

The One Ring

Quick Start Rules

Spring 2012

The One Ring

Quick Start Rules

These rules are intended to be sufficient to allow players to participate in a demo game of The One Ring, using pre-generated characters, and led by a GM who has the complete rules.

Characters

Aside from a suitable name, each character is defined by the following:

- **Culture** – A character's people of origin. Each culture has an associated *Cultural Blessing*, which is a special feature common to all members of that culture. A character's *Standard of Living* is also determined by her culture. Instead of tracking gold pieces, characters use their standards of living to determine what they can afford during an adventure.
- **Calling** – A character's pursuit, analogous to class or profession. Calling determines a character's *Shadow Weakness*, which is a category of negative traits that a character acquires if she gives in to despair.
- **Traits** – Tags that describe a character's special talents and features. Traits can be invoked in three ways:
 1. To allow a character to automatically succeed at a skill test called for by the GM, as long as the test is related to the trait.
 2. To introduce a skill test into the narrative. PCs can propose their own skill tests at any time (and thus take some control over the narrative), as long as the test is related to the trait.

3. To advance skills. The GM awards advancement points for succeeding (and sometimes for failing) at skill tests. Tests related to traits are much more likely to earn advancement points. (In a demo game there is probably not much need to track character advancement.)
- **Attributes** – The three main ability scores: Body, Heart, and Wits. Each of these has a basic rating and a favored rating.
 - **Common Skills** – Common skills are skills that are not weapon skills. Each dot represents a rank in that skill. Skills are aligned under their associated attributes. For example, all skills associated with the Body attribute are listed in a column under Body. Some skills are underlined, which means they are favored.
 - **Weapon Skills** – Just like common skills, except for weapons. Weapon skills can be favored and can also appear in brackets, such as (Swords). A skill in brackets means the character's cultural background allows him to use any weapon in that category with equal facility. Weapon skills are associated with the Body attribute.
 - **Rewards and Virtues** – Exceptional gifts the character has earned. Both rewards and virtues are culture-specific.

Skill Tests

The One Ring uses 6-sided and 12-sided dice. The 12-sided die is called the Fate Die. Tests are made by rolling zero or more 6-sided dice and one Fate Die, and adding up all the results. If the total is equal to or greater than the Target Number (TN), the test is passed. The standard TN for skill tests is 14. In some circumstances, the TN may be adjusted upward or downward to reflect the conditions of the test.

No matter what, you always get to roll the Fate Die when making a test. The number of 6-sided dice is equal to your rank in the skill being tested. So a character with 2 ranks in Riddle would roll 2d6+1d12 and add the results together.

On the 6-sided dice, results 1 through 3 do not count when a character has the Weary condition (explained later). In addition, when a test is passed, each result of 6 is a degree of extraordinary success. The more 6s, the more extraordinary the success.

On the Fate Die, a result of 12 indicates automatic success. No matter what the TN was or how many dice were rolled, a 12 on the Fate Die means success. On the other hand, a result of 11 means automatic failure. The GM may also interpret a result of 11 as a *critical failure*.

INVOKING ATTRIBUTES

After the dice are rolled for a skill test, a character may optionally invoke the associated attribute of the skill. Invoking an attribute costs 1 point of Hope.

When an attribute is invoked, add the attribute rating to the dice result. For example, when testing Awareness (a Body skill), a character can choose to add his Body score to the dice result.

Normally invoking an attribute adds the attribute's basic rating to the dice results. However, if a skill is favored, add the attribute's favored rating to the result.

CORRUPTION TESTS

A Corruption test is a special kind of skill test that uses a character's Wisdom score instead of a skill. Roll a number of 6-sided dice equal to the Wisdom score, plus the Fate Die, and add the results together. If the total is 14 or higher, the test is passed. Failing a Corruption test earns the character one or more Shadow points.

FEAR TESTS

A Fear test is a special kind of skill test that uses a character's Valour score instead of a skill. Roll a number of 6-sided dice equal to the Valour score, plus the Fate Die, and add the results together. If the total is 14 or higher, the test is passed. A

character who fails a Fear test loses the option to spend Hope to invoke attributes. This penalty lasts for as long as the character is subjected to the source of the fear. Some particularly hideous servants of the Enemy are so fearful that almost no one can stand against them. The TN for Fear tests against such foes is suitably increased.

Combat

At the beginning of combat, the GM may allow one or more ranged volleys. Attacks made during ranged volleys are simultaneous.

Once melee range is achieved, initiative is determined. Initiative is a simple matter of which side is the attacker and which side is the defender. If the narrative does not make this clear, the GM may require a skill check (usually either Battle or Awareness) to decide who holds initiative.

Each PC picks a stance. There are three melee stances and one ranged stance:

1. *Forward* – High offense, low defense.
2. *Open* – Medium offense, medium defense.
3. *Defensive* – High defense, low offense.
4. *Rearward* – A ranged stance. To take a rearward stance, at least two allies must be in a melee stance. The GM may allow rearward stances in other circumstances as well.

Each round of combat proceeds in the order listed above, starting with forward and ending with rearward. At each step, the defending side goes first and the attacking side goes second.

HIT ROLL

Hit rolls are weapon skill checks. The TN is determined by the stance the character is in. (GM-controlled enemies use the same TN that their player-controlled opponents do.) The forward stance has the lowest TN; the defensive and rearward stances have the highest. The TN is further increased by the *Parry* rating of the target.

Stance	Combat order	TN
Forward	1	6
Open	2	9
Defensive	3	12
Rearward	4	12

For example, a PC in the open stance trying to hit a goblin whose Parry is 4 would have to beat TN 13.

DAMAGE ROLL

On a successful hit, the target's Endurance is reduced by the *weapon's* Damage rating. Each extraordinary success adds the *character's* Damage rating to the total Endurance loss. Loss of Endurance can cause PCs to become Weary. Any combatant reduced to 0 Endurance is out of the fight. For some GM-controlled enemies this is equivalent to death. PCs with 0 Endurance are unconscious.

Weapons have an Edge rating in addition to a Damage rating. If the Fate Die result on a weapon skill check is equal to or greater than the Edge rating of the weapon, a *piercing blow* has been struck. If the target is not wearing armor, he is Wounded. As with complete Endurance loss, sustaining a wound may put a GM-controlled enemy out of action right away. PCs who are Wounded do not suffer any immediate effects, but will often spend a long time recovering from it. A PC who is already Wounded and who sustains a second wound is unconscious (exactly as if he

had been reduced to 0 Endurance). A PC who is both Wounded and reduced to 0 Endurance is at risk of death.

Armor-wearing targets may be able to avoid a wound by making a *Protection* test. The number of 6-sided dice rolled is indicated by the armor type. (As usual, the Fate Die is also rolled.) The TN for the test is equal to the Injury rating of the weapon that struck the blow. Protection tests are associated with the Body attribute.

POST-COMBAT RECOVERY

When combat ends, uninjured characters who can rest for at least half an hour will recover a number of Endurance points equal to their basic Heart score.

Journeys

The GM determines the length and difficulty of each overland journey, and calls for one or more Travel skill tests—roughly one test for every 6 days of travel time. Failing a Travel test means a character's Fatigue score is increased by 1 or 2. (Exactly how much is decided by the GM.) If anyone rolls an 11 on the Fate Die while making a Travel test, an unexpected hazard has been encountered. The GM will call for a skill test from someone in the fellowship to try and deal with the hazard.

Before embarking on a journey, the GM has the PCs plan their route by making Lore tests. Success or failure at these Lore checks make the journey easier or more difficult.

Journeys are made significantly easier with the aid of horses. However, it may not be within a character's standard of living to afford this luxury, and not all journeys are amenable to riding.

Endurance and Fatigue

A character's Fatigue rating is determined by adding up the encumbrance value of all her carried gear, plus any treasure carried. Failed Travel rolls can increase a character's Fatigue score as well.

If a character's Endurance is equal to or less than her Fatigue, she gains the Weary condition. When a Weary character makes a skill test, all 6-sided dice results of 1, 2, or 3 are ignored.

RECOVERY

Fatigue is recalculated at the beginning of each new gaming session. The Weary condition can be alleviated by getting a good night's rest (provided a character's Endurance has risen back up above his Fatigue).

Endurance recovers with each night's sleep. Uninjured characters recover a number of Endurance points equal to their basic Heart rating plus 2. Characters who are Wounded recover only 1 or 2 points of Endurance per day.

Hope and Shadow

Characters gain Shadow points by traveling in blighted lands, having possession of a Shadow-tainted item, experiencing anguish, or behaving dishonorably.

If a character's Hope score is equal to or less than his Shadow score, he gains the Miserable condition. A Miserable character who rolls an 11 on the Fate Die during any test experiences a brief bout of madness, after which he automatically acquires a *Flaw* related to his Shadow Weakness. Flaws work like traits, except they are invoked by the GM to produce unfavorable results.

RECOVERY

When a character acquires a flaw, she erases her accumulated Shadow points and gains one permanent Shadow point instead. Permanent Shadow points can never be removed. These are scars that characters carry with them for the rest of their lives.

The principal method for restoring Hope is by drawing on the character's companions for strength. At the beginning of each gaming session, the GM establishes a pool of points—called *Fellowship Points*—from which any PC can replenish his Hope. A player must get the agreement of at least half the group to take points to restore his character's Hope. It is a good idea to roleplay the conditions that restore a character's Hope.

The GM may provide alternate means to increase the number of Fellowship Points available, such as the camaraderie afforded by a well-lit inn. The GM may also allow PCs to invoke their traits to propose skill tests to increase the pool of Fellowship Points, such as Inspire, Song, Riddle, or Craft.

During the Fellowship Phase (the downtime between adventures), PCs can reduce their (non-permanent) Shadow points by engaging in activities that restore their spirit, such as Song or Craft. The GM may allow PCs without Shadow points to use this method to directly recover their own Hope instead.