

RANK20

A rules-light RPG by Ryan Stoughton



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What is Rank20?

Rank20 is a rules-light game designed around getting as much mileage out of as few mechanics as possible. The system revolves around a highly standardized skill and action point mechanic, and includes a simple magic system.

For the **Gamemaster**, this means allocating more mental resources to creating interesting situations, enhancing the action, and making sure everyone is having a good time.

Players will find that while they do not tweak and customize every minutiae of their character, the **Reserve mechanics** lets them emphasize actions and abilities that they consider important to their character during play, rather than at character creation.

This file is the bare-bones version of **Rank20**; it does not contain explanations for new players. A traditional RPG rulebook, with full explanations for new players, is in the works. The intended audience of this document is experienced gamers.

Whatever your perspective, remember that **Rank20** – like all RPGs – is a work in progress. For feedback, suggestions, and criticism contact me at **ryanstoughton@hotmail.com**, or look for **rycanada** on the forums at **EN World**.

Cheers, and happy gaming!

- **Ryan Stoughton**

Creating a Character

Stats

You have 4 stats: Strength (STR), Agility (AGI), Intellect (INT) and Willpower (WIL).

STR is used for most of melee fighting, defending when you have heavy armor and a shield, moving heavy objects, fighting off disease or poison, and resisting magic that alters you physically. STR is very important for Warriors.

AGI is for melee fighting with light weapons or light armor, moving acrobatically, dodging flashy magical attacks, fiddling with devices, hiding or moving silently, and fighting at range. AGI is very important to Rogues.

INT is for figuring things out, having moments of insight, remembering information, casting magic, seeing through tricks, convincing people to do what you say, and seeing through magic that tries to fool you. INT is very important to Mages.

WIL is for commanding or intimidating others to do what you say, resisting magic that tries to make you act against your wishes. WIL is important for everyone.

Your stats range from 1 to 6, with 1 being below average, 2 being an average middle ages commoner, and 6 representing the human maximum. **Roll 1dd20 4 times to determine your stats, and assign them as you see fit:**

d20 roll	Stat Value	d20 roll	Stat Value
1	1	11	4
2	1	12	4
3	1	13	4
4	2	14	4
5	2	15	5
6	2	16	5
7	3	17	5
8	3	18	6
9	3	19	6
10	3	20	6

Rank and the Rank Modifiers

You have a **Rank**, which is a general measure of your character's power and experience. **You start with a Rank of 4**, and have four **Rank Modifiers**:

Non-Rank (a.k.a. Zero)

This modifier is used when you take an action that is outside your character's abilities. Non-Rank is always zero, and is abbreviated **0**. A Warrior trying to pick a lock would use Non-Rank.

Half-Rank (a.k.a. General)

This modifier is used when the action is outside your class but still something your character can do. This is equal to your Rank divided by 2, and is abbreviated **1/2**. A Rogue trying to catch a prize fish in a fishing contest would use Half-Rank.

At-Rank (a.k.a. Class):

This modifier is used when the action you take is something your Class is good at. This is equal to your Rank, and is abbreviated **@**. Since most of the time you will do things that fall in your Class, you will use your At-Rank modifier the most. A Mage casting a spell would use At-Rank.

Over-Rank (a.k.a. Specialty)

This modifier is used if you have specialized in something. Not for starting characters. This is abbreviated **!!**, and is equal to your Rank plus 3. A Rogue that has specialized in manipulating devices would use Over-Rank when disarming a trap or picking a lock.

Modifier	Value	A.K.A.	Abbr.
Non-Rank	0	Zero	0
Half-Rank	Rank/2	General	1/2
At-Rank	Rank	Class	@
Over-Rank	Rank+3	Specialty	!!

Class

You have a Class, which indicates your most important abilities. When you make these kinds of actions, you will use your At-Rank, or “Class” modifier. At character creation, choose one of these three classes:

Mages – and only mages – use magic. Mages are also good at resisting magical effects that deceive the mind. They often know handy snippets of information about magic, monsters, and ancient civilizations. Mages can only use simple weapons and light armor.

Rogues use light armor and light weapons, are good at moving stealthily, and are handy with devices. They also are good at getting into places they’re not supposed to, by balancing, climbing, tumbling, and jumping to get to where they want to go. Rogues are good at resisting magical effects that can be dodged.

Warriors attack and defend with weapons and armor, and use shields. Warriors are good at resisting magical effects that alter the body.

NPC and Monster Classes

The Gamemaster chooses the names of NPC and Monster classes, and decides what their Class does. Here are some suggestions for NPC and Monster Classes, and what they do at-Rank:

Commoners farm, fish, or perform some mundane craft.

Dragons breathe fire, fight in melee, resist magic, detect intruders in their lair, and use magic. They defend with STR like a warrior in heavy armor.

Goblins set traps and attack adventurers in their underground caves.

Necromancers raise the dead, curse their enemies, and cast magic that drains life out of their opponents.

Thugs rough people up in alleyways.

Trolls use force to destroy whatever they can, and absorb damage (defending with STR).

Playing the Game

The Core Mechanic

Whenever you make a non-trivial action, you add a Stat and one of your Rank Modifiers, roll a d20, and add them up. This is called a Check.

$$\text{Check} = \text{d20} + \text{Rank Modifier} + \text{Stat}$$

If you meet or beat a Target Number set by the GM, your action succeeds. If the d20 roll is a natural 20, you succeed automatically, and on a natural 1 you fail automatically. The player always rolls, and GMs treat NPCs and Monsters like PCs that always roll 10. If two NPCs are opposed, the GM uses their discretion or asks a player to roll for one side.

Reserve

You have a pool of Reserve Points equal to your Rank plus your WIL. You spend this Reserve during the game in the following ways:

Action	Reserve Cost
Make a Check best of 2 d20 rolls	1
Make a Check best of 3 d20 rolls	2
Take an extra move on your turn	1
Take an extra action on your turn	2
Shrug off hits on your turn	1 per hit
Cast a spell	1

You can only use reserve in one way per turn.

Your Reserve comes back at a rate of half-Rank per night. Especially relaxing conditions make your Reserve return at a rate of Rank per night.

If an NPC uses Reserve to make Best of 2, the Gamemaster treats their roll as 13 instead of 10. If an NPC uses Reserve to make Best of 3, the Gamemaster treats their roll as 16 instead of 10.

Combat

In combat, every turn you can make 1 Check and move 30 feet.

If a character succeeds at an action that hurts another character (usually melee combat), they take a Hit. **If a character takes Hits equal to STR, they fall unconscious.** If they were bleeding, and no one binds their wounds, they die.

You can use Reserve to shrug off hits, and Tactical Tables to get some ideas for what you can do in combat.

Tactical Tables

General Combat		Ranged Actions		
Condition	+/-	Range	Penalty	
Surprised Opponent	+4	Touch/Melee	+0	
Higher Ground	+1	Close (10 yards)	-1	
Charging Mount	+2	Short (30 yards)	-2	
Better Footing	+1	Medium (60 yards)	-4	
Opponent Prone (melee)	+4	Long (100 yards)	-6	
Opponent Prone (ranged)	-4	Extreme (200 yards)	-8	
Flanked Opponent	+2			

Weapons		Multiple Foes		
Condition	+/-	#	Disorg.	Org.
Light Simple	+1	2	-2	-2
Simple	+2	3	-3	-2
Light Martial	+3	4	-4	-3
Martial	+4	5	-5	-4
Two-handed Martial	+5	7	-7	-5
		10	-10	-6
		25	-25	-8
		50	-50	-10
		100	-100	-12

Armor		Other Conditions	
Condition	+/-	Condition	+/-
Shield	+1	Blinded	-6
Light Armor	+1	Opponent Invisible	-4
Medium Armor	+2	Opponent Blurry	-2
Heavy Armor	+3	Deafened	-1
		Staggered	-2

Special Weapons and Armor		Cause Extra Effects	
Condition	+/-	Condition	+/-
Masterwork	+2	Deal Extra Hit	-4
Magical	+2	Cause Effect ...	
Legendary	+2	... not as bad as a hit	-2
		... like a hit	-4
		... worse than a hit	-8
		... crippling	-12

Magic

Only Mages can use magic, although others can learn specific kinds of magic later on. Usually other characters only learn how to use magic half-Ranked (GM's discretion).

To cast a spell, the caster spends 1 Reserve point and makes a check using $d20 + INT + Rank\ Modifier$. The basic spell causes some harmless effect on a target that is in melee range, and ends after 1 round unless the caster spends their next action maintaining the spell. More powerful spells are harder to cast; see the Magical Modifiers for ideas for using magic.

Characters resist magic at half-Rank unless their class is good at resisting a particular kind of magic. There is one exception: All player characters can resist magic that tries to make them act against their will as if it were part of their class. Unopposed spells must meet a target of at least 10 to succeed.

Magical Modifiers

Range	Range	Penalty	Condition	Effects	+/-
Touch/Melee		+0	Deal 1 hit (instant)		-2
Close (10 yards)		-1	Deal 2 hits (instant)		-5
Short (30 yards)		-2	Deal 4 hits (instant)		-10
Medium (60 yards)		-4	Raise/Lower Stat by 1		-4
Long (100 yards)		-6	Heal a hit (instant)		-5
Extreme (200 yards)		-8	Other effect is...		
			... harmless		+0
			... not as bad as a hit		-2
			... like a hit		-4
			... worse than a hit		-8
			... crippling		-12
			Spells marked instant cannot be maintained, exceptions are at the GM's discretion.		

Multiple Targets

#	Penalty
2	-2
3	-2
4	-3
5	-4
7	-5
10	-6
25	-8
50	-10
100	-12

Areas of effects targeting multiple foes are either lines, cones, or spheres. Calculate difficulty based on number of targets, assuming they are fairly close together.

For figuring out unusual magical effects, a target could mean 200 pounds, 5 feet square, 1 yard of radius, etc.

GM's discretion rules the day.

Special Conditions

Condition	+/-
Trigger (Simple)	-2
Trigger (Complex)	-4
Uses an element of the environment	+2

Advancement

If your character learns from his experiences and improves his abilities, your Rank will increase. If your character learns things outside of his class, the GM may let him change that class to make it broader (e.g. from Warrior to Gladiator). If your character really specializes in something, talk to your GM about a Specialty. To gain a Specialty, you may have to skip gaining a Rank, and a Specialty is more specific than a Class.

Appendix: Optional Rules

Pure Stat Checks

Sometimes an action depends a great deal on a Stat, but doesn't really involve a character's learned skills. In that case, instead of adding a Stat and a Rank modifier, just add a Stat twice. So a Pure STR check would be: **STR+STR+d20 vs. Target**

Fiving

PCs can choose to Five any roll, which means accepting a roll of 5 instead of actually rolling the d20. If a magic user Fives, they do not need to spend a Reserve point to cast their spell. A magic user can only cast with Fiving half-Rank*10 times before resting.

Character Balancing

When you create a character, total up the Stats, and compare with the other players. The character with the highest total is Rank 4. For every 4 points below that character, other characters get an extra Rank. For example, if Axan is 4,5,4,6 (total 19) but his friend Dolmar is 2,2,3,3 (total 10), Dolmar starts at Rank 6 instead of Rank 4.

d6es instead of a d20

If, rather than a d20, you have access to a few d6es, you can still play Rank20. For stats, just roll 1d6 4 times and assign as you see fit. For actions, roll 3d6 instead of 1d20. When using Reserve, use the following chart instead of the normal Reserve chart:

Action	Reserve Cost
Add 1d6 to a Check	1
Add 2d6 to a Check	2
Take an extra move on your turn	1
Take an extra action on your turn	2
Shrug off hits on your turn	1 per hit
Cast a spell	1

NPC Reserve use remains unchanged.

If you have both a d20 and some d6es, you might enjoy playing with this Reserve chart but still using the d20 for your actions. The choice is yours.

APPENDIX: RANK20 CHARACTER SHEET

Character	Class	Rank
<p>Stats</p> <p>STR <input style="width: 80px; height: 30px;" type="text"/></p> <p>AGI <input style="width: 80px; height: 30px;" type="text"/></p> <p>INT <input style="width: 80px; height: 30px;" type="text"/></p> <p>WIL <input style="width: 80px; height: 30px;" type="text"/></p>		<p>Rank Modifiers</p> <p>@ <input style="width: 80px; height: 30px;" type="text"/></p> <p>1/2 <input style="width: 80px; height: 30px;" type="text"/></p> <p>!! <input style="width: 80px; height: 30px;" type="text"/></p>

Reserve Used

Hits Taken

Common Actions

Common Modifiers

Notes

Equipment
