

ARRC

QUICKSTART

MAY SIXTEEN VERSION



ARC is a *rules-light, tension-heavy*
fantasy tabletop role-playing game

where anyone can create **URGENT STORIES**
ticking down to a seemingly inescapable

APOCALYPSE

This quickstart gives you essential information to start playing **ARC**.

It *includes* key excerpts for Setting the Doom, Hero Creation, Core Rules and even sample play and creatures condensed from the full book.

It *does not* include all Hero Creation options, the full list of Spells and Techniques and associated rules, even more extensive examples and guiding information, an appendix full of fascinating creatures...and all the unforgettable art.

While the rules are mostly complete, there may be some changes between now and the final version.

LINKS

arc-rpg.com

Digital character sheet, info, announcements, and mailing list

twitter.com/momatoes

Follow the creator on Twitter

exaltedfuneral.com

Cool RPGs from an even cooler publisher

CREDITS

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Kickstarter by Exalted Funeral Press

WHY **PLAY** ARC?

Play ARC to:

- Escape to a world filled with **MEMORABLE, HEART-RACING TALES**. Challenge awaits you. Can you overcome looming obliteration?
- **BUILD A STORY** together. Support each other as heroes on a fantasy adventure creating narratives that alter the course of destiny.
- **HAVE FUN**—even when you’ve never played or run a tabletop role-playing game before. It’s easy to feel anxious and uncertain with a new hobby. The full book will guide you on becoming heroes immersed in adventure so that you worry about the Doom and not yourself.

ARC enables people wishing to run a game with limited experience. The Doom and its Omens help create tension and manage the story’s pacing. The rules are approachable so you can focus on helping make the best story for the table. Additionally, the last chapter of the full book is filled with tips for building a good experience for you and your friends.

Play
ARC
 IF YOU'RE
READY
 to defeat the
Apocalypse



WHAT DO I NEED TO PLAY THE QUICKSTART?

PEOPLE

- one player, called the **Guide**, to facilitate the game.
- 3–6 other players role-playing Heroes. Simply referred to as ‘player.’

TOOLS

- ARC character sheets to track Heroes’ stats and capabilities.
Visit arc-rpg.com for an online version.
- a stopwatch or timer—digital or otherwise.
- several six-sided dice*. ARC can technically be played with one die but having two to three is better.

*dice are referred to as **X**d6, where X is the number of six-sided die to roll: 1d6, 2d6, etc.

ESSENTIALS

- a few hours of free time, respect for fellow players, and a willingness to save the world.

WHO IS THE GUIDE?

The Guide sets the scenes, role-plays as non-hero characters, and builds challenges and situations that other players must tackle.

The Guide also has the final say on rules, but they can delegate answering simple rules questions to others.

Being a Guide is perfect if you love planting story seeds for others and growing it with them to make a unique creation.

HOW DO YOU PLAY ARC?

ARC is great for tense, bounded story arcs with dark and looming futures — using the hair-raising **Doomsday Clock** to unleash havoc.

1. SETUP

Guide and players decide on what kind of story to tackle—**knights fighting gears? glorious bard saviors? babaylan facing the bakunawa?** The Guide then prepares the **Doom**, three **Omens**, and the Doomsday Clock.

2. HERO CREATION

Players create their Heroes. Afterwards, the game itself begins and can be played across one or multiple sessions.

3. GAME SESSION

The Guide sets the scene and the Heroes react. Difficult, risky actions require rolling dice in a **Skill Check** to see if the Hero succeeds.

Sometimes, the situation escalates into **Conflict**.

At set intervals, the Doomsday Clock advances. If it reaches the end, **the Doom arrives**—and the group has to decide what happens in this changed world.

HERO: My **PRESENCE** is 2. I think I'll use a **CONCERTED** approach to get her attention as enthusiastically as I can. I have a 1 in **CONCERTED**, so my **TARGET NUMBER** for this **SKILL CHECK** is 3. I roll...a 2!

GUIDE: Your 1d6 roll is lower than the **TN**, so you succeed in getting the giant's attention! However, she doesn't seem to like it...She stands up to her full height and casts a shadow

GUIDE: A white-haired woman swims in the pond, and she looms so large that it seems she spans kilometers wide. Three or four huge koi swim in the pond but they otherwise.

GUIDE: Another hour passes, so the **DOOMSDAY CLOCK** advances by one. We have three **OMENS** in play so it can go even faster. Just a few more hours, then...until Doom arrives.

Setup

for the Guide

1. CREATE A DOOM

A terrible event that Heroes will want to prevent at any cost.

Examples:

World-ending earthquake brought by a goddess' approaching death
Impending arrival of ravenous shadowcreatures.

2. CREATE THREE OMENS

Omens are story fronts contributing to the advancing Doom. While they may not directly cause the Doom, they speed its arrival.

Examples:

A widening crack in a forgotten portal
Border villages falling mysteriously ill
An arcane book missing from the magic university

“

The meteor loomed closer and closer as the people could only helplessly watch the Doom that would kill them all. There were many warning signs and many were ignored in the guileless way desperate people blind their eyes against the truth.

More about Omens

Heroes can resolve Omens to slow down the Doom. Resolution happens when they've removed its cause or rendered its impact moot.

For example, Heroes could resolve the Omen “local cult is hoarding gold and jewelry” by defeating all members, stealing back the valuables, convincing the cult to disarm, asking the local kawal to intervene or even burning down the cult's headquarters.

3. BUILD THE DOOMSDAY CLOCK

The Doomsday Clock is made of discrete segments called **moments**. The number and speed of moments depend on length of play.

A one-session game

Doomsday Clock has 3 moments per hour of play; advances every half-hour

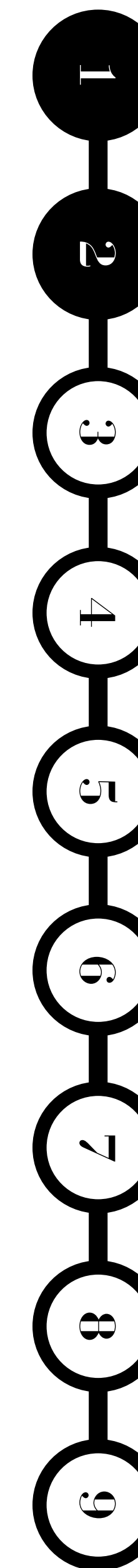
2-3 sessions

1.5 moments per hour of play; advances every hour

4+ sessions

1.5 moments per session of play; advances every session

Every time the Doomsday Clock advances, a moment is spent. Then, the Guide rolls 1d6 per Omen still in play; for every **5 or 6** the Clock advances one more moment.



A sample **CLOCK** for a 3-hour, single session game. Two moments are gone—only seven left.

Hero Creation PART 1.1

Players move the story and explore the collective world through **Heroes**.

Any Hero can be played as long as they make sense in the setting. Whether as a human, an elf or a cat person moonlighting as a monk by day—identity and personality should have no limits.

The Hero's capabilities are expressed through several aspects, or "stats".

Hero Creation fills in these details to build a well-rounded and capable character.

Step 1: Approach Scores

APPROACH SCORES represent the Hero's aptitude for solving problems and using Skills in particular ways. Do they tend towards **creative** solutions? Are they **careful** and detail-oriented? Or do they gravitate towards resolving challenges through sheer, **concerted** effort?

To determine approach scores: Assign a +0, +1 and +2 to **Creative, Careful, and Concerted** in any order you'd like.

+0 means zero aptitude, +1 is average, +2 is gifted and +3 is expert.

Step 2: Blood and Guts

BLOOD is the Hero's ability to withstand **physical** damage. If it becomes zero the next physical damage reduces Approach Scores instead.

GUTS measures the Hero's ability to withstand **psychosocial** damage. Like Blood, if it becomes zero the next psychosocial damage reduces Approach Scores.

To determine Blood & Guts modifiers: Allocate modifiers to **Blood** and **Guts** so their sum is 6 (minimum 0); for example, 4 and 2, 1 and 5, 0 and 6. Then, roll for **Blood** and **Guts** to set its first value.

While Heroes can sustain harm, they can also recover Blood and Guts with rest.

When Heroes wake up from a Long Rest—a specific type of break taking 5 real-time minutes and up to 15 in-story hours—their player has the option of rolling a new maximum for Blood and Guts for the rest of the day equal to 2d6 plus their Hero's **modifier**.

Step 3: Skill Ranks

Heroes use Skills to solve a wide array of challenges such as defeating giant rats, talking to immense dragons or haggling the price of wares.

A. Knowledge C. Physical E. Prowess

Academic
Culture
Observe
Tactics

Acrobatics
Coordination
Physique
Weaponry

Arcana
Focus

B. Social

Charisma
Guile
Impose
Insight

D. Practical

Artistry
Survival
Tinker
Trade

View the character sheet at arc-rpg.com for descriptions per Skill.

To determine Skill ranks:

Allocate +2 to two **Skills** and +1 to three **Skills**.

Like with Approaches, +0 means zero aptitude, +1 is average, +2 is gifted and +3 is expert.

Hero Creation PART 1.2

Step 3: Skill Ranks

	Knowledge	Social	Physical	Practical	Prowess
Example applications	Theorizing a scientific principle with ACADEMIC .	Convincing an enemy to join your cause through diplomacy with CHARISMA .	Dynamically balancing across a precarious ledge with ACROBATICS .	Writing a truly evocative poem with ARTISTRY .	Detecting if magic was recently cast with ARCANA .
	Deciphering the village elder's hidden song with CULTURE .	Intimidating the queen in front of her court with IMPOSE .	Moving quietly and efficiently to avoid detection with COORDINATION .	Gathering food and water in the forest through SURVIVAL .	Enduring intense mental duress through FOCUS .
View the character sheet at arc-rpg.com for more examples per Skill.	Investigating a crime scene for clues with OBSERVE .	Realizing that the datu is lying with INSIGHT .	Punching the akromata really, really hard with PHYSIQUE .	Creating contraptions and traps from common materials and TINKER .	
	Knowing how to position oneself in a heated battle with TACTICS .	Bluffing about possessing a mega weapon with GUILE .	Handling an unwieldy hammer with WEAPONRY .	Knowing pricing and methods for leather- and metalworking with TRADE .	

Hero Creation PART 2

Step 4: Inventory

The Hero's inventory contains useful items for creating better opportunities and even new capabilities. Surviving a cold night in the wilderness, for example, is much easier with a tent and a flint & tinder to make fire. Inventory also covers powerful abilities such as Spells and Techniques, which have unique effects on the world.

While the inventory items in this Quickstart provide unique options for the Hero, they're no match for the 80+ items in the full book.

“*"A chicken?" the rogue asked, incredulously. "What use do I have for a chicken?" "Let's just say it's very handy for dealing a certain fowl-phobic baron," the stranger smiled.*

To determine inventory, Pick from below. You may have more than one of an item unless marked by an asterisk*.

Pick two from *this* list.

- 3 day's rations
- Crowbar and lantern
- 50-ft rope and a rolled-up carpet
- Booming Voice
[+1 PHYSICAL DAMAGE]
- Well-rounded education*
[+1 PSYCHOSOCIAL DAMAGE]
- Lifebringer [SPELL]
| You or any other being you can see regain 4 Blood and 4 Guts.
- Memory Seed [TECHNIQUE]
| Through your charm and willpower's force plant the seeds of a false, yet vivid, memory in a target.

Then, pick two more from *this* list.

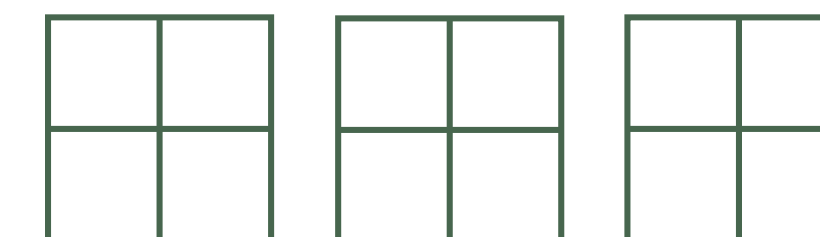
- A heavy crown with oppressive aura
- Mirror and fine clothes
- Thieves' tools, disguise kit, manacles
- Dagger and toga
[+1 PHYSICAL DAMAGE and +1 PHYSICAL RESIST]
- Self-esteem and personal growth*
[+1 PSYCHOSOCIAL DAMAGE and +1 PSYCHOSOCIAL RESIST]
- Little Escapologist [SPELL]
| You turn completely invisible for 10 real-time minutes or 3 turns in a conflict. You generate neither smell nor sound.
- Stonewall [TECHNIQUE]
| Reduce all damage by 1 for the next 15 real-time minutes or 5 turns in a conflict.

Finally, pick just one item more from *this* list.

- A set of alchemist's tools plus one dose of a rare drug
- A pair of glasses granting darkvision
- A sturdy sword
[+2 PHYSICAL DAMAGE]
- Devastating vocabulary*
[+2 PSYCHOSOCIAL DAMAGE]
- Manic Hands [SPELL]
| Four arms and hands burst from your face face for 10 real-time minutes or 3 turns in a conflict. You may perform 2 Skill Checks per turn in a conflict; outside conflict you have +1 TN for actions that benefit from extra hands; but -1 TN to Social Skills.
- Turn the Tide [TECHNIQUE]
| All your Skill Checks come with Opportunity for 10 real-time minutes or 3 turns in a conflict.

Step 5: Bonds

Bonds represent two Heroes' relationship visualized through big and small boxes. Every new step of Bond fills a small box—also called a minor level. Every big box that gets filled represents a **major** level of Bond.



the hero accepts inconvenience for their companion

the hero accepts harm for the companion

the hero is ready to die for them

To determine bonds:

You have 6 minor levels of Bond with one ally; 3 minor levels of Bond with another.

Core Rules

A. Skill Checks

Whenever the player attempts a risky action with a chance for an interesting success or failure, the Guide may ask them to make a **SKILL CHECK**, declaring a **SKILL** and **APPROACH** based on the intended outcome.

Most of the time, the same challenge can be resolved in different ways. Sneaking past a troll, for example, can be done with

Careful+Coordination to sneak by with efficient, stealthy movement; Creative+Tinker to build a contraption to generate distracting noises; or even Concerted+Culture to recall that trolls have poor eyesight.

Players should try to narrate how the **APPROACH** applies to the **SKILL**; for example, saying “I try to deduce artistic motifs from the markings on the altar” is much better than just “I observe creatively”.

Some examples of how approach can apply to Skill.

	Creative	Careful	Concerted
Knowledge Skill	Theorize, shift, think laterally	Assess, inquire, analyze	Recall, restore, overwrite
Social Skill	Charm, incite, inspire	Reason, detail, guide	Intimidate, enforce, invade
Physical Skill	Bedazzle, innovate, exceed expectations	Be safe, be calm, follow best guidelines	Charge, endure, overwhelm
Practical Skill	Invent, adapt, experiment	Soothe, refine, survey	Rush, withstand, brute force
Prowess Skill	Explore, expand, create	Sense, attune, investigate	Memorize, remember, commit

The SUM of your **SKILL RANKS** and your chosen **APPROACH SCORE** determines the **THRESHOLD NUMBER (TN)**.

Once the TN is known, the player rolls **1D6** to determine the outcome— a roll under the TN means success.

However, other factors can help or even hinder success.

DIFFICULTY

Before the roll, the Guide can adjust TN based on the relative difficulty of the task.

EASY +1 to TN

The Hero has very good tools, the target has poor defenses, or the action is very well planned.

DIFFICULT +0

Most Skill Checks; actions done under pressure or risky tasks where preparations are adequate but imperfect.

VERY DIFFICULT -1

Very inadequate or even incorrect tools, capacity or circumstances; target has effective defenses, or action is significantly high-risk or poorly planned.

STAGGERINGLY HARD -2

*The conditions are even worse off. Current situation actively hinders the task; perhaps the target has effective resistance specifically against this kind of action or the action is **wildly**, terribly infeasible.*

IMPOSSIBLY HARD -3

*I mean, you can certainly *try*.*

While these guidelines exist, assigning Difficulty Modifier is ultimately up to the Guide’s judgement.

SPENDING BONDS

Before the roll, one ally can **assist** to increase TN equal to major levels of Bond with the Hero. The ally must have a relevant Skill they use to help.

Alternatively, any ally may sacrifice minor levels of Bond to allow a reroll.

Core Rules

A. Skill Checks (continued)

If the Skill Check's **1D6** roll is *equal* to the TN, the player chooses:

Succeed with a **CONSEQUENCE**

complicating the Hero and their allies' situation. Either the Guide or player may pick from:

- Delay or inefficiency**, e.g. Taking so long that the guards are rounding the corner.
- Permanent or temporary loss of resource**, e.g. Having a weapon stuck in an enemy's armor.
- Discord and misunderstanding**, e.g. Besmirched reputation with a merchant.
- Overkill**, e.g. Harming the bard inadvertently due to spillover effects.
- ???? UNKNOWN**, to be revealed later.

Fail but with an **OPPORTUNITY**

improving the Hero and their allies' situation. Either the Guide or player may pick from:

- Risk reduction**, e.g. Deescalating tension in the negotiations.
- Risk redirection**, e.g. Putting someone else on the spot.
- Gaining trust or respect**, e.g. Impressing the elven queen.
- New knowledge**, e.g. Discovering a weakness of the manananggal.
- ???? UNKNOWN**, to be revealed later.

If the roll *exceeds* the TN, the Hero exceeded their threshold and the action fails. Depending on the stakes at hand, the Guide may also introduce a complication as a result.

UPGRADING OUTCOMES

However, players may sacrifice **3 BLOOD** OR **3 GUTS** once to upgrade the outcome.

- A tied roll is upgraded to a pure success.
- A failed roll may be upgraded to a success with **CONSEQUENCE** or failure with **OPPORTUNITY**.

Successful rolls cannot be upgraded.

B. Conflict

During a **CONFLICT**, characters are at odds with one another and victory is on the line. Imagine a tavern fight, a showdown with the boss, or even a verbal beatdown from guild courtesans.

In a conflict, anyone can make a difference. Characters' actions and reactions must be carefully sequenced in **turns**, which require unique rules. In ARC, turn order is determined by **intent**, not a roll.

Note

The conflict rules mentions a special unit for distance: the **height**, being equal to an average human's height—around 1.6 meters or 5 to 6 feet.

Core Rules

B. Conflict (continued)

ACTIONS IN A TURN

During their turn Heroes may do any **one** action from below as well as **MOVE**—but not flee—anywhere within **2 HEIGHTS** (if uninjured).

1. STAND GROUND

Anyone attacking the Hero or allies within 2 heights receive -1 to TN.

2. HARM OTHERS

Make Skill Check to attack. Successful **WEAPONRY** and **PHYSIQUE** checks damage **BLOOD**; **IMPOSE**, **GUILE**, for **GUTS**. However, a player may also attempt to justify inflicting psychosocial damage with another situationally-relevant Skill. TN may be reduced by target's **RESIST** items and any applicable difficulty modifiers.

Successful attacks deal **DAMAGE** to Blood or Guts equal to TN plus any Damage Bonuses from weapons.

3. ASSIST AND CREATE ADVANTAGE

Improve TN of allies' Skill Checks. *Rules available in the full book.*

4. USE SPELL OR TECHNIQUE

The Hero performs a Spell or Technique they have.

Every time they are damaged before their turn, they must make a purely random roll and succeed with TN = 6 minus number of times they've been hit so far. A failed roll (over TN) means the spell or technique fizzles out, though it does not disappear from inventory.

5. MOVE AWAY

If the Hero isn't being attacked or targeted they may move up to **5 ADDITIONAL HEIGHTS**. Otherwise the player must succeed at a Skill Check—for example, with Acrobatics or Coordination—to move. Alternately they may opt to move without the Skill Check, but enemies currently engaging them can make a free roll to attack.

6. ANYTHING ELSE

This may include trying to convince an enemy to stand down, climbing a tree for cover, or performing a ritual.

INITIATIVE CATEGORY (TURN ORDER)

Everyone acts in sequence based on **intent**. This is called “initiative category”. The Guide or a delegated player calls out each category to signal who acts next.

- First: characters standing ground.
- Second: characters taking action outside of harming others.
- Third: characters making an attack to harm others.
- Fourth: characters using a Spell or Technique.
- Last: characters moving beyond 2 heights.

Multiple characters can act in the same initiative category, though Heroes go first before allies then everyone else. Among themselves, players can strategize and sequence their Heroes' actions within a given initiative category. Once everyone covered by that category has acted, the next takes place.

Players can change their plan anytime before their turn, but can no longer do an action covered by a past Initiative Category.

If the party was taken by surprise—such as an ambush by hidden enemies—then Heroes then allies act last in the first round of conflict.

Core Rules

C. Life, Death and Naps

FALLEN HEROES – WHEN HEALTH GOES TO ZERO

When Blood or Guts is reduced to zero the next damage normally targeting that stat is applied to Approach Scores instead. Multiple Approach Scores may be damaged at once. If all Approach Scores become zero the Hero **FALLS**.

IF A HERO FALLS YOU HAVE THE OPTION OF LETTING THE FALLEN HERO LIVE OR DIE.

If **LIFE**, the Hero becomes incapacitated and unconscious but fully revives after 5 real-time minutes. All Approach Scores are restored, as well as 1 point to Blood or Guts, whichever was reduced to zero. The player makes a 1d6 roll for an additional consequence.

- 1 OR 2** Hero bears a constantly bleeding wound that deals no damage.
- 3 OR 4** No longer blinks and must constantly apply water to their eyes.
- 5 OR 6** May now speak to the dead. However, the dead doesn't necessarily like them.

More options available in the full book.

If **DEATH** every other Hero gains XP (see rightmost column) equal to thrice their minor levels of bond with the fallen Hero.

The Doomsday Clock advances one moment and the player must create a new Hero.

RECOVERING HEALTH

Heroes may replenish Blood and Guts by resting in safe places away from enemies.

A **SHORT REST** (a nap that lasts 2 real-time minutes and one in-story hour) recovers 1d6 Blood and 1d6 Guts.

A **LONG REST** (5 real-time minutes; in-story hours of at least 9 minus their lower Blood or Guts modifier) allows players to reroll and replenish their max health for the next day—2d6 plus modifier. Rerolling is done for **both** stats.

If they do not wish to make the roll, the player can recover and distribute 7 points of health between Blood and Guts instead.

Blood and Guts cannot go higher than maximum unless rerolled during long rest.

D. Evolving the Hero

EXPERIENCE POINTS (XP) represent growing adventuring expertise and can be spent anytime to add new capabilities.

Each player gain **3 XP per real-time hour** for games with 1-3 sessions; **12 XP** each per **session** for longer campaigns.

—Increasing an Approach Score by 1 costs **3x** its next value XP.

—Increasing a Skill Rank by 1 costs **2x** its next value XP.

XP options for Blood, Guts and Bonds available in the full book.

Spells and Techniques

Whether during or outside conflict, Heroes may perform Spells and Techniques impacting the situation. Spells and Techniques are obtained during Hero Creation, although it is possible to acquire new copies or even custom ones. *The full book contains over 30 Spells and Techniques – this Quickstart only provides a brief taste of the possibilities.*

PERFORMING MORE POWERFUL SPELLS AND TECHNIQUES

When performing a Spell or Technique players can cast either a **BASE** or **ENHANCED** version. Casting the base version immediately applies its effect, consuming one instance.

Enhanced versions, while significantly more powerful, require a Skill Check and in many cases, a reduction of Guts.

Rules for performing Enhanced Spells and Techniques are available in the full book.

RECOVERING SPELLS AND TECHNIQUES

Using Spells and Techniques consumes valuable instances. Luckily, they are not forever lost.

All instances can be restored by a long rest if a related **RITUAL** is performed by then. Failure to do so means no instances replenish. Rituals can be as mundane as sleeping 20 hours, or as strange as burning a letter from a loved one.

Spell and Technique rituals are available in the full book. For this quickstart, players replenish one copy of one Spell or Technique per 4 in-story hours of rest.

“This technique...what are you doing?!”

“Peering into the past; uncovering the sins of our fathers. Surely you have nothing to fear?”

OBTAINING MORE SPELLS AND TECHNIQUES

It's possible to obtain additional instances, learn new and fantastic Spells or Techniques or even craft unique powers. Players must have access to a source that can teach them such as a spellbook, manual or mentor.

Rules for acquiring Spells and Techniques are available in the full book.

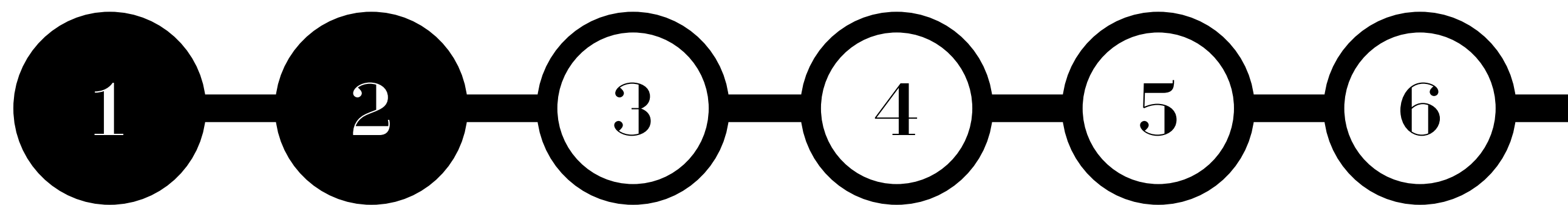


*Meanwhile,
the Doomsday
Clock keeps on
advancing.*

When the Doomsday Clock advances—whether every half hour, hour or session, based on setup—another moment is consumed.

Then, the Guide rolls 1d6 per remaining Omen; for every **5 or 6** the clock advances yet again.

When all moments are consumed and the Doom arrives, it doesn't necessarily mean game over. The full book provides intriguing options for continued play—either rewinding time, or rising from the ashes of the destroyed world.



Guide Toolkit

A. How to Run a Game of ARC

The role of the Guide evolves based on the players and the kind of story everybody wants to play. Regardless, there are a few simple guidelines on things they can do before, during and after a game.

BEFORE THE GAME

1. Familiarize yourself with the Doom, the Omens and how it reflects in the story.
2. Think about the motivations of key non-hero characters or factions within the setting.

DURING THE GAME

1. Set the scene: describe details necessary to empower other players to act. This includes non-hero characters and sometimes, even descriptions that **evoked**: light, sound, atmosphere, the dust and smell of mildew.
2. Respond to Hero action (or inaction). The Heroes' deeds must have weight and consequence.

Don't be afraid to ask questions and nudge the other players into a more clearly articulated response if their action is too vague.

What do you do now? How will you investigate?
What are you trying to accomplish?

3. Adjust the story. After the scene, what happens to the overall story? Does the tension escalate? Do non-hero characters' or factions' motivations change?

4. Enforce rulings, such as:
 - Whether the action needs a Skill Check. Only call for a Skill Check when there are **STAKES** (reading the runes can open the portal!) and a possibility of an **INTERESTING OUTCOME** either way (their attempt may alert the vicious wizard!).
 - Whether the player's chosen Approach and Skill makes sense.
 - Whether or not to apply difficulty modifiers.
 - Consequences or Opportunities for Skill Check rolls tied with the TN.
 - What strange or unusual items do (and if it has impact on the plot).
5. Adjust or create rulings to build more fun experiences tailored to your group.

Guide Toolkit

DURING THE GAME (CONTINUED)

6. Keep your eye on the time. Don't forget to advance the Doomsday Clock and roll 1d6 per still-active Omen.
7. Last but not least: don't stress over facilitating a perfect game.

Perfect games don't exist. Guiding a fun, human game where people can make mistakes, however, is a great target to aim for.

Even more information—such as simple but important principles for safety and running games— are available in the full book.

AFTER THE GAME

Congratulations! Thank the players, including yourself, for making it possible.

If you feel you didn't do so well, that's OK—it's still a valuable learning experience for next time.

That you tried in good faith but didn't get ideal results doesn't demean your efforts' worth in any way. After all, building a story with others is a valuable achievement in its own right. You've completed an arc—and that's *truly* wonderful.

Thank you for playing.



Guide Toolkit

B. Assigning Stats to Non-Hero Characters and Adversaries

To make a custom character or adversary the Guide can use this table to assign stats based on an estimate of the character or adversary's capabilities. Note: these are only stats; there is complete freedom regarding motivation, personality and mannerisms.

A character or adversary can be weak in some aspects, strong in others. For example, a devious courtier may have 2 ranks in Impose and +2 to psychosocial damage but only have 5 Blood. Spells or Techniques can be assigned, too—[relevant rules are available in the full book](#).


In general, a party of four new Heroes can defeat up to 4 fully weak enemies or 2 fully average enemies within 3-4 turns but will have a greater challenge facing stronger adversaries.

Defeating one powerful or monstrous creature is only possible after the party has spent considerable XP—around 18-21 XP for powerful creatures, or 30-36 for monstrous ones. Creatures of various power levels can team up as well.

	Weak	Average	Strong	Powerful	Monstrous
Max Blood	5	7	12	18	24
Max Guts	5	7	12	18	24
Approach Scores	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4
Skill Ranks	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4
Damage	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4
Resist	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4

Sample Scene

TALATA, GUIDE: You're out in the wooded mountains when you hear a thunderous noise: BOOM, BOOM, BOOM, come nearer and nearer. The trees and rain obscure your sight so you're not quite sure what is happening. What do you do?


 The **GUIDE** sets the scenes and narrates important details that Heroes can see, hear, smell or sense.

SIPNAYAN, PLAYER: Can my hero Gunther climb atop a boulder to gain vantage on what's happening?

TALATA: Yes—though the boulder is slippery from the rain and climbing it is dangerous. It's very large, maybe about 2 heights tall. If you're scrambling up the rock very quickly I'll have to ask you to make a **PHYSIQUE SKILL CHECK**.

 The **GUIDE** can ask a player for a **SKILL CHECK** if their Hero will do a risky action with potential for interesting success or failure.

SIPNAYAN: OK, I can do that. And because he's pushing himself to really get up there quickly, I'll use the **CONCERTED APPROACH**.


 Gunther's Skill in Physique is 1. He also has a Concerted Approach Score of 1. The total TN is 2. Not very good odds.

KANTA, PLAYER: Oh hey, my hero Ankha has like 2 major levels of **BOND** with Gunther. I'd like to assist if that's okay!

TALATA: Sure. Do you have an applicable **SKILL** for this assist?

KANTA: I have one rank in **OBSERVE**. I can look out for footholds for Gunther?

 One fellow player can **ASSIST** to add major levels of **BOND** to **TN**, but only if they have an applicable **SKILL**.


 Now, the climb's **TN** is 2 plus 2 more for a total of 4. Sipnayan rolls the d6. It's a... 6! Exceeding the **TN** of 4 so the **SKILL CHECK** fails. Gunther could not climb the boulder.

TALATA: The booming sounds get louder and louder...this action exposes you to the wet stone, and you feel your skin and armor get cold, even wet.

KANTA: Fudge. Can I help him again by sacrificing a minor level of **BOND**?

TALATA: OK! But...you have exactly 8 minor levels of **BOND** with Gunther. If you take 1 off that'll be 7 meaning you'll only have one major level of **BOND** with him. Your bond's **TN** increase for the next roll is only +1, not +2.


 Any player can sacrifice minor levels of Bond to allow rerolls.

 Kanta tells Talata she's okay with it. Sipnayan gets a reroll, but the **TN** now is only 2 plus 1 for a total of 3. Sipnayan rolls. It's a 3—a tie!

TALATA: Sipnayan, you can either take that as a **SUCCESS WITH CONSEQUENCE** or a **FAILURE WITH OPPORTUNITY**. Alternatively, you can spend 3 **BLOOD** or 3 **GUTS** for a pure success. What would you like to do?

SIPNAYAN: Um... hmm. I want to go with **SUCCESS WITH CONSEQUENCE**.

TALATA: Do you have any consequence in mind or do you want me to narrate what happens next?

 In case of a tie, the player has options available: succeed or fail with a corresponding side effect. They can also sacrifice 3 **BLOOD** or **GUTS** to improve the outcome.

SIPNAYAN: I'm thinking about it... maybe as a consequence Gunther's backpack falls down, so that he can't get to his items while up on the rock. It falls on the ground... I won't like it but it has some fragile items in it, so maybe they break on impact?

TALATA: Oof. OK, so Gunther: you scale up the boulder under Ankha's guidance, as the rain's large wet drops hit your entire body. The backpack starts sliding off your shoulders and you can't grab it because your hands are occupied. It lands on the ground with a very heavy thud. More worryingly, you hear something break. It's difficult to see far but luckily the height gives a great position to see what's really happening: a goliath, 3 heights tall, is heading straight towards you both!



NOBLIN

Nobblins are strange, shy creatures who burrow away in large networks of underground tunnels. A small group of nobblins, however, will make expeditions from time to time to check the outside world. While generally skittish, they are willing to fight if their habitat is threatened or if trapped in a corner. Noblin are skilled tinkers, and live in large communes of one hundred cousins.

CREATIVE 1 / CAREFUL 1 / CONCERTED 0

BLOOD 5 / GUTS 5

TINKER 3 / SURVIVAL 2 / OBSERVE 2

INVENTORY

Pointy spear [+1 Physical damage]

Various knick knacks

MIMIC

Mimics are opportunistic feeders who capitalize on adventurers' fondness for treasure and magic items. Mimic take on the guise of a mundane or enchanted item, seemingly innocent... until touched, at which point the mimic unfurls its sharp fangs and bites back. While dungeons are their natural habitat, they've been spotted well outside of it, biding time as innocuous objects in unwitting village homes and shops.

CREATIVE 0 / CAREFUL 0 / CONCERTED 2

BLOOD 7 / GUTS 7

COORDINATION 3 / PHYSIQUE 1

INVENTORY

Bitter bite [+1 Physical damage]

Creatures

Just 3 out of the 36 mundane and fascinating creatures that Guides can use in their story—encounter moon-eating dragons, strange mirror-creatures, and even charming humanoid with large flowers for heads.

strange elf

The long, lonely lives of elves have led many to adopt strange lifestyles and obsessions. For one, pleasure-seeking elves claim their eyes have opened to the transcendent delights of the flesh and now seek to openly prey upon humanoids. Driven by the soul-crushing ennui of their near-eternal lives, strange elves are prisoners of an unfulfillable desire to find meaningful pursuit in life.

CREATIVE 2 / CAREFUL 2 / CONCERTED 0

BLOOD 12 / GUTS 12

CHARISMA 2 / GUILF 2 / TRADE 2 /

IMPOSE 1

INVENTORY

Three handfuls of the flesh of their last victim [Special item, restores 3 Blood when consumed as an action].