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Instructions for the Character Sheet

Just what exactly is a character sheet? And to what purpose is it used?

Well, there's quite a lot you need to know (and define) about your character – and more importantly, things keep changing all the time. For instance, when the character is in battle, he will take damage, and that will affect him for a while, so you need to have some place to write it down. Of course you could just jot it down on some piece of paper, but trust me, after a few hours of gaming you'll have forgotten *where* a specific note was written down.

Keep it simple, keep a character sheet!

On the sheet, all the important information about the character is written down. Starting with personal information such as name, origin or size for instance, there are the values of his attributes, his skills, and so on. These values are needed all throughout the game, and you need to have them handy when they are called for.

On the following pages, we'll give you a more detailed description of what the various entries in the sheet mean and how you should fill the data in.

Please use a **pencil** when filling out the character sheet! You will need to change lots of the entries, and the sheet will get messy in short order if you use a pen which can't be erased easily. (Oh, and keep a good supply of erasers handy as well!)

Of course you are under no obligation to use the character sheet we have provided for you in this document. You can just go ahead and create your own, if you feel you can do a better job. (And if you do, okay, send it to us, maybe we'll bow to your superiority and use *yours*.)

Frontpage:

Personal Information

Name

That's the name of your character. Think of a good one, you might be stuck with the name and the character for a long time. After all, it's not unusual for a campaign to run for months or even longer – so you'd better be careful that you like the name.

A piece of advice: Don't just use a single name character. Just "Oran" (for instance) is pretty slim. Give the character a last name, like "Oran Lafar". Or invent a by-name, such as "Oran the Black" or "Oran from Darkwood". That looks a lot better – and it might give you some hints at a backstory.

You should also stay away from real life names. Using those can jar you out of a game very well, things like "Bob the Warrior" or "Tim the Mighty Mage".

Class

Put the class of your character in here, e.g. fighter or wizard.

Race

Put the race of your character in here, e.g. human or elf.

Homeland

This is where you note the origin of your character. You might just stick with the homeland, but you can also give the character a hometown. Ideally, you put in both.

Religion

As a general rule, everyone in Gushéal believes in religion. It gets kind of difficult to disbelieve when priests prove the gods' existence through their blessings, and very difficult when the gods actually appear in person. So your character will be a believer as well.

The question is, what does she believe in?

There are two religions we have introduced in Gushéal (so far): The main religion that almost all our characters (and yours probably) share, and the monotheistic belief of the Tonomai. (You might want to put off playing a Tonomai character until May and June 2001, when we release detailed source material on our website.)

Your character will most likely believe in the regular pantheon, attend services to the gods, give sacrifices and prayer. Although your character believes in every one of the gods, there will be one god she feels closest to. This is her special favorite – or her guardian if you will.

Unless your character is a cleric, she does not serve the god directly, but her behavior will be guided by the precepts of that god. In other words, knowing which patron god a character chooses gives you some information about that person. For instance, a wizard hungry for knowledge probably reveres Darawk, a fighter is beholden to Seram, a sailor to Sayguel or Mannannan.

Sex

Gender is important. For one thing, there is still a lot of prejudice in the world of Gushémal, and women are often treated as inferior to men. For another – and I feel this is more important – a party with both male and female characters has an entirely different dynamic and opens new areas of gameplay.

If you're just starting out, you should probably play a character of the same gender as yourself. You'll be too busy finding your way in this new world to bother adopting an unusual set of manners and behavior.

Age

A character's age has quite an influence on the game. Just like the real world, someone who's very young won't be taken seriously; someone who's rather old is generally regarded as someone who's over the hill.

Of course there are differences, defined by class and race. As for race, you should regard the following points:

- A human reaches adulthood around 17 years of age.
- Elves on the other hand are still children at that time; they can live for centuries, and maturity is reached somewhere around 100 years of age.
- Dwarves as well live long (though far less than elves), and become adults on their 90th birthday.
- Alreus on the other hand have a somewhat shorter lifespan, and they seem to be grown up at a very early age. Some claim that they start to travel around the world as soon as they can walk. (Actually, the claim is that they "infest" the world as soon as they can walk.)

Class plays into this as well:

- Wizards and clerics have to study for a long time before they can claim this title; the older they get, in general, the higher they are regarded.
 - Thieves have to learn how to fend for themselves in young years, so they might consider themselves masters of the art as early as their twenties.
-

- As for fighters, there's an old proverb which says, "There are no young or old warriors, there are only the living and the dead."

Height

Put the height of your character in this field.

Of course it depends on the race you have chosen. (Keep in mind that women tend to be a little smaller than men.) The maximum sizes for the races are:

- Humans can be up to 7 feet tall
- Elves can be up to 6 feet tall
- Dwarves (Caidwarves) have a maximum size of 4 feet
- Alreus are commonly around 3 feet, but there are some aberrations of 3 ½ feet of height

Weight

Insert here the weight of your character. Please note that the value is dependant upon the attributes STR (Strength) and AGI (Agility). The stronger a person, the more musclemass he carries – the opposite is true as well, of course. On the other hand, a high agility attribute indicates an athletic figure while a low agility points towards an overweight figure.

You should select an appearance that suits these values. (Of course you can also choose to play a musclebound character who can barely move because of the drag of his muscles.)

There are no explicit rules for defining weight.

The following information are the basic weight ranges of the races (for male characters):

- Humans: 100 – 200 lbs
- Elves: 90 – 120 lbs
- Dwarves: 130 – 170 lbs
- Alreus: 50 – 70 lbs

Hair

Put in the hair color of your character.

You should regard the following rules:

- Humans can sport the same natural hair colors like today.
 - Elves ordinarily have cyan colored hair
 - Elvenkin hair can be of the normal human as well as the elven cyan color
 - Dwarves can only have brown hair (in lots of shades), which grays just like every other kind of hair
 - Alreu hair tends towards bright colors, such as a flaming red or a bright yellow
-

Eyes

Insert here the color of the eyes of your character. Note the following guidelines:

- Humans can have all familiar colors
- Elves have purple eyes
- Elvenkin eyes have human or elf-style colors. (If you say that the elvenkin character looks mostly like an elf, it is very likely that the character also has the typical purple eyes.)
- Dwarves (Caidwarves) have exclusively gray or brown eyes, with numerous shades in-between
- Alreus have blue, green or – rarely – brown eyes

Player

Here you, the player, insert your own name.

If you are wondering why you need to attach your real name to the character you're playing yourself, you need to know one more common practice in RPGs: Inbetween the gaming sessions, the sheets are not kept by the players, but by the GM! It's pretty easy to understand – though some may feel a tad insulted –, since the reason is that no player can thus alter the stats of his character. The GM usually can't change the stats, since her writing probably looks a bit different from the player's. (Not to mention that the player has a good idea of what her character sheet looked like the last time.)

Cheating does happen, and this is a practice that easily eliminates it.

Attributes

The attributes of a character are decided based on race and class, which have been previously defined. Follow the rules explained in **Chapter 3** of the *Player's Handbook* to define the attributes and enter them into the character sheet. You also need to fill in the respective bonuses and values, e.g. a strength bonus of +5, to the right of the entry.

Hit Points

To determine the hit points of your character, you need to do a few calculations first. The hit points are a combination of the attributes Strength, Constitution and Agility.

First add the attribute values. Note the sum, it is the total sum of your hit points.

Please note that your character has hit points for several parts of the body. (Take a look at the schematic figure in the character sheet, you see how the figure is divided.) There is a table next to it which lists each body part and the percentage of the total sum:

Head:.....	10%
Torso:.....	40%
Arm (each):.....	10%
Leg (each):.....	15%
<u>TOTAL.....</u>	<u>100%</u>

That means the hit points for e.g. the head are 10% of the total sum.
Calculate the hit points for each body part and note it in the sheet.

Example

A character has the following attribute values:

STR:.....	35
CON:.....	56
AGI:.....	62

The sum of these values is **153**.

According to the table, the **head** has 10% of these 153 hit points, so you have to divide the total by 10:

$$153 / 10 = 15.3$$

Round the result to the next lowest integer number. In this case, that would be **15**. Write that number in the *head* on the character sheet.

Since each **arm** also has 10% of the total, you can write the result (here **15**) in each of the *arms*.

Each **leg** has 15% of the total, therefore you have to calculate:

$$153 / 100 * 15 = 22.95$$

And yes, the result is rounded down as well, to **22**. Write the result in each of the *legs* on the character sheet.

The **torso** has 40% of the hit points – which also means that this body part accounts for all the hit points not yet spread among the other body parts.

It is very likely that there is some disparity. By rounding down all the other values, hit points can be “lost”. So you need to add up all the hit points you just wrote down and subtract that sum from the total hit points:

$$15 \text{ [head]} + 15 + 15 \text{ [arms]} + 22 + 22 \text{ [legs]} = 89$$

$$153 \text{ [total hit points]} - 89 = 64$$

Therefore, **64** is the number of hit points the torso of your character receives.

You can also check the result by calculating

$$153 / 100 * 40 = 61.2 \text{ (rounded down to 61)}$$

As you can see, there are three hit points which had been “lost” before.

Attack Penalty

Total AP

When an opponent attacks your character, the assault will meet several defenses. For one thing, your character will try to avoid the blow. For another, the attack must get through armor and shield. And thirdly, your character might have a magical protection bonus.

The *Attack Penalty* displays this defense. In combat it works so that this value is subtracted from your opponent’s attack.

It’s a composite value. You have to add together three categories:

- Your character’s armor and/or shield value (if used)
- Your character’s agility bonus
- Your character’s magical bonus

The sum of these three categories is the value of the *Total Attack Penalty*.

Agility Bonus

You should already have entered this value with the attributes. Copy the value of the agility bonus down here.

(Also see the **Chapter 3 Attributes**, Section 2 Agility in the *Player’s Handbook*.)

Dafür schaut man bei seinen Attributes nach, rechts neben dem Agilitywert sollte man einen Agility Bonus stehen haben, diesen überträgt man hier ins Feld. Die Attribute sollte man schon gemäß der Rasse ausgewürfelt haben, siehe dafür den entsprechenden Eintrag im Playershandbook.

Magical Bonus

Heavy armor is not the only way to protect oneself against attacks. Wizards have created objects (so-called appliances) which also offer protection – but without any negative effect, such as weight.

The most common are rings or amulets. They create a magical force field of varying strength that repels attacks (to a degree). They cannot completely prevent a character being hit, but they can provide a crucial extra layer of defense.

Concerning the rules, this means that such magical appliances provide an *Attack Penalty*, just like armor and agility. It’s still possible for an able attacker to injure a protected character; he only has to roll the dice right to do that.

Should the character receive a magical bonus, note it here.

Armor

Write here name and weight of the armor worn by the character. The corresponding values for AP (*Attack Penalty*), SP (*Structure Points*) and DP (*Defense Penalty*) you can find in the *Player's Handbook* (**Chapter 7 Equipment** / Section 4 Armor).

Shield

Should the character be carrying a shield, note the values here.

Weapons & Ammunition

This is where you need to write down the weapons carried by the character. It's very advisable to do this so you don't have to constantly check in the *Player's Handbook* for the corresponding values.

Name

Put in a simple description of the weapon in question, e.g. a long sword or a dagger. You might add further information to identify a weapon, such as silver long sword.

Some weapons have proper names. Magical weapons in particular often have names, you need only think of the mystical sword *Excalibur* that King Arthur wielded. But ordinary weapons can also bear weapons, perhaps chosen by the character. Some barbarian tribes for instance name their weapons after successful and glorious fights, so that an axe might bear the name *Orcslayer* (and the character might go into a long tale of how he vanquished the orcs with the aid of said axe).

Of course a proper name is *not* needed. But you should put in qualifiers; just some way to tell the various weapons apart. If your character carries three daggers, you'd better know which is which.

Attack Value

The *Attack Value* indicates how well the character can handle this weapon and therefore how expertly he can attack.

Please note that this might seem a bit redundant. A little further down the sheet you will find the *Weapon Attack Value* which appears to be identical at first. The *Weapon Attack Value*, though, is a base value which might be modified during the course of the game, e.g. through magical means.

Therefore the *Attack Value* is the composite of the *Weapon Attack Value* and any modifier.

For instance, the character uses a long sword. For this weapon, he has a *Weapon Attack Value* of **65**. (Without a magical bonus, the *Attack Value* is also **65**.) Let's say the character has acquired a magical bonus of **+15**, that means the *Attack Value* is in fact **80**.

Range Factor

This offers an overview of the sequence of attack, since the range indicates how early one can engage an opponent. The higher the value, the earlier one can attack.

Further details as well as the corresponding values you can find in the *Player's Handbook* (**Chapter 7** Section 3 Weapons)

Damage

After successfully attacking, take a look at this column and select the value of your attacking weapon. That value describes the damage caused by this weapon.

For instance, the *damage* value could be **2d10+2**. That means you have to roll two ten-sided dice, add the results, then add 2 on top.

Weight

Note here the weight of the weapon.

Range

That's the maximum reach of the weapon.

If there is no value for the weapon, it can only be used in close combat.

If there is a value, the player can ask the GM during a combat round how far away the opponent/target is. Should that distance be smaller than the range, the player can attack.

Important note: In case of projectile weapons (e.g. crossbows) you should take care that you have ammunition for them available.

Ammunition

Some weapons need ammunition, e.g. bows require arrows, crossbows require quarrels. You should note the number of your projectiles in this area and adjust the number whenever one has been fired.

Weapon Attack Value

The *Weapon Attack Value* indicates the experience and training with a specific weapon (category). The different character classes cannot equally well handle weapons, and then there are individual differences within the categories. Some people prefer swords, some axes, some specialize in archery, and so on.

There are few all-rounders in this field – with good reason. In order to handle more weapon categories, you need to spend experience points. If you want to push one (or several or all) category to the maximum limit, you need to spend more experience points. And then you'd probably have no EP left for other enhancements.

As a result, each character should specialize in a limited range of weapons and improve these.

Name

Here you need to note the weapon category, e.g. long sword. That means the character learns how to handle this category and can then use all weapons in this category equally well.

In this example, if the character wrests a long sword from an opponent in battle, he can use it as well as his own long sword.

If that character acquires a short sword, his experience with long swords has no influence at all. Short swords are a different category and therefore ruled by their own values.

(You can find the definitions of the categories in Table 15 in the *Player's Handbook*, **Chapter 7 Equipment** Section 3 Weapons)

Attack Value

This indicates how well the character can use the weapon – and therefore how good his attack in combat is. The higher this value, the better the attack will be.

Write the *Attack Value* in brackets and change it when you increase the value.

For further details, see the *Player's Handbook*.

Mastery Level

The *Mastery Level* defines a limit up to which the *Attack Value* can be enhanced. Whenever this limit is reached, the character has to buy a new *Mastery Level* to improve further.

If you have acquired a *Mastery Level* for a weapon, check off the respective box. A character can only use a weapon when he has the *Mastery Level 1* for this weapon.

Skills

Skills are abilities or professions the character has learned. The character can improve or enhance already learned skills or acquire new skills.

You will find a list of the available skills in the *Player's Handbook* as well as their base values. There are also good descriptions on how they have to be used in the game.

The base value of each skill indicates how good the character is at this. By spending experience points, the base value can be enhanced. The resulting value is written into the last field; whenever a skill check has to be rolled, you need to refer to this value.

Class Abilities & Characteristics

Class Abilities

These abilities are only available to characters in a specific class. Only a fighter can acquire fighter abilities, wizard abilities are closed to him.

Experience points can – and should – be used to buy new *class abilities*, so the player should leave some space in this area.

Characteristics

The player can select these characteristics for the character during the creation process. (See the *Player's Handbook* **Chapter 6: Characteristics**)

They are advantages and disadvantages for the character which generally influence role-playing. One important aspect is that they carry a positive or negative modifier on the other values of the character – an advantageous characteristic bears a negative modifier, while a disadvantage brings a bonus.

Characteristics are only distributed during the creation, therefore the player needs not leave any empty space on the sheet.

Backpage

Valuables

Adventurers and heroes need money for their excursions. A rather mundane thought, but unfortunately true. The ordinary way to acquire the inevitable equipment – e.g. ropes, torches, food – is to buy them, which is commonly done through money. Then of course there are some other needs, such as hiring people (so-called henchmen) or paying out bribes (*very* useful sometimes!).

In this field, you need to write down all valuables that the character currently carries, meaning coins as well as gemstones and the like. (If the character owns more valuables but does not have them on his person, write these down under **NOTES**.)

Experience Points

Experience points are quite important for both the players and their characters. Actually, some people say they are the most important part.

The latter statement is easy to understand since experience points are the most direct form of **reward** in a RPG. Whenever a player or the party has solved a problem or survived a threat, their efforts are rewarded by the GM with experience points.

The GM can hand out experience points (EP) for several feats of the characters/players. For instance, if a player is very good at playacting her character and stays in her role extremely well, she ought to be rewarded. Personal achievements can – and should – be recognized by the GM.

This also means that achievements by the entire party (solving a riddle, besting a group of foes, etc.) do not necessarily mean that everyone receives the same number of EP. The GM is free to distribute the hit points according to how much each player contributed; the more one player worked on the problem, the more hit points he should receive.

What purpose do EP have aside from reward?

Well, they wouldn't be any good reward if you couldn't use them for anything. You can use them to *improve* nearly all *the values on your character sheet* or to *acquire new abilities and skills*. (New class abilities are extremely important for clerics and wizards, since this means acquiring new blessings or spells.)

In this field you should note the sum total of the experience points you receive.

There's a quite a bit of space, so you can write down a few calculations: After all, you'll have to add new EP to the sum total (hopefully often); and every time you spend the EP (e.g. on new skills), you have to subtract them.

Make sure that the current number of EP on your sheet is *always* correct. They are in fact the most important wealth you and your character have, far more important than the valuables! So you'd better double-check that this number is correct!

Burden

Each character has a maximum burden (i.e. weight) he can carry. This weight includes all the equipment on his body. This does *not* indicate the maximum weight the character can lift for a short period, it indicates what he can carry over longer periods.

This limit is the CON (Constitution) attribute multiplied by 2 (in lbs).

$$\text{CON} * 2 = \text{Burden [lbs]}$$

If a character carries more weight, his travel speed slows down, and he gets exhausted more quickly than otherwise. (The GM has to decide the exact effects.)

The burden is subdivided into *Clothes*, *Armor*, *Weapon* and *Equipment*.

Clothes

List here the clothes the character currently wears. Additional or spare clothing has to be listed in *Equipment*.

Also note jewelry currently worn by the character, as well as purses or belt pouches. That makes it a lot easier to find these items!

Equipment

Under *Equipment*, you have two columns at your disposal. For this you need three types of information: name, location (Loc) and the weight (Wt)

You can find a list of available equipment in the *Player's Handbook Chapter 7 Equipment*.

A list of possible locations is noted below the tables in the character sheet.

Please note that you need enough "storage space" for all your equipment. It's nice to own five torches – but carrying them under each arm is quite a burden in the long haul, isn't it? So you need backpacks, for instance. A backpack only holds 40 lbs, though; if you wish to carry more, you have to spread the equipment among your companions (who might also be carrying quite a lot), or you have to find other options, such as a horse or a mule.

Tip 1: You should definitely buy a backpack at the start of your adventure. You never know what you'll find in the course of the story. Chances are that the backpack is going to be chock full by the time you get back home.

Tip 2: Note down the contents of a backpack *together* in one column, so you'll always know where you can find what.

Party

It's very important to keep track of the party itself. There's almost no adventure in which the character travels alone. From the character's point of view, it's too dangerous. From the player's point of view, it's pretty boring to play one-on-one with the GM.

Especially at the beginning of a campaign you should take care to write down all the names of your companion characters, so you don't have to go around asking their names all the time. (You can also make notes on the characters, so you can keep track of their own developments. It's a very practical tool, particularly if your party doesn't meet that often.)

Notes

Write down all the notes that you think will be important in the long run, e.g. the backstory of your character. This space should really only be reserved for the long term information.

If you need to make notes for the duration of the game or the current adventure, use a separate empty sheet. (Depending on how long the campaign runs, you might want to tack it onto the character sheet.)
