

The Basic Fantasy RPG Style Guide

By James Lemon and Chris Gonnerman

A Basic Fantasy Role-Playing Writing Guide

Notes

- Most of the included examples are enclosed in parentheses; do not include them in your work.
- For all capitalization indications, the one overriding exception is that words which start a sentence should be capitalized.
- If you need a copy of the mentioned fonts, please PM or email Solomoriah and/or chiisu81 and we'll help you out!
- This guide can't cover every little rule/item nor the rare exceptions. When in doubt, make a post on your Workshop thread and we'll hammer it out.
- The easiest way to get started creating a Basic Fantasy RPG document is to take an existing ODT file and edit it for your work. These should already have the correct style listings, page and column layouts, etc. If you have any problems, simply make a post on the Workshop sub-forum and we'll help you!
- There are blank adventure and supplement templates available on the Basic Fantasy RPG forums, in the [Submission Guidelines](#) thread.

Titles

If your work is an adventure, the title should be in the QueenEmpress font, all-capitalized but not bold, and centered.

If your work is a supplement, the title should be in the Fritz Quadrata font, all-capitalized but not bold, and left-aligned.

Copyright Statements

Both the title header and the OGL page(s) needs a copyright statement. Normally this is the first year your work was distributed. If that work extends into the next year, you would note this as "xxxx-xxxx+1". If work stops in one year and then picks up 2 years later, you would note this as "xxxx, xxxx+2" or "xxxx-xxxx+1, xxxx+3", etc.

Release 11

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Examples:

"Copyright © 2007 Joe Player", "Copyright © 2007-2009 Joe Player", or "Copyright © 2007, 2010 Joe Player"

Header and Subheader Text

Subheader text should be in the SoutaneBlack font (even in an adventure), not bold, and left-aligned.

Body Text

Rules and supplements should use the Soutane font for body text; adventures should use Century Gothic. Text should be formatted in two columns (equal width, .2" spacing) with Justified alignment. Sentences should be separated by two spaces, not one.

Text Language

Basic Fantasy RPG documents may be written in either American or English style, consistent with the national origin of the work's author. Composite works (such as the Adventure Anthology multimodules) should be standardized as one or the other; generally, as most of our editors are American, it will be the American spellings which are used. No publication should contain both spelling standards.

Pronouns

In Basic Fantasy RPG we use the traditional "him or her" or "his and her", rather than "they" or "it" ("Once the player character comes into the clearing, he or she will see the entrance beyond the trees."). We choose to use inclusive language, while not violating the rules of written English as it was in the early 1980's. The use of pronouns should be limited, and there's usually a way to re-write the sentence/paragraph to eliminate excessive pronouns and improve clarity. In particular, you should try to rewrite any sentence that needs more than one instance of "he or she" or similar constructions.

Ability and Attribute Scores

The wording "ability score" should be used rather than "attribute", and should always be lower-case and not bold. The name of an ability (Strength, Intelligence, etc.) should always be capitalized but not bold.

Character Classes and Races

Character classes should always be capitalized but not bold.

Character races should always be capitalized but not bold. Use "Dwarf" and "Dwarves", and "Elf" and "Elves".

Armor Class

Armor Class should always be written as Armor Class or AC, capitalized but not bold.

Thief Abilities

The names of Thief abilities should always be capitalized but not bold.

Cleric Turn Ability

The word Turn or Turned should always be capitalized but not bold when used in reference to the Clerical ability.

Hit Points and Hit Dice

Written out, both hit point(s) and hit dice/die should be lower-case and not bold. When using HP and HD, they should be all-capitalized but not bold. In some instances, writing Hit Points or Hit Dice in capitalized form may be reasonable, in particular when presented in the same paragraph or section where other capitalized statistics are discussed (such as Armor Class).

Languages

The name of a language should always be capitalized but not bold.

Saving Throws

The saving throw phrase should always be written with only the name/category capitalized, and "versus" should always be written as "vs." ("save vs. Death Ray").

Names of Spells and Magic Items

Spells should be lower-case and bold.

Magical items should be capitalized and bold.

Gold Pieces and Other Money

The type of money should always be written lower-cased, and with a space between the value and type of money ("300 gp", "10 cp"). Do not write "g.p." or "c.p."; no punctuation is needed.

Experience Points

When written out, experience point(s) should be lower-case and not bold. When using "XP" after a number, it should be capitalized, not bold, and spaced after the number ("300 XP").

Morale

When written out, morale should be lower-case and not bold ("If an orc fails its morale check..."). In monster stat strings only, write it as upper-case "M" and lower-case "L", as in "ML".

Attack Roll

Generally, a character's or monster's attack roll should be written as "attack roll" and not as "to hit roll" or even "roll to hit." ("Blinded by the dust, the creature takes a penalty of -4 on its attack roll.").

Damage

The wording for damage should generally be "does", not "deals", "inflicts", etc. ("If its claw hits it does 1d6 points of damage."). Always write "points of damage" in this usage, never just "damage." Half damage should be written out and without a dash between it (not "half-damage" nor using "1/2").

Monster Names

The name of a type of monster should be lower-case and not bold. If a monster has a unique name, it should be capitalized but not bold. As an exception, capitalize each word of a monster's name where it appears before its stat string, whether in a room description or wandering monsters table.

Monster Stat-blocks

If you are contributing one or more entries to a Field Guide, and/or creating a new monster for an adventure, read over the first page in the **Monsters**

section of the **Basic Fantasy RPG Core Rules** (p. 54 in r107). That page covers each line of the monster stat-block.

A few notes:

- No. of Attacks: each attack is always described ("horn", "fist", etc.). Creatures with multiple attacks in each round has each attack notated with a slash ("/") between them. If a creature has multiple ways to attack but can only use one option each round, those attacks are notated with "or" instead.
- Damage: damage is always listed in the same order as the "No. of Attacks" above it, using the same symbols and wording as well ("/", "or", etc.). The die notation is all that's needed, not the attack name.
- XP: as noted on page 54, you will use the table on page 42 of the **Basic Fantasy RPG Core Rules** to calculate the XP value.

Monster/NPC Stat-lines

Here is what an example monster/NPC stat-line in an adventure looks like:

Skeleton: AC 14, HD 1, #At 1, Dam 1d10, Mv 40', Sv F1, MI 12, XP 25

Note that both the name and colon are bold.

If there is more than one monster/NPC: add the number before it ("**3 Skeletons**"), and add "ea." to the end ("XP 25 ea.").

If an NPC or monster has a spell-casting ability, write out the spell names on a line between the stat-line and the HP checkboxes.

("Spells: **bless, continual light, raise undead**")

For NPCs and humanoid opponents, write out the race, class, and level after the name and before the armor class rating ("**Reginald Darkwood**, Human Fighter 1: AC 15, ..."). The "Sv" portion is not needed, as the class and level will indicate the save value.

Also note any ability scores which grant either a penalty or bonus on a line between the stat-line and the HP checkboxes.

("STR 15 (+1), INT 8 (-1), CON 17 (+2)")

If an NPC or humanoid opponent has any spell-casting abilities, write out the spells on a line after the ability scores (if he or she has any that grants a penalty or bonus) and before the HP checkboxes.

Treasure

Names of magical items should be bold and capitalized.

Magical weapons, armor, etc. that grant a bonus should have it listed after the name, not before ("**Longsword +1**").

When notating what is found in a room, on a monster's body, etc. the number of each items should be written, rather than "a", or "several", etc. ("**1 Potion of Healing**", "**3 Scrolls of Raise Undead**").

HP Checkboxes

Use this utility page on the Basic Fantasy RPG website to create your HP checkboxes:

<https://basicfantasy.org/checkboxer.html>

Be sure to use the adventure template, or an existing Basic Fantasy RPG ODT file, to have the "HPCheckBoxes" and "HPChecksEnd" styles, as these will help make sure the checkboxes align properly. It is advisable to review the guidance in the adventure template if you are not experienced at working with styled documents... using styles properly will make both your work and ours easier.

References to the GM, Players, and Characters

GM should always be capitalized, and used instead of "DM", "Referee", "Judge", etc. "Game Master" is the preferred form when the title is written out; always leave a space between the words when writing the title out.

"Player characters" is not normally capitalized (except at the start of a sentence), but when abbreviated should appear as "PC". When pluralized, write it as "PCs", not "PC's". These same rules apply to non-player character(s) ("NPC, NPCs").

If you refer to the player(s), be sure it's something the player(s) should/could do, not the player character(s). If it's the latter, be sure to use that term, or PC(s).

Hyphens and En-dashes

If a dash is used in a sentence rather than a (semi-)colon, it should be the shorter en-dash ("Erin paused – she could hear the leaves rustling.") rather than the longer em-dash ("Erin paused—she could hear the leaves rustling").

In LibreOffice Writer you can insert an en-dash by typing a word, pressing space, typing two hyphens, press space again, and type the next word; Writer will automatically change the two shorter hyphens into one en-dash.

Spaces separating an en-dash from the words on either side are considered the standard in English; we prefer to always include such spaces. The longer em-dash does not include such spaces.

Ellipses

Ellipses should appear as three dots, followed by a space, and then the rest of the sentence. If your word processor changes this to a single character, that is acceptable, but not necessary.

Dice Notation

Dice notation should always use a lower-case "d" ("It has a 1 in 1d6 chance of succeeding.").

"X in X" Chances

As shown above, this phrase should be written as "X in X chance", with no capitalization nor dashes.

Numbers and Ordinal Numbering

The use of words in place of numbers is preferred, except when discussing game statistics (hit dice, damage, etc.). When naming or referring to a room/area in a dungeon/wilderness, always write the numeral, not the word ("the orc from Room 2 will patrol here").

When writing "second", "third", etc. they may be written as a number, with the lettering added as a superscript ("3rd", 4th). If your word processor makes this difficult, we will correct the situation in the proofing process.

Distance and Range

The words "feet" and "inches" are always preferred over the marks ' and ". The ' is used for movement, as it is traditional and not generally subject to

misunderstanding, but we prefer to see the actual words used for ranges, areas, etc. Stat-blocks/lines use marks as is tradition and for brevity.

Commas

Serial (Oxford) commas should be used. When listing three or more things, there should be a comma after each item: "One, two, and three".

References to Basic Fantasy RPG Works/Titles

Any Basic Fantasy RPG titles referred to should be capitalized and bold. "Basic Fantasy RPG" should always be spelled out, not shortened to "BFRPG". "Basic Fantasy" by itself is not sufficient; it must include "RPG".

Titles of the field guides, etc. don't need the "RPG" portion, but should include "Volume".

"Some of the monsters in this adventure come from the **Basic Fantasy Field Guide Volume 1.**"

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Ensure that the preceding copyright lines are as up-to-date as possible. For example, the Basic Fantasy RPG in its 3rd Edition should be "2006-2016".

Final Notes

These are, in the final analysis, just guidelines. The rules stated above are those that the Basic Fantasy Project team follow most of the time when editing works for publication. Like the game rules themselves, though, they are subject to interpretation, and when they don't work, we do something different.

The one most important rule is this: do not hesitate to ask if you have a question! Post your questions to the forum, so that all can benefit from the answers. Ask for help if you need it. The Basic Fantasy Project can only move forward if people share their work; we want to do anything we can to help you share your work with us.

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