



## Skills

Skills are the main way that your character interacts with the game world. Characters with the right skills for the job, get the job done. And probably make it back to town alive. This chapter contains rules for skills and procedures.

## Dice Chain

As discussed in the Introduction, skills are ranked as a number on a die -most often a d6. All skills start with a rank of 1/6. This means that rolling a 1 on a six-sided die is a successful test.

As characters improve and skills advance, they climb a chain of advancement - 2/6, 3/6, 4/6, etc. When a skill's rank equals the number of sides on a die, increase the die type and use the penultimate rank on that die, for the current skill rank.

- ◆ 5/6 advances to 7/8
- ◆ 7/8 advances to 9/10
- ◆ 9/10 advances to 11/12
- ◆ 11/12 advances to 19/20

## Modifiers & Dice Chain

All modifiers to a skill's rank from advancement, governing abilities, help, tools, etc. climb the dice chain as described above.

Penalties applied from light and difficulty of the test reduce the skill's rating on that die, not the die type.

**A -1 penalty on a skill ranked 7/8 would reduce the rank to 6/8, not 5/6.**

## Tests

When you attempt to change the situation presented by the GM, describe the actions your character takes.

- ◆ What are you trying to achieve?
- ◆ What are you doing to accomplish that?

***Sergund needs to find a way up the cliff. Daniel says, "I stand in the boat, attaching my grappling hook to my rope. I give it a good swing and throw it, hooking onto the firm rock above." Sergund is trying to get up the cliff by climbing it, using a rope and grapple in the process.***

The GM then is responsible for determining the correct skill to use for the test based on the player's description and how the questions above are answered.

## No Contest

If there is nothing at stake, or there is no interesting consequence to failure, don't bother testing. The GM should just describe what happens and move on.

## Clever Plans

Dice are dangerous but clever plans don't need to roll. Rolling for a test always has the possibility of failure consequences. Players should strategize and come up with clever plans to overcome obstacles. If the GM thinks your plan is clever, there is no need to roll the dice, they should just describe what happens and move on. Clever plans don't cost a turn.



## Learning Skills

Your character starts with several skills determined by their class during character creation. From there, your character can learn new skills during the course of play. You can also test any skill you don't have by using the *Push Your Luck* rule.

### *Push Your Luck*

When your character attempts something that is obviously under the purview of a skill, but your character doesn't have the skill, you push your luck. You make the test with a rank of 1/10, rolling a 10-sided die. There is only a 10% chance of success, but you put yourself closer to learning that skill.

When you Push Your Luck, note the skill you attempted on your character sheet. Once you Push Your Luck with the same skill a number of times equal to 5 minus your Intelligence modifier you learn the skill. The skill's rating always begins at 2/6 when learned in this manner.

***John's Magic-user has an Intelligence modifier of +2. He'll need to push his luck 3 times to learn to Cook. He logs the test on his character sheet after every attempt. Once the Magic-user pushes his luck 3 times (5-2=3) he opens the Cook skill at 2/6.***

## Help

Each skill on the skill list has additional skills that may be used when one character is helping another. These skills are related to the situation. You can always help with the same skill and may not help with other skills.

- ◆ Spend a point of Resolve to help your friend.
- ◆ If your character receives help from another character, add +1 to your skill rank before making the test.

## Tools

Each skill will be listed with suggested tools that may be used to confer a +1 to the skill rank before the test is made. Tools are situational. If a player comes up with an interesting way to use a tool to gain an advantage the GM should hear them out and allow them a modifier because of their excellent positioning.

## Difficulty

The GM may impose difficulty on a test due to factors outside of the character's control. Examples include dim light and darkness, slippery ice, time-sensitive situations, etc. Depending on how evil the GM is feeling they may apply a difficulty from -1 to -4 to the player's skill rank.



# Skills List

The skill list discusses each skill in Songs of the Northlanders. Each description includes a list of helping skills and suggested tools applicable to that skill.

## Core Skills

### Break

Adventurers always seem to want to break down doors or break open locks. Break is the skill for smashing and grabbing. It is governed by Strength.

*Help:* Break, Improvise, Search

*Suggested Tools:* Crowbar, Hammer

### Circles

Circles show a character's social spheres and is used for tracking down people you know in town to ask for favors and call on aid. It is governed by Charisma.

*Help:* Same Circles, Reputation.

*Suggested Tools:* Letter of Introduction

### Improvise

Many times adventurers will need to jury-rig a ladder or bridge. Maybe they need to tie a grappling hook to the end of a rope and haul up a treasure chest from the bottom of a ravine. Use improvise for this. It is governed by Wisdom.

*Help:* Improvise, Search

*Suggested Tools:* Ropes, Grappling Hook, Crowbar, Shoes, etc.

### Listen

Often in the dungeon, you will need to be quiet and listen through doors and down corridors to see what resides on the other side. It is governed by Wisdom.

*Help:* None

*Suggested Tools:* Earhorn?

### Lore

Recall ancient histories and legends about specific circumstances. This is governed by Intelligence.

*Help:* Arcanist, Catalogue, Lore, Theology

*Suggested Tools:* Tomes.

### Parley

Adventurers use Parley to deal with people on a social level. To convince, manipulate, and threaten. Parley always contains a quid pro quo to benefit both parties. It is governed by Charisma.

*Help:* Parley

*Suggested Tools:* Evidence, Promise, Answers, Lies

### Steel

Test this to Steel Your Nerves against horrid violence, or mind-altering supernatural phenomenon. This is governed by Constitution.

*Help:* None

### Search

Often in the dungeon, your character will need to look out for and find hidden things. Or check to make sure they're not being snuck up on. It is governed by Intelligence.

*Help:* Search

*Tools:* Candles, Torches, Lanterns, etc

### Sneak

Stay hidden and quiet. Sneak up on the unsuspecting. This is governed by Dexterity.

*Help:* None

### Traverse

This is for leaping from rooftop to rooftop, or dilapidated ledge to narrow stairway. It's for clambering up slick cave walls or squeezing through narrow passages. It is governed by Dexterity.

*Help:* None

*Suggested Tools:* Rope, Climbing Gear, Iron Spikes, etc.





## Class Skills

### Alchemy

This skill is used by Alchemists to mix recipes and create potions. Alchemy is governed by Intelligence.

*Help:* Alchemy, Arcanist, Lore

*Suggested Tools:* Herbs, Roots, Bone Meal, Blood, etc.

*Effect:* Purify with fire or magnetize; Create Elixirs (Provide Help for Healers); Create Tinctures or Salve (Remove Condition); Create Potion or Snuff (as Spell) equal to spell divination; Create flammable or bomb (d6 damage).

### Arcanist

Magic-users master the formulae that bind the worlds together. Arcanist is the skill that pulls that theorem of formulae and turns it into magic. This is governed by Intelligence.

*Help:* Arcanist

*Suggested Tools:* Spell Components

### Cartography

It is essential to have a good map on long journeys of exploration through perilous depths or forlorn places. Cartography is used by adventurers to create and interpret maps. It is governed by Intelligence.

*Help:* Cartography, Lore, Catalogue

*Suggested Tools:* Parchment, Ink, etc

*Effect:* Create or interpret maps of places visited.

### Catalogue

The greatest adventurers catalogue the retelling of their adventures into memoirs. They are proficient at researching archives, libraries, holy books, and arcane grimoires. Catalogue is governed by Intelligence.

*Help:* Cartography, Catalogue, Lore

*Suggested Tools:* Coffee, Books

### Cook

No adventuring party is complete without a cook. Someone who is always there to feed off sickness and ready for second breakfasts! Cook is governed by Wisdom.

*Help:* Cook, Improvise, Search

*Suggested Tools:* Cooking Utensils, Garlic, Herbs, etc.

*Effect:* Cook a warm Meal (Provide Help for Healers); Turn a Fresh Ration into food for a party.

### Crafting

Each smith has a signature craft; whether armor, tools, or gold. This skill is used by adventurers to craft items and make repairs useful during campaigns. It is governed by Wisdom.

*Help:* Crafting, Improvise

*Suggested Tools:* Hammers, Leather Straps, etc

*Effect:* Crafting tools, arms, and armor equal to the purchase price of the item; Repairing and mending tools, arms, helms, shields, and armor.

### Criminal

Some adventurers have knowledge in skills in areas that are not legal. Smuggling, counterfeiting, picking locks, and picking pockets. This skill is governed by Dexterity.

*Help:* Criminal, Search, Circles

### Divination

Wizards divine the magical essence of formulae contained in grimoires and on scrolls to discover the secrets hidden within. This skill is governed by Wisdom.

*Help:* Arcanist, Divination

*Suggested Tools:* Smelling salts, incense, etc.

*Difficulty:* See the Magic & Spells chapter.

## Farming

As the seasons change many adventures tend to farms digging ditches, mending fences, and tending to livestock. Farming is governed by Wisdom.

*Help:* Farming, Lore, Improvise, Crafting

*Suggested Tools:* Shovels, Hammers, Shoes

*Effect:* Tend livestock, herd animals, plant and harvest crops, general herbal knowledge

## Fishing

Fisherfolk harvest fish from ponds, lakes, creeks, rivers, and the sea to feed their companions out in the wilds.

*Help:* Fishing, Search, Improvise

*Suggested Tools:* Spears, lines, hooks, and nets.

## Healer

Every adventuring party eventually needs a healer. Bones need reset, teeth need to be pulled, and bleeding needs to be staunched. Take your health seriously. Healer is governed by Wisdom.

*Help:* Healer, Lore, Improvise, Search

*Suggested Tools:* Herbs, Decoctions, Bandages, Poultices.

*Effect:* Treating Sick or Wounded patients; Making Decoctions (Remove Condition).

## Hunting

Skill for tracking and stalking game animals to kill them for food. Hunting is governed by Dexterity.

*Help:* Hunting, Sneak

*Suggested Tools:* Bows, Spears, Traps, Lures

## Invocation

Clerics use Invocation as a way of imploring the gods to grant mercies onto the living world. This skill is the domain of those who know the gods' divine rites and rituals. Clerics use this skill to invoke Prayers. This is governed by Wisdom.

*Help:* Invocation

*Suggested Tools:* Relics

## Mentor

Knowledge is passed down from a teacher to a student. Mentor is used to teach characters new skills. The mentor must already know the skill being taught. This is governed by Intelligence.

*Help:* Mentor

*Suggested Tools:* Books on the subject

## Performing

Regale a crowd with poetic verse of heroes and mighty deeds. Captivate an audience with melodies from lutes and harps. Performing is governed by Charisma.

*Help:* Performing, Lore

*Suggested Tools:* Poems, Instruments

## Riding

Human warriors, Elven heralds, and goblin wolf riders all use the riding skill to command their steeds across ranges or land and into battle. This is governed by Charisma.

*Suggested Tools:* Tacks and harness.

*Effect:* Gain the use of the animal's traits and abilities during combat.

## Ritual

The cosmos contains secrets beyond our mortal coil. Theology is the doctrine of such secrets. Use Ritual to recall secrets and doctrine, the lists of saints and demons, and to give offerings of sacrifice at shrines and temples. Ritual is governed by Wisdom.

*Help:* Catalogue, Lore

*Suggested Tools:* Holy books

## Sailing

Sailors use their skills to navigate waterways and the open sea. Sailing is governed by Wisdom.

*Help:* Sailing, Search, Cartography

*Suggested Tools:* Maps



## Songsmith

The songs of the Elves hang in the breeze with simple beauty or lamenting sorrow, but all are subtle and mighty. Songsmiths weave their magic through voice in melodies that spring from within. This is the skill used by Elf characters to invoke spell songs. It is governed by Charisma.

## Survival

Adventurers need to find their way through the wilds; over roads, through forests, and under mountains.

Survival is also used to make shelter in the wilds, find water and forage food. As well as build fires to keep warm and dry. Survival is governed by Wisdom.

*Help:* Survival, Improvise, Search

*Suggested Tools:* Maps,

*Effect:* Find your way, make camp, find potable water.

## Weaving

Making clothes, cloaks, and hats is important on an adventure and off. Weavers can also mend and do simple repairs on cloth and leather. This is governed by Wisdom.

*Help:* Improvise, Weaving

*Suggested Tools:* Fabric, thread, and needle

## Language Skills

Language as a skill is most often used in this game when writing or reading something important. Sometimes, it may be for communication if there's something large at stake or failure is interesting. In these circumstances, GMs may call for a test for Language.

Language skills follow the standard skill rules.

