**May 8, 2018**

Welcome to the *Pillars of Eternity* Pen and Paper Starter Guide! We at Obsidian are excited to present this opportunity for players to further explore the world of Eora and create new adventures and stories with your friends and companions. Let us know what you think at pnpfeedback@obsidian.net, and we'll update the Guide based on your feedback and our own ongoing playtesting.

# A Note from the Author

This Starter Guide represents an early stage of the game's development. It contains the core ideas that will drive our tabletop sessions, but you may notice that not every entry is filled out, not every term is explained clearly or consistently. You may even notice some outright contradictions between a few sections.

What began as an idea for a simple "Starter Guide" has transformed into something more ambitious. We would like to see this guide serve as the foundation for a full pen and paper tabletop RPG that brings the characters of Eora to life over years, even decades of adventures. To give you a vision of where the game is heading, the scope of the guide has increased. My hope is that you can look past the loose ends to see the bigger picture we are trying to frame.

In the next few months, we will use your feedback to revise and update this guide to an alpha state for playtesting. In the meantime, thank you for all of your support, thoughts, and criticism.

- **Josh Sawyer**

# Goals

The Pillars of Eternity RPG has a somewhat different focus from the computer games. The computer games were intended to capture the spirit of titles like *Baldur's Gate* and *Icewind Dale*, but the RPG is intended to capture the spirit of the Pillars of Eternity *setting*. Its mechanics have a different focus. More attention is given to initial character development, personal character growth, character relationships, and a focus on a long-term home or objective.

The reasons for these differences have to do with the difference in medium. In a tabletop RPG, each character has a role to play and must stand on their own. However, each character also needs to have ties both to other characters as well as to a higher level purpose -- be that the stewardship of a location or a far-flung objective. The mechanics motivate all players to strive to protect and promote their common cause.

Likewise, combat in a tabletop RPG has a much different pace than combat in even the slowest CRPG. While the Pillars of Eternity CRPG focused on a finding a proper party balance of abilities for pacing, the TTRPG gives all characters tactical options in every phase of combat and encourages player communication. The combat systems are the most "gamey" you will find in these rules. The goal is to make combat enjoyable and tactically interesting for a variety of characters while avoiding the pitfalls that some systems with less structured combat systems succumb to.

While some aspects of the TTRPG strive for realism, this is in the service of helping ground the systemic elements in the world of Eora which, while fantastic, tries to emulate many realities of Renaissance/Age of Exploration Earth. When rules seem unrealistic, it is always because I believe the shift will result in a more enjoyable gameplay experience. Let me know if they do not.

## Group Decisions

This game leans more heavily on the play group as a decision making body than games that traditionally rely on the Game Master for arbitration. Whenever a rule defers to the group for a ruling, every player (including the Game Master) counts equally. In the case of ties, the GM's opinion breaks the tie. Players are never excluded from these decisions, even if they are personally affected by the outcome.

## The Cause

A Pillars of Eternity RPG campaign starts with establishing a *cause.* This is a common rallying point for all players. While Pillars promotes the use of a wide variety of personality types, players in a campaign must have a vested interest in the cause. The cause may be a common home, an individual the players are sworn to foster or protect, promotion of an exclusive society, or a thing that the group must accomplish. In all cases, the players must have a strong attachment to the cause and a desire to see it through.

### Types of Causes:

### Home
Whether it is a village, a castle, a neighborhood, a sacred glen, or a lonely outpost in the middle of the wildnerness, the characters are devoted to a fixed location in the world. It is their responsiblity to protect their home and help it grow. Adventures around this type of cause focus on the home itself and nearby environments that become entangled with the home's welfare.

### Person
An individual under the protection of the characters. This person may be the nominal superior of the characters (e.g. a nobleman or a wealthy patron) but is generally not the adventuring type. They require the special talents of the characters to survive and thrive in the world. Examples include the young heir to a noble house, a wealthy merchant, or a revered prophet. Adventures around this type of cause follow the growth of the individual, attendance to their obligations, and related entanglements.

### Society
A limited-membership society, secret or public, of which the characters are all members. This may be a religious order, a political faction, a professional guild, a criminal organization, a mystery cult, or even a monster-hunting club. The society always has rules and goals that the group must uphold and try to accomplish, respectively. Adventures around this type of cause revolve around the goals of the society, advancement within the society, and its conflicts with other groups and individuals.

### Accomplishment
The group has been formed, formally or informally, to accomplish a specific long-term task or set of tasks. They can be self-motivated or charged with this task by an outside party, but all characters are focused on achieving the goal. The goal may be revenge against one or more powerful parties, defeating a powerful dragon that has plagued a region for centuries, toppling a corrupt government, recovering a set of ancient artifacts, or exploring all 100 islands in an uncharted archipelago.

# Regions

The first thing Pillars TTRPG players should do is familiarize themselves with the world of Eora and the core focus of the setting: **The Eastern Reach.** The Eastern Reach is the farthest expansion of western colonial powers in Eora. It is the confluence of the native cultures of Eir Glanfath and the imperial powers of Aedyr and Old Vailia. While the Eastern Reach is, in many ways, the most traditional "fantasy" region of Eora, it is caught in the midst of a social shift due the advancement of a controversial technology known as animancy.

Once you've become familiar with the Eastern Reach, you may also explore the Old Empires and Distant Lands. Aedyr, Old Vailia, Ixamitl, and Rauatai have been around for centuries – in some cases, millennia – but are falling into decline compared to the vivacious, but troubled, colonial nations. The Living Lands, The White that Wends, and Deadfire Archipelago are the other frontiers of kith exploration. Though far from lifeless, they are so hostile to the presence of kith that they are only populated by hardy natives and foolhardy fortune-seekers.

The region your group chooses as its focus will likely have a strong hand in defining the types of conflicts they will face. The Eastern Reach is embroiled in cross-culture misunderstandings, exploitation, the plundering and protection of local sites, and the ethical problems posed by the rise of animancy and the dismissal of mystical and religious authority.

## The Old Empires

Aedyr, Old Vailia, and Rauatai are collectively known as the Old Empires. They are often preoccupied with internal conflicts, dynastic squabbles, lower-class uprisings, and the pursuit of centuries-old myopic feuds. They are entrenched in their ways, but the trenches run *deep*, reflecting a long and complex history that the empires have difficulty moving forward from. The most active of the old empires,

Rauatai, has renewed its outward focus in recent years. Aedyr and Old Vailia have been largely written off by their colonial offshoots in the Eastern Reach, but they still hold great power and the potential to rise to their former glory.

## The Eastern Reach

The Dyrwood, Readceras, the Vailian Republics, Eir Glanfath, and Ixamitl are the nations of the Eastern Reach. So-named for the representing the former edge of Aeyran and Old Vailian colonial exploration, the Reach has transformed itself into a center of trade and innovation. The nations of the Eastern Reach are a diverse mix of old and new cultures. The Dyrwood, Readceras, and the Vailian Republics represent the now-independent colonial settlements of Aedyr and Old Vailia. Eir Glanfath and Ixamitl are both ancient civilizations, the former of which often clashes with the colonial powers.

## The Distant Lands

The Living Lands, the White That Wends, and the Deadfire Archipelago are informally called the Distant Lands. These remote places are the least tamed regions of Eora that have been actively settled by kith. Even the Deafire Archipelago, the most settled area of the Distant Lands, is still so unstable and that the war-torn Dyrwood in the Eastern Reach looks calm in comparison. Though ancient ruins are also part of the Distant Lands, life itself is a struggle and even the most well-connected and wealthy personalities can fall victim to the wildness of nature in the blink of an eye.

## The Gods

The gods of Eora are a fickle bunch. Intractably dedicated to the promotion of their areas of concern, their actions often seem inscrutable or bizarre. Most gods do not take an active role in the lives of mortals, but may occasionally make their presence known through a supernatural manifestation or odd occurrence in an otherwise ordinary day.

## Dice and How to Use Them

Pillars of Eternity uses a standard set of role-playing game dice: 4-sided, 6-sided, 8-sided, two 10-sided, 12-sided, and 20-sided. These are referred to as d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, and d20, respectively. A number in front of the type of dice indicates how many dice of that type are rolled, e.g. 5d6 is five 6-sided dice, or one 6-sided die rolled five times.

The most commonly-used dice are the two d10s and the d4. 2d10 is the standard roll for most skill checks and attacks.

**Bonus**, **Penalty**, **Assist**, and **Hinder** dice are always d4s. When another player Assists or Hinders, they should hand their d4s to the player making the roll.

## Creating a Character

In Pillars of Eternity, creating a character involves conceiving their starting circumstances and the path they took to reach the start of the game. Characters may be created in a wide range of ages, but typically begin play as Adults.

**Culture** – Where are you from?

**Species and Stock** – Are you an elf or a orlan? Island aumaua or coastal?

**Backgrounds** – What was your course through life?

**Attributes** – What defines your basic mental and physical capabilities?

**Skills** – What are you good at?

**Traits** – What's special about you?

**Powers** – What soul powers have you acquired?

**Equipment** – What gear and personal belongings do you have?

## Culture

A character's starting culture grants a trait and allows access to skills during character creation even when they are not in the character's Backgrounds.

### Aedyr
Axe, Blacksmithing, Bow, Carpentry, Etiquette, Farming, History, Housekeeping, Hunting, Husbandry, Insight, Laws of Aedyr, Mace, Masonry, Milling, Negotiate, Shield, Sword, Theology, Woodcutting

**Imperial Courtesy:** +1 Bonus Die when using Etiquette, Charm, Oratory, Negotiate, or Intimidate. +2 Bonus Dice when used with Dyrwoodans and Readcerans.

### Deadfire Archipelago
Athletics, Axe, Brawl, Charm, Fishing, Forecasting, Herbalism, Hunting, Insight, Knitting, Leatherwork, Mace, Navigation, Oratory, Sailing, Shipbuilding, Spear, Survival, Swimming, Theology, Thrown

**Waterborne:** Edge for Awareness, Athletics, Acrobatics, Concentration, and Stealth when in water or on a vessel or surface borne by the water (e.g. ship, raft, even a buoyant barrel).

### Dyrwood
Axe, Baking, Blacksmithing, Brawl, Brewing, Carouse, Carpentry, Cooking, Explosives, Farming, Fishing, Housekeeping, Hunting, Husbandry, Intimidate, Light Blade, Milling, Sword, Trapping, Woodcutting

**Dyrwoodan Hello:** May perform one free Immediate Action at the start of combat, before the Immediate Phase begins. Alternately, an Edge for Brawl, Intimidate, and Explosives.

### Eir Glanfath
Animal Training (Stelgaer), Astronomy, Athletics, Awareness, Bluff, Bow, Brawl, Carpentry, Herbalism, Hunting, Intimidate, Navigation, Mace, Polearm, Riding (Stelgaer), Spear, Stealth, Survival, Trapping, Theology

**Sacred Knowledge:** +1 Bonus Die when using Architecture, Masonry, Metaphysics, Mechanics, or Lockpicking with Engwithan ruins, traps, machines, or locks. Alternately, can give +2 Bonus Dice to Stealth when in Engwithan ruins.

## Ixamitl Plains
Baking, Brawl, Cooking, Dancing, Debate, Farming, Glazing, Hunting, Husbandry, Insight, Leatherworking, Light Blade, Masonry, Milling, Oratory, Philosophy, Spear, Sword, Wand, Weaving

**Civilized Disagreement:** Edge for Philosophy, Debate, Oratory, Negotiate, and Theology.

## Living Lands
Awareness, Appraise, Axe, Blacksmithing, Bluff, Brawl, Carouse, Carpentry, Cobbling, Fishing, Gun, Hunting, Light Blade, Negotiate, Spear, Survival, Tailoring, Tattooing, Wagoneering, Woodcutting

**Desperate Solitude:** Edge for any Obstacle or Versus test when no conscious allies are present in the scene (group decision).

## Naasitaq
Basketry, Bow, Brawl, Carving, Cooking, Dancing, Engraving, Fishing, Forecasting, Hunting, Leatherworking, Light Blade, Navigation, Spear, Stealth, Survival, Tattooing, Thrown, Trapping

**Survival Instinct:** +2 Bonus Dice when using Awareness, Forecasting, Navigation, Stealth, or Survival when suffering from 1 or more Wounds that are not in recovery (i.e. fresh).

## Old Vailia
Acting, Appraise, Carouse, Charm, Cooking, Crossbow, Etiquette, Farming, Fishing, History, Hunting, Juggling, Laws of Old Vailia, Light Blade, Navigation, Oratory, Painting, Polearm, Pottery, Shield, Sword

**Rich Traditions:** +1 Bonus Die for History, Folklore, Oratory, Painting, Pottery, and Cooking.

## Rauatai
Astronomy, Baking, Cooking, Etiquette, Explosives, Fishing, Forecasting, Gun, History, Intimidate, Intrigue, Laws of Rauatai, Masonry, Oratory, Polearm, Sailing, Shipbuilding, Sword, Shield, Tailoring

**Will of Empire:** +1 Bonus Die for Oratory, Debate, Intimidate and Intrigue. Alternately, Assist Dice explode on 4 when assisting another character from the Rauatai culture (invoked pre-roll).

## Readceras
Axe, Blacksmithing, Bow, Brewing, Casting, Charm, Concentration, Cooking, Distillation, Etiquette, Farming, Gemcutting, Housekeeping, Mace, Mining, Oratory, Shield, Sword, Teaching, Theology, Whitesmithing

**Penitential Contemplation:** Re-roll for any Obstacle or Versus test following prayer or meditation (9 Difficulty Theology/Concentration, 1 round).

## Vailian Republics
Appraise, Astronomy, Carouse, Charm, Crossbow, Glazing, Gun, Intrigue, Laws of the Vailian Republics, Light Blade, Mechanics, Metaphysics, Negotiate, Sculpture, Shield, Shipbuilding, Sword, Whitesmithing, Tailoring

**Modern Mind:** +1 Bonus Die on Mechanics, Metaphysics, Surgery, Astronomy. Alternately, an Edge for the same skills.

## White That Wends
Acrobatics, Athletics, Awareness, Brawl, Carving, Etching, Fishing, Folklore, Forecasting, Hunting, Insight, Intimidate, Mace, Navigation, Oratory, Spear, Stealth, Survival, Swimming, Teaching, Thrown, Trapping, Wand

**Winter's Work:** Edge for any Obstacle or Versus test when temperature is below freezing or when the character is in the dark of night.

# Species and Stock

Each Species represents a distinct group of living creatures in Eora, distinguished from each other by myriad traits, but distinctively an inability to produce offspring between different types. The standard Species in Pillars of Eternity are those of the *kith*, i.e. the "civilized" people that dominate Eora.

Within each Species, there are generally two or more Stocks. These are ethnic groups that can produce offspring between each other within a Species but may be distinguished from each other in some minor way.

## Aumaua
All aumaua begin with 10xp in their Might attribute. All aumaua are Size 1.

**Coastal Aumaua**

**Island Aumaua**

## Dwarf
All dwarves begin with 5xp in their Might and Constitution attributes. All dwarves are Size 0.

**Boreal Dwarf**

**Mountain Dwarf**

## Elf
All elves begin with 5xp in their Dexterity and Perception attributes. All elves are Size 0.

**Pale Elf**

**Wood Elf**

## Folk
All folk begin with 5xp in their Might and Resolve attributes. All folk are Size 0.

**Meadow Folk**

**Ocean Folk**

**Savanna Folk**

## Godlike

## Orlan
All orlans begin with 10xp in their Perception attribute, 5xp in their Resolve attribute, and -5xp in their Might attribute. All orlans are Size -1.

**Hearth Orlan**

**Wild Orlan**

# Backgrounds

All characters have one or more backgrounds that define how they came up in the world prior to the start of the game. Most characters will start with three backgrounds: childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood. Some characters, due to the nature of the campaign, may start younger or older.

Backgrounds have Primary and Secondary skills associated with them. Each Primary skill receives 5xp per time it appears in a background. Each Secondary skill receives 2xp per time it appears in a background.

## Child Backgrounds

The first background for every character must start as a Child background. Child backgrounds are broader than subsequent backgrounds because the lives of most children are less rigidly structured than those of adults. Each background corresponds to a category of backgrounds that the child would most likely transition into.

Note that

**Rural Child**

15 xp

**Town Child**

13 xp

**Urban Child**

12 xp

**Military Child**

13 xp

**Court Child**

11 xp

**Noble Child**

10 xp

**Religious Child**

13 xp

**Mercantile Child**

13 xp

**Academic Child**

12 xp

**Criminal Child**

15 xp

## Rural Backgrounds
Each background in Rural grants 15 experience points and 5 circles points in their region.

**Carpenter**
P: Carpentry

S: Masonry, Architecture, Athletics

**Farmer**
P: Farming

S: Forecasting, Husbandry, Survival

**Mason**
P: Masonry

S: Carpentry, Architecture, Athletics

**Miller**
P: Milling

S: Farming, Negotiate, Mechanics

**Woodcutter**
P: Woodcutting

S: Survival, Herbalism, Awareness

**Fisherman**
P: Fishing

S: Forecasting, Sailing, Swimming

**Shepherd**
P: Husbandry

S: Awareness, Forecasting, Hunting

**Housewife/Houseman**
P: Housekeeping

S: Cooking/Baking, Herbalism, Brewing

**Hunter**
P: Hunting

S: Stealth, Awareness, Survival

**Trapper**
P: Trapping

S: Survival, Forecasting, Hunting

**Peddler**
P: Negotiate

S: Survival, Insight, Charm

**Midwife**
P: Midwifery

S: Herbalism, Oratory, Surgery

## Town Backgrounds
Each background in Town grants 13 experience points and 5 circles points in their town.

**Blacksmith**
P: Smithing

S: Negotiate, Athletics, Appraise

**Bookbinder**
P: Bookbinding

S: Leatherworking, Scribing, Cobbling

**Cobbler**
P: Cobbling

S: Leatherworking, Bookbinding, Tailoring

**Carpenter**
P: Carpentry

S: Woodcutting, Athletics, Woodcarving

**Engraver**
P: Engraving

S: Appraise, Scribing, Jeweler

**Glazier**
P: Glazing

S: Jeweler, Woodcutting, Woodcarving

**Innkeeper**
P: Carouse

S: Negotiate, Bookkeeping, Insight

**Laborer**
P: Negotiate

S: Carpentry, Farming, Masonry, Woodcutting, Survival

**Leatherworker**
P: Leatherworking

S: Tailoring, Cobbling, Bookbinding

**Scribe**
P: Scribing

S: Writing, Painting, Bookbinding

**Shopkeeper**
P: Negotiate

S: Appraise, Insight, Charm

**Silversmith**
P: Smithing

S: Engraving, Appraise, Jeweler

**Tailor**
P: Clothwork

S: Leatherworking, Weaving, Knitting

**Tax Collector**
P: Bookkeeping

S: Awareness, Insight, Bluff

# Military Backgrounds
Each background in Military grants 13 experience points and 5 circles points in their military organization.

**Archer**
P: Bow/Crossbow

S: 1 Martial Skill, Athletics, Awareness

**Armorer**
P: Blacksmithing

S: 1 Martial Skill, Carouse, Leatherworking

**Bannerman/Bannerwoman**
P: Oratory

S: 1 Martial Skill, Intimidate, Athletics/Riding

**Battlefield Musician**
P: Musical Performance (Instrument)

S: 1 Martial Skill (melee), Awareness, Athletics

**Blacksmith**
P: Blacksmithing

S: Carouse, Negotiate, Appraise

**Camp Cook**
P: Cooking

S: Carouse, Husbandry, Herbalism

**Captain**
P: Logistics

S: Negotiate, Oratory/Intimidate, Tactics

**Cavalryman/Cavalrywoman**
P: Riding

S: 1 Martial Skill, Awareness, Athletics

**Conscript**
P: 1 Martial Skill

S: Etiquette, Athletics, Survival

**Dragoon**
P: Riding

S: Gun, 1 Martial Skill (Melee), Athletics

**Herald**
P: Oratory

S: Etiquette, History, Athletics/Riding (Horse)

**Gunner**
P: Gun

S: 1 Martial Skill (Melee), Athletics, Awareness

**Infantry**
P: 1 Martial Weapon (melee)

S: 1 Martial Weapon (melee, cannot be the same as primary), Awareness, Athletics

**Marshal / General**
P: Tactics

S: Logistics, Oratory, Negotiate

**Military Chaplain**
P: Oratory

S: 1 Martial Skill, Charm, Insight

**Mounted Archer**
P: Riding

S: Bow/Crossbow, Awareness, Athletics

**Porter**
P: Athletics

S: Housekeping, Survival, Wagoneering

**Prostitute**
P: Charm

S: Bluff, Negotiate, Streetwise

**Quartermaster**
P: Logistics

S: Bookkeeping, 1 Martial Skill, Awareness

**Runner**
P: Athletics

S: Stealth, 1 Martial Skill, Swimming

**Sailor**
P: Sailing

S: Shipbuilding, Navigation, Carouse

**Sapper**
P: Mining

S: Explosives, Athletics, Siege

**Siege Engineer**
P: Siege

S: Explosives, Architecture, Mining

**Skirmisher**
P: Athletics

S: 1 Martial Skill (Melee), 1 Martial Skill (Ranged), Stealth

**Scout**
P: Stealth

S: 1 Martial Skill (Ranged), Awareness, Survival

**Sergeant**
P: Oratory/Intimidate

S: 1 Martial Skill, Logistics, Tactics

**Steadman/Lieutenant**
P: Tactics

S: 1 Martial Skill, Oratory/Intimidate, Logistics

## Court and Estate Backgrounds
Each background in Court and Estate grants 11 experience points and 5 circles points in the community or land surrounding their estate.

**Advisor**
P: Oratory

S: Etiquette, Debate, Intrigue

**Bailiff**
P: Charm/Intimidate

S: Laws of (Land), Bookkeeping, Intrigue

**Chef**
P: Cooking/Baking

S: Baking/Cooking (cannot be the same as primary), Carouse, Etiquette

**Chamberlain**
P: Housekeeping

S: Bookkeeping, Etiquette, Intrigue

**Chronicler**
P: Composition

S: Scribing, Etiquette, History

**Constable**
P: Awareness

S: Laws of (Land), Intimidate, Brawl

**Court Artist**
P: 1 Artistic Skill

S: Etiquette, Insight, Charm

**Court Musician**
P: Musical Performance (Instrument)

S: Carouse, Etiquette, Intrigue

**Courtier**
**P:** Charm

**S:** Etiquette, Intrigue, 1 Social Skill/Dancing

**Executioner**
P: Surgery

S: Intimidate, Negotiate, 1 Martial Skill

**Falconer**
P: Animal Training (Birds of Prey)

S: Hunting, Husbandry, Awareness

**Gardener**
P: Farming

S: Herbalism, Forecasting, Trapping

**Groom**
P: Animal Training (Horse)

S: Husbandry, Housekeeping, Riding (Horse)

**Forester**
P: Survival

S: Hunting, Herbalism, Navigation

**Herald**
P: Etiquette

S: History, Intrigue, Charm

**Jester**
P: Charm

S: Juggling, Acrobatics, Oratory/Acting

**Man/Woman-at-Arms**
P: 1 Martial Skill

S: Etiquette, Negotiate, Athletics/Riding

**Master/Mistress of Hounds**
P: Animal Handling (Dog)

S: Hunting, Husbandry, Awareness

**Minstrel**
P: Musical Performance (Voice)

S: Acting, Oratory, Etiquette

**Nurse**
P: Herbalism

S: Surgery, Bluff, Awareness

**Page**
P: Athletics

S: Housekeeping, Etiquette, Composition

**Servant**
P:

S:

**Squire**
P: 1 Martial Skill

S: Athletics, Riding (Horse), Husbandry

**Steward**
P: Housekeeping

S: Oratory, Bookkeeping, Etiquette

**Treasurer**
P: Bookkeeping

S: Scribing, Composition, Bluff/Oratory

## Noble Backgrounds
Each background in Noble grants 10 experience points and 5 circles points in their nation's nobility.

**Heir**
**P:** Housekeeping

**S:** 1 Martial Skill, 2 Social Skills

**Knight**
**P:** 1 Martial Skill (melee)

**S:** 1 Martial Skills (melee, cannot be the same as primary), Riding (Horse), Tactics

**Lady/Lord**
**P:** Housekeeping

**S:** 3 Social Skills

**Maiden/Gentleman**
**P:** Etiquette

**S:** Charm, 1 Academic Skill, 1 Social Skill

## Religious Backgrounds
Each background in Religious grants 13 experience points and 5 circles points in their religious community, order, or surrounding community.

**Abbess/Abbot**
P: Housekeeping

S: Intrigue, Composition, Bookkeeping

**Chaplain**
P: Oratory

S: Charm, Teaching, Theology

**Clerk**
P: Scribing

S: Bookkeeping, Bookbinding/Painting, Theology

**Crusader**
P: 1 Martial Skill

S: Athletics/Riding, Survival, Theology

**Deacon**
P: Housekeeping

S: Theology, Bookkeeping, Composition

**Hermit**
P: Concentration

S: Survival, Theology, Awareness

**High Priest**
P: Oratory

S: Laws of (Religion), Theology,

**Inquisitor**
P: Insight

S: Theology, Laws of (Religion), Debate

**Mendicant**
P: Survival

S: Concentration, Theology, Teaching

**Missionary**
P: Teaching

S: Athletics/Riding, Theology, Survival

**Monk / Nun**
P: Theology

S: 1 Artistic or Worldly Skill, Insight, Intrigue

**Novice**
P: Etiquette

S: Theology, Concentraion, Housekeeping

**Oblate**
P: Housekeeping

S: Etiquette, Cooking, Theology

**Priest**
P: Oratory

S: Insight, Teaching, Theology

**Temple Guard**
P: Awareness

S: 1 Martial Skill, Insight, Intimidate

**Theologian**
P: Theology

S: Philosophy, Debate, Composition

## Mercantile Backgrounds

Each background in Mercantile grants 13 experience points and 5 circles points in their merchant network.

**Banker**
P: Negotiate

S: Bookkeeping, Insight, Laws of (Land)

**Bookkeeper**
P: Bookkeeping

S: Composition, Scribing, Oratory

**Foreign Trader**
P: Negotiate

S: Survival, Bookkeeping, 1 Living Language/Charm

**Guild Merchant**
P: 1 Artistic Skill

S: Negotiate, Streetwise, Carouse

**Merchant**
P: Negotiate

S: Riding/Wagoneering, Bookkeeping, Carouse

**Moneylender**
P: Negotiate

S: Bookkeeping, Insight, Intimidate

**Shopkeeper**
P: Housekeeping

S: Bookkeeping, Awareness, Negotiate

## Academic Backgrounds

Each background in Academic grants 12 experience points and 5 circles points in their academic institution or, if it is a small institution, a network of affiliated institutions.

**Scribe**

P: Scribing

S: Bookkeeping, Bookbinding/Painting, 1 Academic Skill

**Student**
P: 1 Academic Skill

S: Scribing, 2 Academic Skills (cannot be the same as Primary)

**Professor**
P: Teaching

S: Composition, Scribing, Debate

## Criminal Backgrounds

**Brigand**
P: Survival

S: Stealth, Intimidate, Athletics/Riding

**Burglar**
P: Stealth

S: Lockpicking, Athletics, Streetwise

**Con Artist**
P: Acting

S: Bluff, Scribing, Composition

**Cutpurse**
P: Sleight of Hand

S: Acting/Bluff, Athletics/Stealth, Streetwise

**Robber**
P: Intimidate

S: Stealth, 1 Martial Weapon, Athletics

# Attributes

Attributes represent fundamental physical and mental characteristics of a character. They are often added to die rolls or checked against directly in circumstances where individual skills do not apply. 0 represents an average score for kith characters. +3 is quite high, -3 is quite low, and values up to +5/-5 are extraordinary. Values above 5 are not normally found among kith.

Attributes are purchased on a point scale.

| Points | Score |
| --- | --- |
| 25 | 5 |
| 15 | 4 |
| 10 | 3 |
| 5 | 2 |
| 2 | 1 |
| 0 | 0 |
| -1 | -1 |
| -2 | -2 |
| -3 | -3 |
| -4 | -4 |
| -5 | -5 |

## Might
Affects Melee Damage, Thrown Damage, Carry Limit, and Fortitude.

## Constitution
Affects Fatigue Limit, Wound Recovery and Fortitude.

## Dexterity
Affects Initiative, Ranged Damage (non-Thrown), Reflexes, and Deflection.

## Perception
Affects Accuracy, Reflexes, and Deflection.

## Intellect
Affects Study Minimum Skill Requirements and Will.

## Resolve
Affects Magic Damage, Magic Healing, and Will.

# Defenses
One of the most important impacts of Attributes is to contribute to Defenses. All characters use Defenses to resist attacks. Attackers attempt to equal or exceed these target numbers to score Hits.

### Deflection
Most weapon attacks, such as those from swords, arrows, and monsters' claws, target Deflection.

**Base Deflection = Dexterity + Perception + 5**

### Fortitude
Fortitude represents the body's overall sturdiness and ability to resist poison and disease.

**Base Fortitude = Might + Constitution + 10**

### Reflexes
Reflexes represents the character's ability to maintain their balance or leap out of the way of area attacks like an explosion or a dragon's breath.

**Base Reflexes = Dexterity + Perception + 10**

### Will
Will opposes attacks against the mind and soul of the character, from the terror of a dragon's presence to a cipher's powers of enchantment.

**Base Will = Intellect + Resolve + 10**

# Skills

Skills represent the basis of most characters' capabilities in Pillars of Eternity. While traits, talents, and abilities represent special characteristics, skills are tested more often than any other element of a character. Skills represent a combination of training and natural talent, with higher skill allowing the character to perform more difficult tasks and to make performing routine tasks much more reliable.

Because of Pillars of Eternity's dice mechanics, having a high skill is necessary for achieving difficult tasks with regularity. A lucky double may propel a character to great heights every once in a while, but the skills themselves add to every roll.

## Skills From Character Creation

**Background Skills**
First, calculate your background skills. All characters begin play with a set of skills defined by their backgrounds. Look at your character's backgrounds and make a list of all skills that appear in them. Put a star * next to a skill each time it appears as a primary focus. Put a vertical slash | next to a skill each time it appears as a secondary focus.

When you are finished, give the skills 15 experience for each star, 8 experience for each slash. Reference the experience table below and write down the current rank for each skill with experience. This can later be expanded on with Free Spend (below) or during character advancement between adventures.

**Free Spend Skill Experience**
Each background grants a character a number of "free spend" skill experience based on the background category (e.g. Rural, Military, Religious). Add up these points and spend them on any skills covered by the character's culture or backgrounds. No skill can exceed the listed maximums (below) for the character's number of backgrounds. And no experience can exceed the minimum experience needed to attain the listed max rank.

| Number of Backgrounds | Max Rank |
|---|---|
| 1 | 4 |
| 2 | 5 |
| 3 | 6 |
| 4 | 7 |
| 5 | 8 |
| 6 | 9 |
| 7 | 10 |
| 8 | 11 |

**The Experience Table**
All skills advance using the following experience table. The progression is triangular, meaning advancement in skills will naturally slow down as the character's rank gets higher. For that reason, it is often more efficient to spread points across multiple skills instead of a single skill.

| XP | Rank |
|---|---|
| 1 | 1 |
| 3 | 2 |
| 6 | 3 |
| 10 | 4 |
| 15 | 5 |
| 21 | 6 |
| 28 | 7 |
| 36 | 8 |
| 45 | 10 |
| 55 | 11 |
| 66 | 12 |
| 78 | 13 |
| 91 | 14 |
| 105 | 15 |
| 120 | 16 |
| 136 | 17 |
| 153 | 18 |
| 171 | 19 |
| 190 | 20 |

Progression past rank 20 increases in the same manner.

## Academic Skills

Academic Skills are typically used as part of research or recollection. They are most likely to be used in Obstacle Tests (recalling facts) but may also be used as part of Seasonal Tests when the character is trying to discover an obscure piece of information that they either don't know or can't recall

### Astronomy
Astronomy is the study of stars, moons, and other celestial bodies. It encompasses both practical knowledge as well as the theoretical debates in the field. Some Astronomy checks may require the use of charts or other special tools, such as telescopes, to view objects hidden from the naked eye.

### Bookkeeping
Bookkeeping is the practice of maintaining daybooks, ledgers, and similar account-keeping records. The more financially-active cultures of Eora, such as the Vailian Republics and Rauatai, practice double-entry bookkeeping, but even remote cultures like the Glamfellen of the White That Wends have their own methods for recording important account data.

### Dead Language
Dead languages are only learned in an academic context or in highly-specialized communities that maintain the use of the language among their ranks. If a dead language has a unique alphabet, that must be learned to read the language.

Specializations:

### History
Though little is agreed upon by the various people and nations of Eora, History allows the user to recall the most popular accounts of historical events. There are often many different versions of history depending on whom one asks or what texts one reads. There is also heavy overlap between folklore, mythology, and the sober recapitulation of facts by witnesses. The machinations of interested political parties as well as the Hand Occult further complicate the study of many historical events.

### Laws of (Culture)
Each culture in Eora has its own customs and laws, whether written or taught orally to its people. Knowledge of law is never general, but always specific to an individual culture. There is some overlap between the laws of imperial and colonial cultures, such that knowledge of one can be used to infer (sometimes dangerously) the laws of the other. In such cases, the difficulty is 3 higher than normal.

Aedyr, Readceras, The Dyrwood
Old Vailia, The Vailian Republics

N.B. – Possiby imperial law has inherently higher difficulty??

### Metaphysics
Metaphysics covers practical and theoretical aspects of souls and their functions. While a knowledge of metaphysics does not require the use of animancy, the practice of animancy requires knowledge of metaphysics. More than any other academic field in Eora, metaphysics is highly speculative and full of hotly-contested theories.

Specializations: Animancy, Fringe Theories, Kith Metaphysics, Mainstream Theories

### Philosophy
A companion to Theology and Metaphysics, Philosophy is the study of knowledge itself, the examination of consciousness and the moral and ethical implications of living as a sapient being in Eora. Philosophy covers not only the the bodies of work developed by philosophers from across Eora, but also the logical underpinnings of their arguments and counter-arguments.

**Theology**
Separate from Metaphysics, Theology covers the knowledge of religions, religious organizations (though not religious law), and religious practices, including prayers and rites. As much of Eora is polytheistic, general knowledge of the gods is covered equally by this skill. Obscure splinter faiths, heretical movements, and remote, isolated observances are significantly more difficult to know and recall.

## Artistic Skills

Artistic skills encompass an enormous range of material and performance arts in Eora's various cultures. In addition to being useful for earning a living, artistic skills are required for the creation and enchantment of magical items.

Although most Artistic Skills require tools, a small number do not.

**Acting**
Acting is more than simply bluffing or pretending. It involves knowledge of stage practices, the study and affectation of manners, gestures, and accent, and the improvisational interplay of multiple players. Put simply, Bluff covers the successful telling of half-truths and bald-faced lies. Acting is about the assumption of a full *role* for more than the duration of a simple exchange. When the character is not assuming an alternate role, use Bluff.
Specializations: Accents, Cheating to the Audience, Improvisation, Mannerism

**Basketry**
Basketry involves the use of pliable materials, typically stiff grasses or leaves, into containers such as baskets, bowls. However, the applications of basketry go beyond containers and can be applied to mats, decorative wall-hangings, and even some forms of clothing.

**Blacksmithing**
Blacksmithing involves the working of hard metals such as iron and steel for the creation of tools, including weapons and armor, as well as practical items such as horseshoes, nails, and weather vanes. It does not include decorative engraving (covered by Engraving) or plating (covered by Whitesmithing)

but does cover structural decorative elements such as fluting or other artistic flourishes, as well as finishing and polishing.
Specializations: Armor, Weapons, Common Goods

Requires: Tools, Forge

**Bookbinding**
Bookbinding covers the manufacture of bound books from parchment, palm slats, vellum, or paper with wood, leather, or other durable materials. It covers both the craft aspects of assembling the book as well as decorative appliations such as inlays and gilded page edges. However, it does not cover calligraphy (Writing) or illumination (Painting).
Specializations: Aesthetics, Durability, Efficiency

Requires: Tools

**Carving**
The line between engraving and carving is primarily how deep the cuts are. Engraving is superficial and carving is sculptural. The difference between Carving and Sculpting is that Carving deals fundamentally with the removal of material (bone, ivory, wood, stone) rather than the building up of material.

Requires: Tools

**Casting**
Casting covers both the creation of molds and the process of casting objects from existing molds in a variety of metals. The original material can be almost any hard substance. The molds are typically made from plaster, sand, or other materials that can withstand the heat of molten metal.

Requires: Tools, Forge

**Cobbling**
Cobbling covers the creation, modification, and repair of footwear. It includes the use of leather, cloth, wood, and other, more exotic structural and decorative materials.

Requires: Tools

**Composition**
Composition is the artistic development of written language, the literary equivalent of Oratory. It allows the writer to make their points clearly and, if desired,

with wit, scorn, or lamentation heaped on top.  It can be used either to instruct or to persuade. The most extraordinary compositions do both.
Specializations: Instruction, Playwriting, Poetry, Rhetoric, Satire, Storytelling

**Engraving**
Engraving is the inscription of patterns or letters in hard and semi-hard materials such as bone, ivory, metal, wood, or stone, with specialized tools.  It is primarily a decorative endeavor, but occasionally involves the recording of valuable instructions, commemorative speeches, or important cultural legends.
Specializations: Bone and Ivory, Metal, Stone, Wood

Requires: Tools

**Gemcutting**
Whether precious or semi-precious, gemstone, shells, or stones, gemcutting allows the practioner to cut, shape, and polish stones and shells for use in jewelry or other artistic applications.  Gemcutting often adds greatly to the value of uncut stones, but can be a labor-intensive process. It can be used to create small hardstone carvings, facted jewels, and smooth cabochons.
Specializations: Hardstone Carvings, Faceted Jewels, Cabochons, Shells

Requires: Tools

**Glazing**
The creation of both clear and "stained" glass (including relevant leadworking) as well as glassblowing is covered by glazing.  Glazing includes knowledge of both the technical aspects of the processes and tools as well as artistic skill.
Specializations: Clear Glass, Glassblowing, Stained Glass

Requires: Tools, Forge

**Jeweling**
Jeweling specifically covers the setting (or careful removal) of gemstones and similar decorative hard stones or shells into jewelry or other artistic objects such as sculptures and books. It does not cover gemcutting or whitesmithing itself.

Requires: Tools

**Knitting**
Knitting is distinguished from weaving by the tools and techniques used.  Knitting uses needles to form interlocked loops of yarn, typically made of wool.  It is often used for smaller pieces of clothing or decorative elements. Knitting can incorporate complex patterns and myriad colors.

Requires: Tools

**Leatherworking**
Leatherworking is the preparation, shaping, and cutting of leather for use in clothing and other applications.  In includes the preparation of leather from raw hides, boiling and other softening and hardening techniques, stitching, and other other aspects of producing the finished work.  Note that it does *not* cover the creation of footwear (Cobbling).

Requires: Tools

**Musical Composition**
Musical Composition covers the act of developing original musical melodies, harmonies, rhythms, and even lyrics.  If the composer has any skill in Scribing, it also includes setting these compositions to durable materials.

**Musical Performance (Instrument)**
The performance of music always requires a specific instrument. This can be a complex Vailian contraption, a simple wooden percussion instrument, or the performer's voice.  A small number of instruments require a corresponding Proficiency before they can effectively be used for a performance.

Requires: Instrument

**Painting**
Painting is the use of colored pigments of various types to illustrate figures, landscapes, and even symbolic elements on a variety of surfaces, great and small.  It includes the creation of murals, portraits, and even the illumination of decorative elements in manuscripts.

Requires: Tools

**Pottery**
Pottery deals with the creation of thrown clay and ceramic vessels.  It does not deal with the creation of

sculptural works out of similar materials, which is covered by Sculpting. Pottery includes everything from the shaping of the material to glazing and firing.

Requires: Tools

**Scribing**
Scribing is the act of writing itself. It covers physical proficiency, speed, clarity, and calligraphy, though different scribes will naturally emphasize different aspects. Though there is some overlap with painting, it does not directly cover illumination with gold leaf and pigments (Painting).

Requires: Tools

**Sculpting**
Sculpting involves the creation of large-scale (i.e., not jewelry-sized) three-dimensional works out of clay, wax, or other soft materials. For purposes of what skills cover what activities, Sculpting always involves building the material up rather than removing of material (Carving). It does not cover the creation of molds or the process of casting from an original (Casting).

Requires: Tools

**Tailoring**
Tailoring is specifically the creation, modification, and repair of clothing of all sorts - excluding footwear, covered by Cobbling, and the use of leather as a primary material, covered by Leatherworking. It covers most forms of fabric and most styles of clothing, though certain pieces may require an extreme level of skill.
Specializations: Wool, silk, linen, (Culture) clothing.

Requires: Tools

**Tattooing**
Tattooing allows the practitioner to embed ink below the surface of a creature's skin. Although different cultures use different tools for tattooing, the general process is always the same: the tattooist uses a sharp instrument laden with ink to pierce the skin and deposit the ink beneath.
Specializations: Black work, vibrant color, geometric patterns, creatures, symbols

Requires: Tools

**Weaving**
Weaving requires the use of a loom and allows for the creation of large pieces of cloth or for large-scale patterned works of fabric art such as tapestries.
Specializations: Patterns, Tapestries

Requires: Tools

**Whitesmithing**
Although traditional whitesmithing involves the use of tin, in Eora it is dominantly concerned with the use and shaping of gold, silver, and other precious metals. It contrasts with blacksmithing in the types of metals and techniques used as well as the typical application of the products. Whitesmithing is largely decorative and blacksmithing is typically used for durable tools, weapons, and armor. Whitesmithing also involves the practice of plating objects made from other materials (typically hard metals).
Specializations: Gold, Silver, Jewelry, Plating, Utensils

Requires: Tools

# Soul Skills
Soul skills are generally only available to characters with the Strong Soul Trait. All PCs have Strong Soul, and a number of NPCs encountered in the world may also have this trait.

# Martial Skills

All martial skills are used in a similar fashion. When used in combat, they are part of the Attack Roll, usually a Versus Test against an enemy. The descriptions for martial skills simply define what weapons or shields are covered by those skills.

**Axe**
Hatchets, battle axes, great axes, and sickles.

**Bow**
Hunting bows and war bows.

**Brawl**
Brawl covers all unarmed attacks, whether using fists, feet, claws, tentacles, or any other body part.

**Crossbow**
Crossbows and arbalests.

**Explosives**
Grenades, bombs, and all other non-firearm explosives.

**Gun**
Arquebuses, blunderbusses, and pistols.

**Light Blade**
Daggers, rapiers, and stilettos.

**Mace**
Maces, morning stars, clubs, and flails.

**Polearm**
Pollaxes, quarterstaves, and halberds.

**Shield**
Small, medium, and large shields.

**Siege**
Siege covers the use of catapults, arbalests, onagers, and similar siege weapons.

**Spear**
Spears and pikes.

**Sword**
Arming swords, long swords and sabres.

**Thrown**
Thrown covers the throwing of any and all weapons, including those covered by other skills (e.g. spears, daggers, and hatchets).

**Wand**
Rods, sceptres, and wands.

## Physical Skills

**Acrobatics**
Acrobatics includes all physical feats of body balance and gymnastics.

**Athletics**
Athletics covers all raw feats of physical strength and endurance, including running and climbing, but not including Swimming and Acrobatics.

**Dancing**
Dancing appears in every culture on Eora, even in the frozen lands of The White That Wends. It is used to celebrate, to entertain, and even to mourn. Though the styles vary from culture to culture, the basics are universal.

**Juggling**
A very specific skill, Juggling allows the user to toss one or more objects airborne continuing while continuing to catch, handle, or toss additional objects.

**Riding (Creature)**
Riding involves the mounting and control of a domesticated animal such as a horse or, rarely, a tamed creature such as a giant spider or dragon. Riding does not include the skills required for raising animals (Husbandry) or their domestication (Animal Training).

**Sleight of Hand**
This skill covers the use of sleight of hand both for entertaining a crowd and for misdirecting onlookers for nefarious purposes. It can be used to make small objects "disappear", switch one object for another, or, of course, to covertly cut someone's purse strings or filch something from their person.

**Stealth**
The Stealth skill allows the user to conceal themselves from casual observation or, in extreme cases, direct inspection in poor or obscured visibility. While Stealth cannot be used to hide while already in someone's direct line of sight, a simple distraction can be all the opportunity required for someone to step behind a pillar, crouch in a field of wheat, or slink into a deep shadow.

**Swimming**
Swimming allows the user to tread and efficiently move through water and water-like liquids. Although Athletics covers general athletic endurance, Swimming is always used when checking the stamina of someone who is swimming or treading water.

## Social Skills

**Bluff**
Bluff involves spoken fibs, exaggerations, and outright lies. It can be a powerful tool in the right circumstances, but it should be noted that Bluff does not cover the extended impersonation of a known person or invented character (Acting).

**Carouse**
The general partying skill of Eora, Carouse is used to casually socialize, drink, and entertain at festive group gatherings. Carouse allows the user to fit in, make people comfortable, and generally lift spirits. It is not generally applicable in one-on-one interactions.

**Charm**
Charm is used to flatter, befriend, calm, and flirt. It can also be used to use humor, both to joke and to tease or insult someone to provoke a reaction from

the target or onlookers. Charm is not always about being polite, but about creating relaxed or amused feelings from the audience.

**Debate**
Debate is used specifically to refute the claims of another party, typically through sound logic, but potentially through well-worded fallacies. It can be used in one-on-one discussions, but is often more useful when used for the sake of persuading onlookers.

**Etiquette**
Not a "speaking" skill in the strict sense, Etiquette is used to navigate and perform the particular social observances of a given culture. Taken generally, Etiquette deals with basic aspects of social interaction. It is more commonly specialized in by culture. Etiquette should be used for knowledge of particular interactions as well as the *performance* of social cues.

**Intimidate**
Intimidate can be used to defuse aggression or induce fear in an individual or small group. It always involves the threat of danger (not necessarily physical) backed up by the careful use of vocal tone, physical positioning, and posturing.

**Intrigue**
Intrigue is the skill of working social groups for information. Unlike Carouse, which tends to draw attention to the user, Intrigue gives the character what they are looking for without arousing suspicion. Like Carouse, it is primarily used with large groups and is more abstract than a one-on-one conversation.

**Insight**
Insight involves the observation of an individual's body language, vocal tone, and general reactions to gauge their emotional state and receptiveness to different types of influence. Like Etiquette, Insight is not a "spoken" social skill.

**Negotiate**
The art of compromise, Negotiate is used to make deals through appeals to reason, logic, and emotion. It can be used in financial or diplomatic contexts but always requires an exchange of offers between parties.

**Oratory**
When addressing large crowds (outside of the use of Charm against an individual to provoke a reaction from onlookers), Oratory is required. Oratory is about persuading a large group of people and, as such, rarely addresses individuals unless they are the subjects of criticism for the sake of the audience. While Oratory can be used to provoke a large range of emotions, it is most often used to persuade

listeners that the speaker's position is sound and correct. And although Oratory ideally involves the use of prepared speeches, it can be used extemporaneously to great effect on, for example the battlefield. Note that Debate is also often used with large crowds, but only to refute the statements or positions of another.

**Teaching**
Teaching is purely instructional and is used for one-on-one or group education. The larger the group of individuals, the more difficult instruction becomes – and every teacher has their limits.

# Worldly Skills

**Animal Training (Creature)**
Animal Training is used to domesticate wild animals (when possible) and to train domesticated animals for use as mounts, guards, messengers, drafting, and other specific purposes. Animal Training skills are always specific to a single type of creature.

**Appraise**
Appraise allows the user to discern the value of any commonly or uncommonly traded types of art objects, jewels, materials, commodities, and other rarities.

**Architecture**
Typically rising from the ranks of carpenters and masons, architects are able to plan and coordinate the construction of buildings from foundation to completion. Architecture allows the user to plan and oversee construction as well as to analyze existing structures or architectural drawings.

**Awareness**
Awareness is all about paying attention to details. In contrast with Insight, which involves intuition, Awareness involves direct observation: spotting someone hiding bushes or noting a small detail out of place on a scribe's desk.

**Baking**
Baking allows the user to create bread and other food items that are prepared through the use of dry heat (e.g. crackers, pies, etc.).

**Brewing**
Brewing is the creation of beer through the use of grains steeped in water and its subsequent fermentation in yeast. It can be done in most homes with simple equipment and common ingredients.

**Carpentry**
Carpentry is the use of wood for building structures, from a modest shed to a house. It involves all aspects of sizing, fitting, and joining the timber elements.

**Concentration**
As useful to the artist as it is to the hermit, concentration allows the user to focus on the task at hand without being distracted.

**Cooking**
One of the most beloved skills in Eora, Cooking allows the user to prepare food through the use of various ingredients and the application of heat, typically boiling (cf. Baking).

**Distillation**
Distillation is the creation of spirits (beverages) such as rum and brandy through the process of distilling fermented beverages.

**Farming**
The cultivation of crops is covered by Farming. It includes the knowledge of best practices including basic soil analysis, planting and watering schedules, and harvesting techniques. Though the techniques and scale of farming differ from gardening, the skill of Farming covers the development and maintenance of gardens as well as full farms. Note that Farming does not cover

**Fishing**
Fishing allows the user to capture fish, eels, and similar aquatic critters with the use of hook and line, nets, and fishing spears.

**Folklore (of Culture)**
Every society has local legends, holidays, and superstitions that fall outside of the realms of history, law, and religion. Folklore is always culture-specific and includes the common wisdom and beliefs held by members of that society across class boundaries.

**Forecasting**
Forecasting is the process of predicting weather based off environmental signs as well as knowledge of annual weather cycles. Forecasting is not literal divination, but educated guessing based on personal experience, observation, and collective social knowledge.

**Herbalism**
Herbalism is the study and use of plants for medicinal purposes. It includes the identification of herbs, knowledge of their purported medicinal properties, and the ability to harvest and prepare the herbs for medicinal use.

**Housekeeping**
General care for the stocking, organization, and cleanliness of a residence is covered by Housekeeping.

**Husbandry**
Husbandry is the breeding, care, and raising of domesticated animals, typically for use in labor or as livestock. Husbandry is general to a wide variety of domestic animals but can be specialized. Note that Husbandry never applies to a wild animal, only one that is already domesticated. Husbandry can also be used as a stand-in for Midwifery and Surgery for domesticated animals.

**Hunting**
Hunting is typically used for finding animals, but can also be used for pursuing and tracking down kith – whether they want to be found or not.

**Living Language**
Living languages are ones that are currently in use by societies around Eora. The most commonly used are Aedyran, Vailian, Rauataian, Huana, and Eld Aedyran. They are typically learned through direct exposure to the societies that use them, but can also be learned in an academic environment. As with dead languages, writing a living language requires knowledge of its alphabet.

**Locale Lore**
In contrast to Folklore, Locale Lore involves verifiable facts and figures about the land, its people, its rulers, and the basics of its government. It includes the relative position and distances of cities, rivers, lakes, mountains, roads, and other notable landmarks.

**Lockpicking**
The skill of opening locks with specialized tools, lockpicking is often (but not solely) the realm of professional thieves. Most locks in Eora are simple warded locks that require minimal effort to open, but wealthy individuals can afford locks with complex wards and obstacles for the would-be lockpicker to overcome.

**Logistics**
Logistics is a partner to Housekeeping, but applies to the organization and execution of strategic and tactical plans, including supply chains, formations, and command structures. It is typically employed in a large-scale military context but may be applied in circumstances that are similarly complex.

**Masonry**
Masonry is the use of stonework in construction of buildings. It can be used on its own or in conjunction with Carpentry.

**Mechanics**
Broadly, mechanics covers all simple and complex machines, from mill wheels to clocks. Pulleys, springs, gears, and similar mechanical bits and pieces all fall under this skill. Note that placed traps are

covered by Trapping and locks are covered by Lockpicking.

**Midwifery**
A valuable member of any community, practitioners of Midwifery help with the process of childbirth. They work both to make mothers comfortable as well as to ensure the safety of both mother and child. Before the birth, Midwifery can also be used to advise soon-to-be mothers on safe and prudent practices during the pregnancy.

**Milling**
Milling is the grinding of grains and similar foodstuffs with a dedicated milling wheel, typically made of stone. Mills can be powered by a variety of sources, including water, wind, animals, or even kith.

**Mining**
Dangerous work, mining involves extracting gemstones and ore from deep underground, typically through the use of picks and carefully-engineered explosives.

**Navigation**
Navigation is the use of maps, physical landmarks, and celestial bodies to orient travelers. While Locale Lore can be used as a substitute for a map in a pinch, typically a physical map of some sort – even if incomplete – is required to properly navigate.

**Sailing**
Sailing includes both the use of small boats as well as the operation of large sailing vessels (a task which often involves *many* people skilled in Sailing). It involves rowing, handling rigging, and basic maintenance.

**Shipbuilding**
Shipbuilding is the construction, waterproofing, and repair of boats and sailing ships of all sizes. Although most ships are made of wood, Shipbuilding can also cover vessels made of other materials, such as skin boats built over bone or wooden frames.

**Streetwise**
The urban equivalent of Survival, Streetwise allows the user to feel comfortable and fit into urban environments – big cities only. It can also allow the user to recognize when they are walking into a dangerous circumstance such as an alley ambush or the setup for a confidence game.

**Surgery**
Surgery covers the theory and practice of kith surgery, including limited knowledge of internal biological systems such as the skeletal system, respiratory system, digestive system, and circulatory systems. When in doubt, assume Eora's finest surgeons have the level of knowledge of 16<sup>th</sup> century Earth surgeons. Knowledge of pathology is extremely limited and sterilization is extremely basic when it is practiced at all.

**Survival**
Survival allows the user to feel comfortable in wilderness environments. A true wilderness is not occupied by kith or wilder, but dominated by native plants and creatures. Survival can be used to navigate around hazards, locate food and water, and to avoid known nesting areas of predators or dangerous territorial creatures.

**Tactics**
Tactics covers the organization and use of a military force toward a specific objective. It includes best practices but does not necessarily cover historical examples in detail.

**Trapping**
Trapping involves the use of snares, deadfalls, leg holds, and similar devices to remotely capture or kill animals. It includes knowledge of the basic functionality of traps as well as concealment techniques. However, it does not include locating animals in the first place (Hunting).

**Wagoneering**
Wagonnering is the practice of driving a wagon, chariot, or other creature-drawn vehicle. While related to Riding, Wagoneering requires a specialized skillset to carefully guide the draft animals and vehicle over obstacles and around turns at a variety of speeds.

**Winemaking**
Though grapes are unknown in Eora, many kith make wine from rice. Winemaking involves the cultivation of rice, its fermentation, and the subsequent development into rice wine. Note that wines do not typically stay potable for more than a year once the process has been completed.

**Woodcutting**
The selection, felling, hewing, splitting, and finishing of lumber are all covered by Woodcutting. Typically performed with woodcutting axes and saws, some aspects may also be conducted at a dedicated sawmill. The use of finished lumber is covered by Carpentry.

# Skill Tests
Skill tests take a variety of different forms in Pillars of Eternity: obstacle, versus, investigative, and long-term.

## Obstacle Tests

Obstacle tests pit the character's skills against that of a static obstacle or general circumstance, e.g. climbing a wall or abstracting a character sneaking through a building with a single roll. Obstacle tests never represent a test against an individual that is posing an active threat to the character's success. E.g., you would use an obstacle test to quickly abstract Hiravias sneaking in and out of a building of people, but you wouldn't use one to see if Hiravias could sneak by a single guard.

## Versus Tests

Versus tests are always used when there is a direct contention of action between two or more parties. It can be used for individual feats or a set of opposed tasks, e.g. one character sneaking through a room of individual guards, one character trying to hit another, or two teams of people running across a city to reach the gates first. In such cases, one side is trying to beat the other(s) rolls.

## Investigative Tests

Investigative tests are not rolled, but simply check to see who in the group has the highest bonus in the relevant investigative skills. Investigative skills are used automatically and passively whenever the party chooses to investigate something when there is a clue to find. Of those who participate in the investigating action, the character with the highest relevant bonus automatically finds the clue. Of course, finding a clue does not, in itself, explain its importance or meaning. That is left to the minds of the players.

## Seasonal Tests

Seasonal tests are only performed in down time and, as you may have guessed, take an entire season of time. These may represent obstacles or versus tests when one or more parties are in competition with each other. Seasonal tests may occasionally be broken up over multiple seasons,

e.g. a project that takes half a year to complete may require two separate seasonal rolls.

# Traits

Traits are intrinsic and inherent to a character. They take no special effort from the character to use and require no external power. Traits are always acquired or lost through backgrounds or training. Traits can only be used by the character who has them. I.e., they cannot be used while assisting another character unless explicitly stated.

## Once Per Session

Unless otherwise stated, a Trait can only be used once per session.

## Die Traits

Die Traits either grant additional dice to roll or an alternate way to roll dice. Die Traits always list their usage restrictions.

## Edge Traits

Edge Traits are like Call-On Traits in The Burning Wheel. They can be used *after* an Obstacle or Versus skill check has been made to either break a tie or to re-roll. An individual Edge Trait can only be used once per session and a single check can only benefit from a single Edge Trait. Note that if two opposed characters use Edge Traits on a Versus check, they both must re-roll.

### Calm Hand
Carving, Engraving, Gemcutting, Juggling, Sleight of Hand

### Detail-Oriented
Bookkeeping, Insight, Jeweling, Laws of (Culture), Scribing

### Bravado
Bluff, Carouse, Intimidate,

### Profound Thoughts
Debate, Composition, Metaphysics, Philosophy, Theology

### Reliable Performer
Acting, Debate, Musical Performance, Negotiate, Oratory

**Sharp Memory**
Debate, Folklore, History, Laws of (Culture), Locale Lore

**Steady Breathing**
Crossbow, Gun, Bow, Thrown, Wand.

**World-Wise**
Astronomy, Awareness, Forecasting, Navigation, Survival

## Special Traits
Special Traits never deal with die mechanics, but affect some other aspect of the rules. Special Traits always list their usage restrictions.

# Powers

Powers can be used by any character who has learned to harness and control a Power Source. Power Sources are all ultimately derived from soul energy, but each Power Source represents a different manner of manipulating that energy. A trained warrior relies upon Discipline to use their own soul's power to protect themselves, remove Fatigue, and pull enemies toward them. A wizard uses Arcana to pull soul fragments from the In-Between into themselves or a magical grimoire to hurl balls of flame, confuse opponents, or slicken the ground to trip their enemies.

While many Power Sources can do similar things, a Power Source's ability to perform a specific action may be limited in ways that another Power Source is not, or may have unique advantages that other Power Sources lack. The abilities listed in this chapter are only the starting point for ambitious adventurers. Each Power Source contains guidelines for developing new abilities as well as limitations that represent the upper boundaries of what a Power Source is capable of... for now.

## Powers Terminology

**Ranges**
**None** – The power is always centered on a hex occupied by the user.

**Immediate** - The target must at least partially occupy a hex adjacent to a hex occupied by the user.

**Close** - The target must be no more than 3 hexes away from the user.

**Mid** - The target must be no more than 6 hexes away from the user.

**Far** - The target must be no more than 12 hexes away from the user.

**Extreme** - The target must be no more than 24 hexes away from the user.

**Targets**
**Self** - The target is the user of the ability.

**Individual** - The target may be any individual, including the user.

**Individual (EU)** – The target may be any individual, **except** the **user**.

**Space** - The target may be a single space.

Circles: *All circles radiate out from a central point or hex, equally in all directions.*

**Small Circle** - 3 hexes sharing a common corner.

**Medium Circle** - A hex and the 6 hexes adjacent to it.

**Large Circle** - A hex and every hex within 2 hexes of it.

**Huge Circle** - A hex and every hex within 3 hexes of it.

Cones: *All cones begin adjacent from the user and move directly away from the user through that hex.*

**Small Cone** - 2 hexes long.

**Medium Cone** - 4 hexes long.

**Large Cone** - 6 hexes long.

**Huge Cone** - 8 hexes long.

**Durations**

**Instant** – The effect takes place and is resolved immediately.

**Rounds** – The effect lasts for a specified number of rounds, roughly 6 seconds each. Effects always expire on the beginning of the phase that they started on (non-inclusive).

**Encounter** – Roughly 5 minutes or the duration of an ordinary conversation or combat encounter. Treat a natural close to an encounter as the end of any Encounter duration (group decision). If an encounter seems to run beyond the bounds of what could plausibly be 5 minutes, also put it up to a group decision.

**Bell** – Roughly 3 hours, based on the regular tollings of bells at temples of Berath across Eora.

**Half Day** – These abilities always end half a day after they begin. If they were used at midday, they end at midnight. If they were used at mid-morning, they end at mid-afternoon.

## Arcana

Practitioners of arcana are often called *wizards*. Arcana allows a wizard to draw fragments of Essence from the In-Between into a specially-prepared book called a *grimoire*. The grimoire effectively acts as a capacitor for this energy, which the wizard can unleash in the form of arcane spells. While wizards can use any grimoire as a focus for spells they have mastered, the greater power of grimoires is their ability to allow wizards to cast spells that have been inscribed into the grimoire. With a large enough library of grimoires, a wizard has access to a wide range of spells with an enormous variety of effects.

Foundation: Channel Grimoire

Chill Blades

Fan of Flames

Minoletta's Minor Missiles

Slicken

Spirit Shield

## Bond

Bonds are spiritual connections between two living, intelligent beings. More than simply emotional, a Bond literally tethers the beings' souls together through the In-Between. The power of a Bond allows the bonded creatures to share thoughts and feelings even when separated by great distances, but the Bond can also create vulnerabilities if either party is injured or if they are separated for extended periods of time.

While not all practitioners of Bond form connections with beasts, those who do are often referred to as rangers.

Foundation: Form Bond

Coordinated Attack

Empathic Communication

Impart Skill

Marked Prey

# Discipline

Discipline is the vocation of the professional soldier. It emphasizes dependability, determination, and self-reliance. The practitioner of Discipline does not draw power from faith or from the In-Between, but from thousands of hours of martial training and battlefield application. In an experienced soldier, the soul acts in harmony with the body, not merely mimicking, but augmenting their actions to perform supernatural feats.

**Foundation: Recovery**

**Recovery**

The fighter is able to remove 15 points of Fatigue on activation and on the three subsequent rounds.

**Disciplined Barrage**

The fighter increases their Accuracy with weapon attacks by +4 for 2 rounds.

**Knock Down**

The fighter can make a weapon-based attack at an enemy. If the attack hits, the character can make a second attack roll against the target's Fortitude to knock the enemy Prone for two rounds.

**Positioning Blow**

The fighter makes a weapon-based attack at an enemy. If the attack hits, the character takes 1W damage and is pushed back one hex. Enemies 2 or more sizes larger than the attacker are not pushed. The fighter has the option of Free Moving into an adjacent hex that was previously occupied by the pushed enemy. If no open hex is adjacent, the fighter may not move.

**Covering Attack**

The fighter makes a weapon-based attack at an enemy. If the attack hits, the enemy takes 1W damage and an ally adjacent to the enemy can Free Move 2 hexes.

**Invigorating Strike**

The fighter makes a weapon-based attack at an enemy. The fighter recovers 3d6 Fatigue and, if the attack hits, the enemy takes 1W damage.

**Vigorous Defense**

Raises all of the character's defenses by 3 for 2 rounds.

**Constant Recovery**

When this ability is used, the fighter recovers 2d4 Fatigue immediately and automatically on the Immediate phase for 6 rounds.

**Into the Fray**

The character can make a weapon-based Reflex attack at a Close enemy. If the attack hits, it does 2W damage and Pulls the enemy up to 3 hexes.

**Unbending**

(Triggered, 1/Encounter)

When the fighter would normally hit the Tired state, the fighter immediately recovers 4d6 Fatigue. If this ability removes enough Fatigue that the fighter is below 50% Fatigue, Tired is not actually activated. Note that it is possible for a fighter to hit Tired multiple times in a single encounter, but may still only use Unbending once in a single encounter.

**Take the Hit**

(Triggered)

When an adjacent ally is hit by a direct weapon attack, the fighter may take the hit as though it landed on them with the same result. I.e. if the attack was a Hit on the ally, it is also a Hit on the fighter regardless of the circumstances. Damage calculation is done against the fighter, not the ally, so the fighter may take less (or more) damage than the ally.

**Cover Opening**

(Triggered)

When attacked, the fighter may force their attacker to ignore one of their Afflictions for purposes of granting advantages. E.g. the fighter could force an attacker to ignore their Prone Affliction or Flanked Affliction. The choice of Affliction is up to the fighter.

**Discipline Base Effects**
Shielding

•Increase Deflection

•Increase All Defenses

•Sacrifice

Accuracy

•Increase Accuracy

•Convert Miss to Graze

•Convert Graze to Hit

Positioning

•Move an ally 1 hex

•Move an enemy 1 hex

# Faith
While not all priests use the soul magic of Faith, those who use Faith are invariably believers in a higher power that orders Eora according to a particular religion. Most priests who use Faith align themselves with one of the organized religions, but there are some priests who practice multiple faiths, some who belong to heretical sects, and a small number who believe in religions of their own making.

Foundation: Holy Radiance

Armor of Faith

Barbs of Condemnation

Blessing

Restore Endurance

# Focus
Though it had been practiced in Eir Glanfath by for centuries, the art of Focus reached more widespread use when it was formally studied by animancers in the Dyrwood during the colonization of that country. Due to the mysterious nature of the power, its practitioners became known as "ciphers". Focus is, in some ways, the opposite of Bond. It allows the cipher to make contact with another soul even against the will of the being possessing it. The cipher can then use a combination of their own power and the power of the other soul to create myriad devastating effects.

Foundation: Soul Whip

Antipathetic Field

Eyestrike

Tenuous Grasp

Whisper of Treason

## Guile

Guile is the art of magical misdirection through a variety of soul-augmented tricks and the manipulation of the In-Between. It can be used to conceal, distract, deceive, and even to step through the In-Between with ease.

Foundation: Sneak Attack

Coordinated Positioning

Hobbling Strike

Smoke Cloud

Wounding Shot

## Mortification

Mortification is the channeling of spiritual power through suffering, typically physical pain. It can be used to allow the monk to inflict terrible damage, devastating injuries, to purify their bodies, and to perform supernatural spiritual and physical feats.

Foundation: Transcendent Suffering

Swift Strikes

Torment's Reach

## Nature

Nature magic is the province of druids. Drawing power from the soul energy of all living (and some unliving) things, druids are attuned to the magic of the trees, rocks, streams, bitter tundras, and deep deserts of Eora. Nature magic focuses on healing, plants and beasts, and the powers of the elements.

Foundation: Spiritshift

Nature's Vigor

Sunbeam

Tanglefoot

Vile Thorns

## Rage

In contrast to the practitioners of Discipline, those who channel pure Rage are often known as barbarians. What they lack in finesse and precision, they make up for with raw power and brutality. The powers of Rage allow the user to improve their physical attributes, shrug off damage, terrify enemies, and devastate anyone near them.

Foundation: Frenzy

Carnage

Frightening Shout

Wild Sprint

## Spirits

Indisputably the oldest form of magic still in use in Eora, invoking the memories of dead spirits is the realm of chanters. Every culture in the world is known to have chanters of some sort, women and men who are repositories of lore and folklore, who recite time-honored stories that draw power from fragments of dead souls in the In-Between. Their magic takes the form of individual spoken *phrases* that build to the unleashing of *invocations* -- powers capable of summoning phantasmal creatures, devastating enemies, empowering allies, and a wild range of unique effects.

Foundation: Chant Phrase

And Hel-Hyraf Crashed Upon the Shield

If Their Bones Sleep Under that Hill Still, None Can Say

The Thunder Rolled Like Waves on Black Seas

## Zeal

Sometimes distinguished from Faith by its lack of nuance and tolerance, Zeal represents pure passion combined with intense belief. Paladins who employ Zeal may be members of a religious military order, guardians of a noble family, or even devotees of merciless "total war" practices. Zeal can manifest as healing power, beneficial auras, inspiring commands, and targeted attacks on the paladin's enemies.

Foundation: Conviction

Flames of Devotion

Sworn Enemy

Lay on Hands

# Equipment

## Tools

Tools are typically used in conjunction with an Artistic or Worldly skill when those skills are applied to physical problems instead of academic questions. When a practitioner of a skill lacks access to tools, they may be forced to improvise. Improvisation inflicts penalties to applications of the skill based on how suitable they are as a substitute. The group should decide what suitability level the tools fall into.

| Suitability | Penalty | Examples |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Good | -2 | Stiff wire (Lockpicking), lush forest (Herbalism), stone chisel (Carving) |
| Fair | -4 | Stiletto (Lockpicking), spring meadow (Herbalism), dagger (Carving) |
| Poor | -8 | Think stick (Lockpicking), stocked kitchen (Herbalism), sharp stone (Carving) |

Tools are always referred to by the name of the skill they are used with, e.g. Lockpicking Tools, Herbalism Tools, Surgery Tools.

## Weapons

All melee weapons, wielded one-handed, grant +1 Deflection. Wielded two-handed, they grant +2 Deflection.

**Small Melee**

| Weapon | Damage | Special |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Dagger | 2d4 P/S | |
| Club | 2d4 C | |
| Hatchet | 2d4 S | |
| Sickle | 2d4 S | |
| Stiletto | 1d8 P | Ignores 3 pts of Armor Soak |

**Medium Melee**

| Weapon | Damage | Special |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Arming Sword | 2d6 P/S | |
| Battle Axe | 2d6 S | |
| Flail | 2d6 C | |
| Mace | 2d6 C | |
| Rapier | 2d6 P | |
| Sabre | 2d6 S | |
| Spear | 2d6 P | |
| War Hammer | 1d12 C/P | |

**Large Melee**

| Weapon | Damage | Special |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Estoc | 2d12 P | Ignores 3 pts of Armor Soak |
| Great Axe | 3d8 S | |
| Halberd | 3d8 P/S | |
| Long Sword | 3d8 P/S | |
| Morning Star | 3d8 C/P | |
| Pike | 3d8 P | |
| Pollaxe | 3d8 C/S | |
| Quarterstaff | 3d8 C | |

**Small Ranged**

| Weapon | Damage | Range | Special | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pistol | | 3d12 P | 4 Hexes | |
| Wand | | 1d6 C/P | 6 Hexes | |

**Medium Ranged**

| Weapon | Damage | Range | Special | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Blunderbuss | | 1d12 P | 3 Hexes | 5 Attack Rolls |
| Sceptre | | 1d8 C/S | 6 Hexes | |

**Large Ranged**

| Weapon | Damage | Range | Special |
|---|---|---|---|
| Arbalest | 3d8 P | 7 Hexes | |
| Arquebus | | 2d20 P | 6 Hexes |
| Crossbow | | 2d12 P | 7 Hexes |
| Hunting Bow | | 2d10 P/S | 8 Hexes |
| Rod | | 2d8 P/S | 6 Hexes |
| War Bow | | 2d12 P/S | 8 Hexes |

# Shields

| Shield | Deflection | Fatigue Limit |
|---|---|---|
| Buckler | +2 | -- |
| Heater | +3 | -6 |
| Kite Shield | +4 | -12 |

## Armor

Armor protects the wearer from damage at the cost of a reduced Fatigue Limit.

**Base Soak:** The standard amount of Soak the armor has against damage.

**Weak vs.:** Against any damage type listed here, the armor has -2 Base Soak.  E.g. Hide has 5 Base Soak but 3 Soak vs. Pierce.

**Fatigue Limit:** The character's Fatigue Limit is reduced by this value while the armor is worn.

**Initiative:** This penalty is applied to the character's Initiative when rolled.

**Light Armors**

| Armor | Base Soak | Weak vs. | Fatigue Limit | Initiative |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hide | 5 | Pierce | -6 | -1 |
| Leather | 5 | | -7 | -1 |
| Padded | 5 | Crush, Slash | -5 | -1 |

**Medium Armors**

| Armor | Base Soak | Weak vs. | Fatigue Limit | Initiative |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Breastplate | 7 | Burn, Freeze | -12 | -3 |
| Mail | 7 | Crush | -14 | -3 |
| Scale | 7 | Pierce, Freeze | -10 | -3 |

**Heavy Armors**

| Armor | Base Soak | Weak vs. | Fatigue Limit | Initiative |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brigandine | 8 | Pierce | -20 | -6 |
| Plate | 8 | | -28 | -6 |

# Combat

## Phased Initiative

Pillars of Eternity uses a phase-based initiative system to cleanly separate different types of actions. The goals of the system are to reduce downtime for players between actions, to create a combat flow that, although it may seem artificial, makes sense as it plays out, and to simplify the players' tactical choices in any given phase of combat.

## Rolling Initiative

All participants in a combat roll initiative in the round when they enter combat. The GM records the order of all participants.

## Immediate Phase

A small subset of actions are classified as Immediate. Each character can perform a single Immediate action at the start of every combat round. The GM states which NPCs are performing Immediate actions (without declaring those actions) and asks the players collectively if they wish to perform an Immediate action. Without revealing those actions, they must state whether or not they are participating.

After all players have declared participation in the Immediate Phase, they declare and perform their actions in reverse initiative order. All actions in the Immediate Phase resolve simultaneously, meaning that one action cannot affect or influence any other in that phase.

If a character declared participation in the Immediate Phase and then either declines to act or does not have a valid action to perform, they *Balk* and cannot participate in the Action Phase of that round.

**Types of Immediate Actions**

- **Small Draw** – Any small object can be drawn in the Immediate Phase. If an item is already in the drawing hand, it must be dropped.

- **Modal Shifts** – Any character can change or disable one or more modal ability in the Immediate Phase.

- **Snapshot** - Any firearms, crossbows, or arbalests that are already loaded and in hand can be fired in the Immediate Phase as a Snapshot. Note that a character with multiple qualifying weapons in hand can perform multiple Snapshots in one Immediate Action.

- **Immediate Ability** - A character can activate and resolve an Immediate Ability in the Immediate Phase.

- **Begin/End Slow Ability** - A character who wishes to perform a Slow Ability begins performing it in the Immediate Phase. Activating a Slow ability disallows participation in the Movement Phase and Action Phase unless the character choses to cancel the Slow Ability. Slow Abilities complete as the action of the subsequent Immediate Phase.

## Movement Phase

In the movement phase, all characters perform their movement actions. Movement is acted out in *reverse* initiative order, with the slowest characters moving first, followed by faster characters and ending with the fastest character. If a character changes position (even by one hex) in this phase, they put down a marker to indicate it. A character who is Engaging others and changes position also automatically drops their Engagement until the end of the Movement Phase.

Characters can move through other characters (Ally or Foe) *with a marker* and can choose to end their turn on a hex occupied by another character *if that character has a marker*. When this happens, the character previously occupying the spot is Bumped.

The player (or GM) of a Bumped character chooses the hex or hexes they bump into, but must always move to the closest unoccupied space(s).

### Types of Movement

- **Move** – Character can move up to their Stride. A character who is Engaged cannot perform a Move.

- **Withdraw** – An Engaged character can safely leave Engagement and move up to half their Stride (rounded up). Note that if they are slower than (i.e., acting *before*) another character who wants to keep them in Engagement, avoiding their opponent can be extremely difficult unless they have a vastly superior Stride.

- **Standard Draw** – Any object that is not small can be drawn in the Movement phase. If an object is in the hand(s) performing the draw, it must be dropped. As many objects can be drawn as the character has hands to draw.

- **Stow** – Any object can be stowed in the Movement phase. As many objects can be stowed as the character has hands to stow. Object size is irrelevant for stowing.

At the end of the Movement Phase, all players and the GM remove any move tokens on the board. Any characters who are Threatening are automatically considered to be Engaging adjacent opponents.

## Action Phase

The last phase of combat is Action. This is the phase where most attacks and support events occur. Actions are declared and executed in standard initiative order.

### Types of Actions

- **Attack** - The character can perform a weapon or unarmed attack against any character in their weapon(s) range.

- **Standard Ability** - The character can activate any ability with a Standard activation time in the Action Phase.

## Attacks

Attacks encompass any sort of hostile action between two or more characters. It covers weapon attacks, unarmed attacks, mental attacks, and spell attacks of all sorts.

### Always Hits

An attack specified as Always Hits does not make an attack roll and will, shockingly, always Hit its target. Special circumstances may still convert the Hit to a Crit, Graze, or Miss. Note that if a target is immune to an effect, an Always Hits attack will still have no effect. If a secondary effect is triggered by a Hit, an Always Hits against a target immune to the primary effect will not trigger the secondary effect.

**Vs. Defense**

An attack that is vs. Defense indicates that the target has a chance to avoid or resist the attack through one of the four main defenses: Deflection, Fortitude, Reflexes, and Will. The attacker rolls 2d10, adds their Accuracy, and compares it to the target's relevant defense.

**Accuracy = Skill + Bonuses**

There are four potential resolutions:

**Miss = Attack 4 Lower than Defense and Below**

In most cases, when a total Attack roll is lower than the target's Defense, the attack misses. There is no effect.

**Graze = Attack Lower than Defense, but Within 3**

Some attacks will indicate they have a Graze range. In this case, a total Attack roll lower than the target's Defense but within 3 (e.g. 12, 13, and 14 when the Defense is 15), will score a Graze. The effects of a Graze are always less than a Hit and will be listed with the ability. The standard effect of a damage Graze is that it does half damage.

**Hit = Attack Equal to or up to 9 Higher than Defense**

An Attack total equal to or higher than the target's Defense, but not 10 or more Higher, is a Hit. A Hit does the standard listed effects.

**Crit = Attack 10 Higher than Defense and Above**

If an Attack total is 10 or more points Higher than a Defense total, the result is a Crit. The standard effect of a Crit is double damage dice.

# Damage, Soak, Wounds, and Fatigue (or Drain)

Every attack uses a set of dice to determine base

damage. The attacker rolls damage dice, adds appropriate modifiers, compares the Penetration to the target's Armor Rating, and calculates Damage Total. The Damage Total is then compared to the target's Soak (based on Size and Constitution) to determine Wounds and Fatigue.

# Soak

Soak is based on a character's armor, but can be modified by other effects. After subtracting Soak from Damage, you have Final Damage.

**Damage - Soak = Final Damage**

**Soaking Damage into Fatigue**

If Final Damage is 0 or negative, apply the initial Damage as Fatigue.

## Final Damage and Wounds

Final Damage is compared to the character's size to determine the type of wound they receive. A larger character is much more difficult to seriously wound or kill unless the attacker gains an enormous advantage.

| Size | Minor | Severe | Incap | Deadly | Examples |
|------|-------|--------|-------|--------|----------|
| -4 | 1-2 | 3 | 4 | 5+ | Squirrels and Their Ilk |
| -3 | 1-4 | 5-6 | 7-8 | 9+ | Cats, Small Dogs |
| -2 | 1-6 | 7-9 | 10-12 | 13+ | Children, Wichts, Dogs, Imps |
| **-1** | **1-8** | **9-12** | **13-16** | **17+** | **Orlans, Xaurips, Sporelings, Wurms, Wolves** |
| **0** | **1-10** | **11-15** | **16-20** | **21+** | **Dwarves, Elves, Folk** |
| **1** | **1-12** | **13-18** | **19-24** | **25+** | **Aumaua** |
| 2 | 1-14 | 15-21 | 22-28 | 29+ | Ogres |
| 3 | 1-16 | 16-24 | 25-32 | 33+ | Dank Spores, Young Drakes |
| 4 | 1-18 | 19-27 | 26-36 | 37+ | Drakes |
| 5 | 1-20 | 21-30 | 31-40 | 41+ | Dragons |

## Types of Wounds

### Minor
Small, but significant wounds that include contusions, visible cuts, painful burns and similar lesser injuries. -1 to all rolls.

### Debilitating
Lacerations, bruised and cracked bones, and open wounds. -3 to all rolls.

### Incapacitating
Wounds so damaging that the target is immediately rendered helpless and incapable of rising even if they are still conscious. Incapacitated characters cannot walk without assistance and can only crawl so slowly that they are effectively immobile in combat.
Incapacitation always results in a special type of Wound called an Injury (see below) that inflicts specific penalties while the character is recovering.

### Lethal
That's it.

## Injuries
Any time a character is hit with an Incapacitating Wound, they suffer an Injury. Injuries are always specific to the type of damage that incapacitated the character. Injuries are *not* received when a Debilitating Wound worsens to an Incapacitating wound.

Broken Rib

Swollen Eye

Severe Burn

Frostbite

## Recovering from Wounds and Injuries

Wounds in Pillars of Eternity are serious things. They take time to recover from. Without the assistance of skilled healers, Wounds can worsen and even result in death. If the character aggravates their wounds through strenuous activity, their condition can worsen even more quickly.

### When to Make Recovery Rolls

Recovery rolls start 5 days after the end of the adventure (or incident, for Wounds received during down time) on which they were received. The rolls start with or without treatment. If the character lacks treatment, recovery can be difficult.

Both Herbalism and Surgery can be applied as treatment. Herbalism can be applied by the person suffering the wounds themselves, but does require access to herbalist's tools or equivalent (e.g. a stocked apothecary or medicinal herb garden).

Surgery is ideally applied by another character and requires surgeon's tools. Surgery applied by the victim only applies half of its value.

**Recovery = 2d10 + Herbalism + Surgery + Constitution**

### *Minor Wound*

Roll vs. 12 to recover in 10+1d8 days. A roll of 6 or lower changes a Minor Wound to a Debilitating Wound in the same period of time.

### *Debilitating Wound*

Roll vs. 15 to change the Debilitating Wound to a Minor Wound in 15+1d10 days. A roll of 9 or lower changes a Debilitating Wound to an Incapacitating Wound in the same period of time.

### *Incapacitating Wound*

Roll vs. 18 to change the Incapacitating Wound to a Debilitating Wound in 1d4 days. A roll of 12 or lower makes an Incapacitating Wound lethal in the same period of time.

### Untreated Wounds

If a wound goes untreated, either because the character ignores the wound or their bed rest is interrupted for at least a day, it can worsen. Roll for wound recovery as normal, but without the benefit of Herbalism or Surgery.

# Fatigue

Fatigue represents a character's level of exhaustion relative to their absolute limits. Fatigue can be acquired in several ways, but most notably through performing strenuous actions or as a side effect of avoiding a wound.

### Fatigue Limit

When a character's Fatigue hits their Fatigue Limit, they suffer -3 to all skill checks. This continues until they hit 2x Fatigue Limit, at which point they are incapable of taking actions other than labored speech, crawling, and similar low-energy activities. They are Defenseless and cannot use skills for any purposes other than slowly speaking or checking knowledge (at -6). Fatigue can continue to accrue above 2x Fatigue Limit if, for example, the character is struck by an attack that fails to penetrate their armor.

**Fatigue Limit = 50 + (Constitution * 5)**

**Fatigue Limit Penalty = -3 to all Skill Checks**

**2x Fatigue Limit Penalty = Defenseless, Limited Skill Checks at -6**

### Removing Fatigue

The most common way to alleviate Fatigue is simply to rest.

**Minutes Rested * 2 = Fatigue Removed**

# Experience

Experience is what players use to advance their characters over time. It represents accumulated knowledge and practical experience that allows characters to grow. Characters can gain experience from a variety of sources and the majority of experience is likely to be gained during seasonal activities. The three main categories for experience are Adventure, Study, and Practice.

## Adventure Experience

Adventure experience is gained from in-session playtime. A season's adventure may occur in the span of a few hours, over several days, or even intermittently across many weeks in a single season. Regardless of the actual time of an adventure, the experience gained counts as the character's time spent during a season. Even a dramatic and life-altering event requires time to process.

Adventure experience can be used to advance skills the player uses in sessions. During the adventure, players should mark down any skills their characters actively use in the pursuit of the

adventure or their own personal goals. A character jumping up and down in place to get a mark next to a skill does *not* qualify. Groups should be generous in allowing players to mark skills, but players should keep the spirit of skill-marking in mind. When in doubt, always put it up to a group decision.

Note that some adventures may occur over several play sessions. In such cases, as long as the in-game time is all within the same season, the experience is calculated as a single value for the entire season.

The GM awards 6-10 adventure experience to the group of characters involved in the session based on the entertainment of group's performance. That is, even epic blunders and misadventures should be highly rewarded. Individual characters do not receive different experience values.

Characters may spend adventure experience on any skills they've marked during that adventure, but may spend no more than 5 experience in any single skill.

| XP | Adventure Results |
|----|-------------------|
| 6 | Not much happened. Things went mostly as expected. |
| 7 | Players encountered a minor hiccup or created an interesting twist in the adventure. |
| 8 | A variety of good and bad twists happened during the adventure. |
| 9 | Things took several bad turns, unexpected good fortune came the players' way. |
| 10 | Great things were accomplished, great losses were suffered. Chaos reigned. |

## Study Experience

While most people in the world of Eora do not have time to set aside for dedicated study, wealthy individuals often do. Study experience is gained from reading texts, receiving instruction from a teacher, or observing natural and supernatural phenomena.

Study sources have minimum and maximum skill requirements that restrict who can meaningfully benefit from the source. Some textbooks or courses are too advanced for novices to grasp and some phenomena demand the scrutiny of a seasoned eye.

The minimum skill requirements for all sources of Study experience are also gated by Intellect.

### Base Minimum Skill Req. - Intellect = Effective Minimum Skill Req.

In some cases, it will be extremely difficult for a low Intellect reader to gain anything from a text. Teachers will also struggle to get through to low Intellect characters.

**Text Study**

Texts can take many forms, from the palm manuscripts of the Huana, to the vellum books of Aedyr, to the rare ivory-inscribed epics of the Glamfellen in The White that Wends. Reading texts for study always demands a language requirement and often demands a skill requirement. Texts are not common or cheap in Eora because they are all hand-scribed. While Aedyran has emerged as a common written language in the Old Empires, Eastern Reach, and Distant Lands, the great historical scriptoria and scholars of Eora wrote in a variety of languages and orthographies over thousands of years. It is not uncommon to find texts written in Vailian, Eld Aedyran, Rauataian, Glanfathan, or even dead languages.

Texts without minimum skill requirements can be read by characters with only Basic rating in its written language, but will only earn half experience. Any text that has a minimum skill requirement *cannot* be used as a study source by characters with Basic language ratings. Characters with Conversational ratings gain half experience from books with a minimum skill requirement from 1-5 but cannot gain experience from books with a minimum requirement of 6 or higher.

| Minimum Skill Req | Fluent XP | Conversational XP | Basic XP |
|---|---|---|---|
| -- | Full | Full | Half |
| 1 to 5 | Full | Half | None |
| 6+ | Full | None | None |

If a high number of significant passages (GM's discretion) of a book's text are written in another language (or multiple languages), the reader must use the worst of the associated language skills to determine how much experience they will gain.

E.g. Olivia's character, Salaster, finds a fine copy of On the Poetry of Old Vailia and Aedyr (Poetry, 3-8, +6). The base analytic text is written in Aedyran, but the author didn't bother translating the actual poetry. It's all written in Vailian and Eld Aedyran! Salaster is Native in Aedyran, Fluent in Eld Aedyran, but only Conversational in Vailian. Because the book's minimum rating is 3, Salaster can only gain half of the book's +6 (+3) to Poetry.

**Teacher Study**

Learning with a teacher can be an effective means of gaining study experience. Teachers are at their most efficient when they are able to teach a single student, but circumstances do not always permit that. The more students a teacher is teaching concurrently, the less study experience each student receives. Skilled teachers can deal with more students in a single class, allowing for larger class sizes to still be successful.

As with books, teachers have skill requirements. No teacher can teach above their own skill *in the subject being taught*. When a teacher spends a season teaching, they pick a skill level equal to or below their own skill. This is the skill *maximum* for the class. The skill minimum is always five less than the maximum, modified by the teacher's Resolve.

$$\text{Teaching Skill Minimum Req.} = \text{Skill Maximum} -5 - \text{Resolve}$$

A teacher with high Resolve can extend the skill minimum to allow even novice students to gain from the class. A teacher with low Resolve can only teach a narrow band of students. In some cases, the teacher is so awful that only students with skill exactly at the season's maximum can benefit.

Note that in order to teach students with no experience and low Intellect, teachers may need to set the maximum so low that the minimum becomes negative.

| Students | Study XP |
|---|---|
| 1 | +12 |
| 2 to ½ Teaching | +9 |
| >½ Teaching to Teaching | +6 |

E.g. Brandon's character, Thauros, wants to teach Hunting for a season. He has 12 Hunting, 6 Teaching, and -2 Resolve. His prospective students have Hunting skills between 6 and 10. He chooses to teach at 10 (skill maximum). If he had 0 Resolve, he would be able to teach

students with Hunting between 5 and 10, but Thauros' poor Resolve reduces the range by 2, to 7 to 10.

Because his Teaching is 6, he can teach one student for +12xp, 2 to 3 students for +9xp, or 4-6 students for +6xp. Since he can't teach the student with 6 Hunting, he teaches the remaining three students, giving them +9xp in Hunting for the season.

**Phenomena Study**

The rarest of study sources, phenomena can appear as natural or supernatural events. Phenomena are, by their nature, outside of the boundaries of conventional understanding, so they always have a minimum skill requirement of 15, 20, or 25 and never have a maximum skill requirement. Unlike other study sources, phenomena must go through a process of *comprehension* before they can be studied.

Attempting to comprehend a phenomenon requires a full season of work. At the end of the season, the player must roll 2d10 + Intellect + Phenomenon Skill against a difficulty of the minimum skill requirement + 10. If successful, the character may study the phenomenon in subsequent seasons. Phenomena always yield +15xp per season and can grant a total of 15, 30, or 45 total experience (corresponding to the 15, 20, or 25 minimum skill requirement) to a single character.

Rarely, a phenomenon may be a potential study source for two or more skills. In such cases, characters must comprehend each facet of the phenomenon separately.

## Practice

Practice can both encompass the isolated repetition of drills and techniques as well as the daily practice of a vocation. Certain skills are more well-suited to practice than study. E.g. learning about blacksmithing through practice is generally more productive than reading a book about blacksmithing.

# Wealth, Lifestyle, and Upkeep

Wealth in Pillars of Eternity is tracked as individual tallies of coins, art objects, jewels, and other valuable objects. Characters spend their wealth as they see fit on items and services. In addition to expenses that come up during sessions, wealth can be spent on Lifestyle to grant seasonal bonuses. The accumulation of special holdings, such as retainers and property, will come with the price of Upkeep. Failure to pay the price of Upkeep can have minor to severe consequences on those holdings.

## Wealth as Currency

Not all wealth comes in the form of currency (typically coins), but *most* does.

The base unit of currency in most parts of the Old Empires, Eastern Reach, and the Deadfire Archipelago is the *copper pire* (cp). It is produced and distributed by the Vailian Republics, the most powerful trading nation in their hemisphere. For simplicity, the base rules of Pillars of Eternity can function purely off of prices in cp, with the GM giving all rewards in cp, even if those rewards may, for narrative purposes, be gold or silver coins from a non-Vailian country.

See the **Expanded Currencies** section at the end of this chapter for optional rules that expand the variety of currencies available to players.

## Non-Currency Forms of Wealth

Wealth can also take the form of gemstones, art objects, rare books, and other precious items. These goods can also be sold (or traded) for money, but it is up to an individual buyer (at the GM's discretion) to accept those goods

## Starting Wealth

All bonuses to Wealth received through Backgrounds are tallied up to total the character's starting funds. This money can be spent during character creation or can be saved for use during gameplay.

## The Cost of Things

All items and most services will be listed with prices in cp. GMs should improvise values for items or services that are not listed using printed values as a basic guide. In some cases, the GM may call for a group decision to raise or lower the prices of items or services based on the reality of the situation. E.g., rare spices aren't so rare if you're on the remote island where they grow, after all.

## Lifestyle

Lifestyle represents the general level of shelter, safety, and comfort that the character lives in. Each season, the character opts into a lifestyle and pays an associated cost (unless their lifestyle is being provided for by another character). In exchange, the character receives a variety of bonuses (or penalties, if the lifestyle is severe) for the following season.

A player may discontinue a lifestyle at the start of any season.

### Impoverished

The Impoverished lifestyle is lean and brutal, bereft of all but the most meagre sustenance and shelter. Malnutrition is the rule, lodging is often improvised or absent. Characters who live an Impoverished lifestyle are exposed to the elements and often live on the fringes of civilization.

Note that any character who pays the cost (i.e., nothing) for an Impoverished lifestyle may live a Poor lifestyle by choosing to Live Off the Land (see Seasonal Activities).

0 cp / season
-2 Aging,

### Poor

Most people in Eora lead a Poor lifestyle. They have basic food and humble shelter, enjoy mild protection from the elements, but still lead hard lives. Clothing is often handed-down and in poor condition. Most villages are dominated by the poor and many towns and cities have large populations of poor residents who struggle to keep themselves from becoming destitute.

15 cp / season

### Comfortable

Found most often in towns and cities, the Comfortable lifestyle is a product of prosperous merchant, trade, and artisan classes. People living a Comfortable lifestyle have access to good food, secure shelter, well-kept clothing, and may rarely employ the services of a surgeon, clerk, lawyer or other professional.

250 cp / season

### Prosperous

Particularly successful merchants, renowned artisans, gentry, and minor nobles often live Prosperous lifestyles. They have access to fine food, beautiful and secure shelter, fine clothing in excellent condition, and may easily employ a variety of professionals to see to their needs. The Prosperous lifestyle also often includes the use of basic household servants.

1,500 cp / season

**Rich**
The truly wealthy, people living a Rich lifestyle may easily conduct their lives without contacting less wealthy people outside interactions with servants. Typically only landed nobles in good standing can afford to maintain such a lifestyle for long. This lifestyle gives regular access to exotic food, lavish accommodations, and elaborate clothing featuring rare materials. Household servants and personal guards are always on hand and skilled professionals are often on retainer for easy access.

7,500 cp / season

**Extravagant**
Although there are arguably even more tiers of lifestyle above Extravagant, they are effectively indistinguishable for game purposes. Generally only enjoyed by royalty and high-ranking nobility, the Extravagant lifestyle is phenomenally expensive to maintain. It gives access to any food, any clothing, any people that may be desired for any purpose. Accommodations are both astonishing in craftsmanship and security. A person living an Extravagant lifestyle is often within shouting distance of elite guards, a small army of servants, and myriad top-tier professionals to cater to their every need.

50,000 cp / season

**Lifestyle Availability**
The GM may rule that certain lifestyles are simply not available in a given location due to a lack of sufficient housing, fresh food, etc. In such cases, the player must make do with what is available or change their residence.

# Upkeep
If characters acquire individual employees or properties they maintain across seasons, they will require funds for pay and maintenance, respectively. This comes in the form of Upkeep, costs that are due at the beginning of each season. Failure to maintain Upkeep has different effects for people and properties.

**People Upkeep**
Failure to pay employees on time will lower their Loyalty.

**Property Upkeep**
Failure to pay Upkeep on property will result in the Quality of that property being reduced.

# Circles
Circles represent the social connections your character has made over the course of their life. Circles correspond to social background categories or discrete societies (secret or otherwise). They can be used to call on (effectively create) NPCs for knowledge and favors. These NPCs need not (and typically should not) exist ahead of time. When successfully rolled, the player can create the necessary NPC and potentially call on them again in the future.

# Reputations
Characters can receive a wide variety of Reputations, both broad and nuanced, over the course of their lives. Reputations are always specific to a community, region, or organization of some sort, but are as broad and varied as people themselves.

Some characters may begin play with Reputations due to their backgrounds and traits, but most Reputations are acquired during play at the end of adventures.

The GM should keep track of all player characters to participate in an adventure in a meaningful way (i.e. more than simply a cameo appearance). At the end of the adventure, they should ask the players to nominate reputations for each character. If there is a general consensus, the character receives that reputation. If there is no consensus, the GM should decide.

Reputations advance like skills and receive XP based on the size of the community or region in which the reputation is being formed. Extremely large communities or regions may touch the lives of thousands of people, meaning that they receive relatively little XP and advance slowly. Tightly-knit communities advance Reputations quite quickly as word gets around.

| Community Size | XP |
| --- | --- |
| Village, Monastery, Large Household | 10 |
| Town, Multi-City-Wide Organization | 5 |
| City, Nation-Wide Organization | 3 |
| Metropolis, International Organization | 1 |

## The Scale of Reputation

Reputations start at 1 (when the character gets a single XP in it) and never exceed 5.

## Using Reputation

Any Reputation may be used once per Session by the player to gain a bonus on a Social Skill if it is applicable. Note that certain Social Skills, such as Insight and Teaching, may be hard to justify the use of Reputation. In all cases, the player should make the argument to justify how their Reputation applies to the Skill and circumstance (group decision).

### One Roll, One Reputation

On a single roll, only a single beneficial Reputation may apply.

### To Gain a Bonus

The player can call on their Reputation to gain a bonus on a Social Skill once per Session. They gain 1 Bonus die per rank of the applicable Reputation, up to a maximum of 5d4.

### Negative Reputations

If there are any Reputations the character has that could make the use of their Social Skill more difficult, the worst one always applies. Negative Reputations can apply to any number of Social Skill roles without limit. The skill roll gains 1 Hinder die per rank of the applicable Reputation, up to a maximum of 5d4.

# Seasonal Activities

Unlike many role-playing games, where the majority of character advancement occurs during advancement, Pillars of Eternity uses seasonal activities to heal from wounds, advance skills, teach others, acquire or remove traits, learn powers, and even invent new powers.

# Age and Aging

|  | Aum | Dwarf | Elf | Folk | Orlan |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Childhood | 0-7 | 0-9 | 0-15 | 0-5 | 0-4 |
| Adolescence | 8-20 | 10-28 | 16-48 | 6-16 | 5-13 |
| Young Adult | 21-38 | 29-60 | 49-100 | 17-32 | 14-26 |
| Adult | 39-56 | 61-94 | 101-150 | 33-48 | 27-39 |
| Middle Age | 57-74 | 95-120 | 151-196 | 49-64 | 40-51 |
| Old | 75-96 | 121-150 | 197-250 | 65-80 | 52-64 |
| Venerable | 97+ | 151+ | 251+ | 81+ | 65+ |