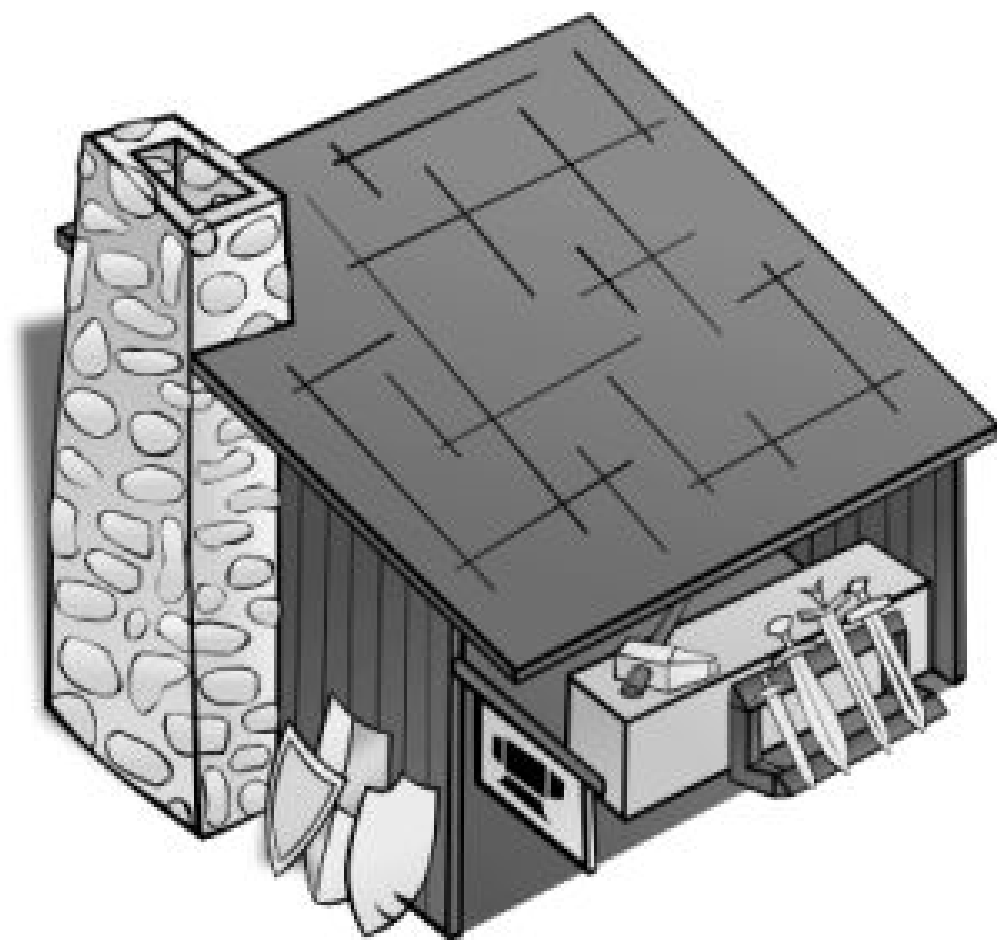


Making Craft Work

Ludi Fortes - Strong Games
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Making Craft Work

by Mark L. Chance

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Why Craft As Written Doesn't Work.....	3
✂ Bizarre Example the First.....	4
✂ Bizarre Example the Second.....	4
✂ Bizarre Example the Third.....	4
Making Craft Work.....	4
✂ Table: Item Complexity	4
✂ Item Complexity.....	5
✂ Masterwork Items.....	5
✂ Special Materials.....	5
✂ Table: Special Materials Modifiers.....	6
✂ Tools (or Lack Thereof).....	6
✂ Failing a Craft Check.....	6
✂ Exceptional Crafting.....	6
Taking the Bizarre Out of Those Examples.....	7

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Making Craft Work

by Mark L. Chance

Introduction

The rules for the Craft skill don't work very well or make much sense. Just about everyone realizes this, yet despite moving from version 3 to version 3-1/2 to the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*, spotting improvement in Craft is like trying to figure out the square root of orange.

I've often read complaints about Craft in various forums. The general consensus usually ends up being, yes, the Craft rules are at least rather wonky, but the game isn't *Commerce & Craftsmen*, so just spend your skill points on something else that'll actually be useful. As far as consensuses go, that one's pretty lousy. If a player wants his PC to be a craftsman, that ought to be a perfectly acceptable desire for a pretty wide range of campaigns.

Wouldn't it be nice if you could find some Craft rules that at least made an effort at making more sense and tried to fix the wonkiness in the rules as written?

Well, I too think it would be nice, and so I sat down and decided to do just that. I've had these rules laying around for quite a while. I dusted them off, polished them up, and now you have them too. Should you have comments or criticisms, please don't hesitate to shoot me an [email](#).

Good gaming!

Mark L. Chance

Spes Magna Games

Why Craft As Written Doesn't Work

Here're the basics:

1. Find the item's price in silver pieces (1 gp = 10 sp).
2. Find the DC on [Table: Craft Skills](#)¹.
3. Pay one-third of the item's price for the cost of raw materials.
4. Make an appropriate Craft check representing one week's worth of work.
5. If the check succeeds, multiply your check result by the DC. If the result \times the DC equals the price of the item in silver pieces, then you have completed the item².
6. If the result \times the DC doesn't equal the price, then it represents the progress you've made this week. Record the result and make a new Craft check for the next week. Each week, you make more progress until your total reaches the price of the item in silver pieces.

What seems like a pretty straightforward series of steps actually produces some bizarre results. Let's look at a few examples.

¹ Hyperlink leads to d20pfsrd.com.

² If the result \times the DC equals double or triple the price of the item in silver pieces, then you've completed the task in one-half or one-third of the time. Other multiples of the DC reduce the time in the same manner. Rules presented under **Exceptional Crafting** below replace this.

Bizarre Example the First

Erlic wants to Craft a one-pound silver ball. His brother Rynook wants to Craft a one-pound gold ball. A one-pound ball of silver is worth one-tenth as much as a pound of gold. Even though Erlic and Rynook work on pretty much the same project -- melting metal and pouring it into a mold -- Rynook must spend much longer on his one-pound ball simply because it's made of gold.

Bizarre Example the Second

Erlic next wants to Craft some full plate. Full plate costs 15,000 silver pieces and faces an armorsmithing DC of 19. Erlic has Craft (armorsmithing) +8. Let's be unrealistic and say that he rolls a 20 for each and every Craft check. 28 times 19 equals 532, which means it'll take Erlic 28 weeks to finish his full plate. So much for having time to adventure.

Bizarre Example the Third

Erlic and Rynook want to see who can craft an item first. Erlic decides to make a high-quality box (value 20 silver pieces, Craft DC 15). Rynook wants to make a crowbar (value 20 silver pieces, Craft DC 10). The brothers have only a +1 bonus for their checks as they are both untrained when making these particular items. Again, let's assume they both roll nothing but 20s. Here are the contest's results:

* Erlic: 21 times 15 equals 315, which is 15.75 times higher than the box's cost.

* Rynook: 21 times 10 equals 210, which is 10.5 times higher than the crowbar's cost.

* The Winner: Erlic, despite the fact he is making the more complicated item.



Making Craft Work

Every Craft attempt is defined by two elements: the time required and the DC. The time required to craft an item is influenced not by an item's price in silver pieces, but rather by its complexity. The DC is likewise influenced by item complexity.

Table: Item Complexity

Complexity	Time Unit	Modifier
Very simple	8 hours	+0
Simple	2 days	+2
Moderate	4 days	+4
Complex	1 week	+8
Very complex	2 weeks	+10

Time Unit: This column tells you how long must be spent working before a Craft check is permitted.

DC Modifier: This modifier is added to base DC 10 of all Craft checks.

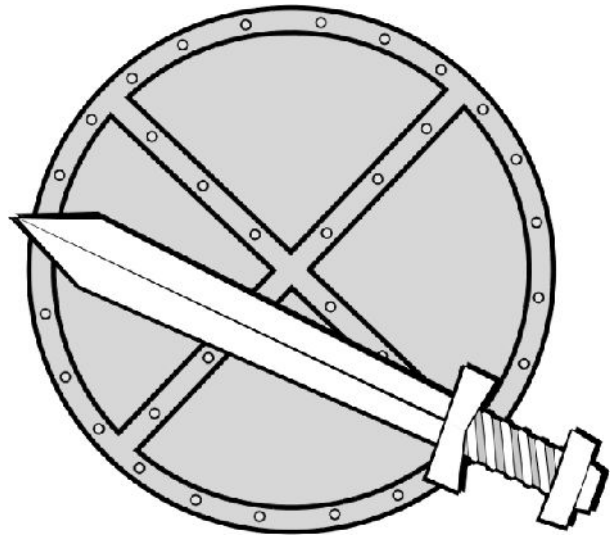
Item Complexity

The complexity categories listed on the table above require some defining. Keep in mind that there is a certain amount of subjectivity at work here.³ The key to item complexity isn't to rely on an exhaustive list of what items belong to which categories. Instead, these rules provide basic category descriptions and a few examples of sorts of items one might expect to fit each respective category.

Very Simple: These items are more or less all one piece or one material of simple shape with no moving parts. Examples: crowbar, quarterstaff.

Simple: A simple item is largely made of one material, but it requires a more specialized shape. Examples: many simple weapons, backpack, most common articles of clothing, simple traps such as pits.

Moderate: Moderate complexity items are characterized by diverse materials or different parts that must be integrated into a whole. Examples: Most martial and exotic weapons, bows, all shields, locks, simple traps using simple mechanical triggers, acid.



Complex: Complex items have diverse materials, moving parts, different parts, and/or decorative bits. Examples: Most types of armor, strength bows, crossbows, most vehicles (excluding large ocean-going vessels), alchemist's fire, smokesticks, tingerwigs.

Very Complex: These are the most complicated items. They require diverse materials, moving parts, different parts, decorated bits, and/or multiple functions or uses. Examples: ocean-going vessels, unusual armors (such as barding), antitoxins, tanglefoot bags, sunrods, thunderstones.

Masterwork Items

A masterwork item has a 50% increase in time unit (in addition to the normal increase in cost). For example, a longsword is a moderately complex item with a time unit of 4 days. Thus, a masterwork longsword has a time unit of 6 days.

Furthermore, any masterwork item has its Craft DC increased by +4. Thus, the masterwork longsword faces a DC 18 Craft check⁴.

Special Materials

A craftsman working with an unusual material (such as adamantite) faces a 50% increase in time unit, which stacks with the 50% increase in time unit associated with masterwork items when applicable. For example, an adamantite masterwork longsword has a time unit of 8 days. Also, unusual materials are harder to work with and increase the item's DC as shown below:

-
- 3 It was suggested to me that item size adjust time for crafting. This makes sense. Certainly, a very large object could be reasonably expected to take longer to craft than a smaller item. At the same time, a very small item also might be more difficult. This suggestion has merit, but, unfortunately, the game system doesn't account for item sizes well. If you, the DM, feel an item's size ought to influence how long it takes to craft, increase the time unit by, say, 25-50% (or more). Just be consistent and up front about these modifiers.
 - 4 Just to clarify: These rules replace those for crafting masterwork items described under the Craft skill.

Table: Special Materials Modifiers

Material	DC Modifier
Adamantine	+6
Darkwood	+2
Dragonhide	+4
Iron, cold	+2
Mithral	+4
Silver, alchemical	+2

Thus, the masterwork adamantite masterwork longsword faces a DC 24 Craft check.

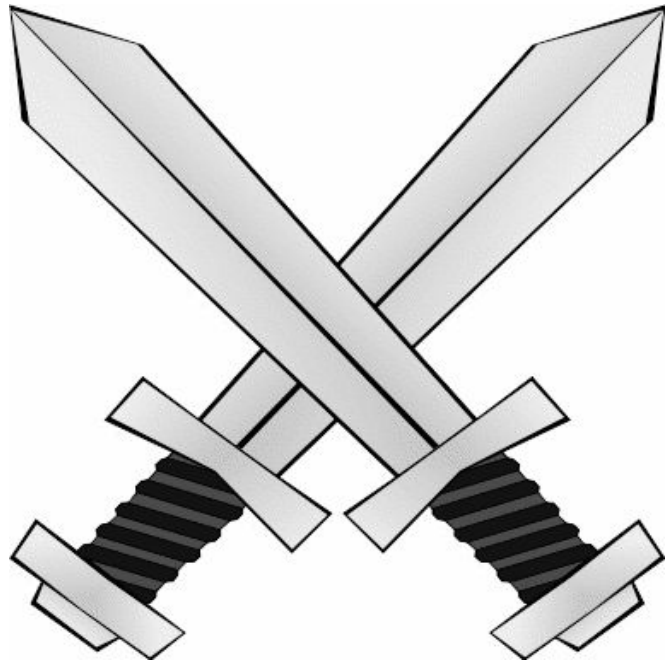
Tools (or Lack Thereof)

All crafts require artisan's tools to give the best chance of success. If improvised tools are used, the check is made with a -2 penalty. On the other hand, masterwork artisan's tools provide a +2 circumstance bonus on the check.

Failing a Craft Check

What happens if the Craft check fails? Well, that depends on how badly it failed. When confronted with a failed Craft check, there are up to three possible bad effects:

1. If the Craft check fails, the item is not completed. Work for another time unit and try again.
2. If the Craft check fails by 5 or more, half of the raw materials are ruined. Pay half the raw materials cost to replace the ruined materials.
3. If the Craft check fails by 10 or more and you are using Craft (alchemy), your laboratory explodes. Pay to replace it as well as the ruined raw materials (as number 2 above). Also make a DC 10 Reflex save to avoid 1d6 points of fire damage.



Exceptional Crafting

What happens if you really ace the Craft check? Can a character get finished more quickly than the time unit? Certainly, but there are limits. For every 5 points greater than the item's DC is the Craft check, halve the item's time unit, but no time unit can be halved this way more than twice.

In addition to an exceptional Craft check reducing the time unit, the crafter's skill alone can shorten the task. For every 5 ranks a crafter has in the relevant Craft skill, halve the item's time unit, but no time unit can be halved this way more than twice.

For example, Erlic is going to craft a clockwork dancer to entertain the king. This is a very complex task, and faces a DC 20 with a 2 week time unit. Furthermore, Erlic wants to use darkwood for the mechanism, yielding DC 22 and a 3 week time unit. Fortunately, Erlic has 10 ranks in Craft (clockwork mechanism). His expertise reduces the time unit to 5 days. He scores a 27 on his Craft check, further reducing the time unit to 2 days.

Taking the Bizarre Out of Those Examples

Here's how the amended Craft system works:

1. Determine the complexity of the item to be made. As always, the DM's input here may be decisive.
2. Pay one-third of the item's cost, including masterwork and unusual materials increases, in order to acquire necessary raw materials.
3. Make a Craft check. If successful, the item is completed in the item's time unit.

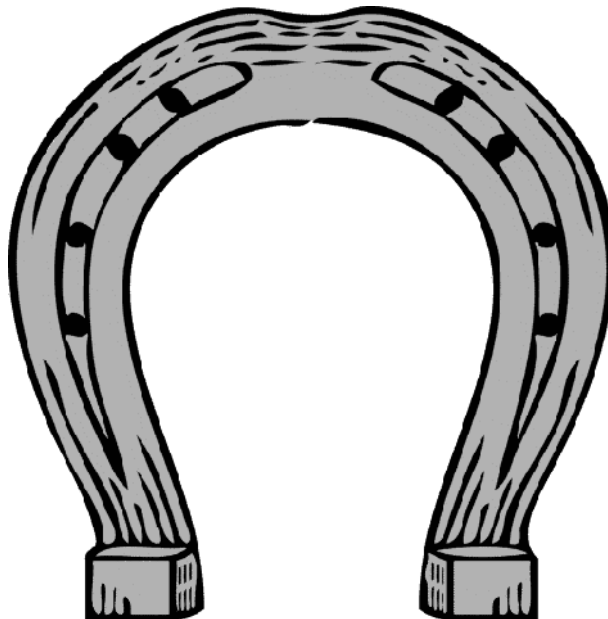
Let's go back and look at our oddities again, but this time we'll use the amended Craft system:

Erlic wants to Craft a one-pound silver ball. Rynook wants to Craft a one-pound gold ball. Both items are very simple. They thus have a time unit of 8 hours and face a DC 10 Craft check. Assuming their respective Craft checks succeed, both finish their one-pound balls in the same amount of time (but not for the same price, since gold costs more than silver).

Erlic wants to Craft some full plate. Full plate is complex. It has a time unit of 1 week and faces a Craft DC of 18. With a good enough Craft check, Erlic finishes his armor in 1 week and has plenty of time to go adventuring⁵.

Erlic and Rynook are twin craftsmen engaged in a contest to see who can craft an item the quickest. Erlic crafts a high-quality box (moderate complexity, 4 day time unit, DC 14), and Rynook crafts a crowbar (very simple, 8 hours time unit, DC 10). Unless Rynook is incredibly unlucky with his skill checks, he'll win the contest.

There you have it. A change to Craft that makes the skill more player-friendly as well as a bit more in line with common sense. If it seems as if DCs are too low, just adjust the modifiers. If it seems time units are too short, lengthen them. The basic system itself remains intact even with such tweaks.



⁵ Yes, this is unrealistic. No one finishes a suit of full plate in seven days. The goal of this system, however, isn't realism, but usability.

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