



# PINNACLE STYLE GUIDE

Thanks for taking time to read Pinnacle's style guide. Our goal is to make it easier for writers both novice and established to craft and submit Savage Tales and books for publication.

For insight into the content and structure of a thrilling and well-crafted adventure, the best sources are Pinnacle's Plot Point Campaigns and adventures, and our friendly online forums, both accessible at [www.peginc.com](http://www.peginc.com).

The following guide tells you everything you need to know about Pinnacle's house style — the nuts and bolts of our grammar preferences and writing nuances. This information applies to all our Savage Settings, except where the source material supersedes it.

The trail awaits...let's ride, amigo!

## WRITING FOR PINNACLE

If you're planning to write professionally, start by picking up a guide to general grammar rules and style.

We recommend William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White's *The Elements of Style*. It's cheap, succinct, and indispensable for any writer.

Beyond that book and this guide, the current edition of *Savage Worlds* is your most valuable reference for style queries.

## Style Sheets

Use Body Text for the body of your work, Chapter Header for chapter headers, and Header01 for the start of major sections. Use Header02 to begin subsections within a given section.

If you need a further breakdown, place a descriptor in bold with a colon, like this:

**The Merchant:** Silas is polite and responsive, but knows nothing pertinent to this adventure.

## Setting Up Your Document

You can download our style template in Microsoft Word format at [www.peginc.com](http://www.peginc.com). But if you need to set up your own template, here's how it's done:

- Always indent the first line in a paragraph. Do not do this by using a tab. Instead, set your Body Text Style to give you an automatic, first line indentation (.03" is good).
- Do not put an extra paragraph (¶) between paragraphs to space it out on the page — adjust your paragraph settings to automatically put 10-pt space after each one instead.
- Use only one space after sentences, or after a quote, colon, etc. Using two spaces is a holdover from the typewriter.
- Use chapter numbers. Spell out numbers one through nine, then use numerals if needed (but we typically keep it under 10 chapters).





# Pinnacle Style Guide

# TONE

This one's important! Pinnacle keeps things PG-13.

We don't do graphic sex or violence. We also don't glorify smoking, and in general try to avoid it all together (yes, even in Deadlands Noir). Harming or killing children is also something we tend to avoid. There are exceptions to every rule, but if it's not critical to your story, please adhere to our rules.

Avoid statements that refer to real-world politics and religions. If it's important to the story and we approved your outline, it's probably fine. If you're slipping in a dig at someone or something, please don't use our products to do it.

## STYLE GUIDE

Following are the top changes we have to make with new writers. We tend to reject manuscripts that commit too many of these errors. And even in an accepted piece, these issues can be *very* time consuming to correct. *Please check for them before submitting your draft!*

## Active Voice, Not Passive

Simply put, active voice is when the *subject* (the person or thing performing the *action* in the sentence) is placed before the verb. By contrast, passive voice flips that relationship — or omits the subject altogether. For example:

*Active: Water quickly fills the room.*

*Passive: The room is quickly filled with water.*

*Passive: The room is quickly filled.*

While passive voice has its uses, it is less direct, sounds hesitant, uses more words, and can make it difficult for the reader to determine who's doing something. When used sparingly it can be effective, but when overused it causes writing to drag. Please stick with active voice to make your writing more vibrant and exciting to read.

## Present Tense, Not Future

Authors tend to think of an adventure as happening in the future because no one is playing it yet. It's a longstanding tradition in RPG writing, but we studiously avoid it.

Think of your adventure as happening in the present. If you use the word “will,” you’re probably wrong.

Don't say:

*"The adventurers **will** see a shiny object nearby."*

Instead, use the present tense:

*"As they enter the chamber, the adventurers see a shiny object nearby."*

Try to avoid writing in terms of the theoretical future or past, which is typified by some forms of “be” (may be/maybe, was being, had been, have been, might be, should be, could be, will be).

- Do a Find for the words “will,” “being,” “should,” “could,” and “may” when you’re done writing. Don’t forget contractions like “he’ll.” Usually, they can be removed or changed to present tense.

## Present Participle and Indirect Phrasing

Although fine if used sparingly and for variety, try to avoid the *-ing* form of verbs (the present participle or gerund). Doing so helps make your writing direct, vibrant, and easier to read.

For example,

*"The wolves surround the villagers."*

is simpler and more direct than

*"The wolves are surrounding the villagers."*

This change of tense doesn't change how it plays out — the villagers or heroes still have to fight their way through savage wolves — but the first sentence gets to the point faster.

Also, try to avoid constructions that involve characters preparing to act. For example,

*"The enemy soldiers fire their rifles."*

is more direct than

*"The enemy soldiers begin to fire their rifles."*

Again, it's the same result but the first example gets the reader there faster. Making these changes across an entire document can reduce your word count substantially and strengthen your writing.

## Shorter. Easier. Stronger.

Shorter paragraphs and sentences are easier on the eyes and thus more likely to be read. Add subheaders to break up long passages of text and provide content cues for the reader.

## “That” and “Who”

Take care not to confuse these terms: “That” refers to *objects* and “who” refers to *people*.

*"The man who saved my life..."*

*"The truck that crashed into the harbor..."*



But do not overuse the word “that” — unless it’s crucial to understanding the sentence, you can usually delete “that.”

## Referring to Characters

We don’t use the term “PCs.” If it’s important to distinguish between PCs and NPCs, you can spell out “player characters.”

But readers get tired of reading the same pronouns over and over, so try to add variety to your references. Player characters can be referred to as “the party,” “characters,” “team,” “heroes,” “investigators,” and so on. Certain settings have additional options, such as “gumshoes” for *Deadlands Noir*, “wanderers” for *Solomon Kane*, “posse” for *Deadlands: The Weird West*, or “kids” for *Pinebox Middle School*, among others.

You can also use situational pronouns. For example, if the group is entering a strange new land, you could call them “strangers,” “invaders,” “explorers,” or “interlopers” on occasion.

For NPCs, we sometimes write it out if it’s important as “nonplayer characters,” or use the term “Extras.” Usually, you should refer to the group itself, as in:

*“The heroes can bring their followers along, should they choose.”*

Note that it doesn’t require the insertion of “NPC” or “nonplayer character” before followers.

## Using “You:” Characters and Players

There are only two ways “you” is appropriate:

- When we’re actually talking to you the reader, as in, “You roll the dice.”
- When it’s colloquial, as in, “You can’t make an omelet without breaking a few eggs, partner!”

Keep the difference between players and characters clear. *Players* roll dice. *Characters* or *players* can make Trait checks. *Characters* have Edges and Hindrances.

Edges and Hindrances are where this pops up the most — but watch for “you” throughout.

## Success and Raise

A roll doesn’t require a “raise” to be successful. *Success* is successful. A raise should give the player more.

For example:

*“The heroes make Notice rolls — a raise lets them detect a small sound down a nearby corridor.”*

That’s incorrect. If you want the Notice roll to essentially be at –4, then just say so.

So this should read:

*“The heroes make Notice rolls at –4. With a success they detect a small sound down a nearby corridor.”*

If you want to add a raise effect, tack it on afterward: Success detects a small sound, but a raise pinpoints it as an alarm for unauthorized access.

## Foe References

At the end of any scene or section in which the heroes encounter nonplayer characters and/or creatures, include a bulleted list of entries for *all* NPCs — even those expected to be noncombatants.

- List each character’s name or type (with a [WC] before each Wild Card, so we know to put an icon there) and the number appearing in parentheses, followed by a colon, and finally the page or book in which the character or creature can be found.
- Wild Cards (which have a setting-specific icon instead of a bullet) are listed first in alphabetical order, followed by any Extras in alphabetical order.
- Insert a brief qualifier for characters or monsters that vary only slightly from their published versions (e.g., “Use the Thug profile, but they have Strength d10 and are armed with clubs.”)
- Unique, named Wild Cards don’t require an amount in parentheses after the name.

**Example:** A scene in a science fiction game. Brave space explorers battle the diabolical Zandrax Oon, her lieutenant Lightning Mahoney, and a teeming mob of slime wraith accomplices. A JumpCorp security team is on hand to aid the heroes, while a ravenous a-pex threatens everyone on the field of battle.

At the end of the scene, just before the following header, foe references should read:

- **A-Pex (1):** See *The Last Parsec: Leviathan*.
- **Lightning Mahoney:** See page @@.
- **Zandrax Oon:** See page @@.
- **JumpCorp Security (1, plus 1 per hero):** See *The Last Parsec: Core*.
- **Slime Wraiths (4 per hero):** Use the Zombie profile in *Savage Worlds*, but they have Pace 8.

## GENERAL GUIDELINES

Please use American English spelling and grammar.

## Book Titles

- Do not refer to specific editions of *Savage Worlds* core rules (like *Deluxe* or *Adventure Edition*) in “print.” Simply use *Savage Worlds*, or *Savage Worlds* core rules. Note *Savage Worlds* is always italicized when speaking of the game system or core rulebook.
- Abbreviate book titles after the first instance. For example, *Savage Worlds Super Powers Companion* can be shortened to *Super Powers Companion* after the first use in text.
- *Never* refer to page numbers in other books. Editions and printings frequently change them.





Just say “See **Hazards** in *Savage Worlds*,” for example, rather than listing the page number.

## Italicized Terms

- Named things like ships and newspapers (not saloons or other business names, like The Salty Dog Cafe)—*Black Revenge*, *Greensboro News & Record*.
- Titles of Pinnacle’s *Savage Settings*: *Deadlands: The Weird West*, *The Last Parsec*, *50 Fathoms*.
- Titles of Plot Point Campaigns: *Red Harvest* in *Deadlands Noir*.
- The first use of a word in a foreign language.
- Lowercase and italicize power names (*armor*, *bolt*) except for mechanics-related words like **Trait** and **Power Points** (*boost/lower Trait*, *drain Power Points*) or for the first power in a list (**Powers:** *Bolt*, *fly*).

## Boldface Terms

- *Savage Tales*/Plot Point adventure names.
- Table names in text (**Special Encounters Table**).
- Direct reference to a named section of a book (the section being read or another), e.g., “See **Dramatic Tasks** in *Savage Worlds*,” or “If the heroes win, go to **Aftermath** on page @@.” This typically applies to **HEADER 01** sections and above. Do not bold references to *entries* (a particular Setting Rule, Hazard, Situational Rule, Edge, power, or

monster); e.g. “See the **Bestiary** in *Savage Worlds*,” but also, “See **Drowning** in *Savage Worlds*.”

## Capitalized Game Terms

- Ace (open-ended die mechanic and Edge)
- Action Card
- Advance, Advancement
- Ammo states — Very High, High, Low, or Out
- Armor (with a value only. Examples: “+4 Armor” and “He’s wearing armor” are correct.)
- attribute names — Agility, Smarts, Spirit, Strength, and Vigor
- Battle Roll
- Benny, Bennies
- Bound
- Bumps & Bruises
- Called Shot
- Card names (for those with names) and suit names — Ace of Spades, Five of Diamonds, Two of Clubs, Joker, etc.
- Cover — Light, Medium, Heavy, Near Total
- Chase, Chase Card
- Command Range
- Conviction
- Critical Failure
- Critical Hit



- Derived or additional statistic names, including those that are setting-specific — Pace, Toughness, Status, Favors, Academics, etc.
- Derived Trait
- Difficult Ground
- Disease type — Chronic, Debilitating, Lethal
- Distracted
- Dramatic Task
- Duration
- Edge — the term itself
- Edge names — Filthy Rich, Soul Drain, etc.
- Edge types — Social Edges, Legendary Edges, Combat Edges, etc.
- Encumbered
- Entangled
- Exhausted
- Extra, Extras
- Fast! Furious! Fun!
- Fatigue, Fatigued
- Fear when referring to the Fear rules but not to the power — The *fear* spell can force you to make a Fear check.
- Game Master or similar setting-specific title — Marshal, Dean, etc.
- Heavy Armor
- Heavy Weapon
- Hindrance — the term itself
- Hindrances — Yellow, Overconfident, Young, etc.
- Hold and The Drop (but not “on”). E.g., you can go on Hold by keeping your initiative card and then get The Drop on them.
- Illumination levels — Dim, Dark, Pitch Darkness
- Incapacitated when referring to the damage condition, but not when referring to something else (which you should avoid)—He became Incapacitated in the same mysterious explosion that incapacitated the city’s power grid.
- Interlude
- Knockout Blow
- Mass Battles
- Minor or Major with regard to Hindrances — Major Hindrances, Minor Hindrances, Vengeful (Major), Greedy (Minor), etc. When describing a type of Hindrance, use an em-dash and short lowercase phrase: Obligation (Major—to their country or firm).
- Minor or Major with regard to sins, but not the word “sin” itself—I lied (a Minor sin) about killing that wagonload of puppies (a Major sin) to the preacher before I burnt him alive in the consecrated church (a Mortal sin).
- Multi-Action penalty
- Networking
- New Powers Edge when referring to the Edge itself, but not when used without such reference — *My hero picked up two new powers by selecting the New Powers Edge.*
- Panicked
- Poison type — Knockout, Mild, etc. Also capitalize “poison” when used together (Lethal Poison).
- Power Modifier; the term itself and the Power Modifiers: e.g., Armor Piercing, Lingered Damage (but “modifier” on its own is lowercase)
- Power Points
- Quick Encounters
- Range and Range brackets — Short, Medium, Long, Extreme
- Rank and the Ranks themselves, and Rank when used as an Edge title (mostly in some military settings such as *Weird War II* and *Tour of Duty*)—Novice, Seasoned, Veteran, Heroic, Legendary, the Rank Edge, etc.
- Rate of Fire (RoF)
- Reach
- Recoil
- Requirements
- Rules referred to by title similarly to Edges or Hindrances (Breaking Things, The Drop, Innocent Bystanders). A quick and dirty guide: Any rule listed in the **Situational Rules** or **Hazards** sections of *Savage Worlds* is capitalized, but *only when referring to the rule itself*.
- Setting Rules; the term itself and any Setting Rules that are known by specific names: e.g., Conviction, Fast Healing, Way of the Brave, Recurring Roles, Inherent Power.
- Shaken (and the sporadic Unshaken — If you are Shaken and become Shaken again by a nondamaging source (such as a Test), you do not become Wounded.
- Size and Scale names — Small, Large, Huge, etc. (Refer to the Size Chart in *Savage Worlds*.)
- Skill names — Intimidation, Shooting, Fighting
- Soak, in reference to the Soak roll mechanics
- Social Conflict
- Special Ability/Special Abilities
- Starting Funds
- Stunned
- Support, when it refers to the Situational Rule
- Target Number (TN)
- Template Names — Large Blast Template (LBT), Medium Blast Template (MBT), Small Blast Template (SMT), Cone Template (Cone).
- Test, when it refers to the Situational Rule
- Three-Round Burst
- token types: Force Token, Influence Token, Task Token (but not “token,” on its own)
- Trait, when it refers to attributes and skills
- Trappings
- Vulnerable
- Wild Card
- Wild Die
- Wound, Wounds, Wounded



## Lowercase Game Terms

Although these terms aren't capitalized in body text, they may be capitalized in certain situations, such as stat block entries, headers, or when used with a capitalized term.

- action
- all Arcane Background types, when referred to as archetypes separate from the AB title. Examples: templar, junker, bibliopath, mage, wizard, witch (similar to the way we don't cap monsters' names in text). Capitalize them when you refer to a member of the organization (as you would with Lutheran or Rotarian)—Librarian, Templar.
- allies
- arcane skill
- attribute (attribute names like Agility and Spirit are capitalized, but the word "attribute" is not)
- card (when not referring to a specific mechanic like Action Card or Chase Card)
- check (*check* or *roll* are acceptable — use the one that sounds best in context)
- control roll
- core skills
- creature types (goblins, street thugs, belly-button lint elementals) Exception: For a specific creature's stat entry in encounter notations, capitalize the creature name (**Lint Sentries (4)**: Use the Belly-Button Lint Elemental profile on page @@.).
- free action, free attack
- gear names and items
- group rolls
- initiative or initiative card



- maneuvering skill
- natural healing
- opposed rolls
- points
- poison or disease (when used generally)
- power (when used alone to refer to supernatural powers)
- power names
- race (unless as a Special Ability in a stat block)
- raise
- roll
- round (as a unit of game time)
- Setting Rules not referred to by a specific name: the gambling rules from *Deadlands: The Weird West*, the rules for breathing in space from the *Science Fiction Companion*, etc.
- skill (skill names like Athletics and Survival are capitalized, but the word "skill" is not)
- success
- trait when it does not refer to attributes and skills
- turn
- walking wounded

## Numbers vs. Numerals

- Spell out numbers one through nine. Use digits for numbers 10 or higher or negative numbers.
- Always express points, die rolls, and numerical bonuses or penalties as a **number**: 4 Hindrance points, 2 points of Wound penalties, Target Number 4, 5 points of damage, if the die roll is less than 1, adds +2 to Notice rolls.
- Express an amount of something (one through nine) as a **numeral**: two yards, three feet, two Wound levels, one die type.
- Spell out card numerals: Five of Diamonds, Two of Clubs, any card less than a Five.
- Never start a sentence with a digit; in that case, spell out the word instead.

## Specific Formatting

- Edge Requirements: Arrange from most general to most specific. 1. Wild Card or not, 2. Rank, 3. Species (where appropriate), 4. attribute, 5. Edge (or Hindrance), 6. skill
- When expressing bonuses and penalties in text, "a Vigor roll (at +2)," "a Vigor roll (-2)," and "a Vigor roll at -2" are all appropriate. Vary their usage.
- Use "@@" as a page-number placeholder.
- Our licensed settings require a Trademark (ALT+0153) or Registered Trademark (ALT+0174) symbol whenever the title is mentioned: *Rifts*® for *Savage Worlds*, *Flash Gordon*™, *Fear Agent*™, and *The Goon*™.
- We use the serial comma, also known as an Oxford comma: *apples, oranges, and kiwis*.
- If a direct quotation is interrupted mid-sentence, do not capitalize the second part of the quotation.



"I didn't see an actual alien being," Mr. Johnson said, "but I sure wish I had."

- No spaces around an ellipsis (...)

## Dashes

- Please use any of them sparingly. If a word does not need a hyphen, don't use it (roleplaying, tabletop, nonmagical, etc.).
- The hyphen is used for hyphenation, word compounding (mother-in-law), and adjectival phrases (slicked-back hair).
- The en-dash is used for the minus sign for all numbers (–3) and to indicate ranges, especially of dates (I expect 4,000–5,000 visitors in the June–August timeframe).
- The em-dash is used to indicate a break — or perhaps a parenthetical pause — in a sentence. Use em dashes when writing Hindrance descriptions: Obligation (Major — to their country or firm).
- In our house style, em-dashes are also used to denote a null entry in a table or stat block (such as for flyers who have no natural Pace).
- The en-dash and em-dash can be found in most programs' special characters features or can be generated on a PC by holding down the ALT key and entering 0150 or 0151 (respectively) on the keypad (and only on the keypad, not the top row of number keys).

## GEAR & VEHICLE FORMATTING

Present gear, weapons, and vehicles in tables. Do not format tables (weapon or otherwise) beyond bold text separated by one tab each. If there are Notes for the weapon, insert them *after two spaces* (or set tabs).

## Sample Gear Table

Item	Cost	Weight
Button Camera	50	—
Notes: 12 hours of continuous use.		

## Weapons

See the sample **Weapon Table** below for the order and content of entries.

## Vehicles

- Generally, vehicles appear in tables (see sample **Vehicle Table** below).
- When vehicle stats are included with a character profile (such as for an Archetype), summarize as you would a weapon, e.g., "compact car (Size 4, Handling +1, Top Speed 120, Toughness 10 (2), Crew 1+3, Used Car Glitch (Slick Tires))"
- When presenting one or two new vehicles in a Savage Tale or other adventure, use the following text format sparingly:

### M-12 Stuart

EXFOR's primary armored fighting vehicle, the M-12 combines the versatility of an infantry fighting vehicle with the punch of a light tank. It's lightly armored, but all that's usually needed on Banshee against anouks, rebels, and the occasional band of Reapers or other outlaws.

**M-12 Stuart:** Size 6 (Large), Handling –1, Top Speed 50 MPH, Toughness 24 (8), Crew 3 (+8), Cost \$3M

**Notes:** Fusion, 12× Heavy Armor (Frontal), Crew Space, Sensor Suite, Targeting System

## SAMPLE WEAPON TABLE: REVOLVERS

TYPE	RANGE	DAMAGE	AP	ROF	SHOTS	MIN STR.	WEIGHT	COST
REVOLVERS								
Revolvers typically have six chambers that must be reloaded one bullet at a time, though separate cylinders called "speed loaders" are also available for more modern firearms for about 10% of the weapon's cost.								
Derringer (.41)	3/6/12	2d4	—	1	2	d4	1	100
Notes: –2 to be Noticed if hidden								
Police Revolver (.38)	10/20/40	2d6	—	1	6	d4	2	150
Colt Peacemaker (.45)	12/24/48	2d6+1	1	1	6	d4	4	200
Smith & Wesson (.357)	12/24/48	2d6+1	1	1	6	d4	5	250

## SAMPLE VEHICLE TABLE: CIVILIAN VEHICLES

VEHICLE	SIZE	HANDLING	TOP SPEED (MPH)	TOUGHNESS	CREW	COST
CIVILIAN VEHICLES						
Compact Car	4 (Large)	+1	120	10 (2)	1+3	5–14K
Notes: Honda Civic or similar vehicle.						
Mid-Sized Car	4 (Large)	0	120	11 (2)	1+4	30K
Notes: Air bags, luxury features.						



# Pinnacle Style Guide

## Weapons:

- 125mm Cannon
- Light Laser Cannon (Fixed, front)
- Light Laser Cannon (Turret)
- Light Laser Cannon (Turret, pintle mount)

## WEAPON FORMATTING

### Game Terms

Terms marked with an asterisk are always included in integrated weapon entries (see **Weapon Stats in Text** and **Weapons in Stat Blocks**, below).

- **Area Effect:** Any attack that uses a template to determine targets affected. Designate only the type of template used in the weapon or ammunition's notes: SBT (Small Blast Template), MBT (Medium Blast Template), LBT (Large Blast Template), or Cone (Cone Template).
- **\*AP (Armor Piercing):** The weapon or round ignores this many points of Armor. A weapon with an AP value of 4, for instance, ignores 4 points of Armor. Excess AP is simply lost.
- **Caliber:** The number listed after a firearm is the caliber of bullet it fires. Use this when figuring ammunition costs or trying to figure out if the

ammo from one weapon fits in another. Do some research as some weapons of the same caliber use very different ammunition.

- **\*Damage:** Damage is listed in terms of dice. Projectile weapons have fixed damage (such as 2d6). Melee weapons have damage based on the wielder's Strength die plus another die, as listed under individual weapon entries. A dagger, for instance, inflicts Str+d4 damage.
- **HW (Heavy Weapon):** The weapon can affect vehicles or other targets with Heavy Armor.
- **Min Str (Minimum Strength):** Each die type difference between the character's Strength and the item's Minimum Strength inflicts a -1 penalty to Pace (minimum of 1), Agility, and Agility-related skill rolls. A melee weapon's damage die is limited to the user's Strength die.
- **\*Range:** This lists the weapon's Short, Medium, and Long Range. Ranges are listed in inches. Weapon ranges are "effective" ranges for the tabletop. If you need to know the real-world range of a weapon (for battles that don't take place on the tabletop, for instance), multiply each range bracket by 2.5. A tank round with a Long Range of 300, for example, has a "real world" long range of





750", or 1,500 yards. That's a rough estimate. In *all* cases, consider game use first and base range off comparisons to other weapons of a similar type.

- **\*RoF (Rate of Fire):** This is the maximum number of shots that may be taken by this weapon per action. The user can make a number of attacks as a single action up to the weapon's Rate of Fire (rather than always using its full Rate of Fire). Two or more shots with such weapons always incur the -2 Recoil penalty.
- **Snapfire:** Certain weapons, such as sniper rifles, are very inaccurate if fired "from the hip" rather than using their excellent sights or scopes. If the character moves in the action he fires, he suffers a -2 penalty.
- **Three-Round Burst:** A weapon with this ability has RoF 1 in that mode, but fires three bullets at once and adds +1 to Shooting and damage rolls.

## Weapon Stats in Text

### Melee Weapons:

*The bandits carry longwords (Str+d6).*

*The bandits carry power swords (Str+d6+d6, Special).* (Assuming you've repeated the power info in the *Science Fiction Companion* or referred readers there somewhere in the table.)

### Ranged Weapons:

*The bandits carry .45 revolvers (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 1, AP 1).*

*The bandits carry pump-action shotguns (Range 12/24/48, Damage 1-3d6, RoF 1).*

Don't list Shots or other stats here. Note also the lack of colons or semicolons, and the period at the end.

## Weapons in Stat Blocks

**Gear:** Knife (Str+d4), .45 pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 1, AP 1).

Note the lack of colons and semicolons, and the period at the end.

Include only Range, Damage, RoF, AP, and HW — no other gear reminders are typically included.

## STAT BLOCK FORMATTING

We'll start with a list of general principles, then provide specific examples.

- Denote a Wild Card by placing "[WC]" and a space before the character or creature's name.
- Alphabetize attributes, skills, Hindrances, Edges, powers, and Special Abilities in stat blocks. Under Edges, note the enhanced version, if applicable, in parentheses after the Edge name as "(Imp)" — e.g., Block (Imp), Frenzy (Imp), etc.
- **Core Skills:** Generally, give all playable characters (e.g., pregens and allies) the core skills. Sentient

foes should have them, unless there's a reason they don't. Most creatures have Fighting, Notice, and Stealth.

- Remember that most skill names end in *-ing*. It's Healing, not Heal. There are a few exceptions, such as Intimidation (*not* Intimidate).
- Commonly misspelled Edges and Hindrances: Fleet-Footed, Jack-of-All-Trades, Level Headed, Quick Draw, Strong Willed, Two-Fisted
- Don't specify Hindrances as Major or Minor unless those options are available. For example, Greedy (Major) or Greedy (Minor) should be specified, but Bad Luck should never have Major or Minor specified as there's no option between the two.
- Parenthetical clarifiers for Edges, Hindrances, and skills should start with a capital, then only capitalized as normal language requires. For example, Outsider (Space alien).
- Check Derived Traits — Pace, Parry, Toughness, and any that are setting-specific — against any Edges or Hindrances that may adjust them (like Acrobat, Brawny, or Fleet-Footed).
- Factor weapons into Parry as necessary; e.g., Fighting d8 with a spear would read, **Parry:** 6 or 7 (spear). Factor all Armor into Toughness.
- Note the colons after and semicolons between Pace, Parry, and Toughness entries.

Stat blocks or profiles (either term is acceptable) are arranged differently for nonplayer characters and creatures:

- Wild Cards and Extras always have entries for Derived Traits, Hindrances, Edges, and Gear (with an em-dash for "none" as applicable).
- Characters with an Arcane Background Edge have Powers and Power Points entries (see example). Include the associated arcane skill and the Edge in the appropriate sections.
- Wild Cards and Extras should meet all Edge Requirements except those dependent on Rank.
- Most creatures don't have Hindrances; they may have a Weakness instead, listed under Special Abilities.
- List a character or creature's Special Abilities alphabetically in a bulleted list. We tend toward complete sentences in Special Abilities, but make exceptions for longer entries, such as Construct or Undead (see example).
- Creatures may have Edges *and* Special Abilities. If a creature has a Special Ability that is exactly the same as an Edge (e.g., Frenzy, Fleet-Footed), give it the Edge instead. (*Exception:* For a creature with an Arcane Background, list it as a Special Ability by type as shown in the sample below.)



## SAMPLE CHARACTER PROFILES

### Hacker

These tech-savvy types hack into computer databases to steal information, override systems, or solve mysteries.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Athletics d4, Common Knowledge d8, Driving d6, Electronics d8, Fighting d4, Hacking d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Repair d6, Research d8, Stealth d6

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** —

**Edges:** Investigator, Streetwise

**Gear:** Laptop computer, overcoat, sunglasses.

### [WC] Irina “The Sorcerer” Gregorovna

Irina is a Russian mob enforcer whose magical powers are only rivaled by her capacity for revenge.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Athletics d4, Common Knowledge d4, Driving d4, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Language (English d6), Language (Russian d8), Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Research d6, Shooting d8, Spellcasting d8, Stealth d8, Taunt d8, Thievery d6

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Loyal (To family and friends), Outsider (Russian), Vengeful (Minor)

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Magic), Block (Imp), Combat Reflexes, Strong Willed, Streetwise

**Powers:** *Bolt, deflection, quickness.* **Power Points:** 10

**Gear:** 9mm pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 1), 2 extra clips, switchblade.

## SAMPLE CREATURE PROFILES

### Skeleton

The skin has already rotted from these risen dead, leaving them slightly quicker than their flesh-laden zombie counterparts.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Athletics d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6

**Pace:** 7; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

**Edges:** —

**Gear:** Varies.

**Special Abilities:**

- **Bony Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Fearless:** Skeletons are immune to Fear and Intimidation.

- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; no additional damage from Called Shots; ignores 1 point of Wound penalties; doesn't breathe; immune to disease and poison.

### [WC] Dragon of Doom

This ancient, spellcasting wyrm rains flame and despair on villages for miles around its desolate lair.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d12+9, Vigor d12

**Skills:** Athletics d10, Fighting d10, Intimidation d12, Notice d12, Spellcasting d8

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 22 (4)

**Edges:** Frenzy (Imp), Level Headed

**Special Abilities:**

- **Armor +4:** Scaly hide.
- **Claws/Bite:** Str+d8.
- **Fear (-2):** A dragon spurs a Fear check at -2.
- **Fiery Breath:** Dragons breathe fire using the Cone Template. Every target within this cone may make an Agility roll at -2 to avoid the attack. Those who fail suffer 2d10 damage and must check to see if they catch fire. A dragon may not attack with its claws or bite in the round it breathes fire.
- **Flight:** Pace 16.
- **Hardy:** The creature does not suffer a Wound from being Shaken twice.
- **Powers:** *Bolt, deflection, teleport.* **Power Points:** 20
- **Size 10 (Huge):** Dragons are massive creatures. This version is 75 feet long from nose to tail, and weighs well over 30,000 pounds. The dragon has two additional Wounds due to its Size.
- **Tail Lash:** Str+d4. The creature may make a free attack against up to two foes to its side or rear at no penalty.
- **Weakness (Underbelly):** Attacks that target the dragon's belly ignore its Armor.



## ADDENDUMS

### STYLE PREFERENCES

Below are a few issues that have come up in recent years that aren't incorrect but express our preferences.

#### “APPEARS”

Perhaps a legacy holdover from early D&D products, some authors use the term “appears to be” far too often. This makes the sentence less active and causes confusion, because saying “appears to be” implies that it's *actually* something else.

Example:

*As the heroes get closer, they spot what appears to have been a house next to the shack.*

Replace with:

*As the heroes get closer, they spot the ruins of a house next to the shack.*

#### “A SUCCESS” / “A +2”

Please say “With success...” rather than “on a success,” and likewise with failure / Critical Failure.

Please say “...characters add +2 to their skill rolls...” rather than “...characters add a +2 to their skill rolls...”

More examples:

Instead of:

*“Anyone who speaks Elven adds a +2 to their Smarts roll.”*

Please use one of the following:

*“Anyone who speaks Elven adds a +2 bonus to their Smarts roll.”*

*“Anyone who speaks Elven adds +2 to their Smarts roll.”*

#### “THEY” AND PRONOUN USAGE

Language is ever-evolving. English speakers have been using “they” as a gender-neutral third-person singular personal pronoun for some time — i.e., referring to an individual as “they” rather than “he” or “she” when one doesn't know that person's gender. Recently, that usage has expanded to intentionally refer to known individuals in a non-gendered or gender non-binary way.

While Pinnacle has no objection to this use of universal pronouns in society at large, we find it can create unwanted confusion on the page, especially in cases where “they” might refer to more than one subject or object in a sentence (a grammatical error called “Unclear Referent”).

Instead, please use the more traditional “he” and “she” for the third-person singular, alternating between them as necessary (remaining consistent when dealing with specific individuals).

### CHOICES, CONSEQUENCES, AND SKILL ROLLS

A well-written adventure should provide the characters with crucial information, challenge them to solve problems, and pose clear choices — and associated risks.

Present meaningful choices in adventures: alternative paths, different approaches to a problem, or high-risk options (that come with matching higher rewards). Two is usually sufficient, but in some cases it may be helpful to offer several courses of action. For example, three different ways to sneak into an armed citadel, each with different levels of risk vs. reward.

Calls for skill rolls should always come with meaningful consequences, even outside of combat. Never call for a skill roll (Notice to see something, Academics to know something, and so on) where success is *required* to advance the plot. This can lead to situations where the players, by failing to glean information locked behind a roll, become unable to keep the plot going.

One way to avoid that is to make sure all *crucial* information is delivered (for free!) at the right moments without a roll. Or else frame the skill attempt differently: the heroes still get the vital information even with a failure, but success earns them something more.

### BE INTERESTING

Above all, make your work *interesting*. We can fix grammar, we can wrestle with organization, but it's very hard to fix *boring*. That's why we don't usually detail every tavern and weapon shop and their owners in a town except in simple, bullet-points — enough so the GM doesn't have to make it all up themselves. Even then, a simple word or two can add tremendously to both the gaming and the reading experience.

Imagine a typical fantasy town. Rather than a page detailing the insides of a tavern, we might give it a single bullet point, with a personality quirk to make the owner interesting and memorable, and maybe a pointer to a Savage Tale that starts or takes place there, like this:

**The Silver Dragon:** A seedy tavern with a limited menu frequented by thieves, smugglers, and assassins. The owner, Tarlus, is a former mercenary and pirate with one eye and a rebellious daughter.

\* **A Daughter's Betrayal:** Tarlus' daughter, Gwenna, overheard one of her father's former mates talk about divvying up stolen booty on a nearby island. See the Savage Tale on page @@ for the details.