

OFFICIAL RULES

ARCANA BEAST

Core Rulebook

Dice

Beasts

Binders

Combat

Growth

Empathy is the deepest bond

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CHAPTER

Dice Mechanics

Roll a pool of dice and count successes. Dice never subtract successes. Success thresholds stay fixed; larger dice (higher Stage) raise the chance each die succeeds. Advantages change the success threshold or add dice, keeping every character able to contribute.

Pool construction:

Beast Binder

Stat + relevant Talent Rank + modifiers. Always uses d6.

Arcana Beast

Stat + relevant Quality Rank + **Special Attack** Rank when applicable + modifiers. Die size comes from Stage (see `stage_die`).

Stage die size (Arcana Beast only; Beast Binders always use d6):

Stage	Die
Stage 0	d6
Stage 1	d6
Stage 2	d8
Stage 3	d10
Stage 4	d12

NOTE

Beast Binders have no Stage and always roll d6. Stage advantage ($\pm$ dice) stacks with die size.

Roll modes (a die counts as one success when it meets or exceeds the threshold):

Mode	Success Range	Description
normal	4+	Each die showing 4 or higher counts as one success.
boost	3+	Each die showing 3 or higher counts as one success.
setback	5+	Each die showing 5 or higher counts as one success.

double boost	2+	Reserved for exceptional advantages. Each die showing 2 or higher counts as one success.
double setback	6+	Reserved for exceptional disadvantages. Each die showing 6 or higher counts as one success.

Tests:

Opposed Test

Both sides roll. Higher successes wins; ties favour the defender or preserve the current situation.

Costly Success

When a roll misses its Difficulty by exactly one, the GM may offer success with a meaningful cost, complication, or hard choice.

Difficulty ratings:

Rating	Successes Needed
routine	1
challenging	2
hard	3
heroic	4
legendary	5

Modifier rules:

- One **Boost** and one **Setback** cancel each other.
- Two Boosts become **Double Boost**. Two Setbacks become **Double Setback**. Additional sources add or remove one die instead.
- Stage difference adds or removes one attack die per Stage, capped at two dice. It never changes roll mode. Die size from Stage stacks with this modifier.
- Elemental advantage grants **Boost**. Elemental disadvantage grants **Setback**.

Arcana Beast

Stats & Derived Stats

Arcana Beast use five B.E.A.S.T. stats:

Stat	Abbr	Governs
Brawn	BRN	Physical attacks and Damage
Endurance	END	HP and resisting hardship
Agility	AGI	Dodge, movement, and Initiative
Spirit	SPR	Connection, courage, and influence
Technique	TEC	Precision and Special Attack Uses

Stat distribution at creation:

Stage	Base per stat	Bonus points	Max per stat
Stage 0	1	5	3
Stage 1	1	10	4
Stage 2	1	12	6
Stage 3	1	15	6
Stage 4	1	20	6

Derived stats by Stage:

Derived Stat	Stage 0	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
HP	2 × Endurance	7 + (2 × Endurance)	10 + (2 × Endurance)	13 + (2 × Endurance)	16 + (2 × Endurance)
Damage	Brawn	Brawn + 1	Brawn + 2	Brawn + 3	Brawn + 4
Dodge	Agility	Agility	Agility	Agility	Agility
Initiative	Agility	Agility	Agility	Agility	Agility
Special Attack Uses		TEC	TEC	TEC	TEC
Social Influence	SPR	SPR	SPR	SPR	SPR

NOTE

Classification never grants stat bonuses. It grants fictional permissions, habitat familiarity, and social affinity.

Evolved-form stats: Every evolved form assigns the bonus-point budget for

its Stage: 12 at Stage 2, 15 at Stage 3, and 20 at Stage 4.

- Each stat begins at 1 and cannot exceed 6 in an evolved form.

Maximum stat in an evolved ...

- 6
- Forms specialise rather than automatically improving every stat.

Classifications

Classification describes body, instincts, and habitat affinity. It does not modify stats.

Classification	Emoji	Favoured Environment	Description
Beast		Grasslands, forests, natural environments	Often have mammalian features like fur, paws, tails, and snouts. They typically favour grasslands, forests, and other natural environments.
Bird		Aerial environments, high places, mountains, tall trees	Often have avian features like feathers, wings, beaks, and talons. They typically favour aerial environments and high places like mountains and tall trees.
Bug		Underground environments	Often have insectoid features like chitinous shells, antennae, and multiple limbs. They typically favour underground environments.
Dragon		Rocky, mountainous environments (varies by Element)	Often have draconic and/or dinosaur-like features like scales, horns, wings, and claws. They typically favour rocky, mountainous environments (varies based on Element).
Fish		Underwater environments	Often have aquatic features like fins, scales, and gills. They typically favour underwater environments.

Flora		Environments with rich soil and plant life	Often have plant-like features such as leaves, bark, roots, and flowers. They typically favour environments with rich soil and plant life.
Ghost		Dark, spooky environments	Often have ethereal, translucent, or otherwise incorporeal features. They typically favour dark, spooky environments.
Humanoid		Varies between individuals	Often have human-like features such as upright posture, hands, and facial features. Their favoured environments vary between individuals.
Machine		Urban environments	Often have mechanical features like metal plating, gears, wires, and digital displays. They typically favour urban environments.
Mineral		Underground environments	Often have rocky or crystalline features like gems, ore, and stone. They typically favour underground environments.
Slime		Varies between individuals	Often have gelatinous, liquid, or otherwise amorphous features. Their favoured environments vary between individuals.
Unknown		Varies between individuals	Any Arcana Beast that doesn't fit into other Classifications. They might be amorphous or have otherwise unusual features. Their favoured environments vary between individuals.

Classification rules:

- Grants **Boost** to any rolls made when interacting with non-hostile Arcana Beast of the same Classification.
- Grants **Boost** to any rolls made to explore or navigate through their favoured environment.
- Classification never grants stat bonuses.

Elements & Matchups

15 elements. In battle, compare the attack element to the defender's innate element:

- If the attacking Element is strong against the defender's Element, the attack roll gains **Boost**.
- If the attacking Element is weak against the defender's Element, the attack roll suffers **Setback**.

Element	Emoji	Theme	Strong Against	Weak Against
Flame		Fire, heat, explosions, passion	Nature, Frost	Tide, Stone
Tide		Water, ice, mist, adaptation	Flame, Stone	Volt, Nature
Nature		Plants, poison, regeneration, beasts	Tide, Stone	Flame, Frost
Stone		Earth, metal, crystal, defense	Flame, Volt	Tide, Nature
Volt		Electricity, speed, technology	Tide, Air	Stone, Void
Air		Wind, storms, flight, sound	Nature, Spirit	Volt, Frost
Frost		Ice, cold, slowing, preservation	Nature, Air	Flame, Metal
Light		Radiance, healing, order, hope	Void, Spirit	Shadow, Arcane
Shadow		Darkness, stealth, fear, curses	Light, Mind	Spirit, Flame
Spirit		Souls, ghosts, dreams, supernatural	Shadow, Mind	Light, Void
Mind		Psychic power, illusion, knowledge	Beast, Arcane	Shadow, Spirit
Beast		Physical instinct, claws, primal power	Mind, Nature	Metal, Arcane
Metal		Machinery, armor, weapons, construction	Frost, Beast	Flame, Volt
Arcane		Raw magic, cosmic energy, mutation	Beast, Light	Mind, Void
Void		Corruption, entropy, antimatter, glitches	Arcane, Volt	Light, Spirit

NOTE

Wheel rule: Every Element is strong against exactly two Elements and weak against exactly two. There is no neutral Element — each Arcana Beast is bound to one of the fifteen. **Special Attack** element: When using **Special Attacks**, compare the Attack Element to the defender's Innate Element.

Natures

Each Nature grants a unique passive feat to the Arcana Beast. These feats reflect the Arcana Beast's personality and trigger under specific conditions during play.

NOTE

It's recommended that a beastbinder and their Arcana Beast have different, perhaps even opposing natures, so that their relationship is dynamic and interesting.

Nature	Emoji	Positive	Negative	Feat	Effect
Balanced		Fair	Indecisive	Even Keel	Once per scene, when this Arcana Beast would suffer a negative condition, they may negate it if they have not gained a positive condition this scene.
Valiant		Courageous	Reckless	Fearless Charge	Gains Boost on attack rolls made against an opponent with higher HP than itself.
Serene		Peaceful	Apathetic	Inner Stillness	Gains Boost on all Dodge rolls while it has not attacked this combat encounter.
Cautious		Careful	Fearful	Calculated Step	Once per encounter, before rolling, may choose to reroll any 1s on its dice pool.
Cheerful		Upbeat	Naive	High Spirits	When recovering from being Knocked Out, recovers with 1 additional HP.

Clever		Intelligent	Scheming	Read the Room	Once per combat, the beastbinder may ask the GM one question about an enemy (weakness, special attack, condition) and receive an honest answer.
Cool		Collected	Aloof	Composure	Immune to the Rattled condition.
Curious		Inquisitive	Nosy	Keen Eye	Gains Boost on all rolls made in exploration or investigation outside of combat.
Eager		Confident	Overambitious	First to Act	Gains +2 to Initiative rolls.
Fierce		Determined	Aggressive	Relentless	When this Arcana Beast knocks out an opponent, it may immediately take one additional action this turn.
Friendly		Kind	Gullible	Open Heart	Gains Boost on all social rolls made toward non-hostile characters.
Tender		Kind	Weak-willed	Gentle Presence	Once per scene, may restore 2 HP to an allied Arcana Beast as a free action.
Headstrong		Brave	Stubborn	Unwavering	Cannot be moved, pushed, or repositioned by enemy effects against its will.
Joyful		Merry	Foolish	Infectious Energy	Allied Arcana Beast within the same scene gain +1 die on their first roll each combat.
Lively		Energetic	Restless	Burst of Speed	Once per combat, may act before its turn order without using its normal action.

Solitary		Calm	Disconnected	Self-Reliant	Gains Boost on all rolls when acting without any allied support or assistance.
Obedient		Attentive	Dependant	Perfect Sync	Once per scene, when the beastbinder uses Direct or Encourage on this Arcana Beast, the beastbinder gains Boost on their next roll that supports the beast.
Studious		Knowledgeable	Awkward	Tactical Memory	After observing an enemy use a Special Attack once, gains Boost on Dodge rolls against that same attack for the rest of the encounter.
Mischievous		Playful	Troublesome	Dirty Trick	Once per encounter, may impose Setback on an enemy's next roll as a free action.
Easygoing		Carefree	Lazy	No Rush	Gains Boost on any roll made on the last turn of a combat round.
Prankish	□	Fun-loving	Distracting	Bait and Switch	Once per scene, may swap its position with an ally or enemy within range as a free action.
Wary		Alert	Nervous	Ambush Sense	Cannot be surprised. Gains Boost on Initiative rolls when ambushed or attacked first.
Sheepish		Modest	Self-doubting	Underestimated	The first attack this Arcana Beast makes each combat is made with Boost, as enemies don't expect much from it.

Humble		Selfless	Underconfident	For the Team	When this Arcana Beast uses an action to aid an ally rather than attack, the ally gains +2 dice on their next roll.
Reserved		Thoughtful	Withdrawn	Patient Precision	If this Arcana Beast did not act on its previous turn, its next attack or Special Attack roll gains Boost.
Feisty		Spirited	Defiant	Chip on the Shoulder	Gains Boost on all rolls while at or below half its maximum HP.
Vigilant		Watchful	Paranoid	Ever-Ready	May always act in a surprise round, even if ambushed. Gains +1 to Initiative.

Special Attacks

Availability

Every Arcana Beast of Stage 1 or higher has a **Special Attack**. Stage 0 Arcana Beast have no **Special Attack**.

Uses per encounter

Number of Uses equals the Arcana Beast's Technique score per Combat Encounter.

Restoration

All Uses are restored when the Combat Encounter ends (Catching Your Breath).

Extra use

Arcana Beast who run out of Uses may spend 1 **Stamina** to get one extra use per encounter, or use one extra use for free once per scene.

Components:

Field	Rule
Name	All Special Attacks have names. Pick something fitting and descriptive.
Element	Special Attacks have an affinity to a particular Element (Attack Element). Often the same as the Arcana Beast's Element, but can be different.

Rank	Rank equals the number of dice added to the attack pool when using the Special Attack.
Uses	Equal to the Arcana Beast's Technique score — Restored at end of Combat Encounter
Effect	Choose one effect for the Special Attack, or work with GM to create custom effects.

Effects:

Effect	Description
Block-Break	Deal half damage and make the target Vulnerable (Setback on Dodge).
Efficient	First use each Combat Encounter doesn't consume a use.
Energy Drain	Heal HP equal to the target's Stage when dealing damage.
Explosive	Deal half damage to main target, plus damage equal to your Stage to all nearby enemies.
Heavy Strike	Deal extra damage equal to 1 + Rank on a hit.
Misdirect	Disorient target until your next turn in addition to normal damage.
Multi-Element	Choose which Element the attack uses each time it is used. Can be taken multiple times for additional elements.
Multi-Hit	Target multiple enemies by spending additional Uses. Single attack roll against highest Dodge. One target per use spent.
Poison Strike	Deal no damage but Poison the target to deal Brawn damage each turn. Lasts until Combat Encounter ends.
Overcharge	Spend multiple Uses to multiply Damage by Uses spent. Become Incapacitated if this leaves you with 0 Uses.
Power Transfer	Give Boosted condition to multiple nearby allies instead of attacking.
Quick Strike	Gain Boost if the target hasn't acted yet this encounter.

Sap	Deal half damage and Weaken target (target deals half damage) instead of normal damage.
Stunning Strike	Deal no damage but Stun the target, making them skip their next turn.
Sure Strike	On miss, still deal half damage.
Backdraft	After the attack resolves, move the user one range band without triggering reactions.
Barrier	After attacking, grant one nearby ally +1 Dodge until the user's next turn.
Beacon	On a hit, allied attacks against the target gain Boost until the start of your next turn.
Chain	After a hit, deal damage equal to Rank to one different nearby enemy.
Cleanse	Instead of bonus damage, remove one negative condition from the user or a nearby ally.
Crater	The target's space becomes difficult terrain until the end of the encounter.
Delayed	Place the attack as a visible trap; it triggers when a creature enters the space.
Disarming	Deal half damage and force the target to drop one held item.
Echoing	If the attack misses, repeat it at the start of your next turn without spending a Use.
Feinting	Choose an ally; their next attack against this target gains Boost.
Grasping	Deal half damage and prevent the target from changing range bands until your next turn.
Guarded	Until your next turn, reduce the first damage you take by Rank.
Launching	On a hit, push the target one range band away.
Lingering	Repeat damage equal to Rank at the start of the target's next turn.
Merciful	When this attack would reduce a target to 0 HP, leave it at 1 HP and clear one hostile condition.
Nullifying	On a hit, end one temporary buff or barrier affecting the target.

Resonant	Gain +1 damage for each different allied Element used against this target this round, maximum +3.
Reversal	If used immediately after taking damage, make the attack with Boost.
Silencing	Deal half damage; the target cannot use Special Attacks until the end of its next turn.
Tethering	Link the target to a nearby object or creature; moving apart requires a Brawn test.

The core rulebook also lists these simpler effects for **Special Attacks**, particularly used during character creation.:

Effect	Description
Accurate	Attack is made with Boost.
Area	Attack hits multiple targets.
Brutal	Attack deals +1 Damage.
Defensive	Grants +1 Dodge until next turn.
Draining	Restores 1 HP when attack hits.
Empowering	Grants +1 to all Stats until next turn.
Hindering	Target gets -1 to all Stats until next turn.
Piercing	Ignores 1 point of Dodge.
Reliable	Minimum 1 success guaranteed.
Stunning	Target loses their next action if hit.

Zero Power

Availability

Optional from Stage 1 onward. Recommended from Stage 2+ for dramatic balance.

Activation

Can only be used when the **Zero Power** trigger condition is currently true.

Frequency

Default once per Scene or Combat Encounter.

Balance

Zero Power should feel stronger than a normal **Special Attack** but not

automatically end every fight.

Build requirements:

- A custom name
- A clearly written trigger condition
- A unique mechanical or narrative effect
- GM approval for balance

Example triggers: "Bond Surge is active"; "Arcana Beast is at or below 25% HP"; "An ally was knocked to 0 HP this round"; "Elemental terrain matches the user's innate element"; "The Arcana Beast has at least 2 active conditions"

Qualities

Starting count

1 at Rank 1

Max per Stage

2

Carry forward to higher Sta...

Yes

- Each Arcana Beast Stage can have up to 2 Qualities, which apply at that Stage and all higher Stages.

Quality	Category	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3
Forcefield	Defense	Block 1 attack per battle	Block 2 attacks per battle	Block 3 attacks per battle or 1 area attack
Rocket Launcher	Attack	Deal +1 damage to single target	Deal +2 damage or hit adjacent enemy	Deal +3 damage or hit all adjacent enemies
Healing Touch	Support	Heal 2 HP once per battle	Heal 3 HP twice per battle	Heal 4 HP three times per battle
Danger Sense	Utility	Cannot be surprised in combat	Gain +1 Initiative when danger is present	Warn allies, granting party +1 Initiative
Natural Armour	Defense	Reduce all damage by 1 (minimum 1)	Reduce all damage by 2 (minimum 1)	Reduce all damage by 3 (minimum 1)
Flight	Movement	Fly short distances, avoid ground hazards	Sustained flight, +1 Dodge vs ground attacks	Expert aerial combat, +2 Dodge vs ground attacks
Telekinesis	Utility	Move small objects, manipulate simple mechanisms	Move medium objects, disarm opponents	Move large objects, throw multiple items as attacks

Camouflage	Stealth	Hide in natural environments	Hide in any environment, +1 to stealth	Near-invisibility, +2 to stealth and first attack
Teleport	Movement	Short-range teleport once per battle	Medium-range teleport twice per battle	Long-range teleport three times per battle
Counterattack	Attack	Counter once per battle when hit	Counter twice per battle when hit	Counter every time hit, but at -1 damage
Pack Tactics	Support	+1 damage when ally is adjacent	+1 damage and +1 accuracy when ally is adjacent	+2 damage and +1 accuracy when any ally is nearby
Thick Hide	Defense	Resist 1 point of physical damage	Resist 2 points of physical damage	Resist 3 points of physical damage
Quick Reflexes	Speed	+1 Initiative in combat	+2 Initiative and can act twice on first turn	+3 Initiative and always act first
Elemental Body	Special	Immune to own element, +1 damage with element attacks	Resist opposing elements, +2 damage with element attacks	Absorb own element for healing, +3 damage with element attacks
Burrowing	Movement	Burrow through soft earth	Burrow through hard earth and soft stone	Burrow through any material, emerge for surprise attacks
Intimidating Presence	Mental	Weak enemies may flee or hesitate	Enemies take -1 to attack rolls when first engaged	All enemies take -1 to attack rolls throughout combat
Regeneration	Healing	Heal 1 HP at start of each turn	Heal 2 HP at start of each turn	Heal 3 HP at start of each turn, regrow lost limbs
Energy Absorption	Special	Absorb energy attacks for half damage	Absorb energy attacks for no damage, store 1 charge	Absorb energy attacks for healing, store 2 charges
Phase Shift	Defense	Become incorporeal for 1 turn, once per battle	Become incorporeal for 1 turn, twice per battle	Become incorporeal for 2 turns, twice per battle
Multi-Limb	Utility	Make one extra simple action per turn	Make one extra attack or complex action per turn	Make two extra actions of any type per turn
Venomous	Attack	Attacks apply Poison 1 on a hit	Attacks apply Poison 2 on a hit; venom ignores natural armour	Attacks apply Poison 3; poisoned targets are also Slowed
Critical Strike	Attack	On a max roll, deal +1 bonus damage	On a max roll, deal +2 bonus damage and ignore Thick Hide	On a max roll, deal +3 bonus damage and inflict Stunned 1
Mirror Shield	Defense	Reflect 1 damage to attacker when hit	Reflect 2 damage to attacker when hit	Reflect 3 damage and apply Dazed to attacker once per battle

Retract	Defense	Once per battle, reduce incoming damage by half for one hit	Once per battle, become immune to physical damage for one turn	Twice per battle, become immune to physical damage for one turn
Battle Cry	Support	Once per battle, give one ally +1 damage on their next attack	Once per battle, give all allies +1 damage on their next attack	Once per battle, give all allies +2 damage and +1 accuracy for one turn
Symbiotic Link	Support	Beast Binder may spend 2 Stamina to restore 1 HP to this Arcana Beast	Beast Binder may spend 2 Stamina to restore 2 HP; link works in reverse	When either would be knocked out, the other may sacrifice 3 HP to prevent it once per battle
Aquatic	Movement	Move freely in water without penalty; breathe underwater	+1 damage to attacks made while in water; ignore aquatic difficult terrain	+2 damage in water; pull enemies into water as a free action once per battle
Wall Crawling	Movement	Climb vertical surfaces at normal movement speed	Climb ceilings; enemies on the ground take -1 to hit this Arcana Beast	Drop from the ceiling as a surprise attack for +2 damage once per battle
Echolocation	Utility	Detect hidden or invisible enemies within short range	Detect enemies through walls; immune to Blind condition	Map the full battlefield at the start of combat; allies may use your senses
Mimic	Utility	Appear as a mundane object; enemies must succeed a check to notice	Copy the silhouette and colouring of another creature type	Perfect mimicry of any creature; gain +2 to first attack from disguise
Shadow Walk	Stealth	Move between shadowed areas without triggering reactions	Reposition to any shadowed spot once per battle as a free action	Emerge from any shadow within range for a surprise attack with +2 damage
Scent Masking	Stealth	Cannot be tracked or detected by smell	Emit a chosen false scent to misdirect pursuers	False scent can be used to lure enemies into traps or ambush positions
Charm	Mental	Once per battle, one enemy hesitates and loses its next action	Once per battle, one enemy is Charmed and will not attack this Arcana Beast for one turn	Once per battle, Charm an enemy into attacking its own ally
Psychic Scream	Mental	Daze one enemy for 1 turn	Daze all nearby enemies for 1 turn	Daze all nearby enemies for 1 turn and deal 1 psychic damage each
Second Wind	Healing	Once per battle, when HP drops to 1, immediately heal 2 HP	Once per battle, when HP drops to 1, immediately heal 4 HP	Once per battle, when HP drops to 1, heal 4 HP and remove one condition
Cleansing Pulse	Healing	Remove one negative condition from self once per battle	Remove one negative condition from self or one ally once per battle	Remove all negative conditions from all allies once per battle

Dual Affinity	Special	Gain immunity to one additional element	Gain immunity and +1 damage with one additional element	Fully wield a second element: immunity, +2 damage, and elemental synergy effects
Apex Presence	Special	Enemies within range take -1 to all rolls on their first turn	Enemies within range take -1 to all rolls for the first two turns	All enemies take -1 to all rolls for the entire battle; allies gain +1 to attack
Afterimage	Speed	Attackers have a 1-in-6 chance of hitting the afterimage instead	Attackers have a 2-in-6 chance of hitting the afterimage instead	Attackers have a 2-in-6 chance of missing; repositioning does not trigger reactions
Blitz	Speed	Once per battle, make two attacks in one action at -1 damage each	Once per battle, make two attacks in one action at normal damage	Once per battle, make three attacks in one action at normal damage
Anchor Stance	Defense	Ignore the first forced movement each battle	Ignore forced movement and gain +1 Dodge while stationary	Adjacent allies also resist forced movement
Aether Compass	Utility	Detect nearby aether traces	Identify direction and rough distance	Read the age and emotional tone of a trace
Bloomwake	Healing	An ally crossing your trail heals 1 HP once per battle	The trail also clears minor terrain hazards	Two allies may benefit and remove one minor condition
Bodyguard	Defense	Intercept one nearby attack per battle	Intercept twice and reduce damage by 1	Counter after an interception once per battle
Bridge Builder	Movement	Cross one short obstacle safely	Carry nearby allies across	Create a scene-long route through difficult terrain
Calming Presence	Mental	Gain Boost when comforting a creature	Nearby allies resist Rattled	Clear Rattled from the group once per scene
Conductor	Support	One ally gains +1 Initiative	Swap initiative with a willing ally	Two allies may act consecutively once per battle
Crystal Memory	Utility	Record one short sight or sound	Replay a full scene with accurate detail	Share a stored memory directly with an ally
Disarming Flourish	Attack	Trade 1 damage to disarm a loose item	Disarm without losing damage once per battle	Also leave the target Vulnerable
Echo Location	Utility	Navigate in darkness	Locate hidden moving creatures nearby	Reveal concealed passages and invisible movement
Elemental Shelter	Support	Protect the group from ordinary weather	Grant +1 Dodge against ranged attacks inside	The shelter restores 1 HP during a short rest

Far Step	Movement	Clear a nearby gap or obstacle	Move between range bands without penalty	Carry an ally and ignore reactions while leaping
Gentle Giant	Support	Handle fragile objects despite great Brawn	Restrain without dealing damage with Boost	Shield smaller creatures, granting them +1 Dodge
Gravitic Pull	Utility	Pull a small object from nearby	Pull a willing ally or loose obstacle	Pull an enemy one range band on a successful Technique test
Horizon Sight	Utility	Ignore ordinary distance penalties to notice details	See through fog, rain, or glare	Spot ambushes before entering their range
Mimicry	Stealth	Copy a familiar sound	Copy a heard voice after brief study	Create layered sounds to distract a group
Momentum	Attack	Gain +1 damage after moving a range band	Keep the bonus until you stop or miss	At full momentum also gain Boost on the attack
Shared Senses	Mental	Share one sense at Close range	Share all senses across the scene	Include one willing ally in the link
Weatherwise	Utility	Predict local weather for the next hour	Find shelter before a hazard arrives	Grant the group Boost on preparation against natural hazards

Evolution & Stages

Stage	Name	Special Attack Rank	Description
0	Slumbering Rest		Vulnerable resting form; wild baseline with no Special Attacks.
1	Stabilized Companion	1	Everyday bonded form; permanent baseline anchored by the partnership.
2	First Breakthrough	2	Protective surge born from the pair's first major breakthrough.
3	Mature Manifest	3	Massive elemental form expressing deep mutual trust.
4	Absolute Culmination	4	Legendary shared absolute truth of the partnership.

Evolution Paths — an evolved form specialises along a Path rather than improving every stat:

Path	Focus	Suggested Boosts
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Courage	Protection, bold action, and physical power	Brawn, Endurance
Wisdom	Planning, control, and technical mastery	Technique, Agility
Harmony	Healing, support, and emotional connection	Spirit, Endurance
Freedom	Movement, self-expression, and adaptation	Agility, Spirit
Instinct	Primal reaction, hunting, and raw survival	Brawn, Agility
Wonder	Curiosity, discovery, and creative insight	Technique, Spirit
Resolve	Grit, perseverance, and enduring hardship	Endurance, Technique
Strain	Unstable power born from fear, coercion, or unresolved harm	Any

Unlocking a new Stage:

- Achieve the form's unique Breakthrough in play.
- Define the form's Path, visible changes, two Form Boosts, Gift, and Tradeoff.

Evolving in play:

Trigger

The form's emotional trigger must be true in the current scene.

Cost

Evolving to the highest unlocked Stage is free when its trigger is true. Lower unlocked Stages are always free.

Action cost

Immediate; does not use the Arcana Beast's Action.

Duration

Highest Stage lasts for one scene or encounter.

Forced evolution

Evolving without a true trigger produces a Strain expression of the form. The beastbinder gains a **Setback** on their next Command, or the Arcana Beast gains 1 temporary Harm until treated.

NOTE

Stage die: Pool die size by Stage: 0–1 use d6, Stage 2 uses d8, Stage 3 uses d10, Stage 4 uses d12. Beast Binders always use d6.

NOTE

Stage advantage: Add one attack die per Stage above the target, or remove one per Stage below, capped at two dice. Stage never changes roll mode. Die size from Stage stacks with this $\pm$ dice modifier.

Creating a form:

- Choose a Path.
- Write the Breakthrough that unlocks it and the emotional Trigger that activates it.
- Choose Classification and Element; either may change.
- Assign two Form Boosts, maximum stat 6.
- Choose one new Quality or **Special Attack**.
- Write one Gift and one Tradeoff.
- Choose the form's name and appearance.

CHAPTER

Beast Binders

Stats

Stat	Used For
Brawn	Lifting, Breaking, Grappling, Striking
Endurance	Withstanding pain, Long exertion, Harsh environments, Pushing through strain
Agility	Dodging, Sneaking, Acrobatics, Quick reactions
Spirit	Persuasion, Inspiration, Resisting fear, Emotional connection
Technique	Research, Problem-solving, Fine control, Complex tasks

Distribution: base 1/stat, distribute 10 bonus points, max 4 per stat. At creation, each Beast Binder starts with 1 in each stat and distributes 10 bonus points across BEAST stats.

Types

- Type Feature grants **Boost** on rolls when the Type's specialty applies
- Each player in a group must be a different Type: Yes

Special Item

A Special Item cannot be permanently lost unless Player and GM agree. When it plays a significant role in the story, the Beast Binder gains **Boost** on one roll that follows from that moment.

Type	Type Feature
Bookworm	Knowledge is Power
Computer Wizard	I Know This System!
Delinquent	Don't Mess with Me!
Free Spirit	Luminous Being
Gamer	Min-Maxed
Gentle Heart	Kindness Matters
Grown-Up	The Responsible One
Jock	Let's Do This!
Little Beast Binder	Boundless Enthusiasm
Loner	I Work Alone
Nerd	That's My Special Interest!
Popular Beast Binder	All Eyes on Me
Rising Star	Natural Leadership
Rich Beast Binder	You Can Count On Me (and My Money)
Shy Beast Binder	I Just Want to Help
Sporty Beast Binder	Let's Do This!
Theatre Beast Binder	To Be or Not To Be
Troublemaker	Whoops!
Transfer Student	Where I Come From...
Wild Child	Survival Instincts
Young Aristocrat	Social Connections
Arena Guide	Home-Court Insight
School Teacher	Teachable Moment
Field Researcher	Field Notes
Sanctuary Keeper	Safe Haven
Community Coach	Pep Talk

Emergency Responder	Crisis Ready
Workshop Artisan	Built to Last
Park Warden	Know the Trail
Travelling Storykeeper	I Know This Tale
Retired Vanguard	Old Battle Wisdom

NOTE

Each Type also suggests 5 Talents, 3 Flaws, 3 Desires, 3 Special Items, and 3 pieces of Stuff

Talents

Beast Binders start with 2 Talents at Rank 1. Talents add dice to a pool when the Talent is relevant to the action being attempted. Max Rank 3. Categories: Academic knowledge, Physical strengths, Social skills, Creative skills, Descriptive terms (belief or disposition).

NOTE

91 talents available

Flaws

Each Beast Binder chooses 1 Flaw. Whenever a Flaw would make it more difficult for a beastbinder to attempt a Test, they gain **Setback** on the roll.

NOTE

58 flaws available

Desires

Each Beast Binder chooses 1 Desire. When a beastbinder chases their Desire in a way that causes serious problems for their Arcana Beast partner or the rest of the group, they immediately gain 1 XP and create a lasting complication the pair must address.

NOTE

60 desires available

Resources

Resource	Starting	Notes
Stamina	4	Energy used to push beyond ordinary limits and fuel Bond Surge. Recover all Stamina during a safe Long Rest.
Harm Slots	3	Gain Harm when reduced to 0 Stamina or when the fiction causes lasting injury. Each Harm should have a named fictional consequence. At 3 Harm, the Beast Binder cannot safely continue until treated.

CHAPTER

Combat

Combat in Arcana Beast uses success-pool dice. The core loop is simple: roll dice, count successes, compare results. Tactical depth comes from positioning, conditions, stage advantages, combos, beastbinder commands, and smart use of **Special Attacks** and **Stamina**.

Initiative

All characters involved in a Combat Encounter roll for Initiative. Opposed Test using the Arcana Beast's Initiative score (equal to Agility).

- Surprised characters roll with **Setback**
- Relevant Qualities or Talents can add dice to the roll

Turn order

Characters act in order of successes rolled (highest first). Order remains the same throughout the encounter.

Ties

GM can declare a tie or call for another roll.

Beast Binder placement

Beast Binders share the same turn as their Arcana Beast partner and use the Arcana Beast's Initiative roll. The beastbinder performs a Command first, then the Arcana Beast performs an Action.

Distance & Movement

Distance	Description	Movement
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Close	Within arm's reach. Melee attacks can be made. Characters can interact directly.	No movement needed — you're already there.
Near	A short dash away. Most of the same battlefield area. Ranged attacks and some abilities work at this distance.	Can move to Close range as part of your turn without spending your Action.
Far	Across the battlefield or in a different area. Only long-range abilities can reach.	Moving from Far to Near (or Near to Far) requires spending your Action on a Reposition, unless you have a movement Quality like Flight or Teleport.

- On their turn, a character can move from Close to Near (or Near to Close) for free in addition to their Action.
- Moving two distance bands in one turn (e.g., Far to Close) requires spending the Action on a Reposition.
- Difficult terrain (rubble, mud, dense vegetation) may require an Agility Test to move through at normal speed.
- Qualities like Flight, Teleport, or Burrowing can bypass movement restrictions at the GM's discretion.

Actions

On each character's turn, they can perform one Action and move one distance band for free.

Action	Description
Attack	Make a melee attack against a Close target, or a ranged attack against a Close or Near target.
Defend	Focus entirely on defense. Grants Boost on all Dodge rolls until next turn.
Use Special Attack	Perform a special ability (costs a Special Attack Use). Range depends on the attack's nature — melee attacks require Close range, ranged attacks work at Near range.
Use Zero Power	Use a conditional ultimate move. Only available when that Arcana Beast's Zero Power trigger is active. Default limit is once per Scene or Combat Encounter.
Assist	Help a Close ally's next roll by granting them +1 die.

Reposition	Move two distance bands or gain a significant positional advantage (e.g., high ground, cover, flanking). GM determines any Boost or benefit gained.
Evolve	Transform to a higher evolutionary stage (Arcana Beast only). Immediate, does not take an Action.
Guard	Protect a Close ally. Until your next turn, any attack targeting that ally targets you instead. You roll Dodge as normal.
Pass	Choose not to act.
Other	Any other reasonable action as determined by the GM.

Beast Binder Commands

Beast Binders don't fight directly — they direct, support, and inspire their Arcana Beast partner from the sidelines. On their shared turn, the beastbinder performs a Command before their Arcana Beast acts.

Command	Effect	Roll
Direct	Give a clear tactical instruction. The Arcana Beast's next Action this turn gains +1 die.	No roll required.
Encourage	Inspire the Arcana Beast with words of support. Remove one negative condition from the Arcana Beast, or grant +1 die to a Dodge roll this turn.	Spirit Test, Difficulty 1 (automatic for most beastbinders).
Strategize	Analyse the battlefield and identify a weakness or opportunity. On success, the Arcana Beast's next attack this turn ignores one positioning benefit the target has (e.g., Cover, High Ground).	Technique Test, Difficulty 2.
Call Back	Urge the Arcana Beast to return to their Wearable Vessel — Devolve safely or retreat from the field. The Arcana Beast can immediately Devolve one Stage (no roll needed) or attempt to Retreat with Boost.	No roll required.

Use Item	Use an item from the beastbinder's Stuff (catalog inventory or custom gear) to aid the Arcana Beast or affect the battlefield. The GM determines the effect using the item's listed effect text when available.	May require a Brawn or Technique Test depending on the item.
Bond Surge	Channel the bond to push the Arcana Beast beyond its limits. The Arcana Beast gains Boost on all rolls this turn, but the beastbinder takes 1 Stamina damage.	No roll required. Costs 1 Stamina.

Beast Binder in danger: If an enemy targets the beastbinder directly, the Arcana Beast partner can use a reaction to intercept. The Arcana Beast can move to Close range with the beastbinder (if not already) and take the hit instead. The Arcana Beast rolls **Dodge** as normal. (Intercepting uses the Arcana Beast's Action for their next turn.)

Attack & Damage Resolution

- Choose a target enemy within range (Close for melee, Near for ranged)

Build dice pool

Stat + Quality Ranks (+ **Special Attack** Rank if applicable) + any modifiers

- Make Attack Roll

- Target makes a **Dodge** roll to defend (dice = Agility + defensive Quality Ranks)

Miss

If defender equals or exceeds attacker's successes, attack misses — no damage.

Hit

If attacker has more successes, attack hits — deal damage.

Critical hit

If the attacker rolls 3 or more faces showing 6 or higher on their attack roll, the attack is a Critical Hit — deal double base Damage before adding extra successes. Critical Hits are rare and dramatic — they are most likely with large dice pools, higher-Stage dice (d8–d12), **Boosted** attacks, and **Special Attacks** with many bonus dice.

Base damage

Equal to the attacker's Damage score.

Extra damage

+1 damage for each success the attacker rolled beyond the defender's

successes.

Critical damage

On a Critical Hit, base Damage is doubled before adding extra successes.

Combo Attacks

When two or more allied Arcana Beast target the same enemy on consecutive turns, they can perform a Combo Attack for extra impact.

- The second attacker (and any subsequent attacker) gains +1 die to their attack roll
- If both attacks hit, the second attack deals +1 extra damage
- Combos reset if the target acts between the allied attacks
- A third consecutive allied attack on the same target deals +2 extra damage instead of +1

Positioning

Position	Effect
High Ground	Attacker gains +1 die on attack rolls against targets below.
Cover	Defender gains +1 die on Dodge rolls against ranged attacks.
Flanking	When two allies are on opposite sides of a target, both gain +1 die on attack rolls.
Cornered	A cornered target cannot Reposition and rolls Dodge with Setback.
Obscured	Attacks against an Obscured target (fog, darkness, smoke) are made with Setback.

Stage Differences

One Stage below

Remove 1 die from the attack pool.

One Stage above

Add 1 die to the attack pool.

Two+ below

Remove 2 dice from the attack pool.

Two+ above

Add 2 dice to the attack pool.

- Stage difference is capped at two dice and never changes roll mode or Dodge.

Retreat

A character can attempt to flee from combat.

- Retreating requires an Agility Test against Difficulty 2
- On success, the character escapes and is removed from the encounter
- On failure, the character loses their Action for the turn and remains in combat
- Enemies may choose to pursue at the GM's discretion
- A beastbinder using Call Back grants their Arcana Beast Boost on the Retreat roll

Knockout & Devolution at 0 HP

Character is knocked out of the fight (unconscious or totally exhausted).

- Add 1 point to the Critical Gauge
- Gain a Harm

Situation	Test	Pass	Fail
From Stage 2+	Endurance Test, Difficulty 3	Devolve to Stage 1	Devolve to Stage 0
From Stage 1	Endurance Test, Difficulty 2	Remain at Stage 1	Devolve to Stage 0

Critical Gauge

Tracks mounting tension and danger in combat. Starts at 0.

- When PCs are reduced to 0 HP/Stamina (+1 point)
- When Players roll faces showing 6 or higher (+1 point per such face)

Threshold	Effect
3	Minor Critical Move — the GM introduces a complication (reinforcements arrive, terrain shifts, an NPC is endangered).
6	Major Critical Move — a dramatic escalation (the enemy evolves, a new threat emerges, the environment becomes hazardous).
9	Climactic Critical Move — the stakes reach their peak (a boss enters, a catastrophic event triggers, the scene transforms entirely).

End of Combat & Recovery

When

A Combat Encounter ends when there is no longer an active and pressing threat to the PCs.

Catching Your Breath

Regain 1 + Endurance score HP. All **Special Attack Uses** are restored.

Kids in Combat

Beast Binders support their Arcana Beast from the sidelines using Commands (see `beastbinder_commands`). They rarely participate directly in combat.

- When a beastbinder is targeted or fights directly, they use **Stamina** instead of HP.

At 0 Stamina

Same consequences as Arcana Beast at 0 HP.

CHAPTER

Conditions

General rules:

Duration

Unless stated otherwise, negative conditions last until the end of the affected character's next turn.

Persistent

Some conditions (like **Poisoned**) last until the end of the Combat Encounter.

Stacking

The same condition cannot be applied to a target more than once at the same time. A new application refreshes the duration.

Immunity after removal

After a condition is removed or expires, the target cannot have the same condition reapplied until after their next turn.

Removal:

- Beast Binder **Encourage** command can remove one negative condition
- Specific Qualities (e.g., **Healing Touch**) may remove conditions

- All conditions end when the Combat Encounter ends

Positive conditions:

Condition	Effect	Duration
Boosted	Character gains Boost on all their rolls for 1 turn.	1 turn

Negative conditions:

Condition	Effect	Duration
Vulnerable	Character has Setback on Dodge rolls.	Until end of target's next turn.
Disoriented	Character has Setback on Attack rolls.	Until end of target's next turn.
Stunned	Character misses their next turn entirely.	Until the character misses one turn.
Poisoned	Character takes damage equal to the poisoner's Brawn at the end of their turn.	Persistent — lasts until the Combat Encounter ends.
Weakened	Character deals half damage with all attacks.	Until end of target's next turn.
Incapacitated	Character cannot take actions.	Until end of the character's next turn.
Dazed	Character removes 1 die from its next roll.	Until the penalty is applied.
Slowed	Character cannot move a free distance band and must use Reposition to change range.	Until end of target's next turn.
Blinded	Character has Setback on rolls that rely on sight.	Until end of target's next turn.

CHAPTER

Exploration, Social & Recovery

Not every challenge involves fighting. Exploration, social encounters, and skill challenges use the same success-pool dice system as combat, keeping the rules simple and consistent. The GM calls for Tests when the outcome is uncertain and failure has meaningful consequences. If there is no meaningful consequence for failure, no roll is needed — the character simply succeeds.

Exploration Tests

Difficulty	Rating
routine	1
challenging	2
hard	3
heroic	4
legendary	5

Social Encounters

Attitude	Resistance
friendly	1
neutral	2
wary	3
hostile	4

Rest & Recovery

- Short Rest (A brief pause of roughly 15-30 minutes):
 - Arcana Beast recover 1 + Endurance HP
 - All Special Attack Uses are restored
 - Temporary conditions end
 - Beast Binders do NOT recover Stamina from a Short Rest
- Long Rest (A full night's sleep or extended period of downtime):
 - Arcana Beast recover all HP
 - Beast Binders recover all Stamina
 - All Special Attack Uses are restored
 - All temporary conditions end
 - Evolved Arcana Beast in their highest Stage must Devolve

Discovery & the Field Guide

Wild Arcana Beast are characters with needs and habitats, not prizes. Discovery rewards curiosity, care, and understanding.

Step	Name	Result
1	Observe	Learn a visible trait, habit, or warning sign.
2	Understand	Discover its Want, Fear, habitat need, or current problem.
3	Connect	Help it, communicate peacefully, or earn its respect.
4	Befriend	Record it as a Friend, Guide, Rival, or Sanctuary Ally and define one favour it may provide.

Ally roles:

friend

Offers information, companionship, or a small favour.

guide

Grants **Boost** while navigating its habitat.

rival

Returns to challenge the pair and drives growth.

sanctuary_ally

Lives at a safe haven and provides a downtime benefit.

NOTE

Completing a Field Guide entry grants one Discovery Mark. Three Discovery Marks may unlock a new contact, sanctuary improvement, special training opportunity, or campaign clue.

Advancement

Session-end questions (1 XP each):

- Did the pair pursue a meaningful shared purpose?
- Did a Desire or Fear create a meaningful complication?
- Did the group learn something important about an Arcana Beast or the world?
- Did the pair repair harm or change how they understand each other?

Gain 1 XP for each yes answer, maximum 3 XP per session.

XP Cost	Benefit
3	Gain a new Talent or Quality at Rank 1.
4	Increase a Talent or Quality by one Rank, maximum Rank 3.
4	Teach an existing Special Attack a new situational effect.
5	Create a new Special Attack at Rank 1.
5	Increase Beast Binder maximum Stamina by 1, maximum 6.

Evolution advancement

Evolution Stages unlock through a unique Breakthrough achieved in play. No stat threshold gates a Stage — only the story moment and the form's design.

Training

A successful downtime Training scene may establish a combo, prepare for a known rival, or count as the fictional requirement for an XP purchase.