



**EARTH**  
RPG  
BASIC SYSTEM

ROLE-PLAYING GAMING

IN

J.R.R.

TOLKIEN'S

MIDDLE-EARTH

AND BEYOND...

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NOTE: See if, when in final printable format, with columns, and artwork, etc, if the players guide can be kept to no more than 24 pages printed. Or less? Could it be scaled down to only 10-12 pages (not counting artwork)? The shorter and simpler, the quicker and easier for new players and GM's to be able to jump in and begin playing with a minimum of having to read everything. Alternatively, just work on the layout so that it gets them started with a character right away. Then have the action and combat rules fall on the GM to learn and explain separately?

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# PLAYERS' GUIDE

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the world of J.R.R. Tolkien's imagination. If you have enjoyed reading the books or watching the movies based on his works including *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Silmarillion*, and his many other works, and wished you could delve further and enjoy adventuring in those richly created lands, then you will find the Eä RPGS (Role-playing Game System) your gateway to enjoying many more hours and years of fun exploring this vast imaginary realm.

### 1.1 WHAT IS A ROLE-PLAYING GAME?

Role-playing gaming (RPGing) is a cooperative, non-competitive, recreational activity summed up as “interactive storytelling.” Role playing games (RPGs) are cooperative, improvisational, somewhat structured but largely free form “interactive stories” that take place in the participants' imagination, usually seated around a table and using paper and pencil to track events, locations, and persons of note. Typically one of the participants is chosen to act as the referee, known variously as the Game Master (GM), Dungeon Master (DM), Narrator, or other titles. The GM creates or modifies the settings in which the other participants, the Player Characters (PCs), will interact with each other and with various Non-Player Characters (NPCs) under the control of the GM. The group of participants then dynamically unfold a series of social interactions and events for an improvisational-theater-like experience, without physically acting out any the activities of their characters.

The participants create imaginary characters in a story run by the GM who acts as writer, director, and referee of this imaginary play. Participants gather around a table, write down notes and statistics about their character, and through dialog, with some occasional dice rolling or other randomizing device, unfold the story. The activity is similar to childhood “let's pretend” games, but with some key differences. The players are not dressing up or physically acting out the activities as they use their imaginations and verbally describe their character's actions to each other, and there are clearly defined rules with the GM acting as moderator and facilitator to keep the game play flowing.

## 1 Introduction

### *1.1.1 A BRIEF EXAMPLE OF A ROLE-PLAYING SESSION.*

The Game Master and the players meet in a comfortable setting around a table. The GM and players have created “character sheets” with information about the various characters they will be using. The GM typically provides some background story, and then some opportunity for choice and action declarations by the players. Here is an example of a what a GM might describe to the players as a short scene:

*You and your friends have just walked into the courtyard of an ancient building. The courtyard is approximately forty feet square. The walls, built of a tan colored stone material apparently indigenous to the area, appear to be constructed in alignment with the four points of the compass. They are about thirty feet high. You entered from an opening in the south wall. You see the north wall has some stairs going up, and the east wall on your right has what appears to be a solid metal door hanging open on rusted hinges. The*



*walls are crumbling in places, and much is overgrown with ivy and weeds. In the center is a large fountain about fifteen feet high in what appears to be the form of a series of three flower-like terraces. Surprisingly, the fountain is currently spouting clear and cool looking water on this hot, dry, dusty day. Looking at the water, you are more acutely aware of how dry your mouths are after the long day's hike to arrive here, with no water previously in sight.*

*The wind is beginning to pick up as a storm from the south, with lightning and dark clouds gathering, quickly approaches. It is getting cooler and windier by the minute...*

#### ***What do you do?***

At this point, the players each take turns verbally describing to the GM and the other players what actions their characters will take. Some will have mundane actions and results, other action attempts could have surprising consequences.

Dice are frequently used to simulate the random events that can occur in life, and make it unknown in advance, even to the GM, what exactly will happen next. For example, someone may decide to climb the stairs, where there are some loose steps, and using the roll of a die to determine how agile the player's character is, may leap to the top unscathed, or may have a bit of a fall to deal with. Of course, there also could be trouble in the form of ill-intentioned bandits lurking behind the entrance of the door....

## 1.2 HOW IS THE EÄ RPG SYSTEM DIFFERENT FROM OTHER ROLE-PLAYING GAME SYSTEMS?

Many game systems are designed for “generic” campaign locations, intentionally leaving the rules open and broad so that the system can be used in a very wide variety of settings. Some systems focus on a specific genre such as fantasy “sword and sorcery”, science fiction, etc, but without being limited to a specific “world” or campaign setting. Still others focus on specific campaign/universe settings such as Star Trek, Star Wars, King Arthur, Call of Cthulhu (horror), Wheel of Time (fantasy), etc. Eä RPGS fits into the last category, a system designed specifically to fit into a Tolkien-based campaign setting, with rules that attempt to enhance that experience.

There have been a number of attempts at creating game systems adapted to J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle-earth since the mid 1970's. The original Dungeons & Dragons was heavily based on Tolkien's, among others settings, including “hobbits” as a player character race, but D&D was designed to also fit many other settings if desired. Intellectual property issues forced the D&D creators to change hobbits to halflings, and make many other changes. In the early 1980's Iron Crown Enterprises modified their Rolemaster system and created the first licensed Tolkien-based RPG, lasting until 1999. From 2001 through 2006 Decipher modified their CODA system for the second licensed Tolkien-based RPG but with far more restrictions on which material they could use than ICE had previously been restricted to. Most recently, in 2011 Cubicle 7 and Sophisticated Games released the next licensed Tolkien-based RPG called The One Ring RPG (TOR RPG).

Prior to TOR, in each case of the commercial Tolkien-based role playing game systems, the commercial ventures were actually just modified versions of their more generic systems roughly adapted to fit into the Tolkien setting. This has ended up a bit like pounding a square peg into a round hole. You *can* make it fit with enough pounding, but it leaves something to be desired in the fit. TOR derives from various other systems, but is the first commercial product designed specifically just for use in a Middle-earth setting. While the TOR RPG has promise they are also under very stringent license restrictions.

### 1.2.1 EÄ RPG OVERVIEW

*Eä RPG* is designed from the ground up, every step of the way, as an attempt to enhance the experience of role playing specifically in J.R.R. Tolkien's imaginary universe in which Middle-earth geographically is but a small (though significant) piece. Every attempt is made to develop the mechanics to improve the “suspension of disbelief” and enhance the “Tolkien-ish” feel that many people experience from reading the books. The system is available in three versions as an attempt to cover the gamut of gamer types and their tastes.



## 1 Introduction

The *Eä RPG* is NOT based on any of the movie, TV, radio, or audio interpretations of Tolkien's works. Only his written works published while J.R.R. Tolkien lived, and then many other works published posthumously by Christopher Tolkien, are used as source material. Every attempt is made to follow these resources in as consistent a manner as possible, though this often presents challenges due to the many contradictions between different versions of Tolkien's works, though this is generally not an issue in helping to enhance the feeling of playing in Middle-earth and the surrounding areas. In areas where "Tolkien canon" (a heavily argued topic unto itself in the Tolkien community) directly conflicts, efforts are made to offer a default approach as consistently as possible. Sometimes there will also be included optional approaches to the same topic (usually in the *Eä RPG Advanced Rules*) for GM's and players who do not prefer the default approach.

# 2 *EÄ RPG BASIC RULES* *OVERVIEW*

The *Eä RPG Basic Rules* are designed to help you create a character as quickly as possible, so that you can begin playing right away. With the guidance of a GM who has already read the rules, a typical first time character creation process should only take about 15 minutes to be ready for play, assuming you do not just use a pre-generated character provided to you by your GM. Play testing has indicated that once players have made one character, the subsequent character creation process can be completed in as little as 5 minutes.

The *Eä RPGS Basic Rules* are exactly that, basic. Every attempt is made to keep character generation very simple and quick, avoiding complex mechanics for fleshing out the character in terms of game statistics. Instead of many attribute scores, the basic rules use only 4. Instead of a long list of skills trying to cover every conceivable action or skill imaginable, just these 4 attributes are used in conjunction with a die roll to determine success or failure for certain challenges or even for combat. Instead of many different sizes and shapes of dice, only one six sided (1d6) die is needed. This level of simplicity can create problems for long term play, but work fine for short campaigns. This system is really only designed for first time players (and game masters) to dip their toes into the role-playing game experience. Experienced role-playing gamers will likely find the system lacking in many areas. Hopefully those who participate in using these basic rules will enjoy it so much, they will want more, and be ready to take the next step by learning the *Eä RPGS Standard Rules*.

## 2 Eä RPG Basic Rules Overview

The *Eä RPG Basic Rules* use a single six sided die (1d6). This is to make it as simple as possible for a new group to get playing right away without having to find any specialized dice. Most homes have six sided dice from board games and other resources. If you do not have a six sided die, you can easily find them at most hobby, game, and bookstores. The *Eä RPG Basic Rules* are geared for beginner players, and is not intended for lengthy campaigns, therefore it does not include many important features of a role playing game system designed for lengthy use over many years. After completing an adventure or two, most players and GM's (Game Masters) will want to begin using the *Eä RPGS Standard Rules* and maybe even eventually work up to the *Eä RPGS Advanced Rules*. With that caveat in mind, if your group really wants to keep using the basic rules, your GM does have some optional information in the GM's guide that helps extend the basic rules for longer use if desired. These options include a rudimentary skills option, basic character advancement, van other features necessary for a more complete role-playing game system.

As was stated before, the *Eä RPGS Basic Rules* use a six sided die for all rolls. The difficulty in succeeding at an attempted task is rated by using a scale from 1 (least difficult) to 10 (most difficult). The basic rules do not provide "classes" aka "professions", and do not provide "skills", instead only using the appropriate attributes for any given task. The *Eä RPGS Basic Rules* avoids using tables and charts as much as possible for action resolution, and uses very simple math.



For more experienced role playing gamers, and those with a little more patience, you may wish to go ahead and read the other sections that provide more background information in preparing a little more detail for your character. Remember, this book describes the *Eä RPG Basic Rules*, whereas the *Eä RPG Standard Rules* and the *Eä RPG Advanced Rules* have far more options for significantly more detail.



## 2.1 NO “SPELL CASTERS” FOR PCS

PCs (Player Characters) in the Basic Rules may not be spell casters. Magic in Middle-earth in the Basic Rules is very abstract and generally not implemented by the Player Characters. Generally manifestations of “magic” in Middle-earth will be seen as natural/supernatural manifestations, exhibited by NPCs (Non-Player Characters), or embedded in items such as runes, swords, armor, buildings, special locations, herbs, wildlife, weather, etc. Since magic in Middle-earth is both subtly simple and terribly complex in its ramifications for use, magic rules do not fit well into such a Basic Rules system intended for beginning players. After some experience with the basic rules, if a player really wishes to have a PC that can use magic, then generally that player should be steered towards learning the Standard or Advanced versions of the Eä RPG after they have learned the basics with the basic rules, sans magic user type player character.

The topic of magic in Middle-earth is extremely complex, and (arguably) can not be appropriately addressed without adding significant complexity to the system. If the players really wish to be spell caster type characters, then the GM should review the rules for “Magic in Middle-earth” from the *Eä RPG Standard Rules* and may attempt to integrate those rules as best as possible. However, if all the game participants (including the GM) are new to role playing games, it is best to learn the basic rules first, and then introduce it slowly as they migrate to the Standard Rules.

## 2.2 SKILLS

The basic version of the Eä RPG Basic Rules do not provide mechanics for listing specific skills. Instead, any time a character attempts to overcome a challenge, they simply use the appropriate attribute and a 1d6 roll to see if they succeed at the task. The GM determines how difficult a task is to overcome based on a rating between 1 to 10, with 10 being the most difficult.

Though the core basic rules do not provide information for skills and skill development, the Game Master does have information about how to use Attributes in lieu of skills, and some optional rules to introduce skills in later character development. As a Player, you only need to understand the basic concept of how to use your character's attribute to accomplish tasks. Your Game Master can help clarify this if you have any questions, but generally you will learn how to do this in the course of game play, through the guidance of the GM.

# 3 CHARACTER CREATION

The steps for creating a character using the *Eä RPG Basic Rules* are:

1. Choose creation method: *Self-determination (allocate points)* or *Song of Arda (roll dice)*. Chapter 3.1
2. Select/Roll race: *Dwarf, Elf, Hobbit, or Human*. Chapter 4.
3. Allocate/Roll *Attribute values: Hröa (body), Celegê (agility), Handê (intellect), and Fëa (spirit)*.
4. Calculate Health Rating (HR)
5. Roll or select the character's *Pursuit (career/profession/class)*
6. Fill out physical description, homeland, and other details
7. Determine if the character needs to purchase additional equipment, weapons, armor, food, etc.
8. Begin playing!

## 3.1 CHOOSE SONG OF ARDA OR SELF-DETERMINATION

The first decision you need to make is the approach to creation, Self-determination (points allocation) or Song of Arda (fate/roll-the-dice generation).

As a fan of J.R.R. Tolkien and his works, you may already have an idea of the type of character you wish to play. Players with more experience from other RPG systems may have very detailed ideas of the character they wish to create. If this description fits you, then choose the “Self-determination” method of character creation.

If you are not that familiar with Tolkien, role-playing games in general, or only have a vague idea of what you would like to play, then maybe let the Song of Arda (fate, aka dice rolling) help you develop your character.

Keep in mind, you and your GM always have a choice whether to use the “Song of Arda”, or “Self-determination” options throughout each step of your character's development process. If you know some parts of what you want, but not other parts, then simply choose what you want during the steps you know, and then roll for the steps you do not have a clear vision.

# 4 RACE/CULTURE

Picture of the 4 main races collage here.

One of the major defining characteristics of Tolkien's Middle-earth (and beyond) is the richly developed races and cultures described in his works. Though there are only a handful of “Free Peoples” as distinctive races, there are many cultural differences within those races. The Eä RPG BR only defines the *races*, and leaves the subdivision of *cultures* for the Standard and Advanced versions of the Eä RPG System for simplicity sake. The 4 Player Character races are:

- Dwarf
- Elf
- Hobbit
- Men

Though there are many other races and cultures available in Tolkien's world for players to encounter as non-player characters, as an introductory system, just these 4 races are available to player characters.

## 4.1 SELECT OR ROLL RACE

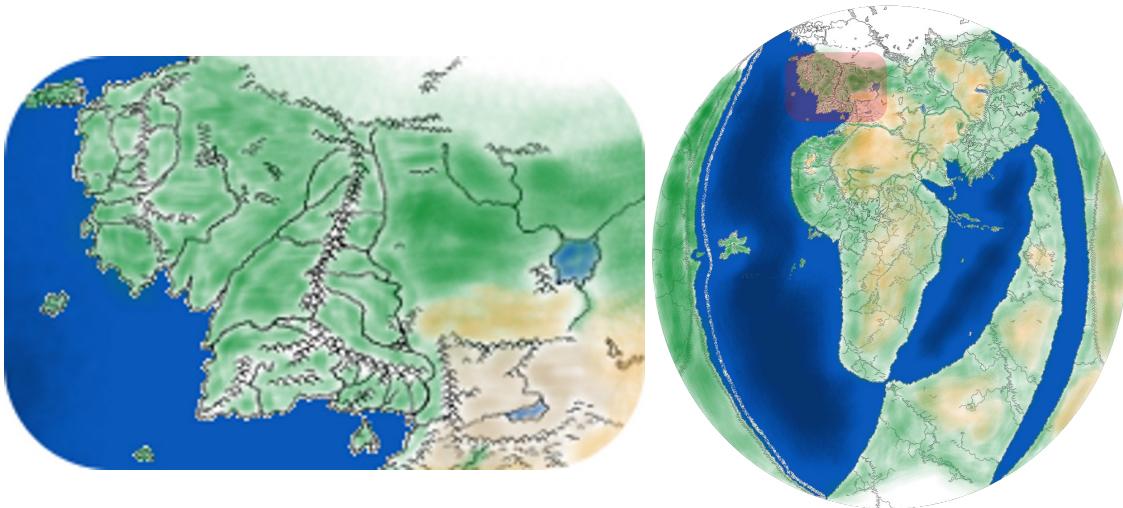
If you are using self-determination approach simply select which race you prefer your character to be. If you are using the Song of Arda “fate” approach, then simply roll your die to determine which race your character is:

Die Roll (1d6)	Result
1	Dwarf
2	Elf
3	Hobbit
4-6	Men (Tolkien used the term “Men” for all humans)

## 4.2 homELANDS

Though the Basic Rules will not list every possible homeland from Tolkien's deeply developed world, some of the more well known are listed in the race description sections to help with the character development process. If you already know Middle-earth well enough to choose a homeland appropriate for your character, you may choose whatever homeland you wish, with your GM's approval of course. Homelands are listed for each of the races.

For those not as familiar with Middle-earth and the lands beyond, a brief list is provided in the racial description section, with the option to roll for the some of the better known locations appropriate to each race. You may simply select one you like, or use let Song of Arda to decide for you.



## 4.3 DWARVES

Picture of Dwarf/dwarves

Dwarves are the descendants of the Seven Fathers, the original lords crafted from the earth by the Vala Aulë. He is the “Smith of the Valar”, the giver of mountains and master of crafts, and the Dwarves call him Mahal (Khuzdul (Dwarvish) for “Maker”). The Dwarves were created first, but Eru forced his servant Aulë to delay their awakening until after the coming of Elves and Men. Following their birth, the Seven Kings formed tribes based on their lines and separated. These seven tribes are the Blacklocks, Broadbeams, Firebeards, Longbeards (Durin's folk, the most well known), Ironfists, Stiffbeards, and Stonefoots. Although these Seven Tribes have since spread across Middle-earth, they have remained close and spawned a universal reputation for ruggedness, practicality, and unwavering loyalty. Most groups favor the rocky highlands and deep caverns of the mountains, for the Dwarves, perhaps more than any race, remember their origin and heritage.

Dwarves tend to be short, stocky, and with exceptionally strong limbs. They have tremendous endurance and can carry great burdens over long distances with little rest. Males average 4' 9" and 150 pounds, while females average 4'5" and 135 pounds. Hair color tends to be black, red, or dark brown, and they grow long beards, of which they are very proud. They usually have a fair to ruddy complexion. Dwarves usually live around 200-400 years. Because of their extensive underground life, Dwarves can see exceptionally well in dim light, though they cannot see in total darkness.

### 4.3.1 *height & weight*

If using the Song of Arda rolling option to generate a character, you may roll a d6 to determine height and weight.

#### **Male**

Height: Average = 4'9"

Die roll result:

1 = 4'7"

2 = 4'8"

3-4 = 4'9"

5 = 5'0"

6 = 5'1"

## 4 Race/Culture

Weight: Average = 150 lbs.

1 = 130

2 = 140

3-4 = 150

5 = 160

6 = 170

### Female

Height: Average = 4'5"

Die roll result:

1 = 4'3"

2 = 4'4"

3-4 = 4'5"

5 = 4'6"

6 = 4'7"

Weight: Average = 135 lbs.

1 = 115

2 = 125

3-4 = 135

5 = 145

6 = 155

### 4.3.2 *homELANDS*

In the Basic Rules provides homelands for the Dwarves only from one of two locations, either originally from a line that once resided in Moria, or else those in the Lonely Mountain. The old locations in the Blue Mountains were destroyed long ago, unless the GM is running a campaign set during the First Age.

- 1-3 Moria (Khazad-dum) in the Misty Mountains
- 4-6 Lonely Mountain (Erebor) by Laketown.



Picture of Elf/Elves

## 4.4 ELVES

The Eldar (first born) were the first to awaken and venture into Middle-earth. They are a graceful and noble race of immortal beings who resemble Men, but “shine” with an inner glow (grace) which betrays the spirit of unique thoughts and gifts. No race has been blessed more, or cursed so much, by the Hand of Fate.

Though basically similar to mortal Men, Elves have several important, if subtle differences. As a race they are taller than humans.

### 4.4.1 *ELF AGE*

Elves initially age normally (like “Men”) until they reach physical maturity around 18-25 years old, then their physical maturation slows so much, that over the period of a thousand years their appearance only matures a few years. Though they do not wrinkle, there is an air of age and wisdom as the years pass that increasingly shows in their eyes and face while retaining their “ageless” quality. For Elf player characters then, their “apparent age” is generally around 18-25. The average actual age of beginning player characters will usually be around 100-600 years.

Roll 1d6 and multiply by 100 to determine age if using the Song of Arda character generation option.

### 4.4.2 *ELVES AND SLEEP*

Do Elves need to sleep? This is a debated topic in the Tolkien community. For the sake of simplicity in the Basic Rules, the following applies to Elves, unique to their race compared to the other races. Elves normally *do* need to sleep the same as Men, an average around 8 hours per day to be fully rested. In the Standard and Advanced Rules, details on other options are available.

### 4.4.3 *HEIGHT & WEIGHT*

If using Song of Arda rolling option to generate a character, you can roll a d6 to determine height and weight.

#### **Male**

Height: Average = 6'4"

Die roll result:

1 = 6'2"

2 = 6'3"

3-4 = 6'4"

5 = 6'5"

6 = 6'6"

## 4 Race/Culture

Weight: Average = 150 lbs.

1 = 130

2 = 140

3-4 = 150

5 = 160

6 = 170

### Female

Height: Average = 6'2"

Die roll result:

1 = 6'0"

2 = 6'1"

3-4 = 6'2"

5 = 6'3"

6 = 6'4"

Weight: Average = 130 lbs.

1 = 110

2 = 120

3-4 = 130

5 = 140

6 = 150

### 4.4.4 *homELANDS*

There are many different branches of the Elves, and they are scattered all over the world during different times and Ages of Arda, but there are a few key locations where concentrations of certain Elf-kind have usually been found throughout Middle-earth, a brief list of the more common locations is listed below.

- 1-2 Rivendell (Imladris), West of the Misty Mountains
- 3 Lorien, (East of the Misty Mountains)
- 4 The Grey Havens, Blue Mountains
- 5-6 Mirkwood

## 4.5 HOBBITS

### Picture of Hobbit/Hobbits

Hobbits are a diminutive folk, standing between two feet to a little less than four feet on average. Hobbit men tend towards a robust build; Hobbit women are more often than not curvaceous. Their complexions are similar to those of the Eriadoran Men who live outside the Shire, with tanned faces and hair ranging from dark blonde to black. Hobbits are generally cheerful; though often wary of 'big folk' they aren't familiar with. On the whole, Hobbits are perhaps the most peacefully ignorant people within the bounds of Middle-Earth, easy to cheer and with little understanding of the dangerous world outside the borders of the Shire.

### 4.5.1 *height & weight*

If using the Song of Arda rolling option to generate a character, you can roll a d6 to determine height and weight.

#### Male

Height: Average = 3'0"

Die roll result:

1 = 2'2"

2 = 2'8"

3-4 = 3'0"

5 = 3'8"

6 = 3'11"

Weight: Average = 90 lbs.

1 = 70

2 = 80

3-4 = 90

5 = 100

6 = 110

#### Female

Height: Average = 2'10"

Die roll result:

1 = 2'0"

2 = 2'6"

3-4 = 2'10"

5 = 3'6"

6 = 3'9"

## 4 Race/Culture

Weight: Average = 80 lbs.

1 = 60

2 = 70

3-4 = 80

5 = 90

6 = 100

### 4.5.2 *homELANDS*

Most Hobbits reside in The Shire, but there are a number of areas throughout the shire that are considered distinct to Hobbits, a brief selection is listed below. The Shire is broken into 4 distinct "farthings", with more specific locations within. The Standard Rules provide more detail about each farthing and location, only a few locations are listed here.

- 1 Hobbiton (Westfarthing)
- 2 Hardbottle (Northfarthing)
- 3 Michel Delving (Westfarthing, chief town)
- 4 Longbottom (Southfarthing)
- 5 The Marish (Eastfarthing)
- 6 Buckland

## 4.6 MEN

Picture of various different types of Men/Women

Men were the Secondborn, and first arose in Utter East during the First Age. There, in a land called Hildórien, they awoke to find a wild continent, and it was some time before they first encountered the Firstborn (the Elves). The Eldar (Elves) gave men the name of Hildor (E. "Followers"), although they are now more commonly called Atani (in the High Elven Quenya tongue) or Edain (In the Grey Elven Sindarin tongue) which both mean "Second People".

Men differ from the Elves in many ways, the least subtle of which is their "Gift of Death". Men are mortal and live their brief lives with a fire and passion unlike any other race. They are also more varied in nature and often flawed and vulnerable. Unlike the Firstborn, they are quite susceptible to disease and temperature extremes.

### 4.6.1 *men height & weight*

If using the Song of Arda rolling option to generate a character, you can roll a d6 to determine height and weight.

#### **Male**

Height: Average = 5'9"

Die roll result:

1 = 5'4"

2 = 5'6"

3-4 = 5'9"

5 = 6'0"

6 = 6'4"

Weight: Average = 180 lbs.

1 = 140

2 = 160

3-4 = 180

5 = 200

6 = 220

## 4 Race/Culture

### Female

Height: Average = 5'5"

Die roll result:

1 = 5'0"

2 = 5'2"

3-4 = 5'5"

5 = 5'7"

6 = 5'10"

Weight: Average = 140 lbs.

1 = 110

2 = 130

3-4 = 140

5 = 150

6 = 180

### 4.6.2 *homELANDS*

The lands of Men are diverse and many. The Standard Rules provide far more choices, but a short listing of some of the more famous areas is listed here as a brief aide.

- 1 Eriador
- 2 Bree
- 3 Gondor
- 4 Laketown
- 5 Rhovanion
- 6 Rohan



# 5 ATTRIBUTES

Your character has certain attributes that provide an approximate representation of his/her features and abilities, concepts such as physique, intellect, etc. With the self-determination approach, you are provided with a number of points that you allocate where you wish, used as a representation of your character's attributes. For the Eä RPG Basic Rules there are 4 basic attributes (there are far more in the standard & advanced versions).

The 4 attributes are:

## **Hrōa** (body)

The physical body and a rough measure of the character's hardiness and strength and how well the character can resist disease, injury, and death.

## **Celegê** (agility)

The nimbleness and manual dexterity of the character. How well the character can balance on a narrow ledge, or dodge to avoid being hit.

## **Handê** (intellect)

The character's intellectual prowess. How quickly the character can learn and recall information, and solve complex analytical problems.

## **Fëa** (spirit)

The non-physical aspect that makes up the person's "being". Represents how in tune the character is with the Song of Arda, and general intuition.

Each attribute is ranked on a scale of 1 to 10. 1 being the lowest or weakest, 10 being the highest or strongest, and 5 considered average for a PC. Less important NPC's tend to have averages around 2-3 for each attribute.

## 5.1 SELF-DETERMINATION METHOD (POINTS)

### Sketching an Outline (story trumps system,) - Character Development Points

The self-determination approach uses a point system for creating your character, rather than rolling dice for random results. This provides you with more control over the creation process of your character, if you already have some idea of the type of character you want. Stronger but less intelligent, or witty and swift? You decide through different combinations of allocated points.

When using the self-determination method of character generation, you begin with a character that is “average” in all attributes. This means all four attributes; Hröa(body), Celegê (agility), Handê (intellect), and Fëa (spirit) each begin at a 5. You will now want to adjust those attributes to better fit the strengths and weaknesses of how you envision your character to be. You are provided with 4 “attribute points” to add to any of the attributes that you wish. You may add all 4 points to one attribute to raise it as high as 9, and leave the rest at 5, or you may distribute the 5 points across the attributes as you wish.

While the average PC stats are around 5+, most “regular” characters (Non Player Characters – NPCs), that PC's meet will average more around 2-3 for each of their Attributes. PC's begin with higher than average attributes to represent their more “heroic” and “adventurous” personalities that are more exceptional and “stand out from the crowd”.

#### **Example:**

Tracy wishes to make a physical strong but not very smart fighter-style human character named “Hrongar the Bold”. This character begins with the following attributes:

Hröa (body) = 5, Celegê (agility) = 5, Handê (intellect) = 5, Fëa (spirit) = 5.

Tracy has 4 points available to allocate. She decides to make Hrongar stronger and faster, so Hrongar's attributes now are:

Hröa = 7, Celegê = 7, Handê = 5, Fëa = 5.

### *5.1.1 SWAP POINTS [OPTIONAL]*

According to GM's preference, you may additionally subtract points from the existing base of 5, and allocate those points to another attribute. This is in addition to the 4 extra points you initially receive. You can allocate these points where you wish. During this initial character generation, and using the Basic Rules, you may *not* allocate points that would raise any of your attributes higher than 9, nor subtract from any attribute so much that it falls below 2.

## 5 Attributes

**Example:**

Tracy wishes to make “Hrongar the Bold” even stronger and faster, but less intelligent. So she deducts 2 points each from Handê (intellect) and Fëa (spirit), adding them to Hröa (body) and Celegê (agility). Hrongar’s attributes are now:

Hröa = 9, Celegê = 9, Handê = 3, Fëa = 3.

Picture of “song of arda” somehow (maybe the Vala singing in a group), and dice.

## 5.2 SONG OF ARDA METHOD (ROLLS)

### **Fate decides – Dice rolling method**

If you do not really know, or only have a general sense, of what kind of character you wish to create, then using the Song of Arda creation approach might be the course you want to take for generating your character. This method uses dice instead of points allocation to randomly create the aspects of your character. You still have many choices throughout the character creation phases, but “fate” will be much more a determining factor.

Instead of using points to adjust the attributes, this method requires the player to roll dice to determine what the scores are for each attribute. A beginning character using the Dice roll method of character generation begins with all attributes beginning at 2.

**Example:**

Hröa (body)	2
Celegê (agility)	2
Handê (intellect)	2
Fëa (spirit)	2

The player will then roll 1d6 (one six sided die) four times, writing the result of each roll, in order, on a piece of scratch paper.

## 5 Attributes

### Roll example:

1  
6  
2  
4

Now the player adds each roll to the base attribute score, and this is now the total attribute to write on the character sheet. The GM may offer to let the player assign the rolls to attributes as they wish, but generally, using this Song of Arda (fate) approach, one should just accept "fate" and allocate the rolls in the order they were rolled.

### Example:

Hrōa (body)	3	(2 +1 = 3)
Celegê (agility)	8	(2 +6 = 8)
Handê (intellect)	4	(2 +2 = 4)
Fëa (spirit)	6	(2 +4 = 6)

# 6 PURSUIT (PROFESSIONS/CLASSES)

Picture of a 4-way crossroad here. - Take a photo to insert here.

“The Road goes ever on and on  
Down from the door where it began.  
Now far ahead the Road has gone,  
And I must follow, if I can,  
**Pursuing** it with eager feet,  
Until it joins some larger way,  
Where many paths and errands meet.”  
– J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*

You now choose what your character's current pursuit will be. These can be clearly defined “professions” or trades, as well as more abstract vocations or callings.

There are many paths to choose from as one travels through life. There are many branches in these paths. One might choose another path when the opportunity presents itself, or remain on the path they have been given.

In the Basic Rules, a player can roll or choose any path/profession/class they like from what would exist in a normal European-like setting spanning around 400 A.D. To around 1200 A.D. No “spell casters” types are allowed, but there could certainly be those knowledgeable about herbs and healing, or history and lore. However, in the Basic Rules this doesn't really change any of the character's statistics, only how the player will shape and play the character, based on choices ranges from equipment, back story, and motivations, to choices made throughout the course of adventures. To keep the Eä RPG Basic Rules as simple as possible, paths/professions/classes are not fully defined. There are approximate categories, with some examples of more specific titles. If you choose the “Song of Arda” approach to character creation, you may simply roll from the list presented. If you are using the self-determination method of character generation, then simply choose from the list, or make one up for approval by your Game Master.

Your character may choose at any time to follow other paths as opportunities or whims present of course. Initially however, all character begin with only one Character Pursuit.

## 6.1 CHARACTER PATH LIST

This section does provide a lengthy list of possible paths (professions/classes) that the players can pick from, or the players can make up what they want (with GM's approval of course) withing the confines of appropriate for a Middle-earth setting.

Category	Title	Category	Title	Category	Title
<i>1 - Arts &amp; Entertainment</i>		<i>2 - Lore</i>		<i>3 - Worker</i>	
	1 - Artist 2 - Musician 3 - Performer 4 - Sculptor 5 - Storyteller 6 - Writer	-	1 - Barrister 2 - Scribe 3 - Fortune-teller 4 - Herbalist 5 - Teacher 6 - Historian		1 - Craftsman 2 - Merchant 3 - Sailor (civilian) 4 - Hunter 5 - Laborer 6 - Cook
<i>4 - Military</i>		<i>5 - Outlaw</i>		<i>6 - Noble circles</i>	
	1 - Guard (city watch) 2 - Officer 3 - Soldier 4 - Messenger 5 - Sailor (military) 6 - Scout		1 - Bandit 2 - Beggar 3 - Con Artist 4 - Deserter 5 - Pickpocket 6 - Spy		1 - Courtier 2 - Nobility 3 - Herald 4 - Servant 5 - Jester 6 - Royal guard



# 7 EQUIPMENT

The basic rules provide a very simplified equipment list for the player characters. The GM has a longer list in the GM guide. The basic rules only provide minimal information about each equipment item, whereas the standard rules provide far more detailed information.

Every PC begins with a little bit of money and a few bare necessities. The GM will determine if the characters have an opportunity to purchase additional equipment beyond the basics, depending on the character's background story and the campaign.

## 7.1 STARTING EQUIPMENT

All characters begin with the following equipment already included on their person:

1 Set of clothing appropriate to the weather in the character's campaign starting place. 1 set of shoes, sandals, or boots of a style appropriate to the character and setting (the player may be specific, if they wish, for example "high soft doeskin boots"), 1 set of tools appropriate to their "Character Path" (for example a scribe might have quills, ink, and parchments, whereas a locksmith would have lock picks and key making equipment), 1 weapon of choice (again appropriate to their character path, a scribe at most only likely has a small knife, whereas a soldier might have a spear or a knight have a family heirloom sword).

All PC's begin with 1-6 silver piece(s) "Crown(s)" in addition to the following starting equipment:

- 1 set clothes
- 1 cloak for cold/wet weather
- 1 pair shoes or boots (except Hobbits)
- 1 set personal effects (comb/brush, .....)
- 1 water/wine skin
- 1-6 days food (roll 1d6 or GM's discretion)
- 1 money pouch
- 1 sack/satchel/pack
- 1 set underwear (if applicable)

## 7.2 ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT

If the GM allows the PC's to prepare for an adventure, then they may spend some amount of their beginning money to purchase supplies and equipment from the equipment list. The GM may also automatically provide some additional equipment (weapons, armor, food, etc.) to help the PC's get a better start depending on the campaign situation.

For example Bilbo left his comfy hobbit hole very unprepared for such a lengthy journey and the rough climates he would encounter. Fortunately Gandalf and the Dwarves provided him with the necessities he needed to survive the journey, but Bilbo did NOT get to stop at the local mercantile first to stock up on equipment and gear.

There are many different areas that fit under the category of "equipment" from weapons and armor, clothing, food supplies, rope, beasts to herbs and exotic items from afar. The player's guide provides a simply list of the most common equipment, and the GM's guide lists far more equipment. The GM may change availability and pricing as desired to fit the campaign most effectively.

The GM may opt to provide, either before beginning the campaign, or through role play within the campaign, additional equipment to the characters as deemed necessary. An example from Tolkien's works would be in *The Hobbit*. Bilbo did not begin his adventure stocked, and ready to go as a warrior bristling with weapons and bearing armor and all the gear necessary for a long travel, instead Bilbo *"found himself outside, without a hat, a walking-stick, or any money, or anything that he usually took when he went out;"* -*The Hobbit*

Fortunately for Bilbo though, The Dwarves and Gandalf provided some of the necessities for him, including: *"a very small pony, apparently for Bilbo."*, *"a dark-green hood (a little weather-stained) and a dark-green cloak borrowed from Dwalin. They were too large for him, and he looked rather comic."* -*The Hobbit*.

Gandalf caught up and brought additionally for Bilbo: *"a lot of pocket-handkerchiefs, and Bilbo's pipe and tobacco."* Additionally the contract provided covering Bilbo's traveling expenses. Some GM's and players may prefer to have all of their character's equipment predefined and ready to go before game play, but others might choose the above example as an approach to gathering the needed equipment during the course of play, and this can be accomplished in a fun and productive fashion. Which approach you take is between the players and GM.

## 7.3 MONEY, COMMERCE, AND BARTER IN MIDDLE-EARTH

Different lands in Middle-earth have differing monetary systems. However, for the sake of the Eä RPG Basic Rules, a very simplified universal monetary system will be used so that players do not get hung up on the complexities of monetary exchange rates and similar challenges. Please note the Standard and Advanced systems offer much more accurate and detailed monetary listings.

**1 Royal (R) = 10 crowns (cr) = 100 pennies (p)**

Basic Rules Money			
Penny	Copper piece	1/10 silver crown	1/100 gold royal
Crown	Silver piece	10 pennies	1/10 gold royal
Royal	Gold piece	100 pennies	10 silver

## 7.4 EQUIPMENT LISTS

This section provides lists for basic common equipment and supplies. The GM's guide has far more items available. If you do not see an item you wish for your character to have, consult with your GM to see if the item may be available.

### 7.4.1 *CLOTHING & PERSONAL ITEMS*

Item	Price	Notes
Boots	5 p	
Cloak	5 p	
Coat	5 p	
Pants	5 p	
Shirt	5 p	
Backpack	5 p	
Bandage	1 p	
Bedroll	2 p	
Belt pouch	2 p	
Cooking pot	7 p	

## 7 Equipment

Fire-starting bow	3 p	
Flint & Steel	4 p	
Lantern (hooded)	1 cr	
Lantern (bullseye)	2 cr	
Oil flask	5 p	
Pegs (10 wood)	2 p	
Pitons (10 iron)	5 p	
Rope (50' regular)	1 cr	
Rope (50' high quality)	2 cr	
Sack (small)	3 p	10 lb capacity 1 cubic foot
Sack (large)	4 p	50 lb capacity or 3 cubic feet
Tobacco Pipe	7 p	
Tarp (5'x8')	9 p	
Tent	2 cr	
Torch	2 p	
Water/wine skin	2 p	2 pint capacity

### 7.4.2 *FOOD & DRINK*

Item	Price	Notes
Beer/Ale	1 p	Price varies significantly on quality
Brandy	7 p	
Cider	3 p	
Mead	5 p	
Wine	2 p	Price varies significantly
Normal rations	1 cr	1 week un-preserved
Trail rations	15 p	1 week, preserved
Tobacco, average 1 ounce	5 p	Price varies significantly
Tobacco, high quality (South Farthing)	2 cr	1 ounce, price varies significantly

## 7 Equipment

### 7.4.3 WEAPONS

Item	Price	Damage (optional)	Range (feet)	Notes
Arrows (12)	1 cr	1-3	-	
Battle-axe	1 R	1-6	-	
Bola	2 cr	1-2		If successful hit, also entangles
Bolts, Crossbow (20), hand	1 cr	-	-	
Bolts, Crossbow (20), light	2 cr			
Bolts, crossbow (20), heavy	4 cr			
Bolts, crossbow (20), balista	1 R			
Bow, short	1 cr	-	100	
Bow, long	3 cr	-	200	
Bow, Elven	priceless	-	300	Can't buy in stores
Caltrops (12)	1 cr	1 each		
Broadsword	5 cr	1-6		
Club	0	1-3		Grab piece of wood
Crossbow (hand)	5 cr	1-2	50	
Crossbow (light)	3 cr	1-3	100	
Crossbow (heavy)	1 R	1-6	250	
Crossbow / Balista	5 R	2-12	500	(siege weapon)
Dagger	1 cr	1-3		
Flail (footman's)	3 cr	1-3		
Flail (horseman's)	5 cr	1-6		
Halberd	1 R	2-12		Must have minimum Hrða 8
Handaxe	3 cr	1-3		Can be thrown too.
Javelin	1 cr	1-3		
Knife	6 p	1-2	20	Hunting or thrown
Mace	1 cr	1-6		
Morning Star	2 cr	1-6		
Mounted Lance	1 R	2-12		
Net (combat, not fishing)	1 cr	0		Successful hit entangles
Quarterstaff	1 cr	1-6		Or can make from tree limb
Quiver (arrows)	5 p	-		Capacity = 12
Quiver (crossbow bolts)	5 p	-		Capacity = 20
Scabbard	3 p	-		sword, dagger, or similar

## 7 Equipment

Scimitar	2 cr	1-6		
Short Sword	2 cr	1-6		
Sling	5 p	-	75	
Sling bullets/stones (30)	5 p / 0 p	1-3		Stones are free
Spear	2 cr	1-6	50	
Two-handed Sword	1 R	2-12		Must have minimum Hrða 8
War Hammer	5 cr	1-6		
War Mattock	5 cr	1-6		
Whip	1 cr	1	5	Can entangle if wish on successful hit. (Must declare intent to entangle before attempting to hit)
Weapons Belt	5 p	-		

### 7.4.4 PROTECTIVE GEAR (ARMOR & SHIELDS)

Item	Price	Damage Absorption	Notes
Leather helm	1 cr	1	Protects head
Metal helm (partial)	2 cr	2	Protects head only
Metal helm (full)	3 cr	3	Protects head only
Leather armor	2 cr	1	Protects body
Chain mail armor	4 cr	2	Protects body
Shield, small, wooden	1 cr	1	Protects body if held
Shield, small, steel	2 cr	2	Protects body if held



## 8 HEALTH RATING

A character normally begins the game in peak health with no injury or illness. The health status of a character is determined by his/her Health Rating on the character sheet. The character begins with a Health Rating (HR) equal to their Hröa plus their Fëa.

Examples:

Hrongar the Bold has a Hroa of 5 and a Fea of 3 for a total Health Rating of 8.

Olonwenes the swift has a Hroa of 3 and a Fea of 3 for a total Health Rating of 6.

## 9 CHARACTER GROWTH

*By design*, there is no mechanism for character advancement included in the regular *Eä RPG Basic Rules*. This means that there is not a method for increasing skills (there aren't any separate "skills" in the Basic Rules), increase attributes (though certainly magic items, herbs, and other devices may increase the PC's attributes during game play), class/profession development (there is no "class" or "profession" per se in the Basic Rules), or otherwise "improve" the statistical information of the character.

Characters can accumulate reputation, relationships, stories, equipment, property, wealth, and other tangible assets, but they remain basically "flat" in their development of attributes and other abilities. In the Standard and Advanced Rules however, there are extensive rules for character development. Again, the goal with the *Eä RPG Basic Rules* is to help introduce players (and GM's) to the bare minimum needed for a classical paper and dice role playing game experience, for a few sessions, then if they enjoy it enough, they can learn the Standard Rules once they have the minimum basics under their respective belts. This should also make jumping into the Standard Rules less overwhelming for new players, once they have played with the Basic Rules for a few sessions.

*If the Players and the Game Master really decide they wish to stick with the Basic Rules for a while, then the GM **does** have a couple of optional rules available that could be implemented to provide some amount of character development.*

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