

# House Rules – Palladium

Here is a list of the modifications to Palladium's core rules that I have made for use in my games. They seem to work our quite well, however anything is open to interpretation and modification (this is probably the hundredth modification I've made since I started playing and it's based on the current consensus within my current group of players).

## CHARACTERS

Creating characters is somewhat subjective, but I always follow these rules.

1. *Attributes*: When rolling character attributes, always roll one extra die and take the best rolls. For instance, if a player is rolling up a human, all attributes are rolled on 3D6. In my games, roll 4D6 and keep the dice with the highest three values. Exceptional attributes are rolled based on the following chart:

Dice	Exceptional On
1D6	6
2D6	11, 12
3D6	16, 17, 18
4D6	23, 24
5D6	30
6D6	None

2. *Hit Points & S.D.C.*: I've recently been enlightened (through my own games and the arguments of others) that S.D.C. is the most useless stat in all of Palladium's games. Thus, no characters have S.D.C. Only hit points. In Rifts and games with Mega-damage, this makes all creatures have one number for life force. I think it makes more sense. I do still use S.D.C. on inanimate objects, such as safes, doors, and similar items. Any O.C.C. or creature with a bonus to S.D.C. receives half that bonus in additional hit points (i.e. +2D4 S.D.C = +1D4 hit points; +1D4x100 S.D.C. = +1D4x50 hit points).

3. *Alignments*: I use an alternate alignment system (see **Alignments: An Alternative**) that allows players to more easily define a character's personality without being restricted by the tenets of a specific alignment.

## COMBAT

I run combat as per the rules found in the Rifts Main Books (RMB) with only a few modifications with regard to weapons. Any weapon that lists the rate of fire as *Standard* is able to shoot aimed, burst, or wild with the following exception: Heavy energy weapons (plasma ejectors and similar weapons). Heavy weapons are meant to do a large amount of damage with minimum ammunition usage. Therefore, they shoot one shot that does a lot of damage (relative to other single round damage from other weapons).

Bursts damages are always based on a single round's damage. For example, if a weapon lists 1D6 per round/shot, 3D6 for a four-round burst, 1D4x10 for a ten-round burst, and a player chooses to fire a long burst (takes two attacks and does x5 damage), then the player would roll damage for a single shot/round (in this example 1D6) and then multiply the damage rolled by five. Burst damages are as follows:

Type	Damage Mod.	# of Attacks	# of Opponents
Short	x2	1	1
Long	x5	2	1

Full Melee	x10	all	1
Wild	x2	all	2D8

## MAGIC

Magic has always been a bit underrated in Palladium's games. I've implemented a few minor modifications in order to help out the (at one time) beleaguered mages (**Note:** this has changed somewhat with Federation of Magic, adding more powerful TW items and spells). All incantation spells from levels 1-6 take only one action to cast (just like psychic abilities). All incantation spells from levels 7-12 take two attacks/actions to cast. All incantation spells from levels 13+ take a full melee to cast. All ritual spells take a minimum of one full minute of meditation and two melee actions to cast. Most rituals have something listed, but this is a minimum for those rituals that don't. An incantation spell is any spell that does not have the word "Ritual" listed in parentheses next to it or specify special criteria for casting within the description.

In addition, I have added the following to make scrolls a more tempting reward.

Magic has always been a difficult thing for people to learn. In my most recent campaign, it has become apparent that transferring scrolls to one's repertoire of spells is most impractical. The situation was that I gave scrolls as a reward for the completion of a segment of the campaign. The problem was that the character in question, a Temporal Wizard who was obsessed with magic items, weapons and knowledge, *sold* the scroll!. Well, I reminded him that this wasn't exactly in character and I decided I might give him a bonus. Stemming from this is the following optional rule on converting scrolls to known spells.

Ley Line Walkers/Wizards are the most versatile spell casters and receive a +10% bonus to convert a scroll successfully and add it to their permanent repertoire. This applies to any spell.

Shifters are more geared toward Dimensional and Magical Command, such as Domination, Familiar Link, and Mystic Portal. They receive a +10% bonus to learn spells of these types.

Temporal Wizards are certainly the most Dimensionally affluent occupations and receive a +15% to convert scrolls containing Temporal spells (see **Rifts: England** for a list of spells). Because of their mystic nature and general obsession with magic, they also receive a +8% to learn all other spells relating to dimensional manipulation. Temporal Warriors are less versed in the ways of magic than their sorcerous counterparts and only receive half these bonuses.

Techno-Wizards are not subject to any penalties, however, they gain no bonuses either.

Dragons are very unique cases. Hatchlings, because of their curiosity, would have very large bonuses. Unfortunately, they are also impatient, much like a human two-year old, and this greatly reduces their ability to study the magic long enough. Thus, hatchlings gain a +5% to convert a scroll. When a dragon reaches adulthood (600-650 years), they are usually far more dedicated and patient. All dragons can convert scrolls at a percent equal to the percent of literacy in the language in which the scroll is written (i.e. if a scroll is written in elven, then the dragon can convert the scroll at a percent equal to their skill in Literacy: Elven).

All other magic-using occupations receive a +10% bonus to learn any category of spell the player wishes (i.e. divination, combat, healing, etc.; however it should be appropriate to the O.C.C.) and a -5% penalty to any one category that is opposite the chosen "specialization" (I use this term **very** loosely) category (i.e. combat is opposite healing, divination is opposite concealment, etc.).

Characters who have the insanity of Obsession: Magic Items/Weapons/Knowledge (or any derivative of it) have a +20% bonus to convert any scroll of any type. The reason for this is that they are infinitely more determined to learn the knowledge contained on any scroll.

## SKILLS

All skills start at the base percentage, plus any O.C.C. or IQ bonuses. The percent per level is the increment per additional level of experience (as in, beyond level 1). Here is a quick explanation of how I view the different skill categories (O.C.C., O.C.C. Related, and Secondary).

*O.C.C. Skills:* These skills are those that all people of a particular trade (O.C.C.) learn. It is imperative that a character know these skills in order to carry out tasks common to their occupation.

*O.C.C. Related Skills:* These are skills that aid the O.C.C. category. They represent the slight differences in background among the same occupations.

*Secondary Skills:* These skills are considered to be background skills (most people consider these “freebie” skills to take as Weapon Proficiencies and bonus providing skills rather than use these to build a character’s background). This means that a character who grew up in a family of fisherman or near a coast or lake is likely to have the Fishing skill. Someone who grew up in a family of entertainers is likely to have Sing, Dance, or Play Musical Instrument. It all depends on the character’s background. Because it is so dependent, I allow a person to take Secondary Skills from any category, regardless of what the O.C.C. specifies. I only require that the skills be worked into the background in some way. All secondary skills are still limited in that they do not receive any bonuses (further reflecting the background nature).

## PSYCHIC ABILITIES

These have become somewhat subjective to the context of the game. The general rule I follow when using abilities against another intelligent creature (anything above an animal intelligence) is that the creature gets a saving throw against abilities whether they know the ability is being used or not. An example of where this contradicts the book is for the power of Telepathy. In my games, the mind automatically puts up some sort of defense. This is particularly true on Rifts Earth because people are constantly on guard for those with psychic abilities. The world of Heroes Unlimited and Nightbane are also good examples because psychic abilities are more commonplace.

## DRAGONS AS PLAYER CHARACTERS

Dragons deserve their own little section because they are such a unique case. First, I only allow players to be hatchlings. This should be the standard in any game. Unfortunately, Palladium is never really clear on the abilities of dragon hatchlings (though information on adult dragons abounds in at least a couple of books). Because of this, I have compiled the following based on information in **Dragons & Gods** (D&G) and the RMB as a list of abilities and things to provide a dragon hatchling player:

1. **Attributes:** Attributes are rolled standard as described in **Characters** above. Even dragons could, potentially, have exceptional attributes.
2. **Natural Abilities:** Dragons have all natural abilities common to their species. In addition, all dragons have the ability to alter their size at will (as per the ability listed in D&G, p.15) and metamorphosis (as per the ability listed in D&G, p.15).
3. **Spell Magic:** Despite what it says in the RMB, I prefer the following system. Dragons are creatures of magic and, thus, should start with some innate spell knowledge. Players may choose four spells total from levels 1-6 (*not* four from each level). All of these spells must be of the same type (i.e. all Wizard spells, all temporal spells, etc.). For every three levels of experience, the player may choose one additional spell from a level equal to or less than that of the character. All other spells must be learned, taught, or stolen.

4. **Strength:** As specified in **Dragons & Gods**, p.14, dragon hatchlings have supernatural strength and do damage based on the table listed.
5. **Miscellaneous:** This is just a section for abilities/characteristics that didn't fit anything else. First, dragons are creatures of magic and while they do not feed on mystic energy, they do have a certain need for it. For this reason, any dragon that travels to a world or dimension where magic is waning or nearly non-existent (such as the Heroes Unlimited Earth or Robotech Earth), the creature feels lethargic and slow (-3 to all actions and half the normal attacks per melee). On worlds where magic flows like water in a river (such as Rifts Earth), dragons are rather hyperactive and prefer not to nap or sleep, rather like a giddy schoolgirl. On most worlds, however, dragons behave normally and sleep for a few decades every couple of centuries.

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