

READ RUNES

“His sword he hung over the mantelpiece. His coat of mail was arranged on a stand in the hall (until he lent it to a Museum). His gold and silver was largely spent in presents, both useful and extravagant - which to a certain extent accounts for the affection of his nephews and his nieces. His magic ring he kept a great secret, for he chiefly used it when unpleasant callers came!” — The Hobbit

Adventuring often results in the finding of magical items, many of which can be deciphered by reading the runes inscribed on them. Runes come in many forms depending on the creator of the item, the time period during which it was created and what culture the creator belonged to. Some runes are harder than others to understand and some items have hidden magic which cannot be revealed by reading runes (the One Ring is one example, even if it reveals its runes when put into fire).

A Read Rune maneuver may differ very much in time consumption. While a First Age elven sword may take a full hour to decipher, even for a skilled wizard, the casting of a spell from a scroll or book takes normally only one round.

Some results state that another attempt may be made only when “additional knowledge is gained”. Such knowledge may come from skill ranks (i.e. gaining a level), reading applicable books (i.e. visiting the library), receiving aid from another skilled person or learning something else about the item.

Static maneuver modifications:

Open-ended d100 roll

- 20 if the item stems from an earlier age (i.e. a third age magician trying to read runes on a second age item).
- 10 if the item was made by a culture unknown to the reader (i.e. a mannish wizard trying to decipher an orcish shaman staff).
- + 10 if Near success, Partial Success or Success have been achieved in earlier attempts to read the item.
- + 10 if the character has seen the item in use before or had its abilities described in detail.
- + 20 if the character has been truthfully told about the item's abilities (from someone able to use the item, i.e. having successfully read the runes).
- + 30 if the character can cast spells intrinsically.

Read Runes

Static Maneuver Table SM-10.1.3

-26 down Spectacular Failure

Your utter disrespect for the act of reading runes causes any spell(s) in the item to go off directed against you in a harmful way. If GM cannot see a harmful way of using the spells in the item, roll on the Spell Failure Table instead.

-25 – -04 Absolute Failure

Your lack of skill leaves you badly misinformed. Certain of your success, you believe the runes in the item to say something completely different.

05 – 75 Failure

You fail to see any magic in this item.

UM 66 Unusual Event

In a mindless attempt to read the runes you manage to let lose the magic stored in the item (if applicable). The GM decides the effects of your misfortune. When the setback clears up (approximately 10 minutes) you suddenly understand one of the abilities in the item, GM choice.

76 – 90 Partial Success

You are uncertain about the exact abilities of this item, but have a general idea of its purpose and realm. You may make another attempt to read these runes only when additional knowledge is gained.

UM 100 Unusual Event

You decipher the runes with perfection (in half the regular time). You may use the item at will (no need for attunement rolls) and reveal hidden abilities such as curses, hidden runes etc.

91 – 110 Near Success

Your effort is enough to understand simple abilities of the item, such as bonuses (i.e. +5, +10 etc) or single spells stored. More complex abilities remain hidden to you. You may make another attempt after contemplating for 24 hours on the matter.

111 – 175 Success

You learn what realm and spell(s) are contained within the item. You are aware of all abilities in the item, except those that the creator deliberately hid upon the item's creation. Further attempts to reach Absolute Success can be made only when additional knowledge is gained.

176 – 300 up Absolute Success

You are clear of the meaning of the runes and learn all abilities of the item (though some curses and deliberately hidden abilities may remain unknown to you, GM decision). You may use the item without need for attunement rolls.

301 up Remarkable Success

Your knowledge concerning this particular item/rune is outstanding. No information is unknown to you. You are aware of all abilities of the item, even hidden runes and curses. You may use it without attunement rolls and have the ability to instruct others how to use it with a +20 bonus (in addition to the realm and spell bonus in the Staves & Wands static maneuver table).