



RuneQuest

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INTRODUCTION

Greetings, and welcome to the latest version of *RuneQuest*, one of the most popular (and oldest!) roleplaying games written. For fans of the older editions of the game, welcome back!

The purpose of this rulebook is to provide the player with all the rules required to play *RuneQuest* in one handy place. With the help of this book, players will have all they need to create a character and begin preparing for adventure. An experienced Games Master will be able to use the character creation rules and monsters included in this book to begin creating adventures with which to challenge his players. There will be many other *RuneQuest* books available but this is the only one a player truly needs for the game.

Roleplaying Games

Roleplaying games are perhaps best described as a mixture of improvisational theatre and wargaming, or as a continuing, freeform novel. One of the participants, the Games Master, describes the scene and the other participants, the players, decide how their characters will react.

The Games Master, using the rules in this book as a guideline, decides what effect any actions undertaken by the Player Characters have. Mix in magic, mystery, monsters and mayhem, extend it for a few hours, and a *RuneQuest* game session is the result.

Open Game

RuneQuest is published under the Open Gaming Licence, allowing players and other publishers to produce original material based on this book, from rules supplements to entirely new settings. The full details of this license, how it works and what you can do to get your own material published can be found at www.mongoosepublishing.com.

The *RuneQuest* Rules

Though this is a new edition of the *RuneQuest* rules, veteran players will find much here that is familiar. There are still seven basic Characteristics, characters are still defined by skills and combat is a fast-paced assault on the senses with plenty of parrying and dodging of blows. However, the game has been updated and modified dramatically, simplifying and modernising it. Character creation involves less mathematics and combat involves nothing more than simple addition and subtraction, even when engaging multiple enemies.

Overall, a lot of design attention was focussed on the combat rules. The original combat rules written for previous editions of *RuneQuest* were extremely dynamic but could leave a player wanting for just a little simplicity. After all, combat should be fast and furious, not an exercise in mathematics. The combat round has changed, along with the rules for parrying and dodging, creating a very real experience of battle, where a player can 'feel' every axe blow his character swings, believe his character is desperately trying to parry a solid blow or dodging out of the way of a wickedly sharp sword. Even starting characters in this game can be competent warriors, adding to the raw feeling of *RuneQuest* as they attempt the greatest of heroic actions.

Glorantha... and Beyond

This rulebook contains the core rules for *RuneQuest* and little else. However, it tends to assume that the original gaming world for *RuneQuest*, Glorantha, will be used most of the time. Therefore, it includes a magic system suitable for Glorantha, monsters that are known to dwell there and so on. Players wishing to explore this rich and dynamic world should consider picking up the *Glorantha* sourcebook, a supplement to the *RuneQuest* rules that lays out the entire setting, providing a complete world for Games Masters and players to adventure through. Characters within Glorantha will have the opportunity to harness powerful magicks, join the greatest cults of the world and become true Runelords.

RuneQuest does not stop there, however. From the outset, these rules were designed to be suitable for a wide range of games, beyond even the glory of the classic *Glorantha* setting.

Playing *RuneQuest*

There are four traditions in *RuneQuest* that separate it from other fantasy roleplaying games.

Runes

A rune is an inscription or symbol cut into a hard surface such as wood or stone. It is imbued with magical power related to the shape and title of the rune. For example, a magical rune representing water would contain some of the energy of the weather, rivers and sea. Unlocking this power, however, requires great skill and study. While many people in *Glorantha* are capable of using simple incantations with weak runes, only the most powerful can harness the energies bound within the greatest of runes and then control the flow of magic to do their bidding. Such practitioners are known as Runelords and most players will aspire to become one.

Quests

A Quest is a long and lengthy journey of danger and discovery with a great goal awaiting the intrepid adventurer at the end. A Quest may take many forms, such as rescuing a kidnapped princess from enemies on the other side of the world, overthrowing a tyrant or discovering the secret of a long lost rune. Overall, a Quest should take great effort to complete and have great rewards at the end of it. A group of adventurers ridding a village of a few broo raiders is merely on an adventure. Those looking to rid an entire country of evil creatures are on a great Quest indeed.

Cults

Whether they are the cults of *Glorantha*, or the religions, schools of wizardry and universities of other settings, these organisations serve as support mechanisms for the players. Whether they are looking for hard to find magical secrets, rare items or protection from enemies, many find joining a cult to be immensely useful.

RuneQuest Conventions

In order to start playing *RuneQuest*, you will need a few things:

- ☒ This book.
- ☒ One or more friends.
- ☒ A character sheet photocopied from page 120 or downloaded free of charge from the Mongoose Publishing web site (www.mongoosepublishing.com).
- ☒ A pencil, eraser and spare paper.
- ☒ A full set of dice, including four-sided dice (D4), six-sided dice (D6), eight-sided dice (D8), ten-sided dice (D10), 12-sided dice (D12) and 20-sided dice (D20).
- ☒ Most importantly, imagination.

The vast majority of dice rolls in *RuneQuest* are done using percentile dice (referred to as 1D100 in the rules), generating a number between 01 and 100. To roll percentile dice, the player should simply roll two ten-sided dice, one representing the 'tens' and one representing the 'ones'. For instance, if the die representing the 'tens' comes up with a 4, and the die representing the 'ones' comes up with an 8, the percentile result is 48.

When rolling dice, the number before the 'D' indicates the number of dice that should be rolled and totalled. For instance, when instructed to roll 4D6, the player should roll four six-sided dice and total the result.

Sometimes the *RuneQuest* rules will call for a D3 to be rolled. Obviously, there is no such thing as a three-sided die! Instead, the player should roll 1D6 and treat the result as follows: one or two = 1, three or four = 2 and five or six = 3.

Sometimes the *RuneQuest* rules will call for a D2 to be rolled. To do this, roll 1D6 and treat the result as follows: one, two or three = 1, four, five or six = 2.

RuneQuest players will also occasionally need to divide numbers in half, or find the average of two numbers. Unless explicitly stated otherwise, all fractions in *RuneQuest* are rounded down.