

Balanced Character Class Focuses

A Basic Fantasy RPG Character Supplement

Basic Fantasy Role-Playing Game Website: basicfantasy.org

Version 7

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INTRODUCTION

This is a rules supplement for all of the players and game masters that like the variety and flavor of “sub-classes” but don’t like heavy complexity of progression or heavy additional rules. The intent is that players can easily write all additional rules for their class focus right on their character sheet.

This supplement is to be used with the Basic Fantasy Role-Playing Game rule system. If you do not already have a copy of the Basic Fantasy RPG rules, please visit the website at basicfantasy.org and download a copy.

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Balanced Character Class Focuses Explained

What is a balanced character class focus?

They are variants of one of the four main classes listed in the Basic Fantasy Role-Playing Game core rules. These are the traditional classes of Fighter, Thief, Cleric and Magic-User.

Balanced character class focuses are designed to be balanced with non-focus characters to retain game balance.

They are also designed to retain the progression of the class and have simpler rules than entirely new character classes. There are many excellent supplements for campaigns that wish to use complicated full class replacements. These are meant to add flavor, without much additional complexity.

Why use balanced character class focuses?

Class focuses are a way for players to explore a particular archetype from popular literature or culture. The steely eyed bowman, the tomb robber with arcane knowledge, or even the half mad alchemist inhaling fumes that rob his health while he creates works of wonder.

Class focuses focus on one particular aspect or role of a class, but remove other aspects.

Rather than changing the requirements for a class, or the progression between levels, this supplement aims to present each class focus so that it is neither better nor worse than the core class.

For every advantage there is an equal disadvantage that offsets it, while adding color and depth to the class focus.

Class focuses are meant to be fun and easy to use and not to become complex or over-powered sub-classes.

FIGHTER FOCUSES

Berserker

Biting the edge of their shields, frothing at the mouth, swinging their axes and running into combat screaming. Berserkers are terrifying fighters, to foe and friend alike...

Berserkers gain a bonus to hit and damage their opponents, but give up AC when berserk. They may also turn on their friends accidentally during their berserk.

Advantage = Damage bonus, to hit bonus

Disadvantage = Lowered AC , attacks friends

Advantages:

- +2 to hit, +2 damage when berserk
- Can berserk twice per day, and remains berserk until the end of the combat.

Disadvantages:

- -1 to AC when berserk
- On attack role of 1,2,3 the berserk attack automatically hits the player nearest them during the melee, doing ½ damage.
- Berserkers can only use melee weapons during a berserk.

The Focused Master

A life of dedicated focus to the art of a weapon gives a focused master unusual skill with that weapon. A master bowman who hits targets with precision and brutality. A swordsman who blurs the air with her speed and perfectly exploits a weakness. The focused master is a sight that awes and impresses all who encounter them.

The focused master gains advantages to hit and damage, which scale with their level. In return they sacrifice the ability to study any other weapon from that weapon type, and can only ever learn one other small sized weapon.

Advantage = Damage bonus, to hit bonus, improved critical damage bonus

Disadvantage = Limited weapons, no shields

Advantages:

- Additional hit and damage bonus with the focal weapon. Additional To hit and damage bonus up to +10.
 - Level 1= +1, level 3= +2, level 5= +3, level 7= +4, level 9= +5, level 11 = +6, level 13 = +7, level 15 = +8, level 17 = +9, level 19 = +10
- Improved critical - 2x dmg when an attack hits on a natural roll of 18-20. At 9th level on a roll of 16-20. At 15 level 2x dmg on a roll of 14-20. Critical damage is ((base + bonus) X2)
- Magical versions of the focus weapon are allowed.

Disadvantages:

- Only two total weapons can ever be learned. The base weapon and one other. This restriction includes racial weapons which might otherwise be available.
- Focused masters attack, not defend. They do NOT use shields.

The Unarmed Master

Whether it is a tar-footed sailor kick boxing on the docks, or a young woman from the streets who spends all day on the training mat of the local school; the unarmed master has burnished and hardened their body into a living weapon, striking faster and with more accuracy than others.

The unarmed master gains powerful unarmed attacks, and unarmored defenses. In return they scorn all weapons but the largest, wear no armor even magical, and scorn possessions – giving money to the poorest around them, their school or their gym. There is no mystical element to their skills, just years of brutal training.

Advantage = Damage bonus, to hit bonus, unarmed attacks, high AC

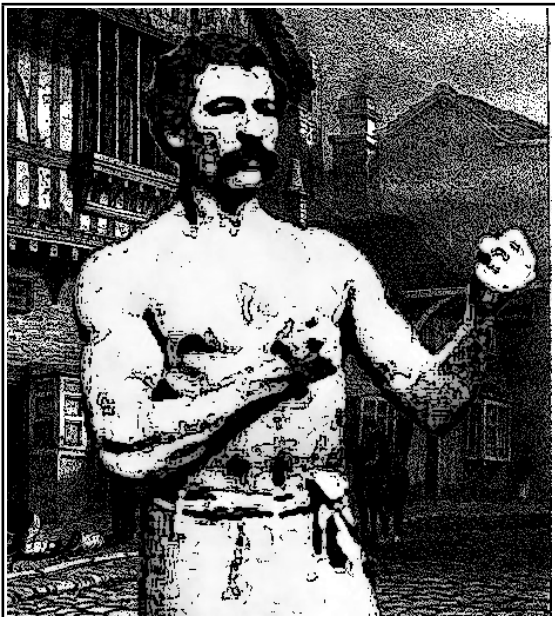
Disadvantage = No money, no armor, no magic AC, one weapon

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The Unarmed Master- continued

Advantages:

- Unarmed Attacks – Magic enhancements to dexterity and items to improve unarmed attacks can still be used.
- Base unarmed attack = 1d6 + damage bonus + DEX bonus
- Additional To hit and damage bonus up to +8.
 - Level 1 = +1, level 3 = +2, level 5 = +3, level 7 = +4, level 9 = +5, level 11 = +6, level 13 = +7, level 15 = +8



- All attacks use DEX bonus to hit, instead of STR.
- All attacks are “weapon” attacks
 - Level 1 – Attacks are “bludgeoning”
 - Level 3 – Attacks are “piercing” or “slashing”, player choice.
 - Level 5 – Attacks are “slashing” or “piercing” whichever remains.
 - Level 9 – Two attacks per round. Attacks are “magic”
 - Level 13 – Three attacks per round.
- High natural AC – Unarmored defense

BALANCED CHARACTER CLASS FOCUSES

- $AC = (DEX \text{ bonus}) + AB + 11$

(AB is attack bonus from the core rules, and it scales by character level)

- Magic enhancements to dexterity can be used.

Disadvantages:

- Only one weapon size L weapon may ever be learned.. Unarmed attacks preferred. Time spent learning weapons smaller than L is not considered worth the time lost in unarmed training. Ranged weapons allowed.
- No armor may be used, no exceptions.
- Magic AC enhancements do not work on unarmed masters. Spells or Items, no exceptions. (Magical dexterity enhancements are allowed.)
- 90% of loot is immediately donated, and nothing that can't be carried or ridden is kept. It is donated to the gym, the school, the club, or the neighborhood. Property just gets in the way of training time.
 - GM discretion where extra property and money goes, and the repercussions of the donations.

The Holy Warrior

Holy Warriors are just that, holy. They are firmly entrenched in their beliefs to the degree that their God smiles on their endeavors. They aren't Clerics, but they are part of the chosen few. God is their co-pilot.

They gain the ability to heal in the name of their god, and to smite the unholy. In return they are required to directly confront evil in melee combat and give up the spoils of their struggle to their God's temple.

Advantage = Healing, bonus vs undead

Disadvantage = No ranged weapons, keeps less loot

Advantages:

- Healing – Once per day, they can heal 2x their level of HP to themselves or others
- +2 to hit, +2 damage vs the undead or unholy

A BASIC FANTASY SUPPLEMENT

The Holy Warrior-continued

Disadvantages:

- No ranged weapons allowed
- 40% of loot surrendered to the temple

The Warrior Poet

The warrior poet stands on the field reciting an eddic saga in the old tongue, and invoking the old magics. Their silver tongues literally charm those they encounter, but they aren't a lute strumming lightweight. They are poets of battle, and lions on the field.

Warrior poets gain the ability to uniquely transcribe magic scrolls for their own use, and to charm others, but sacrifice a portion of their health permanently for the ability.

Advantage = Magic spells, Charm Person

Disadvantage = Less HP

Advantages:

- Unique ability to transcribe magic user scrolls into their book of sagas, then recite them from the book daily. 1 per day at 1st, 2 at 5th, 3 at 10th 4 at 15th. Max of 8 spells in the book.
- Ability to cast charm person once daily, with no preparation.

Disadvantages:

- D6 hit dice is used, rather than d8
- May only gain spells via copying magic user scrolls which destroys them for any other use, and may only transcribe and use spells as a magic user of equivalent level would use scrolls.
- Max of 8 spells transcribed in their book of sagas, one may be removed in order to add a new spell.
- Scrolls may not be used without transcription into a book of sagas, which takes a full day of uninterrupted time.

The Legionary

Years in the field have taught the legions that the best way to soften up an enemy is a quick smack to the face with their shield, followed by a jab from their sword or spear.

BALANCED CHARACTER CLASS FOCUSES

Legionaries have a secondary shield attack, that often knocks their enemies to the ground. Their training limits them to the use of a short sword, dagger, javelin or pike.

Advantage = Shield Attack, Knock-down

Disadvantage = One handed weapons only

Advantages:

- Secondary shield attack is normal to hit, and does 1d4+ STR bonus.
- If a shield attack hits, with a roll of 17- 20 and the enemy is not larger than the legionary, they are knocked to the ground for one melee round.

Disadvantages:

- Shield is carried at all times, even to bed, or meals.
- No weapons requiring both hands may be used, except for spears.
- Short sword, dagger, javelin and pike are all known at 1st level, and the character will always carry two javelins or a pike, a sword and a dagger.

THIEF FOCUSES

The Specialist

The lockpick, pickpocket, cat burglar, sneak, or trap master. All have different roles to play for their guilds and all are necessary specialists who are respected by their more flexible peers on the street.

The specialist thief sacrifices one of their abilities to become an expert at one of the others. This focus compromises some of their abilities in the beginning, but is worth it to advance their career.

They operate as a thief of 5 levels higher in their focus skill. IE: At 1st level they use the 6th level listing for their focal skill.

They operate as a non-thief in their sacrificed skill. At 6th level when they gain back their sacrificed skill at the 1st level listings on the skill table, and progress normally.

Specialist thieves may choose which skill to increase and which skill to decrease, at the GM's discretion.

Example Archetypes	Advantage	Disadvantage
Lock-pick	Open Locks	Move silently.
Pickpocket	Pick Pockets	Remove Traps
Cat Burglar	Climb Walls	Pick Pockets
Sneak	Move Silently	Open Locks
Trap Master	Remove Traps	Pick Pockets

The Tomb Robber

A select few are initiated into the cadre of the tomb robber. They are trained to read the ancient script that they find in tombs, and to remove traps with aplomb.

The tomb robber gains the ability to read magic scrolls and ancient languages. They also gain increased ability to find traps and secret doors, but in return they do not learn skills not used in their brotherhood.

Advantage = Use magic scrolls, remove traps bonus, decipher script, find secret doors

Disadvantage = No sneak attack, pick pockets, climb walls, or ranged weapons usage

Advantages:

- Ability to use magic scrolls as a magic user of equivalent level.
- +5 levels remove traps. IE: 1st-level operates as 6th level when removing traps.
- Ability to read/decipher any script – use “pick pockets” table for chance of success.
- Ability to detect secret doors – use “pick pockets” table for chance of success

Disadvantages:

- No sneak attack, pick pockets or climb walls skills.
- No ranged weapons allowed. (No room in tombs.)

The Holy Fool

Gods need their fools, to unearth and recover their treasures. A select few thieves turn from the path of the streets and use their skills in the service of their Gods. They adopt stronger ethics, and in return gain the favor of the gods.

Holy fools gain the ability to protect themselves from the unholy, and a holy vigor. In return they are required to turn away from their evil pasts and lose the skills associated with those pasts.

Advantage = Turn undead, higher hit die

Disadvantage = No sneak attack or pick pockets

Advantages:

- Turn undead as cleric of equal level.
- Uses d6 hit dice.

Disadvantages:

- No sneak attack, or pick pockets skills.

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CLERIC FOCUSES

The Temple Scholar

They look like librarians in armor, but the temple needs all sorts. When prayer fails them, they can read the ancient scrolls they find to invoke the powers inherent in them.

Temple scholars gain the ability to read magic scrolls as if they are the same level of magic user, but sacrifice a portion of their health permanently for the ability. Their time in the library also gives them a knowledge of languages and items to use in the service of their god.

Advantage = Use magic scrolls, decipher script, identify items

Disadvantage = Less HP per level

Advantages:

- They can use magic-user exclusive scrolls as a magic user of equivalent level.
- Ability to read/decipher any script – use “pick pockets” table for chance of success.
- Ability to research/identify any item – use “remove traps” table for chance of success.

Disadvantages:

- -1 HP, per level, when rolling hit points.

The Healer

She always seem to be at peace. Her god has blessed her with extraordinary abilities to heal herself or others. In return she must heal any who need it.

Healers can cast cure light wounds twice per day on top of their other spells and abilities. In return they must heal all those who ask for it, before healing themselves and must open their faith by lowering their defenses.

Advantage = Healing, lifesaving

Disadvantage = No shields, must heal others

Advantages:

- Can cast all healing spells with no preparation.

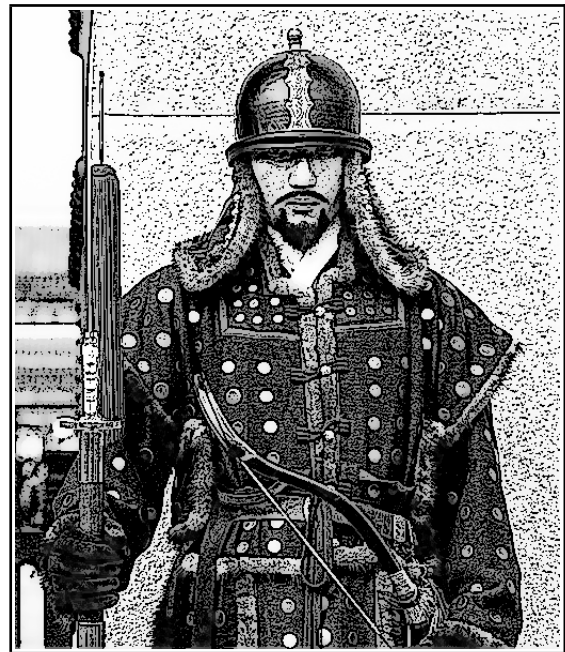
BALANCED CHARACTER CLASS FOCUSES

- Cast cure light wounds 4x per day on top of other spells known. At 8th level this becomes cure serious wounds.
- Lifesaver – can bring any dead player back to 1 hp, once per day per player – use “pick pockets” table for chance of success.

Disadvantages:

- No shield allowed.
- Healers must heal any other player who asks, before healing themselves, even if they are at death's door, or in combat. Healing takes 1 round.

The Temple Guard



They stand at the gate to the temple of the war god, in red-enameled armor holding the bronze-inlaid greatsword that symbolizes their lord.

Temple guards dedicate themselves to their God's favored weapon/weapons. In return their god gives them unusual skill and grace with that weapon.

Advantage = Favored weapon, damage bonus, to hit bonus, overrides weapon restrictions

The Temple Guard – Continued

Disadvantage = No other weapon from the same family of weapons, must use preferred weapon whenever possible even if impractical

Advantages:

- May use whatever weapons are the symbol of their god. Trident for Poseidon, Great-sword for Ares, Spear for Morrigan, etc. Cleric class restrictions don't apply.
- +1 to hit and damage with the god's favored weapons.

Disadvantages:

- May not use any other weapons of the same class of the gods weapons. IE: Maul and warhammer.
- Must use preferred weapons whenever possible even if impractical GM discretion.

MAGIC-USER FOCUSES

The Holy Mage

Touched by a god, god-struck, god-ridden. All these could be used to describe the holy mage. Though they have chosen the path of scholarship and magic, when you meet them it is clear that they could also have become a votary of their god.

The holy mage trades their first level magic-user spell for a first level clerical spell. They receive the ability to strike at the unholy and undead with exceptional force.

Advantage = Gain one clerical spell per level, turn undead

Disadvantage = Lose one magic spell per level

Advantages:

- Must learn one cleric spell at each spell level, as related to their god.
- Turn undead as cleric of equal level.

Disadvantages:

- Permanent loss of 1 MU spell at each spell level.

The Fighting Mage

Into the fray she steps, her white hair streaming behind her, with her sword glowing with the magical energies streaming through it while her leather cape crackles in the wind. Whether you call her the grey mage, the sword mage or simply the fighting mage, she is a force to be reckoned with.

The fighting mage can use any one weapon up to size M, and a shield. They can use leather armor and have more hp than a standard mage, but sacrifice magical abilities as they progress.

Advantage = Use weapon, leather armor, shield, higher hit dice

Disadvantage = Less magic spells

Advantages:

- May choose any one M or smaller sized weapon to learn. Normal Mage restrictions do not apply.

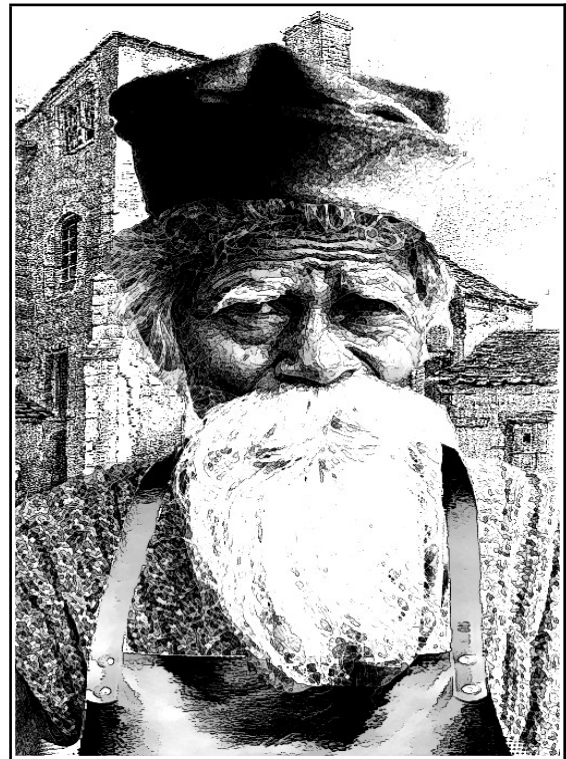
BALANCED CHARACTER CLASS FOCUSES

- May use leather armor and a shield, and may cast while holding a weapon and using their shield.
- Uses d6 hit dice.

Disadvantages:

- Sacrifices the second and fourth spell of every spell level. This spell is permanently lost.
 - **IE:** No 2nd 1st-level spell at level 2, no 2nd 2nd-level spell at level 4, etc.
 - **Final spell count at level 20** = 4 -1st level, 3 -2nd level, 3 -3rd level, 2 -4th level, 2 -5th level, 1 -6th level

The Alchemist



With a crazed cackle, he turns his face to you as you enter his laboratory. You realize that the explosion you heard earlier has burnt off half of his beard and both of his eyebrows and you worry that his hacking cough might be indicative of a health issue.

The Alchemist – continued

Alchemists are specialist mages who study the scholarship of arcane items, and in return for sacrificing their health permanently they learn ways to be 100% successful at alchemically imbuing items with power.

Alchemists can use any item they create, even if it is not allowed by the magic user class.

Advantage = Create magic items easily, master-work items, use any created item

Disadvantage = Lose hp permanently when creating magical items.

Advantages:

- Use any item they create, even disallowed items for magic users.
- Can imbue any item with +1d8, for 1d6 hp permanently lost. 100% chance of success. Once per item.
- Alchemists choose an element to imbue items with. Fire, Ice, Electricity, Sharpness. The imbued item does its extra damage as this element.
- When creating an item, the player rolls 1d20. On a roll of 19-20 the items created is a master-work and the GM rolls on the weapons, armor, or applicable bonus tables in the treasure section of the Basic Fantasy rules book. (special enemies, special abilities, or special bonuses.)

Disadvantages:

- For each item specially imbued 1d6 hp removed permanently from current hp. This kills the alchemist if they go to or below 0 hp. The item is still created successfully, but the alchemist dies. If the alchemist is resurrected after this, they will have 1 hp.

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