

ADVENTURE CONQUEROR KING SYSTEM – SECOND EDITION

The document you are reading is from the future. It was distributed as a free pamphlet at GENCON 2020 to assist *ACKS* players in making the conversion from *ACKS 1E* to *ACKS 2E*. How it reached me, I do not know; it is perhaps a result of some creatio-cognitive singularity in Indianapolis in recent days. In any event, it's quite interesting. I have some concerns about some of what's in this pamphlet, but I can only assume that in the next 36 months that my future self will experience certain playtest outcomes and player suggestions which will make it all become clear. Or perhaps not – the future is, after all, still ours to shape.

AN INTRODUCTION TO *ACKS 2E*

Welcome to GenCon 2020! This year marks the 10th anniversary of *Adventurer Conqueror King System*. By the standards of role-playing games, that makes it an old rules set. Of course, age alone is no reason to change something; but with ten years of gameplay behind *ACKS* by hundreds of gaming groups worldwide, Autarch has now accumulated a wealth of new knowledge about the game. With feedback from our loyal fans, we've decided to update *ACKS*. This guide will walk you through the major changes to the game.

THE BASICS

There are two major changes to the core mechanics of *ACKS* in *2E*.

1D20 THROWS

In *ACKS 1E*, throws were made against a variable target value that depended on the character's class, level, and proficiencies, then modified by circumstances. In *ACKS 2E*, throws are always made with 1d20 against a target value of 20. The character's class, level, and proficiencies provide a **throw bonus** which is then further adjusted by **circumstantial modifiers**.

To make a throw of the dice in *2E*, you follow these steps:

- Throw 1d20.
- Add your throw bonus for the throw to the number generated by the die..
- Add any circumstantial modifiers to the number generated by the die.
- Compare the modified total to 20. If the modified total equals or exceeds 20, the outcome is favorable to you. If the modified total is lower than 20, the outcome is unfavorable to you.

To calculate your adventurer's throw bonus, use the formula (20 – 1E target value). For instance, if your saving throw versus Blast had a target value of 16+ in 1E, your character's saving throw versus Blast now has a throw bonus of +4.

2D6 ROLLS

All 2d6 rolls for loyalty, morale, reaction, and other interactions are replaced with throws in *ACKS 2E*. The same modifiers apply, but the ranges on the table are adjusted, as follows.

Reaction, Morale, Loyalty Rolls			
Adjusted Die Roll	Loyalty Result	Reaction Result	Morale Result
1-*	Hostility	Hostile, attacks	Retreat
2-5	Resignation	Unfriendly, attacks if stronger	Fighting Withdrawal
6-15	Grudging Loyalty	Neutral, uncertain	Fight On
16-19	Loyalty	Indifferent, helpful if compensated	Advance and Pursue
20+*	Fanatic Loyalty	Friendly, helpful	Victory or Death

*Or natural die roll of 1 or 20.

CHARACTERS

WISDOM MODIFIER

In *ACKS 2E*, your WIS modifier increases your throw bonus on *all* saving throws, not just saving throws versus magic.

DEXTERITY MODIFIER

In *ACKS 2E*, your DEX modifier increases your throw bonus on proficiency throws to perform acrobatics, open locks, pick pockets, find traps, remove traps, hide in shadows, move silently, or climb walls.

ARMOR, WEAPON, AND FIGHTING STYLE PROFICIENCIES

In *ACKS 1E* the armor, weapons, and fighting styles available to a character were defined in natural language. This occasionally made a particular class's selections somewhat open to debate. *ACKS 2E* has formalized the selection of armor, weapons, and fighting styles into proficiencies, so that each class can have its starting armor, weapon, and fighting style proficiencies clearly laid out in a table.

ANIMAL COMPANIONS AND FAMILIARS

Instead of having $\frac{1}{2}$ the Hit Dice of the adventurer they accompany, animal companions and familiars in *2E* have 1 Hit Die less than their adventurer ($\frac{1}{2}$ HD at 1st level). The animal companion or familiar's baseline characteristics are adjusted based on its current Hit Dice relative to the Hit Dice of an ordinary animal of its type:

- The monster's attack throws, hit points, and saving throws increase or decrease by one per Hit Die.
- The monster's AC increases or decreases by $\frac{1}{2}$ (1 per 2 HD), to a minimum of 0 and a maximum of its own starting HD.
- The monster deals an average of 2 hp more or less damage divided among all its attacks per HD. The Judge should decide how this is manifested. The Monster Attack Table (p. XX) can be used to calculate new damage dice if desired.

These rules put animal companions and familiars equal to an equivalent animal henchman acquired via Beast Friendship proficiency.

The rules for familiars in *2E* specify that the familiar cannot itself select the Familiar proficiency, nor have henchmen. Familiars that take language proficiency learn to read and understand the language, but cannot speak it. Familiars can only communicate with their adventurer, or with characters benefiting from **speak with animals** or **tongues**.

EQUIPMENT

COMMISSIONING EQUIPMENT

ACKS 2E incorporates the revised rules for Commissioning Equipment originally posted on the Official Forums.

If equipment the adventurers desire to purchase is not available, they may commission it to be created. The advantage of commissioning equipment is that ten times more equipment can be commissioned than is available as inventory. Where the number available is listed as a percentage chance, multiply the percentage by 10 and divide by 100%. The integer quotient is the number of units available, and the remainder (if any) is the percentage chance of one additional unit being available.

The disadvantage of commissioning equipment is that it is not immediately available. Buildings and vehicles, which can be built by large groups, are constructed at a rate of 1 day per 500gp value. Animals take 1 day per 1gp value to find and train. Other equipment takes 1 day per 5gp value. All commissioned equipment is worked on simultaneously.

CROSSBOWS AND ARBALESTS

Crossbows and arbalests must be reloaded after they are fired. Reloading is an action in lieu of moving.

MASTERWORK EQUIPMENT

The rules for masterwork equipment in the *Heroic Fantasy Handbook* are incorporated into *ACKS 2E*.

PROFICIENCIES

GAINING PROFICIENCIES

In *ACKS 2E*, all characters have four implicit general proficiency slots which represent their potential for natural accretion of knowledge over time (in addition to their starting and level-based proficiencies). Characters who are not exceptionally diligent at practice automatically fill these slots after 5, 15, 35, and 70 years of work.

However, by extensive training, characters can accelerate their acquisition of these proficiency slots.

- It takes 60 days (2 months) of major activity training that proficiency to gain the first rank of a proficiency.
- It takes 240 days (8 months) of major activity training that proficiency to gain the second rank or the first rank of a second proficiency.
- It takes 540 days (18 months) of major activity training that proficiency to gain the third rank or the first rank of a third proficiency.
- It takes 960 days (32 months) of major activity training that proficiency to gain the fourth rank or the first rank of a fourth proficiency.

The total time required to gain four proficiency ranks is therefore 1,800 days; at 6 hours per day of major activity that equates to about 10,000 hours.

RETRAINING PROFICIENCIES

Characters in *ACKS 2E* can retrain an existing class or general proficiency for another proficiency of the same type with 120 days of major activity training. The character must have access to a tutor who knows the proficiency, or to a training manual of the appropriate proficiency rank. A character can train back into a proficiency he previously knew with 60 days of major activity.

EXAMPLE: As a young man, Athelstan learned Craft (blacksmithing) and used his earnings from blacksmithing to tide him over when he was recovering from adventurers. Now that Athelstan has become a lord, he has a blacksmith on retainer and concerns himself with weightier matters of state. Athelstan hires a marshal to train him in Military Strategy. After 60 days of training, Athelstan has learned Military Strategy. He has lost Craft (blacksmithing).

MODIFIED PROFICIENCIES

ACKS 2E incorporates the modifications to the rules for Proficiencies found in the *Heroic Fantasy Handbook*.

SPELLS

ARCANE REPERTOIRES AND SPELLBOOKS

The conceptual difference between spell repertoires, spell books, and spell formulas was somewhat confused in *ACKS 1E*. In *ACKS 2E* the rules make a clear distinction between the three.

- A spell repertoire is the set of spells that an arcane caster is capable of casting. The size of a caster's spell repertoire is limited by his class, level, and ability scores.
- A spell book is the set of spells that an arcane caster could have in his repertoire. There is no limit to the size of a caster's spell book.
- A spell formula is the information necessary to add a spell to a spell book. Spell formulas can be found on scrolls, in other caster's spell books, or in rare books.

It requires 1,000gp and 1 week of game time per spell level, plus access to the appropriate spell formula, to add a spell to your spell book. If your repertoire is not full, you may automatically add the spell to your repertoire at the same time. If the your repertoire is full, you may automatically replace one spell of the same level with the new spell at the same time.

An arcane spellcaster who already has a full repertoire of spells may sometimes wish to replace one spell in his spell repertoire with another of equal level already recorded in his spell book. It costs 1 week of game time per spell level to replace a spell in the repertoire with another in the spell book.

ADVENTURES

ATTACKS AND ARMOR PENETRATION

ACKS 2E uses the rules for Attacks and Armor Penetration found in the *Heroic Fantasy Handbook*.

CONDITIONS

The effect of various conditions in combat has been formalized in ACKS 2E following the rules from *Axioms VI*.

CRITICAL HITS

ACKS 2E uses the rules for Critical Hits found in the *Heroic Fantasy Handbook*.

DAMAGE

When doubling (tripling, quadrupling, etc.) damage dice, increase the damage bonus by the same factor.

HIT POINTS AND HEALING

ACKS 2E uses the rules for Hit Points and Healing found in the *Heroic Fantasy Handbook*.

MORTAL WOUNDS

In ACKS 2E, adventurers with d6 HD add +2 to their 1d20 roll on the Mortal Wounds table. Adventurers with d8 HD add +4, adventurers with d10 HD add +6, and adventurers with d12 HD add +8.

However, the penalties for negative hit points are more severe. The Mortal Wounds throw is modified by +5 if hp are exactly 0; -2 if hp are at a negative value from $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ max hp; -5 if hp are at a negative value of $\frac{1}{2}$ max hp to max hp; -10 if hp are at a negative value of max hp to twice max hp; and an additional -5 for each max-hp interval thereafter.

EXAMPLE: Athelstan has 40 hp. At 0 hp, the modifier is +5. At -5 hp, the modifier is 0. At -10 hp, the modifier is -2. At -20 hp, the modifier is -5; at -10 hp, the penalty is -2; at -20hp, the penalty is -5; at -40hp, the penalty is -10; at -80hp, the penalty is -15, and so on.

SPEARS

When attacking with a spear, an attack throw of natural 1 results in a non-magical spear's haft being broken. A magical spear's haft is damaged. A magical spear can be damaged a number of times equal to its bonus before its haft is broken. A spear with a broken haft can be used as a dagger or a quarterstaff, but no longer functions as a spear. A nonmagical or magical spear can be repaired by setting the spearhead onto a new shaft, which costs 1gp and requires 1 rank of Craft (weaponsmithing).

SPECIAL MANEUVERS

ACKS 2E adds the clamber and sweeping attack special maneuvers from the *Heroic Fantasy Handbook*. It also makes special maneuvers more useful. When you succeeds on a disarm, force back, knock down, or sunder special maneuver, you may choose to deal normal damage in addition to triggering the effect of the special maneuver. When you succeed in a wrestling special maneuver, you may choose to deal brawling damage in addition to triggering the effect of the special maneuver.

THIEVERY

ACKS 2E uses the rules for Thievery found in the *Heroic Fantasy Handbook*, including encumbrance, equipment, and revisions to the thief skills.

CAMPAIGNS

CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

Campaign activities in ACKS 2E are governed using the rules for Campaign Activities found in *Axioms Special Edition*.

MAGICAL RESEARCH

Weapons: Weapons that use ammunition (bows, crossbows, slings) and the various types of ammunition (arrows, bolts, and stones) cost only $\frac{1}{2}$ the time and gold to enchant as other weapons. This is because the magical bonus applies only to the attack throw or damage roll and not both.

Potions: Potions have a duration of 1d6+6 turns or the duration of the spell granted by the potion, whichever is shorter. Potions enchanted with spells of instantaneous duration (such as healing potions) remain instantaneous.

Potions have a caster level equal to the minimum caster level required to cast the spell with which the potion has been enchanted.

Wands and Staves: Wands have a caster level equal to the minimum caster level required to cast the highest-level spell with which the wand has been charged. Staves have a caster level equal to the three levels higher than the minimum caster level, or equal to that of the caster who enchanted them, whichever is lower.

Constructs and Machines: The cost of adding a major special ability to a construct or machine is 5,000gp. The cost of adding a minor special ability is 625gp. Major and minor special abilities are currently explained in *Lairs & Encounters*.

STRONGHOLDS AND DOMAINS

ACKS 2E uses the revised approach for strongholds and domains found in *Axioms III* in lieu of the system found in the Campaigns chapter of *ACKS 1E*, as well as the ancillary rules for separating land and lordship, establishing senates, and managing domain encounters from that same issue, and for beastman clanholds, chaotic domains, and tribal warriors from *Axioms II*.

BATTLES

The *2E* rules adopt the revised approach for abstract battle resolution found in *Axioms IV* in lieu of the system found in *Domains at War: Campaigns*.

MERCANTILE VENTURES

ACKS 2E incorporates the rules for mercantile ventures found in *Axioms III*.

ABSTRACT DUNGEONS

ACKS 2E incorporates the rules for abstract adventuring found in *Axioms VI*.

MONSTERS

MONSTER REACTIONS

The monster listings now include a reaction score for each monster, which is applied as a modifier to reaction rolls when the monster is encountered by adventurers. This score can vary depending if the monster is encountered in its lair.

EXAMPLE: Owlbears are mean-spirited carnivores gripped by bestial madness. Their reaction modifier is -10. Owlbears almost always attack adventures they encounter.

TREASURE

TREASURE TYPE

ACKS 2E uses the updated treasure type tables found in *Heroic Fantasy Handbook*.

POTIONS

Potions have a duration of 1d6+6 turns or the duration of the spell granted by the potion, whichever is shorter. Potions enchanted with spells of instantaneous duration (such as healing potions) remain instantaneous. Potions have a caster level equal to the minimum caster level required to cast the spell with which the potion has been enchanted.

SCROLLS

Scrolls have a caster level equal to the minimum caster level required to cast the spell, or the caster level of their users, whichever is greater.

WANDS AND STAVES

Wands have a caster level equal to the minimum caster level required to cast the highest-level spell with which the wand has been charged. Staves have a caster level equal to the three levels higher than the minimum caster level, or equal to that of the caster who enchanted them, whichever is lower.