



# GLOSSARY OF ESSENTIAL TERMS

Words in **boldface** indicate other entries within this glossary.

*ability*: Any skill, knowledge, personality trait, possession, **relationship**, or **magic** that a character can use to **augment** another ability or perform an **action**.

*ability rating*: A number given to an **ability** to show its relative strength or importance, used to determine **success** or **failure** with a **die roll**. It may have one or more **masteries**. See also **target number**.

*action*: A single act that a hero attempts. It is either an **automatic success** or requires a **contest** in which an **ability** of the hero is opposed by some **resistance**.

*adept*: A committed member of a **wizardry school** who can cast **spells** from a **grimoire**.

*advantage points (AP)*: A numerical measure of how well a character is accomplishing his goals in an **extended contest**. In a contest, the advantage points start off equal to the **target number** of the first **ability** the character uses. He suffers a **defeat** if his total is reduced to 0 or below.

*adventure*: A story played out over one or more game sessions, in which the player **heroes** interact with the situations and adversaries prepared for them by the **narrator**.

*affinity*: A broad **magical ability** provided by a **god** or **hero** to **initiates** and **devotees**. Devotees can use the **feats** within the affinity.

*alien world modifier*: A **-20 penalty** assessed to all **abilities** of a **being** or **entity** that travels into a world other than its native one. A dedicated member of a **religion** who has **concentrated** his magic does not suffer this penalty in his religion's proper **Otherworld**.

*animism*: A system of specialized **magic**, in which worshippers (animists) practice ecstatic **worship** of **spirits**.

*augmentation*: Using one **ability** to aid another ability, granting a **modifier** its **target number**. See *automatic augment*, *variable augment*.

*automatic augment*: An **augmentation** that does not require any **action** on the part of the **character**. It adds  $\frac{1}{10}$  of the augmenting ability's rating.

*automatic success*: An **action** that succeeds without needing any **contest** or **die roll**, because no self-respecting hero would ever fail at such a task.

*being*: A person or creature native to the **Mortal World**.

*blessing*: A magical effect invoked by **liturgists** from a **scripture** upon **lay members** and other members of a congregation.

*bonus*: A **modifier** that increases an **ability rating**.

*bump*: A change to the **degree of success** or **failure** of a **die roll**. Having more **masteries** than your opponent or spending a **hero point** grants *bump ups*, which improve the degree of **success** (such as from a **fumble** to a **failure**). A *bump down* comes only from **masteries**, and increases the degree of **failure** of your opponent (such as from a **success** to a **failure**).

*campaign*: A series of **adventures** that share **heroes** and other plot elements and form a larger story.

*cement*: Spending a **hero point** to make an advantage won during play into a permanent **ability** written onto the hero's **character sheet**. If something gained by your hero is not cemented it may not last beyond the current **adventure**.

*character*: A person or creature within **Glorantha**, either a **hero** controlled by a **player** or a **narrator character** played by the **narrator**.

*character sheet*: The piece of paper on which a **player** writes the **abilities**, ratings, and other information about his **hero**. *HeroQuest* provides a sample character sheet (page 256), and more are available online.

*charm*: A **focus** in which a **spirit** is bound, which provides **automatic augments** (only) to its possessor. Also available as **common magic**.

*church*: A **religion** whose members venerate **God** within the magic system of **wizardry**.

*common magic*: The most basic kind of **magic**, originating in the **Mortal World**. Characters have a **Common Magic keyword** that can include **talents** (**innate magic**), **feats**, **charms**, and **spells**. Common magic is often available from a local **common religion**.

*communal worshipper*: A basic member of a **theist religion**, who worships a **pantheon** of **deities** and may ask for **divine aid**.

*community*: A group of people, such as relatives, a **religion**, a government, or a **hero band**. Characters have **relationships** to communities of which they are part.

*community support*: Aid granted by a **community** to a **hero** that can give a **bonus** to a **ritual**, **heroquest**, or other **action**. A hero can approach any community that he belongs to and use his **relationship** with it in a **contest** to obtain the desired level of **support**.

*companion*: In a **heroquest**, a person that accompanies and helps the **main character**.

*concentrating magic use*: Dedicating oneself to a single **magic** system, either **innate magic**, **theism**, **animism**, or **wizardry**. The hero then learns magic at half the normal **hero point** cost, but cannot use magic from the other systems.

- contest*: A challenge in which the **narrator** and one or more **players** use **die rolls** to determine each contestant's level of **victory or defeat**. See *extended contest*, *simple contest*.
- critical*: A natural roll of 1 on a **d20**, which indicates that the **die roll** succeeds brilliantly.
- critical station*: A **station** of a **heroquest** where the results directly affect the chance of success for the entire quest.
- cult*: A magical organization within a **theist religion** whose **initiate** and **devotee** members **worship** a single **deity**.
- curse*: A harmful magical effect invoked by **liturgists** from a **scripture** upon foes of the congregation.
- d20*: A twenty-sided die, used to help resolve **contests**.
- daimon*: A petty **deity** that inhabits either the **God World** or part of the **Mortal World** as a landscape being.
- dead*: The worst possible **state of health**. In *HeroQuest*, death cannot result from a **die roll**, only a deliberate action.
- default resistance*: The **resistance** used (normally 14) if no **ability** or attribute opposes an attempted action.
- defeat*: Losing a **contest**. See also **level of victory or defeat**.
- degree of failure/success*: The result of a **die roll**: **critical**, **success**, **failure**, or **fumble**.
- deity*: An **entity** from the **God World**. Some deities are worshipped by **theists**.
- demesne*: The **Spirit World** home of a majestic **spirit** or great **spirit**, traveled to by **animists** during **worship**.
- devotee*: A dedicated **theist** who **concentrates his magic** and devotes his life to a single **deity**, and is thus able to learn his god's **feats** and eventually its **secret**.
- die roll*: The number (1 to 20) rolled on a **d20**.
- divine aid*: A form of **magic** used by a **theist** to call upon his **pantheon** or **deity** for general aid.
- dying*: The **state of health** resulting from a complete **defeat**, which prevents the **character** from taking any action related to his defeat. Recovery is possible but difficult.
- entity*: A supernatural entity from an **Otherworld**: a **deity**, **spirit**, or **essence**.
- Essence Planes*: The **Otherworld** where **essences** dwell, contacted by **wizardry**.
- essence*: An entity from the **Essence Planes**. **God**, **saints**, and **founders** are **essences** worshipped by **monotheists**.
- extended contest*: The longer, more dramatic type of **contest**. Each **round**, characters perform **actions** to reduce their opponent's **advantage points**.
- failure*: Rolling a number greater than your **target number** on a **die roll**, indicating that the attempted **action** fails.
- feat*: A **magical ability** learned by a **devotee** that repeats an act a **deity** performed in its **myths**. Feats are usually part of an **affinity**, but are also available as **common magic**.
- fetch*: A **spirit** guide or awakened part of a **shaman's spirit** that aids him and serves as his link to the **Spirit World**.
- fetish*: A **focus** into which a **spirit** is bound, which provides magic to a **practitioner**.
- final action*: A **simple contest** by which a **hero** can try to come back into a group **extended contest** after he falls to 0 or fewer **advantage points**.
- final AP total*: A **character's** ending **advantage points** in an **extended contest**, after any **final action** or **parting shot** has been completed. This number (usually negative) determines the loser's level of **defeat** and the winner's level of **victory**.
- first magic*: **Magic** that is ready to cast at a moment's notice.
- flaw*: An **ability** that impairs or handicaps a **character**.
- focus*: An item that must be touched to use a **magical ability**; either a **charm**, **fetish**, **scripture**, **grimoire**, or **talisman**.
- follower*: A character attached to a **hero** and controlled by the **player**. A **hero** must have a **relationship** with a follower, which is either a **retainer** or a **sidekick**.
- formulary*: A book containing the instructions for **orderlies** to cast their **spells**. It is not used as a **focus**.
- founder*: The **saint** or **adept** founder of a **wizardry school**. Also used to refer to the founder of a **church**.
- fumble*: A natural roll of 20 on a **d20**, which indicates that the **die roll** fails catastrophically.
- Genertela*: The northern continent of **Glorantha**.
- Glorantha*: The world of *HeroQuest*, including the **Mortal World** and the **Otherworlds**, outside of which is **Chaos**.
- god, goddess*: See *deity*.
- God*: The ultimate god of a **monotheist**, **wizardly church**, often called the **Invisible God**.
- God World*: The **Otherworld** where **deities** dwell, contacted by **theists** using **sacrifice**.
- great secret*: See *secret*.
- grimoire*: A **focus** in the form of a magical book containing **spells**, created by a **wizardry school**.
- guardian*: A magical **being** or **Otherworld entity** that supports and oversees a **hero band** or other **community**, or which empowers part of the landscape of the **Mortal World**.
- healthy*: The **state of health** of a character who has not suffered any **defeat**.
- hero*: A **character** whose actions are directed by a **player**. It also refers to a famous and powerful actor in **Gloranthan history** or **myth**, often worshipped.
- hero band*: A **community** with a **guardian**, often actively involved in the struggles of the **Hero Wars**. Forming their own hero band is a major goal of **player heroes**.
- Hero Planes*: The part of the **Other Side** where the great actions and conflicts of the **myths** take place, visited in **heroquests**.
- hero point*: The "reward" received by a **player** that can be used to make permanent improvements to his **hero** and to **bump the degree of success or failure** of a **die roll**.
- Hero Wars*: A time when ancient and novel **magic** and beliefs clash to remake **Glorantha**. This period is the setting of *HeroQuest*.
- heroforming*: A type of **secret** that allows a **character** to temporarily incarnate a **hero** or **spirit** into his body.
- heroquest*: A deliberate journey into the **Otherworld**. A **heroquest** usually reenacts a **myth** of the hero's **religion**. A **hero** who is victorious gains a **magical ability** for himself or his **community**.
- heroquest challenge*: A special confrontation during a **heroquest** as the result of which the **hero** or his **community** either gains the opponent's **ability** or loses his own.
- heroquest moment*: A place or time during a **heroquest** when a **heroquester** declares it is the right moment to activate a **community support** bonus.
- hidden station*: A **station** of a **heroquest** known in the **myths** of worshippers but not to outsiders.
- homeland*: A **keyword** that shows the **abilities** typically known by everyone in a given culture or region.

- hurt*: The **state of health** resulting from a marginal defeat, which imposes a **-1 penalty** to appropriate **abilities**.
- impaired*: The **state of health** resulting from a minor defeat, which imposes a **-10% penalty** to appropriate **abilities**.
- improvisation, improvisational modifier*: A **penalty** of **-1** to **-20** (default **-5**) applied by the **narrator** when a **hero** uses an **ability** that is not quite suited for his **action**.
- initiate*: A committed **theist** who worships a single **deity** above all others, and so can learn the god's **affinities**.
- injured*: The state of health resulting from a major defeat, which imposes a **-50% penalty** to appropriate **abilities**.
- innate magic*: The **magic** inherent in living beings and the **Mortal World**. Innate **magical abilities** are called **talents**.
- keyword*: A template showing the typical **abilities** of a certain **homeland, occupation, religion, species, or source of magic**. You cannot raise a keyword with **hero points**.
- lay member*: A basic member of a wizardly **church** who worships **God** and benefits from **blessings** invoked by **liturgists**.
- level of support*: The degree to which a **community** supports a **hero**, ranging from total support to condemnation.
- level of victory or defeat*: The degree to which a hero wins or loses a **contest**. The level (marginal, minor, major, or complete) applies to the winner's **victory** and the loser's **defeat**.
- liturgist*: A member of a **church** (and sometimes also a **saintly order**) who leads a congregation in **worship** and invokes **blessings** and **curses** from **scriptures**.
- magic, magical ability*: The energy of the **Otherworld** brought into the **Mortal World** through **worship**. The four magic systems—**innate magic, theism, animism, and wizardry**—grant different kinds of magical abilities: **talents; affinities, feats; charms, fetishes; blessings, curses, grimoires, spells; and secrets**. Magic always faces **resistance** to its use.
- magic keyword*: A keyword containing the **abilities** and **magic** taught by a **specialized religion, or a hero's common magic**.
- magician*: A person who uses **magic**, especially one who specializes in magic such as a **devotee, practitioner, shaman, liturgist, or adept**.
- main character*: The central **quester** in a **heroquest**: the **protagonist** of the **myth**.
- mass effort*: Any of several methods used by the **narrator** to assign a single **ability rating** to a group of individuals.
- mastery*: The **rune (L)** in an **ability rating** that equals **20** points. If an ability has more than one mastery it is written with a number after the **L**. Masteries **bump up die rolls**, and provide **20 advantage points** each in an **extended contest**.
- miracle*: A magical action of **God** manifesting in the **Mortal World** in response to the plea of a member of a **church**.
- misapplied worship*: Using the wrong method of **worship** to contact an **Otherworld entity**. The worshipper can gain **magic**, but gains no advantage for **concentrating** his magic.
- monotheist*: A member of a **wizardry religion**.
- modifier*: A number that increases (**bonus**) or decreases (**penalty**) an **ability rating** in a **contest**. The rating combined with all modifiers yields the **target number**. Common modifiers include **improvisation, defeat, and augmentation**.
- Mortal World*: The normal, everyday world where mortal **beings** live, as opposed to the **Otherworld**. It is the source of **common magic** and the **innate magic** of **talents**.
- mundane ability*: Any non-magical **ability** of a character: **skills, personality traits, relationships, and possessions**.
- myths*: Stories about a **deity, spirit, saint, or hero**, the actions that are remembered and emulated in **worship** by their followers. Worshipers learn **abilities** such as *Mythology of [Deity]*, *[Practice] Knowledge*, and *Rule of [Saint]*, which are also maps for **heroquesting**.
- narrator character*: A **character** controlled by the **narrator**, who provides aid, information, or resistance to the **heroes**.
- narrator*: The player who oversees a game of *HeroQuest*. She controls **narrator characters** and challenges **heroes** as they try to accomplish their goals in the world of **Glorantha**.
- natural resistance*: The **resistance** that opposes an **ability** used in the natural world, such as **Jump**. The resistance depends on the difficulty of the obstacle; if no specific ability or attribute applies, the **default resistance** is used.
- node*: A "point" in the **Essence Planes** from which the magic of a **scripture, blessing, curse, spell, or grimoire** emanates.
- occupation*: A **keyword** that shows the **abilities** typically known by everyone with a given job.
- order*: A religious organization within a **church** that worships a specific **saint**, from which **orderlies** gain magic.
- orderly*: A basic member of a **saintly order**, able to use **spells**.
- Otherworld, Other Side*: The magical worlds that exist beyond the **Mortal World**, the homes of **entities** and the sources of **magic**. There are several Otherworlds, including the **God World, Spirit World, Essence Planes, and Underworld**.
- Otherworld Barrier*: A barrier separating the **Mortal World** and the **Otherworlds** that offers a **resistance** of **10L3** or more to any **being or entity** trying to cross between them.
- pantheon*: A group of **deities** who share **communal worship** by **theists**.
- parting shot*: An **action** taken immediately upon **defeating** an opponent in an **extended contest** to attempt to make the **level of victory or defeat** greater.
- passive resistance*: The **default resistance** to some actions (such as **magic**) that applies even when there is no active resisting force or attribute. See also *natural resistance*.
- penalty*: A **modifier** that decreases an **ability rating**.
- personal resistance*: The **resistance** provided by the **target number** or attribute of a person or force in a **contest**.
- personality, personality trait*: An **ability** (sometimes a **flaw**) that describes an emotional or behavioral quality of a **character**.
- piety*: A magical **relationship** that measures a character's dedication to his **religion** or the **entity** that he worships.
- player*: A person playing *HeroQuest*, acting the part of a **hero** who is one of the **protagonists** in the **campaign**.
- portal of power*: A magical symbol used by an **adept** to cross the **Otherworld Barrier** and enter the **Essence Planes** to learn **spells** or begin a **heroquest**.
- possession*: The voluntary or involuntary state in which a **spirit** has entered a mortal's body, influencing him or even taking control of his actions.
- power spot*: A place where the **Otherworld Barrier** is weak or unusually close to the **Mortal World**, lowering the **resistance** that must be overcome to enter the **Otherworld**.
- practice*: A magical organization within an **animist tradition** that worships one or more majestic **spirits** and provides a connection to a group of **practice spirits**. There are four types of practices: **core, helper, shamanic, and enemy**.
- practitioner*: A committed **animist worshipper** who belongs to a **practice** and can create **charms** and **fetishes**.



*propitiatory worship*: **Worship** to appease an **entity** regarded as evil by the worshipper.

*rating*: See *ability rating*.

*relationship*: An **ability** that expresses the connection between a **hero** and either a **follower**, a **supporting character**, or a **community** (such as a **hero band**). A relationship to a religion or **Otherworld entity** is referred to as **piety**.

*religion*: A magical **community** and a pattern of **worship** and belief that provides **magic**.

*resistance*: The opposition to an **action** in a **contest**, provided by either the **rating** of a character, force, or attribute, or the default resistance of 14. See also *default resistance*, *natural resistance*, *passive resistance*, *personal resistance*.

*retainer*: A **follower** whose only statistic is a single **keyword**, and whose autonomy and loyalty are limited.

*ritual, ritual magic*: A method of **magic** that gives **modifiers** to **magic** based on the **community support**, ritual roles, and sacred times, places, and items used in the ritual.

*round*: A division of an **extended contest** during which each **character** may make one **action**, likely gaining or losing **advantage points**.

*rune*: A magical symbol that concentrates **Otherworld power**. Runes represent **magical concepts**, **Otherworld entities**, or fundamental aspects of **Glorantha**.

*saint*: An individual within a **church** who taught a way to act or worship. **Orderlies** venerate the saint in an **order** and receive **blessings** and **spells**.

*scripture*: The sacred text of a **church** or **order**, used by **liturgists** to invoke **blessings** and **curses**.

*secret*: The greatest **magical ability** taught by a **specialized religion**, the innermost nature of the **entity** worshipped. **Devotees**, **practitioners**, and **shamans** can learn the secret, which provides powerful, unique magic. The ultimate entity worshipped by an entire religion provides a great secret.

*shaman*: An **animist** magician with a **fetch**, skilled in dealing with **spirits** and traveling to the **Spirit World**.

*shamanic circle*: A special **power spot** opened by a **shaman** to cross the **Otherworld Barrier** and enter the **Spirit World** to find **spirits** or begin a **heroquest**.

*shrine, temple*: In **theistic** magic, the holy place of a **deity** where worshippers conduct sacrifices and cross the **Otherworld Barrier** to the **God World**.

*sidekick*: A **follower** defined by a **keyword** and three significant abilities, with some autonomy and a great deal of loyalty.

*simple contest*: A **contest** that consists of one **action**, in which a character's **ability** is opposed by a **resistance**, and the **level of victory or defeat** is decided by one **die roll** per side.

*skill*: A **mundane ability** that represents a physical or mental capability of a **character**.

*specialized religion*: A magical **community** that teaches how to gain **magic** from the **Otherworld** using **worship**.

*specialty*: A subtype of an **occupation keyword** that provides variations in the typical abilities or **ability ratings** available to members.

*species keyword*: A **keyword** that shows the typical innate **abilities** common to all members of a given species. Usually used only for intelligent races.

*spell*: A **magical ability** learned by **orderlies**, who use a **talisman** and a **formulary**; or by **adepts** of a **wizardry school**, who cast spells using **talismans** and **grimoires**.

*spirit*: An **Otherworld entity** native the **Spirit World**. Many spirits can provide **magical abilities** if bound in a **charm** or **fetish** by a **practitioner** or **shaman**.

*Spirit World*: The **Otherworld** where **spirits** dwell, contacted by animists using ecstatic worship.

*spiritist*: A basic member of an **animist tradition**. Spiritists worship a great **spirit** and are given **charms**.

*starting AP total*: See *advantage points*.

*state of health*: The degree of "damage" a **hero** suffers from, either **healthy**, **hurt**, **impaired**, **injured**, **dying**, or **dead**.

*station*: A single encounter or event of a **heroquest**. The **level of victory or defeat** the **hero** receives at the station may incur a **modifier** at a later station in the **myth**.

*subcult*: A minor **cult** that worships an aspect of a **deity** or a petty **deity** or powerful **hero** associated with the deity.

*success*: Rolling equal to or less than the **target number** on a **die roll**, which indicates the **action** taken by the **hero** succeeds.

*supporter*: Anyone who provides support to the **main character** of a **heroquest** without actually taking an active role.

*supporting character*: An adversary, ally, contact, dependent, or patron of a **hero** that is controlled by the narrator, but with whom the **hero** has a defined **relationship**.

*talent*: The spontaneous **innate magic** of the **Mortal World**, part of a character's **common magic** keyword.

*talisman*: A **focus** used by an **orderly** or **adept** to cast a **spell**. Orderly talismans must be consecrated by an **order liturgist**. Talismans are also available as **common magic**.

*target number*: The number that a **die roll** must be less than or equal to in order for an **action** in a **contest** to be a **success**. It is equal to the **ability rating** plus or minus all **modifiers**. See also *ability rating*.

*temple*: See *shrine*.

*theism*: A system of specialized **magic**, in which worshippers (theists) sacrifice to **gods**.

*tie*: The outcome of a **contest** in which no one receives a **victory** or a **defeat**.

*tradition*: An **animist religion** in which members worship and use a particular set of **spirits** to provide **magic**.

*Underworld*: An **Otherworld** where the **God World**, **Spirit World**, and **Essence Planes** mix, home to demons. Regarded as evil by most religions.

*unrelated action*: An **action** taken during an **extended contest** that does not directly relate to defeating an opponent.

*variable augment*: An **augmentation** that requires a **contest** to determine the amount of the **modifier**.

*victory*: Winning a **contest**. See also **level of victory or defeat**.

*virtue*: A **personality trait** that is desired in a **character** by a **religion** or the **Otherworld entity** that he worships.

*Wealth*: An **ability** that describes the material assets and social status of a **character**.

*wizardry*: A system of specialized **magic**, in which worshippers (**monotheists**) venerate **God**, **saints**, and **founders**.

*wizardry school*: A philosophy or method of teaching **wizardry** based upon one or more **grimoires**.

*worship*: Any method used by inhabitants of the **Mortal World** to contact **entities** of the **Otherworld** and learn **magic**. The common forms of worship are sacrifice to **deities** by **theists**, ecstatic worship of **spirits** by **animists**, and veneration of **essences** by **monotheists**. See also *misapplied worship*, *propitiatory worship*.