

Player Guide: Heroes

If You're New to PrinceCon

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General Information

Some key things to understand about the PrinceCon system:

- The GM rolls all dice (though occasionally they will hand you one for that save-or-die situation...)
- The system is based on OGL/D20, but has a variety of difference. Chief among them are:
 - All characters have just one action per round, in the absence of Haste-type effects
 - Character level does not grant multiple melee or missile attacks, though some Feats do
 - Combat actions use a phase system instead of initiative
 - The races and classes are unique to the PrinceCon system
 - Skills are unique and you either have them or you don't, though the basic rating for skills you have increases with your level
 - The feats are unique to the PrinceCon system
 - The mage and cleric casting systems are points-based — no learning, components, or memorization
 - There is no money (you're usually assumed to have as much as you require), and the equipment selection is limited to a set of predefined "packs" — the more equipment you carry, the fewer weapons you can carry (and vice versa)
 - Even friendly spells may require saving throws. You can drop your saving throws, but that affects *all* of them, so not always a good idea during combat. This is chiefly relevant for **Cure Wounds** (the basic healing spell) — you'll need to decide whether to get out of combat to be cured, to drop saves during combat and hope the cure is the only incoming effect, or to keep saves up and hope to fail the save against the cure.

The casting system and specific spells/prayers are discussed in the section of this document specific to your class.

Hireling Hall, Characters, and Expeditions

You'll generate a character when you register for the convention. All characters start at 5th level. The available players and GMs gather in Hireling Hall to sort themselves out into expeditions. Each GM has a poster describing their scenario, which will quickly accumulate reports from previous expeditions.

Your character will be with you through the entire con, gathering experience and magic items and so on. Each time you go on an expedition, you'll gain experience based on the amount of time you were out, modified by the scores the GM gave you for the expedition. Generally you can expect to gain 4-5 levels over the course of the con if you are playing a lot, which means you'll gain a level on most expeditions. The players who absolutely go without sleep can fit in 6 or 7 expeditions, and if they do well, make 10th level for their final run.

If you start the con late (e.g. Saturday morning instead of Friday night), you'll still start at 5th level but likely jump two or more levels after your first expedition. If you start *very* late (Saturday night or Sunday morning), ask the desk if they can bump your starting level to keep you more in line with the party (and enemies) you'll be with.

Finally, if your character dies on an expedition, no worries, you can either resurrect her or generate a new character. There is an experience penalty which varies from very slight to a full level, depending on the nature of your death. If you're going to die, try to make it a heroic sacrifice to save the party!

Character Creation

To begin with, you'll need to pick your race, class, religion, attributes, and name, but most of those are fairly straightforward once you have a character concept. You may want to consult the race lists in the Con Book before starting, to familiarize yourself with the specific movement rates, bonuses, and penalties for each race.

The toughest part for most players is feat selection. The sheer number of feats (and different strategies they offer) can take some time to wade through. Recommended feats are discussed in the section of this document for each character class. The better an idea of your desired feats you have before sitting down at the computer, the faster you'll get through character creation, and the more people we can process through the system.

There are also a number of skills available, but many will be granted by the character's race or class, so any selections remaining should be somewhat more straightforward. Remember you can use a slot for a regular skill or for any knowledge skill you choose to define.

You can optionally select your pack, weapons, and armor to have some extra calculations added to your character sheet (for instance, skill penalties for heavy armor, and attack values with a specific weapon).

If you make any critical mistakes during character creation, consult the desk. Assuming you have not yet gone on an expedition, they can reset specific selections (such as a feat or skill chosen in error) or let you start over on the character entirely (though the attributes won't change). Please avoid doing this unless absolutely necessary, as it slows things down for everyone.

Character Packages

In this guide, you'll see several common packages described for each character class. During character creation, you can select one of these packages if you like, and it will make the appropriate selections for you (feats, skills, equipment, a couple of key attributes, etc.). This can save a lot of time during character creation, so if you're unsure about all the options, we recommend you pick a package.

The package only affects your character during the initial creation process. When you gain levels from going on expeditions, you'll have to select any new feats or attribute advances normally. By then, you should have a better idea of how to improve your character. Each package below recommends a few feats for you to consider as you level up, but it'll be up to you whether to take those suggestions.

Combat Phases

Instead of initiative, PrinceCon uses a phase system, where each type of action occurs in a specific phase. All actions in one phase occur before any in the next phase. In other words, all melee attacks happen before all clerical prayers, which occur before all movement (unless you hold an action past its usual phase). The full list of phases is:

1. Declarations
2. Powers
3. Combat (usually missile first, and longer weapons first in a charging attack). If you go to 0 HP or below you fall unconscious immediately, but you never die until the end of a turn.
4. Clerical Prayers (in other words, clerical prayers can be interrupted by missile, melee, or grappling attacks)
5. Mage Spells (in other words, Mages can be interrupted by the above plus Clerical effects)
6. Items
7. Movement

Note that Haste-type actions allow you to take a second full action in a round, generally in the same or different phases (except no one can cast twice in a round).

Note that there are two things that must be declared during Declaration Phase:

1. Dropping of saving throws (usually in expectation of an incoming cure)
2. For Mages and Guardians, whether they're casting, and what specific spell they're casting

Heroes and Clerics don't normally need to declare anything except dropping saves.

The other phases are fairly self-explanatory.

Hero Guide

Heroes are the only non-casters in PrinceCon. They combine the traditional warriors, scouts, scoundrels, and so on into a single class which can take elements of any or all of those. As a Hero you are rewarded with superior combat abilities and feats, and you may elect to have a decent selection of skills as well. You can use all these options to craft the character

Character Creation

Heroes have more feat slots than any other class, with basic weapon and armor proficiencies covered for free, and as a result, are largely defined by their feat selection. Some typical packages for you to consider are:

- **Fighter:** A good melee generalist with multiple attack options
 - *Ability Scores:* First priority is Strength, then Dexterity and Constitution. A Dexterity of at least 15 will let you take **Whirlwind Attack** to maximize your multistrike.
 - *Feats:* **Warrior, Combat Maneuvers, Advanced Combat Maneuvers, Multistrike, Strength Focus.**
 - These feats grant you melee to-hit and damage bonuses, let you shift points around between to-hit, damage, and AC on your strikes, let you make multiple melee attacks with reduced penalties, and let you temporarily boost your Strength (and therefore melee attacks) at the cost of extra fatigue afterward.
 - At future levels, Dexterity permitting go for **Whirlwind Attack**, and then **Great Cleave**.
 - *Equipment:* Pack B, the biggest melee weapon you can carry and a backup missile weapon, Full Chain armor (good defense but leaving you with decent movement, workable skills, and Dexterity), and a small shield
- **Hammer:** A melee specialist with maximum damage attacks
 - *Ability Scores:* Maximize Strength (Constitution second). You will likely wear armor too heavy to take advantage of a good Dexterity bonus.
 - *Feats:* **Warrior, Critical Hit, Strength Focus, Toughness, Hard to Kill**
 - These feats boost your melee attacks, give you a chance to score double damage on a good enough attack roll, let you boost your strength (and therefore melee attacks) temporarily at the cost of extra fatigue afterward, reduce the damage you take when you are hit, and extends the range of negative HP within which you are still alive.
 - At Levels 6 and 7, take **Brute Force** and **Deadly Attack**, respectively. Consider **Heroic Surge** if you often find yourself low on Hit Points.
 - *Equipment:* Pack B, the biggest melee weapon you can carry and a backup missile weapon, Full Plate armor, and a small shield
- **Marksman:** Your best friend with a bow or crossbow.
 - *Ability Scores:* Dexterity first and foremost.
 - *Feats:* **Archer, Halfmove, Critical Hit, Sharpshooter, Rapid Fire.**
 - These feats improve your missile attack and damage, give you the opportunity to score double-damage on a great attack roll, let you move up to half your movement in addition to firing in a round, and let you either attack targets under cover/in melee or fire multiple shots per round.
 - At Level 7 take **Deadly Attack**. Consider additional levels of **Critical Hit**, as well as **Snap Shot**. Also **Precision Attack** if you tend to get caught in melee. Note that as a Sharpshooter, you can fire into melee without risking hitting your friends.
 - *Equipment:* Pack B, a Heavy Crossbow if your Strength is over 16 or a Longbow otherwise, a backup melee weapon, and a Chain Shirt (the best you can get without impacting your Dexterity) and Small Shield.
- **Woodsmen:**
 - *Ability Scores:* prioritize **Dexterity** and **Wisdom**.
 - *Feats:* **Ranger, Knack, Archer, Halfmove, Running.**
 - These feats let you build high skills ratings for key skills like Awareness (noticing things; detecting ambushes) and Survival (following or obscuring tracks), improve your missile attacks, and increase your movement, even letting you move on rounds when you fire.

- Take **Sixth Sense** as a future advance, and consider multiple levels of **Dodge** to avoid light armor giving you trouble.
 - *Skills:* Add **Heal** and **Traps** as Ranger skills (plus whatever additional skill you favor). Put the Knack bonuses into **Awareness** and **Survival**.
 - *Equipment:* Pack B, the classic Long Sword and Longbow (unless your family heirloom happens to be a Greatsword), with Leather and a Small Shield to maximize your mobility, Dexterity, and skills.
- **Rogue:**
 - *Ability Scores:* Focus on Dexterity and then maybe Strength and Charisma.
 - *Feats:* **Warrior, Spy, Knack, Sneak Attack** x2.
 - These feats improve your melee attacks, substantially improve your sneaking skills (Hide and Move Silently), and give you +2d6 damage on rear or surprise attacks.
 - At Level 6 take **Critical Hit**, and at level 7, **Deadly Attack**.
 - *Skills:* Add either **Sleight of Hand** or **Persuasion** as your Spy skill, and apply the Knack bonus to **Hide** and **Move Silently**.
 - *Equipment:* Pack B, a melee weapon and backup missile weapon of your choice, with Leather and a Small Shield to maximize your mobility, Dexterity, and skills.

Melee Combat

Several things to be aware of.

Movement: As a Hero or Guardian, you have a Combat Step that's 1/4 of your movement (thanks to the *Long Combat Step* feat). You can move this far and still attack in the Combat phase. This is normally used to shift to a new opponent, but may be used to spring into combat from an ambush. If your enemy is farther away, you can charge into combat up to 1/2 your movement, though in that event the attack would take place in movement phase. Other than that, you can either take your whole action to make a full move in the movement phase, or make a minor 5' adjustment of your position (e.g. if you're already in melee but want to make a small shift).

Basic Attacks: Normally melee attacks occur in the Combat phase, after missile attack but before casting, using items, or moving. You may hold an attack for a future phase if you like (e.g. "I'll strike if anyone moves into reach during movement phase"). But it's definitely beneficial to strike opposing mages or clerics, as this can disrupt any casting before it goes into effect. Generally (outside of a charge) melee attacks are simultaneous, so anyone taken down gets their "strike back" no matter what order the dice are rolled in. If you have the *Critical Hit* feat you may do critical hits. If you have the *Toughness* feat you take less damage than normal when injured, and if you have *Hard to Kill* you won't die as easily.

Advanced Attacks: The *Combat Maneuvers*, *Advanced Combat Maneuvers*, and *Great Blow* feats allow you to shift some points between chance to hit, damage, and your AC. For instance, you could lower your defenses (-2 AC) in order to strike a mighty blow (+2 damage). The *Multistrike* feat cuts penalties for attacking twice (or even three times) in one round — but there are still penalties unless you have enough *Whirlwind Attack*. If you have *Sneak Attack* you will want to attack from ambush or behind, though you'll find it's tricky to catch an opponent totally unaware unless you can enlist some friends to distract them.

Defense: If you find yourself outmatched or low on hit points, you can parry (regular attack with a one-handed weapon, and +1 or +2 AC versus your melee foes with an off-handed weapon), fight defensively (+2 AC, -4 to hit), or even dodge (+4 AC and a half move, but no attack). You may also want to drop your saving throws, reducing your resistance against enemy spells, but also letting you accept a friendly cure spell without resistance.

Consciousness and Death: When reduced to 0 HP, you fall unconscious right away (though remember melee attacks are generally simultaneous) but if you're low enough you don't die until the end of the round. That means you can be cured (but

generally simultaneous), but if you go low enough, you don't die until the end of the round. That means you can be cured (by someone else!) in clerical prayer phase or item phase and survive. (Note that you automatically fail *Will* saves when unconscious, so a friendly cure would not be resisted.) If you are brought back to positive hit points and have not yet acted for the round, you may stand up, but that's all.

Missile Combat

Range: Note that every missile weapon has a Range Increment. Attacks within the first range increment are as normal, and there's a -2 to-hit penalty for each range increment thereafter (up to the limit of 5xRI/-8 penalty). Also, any weapon with at least a 50' range increment has a **Point Blank** range of 30' within which it does +1 damage.

Rate of Fire: Crossbows do not fire every turn unless you have a Strength of 11 (Light Crossbow) or 17 (Heavy Crossbow). Other missile weapons can be fired every turn.

Ammunition: You are assumed to have plenty of arrows/quarrels/stones/etc. The only weapons where ammunition counts are the ones where you throw the whole weapon (dagger, hand axe, etc.).

Movement: Normally you are limited to the 5' adjustment while firing a missile weapon. However, if you have the *Halfmove* feat, you can take half your movement in movement phase and still fire a missile weapon in the Combat phase. Note that if you are fast enough, you can stay out of reach of an angry foe while still firing at him every turn. It may be worth your while to take the *Running* feat to help with this, or make sure a cleric or mage in the party can enhance your movement rate.

Melee: It is normally unsafe to fire into a melee (target has cover and if you miss by 4 or less you may hit your friend), unless you have the *Sharpshooter* feat.

Grappling

Each combatant has a grappling bonus based on size, Strength, etc.

To grapple an opponent you must first hit with a touch attack, and then perform the usual grapple check (opposed roll with each combatant's grapple bonus). If the attacker wins he has grappled successfully — and if the defender wins she has broken out. If the attacker successfully grapples, he does his unarmed combat damage against the opponent. (Note: you cannot successfully grapple anyone who damaged you earlier in the Combat Phase.)

Once the grapple is established, each character gets a grapple action every round. This can be an attempt to cause unarmed combat damage, or a variety of other things, primarily including attempting to pin your opponent. A pinned opponent can do nothing except try to break out, and is easy for your friends to hit and damage. (In the absence of someone being pinned, all outside attacks into a grapple are randomized among all the grapplers.)

Basically, if you are the one trying to grapple, your goal is likely to pin your opponent. If you are the one being grappled, your goal is likely to move or break free, unless you think you can turn the grapple to your advantage by pinning your opponent in turn. In any case, opposed grapple checks will normally be necessary.

If, after making any needed grapple checks, the results of the two characters' actions are consistent, they are applied. If they are obviously impossible (each pins the other, or one establishes a pin while the other breaks free), then nothing happens and the grapple goes on for another round.

Additional Tactics

Sneak Attack: If you have this feat, try to sneak up on foes (with *Move Silently*, *Hide*, *Invisibility*, etc.) or wait until a couple of your friends have engaged them and then join the melee from the target's rear.

Halfmove: Try to find an opponent who you can enrage into chasing you, yet can't quite catch you as you half move. You get a free shot every round!

Enhanced Senses: If all the characters in your party have special senses (or can be given them via spells), it may be worth putting a *Darkness* on the battle in order to hinder the enemies.

Distracting Casters: If there are enemy casters, target them with missile weapons and/or clerical prayers (for enemy mages) to try to prevent them from casting. Of course, a good melee or grapple is best of all, but often the casters are hiding behind the front line. *Rapid Fire* or *Multistrike* may be the best way to maximize the chances of interruption.

Boost the Heroes: Clerics, Mages, and Guardians have a number of spells that can boost anyone fighting in melee. *Flame Weapon*, *Enhance Ability*, *Enhance Weapon*, *Aura of Power*, *Swiftsure*, *Bane*, *Haste*, *Bless*, *Shield*, and so on. It may be worth staying close enough to pick up a boost before rushing off into melee. Don't underestimate the value of improving your Combat Step, if possible.

Invisibility: You can use this to get a *Sneak Attack* or just plain attacking from rear to-hit bonus. Normal *Invisibility* is broken after you attack, but *Improved Invisibility* keeps going. You may want to use this to sneak up on and interrupt a caster.

Haste: You can take two actions per round — two attacks, a full move and an attack, etc. You just can't cast twice. Consider the best way to take advantage of this (if you can, striking two casters may be way better than swinging twice in one generic melee).

Defending Against the Unknown: Finally, there may come the situation where you're being attacked seemingly out of nowhere. Perhaps an invisible or incredibly mobile foe? In these situations, it may be best to hold your action and see what develops later in the round. Perhaps an invisible foe appears as they act, or a friendly caster can dispel some enemy magic, or the ability to make a full move in the last phase gives you the flexibility to engage a target.

The original document is available at <http://www.princecon.org/gm/tiki-index.php?page=Player+Guide%3A+Heroes>