

Green Ronin d20 Writer's Guidelines

The first thing to remember when writing for Green Ronin is that roleplaying is a form of entertainment. There is a time to be technical and a time to be precise, but the first order of business is to entertain the reader and the players. Please avoid the Gygaxian tone (see 1st edition DMG for details) and grad school pretension. What we do should be fun to read and should not require an academic dictionary.

Writing for the d20 System has several associated challenges. We have a license to deal with and we must be careful with how we use and present material.

Here are a few simple guidelines that will save us time during editing and make your turnover clean.

- Never refer to the *D&D* core rulebooks by name. Do not refer to the *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, and *Monster Manual*. This is a violation of WotC's copyrights. When you want to refer to those books, use the abbreviations *PHB*, *DMG*, and *MM* instead and even then avoid giving a page reference. You can reference chapter and header sections. When referencing a section of one of the core rulebooks, bold the section title and always italicize the book abbreviation. Examples include, "see **Chapter Two: Races** in the *PHB* for details" or "see **Tools and Skill Kits** in **Chapter Seven: Equipment** of the *PHB*." Please also avoid the *Core Rulebook I, II, and III* method. That's a White Wolf thing.
- The System Reference Document is your best friend. Use it. Note, while it contains information from the *PHB*, *DMG*, and *MM*, it also includes rules material from the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*, *Epic Level Handbook*, and *Deities and Demigods*. Feel free to use this material as well. Be careful when referencing these books within your work, you must use the following titles: *Psionics Handbook* for anything out of the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*, *Epic Level Handbook* or *ELH* for anything out of the *Epic Level Handbook*. *Deities and Demigods* is a special case. As the title is closed, you cannot refer to it by name.
- Never use or reference material that comes from D&D books apart from the core rulebooks. *Oriental Adventures*, *Manual of the Planes*, and the *Complete* books are not part of the Open Gaming License System Reference Document and are thus out of bounds.
- If you want to use Open Game Content from another source (including WotC's *Unearthed Arcana*), that's fine. Pay close attention to what is deemed open content in the source material that you are using; do NOT use closed material. If in doubt, ask your developer or don't use the material at all. You must include a correct Section 15 with your work, so we can update the OGL properly in the final product. You should also be aware of our OGC policy regarding payment. Basically, we don't pay for material just cut and pasted from another source. If you take OGC and modify it heavily to suit the project, that's fine. If you just take work and change a few proper nouns, that we don't pay for.
- When doing stat blocks or monster design, *always* show your math for skill totals, attack bonuses, and the like. Put these in brackets in red, noting where each bonus comes from (like ability scores, feats, etc). For example, a Small monster's Attack line should look like this: **Attacks:** Small short sword +5 melee [2 base, +2 Str, +1 size] (1d4+2/19–20)
- We general follow the WotC house style. If you have doubts on how to format something like a stat block or a feat, check our products first for a precedent. If there is no precedent in a Green Ronin product, check the *D&D* core rulebooks and follow what you find there.
- Two examples of our standard stat block follow. The first is a blank, and the second is an example of what one should look like. Use this format when statting up characters.

Spell Lists you obviously won't need for every character (Special Attacks and Special Qualities are similar in this regard; a character may have none). This one is presented in a pre-edited state, so you can see how to make it as easy as possible on the editor. As noted, the numbers are in red to "show the math" and make verifying them easier. Note the use of synergy and size bonuses in the skill section, as these are commonly forgotten when doing stat blocks.

With these stat-blocks, delete lines that don't apply. For example, if a monster doesn't have regeneration, fast healing, damage reduction, or all three delete the entries. Also note, in spell entries or spell-like abilities, be sure to enter the spell or effect's DC and melee touch or ranged touch bonus if the spell is used as an attack. For example, ray of enfeeblement (ranged touch +@, DC @)

NAME (BLANK STAT BLOCK)

CR @

Gender race class level

AL Size type (subtype)

Init []; **Senses** Spot +@ [], Listen +@ []; follow-up with Low-Light Vision, Darkvision @ ft., and Scent as applicable

Aura [examples include Aura of Courage, list the aura and the range]

Languages [List primary language, and then the rest in alphabetical order]

AC @ [@ Dex], touch @, flat-footed @; [note feats or abilities that boost AC here]

hp @ (@ HD[]); regeneration/fast healing ; **DR**

Immune

Resist ; SR

Fort +@ [@, @Con], **Ref** +@ [@, @Dex], **Will** +@ [@, @Wis]

Weakness [vulnerabilities and the like]

Spd @ft. (@ squares)

Atk weapon +@ [@, @Str] (@d@+@/@-@/×@) or

ranged weapon +@ [@, @Dex] (@d@+@/@-@/×@)

Space; Reach @@omit if 5/5

Base Atk +@; **Grp** +@ [@, @Str, @size]

Atk Options @@ [put things like Power Attack or Metamagic Feats for sorcerers here, also list special combat techniques gained from class features, templates and so on]

Special Atk @@

Combat Gear @@ [scrolls, potions, wands, and so on]

Spells Prepared (CL th):

2nd-@@, @@

1st-@@, @@

Spell-Like Abilities (CL th):

1/day-@@

Abilities Str @, Dex @, Con @, Int @, Wis @, Cha @

SQ @@

Feats [@] @@

Skills [@+@Int×@=] @@

Possessions combat gear plus@@ [always listed in this order Armor, Shield, Melee Weapon, Ranged Weapon, Potions and Oils {if not listed under Combat Gear}, Rings, Rods, Scrolls {if not listed under Combat Gear}, Staffs {if not listed under Combat Gear}, Wands {if not listed...}, Wondrous Items {if not listed...}, mundane equipment, money

Hook [this is entirely optional]

TRASK, ENFORCER LEADER AND SYNDICATE LIEUTENANT

CR 8

Male gnome rogue 4, illusionist 4

N Small humanoid (gnome)

Init +4 [4 Dex]; **Senses** Spot +6 [6, 0 Wis], Listen +9 [7, 0 Wis, 2 race]; low-light vision

Languages Common, Gnome, Goblin

AC 17 [4 Dex, 1 size, 2 ring], touch 17, flat-footed 17; Dodge, +4 against giants, uncanny dodge

hp 40 (8 HD[4d6+8 plus 4d4+8])

Fort +4[1, 1, 2 Con], **Ref** +9[4, 1, 4 Dex], **Will** +5 (+7 against illusions) [1, 4, 0 Wis]; evasion

Spd 20 ft. (4 squares)

Atk *Small sword of subtlety* +7 [5, 0 Str, 1 size, 1 magic] (1d4+1/19–20)

Base Atk +5 [3 rogue, 2 illusionist]; **Grp** +1 [5, 0 Str, –4 size]

Special Atk Sneak attack +2d6

Spells Prepared (CL 4th; barred conjuration and necromancy): [+2 DC for illusion]

2nd [2+1 Int+1 spec]—*blur*, *invisibility*, *protection from arrows*, *scorching ray* (ranged touch +9)

1st [3+1 Int+1 spec]—*color spray* (DC 15), *expeditious retreat*, *shield*, *silent image* (DC 15)

0 [4+1 spec]—*detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 14), *open/close*, *ray of frost* (ranged touch +9, DC 12), *read magic*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st):

1/day—*dancing lights*, *ghost sound* (DC 13 [10, 1 race, 1 Cha, 1 feat]), *prestidigitation*, *speak with animals* (burrowing only)

Abilities Str 10, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 12

SQ Gnome traits, summon familiar (none), trap sense +1, trapfinding

Feats [3+1bonus] Dodge, Scribe Scroll^B, Silent Spell, Spell Focus (illusion)

Skills [rogue ((8+2 Int)×7=70) + illusionist ((2+2 Int)×4=16)] Appraise +4 [2, 2 Int], Balance +8 [2, 4 Dex, 2 Tumble], Bluff +6 [5, 1 Cha], Climb +2 [2, 0 Str], Craft (alchemy) +8 [4, 2 Int, 2 race], Diplomacy +5 [0, 1 Cha, 2 Bluff, 2 Sense Motive], Disguise +2 (+4 acting) [1, 1 Cha, 2 Bluff], Escape Artist +9 [5, 4 Dex], Gather Information +5 [2, 1 Cha, 2 Knowledge: local], Hide +12 [4, 4 Dex, 4 size], Intimidate +3 [0, 1 Cha, 2 Bluff], Jump +7 [5, 0 Str, 2 Tumble], Knowledge (arcana) +6 [4, 2 Int], Knowledge (local) +7 [5, 2 Int], Listen +9 [7, 0 Wis, 2 race], Move Silently +11 [7, 4 Dex], Search +9 [7, 2 Int], Sense Motive +7 [7, 0 Wis], Spellcraft +6 [4, 2 Int], Spot +6 [6, 0 Wis], Survival +2 [0, 0 Wis, 2 Search], Tumble +13 [7, 4 Dex, 2 Jump], Use Rope +4 (+6 bindings) [0, 4 Dex, 2 Escape Artist]

Possessions *Sword of subtlety*, *ring of protection* +2, *wand of magic missile* (CL 3rd, 42 charges), *cloak of arachnida*

Spellbook all prepared spells, plus all cantrips, and so on...

Hook “I am the master of Cheese!”

Other Templates

The rest of these templates are for you to use when designing new races, classes, magic items, prestige classes and so on. To use these, simply copy the template and past it inside your document and fill in the information.

Race Frame

<h1>@@Race

1 P describing the race

<h3>Personality

1 P

<h3>Physical Description

1P

<h3>Relations

1P

<h3>Alignment

1P

<h3>@@Race Lands

1P

<h3>Religion

1P

<h3>Language

1P

<h3>Names

1P

<h3>Adventurers

1P

<h2>Race Racial Traits

- Ability modifiers, list in order, if any
- Size
- Race base land speed is
- Racial ability
- Racial ability
- Automatic Language: list. Bonus Languages: List.
- Favored Class: y. A multiclass x's y class does not count when determining whether she takes an experience point penalty for multiclassing.

Class Frame

<h1>@@Class Name

@@Description, general overview of what the class is, what it does, and how it does it.

<h4>Adventurers

1P Describe why these characters are adventurers. D20 is about adventuring; if the class is unlikely to be an adventurer, gamers are not likely to play this class

<h4>Characteristics

1P Briefly offer an overview of the class's abilities

<h4>Alignment

1P Briefly describe common alignments

<h4>Religion

1P Speak in general terms, god of valor, god of bananas, etc.

<h4>Background

1–2 P Simply describe the training and background that characters underwent to advance into this class.

<h4>Races

1P What are the typical races and why?

<h4>Other Classes

1P How does this character work with other classes?

<h4>Role

1P Describe the character's niche in a party

<h4>Adaptation

1P Guidance for incorporating the class into other GR settings

<h2>Game Rule Information

@@classes have the following game statistics.

Abilities: 1 P

Alignment: @@Optional

Starting Gold: @d@ × @.

Starting Age: As @@core class.

Hit Die: dy.

<h3>Class Skills

The @@class's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are .

Skill Points at 1st Level: (@ + Int modifier) × 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: @ + Int modifier.

<h3>Class Features

All of the following are class features of the @@class.

<h4>Weapon and Armor Proficiency

<table>

<htable>Table @–@: The X

	Base	Fort	Ref	Will		
Level	Attack Bonus	Save	Save	Save	Special	Spells

1st

2nd
3rd
4th
5th
6th
7th
8th
9th
10th
11th
12th
13th
14th
15th
16th
17th
18th
19th
20th

</table>

<h3>Race Class Starting Package

Armor: @@ (+@@AC, armor check penalty -@@, speed @@ ft., @@ lb.).

@@shield (+@@ AC, armor check penalty -@@, @@ lb.).

Weapons: @@ (@@ d@@, crit @@, @@ lb., @@size, @@type).

@@ (@@ d@@, crit @@, range inc. @@ ft., @@ lb., @@size, @@type).

Skill Selection: Pick a number of skills equal to @@ + Int modifier.

Skill	Ranks	Ability	Armor Check Penalty
-------	-------	---------	---------------------

@@	@@	@@	@@
----	----	----	----

@@	@@	@@	@@
----	----	----	----

@@	@@	@@	@@
----	----	----	----

Feat: @@.

[[@@**Bonus Feat:** @@.]]

Gear: Backpack with waterskin, one day's trail rations, bedroll, sack, flint and steel.

@@illumination. @@ammo. @@holy symbol.

Gold: @@d@@ gp.

Skill Frame

Avoid designing new skills

<h3>Skill name <h4>(Key Ability, Trained?, Armor Check Penalty?)

Description of what the skill encompasses and when used.

Check: What a character (You) can do with a successful skill check.

Action: The type of action using the skill requires and amount of time required for a check.

Try Again: Any conditions that apply to successive attempts to use the skill successfully. Omit if the skill can be retried without penalty other than additional time

Special: Any extra facts deriving from its use.

Synergy: list, if any

Restriction: list if any, see Search skills for details

Untrained: List details

Feat Frame

<h3>Feat name [special category, otherwise General]

Descriptive blurb

Prerequisites: list, if any [Stat (**ALWAYS ALWAYS ALWAYS** an Odd Number), Race, Skill, Feat, Class Feature, BAB]

Benefit: 2nd person descript

Normal: Describe, if any

Special: Describe, if any

Prestige Class Frame

<h2>@@Prestige Class Name

Description of what the class is, what it does, and something of its history.

<h3>Becoming a @@Class

@@General description of what a candidate has to do to become a member of this class, highlighting some mechanics in narrative terms.

@@Describe particular classes and guidance to meet prerequisites.

<box>

<hbox>Entry Requirements

Race:

Base Attack Bonus: +@ (delete if none)

Skills: @@Skill name @ ranks

Feats:

Class Features:

Spellcasting:

Special:

</box>

<table>

<htable>Table @-@: The X

Hit Die: d@

	Base	Fort	Ref	Will		
Level	Attack Bonus	Save	Save	Save	Special	Spellcasting
1st						
2nd						
3rd	A prestige class must have a minimum of 3 levels					
4th						
5th	Limit for a highly specialized character roll					
6th						
7th						
8th						
9th						
10th	Typical limit for “class replacement”					
11th	Special					
12th	Special					
13th	Special					
14th	Special					
15th	Limit					

Class Skills (@ + Int modifier per level): List alphabetically.

</table>

<h3>Class Features

Describe the abilities of the prestige class in broad terms

<h4>Weapon and Armor Proficiency

Delete this entry if no new weapon or armor proficiencies.

<h4>@@ Class Feature (Ex, Sp, or Su)

Describe

<h4>Spells per Day/Spellcasting/et al

Delete this entry if none

<h3>Playing a Prestige Class

1–3 paragraphs on sketching out a general history for characters, emphasizing the psychology of the character and the reasons for the class shift.

<h3>@@Prestige Classes in the World

@@GM advice for incorporating the prestige class in an ongoing campaign in broad strokes.

@@Using the class in Freeport and other GR settings

<h4>@@Prestige Class as Organization [Optional]

If it makes sense, construct an organization through which members of the Prestige Class operate. Be sure to mention structure, notables, suggestions for locations, missions, etc.

<h4>NPC Reactions

Talk briefly about how these characters interact with the world, using common NPC Attitude terminology, such as “Good wizards are often hostile to soulweavers, seeing their techniques as an abomination.” Stick to base classes only. You get extra credit for mentioning Master Classes/Advanced Classes.

<h4>@@Prestige Class Lore

Characters can make Knowledge (@@type) or bardic knowledge checks to research the @@prestige class and learn more about them.

DC 15: Common information

DC 20: Hard to attain information, typically about a member or overarching goal

DC 25: Guarded information

DC 30: Optional, the really secret stuff

Monster Frame

<h2>Monster Name

Size Type

Hit Dice: @d@+@ (@@hp)

Initiative: +@

Speed: @@ft. (squares)

Armor Class: @@ (), touch, flat-footed

Base Attack/Grapple: @@/@@ []

Attack: @@ +@@ melee (@@ d@@) or @@ +@@ ranged (@@ d@@)

Full Attack: @@ +@@ melee (@@ d@@) or @@ +@@ ranged (@@ d@@)

Space/Reach: @@ ft./@@ ft.

Special Attacks:

Special Qualities:

Saves: Fort +@ [, Con], Ref +@ [, Dex], Will +@ [, Wis]

Abilities: Str @@, Dex @@, Con @@, Int @@, Wis @@, Cha @@

Skills: [(x+Int)×y=z] skill +@ [, mod],

Feats: [] list

Environment:

Organization:

Challenge Rating:

Treasure:

Alignment:

Advancement:

Level Adjustment:

Description

Details

Languages

<h3>Combat

Tactics; Note about DR

SA

SQ

Template Frame

<h2>Template

1–3 P Description

1 P Adapting to the world

<h3>Sample Template

Description

This example uses an “x” as the base creature.

Template Level (if any) Race Class (if any)

Size Type

Hit Dice: xdy+ (hp)

Initiative: +

Speed: ft. (squares)

Armor Class: (), touch, flat-footed

Base Attack/Grapple: / [BAB, + size, + Str]

Attack:

Full Attack:

Space/Reach:

Special Attacks:

Special Qualities:

Saves: Fort + [base, + Con], Ref + [base, + Dex], Will + [base, + Wis]

Abilities: Str, Dex, Con, Int, Wis, Cha

Skills: [(x+Int)*y=z] skill + [ranks, + mod],

Feats: [] list

Environment:

Organization:

Challenge Rating:

Treasure:

Alignment:

Advancement:

Level Adjustment:

Description

Details

Languages

<h3>Combat

Tactics; Note about DR

SA

SQ

<h2>Creating a Template

“@@template” is an acquired or inherited template that can be added to any (creature types), stat requirements, alignment requirements (referred to hereafter as the base creature).

A template uses all the base creature’s statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

[Use only those that apply]

Size and Type:

Hit Dice:

Initiative:

Speed:

Armor Class:

Attack:

Full Attack:

Space/Reach:

Special Attacks:

Special Qualities:

Saves:

Abilities:

Skills:

Feats:

Environment:

Organization:

Challenge Rating:

Treasure:

Alignment:

Advancement:

Level Adjustment:

Spell Frame

<h3>Spell name

School (Subschool) [Descriptor]

Level: Class level

Components: List

Casting Time: time

Range: Personal/touch/close/medium/long/feet

Target/Effect/Area/Line of Effect:

Duration: detail

Saving Throw: detail

Spell Resistance: Yes or No

Short snappy descriptive text of what it looks like when the spell is cast or takes effect. Describe in broad general terms and pay attention to components.

Descriptive text

Material Components: list, if any

Magic Item

<h3>@@Magic Item

A general description of the magic item and its purpose

<h4>Description

Provide concrete descriptions about what the magic item looks like.

<h4>Prerequisite

Any special ability that the item must have to acquire the ability in question. Strike this if none.

<h4>Activation

Method for activating the item, if any, including the time it takes (standard, swift, etc.)

<h4>Effect

Detail what the magic item does and if it has any limits on use and duration

Aura/Caster Level: @@Strength school; CL @th

Construction: @@Feat, *spell*

Weight: @ lb. [Delete if 0 lb.]

Price: <<**NOTE: Show Math**>>

Green Ronin Publishing Text Formatting Guidelines

This document describes the manner in which text documents turned over to Green Ronin publishing should be formatted. Some of these things may seem a bit anal retentive, but all of the guidelines below are provided in an effort to make the text transfer process smooth for everyone involved in a project. Hopefully, writers and editors will not find them too onerous. In comparison to formatting requirements from other companies that we are aware of, we feel the following rules are pretty reasonable.

Green Ronin Manuscript Dos

- **Format your file correctly.** All files should be turned in either MS Word or Rich Text Format.
- **Use the right fonts.** All text should be set in either: Times New Roman, Georgia or Arial.
- **Format your text correctly.** Bolds and italic are fine.
- **Use the same font size for all text.** Simple enough.
- **Notate your headers correctly.** All headers should be denoted in the following manner:

Header Type	Tag
Chapter or section start	<chapter> or <CHAPTER>
Header 1	<H1> or <h1>
Header 2	<H2> or <h2>
Header 3	<H3> or <h3>
Header 4	<H4> or <h4>
Header 5	<H5> or <h5>

It is only necessary to place the header notation on one side of the header being marked.

Bad Example: <header 1>How to Kick Demon Ass

Bad Example: <h1>How to Kick Demon Ass</h1>

Bad Example: <h1>How to Kick Demon Ass<h1>

Good Example: <h1>How to Kick Demon Ass

Bolding your headers is fine. If you feel the need to define a specialized type of text for your particular project, simply make sure you include clear notation on the text type and how it is marked in the document, and define a simple one-word notation for it denoted by “<>” marks.

Non-header text formatting is noted as follows:

Header Type	Tag
Sidebar beginning	<sidebar> or <SIDEBAR>
Sidebar Header	<hsidebar>
Sidebar ending	</sidebar> or </SIDEBAR>
Table beginning	<table> or <TABLE>
Table Header	<htable>
Table ending	</table> Or </TABLE>
Boxed text start	<boxed> or <BOXED>
Boxed Header	<hboxed>
Boxed text end	</boxed> or </BOXED>
Player text start	<player> or <PLAYER>
Player text end	</player> or </PLAYER>

Unlike header tags, specialized text type tags should have an opening and closing tag, as if you were coding HTML. It is NOT necessary to tag body text. Green Ronin layout just assumes any untagged text is supposed to be body text.

- **Format your tables correctly.** Tabbed fields in tables should be separated by no more than ONE tab. If you feel the need to make your table totally clear, then include one version with it all pretty and tabbed out how you think it should look, and one version properly tabbed as described above.
- **Make sure internal comments are clearly marked.** Internal comments to the editor or layout person should be set in between <<>> symbols, in ALL CAPS, and **bolded** when possible.

Example: <<HEY LAYOUT GUY, BLAH BLAH BLAH>>

- **All generic page references should be denoted properly.** Use two @ symbols to denote these as shown below.

Bad examples: “See page xx.” “See page YY.”

Good example: “See page @@.”

The reason for this is that in the wacky world of RPGs, XX and YY are sometimes parts of names, etc. Words containing “@@” are, to say the least, much more rare.

- **Use proper syntax when making chapter references.** When you make an internal reference to a chapter, write out the chapter number and title if appropriate, rather than just using an Arabic numeral. Also, bold your chapter references.

Bad Example: See Chapter 1: Kicking Demon Ass.

Bad Example: See Chapter One.

Bad Example: See Chapter 1.

Good Example: See **Chapter One: Kicking Demon Ass.**

Good Example: See **Chapter One.**

- **Use proper syntax when making section references.** When you make a specific internal reference to another section of text by naming its header, bold it.

Bad Example: See Kicking Demon Ass for more information.

Bad Example: See Kicking Demon Ass on page @@

Good Example: See **Kicking Demon Ass** for more information.

Good Example: See **Kicking Demon Ass** on page @@.

Green Ronin Manuscript Don'ts

- **DO NOT use any MS Word styles.** If you turn in a MS with styles used, it will be returned to you so you can remove the styles and properly notate all your headers as described under “dos” above. This can be circumvented if you actually go to the trouble of redefining all the styles so they fit the text characteristics defined above.
- **DO NOT USE THE TABLE FUNCTION OF ANY WORD PROCESSING PROGRAM.** I can't emphasize this enough. When doing a table, simply use tabs to define it as listed **under Green Ronin Manuscript Dos.** The formatting imposed by the table function of word processing programs does not import into Indesign well at all.
- **Do not use the phrase “See Below”.** It's a perfectly natural instinct to use the phrase “See Below” when working on a manuscript. Since the text is presented in a vertical format. However, such references often become meaningless when the text is put in a layout. Please make references to other parts of the manuscript specific rather than general.

Bad Example: For more information, see below.

Good Example: For more information, see the next section

Really Good Example: For more information, see the section on kicking demon ass on page @@.

- Do not put carriage returns after paragraphs or headers. Once again, it's pretty instinctual to put a carriage return after every paragraph and header, since it makes the text much easier to read on screen. However, these extra carriage returns have to be removed in layout. Not fun. Instead of putting a carriage return after every paragraph, use the Paragraph Formatting settings of your word processor to set space after each paragraph. That way the text looks good on screen to you while writing, and Green Ronin doesn't have to needlessly reformat your text.