

Pentola is a highly lethal world where what you believe and do is what you become. Explore a city of incredible magic and unending intrigue above catacombs filled with ancient horrors locked away before an apocalypse hundreds of years in the past. Take power, become rich, explore the lost city, or sing away the demons from your gondola.

In Pentola, you are what you choose to become.

Characteristics

Iron represents force of will, presence, and metaphysical aptitude.

Flax represents mental prowess and training, including knowledge and intuition.

Bone represents physical prowess and training, including strength, agility, toughness, etc.

Characteristics may never rise above 12, any overage is wasted/ineffective.

Tests, Intent & Approach

1. The player declares their character's *intent*—what outcome they want from their action.
2. Once the *intent* is known, the player must explain their character's *approach*—how the character will attempt to realize their *intent* through action.
3. Once the *intent* and *approach* are known the ref is then—and only then—able to adjudicate the action, deciding first if a test is necessary, then which characteristic is most relevant based on the *intent* and *approach*. A test is necessary **only** under the following conditions:
 - A. The action as defined by the *intent* and *approach* together **can fail**.
 - B. The action as defined by the *intent* and *approach* together **can succeed**.
 - C. Failure has **meaningful consequences**.

When a test is called for, the player should roll a **d12** against the specified characteristic:

- ▷ A result lower than the characteristic is a *success*.
- ▷ A result equal to the characteristic is a *triumph*.
- ▷ A result above the characteristic is a *failure*.

For especially easy or hard tasks, the ref *may* impose advantage or disadvantage on the roll; in which case, roll twice and take the *better* result or *worse* result respectively.

A character may aid or interfere with another character's test, granting advantage or imposing disadvantage respectively.

When two or more characters oppose each other, such as in an argument, all roll. The character that rolls highest without failing wins. If all fail, the highest roll wins. In ties, the player wins. In ties between players, roll again between the tied parties only.

Familiarities

Characters who are familiar with a particular task roll with advantage when trying it.

Dweomers & Matrices

Dweomers are the formula by which Pentolans apply magic into their world. You may apply any dweomer you have a copy of slowly, in a ritual, taking 10 minutes per magnitude or level.

If you are familiar with a dweomer, you may attempt to apply it from memory. If applying it as a ritual, make a Flax test with advantage. If applying it as an action, make your test without advantage; if a hostile creature or person is close to you, test with disadvantage.

One way to apply a dweomer as an action more reliably is to use a *matrix*, a special device for applying a specific dweomer. Each matrix has it's own rating between 2–12. This rating is only for the purposes of opposed tests, they are always automatically successful at applying a dweomer. After each use, roll a **d12**; unless the result is over the matrix's rating, reduce its rating by one.

Tools

Tools assist in performing specific tasks. Without them, some tasks can only be tried at disadvantage or maybe even not at all. Particularly excellent tools may grant advantage at a task. Some items perform the action themselves (such as using a matrix to apply a dweomer) and have their own rating. In these cases, roll against the item's rating to determine success instead of the character's characteristic.

Kits

Kits are consumable items needed for a broad set of tasks—herbalism, medicine, spelunking, etc—any time you need a consumable related to the kit, you have it. Mark next to your kit after each use. Kits always start with 12 uses.

Iron, Flax, and Bone is a lightweight tabletop rpg that requires one twelve-sided die (a **d12**), a writing utensil, this zini, and a couple friends. The back of this zini is meant to be written on!

One player is the referee (ref): they facilitate the game and take on running the world.

Action Time

When it is useful to break down time into discrete chunks—during chases, fights, disasters, whatever—it breaks down into **moments** roughly 3 seconds long.

Characters can take one *action* and one *reaction* each *moment* without penalty. They may **take an additional action** or *reaction* but make all tests at **disadvantage** or **forego** their action or reaction to test the other with **advantage**.

Actions include, but are not limited to:

exercising a knack, making an attack, moving nearby, applying a dweomer, throwing a grappling hook, drinking a potion, using kit or tool.

Reactions include, but are not limited to, the following:

parrying, blocking, dodging, interfering with or aiding another action.

During action time use *Declare Up, Adjudicate Down (DUAD)*:

1. Everyone involved makes an opposed **Flax** test, noting their result and noting whether they triumphed, succeeded, or failed.
2. Actions and reactions are **declared from worst to best** - any reactions declared against an earlier action have advantage.
3. Action tests are **made in reverse of declaration**, last declared action being adjudicated first, reactions occurring as appropriate.

Combat Reactions

Each of the combat reactions has particular tradeoffs:

- ▷ **Blocking** tests are made with advantage, sacrificing your shield to prevent injury.
- ▷ **Parrying** tests bat aside your opponents weapon
- ▷ **Dodging** tests are made with disadvantage but negate injury if successful.

Injury, Scarring, and Death

Combat is deadly and best avoided. Characters can be hit 3 times before their luck runs out and they **Face Death**, making a test against **Bone**:

Triumph: Character gains a *cool scar*.

Success: Character gains a **wound**.

Failure: Character gains a **terrible scar** and **2 wounds**.

Scars come in two flavors, *cool* and *terrible*. *Cool scars* grant the character advantage on relevant social tests, *terrible scars* impose disadvantage.

Wounds permanently fill in one of the character's hit boxes, effectively reducing how many hits they can take in the future.

Distance

Something is *close* if you can reach out and touch it with no more than a few steps.

Something is *near* if you can walk to it within a few seconds—within about 30 ft.

Something is *distant* if it's further than nearby but still within about 150 ft.

Something is *far* if it's further than distant but still visible.

Armor

If wearing armor, roll a **d12** whenever you are hit (except if the hit was a triumph):

- ▷ *Light* armor saves you from a hit on a 4, 8, or 12.
- ▷ *Medium* armor saves you from a hit on a 3, 6, 9, or 12.
- ▷ *Heavy* armor saves you from a hit on **any even number**.