## Character Creation

Start by deciding if your going to start in a funnel full of ready to be slaughtered level 0 pawns or with a level 1+ character.

### ️ The Funnel: Survive to Thrive

**“Before you were a legend, you were a survivor. In the world after the fall, only the lucky—or the relentless—live long enough to matter.”**

#### What Is the Funnel?

The **Funnel** is a notorious and beloved tradition in crawl classic games like DCC, MCC, and SCC. Instead of making a single heroic character, each player begins with a handful of zero-level hopefuls: untested scavvers, shell-shocked Freezies, mutated villagers, or desperate survivors. Their only goals? **Survive. Learn. Maybe, just maybe, become someone legendary.**

In Afterglow: Shatterlands, the funnel is a baptism by fire—a one-shot or campaign opener where the radioactive dice will decide who gets a story… and who ends up as compost for the ruins.

#### Why Run a Funnel?

* **Instant stakes:** Death is likely, so every victory feels earned.
* **Emergent story:** You discover your “real” character through the chaos.
* **Strange heroes:** Sometimes the scrawny mutant with a pocketful of bottle caps ends up saving the world.
* **Bonded parties:** Survivors are forged in disaster—they start play as a tight, weird crew.

#### Funnel Step-by-Step

1. **Build a Batch of Zeros**
	* Each player creates **3–4 zero-level characters**. Roll stats in order (3d6).
	* Roll for a background
	* Equipment is random, minimal, and almost always a little sad. (Roll on a junk table, start with a useless tool or odd trinket.)
	* No class yet, but note if you’re a mutant, synth, human, etc.
2. **Into the Fire**
	* Throw the batch into a deadly scenario: a bunker awakening, a mutant nest, a raider ambush, an AI gone rogue.
	* Survive using cunning, teamwork, and luck—not class features.
3. **Death & Glory**
	* Zeros will die—often in memorable, hilarious, or heroic ways. That’s half the fun.
	* Encourage quick, bold play; there’s no “wrong” move.
4. **The Last Ones Standing**
	* Those who survive **earn the right to level up**. Choose a class, roll for subclass, or let the scenario shape your fate.
	* Surviving zeros may become Freezies, Shamans, Mutants, or whatever fits the setting and their actions.
5. **Origin Stories**
	* Survivors gain scars, oddities, or even “Funnel Luck”—a permanent boon from making it through hell.
	* Funnel play generates instant stories and inside jokes for the group.

#### Funnel Flavor for Afterglow

* **Awakening:** Freezy PCs may start groggy in a malfunctioning cryopod. Mutants might emerge from the rubble of a collapsed gene-vat.
* **Relics & Risks:** Each zero starts with a single “Before the Fall” memento—most are junk, but some hold strange value.
* **Mutations:** Some zeros start with a minor mutation—roll for it! That tentacle arm or glow-in-the-dark skin might be the only thing keeping you alive.
* **Jury-Rigged Tools:** All weapons and armor are makeshift, and may fall apart at a bad time (Judge’s discretion).

#### Running the Funnel

* **Embrace Chaos:** Encourage players to be reckless and creative. Let the dice and the wasteland decide.
* **Keep Pace Fast:** Don’t linger over every death. Make each one memorable and move on.
* **Celebrate the Fallen:** Name a landmark, rumor, or mutant animal after the best-remembered zeroes.

#### What Makes a Funnel Memorable?

* **Unexpected Heroes:** The weakest often become the mightiest.
* **Inside Jokes:** “Remember Old Jim with the broken toaster? He took down a gutblossom with a shoe.”
* **Player Buy-in:** Even players who lose all their zeros have fun cheering on the survivors.

#### Sample Funnel Entry Point

*“You wake to the shriek of klaxons and the icy rattle of a bunker door. Your memories are foggy, your only possessions a cracked pair of glasses and a lunchbox from another age. Something moves in the shadows. Only the desperate, the clever, or the damned will survive…”*

###  The Funky Dice

Crawl classics use more than just the familiar d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, and d20. You’ll encounter oddball dice—**the “funky dice”**—like the d3, d5, d7, d14, d16, d24, and d30. These rare faces show up in class abilities, spell checks, critical hit tables, and more.

**Not sure how to roll a funky die?**

* If you don’t own physical funky dice, just roll the next-highest die and reroll results above the target range.
	+ For a d7, roll a d8 and reroll 8s.
	+ For a d16, roll a d20 and ignore results of 17–20.

These dice are the spice of the wasteland—expect the unexpected!

####  The Dice Chain

Many checks, attacks, and effects in Afterglow use **the Dice Chain**—a sequence of dice from smallest to largest, representing increasing or decreasing chance of success, damage, or effect. **The Dice Chain:**

* d3 → d4 → d5 → d6 → d7 → d8 → d10 → d12 → d14 → d16 → d20 → d24 → d30

**How it works:**

* **Bonuses or penalties** might “move you up or down the dice chain.”
	+ *Example:* If you’d roll a d20 for an artifact check but get a +1 die step bonus, you roll a d24 instead.
	+ *Penalty?* Drop to a d16.

This system replaces flat bonuses or penalties with a more “swingy” and exciting change in your odds. **Going up the dice chain feels great; dropping down adds tension.**

**Tip:**
If you don’t have a physical die for a step, use the same “roll and reroll out-of-range” trick as with the Funky Dice.

###  Quick Reference Table

| Dice Chain Step | Die |
| --- | --- |
| 1 | d3 |
| 2 | d4 |
| 3 | d5 |
| 4 | d6 |
| 5 | d7 |
| 6 | d8 |
| 7 | d10 |
| 8 | d12 |
| 9 | d14 |
| 10 | d16 |
| 11 | d20 |
| 12 | d24 |
| 13 | d30 |

**Summary:**

* *Funky Dice*: Unusual dice like d7, d14, d16, d24, d30; use them for unique effects.
* *Dice Chain*: A series of dice; move up or down the chain as effects or circumstances demand.

###  Ability Scores

Characters in Afterglow: Shatterlands are defined by six core ability scores, representing the raw talents and traits that let survivors persist (or perish) in the post-Fall world. These numbers influence every action—combat, scavenging, negotiation, mutation checks, and more.

####  How Are Ability Scores Determined?

Roll 3d6 (or 4d6, drop lowest, at Judge’s discretion) for each score, in order or assigned as preferred. Your background, class, or mutations might grant adjustments. Most scores fall between 3 and 18, but the wasteland is full of outliers…

####  Ability Score Definitions

**Strength (STR):**
Raw physical power and brute force. Determines melee damage, carrying capacity, climbing, breaking, and feats of athleticism.
*Ex: Swinging a weapon, forcing open a jammed bunker door, grappling with a mutant.*

**Agility (AGI):**
Speed, reflexes, and manual dexterity. Affects ranged attacks, dodging, sneaking, and delicate tasks like picking locks or disarming traps.
*Ex: Dodging a blow, shooting a crossbow, slipping away unseen.*

**Stamina (STA):**
Endurance, resistance to harm, and overall vitality. Directly adds to hit points and affects saves vs. poison, disease, radiation, or exhaustion.
*Ex: Resisting a mutant toxin, surviving a forced march, recovering from wounds.*

**Personality (PER):**
Charisma, willpower, leadership, and the strength of presence. Important for social interactions, commanding followers, bargaining, and many artifact and wetware checks.
*Ex: Intimidating a hostile gang, convincing a judge, rallying allies.*

**Intelligence (INT):**
Reasoning, memory, and technical know-how. Used for knowledge checks, deciphering relics, hacking, and casting certain spells or programs.
*Ex: Hacking an AI shrine, diagnosing malfunctioning tech, recalling lore.*

**Luck (LCK):**
Your fortune—good or ill. Luck can be spent to influence rolls, and every character’s Luck stat is tied to a unique feature (see: Lucky Roll). Judges may call for Luck checks in high-stakes situations.
*Ex: Dodging a lethal trap, surviving a near miss, random encounters.*

####  Ability Score Modifiers

Your ability scores (typically 3–18) provide a modifier that applies to rolls, checks, and relevant game effects.

| Score | Modifier |
| --- | --- |
| 3 | –3 |
| 4–5 | –2 |
| 6–8 | –1 |
| 9–12 | 0 |
| 13–15 | +1 |
| 16–17 | +2 |
| 18 | +3 |

*Most checks use the ability modifier. Some rolls (like artifact checks) may use the full score as a base.*

#### Example Uses

* **Strength:** Damage bonus in melee, break doors
* **Agility:** Initiative, AC, ranged attacks, stealth
* **Stamina:** Bonus HP per level, poison saves
* **Personality:** Social rolls, artifact interaction, AI negotiation
* **Intelligence:** Tech checks, languages, hacking, spell checks
* **Luck:** Saving throws, criticals, “Lucky Roll” trait, or spent for emergencies

**Pro Tip:**
A “0” modifier means you’re average for the world of Afterglow. Anything above +1 is exceptional; –2 or –3 means trouble (but also more stories).

#### Figuring Out What You Weigh (And Why It Matters)

Most of the time in Afterglow, you don’t need to know exactly what your character weighs.
But sometimes—when you’re trying to lift someone, fly with the Wings trait, swim in heavy armor, or haul a crate of scrap across a rope bridge—the numbers matter.
That’s where these guidelines come in.

In the wastes, weight isn’t just about the number on a scale.
It’s how much your bones, muscle, and gear combine into something the world has to carry.
Light and quick? You’ll cover more ground, fly longer, and squeeze through tighter spaces.
Heavy and solid? You’ll hit harder, stand your ground better, but maybe think twice before leaping from that rooftop.

##### Humanoid Baseline

If your character is roughly human-shaped—two arms, two legs, upright gait—start here:

| Height Range | Build Type | Typical Weight |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 4’–5’ | Light | 90–120 lbs |
| 4’–5’ | Heavy | 110–150 lbs |
| 5’–6’ | Light | 120–160 lbs |
| 5’–6’ | Heavy | 140–200 lbs |
| 6’–7’ | Light | 160–200 lbs |
| 6’–7’ | Heavy | 180–250 lbs |

##### Quick-and-Dirty Math

If you want a number that feels more “yours”:

1. Take your height in inches.
2. Multiply by 2.3.
3. Add (or subtract) 10 lbs for each point of Strength modifier.
4. Round to the nearest 5 lbs.
* **Light Build:** Subtract 10–15%.
* **Heavy Build:** Add 10–15%.

This isn’t science. It’s a quick campfire estimate—close enough for game night.

##### Not All Bodies Are Built the Same

If you’re not human-shaped, pick the closest match and adjust:

* **Hollow bones (birds, gliders):** –15%
* **Dense muscle (sprinters, wrestlers):** +15%
* **Armored plates or exoskeletons:** +25%

Quadrupeds carry their weight differently.
Insectoids can seem heavy for their size.
Some Bio-Synths weigh more than they look… and others less.
The Judge makes the final call, usually with your input.

**Judge’s Note:**
Treat these as a story tool, not just a stat.
A heavy-built character might leave deeper footprints or creak old floorboards.
A light-framed one might vanish into a crowd or perch on a crumbling ledge without it collapsing.
Numbers are here to serve the fiction—not the other way around.

###  Afterglow: Luck

**When you create a character, roll 1d30. The result shows what aspect of your life is ‘favored’ (or cursed) by fate. Your Luck modifier applies to that roll or event type.**
*(Ex: If your Lucky Roll is “Mutant Saves,” and you have +2 Luck, add +2 to all mutation saving throws.)*

**If you’re a Freezy or have a forgotten past, roll twice and pick one.**

| d30 | Lucky Roll | Luck Applies To… |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Scrapper’s Hand | Artifact checks |
| 2 | Gut Instinct | Initiative rolls |
| 3 | Vault of the Strong | Strength checks & melee damage |
| 4 | Ghostwalker | Stealth & sneaking attempts |
| 5 | Lightfoot | Reflex saves (dodge, jump, avoid traps) |
| 6 | Survivor’s Grit | Stamina checks & poison/disease/radiation saves |
| 7 | Silver Tongue | Social rolls, negotiations, first impressions |
| 8 | Sureshot | Ranged attacks (to hit only) |
| 9 | Shadow’s Veil | Surprise and ambush rolls |
| 10 | Jury-Rigger | Repair and jury-rig checks |
| 11 | Mutant’s Fortune | Mutation saves (resisting negative effects) |
| 12 | Wasteland Gambler | Gambling, risk/reward or chance-based activities |
| 13 | Whispered Secrets | Deciphering code, ancient tech, or AI language |
| 14 | Hard to Kill | Death saves & last-stand survival rolls |
| 15 | Raider’s Aim | Critical hit confirmation (all attacks) |
| 16 | Relic Seeker | Finding hidden items/loot |
| 17 | Phase-Touched | Phase Gate travel mishap rolls |
| 18 | Night Eyes | Spotting danger in darkness/low light |
| 19 | Iron Will | Will saves (mind control, fear, mental attacks) |
| 20 | Scavver’s Luck | Random loot tables, “found items” |
| 21 | Clean Escape | Fleeing or disengaging from combat |
| 22 | Jackrabbit Reflexes | Initiative & movement checks |
| 23 | Animal Friend | Animal handling, taming, or calming |
| 24 | Patchwork Healer | Stabilizing wounds or treating injuries |
| 25 | Bone-Breaker | Unarmed/melee damage rolls |
| 26 | Glowchild | Radiation resistance/saves |
| 27 | Nimble Fingers | Sleight of hand, picking pockets or locks |
| 28 | Doom Escaper | “Save vs. Death” or similar save-or-die effects |
| 29 | Whisper-Born Insight | Rolling for vision spells/psychic phenomena |
| 30 | Judge’s Favor | Legal/judicial encounters or making a good impression |

####  Lucky Roll Usage

* **When you make a roll covered by your Lucky Roll, apply your current Luck modifier.**
* Judges may allow a Luck roll to come into play in especially cinematic or high-stakes moments!
* **At character creation**, roll once on the Lucky Roll Table to determine your unique area of fortune (e.g., critical hits, artifact checks, initiative, etc.). **Your Lucky Roll bonus is set at character creation**: Apply your *Luck modifier at the time you rolled your Lucky Roll* to the relevant checks or events, and record it. **This modifier does not change**—even if your Luck score changes due to burning, regaining, or in-game effects, your Lucky Roll bonus or penalty stays the same throughout your adventuring career.

**Example:**
If you start play with a Luck modifier of +2 and your Lucky Roll is “Sureshot: Ranged Attacks,” you always add +2 to your ranged attack rolls, even if your Luck score later drops to –1 or climbs to +3.

###  Burning Luck (Official Rules)

#### What is Burning Luck?

**Burning Luck** allows a character to sacrifice points from their Luck score to influence the outcome of important rolls. Each point of Luck burned permanently lowers your Luck score—but can mean the difference between life and death, success and failure.

#### How to Burn Luck

* **At any time you make a roll**—attack, save, skill check, spell check, etc.—**you may burn Luck to increase the result.**
* For every 1 point of Luck you burn, **add +1** to the roll.
* You must declare how much Luck you are burning **before the Judge announces whether your roll succeeds or fails**.

**Luck burned in this way is permanent.**
Your Luck score is reduced, and does not naturally recover unless you gain it back through specific class abilities, magic, Judge rewards, or at certain milestones.

#### Key Points

* **Anyone can burn Luck,** but certain classes (like Thieves or Halflings in DCC) may recover Luck more quickly, or have special rules for Luck.
* Burning Luck **does not affect your Lucky Roll modifier** (the bonus/penalty you set at character creation).
* With a lower Luck score, future random rolls that call for a Luck check are less likely to succeed.

#### Regaining Luck

Luck is precious. Most characters **regain Luck only at the Judge’s discretion**—for exceptional roleplaying, heroic deeds, or major milestones.
Some classes, features, or magic items may allow for periodic Luck recovery.

#### Example (Player-Facing):

Tessa faces down a mutant beast and needs a 16 to hit. She rolls a 13. Before the Judge declares failure, Tessa decides to burn 3 points of Luck, adding +3 for a final result of 16. The attack hits! Tessa’s Luck score is now 9 (down from 12), and she’s more vulnerable to random misfortune in the future.

#### Sidebar: **Judge’s Advice**

* Burning Luck is a powerful tool—encourage its use in tense, meaningful moments.
* Remember: Luck burned is gone for good unless something special brings it back!

### Background: Who Were You Before the Shatterlands Claimed You?

Before you set foot on the road of scavvers, seekers, and survivors, you were someone else. Everyone in the Shatterlands carries a story of what they once were — a life of hard labor, quiet trade, or desperate survival. Maybe you worked the scrap piles, herded fungus-fed cattle, or patched solar panels for a barter-lord. Maybe your hands still remember the weight of a hammer, the sting of ash, or the rhythm of a loom.

Your **background** isn’t just flavor — it comes with a simple tool, a half-remembered skill, and a weapon tied to that former life. These things may feel small compared to the horrors waiting in the wasteland, but they’re the roots that keep your character grounded.

Roll **d100** on the Background Table to see what you once were. Or, if you have a strong vision, choose instead — with your Judge’s approval, shape a background that fits the tone of the setting. The important thing is that you start not as a ready-made hero, but as someone ordinary, stepping into the extraordinary.

#### Gear and Training

Each background provides:

* **A trade good** — the simple tool, keepsake, or leftover scrap from your old life.
* **A weapon** — not a finely forged blade or a soldier’s rifle, but whatever you would realistically have handled in your role.

#### Non-Humans and Bio-Synths

If your result places you as something more than human — a Bio-Synth grown in a vat, a Forged machine who remembers another age, or some rarer strain — your path is already written. At level 1, you advance into the class tied to that origin. Even at level 0, you carry fragments of your nature: a Bio-Synth’s mutations, a Forged’s mechanical resilience, or an elf-blood’s uncanny senses. These fragments are faint sparks of what will later define you.

#### Judge’s Note

Backgrounds are a starting place, not a cage. They give your players texture, color, and humble beginnings. Let them bend a result to fit their vision, or swap an item for something that tells the right story. The wasteland is full of broken tools and forgotten trades — the point is to step into adventure with history at your back, and uncertainty ahead.

###  d100 Pre-Adventurer Backgrounds (With Starting Gear)

| d100 | Background | Starting Weapon | Starting Items (2–3) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Farmer | Pitchfork (spear) | Seed pouch, work gloves, battered hat |
| 2 | Rancher | Lasso | Branding iron, animal feed, rope |
| 3 | Scrap Scavenger | Pry bar (club) | Scrap bag, magnet, broken goggles |
| 4 | Water Carrier | Sling | Waterskin, ceramic jug, filter cloth |
| 5 | Bunker Custodian | Mop handle (staff) | Key ring, cleaning kit, faded badge |
| 6 | Caravan Guard | Short sword | Buckler, padded vest, trail rations |
| 7 | Trader’s Apprentice | Dagger | Small scales, tally stick, bartering kit |
| 8 | Tinker | Wrench (club) | Tool pouch, wire spool, mini-oil can |
| 9 | Gutblossom Harvester | Sickle | Shears, heavy gloves, preservative jar |
| 10 | Town Guard | Spear | Scrap shield, whistle, handcuffs |
| 11 | Judge Recruit | Club | ID tag, notepad, codebook |
| 12 | Grave Digger | Shovel | Tallow candle, flask of spirits, rope |
| 13 | Stable Hand | Pitchfork (spear) | Brush, oats bag, hoof pick |
| 14 | Fungus Forager | Small knife | Basket, mask, sample vials |
| 15 | Herd Minder | Staff | Slingshot, bell, woolen blanket |
| 16 | Water Purifier Operator | Hammer | Water test kit, flask, heavy boots |
| 17 | Glow Rat Catcher | Net | Cage, dried meat, rat whistle |
| 18 | Ruin Mapper | Hatchet | Chalk, old map scraps, compass |
| 19 | Mechanic’s Assistant | Spanner (club) | Tool roll, rags, oil-stained jumpsuit |
| 20 | Camp Cook | Cleaver | Cooking pot, tin plate, spice pouch |
| 21 | Library Scribe | Letter opener | Ink vial, journal, spectacles |
| 22 | Barkeep | Rolling pin | Apron, corkscrew, bottle of hooch |
| 23 | Old World Relic Collector | Dagger | Trinket bag, magnifying glass, odd coin |
| 24 | Scout | Short bow | Binoculars, camo cloak, trail markers |
| 25 | Messenger | Sling | Message tube, satchel, quick shoes |
| 26 | Watchtower Lookout | Spear | Signal mirror, spyglass, snack pouch |
| 27 | Pipeworks Maintainer | Pipe wrench (club) | Valve key, headlamp, patch tape |
| 28 | Dust Farmer | Hoe | Water can, mask, bag of dirt |
| 29 | Scrap Hauler | Crowbar | Harness, gloves, salvage sack |
| 30 | Goat Herder | Staff | Milk flask, whistle, patchy cloak |
| 31 | Pit Fighter | Spiked knuckles | Bandages, tooth necklace, torn shirt |
| 32 | Mutant Wrangler | Whip | Duct tape, tranquilizer darts, arm guard |
| 33 | Glowmoth Shepherd | Net | Glow jar, soft gloves, moth cage |
| 34 | Junk Dealer | Shiv | Ledger, scales, trinket box |
| 35 | Storyteller | Cane | Drum, story scroll, puppet |
| 36 | Wandering Peddler | Walking stick | Pack, trade trinkets, patched hat |
| 37 | Nomad | Sling | Bedroll, canteen, makeshift tent |
| 38 | Gutter Rat | Shiv | Pocket sand, rat tail, tattered scarf |
| 39 | Clutch Tender | Short spear | Egg basket, padded vest, repellant powder |
| 40 | Fish Trapper | Fish spear | Fishing net, stringer, bait box |
| 41 | Bone Carver | Chisel (dagger) | Bone charm, carving set, dust mask |
| 42 | Salvage Diver | Knife | Rope, goggles, waterproof bag |
| 43 | Shaman’s Novice | Quarterstaff | Ritual beads, scented pouch, bone rattle |
| 44 | Glow Beetle Breeder | Small sickle | Beetle jar, food paste, mesh gloves |
| 45 | Reactor Sweeper | Pipe (club) | Dosimeter, thick boots, lead apron |
| 46 | Tech Cultist | Ritual dagger | Symbolic gear, circuit charm, glow stick |
| 47 | Old Code Archivist | Small hammer | Flash drive, logbook, wire spool |
| 48 | Herbalist | Knife | Herb pouch, mortar & pestle, healing balm |
| 49 | Chicken Wrangler | Staff | Hen basket, feathers, cracked egg |
| 50 | Maskmaker | Awl | Mask kit, pigment jar, spool of thread |
| 51 | Pigeon Keeper | Slingshot | Pigeon cage, seed, note ring |
| 52 | Tunnel Digger | Pickaxe | Headlamp, rope, flask of water |
| 53 | Sludge Hauler | Shovel | Oilcloth boots, slop bucket, mask |
| 54 | Lab Escapee | Scalpel | Sample vial, patient band, hospital gown |
| 55 | Spore Sprayer | Club | Sprayer pack, face shield, fungus sample |
| 56 | Remnant Radio Operator | Wrench | Headset, frequency list, tool satchel |
| 57 | Caravan Cook | Cleaver | Cooking oil, stew pot, spice mix |
| 58 | Weather Watcher | Staff | Weather vane, barometer, storm log |
| 59 | Bandit’s Offspring | Sling | Coin pouch, stolen ring, ragged coat |
| 60 | Memory Pearl Scraper | File (dagger) | Pearl fragment, extraction tool, lamp |
| 61 | Freezy | None (choose) | Hospital bracelet, strange token, cryptic note |
| 62 | Trap Setter | Knife | Trap parts, wire, bait pouch |
| 63 | Trade Envoy | Short sword | Barter tokens, travel cloak, trade pass |
| 64 | Outpost Builder | Hatchet | Blueprints, nails, wooden plank |
| 65 | Scrap Musician | Drumstick (club) | Broken instrument, tuning fork, tin cup |
| 66 | Crafter (specify) | Chisel (dagger) | Tool set, sample work, pattern stencil |
| 67 | Candle Maker | Knife | Wax, wick roll, tin mold |
| 68 | Wall Scribe | Club | Paint pot, stencil, chalk |
| 69 | Wilds Guide | Bow | Trail markers, wildflower, field notes |
| 70 | “Ghost” Survivor | Shiv | Tattered coat, dog tag, lucky charm |
| 71 | Mushroom Farmer | Knife | Fungi basket, sprouting kit, damp rags |
| 72 | Artifact Hunter | Short sword | Artifact pouch, hand mirror, trowel |
| 73 | Road Warden | Spear | Signal flag, chain, travel boots |
| 74 | Silo Watcher | Club | Grain sample, horn, makeshift key |
| 75 | Mutant Rights Protestor | Club | Placard, pamphlet, red scarf |
| 76 | Raider Hostage | Shiv | Broken chain, scrap of cloth, hidden nail |
| 77 | Teacher | Letter opener | Chalk, slate, well-used book |
| 78 | Well Digger | Spade | Water dowsing rod, rope, muddy boots |
| 79 | Amnesiac Freezy | None (choose) | Hospital bracelet, strange token, note |
| 80 | Plague Doctor | Cane | Beaked mask, poultice, dried herbs |
| 81 | Street Medic | Scalpel | Bandage roll, flask of hooch, med kit |
| 82 | Scrapwright | Mallet | Blueprints, rivets, glue pot |
| 83 | Bonepicker | Shiv | Bone bag, tongs, tooth necklace |
| 84 | Phase Gate Cleaner | Crowbar | Keycard, cleaning spray, wipes |
| 85 | Fence Builder | Hammer | Nails, wire coil, fence patch |
| 86 | Plague Survivor | Knife | Face wrap, old medallion, infection kit |
| 87 | AI Shrine Attendant | Ritual dagger | Candle stub, idol, prayer bead |
| 88 | Tunnel Scout | Short sword | Echo stone, headlamp, dust mask |
| 89 | Patchwork Healer | Splint | Bandage roll, needle, salve jar |
| 90 | Dreamer (Oracular) | Cane | Tarot bones, painted rock, incense |
| 91 | Runaway Clone | Knife | Barcode tag, genetic slip, odd flashback |
| 92 | Outland Courier | Slingshot | Letter pouch, disguise scarf, coin |
| 93 | Roving Preacher | Staff | Prayer book, holy symbol, flask |
| 94 | WAG Operator | Wrench | Operator’s badge, repair ticket, helmet |
| 95 | Graveyard Nightwatch | Club | Lantern, bell, tattered cloak |
| 96 | Vermin Hunter | Slingshot | Trap, poison vial, tooth trophy |
| 97 | Whisper-Born Outcast | Dagger | Whisper token, mask, cryptic note |
| 98 | Glowleaf Grower | Sickle | Glowleaf, fertilizer, water scoop |
| 99 | Child of Gaia Initiate | Quarterstaff | Seed pouch, herbal poultice, green badge |
| 100 | Runaway Clone | Shiv | ID band, stolen coat, flash of memory |

### ⚙️ Calculating Secondary (Derived) Stats

When you make a character, you’ll need to determine a few key stats based on your ability scores, equipment, and class features. Here’s how to calculate the most common derived stats in Afterglow: Shatterlands.

####  Melee Attack Bonus

* **Base:** Your melee attack bonus is equal to your **Strength modifier** (from your ability score) **plus your class’s attack progression** (often tied to level or specific class features).
	+ **Typical 0-level (funnel):** Melee attack = Strength modifier
	+ **1st level or higher:** Melee attack = Strength modifier + class bonus (see your class table)
* **Modifiers:** Apply additional bonuses from special abilities, magic items, or situational modifiers as directed.

**Example:**
A 1st-level Judge with Strength 15 (+1) and a class bonus of +1 would have a melee attack bonus of **+2**.

####  Ranged Attack Bonus

* **Base:** Your ranged attack bonus is your **Agility modifier** plus your class’s attack progression.
	+ **Typical 0-level:** Ranged attack = Agility modifier
	+ **1st level or higher:** Ranged attack = Agility modifier + class bonus
* Apply bonuses from gear (e.g., scopes), mutations, or circumstances as appropriate.

**Example:**
A Survivalist with Agility 17 (+2) and a class attack bonus of +1 has a ranged attack bonus of **+3**.

####  Damage Bonus

* **Melee Damage:** Add your **Strength modifier** to the weapon’s damage roll.
* **Ranged Damage:** Normally, ranged attacks do **not** add your Agility modifier to damage, unless a weapon, mutation, or class feature says otherwise.
* Some effects, Lucky Rolls, or background items may further modify damage.

**Example:**
A club does 1d6 damage. If your Strength modifier is +1, you roll 1d6+1 for melee hits with a club.

#### ️ Armor Class (AC)

* **Base AC:** 10
* **Add:** Armor worn (see gear for AC bonus)
* **Add:** Agility modifier (unless the armor type restricts it)
* **Add:** Shields, magical effects, or situational bonuses

**Example:**
Leather armor (+2 AC), Agility modifier +1: 10 + 2 + 1 = **AC 13**

####  Saving Throws

* Your **Fortitude, Reflex, and Will saves** are determined by:
	+ Your class’s save values (see advancement table)
	+ **Plus** the appropriate ability modifier:
		- **Fortitude:** Stamina modifier
		- **Reflex:** Agility modifier
		- **Will:** Personality modifier
* **Total Save:** Class Save + Ability Modifier

####  Initiative

* Roll 1d20 + your **Agility modifier** (unless class or gear modifies it)

####  Movement Speed

* Standard movement is determined by your class and armor.
* Typical base speed is **30 ft** for most unarmored humans.
* **Reduce** speed for heavy armor or encumbrance, as listed in equipment or class rules.

#### ❤️ Hit Points (HP)

* **At 0-level:** 1d4 + Stamina modifier (minimum 1 HP)
* **At 1st level and higher:** Roll your class’s Hit Die (HD) and add your Stamina modifier per level (minimum 1 per level)
* Some classes, backgrounds, or mutations may adjust this.

####  Quick Reference Table

| Stat | Calculation |
| --- | --- |
| Melee Attack | Strength mod + class attack bonus |
| Ranged Attack | Agility mod + class attack bonus |
| Melee Damage | Weapon damage + Strength mod |
| Ranged Damage | Weapon damage (+mod only if allowed) |
| Armor Class (AC) | 10 + armor bonus + Agility mod (+shield, etc) |
| Fortitude Save | Class Fort + Stamina mod |
| Reflex Save | Class Ref + Agility mod |
| Will Save | Class Will + Personality mod |
| Initiative | 1d20 + Agility mod |
| Hit Points | HD per level + Stamina mod (min 1/lvl) |
| Movement Speed | Base (typically 30 ft) – encumbrance/armor |

**Judge’s Note:**
Some backgrounds, class features, or mutations may offer exceptions—always check your character’s specifics!

###  Afterglow Personality System: Your Moral Code

#### ✨ The Four Pillars of Personality in Afterglow

The Afterglow Personality System helps define what drives your character, how they solve problems, and what makes them tick. These four core areas shape every major decision, risk, and relationship in the game:

* **Morality**
Where do you stand on the spectrum from self-sacrifice to ruthless dominance? Morality reflects your character’s current moral compass — not just what you say, but what you actually do. This can change over time based on your actions and consequences.
* **Approach**
What’s your default move when things go sideways? Approach describes your PC’s instinctive method for handling challenges, danger, or opportunities. Each Approach comes with a small, always-on bonus tied to how you operate.
* **Temperament**
How do you express emotion, react to setbacks, or connect with others? Temperament is your social and emotional style — the “feel” of your character in any interaction. It influences how NPCs, factions, and AIs react to you.
* **Worldview**
What belief or philosophy shapes your biggest choices? Worldview is the core truth or conviction that guides your character, even in the face of adversity or loss. Living by your Worldview (especially when it’s costly) earns narrative rewards and deepens your story.

Together, these four areas form your **Personality Profile** — a living, evolving answer to the question:
**Who are you, really, when the Afterglow world pushes back?**

####  Morality

“It’s not about being good or evil. It’s about what you do — when no one else is watching.”

In Afterglow, your **Moral Code** represents where you fall on a spectrum of moral behavior. It isn't fixed forever — it shifts based on your choices, consequences, and growth. Your Judge will track your alignment over time, rewarding or punishing based on how you live your values... or betray them.

#####  What it Does

* **Reflects your character’s current moral compass** — not just what they say, but what they actually do.
* **May influence AI Patron reactions, artifact behavior, or NPC trust.**
* **Lets the Judge trigger moral consequences, boons, or even corruption/taint events.**

#####  How to Choose Your Moral Code

You can either:

* **Roll 1d12** randomly, letting fate define your ethical center,
**or**
* **Pick one** that fits your backstory and the type of story you want to tell.

You can always discuss your choice with the Judge to make sure it matches the campaign tone and your group’s expectations.

#####  Moral Code Table (d12)

| d12 | Morality | Legacy Analog | Summary |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | **Saintly** | Lawful | Altruistic, self-sacrificing. Would die so another might live. |
| 2 | **Virtuous** | Lawful | Genuinely moral. Compassionate and honest. |
| 3 | **Kind-Hearted** | Lawful | Gentle but not rigid; generous, forgives easily. |
| 4 | **Honorable** | Lawful | Keeps promises, defends the weak, bound by oath or code. |
| 5 | **Dutiful** | Neutral | Obeys rules, serves order, follows laws or superiors. |
| 6–7 | **Apathetic** | True Neutral | Goes with the flow, no strong leanings; moral driftwood. |
| 8 | **Opportunist** | Neutral | Self-serving but not malicious; a survivor. |
| 9 | **Selfish** | Chaotic | Prioritizes self even when others suffer. |
| 10 | **Cruel** | Chaotic | Finds pleasure in dominance or hurt; enjoys control or pain. |
| 11 | **Deceitful** | Chaotic | Uses manipulation as a tool; lies, betrays, exploits. |
| 12 | **Tyrannical** | Chaotic | Inhuman behavior; no empathy or restraint; craves power, control. |

#####  Can I Change My Morality?

**Yes — but only through your actions.**
The Judge may shift your morality **up or down the scale** if you repeatedly:

* Commit selfless or heroic deeds → shift upward
* Commit betrayals, harm innocents, or seek power → shift downward

This is not about punishment — it’s about tracking the story of who your character is becoming.

#####  Tips for Roleplaying Morality

* **Use it as a baseline, not a cage.** You don’t have to act 100% consistent — real people wrestle with morality.
* **Let moral dilemmas define your arc.** Afterglow is full of gray choices.
* **Ask your Judge if they’re tracking shifts.** It may influence artifact behavior or Patron AI favor.

#### ⚙️ Your Approach

“When it all goes sideways, what’s your instinct? How do you get things done — and what are you known for?”

Your **Approach** describes your character’s default method for solving problems, handling danger, and navigating social situations. It’s not about what you *can* do, but what you *usually* do first. Approach also grants a small, always-on bonus that rewards you for playing to your strengths.

#####  What it Does

* **Defines your go-to method** in crises, conflict, or tough decisions.
* **Grants a +1 bonus** (or a similar effect) to a specific type of roll, always stacking with other bonuses.
* **Gives the Judge a hook** for narrative complications or rewards — both when you follow your Approach and when you intentionally go against it.

#####  How to Choose Your Approach

You can either:

* **Roll 1d24** to let chance decide how you deal with the world,
**or**
* **Pick one** that fits your character’s history, background, and personal style.

Your Approach is *not* set in stone, but can only be changed with Judge approval — usually after significant growth, trauma, or a major turning point.

#####  Approach Table (d24)

| d24 | Approach | Bonus |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | **Diplomat** | +1 to reaction and negotiation rolls |
| 2 | **Protector** | +1 AC when adjacent to a friendly target |
| 3 | **Investigator** | +1 to artifact checks and perception |
| 4 | **Trickster** | +1 to deception and disguise |
| 5 | **Enforcer** | +1 melee attack rolls vs lone targets |
| 6 | **Strategist** | +1 to initiative and ambush rolls |
| 7 | **Saboteur** | +1 to damage vs machines or tech |
| 8 | **Survivor** | +1 to Fortitude saves |
| 9 | **Rebel** | +1 to Will saves vs coercion |
| 10 | **Face** | +1 to social rolls in formal groups |
| 11 | **Wanderer** | +1 Speed and initiative during travel |
| 12 | **Destroyer** | +1 damage vs constructs or cover |
| 13 | **Healer** | +1 to medicine or healing item checks |
| 14 | **Tactician** | +1 to group combat rolls when giving orders |
| 15 | **Sentinel** | +1 to perception; cannot be surprised if awake |
| 16 | **Sneak** | +1 to Stealth and sneak attacks |
| 17 | **Scout** | +1 to detection rolls while exploring |
| 18 | **Preacher** | +1 to rally or recruit checks |
| 19 | **Fixer** | +1 to barter, bribe, or favors |
| 20 | **Tinker** | +1 to field repairs or jury-rigged tech |
| 21 | **Hunter** | +1 to tracking and damage vs beasts |
| 22 | **Archivist** | +1 to research or data interface rolls |
| 23 | **Sentry** | +1 to surprise checks and overwatch reactions |
| 24 | **Gambler** | +1 to Luck checks; reroll 1s once/day |

#####  Can I Change My Approach?

**Yes — but only with Judge approval.**
Your Approach may shift when your character:

* Survives a life-changing event
* Embraces a new outlook or abandons their old ways
* Grows or regresses in a major narrative arc

Approach is meant to *reward* consistent play, but never to box you in.

#####  Tips for Roleplaying Approach

* **Play to your strengths:** Let your Approach inform your choices, especially in tense scenes.
* **Surprise the table:** Sometimes breaking your own pattern can be just as dramatic — and memorable.
* **Let your Approach evolve:** Don’t be afraid to ask the Judge about shifting your Approach if your story goes somewhere new.

*Custom Approaches are welcome with Judge approval. Just describe a clear, repeatable problem-solving style and suggest an appropriate bonus.*

####  Player Guide: Your Temperament

“How you talk. How you react. What people feel when they meet you — this is your emotional weather.”

Your **Temperament** describes your character’s social and emotional style. It shapes how you interact, how others perceive you, and how you handle stress or celebration. It’s not just window dressing — Judges use Temperament as a roleplay tool for rewarding great in-character moments, nudging social scenes, or even adjusting NPC reactions.

#####  What it Does

* **Defines your baseline personality tone:** Outgoing, guarded, volatile, nurturing — what’s your default?
* **Gives the Judge guidance** for how strangers, factions, and even AIs react to you in social situations.
* **May earn you roleplay XP, bonds, or story boons** for acting true to your Temperament — especially in tense or dramatic scenes.

**Temperament is narrative-only** — it never grants or removes mechanical bonuses by itself.

#####  How to Choose Your Temperament

You can either:

* **Roll 1d30** for a surprise that might inspire your play, **or**
* **Pick one** that matches your character’s personality, trauma, or the arc you want to explore.

If nothing feels right, you can work with your Judge to craft a custom Temperament — just keep it to one strong “emotional flavor” or default mode, not a full backstory.

#####  Temperament Table (d30)

| d30 | Temperament | Short Description |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | **Empathic** | Deeply in tune with others' emotions |
| 2 | **Stoic** | Rarely shows feelings; calm under pressure |
| 3 | **Gregarious** | Friendly, chatty, welcoming |
| 4 | **Calculating** | Emotionally cool, always thinking |
| 5 | **Hopeful** | Believes in good outcomes |
| 6 | **Jaded** | Seen too much to be optimistic |
| 7 | **Hot-headed** | Quick to anger or bold action |
| 8 | **Quiet** | Reserved, listens more than speaks |
| 9 | **Paranoid** | Trusts no one |
| 10 | **Confident** | Self-assured and unshakable |
| 11 | **Mournful** | Haunted by sorrow or loss |
| 12 | **Erratic** | Emotionally unpredictable |
| 13 | **Charismatic** | Effortlessly draws people in |
| 14 | **Detached** | Cold or emotionally distant |
| 15 | **Driven** | Purpose above all else |
| 16 | **Playful** | Light-hearted, teasing |
| 17 | **Bitter** | Harsh, cynical, or resentful |
| 18 | **Nurturing** | Protective and encouraging |
| 19 | **Cold** | Lacks empathy, shows no warmth |
| 20 | **Charming** | Polished and persuasive |
| 21 | **Melancholic** | Dreamy or quietly sad |
| 22 | **Anxious** | Worry-driven, alert to threats |
| 23 | **Loyal** | Devoted to companions or causes |
| 24 | **Theatrical** | Big emotions, dramatic flair |
| 25 | **Obsessive** | Can't let go of one thing |
| 26 | **Spiritual** | Believes in something greater |
| 27 | **Nihilistic** | Believes nothing matters |
| 28 | **Protective** | Always guarding someone else |
| 29 | **Provocative** | Likes to test limits |
| 30 | **Haunted** | Burdened by memories or guilt |

#####  Can I Change My Temperament?

**Yes — with Judge approval.**
You might change your Temperament after major trauma, healing, or revelation, or if your character genuinely grows in a new direction.

#####  Tips for Roleplaying Temperament

* **Let Temperament inform your scenes, not dictate them:** You can still surprise others or push your own boundaries.
* **Reward: Judges may offer inspiration, XP, or in-story benefits** when you play your Temperament well in tough situations.
* **Use as a social cue:** Let others at the table know how you want to be approached, or what you expect from the world.

*These are suggestions. If none fit, create your own Temperament with Judge approval!*

####  Player Guide: Your Worldview

“What do you believe, even when the world proves you wrong? What’s the one thing you’ll hold onto, even at your lowest?”

Your **Worldview** is your character’s core belief or philosophy — the truth they carry into every decision, no matter how much the wasteland tries to grind it out of them. It doesn’t give you a bonus or restrict your choices, but it *does* give your Judge a tool for rewarding powerful roleplay and for framing moments of doubt, faith, or revelation.

#####  What it Does

* **Defines your PC’s guiding principle or life philosophy.**
* **Gives the Judge a hook** to reward you with XP, boons, or inspiration when you make choices that *reflect your Worldview, especially when it costs you.*
* **Helps ground your roleplay in big, memorable moments:** crises of faith, acts of defiance, or sudden reversals of heart.

Worldview is not a background or a goal — it’s the deep-seated *belief* that colors everything your PC does.

#####  How to Choose Your Worldview

You can either:

* **Roll 1d30** for a random spark, **or**
* **Pick or write one** that matches your concept, history, or the arc you want to play.

If nothing on the table feels right, you’re encouraged to create your own Worldview with Judge approval. Just keep it short, strong, and clear.

#####  Worldview Table (d30)

| d30 | Worldview | Belief Statement |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Altruist | "The strong should protect the weak." |
| 2 | Technophile | "Machines are humanity’s next step." |
| 3 | Technophobe | "All tech corrupts eventually." |
| 4 | Fatalist | "What’s broken stays broken." |
| 5 | Survivalist | "Only the prepared endure." |
| 6 | Martyr | "I was born to take the fall so others don’t." |
| 7 | Pacifist | "No life is worth taking if it can be spared." |
| 8 | Justice-Seeker | "Fairness isn’t found — it’s fought for." |
| 9 | Pragmatist | "The world is what it is. I do what works." |
| 10 | Anarchist | "No masters. No rulers. No chains." |
| 11 | Purist | "Mutation is a sickness to be purged." |
| 12 | Mutant Rights Activist | "We didn’t choose this — we still deserve dignity." |
| 13 | Warden | "The wild has a right to reclaim what's left." |
| 14 | Archivist | "The past holds the answers." |
| 15 | Destroyer | "This world needs to burn before it can grow again." |
| 16 | Faithful | "I serve the will of higher powers." |
| 17 | Skeptic | "Faith is just fear with polish." |
| 18 | Hedonist | "Live while you can. Nothing else matters." |
| 19 | Caretaker | "No one should die alone or forgotten." |
| 20 | Iconoclast | "The old ways failed. I break what others worship." |
| 21 | Witness | "I remember so others can forget." |
| 22 | Truth-Seeker | "I’ll uncover what really happened — no matter the cost." |
| 23 | Resenter | "They took everything. I won’t forgive." |
| 24 | Pilgrim | "There’s something waiting for me out there." |
| 25 | Harmonist | "Everything — flesh, steel, mind, and moss — belongs together." |
| 26 | Dreamer | "If you can imagine it, you can build it." |
| 27 | Fanatic | "I’ve seen the truth. You just haven’t yet." |
| 28 | Mercenary | "Everything has a price — and I don't work for free." |
| 29 | Vision-Touched | "Something speaks to me... even now." |
| 30 | Free Thinker | "I make my own path. Always have." |

#####  Can I Change My Worldview?

**Yes — with Judge approval.**
Worldview shifts rarely, and only after major revelations, betrayals, or turning points. It’s a mark of deep growth, trauma, or spiritual awakening.

#####  Tips for Roleplaying Worldview

* **Lean into your Worldview during hard choices:** Let it push you, or let you rebel against it.
* **Let it challenge you:** A Worldview isn’t always comfortable — sometimes it leads you straight into trouble or heartbreak.
* **Work with your Judge:** If you want your PC to question or change their Worldview, play it out! These can be some of the most memorable moments at the table.

*Custom Worldviews are encouraged. Make it your own — just keep it core to who your PC is, not what they want to own, kill, or conquer.*

### Languages: Words of a Broken World

The Shatterlands hum with voices — scraps of Old World tongues, gutter dialects, and strange new languages birthed from faction, cult, and tribe. Language is more than communication: it’s survival, belonging, and sometimes the only line between ally and enemy.

At character creation, you automatically know **Common Tongue** and gain one additional language for each Intelligence bonus plus any from your background or class. Judges should encourage players to roleplay these choices: who taught you this tongue, and what memories does it carry?

Some languages are rare or dangerous to know — machine code whispers, forgotten prayers, or the secret speech of Bio-Synths. Picking one ties your character into the setting’s mysteries.

### Weapon Training: Tools Turned Weapons

Before you were an adventurer, you had hands used to work. Those same hands now grip weapons. In Afterglow, weapon training starts humbly. Your background provides a **single weapon** you can use with competence, usually whatever would have been at hand in your old life.
Your class determines how much better you become. A scavver swinging a wrench may learn to wield rifles with practiced precision. A cultist with a torch may learn to drive mobs with it. Don’t think of weapon training as a strict limit; think of it as a ladder. The world will hand you sharper tools as you climb.

### Trade Goods: What You Carry from Before

Every survivor begins with something small from their old life. It may be a tool, a trinket, or a scrap of gear that still works. These **trade goods** are chosen from or inspired by your background. They’re not powerful items — but they have weight.

A glass lens, a pouch of seeds, a piece of scrap electronics, or a charm made of bone may not win a battle, but it may open a story. Judges should look for ways to make these goods meaningful — whether through barter, recognition, or symbolism.

### Choosing a Class

In the Shatterlands, survival shapes identity. Most characters begin as ordinary folk — herders, scrappers, tinkers, zealots — but when they rise above 0-level, they step into a class.

For some, the choice is dictated by **what they are**. A Forged machine does not become a Cultist; its path is defined by circuits and memory. A Bio-Synth grown in a vat follows the shape of its engineered nature. In these cases, genotype and class are one and the same.

For others, especially humans, class is a matter of **what they become**. Once they survive their first trial, they may take up the mantle of Boomshade, Child of Gaia, Cultist, Patchrunner, or another path. The choice reflects how they adapt — through cunning, faith, mutation, or the dangerous bond with ancient AIs.

#### Hit Points

Every class uses its own die to determine hit points. All characters begin with **1d4 hit points at 0 level**, and class hit dice are added on top. For example: a Freezy rolls 1d4 + 1d6 at 1st level, then another 1d6 when they advance to 2nd.

#### Weapon Training

All classes can wield simple, improvised, or primitive weapons. Beyond that, each class description explains what they excel with — some learn the finer points of firearms, others focus on claws, toxins, or patch-coded weaponry.

#### Action Dice

Action Dice fuel almost everything: attacks, mutations, wetware programs, and other abilities. A 1st-level character typically rolls **1d20** as their main Action Die. As they advance, they may gain additional dice, often of smaller size (like a d14), to represent less reliable secondary actions. Class descriptions explain how each archetype uses their dice — some to strike more often, others to trigger powers or programs.

#### Titles

At lower levels, survivors gain **titles** that mark their growing reputation. A 1st-level Boomshade might be called a “Blaster,” while a 3rd-level Child of Gaia could be known as a “Green-Seer.” Titles are cultural shorthand: names given by settlements, factions, or rumors that spread faster than truth. At higher levels (7+), such survivors are so rare that no common titles exist. Judges and players are encouraged to invent their own, drawing from faction myths, local slang, or the whispers of machine-priests.

### Level Advancement: Growing in the Afterglow

No one walks into the Shatterlands as a hero. You begin as a farmer with a rusted blade, a scavver with a satchel of junk, a zealot clutching words half-remembered. What makes you more than ordinary is not bloodline or prophecy, but the simple act of surviving.

Every journey through the ruins, every bargain struck, every scar taken — these shape you. With each encounter you endure, you gain **experience**, and with it the strength to change. This is how characters grow in Afterglow: not by counting every coin or kill, but by returning from danger alive, bearing the lessons of what nearly destroyed you.

Advancement is uneven, as it should be. Heroes of the old stories did not climb in neat steps. Sometimes they fled from terrors too great to face. Sometimes they stumbled into victories they didn’t deserve. Sometimes they spent long stretches wandering without change, only to emerge transformed by a single, harrowing trial. So it is in the Shatterlands.

When you survive an encounter, the Judge will award you a measure of experience. Most dangers are worth something. The deadliest — the kind that leave ash in your teeth and tremors in your hands — are worth more. How much you gain is the Judge’s call. When your tally crosses a threshold, you advance to a new level. With each new level come more hit points, sharper skills, and powers that once seemed impossible.

For those who begin at **0-level**, the climb is cruel. Many will die. But those who endure their first trial are hardened by it. Judges may choose to reward any 0-level funnel survivor with immediate advancement to 1st level — their trial by fire recognized by fate itself.

Remember this: leveling up is not just numbers on a sheet. It is your character’s story turning a page. How do they stand differently? What did they sacrifice to reach this point? Every advance is a scar, a memory, a whisper that you are not who you once were.

Basics of the XP System: The experience system works as follows: • All character classes use the same advancement table. • Each encounter is worth from 0 to 4 XP, and those XP are not earned merely by killing monsters, disarming traps, looting artifacts, or exploring a ruin. Rather, successfully surviving encounters earns the characters XP. A typical encounter is worth 2 XP, and the system scales from 0 to 4 depending on difficulty. • All characters that participate in the encounter receive the same XP. • The judge determines how much XP is awarded. • Characters level up when they reach the XP threshold for the next level. • The level thresholds become progressively higher. The number of “average adventures” required to advance to each subsequent level is higher than the preceding

### XP Level Thresholds

Zero-level characters start at **0 XP**. The indicated amount of XP is required to achieve each new level.

For example:

* A 0-level character becomes a **1st-level character** at **10 XP**.
* They reach **2nd level** at **50 XP**, **3rd level** at **110 XP**, and so on.

| Level | XP Required |
| --- | --- |
| 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 10 |
| 2 | 50 |
| 3 | 110 |
| 4 | 190 |
| 5 | 290 |
| 6 | 410 |
| 7 | 550 |
| 8 | 710 |
| 9 | 890 |
| 10 | 1090 |