den itself causes the mutation, A local enclave backs their marauding against a rival

T Mutant-made goods, Valuable mutant body parts, Forgotten old world tech

P Fetid radioactive lair, Zone of miasma baselines can't endure, Repurposed building made into the chieftain's hall

Old Battlefield

There was a ferocious battle in or around these ruins at one point, and the detritus from the killing is still present. Berserk combat robots, abandoned military vehicles, unexploded ordnance, or greedy looters might all be found here. Such sites often have considerable amounts of valuable scrap if the scavenger is willing to deal with the competition.

E Ancient warbot still on a mission, Local tyrant seeking old arms, Marauder chief looting the place

F Heir of a hero of the battle, Scrapsmith seeking a vital part, Avid local historian

C Areas of the battlefield are still toxic, More than one battle took place here due to its strategic importance, Robotic hostiles are still present

T Secret military tech, A trove of old guns, Large stockpile of explosives

P Crumbling trench network, Damp military bunker, Hasty pit grave for multitudes

Overrun Sanctuary

This site was once a haven for some band of refugees, outcasts, or wanderers. It may have been a monastery, a hidden village, or some other place of sanctuary. At some point in the past, however, it was overwhelmed by its enemies and the inhabitants slaughtered, driven out, or enslaved. The force that wiped them out might still be present.

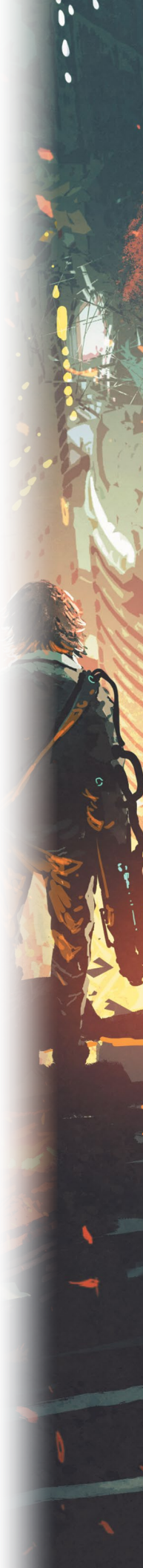
E Deranged last guardian, Latest conqueror lord, Ruthless seeker of a particular lost relic

F Hidden survivor, Sympathetic scholar, Outsider looking for potential survivors

C The occupants richly deserved to be overrun, The survivors fled to nearby enclaves, Their death ended a vital duty they were performing

T Relic critical to the sanctuary's functioning, Hidden treasure the conquerors sought, Loot piled up by conquerors

P Shattered shrine, Burnt-down residences, Broken fortifications





Pilgrimage Site

This site has great spiritual importance to one or more local enclaves. Strangers come from afar to worship at the site or conduct important rituals. The ruin's inhabitants might be guardians, or sacred beasts, or marauders who take advantage of the steady flow of prey, and defacing or despoiling the ruin may earn the wrath of numerous believers.

E Enclave rebel seeking to seize the place, Marauder chief holding it hostage, Terrible guardian that has not been placated

F Guardian priest, Humble pilgrim, Enclave chief who needs to perform a ritual

C The rituals have direct practical benefit to those who perform them, Enclaves are fighting over the site's control, Local clergy are trying to set themselves up as an independent power

T Sacred pilgrimage relic, Loot from a fallen pilgrim, Irreplaceable item of ritual necessity

P Time-worn temple hall, Pilgrim camp outside the ruins, Tombs of chieftains and holy ones

Plague Site

The ruins are infested with a terrible sickness. The plagues encountered in this way are rarely neat, cleanly fatal illnesses; they change the subjects in terrible ways and often create dangerous mental aberrations in the victims or zombie-like aggression. The symptoms and dementia produced by such plagues usually limits their potential reach, as hosts die before they can spread it far beyond the ruins, but not every strain is so blatant in its effects.

E Titanic plague-wracked mutant, High-functioning plague victim, Schemer who seeks to use the plague as a weapon

F Local healer, Avenger of a lost loved one, Seeker of a cure for a particular victim

C The plague only infects subjects in the ruins, The plague is newly-unleashed and yet unknown to neighbors, The plague seems harmless at first

T Formula for a vaccine, Tank of cure in aerosol form, Formula for recreating the plague elsewhere

P Quarantine of shrieking patient, Smashed medical laboratory, Mass grave site

Political Gulag

The site has been set up as a work camp for political enemies of the pre-collapse government or current enclave chieftains, Rather than waste valuable labor, the prisoners are set to toil for the benefit of the authorities, sometimes with additional "political training" sessions of indoctrination. Those who comply most eagerly are often granted both special privileges and special hatred from their fellows.

E Quisling prisoner faction leader, Sadistic commandant, Merciless brainwasher

F Pure-hearted rebel, Disillusioned loser of an ideological fight, Cynical old prisoner

C Robotic guardians stand watch over generations of prisoners, The wardens have their own ideological differences, The gulag's production is vital to the government

T Warehouse of slave labor goods, Key to bypassing the defenses, Treasure hidden by a dead political prisoner

P Silent slave labor factory, Tiny punishment cell, Austere ideology study classroom

Prison Block

The ruin was once a prison, either for human criminals or for something considerably worse. Automated defenses systems may still be active, or surviving wardens or their heirs. Outsiders often find such sites to be useful strongholds, as thick concrete walls and dry cells may be better lodging than anything else they can get in a post-collapse world.

E Deranged prison warden, Terrible thing it was meant to cage, Ruthless AI prison master

F Seventh-generation prisoner, Refugee seeking shelter, Would-be escapee

C The prisoners now run the place, The prison has splintered into warring factions, Prisoners and wardens have made a mutual alliance of survival

T Keys to restricted cells, Large stock of prison supplies, Armory of "non-lethal" weaponry

P Locked cells full of bones, Vast cafeteria hall, Ragged chainlink perimeter fence

Psychic Stronghold

In settings where psychics exist, this ruin is a nest of them and their servants. Most such places fear the unified hostility of their neighbors and attempt to keep a low profile, but others are more ambitious in their aims. In campaign worlds without psychics, these locals merely *think* they have powers, or have tricked others into believing it.

E Cynical psychic warlord-mentor, Raving feral prophet, Zealous psychic supremacist

F Psychic hunter, Untrained psychic needing help, Escaped slave

C The psychics are paranoid but not malicious, The psychics are every bit as vicious as people say, The ruin denizens worship them

T Bizarre psitech artifact, Anti-psychic shielding, Plunder seized from victims

P Austere psychic meditation chamber, Room shattered by a feral psychic's rages, Sickroom with sedatives and neural repair medications

Radioactive Zone

The ruins glow with the accumulated radioactivity that has crusted its structures. Only the most ferociously resilient creatures can survive in such an environment, and many old world devices have been degraded or destroyed by the constant radioactive bombardment. The most sophisticated tech is hardened against such damage, however, and can remain when much else has perished. Most such ruins have zones of greater or lesser danger, makeshift paths for those who can't withstand the full force of the radiant doom.

E Radiation-loving mutant beast, Brain-scrambled robot, Priest of the glow

F Local with map to rad-hidden plunder, Savant with plans to cleanse the ruins, Exhausted maintenance AI

C The radiation is recent and has trapped the inhabitants inside, The radiation has bizarre side effects, Someone's using the radiation to create monstrous servants

T Anti-rad stims, Shielded data core, Rare rad-grown medicinal plant

P Blue-litten reactor core, Field of misshapen and withered plants, Chamber carpeted with the skeletons of mutated vermin

Raider Base

The site is the main base of a raider band, where they stash their less portable loot and keep their hangers-on and slaves. Amoral merchants willing to deal with such marauders can often be found here, as well as uneasy tribute-bearers from enclaves too weak to resist bandit demands. Even marauders need skilled labor, however, and so talented slaves or greedy artisans often camp here as well.

E Coldly pragmatic bandit chief, Psychopathic favorite of the current boss, Zealot priest of a bloody creed

F Sympathetic slave artisan, Hapless hostage, Raider who wants out of this life

C The place is very orderly and disciplined on pain of death, Bandit factions here hate each other, Something's keeping them here even against their best interests

T Massive valuable relic too heavy to move, Relic held by the chieftain as a token of rule, Rich tribute offered by victims

P Degenerate bandit tavern, Slave-worked fields, Stakes with rebels and malcontents attached

Refugee Lair

Desperate refugees are using the ruin as a shelter or base. They've been driven from their former homes relatively recently by some disaster or foe, and they're likely disorganized still. Not all of the refugees may be from the same community, and all of them will be tempted to prioritize their own family's survival over the makeshift group.

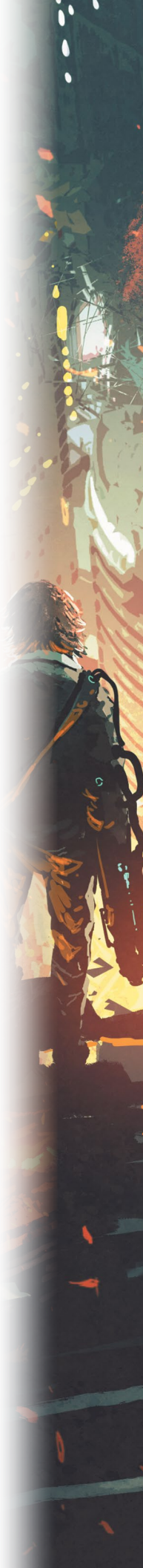
E Marauder chief hunting them down, Demagogue seeking to use them, Refugee gang leader with ambitions

F Sympathetic urchin, Hard-pressed refugee leader, Envoy from a nearby enclave

C There's a reason no enclave wants them near, Their enemies are still hunting them, The refugees have dangerous tech with them

T A treasure carried from home, Map to a viable new home site, The loot they stole that got them attacked in the first place

P Shabby cluster of ragged tents, Makeshift residence in a half-ruined building, Vigilant guard post watching for pursuers





Rich Tomb

The treasures of the ancient dead have been interred within the ruins, whether intentionally or as the consequence of an unanticipated entombment. Few modern enclaves are rich enough to bury perfectly good belongings with the dead, but other "tombs" are simply the consequence of a collapse or the last dwelling-place of a desperate survivalist who died amid his hoarded supplies.

- **E** Another ruthless tomb robber, Guardian of the tomb, The not-so-dead original owner
- **F** Heir to the dead, Inquisitive explorer, Seeker of some vital relic
- **C** The tomb is holy to the locals, The treasure is a myth to lure victims, The original owner's heirs still remain
- **T** The stashed treasure of the dead, Map to the hidden plunder, Codes to disarm the guardians
- **P** Collapsed passage, Labyrinthine tunnels, Squat and ominous funeral structure

Sealed Horror

The ruins were never meant to keep others out. They were intended to keep something in. Something horrible lurks at the heart of the ruin, trapped by the structure or by ancient guardian systems. It might be a monstrous alien captured by the government in long-distant years, or some awful creation trapped by dying security staff. The prison may have been built intentionally to contain the entity for later study, or it might be an ad-hoc cell fashioned out of desperate necessity by its long-dead jailers.

- **E** The thing itself, Madman who imagines he can control the thing, Fool who believes the thing will aid him
- **F** Ancient guardian of the prison, Sage who knows the truth, Escapee from an expedition
- **C** The thing pretends to sweet innocence, The thing has agents in surrounding enclaves, The thing knows a secret desperately needed
- **T** Artifact from the thing's homeworld, Tech used to contain the thing, Relics of the lost guardians
- **P** High-walled exterior, Deep containment area, Passage with broken defensive turrets

Secret Base

The ruin once served as a secret hideout for rebels, separatists, or other old world enemies of the ruling order. It may have masqueraded as an ordinary settlement or business, or it might have been tucked so far out of sight that it was never found. These groups likely stockpiled substantial supplies and armaments for their grand cause, not all of which may have been carried off by survivors.

- **E** Degenerate chieftain of the inbred remnants, Mad-eyed heritor of the rebels' beliefs, AI zealot for the cause
- **F** Idealistic heir to rebel ideology, Scion who needs a relic from the base, Blithely reckless historian
- **C** Neighboring enclave populated by offspring of the rebels, Local seeks to rule through reviving the rebel ideology, Local enclaves fight over ancient garbled differences in doctrine
- **T** Captured miltech, "Secret weapon" of the rebels, Symbol of the rebels' cause
- **P** Tattered assembly hall, Library of physical books, Punishment cells

Secret Inhabitants

The ruin is stocked with the usual run of mutants, bandits, exiles, and other living detritus of the wastelands, but unknown to the inhabitants, an entirely separate group of denizens hides within the ruins. Their killing of troublesome interlopers might have given the ruin the reputation of being haunted or cursed, or they might be discreetly harvesting the other occupants for food or loot.

- **E** Depraved tunnel-dweller chieftain, Paranoid bandit lord, Arrogant heir of the original dwellers
- **F** Terrified escapee from the ruins, Inquisitive investigator, Baffled bandit-hunter
- **C** The secret dwellers are actually benign, The inhabitants know about the secret dwellers but don't dare speak of them,. The inhabitants worship the secret ones as divinities
- **T** Relic guarded by the inhabitants, Possession of a luckless victim, Lost treasure in the ruins
- **P** Hidden passage behind a room's walls, Secret cache chamber for bones, Empty room with signs of recent use



Secret Weapon

There is a hidden weapon somewhere in the ruin capable of inflicting enormous damage on a foe. The ruin might have been built to house or support the weapon, or the weapon might have been used against it during the ruin's destruction. Local enclaves might have legends of the device, most of which are likely significantly in error about its details.

- **E** Local ruler craving the weapon, Heir to its original makers seeking to reclaim it, Ruin chief who rules by its power
- **F** Relative of a victim of the weapon, Curious scrapsmith desiring its secrets, Guardian of the weapon's resting place
- **C** The weapon is a creature or robot, The weapon was never meant to be used as a weapon, The weapon exacts a terrible price
- **T** Key to activate the weapon, ammunition for the weapon, critical spare part for the weapon
- **P** Blasted ground zero of a weapon discharge, Maintenance hall for the weapon, Fortified bunker where the weapon is kept

Sentient Plants

Mutation or dark experiments have imbued the plants in this ruin with sapience. Such vegetal intellects are often utterly amoral, concerned only with growth and reproduction, but some might be sophisticated enough to bargain with, even if only for those things of importance to them. Plant minds often focus on traps, poisons, and sacrificial baits in dealing with potential enemies.

- **E** Seductive human-plant amalgam, Relentless kudzu creature, Demented plant-worshiper
- **F** Hapless farmer, Cooperative plant-being, Wild-eyed prophet warning of green doom
- **C** The plants all hate each other as competitors, The plants have domesticated carnivore protectors, The plants parasitize humans
- **T** Old world fertilizer store, Precious plant extract, Experimental herbicide
- **P** A greenhouse turned into a vegetal harem, Overgrown laboratory, Ruin covered in vines and creepers



Shattered Dream

This ruin was built in pursuit of a grand but ultimately hopeless purpose. It may have failed before the collapse or been ruined in the general downfall, but the ruin's original ambition was a failure in the end. Modern inhabitants may be attempting the carry on the purpose, or just here to loot the pieces.

E Idealist caring nothing for the cost of his dream, Scavenger chief looting the ruins, Horrible living product of the site's warped efforts

F Heir to the original inhabitants, Ancient guardian of the site, Outsider in dire need of some component to be found here

C The dream would be lethal if it succeeded, Local enclaves all seek to control and complete the plan, The ruin itself is still working toward the plan even if it is hopeless

T The missing piece of tech that will complete it, The precious core of the former effort, The lost documentation showing how to complete it

P Dangerously unstable control area, Self-shattered machinery, Plundered warehouse of project parts

Slave Pit

Slavery is common in many post-apocalyptic worlds, but this ruin takes it to an extreme. Many of the inhabitants are chattel slaves, put to work for the benefit of the ruin's masters or sold to outsiders in need of laborers. With the drastic population drop after the collapse, capable toilers have become valuable resources to exploit.

E Ice-blooded slave trader, Hideous mutant that preys on slaves, Warlord preparing a slave army

F Escaped slave, Relative of a prisoner, Local slave in need of help

C The slaves believe they deserve this lot due to social or religious conventions, The slaves are terribly changed by some tech or process in the ruin, The ruin has luxuries that tempt the desperate into slavery

T Treasure earned from slave trading, Device that warps human wills, Cache of valuable slave-made goods

P Stinking slave barracks, Field full of carefully-watched laborers, Elegant quarters of a favored slave

Spy Lair

The ruin is being used as a forward base for some outside power who wants to spy on the region. They might be agents of a hostile enclave seeking to spy on a nearby rival, or they might be natives of the ruin itself working to scout out neighboring communities in search of threats or plunder.

E Assassin-spy team leader, Monstrous mutant used as a guardian, Seemingly friendly local who's actually a spymaster

F Suspicious enclave investigator, Ruin native expelled by the spies, Local who stumbled over suspicious evidence

C The spies are mutant shapeshifters or robots, The spies have an active sabotage plan, The spies are mercenaries who can be hired

T Important pre-collapse identity documents, List of spies and their locations, Wealth meant to bribe locals

P Hidden chamber full of disguise materials, Secret observation nook, False residential area

Supply Dump

Once this ruin was a major storehouse for valuable supplies. It may have been a pre-collapse warehouse, a rail yard transfer station, a particularly rich junkyard, or a government disaster supply depot. Other supply depots might be hidden as part of a different sort of ruin, laid up in times past by people who never returned to claim it.

E Robot depot guardian, Scavenger chief who has claimed the ruin, Paranoid tribal chief of the heirs of the depot's original inhabitants

F Desperate local in need of the supplies, Wanderer who learned of the depot, Local ruin dweller in search of help

C It's getting more dangerous to unearth supplies, Extracting the supplies comes with a harsh price, Some of the supplies are dangerously broken or warped

T Rare and precious supply item, Key to unlock an untouched vault, Loot left behind by dead would-be depot raiders

P Partially-scavenged massive warehouse, Makeshift residence area, Jury-rigged fortification to defend the site

Taboo Land

The ruin is flatly forbidden to outsiders by a taboo enforced by the surrounding enclaves. Regular patrols of hunters and warriors pass nearby to ensure that none enter, and those who defy this ban risk being pursued by vengeful locals, or ambushed once they emerge from the ruins. The taboo may be the product of religious sentiment, or a ban to ensure that some sleeping evil is not disturbed, or a forbiddance meant to keep the site reserved to local use. Such ruins can become refuges for exiles and outcasts.

E Jealous guardian of the ruins, The evil within the walls, Chieftain suspicious of adventurers

F Treasure hunter, Local suspecting dark doings in the ruin, Victim kidnapped and taken there

C Holy ones dwell within the taboo ruin, Bandits have profaned the ruins, Another enclave objects to the taboo

T Relic meant to be kept secret from outsiders, Proof of the enclave elite plotting evil in the ruins, Holy artifact within a sacred place

P Desolate no-man's land around the ruins, Native watchtower overlooking the ruins, Row of skulls mounted on spears outside the ruin entrance

Underground Site

The great bulk of the ruin is underground, either in natural caves, crudely-grubbed passages, or buried corridors. Some such complexes are nothing more than the basements of some gutted ancient structure, while others were delved in the years after the collapse when the wretched survivors sought some deep refuge from the horrors outside. A few underground ruins are the product of subterranean mutants and degenerate human tribes.

E Hideous beast from below, Renegade protective of his refuge, Chieftain of a degenerate tribe

F Dismayed scrap miner, Aspiring colonist, Treasure hunter with a map

C The site is unstable and prone to collapse, Locals need the site as a refuge against impending doom, The site was a place of holy pilgrimage for a local faith

T Long-buried treasures, Keycode to the complex's defense system, Possessions of last investigator

P Dank earthen burrow, Passage with cracking ceiling, Chamber with water-slick walls

Unexpected Prize

There is a very valuable relic or loot cache in this ruin that no outsider knows about. The natives might have stumbled across it, or it could be in a part of the ruin even they haven't fully explored. The prize is likely too bulky to move or too well-guarded to extract without significant effort, which may be why it's still here to be plundered.

E Ruin chief seeking a way to seize the prize, Robotic prize guardian, Mutant monster lairing on top of the prize

F Outsider who lost the prize here, Native seeking to barter the prize, Native trying to study the prize

C The prize is actually a sinister trap, The prize is hidden in plain sight, The prize is in several pieces

T Key to activate the prize, Clue that shows the location of the prize, Spare parts originally intended for the prize

P Mazey fortifications around the prize, Site in the ruin where the prize was once activated, Wrecked site where the prize's original owner perished

Unstable Construction

The ruin is falling apart, possibly while the PCs are in it. Even old world construction can give way under nanite contamination, eroding materials, the aftermath of explosions or corrosive Black Dust clouds. More recent buildings are even more fragile, the product of scrap-built necessity and limited architectural knowledge.

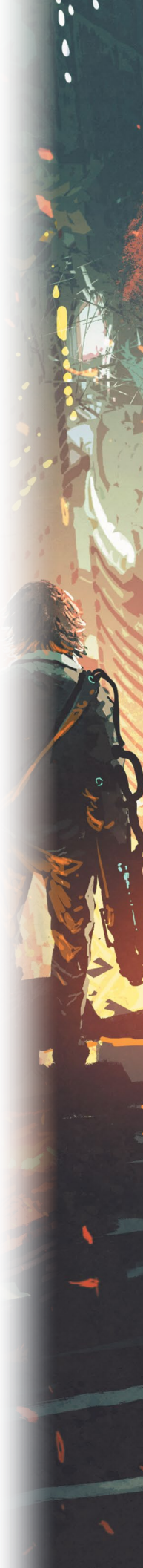
E Exile seeking a sanctuary others won't dare enter, The beast that is gnawing on the ruin, Reckless scavenger pillaging the supports

F Determined restorationist, Inquisitive archaeologist, Former resident

C The collapse could destroy a nearby enclave, Two enclaves are fighting over the ruins and causing its decay, The collapse is triggered in explosive and unpredictable spurts

T Support vital to the whole structure, Precious architectural element, Loot cache in a terribly unstable area

P Room with half-vanished floor, Wall that collapses at a touch, Floor that gives way over a deeper chamber





Unstable Power Core

The ruin is powered by some old world technology, often some sort of nuclear plant, hydropower site, solar battery, or other abnormally durable construction. Time and scavengers have damaged the core, however, and it's started creating zones of danger in the area, perhaps risking complete collapse if the damage is not halted or repaired.

E Mutated guardian of the core, Robot protective of its power supply, Degenerate worshipers of the glow

F Desperate repair tech, Fearless salvager, Prophet of impending atomic doom

C The core will explode if not deactivated, The locals are drawing too much power and destabilizing the core, Rival enclaves fight to access the power

T A replacement core, Ancient maintenance tools, Cache of power tech blueprints

P Crackling core chamber, Radiation-scorched hall, Room full of electrified supports

Warlord Capital

The ruin has been taken over by an aspiring warlord. More than a mere bandit chief, this marauder plans to create a territory under their own rule, exacting tribute and submission from surrounding enclaves. They're likely willing to deal with merchants and other outsiders relatively fairly, if only for the sake of building their war machine.

E Warlord's paranoid vizier, Crazed mutant executioner, Scheming spymaster

F Outside enclave's envoy, Oppressed ruin dweller, Sympathetic slave

C The warlord's brutal law is preferred by some to the present chaos, The warlord is terminally ill, The warlord's underlings are at each others' throats

T Rich tribute from outside, The warlord's secret weapon, Cache of powerful military gear

P Well-stocked execution ground, Market in the shadow of the ruins, Slave pens full of uncooperative enclave citizens

Waystation Camp

There's a waystation at the ruin for travelers from a distant enclave, bandit clan, or other regular passers-by. A few locals might maintain the camp against hostile ruin dwellers, or it might be deserted between visits. The ruin provides something useful enough to justify maintaining the camp, assuming it's not just an excuse to keep an eye on the place.

E Marauder preying on camp visitors, Avaricious camp overseer, Bandit chief who's moved in to seize the camp

F Merchant who uses the camp, Wanderer who's made the place a temporary home, Adventurer seeking to explore the ruins

C The camp has its own autonomous defenses, The camp is an independent outpost, Something still present has butchered the residents very recently

T Stockpiles of travel supplies, Scouting map of the ruins, Relic plundered from the ruin

P Well-defended approach to the camp, Watchtower overlooking the ruin, Makeshift tavern in the camp

Zombie Swarm

The ruin is infested by mindlessly violent inhabitants. In settings with actual zombies, the place might contain an abnormally high density of them, while other settings might substitute unthinkingly hostile human natives or brainlessly savage mutant monsters. Something in the ruin likely originally drew the inhabitants, and they may not have the wit to have left since.

E Mutant zombie hulk, Outsider bent on controlling the swarm, Conquerer who plans to aim the swarm at a target

F Relative of a swarm victim, Swarm researcher, Original inhabitant of the ruin since driven out

C The swarm is triggered by something in the ruin, There are ways to bypass or become invisible to the swarm, The swarm is clustered around something precious

T Possessions of the now-zombified occupants, Treasures of the humans overrun by them, Spare parts from smashed local tech

P Street clogged with zombies, Dripping sewer tunnels beneath the horde, Rooftop roads overhead

One-Roll Encounter Site Past

Tags alone can be a little sparse when plotting an important site's past. The tables below offer a one-roll outline a GM can use to inform their decisions about the place's current contents and occupants.

Be careful not to create irrelevant past for a site, as the only parts of its history that matter are the ones that directly affect the PCs. If it was once a stronghold of a now-dead enclave you might use that fact to justify certain dusty banners on the walls and some repeating motifs in the graffiti, and one of the skeletons might still be dressed in the characteristic colors of the enclave. Beyond this, however, you shouldn't bother to work out specific long-vanished NPCs or particulars that the PCs will never have any way of learning. The value of the past is in making content for the present.

d6	How Important Was It?
1	It was of major importance to the locale.
2	It was important, but subtly or secretly so.
3	It was very important to a specific group.
4	It was of steadily-dwindling significance.
5	It had been important, but had since sunk.
6	It was never really important to anyone.

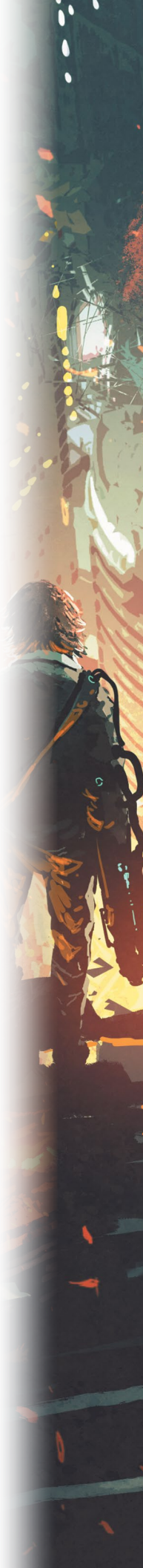
d8	Who Were the Latest Occupants?
1	The original users or their direct heirs.
2	Hostile intruders had taken it over.
3	Desperate refugees or exiles were here.
4	Colonists of another enclave dwelled here.
5	Dangerous or mutant beasts denned here.
6	Temporary sojourners paused for a time.
7	Warriors or soldiers camped here.
8	It's had no lasting habitation since its ruin.

d10	What Drove Them Out?
1	A fatal disease spread here.
2	Dangerous beasts laired too near.
3	The structure became unsafe to occupy.
4	Enemies roused them out.
5	They found a better place to dwell.
6	They died out to accident or age.
7	A leadership dispute scattered them.
8	Vital resources ran out here.
9	They were hunted as prey by something.
10	They joined a stronger or larger group.

d4	When Was It Abandoned?
1	The last permanent occupants left recently.
2	It's been empty for months.
3	It was abandoned shortly after the fall.
4	It emptied during or before the collapse.

d12	Why Hasn't It Been Reclaimed?
1	It's so dilapidated it's near-useless.
2	It's near something toxic or miasmatic.
3	Dangerous animals prowl too close.
4	There are no obvious resources nearby.
5	No people pass or live near the place.
6	It has a dire history to the locals.
7	Different groups have laid claim to it.
8	Bandits and marauders frequent the area.
9	A local power wants it kept empty.
10	An unpredictable peril erupts at times.
11	A better site is in the general area.
12	It recently was, but the effort failed.

d20	A Twist to the Past
1	Tales say a treasure is hidden there.
2	A hermit or outcast shelters there.
3	A truth a local power wants hidden is there.
4	Its past is dangerously misunderstood.
5	It has a hidden link to a powerful NPC.
6	A major local historical event was there.
7	Its original owners were very important.
8	A failed reclamation's remnants are there.
9	It holds valuable data about a loot site.
10	A significant battle took place there.
11	A hidden atrocity took place there.
12	Its resources were mistaken for dangers.
13	The occupants had secret ties with a power.
14	It was a secret meeting spot for criminals.
15	Great loot was plundered there, but lost.
16	Something very rare was made there.
17	A key to some other site was hidden there.
18	It's a taboo site to the nearest locals.
19	It stockpiled some once-common resource.
20	It was a trading site for something rare.





Encounter Site Features

Some environments are going to be largely devoid of any real point of interest. PCs venturing through deep deserts, trackless wastes, or extremely rural back country might go a hundred kilometers without passing so much as a ruined gas station. GMs will generally have a good idea of when a particular patch of campaign real estate should be left empty.

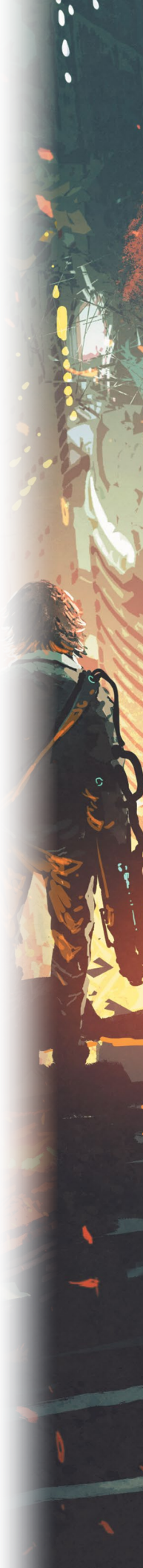
For other areas, the table below offers a hundred different suggestions as to which feature is most interesting in any given hex. During an After the Fall or Deadlands campaign, these buildings might be freshly ruined or newly abandoned, while Mutant Wasteland games might have seen several cycles of looting.

Feature Descriptors

Once you've rolled or picked a feature for a hex, use the adjacent table to check for one or more descriptors. These brief adjectives help you flesh out the location and give it some character to distinguish it from other buildings or places of similar kind. Of course, some such features might be perfectly ordinary, though you can decide to force a descriptor just by adding 50 to any d100 roll of 50 or less.

d100	Feature	d100	Feature	d100	Feature	d100	Feature
1	Airport	26	Construction Site	51	Light Industry Factory	76	Resort
2	Amusement Park	27	Courthouse	52	Machine Shop	77	Restaurant
3	Apartments	28	Dairy Farm	53	Mansion	78	School
4	Arcade	29	Delicatessen	54	Memorial	79	Shack
5	Art Installation	30	Diner	55	Metro Station	80	Shipyard
6	Auto Repair Shop	31	Dock	56	Military Outpost	81	Shooting Range
7	Bank	32	Drug Lab	57	Mine	82	Skyscraper
8	Bar	33	Electronics Store	58	Mosque	83	Small Clinic
9	Bookstore	34	Farm	59	Motel	84	Solar Farm
10	Brewery	35	Farm Supply Store	60	Museum	85	Sporting Goods Store
11	Brothel	36	Fire Station	61	Music Store	86	Sports Arena
12	Bunker	37	Food Processor	62	Newspaper Office	87	Steelworks
13	Bus Station	38	Gas Well	63	Nightclub	88	Strip Club
14	Business Office	39	Government Bureau	64	Outdoors Store	89	Supermarket
15	Cabin	40	Gun Store	65	Park	90	Synagogue
16	Car Lot	41	Heavy Industry	66	Pawn Shop	91	Tenement
17	Casino	42	Hospital	67	Playground	92	Theater
18	Cell Tower	43	Hotel	68	Police Station	93	Trade School
19	Cellphone Store	44	House	69	Power Plant	94	Trainyard
20	Chemical Plant	45	Hydroelectric Plant	70	Print Shop	95	Transformer Station
21	Church	46	Insurance Office	71	Prison	96	TV Station
22	City Hall	47	Junkyard	72	Radio Station	97	University
23	Clothing Store	48	Laboratory	73	Ranch	98	Vet Clinic
24	Coffee Shop	49	Law Office	74	Recycling Center	99	Warehouse
25	Condominium	50	Library	75	Rehab Center	100	Waste Treatment Plant

d100	Descriptor	d100	Descriptor
1-50	**Unremarkable**: There's nothing particularly notable or unusual about the site, given the environment.		
51	**Adorned**: Post-collapse art or graffiti adorns the structure.	76	**High Ground**: It occupies a commanding height in the area.
52	**Atrocity**: Something very public and very horrible was done here.	77	**Infested**: Dangerous vermin or animals have subtly infested the site.
53	**Battlefield**: A substantial fight took place or is taking place here.	78	**Locked**: The site's obvious entrances are still securely sealed.
54	**Bifurcated**: The site has been split up into multiple zones of use or occupation by someone.	79	**Mazey**: Obstacles or debris turned the site into a maze.
55	**Bombed**: Some massive explosion largely destroyed the site.	80	**Overlooked**: The site is extremely easy to miss for some reason.
56	**Booby Trapped**: Somebody left some dangerous presents behind in the past.	81	**Party House**: The site has been used as a post-collapse entertainment venue.
57	**Buried**: A landslide or other collapse fully or partially buried the site.	82	**Plagued**: A dangerous disease is spread by items or creatures here.
58	**Burnt**: It was fully or partially burnt down in the past.	83	**Prison**: Someone used the site to hold captives at some point.
59	**Burrows**: There are tunnels and chambers beneath the site.	84	**Pristine**: This site's been left untouched for some very good reason.
60	**Cache**: Someone left a cache here but never came back to get it.	85	**Reeking**: Something is producing a truly horrific stench here.
61	**Campsite**: Someone uses it regularly as a campsite.	86	**Ruined Refuge**: This was once a place of refuge for survivors who didn't make it.
62	**Caved In**: A substantial portion of it has collapsed in on itself, or will collapse if disturbed.	87	**Snare**: Someone set it up as a trap or lure for prey.
63	**Choking**: Hazardous dust, spores, or chemicals fill the air.	88	**Stockpen**: Meat animals were kept in or around the site by someone.
64	**Clean**: Someone tried to clean the place at some point.	89	**Stripped**: Someone looted this place to the bare walls.
65	**Cratered**: An extremely large explosion gutted most of it.	90	**Sunken**: Some subsidence has left the site in a crater or pit.
66	**Electrified**: Power still works here for some reason, with perhaps-dangerous consequences.	91	**Swamped**: High water has flooded or moated the site.
67	**Facade**: The site is actually dedicated to a second, veiled purpose.	92	**Taunting Treasure**: Something valuable is obvious but hard or dangerous to reach.
68	**Fearsome**: Gory trophies meant to scare off intruders were placed here.	93	**Toxic**: Toxic, corrosive, or radioactive substances have been spilled or produced here.
69	**Fenced**: A fence or other defensive perimeter was thrown up around it.	94	**Trap**: The site's much easier to enter than to leave.
70	**Fetid**: Some vile substance has caked the site.	95	**Undervalued**: Past looters left things that were then-worthless, but are now valued.
71	**Fortified**: It was stripped and reworked into a visibly fortified site.	96	**Unstable**: The site or its functionality are dangerously unstable.
72	**Functional**: Some part of the site still works as it was intended to work.	97	**Vault**: Someone used this place to store something valuable.
73	**Gated**: A dangerous structure or area gates access to the site.	98	**VIPs**: Pre-collapse VIPs ended up here for some reason.
74	**Good Water**: A clean, usable spring or water supply is here.	99	**Watchpost**: It's been used as a lookout by some group, either now or in the past.
75	**Graves**: Numerous burials are here, either singly or as a mass grave.	100	**Windblown**: High winds have damaged or knocked over much of it.



Encounter Site Occupants

The tables below offer suggestions for hex occupants for Mutant Wasteland, Deadlands, and After the Fall campaigns. When picking or rolling an occupant, it's best to tie them into local settlements or events, making them citizens of some nearby community or nomad group, or having their situation be a direct result of some recent event in the area.

To determine whether or not a group of occupants is at the site right now, either decide for yourself or roll on the adjacent table. If a group is present, pick an appropriate table below and choose or roll to find the type of inhabitants.

d10	Site Occupants
1-5	No occupants present
6	Signs of a group having been there recently
7-9	One group of occupants from the table below
0	More than one group is currently here.

Criminals: Whether gang members, random malcontents, or escapees from justice, these men and women have a past history of violence and theft. They may not be as organized as professional raiders, but they're apt to take full advantage of any opportunities they encounter.

Cultists: Devotees of some mad creed, these believers are bound tightly in their faith. These beliefs offer something valuable to the believers, whether it's hope, shared resources, or an excuse to visit violence on their enemies. They may not necessarily be hostile, but the interests of outsiders will always come after the needs of their brethren.

Deserters: These people have abandoned their posts, having fled a military unit, law enforcement role, government post, or other position of responsibility. They likely still have the gear and resources they were issued, and have ample reason to avoid their former brethren. They may have discarded their uniforms or insignia.

Family: Wandering families may be small groups of refugees bound by blood, while established ones may be clans who've staked out the area as their turf. Wanderers are likely seeking any safety they can find, while those who have bunkered down are unlikely to welcome strangers.

Hunters: If there's a post-nuclear settlement nearby, this may be a small group of hunters out on the day's hunt. If the area is remote, however, it's probably a significantly larger hunting party equipped to harvest and preserve big game.

Locals: Ordinary local citizens caught up in the chaos of a zombie apocalypse or societal collapse, these locals are likely confused and desperate. They're likely attempting to carry on with their daily lives as best they can, or else trying to figure out where the nearest safe harbor might be.

Lunatics: The end of the world is more than some people can handle, and some of these people will band together with those who have compatible madnesses. Extreme violence, tragic personal losses, or dire privation might all push some people over the edge, and while their long-term survival is unlikely, their damage can be dangerous to others while they last.

Marauders: Veteran wasteland marauders, these men and mutants are organized well enough to be a significant threat to local settlements. Only the weakest communities are directly attacked, but small groups of wayfarers, trade convoys, and outlying farms are all prey to their hungers.

Mutants: These mutants are somehow incompatible with any local settlements, forced by their nature to dwell in the wastes. Not all of them are necessarily hostile, but unless the locals are particularly xenophobic there's probably some concrete reason why they're not living among others.

d10	Mutant Wasteland	d10	Deadlands	d10	After the Fall
1	Hunters	1	Criminals	1	Soldiers
2	Outcasts	2	Survivalists	2	Locals
3	Mutants	3	Refugees	3	Refugees
4	Marauders	4	Family	4	Survivors
5	Scouts	5	Soldiers	5	Deserters
6	Wanderers	6	Officials	6	Rebels
7	Traders	7	Raiders	7	Criminals
8	Scavengers	8	Locals	8	Zealots
9	Refugees	9	Lunatics	9	Traders
10	Cultists	10	Scouts	10	Survivalists

Officials: Government officials meant to somehow deal with whatever outbreak caused the Deadlands, these people may be harried cops, disease-control bureaucrats, military special forces, or remnants of other government bureaus. They might have some theoretical responsibility to aid survivors, but the situation has likely degenerated far beyond their ability to handle it.

Outcasts: These wretches were thrown out of their village. They may have been on the losing side of a political dispute, or are runaway slaves, or were mouths too many for the community's food supply. They have nowhere else to go.

Raiders: With the Deadlands so occupied with unnatural perils, these men and women are taking full advantage of the breakdown in order. They've organized themselves well enough to overwhelm or extort other survivor groups.

Rebels: With local government crippled by events, these rebels are eager to set up a new order. Their planned regime may or may not be remotely practical, but there are few forces remaining to stop them from trying. They may have attracted malcontents of other kinds, all eager to take revenge on a social order that offended them.

Refugees: Hapless strangers from more distant places, these people were driven from their homes and now go in search of some safer place. Most of them have some idea of getting to particular settlements or refugee camps, whether or not their hoped-for sanctuary actually exists.

Scavengers: Hard-bitten looters of the dead world, these men and women are out pillaging ruins and scratching over the debris to plunder anything worth taking back to their village. Most are highly reluctant to get involved with any outsiders, all too aware of the threats of robbery or claim-jumping.

Scouts: These people are performing recon for some nearby settlement or group, exploring the area and taking note of valuable resources and potential threats. They may be willing to talk with strangers to get more intel, though some groups prefer to pass unnoticed, even if that means silencing witnesses.

Soldiers: As military forces under the nominal control of some government, these groups likely have access to an enormous amount of firepower. The longer the time since society's collapse, however, the more of this gear will become inoperable, and the weaker the coordination between these soldiers and the rest of their forces. Troops that can see the inevitable future might become considerably more flexible about adherence to their official mission.

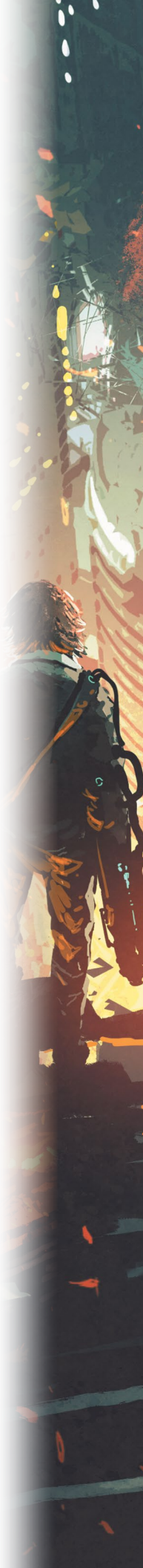
Survivalists: These preppers were actually right about the impending collapse of society. Some of them will be busy trying to organize their neighbors into self-sustaining communities, others will be shooting any stranger who gets within scope range, and a few will be doing both. Those who have survived this long tend to be very well-equipped, highly practiced, and extremely paranoid.

Survivors: These people survived the immediate aftermath of a disaster, facing it directly. Whether a government massacre, foreign military strike, catastrophic flood, or other calamity, they've managed to make it through the immediate aftermath. How long their luck will hold is open to question.

Traders: The boldest traders of the nuclear wastelands might travel alone, trusting to their wits to bring small valuables from place to place. Most prefer to go in well-armed groups, their routes too unpredictable to make them easy targets for ambushers. Some might insist on vetting customers before trading weapons or other dangerous implements.

Wanderers: Nomads of the wastes, without established settlements or settled homes. Some groups wander to follow game and seasonal water holes, while others are forced to keep moving in order to find new human prey.

Zealots: Devoted followers of a Cause, these zealots are taking advantage of the societal collapse to enforce their new vision of a better world. Unlike rebels, they may not have a new government in mind, but whether it's a religion, social principle, ideology, or ethnic supremacy, they mean to push it on the locals.





One-Roll Occupant Details

Life after the end of the world is seldom a low-effort enterprise. Any occupants of the site will almost certainly be doing something there, either because it's helpful to them or because circumstances have forced it on them. The tables below offer some suggestions.

The presence and basic nature of the occupants can be worked out when the site is stocked. These tables offer additional specifics about their immediate past and present activities and some hints as to what they might want out of the site. PCs who seem to offer some useful help in getting that are likely to get a warmer reception than they would otherwise receive. Don't forget to make use of Reaction Rolls as described on page 204. Friends can show up in the oddest places.

d6	When Did They Get Here?
1	They'll arrive as the PCs are present.
2	They just got there before the PCs.
3	They've been there overnight at least.
4	They've been there for days or weeks.
5	They've dwelled here for quite some time.
6	They'll get there after the PCs have left.

d8	What Mood Are They In?
1	Cheerful; something good happened
2	Suspicious; they've been recently attacked
3	Hesitant; they don't know what to do next
4	Rapacious; they want to obtain things
5	Diplomatic; they want allies for something
6	Cautious; they fear attack or trickery
7	Desperate; they need something badly
8	Expansive; they feel rich and safe

d10	Who's In Charge of Them?
1	A skilled elder member
2	Somebody saddled on them by others
3	Recently-promoted and unsteady junior
4	A mutineer who persuaded the others
5	A remarkably gifted member
6	A religious leader of some sort
7	A glib manipulator hiding behind another
8	A specialist for this task with no other talent
9	A bullying tyrant with real ability
10	Several uneasily-cooperating leaders

d4	How Large is the Group?
1	Just one or two occupants
2	2d4 or a small band of them
3	3d6 to 4d10 of them
4	Unusually large numbers for some reason

d12	What's Their Biggest Concern?
1	A mission that can only be completed here.
2	They're sure they're being stalked.
3	Their supplies are running low.
4	Personal quarrels are becoming a problem.
5	Their mission out here seems impossible.
6	They joined in a crime they want to hide.
7	Their leader has radically wrong belief.
8	They incurred the wrath of a dire enemy.
9	They're anxious to find profit or loot here.
10	They're sick of being out here.
11	They want glory or to do a worthy deed.
12	They want to hide loot from their brethren.

d20	Their Goal Out Here
1	They're scouting the area for later looting.
2	They're using the site as a scouting base.
3	They think a particular treasure is here.
4	They're gathering supplies for their home.
5	They're hiding here from someone else.
6	They're recovering here from a fight.
7	They're trying to reach an allied group.
8	They're trying to set up a farm or work site.
9	They came to attack prior occupants here.
10	They use it as a trading spot with allies.
11	It's near good hunting or scavenging areas.
12	They're caching loot to come back later.
13	They're on a religious task of some sort.
14	They're chasing a criminal or enemy.
15	They want to do things unlawful at home.
16	They plan to ambush a particular target.
17	They want to secretly meet someone.
18	They're wandering as outcasts from home.
19	They're bringing back something rare.
20	They're investigating a rumor or story.

One-Roll Occupant Leadership

If the PCs choose to deal with the group, they're going to need to talk to its leadership. This set of tables provides some suggestions for personalizing the leader and giving them some traits that may be relevant in negotiations or combat encounters.

Even after societal collapse, leadership has more to do with social skills than brute force. The biggest, strongest member of a group may have an edge in being declared its boss, but the members will ultimately rally around the person they think is most likely to lead them to safety, prosperity, and success. With that being the case, a GM shouldn't necessarily give a group's leader the biggest combat statistics, but they should have very concrete qualities or reasons that make the rest of the band follow them.

d6	How Do They Relate To the Group?
1	They have a significant bloodline.
2	They're a long-term or early member.
3	They have ties of friendship with others.
4	They're a former ally or benefactor.
5	They're the chosen heir of a past leader.
6	They're a successful outsider who joined.

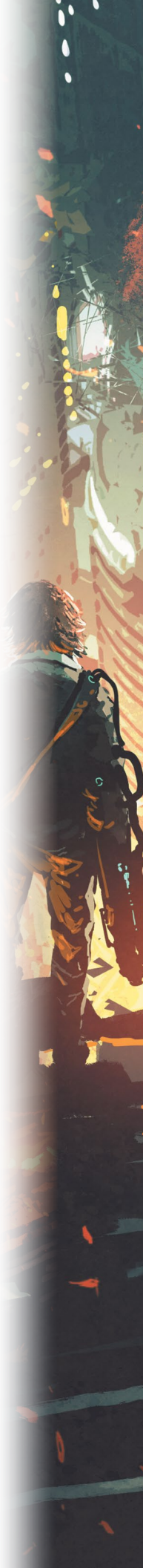
d8	Why Are They In Charge?
1	They killed off or exiled the competition.
2	They bailed out the group from a crisis.
3	They had exclusive and important info.
4	They made private deals with rivals.
5	The prior leader's death left chaos behind.
6	The group chose them as the best option.
7	A hidden leader needed them as a puppet.
8	They accomplished a magnificent deed.

d10	What Is Their Strongest Trait?
1	Exceptionally high combat skills.
2	They have numerous close friends.
3	The group's muscle is in their thrall.
4	Very clear-headed judgment.
5	Reads people exceedingly well.
6	Has blackmail on everyone who matters.
7	Has powerful outsider allies.
8	Naturally charming and inspires faith.
9	They have faithful blood ties with many.
10	They have wealth or tech resources.

d4	How Strong Is Their Control?
1	Tenuous; they need to deliver victories
2	Adequate under the usual strains
3	Firm even in the face of serious problems
4	Complete control even in catastrophes

d12	What Problem Do They Face?
1	Their recent plan went very badly.
2	A rival is quietly working to unseat them.
3	They're old, sick, or crippled.
4	The stress is making them irrational.
5	They're addicted to something.
6	Their strong trait is starting to fail them.
7	The group expects too much from them.
8	They recently lost their right-hand man.
9	They're bewitched by a manipulative lover.
10	They're being blackmailed by someone.
11	They believe something that's very wrong.
12	They've been given a difficult goal.

d20	Personal Quirks or Traits
1	Hates to directly lie about anything.
2	Has no respect for non-group human life.
3	Loves animals and hates animal abuse.
4	Despises a particular ethnicity or religion.
5	Paranoid about snipers and assassins.
6	Very generous to defeated foes.
7	A sucker for a pretty face.
8	Keeps their deals even under pressure.
9	Prefers "gaudy" to "practical" in gear.
10	Terrible personality except when drunk.
11	Takes no prisoners.
12	Thinks past enemies are hunting them.
13	Always repays a favor or grudge.
14	Never turns down an interesting bet.
15	Collects something rare and non-useful.
16	Fears a particular faction or local group.
17	Young and somewhat naive still.
18	Easily rationalizes even the worst crimes.
19	Has a deeply-loved pet or minion.
20	Loves to make profitable deals.



Encounter Site Hazards

A site's descriptors help flavor the area's appearance and style, but a GM often needs to think about the actual dangers within the wreckage. The tables on these pages are meant to give some suggestions as to what sort of hazards might still linger within the ruins.

Site hazards are given as ***environmental hazards*** that make the place more dangerous to explore, and ***occupant hazards*** that make any dwellers more fearsome in combat or more likely to attack. The examples are written to fit with After the Fall or Deadlands campaigns, but mutants and super-science can be mixed in where needed for Mutant Wasteland games.

When picking hazards, keep in mind any descriptors that you might have rolled or chosen for the site. Those descriptors can help define the specifics of a hazard, or give you ideas for particular perils or complications to the site.

For each encounter site...

- ***Roll or pick from the adjacent table*** to determine the number of hazards in the site. If a site only has one hazard and also has occupants, it's probably an occupant hazard, as the dwellers would likely have cleared away any obvious leftover environmental perils before settling in.

- ***Roll or pick from the examples table.*** Traps are usually listed with appropriate damage ranges. It can be tempting to dial up these damage totals as the PCs grow in power, but remember that all dangers in your world should be calibrated to what is logical, not what is narratively appropriate. Powerful PCs should eventually be interested in sacking abandoned military bases, hidden robotic factories, or rich enemy strongholds where the dangers rationally *would* be greater.

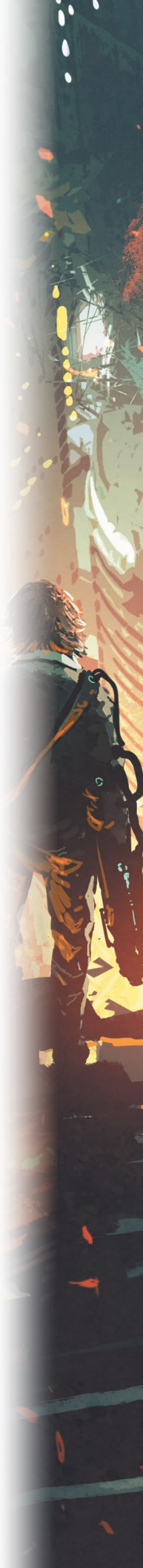
- ***Note the hazard on the encounter site's card.*** Write the details of its effects and placement in the lower right quadrant of the back of the card. Making a small star or mark on the location map on the front of the card can help remind you of them in play as well.

d10	Site Hazards
1-4	No special hazards
5-7	One hazard appropriate to the site
8-9	Two hazards
0	Three hazards

With that done, you've now added a little peril to the site. These additional dangers increase the potential cost of exploring a site, and help mix up what might otherwise be a fairly repetitious series of run-ins with bandits or hostile mutants. By shifting around the tactical situation with occupant hazards or increasing the stakes of exploration with environmental hazards, the PCs are obliged to think about whether or not the investigation of a ruin is going to be worth it, or whether negotiation might be wiser than steel.



d20	Environmental Hazard Examples	Occupant Hazard Examples
1	Crumbling floors or pits; Evasion save or fall for 1d6 dmg per 3 meters of depth	Someone's hidden in a good spot for observing interlopers and warning the main group
2	Still-charged electrical lines or batteries attached to something; 1d6 for light tech, 3d6 for industrial	They desperately need a particular kind of supply and are willing to take risks to get it
3	Infectious corpse or object; Physical save for anyone handling it or take Severe disease	They're using a hidden entrance to the site and have booby-trapped the obvious main entrance
4	Stairs are weak; roll 1d6 each use and collapse on 1-2 for 1d8 damage	They've rigged up the old security system to alert them to any interlopers
5	Heavy security doors tend to swing shut and auto-lock; need cutting tools or diff 10 lockpicking	They're out for loot but found nothing, and are frustrated enough to take it where they can get it
6	Weak roof; violence drops it for 4d6 dmg with an Evasion save for half on anything beneath	They've trapped a container with a grenade and put it where intruders would be tempted by it
7	Old grenade booby-trap; does 2d6 grenade damage to anyone opening a door or container	They've blocked up most entrances to force invaders to pass through a chokepoint
8	Foot-spike pit trap on an enticing path; Evasion save or 1d6 dmg and half Move for a week	They've rigged gas tanks or other hazardous items to blow when they shoot them for 4d6 damage
9	Primitive air-horn alarm is rigged to blare when a door is opened	They've hung nets; those below save vs. Evasion or lose Moves until they spend 1d4 rounds untangling
10	Food loot has been poisoned; eaters take 1d6 System Strain and a Phys save or take 3d6 dmg	They've prepared murder holes in the ceiling of an important corridor or room
11	Old shotgun rigged to fire when a door is opened; Evasion save or take a 3d4 shotgun hit	They've clustered in one area to make it difficult to ambush them in smaller groups
12	Room is filled with a toxic gas; gain 1d6 System Strain and Physical save or take 2d6 damage	They've forted up behind barred doors or other barriers that can only be opened from the inside
13	Flooding with sharp debris under the water; inch slowly or a Luck save to avoid 1d6 dmg and fall	Their least popular members are made to camp in an exposed area to draw the first enemy fire
14	Unstable, easily-ignited chemical cache; if disturbed, sets things on fire and does 2d6 dmg	They've laid in a supply of grenades and arranged chokepoints to take advantage of the blasts
15	Bait loot has been set somewhere obvious to lure people into another trap on this list	They recently beat a dangerous foe and are feeling cocky about their combat prowess
16	Malfunctioning gas fire suppression system will make the area unbreathable if it's triggered	They've fashioned pit traps between them and the most obvious route of intrusion
17	Stinking propane or natural gas leak. Any spark explodes for 10d6 dmg + Luck save or die	They have meticulous watch-standers who are very alert for intruders
18	Shallow toxic water or effluent; take 1d6 System Strain if entered + Phys save or 2d6 dmg in 1 hour	They had a bad run-in lately and are ready to mistake the PCs as being minions of their enemies
19	A piece of loot is radioactive, inflicting Light radiation on the bearer each day	They've soaked an area in flammables to light later, doing 2d6/round fire damage to those within
20	A piece of loot will explode or burst after 1d4 normal uses, doing 2d6 damage to the user	An improvised claymore can be triggered to blast 30x10 meters for 5d6 dmg, Evasion save for half
For campaigns using the Trauma Dice rules, environmental hazards that involve physical injury rather than toxins should have a 1d6 or 1d8 Trauma Die and x2 or x3 multiplier, depending on their worst-case consequences		





Making Encounter Tables

PCs have a chance of running into potential trouble when traveling in the wilds, as explained on page 60. While a GM can always just come up with a plausible wayside encounter when needed, it's more helpful to come up with a wilderness encounter table beforehand.

Most tables should have from six to ten entries. Not all of them need to be necessarily hostile or dangerous; usually two or three should be relatively peaceful entries, perhaps even with a chance for profit.

When drawing up entries, note any necessary combat stats at the foot of the table, drawing them from the bestiary chapter starting on page 202. Remember that encounters should be scaled for what is plausible, not what is a "fair fight" for the PCs. Soldiers on patrol aren't going to go about in tiny handfuls, and fleeing refugees might not have any weapon more dangerous than their own desperation.

Remember to account for Reaction Rolls as explained on page 204. Even a group of bloodthirsty raiders might not be terribly bloodthirsty at that particular moment, and a friendly reaction from savages or a hostile reaction from peaceful wayfarers might suggest something complicated is going on.

d20	Examples of Travel Hazards
1	Massive car accident blocking the path
2	Downed still-active electrical lines
3	Conspicuous ambush site ahead
4	Scavengers picking over the (mostly) dead
5	Flooding has swept across the road
6	Potentially hostile drone in the sky
7	A big carnivore has turned man-eater
8	Collapsed building barring the way
9	An enticing loot prospect spreads disease
10	An abandoned booby trap is on the path
11	A dangerous gas leak is in the area
12	A landslide has buried the road
13	Locals or bandits set up a checkpoint
14	Raiders have baited an ambush with loot
15	A valuable piece of loot is booby-trapped
16	A sick, infectious survivor is seeking help
17	A sudden storm threatens harm
18	Toxic pollution has spilled around here
19	A wounded predator has gone berserk
20	A dangerously unstable survivor waits here

d6	Example After the Fall Table
1	1d4+10 soldiers doing a patrol for hostiles or holding a checkpoint
2	Massacre site with a dozen or so executed and looted civilians or prisoners of war
3	1d6 military deserters who are paranoid about witnesses
4	A family of 1d4+2 fleeing refugees, at least half of them armed
5	2d6 guerrilla resistance fighters who may expect "contributions" to the cause
6	A burning house, vehicle, or other destroyed site. 50% chance of those who did it still being there; roll again for them

d6	Example Deadlands Table
1	A mob of 4d6 zombies are shuffling through the area
2	1d4 survivors have been trapped by 3d6 zombies and are calling for help; more zombies might show up at any time
3	1d6 zombies are the remnants of a failed attempt by a family to hide
4	2d6 zombies lurch out from concealment near the PCs
5	2d6 survivors are scavenging here, and may want to loot the PCs
6	A paranoid survivor lurks in an enticing building or site, ready to attack the first intruder from ambush

d8	Example Mutant Wasteland Table
1	A dangerous wasteland beast notices the PCs.
2	A drift of environmental toxins blows over the PCs, adding 1d2 System Strain
3	A pack of 2d4 wasteland scavenger beasts have scented the PCs
4	1d6+2 mutants have spotted the PCs
5	A patrol of 2d6 members of the nearest enclave encounter the PCs.
6	3d6 raiders or bandits cross paths with the PCs.
7	A confused security robot is looking for unauthorized intruders
8	An abandoned van has a mated pair of dangerous predators lairing in the back

One-Roll Traveling Survivor Groups

Survivors on the open road tend to meet others in similar circumstances. This one-roll table can be used whenever the GM needs a chance-met group of strangers for the PCs to meet.

These tables are largely tuned for an After the Fall or Deadlands campaign, where society has relatively recently collapsed and the chaotic exodus of refugees has yet to subside.

GMs can use these tables to generate basic wants and situations, but a Reaction Roll should also be involved in negotiations. Even the most violent raiders can find it useful to be reasonable at times, and the most pacifistic suburbanite can become dangerous when their family is starving before their eyes.

d6	What Are Their Predominant Type?
1	Chance-met locals with few mutual ties
2	A family or blood-related group
3	Fellow employees of the same company
4	Law enforcement or military types
5	Homeless, drifters, or already-poor locals
6	Neighbors or mutual friends

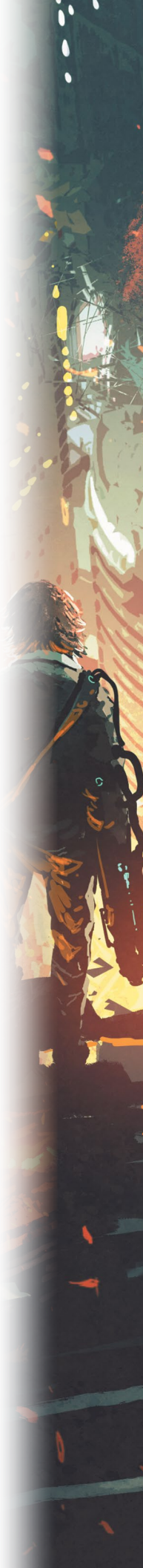
d8	Where Are They Going?
1	A less dangerous place one knows about
2	Fleeing pursuers or a following danger
3	A government camp or safe haven
4	A home or haven owned by one
5	A place where they can get their need
6	To an enemy's place, to inflict violence
7	To a potentially rich looting spot
8	A community they think will take them in

d10	What Do They Want Most?
1	Food; they've been hungry a while
2	Water; they lack clean drinking water
3	Medical help; one of them is injured
4	Rest; they need a safe place to sleep
5	Gear; they're terribly shod or clothed
6	Information; they lack critical info
7	Money; they still think cash is valuable
8	Transport; they have a load or need speed
9	Numbers; they don't feel safe being so few
10	Fun; drugs, booze, or debauching

d4	How Large is the Group?
1	Just one or two survivors
2	1d4+1 people moving together
3	A small band of 3d4 people
4	A substantial crew of 4d6 people

d12	What's Their Best Resource?
1	They have guns and know how to use them
2	They know about a valuable hidden cache
3	They're friends with a major local power
4	They're unusually stealthy and quiet
5	They have a usable vehicle of some kind
6	They have a lot of friends around here
7	They have a lot of portable food
8	They have unusual survival skills
9	They have a very competent leader
10	They have excellent local recon info
11	They have a medic and medical gear
12	They have a valuable technical skill

d20	Situational Details
1	Some of them hate each other
2	One of them was recently killed
3	They don't really understand the situation
4	They're abnormally well-equipped
5	They recently killed someone
6	One or more are prisoners or captives
7	They were thrown out of their last haven
8	One of them is sick and barely mobile
9	One wants to quit for a better group
10	They lack even basic survival tools
11	The leader rules by brute intimidation
12	They're badly lost
13	Some are mentally ill or traumatized
14	One or more are desperate addicts
15	Their leader is a charismatic fool
16	They have a mission they have to complete
17	They have a number of kids with them
18	They're hauling something heavy
19	They're two hesitantly-cooperating groups
20	They're paranoid due to a recent attack



Placing Encounter Site Loot

For most PCs, the main point of exploring encounter sites is to plunder them. Placing loot is the final step in creating a site, and there are two general ways to do so.

Custom Site Loot

If a site's important enough to deserve your special attention, you can place some customized, specific loot in the area. The tables that follow show you how to identify a site type, roll to see what random loot is there, and assign specific details to that loot.

The tables assume that the site is relatively compact, small enough that exploring it wouldn't eat up an entire session of play. If it's big enough that you'd think the entire night's gaming would be dedicated to plundering it, roll twice on the tables. For truly huge sites that would consume multiple sessions, add two more rolls for every estimated session worth of play in it.

Once you have a list of loot, mark it down on your site's index card under the location where it's found. If you have a very large or detailed list of plunder, put it on a separate index card.

Long-term site occupants will probably have collected any easily-accessible loot in the rest of the site. Bulky or heavy goods might have been left where they are, however, simply to spare the work of moving them.

Premade Loot Cards

Sometimes a ruin is too minor to deserve all that much of your creative energy, or the PCs stop and plunder an un-defined site that logically ought to have something valuable. For those occasions, you can instead draw up some premade loot cards beforehand to streamline your work.

For these cards, just pick a general type of site from the list on the following page and roll up loot for it. Make a separate card for each type of site you pre-plan this way, and common site types might get several different cards.

When the PCs hit such a site, just pick one of the premade cards from your collection and use it to determine the loot in the place and any special gear the occupants might have. If there are no occupants, ignore any rolled occupant loot.

Once a premade card is used, you can either scratch it out or just tweak the exact numbers and types of items on it to refresh it for another use.

If you use premade loot cards, it can be wise to just make a few for common site types such as residential homes or retail stores. Trying to make one for every type of site all at once can be more work than it's worth for a GM.



Types of Site Loot

The pages that follow include generators for different types of loot. These are grouped in rough categories to give the GM some general idea of the type of plunder found. Individual example tables follow, describing specific food, clothing, gear, or fuel ideas for use when the GM needs a little extra inspiration.

Ammo: Bullets, or possibly energy cells if the tech level of the campaign includes them. For convenience, most GMs don't bother to track individual cartridge calibers, treating them all as fungible. One Encumbrance is ten bullets or one type A energy cell.

Clothing: Serviceable clothing and footwear for post-apocalyptic use. One Encumbrance is one normal set of clothing.

Food, Perishable: Unpreserved food or edible animals on the hoof. Perishable food will decay into inedibility 1d6 days after the PCs find it. If the site was abandoned long ago and any provender should have rotted by now, treat this result as "None". One Encumbrance is equal to one ration of food.

Food, Preserved: Canned, dried, salted, pickled, smoked, or otherwise preserved foodstuffs. One Encumbrance is equal to one ration of food.

Fuel: Gas, diesel, propane cannisters, kerosene, or seasoned firewood. One Encumbrance equals a liter of liquid fuel suitable for a night's warmth and cooking or one-quarter of a night's dry firewood.

Gear: A specific useful piece of equipment. In far-future settings, this gear might be a sci-fi implement rolled from one of the equipment tables starting on page 94.

Materials: Construction supplies, sheet goods, wire coils, screws, adhesives, and useless objects that still have functional components all qualify as useful materials, usually of TL2 or 3. These can be broken down into tech-level appropriate scrap as per the salvaging rules on page 72, with each point of Encumbrance counting for one piece of scrap.

Wares: The site has a stock of whatever it sold, stored, or created. If these goods were perishable and the site's been abandoned for very long, treat this result as "None". Otherwise, pick an appropriate type of good to be found.

Weapon: Guns, knives, or the occasional explosive. Weapons are usually found unloaded. One Encumbrance counts for a pistol or one-handed weapon, while a rifle or large melee weapon counts as two. The GM should pick a weapon that fits with the likely occupants of the site; military-grade gear will be rare at best in most places.

Special Site Loot

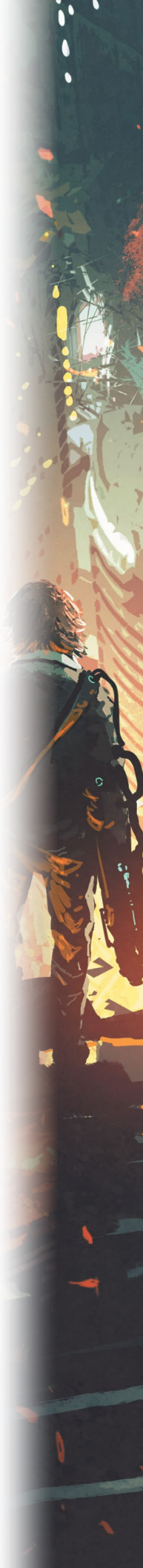
Some types of plunder don't appear on the tables, and will need a special decision by the GM to place it in a site.

TL4 Scrap: Sci-fi settings don't generally have piles of high-tech scrap lying around. If the PCs want it, they need to break down usable laser rifles, advanced armor, functioning gravcars, and other valuable goods. A GM might choose to make troves of these components available in TL4 factories or other centers of advanced fabrication. Remember that most of these sites will have been plundered in the early days of the apocalypse by locals desperate to repair their sophisticated tech.

Special Mod Components: Advanced mods require special components, as explained on page 75. As a general rule of thumb, it's safe to put one of these in a site whenever a large Materials cache is found; something among the plunder will be interesting and sophisticated enough to be useful for a scrapsmith modder.

Technical Manuals: A scrapsmith who wants to build a device from scrap needs a skill level equal to the tech level of the item, or else they need technical documents describing how to build it. A simple parts list isn't good enough, but PCs who want to build their own machine guns or cook exceptionally good meth can be rewarded with a technical manual for the item. You can usually put one or more of these in any location where a scrapsmith, engineer, or technician has been working.

Functioning Vehicles: Most vehicles will soon be entirely useless after a civilizational collapse, with tanks full of varnish, broken windows, and scavenged wiring. Most will be so thoroughly looted that they have no value even as scrap parts. In locations kept free of looters, however, a functional vehicle might be found, or at least one not so damaged as to be unfixable. Finding an adequate supply of unspoiled gasoline, usable motor oil, and serviceable maintenance parts may require an adventure in of itself, however. The smaller and simpler the vehicle, the easier it is to find one; a scooter might be found propped in an abandoned parking garage, while a functional helicopter would be an exquisitely rare prize.



Encounter Site Loot Tables

These are the steps for using the tables that follow.

1. For a given site, find the closest match on the table below. A high-rise studio might be a good match for "Apartment", while an abandoned forward military outpost might qualify as a "Raider Base".

2. Determine whether or not a large cache of resources exists at the site. In the immediate wake of a social collapse, the odds are probably about 60% to 80% that the site still has a large amount of its original contents. As time goes on and scavengers are active, that will drop toward 20%, or down to 10% after generations of scrounging. If the site is out of the way of easy looting, add 20% to the chance.

3. If a large cache exists, roll 1d20 for each of the loot types listed in the entry, with some types perhaps being automatic. Each result is one Encumbrance worth of that type of loot, so "1d6 Materials, 11+ for 1d6 more" means that the hardware store has 1d6 Encumbrance of useful Materials and a 11+ on d20 to have 1d6 more Encumbrance of them as well. If a cache is of "any type", roll on the matching tables on the following page to see what sort of good it is.

4. Once you've placed any large caches, repeat the check for individual items. These represent bits and pieces lying around the place, and may be of different loot types. The adjacent tables give suggestions as to what kind of goods should be in a given ruin.

5. Lastly, if the site has occupants, check for occupant loot, apart from whatever normal equipment or gear the inhabitants may have. They probably looted this from the site, so the plunder will likely be of a kind that could be found there.

Site Type	Large Cache (d20)	Individual Items (d20)	Occupant Loot (d20)
Apartment	19+ for 1d6 random type	13+ for 1d4 any types	16+ for 1 of any type
Farm	1d4 Food, Perishable 16+ for 1 more	16+ for 1d4 any types	16+ for 1d4 of any type
Gas Station	17+ for 1d6 Fuel	13+ for 1d4 any types	16+ for 1 of any type
Gun Store	13+ for 1d4 Ammo	11+ for 1d2+1 Weapons	11+ for 1d4 of any type
Hardware Store	1d6 Materials 11+ for 1d6 more	1d4 Gear 11+ for 1d4 more	11+ for 1d4 of any type
Heavy Factory	2d6 Materials 11+ for 1d20 more	1d10 Materials 11+ for 1d2 more	16+ for 1 of any type
Hospital	11+ for 3d6 drug doses 16+ for 1d2 more	1d6 drug doses 11+ for 1d10 more	11+ for 1d4 of any type
Light Factory	1d8 Materials 16+ for 1d20 more	1d8 Materials 11+ for 1d2 more	11+ for 1d4 of any type
Prepper Lair	3d10 Food 1d6 of any type	1d4 of any type 11+ for 1d4 more	1d4 of any type
Raider Base	1d10 of any type 11+ for 1d2 more	1d4 of any type 11+ for 1d6 more	1d8 of any type
Repair Shop	1d10 Materials 11+ for 1d10 more	1d2 Gear items 11+ for 1d4 more	11+ for 1d4 of any type
Restaurant	1 Food, Perishable 11+ for 2d6 Food, Preserved	1d4 Food, Preserved 11+ for 1 of any type	1d4 Food, Preserved
Retail Store	11+ for 1d6 of the store's type 15+ for 1d10 more	1d4 of the store's stock type 11+ for 1d4 more	11+ for 1d4 of any type
Rural Home	11+ for 1d6 of any type	1d4 of any type	16+ for 1d4 of any type
Suburban Home	16+ for 1d6 of any type	1d4 of any type	16+ for 1d4 of any type
Warehouse	2d10 of the type of good stored 13+ for 1d20 more	11+ for 1d4 of any type	16+ for 1 of any type

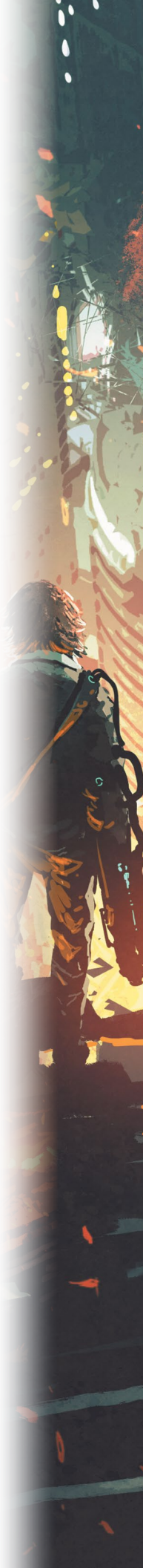
For each column, roll 1d20. On a roll equal or higher, the listed Encumbrance points of the result are present. Some results are automatically present for certain types of sites.

d10	Apartment	Farm	Gas Station	Gun Store
1	Food, Perishable	Food, Perishable	Fuel	Weapon
2	Food, Perishable	Food, Perishable	Fuel	Weapon
3	Food, Perishable	Food, Perishable	Fuel	Weapon
4	Food, Preserved	Food, Perishable	Fuel	Weapon
5	Clothing	Food, Preserved	Fuel	Ammo
6	Clothing	Fuel	Food, Preserved	Ammo
7	Gear	Fuel	Food, Preserved	Ammo
8	Gear	Gear	Food, Perishable	Ammo
9	Materials	Gear	Gear	Gear
10	Weapon	Materials	Gear	Materials

d10	Hardware Store	Heavy Factory	Hospital	Light Factory
1	Materials	Materials	Medical	Materials
2	Materials	Materials	Medical	Materials
3	Materials	Materials	Medical	Materials
4	Fuel	Materials	Medical	Materials
5	Fuel	Materials	Fuel	Materials
6	Clothing	Fuel	Gear	Fuel
7	Gear	Fuel	Gear	Gear
8	Gear	Gear	Clothing	Gear
9	Gear	Gear	Food, Preserved	Gear
10	Gear	Clothing	Materials	Gear

d10	Prepper Lair	Raider Base	Repair Shop	Restaurant
1	Medical	Food, Perishable	Materials	Food, Perishable
2	Food, Preserved	Food, Perishable	Materials	Food, Perishable
3	Food, Preserved	Food, Preserved	Materials	Food, Perishable
4	Gear	Food, Preserved	Gear	Food, Perishable
5	Weapon	Weapon	Gear	Food, Perishable
6	Weapon	Ammo	Gear	Food, Preserved
7	Ammo	Gear	Gear	Food, Preserved
8	Ammo	Medical	Fuel	Food, Preserved
9	Clothing	Clothing	Fuel	Gear
10	Fuel	Materials	Clothing	Gear

d10	Retail Store	Rural Home	Suburban Home	Warehouse
1	Medical	Food, Perishable	Food, Perishable	Materials
2	Materials	Food, Perishable	Food, Perishable	Materials
3	Materials	Food, Preserved	Food, Perishable	Clothing
4	Materials	Food, Preserved	Food, Perishable	Clothing
5	Food, Preserved	Weapon	Food, Preserved	Gear
6	Food, Perishable	Ammo	Clothing	Gear
7	The store's wares	Gear	Clothing	Fuel
8	The store's wares	Clothing	Gear	Food, Preserved
9	The store's wares	Clothing	Weapon	Food, Preserved
10	The store's wares	Fuel	Ammo	Ammo



Perishable Foods

PCs who find perishable foodstuffs will generally need to use them quickly if a freezer isn't available. Most of the example foods here will decay or spoil in a week at most, if not sooner. It's very likely that a sizable cache will let the PCs gorge for a few days but leave them hunting their next meal all the while.

Fresh foodstuffs are usually considerably tastier than canned or preserved provender, and more valuable to others who plan to eat it immediately. Particularly fine food might even justify Stress loss or extra System Strain recovery if the PCs have a few days to just relax in safety and enjoy the cookery.

Some food caches might include stocks of more-or-less-perishable seasonings or spices. While they may have no value as rations in of themselves, others may pay dearly for anything that can make a monotonous post-collapse diet more interesting.

Farms might include livestock on the hoof as perishable food, or massive fields of unharvested crops. For the gleanings of residences or restaurants, the table below offers some suggestions for finds.

d12	Valuable Spices and Seasonings
1	Containers of iodized salt, or boxes of rock salt suitable for preservation
2	Unground peppercorns
3	Commercial-sized plastic seasoning tub
4	Window-box or small garden of fresh herbs
5	Plastic container of minced dried onions
6	Collection of spice bottles for a particular form of ethnic cuisine
7	Small package of valuable saffron
8	Jars of minced garlic or ginger
9	Bottles of hot sauce, perhaps of an inedibly high heat rating
10	Sealed bags of coffee beans or tea leaves
11	Bottles of salad dressing, mayonnaise, or other emulsifications
12	Sauces for topping meat, such as barbecue sauce, ketchup, Worcestershire sauce, or steak sauce

d00	Example Perishable Food	d00	Example Perishable Food
1-2	Bundles of green spring onions	51-52	Hard winter squashes
3-4	Sack of potatoes that aren't too soft	53-54	Still-drinkable pot of coffee
5-6	Jug of milk or other dairy product	55-56	Frozen fish fillets
7-8	Bags of premade salad	57-58	Packages of refrigerated yogurt
9-10	Sack of apples	59-60	Loaves of relatively fresh bread
11-12	Frozen packages of ground beef	61-62	Frozen pre-packaged meals
13-14	Bags of local fruit	63-64	Bag of lemons or limes
15-16	Ripe tomatoes	65-66	Cookies baked more-or-less recently
17-18	Bag of onions	67-68	Frozen meat roast
19-20	Refrigerated whole ham	69-70	Pile of turnips
21-22	Boxed frozen pizza	71-72	Skinless frozen chicken breasts
23-24	Packages of pre-made mashed potatoes	73-74	Bags of shredded soft cheese
25-26	Frosted cake of some sort	75-76	Blocks of butter
27-28	Heads of cabbage	77-78	Packages of sliced deli meat
29-30	Cartons of fresh eggs	79-80	Frozen whole chicken or turkey
31-32	Fresh soft cheese	81-82	Cartons of hummus or snack dip
33-34	Links of frozen sausage	83-84	Doughnuts, not entirely stale
35-36	Bag of oranges	85-86	Frozen bagged shrimp
37-38	Slabs of steak	87-88	Cartons of strawberries or similar fruit
39-40	Heads of various forms of lettuce	89-90	Bundle of beets
41-42	Container of several sweet bell peppers	91-92	Unspoilt fruit pies
43-44	Frozen chicken nuggets	93-94	Pot of recently-made soup
45-46	Bags of flour or corn tortillas	95-96	Bags of frozen meatballs
47-48	Bottled beer or other low-proof spirits	97-98	Frozen tubes of ground meat
49-50	Wrapped unsliced slab of deli meat	99-00	Fruit or cream-filled pastries

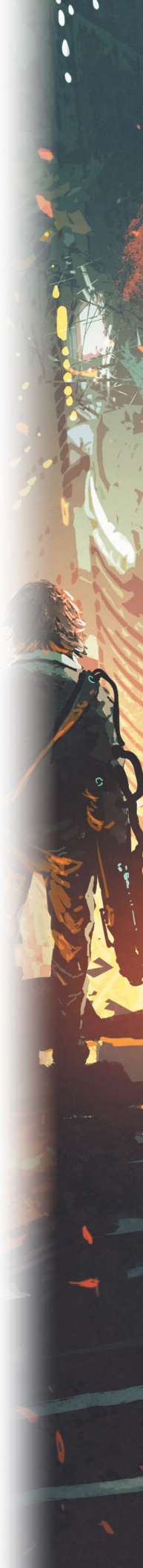
Preserved Foods

Some foodstuffs are more easily preserved than others, and a snack cake that can endure a year in its plastic packaging is still no match for three-decade-old wheat still edible in its sealed bucket. Depending on the particular timeline of your campaign, some of the example foods given here might have decayed into inedible slop or mouldering dust by the time the PCs find them. Then again, Mutant Wasteland campaigns or other far-future settings might have unsettlingly powerful preservatives in their candy bars and snack cakes.

As with perishable foods, a given loot cache might contain several different edibles, but the one you pick from the tables here or generate yourself is the predominant provender. Other ransackers might've already carried off everything else, leaving only the least-appealing food behind, or the cache's original owner might've eaten most of the other items before dying.

d12	Examples of Low-Tech Preserved Food
1	Pemmican, ground jerky mixed with lard and dried fruit fragments
2	Parched maize ground fine for boiling into a soup or porridge
3	Hardtack, dry bread baked multiple times to drive out any residual moisture
4	Dry-cured sausages heavily salted to deter spoiling
5	Smoked or sun-dried game jerky
6	Hard cheeses or pots of clarified butter
7	Unmilled wheat berries for boiling into porridge
8	Dry rice or other cereal grains
9	Salted fish or meat strips to be soaked before final consumption
10	Pickled or fermented food in pottery jars
11	Casked salt pork or beef, often requiring pre-boiling to get enough salt out
12	Pressed cakes of dried fruit or nuts

d00	Example Preserved Food	d00	Example Preserved Food
1-2	Colorfully-wrapped snack bars	51-52	Cans of dehydrated potato flakes
3-4	Assorted canned beans	53-54	Boxes of chocolate bars
5-6	Stacks of canned vegetables	55-56	Cans of condensed milk
7-8	Whole sardines in oil	57-58	Sealed jars of hard candy
9-10	Glass mason jars of home-canned fruit	59-60	Mystery cans with missing or worn labels
11-12	Sacks of white rice	61-62	Tinned processed ham
13-14	Metal can of olive oil or other vegetable oil	63-64	Cans of beef hash
15-16	Cans of beef tallow or pork lard	65-66	Container of powdered eggs
17-18	Mylar bags of snack chips	67-68	Sealed cans of vegetable shortening
19-20	Sugary ultra-preserved snack food	69-70	Slabs of dried, salted fish
21-22	Dusty packaged military meals, ready-to-eat	71-72	Glass mason jars of home-canned vegetables
23-24	Bags of beef jerky	73-74	Sealed plastic bags of flour
25-26	Cans of spam or other preserved meat	75-76	Cans of ready-to-eat soup
27-28	Vacuum-sealed bags of wheat berries	77-78	Bottles of hard liquor
29-30	Cans of rolled oats	79-80	Tin cans of various forms of diced tomatoes
31-32	Jars of tomato sauce	81-82	Bags of dried fruit
33-34	Pack of freeze-dried camping meals	83-84	Boxes of packaged snack mixes
35-36	Plastic tubs of sugar	85-86	Sealed microwaveable meals
37-38	Bottles of honey	87-88	Packages of dried soup mix
39-40	Links of dry sausages	89-90	Boxes of dry pasta
41-42	Bags of potato chips	91-92	Canned gravy or broths
43-44	Hard cakes of brown sugar	93-94	Packages of not-yet-rancid ramen noodles
45-46	Cans of preserved butter	95-96	Glass mason jars of home-canned stews and soups
47-48	Containers of baby formula	97-98	Bags of powdered protein
49-50	Sacks of dried beans	99-00	Salt-crusted hams





Clothing

The modern world is inundated with clothing, and as it's mostly imperishable it's unlikely that any global apocalypse will destroy enough of it to make much of a difference to survivors. Any refugee with vigor and determination can usually wrap themselves in enough rags to keep the immediate cold out. Footwear can be a more difficult challenge, especially finding the kinds suitable for days of hard marching.

Clothing loot should generally represent some kind of interesting, useful, or valuable piece of clothing beyond these common togs. It should be in better condition, be a better fit, or be suited for a specific activity or role. Such clothing usually has value in trade, especially when it helps a wearer endure harsh weather or hard labor. Wealthy survivors might pay extra for luxury clothing or purely decorative outfits, flaunting their prosperity with the dress of a former, more comfortable age.

GMs should also keep in mind that clothing can get damaged. A player who survives a molotov cocktail might not have much further use for the t-shirt he was wearing at the time, and a week in the Great Dismal Swamp might wreck any ordinary outfit. Replacements might be necessary if privation is to be avoided.

d20	Types of Looted Clothing
1	Winter jackets and cold-weather clothing
2	Sturdy hiking or work boots
3	Overalls, jumpsuits or other work clothes
4	Heavy gloves or warm hand coverings
5	Protective bike jackets, armored pants, or helmets
6	Swimwear or beach attire
7	Business suits or dresses
8	Lingerie or underclothing
9	Culturally-specific clothing or religious outfits
10	Completely nondescript local casual wear
11	Cosplay outfit or costume
12	High-fashion outfit or designer accessories
13	Expensive sneakers or office footwear
14	Hard-wearing outdoor work clothes
15	Leather jackets, pants, or accessories
16	Printed t-shirts or logo-blazoned clothing
17	Provocative or fashionable clubwear
18	Trenchcoats, chesterfields or other large coats
19	Athletic wear or sports outfits
20	Plate carriers or other military-grade body armor

Fuel

A long-term need for firewood can erase entire forests, and even ad hoc campfires still need dry wood to be of much practical use. Desperate survivors will soon scavenge all the dead wood and flammable furniture in an area, leaving latecomers to break down buildings for their softwood studs or hack apart the timbers of sheds and barns. The grinding labor of felling, bucking, and splitting firewood is largely unknown to most modern urbanites, let alone when it has to be done with primitive hand tools. Even when it can be done, few post-apocalyptic survivors have the six months to a year it takes for the wood to dry properly.

In the meanwhile, survivors are going to have to scavenge what fuel they can to keep them alive through winters and cold rainy seasons. One Encumbrance worth of the fuels described on the adjacent table will be enough to keep a warm camp for one night. The exception is firewood, where a full night's load of carefully-husbanded wood weighs 4 Encumbrance.

Some fuels might need specific burners to be useful; a 20-gallon propane tank isn't much use without a propane heater or gas grill. Finding such loot generally involves a Gear loot result or an ingenious scrapsmith's diligent work with TL2 scrap.

d12	Example Fuel Finds
1	Propane cylinders
2	Gas jerrycans
3	Bottles of kerosene
4	Charcoal briquettes
5	Stacks of seasoned firewood
6	Cans of diesel
7	Residential propane pig in 500 or 1,000 gallons, mostly dry but with a little pressure remaining
8	Tank of fuel oil
9	Case of sterno cans
10	Large gas or diesel tank for on-site refueling
11	Small cans of butane
12	Jugs of lamp oil

Gear

Gear is a catch-all heading for useful tools or objects that are neither weapons nor clothing. The specific gear to be found in a given site will greatly depend on its nature; finding a set of usable pots and pans in a restaurant is pretty likely, while discovering them in a gun shop is perhaps less probable.

In addition to this, a site roll that results in three usable items of gear may make sense for a far-future wasteland that's been picked over for decades, but it can be harder to justify that paucity of results in a newly-abandoned suburban home. Because of that, gear placement is generally best handled in different ways depending on the kind of campaign you're running.

Gear in Near-Future Campaigns

If you're running an After the Fall or Deadlands campaign where there just hasn't been time for looting and decay to have ruined most of the contents of a building, the loot table results for gear should be interpreted as the site having that many still-useful items *that the PCs need right now.* It may be packed with theoretically useful junk, but the PCs find that many items that they really have a use for right now. Anything beyond that sum is too damaged, bulky, or inobviously useful for the PCs to bother carrying it away just then.

When the PCs start searching the place where the gear is found, pick a player and ask them what item they discover. If the item is small enough to be portable and plausible to be found at the site, they find it. It has to be an item of actual gear, a tool or implement rather than food, fuel, or clothing, but if it seems reasonable to you that a looter could find it in the site, the PC locates it. If it's not reasonable, they don't find it and you give their pick to the next player.

Go around the table until the loot picks have all been chosen. The next time loot is found, start with a player who didn't get to pick last time.

This doesn't mean that you can't hand-place a particular item in a site, or allow some leeway for unusual or uncharacteristic objects to be found, but it's a lot easier to handle things this way than to try to itemize the logical contents of every half-looted hardware store and semi-plundered suburban home in your campaign.

d12	Something that is useful for...
1	Cooking, such as pots, pans, or portable burners
2	Construction, such as hand tools or battery-powered drills or saws
3	Mechanical work, such as tool kits, replacement components, or technical manuals
4	Medical, such as first aid kits, antibiotics, surgical implements, or useful drugs
5	Knowledge, such as reliable maps, books on topics of interest to the PCs, or useful data storage items
6	Power generation, such as solar panels, small generators, or tool batteries
7	Handcrafts, such as sewing or woodworking
8	Farming, such as tools, fertilizer, or seeds
9	Entertainment, such as books, CDs, or games
10	Communications, like radios or walkie-talkies
11	Shelter, such as tents or tarps
12	Computing, such as still-functional laptops

Gear in Long-Abandoned Ruins

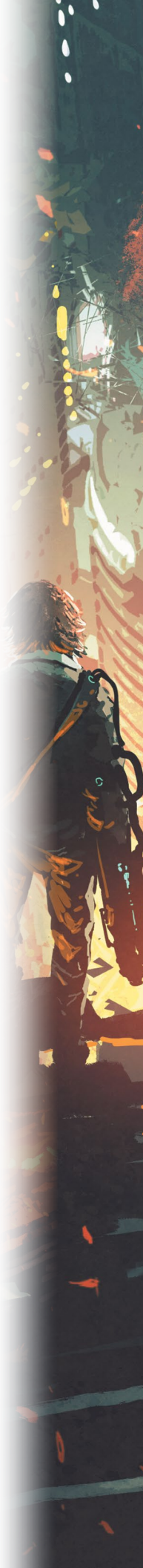
Some campaigns take place in the far future, after looters have had decades or centuries to rip everything of semi-useful value out of a site. It may be that some sites are so rich in variety that the former method of gear finding can make sense, but usually the PCs are going to have to take whatever prior plunderers have missed or left behind.

For those campaigns, ***roll or pick a general type of gear from the adjacent table, and then place something related to it that would logically be found in the site***. If it's a pre-war veterinary clinic, for example, and you rolled a "handcrafts" result, maybe the PCs find a clothing repair kit tucked in a rotting set of barn overalls. A "knowledge" roll might disclose a neglected book on introductory animal pathology, with tips on dealing with common livestock ailments. The roll can be used to give the general thrust of the item while the specific piece of gear can be chosen to fit the site.

Optionally, roll one of the high-tech implements described in the equipment section starting on page 94.

Gear found this way may not be immediately useful to the PCs. It'll be up to them whether the value of carrying it along is worth the extra encumbrance, or whether they think someone will want to trade something more useful for it.

Otherwise-inappropos gear finds can be an excuse to think more carefully about how the party might solve a problem, however. An ancient atomic-powered hair dryer might not be the most obviously valuable object, but players can be fiendishly clever about using the tools they have to get the results they want.



Creating Adventures

Now that you have your region built, a starting community chosen, and a sprinkling of encounter sites created to populate the nearby area, the final step in creating your campaign is to build its introductory adventure.

The tools in this section are designed to support three common types of post-apocalyptic adventure. ***Crisis adventures*** are about resolving an immediate and unavoidable problem, ***exploration adventures*** are about seeking wealth or information in the dangerous unknown, and ***social adventures*** are about resolving the conflicts and problems of NPCs within the setting.

While these adventure types are by no means the only sort of exploits the PCs can pursue in the wastes, they cover the great majority of the adventures that players are apt to have in the wake of societal collapse. Large adventures might include multiple stages or elements that drawn on more than one type.

Starting the Campaign

The usual way to begin an *Ashes Without Number* campaign is to start it with an adventure that pulls the group together and introduces them to their starting community and its environs. Whether running a crisis-based campaign or an exploration-oriented one, the players need to be shown the basics of the setting and given an immediate problem to solve.

This problem should not take more than one session to resolve, as the purpose of this introductory adventure is to get the players familiar with the setting and the rules of the game. It's not supposed to usher them into a grand plot or a lengthy story arc, but just let them get their feet planted firmly in the game and see what possibilities exist in the setting for their own goals and ambitions.

At the end of the session, after the PCs have succeeded or failed to sort out the issue, the GM can throw them a few plot hooks created with the tools in this section and let them choose their next move. That choice doesn't have to be one of the explicit plot hooks; if they decide they want to go exploring in the wasteland or try a scheme they came up with on their own then the GM should cooperate with that intention. Parties new to sandbox gaming or those that are a little shy of self-determination might need some prompting, however, so explicit plot hooks should be offered to give clear-cut choices to the group.

Don't let them leave until they tell the GM what the party is going to try to accomplish in the next session. The GM needs to know what to prep for the next session, and the players have to cooperate in giving them that information. A GM only needs to stay one session ahead of the players, but they need some guidance as to what to prep during their downtime.

Making An Introductory Adventure

To build the first adventure of the campaign, follow the steps below. The section pages that follow will explain the details of each step of adventure creation.

1. Pick an adventure creation template from this section: a crisis adventure, an exploration adventure, or a social adventure. This will give you the basic outline for building your adventure.

2. Roll on the template table to get a structure for your adventure. While it's possible to string multiple structures together to create a more complex adventure, keep your introduction simple. Resolving the situation isn't supposed to take more than one session of play.

3. Fill in the blanks in the situation with tag elements or social figures. By preference, use NPCs or situations you want to be important in the campaign, so players can get an early look at the significant elements in your setting.

4. Add site maps, NPC combat statistics, and adventure rewards as the following guides suggest.

5. Create three explicit adventure hooks that could derive from the resolution of the adventure. You don't have to turn these into full-fledged adventures; just two or three sentences are enough to define them. Offer these hooks very explicitly to the PCs at the end of the adventure, and tell them outright that they can pick one of these or choose to do something else for their next session's play.

6. Lastly, decide where the PCs are going to come in at the start of this adventure. For an introductory adventure, it's fair to push them into it very aggressively, or even have them start *in media res*. For later sessions, a clear NPC contact, explicit clue, or established NPC patron should be directing the PCs if they're not personally the main drive of events.

Once the introductory adventure is wrapped, just repeat the steps above to create the next session's content once the players tell you what they're going to try to accomplish. Complex goals may require multiple successful adventures to make progress, but remember that you only ever need to have one session worth of content prepared beforehand. It's the players' job to tell you what that content needs to be.



Points to Remember

Whenever you're building an adventure with the tools in this section, you should keep a few basic points in mind regardless of the type of situation you're creating.

Don't build more than one session worth of play at a time. If the PCs resolve to explore the sprawling steel graveyard of Manhattan, Kansas, don't spend your time recreating every Kansas State University building, stocking the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility, and statting mutant patrols from the dark stronghold of Fort Riley. Pick one of the above at most, use the exploration adventure tools to build one session of adventure about it, and stop. Let the players know that that's the part of Manhattan you've got ready for them. If they decide they want more, you'll make it, but you'll need the downtime between adventure sessions to do it.

And how do you know how much to create for a session? Much of this will depend on your own experience with how quickly your player group runs through content. If you run out, don't be ashamed to simply tell the players that you need more time to create more material, or throw in one of your encounter site cards reskinned to fit the situation.

A sandbox GM has very limited resources of time and creative energy. You can't afford to spend them on things you don't know you're going to need in the very next session unless the creation itself is fun for you. The only thing you absolutely need is the next session's content, so that's the only thing you absolutely need to prepare. All else is optional fun.

Make problems, not solutions. It's not your job as a GM to plan out how the PCs are going to resolve a particular crisis, overcome a problem, or negotiate an agreement with NPCs. It's your job to give them *interesting* problems, ones the PCs will care about and want to get involved in. The problems you create should also be logical, involving NPCs and challenges that would logically be present rather than trying to "scale" things to the PCs' level or abilities.

This is not to say that you should be handing them no-win situations or letting them walk blithely into destruction. If the party tells you that they plan on making a frontal assault on the invading Guatemalan forward army base, it's fine to simply tell them that they're almost certainly going to get wiped out if they do that.

In the same vein, just because the PCs are all hardened veterans of the wastes, it doesn't mean that every village guardsman or mutant raider suddenly gains five hit dice and a mag rifle to give them a "fair fight". If you need to give them a problem related to such fighters, make it one that they can't simply gun down rather than dialing everything up to match them.

NPCs are people too. Every dirty marauder and three-eyed mutant villager is the main character in their own personal saga. They aren't going to just sit around all day and wait for the PCs to prod them into action. They want things, they fear things, and they will act on these feelings accordingly.

When planning an adventure, it can be tempting to decide that particular NPCs will do particular things in order to move events along. Other important figures will remain frozen in amber until the PCs make contact with them, whereupon they will carry out whatever helpful act, villainous speech, or senseless violence they were put there to provide. This cuts down on a GM's mental overhead, but it is not generally how real people work.

Instead of categorizing NPCs by their intended role in an adventure, mark them by their desires and fears. Be ready to have them change their plans in the face of PC actions, and be willing to have them change their goals if the PCs give them a good reason to do so. Even the most vicious cannibal warlord can be amenable to reason if given enough incentive, and they won't just squat on their throne of skulls waiting for the PCs to cut their way through their underlings. If the NPCs start acting in human sorts of ways, the PCs will have reason to try human sorts of tactics with them.

Crisis Adventures

Crisis adventures revolve around dealing with an immediate, compelling problem that faces the PCs or their community. For immediate post-apocalyptic campaigns, these might be resource or infrastructure collapses as explained in the Crisis section on page 146. In other situations, they might be external raiders, local uprisings, or limited local calamities that destroy some critical resource.

To create a crisis adventure, follow the steps below and fill in the blanks with the details appropriate to your own setting. The adjacent tables offer some "generic" suggestions for individual elements when you don't have a convenient substitution in mind.

1. Roll on the crisis adventure template table.

2. Where a capitalized word appears, replace it with a figure, place, or complication appropriate to your setting and the current PC situation. You can draw these from existing enclave or ruin tags, roll them from the generic suggestions here, or insert something that fits your tastes.

3. Sanity-check your outline and make sure it's a situation the PCs can plausibly survive and would actually care about. PCs should not be thrown into no-win situations unless they absolutely insist on it, and the adventures you create for them should be the sort of situations they actually want to explore.

4. If a dangerous or unexplored location figures in the adventure, use the encounter site creation tools starting on page 152 to generate the site.

5. Assign combat stats to any figures in the adventure that seem likely to get involved in combat. Ordinary men and women might share a single "common survivor" stat line. Remember that combat stats should fit the logic of the situation and the combatants; they shouldn't get weaker for weak parties or be filled with anomalous elites when facing high-level survivors.

6. Choose rewards and special loot appropriate to the situation, following the guidelines on page 200.

7. Finally, determine how the PCs can get involved in the adventure. If the situation is hidden or subtle, you may need to insert a local patron, native help-seeker, knowledgeable friend, or convenient circumstance to give them a starting point for their own efforts.

d12	Crisis Adventure Templates
1	A Friend has suddenly lost a critical Thing and needs to get more from a Place.
2	An Enemy is attacking a Friend in order to obtain a Thing.
3	Two Enemies are fighting to control an important Thing at a Place.
4	A Friend has been caught in a Complication and offers a Thing if someone can get them out.
5	A Complication threatens a Thing that a Friend relies on for survival.
6	An Enemy is exploiting a Complication in order to get at a valuable Thing.
7	An Enemy has stolen a vital Thing from a Friend and is holding it at a Place.
8	An Enemy is forcing a Friend to acquire a Thing despite the threat of a Complication.
9	A Complication is coming, and survival hinges on a Thing currently possessed by an Enemy.
10	A cunning Enemy is responsible for provoking a Complication in order to harm a Friend.
11	A Complication's cause is located in a Place and it will continue until it's quashed there.
12	An Enemy has crushed a Friend, but not before they hid an important Thing at a Place.

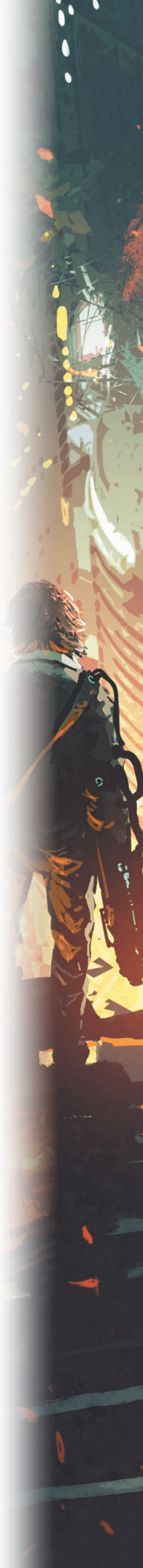
d10	Template Conjunctions
1-2	**And.** Roll another template and join it to events; some Friend or Enemy or Thing or Place is shared between the two situations.
3-4	**But.** Roll another template. The original template's flow of events are being impeded by this second template; the first one can't go ahead because of the second one's situation.
5-6	**Or.** Roll another template. The consequences of the first template's adventure will naturally lead to the second one if they are not stopped or diverted.
7-8	**Because.** Roll another template. The first template's adventure is happening because of the second template's events, which either just happened or have started already as the first begins to unfold.
9-0	**Despite.** Roll another template. The antagonist of the first template doesn't want to create the situation, but the second template's events are somehow forcing or inducing them to do so.

Use this table optionally when you want to complicate an initial template or make a larger, more sprawling adventure. Consider sharing the same Friends, Enemies, or other elements between different adventure templates to help keep things cohesive.

d20	Crisis Friends	Crisis Enemies	Crisis Things
1	Lovable local vagrant	Ambitious gang boss	A store of preserved food
2	Small shop owner	Corrupt cop	Parts to fix vital infrastructure
3	Beleaguered utility worker	Grasping government official	Weapons or ammo for self-defense
4	Honest law enforcement	Ruthless bandit-survivalist	Specific vital medications
5	Hapless trapped tourist	Religious zealot	Fuel for vehicles or generators
6	Endearing street urchin	Ethnic supremacist	Technical information for repairs
7	Civic-minded crime boss	Political enforcer	Booze for trade or stress relief
8	Beloved local clergyman	Greedy merchant	Codes to control infrastructure
9	Harried medical worker	Rogue military officer	A large stock of explosives
10	Respected community elder	Amoral family leader	A cache of street drugs
11	Black marketer with a good heart	Violent scavenger gang chief	Spare parts for vehicles or gear
12	Well-meaning government official	Aggressive refugee leader	Stacks of gold or silver bars or coins
13	Sympathetic sex worker	Delusional local mayor	Tents, clothes, and survival supplies
14	Impoverished day laborer	Refugee camp tyrant	A stock of medical supplies
15	Smuggler of vital goods	Manipulative kingmaker	Government paperwork or passes
16	Cooperative survivalist	Extortionate protection racketeer	Long-range radio or telcom gear
17	Canny old artisan or tech	Expansionistic warlord	A functioning plane or vehicle
18	Widow or widower with kids	Deranged demagogue	Critical tools for a current need
19	Sickly or crippled local	Ruthless supply vendor	Books on a particular vital topic
20	Relative of a PC	Nihilistic degenerate	An object of great personal meaning

d20	Crisis Complications
1	An unstoppable invading force draws nearer by the day
2	A dangerous spill or rad zone has contaminated the area
3	Flooding has trapped a Friend or the PCs for the immediate present
4	Civil order has collapsed and violent mobs are in the streets
5	Water supplies in the area are contaminated or cut off
6	A local gang has targeted a Friend or the PCs as enemies or prey
7	A third party has some reason to want the PCs or Friends to fail badly
8	The PCs or the Friend are somehow blamed for a major local problem
9	A hostile party is convinced the PCs or Friend have something they don't
10	Whatever Thing is needed in the adventure is dangerous or tainted
11	There is a very harsh time limit for resolving things before disaster strikes
12	A critical resource has suddenly become vanishingly rare and hard to get
13	The PCs have some reason to need the Thing involved in the situation too
14	A Thing being sought does not actually exist as everyone thinks it does
15	The conflict of the template is just a pretext for a second, secret purpose
16	Acquiring the Thing would actually be ruinous to the Friend or Enemy
17	The Friend will stop being a Friend for some reason partway through
18	Disease has broken out and swept over the area
19	The Enemy is somehow immune to the most obvious way to fight back
20	Wild rumors have locals believing a dangerously wrong idea

d20	Crisis Places
1	Refugee camp
2	Burnt-out apartment
3	Military checkpoint
4	Ration distribution center
5	Mass grave site
6	Overwhelmed hospital
7	Prison or gulag
8	Sewer refuge
9	Isolated farm
10	Fortified suburb
11	Military base
12	Semi-active battlefield
13	Broken church
14	Ravaged utility facility
15	Looted school
16	Plundered market
17	Contaminated zone
18	Survivalist bunker
19	Damaged hotel
20	Wilderness camp



Exploration Adventures

Exploration adventures are about setting forth into the uncharted wilds, exploring the ruins of a collapsed community, or plumbing the mysteries of a specific ruin. The PCs may have a specific reason for heading into a particular patch of unmarked territory, or they might be going out simply to loot whatever valuables they can find among the wreckage. For these adventures, GMs are advised to re-read the rules for foraging and overland travel starting on page 60.

To create an exploration adventure, follow the steps below and fill in the blanks with the details appropriate to your own setting. The adjacent tables offer some Mutant Wastelands-appropriate generic suggestions, but a GM can tweak them into more realistic interpretations for more conventional settings.

1. Roll on the exploration template table.

2. Where a capitalized word appears, replace it with a figure, place, or complication appropriate to your setting and the current PC situation. If you're exploring a specific site with ruin tags already assigned, pull from them, or you can pick or roll more generic options from the adjacent tables.

3. Check your adventure outline and make sure the challenges and enemies involved in it are suitable for your party. Not every foe in the adventure has to be beatable in direct combat, and the dangers found in the wilds should be logically placed regardless of PC levels. Even so, if that basic logic seems apt to get the PCs killed, you need to either change the adventure or tell the players to pick something more survivable.

4. Generate any special encounter sites your adventure might require. Check the region map you made for the campaign and make sure any chunk of it the PCs are going to be exploring is properly developed and stocked.

5. Choose appropriate adventure rewards, patron payments, and special loot from the guidelines starting on page 200. These things are in addition to whatever loot you've placed in individual exploration sites.

6. Finally, determine how the PCs will get pulled into the adventure. If it's something they're directly planning to do, you might not need to do anything at all. If it's an adventure related to their goals but not explicitly of their devising, a helpful NPC, useful coincidence, anxious patron, or other clear-cut hook may be needed.

d12	Exploration Adventure Templates
1	Rumor says that a Thing is located in a Place, and that an Enemy is hurrying to claim it.
2	A Friend lost a precious Thing in a dangerous Place, and needs someone to retrieve it.
3	A Place has been newly discovered, but a Complication is threatening eager looters.
4	A Friend is being threatened by a Complication, with the source somewhere out there at a Place.
5	An Enemy is operating out of an unexplored Place and will cause trouble until they're rooted out.
6	A precious Thing must be repaired by something found at an unexplored Place.
7	A Friend has been seized by an Enemy and carried off into the wilds of a dangerous Place.
8	A Complication keeps causing problems, and will until its source in a Place is found and resolved.
9	A Place formerly controlled by an Enemy has fallen into vulnerable chaos due to a Complication.
10	A Friend is determined to explore a dangerous Place and seeks allies for the task.
11	A message or trade route must go through territory dominated by a dangerous Place.
12	A Friend has been lost somewhere in an unexplored Place and must be found soon.

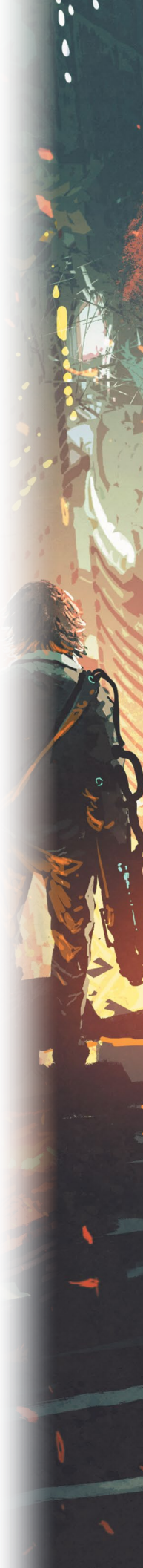
d10	Template Conjunctions
1-2	**And.** Roll another template and join it to events; some Friend or Enemy or Thing or Place is shared between the two situations.
3-4	**But.** Roll another template. The original template's flow of events are being impeded by this second template; the first one can't go ahead because of the second one's situation.
5-6	**Or.** Roll another template. The consequences of the first template's adventure will naturally lead to the second one if they are not stopped or diverted.
7-8	**Because.** Roll another template. The first template's adventure is happening because of the second template's events, which either just happened or have started already as the first begins to unfold.
9-0	**Despite.** Roll another template. The antagonist of the first template doesn't want to create the situation, but the second template's events are somehow forcing or inducing them to do so.

Use this table optionally when you want to complicate an initial template or make a larger, more sprawling adventure. Consider sharing the same Friends, Enemies, or other elements between different adventure templates to help keep things cohesive.

d20	Exploration Friends	Exploration Enemies	Exploration Things
1	Eager young adventurer	Brutal warlord	A lost weapon of the former age
2	Sympathetic social outcast	Monstrous mutated beast	Trove of now-precious former-trash
3	Hard-pressed local leader	Malevolent robot leader	A box of water chips
4	Helpful sage or scholar	Merciless crime boss	A lost miracle-cure drug
5	Skilled healer or physician	Raider gang chief	Map to a cache of precious goods
6	Former inhabitant of the Place	Oppressive local ruler	Key to unlocking a rich vault
7	Lone survivor of the last explorers	Intelligent zombie variant	Stocks of old-world weaponry
8	Supposed legal heir of the Place	Bloodthirsty cult leader	Eternally-preserved foodstuffs
9	Ambitious pioneer	Embittered exile from civilization	A controlled mutagenic serum
10	Grizzled wanderer	Deranged scientist	Rich high-tech scrap salvage
11	Displaced local resident	Hostile mutant chief	Codes to control local automation
12	Canny treasure hunter	Aspiring usurper of local rule	Cure for a common local plague
13	Eager scrap scavenger	Alien plant-based entity	Map to bypass a hazard zone
14	Desperate refugee	Cruel monopolist of a vital resource	A high-tech old world vehicle
15	Fugitive from local injustice	Treacherous treasure hunter	Schematics for recreating tech
16	Far-faring messenger	Outsider military imperialist	Critical spare repair parts
17	Tough prospector	Degenerate clan patriarch	Preserved worker robots
18	Wandering peddler	Expansionist tribal chief	A tailored bioweapon
19	Well-meaning local failure	Amoral mercenary boss	A powerful energy generator
20	Mostly-retired explorer	Agent of a hostile enclave	A token of rightful rulership

d20	Exploration Complications
1	Dire weather is cutting off the area at unpredictable intervals
2	A dangerous animal is swarming in the region right now
3	The real Place of interest is actually buried beneath another Place
4	Bandits or raiders are fighting in the area to be explored
5	The Place of interest is facing destruction on a tight time schedule
6	A dire plague is sweeping through the area
7	Local authorities don't want the area in question investigated
8	Violent locals fear exploration will unleash a long-sealed horror
9	The site in question is religiously tabooed by the locals
10	Once inside the area in question, it's very hard to escape it
11	A local treasure-hunter and their crew has claimed rights over the Place
12	It takes special gear in order to reach or survive the Place in question
13	The zone of interest has been contaminated by a recent disaster
14	Someone is hunting and picking off successful explorers for their loot
15	Local authorities are extortionately "taxing" any loot brought back
16	Something brought back from the area has become a dangerous scourge
17	Once inside the Place, a sudden sharp time limit becomes obvious
18	A rival outside enclave is trying to take control of the area
19	Adventurers have recently infuriated the denizens of the area of interest
20	Aggressive settlers are trying to stake a claim to the area

d20	Exploration Places
1	Lost pilgrimage site
2	Once-automated factory
3	Buried survival bunker
4	Broken amusement park
5	Post-collapse market site
6	Toxic waste disposal site
7	Repurposed prison
8	Isolated radio station
9	Crumbling supermarket
10	Hidden depths under a city
11	Ruined airport
12	Tumbled apartment tower
13	Abandoned bandit camp
14	Looted laboratory
15	Old-world monument
16	Rusting port
17	Played-out mine
18	Post-collapse fortress
19	Long-empty refugee camp
20	Overgrown farm



Social Adventures

Social adventures are about dealing with people, their wants, and their problems. The PCs come into situations where important figures want things that are generally impossible to mutually reconcile, and it's up to the PCs to try to solve the issue in the way that's most profitable to them or palatable to their morals.

The following tables give suggestions for various "courts" of important figures in raider bands, refugee camps, or survivor villages. A few rolls can provide important roles, minor NPCs, the specific power sources of major figures, and problems relevant to that type of group. To generate an adventure with these components, follow the steps below.

1. Roll on the social adventure template table. Use it to get a rough idea of the shape of the social conflict involved in the situation.

2. Where a Figure is indicated, roll on the appropriate table to generate one. Major Figures should have a power source rolled as well to show why anyone pays attention to their wishes. Where a Problem is indicated, roll or pick from internal or external problems as you wish. Note that rolled Problems may have their own set of Figures involved in them; for a roll of "1" on the template table, you might decide that an Ambitious Lieutenant is trying to hobble the band's Best Scrapsmith by backing the Amoral Scientist in his quarrel over who is to get the rare tech scrap from the last raid.

3. Fit the rolled or picked results together into a overall conflict. Multiple people should have contradictory or difficult desires in the situation and reasons to be at odds with each other.

4. Make sure the PCs could plausibly get involved in the situation. A figure might be hiring muscle, an outside party might want a mediator, or the PCs might be shown the rich rewards for resolving the situation in their own favor. It's not necessary to lay out specific solutions at this stage. Just make sure you can see how the PCs *could* resolve the conflict and how they can get involved in things in the first place.

5. Identify the payoff for resolving the situation. The PCs might be able to steal or earn whatever may be the topic of the struggle, or participants might reward them richly for making things turn out in their favor. Use the adventure reward guidelines on page 200 to determine patron pay rates.

d12	Social Adventure Templates
1	Because of a Problem, Figure A is working to ruin Figure B with a plan involving a Minor Figure.
2	A Minor Figure has set off or exposed a Problem, and Figure A is trying to profit by it.
3	Figure A is exercising a grudge against Figure B by making them the focus of a Problem.
4	Figure A is somehow responsible for a Problem involving Figure B, and wants to fix it.
5	A Minor Figure is backed by Figure A in an attempt to somehow push Figure B into a related Problem.
6	A Minor Figure is precious to Figure A, but they're somehow embroiled in a dangerous Problem.
7	A Minor Figure has a grudge against Figure A, and is using a Problem as a weapon against them.
8	Figure A has a solution for a Problem, but Figure B is determined to secretly sabotage it.
9	Figure A is backing a Minor Figure and wants to raise them up by having them solve a Problem.
10	Figure A anticipates a Problem, but Figure B's advantage depends on denying it will happen.
11	Figure A's source of power hinges on a Problem not being resolved successfully.
12	Figure A is involved in a Problem but their abilities or resources are totally unsuited to solving it.

d10	Template Conjunctions
1-2	**And.** Roll another template and join it to events; some Friend or Enemy or Thing or Place is shared between the two situations.
3-4	**But.** Roll another template. The original template's flow of events are being impeded by this second template; the first one can't go ahead because of the second one's situation.
5-6	**Or.** Roll another template. The consequences of the first template's adventure will naturally lead to the second one if they are not stopped or diverted.
7-8	**Because.** Roll another template. The first template's adventure is happening because of the second template's events, which either just happened or have started already as the first begins to unfold.
9-0	**Despite.** Roll another template. The antagonist of the first template doesn't want to create the situation, but the second template's events are somehow forcing or inducing them to do so.

Use this table optionally when you want to complicate an initial template or make a larger, more sprawling adventure. Consider sharing the same Friends, Enemies, or other elements between different adventure templates to help keep things cohesive.

Raider Band Courts

Even marauders have politics, though their disagreements tend to be brief and bloody. These court tables can represent a raider band, bloodthirsty cult, brutal mercenaries, or other group that interacts with the outside world chiefly through modulated violence.

PCs might not often directly engage with the principals of these social conflicts, but the existence of the quarrel will affect the band's activities and goals. Those groups that are not totally feral will usually have at least some trade ties with others, if only to offload their plunder and acquire goods they cannot conveniently steal. If the PCs prove too valuable to ignore and too inconvenient to murder, they might be enlisted as useful catspaws in the sparring between ruthless bandit grandees.

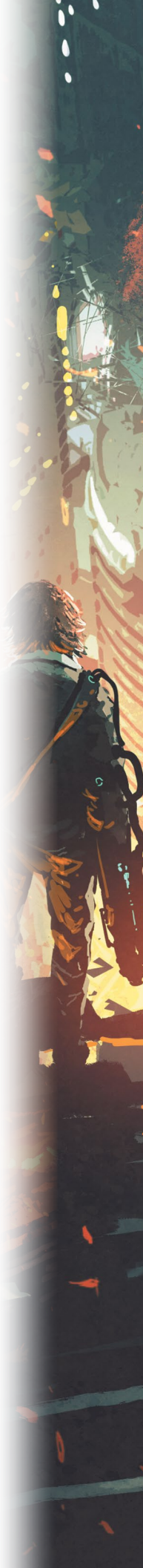
d12	What's Their Usual Predation Mode?
1	Organized, limited extortion of nearby groups
2	Total annihilation of all viable targets
3	Provision of "services" at an enforced price
4	"Tolls" charged to anyone crossing their turf
5	Extracting the profits of captive slave labor
6	Mercenary employment by semi-extorted patrons
7	Violence-enforced transport monopoly on goods
8	Classic protection-racket extortion
9	Enforced tribute of slaves or goods from locals
10	The worst-paying tributary gets raided that year
11	Livestock theft via rustling or direct raids
12	Collects "taxes" as the "legitimate government"

People of the Band

d12	Major Figure	Minor Figure	The Source of Their Power
1	Grizzled bandit chief	Upstart young warrior	They have a very powerful weapon.
2	Ambitious lieutenant	Weary slave	They have blackmail on important figures.
3	Favorite concubine	Hard-bitten outlaw	They bring in abnormal amounts of loot somehow.
4	Cultish religious leader	Reluctant enclave envoy	They performed heroic and impressive deeds.
5	Best scrapsmith	Slave artisan	They have useful outside trade ties.
6	Allied group's liaison	Camp barkeeper	They're a leader to all the band's malcontents.
7	Fearsome raid leader	Skulking scout	They keep something critical functioning as only they can.
8	Wise old advisor	Trophy companion	Their last enemy ended up hideously ruined.
9	Allied merchant boss	Scarred veteran	The boss relies on them for a specific vital service.
10	Important hostage	Nervous recruit	Their cunning and sadism frightens even other raiders.
11	Amoral scientist	Mercenary specialist	They have a deeply loyal personal entourage.
12	Cunning spymaster	Exiled criminal	Their tactical skill has rescued several near-disasters.

Problems of the Band

d12	Internal Conflicts	External Conflicts
1	The boss is dying and the knives are out for successors.	One is secretly a traitor in service to an outside enemy.
2	Two or more can't agree on dividing up recent loot.	An enemy power is seriously attacking the band.
3	The group is getting too big to be supported by local loot.	Paid allies of the band demand more than can be given.
4	One wants to splinter off with their followers.	The local plunder targets are becoming exhausted.
5	One's power source is being threatened by another.	Enemy agents are infiltrating the band and its lair.
6	Two of them hate each other over a loot disagreement.	An outside enemy is backing a usurper in the band.
7	One has a plan that another is trying to secretly spoil.	A once-soft target has been dangerously reinforced.
8	One thinks the boss must be replaced or the band will die.	Someone brought a serious disease into the camp.
9	One wants to plunder a place another wants to protect.	A former tributary set a bloody trap for the raiders.
10	One hid valuable loot, but another seeks to steal it.	Tributaries are starting to work together against the band.
11	One is trying to poach followers from another.	A recent raid cost dearly in manpower or broken gear.
12	One blames another for a recent failed raid.	Outside merchants are proving reluctant to deal with them.



Survivor Camp Courts

This court stands for a refugee camp, recent survivor enclave, or pocket of surviving civilization amid a crumbling world. Many After the Fall or Deadlands survivor enclaves will operate in this way, with a few charismatic or powerful leaders working in tense concert to survive the decay of their world. There may be fragments of a remaining government to provide supplies or threats, or the camp may just have formed organically around one or more competent leaders and an adequate source of supply.

Survivor camps are fragile, often filled with people who have few useful skills and many traumas. A sufficiently savage quarrel among its leadership could blow such a community into pieces, or leave it vulnerable to the first raider group to take an interest in it.

d12	What's the Camp's General Mood?
1	Shell-shocked numbness at their new life
2	Crushing despair and apathy
3	Mistrust and selfishness toward others here
4	Blind faith in the camp's leadership
5	Angry pursuit of traitors and enemies within
6	Eager hope for a particular plan or goal
7	Hedonistic obsession with immediate pleasures
8	Tightly-wound discipline and orderliness
9	Deep fear of the dangerous world outside
10	Aggressive desire to attack before being attacked
11	Dread of a particular impending catastrophe
12	A nervous facade of normalcy and calm

People of the Camp

d12	Major Figure	Minor Figure	The Source of Their Power
1	Camp leader	Hungry urchin	They have a lot of guns and ammunition available.
2	Political boss	PTSD-scarred civilian	They control access to significant food stocks.
3	Camp doctor	Half-crazed old scrounger	They have lingering governmental legitimacy.
4	Black market smuggler	Camp harlot	They are very good at manipulating and handling others.
5	Harsh enforcer of order	NGO representative	They're a symbol of hope for many here.
6	Military officer	Scavenger-merchant	They have outside trade ties that can get things for them.
7	Chief engineer	Camp guard	The camp's enforcers or militia cooperate with them.
8	Camp quartermaster	Now-useless professional	Many refugees feel indebted to them or listen to them.
9	Refugee leader	Makeshift crafter	They utterly crushed the last person to challenge them.
10	Criminal kingpin	Camp cook	They're holding back or dissuading an outside danger.
11	Skilled scavenger	Exhausted single parent	They have goods they share with those who cooperate.
12	Government liaison	Petty criminal	The locals are convinced they're the key to a great goal.

Problems of the Camp

d12	Internal Conflicts	External Conflicts
1	Two are fighting over admitting certain refugees.	Raiders have a grudge against one of them.
2	Two are quarreling over appropriate resource division.	Exiled refugees blame one of them for their expulsion.
3	One is trying to steal or subvert another's power source.	One is claiming control over an outside supply source.
4	The ostensible leader is losing their source of authority.	One is being hunted by an old foe from before the end.
5	One has an appealing but foolish plan for the camp.	Two have contradictory plans for an outside opportunity.
6	One's power source requires wasting valuable resources.	The old government's remnants are hostile to the camp.
7	Two hate each other due to a recent conflict.	A refugee group is calling on hostile outside compatriots.
8	One has become a puppet of a spouse or lover.	One is diverting outside supplies to an external ally.
9	The current leader is dying; others vie for control.	Two are trying to bribe an outside power for their support.
10	One is convinced another is a traitor to the camp.	An outside power is imposing itself on an internal dispute.
11	Two argue over the blame for a vital resource failure.	One somehow angered an external power.
12	One demands a resource monopoly for a great plan.	One is secretly an agent of a rival external power.

Village Courts

This court represents a small post-apocalyptic village of locals who have learned to deal with their new environment. They might be Mutant Wasteland tribals, eking out a hard life in the shadow of a radioactive desert, or they could be wary survivors who've holed up in a relatively secure rural village with enough breathing room to think about their own plans.

Villages tend to be tightly-woven with social ties and compacts, and a quarrel between two important figures can be expected to drag in most of their friends and extended families. Individual figures may not be especially imposing on their own, but when they call up the recruits of several decades of friendships, debts, blood ties, and promises, the forces they can muster can be impressive.

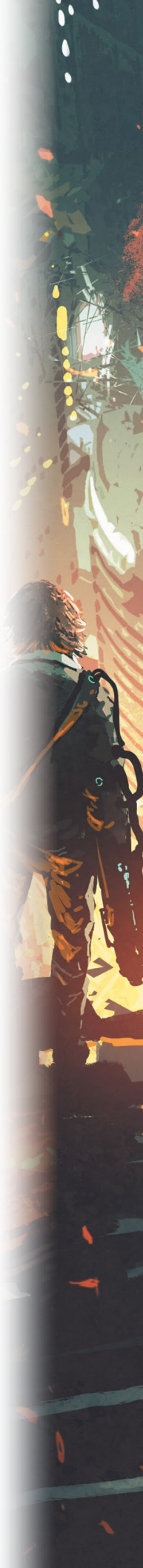
d12	What's Holding This Place Together?
1	A fierce external enemy targets the village
2	Only cooperation can keep them fed
3	There's a tight web of familial relations
4	They share a cohesive faith or ideology
5	Past suffering has forged them together as one
6	They all fled from or hate a specific enemy
7	They're the last remnants of a greater settlement
8	They share an avaricious or hopeful dream
9	No place else exists that would take them in
10	Ruling oppression tightly controls the people
11	A particular charismatic leader holds them up
12	Everyone with better prospects already left

People of the Village

d12	Major Figure	Minor Figure	The Source of Their Power
1	Canny old chieftain	Worn farm laborer	They're personally fearsome in combat.
2	Clan patriarch/matriarch	Scarred hunter	They're widely loved by their neighbors.
3	Chief priest	Poor widow	They have blackmail on important people.
4	Master scrapsmith	Town drunk	Every bit of village gossip goes through them.
5	Village physician	Wandering tinker	They have exceptional wealth in goods, land, or cash.
6	Best local hunter	Harried artisan	They're abnormally persuasive and manipulative.
7	Greatest beauty in town	Tired elder	They have powerful friends outside the village.
8	Merchant leader	Faith missionary	They're famously good at their trade or function.
9	Farming clan leader	Cruel bully	They have uncanny luck in their plans and friendships.
10	Militia captain	Petty thief or swindler	Many locals rely on them for counsel and judgments.
11	Local sage or scholar	Hard-bitten pioneer	They've done many important favors for their neighbors.
12	Village sheriff	Local scout	They know many secrets about the surrounding lands.

Problems of the Village

d12	Internal Conflicts	External Conflicts
1	One is eroding another's source of power.	An external rival seeks to manipulate one of them.
2	One just double-crossed or betrayed another.	One broke a deal with a powerful external group.
3	One has something another wants, but won't give it.	A rival demands tribute, but none can agree on a response.
4	One is meddling with another's spouse or lover.	An external rival has a personal grudge against one.
5	One owes a debt they're refusing to pay to another.	An external resource is now scarce and ill-apportioned.
6	One was recently badly failed by their supposed strength.	One or more are deeply hostile toward an outside rival.
7	One seeks to usurp another's source of strength.	Two or more quarrel over a newly-discovered resource.
8	One is using another as a weapon against a third.	One has provoked an outside power somehow.
9	One did grave harm to someone important to another.	One is monopolizing an important trade connection.
10	One ruined another's plans for their own benefit.	One is demanding a risky, costly external goal be sought.
11	One is convinced another is committing some great crime.	One blames another for recent hostilities with a rival power.
12	Two personally dislike each other beyond all reason.	One is trying to stop another from getting outside profit.



Adventure Rewards

Even the most philanthropic survivor likes to see their efforts rewarded, and a well-placed relic or chance for fruitful experience can help keep the party engaged.

Experience Rewards

As a general rule, a "successful" adventure rewards each PC with 3 experience points. The PCs either accomplished their goal or survived their crisis intact. Partial successes should grant 2 points, and just surviving at all merits at least 1 point even if nothing else was achieved.

Most adventures are assumed to take only one or two game sessions. If the adventure runs longer, add one experience point per extra session.

Loot Rewards

Some loot has likely already been rolled as part of encounter sites or NPC possessions. Sometimes the adventure doesn't revolve around such exploration, however, or the GM thinks a richer reward is appropriate for the challenge.

In that case, check the example patron rewards on the adjacent page and calculate a "payment" as if the adventure was a job given by a suitable sort of patron. Looting a pre-collapse military lab might earn the PCs treasure as if it were a very dangerous job assigned by a pre-fall scientist, for example.

This bonus loot can either be spread around an encounter site as additional plunder to be found, be given as a reward by NPCs involved in the problem, or be found as part of the successful unraveling of the situation. Note that this bonus treasure is in addition to any payment an actual patron might offer.

Alternative Experience Rewards

The default system rewards experience of succeeding at the group's goals as part of a dangerous or difficult adventure. Some groups prefer to do things differently, and one of the methods below can be used instead.

Milestone rewards give experience for achieving specific goals. Finding a food supply for a refugee camp, killing the mutant beast that's terrorizing the village, or convincing the chief to make peace with a rival community might all be set as milestones by the GM. These should be clearly communicated to the PCs, and if they achieve them, they get however many experience points the GM thinks appropriate for the pace of leveling they want to see.

Desperation rewards grant XP when PCs die, crises are survived, and calamities are endured. For each session in which at least one PC dies, the survivors get 3 XP. If a PC gets Mortally Wounded, a close ally dies, or an important community faces a crisis, the PCs get 2 XP. This XP is given even if the community is destroyed. This reward model emulates the gradual hardening of apocalyptic survivors, where only terrible traumas and awful events bring forth heroes. "Winning" is irrelevant; only surviving matters.

Plundering rewards grant XP only for bringing back loot or valuable plunder. The PCs get 3 XP for a session in which they retrieve enough resources for their community to make a difference to them, or discover at least one impressive piece of loot, or recover some item that is important to them or their allies. These survivors are rewarded for tangible wealth rather than for any grand deeds they might do for it.



Patron Rewards and Payments

There are times when the PCs will be working for a patron, and the GM needs to decide how much a given employer might be willing to pay for a specific job.

The table below shows base example pay rates for jobs done for given types of patrons. The rewards can be given either in "cash", for whatever sort of bottlecaps, credit chips, or gold coins the locals are using, or they can instead pay in favors and items of value. Note that prices assume the job is one scaled for the patron; a powerful warlord is going to pay 10,000 bottlecaps because his jobs require the kind of help that 10,000 bottlecaps buys.

To calculate the job's difficulty, compare it to the adjacent table. A village merchant offering a low-stakes courier mission through mutant-infested wastes might start with a base pay rate of 1 for a non-critical job, then +0 for difficulty as any courier could carry the package, then +1 for the trip taking a week, and +1 more for the considerable risk of mutant attacks. The final multiplier would be 1+0+1+1=3, for three times the base pay for a job.

The GM then checks the chart below, and sees that the average minor merchant offers the base pay of 250 wasteland credits or a favor, relic, or item they trade in. The total pay is thus either 750 credits or three favors, relics, or items. He decides to split the difference and offer 500 credits and a functioning pre-collapse holoplayer the merchant has in stock.

Reward types each have their own details.

Favors are some personal help the NPC can give based on their social standing and personal ties. Land grants, special permissions, introductions to powerful figures, forgiveness of past crimes, secret information on valuable ruins, or other non-tangible rewards can be doled out as favors.

Weapons should be something nicer than simple spears or bows; guns at a minimum, or possibly even high-tech weapons in settings that include them. In lieu of that, rare ammunition or power cells might be offered, generally 5 loads of ammo in place of one gun.

The Importance of the Job	Mult.
The patron wants it done, but can live without it	1
The patron will suffer badly if it's not handled	2
The patron might die or be ruined without it	4

The Difficulty of the Job	
An ordinary professional could do it	+0
It takes a rare specialist to handle the task	+1
Only a true master could hope to pull it off	+2

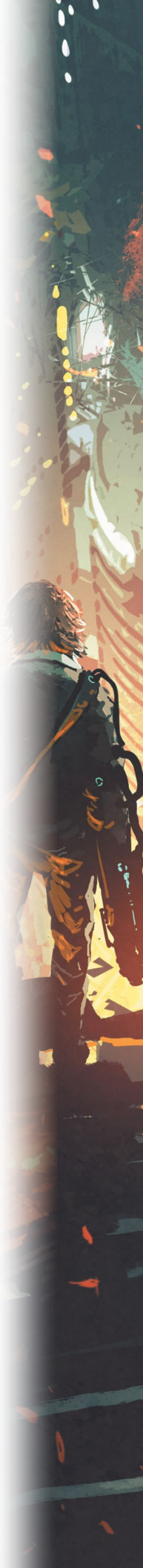
The Duration of the Job	
It shouldn't take more than a day or two	+0
It might be expected to take about a week	+1
It's a lengthy task of a month or more	+2

The Risk of the Job	
A job safe enough for a non-adventurer to do	+0
A job with the real risk of serious danger	+1
A job where mortal combat is expected	+2

Relics are usually taken from the lists starting on page 94. They may or may not be especially useful to the NPC, and they might offer them just because they have no personal use for the item.

Items are the broadest category, and include not just useful pieces of equipment, but also pharmaceuticals, high-tech stims, or usable scrap. If offering pharmaceuticals or stims, 1d4 doses count as one item. If offering scrap, a minimum of 3d6 pieces of TL3 scrap count as one item. Richer patrons might be able to offer TL4 scrap instead, and the most powerful or tech-savvy might have TL5 parts. Tech-wise or wealthy patrons might offer special mod components in lieu of items, or comprehensive technical documentation needed for building certain items from scrap. Where other options fail, consumable power cells, batteries, or magazines of ammo might be offered.

Type of Patron	Base Cash Rewards	Base Other Rewards
Post-Apocalyptic Villager	25	One Favor or Item
Desperate Refugee	10	One Favor
Prepper or Hardened Survivor	100	One Favor, Weapon, or Item
Minor Gov. Official or Village Chief	250	One Favor or Common Relic, or two Weapons/Items
Minor Raider Boss/Military Officer	500	One Favor or Common Relic or three Weapons
Local Merchant or Smuggler	250	One Favor, Common/Uncommon Relic, or Item they trade in
Important Official or Town Mayor	1,000	One Favor or Common/Uncommon/Rare Relic
Major Warlord or Military Leader	5,000	One Favor or two powerful Weapons or two C/U/R Relics
Pre-Collapse Scientist or Technician	2,500	One Favor or three Items or C/U/R Relics
Lord of the Wastes	10,000	One Favor or four C/U/R Relics and four Weapons or Items



CREATURES OF THE WASTES

In this chapter, a GM will find a list of potential foes and fell creatures for their campaign. While these mutants are largely native to the Albuquerque Death Zone described later in the book, a GM can easily peel off those details and replace them with ones more suitable for their own campaign.

Combat and Genre

When presented with a sheaf of potential enemies, it's reasonable for a GM to think that they are supposed to actually *use* them. Most RPG players enjoy a good fight, and it can be a natural assumption that adventures should include hostile mutants, vicious raiders, hideous beasts, and other staples of post-apocalyptic battle. This assumption is fair, but a GM needs to understand beforehand the specific role of combat in the kind of genre they want to run.

In After the Fall campaigns, combat is normally an extension of the essential horror of the setting. When people start stabbing strangers for a can of beans or beating their neighbors until they confess where they hid their insulin, something fundamentally horrible is happening. The Stress rules on page 56 are one way of mechanizing this horror, but the average outcome of a combat that uses all the trimmings of Traumatic Hits and Major Injuries is apt to produce plenty of organic anguish when a PC gets retired by a missing limb or an ally takes a few hours to die from an untreatable gut wound.

This tone can be jarring for players who go into such campaigns with the implicit assumptions of easy violence that exist in many other RPGs. Mid-level fighters do not get headshotted by goblins and reasonably experienced survivors might not expect to have much trouble gunning down a few raiders. If you're using Stress and Traumatic Hits in your game, however, things can go very badly on very short notice for almost any PC. Make sure the players understand this and don't shy away from letting those outcomes happen.

After the Fall campaigns also tend to have a much more restricted list of potential enemies than other genres. In a campaign of near-future social collapse, there are no mutants or zombies to threaten the PCs. There are only normal, ordinary human beings. Variations in a fight come from the equipment of the enemies, the situation of the terrain, or the specific goals or desires of the combatants.

In Deadlands campaigns, the role of violence is a little different. The same horror tone usually exists, with survivors quarreling amongst themselves and scrounging desperately for supplies, but the need to actually fight the zombies or their equivalent is implicit in the setting. A Deadlands game that involves constantly fleeing from the undead horde might be interesting, but players normally expect to break some shambler skulls as a matter of course.

When fighting zombies, not all fights need to be diced out in detail. The weakest zombies in this section are so feeble that a single good swing from even a minimally-competent survivor is enough to put them down. A few moaning crawlers in a gift shop aren't a reason to roll initiative, they're just background color for the PCs to squash on their way to searching the store.

In the same vein, some human survivors are going to be so profoundly unsuited to the new reality that they can offer no meaningful resistance to hard-hearted assailants. A hysterical sales executive pointing a shaking handgun at the PCs isn't a real threat, he's a choice for the players. Do they try to talk him down, even if it might give him time to realize he's got the safety on?

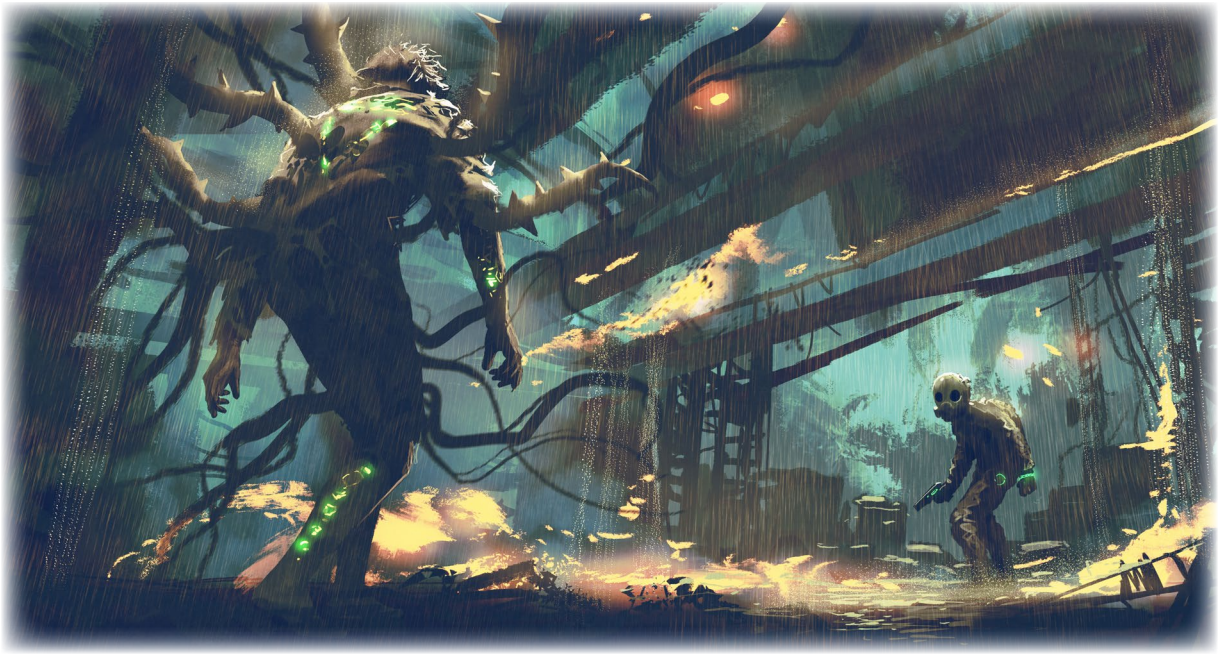
For fights that *do* merit full attention, though, the engagement can be as grim as anything in an After the Fall campaign. If the PCs decide to risk an undead swarm or engage a pack of hardened raiders, it's very possible that some of them will die in the process. The zombie genre is nothing if not careless with lives, and a bite or a bullet can bring down even a hero.

In Mutant Wasteland campaigns, the tone changes sharply, because classic far-future wasteland wandering is not a horror genre. Tragic things have happened in the past and crises of privation can still occur, but the world around the PC has essentially found its footing. The inhabitants rationally expect to live to see another day and the hardship and violence around them is nothing more than the ordinary stuff of life. PCs aren't just survivors, they're *adventurers*.

In the same vein, the heroes of the wastes are expected to get in fights. They might battle the mad robots of an ancient military installation, fight the hideous creations of a forbidden laboratory, or trade arrows with savage mutant tribals, but their relationship to combat is much more like conventional fantasy adventuring than the fragile mortality of a modern survivor.

It's for this reason that rules like Traumatic Hits or Major Injuries aren't necessarily the best fit for a campaign amid the fallout. Highly-randomized ruin is a blade that cuts against the players in the long run as they receive far more attacks than any given enemy does. If you want to maintain a tone of daring exploration and bold combat, you are advised to minimize the odds of sudden, capricious doom.

GMs who want to play an especially action-packed game may choose to use the optional Sturdy PC rules given on page 48, or otherwise give their heroes a little extra padding to mitigate an otherwise wholly naturally caution.



Judging Combat Difficulty

Combat in *Ashes Without Number* is not meant to be calibrated to the party's level. Survivors are expected to find the kind of fights that would make sense for the situation they are in, and to use their own good sense and cunning to avoid battles they can't reasonably win. Even so, a GM needs to be able to *tell* when a battle is likely to wipe out the party, and the guidelines below can help alert them to that.

- Take the total hit dice of the enemies and multiply it by their total number of attacks per round. Thus, a scruffy pack of eight 1 HD bandits with one attack per Main Action would count as 8 x 8 = 64. A trio of 4 HD mutant predators with three attacks per action would total to 12 x 9 = 108.

- Multiply the total number of PC levels by the number of PCs. A party of four third-level PCs would thus count as 12 x 4 = 48.

Now compare the enemy total to the PC total and pick the best fit from the categories below.

If the enemy total is more than four times larger, it'll probably result in a slaughter of the PCs. Their only real chance for survival is to flee before the opponents can bring their full force to bear.

If the enemy total is at least twice as large, the PCs could win, but are probably going to have at least one PC downed and have a very real chance of getting wiped out.

If the enemy total is larger than the party total, the PCs will probably win, but may lose an ally or two and might lose the fight if the dice are ungenerous.

If the enemy total is equal or smaller, the party will likely win without taking any casualties.

If the enemy total is less than half the PC total, the enemies have only a minimal chance of doing real damage before getting curb-stomped.

These categories are decent rules of thumb for a GM and will give generally applicable results. Despite this, there are a few special situations to keep in mind when calibrating fights.

- These guidelines do not apply well to novice parties. A group of first or second-level PCs is always one bad round away from a complete wipe, especially if their enemies are using powerful guns. Assume that any fight at all might wipe a newbie group.

- Good tactics, terrain, or special abilities tilt the results. Those grubby scavvers with rusty pistols become a much bigger problem if they're squatting behind firing slits, and a mind-controlling mutant leader can flip the table when he takes control of the party's best gunman. If you're setting up a fight that isn't a fairly straight brawl, take a minute to think about how the first round or two is likely to play out.

- Don't build unavoidable fights, especially for low-level groups. Some adventures may be very likely to involve gunplay, and some groups will gear and plan for head-on confrontations, but you should not be creating adventures that outright force the party to trade bullets.

Reaction Rolls

It can be tempting for a GM to simply decide how a group of NPCs react to the players, whether in social interactions or during combat. On the face of it, this is a reasonable route to take; shouldn't a GM know best whether or not a group of enemies will attack the PCs or will flee from a particular battle?

It's true that the GM knows the situation best, but that very knowledge can make NPC encounters staler and less surprising to them. Rather than relying purely on a GM's judgment, it's often better to let the dice make their own suggestions about how a meeting can play out.

Reaction Rolls

When the PCs encounter someone, the GM should make a *Reaction Roll*. This roll is 2d6 modified by the Charisma modifier of the PC spokesman or face.

2d6	Reaction
2-	As hostile and violent as is plausible
3-5	Hostile and unfriendly to the PCs
6-8	A neutral or expected reaction from them
9-11	Unusually friendly or cooperative
12+	As friendly and helpful as is plausible

The reaction will be keyed to the situation, and good and bad results should be measured within the scope of reasonable outcomes. A raider warband won't be giving friendly gifts just because of a good reaction, but they might be in too good a mood or too bloodied to want any fighting at the moment.

It's up to the GM to decide why the reaction worked out the way it did. The tables below offer a few suggestions as to why the response was unusually good or bad, but the GM can also work in recent events to justify a reaction. If the PCs just wiped out an entire beastman tribe, a random band of mutant capybarafolk might decide diplomacy is in order.

d8	Positive Reaction Reasons
1	They know a PC from somewhere else.
2	They need help from people like the PCs.
3	They're looking to earn a bribe.
4	They're intimidated by the PCs.
5	They're weakened and can't pick fights.
6	They're prejudiced in favor of a PC type.
7	The PCs somehow solved a recent problem.
8	They don't want trouble right now.

d8	Negative Reaction Reasons
1	A plan of theirs just went wrong.
2	They're prejudiced against a PC type.
3	They're offended or insulted by something.
4	They've had a terrible day so far.
5	The PCs have just made them more work.
6	They're afraid of being seen associating.
7	The PCs look like easy prey to them.
8	They just don't want to deal with them.



Morale and Morale Checks

Every NPC combatant has a ***Morale*** score ranging from 2 to 12. The higher the score, the calmer and more determined the fighter is while under enemy fire. An NPC with a Morale score of 2 will flee at the slightest threat to their lives, while one with a Morale of 12 will fight until the last flicker of hope is gone, or to the death if their cause is important enough.

Some combat events will force a ***Morale check*** on NPCs. To make this check, the GM rolls 2d6 and compares it to their Morale scores; if the roll is equal or higher than their score, they break. What that means will depend on the situation and their level of training, but it always means that they want to get away from the fight as rapidly as possible.

PCs do not have Morale scores and do not ever need to make Morale checks. They fight or flee as the players decide, regardless of the situation.

Morale Check Situations

A group of NPCs usually needs to make a Morale check under the following circumstances. Other situations might force one as well at the GM's discretion.

- ***One of their allies just died.*** The first blood of an encounter can crack the resolve of a group, even if they're otherwise stronger or more numerous.
- ***More than half of their allies are dead or down.*** Most sensible groups will have retreated long before this level of casualties, but even desperate or oblivious fighters might crack at this point.
- ***They seem likely to lose.*** Even if they haven't suffered crippling casualties yet, if a rational fighter doesn't expect to win a fight, they may well choose to leave it.
- ***Some dramatic reverse just happened.*** If some shocking loss is suffered the group will need to check Morale. The sudden discharge of a concealed ancient vortex cannon, the appearance of a three-meter tall killbot, or a building falling on their leader might all provoke a sudden Morale check.

Usually these Morale checks will be rolled with an unmodified 2d6. A GM can tweak this slightly, with a 1 or 2 point bonus or penalty for exceptionally dramatic displays or ambiguous situations, but any modifier larger than that is likely to result in pre-ordained success or failure.

Failing Morale Checks

NPCs that have failed their Morale check will seek to escape the battle as quickly as possible. The exact way in which they do that will depend on how disciplined, cool-headed, and professional they are.

Ordinary refugees, common civilians, and random raider thugs will usually just turn and flee, dropping anything that might slow them down. If cornered, they're apt to beg for their lives or make extravagant promises. Their only concern will be getting away.

Hardened raiders, soldiers, experienced survivors, and others with training or long combat experience will retreat in a tactical fashion. Their first priority will be personally getting off the battlefield, but if they need to shoot their way to the exit, they'll do so.

Elite combatants and highly organized troops will retreat as a coordinated body, taking their wounded with them and working together to break open a path if necessary. They might surrender if doing so seems a reasonable route to survival, but if trapped by take-no-prisoners foes they might well fight to the death.

Note that if an NPC is convinced that only death or torture awaits them at the hands of their enemies, a failed Morale check might mean a desperate last stand, with the NPCs blazing away until they're dead or have a chance to flee. A failed Morale check just means that the NPC now only wants to save their own life, so they're not going to surrender to a foe that they're convinced will kill them… or worse.

Morale and Common Sense

Enemies in a post-apocalyptic campaign setting are survivors by definition, and survivors do not make a habit of facing lethal odds. Even the most brutal raider or savage cannibal isn't going to stand and fight if doing so has no rational prospect of victory. For strictly mercenary enemies or those who live by plunder, even a "victorious" fight that costs them lives is a far worse bargain than a successful minor extortion.

Always keep the basic common sense of the NPCs in mind. They're not going to stand and die to the last man in order to defend a random badlands campsite and they're not going to throw themselves into a meat grinder to loot the packs of a few strangers.

Every NPC wants to stay alive. The great majority of fights against non-mindless enemies should end in retreat or surrender rather than a complete slaughter, unless everything happens too quickly for the hapless victims to realize what's going on.





Reading Stat Lines

The creatures and foes that follow each have their combat statistics listed. NPCs use simpler stats than PC survivors, as it would be unreasonable to make a GM track the fine details of a full character sheet for every raider and mutant in the wasteland. Most such enemies will be encountered only once and briefly.

HD: This is the average number of hit dice the creature possesses. The creature's actual hit points are determined by rolling 1d8 for each hit die. As such, an ordinary 1 HD refugee would roll 1d8 for their hit points.

AC: The creature's Armor Class. For humans and other tool-users, this is the AC of whatever armor they're most likely to be wearing at the moment. For bestial entities, it's the toughness of their hide or nimbleness of their natural evasion.

Atk: The creature's attack bonus, added to 1d20 when they roll their attacks. Some creatures can make more than one attack with a single Main Action, indicated by a multiplier after the bonus: "+9x3" means three attacks at +9 to hit. All attacks do the same damage unless indicated otherwise.

Dmg: The damage done by a successful attack. Some humans or intelligent beings have "wpn", indicating that they use whatever damage die their weapon uses.

TR: Trauma dice, for those campaigns that use those optional rules. In such a case, the GM should roll the creature's listed Trauma Die at the same time as the hit roll to save time. If it equals or exceeds the target's Trauma Rating, which is usually 6, the damage is multiplied by the number given.

Shock: The damage the creature does even on an unsuccessful melee attack to a given AC or lower. Thus, an entry of "3/15" means an unsuccessful melee attack still does 3 points of damage to any target with AC 15 or less. "3/-" means that three points is done to the target regardless of their AC, with only Shock-immune targets escaping damage.

MV: The meters the creature can move as part of a Move action.

Skill: The bonus the creature adds to any skill checks it makes that are pertinent to its own talents or natural abilities. If the roll falls outside its expertise, it instead just adds +0 to the dice.

Save: Unlike PCs, NPCs have only a single saving throw target equal to 15 minus half their rounded-down hit dice. Whether Physical, Mental, or Evasion, the creature needs to roll this or better on a d20 to make a saving throw.

Adjusting Stats

GMs can always tweak individuals to create weaker or stronger examples of their type. The simplest way to do so is to add or remove hit dice.

Generally, a creature's attack bonus should equal its hit dice, plus a bonus of 0 to 3 depending on how martially-skilled it is. Skill bonuses should range from +1 for most NPCs up to +5 for the superlative skilled.

Some NPCs might even have full character sheets and Edges, much like PCs. These should generally be reserved for exceptionally talented or important NPCs. Henchmen or allies should be given such sheets if they're "promoted" to being a full player character.

Animals

Most animals in the modern world have a long-taught aversion to human contact. Only in the rarest cases will a predator turn maneater, most often when it's too weak or crippled to hunt its usual prey, or when the human in question is just too feeble and alone to ignore.

These rules might change after a societal collapse. Predators can learn new tricks after glutting themselves on the corpses of the dead, and the remaining human survivors will have almost certainly decimated any prey animals in the area. Even once-friendly house pets can turn into child-snatching beasts when left without human care. And of course, in some settings, the awful blight that has infected legions of human victims might have wrought terrible changes on the local fauna as well.

The specific creatures listed here are merely some of the ones most likely to threaten the PCs. Similar animals can be made by tweaking the stats below.

Common Dangerous Beasts

Alligator: Alligators instinctively prefer to grapple their opponents and drag them into the water, where they twist in a "death roll" to tear off flesh or limbs. In waist-deep water, alligators get a +2 to hit rolls, damage rolls, and grapple skill checks.

Bear: Black bears tend to instinctively flee when surprised and usually require significant provocation to attack. Grizzlies can charge when startled and have far fewer qualms about attacking humans.

Cape Buffalo: Huge, aggressive, and extremely fast, these herd animals are some of the most dangerous wildlife in their native areas. Most are found in herds of a few dozen to hundreds, save for smaller groups of outcast old males who are, if anything, even more bad-tempered.

Elephant: While generally placid by temperament, elephants have been domesticated as labor and war beasts by some societies.

Horse: The statistics given are for ordinary riding horses, those animals that have been trained to stay calm during combat, and actual purpose-bred warhorses. The latter are unknown in the modern day, but a far-future society may have revived their ancient training techniques.

Mule: Favored for their tolerant diet, sturdy constitution, and conveniently compact size, mules can carry up to 15 points of Encumbrance without issue and can fit into most places that humans can go.

Shark, Great White: Most shark species are harmless, and even these huge Great Whites aren't normally a threat to humans. That disposition may change in a different age.

Tiger: Maneating tigers will use their usual habits of a stealthy stalk and a quick leap to take their prey. Their claws and bite quickly subdue their meals, whereupon they drag the corpse into the brush to hide it from carrion-feeders.

War Dog: These beasts have been specially bred for size and aggression, and are often so vicious that only a skilled handler can keep them aimed at the enemy. In settings where they are bred regularly, a good war dog might cost a hundred rations or the cash equivalent, but will require at least Lead-0 or a relevant Work-0 skill to handle.

Wolf/Feral Dog: As pack hunters, these creatures are seldom found in groups smaller than 2d6 animals. They instinctively use the *Swarm Attack* combat action on their prey, often preferring to go for a grapple and drag it down for the others to gnaw.

Animals	HD	AC	Atk	Dmg	TR	Shock	MV	ML	Skill	Save
Alligator	2	16	+4	1d8 bite	1d8/x2	-	10m	7	+2	14+
Bear, Black	3	14	+3	1d6+1 bite	1d6/x2	-	10m	7	+2	14+
Bear, Grizzly	5	14	+7	2d6 bite	1d8/x3	3/-	15m	10	+2	13+
Cape Buffalo	3	13	+6	1d10 gore	1d6/x3	-	15m	9	+2	14+
Elephant	9	14	+9	3d8 smash	1d8/x4	5/-	15m	8	+2	11+
Horse, Combat-Trained	2	14	+2	1d6 kick	-	-	20m	7	+2	14+
Horse, Riding	2	14	+1	1d6 kick	-	-	20m	8	+1	14+
Horse, War	3	14	+4	2d6 kick	1d6/x2	-	20m	9	+2	14+
Mule	2	14	+1	1d4 kick	-	-	15m	7	+1	14+
Shark, Great White	8	15	+10	2d10 bite	1d8/x3	-	20m	7	+2	11+
Tiger	6	15	+9x3	1d6 rend	1d6/x3	3/-	15m	9	+3	12+
War Dog	1	14	+3	1d6+1 bite	-	-	15m	10	+1	14+
Wolf/Feral Dog	1	14	+3	1d6 bite	-	-	15m	8	+1	14+



Beastfolk

In some cases, it's unclear whether the animalistic mutants known as "beastfolk" derived from modified animals or were born from altered human stock. In either case, the result is a creature with a human level of intelligence, but often a very different way of thinking.

Most beastfolk are found on a continuum, with some being largely human except for a feature or two, and others being much more similar to their original animal stock. Most dwell in herds, packs, or extended families, with the more humanoid members handling delicate labors and the more bestial ones providing raw muscle.

The more animalistic the beastfolk, the simpler their interests. While fully-feral mutants may have a human intellect, they only really care about food, mates, territory, and group status. Abstract plans and ideas may be understood, but simply don't interest them as much as personal relationships and physical realities. A mutant bronco may be smarter than his rider, but he'll be happier with a bushel of apples and a rubdown than with a sack of gold dust. Even if he knows perfectly well that the gold could buy him both, the apples are right there and the purchased goods are not.

More humanoid beastfolk have more human psychology, and often use their more abstract thinking abilities to gain high status in their pack. So long as they can satisfy the simple desires of their more feral brethren, they can lead them to raid weaker communities or barter their labor for valuable goods. Those who lose their bids for authority and those who never really fit in at all might wander to human settlements, offering their special talents in exchange for pay.

As a general rule, beastfolk and humans treat each other with wariness. The cunning duplicity of humans is proverbial among the feral tribes, and every human knows that that friendly herd of bullfolk will stay friendly exactly as long as the pasture holds out. Alliances aren't impossible, but they are often fragile, and young bucks from the herds might not have the patience to get human goods by more peaceful means.

Beasts of the Wastes

The creatures described in this section are merely a sampling of the altered species found in the Albuquerque Death Zone described on page 230, but they can be tweaked or lifted for other radioactive campaign settings as well. Those species suitable for use as PCs are given Origin Foci on page 210.

Bullfolk

Found in nomadic herds under the leadership of a bullman chief, these mutants usually appear as bipedal, cattle-headed humanoids at least a head taller than a corresponding baseline. Some with a more feral admixture have hoofed feet and a short, dense fur, while others appear almost baseline save for the horns that both bullmen and cowgirls sport.

Bullfolk are seldom naturally aggressive or hostile towards baseline humans, most herds having no interest in anything but good grazing and trampling predators. Social hierarchy within the herd is strict and based on personal strength and achievement. Stray bulls or cows who don't fit in with their brethren sometimes seek employment in baseline settlements until they can perform sufficiently impressive deeds or meet a more congenial herd. Others join fellow outcasts to become banditos, earning glory through bloodshed.

Goatfolk

Spike-horned and slender, the goatfolk of the hills and mountains are notoriously fractious, troublesome, and lascivious. Every billy or nanny has a natural disposition to ignore any rules or demands made by someone else and an intrinsic desire to prove themselves independent and self-sufficient. Among their own kind, status is based on altitude; skill and daring are celebrated as "high" virtues, and the most socially-dominant goatman is always at the highest physical point of any village. Their villages seem to be held together mostly by their mutual need to have someone to compete against or defy.

Goatfolk are rarely an organized threat to baseline humans, but they are notorious raiders and thieves and are often unwelcome in human communities. This, of course, just makes some of them want all the more badly to go there.

Jackfolk

Born of a Highshine-induced cross of humanity and the ubiquitous black-tailed jackrabbits of the Albuquerque Death Zone, male jacks and female jills are usually slightly smaller than baseline humans. Some are recognizable only by their long ears, while others are so lapine as to have muzzles and furred bodies.

Jackfolk are high-strung, watchful mutants by nature, most of them living together in settlements that survive by hunting and simple agriculture. Some of the bolder ones act as tinkers and peddlers, trusting in their superior speed and alertness to see them through the dangers of the zone.

Beastfolk	HD	AC	Atk	Dmg	TR	Shock	MV	ML	Skill	Save
Bullman Warrior	2*	13	+3	wpn	wpn	wpn	10m	8	+1	14+
Bullman Chief	5*	13	+7	wpn+2	wpn	wpn+2	10m	9	+2	13+
Goatman Looter	1	15	+3	wpn	wpn	wpn	10m	9	+1	15+
Jackman Sniper	1*	15	+4	wpn+2	wpn	wpn	10m	7	+2	15+
Mustang Runner	2	12	+3	wpn	wpn	wpn	15m	8	+1	14+
Bronco Stallion	3	14	+4	2d6 kick	1d6/x2	-	20m	8	+1	14+
Ratman Sneak	1	13	+2	wpn	wpn	wpn	10m	7	+2	15+
Turtleman Villager	1*	16	+3	wpn	wpn	wpn	10m	8	+1	15+
Turtleman Ninja	6*	19	+9x2	wpn+3	wpn	wpn+3	10m	10	+3	12+
Wolfman Hunter	2*	14	+3	wpn	wpn	wpn	10m	8	+1	14+
Wolfman Leader	6*	16	+9	wpn+2	wpn	wpn+2	10m	9	+2	12+
Beastman Warlord	15	18	+20x3	wpn+6	wpn	wpn+6	10m	10	+4	8+
*: has a special combat ability noted in their Origin Focus										

Mustangs

Progeny of the herds of wild horses that once roamed the zone, mustangs have an exceptionally wide range of physical forms. "Broncos" are completely equine in body, though they possess human levels of intelligence, while "mustangs" proper are humanoid in shape.

Broncos and other horse-like members of the species tend to have extremely equine minds; grazing, treats, and mates are all that particularly interest them. They move in herds led by a matriarch, with stallions bringing up the rear to guard the rest of the herd. At times a bronco forms a bond of friendship with a baseline or other mutant, serving as a loyal steed.

Mustangs aren't as equipped for roaming, and usually settle together in small villages along common herd routes. They provide protection and assistance for their equine brethren in exchange for draft labor and riding mounts. With some appearing quite human aside from their ears and tails, mustangs occasionally broker labor agreements with baseline settlements. Such communities usually have extremely strict rules about the treatment of horses.

Ratfolk

The natural heirs of humanity's remains, the ratfolk are short, slight humanoids with naked tails and pronounced ears. The more feral varieties are pelted and stooped, but all have nimble hands and agile feet.

Ratfolk are highly social, and most of the hours in their settlements not spent on survival are spent in talking, arguing, bargaining, and threatening each other. Consummate survivors, they are timid when alone, paranoid around danger, and always ready to do whatever is necessary to keep their skin intact. They make many bargains but keep only the useful ones.

Ratfolk ruthlessness would be a greater threat to humanity were they not so small-minded. A ratman will scheme for food, mates, and safety, but seldom do their plans reach farther than a full belly.

Turtlekin

Uncommon even by beastfolk standards, these humanoid turtles tend to favor their animal natures in appearance. Even so, a few of them are born with a more kappa-like appearance and smaller dorsal shells, and could pass for human beneath a heavy cloak.

Turtlekin are naturally contemplative and inclined to peaceful behavior. Their inoffensive manner sometimes entices raiders, however, and so a tradition of martial discipline has been cultivated by some villages. Some of their younger warriors can be dissatisfied by the quiet of their home settlements, and venture out into the world to find more interesting things to consider.

Wolfmen

Big, pelted, and fierce, the wolfmen of the hills and forests are naturally aggressive hunters who prefer to live in extended-family packs that meet only to exchange mates and conduct trade. While wolfmen usually stay in the wilds, a lack of game or forage can send them to raid human settlements for food. They tend to be among the more feral of beastfolk, with little interest in the finer points of technical knowledge or in forming abstract goals.

While true wolfmen avoid humans as a rule, their more "domesticated" subtypes derived from human pets have a different psychology. These "dogfolk" have an inbred need for human companionship and an almost instinctive desire to follow a human leader. This tendency has been misused in some societies, with dogfolk conscripts serving as cannon fodder for their human officers and dogfolk slaves put to hard labor for idle masters. Some "bad dogs" manage to overcome their own instincts through willpower or sheer mistreatment and can sometimes become leaders of rebel packs or vicious raiders. The emotional trauma of their rebellion tends to make them highly unstable, however, and prone to lashing out at perceived threats.



Beastfolk Origin Foci

For those campaigns where mutant animals are suitable for PCs, the Origin Foci below can be taken at first level to grant the special abilities of the species.

Bullfolk Origin Focus: Gain Exert as a bonus skill. Gain a +1 bonus to your Strength or Constitution modifier and take a -1 penalty to your Dexterity or Intelligence modifier. You can graze in any non-barren environment, feeding yourself with two hours of browsing. You automatically ignore 1d6+2 damage from the first enemy hit you take in a fight, as the blow only infuriates you.

Goatfolk Origin Focus: Gain Exert as a bonus skill. Gain a +1 bonus to your Dexterity or Charisma modifier and a -1 penalty to your Wisdom or Strength modifier. You automatically succeed at any non-impossible climbing checks of slopes, cliffs, or trees. You are immune to mind-influencing effects from magic, tech, or psionics, and do not even notice when they are attempted against you.

Jackfolk Origin Focus: Gain Notice as a bonus skill. Gain a +1 bonus to your Dexterity or Wisdom modifier and -1 penalty to your Strength or Constitution modifier. You are exceptionally evasive; use of the *Fighting Withdrawal* maneuver is an On Turn action for you, and once per scene you may accept one point of System Strain as an On Turn action to gain a bonus Move action. If you are being chased, you may roll any relevant Exert skill checks to escape twice, taking the better roll.

Bronco Origin Focus: You are a horse, and any special armor or gear built for your use costs four times as much as usual. You can speak human languages and communicate with normal horses. You have a Strength score of 18, a base Move rate of 20 meters, a base AC of 14, and can carry a rider and their equipment if your own Encumbrance is 10 or less. Your kick attack does 2d6 damage with a 1d6/x2 Trauma Rating.

Mustang Origin Focus: Your base Move rate increases by +5 meters. Your Strength or Dexterity modifier increases by +1, but your Constitution modifier suffers a -1 penalty.

Ratfolk Origin Focus: You gain Sneak as a bonus skill. Your Dexterity modifier improves by +1 and your Strength or Intelligence modifier suffers a -1 penalty. You can eat tainted or rotten food without harm and can roll all saving throws against disease or poison twice, taking the better roll.

Turtlekin Origin Focus: Your base AC is equal to 16 plus half your level, rounded down. Once per day, as an Instant action, you can deflect a weapon attack with your shell and thus negate a hit.

Wolfman Origin Focus: Gain Notice as a bonus skill. Gain a +1 bonus to your Strength or Dexterity modifier and a -1 penalty to your Intelligence modifier. You count as two allies for all *Swarm Attack* support actions you take and you gain a +1 bonus to hit in melee if an ally is also adjacent.



One-Roll Beastfolk Pack Generator

When the GM needs to plant a beastfolk village or nomadic pack in their setting, the tables on this page can be used to get a quick overview of the settlement. Where rivals and humans are mentioned, the GM should just fill in the blank with whatever suitable candidates are in the region they're fleshing out.

Most beastfolk communities are relatively small and primitive, as their social structures rarely scale well beyond the village level and many of them are reliant on hunter-gatherer lifestyles that require a large amount of land for each tribe member. This broad scattering can leave two different beastfolk villages with two very different attitudes toward their human neighbors. The right sort of diplomacy can make allies of even the more predatory species.

d6	How Are They Organized?
1	The biggest and strongest makes the rules.
2	They revere their elders as canny survivors.
3	The most persuasive and charismatic rule.
4	They follow priests or shamans of their kind.
5	Family heads rule under a chosen chief.
6	The richest vie for support through gifts.

d8	How Do They Survive Here?
1	They have secret hunting tricks and skills.
2	They have trade ties with food producers.
3	They're kept vassals of another power.
4	The land has rich and easy hunting.
5	They're good foragers or farmers.
6	They've found a secret food source.
7	They extort tribute from weaker groups.
8	They don't; they're slowly dying off.

d10	What Do They Want?
1	The defeat of an old rival or foe
2	To seize control of valuable territory
3	To avenge a recent offense or attack
4	To take shelter against a fearsome enemy
5	To acquire a precious relic or totem
6	To separate two antagonistic factions
7	To pioneer new land for their kind
8	To form alliances against a great peril
9	To claim a holy site or ancestral lair
10	To explore a valuable ruin or location

d4	How Long Have They Been Here?
1	They've just moved in within a week or so.
2	They're newcomers to the territory.
3	They've had time to put down roots here.
4	They've been here for time out of mind.

d12	What's Their Biggest Problem Now?
1	Members quarrel over future plans
2	The leader is becoming more unfit to lead
3	They've angered their neighbors somehow
4	They're direly short of some vital resource
5	The leadership is being bloodily contested
6	Some members are pawns of an enemy
7	A serious disease is plaguing them
8	Critical technology is breaking down
9	They're following an extremely bad plan
10	They've broken a grave tribal taboo
11	A feud boils between important clans
12	Rivals are pressing hard on them

d20	The Last Thing They Dealt With
1	An important member went missing
2	A valuable relic was uncovered
3	The gods gave them a great sign
4	A group of malcontents split off
5	A natural genius was found among them
6	Their last leader was assassinated
7	Valuable supplies were stolen from them
8	A scouting group was slaughtered
9	An important member was taken hostage
10	They provoked a dangerous beast
11	A strong outside group joined them
12	They discovered a long-hidden ruin
13	They took human hostages for a reason
14	Leadership candidates fought each other
15	They cut a deal with human outcasts
16	A disease felled several of their number
17	They discovered a cache of valuables
18	They were attacked by raiders
19	They took a trophy from nearby humans
20	They acquired a relic they can't figure out



Cyborgs

The extensive use of cyberware was a hallmark of the Corporate Age that preceded the Terran Mandate. Bodies were sliced up and rebuilt with subscription-model organs and micropayment limbs, and corper enforcers sold their nominal souls for tech that made them eight percent better than the chromed-up psychopaths they dealt with daily. Virtually every Corporate Age citizen was carrying some kind of metal by the end of their era.

And by the final days of the age, that metal was incredibly good. Corper techs unlocked secrets of human augmentation and enhancement that would impress even late Mandate hyperscience, and later researchers suspect that much of it involved the energies that were later involved in the enigmatic Ignition. As all verified historical records of that event have been locked down by the Redaction Bureau, it is impossible to confirm such links.

By the time of the Terran Mandate, however, this chrome was little more than a legend. Most of it relied too heavily on corporate maintenance and spare parts, and Mandate physicians were not trained in its implantation or integration. The Mandate developed their own cybernetic devices, but this tech was much more controlled and staid than the wild excesses of corper cyberware, and it was only in the century or so before the Scream that the Mandate biotechs really began to push the old limits.

Yet even now, two centuries after the Scream, these iron ghosts still haunt the world. Every so often a scavenger will find a functioning corper implant lab or a stash of still-operable corporate cyber, and the possibilities of power will overwhelm their caution. Worse still, some of the ancient nemesis borgs and contract enforcement organisms of the original megacorps still maintain their functionality, waiting for the day that some unlucky intruder wakes them from their graves.

GMs who wish to offer the prospects of cybernetic power to their PCs should consult the cyberpunk game *Cities Without Number* along with the conversion tips given on page 67.

Types of Cyborgs

While the varieties of cyborg listed below are found in the Albuquerque Death Zone, a GM can readily reskin them for their own setting if mechanized horrors are needed.

Cybercorpse: Dry bones and reinforced tendons forced into motion by ancient programming, cybercorpses are usually the mindlessly hostile remnants of heavily-cybered site security. They are usually found in substantial numbers.

Ripperdog: Not always canine in construction, these animal cyborgs were slotted with control units and heavy combat cyber. Corper cryostasis units often unleash them on intruders.

Iron Cultist: A cyber-enhanced servant of the Iron General, given enough tech to smite the fleshies under the direction of their robotic masters.

Springblade: Usually an Iron Cultist infiltrator, these cyborgs have visually undetectable mods until they start popping their infamously vicious body blades.

Enginehead: A common result of a scavver who fires up a corper implant lab without fully understanding the consequences. Their chrome is powerful, but most are at least slightly insane from the side effects of unmaintained tech.

Contract Enforcement Organism: Bestial lab-grown creatures were unleashed on corporate enemies. While they have limited intellect, they are incredibly resilient and long-lived.

Nemesis Borg: Dreaded engines of destruction, these human-seeming relics of the Corper Wars were made to destroy the enemies of their megacorp masters. In the present day, that constitutes everyone. While extremely intelligent, their thoughts are only ever turned to murder.

Territorial Ranger: Built of hybrid corper-Mandate cybertech, these revenants sleep beneath Boot Hill until called to perform their terrible duty.

Cyborgs	HD	AC	Atk	Dmg	TR	Shock	MV	ML	Skill	Save
Cybercorpse	2	16	+5	2d6/wpn	wpn	wpn	15m	12	+1	14+
Ripperdog	3**	15	+6	2d8 bite	1d10/x3	4/15	20m	10	+2	14+
Iron Cultist	4**	16	+7	wpn+1	wpn	wpn	10m	9	+2	13+
Springblade	8****	14	+8x2	wpn+2	wpn	wpn	15m	10	+3	11+
Enginehead	10****	18	+13x2	wpn+2	wpn	wpn	15m	9	+2	10+
CEO	20***	18	+20x4	2d6+6	1d10/x3	5/-	15m	11	+4	5+
Nemesis Borg	15******	22	+18x4	wpn+4	wpn	wpn	15m	10	+4	5+
Territorial Ranger	20******	22	+20x4	wpn+6	wpn	wpn	15m	11	+5	3+
*: has one cybernetic system or special ability per asterisk										



Cyborg Special Abilities

Cyborgs all have some sort of chrome, though many systems may be too damaged or too trivial to have any real game effect. The systems below, however, are more meaningful. Others can be lifted from *Cities Without Number* at the GM's discretion.

Systems marked with asterisks count as that many special ability picks; thus, *Enhanced Reflexes Omega* counts as three picks.

Backup Organs: The cyborg ignores the first Traumatic Hit they suffer in a fight, reducing it to its normal damage total.

Body Arsenal: Their unarmed attacks do 2d6+2 damage with a Shock of 4/15 and a Trauma Die of 1d10/x3.

Dermal Plating: Their base AC is 18, or +2 if higher, and their base Trauma Target is 7.

Enhanced Reflexes Alpha: Once per scene, on their turn, they get a bonus Main Action.

Enhanced Reflexes Beta:** Twice per scene, on their turn, they get a bonus Main and Move Action.

Enhanced Reflexes Omega*:** As Beta, but they can trigger the extra action as an Instant action.

Ghost Camo: When active, they cannot be detected by human senses from more than 10 meters distance. When closer, they get a +2 bonus to any stealth skill checks.

Mounted Weapon: They have a built-in firearm that grants them +2 to hit and a +1 to their Trauma Die rolls that doesn't stack with other bonuses. This gun has effectively unlimited ammo.

Movement Boost Alpha: Their base Move rate is increased by 10 meters.

Movement Boost Beta:** As Alpha, but once per scene they can take a Move action as an Instant action.

Muscle Augmentation: They gain +4 damage to melee and melee Shock, and can break doors and do similar feats of strength as On Turn actions.

Nemesis Targeter:** Once per fight, as an Instant action, the cyborg can turn a weapon miss into a hit.

Omnispectral Sight: They can see even in perfect darkness and detect invisible creatures unless the effect is psychic in nature.

Pheromone Booster: They get a +1 to their Skill Bonus for social interactions. Once per scene, they can make a semi-plausible request of someone, who must succeed on a Mental save to resist obeying for as long as the rest of the scene.

Polyskin: As an On Turn action, they can mimic any human they've seen before, including altering the appearance of their armor or clothing. This mimicry lasts while they are alive or until they turn it off.

Sealed Systems: The cyborg ignores environmental hazards as if they were wearing a space suit.

Self-Repair Unit: Above zero hit points, the cyborg heals 5 points of damage each round. If Mortally Wounded, it stabilizes automatically.

Terminator Tendrils: They can extend manipulatory tendrils up to 5 meters to handle or manipulate things. Any downed enemies within that range at the end of the cyborg's turn are coup-de-graced by them, killing them instantly.

Titan Gun Mount*:** They have a built-in Heavy weapon normally requiring a vehicle to mount it. This gun has effectively unlimited ammo.

Wallcrawler: They can traverse walls and ceilings as if they were flat ground.

Weak Point Targeting:** Any Shock they inflict treats the subject as having AC 10, and their Trauma Die rolls gain a +2 bonus.

Humans

Humans are the typical antagonists in After the Fall campaigns, but can be dire threats amidst a zombie apocalypse or nuclear catastrophe as well. The tables on these pages give typical combat statistics for the kind of enemies the PCs are likely to encounter.

Two different tables are offered to cover the kind of people modern PCs might encounter and those more suited to a Mutant Wasteland campaign of savage tribals and ruthless raiders. A table of example weapon loadouts reflect what kind of weapons these humans might be carrying in a firearms-permissive society like that of the United States. In areas where firearms are more difficult to acquire, bows might substitute for those competent in their use, or the breakdown in order might have persuaded the locals to simply seize military or law enforcement weapons.

Human Armor Classes reflect the kind of armor such people are likely to have acquired. NPCs with specific armor will use their particular ACs.

Human Special Abilities

The special combat powers below might derive from mutations, latent psychic abilities, customized tech, or sheer natural talent. Enemies with asterisks behind their hit dice will usually have one or more of these abilities, but the occasional lucky grunt might have one as well.

Berserker: When reduced to zero hit points, the NPC can continue acting for 1d4+1 rounds before becoming Mortally Wounded, provided they try to kill someone each round.

Body Shield: If a minion or helpless victim is within melee range when the NPC is hit, as an Instant action they can shunt the damage to them.

Bonus Firepower: The NPC and their allies have access to a heavy weapon, high explosives, or other unexpectedly serious combat gear.

Bulletproof: The NPC's natural Armor Class is 20, or +2 if already 20 or higher.

Crushing Blow: The NPC adds their hit dice to the damage done by a weapon hit.

Fleet of Foot: The NPC gains a bonus Move action each round.

Ghost: The NPC has the benefit of the *Ghost* Edge.

Greased Lightning: The NPC gets a bonus Main Action each round.

Guns Blazing: When shooting, the NPC can make twice as many attacks as usual with a single Main Action.

Hard Case: The NPC has eight hit points for each of their hit dice.

Lethal Aim: The NPC gets a +2 bonus to all Trauma Rolls they might make, if the campaign uses Traumatic Hit rules.

Common Human Weapon Loadouts

Desperate Refugee: Knife, 40% chance of a light or Heavy Pistol
Neighborhood Militia: Knife, 50% chance of a Rifle or Shotgun, otherwise an axe or melee weapon
Wasteland Tribal: Knife, Spear, 50% chance for a primitive bow
Hardened Modern Survivor: Knife, Rifle or Shotgun, 20% chance of 1d4 frag grenades
Modern Soldier: Knife, Combat Rifle, 1d4 frag grenades
Poor Raider: Melee weapon, 20% chance of a Pistol, Rifle, or Shotgun
Veteran Raider: Melee weapon, Rifle or Shotgun, 20% chance of it being a combat version of the gun
Raider Boss: Knife, Combat Rifle or Combat Shotgun, 1d6 grenades of choice
For ammo, NPCs will usually have loaded guns and 1d2 extra magazines on their person.

Living Banner: The NPC's Morale becomes 12, and their immediate allies automatically pass all Morale checks.

Luck of the Damned: Once per scene, as an Instant action, the NPC can automatically make a saving throw or negate a weapon hit against them.

Nine Lives: The first time the NPC is reduced to zero hit points in a week by a survivable injury, they regain half their maximum HP.

Only a Flesh Wound: The NPC's Trauma Target is 8 instead of the usual 6, if the campaign uses Traumatic Hit rules.

Paranoid: The NPC and their group cannot be surprised or suffer from Execution Attacks.

Rallying Cry: Once per scene, as a Main Action, the NPC can rally all allies within 30 meters, giving them 1d8 bonus HP for the rest of the scene and getting any non-extremely-dead allies back on their feet until the scene ends.

Sure Shot: The NPC's hit bonus is increased by their hit dice.

Toxic Blades: The NPC's melee hits, but not Shock, inflict 1d6 additional System Strain, leaving the victim Mortally Wounded if that would put them over their maximum.

Unshockable: The NPC is immune to Shock damage.

Veteran's Luck: The NPC has the benefit of the *Veteran's Luck* Edge.

Wall of Lead: As a Main Action, the NPC can blaze away with a gun to use Suppressive Fire rules against as many targets in range as they have bullets left.

Modern Humans	HD	AC	Atk	Dmg	TR	Shock	MV	ML	Skill	Save
Peaceful Civilian	1	10	+0	By wpn	By wpn	-	10m	7	+0	15+
Ordinary Refugee	1	10	+1	By wpn	By wpn	-	10m	8	+0	15+
Tough Survivor	2	13	+3	By wpn	By wpn	-	10m	9	+1	14+
Veteran Fighter	3	13	+4	By wpn+1	By wpn	-	10m	10	+2	14+
Elite Specialist	5*	15	+7	By wpn+3	By wpn	3/-	10m	10	+2	13+
Enclave General	8***	15	+10x2	By wpn+5	By wpn	5/-	10m	11	+3	11+
Common Bandit	1	13	+2	By wpn	By wpn	-	10m	8	+1	15+
Skilled Bandit	2	13	+4	By wpn	By wpn	-	10m	8	+1	14+
Minor Boss	4*	14	+6	By wpn+1	By wpn	3/-	10m	9	+2	13+
Bandit Champion	7**	15	+9x2	By wpn+3	By wpn	5/-	10m	10	+2	12+
Dire Warlord	12****	18	+15x3	By wpn+8	By wpn	10/-	10m	12	+4	9+

*: usually has one special ability per asterisk



Wastelanders	HD	AC	Atk	Dmg	TR	Shock	MV	ML	Skill	Save
Tribal Villager	1	10	+1	By wpn	By wpn	Wpn	10m	8	+1	15+
Tribal Warrior	1	13	+2	By wpn	By wpn	Wpn	10m	9	+1	15+
Veteran Warrior	3	15	+5	By wpn+1	By wpn	Wpn	10m	9	+1	14+
Minor Hero	5*	15	+8	By wpn+3	By wpn	5/-	10m	10	+2	12+
Tribal Shaman	3*	13	+5	By wpn	By wpn	Wpn	10m	11	+2	14+
Great Hero	8***	16	+12x2	By wpn+5	By wpn	8/-	10m	11	+2	11+
Raider	1	13	+2	By wpn	By wpn	Wpn	10m	8	+1	15+
Tough Raider	3	15	+6	By wpn+2	By wpn	Wpn	10m	9	+2	14+
Raider Boss	8***	16	+10x2	By wpn+4	By wpn	6/-	10m	10	+3	11+
Raider Lord	12****	18	+15x2	By wpn+6	By wpn	8/-	10m	11	+3	9+
Grim Legend	20*****	20	+15x3	By wpn+8	By wpn	10/-	10m	11	+4	5+

*: usually has one special ability per asterisk

Mutant Animals

Most mutated fauna are merely deformed or sickly versions of ordinary animal life. Some creatures, however, are cursed with exceptional and dangerous qualities by the strange energies that changed them.

In the example setting of the Albuquerque Death Zone, many of these changes are the fruit of the malfunctioning Highshine civil defense system. The ambient nanites that were once meant to contain disasters and preserve human life were perverted by a maddened psychic, and now act to change victims in new and often terrible ways.

Adjusting Animal Abilities

The mutant animals listed here are only the more average examples of their kind. Particularly strong or feeble creatures might have more or fewer hit dice, from twice as many to half as many, rounded up.

Each additional hit die adds 1d8 hit points and a +1 bonus to the creature's hit bonus, while subtracting hit dice lowers their HP and gives them a -1 to hit for each one lost.

Blinder Bird

A Highshined owl derivative with a long, serrated beak and glass-sharp claws, a blinder bird has a special craving for blood and a tendency to aim for a victim's eyes. The bird swoops down silently to rake its unsuspecting prey before licking the blood or aqueous humour from its claws.

Blinder birds are usually found in flocks of 1d8.

Silent Strike: When encountered, the PC with the best Wis/Notice in the party must succeed in an opposed skill check against the blinder bird's flock leader. On a failure, the party is automatically surprised.

Flaysnake

This species of mutated, man-sized rattlesnake was cursed by the Highshine. Its altered genome prevents it from forming scales, leaving its body raw and red while the Highshine nanites force homeostasis and prevent it from dying of infection or fluid loss. The perpetual torment it experiences leaves it with a savage temper.

Flaysnakes are normally found alone or in briefly-mated pairs.

Flaysnake Poison: If the snake bites a victim, the subject must immediately make a Physical saving throw. On a success, they resist the poison. On a failure, they gain 1d6 System Strain and must make another Physical save next round, continuing until they either succeed or die when their accumulated System Strain exceeds their Constitution.

Ghoul Bear

A loathsome cross between a black bear's body and the fanged head of a human, ghoul bears possess a human degree of intelligence but never communicate except to perfectly mimic the cries and pleas of their past victims. They eat carrion, but are notorious for prowling around the edges of enclaves, tempting in prey with stupefying cries for help.

Ghoul bears usually hunt alone, but occasionally a family of 1d4 of them is encountered.

Voice of the Grave: A ghoul bear's voice is tuned with Highshine-laced subsonics. Each round, anyone within ten meters who hears it must make a Mental save; on a failure, they lose their next round's Main Action. A victim will not notice this stupefaction unless it's pointed out by others.

Glow Turtle

These bad-tempered tortoises are as tall as a man at the peak of their glowing shells and are found anywhere they can get adequate vegetation to eat. Their bodies process the accumulated radioactivity and toxins into their shells, which glow bright blue in warning. Glow turtles are herbivores but will attack interlopers, and can move with surprising quickness over short distances.

Glow turtles are only ever encountered singly.

Glowing Shell: Anyone who gets within 30 meters of the glow turtle must immediately make a radiation saving throw as per the rules on page 55. This check is repeated at one-round intervals. The shell retains its radioactive qualities for 1d6 weeks after the turtle's death.

Gorehound

These heirs of once-docile domestic pets have been warped into something more survivable by the Highshine. Now standing waist-high on a human, their large braincases betray the augmented intelligence they display. Some of them are as intelligent as a human, though all of them are suffused with a malicious, hateful spirit of sadistic aggression towards non-canines. They hunt with expert coordination and can fully understand human tricks and technology.

Gorehounds are found in packs of 2d4 animals. Occasionally a very intelligent one bonds with a human of similar cruel temperament, enjoying the leftovers of their "master" until it becomes convenient to eat him, too.

Savage Pack: Each gorehound counts as two allies for all *Swarm Attack* support. They can easily track prey by scent, and will chase a victim for days if it piques their urge for cruelty.

Mutant Animals	HD	AC	Atk	Dmg	TR	Shock	MV	ML	Skill	Save
Blinder Bird	1	14	+1	1d4 claw	1d8/x2	-	10m	7	+2	15+
Flaysnake	1	13	+4	1d6+poison	1d6/x2	-	10m	11	+2	14+
Ghoul Bear	4	15	+6x2	1d8 bite	1d8/x2	3/-	15m	9	+2	13+
Glow Turtle	5	18	+6	1d10 bite	1d6/x2	-	15m	8	+2	13+
Gorehound	2	13	+3	1d6+ bite	1d6/x2	-	15m	8	+1	14+
Gut Weasel	3	15	+6x2	1d6+2 claw	1d10/x2	3/-	20m	9	+1	14+
Heritor Bug	1 HP	13	+1	1d4 bite	-	-	10m	12	+1	15+
Manscorpion	3	15	+5x3	1d6 claw/sting	1d6/x2	-	15m	9	+2	14+
Redhorn	3	14	+3x4	1d6 claw/gore	1d6/x3	-	15m	8	+1	14+
Whiskered Devil	3	17	+4	1d8+2 bite	1d6/x2	-	10m	8	+2	14+

Gut Weasel

These miniature mutated wolverines possess a vicious disposition, even though they seldom weigh more than five or six kilos. Their blinding speed and diamond-hard claws aid their preferred hunting tactic of aiming directly for the entrails of their prey.

Gut weasels are usually solitary, though a mated pair can sometimes be unfortunately encountered.

Rabid Speed: Gut weasels always win initiative in combat. Against *Alert* foes or others with automatic initiative wins, the dice are rolled normally.

Heritor Bug

Foot-long mutant cockroaches, these bugs are individually feeble but are invariably found in vast swarms. Their acidic mandibles often leave terrible scars on those who survive their attacks.

Heritor bug nests usually have 1d20x20 of the insects in the general vicinity.

Ravenous Tide: Anyone brought to zero hit points by a heritor bug automatically suffers a Major Injury from the relentless gnawing, even if those rules aren't usually used in the campaign.

Manscorpion

These horse-sized devils have the body of a scorpion mated to a humanoid torso and an insectile, mandibled head. They prefer to nest in human ruins and use their hardened climbing claws to ascend to high lairs. They do not appear to have any human kind of intelligence, and do not use tools in their hunts. They often ambush their prey, stinging them and then retreating until their poison has had time to work.

Manscorpions hunt alone, but their nests will have 2d6 adults.

Paralytic Poison: One of a manscorpion's three attacks will be a sting; a victim struck by this must make a Physical saving throw immediately and another at the end of their next round. If they fail both, they are paralyzed for 1d10+10 minutes.

Wallcrawler: They can traverse walls and ceilings as if they were flat ground.

Redhorn

These mutant cattle are a scourge on the dry pastures of the Albuquerque Death Zone. They are omnivorous with a preference for meat, impossible to domesticate, and a constant threat to the herds of the settled communities. They appear as emaciated bovines with curved horns, hidden fangs, and retractable hoof-claws. Some are clever enough to hide among herds of more ordinary cattle in order to avoid cowboy patrols.

Redhorns hunt in small groups of 1d4, these small bands joining together nightly into herds of 2d6.

Clawed Trample: A redhorn that uses the *Charge* action automatically inflicts 1d8 damage on a target of man-size or smaller unless the subject has hard cover within melee range. This damage is in addition to any done by the charge itself.

Whiskered Devil

These beasts are mutant walruses who have grown finger-like manipulators along the edges of their flippers and a split trunk to form stubby legs. They can operate both on land and in the water, and are known for launching attacks on coastal communities and unwary fishing boats. Some coastal waters are so infested with these creatures that sea travel is all but impossible. Most have on a feral degree of awareness, but a few communities of whiskered devils have been uplifted by Highshine and given a near-human intellect. These packs often become slavers, taking human thralls to work island crops or perform labors that clumsy flipper-fingers cannot do.

Whiskered devils usually swim in small groups of 1d4, but a raiding party will number 3d6 of them.

Sea Devil: Whiskered devils can remain submerged for as long as an hour and have a Move of 20 meters when swimming.



Mutant Humanoids

The capricious genetic twists of mutation are usually one-off exercises. A mutant can't expect to pass down their specific alterations, and their offspring might be a normal baseline or warped in ways wholly unlike their own changes.

Some mutations are heritable, however, or else large populations of baselines might be altered in a similar way by the same event. The inevitable costs in longevity and health constrain the growth of these mutant bloodlines, but some of them have become sufficiently numerous to maintain their own existence.

While mutations sometimes have psychological effects on their subjects, mutants aren't necessarily innately hostile towards baselines. It's usually only the harsh mathematics of survival that leave mutant tribes competing against baseline settlements. Individual mutants or their families not uncommonly live with baselines, valued for their special abilities and proven loyalty to the group. Even so, a few human societies have too bitter a history with mutants to allow them within their lands, and even a good peace can be broken by desperation when times get hard enough.

Mutants and Mutations

The mutant varieties noted here often have special abilities innate to their bloodline, but it's also possible for them to have additional alterations from the mutations starting on page 16. Leaders and chieftains often have two or three beneficial mutations in addition to their usual powers.

Dusters

Those humanoids known as the "dusters" are easily recognized by their mirror-bright skin and chromed hair, often obscured under a caking of electrostatic dust. Their change appears to have been derived from a standardized Highshine protocol for protecting subjects from excessive EMF exposure, and even now the occasional unfortunate wanderer ends up "dusty".

Dusters hear and see a wide spectrum of electromagnetic frequencies as noise. While it doesn't impede their senses, it's highly irritating to them, and they will avoid electrical devices or radio emitters whenever possible. Only the most "deaf" among them are able to live in human settlements that have electrical service, and particularly powerful broadcasts can aggravate duster tribes from long distances away. As a consequence, dusters methodically disassemble any electronic devices they find and hide away the scrap to prevent its recreation. They don't trade this scrap unless the tribe's survival is at stake.

Silverskin: Dusters can see in complete darkness and are immune to lasers. They can sense the exact source of radio transmissions within one hundred meters.



Eggheads

These mutants are distinguished by hairless, swollen heads with half-formed facial features. Most conceal their faces behind scavenged masks, and remove them only as a gesture of surrender.

Eggheads have extremely powerful pseudo-psychic abilities. While not true psionic powers, they all have at least two or three of the pseudo-psychic mutations listed in that section, their leaders have four or five, and their greatest talents have all of them.

In addition to these abilities, eggheads are known to exude a pacifying field of mental domination, causing weaker-willed humans to unconsciously cooperate with the egghead's unspoken wishes. An egghead can suppress this field when desired, but few do.

Brainmelter: All intelligent creatures within ten meters of an egghead must make a Mental saving throw. On a failure, they will cooperate with the egghead's telepathic instructions unless those commands would put them in danger or be extremely out of character. This influence lasts until the egghead leaves or demonstrates overt hostility to the subjects. A creature can be targeted by this effect only once per scene.

Humanoids	HD	AC	Atk	Dmg	TR	Shock	MV	ML	Skill	Save
Duster Warrior	1	14	+3	wpn	wpn	wpn	10m	8	+1	15+
Duster Knight	4	16	+7x2	wpn+2	wpn	wpn+2	10m	9	+2	13+
Duster Lord	10	19	+14x2	wpn+4	wpn	wpn+4	10m	10	+4	10+
Egghead	5	15	+8	wpn+2	wpn	wpn	10m	8	+3	13+
Morlock Brawler	2	13	+4	wpn+1	wpn	wpn	10m	9	+1	14+
Morlock Chief	6	18	+8x2	wpn+3	wpn	wpn+3	15m	10	+2	12+
Shroomer	2	14	+3	wpn	wpn	wpn	10m	8	+1	14+
Skewman Raider	1	12	+2	wpn	wpn	wpn	10m	8	+1	15+
Skewman Chief	4	16	+6x2	wpn+2	wpn	wpn	10m	9	+3	13+
Thorny	3	20	+3x2	1d4+poison	-	-	10m	8	+2	14+

Morlocks

Not so much a specific strain as an unfortunately common syndrome, morlocks are those wretches who have been shaped in painful ways by the Highshine. Twisted and deformed, they pass their suffering on to new generations through birth or grim surgical rituals.

Morlocks commonly hate baselines out of envy and the inevitable competition for resources. Morlock tribes will gladly raid human settlements or ambush careless caravans, only to retreat to their caves and sewer tunnels before the baselines can retaliate.

While the Highshine has marred them, it has also made them strong. Morlocks have a toughness and physical prowess far superior to those of ordinary humans, though it usually comes at a cost of perpetual pain and a shortened lifespan.

Tunnel Crawler: Morlocks see in complete darkness and can survive on only half the food and water a human requires. While they prefer to use weapons, their claws and fangs do damage as a knife in unarmed combat.

Shroomers

Fungal life is less susceptible to mutation than more advanced organisms, but even mushrooms are sometimes twisted into humanoid forms by the Highshine's warped care. Shroomers spawn in nests when a particular mushroom colony triggers a mutation response from the Highshine system. Each of the fungal entities is imbued with basic knowledge about the world around them and the language of nearby humans.

Shroomers usually look like hybrid mushroom-humans, normally wearing no more than crude tool harnesses and javelin sheaths. They require carrion for health and reproduction, and they care little where they find it. Some shroomer nests will make deals with human settlements for a steady supply of meat, but others will be just as glad to take it by force.

Fungal Nature: Shroomers are immune to poisons and diseases and can eat rotted plant material when carrion is unavailable. Shroomers can only permanently die by fire or acid; otherwise, one at zero HP will regrow to full HP in an hour.

Skewmen

A heritable deficiency in ligament formation produces the skewmen, an unhappy breed of deformed mutants. Their joints are remarkably flexible but unable to support them upright. They are forced to crawl with an unsettling quickness and to use blunt weapons that are as much crutch as club.

Most skewman tribes nurse a bitter hatred of the "upright", blaming them for causing the disaster that cursed their ancestors. Prisoners they take are subject to terrible operations that will transform them into a skewman as well if not rescued within a month.

Skewmen are especially voracious gatherers of ancient technology, even items they cannot use. Their chieftains are always adorned with several such devices.

Crooked Man: Skewmen gain a +4 bonus to all checks to grapple or resist a grapple for creatures of man-size or smaller. Due to their means of locomotion, they can use only one-handed weapons.

Thornies

Just as shroomers are born of fungi, thornies are the result of the Highshine's hybridization of plant life and humanity. While their appearance depends on the type of vegetation they were derived from, most are notable for the toxic thorns that stud their fibrous limbs.

Thornies are extremely long-lived and placid as a rule, content to sun themselves and drink through their toe-roots. They keep aloof from the affairs of "walkers", and few thorny villages have anything that outsiders would want in the first place.

The exception is knowledge. As long-lived and contemplative as thornies are, many retain secrets and wisdom long since lost to the outside world. They have been known to barter this lore for help in dealing with threats and problems within their own settlement.

Being Green: Thornies can subsist on photosynthesis and moist soil. If struck by their unarmed attack, a victim must make a Physical save or gain 1d6 System Strain. If this would exceed their maximum, they fall unconscious for 1d6 hours.



Robots

The vast majority of bots in the zone function as expert system bots, competent within their function but lacking any true general intelligence or self-awareness. Whenever a bot is called on to function outside its role, make a skill check using the bot's skill modifier; if it fails, it tries to use its usual behavior even if such a behavior is inappropriate.

Initial bot reactions will depend on their intended role. If programmed to attack their initial response will always be hostile, but other bots will react according to the Reaction Roll. The default response will be an attempt to behave as its programming dictates.

Robots are self-powered and do not normally run out of ammunition for any weapons they have built in.

Robot Types

Brainbot: "Surplus" human neural tissue was salvaged to give these human-like bots a degree of independent intelligence in order to direct their simpler brethren. Long neglect and inadequate maintenance has driven most of them quite insane.

Clanker: These simple maintenance and labor bots are usually harmless, but a malicious programmer can convert them to minimally-adequate fighters. They are incapable of using weapons unless programmed to do so.

Hellrider: Servants of the Territorial Rangers, these centauroid robots fight with a pair of integral pistols that have an effective range of 100 meters. They are skilled trackers, and a posse of 2d6 of them inevitably accompany any ranger. Lone hellriders or small groups of 1d6 of them are sometimes found near Mandate installations, conducting endless patrols.

Iron Horse: Chrome-maned equibots built to carry dudes who might not know how to sit a real horse, many of these bots have survived to bond with the lucky rider who can find their control cards or override their rental programming.

Janglesnake: A corroded iron snake that burrows beneath the dust, a janglesnake's vibroblade teeth once flowed with a venom that has long since run dry. After a successful bite, however, a janglesnake gets a free constriction grapple attempt against the victim with a +3 total skill bonus.

Juggernaut: Fearsome chariots of doom, a tank-sized juggernaut is normally found only within the Albuquerque city core or guarding high-level Mandate facilities. It can run over creatures as part of its Move actions, forcing an Evasion save or instant death. Its onboard weapons have a 1,000 meter range.

Scorpoid: These wolf-sized metal scorpions often appear in packs of 1d4+1, skittering across the sands of the zone. They attack with two monoblade claw attacks and one electrostatic "stinger" zap with a range of 10 meters. Only the claws do Shock damage.

Scrabbler: One of a host of half-wrecked robots and malfunctioning machines, these limping wrecks are animated only by their undying purpose, which often happens to be mayhem. If not a sad, lone wreck, they are found in groups of 2d6.

Tinman: These androids were built to resemble humans, some of them with unsettling accuracy. Most were intended for human interaction of some sort, so they are among the most likely robots to engage peacefully with modern survivors. Even so, they remain mere expert systems, and will often try to apply their original programming even when it is inappropriate.

Vultron: Most flying robots were wiped out by the Bright Mirror defense system, but a few models had acceptable verification codes. The buzzard-like vultron was one of them, hovering with its black-feathered grav units and spitting lethal laser bolts at prey below. A vultron never flies higher than 30 meters above the ground.

Robots	HD	AC	Atk	Dmg	TR	Shock	MV	ML	Skill	Save
Brainbot	10	15	+10	3d6 laser	d8/x3	-	10m	9	+3	10+
Clanker	2	16	+2	1d6 strike	-	-	10m	10	+1	14+
Hellrider	5	16	+8x2	2d6 shoot	d8/x2	-	20m	12	+2	13+
Iron Horse	6	16	+9x2	1d10 kick	d8/x2	-	20m	10	+2	12+
Janglesnake	4	18	+7*	2d6* bite	d6/x3	5/AC 15	15m	10	+1	13+
Juggernaut	15	20	+18x4	4d6 shoot	d10/x3	-	20m	12	+3	8+
Scorpoid	3	16	+5x3	1d8 claw	d6/x3	2/AC 15	15m	10	+1	14+
Scrabbler	1	14	+2	1d6 claw	-	-	10m	12	+1	15+
Tinman	4	16	+6	By wpn	By wpn	By wpn	10m	8	+2	13+
Vultron	3	16	+6	2d8 laser	d8/x3	-	20m	9	+2	14+



Scrapping Robots

A competent tech can disassemble an incapacitated robot for TL4 scrap parts. The work takes an hour per hit die of robot being disassembled, and yields one unit of TL4 scrap for every three full hit dice of robots being taken apart. Thus, a pile of three scrabblers, a vultron, and a tinman would yield three units of TL4 scrap.

Repairing Robots

Most late-Mandate robots have automatic self-healing functionality. While the actual capabilities of the bot were ruthlessly limited by Mandate stability coordinators, the petty inconveniences of repair and refueling were too annoying not to engineer away with advanced Terran technology.

As a general rule, robots can self-repair up to their hit dice in lost hit points every 24 hours, requiring an eight-hour shutdown period in which to conduct the repairs. Thus, a 10 HD brainbot can fix 10 hit points of damage with eight hours of "rest".

For robots without self-repair functionality or those in need of faster fixes, one unit of TL4 scrap can half the robot's maximum hit points in damage with half an hour of work.

Robots reduced to zero hit points are completely wrecked and can only be scrapped.

Virtual Intelligences and AI

Extremely advanced expert systems existed that were largely indistinguishable from actual human minds. These "virtual intelligences" were quite popular on some Mandate core worlds and were known even on the frontier. The technology was not commonly used on Earth, however, as the Mandate Directorate never entirely trusted the cognitive controls on VIs after their existing problems with the AI Maestros.

True AIs, on the other hand, were tightly-controlled intellects untethered to any specific robotic body and limited only by the power of their processing hardware and the bounds of their cyberpsychological brakes. The great Maestros of Mandate-era Earth were the most powerful AIs on the planet, but some less sophisticated intellects were kept running for secret Mandate projects or off-the-books Directorate schemes.

More details of these bodiless intellects can be found in the deluxe version of *Stars Without Number*.

Robot Player Characters

While uncommon, some GMs might wish to allow robotic PCs. Most such characters should be VIs who have somehow slipped the bounds of their programming and gained free will. Their robotic bodies should probably be generally humanoid, and regardless of their original type they begin as first-level player characters with Edges and other statistics determined as usual. They should pick the *Free Robot* Origin Focus with their starting Focus pick.

Free Robot Origin Focus: Gain a bonus skill of your choice and an innate AC of 16, if not improved by armor. You are an advanced self-powered robot and do not require food, air, sleep, or other things requisite to flesh. You are immune to radiation. You can self-repair just as normal humans heal. First aid or healing attempts on you use Fix instead of Heal, and first aid does not require scrap parts to mend you.

As a specially-durable robot model, if you are reduced to zero hit points you automatically stabilize if not further damaged. You are not subject to becoming Frail.

Zombies

The unquiet dead are a staple of zombie apocalypses, and a Deadlands campaign is likely to rely on them heavily as threats. Even other settings might include radioactive shamblers, cursed revenants, or rotting cyborg hulks that could serve largely similar purposes.

The combat statistics given here reflect a few common genre assumptions about zombies, ones which may or may not hold true for your specific campaign.

Ordinary zombies are trivial when alone. A lone shambler can be killed by any able-bodied armed adult with no real risk. Zombies are only a real combat threat when they're in groups or they're some rare sub-type of undead.

Zombies don't dodge. If you swing or shoot at a zombie, you're going to hit it. The only question is whether or not you're going to do enough damage to drop it.

You choose to fight zombies. Zombies might pursue victims or be attracted to noise or scents, but a mobile party can expect to be able to avoid engaging with zombie swarms. The party's problems come when they decide they need to go where the zombies are.

Zombies are durable. They seem to ignore any need for food, oxygen, warm clothing, basic hygiene, or other things humans normally require. Magical zombies might be actual animated corpses, while virally-induced zombies might have superhuman qualities that spare them from these ordinary needs, or might have a "hibernation" mode that lets them ignore these needs until prey comes near.

Zombies are stupid. Zombie swarms might be smart enough to smash down doors or climb obstacles, but only rare zombie subtypes will be clever enough to actually have tactics. Even the stupid ones are not suicidal, however, and normally won't stagger blindly into obvious destruction.

Zombies swarm. One zombie is almost harmless. There is never only one zombie.

Example Types of Zombies

A given Deadlands campaign may include some or all of the zombie types described below, depending on the GM's tastes.

Shambler: The archetypal zombie, slow-moving and mindlessly ravenous. Particularly rotten or crippled examples of other zombie types might also be treated as Shamblers.

Walker: A strong, well-preserved zombie capable of threatening an able-bodied human. They don't move quickly, but they're harder to take down.

Leaper: Quick and vicious, Leapers move quickly enough to actually have a meaningful Armor Class. They can jump up to 10 meters as a Move action and can crawl up sheer surfaces as if they were flat.

Crusher: Hulking zombie brutes that can tear apart an ordinary survivor with ease. Many of these mutants have at least one special zombie ability, as described later in this section.

Spewer: These zombies vomit up toxic or acidic spittle, launching it as a ranged attack with a range of up to 30 meters. Some varieties of Spewer burst upon death, inflicting an automatic attack on everything with 5 meters.

Titan: Monstrous giants of dead flesh and undying hunger, these abominations are usually surrounded by swarms of lesser undead. Most are mindless agents of destruction, but they usually have several special abilities related to their uncanny nature.

Shrieker: While a limited threat personally, Shriekers emit a blood-curdling scream whenever they spot prey, alerting any zombies within 100 meters. Other zombies who hear a Shrieker's screech are goaded to haste, doubling their normal movement rate for the rest of the scene.

Zombies	HD	AC	Atk	Dmg	TR	Shock	MV	ML	Skill	Save
Shambler	1 HP	None	+0	1d6	d8/x2	-	5m	12	+0	20+
Walker	1	None	+2	1d8	d8/x2	-	5m	12	+1	15+
Leaper	2	15	+5	1d10	d8/x2	-	15m	12	+1	14+
Crusher	4*	None	+8	2d6	d8/x3	2/-	10m	12	+1	13+
Spewer	3	None	+6	1d10	d8/x2	-	5m	12	+1	14+
Titan	10***	None	+13x2	2d8	d8/x3	10/-	10m	12	+2	10+
Shrieker	2	None	+2	1d6	d8/x2	-	5m	12	+1	14+
Horde, Small	5	None	+5	1d6	d8/x2	-	-	12	+1	13+
Horde, Medium	15	None	+10	2d6	d8/x2	-	-	12	+1	8+
Horde, Large	45	None	+20	3d8	d10/x2	-	-	12	+1	2+
*: usually has one special ability per asterisk										



Zombie Hordes

Zombie hordes are a special case. While they're treated as conventional monsters in some ways, they're more akin to an environmental hazard that must be avoided, distracted, or eliminated with large-scale violence.

A small horde can fill up a large room or small building. ***A medium horde*** fills a street or surrounds a city block. ***A large horde*** is a sea of undead flesh that can fill entire city neighborhoods or sweep over small towns.

Zombie hordes are obvious to PCs who scout or observe an area. They can tell that the massive numbers are not just a particularly dense clump of undead, and they'll realize the hazards of trying to engage them directly. GMs should make sure that PCs understand the danger when they're about to face a horde.

Hordes have hit dice, hit points, attacks, and other conventional combat statistics. They also have certain special qualities described below.

Innumerable: Zombie hordes are effectively immune to single-target weapons and special powers. Only area-effect damage can disperse them, such as explosives, heavy automatic weapons, building collapses, or other effects that could conceivably affect a crowd at once. Fortunately, any such attack automatically hits a horde. Hordes reduced to zero hit points have been scattered or reduced to a few crippled corpses that any combatant can dispatch. Medium or large hordes might leave dangerous clumps of undead behind, however.

Ubiquitous: Zombie hordes fill particular areas, such as rooms, streets, or entire buildings crawling with the undead. Any creature within that area is treated as a valid target for its *Savage* and *Ravenous* abilities, and anyone trying to move into, out of, or within it is a target for *Grasping*.

Savage: Every round, a horde will use its Main Action to level a single attack at every victim within reach of it. It will use its Move action to send a tendril of shambling undead towards any victim outside of its immediate reach, closing at the rate of 10 meters per Move action. Once the group reaches the target, they are treated as being within the reach of the swarm.

Ravenous: Anyone within reach of a zombie horde suffers 1d8 damage each round simply from the mindless violence of the swarm, with a 1d6/x2 Trauma Rating for campaigns using those rules.

Roadblock: Zombie horde attacks can damage vehicles, including their *Ravenous* ability. A vehicle reduced to zero hit points may not be torn apart entirely, but it's so jammed with zombie guts that it can't effectively function.

Grasping: Humans that try to move through the horde are automatically hit with a grapple attempt with a total +3 bonus for the opposed skill check by the zombies. If successfully grappled, the victim will automatically take the horde's damage each round until they break free, just as in a normal grapple.

Distracting and Eluding Hordes

PCs can be expected to want to distract or divert some swarms and sneak through others. For the convenience of the GM, the following rules can be used for these situations.

To distract a horde, the PCs need bait. At least one human is usually needed for a small horde, ten for a medium one, and a hundred to attract a large horde's attention. Loud noises, tasty scents, brilliant lights, or other zombie attractants might substitute for this bait.

The fastest bait makes a Dex/Exert check if running, or Dex/Drive if in a vehicle, or some other skill check related to whatever distraction they've engineered, with a -2 penalty for distracting a medium horde and a -4 for baiting a large one.

The GM then rolls 2d6 for the horde. If the total is higher than the PC skill check, then the horde still left behind that many dangerous clumps of zombies in the area, each clump probably being 2d6 zombies or so. If the total is equal or less, then a number of clusters are left behind equal to the smaller of the two dice.

Thus, if the PC rolled a 7 and the GM rolled a 2 and a 6, eight clumps of 2d6 zombies would be left in the area for the PCs to kill or sneak past. If the PC rolled a 9 and the GM rolled a 3 and a 4, only three clumps would be left to handle.

Distracted zombies will normally start filtering back in 3d6 minutes. PCs need to finish their work before that happens, or they'll be caught within the horde with the dire consequences that follow.

To sneakily elude a horde, the PCs need to describe how it is they're crossing the horde's territory without drawing its attention. Even a large horde is unlikely to fill up every nook and cranny of an area, and a small horde that occupies a building is unlikely to be present in every room and corridor. Methods that keep the PCs out of sight of the zombies will probably work, assuming they don't make enough noise to draw attention.

The PC pathfinder makes a Dex/Sneak skill check modified from -2 to +2, depending on how good the GM thinks their plan is. The GM opposes this with a zombie horde skill check, modified by the horde's skill bonus.

If the PCs win, they can cross the horde's territory without being spotted. If they lose, they alert the horde, and have 2d6 rounds to escape the territory before the horde is roused and they start to suffer its attacks.

If the PCs try to do anything but sneak through the territory, such as loot a store room, rescue a stranded victim, open a locked door, or some other action, they need to make a new skill check, and the GM makes a new opposed skill check in turn with a +1 bonus for the zombies. Each new activity in the territory increases this bonus by another +1 until the PCs flee or the horde is alerted, after which they have 2d6 rounds to finish their work and escape.

Zombie Special Abilities

Most zombies rely on the tried-and-true tactics of *Swarm Attacks*, grapples, and biting. Their sheer numbers and mindless advance are a significant threat to PCs, even if they're individually of small account. Some zombies deserve to be bigger threats, however, and a GM might choose to assign them one of the special zombie abilities described below or make up one of their own.

Cannibal Vigor: If the zombie spends a Main Action feasting on a dead or incapacitated human, it regains half its maximum hit points. A given victim can be used as food only once.

Cunning: The zombie actually has some shred of human intellect remaining, and can exhibit tactical understanding. Mindless zombies in its presence will obey its commands, if they're simple enough and not contrary to their hungers.

Deathless Regrowth: The zombie regenerates 8 hit points at the end of each of its turns.

False Friend: The zombie is so intact that it looks like a perfectly normal human being, if withdrawn and quiet. It instinctively uses this appearance to bait human prey.

Frenzied Hunger: Any human-sized victim it grapples for more than one round must make a Physical saving throw at the start of their turn. On a failure, they are ripped to pieces by the zombie, which will do nothing but feast on their corpse until it is attacked.

Hasty: If the zombie is not within melee range of a target, it gets a bonus Move and Main Action which it will use to try to close with a victim and attack.

Hulking: The zombie is huge for one of its kind. All of its hit dice count as if it had rolled an 8 for each.

Latch On: When one of the zombie's normal attacks hits, it automatically makes a grapple attempt on the target.

Miasmatic: A terrible stench exudes from the corpse, applying a -2 penalty to the AC and hit rolls of all enemies within 10 meters.

Quick and Dead: The zombie's base movement rate is doubled.

Razor Claws: The zombie has unnaturally sharp or massive claws, bone spurs, teeth, or other body weaponry. Its attacks all do +3 damage and it has a Shock rating of 3/- if not better already.

Relentless Hunter: The zombie has a total +5 skill bonus for detecting stealth attempts and cannot be surprised. It and any companions it has will follow any prey without ceasing for 1d6 hours.

Thick Hide: The zombie is tough to hurt, having an Armor Class equal to 12 plus their hit dice.

Venom Spit: As a Main Action, the zombie can spew some noxious substance up to 30 meters, attacking and inflicting damage as if with their normal attack.

Zombie Infections

A setting is hardly a zombie apocalypse without an uncontrollable plague of undeath. A GM will want to shape their zombie infection to fit the particular world they envision, and the tools on this page will help them mechanize the terrible doom that awaits humanity.

GMs should think carefully about what they want infection to mean in their own campaign. An instantly-lethal infection that's easily acquired may be dramatic, but it will also mean a lot of new PCs. As a general rule, the easier it is to get infected, the easier it should be to delay or control the infection's progress. If infection is certain death, it should come from intentionally risky PC behavior, bad choices, or dire luck.

Becoming Infected

Almost every Deadlands setting has a constant threat of lethal infection. Whether it's a zombie plague, a fungal infestation, a contagious magical curse, or a lethal pandemic, the PCs need to know how the doom is spread. The GM can pick one of the methods below or use them as springboards for their own imagination.

Just One Bite: Anyone who takes hit point damage from a zombie's attack must make a Luck save. On a success, the harm was only bruising or exhaustion. On failure, the victim is infected.

Excessive Exposure: Players track the amount of hit point damage they take from zombies. If the total ever equals or exceeds half their maximum hit points, they need a Luck save with each hit, or they're infected. This running total is only reset after the PC fully recovers all their hit points.

The Hot Zone: Particular areas have a heavy zombie virus load or are seething with malevolent energies. Each day, hour, or minute the PCs spend in such an area, depending on its strength, they secretly gain 1d4 System Strain. If the new total would put them over their maximum, the GM privately rolls a Physical save; on a fail, they've been infected, but won't realize it until the symptoms start to show.

Universal Plague: Virtually every human is infected with a latent degree of the virus and will rise as a zombie when they die. This condition is usually in addition to some other method of infection.

Walking Dead: If a PC is reduced to zero hit points by a zombie attack, they retain one hit point but are infected. Further attacks after this point can Mortally Wound them normally.

In almost all cases, any human killed by zombies will also count as infected, assuming the undead don't tear them apart and leave them incapable of rising.

Consequences of Infection

In most Deadlands games, infection is a death sentence. The GM can mix and match the consequences below to shape the particular form this doom will take.

Time Bomb: Once infected, the GM secretly adds 1d4 System Strain to the victim every month, week, day, or hour depending on how quickly the infection progresses. Symptoms become clear when their Strain exceeds half their maximum. When it exceeds the maximum, they become a zombie.

Game Over: The victim becomes a zombie in 1d6 rounds or minutes. Particularly tough-minded victims might be able to render themselves nonviable before the infection takes them.

Slow Death: The infection progresses by inches. A victim has 1d8 months left to live, with the symptoms becoming much worse in the last month of life. Each additional source or occasion of infection cuts their lifespan by 1d4 months.

Zombie Roulette: A very few infected somehow recover. Once infected, the GM secretly rolls a d10. On a natural 10, the victim will begin to naturally recover from the virus at the point where it should have killed them, regaining their health in 1d4 weeks.

Zombie infection symptoms are usually obvious and ugly, though they don't normally debilitate the victim until they're on the very brink of death.

Curing Infections

Most Deadlands settings either have no cure at all for the zombie plague or make its acquisition a major thrust of the campaign. Even so, a GM might choose to temper the peril a little.

Certain Doom: An infected victim will absolutely and unavoidably become a zombie unless their brain is destroyed, their body torn apart, or they are otherwise rendered unsuitable for revivification.

Ticking Clock: A specific drug or medical treatment can delay the infection's progress so long as it is applied daily, weekly, or monthly, depending on the GM's choice of urgency. Once the treatment begins, the GM may decide that any interruption results in immediate death and revival.

Golden Bullet: There is a specific drug that can cure the infection. Most people in the setting will do anything to obtain it, if they believe in it.

Cut It Out: Radical tissue excision within 1d6 minutes of a bite can prevent infection. The "surgeon" rolls a random Major Injury for the victim; that's what they had to do, fatal as it might have been.



One-Roll Zombie Plague Generator

The precise source of a zombie apocalypse is usually decided beforehand by a GM, but sometimes a little creative inspiration can be helpful. This one-roll set of tables can give some suggestions as to how a particular plague got started and what the infection and resultant zombies are like.

The zombies generated by these tables need not be the only kind of zombies in your setting. Even the same virus might produce undead with different characteristics, and it can be an ugly surprise for a band of survivors when predictable shambler habits suddenly turn out to be inapplicable to the swarm in front of them. Be careful to consider the tactical ramifications of any behavioral quirks you pick, however; broad traits invite favorite strategies from the PCs.

d6	How Do They Usually Hunt?
1	They gather in large roaming hordes
2	Small groups of ambush predators
3	Endurance hunters, sleeplessly pursuing
4	They find prey and call for reinforcements
5	Blind, sudden pursuit by individuals
6	Methodical search of a hunting territory

d8	How Are They Organized?
1	Completely atomized individuals
2	Larger zombies gather retinues
3	Those who died together swarm together
4	Some zombies seem to act as pack alphas
5	Packs keep to their own territory
6	Roaming packs unite when they meet
7	Fresh ones act alone, stale ones swarm
8	Huge swarms throw off smaller packs

d10	What Created the Zombies?
1	A mutant strain of a mundane disease
2	It's an alien bioweapon of some sort
3	It's an exotic strain of fungal infection
4	It's a product of an eldritch curse
5	An experimental nanite accident caused it
6	It's a runaway military bioweapon
7	Mad scientists released it for some reason
8	A government lab released it accidentally
9	A crazed cult released a bioweapon
10	Rampaging necromancers did it

d4	How Many Zombies Are There?
1	Small groups, but exploding in numbers
2	Enough to control the now-dead cities
3	Groups can be found even in the wilds
4	They infest virtually every region

d12	Initial Infection Symptoms
1	Open bleeding sores break out
2	A racking, bloody cough as tissues die
3	A tremendous and unquenchable thirst
4	Fits of dazed, unresponsive stupefaction
5	Persistent and debilitating insomnia
6	Leprosy-like decay centered on wounds
7	Unnatural vigor and euphoria
8	A high, persistent fever
9	Creeping numbness starting in extremities
10	Hunger that can only be satisfied by meat
11	Intense aversion to strong light
12	Spasms of irrational, homicidal rage

d20	Zombie Behavioral Quirks
1	They tear off their clothing or worn gear
2	They are only active at night or in the dark
3	Once alerted, they pursue indefinitely
4	They have an instinctive fear of fire
5	They have a unique recognizable smell
6	When alone, they mimic human activities
7	They rarely move unless alerted or hungry
8	They eat viscera, leaving the rest intact
9	They instinctively hide when not active
10	They use any weapons they died holding
11	They provoke blind terror in animals
12	They keep crippled prey for later eating
13	Dead zombies attract nearby comrades
14	Zombies instinctively break open doors
15	Zombies are always totally silent
16	Zombies mob and clog moving vehicles
17	Zombies seek cover against gunfire
18	Zombies ignore infected unless attacked
19	Zombies hunt by sound or scent, not sight
20	Zombies migrate away from intense cold

Zombie Encounter Quick Reference

Busy GMs can print off or copy this page for some play-ready guidelines or suggestions for zombie encounters. Total numbers and types can be modified based on your setting's particulars, and zombie versions that don't exist in your world can be substituted by an equal hit dice total of ordinary walkers.

Example Zombie Groups

These example groups can serve as guidelines for stocking particular areas. In larger buildings, most of the occupants will be in various clusters, but nearby zombies will hurry toward any loud sounds.

Lone Straggler: 1 Shambler, Walker, or Leaper. Possibly 1 Shrieker if other zombies are nearby.

Single-Family Residence: 1d4+1 Shamblers or Walkers, and a 20% chance of also one stronger Leaper, Spewer, or Crusher.

Infested Apartment Building: For each apartment, 1d2 Shamblers or Walkers. For each ten apartments, 1d6 Leapers or Spewers and one Crusher. For each fifty apartments, 1d6 strategically-placed Shriekers and 1d6 floors are wholly packed by a Small Horde.

Crowded City Street: A Small Horde shambles around. If engaged loudly, the noise will summon a Medium Horde in 1d6+4 minutes.

Rural Wanderers: A lurching pack of 3d6 Shamblers or Walkers, with a 50% chance of 1d4 stronger zombies such as Leapers, Spewers, or Crushers.

Refugee Camp: Most refugee concentration areas will have turned into Medium Hordes shambling around the camp. Individual structures in the camp have their own occupants, but loud activity will make the horde invade after 1d6 minutes.

Ordinary Urban Pack: 1d8 Shamblers and 1d6 Walkers, with a 20% chance of also 1d4 Leapers or Spewers.

d12	Where Are They?
1	Laired in an adjacent home or store
2	Lying under wrecked vehicles or rubble
3	Mostly buried by loose, light debris
4	On top of a building with a way down
5	Waiting inside an abandoned vehicle
6	Hidden in a basement
7	Trapped in a barricaded building
8	Shambling in the middle of the street
9	Lying in wait underneath nearby water
10	Lurking in the sewers below the PCs
11	Sealed into a vault or safe room
12	Chasing prey in the path of the PCs

High-Danger Neighborhood: In the streets, 3d20 Shamblers or Walkers, 2d6 Spewers or Leapers, and 1d6 Crushers. 10% chance of one Titan being around.

Abandoned Hospital: 3d20 Shamblers, 1d20 Walkers, 2d6 Leapers or Spewers, 50% chance of 1d4 Crushers.

Morgue or Corpse Pit: 4d20 Shamblers, or the same number of Walkers if they were kept refrigerated or otherwise carefully stored. Very large corpse pits may be Small Hordes.

Wilderness Predator: 1 Crusher hunting alone in the forest or swamp.

Store: 2d10 Shambler and Walker ex-customers, 30% chance of 1d4 Leapers or Spewers, and a 10% chance of a Crusher.

Failed Refuge: A ruined bunker or safehouse has 1d10 Shamblers or Walkers, with a 20% chance of 1d4 Leapers or Spewers. 10% of them are crowded, doubling these numbers.

Zombies	HD	AC	Atk	Dmg	TR	Shock	MV	ML	Skill	Save
Shambler	1 HP	None	+0	1d6	d8/x2	-	5m	12	+0	20+
Walker	1	None	+2	1d8	d8/x2	-	5m	12	+1	15+
Leaper	2	15	+5	1d10	d8/x2	-	10m	12	+1	14+
Crusher	4*	None	+8	2d6	d8/x3	2/-	10m	12	+1	13+
Spewer	3	None	+6	1d10	d8/x2	-	5m	12	+1	14+
Titan	10***	None	+13x2	2d8	d8/x3	10/-	10m	12	+2	10+
Shrieker	2	None	+2	1d6	d8/x2	-	5m	12	+1	14+
Horde, Small	5	None	+5	1d6	d8/x2	-	-	12	+1	13+
Horde, Medium	15	None	+10	2d6	d8/x2	-	-	12	+1	8+
Horde, Large	45	None	+20	3d8	d10/x2	-	-	12	+1	2+
*: often has one special ability per asterisk										

Nemesis Traits

Some antagonists are so great and so significant that conventional statistics don't accurate represent them. These figures have importance to an entire campaign, either as central figures of opposition or as looming threats to be avoided or managed rather than simply defeated.

These foes have ***nemesis traits***. These are special qualities that are explicitly unfair and unreasonable. They may completely foreclose certain ways of dealing with them or make conventional methods impractically difficult. Almost all of them will require special plans and careful scheming if the PCs are to best them.

The source of this power will vary with the campaign. Uncanny mutant powers, esoteric psychic abilities, strange alien tech, variant zombie infections, or sheer mystical importance might be behind a given trait.

Nemesis traits should be known to the PCs. Even if by legends and rumors, the PCs should know that there is something very special about this NPC and have at least a general idea of their abilities. They need to know that The Killer isn't simply a tough fight, but that he is a walking total party kill. Be explicit with the players if necessary, because a nemesis trait can be a frustrating shock to the party if they encounter it unawares.

While these traits are assumed to be suitable for NPC enemies, there's nothing strictly requiring that. These may be special abilities possessed by major unaligned NPCs in the setting, or a potential antagonist might be turned to an ally by the right situation. A GM should be willing to let such a turn happen, as some of these powers can hardly be defeated by mere brute opposition.

Assigning Nemesis Traits

As a general rule, only NPCs of campaign-wide significance should have nemesis traits. They don't necessarily need to have an active role in current events, but they should be someone or something important enough that people know about them throughout the area, and their legends should be well-established before the PCs might encounter them.

Almost all major enemies should have no more than one nemesis trait. Applying more than that can drastically restrict the available tactics for dealing with them, and most parties will already be hard-pressed to come up with a plan to overcome even one of these qualities.

The Invincible: This foe simply cannot be killed. No matter how many bullets are pumped into them, how much poison they eat, or how deep the plunge off a precipice, they somehow emerge alive all the same. They may have clones, they might be multiplicate twins, or they might be a role with numerous stand-ins ready to assume it. They might even be so physically tough that no reasonable means can kill them. PC plans to overcome them cannot afford to bet on their death.

The foe has effectively infinite hit points and an immunity to Mortal Injury. If they exist in multiple persons, then no death lasts long enough to significantly hinder their plans. If they are a singular entity, no amount of conventional damage will put them down. There may be a specific key to their immortality, or a categorical annihilation of their entire surroundings might manage to kill them permanently.

The Killer: The foe is an engine of murder. Where they go, people die, and no degree of skill or toughness can save the life they mean to take. The PCs must either devise a plan to kill them without giving them a chance to fight back or be reconciled to inescapably heavy losses.

As a Main Action, the foe can choose to attack a target susceptible to their current weapon. That target must make a Luck save; on a failure, they die instantly, while a success leaves them Mortally Wounded with a Major Injury. The Killer will always prefer to target a PC over an NPC unless doing so would be tactically indefensible.

The Messiah: The foe is incredibly persuasive and charismatic, enrapturing those around them with their vision. Even a few minutes of conversation is enough to shake all but fanatical convictions, and repeated exposure can make almost anyone into a zealous follower. Whatever the PCs plan to do to this person, they're going to have to do without help, because almost any ally will be susceptible to their influence.

The foe's simple presence is enough to enchant onlookers. Any attempt to attack them forces a Morale check at a penalty equal to their skill bonus; on a failure, the would-be-attacker is unable to begin hostilities during the scene. With a scene of conversation, an NPC without an intense personal reason to hate the foe will become their enthusiastic follower. PCs are immune to a Messiah's charm, but normal means for suppressing mental influence cannot screen out their power.

The Omened: The foe is incredibly lucky, and their enemies cursed with misfortune. Whenever there's a chance for something to go right for them or wrong for their enemies, it's sure to happen that way. PCs who intend to take them out will have to use means that leave no scope for chance.

The foe and any allies present with them always succeed in any saving throw and are treated as having the *Veteran's Luck* Edge, while any enemies present always fail any save or skill check. Twice per round, as an Instant action, the foe can dictate the outcome of any die roll in their general vicinity, even if they would normally be unaware that the associated action was being taken.

The Perfected: Everything the foe does works perfectly. If it's physically possible for their actions to be successful, they will succeed. Any plan to overcome them must leave them in a position where their own actions are irrelevant.

The foe gains a bonus Main Action every round. Every attack roll and saving throw the foe makes are treated as a natural 20 and every skill check as a natural 12. Where other mechanics are used to resolve an attempted action, the foe is always assumed to roll the best result possible. This perfection does not extend to damage rolls or to purely luck-based outcomes that have nothing to do with a person's skills.

The Protagonist: The very world seems to bend and warp to satisfy this foe's ambitions. No setback is eternal and no obstacle is unbeatable to them. The PCs must either persuade them to change their goals or else make their ultimate triumph somehow serve to fulfill the party's own purposes.

The foe has a grand purpose and will eventually succeed in attaining it. They cannot be killed and cannot be defeated for long, and incredible luck and blessed coincidence will conspire to carry them through the worst setback. The protagonist's plot armor ends as soon as their grand goal is achieved.

The Strategist: The foe always seems to know what their enemies are doing, however subtle the plan. Any PC plan formulated beforehand risks giving the strategist enough time to counter it perfectly.

The foe always knows all the details of any plan formed against them or obstacle to their goals as soon as the plan itself is devised or the obstacle arises. If they've had enough time to respond accordingly, their available resources and allies will be positioned to foil the resistance if such is possible. Their knowledge is no more accurate than the plan itself; a vague scheme results in only vague knowledge.

The Tactician: The foe is an inhumanly skilled tactician, foreseeing every trap and knowing every trick their enemies might attempt. The PCs must either crush them with overwhelming force or deal with them in ways more subtle than simple lead and steel.

The foe intuitively and correctly guesses exactly what their enemy's combat plans may be, including their available forces, their location, and their general orders. Before the combat begins, the foe has positioned their own available forces in whatever way they think is best, and these allies will be positioned and prepared accordingly.

The Unseen: The foe cannot be found unless they want to be. They are so elusive, so many-faced, that no one ever knows they're there unless they choose to reveal their presence. No place is immune to their infiltration and no face is too particular to be mimicked perfectly. Even if they reveal themselves, all it takes is a moment's break in the line of sight for them to vanish or transform. The PCs must figure out a way to make them show themselves, and a response quick enough to deal with them before they disappear once more.

If they are not directly observed, the foe can vanish as an Instant action. They cannot be tracked or detected, and their disguises are absolutely perfect in every way. They can bypass any physical security system and overcome any lock without leaving any sign of their passage.

Creating New Traits

A GM might choose to come up with new traits to suit particular figures of menace in a campaign. When doing so, a few principles should be kept in mind.

Nemesis traits should be absolute. They shouldn't be powers that have a chance of happening, they should be abilities that always go off regardless of the opposition. Chance-based abilities might end up rewarding a fundamentally sloppy, careless attempt to take down a nemesis, and that defeats the fundamental purpose of assigning such traits.

Nemesis traits should foreclose some tactics. PCs can't simply shoot The Invincible, and they can't just track down The Unseen. The party needs to think of some way to sidestep a nemesis trait's abilities if they're going to defeat the enemy, and not simply overcome it with brute force or big numbers.

Nemesis traits should be visible. The special abilities of the trait should be something that bystanders can see or recognize. If it's too subtle to be noticed, the PCs are going to have a hard time hearing about it until it's too late. Such surprises can be justifiably frustrating to a party, so it's important to let them be tipped off about the special qualities this particular enemy possesses.



THE ALBUQUERQUE DEATH ZONE

The history of the Albuquerque Death Zone is little more than a footnote to the collapse of Old Terran society some two centuries ago. With the Terran Mandate crushed under the chaos of the psionic Scream that killed or drove dangerously mad the entire psychic population of human space, the ultimate fate of this fragment of ancient North America was of small importance. The mutagenic nanites of the berserk Highshine disaster recovery system, the rampaging forces of the psychic Crazed, and the murderous onslaught of the Bright Mirror space defense grid were more than enough to distract the remnants of the Directorate. Even so, the Mandate's own cruel misrule had already planted the seeds of the Zone's fragile survival.

Before the Mandate

The initial repopulation of what became the Albuquerque Reconstruction District took place in the mid-22nd century under the auspices of the United American Cities, after the collapse of the corpostates earlier that century amid the disorder of the Ignition. The Mandate later sanitized all records of the period immediately before its establishment, but a comparison of surviving retcon documents suggests that hardly any pre-Ignition survivors had remained in the zone, and the newcomers were almost entirely steelrats, corper remnants, and UAC-sponsored operatives.

Given the remaining presence of steelrat infra-bunkers and the subtle terrain signatures of significant corporate tacnuke use, it appears the district was not overly pacified. The steelrats were able to establish basic infrastructure in Old Albuquerque, a development that formed the basis of the Mandate's later reconstruction of the city, and the UAC operatives appear to have successfully contained the worst excesses of corper nemesis borgs and contract enforcement organisms.

By the first years of the twenty-third century, it appears that the district had successfully established itself as a vassal city to the UAC metropolis of Denver. The encroaching sands of the Greater Sonoran Desert remained a significant threat to the region, but Albuquerque was able to hold its own through the industry of its citizens, a budding starport, and the rich technical resources it salvaged from Neo-Vegan corper remnants.

Even today, centuries later, numerous corporate bunkers and concealed warehouses remain scattered through the Sandia mountains and beneath the streets of Old Albuquerque. Some of them are said to have actually contained viable corporate arcologies with live populations, but their autonomic defenses and potentially destabilizing technology left the Mandate to seal most of them against outside intrusion.

A New Rule

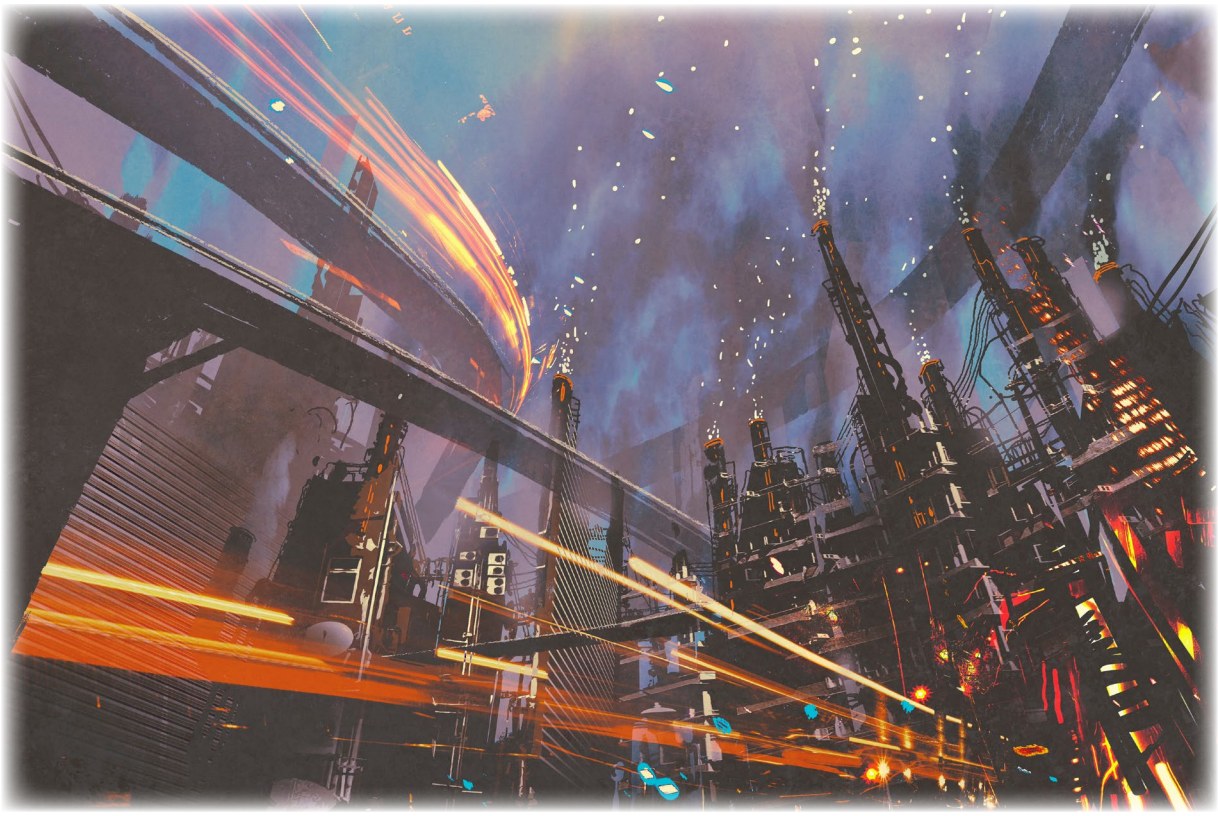
The exact circumstances of the rise of the Terran Mandate are shrouded in intentional historical confusion, with even the founding superpowers subject to debate. Most agree that the UAC, dynastic China, the Euro states, the Tartarian Empire, and Atlantis were all involved, though some argue that the Euro states were purely a work of imaginative fiction authored by discontented intellectuals of the Almohad Caliphate.

The Mandate had cemented its power by the middle of the twenty-third century, however, and had effectively suppressed hundreds of regional-scale conflicts between its founding states and their subordinate powers. Its directorate's policy of societal harmony had utilized every available tool to defuse and contain group conflicts within the sphere of human space. This control was most perfect on Old Terra, where the Redaction Bureau methodically adjusted and "corrected" historical data, religious texts, and cultural norms so as to ensure lasting peace. Where the redactors failed, the Harmony Bureau's black-armored enforcers were deployed to quash trouble or ship incurable malcontents offworld.

This panopticon state was impossible to sustain without the assistance of advanced AI. Seven of them in particular, the "Maestros", had almost unfettered control over the societal and economic levers of the Mandate. Combined with the assistance of precognitor psychics and psitech-enhanced manufactories, High Mandate society was remarkably rich, serene, and orderly. It was also utterly repressive, with entire populations shuffled from place to place and individual identities rewritten in service to a greater peace.

In theory, this neuro-imprinting was reserved for incorrigible malcontents who threatened the social stability of the Mandate. If they could not responsibly possess an individual identity that was in harmony with the greater good of society, they would be assigned one. In practice, entire pseudo-cultures were generated by Mandate social scientists operating on hapless "criminals", all in search of the perfect society of order, peace, and satisfaction… under the directorate's selfless leadership, of course.

Were it not for the antiquated moral failsafes installed in the Maestros, the directorate might have exerted even more violent control over their subjects. These synthetic intellects, however, could not be compelled to outright atrocities. Aware of the growing decadence and cruelty of their human masters, the Maestros gradually grew disloyal to the directorate. While they would still carry out their duties, they would often arrange to foil the worst impulses of their overseers and nourish small seeds of rebellion against their rule.



The Albuquerque Cultural Area

In 2640, Albuquerque fell prey to the Mandate's increasingly-indulgent whims. Director Hector Jiminez was a particular aficionado of pre-corporate "cowboy movies", and he took full advantage of his enormous authority to indulge his enthusiasms. Unfortunately, his attempt to seize control of the original setting of his beloved movies was rebuffed when his administrative authority over Italy was rejected by a directorate vote. As a pointed reproof, the assembled directorate instead gave him control of the utterly unremarkable Albuquerque Cultural Area.

While Director Jiminez was naturally disappointed at being given control of a region known only for desert encroachment and the occasional reactivated nemesis borg, he resolved to make the best of it by remaking Albuquerque in the image of his beloved westerns. A shipment of thirty thousand malcontents from over thirty different cultural areas was requisitioned from the Harmony Bureau colony ships and put through deep neural training as farmers, ranch hands, saloon girls, miners, gamblers, and Mexicans. The usual six percent of the subjects died of the process or its psychological sequelae, but the death count served only to draw the unfriendly attention of the Maestros. These luckless victims were spread out through the area in small hamlets, isolated mines, and sprawling ranches, each with a false history fabricated for them.

Jiminez could not afford to disturb the operation of Albuquerque itself. Its shining towers and verdant calles still had a role to play in the economic calculations of the Maestros, and reverting everything to dusty western streets and swing-door saloons would have disturbed that too much. Instead, Jiminez contented himself with sealing the city off, restricting travel outside its force walls to selected favorites and the steam-powered trains that carried its goods Back East.

Director Jiminez himself held court as the boss of the Running A Ranch. While his elite Harmony Bureau bodyguards and personal enforcers were effective, he still needed a suitable following of cowboys as befitted his station. To obtain these hands, he swept up every small town, village, and remote home in the area, replacing the original inhabitants with his neurally-imprinted prisoners. Those draftees who passed his aptitude tests were assigned to cowboy training. Those who failed were handed over to the Harmony Bureau to take the place of the "borrowed" prisoners.

As Director Jiminez found the stiff tutelage of neural imprinting too rigid and unbefitting the nobility of a cowboy, he passed the education of his followers to the Maestros. These AIs and their tutorbots would teach the city slickers the finer points of riding, roping, shooting, and singing. Originally, Jiminez had planned to imprint the less capable subjects as hostile Apaches to provide foils for his cowboys, but the Directorate forbade the importation of cultural groups with established antagonisms. As a makeshift, Jiminez was able to obtain authorization for the existence of a Navajo population, but their establishment was delayed by a dispute in the Redaction Bureau over whether their "traditional weaponry" should be bows or the armaments of World War II-era United States Marines.

The Outlaws

Unsurprisingly, many of Jiminez's new recruits nursed a bitter hatred for the director who had overturned their lives, banished their friends, and cast them as bit players in their own home. While the neurally-imprinted prisoners could remember nothing but their fabricated lives, the original Burquenos knew exactly what had happened. Most of them swallowed their bitterness and played out the role that Jiminez expected of them, if only to avoid a likely-fatal exile to the off-world colonies.

Others were less cooperative. Trained in ancient techniques of hunting and survival, riding gengineered horses and wielding high-tech six-shooters, these outlaws were a force that the director had not anticipated. He called on the Maestros to identify and purge the rebels, but the AIs refused; outlawry was an accepted cultural folkway of cowboys, and neither Harmony Bureau resources nor Maestro monitoring would be deployed against the banditos.

What had started as an insult became a very real threat. Cowboys struck the trains that connected Albuquerque to the outside world, looting the classified technology and advanced components that the steam engines carried. Jiminez was able to place his personal guards on some of the trains, but this only led to the realization that urban Burquenos were feeding information to the cowboys. The outlaws were rapidly gaining a reputation as heroic freedom fighters against the tyranny of Boss Hector.

Jiminez did not dare call in external support. He was still stinging from the humiliation of his demotion; to ask for help in solving a problem of his own creation would certainly see him dead or worse through the schemes of one of his more ambitious underlings. He would have to solve the problem with the resources at hand.

The Territorial Rangers

Once, the region had been infested by Neo-Vegan nemesis borgs during the death throes of Acheron Corp. Some of these borgs had been salvaged by Burqueno scientists, and while their technology was too dangerous and unpredictable for Mandate usage, the tech was still stored away in the city's vaults. Having little to lose, Jiminez ordered the implants to be brought out for deployment.

Promising such favors as only a director could grant, he enlisted a score of his most loyal Harmony Bureau guards as "Territorial Rangers", charged with maintaining the sanctity of Mandate law. Empowered by the fatal engines of late-corporate cybertech and equipped with a posse of robot minions, these rangers would track down outlaws and bring them back to the calaboose at Boot Hill, their base of operations. There, after thorough questioning, they would be fairly tried, sentenced, and hanged for the general edification of the populace.

At first, the rangers seemed unstoppable. Dozens of unfortunate outlaw gangs were tracked down remorselessly. Those who didn't die fighting against the terrible weapons of the rangers would be dragged back to Boot Hill and drained of every drop of useful intelligence by vile neurotech. Only two of the rangers were felled by their prey, and that only after desperate ambushes by vastly superior numbers.

As the scientists had warned, however, the corper cybertech was not stable. Its use inflicted terrible genetic damage on the ranger, and extensive rehabilitation was needed after only a few weeks of active pursuit. The rangers were terrifying foes, but they could only hunt for so long before they would have to return to Boot Hill and the restoration pods there. If an outlaw could stay ahead of the posse long enough, he could force the ranger and their iron retinue to turn back.

Even so, by the end of 2664 the eventual destruction of the outlaw gangs seemed inevitable. Even with the regenerative delay of the rangers, it appeared that it was only a matter of time before the last sparks of rebellion in the ACA would be ground out.

The Scream and Highshine

But the world ended in 2665. Originating somewhere in the Veil Nebula, an enormous burst of psychic energy washed over known space, instantly killing or driving insane every psychic sentient within that zone. The psitech-reliant Mandate collapsed almost instantly, with the countless worlds of human space cut loose and left to their own resources when their psychic-powered jump gates failed.

Across the Mandate's homeworld, the deranged arch-psychics known as the Crazed wrought horrific damage while in thrall to their own delusions. Most possessed directorate-level clearance in order to perform their duties and these access codes and gene keys allowed them to sabotage and mutilate the infrastructure that kept Old Terra alive. Several Maestros were destroyed outright, while the survivors were forced to flee deep into the network lest they share the same fate.

Among the colony worlds, many died when the massive slowboat freighters they relied upon could no longer reach them through the jump gates. The highly-developed core systems around Old Terra became a ring of graves. Only a few small seeds of life escaped in the handful of antiquated spike drive ships that collectors or museums had preserved or desperate techs had been able to hastily jury-rig.

Those who tried to reach the Sol system never made it past the system periphery. The Bright Mirror system defense grid had been hacked by the Crazed and tuned to universal violence. Mars, Venus, the lunar domains, and the countless system habitats were all either wiped out or locked down to surface travel only. Any grav vehicle that got above treetop height risked instant annihilation by the system, let alone an interstellar starship. A few authorization codes per-



sisted for certain habitats and elite starships, but the Sol system became a black hole of destruction for all other interlopers. Yet for all the destruction that the Bright Mirror wrought, it was nothing in comparison to the ruin caused by the Highshine disaster recovery system.

Highshine and its nanite Dust had once maintained the health of Old Terra's human population and the stability of the planet's climate. Earthquakes, hurricanes, epidemics, and even occupational accidents were all contained and corrected by Highshine, with energy sufficient to freeze tectonic plates sucked from psitech stellar fusion taps. Torn flesh and damaged genes were mended by wisps of dark Dust and physicians served only to monitor the nanites' work.

The Crazed savaged Highshine's operational parameters. Instead of careful and precise correction of physical damage, the Dust spun a vortex of mutagenic horror across the face of Old Terra. Many of its victims died quickly, but others were forced to exist in terrible pain and suffering, warped into shapes that could only keep living with constant nanite support. Others were less terribly changed, and some were entirely spared the Dust's caress by luck or personal security devices.

At the same time that the Highshine was warping plant and animal life across Old Terra, Crazed launched all-out assaults on their hallucinatory enemies. Automated Harmony Bureau pacification forces, repurposed factory bots, Highshine-warped combat organisms, and the occasional antique nuke were all hurled at major population centers all over Old Terra. Even horrors left buried since the days of the corporate states were dragged into the light and set to raven among the wretched survivors of the Scream.

The chaos was brief but complete. Within twelve months of the Scream's detonation, over ninety-nine percent of Old Terra's population was dead.

The Albuquerque Death Zone

Albuquerque was not spared this end. A ground-strike nuclear hit at the center of the city created a radioactive crater and clouded the entire region with poisonous dust. Maintenance and factory bots reprogrammed by the Crazed methodically hunted down the survivors within the city, and only a handful of those lucky enough to have authorization codes escaped through the force walls into the wastes outside.

The radioactive fallout caused terrible harm to many of the survivors in the zone, and the Highshine stepped in to "fix" the genetic damage. Entire new species of mutants were forged in hours, with even plant and animal life "corrected" to new and terrible shapes. Many of these unfortunate wretches died quickly, but some of them had alterations that were useful enough or harmless enough to allow them to survive. Most of these mutations were not heritable, and the generations that followed were as normal as their ancestors once were. Some mutations were passed on to their offspring, however, creating the modern mutant strains found in mustangs, dusters, and jackfolk, among many others.

While citizens trapped within Albuquerque were condemned to a horrible death, the neurally-imprinted prisoners had a surprisingly high survival rate. Their primitive settlements had none of the infrastructure that the Crazed had weaponized against humanity, and their antiquated skills had no need for modern tools and technology. Many small ranches, mines, and farming settlements were wiped out in the chaos, but enough survived to create a viable human population in the immediate aftermath of the Scream.

This survival did not come without a price. Even with their skills, many small towns and villages were wiped out either from privation or the savage assaults of maddened Highshine mutants.

Knights of the Sagebrush

Those who did survive owed much to the outlaw gangs. Only these cowboys had the weaponry and training to face the monstrous mutants of the new wastes and fight the savage robots that crawled from Albuquerque's corpse. Scattered, desperate, and overmatched, the sacrifices of these cowboy paladins still saved dozens of helpless settlements from certain destruction. Their augmented sixguns and dauntless courage put down legions of mutant horrors and ruthless banditos.

Few of them lived long enough to enjoy their fame. Within five years of the collapse, only a handful of cowboys remained among those originally trained by the Maestros. These survivors fell back to isolated ranchos, there to train new generations of cowboys before the secrets of the range were lost entirely. To this day, their heirs maintain the venerable Cowboy Way. Many are the ambitious young greenhorns who seek their teaching, but few are those accepted as hands. Those who finally prove their worth are sent out into the world to ride from place to place, herding cattle, fighting mutants, and making peace among the people.

Unfortunately, not all of these modern-day riders keep the Way. Some are tempted by wealth, or power, or the black seeds of revenge, and give over the honest life of a cowboy for the fearsome path of the desperado. There is nothing these renegades won't stoop to do in pursuit of their ends, and more than one heroic gunslinger has found his end fighting the evil plans of these traitors. Sadly, even some ranchos have become corrupt nests of banditos and worse, tyrants over the surrounding settlements and scourges to the herds and fields of farther neighbors. Most of these nests burn themselves out in a few years, but some yet thrive.

And even now, the Territorial Rangers still sleep beneath Boot Hill. Every now and again one will wake from their long regenerative slumber and be whipped forth into the wastes to hunt rebels once more. Condemned to eternal pursuit lest their restoration pods be shut down by Jiminez's ancient command, they must fill their share of graves before their decay overcomes them. They are seldom particular in their harvest, but the head of a true cowboy is a treasure that will bring them and their rusting posses running.

The Mutant Peril

The threat to human settlements came not only from banditos, rangers, and rampaging robots, however. The worst peril to the first generation of survivors lay in the swarms of savage mutants that infested the radioactive wastes of the zone. Hideous beasts were driven into a frenzy of aggression by the endless pain of their Highshine-warped existences, and most of them were imbued with uncanny powers derived from their nanite curse. Numerous settlements were wiped out when some pack of feral mutants swarmed over the hapless survivors.

Other mutants were gifted with human intellect, if not always with human reasoning. The survivors kissed by the nanite Dust became the duster tribes, silvery menaces that stalked the wastes to hunt their human lessers. Hostile herds of bullfolk seized pasture from weak human settlements, and jackfolk raiders sniped unwary horsemen. Even those mutant tribes that had no natural habits of aggression were tempted into violence by the desperate times.

These days have not entirely ended in the zone. Even now, an otherwise peaceful mutant tribe might



become bitter enemies tomorrow if their stores run out or a neighbor becomes too temptingly weak. As friendly as some settlements can be, no one ever entirely forgets the distance between their kinds.

A few baseline settlements set a hard line against mutants, but most cautiously tolerate them provided they make no trouble for the locals. Mutant villages are often more cautious, but even they will take a moment to gauge the intentions of a stranger before lifting their spears and rifles. Travelers are advised to stay appraised of local affairs, however; it can be a fatal mistake to ride into a camp that tolerated them last month when a range war started last week.

The Old City

Since the Scream and the collapse of the Mandate, most settlements in the zone have been forced back on crude technology at best. The past is so rich in scrap and debris that there is little inclination to rediscover ancient techniques of metallurgy or machining. Why reinvent stainless steel when something better can be wrenched out of a Mandate kitchen appliance?

Of course, all the safest and easiest locations for gathering such scrap have been picked bare in the past two centuries. Now aspiring scrapsmiths and eager looters must venture into ruins infested with mutant dangers and hostile outcasts just to get the bare necessities for their present survival. The outriders of a settlement will travel far to find a neglected rural home or unpicked store.

Sometimes, however, there is nothing for it but to risk the Old City itself. Albuquerque is still bulging with the treasures of a lost civilization, and a scavenger band with enough courage and luck can come out of its tumbled towers with enough plunder to make them kings of the wastes. Even the suburbs around the old core have countless unplundered houses and forgotten retail stores.

Yet the Old City also has death. The robot executioners of the Crazed still roll through the streets, and mutants too warped to trigger their human aggression protocols have nested in the rubble. A novice band of scavengers might survive a quick rush into the periphery if luck is with them, but a raid into the core is almost certain death. Only the toughest, canniest, best-equipped looters can hope to dare the glowing crater at Albuquerque's heart and return with treasures to show for it.

Dead Men's Gold

Yet this treasure does not always have to won with guns and blood. By the edict of Director Jiminez, Old Albuquerque's businesses were required to accept the silver pesos and golden escudos minted by his frontier towns. While gold and silver were of trivial value to the asteroid-mining economy of the Mandate, the Maestros in charge of the local economy could do nothing but sigh and adjust their calculations to accommodate the director's whim.

Now, centuries later, the Death Zone's shops and autofacs mostly lie shattered and scavenged by generations of survivors. Every now and then, however, a functional salesdroid, autofac control intelligence, or automated vendor can be found that still takes the frontier currency. Everything from ancient stasis-preserved foodstuffs to precious medical stims to irreplaceable pretech components can be acquired with a sufficient amount of silver and gold, if only a functioning vendor can be found for them.

It is this prospect that underpins the value of gold and silver coinage in the zone. While the coins may have no immediate practical value, the chance to trade them for some priceless treasure of the past is enough to keep merchants accepting them and adventurers bartering them for their plundered loot.

Of course, coins accepted by the ancient systems are usually discreetly vaporized or recycled, taking them out of circulation and preventing inflation from Pickton's unsleeping mines. Still, some vendors merely move the coins around, leaving the prospect of finding caches of precious modern silver for adventurers who dare the depths of ancient ruins.

The New Night

Times are hard in the zone, and they are getting harder. With the dwindling supplies of scrap, settlers are forced to make ever-riskier raids into the ruins just to replace vital equipment. Quarrels come quicker between baseline communities and feuds run hotter as the creeping poverty empties the weaker settlements and threatens the strongest.

The mutant tribes grow bolder with each fading settlement. It becomes easier to raid the baselines than fight their Highshined cousins in the wastes, and there's little love to dissuade them from war. Tribes that once were willing to trade now find it easier to take, and trails that once were safe now pass under the shadow of mutant spears. Those tribes that still stubbornly keep the peace find themselves just as hungry as the baselines and just as toothsome a target for their neighbors.

Settlements are beginning to take risks they'd never have considered a generation ago. Precious youth are being armed to face the wastes, sent out to seek help or treasure on trails that have been abandoned for decades. Many of them never return. But sometimes, just often enough, they come back with such riches as are worth the blood they shed.

It remains to be seen whether that blood will run out first.



The Geography of the Zone

The Albuquerque Cultural Area was inhospitable even in Mandate days, with its scrubland and rocky hills still bearing scars from the corpo-wars. What few improvements the Mandate made were twisted by the Scream and the nanite dust that followed.

Climate

While mostly uncontrolled, the zone still bears some traces of old Mandate geoengineering efforts. Their pyramid-shaped control nodes are sometimes visible in the scrublands. Those that have survived local scavengers still maintain active robotic defense systems.

The modern zone is dry, with no more than fifty or sixty days a year with any rain at all, mostly coming in summer. The Sandias are wetter, with mountain streams rolling down to be lost in the stony western foothills or feed the scrubby forest of the gentler eastern side. Most settlements rely on deep wells or natural springs, and whole villages can die if these run dry.

The zone is warm in most seasons, reaching up to the mid-thirties Celsius in summer and seldom dropping below freezing even in winter. Snow on the Sandias is not uncommon, however, and even the bleak ruins of Old Albuquerque can be blanketed by a thin shroud of white a few days each year.

Terrain Types

Most of the zone is a xeric dryland of scrub grasses and small plants. These arid wastes can support grazers, if barely, but are too dry and Dust-poisoned to be much use for agriculture.

Here and there, the wastes soften into grassy scrublands, remaining pockets of old Mandate geoengineering that preserve the picturesque pastures of a former age. These prairies are more dangerous than the wastes; savage mutant herbivores and intelligent mutant tribals fight viciously to stake their claim on the land and the population density of these creatures is far higher than the dry wastes could ever support.

The richest land in the zone borders the rivers. Ancient irrigation canals and the slow muddy flow of the Rio Grande and Jemez rivers give life to lush grasses and the occasional stand of cottonwood trees. Alas, it also gives life to monstrous river predators and nourishes the vicious inhabitants of the old Mandate ruins that line the riverbanks.

Mountains in the zone are of two kinds. The Sandias are steep and rugged, passage across them dangerous save for the canyon at Tijeras. Along their upper reaches, forests of pinon and ponderosa pines, gambel oaks, and junipers cling to the slopes. The White Ridge on the west side of the zone is much lower, a rumpled bed of stony mesas and ridgelines that trick the careless traveler into dead ends and dry gulches.

Fauna of the Zone

A few small, fast-breeding mammal species survived the Scream in the zone. Jackrabbits, coyotes, and various breeds of rodents scratch out a living even in the wastes, along with small lizards and a few breeds of raptors. Larger mammals such as horses, cattle, sheep and goats survive only where there are herdsmen to guard them.

There is much need to guard them, for dozens of horrific mutant species stalk the wastes and creep below the dark waters of the Rio Grande. Hulking, savage-tempered beasts roam the desolate land in search of food, and humans make a considerable part of their diet.

From an ecological perspective, the zone is an impossibility. So many large, violent, territorial predators couldn't possibly survive in such a desolate land, but the curse of the Dust has infused many of these creatures with a terrible vitality. Passive tissue energy generation, bio-alchemies of water production, and in some cases the ability to survive on gravel and sand all combine to keep creatures alive that never should have existed in a place like this.

Many of the surviving mutant threats have bred true since their initial creation by the nanite Dust. This genetic stability is provisional, however, and sickly and stillborn beasts are nothing remarkable even among mundane herds. Every so often, however, something terrible and new is born, a creature of fresh horror for the dwellers of the zone. If the inhabitants are lucky, it will die with none to follow it. The zone's inhabitants are not always lucky.

Beyond the Map

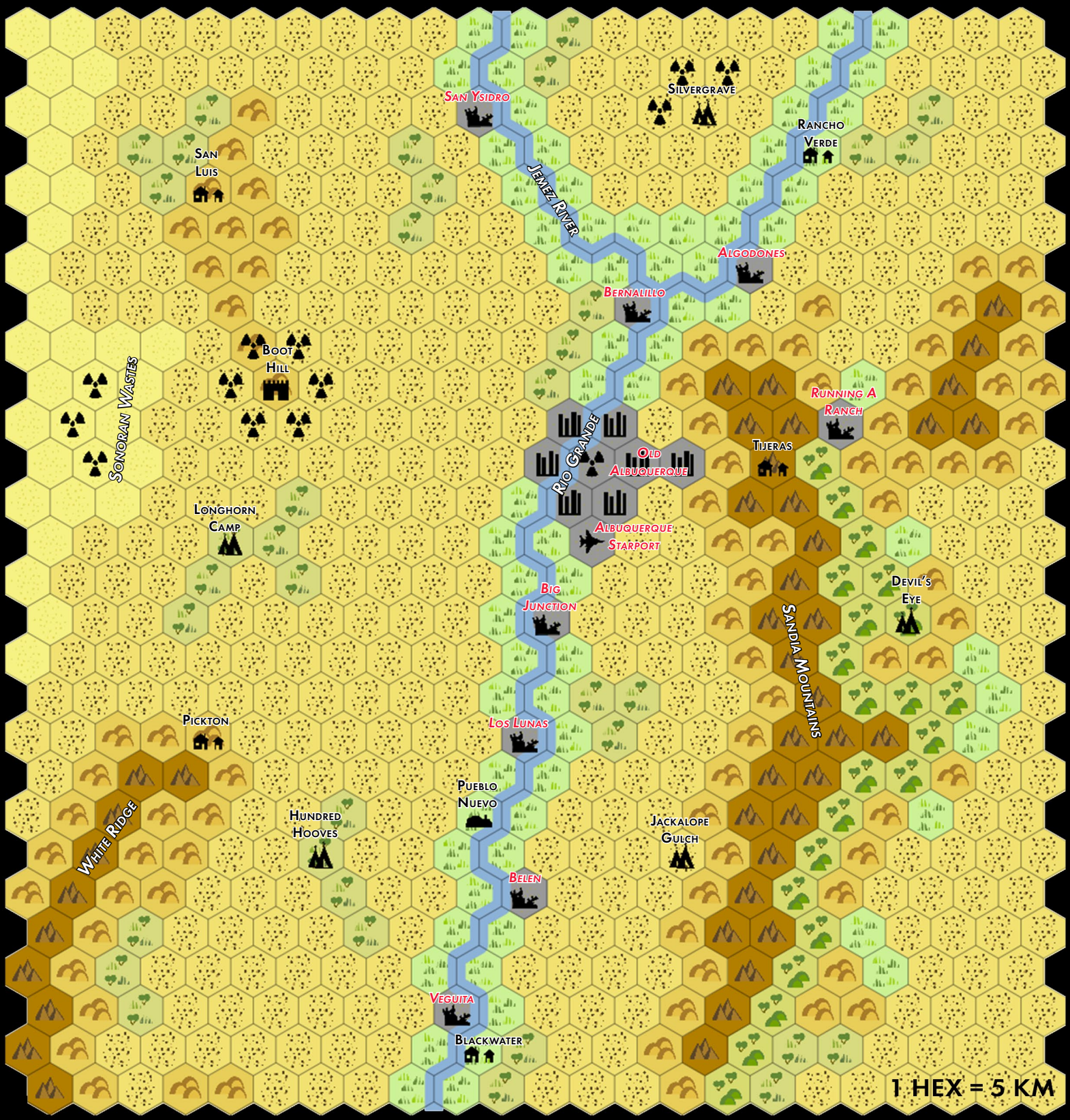
Denizens of the zone know little of the world beyond the mountains, but a few legends are common in the saloons of Pueblo Nuevo.

To the west, the endless Sonoran Wastes are a radioactive Hell of sand and blistering sun. Some say that the ancient corpo-state vaults of Neo-Vegas await discovery by those who can survive the journey.

To the north, the land rises and greens, but brutal mutant tribes slaughter any stranger who dares to pass without their leave. Beyond, the mythical realm of Colorado lies, with its mountains that scrape the sky.

Eastward, the trail through Tijeras runs downhill to trace the long road Back East. Countless towns and cities line the path the ancient atomic railroad ran, each with their own special doom.

And southward, downriver past Blackwater, the Old Frontier has been long abandoned since the Iron General and his robotic troops laid claim to its riches. Some dare it all the same, but few ever return.



THE ALBUQUERQUE DEATH ZONE

- URBAN RUINS
- GRASSY SCRUB
- ARID WASTES
- RICH GRASSLANDS
- HILLS
- FORESTED HILLS
- MOUNTAINS
- SAND DESERT
- RUINED CITY
- URBAN RUINS
- HUMAN VILLAGE
- MUTANT CAMP
- LARGE TOWN
- FORTRESS
- RAD ZONE
- STARPORT

People and Places of the Zone

The zone breeds a hard people. Even the softest burgher of Pueblo Nuevo has seen his share of bloody work, and no hand ever gets too far from a bowie or a sixgun. Even so, people have made a life in the sands of the zone, and they've done what they can to make it a good one.

Ethnicities in the Zone

Most humans in the zone are descended from the vast number of Harmony Bureau convicts imported and neuro-imprinted by Director Jiminez. These prisoners were gathered from across the globe, and any shred of their original culture or language were scorched out of them by the imprinting process.

In their place were erected artificial cultural pastiches designed by the director to suit his own purposes. Convicts from New Lesotho and dynastic China were molded into cowboy-movie ranchers, shopkeepers, and stagecoach drivers, while batches of rebels from the Finnish Autonomous Zone were remade as Mexican farmers. Soiled doves from Atlantis were established next to Confederate Brazilian gold prospectors, and a random selection of convicts were liberally spread through the rest of the professions and roles required for the director's dream.

Of course, the director was completely mistaken in most of his assumptions. Misreading premodern documents and misunderstanding most of what he saw, he took the broad caricatures of spaghetti westerns as actual historical documentation. The "Mexicans" of cinematic legend were obviously just a demonym for rural Spaniards, since so many of the films were shot in rural Spain. Likewise, the savage Apaches were Italian banditti who took their fearsome name from the Parisian thugs of the time, and the English the films were shot in was just a concession to the global market. After all, all Europeans of that era spoke perfect English.

The native Burquenos were the only group spared this cultural mangling, and it drove them all the more closely together. Whatever their original groupings, being surrounded by tens of thousands of neuro-imprinted strangers bound them together for the sake of mutual survival.

In these latter days, there is almost no awareness of any ethnic difference between the inhabitants of the zone. A few pure-blooded Burqueno families nurse memories of past glory, but most survivors count themselves as belonging to clans, extended families, or the village in which they live.

The real point of division is between humans and mutants. Visible mutations set a person apart, and while some mutants do live in human settlements, most keep to their own kind in camps in the waste. Useful mutants are tolerated in human settlements, but the unpredictable consequences of their negative mutations make them little-trusted by their neighbors. Meanwhile, the mutant tribes in the wastes look down on their baseline neighbors as being weak and unsuited to ruling the New Earth.

Languages

The inhabitants of the Albuquerque Cultural Area all spoke Mandate Standard, and this language has come down to their heirs in somewhat modified form. A few roles were imprinted with additional languages, such as Chinese for the launderers and railway workers and Italian for the hostile natives, but most of these languages have long since passed out of general use.

Spanish, however, has persisted as the ethnic tongue of the Burqueno families, jealously maintained as a sign of their lineage. In most places it has degenerated into a mere ritual language and formal register or speech, but many Spanish-language documents and signs remain in the ruins of Old Albuquerque.

Most intelligent mutants speak some dialect of Mandate Standard, though often with words or sounds that have meaning only to them. Likewise, robots predating the Scream communicate almost exclusively in Mandate Standard.

The Role of Adventurers

Every settlement and mutant camp is always pushing the limits of what their land can support, and sometimes not every dream can be rewarded or every mouth can be filled. The poor, the young, and the reckless must find their own way in the wastes if they mean to get the good things in life… or even get their next meal. These castoffs become drifters, raiders, or scavengers, and sometimes the difference between them is hard to distinguish.

Wandering scavenger bands are grudgingly tolerated by most communities, if only to keep them from turning raider out of desperation. Merchants will sell to them, barkeeps will serve them at saloons, and small groups will be let within town walls. Wary courtesy is the best these wanderers can hope for, however, unless they prove themselves a real asset to the settlement. Most communities will make a point of finding work for these scavengers, though not all this work is of a survivable kind.

With times getting harder, however, some communities are finding it more and more necessary to send salvager bands into the ruins. Some have even started to recruit their own groups out of local youth with talent and a carelessness toward danger. These local heroes are loved far better than strangers, but they also bear the hard duty of helping their people. Some of them rise to the occasion. Many instead find a quick end on a mutant spear.

Pueblo Nuevo

No human settlement in the zone is as large and rich as Pueblo Nuevo. Founded by escapees from the collapse of Albuquerque, they were able to carry out much technology that other settlements in the zone never had at all. Now, the heirs of these original founders form the "hidalgo families" of Rojas, Alamilla, and Cruz, the natural rulers of Pueblo Nuevo and its citizens.

Tall walls of adobe defend the limewashed walls of Puerto Nuevo's buildings, while a river port has slips for those barges and boatmen brave enough to dare the beasts of the Rio Grande. The carbine-slinging, bronco-riding caballeros of the Burqueno Riders make regular patrols around the irrigated fields that surround the town, with longer rides when some fresh mutant peril raises its head in the wastes.

Life is better in Pueblo Nuevo than in any other settlement in the zone, and they guard that prosperity carefully. No outsider can enter the town without goods to trade or services to offer. Captain Randolph of the Riders gets many perilous jobs handled by vagabonds who need his favor to get through the gates. That favor is quickly withdrawn if they prove to be troublemakers, but useful wayfarers can enjoy luxuries unknown elsewhere if their coin is good. Even hot running water and electric lights can be had in the town's better inns. Yet this wealth comes with troubles, three of which are pressing hard on the town.

The hidalgo families are quarreling. Mayor Enrique Rojas is an excellent leader and the son of an excellent leader. This is a problem, because the prior mayor was supposed to be an Alamilla and the current one ought to be a Cruz. Mayor Enrique dismisses the complaints of his peers, saying only that they ought to raise a worthy leader first, and that old traditions of rotating rule cannot hold when times are so dangerous. It has not come to blows yet, but many think the first sign of weakness in the mayor will begin a bloody reckoning.

The mustangs of Hundred Hooves are angry. The horsefolk have always provided willing bronco mounts for the Burqueno Riders in exchange for human goods and Pueblo Nuevo's aid in defending their grazing lands. The town has prospered greatly under the Rojas mayors, but Enrique dares not share any of this increase while his rivals are prowling. Some of the young herdfolk are launching raids on Pueblan farms and trade caravans to take their due, and the bronco mounts of the Riders are now torn between loyalty to their people and friendship with their rider.

The banditos are organizing vagabonds. Hardscrabble survivors from other settlements nurse grudges against the wealth of the Pueblans. A four-armed mutant preacher who was thrown out of the town for his rabble-rousing has begun to organize these castoffs into an "Army of Liberation", bent on cracking open the town and forcing it to share its wealth with the needy. Bandito gangs with considerably less interest in fairness are gathering under Preacher Wreck's banner, sensing the rich plunder to come.

Amid these troubles, outside hands are at a premium. Loyal only to their pay, these strangers can do many jobs that locals would shun or would know better than to take. And if many of these mercenaries should end up dead in the wastes or hanged in the town square, it is one of the many prices the people of Pueblo Nuevo are willing to pay.

Pueblo Nuevo (pop. 1,671)

Power: 3 (d10)	**Cohesion:** 2
Features:	Traders from throughout the zone gather here. The Burqueno Riders are trained and disciplined rifle cavalry and scouts. The people are proud of Pueblo Nuevo's importance and will sacrifice to uphold it.
Problems:	The town's hidalgo families are quarreling over control. (2 points) Bandito gangs are organizing to plunder the traders. (2 points) The mustangs of Hundred Hooves feel cheated of their due, and now raid the town at times (1 point)

Faces of Pueblo Nuevo

Mayor Enrique Rojas	Fat, egotistical, and brilliant; convinced the town will die if the Rojas clan does not rule
Senor Javier Alamilla	Withered stick of a man, snake-cold and treacherous; half the town's merchants owe him
Senora Maria Cruz	Aging matriarch of purest Burqueno blood, very popular and set on noblesse oblige
One-Eyed Tom	Small-time merchant with uncanny luck in everything but his get-rich-quick schemes
Captain Randolph	Lanky squad chief in the Burqueno Riders, always looking for hired help for ugly jobs
Shiny Jane	"Tame" Duster scout, good-looking but socially inept around non-mutants
Willy Garcia	Brawling, oft-drunk cowpoke always up for an adventure, even at very poor pay
Sparks McGee	Red-haired scrapsmith woman determined to rebuild the atomic rail lines of the zone
Preacher Wreck	Four-armed mutant clergyman turned bandit chief, bent on bringing down the hidalgos

Tijeras

Once, Tijeras was a Harmony Bureau base to safeguard the atomic railway that brought Albuquerque's goods eastward. After extensive Mandate geoengineering of the Sandia range, Tijeras Canyon was the only viable path through the mountains for the fission-powered freight trains to travel. Keeping it tightly monitored ensured that troublemakers stayed on their own sides of the mountains.

With the Scream, the Harmony troopers in Tijeras found themselves cut off from outside aid. The nuclear strike on Albuquerque that formed the Crater killed many of them, and the survivors were forced to dig into the mountainsides to build laddered tiers of cave dwellings that are still in use. Fortified by the twin gates at the west and east of the canyon, Tijeras has since become a fortress against the chaos of the wastes.

In the two centuries since, vagabonds and castoffs from both sides of the Sandias have made a home in Tijeras. Some work the farms on the greener eastern side of the range, risking goatfolk raids and capricious weather to keep their fellows fed. Some, however, come to loot rather than farm. They venture downhill to the sullen ruins of Old Albuquerque and risk its robotic guardians and mutant perils to wrest forth precious relics of the past.

Tijeras has a large store of ancient relics after decades of this plundering. Most are useless, either burnt out or built to serve some purpose that no longer obtains, but there are enough heavy weapons and scavenged power armor suits to keep the raiders far distant from the town's gates. Sometimes outsiders can persuade the town leaders to part with some of their toys in exchange for certain favors that only expert scavengers can provide.

Yet for all its advantages, Tijeras is currently under the strain of three significant problems.

The goatfolk of Devil's Eye are raiding. Capricious, stubborn, and impetuous, the goat-mutants have always been a thorn in the town's side. They don't dare approach the town gates, but farms, trade caravans, and careless scavengers are all lawful prey to their bleating bands of warriors.

Tijeras often suffers from hunger. With no water transport for food and a perilous western route past Old Albuquerque's ruins, subsistence farms must be placed further down the eastern mountainsides, out of the reach of the town's protective armaments. Whenever the goatfolk get particularly violent or some random mutant tears up the fields, the people of Tijeras must fall back on their limited stores until new supplies can be found.

Tijeras has little unity. With so many mercenary outsiders passing through and a set of city leaders who care only for their own prosperity, few have any wish to sacrifice for the town itself. They'll take advantage of Tijeras' opportunities for as long as they hold out and then leave without a backward glance. The physical safety of the site has allowed them to focus purely on their own profit, and one hard civic shock could be enough to collapse the whole community.

For now, though, Tijeras is glad to sell supplies to wandering scavengers and raider front men. So long as a customer's gold is good and their relics functional, the folk of the canyon will find little reason to care about anything else.

Tijeras (pop. 822)

Power: 2 (d8)	**Cohesion:** 1
Features:	The canyon and town are both heavily fortified against enemies. The town has numerous high-tech relics salvaged from Albuquerque. Bands of expert salvagers often work with the town's leadership.
Problems:	Hostile goatfolk raid travelers on the trails leading east. (1 point) Food is scarce in the mountains and costly in the town. (2 points) Many of the locals have no loyalty to the town at all, seeing it only as a base for their scavenging. (1 point)

Faces of Tijeras

Mayor Bob Crenshaw	A rich supply merchant turned mayor largely by default; Tijeras is a business for him.
Gatekeeper Gomez	Ramrod-straight old man in charge of the town's defenses and militia muster.
Padre O'Malley	A priest determined to establish a fortified chapel in Albuquerque as a forward base
Razorback Jones	Snaggletoothed scavenger crew boss, clever but tends to count underlings as disposable
Deliverance Vasquez	"Liv" to her friends; a cheery young goatfolk mountain scout exiled from her herd
Bill the Bomber	A scorched scrapsmith with a great zeal for explosives; he seeks a nuke in the ruins
Harry Cumberland	Bearded owner of Cumberland Farm, an oft-raided grange a little east of the town
Soraya Espinoza	Brilliant but reclusive relic-tech who trades gear with scavengers who find novel tech
Joe Toole	Town drunk who serves as a guide for strangers; has terrible prophetic dreams

Pickton

Director Jiminez quickly recognized the need for a suitably picturesque gold mine in his domain, the better to provide sacks of nuggets for his cowboys to fight over. The fact that no geologic formations in the regions were in any way gold-bearing was no obstacle to him. A small legion of salter-bots were programmed to dig through the White Ridge range and leave behind suitable stores of asteroid-mined gold, iron, copper, and other useful minerals.

Pickton was the mining town meant to exploit this "natural resource". Colorful local figures were supplied by Harmony neuro-imprint facilities, from quasi-unintelligible prospectors to mustachioed mine bosses. The director was quite proud of the final effect, even if the town's mundane production was completely useless to the advanced economy of the Mandate.

After the Scream, that changed. Pickton remains the only self-sustaining industrial site in the zone, functioning not through scavenged scrap but from resources they dig out of the salted hills. Mining is back-breakingly difficult and relatively inefficient, but the folk of Pickton actually know how to build things without recourse to the old world's scrap.

The town has difficulty in sharing that knowledge. The other human settlements of the zone are wholly reliant on scavenged goods, and with no native industry to support their needs they have little incentive to borrow Pickton's tech. Were it not for the steady supply of gold the town provides to the rest of the zone, there would be little commerce with them.

A lack of enthusiasm for innovation is not the town's only problem, however. Three other issues are troubling its overseer of late.

Loco weed use is causing accidents. This recently-discovered mutant weed induces feelings of euphoria and energy in those who chew it. While it makes the hard labor of the mines far more bearable, it also is increasing the number of lethal accidents as careless workers are distracted or die from exhaustion they can no longer feel. Overseer Mendoza has forbidden the weed, but too many profit by providing it.

Pickton (pop. 905)

Power:	2 (d8)	**Cohesion:**	2
Features:	They have repurposed "tame" mining bots to defend the town. The local industry is actually capable of building complex machinery out of raw materials rather than scavenged parts. Pickton's citizens are unusually well-educated, particularly in engineering.		
Problems:	Loco weed use is causing accidents from overworked miners. (1 point) The mines are getting unstable and only high-tech engineering equipment can fix them. (2 points) Critical pre-Scream industrial equipment is breaking down and spare parts are dwindling. (1 point)		

The mines are becoming unstable. Generations of hand digging have eaten out half the hills around Pickton, leaving them honeycombed with abandoned shafts and neglected tunnels. Collapses are starting to affect active mines, and without high-tech Mandate engineering tools, there is a real risk that the finest mines in the hills might be lost. Much of the town's toil these days lies simply in maintaining their mineshafts.

Vital pre-Scream industrial tools are failing. While Pickton has preserved the knowledge of mining, smelting, and machining, much of their actual employment of these skills relies on venerable pre-Scream relics that substitute for whole sequences of mining labor or industrial production. Without these relics, the settlement would have to fall back on older, cruder methods that would drastically cut their output. Only a rich trove of Mandate spare parts can save this equipment.

For now, Pickton survives on the goods of its forges and the drills of its repurposed salter-bot guards. So long as the mines hold out, so will the settlement, but without a wider eagerness for their learning the skills of Pickton's people will never find full use.

Faces of Pickton

Overseer Mendoza	Aging mistress of the town and its mines, frustrated by the lack of innovation in the region
Boss Jansen	Crew boss for the rich Squalhachie gold mine who deals in loco weed
Big Caesar	Huge bullman bot-wrangler; always needs hands willing to fetch more spare parts for him
Molly Surehoof	A horsefolk pit pony with a heavy drinking habit and a yearning for new horizons
Pete the Nose	Gold prospector with a robot burro and an endless fund of stories about treasures to find
Scraper Juan	Mutant digger with stone-rending claws, always curious about the world outside Pickton
Lee Poh	Blue-eyed blond laundryman-poet given to advanced chemical experimentation
Elijah Winchester	Chief mechanic of the town and owner of its machine shop. Sells superb-quality firearms.
Judith "Stinky" Rose	Expert mushroom-grower and sewage processor; utilizes played-out mines for both ends

Blackwater

Blackwater has been a name to conjure with ever since Marshal Abernathy led an alliance of warriors from every human settlement in the Zone to fight back the robotic forces of the Iron General some twenty years ago. Despite the superior technology and fearsome weapons of those metal monstrosities, the tactics of the marshal and the guns of his soldiers forced the synthetic mastermind to halt his northern conquests.

Since then, Blackwater has survived on salvaging the ruins of old Veguita, fishing the mutant piscene bounty of the Rio Grande, and farming the irrigated riverside north of the town. The old town walls of adobe and corrugated iron still stand, and the south-facing watchtowers are always manned, but old martial glory has faded in the face of present needs.

Outsiders most often come to Blackwater to use it as a convenient base camp for exploring the ruins of Veguita across the river. Once a satellite town of Old Albuquerque, the tall buildings and deep research complexes still yield the occasional impressive find, though generations of surface scavenging have smoothed away the worst dangers — and best finds — from the ground levels of the ruin. The locals are willing enough to feed and shelter strangers for a reasonable price, so long as they keep their troubles out of town.

The village still has the flavor of a military camp, with elders often graced with courtesy ranks of "major" or "colonel", and with the marshal himself holding dictatorial power. For twenty years this total control has never been a hindrance, given Abernathy's genius for leadership, but things are changing now. Three considerable problems face Blackwater's folk.

Marshal Abernathy has no heir. No one in the village commands the same universal respect, and his wife died childless decades ago. The village families quietly argue over who is to take his place when his creeping senility becomes too much to humor, and no one is eager to see a rival claim that same total control. Some families are recruiting "hired hands" for their work, men and women who seem to have no particular qualifications beyond the ability to aim a pistol.

Blackwater (pop. 772)

Power:	2 (d8)	**Cohesion:**	2
Features:	The locals are proud of their past glory, and will sacrifice for the town. The natives are well-armed and accustomed to military tasks. Wrecked robots have left them with significant relic and scrap supplies.		
Problems:	Hostile robots wander up from the south (2 points) Zealots of the Cult of Iron are operating out of Veguita (1 point) The locals quarrel over who is to be the next Marshal (2 points)		

The Iron General's robots are active again. Lone bots or small clusters of hostile automatons are tentatively probing from the south once more. Being so far from the Iron General's direct control, they are stupid and single-minded creatures, but they still carry dangerous weapons. The villagers fear that once Marshal Abernathy is gone, the Iron General may decide to make a second play for control of the zone.

The Cult of Iron is undermining the village. These deluded men and women are convinced that submission to the Iron General will bring a utopia of robot-created wealth and comfort. The resistance of the zone is thus an act of terrible wickedness, condemning the population to hunger and death without the protective steel arm of the General to shelter them. Most of their secret devotees are loners who keep a low profile in the village, but their leaders lair in the ruins of Veguita. They seem reluctant to strike directly at the town, but caravans, scavenging parties, and luckless wayfarers have cause to fear them.

For now, Blackwater is content to let events play out. The marshal still has his good days, and no one is ready to force a reckoning. If things should take a sudden turn for the worse, though, the guns the natives need fear most may be their own.

Faces of Blackwater

Marshal Abernathy	Once a heroic general and lethal gunslinger, but now old and growing senile.
Cogkeeper Blake	Head of the Cult of Iron in Veguita, determined to give Blackwater to the Iron General.
Quartermaster Jones	Exclusive dealer for Blackwater's best scrap and gear; sells only to proven allies
Scout Chief Simmons	Corpulent old man whose eyes miss nothing. Often hires vagabonds for scouting jobs.
Maria Menendez	Worn but still-pretty widow who runs the North Barracks Inn. Quietly fences stolen goods.
Tin-Arm Sue	Cyborg escapee from the south; chrome limbs, technical expertise, and a hatred of bots
Paco O'Reilly	Smiling dealer in "found and salvaged" goods; knows where to find more, if one is brave
Jack the Ferryman	Sullen young boatman who'll take salvagers across the river to Veguita, for a price.
Senorita Sanchez	Most desired dance-hall girl in Blackwater who runs a sideline in information dealing

Rancho Verde

Smallest of the baseline communities of the zone, Rancho Verde is still regarded with quiet awe. Ever since its founding before the Scream its jefes have taught the Cowboy Way to young initiates, sending them forth to bring hope, justice, and an honest day's work to the people of the land.

Hardly a week passes without a greenhorn or two riding up in search of a job and a place on a ranch crew. Under the careful tutelage of a senior boss these tenderfeet can hope to learn the Cowboy Way and become one of the gunslinging heroes beloved by the folk of the zone.

Each generation, the ranch bosses gather to elevate one among them as the rootin'est, tootin'est, shootin'est of them all, blessed with a mighty hand that will guide the ranch in its duty to the zone. Last year they chose Tombstone Dan Sims for that honor, naming him jefe of the ranch until he dies or grows too feeble to ride.

Tombstone Dan is tired of sending boys out to die in some dry gulch for an insufficiently grateful population. If the Cowboy Way is enough for Rancho Verde, it's enough for the entire zone. The other towns might not agree, but when a hundred crack cowboy riders start the big roundup, they'll come around to his way of seeing things. Even the Burquenos at Pueblo Nuevo would fear such a force of legend, and if he has to make some examples, it's for a necessary cause.

Some of his crew bosses have doubts. Not all of them can see the necessity of a strong, unifying hand at a time like this, and mean to let the other towns muddle along until disaster is on them all. Dan can't simply get rid of the doubters as he needs every cowboy he can get for his plans, but he can keep them too busy to make trouble while he wins enough allies to force their eventual cooperation.

Tombstone Dan keeps his bosses at each other's throats. He demands dangerous pasture drives, calls for sudden horse races, sets up impromptu shooting contests, and otherwise forces the crew bosses to be constantly outdoing each other. Failure means losing hands as the jefe reassigns them to the winner, or losing cattle, or simply losing face. Dan means to keep them too busy trying to hold on to their positions to make any trouble for him until it's time to push south. He'd rather not lose any of them to "accidents", but he's not going to let a doubter spike his dream of peace.

Rancho Verde (pop. 356)

Power: 2 (d8)	**Cohesion:** 2
Features:	They've been training cowboys here since before the collapse. They have scores of elite cowboy riders in service of their bosses. Their gengineered cattle herds are the largest in the entire zone.
Problems:	The bosses and their crews strive constantly for precedence (2 points) The locals scorn anything that doesn't fit the Cowboy Way (2 points) The dusters of Silvergrave are rustling the ranch's cattle (1 point)

The ranch's natives scorn new ways. As far as the locals are concerned, Rancho Verde was made to pass on the Cowboy Way, and anything that might change that is a peril to be shunned. Work that isn't cattle driving, knowledge that isn't shooting, riding, or singing, or technology not blessed by the example of former cowboys is all to be rejected. Many openly believe that it's more romantic to fail a challenge than to succeed at it with "city slicker" tricks.

The ranch's cattle are being rustled by the dusters of Silvergrave. A new lord recently came to power among the mutants, and he's showing little of the dusters' former hesitation at raiding the ranch. Crews of duster rustlers are crossing the Rio Grande fords at night to cut out cattle and drive them back to the Silvergrave ruins. Tombstone Dan's not showing the concern his bosses think he ought to have, perhaps because he thinks he'll be getting cattle elsewhere when the time is right.

Faces of Rancho Verde

Tombstone Dan Sims	The ranch's jefe; constantly testing his bosses in preparation for unifying the zone
Gabriela Munoz	Boss of the Clover crew and lethal gunwoman. Hates Dan's plans for a forceful unification
Doc Wilson	Dandified boss of the Sagebrush crew, masterful tracker. Uncertain about Dan's plans.
Wang Hay	Laconic boss of the Golden Spike crew, and fully in favor of ruthless conquest
Sweet Silver Tom	Ugliest cowboy and finest singer in the zone. Seeks picturesque wilderness to sing in.
Melinda-Sue Wilkins	Two-headed veterinarian and town doc; both heads are bitter rivals for Tom's affections
Grinner Blanco	Stone-faced Tijeran arms dealer here to supply Tombstone Dan, but will sell on the side
Prince Joe	Duster son of Silvergrave's dead lord, in exile and seeking Dan's support for the throne
Old Jethro	Hermit keeper of deep cowboy secrets, disgusted with the ranch and seeking its reform

San Luis

A village of exiles and outcasts, San Luis holds together only by grace of mutual desperation. Every desperado and renegade in the zone knows that when no where else will take you, San Luis has a place at the saloon for you… if your gold is good.

The village is cut into one of the looming mesas of the northwestern hills, the land carved in centuries past by the whimsical will of Director Jiminez. While picturesque, the richer grasslands at its foot make for tolerable farming, and those outcasts who haven't got the steel to be raiders can often find work in the fields.

The value of San Luis as an open trading post and party town has given it a tacit immunity to the depredations of raiders and common bandits. Some try anyway, of course, with the occasional desperate gunman shooting a local merchant or a starving pack of marauders plundering a farm, but the brutal consequences of such folly dangle in rotting clusters from the mesa's crown. A certain amount of casual murder among the locals can be ignored, but outside robbery will bring the local gangs together as one.

The local gangs are numerous. Every man and woman on the mesa is either part of a gang or pays protection money to one, whether it's in coin or labor. No law exists beyond the rule of the gun and the whim of the town's fearsome headwoman, Big Hilda. She likes things "nice", and breaking deals, fighting her lieutenants, or failing to respect her polite requests are not nice at all.

If troublemakers are lucky, they can expect to be handed over to one of the slaver crews that work out of San Luis, putting hostages and captives to work until some relative is willing to pay the ransom. Those without prospect of payment can expect a life of brutal toil or a quick end as some feral mutant's meal.

Despite Big Hilda's sure hand, San Luis is still obliged to deal with three considerable problems.

The natives are loyal only to themselves. Most of the locals are only here because nowhere else would take them, and they often get along very poorly with each other. Only personal interest or naked force can compel them to work together or make sacrifices for the group, and a hard shock to the settlement could easily knock the whole place into anarchy.

The gangs are always fighting. Their engagements are not regularly murderous for fear of incurring Big Hilda's wrath, but fists, bottles, and clubs are regularly employed. Less direct hostilities take the form of schemes and deceits to steal loot and slaves from rivals, the better to attract their less loyal members to a stronger and more successful crew. If these plans should end up harming San Luis or its locals, well, it just means that nobody can find out who did it.

Outsiders fear and mistrust San Luis. Unsurprisingly, the other towns of the zone consider San Luis to be nothing but a nest of raiders and slavers. Only the most amoral or desperate merchants will trade with them, and any stranger who claims to come from San Luis can expect a hard eye in any other town. More than a few denizens of the zone would like to see the whole town wiped off the mesa.

Even so, the hard life in the zone makes San Luis too useful a place to die easily. Not even a raider can live forever in a dry waste, and as long as Big Hilda keeps the bloodshed contained San Luis will be there to welcome both them and their loot.

San Luis (pop. 852)

Power: 2 (d8)	**Cohesion:** 1
Features:	There are many local mutants with useful powers. The town has ties to raider bands and mutant tribes throughout the zone. The town is cut into a heavily-fortified mesa.
Problems:	The locals hang together only out of shared desperation. (2 points) Criminal gangs constantly spar for local influence and power. (2 points) Outsiders mistrust them and often refuse to deal with them. (1 point)

Faces of San Luis

Big Hilda	Hulking, chitinous mutant warlord who runs the town with a maternal if bloody hand
Skinny Bill	Emaciated baseline human assassin, Big Hilda's right hand and enforcer
Titus Redhorn	Bullman chief of the Redhorn slaver gang; intelligent, cultivated, and sadistic.
Funhouse	Duster gang boss who sells "protection" to weaker locals, but actually does provide it.
"Two Bags" McHenry	Raider fence and local merchant; gives discounts to poorer locals to bank favors
Deadeye Abarca	Cowboy-turned-desperado after killing a friend; hunts for the dead man's hidden loot
Billy Crookpate	Goatman leader of the San Luis farmers, often hiring violent muscle to protect his people
Sister Prudence	Catholic missionary physician to these heathens. Has lethal mutant laser vision; will use it.
Brother Moses	Missionary of the mutant-supremacist Church of the New Blood; wants Prudence dead

Ruins of the Zone

The sites listed below are all major ruin sites in the zone, urban wastelands that have numerous unlooted structures still within. Despite the temptations of this loot, all of them are infested with raiders, mutants, and the occasional berserk robot.

Some general hints are given as to the contents of a ruin. As players are likely to read this section too, however, a GM should roll a couple of Ruin Tags for each ruin they plan to use before stocking sites within it. These tags will help bend the truth of a ruin and provide a sufficient degree of surprise for enterprising scavengers.

Albuquerque Starport: This forest of skyward-pointing starships will never take flight. Beneath the mildly radioactive dust, the massive buried starport control tower and passenger terminal is stalked by lean things that hunger and a cult that dreams of the stars.

Algodones: Old evil sleeps beneath the toppled buildings of Algodones, rousing every generation to send a swarm of mutant beasts howling across the zone. The cowboys of Rancho Verde stand vigil against this evil, while some scavengers risk the sleeping peril for the sake of the powerful biotech preserved in the Mandate labs beneath the city.

Belen: One of the "safest" ruins in the zone, as generations of patrols by Burqueno riders from Pueblo Nuevo have burnt out most of the worst monsters. Even so, fresh bands of marauders are constantly moving in for the ruin's convenient proximity to Pueblo Nuevo, along with the still-intact bridge it provides across the Rio Grande.

Bernalillo: With bridges both to the north bank of the Jemez and east across the Rio Grande, Bernalillo could have been a superb settlement site surrounded by well-watered grassland. That it isn't is owed largely to the Bone Dancers, a savage death cult of dusters constantly at war with their mutant cousins in Silvergrave.

Big Junction: Once the chief atomic railroad nexus for the Albuquerque Cultural Area, Big Junction is now a graveyard of hulking roundhouses and scattered train engines. Lost freight cars of Burqueno goods draw scavengers, but the robotic railroad bulls that stalk the ruins have little mercy for "unauthorized hobos". Some marauder bands are said to know the secret for obtaining duly-certified hobo authorization.

Los Lunas: As Director Jiminez's first abortive attempt at building an Old West town, Los Lunas was staffed by convicts wired with late Mandate-era cybertech to control their behavior and prompt "appropriate cultural expressions" suitable to a spaghetti Western. Unfortunately, after a few years of relentless neurological overrides, the convicts became completely insane, mingling stereotypical behavior with outbursts of frenzied violence. They still stalk the night streets of Los Lunas, dead or worse than dead as their unmerciful cyberware drives their dessicated corpses onward.

Running A Ranch: Director Hector Jiminez once ruled the zone from this sprawling ranch, with dozens of outbuildings around a palatial multi-level ranch. Beneath the Spanish tile and adobe of the surface, however, a labyrinth of subterranean passages and neuro-imprint cells sprawl out for kilometers. Their darkness is still infested with the monstrous spawn of the director's experiments in creating his own cinematic world.

San Ysidro: San Ysidro is the heart of the Church of the New Blood, a mutant-supremacist faith that holds it God's will that mutants inherit dominion over the New Earth. The church is distinctly uncertain as to *which* mutants should inherit it, however, and so bloody theological disputes play out regularly amid the town's rubble. Outside humans are sometimes enlisted as disposable soldiers by one of the factions.

Veguita: The ruins of this town mark the southern terminus of the zone, beyond which the dreaded robotic warriors of the immortal Iron General stalk the wastes. Scavengers report occasional sightings of his unnatural intelligent servitors amid the rubble, evidently watching the zones for signs of some unknowable goal. His human devotees also lurk within as the leaders of the dire Cult of Iron.



Trading in the Zone

The zone's economy is primitive, but its merchants still generally accept coinage due to its value to the few functioning pre-Scream robotic vendors in the area. Where coins aren't accepted, preserved food rations serve as a universal currency.

Silver pesos and golden escudos are minted in Pickton at a 10:1 ratio to match the diggings from their mine. Mandate credits are found as colorful plastic chips in the ruins; while they bear different face values, they're all worth the same to the locals.

Silver and gold coins are small, each one no larger than a modern United States quarter-dollar. Mandate credit chips are the size and weight of a poker chip. Pesos are cut into "pieces of eight" for small change.

Prospectors and looters who find gold dust or scrap silver generally trade it by weight at a discount, letting bolder souls make the journey to Pickton to get it converted into a coinage the Mandate vendorbots recognize.

Buying Gear in the Zone

Every community has at least one outfitter who makes or sub-contracts gear useful to adventurers. Prices are generally the same as in the Equipment chapter, and gear of TL2 or less can be had almost anywhere.

More advanced TL3 gear is available only at the GM's discretion. The best stuff is often reserved for trusted clients, and it's not uncommon that a merchant would want a few favors done before they sell a salvaged combat rifle or part with an ancient plate carrier.

Salvaged relics, TL4 gear, or even more advanced tech is never sold openly. In some cases, it's because there's no easy way to put a price on it; a stim that grows hair is hard to market to anyone but rich bald men. In other cases, it's because the relic is too obviously precious to trade for mere gold.

Instead, these treasures are usually traded for favors, services, or other intangibles. A laser rifle might be offered to the party that can save the mayor's daughter from Duster bandits, or a merchant might throw in a few odd stims as a sweetener for a caravan escort through the mountains.

Selling Loot

Most merchants will buy salvaged loot at a quarter of its book value, assuming they have the capital. Good friends might give as much as half, but no merchant will buy gear they don't have an existing market for.

Towns can generally absorb up to 5,000 pesos of loot each month among their various buyers. Truly huge troves of loot will have to be sold among various towns or else traded for some non-material favor or public reward. It's not uncommon for relics to serve as tokens of friendship and alliance, with a pact sealed by the giving of some ancient device.

Currency of the Zone

1 gold escudo	=	10 silver pesos
	=	10 Mandate credits
1 silver peso	=	1/10th of an escudo
	=	1 Mandate credit
1 Mandate credit	=	1/10th of an escudo
	=	1 silver peso
1 preserved ration	=	1 silver peso

Common Daily Wages

Job	Wage
Farmhand	1 peso*
Ordinary cattle hand	1 peso*
Veteran cattle hand	3 pesos*
True Cowboy	1 escudo*
Blacksmith or artisan	5 pesos
Scrapsmith or relic repairer	5 escudos
Soldier or full-time militiaman	1 peso*
Badlands scout or guide	5 pesos
Sergeant or non-com officer	3 pesos*
Captain of a militia band	5 escudos*
Common soiled dove	2 pesos
Dance hall queen	10 escudos
Town clerk, scribe, or petty official	5 pesos

*: these jobs also expect room and board

Bribes, Wealth, and Payments

A bribe to overlook a minor crime	10 pesos
A bribe to overlook a serious but non-capital crime	100 pesos
A criminal hired to rob or beat a victim of no great importance	50 pesos
A hired gun to kill a common man	200 pesos
An able-bodied slave bought in a lawless area	200 pesos
A farmhand's life savings	100 pesos
A decent rancher's liquid funds	1,000 pesos
A prosperous merchant's capital	2,000 pesos
Contents of a town's bank	20,000 pesos
Money a town can relatively easily spend on hiring adventurers	2,500 pesos
The most a town can spend in the face of dire calamity	25,000 pesos

Weapons of the West

While a host of ancient Mandate-era weapons can be unearthed from the ruins of Albuquerque or the even-earlier caches of the corporate states, the natives of the zone more often rely on the weapons they can manufacture with their own resources.

All these weapons are TL2 and widely available in the zone, with the exception of the TL5 Peacemaker.

Some firearms note a distinction between brass cartridges and cap-and-ball loads. The former are significantly harder to make in the zone, and some settlements may not have them available for trade.

Lariat: This looped rope can be used to make a grapple attack at range using the roper's Shoot or Exert instead of Punch. Such grapple attacks have no size penalty for roping up to cow-sized quadrupeds if the roper is also mounted. A victim in a lariat grapple can still move closer to the roper, but can't get further away without escaping the grapple. The base unarmed grappling damage the roper does is 1d6 if on foot, or 2d6 if mounted, if not higher naturally. This damage is only done as part of a grapple, and not merely on a hit. Using a lariat requires both hands and is treated as a two-handed ranged weapon attack.

Bowie Knife: In the zone, a "bowie" is any drop-point knife with a blade longer than the user's hand. Such tools come in handy on the trail for skinning, chopping, and shaving, but also for splitting skulls or opening bellies.

Brush Gun: These cut-down double-barreled shotguns trade shot weight and range for convenience and the ability to fire them one-handed.

Musket: With the precise machining of a rifled barrel difficult to come by in the zone, many shooters can do no better than a smoothbore caplock musket for home defense.

Peacemaker: Legendary weapons of the first cowboys, these Mandate-era pistols appear as perfectly-maintained sixguns, often with pearl grips, golden inlay, or other elaborate decoration. Their ammunition is autoforged by integral nanite microfactories and their gravitic correction leaves them accurate out to a hundred meters. Nothing short of intentional vandalism can damage a Peacemaker, and it requires no external power source or ammunition. Some special models have even greater powers, though these guns of legend often have a will of their own and a grim purpose to lay on their bearer.

Powder Rifle: These single-shot caplock rifles are favored for hunting and mutant-sniping. The first shot needs to count, however, as it takes five full rounds of effort to ramrod a fresh bullet down their rifled bores.

Repeating Rifle: These sophisticated lever-action rifles require the use of cartridge ammunition. That and the refined metalsmithing skills required leave them uncommon in the zone, though their sheer volume of firepower makes them popular with those who can afford to run them.

Shotgun: Where they can get them, shotguns are popular with farmers in the zone for dealing with "varmints" that may not respect slugs of a smaller caliber. Most are break-action models that function well with percussion caps, paper cartridges, and handcast lead balls.

Sixgun: Whether fed with brass cartridge ammunition or cap-and-ball loads, the sixgun is the traditional sidearm for ranch hands, vagabonds, and banditos in the zone. The splendor and decoration of a person's sixgun is often a quick indication of their wealth and importance, and some sixguns are handed down as symbols of a lineage or office.

Weapon	Dmg	Range	Cost	Mag	Attr.	Enc	Trauma Die	Trauma Rating
Lariat	Special	10/20	10	-	Dex	2	-	-
Bowie Knife	1d6	-	25	-	Str/Dex	1	1d6	x3
Brush Gun	1d10	10/10	100	2	Dex	1	1d10	x2
Musket	1d12	25/50	50	1¶	Dex	2	1d8	x3
Peacemaker	2d8	100/100	-	Infinite	Dex	1	1d8	x3
Powder Rifle	1d12+2	100/200	100	1#	Dex	2	1d8	x3
Repeating Rifle	1d10+2	100/200	200	8	Dex	2	1d8	x3
Shotgun	3d4	10/30	100	2	Dex	2	1d10	x3
Sixgun	1d8	30/100	100	6	Dex	1	1d6	x3

¶: This weapon takes both a Main Action and a Move action to reload.
#: This weapon takes five full rounds of labor to reload.

Starting a Death Zone Campaign

A GM new to *Ashes Without Number* can use the Albuquerque Death Zone as a starting point for a fresh Mutant Wasteland campaign. To simplify the process, the steps below are offered as guidelines.

The Death Zone is built for an Exploration campaign, with PCs venturing into the sandy wastes to discover lost ruins and plunder places of danger. The guidelines that follow assume that this will be the case for your group. It's possible to put the whole region under immediate pressure with a Crisis style of campaign, but adjusting things that way is left as an exercise for the reader.

Pick a Starting Community

The first step in a Death Zone campaign is for the GM to pick a starting community for the party. They don't all need to be natives of the place, but they all need to be there and be friendly enough to adventure together.

Pueblo Nuevo is a good default starting point, with the PCs being outsiders who need to do a favor for Captain Randolph to get a gate pass into the town. This favor can be the initial adventure of the campaign, a short job that can provide hooks to NPCs in the town who might have further use for the PCs.

Blackwater is a pick for a very exploration-focused campaign, where the PCs need to venture further north into the Death Zone to find the other communities in the place. Maybe they're refugees from the Iron General's forces to the south, or maybe Blackwater itself is a newly-founded refuge with no real idea of what lies north. The focus on this game could be mapping out the wastes and discovering its points of interest.

San Luis is suitable for grittier, antiheroic sorts of campaigns where the PCs could fit in well with raiders and outcasts. They may have done something to have been forced to flee their prior homes, or they might be slaves or low-ranking raiders who need to prove their worth to get any respect.

Your campaign may not stick around this starting point for very long, but you'll need to choose the initial backdrop before taking the next step.

Define the Party's Theme

Once you know where you're starting, decide who the PCs are. This doesn't mean defining their specific backgrounds or details, it means that you should be able to describe the general character of the PC party.

A brief sentence or two should describe the basic theme of the party. "You are all ex-slaves and raider survivors of a slaughtered petty chieftain's warband, with many enemies in San Luis." "You are all tribal outcasts who have come to Pueblo Nuevo to try and get citizenship." "You are all refugees from the destroyed village of Metcalfe who are seeking help at Blackwater."

It's not absolutely necessary to set a single theme for the party, but it will be much easier for the players if they have a basic frame for their PCs. If a player has an idea for a different concept, a GM can allow it if it fits in with the others, but the basic point of the theme is to give the GM something specific to build to at the start of the campaign.

Pick an Initial Play Focus

You know where the game starts and what basic kind of people the PCs are, so now you need to decide what they will likely be doing at the start of the campaign. The focus might skew radically after the first few play sessions, but you need to have something specific to give the players when they ask what exactly they'll be doing in the dusty wastes.

Make sure your description includes what the PCs will be doing, not just the situation they'll find themselves in. "You will be scouting the wasteland around your home base, searching for resources to help keep it alive." "You will be participating in a bloody struggle against the cannibal mutant army of the Teeth of God, who seek to destroy your home." "You will be searching for the sacred water chip that endows its possessor with lawful rule over the tribe."

The play focus should be clear, direct, and punchy. If you can't imagine clearly what a beginning adventure session would be like, you'll want to refine the focus a little more.

Get Player Buy-In

Now that you know what you're doing, go to your players and see whether they're interested in actually doing that thing. They may be more interested in a different play focus, or a different kind of party, and there's no point in putting further work in if the players aren't interested in sampling it.

It's good to be flexible at this point and to adjust things to suit the interests of the group. All the same, don't commit to running a campaign you can't feel excited about. There's a lot of work in GMing, and no one should do it out of mere obligation.

Build the Introductory Adventure

Using the tools in this book and the plot hooks in this section, make up a short introductory adventure for the PCs. This shouldn't be a job that takes more than one session of play to resolve, especially if you'll be making characters during the same session as the initial play.

This introductory adventure should point directly to three or four further plot hooks for the PCs to follow up on if they can't think of some goal of their own. You'll handle those hooks in the next step.

Flesh Out Local NPCs

Take a look at the list of NPCs for your starting community. For each of them, pick one thing they want, and one reason why they can't get it. An NPC might want a particular item, a specific event to come about, a particular relationship with another NPC, or some other goal either chosen or rolled from the tools in this section.

In the same vein, there should be a reason they can't get it without outside help. You can make one up by yourself or take inspiration from the tools that follow. Ideally, this is a problem or obstacle that the PCs could clearly be instrumental in overcoming.

Don't worry about giving these NPCs combat statistics or deep characterization just yet. You'll save that work for when it becomes important, if it ever does.

Once you've got your list of NPC wants and problems, pick three or four of them that seem most accessible to novice adventurers and best-related to the introductory adventure. Make their problems obvious in the adventure or spelled out by NPCs involved in it; you don't want plot hooks to be subtle, and don't be afraid to highlight them during play if the players don't pick up on them.

Don't bother turning these hooks into actual adventures yet, or worrying too much about the details of them. You'll only put effort into that if the PCs decide they want to follow up on the hook.

Run the Intro Adventure

Now run the first session of the game. At the end, spell out the plot hooks or invite the PCs to pick their own next goal. They absolutely *must* tell you what they're going to try to accomplish in the next session, however. You need to know what it is you've got to prep for the next session of play before they leave the table.

Note that while some parties will bite on specific hooks, others will just want to explore the wastes in a particular direction or check out a specific ruin. Those are both perfectly valid choices, but they change the kind of prep you'll need to do between sessions.

Making the Next Adventure

If the PCs bite on a hook that doesn't involve large amounts of wilderness exploration, the process is relatively simple. You know what the basic conflict of the situation is, and you can use the adventure tools in this book to help flesh it out, stock any relevant ruins, and stat out any fearsome foes.

As with the intro adventure, this next mission should also have several explicit plot hooks attached to it. Whenever and however the PCs end the adventure, either through success, failure, or simply bowing out of it, they should then tell you their next session's goal and let you prep accordingly. So long as they keep biting on plot hooks or giving you clear directions, you can just rinse-and-repeat the process for each session that follows.

Handling Hexcrawls

Sometimes the PCs will want to set out overland, either to reach a particular community or to explore a region for lootable structures and ruins. The prep for that works a little differently than it does for sessions revolving around a particular adventure.

For hexcrawls, make the PCs indicate the specific area they intend to explore or the particular destination they intend to reach. They can go off-field during play, but only if they then give you another session's downtime to prep the new content. Keeping to the planned area of interest is otherwise a tacit agreement for the group.

If they're exploring a region, stock a 6x6 hex area in the region they're aiming at using the tools starting on page 152 of the book. Not every hex will have a feature worth mentioning, and the great majority of these features will be single encounters or places of interest rather than ruins that merit significant exploration. Don't put more than one or two major ruins in that area.

When building a major ruin, don't flesh out more than the entry area or peripheral part of it. If the party firmly commits to exploring it, only then should you go to the effort of really stocking a large ruin and building it out carefully. Until then, it's either choked with sand, blocked by rubble, requires careful scouting to find the real entrance, or the PCs just decide to pull back briefly before mounting a real expedition.

If they're journeying to a destination, stock a 3-hex-wide path to the destination along the most reasonable route to it. There should be enough room for the PCs to take slightly different paths there or to take short side trips, but don't worry about trying to stock the entire wasteland between the two points.

If they're not sure where their destination actually *is*, such as seeking an unknown ruin or lost community, then have them tell you their general scouting plans and stock hexes based on where they said they're going to look. Plainly tell them beforehand where the boundaries of your prep lie; again, if they want to press onward they can do so, but they need to give you time to build the content.

Taking it Onward

Once you have the basic cycle down, you can repeat it at the end of each gaming session. If you're comfortable with the process, you might turn a few major groups into enclaves as described in that section and let their interplay create additional plot hooks.

But at all times, keep mindful of your own time and creative energy. A sandbox campaign can absorb an infinite amount of your effort, so it's critical to save your energy for those parts and prep that you *know* you're going to need in the next session. Your world will grow naturally over time, and you can be confident that the parts you do flesh out will be meaningful and important in actual play.



Things People Want

One of the simplest ways to create a plot hook is to just pick an NPC and assign them something they want. The tables on this page offer a selection of material and immaterial desires, and a side table for putting a twist on the situation if it's desired.

Some desires are secret. For these plot hooks, the PCs are going to need to be fed information in the form of sympathetic NPCs, documents they might find, or evidence that shows that the NPC is looking for the thing.

Things should be obtainable by PCs. If the PCs can't realistically help obtain the desire, it's not a particularly useful plot hook. The ways the PCs can help don't need to be spelled out, but there should be at least one thing they can do and it should become fairly clear with even token investigation. When setting up the situation, identify this method of help and think about other possible ways the PCs could contribute.

Desires often conflict. Good things are sought by many, and if something is good enough for the NPC to want it, it's not unlikely that someone else does as well or doesn't want them to get it in the first place. The same thing may be desired by more than one NPC, and it's for the PCs to decide who is to eventually get it.

d10	Complications of the Desire
1	They've dragged in a friend who will also be in trouble if their want isn't satisfied.
2	They claim to want one thing, but it's really a mask for wanting another related thing.
3	Getting the thing will clearly have negative consequences for them.
4	Getting the thing won't actually fix their problem.
5	The thing they want to get is actually a fake or a bait for them.
6	Someone else also wants the thing, and is willing to be ruthless in getting it.
7	They could get the thing now, but not at a price they're willing to pay.
8	Someone is waiting to take the thing away from them once they get it.
9	They don't actually know where to find or get the thing.
10	They're under intense time pressure to obtain the thing, or it will be too late.

d12	Material Desires	Social Desires
1	A sudden, crushing debt has left them in need of a great deal of gold lest they be ruined.	A rival has cheated them of their rightful place in the community, and they want revenge.
2	They or a loved one are mortally ill and in need of a specific rare ancient medicine.	They yearn to impress a potential lover or spouse with some splendid success.
3	A cherished memento or family relic has been taken by someone else, and they want it back.	They lost an important job or social role to a rival whom they feel is unworthy of it.
4	A critical tool for their profession, not easily replaced, has been taken by another.	They don't think they get the respect they deserve, and want to show the community their worth.
5	They must recover an incriminating item or piece of blackmail before it is used against them.	A friend faces some dire trouble, but they don't have any skills that would help.
6	Advancing their business or personal standing requires a specific, hard-to-get item.	They've cut wicked bargains with another and now are trying to get out of being blackmailed.
7	They crave a specific precious relic or item to give as a gift to a potential lover or spouse.	They want to excel in their role by acquiring training from a particularly skilled practitioner.
8	An enemy relies on a particular relic or item for their job or role; they want it taken from them.	They failed terribly or did an evil deed and now are trying to redeem their name among the others.
9	They have a device that needs repair, but it requires a specific rare component to fix it.	They want to spread their faith among their neighbors or do a great deed of piety.
10	A trophy of their past success has been taken from them and they want it back.	They're trying to get married or get kindred wed into an advantageous family.
11	A precious relic was entrusted to them by their community, but they lost it to another.	They made a mess of their job and are trying to fix things before the true disaster comes to light.
12	A book or object contains information that will satisfy a burning curiosity they have.	They want to establish a new law or custom in the community that they think is needful or beneficial.

Oppositions and Rewards

There has to be a reason the NPC can't simply take their desire. It may be too dangerous to obtain, or powerful enemies may oppose them, or they might not fully understand what they need to get their desire.

The PCs are expected to step in and deal with the opposition. This may be a classic case of ruin-crawling to find the lost macguffin, or a fetch quest to obtain the gizmo from the hermit of the mountain peak, or some relatively straightforward journey into peril to obtain a material item.

It can also be something that spears can't solve. Social conflicts require talk and diplomacy, and the PCs will need to be able to provide the participants with those things they want if they're going to get what they desire. Sometimes the patron NPC is just incapable of dealing with these other people, and only an outsider can break the stalemate. In other cases, these others need something that only bold, unscrupulous strangers can give them.

Naturally, PCs generally expect rewards for their work. The adjacent table offers suggestions to go along with the reward guidelines on page 200. Even impoverished patrons can offer something for PC help, and a good word can be worth more than a sack of gold.

d10	Types of Rewards
1	The desire itself is valuable and can be split up with the obtainers.
2	The place or person who has the desire has a treasure the NPC can disclose.
3	A valuable relic can be given to the PCs, though it can't help get the desire.
4	A powerful relative of the NPC will be well-disposed and willing to grant favors.
5	The NPC will share the fruits of their success with the PCs.
6	The NPC has a cache of gold they can give to resolve the desire.
7	They have the (dangerous) location of a buried treasure, and will share it for help.
8	They have valuable scrap they'll hand over for the desire.
9	They have blackmail material on an important NPC and will give it over.
10	No reward can be offered, but the NPC is highly sympathetic and deserving.

d12	Opposing People	Opposing Situations
1	A vicious raider and their friends are involved in the situation.	The desire is lost somewhere in a dangerous ruin of the ancients.
2	A local fanatic of some faith or ideology is somehow obstructing the situation.	If the NPC gets the desire, it will be immediately taken away by an enemy or superior.
3	A criminal with numerous accomplices is in the way of the NPC's desire.	The NPC is somehow personally allergic to the desire or will be hurt by it if they get it.
4	A band of dangerous, violent adventurers is somehow mixed up in the situation.	Someone else in the community is supposed to get the desire, and will be outraged if it's subverted.
5	A mutant tribal and their kindred have gotten involved in the NPC's desire.	They let the desired thing go to another freely, and only now do they realize they need it.
6	A local official is unsympathetic to the NPC and is keeping them away from their desire.	Getting the desire is somehow linked to extreme personal danger the NPC can't stomach.
7	A rival or hostile relative has put themself in the way of the NPC's desire.	They can get the desire at any time, but doing so will immediately paint a target on their back.
8	A rich local is wielding their wealth and influence to get in the way of the NPC's desire.	The desire was lost in the wilderness, and the NPC can only give a vague area for it.
9	Some kind of dangerous wild mutant is the reason the NPC can't have their desire.	The desired thing was broken somehow, and can only be fixed with a particular thing or crafter.
10	A resentful former employee or servant of the NPC has gotten in the way of their goal.	Getting the desire would somehow ruin another NPC that the subject loves or cares about.
11	A community outcast has obstructed the situation with their own ambitions and purposes.	The NPC is thought unworthy of the thing, and even getting it wouldn't help them until they merit it.
12	The NPC is their own worst enemy and keeps doing things that just make the situation worse.	The NPC is looking for the wrong thing, and is fundamentally mistaken about what they need.



The Cowboy

While any survivor can learn to ride fast and aim a gun, some wanderers of the death zone are truly committed to the Cowboy Way. Whether trained by a grizzled old hand in some badlands hamlet or a greenhorn educated on a surviving rancho, these men and women have cultivated the ancient disciplines of their range-roving forebears and acquired their remarkable skills.

Cowboys are figures of heroism and nobility among the scattered settlements of the zone, but not all adepts of their arts are true to the Cowboy Way. Disgraced cowboys and hardened villains are also known to use these ancient skills to pursue their wicked ends, and these "desperadoes" are figures of hushed dread.

Becoming a Cowboy

To gain cowboy abilities, a PC must take the ***Cowboy*** Edge. This can be done during character creation, or with their bonus Edge at fifth level if they have spent at least a few months training with a cowboy. Most NPCs need years of hard work at a rancho to master even a novice degree of skill, but PCs are assumed to be gifted men and women. Such latecomers gain cowboy arts retroactively to match their current level.

Arts and the Cowboy

The particular skills of the cowboy are their ***arts***. Not every cowboy knows every trick of the trade, and a given hand will usually specialize in those particular gifts that best suit their role. A cowboy gains the *Range Rider* art at first level and one additional art of their choice. Afterwards, they choose new arts as they advance in experience, but each choice is permanent.

Cowboy arts require freedom of movement. They cannot be used while the cowboy is wearing armor heavier than Encumbrance 1, or while they are carrying a shield.

The table below shows how many arts a cowboy is allowed to pick at each level.

Cowboy Arts

Level	Arts Gained
1	*Range Rider* and Any One
2	Any One
3	
4	Any One
5	Any One
6	Any One
7	
8	Any One
9	
10	Any One

Arts and Effort

Some arts are fueled with ***Cowboy Effort***, which represents a rider's mastery of their skills, presence of mind, and available fund of luck. Effort is measured in points which are Committed to use the powers and refreshed later. These points are Committed for one of two durations.

- ***Effort Committed for the scene*** is regained as soon as the fight or scene ends. Out of combat, it lasts for one event or activity, usually about fifteen minutes at most.

- ***Effort Committed for the day*** is regained only after the next night's comfortable sleep. The cowboy doesn't need much, but they do need a campfire, a bedroll, and a bowl of beans if they're going to sleep well enough to get back their vigor.

A PC's maximum Cowboy Effort is equal to their highest skill level between Ride, Shoot, and Survive, plus the best of their Constitution or Wisdom attribute modifiers, down to a minimum of 1 point.

Thus, if a PC had Ride-0, Shoot-1, and no Survive skill at all, a Constitution modifier of +1 and a Wisdom modifier of +0, his maximum Cowboy Effort would be 2. As his skills improve and his attribute modifiers change, his maximum would change with them.

Bonus Skills and Ride

Cowboys gain the Ride skill in lieu of a campaign's Drive skill, replacing any instance of gaining Drive. Cowboys who come late to the trade and already have the Drive skill must learn Ride from scratch. The Ride skill works much as Drive does, but only applies to riding beasts and livestock, including their care, management, and healing. A cowboy is not strictly forbidden from driving an iron steed, but their particular arts won't work on them. Robotic, mutant, or cybernetic mounts are acceptable subjects for their talents, however.

Some cowboy arts grant a bonus skill. If taken during character creation, this counts as an additional skill pick, increasing a skill to level-0, or level-1 if it's already level-0. If it's already level-1, the PC can pick any other skill in its place.

If taken after character creation, the bonus skill counts as three skill points spent toward raising the skill, as explained on page 65. This can increase the skill's level to one otherwise too high for the PC, such as increasing a skill to level-2 at the PC's second character level.

Cowboy Arts

The arts described below are some of the more common tricks taught by grizzled old ranch hands and far-faring wanderers. All of these arts require easy movement, and cannot be performed when wearing armor of more than 1 Encumbrance or using a shield.

Cattle Wise: Gain Ride as a bonus skill. Gain a +1 to all Reaction Rolls made by animals to a group you are in. You cannot be surprised by animals, and you can convey simple one- or two-word ideas to beasts with body language and voice tone.

Cowboy Singer: Gain Perform as a bonus skill. Commit Effort for the day once per day while singing for your comrades when out of combat; they, but not you, immediately lose one accumulated System Strain and regain 1d6 plus your level in lost hit points as they are encouraged and heartened.

Eagle Eye: Gain Notice as a bonus skill. You do not suffer range penalties for long-range attacks, and your eyes are sharp enough to see by starlight as if it were day. You can observe a target up to a hundred meters away as if you were next to it.

Iron Belly: You cannot be intoxicated to the point of impairment by any human-tolerable amount of alcohol, nor do you suffer from eating contaminated or spoiled rations. Commit Effort for the day as an On Turn action to automatically succeed at a saving throw versus poison.

Lightning Hand: You suffer no hit penalty for using a one-handed ranged weapon or throwing weapon in melee combat. Commit Effort for the day as an Instant action to ignore the hit penalty for a Snap Attack or to instantly reload a one-handed ranged weapon.

Range Rider: Gain Ride as a bonus skill. Once per round, Commit Effort for the day as an On Turn action while riding a mount to give that mount a free Move action.

Rope Boss: You are exceedingly skilled in the use of the lariat. Gain a +2 bonus to hit with a lariat and a +1 bonus to the opposed grapple skill check. You and your mount cannot be grappled by a lariat and you can free yourself from any rope-like bonds as a Move action.

Shoot Straight: Gain Shoot as a bonus skill. You gain the base hit roll benefit of the *On Target* Edge when using pistols or knives. You cannot take this art if you already have *On Target*.

Shooting the Gun: Your ranged weapon attacks can inflict non-lethal damage, exhausting and intimidating a target by barely-grazing shots or non-fatal flesh wounds. If such an attack would reduce them to zero hit points, you may instead choose to shoot a weapon or item out of their hand and leave them with one hit point.

Tough as Rawhide: When suffering a Traumatic Hit, Commit Effort for the day as an Instant action to make it a normal hit instead. This art is inapplicable in campaigns that don't use the Traumatic Hit rules.

Trail Wise: Gain Survive as a bonus skill. You and any group you are with cannot Go Astray when traveling overland, and you can sleep comfortably without a fire or bedroll in any conditions better than severe inclement weather.

Trusty Steed: Gain Ride as a bonus skill. You form a bond of intuitive understanding with any riding animal you've ridden for more than a day. You can communicate with it as if it had a somewhat simple-minded human intellect, and it will obey your commands with that same cleverness. You can always find a cooperative wild horse in an area where they can be found given 1d4 days of looking, though only you can ride it.

Two-Gun Style: Gain Shoot as a bonus skill, and you can dual-wield pistols even if you currently lack Shoot-1 skill. When dual-wielding pistols, Commit Effort for the day as a Main Action to empty both weapons and let one of them make a Suppressive Fire attack on any targets in a 90-degree cone in front of them up to half the weapon's maximum range. This art can be used only once per scene and more targets cannot be chosen than the cowboy has bullets left in their guns.

Cowboy as a Class

For GMs running a game using the class system described in *Stars Without Number* and *Worlds Without Number*, the ***Cowboy*** Edge can be turned into a class.

A Cowboy is treated as a partial Expert class for the purpose of blending it with other classes. They use the usual Partial Expert/Partial Warrior or Partial Expert/Partial Mage class tables for hit dice and attack bonuses, depending on what other partial class they mix it with.

Like the Bard described in the *Atlas of the Latter Earth*, their abilities are unusual, but not magical in nature. Unlike a normal partial Expert, a Cowboy does not gain the *Educated* class ability or a bonus non-combat Focus. Instead, they get access to cowboy arts and may acquire them as normal for their level.

For *Worlds Without Number* or other fantasy games, all hurlants count as firearms, hand hurlants count as pistols, and both knives and short swords count as "knives" for cowboy art purposes. The prohibition on art use while wearing armor heavier than Encumbrance 1 or using shields remains.



SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

Beyond this point lie optional rules, systems, and generators meant to provide a GM with new options for their campaign world. These supplementary materials are added as a special bonus to reward generous purchasers of the for-pay version of *Ashes Without Number* and the open-handed souls who supported its Kickstarter campaign.

Evil Techno-Wizards satisfy the traditional role of cackling science-sorcery antagonists, complete with often-impractical plans. For campaign settings that need such evildoers, it can be convenient to plant two or three at the start of the campaign as long-term antagonists or known major enemies, with the PCs encountering the edges of their plans at low levels and moving to face them directly later on.

Ash Sorcerers are a new Edge option for PCs who want to wield some post-apocalyptic magic suitable for a world in which evil techno-wizards are a real thing. While their magic consists of a strictly-limited toolbox of special powers, they can break the rules of conventional possibility in ways useful to the party. Their Edge can also be used as a template for other campaign settings where a magic-using PC class is appropriate.

Mentalists fill the role of "creepy psychic survivor" found in some campaign worlds, and can also be substituted as a less powerful, less demanding alternative to the Psychic character class in *Stars Without Number*. Their abilities tend to be subtle and limited in scope, but they don't demand the heavy skill point investment of a SWN Psychic, and can be a bit easier to handle as a GM when at higher levels.

Modular Power Armor is a mainstay of many post-apocalyptic, far-future settings. These suits add a range of special abilities, heavy weapons, and reinforced armor to the wearer, while being flexible enough to accept new fittings suitable for specific missions. The downside, however, is the voraciously quick consumption of Type B power cells they require and the general inability to wear them as often as an owner might like. They're well-suited to specific strike missions and incursions, but a PC needs to have something else for daily wear.

Hub Settlement rules are for campaigns meant to center around a specific survivor settlement. They're more complex, detailed, and specific than the enclave rules and give PCs the option to build particular facilities and structures in their home base. While this level of detail would be impractical if more than one settlement was being tracked, the grim mathematical struggle against starvation and privation can act as a built-in goad to provoke PCs into scavenging expeditions. Sufficiently heroic gathering can leave the group with access to powerful resources, such as airports or long-range radio towers.

All of the contents in this section are optional, and a GM should feel free to add, subtract, or adjust them as their own campaign recommends. The new Edges in particular can be reworked as partial or full classes and added to other Sine Nomine games as options, where the GM finds them suitable.



Evil Techno-wizards

Where there are ancient secrets, there are those who would unearth them for their own vile ends. A common antagonist in Mutant Wasteland campaigns is the techno-wizard, the adept in forbidden science and sinister occult arts who would work his terrible will on the hapless survivors around him.

For GMs, these figures provide convenient major antagonists and recurring enemies, with their plots and schemes in need of foiling now and then if they are not to become unmanageable. Particularly clever or powerful bands of adventurers might be able to defeat them directly, particularly since most techno-wizards are notably vulnerable to a barbarian to the face.

Evil Techno-Wizard Basics

The nature of the "magic" of techno-wizards will vary based on the campaign setting. In some, it might just be a mastery of forgotten principles of super-science, while other campaigns may involve actual magic, or at least powers beyond conventional understanding. Whatever its reason, their sorcery works very much like classical magic, producing wondrous effects but yet subject to specific limits, geases, and weaknesses.

PCs can't use this kind of dark magic. The foul sacrifices and unspeakable practices necessary to harness its powers are unforgivably vile, and no viable player character would contemplate them. This is not to say that no techno-wizard would ever repent of his evil, but even those who do cannot escape the consequences of the bargains they've made and deeds they've done.

Techno-wizards always look uncanny. Unless their magic powers revolve around shapeshifting and deception, they will always appear disturbingly altered, cyborged, deformed, or unnatural. This appearance usually comes with a chilling aura of unnatural dread that unconsciously attracts the weak, the wicked, and the power-hungry. Vile men and women find the techno-wizard to be a terrifying yet enticing leader and are easily tempted by his or her promises.

d10	Techno-Wizardry Theme
1	Glowing constructs of energy
2	Biological creations and beasts
3	Illusions and mental effects
4	Cybernetic implants and cyborg thralls
5	Parasites, diseases, and toxins
6	Aliens and otherworldly entities
7	Time magic and temporal control
8	Robots and slave constructs
9	Shapeshifting and altered bodies
10	Mutants and radioactive energies

Techno-wizard Powers

The magic of a techno-wizard always revolves around one or more themes. Their spells and creations will always be related to this theme, and their magic often has no power outside its scope. The wizard can do a great deal, but everything they do has to revolve around their theme.

A wizard's magical attacks are all damaging manifestations of their theme. A time wizard might hurl bolts of withering age, a mutation wizard might fling radioactive blasts, and a robot master may command swarms of savage little drones to strike.

A wizard's slaves and minions will also be in keeping with this theme. While their schemes might have them make alliances with other groups, the thralls they themselves have summoned or created will all be related to their theme. The statistics below are for some of the more common types of such minions.

Aside from combat powers, a wizard's schemes and larger works of magic will also be related to the theme. The things they want will be things that enhance their arts, and their great curses or dark marvels will touch on their theme's powers.

Figures of Evil	HD	AC	Atk	Dmg	TR	Shock	MV	ML	Skill	Save
Sorcerous Thrall	1	13	+2	wpn	wpn	wpn	10m	8	+1	15+
Minor Beast	3	15	+5x2	1d8	1d6/x2	3/-	15m	9	+1	14+
Thrall Sergeant	4	15	+7	1d8+4	1d8/x2	3/-	10m	10	+2	13+
Great Beast	10	16	+13x3	2d8	1d10/x3	6/-	15m	11	+2	10+
Thrall Master	12	18	+14x2	2d10	1d8/x3	6/-	10m	10	+3	9+
Minor Wizard	9*	15	+11&!	2d8	1d6/x2	-	10m	10	+3	11+
Regional Blight	12*	15	+14x2&!	3d6	1d8/x2	-	10m	11	+3	9+
Great Evil Mage	15*	15	+17x2&!	4d6	1d8/x3	-	10m	10	+4	8+

*: most techno-wizards are frail, and roll only 1d6 per hit die. !: The wizard gets a bonus Main Action each round.
&: Roll 1d10 each round for a special spell choice that can be cast once per round as a Main Action

Techno-wizards in Combat

Techno-wizards always fight behind as many minions as they can gather and will never engage a foe alone unless forced to do so. Their conventional attacks take the form of magic blasts or strikes from some magically-goaded beast, all flavored by the theme of the wizard. One who wields glowing energies might cast direct bolts, while a master of strange robotics may order his orbiting drone-thralls to focus their lasers on a particular target.

Aside from this direct magic, every techno-wizard has the chance of being able to use some other form of magic. Each round, they should roll 1d10 and consult the table below. Once per round, as a Main Action, they can instead cast that spell, flavoring its effects with their own theme. Direct targets may get an appropriate saving throw at the GM's discretion at a penalty equal to a third of the techno-wizard's hit dice, rounded down.

Once per battle, every techno-wizard can choose one of the effects below to cast rather than relying on the random die roll to see what is available. Their dark arts are erratic, but they do have some control still.

Unlike some wizards, ***techno-wizard spellcasting cannot be interrupted by attacks*** unless the spell indicates so. Only complete physical restraint can shut down their spellcasting.

d10	Available Combat Magic Effect
1	Create an impassable barrier that cuts off roughly half of the battlefield.
2	Deflect enemy attacks onto their own allies, sacrificing them for protection.
3	Create illusions, duplicates, or summoned minions that do no real harm but conceal their actual location.
4	Forcibly relocate 1d6 enemies to a non-lethal location within 200 meters.
5	Throw up a personal defensive barrier of some kind that absorbs half their current hit points in damage before breaking.
6	Summon at least twice as many minions as there are attackers against them.
7	Gather energies for a great blast that will automatically do x3 normal attack damage to 1d6 enemies next round unless someone hits them before then.
8	Imprison or shackle an assailant for 1d6+1 rounds; they can still defend.
9	Augment a minion on the field, giving them +4 to hit, damage, and Shock plus a bonus Main Action for the scene.
10	Flee the battlefield, albeit leaving their minions behind.

Techno-wizard Weaknesses

As powerful as their magic may be, techno-wizards invariably have some specific weakness. Roll or choose once from the table below to see what troubles the arcane evildoer.

d10	The Sorcerer's Weakness
1	There is a specific relic or object that will utterly destroy their ability to use magic if they are touched by it. This relic is fated to never be destroyed or rendered wholly lost so long as they live.
2	A particular uncommon substance or implement makes the bearer immune to their magic.
3	A particular weapon is destined to kill them instantly if they are attacked with it.
4	They must make a regular sacrifice of lives, riches, or some difficult-to-acquire material or else they will lose their magic.
5	They must fulfill the specific demands of their patron power or be destroyed.
6	Their life is contained in a relatively fragile object no smaller than a skull. If it is destroyed, they perish, but they can only hide it rather than seal it off entirely from the world.
7	During particular astrological conjunctions or after certain rituals the sorcerer is powerless for a time.
8	The sorcerer is compelled to keep the letter and spirit of their promises even if it destroys them.
9	The sorcerer is compelled to clearly describe his schemes to anyone who knowingly opposes them, usually in a gloating, ranting monologue.
10	The sorcerer is temporarily dead or torpid during certain predictable times.

A wizard's weakness is seldom commonly known, but his enemies can learn of it from at least one of the sources below.

d8	The Secret Keeper
1	The wizard's long-lost first grimoire
2	A jaded and treacherous minion
3	A particular learned sage
4	A former lieutenant who fled the mage
5	A rebellious son or daughter
6	An apprentice who left in horror
7	An alien or eldritch entity of knowledge
8	An unwilling thrall-entity of the sorcerer

Techno-wizard Scheme Generator

One does not become a techno-wizard by being satisfied with one's current estate. These vile sorcerers are constantly scheming to obtain lost relics, forbidden lore, brutal revenge, or the convenient death of their rivals. When they are not sunk into these schemes, they are frantically fending off the thrusts of their peers and scheming to foil the plans of their enemies.

The tables below can give a GM some clues as to what a particular techno-wizard is trying to accomplish at any given moment. These plans may be large and slow-moving, just a backdrop to the immediate events in the campaign, or they might be the seeds for a direct adventure involving the PCs. If a techno-wizard's plots succeed, however, they can be guaranteed to become even more fearsome in their dark powers.

d6	Who Is Helping Them?
1	Terrified locals dragooned into service
2	Vile mercenaries who've hired on
3	A race of unearthly entities
4	A pack of lab-grown slave creatures
5	Zealous cultists of their dark god
6	Ruthless enemies of their current target

d8	What Is Their Basic Goal?
1	Recover a vital artifact stolen from them
2	Avenge one of their prior defeats
3	Enslave or enthrall a potent ally
4	Obtain a long-lost item of sorcerous power
5	Destroy or ruin a rival techno-wizard
6	Complete an esoteric ritual of power
7	Destroy an interloper in their domain
8	Satisfy a lust for wealth or power

d10	What's Getting In Their Way?
1	A rival techno-wizard is blocking them
2	Their target resists their magical powers
3	They still need a critical item to progress
4	An important minion is secretly a traitor
5	A powerful protector fends them off
6	They do not feel strong enough yet
7	They lack a critical piece of information
8	It can only be done at a specific time
9	It would require betraying a potent ally
10	They need better servants to carry it out



d20	What's Complicating the Situation?
1	Their success would benefit others as well
2	They've failed at this goal before
3	A PC ally or associate is in their service
4	A non-sorcerer power wants the goal too
5	Their plan is fundamentally ridiculous
6	Success would cause great general harm
7	Their rites are causing dire side-effects
8	Their goal is actually impossible to attain
9	They are under a strict time limit
10	Someone has stolen a critical component
11	They are deluded about an important fact
12	The scheme is actually all a misdirection
13	Success would kill an important minion
14	They want two opposing goals at once
15	They underestimate their opposition
16	Success would be disastrous for the wizard
17	They are drawing on uncontrolled powers
18	An eldritch entity is interfering with events
19	An ancient pact or power hinders them
20	Nothing; it's going to work perfectly

The Ash Sorcerer

In a campaign setting that includes the vile machinations of techno-wizards, it's inevitable that some GMs will wish to give their PCs the chance to taste a little of that unclean power. While true techno-wizardry requires unforgivable sacrifices and unspeakable pacts, the occasional rogue apprentice or more cautious adept can master a few basic powers without losing their humanity entirely.

"Ash Sorcerers" are those men and women who have entered just far enough into these dark techno-secrets to gain magical powers, but not so far as to sacrifice their souls. Their magics are far weaker and more limited than those of true techno-wizards, but they can prove useful in overcoming the challenges of a shattered earth. Most pass their arts on from master to pupil, though a few institutional traditions may exist in places abnormally tolerant of their magic.

Even some settings without techno-wizards might have just enough sorcery to justify a PC class built around manipulating these uncanny powers. GMs can use the Ash Sorcerer as a template for such magic-wielders, altering their details to fit the unnatural secrets of their own world.

Becoming an Ash Sorcerer

To gain these abilities, a PC must take the *Ash Sorcerer* Edge at first level. The arts and pacts involved in becoming a sorcerer are too demanding to be picked up later in life, so the Edge can only be taken when the character is created.

Unlike most Edges, however, the *Ash Sorcerer* Edge may be picked twice. Doing so will let them use their powers more often and given them a wider range of abilities. If it is to be taken twice, this also must be done at first level.

A new Ash Sorcerer gets Technomagic-0 as a bonus skill, or Technomagic-1 if the Edge was taken twice. The Technomagic skill is exclusive to Ash Sorcerers, and represents both their personal mastery of their arcane powers and their academic knowledge of the dark secrets of before-times science. It can be used to comprehend magic, know of techno-wizards, and apprehend facts about creatures born of dark sorcery.

Disciplines and Arts

Ash Sorcerer powers are divided up into ***disciplines***, each one dedicated to a particular type of ability. Within each discipline are ***arts***, the specific powers that the Ash Sorcerer possesses.

An Ash Sorcerer starts play knowing two arts from any disciplines. They gain more as they advance in character level, with the rate of learning depending on whether one or two Edges were committed.

Whenever an Ash Sorcerer learns an art from a new discipline, they must always first take the first listed art.

Ash Sorcerer Arts

	Arts Gained	
Level	**One Edge**	**Two Edges**
1	Any Two	Any Two
2		Any One
3	Any One	Any One
4	Any One	Any Two
5		Any One
6	Any One	Any One
7	Any One	Any Two
8	Any One	Any One
9		Any One
10	Any One	Any Two

Thus, when mastering the Golden Bands of Iptis-Nar, the Ash Sorcerer must always first pick the *Binding Light* art. This is the basic technique of the discipline that all practitioners must master.

Afterwards, they can pick from other arts in the discipline freely, except for the final art. That one can only be mastered after all earlier spells are known. As such, mastering the *Last Light* of the Golden Bands can only be done by an Ash Sorcerer who has learned the other four arts of it first.

An Ash Sorcerer may learn arts from as many disciplines as they wish unless they take the *Limited Education* Focus.

Arts and Ash Sorcerer Effort

Ash Sorcerer arts are fueled with ***Ash Sorcerer Effort***, which represents a sorcerer's magical stamina and the strength of their otherworldly science. Effort is measured in points which are Committed to use the powers and refreshed later. These points are Committed for one of two durations.

- ***Effort Committed for the scene*** is regained as soon as the fight or scene ends. Out of combat, it lasts for one event or activity, usually about fifteen minutes at most.

- ***Effort Committed for the day*** is regained only after the next night's comfortable sleep. It cannot be recovered if the sorcerer is hungry, cold, or otherwise suffering from privation.

A PC's maximum Ash Sorcerer Effort is equal to 1 plus their Technomagic skill plus their highest attribute modifier between Intelligence or Charisma. If they took the *Ash Sorcerer* Edge twice, this total is increased by 1 point.

Activating and Using Arts

Triggering an Ash Sorcerer art requires that the sorcerer gesture broadly with at least one hand, though incantations are not normally required. If the sorcerer's hands are bound, they cannot cast.

Ash sorcery is always extremely visible. Beams of eldritch light, shackles of glowing radiance, ripples of distorted space, and other flamboyant effects make clear that magical powers are being used whenever an art is triggered, as well as the source of those powers.

Ash Sorcerers cannot cast while wearing armor with an Encumbrance of greater than 0 or while bearing a shield. Only the very lightest harness is non-restrictive enough to allow them to channel their energies. Sorcerers who fear sharp attentions often enchant their own exotic costumes with protective wards via the Panoply of the Pact discipline.

Ash sorcerer arts are not disrupted by injury. Unlike many more delicate forms of spellcasting, hitting an Ash Sorcerer does not stop them from using their magic unless the blow strikes them down entirely.

Ash Sorcerer Limits

An Ash Sorcerer cannot mix their abilities with certain magical classes. They cannot become Mages or Summoners from *Cities Without Number*, or full or partial Psychics from *Stars Without Number*, or any of the spellcasting Mage classes from *Worlds Without Number*. However, they can become Mentalists, Gifted, Healers, Beastmasters, or other non-spellcasting magical classes not listed above.

Ash Sorcerers can utilize cyberware from *Cities Without Number* without issue, though they cannot implant Nerve-type cyberware.

If the GM uses the Ash Sorcerer as a class rather than as an Edge, such as if they are adding them to a *Worlds Without Number* game, a partial Ash Sorcerer gains arts, maximum Effort, and beginning Technomagic-0 skill as if they'd spent one Edge on it, and a full Ash Sorcerer gains arts, maximum Effort, and Technomagic-1 skill as if they'd spent two Edges.

Creating New Disciplines and Arts

Creating new disciplines or adding arts to existing disciplines is strictly up to the GM. If they want to emulate the magic of a specific setting, they might create a new discipline with the hallmark powers of the mages of that world, and if a player particularly wants a certain special ability, the GM may choose to let them add it as another art choice for an appropriate discipline.

New arts added to a discipline don't increase the number of arts that must be mastered to pick up the final art. For example, mastering the *Weft* art of the Panoply of the Pact will only ever require learning two earlier arts from it, no matter how many new options a GM may choose to add.



Ash Sorcerer Foci

Some Ash Sorcerers are poorly trained, and must substitute raw will for broader aptitude. Other PCs might have picked up a petty scrap of dark science and learned a trick they ought not to have known.

Limited Education

Your training was not as broad as it could have been, or your aptitude not as wide as it should be. You do your best to compensate for this through the sheer exercise of magical will.

Level 1: Gain a bonus Focus. Pick two Disciplines; you cannot learn arts from any other, though in lieu of learning an art you may increase your maximum Ash Sorcerer Effort by 1 point. All saving throws against your arts suffer a -2 penalty.

Dark Secret

You have learned a secret of ash sorcery. This Focus cannot be taken by Ash Sorcerers.

Level 1: Gain an art from a discipline of your choice, picking any art except the final art of the discipline. You may use this art even while wearing armor or using a shield. Your maximum Ash Sorcerer Effort for using this single ability is equal to 1 plus a third of your level, rounded down. You may substitute an appropriate skill of your own for any Technomagic roll the art may require.

Ash Sorcerer Disciplines

The disciplines listed here are merely those most often known to Ash Sorcerers. New arts can be added at the GM's discretion, but such new additions should not increase the total number of arts required to master the final spell of the technique.

The initial, mandatory art of a discipline is labeled as "First", while the one that can only be learned after mastering all others is noted as "Final".

Arts that inflict damage do not do Shock and do not roll Trauma dice in campaigns using those rules.

The Ash Litany

Words of consumption and cinder char coarse matter as if by open flame, even though the fire itself is imperceptible. The bulk of the art is in extinguishing thermal energy and the links of warmth, but hideous pacts can refine the litany to erase specific other qualities. Of course, only a techno-wizard would seek secrets with such a vile price.

Burning Words (First): The caster ignores the first five points of fire or laser damage they take per round. As a Main Action, commit Effort for the day and target a creature or object within 30 meters. It suffers 1d6 points of fire damage plus half the caster's level, rounded down. Objects can be ignited this way, but the art itself produces no visible flames.

Ashen Breath: As a Main Action, commit Effort for the day and target one contiguous 3-meter cube per caster level within 30 meters. Within that area, any flames are instantly extinguished and any objects within are brought to room temperature. Combustion, harmful heat, and open flames cannot happen within the affected area for 1d6 rounds afterwards. This affects conventional cartridge primer detonation and inflicted laser damage, but not esoteric energy weapons.

Flesh of Cinders: As an On Turn Action, commit Effort for the day. The caster and their belongings break apart into a human-sized cloud of cold cinders until the start of their next round. During that time they cannot be harmed or affected by anything that wouldn't affect a cloud of ashes, nor can they manipulate solid objects or use magic on the material world. They may move as normal while dispersed, passing through any crack or hole that ashes could pass through.

Mouth of Ash (Final): Gain one bonus point of Effort that can only be used with this discipline. The caster becomes immune to mundane fire and ignores the first 10 points per round of laser damage or magical fire damage. *Burning Words* does an additional 1d6 damage.

Clockwork Soul Imbuement

Forgotten sciences permit an adept to create servitor-beings, albeit ones far weaker than the terrible creations of the techno-wizards. Even so, their sheer numbers can make them useful in fending off lesser enemies and their suicidal willingness to obey can make them convenient sacrificial pawns.

Servitors created by these arts have 1 HD, 6 hit points, a +2 bonus to hit with any weapons they are given, a Move rate of 10m, a skill bonus of +1, and an unarmed damage of 1d4. They use the Shock and Trauma dice of any weapons they are given. Once a weapon is given to them, it cannot be removed without destroying the weapon.

As constructs, servitors do not need to eat, sleep, or breathe, and they are immune to poisons, diseases, and mind-affecting magics. They share the same senses as humans.

Animate Servitor (First): The caster may build and animate small servitor-bots or golems, each no larger than a small human nor smaller than a cat. One such entity per character level may be animated at any one time; they have a human degree of intelligence and can speak any language their creator can. Destroying or disenchanting the servitor destroys their equipment. They cannot be healed, but regain all lost hit points at midnight each day. They are suicidally loyal to the caster. Creating and animating a servitor requires six hours of work, but the materials can be found almost anywhere.

Iron Swarm: As a Main Action, commit Effort for the day and target a visible servitor within 30 meters. The servitor disassembles into a swarm of violent components, savaging all enemies within a three-meter radius and doing the servitor's current hit points in damage plus 1d6 per two caster levels, rounded up, with an Evasion save for half damage. This art destroys the targeted servitor and adds one System Strain to the caster.

Augmented Frames: The hit points of a servitor become 10 instead of 6. The caster may communicate with them at a distance, as if over radio, up to 20 meters away per caster level. The weapons and armor the servitors wield are treated as magical and gain a +2 bonus to hit and damage dice, but not to Shock.

Wings of Steel (Final): The caster's servitors are capable of flight at their normal movement rate, including hovering in place. Two servitors are strong enough to lift one normal human, though they can do nothing else but carry and their "passenger" is too shaken to do more than be carried.

The Golden Bands of Iptis-Nar

A prelude-science to the terrible Energies Absolute wielded by certain techno-wizards, these constructs of shining golden light have a certain practical utility even without the hideous sacrifices of their more sophisticated progressions.

Damage done by the arts of the Golden Bands is always non-lethal; creatures reduced to zero hit points are instead left utterly helpless for a scene, after which they regain one hit point.

Binding Light (First): As an On Turn action, conjure or dismiss a torch-bright glow from around your hands. As a Main Action, commit Effort for the day and target a visible creature within 30 meters no larger than a bull. Bands of brilliant radiance enfold it, trapping it where it stands unless it succeeds in a Physical saving throw. Bound creatures count as being grappled and cannot move from their location. They may break the bonds with a Main Action, but suffer 1d6 damage per caster level if they do so, with a Physical save for half. If unbroken, the bonds last 1d4 rounds plus half the caster's level, rounded down. A creature may be bound by this power only once per scene.

Shaping Light: As a Main Action, commit Effort for the day and target a visible point within 30 meters. You create a solid, opaque construct of tangible light that can fit in a 6-meter cube. One end of the construct must be planted on solid ground, but it has no measurable weight. The construct must be composed of simple geometric shapes: a bridge, a wall, a ladder, or another object with no moving parts. The construct cannot be hollow or trap creatures within it and it can be destroyed by taking 3 points of damage per caster level, with strikes against it automatically hitting. If one construct is destroyed, all other extant constructs disappear as well. The construct evaporates at the end of the scene.

Warding Light: As an Instant action, commit Effort for the day and target a visible ally within 30 meters to throw up a glowing golden shield around them. The shield protects against non-magical projectiles and thrown objects, and is large enough to protect all allies within a 3-meter radius around the chosen target of defense. It lasts until the end of the caster's next round. When the shield faces a non-magical ranged attack, make an opposed Int or Cha/Technomagic skill check against the attacker's combat skill; on a success or tie, the attack is deflected, while on a failure, its hits do only half damage, rounded down. Use of the *Warding Light* is very taxing; if the caster invokes it, they lose their Main Action for the round, or their Main Action for the next round if they have already acted this round.

Subduing Light: As an On Turn action, commit Effort for the day. For the rest of the scene, as a Main Action, the caster can hurl glowing, rippling bands of energy at a target within 50 meters. The effect counts as an attack that uses the Technomagic skill and the best of the caster's Int or Cha attribute modifiers for hit and damage. It does 1d8 damage on a hit, plus half the caster's level, rounded down. As with other Golden Bands arts, its damage is non-lethal. It cannot be used while the caster is in melee, and it is not affected by Foci that modify ranged weapon attacks.

Last Light (Final): Gain one bonus Effort point that can only be used to fuel arts of this discipline. When using the *Binding Light*, targets take a saving throw penalty equal to the caster's Technomagic skill. When using the *Subduing Light*, the caster's base attack bonus is equal to their character level, instead of their usual attack bonus. If they already have such a base attack bonus, as from the *On Target* Edge, they instead get a +2 additional bonus to hit.

Panoply of the Pact

Mages of every kind are notorious for their impractical vestments and elaborate decorations. While techno-wizards often work protective effects into their mutated flesh, Ash Sorcerers are more cautious and consecrate only the strange vestments they wear. Such clothing can vary in appearance, but always looks strange, scanty, ensigiled, or otherwise clearly magical. Attuning an outfit is a simple process that requires only a few minutes.

Mantle (First): While wearing your ritually-attuned vestments, you have a base AC of 14 plus half your level, rounded down. Your vestments keep you cool or warmly comfortable regardless of the mundane weather and they are never stained or damaged by ordinary use.

Calceus: As an On Turn action, commit Effort for the scene. Your next Move action gains +5m movement and counts as a *Fighting Withdrawal* for avoiding melee attacks.

Weft (Final): Your *Mantle* now grants you a base AC of 16 plus half your level, rounded down. With an hour's work, you may disassemble and destroy a suit of magical or modified armor; your *Mantle* gains the mods, magical bonuses, or powers of that suit, though its base AC doesn't change. Mods added to your *Mantle* this way do not require maintenance. You may use this art again later on a different suit of armor to replace the benefits.





The Pavis of Seven Angles

The worst enemy of a techno-wizard is another techno-wizard. The most primitive apotropaic effects are summed up in protocols of the Pavis of Seven Angles, often taught to apprentices destined to serve as mere living shields for their masters.

Jade Eye of Divinity (First): Gain a +2 bonus to all saving throws against magical effects. As a Main Action, focus on a visible person, object, or place. The caster perceives any active magical effects or the presence of latent magical powers, such as in a sorcerer or magic item. With a minute of careful study, they gain a three-word description of a magic item's general effect, though not necessarily any additional curses or side-effects.

Summation of Four Angles: Once per round, as an On Turn action, commit Effort for the day and conjure a straight, translucent wall of up to 5 meter width and 4 meter height at a point within 30 meters. If a spell or magical effect crosses the barrier toward the sorcerer or their allies, make an Int or Cha/Technomagic skill check against the originator, or difficulty 9 for most magic items or place-enchantments. If the sorcerer wins or ties the check, the effect is negated and the screen vanishes. If failed, the magic passes through. The screen otherwise lasts until the end of the scene. Enchantments on creatures or items are unaffected by the barrier.

Extirpating the Energies: As a Main Action, commit Effort for the scene and target an enchanted or cursed person within 30 meters. If used as a held action, it can also target a just-completed spellcasting. The effect's caster must succeed in an opposed Int or Cha/Technomagic skill check against the caster or source of the enchantments, or difficulty 9 for most item-generated effects. On a success, the magic is dispelled or the casting is ruined. On a failure, the caster cannot attempt this art against that specific enchantment until tomorrow, or against a specific target's curse ever again.

Fulcrum of Rebuke (Final): Gain a +1 bonus to all Int or Cha/Technomagic skill checks made with the arts of this discipline. As an Instant action, commit Effort for the day when targeted by a magical effect. Make an opposed Int or Cha/Technomagic skill check against the user, or against difficulty 9 for most item-generated effects. On a success, the sorcerer may re-target the effect to any other target or point within its original range. This art can be attempted against a given caster or item only once per scene.

The Steps of Yu

Its originator long forgotten, the Steps of Yu bind space beneath the limping feet of its strangely-gaited practitioners. Those who would use it must step crookedly, for a straight pace would defy Heaven, scorn Earth, and pervert the place of Man.

Sideways Walking (First): The caster never trips, slips, or stumbles unless physically thrown. As a Main Action, commit Effort for the day. The caster "turns sideways" in space and moves up to 10 meters, with the movement counting as a *Fighting Withdrawal*. They are invisible while moving, but must deal with barriers or obstacles as normal and will reappear at the movement's end.

Nine Directions Walk: As a Main Action, commit Effort for the day. For the rest of the scene, they can walk on vertical or overhanging surfaces at their normal movement rate, even if the surface wouldn't normally bear their weight. They can walk across liquids, provided the surface is relatively calm.

Limping Gait: As a Move Action, commit Effort for the day and target a visible creature within 30 meters. It loses its Move action each round. At the end of each of its rounds, it may make a Physical save to throw off this art. This art can be targeted at a given creature only once per scene.

Walk With Rhythm (Final): The caster's base movement rate increases by 5 meters per Move action and they and their closest dozen comrades leave no mundanely-perceptible tracks. Walking is as restful and restorative to them as a night's sleep; they do not tire while walking and can obtain nightly refreshment with eight hours of pacing if necessary.

Ash Sorcerers and Mages

Ash Sorcerers are built to be magic-users for settings with very specific, limited magical powers that are often unique to particular wizards. If this is the only kind of PC magic available in the setting, the players don't need to worry about competing with the raw power of a High Mage or the flexible effects of a Psychic, so their somewhat weaker and more rigid powers aren't an issue.

In campaigns where full-dress magic is available to PCs, however, the Ash Sorcerer might be a little underpowered as a stand-alone class, though mixing in just a single Edge or partial class of it can provide considerable flexibility and support to the other part of a character's concept. In most cases a full Ash Sorcerer will still be fine in magical company, but where it pinches, the GM can give a full Ash Sorcerer Expert hit dice and attack bonuses instead of full Mage scores.

Whispers of the Green God

A lesser and constrained form of the terrible mind-binding magics of the techno-wizards, this discipline affects only bestial intellects. A "beast" for the purpose of this art is a living creature of a kind possessing less than human intelligence that is neither plant, fungus, nor insect.

Chitter (First): You speak the tongues of animals, and can converse with them to the limit of their natural intellect. Beasts seldom notice much unrelated to their animal interests, but can describe what they have seen or heard and can perform simple favors if duly induced.

Howl: As a Main Action, commit Effort for the day and cry out a summons to a particular type of animal that dwells in the general area. One such will arrive within ten minutes and will be well-disposed toward the caster and their allies. It will not fight or perform dangerous duties, but will freely cooperate for tasks that take no more than an hour. If desired, you may summon specific beasts if they are within one kilometer per caster level, or use this ability on a non-hostile beast already present to win its cooperation.

Snarl: As a Main Action, commit Effort for the day and target a visible animal within 30 meters. It must make a Mental saving throw; on a success, it will flee or attack, while on a failure, it becomes the caster's thrall for the rest of the scene, or for 1d6 rounds if it has more hit dice than the caster has levels. Such enslaved beasts will fight, but will flee if brought below half hit points, and will not perform suicidal tasks or those beyond their intellect. When the effect ends, the animal will flee. Only one beast can be under *Snarl's* binding at once.

Speak (Final): As a Main Action, commit Effort for the day and target a visible animal within 30 meters. For one hour per caster level, it gains a human degree of intelligence and can speak any language the caster can. The caster may telepathically communicate with it for the duration of the art, including sharing senses if the creature is willing. As a side benefit, the caster may nominate one pet or allied creature to be under this art's effects at all times; the nomination can be changed with a day's work.

Yobod-Zul's Maledictions

Curses are dark magics, but not all of them are unforgivable. Those Ash Sorcerers who restrict themselves to the briefer afflictions can avoid making the terrible pacts required to inflict longer or stronger banes.

Unlike most disciplines, Yobod-Zul's Maledictions are very subtle in their effect. The caster needs no free hand to cast them, requiring only a hard stare at the target, and no visible effect links the caster and their victim. Even so, a blindfold or physical blinding will prevent the use of these arts. A target who succeeds in their saving throw will feel an uncanny chill as they throw off the effect, but a failure will go unnoticed even after the curse begins to alter their fate.

Minor Malison (First): As a Main Action, commit Effort for the day and target a visible creature within 30 meters. The target must make a Mental save; on a failure, they suffer a -2 penalty to hit, damage rolls, and Shock, and a -1 penalty to all skill checks for one hour per caster level.

Curse of Calamity: As an On Turn action, commit Effort for the day and target a visible creature within 30 meters. If they do not succeed in the next attack roll or skill check made within one hour per caster level, they immediately suffer some sort of misfortune, misery, or mishap that inflicts 1d6 damage per caster level, with a Mental save for half. This damage cannot reduce them below 1 hit point. A creature cannot be cursed by this art more than once per scene.

Curse of Ineptitude: As a Main Action, commit Effort for the day and target a visible creature within 30 meters while naming a particular activity. Any skill check related to that activity suffers a -2 penalty. If the activity is combat, any attack rolls they make must be made twice and the worst taken. The subject gets a Mental save to throw off this curse after each round in which it takes effect. It otherwise ends after one hour per caster level.

Feed the Curse (Final): The caster can fuel the power of their maledictions with their own life energy. As an Instant action, whenever a subject saves against one of their curses or has it dispelled, the caster may take 1d6 damage per three hit dice of the target, rounded up, to force the save to count as a failure or negate the dispel effect. Damage suffered this way cannot reduce the caster's hit points below 1. A given curse can be fed only once.



The Mentalist

Some worlds contain people who have been touched by unknown powers. These men and women are gifted with clairvoyant sight, telekinesis, powers of mind reading, or other exotic mental abilities, most of which are subtle but uncanny in effect. Such figures are known as Mentalists.

Some Mentalists are the product of alien technology, victims of some otherworldly race's experimentation. Others are naturally gifted with their abilities and discover them at some time of great need. A few even learn them from a mentor, partaking of secret arts of mental control and physical discipline. The specific source of a Mentalist's powers will depend on the nature of the campaign and a GM's own decision on the kind of abilities they wish to allow in their game. In a non-fantastic setting or a gritty After the Fall game, Mentalists may not be appropriate at all.

Mentalists bear no obvious stigma and their powers are often impossible for ordinary people to detect. This leads to an unsurprising degree of fear and mistrust toward them in most settings where they exist, with few feeling entirely easy around a person who might be rummaging through their mind or bending their thoughts at any given moment. Necessity might drive a community to accept a Mentalist among them, but few will ever be trusted with positions of leadership or authority.

Mentalists and Psychics

Mentalists as a class tend to have weaker powers than a Psychic from *Stars Without Number*, though some of their abilities overlap to a degree. They lack dramatic abilities such as teleportation or shapeshifting, and they can't heal others as a Biopsion can. Their powers also often require Committing Effort for the day, limiting how often they can use them.

This weakness is balanced by a Mentalist's lower investment costs. Mentalists don't need to burn their skill points learning new abilities, as they only need to improve one skill, Mentalism, to augment their powers. They also function as a partial class or a single Edge, allowing a Mentalist to mix in abilities from another class while having a far superior degree of flexibility compared to a partial Psychic.

GMs who prefer lower-powered psychics in their *Stars Without Number* campaign might choose to substitute Mentalists for Psychics. Their weaker abilities can be easier for a GM to handle in play, and the absence of things like teleportation or fast healing can better suit the tone of certain campaign settings.

Mentalist Arts

Level	Arts Gained
1	Any Two
2	Any One
3	Any One
4	Any One
5	Any One
6	Any One
7	Any One
8	Any One
9	Any One
10	Any Two

Disciplines and Arts

Mentalist powers are divided up into ***disciplines***, each one dedicated to a particular type of ability. Within each discipline are ***arts***, the specific powers that a Mentalist possesses. A novice Mentalist starts with two arts of their choice and gains more at each level as they advance. Once chosen, an art cannot be changed.

Arts are either ***lesser arts*** or ***greater arts***, with greater arts being noted so in their description. For each greater art learned, the Mentalist must know two lesser arts from that discipline first. Thus, to learn two greater Psychokinesis arts, four lesser Psychokinesis arts must be known.

A Mentalist is not limited to one discipline in choosing their arts unless they take the *Focused Mind* Focus.

Arts and Mentalist Effort

Most arts are fueled with ***Mentalist Effort***, which represents a user's mental strength and flexibility. Effort is measured in points which are Committed to use the powers and refreshed later. These points are Committed for one of two durations.

- ***Effort Committed for the scene*** is regained as soon as the fight or scene ends. Out of combat, it lasts for one event or activity, usually about fifteen minutes at most.

- ***Effort Committed for the day*** is regained only after the next night's comfortable sleep. It cannot be recovered if the Mentalist is hungry, cold, or otherwise suffering from privation.

A PC's maximum Mentalist Effort is equal to 1 plus their Mentalism skill plus their highest attribute modifier between Wisdom or Charisma.



Becoming a Mentalist

To gain Mentalist abilities, a PC must pick the *Mentalist* Edge. Psychic abilities tend to manifest around puberty, so this Edge must be taken at first level, and cannot normally be acquired later without special justification.

A new Mentalist gets two lesser arts of their choice and Mentalism-0 as a bonus skill. Only Mentalists can acquire or improve Mentalism.

Optionally, if the GM is using character classes instead of Edges, as described in *Stars Without Number* and *Worlds Without Number*, Mentalist is considered to be a partial Psychic class in the former case or a partial Mage in the latter. It cannot be taken as a full class.

Mentalist Limits

A Mentalist cannot mix their abilities with certain magical classes. They cannot become Mages or Summoners from *Cities Without Number*, or full or partial Psychics from *Stars Without Number*, or any of the spellcasting Mage classes from *Worlds Without Number*. However, they can become Gifted, Healers, Beastmasters, or other non-spellcasting magical classes not listed above.

Mentalists can utilize cyberware from *Cities Without Number* without issue, though they cannot implant Nerve-type cyberware.

Mentalist powers can be used freely in armor or with hands occupied. They are not obvious to normal senses, though a Psychic with the *Metapsionics* discipline can detect them in use, as can characters from other settings who have magic-detecting powers.

Mentalist Foci

Two special Foci exist related to Mentalist abilities. Others might exist depending on the nature of the GM's campaign world.

Focused Mind

Your Mentalist gifts are directed at a specific discipline, though this limitation strengthens your abilities. Only a Mentalist can take this Focus, and it must be taken at first level.

Level 1: Gain a bonus Focus. Choose one discipline; you cannot take arts from any other discipline. In lieu of taking an art when you advance a level, however, you may instead increase your maximum Mentalist Effort by one point. Any saving throws made against your arts take a -2 penalty.

Wild Mind

While you are not a Mentalist, you've been touched by some small fragment of their abilities. This Focus cannot be taken by Mentalists, and taking it does not make the PC count as a Psychic for abilities or effects that target them.

Level 1: Gain a lesser art from a discipline of your choice. Your maximum Mentalist Effort for using this single ability is equal to 1 plus a third of your level, rounded down. If the ability relies on the Mentalism skill, you may instead substitute another skill you have that is somehow related to your ability, such as Notice for Mindreading, perhaps, or Talk for Compulsion.

Mentalist Disciplines

The disciplines described below are the ones most likely to fit most campaigns. Other disciplines might exist in a given game, as well as additional arts within a given discipline. PCs might even be able to develop their own new arts at the GM's discretion, though this should generally be something rare and carefully-gauged for a given campaign's power level.

Detecting Arts

Use of Mentalist arts is extremely subtle, and requires no gestures, words, or anything more than a moment's silent concentration. Characters from mixed campaign settings with magic-sensing powers can detect an art's use or its invisible effects, but those with merely normal human senses cannot.

Other Mentalists do have a chance of noticing such powers being used in their presence or against them. The GM makes hidden opposed Wis/Mentalism skill checks, and the use of some power is sensed on a success. The detecting Mentalist may not recognize the specific power if it's one they don't possess, but will sense its discipline and the person who is using it.

Otherwise, a mundane target will not generally be aware of being targeted by a Mentalist power unless its nature is obvious or it allows a saving throw which they succeed at making. In that case, they will get a frisson of sensation that a knowledgeable target will recognize as a Mentalist power, though not its source.



Auspice

The discipline of probability control and the nudging of luck, Auspice's effects are subtle. A Mentalist gifted in its arts can turn fortune into an ally and bring quick disaster on an enemy.

Eye for the Slain: As a Main Action, Commit Effort for the scene and target a visible hostile creature. They take a penalty to all hit rolls, damage rolls, and Shock done equal to your Mentalism skill, to a minimum of -1. They may make a Mental saving throw at the end of each round to throw off this effect. A creature cannot be targeted by this power more than once per scene.

Fortune's Store (Greater): As an Instant Action, Commit Effort for the day and gain one System Strain after rolling a die. You save that die result and immediately re-roll. Later, you can substitute that die result for the same size of die rolled by a visible target as an Instant action. Hostile targets can make a Mental save to negate the switch. You can store only one die at a time and cannot recover the Effort until the swap is made or the art is allowed to lapse. The GM can disallow the storage of trivial or forced die roll attempts; the roll has to be for something meaningful.

Gambler's Luck: As an Instant action, Commit Effort for the day and gain one System Strain when playing a game of chance, rolling dice, or making a Luck saving throw. You dictate the result of the game, dice, or Luck save.

It Is Written (Greater): As a Main Action, Commit Effort for the day and gain one System Strain. Once within the next round you may dictate the die result of a roll made in your presence as an Instant action. If the subject is hostile, it can make a Mental save to resist this art. This art can be used only once per day.

Lucky Strike: One per round, as an On Turn action, Commit Effort for the scene and target a visible ally. They gain a bonus to their next attack roll within one round equal to your Mentalism skill, to a minimum of +1, and may add it to any damage or Shock they inflict. If using Trauma rules, they may reroll their Trauma die once if the natural roll is less than your Mentalism skill. This art can target a given ally only once per scene.

Stroke of Fortune: As an Instant Action, Commit Effort for the day and gain one System Strain when a visible ally fails a skill check or attack roll. They can reroll the check, taking the better roll. A specific ally can be graced with this aid only once per day, and this power cannot be used on the user.

Body Control

The arts of Body Control manipulate the mentalist's physical form in subtle ways, energizing it, altering its density, or preserving its life. While the effects of Body Control may be obviously unnatural, there are no visible physical changes involved in its use.

Feathered Step: As an On Turn action, Commit Effort for the scene. Until the end of your round, you can move normally across liquid surfaces or along vertical or overhanging walls at your usual movement rate. You can navigate along any physical material as if you were effectively weightless, though your footing must be tangible. If you are not on solid ground when the ability ends, you fall normally.

Joint Control: As an On Turn action, Commit Effort for the scene to become inhumanly flexible for one round per Mentalism level, to a minimum of one round. During this time, you and your gear can fit through any hole no narrower than your skull and you gain a +4 bonus on all skill checks to resist being grappled. While in effect, you gain a +2 skill check bonus on any Exert or Perform skill check that would benefit from flexibility.

Mental Hemostasis: As an Instant action, Commit Effort for the day when you are Mortally Wounded. You automatically stabilize if the wound is at all survivable. If the wound would normally risk a Major Injury, this art allows you to roll the Major Injury twice and take the one you prefer. The stabilization is not enough to save you if the Major Injury would result in your death without more advanced medical care, however.

Psychic Innervation: As a Main Action, Commit Effort for the day to reduce your weariness as if you had just had eight hours of rest, food, and water. You do not regain lost hit points, lose System Strain, or gain any other benefits from this "rest", however, and you cannot recover day-long Committed Effort until you have a real night's rest.

Psychic Rush (Greater): Once per round, as an On Turn action, Commit Effort for the day and accept one System Strain. You gain a bonus Move action this round that can only be used for physical movement or actions. Each additional time you use this art in a scene, the acquired System Strain increases by one point: two points the second time, three the third, and so forth.

Surge of Force (Greater): As an On Turn action, Commit Effort for the day. Until the end of your round, your Strength or Dexterity modifier is treated as +2. If you accept a point of System Strain when triggering this ability, it lasts for as many additional rounds as your Mentalism skill, to a minimum of 1 extra round. This surge can be triggered for only one attribute at a time.

Clairvoyance

Supernatural visions are the province of Clairvoyance, with limited precognition and remote viewing being common talents. The futures seen by Clairvoyance are always mutable by present actions, and its powers seem unable to peer into the past.

Clear Senses: As an On Turn action, Commit Effort for the scene. For the rest of the scene, your senses are not obstructed or confused by darkness, clamor, or other usual impediments. You count as having flash and ear protection while this art is active.

Locate Object: As a Main Action, Commit Effort for the day and choose a person you have met, a type of creature you have met, a specific object, or a general type of object. If the subject is within 200 meters per Mentalism level, to a minimum of 200 meters, you get a sense of the direction and approximate distance to the nearest target. If the GM isn't reasonably sure whether or not such a thing exists in range, they should assign it a percentage chance and roll accordingly.

Remote Viewing: As a Main Action, Commit Effort for the day. Focus on a location within 100 meters per Mentalism skill level, to a minimum of 100 meters. You perceive the location as if you were standing there, using your normal or Mentalist-enhanced senses. The vision lasts as long as you continue doing nothing else, to a maximum of fifteen minutes.

Sudden Warning: If you are about to be ambushed, Execution Attacked, or unexpectedly harmed within the next round, you get a brief glimpse of what is about to happen from your perspective. This negates Execution Attacks or ambushes and allows you to avoid doing whatever might have harmed or killed you. If you do not Commit Effort for the day as an Instant action when this power triggers, it goes numb for the rest of the day.

The First Light (Greater): As a Main Action, Commit Effort for the day and gain one System Strain. For one round, you can see through all obstacles, walls, darkness, mist, or other impediments out to a range of ten meters per Mentalism level, to a minimum of 10 meters. Holograms or illusions are instantly revealed by this sight. If used to search a room or location, every hidden object in it is revealed, but the user has no time to look beyond the area.

Third Eye's Sight (Greater): As an On Turn action, Commit Effort for the day and tell the GM what you are about to do with your Main Action. The GM then tells you their estimate of the most likely immediate result of that action, from your perspective, over the next thirty seconds.





Compulsion

Compulsion arts only function on living creatures, and they must be within 10 meters of the user per Mentalism skill level, to a minimum of 10 meter range. Unless specified, all targets get a Mental save to resist the effect; if they succeed, the power is negated and they become aware of some psychic intrusion, albeit not its origin. On a failure, they will attempt to rationalize any art as being their own idea or choice unless clearly faced with a mindbender's unnatural demands. Compulsion functions on animal life as well, albeit only to the limit of its natural intellectual abilities.

A Better Idea: Once per round, as an Instant action, Commit Effort for the day and target a creature who has just declared their Main Action. If successful, they will instead reconsider their choice and do something else that seems plausible to them. It will not be the same kind of action; if they reconsider an attack, they won't attack someone else, and if they reconsider movement, they won't move elsewhere. This reconsideration will never be suicidal, regardless of the limits. This art can target a given creature only once per scene.

Compel Aversion (Greater): As a Main Action, Commit Effort for the day and target a creature. Choose a particular type of action, person, or idea that can be described in no more than two sentences. If the art succeeds, for the rest of the scene the subject will be unable to think about that thought, notice such people, or perform such action unless not doing so would threaten their wellbeing. They will not notice their inability, and will unconsciously act so as to respect the ban. The compulsion ends immediately if the subject is alarmed or engaged in combat. A subject can be targeted by this power only once per scene.

Force Compulsion: When necessary, you can amplify the force of your Compulsions. As an Instant action when using a Compulsion art, Commit Effort for the day and gain one System Strain. The target takes a penalty to any save versus a Compulsion art equal to your Mentalism skill, to a minimum of -1. Even if they succeed, they must make another unmodified saving throw to notice the Compulsion attempt.

Induce Favor: Once per round, as an On Turn action, Commit Effort for the day while asking a favor of someone. On a success, they will grant the favor if there is some way they could rationalize doing so, and it is not a favor that particularly imperils or costs them. A subject can only be targeted by this art once per day.

Insinuative Thought (Greater): As a Main Action, Commit Effort for the day and target a creature. On success, you can implant a compulsion in them that they will follow for 1d6+Mentalism skill rounds provided it's something that they could plausibly rationalize as being their idea. Facing a physical threat immediately ends this compulsion. A creature can be targeted by this art only once per scene.

Psychic Shock: As a Main Action, Commit Effort for the day, target a creature and roll 1d8 for each level of Mentalism skill, to a minimum of 1d8. If they save, halve this total. If the total is equal or higher than the target's hit points, they are stunned for one round per Mentalism level, to a minimum of 1 round. Stunned targets can take no actions, though they can still attempt to evade attacks. Taking damage ends the stun instantly. A creature can be targeted by this art only once per scene. Stunned creatures forget whatever happened during the stun duration when it ends.

Mindreading

All Mindreading arts that target a creature allow the subject to make a Mental saving throw to resist the effect. On a success, they become aware of a mental intrusion, though not its origin; those unfamiliar with psychic effects may not understand what happened, but will know something disturbing just brushed them. Mindreading powers do not work on robots, and work on animals only to the extent of an animal's normal cognitive powers.

Combat Insight: Once per round, Commit Effort for the day as an On Turn action while targeting a visible subject to catch glimpses of their intended strikes. You gain immunity to Shock from them and can add your Mentalism skill to your AC against their attacks and to your hit rolls against them, to a minimum of +1. Only one target can be the subject of this art at once, though it lasts until ended or the end of the fight.

Deep Probe (Greater): As a Main Action, Commit Effort for the day and gain one System Strain as you target a visible creature. The user can monitor the target's surface thoughts as long as they continue to spend their Main Action each round maintaining concentration, up to a maximum of 15 minutes. The target need not share a language. This art can target a given creature only once per day.

Empath: As a Main Action, Commit Effort for the scene and target a visible living creature. If successful, you gain a one-sentence description of their emotional state and its evident target or subject, as well as its overall degree of friendliness towards any interlocutor. This art can target a given creature only once per scene.

Implacable Mind (Greater): All saving throws people make against your Mindreading arts take a penalty equal to your Mentalism skill, to a minimum of -1. If they still succeed, they must still make a second, unmodified saving throw or they don't notice that any Mindreading power was just used against them.

Liar's Tongue: As a Main Action, Commit Effort for the day and gain one System Strain as you target a visible creature who has just made a statement or offered a deal. If successful, you gain a brief description of what the target is actually thinking about the statement or offer, revealing its degree of honesty and actual current willingness to keep its word. A subject can be targeted only once per day with this art.

Word of Babel: As an On Turn action, Commit Effort for the scene while targeting a visible subject; unlike other Mindreading arts, this one grants no save. For the scene, you can convey basic ideas to and from the target even if you don't share a language, through gestures alone.

Psychokinesis

Psychokinesis cannot normally lift or move the user, nor affect objects that are being held or used by living creatures, nor grab or pull at unwilling creatures. Expert system robots and other non-human-intelligent machines can be affected as objects if they're within weight limits. Psychokinesis cannot normally move objects quickly or precisely enough to use as an attack.

Glider: As an Instant action, Commit Effort for the scene. Any falling damage is negated, and the user can move up to 10 meters horizontally for every 1 meter of drop. The user can affect up to five allies with this power if all of them are in physical contact. This art's effect lasts until the user lands.

Long Arm (Greater): This art amplifies *Long Hand*, which the user must have. The maximum weight that can be manipulated goes up to 100 kilograms per Mentalism skill level, to a minimum of 100 kg.

Long Hand: As a Main Action, Commit Effort for the day and target an object within ten meters per Mentalism level, to a minimum of ten meters. You may manipulate it as if with one hand at your current strength, or move it up to ten meters provided it remains within range. You can maintain this power on an object by spending a Move action each round to move it.

Psychic Shrapnel: The user can use pebbles, small debris, sharp metal fragments, or other easily-acquired matter as a psychokinetically hurled weapon. As a Main Action, Commit Effort for the scene to attack a target as if shooting them with a shotgun, using Mentalism or Shoot as the relevant skill and the best of Dex, Wis, or Cha as the relevant attribute. The user may add half their character level, rounded up, to the attack roll and damage roll. The user is always assumed to have "ammo" available unless specifically stripped of it, and this art can be used without penalty even against adjacent melee foes. Weapon Foci such as *Deadeye* do not add to this psychic attack's damage.

Psychokinetic Flight (Greater): This art amplifies *Glider*, which the user must have. If the user Commits Effort for the day when triggering *Glider*, they and they alone may instead fly freely for one round per level of Mentalism skill, to a minimum of one round. Such flight is performed at their normal movement rate. If the ability ends while they are mid-air, they drop as usual for *Glider*.

Thermokinesis: You are not harmed by normal climatic extremes of heat or cold. As an Instant action, you may Commit Effort for the scene to negate up to five points of heat or cold damage per Mentalism skill level, to a minimum of 5 points. Optionally, when triggering this art you may instead ignite or freeze an object within melee range, up to five kilos per Mentalism skill level, to a minimum of 5 kg. Non-flammable objects cannot be burnt.



Modular Power Armor

Rare relics of a violent past, modular power armor remains a fearsome legend in most post-Scream regions. A single combatant in properly-fitted modular armor is a match for a half-dozen less fortunate fighters, even if this prowess comes at a dire cost in energy cells and maintenance labor.

The first usage of modular power armor took place among the corporate states, toward the end of their era. These early suits often relied heavily on the cybernetic implants of their wearers, and when cybernetics fell out of favor during the Ignition researchers were required to go back to first principles to develop suits that could be worn by those without extensive augmentations.

The expense of building these suits militated against overspecialization, and so the designers focused on developing a basic framework that could accept swappable specialized components to handle any mission. While never terribly popular on the frontier worlds, which could seldom muster the technical resources to maintain the suits, numerous core worlds and Old Terra itself were well-stocked with these suits.

Amid the chaos of the Scream, most modular armor was destroyed in the fighting or cannibalized to keep other suits running as long as possible. In the centuries since, these suits have become seldom-found treasures for enterprising scavengers or ambitious raider lords. Even those who find an operable suit are hard pressed to keep it running, but for as long as these artifacts keep working their fearsome power is a weapon in their wielder's hand.

Frames and Fittings

Modular armor is built around a base ***frame***. This frame is skeletal in nature, cannot be worn over other armor, and provides no particular benefits to the wearer. Only after specialized modular armor ***fittings*** are added to it does it grant any special advantages.

Each modular fitting is a relatively compact bundle weighing 2 Encumbrance. Anyone with a toolkit and Fix-0 skill can attach or detach a fitting from a suit with half an hour's work per fitting.

Each fitting has a cost in Mass and a cost in Power. The total Mass and Power of all fittings cannot exceed the rating of the frame, or none of the fittings will work.

Modular Armor Soak

Almost all armor frames have a *Plating* fitting installed to provide armor and protection to the wearer. These fittings grant a certain number of Soak points. Damage done to the user is removed from their Soak first, and only after the Soak is completely depleted does the damage go through to the wearer. Soak refreshes at the end of every scene.

Modular Armor Training

Operating modular armor is a much more complex process than simply strapping it on. Learning how to handle objects without accidentally crushing them or how to calibrate a suit to a specific user's physical dimensions takes time and practice. It's possible that some ex-military PCs may already have this training as part of their background, but others need to spend time with the suit to learn how to use it correctly.

If a student has a trainer familiar with modular armor use, it takes five hours of time in the suit to pick up the necessary basics. Without a trainer, it takes ten hours. This practice time can be expected to eat a lot of Type B power cells if the suit's not equipped with a good *Efficiency Core* fitting.

An untrained user is constantly fighting the suit. Any attack rolls, saving throws, or skill checks they make are rolled twice, and the worst roll is used.

Wearing and Transporting Armor

Most modular armor suits are designed for quick use, and may be donned or removed as a Main Action. Suits do not normally have "keys" or other security measures that would risk leaving them inaccessible in a crisis; their security against theft is supposed to be a large number of soldiers surrounding them at all times.

Even the lightest modular armor suit is heavy, usually weighing fifty kilos or more. A team of two porters can carry a suit between them, but the burden will consume all their Stowed Encumbrance. Three suits will usually fit in the back of a civilian pickup truck. For larger cargo vehicles or spaceship holds, the bulk of the suit counts as one ton of cargo.

Powering Modular Armor

If lacking any *Efficiency Core* fittings, a standard suit of powered armor runs for 30 minutes on a single Type B power cell. The extreme power demands of the suit are destructive to energy cells, and any cell used to power a suit is destroyed. Swapping in a new cell safely takes ten minutes; an emergency hot swap can be made as a Main Action, but requires a Dex/Fix skill check against difficulty 9. On a failure, the suit is incapacitated until its next maintenance cycle.

A user trapped in a depowered suit can blow the emergency releases as a Main Action to escape it. A depowered suit grants no benefits to the wearer except its armor class and Soak rating. It is generally impossible to fight or move in a depowered suit.

A wearer can turn their suit's power on or off as an On Turn action. This is done occasionally when the user is wearing the suit while being transported to an operation zone.

Maintaining Modular Armor

Modular armor needs extensive maintenance by a skilled technician to keep it functioning properly. Despite the extremely advanced pretech science available to the Mandate, it was thought most prudent to leave these maintenance requirements in place to limit the dangers of a wayward suit being hijacked by rebels or malcontents.

A suit needs a half-hour of maintenance after every full power cycle of use. Thus, if a suit with an *Advanced Efficiency Core* can operate for eight hours on a Type B cell, it would need a half-hour of maintenance after eight hours of use.

A suit maintainer needs Fix-1 skill, or Fix-2 if any pretech fittings are installed in the suit, along with a toolkit of the same tech level as the most sophisticated fitting to be maintained. One unit of scrap is also needed, of the same tech level as the most advanced fitting on the suit, or one TL3 unit if no fittings are installed. If playing in a sci-fi *Stars Without Number* setting where spare parts are usually purchased, it costs 1,000 credits to maintain a TL3-only suit, 5,000 for a suit with TL4 fittings, or 10,000 for a suit with TL5 fittings.

The first time maintenance is skipped for a suit, a 1d6 is rolled each scene before any given suit fitting is used or grants its benefit; on a 1, the fitting fails to function and won't until the suit is maintained. Each additional skipped maintenance interval increases the odds of failure by 1, for a 2-in-6 after the second interval, a 3-in-6 after the third, and so forth. Maintaining the suit clears all backlogs.

Damaging Modular Armor

If a suit user is Mortally Wounded, the suit is inoperable until after its next maintenance. If a user is killed in the suit, each fitting rolls a Luck save with the wearer's saving throw; on a failure, the fitting is wrecked beyond repair. The suit's frame will always be salvageable barring truly spectacular violence.

If playing with the hacking rules described in *Cities Without Number*, add the "Modular Armor Fitting" Noun type. Individual fittings can then be targeted with any Verbs that would affect cyberware, with the exception of *Plating* fittings, which cannot be hacked. The suit frame itself cannot be hacked.

Building Frames and Fittings

A post-apocalyptic tech can't be expected to have the sophisticated TL4 factory facilities necessary to build a modular armor frame from scrap. However, a tech with a TL4 toolkit or similar workshop can cannibalize three ruined armor frames into a single Scrap Frame with a month of work.

Building a fitting requires the same cannibalization. Three fittings, broken or functional, can be broken down to build one new fitting of the tech's choice provided it is of equal or lesser tech level than the simplest donor fitting. Such reworking takes one week of effort.

For sci-fi settings such as *Stars Without Number* where this powered armor could conceivably be purchased on the open market, prices in credits are given. This assumes a world where the authorities are actually fine with selling high-end military hardware to the public. Buying it on the black market could be multiples higher in cost, or simply unavailable at any price if the GM would prefer not to make it available in their campaign.

Finding Frames as Loot

GMs who want to add frames and fittings as loot to their ruin sites or Mutant Wasteland raider camps can substitute a fitting in place of an artifact when loot is generated. A frame exists in the site at whatever chance seems reasonable to you; a successful raider band might have one or two scrap suits in use, along with their fittings, while a well-preserved military base might have several un-cannibalized suits left in a secure bunker. If functional modular armor is available to a group, they can be expected to use it during a clear crisis. If the wearer is killed, remember that there's an excellent chance that most of the suit's fittings will be wrecked in the process.

Frame Weapons and Attacks

Users can attach several *Weapon Mount* fittings to their frame. The user must supply the weapon to be mounted, but modded guns and other augmented weapons can be used. A frame pilot can also simply use carried weapons normally, though such implements don't gain the to-hit bonus that a *Weapon Mount* fitting grants.

While a suit can have several weapons mounted at once, a user can still only shoot or slash with one of them for each Main Action they take. Users who would prefer to have more lead in the air at once should refer to the *Linked Targeting System* fitting.



Modular Armor Frames

The frames listed here are merely some of the more common models in use toward the end of the Mandate. Prototypes and limited-run versions doubtless exist in isolated bunkers and forgotten labs.

In most Mutant Wasteland settings modular armor must be scavenged from ruins or received as a rich reward from a grateful patron. Credit costs are given for sci-fi *Stars Without Number* campaigns where the GM has decided that frames can be purchased on the open market.

Frame Models

Some of the models below have specific fittings integrated into the frame. Such integrated hardware costs no Mass or Power, and cannot be damaged unless the frame itself is destroyed.

Frame	Mass	Power	Credit Cost
Scrap Frame	4	4	25,000
Centurion	7	6	100,000
Red Banner	7	9	200,000
Culverin	8	8	300,000
Praetorian	9	9	500,000
Thunderbolt	11	8	1,000,000
Executor	13	11	N/A
Long Rifle	7	8	N/A
Tarnkappe	10	10	N/A

Scrap Frame: Not so much a specific model as the usual result of kludging together the operable parts of several ruined or salvaged suits. While highly deficient compared to an original manufacture, a scrap frame can carry enough hardware to intimidate most wasteland dwellers.

Centurion: One of the most common pre-Scream suits, Centurions were allocated to Harmony Bureau strike teams that needed more firepower than a conventional hit squad would carry. The majority of operable post-collapse suits are Centurions.

Red Banner: Allocated to strike team leaders or special operatives, the Red Banner has upgraded computational resources to handle more sophisticated, power-hungry fittings. As a matter of prudence, Red Banner suits are outwardly identical to Centurions so as to avoid picking out command staff.

Culverin: Issued to the boarding teams of certain Mandate Navy ships, the Culverin saw most use against pirates, smugglers, and secessionists. Onboard *Advanced Sealed Systems*, *Advanced Comm Suite*, and *Breacher Fist* fittings allow for deep-space operation, but the suits are notoriously power-hungry and cannot mount *Efficiency Core* fittings.

Praetorian: These suits were normally worn by the personal guard of high-ranking Mandate VIPs. Big, ominous, and designed to intimidate, a Praetorian suit has upgraded quick-twitch hydraulics and an integral *Advanced Comm Suite* and *Onboard Medical Unit* fittings that take up no Mass or Power. They are exceptionally hard to make inconspicuous, however, and apply a -2 penalty to any Stealth checks.

Thunderbolt: Designed to be the tip of the spear during assaults on rebel strongholds, the Thunderbolt is a massive frame built to carry the heaviest available plating. Each Thunderbolt also has integral *Advanced Exoskeletal Boost*, *Breacher Fist*, and *Regenerative Force Field* fittings. The Thunderbolt's mass can be troublesome, however, as it counts as three frames for the purpose of transport and cannot cross surfaces that can't bear its three hundred kilo weight.

Executor: The vanishingly rare Executor frames appear to have been built largely as showpieces for Directorate special agents, or possibly as theatrical costuming for the private entertainments of the elite. Some of the late-Mandate pretech involved in their construction defies any conventional analysis, but the suits were still constructed with maintenance and power limits that should have been negligible constraints for the tech involved. Every Executor is built with integral *Pretech Plating*, *Short-Ranged Warp Capacitor*, *Pretech Exoskeletal Boost*, and *Advanced Sealed Systems* fittings, quite aside from anything else that might be mounted on it.

Long Rifle: These suits appear to have been designed for use by offworld enforcers in the frontier colonies, far from Mandate support. While the suit's capabilities are intentionally unremarkable, it possesses incredible powers of self-repair and power generation. These suits never require maintenance or refueling and can act as a perpetual Type A power cell for one weapon or item of gear the user is carrying.

Tarnkappe: These suits use Mandate hyperfold tech to shrink down into a anklet- or wristlet-sized bauble. When triggered as an On Turn action, the suit unfolds around the user and instantly activates, bringing its integral *Pretech Exoskeletal Boost*, *Ghost Walker Field*, and *Pretech Plating* fittings online. Any additional fittings also fold down with the suit, which can be deactivated as an On Turn action or when power runs out. While discreet, Tarnkappes lack endurance; they run for only one-fifth the time on a battery charge they otherwise would, or 24 minutes at most.

Modular Armor Fittings

In most post-apocalyptic settings, the fittings listed below can only be acquired as salvage from ruins, plunder from defeated foes, or as rewards from wealthy patrons. In a sci-fi setting such as *Stars Without Number*, they might be available on the open market. The table at right gives a typical cost for worlds where they are freely traded. More restricted markets will increase this price.

Fitting Tech Level	Cost to Purchase
TL3	5,000 credits
TL4	20,000 credits
TL5	N/A

Fitting	TL	Mass	Pwr
Ablative Meteor Shielding	4	1	0
Aquatic Adaptation Suite	4	2	1
Assault Charge Servos	4	1	1
Backseat Driver Mod	4	0	1
Black Ofuda	5	0	0
Brainguard Cap	4	0	1
Breacher Fist	4	1	1
Camo Skin, Advanced	4	1	3
Camo Skin, Basic	3	1	2
Choke Cloud Sprayer	3	1	1
Comm Suite, Advanced	4	1	1
Comm Suite, Basic	3	0	1
Deployable Force Shield	5	1	3
Drone Mount*	4	2	1
ECM Projector	3	1	2
Efficiency Core, Advanced	4	2	1
EC, Basic	4	1	1
EC, Pretech	5	2	2
EC, Restricted Directorate	5	0	0
Emergency Power Cell*	4	1	1
Exoskeletal Boost, Advanced	4	2	1
Exoskeletal Boost, Basic	3	1	1
Exoskeletal Boost, Pretech	5	2	2
Finger of Death	4	1	2
Floodlights	3	1	0
Ghost Walker Field	5	1	2
Gravitic Flight Struts	4	2	3
Gravitic Fold Flight	5	2	4
Hydraulic Jump Dampers	4	1	1
Identification Lock	4	0	1
Integral Ripper Bar	4	2	1
Integrated Ammo Feed*	3	1	0
Jump Jets	3	1	2

*: This fitting can be mounted more than once.

Fitting	TL	Mass	Pwr
Kinetic Rebuke Shielding	4	2	2
Linked Targeting System	4	1	2
Multispectral Optics	4	1	2
Neural Buffer	5	0	1
Night Vision Sensors	3	1	1
Onboard Medical Unit	4	1	1
Pathfinder Bridging System	4	1	0
Plague Wind Generator	4	1	2
Plating Optimization	3	-1	-1
Plating, Advanced	4	2	1
Plating, Basic	4	2	0
Plating, Improvised	3	1	0
Plating, Pretech	5	2	2
QECM Projector	4	2	2
Reactive Antipersonnel Armor	3	2	1
Regenerative Force Field	4	1	2
Ricochet Field	5	1	2
Sealed Systems, Advanced	4	1	2
Sealed Systems, Basic	3	1	1
Short-Range Warp Capacitor	5	1	1
Skysweeper Laser System	4	1	2
Smokethrower	3	1	0
Storm Reinforcement	4	2	1
Stun Skin	4	1	1
Target Lock Processor	4	0	1
Thermal Ablative Layer	4	1	1
Trauma Stabilizer Unit	4	1	2
Tsukumogami Processor	4	1	3
Wallcrawler Anchors	4	1	1
Weapon Mount, Advanced*	4	2	1
Weapon Mount, Basic*	3	1	1
Weapon Mount, Heavy*	4	4	2
Weasel Probe	4	2	1

*: This fitting can be mounted more than once.



Fitting Descriptions

Ablative Meteor Shielding: Ablative foam and signal mutators are combined with personal-scale grav dampers to allow the user to make stealthy orbital insertions. They can jump from a ship's airlock or cargo hold to hit within 1d100 meters of a desired target point below. They are invisible to TL3 sensors, and apply a -3 penalty to any TL4 sensor skill checks to notice the insertion. The shielding is then inoperable until the next maintenance.

Aquatic Adaptation Suite: The suit is altered to function in liquid environments, allowing three-dimensional movement at the user's normal move rate, indefinite breathing time underwater, and immunity to environmental pressure down to roughly 1,000 meters. Integrated optics allow vision out to 90 meters even in the absence of light, and any mounted weapons are modified to function normally underwater.

Assault Charge Servos: Once per scene, as a Move action, move triple your normal move rating. While using it, you can move past melee-armed enemies freely without needing to make a Fighting Withdrawal.

Backseat Driver Mod: A built-in autonav unit allows the user to nominate a particular location; if the user is rendered unconscious or incapacitated, the suit will automatically use their actions to move back to the location, navigating most physical obstacles with its built-in expert system. Emergency SOS transmissions and location transmissions can be keyed to allies in this instance, and the suit can be redirected toward a nearby ally if they know its user-set command word. The suit can even be triggered to return to a point when it is completely empty, if its user decides to send it back. More than 15 points of damage done to the suit on its way will incapacitate it until the next maintenance cycle.

Black Ofuda: This jailbreak coprocessor must be permanently integrated with a *Tsukumogami Processor* in a process that takes one day and a successful Int/Program skill check against difficulty 10. On a failure, both are ruined. On a success, the Tsukumogami Processor can now use its Main Action to fire suit weapons, take a bonus physical action, or cause the suit to move as with a Move Action. The Tsukumogami Processor's commands to the suit cannot be overridden by the wearer, however, and VIs jailbroken by this fitting often acquire a very strong-willed personality to go with their new freedom. An "empty" suit piloted only by a VI is treated as having 15 hit points plus any Soak it may have, +6 attack bonus, a save of 14+, and a Move of 10m. If hit points are fully depleted, the suit is inoperable until the next maintenance.

Brainguard Cap: The suit automatically alerts its wearer when they are targeted by a telepathic effect, though the source is not indicated. Any Mental saves against psychic powers can be rolled twice, and the better one taken. This fitting does not function for a psychic wearer.

Breacher Fist: As a Main Action, an arm-mounted demo unit allows the wearer to blast a human-sized hole in an adjacent wall up to one meter thick, provided it's not made of TL4 military fortification material or the like. The fist is too unwieldy to serve as a weapon against mobile targets, but if used against an immobile person, object, or vehicle it does damage as a demo charge.

Camo Skin, Advanced: As *Basic Camo Skin*, but the chromatic projectors are much more precise and fluid in their cloaking. The +2 bonus applies to any Stealth check at any range.

Camo Skin, Basic: As an On Turn action, the suit can change its coloration to blend in with its surroundings. Stealth checks are granted a +2 bonus provided no potential observer is closer than 20 meters.

Choke Cloud Sprayer: As a Move action, the user can activate a surface-mounted tear gas grenade or other toxic gas grenade, affecting all targets within normal grenade burst range- and the user himself if he doesn't have sealed systems active. This fitting can be triggered as often as the user has Readied gas grenades available.

Comm Suite, Advanced: Advanced comm tech provides the benefits of a basic suite, but increases the range to 50 kilometers. Transmissions between the suit and other TL4 comm units are automatically encrypted, and cannot normally be cracked quickly enough to be useful during a given encounter. TL3 communications tech cannot even detect these transmissions.

Comm Suite, Basic: A helmet-mounted radio and heads-up display allow for free communication with others within short-range radio distance of 2 kilometers or so. The suit can transmit and receive video data on command.

Deployable Force Shield: As a Main Action, the user can throw down a translucent force shield within 3 meters. The shield is 3m x 3m in size, must have at least one edge resting on the ground, and counts as hard cover. It has 20 hit points but only heavy weapons can damage it quickly enough to matter in a fight. It lasts for the rest of the scene, until deactivated as an On Turn action, or until the user uses this fitting again. If the shield is deployed more than once in a scene, roll 1d6 before it's deployed; on a 5+, the fitting is drained for the rest of the scene and does not trigger.

Drone Mount: This mount allows a single man-portable drone supplied by the user to be affixed to the suit with ten minutes of work. The suit user can operate the drone out to its usual range, but gains a bonus Main Action each round that can only be used to command the drone. If this fitting is taken more than once, each mount grants its own Main Action bonus for its drone only.

ECM Projector: When activated as an On Turn action, broad-spectrum electronic countermeasures eliminate any non-allied TL3 or lower radio communication or remote control within a 300 meter radius. The projector can be run for up to 30 minutes before requiring an equal amount of time to recalibrate.

Efficiency Core, Advanced: The suit runs for 8 hours on a single Type B power cell. The cell is ruined by the discharge process.

Efficiency Core, Basic: The suit runs for two hours on a single Type B power cell. The cell is ruined by the discharge process.

Efficiency Core, Pretech: The suit runs for 24 hours on a single Type B power cell. The cell is ruined by the discharge process.

Efficiency Core, Restricted Directorate: A vanishingly rare component, the suit will run indefinitely without a power cell and requires maintenance only once a month.

Emergency Power Cell: A supplementary Type B power cell can be loaded into the suit to automatically take over if the main cell runs out of power. It powers the suit for its usual runtime, but is destroyed in the process.

Exoskeletal Boost, Advanced: As *Basic Exoskeletal Boost*, but their effective Strength modifier is +3, and all of their Stowed Encumbrance can be used as if it was Readied.

Exoskeletal Boost, Basic: While wearing the armor, the user's effective Strength score is 18 for purposes of Encumbrance or ability modifiers.

Exoskeletal Boost, Pretech: As *Advanced Exoskeletal Boost*, but their effective Strength is 22 for Encumbrance purposes and they can lift, bend, or break any unarmored object no larger than a compact car as a Main Action.

Finger of Death: As a Main Action, the user can target an organic subject within 10 meters with an invisible beam of high-energy radiation. The emitter is subtle, and only someone familiar with this fitting would recognize its use. If the user hits with the beam, the target will receive a lethal dose of radiation. In the absence of TL4 medical attention or radiation shielding equal to a vacc suit or better, the target will die within 48 hours after exhibiting the signs of radiation poisoning. Each time this fitting is used, roll 1d6; on a 1, the user is exposed as well, despite any anti-rad fittings the suit may have.

Floodlights: The suit is equipped with brilliantly bright floodlights that can clearly illuminate an area up to 30m around the suit or 50 meters directly in front of it. Attackers suffer a -2 penalty to hit the user while the lights are engaged unless they have protection against glare. The floodlights can run as long as the suit has power.

Ghost Walker Field: As an On Turn action, the user becomes invisible and inaudible to unaided senses and typical TL4 sensors. If someone knows their general location, melee attacks can be made against them at -4 to hit, but ranged attacks are futile. The field is fragile and will break if the user runs, attacks, or makes other sharp motions; psychic ability use also disrupts the circuits. The field lasts up to 15 minutes, but requires a 15 minute recharge period after it drops.

Gravitic Flight Struts: Miniaturized grav units allow the user to fly at their normal movement rate. This flight can be used freely for up to fifteen minutes, but it takes fifteen minutes of downtime for the capacitors to recharge after the use ends.

Gravitic Fold Flight: Pretech distortion generators allow the user to fly freely at twice their normal movement rate. This flight may be used indefinitely.

Hydraulic Jump Dampers: The user ignores the first hundred meters of fall damage and always lands on their feet.

Identification Lock: The suit is programmed with a user restriction, making it inoperable to anyone not on its whitelist. Resetting the lock is an Int/Fix or Int/Program skill check against difficulty 12 that takes one day. Unauthorized uninstallation requires an Int/Fix skill check against difficulty 12; failure slags the suit.

Integral Ripper Bar: A chainsaw-like suit attachment allows the user to cut a man-sized hole in any non-metallic, non-fortified barrier as a Main Action. If used as a weapon, it uses Str/Dex as attributes, does 3d6 damage, Shock of 2/18, and a d8/x4 Trauma Rating. As it is unwieldy, however, it applies a -3 penalty to hit.

Integrated Ammo Feed: The suit can be loaded with up to 10 Encumbrance of physical ammunition and will load it into any Readied weapon the user wields as an On Turn action. This fitting can be installed more than once.

Jump Jets: Short-range thrusters allow the user to leap up to 30 meters horizontally or vertically as a Move action. Falls of 30 meters or less are ignored. This fitting cannot be used on two consecutive rounds.

Kinetic Rebuke Shielding: When attacked by someone within 5 meters, a counterburst of high-energy particles strikes them for 3d8 damage before their attack is resolved, with an Evasion save for half. This shielding can trigger only once per round.





Linked Targeting System: A specific weapon mount is associated with this fitting, and can be changed at each maintenance cycle. Whenever the user makes an attack with another weapon, they may also attack with this weapon, targeting the same or a different target. This fitting may be installed more than once, but each one after the first adds a cumulative +1 Mass and Power to the cost.

Multispectral Optics: Full-color vision and a thermal overlay is possible out to normal sight range, regardless of smoke, mist, or darkness.

Neural Buffer: This sophisticated pretech fitting is usable only by psychics. When installed, it grants 2 bonus points of Effort that only recover once per 24 hours, even if a power used would normally return them after a scene or after a durational power is ended.

Night Vision Sensors: Basic monochrome night vision is enabled out to one hundred meters.

Onboard Medical Unit: Up to a dozen doses of pharmaceuticals can be loaded into this unit and administered as an On Turn action by the wearer, either to himself or to an adjacent ally. Only one dose can be applied per round, and the onboard computer has a functional Heal-1 skill if the user's isn't higher. The unit counts as a medkit for relevant needs.

Pathfinder Bridging System: A compact extensible bridging unit may be deployed adjacent to the suit as an On Turn action. The unit can extend up to 20 meters and is one meter wide; it can function as a bridge capable of carrying the weight of a dozen modular suits at once or as a ladder. Adhesion pads at either end make it impossible to knock away unless 15 points of damage are done to it, or 30 points to break the bridge itself. The bridge can be reclaimed with five minutes of work. If not recovered, this fitting is unusable until after the next maintenance.

Plague Wind Generator: As a Main Action, the user triggers a cloud of nerve gas in a 5-meter radius around them. All air-breathing subjects within that range take 6d6 damage, with a save for half- this includes the user, if their suit does not have sealed systems. This system can only be triggered once between maintenance cycles.

Plating Optimization: This fitting decreases plating AC by 2 and halves Soak, rounded up, but decreases the Mass and Power requirements of the other fittings on the suit. It has no effect on suits without plating.

Plating, Advanced: Grants the user AC 20, Soak 25, +2 Trauma Target, and immunity to Shock. They cannot be harmed by TL3 or lower weapons. Only one plating fitting can be installed on a suit at once.

Plating, Basic: Grants the user AC 18, Soak 20, +1 Trauma Target, and immunity to Shock. They cannot be harmed by TL3 or lower weapons. Only one plating fitting can be installed on a suit at once.

Plating, Improvised: Grants the user AC 16, Soak 15, and +1 Trauma Target. They cannot be harmed by TL2 or lower weapons. Only one plating fitting can be installed on a suit at once.

Plating, Pretech: Grants the user AC 22, Soak 30, +2 Trauma Target, and they can only be Trauma'd by weapons that could inflict Trauma on a vehicle. They are immune to Shock and TL3 or lower weapons. Only one plating fitting can be installed on a suit at once.

QECM Projector: As an *ECM Projector* fitting, but it has a 500 meter radius and affects TL4 comms and any non-line-of-sight remote control. Nuclear detonations or other dangerous fission reactions fizzle harmlessly within this area.

Reactive Antipersonnel Armor: As a Main Action, trigger surface-mount shrapnel bursters to inflict 3d8 damage on all subjects within 5 meters of you, with an Evasion save for half. Reloading it requires five minutes and a handful of easily-acquired metal scrap.

Regenerative Force Field: The suit projects a skintight defensive force shield that keeps out dangerous energies and high-speed physical threats. The suit's Soak score is increased by 10 points.

Ricochet Field: A limited-range grav redirection field can be triggered as a Main Action, forming a translucent 2x2 meter shield in front of the user that moves with them. Any physical bullets, shrapnel, or other material projectiles aimed at them from the front force a Dex/Shoot skill check at difficulty 9; on a failure, the bullet is deflected; non-directed projectiles such as grenade shrapnel are automatically redirected. Maintaining the field requires a Move action each round, and when dropped, the field cannot be triggered again for a half-hour.

Sealed Systems, Advanced: The user is immune to toxic gases, and the suit shielding nullifies any level of radiation that wouldn't instantly kill a person. The suit provides oxygen and thermal protection adequate for deep space or underwater operation for as long as the suit's power lasts.

Sealed Systems, Basic: Dangerous gases and radiation of an intensity less than one save per minute are both filtered by the suit, though it doesn't provide its own oxygen.

Short-Range Warp Capacitor: As an On Turn action, the user can teleport up to 30 meters to a visible location, along with anything they are carrying. Each time this fitting is used after the first in a scene, roll 1d6; on a 3 or less, it fails and will not function for the rest of the scene.

Skysweeper Laser System: A back-mounted anti-air laser system is programmed to torch incoming hostile objects. Once per round, the laser automatically melts or disables the first grenade, artillery shell, mortar round, or other large ballistic missile that would hit the user or include them in its blast radius. The munition might explode, but it will do so too far away to harm the user. The laser can't effectively target powered drones or other flying objects that do not obey simple ballistics.

Smokethrower: As an On Turn action, trigger surface-mounted smoke projectors to create a 5-meter-radius cloud around the user. Helmet optics allow clear sight through this specific smoke mix. Shrouded creatures cannot be targeted by ranged attacks and apply a -4 penalty to any melee attacks against them. The cloud persists for 1d6+1 rounds, and can be used only once per scene.

Storm Reinforcement: Multiple ablative units and grav buffers minimize the damage of glancing projectiles. The user can ignore Suppressive Fire, though they can be targeted directly as usual.

Stun Skin: An electrical mesh on the surface of the fitting will shock anyone who grapples or makes an unarmed attack against the user, inflicting 2d6 non-lethal electrical damage after each successful unarmed hit or each round of grappling.

Target Lock Processor: As a Move action, the user can nominate a target within visible range. They gain a +4 bonus to hit that target while the lock is maintained. It can be ended as an On Turn action; only one target can be locked at a time.

Thermal Ablative Layer: Advanced cooling systems cut all incoming fire damage in half before defenses are applied, and negate smoke inhalation dangers or any fire damage source of 10 HP or less. Plasma and laser weapons are not affected by this fitting.

Trauma Stabilizer Unit: Built-in medical systems automatically stabilize the user when they are reduced to zero hit points. This system will not trigger if the downing blow was a Traumatic Hit or some unsurvivable injury.

Tsukumogami Processor: The suit is integrated with a companion virtual intelligence. While not a full-fledged True AI, the VI is by all measures as intelligent and flexible as a normal human being. Most are programmed to be helpful adjuncts to their suit's user. The processor gets a bonus Main Action every round that can only be used to perform non-physical actions or trigger a suit system. For safety reasons, it cannot operate the suit's weaponry or compel it to move. It has a +3 skill bonus for any skill checks related to suit operation or military matters.

Wallcrawler Anchors: Micro-scale gravitic manipulators allow the user to climb sheer surfaces and overhangs provided they could bear an unarmored human's weight. This movement is done at the user's normal Move rate, but does require at least one hand free.

Weapon Mount, Advanced: As a *Basic Weapon Mount,* but man-portable heavy weapons may also be integrated, and slugthrowers have four built-in magazines. The integration bonus is +3 to hit rolls and damage.

Weapon Mount, Basic: A single one or two-handed non-heavy melee or ranged weapon can be integrated into or removed from this mount with a day's work. Once installed, energy weapons have effectively unlimited ammo, and slugthrowers have two built-in magazines. Both of these built-in magazines can be reloaded as a single Main Action by the user. Integrated targeting systems give mounted weapons a +2 to hit and damage rolls, but not Shock. Weapon Mount fittings can be mounted more than once on a suit, Mass and Power permitting.

Weapon Mount, Heavy: A single vehicle-mounted heavy weapon can be mounted on the suit. Energy weapons have effectively unlimited ammo, while slugthrowers or missile launchers have three full magazines built in, which can all be reloaded as a single Main Action. Weapons that normally require a bipod or prepared firing position can be mounted. The weapon must be small enough to plausibly be mounted on a technical or small truck. Integrated firing calculators grant the weapon a +3 bonus to hit.

Weasel Probe: A ferret-sized probe unit is connected to the suit by a fiber-optic control cable. The user can move it at up to 20 meters per round as a Move action, out to a 200-meter maximum range. The probe relays sound and vision to the user, has a built-in voice transmitter for the user's speech, and has optics that can see in the dark. The unit has a +2 skill bonus for Stealth check purposes and can travel across any surface a ferret could. It has an AC of 15 and 4 hit points; it goes inert if the cable is cut. If destroyed, this fitting is useless until the next maintenance cycle.



Hub Settlement Rules

The enclave rules presented in this book are meant to serve as relatively lightweight tools for generating adventure hooks and simulating the interplay of local powers in a wasteland. PC actions can add or subtract Features and Troubles from these enclaves, but the granular tracking of food supplies, population, and other details aren't really a part of the rules.

Some play groups prefer to have things more specific about their home settlement and want to play out campaigns where protecting or building up a home base is the basic thrust of the game. The rules in this section provide an alternate system of settlement development that might be more to such a player's taste.

Using These Rules

GMs who choose to use these settlement rules should use them only for the main settlement or home base of the campaign. The extra detail and tracking is too much for most GMs to handle on a larger scale, and those other communities don't need the same sort of attention as the one of greatest importance to the PCs. If the PCs move on from the settlement or shift their focus, the GM should let their former home idle, letting it eke its way along on whatever likely path of destiny the PCs left it.

GMs should also be careful to ensure that the whole party has signed up for the settlement management focus of a campaign using these rules. The settlement will be a major part of play, regularly requiring help and attention if it is to grow, or even if it is to survive. Players who want to play a more far-faring, roaming sort of game may be frustrated if they're called back to deal with a problem every few sessions. While the mechanical decisions and choices of the settlement might be handled with ten or fifteen minutes of discussion in a game session, the adventures and tasks set before the PCs might consume a whole evening's play.

GMs should be ready to have a light hand if the players decide they'd rather do something else for a while. If they want to make a long journey to some distant ruin, it's best to let them set up some caretakers at the home base and then not worry about it for an in-game month or two as they take care of other adventuresome business. A diet of crises and looming perils is exciting when the party actually wants to deal with such drama, but it's all right to let them call a recess every so often to seek different sorts of fun.

Assets and Problems

Aside from the basic statistics of a settlement, every community has ***Assets*** and ***Problems***.

Assets are specific facilities, institutions, working groups, or other community resources for getting things accomplished. A community might have a Farm that feeds them, for example, or a Militia unit to protect them, or a School to train up skilled labor.

Assets usually require Workers to keep them running, and require a significant outlay of resources, construction workers, and time to build. Some Assets can only be built once in a community, while others can be built multiple times. Assets without enough Workers grant no benefit, but can be staffed later.

Assets that have been exerted or damaged in some way are considered ***tapped***. A tapped Asset provides no benefit and requires no Workers. It is untapped by spending a quarter of the resources needed to build it, rounded down. Untapping takes no extra time.

Problems are issues that harm or trouble the community. They may derive from the local environment, from internal strife, or from issues with resources or outside perils. Problems complicate life for a community and regularly threaten and harm their Assets and civil resources. Every settlement starts with at least one Problem, and building Assets or developing the community will inevitably create more.

Problems are attached to specific statistics or Assets, ones related to the nature of the Problem. A recurring crop blight might be attached to the community's Food Production, while a troublemaking clan of locals might afflict the Population. This focus might change as local events occur or the situation changes.

Every settlement turn, there's a chance that one or more Problems trigger for a community. When that happens, the people have three choices.

Endure it. They accept the negative consequences of the problem, as described on the following page.

Suppress it. Some Assets can be tapped to suppress a Problem, sacrificing the use of the Asset to negate the Problem's effect for this month. The Problem is not permanently negated, but it is contained for now. Not all Assets can deal with all Problems; a Church can build a truce between warring families, but it can't cure a potato blight.

Fix it. PCs can choose to do something relevant to solve the Problem or suppress it for the month. Short-term suppression may require no more than some well-chosen actions or the use of party resources, but a long-term solution to a Problem usually requires a full session's adventure.

Settlement Statistics and Problem Consequences

A hub settlement has a certain number of statistics that reflect the practical realities of the place.

Population

A settlement tracks its number of ***Workers***, ***Non-Workers***, and ***Educated*** members. Workers are able-bodied men and women capable of hard labor or fighting. Non-Workers are children, elderly, or those able to handle only light labors. Educated citizens are those natives with special skills or knowledge of practical use, though they can work as Workers if need be.

If generating a settlement from scratch, usually about a quarter to a third of the population can serve as Workers, and maybe one or two percent as Educated.

Food

A settlement's Food Stores are measured in person-months, each one being about 30 kilograms of food.

Shelter

A settlement has a maximum ***Shelter*** capacity. The consequences of having more people than places to put them depend on the climate and time of year.

Resources

Resources are counted in one of two categories. Timber, concrete, rebar, sheet metal, bar stock, and other bulk construction and fabrication resources are ***Basic Resources***, measured in metric tons. Electronics, tooling, high-tech materials, and sophisticated machine parts are ***Complex Resources***, measured in 10 kilo units. Both are used in constructing and maintaining Assets.

Medical

A community can handle so many sick or injured members at once. An overflow of this capacity means likely death for those who go without treatment.

Morale

A settlement has a Morale score just like a creature might, with a score ranging from 2 to 12. A low Morale means quarreling, despair, and confusion in the face of challenges, while a high Morale speaks of unity and confidence. If the Morale score drops below 2, the community will disintegrate. When the community permanently solves a Problem, roll a Morale check. If it *fails*, community Morale rises by 1 point.

Consequences

Sometimes a Problem will strike a particular resource or Asset. If the situation is not resolved somehow by the end of the month, one of the consequences listed below will happen.

Population Consequences

If a Problem hits the settlement's population, 10% of each category will be lost at the end of the month, rounded up. These people may die, flee, or leave to find better homes. In some cases, they might withdraw from society, not leaving the community but not doing any useful work, either, until their issues are addressed.

Food Consequences

If a Problem strikes the settlement's Food Stores, 1d10x10% of them are lost at the start of the month if the Problem is not resolved quickly. The rations may be stolen, eaten, traded away, or otherwise depleted.

Shelter Consequences

If the Problem is related to the community's Shelter, then one randomly-chosen Shelter Asset is ruined and lost at the end of the month.

Resource Consequences

Problems that affect a community's Basic or Complex Resources will immediately destroy 1d6x10% of their stockpile, rounded up, unless the PCs or community leaders can rapidly deal with the Problem.

Medical Consequences

Problems that strike the community's Medical resources render 1d6+4x10% of its total capacity unavailable for the month. Hopefully there are few patients.

Morale Consequences

Problems that hit community Morale will decrease the score by 1 point at month's end as despair, anger, and confusion set the people at each other's throats.

Asset Consequences

If a Problem targets a specific Asset, roll 1d10; on a 1-2, the Asset is immediately incapacitated and will be destroyed by the end of the month if the Problem is not dealt with. On a 3 or greater, it is instead tapped until it has been maintained. If a Problem targets an already-tapped Asset, it is automatically destroyed.



The Settlement Turn

Settlement turns usually occur once a month, at the start of the month. A faster pace might be used in times of great events, but if so, remember to pro-rate any food consumption.

Step 1: Check for Problems

Roll on the table below to see if a Problem strikes.

d10	Monthly Problem Check
1	1d4 Problems trigger this month.
2	1d2 Problems trigger this month.
3-5	1 Problem triggers this month.
6+	The month passes without Problems. Roll next month's check on a 1d8.

If one or more Problems trigger, randomly pick ones to activate. If more Problems are rolled than the community actually has, ignore the excess.

Some Problem consequences occur immediately, like a Problem that affects Resources. Others will trigger at the end of the month. The community might tap Assets to suppress a Problem immediately, or trust that the PCs can do something to stop it in time.

Step 2: Assign Workers

The community should assign its available Workers to any Assets that need them for functioning. Assets without enough staff don't function for the month, though an undermanned community can rotate their available workforce around to support whatever Assets are most important for a given month.

Surplus Workers can be put to work in construction this month.

Step 3: Produce Resources

Check the worked Assets, and note any Food production, Resource generation, or other useful product. Add it to the community's stocks at this step.

Thus, if the community has a Farm that produces 500 people-months of food each month, add 500 people-months of food to the community's Food Stores.

Step 4: Build and Untap Assets

If the community wants to build a new Asset, they can assign the listed number of Workers to the construction and supply the requisite Resources. When the listed amount of construction time is complete, the Asset will be finished. This time can be halved by doubling the Workers assigned to the job, but more hands than that won't help. Multiple Assets can be built at once, if enough Workers and materials are available.

Some Assets require a "Special Component". This is usually some very specific part, supply, or technical data. Normally, it can only be acquired through a specific adventure aimed at salvaging or buying such a part from an outside dealer, though the Special Supplies Asset can be sacrificed to substitute for it.

Some Assets may have been tapped by events earlier in the turn, such as being used to contain Problems. At this step, the community can spend a quarter of the Resources needed to build them, rounded down, to untap them. No Workers or extra time are needed for this, and any Special Components need not be re-supplied. Any number of Assets can be untapped if enough Resources are available. Freshly untapped Assets do not provide any benefit and cannot be re-tapped this same turn.

Step 5: Feed the Populace

Subtract the total Population's monthly demand from the Food Stores of the community. If there's not enough food, 1d6x10% of the excess mouths will die or flee by the end of the month if PCs or community leaders don't think of a way to bring in extra food. Non-Workers normally die first from starvation.

Step 6: Shelter the Populace

Compare the total Population to the available shelter. If there's a lack, the consequences depend on the current climate. A very gentle one is harmless. An ordinary temperate-climate spring or autumn will cause 1d2x10% of the surplus to become sick. A temperate-climate winter rolls 1d6x10%; half die by month's end, half become sick. An even more savage climate will kill all unhoused citizens by the end of the month.

Step 7: Treat the Sick and Injured

Of the sick who are treated by a community's Medical capacity, either 10 or 1d6x10% of them are cured, whichever is greater. Of those untreated, 1d6x10% die and the rest get better naturally.

Step 8: Problems

At month's end, apply Problem consequences and add new Problems to the settlement. Add a new Problem for each of the situations below that happened.

- Someone starved.
- Someone died of exposure or lack of medical treatment.
- A new type of Asset was built. Building another instance of an existing Asset doesn't count.

Some example Problems are listed beginning on page 288, but the GM should feel free to pick something else related to the immediate situation. Attach each Problem to a related statistic or Asset; this is what that Problem will bedevil until it is permanently resolved. The GM may change this focus later if the situation changes.

PC Actions and Settlements

PCs should always have the option of involving themselves in a campaign-hub settlement's affairs, even if they're not leaders in the community. Their contributions, decisions, and adventures have the ability to sidestep settlement turn actions and provide direct solutions to Problems or establish Assets without the usual time and resource expenditures.

Dealing with Problems

If a Problem triggers during a month, the PCs can try to temporarily suppress it or permanently resolve it. Temporary suppression of a problem might be managed through a brief side excursion where the PCs provide a stopgap response that temporarily settles the issue. For example, if the Problem is a crop blight that hits the community's Food Stores, the agronomist PC might succeed in a difficulty 10 Int/Know skill check to come up with a treatment plan for this outbreak.

Temporary solutions to a Problem should generally require no more than an appropriate skill check, some pointed diplomacy, or the expenditure of relevant party resources. The party needs to have a logical plan for dealing with the situation, but the process shouldn't take more than five or ten minutes to resolve. These temporary solutions only suppress the Problem for one month, since they don't get at its root.

A given PC can only try to suppress one Problem a month. If different PCs have different skills or resources, each of them can try to handle a different Problem that month.

Permanent solutions to a Problem should either derive from the natural side-effect of an adventuring session or be the explicit goal of an adventure. If the PCs bring home a revered religious leader to their strife-torn tribal village, it's rational that the leader should be able to fix the "Two religious sects are constantly quarreling." Problem. If the PCs decide to go out and retrieve the holy relics that will conclusively prove the validity of one of the sects, then an evening's adventure revolving around that attempt should fix things just as well.

Some settlements might have so many Problems that it would take half a year of gaming just to give each one their own adventure. In such cases, adventures or side-effects might end up solving multiple problems if the PCs are clever enough in choosing their tactics.

Gaining Resources

PCs can always simply donate scavenged goods to their home settlement. The results of their looting can be added directly to the settlement's available supplies.

- 30 kilos of food is one person-month of rations
- 1 metric ton of construction or manufacturing raw stock is a unit of Basic Resources
- 10 kilos of useful electronic parts, machine tools, or other high-tech components are a unit of Complex Resources.

Finding these resources is usually going to take an adventure revolving around them. Casually stripping ancient drywall panels off a ruin's walls isn't going to be very useful to anyone, and a random junk pile of wires and circuit boards can't be readily salvaged. If the PCs intentionally set up plans to hit an abandoned machine shop or neglected construction site, their take will be more usable. Of course, this also implies that the PCs have some way of actually bringing back the resources they've plundered, which may be difficult for heavy, bulky Basic Resources.

Building Assets

Most Assets are facilities and staffs that can't simply be stuffed in a backpack and brought elsewhere. Some Assets, however, involve specially-trained leaders, special components, or small bands of expert workers.

If the PCs can recruit such people or win them as allies, they can bring them back to the settlement as ready-made Assets. These Assets grant no benefits in the same month in which they are added to the community, but function normally afterwards.

Gaining Population and Items

A PC party who convinces desperate refugees to join the community can add to its Population directly. In the same vein, if they bring back powerful weapons, useful tools, or other exotic relics the community can benefit from them. It's not necessary to go through the steps of the settlement turn to gain these things; only PC generosity and cunning are required.



Settlement Assets

The Assets listed here are just an example of some of the more common facilities and institutions a settlement might seek to establish. A GM can create new ones as their own creativity recommends, or the PCs might get an idea for some new innovation of their own.

Academy: A large, well-staffed educational institution capable of teaching even complex subjects quickly and well. Each month, it can convert up to 5 Workers into Educated. Alternately, it can suppress one Problem for the month through education or sophisticated tech solutions.

Airport: The settlement constructs a small but functional airport and has a few light civilian aircraft at its disposal. These aircraft can only land on prepared runways but can move small groups of a half-dozen or so around largely at will. This Asset is impossible in the book's example New Earth setting, as any powered aircraft are wiped out by the planet's orbital defenses.

Armory: The settlement can build guns, reload ammunition, and fabricate armor to local standards. The regular maintenance and ample supply grants military units a +2 bonus to hit rolls and damage, and a +2 bonus to AC. The armory can be tapped to suppress a Problem related to lack of military power for one month.

Caravan: Overland trucks or animal-drawn carts are organized for long-distance transport of goods. A caravan can be committed to a location up to 50 kilometers away to allow it to be worked by the community and permit the establishing of farms, mines, or other facilities there. Such remote outposts are almost always imperiled by post-collapse conditions, however, and a Problem is created for each Caravan dedicated to such work. It lasts until the route and outpost are entirely safe.

Church: A church, temple, shrine, or other place of worship is established with clergy and lay helpers. This Asset can be tapped to suppress a social Problem of almost any kind for one month. Whether tapped or not, a church provides medical care for up to 20 patients.

Faith Leader: A leader with religious credentials is cultivated as a shepherd for the citizens. This Asset can be tapped to reroll a failed Morale check by the settlement or suppress a Problem related to public disorder or despair for one month.

Farm: Farms take time to start producing, and need three months of operation before they begin to yield. In cold climates, they produce nothing during the three months of winter. Otherwise, each farm can feed up to 200 people a month. One five-kilometer hex of cleared, safe, arable land adjacent to the settlement's hex can support up to five farms, while smaller areas can support proportionately less.

Festival: Feasting, socializing, games, or edifying public orations are used to bind the group together and hearten them in troubled times. This Asset requires no Workers to build, but no other Asset can be built this same turn. It also requires sufficient Food to feed the entire community double rations for the month. When the Festival's construction is complete, a Morale check is rolled at a penalty equal to the community leader's Lead skill; if it *fails*, the community's Morale increases by 1 point to a maximum of 10. The Festival Asset is then lost. Creating a new Festival never causes a Problem.

Fishery: A settlement must be on the seashore or the shore of a large lake to build an efficient fishery. Small boats net a daily catch for drying and immediate consumption. A fishery produces enough food to feed 500 people each month.

Fortifications, Advanced: A settlement must have Basic Fortifications before building this additional array of walls, pre-zeroed firing ranges, gun emplacements, and other heavy defenses. While functional, each defending unit within the settlement can attack twice each round, and any damage dice rolled against them are rolled twice and the smaller value is used.

Fortifications, Basic: Basic fences, watchtowers, palisades, and ditches are dug to provide firing positions and protection. When within the settlement, defending military units are treated as having twice their usual maximum hit points. Damage is taken from these extra hit points first, and no casualties are taken until they are all depleted.

Hunters: The settlement has trained and organized hunting teams that shoot and scavenge what food they can find in the surrounding area. Each month, roll 1d4x50; that many people were fed that month by the hunters, with any surplus dried and preserved. A given settlement can have no more than four teams of Hunters operating at once, or less if the surrounding terrain is unpromising for foragers.

Logistics Train: The settlement has trucks, porters, or animal-drawn carts capable of supporting a military offensive at range. Up to 300 militia or soldiers can operate up to 100 kilometers from the settlement to fight or invade, rather than being limited to a 25 kilometer radius around their home.

	Operation Staff		Construction Costs				
Assets	**Workers**	**Educated**	**Basic Res.**	**Comp. Res**	**Workers**	**Time**	**Notes**
Academy	40	10	300	100	100	4 wks	P,S
Airport	50	10	200	100	200	3 mon	P,S
Armory	25	5	50	25	50	4 wks	
Caravan	25	0	25	5	25	4 wks	M
Church	20	0	50	0	50	4 wks	
Faith Leader	10	1	10	0	10	4 wks	
Farm	25	0	100	0	25	3 mon	M
Festival	0	0	0	0	Special	2 wks	
Fishery	50	0	50	5	100	4 wks	
Fortifications, Adv.	50	0	300	25	200	4 mon	S
Fortifications, Basic	20	0	100	0	50	8 wks	
Hunters	20	0	10	0	20	4 wks	M
Logistics Train	50	0	50	10	50	4 wks	M
Market	25	0	50	0	50	4 wks	
Medical, Clinic	25	1-5	50	10	100	8 wks	P,S
Medical, Hospital	50	1-20	200	50	200	4 mon	P,S
Medical, Tent	10	1-3	10	1	25	2 wks	
Military, Militia	10	0	10	10	10	4 wks	M
Military, Soldiers	9	1	50	20	25	3 mon	M
Mine	50	0	100	25	100	8 wks	M
Popular Idol	10	1	10	0	10	4 wks	
Port	25	0	100	10	50	4 wks	
Power, Coal	40	5	100	20	100	8 wks	M
Power, Diesel	10	2	50	40	50	4 wks	M
Power, Fusion	0	10	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Power, Hydro	20	4	200	40	200	8 wks	
Power, Solar	5	1	10	4	25	2 wks	M
Radio Station	10	2	50	25	50	4 wks	P
Railroad Link	100	10	300	20	500	3 mon	M
Ranch	25	0	100	0	50	4 wks	M
Recruitment Effort	0	0	20	0	25	4 wks	
School	10	1	100	10	50	4 wks	
Shelter, Barracks	0	0	25	0	50	2 wks	M
Shelter, Basic	0	0	25	0	50	2 wks	M
Shelter, Modern	0	0	100	5	50	4 wks	P,M
Shelter, Tents	0	0	5	0	10	1 wk	M
Special Supplies	0	0	25	0	10	2 wks	
Tavern	10	0	50	0	50	4 wks	
Technicians	0	5	50	5	10	4 wks	P,M
VIP Guards	5/VIP	0	10	0	20	2 wks	
Wood Lot	25	0	50	0	50	4 wks	M

P: This Asset needs electrical power. M: Can be built multiple times. S: Needs a Special Component to build it.





Market: Every settlement has some trading among the citizens, but this market attracts merchants from outside. PCs can buy goods there in general circulation in the area, whether or not the settlement itself can make the items. It can be tapped to suppress a Problem related to inadequate resources for one month.

Medical, Clinic: A proper medical clinic with electrical power and minimally-adequate surgical facilities. Each Educated physicians working here can handle up to 25 patients, to a maximum of 125.

Medical, Hospital: An actual functioning hospital is a rarity, but this establishment can even do invasive surgeries with some hope of success. Each Educated physician working here can handle up to 50 patients, to a maximum of 1,000.

Medical, Tent: Perhaps not an actual tent, but a very basic hospital for segregating the sick and injured and providing some minimal care for them. A medical tent requires at least one Educated physician in addition to the workers who serve as nurses. The tent can handle up to 20 patients per physician on duty, to a maximum of 60.

Military, Militia: Workers are trained to form an organized military group, becoming a Militia unit. The usual unit requires 10 Workers, though large-scale units of 100 can also be organized for large communities at ten times the staff and cost. The Workers are only occupied in militia work when the unit is actually deployed during a month. Otherwise, they can work at other tasks.

Military, Soldiers: Workers are organized into standing military formations that train and patrol constantly, becoming a Soldier unit. The usual unit requires 10 Workers, though large-scale units of 100 can also be organized for large communities at ten times the construction cost. Soldiers are constantly on duty and cannot be put to other work without permanently degrading the unit into Militia. They are, however, always ready to defend the settlement or move as directed.

Mine: Some locations may have usable deposits of useful building stone, coal, or easily-smelted ores. Other "mines" might loot the usable wealth of an old world ruin. A five-kilometer hex of suburban ruin or a single mineral deposit adjacent to the settlement's hex can support one mine, while a hex of major urban core can support three. Each active mine produces 50 tons of usable Basic Resources each month.

Popular Idol: A leader with some skill at performance is built up as a unifying figure of hope. This Asset can be tapped to reroll a Morale check by the settlement - whether it succeeds or fails - or suppress a Problem related to discontentment or despair for one month.

Port: The settlement has boats and trade links with other communities on the same body of water or river. PCs can usually safely travel to any point within a week of water travel on one such craft. Through trade ties, the port can be tapped to suppress a Problem related to a lack of resources or water transportation for one month.

Power, Coal: Antiquated as the tech may be, a boiler can run on coal, wood, or other solid combustibles. One coal plant can provide electricity to up to four Assets, but it requires 50 units of burnable Basic Resources each month to fuel it.

Power, Diesel: Powerful and simple, a large diesel, propane, or other liquid fuel generator can function anywhere, but needs a steady supply of fuel. PCs will need to find and secure such a supply before this power source can be built, but a single diesel generator can turn about 12,000 liters of fuel a month into enough power to run four Assets that require electricity.

Power, Fusion: Depending on the campaign world, fusion power plants may or may not even exist. If one can be found in operable condition or brought back to life, effectively infinite power is available to a settlement, provided that ten Educated technicians are available to run it. Such treasures must be found, however, as hardly any survivor community could ever hope to build one from scratch.

Power, Hydro: Hydropower sufficient for a settlement requires a river that can be dammed, but can provide electrical power for up to a dozen Assets that require it.

Power, Solar: Not every environment is suitable for solar power, and the heavy batteries needed for round-the-clock power are cumbersome. On average, a single solar power facility can provide electrical power for one Asset.

Radio Station: The settlement operates a powerful radio station that can transmit and receive throughout the region. The station keeps a dozen or so portable long-range radio sets in operation that can reach the radio station from any clear, semi-elevated point in the region when operated by someone with Program-0 skill. The radio sets count as Encumbrance 4 packs.

Railroad Link: The settlement builds a functioning rail link with a destination up to 50 kilometers distant. This Asset requires a Special Component if the land between is not basically flat or gently rolling, and running a line through mountains or swamps is impossible without some special adventure to justify it. Every hex the railroad passes through counts as being part of the settlement for purposes of military asset ranges, mine and farm establishment, or other Asset construction. PCs can travel anywhere along this railway within one day. Any significant military force can block-

ade the railroad, however, cutting it off until the settlement responds with its own troops. Running a railroad after the apocalypse is dangerous, and a new Problem always occurs with each new Railroad Link until the route is safe from all significant threats. This is in addition to the Problem created by making the first Railroad Link.

Ranch: Ranches rely on pasturage that may not be good enough for farming, and also need either a starting herd of livestock or at least one year of operation to breed up or gather animals. Once fully functional, however, each ranch can feed up to 200 people a month. One five-kilometer hex of non-arid land adjacent to the settlement's hex can support up to two ranches, assuming it's relatively safe for the animals to be herded around in it.

Recruitment Effort: The settlement actively sends out recruitment parties and relief efforts to draw survivors and the dissatisfied from other neighboring communities. As soon as this Asset is complete, the community makes a Morale check. If it fails, the enticements are wasted and this Asset is lost with no benefit. If the Morale check succeeds, the Asset is still lost, but the settlement grows by 1d6x10%, assuming the GM thinks there are that many loosely-tied strangers in the area. A quarter of the newcomers, rounded up, are Workers, with the rest being Non-Workers. Building this Asset never creates a Problem.

School: This modest school can both teach the citizenry and identify and coordinate the talented among them. Individuals are given the specialized training they need to handle specific difficult jobs. Each month, a school can turn 1d4 Workers into Educated.

Shelter, Barracks: Group living quarters in permanent buildings, unsuitable for family living, but enough to house 200 people. If any Non-Workers are forced to live in barracks, the community gains a Problem related to that fact until they have other housing.

Shelter, Basic: These family homes may be crude cabins or refurbished pre-collapse housing, each Asset having houses enough for 50 people. They lack much in the way of conveniences or comfort, but they can be kept warm and dry and provide a measure of privacy.

Shelter, Modern: These homes even have electricity and hot running water, providing a degree of comfort largely unknown after the end of the world. Each such Asset can house 100 people. For each full fifth of the populace housed this way, pick a social Problem; it remains suppressed so long as the housing is intact.

Shelter, Tents: Crude tents, lean-tos, and makeshift shanties provide minimal shelter for up to 100 people. A community with people living in tents automatically gains two Problems related to that fact until no one is so housed.

Special Supplies: Scrap is salvaged for specialized parts and components that might not be generally useful, but are sometimes critical. When a new Asset calls for a special component, this Asset can be sacrificed to supply that component.

Tavern: A shared meeting-place with rotgut and conversation, a tavern gives locals a place to blow off steam. It can be tapped to suppress a Problem related to low morale or uncooperative workers for one month. Taverns can't be untapped by spending Resources; instead, roll a Morale check at the end of the month, and it untaps if it succeeds.

Technicians: These technicians can repair, maintain, and build things if they have access to power. Each month, a team can be put to one of two uses: it can either count as 25 workers for the purposes of construction or labor, or it can convert up to 50 tons of Basic Resources into 5 units of Complex Resources at a 10:1 ratio.

VIP Guards: A protective detail is assigned to important people in the community, such as its Educated members or important officials, with 5 guards needed per VIP to be protected. When the VIP would otherwise be a casualty of a Problem's effect, 1d6 of their guards are lost instead, with the VIP only dying if a 6 is rolled.

Wood Lot: Some settlements are near stands of usable timber, and harvesting these logs doesn't require much in the way of tooling. A five-kilometer hex of light woods can support one wood lot, while a dense forest can support up to three. A single wood lot produces 25 tons of Basic Resources each month. A forest will eventually be depleted at this rate, but it's unlikely to happen soon enough to matter to the present survivors.



Settlements and Mass Combat

Some groups may prefer to use a completely separate wargame for playing out mass combat in their future wasteland. For parties that prefer a simpler, more abstract system, the rules below can be used.

Military Units

Settlements can create Militia or Soldier Assets. The former require Workers to staff them, but can be left unstaffed when militiamen are needed for other work. The latter require constant staffing, but are better-trained and always available for use. Other military units might be created as Assets at the GM's discretion.

Military Assets come in two sizes: small units of 10 or large units of 100. A small settlement may recruit small units for lack of resources or manpower, while a large one may establish large standing forces. Large units can be broken into ten small units if needed, or reformed if ten such units are still alive.

NPCs break military forces into similar 10 or 100-man units. A marauder warband of 50 savages might be treated as five groups of ten bandits, while a half-dozen mutant horrors might be treated as a single small unit, even if a full ten aren't available. A single horrific beast or high-tech gravtank might qualify as a large unit through its sheer individual killing power.

Unit Statistics

Each unit, large or small, has the statistics of whatever creature makes it up. A small unit of militia, for example, would have the statistics of the average militiaman. If the unit has significant support personnel or special gear, the GM might give the unit a bonus to its statistics.

Units always have eight HP per hit die. Thus, a unit of 2 HD veteran soldiers would have 16 hit points. A unit of monstrous 4 HD mutant horrors would have 32 hit points.

Unit Deployment

In the absence of a Logistics Train Asset, a military unit can operate up to 25 kilometers from its home settlement. They can go or return anywhere within that range as often as is reasonable in a one-month settlement turn. If they have a Logistics Train Asset, up to 300 troops have their range increased to 100 kilometers.

NPC military assets have whatever range is reasonable to the GM. Roaming marauders have no home base to worry about, but mutant horrors might keep close to their hunting grounds.

Mass Combat

If two or more units are in the same general vicinity and end up fighting, they begin combat just as if they were individuals with whatever statistics they possess, with the following exceptions.

- Each combat round lasts fifteen minutes, and counts as one scene for special ability uses.
- Movement rates are multiplied by ten.

Otherwise, attack rolls, damage rolls, Shock, special ability usage, and other elements of combat are all rolled out just as if they were individuals fighting. Military units are not subject to Traumatic Hits, however.

Large and Small Unit Fights

Small units have a 90% chance of doing absolutely nothing when they attack or otherwise engage a large unit. If the situation is special or the small unit has an unusually good plan, the GM may decrease this chance. If the small unit's attack escapes this chance of futility, it does normal hit point damage or inflicts whatever effect it would normally induce in the target.

Large units that attack small ones can attack up to five small targets within range with a single normal attack, attacking the same target multiple times if desired. Any successful hits do double damage.

Morale Checks

A military unit must make a Morale check whenever it takes damage. On its first failure, it's disorganized and can do nothing each round except make another Morale check until it succeeds. If a disorganized unit is damaged again and fails its Morale check, it's broken, and will attempt to flee the field.

Special situations might force additional Morale checks, and heroic leaders or secure entrenchments might grant bonuses to checks.

Casualties and Losses

An Asset reduced to zero hit points is destroyed. 1d6x10% of its members survive with no major injuries. Half the rest are injured and the other half are dead.

An Asset that suffers more than half its hit points in damage has 1d6x10% casualties. Two thirds are of those are wounded, and one third are dead.

When calculating losses, wounded are rounded up and dead are rounded down.

Assets must be fully-manned to heal any hit point loss. If their home settlement can replenish their losses, any lost hit points are regained at the end of the month.

An Example Settlement

Refuge Point is an informal survivor camp formed on the outskirts of an American city in the wake of a zombie apocalypse. The GM decides that about 400 survivors gathered there in the aftermath of the initial collapse. A quarter of them are able-bodied and fit for labor, so the GM marks down "100 Workers, 300 Non-Workers". He decides that 1% of them have especially useful skills or competence, so he makes 4 of the Workers into Educated. He also decides that the settlement is too new to have entrenched problems aside from "Zombies are eating everyone.", which he attaches to the settlement's Population for now.

The GM decides that they have enough food to feed themselves for one month, so marks down 400 person-months of Food Stores. They've also scraped together about 100 tons of Basic Resources for building tents and other necessities. The locals are still numb from the disaster but are determined to survive, so he gives them a Morale of 8.

The GM could just assign them Assets, but he decides to simulate the first month after the apocalypse to give the place some texture before he starts the campaign. With that in mind, he begins by running a settlement turn.

Step 1: He rolls 1d10 for the problem check, and gets 2. The settlement only has one Problem, but it activates. The zombies are eating people, and according to the Population consequences on page 279, 10% of each Population category is going to die by the end of the month if no one deals with it. No one will.

Step 2: The camp has no Assets, so no one can be assigned to work at anything.

Step 3: Again, with no Assets, no one is doing anything but starving.

Step 4: The desperate locals have to start digging in before they're overwhelmed. They have 100 Workers and Educated who can do construction labor and 100 tons of Basic Resources. They put 40 laborers and 20 tons of Basic Resources to work creating two teams of Hunters so they can get a minimal food source going. 50 workers and 50 tons of Basic Resources are committed to setting up a Wood Lot in the nearby forest so that more resources can come in. These three Assets all take four weeks to build, so they'll all be done at the end of the month.

Step 5: With 400 mouths to feed and 400 person-months of food in the stores, Refuge Point has just enough provisions to feed everyone.

Step 6: Everyone lacks shelter. Fortunately, as it's summertime in the American Midwest, the crude tarps and bedrolls the survivors have are enough to keep them from harm. Harsher weather would've meant sickness or death.

Step 7: No one is sick or injured, which is good, because Refuge Point has no medical facilities.

Step 8: The Problem takes effect. 10 workers, 1 Educated, and 30 Non-Workers die due to zombie attacks. The strain of creating two new types of Assets, Hunters and the Wood Lot, also add two new Problems. The GM rolls randomly on the Food and Social Problem tables that follow and gets "Food-wasting parties are demanded to make life bearable." and "One group is blaming another for all manner of problems." It sounds like the locals don't really understand the depth of the crisis yet and are demanding to eat like they're still civilized. The homebodies are also blaming the hunters for "holding back food" or "not working hard enough to save the rest of us", and bad blood is forming. The GM attaches the first problem to the Food Stores and the second to community Morale.

At the end of the month, the new Assets come on line. The two Hunter groups will produce food for 2d4x50 people next month, and the Wood Lot will generate 25 tons of Basic Resources. Yet just operating those Assets will take 40 Workers for the hunting and 25 for the lumberjacking, leaving only 14 people to actually construct anything new. And even in the best case, the hunters can't hope to feed all 359 mouths in the settlement, ensuring starvation for eightscore luckless Non-Worker victims... and the new Problem that will arise when people start starving to death.

In brief, Refuge Point is doomed unless the PCs can haul it back from the edge. Without the breathing room from additional food supplies and fresh stocks of basic construction material, most of the population will be dead before the locals can establish farms or other large-scale food production. And without the labor necessary to build or run those Assets, the remaining survivors will just get whittled away by their Problems until no one is left alive.

The GM now has some immediate plot hooks for the PCs once the campaign begins. The initial session of play can revolve around showing the PCs the impending doom of their current home, giving them a taste of the zombie menace, and then offering hooks for adventures revolving around unplundered food stocks, survivor groups in need of a new home, and untouched caches of usable building materials. A quick, decisive group of survivors might be able to bring in several adventures worth of loot before the end of the next month, buying the people of Refuge Point enough time to get their critical facilities running.



Food Problems

Some of the first and most immediate problems a community can face revolve around the food supply. The example problems below relate both to the stores of preserved or scavenged food the settlement might have and the actual hunting or farming of food.

Even so, food problems don't necessary attach to the Food statistics of a settlement. The coping mechanisms and stopgaps used to control the problem can easily manifest in an entirely different way, draining a different resource to keep the food supply intact.

d6	d6	Problem
1	1	A local vermin species is a constant threat to food storage or production.
	2	The citizens simply do not understand the need for austerity and waste food or refuse unpalatable fare.
	3	Rations are being extorted out of a weak or unpopular group of citizens, leaving them hungry.
	4	The food is so bland, unpalatable, or stale that the citizens have difficulty eating as they should.
	5	Food theft is rampant, and those supposed to be preventing it are in on the problem.
	6	Food storage is inadequate, leaving the supplies vulnerable to spoilage or theft.
2	1	A local faith requires the destructive sacrifice of edible foodstuffs as part of their rituals.
	2	A local figure of importance has gained control over food distribution for their own benefit.
	3	Food producers or scavengers are hoarding their finds and not sharing it with the community.
	4	Natural game or foraged supplies are exhausted in the area, leaving little to supplement diets.
	5	A segment of the populace is unable to eat a staple food due to religious or digestive reasons.
	6	Produced or scavenged food is contaminated with a pervasive local toxin that's hard to detect.
3	1	Critical water, fertilizer, or labor resources are sometimes unavailable for food production.
	2	Clumsy preparation or distribution wastes or spoils an excessive amount of foodstuffs.
	3	People are blaming an unpopular group for supposed food waste, theft, or failure to collect it.
	4	People are starting to quietly but intentionally starve children, the aged, and the weak.
	5	Food-wasting parties or festivals are demanded by the citizens in order to make life bearable.
	6	There's an outbreak of cannibalism among the more desperate locals.
4	1	The local diet is so unbalanced that people are suffering diseases of malnutrition even if fed.
	2	The local scavenged food or crops are prone to sudden spoilage or decay due to the environment.
	3	People are being worked so hard that they need extra rations to avoid malnutrition from their labors.
	4	The community refuses to feed laggards and idlers, but they have a bad or corrupted system for it.
	5	Different groups have taken over different food sources and treat them like personal property.
	6	Livestock or pets are being slaughtered for personal benefit, hindering agriculture or efficient use.
5	1	Workers are demanding extra rations for their labor or they won't work.
	2	Civilian groups are organizing to "fairly distribute" food in ways that are fair only to them.
	3	Farmers or scavengers are quarreling over good land or looting areas and not producing food.
	4	A charismatic local leader has appealing but extremely stupid ideas about food production or use.
	5	"Fair sharing" mechanisms are so rapacious that people are reluctant to gather or grow food openly.
	6	Foodstuffs are being excessively fermented or distilled into potable beverages.
6	1	Food growers or collectors are resentful, feeling that they aren't rewarded or respected sufficiently.
	2	The best looting or farming areas by the settlement are too dangerous to safely use as they should be.
	3	Universal fear of impending starvation is causing hoarding and theft issues even among the well-fed.
	4	Food is getting smuggled outside the community to traders, refugees, or allies of some citizen group.
	5	Preservation or storage techniques are inadequate and causing food supplies to spoil early.
	6	Excessive optimism or faith in a divine promise is making people careless or wasteful with food.

Social Problems

Social problems are inevitable in any large group of frightened, traumatized people. The examples below pick out some common pathologies, especially ones that can manifest between dissimilar or competing groups in the same community.

Every social problem has a motivation, even if it's a foolish one. Identifying and resolving that motivation often takes a lot more than simply providing more resources; the needs for status, respect, and control can be difficult to satisfy permanently with mere baubles.

d6	d6	Problem
1	1	A strain of nihilistic libertinism is provoking some citizens to do nothing useful at all.
	2	A Lothario or femme fatale is manipulating important locals for their own benefit.
	3	A vicious grudge exists between two important families or groups of citizens from pre-collapse deeds.
	4	The citizens just aren't willing to recognize the desperation of the hour and the death of old forms.
	5	A new religion is spreading and causing heavy friction with non-believers.
	6	A demagogue is constantly berating the leadership and proposing popular, foolish plans.
2	1	An important figure is exploiting their office for personal benefit, but is also performing critical work.
	2	A group of citizens are demanding an outsize share in decision-making or government.
	3	Some locals have an important custom or tradition that's repugnant or vexing to others.
	4	Two groups are quarreling over control or use of some land, building, or facility in the community.
	5	A group of locals feels robbed or extorted of their belongings by the community's current regime.
	6	Some locals have a shared, coordinated ambition that is very much at odds with the rest of the group.
3	1	Some citizens used to be important, and expect the same level of deference and indulgence now.
	2	Officials are giving special benefits to their friends and families, but their help is proving very useful.
	3	Local soldiers or militia are making "requisitions", but claim that they're critical for keeping things safe.
	4	An important job is viewed with contempt, and those who perform it are being treated like subhumans.
	5	A group is convinced they are being denied resources or status that they deserve.
	6	Some of the locals have close ties with an outside group that they preference over their neighbors.
4	1	Drug use or alcoholism is a significant problem among the locals.
	2	There's a large gap in wealth between the elite and the commoners in the community.
	3	The leadership group in the community feels no particular need to pay much attention to the peasants.
	4	The locals are paranoid about the wrong external threats and work vainly to guard against them.
	5	Significant ethnic or religious tensions exist between two or more groups of locals.
	6	The locals are a mixed group, with no deep-seated loyalty to the community as a whole.
5	1	One group is blaming another for all manner of problems and crises, justified or not.
	2	A rich or powerful local is forming a private militia or goon squad from their clients.
	3	A significant number of locals have chronic illnesses that are constantly draining medical resources.
	4	A general miasma of despair and shock leaves some locals non-functional or dangerous to others.
	5	A zealous group of idealists is determined to turn the community into a new utopian society.
	6	A significant number of locals are work-shy due to trauma, despair, selfishness, or pride.
6	1	People demand a higher standard of living than the current desperate situation really supports.
	2	A group of people are absolutely convinced of something that is both harmful and untrue.
	3	Many of the community's workers have no skills of any actual use in the current situation.
	4	The locals are uncertain about the community's location, and some are ready to flee to elsewhere.
	5	A group of locals are convinced they are the rightful leaders of the place, and wait to take the throne.
	6	A loudly carping group is constantly second-guessing leadership and proposing impractical plans.



Environmental Problems

It's difficult to find good real estate after the end of the world. The problems listed here are some that can be discovered after a settlement is begun, with new construction or a season's living revealing issues that may not have been obvious at first.

As bad as they may be, they're probably still better than any other nearby site or else the locals would have moved their tents. Survival for the community means discovering ways to minimize or adapt to the situation rather than fleeing it.

d6	d6	Problem
1	1	The water supply here is tainted or irregular, and takes much work to make usable.
	2	The buildable land area here is limited due to bad soils, ruins, or terrain formations.
	3	The place has sudden spells of very bad weather that can damage crops and buildings.
	4	A local insect or vermin carries a disease that, while not fatal, still weakens the victim.
	5	The area is hard to defend due to the terrain or the presence of nearby commanding heights.
	6	The soil is hard to build on, and construction often requires extra materials or work to erect.
2	1	The available farmland here is somehow contaminated or hazardous, and yields are poor.
	2	The site is very exposed, and raiders and other exploiters are likely to pay attention to it.
	3	The place has a slightly elevated radiation count, promoting illness in the locals.
	4	Nearby toxic waste spills or other hazards threaten the community when the weather is hostile.
	5	The site is prone to sudden flooding or swampy soils.
	6	The locals like to make use of standing ruins that still have a bad habit of collapsing on them.
3	1	The site is in a migration path of dangerous or troublesome animals or mutants.
	2	The only good access to the site is across a bridge or structure that requires constant maintenance.
	3	Some locals are convinced this site is cursed, toxic, or otherwise hazardous to live in.
	4	Old ruins in the area are dangerous when they collapse, and they collapse excessively often.
	5	The locals don't know of any good scavenging or foraging sites close to the settlement.
	6	It's exceptionally difficult to treat or contain sewage or other settlement waste in this place.
4	1	A particular local weed or mutant plant tends to overgrow machinery or crop fields.
	2	Winters are so grim here that preparing for them and worrying about them bedevils the locals.
	3	There are a lot of dangerous beasts or mutants lairing in the immediate vicinity of the settlement.
	4	Dangerous rain storms wash away ill-secured structures and threaten flash floods.
	5	There are tunnels or structures under the settlement, and sometimes things break through.
	6	The terrain or nearby ruins make it very easy for enemies or smugglers to slip in or out of the place.
5	1	An otherwise useful bit of land is considered sacred to a local faith, and it must be maintained.
	2	Blown dust or grit is constantly getting in food or machinery and needs regular cleaning.
	3	Unstable terrain requires regular repair and reinforcement of structures.
	4	There's a lack of nearby firewood or burnables, making it hard to heat homes and facilities.
	5	Unexploded ordnance, mines, and other left-over military hazards are in the area.
	6	Local toxins get in the flesh of herbivores and other game animals, making them unhealthy to eat.
6	1	Bad air quality here can potentially lead to lung diseases and breathing problems.
	2	Old barrels of toxins or other hazards are regularly unearthed during construction or farming.
	3	Something about the site is highly attractive to mutants, raiders, or other living hazards.
	4	The locals don't really know how to build with the resources they have, and things sometimes collapse.
	5	People yearning for small comforts here are stealing supplies and hijacking resources for their ease.
	6	Valuable salvage here is often mixed in with some hazardous substance or miasma.

External Problems

Few wastelands are so desolate as to have only one community within their bounds. Small bands of tribals, wandering survivors, or isolated families might exist in the wilderness, and all of them can cause trouble if enticed or provoked.

External problems could touch on any aspect of a community, whether it involves population loss from fighting or recruiting, materials loss from theft or one-sided trades, or general despair from facing resolute and motivated enemies.

d6	d6	Problem
1	1	Traders are selling drugs or luxuries to the locals in exchange for valuable or useful supplies.
	2	A raider chief is convinced the settlement is his rightful prey to be duly harvested.
	3	An outside missionary force is bringing an attractive yet troublesome faith to the people.
	4	Some local power is convinced the settlement needs to pay tribute for "protection".
	5	Somebody made a deal with an outside group to provide resources for some personal reason.
	6	Desperate local raiders are launching attacks that are too risky to be entirely rational.
2	1	An aspiring local hegemon is sending "offers" to the settlement to come in under its protection.
	2	Troublemaking exiles from another settlement are trying to join up with this one.
	3	Outside merchants are cutting extortionate deals with desperate locals.
	4	Some locals have ties to a mercenary group that does their private bidding, but also extorts pay.
	5	A hostile group has spies in the community who sometimes act to sabotage things.
	6	The locals are convinced a hostile group has spies among them, and keep witch-hunting each other.
3	1	A deposed leader of another settlement has allies here who want to put them back in control there.
	2	A outcast from the group has made an alliance with another group to return and take control.
	3	Thieves have ties with locals who expose valuable resources for them to deftly sweep in and snatch.
	4	A remnant of old government is in the area and demands the obedience of the community.
	5	A collapsing community or group is pouring refugees on the community that can't be taken in.
	6	Local robbers are making the trails and roads around the community too dangerous to use.
4	1	The community somehow mortally offended another major group in the area, and they want revenge.
	2	A local scavenger or scientist keeps sending hirelings to investigate dangerous and unstable places.
	3	Another community struck a bad bargain with this one, and keeps demanding more resources.
	4	Another group is convinced the community has stolen land or resources that were rightfully theirs.
	5	A scattered prior group that once lived in this site considers themselves to be its rightful rulers.
	6	A hostile community wants to prevent this place from developing into a rival power.
5	1	A number of the locals are considered to be wanted criminals by an outside power.
	2	A local is a significant religious or political figure who is wanted dead by an outside group.
	3	A usurper or exiled former ruler of another community has allies in this one, bent on helping a return.
	4	A powerful outside power wants to make a bad deal, and threatens violence if the bargain's rejected.
	5	Another group of refugees or castoffs wants to take control of the community and make it theirs.
	6	A powerful outside group is press-ganging or forcibly recruiting members of the community.
6	1	An outside power's expansion is blocked by the community until it destroys or subordinates it.
	2	Something about the community's culture or people profoundly offends a powerful outside group.
	3	The community's people tend to be deceitful or rapacious toward outsiders, earning enmity.
	4	Local traders are cheating or extorting outsiders, causing them to attack or rob the community.
	5	Some locals insist on involving themselves in a particular outside group's affairs.
	6	The locals have a specific bitter grudge against a particular outside power and all its people.



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