Novus Primer

The purpose of this document is to give a quick overview of the system for those who have never played before. This will explain some of the items on the Pre-Generated Character Sheets and allow players to more easily understand how the system works.

Basic Mechanics

Basic Resolution: For most actions and activities, you roll two ten-sided dice and if the total is equal to or greater than the Target Number, you succeed at the action. Depending on how much over the Target Number your roll was, you could earn one or more Fate Points.

Target Number: In many cases, this will be 15. Advantages and Complications can alter this, or alter your roll to allow make things easier or more difficult. There may even be Advantages or Complications that are hidden from you. Some actions you want to try may also have a specific, pre-defined Target Number.

Nova Roll: If you roll a one on one die and a ten on the other die (a result of 11), you immediately succeed at the action, but just barely. You also earn a Fate Point.

Super Nova Roll: This happens when you roll tens on both dice. You treat it as if you rolled a total of 40 on the dice, and then add in any skill bonuses or modifiers. This roll is always considered an automatic success as well, but the degree of success is determined by totals. You also earn 5 Fate Points as well.

Explosions: Any time you roll a ten on one of the dice, and the other die is not a one or a ten, this is called an Explosion. This is because you get to reroll that die with the ten on it and add it to the total of the initial roll. You can keep doing this as long as you continue rolling a ten on that die, until your dice total reaches a maximum of 40. You can earn Fate Points from this just as with the Basic Resolution.

Failure: If you do not succeed in equaling and beating the Target Number, this is considered a failure. The action simply does not work or get completed. If your failure is by 10 or more points, you will earn Snag Points.

Fumble: If you roll a one on both dice, this is considered a Fumble. The action automatically fails, and you earn double the normal number of Snag Points. You also earn one Fate Point, but this cannot be used to reduce the Snag result.

Snag Points: Once you gain one or more Snag Points, you must make a roll on the appropriate Snag Table and add in the Snag Points as a modifier to that roll to determine what has happened.

Fate Points: You start the game with 3 Fate Points and can earn more through exceptional rolls or exceptional role playing as well. However, GMs are encouraged to not award any Fate Points if you have 10 or more already. They are intended to be spent, not hoarded. There are 3 tables at the back of the core rules that tell us what they can be spent on. These tables are Dice Adjustments, Damage Adjustments, and Story Adjustments. They give you, the player, a little bit of control over the narrative of the game without destroying the enjoyment for anybody else.

Character Overview

For this section, we will be reviewing the different aspects of one of the Pre-Generated Characters. This will give you an idea of what each section is about.

1. **Name:** This is the name of the character.

2. **Race/Culture/Training Path:** This tells us the character's race, the type of background he grew up in, and hit Training Path.

3. **Experience Points:** Characters in Novus are point based. A starting character has 100 Experience Points. As your character gains in experience he will earn Character Points. As he spends those Character Points, the points spent are added to

4. **Hits:** This is sometimes referred to as your *Vitality* or even your *Fatigue*. When you take damage, it is subtracted from your Hits. When you cast a spell, your Fatigue is also subtracted from your Hits. Four hours of rest will completely heal all Hits of damage or Fatigue that you have received.

5. **Wnds:** This stands for *Wounds*. Every character and monsters as well, have the ability to take Wounds, which is more serious damage than you take from Hits. There are 3 types of wounds, Minor, Major, and Dire. And the numbers listed are in that order. Tyln has 6/4/2, so this means that he can take 6 Minor Wounds, 4 Major Wounds, and 2 Dire wounds before automatically falling unconscious and possibly dying. You receive a -1 to all actions per each Minor Wound received. You receive a -2 to all actions for each Major Wound received and a -3 to all actions for each Dire Wound received. These minuses are cumulative.

6. **CrTs:** This stands for *Critical Thresholds*. There are six Critical Thresholds in total, and they are listed from least severe to most severe. When you are hit by an attack, if the amount of Hits delivered meets or exceeds one of the Critical Thresholds (after all adjustments to the Hits have been made), then you also receive the Critical Damage result for attack. Critical damage can include results like bleeding, stuns, penalties, and even Wounds. We will go into them later.

7. **DT:** This stands for *Damage Threshold*. The roll for an attack must equal or beat this number in order to hit and damage the character.

8. **AR:** This stands for Armor Rating. If you are hit by an attack, this number is subtracted from the total number of Hits dealt.

9. **Move:** This is your base movement rate. How far you can go during a Move Action during a round.

10. **Fate Pts:** This is how many Fate Points your character currently has.

Talyn [1]   [2](Verdyri/Sylvan/Archer) (100) [3]

Hits [4] 39	**Wnds** [5] 4/3/2	**CrTs:** [6] 4/6/8/10/12/14
DT: 20 [7]	**AR:** 6 [8]	**Move** [9] 10' **Fate Pts** [10] 3

Primary Stats: **Secondary Stats:**

Chr: 3	**Res:** 1	**Aura:** 5 [12]	**Reflexes:** 9
Con: 3 [11]	**Spd:** 4	**Init:** 6	**Stamina:** 4
Dex: 5	**Str:** 3	**Insight:** 4	**Will:** 3
Int: 2	**Wis:** 2	**Might:** 4	**Lift:** 200 [13]

Skills: (stats not added)   **Attacks:** (stats already added)

Skills [14]		Attacks [15]
Acrobatics	2	7 Long Bow (10, 2AP, RI: 80)
Archery	5	9 Rapier (9, 3AP, +2 Init)
Athletics	2	9 Dagger (5, 2AP, +4 Init)
Blades (Light & Short)	4	**Skills (continued):**
Crafts (Bowyer)	4	Magelore (Herbals) 1
Crafts (Fletching)	3	Perception 6
Foraging	2	Perform (Pipes) 1
Healing	1	Riding (Horses) 2
Lore (Zen Archery)	5	Stealth 3
Magecraft	1	Tracking 2

Size: [16] 5'11" tall, 144 lbs

Special Skills & Abilities: [17]

- **Nightvision:** 500' (see core rules for details)
- **Enhanced Perception:** +2 to all Perception rolls (added in)
- **Enhanced Hearing:** +1 to Hearing-related rolls (not added in)
- **Ranged Archer:** Range Increment for Long Bows increased one step (added in)
- **Extraordinary Aim:** If not moving or mounted, range penalties halved; take a Full Action for no range penalties at all
- **Zen Archery:** Uses his Bow much more efficiently than others. The following moves and Abilities are known
  - **Defensive Shot:** Character gets -2 to AB and +3 to DT. The AP for this shot is increase by 1.
  - **Double Shot:** Increase of +1 AP applies to both loading and shooting 2 arrows at once. Targets must be within same direction, not more than 5' apart for every 20' of range.
  - **Precise Shot:** Increase the AP of this shot by +1 and no -4 modifier when firing into melee. Also, missed shots will not hit friends in range.
  - **Agile Shooting:** May fire bow from any position, or even when moving. Position and movement will not generate any modifiers.

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11. **Primary Stats:** You character has 8 Primary Stats. They are *Charisma* (Chr), *Constitution* (Con), *Dexterity* (Dex), *Intelligence* (Int), *Resolve* (Res), *Speed* (Spd), *Strength* (Str), and *Wisdom* (Wis). When you make skill rolls, you add your skill bonus and one of your Stats to the roll. The stat that you use will be determined by the GM based on the way that you are attempting to use the skill. For example, one use of the Athletics skill may use your Con stat, while another use of it might need Dexterity and a third usage might use Strength, and so forth.

12. Secondary Stats: Your character has 7 Secondary Stats. They are used in various ways and for various things. Lift is also located here as it was a convenient place to put it and it was based on your Secondary Stats. One of the main uses for the Secondary Stats, is in making Saving Throws against various things.

Aura: This is your connection to otherworldly and magical forces. It is often the primary stat for resisting magic or even detecting it.

Init: This stat reflects how well you integrate information and react to it. It is used to determine the order in which individuals go during combat rounds.

Insight: This stat allows you to recognize what is important and on making deductions. It can also be used to determine what you character notices, like an unskilled Perception roll. Just because you may have missed a clue, it does not mean your character has, and this can allow him to bring it to your attention.

Might: This stat would be used for attempting feats of strength. It is also used to determine your character's Lift Capacity.

Reflexes: Sometimes you will need to act quickly without thought, and this stat is what would be used for that.

Stamina: This stat is used for resisting certain magical effects, diseases, and other physical effect.

Will: This is your character's strength of mind, their will power. This is used to resist mental effects from spells to fast talking con-men.

13. Lift: This is the normal maximum amount of weight that a character may lift with a Might roll. Exceptional rolls might allow for exceeding this amount.

14. Skills: This is a list of skills in which your character has skill ranks in. As mentioned above, we have not added in any stats to these totals because the stat to be used may change based on the way that the skill is used. The Casting skill, for those who have it, also states the School of Magic or Class list, and the Stat used when casting spells from that School/Class.

15. Attacks: The number before weapon or attack name is skill bonus with the already added in. For attacks, we add the skill bonus because the stat does not change for them. After this initial number, you have the name of the attack or the weapon used in the attack. Then you have some information enclosed in parenthesis ( ) after the attack name. The information here includes the Base Damage, plus any Init Modifiers, Range Increments (RI), and any special adjustments for the weapon.

Base Damage: This number is the minimum amount of damage dealt with any successful attack. This number also determines the maximum amount of Scaled Damage that may be dealt. The total amount of damage is equal to the Base Damage plus double the Base Damage. For example, Tyln uses a War Hammer. It has a Base Damage of 11, so that means that the maximum amount of damage dealt can be 33 (11 + (2 x 11) = 33).

+## init: Certain weapons can affect your Init in the combat round, but only if you are using them. If this is not listed, then there is no initiative adjustment for this weapon.

RI: This stands for Range Increment. On page 58 of the core rules is the Range Increments table. This gives the various ranges for your weapon based on the increment listed

Special: Some weapons have special features or adjustments based against certain conditions. If the weapons have any, they will be listed here or referred to here.

16. Size: This is the character's hieght and weight.

17. Special Skills or Abilities: This section lists any special skills or abilities that the character may have. Certain characters may have even more information, such as spells or Combat Moves, listed on a separate page.

Spells

For those characters who cast spells, there are several additional things to consider.

Cantrips: Cantrips cost 1 Fatigue to cast. They always have a range of touch unless otherwise stated and they normally do not affect others. Cantrips have a Target Number of 12. Should you roll 17 or higher when trying to cast a Cantrip, there is no Fatigue cost.

Spells: Spells have a number of unique features that we will go over.

Spell Name: This is a generic name. We encourage GMs and Players to come up with more colorful names based on their backgrounds and the setting that they are playing in.

Spell Costs: Every spell has 3 costs, which are based on the type of caster that they are. For the Pre-Generated Characters, you need not worry about this, as the characters have already paid for the spells that they have.

CTN: This is the Casting Target Number, the number that they need to roll with their Casting skill. The stat used with it is based on the type of caster. For example, Mystics and Monks use Resolve and Magicians use Intelligence.

**Fatigue:** This is the Fatigue cost that the caster has to pay when casting the spell.

Vs: This is what the spell is against. For any spell that is against DT (Defensive Threshold), the character must first cast the spell correctly, and then they must make an attack roll using their Targeting skill. For the Pre-Generated Characters, any such attacks against DT are listed with their other attacks.

Range: This is the distance the target of the spell can be from the caster.

Duration: This is how long the spell lasts. If the spell has a duration that says something like 1 round/rank, that means that it lasts 1 round for each rank the character has in his Magecraft skill. If it has (C) as well, that means that the caster has to concentrate on the spell to get its benefits. The character can stop and start concentrating any number of times within the duration.

Casting Options: Every spell has Casting Options available to them. The caster does not need to decide which options he wants use before he rolls. He can make his casting roll, and if it is higher than the base CTN of the spell, he may then decide if he wants to use one or more casting options. Each option has a CTN adjustment and a Fatigue (Ftg) adjustment. If the character decides to use a Casting Option, his roll needs to have been high enough to handle those adjustments accordingly.

Example: Nuihc decides to cast the spell, Sense Hidden. It has a CTN of 15 and a Fatigue cost of 1. For his casting roll, he rolls a 9 and an 8 and his total skill bonus is 7. This gives him a total casting roll of 24. That is 9 points above the base CTN. Nuihc decides to make the spell last for 10 minutes per rank which raises the CTN to 21 and the total Fatigue cost of 3. He also decides to Increase Detection Rate to be a Snap Action, which adds another 3 to the CTN, bringing it up to 24, which is the total of his roll. And hit final Fatigue cost will be 4 points in total.
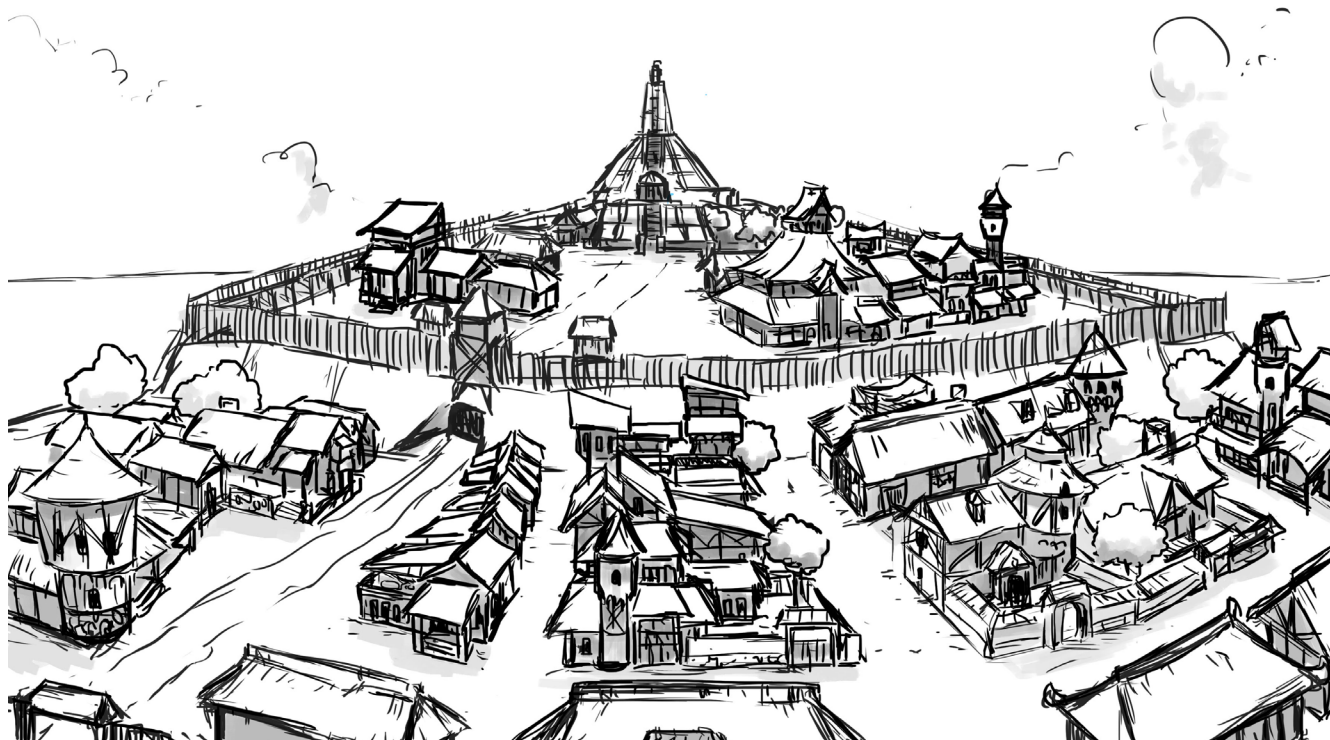
The Combat Round

The Combat Round is divided into 4 Phases and the character has 5 Action Points (AP) to spend each round. And we will go over what each Phase is and what can be done in a round.

Phase 1 - Initiative Phase

Roll 2d10 and add in your Initiative (Init) stat. Yes, this roll is explosive. This is your Base Initiative, and determines the order in which you declare your Actions for the round. You normally only roll your Initiative once per combat. This Primer will not go into detail about the requirements for re-rolling Initiative.

You total value for this Initiative Roll is called your Initiative Point (IP).

Phase 2 - Action Declaration Phase

Going in Initiative Order, from lowest to highest, every character and NPC declares their Actions for the round. As seen on the sheets for the Pre-Generated Characters, certain attacks may have initiative modifiers. Those modifiers do not apply to Action Declaration, only to Resolution.

As mentioned above, every round has 5 Action Points (AP), and every round also lasts for 5 seconds. However, 1 AP does not necessarily equate to 1 second.

The section on Actions breaks the lists of possible Actions into 5 categories based on how many AP are involved.

- Maximum Action = 5 AP
- Full Action = 4 AP
- Standard Action = 3 AP
- Half Action = 2 AP
- Snap Action = 1 AP

You may declare any number of Actions, so long as the total number of AP does not exceed 5 for the round. You are also limited in declaring certain Actions only once per round as follows:

Attack Actions – You may only declare one attack Action per round. Some attack Actions, such as with a Combat Style may involve multiple attack rolls, but they are still considered a single Action. For example, you cannot declare 2 Dagger attacks as that would be 2 attack Actions, but if you have a Style that allows for multiple attacks, using that Multiple Attack Ability would be a single attack Action that allows for multiple attack rolls.

Movement Actions – You may only declare one movement action per round. This means you can likely move before or after an attack, but not both.

Casting Action – Spell Casting Actions may only be declared once per round. Counterspells count as a Casting Action. Attack Spells often require both a Casting roll and an Attack roll and count as both a Casting Action and an Attack Action and do not have to be declared separately.

> **Note:** *Please be aware that there can always be exceptions to the above, such as with spells or items, or even by spending Fate Points to allow extra actions. The GM will determine what exceptions will be allowed.*

Phase 3 - Resolution Phase

Now that all actions for the round have been declared, it is time to resolve them. This is done in two distinct steps.

Step 1: Priority Actions

Snap Actions, Defensive Actions, Counterspells, and Fast Cast spells are always resolved first, regardless of the character's Initiative Point (IP). If there is more than one of these types of actions in the round, they are resolved in Initiative Order, from the highest IP to the lowest.

Step 2: Normal Actions

Once the Priority Actions have been resolved, it is time to resolve all other actions. Actions are always resolved in Initiative Order from highest to lowest. Please keep in mind that certain types of attacks have initiative modifiers which can alter the order in which attack is resolved, especially if your and your foe's IPs are close.

All damage, except for Bleeding and Stuns are applied immediately Bleeding is applied in Phase 4. Stuns (Dazed, Shaken, and Staggered) are applied and/or subtracted during Phase 4 as well. If new Stuns are applied, they actually affect the character in the following round.

Should two characters have the same IP, then their Speed determines which goes first for that IP. If they also have the same Speed, then roll 1d10 and the highest roll goes first (ties get rerolled until you have a winner).

Phase 4 - Upkeep Phase

Once all actions have been resolved, it is time to do a little upkeep on the round before starting the next one. Here is a list of things that may need to be taken care of.

Bleeding – Any points of Bleeding during the round are subtracted from the Hit total at this point.

Acquired Stuns – Should the character have received any Stuns during the round, they are applied to the totals now.

Existing Stuns – Any rounds of Stuns that the character already has are reduced by one at this point. This never applies to Stuns acquired during the round. Rounds of Staggered are the first to take effect and thus the first to be removed. Then rounds of Shaken, and finally rounds of Dazed.

Special Effects – Any spells or abilities that are supposed to end this round end during this phase of the round.

Following Rounds

All subsequent rounds would cycle through Phases 2 through 4 each round. The only exception is for new combatants entering the situation or attempting to reset one's initiative (see the core rules for more details on this).

Cancelling Actions

There are times when you will want to cancel your existing declared actions to perform some other actions. As long as you have not yet performed your Actions for the round you may abort them and declare and perform another Action.

If you cancel a Maximum, Full, or Standard Action (or a combination of Actions that totals up to be between 3 or more AP in total), you may then declare and perform an Abort Action or Snap Action instead.

If you cancel a Half Action (or 2 APs worth of Actions), you may declare and perform a Snap Action in the place of what you cancelled.

If you cancel a single Snap Action, you do not get to perform a replacement Action.

The replacement actions are performed at the time that the original Action(s) were cancelled, and the replacement Action is resolved first if it happens at the same time as another character's Actions.

Actions

Your character can perform up to 5 Action Points (AP) worth of Actions per round.

A character can perform a limited number of Actions in a given round. The list of possible Actions have been broken down into groups to make it easier to determine what the character can do. Please note that various Combat Moves can change the number of AP required for an Attack Action.

MAXIMUM ACTIONS (5 AP)

- Cast Spell (gain +2 to casting roll)
- Multiple Attacks (Full AB, before adjustments)
- Reload heavy Crossbow

FULL ACTIONS (4 AP)

- Basic Attack (Huge weapons)
- Cast a Spell
- Control Mount (if scared/spooked/injured)
- Move 3x Base Run (-10 to all other actions)
- Move distance up to 5 x Base Movement
- Pick Lock/Disarm Trap (requires 1 round minimum)
- Reload Light Crossbow

STANDARD ACTIONS (3 AP)

- Basic Attack (Medium/Large weapons)
- Basic Brawling Attack (using improvised weapons)
- Defensive Action (Block, Dodge, or Dive for Cover)
- Reload Hand Crossbow

HALF ACTIONS (2 AP)

- Attack w/ Ranged Weapon (Missile or Thrown)
- Basic Attack (Tiny/Small weapons)
- Basic Martial Arts/Unarmed/Brawling/Natural Attack
- Basic Shot/Throw
- Cast Counterspell
- Control Mount (Mounted Combat)
- Disengage from Melee
- Draw a Weapon
- Full Perception (Perception roll)
- Get up from Prone Position
- Move 2x Base Run (-6 to all other actions in this round)
- Move distance up to 3x Base Movement
- Pick up item from ground/floor (no roll required)
- Prepare (used for various actions/abilities)
- Quick Cast a Spell (-4 to Casting Roll)
- Reload Bow or Sling of any type

SNAP ACTIONS (1 AP)

Snap Actions are quick actions that can be done during a round or after Cancelling an Action.

- Concentrate on Spell (or other activity)
- Drop to ground (controlled drop/dismount)
- Maintain Adrenal/Agile Defense
- Maintain Combat Style (to gain benefits)
- Move Base Movement
- Move Base Run (-2 to all other actions)
- Pick item up off the ground or floor (Reflexes Save)
- Snap Cast a spell
- Snap Perception (Insight roll)
- Take Herb/Drink Potion

ABORT ACTIONS

Abort Actions may only be declared should you cancel one or more previously declared actions. Abort Actions are also the only Actions that may be performed if your character is Stunned or if their Initiative Point is less than zero. The Snap Actions listed above may also be considered Abort Actions.

- Cast Counterspell
- Defensive Action (Block, Dodge, or Dive for Cover)
- Fight Defensively w/ Melee Weapon, only if not Stunned
- Fully Parry
- Full Perception (Perception roll)
- Move 2x Base Movement
- Move 2 x Base Run (-4 to all other actions)
- Perform non-combat action with -5 modifier
- Pick up item from ground/floor (no roll)