

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why doesn't *Altonomy* contain rules on level advancement?

Level advancement is, in my opinion, an essentially subjective issue that will (and should) vary depending on the type of campaign. A hack-and-slash campaign might rely on kill counts, whereas in a game of political intrigue level advancement would be based on more subtle victories. Some GMs might grant characters level advancement even in defeat; it can be reasonably argued that one learns as much from failure as from success. One approach is to have the GM and the players work out just how level advancement will be determined at the beginning of the campaign before any dice are rolled. In my campaigns, level advancement is based on how well players portray their characters, and how well they work with other players to accomplish group goals. Other groups will no doubt wish to work under different rules.

2. Why didn't you provide more monsters?

Because that would mean players could sit and memorize monster statistics, which pisses me off. I have made available ready-made monsters for GMs who don't mind players doing that sort of thing, but I think it's better for GMs to create their own monsters. It keeps the players on their toes, and helps to customize the campaign world. Unicorns might not work so well in a Middle-Earth setting, for example, and dragons would seem out of place in Lankhmar. I have provided some ready-made monsters, but I advise all GMs to use these only as a guide to creating their own.

3. Isn't *regenerate* an awfully powerful spell?

Yup. Some GMs may choose not to make that spell available, and I wouldn't blame them. One can reasonably argue that the existence of limb-restoring magic would make players more careless than is realistic, but I thought it was wise to at least include the spell. However, I see no problem with a GM who rules that *regenerate* requires rare components not listed in the spell description, components that are of course rare and difficult to obtain.

4. Combat in *Altonomy* can get pretty deadly, can't it?

It can, and deliberately so. Lone heroes dispatching hordes of enemies may make stirring fiction, but in an RPG it causes too many imbalances. Why would a king bother hiring, training and equipping thousands of low-level troops when his entire militia can be annihilated by one-tenth as many swordsmasters? In real life not even the most skilled swordsman would be eager to engage two or more opponents at once; it's just too dangerous. No matter how experienced he is, a sword through the heart will make him just as dead.

5. Hey, where's the resurrection magic? How can I get my character raised from the dead?

You can't. Raising characters from the dead is in my view an absolute game-killer that destroys the tension of combat and absolves players of responsibility for their foolish decisions. Why worry about challenging a powerful sorceress when you know that no matter how easily she blows your head off in the morning you can be back in time for lunch? It also wreaks havoc on the game world. Assassins become much less a threat when death is just a waiting room, and you'd better believe that every king worth his salt would have a wizard on hand with the capability of bringing him back from the dead. All in all, it's just better that people who die stay dead.

In my campaigns, one of the first things I tell my players is, "If your character dies, tear up the character sheet and throw it away. He's never coming back." Other GMs are free to introduce resurrection magic into their campaigns, but I won't condone it in my rules.

6. Is there a typo in the example under *Testing Luck*?

Yes, and damn you for noticing. In the last sentence of that example section, replace "Sorcery" with "evasion" and then forget that you ever thought it read otherwise.