

# Research Rules

Throughout this scenario, the PCs must uncover information pertaining to Aram Zey's murder. The research system represents the PCs' sorting through extensive collections of texts, investigating subtle clues, and track down hidden leads in several different collections. A collection can be almost any source of information used for research, ranging from a complete library to a chest of disorganized documents.

Each research challenge is like an encounter and has two key statistics: a Complexity rating, which reflects the level of complexity of the information being searched, and knowledge points (kp), which are an abstract representation of the amount of information a given collection contains. A research challenge's Complexity rating acts as the DC for a Research check to unravel that library's clues. A Research check is akin to a Knowledge skill check, though many research challenges note additional skills a PC can use for that collection.

Attempting a Research check requires an uninterrupted 8-hour period of research, and a character cannot take 10 or take 20 on a Research check. Each 8-hour period of research grants a cumulative +1 bonus on Research checks in that collection. Up to two additional characters can use the aid another action to assist a primary researcher. In addition, some libraries grant a Knowledge bonus—a bonus on specific Knowledge checks (including Research checks) made within that library—due to the depth and completeness of its collections. Research checks cannot be made untrained unless the skill could normally be used untrained.

Succeeding at a Research check reduces a research challenge's knowledge points, similar to dealing damage to a creature's hit points. The damage dealt by the primary researcher varies based on her training in the skill she used for the Research check. A primary researcher reduces a collection's kp by  $1d12 +$  her Intelligence modifier if she has either the Skill Focus feat in the skill or has both 5 ranks in the skill and treats the skill as a class skill. Reduce this to  $1d8 +$  her Intelligence modifier if she has either 5 ranks in the skill or treats the skill as a class skill (but not both). Otherwise, she reduces the collection's kp by  $1d4 +$  her Intelligence modifier. For every 5 by which a

Research check exceeds the collection's Complexity rating, the primary researcher decreases the kp total by 1 additional point. Rolling a natural 20 on a Research check acts like a critical threat, doubling the kp reduction if a second Research check with the same modifiers (taking no additional time) succeeds. Conversely, rolling a natural 1 on a Research check automatically results in failure, and the collection's kp increases by 1/4 its maximum knowledge point total as the collection's complexity causes a researcher to follow a wrong avenue of research.

As the knowledge points are decreased to various "trigger points," the PCs uncover the collection's corresponding secrets. By the time a collection's kp total is reduced to 0, the PCs have learned all that they can from that library. In order to learn more, they must visit another collection and continue their research there.

Finally, this adventure assumes that the PCs are able to research for one 8-hour period per day for the purpose of calculating the adventure's secondary success conditions. If the PCs have some special ability to remain awake and attentive for extraordinary lengths of time, treat this instead as a creative solution that can grant a bonus on the Research check (see below).

These rules are summarized for the players in **Player Handout #2** (see page 26).

**Additional Options:** The research rules only allow as many as three PCs to participate at once, which might bore other players. During any given 8-hour period, only one primary researcher can reduce the collection's kp total; however, you can let two or more teams led by their own primary researchers investigate in tandem. Simply use the best result during any given phase, and let the PCs engage in a bit of friendly rivalry.

If a PC has a special ability that allows her to use an ability score other than Intelligence to modifier her Intelligence-based abilities (e.g. a lore oracle's lore keeper revelation), she can instead use that ability score when reducing a library's remaining kp.

Normally, any spell that does not explicitly modify Research checks is unlikely to impact these encounters. However, you can grant the primary researcher as much as a +5

bonus on her Research check to reward clever uses of spells, magic items, and other abilities.

**Four-Player Adjustment:** A group of only four PCs is less likely to have an especially talented primary researcher or competent secondary researchers. To reflect this, treat the primary researcher's Intelligence modifier as 1 higher each time the PCs succeed at a Research check to reduce the collection's remaining kp.

### **Research in the Collection Esoterica**

Thanks to the Collection Esoterica's disorganization, researching the lantern is a time-consuming affair. The collection's paper assets consist of trunks full of ledgers, journals, notes, and manuscripts from explorers dating back nearly 600 years. Most of the information is wholly unrelated to the lantern the PCs seek, though most of the texts contain fascinating bits of lore on occult mysteries across Golarion. However, more than half of these finds are absolute fabrications. Nigel's predecessor was in the process of sorting through and cataloguing all of this information when she disappeared years ago. Due to the occult nature of the Collection Esoterica, PCs that have access to occult skill unlocks (*Pathfinder RPG Occult Adventures* 194) or the Psychic Sensitivity feat (*Occult Adventures* 138) gain a +2 bonus on all Research checks here.