

Pony Tales

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*A Role-Playing Game for
Ages Twelve and Older*

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“ONCE UPON A TIME, IN THE MAGICAL LAND OF EQUESTRIA . . .”

With these words, the world was introduced to *My Little Pony Friendship Is Magic*. This half-hour television program became a surprise hit in its first season, not only with the young girls for whom it was intended but with people of all ages and many cultures—thanks to its creators' determination to present well-written stories, vivid characters, and a fascinating setting.

Those qualities have made this storybook principality and the good-hearted ponies who live there a wonderful place to visit, even if only in one's imagination. *Pony Tales* is a vehicle for that imagination, providing rules to guide any group of friends with a bunch of dice and maybe some maps in spending a few hours around a table exploring Equestria for adventure and entertainment.

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~ Introduction ~

THE FIRST ROLE-PLAYING GAME appeared in the late 1970s, after the designer of a miniatures wargame about the Middle Ages discovered that his friends were more willing to play if he included fantasy elements, such as magic, mythical creatures, and individual heroes with special abilities and personalities. Through the 1980s and 1990s, hundreds of other role-playing games, or RPGs, were published on all kinds of subjects—science fiction and space opera, pulp adventure and modern-day super-spies, cowboys, superheroes, and just about anything else that would be fun and exciting for a group of friends to pretend to be for an afternoon.

There aren't quite as many RPGs nowadays; like a lot of other activities, they were sort of a fad. A lot of games from small publishers disappeared, and other hobbies, including computer and video games, became the new and exciting things to do. RPGs haven't gone away completely, though, because it's still fun for people to get together and play the old-fashioned way, with a book of rules, a bunch of dice, maybe a few maps, and some time to sit around a table and visit an imaginary world for adventure and entertainment.

About the Rulebook

This book is organized into several parts, each focused on a different aspect of the game. *Part one* lays out the basic rules. *Part two* adds information and extra rules that are helpful but not absolutely or constantly necessary. *Part three* discusses the setting of the television program, both as the show's creator originally imagined it and as it's ended up in actual episodes. *Part four* offers suggestions and ideas for playing a fun and exciting game. At the end of the book is a *quick reference* of tables to look up things during a game session.

The book is written in a conversational style for ease of reading. The simple, informal language also seems to fit the fairy-tale feeling of the magical land and the stories that happen there, which may help the narrator and players get into the right frame of mind for playing the game.

A Group of Friends

Any role-playing game needs one person to “run the show”. Other games may call this person the “game-master”, “referee”, “umpire”, or some similar name. In *Pony Tales*, she's called the *narrator*. The narrator controls the world, kind of like a movie or television director—figuring out what happens after players' ponies do things, playing the parts of other ponies or creatures, and keeping the game's story going.

The rest of the group are *players*. Each one controls a *character*, playing the character's part like an actor. If a player's caught up in the excitement, she might act out what her character's doing or saying, but usually it's enough just to describe her character's words and actions. In *Pony Tales*, the players' characters are brightly colored ponies who live in the magical land.

If the group wants, a different person can be the narrator for each story. When her story's finished, she can hand off the narrator's duties to someone else and become a player for the next few stories, until it's her turn to be narrator again.

What Kind of Game?

Before starting, everyone should talk about what kind of game they want to play. There's a lot of room for everyone to be creative, but one question does need to be answered: Will the game be literal or figurative?

- A *literal game* takes the show's episodes at face value—no matter how silly, illogical, or inconsistent they get. The idea is simply to have fun and lots of laughs, paying attention only to what's happening at the moment. This doesn't mean the narrator and players can't be serious, but they shouldn't go overboard about it, or it won't feel like the show does.
- A *figurative game* treats the show's episodes as if they were stories told by, or to, a little sister or brother—mostly right, but with details mixed up, simplified, or exaggerated. It's up to the narrator and players to decide how the details are different. Having fun and laughs still is important, but the narrator and players might be more adventurous and serious. Keep in mind, though, that getting very dark will make the game feel completely different from the show.

Whatever the group decides, the point is to have fun. Some narrators might think they should make things tough for the players, but a lot of players don't like that, and it doesn't fit the tone of the show. The narrator should *cooperate* with the players, and vice versa, in telling the story—that's why she's called a “narrator” and why the rules talk a lot about “story”.

How Do the Ponies Know Each Other?

If the players are willing, they can create their ponies in such a way that it makes sense they know each other. If the players want to create ponies that are very different from each other, it might be harder to explain how the group of ponies has gotten together, and the narrator may have to work with the players to come up with ways of doing it. Below are a couple of suggestions; the narrator may use one or both of them, or figure out something else.

- The first story can be all about how the ponies are thrown together, much like the first episodes of the show. It could be that things just happen, or there could be some problem that causes one or more of the ponies to look for others who have useful talents or personalities to help solve it.
- The narrator can tell the players that each pony must be friends with (or a relative of) at least two other ponies before the game begins. The players then talk about which ponies know each other, how, and why. That can help give ideas to players having trouble deciding what their ponies are like.

The player ponies probably should live in (or move to) the same neighborhood or town, within a mile or so of each other, as the television characters do. If they live farther apart, especially in different towns, the narrator can have a lot of trouble explaining why they all happen to be in one place for the beginning of every story! *

~ Part One of Four ★ Playing the Game: Basic Rules ~

IN AN EFFORT TO MAKE THE game easy to play while still covering as many situations as possible, the basic rules are designed to be streamlined and fast-moving. One goal is to keep the game moving without bogging down. Another is to make the rules straightforward enough that nearly any teen or adult, including someone who hasn't played or even heard of role-playing games before, can understand and use them.

Creating a pony is the first step for a player, and is important to understand even for a narrator. In addition to outlining the creation process, this section also introduces a lot of concepts that the rest of the rules depend on.

Task resolution is the game's "engine", providing a way to figure out whether a pony or other creature succeeds or fails at doing something. The next several sections deal with special cases or uses of these foundational rules.

Rounds, combat, and movement deal with fights, chases, and other kinds of excitement that are so central to adventure, whether it's fiction or games. These sections cover the essentials of combat—time, injury and recovery, fighting, and moving.

Judgment Call: Using the Rules

The narrator should use her imagination to think up exactly what happens when a pony succeeds or fails at a task or other die roll. Otherwise a game can turn into a dry, boring series of die rolls and rules references. Of course, the references are needed so everyone understands how the rules handle the results of die rolls, but the narrator and players should make the most of them by adding colorful storytelling and role-playing.

Fair play's important to make sure players have fun and aren't too disappointed when their ponies can't seem to get something right. Humor's important too, because the game's based on a show with a lot of comedy. Besides, some of the funniest moments in role-playing can happen when a roll fails spectacularly at just the wrong (or right) moment.

The narrator doesn't have to stick to the rules when doing so is more bother than it's worth, seems unfair, or dampens the fun. They're just tools to help decide things fairly. A light comedy game—or any kind of literal game—may not use all the detailed rules, but a figurative game with a more serious tone such as high adventure often can't get along without them. The real goal is to tell a thrilling, or funny, or dramatic story, and if the moment seems right for something to happen in some particular way, the narrator's free to fudge things creatively. ★



Windmill by Baron Engel

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~ First Things First: Creating a Pony ~

BEFORE THE GAME STARTS, every player has to create a pony she will play, like an actor plays a character—though it's a good idea to read and understand the rules first. A player can start with a mental picture of a pony and create the pony to match that picture, or can create a pony first, then decide what she looks and acts like. Either way, the player should fill out a *Pony Form* as she goes through the creation steps, to keep track of the pony's information. The narrator can use the same steps to create ponies who are important to the story for any reason.

Every pony has *Aptitudes* and *Talents*. Aptitudes describe what a pony's naturally good at (and not good at) doing. Talents are skills and abilities the pony has. Both are given numerical values to use with the rules, expressed in *dice*. The more dice an Aptitude or Talent has, the better the pony is at it.

To make small adjustments possible, a die is divided into thirds. The first adds one pip to a die roll, the second adds two pips to a die roll, and the third adds a whole die. Since arithmetic is easier with whole numbers, a player or narrator may want to think of each die as three "points" while creating a pony. A table of die (and point) values is at the bottom of the page.

An Aptitude's or Talent's value is written down as the number of whole dice, followed by the letter *d*, and finishing with any added pips. For example, the value of a Talent with three and two-thirds dice in it is written as 3d+2. During the game, the narrator may ask the player to roll that 3d+2. If the player rolls 11 on the three dice, then after adding the extra +2, the total would be 13.

Step 1: What Kind of Pony?

First, decide whether the pony will be an *earth pony*, a *pegasus pony*, or a *unicorn pony*. Earth ponies have a magical connection to the land and living things. Pegasus ponies can fly, command the winds and weather, and walk on clouds. Unicorn ponies can levitate things, make balls of light, and cast magical spells.

Second, decide whether the pony will be female or male. An adult female is a *mare* and an adult male is a *stallion*. A young pony is a *foal*; a female foal is a *filly* and a male foal is a *colt*. Most player ponies probably will be adults, even if young adults, but they may have to deal with foals during the course of some stories, just as the characters on the television show often do.

Step 2: Aptitudes

There are eight Aptitudes. The physical Aptitudes are *Muscle* and *Hardiness*. The motor Aptitudes are *Reflexes* and *Coordination*. The mental Aptitudes are *Smarts* and *Senses*. The magic Aptitudes are *Power* and *Finesse*; a pegasus or unicorn pony has both, while an earth pony has Power but not Finesse.

Muscle describes how large and strong a pony is. A pony with a little Muscle is small and delicate. A pony with lots of Muscle is big and brawny.

Hardiness describes how tough and healthy a pony is. A pony with a little Hardiness catches sniffles easily and gets tired quickly. A pony with lots of Hardiness is sturdy and fit.

Reflexes describes how quick and limber a pony is. A pony with a little Reflexes is sluggish and clumsy. A pony with lots of Reflexes is swift and graceful.

Coordination describes a pony's fine motor control. A pony with a little Coordination is awkward and heavy-hoofed. A pony with lots of Coordination is deft and has a light touch.

Smarts describes how good a pony is at thinking, remembering, and planning. A pony with a little Smarts is slow and simple. A pony with lots of Smarts is bright and clever.

Senses describes how well a pony notices things around her. A pony with a little Senses isn't very observant. A pony with lots of Senses is good at spotting details.

Power describes *how much* magic a pony can work with. A pony with a little Power can't cast big spells, can't work with lots of weather, or doesn't have a strong connection to the land. A pony with lots of Power is very magical indeed.

Finesse describes *how well* a unicorn or pegasus can work with her tribe's magic. A pony with a little Finesse has trouble casting spells or weatherworking properly. A pony with a lot of Finesse can cast spells or work with weather easily.

Each Aptitude starts with a value of 1d (3 points). The pony's player—or the narrator, if creating a non-player pony—adds 12d (36 points) more to the pony's Aptitudes, splitting them up however she wants. The only limit is that no single Aptitude can end up with a total of more than 5d (15 points) in it. Remember that the creator of an earth pony only has to worry about seven Aptitudes, while the creator of a pegasus or unicorn has to spread those dice (points) over eight Aptitudes.

Step 3: Talents

There are two kinds of Talents. A *Mundane* Talent is an ordinary skill or ability any pony can learn or have. A *Magical* Talent normally is allowed only for a pony of a specific tribe.

A list of Talents is in part two of the rulebook, but a player can make up a Talent if the narrator agrees it's a good one. The new Talent should be named with no more than a couple of words, followed by a sentence describing it so everyone has a clear idea what it means. Describing a unicorn spell takes more than a single sentence, so a unicorn's player may need to keep a separate sheet of spell descriptions. The narrator should keep a list of Talents that everyone's come up with.

A Talent's value starts with the dice of the Aptitude it's based on; the player adds Talent dice to it and writes down the total. A pony's player can add 7d (21 points) to the pony's Talents, splitting them up as she wishes—but each Talent must get at least +1 (1 point) and can't get more than 3d (9 points). There's no other limit to how many Talents a pony can have.

For example, a player wants to give her pony *Teamster*, a Mundane Talent based on Muscle. The pony's Muscle is 2d+2 (8 points). The player can't add any less than +1 (1 point) or more than 3d (9 points) of Talent dice to a single Talent. After thinking about the other Talents she wants to give the pony, she decides to use +2 (2 points) of Talent dice for Teamster. Adding that to the pony's Muscle of 2d+2 (8 points) means the pony's Teamster Talent is 3d+1 (2 + 8 = 10 points). ♦

Dice:	+1	+2	1d	1d+1	1d+2	2d	2d+1	2d+2	3d	3d+1	3d+2	4d	4d+1	4d+2	5d	5d+1	5d+2	6d	(and so on)
Points:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	(and so on)

A **Mundane Talent** has one value based on the physical, motor, or mental Aptitude that's most logical for it. For example, Teamster is based on Muscle, not Senses; Navigation is based on Smarts, not Reflexes. If a player isn't sure which Aptitude to use, she should talk it over with the narrator.

The only exception is that an earth pony can base a Mundane Talent on Power, if the Talent deals with caring for the land or for living things and the pony's Power has more dice than the Aptitude the Talent's normally based on. Some examples are Cooking, Farming, Husbandry (rearing and keeping animals), Medicine, and Veterinary Medicine.

A **Magical Talent** has *two* values. In addition to the normal Talent value, which is based on Finesse, a Magical Talent also has an *Effect* value, which is based on Power. The normal Talent value represents how well a unicorn or pegasus can use the Talent; the Effect value represents how much the pony can do with the Talent. The pony's creator can spend Talent points on *either or both* of a Magical Talent's values if she wants.

A pegasus pony can learn Magical Talents that deal with flight, air, and weather. Some examples are Cloudworking, Flying, Boltworking, Rainworking, and Windworking. A unicorn pony can learn *spells*, Magical Talents that act at a distance. Some examples are Force Bubble (creating a protective sphere), Pyrotechnics (creating a fireworks-like light show), and Wink (moving instantly from place to place).

Style of magic: A unicorn's creator must decide on the unicorn's *Style* of magic. The unicorn can learn and cast spells that fit within her Style, but can't learn or cast spells that don't fit her Style. Some examples of Magical Styles are Pyromancy (fire spells), Thaumaturgy (showy, performance-oriented spells), and Lapidurgy (spells involving gems and jewelry).

There are two exceptions to this restriction. Any unicorn can use Levitation to pick up objects and to carry or manipulate them in mid-air without touching them, and can use Illumination to create glowing balls of light like will-o'-the-wisps.

A player can make up a new Style, as long as the narrator agrees it's a good one and isn't so powerful that it upsets the game. The player should be able to name it with no more than a couple of words, but it's okay to follow that with a short description so everyone has a clear idea what it means.

A unicorn's player may want to make her pony's Style be magic itself, but it isn't wise to allow that. The show makes a big deal about how only *one* pony seems to have that Style, and she isn't the player's pony. Besides, it wouldn't be fair to the other players, especially to players of other unicorn ponies.

Wild Talent: With the narrator's permission, a pony may have *one* Wild Talent that normally belongs to one of the other tribes. The narrator probably should require the player to spend at least 1d (3 points) on that Talent. Examples from the television show include an earth pony who can make vague predictions about what will happen soon, based on her body's twitches and aches, a pegasus who's very good at understanding and taking care of animals, and a unicorn who can create lightning.

Special Talent: The pony's creator must choose one Talent to be the pony's Special Talent, represented by the *cutie mark* on her haunches. It should be one of the Talents with the most dice in it, and the narrator probably should require the player to spend at least 1d (3 points) on it.

Step 4: Personal Traits

A pony's creator must choose two important Personal Traits. The pony's *Personal Strength* is a part of her personality that makes her worth knowing and respecting. No pony's perfect, though, and that's where her *Personal Weakness* comes in.

The Elements represented by the television show's main characters are good examples of Strengths. Examples of Weaknesses are Brash, Fastidious (overly concerned with cleanliness), Insecure, Introverted (not very sociable), Stubborn, and Timid.

A player can make up a new Personal Trait, as long as the narrator agrees it's appropriate. She should be able to name it in a couple of words, but it's okay to follow that with a short description so everyone has a clear idea what it means.

Personal Traits help make a pony interesting and can help a player decide how her pony should react to a situation. She should keep her pony's Traits in mind when role-playing, and the narrator should remind her if she seems to be forgetting about them. A pony can overcome a Trait temporarily, but she needs a good reason to try and the narrator may ask for a Smarts roll.

Even if they are some of the most important or noticeable things about a pony, though, her personality should be more than just those two Personal Traits. She should be a well-rounded character full of intriguing details and history.

Step 5: Finishing Touches

Note down other important numbers, describe how the pony looks and acts, and list things the pony owns.

Fatigue Points: 3 per die of Stamina or Hardiness, plus additional pips, plus 15. An hour of sleep recovers 1 Fatigue Point for every 6 total Fatigue Points the pony has, rounding to the nearest point. An hour of rest recovers $\frac{1}{2}$ as many points as sleep; round down if Stamina or Hardiness is less than 2d, round up otherwise. See "Plumb Tuckered: Fatigue and Rest".

Strength Bonus: $\frac{1}{2}$ the number of Muscle dice, rounded up to the next whole die. See "Them's Fightin' Words: Combat".

Walk Move: 5 yards plus 1 per whole die of Muscle (or an earth pony's Power if it's more). *Trot* is 2 times Walk, *Canter* is 4 times Walk, and *Gallop* is 8 times Walk. *Swim Move* and *Climb Move* are $\frac{1}{2}$ of Walk, and *Jump* is $\frac{1}{4}$ of Walk, rounded up. **Flight Move:** for a pegasus, 5 yards plus 1 per whole die of Power. *Moderate* is 2 times that, *Fast* is 4 times that, and *Very Fast* is 8 times that. See "Hoofin' It and Wingin' It: Movement".

Describe the pony's **looks**, such as: Is she big or small, thin or heavy? What colors are her coat, mane, and tail? What color and shape are her eyes? What is her cutie mark?

Name the pony and describe anything else about her that seems important, such as: What does her voice sound like? What kind of personality does she have? Where does she come from? What was her life like before the game?

The pony may have up to eight important **possessions**. A *major possession* is big, like a farm, a business, a house, or lots of income, and counts as four. A *medium possession* is something like a carriage, a wagon, a book collection, or a good income and counts as two. A *minor possession* is something like a set of tools or cookware, a musical instrument, a paint set and easel, camping gear, or a small income. A player can make up a possession, as long as the narrator agrees it's appropriate. Every pony also owns a pair of *panniers* (saddlebags). ♦

~ Doing Things: Basic Task Resolution ~

SOONER OR LATER, A PONY will try to do something hard, or something another pony or creature doesn't want that pony to do. What happens then?

Anyone who played "let's pretend" as a child knows it's easy to start arguing because there's no good way to decide fairly who's right. To keep the story moving and to give every pony a fair chance, here are rules for figuring out whether a pony succeeds at doing something.

Step 1: How Hard Is the Task?

Any one thing a pony tries to do is called a *task*. Most tasks are short and have clear goals, such as jumping a fence, lifting a box, throwing an apple, or setting a table properly. The narrator measures how hard a task is by giving it a number, called a *difficulty*. The harder the task is, the greater the difficulty will be.

The **basic difficulty** is how hard the task is under normal conditions. If the basic difficulty depends on a measurement, such as how heavy or far away something is, round up. For example, a pony may try to carry a load of 50 pounds; that's between 40 pounds (which has a basic difficulty of 4) and 60 pounds (a basic difficulty of 5), so round up to 60 pounds.

Difficulty modifiers add to or subtract from the basic difficulty, to allow for things that make the task harder or easier than it normally would be. Many modifiers may be obvious to the players, but some might depend on things the narrator knows about the situation that the players don't. When planning a story, the narrator can list modifiers she thinks she might need. If she has to come up with an unexpected modifier during play, she can note it down for future use.

A player who is really clever or is doing a very good job of role-playing her pony can be rewarded by reducing the difficulty a little. The narrator can increase the difficulty a little for a player who tries to use a Talent that barely covers the task.

Modifier	Description and example
Add 16 or more	<i>Huge disadvantage</i> : Repairing a complicated machine without any proper tools
Add 11 to 15	<i>Big disadvantage</i> : Finding another pony in complete darkness
Add 6 to 10	<i>Fair disadvantage</i> : Tracking another pony in heavy rain or snow
Add 1 to 5	<i>Small disadvantage</i> : Fixing something small and complex, like a pocket-watch, by candle-light
Subtract 1 to 5	<i>Small advantage</i> : Something useful like a springy board the pony can use to jump better
Subtract 6 to 10	<i>Fair advantage</i> : Rough-and-ready tool, such as making a sling at the end of a rope to lift a pony
Subtract 11 to 15	<i>Big advantage</i> : Good tools, such as an emergency medical kit to help a pony who's hurt
Subtract 16 or more	<i>Huge advantage</i> : Best tools for the job, such as a clinic or a hospital to help a pony who's hurt

Personal Traits: The narrator may reduce the difficulty of a task that can be helped by the pony's Personal Strength and increase the difficulty of a task that may be hindered by her Personal Weakness. Exactly how much to change the difficulty will depend on the task and the situation, but it usually would be a *small* advantage or disadvantage, and probably shouldn't be more than a *fair* advantage or disadvantage.

Rushing: A pony can spend less time on a task than it normally takes if she's in a hurry, but it'll make the task harder. Not every task can be rushed; if in doubt, the narrator may ask a player to explain how she thinks the task can be rushed, and may not allow it if the player can't come up with a good reason.

Description	Difficulty modifier
Spending $\frac{3}{4}$ as long on the task	Add 5 to the difficulty
Spending $\frac{1}{2}$ as long on the task	Add 10 to the difficulty
Spending $\frac{1}{4}$ as long on the task	Add 20 to the difficulty

The **final difficulty** is the number that the narrator comes up with after all the appropriate modifiers have been added or subtracted. The narrator shouldn't tell the player what the final difficulty is, but may give hints. For example, the narrator might say to a player, "That fence looks awfully tall. Jumping over it won't be easy! Are you sure you want to try that?"

A player who's read the rules may have a fairly good idea most of the time what the difficulty will be, and that's fine. After all, even in the real world, people often have a decent notion of how hard it is to do something.

Difficulty	Description and example
0 or less	<i>Trivial</i> : The player doesn't need to do anything; the narrator can go on with the story
1 to 5	<i>Routine</i> : Make an attempt only if the task is very important to the story
6 to 10	<i>Easy</i> : The task doesn't take much work unless the pony doesn't have a good Talent for it
11 to 15	<i>Middling</i> : A pony may have trouble with the task, and doing it right takes skill and effort
16 to 20	<i>Hard</i> : A pony should be well-trained in the kind of task being done
21 to 25	<i>Very hard</i> : Only the best-trained pony has a chance at succeeding
26 or more	<i>Impossible</i> : Succeeding at the task will be talked about for a long time

A **contest** happens when another pony or creature works against the pony—for example, in a tug-of-war or arm-wrestling. The narrator doesn't use a normal difficulty number; instead both ponies or creatures roll their dice and the greater number rolled wins the contest. Just as with a normal task, the narrator can apply difficulty modifiers to one side or both sides of the contest, and can use the contest's result in storytelling. ♦

If a pony needs to do something long and complicated, it may not be a single task—instead, it’s probably a **project** made up of a bunch of tasks. The narrator should break a project into a series of tasks. That way, even if the pony doesn’t succeed at every task, she still might be able to finish the project. Also, the narrator can use the results as part of the storytelling, or let other ponies help out. Ponies might team up on some tasks, or different ponies might work on different tasks.

Step 2: What Talent or Aptitude Does the Pony Use?

If the pony trying to do the task has a Talent that’s appropriate for it, she can use that Talent. For instance, a pony who has the Farming Talent could use it when trying to harvest apples from a tree. Any pony can use a Mundane Talent if the narrator agrees that it covers the task. For the right kind of task, a pegasus or unicorn pony may be able to use a Magical Talent.

If the pony doesn’t have a good Talent to use for the task, the pony may be able to use an Aptitude instead—but the narrator probably should add 1 to 5 to the task’s difficulty. Usually it should be pretty obvious which Aptitude fits best, but if it isn’t, the narrator may have to decide on which one to use.

Use *Muscle* when a pony needs to be strong, such as pushing, pulling, lifting, carrying, holding on to something (especially if it’s moving), or bucking a tree to get fruit to fall.

Use *Hardiness* when a pony tries not to get hurt or sick, such as falling, breathing smoke from a fire, or being around creatures who are ill with something the pony might catch.

Use *Reflexes* when a pony needs to be quick or nimble, such as doing something before another pony or creature can do it (or stop the pony from doing it), galloping or flying quickly, or pulling a tablecloth off a table without any dishes falling.

Use *Coordination* when a pony does something tricky, such as stacking things that might fall or using tools or tableware.

Use *Smarts* when a pony is thinking or remembering, such as solving a puzzle, making a plan, or remembering something from a long time ago or that the pony only heard once.

Use *Senses* when a pony may notice something unusual, hidden, or not very obvious. This includes all the other senses—hearing, touch, smell, and taste—as well as sight.

Use *Finesse* for a magical task that needs fine control rather than brute force. A pegasus pony may be able to use Finesse for a task that involves or can use flying, or wind or weather. A unicorn pony may be able to use Finesse for a task instead of Coordination, since she can levitate tools or other objects.

Use *Power* for a magical task that needs brute force rather than fine control. An earth pony may be able to use Power for a task involving earth or rock, or creatures or plants, especially if it’s about taking care of them. A unicorn may be able to use Power instead of Muscle, since she can levitate heavy objects.

An **esoteric task** is one that *must* be done by a pony who has an good Talent for it. If the pony doesn’t have a Talent for the task, she can’t do it—and probably knows she can’t. For example, building a complex machine like a water wheel or a windmill, or giving another pony a complex medical treatment, takes a lot of special knowledge most ponies haven’t learned.

Extra care: A pony who spends more time on a task than it normally takes, to work more carefully, adds dice—but only if she doesn’t do anything else or get distracted while she works.

Description	Attempt modifier
Spending twice as long on the task	Add 1d to Talent
Spending 4 times as long on the task	Add 2d to Talent
Spending 8 times as long on the task	Add 3d to Talent

Pips per whole die: Some rules only allow a pony “one pip (or yard or other unit) per whole die”, or something similar; some examples are *recovering Fatigue Points*, *Moves*, and *very small spells*. In that case, instead of rolling, drop the +1 or +2 if the pony has that and count the number of dice. For instance, for a pony with 6d+2, drop the +2 and count only the 6 dice, so if the rule says the pony gets “1 pip per whole die”, she’d get 6 pips.

A pony who uses her **Special Talent** for a task adds one pip per whole die of Power to her Talent (or Aptitude) dice. For instance, a pony with 3d+1 of Power adds 3 to the die roll any time she uses her Special Talent for a task.

Step 3: Make the Attempt!

Trying to do a task is called an *attempt*. The player whose pony is making the task attempt rolls the dice in the Talent or Aptitude that the pony is using. If the total is equal to or greater than the final difficulty, the pony succeeds at the task attempt! How well the successful pony did depends on how many points she has left over after subtracting the final difficulty.

Success	Description
0 points left over	Pony barely succeeded; the task may take longer than usual, or she doesn’t get as much as usual
1 to 4	Pony succeeded, but didn’t do anything special
5 to 8 points	Pony did well; maybe the task went quickly or she got more than she expected
9 to 12 points	Pony did very well; the task may have gone quickly and she got extra out of it
13 to 16 points	Pony did so well, other ponies watching would notice; the narrator should reward the pony
17 points or more	Pony did well enough that other ponies will talk about it; she should get a really good result

If the attempt’s point total is less than the final difficulty, the pony fails. If she just barely fails, but the task is something she can try again, the narrator may let her do so with a greater difficulty. The narrator can use a table of failure results like the one for success, but in reverse, and can use the results in storytelling.

Mishaps and fortuities: Die rolls also can result in unusually good or bad results, allowing for lucky breaks or freak accidents that sometimes happen. If a 1 is rolled on *every* die, the narrator can decide a *mishap* causes something unusually bad to happen in the attempt. If a 6 is rolled on every die, the narrator can decide a *fortuity* causes something unusually good to happen in the attempt. One possibility is to allow the person rolling to roll another die and add it—and to keep doing so as long as she keeps rolling a six on the bonus die. ★

~ Spectacular Feats: Using Magical Talents ~

A PEGASUS OR UNICORN using a Magical Talent makes a task attempt with a difficulty based on the size of the magical working. The narrator can skip the task attempt if the pony isn't in a hurry or stressed and difficulty is 5 or less. If the attempt succeeds or is skipped, the magical working generates *Effect Dice* based on the pony's Power; round up if needed. The bigger it is, the more Effect Dice it generates.

What Effect Dice do depends on which Magical Talent is being used. A pegasus using Boltworking can control lightning, so for that Talent, Effect Dice are injury or damage dice of lightning. A unicorn using Levitation can lift and control objects, so for that Talent, Effect Dice are used the same way as Muscle to lift and carry objects.

Magical working	Difficulty	Effect Dice
<i>Very small</i>	0	1 pip per die of Power
<i>Small</i>	5	Divide Power in half
<i>Moderate</i>	10	Equal to Power
<i>Large</i>	15	Multiply Power by 1 ½
<i>Very large</i>	20	Multiply Power by 2

Bonk! If a pony using magic is hit on the head—especially on the alicorn (horn), for a unicorn—by surprise or hard enough to distract or injure her (including being *stunned*), *all* her active weatherworkings or spells stop immediately.

Pegasus Weatherworking

Weather is created by humidity (moisture in the air), air pressure, and temperature. The show hints that pegasus magic controls the first two, but temperature's controlled by the rising and setting of the sun. In ancient times the unicorns controlled the sun and moon, but more recently the sun and moon princesses took over that duty. For the game's purposes, weather magic changes local conditions of humidity or pressure over time.

The result of a mishap: "Tongs" threw a wrench at the changeling—and accidentally beamed Silver Tuppence on the noggin instead. Naturally, poor Tuppence lost his Levitation spell and his grip on another wrench, which promptly fell to the deck.
Art by Christina "Smudge" Hanson



Weather is very powerful, with lots of energy, so teams of pegasus ponies work together in controlling it over even a small area. Notice that when one pegasus works with a cloud, it usually is only a few times her own size. That may be partly so it fits in the television picture, but it also may be how much a single pegasus can work with comfortably.

A pegasus can stop a weatherworking she's cast any time she wants, even if she hasn't used up all its Effect Dice.

Unicorn Spellcasting

An *instant* spell lasts no more than a few seconds. An example of an instant spell is Force Blast, which shoots a bolt of raw magical energy at a target. A *duration* spell lasts for a longer period of time; the unicorn decides how long it will last at the time she casts the spell.

Levitation: A unicorn using Levitation makes a spellcasting task attempt each time she adds to the number of objects being levitated, manipulates at least one object, moves at least one object farther away by at least 1 yard, or sets down an object. No roll is needed if she just drops things. Add 1 to difficulty for each object after the first she levitates; a failure means the unicorn drops some or all of the objects. Effect Dice are the equivalent of Muscle for lifting and fatigue.

Casting distance: Most Magical Talents can't reach very far away from a pony using them. When using such a Talent up to 1 yard away, a pegasus or unicorn can use her full Talent dice. For every yard farther away the pony tries to use the Talent, subtract 1d. A pony can't use the Talent so far away that she would roll less than 1d.

Ranged magic: Some Magical Talents can be "thrown" or "fired" at more distant targets. The Talent's *short* range is equal to 1 yard per whole die of Power (or base Effect for the Talent, if Talent or Experience Points have been spent on it). The narrator can add a *very long* range that's 10 times *long* range (and adds 20 to spell difficulty), but she should be cautious about doing so, since that can be very powerful.

Range	Description	Modifier
<i>Short</i>	No farther than 1 yard per whole die of Power (or base Effect, if it's more)	No modifier
<i>Medium</i>	Beyond short range, no farther than 10 times short range	Add 5 to difficulty
<i>Long</i>	Beyond medium range, no farther than 10 times medium range	Add 10 to difficulty

A Magic Talent may have a casting distance *and* is ranged, which can seem a bit confusing. An example is Wink—the ability to move creatures or things instantly across distances. Casting distance is how far away the caster can reach a creature or object she wants to Wink; range is how far she Winks it.

Consider a unicorn who tries to Wink away a changeling that's about to attack her. The casting distance from her to the changeling is 2 yards, so she subtracts 1d from her Wink Talent. She decides to Wink the changeling away to medium range, which adds 10 to the difficulty of the Wink attempt. ★

~ Doing More Things: Special Task Rules ~

THE BASIC TASK RULES ARE pretty general. They'll do for simple cases, but many situations call for more detail or additional information. Here are a couple of common examples.

Lifting, Carrying, and Pulling

A pony uses Muscle to pick up and carry something; an earth pony can use Power instead if it's greater. The narrator can skip the attempt if the pony isn't in a hurry or stressed, or if the difficulty is less than or equal to the pony's Muscle.

If it matters to the story, make an attempt every round a pony carries or pulls a big load. If the attempt succeeds, the pony keeps carrying it. If the attempt fails, the pony has to put it down and take a break for a round before lifting it again. If there's a mishap, the pony drops it or collapses on the ground instead. Lifting, pushing, or pulling a load with only one hoof, head, mouth, or a wing adds 5 to the difficulty.

A *light* load is up to 20 pounds (9 kg); 2 pounds (0.9 kg) has a difficulty of 1, 10 pounds (4.5 kg) has a difficulty of 2, and 20 pounds (9 kg) has a difficulty of 3.

Load	Description	Add 1 to difficulty per	Difficulty Range
<i>Medium</i>	40 to 200 pounds (18 to 91 kg)	20 pounds (9 kg)	4 (40 lbs.)–12 (200 lbs.)
<i>Heavy</i>	240 to 400 lbs. (109 to 181 kg)	40 pounds (18 kg)	13 (240 lbs.)–17 (400 lbs.)
<i>Very heavy</i>	500 to 2000 lbs. (227 to 907 kg)	100 pounds (45 kg)	18 (500 lbs.) to 33 (1 t)
<i>Extra-heavy</i>	1.1 to 2 tons (1.1 to 1.8 tonnes)	0.1 ton (0.1 tonne)	34 (1.1 t) to 43 (2 t)
<i>Super-heavy</i>	2.5 to 10 tons (2.3 to 9 tonnes)	0.5 ton (0.5 tonne)	44 (2.5 t) to 59 (10 t)
<i>Gigantic</i>	15 to 100 tons (14 to 91 tonnes)	5 tons (4.5 tonnes)	60 (15 t) to 77 (100 t)

Pulling a load on *skids* (ski-like boards) or wheels is easier than carrying it, so the weight of a pulled load is reduced before finding the difficulty. Include the weight of the cart, wagon, or *rolling stock* (railroad cars) the load's on, and divide the total load by the number listed for the method of carrying.

When carrying a load	Divide by
On skids or in properly packed & worn panniers	2
On a primitive cart or wagon	10
On a modern cart or wagon	20
On a train or canal barge	100

Teamwork

Some tasks are too big for one pony, such as pulling a canal barge, pushing a rain cloud into place, or levitating a roof onto a house. In that case, several ponies can team up to work on it. One pony should be the team's leader; she first makes a task attempt with Leadership, Smarts, or (if the narrator thinks it applies) the task Talent. The difficulty depends on what kind of orders or directions the leader has to give, and can involve role-playing. Raising a barn wall isn't very complicated, but medical treatment may need more specific instructions.

Orders or Directions	Difficulty
Simple or general	3
Easy or specific	7
Difficult or very specific	12
Very difficult or precise	17
Extremely difficult or very precise	22
Exacting	28

How well does the group work together?	Modifier
Will follow leader no matter what	Subtract 20
Members will sacrifice for each other	Subtract 15
Has trained a lot to work together	Subtract 10
Has trained a little to work together	Subtract 5
Has worked together a lot or is willing to	None
Has worked together several times	Add 5
Has worked together only a few times	Add 10
Has never worked together or most members hate each other	Add 15 to difficulty
Isn't interested in working together, all of its members hate each other, or members can't communicate with each other	Add 20 to difficulty

If the leader does a good job, subtract from the difficulty of her orders, especially if she has a good task Talent *and* Leadership. If the leader *isn't* doing a good job, leave it as is or change it a little either way. If there is no leader, add to difficulty.

If the leader's attempt succeeds, the group adds together their dice for one great big attempt on the main task. The narrator can give them any other benefits that seem logical. If the attempt fails, group members make separate attempts on pieces of the task. The narrator can give them any other problems that seem logical. If some ponies succeed but others fail, that could cause even bigger problems. (Imagine what happens to that roof or cloud when only parts of it are moved.) ★

NOT ONLY WILL THE players' ponies deal with other ponies or creatures, they also have to face what the world itself might throw at them. A few common and important things that affect adventuring ponies are size, visibility, and weather.

Size: How Big Is a Creature or Object?

Not everything in the world is the same size as a pony, and even ponies can vary in size depending on age. Any time a pony or creature has to deal with someone or something much bigger or smaller, the narrator can use these rules for *Size*.

Subtract the Size of the smaller creature or object from the Size of the larger one. Remember that subtracting a negative number is like adding a positive number; 6 minus -3 is the same as 6 plus 3. The result is the *Size difference*.

If being bigger makes things easier, then the Size difference should be subtracted from the difficulty of the bigger creature's task, added to the difficulty of the smaller creature's task, or both. If being smaller makes things easier, then the modifier should be applied the other way. The same principles can be applied to numbers other than difficulty modifiers, if the narrator thinks the Size difference would matter.

Since a Size number is fairly loose, most adult ponies will be Size 0 (zero). A stallion or mare would have to be especially big or little to have a different Size. If a player wants her pony to have an exceptional Size—probably 1 for a huge stallion or -1 for a tiny mare—she should ask the narrator's permission and write it down as part of the pony's description. The pony's Muscle also should be very large or small, to explain why she (or he) has such an unusual Size.

Creature	Size	Creature or object	Size
Full-grown dragon	40	Adult pony	0
Building (8 stories)	24	Young foal	-2
Building (4 stories)	20	Medium dog	-3
Building (2 stories)	14	House cat	-6
Train car	10	Breadbox	-6
Elephant	8	Rat	-9
Large wagon	6	Mouse	-12
Small cart	3	Coin	-15
Sun princess	3	Ant	-21
Moon princess	2		

How Tall and Heavy Is a Pony? The height of a pony (or any creature that mostly goes around on all fours) is measured to the *withers*—the top of the back just behind the neck. Since a pony's head can go up and down, measuring to the top of the head doesn't work very well. Some ponies may be a little taller or shorter, but most should be fairly close to the heights listed. A pony's Muscle Aptitude can be used as a guide when deciding how big or small that pony is.

Pony	Height at withers
Young mare	About 2 ½ feet or 75 centimeters
Young stallion	About 3 feet or 90 cm
Very old pony	May shrink some with age
School-age foal	About 1 ½ to 2 feet or 45 to 60 cm
Baby foal	Less than a foot or 30 cm
Sun princess	About 5 feet or 1.5 meters
Moon princess	About 3 feet or 90 cm

Ponies are surprisingly heavy for their size, because even small ponies have a lot of muscle-power. That's why ponies can kick trees hard enough to make ripe fruit fall out of them (earth magic helps too), pull carts or plows, and push snowplows. Average numbers are listed; a given pony may vary.

Pony	Weight or mass
Young mare	About 75 pounds or 35 kilograms
Young stallion	About 150 pounds or 70 kg
Very old pony	Heavier if she's run to fat, lighter if skinny
School-age foal	About 50 pounds or 20 to 25 kg
Baby foal	Only a few pounds or kilograms
Sun princess	May be 400 to 600 pounds or 180 to 270 kg
Moon princess	May be 100 to 150 pounds or 45 to 70 kg

Originally, the show's creator wanted to use a lot of different models for the ponies, with different heights and weights. The show's art staff already was working hard, though, so to save time and the staff's sanity, most ponies at first were based on a few models, with different colors, cutie marks, manes, and tails. As the show went on, new models were added gradually.

Wind and Weather

Because pegasus magic is tied so closely to the wind and weather, they're important enough to need more detailed information than most games use. The narrator also is encouraged to find a good introductory book on weather for reference.

Precipitation is water that falls from certain kinds of clouds. Rain and drizzle are liquid or freezing, but snow, hail, sleet, and a few lesser-known kinds are frozen. *Virga* is precipitation that evaporates before it hits the ground.

Raindrops usually are bigger than 0.02 inch (0.5 mm) in diameter, but they may be smaller if they're widely scattered. *Drizzle* drops are smaller and lighter, so they follow air currents more, seem to float, and are more tightly packed. Drizzle is like *very light* or *light* rain, except that visibility is cut in half.

Rain or drizzle is measured, in inches or millimeters, by how deep it fills special cups set out to catch it. How hard it's raining or drizzling is measured by how much falls in an hour, or would fall in an hour if it lasted that long. The record in the real world is 12 inches (305 mm) in 42 minutes (0.7 hour), which works out to about 17 inches (435 mm) per hour. ♦

Snow is white or translucent ice crystals in complicated, branched hexagonal shapes bunched together in snowflakes. As a rule of thumb, 10 units of snow is roughly equal to 1 unit of rain—but warm, wet snow is denser and cold, dry snow is lighter, so snow can range from 6 to 11 units being equal to about 1 unit of rain. In *really* extreme conditions the range can be 4 to 50 units of snow being equal to about 1 unit of rain!

To keep things simple, use the list of rain levels, but divide visibility in half and multiply the amount by 10 (or whatever number seems right for the temperature and humidity). The narrator can treat other frozen precipitation the same way, although strong hail or sleet can hit hard enough to injure creatures or damage things caught out in it.

Rain	Inches/hr.	mm/hour	Visibility, mi./km	
<i>None</i>	0	0	Unobstructed	
<i>Very light</i>	0.01 or less	0.25 or less	4 to 8	6.4 to 13
<i>Light</i>	0.01 to 0.04	1 to 4	2 to 4	3.2 to 6.4
<i>Moderate</i>	0.04 to 0.16	1 to 4	1 to 2	1.6 to 3.2
<i>Heavy</i>	0.16 to 0.64	4 to 16	½ to 1	0.8 to 1.6
<i>V. heavy</i>	0.64 to 2	16 to 50	¼ to ½	0.4 to 0.8
<i>Extreme</i>	2 to 8	50 to 203	⅛ to ¼	0.2 to 0.4
<i>Maximum</i>	more than 8	> 203	⅙ to ⅛	0.1 to 0.2

The *Beaufort scale* was created in the nineteenth century to classify **wind** speed in *knots*, traditional for sailing; 1 knot is about 1.15 mph or 1.85 km/h. Keep in mind that hurricanes and tornadoes may have wind speeds much faster than those listed!

Beaufort Scale	Knots	mph	km/h
0 <i>Calm</i> : Little or no wind, too light to feel on the skin			
1 <i>Light air</i>	1 to 2	1 to 3	1 to 5.5
2 <i>Light breeze</i>	3 to 6	4 to 7	5.6 to 11
3 <i>Gentle breeze</i>	7 to 10	8 to 12	12 to 19
4 <i>Moderate breeze</i>	11 to 15	13 to 17	20 to 28
5 <i>Fresh breeze</i>	16 to 20	18 to 24	29 to 38
6 <i>Strong breeze</i>	21 to 26	25 to 30	39 to 49
7 <i>Near gale</i>	27 to 33	31 to 38	50 to 61
8 <i>Fresh gale</i>	34 to 40	39 to 46	62 to 74
9 <i>Strong gale</i>	41 to 47	47 to 54	75 to 88
10 <i>Whole gale</i>	48 to 55	55 to 63	89 to 102
11 <i>Violent storm</i>	56 to 63	64 to 72	103 to 117
12 <i>Hurricane force</i>	64 or more	73 or more	118 or more
<i>EF5 tornado</i>	> 174	> 200	> 322

Visibility: How Far Can a Pony See?

Visibility is how far and how well a pony or other creature with good eyes can see. The difficulty of a Notice or Senses task attempt will be higher for looking at, or for, something far away than for looking at, or for, something that's close by. Anything that's beyond the range of visibility can't be seen at all.

Visibility	Miles	km
<i>Ideal</i> : Clear, clean arctic/mountain air	45 to 60	72 to 91
<i>Typical</i> : sea-level air near town or city	20 to 30	32 to 48
<i>Haze</i>	1 ¼ to 3	2 to 5
<i>Mist</i>	⅝ to 1 ¼	1 to 2
<i>Fog or clouds</i>	⅝ or less	1 or less
"Zero" visibility: no greater than . . .	110 yards	100 m

Seeing Conditions	Modifier
Light smoke or fog, or middle distance	Add 3 (or 1d)
Thick smoke or fog, or long distance	Add 6 (or 2d)
Very thick smoke or fog, very long distance, complete darkness, or not being able to see	Add 12 (or 4d) to difficulty
Twilight (divide visibility by 2)	Add 5 to diff.
Night (divide visibility by 4)	Add 10 to diff.

Morning twilight is between dawn and sunrise; evening twilight is between sunset and dusk. Dawn or dusk is when the center of the sun is six degrees below the horizon.

A **light source** listed as "360°" casts light all around; one listed as "30°" casts a cone of light. A pony can't see past "night" distance, because her eyes are adjusted to the light she's using. For other light sources, twilight distance is 3 times daylight distance and night distance is 3 times twilight distance; a 30° light source casts light 3 times farther than a 360° light source. For example, a lamp might cast daylight to 2 yards, twilight to 6 yards, and night to 18 yards; a similar "bullseye" lantern might cast day to 6 yards, twilight to 18 yards, and night to 56 yards.

Light	Daylight	Twilight	Night
Match (360°)	—	1 yd. (0.9 m)	2 yards (1.8 m)
Candle (360°)	—	0 to 1 yard (0 to 0.9 m)	2 to 3 yards (1.8 to 2.7 m)
Lantern (360°)	0 to 1 yard (0 to 0.9 m)	2 yards (1.8 m)	3 to 5 yards (2.7 to 4.5 m)
Early flashlight (30°)	0 to 1 yard (0 to 0.9 m)	2 yards (1.8 m)	3 to 5 yards (2.7 to 4.5 m)
Modern flashlight (30°)	0 to 5 yards (0 to 4.5 m)	6 to 10 yds. (5.4 to 9 m)	11 to 30 yards (11 to 27 m)

The first flashlights, invented in the 1890s, were big and heavy, and batteries lasted only a few minutes. They were used in short "flashes", then turned off to save power. *

~ Two Bits: Buying and Selling ~

THE SHOW'S WRITERS ARE vague about what a *bit*, the ponies' unit of money, is worth—it's the buying, not the exact amount, that's important to a story. The game uses a similar approach with task attempts and difficulties.

How Much Money?

The more money a pony has, the more dice her player can use to make a purchase. If the attempt succeeds, the pony buys the item. If the attempt fails, the pony doesn't have enough money for some reason, such as leaving her cash or checkbook at home, or forgetting to put money in the right account. Unless there's a mishap, she can try again after fixing the problem.

Money Possession: Purchasing Dice:	Major 6d	Medium 4d	Minor 2d	None 1d
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How Much Does It Cost?

The difficulty of a purchase is based on how expensive the item is. The list of difficulties only goes so far, but the narrator can add to it for even higher prices. That probably won't happen often, though, unless something *really* big is involved—such as a steamship or large airship, a big farm or noble's manor, or a public works project. As a rough guide, most minor possessions are difficulty 9 to 16, most medium possessions are difficulty 17 to 24, and most major possessions are difficulty 25 to 32.

Difficulty	Description and Examples
1 to 5	<i>Cheap</i> : anything up to a diner lunch or a small hardback book
6 to 10	<i>Inexpensive</i> : diner supper, large hardback book, binoculars, basic weapon, banquet dinner
11 to 15	<i>A little expensive</i> : wood chest or desk, quality weapon, basic firearm, basic music instrument
16 to 20	<i>Kind of expensive</i> : quality firearm, high-end weapon, fine musical instrument
21 to 25	<i>Expensive</i> : high-end firearm, small cart or caravan, small studio flat or apartment
26 to 30	<i>Very expensive</i> : fancy carriage, large apartment, small sailboat, family house with yard
31 to 35	<i>Costly</i> : steam locomotive or yacht, small airship, small farm or estate, office building

Difficulty modifiers: A lot of things can affect an item's price. The narrator should consider how hard it is to get the item, how hard it is to ship the item to where the buyer is, and anything else that might have an impact. Sometimes a buyer can try to reduce the price—say, by haggling—in a contest with the seller, using Smarts or an appropriate Talent.

How well-made is the item?	Difficulty Modifier
Higher quality than usual	Add 5 or more to difficulty
Lower quality than usual	Subtract 5 or more

What is the item's condition?	Difficulty Modifier
Very good shape or heavily decorated	Add 5 or more to diff.
Damaged or heavily worn	Subtract 5 or more

How common is the item?	Difficulty Modifier
Not available to the public, out of season, or from far away	Add 15 or more to difficulty
Uncommon, not easily available, or in great demand	Add 5 or more to difficulty
Very common item or the market is flooded	Subtract 5 or more from difficulty

What is the item's technology?	Difficulty Modifier
A lot more advanced than what's commonly available	Add 15 or more to difficulty
A little more advanced than what's commonly available	Add 5 or more to difficulty
Simpler than what's commonly available	Subtract 5 or more from difficulty

Customer relations	Difficulty Modifier
Customer doesn't pay on time or is a problem	Add 1 or more to difficulty
Customer pays on time, shops there a lot, or seller has no complaints	Subtract 1 or more from difficulty

Spending Limits

The narrator can limit purchases, based on how much a pony can spend, to keep shopping sprees from going too far. One item, a visit to a single store, or a whole shopping trip can be counted as one purchase, depending on the situation.

Purchase	Difficulty	Limit
<i>Casual</i>	Equal to or less than number of purchasing dice	Several per day
<i>Normal</i>	Greater than casual purchase, but no greater than 3 times purchasing dice	1 per day
<i>Luxury</i>	Greater than normal purchase, but no greater than 5 times number of purchasing dice, rounding up	1 per week

For example, a pony with a medium possession of money has 4d of purchasing dice. For her, a casual purchase would be difficulty 4 or less, a normal purchase would be difficulty 5 to 12, and a luxury purchase would be difficulty 13 to 20.

If a pony wants to buy something *really* big for the money she has, the narrator may decide she has to give up some or all of her money possession to get it. For instance, a pony with a major possession of money who buys a big farm might have to reduce her money to a medium or even a minor possession. ★

MOST OF THE TIME, the narrator and players can use the same tricks that writers do when it comes to telling the story. If a pony spends hours doing something tedious like searching through a library, it's enough to spend only a few real minutes covering that. Sometimes, though, it's important to keep track of exactly what's happening when, and what order that ponies or creatures are doing things. Fighting's the most common reason for that, but it isn't the only one.

To help everyone keep track when things get fast and complicated, time is broken into five-second periods called *rounds*. Once every pony or creature who's involved has had a turn to do things, the round is over, and a new one starts if necessary. When the narrator decides rounds are no longer needed, the game goes back to the normal way of handling time.

Step 1: Initiative

The order that ponies and other creatures take turns in a round, called *initiative*, is decided by a contest involving every pony or creature who will get a turn in the round. A pony or creature who has the Alertness Talent can use it; otherwise, use Reflexes. The greatest point total goes first, the second greatest goes next, and so on until the lowest point total, which goes last. The narrator can keep track of initiative on scratch paper or by whatever means are convenient.

The narrator has a choice of ways to handle initiative. The *fast* method is to limit initiative to a single contest at the beginning of the first round, then use that initiative order every round until the rounds end. The *dramatic* method is an initiative contest at the beginning of every round. When the narrator needs to break a tie, she can compare appropriate Talents or Aptitudes, or look at the situation and decide a logical order.

The narrator can let a creature who acts by surprise go first in that round, or instead add 3 (or 1d) to all her task attempts. Examples are attacking from behind, ambushes, or unexpected attacks from a hypnotized friend or companion.

Of course, a pony or creature who's unconscious, or otherwise isn't able to do anything, doesn't get a turn in a round (if she hasn't taken it already).

Step 2: Actions

A pony or creature may take up to three **full actions** during her turn in a round. A full action is anything a pony or creature does that takes effort or concentration, usually a task attempt of some kind. Full actions are *limited* or *unlimited*.

A **limited action** can be taken no more than once during a turn. For example, a pony can use one full action for movement, but not two or three; if the pony doesn't move at all, she doesn't use any full actions for movement. Following are some of the most common limited actions.

Active defense—a full or normal defense, blocking, or parrying, as described in “Them’s Fightin’ Words: Combat”.

Carrying something heavy and doing anything else at the same time other than walking or talking.

Getting up after falling, or getting knocked or thrown, to the ground.

Movement is described in “Hoofin’ It and Wingin’ It: Movement”. In good conditions, a full movement action is more than ½ of Walk, Swim, or Climb Move (rounding up), flying faster than Flight Move, jumping several times in a row, jumping over another pony or creature, or jumping onto a table (or other raised area). A movement task attempt is necessary only for trying to do something tricky or for trying to flee (run away).

In bad conditions, a full movement action is more than 1 yard (0.9 m) walking, swimming, or climbing, jumping at all, or more than ½ of Flight Move (rounding up). A movement task attempt may be required. If conditions are *very* bad, the narrator may decide that *any* movement is a full action.

Speaking more than a few words or a short sentence, such as explaining a plan or talking about complicated ideas or information, to nearby ponies or creatures.

Taking off or landing by a flyer. This doesn't count as a movement action, so it can be combined with flying or running.

Trying a stunt with a moving vehicle, such as a carriage.

Working on a task that takes a few seconds, or starting or continuing a task that takes longer than that. The pony or creature may try to rush the task, if she's in a hurry and the task normally takes longer than a single round.

An **unlimited action** may be taken once or more than once during a turn. For example, a pony could attack twice and use her other full action to do something else. Following are some of the most common unlimited actions.

Attacking in any way, as described in “Them’s Fightin’ Words: Combat”. Besides using hooves, head, wings, or teeth, this includes wrestling or using a weapon.

Catching a thrown or dropped object. The catcher can take this action right after the throwing or dropping action, one of the few times a pony can take an action before her initiative.

Readying a weapon or device, including drawing or reloading a bow or firearm, sheathing or unsheathing a blade, or a similar action. A task attempt usually isn't needed, but the narrator may ask for one if there's a lot of stress or confusion.

Throwing an object at or to another pony or creature.

A **free action** is anything a pony or creature can do automatically except under the worst conditions. They're limited actions, but don't count as full actions—a pony could take three full actions and a free action, for instance. If the narrator thinks an action takes concentration, and therefore a task attempt, it *usually* isn't a free action. Deciding initiative, resisting injury or illness, and resisting shock or surprise don't count as actions of any kind.

Glancing around a room (maybe using Notice or Senses).

Moving a short distance. In good conditions, this can be up to ½ of a Run, Swim, or Climb Move (rounding up), a single jump, or 1 Flight Move. In bad conditions, this is limited to walking, swimming, or climbing no more than 1 yard (0.9 m) or flying no more than ½ of a Flight Move (rounding up).

Dropping prone (lying belly-down) on purpose or getting up from doing so.

Speaking a few words to another pony or creature nearby.

Step 3: Is It Over?

The narrator decides whether to go on to a new round, starting over with step 1, or that there's no need to do so. ★

~ Icky Stuff: Injury, Illness, and Healing ~

THE SHOW DOESN'T TALK much about them directly, but it's clear that birth and death are part of life for the ponies. Getting hurt, getting sick, and getting better are things any pony will do, especially one who goes on adventures.

Sometimes the show does something pretty terrible to a pony—say, squishing her under a falling piano or smacking her into a cliff—but she's fine later in the episode or even in the next scene! Other times, though, a plot depends on (for example) a pony being rescued from, or trying to avoid, going *splat* after a good long fall. As a result, this is where the difference between a literal game and a figurative game may be most noticeable. Along with the rules are suggestions for handling them depending on which kind of game is being played.

Injury or Illness

The narrator and players need to keep track of how hurt or sick ponies or creatures get when bad things happen to them. It matters more in a figurative game, but even in a literal game they should suffer penalties to their task attempts for a while.

A pony who may get hurt or sick makes a task attempt to resist it. The worse the injury or illness can be, the greater the difficulty of resisting. Roll the pony's Hardiness dice plus the dice for any protection (such as armor) and subtract the result from the injury or illness difficulty. An earth pony can use Power instead if it's greater than her Hardiness. A pegasus can use Power instead if she's flying. A unicorn can use Power instead if a spell's causing the injury or illness.

If the result's zero or less, the pony just gets a few bruises or sniffles; if it's more than zero, the pony gets hurt or sick. Check off on her Pony Form the level that matches the result.

Result	Injury or Illness and Description
0 or less	<i>Bruise</i> : No effect in the game
1 to 3	<i>Stunned</i> : Subtract 1d from all task attempts in the pony's next turn
4 to 6	<i>Minor</i> : Subtract 1d from task attempts until healed
7 to 9	<i>Serious</i> : Subtract 2d from task attempts till healed
10 to 12	<i>Major</i> : May become unconscious; subtract 3d from all task attempts until healed
13 to 15	<i>Mortal</i> : Unconscious until healed
16 or more:	Immediate death

A pony who suffers a major injury or illness immediately makes a Hardiness task attempt to stay conscious, with a difficulty of 15. A pony who fails is unconscious for 10 to 60 minutes; in a literal game, this can be 10 to 60 rounds. (Roll 10d.)

A pony who suffers a mortal injury or illness makes a Hardiness task attempt once a minute to stay alive. The difficulty is equal to the number of minutes since the pony suffered the mortal injury or illness. A literal game can ignore this.

If the group thinks it's too easy for ponies to get hurt, sick, or worse, the narrator can make some adjustments. These can be applied in both literal and figurative games.

An easy change is to make each level one point bigger, so that *stunned* is 1 to 4 points, *minor* is 5 to 8 points, *serious* is 9 to 12 points, and so on. Another option is to adjust the nastier levels more than the lesser ones—for instance, making *minor* 1 point bigger, *serious* 2 points bigger, *major* 3 points, and so on.

The narrator also can allow a mortally injured or dead player pony to be “not quite dead” until she can be rescued and treated, unless there just isn't any possible way to do so.

Increasing injury or illness: If a pony gets sick or hurt again, worse than she already is, check off the new level. If the new injury or illness *isn't* worse, increase the pony's injury or illness by one level. That may sound complicated, but once everyone gets used to it, keeping track should be pretty easy. Here are examples, using a pony with a *serious* injury:

- If the new injury's *major*, *mortal*, or *death*, check off that level of injury, whichever one it is.
- If the new injury's *stun*, *minor*, or *serious*, increase the injury by one level, checking off *major*.

Healing

Natural healing in a **figurative game** takes rest. After a pony spends enough time resting—not doing anything active—she makes a task attempt using Hardiness. Subtract 1d if the pony *doesn't* rest and instead is active (for instance, working or adventuring). Add 1d if the pony rests twice as long as the injury level needs. If the attempt is successful, reduce the pony's injury level by one (for instance, from “serious injury” to “minor injury”). If the attempt fails, injury level stays the same.

In a **literal game**, anything short of the biggest threats to life and limb just knocks around a pony for comedic effect; the narrator can ignore injury effects. If she wants to pay *some* attention to boo-boos—especially on ponies who get into trouble when they should know better—she can use minutes instead of days and hours instead of weeks for healing. That lets ponies recover from injuries quickly, but doesn't remove mortal peril, for last-minute rescues and other dramatic moments.

Only a pony with the Medicine Talent can give a patient, the hurt or sick pony, **medical treatment** to speed up healing. The pony giving treatment makes a healing attempt once per day. If it's successful, reduce the patient's injury level by one—for instance, from “serious injury” to “minor injury”. If it fails, the patient's injury level stays the same. A pony in charge of treatment who has the right tools, such as medicines, bandages, surgical instruments, healing magic, or whatever the narrator thinks is needed, can reduce the difficulty. Treating the patient in a clinic or hospital reduces difficulty even more.

Healing	Natural Healing	Medical Treatment
Minor	Difficulty 6 after 3 days	Difficulty 10 each day
Serious	Difficulty 6 after 3 days	Difficulty 15 each day
Major	Difficulty 6 after 2 weeks	Difficulty 20 each day
Mortal	Difficulty 8 after 5 weeks	Difficulty 25 each day

The narrator instead can skip over healing or treatment, letting player ponies recover automatically, then pick up the story again after that time passes: “A few weeks later . . .” *

~ Plumb Tuckered: Fatigue and Rest ~

WHEN A PONY EXERTS herself, she gets tired, and eventually must rest to recover from being tired. How much she can exert herself is measured with *Fatigue Points*. A pony's Fatigue Points (FP for short) are equal to 3 per whole die of Stamina or Hardiness, plus any additional pips, plus 15; an earth pony can add 1 to this per whole die of Power. For instance, a pony with 3d+2 Stamina would have 26 Fatigue Points: 3 dice times 3 is 9, +2 pips, plus 15, equals 26.

Exertion and Work

The harder a pony exerts herself, the more Fatigue Points she spends (uses up). To keep things simple, exertion is divided into 5 levels, from *trivial* (using almost no energy) to *maximum* (all-out effort). A pony doesn't have to spend any Fatigue Points on a trivial exertion; a *stroll* (½ of Walk Move or less), or a *very small* spell or weatherworking, is trivial.

Activity	Light	Moderate	Heavy	Maximum
<i>Running</i>	Walk	Trot	Canter	Gallop
<i>Swimming</i>	Swim	Swim × 2	Swim × 3	Swim × 4
<i>Climbing</i>	—	Climb	Cli. × 1 ½	Climb × 2
<i>Jumping</i>	A few jumps	Several per minute	Constant jumps	Constant, with tricks
<i>Flying</i>	Slow flight	Moderate or hover	Fast flight	Very fast flight
<i>Carrying or pulling</i>	Light load	Medium load	Heavy load	Very heavy load
<i>Per hour of activity:</i>	Spend 1 FP	Spend 3 FP	Spend 12 FP	Spend 60 FP
<i>Or spend 1 FP per:</i>	60 minutes	20 minutes	5 minutes	1 minute
<i>Weather-working or instant spell:</i>	Spend 1 FP for a small working	Spend 2 FP for a moderate working	Spend 4 FP for a large working	Spend 8 FP for a very large working

Round the amount of time spent on an activity up to the next whole interval. The activities listed aren't intended to cover every possible kind of work. They're just common examples to help the narrator decide the level of exertion for any activity she or a player decides a pony's doing.

A pony **doing multiple things** at the same time spends Fatigue Points for the next higher level of exertion than the single greatest exertion she's doing. For instance, a pony carrying a medium load (moderate exertion) while walking (light exertion) spends Fatigue Points for heavy exertion—1 level greater than moderate.

Several trivial exertions at one time can be treated as light exertion. A pony doing maximum exertion *and* anything else spends at least 1 *extra* Fatigue Point. The narrator can decide that a pony who tries to do too many things at once increases her exertion by *two* levels instead of one.

A pony **using a Magical Talent** spends the Fatigue Points for that weatherworking or spell *when she casts it*. A unicorn casting a *duration* spell spends enough Fatigue Points to keep her spell going for the duration she wants, just like any normal activity—even if she later decides to stop the spell before the duration runs out. A pony casting a weatherworking or *instant* spell spends the number of Fatigue Points listed in the table for that size of magical working.

Special conditions can increase the level of exertion that a pony's doing. Here are a few examples, but the narrator can make up more if she thinks they might be needed.

Condition	Add 1 exert. level	Add 2 exert. levels
<i>Weather</i>	Hot	Very hot
<i>Spellcasting at:</i>	Medium range	Long range
<i>Flight, per min.</i>	Heroic (2 FP)	Supersonic (4 FP)

Rounds

If a fight, or other reason for using rounds, doesn't last more than a couple of rounds, don't spend any Fatigue Points. If it does last longer than a couple of rounds, every pony or creature involved spends 1 or 2 FP. One who did a lot of fighting or other intense activity, for most or all of the rounds, spends 2 FP. One who was less active (such as hiding, sneaking around, or freeing prisoners), for most or all of the rounds, spends 1 FP.

If it lasts more than a few minutes of game time—which is a *lot* of rounds—everyone may spend more Fatigue Points after it's over. One who did a lot of fighting or other intense activity, for most or all of the rounds, spends Fatigue Points for heavy exertion. One who was less active for most or all of the rounds spends Fatigue Points for moderate exertion.

A unicorn or pegasus who casts spells or weatherworkings during rounds spends Fatigue Points for rounds *in addition* to whatever Fatigue Points are needed for the magical workings.

Tuckered Out

A pony who has 5 or fewer Fatigue Points left is *tired*, and must subtract 1d from all task attempts. A pony who runs out of Fatigue Points is *exhausted*, and must subtract 2d from all task rolls. An exhausted pony can spend another 5 Fatigue Points, but every time she does, she suffers 1 injury level, starting with *minor injury*; for task attempts, use the injury penalty instead of the exhaustion penalty. A pony who does this more than once can work herself into the hospital!

Resting and Recovery

A pony who's spent Fatigue Points recovers by *sleeping* or by *resting*. For each hour of sleeping, a pony gets back 1 Fatigue Point for every 6 total Fatigue Points she has, rounding to the nearest whole point. For each hour of resting while awake—which means no more than trivial exertion—a pony gets back ½ as many points as she would when sleeping; round down if Stamina or Hardiness is less than 2d and round up otherwise. For example, a pony with 26 FP would recover 4 FP per hour of sleep or 2 FP per hour of rest. Flying is at least light exertion, so a flying pegasus or creature can't rest. *

THERE IS A LITTLE FIGHTING on the show's more adventurous episodes—and fighting is a staple of adventure stories and games in general. For a narrator and group of players who want that kind of game, it probably will be very important.

Step 1: What Is the Target's Defense?

The difficulty of an attack depends on how the target's dealing with attacks. Someone who isn't doing anything special to avoid attacks is using a *passive defense*, which gives the attack a basic difficulty of 10 and doesn't count as a full action. Someone who *is* trying to avoid or stop attacks is using an *active defense*, which *does* count as a full action.

A pony or creature can choose an active defense only on her turn during a round, and that choice of defense lasts until the pony's or creature's turn in the next round. As the narrator calls for each player's turn in a round, she may want to ask that player right away what defense she's choosing.

A pony or creature using an active defense only makes one task attempt; the result is used against *all* attacks on her. If the pony or creature is attacked in a round before her turn, she can't change her defense against it, because she can't react quickly enough. If an active defense turns out to be less than a passive defense of 10, the pony or creature just isn't doing a good job of defending—misjudging attacks, dodging the wrong way, not keeping good track of attackers, and so on.

The basic difficulty of a **spell attack** is based on the size of the spell *or* the target's defense, whichever is *greater*.

Active Defense and Description	Difficulty
<i>All-out</i> : Trying hard to avoid attacks, and so can't take <i>any</i> other actions at the same time	10 + Dodge or Reflexes
<i>Normal</i> : Trying to avoid attacks while doing other things at the same time	Dodge or Reflexes
<i>Block</i> : Trying to stop attacks; use Brawling if unarmed or Mêlée if using a weapon	Talent or Reflexes
<i>Parry</i> : Trying to <i>deflect</i> (push aside) attacks; use Brawling if unarmed, Mêlée if using a weapon	Talent or Reflexes

The narrator may allow a pony or creature who has some idea an attack's coming, but can't do much about it, to use a normal defense as a free action.

A pony who's using part of her body, rather than a weapon, to block attacks is injured automatically by an attacking weapon, unless she's wearing armor or has a Talent that covers blocking. If the attack attempt succeeds, add the attacker's Strength Bonus; if it fails, don't add the Strength Bonus.

When a pony uses a sharp weapon to parry, and an unarmed attack or an attack using a close-up weapon fails because of the parry, the parrying weapon injures the attacker—but don't add any Strength Bonus.

A fast-moving attack like a fired bullet can't be blocked or parried, of course. In that case, the target uses the same defense, but avoids the attack instead of blocking or parrying it.

Step 2: What Is the Range to the Target?

It's easier to hit a target that's nearby than a target that's far away. There are three basic ranges: *short*, *medium*, and *long*.

Attacking without a weapon or with a close-up weapon—for instance, a sword or club—is always at short range. Most such weapons usually are limited to one yard or hex away. A very long weapon may reach farther than the next yard or hex, but may be hard to use; an example is a big polearm such as a pike.

A weapon that shoots, or a magical attack, has short, medium, and long ranges. Short range is no farther than the weapon's first range listing. Medium range is farther than the first range listing but no farther than the second range listing. Long range is farther than the second range listing but no farther than the third range listing. A narrator who doesn't want to count out distances all the time can estimate what modifier to use.

Range and Examples	Modifier
<i>Short</i> : Shooting a rifle across a big ballroom	None
<i>Medium</i> : Shooting a pistol across a big ballroom, shooting a rifle across a small farm field	Add 5 to difficulty
<i>Long</i> : Shooting a pistol across a small farm field, shooting a rifle the long way across a sport field	Add 10 to difficulty

Step 3: What Kind of Attack?

A pony without the right fighting Talent attacks with Reflexes (if fighting without weapons or with close-up weapons) or Coordination (if shooting a distance weapon) instead. What *kind* of attack a pony or creature makes may modify its difficulty. It also may have some sort of extra effect, which also is described.

The attacker can try to **strike** a target and cause injury. She can attack only in the direction the attacking part of her body is facing; a wing clips outward from a pegasus pony's side. An attacker using her own body or a muscle-powered weapon adds her Strength Bonus to the attack's injury points. An attacker using a weapon like a firearm that isn't powered by her own muscles *doesn't* add her Strength Bonus.

A pony's or creature's **Strength Bonus** is equal to $\frac{1}{2}$ of her whole Muscle dice, rounded up to the next whole die. For 2d+2 Muscle or less, Strength Bonus is 1d. For 3d to 4d+2 Muscle, Strength Bonus is 2d. For 5d Muscle, Strength Bonus is 3d. ▶

Unarmed Strike	Modifier	Injury
<i>Punch</i> forward with front hoof or <i>butt</i> forward with head	None	Add 1 to Strength
<i>Gore</i> forward with alicorn (horn)	None	Add 2
<i>Box</i> forward with both front hooves or <i>clip</i> to the side with a wing	Add 3 to difficulty	Add 2 to Strength
<i>Kick</i> backward with a rear hoof	Add 6	Add 1d
<i>Buck</i> backward with both rear hooves	Add 9	Add 2d
<i>Bite</i> forward in normal conditions	Add 3	Strength Bonus
<i>Bite</i> when very close (grab or tackle)	Subtract 3	

The attacker can try to **grab** part of a target's body. Add 6 to the attack's difficulty. Every round a target stays grabbed, the attacker can use her Strength Bonus to injure the target. Trying to escape is a Muscle contest and takes a full action. Different kinds of grab also do other things.

A *choke* cuts off the target's breathing by pressing a limb, rope, rod, or pole against her throat. A *flip* grabs one of the target's limbs and yanks her over to fall down; hitting the ground causes 3d of injury. A *hold* traps the target but does less injury; subtract 3d or more from the injury points—whatever the attacker decides. A *slam* or *throw* lifts and flings the target at the ground, a wall, or anything solid nearby. Picking up the target using Lifting, Muscle, or Levitation is a full action. Slamming or throwing the target takes a second, similar full action.

A slammed or thrown target suffers injury equal to the *toughness* of the object she hits, plus the attacker's Strength Bonus. The attacker's Strength Bonus also is used against the object to see if it's damaged; it resists with its toughness. If the target's thrown at other creatures, each one suffers 3d of injury—but subtract 1 point for each creature more than two.

Toughness and Examples	Roll
<i>Flimsy</i> : Plywood door	1d
<i>Tough</i> : Hardwood door	2d
<i>Sturdy</i> : Bolted steel door or floor safe	3d
<i>Very sturdy</i> : A few layers of steel	4d
<i>Reinforced</i> : Many layers of steel	6d

When trying to **tackle** a target's whole body, add 3 to the attack's difficulty. If the tackle succeeds or the target isn't struggling, the attacker captures the target. Every round the target stays tackled, the attacker can use her Strength Bonus to injure the target. The target can't do anything except make escape attempts, just like escaping a grab.

Trying to **push, knock down, or trip** a target is a Brawling or Muscle contest. A knocked-down or tripped target falls to the ground. A pushed target stumbles; she isn't injured, but she subtracts 2d from her next Coordination task attempt.

Attack	Modifier
Push	Add 3 (or 1d) to attack difficulty
Knockdown or trip	Add 6 (or 2d) to attack difficulty

Step 4: Are There Any Special Conditions?

A lot of other choices or circumstances can affect the difficulty of an attack. A special condition also may have some sort of extra effect, which also is described.

All-out attack: The attacker puts *everything* into hitting the target, and can't take any other actions at all, including using an active defense. Subtract 6 (or 2d) from the attack difficulty, and if it hits, add 1d to injury.

Cover is anything in the way that prevents an attacker from hitting a target. A target that's completely blocked by cover can't be hit directly, but if an attack does enough damage (injury) to destroy the cover, what's left over may hit the target.

Cover and Visibility	Diff. Modifier
Very thick smoke or fog, complete darkness, cover that hides about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the target, or attacker who can't see	Add 12 (or 4d) to difficulty
Thick smoke or fog, moonlit night, or cover that hides about $\frac{1}{2}$ of target	Add 6 (or 2d) to difficulty
Light smoke or fog, dim light, twilight, or cover that hides about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the target	Add 3 (or 1d) to difficulty
The target can't see at all	Subtract 12 (or 4d)

Attacking a **crouched or prone** (lying face-down) target affects difficulty. Someone who's crouching can move only half as far as normal, rounding up.

Target Is . . .	Difficulty Modifier
Crouched and not moving	Add 3 (or 1d) to difficulty
Crouched and moving	Add 6 (or 2d) to difficulty
Prone at short range	Subtract 6 (or 2d) from diff.
Prone at med. or long range	Add 6 (or 2d) to difficulty

Creatures of different **Sizes** may fight. Bigger creatures or things are easier to hit, and usually can take more punishment, than smaller creatures or things. The examples in "How Big Is a Creature or Object?" can guide a narrator in choosing a Size. The narrator can apply Size to a weapon if the attacker using it is bigger or smaller than the target. If an attacker wants to hit an object being held or carried, use the Size of the object.

An attacker who's bigger than the target adds the Size difference to attack difficulty and to injury; an attacker who's smaller than the target subtracts the Size difference from attack difficulty and from injury. Sometimes a big object might not be sturdy or heavy for its Size—for instance, a hot-air balloon or a cloud. In that case, don't add the Size modifier to the injury from such an object or attacker.

For example: A pony farmer finds a rat in her grain silo. The pony is size 0; the rat is size -9; 0 minus -9 is 9. The pony adds 9 to the difficulty of attacking the rat and adds 9 to injury if she does hit it. The rat subtracts 9 from the difficulty of attacking the pony and subtracts 9 from the injury if it succeeds.

Step 5: Make the Attempt!

An attack's difficulty can't be less than 3, no matter how much was subtracted from it. Once the final difficulty's figured out, the attacker makes a task attempt using a fighting Talent or the appropriate Aptitude. If the attempt succeeds, the attack hits the target; if it fails, the attack misses. A successful attack may injure the target or cause any special effect it may have.

Step 6: What Is the Injury or Effect?

An attack that hits a target may injure that target. Use the injury rules to find out whether or how much the target's hurt, using the attack's injury points, plus the attacker's Strength Bonus if that applies; the target uses Hardiness to resist injury. Lists of weapons and armor are in part two of the book. ★

MOVEMENT OF PONIES, creatures, and vehicles in the game is measured in *yards per round*. Every 5 yards (4.5 m) per round is equal to about 2 miles (3.3 km) per hour. These detailed rules are intended for use during rounds; in normal role-playing they can be used as loose guidelines instead.

Walking and Running

A pony's *Walk Move* is 5 yards plus 1 yard for each whole die of Muscle; an earth pony can use Power instead if it's more than her Muscle. After walking or running in a round, a pony makes a movement task attempt, using the Running Talent if she has it or Reflexes if she doesn't. Difficulty is based on how fast she's moving. The narrator can skip task attempts for a pony who's walking or trotting in good conditions.

A pony who fails a running attempt slows down in her next turn by 2 times her Walk Move. If she slows down to zero yards, she stops. If it would make her movement less than zero or if a mishap happens, she falls and may be hurt.

A running pony can *speed up* or *slow down* by as much as 2 times her Walk Move. She can walk, but not run, *backward*. She can *turn* or *sidle* (move 1 yard sideways instead of forward); a turn doesn't count as movement, but a sidle does. A pony can turn or sidle more than once in a round.

Swimming

A pony's *Swim Move* is $\frac{1}{2}$ of her Walk Move, rounding up. After swimming in a round, a pony makes a movement task attempt, using the Swimming Talent if she has it or Reflexes if she doesn't. Difficulty is based on how fast she's swimming. The narrator can skip task attempts for a pony who's swimming no farther than her Swim Move in good conditions.

A pony who fails a swimming attempt slows down in her next turn by 2 times her Swim Move and may start to drown. Don't forget that currents may affect the pony's movement.

A swimming pony can *speed up* or *slow down* by as much as her Swim Move. She can *turn* or *sidle* (move 1 yard sideways instead of forward); a turn doesn't count as movement, but a sidle does. A pony can turn or sidle more than once in a round.

Climbing

A pony's *Climb Move* is $\frac{1}{2}$ of her Walk Move, rounding up, if she doesn't have the Climbing Talent; if she does, it's equal to Walk Move. After climbing up or down in a round, the pony makes a movement task attempt, using the Climbing Talent if she has it or Reflexes if she doesn't. Difficulty is based on how fast she's climbing. The narrator can skip task attempts for a pony who's climbing no farther than her Climb Move in good conditions.

A pony who fails a climbing attempt slows down in her next turn by 2 times her Climb Move. If she slows down to zero yards, she stops. If it would make her movement less than zero or if a mishap happens, she falls and may be hurt; how far she falls depends on how steep the climb is and how high up she is.

A climbing pony can *speed up* or *slow down* by as much as her Climb Move. She can *sidle* (move 1 yard sideways instead of forward), which counts as movement. A pony can sidle more than once in a round.

Jumping

A pony can *jump* up or forward $\frac{1}{4}$ of her Walk Move, rounding up. After jumping, the pony makes a movement task attempt, using the Jumping Talent if she has it or Reflexes if she doesn't, with a difficulty based on the distance jumped. Getting a running (galloping) start makes a jump easier. The narrator can skip task attempts for a pony who's jumping in good conditions and isn't trying to jump farther than her normal jump distance. A pony who fails a jumping attempt falls and may be hurt.

Flying

A pegasus pony's *Flight Move* is 5 yards plus 1 for each whole die of Power. (Pegasus flight is mostly magical.) After flying in a round, a pegasus makes a task attempt using the Flying Talent if she has it or Finesse if she doesn't, with a difficulty based on how fast she's flying. The narrator can skip attempts for a flyer in slow or moderate flight under good conditions.

A flyer who fails a flight attempt automatically slows down in her next turn by 2 times Flight Move. If she slows down to zero yards, she hovers. If it would make her movement less than zero yards or there's a mishap, she loses control. If she's *flying low*, she crashes and may get hurt. If she's *flying high*, she falls; on her next turn she can make a task attempt to regain control with a difficulty of 15—if she hasn't hit the ground yet.

Maneuvers: Since a flyer moves in all three dimensions, changing the way she's moving can be a lot more complicated than it is for other movement. *Simple* maneuvers are easy enough that most flyers don't have much trouble learning them. *Fancy* maneuvers are difficult *aerobatic* (aerial acrobatic) stunts.

Simple flying maneuvers are similar to running maneuvers, with the addition of *altitude* (how high up the flyer is). A flyer can *speed up* or *slow down* by as much as 8 times Flight Move. She can *gain* or *lose altitude* by no more than 4 times Flight Move—be sure to keep track of altitude! She can *glide* instead of fly, which is one level less exertion, but never less than light exertion; see "Plumb Tuckered: Fatigue and Rest". She can *fly low*, but she'll have to be careful of obstacles. She can *turn* or *slip* (move diagonally sideways instead of forward); a turn doesn't count as movement, but a slip does. A flyer can turn or slip more than once in a round, and a slip can be from 1 yard to $\frac{1}{8}$ of the distance the flyer's moving in the round, rounding down.

Fancy maneuvers can be tricky or even dangerous. A flyer can fly *backward*, but only in slow flight. She can *rotate* from right-side up to upside-down or *vice versa*, which doesn't count as movement. She can *half-loop* or *half-roll*. She can turn horizontal movement into vertical movement with a *power-dive* or *zoom-climb*; difficulty is based on the vertical distance. A flyer who reaches 1877 yards (1716 m) per round will *break the sound barrier* if she succeeds at her movement task attempt.

A half-loop is a vertical half-circle that ends with the flyer heading the opposite way (180°) from her direction before the half-loop. She must use at least 1 yard or $\frac{1}{8}$ of the distance she's flying in the round, rounding down—whichever is more—to gain (in a climbing half-loop) or lose (in a diving half-loop) altitude. She also goes half that distance horizontally during the first part of the half-loop, then comes back the same distance during the last part. She may, but doesn't have to, make *one* more half-loop right after the first, for a full loop or a big S-shape. ♦

A half-roll is a *helical* (corkscrew-shaped) half-circle that ends with the flyer heading the same direction, but some distance sideways, like a slip. She must use at least 1 yard or $\frac{1}{8}$ of the distance she's flying in the round, rounding down—which ever is more—to move diagonally; she also goes up half as far, then down again, or *vice versa*. She may, but doesn't have to, make *one* more half-roll right after the first, but in the opposite direction, for a *barrel roll*. For example, an upward right half-roll is followed by a downward left half-roll.

A half-loop or half-roll counts as movement and isn't allowed in heroic flight. A flyer who starts a half-loop or half-roll right-side up ends upside-down and *vice versa*.

A power-dive turns forward movement into *lost* altitude. (For example, a flyer who moved 100 yards in the last round now moves zero yards and loses 100 yards of altitude instead.) The only other maneuver allowed is *gain* or *lose altitude*.

A zoom-climb turns forward movement into *gained* altitude. The only other maneuver allowed is *gain* or *lose altitude*. A zoom-climb ends when the flyer stops it or gains zero or less altitude. A flyer can power-dive right after a zoom-climb, but not *vice versa*—she must fly level for at least 1 round.

Taking off or landing is a full action, separate from flying—a flyer can take off and fly, or fly and land, in the same round. Flying or Finesse can be used instead of Jump or Reflexes. To *take off*, a flyer makes a jump up to 2 yards (1.8 m); a flyer who wants an easier take-off can try a galloping start to the jump.

Just like in real flying, *landing* is more complicated. The flyer makes a jump down from her height above the landing spot. Add 5 to landing difficulty for flying at trotting speed (relative to the landing spot) before landing. Add 10 for flying at cantering speed. Add 15 for flying at galloping speed. Add 20 for flying faster than a gallop. The flyer runs at the same speed and direction she was flying until she's able to slow down, and may have to make a Running or Reflexes task attempt for that.

Difficulty Modifiers for Movement

For any pony who doesn't move in a straight line, or who has to cope with bad conditions, apply these difficulty modifiers.

	Maneuvers and Bad Conditions	Modif.
Maneuvers	For each turn, sidle, slip, or rotation	Add 1
	For each half-loop or half-roll	Add 5
	Walking or flying backward, flying low, gliding, power-diving or zoom-climbing	Add 5 to difficulty
	Trying to break the sound barrier	Add 10
Bad Conditions	Uneven surface, small obstacles, choppy water, climbing tree, or flying in strong winds	Add 5 to difficulty
	Big obstacles, strong current, climbing a rough wall, or flying in rough air	Add 10 to diff.
	Lots of big, close obstacles, or stormy weather	Add 15
	Narrow or shaky path (cliff trail, rope bridge), big waves, or climbing a smooth wall	Add 20 to diff.
	Collapsing hall, flying/swimming in hurricane	Add ≥ 25

Muscle or Power dice:	1d	2d	3d	4d	5d
Walk or Flight Move:	6 yds. (5.5 m)	7 yards (6.4 m)	8 yds. (7.3 m)	9 yards (8.2 m)	10 yds. (9.1 m)

	Movement Distances	Difficulty
Walking & Running	Walk from 1 yard to as far as Walk Move	0
	Trot: Run (jog) farther than Walk Move but no farther than 2 times Walk Move	5
	Canter: Run farther than trot but no farther than 4 times Walk Move	10
	Gallop: Run (sprint) farther than canter but no farther than 8 times Walk Move	15
Swimming	Swim from 1 yard to as far as Swim Move	5
	Swim farther than Swim Move but no farther than 2 times Swim Move	10
	Swim farther than 2 times Swim Move but no farther than 3 times Swim Move	15
	Swim farther than 3 times Swim Move but no farther than 4 times Swim Move	20
Climbing	Climb from 1 yard to as far as Climb Move	10
	Climb farther than Climb Move but no farther than 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ times Climb Move	20
	Climb farther than 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ times Climb Move but no farther than 2 times Climb Move	30
Jumping	Jump from 1 yard to as far as Jump Move	5
	Each extra yard added to jump distance	Add 5
	Running start to jump: Gallop for 1 round Gallop for 2 rounds	Subtract 5 Subtract 10

Flying	Hover: Stay still in mid-air (move 0 yards)	3
	Slow: From 1 yard to as far as Flight Move	0
	Moderate: Farther than Flight Move but no farther than 2 times Flight Move	5
	Fast: Farther than 2 times Flight Move but no farther than 4 times Flight Move	10
	Very fast: Farther than 4 times Flight Move but no farther than 8 times Flight Move	15

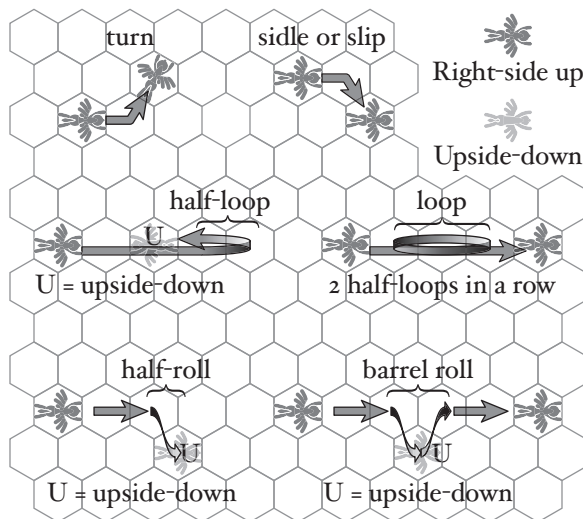
Heroic flight is farther than 8 times Flight Move; add 5 to difficulty for each doubling of distance. (Up to 16 times Flight Move, difficulty is 20; up to 32 times, difficulty is 25; and so on.) A pegasus *must* have the Flying Talent to fly this fast, and fancy maneuvers except power-dive and zoom-climb are not allowed.

A pegasus in heroic flight leaves behind a sparkling trail that matches her coat, mane, or tail colors. The faster she flies, the longer the trail is and the longer it lingers in the air. ♦

Keeping Track of Everything

For a simple situation—say, one pony chasing another on a road, or some flyers high in the air—the narrator can keep track of basic information like how far apart they are, and take care of the rest with normal role-playing. For something more complicated, such as a bunch of ponies running or flying around in a town or forest, the narrator may want to use a map.

Many games use maps overlaid with grids of hexagons (or *hexes*) to help everyone understand the lay of the land and how characters or creatures are moving. Below are diagrams of maneuvers showing how they work on hex-grids. Maneuvering gets trickier if a pony or creature isn't going straight down a row of hexes, but the narrator and players should use common sense to figure out where a figure should end up.



Making and using maps: Blank sheets printed with hex-grids for drawing on, both paper and bigger plastic “mats” for use with wet-erase markers, are available from retailers who sell role-playing games and supplies for them. A narrator who has drawing or painting software may be able to make her own maps and hex-grids, and some Web-searching should turn up downloadable tools, grids, symbols, and images.

Small pewter figures, often painted, are popular for marking where characters and creatures are on such a map—but there aren't any for magical cartoon ponies. Cardboard stand-ups with art are one solution. A group who's willing to use maps with big (1 ¼-inch or 32-mm) hexes can try molded pony toys. Otherwise, the narrator and players may have to use any pieces they can find, as long as everyone can tell which way they're facing, so it's easy to figure out what direction each pony's going.

Scale is the other problem to solve. When the narrator needs fine detail and doesn't expect movement to be very fast, she can use a *small* scale of 1 yard per hex. A full-grown pony fits, nose to tail, in one hex, though the sun princess or other large creature may need two hexes (or even more, if very large).

Galloping or very fast flying can cover a lot of territory in a hurry, though. For that the narrator may want to move up to a *medium* scale of 4 yards per hex and divide all distances given in the movement rules by 4, rounding up where needed. Much of the time this should be open or mostly open ground or sky; zipping around where there are lots of buildings, trees, rocks, or other solid objects to smack into often doesn't end well.

If a daring—or crazy—pegasus tries heroic flight, and the narrator decides to use a map for it (which isn't recommended), she can use a *large* scale. It can vary, depending on just how fast the pegasus wants to go, but a good rule of thumb is to start at a scale of 16 yards per hex and keep doubling from there until the narrator reaches a scale that can manage the movement conveniently. That means only the biggest objects will take up much space on the map, but if a pegasus pulls a stunt like this at low altitude, she's likely to learn a very painful lesson. ★

~ Good Show: Experience and Rewards ~

AS THE GAME GOES ON, the narrator can reward players with *experience points* or *possession points*. A good time to give out points is at the end of a story; a player who role-played especially well or was especially clever might deserve a little extra.

Experience points can improve a pony's Talents or add new Talents. A Talent being improved or added should be one the pony's had a chance to practice or learn. Improving a Talent by 1 pip costs as many experience points as the skill has in whole dice. For example, if a Talent has 3d+2, it would cost 3 experience points to add a pip, improving it to 4d. Adding another pip after that would cost 4 experience points.

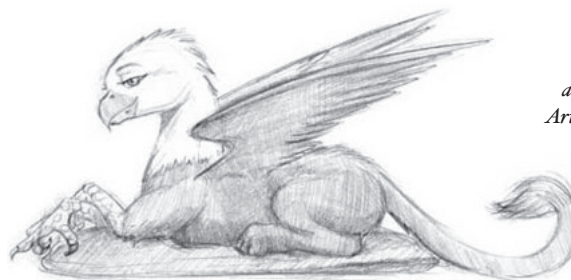
The total number of experience points added to a Talent can be listed on a Pony Form in the column labeled “Exp.”, part of the “Talents and Specialties” section of the Form. Aptitudes can't be improved except under special circumstances—usually magical and rare—with the narrator's permission.

Giving one experience point to a player pony is a small reward. Two is more typical, and three experience points is a big reward. The narrator probably shouldn't give out more than three points except under the most exceptional circumstances.

Possession points can be *consumable* or *permanent*. A consumable point represents something temporary, and once it's spent, it's gone. A permanent point can be used to improve one of a pony's possessions (making a minor possession into a medium possession, for instance) or to get the pony a new one—or it can be saved for later (maybe to put together several points for a bigger possession).

Be imaginative when using possession points! They can be all sorts of other things besides belongings or money. For instance, a consumable point could mean another pony owes the player's pony a small favor. Permanent points could represent special privileges or legal powers, or friends in high places.

Giving one possession point to a player pony, especially a permanent one, is a decent reward. Giving out two is a generous reward, and giving out more points is a big reward. The narrator probably shouldn't give out more than four points except under the most exceptional circumstances. ★



Golden Bill,
a griffin musician
Art by Baron Engel

Player name

Pony name

☐ Earth

☐ Pegasus

☐ Unicorn

Pony's tribe and gender

☐ Mare

☐ Stallion

☐ Filly

☐ Colt

Aptitude	Add up points		Dice
Muscle	3	+	= d
Hardiness	3	+	= d
Reflexes	3	+	= d
Coordination	3	+	= d
Smarts	3	+	= d
Senses	3	+	= d
Power	3	+	= d
Finesse	+	=	d
Total points:			

Personal Strength

Personal Weakness

Magic Style

Run	Walk	Trot	Canter	Gallop
Yards				
Diffic.	0	5	10	15
Swim	Move	× 2	× 3	× 4
Yards				
Diffic.	5	10	15	20
Climb	Move	× 1 ½	× 2	Round up if needed
Yards				
Diffic.	10	20	30	
Jump	Move	+1 yd.	+2 yds.	+3 yds.
Yards				
Diffic.	5	10	15	20
Fly	Slow	Mod.	Fast	V. fast
Yards				
Diffic.	0	5	10	15
Strength Bonus				d

Talents and Specialties	Based on	Add up points		Exp.	Dice
		+	=		d
		+	=		d
		+	=		d
		+	=		d
		+	=		d
		+	=		d
		+	=		d
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		+	=		d
		+	=		d
		+	=		d
		+	=		d

Important possessions (every pony gets panniers/saddlebags)	Major	Med.	Minor
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Pony description

Cutie mark (sketch or description)

Experience Points

Unused

Spent

Harmony Points

Fatigue Points

Total

Spent

Recovery per hour

Sleeping

Resting

Illness or Injury

☐ Bruised

≤ 0

☐ Stunned

1-

☐ Minor

-

☐ Serious

-

☐ Major

-

☐ Mortal

-

☐ Death

≥

Spell name and description

Effect

Casting distance? ☐ no ☐ yes, from caster to:

Ranged spell? ☐ no ☐ yes, from caster to:

Failure

Mishap

Duration? ☐ instant ☐ how long Effect lasts:

Special rule (if any)

Spell name and description

Effect

Casting distance? ☐ no ☐ yes, from caster to:

Ranged spell? ☐ no ☐ yes, from caster to:

Failure

Mishap

Duration? ☐ instant ☐ how long Effect lasts:

Special rule (if any)

Spell name and description

Effect

Casting distance? ☐ no ☐ yes, from caster to:

Ranged spell? ☐ no ☐ yes, from caster to:

Failure

Mishap

Duration? ☐ instant ☐ how long Effect lasts:

Special rule (if any)

Spell name and description

Effect

Casting distance? ☐ no ☐ yes, from caster to:

Ranged spell? ☐ no ☐ yes, from caster to:

Failure

Mishap

Duration? ☐ instant ☐ how long Effect lasts:

Special rule (if any)

Step 1: What Kind of Pony?

- Choose the pony's tribe: earth pony, pegasus, or unicorn.
- Choose whether the pony's a mare (female) or stallion (male).

Step 2: Aptitudes

- List the starting Aptitudes of the tribe chosen for the pony.
- Add 12d (36 points) to Aptitudes. They can be split up as desired, but no Aptitude can be more than 5d (15 points).

Step 3: Talents Choosing Talents and figuring out how many points to put into each one can take time and effort, so it's okay if these steps get all mixed up. They're listed separately just to make explaining and remembering them easier.

- Choose the pony's Talents and describe them if necessary.
- Decide whether each Talent is Mundane or Magical.
- Decide for each Talent what Aptitude to base it on.
- Decide which will be the pony's Special Talent.
- Add 7d (21 points) to Talents. Each Talent must have at least +1 (1 point) and no more than 3d (9 points) added to it.

Stamina or Hardiness:	1d	1d+1	1d+2	2d	2d+1	2d+2	3d	3d+1	3d+2	4d	4d+1	4d+2	5d	5d+1	5d+2	6d	6d+1
Fatigue Points:	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34
<i>Recovery per hour of sleep:</i>	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	6	6
<i>Recovery per hour of rest:</i>	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

Step 4: Personal Traits Decide on the pony's Personal Strength and Personal Weakness, name them, and describe them. They can be made up, with the narrator's approval.

Step 5: Finishing Touches

- Note down Fatigue Points and recovery, Strength Bonus, and Moves. The tables below provide pre-calculated values.
- Describe how the pony looks. That can include size and build; colors of coat, mane, tail, and eyes; and the cutie mark and its meaning. Use an extra sheet if it's needed.
- Name the pony and describe what else is important about the pony. Some examples are personality, voice, birthplace, and earlier life. Use an extra sheet if it's needed.
- Decide on the pony's important possessions. The pony may have up to 8. A major possession counts as 4. A medium possession counts as 2. A minor possession counts as 1. Every pony also owns a pair of panniers or saddlebags. ★

Muscle (or Power, if applicable):	1d	1d+1	1d+2	2d	2d+1	2d+2	3d	3d+1	3d+2	4d	4d+1	4d+2	5d
Strength Bonus	1d	1d	1d	1d	1d	1d	2d	2d	2d	2d	2d	2d	3d
Walk Move or Flight Move	6	6	6	7	7	7	8	8	8	9	9	9	10
Trot or moderate flight	12	12	12	14	14	14	16	16	16	18	18	18	20
Canter or fast flight	24	24	24	28	28	28	32	32	32	36	36	36	40
Gallop or very fast flight	48	48	48	56	56	56	64	64	64	72	72	72	80
Swim Move	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5
Moderate swim (2 times Swim)	6	6	6	8	8	8	8	8	8	10	10	10	10
Fast swim (3 times Swim)	9	9	9	12	12	12	12	12	12	15	15	15	15
Very fast swim (4 times Swim)	12	12	12	16	16	16	16	16	16	20	20	20	20
Climb Move (without Climbing Talent)	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5
Fast climb (1 ½ times Climb, round up)	5	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	8	8	8	8
Very fast climb (2 times Climb)	6	6	6	8	8	8	8	8	8	10	10	10	10
Climb Move (with Climbing Talent)	6	6	6	7	7	7	8	8	8	9	9	9	10
Fast climb (1 ½ times Climb, round up)	9	9	9	11	11	11	12	12	12	14	14	14	15
Very fast climb (2 times Climb)	12	12	12	14	14	14	16	16	16	18	18	18	20
Jump	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3
Jump + 1 yard	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4
Jump + 2 yards	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5
Jump + 3 yards	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	6

~ Part Two of Four ★ Gussy It Up: Lists & Optional Rules ~

TO MAKE THE BASIC RULES small and friendly, a lot was left out. Long lists in the middle of the rules break the flow of reading. Rules that may be useful, but aren't absolutely necessary, can complicate the game. Those lists and rules are in this part, where they're out of the way when they're not needed, but are easy to find when someone needs to look them up.

The **list of Talents** covers skills and abilities for both adventurers and more ordinary folks and shows by example how new Talents created by the narrator and players should look.

Optional rules add detail or spectacle, but also increase complexity. They range from small refinements that would work in lighter medium-level games to major additions intended for experienced groups who want serious high-adventure figurative games. Use the check-boxes to mark the ones in use.

Three **example ponies**, one from each tribe, show how the pony-creation process works, using pony-creation checklists and filled-out Pony Forms.

The sections on **equipment and weapons** mostly contain things adventurers are likely to use. Other good sources are vintage mail-order catalogs, illustrated books, or magazines. A few publishers make a living finding and reprinting such old publications, for research or as coloring books.

A lot of **creatures** shown in episodes are unique or treated differently from similar ones in the real world or legends. Many only show up once each! As a result, they aren't easy to nail down in nice, neat numbers, but best guesses are listed. Of course, a narrator's free to come up with her own ideas of how to make them work, or even to invent new ones.

"Should Something Like That Be in This Game?"

Parents might be a little uneasy with some of the material in this rulebook. After all, it's based on a television program for little girls about brightly colored magical ponies!

True, the stories are funny and charming, and avoid getting deeply into things that younger viewers might have a hard time with. Part of what made the show such a surprise hit with all sorts of people, though, is that it *isn't* all sweetness and light.

The show's creator and writers have gone out of their way to treat the audience with respect. Bullies, conflicts with family or friends, even bigger issues such as starting a family or settling matters with neighbors—whether they live next door or across a border—are treated in ways that people really can, or do, see in their lives. The lessons aren't pasted on as afterthoughts; they grow out of the stories, following the adage that an author should *show* what's happening, not just tell about it.

An older viewer may notice little background details of the ponies' world, things that say "this is a real world, with real joys and real problems." The depth and unspoken acknowledgement of these elements make the stories ring true.

The game is meant to be playable by both teens and adults, and it needs to treat everyone with the same respect the show does. Besides, the show originally was supposed to be one-third adventure and two-thirds slice of life. The game wouldn't be complete if it couldn't handle both, and it's intended to allow narrators and players the same kind of flexibility. ★

2-4	List of Talents	Muscle Talents	Smarts Talents
		Hardiness Talents	Senses Talents
		Reflexes Talents	Pegasus Magical Talents
		Coordination Talents	Unicorn Magical (Spell) Talents
5	Enchanted Artifacts and World-Magic	Enchanted Artifacts	World-Magic
6	Creating a Pony Optional Rules	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Kinds of Ponies	<input type="checkbox"/> Specialties
		<input type="checkbox"/> Other Creatures	
7	Task Resolution Optional Rules	<input type="checkbox"/> Harmony Points	<input type="checkbox"/> Streamlining Die Rolls
7	Buying and Selling Optional Rules	<input type="checkbox"/> Incidental Possessions	
8	Rounds and Actions Optional Rules	<input type="checkbox"/> Delaying	<input type="checkbox"/> Extra Actions
8	Fatigue and Rest Optional Rules	<input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping and Waking	<input type="checkbox"/> Extra Effort
9	Injury, Illness, and Healing Optional Rules	<input type="checkbox"/> Natural Hazards	<input type="checkbox"/> First Aid
10	Combat Optional Rules	<input type="checkbox"/> Close Range (Step 2)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> More Attacks (Step 3)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> More Special Conditions (Step 4)	
11	Movement Optional Rules	<input type="checkbox"/> Long-Distance Travel	<input type="checkbox"/> Trading Speed & Altitude
		<input type="checkbox"/> Sliding and Rolling	<input type="checkbox"/> Speed Is Energy
		<input type="checkbox"/> Running Momentum	<input type="checkbox"/> Inside & Outside Loops
		<input type="checkbox"/> Gravity and Falling	<input type="checkbox"/> Flying Momentum
		<input type="checkbox"/> Gliding	
12-13	Romany: Example Earth Pony		
14-15	Scirocco: Example Pegasus Pony		
16-17	Glitch: Example Unicorn Pony (<i>guest contribution</i>)		
18-19	Equipment and Belongings	Available Almost Anywhere	
		Available in Cities or by Mail-Order	
		Unusual or Rare	
		Useful Information	
		The Best Things in Life Are Free	
		Barding and Armor	
19-20	Muscle-Powered Weapons	Weaponless Attacks	Missile and Thrown Weapons
		Mêlée Weapons	Improvised Weapons
21-23	Mechanical Weapons, Firearms, and Explosives	Mechanical Weapons	Explosives
		Firearms	A Last Word
24-26	Creatures	Talking Creatures	Dumb Creatures

~ List of Talents ~

DOZENS OF TALENTS ARE DESCRIBED here, but they don't cover every skill or ability. More can be added as they're needed, especially for a literal game or for a figurative game that includes technology outside the nineteenth-century time frame the show's creator used as inspiration for the ponies' world. Every new Talent should be given a name, probably no more than a couple of words, and a short description.

Other RPG rulebooks are good sources for additional skills and abilities. Since most other games don't handle magic the same way *Pony Tales* does, however, their spells and magical abilities may not be as useful. A *really* adventurous group also can look into rules for *disadvantages*, which are weaknesses that compensate a character with bonus Talent Points.

Some of the listed Talents are unsavory or even unpleasant, but many are staples of adventure fiction and, for the same reasons, adventure games. A narrator and players who want that kind of game will need those Talents along with the more everyday ones. Also, even if the players don't use them when creating ponies, the narrator may need them when creating villains or minions that the players' ponies may have to face.

Any Talent marked with an asterisk (*) can be a Magical Talent for an earth pony. Generally these are Talents that are all about taking care of the land or of living things.

Magical Talents: The program's writers often change how magic seems to work to fit their scripts, but a role-playing game needs consistent rules. Because of that, the example Magical Talents may not look exactly the same as they do on the show. Instead, they're written to match the *spirit* of the series and to be useful and balanced for the game. New Magical Talents should follow the same guidelines.

Pegasus cloudwalking: Any pegasus can stand on clouds as if they were solid, or fly through them, without a task attempt except under very stressful conditions. If a pegasus is greatly distracted or otherwise not thinking straight, the narrator may require a Cloudworking (or Finesse) task attempt; failure means the pegasus forgets to switch her cloudwalking "on" or "off". Forgetting to turn it "on" before landing on a cloud is awkward enough, but forgetting to turn it "off" before flying into a cloud could be painful as well as embarrassing.

Look, Ma, no hands: One thing even the show's animators have trouble with is how earth and pegasus ponies use tools or carry things without levitation magic or hands. They can use their mouths—which real horses do—for fine tasks. They seem to be able to make things magically stick to hooves and other parts of their bodies, such as their backs or heads. Sometimes careful camera angles hide the fact that there's no good solution. The narrator and players can use similar kinds of tricks during play, and shouldn't worry about the details.

Iron Horse This is an ability instead of a skill, not based on any one Aptitude. For each "die", double the time for spending 1 Fatigue Point, or cut Fatigue Points spent by ½ (rounding up), for all Talents based on one Aptitude, which must be specified. Spend Experience Points on a new Iron Horse based on the chosen Aptitude. The narrator probably shouldn't allow more than "1d" or "2d" of this ability on any single pony.

Muscle Talents

Blacksmithing Working iron into useful artifacts or devices.

Lumbering Harvesting wood from trees with minimal waste.

Move Increase This is an ability instead of a skill. Add to Muscle for the purpose of figuring out what the pony's Walk Move is; the greatest Walk Move a pony can have is 10. Swim, climb, and Jump Moves are based on the increased Walk Move.

Plowing* Pulling, steering, and operating a plow or harvester.

Teamster Efficient loading, pulling, and unloading of vehicles.

Hardiness Talents

Stamina Replaces Hardiness to resist fatigue, poison, & illness.

Reflexes Talents

Acrobatics Performing gymnastics and breaking falls.

Alertness Replaces Reflexes for initiative; see the rules in "Fast and Furious: Rounds and Actions" for details.

Brawling Fighting without weapons (using hooves, teeth, or other parts of the body).

Climbing Scaling steep surfaces to move upward or downward.

Contortion The ability to wiggle out of bonds or restrictions.

Dodge Avoiding attacks or obstacles; see the rules in "Them's Fightin' Words: Combat" for details.

Jumping Leaping, including over obstacles, without falling.

Mêlée Fighting with close-up weapons (clubs, blades, *et cetera*).

Running Moving on one's hooves (or paws or feet).

Sneaking Moving silently, using cover and misdirection.

Swimming Moving through the water and breathing properly.

Coordination Talents

Firearms Shooting pistols, rifles, shotguns, and cannon.

Legerdemain Fancy manipulation and misdirection, including picking pockets, hiding small objects quickly, or stage magic.

Lockpicking Opening mechanical locks without proper keys or combinations and disarming simple mechanical traps.

Masonry Building sturdy and useful brick and stone structures.

Missile Weapons Shooting bows, crossbows, and slings.

Performing This is a group of Talents. Any single kind of performance is a Talent, such as singing, playing a musical instrument, or a style of dance.

Piloting Steering or guiding mechanical vehicles.

Throwing Flinging or catching objects accurately.

Tinker Building, repairing small or simple mechanical devices.

Smarts Talents

Business Running an enterprise successfully and profitably.

Charm Influencing other ponies or creatures with charisma.

Confidence Using bluffs, lies, and trickery on others. ("Con", as in "con man" or "con game", is short for "confidence"; this is an old meaning of the word related to "confidential".)

Cosmopolitan General but not very detailed knowledge of cultures other than the pony's or creature's native one.

Demolitions Using force to destroy structures or objects.

Engineering Designing and building big, complicated devices.

Farriery* Hoof care—trimming, balancing, rasping, shoeing.

Farming* Planting, maintaining, harvesting, and processing.

Forestry* Caring for forests and the lands where they grow. ♦

Forgery Creating or spotting fake documents, artworks, or currency. Other Talents may be needed to help in making or spotting a big or complicated fake such as a painting.

Husbandry* Breeding, rearing, and caring for animals, especially domestic ones.

Intimidation Influencing others through threats and fear.

Languages This is a group of Talents. Each language is a Talent; every talking creature knows one language for free.

Leadership Directing groups of other ponies or creatures in working or fighting.

Medicine* Treating sick or injured ponies.

Navigation Using instruments, maps, stars, or landmarks to avoid getting lost.

Preserving* Using canning or any other method to prevent food from spoiling.

Repair Returning damaged or worn devices to good condition.

Science This is a group of Talents. Any single science can be a Talent, such as astronomy, biology, chemistry, meteorology, even magic theory or alchemy.

Telegraphy Operating and maintaining telegraph equipment.

Veterinary Medicine* Treating sick or injured animals.

Willpower Resisting stress or pain, or attempts to influence.

Senses Talents

Acting Playing a fictitious role, on the stage or anywhere else.

Animal Training* Teaching animals to perform tasks and follow commands.

Art This is a group of Talents. Any single form of art is a Talent, such as drawing, painting, photography, sculpting, scrimshaw, or woodcarving.

Cooking* Preparing foods that are safe, nutritious, and tasty.

Craft This is a group of Talents. Any single craft is a Talent, such as basket-weaving, carpentry, glass-blowing, pottery-throwing, or sewing.

Disguise Changing appearance with make-up, costume, posture.

Familiarity Knowledge of a specific geographical area—a neighborhood, a city, a region, or a country. The bigger the area, the less detailed the knowledge is.

Gambling Playing games of chance or skill, including cheating or spotting cheats.

Hiding Keeping still and avoiding notice, concealing objects.

Investigation Gathering clues to solve puzzles or mysteries.

Journalism Gathering and presenting information about newsworthy events.

Notice Observing things or details with sight and other senses.

Oratory Public speaking to influence large audiences.

Persuasion Influencing small audiences with talk, gifts, or other methods.

Searching Canvassing an area systematically for hidden objects.

Streetwise Finding information, goods, and contacts in an urban environment.

Survival* Techniques for living in wild conditions.

Tracking Following a creature's trail without being noticed.

Writing Communicating with text—speeches, poetry, or stories to be read aloud—but success also depends on how well the speaker does with the material.

Pegasus Magical Talents

Any pegasus can weatherwork or Windwork, even if she hasn't spent points on the Talent she's using—just use her basic Finesse for the Talent and basic Power for Effect. See “Wind and Weather” for details on precipitation and wind speeds. All weather Talents are limited by casting distances. Boltworking also is a *ranged* Talent, for how far a lightning bolt is thrown.

Bump of Direction keeps a pegasus oriented even when she can't see. A successful task attempt means the pegasus knows roughly which way is up (or down) and where the cardinal directions (north, south, east, west) are. The better the success, the more exactly the pegasus knows where those directions are. This works like a Mundane Talent; it has no Effect.

Flying is moving through the air without losing control and falling; see “Hoofin' It and Wingin' It: Movement”.

Flight Increase adds to Power for the purpose of figuring out what the pegasus pony's Flight Move is; the greatest Flight Move a pegasus can have is 10.

Weatherworking is a group of Talents that control and manipulate clouds. If there aren't any clouds, especially rain clouds, or the air's very dry, the Talents may not work.

The *Boltworking* Talent controls lightning. Effect is the injury or damage dice a lightning bolt does; each bolt the pegasus prevents, causes, or directs “uses up” dice of Effect. Once the Effect dice are used up, that weatherworking ends, and the pegasus must start another weatherworking if she wants to control more lightning. A tiny cloud's bolt may be 1d to 2d; a huge storm cloud's bolt may be 5d to 10d or more.

The *Cloudworking* Talent controls clouds. Subtract the Size of each cloud the pegasus works on from the Effect rolled by the pegasus. If a cloud is smaller than Size 1 (which is very rare), count it as Size 1. Once the Effect is “used up”, that weatherworking ends, and the pegasus must start another weatherworking if she wants to control more clouds. Note that creating a cloud is harder in dry air; dissipating one is harder in humid air. Moving or shaping a cloud in windy air is harder, and so are complicated movements or shapes.

The *Rainworking* Talent controls precipitation. Effect is the cloud Size the pegasus can work with; she can change the precipitation falling from a cloud by one level for each Size interval. (*No rain* is one level less than *very light rain*.) The change takes 1 round per Size-level, and can be rushed or take extra time. If she's working on a Size 20 cloud, she can change the rain by one level for 20 pips of Effect (taking 20 rounds), by two levels for 40 pips of Effect (taking 40 rounds), by three levels for 60 pips of Effect (taking 60 rounds), and so on. A cloud smaller than Size 1 is counted as Size 1.

The pegasus can work on more than one cloud, but once the Effect's “used up”, that weatherworking ends, and she must start another weatherworking if she wants to control more precipitation. Precipitation can't be thawed or frozen, but a pegasus can change it from one kind of precipitation to another in the *same* state, such as turning snow to hail or *vice versa*, with 1 cloud-Size interval of Effect per level of precipitation.

Windworking is the controlling and directing of winds. Each 5 Effect Points can increase or decrease, by one level, the wind speed of the air around the pegasus. To change wind direction by 30° takes 5 Effect Points per level of wind. ♦

Unicorn Magical (Spell) Talents

The narrator and players probably will have to make up more Spell Talents than any other kind of Talent. These examples, based on spells in several episodes, only scratch the surface.

Don't be afraid to adjust a Spell Talent that, at first, is too powerful—or not powerful enough. The narrator also should be cautious about Spell Talents that allow players to gather and study information more easily than normal senses and thinking. Nothing spoils a story's surprises like using divination magic to figure out too easily where ambushes or clues are!

Force Blast shoots a beam of raw magical energy at a target. *Effect*: injury or damage; may knock the target away as if slammed or thrown. *Casting distance*: none; the beam shoots from the alicorn (horn). *Ranged spell*: use the range modifier for how far away the beam's target is and apply any other appropriate modifiers from the fighting rules. *Failure*: the beam misses the intended target and may hit something or someone else instead. *Mishap*: the spell fizzles. *Duration*: instant.

Force Bubble creates a sphere of magical energy. *Effect*: dice of armor/toughness; the bubble shatters if injury/damage points of an attack are greater than its armor/toughness. See the rules on protective armor and on toughness in "Them's Fightin' Words: Combat". *Casting distance*: measure from the caster to the bubble's center. *Ranged spell*: use the range modifier for the bubble's radius (the distance from the bubble's center to its edge). *Failure or mishap*: the spell fizzles. *Duration*: how long the bubble lasts. *Special rule*: Creating a temporary opening in the bubble for 1 round is a full action of difficulty 5.

Pyrotechnics creates a fireworks-like display of flashes, starbursts, or simple images. *Effect*: how complex or impressive the light show is; if it matters, a watcher can use Senses to resist being amazed or convinced. *Casting distance*: none; pyrotechnics shoot from the alicorn (horn). *Ranged spell*: use the range modifier for how far away the caster wants the display to be. *Failure*: misses the intended target and ends up somewhere random, but no farther away than it was supposed to go. *Mishap*: the spell fizzles. *Duration*: how long the light show lasts.

Special rule: The spell can be used to attack with an explosion; add 5 to difficulty. Duration is instant. See "Explosives" later in this part for rules on this kind of attack and trying to get away from it. Effect dice cause injury or damage and set things on fire like a torch. Anyone up to 2 yards away from the explosion is hit by the whole Effect roll, everyone 3 to 4 yards away is hit by $\frac{1}{2}$ the Effect roll, and everyone 5 to 8 yards away is hit by $\frac{1}{4}$ of the Effect roll. *This can include the caster's friends!*

Transformation is a class of Talents rather than a single Talent. The Talent must specify, with the narrator's approval, what can be transformed, and what it can be transformed into. (A good example from the show would be changing fabric directly into clothing.) *Effect*: how much toughness, complexity, Size, and/or other appropriate attributes (as decided by the narrator) can be transformed. *Casting distance*: the caster can transform something nearby. *Ranged spell*: this is *not* a ranged spell. *Failure*: the spell fizzles. *Mishap*: the spell ruins whatever is being transformed. *Duration*: how long the transformation lasts before the object or material changes back to its original form. *Special rule*: once cast, it no longer is considered an active spell and can't be stopped by distracting or injuring the spellcaster.

The show's writers are free to use Transformation spells as a shortcut to keep a scene from running too long, but the narrator should keep in mind that this can be a *very* powerful Talent. The duration limit is partly to keep the Talent from being totally unreasonable, and partly to explain why unicorns don't use Transformation to create everything. On the other hand (hoof?), it can be combined with more ordinary ways of doing things—for example, when making a dress, Transformation may change the fabric to the final shape, but cutting and sewing make sure it stays that way once the spell wears off.

Wink moves creatures or things across distances "in the wink of an eye". (A modern word for the same thing is *teleportation*.) *Effect*: how much mass can be Winked, similar to Levitation. *Casting distance*: the caster can move anything nearby, including herself; subtract the points for the farthest object the caster tries to move. *Ranged spell*: use the range modifier for how far the caster wants to Wink, and use difficulty modifiers for visibility; also, if the caster's very familiar with where she's Winking to, the narrator can subtract 5 to 10 from casting difficulty. *Failure*: the spell fizzles. *Mishap*: the Wink ends up somewhere random (possibly including upward), but no farther away than it was supposed to go. *Duration*: instant.

Illumination creates a magical ball of light—see "Visibility: How Far Can a Pony See?" for details. *Effect*: the radius, in yards, of night-level light. The radius of twilight-level light is 1 yard per die of Effect. The radius of daylight-level light is $\frac{1}{3}$ of the twilight distance, rounding to the nearest yard. If the unicorn casts a 30° light instead, multiply each radius by 3. *Casting distance*: the spell can light up the caster's alicorn (horn); a 360° light can be cast nearby, but a 30° light can't. *Ranged spell*: this is *not* a ranged spell. *Failure or mishap*: the spell fizzles. *Duration*: how long the glow lasts.

Special rule: The spell can be used to *dazzle* with a blinding flash instead. Duration is instant. Anyone up to 2 yards from the flash is hit by the whole Effect roll, anyone 3 to 4 yards away is hit by $\frac{1}{2}$ the Effect, and anyone 5 to 8 yards away is hit by $\frac{1}{4}$ of the Effect. *This includes the caster's friends if they aren't warned!* If the Effect's greater, the victim's *stunned* and can't see for that many rounds. (For example, if the Effect is 5 greater than the resistance roll, that pony's affected for 5 rounds.) Anyone more than 8 yards away just gets spots before the eyes.

Levitation lifts, carries, and manipulates objects using magic. *Effect*: dice of "Muscle". *Casting distance*: subtract the points for the farthest object. *Ranged spell*: This is *not* a ranged spell. *Failure or mishap*: the spell fizzles. *Duration*: how long objects can be carried or manipulated.

Prime Mover powers a mechanical device that's designed for it, just as Muscle can be used to crank, turn, or move a windlass, winch, or capstan. *Effect*: how much energy is put into the device, but be careful; too much energy might damage the device. *Casting distance*: the spell can power a device that's nearby. *Ranged spell*: this is *not* a ranged spell. *Failure*: the spell fizzles. *Mishap*: the spell operates the device incorrectly and may damage it. *Duration*: how long the spell powers the device. *Special rule*: It's not quite the same as Levitation, since the magical force is used more directly—like electricity, or heat in a steam engine—but the narrator may decide to allow any unicorn to use it rather than requiring it to be part of the unicorn's Style. *

THE PONIES LIVE IN A world filled with magic. Other creatures or kinds of creatures, even some plants, wield peculiar and powerful abilities—and some of those creatures or nations are very unfriendly indeed. Artisans and wizards have crafted objects containing mighty and treacherous spells.

As mentioned elsewhere in the book, the show's creator and writers plainly intend that world's magic to be natural and scientific, in the sense that it obeys laws, which can be discovered, written down, and explored. What isn't as clear is exactly what those laws are and how they work.

Partly that's because magic no doubt is a large and complicated field of study in the ponies' world, like physics. To be perfectly honest, though, it also is because the writers aren't consistent about how they treat magic in various episodes. In a children's television program, that's fine—and sometimes necessary—to make a story work. A role-playing game, though, needs to be fair and firm in how it handles things.

Because it's such a broad topic, though, this section can provide only general guidelines. Part of the narrator's job, when creating and defining "big magic" for a story, is to combine those guidelines with the game's other rules.

Enchanted Artifacts

In several episodes, spell books, enchanted jewelry, and other magical objects have turned up to cause trouble, and usually get destroyed or locked away as a result. Even items that aren't *intended* to be evil or dangerous can be so by accident, or when they fall into the wrong hooves. These are time-honored themes; people around the world have been telling cautionary tales of powerful but perilous relics for hundreds or even thousands of years. In today's world of industrial-size tools and weapons, those lessons are more meaningful than ever.

The television program seems to present magical artifacts in two ways. Some items do one thing, some do the other, and very powerful ones may do both.

A spell book or similar item seems to work like a "spell in a bottle". For game purposes, it's a Magical Talent that can be added temporarily to a unicorn, even if it isn't in the unicorn's Magical Style. How to define "temporary" varies from item to item and maybe from spell to spell. In some cases, the unicorn may need to have the item around to use the Talent. In others, casting the spell may "transfer" the Talent to the unicorn, requiring a specific act or even a counterspell, defined by the narrator, to get rid of it. The spell books shown so far contained one spell each, but it may be possible for a book to have more than one spell in it.

Enchanted jewelry or a similar item apparently "magnifies" a unicorn's existing abilities. In game terms, it adds dice to one or both of the unicorn's magical Aptitudes, and usually has to be worn or otherwise in contact with the unicorn's body. It also might extend the unicorn's Magical Style or allow the unicorn to cast spells outside her Magical Style.

A unicorn spell normally wears off eventually, according to the rule for duration. One way the narrator can make an artifact's spell very powerful is to make it permanent—at least until other magic that's more powerful is used to reverse it.

In any case, there almost always is a cost associated with using an enchanted artifact. Usually, it gradually twists the unicorn's mind in some fashion, causing her to do bigger and worse things with her new magic as time goes on. Sometimes, instead, it simply is terribly tricky to deal with, and does unexpected and unwanted things unless it's treated very carefully.

World-Magic

Not all the magic featured on the program has been the natural ability of a plant's or creature's species or the spells or power contained in an artificially created device. Some of it, including the Elements, seems to arise from the world itself, part of what drives its processes and balances.

Sometimes world-magic just exists, like any natural process; other times there are hints that some consciousness directs it. The tree from which the Elements came certainly seemed to know what it was doing when it created the box that eventually became the main character's new castle.

World-magic clearly is mightier than any other kind—after all, a world's a pretty big place. It's more widely varied and there's more of it, too. Since it trumps any other kind of magic, the show's writers use it sparingly. Reportedly, a nickname for the Elements among show staff and fans is "the orbital friendship cannon": They were so powerful they tended to overshadow any other way to solve a problem. "Why don't we just use the Elements on it/him/them?" creates a real obstacle to writing a story in which characters must struggle to succeed. It's easy to see why the writers returned the Elements to the tree.

The narrator would do well to approach world-magic the same way. This is one area where a storytelling element may affect a role-playing game even *more* than writing a television episode or a novel! Large-scale world-magic can warp almost any adventure or set of rules to the point of "because I say so".

In a dramatic climax to a long-running storyline or similarly big event, that can be excused, but the narrator still needs to handle it carefully. The magic should follow the rules of good storytelling, even if it doesn't follow game rules, and should be consistent with the way the rest of the world works. It also shouldn't make the player ponies nothing more than spectators—just sitting around listening to the narrator describe the big finish, without having any part in it, isn't much fun.

Of course, world-magic doesn't *have* to be big and splashy. On a *small* scale, especially if it's what writers call a *maguffin*, it can be very effective. (A maguffin is an object or idea that drives a story's plot, often indirectly; a famous example is the falcon statue in the novel and movie versions of *The Maltese Falcon*.) In that case, it doesn't have a direct impact on the player ponies or ways of solving the story's central problem.

Indeed, it may *be* the story's central problem! One adventure in the pilot game revolved around a small spring and pond up in the mountains that had magical healing properties, and the efforts of the pony who discovered it to protect it and keep it from being ruined by too many ponies rushing to use it.

Even on a small scale, world-magic should be used sparingly. Still, it's one of many tools the narrator has available. As long as she doesn't overuse any one of them, she should be able to keep the game fresh and interesting. ★

~ Creating a Pony Optional Rules ~

ADDING DETAILS AND possibilities to the characters that players or narrators create can help make them more distinctive or more true to the television series. The narrator should be careful with these rules, though, because they can be abused by players who are willing to do anything they can to make their ponies more powerful.

Other Kinds of Ponies

Player ponies are supposed to be special, so they get more Aptitude Points than “normal” ponies. Such a pony-on-the-street gets 8d (24 points). A school-age foal may get only 4d (12 points)—more for an older foal, fewer for a younger one—and will gain Aptitude points as she (or he) grows into an adult.

□ The **princesses** look like unicorns with wings, but they also have earth-pony strength and magical connection to the land. Since they are rare and powerful, the narrator probably shouldn’t allow players to create them. If there’s a need to create one like the show’s main character (or her former foalsitter), the normal pony creation rules can be used with two changes: A princess may have any number of Wild Talents and can treat Mundane Talents as Magical Talents like an earth pony. A more powerful princess can use the next rule as well.

□ **Legendary or experienced ponies:** The narrator and players can change Aptitude dice, Talent dice, and Possession Points to suit the kind of game everyone has in mind.

Aptitude Points can be increased to create a powerful pony, but more than 16d (48 points) would make her super-powered, even keeping the limit of 5d (15 points) in one Aptitude.

Talent Points can be increased to create a pony who’s seen and done a lot in her life, and probably is older and more seasoned. Up to 10d (30 points) is good for a mature pony; around 14d (42 points) would represent a real veteran.

Possession Points probably shouldn’t change by more than a couple of points either way. Even 12 Possession Points is a lot to start with, and 16 is enough for a noble with a large estate!

□ Other Creatures

Ponies aren’t the only creatures, or even the only talking creatures, in the world. Later in the book are examples of both, and a narrator can use other role-playing games for ideas, too.

A powerful intelligent creature like a full-grown dragon may have lots of Talent dice, but even a creature much larger or smaller than a pony should have a similar number of Aptitude dice and the same limit of 5d in each Aptitude. Instead of adding Aptitude dice, use the Size rules in “Weights and Measures: Special Task Rules”, and “Them’s Fightin’ Words: Combat” to compare larger and smaller creatures. Mostly Size will affect the use of Muscle and Hardiness and sometimes certain kinds of magic, such as how much fire a dragon can breathe out.

An animal that isn’t intelligent, or at least isn’t as intelligent as a pony or other talking creatures, gets 1d of Smarts and is very limited in what Talents it might have.

A creature such as a zebra who can use magic actively has both Power and Finesse. A creature such as a griffin who’s magical but can’t use magic actively has Power but not Finesse. A creature who has no magic won’t have either Aptitude.

Some players may want to play other creatures than ponies. It’s up to the narrator whether the players can, but anything she allows probably should get the same number of dice that ponies do. Also remember that the show is mainly about the ponies, so there isn’t a lot of information on other creatures. The narrator will have to figure out how she wants to handle those other creatures and how their societies work.

□ Specialties

Most Talents are pretty general. For instance, the Piloting Talent allows a pony or creature to operate any kind of large mechanical vehicle. That’s easy to understand and play, especially in a *cinematic* (movie-like) game of adventure, but anyone who’s piloted a sailboat, an airship, or a steamship will point out that each of them needs different skills to guide properly!

A *Specialty* is narrower than a Talent—for example, a pony can have a Specialty for just Airship Piloting—but it costs less. One Talent or Experience Point is worth *three* Specialty Points.

Adding to an existing Talent: A pony or creature who already has a Talent related to the Specialty starts with the value for that Talent, then adds the Specialty to it. For instance, if a pony has 2d+2 in the Piloting Talent, and adds another +2 for a Specialty in Airship Piloting, she would roll 3d+1 when piloting an airship, and would roll 2d+2 when piloting any other kind of vehicle. She also has one point (+1) left over to add to another Specialty, since she only put +2 into Airship Piloting.

Adding experience points to a Talent also improves all the Specialties related to it. If a pony’s Piloting Talent of 2d+2 is improved by +1 to 3d and she has the Airship Piloting Specialty at 3d+1, it also improves by +1 and becomes 3d+2.

Without an existing Talent: A pony or creature who *doesn’t* have a Talent related to the Specialty just adds the Specialty to the base Aptitude. For instance, a pony without the Piloting Talent who has a Coordination of 2d and adds +2 for a Specialty in Airship Piloting would roll 2d+2 when piloting an airship. She also has one point (+1) left over to add to another Specialty, since she only put +2 into Airship Piloting.

Using Specialties: Specialties otherwise follow the rules for Talents. New Specialties should be things the pony’s had a chance to learn or practice. A narrator or player can use a Specialty only when a task falls within it; a pony can’t use Airship Piloting to pilot a steamship on the water, for instance. Also, a starting pony can’t add more than 3d to any single Specialty.

The narrator should keep an eye on Specialties to make sure they don’t get too powerful for what players are “spending” in Talent or Experience Points. If a player tries to cram a lot into a Specialty, it probably should be a Talent instead. A Specialty shouldn’t be too narrow, either; an example would be a Specialty for piloting a specific model of railroad locomotive.

Specialties can be complicated, but a narrator or player can do clever things with them. A Specialty of Iron Horse would apply to one Talent rather than to all Talents based on one Aptitude. A pony who has a Familiarity Talent for a region could have a Specialty for part of the region; she would have some knowledge of the whole area, but would know more about, say, her home town in the middle of that area. A Cosmopolitan Specialty in a specific culture, for instance buffalo or griffins, would be more detailed, but only about that culture. ★

MOST OF THESE RULES alter how the narrator and players deal with die rolls. Harmony Points allow for spectacular efforts and results. The others seek to speed up play and to reduce the need for throwing fistfuls of dice.

□ Harmony Points

A Harmony Point allows a player to double what she normally rolls for an Aptitude or Talent. For example, a player who normally rolls 3d+2 (11 points) instead rolls 7d+1 (22 points).

A Harmony Point may be spent only *before* rolling, not after, and the doubling is done before adding or subtracting any modifiers. A Harmony Point normally affects only one die roll, but the narrator can allow a player to use it on all her rolls in a round, if it's at the adventure's climax, when things are at their most exciting and important. That probably shouldn't happen more often than once per game meeting or session.

A pony starts the game with one Harmony Point; once it's used, it's gone. The narrator can reward a player with a new Harmony Point if she does well at playing according to her pony's *code of conduct*—the rules the pony tries to live by. (They're called Harmony Points because most ponies try to live in harmony.) The narrator also can take away a Harmony Point from a pony who does things that are against the pony's code.

Another creature who lives by very different rules, such as a changeling, might get a *Dis*harmony Point, or other kind of point, instead. However, the narrator should stick to the same idea of rewarding the creature for living up to her code and taking away points for doing things that are against it.

Streamlining Die Rolls

The game should be about role-playing rather than “roll-playing”, so here are a couple of ways to cut down on the dice.

□ **Fixed Effect:** A pegasus or unicorn using a Magical Talent makes *two* die rolls—one for casting the magic and one for the magic's Effect. If that's too much hassle, just make the casting roll and assume the Effect is 3 pips per die, or 3 ½ pips per die, rounding up, if people don't mind dealing with fractions in their arithmetic.

□ **Too many dice!** Rolling a lot of dice—say, ten or more—can get annoying. It may not be easy for smaller hands to do, and sometimes the results are wildly high or low. In such a case, roll 5d, then add 3 ½ for every extra die, rounding up. For example, for 12d, the player could roll 5d and add 25; if the player rolls 18, after adding 25, the total would be 18 + 25 = 43.

Don't forget the +1 or +2 if the Aptitude or Talent has it! ★

Whole Dice	Roll 5d	Whole Dice	Roll 5d	Whole Dice	Roll 5d
11d	+21	16d	+39	21d	+56
12d	+25	17d	+42	22d	+60
13d	+28	18d	+46	23d	+63
14d	+32	19d	+49	24d	+67
15d	+35	20d	+53	25d	+70

POSSESSION POINTS WORK best for “settled” ponies who, like the program's characters, live in one area, even if they do sometimes make trips to distant places. For wandering adventurers, Possession Points work well enough as rewards—but when creating such a pony, they aren't as effective at dealing with the small but vital pieces of gear needed for survival.

□ Incidental Possessions

Possession Points provide a way to limit a pony's *important* belongings, but they aren't intended to cover everything a pony may own. After all, a pony who has an apartment or house full of belongings can, with a little time, get anything she needs to help her with a task or problem. If she doesn't own it already, she can buy it at a neighborhood hardware or general store.

However, an adventurer who doesn't live in one place and carries everything she owns on her back, or in a small cart, might not have what she needs for a situation—and in the wilderness, there are no shops where she might be able to get the right tool or widget. A settled pony who goes out on expeditions once in a while faces the same problem, just not as often.

In situations like that, the narrator and players have to pay more attention to exactly what a pony's carrying along, and what she's able to buy when she reaches a town, which isn't as suited to the loose way Possession Points work. For wandering ponies, that's true from the start of the game; for settled ponies, it matters when they're packing their bags before venturing out into the unknown.

The basic rules provide ways to deal with situations during play that require tighter control of, or limits on, possessions, but the narrator also can add an *Incidental* category for small, inexpensive items, which would “cost” ½ Possession Point each and would have cost difficulties of roughly 1 to 8. Alternatively, the narrator simply can allow starting players to list any small items for their ponies that seem reasonable, aren't very expensive, and are small and light enough to pack along.

Of course, she should look at those lists carefully before approving them! In a figurative game, if a player tries to claim that *of course* her pony *just happens* to have a Junior Mad Scientist Chemistry Set (or whatever other unlikely thing she needs) in her bags, the narrator can and should say no. A literal game can be a little more freewheeling, especially if the tone is mostly slapstick comedy and the item fits well with what's going on at the time. That works both ways, though—a major villain or antagonist (but not a minion) should be as free as a player pony to produce a needed item on cue, as long as it doesn't spoil the fun or make her too tough to beat. ★

For *Nightmare Night*, Romany's friends dressed her up as a road-pony fortune-teller; an old, and not very flattering, stereotype. Road-pony Romany wasn't happy about it.
Art by Christina “Smudge” Hanson



TIMING IS EVERYTHING, the old saying goes, and that probably is more true during rounds than in any other part of the game. Being able to act at a specific moment, or to do several things quickly before an opponent can react, may have a big impact on how things turn out.

□ **Delaying**

A pony or creature can *delay* to wait for something else to happen before taking more actions. The narrator or player can say why the pony or creature is waiting—"I'll wait for him to attack," for example—or say just that the pony or creature is waiting—for instance, "I'm not sure what's going on, so I'll wait to see what happens before I do anything else."

If a pony or creature is delaying for something in particular, the narrator can let her take an action if or when that something happens, after any task attempt is made but before the attempt's effect. Using the example of the pony waiting for a creature to attack, when the creature attacks, that pony would be able to take another action after the attack attempt but before anything else happens.

A pony or creature can take an action, delay, take another actions, delay again, then take a third action. If the pony or creature hasn't used up all her actions by the end of the round, she loses any she hasn't taken.

□ **Extra Actions**

The narrator can allow a player (or a non-player creature) to take more than three full actions in a round. However, for each full action beyond three that a pony or creature takes, subtract 1d from *every* task attempt that pony or creature makes in the round—except initiative or causing or resisting injury. For example, if a player decides her pony will take five full actions during the current round, 2d would be subtracted from each of her pony's task attempts for the round.

When a player's turn comes up in a round, the narrator should ask right away how many actions the player will take as well as what defense the player will use, so the action penalty can be applied properly when needed.

If the "Delaying" optional rule is used, each delay should be counted as a full action in itself. A player who decided to use an active defense, delay, attack, delay, and move would take a total of five full actions. Since that's two full actions more than the normal limit of three, that player's pony would subtract 2d from all task attempts in that round. *

Marathon (left) and Wind Shear (right) climbed above the "wild" fog to get a navigational fix for the steamship they were stranded on. Unfortunately, there wasn't much to see, because the fog stretched to the horizon.
Art by Christina "Smudge" Hanson



EVERY PONY NEEDS HER sleep, so the narrator may have to use the "Sleeping and Waking" rule once in a while. "Extra Effort" is intended for those dramatic moments that demand just a little bit more from a heroic pony or a dastardly villain.

□ **Sleeping and Waking**

A pony staying up longer than she should makes a Stamina or Hardiness roll every day with a difficulty equal to the total hours of missed sleep. The narrator can modify the difficulty depending on what's going on around the pony. If it's peaceful and quiet, or the pony's really comfortable, that increases the difficulty. If it's loud or uncomfortable, or the pony's trying to stay active (walking around, say), that decreases the difficulty.

A pony who misses one sleep roll is considered to be *tired*, just as if she's used most of her Fatigue Points. If she misses a second sleep roll, she's considered to be *exhausted*, as if she's used all of her Fatigue Points. After the third failed sleep-fatigue roll, the pony falls asleep no matter what. Other ponies trying to keep her awake must keep doing it constantly or the sleepy pony will drift off again. A pony stays sleepy, with the penalty for being tired or exhausted, until she makes up the lost sleep. A pony who's tired or exhausted from using up Fatigue Points *and* from missing sleep combines the penalties.

Normally, *trying* to fall asleep is routine, but if conditions are bad, like being cold, wet, hungry, or surrounded by loud noise, the pony makes a Hardiness roll every ten minutes, with a difficulty of 5 for each bad condition. If the pony's awake long enough, the narrator may give the pony a penalty for lost sleep.

A pony who's trying to wake up or who's being waked makes a Hardiness roll each round with a difficulty of 5. If it's too early (less than a full night's sleep), add to the difficulty. Loud noises or other disturbances decrease the difficulty. A big success means the pony wakes up alert. A small success means the pony wakes up groggy and disoriented. A small failure means the pony doesn't quite wake up, but is dozing. A mishap means the pony stays fast asleep.

□ **Extra Effort**

During a round, a creature may spend 1 Fatigue Point immediately. This *extra effort* gives the creature +1d to *all* rolls for that action, including attacking and causing injury.

A creature who is using s Harmony Point can't use extra effort. The narrator probably shouldn't allow any single pony to use extra effort more than once during any single time she's involved in rounds. *

~ Injury, Illness, and Healing Optional Rules ~

THESE RULES AREN'T SO much "optional", except for first aid, as they are "occasional": The narrator may need them every now and then, usually because something unusual or extreme happens to a pony or creature. Of course, "unusual or extreme" describes a lot of what goes on in adventures!

□ Natural Hazards

Accidents, horseplay (ahem!), and bad luck can happen even to a pony who doesn't go on adventures. The narrator can use these rules to handle the dangers of the everyday world.

Asphyxiation: Roll 1d injury on the first round a pony can't breathe; adding 1 "point" each round after that. (Roll 1d+1 on the second, 1d+2 on the third, 2d on the fourth, and so on.)

Breath-holding: A pony who's underwater or high in the air may try to hold her breath. Roll the pony's Hardiness dice; the result is how many rounds she can hold her breath. If the pony can take some deep breaths first, the narrator should allow a bonus. A pony with the Stamina Talent can use it instead, and the number of rounds is twice the total of the die roll. Once the pony runs out of breath, she starts to asphyxiate.

Cold: Roll after every hour of exposure to low temperatures. If it's chilly, in the forties Fahrenheit (4.4 to 9.4° C), roll 1d injury; add 1 "point" for each 10° F (5.6° C) or so colder. (Roll 1d+1 for the thirties, 1d+2 for the twenties, 2d for the teens, and so on.) Wearing warm clothing subtracts up to 1d from this roll, depending on how good it is. Exercising to stay warm adds 1d for each level of exertion to a Hardiness roll resisting cold injury, if the pony or creature can keep it up for most of the hour. Watch those Fatigue Points!

Collision: Roll 1d injury for a pony who smashes into something or *vice versa* at 26 to 30 yards (24–27 m) per round; add 1 "point" for each 5 yards (4.5 m) per round faster. (Roll 1d+1 for 31 to 35 yards [28–32 m] per round, 1d+2 for 36 to 40 yards [33–37 m], 2d for 41 to 45 yards [37–41 m], and so on.)

Dehydration: Roll 1d injury after 24 hours that a pony can't get any water, adding 1 "point" each 12 hours after that. (Roll 1d+1 after 36 hours, 1d+2 after 48 hours, 2d after 60 hours, and so on.) If it's warm, in the eighties Fahrenheit (27–32° C), roll every 6 hours and double the water needed. If it's hot, in the nineties Fahrenheit (33–38° C), roll every 3 hours, and the pony needs 4 times as much water. If it's very hot, more than 100° F (38° C), roll every hour, and the pony needs 8 times as much water. Use normal healing rules for recovering from dehydration, as long as there's enough water to drink.

Drowning: Roll 1d injury when a pony fails a roll for swimming; add 1 "point" for each failed swimming roll after that. (Roll 1d+1 after the second failed roll, 1d+2 after the third, and so on.) The failed swimming rolls don't have to be in a row, but they must be during the same time the pony's in the water.

Falling: Roll 1d injury for a fall of 6 to 10 feet (1.8–3 m); add 1 "point" for every 5 feet (1.5 m) more. (Roll 1d+1 for 11 to 15 feet, 1d+2 for 16 to 20 feet, 2d for 21 to 25 feet, and so on.)

Sleet or hail can be dangerous as well as cold. Roll for injury each round a pony's caught out in it.

Sleet or hail	Injury	Sleet or hail	Injury
Light or very light	None	Very heavy	1d+2
Moderate	1d	Extreme	2d
Heavy	1d+1	Maximum	3d

Starvation: Roll 1d injury after the second day a pony can't get any food, adding 1 "point" each day after that. (Roll 1d+1 injury on the third day, 1d+2 on the fourth, 2d on the fifth, and so on.) A pony who eats a little food stretches out the time; a pony who eats half the food she needs rolls every two days instead of every day. Use the normal healing rules for recovering from starvation, as long as there's enough food to eat.

Strange stuff: A pony may come across something that doesn't hurt her, but does weird things to her instead. The narrator can use illness level to decide how weird it is. An example is the blue plant that plays pranks on creatures who touch it; a "major illness" may be a bigger prank than a "minor illness".

□ First Aid

The Medicine Talent can be used on a mortally ill or injured pony to remove the danger of death. This is an *esoteric task*—a pony can't give first aid unless she has Medicine. Difficulty is equal to the number of minutes that the patient's been mortally injured. If the attempt succeeds, the patient no longer is in danger of dying. Failure means the mortally injured pony still is in danger of dying. If an attempt at first aid fails, the first-aid pony can try again after another five minutes have passed.

□ **The "golden hour":** If first aid succeeds within 5 minutes of the mortal injury, the patient will recover completely, with no permanent damage. For every 5 minutes longer that it takes first aid to be successful, the patient permanently loses 1d from every Talent. (A Talent can't be less than zero dice, though.) After 30 minutes, first aid no longer does any good.

□ **Resuscitation:** A pony who died in the last few minutes may be revived, as long as the pony's still in good shape and not horribly mangled. If a unicorn can use a spell for first aid, treat the dead pony as if she's mortally injured. If normal first aid is used, a new attempt must be made every five minutes until the pony can be hospitalized; if any of the attempts fail, the pony is really dead and can't be revived. At the hospital, the dead pony is treated as if she's mortally injured.

The first-aid rules are useful mostly for figurative games of high adventure with lots of fighting or combat. Occasionally they might be needed after a disaster or other situation, maybe set up as part of a story plot. One possibility is finding a mysterious victim lying somewhere who needs saving . . . and as a result leads the heroes into trouble—that is, the next story. (In a case like that, of course, the narrator may let the attempt at first aid succeed automatically, for dramatic reasons.) *



Poor Silver Tuppence isn't feeling well. A nice cup of hot tea should help. Art by Christina "Smudge" Hanson

FIGHTING CAN GET fancier than just smacking, tripping, or shooting at someone. Here are some possibilities for a narrator or player who wants to try something out of the ordinary.

□ Close Range (Step 2)

Subtract 5 from difficulty when attacking or using a Magical Talent on a target no more than 3 yards (2.7 m) away; attacking without a weapon or with a close-up weapon is always at close range. When using a Magical Talent, if Power (or base Effect for the Talent, if points have been spent on it) is less than 3d, use close range out to 3 yards and medium range beyond that.

More Attacks (Step 3)

These indirect or modified attacks try for special results.

□ **Disarm** is an attempt to knock a weapon or object out of the target's grip. If the attack succeeds and the target hasn't taken any actions yet, she can use an action to try to keep her grip on the weapon or object, even if it's before her initiative. The target uses Muscle (or Levitation) against the attack's "injury" points. If the roll is greater than the injury, the target holds on to the weapon or object; if it's less than or equal, she drops it.

□ **Entangle** is the use of a lasso, net, whip, or other flexible weapon to tangle up a target. If the attack succeeds, the weapon wraps around the target. Unless it's spiky or otherwise special, it doesn't hurt the target, but she can't take any actions other than talking or trying to break free, which is a contest against the weapon's "injury" points and counts as an action. To slip out of the weapon, the target uses Coordination in the contest. To break the weapon, the target uses Muscle instead.

□ **Lunge** is a sudden rush at a target that adds half a yard (45 cm) to the range of a weaponless or mêlée attack, but adds 3 (or 1d) to attack difficulty and subtracts 1d from injury.

□ **Sweep** is a roundhouse blow or leg sweep. Subtract 6 (or 2d) from attack difficulty and subtract 3d from injury.

More Special Conditions (Step 4)

These can affect attacks and can provide more choices.

□ **Aiming**: An attacker using a weapon that shoots projectiles can track a target. Each round that an attacker takes no other actions but aiming at a target, she can add 1d to the attempt when she shoots at that target, but she can't add more than 3d. A moving target may add to the difficulty of the shot.

□ **Called shot**: An attacker can try to attack a specific part of a target's body. Trying to hit an arm (front limb) or leg (back limb) causes less injury because the attacker took extra care to hit an area that's "less vital." If adding 4d to a head or heart injury seems too drastic, add 2d instead. Trying to hit the chest or abdomen doesn't change the difficulty or injury.

Trying to hit	Difficulty Modifier	Injury
Target's head	Add 3 (or 1d)	Add 4d (or 2d)
Target's heart	Add 12 (or 4d)	Add 4d (or 2d)
Target's arm	Add 3 (or 1d)	Subtract 2
Target's leg or wing	Add 3 (or 1d)	Subtract 1

Injury to a body part may affect how well it can be used. Except for chest injuries, the penalty listed lasts until the body part heals, which probably takes a few days. Medical treatment (including magic) can be applied to an injured location.

Injury	Effect of injury
Head	Subtract 1 from Smarts, Senses, and initiative rolls
Chest	Can't take any actions in next turn
Arm	Subtract 1 from task attempts using arm
Leg	Subtract 1 from Coordin., Reflexes, initiative rolls

An attacker can use a called shot to *knock out* a target. The attacker must succeed at hitting the target's head and getting at least a *stunned* result on the injury. Subtract the difficulty of the attack from the attack attempt's points; that's the number of hours the target's unconscious, unless something or someone else wakes her up before she regains consciousness on her own. Divide the level of injury in half, rounding down, before checking it off on the target. For example, reduce a *mortal injury* to a *minor injury*; reduce a *major injury* to *stunned*.

□ **Group attack**: A group of attackers can combine attacks, using the rules for "Teamwork", part of "Doing More Things: Special Task Rules". The attackers' leader makes a Leadership or Smarts task attempt. If it succeeds, the whole group attacks at once, at the leader's initiative; all successful attacks add their injury points together, and the group can make *called shots* to the same part of the target. If it fails, the attackers take their own actions at their own initiatives as usual.

□ **Multiple weapons**: The attacker must be able to handle all the weapons at once, and they all must be ready.

□ **Quick draw**: Instead of taking a separate action to ready a weapon, an attacker can make a task attempt, using the fighting Talent or Aptitude, with a basic difficulty of 10 to try readying the weapon and attacking with it as one full action. It must be a weapon that can be quick-drawn, such as a bow and arrow, a loaded cartridge pistol, or a dagger. Failure means that readying and attacking are two separate actions, as usual.

□ **Recoil**: If a shooting weapon's injury dice are greater than 3 times the shooter's Muscle, and she has to hold it when shooting, add the difference to attack difficulty. For example, a shooter with a Muscle of 2d who uses a heavy rifle would add 1d to difficulty: The injury value of a heavy rifle is 7d, and 3 times the shooter's Muscle is 6d; 7d minus 6d leaves 1d. If the weapon's Size is greater than the shooter's size, add the Size difference to the recoil value; if it's less, subtract the Size difference.

A similar rule can be used when shooting with a shortbow or longbow, but don't multiply the shooter's Muscle. For instance, a shooter with a Muscle of 2d who tries to shoot a longbow would add 1d to attack difficulty, since the injury value of a longbow is 3d, and 3d minus 2d leaves 1d. Recoil isn't the problem in this case—pulling a bow takes a lot of strength.

□ **Unwieldy** weapons or objects are longer than 2 feet (60 cm), hard to grip or throw, or use technology or magic the user doesn't understand. Add 5 or more to attack difficulty for an unwieldy object. If the narrator thinks other things make it easier to use, such as experience, strength, or good design (say, a well-balanced sword), she might add less to the difficulty. *

~ Movement Optional Rules ~

THESE RULES ADD FLAVOR and realism to movement, but they also make it much more complicated. Most are recommended only for serious and detailed figurative games.

□ Long-Distance Travel

How far a pony travels in an hour is based on Walk or Flight Move: 5 yards (4.5 m) per round is about 2 mph (3.3 km/h); each yard (0.9 m) more adds about 0.4 mph (0.66 km). How far she can get in a day depends on how many hours she travels.

□ Sliding and Rolling

A pony who hits the ground after falling while running or flying—unless she's going straight or almost straight down—slides or rolls along the ground half as many yards, rounding down, as she was moving. On a slick surface she may go farther, but on a rough surface she may go a shorter distance. A pony can slide or roll on purpose, but she still can get hurt doing that. In a literal game, an out-of-control flyer suddenly may fall straight down, but in a figurative game she'll go *ballistic*, curving down like a cannonball from the direction she was going when she lost control. If she's in formation, as part of a flying team, she may crash into a teammate!

□ Running Momentum

A walking pony can turn or sidle as much as she wants, but a pony who's running or swimming builds up momentum and has to move in a straight line for a distance before turning or sidling.

A trotting pony has to go straight at least 1 yard before turning or sidling. A pony who's cantering up to 3 times Walk Move has to go straight at least 2 yards; add 2 more yards to this distance for every extra multiple of Walk Move. For example, a pony galloping at 6 times Walk Move would have to go straight at least 8 yards before turning.

A pony who's swimming no farther than her Swim Move has to go straight at least 1 yard before turning or sidling. A pony swimming faster, up to 2 times her Swim Move, has to go straight at least 2 yards before turning or sidling; add 2 more yards to this distance for every extra multiple of Swim Move.

If the pony tries to turn or sidle too soon, add 1 to movement difficulty for every yard less than the full distance. A narrator who likes the general idea of this rule, but doesn't want to make everyone count hexes all the time, simply can add 5 to 10 (or even more) to the movement difficulty for a pony who obviously is trying to maneuver too tightly.

□ Gravity and Falling

The *real* reason for power-diving or zoom-climbing is to take advantage of gravity, letting it help pull the flyer downward—speeding up a power-dive or slowing down a zoom-climb. In the first round of a power-dive or zoom-climb, gravity subtracts 140 yards (123 m) from altitude. Every round after that, it subtracts 500 yards (457 m), because at that point air resistance stops the process of speeding up from gravity. A creature who's falling out of control, or spreads out like a skydiver to fall as slowly as possible, instead subtracts 300 yards (274 m) every round after the first.

□ Gliding

A gliding flyer must go faster than 2 times Flight Move, and can't land, hover, or make fancy maneuvers. She can slow down, but she can't speed up.

□ Trading Speed and Altitude

A flyer who gains altitude slows down by as many yards as she gains in altitude; a flyer who loses altitude speeds up by as many yards as she loses in altitude. This is automatic and doesn't count as a *speed up* or *slow down* maneuver, but a flyer can use a *speed up* or *slow down* maneuver to cancel out the speed change that gaining or losing altitude would cause—or to change her speed even more.

□ Speed Is Energy

Turning, slipping, half-looping, or half-rolling tends to slow down a flyer—these maneuvers take energy, which comes out of speed. Each turn or slip subtracts half a Flight Move, and each half-loop or half-roll subtracts 1 Flight Move, from the flyer's movement in her next round.

□ Inside and Outside Loops

For an upward half-loop, a flyer usually starts right-side up and, at the end when she's upside-down, rotates back to right-side up. For a downward half-loop, she usually rotates to upside-down, goes through the half-loop, and ends right-side up. These are *inside* half-loops because the flyer's head is toward the inside of the loop's curve. An *outside* half-loop, with the flyer's head toward the outside of the loop's curve, is harder and makes the blood rush to the head. That's uncomfortable and it's tougher to see, hear, and think; the narrator can add 5 to 10 to the difficulty of the flyer's attempts in the round, depending on how fast she's flying.

□ Flying Momentum

A flyer who's hovering or in slow flight can turn as much as she wants, but she can't slip, half-loop, or half-roll. A flyer moving faster builds up momentum and has to move in a straight line for a distance before maneuvering.

A flyer in moderate flight has to fly straight at least 1 yard before turning. A flyer who's flying up to 3 times Flight Move has to go straight at least 2 yards; add 2 more yards to this distance for every extra multiple of Flight Move. For example, a flyer moving at 6 times Flight Move would have to go straight at least 8 yards before turning.

Before a flyer slips, she must fly straight the same distance as she slips. At the *end* of a slip, if she is *not* in heroic flight, she can, but doesn't have to, make up to two 60° turns in the opposite direction (turn left after a right slip or *vice versa*).

Before a flyer half-loops or half-rolls, she must fly straight the same distance as the half-loop or half-roll. She doesn't have to go double the distance for a full loop, S, or barrel roll.

A flyer who tries to maneuver without first going straight far enough adds 1 to flying difficulty for every yard less than the full distance. If the narrator likes the general idea of these rules, but doesn't want to make everyone count hexes all the time, she can add 5 to 10 (or even more) to the flying difficulty for a flyer who obviously is trying to maneuver too tightly. *

~ *Romany: Example Earth Pony* ~

CHRIS IS PART OF A GROUP who's new to role-playing games; they've decided not to use most of the optional rules, at least until they're used to the basic rules. Chris wants to create a character who isn't complicated to set up or play, and decides on a young "road pony", loosely based on the Roma people and other traveling social groups, out on her own for the first time.

Step 1: What Kind of Pony?

- A. *Choose the pony's tribe.* This'll be an earth pony.
- B. *Choose whether the pony's a mare or stallion.* She'll be a mare.

Step 2: Aptitudes

- A. *List the starting Aptitudes of the pony's tribe.* An earth pony starts with 1d (3 points) each in Muscle, Hardiness, Reflexes, Coordination, Smarts, and Power.
- B. *Add 12d (36 points) to the pony's Aptitudes.* Second column shows added dice/points; third column shows Aptitude totals.

<i>Muscle:</i>	add 2d (6 points) to get	3d (9 points)
<i>Hardiness:</i>	add 2d (6 points) to get	3d (9 points)
<i>Reflexes:</i>	add 2d (6 points) to get	3d (9 points)
<i>Coordination:</i>	add 2d (6 points) to get	3d (9 points)
<i>Smarts:</i>	add 2d (6 points) to get	3d (9 points)
<i>Senses:</i>	add 2d (6 points) to get	3d (9 points)
<i>Power:</i>	add 0d (0 points) to get	1d (3 points)

Step 3: Talents

- A. *Choose the pony's Talents.* The pony's Talents are listed below. *Familiarity, Medicine, Running, and Teamster* are from the standard Talents list. *Carpentry* is a Craft Talent: the construction and repair of wooden items, including furniture and small buildings. *Tinker* is a Craft Talent: the creation, repair, and maintenance of common items such as tools, simple mechanisms, and household goods.
- B. *Decide whether each Talent is Mundane or Magical.* They're all Mundane Talents.
- C. *Decide for each Talent what Aptitude to base it on.* Teamster is based on Muscle. Running is based on Reflexes. Familiarity and Medicine are based on Smarts. Carpentry and Tinker are based on Senses.
- D. *Decide which will be the pony's Special Talent.* Since Power is 1d, 1 will be added to task attempts using Teamster.
- E. *Add 7d (21 points) to the Talents.* Talent dice/points are added in the third column; final totals are in the last column.

<i>Tinker:</i>	3d (9 pts.)	plus 2d (6 pts.)	= 5d (15 pts.)
<i>Carpentry:</i>	3d (9 pts.)	plus 1d (3 pts.)	= 4d (12 pts.)
<i>Teamster:</i>	3d (9 pts.)	plus 1d (3 pts.)	= 4d (12 pts.)
<i>Running:</i>	3d (9 pts.)	plus 1d (3 pts.)	= 4d (12 pts.)
<i>Familiarity:</i>	3d (9 pts.)	plus 1d (3 pts.)	= 4d (12 pts.)
<i>Medicine:</i>	3d (9 pts.)	plus 1d (3 pts.)	= 4d (12 pts.)

Step 4: Personal Traits

- A. *Name and describe the pony's Personal Strength.* Work ethic: She's hard-working and usually is willing to lend a hoof when a job needs to be done.
- B. *Name and describe the pony's Personal Weakness.* Wary: she doesn't warm to strangers easily, especially "townies" (city or town ponies), and tends to be a bit suspicious of them.

Step 5: Finishing Touches

- A. *Note Fatigue Points and recovery, Strength Bonus, and Moves.*
Fatigue Points: Hardiness is 3d; $(3 \times 3) + 15 = 24$; add 1 more for 1d of Power, for a total of 25.
Recovery: 4 per hour sleeping, 2 per hour resting.
Strength Bonus: $3d \text{ Muscle} \times \frac{1}{2}$ (rounded up) = 2d.
Moves: Walk is $5 + 3 = 8$; double and redouble for trot (16), canter (32), and gallop (64). Swim and Climb are $\text{Walk} \times \frac{1}{2} = 4$; Pony Form shows multipliers for faster swimming and climbing. Jump is $\text{Walk} \times \frac{1}{4} = 2$; Pony Form shows additions for bigger jumps. Round up as needed.
- B. *Describe how the pony looks.* She's compact but blocky and well-muscled from hauling her caravan around. Her somewhat rough coat is red-brown like road dust. Her mane and tail are straight but cropped close to make them easier to keep clean. Their salt-and-pepper look averages out to an ash gray from a distance. Her eyes are hazel. Her cutie mark is a section of macadam road curving into the distance, disappearing between a pair of hills.
- C. *Name the pony and describe what else is important about her.* Romany is touring the country, learning its highways and byways and getting a feel for how different areas vary. Like many nomads and wanderers in the real world, she tends to distrust townies and regards them as a bit crazy; often the townies in question feel the same way about road ponies, viewing them as odd or possibly criminal. Still, she's a good friend once someone has won her over, even if she can be a bit sharp-tempered, and she's good at what she does for a living. By necessity she's learned a bit about being an *apothecary* (an old term similar to the more modern "pharmacist" or "druggist") and dealing with aches, sprains, and other injuries from an active life on the road. She may rejoin her family and clan sometime in the future, but for now she's enjoying her independence and the area where she's stopped to rest and make some bits.
- D. *Choose the pony's important possessions.* She has three medium possessions: a colorfully painted road-pony caravan that she pulls and lives in (the sides open up to form counters and awnings for doing business), money from tinkering and carpentry work, and an inventory of spare parts and small finished goods. She has two minor possessions: a toolkit of tinker's tools and highway maps of the pony nation. ♦

Player name	Chris		
Pony name	Romany		
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Earth <input type="radio"/> Pegasus <input type="radio"/> Unicorn	Pony's tribe and gender <input checked="" type="radio"/> Mare <input type="radio"/> Stallion <input type="radio"/> Filly <input type="radio"/> Colt		

Aptitude	Add up points	Dice
Muscle	3 + 6 = 9	3 d
Hardiness	3 + 6 = 9	3 d
Reflexes	3 + 6 = 9	3 d
Coordination	3 + 6 = 9	3 d
Smarts	3 + 6 = 9	3 d
Senses	3 + 6 = 9	3 d
Power	3 + 0 = 3	1 d
Finesse	+ =	d
Total points: 36		

Personal Strength Work ethic: She's hard-working and usually is willing to lend a hoof when a job needs to be done
Personal Weakness Wary: she doesn't warm to strangers easily, especially townies, and tends to be a bit suspicious of them
Magic Style

Run	Walk	Trot	Canter	Gallop
Yards	8	16	32	64
Diffic.	0	5	10	15
Swim	Move	× 2	× 3	× 4
Yards	4	8	12	16
Diffic.	5	10	15	20
Climb	Move	× 1 ½	× 2	Round up if needed
Yards	4	6	8	
Diffic.	10	20	30	
Jump	Move	+1 yd.	+2 yds.	+3 yds.
Yards	2	3	4	5
Diffic.	5	10	15	20
Fly	Slow	Mod.	Fast	V. fast
Yards				
Diffic.	0	5	10	15
Strength Bonus			2	d

Talents and Specialties	Based on	Add up points	Exp.	Dice
Teamster (Special Talent)	Muscle	9 + 3 = 12		4 d +1
Running	Reflexes	9 + 3 = 12		4 d
Familiarity with pony nation's highways	Smarts	9 + 3 = 12		4 d
Medicine	Smarts	9 + 3 = 12		4 d
Carpentry (craft): construction and repair of wood items	Senses	9 + 3 = 12		4 d
Tinker (craft): creation, repair, & maintenance of common household items (e.g., tools)	Senses	9 + 6 = 15		5 d
		+ =		d
		+ =		d
		+ =		d
		+ =		d
		+ =		d
		+ =		d
		+ =		d
		+ =		d

Important possessions (every pony gets panniers/saddlebags)	Major	Med.	Minor
Dwelling: colorful road-pony caravan she pulls and lives in; sides open up to form counters and awnings for business	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Money: income from tinkering/carpentry	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inventory: spare parts, small finished goods	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Toolkit: tinker's tools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Maps: highway maps of pony nation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Pony description Compact but blocky and well-muscled Rough road-dust red-brown coat with straight, close-cropped salt-and-pepper mane and tail; hazel eyes
Cutie mark (sketch or description) A section of macadam road curving into the distance and disappearing between a pair of hills

Experience Points Unused Spent	Harmony Points
Fatigue Points Total 25 Spent Recovery per hour Sleeping 4 Resting 2	Illness or Injury <input type="radio"/> Bruised ≤ 0 <input type="radio"/> Stunned 1- <input type="radio"/> Minor - <input type="radio"/> Serious - <input type="radio"/> Major - <input type="radio"/> Mortal - <input type="radio"/> Death ≥

~ Scirocco: Example Pegasus Pony ~

ALEX IS PART OF A GROUP looking for high adventure with lots of action—but not too heavy, so the game's tone isn't much darker than the show is. Alex likes playing bold warriors and decides a typically feisty, assertive pegasus with some weather and fighting skills is just the pony to be part of a group of adventurers righting wrongs and seeking treasures.

Step 1: What Kind of Pony?

- Choose the pony's tribe. This'll be a pegasus pony.
- Choose whether the pony's a mare or stallion. She'll be a mare.

Step 2: Aptitudes

- List the starting Aptitudes of the pony's tribe. A pegasus pony starts with 1d each in Muscle, Hardiness, Reflexes, Coordination, Smarts, Senses, Power, and Finesse.
- Add 12d (36 points) to the pony's Aptitudes. Second column shows added dice/points; third column shows Aptitude totals.

Muscle:	add 1d (3 points) to get	2d (6 points)
Hardiness:	add 2d (6 points) to get	3d (9 points)
Reflexes:	add 2d (6 points) to get	3d (9 points)
Coordination:	add +2 (2 points) to get	1d+2 (5 points)
Smarts:	add 1d+1 (4 points) to get	2d+1 (7 points)
Senses:	add 1d+2 (5 points) to get	2d+2 (8 points)
Power:	add 1d+1 (4 points) to get	2d+1 (7 points)
Finesse:	add 2d (6 points) to get	3d (9 points)

Step 3: Talents

- Choose the pony's Talents. The pony's Talents are listed below. *Brawling*, *Dodge*, *Firearms*, *Notice*, *Boltworking*, *Windworking*, and *Flight Increase* are from the standard Talents list. *Hoofblade* is a Specialty of *Mêlée* for attacking with war boots fitted with short blades similar to daggers or knives. *Rifle* is a Specialty of *Firearms* for shooting rifled longarms. *Sharp Vision* is a Specialty of *Notice* for using one's eyes.
- Decide whether each Talent is Mundane or Magical. *Brawling*, *Dodge*, *Hoofblade*, *Firearms*, *Rifle*, *Gunsmithing*, *Notice*, and *Sharp Vision* are Mundane Talents or Specialties. *Boltworking*, *Windworking*, and *Flight Increase* are Magical.
- Decide for each Talent what Aptitude to base it on. *Brawling*, *Dodge*, and *Hoofblade* are based on Reflexes. *Firearms* is based on Coordination and *Rifle* is a Specialty of *Firearms*. *Gunsmithing* and *Notice* are based on Senses, and *Sharp Vision* is a Specialty of *Notice*. *Boltworking* and *Windworking* Talents are based on Finesse; *Boltworking* and *Windworking* Effects and *Flight Increase* are based on Power.
- Decide which will be the Special Talent. *Windworking* will be the Special Talent. Since Power is 2d+1, 2 will be added.
- Add 7d (21 points) to the Talents. Talent dice/points are added in the third column; final totals are in the last column. An asterisk (*) indicates a Specialty

<i>Brawling</i> :	3d (9 pts.)	plus 1d (3 pts.)	= 4d (12 pts.)
<i>Dodge</i> :	3d (9 pts.)	plus 1d (3 pts.)	= 4d (12 pts.)
<i>Hoofblade</i> :	3d (9 pts.)	plus 1d (1 pt.)*	= 4d (10 pts.)

<i>Firearms</i> :	1d+2 (5 pts.)	plus +1 (1 pt.)	= 2d (6 pts.)
<i>Rifle</i> :	2d (6 pts.)	plus 1d (1 pt.)*	= 3d (7 pts.)
<i>Gunsmithing</i> :	2d+2 (8 pts.)	plus +1 (1 pt.)	= 3d (9 pts.)
<i>Notice</i> :	2d+2 (8 pts.)	plus +1 (1 pt.)	= 3d (9 pts.)
<i>Sharp Vision</i> :	3d (9 pts.)	plus 1d (1 pt.)*	= 4d (10 pts.)
<i>Boltworking T.</i> :	3d (9 pts.)	plus 0 (0 pts.)	= 3d (9 pts.)
<i>Boltworking Ef.</i> :	2d+1 (7 pts.)	plus +2 (2 pts.)	= 3d (9 pts.)
<i>Windworking T.</i> :	3d (9 pts.)	plus 1d (3 pts.)	= 4d (12 pts.)
<i>Windworking E.</i> :	2d+1 (7 pts.)	plus +2 (2 pts.)	= 3d (9 pts.)
<i>Flight Increase</i> :	2d+1 (7 pts.)	plus +2 (2 pts.)	= 3d (9 pts.)

Step 4: Personal Traits

- Name and describe the pony's Personal Strength. Courageous: Even if she's afraid, she won't let that stop her from doing what she must.
- Name and describe the pony's Personal Weakness. Impetuous: She tends to rush into a situation without thinking about it first, which can get her into a lot of trouble.

Step 5: Finishing Touches

- Note Fatigue Points and recovery, Strength Bonus, and Moves.

Fatigue Points: Hardiness is 3d; $(3 \times 3) + 15 = 24$.
Recovery: 3 per hour sleeping, 1 per hour resting.
Strength Bonus: 2d Muscle $\times \frac{1}{2}$ (rounded up) = 1d.
Moves: Walk is $5 + 2 = 7$; double and redouble for trot (14), canter (28), and gallop (56). Swim and Climb are Walk $\times \frac{1}{2} = 4$; the Pony Form shows multipliers for faster swimming and climbing. Jump is Walk $\times \frac{1}{4} = 2$; the Pony Form shows additions for bigger jumps. Flight is $5 + 2 + 1$ (Flight Increase) = 8; double and redouble to 16, 32, and 64 for faster flight speeds. Round up as needed.
- Describe how the pony looks. She's sleek and sturdy rather than big and muscular, and cuts an imposing figure in her barding and hoofblades. Her dark-red coat, and curly dark-gold mane and tail, are surprisingly fine, but they can get pretty nussed after a long, hard day of traveling. Her dark eyes usually are watchful and hard to read. Her cutie mark is a gray-brown dust cloud with wind "speed lines" behind it.
- Name the pony and describe what else is important about her. Scirocco always has been a rough-and-tumble sort, so falling in with a band of roaming adventurers came naturally to her. She doesn't always look before she leaps, but she does try to do the right thing, even if it means she and her friends don't always get all the treasure they're looking for. She's a decent shot, especially with a rifle, but it's getting up close and personal in a fight that she's really good at.
- Choose the pony's important possessions. She has two medium possessions: a set of plate barding with helm and a pack containing camping and survival gear, including a small tent. She has four minor possessions: a small amount of money, a pair of bladed war boots (light sharp weapons: 1d+1 injury each, short length), a medium bolt-action metallic-cartridge rifle (6d injury, capacity 6 rounds, ranges 25/50/100 yards) with ammunition, bandolier, bag, and stripper clips, and a toolkit to clean and maintain her weapons and armor. ♦

Player name	Alex		
Pony name	Scirocco		
<input type="radio"/> Earth <input checked="" type="radio"/> Pegasus <input type="radio"/> Unicorn	Pony's tribe and gender <input checked="" type="radio"/> Mare <input type="radio"/> Stallion <input type="radio"/> Filly <input type="radio"/> Colt		

Aptitude	Add up points	Dice
Muscle	3 + 3 = 6	2 d
Hardiness	3 + 6 = 9	3 d
Reflexes	3 + 6 = 9	3 d
Coordination	3 + 2 = 5	1 d +2
Smarts	3 + 4 = 7	2 d +1
Senses	3 + 5 = 8	2 d +2
Power	3 + 4 = 7	2 d +1
Finesse	3 + 6 = 9	3 d
Total points: 36		

Personal Strength <i>Courageous: Even if she's afraid, she won't let that stop her from doing what she must</i>
Personal Weakness <i>Impetuous: Tends to rush into a situation without thinking about it first</i>
Magic Style

Run	Walk	Trot	Canter	Gallop
Yards	7	14	28	56
Diffic.	0	5	10	15
Swim	Move	× 2	× 3	× 4
Yards	4	8	16	32
Diffic.	5	10	15	20
Climb	Move	× 1 ½	× 2	Round up if needed
Yards	4	6	8	
Diffic.	10	20	30	
Jump	Move	+1 yd.	+2 yds.	+3 yds.
Yards	2	3	4	5
Diffic.	5	10	15	20
Fly	Slow	Mod.	Fast	V. fast
Yards	8	16	32	64
Diffic.	0	5	10	15
Strength Bonus				1 d

Talents and Specialties	Based on	Add up points	Exp.	Dice
Brawling	Reflexes	9 + 3 = 12		4 d
Dodge	Reflexes	9 + 3 = 12		4 d
Hoofblade (Mêlée Specialty)	Reflexes	9 + 1 = 10		4 d
Firearms	Coord.	5 + 1 = 6		2 d
Rifle (Firearms Specialty)	Firearms	6 + 1 = 7		3 d
Gunsmithing (Craft Talent)	Senses	8 + 1 = 9		3 d
Notice	Senses	8 + 1 = 9		3 d
Sharp Vision (Notice Spec.)	Notice	9 + 1 = 10		4 d
Boltworking (Talent)	Finene	9 + 0 = 9		3 d
Boltworking (Effect)	Power	7 + 2 = 9		3 d
Windworking (Special Talent)	Finene	9 + 3 = 12		4 d +2
Windworking (Effect)	Power	7 + 2 = 9		3 d
Flight Increase	Power	7 + 2 = 9		3 d
Total		+21=		d
		+ =		d
		+ =		d

Important possessions (every pony gets panniers/saddlebags)	Major	Med.	Minor
Pack containing camping and survival gear	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Armor: Plate barding (add 3d to Hardiness)	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Money	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Weapon: bladed war boots (1d+1 injury, short)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Weapon: bolt-action rifle (6d, 6 rounds)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
plus ammo, bandolier, bag, stripper clips	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Toolkit: clean & maintain armor & weapons	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Pony description Sleek & sturdy build Fine dark-red coat Curly dark-gold mane & tail Dark, watchful eyes
Cutie mark (sketch or description) A gray-brown dust cloud with wind "speed lines" behind it

Experience Points		Harmony Points
Unused	Spent	
Fatigue Points Total 24 Spent		Illness or Injury <input type="radio"/> Bruised ≤ 0 <input type="radio"/> Stunned 1- <input type="radio"/> Minor - <input type="radio"/> Serious - <input type="radio"/> Major - <input type="radio"/> Mortal - <input type="radio"/> Death ≥
Recovery per hour		
Sleeping	4	
Resting	2	

~ **Glitch: Example Unicorn Pony (guest contrib.)** ~

PAT WILL BE PLAYING in a literal game that's all about the comedy, set in a small town not far from a big city. The narrator's willing to let this group of experienced players have a lot of leeway, since the game will be fast and loose, with lots of silliness and pratfalls. Pat decides to create a mad scientist, just the sort of character who fits well in madcap adventure.

Step 1: What Kind of Pony?

- A. *Choose the pony's tribe.* This'll be a unicorn pony.
- B. *Choose whether the pony's a mare or stallion.* He'll be a stallion.

Step 2: Aptitudes

Spend 50 Aptitude Points. Second column shows added points; third column shows Aptitude totals.

<i>Muscle:</i>	add +2 (2 points) to get	1d+2 (5 points)
<i>Hardiness:</i>	add 1d (3 points) to get	2d (6 points)
<i>Reflexes:</i>	add +2 (2 points) to get	1d+2 (5 points)
<i>Coordination:</i>	add 1d (3 points) to get	2d (6 points)
<i>Smarts:</i>	add 2d (6 points) to get	3d (9 points)
<i>Senses:</i>	add 1d (3 points) to get	2d (6 points)
<i>Power:</i>	add 2d+2 (8 points) to get	3d+2 (11 points)
<i>Finesse:</i>	add 3d (9 points) to get	4d (12 points)

Step 3: Talents

- A. *Choose the pony's Magical Style.* Mechanical magic is the ability to motivate and operate machinery.
- B. *Choose the pony's Talents.* The pony's Talents are listed below. *Piloting, Repair, Engineering, Levitation,* and *Prime Mover* are from the standard Talents list.
Magical Stamina Specialty of Stamina for resisting fatigue from using Magical Talents.
Resist Mechanical Injury Specialty of Hardiness for resisting injury from mechanical devices when things go horribly wrong. (This is an example of a Talent or Specialty a narrator might permit in a comedic literal game, but may be reluctant to allow in a more serious figurative game.)
Mechanical Control Powering and operating mechanical devices that aren't intended to be powered by Prime Mover.
Gremlins Specialty of Mechanical Control for taking control of a mechanical device from someone who's operating it.
- C. *Decide whether each Talent is Mundane or Magical.* *Magical Stamina, Resist Mechanical Injury, Piloting, Repair,* and *Engineering* are Mundane Talents. *Levitation, Prime Mover, Mechanical Control,* and *Gremlins* are Magical Talents.
- D. *Decide which will be the Special Talent.* *Prime Mover* will be the Special Talent. Since *Power* is 3d+2, 3 will be added.
- E. *Decide for each Talent what Aptitude to base it on.* *Magical Stamina* and *Resist Mechanical Injury* are based on *Hardiness*. *Piloting* is based on *Coordination*. *Repair* and *Engineering* are based on *Smarts*. *Levitation Effect, Prime Mover Effect,* and *Mechanical Control Effect* are based on *Power*; *Gremlins Effect* is a Specialty based on *Mechanical Control Effect*.

- E. *Add 7d (21 points) to Talents.* Talent points are added in third column; totals are in last column. Points noted with * (asterisk) are Specialty points. Pat decides to list values for spell Talents, even if no points were added, for reference.

<i>Iron Horse:</i>	"1d" (3 points)	= 5d (9 pts.)
<i>Resist Mech. Inj.:</i>	2d (6 pts.)	plus 2d (2 pts.)* = 4d (8 pts.)
<i>Piloting:</i>	2d (6 pts.)	plus +1 (1 pt.) = 2d+1 (7 pts.)
<i>Repair:</i>	3d (9 pts.)	plus 1d (3 pts.) = 4d (12 pts.)
<i>Engineering:</i>	3d (9 pts.)	plus +1 (1 pt.) = 3d+1 (10 pts.)
<i>Levitation (Eff):</i>	3d+2 (11 pts.)	plus 1d+1 (4 pts.) = 5d (15 pts.)
<i>Prime M. (Eff):</i>	3d+2 (11 pts.)	plus 1d+1 (4 pts.) = 5d (15 pts.)
<i>Mech. C. (Eff):</i>	3d+2 (11 pts.)	plus +1 (1 pt.) = 4d (12 pts.)
<i>Gremlins (Tal):</i>	4d (12 pts.)	plus 2d (2 pts.)* = 6d (14 pts.)

Step 4: Personal Traits

- A. *Name and describe the pony's Personal Strength.* Adaptable: He can adjust to new and strange situations quickly and easily.
- B. *Name and describe the pony's Personal Weakness.* Mad scientist: "Bwahahahahaha! Now the world will see my genius!"

Step 5: Finishing Touches

- A. *Note Fatigue Points and recovery, Strength Bonus, and Moves.*
Fatigue Points: *Hardiness* is 2d; $(2 \times 3) + 15 = 21$.
Recovery: 4 per hour sleeping, 2 per hour resting.
Strength Bonus: 1d of *Muscle* $\times \frac{1}{2}$ (rounded up) = 1d.
Moves: *Walk* is $5 + 3 = 8$; double and redouble for *trot* (16), *canter* (32), and *gallop* (64). *Swim* and *Climb* are *Walk* $\times \frac{1}{2} = 4$; *Pony Form* shows multipliers for faster swimming and climbing. *Jump* is *Walk* $\times \frac{1}{4} = 2$; *Pony Form* shows additions for bigger jumps. Round up as needed.
- B. *Describe how the pony looks.* He's scrawny and long-legged. His color scheme defies any attempt to color-coordinate, with a fire-engine-red coat, a lime-green mane and tail that usually are somewhat unkempt, and blaze-orange eyes. From time to time he will don the "clock . . . is . . . ticking!" expression; at that point, those who know him well will run. His cutie mark is a set of interlaced gears with broken teeth.
- C. *Name the pony and describe what else is important about him.* Through his own luck, as well as inheritance, Glitch is a wealthy unicorn. This allows him to pursue his "destiny"—if by that one means "tinkering with devices only slightly more dangerous than a wood-chipper"—free of such minor considerations as "safety". He has a reputation as a usually incompetent inventor and often is seen flopping about the skies in his home-made ornithopter. He is indeed the terror of the local pegasus ponies.
- D. *Choose the pony's important possessions.* He has one major possession: money! Lots and lots of it! He has one medium possession: some kind of vehicle—for instance, an ornithopter, autogyro, steam-car, or giant vinegar-and-baking-soda jet boat—but only one at a time; switching vehicles usually follows the destruction of the previous vehicle. He has two minor possessions: an inventory of parts from broken gadgets, and a contact among fellow mad-scientist ponies. ♦

Player name	PAT		
Pony name	GLITCH		
<input type="radio"/> Earth <input type="radio"/> Pegasus <input checked="" type="radio"/> Unicorn	Pony's tribe and gender <input type="radio"/> Mare <input checked="" type="radio"/> Stallion <input type="radio"/> Filly <input type="radio"/> Colt		

Aptitude	Add up points	Dice
Muscle	3 + 2 = 5	1d+2
Hardiness	3 + 3 = 6	2d
Reflexes	3 + 2 = 5	1d+2
Coordination	3 + 3 = 6	2d
Smarts	3 + 6 = 9	3d
Senses	3 + 3 = 6	2d
Power	3 + 8 = 11	3d+2
Finesse	3 + 9 = 12	4d
Total points: 36		

Personal Strength ADAPTABLE: HE CAN ADJUST TO NEW & STRANGE SITUATIONS QUICKLY & EASILY
Personal Weakness MAD SCIENTIST: "RWAAHAHAHAHA! NOW THE WORLD WILL SEE MY GENIUS!"
Magic Style MECHANICAL MAGIC: MOTIVATING & OPERATING MACHINES

Run	Walk	Trot	Canter	Gallop
Yards Diffic.	6 o	12 5	24 10	48 15
Swim	Move	× 2	× 3	× 4
Yards Diffic.	3 5	6 10	9 15	12 20
Climb	Move	× 1 ½	× 2	Round up if needed
Yards Diffic.	3 10	5 20	6 30	
Jump	Move	+1 yd.	+2 yds.	+3 yds.
Yards Diffic.	2 5	3 10	4 15	5 20
Fly	Slow	Mod.	Fast	V. fast
Yards Diffic.	o	5	10	15
Strength Bonus			1	d

Talents and Specialties	Based on	Add up points	Exp.	Dice
IRON HORSE: REDUCE FATIGUE BY		+ = 3		1d
HALF FOR ALL FINESSE TALENTS		+ =		d
RESIST MECH. INJURY (SPEC.)	HARDI.	6 + 2* = 8		4d
PILOTING	COORDIN.	6 + 1 = 7		2d+1
REPAIR	SMARTS	9 + 3 = 12		4d
ENGINEERING	SMARTS	9 + 1 = 10		3d+1
ILLUMINATION (TALENT)	FINESSE	12 + 0 = 12		4d
ILLUMINATION (EFFECT)	POWER	11 + 0 = 11		3d+2
LEVITATION (TALENT)	FINESSE	12 + 0 = 12		4d
LEVITATION (EFFECT)	POWER	11 + 4 = 15		5d
PRIME MOVER (TALENT)	FINESSE	12 + 0 = 12		4d+3
PRIME MOVER (EFFECT)	POWER	11 + 4 = 15		5d
MECH. CONTROL (TALENT)	FINESSE	12 + 0 = 12		4d
MECH. CONTROL (EFFECT)	POWER	11 + 1 = 12		4d
GREMLINS (SPEC., TALENT)	MECH. C.	12 + 2* = 14		6d
* SPECIALTY POINTS (3 FOR 1) TOTAL		+ 21 =		d

Important possessions (every pony gets panniers/saddlebags)	Major	Med.	Minor
MONEY! LOTS AND LOTS OF IT!	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SOME KIND OF VEHICLE – FOR INSTANCE, AN ORNiTHOPTER, AUTOGYRO, STEAM-CAR, OR GIANT VINEGAR-&BAKING-SODA JET BOAT – BUT ONLY 1 AT A TIME; SWITCHING USUALLY FOLLOWS PREVIOUS VEHICLE'S DESTRUCTION	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
INVENTORY: PARTS FROM BROKEN GADGETS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
CONTACT: FELLOW MAD-SCIENTIST PONIES	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Pony description SCRAWNY AND LONG-LEGGED FIRE-ENGINE RED COAT, UN- KEMPT LIME GREEN MANE & TAIL, BLAZE-ORANGE EYES
Cutie mark (sketch or description) INTERLACED GEARS WITH BROKEN TEETH

Experience Points		Harmony Points
Unused	Spent	
Fatigue Points		Illness or Injury
Total	21	<input type="radio"/> Bruised ≤ 0 <input type="radio"/> Stunned 1–
Spent		<input type="radio"/> Minor – <input type="radio"/> Serious –
Recovery per hour		<input type="radio"/> Major – <input type="radio"/> Mortal –
Sleeping	4	<input type="radio"/> Death ≥
Resting	2	

~ Equipment and Belongings ~

NARRATORS AND PLAYERS who want some help in coming up with their ponies' possessions can use these lists of items and rules to go with them. Narrators especially are encouraged to look up more information if they want to add more items. Other game books would be a good place to start.

Historically, most of the items listed were available through much of the nineteenth century. A few were invented during the nineteenth century; those items include rough dates in parentheses. Keep in mind that, over time, the same kind of item may get smaller, lighter, cheaper, more effective, or some combination—compare a sewing machine or a wind-up alarm clock made in 1900 to one made in 1850.

Available Almost Anywhere

These can be found wherever there are shops or stores—even in small towns, though the supply might be limited.

Cheap (*buying difficulty 1–5*)

Alarm clock (1840s)	Newspaper, magazine
Backpack	Personal hygiene kit
Basic rations (a few days)	Pocket-watch (basic)
Blanket	Rope, cotton, 50 yards (45 m)
Crowbar	Rope, hemp, 50 yards (45 m)
Duffel bag	Sewing machine, portable (1840s)
Eating utensils	Shovel
Lantern	Steamer trunk
Lighter (Döbereiner's lamp)	Tent, 1-pony
Marbles	Torch

Inexpensive (*buying difficulty 6–10*)

Basic clothing	Sleeping bag or bedroll
Carpenter or construction toolkit	Tent, 3-pony
Iron spikes (8) and piton	Wood stove
Pocket-watch (high-quality)	

Available in Cities or by Mail-Order

These items are sold in department stores and other large retailers, which mostly are in big cities. Most department stores mail out catalogs, so faraway customers can mail-order stuff they can't get in local shops—but shipping a mail order can take a few days to a few weeks, so it'd better not be urgent!

Cheap (*buying difficulty 1–5*)

Camera film (1830s)	Flashlight batteries (1890s)
Compass	Holster
Flashlight, large (1890s)	Kerosene heater (1850s)

Inexpensive (*buying difficulty 6–10*)

Art supplies	Gas stove (1850s)
Binoculars	Mechanic's tool kit
Camera (1830s)	Rifle scope (1830s)
Disguise kit	Telescope, small
Electrician's tool kit (1880s)	Typewriter (1870s)
Emergency medical kit (1880s)	

Unusual or Rare

Most ponies wouldn't have much interest in buying these items, so they generally wouldn't be found in ordinary shops or stores. Instead, they'd be offered by businesses that sell supplies to professionals, such as a restaurant-supply company selling to chefs and restaurateurs. In some cases, a customer might have to provide proof she *is* a professional before the company will sell to her—the company wouldn't want to sell to a pony who doesn't know what she's doing and could hurt herself or others, or there may be a law for the same reason.

The cost difficulties for weapons are listed with the rest of the information on them. A weapon that's really good-quality (and of course more expensive) doesn't cause more injury—in-
stead, it's tougher, and less likely to break or fail.

Cheap (*buying difficulty 1–5*)

Lockpicking tools

Inexpensive (*buying diff. 6–10*)

Archæologist's tool kit (1880s)
Gas mask (1840s)
Hobble
Jungle explorer's kit
Parachute

A Little Expensive

(*buying difficulty 11–15*)

Evidence kit (1880s)

Useful Information

Certain items do specific things under the rules. Here's how to handle them during play.

Binoculars: Add 3 points to attempts for looking at, or for, things more than 2 yards (1.8 m) away, but only in daylight.

Crowbar: Add 3 points to Muscle when prying something.

Flashlight: See the rules under "Weather and Visibility".

Gas mask: Wearing a gas mask adds 6 points to the wearer's Hardiness against a gas attack or cancels out 3 points of subtraction from Hardiness, whichever is more appropriate.

Hobble: Cuffs together front or rear hooves and comes with a key; the difficulty of picking the lock is 15, and the toughness of the hobble is 15.

Jungle explorer's pack: Add 2 to Survival or Smarts for surviving in jungle or heavy forest; has pith helmet, insect repellent, and mosquito netting in a small knapsack.

Iron spikes and piton: Add 3 points to climbing attempts; must be used with a rope.

Lockpicking tools: Add 3 points to attempts at picking locks, but only if the user has the Lockpicking Talent.

Marbles: A pony who steps on marbles scattered on the ground makes a Running or Reflexes attempt each step until she can move away. Difficulty is 15; each step is an action.

Rifle Scope: Add 2 points for shooting at medium or long range, but only if the shooter spent the previous round aiming. Also works as a small telescope.

Rope, hemp: Hemp rope is heavy-duty, able to support a lot of weight; its toughness is 5.

Rope, cotton: Cotton rope is medium-duty, able to support some weight, but not as much as hemp; its toughness is 3.

Shovel: Add 3 points to digging task attempts.

Telescope: Add 6 points when looking at or for faraway things, but the user must spend a round to focus the telescope.

Toolkits: Every toolkit includes a container and all the tools and parts needed for working on normal tasks; it adds 3 points to task attempts involving that kind of work. ♦

The Best Things in Life Are Free

Not every possession a player pony may have is something that can be bought in a store—possession points can be used to represent all sorts of other things too. Some are physical objects, but others could be more abstract. Part three of the rulebook, “The Magical Land”, contains background information that can help explain some of the suggestions below.

Such a “possession” can give a pony more history and depth, making her more interesting to play. The narrator may be able to use it as a way to get the pony and her friends involved in stories. A new one can be a reward for good role-playing or solving problems. Players may come up with new and interesting possessions, but the narrator should keep an eye on them to make sure they’re appropriate and not too powerful.

The pony’s **social rank** can be elevated, but a player pony has to pay for lands or money with other possession points, and the player should explain how the pony got the rank. The narrator probably shouldn’t allow a player pony to be a royal except under the most extraordinary circumstances. A *patent of nobility* is a major possession and makes the pony a member of the *peerage* (nobility) with a title such as baron(ess) or count(ess)—most likely a *life title*, one that isn’t inherited. A *knighthood* is a medium possession and includes membership in a specific *chivalric order* (association of knights). Being an upper-class but untitled commoner is a minor possession.

The pony may have a **contact** with an individual or group who can do favors or get information for the pony—but sometimes may ask for favors or information in return. A *major contact* represents an important individual or large group who can and will do big favors. A *medium contact* represents an individual or group who can do a few big favors or more small favors. A *minor contact* represents an individual or group who can do small favors, but not big ones.

A **toolkit** doesn’t have to contain hammers, wrenches, or screwdrivers. Any set of devices that can help a pony use a Talent can be thought of as a toolkit—for example, navigation instruments, a vest containing basic survival gear, an accountant’s portfolio, or a wet bar containing a coffee and tea set. A *major toolkit* fills a set of cabinets installed in a workroom. A *medium toolkit* fills a single cabinet or chest that can be on casters so it can be rolled around a workroom. A *minor toolkit* fills a portable container that can be carried easily.

An **inventory** of parts or other items can be used to build or repair things, or to use in other tasks. An example is a selection of hardware, such as nails, screws, fasteners, hinges, and knobs. The pony can replace items she uses from her inventory, but not too quickly, and she may run out temporarily if a project or task is big enough. A pony who has a business such as a store, but no separate inventory, can’t use things from her business; there may be laws or regulations that make it hard or impossible, or she sells big things like furniture that can’t be moved easily, or she may not have anything left over from what she has to sell in order to make a living. A *major inventory* is enough large items to fill a small warehouse or enough small items to fill a room. A *medium inventory* is enough large items to fill a room or enough small items to fill a good-size cabinet. A *minor inventory* is a few large items or enough small items to fill a portable container that can be carried easily. *

Barding and Armor

Barding (equine armor) adds to Hardiness when resisting injury from attacks. A pony can wear one kind of barding at a time. It’s heavy and clumsy; for every die of protection, subtract 1 from Reflexes, Coordination, or Talents based on them. Wearing barding can get hot even in mild weather, but metal armor isn’t much protection against cold either. Barding may not protect against other things such as falls, poisons, and diseases. If there’s any doubt, the narrator has to decide.

Type of barding: Add to Hardiness:	Leather +1d	Mail (chainmail) +2d	Plate +3d
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~ Muscle-Powered Weapons ~

A **MUSCLE-POWERED WEAPON** depends on the user swinging, thrusting, or otherwise moving it with her own body to attack. That’s why a muscle-powered weapon adds the user’s Strength Bonus to the weapon’s injury points, listed in the tables’ “Injury” or “Inj.” columns.

Weaponless Attacks

Any pony or creature can attack even without a weapon by using her own body and the Brawling Talent (or Reflexes). The list below covers the attacks a pony can make. Other creatures may use different attacks or different values for similar attacks.

Attack	With . . .	Injury	Diff. Mod.
Bite	Teeth	*	+3 (or +1d)†
Punch, butt	One front hoof or head	+1‡	No modif.
Box or clip	Both front hooves or wing	+2	+3 (or +1d)
Kick	One rear hoof	1d	+6 (or +2d)
Buck	Both rear hooves	2d	+9 (or +3d)

* Strength Bonus only.

† Subtract 3 (or 1d) if attacker and target are very close.

‡ For a unicorn using her alicorn (horn), use +2 instead.

Mêlée Weapons

Most muscle-powered weapons are for close-up fighting; they may be blunt, sharp (bladed or pointed), or flexible. If she wants, a player can tell the narrator her pony’s using a sharp weapon as a blunt weapon: cut the injury roll in half before subtracting the target’s roll to resist injury. “Long” weapons are longer than 24 inches (60 cm)—see the rule for “unwieldy weapons”. A length of “either” means some weapons are short and others are long. Cost difficulty of blunt weapons is “cheap” (1–5) except for *very large*, which is “inexpensive” (6–10); cost difficulty of sharp and flexible weapons is “inexpensive”.

Attacking with mêlée weapons uses the Mêlée Talent (or Reflexes), with a few exceptions. A spike imitating or fitting over an alicorn (horn) is a *very light* sharp weapon. A unicorn attacking with one uses the Brawling Talent; other ponies use Mêlée. A “war boot” like the royal guards wear is a *light* blunt weapon. Any pony attacking with war boots uses Brawling. ♦

Blunt	Inj.	Length	Real-World Examples
<i>Extra-light</i>	+2	Short	Blackjack
<i>Very light</i>	1d	Short	Sap
<i>Light</i>	1d+1	Either	Brass knuckles (short), mace (long)
<i>Medium</i>	1d+2	Either	<i>Tonfa</i> (short), quarterstaff (long)

Sharp	Inj.	Length	Real-World Examples
<i>Very light</i>	1d	Short	Dagger, bayonet, survival knife
<i>Light</i>	1d+1	Either	
<i>Medium</i>	1d+2	Either	Shortsword
<i>Heavy</i>	2d	Long	Rapier
<i>Very heavy</i>	2d+1	Long	
<i>Extra-heavy</i>	2d+2	Long	Broadsword
<i>Huge</i>	3d	Long	Large axe

Flexible	Inj.	Length	Real-World Examples
<i>Very light</i>	1d	Long	Bullwhip
<i>Light</i>	1d+1	Long	
<i>Medium</i>	1d+2	Long	<i>Kusari-fundo</i> (chain with heavy ends)
<i>Heavy</i>	2d	Long	Ball and chain

Missile and Thrown Weapons

A muscle-powered weapon that shoots a missile or projectile takes one action to reload. Examples would be an archer nocking a new arrow on her bow or a slinger putting a new stone in her sling's pouch. A shooter can load and shoot in the same round, if she takes multiple actions in the round to do it.

The cost difficulty of a missile weapon is “inexpensive” (6–10) except for a large one, which is “a little expensive” (11–15). The cost difficulty of a small batch of arrows or bolts is “cheap” (1–5). The cost difficulty of a small thrown weapon is “cheap”; the cost difficulty of a medium or large one is “inexpensive”.

For the ranges of a small thrown weapon, the thrower makes a Muscle roll. The result is short range; add 1 yard to this for medium range and 2 yards for long range.

Missile Wpns.	Inj.	Short Range	Medium Range	Long Range	Real-World Examples
<i>Very light</i>	1d	5 yards (4.5 m)	10 yards (9 m)	15 yards (14 m)	Sling and stone
<i>Heavy</i>	2d	10 yards (9 m)	100 yards (91 m)	250 yards (229 m)	Shortbow and arrow
<i>Huge</i>	3d	10 yards (9 m)	100 yards (91 m)	250 yards (229 m)	Longbow and arrow

Thrown Wpns.	Inj.	Short Range	Medium Range	Long Range	Real-World Examples
<i>Small</i>	+1	Muscle roll	Muscle + 1 yard	Muscle + 2 yards	Dart
<i>Very light</i>	1d	5 yards (4.5 m)	10 yards (9 m)	15 yards (14 m)	Throwing dagger
<i>Heavy</i>	2d	5 yards (4.5 m)	25 yards (23 m)	40 yards (37 m)	Javelin (unwieldy weapon)

Improvised Weapons

A pony who wants a weapon but doesn't have a real one may try to use anything she can find. Generally an improvised weapon doesn't cause as much injury and adds 5 (or more) to attack difficulty. If an attack roll results in a mishap, it breaks, the user hurts herself, or both. If the user hurts herself, don't add her Strength Bonus to the injury. An improvised weapon doesn't last long—unless it's tough like a thick metal pipe or a screwdriver—even if it isn't broken in a mishap.

For the ranges of a thrown object, the thrower makes a Muscle roll and adds to or subtracts from it to find short, medium, and long ranges. If the total is zero or less, the thrower can't get the object to that range or farther.

Torch: A lit torch causes 3d of injury (or damage) per round after the first that the flame's touching something; if it's flammable, it could catch fire.

Blunt	Injury	Length	Real-World Examples
<i>Extra-light</i>	+2	Short	Crowbar, shovel
<i>Very light</i>	1d	Short	Hammer
<i>Light</i>	1d+1	Long	Baseball bat, large stick

Sharp	Inj.	Length	Real-World Examples
<i>Small</i>	+1	Short	Arrow, bolt, dart, iron spike
<i>Extra-light</i>	+2	Short	Awl, ice pick, household scissors, pen knife, screwdriver, stake
<i>Very light</i>	1d	Short	Hedge clippers, shears, chef's knife
<i>Light</i>	1d+1	Short	Hatchet
<i>Medium</i>	1d+2	Long	Machete

Flexible	Injury	Length	Real-World Examples
<i>Small</i>	+1	Long	Cotton rope
<i>Extra-light</i>	+2	Long	Hemp rope

Throw	Inj.	Diff.	Short	Med.	Long	Examples
<i>Small</i>	+1	+5	Muscle roll	Muscle + 1 yd.	Muscle + 2 yd.	Apple thrown by front hoof
<i>Extra-light</i>	+2	+10	Double result of roll plus modifier, if any			Apple kicked by back hoof
<i>Extra-light</i>	+2	+5	Muscle – 2 yd.	Muscle – 1 yd.	Muscle roll	Rock thrown by front hoof
<i>Very light</i>	1d	+10	Double result of roll minus modif., if any			Rock kicked by back hoof

Adjusting weapons: All the weapons tables, including those on the next few pages, show typical examples. The narrator and players should keep in mind that, especially before mass production became common in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, even items that are supposed to be very similar can vary a *lot*. There's room to change the values of many weapons a little, especially for unusual conditions. ★

A MECHANICAL WEAPON USES TENSION or a *moment arm* to throw a projectile at higher speed than most muscles can match. A firearm (or a bigger gun like a cannon) uses the pressure of expanding gas from a very rapid *combustion* (burning) of gunpowder, black powder, or cordite to do the same thing, but even faster. Explosives release a lot of energy very quickly, also from chemical reactions. The user's Strength Bonus is *not* added to the injury (or damage) dice of these weapons.

Mechanical Weapons

The most common mechanical weapon small enough for someone to carry and use is the *crossbow*. Reloading and cranking one to build up tension takes a round, and the pony doing the cranking can't take any other actions. A small crossbow shoots *darts* and is "inexpensive" (6–10); the others shoot *bolts* and are "a little expensive" (11–15).

If it's too big for one pony, it's probably a *siege engine*; the best-known is the *catapult*, but there are others as well. A catapult flings a large object—usually a rock or metal ball—at a target. Reloading it after shooting takes a round, and the reloaders can't take any other actions. It's hard to aim, so add 5 to the difficulty of attacking with it. A catapult is at least size 12; see "How Big Is a Creature or Object?" in "Weights and Measures: The Physical World" and the Size rules in "Them's Fightin' Words: Combat".

Crossb.	Inj.	Short R.	Medium R.	Long Range
Small	4d	10 yd. (9 m)	25 yd. (23 m)	50 yd. (46 m)
Medium	4d	10 yd. (9 m)	100 yd. (91 m)	200 yd. (183 m)
Large	4d+1	10 yd. (9 m)	100 yd. (91 m)	300 yd. (274 m)
Catapult.	3d+2	50 yd. (45 m)	100 yd. (91 m)	200 yd. (183 m)

Firearms

The history of firearms is complicated, so to keep things simple only four kinds of weapons are covered here. The *matchlock* had its heyday during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (but a few antiques still might be around later). The *flintlock* took over in the late seventeenth century and lingered into the early nineteenth century. *Percussion* weapons only lasted from the 1820s to the 1880s, because *cartridge* weapons appeared in the 1850s and gradually swept away everything else.

A **matchlock firearm**, also called a *musket* or *arquebus*, is a *muzzle-loader*; the shooter puts a powder charge, wadding, and a round lead bullet down the barrel, then uses a *ramrod* to tamp them into place at the back. A burning *match* (a length of thin cord treated to make it burn better) is clamped in the lock. When the trigger or lever is pulled, the lock swings the match onto the *touch-hole*, where the flame sets off the powder charge. If the attack roll results in a mishap, it could mean the match went out and doesn't light the charge—especially if it's raining or even very humid. The cost difficulty of a matchlock is "kind of expensive" (16–20), and the cost difficulty of each powder charge, wadding, and bullet is "cheap" (1–5).

A typical musket is four to six feet long (1.2 to 1.8 m) and can weigh 20 pounds (9 kg)! It's so heavy a wooden *rest* (like a monopod) is needed to support it. If a rest isn't available, using a musket takes 2 actions: the first action is lifting the weapon with a difficulty of 3, and the second action is shooting it. Reloading after shooting takes 12 rounds, unless the shooter succeeds at a roll with a difficulty of 10, using the same dice as for shooting—then it takes only 1 round.

A **flintlock firearm** also uses a lock, but instead of a match, a flint and iron pyrite are scraped together, which throws sparks onto a small *pan* holding a little powder to light the charge. If an attack roll results in a mishap, it may mean the sparks don't reach the powder or there's a *flash in the pan* that doesn't light the charge. A flintlock musket is about the same size as a matchlock musket, and also needs a rest for support; use the same rule as for a matchlock if there isn't a rest.

The first pistols were flintlocks. A typical example is about a foot (30 cm) long and weighs 8 pounds (3.5 kg). Since these pistols aren't reliable and take a long time to reload, a shooter often carried a *brace* (pair). A flintlock takes 8 rounds to reload, unless the shooter succeeds at a roll with a difficulty of 8, using the same dice as for shooting—then it takes only 1 round. The cost difficulty of a flintlock is "kind of expensive" (16–20, though a musket costs more than a pistol), and the cost difficulty of a powder charge, wadding, and bullet is "cheap" (1–5).

A **cannon** uses gunpowder to throw large stone or metal balls. A small (bronze or iron) cannon needs a crew of two to load and fire it; a large (iron) cannon needs a crew of four. Loading a cannon takes 1 round, and the crew can't do anything else. It takes 1 round for the *gun captain* (crew leader) to aim and fire the cannon. If an attack roll results in a mishap, the cannon wasn't loaded right, and it may not fire at all—or too much powder was loaded and the cannon barrel fails. A bronze cannon bulges and is ruined, but an iron cannon blows up like a bomb, which probably will injure everyone nearby.

A typical cannon is Size 15; see "How Big Is a Creature or Object?" and the Size rules in "Them's Fightin' Words: Combat". A small cannon's cost difficulty is "expensive" (21–25) and a large cannon's cost difficulty is "very expensive" (26–30). A set of one powder charge, wadding, and ball is "inexpensive" (6–10).

An early **percussion firearm** is a lot like a flintlock, but it uses a *percussion cap* instead of a flint. A new cap, holding a small amount of chemical that ignites when struck, is put on the lock before each shot. This makes loading and firing the weapon faster, safer, and more reliable. For a percussion pistol or musket, use the statistics and rules for a flintlock, with a couple of exceptions. Reloading takes 6 rounds instead of 8, but the difficulty of reloading in 1 round is the same as for a flintlock. A percussion weapon is more resistant to bad weather, so it takes a worse roll, or a mishap, to get a malfunction than for a flintlock or (especially!) a matchlock.

The **cartridge** appeared in the early part of the nineteenth century. It packages the powder and bullet together and is made of special paper or rubber. New designs became possible, such as the *revolver*, which can hold multiple rounds in a *cylinder* that rotates, each time the weapon's fired, to bring up a new round. Many weapons used in the Old West were percussion cartridge weapons. ♦

The **metallic cartridge**, usually made of brass, includes a *primer* to take the place of the percussion cap; this made ammunition completely self-contained for the first time. It was introduced in the 1840s and worked so well that the idea's lasted right to the present, more than a century and a half later.

Percussion cartridge firearms and metallic-cartridge firearms use the same rules and statistics, with two exceptions. The first is that a percussion cartridge weapon must be loaded and fired in two different rounds, but a metallic-cartridge weapon can be loaded and fired in the same round, as two full actions.

The second is how many rounds of ammunition a weapon can hold. A percussion cartridge carbine or rifle can hold only one round. The number, or *capacity*, of rounds any other cartridge firearm can hold is listed in the "Cap." column; when that many rounds have been fired, the weapon is empty and must be reloaded before it can be fired again.

The cost difficulty of a cartridge weapon is "inexpensive" (6-10) for a basic model or "a little expensive" (11-15) or more for a fancier model. The cost difficulty for 50 rounds of ammunition is "cheap" to "inexpensive" (1-10), depending on how powerful it is. Bigger, more powerful weapons or ammunition will cost more than smaller, lighter weapons or ammunition.

Early Guns	Injury	Short R.	Medium R.	Long R.
Matchlock musket	3d+2	10 yards (9 m)	20 yards (18 m)	40 yards (37 m)
Flintlock pistol	3d+1	5 yards (4.5 m)	10 yards (9 m)	25 yards (23 m)
Flintlock musket	4d	25 yards (23 m)	40 yards (37 m)	100 yards (91 m)
Sm. cannon (Size 15)	4d	50 yards (45 m)	200 yards (183 m)	800 yards (732 m)
Lg. cannon (Size 15)	5d	50 yards (45 m)	150 yards (137 m)	500 yards (457 m)

Sidearms	Inj.	Cap.	Short	Med.	Long	Examples
Low-power	3d+2	8	10 yd. (9 m)	20 yd. (18 m)	30 yd. (27 m)	Early 9-mm auto. pistols
Medium-power	4d	6	12 yd. (11 m)	25 yd. (23 m)	40 yd. (37 m)	Colt .38 snub revolv.
High-power	4d+1	6	15 yd. (14 m)	30 yd. (27 m)	45 yd. (41 m)	Colt .45 Peacemaker

Carbines	Inj.	Cap.*	Short	Med.	Long	Example
Low-power	4d+2	10	10 yd. (9 m)	20 yd. (18 m)	40 yd. (37 m)	
Medium-power	5d	10	12 yd. (11 m)	25 yd. (23 m)	50 yd. (46 m)	
High-power	5d+1	8	15 yd. (14 m)	30 yd. (27 m)	60 yd. (55 m)	.30-cal. M-1 Carbine

* Ammunition capacity is 1 for a percussion cartridge carbine or rifle.

Rifles	Inj.	Cap.*	Short	Med.	Long	Examples
Low-power	5d+2	8	20 yd. (18 m)	40 yd. (37 m)	80 yd. (73 m)	
Med.-power	6d	6	25 yd. (23 m)	50 yd. (46 m)	100 yd. (91 m)	
High-power	6d+1	6	30 yd. (27 m)	60 yd. (55 m)	120 yd. (110 m)	Winchester 94 (.30-30)
V. hi.-power	6d+2	5	35 yd. (32 m)	70 yd. (64 m)	140 yd. (128 m)	
Heavy	7d	5	40 yd. (37 m)	80 yd. (73 m)	160 yd. (146 m)	Springfield M-1903

Shotgun	Inj.	Cap.	Short	Med.	Long	Examples
Double-barrel	6d	2	20 yd. (18 m)	40 yd. (37 m)	60 yd. (55 m)	Remington 30 (12 gauge)
Sawed-off	6d	2	15 yd. (14 m)	20 yd. (18 m)	30 yd. (27 m)	(Barrels cut to make it smaller)

Someone who knows firearms well may notice that these rules and statistics are *very* simplified. If everyone's interested enough to want more detailed firearms, they probably have, or can get, enough information to create specific models and additional rules. The statistics here can be used as guidelines.

Rather than reinvent real-world firearms, try to think of firearms the ponies (or other creatures) might build. This applies to other inventions as well. The program might show scissors with *bows* (finger-loops) so a young television audience will recognize them—but ponies don't have fingers and so wouldn't use bows; they'd design their scissors very differently.

Explosives

Cannon have been mentioned and fireworks are shows on a few episodes. Modern mining and construction methods also depend a lot on the creative (and careful) use of explosives. The ponies might not have to use them as much, thanks to spell, levitation, and earth magic, but sometimes a big job probably just can't be done without blowing something up.

Low explosives such as black powder *deflagrate*, or burn very quickly, but still at less than the speed of sound. They're useful for propelling things, like bullets or rockets, but not as good at blowing up things, because they don't pack all their force into a very brief instant of time. Low explosives have been around a long time; China had simple fireworks in the seventh century.

High explosives such as dynamite *detonate*; the reaction *propagates* (moves through the chemical) faster than the speed of sound, creating a short, sudden shock-wave that carries a lot of force. It's a good way to blow up things, but it doesn't propel things very well—they tend to get blown up too. The earliest high explosive, nitroglycerin, was discovered in the 1840s. It was horribly unstable, but various ways to make it safer to handle, including dynamite and gelignite, were invented during the 1860s and 1870s. In the twentieth century, other substances were developed to take its place. The cost difficulty for a stick of dynamite is "cheap" (1-5). ♦

A **gunpowder bomb** is a pottery ball about the size of a melon, filled with black powder; a length of fuse is stuck into it before the ball is sealed up. When it goes off, it scatters jagged bits of pottery, a little fire, and a small shock-wave. The cost difficulty of a black-powder bomb is “a little expensive” (11–15), but it’s a much older invention than the others described.

A **fragmentation grenade** is similar, but smaller and metal instead of pottery. It may be packed with shot as well as high explosive. The explosion throws out bits of metal, which can be almost as deadly as bullets over short distances; most don’t go more than about 50 yards (45 m), but a few may zip out as far as 200 yards (183 m). The cost difficulty of a fragmentation grenade is “inexpensive” (6–10).

A **smoke grenade** is full of chemicals that burn and produce a lot of smoke when it goes off. The cloud of smoke will fill an area about 4 yards (3.7 m) in diameter and will be carried by the wind; anyone inside the smoke subtracts 1d from rolls for Reflexes, Coordination, Senses, and Talents based on them. Anyone or anything within a yard or so of a smoke grenade when it explodes may get hit with some of the burning chemical, which will cause 3d injury (or damage) like a torch until it burns out or is wiped off. The cost difficulty of a smoke grenade is “inexpensive” (6–10).

Any of these devices must be set off with a **fuse**, which is lit before the explosive is thrown or placed. When it burns down, the explosive goes off. The maker or user of the explosive device can cut the length of the fuse to match the amount of time she wants it to burn, but it’s not completely reliable.

The narrator should roll, secretly, 2d and subtract 7, which means the result will range from –5 to 5. Add this to the number of seconds that the fuse will burn; remember that adding a negative number is like subtracting a positive number. If the result is 0 or less, the explosive goes off right away. (Ouch.) On the other hand, if a fuse burns too *long*, someone might be quick enough to throw the bomb or grenade back!

The farther away someone is from an explosion, the less injury she’s likely to suffer from it. Someone who’s a short distance away, shown in the column labeled “Full”, gets the whole injury roll. Someone who’s a little farther away, shown in the column labeled “½”, gets only half the injury roll, rounded up. Someone who’s even farther away, shown in the column labeled “¼”, gets only one-fourth of the injury roll, rounded up. Anyone farther away is fairly safe, though it’s possible a few fragments might hit unlucky bystanders.

For example, someone no more than 2 yards from a gunpowder bomb going off gets the full injury roll; someone 3 to 4 yards from the bomb gets half the injury roll, and someone 5 to 8 yards away gets one-fourth of the injury roll.

For the ranges of a thrown explosive device, the thrower makes a Muscle roll and adds to or subtracts from it to find short, medium, and long ranges. If the total is zero or less, the thrower can’t get the object to that range or farther.

Anyone near the place where the explosive lands compares her defense to the throwing roll. If the defense total’s greater than the throwing roll, the pony or creature managed to dive for cover or find some other way to protect herself from the explosion. If the throwing roll’s greater than or equal to the defense total, the pony or creature is hit by the explosion.

A pony or creature who hasn’t taken her turn yet in the round can abandon whatever she was going to do and try to get away from the blast. She makes a Dodge or Reflexes roll with a difficulty of 15. If the roll’s less than 15, the pony fails to dodge and stays in the same place. If the roll is 15 to 18, the pony’s able to get one “zone” farther away—for example, from the “full injury” distance to the “half injury” distance. If the roll’s 19 to 22, the pony’s able to get two zones farther away. If the roll’s 23 or greater, the pony’s able to get three zones farther away.

Device	Inj.	Full	½	¼	Short	Med.	Long
Gunpowder bomb	6d	0–2 yd.	3–4 yd.	5–8 yd.	Muscle – 2 yd.	Muscle – 1 yard	Muscle roll
Stick of dynamite	5d	0–2 yd.	3–5 yd.	6–10 yd.	Muscle – 3 yd.	Muscle – 2 yd.	Muscle + 1 yd.
Fragmen. grenade	6d	0–3 yd.	4–8 yd.	9–16 yd.	Muscle – 4 yd.	Muscle – 3 yd.	Muscle + 3 yd.
Smoke grenade	(3d)	0–1 yard	—	—	Muscle – 4 yd.	Muscle – 3 yd.	Muscle + 3 yd.

Throwing a bomb or grenade: The thrower aims at a place (a map hex, in game terms) rather than a living target and relies on the explosion to injure everyone nearby. The difficulty of hitting the right spot depends on how far away it is. If the thrower misses, the narrator decides how far and which way.

Rng.	Diff.	Condition	Mod.
Close	0	Thrower can’t see target area directly	+6
Short	10	Target area is not “even ground”	+4
Med.	15	Target area is very hard (bomb bounces)	+4
Long	20	Target area is very soft (bomb sinks)	–4

A Last Word

Weapons and explosives are included for narrators and players who want a lot of high adventure, especially groups playing figurative games. They certainly *aren’t* required, and the narrator is free to exclude them if she wishes!

A bullet (or arrow or bolt) doesn’t just stop and fall when it reaches the end of long range. Beyond that, though, it starts slowing down; hitting a target (on purpose, at least) gets a lot tougher, and the projectile won’t hit as hard. As it runs out of energy, it does curve down gradually and eventually hits the ground—but that could be a long way off, so it’s possible to hit something by accident. A good rule of thumb for the possible danger zone is about ten times the weapon’s long range.

The narrator may want to keep this in mind, especially if a player’s careless about what might happen if she misses her target, and roll to see whether stray rounds hit something important, like bystanders. If it’s far enough away, where the projectiles have lost most of their energy, the chances of hitting something and the injury dice should be pretty low, but this can help make the point that weapons are *dangerous* and shouldn’t be used without considering the consequences. *

~ Creatures ~

CREATURES LIVING IN THE WORLD of the ponies are much more intelligent than in the real world. This is one place where using other RPG rulebooks as sources can cause a narrator a bit of trouble unless she thinks about how to adapt them.

For *Pony Tales*, it's more useful to divide creatures into *talking* and *dumb*. (Originally, "dumb" just meant "unable to talk" rather than "stupid", and it's still used that way in some old sayings and proverbs.) A talking creature can think about and communicate complex ideas, and therefore is intelligent enough to build, or at least to participate in, societies and cultures. A dumb creature may be able to communicate simple ideas, but generally can't build complex societies or cultures.

Cattle and sheep can talk, but mostly they seem to live under the care and protection of the ponies rather than on their own, maybe because the ponies are better at thinking about the future and planning effectively. Still, they do talk, are somewhat intelligent, and live in pony society, so they're grouped with the talking creatures.

Why not call talking creatures "civilized"? The word *civilization* actually means "the art of living in cities". Bison, for instance, are shown to live in small nomadic camps, but not cities, so technically they aren't civilized.

What ponies seem to have that most other creatures don't have is *magic*—at least, magic beyond the most basic kind, such as the world-magic that makes even dumb creatures smarter than animals in the real world. That's probably why the ponies have such a thriving society and nation.

The only zebra shown on the program seems to be an *alchemist*, working with mineral and vegetable matter to create magical potions, ointments, and other substances that can accomplish sometimes amazing things. Whether that ability is unique to her or is common among zebras isn't known for certain, but the game assumes it's common, different from pony magic but just as capable.

Talking Creatures

The show doesn't go into much detail about talking creatures other than the ponies. As a result, the listings in this section often rely on guesswork, based on brief glimpses in a few episodes and on similar real creatures or creatures from myths and legends in real history. If the narrator disagrees with those guesses, she's free to change the numbers to suit her own ideas of how the creatures work.

These listings mostly are for minions or others who aren't major story characters. "Injury levels" are simplifications of the injury table, so that fighting lots of minions doesn't take up too much time in the game. A player pony has 4 injury levels. A creature with 1 injury level suffers "major injury" from a result of 1 to 12. A creature with 2 injury levels is "stunned" by a result of 1 to 6 and suffers "major injury" from a result of 7 to 12.

The narrator should create *important* characters with the same care that players use in creating their ponies. Powerful ones might have more dice (points) in Aptitudes and Talents, but the narrator should be careful about that, or they might end up being too much for the player ponies to cope with, and that isn't much fun.

Bison (buffalo), adult

Injury levels: 2 Size 4 to 6 Walk Move similar to pony
Muscle/Hardiness 3d Reflexes/Coord. 1d Smarts/Senses 2d
Brawling 4d Dodge 2d Jumping 4d Running 4d
Search 3d Sneak 3d Tracking 3d Willpower 3d
Attacks: Strength Bonus 2d, otherwise similar to ponies

Bison (buffalo), young

Injury levels: 2 Size 0 to 1 Walk Move similar to pony
Muscle/Hardiness 2d Reflexes/Coord. 2d Smarts/Senses 2d
Brawling 3d Climbing 4d Dodge 4d Jumping 4d
Running 4d Search 3d Sneak 3d Tracking 3d
Attacks: Strength Bonus 1d, otherwise similar to ponies

Bull

Injury levels: 2 Size 3 to 4 Walk Move 10*
Muscle/Hardiness 3d Reflexes/Coord. 2d Smarts/Senses 1d
Brawling 4d Dodge 3d Jumping 4d Lifting 4d Running 4d
Attacks: Strength Bonus 2d, otherwise similar to ponies

Cow

Injury levels: 2 Size 3 to 4 Walk Move 10*
Muscle/Hardiness 3d Reflexes/Coord. 2d Smarts/Senses 1d
Dodge 3d Jumping 4d Running 4d
Attacks: Strength Bonus 2d, otherwise similar to ponies

Changeling

Injury levels: 2 Size 0 Move similar to pegasus
Muscle 2d Hardiness 2d Reflexes 2d Coordination 2d
Smarts 2d Senses 2d Power 2d
Brawling 4d Climbing 3d Dodge 4d Flying 4d Jumping 4d
Running 4d Search 3d Sneak 3d Tracking 3d Willpower 3d
Attacks: Strength Bonus 1d, teeth +1; others similar to ponies
Abilities: can imitate the appearance, but not the special abilities, of another creature that's about the same size

Diamond dog

Injury levels: 2 Size 1 to 2 Walk Move 10*
Muscle 3d Hardi. 2d Reflexes/Coord. 2d Smarts 1d Senses 2d
Brawling 5d Climbing 4d Dodge 4d Intimidation 3d
Jumping 5d Running 5d Search 3d Sneak 4d Tracking 3d
Attacks: Strength Bonus 2d, teeth +1, claws +1

Donkey or mule

Injury levels: 2 Size 0 to 1 Run Move 10*
Muscle/Hardiness 2d Reflexes/Coord. 2d Smarts/Senses 2d
Brawling 5d Dodge 5d Jumping 5d Running 5d Search 3d
Attacks: Strength Bonus 1d, otherwise similar to ponies

Draconequis

Injury levels: 4 Size 4 Move similar to pegasus
Muscle 2d Hardiness 2d Reflexes 2d Coordination 2d
Smarts 2d Senses 2d Power 5d Finesse 5d
Brawling 4d Dodge 5d Flying 5d Intimidation 5d Jumping 5d
Running 4d Search 5d Sneak 5d Tracking 3d Willpower 7d
Attacks: Strength Bonus 1d, otherwise similar to ponies
Abilities: the only draconequis shown was a master of chaos and transformation; what others may be like is unknown ♦

Dragon, adult

Injury levels: 4 Size 40 Walk Move 25, Flight Move 32*
Muscle 5d Hardiness 5d Reflexes 2d Coordination 2d
Smarts 2d Senses 2d Power 4d
Brawling 4d Dodge 4d Intimidation 6d Flying 6d
Running 6d Search 3d Tracking 3d Willpower 5d
Attacks: Strength Bonus 3d, teeth +1d, claws +1d; fire-breathing 3d (do not add Strength Bonus) Armor: +2 thick hide

Dragon, young

Injury levels: 2 Size 1 to 5 Move similar to pegasus
Muscle 3d Hardiness 2d Reflexes 2d Coordination 2d
Smarts 2d Senses 2d Power 3d
Brawling 3d Dodge 3d Intimidation 4d Flying 4d
Running 4d Search 3d Tracking 3d Willpower 4d
Attacks: Strength Bonus 2d, teeth +2, claws +1; fire-breathing 3d

Griffin

Injury levels: 2 Size 1 to 2 Move similar to pegasus
Muscle 2d Hardiness 2d Reflexes 2d Coordination 2d
Smarts 2d Senses 2d Power 2d
Brawling 4d Climbing 4d Dodge 3d Flying 4d Jumping 4d
Running 3d Search 3d Sneak 3d Tracking 3d Willpower 3d
Attacks: Strength Bonus 1d, beak +2, talons +1d

Minotaur

Injury levels: 2 Size 2 Walk Move 10*
Muscle 3d Hardi. 2d Reflexes/Coord. 2d Smarts/Senses 2d
Brawling 4d Climbing 4d Dodge 2d Jumping 4d
Running 5d Search 3d Sneak 3d Tracking 3d Willpower 3d
Attacks: Strength Bonus 2d, similar to unicorn (including horn)

Sea (river?) serpent

Injury levels: 2 Size 10 Swim Move 16*
Muscle/Hardiness 4d Reflexes/Coord. 2d Smarts/Senses 2d
Brawling 3d Dodge 4d Search 3d Swimming 6d Willpower 3d
Attack: Strength Bonus 2d, teeth +2

Sheep

Injury levels: 1 Size -1 Walk Move 10*
Muscle/Hardiness 2d Reflexes/Coord. 2d Smarts/Senses 1d
Climbing 3d Dodge 3d Jumping 4d Running 4d
Attacks: Strength Bonus 1d, otherwise similar to ponies

Zebra

Injury levels: 2 Size 0 Walk Move similar to pony
Muscle 2d Hardiness 2d Reflexes 2d Coordination 2d
Smarts 2d Senses 2d Power 2d Finesse 2d
Alchemy 3d Brawling 3d Climbing 3d Dodge 3d Jumping 4d
Running 4d Search 3d Sneak 4d Tracking 3d Willpower 3d
Attacks: Strength Bonus 1d, otherwise similar to ponies
Abilities: zebra magic seems to be alchemical—mixing potions, elixirs, and such from plant and mineral substances

* This creature adds 5 to movement difficulty for each move after the first and is limited to no more than 4 moves. For example, a diamond dog running 30 yards or an adult dragon flying 96 yards would have a movement difficulty of 10.

Dumb Creatures

Along with animals similar to those in the real world, the world of the ponies has magical animals based on myths and legends from many ancient cultures in real history; others are based on terrible puns in English. A flyer with no Finesse or Power bases its Flying Talent on Reflexes and its Flight Move on Muscle. All dumb creatures are limited to no more than 4 Moves, and add 5 to movement difficulty for each Move after the first.

Cerberus (or Kerberos)

Injury levels: 4 Size 12 Walk Move 30
Muscle/Hardi. 4d Reflexes/Coord. 3d Smarts 1d Senses 2d
Brawling 5d Dodge 5d Intimidation 5d
Running 4d Search 3d Tracking 4d Willpower 4d
Attack: Strength Bonus 2d, teeth +1d

Cockatrice

Injury levels: 1 Size -5 Flight Move 15
Muscle/Hardi. 1d Reflexes/Coord. 3d Smarts 1d Senses 2d
Brawling 4d Flying 3d Search 3d Tracking 3d Willpower 3d
Attacks: Strength Bonus 1d, beak +0, talons +1; petrification, “injury” 3d (no Strength Bonus)—injury level is how much of target is turned to stone, but can be reversed by cockatrice

Hydra

Injury levels: 2 Size 15 Walk Move 15
Muscle/Hardiness 5d Reflexes/Coord. 2d Smarts/Senses 1d
Brawling 3d Dodge 3d Search 3d Tracking 3d Willpower 3d
Attacks: Strength Bonus 3d, teeth +2, stomp +1d
Armor: +2 thick hide
Abilities: up to 7 heads, each able to attack individually, but it may have trouble making up its mind about what to do (use “Teamwork” rule in “Doing More Things: Special Task Rules”)

Manticore

Injury levels: 2 Size 6 Walk Move 35, flight Move 15
Muscle/Hardi. 4d Reflexes/Coord. 3d Smarts 1d Senses 2d
Brawling 5d Climbing 5d Dodge 4d Flying 5d Jumping 5d
Running 5d Search 3d Sneak 4d Tracking 3d Willpower 3d
Attacks: Strength Bonus 2d, claws +2, teeth +2, tail strike, +1
Armor: +2 thick fur
Abilities: tail sting may inject venom (see cobra); up to narrator

Parasprite

Injury levels: 1 Size -13 Flight Move 15
Muscle/Hardiness 1d Reflexes/Coord. 3d Smarts/Senses 1d
Flying 4d Dodge 4d Search 2d Willpower 3d
Attacks: Strength Bonus 1d, bite +0; swarm attack*

Phoenix

Injury levels: 1 Size -8 Move: Flight 32, glide 15
Muscle/Hardi. 2d Reflexes/Coord. 4d Smarts 1d Senses 2d
Brawling 5d Flying 5d Search 3d Tracking 3d Willpower 3d
Attacks: Strength Bonus 1d, beak +2; talons +1d; flash 3d (no Strength Bonus) dazzles (stuns) anyone nearby who fails to resist
Abilities: can fly or glide for several hundred miles or as long as thermals (air rising from warm ground) can keep them aloft ♦

Quarry eel

Injury levels: 2 Size 10 Run (slither) Move 30
Muscle/Hardiness 4d Reflexes/Coord. 3d Smarts/Senses 1d
Brawling 5d Dodge 4d Intimidation 5d Running 4d
Search 3d Tracking 3d Willpower 4d
Attacks: Strength Bonus, 2d, teeth +1d
Armor: +2 thick hide

Timberwolf

Injury levels: 2 Size 1 to 2 Run Move 25
Muscle/Hardi. 4d Reflexes/Coord. 3d Smarts 1d Senses 2d
Brawling 5d Dodge 5d Intimidation 5d
Running 4d Search 3d Tracking 4d Willpower 4d
Attack: Strength Bonus 2d, teeth +1d

Ursa major

Injury levels: 4 Size 24 Run Move 30
Muscle/Hardi. 5d Reflexes 3d Coord. 2d Smarts 1d Senses 2d
Brawling 4d Dodge 4d Intimidation 5d Jumping 6d
Running 6d Search 3d Tracking 3d Willpower 5d
Attacks: Strength Bonus 3d, claws +1d, teeth +1d
Armor: +2 astral hide

Ursa minor

Injury levels: 2 Size 12 Run Move 25
Muscle/Hardi. 4d Reflexes 3d Coord. 2d Smarts/Senses 1d
Brawling 3d Dodge 4d Intimidation 4d Jumping 5d
Running 5d Search 2d Tracking 2d Willpower 4d
Attacks: Strength Bonus 2d, claws +1d, teeth +1d
Armor: +2 astral hide

Even ordinary animals in the ponies' world seem to be much more intelligent than in the real world. Still, in the wild they probably live much the same ways as their real counterparts do.

* For a "swarm attack", make one Brawling roll for the whole group of creatures and add 5 to the die roll for every 10 creatures involved in the attack.

Bat, brown or red

Injury levels: 1 Size -10 Flight Move 15
Muscle/Hardiness 1d Reflexes/Coord. 3d Smarts/Senses 1d
Brawling 4d Flying 4d Search 2d (Hearing +1d)
Tracking 2d (Sonar +1d) Willpower 3d
Attacks: Strength Bonus 1d, claws +0; swarm attack*
Abilities: can fly up to a few hundred miles

Bird of prey (falcon or hawk)

Injury levels: 1 Size -9 Flight Move 32, glide 15
Muscle/Hardi. 2d Reflexes/Coord. 4d Smarts 1d Senses 2d
Brawling 5d Flying 5d Search 3d Tracking 3d Willpower 3d
Attacks: Strength Bonus 1d, beak +2, talons +1d
Abilities: can fly or glide for several hundred miles or as long as thermals (air rising from warm ground) can keep them aloft

Cat, domestic

Injury levels: 1 Size -6 Run Move 20
Muscle/Hardi. 1d Reflexes/Coord. 3d Smarts 1d Senses 2d
Brawling 4d Climbing 4d Dodge 4d Jumping 4d
Running 3d Search 3d Sneak 4d Tracking 3d Willpower 3d
Attacks: Strength Bonus 1d, claws +2, teeth +2

Cat, large (lion, tiger, puma)

Injury levels: 2 Size 3 to 4 Run Move 30
Muscle/Hardi. 4d Reflexes 4d Coord. 3d Smarts 1d Senses 2d
Brawling 5d Climbing 5d Dodge 5d Jumping 5d
Running 5d Search 3d Sneak 5d Tracking 3d Willpower 3d
Attacks: Strength Bonus 2d, claws +2; teeth +2
Armor: thick fur, +2
Ability: Can leap 10 yards horizontally or 2 yards vertically

Cobra

Injury levels: 1 Size -9 Run (slither) Move 15
Muscle/Hardi. 1d Reflexes/Coord. 4d Smarts 1d Senses 2d
Brawling 5d Dodge 5d Intimidation 4d Running 5d Search 3d
Sneak 5d Tracking 3d Venom-Spitting 4d Willpower 4d
Attacks: Strength Bonus 1d, fangs +1d; venom injected if Brawling roll succeeds by 5 or more (venom can cause 1 injury level every 10 minutes until victim dies or is treated—roll Hardiness or Stamina dice against poison difficulty 25 to resist)
Ability: can use "called shot" rule to spit venom into target's eyes or mouth

Dog, domestic

Injury levels: 1 Size: -5 Run Move 25
Muscle/Hardi. 3d Reflexes/Coord. 3d Smarts 1d Senses 2d
Brawling 4d Dodge 4d Intimidation 3d
Running 4d Search 3d Tracking 4d Willpower 4d
Attack: Strength Bonus 2d, teeth +1d

Dog, guard

Injury levels: 2 Size: -4 Run Move 25
Muscle/Hardi. 4d Reflexes/Coord. 3d Smarts 1d Senses 2d
Brawling 5d Dodge 6d Intimidation 5d
Running 4d Search 3d Tracking 4d Willpower 4d
Attack: Strength Bonus 2d, teeth +1d

Rat

Injury levels: 1 Size: -9 Run Move 3
Muscle/Hardi. 1d Reflexes/Coord. 3d Smarts 1d Senses 2d
Acrobatics 3d+1 Brawling 5d Climbing 3d+2 Dodge 3d+1
Hide (self only) 4d Jumping 4d Running 3d
Search 3d Swimming 1d+2 Willpower 4d
Attacks: Strength Bonus 1d, teeth +0; swarm attack*

Shark

Injury levels: 2 Size: 3 to 4 Swim Move 16
Muscle/Hardi. 3d Reflexes 3d Coord. 2d Smarts 1d Senses 2d
Brawling 4d Intimidation 6d Search 3d
Swimming 5d Tracking 3d Willpower 7d
Attack: Strength Bonus 2d, teeth +1d
Armor: +2 thick hide *

~ Part Three of Four ★ The Magical Land: Game Setting ~

THE RULES DELIVER A WAY to handle, fairly and consistently, what happens in a role-playing game, but that's only half the job. The other half is the *setting*—the universe in which the game takes place. In the case of *Pony Tales*, that setting is the country, and the world, where the magical ponies live.

A **timetable** of discoveries and inventions lists a sampling of important developments in several fields from the 1820s through the 1920s to provide historical context. The dates listed are very rough and the entries are just examples; the word “modern” is used loosely to mean that a discovery or invention is just *starting* to look like it does today.

Background on the ponies' technology and culture, and speculation about it, covers eight broad topics: agriculture, power sources, materials and metallurgy, transportation, information, medicine, military affairs, and society in general.

Mini-essays examine those and other relevant subjects, looking under the surface, making connections that may not be obvious, and offering suggestions to narrator and players alike for using the background information in a game.

Repeating History

This part was written to provide as much information as possible in a limited number of pages. The idea is that it's better to give a narrator plenty of material, so she can pick and choose what elements to keep and which to throw out, than it is to provide only a little and force a narrator who wants more detail to go through a bunch of tedious research.

It's important to remember, though, that history is complicated and full of surprises. Cramming big chunks of it into a few pages means that lots of details get tossed out, and what's left over only scratches the surface. A lot of discoveries and inventions happened earlier or later than many people think, and there are endless arguments over who discovered or invented what and whether he or she was first at it.

Still, a narrator and group of players should be able to get a basic understanding of the nineteenth-century time period the show's creator tried to capture, when society was in the midst of leaving behind centuries-old rural and agrarian ways of life as urbanization and industrialization took hold. ★



*On Nightmare Night, a troupe of road ponies came to town. Their leader was a knife-sharpener by trade.
Art by Christina “Smudge” Hanson*

2-3 A Timetable of Discoveries and Inventions Why Is the Show's Technology So Inconsistent?

3 Agriculture

4 Power

Muscle, Water, Wind	Electricity
Steam	Cooking, Lighting, Heating
Other Power Sources	Magic

5 Materials

Construction	Rubber and Plastics
Glass	Fabrics
Metals	Pigments and Dyes

6 Transportation

Railroads	Seafaring
Roads	Aviation

7 Information

Print	Computing Devices
Photography	Writing and Signage
Sound	Mail & Telecommunications

8 Medicine

General Health Care	Food Safety and Preservation
Pharmaceuticals	Magic
Surgery and Dental Care	

9-10 Military

The Royal Guard
The EUP Guard and the Princess's Flying Squadron
The Citizenry
Technology
Ranks, Grades, and Rates
Organization

11-13 Society

The Royalty	Cutie Marks
The Nobility	Money
Styles and Dignities	Cuisine
Knighthoods	Music
The Commons	Education & Apprenticeship

13-15 Mini-Essays

The Grapes of Bein' Kinda Upset (<i>guest contribution</i>)
What's This Thing Made of? (<i>guest contribution</i>)
Turn Your Head and Cough (<i>guest contribution</i>)
Earthshaking Changes
Back in the Old Days
City-State, Principality, Empire
Consorting With Rulers
About (Non-Magical) Ponies

16 Archaic Units of Measure

~ *A Timetable of Discoveries and Inventions* ~

	Energy and Power	Materials	Transportation	Information	Health and Safety
<i>Before 1820s</i>	Windmill, steam power, water wheel, limited gas lighting, early wet cell (battery)	Steel, synthetic pigments, sewing machine, platinum discovered, flintlock	Macadam, velocipede bicycle, hot-air/gas balloon, sailing ship, paddlewheel	Steam printing press, mechanical paper-making, acoustic megaphone	Germ theory, surgery, stethoscope, pill, early anæsthesia, icebox, inoculation, canning
1820s	Portable steam engine, early internal combustion engine, friction match	Portland cement, rubber balloon, thermocouple, bolt action, percussion cap	Steam locomotive , marine propellor, unsuccessful early steam carriages	Large-circulation newspapers, Fresnel lens	Modern dental braces, first modern city fire brigade (Edinburgh)
1830s	Widespread steam power, gas oven, Daniel cell (battery)	Steel plow, mechanical lawnmower, modern glass mirror, first class rings (West Point)	Combine harvester, modern “caterpillar” tracks, first trans-oceanic steamship	Telegraphy, Morse code, plate photography, Babbage engines (never finished)	Gel capsule (for medications), first modern police force (London)
1840s	Corliss steam engine, early arc lighting, Grove cell (battery)	Vulcanized rubber, rubber band, nitro-glycerine, guncotton, squeeze tube	Early ocean liner, railway semaphore signal	High-speed printing, wood-pulp paper, wind-up alarm clock, postage stamp	Modern anæsthesia, pressure-sensitive adhesive tape (first used in surgery)
1850s	Heat radiator, gas heater, widespread gas/kerosene lighting, lead-acid battery	Mass-produced steel, petroleum cracking, first synthetic dyes, metallic cartridge	Steam tractor, steel railroad rail, safety elevator, steam-powered fire engine	Modern fountain pen, mass-produced watch, “absolute zero” discovered	Commercial refrigeration, bathroom tissue
1860s	Practical internal combustion engine, fluorescent lighting, gravity cell (battery)	Many synthetic pigments, helium discovered, cranked automatic action	Early glider, early (gas) traffic light, railway air brake, early attempts at auto & motorcycle	Typewriter, wrist-watch, first color photography, periodic table of the elements	Sterilization and pasteurization, Mendelian inheritance
1870s	Hydroelectric power, practical carbon arc lighting, supercharger	Celluloid plastic, gelignite, gem-quality synthetic rubies, lawn sprinkler	Larger ocean liner, reefer (refrigerated) ship, windjammer, penny-farthing bicycle	Telephone, cylinder phonograph, inexpensive pocket watch, carbon microphone	Modern sutures and germ theory, widespread commercial refrigeration
1880s	Limited electricity, dry cell (battery), early incandescent lighting, steam & wind turbines	Mass-produced aluminum, cordite, self-loading and fully automatic actions	Nonrigid hydrogen airship, pneumatic tire, safety bicycle, electric elevator	Cash register, early film photography, linotype machine	Vaccinations for more diseases, silk dental floss on the market, pasteurized milk
1890s	Subatomic particles and radioactivity discovered, gas water heater with tank	Spray painting, noble gases discovered, glass-blowing machine (mass-produce bottles)	Automobile, motorcycle, electric bicycle, steam-turbine ship, escalator	Early radio, silent movies, high-accuracy pocket watch	X-ray photography, aspirin, antitoxins, bottle cap, bathroom tissue on rolls
1900s	Einsteinian physics, diesel engine, turbo-charger, nicad and nickel-iron batteries	Bakelite, cellophane, synthetic pigments, improved vulcanization, synthetic rubber	Airplane, rigid airship, military armored car, railway light signal, gasoline fire engine	Modern photography, early color film, disk phonograph, early ball-point pen	Blood types, modern blood transfusions, vitamins discovered, chromosome theory
1910s	Superconductivity discovered, Bohr atomic model, neon lighting	Early artificial fibers, helium production, stainless steel, growing metal crystals	Gasoline tractor, electric traffic light, tank (armored fighting vehicle), diesel ship	Radio broadcasting, condenser microphone, sonar, high-accuracy wristwatch	Laparoscopic surgery, antibiotics, genetic map of chromosome, self-serve supermarket
1920s	Large electrical grids, modern incandescent lighting, early quantum physics	Polymer plastics, zipper, Pyrex glass, aerosol spray, consumer adhesive tape	Diesel locomotive , autogyro aircraft, use of helium in airships, parking meter	Movie sound, electric guitar, self-winding watch, photo booth, electric bullhorn	Vaccinations for many diseases, household refrigeration, modern genetic research

THE SHOW PRESENTS the ponies' country as a picturesque, fantastical land of magic. However, instead of a storybook rendition of the Middle Ages, with knights in shining armor, castles, and wizards in towers, the ponies seem to be in the middle of their version of the Industrial Revolution—which in real history took place mostly during the nineteenth century. How can one tell, though? The program isn't very consistent about the kinds of technology it shows, after all.

There are lots of examples throughout this part of the rulebook, but one technology in particular pins down the time period pretty well: The steam locomotive entered commercial service in the 1820s, and diesel locomotives started to replace steam in the 1920s. To narrow things even more, the style of locomotive shown in the program is similar to designs used in the United States during the 1860s to the 1880s. So the focus will be on the century of the steam locomotive, with special attention to the middle three decades. This should provide some historical context as well as specific information to help the narrator decide just what she may want to include or leave out.

As much as possible, information about the show's setting is based on the episodes, but some came out of comments by, interviews of, or question-and-answer sessions with people working on the show. That includes the show's creator, who's warned that since she isn't with the show any more, things may have changed. Still, it's useful to know what she was thinking when she did the original creative work.

Why Is the Show's Technology So Inconsistent?

The show's supervising director has commented that technology looks so strange because the show's staff try to write about and show things that are familiar to a modern audience—especially younger viewers—even if some of them otherwise might look out of place. Moreover, the show's mostly a comedy, and the writers seem willing to stretch things for a good laugh.

The staff is trying for a fairy-tale feel, but it's possible that, even if or when they want to stay “in period”, there's not much time for research or double-checking things they put in the scripts. A narrator may be able to explain some of the gaps by assuming the ponies are better at, say, entertainment technology, because they don't spend as much time and energy on other things like war. (Of course, they obviously know what war is, since the main character asks if her future self has come back in time from an “epic pony war in the distant future”, a joke based on many science-fiction movies and video games.)

Even leaving aside the most obvious *anachronisms*—things that are out of place for a given time period—it can be tough to nail down a specific date. There isn't much sign of telephones, which showed up in the 1870s, but there *are* cash registers and linotype machines, which came later, in the 1880s. Color photographs and disk phonographs are products of the 1900s, yet everyone uses quill pens instead of the fountain pens that began to replace them even before the 1850s. The toys based on the show especially can be way out of the time period, since they include things like pick-up trucks and microwave ovens!

Still and all, it's a show for children about brightly colored magical ponies, so it shouldn't be taken *too* seriously. This information is presented simply to get people to ask questions and look up answers as far as they're comfortable doing. *

FARMING AND KEEPING LIVESTOCK are well developed on the show. Family farms raise a wide variety of crops and other plants, including apples, carrots, celery, corn, and many different kinds of flowers. Farmers' markets and neighborhood stores sell the produce of the country's farms and orchards. It seems safe to guess that the ponies raise just about any food crop there is, no matter where in the world it comes from, as long as there's someplace with the right climate and soil for it.

Tea and chocolate seem to be popular, and coffee has been seen and mentioned. All three are from the tropics, but it isn't clear whether the ponies have to import them from other lands or they can be grown somewhere in the country.

The apple cider shown in one episode had foam “heads” when poured, which is more like beer than cider. Alcohol is a preservative and antiseptic, which is necessary where water may not be safe to drink without treatment. Beer, cider, and wine also contain some vitamins and other nutrients. If the narrator and players want to include alcohol, that means vineyards and wine casks, beer breweries, cider mills, and distilleries—as well as pubs and taverns. Incidentally, the idea of a “drinking age” is very recent, arising during the twentieth century where safe drinking water had become commonplace.

Most natural fabrics seem to be available for clothes, banners, and flags. There probably are cotton plantations and sheep ranches, sheep-shears and shearing sheds, cotton gins, spinning jennies and Jacquard looms, and other machines and industries needed to turn fibers into thread and cloth.

The ponies keep other animals too: cattle for milk, chickens for eggs, and pigs for less obvious reasons. The show's creator, when asked why ponies kept pigs (raised for meat in the real world), answered that the ponies really like truffles—certain kinds of mushrooms—which pigs can be trained to sniff out. Boar hair also was used to make paintbrushes, toothbrushes, and hairbrushes, though modern plastics mostly (but not entirely) took their place in the mid-twentieth century. Manure from animals might be used in fertilizers.

Earth ponies have a magical connection to the land and to living things, but they also seem to understand scientific methods and techniques. Crop rotation, including letting land lie *fallow* (temporarily unplanted) to “rest” and renew its ability to grow plants, is the most important. Absolute control over the seasons and weather, thanks to the pegasus ponies, would make crop failures and bad harvests rare. Ponies probably don't go hungry much, and even the poorest ones can afford a decent diet. Only the holiday pageants retelling the story of the country's founding would remind ponies what could happen if things went badly wrong.

Tools used on the farm include pony-drawn plows and other devices, as well as hoes, shovels and spades, rakes, and bare hooves. Heavier equipment hasn't been shown, but portable steam engines came around in the 1820s. They were powerful, but big and expensive, so organizations of local farmers would get together to buy or lease them, and move them from farm to farm as they were needed. Steam tractors appeared in the 1850s, but the ponies can do their own pulling, so they may not be very interested in that kind of invention. *

WINDMILLS AND WATER WHEELS dot the landscape, particularly in the small town where most of the show takes place. The ponies probably have been building them for centuries—but what about more advanced sources of power?

Muscle, Water, and Wind

Thanks to powerful muscles, the ponies themselves are a reliable source of energy. They probably are masters of building and using mechanisms to turn their own efforts into power for threshing, winnowing, grinding, hauling, and a lot of other agricultural and industrial tasks.

Windmills and water wheels have been around in the real world for some two thousand years, so these too probably are things the ponies understand very well. They're limited to providing mechanical power right next door, though, which means they have to be built where there's good water or wind power, not where it would be most convenient for whatever industries are using them.

Steam

The first high-pressure steam engines were invented at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Much more powerful than earlier designs, they helped to make the Industrial Revolution possible, and led directly to the world we know today.

Early steam engines were fueled with wood or coal; the classic steam locomotive with its coal car is well-known even now. For most of the nineteenth century, the mechanism used by a steam engine was *reciprocating*, using back-and-forth motions, which usually meant big pistons and cylinders. Oil-fired steam turbines arrived in the 1880s, and saw their first widespread use in steamships; they mostly replaced reciprocating steam engines through the early part of the twentieth century.

A big problem with burning wood or especially coal is air pollution. The infamous “London fog” of the nineteenth century killed untold numbers of people and made noon as gloomy as night. The ponies probably wouldn't put up with that kind of problem getting out of hand (or hoof). Pegasus ponies may use their flight and cloud-working to deal with smoke, earth ponies may create new inventions to filter and trap it, and unicorn ponies may contribute magical solutions.

Other Power Sources

The earliest internal-combustion engines showed up in the 1820s, with improved versions coming around in the 1860s. However, they weren't reliable enough or powerful enough for use in motor vehicles until the 1890s, which is a big reason why automobiles appeared at that time. For a while steam competed with gasoline, but it lost out because there isn't much else that packs as much energy into a pound of fuel as gasoline does—and is as easy to burn and use.

Most other power sources familiar to people today were introduced during the twentieth century, especially after the Second World War, so it's almost certain that they wouldn't be available to the ponies at all.

Electricity

The show's creator has said that the ponies don't have—or at least aren't *supposed* to have—electricity. That means their technology probably isn't much more advanced than the 1880s, when electricity started to be more than just a novelty.

Hydroelectric and wind turbines were early sources of electric power starting in the 1870s, but until big electrical grids developed in the early and mid-twentieth century, they were limited to supplying nearby buildings or towns. Most hydroelectric power comes from big dams and reservoirs; a dam with hydro plant has shown up, only to burst and threaten the town with flooding. That episode was full of funny movie clichés, though, so taking it with a grain of salt may be wise.

Cooking, Lighting, and Heating

A traditional wood- or charcoal-burning brick bakery oven might be so large that the whole building would be constructed around it. Nineteenth-century ovens and stoves were made of iron, and most of them burned wood. Gas-burning appliances went on the market in the 1830s. The electric gadgets that fill kitchen counters today didn't exist; everything was done with muscle-power, and it was hard work.

Gas lighting started to replace oil lamps early in the nineteenth century, but during the 1850s it got to be pretty widespread. Many television episodes use the sound effect of a light switch being flipped, probably so a modern audience would recognize it, but a gas light going on makes a *whoosh* sound (kind of like a gas stove burner being lit) and wouldn't light up a room as suddenly or as brightly as an electric light.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, heat came mostly from fireplaces and wood-burning stoves. Radiators, first using hot water and later steam, were invented in the 1850s. Gas heaters were invented at about the same time, and improved versions came out in the 1880s.

Magic

As part of the comment about electricity mentioned earlier, the creator added that she consoled herself with the idea that unicorn inventors might make enchanted appliances, explaining the existence of “electrical” devices. At least one episode has taken this idea and run with it. Still, being cautious about using it probably is a good idea.

Unicorn magic mostly seems to be limited to a scale not far from what an individual pony can do by more ordinary means. (Remember that the main character of the show is considered to be unusually strong magically!) That limited scale may be to keep the unicorn ponies from being more powerful than the other kinds of ponies and to prevent the earth ponies in particular from being overshadowed. Think about this: if enchanting things is easy, why bother using technology at all?

That said, it may be possible for clever ponies to come up with inventions that can make use of unicorn magic. It's easy to imagine, for instance, a smithy or machine shop run by a partnership of earth ponies for most of the inventing, designing, and heavy labor, and unicorn ponies for fine work using levitation and spell-casting for tricky or troublesome tasks. *

ALL THE CLASSICAL substances seem to be available to the Ponies—wood, stone, brick, glass, metals known since ancient times, and natural fibers such as cotton, wool, and silk. Whether the ponies use animal products such as leather and ivory is an open question; as herbivores, they may not like the idea, and such things are controversial even in the real world, so the writers may not want to bring it up.

Construction

The town where most of the show takes place is built mostly of thatched half-timbered buildings, like old European villages; a lot of Europe's forests disappeared gradually during the Middle Ages, so wood wasn't available for roofing. Much of the capital city is built of stone, like larger European towns and cities that have been around a long time. In the first season, the country's biggest city was shown to use lots of brick, and houses, streets, and stores looked like photos of New York in the late nineteenth century—though in later episodes it's looked more like the mid-twentieth century.

Not only does that show what the ponies use to build things with, it also shows that different towns or neighborhoods are built from different materials. A narrator can use that when describing places, to help give players a vivid mental picture, and a narrator who's really interested can decide what's used in a town or city by figuring out what's available because of trade or local mines and industries.

Glass

The ponies make telescopes, eyeglasses, and even sunglasses, and every window is *glazed* (covered with glass). Most of these uses were well-developed during the nineteenth century. Sunglasses using smoky quartz for the lenses were known even to the ancient Chinese, but it wasn't until the early twentieth century that they became widely popular. The “designer shades” on some episodes are very modern-looking, possibly so the audience would recognize them as being trendy and up-to-date, rather than see them as old-fashioned.

Metals

Along with precious metals like gold and silver, metals known since the ancient world include copper, iron, and their alloys. In the case of copper, those alloys are brass—copper and zinc—and bronze—copper and (usually) tin. In the case of iron, those alloys are steel, using different additives to get different kinds. Large-scale production of high-quality steel came along in the 1850s with the Bessemer process.

Other metals such as aluminum were being discovered, but were very hard to get, because ways of separating the pure metals from raw ores hadn't been developed yet. Aluminum was as valuable as silver! It was only in the 1880s that the Hall-Héroult process began producing aluminum in quantity, making it much cheaper.

The ponies probably make much use of brass, bronze, and iron, and probably steel, as well as gold and silver for jewelry and other specialized purposes. They may have aluminum, but probably not titanium or other exotic metals.

Rubber and Plastics

Rubber in its natural state is sticky, brittle when cold, and doesn't keep its shape when warm. *Vulcanization* solved those problems in the 1850s and made rubber practical for all sorts of uses. In the twentieth century, especially since the Second World War, plastics replaced vulcanized rubber for many of those uses. It's *very* likely the ponies don't have those plastics at all. The only plastic they're likely to have is celluloid, which in real history came out in the 1870s; it was used in movie film and as a substitute for ivory, horn, and other animal products, which were much more expensive. However, it's also kind of fragile and very flammable, which is why in the early twentieth century other materials like Bakelite replaced it.

Fabrics

Natural fibers include cotton, flax, hemp, linen, jute, sisal, wool, and silk, among others. Most have been known since ancient times, and as noted in the section on agriculture, the ponies probably are able to produce most of them, and may trade for the rest. Silk comes from butterfly cocoons and wool comes from sheep; the rest are plant products.

There may be thriving industries for spinning raw fibers into thread, weaving thread into cloth, and coloring thread and cloth with dyes. All of them are hard work, and unless there are strict work-safety laws, they can do pretty nasty things to the people working in them. It's probably safe to assume the ponies have such laws!

Artificial fibers didn't appear until the twentieth century. A few of them were invented in the early part of the century, but most were invented in the 1940s and later. The ponies probably don't have any of them.

Pigments and Dyes

The stuff that gives paint its color is called *pigment*. Most natural pigments are mineral—ground-up soil or rock. It's not hard to guess that many are poisonous and expensive. A few natural pigments did come from plants or animals, often outside the West. *Synthetic* (man-made) pigments began to appear in the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century. As chemistry advanced in the late nineteenth century and into the twentieth, most of the old pigments were replaced with cheaper and safer synthetics, and many can't be found today.

The show features very bright colors, even (or especially) on buildings and in art painted by ponies. Part of that is artistic license, to make the animation pretty and appealing, of course. Some of it may be that mineral pigments are unusually easy for the ponies to find or to get. Magic may play a role in prospecting, among other things; one episode featured a spell to detect nearby gemstones, for instance.

Before the twentieth century, most *dyes* came from plants, and many weren't very vivid; the few that could make bright colors were rare and valuable. The dyes weren't *color-fast*, meaning they didn't stick well to the fibers, so washing tended to rinse dyes right out of fabric. (Underwear was invented to keep sweat from getting into clothing, so it didn't need to be washed as much.) Even today, a lot of washing can make dyes fade, which is why so many advertisements for laundry detergents make a big deal about how bright colors are after using them. *

CARTS, WAGONS, AND CARRIAGES ARE the most common vehicles shown, all of them pulled by ponies. The only mechanical vehicles seen so far are steam-powered railroad locomotives and, occasionally, airships propelled by fanciful fans.

Railroads

The earliest known railroads date back to ancient Greece, and they began to reappear in medieval Europe. Through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries they gradually improved and by 1800 they were pretty well-developed. Trains really were drawn by horses until steam locomotives started appearing in the 1820s. Steel rails started to replace iron in the 1850s. Electrified trains arrived in the 1880s and diesel locomotives began to displace steam in the 1920s.

Most of the locomotives shown on the program are typical of the United States in the 1860s, aside from a “crystal” locomotive. The *rolling stock* (train cars, as a group) is smaller than most US designs, and looks more like what was seen in Britain, where railways often use tighter curves and smaller tunnels. That’s probably for good cartoon (and toy) appeal.

Oddly, one first-season episode shows a team of ponies hauling what seems to be a perfectly functional locomotive for no apparent reason, before a herd of bison try to stop the train. Nobody’s given an official explanation, but it may have been a last-minute script change to make the scene seem less violent. Bumping shoulders with a pony teamster is one thing; derailing a locomotive is a lot more serious!

What the episode calls a “private sleeper car” actually is a *caboose*, a car used as an office and sleeping space for the train’s crew, as well as a place to keep a look-out for hazards and problems with the train or tracks. Usually it was added to the train’s back end. Modern trains don’t use cabooses—technology reduced crew sizes and made it easier to watch for problems.

An episode in the second season shows a simplified caboose, and calls one of the crew a *conductor*, but that actually was the *engineer*. A conductor deals with the passengers, taking tickets, answering questions, shouting “all aboard!” at stations, and so on. An engineer keeps the engine running and controls the train’s speed and operation.

Railroads have been around in the real world for centuries. In the show they run from the capital through the small town where the main cast live, and even out to a small frontier town. Railroads seem to serve much of the country—but probably not all of it. Roads and waterways would make up the rest of the network.

Roads

In cities, cobblestone streets seem to be common. Highways may be built like Roman roads—some of which still are used today, centuries after they were built—or *macadam* roads, which arose in the 1770s and 1780s and were the first designed using modern scientific methods. Concrete also would be available, but it’s more likely to be used on bridges and city streets than on country roads; large blocks of concrete are hard to maintain or repair if they crack or crumble.

Tarmac and asphalt roads historically showed up in the 1920s, when automobile traffic got heavy enough to raise lots of dust and to wear out macadam roads must more quickly. Since pony technology originally was intended by the show’s creator to predate the twentieth century, they probably aren’t able to build, and (without automobiles) really don’t need, roads of this kind.

Carts, wagons, and carriages seem to be well-designed and well-built. Leaf-spring suspensions, iron-strapped spoke wheels, full collars and breastcollars, and whippletrees all date back to the Middle Ages. The ponies plainly have developed all these devices to as near perfection as their technology allows.

Seafaring

Believe it or not, the most energy-efficient form of transportation ever invented is the mule-drawn canal barge! Canals and rivers even today remain important “roads”, and before good roads and good railroads became common in the nineteenth century, they often were the *only* way to get large cargoes around. Since ponies usually provide their own power, it’s easy to imagine single ponies or teams towing barges the same way they do trains and wagons.

The show hasn’t touched on the ocean, though a couple of comic-book issues have, so the narrator who wants to do so mostly has to rely on real-world history as a guide. In the 1850s, iron started to replace wood for building hulls, at first in warships, then gradually in other kinds of ships. (War is, perhaps lamentably, the real world’s biggest source of invention.) Steel started to replace iron in the 1870s.

The first paddlewheel steamboats and steamships appeared in the late eighteenth century, primarily for river and canal use. Screw propulsion appeared in the 1840s, mostly on ocean-going ships—especially warships. Screws are more efficient than paddlewheels, but paddlewheels can work in much shallower water.

The age of sail wasn’t over quite yet, though. Clipper ships and full-rigged ships served at least from the late eighteenth century through most of the nineteenth. The windjammer with its iron (or, later, steel) hull and scientific design started to take over from them in the 1870s; it could compete with early steamships, and the last windjammers didn’t retire from commercial service until after the Second World War, when diesel-powered container ships started to appear.

Aviation

The ponies apparently use hot-air balloons and airships a lot, and one episode shows an early form of glider; both look like designs dating to the late nineteenth century. A late-twentieth-century hang-glider is shown once, mostly as a sight gag. Powered aircraft are completely absent, other than very cartoony pedal-driven gyrocopter-like gadgets in a couple of episodes.

Airplanes probably aren’t a priority for ponies, since pegasus ponies already can fly and can draw chariots and wagons through the air. The ponies seem to understand the science of flying, which is why they can build gliders, but they don’t have the powerful engines needed for aviation—steam plants aren’t very efficient for use on heavier-than-air aircraft. ★

MANY OF THE WILDEST inconsistencies on the show are in information technology. Books and phonograph recordings are important media, as they really were in the later part of the nineteenth century. On the other hand, a brainwave monitor, a dual-turntable DJ deck, and a heart-monitor cutie mark have been shown, all based on electronic technology that didn't exist before the 1970s.

Print

The oldest mass medium got its start with movable lead type and the printing press. It revolutionized how information was stored and moved and made education and literacy enormously easier to get. Still, aside from minor improvements, it didn't change much for several centuries.

In the nineteenth century printing was getting faster and more effective thanks to steam power, but it wasn't keeping up with growing demand. New high-speed rotary presses came out in the 1840s, giving print houses the ability to churn out mountains of books, newspapers, and magazines. The existence of a large library owned by or at least available to a young student, and of a public library in a small town, argue that books are common and inexpensive for the ponies.

Newspapers probably are the main source of news. Every large or important city would have at least one daily paper. Most large towns may have dailies and certainly would have weekly papers. Smaller towns and villages may have weeklies or may depend on nearby larger urban centers for newspapers.

The episode about a school newspaper showed a couple of cartoony *linotype machines*, which appeared in the 1880s. These made it possible for newspapers to expand beyond eight pages and sparked an explosion in magazine publishing. There probably are scores or hundreds of magazines across the country, on every subject under the sun (or moon, if one prefers).

Photography

Both a bellows camera and single-lens reflex (SLR) cameras are shown on the same episode. Bellows cameras have existed since the 1850s, but SLR cameras came out in the 1950s—another case of the artists using a familiar device for the audience's benefit. Practical color film started to appear at the beginning of the twentieth century, and digital cameras started to appear at the end of the twentieth century. Silent movies started showing in the 1890s and sound was added in the 1920s.

Sound

Wind-up phonographs invented in the 1870s played scratchy, tinny *monaural* (not stereo) sound recordings on waxed cylinders. In the 1900s, new models played recordings on flat shellac disks; vinyl came later, in the 1950s. Compact discs appeared in the 1980s, but vinyl records still are made because some people like their sound better. Other pieces of audio equipment that have been shown are the previously mentioned DJ deck, modern headsets, and 1930s-style microphones, which are obvious examples of the animators using devices familiar to a modern audience to set the right kind of tone for a specific scene.

Computing Devices

Various forms of abacus have been around for thousands of years. Adding machines first appeared in the 1640s and became widespread in the mid-nineteenth century. Charles Babbage in the 1830s designed and tried to build giant mechanical calculating machines, but never got enough money or cooperation to finish any. Electromechanical computers were used on warships during the Second World War. Electronic computers weren't invented until the middle of the twentieth century.

Writing and Signage

In early episodes the ponies' written language was shown as pictographic, using symbols from their everyday lives and possibly influenced by cutie marks. Later it's shown as vaguely like the Latin alphabet used by English and other European languages, but smudged so it doesn't look exactly like any real language. The narrator's probably free to decide what she wants it to look like. Signs hanging outside shops are pictorial, without any writing, which is how almost all signs looked before literacy became common in the nineteenth century.

Mail and Telecommunications

The electric telegraph made its commercial debut in the 1830s; telegraph lines often were laid alongside the railroads that were expanding rapidly during the same time period. People experimented with telephones all through the nineteenth century, but practical devices didn't appear until the 1870s. Radio began to appear in the 1890s and television is a product of the mid-twentieth century.

The only telephone shown was a mid-twentieth-century handset on a desk, part of a sight gag based on a popular television series set in the 1960s. It's easy to understand why no other phones are seen—making a quick call doesn't have nearly as much old-fashioned charm as sending a telegram or a letter.

Some episodes have featured telegrams, so there probably is a telegraph network across the country. However, the ponies probably communicate mostly through a really good postal service, just as people used before all those newfangled inventions came along. For packages and cheap postage, earth ponies probably haul large *vans* (enclosed wagons) from town to town. For faster but still inexpensive rates, earth ponies and some unicorn ponies may gallop with saddlebags. More expensive express mail could be sent by pegasus pony. (The obvious puns about "pony express" and "air mail" come to mind.)

Deliveries might come twice a day—morning and afternoon—seven days a week, and city ponies might even send letters or postcards across town. Cities may be divided into numbered postal districts, but national systems of postal or ZIP (Zone Improvement Program) codes were introduced in the 1930s and '40s and became widespread in the 1950s and '60s.

Sending mail by magic probably would be rarest, fastest, and of course most expensive, unless a pony happens to have an advantage like a live-in dragon. Speaking of said live-in dragon, after he was hatched by the show's main character, the older princess reared him and taught him the spells for sending and receiving letters. Later he was reunited with the show's main character because the princess thought the pony who hatched him should be a part of his life. ★

IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, medicine was turning from an art into a science. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, this medical revolution was well under way. The “wild card” for pony medicine is magic, which may affect it more than anything else except possibly agriculture.

General Health Care

Medical care probably isn't hard for ponies to get; they live in a wealthy, peaceful country, and many of them may be diligent about getting check-ups and preventive care, a good example to follow. Still, they apparently don't have universal health care; a goal mentioned by one of the show's main characters is saving up to get a replacement hip joint for her grandmother. Of course, joint replacements didn't come around in the real world until after the Second World War, so this may be another case of the writers stretching things for the sake of a good joke.

It's sad but true that infant mortality was the biggest reason populations didn't grow quickly before modern medicine—too many children didn't make it past their first couple of birthdays. Since the ponies live in a fairy-tale land, they may not have had as much trouble with that in their history. Besides, they probably consider prenatal and postnatal care of both *dam* (mother) and foal to be really important. In another century the land may be covered with ponies!

Pharmaceuticals

Germ theory evolved through the early part of the nineteenth century, and in the 1870s and later matured into its modern form. Inoculation against disease was introduced to the West in the eighteenth century, but in the 1880s and after vaccinations improved in effectiveness, technique, and the number of diseases covered.

In the 1890s, aspirin was derived from willow bark, a traditional painkiller sometimes applied by brewing it into tea. Antibiotics and other antibacterial drugs started to show up in the early twentieth century. It's possible, though, that the magical nature of the ponies' world may give them some advantages in discovering and making pharmaceutical remedies sooner than in the real world.

Not only do the ponies have all the plants of the real world, grown by them or imported from other lands, but there seem to be lots of magical plants, such as the blue plant that plays pranks on unlucky creatures who touch it. The narrator's as free as the writers to think up new ones, especially ones important to the story.

Alert viewers may wonder how the ponies can dismiss curses and ghosts as superstition, yet accept magic as a fact of their lives. How can a cure for the blue plant's pranks be “natural”? In the ponies' world, that plant *is* natural. The cure for it would be natural too. Magic works by laws that can be discovered and written down. Curses, ghosts, and other products of superstition can't be explained the same way; there's no way for them to work under the laws of science—and to the ponies, magic is a science too. It's as natural as physics, chemistry, or biology.

Surgery and Dental Care

Surgery, including dental surgery, is very old; there's evidence of it happening even in prehistoric times. Still, it wasn't until the nineteenth century that surgery started getting less horrible and more reliable. A big reason was a better understanding of the body and how it's put together, but a lot of other factors contributed too.

Early anesthetics were around in the early nineteenth century, and better ones, along with better ways of using them, began to show up in the 1840s. Sterilization started preventing infection in the 1860s. Primitive blood transfusions appeared in the 1810s, with improvements like blood typing in the 1900s.

Toothbrushes also are ancient, but by the nineteenth century they were starting to look like modern ones, and early in the century the first toothpastes were showing up. Dental floss made of silk was invented at about the same time, but didn't go on the market until the 1880s. (Today it's made of nylon, which was invented in the 1930s.)

Food Safety and Preservation

Canning was invented in the 1810s, but older ways to preserve foods, including salting, drying, pickling, and candying, have been around for centuries or millennia. Pasteurization, a product of the 1860s, cut down on food poisoning.

The icebox, invented at the beginning of the nineteenth century, kept food cool—but a block of ice had to be put in it to do the job. The ice gradually melted, of course, and had to be replaced every so often; the meltwater had to be drained, too. A whole industry grew up around collecting, storing, and delivering ice.

Large-scale refrigeration came about in the 1850s, at first for use in warehouses by brewers, butchers, and other businesses, including ice houses, which supplied ice for iceboxes. Refrigeration wasn't scaled down for household use until the 1920s, after electrification became common across the industrialized world.

Magic

Earth-pony magic is centered on the land, living things, and the arts (both creative and mechanical). Medicine, both for ponies and for other creatures, clearly is a part of that. Consider that the nurses shown on several episodes are earth ponies. Some unicorns apparently have spell talents related to medicine, too.

Earth magic probably allows a pony to sense where an injury or illness is in a patient, and may guide the pony in choosing a treatment. It might be a subtle thing: something “feels right” to do. Even so, it's likely the ponies study medicine as a science; if nothing else, they probably want to learn why and how their magic guides them, to double-check what they do and to avoid making mistakes.

Spell magic is more spectacular and obvious, but it can't work miracles. A unicorn pony almost certainly can't heal a patient all at once. Instead, what a spell can do probably is similar to a physical exam or a surgical operation, or a treatment of about that level of effort. If it were able to do much more than that, it wouldn't be a spell, it would be a super-power. ★

AT FIRST, THE PROGRAM didn't deal much with the military, other than to show occasional guards in ceremonial armor. That began to change gradually starting with the second season, though like information technology, the handling of military affairs has been extremely inconsistent.

The Royal Guard

The modern soldiery seen most often is the Royal Guard. Its primary role appears to be guarding the royal sisters, their palace, and the capital. It also carries out important royal errands, such as conveying the protégée of the sun princess, and her dragon sidekick, to the small town that would become their new home. The show's creator said that guardsponies are paid for their service and hinted that the guard is a volunteer force.

Guard *barding* (equine armor) looks to be gold-plated and decorative but functional. Its design borrows from *lorica segmentata*—the armor worn by Roman legionaries—and from barding worn by *destriers*, the warhorses of medieval European knights. The *helm* (helmet) is modeled loosely on the Roman *galea* (GAY-lee-ah) with ceremonial crest. The design may have come from the ancient pegasus tribe, which used similar armor.

The guards' uniform appearance isn't limited to their barding; most are shown with gray coats and white tails or white coats with blue tails. The real reason probably is to make life easier for the animators, who can duplicate one ready-made model as many times as they need for a scene.

Maybe the armor's enchanted to change the way its wearer looks, and when a guard takes it off, he changes back to his normal appearance. This enchantment would help fulfill the role of a uniform, which reinforces a sense of group identity and belonging for every member of a military force. Note that the barding covers a guard's cutie mark; perhaps the magic of a cutie mark is strong enough to overcome such an enchantment!

The EUP Guard and the Princess's Flying Squadron

After the moon princess was banished, her sister realized "protective forces" were needed; within a year, the EUP (Earth-Unicorn-Pegasus) Guard was formed. Whether its mission was to protect her or to protect the country isn't clear. Also, whether it and the Royal Guard are the same organization or are separate forces hasn't been revealed, according to one of the show's directors.

At the celebration of the first anniversary of peace, an elite EUPG team of pegasus "aerial performers" impressed the audience enough to establish a permanent identity for themselves. They also became the princess's own "official flying squadron". Usually that squadron is presented as being like the US Navy's Blue Angels aerobatic team, down to a similar *livery* (color and design scheme) of blue trimmed with gold. Whether the squadron also has other duties isn't completely clear.

A third-season episode took place at the academy where candidates for the squadron are trained, though the script seems to be influenced more by Hollywood movies than real military academies. The major character starring in the episode seems very young to be a cadet; the show's creator has said the main characters probably are in their teens.

A possible explanation is that her class is part of a junior training course similar to the US military's JROTC (Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps) for high schoolers. If so, young ponies who pass the junior course would be on a "fast track" to promotion after graduating from the real training program.

The Citizenry

On several episodes characters get together to deal with a threat to part or all of the country—in some cases because of a royal summons. Before the twentieth century, many countries kept small standing armies (because armies are expensive) and called up citizens in time of trouble, and the ponies seem to have a similar *militia* tradition. An *unorganized* militia is made up of anyone who responds to the call. An *organized* militia, like a volunteer fire department, has official members and support from the government, but is a part-time organization.

Equipment

The ponies have fireworks, and bullets and cannon are mentioned, but spears are the only military weapons shown. That makes sense for a children's program, and it's tough to figure out how ponies would use the spears, or any other weapons, for that matter. Still, it's possible they can make and use firearms or other weapons that were around in the nineteenth century.

One character's pet tortoise is named "Tank", after the heaviest type of armored fighting vehicle—but tanks were invented, in Britain, during the First World War in the 1910s! Calling them "tanks" may seem odd, but to keep the real goal secret, the government said they were going to be "mobile water tanks" to carry water for the troops, and the name stuck.

Ranks, Grades, and Rates

The show called the ancient pegasus tribe's leader a *commander*, but that's a modern navy rank. It's a common mix-up because a similar term, *commanding officer*, means an officer of any rank in charge of a military unit; a better one-word rank for a military dictator would be *general*. Also, a fourth-season episode outlining the origins of the EUP Guard used real officer ranks, but mixed up army and navy ranks willy-nilly.

For narrators and players who want more consistency, tables of officer and enlisted ranks, based on the British and US armies and navies in the late nineteenth century, are provided. Marine corps ranks tend to be similar to army ranks, but may be slightly different here and there.

Commissioned officers receive their authority directly from their sovereign government through formal documents called *commissions*. The sister princesses probably issue the officers' commissions for the Royal Guard and EUP Guard.

General ranks as a group don't have a special name. Colonel, lieutenant colonel, and major are *field ranks* because they usually are in the field (while generals may be at headquarters planning strategy). Captain and lieutenant ranks are *company ranks* because they are in company-size units or smaller.

Commodores and admirals used special flags to show what ships they were on, so these ranks are called *flag ranks* (and the ships are called *flagships*). Captain, commander, and lieutenant commander are *senior ranks*. Sublieutenant/lieutenant (junior grade) and midshipman/ensign are *junior ranks*. ♦

General and flag officers tend to be at least in their forties, and usually are older. Field and senior officers tend to be at least in their twenties, and usually thirties or forties. Company and junior officers tend to be in their thirties or younger.

<i>Army</i>	Commissioned officer ranks	<i>Navy</i>
Field Marshal* [UK] <i>or</i> General of the Army* [US]	Admiral of the Fleet* [UK] <i>or</i> Fleet Admiral* [US]	
General	Admiral	
Lieutenant general	Vice admiral	
Major general	Rear admiral	
Brigadier general	Commodore	
Colonel	Captain	
Lieutenant colonel	Commander	
Major	Lieutenant commander	
Captain	Lieutenant	
Lieutenant [UK] <i>or</i> first lieutenant [US]	Sublieutenant [UK] <i>or</i> lieutenant (junior grade) [US]	
Ensign/cornet† [UK] <i>or</i> second lieutenant [US]	Midshipman [UK] <i>or</i> ensign [US]	

* Used only in wartime † Ensign in infantry, cornet in cavalry

Enlisted: A corporal, sergeant, or petty officer is a *non-commissioned officer* (NCO). NCOs assist officers, help teach new officers and privates or seamen, and generally act as the “glue” holding together a military force. In Britain enlisted ranks used to be called “other ranks”.

The terms *grade* (army) or *rate* (navy) may be used in place of “rank” for enlisted personnel. Navies use another word, *rating*, for an NCO’s job specialty; example ratings are boatswain’s mate or *bos’n*, quartermaster, gunner’s mate, master at arms, cook, armorer, and *coxswain* (senior NCO in charge of a boat).

<i>Army grades</i>	Enlisted ranks	<i>Navy rates</i>
Sergeant major	Chief petty officer	
First sergeant	Petty officer first class	
Staff sergeant	Petty officer second class	
Sergeant	Petty officer third class	
Corporal	Leading seaman	
Private	Able seaman	

Organization

Along with everything else in society, the Industrial Revolution changed military forces radically during the nineteenth century. Organization and equipment evolved as traditions, technology, and force sizes changed and developed.

Armies at that time had three basic branches: infantry, cavalry, and artillery. Infantry was an army’s main strength. Cavalry was fast and mobile. Artillery was hard-hitting at a distance, but if an enemy got close, it was vulnerable.

An army (or marine) unit contains two to eight, or sometimes more, units of the next smaller level, depending on what kind of organization’s used. A large unit, usually company or bigger, also may have a small “headquarters” unit made up of the commanding officer, his staff, some guards, and helpers such as couriers and clerks. Units may be lettered, numbered, or (regiments or larger) named. Confusingly, a big enough national army may contain several units called “armies”!

Up to a certain level—possibly regiment—each pony unit may be made up mostly or completely of one tribe. A flying unit, for instance, wouldn’t be much good if it isn’t all pegasus ponies! Strong, tough earth ponies probably are most common in infantry units, fast-flying pegasus ponies would be the equivalent of cavalry, and unicorns may be most common in artillery.

The EUP Guard also seems to be called the “Protective Pony Platoons”, but that may be a nickname thanks to its *alliteration* (words starting with the same letter). In the real world, the *platoon* was introduced during the seventeenth century.

Infantry	Cavalry	Artillery	Personnel	Led by
Army (contains all branches)			80,000–200,000	General
Corps (contains all branches)			20,000–45,000	Lt. gen.
Division	Division	Division	10,000–15,000	Mjr. gen.
Brigade	Brigade	Brigade	3000–5000	Brig. gen.
Regiment	Regiment	Regiment	1500–3000	Colonel
Battalion	Squadron	Battalion	300–1300	Lt. col.
Company	Troop	Battery	80–255 (4–8 guns)	Cap./mjr.
Platoon	Platoon	—	26–55	Lieut.
Section	Section	Section	8–13 (2–4 guns)	Cpl./sgt.
Squad	Squad	—	8–13	Cpl./sgt.

Navies in the late nineteenth century were starting to change quickly. Sails and wooden hulls were giving way to steam and iron or steel hulls. New types of warships needed new names and new organizations. Things wouldn’t start to settle down again until after the First World War.

A sailing warship was a *man-of-war*; a commercial ship was a *merchantman*. The British Royal Navy classified men-of-war by *rates*—first to third rate for *ships* (larger men-of-war) and fourth to sixth rate for *frigates* (smaller men-of-war)—based on how many cannon they carried in their *broad-sides*. Men-of-war that didn’t fit neatly were *unrated*, with names depending on their designs: brig, sloop, corvette, cutter, and so on.

Usually, bigger men-of-war were organized into *squadrons*, but smaller men-of-war were organized into *flotillas*. A *cruiser* operated on its own, not assigned to a squadron or flotilla. ★

Navy unit	Men-of-war	Led by
Fleet	Several sqdns./flots.	Admiral
Sqdrn./flotilla	4–8	Commodore/r. adm.
Division	2–4	Sr. capt./commodore
Half-division	1–2	Most senior captain

WHAT MAKES THE SHOW so attractive to so many people is the obvious effort the creator and the staff put into inventing lovable, believable characters and building an interesting world for them to live in. The company that owns the show had their own ideas, but they had the wisdom to take the best parts from both and, with some exceptions, the courage to give the writers a surprisingly free hand in telling the stories.

Because the ponies live in a land of magic, many fairy-tale ideas are used. The country is ruled by princesses (royalty) and may have a *peerage* (nobility). More recent ideas from fantasy fiction also were adopted, such as moving the background from the Middle Ages to around the Industrial Revolution.

The show rightly focuses mostly on the seven main characters and the princesses. As a result, though, unless some piece of information is important to one of the episodes, it usually doesn't get mentioned and may not even be developed. Once in a while, one episode might contradict another. The narrator will have to decide whether to worry about contradictions and, if she does take them into account, how to resolve them.

The Royalty

In the original planning for the show, the country was going to be ruled by a queen. The title was changed to "princess" out of a belief expressed by company executives that animated movies over the last few decades have associated queens with villains, and princesses with heroines, in people's minds. (Note that the changelings are ruled by a queen, which only reinforces this odd idea!) After her return, the moon princess became co-ruler, working at night while her sister works during the day.

Only members of a country's ruling family are royalty. The royal sisters have no other siblings. They do, or did, have parents, but almost nothing's been said about those parents. The bride in the royal wedding is a niece of the sisters, and also is a princess herself. The show's creator, who was no longer on the staff when those episodes aired, expressed surprise that the character "had wings". Her plan originally was that only the show's main character would gain wings (and earth pony strength), and that she would succeed to the throne as queen.

She has mentioned a *very* distant nephew of the princesses' mother, who was going to be a duke (a noble), but ended up being a prince (a royal). This was changed because of a concern that, in places where people aren't familiar with European titles of nobility, nobody would know what a duke is. It's a good point — after all, explaining those titles is part of why this section was written!

The Nobility

Below the royalty are the *nobility*, families who — usually but not always — have their own *fiefs* (lands they hold). A noble might owe allegiance, called *fealty*, to a higher-ranking noble, and so on, up to a noble who would be directly under the crown. A *vassal* is anyone who owes fealty to someone else, who in turn is called the vassal's *lord*. Relationships among noble families, and between noble and royal families, got pretty confusing in the thousand years between the end of the Western Roman Empire and the start of the modern world.

Titles of nobility (and royalty) usually are *hereditary*, passed down from parent to child, except for so-called *life titles*. Life titles might be granted as rewards or, historically, sold to raise funds for the royal government, though polite people didn't say that in so many words. Such titles might or might not have lands attached to them, but the bearers generally weren't eligible for membership in the upper house of parliament or other legislative body, as hereditary nobles would be.

The show hasn't mentioned a parliament, but the creator meant for the ponies to have a nobility. The program's growing popularity apparently has given the writers the freedom to include a peerage (among other elements), though what role it has in the governing and day-to-day life of the country still isn't clear. Fan-written stories have come up with a whole variety of guesses at how the government works, and the narrator, too, may have to figure out answers that suit her and the players.

Styles and Dignities

To keep things simple, the table of ranks lists only the most common verbal *style*, or form of address; different styles might be used in letters or on envelopes, among other places. A *dignity* is the title itself, separate from properties or territories that may go with the title; both of those are listed too. There are many other ranks that aren't listed because they were rare or used only in small areas. Most titles are pronounced in English as one might expect — but *viscount* is pronounced *vye-count*.

Originally, the word "gentle" literally meant "noble". That's why today the polite way to address a crowd of people is as "ladies and gentlemen"; once upon a time, that phrase actually meant "noblewomen and noblemen". Calling a commoner a "lady" or "gentleman" wasn't a good idea, and even worse was failing to pay proper respect to a noble or royal, which often was a crime and still is considered terribly rude.

Through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, society got more relaxed about styles and *obeisances* (gestures of respect such as bows or curtsies). It may be enough to call a noble or royal "sir" or "ma'am" after using the proper style at least once when meeting that person during an event.

A pony might address one of the sisters first as "Your Royal Highness" and after that as "Ma'am". Addressing her first as "Princess" or "Your Highness" would be quite informal, though a student or close friend might be allowed to do it. For the new princesses, who might not rank quite as high, one idea is to use old European styles of "Serene Highness" and "Illustrious Highness", with just plain "Highness" being lower still.

A prince/princess or duke/duchess may or may not rule a *sovereign* (independent) country. A sovereign prince or princess rules a *principality*; a sovereign duke or duchess rules a *duchy*. A non-sovereign prince or princess usually is the son or daughter of a king or queen, and a non-sovereign duke or duchess is a noble. The sister princesses, of course, are sovereign and technically rule a principality. Whether the crystal city is a separate sovereign state, or part of the larger principality, isn't clear.

If a country has one ruler, which usually was the case in real history, that ruler is a *monarch*, from Greek *monos* (one) and *archon* (ruler), ruling a monarchy. There are a few historical cases, though, of two rulers, like the royal sisters; each of the rulers would be a *diarch*, ruling a diarchy, instead. ♦

Knighthoods

A knight or dame belongs to a *chivalric order* (association of knights). A country may have several different orders, each with centuries of history behind it. Some orders may have special privileges or duties, handed down over generations from times gone by. They might be open only to certain kinds of people—maybe only women can be *dubbed* (inducted) into one of them, and only people who’ve distinguished themselves in battle can be dubbed into another. Often there are ranks within an order; a new knight may start at the lowest and may be rewarded later with higher rank if he or she has done something new that deserves recognition. Knighthoods aren’t hereditary, though, and knights technically are high-ranking commoners.

A narrator can use her imagination to create orders and invent their histories, ranks, privileges, and duties. A flowing title like “Dame Commander of the Order of the Golden Sun” or “Knight Grand Cross of the Order of Harmony” can add a lot of color to a character, especially if there’s a story behind it. Knighthoods also are a possible reward for player ponies who do something *really* spectacular.

The Commons

Anyone who isn’t royalty or nobility is a *commoner*. In a modern society like the ponies have, this includes the poor and the working class, rich merchants and landowners, and the middle class in between. As in Britain during the late nineteenth century, some ponies apparently are interested in finding ways into the nobility (or the royalty). Most ponies seem happy with the way things are, though, and they show a reverence and genuine affection for the princesses, who clearly love their little ponies in return. They’ve built a wealthy, peaceful country, and the princesses help make sure it stays that way.

Cutie Marks

This unique aspect of the ponies has been a great way for the writers to talk about growing up. It’s central to pony society, and the narrator and players should keep that in mind. Much is made on the show of how a mark’s supposed to reflect a pony’s talents, but a look at various marks shows that some are kind of abstract, and for others it’s a stretch to make the connection. The narrator and players probably don’t have to be too fussy about a pony’s mark, and a mark that isn’t obvious can be something to build a story around: “But . . . what does it *mean*?”

Money

The ponies have a *cash economy*, using money rather than barter for most business. Their currency’s called the *bit*, likely based on “two bits”, a nickname for the US quarter: In the eighteenth century, a popular Spanish coin called the *real* could be broken into eight parts, so two bits were a quarter of a coin; that’s also the source of the phrase “pieces of eight”. The bit seems to be a small, thick gold coin, and there’s been no sign of paper bills. “Cents”, from Latin *centum* meaning “hundred”, are mentioned on one episode, so there probably are 100 cents in a bit.

They may have checks (or cheques) and letters of credit, banks, and perhaps even stock markets. They probably don’t have credit cards, charge cards, or other forms of cards; those were invented in the mid-twentieth century and later.

They *do* have income tax. In an early episode, a pony offers to “do” the main character’s taxes for one of her ball tickets!

Cuisine

Since the ponies are *herbivores*, eating mostly plant materials, their foods don’t include any meats, though they do use dairy products and eggs. They cook some dishes, such as soups, but others are eaten raw, such as salads. Sandwiches seem to be popular. More than anything else, though, baking seems to be the central pillar of pony cuisine. Not all baking is sweet—calzones, for instance, are savory—so whole meals might be baked goods. As with building materials, a good narrator can make a place come alive partly by describing local differences in foods and cooking.

Preserving foods by pickling and salting have been around thousands of years. Canning was invented in the early nineteenth century; iceboxes and large refrigerators were invented mid-century, but household refrigerators came in the 1920s.

Music

The nineteenth century was a period of transition. The formal kinds of music that people today lump together as “classical” gradually gave way to popular music such as ragtime and jazz, which arose from minstrel music and other sources as sheet music became widely available and audio recording became possible. Rock and roll developed out of jazz in the 1950s. Popular music existed before the nineteenth century, and “classical” music still is written today; it’s just that they switched places in terms of how well-known they are. ♪

Rank (male or female)	Class	Most Common Verbal Style	Dignity	Territory
Emperor <i>or</i> empress	Imperial	His/Her/Your Imperial Majesty (HIM)	—	Empire
King <i>or</i> queen	Royalty	His/Her/Your Majesty (HM)	Kingdom <i>or</i> queendom	Kingdom
Prince <i>or</i> princess	Royalty	His/Her/Your Royal Highness (HRH)	Princedom	(Principality)
Duke <i>or</i> duchess	Nobility	His/Her/Your Grace	Dukedom	Duchy
Marquess <i>or</i> marchioness	Nobility	My Lord/Lady, Your Lordship/Ladyship	Marquessate <i>or</i> marquisate	March
Earl/count <i>or</i> countess	Nobility	My Lord/Lady, Your Lordship/Ladyship	Earldom	Earldom <i>or</i> county
Viscount <i>or</i> viscountess	Nobility	My Lord/Lady, Your Lordship/Ladyship	Viscountship	Viscounty
Baron <i>or</i> baroness	Nobility	My Lord/Lady, Your Lordship/Ladyship	Barony	Barony
Baronet <i>or</i> baronetess	Gentry	Sir <i>or</i> Dame [First or Full Name]	—	—
Knight <i>or</i> dame	Gentry	Sir <i>or</i> Dame [First or Full Name]	—	—

Education and Apprenticeship

Foals go to school. That might seem trivial, but it's important. A government-supported universal education system was rare before the eighteenth century. Even in the nineteenth century many children only got a few years of schooling, especially those who helped out on family farms (which was most of them). It's no coincidence the growth of such schools happened during and after the Industrial Revolution.

Before industrialization, societies depended mostly on agriculture and on "cottage industries"—small businesses such as smithies, shops, and other establishments run by individuals or families. Many boys (and even some girls) learned by doing, through *apprenticeships*, helping out and being taught by the masters of the businesses. Once they were ready they became *journeymen*, wandering, working, and learning more about their trades from other masters. Eventually, if they were able, they would try to pass exams before committees of local masters to become masters themselves, and set up their own workshops and businesses.

There were universities, but they mostly taught things like law, theology, and other esoteric subjects, and mostly were attended by the wealthy. In a lot of fantasy fiction, magic usually qualifies as an esoteric subject, with its own special schools or *colleges*, either independent or as part of universities. The princess's school for gifted unicorns follows that literary tradition. Universities started taking their current form during the early modern period in the seventeenth century.

As the Industrial Revolution went on, the need to educate people beyond what they could learn in apprenticeships got more and more urgent, especially the need to teach basic literacy, the ability to read and write. Finally the apprenticeship system as the primary way to educate young people collapsed, and only traces of it remain. An organized system of formal education in schools developed to take its place, and that's what most people go through today.

One of the main characters helps run a family farm. Another is a clothing designer who seems to have earned her mastery and runs a boutique. (One episode shows her as a filly sewing in the same boutique, so maybe she was an apprentice there.) Yet another works at a bakery. Two others may be in public service. The show's central character is a student, possibly on a royal stipend, and may be the town librarian. That much responsibility suggests the characters are in their early twenties, but the show's creator described their maturity as being in the range of twelve to eighteen: young enough to learn the show's lessons, but old enough to do adult things, so writers wouldn't be limited to stories about school or family.

All this indicates a society in the midst of changing from *agrarian* (mostly agricultural) to industrial, which fits the nineteenth-century feel the writers seem to want. Teens were viewed as junior adults rather than as "senior children", the way they often are regarded today. They had more freedom of movement—and a lot more responsibility to go along with it. Important themes of the show, besides the value of friendship, seem to be that being able to stand on one's own feet (hooves) is something to strive for and that healthy ambition is a good thing for anyone to have. ★

~ Mini-Essays ~

THESE SHORT COMMENTARIES, some by other writers, are intended to inform and inspire the narrator and players. Some of them take closer looks at the subjects outlined in the previous sections, both to bring up points that may not be obvious at first glance and to suggest ways the information can be used by a narrator or player. Others discuss topics that might not show up in any episodes, but still could be useful.

The Grapes of Bein' Kinda Upset (*guest contribution*)

The ponies' nation is, at its heart, an agricultural land. Thanks to pegasus weather control and the ability of earth ponies to coax the best possible crop yields from the ground, only a relatively small part of the population needs to be involved in food production. This leaves the rest of the population free to pursue other things, to urbanize, and to have plenty of leisure time. Excess food production is the basis of trade with the outside world. The backbone of the realm is its farmers.

But this means that when trouble *does* strike the fields, it's serious business. Even a minor failure in the managed ecology looms large and warrants high-level attention. The famine that led to the Great Migration of the three tribes, and the very founding of the nation they joined together to create, is one of the most important stories the ponies pass down through the generations. The system is more fragile than most think, subject to interference in many different ways.

Shady characters are attracted to wealth, and the wealth of this land is in its homesteads and plantations. And what of the other lands that aren't so lucky as to have fully controlled skies and magically enhanced farms? When the ponies have plenty but neighboring countries do not . . . morality and treaties mean nothing to parents watching their children grow thin. Prosperity brings burdens and tensions that must be solved, and the infrastructure—transportation, magical support, education of young farmers—requires constant vigilance lest disasters both natural and intentional lay bare the fields.

What's This Thing Made of? (*guest contribution*)

Materials science is one of the most important aspects of a culture and its technology. It's also one of the greatest hazards to the culture's well-being.

History shows that when a new technology starts making heavy use of a natural resource, a crisis follows. The great shipbuilding boom of the seventeenth century that created the British Empire cost England nearly all of her old-growth oaks. The advent of glassmaking in Scotland demanded huge amounts of fuel, which denuded the northern forests. Cheap coal led to pollution. And this is just a single island.

Taking an invention from a curiosity to the mass market often comes at a huge price, and in a carefully managed nation like the ponies', this causes tensions between those who want the item and those who don't want to exhaust the resources needed for it. That can lead to bootlegging, poaching, and buying materials from other nations—"let *them* suffer the consequences while *we* keep our land pristine!" ♦

Complex chemistry is just starting to operate at a large scale. Individual laboratories and alchemists still mostly would ply their trades in small amounts, making reagents rare, prized, and costly. (Pegasus smugglers, anyone?) As well, a lot of materials taken for granted in the modern world won't exist among the ponies, or will be much more expensive. Consider also toxic by-products and what to do about them; the princesses will have little sympathy for a polluter, even on a modest scale.

So far, there's been no sign on the show of mass production, which has a certain charm—but also means that anything complex will be expensive and hoof-built. Maintenance requires artisans and craftsponies, not mere “parts changers”, as spare parts may not fit without individual modification. Construction may be as much art as science, and anything that needs to last will be extremely overbuilt.

Imagine the turmoil when a factory brings in a new technology that promises to improve efficiency. In fairness, historically such a factory owner usually increased production (to try making more money) rather than cut down on work force, but the workers didn't know that or didn't want to believe it if they were told, since they had families to support!

The ponies are working their way through an Industrial Revolution, but while their path is markedly different than the real world's, it'll no less chaotic.

Turn Your Head and Cough (*guest contribution*)

Medicine's a tricky subject; historically it's been surrounded by superstition, taboo, and outright quackery. The sad truth is, it also tends to be driven by terrible things: war and epidemics.

Through the nineteenth century, several important factors were coming together in Western medicine. Most clustered around germ theory, including pasteurization, antiseptics, and vaccination. Other discoveries, such as anæsthetics, made surgery much less brutal, and X-rays allowed diagnosis of internal injuries. Treatment of traumatic injuries advanced dramatically, though unfortunately it took the carnage of the American Civil War for that to happen.

By its nature, the ponies' country is a much cleaner place to live than the real world, and its populace isn't subject to warfare. It also doesn't have cultural habits that interfere with medicine and science. Most ponies aren't geniuses—but they also aren't resistant to accepting ideas from those who are. Once a discovery's made, it often seems to be adopted amazingly quickly, especially if the word of royalty backs it up.

All that being said, medicine still would have its adventures. Dealing with an epidemic outbreak requires learning how it spreads; that in turn leads to the desperate search for “patient zero”, the first case from which the epidemic springs. Quacks, charlatans, and snake-oil sellers prey on the gullible, and ponies can be pretty gullible.

A small group of ponies might find itself dispatched to locations in remote corners of the nation, or beyond, to offer relief in time of trouble. Disasters, natural or otherwise, leave in their wake hard decisions in *triage* (pronounced *tree-ahzh*), the process of choosing whom to treat and in what order, with limited time and resources—and who has to be left untreated because they can't be saved. Such decisions could be very rough on the ponies, who are compassionate and empathic by nature.

And there is always Mad Science! “*It's alive!*” invariably is gleefully proclaimed by someone with the title of “Doctor”. . . . There may be no zombie ponies, but are there Frankenfoals?

Back in the Old Days . . .

Everything can and probably will change in a thousand years. When the moon princess was banished, most ponies apparently lived in thatched huts and fenced yards, according to the book illustrations on the first episode. The population may have been one-third or one-fourth as large back then. There might not have been many cities or large towns, and most would be small by modern standards. Most ponies might have lived in the countryside or in small villages and hamlets every few miles along the few dirt roads winding across the land.

Now she's back, using a “Hollywood” version of medieval speech. English itself isn't a thousand years old, so that's the only way the writers can get across the idea of old-fashioned talk. But it also could mean that pony society doesn't move as fast as real history did; there aren't as many wars, famines, or plagues to push things along. The princess's style of talking is associated with the High Middle Ages, so it's a reasonable rule of thumb to double the amount of time for historical things, like inventions and fashions, to happen. What was going on, say, five hundred years before the nineteenth century? That could be what the magical land looked like when the royal sisters battled and, presumably, destroyed their castle-palace.

Earthshaking Changes

Today we're used to society and technology changing constantly, yet it's easy to forget that, not so long ago, people just didn't have some device or process we take for granted now. In the nineteenth century, though, people struggled with the notion that, fairly suddenly, ideas and ways of doing things that had been around for hundreds or even *thousands* of years weren't working any more. In the Middle Ages a man or woman might do things much the same way as an ancestor of a century before; during the Industrial Revolution a living grandparent might be able to remember a completely different world.

Train locomotives started moving people and cargoes faster than horses. Telegraphy began to move information faster than letters. Huge new factories used mass production and interchangeable parts to churn out consumer goods. Cities became even more important, drawing in ever larger numbers of people seeking work. Big new machines needed far more energy than muscles, water wheels, or windmills could provide.

All of this was happening at once, and nothing like it *ever* had happened before in history, so there wasn't any kind of guide to figure out what to do about it. The social upheavals were gigantic, and it's almost impossible to describe easily how big an effect they had on people at the time—much greater than we see today, even with all the advances in electronics.

There seems to be less uncertainty and bafflement in the ways ponies are coping with these changes. Of course, those wouldn't be the best things to put into a children's television show, for a lot of reasons, but this also could be seen as more evidence that pony society isn't moving at the same meteoric speed that real history has. Ponies, being herd creatures, also may be more cooperative and may find it easier to get along. ♦

City-State, Principality, Empire

An *empire* is a diverse collection of countries or peoples joined together under an overall monarchy or *oligarchy* (small ruling group). Since it seems to include exactly the sort of varied lands and tribes that an empire should have, the pony principality seems to be more of a true empire than the land of the crystal ponies that actually is called an empire in the program.

If the crystal ponies' country isn't really an empire, then, what is it? It doesn't seem to be very big and, probably to be more familiar to a young television audience, it looks more like a twentieth-century suburb than an medieval city that disappeared a thousand years ago. More than anything else, then, it appears to be a *city-state*, a tiny country consisting mostly of a central city with maybe a small amount of land around it, possibly including some farmland, villages, or both. Perhaps it should be called the Crystal City instead—but trademarking that name to use on toys and other products might have turned out to be too difficult or even impossible.

Going farther back, one might ask how the ancient pony tribes were governed. The unicorns plainly had a *feudal monarchy*, with a king who ruled directly and maybe a nobility. Equally clearly, the pegasus tribe was a *military dictatorship* ruled by a high-ranking officer, set up as if the whole society were one big army. It isn't as clear how the earth tribe was governed, though. Perhaps it was a sort of early *republic*, either democratic (in which individuals vote on everything) or representative (in which officials are elected to act on behalf of the citizens).

Consorting With Rulers

An empire is ruled by an emperor (if male) or empress (if female)—yet the ponies are ruled by princesses. The real reasons that was done for the show already have been explained, but how can a narrator justify it for the players?

Perhaps the sun and moon princesses aren't comfortable with the title of empress and avoid using it in favor of "princess". It could be the pony population or other nations who don't care for the idea of "empresses", so the princesses are being tactful. More simple still, maybe the ponies just don't think of it as an empire, and so don't call it one even if it *technically* is.

The title of prince (or princess) originally just meant "ruler" in general, and could be applied to an emperor, king, duke, or any other monarch; plenty of old phrases and sayings still use that meaning. Possibly by accident, that also is kind of how the show uses the word to describe the special ponies who include all three tribes. Five have been shown so far: the sun and moon princesses, the ruler of the crystal ponies, the main character of the show—and the princess in the storybook who took the "love poison".

Marrying into royalty can create confusion, since the royal spouse would gain a "courtesy" title but wouldn't be a ruler. If it's necessary to tell them apart, the word *regnant* (from the same root as the word *reign*) is added to a ruling royal's title, while the word *consort* is added to the title of a ruling royal's spouse. For example, the ruler of the crystal ponies is a *princess regnant*, while her husband, the main character's brother, is a *prince consort*. The husband of a ruling queen or empress also is called a prince consort, an old custom dating from the days when prince was a more general term.

About (Non-Magical) Ponies

For the first time in history, more human beings around the world live in cities than in the country. Because of that, fewer and fewer of them get to meet many animals face-to-face, other than dogs, cats, a few other kinds kept as pets, zoo exhibits, and—if they keep their eyes open—some wild animals that make their homes in human neighborhoods. Since motor vehicles replaced most horses, ponies, and other draft animals in the middle of the twentieth century, fewer and fewer people get to meet them at all. For folks who might not have had much chance to learn about the animals on which the magical ponies are based, here's a little background on them.

The difference between a horse and a pony is supposed to be size. An adult horse stands more than fourteen hands, two inches tall at the shoulder. (A hand is four inches, so that would be fifty-eight inches, or about 147 centimeters.) In theory, a full-grown pony is no taller than 14.2 hh (14 hands 2 inches). Of course, in reality it's more complicated than that. Stocky body shape and proportions often are considered part of what makes a pony different from a horse, but sometimes it depends more on who's talking, what part of the horse world they're interested in, and a lot of other sometimes confusing things like tradition or occupation.

Ponies are very strong for their size, which makes them surprisingly heavy, thanks to all those muscles, and they're very smart and friendly, if they're trained properly to deal with people. They developed in out-of-the-way places with harsh climates, where being small but strong, and being able to live on food of less than ideal quality, were real advantages to the people who used them as draft animals. Even today in a few places they still are used for work on farms, to pull carts or wagons on roads, and for riding. Pony sports are as popular as events for larger horses, and in some cases horses and ponies might compete in the same events.

The lips of ponies and horses are very mobile, able to do amazingly delicate things like pick up and handle objects. There is one case known to the author of a bored horse using his lips to help unfasten the door of his trailer so he could go wandering around a local park. Even human lips, which are mobile enough to help make the complex sounds of language, aren't as good at manipulating things. Since the magical ponies combine the two abilities, using their lips to do things like write with pencils is quite plausible, and of course teeth and tongue could be used to help in some cases. (Keeping things clean would be a big priority, since a magical pony never knows when she might have to put something in her mouth.)

Ponies don't have fur, exactly. Like cattle, deer, and other related animals, ponies and horses have *bides* of *hair* rather than pelts of fur. Furred skin grows two or three different kinds of hairs. *Ground* hairs are short and frizzy to insulate an animal against cold. *Guard* hairs are longer, straighter, and sturdier, to protect the other hairs from damage. *Awn* hairs, if an animal has them, are in between the other two kinds. Hide, on the other hand, has only one kind of hair—and sweat glands, which help cool down an animal after exercise. (That usually means running away from predators.) The ponies in the show sometimes are shown to sweat, and occasionally mention it in dialog, which means they probably have hides. *

~ Archaic Units of Measure ~

THE NEW TECHNOLOGIES coming out of the Industrial Revolution demanded standardization and precision. As a result, in 1799 a movement to create a whole new “metric system” got its start in France, and in 1824 the United Kingdom passed the Weights and Measures Act to regularize a hodgepodge of ancient English measurement units. In the middle of the twentieth century, both systems were overhauled again, and it’s those, or related systems, that are used today.

The tables on this page show many, but not all, of the obsolete English units. They didn’t disappear overnight—older people still tended to use them for many years after 1824, lots of records and objects were based on them, and some stuck around in the United States, which was already independent. The ponies may be going through a similar transition, and farmers especially may use old units. Some of the units listed were based on the human body; the ponies may use units based on their own bodies or on the body of the immortal sun princess. *

Length	Equal to
Poppyseed	about ¼ barleycorn
Line	¼ barleycorn
Barleycorn	⅓ inch
Digit	¾ inch
Finger	⅞ inch
Inch	3 barleycorns
Nail	3 digits
Palm	3 inches
Hand	4 inches
Shaftment	6 inches
Link	7.92 in. (⅓ ₁₀₀ chain)
Span	3 palms (9"; outstretched hand)
Foot	modern US foot; 30.48 cm
Cubit	18 inches (fingertips to elbow)
Yard	modern US yard; 0.9144 m
Ell	45 inches (mostly for cloth)
Fathom	6 feet (outstretched arms)
Rod	5 ½ yards (for surveying)
Chain	4 rods; about 20.12 m
Furlong	40 rods (one plow-furrow long)
Mile	modern US mile; about 1.6 km
League	3 miles (one hour’s walk)

Area	Equal to
Perch	1 square rod; 272 ¼ square feet or about 25.3 square meters
Rood	¼ acre; width of 1 rod by length of 1 furlong
Acre	1 chain by 1 furlong (can be plowed in 1 day); about 0.4 hectare
Bovate	about 15 acres/6 hectares (can be plowed with 1 ox in 1 year)
Virgate	about 30 acres (can be plowed with 2-oxen team in 1 year)
Hide	4 to 8 bovates (land able to support 1 household for food/taxes)
Carucate	about 120 acres (can be plowed with 8-oxen team in 1 year)
Knight’s fee	5 hides (fee was enough money to produce 1 equipped soldier)
Hundred/wapentake	100 hides, grouped for administrative purposes (census, taxes, ownership records, and so on)

Volume	Equal to	Volume	Equal to (US gal. = about 3.8 l)
Mouthful	about ½ fluid ounce	Gallon	2 pottles (1.25 US gallons)
Pony	2 mouthfuls	Peck	2 gallons (2.5 US gallons)
Jack(pot)	2 ponies (2 ½ fl. oz.)	Kenning	2 pecks (4 gallons)
Gill	2 jacks (5 fl. oz.)	Bushel	2 kennings (8 gallons)
Cup	2 gills (10 fl. oz.)	Strike	2 bushels (16 gallons)
Pint	2 cups (20 fl. oz.)	Coomb	2 strikes (32 gallons)
Quart	2 pints (40 fl. oz.)	Hogshead	2 coombs (64 gallons)
Pottle	2 quarts (80 fl. oz.)	Butt/pipe	2 hogsheads (128 gallons)

Volume	Equal to
Tun	2 butts or pipes (256 gallons; see next page)
Jigger	1 ½ fluid ounces (still used in recipes for mixed drinks)
Perch	24 ¾ cubic feet of dry stone (a pile 16 ½ feet by 1 ½ feet by 1 foot)
Cord	128 cubic feet of firewood (a stack 8 feet long, 4 feet wide, 4 feet high)

Avoirdupois	Weight equal to
Grain	gr 1/7000 US pound; about 64.8 milligrams
Dram/Drachm	dr 1/16 oz. (possibly from ancient Greek silver <i>drachma</i> coin)
Ounce	oz 1/16 US pound; about 28 grams
Pound	lb US pound; about 454 g (<i>lb</i> short for <i>libra</i> , “scales” in Latin)
Nail	1/16 long hundredweight; 7 pounds
Clove	7 pounds (wool) or 8 pounds (cheese)
Stone	st 2 cloves; 14 pounds
Quarter or tod	¼ hundredweight; tod is 2 stones or ¼ long hundredwt.
Hundredweight cwt	112 pounds (long) or 100 pounds (short)
Ton	t 20 hundredweights; long or short tons

Troy weight (coins, precious metal)	Apothecary (used in medicine)
Grain	gr 1/7000 US pound; about 64.8 milligrams (both troy & apoth.)
Pennyweight dwt	24 grains
Ounce	oz t 20 pennyweights
Mark	8 troy ounces
Pound	lb t 12 ounces troy or apoth.; about 0.823 avoirdupois/US pound
	Scruple s ap 20 grains
	Dram dr ap 3 scruples
	Ounce oz ap 8 apothecary drams

~ Part Four of Four ★ Once Upon a Time: Storytelling ~

EVERYONE HAS READ UP on the rules, talked over their ponies, and decided whether they want to play a literal game or a figurative game and how much comedy or drama they want in it. Now what? For any narrator, especially one who hasn't run a role-playing game before, that can be a pretty daunting question. Most RPG rulebooks try to answer it at least to some extent, and *Pony Tales* is no exception.

Advice on playing and narrating can help get the group started. Some is intended for the reader who hasn't played role-playing games before and may need help getting a mental grip on how they work. Some aims to assist the reader who's played a lot of role-playing games, but may have difficulty adjusting to a game about friendly magical ponies.

Even if, at first glance, some of it may not seem to apply to a specific reader, it may be a good idea to read the whole section anyway. A beginning narrator or player eventually will become an experienced one. An experienced RPG player may want to introduce friends to the hobby. Either way, it pays to understand what other folks may find easy or challenging about role-playing games in general and *Pony Tales* in particular.

A **setting** is the first thing the narrator needs. An example, the Valley of Heart's Delight, can be used as-is, or can serve as a source of ideas for the narrator's own work. Some recommendations and guidelines also are provided to help the narrator consider how to approach the project.

Story seeds are short descriptions of adventure ideas, which a narrator can use directly, change around to suit her own ideas of how to do things, or use as reference when developing completely new ideas.

Sample ponies can be borrowed and used directly, or can serve as inspiration for players creating their own ponies or a narrator creating background characters for stories.

Showing by Example

Mostly this part presents actual samples that can be used directly or modified. In some cases there also is some examination and explanation of why and how those samples are set up in particular ways—usually when it may not be obvious just from looking at them.

The word “setting” is used a bit differently in this part than in part three. There, it's more general, used to mean the whole country and world shown in the series. Here, it's more specific, used to mean a particular region where the game may spend much or most of its time. In the series, the equivalent would be the small town where the main characters live, the nearby national capital, and the immediately surrounding areas.

Following this part of the rulebook is a twelve-page *quick reference* of tables containing summaries of important rules. It's not intended to replace the rules; instead, it's designed to make looking them up faster and more convenient, so the narrator and players can keep the story moving. ★

2-3 Advice for the Group

Playing Well With Others
All Ponies Are Created Equal
To Roll or Not to Roll
Being Talented
Life and Death
Mortal Peril and Other Sources of Conflict

4-5 The Valley of Heart's Delight: A Sample Setting

Geography
Development
The Marquess and His Family
Technology
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6-7 Creating and Using a Setting

Scale and Scope
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Making Connections
Here Be Dragons
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8-10 Story Seeds

“That's Not What I Ordered”
“An Explosive Situation”
“Stand and Deliver”
“A Giant Complication”
“Title and Deed”
“Ten Little Ponies”
“Cooking the Books” (by Vikki)
“What's That Noise?” (by Vikki)
“The Forbidding Fruit” (by Vikki)
“Pony Encounters of the Fourth Kind” (by Vikki)
“The Slumbering Princess” (by Vikki)

11-17 Sample Ponies

Cymbal: Earth Mare (guest contribution)
Bumpkin: Earth Stallion (guest contribution)
Wind Shear: Pegasus Mare (guest contribution)
Marathon: Pegasus Stallion (guest contribution)
Stormbucker: Pegasus Stallion (guest contribution)
Starry Skies: Unicorn Mare (guest contribution)
Galea: Unicorn Mare
Silver Tuppence: Unicorn Stallion (guest contribution)

The Bucking Mare
public house
(pub) and inn
by Baron Engel



THIS SECTION ISN'T THE only place in the rulebook where tips and hints can be found. Quite a few are in the introduction at the beginning of the book and at the start of each of the book's four parts. Some of the longer section or subsection introductions also include suggestions, such as the "List of Talents" and "The Best Things in Life Are Free" in Part II.

Playing Well With Others

Basic rules of courtesy apply when participating in a role-playing game, of course, but being a good player involves more than that. First and foremost, *participate!* Pay attention to the game and avoid distractions. Be active, even if playing a shy character—think of ways to push her into the action, including asking the narrator and other players to find ways of helping.

Instead of saying "my pony wouldn't do that", cooperate with the narrator and other players in making it happen anyway. That makes the story more interesting, as the pony struggles to deal with something that makes her uncomfortable. Likewise, avoid stopping other players' actions, which wastes time and slows down the story; work with them instead. A player also should be willing to make adjustments to her pony, because a good character grows and changes over time.

If a player pony is supposed to be a good haggler, she should haggle. This is the role-playing version of "show, don't tell". It's okay for the pony to have deep, dark background stuff, but as much as possible, demonstrate the pony's personality, how she talks and moves and acts, what she's good at and not good at. Be descriptive, but try to keep it short and vivid.

Don't be difficult, causing trouble with the other players or their ponies. For one thing, that runs counter to the whole spirit of the television series. For another, even if the player doing it thinks it's fun, the others probably don't.

Read and understand the rules, but don't try to squeeze every little advantage out of them. A player who has to be told over and over how to do something under the rules slows down the game. So does a "rules lawyer" who argues over every detail, especially when trying to gain something out of it.

Remember it's a game. Try not to get frustrated by failing at something; instead, use it. What happens now? How can the situation be salvaged? Does it make the story funnier or more dramatic? Share the game; every player's pony should get time in the spotlight—and should cooperate with her friends.

All Ponies Are Created Equal

The television program does its best to present all three pony tribes as equal in magic and ability. That works well enough when writing a script, in which the author can control how things turn out, or when figuring out how the three tribes work together to build a society. For a role-playing game, though, there can be problems in balancing player ponies.

Earth magic is quite powerful and influential on a *society-wide* basis—but it's very subtle and long-term, which means it doesn't show up well in a role-playing game. Most games probably aren't going to focus much on growing and harvesting crops, after all. During play, the most visible aspect of earth magic likely will be strength and toughness.

The rules try to emphasize this advantage, and the value of the earth tribe's connection to the land, where possible. In a high-adventure game including a good deal of fighting, that might be enough by itself. Still, a narrator who finds that earth ponies just aren't getting enough of a break can experiment with balancing measures—for example, giving an earth pony an extra few Talent Points to start with, an extra Harmony Point, or an additional *extra effort*.

Pegasus magic effects on weather, especially lightning, are much flashier. By far the biggest advantage of a pegasus player pony, though, is flight. Aside from heroic flight, it isn't faster than running, but going over or around obstacles is much easier, which can create headaches for the narrator. Surprises may be spoiled: "I'll just go see what's over that hill and report back!" Groups may split up, forcing her to handle two—or more—parties and dividing everyone's time and attention.

It's hard to limit this without bending the show's setting out of shape, such as not allowing pegasus player ponies at all. Sometimes the narrator may be able to throw in things like wing injuries or horizon-to-horizon "wild" fog, but that can't be done too often. The narrator simply may have to put up with it and ask the players not to split up more than necessary.

Unicorn magic definitely is the most spectacular and immediate; spells can do all sorts of things, and creating and using new spells can be fun in themselves. Because spells are so flexible and all-encompassing, some fans of the show joke, or honestly may believe, that unicorns are a "master race".

The rules cope with this partly through the split between Talent and Effect, which makes it harder, though not impossible, for a unicorn to be extremely powerful. (It also allows for variations in magical ability, such as a unicorn who's strong but not very controlled or *vice versa*.) Another method is through use of Fatigue Points, especially for instant spells. The narrator also can veto spells that may affect the game in negative ways, such as sensing or figuring out normally hidden information.

To Roll or Not to Roll

As mentioned elsewhere, the game's rules exist for just one reason: to provide a fair way to decide how something turns out when the result could be anywhere on a range of possibilities. It's easy to get hung up on the rules, though, and to use them all the time—even when it isn't necessary or desirable!

Any time it makes sense that a pony can do something pretty much automatically, don't bother with a die roll, especially if it would slow down the game. If the plot depends on a player pony noticing or doing some particular thing, and a player thinks of looking for or doing it, or something similar enough, assume the pony was successful and move on. Think of it this way: the "roll" was whether a player thought to look for or do what was needed, and succeeding at it is the player's reward. If it was exceptionally important or clever, the narrator may want to give the player a little extra at the story's end.

Die rolls should be used when the outcome is uncertain but dramatic (or, in some cases, comedic). Does the pony get only one chance at it? Is it unusually difficult? Is the pony trying to do it while fighting, stressed, or under duress? Will the story work out very differently depending on what the result is? If the answer is "yes", then a roll probably is appropriate. ♦

Being Talented

Even when a roll isn't needed, the narrator can make storytelling decisions based on whether a pony has a particular Talent or how many dice that pony has in the Talent.

If one of the player ponies has a History Talent, for instance, the narrator can tell that player, "Your pony remembers reading something about a similar inscription," and go on to tell about it. If more than one player pony has the right Talent, she might tell the one with the most dice or, for an easy task or well-known fact, some or all of the Talented ponies' players. And what if different ponies remember that fact differently?

A pony with 4d or more in a Talent is pretty good at it, someone whom friends and neighbors might ask for help with a task the Talent covers. A Talent of 6d or more makes that pony a local expert, officially or unofficially. At 8d or more, the pony's expertise is likely to be more widely known. At 10d or more, the pony probably is famous for her expertise.

This can apply to player ponies, too—but that may not always be pleasant. An episode in the show's first season about a major character becoming a famous model is just one example of the many ways being well-known can be as much a curse as a blessing, and how that can be a good basis for a storyline.

Life and Death

In many, probably most, role-playing games—especially fantasy and science-fictional ones—there are ways for characters to cheat death. Resurrection, downloading memories into clones, and other such rationales mean that even if a player "loses" a character during play, it probably won't be permanent.

This is because players, quite naturally, tend to get very attached to the characters they've spent a lot of time building up and playing. If a character is snatched away for good, there's always the possibility that character's player will be upset enough to quit the game, and maybe even role-playing games in general. That's no fun for anyone.

Like other more-or-less modern-period settings, though, the world of the ponies doesn't provide any reasonable way to justify bringing a character "back from the dead". The real reason is that, in children's television shows, the whole subject of death usually is avoided entirely; it's never a happy one, and it's hard for adults to explain and for children to understand.

Moreover, as the program's presented them, pony science and magic clearly aren't powerful enough to do the job. Medicine in the late nineteenth century, the period the show's creator used as inspiration, was only just starting to deal effectively with dangerous illnesses and injuries. Even if the narrator's willing to allow more modern medical technology, that still may not be enough to cope with all the ways an adventuring pony can get herself bumped off. An individual pony's magic also seems to be limited in what, and how much, it can do.

What this means for the game is that the narrator and players need to be careful about how dangerous it gets. Some of the rules in "Icky Stuff: Illness, Injury, and Healing" provide ways to reduce the game's deadliness, such as increasing the size of the injury levels or allowing a "dead" pony to be mortally wounded instead, so others can rescue her. Still, that's no substitute for finding ways to make a game exciting while reducing the chances of killing off a character unnecessarily.

Mortal Peril and Other Sources of Conflict

The previous subsection leads into a related subject. Many experienced role-play gamers have spent much of their time killing monsters and gathering up treasure, or shooting bad guys of various kinds (depending on the setting), or being hunted by mysterious pursuers who want to do terrible things to them.

In short, what plot or narrative exist in games like that tend to be all about violence and about threats to a character's life and limb. If that's the only method a player or game-master has ever seen, or used in, driving a game, it can be confusing and difficult to adjust to one with little or no fighting, treasure, or other traditional action-adventure standbys.

One of the "pilot" game's players received from one group a request for help with this struggle to understand—and a message from another group who enthusiastically embraced the storytelling supported by *Pony Tales*. What was the difference, and what lessons can be learned from that difference?

The group who immediately grasped *Pony Tales* was made up partly of people who'd never played any role-playing games before; one was a historical re-enactor and another was in community theater. This meant, first, that the group had no ingrained habits to unlearn, and second, that they already were used to the idea of role-playing as improvisational theater.

The group having trouble had spent all its time in fantasy games made up almost completely of monster-killing and treasure-hunting—more like a wargame (which, after all, is how role-playing games started) than a game about character and story. How can they, and similar groups, break out of the habit?

Any educational course on writing starts with the idea that a story is about conflict. But conflict doesn't have to be war or combat; *any* form of struggle is, by definition, conflict. Think about other story forms and *genres*. Quests, mysteries, psychological journeys, romantic pursuits—look at any library for inspiration. As long as there's a goal, and obstacles between that goal and the players' ponies, it's fair game.

This doesn't mean there shouldn't be *any* fighting; it just means that fighting becomes just one of many possibilities for action and conflict. Also, rewards don't have to be treasures; fame, romance, contacts, elevation of rank, or anything else someone may want or need may satisfy a player and her pony. Variety is what keeps a game fresh and interesting for months or even, if everyone can keep it going, years.

The narrator should try to understand each player and each pony. What is that individual looking for in the game? What does her pony want in life? What are the strengths and weaknesses of both? How can the narrator balance the various players and ponies? Is it possible to construct stories that will satisfy everyone, or is it necessary to create a story starring one or two of the player ponies, with the rest as supporting cast, then shift the spotlight to other members of the group?

A player should ask similar questions about herself, her pony, and the rest of the group, including the narrator. The game isn't about any one player or pony; it should be about *all* of them, because friendship is magic. If it looks like an idea for one pony won't fit very well with the others, be willing to make changes. Talk things over with everyone else so that, through compromise and consensus, the game can evolve into something the whole group, including the narrator, can enjoy. ★

~ *The Valley of Heart's Delight: A Sample Setting* ~

THE VALLEY OF HEART'S DELIGHT was settled by ponies a few centuries ago. The pleasant, fertile valley is nourished by forty feet of topsoil, laid down year after patient year by the broad, shallow Honey River that wanders along its length to a small estuary where the valley opens on the ocean. The surrounding hills are less than four thousand feet high—but they are unusually rugged and densely carpeted with redwoods, oaks, and a wild variety of other trees and scrub.

After passing over these difficult hills from the growing pony principality to the north, the would-be settlers felt they'd found a land worthy of the ordeal. It wouldn't be theirs without a struggle, though. Besides the effort of turning the land itself to their purposes, they faced the hostility of a griffon tribe living in the hills to the south. Raiding and occasional skirmishes heated up tensions between the two peoples. Neither was willing to give up the rich land, and as the more numerous and organized ponies gradually pushed back the griffons, the latter in turn became more desperate.

A border war loomed on the horizon, underscoring the immediate need for a workable lasting solution. Should the situation get bad enough, the sun princess herself might intervene. Even the pony settlers didn't like that possibility, for her sense of justice and fairness might not favor them so much as they would wish.

A shrewd, charismatic earth stallion conceived an answer. Though complex in detail, its essence was simple: a series of agreements and arrangements that ensured each side was better off having the other around than it would have been alone. He worked tirelessly and sometimes bravely to convince others of his vision, and did not emerge entirely unscathed. But emerge he did, triumphant if exhausted and wounded.

His reward from the princess for a job well done was, of course, another job. She ennobled him, giving him the title of marquess and a fief, the March of the Valley of Heart's Delight—including the nearest ridgelines of the bordering ranges of hills. The title has descended in direct line over the generations to the present day, and the march has grown and prospered under the leadership and guidance of its marquesses and marchionesses.

Geography

The valley is shaped roughly like a pie wedge about thirty miles (48 km) long by fifteen miles (24 km) wide at the coast. From its point at the crotch of the surrounding ranges, its axis runs west-southwestward to the ocean. The valley floor is nice and flat aside from occasional hummocks and hillocks around the rim, in sharp contrast to the craggy hillsides making up that rim. Its name, landforms, and climate are inspired by the Santa Clara Valley (today better known by its modern nickname of Silicon Valley), at the south end of San Francisco Bay.

In more than one sense, the valley's heart is the Honey River, which flows more or less along the valley's centerline from the hills to a small estuary at the ocean. The Honey is about the size of California's Russian River and meanders from year to year, though rarely any great distance. Various creeks cross the valley to join it, none wider than a stone's throw.

Twenty-five miles (40 km) off the valley's coast are the Carillon Islands, an arc of intimidatingly rocky islets rising sharply from the sea. They, and the bank on which they rest, provide some shelter against storm surges and surf—and, it was discovered in recent years, are near the edge of the continental shelf. Beyond, a cold ocean current runs southward.

The coast extends north-northwest and south-southeast from the valley; the ranges of hills end abruptly in steep sandstone cliffs overlooking narrow rocky beaches. Beyond the hills to the south are open rolling plains and a large unsheltered bay. These wild lands remain a thinly populated frontier beyond the pony land's borders and unclaimed by any organized polity. The bay has no notable harbor sites and the plains are marginal by pony standards, which explains why they aren't settled.

Development

Before the arrival of the pony settlers, grasses and scrub dominated the valley itself, while the hills above were thickly forested, all thanks to a Mediterranean climate. Since then most of the valley has been covered with orchards and fields, and the nearest hillsides support vinyards and small ranches; among the farms is a sizable spread belonging to a branch of the Apple clan. Throughout the nearby hills there is judicious logging, especially of oak and redwood. Kelp beds lie off the coast, and a combination lighthouse and weather station stands sentinel on the tallest of the Carillons.

Processing and preserving raw produce forms much of the valley's industry. There are packing, canning, salting, pickling, and candying houses. There are wineries, breweries, cider mills, and distilleries; most are of at least decent quality, but best-known and most celebrated are some of the wineries and cider mills. Even a little spinning and weaving goes on, though it is strictly minor by comparison. The valley can feed itself, and exports some of the raw and processed foodstuffs, textiles, and other products, but must import most raw materials and industrial goods other than what the modest local cottage industries can produce.

Making this export trade possible is a superb transportation network of canals, Roman-style highways, and macadam secondary roads. Barges from tiny to medium-size ply the waterways, and a steady traffic of small riverboats, including a few steam paddle-wheelers, navigates the Honey up to the base of the hills. The valley's only rail corridor, recently expanded to two lines, follows the river through the hills to the head of the valley, steers wider of it to avoid floodwaters, runs to the delta, and continues along the coast, skirting the hills to run north, back to the interior of the pony nation.

The valley's only (medium-size) city, Gallopston, lies at the mouth of the river; it is a good river port, an adequate seaport, and the valley's biggest railway station and terminal. Towns and villages dot the valley, along with windmills and water wheels. Not far from the head of the valley, a rocky promontory among the straggling foothills forces the river to bend around it to the south. Atop the promontory is . . . a castle. It's not very big, and it's rather timeworn, but it's still occupied by the marquess and his family. Nestled at the base of the promontory beside the river is the *seat* (capital), Bitburg, a large town where a lot of the march's main government offices are located. ♦

The Marquess and His Family

The marquess is effectively a crown governor. In theory, it is an autocratic position, but in practice even the most dictatorial lord or lady is forced to rely on a cabinet of appointed experts and to hear what amount to elected lobbyists sent by various districts or occupations. The princess likely had just this outcome in mind, but if so has never admitted it.

The current marquess has inherited his line's leadership and imagination, but also is quite eccentric. Schmiedeeisen (German for Wrought Iron; *schmieden* means "to forge" and *Eisen* means "iron") is in late middle age. His coat is steel-gray and his mane and tail are a deep bronze; his eyes are a bright green and his cutie mark is an iron-strapped water wheel.

He is fascinated with gadgets and artifacts of all sorts, both ancient and modern. (King Christian IV, who ruled Denmark during part of the seventeenth century, is a loose model for this mild obsession.) The march's inhabitants regard him with a sort of affectionate exasperation, and accept his vagaries the way real-world farmers deal with the weather: it does what it does, and there ain't much to do about it.

His wife Weinstock (Grapevine), though long-suffering, genuinely seems to love him, and has much practice managing and directing his occasional enthusiasms. The mare is about the same age as her husband, but still handsome with her rosy-violet coat, leaf-green mane and tail, and pale eyes. Her cutie mark is, in fact, a length of grapevine, befitting a scion of the valley's most important vintners. She has borne five foals: a daughter, three sons, and a second daughter.

The eldest daughter and heir, Morgenstern (Morning Star), is a robust mare in her mid-twenties. Her coat is alabaster, her mane and tail seafoam gray; her cutie mark is a rising sun. She is married, though there are no foals as yet, and lives with her husband in Bitburg, near—but not in—the castle. She has inherited both her paternal line's formidable intellect and her mother's practicality, and promises to be a capable marchioness when the time comes.

The eldest son and second child, in his early twenties, is Herbsthimmel (Autumn Sky, from *Herbst* and *Himmel*). His cyan coat is set off by white mane and tail, and his cutie mark is an inkpot and quill. The second son, about twenty, is Goldensonne (Golden Sun). He is butter yellow with pale orange mane and tail; his cutie mark is a sloop in full sail. The youngest son, in his late teens, is Dämmerung (a word that can mean Dawn, Dusk, or Twilight). He has a magenta coat, deep red mane and tail, and a cutie mark of a wine press. All three spend as much time away from the castle as they can manage.

The youngest child is Abendstern (Evenstar), a delicate filly of fourteen. Her coat is glossy black and her mane and tail are mint-gold; her cutie mark is a constellation of stars. She is the only one of the five to live in the castle, though she ventures out routinely, especially to visit her mother's family's holdings on the northern slopes of the valley.

Technology

Pony society appears to advance at a leisurely pace, perhaps half the rate of real history. This places the moon princess's banishment in the equivalent of the late fourteenth century, which fits with her "forsoothly" style of speech and manner.

Science and engineering are assumed to be roughly equivalent to the late nineteenth century in the real world, specifically the 1860s to the 1880s. It's an exciting time, when a lot of new discoveries and inventions are appearing.

The marquess's love of machines and inventions fits this era of progress and industry, but it can be very hit or miss. In some cases, such as the excellent road system and the dual-line railway, it has been of great benefit to the valley's economy. Others have been outright failures. And in the middle are some dubious-seeming schemes.

Chief among the last is an experimental sidewheeler tugboat based in Gallopston harbor and, rather incongruously, named after the sun princess. A locomotive boiler and drive system powers each of the wheels, and can be reversed at need. Unfortunately these power trains are separate, with no provision for one boiler to drive both wheels. The tug's dumpy hull is double-ended, with a rudder at each end that can be fixed in place when that end of the tug is serving as the bow.

The merchant shipping served by the tug (an honor most of their captains can do without) includes paddle and screw steamers, barques and full-rigged ships, the earliest windjammers, and a last few clippers. Most of these ships carry on the domestic trade, running among ports within the pony nation, but some may run to foreign ports as well.

An airship terminal also was added recently on the north-east edge of Gallopston to serve the growing air traffic.

The Neighbors

In the southern hills lives a sizable population of griffons in scattered villages. Before the ponies arrived, the griffons lived a more-or-less tribal lifestyle, hunting and gathering from the bounty of a mild, friendly land.

After the first marquess established the accords that ended the potentially deadly rivalry, the griffons supplemented their traditional ways first by trading with the ponies and eventually by working in seasonal or peripheral occupations among or near the pony population.

Late September through October is called "griffon summer". Originally the time of year when their raids and depredations were most frequent, it evolved after the two peoples came to terms. It still is the season when they have the most contact with the ponies, but the activities are very different.

Some come to trade. Others renew old contracts or negotiate new ones. There is seasonal employment, whether for themselves or for pony employers. Traditional fishing rights, both offshore and along the Honey River, are very important.

Toward the end of October there is a combination fair and festival celebrating the season and the comity. That the spooky holiday inspired by the mare in the moon forms a sort of cap to it is a coincidence of timing, but perhaps inevitably there has been some mixing of the two. Some griffons participate with gusto, especially younger ones, while their elders simply treat it as another autumn festivity.

Though amity is the overall consensus on both sides, it is not universal. Some friction remains among inherently unpleasant personalities and those who bear ancestral grudges more readily than others. Generally such individuals are regarded as soreheads and given little heed. *

PERHAPS THE MOST important single idea a narrator should keep in mind when creating a setting for her game is *variety*. There should be a lot of different places, and kinds of places, in easy reach of the player ponies. That gives the narrator a wide range of choices for story locations and the players a lot of alternatives for their ponies' backgrounds.

The example setting, the Valley of Heart's Delight, is a well-settled coastal region on the edge of the pony nation. A network of roads, waterways, and rails makes it easy to get around the valley in a few hours.

For adventures in untamed or exotic places, there's wilderness just over the border to the south and in the hills to the east. An ocean right next door is useful for journeys by ship or airship, perhaps to remote islands or distant foreign countries.

For stories that take place in civilized places, there's a medium-size city and many smaller towns and villages. The griffon settlements in the southern hills are a bit out of the way, but just different enough to be an interesting change of pace.

If a *major* city is needed, the story probably is big enough to justify the player ponies traveling to it by land, sea, or air. For that matter, a story can be set *on* a passenger train, ship, or airship, especially if it's a long trip; within the valley, barges and paddlewheel riverboats are other colorful possibilities.

There aren't many big factories in the valley, but smaller industries do exist, so if the narrator wants, say, a handy mill, smithy, or weaving shed for a story, it shouldn't be hard to put one where it's needed. The countryside surrounding the valley's settlements is filled with farms, orchards, vineyards, ranches, forests, and all sorts of other rural or open spaces.

There's one other important fact about the valley: It's as far away as possible from where the television series mostly takes place, so the episodes and the characters in them don't overshadow or distract from the game's characters and stories.

The Valley of Heart's Delight is just one way to provide variety, and the narrator's free to come up with her own methods of doing that. It isn't necessary to use the same answers—but it's a good idea to start by asking some of the same questions. Some questions can be figured out by looking at how the Valley is put together, and others are explored in this section.

Scale and Scope

Will the player ponies live in one place, as the television characters do, or will they be a traveling band of adventurers or other wanderers, like so many characters in fantasy fiction and role-playing games? The answer will affect how big an area, and what kinds of details, the narrator should think about as she works on her game's setting.

The narrator doesn't need to figure out where every house is and who every pony is, of course. To start with, it's enough just to give the players a good sense of place—what and where the most important features (both natural and pony-made) are, a brief history, and prominent individuals. Here and there the narrator may want to go into detail, such as the town where the player ponies live or meet, or other places of unusual interest, but the rest can be described in more general terms to give the players an introduction to the setting.

The players should get some input too. Their ponies need to be fitted into the setting, after all, and they may have good ideas to add. If everyone knows each other well enough, the narrator may be able to sketch out a setting she's pretty sure the players will like and can use, then adjust it to accommodate their contributions and characters. Newer acquaintances, or a group that hasn't played role-playing games before, may need to talk over what they want from the setting (and the game) before the narrator starts to work on it.

If the player ponies are settled, the area within about a day's travel of where they live needs to be fairly detailed. Outside of that, rough notes should be enough at first. When a story takes the players to a faraway place, the narrator can fill in details on it as she's getting ready for that story. (In the section on the Valley of Heart's Delight, for instance, there's only the most basic information on the lands outside the valley.) This method's harder at first, since the narrator has to do a lot of work up front, but as long as the players don't decide to take a sudden long-distance trip, she usually won't have to make up whole new places on the spot during a game session.

If the player ponies are nomadic, the narrator has to cover a much bigger area, but probably doesn't have to be really detailed about any single part of it. As the players travel, the narrator may need to think about places they might go and make some notes on those places between game sessions. This method is easier at first, since the narrator doesn't have to lay down a lot of groundwork before starting, but it does mean the narrator may have to do a lot of improvising when the players go off in an unexpected direction. (Sooner or later they will!)

There and Back Again

In a traditional fantasy setting, long-distance travel mostly is limited to walking speed, either of the characters themselves or of horses. There may be sailing ships or flying creatures that can be ridden, but those may be rare or not very much faster. The ponies, though, have an industrial-age society, and that increases travel speeds greatly.

The speed of a steam locomotive depends on a lot of different things—for example, how big and powerful it is, how heavy a train it pulls, and how many hills, bridges, and curves slow it down on its route. A fast passenger train might average 45 to 50 miles per hour (72–80 km/h), while a slower train might run 30 to 45 mph (48–72 km/h). Faster speeds are possible, but those usually tend to be exceptional.

A typical steam ocean liner of the late nineteenth century could maintain speeds of 15 to 20 knots (17–23 mph or 28–37 km/h) for most or all of a trip, though it might be capable of slightly faster speeds for short periods. Cargo steamships generally were slower, many of them only half as fast. A windjammer could reach an ocean liner's speed with favorable winds, and even if winds weren't ideal it could match a cargo steamer.

An airship wasn't fast at all, especially the early ones that flew before the twentieth century. The ponies might be able to do a little better, but probably not by very much. One advantage a pony airship captain could have is that, with pegasus control of the weather, airship travel may not face as many unexpected storms or unfavorable winds. ♦

Making Connections

In a **figurative game** that pays attention to details of *world-building*—the design and creation of a logical, self-consistent fictional setting—technology can be a pretty central element. Part three covers a lot of ground, but there are a few other points a narrator should keep in mind when building a setting.

The biggest two are in communication and transportation. A major reason there doesn't seem to be as much room for adventure in today's world is that it's a snap to send lots of information almost anywhere, almost instantly. It isn't a whole lot more difficult to send people or goods around the world. That means there aren't many frontiers left that are beyond the easy reach of civilization—but consider how much adventure fiction depends on wilderness and distant, exotic places.

Being lost, making rescues, discovering new places, finding primitive tribes, questing for ancient artifacts: all of them, and more, depend on the unknown or little-known. Rumors, legends, delayed letters, and long-lost expeditions are staples of pulp and classic tales of mystery and derring-do. During the time period the show's creator had in mind, this already was starting to break down, thanks to the spread of telegraphy and steam propulsion, but that process hadn't gone very far yet.

The next step away from a romantic world of adventure came at the end of the nineteenth century. Broadcasting by wireless (radio) could send information long distances in any direction, without wires of course, as long as there was a receiver at the other end. Petroleum-fueled internal-combustion engines freed fast, reliable ground transportation from rails, improved shipping, and made widespread aviation possible.

At the end of the Second World War in the mid-twentieth century, the process of mechanization was nearly complete across the industrialized world. Jet aircraft, electronics, and rockets led in turn to mass air travel, television, and satellites.

Another important aspect of technology is that one area often influences another, sometimes in surprising ways. It can be tricky, when world-building, to give a society one technology but not another that existed in real history. There might be developments in one technology that depend on, or result in, the technology that's supposed to be “missing”.

The invention of celluloid in the 1870s made all sorts of products cheaper and easier to make, especially items previously made from ivory: billiard balls, photographic film, jewelry boxes, parts of musical instruments, and hair accessories. Unfortunately, it also was brittle and, more importantly, one of its components, nitrocellulose, is terribly unstable. Celluloid was known to explode occasionally during production, and several movie theaters full of people burned down during the early twentieth century when nitrate film—which was made from nitrocellulose—caught fire. (Different kinds of “safety” film were developed in the 1900s and 1940s.) What made it dangerous for consumer goods and the movie industry, though, turned out to be perfect for firearms. Guncotton, which was based on nitrocellulose, replaced older forms of gunpowder because it was more powerful and produced much less smoke.

A **literal game** is less concerned about the fine points and is more about what's happening at the moment. The narrator and players are much more free to ignore inconsistencies in favor of whatever keeps the story going in lively fashion.

Here Be Dragons

In addition to written notes, a narrator may want to make and keep maps. A role-playing game tends to use two kinds of maps: *area maps* and *local maps*.

An **area map** displays an overview of a region—where cities and natural features are, what roads, railroads, or other transportation routes exist, and any additional information the narrator or players might find important. It could show a small section of countryside or a large nation, depending on how much detail is needed and how important the area is.

A poster of the whole pony nation came out a while back, and versions of it have been used as backgrounds on a few episodes, but it wasn't produced by the show's creative staff. The show's supervising director has commented that the production crew never made any maps, instead creating new places as needed for scripts. A narrator probably is free to go either way, using the poster-map or not as she wishes.

A **local map** shows a small area, usually of someplace where a story is happening; this kind of map is covered in a little more detail at the end of part one. It can be, and probably should be, printed with a grid of hexagons to make keeping track of moving and fighting easier. It also can make visualizing the place easier for players, on the principle that a picture is worth a thousand words.

A Living World

As the game goes on, the narrator may want to build up a “world book” of information on characters, places, and events from past stories that may be useful later. It also can include ideas the narrator (or even a player) comes up with that haven't showed up yet in any stories during the game, or may not have anything to do with the player ponies, but still are worth keeping in mind for the future.

Some of the latter could show up in the newspapers, for instance, either as *foreshadowing* (to pave the way for, and maybe hint at, future events) or simply as “window dressing” to promote the illusion of living in a busy, complicated world. A world's a big place, after all, and lots of things happen even when the player ponies aren't around.

Another way for the narrator to show an ongoing, active society is to change around some things (especially small ones) in logical ways when the players come back to a place they've visited before—particularly if it's been a long time since they were last there. If what the players did in the past has had a big impact on a place, such changes can be a good way to show them just what kind of impact it was.

An example could be the players happening on a town in a dry land, where there isn't much rain, that depends on a well for water—but the ancient windmill that used to pump water up from the well was damaged or destroyed and none of the local people know how to repair it. Do the players simply pass through? When they return later, the narrator can describe a desolate scene of abandoned, ruined buildings, sand drifting in the doorways. Do they stop and help? They could come back to a hero's welcome in a thriving, healthy town of happy inhabitants. Once the players figure out that their actions can affect the people and places around them, it can be an eye-opening experience for everyone. ★

JUST LIKE ANY WRITER, every narrator may develop her own style, both in the kinds of stories she likes to set up and the way she prefers to handle them. On the other hand, there are rules of thumb authors tend to follow, at least most of the time. Because role-playing is different in many ways from ordinary fiction, some of the rules may be different, but a lot of the basic elements of storytelling are pretty similar.

A story or adventure that should happen in one afternoon or evening of play is kind of like a single episode of the show. A single sentence or a short paragraph probably is enough to start, and the narrator doesn't even have to write it down, as long as she has a pretty good idea what it is. A multi-session story is more like one of the show's two-part stories, and the narrator may need to write down at least a basic description so she won't forget the important points.

Whether the story's big or small, the narrator should be prepared with anything she thinks she'll need, such as maps, notes, and character descriptions. The bigger or longer the story, the more preparation's needed, but don't go overboard. Players have minds of their own. Frequently they'll think of something the narrator didn't, or miss the narrator's hints or clues, and go off in a completely different direction!

When that happens, it's tempting to do anything necessary to force the players back on track, even if it damages the story or the characters. The narrator will have to use her judgment, but being flexible usually is best. Maybe the story won't turn out the way the narrator had in mind, but if everyone has fun—including the narrator—does it really matter?

Re-using ideas from the show is perfectly okay—as long as the narrator tries to use them *differently*. Partly that's so the players don't guess too early what the story's supposed to be, and partly it's to keep the story fresh and original. Think about good and bad movie sequels: The worst ones try to tell pretty much the same stories over again, while the best ones try to tell completely new stories, different from the previous movies, even if they feature the same characters or locations.

Serial or Episodic? Originally, the show's creator wanted the series to be a *serial*: Each new episode would pick up right where the last one left off, allowing the overall *story arc* to be rich and detailed. Company executives, on the other hand, wanted the series to be *episodic*: Each episode would be a separate story—except for occasional two-part stories—allowing new watchers to get into the series quickly without forcing them to catch up on everything that's happened or to watch all the episodes in order.

Of course, the program ended up being episodic, but that doesn't mean the narrator and players have to do it that way. Many role-playing games have been serial, simply following the lives of the characters as they go from adventure to adventure. The story-seeds are written for an episodic game, but most of them should be easy to alter for a serial game.

For that matter, a game doesn't have to be all one or the other. A serial story arc might last for many sessions, then eventually end; that could be followed by some episodic game sessions, maybe leading to another long story arc.

“That's Not What I Ordered”

After a mix-up in shipping, one of the player ponies gets the wrong package—and it's full of parasprites! The first problem is dealing with them, especially if they get loose. After that, finding out where they came from, who sent them, and why probably is pretty urgent.

“An Explosive Situation”

The slightly crazy old uncle of a player pony lives up in the hills, prospecting for minerals. He sends a letter to the player pony claiming other ponies are trying to run him off his claim. It turns out those other ponies are loggers who aren't happy that he's leaving boxes of old, unstable dynamite lying around (so he doesn't have to carry the heavy boxes everywhere) that could blow up if somepony just happens to walk by. . . .

“Stand and Deliver”

The player ponies are hired to help set up a new airship terminal or small seaport well outside the ponies' country. During the journey to the job site, the airship they're on is waylaid by sky pirates in a smaller but faster airship, armed with a swivel-mounted quick-firing breechloading light naval gun. The flyers among the pirates—pegasus ponies, a couple of griffons, and maybe even more exotic creatures—try to land on the bigger airship in order to capture it. Stand by to repel boarders!

“A Giant Complication”

This is a sequel to the previous story. After the pirates are defeated and the airship is repaired, the expedition reaches the place where the new terminal or port will be set up. A thin thread of smoke coming out of a nearby cave turns out to be from a very old sleeping dragon. He's big enough to be a problem if they make an enemy of him, but frail (and lonely) enough that they might be able to talk him into being friendly or at least into putting up with pony neighbors.

“Title and Deed”

The inheritance of a prominent and popular local landowner is being challenged by a stranger from a distant city, who brought old papers that support this claim. Are the papers legitimate or fakes? If the latter, does the pony bearing them know or is he or she a dupe of someone else who has a hidden agenda?

A possible complication can be the disappearance of the local claimant's papers from the family's lawyer's safe (or the whole safe itself). Who took them and how? Where are they? Can they be found and brought back in time for the court case?

“Ten Little Ponies”

Along with the crew and maybe a few other passengers, the player ponies are stuck on a small steamship or large airship that's been damaged by untamed weather and is drifting in pea-soup fog. What no one realizes at first is that a lost changeling was blown aboard during the storm and is making ponies disappear into hidden cocoons one by one.

For an extra twist, the narrator could talk with one of the players privately before the game starts. That player's pony could be the first one kidnapped, and the player would play the changeling until the other players figure out what's going on. ♦

“Cooking the Books” (by Vikki)

Some miscreant schoolfoals have discovered a spell that alters the text in their schoolbooks, which lets them contest the grades on their tests. (“It’s not a mistake at all! See?”) Miscasting the spell, though, has made its effects more far-reaching than they realize—which ponies all over town are finding out.

“What’s That Noise?” (by Vikki)

Irate dragons show up, insisting that ponies are using a weapon on them. They claim to hear a grating, high-pitched tone that’s strongest in the area, and refuse to leave until it’s stopped. What’s causing it? The dragons are getting more and more upset, and some ponies want to send for assistance from the EUP Guard. Can the mystery be solved before hostilities break out?

“The Forbidding Fruit” (by Vikki)

An exotic new fruit that some claim tastes better than apples is discovered (or maybe “discovered”)! The new plants are sold to local farmers, who put them in fields—only to find that they grow like weeds, even over boundaries, choking out all other crops including apple groves. Trying to uproot them reveals that they refuse to be dealt with like *mere plants*.

Even after dealing with the problems caused by the plants themselves, there might be all sorts of other questions to answer. Who found, or maybe made, them? Why sell them? Is the discoverer innocent, just as much of a victim as everyone who bought the plants, or a villain with a scheme?

“Pony Encounters of the Fourth Kind” (by Vikki)

This adventure is an example of an epic multi-session story, full of fighting, mighty magic, and world-changing events.

Act One: An amber gem-like meteorite the size of four full-grown ponies blazes across the sky, leaving a fiery trail visible for miles, before crashing to earth with the force of an earthquake. If close by, the player ponies may come on the scene as other curious early arrivals touch it and suddenly are transformed into alicorns like the princesses in a flash of light and magical fury. If far from the crash-site, they will hear about its fantastic properties through newspapers or word-of-mouth.

Ponies flock to it, hoping to become like their beloved princesses—but before long the royal sisters realize their magical power is diminishing, being spread among the skyrocketing numbers of alicorns. The Guard (or maybe the player ponies) are dispatched post-haste to secure the meteorite, but the sisters’ strength already is insufficient to raise the sun.

As the meteorite is transported to the capital for analysis, the draconeus of chaos appears and tries to destroy it. He’s affected by it too! Fortunately, his powers are weakened enough to be a minor annoyance rather than a major problem.

Act Two: The player ponies arrive to find the royal palace under siege. Three new-minted alicorns, who appear to be corrupted by the powerful magic, are trying to seize the throne. Those who were earth and pegasus ponies don’t seem to have mastered their new abilities as well as former unicorns have.

The player ponies need to outsmart the would-be usurpers or to manipulate them into turning against each other. When they succeed, the force bubble protecting the palace can be lowered to let them, and the meteorite, inside.

Safe in the palace, the moon princess reveals that the meteorite seems familiar somehow, but indistinctly, as if from a dream. The narrator should provide the players with a clue to a revelation: The meteorite was a component of a failed escape attempt by her banished villainous identity, meant to disperse the sun princess’s power and remove it as a threat.

The clue brings back her memory of the *star ponies*—the “stars” mentioned in the prophesy who would “aid in her escape” from the moon. Frightened by the memory, she smashes the meteorite—only to reveal a star pony nestled inside.

Star ponies can live in vacuum and feed on moonlight. They’re hornless, but possess magic on a par with ordinary unicorns. However, it’s limited to a few spells: levitation, gravity manipulation, and crystalline shields. Combined, the spells can propel them through space and protect them against atmospheric re-entry. Their other abilities seem to be more psychic in nature: telepathy (there’s no sound in space, and they’re not used to speaking out loud), inducing trances, and illusions.

The star pony introduces herself as Sadalbari—Arabic for “lucky star of the splendid one” and the name of a star in the constellation of Pegasus. She’s been in stasis since the mare in the moon cast the spell on her that would transform anyone touching her into an alicorn. Breaking the spell sent a signal to the others who’ve been waiting patiently since the mare in the moon escaped. Those other star ponies will be arriving soon to help their mistress take over Equestria.

Sadalbari is disappointed to learn the mare in the moon was defeated and has turned back to her former identity. The star ponies respect the moon princess, but they revere the mare in the moon as her *true* form.

Act Three: The force bubble protecting the palace collapses after the guardspony officer casting it is knocked out by one of the *three* other star ponies who had been in the meteorite, hidden by their illusion. (Recall that the meteorite had been as large as four full-grown ponies.) Fighting rages through the palace as the player ponies and the available Guard forces try to deal with the star ponies. The sun princess focuses on dispelling the star ponies’ illusions; her sister searches her memories for their weaknesses.

The star ponies want to capture the moon princess in their crystal shield, then reverse gravity to shoot back to the moon. There they can try to turn her back into the mare in the moon with their mind-affecting powers. Whether this succeeds or not, star ponies begin arriving all over the country. Most of the new alicorns are helping to fight them back, but not all, and some even use the opportunity to take out potential rivals.

At this point, the story can go several ways. If the star ponies succeed in taking the moon princess, the player ponies are the only ones available to rescue her, with the sun princess giving up the last of her power to temporarily change them to alicorns so they can travel to, and survive on, the moon.

If the star ponies fail to abduct their unwilling mistress, the player ponies—and the nation—still have an invasion on their hooves. The new alicorns must be persuaded to work together or to give up their power willingly so the sun princess can raise the sun. That will cut off the star ponies from their power source and allow them to be ejected from the land. ♦

“The Slumbering Princess” (by Vikki)

This is a medium-size adventure, larger than the smaller single-session stories, but smaller than the previous one. It does share some themes and ideas with that large adventure, but it also shows how they can be used in different ways to get very different results. With some alterations to both storylines, this adventure even could be used to lead into the other one.

One evening while preparing for her duty of raising the moon and guarding the night, the moon princess suddenly collapses on her balcony. She's found after the unusually long dusk is noticed, and her sister, though reluctant to leave her, covers for her the same way as during the time of her lunar exile.

She's placed in the care of the best physicians, who discover that her condition is some sort of deep sleep. Word spreads like wildfire throughout the land, but stranger news follows as the capital and an expanding wave of towns start to experience total insomnia. Accidents caused by sleep deprivation, and arguments caused by related irritability, skyrocket! After a few days, desperation sets in as it gets harder to concentrate on even simple tasks, no matter how important.

The player ponies at last are visited by cryptic dreams in which the sleeping princess begs them to unite in the capital and, to prove their story, endows them with a memory of her foalhood that only her sister would know.

All sorts of possibilities can follow. For example . . .

- Are the player ponies awake or still dreaming?
- The player ponies could be attacked by their own nightmares—but in the waking world! Are they subconscious memories, fears, or insecurities that must be overcome?
- The capital's population could turn into sleep-deprived mind-controlled zombie ponies, maybe even including the sun princess, and the player ponies must awaken the moon princess to save the day.
- The player ponies may have to enter the moon princess's dreams and battle against the subconscious remnants of the villainess she became before being banished to the moon. ★



Astra Rose and Silver Tuppence didn't take kindly to being fooled by the changeling!
Art by Christina “Smudge” Hanson

~ Sample Ponies ~

ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES are several ponies the narrator can use as background characters or players can use directly or as inspiration for their own ponies. Each sample pony is set up as if he or she is a starting player pony, with 36 Aptitude Points and 21 Talent Points.

For a more experienced pony, simply add some experience points for improved Talents or Specialties, or new ones that seem appropriate for the pony. If the group isn't using the Specialties optional rule, convert the sample pony's Specialties to regular Talents; each added Specialty die would become one point of Talent. The sample ponies' Specialties are in whole-die increments to make conversion easier.

These samples are intended to be widely varied, both in the kinds of characters they are and the kinds of games they fit into best. Some were created by players for the author's “pilot” game, while others were created especially for this section.

For a unicorn **Magical Talent**, both Talent and Effect points are listed for easy reference. If Illumination or Levitation isn't listed, use the pony's base Finesse for the Talent and base Power for the Effect. The same goes for a pegasus who tries to use a weatherworking Talent that isn't listed.

“Extras” or “spear carriers”: Not every character the player ponies run into needs to be this detailed. A random shopkeeper or some pony who stops to give directions probably doesn't need any numbers—or at most may need an important Talent or two, such as Business or Haggling in the case of that shopkeeper. A bit of vivid description, maybe some personality or physical quirks, and other touches of individuality often can be enough to keep the scene going in an enjoyable and believable fashion. Real people the narrator's met, story characters, and even news items or anecdotes the narrator's heard or read can provide ideas.

Reactions to the player ponies should be reasonable, though. A gang of tough-looking armored bravos swaggering into town might not be greeted with friendly smiles, for instance—more like nervous suspicion that they might be bandits or outlaws. Of course, that could depend on the kind of place the town is: A frontier village might be a little more willing to accept rough-hewn ponies who obviously have had to travel through potentially dangerous wilderness, while a pony in a big city might be more inclined to call the cops.

Villains and minions: Some of the example ponies can be used as antagonists, working against the player ponies but not really bad or evil; they even might be working for a villain, knowingly or not. Still, sometimes the narrator definitely needs a pony or other creature who really is nasty or ruthless enough to be a true “bad guy”. For such a “boss” villain, the narrator should spend as much effort as a player does on creating her pony. That villain needs to be worth working to beat, and when the players succeed, it should be a satisfying victory.

On the other hand, lowly minions, like other “spear carriers”, don't need much more than some basic notes—Aptitudes and the most important Talents they're likely to use, maybe with a few quirks to make some of them seem a little more individual. Minions shouldn't get many Luck or Harmony Points, if they get any! ♦

Cymbal: Earth Mare (guest contribution)

Muscle	1d+2	Walk Move	6 yards
Hardiness	2d	Swim & Climb Moves	3 yards
Reflexes	2d	Jump	2 yards
Coordination	4d	Strength Bonus	1d
Smarts	2d+2	Fatigue Points	25
Senses	3d+2	Recovery (sleep)	4/hour
Power	3d	Recovery (rest)	2/hour

Talents and Specialties (based on . . .)

Dice

Stamina (Hardiness)	. . . . .	2d+1
Mêlée (Reflexes)	. . . . .	2d+1
Clubs (Mêlée) Mêlée Specialty	. . . . .	4d+1
Fighting using blunt instruments that may or may not be intended as weapons		
Drums/Percussion (Coord.) Music Perf., Special Talent	. .	6d+3
Flutes (Coordination) Music Performance Talent	. . . . .	4d+1
Dance (Coordination) Performance Talent	. . . . .	4d+1
Business (Smarts)	. . . . .	3d
Charm (Smarts)	. . . . .	3d
Familiarity (Smarts) with pony nation's highways	. . . . .	3d
Acting (Senses)	. . . . .	4d
Disguise (Senses)	. . . . .	4d
Streetwise (Senses)	. . . . .	4d
Musical Hypnosis (Power) Wild Talent, Effect roll	. . . . .	4d

Possessions (including panniers/saddlebags)

Dwelling (medium)	Road-pony caravan that she pulls
Money (medium)	Income from performing and petty crime
Musical instrument (medium)	High-quality drum set
Musical instrument (minor)	Silver flute
Clothing (minor)	Performance wardrobe

Cymbal is a stereotypical road pony—independent, mobile, a bit larcenous, alluring, and the kind of filly one doesn't bring home to Mother. Her usual performance is a percussion-and-dance show with drums set at various angles on-stage that she plays as she dances. Some ponies, though, may have figured out there seems to be a little more to it than just musical skill. She also is willing to beat a fine rhythm on the skulls of those who get just a little too forward in their appreciation or intolerance.

For all her carefree, flippant ways, she does have a sense of duty, if not to the nation's laws and society, then at least to the Princesses and ordinary folk, whom she adores in equal measure. She's known to be a minor troublemaker and irritant, but she also keeps the local constabulary informed of anything threatening and has been known to undertake dangerous self-assigned missions to keep others out of harm's way. The constables don't quite know what to make of her.

Wild Talent (Musical Hypnosis spell): When Cymbal works at it, her music can hypnotize—holding a small crowd in passive rapture, putting a pony to sleep, weaving a suggestion, or calming a raging opponent. A glow appears around the instrument, but it won't distract those under the spell. To cast it, make a Music Performance Talent roll with any modifiers. *Casting distance:* none. *Ranged spell:* use range modifier for the farthest affected creature. *Failure:* spell fizzles. *Mishap:* spell backfires, causing unexpected behavior. *Effect:* Intimidation, Persuasion, or other appropriate Talent roll to hypnotize listeners; resist with Willpower or Smarts, or Senses if appropriate. *Duration:* how long hypnosis lasts before it wears off.

Personal Strength: *Sense of duty*—She does what she can to protect the innocent and is devoted to the princesses.

Personal Weakness: *Minor criminal record*—she's known to the authorities for petty theft and disorderly conduct.

Physical Description: Cymbal is short, slim, and graceful, with a dancer's muscles. Her coat is golden and her mane and tail are white and flowing; all of them are carefully tended. Her eyes are azure blue, and her cutie mark is a tambourine.

Best suited for a game set nearly anywhere that might be a bit edgy or daring. ♦



Deathcap the mushroom bunter
and part of her cutie mark.
Art by Baron Engel

*Additional guest contributions will
be included in future revisions.*



*"Tongs" and a griffin give each other the evil eye.
Art by Christina "Smudge" Hanson*

Bumpkin: Earth Stallion (*guest contribution*)

Muscle	2d+1	Walk Move	7 yards
Hardiness	2d	Swim & Climb Moves	4 yards
Reflexes	2d	Jump	2 yards
Coordination	2d	Strength Bonus	1d
Smarts	3d+2	Fatigue Points	26
Senses	2d	Recovery (sleep)	4
Power	5d	Recovery (rest)	2

Talent and Specialties (based on . . .) **Dice**

<i>Cast-Iron Stomach</i> (Hardiness) Stamina Specialty	4d
Resisting getting sick from eating or drinking bad or difficult things	
<i>Improvised Weapons</i> (Reflexes) Mêlée Specialty	4d
Fighting using objects not intended to be weapons	
<i>Brawling</i> (Reflexes)	3d
<i>Firearms</i> (Coordination)	3d
<i>Business</i> (Smarts)	4d
<i>Cosmopolitan</i> (Smarts)	4d
<i>Confidence</i> (Smarts)	4d
<i>Familiar</i> (Smarts) with pony nation's highways	4d
<i>Moonshining</i> (Power) Special Talent	6d+5
Brewing and distilling alcohol in primitive conditions with hoof-built equipment	
<i>Medicine</i> (Power)	6d
<i>Trauma Medicine</i> (Medicine) Medicine Specialty	7d
Treating traumatic injuries from accidents or fighting	

Possessions (he usually has a bottle of bourbon in his panniers)

Dwelling (medium) Rented outbuilding on a farm
Money (medium) Income from moonshining
Business (medium) Distillery in the woods
Contact (minor) with the local black market
Weapon (minor) Fancy coach gun: 2 shots, 6d injury; silver-inlaid engraving, scrimshawed ivory butt-plate and side panels, purple velvet shell pouch holding 20 nickel-plated brass shells

Bumpkin is the very picture of a hayseed from the back country—but he's smarter than he looks and acts.

Personal Strength: *Extrovert*—he's a friendly, outgoing sort who usually does well at winning over other ponies.

Personal Weakness: *Hick*—he behaves a lot like the stereotype of a backwood yokel.

Physical Description: Bumpkin is tall and a little gangly. His slightly shaggy coat is copper-colored; his short, raggedly cut mane and tail are blonde and rough. All of them usually are a bit dirty. His eyes are bloodshot . . . okay, purple. His cute mark is a clay jug with "XXX" marked on it.

Best suited for a game set in the country, maybe near a small town, that might be a bit uncouth, but not dark.

Wind Shear: Pegasus Mare (*guest contribution*)

Muscle	3d	Walk Move	8 yards
Hardiness	3d	Swim & Climb Moves	4 yards
Reflexes	2d+1	Jump	2 yards
Coordination	2d+1	Flight Move	7 yards
Smarts	2d+1	Strength Bonus	2d
Senses	2d+1	Fatigue Points	25
Power	2d+1	Recovery (sleep)	4
Finesse	2d+1	Recovery (rest)	2

Talents and Specialties (based on . . .)**Dice**

<i>Stamina</i> (Hardiness)	3d+1
<i>Swimming</i> (Reflexes)	3d+1
<i>Administration</i> (Smarts)	2d+2
Knowledge of rules/regulations & how an organization works	
<i>Familiarity</i> (Smarts) with city where game is set.	2d+2
<i>Lifeguard</i> (Smarts)	2d+2
Rescuing a victim from drowning without letting a panicking victim drown the rescuer too	
<i>Medicine</i> (Smarts)	3d
<i>Survival</i> (Smarts)	3d
<i>Marine Survival</i> (Survival) Specialty dealing with ocean .	4d
<i>Urban Legends</i> (Smarts)	2d+2
Knowledge of spooky stories that may or may not be true	
<i>Rescue Search</i> (Senses) Search Specialty	3d+1
Finding lost victims in the wilderness or on the ocean	
<i>Flying</i> (Finesse)	3d+1
<i>Weather Sense</i> (Finesse)	3d
<i>Windworking</i> Talent (Finesse)	3d

Possessions (every pony gets panniers/saddlebags)

<i>Dwelling</i> (medium) A small flat that she rents
<i>Money</i> (medium) Income from patrol work (and maybe writing)
<i>Phonograph</i> and record collection (medium)
<i>Toolkit</i> (minor) Survival vest with minimal gear (such as compass, first-aid kit, whistle, waterproof tin of matches, fire-crackers, and a pair of flares)
<i>Sunglasses</i> (minor) High-quality flyer's shades with lanyard

Wind Shear works on the local coastal patrol, helping to safeguard seafarers and those who live close to the ocean. She's good at her job, but those around her know full well she also is a little crazy. A favorite piece of advice she gives is "Always put a lanyard on your sandwich. You don't want to drop it when you're sitting on a cloud taking your lunch break."

Personal Strength: *Enthusiastic*—whatever she or her friends are doing, she'll jump into it with all four hooves.

Personal Weakness: *Loopy*—the sky isn't the same color in her world; she'll believe the most outrageous things. What's annoying is how often she's right. Parents occasionally tell their foals not to drink too much seawater or they'll end up like her.

Physical Description: Wind Shear's lean and wiry like a track-and-field athlete and fairly attractive. Her well-groomed coat is medium purple; her mane and tail are glossy black, straight, and medium length. Her eyes are deep purple. Her cutie mark is a white five-pointed star with a gold upraised wing.

Best suited for a fairly light game that ranges from silly to serious, set in a coastal area around a port city.

Marathon: Pegasus Stallion (*guest contribution*)

Muscle	2d	Walk Move	7 yards
Hardiness	4d+1	Swim & Climb Moves	4 yards
Reflexes	2d	Jump	2 yards
Coordination	2d	Flight Move	8 yards
Smarts	2d+1	Strength Bonus	1d
Senses	2d+2	Fatigue Points	37
Power	3d	Recovery (sleep)	6
Finesse	1d+2	Recovery (rest)	3

Talents and Specialties (based on . . .)**Dice**

<i>Stamina</i> (Hardiness) Special Talent.	6d+4
<i>Navigation</i> (Smarts)	4d
<i>Orienteering</i> (Navigation) Navigation Specialty.	5d
The use of maps and charts (rather than using instruments or examining the lay of the land)	
<i>Geography</i> (Smarts) Science Talent	2d+2
The science and study of the lands, the features, the inhabitants, and the phenomena of the world	
<i>Postal Service Administration</i> (Smarts) Admin. Specialty .	1d+2
Dealing with the royal postal service	
<i>Aerial Teamster</i> (Finesse)	3d
Efficiently loading, pulling through the air, and unloading a van, wagon, or cart	
<i>Flying</i> (Finesse)	4d
<i>Bump of Direction</i> (Finesse)	4d
<i>Weather Sense</i> (Finesse)	5d
Magical ability to understand exactly what the weather's doing at the moment and how it may change over the next day, assuming it isn't influenced by magic	

Possessions (including panniers/saddlebags)

<i>Dwelling</i> (medium) A small flat that he rents
<i>Money</i> (medium) Income from postal work
<i>Maps</i> (medium) Case of maps and charts
<i>Toolkit</i> (minor) Navigation instruments with case
<i>Library</i> (minor) Books with an emphasis on romances (in the old meaning of the word: novels about exotic places and characters, what today would be called pulp fiction)

Marathon works for the royal postal service, flying letters and small packages long distances from post office to post office.

Personal Strength: *Patient*—even if he doesn't like it, he'll put up with a lot when it's what his friends want or need.

Personal Weakness: *Introvert*—he doesn't make friends easily or quickly.

Physical Description: Marathon is average size for a pegasus stallion, but with an athletic build like a marathon runner. His coat is dark blue with an undertone of gray. His mane and tail are light grayish-blue; he keeps the former fairly short and the latter slightly longer. His eyes are greenish-blue. His cutie mark is a pony sandal with wings.

Best suited for a game that may involve traveling, but tends to be based in one area. ♦

Stormbucker: Pegasus Stallion (*guest contribution*)

Muscle	3d	Walk Move	8 yards
Hardiness	3d	Swim & Climb Moves	4 yards
Reflexes	4d	Jump	2 yards
Coordination	1d+1	Flight Move	7 yards
Smarts	1d+2	Strength Bonus	2d
Senses	2d+2	Fatigue Points	24
Power	1d+2	Recovery (sleep)	4
Finesse	2d+2	Recovery (rest)	2

Talents and Specialties (based on . . .)**Dice**

<i>Iron Horse</i> Specialty	1d
Reduces fatigue for Flying by ½ (double time for 1 FP)	
<i>Brawling</i> (Reflexes) Special Talent	5d+1
<i>Buck</i> (Brawling) Specialty: Attacking by bucking	7d+1
<i>Warboot Parry</i> (Brawling) Spec.: Parrying with warboots	7d+1
<i>Dodge</i> (Reflexes)	4d+1
<i>Confidence</i> (Smarts)	2d
<i>Painting</i> (Senses) Art Talent.	3d
<i>Gambling</i> (Senses)	3d
<i>Investigation</i> (Senses)	3d
<i>Notice</i> (Senses)	3d
<i>Streetwise</i> (Senses)	3d
<i>Black Market</i> (Streetwise) Specialty	4d
Buying, selling, and moving contraband and other illicit goods	
<i>Boltworking</i> Talent (Finesse)	3d
<i>Boltworking</i> Effect (Power)	3d
<i>Flying</i> (Finesse)	3d
<i>Emergency Maneuvers</i> (Flying) Specialty	4d
Maneuvering suddenly to avoid crashing or trouble	
<i>Sky Chariot</i> (Flying) Specialty	4d
Pulling a chariot through the air safely & comfortably	

Possessions (including panniers/saddlebags)

Dwelling (medium) A small flat that he owns
Money (medium) Income from bodyguarding and pick-up jobs
Vehicle (medium) Two-passenger sky chariot that he pulls
Barding (minor) Old royal guard helm: +3d armor, head only; forehead spike, 1d injury plus Strength Bonus (3d total)
Weapon (minor) Warboots: 1d+1 injury plus Strength Bonus and strike dice; Punch, 3d+2 total injury; Box, 4d total injury (+3 or +1d difficulty mod.); Kick, 4d+1 total injury (+6 or +2d difficulty modifier); Buck, 5d+1 total injury (+9 or +3d difficulty modifier)

Stormbucker was a guardspony who served on the borders and in the nation's biggest city. He's not a police-pony or detective, but he assisted in criminal take-downs and learned a lot. He hoped for a posting to the royal palace—what guard doesn't?—but then he uncovered corruption in his own unit.

A lieutenant was taking bribes from smugglers and bureaucrats. Stormbucker reported it; the lieutenant was tried and convicted, but the court-martial was hushed up and others escaped justice. To Stormbucker it looked like politics and dirty dealing. He appealed to the princesses but never got an answer. (He doesn't know that his letter was intercepted and never reached them.)

He resigned in disgust and now is a "white hat" muscle-for-hire: bodyguarding, making dangerous deliveries, and similar jobs. He's known to the local authorities, who sympathize with his history—but they also know he's kind of a loose cannon.

Personal Strength: *Sense of justice*—He is a very, sometimes roughly, straightforward believer in doing the right thing.

Personal Weakness: *Distrusts authority*—his bad experiences in the royal guard have left a lasting impression.

Physical Description: Stormbucker is large and sturdy, with a well-trimmed gold coat. His short-cropped mane and tail are cobalt blue. His eyes are violet. His cutie mark is a horseshoe over crossed spears.

Best suited for a somewhat dark game set mostly in a big city, with lots of shady figures and scheming. ♦



Wind Shear
by Christina "Smudge" Hanson

Starry Skies: Unicorn Mare (guest contribution)

Muscle	1d+2	Walk Move	6 yards
Hardiness	2d	Swim & Climb Moves	3 yards
Reflexes	2d	Jump	2 yards
Coordination	1d+2	Strength Bonus	1d
Smarts	4d	Fatigue Points	21
Senses	2d	Recovery (sleep)	4
Power	2d+2	Recovery (rest)	2
Finesse	4d	Magical Style: Pyromancy	

Talents and Specialties (based on . . .)

Dice

<i>Iron Horse</i>	1d
Reduces fatigue for Finesse Talents by ½	
<i>Astronomy</i> (Smarts) Science Talent, Special Talent	5d+2
The study of heavenly bodies and phenomena	
<i>Optics</i> (Smarts) Science Talent	5d
Working with light using lenses & related instruments	
<i>Mathematics</i> (Smarts) Science Talent	4d+1
Working with advanced equations and calculations, including geometry, algebra, and calculus	
<i>Charm</i> (Smarts)	4d+1
<i>High Society</i> (Charm) Specialty	5d+1
Dealing with the upper classes and the places where they tend to spend their time	
<i>Sharp Vision</i> (Senses) Notice Specialty for seeing well . . .	3d
<i>Illumination</i> (Finesse) Talent	4d
<i>Illumination</i> (Power) Effect	4d
<i>Levitation</i> (Finesse) Talent	4d
<i>Levitation</i> (Power) Effect	2d+2
<i>Pyrokinesis</i> (Finesse) Talent	4d+2
<i>Pyrokinesis</i> (Power) Effect	4d
Generating heat in a target object, possibly to the point of causing it to melt or catch fire	

Possession (including panniers/saddlebags)

<i>Business</i> (major) Telescope and optics shop; she lives in a room above the storefront
<i>Money</i> (medium) Income from the business
<i>Telescope</i> (minor) High-quality collapsing spyglass
<i>Mirror</i> (minor) Silvered segmented folding parabolic steel mirror (24-inch diameter): +1d injury or Effect with Pyrokinesis and dazzle Illumination, +1d resistance to light or fire magic when used as a shield; use Levitation or Coordination for Talent roll, depending on how it's being used

Starry Skies is a classic mage-type: able to attack and defend at range fairly well, but fragile when the bad guys finally get their grubby mitts on her. Her favorite combat moves will be blinding flashes, enhanced by her mirror if she has time to deploy it, or good old-fashioned rock-chucking with Levitation. She will direct fire spells at living beings only as a last resort.

Magical Style: *Pyromancy* is fire-related magic. The “Pyrokinesis” spell isn’t a flamethrower, fireball, or wall of fire; it’s the ability to generate heat and to stare at things until they catch on fire. It’s like opening a hot oven and getting slapped in the face by the hot air coming out—just add sparkly special effects.

Personal Strength: *Sense of fun*—she enjoys a good joke, which is a good thing, given her appearance.

Personal Weakness: *Unusual appearance*—she looks odd even for a brightly colored magical pony.

Physical Description: Starry’s cutie mark is a galaxy surrounded by nebulae, representing her talents in all things astronomical—in particular, her interest in cosmology and her nation’s place in the universe. In other ways, her appearance is unusual enough to be memorable and a little unnerving. She’s small and somewhat slender for an adult unicorn, but much of her coloration is similar to that of the moon princess, especially the cobalt blue of her coat. Her mane and tail of deep violet frosted with magenta, sometimes dotted with red glowing motes, also is out of the ordinary. Her eyes are ruby red.

In fact, her costumery on Nightmare Nights often is as either the moon princess or the mare in the moon, and she’s scared the proverbial pants off of more than one foal.

Best suited for a figurative game of classic high adventure, including questing and epic journeys. ♦

Marathon spots a griffin who failed his Stealth roll.
Art by Christina “Smudge” Hanson



Galea: Unicorn Mare

Muscle	2d	Walk Move	7 yards
Hardiness	2d	Swim & Climb Moves	4 yards
Reflexes	2d	Jump	2 yards
Coordination	2d	Strength Bonus	1d
Smarts	3d	Fatigue Points	24
Senses	2d	Recovery (sleep)	4
Power	2d	Recovery (rest)	2
Finesse	4d	Magical Style: Martial magic	

Talents (based on . . .)

Dice

<i>Leadership</i> (Smarts)	4d
<i>Navigation</i> (Smarts)	4d
<i>Piloting</i> (Coordination)	3d
<i>Stamina</i> (Hardiness)	3d
<i>Force Blast</i> (Finesse) Talent	5d
<i>Force Blast</i> (Power) Effect	2d
<i>Force Bubble</i> (Finesse) Special Talent	5d+2
<i>Force Bubble</i> (Power) Effect	2d
<i>Illumination</i> (Finesse) Talent	5d
<i>Illumination</i> (Power) Effect	2d

Possessions (including panniers/saddlebags)

<i>Knighthood</i> (med.)	Dame Commander of the Order of the Sun
<i>Money</i> (medium)	Pensions and partnership dividends
<i>Dwelling</i> (medium)	Townhouse with small yard in town
<i>Contact</i> (minor)	With the EUP Guard and retired officers
<i>Toolkit</i> (minor)	Set of navigation and sighting instruments

Galea served for many years as an EUP Guard officer in the airship corps, eventually reaching the rank of lieutenant colonel and assuming command of a large transport airship. During a training exercise, a smaller airship with an inexperienced crew collided with hers, causing both airships to crash. Her firm leadership, quick thinking, and clever use of her spells during the crisis saved lives, but she herself was seriously injured.

Her age and injuries forced her to retire; she still has a slight limp and isn't quite as strong as she used to be. In recognition of her sacrifice and gallantry, she received a retirement promotion to colonel and a knighthood. Both provided her with generous pensions, which she used to buy a townhouse.

She spent several months recuperating and adjusting to life as a retiree, but found it . . . boring. A group of investors, who were forming a company to build and operate an airship larger than any previous design, approached her to offer a chance to invest and to be the airship's captain. She leapt at the chance.

Magical Style: *Martial magic* is related to combat and war, including spells that help an officer exercise tactical command.

Personal Strength: *Honorable*—her word is her bond, and she lives by the code expected of an officer and a lady.

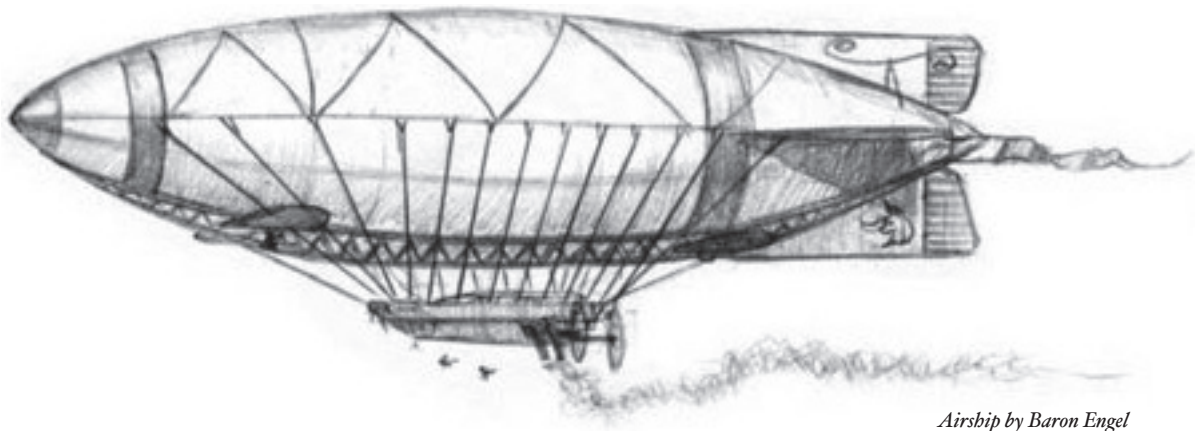
Personal Weakness: *Officer's manner*—her military training and bearing tend to come out in her attitudes and actions.

Physical Description: Galea is thin and a bit stringy with age. Her coat is a medium stone-gray, and she generally keeps it well-groomed. Her mane and tail are two-tone blue and somewhat wavy; she keeps them as neat and tidy as she did when she was in the Guard, though they're a little longer now. Her eyes are orange-red and usually narrowed. Her cutie mark is a *galea* (Roman legionary helmet) with face-guard in profile.

Suited for almost any game, with modification. In a comedic game, she can be competent but officious and self-important; in a serious game, she can be focused and professional.

An adventure game could follow the airship's travels to exotic lands or contract jobs around the ponies' country. In that case, substitute a suit of armor for the townhouse, including an alicorn-cover on the helm and war-boots on the hooves.

For a lighter game, she might have retired a second time but kept her part ownership of and investment in the airship. ♦



Airship by Baron Engel

Silver Tuppence: Unicorn Stallion *(guest contribution)*

Muscle	1d	Walk Move	6 yards
Hardiness	1d	Swim & Climb Moves	3 yards
Reflexes	1d	Jump	2 yards
Coordination	1d+1	Strength Bonus	1d
Smarts	5d	Fatigue Points	18
Senses	3d+1	Recovery (sleep)	3
Power	3d	Recovery (rest)	1
Finesse	4d+1	Magical Style: Numismatics	

Talents (based on . . .)

Dice

Alertness (Reflexes)	2d
Accounting (Smarts)	5d+1
Math dealing with business income and expenses	
Business (Smarts)	5d+1
Intimidation (Smarts)	5d+1
Leadership (Smarts)	5d+1
Organization (Smarts)	6d+1
Creating and maintaining order in a document or effort	
Willpower (Smarts)	5d+1
Barista (Senses)	3d+2
Brewing, steeping, mixing, or otherwise creating safe, tasty, and beneficial or well-balanced drinks	
Writing (Senses)	4d
Levitation (Finesse) Talent	5d+2
Levitation (Power) Effect	3d
Illumination (Finesse) Talent	4d+2
Illumination (Power) Effect	3d
Metal Appraisal (Finesse) Special Talent	4d+5
Metal Appraisal (Power) Effect	3d

Possessions (including panniers/saddlebags)

<i>Dwelling</i> (medium)	A nice flat in the lord's seat (manor house, castle, or palace from which the lord runs his lands)
<i>Money</i> (medium)	Income from majordomo's job
<i>Steamer trunk</i> (medium)	Contains a couple of butler-style outfits, pince-nez glasses with clip-on sunglasses, sundry toiletries, and a couple of blankets
<i>Toolkit</i> (minor)	Accountant's portfolio in a leather case, with abacus, chalk and small chalkboard, ledger paper, fountain pen with refills, letter paper, envelopes, candle wax, and a copy of the lord's wax seal for official business
<i>Toolkit</i> (minor)	Wet bar with tea set, coffee set, and liquors

Silver Tuppence works as a *majordomo* for the lord (or lady) in charge of the area where the game is set. He helps to keep the household's accounts in order and acts as the lord's agent for various tasks, including inspections and audits of businesses and local government agencies within the lord's lands.

For a stallion he's a bit pretty, and he's polite to the point of fussiness—but when the chips are down he can be surprisingly firm and able. He's not fond of leaving the lord's seat, preferring to work in his study, but all too often there's some errand that simply *has* to be run, and of course he usually gets chosen to do it because he's so reliable and capable.

Magical Style: *Numismatics* in the real world is the study and collection of coins, paper money, and medals. In Silver Tuppence's case, it is magic dealing with those things, and by extension other metals of value and financial instruments—stocks and bonds, letters of credit, and the like.

Metal Appraisal spell: Senses what, if any, metals and how much are in an object or location. *Casting distance:* none. *Ranged spell:* use range modifier for how far away object or location is. *Failure:* spell fizzles. *Mishap:* spell gives false information. *Effect:* Notice dice to determine if object or location contains metals, what those metals are, and how much. *Duration:* instant; in effect, the spell asks a question and gets an answer.

This spell is right on the edge of his Magical Style, and is phrased to make it useful for adventuring as well as more everyday accounting purposes. For example, it can be used to determine if steel or iron slugs are mixed in with silver or gold coins, but it also can be used to determine if there is iron *rebar* (reinforcing bar) inside a brick wall—say, as part of a building inspection. Another possibility is to count the monetary value of a pile or bag of coins without touching it, which would require a suitably high difficulty for the spell's Effect Notice roll.

Personal Strength: *Level-headed*—he doesn't panic or lose his head easily when things start getting serious.

Personal Weakness: *Fussy homebody*—he's a bit obsessive-compulsive and it's hard to pry him out of the lord's seat.

Physical Description: Silver Tuppence is slim and lanky, delicate enough to be mistaken easily for a mare. His impeccably groomed coat is silver gray. His mane and tail are similarly tidy—white with a shock of blue, worn straight and bound with a ribbon at the end, then curled. His eyes are copper-colored. His cutie mark is a pair of silver coins stamped with the seals of the royal princesses.

Best suited for a light adventure game that takes place mostly in one area. ★



Changeling, Astra Rose, and Silver Tuppence by Christina "Smudge" Hanson

THIS TWELVE-PAGE *quick reference* can be punched and put in a binder with the rest of the rulebook. Another idea is to print them on, or glue them to, both sides of heavy card stock, then assemble the sheets into a foldable screen to shield the narrator's notes and story-spoilers from view. The panels can be arranged in any order that suits the narrator.

The tables are very brief; they're reminders, not substitutes for the actual rules. If there's a conflict between this quick reference and the rules sections, follow the rules sections.

~ Optional Rules in Use ~

First Things First: Creating a Pony

- ☐ Other Kinds of Ponies
- ☐ Creating Other Creatures
- ☐ Specialties

Doing Things: Basic Task Resolution

- ☐ Harmony Points
- ☐ Too Many Dice!

Fast and Furious: Rounds and Actions

- ☐ Delaying
- ☐ Extra Actions

Plumb Tuckered: Fatigue and Rest

- ☐ Sleeping and Waking
- ☐ Extra Effort

Icky Stuff: Injury, Illness, and Healing

- ☐ Natural Hazards
- ☐ Overexertion
- ☐ First Aid

Them's Fightin' Words: Combat

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Step 2: Close Range | <input type="checkbox"/> Step 4: Additional Special Conditions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Step 3: Additional Attacks | <input type="checkbox"/> Aiming |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disarm | <input type="checkbox"/> Called Shot |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Entangle | <input type="checkbox"/> Group Attack |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lunge | <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple Weapons |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sweep | <input type="checkbox"/> Quick Draw |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Recoil |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Unwieldy Weapons and Objects |

Hoofin' It and Wingin' It: Movement

- ☐ Sliding and Rolling
- ☐ Running Momentum
- ☐ Gliding
- ☐ Gravity and Falling
- ☐ Trading Speed and Altitude
- ☐ Speed Is Energy
- ☐ Inside and Outside Loops
- ☐ Flying Momentum



Griffin chick
by Baron Engel

~ First Things First: Creating a Pony ~

Step 1: What Kind of Pony?

- A. Choose the pony's tribe: earth pony, pegasus, or unicorn.
- B. Choose whether the pony's a mare (female) or stallion (male).

Step 2: Aptitudes

- A. List the starting Aptitudes of the tribe chosen for the pony.
- B. Add 12d (36 points) to Aptitudes. They can be split up as desired, but no Aptitude can be more than 5d (15 points).

Step 3: Talents

Choosing Talents and figuring out how many points to put into each one can take some time and effort, so it's okay if these steps get all mixed up. They're listed separately just to make explaining and remembering them easier.

- A. Choose the pony's Talents and describe them if necessary.
- B. Decide whether each Talent is Mundane or Magical.
- C. Decide for each Talent what Aptitude to base it on.
- D. Decide which will the pony's Special Talent.
- E. Add 7d (21 points) to Talents. They can be split up as desired, but each Talent must have at least +1 (1 point) and no more than 3d (9 points) added to it.

Step 4: Personal Traits

Decide on the pony's Personal Strength and Personal Weakness, name them, and describe them. They can be made up, with the narrator's approval.

Step 5: Finishing Touches

- A. Note down Fatigue Points and recovery, Strength Bonus, and Moves.
- B. Describe how the pony looks. That can include size and build; colors of coat, mane, tail, and eyes; and the cutie mark and its meaning. Use an extra sheet if it's needed.
- C. Name the pony and describe what else is important about the pony. Some examples are personality, voice, birthplace, and earlier life. Use an extra sheet if it's needed.
- D. Note down the pony's Moves and Strength Bonus.
- E. Decide on the pony's important possessions. The pony may have up to 8. A major possession counts as 4. A medium possession counts as 2. A minor possession counts as 1. Every pony also owns a pair of panniers or saddlebags.

Dice:	+1	+2	1d	1d+1	1d+2	2d	2d+1	2d+2	3d	3d+1	3d+2	4d	4d+1	4d+2	5d	5d+1	5d+2	6d	(and so on)
Points:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	(and so on)

~ List of Sample Talents ~

Muscle Talents

Blacksmithing Working iron into useful artifacts or devices.
Lifting Used instead of Muscle for hefting and carrying.
Lumbering Harvesting wood from trees with minimal waste.
Move Increase (ability) Add to Muscle for Run Move.
*Plowing** Pulling, steering, and operating a plow or harvester.
Teamster Loading, pulling, and unloading a van, wagon, or cart.

Hardiness Talents

Stamina Replaces Hardiness to resist fatigue, poison, illness.

Reflexes Talents

Acrobatics Performing gymnastics and breaking falls.
Alertness Replaces Reflexes for rolling initiative; see the rules in “Fast and Furious: Rounds and Actions” for details.
Brawling Fighting without weapons.
Climbing Scaling steep surfaces to move upward or downward.
Contortion The ability to wiggle out of bonds or restrictions.
Dodge Avoiding attacks or obstacles; see the rules in “Them’s Fightin’ Words: Combat” for details.
Jumping Leaping, including over obstacles, without falling.
Mêlée Fighting with close-up weapons (clubs, blades, *et cetera*).
Running Moving on one’s hooves (or paws or feet).
Sneaking Moving silently, using cover and misdirection.
Swimming Moving through the water and breathing properly.

Coordination Talents

Firearms Shooting pistols, rifles, shotguns, and cannon.
Legerdemain Fancy manipulation and misdirection.
Lockpicking Opening locks, disarming simple traps.
Masonry Building sturdy and useful brick and stone structures.
Missile Weapons Shooting bows, crossbows, and slings.
Performing Any single kind of performance is a Talent.
Piloting Steering or guiding mechanical vehicles.
Throwing Flinging or catching objects accurately.
Tinker Building, repairing small or simple mechanical devices.

Smarts Talents

Business Running an enterprise successfully and profitably.
Charm Influencing other ponies or creatures with charisma.
Confidence Using bluffs, lies, and trickery on others.
Cosmopolitan General knowledge of other cultures.
Demolitions Using force to destroy structures or objects.
Engineering Designing and building big, complicated devices.
*Farriery** Hoof care—trimming, balancing, rasping, shoeing.
*Farming** Planting, maintaining, harvesting, and processing.
*Forestry** Caring for forests and the lands where they grow.
Forgery Creating or spotting fake documents, art, or currency.
*Husbandry** Breeding, rearing, and caring for animals.
Intimidation Influencing others through threats and fear.
Languages (group) Any single language is a Talent.
Leadership Directing groups of other ponies or creatures.
*Medicine** Treating sick or injured ponies.
Navigation Using maps or other means to avoid getting lost.
*Preserving** Using any method to prevent food from spoiling.
Repair Returning damaged or worn devices to good condition.

Science (group) Any single science is a Talent.
Telegraphy Operating and maintaining telegraph equipment.
*Veterinary Medicine** Treating sick or injured animals.
Willpower Resisting stress or pain, or attempts to influence.

Senses Talents

Acting Playing a fictitious role, on the stage or anywhere else.
*Animal Training** Teaching animals to perform tasks and follow commands.
Art (group) Any single form of art is a Talent.
*Cooking** Preparing foods that are safe, nutritious, and tasty.
Craft (group) Any single craft is a Talent.
Disguise Changing appearance with make-up, costume, posture.
Familiarity Knowledge of a specific geographical area; the bigger the area, the less detailed the knowledge is.
Gambling Playing games of chance or skill.
Hiding Keeping still and avoiding notice, concealing objects.
Investigation Gathering clues to solve puzzles or mysteries.
Journalism Gathering and presenting information about newsworthy events.
Notice Observing things or details with sight and other senses.
Oratory Public speaking to influence large audiences.
Persuasion Influencing small audiences with talk, gifts, or other methods.
Searching Canvassing an area systematically for hidden objects.
Streetwise Finding information, goods, and contacts in an urban environment.
*Survival** Techniques for living in wild conditions.
Tracking Following a creature’s trail without being noticed.
Writing Communicating effectively using text rather than spoken language.

Pegasus Magical Talents

Bump of Direction Orients a pegasus even when she can’t see.
Flying Moving through the air without losing control and falling; see “Hoofin’ It and Wingin’ It: Movement” for details.
Flight Increase (ability) Add to Power for Flight Move.
Weatherworking (group) Controlling and manipulating clouds: Boltworking, Cloudworking, and Rainworking Talents.
Windworking Controlling and directing of winds.

Unicorn Magical (Spell) Talents

Force Blast shoots a beam of raw magical force at a target.
Force Bubble creates a protective sphere of magical force.
Illumination creates a glow like a will-o’-the-wisp—see the rules in “Visibility: How Far Can a Pony See?” for details.
Levitation lifts, carries, and manipulates objects using magic.
Prime Mover powers a mechanical device that’s designed for it. The narrator may decide to allow any unicorn to use it rather than requiring it to be part of the unicorn’s Style.
Pyrotechnics creates a fireworks-like display of flashes, starbursts, or simple images. Can be used to attack: *dazzle* creates a blinding flash; *explosion* causes real injury.
Transformation (group) Talent must specify, with narrator approval, what can be transformed and what it can be transformed into.
Wink moves creatures or things across distances “in the wink of an eye”.

~ Doing Things: Basic Task Resolution ~

Difficulty Ratings		
≤ 0	<i>Trivial</i>	No task attempt needed
1-5	<i>Routine</i>	Attempt needed only if very important
6-10	<i>Easy</i>	Takes little effort unless lacking Talent
11-15	<i>Middling</i>	Doing task right takes skill and effort
16-20	<i>Hard</i>	Pony should be well-trained for task
21-25	<i>V. hard</i>	Only best-trained pony has a chance
≥ 26	<i>Impossible</i>	Success is worthy of telling the tale

Difficulty Modifier Ratings and Examples

≥ +16	<i>Huge disadvantage</i>	Machine repair without tools
+11 to +15	<i>Big disadvantage</i>	Finding a pony in darkness
+6 to +10	<i>Fair disadvantage</i>	Tracking pony in rain/snow
+1 to +5	<i>Small disadvantage</i>	Fix pocket-watch by candle
-1 to -5	<i>Small advantage</i>	Springy board for jumping
-6 to -10	<i>Fair advantage</i>	Rough-&-ready tool for task
-11 to -15	<i>Big advantage</i>	Good tools for the task
≤ -16	<i>Huge advantage</i>	Best tools for the task

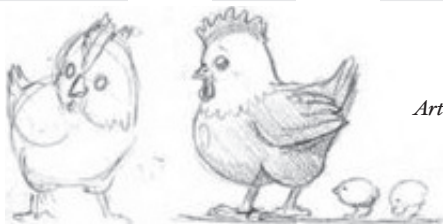
Rushing Task	DM	Extra Time	Add
Spend $\frac{3}{4}$ as long	+5	Spend twice as long	+1d
Spend $\frac{1}{2}$ as long	+10	Spend 4 times as long	+2d
Spend $\frac{1}{4}$ as long	+20	Spend 8 times as long	+3d

Die Roll Minus Difficulty and Result

0	Barely succeeded; longer than, or gets less than, usual
1-4	Succeeded, but didn't do anything special
5-8	Did well; went quickly or got more than expected
9-12	Did very well; task went quickly and got extra
13-16	Did well enough that bystanders noticed success
≥ 17	Did well enough that success will be talked about

~ Spectacular Feats: Using Magical Talents ~

Casting distance:	1 yd.	2 yds.	3 yds.	4 yds.	5 yds.
Talent modifier:	—	-1d	-2d	-3d	-4d



Art by Baron Engel

~ Spectacular Feats: Using Magical Talents ~

Magic	Diff.	Effect	Magic	Diff.	Effect
<i>V. small</i>	0	1 pip/die	<i>Large</i>	15	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ × Power
<i>Small</i>	5	$\frac{1}{2}$ Power	<i>V. large</i>	20	2 × Power
<i>Moderate</i>	10	1 × Power	Round up if necessary		

Range	Description	Mod.
<i>Close</i>	No farther than 3 yards (2.7 m)	none
<i>Short</i>	Beyond close to 1 yard per die of Power	+5
<i>Medium</i>	Beyond short to 10 times short range	+10
<i>Long</i>	Beyond medium to 10 times med. range	+15

Spell Duration	Mod.	Spell Duration	Mod.
Up to 1 round	None	Up to 10 minutes	+10
Up to 1 minute	+5	Up to 1 hour	+15

~ Doing More Things: Special Task Rules ~

Teamwork: Orders or instructions	Difficulty
Simple or general commands	3
Easy or specific commands	7
Difficult or very specific commands	12
Very difficult or precise commands	17
Extremely difficult or very precise commands	22
Exacting commands	28

Teamwork: Group's ability	DM
Follows leader no matter what	-20
Members will sacrifice for each other	-15
Has trained a lot to work together	-10
Has trained a little to work together	-5
Has worked together a lot or is willing to	None
Has worked together several times	+5
Has worked together only a few times	+10
Never worked together or members hate each other	+15
Not interested in working together, all members hate each other, or members can't communicate	+20

Load is carried on	*	Load is carried on	*
Skids, smooth surface	2	Modern cart/wagon	20
Primitive cart/wagon	10	Train or canal barge	100

* Divide weight of load by number listed

How Much Can a Pony Lift, Carry, and Pull?

D = difficulty

tons = US short tons

tonnes = metric tonnes

pounds	kg	D
0.1 to 2	0 to 0.9	1
2.1 to 10	1.0-4.5	2
11 to 20	4.6-9.1	3
21-40	10-18	4
41-60	19-27	5
61-80	28-36	6
81-100	37-45	7
101-120	46-54	8
121-140	55-64	9
141-160	65-73	10
161-180	74-82	11
181-200	83-91	12
201-240	92-109	13
241-280	110-127	14
281-320	128-145	15
321-360	146-163	16
361-400	164-181	17
401-500	182-227	18
501-600	228-272	19
601-700	273-318	20
701-800	319-363	21
801-900	364-408	22
901-1000	409-454	23
1001-1100	455-499	24
1101-1200	500-544	25
1201-1300	545-590	26
1301-1400	591-635	27
1401-1500	636-680	28
1501-1600	681-726	29
1601-1700	727-771	30
1701-1800	772-816	31
1801-1900	817-862	32
1901-2000	863-907	33

tons	tonnes	D
1.01-1.10	0.91-1.00	34
1.11-1.20	1.01-1.09	35
1.21-1.30	1.10-1.18	36
1.31-1.40	1.19-1.27	37
1.41-1.50	1.28-1.36	38
1.51-1.60	1.37-1.45	39
1.61-1.70	1.46-1.54	40
1.71-1.80	1.55-1.63	41
1.81-1.90	1.64-1.72	42
1.91-2.00	1.73-1.81	43
2.1-2.5	1.9-2.3	44
2.6-3.0	2.4-2.7	45
3.1-3.5	2.8-3.2	46
3.6-4.0	3.3-3.6	47
4.1-4.5	3.7-4.1	48
4.6-5.0	4.2-4.5	49
5.1-5.5	4.6-5.0	50
5.6-6.0	5.1-5.4	51
6.1-6.5	5.5-5.9	52
6.6-7.0	6.0-6.4	53
7.1-7.5	6.5-6.8	54
7.6-8.0	6.9-7.3	55
8.1-8.5	7.4-7.7	56
8.6-9.0	7.8-8.2	57
9.1-9.5	8.3-8.6	58
9.6-10.0	8.7-9.1	59
11-15	10-14	60
16-20	15-18	61
21-25	19-23	62
26-30	24-27	63
31-35	28-32	64
36-40	33-36	65
41-45	37-41	66
46-50	42-45	67
51-55	46-50	68
56-60	51-54	69
61-65	55-59	70

~ Two Bits: Buying Things ~

Possession of money: Dice for purchases:	Major 6d	Mod. 4d	Minor 2d	None 1d
---------------------------------------------	-------------	------------	-------------	------------

Price range	Diff.	3d times
<i>Cheap:</i> 1-20 bits	1-5	1 bit
<i>Inexpensive:</i> 21-200 bits	6-10	10 bits
<i>A little expensive:</i> Hundreds of bits	11-15	100 bits
<i>Kind of expensive:</i> A few thousand bits	16-20	500 bits
<i>Expensive:</i> Several thousand bits	21-25	1000 bits
<i>Very expensive:</i> Tens of thousands of bits	26-30	10,000
<i>Costly:</i> Hundreds of thousands of bits	31-35	100,000

Things that can affect prices	Diff.	Mod.
<i>Item is:</i> low-quality, damaged, very common, or simpler technology than commonly available; local market is flooded	-5 or less	(each)
Customer pays on time, customer shops there a lot, or seller has no complaints	-1 or less	(each)
Customer doesn't pay on time or is a problem	+1 or more	
<i>Item is:</i> high-quality, in very good shape, heavily decorated, uncommon, not easily available, in big demand, or a bit more advanced technology than commonly available	+5 or more	(each)
<i>Item is:</i> not available to public, out of season, from far away, or much more advanced technology than is commonly available	+15 or more	(each)

Purchase difficulty	How often?
<i>Casual:</i> ≤ number of money dice	Several per day
<i>Normal:</i> > number to 3 times number of dice	One per day
<i>Luxury:</i> > 3 times number of money dice	One per week

Optional Rule: Too Many Dice!

Whole Dice	Roll 5d	Whole Dice	Roll 5d	Whole Dice	Roll 5d
11d	+21	16d	+39	21d	+56
12d	+25	17d	+42	22d	+60
13d	+28	18d	+46	23d	+63
14d	+32	19d	+49	24d	+67
15d	+35	20d	+53	25d	+70

~ *Weights and Measures: The Physical World* ~

Size	Examples	Size	Examples	Size	Exam.
40	Dragon	3	Small cart	-6	Housecat
24	Bldg. (8 flrs.)	3	Sun princess	-6	Breadbox
20	Bldg. (4 flrs.)	2	Moon princess	-9	Rat
14	Bldg. (2 flrs.)	0	Adult pony	-12	Mouse
10	Train car	-3	Foal	-15	Coin
6	Large wagon	-3	Medium dog	-21	Ant

Precipitation*	Visibility
<i>None</i> : 0 inches (0 mm)	See table at right
<i>Very light</i> : ≤ 0.01 inch (0.25 mm)	4-8 mi. (6.4-13 km)
<i>Light</i> : 0.02 to 0.04 in. (0.26-1 mm)	2-4 mi. (3.2-6.4 km)
<i>Moderate</i> : 0.05 to 0.16 in. (2-4 mm)	1-2 mi. (1.6-3.2 km)
<i>Heavy</i> : 0.17 to 0.64 in. (5-16 mm)	½-1 mi. (0.8-1.6 km)
<i>Very heavy</i> : 0.7 to 2.0 in. (17-50 mm)	¼-½ mi. (0.4-0.8 km)
<i>Extreme</i> : 3 to 8 in. (51-203 mm)	⅛-¼ mi. (0.2-0.4 km)
<i>Maximum</i> : > 8 inches (203 mm)	⅙-⅛ mi. (0.1-0.2 km)

* Drizzle may be *very light* or *light*; half visibility.
Snow may be 6 to 11 times as bulky; half visibility.

Visibility Conditions	DM
Light smoke or fog, <i>or</i> middle distance	+3 <i>or</i> +1d
Thick smoke or fog, <i>or</i> long distance	+6 <i>or</i> +2d
Very thick smoke or fog, <i>or</i> very long distance	+12 <i>or</i> +4d
Twilight (half normal range of visibility)	+5
Night (one-fourth normal range of visibility)	+10

Beaufort Scale	Knots	mph	km/h	Conditions on land	Conditions on water
0 Calm	little or no wind, too light to feel			Calm—smoke rises vertically	Flat seas with no significant waves
1 Light air	1-2	1-3	1-5.5	Smoke drifts, wind vanes are still	Ripples without crests
2 Light breeze	3-6	4-7	5.6-11	Leaves rustle, wind vanes move	Small wavelets, glassy crests
3 Gentle breeze	7-10	8-12	12-19	Leaves and twigs move	Large wavelets, scattered whitecaps
4 Moder. breeze	11-15	13-17	20-28	Small branches move, dust raised	Small waves with breaking crests
5 Fresh breeze	16-20	18-24	29-38	Small trees sway, med. branches move	Many whitecaps, slight spray in air
6 Strong breeze	21-26	25-30	39-49	Large branches move, umbrellas pull	Foam crests frequent, some spray
7 Near gale	27-33	31-38	50-61	Trees move, hard to walk	Sea heaps up, foam blown in streaks
8 Fresh gale	34-40	39-46	62-74	Twigs broken off, very hard to walk	High waves, breaking crests, spray
9 Strong gale	41-47	47-54	75-88	Branches break, some saplings fall	High waves, some rolling over, spray
10 Whole gale	48-55	55-63	89-102	Trees break, shingles come loose	High waves with overhanging crests
11 Violent storm	56-63	64-72	103-117	Much damage to plants and roofs	Extremely high waves, lots of spray
12 Hurricane force	≥ 64	≥ 73	≥ 118	Major damage to plants and houses	Huge waves, air filled with spray
— Typical tornado	90-100	104-115	167-185	Catastrophic but uneven damage	Waterspout; extreme conditions

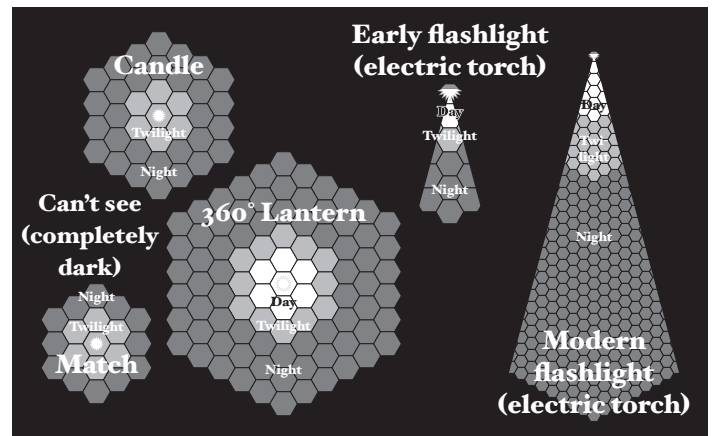
Pony Tales by Dave Bryant

Quick Reference ~ Panel 6

Third Edition ~ Version 4

Visibility in air	Distance
<i>Ideal</i> : clear mountain/arctic air	45-60 miles (72-91 km)
<i>Typical</i> : sea level near town/city	20-30 miles (32-48 km)
<i>Haze</i> : thin fog, smoke, etc.	1.25-3 miles (2-5 km)
<i>Mist</i> : medium fog, smoke, etc.	0.625-1.2 miles (1-1.9 km)
<i>Fog or clouds</i> : thick smoke, etc.	0.62 miles (0.95 km) or less
<i>“Zero”</i> visibility	110 yards (100 m) or less

Light	Daylight	Twilight	Night
Match (360°)	—	0 to 1 yard	2 yards
Candle (360°)	—	0 to 1 yard	2 to 3 yards
Lantern (360°)	0 to 1 yard	2 yards	3 to 5 yards
Early flash. (30°)	0 to 1 yard	2 yards	3 to 5 yards
Mod. flash. (30°)	0 to 5 yards	6 to 10 yds.	11 to 30 yards



Stamina or Hardiness:	1d	1d+1	1d+2	2d	2d+1	2d+2	3d	3d+1	3d+2	4d	4d+1	4d+2	5d	5d+1	5d+2	6d	6d+1
Fatigue Points:	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34

~ *Icky Stuff: Injury, Illness, and Healing* ~

Injury or illness (use second column for changed values, if any)			
≤ 0	≤ 0	Bruised	No effect
1-3	1-	Stunned	-1d to all tasks next turn
4-6	-	Minor	-1d to all tasks until healed
7-9	-	Serious	-2d to all tasks until healed
10-12	-	Major	-3d to all tasks until healed; may be unconscious for 10d minutes
13-15	-	Mortal	Unconscious until healed; Hardiness roll each minute to stay alive
≥ 16	≥	Death	Immediate

Natural healing from	Roll after	Difficulty
Stunned (no recovery roll needed)	—	automatic
Minor illness or injury	3 days	6
Serious illness or injury	3 days	6
Major illness or injury	2 weeks	6
Mortal illness or injury	5 weeks	8

Medical treatment for	Roll after	Difficulty
Minor illness or injury	1 day	10
Serious illness or injury	1 day	15
Major illness or injury	1 day	20
Mortal illness or injury	1 day	25

Optional Rule: Natural Hazards

Hail or sleet:	Mod.	Heavy	V. hvy	Extr.	Max.
Injury/round:	1d	1d+1	1d+2	2d	3d

Hazard	1d	1d+1	1d+2	2d	2d+1	2d+2	3d	3d+1	3d+2	4d	← Injury
Asphyxiat.	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	Round
Drowning	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	Failed Roll
Dehydrat.	1	1 ½	2	2 ½	3	3 ½	4	4 ½	5	5 ½	Days
Starvation	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Days
Cold	40-49 4-9	30-39 -1-4	20-29 -7-2	10-19 -12-7	0-9 -18-13	-10-1 -23-18	-20-11 -29-24	-30-21 -34-24	-40-31 -46-35	-50-41 -46-41	°F each hour °C each hour
Falling	6-10 2-3	11-15 3-5	16-20 5-6	21-25 6-8	26-30 8-9	31-35 9-11	36-40 11-12	41-45 12-14	46-50 14-15	51-55 16-17	Feet Meters
Collision	26-30 24-27	31-35 28-32	36-40 33-37	41-45 37-41	46-50 42-46	51-55 47-50	56-60 51-55	61-65 56-59	66-70 60-64	71-75 65-69	Yards/round Meters/round

~ *Plumb Tuckered: Fatigue and Rest* ~

Activity	Light	Moderate	Heavy	Max.
<i>Running</i>	Walk	Trot	Canter	Gallop
<i>Swimming</i>	Swim	Swim × 2	Swim × 3	Swim × 4
<i>Climbing</i>	—	Climb	Cli. × 1 ½	Climb × 2
<i>Jumping</i>	A few	Sev./min.	Constant	With tricks
<i>Flying</i>	Slow	M./hover	Fast	Very fast
<i>Carry/pull</i>	Light	Medium	Heavy	Very heavy
<i>Per hour:</i>	1 FP	3 FP	12 FP	60 FP
<i>1 FP per:</i>	60 min.	20 min.	5 minutes	1 minute
<i>Weatherw. & instant s.:</i>	1 FP for small	2 FP for moderate	4 FP for large	8 FP for very large

Condition	+1 exert. level	+2 exert. levels
<i>Weather</i>	Hot	Very hot
<i>Spellcasting at:</i>	Medium range	Long range
<i>Flight, per min.</i>	Heroic (2 FP)	Supersonic (4 FP)

FP	Pony's Condition	FP	Pony's Condition
1-5	<i>Tired:</i> -1d*	-5	<i>Exhausted:</i> minor injury
0	<i>Exhausted:</i> -2d*	-10	<i>Exhausted:</i> serious injury
	* From all task attempts	-15	<i>Exhausted:</i> major injury

Recovery of Fatigue Points per Hour

Sleep: ½ of total FP; round to nearest whole point

Rest: ½ as much as sleep; round up to next whole point (if Stamina or Hardiness is less than 2d, 1 FP per hour)

~ Fast and Furious: Rounds and Actions ~

Step 1. Initiative

Determine order of play with Alertness or Reflexes rolls.

Step 2. Actions

Decide on actions to take; apply action penalty if needed.

Step 3. Is It Over?

Continue with rounds or revert to normal handling of time.

~ Them's Fightin' Words: Combat ~

Step 1: Defense

Defense	Attack difficulty
<i>Passive</i> No special effort to defend	10
<i>All-out</i> No other actions allowed	Dodge or Reflexes + 10
<i>Normal</i> Other full actions allowed	Dodge or Reflexes roll
<i>Block</i> Trying to stop attacks	Brawling, Mêlée, or Reflexes roll
<i>Pary</i> Trying to deflect attacks	Brawling, Mêlée, or Reflexes roll

Step 2: Range

Range	Distance	DM
<i>Close</i> (optional) 0–3 yards (0–2.7 m)		–5
<i>Short</i> To first range listing (beyond 3 yards if using close range)		None
<i>Medium</i> Beyond 1st range listing to 2nd range listing		+5
<i>Long</i> Beyond 2nd range listing to 3rd range listing		+10

Step 3: Attack

Unarmed	Attacker uses . . .	Injury	DM
<i>Bite</i>	Teeth	*	+3 (or +1d)†
<i>Punch, butt</i>	One front hoof or head	+1‡	No modif.
<i>Box or clip</i>	Both front hooves or wing	+2	+3 (or +1d)
<i>Kick</i>	One rear hoof	1d	+6 (or +2d)
<i>Buck</i>	Both rear hooves	2d	+9 (or +3d)

DM = Difficulty Modifier * Strength Bonus only.

† Subtract 3 (or 1d) if attacker and target are very close.

‡ For a unicorn using her alicorn (horn), use +2 instead.

Muscle	Strength Bonus
2d+2 or less	1d
3d to 4d+2	2d
5d	3d

Special Attacks

Grab	Attack difficulty modifier of +6 (or +2d); each round target's grabbed, attacker can use Strength Bonus; target trying to escape rolls Muscle contest against attacker (counts as an action)
<i>Choke</i>	Cut off target's air, using Strength Bonus on first round; after that, use general Grab rules
<i>Flip</i>	Yank target into falling; target suffers 3d injury from hitting round and then is prone
<i>Hold</i>	Hold target; subtracts 3d or more from injury
<i>Slam or throw</i>	Lift and slam or throw target into nearby object with two actions (lift and slam), both needing lifting rolls; injury equals object's toughness roll; attacker's Strength Bonus may damage object, resisted by toughness roll
Tackle	Try to grab target's body; +3 (or +1d) to attack difficulty, normal injury dice first round, Strength Bonus after
Trip or knock-down	Roll Muscle (or Talent) contest against target; +6 (or +2d) to attack difficulty; if successful, target is not injured but falls (standing up is a full action)
Push	Roll Muscle (or Talent) contest against target; +3 (or +1d) to attack difficulty; if successful, target not injured but suffers –2d from next Agility roll

Toughness, with examples	Dice
<i>Flimsy</i> : plywood door	1d
<i>Tough</i> : weapon or hard wooden door	2d
<i>Sturdy</i> : floor safe or bolted steel door	3d
<i>Very sturdy</i> : a few layers of steel	4d
<i>Reinforced</i> : many layers of steel	6d

Optional Attacks

Disarm	Tries to knock weapon or object from target's grip; target can use an action to roll Muscle (or Levitation) against "injury" roll in a contest to keep a grip on weapon or object
Entangle	Tries to tangle up target with lasso, net, whip, etc.; target isn't injured, but can't take any actions besides trying to break free in a contest against "injury" roll; slipping out is an Agility roll, and breaking weapon is a Muscle roll
Lunge	Rushes target; add ½ yard (45 cm) to range of attack, +3 (or +1d) to attack difficulty, –1d injury
Sweep	Makes roundhouse blow or leg sweep; –6 (or –2d) from attack difficulty and –1d from injury

Step 4: Special Conditions

All-out attack	-6 (or -2d) from attack difficulty and +1d to injury; can't take any other actions in round
Crouched target	+3 (or +1d) to attack difficulty; +3 (or +1d) more if crouched target is moving; crouched target can move only half as far as normal
Prone target	-6 (or -2d) to attack difficulty at point-blank/short range; +6 (or +2d) at medium/long range
Size	See "Size" table for example values
Surprise	In first round, goes first or +1d to all actions

Optional Special Conditions

Aiming	Shooter taking no other action gets +1d to attack roll per round aiming at target; +3d max.
Group Att.	See "Teamwork" tables for information
Multiple weapons	Multi-action penalty if using multiple weapons in round
Quick draw	Attacker can subtract dice from attack roll and add them to initiative roll for a round
Unwieldy weapon	+5 to attack difficulty: weapon is more than 2 ft. (60 cm), hard to use, or user doesn't understand

Cover and visibility

DM

Target can't see at all	-12 or -4d
Light smoke/fog, dim light, twilight, or target 1/4 hidden	+3 or +1d
Thick smoke/fog, moonlight, or target 1/2 hidden	+6 or +2d
Very thick smoke/fog, darkness, target 3/4 hidden, or attacker can't see at all	+12 or +4d
Target is completely hidden	*

* Can't hit target directly, but if injury roll is greater than protection from cover, what's left over may hit target.

Called Shot	Diff. Modifier	Injury	Injury effect
Head	+3 or +1d	+4d (+2d)	-1 to Smarts, Senses, init.
Heart	+12 or +4d	+4d (+2d)	No actions next round
Arm	+2 or +1d	-2	-1 to rolls with injured arm
Leg or wing	+3 or +1d	-1	-1 to Reflexes, Coordination, initiative rolls

DM = Difficulty modifier

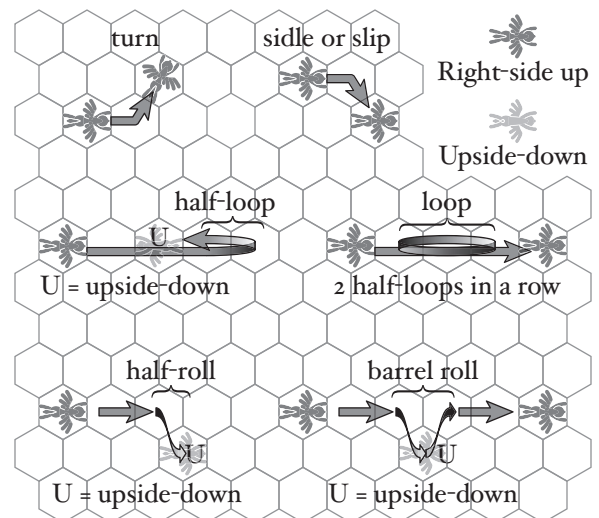
Step 5: Roll! • Step 6: Injury or Effect (if successful)

Type of barding (armor):	Leather	Mail	Plate
Hardness roll modifier:	+1d	+2d	+3d

~ Hoofin' It and Wingin' It: Movement ~

Muscle or Power dice:	1d	2d	3d	4d	5d
Walk or Flight Move:	6 yds. (5.5 m)	7 yards (6.4 m)	8 yds. (7.3 m)	9 yards (8.2 m)	10 yds. (9.1 m)

	Movement Distances	Diff.
Walk & Run	Walk from 1 yard to as far as Walk Move	0
	Trot (run) beyond Walk Move to 2 × Walk M.	5
	Canter (run) beyond trot to 4 × Walk Move	10
	Gallop (run) beyond canter to 8 × Walk Move	15
Swimming	1 yard to as far as Swim Move	5
	Beyond Swim Move to 2 × Swim Move	10
	Beyond 2 × Swim Move to 3 × Swim Move	15
	Beyond 3 × Swim Move to 4 × Swim Move	20
Climbing	From 1 yard to as far as Climb Move	10
	Beyond Climb Move to 1 1/2 × Climb Move	20
	Beyond 1 1/2 × Climb Move to 2 × Climb Move	30
Jumping	From 1 yard to as far as Jump Move	5
	Each extra yard added to jump distance	+5
	Running start to jump: Gallop for 1 round Gallop for 2 rounds	-5 -10
Flying	Hover: Stay still in mid-air (move 0 yards)	3
	Slow: From 1 yard to as far as Flight Move	0
	Moderate: Beyond Flight M. to 2 × Flight M.	5
	Fast: Beyond 2 × Flight Move to 4 × Flight M.	10
	Very fast: Beyond 4 × Flight M. to 8 × Flight M.	15
	Heroic: Beyond 8 × Flight Move, needs Flight Talent; add to difficulty as distance doubles	+5 per doubling



~ Hoofin' It and Wingin' It: Movement ~

Maneuvers and Bad Conditions		DM
Maneuvers	Speed up or slow down by up to 2 times Move (8 times Move for flying), gain or lose altitude	—
	Per turn or rotation (<i>doesn't count as movement</i>)	+1
	Per sidle (1 yard) or slip (1 yd. to 1/8 of flying move)	+1
	Per half-loop or half-roll (at least 1/8 of move)	+5
	Walking or flying slow backward, flying low, gliding, power-diving or zoom-climbing	+5
	Trying to break the sound barrier	+10
Bad Conditions	Uneven surface, small obstacles, choppy water, climbing tree, or flying in strong winds	+5
	Big obstacles, strong current, climbing a rough wall, or flying in rough air	+10
	Lots of big, close obstacles, or stormy weather	+15
	Narrow or shaky path (cliff trail, rope bridge), big waves, or climbing a smooth wall	+20
	Collapsing hall, flying/swimming in hurricane	≥ +25

Taking off & landing	Maneuver/difficulty
Take off	Jump up ≤ 2 yards (galloping start allowed)
Land at walking speed	Jump down from height
Land at trotting speed	+5 to jump difficulty
Land at cantering speed	+10 to jump difficulty
Land at galloping speed	+15 to jump difficulty
Land faster than gallop	+20 to jump difficulty

Optional Rules for Running Movement

Running . . .	Must go straight . . .
At trot (to 2 × Walk Move)	1 yard before turning or sidling
Up to 3 × Walk Move	2 yards before turning or sidling
Up to 4 × Walk Move	4 yards before turning or sidling
Up to 5 × Walk Move	6 yards before turning or sidling
Up to 6 × Walk Move	8 yards before turning or sidling
Up to 7 × Walk Move	10 yards before turning or sidling
Up to 8 × Walk Move	12 yards before turning or sidling
Turning or sidling too soon suffers +1 DM per yard too soon	

Optional Rules for Flying Movement

Maneuver	Optional limits and effects
Gain altitude	Slow down 1 yard per yard altitude gain
Lose altitude	Speed up 1 yard per yard altitude lost
Slip	May make 2 turns in opposite direction
Per turn or slip	Slow down by 1/2 Flight Move
Per half-loop/-roll	Slow down by Flight Move
Glide: must go faster than 2 times Flight Move; no landing, hovering, speeding up, or fancy maneuvers	

Pulled down by gravity:	First round	Second and later
In power-dive or zoom-climb:	140 yards	500 yards
Falling while spread-eagled:	140 yards	300 yards

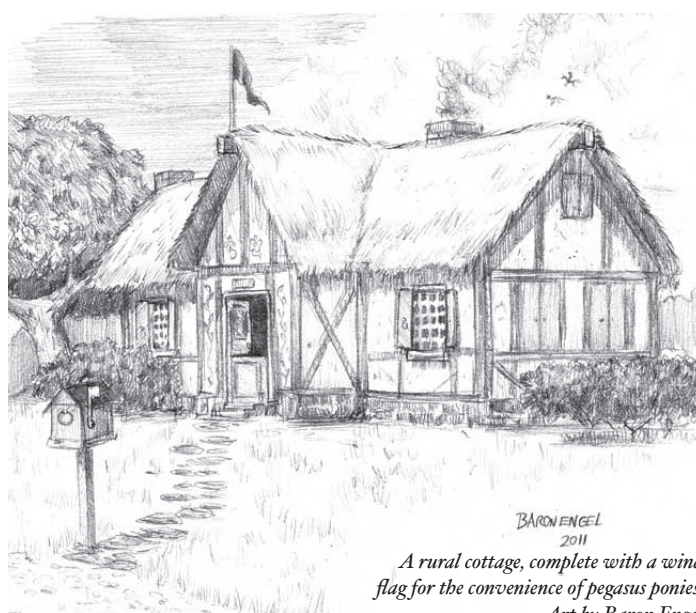
Flying . . .	Must go straight . . .
Moderate (to 2 × Flight Move)	1 yard before turn
Up to 3 × Flight Move	2 yards before turn
Up to 4 × Flight Move	4 yards before turn
Up to 5 × Flight Move	6 yards before turn
Up to 6 × Flight Move	8 yards before turn
Up to 7 × Flight Move	10 yards before turn
Up to 8 × Flight Move	12 yards before turn

Before slipping, half-looping, or half-rolling, flyer must fly straight same distance as she slips, half-loops, or half-rolls; doesn't have to double distance for full loop, S, or barrel roll

Turning or slipping too soon suffers +1 DM per yard too soon

In heroic flight may not make turns immediately after slip

Slow flight: may turn freely but can't slip



A rural cottage, complete with a wind flag for the convenience of pegasus ponies.
Art by Baron Engel

~ List of Sample Equipment ~

Available Almost Anywhere

Cheap (buying difficulty 1-5)
 Alarm clock (1840s)
 Backpack
 Basic rations (a few days)
 Blanket
 Crowbar
 Duffel bag
 Eating utensils
 Lantern
 Lighter (Döbereiner's lamp)
 Marbles
 Newspaper, magazine
 Personal hygiene kit
 Pocket-watch (basic)
 Rope, cotton, 50 yards (150 ft. or 45 m)
 Rope, hemp, 50 yards (150 feet or 45 m)
 Sewing machine, portable (1840s)
 Shovel
 Steamer trunk
 Tent, 1-pony
 Torch

Inexpensive (buying difficulty 6-10)
 Basic clothing
 Carpenter or construction toolkit
 Iron spikes (8) and piton
 Pocket-watch (high-quality)
 Sleeping bag or bedroll
 Tent, 3-pony
 Wood stove

Available in Cities or by Mail-Order

Cheap (buying difficulty 1-5)
 Camera film (1830s)
 Compass
 Flashlight, large (1890s)
 Flashlight batteries (1890s)
 Holster
 Kerosene heater (1850s)

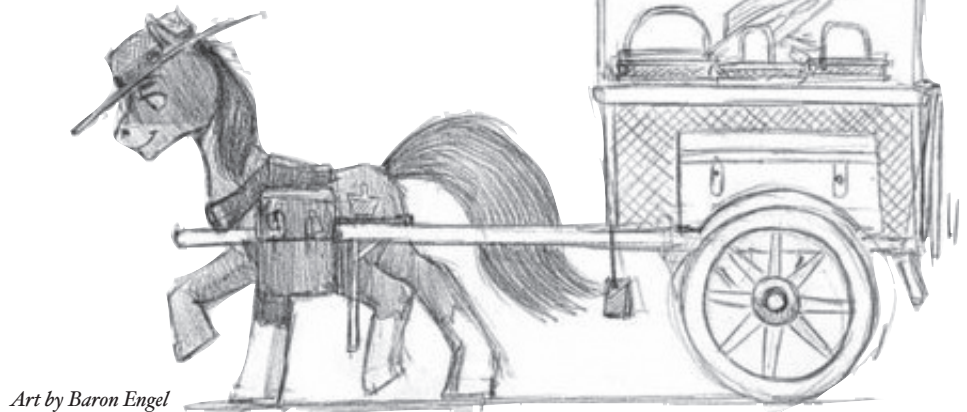
Inexpensive (buying difficulty 6-10)
 Art supplies
 Binoculars
 Camera (1830s)
 Disguise kit
 Electrician's tool kit (1880s)
 Emergency medical kit (1880s)
 Gas stove (1850s)
 Mechanic's tool kit
 Rifle scope (1830s)
 Telescope, small
 Typewriter (1870s)

Unusual or Rare

Cheap (buying difficulty 1-5)
 Lockpicking tools

Inexpensive (buying difficulty 6-10)
 Archaeologist's tool kit (1880s)
 Gas mask (1840s)
 Hobble
 Jungle explorer's kit
 Parachute

A Little Expensive (buying difficulty 11-15)
 Evidence kit (1880s)



Art by Baron Engel

Useful Information

Binoculars Add 1d to rolls for looking at, or for, things more than 2 yards (1.8 m) away, but only in daylight.

Crowbar Add 1d to Muscle rolls when prying something.

Flashlight See rules in "Visibility: How Far Can a Pony See?"

Gas mask Adds 2d to wearer's Hardiness roll against a gas attack or cancels out 1d of subtraction from roll, whichever is more appropriate.

Hobble Cuffs front or rear hooves and comes with a key; difficulty of picking lock is 15, toughness of hobble is 15.

Jungle explorer's pack Add 2 to rolls for surviving in jungle or heavy forest; has pith helmet, insect repellent, and mosquito netting in a small knapsack.

Iron spikes and piton Add 1d to climbing rolls; must be used with a rope.

Lockpicking tools Add 1d to rolls for picking locks, but only if user has Lockpicking Talent.

Marbles A pony who steps on marbles scattered on the ground makes a Running or Reflexes roll each step until she can move away from them. Difficulty is 15; each step is an action.

Rifle Scope Add 2 to rolls for shooting at medium or long range, but only if shooter spent previous round aiming. Also works as a small telescope.

Rope, hemp Hemp rope is heavy-duty, able to support a lot of weight; toughness is 5.

Rope, cotton Cotton rope is medium-duty, able to support some weight, but not as much as hemp; toughness is 3.

Shovel Add 1d to rolls for digging.

Telescope Add 2d to rolls for looking at, or for, faraway things, but user must spend a round to focus it.

Tool kits Every tool kit includes a container and all tools and parts needed for working on normal tasks; adds 1d to rolls for that kind of work.

~ Muscle-Powered Weapons ~

Purpose-Built Mêlée Weapons

Blunt	Inj.	Length	Real-World Examples
<i>Extra-light</i>	+2	Short	Blackjack
<i>Very light</i>	1d	Short	Sap
<i>Light</i>	1d+1	Either	Brass knuckles (short), mace (long)
<i>Medium</i>	1d+2	Either	<i>Tonfa</i> (short), quarterstaff (long)

Sharp	Inj.	Length	Real-World Examples
<i>Very light</i>	1d	Short	Dagger, bayonet, survival knife
<i>Light</i>	1d+1	Either	
<i>Medium</i>	1d+2	Either	Shortsword
<i>Heavy</i>	2d	Long	Rapier
<i>Very heavy</i>	2d+1	Long	
<i>Extra-heavy</i>	2d+2	Long	Broadsword
<i>Huge</i>	3d	Long	Large axe

Flexible	Inj.	Length	Real-World Examples
<i>Very light</i>	1d	Long	Bullwhip
<i>Light</i>	1d+1	Long	
<i>Medium</i>	1d+2	Long	<i>Kusari-fundo</i> (chain with heavy ends)
<i>Heavy</i>	2d	Long	Ball and chain

Purpose-Built Ranged Weapons

Missile Wpns.	Inj.	Short Range	Medium Range	Long Range	Real-World Examples
<i>Very light</i>	1d	5 yards (4.5 m)	10 yards (9 m)	15 yards (14 m)	Sling and stone
<i>Heavy</i>	2d	10 yards (9 m)	100 yards (91 m)	250 yards (229 m)	Shortbow and arrow
<i>Huge</i>	3d	10 yards (9 m)	100 yards (91 m)	250 yards (229 m)	Longbow and arrow

Thrown Wpns.	Inj.	Short Range	Medium Range	Long Range	Real-World Examples
<i>Small</i>	+1	Muscle roll	Muscle + 1 yard	Muscle + 2 yards	Dart
<i>Very light</i>	1d	5 yards (4.5 m)	10 yards (9 m)	15 yards (14 m)	Throwing dagger
<i>Heavy</i>	2d	5 yards (4.5 m)	25 yards (23 m)	40 yards (37 m)	Javelin (unwieldy weapon)

Improvised Mêlée Weapons

Blunt	Injury	Length	Real-World Examples
<i>Extra-light</i>	+2	Short	Crowbar, shovel
<i>Very light</i>	1d	Short	Hammer
<i>Light</i>	1d+1	Long	Baseball bat, large stick

Sharp	Inj.	Length	Real-World Examples
<i>Small</i>	+1	Short	Arrow, bolt, dart, iron spike
<i>Extra-light</i>	+2	Short	Awl, ice pick, household scissors, pen knife, screwdriver, stake
<i>Very light</i>	1d	Short	Hedge clippers, shears, chef's knife
<i>Light</i>	1d+1	Short	Hatchet
<i>Medium</i>	1d+2	Long	Machete

Flexible	Injury	Length	Real-World Examples
<i>Small</i>	+1	Long	Cotton rope
<i>Extra-light</i>	+2	Long	Hemp rope

Improvised Ranged Weapons

Throw	Inj.	Diff.	Short	Med.	Long	Examples
<i>Small</i>	+1	+5	Muscle roll	Muscle + 1 yd.	Muscle + 2 yd.	Apple thrown by front hoof
<i>Extra-light</i>	+2	+10	Double result of roll plus modifier, if any			Apple kicked by back hoof
<i>Extra-light</i>	+2	+5	Muscle - 2 yd.	Muscle - 1 yd.	Muscle roll	Rock thrown by front hoof
<i>Very light</i>	1d	+10	Double result of roll minus modif, if any			Rock kicked by back hoof



Art by Baron Engel

~ Mechanical Weapons, Firearms, and Explosives ~

Mechanical Weapons	Injury	Capacity	Short Range	Medium Rng.	Long Range
Small crossbow	4d	1	10 yards (9 m)	25 yards (23 m)	50 yards (46 m)
Medium crossbow	4d	1	10 yards (9 m)	100 yards (91 m)	200 yards (183 m)
Large crossbow	4d+1	1	10 yards (9 m)	100 yards (91 m)	300 yards (274 m)
Catapult (Size ≥ 12)	3d+2	1	50 yards (45 m)	100 yards (91 m)	200 yards (183 m)

	Firearms	Injury	Capacity	Short Range	Medium Rng.	Long Range	Real-World Examples
Early	Matchlock musket	3d+2	1	10 yards (9 m)	20 yards (18 m)	40 yards (37 m)	
	Flintlock pistol	3d+1	1	5 yards (4.5 m)	10 yards (9 m)	25 yards (23 m)	
	Flintlock musket	4d	1	25 yards (23 m)	40 yards (37 m)	100 yards (91 m)	
	Small cannon*	4d	1	50 yards (45 m)	200 yards (183 m)	800 yards (732 m)	
	Large cannon*	5d	1	50 yards (45 m)	150 yards (137 m)	500 yards (457 m)	
Sidearms	Low-power	3d+2	8	10 yards (9 m)	20 yards (18 m)	30 yards (27 m)	Early 9-mm automatic pistols
	Medium-power	4d	6	12 yards (11 m)	25 yards (23 m)	40 yards (37 m)	Colt .38 snub revolver
	High-power	4d+1	6	15 yards (14 m)	30 yards (27 m)	45 yards (41 m)	Colt .45 Peacemaker
Carbines	Low-power	4d+2	10 (1†)	10 yards (9 m)	20 yards (18 m)	40 yards (37 m)	
	Medium-power	5d	10 (1†)	12 yards (11 m)	25 yards (23 m)	50 yards (46 m)	
	High-power	5d+1	8 (1†)	15 yards (14 m)	30 yards (27 m)	60 yards (55 m)	.30-cal. M-1 Carbine
Rifles	Low-power	5d+2	8 (1†)	20 yards (18 m)	40 yards (37 m)	80 yards (73 m)	
	Medium-power	6d	6 (1†)	25 yards (23 m)	50 yards (46 m)	100 yards (91 m)	
	High-power	6d+1	6 (1†)	30 yards (27 m)	60 yards (55 m)	120 yards (110 m)	Winchester 94 (.30-30)
	Very high-power	6d+2	5 (1†)	35 yards (32 m)	70 yards (64 m)	140 yards (128 m)	
	Heavy	7d	5 (1†)	40 yards (37 m)	80 yards (73 m)	160 yards (146 m)	Springfield M-1903
Shot.	Double-barrel	6d	2	20 yards (18 m)	40 yards (37 m)	60 yards (55 m)	Remington 30 (12 gauge)
	Sawed-off	6d	2	15 yards (14 m)	20 yards (18 m)	30 yards (27 m)	(Barrels cut to shorten it)

Explosive Devices	Injury	Full	Half	Quarter	Short Range	Medium Range	Long Range
Gunpowder bomb	6d	0-2 yards	3-4 yards	5-8 yards	Muscle - 2 yards	Muscle - 1 yard	Muscle roll
Stick of dynamite	5d	0-2 yards	3-5 yards	6-10 yards	Muscle - 3 yards	Muscle - 2 yards	Muscle + 1 yards
Fragmentation grenade	6d	0-3 yards	4-8 yards	9-16 yards	Muscle - 4 yards	Muscle - 3 yards	Muscle + 3 yards
Smoke grenade	3d‡	0-1 yard	—	—	Muscle - 4 yards	Muscle - 3 yards	Muscle + 3 yards

Throwing Explosives

Range	Difficulty	Condition	DM
Close	0	Thrower can't see target area directly	+6
Short	10	Target area is not "even ground"	+4
Med.	15	Target area is very hard (bomb bounces)	+4
Long	20	Target area is very soft (bomb sinks)	-4

* Size 15

† Ammunition capacity is 1 for any percussion cartridge carbine or rifle.

‡ Subtract 1d from all rolls for Reflexes, Coordination, and vision while inside the smoke; burning chemicals injure like a torch (3d) until they burn out or are wiped off.

Initiative Tracker: Put a token or mark for each pony (or creature) involved in the round on the square with her initiative value.

60	59	58	57	56	55	54	53	52	51
50	49	48	47	46	45	44	43	42	41
40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31
30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21
20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

[illegible]