

Pentola: City of Shards



From spires to catacombs,
intrigue and magic flow like blood into the canals.

By Michael T Lombardi

Pentola

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I Introduction

From spires to catacombs intrigue flows like blood into the canals.

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.

How This Book Is Laid Out

There are a few things to note while reading this book.

Example Text

Examples describing how something should play out will always be rendered like this:



An Example of an Example

Example text will be here.

Rules Test Asides

It will sometimes be necessary to make a note to the reader about the rules text to provide context or let them know where else to look in the book. These notes will always be rendered like this:

Aside Title

A summary of the reason for the aside and useful information for the reader.

In-World Asides

Occasionally, this book will include *in-world* asides - by which we mean these are narrative pieces or information given from the perspective of a person in Pentola. They will always be rendered like this:



On Pentolan Literacy

It is often said, especially by those bright scholars of the Aydinlar Empire, that Pentolans have no grasp of letters. This is, obviously, false.

For example, I am a Pentolan, and I'm writing this field guide.

There is, however a grain of truth - the vast and multitudinous population of our city does not, largely, know how to read and write. Nor do they need to! Most of them have apprenticed to a Guild or learned the Craft from a family member or friend - and we teach all of our children the *Auratic Vision* and *Message* dweomers, of course.

Most Pentolans never learn to read not, as the Aydlinars would have you believe, because their lack of enlightenment leaves them unable to do so, but *simply because it isn't necessary*.

- Mariella Mutti, Spire Basilisco Archivist

Game Design Notes

It is useful for us to include notes on the intended design and function of the game - and to help you understand how and why you might alter these rules to suit your table. They will always be rendered like this:



Design Concept

Explanation of concept and how it's intended to work, etc.

II Core Mechanics

In Pentola, there are a few things which make up the core mechanics:

- Action Resolution: How you determine if a character succeeds or fails at something
- Ratings and Rankings: Shorthand for how powerful a particular bonus is
- The Usage Die and Resource Decks: Determining whether or not resources are expended
- Time: How time is mechanized
- Distance: How distance is abstracted

1. Action Resolution

In Pentola ambiguous actions are resolved by following the Intent-Approach-Adjudicate workflow:

Intent

The player declares what their character is trying to accomplish - what outcome they want from the action or scene.



Declaring Intent

Chris is playing as Giuseppe “Porkslope” Esposito, a guerilla art-mage who uses his skill and magic boots to lay traps. Porkslope needs to get up on the side of a spire in order to design his next graffiti-spell, but a guard thinks he is suspicious.

Chris says that he wants to convince the guard that he is actually here to *clean* the spire’s walls.

At this point, Chris has declared Porkslope’s intent. {{% /example %}}

Approach

Once the intent is known, the player must explain their approach - how the character will attempt to realize their intent through action.



Explaining Approach

Chris is playing as Giuseppe “Porkslope” Esposito, a guerilla art-mage who uses his skill and magic boots to lay traps. Porkslope needs to get up on the side of a spire in order to design his next graffiti-spell, but a guard thinks he is suspicious.

Chris previously declared that Porkslope intends to convince the guard that he is actually here to clean the spire’s walls.

The referee asks Chris to explain how Porkslope will do this and Chris responds by saying Porkslope will hold up his bucket and a dirty rag, point to his own poor clothes, and try to play it off like he’s some contract-cleaner.

Other approaches Chris could’ve tried to fulfill Porkslope’s intent:

- Having Porkslope explain in great and boring detail the series of events that led to the spire needing to be cleaned, his guild being hired, and him being assigned this dangerous work.
- Having Porkslope play it off as a dead-eyed service worker who just *really* wants to get this over with.
- Having Porkslope try to hand off his bucket and tools and get the guard to try to go out the window to clean the tower herself.
- Innumerable other options constrained only by Chris’s ability to think up new approaches.

Adjudicate

Once the intent and approach are known the referee is then - and only then - able to begin to adjudicate the action. First, the referee will decide if a test of some sort is necessary. A test is necessary only under the following conditions:

1. The action as defined by the intent and approach together can fail.
 - If the combination of intent and approach can't reasonably fail - for example, reaching the second level of a tree house by climbing the ladder - there's *no* reason to call for a test.
2. The action as defined by the intent and approach together can succeed.
 - If the combination of intent and approach can't reasonably succeed - for example, reaching the second level of a tree house by digging at the base of the tree - there's *no* reason to call for a test.
3. The action as defined by the intent and approach can succeed, could fail, and failure has meaningful consequences.
 - If the consequences of failure are that the character must try again and again until success, those are not meaningful consequences. Note that the same intent and approach may have meaningful consequences under one set of conditions but not under another.



Adjudicating Actions

Chris is playing as Giuseppe “Porkslope” Esposito, a guerilla art-mage who uses his skill and magic boots to lay traps. Porkslope needs to get up on the side of a spire in order to design his next graffiti-spell, but a guard thinks he is suspicious.

Chris previously declared that Porkslope intends to convince the guard that he is actually here to clean the spire's walls by holding up his bucket and a dirty rag, pointing to his own poor clothes, and trying to play it off like he's some contract-cleaner.

Depending on the referee and the game, here are a few ways this could go:

- The referee decides that the guard knows the spire is due for a cleaning and that Porkslope's explanation seems to fit right in. There is no reasonable chance of failure, so the referee announces that the guard lets Porkslope pass.
- The referee decides that the guard has already worked with the spire-cleaners' guild before and knows their customs and attire - and Porkslope matches neither. There is no reasonable chance of success, so the referee announces that the guard is going to try to detain Porkslope for further questioning.
- The referee decides that the guard's neither particularly knowledgeable nor lax in her duties, so Porkslope can try to convince her and this will require a test. Note that in this example Porkslope could succeed, in which case he can continue, or could fail, in which case the guard's suspicions will be aroused. Porkslope can't just try again over and over, there are meaningful consequences for each failure.

Tests

If the referee decides that a test is called for, they will then specify the appropriate characteristic. The player should add their *highest* relevant bonus to their goal. In cases where it is ambiguous if a bonus should apply, the referee will decide.

In order to successfully pass a test a player must roll **below** their goal for the specified characteristic on a d100.



Actions and Tests: Locked Door

Cerise, a strong and experienced mercenary, is attempting to get past a locked door by kicking it down in several scenarios:

1. Cerise reaches an abandoned warehouse on the outskirts of town to look for clues but the side door is locked. Even though it is possible that Cerise's first attempt to break down the door might fail in this scenario the referee decides there are no meaningful consequences to that failure, nor to retrying until she *does* kick the door down. The referee declares that Cerise successfully kicks the door in.
2. Cerise is chasing a fleeing bandit who has slipped into the building and barred the door behind him to buy himself more time to escape. In this scenario not only can Cerise fail to kick in the door but each failed attempt gives the fleeing bandit more time to escape. The referee decides that a test is required and directs Cerise to test against her Bone, adding any relevant bonuses she may have.
3. Cerise is locked into a steel vault and needs to escape. In this scenario failure to kick open the door means that Cerise remains locked in the vault. However, the referee notes that the vault door is nearly a foot thick and that Cerise's stated approach - kicking down the door - is simply impossible. The referee declares that Cerise kicks the steel door but fails to open it.

Some tests are **easy**, doubling the chance of success. Other tests are **hard**, halving the chance of success.



Tests: Easy and Hard

Caleb is attempting to convince the guard to share some gossip using several different approaches:

1. Caleb wants to share false gossip about the topic to prompt the guard to share his own knowledge. The referee decides that this approach *could* work, but isn't particularly more or less likely to do so. The referee therefore calls for an Flax test to pull off the minor deception.
2. Caleb wants to approach the guard with a smile and a friendly smile before mentioning the topic of gossip off-handedly. The referee knows that the guard is young and slightly ill disciplined - and decides that the guard is particularly susceptible to this method. The referee therefore calls for an easy Flax test, allowing Caleb to double his goal for this test.
3. Caleb wants to intimidate the guard into sharing the gossip by being physical and not-quite threatening him. The referee knows that the guard is young, slightly ill disciplined, and has a lot to prove - and therefore determine that this method is particularly unlikely to get the fulfill the desired intent. The referee therefor calls for Caleb to make a hard Flax test, forcing Caleb to cut his goal for this test in half.

If the result of the test is less than 1/10 the test's goal, it is a **triumph** - the *best possible* result based on the character's intentions.

If the result of the test is 100, it is a **botch** - the *worst possible* result based on the character's intentions.

Opposed Tests

Opposed tests are made by both sides who are in direct competition with each other. Both characters make the tests as normal and the results depend on how well both sides do:

- **One Side Succeeds:** If one side succeeds their test and the other fails then the successful side has won the opposed test.
- **Both Characters Succeed:** If both sides succeed then whoever rolled the highest in their test wins the opposed test. However, if one side rolls a critical while the other rolls an ordinary success then the side that rolled the critical wins.
- **Both Sides Fail:** Whoever rolled the highest without botching in their test wins the opposed test. In the case of ties for both the Player wins. If the action is player-against-player, the defender wins.



Opposed Tests: Vying for Crowd Favor

Caleb and Cerivny are vying for the favor of the crowd during a debate. Cerivny relies on her natural charm and skill at persuasion to sway the crowd, rolling against a goal of 80%. Caleb draws on their deep experience and leverages the crowd's emotions through recalling their historic heroines and bringing to mind their greatest triumphs and struggles, making their test easy and rolling against a goal of 140%.

Here are a few ways this could play out, depending on the results of each characters' test:

1. Cerivny rolls an 87, failing, and Caleb rolls an 83, succeeding. Caleb wins over the crowd.
2. Cerivny rolls a 68, succeeding, and Caleb rolls a 32, succeeding. Because both characters succeeded at their test and Cerivny's roll was higher, Cerivny wins over the crowd.
3. Cerivny rolls a 41, succeeding, and Caleb rolls a 12, critically succeeding. Even though both character succeeded Caleb had a critical success and therefore wins over the crowd.
4. Cerivny rolls a 91, failing, and Caleb rolls a 100, botching. Even though both characters failed, Caleb actually botched and therefore Cerivny wins over the crowd.

2. Ratings and Rankings

Bonuses to tests in Pentola come from several sources – vocations, skills, relationships, and reputations. The level of bonus a character has in each of these is the *rating* of that vocation, skills, relationship, or reputation.

Reaching certain ratings in these bonuses unlocks a ranking, a general category for how profound that bonus is:

- Any rating less than 0% is *nonexistant* (N)
- A rating between 1-25% is *basic* (B)
- A rating between 25-49% is *comprehensive* (C)
- A rating of 50-74% is *extraordinary* (E)
- A rating of 75-99% is *incredible* (I)
- A rating of 100%+ is *unbelievable* (U)

In addition to adding the highest relevant rating to a test, sometimes the ranking is also important and additional effects or rules key off of that.

3. Usage Die

Some special abilities and items will specify that they have a usage die.

Immediately after using an ability with a usage die, or one minute after using an item with one, roll the appropriate usage die. If the roll is a 1 then the usage die is downgraded to the next lower die in the following chain:

D20 > D12 > D10 > D8 > D6 > D4

When you roll a 1 on a D4 the item or ability is expended and the character has no more uses of it left.



Using Your Usage Die

After Carina uses herbs from her kit to brew a tea to make the shopkeep more susceptible to her influence she must roll the usage die for her herbs, a D8. Carina rolls the D8 which lands on a 1, meaning that one use from her herbal kit is gone. The kit's usage die is reduced by one step to a D6, meaning the next time it is used Carina will roll that die instead.

If instead Carina had rolled a 2 or higher the usage die would remain a D8.

4. Resource Cards

Sometimes, a character needs to expend tangible resources to acquire something or perform an action, typically when the item or ability has an associated cost.

In Pentola, the cards in a suit go from 1-7, then Thief, Captain, Matriarch (the named cards, called *face cards*, all have a value of 10 unless otherwise indicated).



Using a Standard Deck of Playing Cards

To use a standard deck of playing cards, remove the 8s, 9s, and 10s from the deck. It's useful to sort the deck initially by suit, since how many suits you have access to often depends on the specific resource.

Every character has access to a deck which represents their own available resources. When you have to pay a cost, you draw cards one at a time from your deck until you meet the cost, unless otherwise specified.

If your relevant ranking is basic, you look through your deck and choose one card to pay towards the cost. The remainder must be randomly drawn after you reshuffle the remaining cards in your deck.

If your relevant ranking is comprehensive, you may look through your deck and choose up to two cards to pay towards the cost instead. If your relevant ranking is extraordinary, you may choose up to three cards. If your relevant ranking is incredible, you may choose up to four cards. If your relevant ranking is unbelievable, you may choose any number of cards.



Paying a Cost with Resource Cards

Carina is plans to perform a ritual whose cost is 6. Her relevant rating is 43, *comprehensive*.

She may look through her deck to select up to two cards to use to pay the cost, and chooses to use a 2 and a 4. If her relevant rating was 23, *basic*, she would only be able to select one card.

She might then choose to use a 6 and not have to draw, or a 3 and draw a card.

Cards spent from your available resources are not automatically refilled; place them in a discard pile. Different types of resources are refilled using specific rules for those resources.

5. Time

While playing it's sometimes useful to break time down mechanically - during fights or tense moments, for example. Largely though, play passes at whatever speed makes sense for the adventure and action - minutes may pass, or hours, or weeks.

When you need to mechanize time, it breaks down like this:

- Action occurs every *moment*, which is roughly three seconds. In a moment, a character can make one action and reaction without penalty. If a character wants to perform two actions they may forego their reaction and vice versa. A character may take an additional action or reaction without forgoing another, but all of their tests are one step harder as a result. A character may also forego an action or reaction to focus on just the one thing, making the test one step easier.
- Actions include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Exercising a knack
 - Making an attack
 - Moving
 - Applying a dweomer
 - Channeling a miracle
 - Throwing a grappling hook
 - Drinking a potion
 - Using a matrix or scroll
- Reactions include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Parrying
 - Blocking
 - Dodging
 - Interfering with another action

Initiative

In addition to time breaking down into moments you need to be able to determine what order actions and reactions happen. In Pentola we use the *declare up, adjudicate down* (DUAD) system for initiative.

Each character involved in the conflict first rolls against their intellect, adding a skill or vocational bonus if appropriate. The initiative test is treated like a multiple-participant opposed test.

The participant whose result is *worst* declare their actions and reactions first. The participant whose result is *next worst* declares their actions and reactions next, and so on until the participant with the best result declares their action and any reaction.

Then, in reverse order, the actions take effect - so the character who declared last acts first and the character who declared first acts last.

Note that initiative doesn't always mean combat - you might break into initiative when chasing someone, or racing to an objective, or trying to provide a distraction, etc.



Example Initiative: Two Combatants

Toph and Tarasi are sparring. Toph has an Flax of 39 and a fencing skill bonus of 43% (total goal of 82%). Tarasi has an Flax of 30 and a gearslinger skill bonus of 20% (total goal of 50%).

At the beginning of the moment both characters roll an initiative test and their results are compared:

Tarasi rolls a 79, failing her test, and Toph rolls a 31, succeeding.

Tarasi therefore declares her action first: she decides to kick at Toph. Toph declares next; since he knows Tarasi will kick at him, he declares he will use his reaction to dodge her kick and his action to elbow her in response.

Toph is able to try to elbow Tarasi first. He succeeds on his test, inflicting damage. Tarasi attempts to kick Toph and succeeds on her test with a 21, but Toph also succeeds on his dodge (27) and his result is higher - therefore she does no damage.

The next moment starts and they both roll for initiative again and repeat the cycle.

Example Initiative: Three Combatants

As in the last example, but there's now a third combatant, Galner (Flax 30, Needlejutsu skill bonus 21%), who is teamed up with Tarasi against Toph. Toph's result is a 31 (success), Tarasi's a 79 (failure), and Galner's a 10 (success).

Tarasi declares her action first, deciding to kick at Toph. Galner succeeded on his test but his result is lower than Toph's, so he declares next: he will tackle Toph. Toph declares last and this time decides to focus on Galner, dodging his tackle and elbowing him.

Toph acts first, successfully elbowing Galner. Galner acts next, succeeding on his test to tackle Toph (rolling a 15), but Toph critically succeeds on his test (rolling a 2) and so avoids him. Tarasi acts next, succeeding on her test to kick Toph and inflicts damage.

At the beginning of the next round they all test initiative again and repeat the cycle.



The initiative mechanic is one which is harder and longer to explain than it is to use. In practice, it does a few things:

- It keeps combat dynamic, ensuring each round the initiative order will likely change.
- It rewards players for paying attention to what everyone in the combat is doing - you can only react to actions lower in the initiative order, or play off other actions.
- It ratchets up tension - the unpredictability and potential for dangerous combinations of actions make for more lethal combat.

It has a higher cognitive load on the referee and players than traditional or side-based initiative, but in practice it's manageable for fewer than a dozen combatants - which is where traditional initiative systems break down too.

My method for tracking it is to record the results for each participant on a piece of paper or in a text document, putting lower results lower on the page than higher ones. I then mark each result with an S for success (if the participant succeeded on their roll), a CS for critical success, or an F for a failure. I then work my way up the document, starting with the lowest failure to the highest. Repeat for the successes and then the critical successes. I then flip the order and the actions are adjudicated as normal.

If this is too complicated or fiddly for your table, pretty much any other initiative system can work here. I do encourage you to try it though, first!

6. Distance

Distances in Pentola are abstracted to a few ranges:

- Things and people are *close* if you can reach out and touch them with no more than a few steps.
- Things and people are *near* if you can walk to them within a few seconds - within about 30 ft / 10 meters.
- Things and people are *distant* if they're further than nearby but still clearly perceptible - within about 150 ft / 50 meters.
- Things and people are *far* if they're further than distant but you can still visible.

Characters can move somewhere near as an action in a moment. If they forego their reaction, they can instead sprint to somewhere distant.

III Character Creation

Characters are created by following these steps:

1. Determining characteristics
2. Calculating attributes
3. Determining ambitions and traits
4. Determining vocation and skills
5. Determining relationships
6. Determining reputations
7. Determining knacks
8. Gaining initial dweomers
9. Determining wealth and buying equipment
10. Gain Starting Improvement Points

7. Determining Characteristics

Characters in Pentola have three characteristics: Iron, Flax, Bone.

In Pentola, iron is both rare and precious as it has apparent metamagical and demon-abjuring properties; any magic effects are more portant when iron is incorporated in the application and demons of all sorts shy away from iron as it ignores their abilities and defenses. Iron represent's a character's force of will, presence, and metaphysical aptitude.

Flax is a crop which represents so much of human ingenuity - one of the earliest and most widespread crops domesticated, flax supplies the Pentolans with food, oil, cloth, paper, and paint; it represents ingenuity, industry, trade, craft, and knowledge to the Pentolans. Flax represents a character's mental prowess and training, including their knowledge and intuition.

Pentolans are not strangers to danger or hard work and associate bone with both, priding themselves on their physical daring and the use of their bodies to accomplish their tasks, though they are ever mindful of their own ultimate fragility. Bone represents a character's physical prowess and training, including their strength, agility, hand-eye coordination, etc.

Characteristics are the base goal for tests.

Declare *what* you're trying to accomplish (your intent) **and** *how* you intend to accomplish it (your approach). The referee will determine if your action requires a test and which characteristic is most appropriate.

Then you'll try to roll under the appropriate goal. Your characteristics determine your base chance of success at any given test, but you'll *usually* be able to add a bonus from a relevant skill, vocation, or ability.

You determine your starting characteristics by rolling three twenty-sided dice (3d20) for each characteristic in order. You roll first for Bone, then for Flax, and finally for Iron.



Summing 3d20

When determining a characteristic you roll 3d20. Assuming you rolled a 13, a 7, and a 16, the sum of these results would be 36.

A 30 in a characteristic is the average for a human - higher scores are above average - and a 75 is the absolute upper bound of a human not affected by special abilities or conditions.



On Starting Characteristics

We use 3d20 to determine characteristics for a couple reasons:

1. Homage - this plays into the history of the hobby, where players roll 3d6 to determine their attributes.
2. A bell curve - this will tend to give results near 30, with few characters who have characteristics either very high or very low.

Note that this applies to *humans*, but that other creatures - demons, monsters, etc - can and *probably should* have their characteristics determined by a different formula. For example, a minotaur might roll 7d12 for their body and power but only 3d10 for their intellect. Similarly, a stormraven might have a body of 1d12+12, an intellect of 2d20, and a power of 5d20.

You could modify this to create more heroic player characters - 2d20+20 will tend to create characters with average characteristics around 40. This isn't the default because Pentola leans into the lethality and danger of combat and magic.



Determining Characteristics for Taryn Carozza

To determine Taryn's characteristics, we roll 3d20 each for Iron, Flax, and Bone:

- **Iron:** 18 – basic
- **Flax:** 44 – comprehensive
- **Bone:** 51 – *extraordinary!*

At the beginning of play Taryn has significantly less personal power than most people, has an average education and knowledge-base, and is stronger, tougher, and more agile than most people.

8. Calculating Attributes

Once you have rolled for your starting characteristics you can determine your attributes. These are pools of points which represent your ability to sustain damage (in the case of Blood) and use magic or special abilities (in the case of Tephra).

- **Blood:** Add your character's Bone and Iron - the 'tens' digit is their Blood. In Pentola, citizens refer to how thick or thin someone's blood is as a metaphor for how tough they are, or how much danger seems to affect them. People who are thick-blooded stride through dangers recklessly, coming out relatively unscathed, and survive injuries you would expect to be lethal. When someone's luck seems to be running out in a fight, Pentolans will oft remark on their thinning blood.
- **Tephra:** Add your character's Flax and Iron - the 'tens' digit is their Tephra. Pentolans describe people as being heavy with Tephra if they are intrinsically powerful or adept at magic, believing them to be literally full of magic. If someone is light on Tephra or has been dropping it, Pentolans believe they are not capable of much more magic... at least, not without thinning their blood dangerously.



Example Determining Attributes for Taryn

Having rolled the characteristics for Taryn we can calculate their attributes:

- Blood: With a Bone of 51 and a Iron of 18 (total of 69), Taryn's Blood is 6.
- Tephra: With an Flax of 44 and a Iron of 18 (total of 62), Taryn's Tephra is 6.

9. Determining Traits and Ambitions

The following sections give you a bit of background you can use to make your character more distinctive and which you can build on to have a starting point.

As with all of the other character creation tables, you are *not obligated* to use them! You can roll on them, choose from them, make up traits of your own, or otherwise start play with something more of a blank slate.

You must, however, start play with one or two long term ambitions.

Long term ambitions are things that are a character's motivation in life, only achievable over multiple adventures. Short term ambitions are usually relevant to the adventure currently being played and are determined within the first hour of each session. Short term ambitions are removed from the character sheet at the end of each session. Ambitions are always removed from the character sheet when completed.

Achieving ambitions earns your character Improvement Points (IP), which you can spend to improve your character:

- Once per session per ambition, when that ambition is brought into play in a concrete way, the character earns 1IP.
- If a short term ambition is achieved the character earns 2IP.
- If a long term ambition is achieved the character earns 5IP.

Mark your character's long term ambition on your character sheet. A character may record up to two long term ambitions and one short term ambition on their character sheet at a time - you may pursue other ambitions, but they will not earn improvement points.



Ambitions and IP

The accrual of IP by working to fulfill ambitions is an important mechanic in Pentola. It emphasizes that characters grow by pursuing their own goals in the world, a reflection of the effect of magic upon them. As their ambitions are realized, their gestalt grows stronger and more defined.

Note that characters accrue IP for working to fulfill their own ambitions and those of others in the group, not only for completing them.

d100	Personality	Physical	Interests	Fears	Ambitions
01	Absentminded	Athletic	Acrobatics	A Specific Guild	Assassinate a Public Figure
02	Active	Beady Eyes	Agriculture	Alchemy	Be Recognized
03	Adventurous	Beefy	Alchemy	Archives	Become a Champion
04	Appreciative	Bony	Anatomy	Becoming Angry	Become a Demonic Supplicant
05	Athletic	Bowlegged	Antiquing	Bees	Become a Gang Captain
06	Big-thinking	Bright Eyes	Antiquities	Being Alone	Become a Gondolieri
07	Blunt	Broad Nose	Aquascaping	Being Buried Alive	Become a Grantor
08	Brutal	Broad-Shouldered	Archery	Being Contagious	Become a Patron
09	Calm	Bulbous Nose	Architecture	Being Dirty	Become a Principal
10	Cantankerous	Bulging Eyes	Astronomy	Being Eaten	Become a Supplicant
11	Careless	Bulky	Baking	Being Forgotten	Become an Archmage
12	Casual	Burly	Bird watching	Being Rained On	Become an Ironbinder
13	Cautious	Button Nose	Book collecting	Being Stared At	Become Center of a Hero Cult
14	Clean	Calloused Hands	Bookbinding	Being Wet	Become Wealthy
15	Clear-headed	Catlike Face	Candlemaking	Birds	Bind a Demon
16	Colorful	Chapped Lips	Carving	Blood	Break a Law of Magic
17	Compassionate	Chiseled	Ceramics	Blushing	Bring a Golem to Life

d100	Personality	Physical	Interests	Fears	Ambitions
18	Competitive	Chiseled Face	Chemistry	Canals	Build a Bridge
19	Conformist	Chubby	Coin collecting	Ceremonies	Build a Carnavalesco Float
20	Contemplative	Cloudy Eyes	Comedy	Childbirth	Build a House
21	Contradictory	Coltish	Cooking	Coffins	Build a Laboratory
22	Courteous	Compact	Crotcheting	Colors	Catalogue an Unkown Creature
23	Cowardly	Cracked Lips	Dancing	Comets	Change a Law
24	Critical	Craggy Face	Dentistry	Confined Spaces	Change the Past
25	Cultured	Crooked Nose	Directing	Cosmic Phenomenon	Clear Family Name
26	Dedicated	Curvy	Disease	Crossing Bridges	Complete a Collection
27	Devious	Dainty Nose	Divination	Crystals or Glass	Conquer a Spire
28	Discouraging	Deep-Set Eyes	Drama	Dawn	Craft a Masterpiece
29	Discourteous	Delicate Hands	Drawing	Daylight	Defeat a Harcosok
30	Disloyal	Dull Eyes	Ecology	Demons	Defend a Thesis
31	Disobedient	Elongated Face	Economics	Dinner Conversations	Destroy a Rival Organization
32	Dogmatic	Emaciated	Engineering	Dolls	Destroy an Artifact
33	Dynamic	Fit	Ethics	Drakes	Discover a Lost Dweomer
34	Ebullient	Flabby	Falconry	Feces	Discover a Star
35	Empathetic	Flared Nose	Fishing	Feeling Pleasure	Discover Elixir of Life
36	Esthetic	Flecked Eyes	Fishkeeping	Fish	Discover Lost Knowledge
37	Extravagant	Full-Figured	Gambling	Flowers	Earn a Favor From Mama Gondoliera
38	Extreme	Gaunt	Gaming	Flutes	Earn a Gondolieri Nickname
39	Familial	Glittering Eyes	Gardening	Fog	Earn a Reputation
40	Fatalistic	Grimy Nails	Genealogy	Forgetting Things	Execute a Bank Heist
41	Felicitic	Hawk Nose	Geography	Fountains	Find a Cure for Splintering
42	Fiery	Heavy-lidded Eyes	Geology	gambling	Find the Pentolan Egg
43	Fixed	Heavy-set	Glassblowing	garlic	Fly
44	Forgiving	Hooded Eyes	Herpetology	Growing Old	Found a Guild
45	Friendly	Hourglass Figure	Hunting	Hearing a Certain Word or Name	Found a Gymnasium
46	Grim	Jowly Face	Hydroponics	Heights	Gain a Patron
47	Gullible	Lanky	Insect collecting	Ice or Frost	Get Art in a Gala
48	Haughty	Large	Interior design	Infinity	Get Elected
49	Helpful	Large Hands	Investing	Leprosy	Graffiti a Major Power
50	High-minded	Lissome	Jewelry making	Libraries	Invent a Dweomer
51	Idealistic	Lithe	Journalism	Lice	Invent Alchemical Food
52	Impersonal	Long Nose	Juggling	Long Waits	Invent Alchemical Formula
53	Impulsive	Long-Legged	Knitting	Long Words	Invent Alchemical Poison
54	Intolerant	Moist Lips	Lace making	Looking up	Invent New Alchemical Fruit
55	Irrational	Muscular	Landscaping	Magic	Join the Bloodless
56	Kind	Narrow Eyes	Lapidary	Magistrates	Kill an Aristocrat
57	Libidinous	Narrow Face	Leadership	Meat	Lead a Carnavalesco Parade
58	Logical	Narrow Lips	Learning	Mice	Lead a Guild
59	Mannerless	Oblong Face	Leather crafting	Moths	Lead a Temple
60	Melancholic	Petite	Linguistics	Myths	Lose a Reputation
61	Mellow	Plump	Logic	Noise	Make a Deal With a Demon
62	Meretricious	Plush	Magic	Nosebleeds	Make an Ever-burning Lamp
63	Miserable	Pot-Bellied	Martial arts	Nudity	Map a Catacomb
64	Narrow	Protruding Eyes	Mathematics	Paintings	Complex Completely Master a Dweomer

d100	Personality	Physical	Interests	Fears	Ambitions
65	Old-fashioned	Pudgy	Mechanisms	Parasites	Modify Body with Magic
66	Outspoken	Ragged Nails	Meditation	Poetry	Never Go Hungry Again
67	Paternalistic	Rangy	Metalworking	Politicians	Obtain a Mirror of Nevaeh
68	Peaceful	Rheumy Eyes	Meteorology	Poverty	Obtain an Accurate Clock
69	Pedantic	Ripped	Model building	Punishment	Own a Ship
70	Perceptive	Rough Hands	Painting	Razors	Own an Inn
71	Providential	Round Face	Perfume	Reptiles	Perform a Ritual
72	Prudent	Sculpted Face	Philanthropy	Ridicule	Sacrifice
73	Repentant	Sharp Eyes	Philosophy	Skin Lesions	Perform Successful Surgery
74	Resentful	Short	Physics	Sleep	Raise the Dead
75	Reserved	Sinewy	Poetry	Small Things	Reconcile Two Powers
76	Responsible	Slender	Politics	Spires	Recover Porkslope's Boots
77	Sedentary	Sloping Shoulders	Pottery	Spirits	Replace a Body Part
78	Self-reliant	Small Eyes	Puppetry	Statues	Retrieve an Artifact
79	Sensual	Small Hands	Puzzles	Stealing	Ride a Griffon
80	Seraphic	Smooth Hands	Quilling	Sunshine	Rob a Spire
81	Solitary	Square Face	Reading	Tapeworms	Rule a Neighborhood
82	Steadfast	Square Hands	Seafaring	Teeth	Rule a Spire
83	Stolid	Squinty Eyes	Sewing	The Churn	See the Glass Shark
84	Studious	Stocky	Shoes	The Night	Slay a Demon
85	Stupid	Straight Nose	Singing	The Sea	Start a New Line of Drakes
86	Suave	Strapping	Sketching	Theatres	Summon a Demon
87	Subjective	Stubby Fingers	Slinging	Theology	Survive the Gauntlet
88	Tactless	Sunken Eyes	Spelunking	Time	Swim the Churn
89	Tense	Taut	Stone skipping	Toads	Take Revenge
90	Thievish	Thick	Storytelling	Trebuchets	Topple a Spire
91	Troublesome	Thin Lips	Swimming	Trees	Uncover a Rule of Magic
92	Unceremonious	Thin Nose	Theater	Undressing in Front of Someone	Ward off Demonic Threat Through Song
93	Understanding	Toned	Theology	Vegetables	Wield an Iron Weapon
94	Unhealthy	Turned-up Nose	Topiary	Venereal Disease	Win a Brewing Competition
95	Unimaginative	Voluptuous	Trading	Voids	Win a Drake Race
96	Unpolished	Wild Eyes	Travel	Washing	Win a Judicial Duel
97	Unreflective	Wide-set Eyes	Treasure Hunting	Weakness	Win Award for Excellence
98	Unstable	Willowy	Trebucheting	Wealth	Win Pokey's Box
99	Venturesome	Wiry	Whittling	Whirlpools	Write a Book
100	Winning	Wolfish Face	Wrestling	Wind	Write a Book
					Write Successful Play



Example: Determining Traits and Ambitions for Taryn

For Taryn we roll once for each column in the traits table:

- **Personality:** Contradictory (21)
- **Physical Trait:** Narrow Eyes (56)
- **Interest:** Learning (58)
- **Fear:** Drakes (33)
- **Long Term Ambition:** Ward Off Demonic Threat Through Song (90)

These traits paint an image of Taryn as a person eager to learn and always watchful, seeking truth by speaking up even when it's unwise. Their fear of Drakes makes their start as a would-be Knight more difficult *and* interesting. The ambition to ward off Demons with a song implies that they have a curiosity about the *Gondolieri* who are famous for abjuring the demons in the canals with their songs.

10. Vocations and Skills

Vocations

Characters each have a vocation - a calling or an occupation to which a character is inexorably drawn and which helps to define them.

Whenever your character is faced with a test which can be reasonably argued to be relevant to their vocation you may add your vocation bonus to the test's goal.

Every character begins play with a single vocation at 25% and can optionally acquire a second vocation later by spending five IP. No character can have more than two vocations at a single time.

If you want to trade one of your vocations for another, you can do so freely, though the bonus resets to 25%.



Using Vocations

Tick-Tock Tarasi has *Clockmaker* as a vocation.

When attempting to shoot a crossbow at an enemy mercenary, she could not fall back on her Clockmaker vocation to improve her chances of success. She could, however, leverage her vocation to improve her chances to pick a lock, assuming she doesn't have a more relevant skill.

In cases where she *does* have a relevant skill, she can choose to use whichever bonus is higher.



Vocations and Intended Function

Vocations are a sort of fall-back option, they should rarely be the first-choice for a test. Character specialization is described by their *skills*, vocations act as surety that characters don't fail at things in their primary domain.

You can do entirely away with skills and just rely on vocations, but be aware that this reduces the number of knobs and levers available.

One thing you can do is increase the IP cost of raising a vocation to offset the temptation to use it for everything (if you find that to be a problem).

Improvement points (IP)

Improvement Points, also called IP, are the currency by which your characters advance in Pentola. You gain IP by fulfilling ambitions, protecting dependents, and thwarting enemies. These activities are covered more fully in later chapters.

You can write your own vocation, roll to determine your vocation based on the table below, or choose a vocation that you think fits your character.

d100 Result	Vocation	d100 Result	Vocation	d100 Result	Vocation	d100 Result	Vocation
01	Acrobat	26	Cooper	51	Hatter	76	Performer
02	Actor	27	Courtesan	52	Historian	77	Reeve
03	Alchemist	28	Cutler	53	Illuminator	78	Researcher
04	Apothecary	29	Cutpurse	54	Inventor	79	Retainer
05	Archaeologist	30	Dancer	55	Investigator	80	Saddler
06	Archer	31	Dentist	56	Jester	81	Sailor
07	Architect	32	Diabolist	57	Jeweler	82	Scribe
08	Aristocrat	33	Diplomat	58	Journalist	83	Sculptor
09	Artist	34	Drake Jockey	59	Judge	84	Smith
10	Assassin	35	Duellist	60	Lawyer	85	Soldier
11	Automator	36	Enchanter	61	Librarian	86	Spelunker
12	Barber	37	Exorcist	62	Linguist	87	Spirit Binder
13	Barrister	38	Explorer	63	Locksmith	88	Spy
14	Bodyguard	39	Falconer	64	Mason	89	Summoner
15	Bookbinder	40	Fencer	65	Mercenary	90	Surgeon
16	Bounty	41	Firefighter	66	Merchant	91	Tailor
17	Hunter	42	Fisher	67	Mortician	92	Teacher
18	Brewer	43	Florist	68	Notary	93	Thief
19	Butcher	44	Fortuneteller	69	Prostitute	94	Torturer
20	Canal	45	Gardener	70	Politician	95	Toymaker
21	Purifier	46	Gladiator	71	Preacher	96	Tutor
22	Carpenter	47	Glider	72	Priest	97	Vatter
23	Cartographer	48	Gondolier	73	Printer	98	Weaver
24	Cleric	49	Grocer	74	Privateer	99	Wizard
25	Clock Maker	50	Guard	75	Procurer	100	Writer
	Cobbler						
	Cook						

Choosing Skills

Skills are things a character specializes in doing. In cases where a character has both a vocation *and/or* one or more skills which could apply to action, use whichever bonus is higher. After a character successfully passes a normal or hard test against a skill, place a mark to the right of the skill. During the next down time between adventures, roll a d100 for each skill with such a mark; if the result is greater than your current skill bonus, increase your bonus by 3. In either case, erase the mark.



Increasing Skills Through Use

The rule as written allows characters to increase their skills through use, though slowly. It's also designed to prevent spamming the same skill over and over as a solution to all problems as you mark it only once per adventure. As discussed at the end of this chapter in the section on [Improvement Points](#), you can also improve your skills by training and spending IP. Use isn't the only way to improve your character's skills but it's the only way to do so without spending downtime/IP.

At the beginning of play, a character has 250 percentage points to spend on skills, where each point grants the character a +1% chance of success to related actions.

In Pentola there is no defined skill list, but here are a few examples for inspiration:

Dodge, Archery, Fencing, Culture (Gascon), Alchemy, Athletics, Driving, Bluffing, Persuasion, Rhetoric, Mechanisms, Streetwise, Trade, Literacy (Pentolan), Occult Lore, Medicine, Wrestling, Painting, Swimming, Thaumaturgy, Drakeback Riding, Herbalism, Mathematics, Goldsmithing, Sculpting, Researching, Stealth, Hagglng, Literacy (Aydinlar), etc.



Skill and Vocation Bonuses in Action

Tick-Tock Tarasi has *Clockmaker* as a vocation (25% bonus), as well as the skills Crafting (50%), Literacy [Pentolan] (35%), Researching (30%), Alchemy (40%), Occult Lore (30%), Diabolism (20%), Dodge (20%), and Appraisal (20%).

Scenario 1: Shooting a Crossbow

None of Tarasi's skills or her vocation apply to this action, so she can't add any bonuses to it.

Scenario 2: Picking a Lock

In this case, Tarasi has no skills that apply to this action, but her vocation does - so she can add that bonus to this test.

Scenario 3: Appraising a Lock

In this case, both Tarasi's vocation *and* her skill Appraisal apply to this action. Her vocation has a higher bonus (25% vs 20%), so she would use her vocation bonus on this test.

Scenario 4: Appraising Art

In this case, only Tarasi's Appraisal skill applies to this action, so she would add that bonus to this test.

Archetype Skills

If you're unsure of what sort of character you'd like to play mechanically, you may choose to roll for an archetype on the table below or select one freely.

Instead of having 250 points to spend on skills, you gain the skills listed for your archetype and have 50 points left to distribute.

d10 result	Archetype	Skills (Bonus %)
1	Sword and Board	Sword and Buckler (35), Athletics (35), Bluster (30), Streetwise (20), Haggling (20), Swimming (20), Military Lore (20), Heraldry (20), Dodge (20), and Crafting (10).
2	Archer	Marksman (35), Athletics (35), Perception (30), Streetwise (20), Haggling (20), Fletching (20), Hunting (20), Stealth (20), and Crafting (10).
3	Thief	Stealth (35), Acrobatics (35), Streetwise (30), Pickpocket (20), Lockpicking (20), Perception (20), Reconnaissance (20), Marksman (20), and Crafting (10).
4	Alchemist	Alchemy (35), Research (35), Trade (30), Crafting (30), Literacy [Pentolan] (20), Nature Lore (20), Medicine (20), and Appraisal (20).
5	Priest	Persuasion (35), Religious Lore (35), Diabolism (30), Crafting (30), Investigation (20), Literacy [Pentolan] (20), Occult Lore (20), and Alchemy (20).
6	Mage	Crafting (45), Literacy [Pentolan] (35), Researching (30), Alchemy (20), Occult Lore (20), Diabolism (20), Dodge (20), and Appraisal (20).
7	Knight	Sword and Buckler (35), Drakerider (35), Marksmanship (30), Rhetoric (20), Trade (20), Literacy [Pentolan] (20), Heraldry (20), Swimming (20), and Crafting (10).
8	Con Artist	Bluff (35), Streetwise (35), Deception (30), Legal Lore (20), Appraisal (20), Mechanisms (20), Haggling (20), Brawling (20), and Crafting (10).
9	Artist	Crafting (45), Sculpting (35), Trade (30), Research (20), Mechanisms (20), Alchemy (20), Literacy [Pentolan] (20), and Drawing (20). <i>May trade Sculpting and Drawing for any other types of art.</i>
10	Leader	Persuasion (35), Diplomacy (35), Politics (30), Legal Lore (20), Literacy [Pentolan] (20), Investigation (20), Sword and Buckler (20), Dodge (20), and Crafting (10).

Note that this includes the automatic 10% skill bonus in Crafting every Pentolan starts with.



Skills and Ambiguity

Note that some of the skills overlap or seem a bit random - it is intended that you pick skills that you want your character to specialize in, then use those specializations to solve problems. The list is freeform so you can capture *exactly* what makes your character yours.

You can determine if a skill is too broad mostly by judgement: Fighting is probably not specific enough, but a particular fighting style is okay. Influence is too broad, but bluff, rhetoric, persuasion, and bluster are all okay. Largely, if there's a more specific word that can speak to a character's *approach*, rather than their *intent*, it's an indicator that the more specific word should be used. Sometimes, this isn't possible.

You can also swing the other way and go for more vague skills that apply more broadly, but be aware that characters will likely accrue a short list of skills with high bonuses.



Passively Using Skills

Sometimes you'll want to represent that a character is knowledgeable rather than skilled in a particular action. This does *not* imply that there are no actions to test for with a given skill! Knowledge of medicine might help you set a bone or identify an illness or determine someone's overall hardness. Similarly, expertise in wrestling will convey knowledge about things outside of being able to grapple - they'll pick up kinesiology, reading people, etc. Reward characters for specializing!

If a character's skill ranking is comprehensive, consider that they automatically know anything an apprentice in that field might know. For everything else, make them test. If a character's skill ranking is extraordinary, consider that they automatically know anything a seasoned professional in that field might know. For everything else, make them test. If a character's skill ranking is incredible or unbelievable, consider that they automatically know anything about their field that isn't hidden, unique, or otherwise very hard to discover. For everything else, make them test.

11. Relationships

When you begin play, choose an ally, a dependent, and either an enemy or an organization. You have a relationship bonus with each of these equal to 25%.

- **Ally.** This is a group or person a player character can ask for aid, can call in favors from, or with whom they otherwise have a positive relationship.
- **Dependent.** This is usually the character's family or a group that relies upon them.
- **Enemy.** This is a sworn enemy. Interactions with this person or group are usually negative. They may be a recurring foe or antagonistic organization.
- **Organization.** This could be a wizards' sorority, a former regiment, or even a cult. The character has an association with this organization; they typically deal with this group on a favorable basis. GMs should determine the maximum scale of an organization, which could be as great as a whole nation, or just a small wandering band of minstrels.



Relationships and Hooks

Relationships are intended to provide the referee - and the players - with hooks and handholds by which to attach characters to the city. An Ally should provide information or jobs, a dependent should get into trouble frequently, an enemy should try to inconvenience or harm the character and thwart their goals, and organizations should actively generate problems and opportunities alike.

Interacting with established relationships is one of the primary means by which characters gain improvement points, so keep that in mind. Not every interaction with a relationship will generate a chance for IP, but lots of them should.

Make a relationship test whenever you want to lean on the relationship in the fiction or take advantage of the relationship's mechanical advantages. As usual, in some situations a roll is not called for, depending on your intent and approach.

On a critical success for a relationship test, the character gains a very positive response, and an increase of 1D6% to their relationship. On a botch the character damages their relationship with the party and loses 1D4% from their relationship. Further, after a botch, the player cannot call on a relationship for rest of the adventure. In the case of enemies this means that they have accidentally aided them in some way.

You can purchase new relationships later with improvement points for the cost listed; new relationships start at a bonus of 10%. New relationships may arise from play - in these cases, they start at 5%.

Relationship	IP Cost	Advantages	Disadvantages
Ally	2	Loan an appropriate item or finances; assist on social test; provide info and/or employment	Allies demand favors of the character, in the form of money, errands etc for each favor given; enemies of your ally become your enemies.
Dependent	1	Characters gain 1-3 additional Improvement Points where they support, aid or defend Dependents.	Dependents regularly get themselves and the character into trouble; Enemies will target dependents to harm the character
Enemy	2	Gains +25% to tests in the attempt to thwart their enemy; gain 1-3 additional IP for thwarting an enemy's plans; gain employment by enemy's opponents	Enemies will try to harm characters as often as possible; All interactions (parleys, influence, negotiation) with an enemy will be at one difficulty rating harder than normal.
Organization	2	Can access the facilities offered by the organization; can gain information and possible employment	Organizations typically demand a charge for their services, either in cash or a favor; Enemies of an organization may harry and harm the character for their relationship to the organization.



Relationships In Play

At the start of play, Taryn selects Rose Carozza, their aunt and a Warden, as an ally. Taryn takes Spot, a miniature tiger, as their dependent. Finally, as Taryn's goal is to become a full fledged member of the Wardens, Taryn takes them as an organizational relationship.

During Taryn's first session it becomes clear that lacking a proper weapon (Taryn only has a single dagger which doubles as their utility knife) is a problem. Taryn asks their aunt, Rose, for a loaner weapon and makes a relationship test. Taryn's Iron is 18, to which they add their relationship bonus, 25%, for a total goal of 43%.

Taryn rolls a 32 and the referee declares that Aunt Rose lends an old shortsword and a spare longbow to Taryn - on the condition that Taryn must succeed in the trials to join the Wardens or return the weapons upon failure.

Later in the adventure, Taryn is ambushed in an alley by Spy, who has been paid by the father of a man Rose killed in a judicial duel - Taryn has inherited their aunt's enemies.



Starting Relationship Details

It can be a bit daunting to spin out several detailed relationships all at once. One useful way to handle this is to collaboratively add details to the relationships in play - that is, when you think your ally would first be useful to your character or the game generally, invoke them and flesh them out on the fly with your referee. The referee, in turn, is encouraged to think of times when your relationships would drive interesting choices for your character, be helpful in moving things forward, or throw problems into the fiction for you and the other players to handle.

In either case, don't feel like you need to have several pages of relationship context built up to use a relationship; sometimes it's enough to know that your dependent is your nephew and spin things out from there. Of course, it's okay to take some time to flesh those relationships out, too! Just make sure that the player and referee are on the same page so things can adjudicate smoothly.

Allies

Roll on the table below to randomly determine your ally's vocation or select one from the larger [Vocations](#) table.

1D20	Ally
01	Gondoliera
02	Butcher
03	Spireglider
04	Trebuchet Operator
05	Mercenary
06	Innkeeper
07	Fisher
08	Priest
09	Author
10	Artist
11	Archivist
12	Smith
13	Alchemist
14	Canal Cleanser
15	Merchant
16	Reporter
17	Gladiator
18	Notary
19	Barrister
20	Barber-Surgeon

Dependents

Roll on the table below to randomly determine who your dependent is to you or choose another sort of relationship that makes sense for your character.

1D12	Dependent
01	Foundling Child
02	Parent
03	Aunt/Uncle
04	Nephew/Niece
05	Cousin
06	Friend
07	Alchemy Addict
08	Client
09	Grandparent
10	Falcon
11	Apprentice
12	Drake Hatchling

Enemy

Roll on the table below to determine your enemy's vocation or select one from the larger [Vocations](#) table. Note that an organization can also be your enemy.

1D20	Enemy
01	Organization (Roll 1D12+1 on this table)
02	Mercenary
03	Barber-Surgeon
04	Investigator
05	Fixer
06	Alchemist
07	Smith
08	Barrister
09	Knight
10	Priest
11	Crafter
12	Librarian
13	Judicial Duelist
14	Banker
15	Guild Leader
16	Patron/Matron
17	Automaton
18	Spire Aristocrat
19	Ship Captain
20	Demon

Organization

To randomly generate an organization, roll 1D4 to determine the type of organization, then roll on the related table to determine details about it. Use those details as the skeleton of ideas to flesh out a group of people in the world - Pentola is enormous and varied, far too large and fractured to detail every organization you might encounter.

1D4	Table to Roll On
01	Academic
02	Religious
03	Guild
04	Spire

Academic Organizations

Roll 1D12 6 times or, for fast generation, roll 1d12 and read straight across.

- **Type:** The institution of the organization that defines its structure
- **Focus:** The purpose of the organization, what it primarily spends its effort on
- **Symbol:** The marking used to differentiate this organization from others
- **Color:** The primary color associated with the organization, often used in their clothes or banners
- **Reputation:** The strongest belief outsiders have about the organization's behaviors and beliefs
- **Distinctive Feature:** In Pentola the beliefs and repeated behaviors of people change their bodies - members of organizations tend to acquire one or more distinctive features over time.

1D12	Type	Focus	Symbol	Color	Reputation	Distinctive Feature
01	School	Automata	Drake	Red	Bold	Entirely hairless
02	Gymnasium	Crafting	Book	Blue	Pedantic	Eyes look like coins
03	University	Archaeology	Fist	Yellow	Reckless	Metallic fingernails
04	Academy	Alchemy	Scroll	Green	Bookish	Bifurcated tongue
05	Library	Politics	Flower	Purple	Greedy	Hair is same as Color
06	Laboratory	History	Chains	Brown	Proud	Skin is hard like stone
07	Archives	Literature	Falcon	White	Combative	Blind in left eye
08	Studio	Arts	Spire	Gray	Rich	Lightning scars all over
09	Institute	Warfare	Sword	Black	Pious	Tally mark scars on body
10	Monastery	Demonology	Lantern	Orange	Loyal	Extra finger on one hand
11	Gurukula	Medicine	Heart	Pink	Strange	Eyes same as Color
12	Spire College	Rhetoric	Eye	Numerous	Implacable	Voice always echoes



Example Academic Organization

We first roll 1D12 6 times to determine which details will define this organization:

- **Type:** 9, Institute
- **Focus:** 6, History
- **Symbol:** 1, Drake
- **Color:** 10, Orange
- **Reputation:** 9, Pious
- **Distinctive Feature:** 12, Voice always echoes

Guardians of the True Word

A snarling bronze drake is embossed upon the doors to this old and prestigious research guild. The academics within practice psychohistorical magics and divination to discern the Truth of the World as it has been - they then share this interpretation with each other orally, crafting poems as records in a tongue taught only to full members of the guild. They are funded by students of the True Word but do not evangelize to others - they seek only to understand and share with those who share their passion. Artists of the Word stay with the Guardians for weeks at a time, learning the new discoveries and committing them to memory, that they may go out into the world and create works which echo this truth.

The Truth is never spoken aloud to outsiders, but no word spoken by a believer is ever heard only once - every syllable seems to echo in the air, no matter how hushed the tone.

Religious Organizations

Roll 1D12 6 times or, for fast generation, roll 1d12 and read straight across.

- **Type:** The institution of the organization that defines its structure
- **Primary Domain:** The main focus of the religious group in this institution - they may have others, but this is what they're *most* known for.
- **Symbol:** The marking used to differentiate this organization from others
- **Preferred Sacrifice:** The sacrifice that is considered most valuable to this organization
- **Cleric Attire:** Ranking members of religious organizations are often visible by a special item of clothing
- **Distinctive Feature:** In Pentola the beliefs and repeated behaviors of people change their bodies - members of organizations tend to acquire one or more distinctive features over time.

1D12	Type	Primary Domain	Symbol	Preferred Sacrifice	Cleric Attire	Distinctive Feature
01	Church	Birth	Candle	Gold	Mask	Entirely white eyes
02	Sect	Death	Fish	Dove	Scarf	Skin the texture of wood
03	Cult	Light	Sun	Hunger	Head covering	Teeth like a shark
04	Hermitage	Magic	Crescent	Honey	Hood	Metallic hair
05	Covenant	Battle	Star	Sweat	High Collar	Double-jointed knees
06	Temple	Trade	Hammer	Feast	Robe	Skin hot to touch
07	Choir	Travel	Wave	Tin	Belt	Voice rumbles in chest
08	Chapter	Sky	Wheel	Hair	Ring	Lips are violet
09	Order	Water	Wings	Copper	Pendant	Symbol is raised on palm
10	Sanctuary	Darkness	Drop	Art	Tattoo	Smell like fire
11	Inquisition	Chaos	Leaf	Blood	Sash	Ears are huge
12	Flock	Community	Flame	Phoenix	Stole	Cast no shadow



Example Religious Organization

We first roll 1D12 6 times to determine which details will define this organization:

- **Type:** 11, Inquisition
- **Primary Domain:** 11, Chaos
- **Symbol:** 2, Fish
- **Preferred Sacrifice:** 10, Art
- **Cleric Attire:** 6, Robe
- **Distinctive Feature:** 11, Ears are huge

The Troutslappers of Her Aquatic Majesty

The adherents of Nianzhen, the Mermaid Queen, are a terrifying force in the canals and spires of Pentola. These devout souls carry their holy symbol, a two foot long solid bronze trout, as a weapon and a warning. They stalk the city in deep red robes and seek out those who would break Nianzhen's commandments - which change daily depending on the inquisitor.

They practice their faith by routinely drowning and reviving each other in an attempt to get closer to Her Aquatic Majesty and understand her mysteries more completely. Their only unwavering belief is that art, especially statues, are an affront to Her - after all, water is formless.

Even when out of their vestments these pious interlocutors are visible by their massive ears - all the better to hear blasphemy on the lips of citizens...

Guild

Roll once on the [Vocations](#) table to determine the primary business of the guild, then roll 1D12 6 times or, for fast generation, roll 1d12 and read straight across.

- **Type:** The institution of the organization that defines its structure

- **Reputation:** The strongest belief outsiders have about the organization's behaviors and beliefs
- **Symbol:** The marking used to differentiate this organization from others
- **Value:** The core value of the organization which informs their decisions and structure
- **Color:** The primary color associated with the organization, often used in their clothes or banners
- **Distinctive Feature:** In Pentola the beliefs and repeated behaviors of people change their bodies - members of organizations tend to acquire one or more distinctive features over time.

1D12	Type	Reputation	Symbol	Value	Color	Distinctive Feature
01	Association	Trustworthy	Scales	Profit	Red	Eyes glow in darkness
02	Society	Ambitious	Crow	Reputation	Blue	Skin is textured like silk
03	Shreni	Violent	Honeycomb	Favors	Yellow	Bulging eyes
04	League	Aggressive	Fruit	Customers	Green	Skull shaped like cone
05	Company	Dependable	Knife	Competition	Purple	Irises are square
06	Esnaf	Duplicious	Ladder	Transparency	Brown	Very long fingers
07	House	Impulsive	Moon	Improvement	White	Hairy feet
08	Order	Talkative	Anchor	Discipline	Gray	Double-jointed elbows
09	Body	Articulate	Bone	Leadership	Black	Missing finger
10	Conjuration	Industrious	Razor	Service	Orange	Sweats capacin
11	Union	Humble	Bell	Quality	Pink	Skin gritty like sand
12	Cooperative	Sardonic	Tool	Safety	Numerous	Skin clinks like metal



Example Guild Organization

- **Vocation:** 81, Sailor
- **Type:** 10, Conjuration
- **Reputation:** 10, Industrious
- **Symbol:** 2, Crow
- **Value:** 5, Competition
- **Color:** 7, White
- **Distinctive Feature:** 9, Missing Finger

Conjuration of the Peaceful Waves

This group of sailors specialize in the Craft as applied to sailing, and moreover, into melding art with seamanship. Wherever Conjurers of the Peaceful Waves are found, so too are fantastic ropes, sails, anchors, lanterns, and all sorts of other equipment. The Conjurers lose their left pinky as they advance in the organization, the digit turning a brilliant blue and slowly disintegrating as they improve their skills.

The Conjuration gathers in beautifully crafted halls across Pentola and even has a few halls in other lands and cities - anywhere the seas need crossing. They are serious competitors for any and all other groups and guilds who make goods for seafaring.

Spire

Roll 1d12 6 times or, for fast generation, roll 1d12 and read straight across.

- **Shape:** The general shape category of the spire.
- **Symbol:** The marking used to differentiate this organization from others
- **Reputation:** The strongest belief outsiders have about the organization's behaviors and beliefs
- **Value:** The core value of the organization which informs their decisions and structure
- **Focus:** The purpose of the organization, what it primarily spends its effort on
- **Distinctive Feature:** In Pentola the beliefs and repeated behaviors of people change their bodies - members of organizations tend to acquire one or more distinctive features over time.

1D12	Shape	Symbol	Reputation	Value	Focus	Distinctive Feature
01	Spiraling	Griffin	Brave	Money	Transcendance	Metallic veins
02	Sheer	Squid	Adventurous	Power	Automata	Silver tears
03	Oval	Eagle	Vengeful	Secrets	Magic	Blood is flammable
04	Finger	Scorpion	Creative	Artifacts	Supplication	Nose like snake
05	Branching	Bat	Arrogant	Art	Poetry	Full mane
06	Diamond	Elephant	Devout	Books	Architecture	Entirely black eyes
07	Octagonal	Crab	Charitable	Loyalty	Religion	Abnormally tall
08	Star	Moon	Jealous	Neutrality	Control	Prehensile hair
09	Monolithic	Serpent	Manipulative	Law	Military	Breath frosts the air
10	Fractal	Feather	Prim	Fame	Pleasure	Skin looks like opal
11	Spear	Dagger	Rigid	Glory	Recognition	Body covered in soft fur
12	Polygonal	Lens	Tireless	Peace	Wealth	Ears are just holes



Example Guild Organization

- **Shape:** 2, Sheer
- **Symbol:** 1, Griffin
- **Reputation:** 4, Creative
- **Value:** 11, Glory
- **Focus:** 11, Recognition
- **Distinctive Feature:** 1, Metallic Veins

Skylion Spire

Exploding up from an isle in the Pentolan Bay is the Skylion Spire, a sheer megalith of a perfect cylinder. Far above, beyond the sight of those in the canals there is a feature atop the spire through which the high winds sometimes pour, causing echoing reverberations which sound like ten thousand lions roaring over the city. The Skyliions who live in the spire and recruit for it are amongst the most dangerous militants in the city, mostly made up of warriors who are both champions, able to channel miracles, and battlecrafters able to weave the dweomers into combat and stack the odds in their favor.

Their crest, a bloody Griffin's head, is emblazoned on their banners and tunics. The skyliions are renowned across the city for being deadly duelists and interveners, often useful as proxies for a duel in a court of swords or as mercenaries when up against unbelievable odds. The skyliions seek glory and recognition every day, aiming always to be known as the greatest masters of violence and battle.

12. Knacks

Knacks are special abilities characters can possess, tied to *who they are* and *what they repeatedly do* - a character's knacks are a statement about a character's *gestalt*, the qualities which are more than the sum of a character's individual parts. Knacks derive from personality traits, behaviors, vocations, and core beliefs.

Characters begin play with a randomly determined knack at magnitude 3. Magnitude is a measure of how developed and potentially powerful a particular knack is.

To determine a new knack, roll a d8 on the formula table and then a d20 four times to determine the quirk, form, effect, and element. Alternatively, for faster generation, roll a d8 on the formula table and then a d20 once, reading directly across the second table to determine the quirk, form, effect, and element.

If the combination doesn't make sense, roll again or pick an appropriate option from the list.

Some knacks may be predetermined and provided by the referee as resulting from a particular organization, skill, or vocation.

Knacks gained after character creation always start at magnitude 1. The maximum magnitude of any knack is limited by a character's max Tephra. For example, a character with a Tephra of 6 could not have any knacks whose magnitude was 7 or higher. Note that this limits the maximum magnitude of any given knack, not the total magnitude of knacks a character can acquire.

Roll d8	Description							
1	(Physical Quirk) (Physical Form) of (Ethereal Effect) (Ethereal Element)							
2	(Physical Quirk) (Physical Form) of (Ethereal Effect) (Physical Element)							
3	(Physical Quirk) (Physical Form) of (Physical Effect) (Physical Element)							
4	(Physical Quirk) (Physical Form) of (Physical Effect) (Ethereal Element)							
5	(Ethereal Quirk) (Ethereal Form) of (Ethereal Effect) (Ethereal Element)							
6	(Ethereal Quirk) (Ethereal Form) of (Ethereal Effect) (Physical Element)							
7	(Ethereal Quirk) (Ethereal Form) of (Physical Effect) (Physical Element)							
8	(Ethereal Quirk) (Ethereal Form) of (Physical Effect) (Ethereal Element)							

Roll d20	Physical Quirk	Physical Form	Ethereal Quirk	Ethereal Form	Physical Effect	Ethereal Effect	Physical Element	Ethereal Element
01	Bladed	Finger	Animalistic	Reflection	Piercing	Revealing	Flesh	Memory
02	Burned	Eye	Burning	Blood	Spawning	Excruciating	Bone	Dream
03	Spiked	Hair	Fearsome	Echo	Diminishing	Soothing	Brine	Thunder
04	Gnarled	Lips	Shimmering	Blush	Consuming	Energizing	Metal	Chaos
05	Sandy	Palm	Hardened	Shadow	Animating	Bewildering	Plant	Belief
06	Jeweled	Nail	Harsh	Breath	Crushing	Withering	Fungus	Hope
07	Metallic	Tears	Repulsive	Phlegm	Attracting	Avenging	Insect	Fear
08	Scaled	Skin	Smooth	Movement	Duplicating	Warding	Stone	Pain
09	Polished	Nose	Icy	Voice	Sealing	Compelling	Mouth	Harmony
10	Thick	Teeth	Resonant	Presence	Hindering	Concealing	Muscle	Violence
11	Split	Tongue	Ringling	Sweat	Imprisoning	Emboldening	Thorn	Knowledge
12	Twisted	Skull	Stinging	Scent	Opening	Deceiving	Portal	Intent

Once you've determined the description of the knack, work with the referee to describe the knack's general effects based on its name and how it ties into your character's *gestalt*. If a knack is related to a vocation, skill, or relationship its magnitude can never exceed the 10s place of the relevant bonus (in addition to the limitation on all knacks imposed by your Iron score).



Knacks and Characters

Knacks are a way to reinforce both the world and the characters' lives in it. Knacks are an expression of the supersaturation of magic that seeps into every bone, stone, and inch of the land. As characters solidify in their sense of self and their convictions in the world, the magic *changes* them. They naturally become more powerful in the things they care about and actualize themselves through.

Artisans imbue their work with their magic, gardeners grow potent herbs and incredible flowers, farmers' crops yield more and better, and warriors find that their skills in battle become preternatural.

In addition to randomly generated knacks it is a good idea for the referee to grant knacks to characters who seem to be developing along a particular path. This can reinforce the feeling of their actions and beliefs mattering through the mechanics.

If a character exercises a knack against an unwilling target an opposed test is required. When an opposed test is required, the character exercising their knack always rolls against Iron, adding the highest relevant vocation, skill, or relationship bonus if related. The target rolls against Bone (if the knack is something that can be dodged) or Iron (if the knack is something that can be resisted by force of will) and adds their highest relevant bonus as normal.

Unless otherwise specified a knack's ongoing effects last up to 10 minutes per magnitude and has a range of nearby.

- If a knack deals damage instantly it deals 1d3 per magnitude if it is reduced by armor or 1 per magnitude if it is not.
- If a knack increases/decreases damage dealt or armor for a duration it does so for 1 point per magnitude.
- If a knack imposes a penalty or grants a bonus actively it does so at 10% per magnitude.
- If a knack imposes a penalty or grants a bonus passively it does so at 5% per total magnitude.
- A knack which grants an extra action or reaction is triggered once in its duration; after the extra actions or reactions are used the knack ends.
- If a knack has no mechanical effects which improve with the magnitude, instead grant the character a 10% bonus per magnitude to their opposed Iron test to exercise the knack against unwilling targets.

You may also suggest uses for the knack outside of the initially described effect. If the knack fits the description and situation reasonably closely the referee should *usually* allow it.



Example: Creating a Knack

To create a knack we first roll a d8 and get a 4. This indicates that the description of our knack will match the following description:

(Physical Quirk) (Physical Form) of (Physical Effect) (Ethereal Element).

We now roll a d12 once to quickly determine the knack, getting a 9.

This results in the knack "Polished Nose of Sealing Harmony"

The referee interprets this as Taryn's nose appearing to be polished to a smooth shine and, when exercised (and thereby empowered) causes those within range who can see them to have their violent and discordant thoughts and tendencies sealed away for the duration. Mechanically, anyone nearby who fails an opposed power test against Taryn (who adds 10% per magnitude to their goal for the test) is unable to take any violent actions and is more open to talking things through.

This is linked to Taryn's deeply held belief that problems can be solved by compromise and careful consideration. For every additional point of magnitude this knack will grant a 10% bonus to Taryn's opposed Iron test to make this knack affect targets.

Exercising a Knack

Exercising a knack is an action and takes something out of the character. To exercise a knack a character spends an amount of power points equal to the magnitude at which they want to exercise the knack. Characters have some control over how much of themselves they pour into the exercising of a knack and *do not* have to use their knacks at the highest magnitude.



Example: Exercising a Knack

Taryn chooses to exercise their “Polished Nose of Sealing Harmony” knack in response to escalating tensions between two factions. They have the knack at magnitude 5 but choose to exercise it as magnitude 3.

Taryn then makes an opposed test against everyone nearby, testing their Iron with a +30% bonus from the knack’s magnitude. The effected targets also test Iron and add their highest relevant bonus, if any.

A character does not need to make any tests to exercise a knack because the ability is an extension of who they are (though an opposed test may need to be made to effect the target as normal). It uses some metaphysical energy that they experience as a growing sense of hunger and ache in their bones, but does not otherwise tire them.

If a character has no power points to spend on exercising a knack they may instead make a Power test and spend Blood equal to the magnitude of the knack they are attempting to exercise. Note that the Blood is lost *whether or not* they succeed on the test as they burn some of their life force to power the attempt. Failure indicates that they simply couldn’t control it.



Example: Exercising a Knack with 0 Tephra

Taryn chooses to exercise their “Polished Scent of Sealing Harmony” knack in response to escalating tensions between two factions in a last ditch attempt to prevent violence from breaking out. They have the knack at a magnitude 5 and choose to exercise it as such, but have no Tephra left.

Taryn taps into their life force, making a Iron test and succeeding; their current Blood decreases by 5. They then make an opposed test against everyone nearby, testing their Iron with a +50% bonus from the knack’s magnitude. The effected targets also test Iron and add the highest relevant bonus, if any.

Note: If Taryn had failed their Iron test to exercise the knack they would *still* have had their current Blood decrease by 5.

Improving Knacks

When spending improvement points you may spend 1IP to increase the magnitude of a knack by 1, provided you meet the prerequisites (if any).

13. Starting Dweomers and the Craft

In Pentola there is an approach to magic that seeks to uncover the rules which govern the universe. The application of these rules to manipulate reality is known as the *Craft*, and those who do so are known as **crafters**. Well-known applications are called dweomers and can be learned from others and from writings.

The Craft is not a secret or hidden knowledge—but, much like advanced fields of scientific inquiry in our world, few invest much of their time and energy into it—for the vast majority of people it is enough to know a few convenient dweomers and the basics, to use items and to pay for specialists when more is required.

Common Dweomers

Almost all children in Pentola learn two dweomers as a matter of course.

They learn the dweomer for *auratic vision* because they live in a heavily magic-using society—and therefore find it important to be able to investigate effects and persons for safety reasons, if nothing else.

They also learn the dweomer for *message* as a way to communicate in the city; after all, with limited literacy and freely available magic, sending messages is a cheap, useful way to keep in contact.

Dweomer	Traits	Description
Auratic Vision	Concentration	See magic auras as smoky hazes of color and intensity—the stronger the magic, the thicker the haze.
Message	Resist	Send a mental message up to 5 words per magnitude long which the target can decline or accept, which manifests as a warm itchiness in the target's ear.

These two dweomers may be automatically applied at magnitude 1 as a ritual without any test and have a 25% bonus when applied from memory.

For more information on dweomers and the Craft, see [Chapter III: The Craft](#).

14. Wealth and Equipment

Pentolans primarily use card money for the exchange of goods and services, but also barter. In Pentola, wealth is abstracted and represented by a [resource deck](#). Characters are assumed to start with a default wealth of *average* (a 2-suit deck with a ranking of basic). You can, instead, opt to begin play with three additional improvement points per wealth status you forego.

IP Cost	Status	Ranking	Suits	Social Class
1	Destitute	Nonexistent	1	Beggars
4	Poor	Nonexistent	2	Laborers
7	Average	Basic	2	Tradesfolk
11	Prosperous	Basic	3	Minor merchants, officials
15	Wealthy	Comprehensive	3	Merchants, minor nobility
20	Rich	Comprehensive	4	Spirons, Guildheads

Whenever you make a purchase, including buying additional starting equipment, you must pay the cost equal to the item's value from your wealth deck. If the total you draw is higher than the cost of the item, you overpay and the card is still spent. Place these cards into a pile together as your spent wealth.

If you ever run entirely out of cards in your deck, you drop to the next lowest wealth rank and gain a new deck with the appropriate number of suits.

Whenever you make a sale you may:

- Randomly draw one card from your spent wealth pile
- Select any number of cards from your spent wealth pile whose worth totals up to no more than half the value of whatever you are selling
- Opt to be paid a *favor card* instead
- Be otherwise paid in whatever other way seems fair to your character via bargaining and bartering

Favor Cards

When a character opts to be paid with a favor card the referee deals them a card from the Favors Deck. This is a special full deck of Pentolan cards each of which is simultaneously currency *and* a minor one-use magical item. To trigger the card's effect you must tear it in half, destroying it irrecoverably.

If the value of the favor card is *less* than the value of whatever is being sold you may try to convince the purchaser to offer another card instead (by haggling, intimidating, reasoning, etc). You may try to convince them to draw an *additional* card, but the test will be one step harder.

If the value of the favor card is *higher* than the value of whatever is being sold the buyer is overpaying for some reason - they may or may not be aware that they're overpaying depending on the context.

Card	Effect
1♠	TODO
2♠	TODO
3♠	TODO
4♠	TODO
5♠	TODO
6♠	TODO
7♠	TODO
J♠	Remove a blemish or scar from self.
K♠	Remove the need to breathe for self for an hour.
Q♠	Nourish self for a week as if having eaten delicious, hearty meals every day.
1♥	TODO

Card	Effect
2♥	TODO
3♥	TODO
4♥	TODO
5♥	TODO
6♥	TODO
7♥	TODO
J♥	TODO
K♥	TODO
Q♥	TODO
1♣	TODO
2♣	TODO
3♣	TODO
4♣	TODO
5♣	TODO
6♣	TODO
7♣	TODO
J♣	TODO
K♣	TODO
Q♣	TODO
1♦	TODO
2♦	TODO
3♦	TODO
4♦	TODO
5♦	TODO
6♦	TODO
7♦	TODO
J♦	TODO
K♦	TODO
Q♦	TODO



Abstract Wealth and Economy

Economic concerns in Pentola are abstracted away, but not entirely. The goal is to provide *some* resource management without making it over-burdensome. It also introduces risk and tension to every purchase and sale that a character makes—the hope being that players will pay more attention to their equipment list and try to use it more creatively.

You can swap out the abstraction for something more familiar, like gold/silver/copper, but be mindful that this will require some fiddling. Guidelines for items converted from other systems:

- Every 100 silver pieces in Runequest is roughly equal to 1 point of value.
- Every 10 gold pieces in an OSR game is roughly equal to 1 point of value.
- Every 25 gold pieces in a newer edition is roughly equal to 1 point of value.

This begins to break down when you get to very expensive items like plate armor, ships, horses (drakes in Pentola, there's no horses!), and most magic items. Consider making acquiring these items more akin to a side quest to convince the seller to make a deal or acquire the funds. Also keep in mind that most other systems are lower-magic than Pentola—one option is to drop the cost of magic items to 1/10th.

Also be mindful that it's *okay* for some things to be beyond the reach of relatively new characters and to give more experienced characters access to better equipment by grant from their organization, by recovering them from catacombs, or by outright stealing them. Each of these options can turn equipment acquisition into a more interesting, impactful part of the campaign.

Later, when improving your character, you can spend a number of improvement points equal to the difference between your current wealth and the desired rank.



Improving Wealth

Taryn started play with Average wealth and wants to increase it to Well-Off.

The difference in IP costs is 11 - 7, so Taryn would pay 4 IP to increase their wealth.

If Taryn wanted to instead increase their wealth from Average to Wealthy, they would pay 8 IP.

Encumbrance

A character can carry a number of items equal to their max Blood with no issues. Carrying over this amount means they are encumbered and all tests are one step harder - they can also only ever move to somewhere nearby in a moment. They simply cannot carry more than double their max Blood.

Note that some items can increase your encumbrance maximum by making carrying items easier.



Encumbrance and Large or Small Items

Sometimes, it seems obvious that an object shouldn't take up a slot for each instance of that item - arrows, scrolls, daggers, etc - in these cases, either make a judgement call (if encumbrance is important to you) and say every 5 or 20 of an item counts as a slot, or make players use something like a scroll case or quiver and count that. Alternatively, consider just having each unique type of item be a slot. One tradeoff you can let the players make is allowing them to store their items in containers on their person, but make it take a moment to retrieve items from those containers.

Similarly, some items are overly bulky, awkward, or heavy—it might make sense for them to count as two or even three slots.

As with most things in Pentola, referees are empowered to make judgements that will fit their table.

Starting Equipment

To speed up character creation, characters all begin with a set of starting equipment. They may, optionally, buy additional equipment from the lists above or seek additional equipment. If you rolled for or chose an archetype in the skills section you will probably want to select the equipment package that matches it here.

d10 result	Archetype	Starting Equipment
1	Sword and Board	Linen Shirt, Linen Skirt, Sword, Buckler, Dagger, Small Sack, Backpack, Lantern, Flask of Oil, Wineskin
2	Archer	Padded Hauberk, Crossbow, Quiver of Bolts, Dagger, 50' Rope, Fletcher's Tools, Backpack, Handheld Mirror
3	Thief	Padded Shirt, Sword, Dagger, Lockpicking Tools, Backpack, 50' Rope, Wineskin, Common Herbs, Grappling Hook
4	Alchemist	Dagger, Alchemist's Tools, Backpack, Quills (5), Inkpots (3), Blank Scrolls (5), Lantern, Wineskin, Empty Bottles (5)
5	Priest	Dagger, Icon, Quills (5), Inkpots (3), Blank Scrolls (10), Lantern, Wineskin, Iron Token, Common Herbs, Incense
6	Mage	Dagger, Quills (5), Inkpots (3), Blank Scrolls (10), Craftbook, Candles (3), Iron Token, Common Herbs, Abacus, Chalk
7	Knight	Linen Shirt, Linen Skirt, Linen Greaves, Linen Helm, Medium Shield, Sword, Dagger, Lance, Saddle, Saddlebag
8	Con Artist	Padded Shirt, Dagger, Small Sack, Handheld Mirror, Lantern, Flask of Oil, Wineskin, Forgery Tools, Chalk
9	Artist	Dagger, Artist's Tools, Lantern, Flask of Oil, Wineskin, Small Sack, Handheld Mirror
10	Leader	Linen Shirt, Linen Skirt, Lantern, Flask of Oil, Wineskin, Handheld Mirror, Emblem, Chalk, Iron Token



Example: Determining Wealth and Buying Equipment for Taryn

We decide to have Taryn forego one level of wealth and begin play as Poor to gain an addition three improvement points immediately.

This means picking up any additional starting equipment is going to be a bit dicey.

We chose Knight for Taryn's archetype earlier, so we'll just use that equipment to start.

That nets us some good armor, a sword and shield, a lance, a dagger, and equipment for drakeriding.

To round out Taryn though, we want to pick up a lantern and two flasks of oil - it'd be nice to grab a bow and some arrows, but starting with a wealth of Poor, that's pretty risky.

We roll against Taryn's wealth (a d6) for each item in order:

- For the lantern we roll a 6 and suffer no substantial loss in funds.
- For the first flask of oil we roll a 2.
- For the second flask, however, we roll a 1 - reducing our wealth die to a d4! If Taryn buys anything else and rolls a 1, they'll become Destitute!

Looks like Taryn *definitely* isn't going to be starting with a bow!

Armor

Armor provides protection (AP) by reducing all incoming damage. When taking damage from an attack reduce the incoming damage by the AP. However, heavier armors impose penalties, making some tests one step harder.

Armors also have a usage die which must be rolled after every combat in which damage was taken that the armor did not completely absorb. Damaged armor can be repaired unless its usage die is completely used up, in which case it is damaged beyond repair. Each step up in usage die raises the value of the armor by one.

When purchasing armor, its base value is equal to the AP the armor provides, unless it has the cheap or expensive qualities.



Armor In Play

Taryn started play with a padded shirt (AP 1, d6 usage die, cheap). Their total AP is 1 - unless an enemy makes a called strike to an unprotected area, all incoming physical damage will be reduced by 1 automatically. After a fight where they were hurt, Taryn must roll for their armor to see if it has been damaged. They roll a 1 and the usage die reduces to a d4.

Taryn can take their padded shirt to be repaired (Value 1) or attempt to repair it themselves.

Later, Taryn acquires a plated cap (AP 1, d8 usage die) and decides to wear it, increasing their AP to 2.

Types of Armor

- **Shirt:** Shirts of armor cover your torso and upper arms, falling to just about your hips.
- **Skirt:** Skirts of armor cover your waist and upper legs, stopping at around the knees.
- **Vambraces:** Vambraces cover your forearms.
- **Helm:** Helms come in two broad categories, open and closed. Open helms cover the top of your head, the back, and your cheeks. Closed helms cover your whole head but at a cost of making it harder to hear and see. Most closed helms have an option to open them up, allowing you to improve protection for combat without spending all day hard of hearing. Both types of helm include neck flaps to protect the back of the neck.
- **Cap:** Caps cover the top of your head and do not do much to protect the sides or back.
- **Breastplate:** Breastplates cover the front and back of your torso as well as the tops of your shoulders.
- **Hauberk:** Hauberks cover your chest, arms, and upper thighs as a sort of very large shirt.
- **Trews:** Trews cover your legs.

- **Greaves:** Greaves cover your calves.



Additional Types of Armor

There's dozens of other ways to break down armor into smaller pieces - feel free to provide alternate types of armor wherever you want, just be mindful of total AP and cost. The list above isn't comprehensive, but it's about as many useful distinctions as we felt could be added without pushing choice paralysis on players.

Armor Materials

- **Bone:** In Pentola, armor made of strips of hard bone sewn to drakeleather backing are common and reasonably affordable for common soldiers. Bone armor is made from drakebone, from whalebone, and from imported sources such as horse.
- **Enamelled:** Wealthy folks in Pentola with a flair for fashion will often purchase enamelled armor made of drakeleather and treated with lacquer and alchemical reagents to stiffen the armor and make it amenable to extensive decoration. Most enamelled armor is worn over padded shirt and trews and is made bespoke for the owner.
- **Padded:** Padded armor is made of many layers of cloth stiffened in water from the canals to provide cheap but reasonable protection from edged weapons.
- **Plate:** Shaped plates of bronze provide superior protection for the wearer at the cost of weight and high value. Polished to a shine and often tooled with decoration, plate armor is the pinnacle of armor for professional warriors and marines. It's resistant to water and relatively easy to repair, compared to enamelled armor, though less fashion-forward. It is normally worn over padded shirt and trews to provide some coverage for the gaps in the armor. Suits of bronze armor are expensive, especially if bespoke, though more generic pieces are available due to demand from military forces.
- **Scale:** Armor made of small overlapping bronze plates sewn to drakeleather provides very good protection and is relatively affordable. It requires both more and less maintenance as individual scales can be replaced if damaged. It's cheaper than plate or enamelled armor because it can be produced in a few sizes to accommodate numerous bodies. It's therefore also easier to loot from an enemy.
- **Linen:** Linen armor is made of layers of glued linen formed into bands and sewn together to provide cheap, reasonable armor for common soldiers and folks who fight mostly on land.



Tweaking Armor Materials

Pentola assumes a high-magic bronze age urban center full of artisans and dozens of cultures mashing up together to create a metropolis. There's no reason characters couldn't come across armor materials considered exotic for Pentola - sharkskin, griffin wool, etc. Be mindful that there's no indigenous domesticated mammals in the city and surrounding areas - no cows, sheep, pigs, or horses - so normal leather is a luxury good imported from elsewhere. Highlight items made from those materials as higher status or remarkable, because Pentolans would think of them that way.

Particularly notable here, as with the rest of the setting, is the relative scarcity of iron. Iron is mostly used for its anti-demon properties - this world does not have steel manufacture but does have plentiful sources of copper and tin for bronze. In Pentola, adding iron to armor and other equipment is incredibly expensive and often is more valuable as a component for magic and anti-demon applications.

Armor Qualities

- **Expensive:** Armor with this quality must be made to order; it is twice as valuable as normal and costs twice as much to repair.
- **Cheap:** Armor with this quality always counts as V1 when buying and selling.

- **Easily Repairable:** Armor with this quality is easier and cheaper to repair, but more expensive to make; roll twice on the usage die when repairing it yourself or spend one to have it repaired to full if being done professionally, but the actual value of the armor increases by one.
- **Fashionable:** Armor with this quality makes relevant social tests one step easier - people perceive the wearer as more wealthy and high status.
- **Heavy:** Wearing any armor with this quality makes athletics-related actions and tests to resist fatigue one step harder. Each piece of armor with this quality takes up an additional encumbrance slot.
- **Light:** Each piece of armor with this quality does *not* take up an encumbrance slot.
- **Loud:** Wearing any armor with this quality makes stealth-related actions where being heard is a concern one step harder.
- **Dampened Hearing:** Wearing any armor with this quality makes tests to notice something audible one step harder.
- **Limited Vision:** Wearing any armor with this quality makes visual perception tests one step harder.

Armor	AP	Usage Die	Qualities	Value
Bone Cap	1	d4	Easily Repairable, Light, Loud	3
Bone Helm (Open)	1	d6	Easily Repairable, Light, Loud, Dampened Hearing	4
Bone Shirt	2	d6	Easily Repairable, Light, Loud	5
Bone Skirt	1	d6	Easily Repairable, Light, Loud	4
Enamelled Breastplate	2	d8	Fashionable, Expensive, Heavy	10
Enamelled Helm (Open)	1	d8	Fashionable, Expensive, Dampened Hearing	8
Enamelled Greaves	1	d8	Fashionable, Expensive	8
Enamelled Vambraces	1	d8	Fashionable, Expensive	8
Padded Shirt	1	d6	Cheap, Light	1
Padded Trews	1	d6	Cheap, Light	1
Padded Hauberk	2	d8	Cheap, Light	1
Padded Cap	1	d4	Cheap, Light	1
Plate Breastplate	4	d10	Expensive, Heavy	16
Plate Greaves	1	d10	Expensive	10
Plate Helm (Open)	2	d10	Expensive, Dampened Hearing	12
Plate Helm (Closed)	2	d10	Expensive, Dampened Hearing, Limited Vision	12
Plate Vambraces	1	d10	Expensive	10
Plated Cap	1	d8	-	4
Plated Coat	3	d8	Heavy	6
Scale Shirt	3	d8	Heavy, Easily Repairable	7
Scale Skirt	2	d8	Heavy, Easily Repairable	6
Scale Hauberk	4	d8	Heavy, Easily Repairable	8
Linen Shirt	2	d6	-	4
Linen Skirt	1	d6	-	3
Linen Greaves	1	d6	-	3
Linen Vambraces	1	d6	-	3
Linen Helm (Open)	1	d6	Dampened Hearing	3

Masterwork and Magic Armor

In Pentola, because magic is supersaturating the world and everything (and everyone!) in it, masterfully crafted items *are* magical. There is no distinction.

Particularly well-crafted items by artisans might add or remove qualities from an item, increase the AP or usage die, or provide interesting and unique abilities. Changes to the item require a recalculation of its cost; adding a positive quality to the item or removing a negative one increases the value by 1, any added magical effects increase the value by 2 unless otherwise noted.



Examples of Magic Armor

Here are a few examples of magical armor created by artisans:

- **Enamelled Vambraces of the Sphinx:** AP 1, d8, Fashionable, Expensive (V10). These vambraces have imagery of a sphinx (a mythical creature from the Aydinlar Empire) emblazoned on them in gold and brown. In addition to their normal qualities, these vambraces grant the wearer particular skill at solving riddles.
- **Lion Bone Helm:** AP 1, d8, Dampened Hearing, Fashionable, (V5). This impressive helm made from the skull of a massive feline creature amplifies the wearers voice, making tests to be heard and to intimidate one step easier.
- **Padded Thinking Cap:** AP 2, d6 (V6). This cap is made of woven silk and the weave itself is an homage to Archives, showing small scrolls and quills. It grants the wearer +5 to their Flax score while worn.
- **Grave Greaves:** AP 1, d10, Expensive (12). These bronze plate greaves have been molded into the shape of catacomb walls and no amount of polishing will clear the verdigris from them. They make opposed power tests to resist hostile actions one step easier.
- **Exploding Scale Hauberk:** AP 3, d12, Heavy (V10). Every scale of this hauberk has been delicately inscribed with a rune of ejection. The wearer can will this hauberk to violently shed scales in a burst centered on them at a magnitude of 1 per usage die step they are willing to sacrifice. For each magnitude spent the scales deal 3 damage which may be reduced by armor.
- **Artisanal Linen Skirt:** AP 2, d8 (V5). The bands of this linen skirt detail an idyllic scene of peace in a spire garden.

Weapons and Shields

When attacking, the *singles* result of your roll determines the damage dealt (so a roll of a 34 would deal 4 damage). When an attack is a triumph, ignore all armor and deal the face value of the roll (so a triumph of 07 would deal 7 damage, ignoring all AP). Remember that AP and parrying can reduce incoming damage to zero.

Weapons and shields have a usage die. After every combat where a weapon is used in a successful attack but deals no damage due to the target's armor, roll the weapon's usage die.

You can use your shield to block an incoming attack, reducing the usage die by one step to negate all incoming damage if you succeed on the opposed test.

The value of a weapon or shield is determined by its usage die and may be modified by its qualities; a weapon or shield with a usage die of a d4 has a value of one, each step up increases the value by one.



Weapons and Pricing

The default rules here make weapons much more costly and valuable, especially when compared to other games. This is because weapons are not normally acquired by general citizens - player characters tend to get involved in all sorts of trouble and adventures that most citizens try very hard to avoid. Weapons also make for pretty good treasure and can be traded for other equipment because of their expense.

You could make acquiring weapons cheaper by removing the usage die cost, but be mindful that weapons are some of the most plentiful items the characters may be finding, if your game leans towards violent conflicts.

Weapon Qualities

- **Cheap:** Weapons with this quality always count as V1 when being bought or sold.
- **Concealable:** Weapons with this quality are easy to conceal and can be hidden in your clothes and armor.
- **Heavy:** Weapons with this quality count twice for encumbrance and, when attacking, ignore the target's AP up to the number of the tens die rolled (so a roll of 34 would deal 4 damage and ignore up to 3AP).

- **Light:** Weapons with this quality do not count for encumbrance, but do the lesser damage of the results of the tens and singles dice (so a roll of 34 would deal 3 damage).
- **Encumbering:** Carrying any shield with this quality makes athletics-related actions and tests to resist fatigue one step harder.
- **Reach:** Weapons with this quality are longer than most, allowing you to keep an opponent at a distance, meaning they'll have to successfully close with you in order to use their weapon.
- **Balanced:** Weapons with this quality are designed to be thrown and may be used against nearby targets in addition to close ones.
- **Ranged:** Weapons with this quality are designed to shoot ammunition at an enemy who is distant or closer. You can also shoot at enemies who are Far Away, but the test is one step harder. You can parry a melee attack with a ranged weapon but its usage die automatically decreases by one.
- **Expensive:** Weapons with this quality have double their normal value and cost twice as much to repair.
- **Easily Repairable:** Weapons with this quality are easier and cheaper to repair; roll twice on the usage die when repairing it yourself or make only one wealth roll to have it repaired to full if being done professionally.
- **Slow (X):** Weapons with this quality are slow to reload and require X actions to do so.
- **Fashionable:** Weapons with this quality makes relevant social tests one step easier - people perceive the wearer as more wealthy and high status.

Weapon	Usage Die	Qualities	Value
Dagger	d6	Concealable, Cheap, Light	1
Sword	d8		3
Spear	d6	Easily Repairable, Balanced, Reach	2
Halberd	d6	Easily Repairable, Encumbering	2
Pike	d6	Easily Repairable, Encumbering, Reach	2
Throwing Dagger	d4	Concealable, Balanced, Light	1
Khopesh	d8	Fashionable	4
Kopis	d8	Fashionable	4
Mace	d10	Expensive	5
Club	d6	Cheap	1
Handaxe	d8	Balanced	3
Greataxe	d8	Encumbering	3
Buckler	d6	Shield, Light	2
Round Shield	d8	Shield	3
Figure Eight Shield	d10	Shield, Encumbering	4
Tower Shield	d12	Shield, Heavy, Encumbering	5
Recurve Bow	d4	Ranged, Expensive	2
Crossbow	d6	Ranged, Slow (2)	2
Heavy Crossbow	d8	Ranged, Slow (4), Heavy	3
Hand Crossbow	d4	Ranged, Slow (2), Light, Expensive	2
Repeating Crossbow	d4	Ranged, Expensive	2
Sling	-	Ranged	1

Masterwork and Magic Weapons

As with armor there's no distinction between masterwork weapons and magical ones.

Particularly skilled artisans might create items which are more resilient, deal more damage, add or remove qualities, or grant new special abilities. Unless otherwise specified, magical abilities increase the value by 2.



Examples of Magic Weapons

Here are a few examples of magical armor created by artisans:

- **Spireblade:** d12 usage, Fashionable (V7). This elegant bronze blade has been lovingly crafted by a spire artisan and has the Spire's name engraved into it. The handle is wrapped in sharkskin and the pommel is polished crystal which glows ever so slightly.
- **Magelass Dagger:** d8 usage, Expensive (V8). This blackglass dagger is born of stone from the heart of a volcano, the handle wrapped in silver silk. It functions as a dagger against most opponents, but against demons it deals triple damage.
- **Storm Spear:** d8 usage (V5). This spear's shaft is made from a dark hardwood, the head of the spear gleams in the light and the whole thing vibrates slightly during stormy weather. When thrown the spear becomes a bolt of lightning dealing 2d4 damage (ignoring AP), returning to the wielder's hand at the beginning of the next moment, and automatically decreases the Storm Spear's usage die by one step.
- **Mirror Shield:** d12 usage, (V7). This bronze round shield is polished to a literal mirror sheen and has small runes inscribed around the edges in a tiny iron rim. In addition to blocking normal attacks, this shield can be used to reflect magic attacks back at an enemy. When using the shield this way, reduce the usage die by one step as if blocking an attack.
- **Sniper Sling:** No usage die (V3). This sling is innocuous except for the black stitching weaving through it. This sling may be used against any enemy who the wielder can see, no matter the range.
- **Majestic Trout:** 1d8 usage (V5). This solid bronze statue of a trout with its mouth agape flops in the hand, acting as something akin to a flail. Attacks with the majestic trout cannot be parried, only blocked or dodged.

Miscellaneous Equipment Table

Item	Usage Die	Value	Notes
Backpack	-	2	Carry +5 extra
Flask of Oil	-	1	-
Tools	-	3	Related tests are one step easier
Lantern	d12	3	Refill with one flask of oil; shed usable light nearby
Handheld Mirror	-	2	-
Preserved Rations	d8	2	-
Fresh Rations	d4	2	-
50' Rope	-	1	-
Sack	-	1	-
Firepiston	-	2	-
Tinder	d4	-	-
Wineskin	d6	3	-
Common Herbs	d8	2	-
10' Pole	-	1	-
Quiver of Arrows / Bolts	d10	7	Costs 3 less without the quiver
Pouch of Sling Bullets	d12	5	-
Bronze Grappling Hook	-	3	-
Quills (5)	d4	1	Each quill has a usage die, roll once per scroll scribed
Inkpot	d6	2	Roll once per scroll scribed
Blank Scroll	-	3	-
Empty Bottle	-	2	-
Iron Token	d6	9	Opposed Tests against demons are one step easier, degrade usage to repel them and deal 2d8 damage
Incense	d8	3	-
Abacus	-	2	-
Chalk	d6	1	-

15. Improving Characters

Characters begin play with five improvement points (IP). You may choose to spend them immediately or hang onto them until later.

Characters in Pentola advance in a few ways:

1. By using their skills, characters have a chance to improve those skills.
2. By acting in the world, characters may improve or lose their reputations.
3. By interacting with the people and groups with whom they have relationships, those relationships grow stronger or weaker and new ones may form.
4. By spending improvement points gained by achieving ambitions or by spending long periods of time practicing and researching, characters can improve themselves.

Gaining IP via Practice or Research

During downtime between adventures the players may improve their characters. For every three month period of dedicated practice or research a character may gain 1IP.



This timeline assumes that your characters take breaks from seasons of adventuring and getting into trouble and that you're tracking downtime by weeks or months. A simple tweak to this is to just make practice/research a downtime action and everytime the player characters take it during arbitrary downtime, give them 1 IP.

Improving Skills Through Use

Once per adventure when a character makes a normal or harder test and uses a relevant skill bonus, make a mark beside that skill. At the end of each adventure, roll a d100 for each skill you marked during play.

- If the result of the roll is higher than the skill bonus, you have improved it - in this case, increase the bonus by 3.
- If the result is lower, the character has not learned enough to improve.

Every time you botch a test using a skill, add 5 to the skill bonus. This represent a character gleaning new understanding from failure.

There is no limit to the bonus a skill can reach.



Example: Improving Skills

After their first adventure, Taryn has successfully used the following skills: leadership, first-aid, scrounging, and wrestling. The player rolls 1D100 for each skill:

- Taryn rolled a 55 against Leadership (50%), and improves it by 3 to 53%.
- Taryn rolled a 82 against First Aid (20%) and improves it to 23%.
- Taryn rolled a 42 against Scrounging (45%) and does not improve it.
- Taryn rolled a 40 against Wrestling (30%) and improves it to 33%.

Gaining and Losing Reputation

Every time a character takes an action which is witnessed and could reinforce a character's reputation, make a mark to the right of the reputation on your character sheet. Every time a character takes an action which is witnessed and could degrade a character's reputation, make a mark to the left of the reputation on your character sheet.

After each adventure, note the total marks against each of the character's reputations - one mark which reinforces it cancels out one which degrades it. Roll a d100 for each remaining mark. If the mark is to the right of the reputation and the result is higher than the reputation bonus, increase it by 3. If the mark is to the left of the reputation and the result is lower than the reputation bonus, decrease it by 3.



This system is intended to reduce the amount you need to roll during an adventure for your reputations, but you could, optionally, just roll every time a reinforcing or degrading action is taken. Alternatively, you could just shift the reputation bonus by 3 with each action and skip rolling altogether.

Changing Relationships

Every time a character fulfills an obligation or grants a favor to an ally, dependent or organization, thwarts an enemy or is thwarted by them, make a mark to the right of the relationship on your character sheet. Every time a character fails an ally, dependent, or organization, or ignores an enemy threat, make a mark to the left of the relationship on your character sheet.

After each adventure, note the total marks against each of the character's relationships - one mark which reinforces it cancels out one which degrades it. Roll a d100 for each remaining mark. If the mark is to the right of the relationship and the result is higher than the relationship bonus, increase it by 3. If the mark is to the left of the relationship and the result is lower than the relationship bonus, decrease it by 3.



As with reputations, you may want to roll as soon as the action happens or just automatically modify the relationship without a roll.

Spending Improvement points

Characters can spend improvement points to improve skills, vocations, and characteristics, to modify relationships and reputation, to purchase new knacks, dweomers or miracles, or improve existing knacks and miracles.

You can choose to spend one improvement point to modify a skill, reputation, relationship, or memorized dweomer bonus by 5 points.

You can choose to spend two improvement points to modify a vocation bonus by 5 points.

You can choose to spend one improvement point to increase one characteristic by one point. The maximum a human character can increase a characteristic to is 75. For non-humans, the maximum for a characteristic is equal to the maximum possible starting score for the characteristic plus 15.

You can choose to spend one improvement point per magnitude to acquire or improve an knack.

You can choose to spend two improvement points per magnitude to acquire or improve a miracle.



Improvement points are handed out mostly when characters fulfill or invoke their ambitions and relationships. Players can expect a steady trickle of improvement points if they're working towards their goals or leaning into their relationships, but advancement is still relatively slow and flat.

You can speed up the rate at which characters acquire improvement points by giving out more for fulfilling ambitions or by adding new ways to acquire improvement points.

This is particularly useful for encouraging other modes of play and interaction. For example, you might give characters improvement points for resolving group or community ambitions in addition to personal ones, or for discovering new lore about the city or magic or a faction, or setting up new relationships between factions.