

# Architrave

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Architrave is a lightweight rpg ruleset for OSR games. Its features include:

**High compatibility with OSR games.** If you have a library of OSR bestiaries, adventure and spell books, little or no conversion is needed to use them with Architrave.

**Fast to teach, easy to run.** If you are introducing a group of new players to OSR games, Architrave allows them to make characters and understand all the rules in minutes.

**No classes.** Every PC is a Knave, a tomb-raiding, adventure-seeking ne'er-do-well who wields a spell book just as easily as a blade. This is an ideal system for players who like to switch up their character's focus from time to time and don't like being pigeonholed. A PC's role in the party is determined largely by the equipment they carry.

**Abilities are king.** All d20 rolls use the six standard abilities. The way that ability scores and bonuses work has also been cleaned up, rationalized, and made consistent with how other systems like armour work.

**Copper standard.** Architrave assumes that the common unit of currency is the copper penny. All item prices use this denomination and approximate actual medieval prices.

**A list of ~83 level-less spells.**

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**Designer commentary.** The rules include designer comments explaining why each rule was written the way it was, to aid in hacking the game.

# Character Creation

**1** PCs have six abilities: Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. Each ability has two related values: a **defence** and a **bonus**. When creating a PC, roll 3d6 for each of their abilities, in order. The lowest of the three dice on each roll is that ability's bonus. Add 10 to find its defence.

**Example:** You roll a 2, 2, and 6 for Strength. The lowest die is a 2, so your PC's Strength has a bonus of +2 and a defence of 12. Repeat this process for the rest of the abilities.

**Designer's Note:** "Ability defence" is my term for what is normally called ability scores. I refer to them this way to make it clearer how they work during opposed ability checks, explained later.

The rolling mechanic will make most abilities start at 11/+1. The bonus and defence of three abilities will rise by 1 point each time the PC gains a level, up to a maximum of 20/+10 by level 10. This puts everything on an intuitive ten point scale, and is intended to mirror the way that attack bonuses, hit dice, and saving throws in most OSR games increase by about one point per level.

**2** PCs start with 2 days of rations and one weapon of their player's choice. Roll on the Starting Gear tables on the following page to determine starting armour and equipment. You can choose to have no armour in return for a random spellbook.

**Designer's Note:** Rolling for starting equipment dramatically speeds up the character creation process, which is important if you're playing a high-lethality game like Architrave. If you want to permit shopping for equipment, however, have players roll 3d6x20 to find their starting copper pieces.

PCs have a number of item slots equal to their Constitution defence, and items they carry must fit into available slots. Most items take up one slot, but some take up more.

Some small items can be bundled together into a single slot. Ask the GM if you are unsure.

**Designer's Note:** Item slots make tracking encumbrance fast and easy, which is important since resource management is an important aspect of the game. They also represent character customization slots, since what a Knave is carrying goes a long way towards determining their playstyle and role in the party.

Armour comes with an armour defence value. Note that value on your character sheet with its corresponding Armour bonus (always 10 less than the defence). If the PC is not wearing any armour, their armour defence is 11 and their armour bonus is +1.

**Designer's Note:** "Armour defence" is essentially the same concept as armour class in most OSR games. It's been renamed to emphasize the connection between the way it and ability defences work.

**3** Roll 1d8 to determine your PC's starting and maximum hit points. A PC's healing rate is 1d8+ Constitution bonus. Their exploration speed is 120ft per exploration turn, and their combat speed is 40ft per round.

**Designer's Note:** All hit dice are assumed to be d8s in Architrave, for PCs, NPCs, and monsters. This simplifies the game and keeps things compatible with the stats in most OSR books. Note that a PC's Constitution bonus is not added to their hit point rolls. GMs who don't want starting PCs to be quite as fragile might want to allow starting HP to be rerolled if it is below 5.

**4** Invent or roll the rest of your PC's traits, such as their physique, face, skin, hair, clothing, virtue, vice, speech, background, and alignment, using the random tables on the following page. Choose a gender and a name for your PC, but don't get too attached. It's a dangerous world out there.

**Designer's Note:** Randomizing most of a PC's traits speeds up character creation, but it also has the effect of creating surprising, unique characters that most players wouldn't think to invent or play.

# Traits

## Physique

- |              |             |                |              |
|--------------|-------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1. Athletic  | 6. Hulking  | 11. Short      | 16. Stout    |
| 2. Brawny    | 7. Lanky    | 12. Sinewy     | 17. Tiny     |
| 3. Corpulent | 8. Ripped   | 13. Slender    | 18. Towering |
| 4. Delicate  | 9. Rugged   | 14. Flabby     | 19. Willowy  |
| 5. Gaunt     | 10. Scrawny | 15. Statuesque | 20. Wiry     |

## Face

- |             |              |             |             |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. Bloated  | 6. Elongated | 11. Impish  | 16. Sharp   |
| 2. Blunt    | 7. Patrician | 12. Narrow  | 17. Soft    |
| 3. Bony     | 8. Pinched   | 13. Ratlike | 18. Square  |
| 4. Chiseled | 9. Hawkish   | 14. Round   | 19. Wide    |
| 5. Delicate | 10. Broken   | 15. Sunken  | 20. Wolfish |

## Skin

- |                |                |              |               |
|----------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1. Battle Scar | 6. Oily        | 11. Reeking  | 16. Sunburned |
| 2. Birthmark   | 7. Pale        | 12. Tattooed | 17. Tanned    |
| 3. Burn Scar   | 8. Perfect     | 13. Rosy     | 18. War Paint |
| 4. Dark        | 9. Pierced     | 14. Rough    | 19. Weathered |
| 5. Makeup      | 10. Pockmarked | 15. Sallow   | 20. Whip Scar |

## Hair

- |            |               |               |              |
|------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1. Bald    | 6. Disheveled | 11. Limp      | 16. Ponytail |
| 2. Braided | 7. Dreadlocks | 12. Long      | 17. Silky    |
| 3. Bristly | 8. Filthy     | 13. Luxurious | 18. Topknot  |
| 4. Cropped | 9. Frizzy     | 14. Mohawk    | 19. Wavy     |
| 5. Curly   | 10. Greased   | 15. Oily      | 20. Wispy    |

## Clothing

- |               |                |               |                |
|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1. Antique    | 6. Elegant     | 11. Foreign   | 16. Patched    |
| 2. Bloody     | 7. Fashionable | 12. Frayed    | 17. Perfumed   |
| 3. Ceremonial | 8. Filthy      | 13. Frumpy    | 18. Rancid     |
| 4. Decorated  | 9. Flamboyant  | 14. Livery    | 19. Torn       |
| 5. Eccentric  | 10. Stained    | 15. Oversized | 20. Undersized |

## Virtue

- |               |                |                |               |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1. Ambitious  | 6. Disciplined | 11. Honorable  | 16. Merciful  |
| 2. Cautious   | 7. Focused     | 12. Humble     | 17. Righteous |
| 3. Courageous | 8. Generous    | 13. Idealistic | 18. Serene    |
| 4. Courteous  | 9. Gregarious  | 14. Just       | 19. Stoic     |
| 5. Curious    | 10. Honest     | 15. Loyal      | 20. Tolerant  |

## Vice

- |               |               |                |                |
|---------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. Aggressive | 6. Deceitful  | 11. Lazy       | 16. Suspicious |
| 2. Arrogant   | 7. Flippant   | 12. Nervous    | 17. Vain       |
| 3. Bitter     | 8. Gluttonous | 13. Prejudiced | 18. Vengeful   |
| 4. Cowardly   | 9. Greedy     | 14. Reckless   | 19. Wasteful   |
| 5. Cruel      | 10. Irascible | 15. Rude       | 20. Whiny      |

## Speech

- |             |             |                |                |
|-------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. Blunt    | 6. Droning  | 11. Mumbling   | 16. Dialect    |
| 2. Booming  | 7. Flowery  | 12. Precise    | 17. Slow       |
| 3. Breathly | 8. Formal   | 13. Quaint     | 18. Squeaky    |
| 4. Cryptic  | 9. Gravelly | 14. Rambling   | 19. Stuttering |
| 5. Drawling | 10. Hoarse  | 15. Rapid-fire | 20. Whispery   |

## Background

- |              |               |               |                |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1. Alchemist | 6. Cleric     | 11. Magician  | 16. Performer  |
| 2. Beggar    | 7. Cook       | 12. Mariner   | 17. Pickpocket |
| 3. Butcher   | 8. Cultist    | 13. Mercenary | 18. Smuggler   |
| 4. Burglar   | 9. Gambler    | 14. Merchant  | 19. Student    |
| 5. Charlatan | 10. Herbalist | 15. Outlaw    | 20. Tracker    |

## Misfortunes

- |                |                |               |               |
|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1. Abandoned   | 6. Defrauded   | 11. Framed    | 16. Pursued   |
| 2. Addicted    | 7. Demoted     | 12. Haunted   | 17. Rejected  |
| 3. Blackmailed | 8. Discredited | 13. Kidnapped | 18. Replaced  |
| 4. Condemned   | 9. Disowned    | 14. Mutilated | 19. Robbed    |
| 5. Cursed      | 10. Exiled     | 15. Poor      | 20. Suspected |

# Starting Gear

## Armour

- |           |          |            |       |
|-----------|----------|------------|-------|
| 1-3:      | 4-14:    | 15-19:     | 20:   |
| No armour | Gambeson | Brigandine | Chain |

## Helmets and Shields

- |       |        |        |                   |
|-------|--------|--------|-------------------|
| 1-13: | 14-16: | 17-19: | 20:               |
| None  | Helmet | Shield | Helmet and Shield |

## Dungeoneering Gear

Roll twice on this table, and once on the following two.

- |                |               |              |                |
|----------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1. Rope, 50ft  | 6. Crowbar    | 11. Lantern  | 16. Pole, 10ft |
| 2. Pulleys     | 7. Tinderbox  | 12. Lamp oil | 17. Sack       |
| 3. Candles, 5  | 8. Grap. hook | 13. Padlock  | 18. Tent       |
| 4. Chain, 10ft | 9. Hammer     | 14. Manacles | 19. Spikes, 5  |
| 5. Chalk, 10   | 10. Waterskin | 15. Mirror   | 20. Torches, 5 |

## General Gear 1

- |                |             |               |                |
|----------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1. Air bladder | 6. Saw      | 11. Fish. rod | 16. Net        |
| 2. Bear trap   | 7. Bucket   | 12. Marbles   | 17. Tongs      |
| 3. Shovel      | 8. Caltrops | 13. Glue      | 18. Lockpicks  |
| 4. Bellows     | 9. Chisel   | 14. Pick      | 19. Metal file |
| 5. Grease      | 10. Drill   | 15. Hourglass | 20. Nails      |

## General Gear 2

- |            |             |                 |                 |
|------------|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Incense | 6. Bottle   | 11. Fake jewels | 16. Face paint  |
| 2. Sponge  | 7. Soap     | 12. Blank book  | 17. Whistle     |
| 3. Lens    | 8. Spyglass | 13. Card deck   | 18. Instrument  |
| 4. Perfume | 9. Tar pot  | 14. Dice set    | 19. Quill & Ink |
| 5. Horn    | 10. Twine   | 15. Cook pots   | 20. Small bell  |

# Item Costs

All prices are given in copper pennies. Payment for things like ships, real estate, and so on usually takes the form of trade goods, favors, or oaths of fealty rather than coins.

## Tools & Gear

Air Bladder	5
Bear Trap	20
Bedroll	10
Bellows	10
Black Grease	1
Block and Tackle	30
Book (Blank)	300
Book (Reading)	600
Bottle/Vial	1
Bucket	5
Caltrops (bag)	10
Cards with an extra Ace	5
Chain (10 ft)	10
Chalk (10 pieces)	1
Chisel	5
Cookpots	10
Crowbar	10
Drill	10
Face Paint/Makeup	10
Fake Jewels	50
Fishing Rod/Tackle	10
Glass Marbles (bag)	5
Glue (bottle)	1
Grappling Hook	10
Hammer	10
Holy Water	25
Horn	10
Hourglass	300
Incense (packet)	10

Iron Tongs	10
Ladder (10 ft)	10
Large Sponge	5
Lens	100
Lockpicks	100
Manacles	10
Metal File	5
Mirror (small, silver)	200
Musical Instrument	200
Nails (12)	5
Net	10
Oilskin Bag	5
Oilskin Trousers	10
Padlock and Key	20
Perfume	50
Pick	10
Pole (10ft)	5
Quill and Ink	1
Rope (50ft)	10
Sack	1
Saw	10
Set of Loaded Dice	5
Shovel	10
Small Bell	20
Soap	1
Spike (iron)	5
Spike (wood)	1
Spiked boots	5
Spyglass	1000
Tar (Pot)	10
Tent (3 man)	100
Tent (personal)	50
Twine (300 ft)	5
Waterskin	5
Whistle	5

## Light

Candle, 4 hours	1
Lantern	30
Lamp Oil, 4 hours	5
Tinderbox	10
Torch, 1 hour	1

## Armour

<b>Shield</b>	40
<i>(Defence +1, 1 slot, 1 quality)</i>	
<b>Helmet</b>	40
<i>(Defence +1, 1 slot, 1 quality)</i>	
<b>Gambeson</b>	60
<i>(Defence 12, 1 slot, 3 quality)</i>	
<b>Brigandine</b>	500
<i>(Defence 13, 2 slots, 4 quality)</i>	
<b>Chain</b>	1200
<i>(Defence 14, 3 slots, 5 quality)</i>	
<b>Half Plate</b>	4000
<i>(Defence 15, 4 slots, 6 quality)</i>	
<b>Full Plate</b>	8000
<i>(Defence 16, 5 slots, 7 quality)</i>	

## Weapons

<b>Dagger, Cudgel, Sickle, Staff, etc.</b>	5
<i>(d6 damage, 1 slot, 1 hand, 3 quality)</i>	
<b>Spear, Sword, Mace, Axe, Flail, etc.</b>	10
<i>(d8 damage, 2 slots, 1 hand, 3 quality)</i>	
<b>Halberd, War Hammer, Long Sword, Battle Axe, etc.</b>	20
<i>(d10 damage, 3 slots, 2 hands, 3 quality)</i>	
<b>Sling</b>	5
<i>(d4 damage, 1 slot, 1 hand, 3 quality)</i>	
<b>Bow</b>	15
<i>(d6 damage, 2 slots, 2 hands, 3 quality)</i>	
<b>Crossbow</b>	60
<i>(d8 damage, 3 slots, 2 hands, 3 quality)</i>	
<b>Arrows</b>	5
<i>(20)</i>	
<b>Quiver</b>	10
<i>(capacity 20)</i>	

## Clothing

Poor	10
Standard	50
Noble	3000
Furs	5000
Winter	100

## Food

Travel rations (1 day)	5
Animal Feed (1 day)	2
Bacon, side of	10
Bread, 1 loaf	1
Cheese, 1 lb	2
Cider, 4 gallons	1
Cod, whole	20
Eggs, 24	1
Flour, 5 lbs	1
Fruit, 1 lb	1
Garlic, bunch	1
Grain, 1 bushel (8 gal.)	4
Herbs, 1 bunch	1
Lard, 5 lbs	1
Onions, 1 bushel	8
Salt, 1 bushel	3
Spices, 1 lb	100
Sugar, 1 lb	12
Wine/ale, bottle	1

## Animals

Chicken	1
Cow	100
Dog, hunting	50
Dog, small but vicious	20
Donkey/Pack Horse	300
Goat	10
Hawk	1000
Horse, riding	1000
Horse, war	10,000
Ox	300
Pig	30
Sheep	15

## Lodging

Bed, per night	1
Private room, per night	2
Meal	2
Hot bath	2
Stabling and fodder	2

## Ships

Ship, high quality	720/ton
Ship, good quality	480/ton
Ship, used quality	240/ton
Ship, poor quality	120/ton
Raft	50
Fishing boat	500
Sloop	5000
Caravel	25,000
Galleon	125,000

## Transport

Carriage	320
Cart	50
Wagon	120

## Henchmen

Wages are per day, not including food, supplies, shelter, etc.

Laborer	1
Scribe	2
Archer	3
Mason	4
Man-at-arms, on foot	6
Armourer or Blacksmith	8
Man-at-arms, mounted	12
Master Builder	15
Barber-Surgeon	25
Knight	25

## Buildings

Hovel	120
Row House	1200
Craftsman's House	2400
Merchant's House	7200
House with Courtyard	21,600
Guildhall	32,600
Stone Tower	48,000
Temple	75,000
Stronghold	100,000
Cathedral	500,000
Imperial Palace	2,500,000

# Playing the Game

## Abilities

Each of the six abilities is used in different circumstances.

- **Strength:** Used for melee attacks and ability checks requiring physical power, like lifting gates, bending bars, etc.
- **Dexterity:** Used for ability checks requiring poise, speed, and reflexes, like dodging, climbing, sneaking, balancing, etc.
- **Constitution:** Used for ability checks to resist poison, sickness, cold, etc. The Constitution bonus is added to healing rolls. A PC's number of item slots is always equal to their Constitution defence.
- **Intelligence:** Used for ability checks requiring concentration and precision, such as wielding magic, resisting magical effects, recalling lore, crafting objects, tinkering with machinery, picking pockets, etc.
- **Wisdom:** Used for ranged attacks and ability checks requiring perception and intuition, such as tracking, navigating, searching for secret doors, detecting illusions, etc.
- **Charisma:** Used for ability checks to persuade, deceive, interrogate, intimidate, charm, provoke, etc. PCs may employ a number of henchmen equal to their Charisma bonus.

***Designer's Note:** In a system that relies so heavily on the six abilities, it's important for each of them to play an important role, to discourage dump stats. Non-magical characters tend to dump the mental abilities, for example, so I increased their usefulness.*

## Item Slots

PCs have a number of item slots equal to their Constitution defence. Most items, including spellbooks, potions, a

day's rations, light weapons, tools and so on take up 1 slot, but particularly heavy or bulky items like armour or medium to heavy weapons may take up more slots. Groups of small, identical items may be bundled into the same slot, at the GM's discretion. 100 coins can fit in a slot. As a general guideline, a slot holds around 5 pounds of weight.

**What happens if you go over that?**

***Designer's Note:** Using item slots makes encumbrance simple enough that players will be willing to track it. Slots are also the key to character customization, as a PC's gear helps determine who they are. Raising Constitution, therefore, will probably be a priority for most characters.*

## Ability Checks

If a character attempts something where the outcome is uncertain and failure has consequences, they make an **ability check**. To make an ability check, add the bonus of the relevant ability to a d20 roll. If the total is **greater than** 15, the character succeeds. If not, they fail.

If a module or imported rule asks for a "saving throw", substitute an ability check for an attribute that makes sense in context.

***Designer's Note:** Requiring ability checks to exceed 15 means that new PCs have around a 25% chance of success, while level 10 characters have around a 75% chance of success, since ability bonuses can get up to +10 by level 10. This means that an ability check is calibrated situations where the average person "might succeed, but probably wouldn't" and the greatest of heroes "would probably succeed, but it's not guaranteed". It also reflects the general pattern found in the "saving throw" mechanics of early D&D.*

If the ability check is opposed by another character, then instead of aiming to exceed 15, the side doing the rolling must get a total greater than the opposing character's relevant defence score in order to succeed. If they fail, the opposing side succeeds. This type of ability check is called an **opposed ability check**. Note that it doesn't matter which side does the rolling, since the odds of success remain the same.

***Example:** A wizard casts a Babble spell at a goblin, who gets a saving throw to avoid. This is resolved as an opposed ability check using the wizard's Intelligence versus the goblin's Dexterity.*

*ty. The goblin may roll plus their Dexterity bonus, hoping to exceed the wizard's Intelligence defence or the wizard may roll plus their Intelligence bonus, hoping to exceed the goblin's Dexterity defence.*

***Designer's Note:** An ability's defence score is essentially its average roll. Requiring the rolling side to beat the opposing defence (rather than having both sides roll) allows contests to be settled more quickly and eliminates the possibility of ties.*

If there are situational factors that make an ability check significantly easier or harder, the GM may grant the roll **advantage** or **disadvantage**. If a roll has advantage, roll 2d20 and use the better of the two dice. If it has disadvantage, roll 2d20 and use the worse of the two dice.

***Designer's Note:** Compared to numerical modifiers — most players seem to enjoy advantage/disadvantage more, it simplifies the math, and it makes it easier for the GM to eyeball consistently.*

## Reactions

When the PCs encounter an NPC whose reaction to the party is not obvious, the GM may roll 2d6 and consult the following table.

2	3-5	6-8	9-11	12
Hostile	Unfriendly	Unsure	Talkative	Helpful

# Combat

At the start of each combat round, determine initiative by rolling a d6. On a 1-3, all of the enemies will act first. On a 4-6 all of the PCs will act first. Reroll initiative each round.

**Designer's Note:** *Using simple group initiative speeds up combat, keeps all of the players engaged, and avoids bookkeeping. Rerolling initiative every round makes combat more dangerous, since it's possible for one side to go twice in a row.*

On their turn, a character may move their speed (usually 40 ft) and take up to one combat action. This action may be casting a spell, making a second move, making an attack, attempting a stunt, or any other action deemed reasonable by the GM.

To make an attack, roll a d20 and add the character's Strength or Wisdom bonus, depending on whether they are using a melee or ranged weapon, respectively. If the attack total is **greater than** the defender's armour defence, the attack hits. If not, the attack misses.

Alternatively, an attack roll can also be resolved by the defender rolling a d20 and adding their armour bonus, hoping to roll a total **greater than** the defence of the ability the attacker is using. If they succeed, the attack misses. If they fail, the attack hits.

**Designer's Note:** *In other words, attacks are resolved the same way as opposed ability checks, just using Armour in place of an ability.*

On a hit, the attacker rolls their weapon's damage die to determine how many **Hit Points** (HP) the defender loses. A bonus damage die of the weapon's type may be added to the roll if the ideal weapon was used against an enemy type (for example, using a blunt weapon vs. a skeleton).

When a character reaches 0 HP, they are unconscious. When they reach -1 HP or less, they are dead. Players should roll up a new level 1 PC when their old one dies, and should rejoin the party as soon as possible.

## Stunts

Stunts are combat manoeuvres such as stunning, shoving, disarming, tripping, sundering armour, and so on. They may not cause damage directly, but may do so indirectly (for example, pushing an enemy off a ledge). In all cases, the GM judges — very often this will be an opposed ability check, but sometimes a stunt will be impossible or a guaranteed success.

## Advantage in Combat

Characters can gain advantage in combat by attacking a target that is unaware, on lower ground, off balance, disarmed, distracted, or tactically disadvantaged in any significant way. The GM adjudicates this.

When a character has advantage against an opponent on their combat turn, they may either (A) Apply advantage to their attack roll or stunt against that opponent or (B) Make an attack **and** a stunt attempt in the same round against that opponent, without advantage.

## Critical Hits and Quality

During an attack roll:

- If the attacker rolls a natural 20 the defender's armour loses 1 point of quality and they take an additional die of damage (of the weapon's type).
- If the attacker rolls a natural 1 the attacker's weapon loses 1 point of quality. At 0 quality, the item is destroyed.

Each point of quality costs 10% of the item's cost to repair.

**Designer's Note:** *The slow degradation of their gear is another resource clock ticking down during long dungeon raids alongside hit points, spells, torches, and so on.*

## Morale

Monsters and NPCs all have a morale rating, usually between 5 and 9. When they face more danger than they were expecting, the GM will make a **morale roll** by rolling 2d6 and comparing the result to the NPC's morale rating. If the roll is higher than the rating, the NPC will attempt to flee, retreat, or parley. Morale rolls can be trig-

gered by defeating half of an enemy group, defeating a group's leader, or reducing a lone enemy to half HP. Other effects may trigger a morale roll at the GM's discretion.

Hirelings also make morale rolls when they aren't paid, their employer dies, or they face extraordinary danger. Morale may also be improved by paying hirelings more and treating them well.

## Healing

After a meal and a full night's rest, PCs regain lost hit points equal to a d8 plus their Constitution bonus. Resting at a safe haven restores all lost HP.

**Designer's Note:** *Constitution bonuses do not affect maximum hit points like in most OSR games, but it is a big help when it comes to healing.*

## Monsters

All monsters from OSR bestiaries should work as-is in Archtrave with no major conversion needed. Here are some guidelines.

**Hit Dice/Hit Points:** All monster hit dice can be assumed to be d8s unless otherwise specified. To get the monster's hit points, just multiply the number of hit dice they have by 4.

**Armour:** Monster AC (if ascending) is identical to Armour defence. If the AC is descending, subtract it from 19 (if it is from OD&D or B/X D&D) or from 20 (if it is from AD&D) to find its ascending equivalent.

**Attack Bonus:** Any attack bonus given is unchanged, and can be added to both melee and ranged attacks. If an attack bonus is not given, assume that it is the same as the monster's number of hit dice.

**Damage:** Damage remains the same.

**Morale:** Morale rating remains the same.

**Saves:** Since OSR monsters usually don't come with ability scores, assume that monsters have ability bonuses equal to their level, with the corresponding ability defences. Make exceptions if it's clearly wrong for the monster in question (e.g. a 6HD Ogre might have Intelligence of +1).

**Example:** A typical 4 HD monster would have a bonus of +4 and a defence of 14 in all of its abilities by default, unless modified by the GM.

**Designer's Note:** Since OSR sources don't usually provide ability scores, and we're aiming for easy use without direct rewriting, we need a simple default rule that generates ability scores for us. The onus then falls on the GM to patch over any noticeably-wrong consequences of this.

## Various combat situations

- Retreating from melee – If you move out of melee with an opponent, either spend your main action on defence or they get a free attack on you.
- Range weapons in melee – Ranged weapons cannot be used if the shooting character is engaged in melee combat, and are at Disadvantage if the *target* is in melee with an ally.
- Nonlethal damage – at Disadvantage on attack unless the weapon is made for this.
- Grappling to move someone about – It takes a stunt to start this, or to break out of it, or to flip the grapple, and while it lasts you can move about at half speed and drag the target with you. They are otherwise unimpeded so can beat your ass as you do this, and if they have a bear hug attack or something they can auto-hit with it every round.
- Grapple to disarm – grapple to move and then do a further stunt for the disarm.
- Grappling to immobilise someone completely – Only way to do with this knock them out with nonlethal damage.

# Magic

As Knaves, you have The Cunning and so can cast spells, albeit in a limited amateur fashion.

In Architrave, PCs may cast spells if their level (regardless of class or other such divisions) would be sufficient to cast them in the system the spell list was written for. So, with most spell lists, a level 3 PC could only cast spells of level 0 to 2.

Spells are cast out of spell books, which must be held in both hands and read aloud. Each spell book can only be used once per day. Each spell book only holds a single spell, and each spell book takes up an item slot, so if a PC wants to be able to cast many spells, or a wide variety of spells, they'll have to fill most of their inventory with spell books.

Knaves are unable to create, copy or transcribe spell books. To gain new spell books, Knaves must adventure for them, either recovering them from dungeons or looting them from other magicians. The higher the level of the spell book, the rarer and more valuable it is. PCs openly carrying high level spell books are likely to be hounded by bandits and wizards looking to "acquire" them.

**Designer's Note:** Note that spell books can be easily re-skinned as rune stones, clay tablets, potions, scrolls, or whatever else fits your campaign. If you wanted a more dangerous, low-magic setting for example, you could make spell books potions or scrolls that are only used once and then lost forever. The random spell generator found in Ben Milton's *Maze Rats* might be useful for generating ideas for new spells.

If a spell directly affects another creature, the creature may make an ability check to avoid it (as described previously). Success reduces or negates the spell's effects. The caster makes an opposed Intelligence ability check against the defender's relevant ability, usually Dexterity for ranged attack spells, Constitution for life-draining spells, Intelligence for mind-altering spells, or Wisdom for Illusions.

Durational spells cannot be cancelled by their cast until their duration expires.

In general, the GM should use the spell description as a starting point and extrapolate the natural consequences of that.

The rules above cover Lesser Spells. Greater Spells have greater requirements and risk. Default is that a Knave of less than level 4 who casts a Greater Spell suffers the Risk noted in the spell's description; a Knave of level 4 or higher may make an Int save to avoid that. It might be possible to learn to avoid this.

## Spells

In the following spells, "L" is a number equal to the caster's level, an **item** is an object able to be lifted with one hand, and an **object** is anything up to human size. Unless otherwise noted, all spells with ongoing effects last up to L×10 minutes and have a range of up to 40 feet.

A spell, once cast, runs for its duration — a Knave *cannot* cancel a spell early.

**Designer's Note:** When revising this list from the Knave original, I tried to follow the design goals listed below. I haven't got there yet, but I'm working on it.

- Nothing that overlaps with classic fighter/cleric/thief roles
- Nothing that completely negates common dungeoneering activities.
- Nothing that nerfs or negates the most thematically powerful/frightening threats in my games, in particular undead.
- No easy direct attack spells/combat spells. They're boring, overlap too much with combat skills and weapons, and well known for contributing to the "quadratic wizard" problem.
- Ideally, everything is solidly in the space of "something a human can't normally do by any means" (given ~14C Europe technology), at least not in an easily-portable way.
- Ideally, everything provides a versatile building block for use in adventuring tactics, gambits, or plans

**Designer's Note:** Diegetic rationale for having a limited list of highly specific spells — in theory magic can do an indefinite variety of things, but in practice the vast majority of what you try achieves nothing at all. And none of the purported general theories of magic hold water beyond a very narrow scope. Most spells have been handed down from the distant past and at best been tweaked by modern practitioners. And you, as a Knave, are a pretty marginal practitioner.

## Lesser spells

1. **Adhere:** Object is covered in extremely sticky slime.
2. **Animate Object:** Object obeys your commands as best it can. It can walk 15ft per round.
3. **Anthropomorphize:** A touched animal either gains human intelligence or human appearance for L days.
4. **Attract:** L+1 objects are strongly magnetically attracted to each other if they come within 10 feet.
5. **Auditory Illusion:** You create illusory sounds that seem to come from a direction of your choice.
6. **Babble:** A creature must loudly and clearly repeat everything you think. It is otherwise mute.
7. **Beast:** You and your possessions transform into a beast, like a wolf or a bear but not exactly either. You gain claws and speed and physical strength, but you are angry and hungry and you have no human loyalties. You must rampage like (your culture's stereotype of) a "savage beast", except that you can make a Wis save to act otherwise for one round.
8. **Befuddle:** L creatures of your choice are unable to form new short-term memories for the duration of the spell.
9. **Bird Person:** Your arms turn into huge bird wings.
10. **Body Swap:** You switch bodies with a creature you touch. If one body dies, the other dies as well.

11. **Catherine:** A woman wearing a blue dress appears until end of spell. She will obey polite, safe requests.
12. **Command:** A creature obeys a single, three-word command that does not harm it. *Mind control, but quite tightly constrained.*
13. **Control Plants:** Nearby plants and trees obey you and gain the ability to move at 5 feet per round.
14. **Counterspell:** Make an opposed Intelligence ability check against the Intelligence of the caster of a nearby spell. You may do this out of turn as a reaction, or against an ongoing magical effect. On a success, you may cancel the spell.
15. **Deafen:** All nearby creatures are deafened.
16. **Detect Magic:** You hear nearby magical auras singing. Volume and harmony signify the aura's power and refinement.
17. **Disassemble:** Any of your body parts may be detached and reattached at will, without causing pain or damage. You can still control them.
18. **Disguise:** You may alter the appearance of L characters at will as long as they remain humanoid. Attempts to duplicate other characters will seem uncanny.
19. **Displace:** An object appears to be up to L×10ft from its actual position.
20. **Elasticity:** Your body can stretch up to L×2ft beyond your usual envelope.
21. **Elemental Wall:** A straight wall of ice or fire L×40ft long and 10ft high rises from the ground.
22. **Fog Cloud:** Dense fog spreads out from you.
23. **Foresight:** Get vague intimations of the future, manifest by rolling L+1 d20s. Whenever you must roll a d20 after casting the spell, you must choose and then discard one of the rolled results until they are all gone.
24. **Frenzy:** L creatures erupt in a frenzy of violence.
25. **Gravity Shift:** You can change the direction of gravity (for yourself only) up to once per round.
26. **Greed:** L creatures develop an overwhelming urge to possess a visible item of your choice. *Mind control, but unpredictable effects.*
27. **Hover:** An object hovers, frictionless, 2ft above the ground. It can hold up to L humanoids.
28. **Icy Touch:** A thick ice layer spreads across a touched surface, up to L×10ft in radius.
29. **Increase Gravity:** The gravity in an area triples.
30. **Invisible Tether:** Two objects within 10ft of each other cannot be moved more than 10ft apart.
31. **Leap:** You can jump up to L×10ft in the air.
32. **Liquid Air:** The air around you becomes swimmable.
33. **Magic Dampener:** All nearby magical effects have their effectiveness halved.
34. **Marble Madness:** Your pockets are full of marbles, and will refill every round.
35. **Masquerade:** L characters' appearances and voices become identical to a touched character.
36. **Miniaturize:** You and L other touched creatures are reduced to the size of a mouse.
37. **Mirror Image:** L illusory duplicates of yourself appear under your control.
38. **Mirrorwalk:** A mirror becomes a gateway to another mirror that you looked into today.
39. **Multiarm:** You gain L extra arms.
40. **Night Sphere:** An L×40ft wide sphere of darkness displaying the night sky appears.
41. **Objectify:** You become any inanimate object between the size of a grand piano and an apple.
42. **Ooze Form:** You become a living jelly.
43. **Pacify:** L creatures have an aversion to violence.
44. **Phantom Coach:** A ghostly coach appears until end of spell. It moves unnaturally fast over any terrain, including water.
45. **Phobia:** L creatures become terrified of an object of your choice.
46. **Pit:** A pit 10ft wide and L×5ft deep opens in the ground.
47. **Primeval Surge:** An object grows to the size of an elephant. If it is an animal, it is enraged.
48. **Psychometry:** The GM answers L yes or no questions about a touched object.
49. **Pull:** An object of any size is pulled directly towards you with the strength of L men for one round.
50. **Push:** An object of any size is pushed directly away from you with the strength of L men for one round.
51. **Rat:** You and your possessions transform into a small mundane rat. You have your normal mind but the physical limits of a rat. *Think I added this at some point, then forgot about it. Maybe I like rats?*
52. **Raise Spirit:** Summon a spirit into a dead body and make it answer L questions. Can only answer using the parts of the body still present. Works once per body and then traces are burnt out.
53. **Read Surface Thoughts:** You can hear the surface thoughts of nearby creatures.
54. **Repel:** L+1 objects are strongly magnetically repelled from each other if they come within 10 feet.
55. **Scry:** You can see through the eyes of a creature you touched earlier today.
56. **Sculpt Elements:** All inanimate material behaves like clay in your hands.
57. **Shroud:** L creatures are invisible until they move.
58. **Shuffle:** L creatures instantly switch places. Determine where they end up randomly.
59. **Sleep:** L creatures fall into a light sleep.
60. **Smoke Form:** Your body becomes living smoke.
61. **Sniff:** You can smell even the faintest traces of scents.



62. **Sort:** Inanimate items sort themselves according to categories you set. The categories must be visually verifiable.
63. **Spectacle:** A clearly unreal but impressive illusion of your choice appears, under your control. It may be up to the size of a palace and has full motion and sound.
64. **Spellseize:** Cast this as a reaction to another spell going off to make a temporary copy of it that you can cast at any time before this spell ends.
65. **Spider Climb:** You can climb surfaces like a spider. *In a game with a Thief class that had a climbing ability, I'd probably cut this. For Knave, I'm inclined to leave it in.*
66. **Summon Cube:** Once per second, (6 times per round) you may summon or banish a 3-foot-wide cube of earth. New cubes must be affixed to the earth or to other cubes.
67. **Swarm:** You become a swarm of crows, rats, or piranhas. You only take damage from area effects.
68. **Telekinesis:** You may mentally move L items.
69. **Telepathy:** L+1 creatures can hear each other's thoughts, no matter how far apart they move.
70. **Teleport Object:** An inanimate object disappears and reappears on the ground in a visible, clear area up to L×40ft away. *Renamed for clarity*
71. **Thaumaturgic Anchor:** Object becomes the target of every spell cast near it.
72. **Thicket:** A thicket of trees and dense brush up to L×40ft wide suddenly sprouts up.
73. **Time Jump:** An object disappears as it jumps L×10 minutes into the future. When it returns, it appears in the unoccupied area nearest to where it left.
74. **Summon Idol:** A carved stone statue the size of a four poster bed rises from the ground.
75. **Time Rush:** Time in a 40ft bubble starts moving 10 times faster.
76. **Time Slow:** Time in a 40ft bubble slows to 10%.

77. **True Sight:** You see through all nearby illusions.
78. **Upwell:** A spring of seawater appears.
79. **Vision:** You completely control what a creature sees.
80. **Visual Illusion:** A silent, immobile, illusion of your choice appears, up to the size of a bedroom.
81. **Ward:** A silver circle 40ft across appears on the ground. Choose one thing that cannot cross it: Living creatures, dead creatures, projectiles or metal.
82. **Web:** Your wrists can shoot thick webbing.
83. **Wizard Mark:** Your finger can shoot a stream of ulfire-colored paint. This paint is only visible to you, and can be seen at any distance, even through solid objects.
84. **X-Ray Vision:** You gain X-Ray vision.

### Greater spells

1. **Astral Prison:** An object is frozen in time and space within an invulnerable crystal shell. *Risk* — you are trapped in there with it.
2. **Earthquake:** The ground begins shaking violently. Structures may be damaged or collapse. *Risk* — the ground beneath the caster collapses — 2d6 damage and they are buried beneath rubble.
3. **Elemental Wall:** A straight wall of fire or ice L×40ft long and 10ft high rises from the ground. *Risk* — the caster finds themselves on the wrong side of the wall.
4. **Manse:** A sturdy, furnished cottage appears for L×12 hours. You can permit and forbid entry to it at will. *Risk* — you may not leave for the duration.
5. **Raise Dead:** L skeletons rise from the ground to serve you. They are incredibly stupid and can only obey simple orders. Needs lots of work e.g. needs body to work with, summons a spirit into the body. *Risk* - animates and turns against you.

# Various other things

In alphabetical order.

## Advancement

Whenever a PC accumulates 1000 XP, they gain a level, and do two things:

- Roll a number of d8s equal to their new level to find their new HP maximum. If the result is less than their previous maximum, their max HP increases by 1.
- Roll a d20 for each ability score, starting with one of your choice and working down the list. Raise that ability by 1 if the roll is **less than** that ability's defence. Keep cycling through the abilities, stopping when three abilities have advanced, and skipping any abilities that have maxed out. (20/+10).
- **Designer's Note:** *In the above method for raising ability scores, natural talents will tend to advance faster than weaknesses, which makes PCs more varied and specialized.*

As a guideline, each PC receives:

- Base of 50 XP for a low-risk accomplishment, 100 XP for a moderate-risk accomplishment, and 200 XP for a high-risk accomplishment.
- Halve that if your accomplishment was running away from a dangerous thing (the full award is for defeating, subverting, bringing-on-side, or stealthily bypassing such a thing).

The GM should freely notify the PCs of how much XP different objectives are worth when asked.

## Fleeing

PCs can of course flee combat using the regular combat rules, but the monsters are likely to keep pace with them. The alternate is to run like hell, thus:

1. Resolve any attacks due to breaking melee
2. Everyone chooses what groups they are in, i.e. who they will stay with even if they are slower than them.
3. Lowest Dex characters in each group make an opposed roll
4. Fleeing groups are caught by any pursuers who roll higher than them.
5. Whatever happens, the GM judges where any and all groups end up (which could be anywhere in running distance).

**Designer's Note:** *This is simple and quick to resolve, and gives a loss of control that is fitting for headlong flight through a hostile place.*

## Hirelings

A PC can have as many hirelings as their Cha bonus.

Hirelings *will* accompany you into a dungeon or adventure site. But in that case they will want:

- The expedition's pay in advance, which they will probably leave behind with family or friends
- A share of treasure (start at 1/4 share if below half PC level, rising to full share if near-parity or have rare, important skills)

Notes on hireling types:

- **Archer** — level 1, morale 8, bow
- **Man-at-arms** — level 1, morale 8, gambeson, d8 melee weapon
- **Knight** — level 2, morale 9, brigandine, sword and shield *or* a 2h weapon. Won't hire out to anyone below level 4, and will have family and/or friends who will ask questions if they don't return.

Everything about hireling terms is negotiable, but most people who are useful-yet-stupid already got hired by someone else. If in doubt, give +1 / -1 morale for a good / bad deal.

## Thanks

To Ben Milton for creating *Knave* and offering it under a minimally-restrictive licence.

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