

# Guidelines on how to build a tome

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## Introduction

This document explains my personal method at tome creation, development and testing. It's the product of my experiments with RuneSword v. 1.05, namely with Creator.

### 1. Create your extra working tools

The first thing you need is to create some extra tools for smoothing down the development and testing of what you're going to show. I usually do it like this: I have a small tome, which is nothing more than a small area to test creatures and encounters. When I get to finish an encounter, I load it up in this test tome and try it out, documenting what is working well and what's not. I also have a test character in the Roster folder (in fact several), so that I get a working, controlled party to perform the tests I need.

To help you out and save you time, you'll find a Test tome and the character Tester (which should be placed in your Roster folder) together with this document; for more complicated tests, you can also adapt the Return home tome, also included.

### 2. Build your story

Of course, your tome will be as enjoyable as the time you spend with your story, plots and quests, and beyond your graphic and RuneScript abilities, this is the major part of your project. If your tome is nothing but whacking, blood and gore, you're probably missing the point in RPG; the experience is much richer if you can immerse the player and try to make him/her identify himself/herself with the party characters, and wanting to explore the limits of your creativity. Do spend some time here, possibly making a list of what are the goals the party has to fulfil, even if the tome can be partially completed.

### 3. Prepare the tiles and tile sets and Combat wallpaper

There is an excellent tool called TileSet Cannibal, developed by Count0, if you're shuffling tiles and tilesets. Use a blank map to test how your tiles link to one another. Whatever your options, don't forget to load your finished tile sets into Creator and check the individual attributes for each tile, hopefully *before* your start creating your maps. This will save you time, as well.

Let's say you've assembled a tile set for the interior of a dungeon, there are no isomorphic issues to sort out (all tiles mesh well with the rest) and that you've decided on the size of the map. Open Creator with a blank tome. Create your map for dimensions, cutting out everything you don't need. Add the tile set (and combat wallpaper). Check every tile property for every tile, making changes as appropriate. When you're through, place appropriate comments on the map and the time and date when you last worked on it, save just the blank map with the tile set and give it the name you plan to use.

#### 4. Draw the maps

If all goes well so far, you are now producing your maps. Remember that you must be careful here, if you want them to be well made, and the tools you have active on your left upper corner can sometimes get in the way or ruin your work! Always start by doing the bottom layer, first. Make sure that every tile space you want to use in your map has a bottom tile. As a rule, always leave a tile space around the margins of an interior map, because you'll need them when you're putting up walls by the time you start working on the middle layer. Outside maps don't have to follow this, usually, but you must make sure that, for best effects, every tile space, even if impassable, should have a bottom tile (the actual "ground", even if you're putting a mountain on top of it).

The middle layer is trickier, because it's easy to misplace the tile you want, and you have two options here: either you can place it properly, so you click it "over" the previous tile, or you have to erase it. To erase it, be *absolutely* certain that the "eyes" on the other layers are *off* (you don't see the other layers), then use the eraser, *after* checking it is set at tile size (or you risk erasing more than what you intended). In fact, I try to work with the "eyes" of the layers closed, opening them as I move up, and closing them if I need to erase something. The middle layer is also where you place most object tiles, and is usually the most complex.

Doors should be placed at the middle layer, so the engine can get rid of them, when opened. That means you'll have to place the appropriate archway on the top layer (thanks, Downunder Tom).

The top layer is useful for lamps and torches, stairs (if back against walls), fireplaces and the occasional bit of furniture close to a wall, or to put tables over benches, chairs and stools, in fact whatever you need to finish it off, that you could not place at the middle layer stage.

Having completed the map, save it, and use Tester or some other character to move around, making notes of things that do not work well, to be edited. When you're happy with the results, load the map into Creator and add the entry/exit points, and test it again.

#### 5. Create your creatures and items

On a different issue area, you're probably working on your creatures at the same time. Some preparation will help you out.

Start by making sure you have a complete list of the creatures you want to use in your tome. Check that you have a picture for each different class of creatures. Check if your needed creatures can be "based" upon existing ones in RuneSword or on the posted ones by the community, because it will save you a lot (I do mean a lot) of your time. This is where your RuneScript abilities come in handy, and the Test and Rescue tomes will help you make sure each is up for play and can be considered finished. Keep documenting your progress on each one.

Items follow pretty much the same methodology, except they're inanimate.

#### 6. Finalize encounters

This may seem a bit redundant, after stage 5, but you have to go about it for some final details. You have to decide the area, in tile spaces, the encounter is occupying in the map and you have also some encounters with objects, like teleporting portals, or getting into or out of moving spaceships (don't forget RuneSword 3000, from Darwin/Shodan!), etc.

#### 7. Populate the maps

Now is the time to start getting the finished pieces of your puzzle clicking in place. Start by populating the maps, one at a time. Save and test each. Since you've done extensive tests with the items, you will probably have an easy task here. Once you're satisfied, move on.

#### 8. Getting everything in a tome

By now you should have the basics of your tome already assembled, with one or more areas defined, plus the required factoids, the maps going in, the bits and pieces in their proper folders, and an installation README being built. Your themes, if any, extra DM dialog, cut scenes and sounds are also snapping into place. So, you move to final testing. Give it a go. When you're happy, prepare your zip file, making sure you save every bit with the path information, finish up the Readme file, giving credit to your fellow creators who helped you out, plus those you used their work, and contemplate your accomplishment.

#### 9. Posting your work of art

You're done! Post your tome to everyone's enjoyment!