

Tunnel ◆ Quest



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Tunnel Quest

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Introduction

Tunnel Quest or TQ for short, is a brief set of Fantasy Role-Playing rules, designed by Paul Elliot (of *Zenobia* fame) and developed further by Mike Hill (*T&T Sixth Edition*). The game was originally designed to create a simple but compelling set of rules that Paul could use with his family.

The Basics

When the result of a character's action is in doubt, the *Game Master* (GM) asks for a dice roll to determine the outcome. The player rolls 2-dice and must get equal to or greater than the *Difficulty Number*. In a fight the Target Number is the Rating of the Foe. Most tasks can be rated in this way (*climb portcullis might be 6*). A Difficulty Number of 8 would be a typical challenge; 10 or more would be difficult and 13 or more would be formidable for starting characters, at any rate.

In many circumstances, the character may possess a Skill applicable to the situation; in which case, the player may add the Skill level to the dice roll. The character's Experience Level is *usually* added to the roll but only if the GM feels the task warrants it, given the character's *calling*.

Example: *Yuon the Barbarian is hunting small game with a bow and arrow. Yuon has Archery at +1 and the GM allows his player to add the character's Level (+2, for a total of +3), as the activity seems like the sort of thing Barbarians get up to. Later, Yuon attempts to use his Repair Skill (+2) to fix the hem on Maid Morron's court gown. Yuon does not get to add his Level in this particularly un-Barbarian-like activity!*

Creating Fantasy Characters

Players begin by choosing a *Calling* (also known as *profession*, *class* or *type*) for the character from among the following: *mage*, *priest*, *rogue* or *warrior*. Optionally the character may be a *Jack-Of-All-Trades*.

The **mage** focuses on learning the near-forgotten arts of sorcery. He has little time for unrelated Skills and outdoor, healthy activities.

The **priest** follows the tenets of his religion or cult, perhaps serving just one deity or an entire pantheon. Magical power is drawn directly from the divine source so the recipient must remain pure. The priest must often turn his hand to many different activities and has a broader, but shallower range of abilities.

Rogues are numerous. They have great potential but rarely find the road to success. They can use some Magic and some armour.

Warriors are masters of the shield, and many weapons. They are superior in combat situations to the other callings but lack diverse Skills or Magic.

All characters begin at Experience Level one (1) with the following statistics:

	Mage		Priest		Rogue		Warrior
Hits	4	Hits	5	Hits	6	Hits	8
Skills	2	Skills	3	Skills	4	Skills	2
Magic	4	Magic	2	Magic	0	Magic	0

Characters develop and grow in power and ability by gaining and spending *Experience Points*. Once a character accrues points equal to the current total of Hits, Skill and Magic, a new point is added to one of the stats.

Beginning characters start play with a total of 10 stat points. When their total stat points equal 15, the character's level increases by one (1). This continues for each 5 stat points gained. The practical maximum level for a character of *legendary* status is level 6.

Option: A fifth calling exists - the *Jack-of-All-Trades*. He begins with only 8 Stat points but may allocate them where he desires. In all other ways, consider the *Jack-of-all-Trades* a rogue.

Character Statistics

Hits: whenever a character or Foe suffers damage, a Hit is lost. Once all Hits are taken, the character falls unconscious and may die.

Skill: each Skill adds +1 to the dice roll for tasks relating to the Skill. Skills may be chosen multiple times gaining an additional +1 each time. However, no Skill may have a value greater than the character's Level. So a Level 2 character could have a +2 Skill but a first Level character could not.

Sample Skills: the players and GM are free to concoct their own lists of Skills suitable to the style of game they wish to play. The following list is appropriate for a basic fantasy setting.

Actor, Agile, Alluring, Axe, Archer, Armourer, Artist, Bow, Bowyer, Brawler, Cartographer, Dancer, Disguise Artist, Farmer, Fast-talker, Rider, Hagglor, Healer, Heavy Drinker, Herbalist, Keen Observer, Knife-thrower, Leader, Librarian, Lock-cracker, Mace, Merchant, Minstrel, Mountaineer, Nimble, Outlaw, Priest, Quick-on-the-draw, Ranger, Researcher, Seducer, Shadowy, Sling, Sneaky, Soldier, Spear, Spelunker, Stealthy, Steward, Streetwise, Survivalist, Swimmer, Sword, Theologian, Tracker, Ventriloquist, Vintner, Weapon Smith or Woodsman.

Magic: the number of power points a character has to fuel spells of a particular *Sphere* or *colour*. With the exception of the priest, no character may possess more points in a magic Sphere than his Level +1.

Example: *Durk is a rogue with 6 Hits and 4 Skills. His Skills are Stealth +1; Sword +1; Climbing +1 and Escapology +1. He has 10 stat points and is a first level character. Durk begins play with a cloak, flint and steel, knife and one weapon (Durk is a sword kind-of-a-guy). Durk's player now buys 100 coins worth of gear as follows: a lock pick set (60), a backpack (15), oil lantern and oil (17), and a large belt pouch (4) leaving 4 coins for food and ale at the local tavern.*

Suggested Character Names

The following are sample names for characters and chance-met individuals with an English or Celtic flair. Female names are displayed in italics.

Godric	Aethelhelm	Cathan	<i>Aelflaed</i>
Dagmund	Edmund	Midhir	<i>Agnes</i>
Beorn	Brego	Cormac	<i>Cynhild</i>
Aldred	Aidan	Fergil	<i>Matilda</i>
Aelfstan	Godrum	Lorcann	<i>Iorwen</i>
Aethelwulf	Wulfraed	Drustan	<i>Emma</i>
Eadred	Raedmund	Maldred	<i>Eowyn</i>
Osric	Merewine	Dian	<i>Aethelflaed</i>
Ulf	Wulfmaer	Colban	<i>Leoflaed</i>
Wulfric	Aelfric	Gorthyn	<i>Hilda</i>
Athelstan	Brunstan	Owain	<i>Hildegard</i>
Wistan	Whitgar	Eremon	<i>Hildegath</i>
Leof	Beorht	Maredoc	<i>Gytha</i>
Heathwulf	Deor	Artigan	<i>Colleen</i>
Garwulf	Conall	Conor	<i>Dervla</i>
Cuthbert	Finn	Finnian	<i>Brigit</i>
Alric	Brendan	Broccan	<i>Mave</i>

Belongings and Purchases

Priests, rogues and warriors begin the first game with the following items of equipment: cloak, flint and tinder pouch, knife, one weapon (choose from axe, sword, spear or mace); in addition, the priest receives an appropriate *holy symbol*. The mage begins with a knife, flint and tinder pouch, staff (standard weapon and focus) and cloak; he can gain *no benefit from armour*. All characters may purchase 100 coins worth of other non-weapon items from the *Items to Buy list*. The GM must decide whether un-spent coins are lost or form the beginning of the new character's wealth.

Items To Buy

Item	Price	Notes
Axe	100	Standard weapon
Backpack	15	110 kilogram capacity
Belt pouch: large	4	Holds up to 200 coins
Belt pouch: small	2	Holds up to 50 coins
Bow, 12 arrows and quiver	80	Standard ranged weapon

Item	Price	Notes
Canvas	20	10m square
Chain	40	10m length (very heavy)
Cloak	12	All-weather protection
Cuirass: plate	500	+2 Hits
Dagger	30	-2 to combat roll
Flint and tinder pouch	4	Useful for lighting a fire
Garlic	5	10 cloves, unsettles some vampires
Greaves: chain mail	200	+1 Hit
Hammer and 12 spikes	55	Includes tool pouch and belt
Hauberk: chain mail	400	+1 Hit
Healing potion	40	Restores 2 Hits
Helmet	100	+1 Hit
Holy symbol	60	Wood or clay
Holy water	14	1 phial, harms undead creatures
Javelin	20	Standard ranged weapon
Lock pick set	60	Pick locks at -4 without a lock pick set
Mace	35	Standard weapon
Net	10	3m square
Oil	5	Fuels a lantern for 2 hours
Oil lantern	12	10m beam or 5m radius
Pick axe	10	-2 to combat roll, useful for excavation
Poison: belladonna	60	3 doses or applications
Restoration Potion	60	Restores 4 Magic points
Rope	6	10m length
Sack: large	5	40 kilogram capacity
Sack: small	1	20 kilogram capacity
Shield	80	+1 to attack roll (warriors only)
Sling and stones (12 stones)	5	Includes small pouch for stones
Small mirror	10	Wrapped in soft leather

Item	Price	Notes
Spear	50	Standard weapon
Staff	20	Standard weapon
Sword	160	Standard weapon
Torches (3)	3	Provides light for 20 minutes each
Vambraces: leather	50	+1 Hit
Wolf's bane	20	Holds werewolves at bay

Note: two-handed versions of the main weapon categories are available; they each cost up to 500 coins and add +1 to the attack roll. Weapons of high quality may add a further +1 to attack rolls but they are hard to find and cost 1000 coins or more to purchase.

Fighting the Good Fight

Combat takes place in *Turns* lasting as long as 15 seconds of game-time and as short as perhaps just a few heartbeats. Each player makes a single choice of action for his character and this will often be an attack of some form. An *attack roll* represents the character's best attempt to land a telling blow *and* avoid being struck in return.

When a successful roll is made in combat against a Foe, the target's Hits are reduced by one (1). Most Foes have 3 Hits and rarely more: *three strikes* and you're out! Whether it's a dragon or a lion. At zero (0) Hits the creature is *defeated* (which might mean death, unconsciousness or retreat, the GM is at liberty to adjudicate). If the attack roll *fails*, then it is the character that is hit by the Foe. At the GM's discretion (recommended) any roll of a double one (1) will result in a Hit taken by the character regardless of the Foe's Rating or the character's bonuses.

Some Foes are rated as *Grunts* and only have one Hit. They likely have low Foe Ratings but travel and fight in groups, which makes them more dangerous.

Combat Modifiers

Level: warriors add their Level to the combat roll; a mage does not. Rogues add their Level in combat only if they have 2 or less Magic. If the rogue has a Magic stat of 3 or more only add half the Level (round down), rogues with high Magic points have devoted too much time to the arcane arts to focus on effective combat. Priests add half their Level (round down).

Example: Haldric, priest of The Horned Man is currently Experience Level 3, he adds +2 to attack rolls.

Shields: a shield gives +1 bonus to the warrior's attack roll, no other calling gains this benefit. However, a shield will break after the character suffers 3 Hits if not maintained correctly (i.e. If a shield takes 3 Hits in a single battle - it is broken; warriors are considered to correctly maintain their equipment between battles automatically).

No Weapon: an unarmed character fighting an armed Foe reduces his attack roll by -4 . If a character is skilled in unarmed combat, reduce the penalty by the Skill level. Fighting with just a

utility knife, dagger or other small weapon or tool incurs a penalty of -2 against an armed Foe, which cannot be improved with Skill (no right-thinking hero practices with a trowel).

However, when *both* character *and* Foe are unarmed (a creature with long talons and sharp teeth is *not* unarmed), the penalty is ignored and appropriate Skills come to the fore. Skills could include *Strong, Brawling, Dirty Fighting, and Agile* etc. Characters and Foes reduced to zero (0) Hits in unarmed combat are knocked unconscious rather than being killed.

Optionally, the GM may call for a roll of 6+ for the character to remain conscious after suffering 3 or more unarmed Hits in the same battle.

Off hand: when forced to fight with the *off hand* the character suffers a penalty of -1.

Armour: wearing armour increases the character's Hits in combat (leather bracers won't help you if you fall 30 metres from the castle wall).

The following items each add one (1) Hit whilst worn: a ring mail hauberk; a helmet; leather vambraces, and chain mail greaves. A character with a full set of armour will enjoy a bonus of +4 Hits. These *temporary* Hits do *not* count towards the character's stat total for Experience Points purposes. A rogue or priest may gain a maximum of +2 Hits from wearing armour no matter how much he or she piles on; a mage gains no benefit at all.

Healing: Hits are restored to normal after *several hours of rest* - or at as indicated by the GM. Armour Hits are recovered immediately after a battle. At the GM's discretion, a piece of armour may be permanently destroyed during a battle in which the character suffered loss of Hits. Particularly savage wounds or those caused by poison may worsen if not treated with the appropriate Skills.

Multiple Foes: when the characters are outnumbered by several Foes, the GM adds +1 to the Foe Rating for each *additional* Foe. Whenever there are more combat-ready Foes than characters, the characters are outnumbered. Track Hits lost as normal, knocking a Foe out of the fight (and off that combined Rating total) when 3 Hits are taken (or 1 Hit if the Foe is a Grunt).

Example: *Durk and his warrior companion Meldrissa have encountered a small clan of orcs. Each of the 5 orcs has a Foe Rating of 8. Since Durk and Meldrissa are outnumbered, they must make their attack rolls against a total Foe Rating of 11 (8 plus 3 additional foes). This will be a long and bloody battle; well worth an Experience Point (see below).*

When characters face multiple Foes, even one extra enemy can create a difficult situation. The GM should ensure that his description of the combat scene is sufficiently ominous that the players have time to re-think their plans.

Surprise, Bows & Javelins: hitting a Foe who is unaware of the character or who cannot fight back (perhaps the character is throwing a javelin or shooting an arrow) means that even if the attack roll is failed, the character is not harmed by the Foe.

The exception of course is when the Foes have missile weapons and/or attack by surprise themselves. In these instances ask players with vulnerable characters to make a standard attack roll, if successful, the character avoids the attack, otherwise he suffers one Hit of damage. GMs may use this rule to account for traps (a mechanical pit-trap) or accidents (slipping from a moss covered log bridge) as required.

Foe Ratings

Foes are given a *Rating* from 1 to 20 or more. This is the number that the player has to equal or exceed on 2 dice to hit the Foe. There is no definitive list of Foes, since this game is intended to be a largely improvised affair; monsters and people encountered can be given Ratings to match the situation; is the dragon young or venerable? Is the goblin a lackey or cunning assassin?

The following chart offers some Foe Rating suggestions to assist new GMs.

FR	Example
1	An inconsequential Foe (unless encountered in large numbers) it likely has less than the standard 3 Hits
3	Weak Foes; lone scouts tend to flee, raiding parties of 4 or more will attack if they outnumber the characters
6	Quickly defeated by typical heroes but may score a nick before being bested
8	A challenge for neophyte characters - Hits will be lost!
9	A powerful Foe - this may indicated a well-equipped enemy or one with special Skills and talents (or both!)
11	Even well equipped warriors face a stiff challenge with this Foe - the characters will probably suffer several Hits and require recuperation after the battle

Special Abilities

If the Foe possesses a particular special power, which could impact on the battle, it is *activated* when the player fails his or her attack with a ***roll of doubles*** (double 4, double 2 etc.). Powers can range from the mesmerising gaze of a vampire, suffering a poisoned wound, a dragon's fire-breath, being swept into the air by a griffin, and so on. Note that not every special power will cause loss of Hits.

Example: Randell the Kirklander is locked in battle with a fearsome manticore (Foe Rating: 10). Randell is Level 3 with the Sword Skill +2 but has lost his shield in an earlier combat; his standard attack roll is 2d6 + 5 and will only fail an attack roll if the dice roll is 2, 3 or 4. These are good odds but the manticore has a poisonous sting, which will hit Randell on a roll of double one (1) or double 2. Randell doesn't know what effect the poison will have but he doesn't want to find out!

Battle Stats

To give the GM an idea for setting Foe Ratings, the following table displays the average attack roll for each calling at the listed character Level. The numbers assume the character has advanced his best weapon Skill to maximum and, in the warrior's case, uses a shield. A single character matched against a Foe with a Rating equal to his or her average roll will face an even battle; a battle that is at least even counts as *Significant* for the purposes of awarding *Experience Points*. Remember that multiple Foes increase their Ratings with additional numbers but as the enemies fall, the Rating drops.

Level	1	2	3	4	5	6
Mage (1)	8	9	10	11	12	13
Priest	8	10	12	13	14	16
Rogue	9	11	13	15	17	19
Rogue (2)	9	11	12	13	14	15
Warrior	10	12	14	16	18	20

(1) A mage in physical combat gains only a Skill bonus - magical combat is based on Magic spent

(2) Rogue with 3 or more Magic points

As can be seen in the table above, presenting a Level 2 rogue with a nasty *Foe Rating 13* troll will cause some problems for the single character. He needs to score 2 points over his average rating; he will, most likely take one or more Hits. If the troll has a special ability (perhaps it regenerates lost Hits on doubles) chances are, the rogue will die.

A fair challenge to the characters will be a Foe with a Rating equal to the average of their standard attack rolls. For first level characters (lets say a mage, a rogue and a warrior), that number is 9. Remember, this is still a challenge and if the creature has a special ability, drop the Foe Rating by one or more points.

Example Foe: Abnec the swamp troll has a Foe Rating of 10 but sprouts additional limbs as required, which means he is effectively considered as two opponents for the purposes of determining whether the characters are outnumbered. Additionally, Abnec can regenerate lost Hits when a character fails an attack roll with doubles, the GM chooses to recover a lost Hit or score damage to the character.

Swamp trolls are completely immune to Change (green) magic spells but reduce their Foe Rating by one (1) when facing any type of fire-based Harm (red) magic. Abnec would be a stiff challenge for a low Level character; Abnec and his brother would be a challenge for a small party!

Experience Points

When a character accumulates a number of Experience Points equal to his current stat total, the points may be *spent* to purchase a new point of Hits, Magic or Skill. Note that the Jack-of-All-Trades calling need only accumulate 8 points before his first increase.

Each session a character earns one Experience Point (EP) for surviving plus one point for each *significant* battle and/or encounter in which the character participates in some meaningful way. Falling into a drunken stupor before a barroom brawl breaks out doesn't earn the character a point!

The GM can award additional points for overcoming specific challenges, finding special items and general *good play* but should be wary of granting more than 5 – 6 points per session.

Example: although Randell's chances of defeating the manticore in the above example were quite high, the GM decides to award an experience point as a failure would have resulted in a

dangerous poisoned wound. Later, Randell faces and slays a small band of goblins, these were not significant Foes so no experience is awarded.

The Use of Magic

Magic exists in 4 specific *Spheres* or *types*, often associated with a particular *colour* and magic-using characters must specify the colour of their Magic points at the time the power is gained (either during character creation or when spending experience points). The Spheres are: *Change* (green), *Harm* (red), *Mind* (white) and *Move* (blue). Priests are an exception to the rule; they may use points of any colour for any kind of spell - *divine magic*. Players with priest characters must still record the colour of their Magic points as the type of magic may be significant to the situation or the target if not to the priest.

The Magic stat is used to *power* spells; usually, only one (1) point is used to power a basic spell, 2 or 3 for more powerful spells. To succeed in casting a spell, the player rolls two dice to match or exceed the difficulty of the spell or Foe Rating of the target, adding his Level (with the exception of the warrior) and +1 per point of Magic spent (including the first point).

The first point spent must match the Sphere (or colour) of the spell attempted.

Spells are created or improvised by the player to suit each situation. For example, a *turn wooden door to straw door* spell would require 1 green Magic point (Change). Blasting the door with a magical bolt would require 1 red point (Harm). Where a spell does not directly impact on a character or Foe, the GM assigns the difficulty of the spell.

Magic points are replenished after, either a night's rest or some magical replenishment available in the scenario or a purchased *restoration* potion.

A staff or other suitable *Focus* (or a holy symbol in the case of a priest) allows a spell range of 20 metres (however, see the optional rules below). Without the aid of a *Focus* range is limited to only 3 metres. If a spell can reasonably be expected to last a given period (a *sleep* or *warding* spell, for example), the duration is 1d + 1 minutes with a Focus and 1d Combat Turns without.

With GM approval, additional points can be expended to impact on more than one target, a greater range, and/or wider area or last a longer period.

Sample Spells: Disguise, Open Lock, Poison-to-Water, Sand-to-Mud (Change); Touch of Pain, Fire Bolt, Spectral Dagger, Shatter (Harm); Suggestion, Read Surface Thoughts, Plant Emotions, Fear (Mind); Leap, Climb Sheer Surface, Glide, Run (Move).

Example: *Hubric, a level 1 mage has 2 red Magic points, 1 green, 1 blue and 1 white. He creates the spell Searing Sphere that will send a ball of flame towards his enemies inflicting damage on all those within a 3-metre radius. The GM calls for 3 points of Magic with at least one from the Harm (red) Sphere. Hubric spends one (1) of his 2 red points and his blue and green points to fuel the basic spell. He also chooses to burn up his white (Mind) point to ensure a lively effect. Using his staff as a Focus, Hubric blast the sphere off at his foes 20 metres away and rolls 2 dice. He adds his level (+1) the Magic points expended (+3 basic) and (+1 bonus) from the white Magic for a total of +5, handy because he's up against a pair of unfriendly ogres with a combined Foe Rating of 14!*

Some Foes are resistant or particularly susceptible to certain Spheres of magic. This may take the form of an increased (or decreased) Foe Rating against certain magics, a complete immunity or somewhere in between. See the description of Abnec the swamp troll (above) for an example.

Power Level

It should be noted that Magic is a powerful tool in the right hands and inventive players will benefit over those used to a static list of spells but power in the game has its limitations. In considering exactly what can be achieved with spells: think low-key, more *Earthsea* than *D&D*. When the mage is just starting his or her career, spells should be quiet and subtle, mimicking the actions that could be achieved through mundane means – for example, the act of causing damage to a Foe at range could be easily be performed by an archer.

Magical Healing

A common use of Change Magic (a green point of power) is the *healing* spell. Each point spent (the first of which must be green) heals one (1) Hit. When cast by a priest, each point of green magic heals 2 Hits, other colours heal only one (1).

The Warrior-Mage

Warriors can use experience to gain Magic points but never add their Level to the casting roll and may not gain or use points from the Mind (white) Sphere.

Magic-using Foes

It's not uncommon in fantasy literature for heroes to face magic-wielding Foes; the GM can represent such challenges in one of two ways. The first and simplest is to assume that characters losing Hits to magical enemies do so as a result of harmful spells. Secondly, list a certain number and type of magical effects appropriate to the power of the villain.

For example: Mercurio the Imperial Mage (Foe Rating: 14) can release a jet of flame from his eyes whenever the player fails an attack roll. The beam of searing heat is so powerful that all targets within 20 metres must roll 7+ or take a Hit.

Magic Effects Chart

The following optional rules may assist some players and GMs who might be unfamiliar with a completely freeform approach to spell casting. The chart defines the effects that might be achieved by spending a certain number of Magic points but doesn't consider the Sphere required – the GM must still adjudicate this factor.

Magic	Effect	Range	Duration
1	Normal	Touch	An instant
+1	Unusual	Throw	A minute
+2	Unlikely	Sight	An hour
+3	Inexplicable	Knowledge	A day

Magic: a spell created with one Magic point can achieve a normal effect at the caster's fingertips and lasts but an instant. Each additional point spent, of the appropriate type increases the power of, the effect, range or duration. To cause harm to a target within line of sight would cost 2 extra Magic for a total of 3.

Effect: (*Normal*) a normal competent individual could easily achieve this effect. Examples might include opening a door, breaking a window, striking a blow, whispering a message, reading a person's demeanour. (*Unusual*) a spell of this level is still within the bounds of human ability but would take exceptional skill. Such as: leaping a 4-metre chasm, knowing roughly what a person might be thinking, knocking someone unconscious, climbing a slick wall, not being noticed by a guardsman and so on. (*Unlikely*) one or more people acting in concert could achieve this effect but it is highly unlikely. Examples include: bursting open a strong door, vaulting a building, staying afloat in a terrible storm, knowing what a person is thinking, making someone think what you want, et cetera. (*Inexplicable*) these effects are beyond the ability of men and are clear acts of magic. Some examples include, flying, turning invisible, surviving underwater, walking through stone and so on.

Range: the spell's target must be at the caster's finger tips (touch), within throwing range of about 30-metres (throw), within sight of the caster (sight) or the caster must know where the target is, right now (knowledge).

Duration: the spell lasts this long and no longer; consider an *instant* to last roughly one Combat Turn. Note that a spell designed to cause harm need only last an instant but must be combined with at least one point of Change (green) Magic if the damage is to be considered *permanent*.

