

GUIDELINES FOR WRITERS

Writing is a craft and an art. It requires practice and you will have off-days. Don't be perturbed; it happens to the best of us. If you can, try to write something every day, getting into a routine. But don't flog yourself. If you only write 50 words, that's fine. If you write 5,000, even better. It's the routine that's crucial, not the amount.

ACTIVE VS PASSIVE VOICE

Write with an active voice. Compare these two sentences:

If the characters swindle the merchant he will inform the local guild and the guild will employ assassins to hunt the characters down.

Swindling the merchant results in the local guild being informed and assassins being employed.

The former is passive; the latter active in voice. It's tempting to write in a passive voice, with an over-reliance on the use of 'will' because, obviously, the characters in the scenario might do something completely different. However the passive voice takes longer and is weaker in intent. The active voice is shorter, to-the-point and easier to read. Use an active voice wherever you can and your writing will seem fresher and read better.

PUNCTUATION, PUNCTUATION, PUNCTUATION

Good punctuation aids comprehension: poor punctuation detracts from it. Make sure you use commas, semi-colons, colons and apostrophes correctly and appropriately. Use of the 'Oxford Comma' (where a comma is used before the word 'and' is fine as long as it is contextually correct.

GRAMMAR

Good grammar requires practice. The best grammar appears effortless but requires work. Be prepared to revise sentences and paragraphs to adjust your grammar frequently. Beginning sentences with conjunctives 'and', 'but' is fine when used sparingly and when to convey narrative effect.

DOCUMENTS AND STYLES

The final page of this guide provides the styles to be used in your submission. Use styles for all headings, sub-headings, body text and lists. Do not use individual formatting to achieve the same effect. If you don't know how to use styles, then google some advice. Styles are your friend and save a great deal of work when used correctly.

- Do not amend the styles in the template we provide. Do not introduce your own styles. This will make more work for us in the production process.
- Do not double space. Single spacing only.
- Use a single space after a full stop or period; do not use a double space.
- Try to avoid spaces and redundant Hard Returns in your document.
- DO NOT USE TABS TO SEPARATE INFORMATION! Use tables wherever appropriate. Do not use Tabs or Hard Returns inside a table – it causes havoc with layout formatting.
- Use an Em dash for negative numbers (eg, -1). An Em Dash is usually CTRL+ Minus Sign if using Windows, or COMMAND+Minus Sign if OSX.

STAT BLOCKS

A stat block for creatures and NPCs will be included in the Word template. Use this for all stat blocks. Include stat blocks at the end of the document (see Scenario Structure, below).

Note that it is not always necessary to include characteristics (STR, CON, SIZ, etc). An abbreviated stat block, showing the essentials, will also be provided. Use this where appropriate.

TERMINOLOGY AND ABBREVIATIONS.

- Mythras or Mythras Imperative (not MI). Classic Fantasy, not CF.
- Non-Player Character – not NPC
- Character or Adventurer – not Player Character or PC

- XdX – not XDX (so 3d6, not 3D6)
- Games Master – not Game Master, Dungeon Master, Quest Master or GM
- Do *not* use ‘etc’. Always use ‘and so forth’ or ‘and so on’.
- Numbers below five should be written in full. Above five can be expressed as numerals: ‘The cavern is three metres at its widest point, but 6 metres high.’
- Mythras uses metric measurements, not Imperial. The one exception is ‘Classic Fantasy’ where you may use Imperial, but it is always useful to include the metric equivalent in parentheses. ‘The bag weighs 6lbs (2.7 kilos)’; ‘The passage is 10 yards (30 metres) long.’

ALWAYS WRITE FOR THE GAMES MASTER

When constructing a scenario assume that only the Games Master will read it. Do not include information for players unless it is in the form of handouts. Do not provide text that is designed to be read to the players unless it is something that needs to be conveyed from a Non-Player Character to the Characters as dialogue.

The *only* exception here is if writing a module for our ‘Classic Fantasy’ series; here, you may have boxed text (see below) carrying explicit descriptions to be read to characters by the Games Master, but try to use these sparingly. A well-written scenario should lend itself to the Games Master easily being able to provide evocative descriptions without reading verbatim.

TEXT BOXES AND SIDEBARS

If material needs to be enclosed in a text box or sidebar, use the following notation:

[[[Boxed Text]]]

Whatever material needs boxing.

[[[End Box]]]

If you need to refer to something on an earlier or future page, state ‘see page XX’. Do not substitute the XX for a page number in your document.

ART DIRECTION

By all means suggest artwork for inclusion in the scenario. Note the artwork close to where it fits in the text with:

[[[Art Direction]]]

Description of the material to be illustrated. Try to keep it brief.

[[[End Art Direction]]]

You may include whatever sketchmaps, drawings or other illustrative elements with your submission, but send them as a separate file rather than embedded in the Word document.

CLASSIC FANTASY SCENARIOS

Scenarios written for our Classic Fantasy line usually revolve around a dungeon, structure or other form of closed complex that the characters explore. There are a few guidelines for preparing such an adventure for publication:

1. The dungeon is the centrepiece of the scenario, but it should be supported with a rationale for being there, including a little history or other context.
2. You must provide a sketch map of the complex, along with a scale and a key. Something hand drawn on graph paper is fine, because we will have it redrawn, but you are responsible for producing the map that details the complex; do not expect Aeon Games to produce it for you based on the description alone.
3. Ensure you are fully familiar with Classic Fantasy’s content. While based on Mythras, there are some subtle rules differences around magic and character statistics and abilities. Make sure these are correct and consistent. If in doubt, ask us.

WORD/PAGE COUNT

If you are invited to prepare a manuscript, you will be given either a word or page count. One page of US Letter contains about 550 words, so the count will be either a multiple of the total words and/or pages. Try

to stick to the count you are given. When structuring a book, we need to take into account its size for printing, layout and art. This affects our costs, so the count specified is an important factor in what you produce. If, for any reason, you find you will exceed this count, contact us first. We may be able to accommodate it. However it is better to check with us beforehand; it can be disheartening if you spend a couple of months preparing a 30 page scenario only for us to ask you to trim half of it away because it has exceeded the count we've given.

ABOUT PUBLICATION

If we accept your manuscript, prepare yourself for the following:

1. We may well ask you to rewrite some or all of your submission depending on its quality and other requirements. This is a standard part of writing for a living; the draft you submit is unlikely to be the final, accepted draft. Be prepared for rewrites and accept that you will need to do it. It is never personal: even the very best work benefits from some further attention.
2. Your work will be reviewed and edited by Aeon Games staff. We may comment on certain areas, suggest changes or question things you have prepared. This is, again, a standard part of the writing process and so be prepared for a constructive commentary on your work.
3. Producing a book for publication takes time. It can take between 6 months and a year for your work to see publication. We will endeavour to keep you informed of progress, but be aware that there may be a lengthy gap between submitting a manuscript, having it accepted, and then seeing the work in print.
4. We pay for written work on publication. Occasionally we may pay for some, or all, of a commission in advance, but this is not typical. You will be paid for the amount we publish, not necessarily the amount you submitted. This is why keeping to a prescribed page/word count is so important for you financially.
5. As a writer you will be sent a complimentary copy of your work. If you are the sole author, you will be sent three copies. You will also receive unlimited PDF versions.

SCENARIO STRUCTURE

If you are writing a scenario for us, we have a preferred outline structure that we would like you to follow when preparing your manuscript for publication. The sample below shows the key headings with some sample text included as a guide.

OVERVIEW

The characters investigate the strange disappearance of a Guild Master's daughter, uncover the presence of the Chaos Mother cult, and eventually engage in a showdown with the cult's high priest and his warped minions. At the end of the scenario they will have learned more about the cult, its links with Jedakiah, and the location of the Chaos Mother's Chalice.

NPCs

- Rodegar: Father of Ilsandra and the characters' patron. He is distraught at his daughter's disappearance and seeks the characters' help.
- Ilsandra: A young woman, daughter of Rodegar, singled-out by the Chaos Mother Cult for her beauty, innocence, and raven-black hair.
- Zerus: A devious agent specialising in kidnap for ransom. Engaged by Agnos to kidnap Ilsandra, but ignorant of the Chaos Mother cult's existence.
- Agnos: Disciple of the Chaos Mother and High Priest of the cult in Lurien. He receives occasional instruction from Jedakiah and has visited Distaff Peak occasionally. He remains separate from the sorcerer though, and worships the Chaos Mother for his own gain.
- Ulgar: The Chaos-warped henchman of Agnos. A brute of a man with bones made of iron lending him incredible resistance to physical damage.

KEY POINTS/TIMELINE

1. Ilsandra is kidnapped en-route to worship at the temple of Xalgith
2. Rodegar contacts the characters after a week of fruitless searching
3. Investigation by the characters; Zerus's activities come to light
4. If Zerus is located and challenged, he reveals his employer is a man named Agnos
5. Investigate Agnos; uncover the hidden temple beneath Lurien's streets – not more than ten minutes from Rodegar's home.
6. Search the temple and battle the guardians
7. Showdown with Ulgar and Agnos; rescue of Ilsandra
8. Uncover links to Jedakiah and the Chaos Mother's Chalice

AREAS TO BE COVERED

This is optional, but can be useful if the scenario is complex or requires the characters to visit several places or locations.

- Lurien: Market town of North Vale. The scenario does not leave Lurien and is focused on Ilsandra's disappearance.
- The Inn of Six Knives: Shady contacts abound here. Some of the patrons know of Zerus.
- Zerus's House: a ramshackle affair by the river where Zerus lives and keeps trophies of those he has kidnapped.
- Agnos's Apothecary Store: A seemingly innocent shop selling herbal and medicinal supplies. Beneath it are tunnels leading to a secret temple to the Chaos Mother.
- The Temple: Built amidst the sewers this is six connected chambers filled with rats, death and Chaos Mother worshippers.

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

Getting the scenario started and engaging the characters. Provide essential background for the GM.

EVENTS AND LOCATIONS

The core of the scenario, following, wherever possible, a logical sequence.

Remember that if your scenario includes a dungeon or other form of complex to be explored, include a key and a sketch map. Make sure the key and sketch map align properly. If the dungeon consists of several levels, make each level its own section, but keep your numbering sequential with the previous level. This means that if Level 1 of Quagmire Keep ends with location 12, Level 2, where the dungeon starts, should begin with location 14.

Creatures and monsters should be mentioned if they appear in a specific location ('Room 6 is home to 8 bugbears.') but place the statistics for the bugbears at the end of the scenario, in their own section. You do not need to provide statistic blocks for each and every creature unless you need unique individuals; you can include a general, average specimen. However, always include a statistics block, do not refer the Games Master back to the main rulebook without very good reason.

CONCLUSION

Possible outcomes and consequences.

NPC STATISTICS

Self Explanatory, but ensure you use the statistics block in the formats outlined below.

HEADING 1

HEADING 2

HEADING 3

Heading 4

Normal (Body) Text

Bullet Text

- First bullet
- Second bullet
- Third bullet

[[[Boxed Text]]]

Text for boxed

[[[End Box]]]

[[[Art Direction]]]

Art direction text

[[[End Art Direction]]]

NPC STAT BLOCKS

We use two types of Stat Blocks: Major NPCs and Minor. The two tables have all statistics completed; create a blank copy for your own manuscript.

Major NPC

Insert physical description of the NPC/monster, if necessary. Include details of appearance, clothing, attitude, weapons, magic, etc.

If using a monster, you may need to add one or more rows to accommodate non-human Hit Locations. We can provide a variety of templates on request.

STR: 15	Action Points: 3	1d20	Hit Location	AP/HP
CON: 14	Damage Modifier: +1d2	1-3	Right Leg	2/6
SIZ: 12	Magic Points: 12	4-6	Left Leg	2/6
DEX: 12	Movement: 6 metres	7-9	Abdomen	3/7
INT: 15	Initiative Bonus: +13 (-2 for armour)= +11	10-12	Chest	3/8
POW: 12	Armour: Padded limbs, bezaint on torso, reinforced helm	13-15	Right Arm	2/5
CHA: 11	Abilities: none	16-18	Left Arm	2/5
	Magic: none	19-20	Head	4/6
Skills: Athletics 65%, Brawn 45%, Endurance 45%, Evade 30%, Locale (The Vale) 60%, Perception 60%, Survival 45%, Unarmed 47%, Willpower 30%, Stealth 62%				
Love wealth 75%				
Loyalty to Ester 40%				
Hate 'those that let me down' 68%				

Combat Style: Bugbear Warrior (Choose two or three from the following: Club, Sword, Dagger, Mace, Spear, Shield) 70%				
Common Weapons:	size/Force	Reach/Range	Damage	AP/HP
Broadsword	L	L	1d8+1d6	6/20

Minor NPC

Action Points: 2	1d20	Hit Location	AP/HP
Damage Modifier: None	1-3	Right Leg	0/6
Magic Points: 9	4-6	Left Leg	0/6
Movement: 6 metres	7-9	Abdomen	2/7
Initiative Bonus: +12 (-1 for armour)= +11	10-12	Chest	2/8
Armour: quilted hauberk	13-15	Right Arm	0/5
Abilities: None	16-18	Left Arm	0/5
Magic: None	19-20	Head	0/6
Skills: Athletics 38%, Brawn 25%, Endurance 36%, Evade 28%, Locale (The Vale) 40%, Perception 41%, Survival 31%, Unarmed 38%, Willpower 19%, Stealth 39%			
Love wealth 50%			
Fear Pig-axe 73%			

Combat Style: Bugbear Warrior (Choose two or three from the following: Club, Sword, Dagger, Mace, Spear, Shield) 70%				
Common Weapons:	size/Force	Reach/Range	Damage	AP/HP
Broadsword	L	L	1d8+1d6	6/20

Classic Fantasy Monster

You may also use the Minor NPC Table, above.

Bugbear

Characteristics	Attributes		1d20	Location	AP/HP
STR: 2d6+12 (19)	Action Points	2	1 - 3	Right Leg	2/8
CON: 2d6+8 (15)	Damage Modifier	+1d6	4 - 6	Left Leg	2/8
SIZ: 2d6+14 (21)	Magic Points	11	7 - 9	Abdomen	8/9
DEX: 3d6 (11)	Movement	4 m (13')	10 - 12	Chest	8/10
INT: 2d6+3 (10)	Strike Rank	9*	13 - 15	Right Arm	2/7
POW: 3d6 (11)	Average Lair	10-80**	16 - 18	Left Arm	2/7
CHA: 2d6 (7)	Treasure Type	B x4, (M)	19 - 20	Head	2/8
Passions: Evil (Cannibalistic and Slaver) 52%					
Armour: Splint or banded worn over a tough natural hide					
Abilities: Infravision					
Magic: None normally, although some tribes may have specialist witch doctors (magic-users) or shamans (druids)					
Skills: Athletics 60%, Brawn 80%, Endurance 60%, Evade 42%, Languages (Bugbear, Goblin, and Hobgoblin) 57%, Local 50%, Perception 61%, Survival 56%, Track 65%, Unarmed 70%, Willpower 52%					

Combat Style: Bugbear Warrior (Choose two or three from the following: Club, Sword, Dagger, Mace, Spear, Shield) 70%				
Common Weapons:	size/Force	Reach/Range	Damage	AP/HP
Broadsword	L	L	1d8+1d6	6/20
Club	L	M	1d6+1d6	4/8
Dagger	M	M	1d4+1+1d6	6/16
Horseman's Mace	L	M	1d8+1d6	6/12
Northern Round Shield	H	M	1d4+1d6	4/24
Shortspear	L	VL	1d8+1+1d6	4/10