

Glossary of Game Terms

action: The stuff that the player-characters do, experience, and suffer in the game world. We call it “action” to focus on things happening rather than on things going according to plan.

advancement: Player-characters that reappear in subsequent story arcs or in long story arcs gain specialties. Sometimes when a player-character reappears in a new story arc, they are higher level than before. In long campaigns, characters might advance to a higher level after a climactic resolution or as the alternative to gaining a fourth specialty.

arc: See story arc.

capability: One of three measures of what a player-character can accomplish in the game. The three capabilities are Fight, Sway, and Weird.

casting: Throwing your lots (dice). Unlike traditional divination, casting your lots in *Over the Edge* actually does tell you something important about what’s going to happen to you next. Cast your lots only when you care about the outcome.

character: Imaginary person (or pseudoperson) in the game world, either a player-character like a protagonist or a gamemaster-character (any other character, from an extra to a nemesis). Also, what you build through personal suffering, so you have that going for you.

damage: see strike. You take damage in three big chunks, with chunks of all different types.

dice: The lots that you cast are your two dice.

experience points, XP: Meaningless points occasionally awarded or deducted based on player behavior. See also advancement.

extra: A minor GMC that a player can improvise and portray while their player-character is off stage.

Fight: The capability that measures a character’s ability to fight, one way or another. Typically, it equals the character’s level if they have a combat-oriented trait.

gamemaster, GM: The one who runs the game, handling the gamemaster-characters, framing the action, keeping the right secrets from the players, and providing them the right information.

gamemaster-character, GMC: Any character that’s not a player-character.

healing: Damage comes in big chunks called strikes, and your character can sometimes recover from them via actions at the table.

initiative: In a conflict, the character that’s active has the initiative. In general, if a character has the initiative, they succeed on a cast of 7+. Otherwise they succeed on a cast of 8+.

karma: When the party has karma, a player can “spend” the karma to reroll a die when casting lots. If the party doesn’t have karma, they gain karma when someone throws doubles. Each player also rolls for karma at the start of a new story arc.

level: A general measure of a character’s abilities, or the same sort of number measuring the difficulties that characters face. Level 1 indicates unexceptional competence, level 5 indicates abilities beyond the world’s best mortals, and player-characters are usually level 2 (expert) or 3 (elite).

leveling up: See advancement.

local color: Elements of the story that are primarily there to establish the tone or setting, such as a lively encounter with an unusual gamemaster-character.

lots: Your hand-picked pair of dice. Each player has two matched six-sided dice with pips as their lots. You cast lots to see how things turn out in the game.

nemesis: It’s just possible that the game’s author has coached your GM to create a scary villain who’s ready to wreck your player-character.

paranormal: A catch-all phrase for fringe science, psychic abilities, magic, magick, magicke, extraordinary mutations, supernatural entities, and forces not of this world.

player: Someone who runs a player-character

player-character, PC: A character invented and played by a player. Similar to protagonists in traditional storytelling forms, although players are the audience as well as the performers.

reroll: Sometimes after casting their lots, a player can reroll a die. Sometimes the GM makes them reroll a die. Use the newly rolled value; no take-backs.

saves: Exceptional gamemaster-characters have one or more saves, and each save allows them to avoid the negative effects of being defeated by a player-character. When a GMC has a save, they can take a strike and keep on going. Even better, the GM can use the GMC’s save to avoid other sorts of defeats, such as being captured.

story arc, arc: One or more sessions comprising the action around a group of characters. The story arcs that your play group participates in compose your campaign.

strike, to strike, stricken: A strike is damage of some sort, anything from getting roughed up in a fight to having all of one’s chakras spun in reverse. If a player-character gets three strikes, they’re out of the action. They might be dead, paralyzed, insane, comatose, debilitated, or otherwise made ineffective.



Sway: The capability that measures a character's ability to influence groups and individuals, one way or another. Typically, it equals the character's level if they have an influence-oriented trait, or it is the character's default ability level if the character has no such trait.

table: A metonym meaning the immediate, lived play experience. In a roleplaying game, the table is like a stage or screen combined with the audience. Secondly, the table is the surface that your lots roll off of. No, the four doesn't count if the die rolled off the table.

twist: An unexpected or unusual result, as determined when you cast your lots. Threes mean bad twists, and fours mean good twists.

Weird: The capability that measures a character's ability to achieve goals against resistance using paranormal power of one sort or another. Typically, Weird equals the character's level if they have a trait that gives them a useful paranormal power. If the character has no such trait, Weird is 0.

Glossary of World Terms

Words the characters hear, learn, and maybe use.

actor: Someone who does things, which is to say someone directed by a service to undertake actions in pursuit of unknown ends. In common parlance, an "agent." In terms of word origins, this word is basically the same as "agent." Actors that operate secretly are called cloaks.

adept: Someone who is skilled at some paranormal discipline, or art, especially someone trained and not just a prodigy or a natural.

Al Amarja: A volcanic island in the North Atlantic. Its major city is the Edge. The nation is the Ultimate Democratic Republic of Al Amarja. It's a pariah state, but it keeps a low profile. Don't worry, that volcano is never going to blow.

Arms District: The neighborhood in the Edge where State power is concentrated, especially the Peace Force. You must pass a checkpoint to enter.

apocalypse: Environmental degradation, ocean acidification, climate change, rising sea levels, Earth's 6th great extinction, rising extremism, proliferation of nuclear technology, artificial intelligence smarter than we are, DNA experimentation, mind control, designer drugs, messianic expectations — everyone knows that

the end is near, maybe several ends at once. An apocalypse is a revelation, and the fate of humanity is soon to be revealed. But hey, did you see what happened on Throne of Blood last night?

Broken Wings District: Where the elites feel comfortable living, working, and playing.

burger: A newcomer. Polite Marjans will tell you that it's spelled "burgher" and means "citizen," but when you hear people using the term it sure seems like they're talking about ground meat. Sometimes pluralized as "burgers" ("Three burgers walked into a bar...") and sometimes treated as uncountable ("There's too much burger at this party"). See also newkie.

Charon's, St. Charon's Hospital, the Hospital: The Edge's one real hospital. Large, modern, well-equipped, and willing to make a deal when it comes to your fees. Dr. Nusbaum is the genius behind the leading-edge services to be found here and nowhere else. Pronounced KARE-onz.

Cheryl, Sister: Cheryl D'Aubainne, the First Prophet of the Temple of the Divine Experience. You know you love her. She makes Al Amarja viable, with all the spiritual support she provides to

a hard-pressed populace. She naturally works closely with the State, to the benefit of all.

cloak: An undercover actor, a secret agent.

Constance, Sir: Constance D'Aubainne, the CEO of Swaps and chief business mogul on the Island. Buy low, sell high, and all can be yours. She makes Al Amarja viable, thanks to all the transactions her network enables. She works closely with the State, benefiting from a natural and inevitable synergy.

D'Aubainne: The Island has long benefited from the wise and beneficent rule of the D'Aubainnes. Currently, Jean-Christophe D'Aubainne leads the Island as its beloved Head of State. Sister Cheryl and Sir Constance lead the society's spiritual and commercial efforts, respectively. Their father is Our Martyred Leader.

D'Aubainne, Cheryl: See Cheryl, Sister.



D'Aubainne, Constance; Sir

Constance: See Constance, Sir.

D'Aubainne, Jean-Christophe, His

Unassailability: Head of State, brother to Sister Cheryl and Sir Constance. Measure 23 mandates high security and limits personal appearances by His Unassailability.

D'Aubainne University: A renowned center of higher and lower learning, located in Science District. The Moreau Veterinary College is the University's most prestigious and cutting-edge school.

district: One of several neighborhoods in the Edge. Occasionally Marjans use the term "borough," especially (for some reason) in plural: "boroughs." See Arms, Broken Wings, Flowers, Four Points, Gold, Great Men, Justice, Science, and Sunken.

Edge, the: The Island's major city, divided into strikingly distinct neighborhood, or districts.

enforcer: A general term for the people entrusted with street-level policing. Some of them are paid security staff, others are some variant on gang thugs, and in Four Points they're mostly baboons.

Flowers District: The Edge's trendy arts and entertainment district. What passes for "entertainment" here might be classified as mental illness or organized crime in most civilized cities.

Four Points District: For people who want plenty of street cred, there's this district, where life is cheap and baboons patrol the streets.

Freedom Day: The summer holiday celebrating freedom. Observance is mandatory.

Gold, District of: This neighborhood features Swaps, a massive office complex and trading center where people buy low, sell high, and live life the way Sir Constance D'Aubainne wants them to.

Great Men District: This neighborhood is something of a disaster, although the people are reportedly unified and uplifted by their devotion to the Glorious Lords and the power of metal.

grub, to grub: anything you ingest, whether eaten, drunk, swallowed, smoked, vaped, held between the cheek and gums, taken as an enema, blown into your nasal cavities, snorted, or misted into one's bedroom all night. Also, to eat, drink, swallow, smoke, vape, hold between cheek and gums, take as an enema, allow to be blown into your nasal cavities, snort, or mist into one's bedroom all night. Usually you itch the grub you grub, or else why would you grub it?

Island, the: Al Amarja. In figures of speech, "the Island" often substitutes for "the world" or "Earth," as in "Where on the Island have you been all this time?"

itch, to itch: want, need, craving, obsession; to want, to need, to crave, to obsess. For example, "I itch some of Dogu's grub."

jawfish: Rando, whoreson, bastard, animal, vermin, regular person. Plural: jawfish.

Justice District: In this neighborhood, a local self-help organization has blossomed into a full-service vigilante corps. Otto's Sports Club organizes the "clubbers," who carry baseball bats and pick on weirdoes. Visitors welcome, but honestly not all visitors.

Last War: Conspiracy nutcases say that the world is on the verge of a cataclysmic conflict, a global war so final that it will be the "last war," the war to end all wars for good or ill. Humanity will be transformed or destroyed, maybe both. But hey, did you catch the game last night?

Marjan, Martian: Al Amarjan. The j is pronounced many different ways: zh-, sh-, ch-, j-, h-, the German ch-, and occasionally k- or g-. The zh- sound is correct, but that means nothing, so it's not really true.

Measure 23: This topic is classified, per Measure 23. Requests for information can be made in person at the Ministry of Public Safety in the Plaza of Arms.

Metro: The rail system connecting the districts in the Edge. The State wants you to know that the Metro is efficient, clean, and safe, and you will build solidarity with your fellows as you share the ride.

Moreau Veterinary College: A vast college where most of the best, new research is done. Humans are animals, and at any time Moreau has several field tests running in the Edge.

neighbor: A paranormal creature native to Earth, not human but possibly close. The opposite of a stranger.

newky: Newcomer, especially one not steeped in cynicism. Often the term is used affectionately, but more often it occurs in a predatory context. Also burger.

nokay, no-K, NOK: No, not OK, screw you, let's fight right now.



Novemberfest: The Island's creepy and lurid autumn festival.

Dr. Nusbaum: The reclusive genius behind St. Charon's Hospital and its many operations throughout the Edge.

OK, okay: Yes, amen, agreed, blessed be, I yield.

oppenheimer: A fringe scientist, a mad scientist, a scientist.

org: Organization, especially a less formal or less public one, one that you wouldn't call a "club" or a "company." Sometimes orgs are fronts for services. Other times orgs are about to be infiltrated until they become fronts for services.

Our Martyred Leader: Jacques D'Aubainne, formerly the beloved leader of Al Amarja. Father of Jean-Christophe D'Aubainne, Sir Constance, and Sister Cheryl. Marjans sometimes express love for "our martyred leader" that they would never express for a surviving D'Aubainne. He died about twenty years ago, and the most people know about that is that the Underground got him.

paranormal: A catchall phrase for abilities, technologies, and entities that are kept secret from everyday jawfish.

Peace Officer, the Peace, the Peace

Force: Police officer, a zip. They don't carry firearms, but they have body cameras and drone backup. "The Peace" means, roughly, "the police," but usually you'll hear "the zips" instead.

perp: What the zips call anyone who's not a zip. High-status perps do not get called perp to their faces. Some perps embrace the term, but others hate it. Uncle's Security wants you to know that their agents are perps like you. They're not zips, and you can trust them.

the Presidentials: Al Amarja's secret service, empowered to protect the President, whatever that means and no matter who gets in the way. Measure 23 gives them the secret authority and legal powers they need to keep the President safe, and they do it all with you in mind.

Science District: This neighborhood is home to the notorious D'Aubainne University, and the landlords and businesses in the area cater to university students and to out-of-work recent graduates.

service: A general term for a shady organization that sends actors into the field, especially one with no public front. The conspiracies that are working to control or destroy humanity are services. Like an org, but with indefinite boundaries. Lots of orgs are fronts for services, whether they know it or not.

State, the: Al Amarja's government is here for you. This service supports D'Aubainne University, the Peace, and the Presidentials. The president of the Ultimate Democratic Republic of Al Amarja is His Unassailability Jean-Christophe.

stranger: A paranormal entity that's not from Earth. The opposite of a neighbor.

stricker: Someone from a district, implicitly someone from a different district, outsider in general. Sociologically similar to the term "gentile," which means "someone from a tribe (that's not our tribe)."

Sunken District: This neighborhood stakes its claim on being sane and safe enough for newbies. That's their story, and they are sticking to it.

Swaps: A sprawling commercial institution that facilitates transactions of all sorts, run by Sir Constance.

Temple of the Divine Experience:

A monumental structure devoted to the spiritual needs of all, run by Sister Cheryl.

the Terminal: Technically, this term refers only to the building at the center of the D'Aubainne International Airport, but everyone refers to the airport as "the Terminal." You've seen the monstrous ziggurat spiraling into the sky, and you know why everyone just calls the whole place "the Terminal."

Uncle's Security: The private security firm that handles street-level policing in the best parts of the Edge. They treat you with respect and don't call you perp.

the Underground: Is it a nefarious organization bent on toppling the State and destroying humanity? Is it a figment of the State's propaganda? By one definition, everything that happens against the wishes of the State is "the Underground," from actual treason to speeding, and possibly the tide.

war: What this universe is about. See the Last War.

zip: A Peace Officer or any police officer of the State. Assassins, spies, and other cloaks that work for the State are pretty much zips. Anyone who's not a zip is a perp.

