

Mop Fair Freeform - Cut-Down Ars Magica Rules

Abilities at the Mop Fair

Background abilities

You can do anything that is part of, or strongly related to, your character's background. For example, a labourer would be expected to be able to lift heavy objects but an abbot would not.

Where there is any doubt, the storyguide either:

- makes an immediate ruling based on the character background, or
- calls for the player to beat the storyguide at rock-paper-scissors.

Opposed abilities

Where there is competition between two players and **no magic is involved**:

- Knights and Peasants always beat other factions at physical and dexterity tasks
- Nobles, Clergy and Magi always beat other factions at intellectual tasks and those requiring training or education

Where two players of equal prowess oppose each other, or where the prowess is in dispute, the outcome is resolved by rock-paper-scissors. A storyguide can overrule this, e.g. due to magic.

Crime and Punishment at the Mop Fair

Knights are honour-bound to apprehend criminal suspects. It is their own decision as to whether there is sufficient grounds to make an arrest. Failure to carry out their duty could see them ostracised by other Knights and Nobles. A knight's house and income is usually provided by their liege lord (Noble) so this is taken quite seriously.

Apprehended suspects should be brought before the local Noble; if that can't happen immediately then suspects may be held in jail. In Tewkesbury, the local Noble is the Earl/Countess of Gloucester. The Earl (and Countess) of Gloucester has the duty of passing judgement and sentence on suspects. He will simply listen to the arguments of the witnesses, then ask the defendant to argue, and then pass judgement and, if guilty, declare sentence.

No punishment will take place until tomorrow. Suspects found guilty will spend the night in jail.

Tewkesbury has a small jail along the High Street. Although well built and difficult to escape from the inside, it is not difficult to open the door from the outside. If the jail is not guarded then pretty much anyone could help a prisoner to escape.

Characters

Typically, each character will have:

- A public goal, something that everyone will assume that character wants to achieve, which gives them a reason to talk to other players (e.g. get a job, hire staff).
- A private goal, such as solving a problem, obtaining an object, buying off a competitor's key employee, dealing with a threat.
- A private secret, perhaps something they're not proud of, maybe a crime, or secret skill or knowledge about another character.
- Deeper background, which will usually but not always include more goals and secrets.

Each character is a member of one of the following factions:

- **Peasants.** Primarily these people will be seeking work. Most likely they will already have work (there is a labour shortage) so they will be seeking improved pay and conditions. Their remuneration typically includes food and accommodation, possibly for their family too. If they are male and their employer is a Knight or Noble, they may be called to fight if war resumes. Peasants tend to know local myths and may not be the simple folk they first appear.
- **Knights.** These are professional soldiers. All of the Knights in this game are merely Knights-Errant, a second tier below the Companions of the Order of the Garter (no connection to Magi Companions). They typically retain two or three employees, and are normally themselves employed by a Noble (their Liege Lord) to train troops for battle. Knights are also expected to enforce the law, for example apprehending criminal suspects. As well as pay, Knights are usually given land and prestigious accommodation.
- **Nobles.** These comprise the Earl/Countess of Gloucester and the Earl/Countess of Worcester. They will want to hire all manner of staff for their estates, including domestic staff, farm workers and craftsmen. They may also wish to hire Knights. Nobles are also responsible for the enforcement of the law including the wage freeze - although how tightly they wish to enforce the wage freeze is an open question. It is quite normal for women to manage domestic and business affairs during the Medieval period, so the Earls may be represented by their Countesses.
- **Clergy.** Tewkesbury has a large abbey with significant farmland. However there is also an abbey at Hailes, half a day's ride away, with less land but a more popular pilgrimage destination due to its relic of holy blood. Although monks work the fields, the Clergy may want to hire extra farm workers and occasionally also craftsmen and domestic staff. They are exempt from providing troops for battle. Both abbeys are part of Gloucester diocese, overseen by the Bishop of Gloucester. Tewkesbury Abbey is inside the game map; Hailes Abbey in Winchcombe is outside the map boundaries and not in the game.
- **Magi.** There are two nearby covenants; the Covenant of the Forest, covering the wilderness in and around the nearby enormous Forest of Dean, and the Covenant of Winchcombe, an erudite covenant which proclaims to trace its origins back to Winchcombe's time as the capital of Roman Britain. They will want to hire grogs; domestic servants and labourers capable of a variety of duties. If they feel under threat they may wish to hire a Knight, but in general they are exempt from providing troops for battle. Both the Forest and Winchcombe are outside the game map.

Combat and Injury at the Mop Fair

There will **not be much combat** during this freeform. Note that this is a **non-contact game, do not touch anyone without asking** even if play-acting. Here are some cut-down rules just in case.

The key point is - call a storyguide. In purely physical combat with no magic:

- Knights always beat everyone except other Knights
- Peasants and Nobles always beat everyone except Knights, other Peasants and Nobles
- Players of equal prowess play rock-paper-scissors to resolve combat.

It is important to note that **magic and magical items can alter this balance**. A knight who picks on a magus is not guaranteed to win. You'll need to call a storyguide to resolve magical fights.

Victors of combat get to choose whether to inflict a **Superficial, Light or Heavy wound**. They can only inflict a heavy wound if they are carrying a weapon, or a tool which can be used as one..

All combat takes 30 seconds. If another player with higher combat prowess (e.g. a Knight) arrives within that time, then that more powerful player can break up the fight with no injuries to anyone.

Wounds

Superficial wounds are visible but have no significant impact; a bruise or small amount of blood.

Light wounds recover naturally after 5 minutes. During that time the lightly wounded player **must remain seated** unless:

- another player declares that they will carry them (they must sit back down for the remaining minutes as soon as the other player stops carrying them)
- healed by **medicine** or a level 2 corpus spell, at the storyguide's discretion.

For the first 10 minutes of a **heavy wound**, the player **must remain seated**:

- unless another player declares that they will help carry them (they must sit back down for the remaining minutes as soon as the other player stops helping to carrying them)
- and they cannot be healed during these 10 minutes.

Heavy wounds do not recover during the game except by **chirugry** or a level 4 corpus spell, at the storyguide's discretion. If a player receives **three heavy wounds** which are not healed, they are **unconscious or dead**, and out of the game.

Non-Knight players are **defenceless whilst seated** (except for magic or magical items) due to wounds and will normally lose any additional combat inflicted upon them during their time-out. Knights may fight from a seated position with no penalty, even against other Knights.

Magic at the Mop Fair

The key point is - call a storyguide. Ars Magica 5th Edition **magic is simplified** for this freeform. There is no distinction between formulaic, ritual or sponting. There are no sigils or other effects.

There are no Techniques, only Forms.

Forms and Viz

If you have no knowledge of the Form then you cannot cast spells in that Form. Extra players may assist the caster if they have knowledge of the same Form. Each additional player discounts the Viz required by one, but not below zero.

All Viz is the same; there is no Viz specific to a Form nor Technique. Players may join together to add up their Viz. The object that embodies the viz, and the viz itself, is destroyed after casting. The Viz required depends on the Range, Target and Level, which add together.

Duration for spells costing less than 10 pawns of Viz, is set at a maximum of 10 minutes. There is no additional cost to shorten or lengthen the spell between 0-10 minutes. A spell costing 10 or more pawns of Viz may last longer than 10 minutes or become permanent, decided by a storyguide.

Range, Target and Level

Ranges, Targets and Levels have been simplified. Rooms are defined as the physical rooms for the freeform venue. There are three Rooms: High Street, Marshes and Abbey Fields. Storyguides make the final decisions on Range, Target and Level costs.

↓ Range ↓	↓ Target ↓	↓ Level ↓
0: Personal, Touch, Eye	0: Individual	0: A Corpus superficial injury; a Mentem true/false answer or emotion; an Ignem light source; an Aquam cup of water
1: Voice (within the same Room)	4: Circle, Group	2: A Corpus light wound; a Mentem image or one-sentence answer / concept; an Ignem fire causing light wounds; an Aquam puddle of water
2: Sight (a neighbouring Room)	8: Room, Structure; offstage structures such as distant abbeys and castles also count at this level	4: A Corpus heavy wound; a Mentem narrative memory; an Ignem fire causing a heavy wound; an Aquam stream, culvert or ditch
3: Arcane Connection	This freeform has nothing larger than a Room/Structure.	8: A Corpus loss of limb; a Mentem out-of-character action; an Ignem fire burning to ash; an Aquam river or lake.