Voyages of Discovery

By Charles Rice

In a fantasy world not unlike our own, a madman vies for absolute power.

Swept to power during a people's revolution, a soldier has become an Emperor and now all the Continental Kingdoms are within his grasp. Only the naval might of the Island Kingdom and the deadly winter of the Frozen Lands slow his advance but your Queen knows this cannot last and orders every ship she can spare to embark on a Voyage of Discovery.

Unknown islands with resources and magical lore forgotten by men for millennia wait to be discovered. And far to the west there is a New World, which might bring ultimate victory to the Island Kingdom, or sow the seeds of her ultimate destruction.

The wind swells. Your voyage awaits. What direction you sail is up to you.

Voyages of Discovery is a complete fantasy game powered by the Modern^{20} game engine and set in a sword and sorcery world that technologically resembles 19th century Earth. Voyages of Discovery is a complete setting and game system in one book, nothing else is needed to play.

It contains rules for magic, naval combat, boarding actions and individual adventures.

M20

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ISBN 978-1-935432-39-5
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Voyages of Discovery

By Charles Rice

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Speical thanks to the d20 modern designers:
bill Slavicsek, Jeff Grub, Rich RedMan, Charles Ryan, christopher Perkins, Stan!

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Introduction

Terra, as its name suggests, is a world much like our own and similar to earth-like worlds found in other great works of sword and sorcery fiction. Unlike many of those worlds, however, Terra has advanced to an era roughly equivalent to our 19th century. Cannons are the ultimate weapon, especially when carried by large, fast frigates capable of ruling the seas and operating independent of supply for years on end if necessary.

The political scene of Terra is likewise eerily familiar. During a bloody revolution in one of the Continental Kingdoms, a common soldier of unusual charisma and tactical brilliance became a king. In a series of stunning defeats, he defeated the Continental Kingdoms one by one and has now styled himself an emperor. Because of his megalomania and barbaric tyranny, his opponents have taken to calling him the Mad Emperor.

In a typical act of bravado, the Mad Emperor has now begun a new war of expansion on two fronts: on the seas, his fleet attempts to neutralize the "wooden wall" of ships protecting the Island Kingdom, the last hold-out of the Continental Kingdoms. And in the east, his army, as yet undefeated, has begun a push into the Frozen Kingdoms.

For the moment, the kingdoms of the Ancient East and the Southern Kingdoms remain neutral, though both are in a state of almost-frantic preparation for a war they know must eventually come. Unknown as yet to any of the major powers, the Island Kingdom sponsored a great voyage of discovery and has discovered a New World in their quest for allies.

What Admiral Hellstrom found there is both an enormous risk and an enormous opportunity. Though several of the tribes are willing to help, they require help in return in bitter wars against the Near Men. This race of cannibalistic savages was driven nearly to extinction in the Old World, in a war that united the Continental and Southern Kingdoms in a fight for survival. In the New World, Hellstrom discovered that the Near Men are much stronger, much more organized and have something approaching civilization.

To combat this menace, the friendly tribes of the New World have developed a new type of magic based on runic tattoos. An alliance has been proposed, where the New World tribes would provide their Tattoo Shaman in return for firearms and the tall ships of the Old World.

In a desperate gamble, the Queen of the Island Kingdom has agreed to this alliance, requiring her to completely do away with the old order, eliminating serfdom and slavery and instituting universal suffrage to create a completely free nation, one with a navy large enough to fight in two worlds at the same time.

While the Queen's Army fights in the New World, spies stoke the flames of rebellion on the continent and envoys seek to draw the Southern Kingdoms into a new alliance against common enemies. Meanwhile lone explorers seek out uncharted lands in a hope of a discovery as great as that of Admiral Hellstrom and privateers prowl distant seas to return badly needed wealth and captured ships to Her Majesty.

It is a time of discovery. A time of desperate struggle. A time of heroes.

Chapter I: Characters

Character creation in *Voyage of Discovery* should be familiar to anyone who has played *Modern*[20]. If not, don't worry; we'll walk you through the process below. If you have, however, be on the lookout for some things that are different so you don't get tripped up by little changes. Primarily, you'll want to check out the core abilities of the classes in *Voyage of Discovery*. While the classes themselves fill the same basic party roles as those found in *Modern*[20], the core abilities have been changed to better fit the setting.

Character Creation

Character creation consists of several steps to define your character and determine what he knows and what he can do in the game world. Creating a character requires the following steps:

1) Generate ability scores
2) Choose a culture
3) Choose a background
4) Choose an occupation and a hobby
5) Choose a character class
6) Select your character's feats, skills and perks
7) Set the level of secondary characteristics such as Reputation, Wealth and action points
8) Purchase equipment
9) And finally, determine any starting character disadvantages (optional- unless your character is gifted with a magical ability).

Ability Scores

All characters have the following six ability scores:

Strength
Dexterity
Constitution
Intelligence
Wisdom
Charisma

The normal human range of these ability scores is from 3 to 18. As heroes, the player characters, as well as important NPCs, might have ability scores in excess of 18, running into the 20's.

Ability Modifiers

Each ability score has a modifier that can be determined as follows:

(ability/2)-5 [round down]

on their own; foreign dignitaries also frequently hire them as bodyguards.

Although they had expelled the Near Men from their lands a century ago, the Southern Kingdoms joined the fight to drive the Near Men from the Continental Kingdoms for reasons of their own. Most assume they either wanted the beast men farther from their lands or that they considered the creatures a blood enemy. Either way, without them, the expulsion of the Near Men would not have been possible.

Many in the Continental Kingdoms hoped that their great alliance against the Near Men would lead to increased contact with the Southern Kingdoms but this was not to be. As soon as the war was concluded, they immediately returned to their own lands and resumed their former policy of limiting contact with outsiders.

Cultural Traits

Cultural Skill (choose one of the following): Athletics, Outdoorsman, Unarmed, Weapons

Improved Feats: *Attack Focus (spear or unarmed):* +2 attack rolls; *Attack Specialization (spear or unarmed):* +4 damage; *Toughness 1:* the extra hit die granted by this feat is always of maximum hit points; *Endurance Training 1:* +2 Constitution

Required Character Disadvantage: Code: will not personally use the Stealth skill or ranged weapons in combat against other men (DSR 5). The warriors of the Southern Kingdoms have a warrior ethos that stresses bravery in hand-to-hand combat, one on one, man to man. Bows and firearms are only for use against animals, not a fellow warrior and one should meet an opponent on equal terms: if he is dismounted so should you, if he is unarmed you should have the courage to face him unarmed.

If a character does not wish to take this disadvantage, he can take the following instead:

Coward (DSR 5): your Reputation suffers a –10 penalty whenever you deal with someone from the Southern Kingdoms.

Backgrounds

Your background represents what your character did before he became an adventurer. Backgrounds grant a character 4 ranks in one or more skills as well as a base *Wealth*. The additional ranks in a skill granted by a background must obey the usual level limit on max ranks for skills.

Base Churl

You were once a creature of the land, one who toils in the hot sun, working land your grandfather was tied to as a serf. With the rise of the Mad Emperor however, Her Majesty has freed all men, that all may bend their will to the utmost to overthrow the tyrant and keep the Island Kingdom free. You might have been born on the land but in this age of discovery and heroism, your destiny might take you anywhere as a soldier or explorer.

Skills (choose three of the following): Athletics, Medicine, Outdoorsman, Perception, Unarmed and Weapons.

Base Wealth: 4

Born of Leisure

You were born into an old and respectable family.

Skills (choose one of the following): Academics, Art, Influence, Leadership, Read/Write Language, Speak Language and Weapons.

Reputation: +2

Base Wealth: 8

Her Majesty's Service

You have spent time in Her Majesty's service.

Skills (choose three of the following): Artisan, Athletics, Chemistry, Firearms, Leadership, Outdoorsman, Seafaring and Weapons.

Base Wealth: 4

Knave

You were once a criminal. Depending on where your character is from, you might actually be villainous, or might have committed the crime of publishing a newspaper in the Continental Kingdoms.

Skills (choose three of the following): Acrobatics, Athletics, Crime, Influence, Perception, Stealth and Streetwise.

Base Wealth: 4

One Who Prays

You have served time serving God. Alternately, you might have been raised in a monastery.

Skills (choose three of the following): Academics, Art, Influence, Medicine, Perception, Read/Write Language and Speak Language.

Base Wealth: 4

One Who Studies

You have spent time poring over tomes, studying by candlelight long into the night.

Tribal Warrior

You are a warrior from a less "civilized" society.

Professional Skills: Athletics, Outdoorsman and Weapons

Improved Feats: *Armed Defense:* your Weapons skill is considered 2 higher for purposes of this feat; *Attack Focus (bow or spear):* +2 to attack rolls; *Awareness:* your Will save is considered +2 higher for purposes of this feat; *Strength Training 1:* +2 Strength

Villain

You are a wicked evil scoundrel.

Prerequisite: Stealth 10 ranks or Weapons 10 ranks, Sneak Attack, Critical Strike

Professional Skills: Firearms, Stealth and Weapons

Improved Feats: *Crippling Strike:* your target suffers two points of temporary Strength damage; *Critical Strike:* when you inflict bonus damage with this feat, that bonus damage is increased by +3 points; *Enemy:* you may treat anyone you were assigned or hired to kill as an enemy for purposes of this feat; *Sneak Attack:* you inflict +1 damage per feat against flat-footed targets

Hobbies

Each character gets one hobby. Hobbies are activities your character does in his "spare" time when not working *or* adventuring. Hobbies grant a single skill of your choice at 4 ranks. Skills gained as hobbies still have to abide by the normal level cap for skills.

Perks

Most characters receive two perks. Characters whose first level is in the Patron class receive 4 perks. A character can gain extra perks through the Career Advancement feat. Perks can provide the following benefits:

Professional Reputation: granting the character an extra Reputation bonus of +4.

Professional Salary: granting the character an extra Wealth bonus of +4.

Skill Modification: Many skills have additional uses that can only be accessed through perks. These uses of Perks are discussed in the individual skills found in the Skills chapter. If a skill use says it requires a Perk, your effective ranks in that skill use are halved unless you have spent one of your perks to master that skill use.

Character Classes

Invader

Invaders are the front line attackers responsible for breaking down fortifications and seizing enemy property. Frequently this sort of combat is conducted at close range, with no quarter asked or given, as the Invader fights to seize an enemy ship or moves in close to blow a gap in an enemy wall with explosives so his fellow soldiers can assault the breach.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Invader core class.

Hit Die: 1d10

Action Points: 6+ one-half character level, rounded down, every time the character gains a new level in this class.

Skill Points at 1st level: 4 + Int. modifier (x4)

Skill points at each level: 4+ Int. modifier

Class Features

All of the following are features of the Invader core class.

Feats: As indicated on the class table at each level, you may select a number of feats from the General and Invader feat tables. You may also select any feat listed with your Occupation as an Improved Feat.

Gain Ground: Only characters that take their first character level in the Invader class gain this ability.

When an Invader operates in enemy territory (an enemy ship, foreign soil or attacking an enemy fortification) he gains a +4 bonus on all attack rolls.

If the Invader spends an action point when assaulting enemy territory, he gains a bonus to all melee attack and damage rolls equal to one-half his Invader level, rounded up for one round. So +1 to attack and damage rolls at 1st-2nd level, +2 at 3rd-4th etc.

The Invader gains the Armed to the Teeth perk as a bonus perk.

Rake

The Rake is a combatant who prefers a more elegant style of combat. He prefers ranged weapons and fast, light melee weapons that allow him to move and dodge his enemy, conducting himself with grace and wit.

Table 1: Invader

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Recovery Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	+1	4 Feats; Gain Ground	+0	+0
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	+2	1 Feat	+1	+1
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	+2	1 Feat	+2	+1
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	+2	1 Feat	+3	+2
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	+3	1 Feat	+3	+2
6th	+6	+5	+2	+2	+3	1 Feat	+4	+3
7th	+7	+5	+2	+2	+4	1 Feat	+5	+3
8th	+8	+6	+2	+2	+4	1 Feat	+6	+4
9th	+9	+6	+3	+3	+4	1 Feat	+6	+4
10th	+10	+7	+3	+3	+5	1 Feat	+7	+5
11th	+11	+7	+3	+3	+5	1 Feat	+8	+5
12th	+12	+8	+4	+4	+6	1 Feat	+9	+6
13th	+13	+8	+4	+4	+6	1 Feat	+9	+6
14th	+14	+9	+4	+4	+6	1 Feat	+10	+7
15th	+15	+9	+5	+5	+7	1 Feat	+11	+7
16th	+16	+10	+5	+5	+7	1 Feat	+12	+8
17th	+17	+10	+5	+5	+8	1 Feat	+12	+8
18th	+18	+11	+6	+6	+8	1 Feat	+13	+9
19th	+19	+11	+6	+6	+8	1 Feat	+14	+9
20th	+20	+12	+6	+6	+9	1 Feat	+15	+10

Table 2: Rake

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Recovery Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+1	+2	+0	+0	4 Feats; Marksman	+1	+0
2nd	+1	+2	+3	+0	+0	1 Feat	+2	+1
3rd	+2	+2	+3	+1	+1	1 Feat	+3	+1
4th	+3	+2	+4	+1	+1	1 Feat	+4	+2
5th	+3	+3	+4	+1	+1	1 Feat	+5	+2
6th	+4	+3	+5	+2	+2	1 Feat	+6	+3
7th	+5	+4	+5	+2	+2	1 Feat	+7	+3
8th	+6	+4	+6	+2	+2	1 Feat	+8	+4
9th	+6	+4	+6	+3	+3	1 Feat	+9	+4
10th	+7	+5	+7	+3	+3	1 Feat	+10	+5
11th	+8	+5	+7	+3	+3	1 Feat	+11	+5
12th	+9	+6	+8	+4	+4	1 Feat	+12	+6
13th	+9	+6	+8	+4	+4	1 Feat	+13	+6
14th	+10	+6	+9	+4	+4	1 Feat	+14	+7
15th	+11	+7	+9	+5	+5	1 Feat	+15	+7
16th	+12	+7	+10	+5	+5	1 Feat	+16	+8
17th	+12	+8	+10	+5	+5	1 Feat	+17	+8
18th	+13	+8	+11	+6	+6	1 Feat	+18	+9
19th	+14	+8	+11	+6	+6	1 Feat	+19	+9
20th	+15	+9	+12	+6	+6	1 Feat	+20	+10

Chapter II: Skills

Each character receives a number of skill points from his character class. Invaders, Rakes and Bulwarks receive 4 skill points per level, the Rustic and Patron receive 6 skill points per level and the Sage receives 8 skill points per level. All characters receive bonus skill points each level equal to their Intelligence modifier. All character classes grant x4 skill points at 1st level.

Using Skills

When you make a skill check, the game master will determine the difficulty of the check before you roll. Rolling a skill check is 1d20 plus your ranks in the skill, plus the relevant ability modifier. Some skills can be used *untrained*; this means you can make a check in the skill even if you don't have it as a skill. In this case, since you have no ranks, you roll 1d20 plus the skill's ability modifier.

Maximum Skill Ranks: You can have a maximum number of ranks in a skill equal to your total character level +3.

Required Ranks: When not to roll a skill check

Voyage of Discovery attempts to streamline your game by reducing the number of skill checks you make in an average game. One of the ways it does this is by eliminating many of the skill checks you used to make for things like crafting items and knowledge skill checks. Your character knows what he knows and can build what he knows how to build and these things shouldn't vary wildly from adventure to adventure.

Required ranks are used for things that typically don't involve the main action of an adventure. Making skill checks for these actions typically accomplishes nothing other than bogging down the game. For example, if your character needs to brew an acid to burn through a lock and fails his skill check, he's either going to try again, attempt to buy the acid, or steal it. But if the players have a good plan involving the acid, they won't abandon it because they failed a skill check (nor should they). What they will do, is take much more game time than the task likely calls for.

Skill checks are still used when characters come in conflict, such as sneaking up on a guard or picking a lock. When required ranks are called for will be detailed in the skill's description.

Variable Time

Another thing required ranks are used with is the time required to make a skill check. If a skill has both a required ranks listing and a time listing, a character with greater skill can perform it in less time or for less materials cost.

For every additional 4 ranks a character has, he can either cut the time or materials cost required to build the device by one-half. A character with 8 additional ranks can either cut the time and cost required by one-half, or reduce one to one-fourth and so on.

Sample Difficulties

Here are some example skill difficulty classes to help the game master determine how hard a skill check should be.

Difficulty (DC)	Example (Skill Used)
Very Easy (0)	Notice someone standing in the open (Perception)
Easy (5)	Climb a knotted rope (Athletics)
Average (10)	Hear a loud conversation through a door (Perception)
Tough (15)	Escape from loosely knotted ropes (Acrobatics)
Challenging (20)	Find an illegal gambling hall in an unfamiliar city (Streetwise)
Formidable (25)	Open a locked strongbox (Crime)
Heroic (30)	Leap across a 30-foot chasm (Athletics)
Nearly Impossible (40)	Track a group of soldiers across hard ground after a heavy rain (Outdoorsman)

Targeted Skills

Sometimes success or failure with a skill is not set against a static difficulty class but rather determined by another character's skills. *Voyage of Discovery* eliminates opposed skill checks. Instead only one character rolls and the target is equal to 10 plus the opposing skill. Whenever possible, *only player characters make skill checks*.

For example, if a player character attempts to sneak up on a guard, the player would roll a Stealth skill check with a difficulty class of the guard's Perception plus 10 (plus 20 if the guards were on high alert for some reason). If the player character was the guard, and someone attempted to sneak up on her, the player would roll a Perception check with a difficulty class of the attacker's Stealth plus 10 (plus 20 if the character was particularly lax or suffering from the exhausted condition).

But what if I really, really like to roll dice?

If you'd rather roll for everything, simply make every skill that's targeted (the DC determined by another character's skill) into an opposed skill, and add 10 to the required ranks of a skill description and make that the DC.

You might notice that this rule tends to favor player characters over the traditional skill vs. skill opposed checks found in many d20 variants. This is intentional. The player characters are the heroes of the tale. They're special.

Assisting with a skill check

Two heads are better than one. If a character is making a skill check that will take longer than a minute to complete, another character may assist so that the task will be completed faster. If the assisting character has at least 4 ranks in the skill being performed, the task is completed in three-quarters the usual time. If the assisting character has 10 or more ranks in the skill being attempted, the task is completed in one-half the usual time. Only one character may assist in a skill check at a time.

Example: Balthasar is a spy serving on one of the Mad Emperor's vessels and is attempting to break into the captain's strongbox to get access to the ship's orders. Balthasar has 12 ranks in the Crime skill and the lock on the captain's strong box is high quality, meaning it would normally take him 90 minutes to get inside. If Balthasar had a compatriot on board with 4 ranks in the Crime skill to assist him, he could get into the lock in three-quarters the usual time, or 67 minutes. If his compatriot had 10 ranks in the Crime skill, it would only take Balthasar 45 minutes to crack the lock.

Perks

Perks have been discussed some already in Occupations. Since perks have a big impact on skills, we're discussing them here again. In many of the skills below, a use of a skill will be listed as requiring a perk. Perks can be gained through an Occupation or selected through a feat. A character without the appropriate perk can still use functions of a skill listed as requiring a perk, but his effective ranks in the skill are halved (that use of the skill is much less familiar to the character).

Skill	Ability	Untrained?	Action
Academics	Int	No	Varies
Acrobatics	Dex	Yes	Move
Art	Cha	No	---
Artisan	Wis	No	Special
Athletics	Str	Yes	Move
Business	Cha	No	Special
Chemistry	Int	No	---
Crime	Int	No	Move or Full
Firearms	Dex	No	Standard or Full
Influence	Cha	Yes	Standard or Full
Leadership	Cha	No	Standard
Magic	Cha	No	Standard or Full
Medicine	Wis	No	Standard or Special
Outdoorsman	Wis	Yes	Standard or Special
Perception	Wis	Yes	Reaction or Full
Read/Write	NA	No	---
Seafaring	Wis	No	Special
Speak	NA	No	---
Stealth	Dex	Yes	Move
Streetwise	Wis	Yes	Move or Special
Unarmed	Str	Yes	Standard or Full
Weapons	Str	No	Standard or Full

Academics

Int; Trained Only; Requires Specialization

You are intimately familiar with a field of learning. Examples include: History, Law, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, Religion and Tactics. This skill requires specialization, meaning that one specialty must be chosen when this skill is selected. Additional specialties can be added through perks, or through selecting this skill a second time. Areas the character has not selected a perk in can still be known to the character however, since the character still retains one-half his effective ranks (see the information on perks in the skills introduction above).

Depending on the character's ranks in Academics, there are certain facts he will know off the top of his head. What the character does not know, he can find out through research. If the character has access to a library, research time is reduced by one-half.

Ranks	Knowledge Level	Research Time
2	Basic	36 hours
4	Introductory	18 hours
8	Intermediate	12 hours
12	Advanced	8 hours
16	Cutting Edge	6 hours
20	Next Generation	4 hours
23	Almost Limitless	2 hours

Acrobatics

Dexterity; Armor Check Penalty

Balance: This use of the Acrobatics skill allows you to balance on a precarious surface or resist trip attacks. To walk on a precarious surface, determine the Difficulty Class according to the table above. How narrow the surface is (narrow +0, very narrow +5 or tiny +10), how slippery (slippery +0, very slippery +5 or treacherous +10), whether the surface is moving or not (gentle movement +0, rolling movement +5 or breakneck movement +10) and how fast you are moving (5 foot steps +0, half moves +5 or full moves +10) and whether or not you are fighting while balancing will all determine the difficulty.

For example if you were traversing the rigging of a ship (very narrow +5) during a storm (very slippery +5 and breakneck movement +10) trying to make your way quickly to a rope down to the deck (half move +5), you would need to succeed at an Acrobatics check with a DC of 25 (5+5+10+5=25).

To resist a trip attempt, you would need to make an Acrobatics check with a DC equal to the Unarmed or Weapon skill of the attacker +10 (depending on whether the attacker was trying to trip you with an unarmed or weapon attack).

Escape: This use of the Acrobatics skill allows you to escape from a binding, squeeze through a tight space or escape a grapple. To escape from a common or improvised binding (such as ropes, duct tape etc) you would need to make a skill check with a DC of whichever is higher: 20 or the Weapon skill +10 of the character that bound you, if the character is proficient with the binding implement as a weapon (ropes, chains and nets, can all be selected as weapons for example).

Squeezing through a tight space has a DC depending on how narrow the space is: Narrow (15), Very Narrow (20), Extremely Narrow (25) and so on. Small characters subtract 5 from these DCs, while creatures Large or larger add +5 for each size category.

Table 2-1: Blacksmith

Complexity	Defense	Hit Points	Fortification Bonus (Def/Att)	Defenders	Ranks Req.	Materials/ Cost	Time Req.
Primitive	+0	+20	+1/+1	+0	4	1 Bar/+5	+1 hour
Moderate	+1	+25	+1/+1	+0	8	2 Bars/+10	+2 hours
Complex	+2	+30	+1/+1	+0	12	4 Bars /+15	+4 hours
Highly Complex	+2	+35	+1/+1	+0	16	8 Bars /+20	+8 hours
Masterful	+3	+40	+1/+1	+0	20	16 Bars /+25	+16 hours
Brilliant	+4	+45	+1/+1	+0	23	32 Bars /+30	+2 days

To escape a grapple, you need to make an Acrobatics check with a DC equal to the Unarmed or Weapon skill of the attacker +10 (depending on whether the attacker was using an unarmed grapple or a grappling weapon).

Tumble (requires perk): This use of the Acrobatics skill is available only to characters that have ranks in the Acrobatics skill. Tumbling allows you to move across difficult terrain at full speed.

Art

Charisma; Trained Only; Requires Specialization

This skill represents ability at a fine or performing art such as writing fiction, painting, painting and so forth. While any character may dabble in such an art for personal pleasure, only those trained in this skill may use it to earn a living (such as using this skill as a professional skill).

When selecting this skill, you must pick a specific art form. You may use a perk to extend this skill to multiple art forms or you may select this skill multiple times. For example if you took this skill at 1st level for painting, you could either select this skill again for acting, or use a perk to use your Art skill for both painting and acting.

Chameleon (requires perk): the Art skill grants you the Disguise skill use, normally associated with the Crime skill. Only available to acting specialization.

Artisan

Wisdom; Trained Only; Requires Specialization

This skill covers various forms of crafts and skilled trades, such as blacksmithing, carpentry and stonemasonry. Artisans go through extremely long apprenticeships to learn their craft, resulting in a rare individual who truly masters more than one craft. As a result, each use of this skill requires a separate investment of skill points.

Several uses of this skill have vital military applications and any ship or large military force will carry several craftsmen with it.

Fortification: All uses of the Artisan skill allow a character to build fortifications. A defender making use of a fortification gains the listed bonus to attack rolls and to Defense. A second factor to consider when building fortifications is the number of defenders it will protect. As fortifications get more complex, the base number of defenders is increased. Of course, an artisan can simply build the same fortification again and again to protect more defenders as well.

Information on reducing the fortification bonus can be found in the Firearms skill under the Artillerist skill use. Fortifications can also be attacked directly but at great risk to the attackers.

Repair: All uses of the Artisan skill allow a character to

Table 2-2: Carpentry

Complexity	Hardness	Hit Points	Flammability	Fortification Bonus (Def/Att)	Defenders	Ranks Req.	Materials/ Cost	Time Req.
Primitive	3	20	40%	+4/+1	5	4	1 Cord/3	45 min.
Moderate	4	25	35%	+4/+2	10	8	2 Cords/6	90 min.
Complex	5	30	30%	+4/+3	15	12	4 Cords/9	5 hours
Highly Complex	6	35	25%	+4/+4	20	16	8 Cords/12	9 hours
Masterful	7	40	20%	+5/+5	25	20	16 Cords/15	2 days
Brilliant	8	45	15%	+6/+6	30	23	32 Cords/18	5 days

Chapter III: Feats

Along with skills, feats are the primary character building blocks in *Voyage of Discovery*, with four gained at 1st level and one each level after that. General feats help make a character well-rounded regardless of class, while class-specific feats reinforce the various archetypes those classes represent.

Feat Descriptions

Here is the format for feat descriptions.

Feat Name

Prerequisite: A minimum ability score, another feat or feats, a minimum base attack bonus, and/or the minimum ranks in a skill that a character must have to acquire this feat. This entry is absent if a feat has no prerequisite.

A character can gain a feat at the same level at which he or she gains all the prerequisites.

A character can't use a feat if the character has lost a prerequisite.

Benefit: What the feat enables a character to do.

Normal: What a character that does not have this feat is limited to or restricted from doing. If there is no particular drawback to not possessing the feat, this entry is absent.

Special: Additional facts about the feat.

Acrobatic Defense

Rake

Your ability to flip and tumble can make you a maddeningly difficult target to hit as long as you can stay away from your opponent.

Prerequisite: Acrobatics 4 ranks

Effect: You may use your Acrobatics skill +10 as your Defense against ranged attacks, rather than your class-based Defense bonus (this is in addition to any other modifiers that may apply such as the Dodge feat).

Acrobatic Defense may only be used against ranged attacks and may only be used in situations where you would not be denied your Dexterity bonus.

Using this feat is a move action.

Acrobatic Feint

Rake

Your constant tumbling and flipping in combat make it difficult for your opponent to determine where your next attack is coming from.

Effect: You can render your opponent flat-footed to your next attack with a successful Acrobatics skill check. The DC of this check is equal to your opponent's Acrobatics +10 or Reflex +10, whichever is higher.

Chapter IV: Equipment

Equipment can be as important to a character's survival as any learned ability. This section presents firearms and melee weapons, as well as the vital and extremely expensive ships that characters will use to explore new lands and project the power of their home nation across the world of Terra.

Ranged Weapons

These weapons allow a character to project power at range and have defined warfare almost from its inception. In general terms the combatant with the better range on his weapons tends to be the combatant who wins.

Name: The name of the weapon.

Strength Minimum: The minimum Strength score required to use the weapon effectively. If your Strength is below the minimum, you suffer the following penalties based on the weapon type:

- -4 penalty to attack rolls (all weapons)
- No Strength bonus to damage (melee, thrown and archaic ranged weapons). Strength penalties to damage still apply.
- Range increment reduced by one-half (thrown weapons)
- Unable to reload weapon (archaic ranged weapons)

All penalties that apply stack. For example, if a character tried to use a thrown weapon for which he did not meet the Strength minimum, he would suffer a –4 to hit, gain no Strength bonus to damage and the weapon's range increment would be reduced by one-half.

A character can reduce the Strength minimum of a pistol or melee weapon by –5 by wielding it two-handed.

If a character's Strength is 3 higher than the minimum, it is considered a light weapon, suitable for two-weapon fighting (melee weapons and pistols only).

If the weapon is a firearm and it is braced (lying on the ground, on top of a wall, on a bipod or tripod) the weapon's Strength minimum is effectively 0.

Damage (Type): The amount of damage the weapon inflicts, followed by its damage type. The damage types available for modern gaming are: ballistic, bludgeoning, piercing and slashing. Weapons that inflict ballistic, piercing and slashing damage always inflict lethal damage automatically. Bludgeoning weapons inflict injuries on attack rolls that exceed the target's defense by 5 or more if the target fails a Recovery saving throw (see the combat section for information on lethal and non-lethal damage).

Range Increment: When firing at targets past this distance, a –2 attack penalty is incurred. For each further multiple of this distance an additional –2 penalty is incurred.

Firearms have a damage bonus that also decreases at range. Decrease a firearm's damage bonus by –2 for each range increment until the bonus is reduced to 0. Once the damage bonus is reduced to 0, no further reduction occurs.

Rate of Fire: Firearms and archaic ranged weapons have

a rate of fire that determines how quickly they can be fired.

The Compound Bow is an exception to the rules presented above. A bow may be fired multiple times each round using the Multi-Attack rules, as if it were a melee weapon (see the Combat section for rules on Multi-Attack).

Cost: The weapon's cost. Compare this to the purchaser's Wealth to determine if he can afford this weapon (see the Wealth section for more information).

Firing Mechanisms

All firearms in *Voyage of Discovery* can be made with one of three different firing mechanisms.

Matchlock: The matchlock firing mechanism allows the first true small arms to be taken into combat. The first was the development of the earliest trigger, called a *serpentine* because of its s-curved shape. The serpentine was located on the side of the weapon rather than in the traditional location of a trigger today and swiveling it simply brought a slow-burning match down onto a pan of black powder (covered to protect it from wind and rain). While this was a tremendous improvement over earlier attempts at firing mechanisms, one last step remained to turn the matchlock into a reliable system for the battlefield: a true trigger, internalized in the weapon's stock. Once this innovation was achieved the matchlock harquebus was born.

Since locksmiths were the only large body of craftsmen capable of performing the precision engineering needed for these new weapons of war, they came to be called locks, a name that is applied to these firing mechanisms for centuries.

A matchlock weapon takes two full rounds to reload and requires a full round to fire. It misfires on a natural attack roll of 4 or less (6 or less in windy or rainy conditions or if the attacker has moved between loading and firing the weapon). On a natural attack roll of 2 or less the weapon has misfired and jammed, requiring 1 minute (10 rounds) to clean and clear before it can be fired again. On a natural attack roll of 1 the round explodes, inflicting damage equal to the weapon's normal damage on the wielder and the weapon cannot be used until repaired, requiring at least one hour of work and an Artisan skill check (DC 15).

By the time of *Voyage of Discovery*, matchlock firearms are considered antique and primitive. A weapon with a matchlock firing mechanism has its cost reduced by –5.

Wheel lock: Among the many disadvantages of the matchlock, the one that proved the most difficult to the soldier was the need to keep match smoldering, ready to ignite the powder when it was time to fire. If this went out, the soldier was faced with the difficult task of relighting it, possibly while under fire. The solution to this was the wheel lock, which used a spring-loaded mechanism to rub iron pyrite against a serrated wheel. This would cause sparks to rain down on the flash pan. Although the wheel lock was a significant improvement over the matchlock, especially in that it could be loaded and primed and then holstered until it was ready to be fired, the mechanism was extremely complicated to make and thus expensive. Thus, the wheel lock never had a significant impact on the development of firearms and was only used by a few wealthy officers in the militaries of the day.

A wheel lock weapon takes a three move actions to load and requires an attack action to fire. It misfires on a natural attack roll of 3 or less (4 or less in rain). On a natural attack roll of 2 or less the weapon has misfired and jammed, requiring 1 minute (10 rounds) to clean and clear before it can be fired again. On a natural attack roll of 1 the round explodes, inflicting damage equal to the weapon's normal damage on the wielder and the weapon cannot be used until repaired, requiring at least one hour of work and an Artisan

Table 4-1: Firearms

Firearms	Str Min.	Damage (Ballistic)	Range Inc.	Cost (FL)	Cost (WL)	Cost (ML)
Blunderbuss	11	3d8	30 ft.	14	19	9
Blunderbuss, Pistol	8	3d6	20 ft.	13	18	8
Harquebus	18	2d6+2	30 ft.	13	18	8
Musket	12	2d8+4	30 ft.	14	19	9
Musket, Advanced	11	2d8+6	30 ft.	16	21	11
Musket, Rifled	11	2d8+8	40 ft.	18	23	NA
Pistol	8	2d6+4	20 ft.	13	18	8
Pistol, Rifled	8	2d6+6	30 ft.	13	18	8
Topman's Rifle	18	2d10+10	60 ft.	25	---	---

Chapter VI: Naval Warfare

While *Voyage of Discovery* does not intend to be a naval warfare simulation, it does strive for a feeling of authenticity and a different feel of combat when ships fight, as opposed to when characters fight. Before we begin discussion of naval warfare, there are several basic nautical terms a reader will need to be familiar with. The following basic terms are used throughout this section:

Bearing: A point of sail the ship moves along or passes through.

Bow: The front of a ship.

Port: The left side of a ship, as perceived by someone on that ship facing forward.

Starboard: The right side of a ship, as perceived by someone on that ship facing forward.

Aft: The rear of a ship.

Weather Gage: The upwind ship in an engagement, with the wind at its back. This is a decisive advantage.

The Basic Mechanics

Now that we've covered some basic terminology, let's cover the basic mechanics that govern how ships fight.

Maneuverability

Maneuverability is the bonus or penalty to a ship's control checks and Defense and generally tells the player how hard his ship is to control at its present point of sail.

Ship Physical Scale

Ships move and fight on a larger scale than characters. When fighting with ships, one square equals 25 feet.

Defense

Ships have a Defense equal to the ranks in the Seafaring skill (not the total skill modifier) of the Helmsman. So if the Helmsman had 8 ranks in the Seafaring skill the ship's Defense would be 8.

A ship's Defense is also modified by its Maneuverability rating. This can change from round to round based on the ship's current Point of Sail and any damage it has suffered that reduce its Maneuverability.

A ship's Defense is not modified by its size. Rather than factor in size penalties to Defense, size penalties to attack rolls, attack penalties due to the relative inaccuracy of a ship's weapons when fired from a moving target *at* a moving target, *Voyage of Discovery* assumes all these factors to balance out, for the sake of simplicity.

Attacks

Ships attack much like characters. Whoever is commanding a gun crew makes the attack roll, using his Base Attack Bonus, Dexterity modifier and any feats that may apply (such as Attack Focus). If no PC is commanding the gun crew, use the attack bonus of the crew unit, as detailed below in Crew Quality and Morale section.

Maneuvering Ships

This section covers maneuvering and moving ships as they fight.

Points of Sail

There are 8 points of sail for any sailing vessel, relative to the wind direction. Where a ship is relative to the wind direction is vitally important and will determine a ship's options during combat. Indeed, being upwind of your opponent, known as the weather gage, is often the determining factor in which ship wins a battle.

The 8 points of sail are (listed in clockwise order): 1 Into the Wind; Close Hauled (Starboard); 3 Beam Reach (Starboard); 4 Broad Reach (Starboard); 5 Running; 6 Broad Reach (Port); 7 Beam Reach (Port); 8 Close Hauled (Port).

Each point of sail has an effect on the ship's handling and maneuverability.

Into the Wind (maneuverability –4/-8 in high wind): A ship cannot sail directly into the wind. Even passing through this bearing is dangerous and can lead to a complete loss of wind in the sails, known as being "in irons". When passing through this bearing, a ship's helmsman must make a Seamanship check (with the –4/-8 penalty for being into the wind) or have his ship go in irons.

A ship in irons has a Maneuverability of 0 (which means its Defense is 0 as well). It can only move backwards in the direction of the wind 1 square per round (25 feet). After 1-6 rounds the helmsman may make a Seafaring check (DC 15) to bring the ship back under way.

Close Hauled (maneuverability –2/-4 in high winds; movement 50%/25%): Close hauled means a ship "trims" its sails, pulling them in close rather than letting them billow wide. This allows a ship to sail upwind at an angle at one-half its normal speed, one-quarter in high winds.

Beam Reach (maneuverability +0; movement 150%): Moving perpendicular to the wind is the fastest *safe* point of sail for a ship.

Broad Reach (maneuverability +0; movement normal): Moving at an angle away from the wind provides a nice balance of movement and maneuverability.

Running (maneuverability –2/-4; movement 150%/200%): Moving with the wind directly at your back is as fast as moving at a beam reach to the wind and is faster during high winds. However, this point of sail is also tricky in that a ship has to be constantly helmed to keep the wind from blowing it off course.

Moving at this speed during high winds is exceptionally dangerous. The ship's helmsman must make a Seamanship check every hour of travel. Failing this check means the ship is blown into the broad reach or beam reach point of sail, in either direction (25% of moving to any of the four possible points of sail).

If this happens, a ship suffers 6d6 points of damage to its rigging.

Ship Movement

After the helmsman of a ship turns the ship, declines to turn the ship or fails to turn the ship (because he failed his Helmsman check), a ship moves an amount equal to its movement rate, modified by any damage and its current point of sail. Ships *must* move each round.

If less movement is desired, a ship can either pick a point of sail with a modifier that reduces the ship's movement, or the ship can go "close hauled" regardless of its current point of sail, pulling in its sails and thus reducing the ship's speed to 50%.

Weather Conditions

The game master might wish to determine the weather for an adventure as part of adventure preparation, working it into the storyline. For example, if the game master wishes to run a battle against an enemy privateer, a random roll might not be desired, since a hurricane would make the battle he wants to be the climax of the adventure impossible.

If random weather generation is desired, either on the fly or during adventure preparation, roll on the table below to determine the initial weather condition. This is usually rolled after several days, once a vessel has lost sight of land.

Chapter VII: Adventuring

While a Captain rules his vessel with absolute authority, he still takes orders from his superiors. The following section provides the game master with some advice on what those orders might be and how to turn them into adventures.

On station

Being "on station", assigned to a particular spot, is not a very desirable assignment. It's better than being *on land* but not much. Basically, this is a long-form "hurry up and wait" assignment. The crew scrambles to get to their assigned location as soon as possible and then they wait for something to happen. And wait.

Defending: This means the crew is attempting to defend the waters it is assigned to from enemy vessels. Often this is a fleet operation carried out by numerous ships, to defend from a naval invasion through certain waters. The fleet assigned to prevent an invasion of the Island Kingdom by the Mad Emperor has been conducting this necessary but wholly unglamorous duty for years, though individual ships are rotated in an out at 18 month intervals.

Blockade: This is a slightly more offensive variation on the defending assignment. A ship (usually a squadron or fleet) are sent to an enclosed body of water, such as a bay and ordered to prevent any ships from entering or leaving that area. This can bottle up a fleet in a harbor, rendering it useless.

Roaming

Being given a roaming assignment is greatly preferred over being on station. The Captain and his vessel are out on the open water, able to use their initiative and judgment and most importantly *capture prizes*.

Interdiction: This is a form of blockade except the commander is not required to stay in his waters all the time. He is allowed to pursue any vessel that comes within the range he has been assigned to and either sink it or capture it as a prize. Once the vessel has been sunk or captured, the vessel returns to its "home waters" and the hunt for vessels begins again.

Escort: The ship has been assigned to escort a weaker vessel safely to its destination. These orders are usually vague and often interpreted to allow the commander to attack any ship not flying friendly flags that gets a little too close. As long as the assigned vessel reaches its destination safely, any attacks carried out by the commander will be viewed as *initiative*. Of course, if the commander strays too far away from his charge chasing some choice merchant vessel and allows it to be sunk, the word more often ascribed to his actions is *insubordination*.

Exploration: This assignment can be both exhilarating and daunting. The commander is ordered to strike out into unknown territory and document what's there, then return home. Usually discovering a new land is sufficient to fulfill this assignment. The ship will be given some specialized crew to carry out this assignment, typically a cartographer to make updated maps and a naturalist to document the exotic plants and animals there.

Cutting Out

This is a special type of mission that is often combined with a blockade. A small group of men are sent into a port to board and capture an enemy ship and sail it out of harbor. The term "cutting out" comes from the final act of cutting the ship loose from its moorings so it can be sailed to freedom.

This is a stealth mission and the boarding party usually enters the harbor in small boats under cover of darkness. They attempt to take the vessel as quickly as possible and sail it out before anyone at port realizes what is happening. Since such missions usually take place in an enemy port, getting out quickly is advisable as reinforcements and possibly land-based cannons are close at hand.

Land Assault

Again this is usually something undertaken by ships on blockade. In this case, the blockade is a prelude to an assault. There might be ships in harbor that the blockading fleet would gladly meet in battle but shore based cannons prevent this. A force is sent in, usually under cover of darkness and in small boats, to assault this fort and silence its cannons, then signal the forces at sea that the naval battle can begin.

Espionage

Lone vessels are often dispatched into enemy waters, flying enemy flags to deliver spies and saboteurs into enemy lands. These missions will either be given to ships that