

This document tracks changes across Frontiers Tabletop Engine versions over time. New versions are added to the top of the document. Older versions remain accessible below for reference and for designers still working on projects based on earlier releases.

Each version includes a release date and a brief summary of changes and additions. For full detail on any change, refer to the Design Documentation set associated with that version.

Current

Frontiers 1.0

Release Date: 28 August 2026

The first full release. The engine is finalized into three parallel Rulesets built on a shared chassis: the d18 is the default form the engine is tuned around, and the d20 and d100 adapt it. Attributes, Derivatives, Skills, Abilities, Equipment, and Characters are identical across all three; only the Resolution layer differs.

Alongside them, the Design Documentation set was rewritten from scratch as seven documents, one per subsystem.

Rulesets and structure

Three Rulesets replace the single documented form. The d18 is the default: 1d12 + 1d6 summed, with the 1d6 reread as the Gradient. The d20 uses a flat 1d20 with an independent 1d10 Gradient. The d100 is percentile and roll-under, with the units die as the Gradient.

Shared structure is factored out, so only the dice and the numbers tuned to them differ between Rulesets. Each adaptation opens by naming exactly what it changes relative to the d18.

Terminology

Deft replaces **Finesse**. **Capacity** replaces **Reference Level** as the value compared against an item or ability's **Demand**. **Difficulty Threshold (DT)** and **Contest Threshold (CT)** replace the older target-number language. **Pursuits** and **Marks** replace **Vector Marks** for advancement.

HP / Wounds / Fatigue / Energy are the four tracked pools. **Momentum**, **Awareness**, and **Intuition** are removed. Skill **Categories** are retained as pure taxonomy with no modifier. Equipment States become **Stowed / Equipped / Active / Removed**.

Resolution

Gradient Resolution finalized. In the d18 the Gradient is welded to the verdict; in the d20 it is an independent die; in the d100 it is the units die reread. **Favor / Disfavor** is unified as the sole circumstance modifier, placed per-die and capped at 3, canceling one for one before the cap applies.

Rolling is opt-in against a known Score: anything at or below your Score succeeds without a roll, and rolling becomes a gamble you choose to take.

Attributes and Derivatives

Attributes are recentered so the **Modifier = Score – 10** and the **Score itself is the passive value**. Both **Defenses** derive from half the summed Modifiers of their pair, which rewards balanced pairs over a single high Attribute.

Wounds and **Fatigue** are short 1-5 tracks with a –1-per-point penalty. Reaching 0 HP **downs** a character rather than killing them. Live and anchored Derivatives are formally separated.

Energy, Abilities, and Equipment

The **Demand – Capacity** rule governs abilities, weapons, armor, and items alike: cost is the item or ability Level minus the character Level, minimum zero. At or below your Level it is free; above it, you pay the gap every use. Overspend is permitted and spills into Wounds or Fatigue, chosen per point.

Equipment uses a flat slot count with four States. ♦**Interact** becomes a single Free Action covering all item handling, once per Turn.

Characters and advancement

Identity is two layers: **Origin** (what you are and where you are from) and **Archetype** (what you do). Advancement splits into **Individual Pursuits → Marks**, taken immediately and capped at three per Level, and a **Party Pursuit → Levels**, which the whole party takes together.

Milestone and XP advancement are documented as supported alternatives rather than being ruled out.

Icons

♦ Vigor · ☆ Deft · ● Acuity · △ Resolve, replacing the earlier glyph set. See Fixing Missing Icons if any of these fail to render.

Archive

Beta 2026-2

Release Date: April 24, 2026

Major rewrite focused on teaching-first documentation, mechanical clarity, and design-side modularity. Restructures how Frontiers is documented and refines multiple subsystems.

Documentation: Introduced the **Design Documentation** set with Part One (teaching) / Part Two (Frontiers' answer) / Part Three (working ruleset) structure, replacing the older "Expanded" documents. Added **Designing With Frontiers** as the front-door teaching doc. Rewrote the **Frontiers Overview** as the condensed working ruleset with clickable headers. Introduced the **Variants vs. Alternatives** convention.

Terminology: **Initiative** replaces **Momentum** (direction flipped, higher now acts first). **Reference Level** replaces **Provider Level**, unifying math across PCs, NPCs, and Items. **Enhanced** replaces "magic item" terminology for Level-above-0 Equipment. **Skill Categories** (Body, Mind, Voice) introduced as a new layer above specific Skills. Equipment uses **States** (Equipped, Activated, Consumable) instead of "Categories."

Icons: Updated full icon set for better cross-platform rendering. Notable changes: $\square$ Acuity (was $\square$), $\ast$ Resolve (was $\square$), $\square$ Finesse (was $\square$), $\oplus$ Health (was $\oplus$), $\otimes$ Wound (was $\square$), $\ominus$ Fatigue (was $\square$), $\square$ Mental Defense (was $\square$), $\odot$ Awareness (was $\square$), $\blacktriangleright$ Initiative (was $\otimes$ Momentum), $\Rightarrow$ Movement (was $\gg$), $\square$ Downtime (was z^z), $\ast$ Activity (was $\ast$).

Resolution: Gradient Die bands rebalanced to a bell-curve distribution (1 = Major Negative, 2-3 = Minor Negative, 4-7 = Standard, 8-9 = Minor Positive, 10 = Major Positive). Basic vs Gradient modes clearly distinguished. Favor/Disfavor formalized with 3-stack cap and 1-for-1 cancellation.

Attributes & Derivatives: Attribute scale changed from 0-10 to 1-10 (floor of 1 is absolute). Defense formula simplified to $5 + \text{highest of (relevant Mod pair)} + \text{Equipment}$. Awareness and Intuition now have formulas ($1 + \text{Mod}$, reduced by 2 per $\ominus$ Fatigue). Maximum $\otimes$ Wounds = $1 + \diamond\text{Vigor Mod}$; Maximum $\ominus$ Fatigue = $1 + \ast\text{Resolve Mod}$. Live vs Anchored Derivatives distinction formalized. $\odot$ Carrying Capacity removed from core engine.

Flow of Play: Initiative renamed and flipped (higher acts first). Reactions now share the $\diamond$ AP pool, unspent $\diamond$ AP persists until next Turn, available for Reactions. Overspend simplified (player chooses 1 $\otimes$ Wound or 1 $\ominus$ Fatigue, no roll). Negative Energy floor added ($\text{negative one-half of positive max}$, rounded down). Stabilize Action formalized (2 $\diamond$ AP adjacent to restore 1 $\oplus$ HP). Auto-revive at Encounter end if ally can reach. Downtime healing formalized (3 hrs = 50% max HP, rolling).

Skills: Major overhaul. Two-layer system: **Categories** (+1 to +5 flat modifier, capped per-Category) and **binary Specific Skills** (grant Favor when applicable). Category modifiers are build rewards, not baseline training. Previous three-benefit menu (Favor / Enhanced Attribute / Narrative

Edge) removed — Skills now grant only Favor. Skill list remains designer-defined. **Competencies** formally separated as an access-granting system (weapons, armor, tools, languages, vehicles, magical systems).

Abilities: Reference Level replaces Provider Level. **Static vs Dynamic Level** distinction formalized. Universal Anatomy expanded to 9 required fields. Action Cost now explicitly covers four types: Standard ♦AP, ♦Free Action, Reaction, Passive. Soft cap of Ability Level 15. Frequency limits made explicitly optional.

Equipment: Reference Level math mirrors Abilities. Three Equipment States: Equipped (persistent max ⤵Energy reduction), Activated (per-use cost), Consumable (per-use, removed). **Enhanced / non-enhanced** terminology formally adopted. Carrying Capacity / slot systems removed from core (system-defined). Item Durability not in engine. Items granting Abilities: Ability Level = item Level. Max ⤵Energy reductions stack across multiple above-Level items. Max recommended Equipment Level: 15.

Characters: Origin / Background / Archetype reframed as the **Three Roots** (biological, external, trained inheritance). Mechanical contributions per layer are open (templates, not rules). HP formula simplified: ♦Vigor Mod + Archetype HP Mod per Level. Origin and Background no longer contribute to HP. Vigor changes recalculate HP retroactively. Vector Marks remain the progression engine (3 Marks = 1 Level). Skill Mark now grants a new Skill OR +1 Category modifier. Ability Mark legality: ≤ Reference Level + 2. Mark pacing default: ~1 per session. Mark types cannot repeat within a Level. Multi-Archetype default: per-Level features only, no new "Level 1 starter." Starting values at Level 1: 10 Attribute Points, 3 ⤵Energy, 3 Skills, 2 Abilities ≤ Level 3. Single Archetype max: 10 Levels. Total Character Level soft cap: 20.

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Beta 2026-1

Release Date: February 13, 2026

Initial public release of the Frontiers Tabletop Engine.

Introduced the foundational engine: Gradient Resolution System, Free Play / Encounter Play dual-mode structure, four-Attribute base (Vigor / Finesse / Acuity / Resolve), Momentum-based turn order, ♦AP action economy with ⤵Energy exertion resource, Wounds and Fatigue as parallel damage tracks, the Origin / Background / Archetype character triad, Vector Mark advancement, Ability and Equipment Level interaction via Provider Level, and the initial Expanded Documentation set.

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Archived versions: [link TBD, see archiving note below]

*This changelog is a living document. New versions are added to the top. For the current active ruleset, see the **Frontiers Release Section**.