This document expands upon the implementation of the Flow of Play as presented in the Frontiers Overview.

It also offers a few Variants and Alternatives for those who want a different version or different resolution system entirely.

Like the core Release document for this version of Frontiers, the material presented here is modular by design. Sections may be adopted, modified, or omitted depending on the needs of the system being built.

Frontiers operates in two primary modes:

- **Free Play**
- **Encounter Play**

These modes define how time, actions, and resources are structured.

Modes of Play

Free Play

Free Play is the default state of the game.

- Time is fluid.
- No strict turn order exists.
- Characters primarily engage in ✶Activities.
- Rolls occur only when uncertainty meaningfully impacts the narrative.

There is no Action Point tracking during Free Play.

If a situation escalates such that timing precision, positioning, or resource pressure becomes critical, the game shifts into Encounter Play.

The GM determines when this shift occurs.

Encounter Play

Encounter Play introduces structured timing.

Encounter Play is used when:

- Order of actions matters.

- Positioning matters.
- Immediate consequences matter.
- Resource tracking matters.

During Encounter Play:

- Time is divided into Rounds.
- Participants act in Turns.
- Actions consume ✦Action Points.
- Movement consumes »Movement Points.
- ⚡Energy pressure becomes tactically significant.

✶Activities are unavailable during Encounter Play unless explicitly allowed by a rule.

Transitioning Into Encounter Play

When the game shifts from Free Play to Encounter Play:

- All participants determine Momentum.
- A new Round begins immediately.
- No participant begins with expended ✦AP or »MP.
- Ongoing Free Play actions resolve or are suspended at the GM’s discretion.

If a participant was clearly initiating action before others could respond, the GM may allow them to act first in the first Round regardless of Momentum.

Encounter Structure

Encounter Play operates in repeating cycles called **Rounds**.

Each Round consists of every participant taking one **Turn**, ordered by ⧗**Momentum**.

After all participants have taken a Turn, a new Round begins.

There is no fixed limit to the number of Rounds in an Encounter.

The Encounter ends when:

- The conflict resolves,
- The pressure dissipates,
- Or the GM declares the structured timing no longer necessary.

Rounds

A Round represents approximately 10 seconds of in-world time.

All participants share the same Round.

Effects that last “until the end of the Round” expire after all participants have completed their Turns.

Effects that last “until the start of your next Turn” expire immediately before that participant begins acting again.

Turns

A Turn is the window in which a participant may:

- Spend ✦Action Points (AP)
- Spend »Movement Points (MP)
- Use ✧Free Actions (if permitted)
- Trigger effects that specify “during your Turn”

At the start of a participant’s Turn:

- ✦AP refreshes to maximum.
- »MP refreshes to maximum.
- Ongoing effects that expire “at the start of your Turn” resolve.

At the end of a participant’s Turn:

- Unspent ✦AP is lost.
- Unspent »MP is lost.
- Effects that expire “at the end of your Turn” resolve.

A participant cannot take actions outside their Turn unless a rule explicitly grants a Reaction or exception.

Reactions

Reactions are effects triggered outside a participant’s Turn.

- Reactions cost ✦AP unless stated otherwise.
- A participant must have available ✦AP to use a Reaction.
- Reactions resolve immediately after their triggering condition unless the rule states they interrupt.

⧗ Momentum (Turn Order)

Each character has a starting **Momentum Value (MV)** ranging from 0 to 10.

Lower Momentum acts earlier.
Higher Momentum acts later.

At the start of an Encounter:

- A character may keep their Momentum Value (provided by Archetype), or
- Adjust it by adding or subtracting up to their **Finesse Modifier**

Momentum may be further adjusted situationally at the GM’s discretion.

Acting later is not inherently worse. Certain Abilities or tactics benefit from reacting instead of initiating.

Some Abilities, effects, or environmental conditions may temporarily raise or lower MV beyond 0–10. This is permitted within the engine.

Establishing Momentum

At the start of an Encounter:

1. Each participant uses their base Momentum Value (MV).
2. A participant may adjust MV by adding or subtracting up to their Finesse Modifier.
3. The final MV is locked for the duration of the Encounter unless altered by effects.

Participants then act in ascending order of MV.

Ties in Momentum

If two or more participants share the same MV:

- The participant with higher Finesse Score acts first.
- If still tied, the Player goes first, or GM decides.
- That order remains consistent across Rounds unless circumstances change.

Changing Momentum Mid-Encounter

Some Abilities or effects may modify MV.

If Momentum changes mid-Encounter:

- The new MV takes effect at the start of the next Round unless the rule states otherwise.
- Momentum changes do not retroactively reorder Turns already taken.

Action Timing Priority

When multiple effects trigger simultaneously (in the same temporal moment):

1. Effects triggered by the active participant resolve first.
2. Effects triggered by other participants resolve in Momentum order. This ordering does not apply to Reaction chains, which resolve in reverse chronological order.
3. If ambiguity remains, the GM determines resolution order.

Otherwise, normal temporal-based order (when each happened) defines order.

Unless explicitly stated, triggered effects do not interrupt the resolution of an action. They resolve immediately after the triggering event completes.

✦ Actions

An ✦Action is a discrete, mechanically significant effort performed during Encounter Play.

Unless stated otherwise, all ✦Actions cost **1 ✦Action Point (AP)**.

Actions may include:

- Attacking
- Activating an Ability
- Interacting with the environment
- Utilizing equipment
- Improvised efforts adjudicated by the GM

If a rule does not specify an Action cost, it defaults to **1 ✦AP**.

Declaring and Resolving an ✦Action

To perform an ✦Action:

1. Declare the intended Action.
2. Spend the required ✦AP.
3. Resolve the Action fully.
4. Apply any resulting effects.

An ✦Action must be fully resolved before another ✦Action is declared, unless a rule explicitly allows interruption.

A participant may not declare an ✦Action if they do not have sufficient ✦AP available.

Multiple ✦AP Costs

Some Abilities or effects may cost more than 1 ✦AP.

If an Ability requires:

- 2 ✦AP → both must be available at declaration.
- 3 ✦AP → all must be available at declaration.

✦AP costs must be paid in full before resolution begins.

Partial activation is not permitted unless explicitly stated.

✦ Action Points (AP)

During Encounter Play, each participant begins their Turn with **3 ✦AP**, unless modified by a rule.

✦AP may be spent:

- During your Turn for ✦Actions.
- During the Round for Reactions (if permitted).

At the start of your Turn: - ✦AP refreshes to maximum.

At the end of your Turn: - Any unspent ✦AP is lost.

✦AP does not carry over between Turns.

Reactions

Reactions are effects triggered outside a participant’s Turn.

Unless stated otherwise:

- Reactions cost ✦AP.
- A participant must have available ✦AP to use a Reaction.
- A participant may use multiple Reactions per Round if they have sufficient ✦AP.
- Reactions resolve immediately after their triggering condition unless the rule explicitly states they interrupt.

A participant cannot use Reactions while incapacitated.

✧ Free Actions

✧Free Actions represent minor efforts that do not meaningfully tax time or focus.

If an Ability costs a ✧Free Action:

- It may be used once per Round.
- It does not cost ✦AP.
- It may only be used during the participant's Turn unless explicitly stated otherwise.

A participant may use multiple different ✧Free Action Abilities in the same Round, but each is still limited to once per Round unless a rule states otherwise.

Free Actions must still be declared and resolved clearly.

» Movement

Movement represents physical repositioning during Encounter Play.

Movement is tracked using **»Movement Points (MP)**.

Movement does not normally cost ✦AP unless a rule explicitly states otherwise.

» Movement Points (MP)

During Encounter Play:

- Each participant begins their Turn with **»MP equal to 3 + **Finesse Modifier**, unless modified by a rule.
- »MP refreshes to maximum at the start of the participant's Turn.
- Unspent »MP is lost at the end of the participant's Turn.

1 »MP = 1 Unit moved.

A participant may divide movement before, between, or after ✦Actions during their Turn.

Movement does not need to be declared all at once.

Units

Distance in Frontiers is measured in **Units**.

- 1 Unit = 5 feet (1.5 meters)
- 1 Unit = 1 square or hex on a tactical map

Units apply to:

- Movement
- Ranges
- Areas of effect
- Positioning requirements

If playing without a grid, Units represent relative spatial positioning at the GM’s discretion.

Splitting Movement

Movement may be split across a Turn.

Example: - Move 1 Unit - Perform an ✦Action - Move 2 Units

All movement must occur during the participant’s Turn unless a rule explicitly allows movement outside it.

Forced Movement

If a participant is moved by an external effect:

- Forced movement does not cost »MP.
- Forced movement does not trigger additional movement costs.
- Forced movement occurs immediately when the effect resolves.

If forced movement would place a participant in an invalid or obstructed space, the GM determines the nearest valid position.

Impaired or Reduced Movement

If an effect reduces movement:

- The reduction applies to the participant’s total available »MP for that Turn.
- Movement cannot be reduced below 0 unless a rule explicitly immobilizes the participant.

If immobilized:

- The participant cannot spend »MP.
- They may still perform ✦Actions unless otherwise restricted.

Movement and Incapacitation

If a participant becomes Unconscious or otherwise incapacitated:

- They cannot spend »MP.
- Any remaining »MP is lost immediately.

If they regain the ability to act before their Turn ends, they may spend any remaining »MP still available.

Leaving Encounter Play

When Encounter Play ends:

- Any unspent »MP is lost.
- Positioning remains as established in the fiction.

⚡ Energy

⚡Energy represents stamina, exertion, and the capacity to push beyond routine effort.

⚡Energy applies in both Free Play and Encounter Play.

Energy is most commonly spent to activate Abilities or use Equipment above the user’s effective Level.

Spending ⚡ Energy

When a character activates an Ability or uses an effect that requires ⚡Energy:

- Determine the required Energy cost.
- Subtract that amount from the character’s current ⚡Energy.
- If the character does not have sufficient ⚡Energy, they may Overspend.

Energy is spent immediately upon declaration of the Ability or effect.

If an Ability fails or is interrupted after Energy is spent, the Energy cost is not refunded unless a rule explicitly states otherwise.

Overspending ⚡ Energy

If a character does not have sufficient ⚡Energy to pay a required cost, they may Overspend.

When Overspending:

- The Ability or effect is declared normally.
- Immediately roll any even-sided die (default 1d20).
- On an odd result, gain 1 Fatigue.
- On an even result, no additional penalty occurs.

Overspend allows ⚡Energy to drop below 0, up to the system's defined negative limit.

If the negative limit would be exceeded, the action cannot be taken.

Each instance of Overspend requires its own roll.

Negative ⚡ Energy Limits

A character may choose to Overspend into Negative ⚡Energy up to:

- Half of their positive maximum ⚡Energy (rounded down).

Example: - A character with 9 maximum ⚡Energy may go as low as -4.

If spending Energy would push them beyond this limit, the activation fails and cannot be performed.

Negative ⚡Energy is tracked normally and recovers as standard Energy.

Multiple Overspends in a Turn

If a character Overspends multiple times in the same Turn:

- Each separate spending event that occurs while at 0 ⚡Energy triggers a separate Overspend roll.
- Each roll is resolved immediately.

Overspending does not stack into a single roll unless a rule explicitly states otherwise.

Recovery of ⚡ Energy

⚡Energy is regained during zᶻDowntime.

For each hour of uninterrupted Downtime:

- Regain 1 ⚡Energy.

Negative ⚡Energy recovers at the same rate as positive Energy.

Energy cannot exceed its maximum unless a rule explicitly allows it.

Energy and Incapacitation

A character at Negative ⚡Energy is not automatically incapacitated.

Only reaching maximum Fatigue or other specified conditions cause Unconsciousness.

Energy state alone does not prevent Action unless restricted by another rule.

Energy Outside Encounter Play

Energy functions identically in Free Play and Encounter Play.

Spending, Overspending, and recovery timing remain consistent regardless of mode.

Wounds

Wounds represent significant physical injury beyond momentary loss of ✙HP.

Gaining a Wound

A character gains a Wound when:

- They are reduced to 0 ✙HP.
- A rule explicitly states that a Wound is inflicted.

When reduced to 0 ✙HP:

- The character gains 1 Wound.
- The character falls **Unconscious**.
- The character falls prone.
- The character cannot take ✦Actions, ✶Activities, spend »MP, or use Reactions.

They remain Unconscious until they regain at least 1 ✙HP.

If the Encounter concludes and an ally can reach them, they automatically regain 1 ✙HP.

Maximum Wounds

Maximum Wounds = 1 + ❖Vigor Modifier.

If a character at 0 ✙HP would gain a Wound that exceeds their maximum:

- The character dies.

Taking Damage While Unconscious

If a character at 0 ✙HP takes damage:

- They immediately gain 1 additional □Wound.
- No additional ✙HP loss is tracked.

If this additional Wound exceeds their maximum, they die.

Effects of □Wounds

Each □Wound imposes a cumulative penalty:

- -2 to □ Physical Defense
- -2 to □ Mental Defense

These penalties stack.

Wounds do not reduce Attribute Scores directly unless a rule states otherwise.

□ Fatigue

□Fatigue represents mental strain, stress, and overextension.

Gaining □Fatigue

A character may gain □Fatigue from:

- Overspending ⚡Energy
- Prolonged stress or deprivation
- Specific Abilities or effects
- Narrative strain at GM discretion

Maximum □Fatigue

Maximum □Fatigue = 1 + □Resolve Modifier.

If a character would exceed their maximum □Fatigue:

- They immediately fall **Unconscious**.

- They fall prone.
- They cannot take ✦Actions, ✶Activities, spend »MP, or use Reactions.

They remain Unconscious until their Fatigue is reduced below maximum.

Effects of Fatigue

Each Fatigue imposes a cumulative penalty:

- -2 to Awareness
- -2 to ∞Intuition

These penalties stack.

Fatigue does not directly reduce Defense values unless specified by another rule.

Unconscious State (Engine Definition)

A character who is Unconscious:

- Falls prone.
- Cannot act.
- Cannot move.
- Cannot use Reactions.
- May still be targeted normally.

Unconsciousness does not grant automatic immunity or resistance unless defined by a system built on top of Frontiers.

Regaining eligibility to act immediately ends the Unconscious state.

zᶻ Downtime

zᶻDowntime represents structured rest and recovery outside active pressure.

Downtime may occur:

- Between Encounters
- During travel
- In secure locations
- At the GM’s discretion

Downtime Recovery

For each uninterrupted hour of zᶻDowntime:

- Regain 1 ⚡Energy.
- Remove either 1 Wound **or** 1 Fatigue.

A character cannot remove both a Wound and a Fatigue in the same hour.

Extended Downtime

If a period of Downtime lasts at least 3 uninterrupted hours:

- All characters participating recover 1/2 of their maximum ✙HP.

This recovery stacks with each additional qualifying period.

Interrupted Downtime

If Downtime is interrupted by:

- Combat
- Immediate danger
- Significant exertion

Recovery for that hour is lost.

Time must be restarted for recovery to resume.

The following rulings clarify ambiguous timing and interaction cases within Flow of Play.

These rulings apply unless a specific rule explicitly overrides them.

Additional rulings may be added in future revisions as community edge cases are identified.

1. Skipped Turn Due to Incapacitation

If a participant is Unconscious or otherwise unable to act at the start of their Turn:

- Their ✦AP and »MP still refresh.
- They cannot spend them while incapacitated.
- Their Turn immediately ends.

- Unspent ✦AP and »MP are lost as normal.

Start-of-Turn and End-of-Turn effects still resolve. If the participant becomes conscious, they will resume play on their next turn.

2. Simultaneous Start-of-Turn Effects

If multiple effects trigger at the start of a participant's Turn:

- The active participant determines the order in which their effects resolve.
- If effects belong to multiple participants, resolve the active participant's effects first, then others in Momentum order.

3. Simultaneous End-of-Turn Effects

If multiple effects trigger at the end of a participant's Turn:

- The active participant determines the order of their own effects.
- Other participants' effects resolve in Momentum order.

4. Reaction Chains

If multiple Reactions are triggered in response to the same event, resolve them in reverse chronological order:

- The most recently declared Reaction resolves first.
- Continue resolving Reactions in reverse order of declaration.
- The original triggering Action resolves last unless interrupted by a rule that explicitly cancels it.

Momentum does not determine the order of Reactions within a chain.

5. Interrupting Effects

Unless a rule explicitly states that an effect interrupts:

- An Action fully resolves.

No effect retroactively cancels a resolved Action unless the rule explicitly states it does.

6. Overspending and Immediate Incapacitation

If a character Overspends ⚡Energy and gains Fatigue that causes them to reach maximum Fatigue:

- They immediately fall Unconscious.

- If this occurs during their Turn, their Turn ends immediately.
- Any unspent ✦AP or »MP is lost.

The Ability or effect that caused the Overspend is still considered resolved unless a rule states otherwise.

7. Damage While Down During Resolution

If a character is reduced to 0 ✙HP during an Action:

- The Action finishes resolving.
- The character then gains a Wound and falls Unconscious.

If damage occurs during a multi-step effect, resolve the triggering step fully before applying Unconsciousness.

8. Leaving Encounter Play Mid-Round

If the Encounter ends during a participant's Turn:

- The current Action finishes resolving.
- The current Turn ends.
- All unspent ✦AP and »MP are lost.
- Timing returns to Free Play structure.

Ongoing effects persist according to their duration.

9. Entering Encounter Play Mid-Action

If Free Play transitions into Encounter Play during an unresolved Action:

- Resolve the current Action fully.
- Establish Momentum.
- Begin a new Round.

No participant begins the Encounter with expended ✦AP or »MP.

10. Movement and Forced Relocation During Another's Turn

If a participant is moved during another participant's Turn:

- The movement resolves immediately.
- It does not grant additional actions.
- It does not alter Turn order.

If movement places them into or out of range of an ongoing effect, apply the new positioning immediately.

11. Energy Recovery During Encounter Play

⚡Energy cannot be recovered during Encounter Play unless a rule explicitly states otherwise.

Downtime recovery cannot occur while structured timing is active.

12. Downtime and Ongoing Conditions

If Downtime begins while ongoing conditions exist:

- Effects with duration measured in Rounds immediately expire.
- Effects measured in real time continue if narratively appropriate.
- The GM determines ambiguous duration conversions.

13. Multiple State Changes Simultaneously

If a character would simultaneously:

- Reach maximum Fatigue,
- Reach maximum Wounds,
- And drop to 0 ✙HP,

Resolve in the following order:

1. Apply damage and reduce ✙HP.
2. Apply Wounds.
3. Apply Fatigue.
4. Determine death or Unconsciousness.

This prevents circular dependency between state systems.

14. Zero Movement Points at Turn Start

If a participant begins their Turn with 0 »MP due to an effect:

- They still receive refreshed ✦AP.
- They may still perform ✦Actions unless otherwise restricted.

Movement restriction does not imply Action restriction unless explicitly stated.

15. Zero ✦AP at Turn Start

If a participant begins their Turn with an effect that prevents spending ✦AP:

- Their Turn still occurs.
- Start-of-Turn and End-of-Turn effects still resolve.
- They cannot declare ✦Actions.

The following Variants modify specific aspects of the Default Flow of Play rules.

Each Variant explicitly replaces part of the Default Rules. All other Default Rules remain in effect unless stated otherwise.

Encounter Structure Variants

Fixed Momentum Variant

Replaces: Establishing Momentum (Finesse adjustment step)

Momentum Values (MV) are fixed and are not adjusted at the start of an Encounter.

- Participants use their base MV.
- No addition or subtraction from Finesse Modifier is allowed.
- Turn order remains static for the entire Encounter unless modified by an effect.

What Stays the Same: - Ascending MV determines order. - Ties are resolved normally. - MV changes from Abilities still function.

Designer Considerations: This reduces pre-Encounter calculation and creates predictable turn structure. It slightly lowers tactical flexibility at the start of combat.

Rolled Momentum Variant

Replaces: Establishing Momentum

At the start of an Encounter:

- Each participant rolls 1d20 + Finesse Modifier.
- The result becomes their MV for the Encounter.

Turn order proceeds in ascending order of the rolled result.

What Stays the Same: - Turns, Rounds, and AP refresh timing remain unchanged. - MV is locked unless modified by an effect.

Designer Considerations: This increases volatility and unpredictability. It shifts some emphasis from planning to reaction.

Escalating Rounds Variant

Replaces: No Default Rule, modifies Encounter pacing

Beginning at Round 4:

- All damage increases by +1.
- Increase this bonus by +1 each additional Round.

What Stays the Same: - Action economy and Momentum structure remain unchanged.

Designer Considerations: Encourages faster resolution of prolonged Encounters and increases tension over time.

Action Economy Variants

2 AP Variant

Replaces: Default 3 ✦AP per Turn

Participants begin each Turn with **2 ✦AP** instead of 3.

Abilities must be recalibrated if designed around 3-AP assumptions.

What Stays the Same: - AP refresh timing. - Reactions cost ✦AP. - Free Actions remain unchanged.

Designer Considerations: Creates tighter decision pressure and shorter Turns.

Reaction Limit Variant

Replaces: Unlimited Reactions per Round

Each participant may use **only one Reaction per Round**, regardless of available ✦AP.

What Stays the Same: - Reactions still cost ✦AP. - Timing and trigger rules remain unchanged.

Designer Considerations: Reduces reaction stacking and simplifies timing chains.

Committed Action Variant

Replaces: None, modifies Action resolution

If a participant spends all remaining ✦AP on a single ✦Action:

- That Action gains +2 to its Resolution Roll.

This bonus applies only if no ✦AP remains after declaration.

What Stays the Same: - AP refresh. - Reaction rules.

Designer Considerations: Encourages burst turns and tactical commitment.

Movement Variants

Action-Based Movement Variant

Replaces: »Movement Points system

Remove »MP entirely.

Movement now costs:

- 1 ✦AP per 2 □Units moved.

Movement may still be split across a Turn.

What Stays the Same: - □Units remain the measurement system. - Forced movement rules remain unchanged.

Designer Considerations: Simplifies resource tracking by consolidating movement into AP.

Zone Movement Variant

Replaces: □Unit-based measurement

Replace □Units with abstract Zones:

- Engaged
- Near
- Far

Moving between adjacent Zones costs 1 »MP.

Specific distances are abstracted narratively.

What Stays the Same: - MP refresh timing. - Forced movement rules.

Designer Considerations: Speeds play and reduces grid reliance.

Energy Variants

No Overspend Variant

Replaces: Overspending ⚡Energy

If a character lacks sufficient ⚡Energy:

- The Ability cannot be activated.

Negative ⚡Energy does not exist.

What Stays the Same: - Energy recovery rules. - Fatigue from other sources.

Designer Considerations: Removes risk-reward tension but simplifies bookkeeping.

Strain on Use Variant

Replaces: Overspend roll mechanic

Whenever ⚡Energy is spent:

- Roll a die.
- On an odd result, gain 1 Fatigue.

Negative ⚡Energy is removed.

What Stays the Same: - Energy costs and recovery.

Designer Considerations: Shifts risk from overspending to consistent exertion.

Harm & Recovery Variants

Conscious at 0 HP Variant

Replaces: Automatic Unconsciousness at 0 ✙HP

When reduced to 0 ✙HP:

- The character gains a Wound.
- The character remains conscious but:
- Cannot spend ✦AP.
- Cannot spend »MP.
- Suffers -4 to all Resolution Rolls.

They fall Unconscious only if they gain another Wound.

What Stays the Same: - Wound maximum rules. - Death threshold.

Designer Considerations: Allows dramatic last stands before collapse.

Gradual Wound Severity Variant

Replaces: Flat -2 penalty per Wound

Wounds impose escalating penalties:

- 1st Wound: -1 Defense
- 2nd Wound: -2 Defense
- 3rd Wound: -3 Defense
- etc.

Penalties stack cumulatively.

What Stays the Same: - Wound maximum. - Death rules.

Designer Considerations: Creates nonlinear survivability decline.

The following Alternatives replace major aspects of the Flow of Play architecture.

Adopting these requires recalibration of Abilities, scaling, and pacing assumptions.

Simultaneous Turn Alternative

Remove individual Turns.

Each Round:

1. All participants declare Actions.
2. Resolve in Momentum order.
3. Apply all results before the next Round begins.

AP still refreshes per Round.

Impact: Removes strict turn segmentation and increases cinematic chaos.

No Momentum Alternative

Remove Momentum entirely.

Turn order rotates clockwise around the table, with the GM inserting NPCs logically.

Impact: Simplifies tracking but removes speed-based ordering.

Unified Resource Alternative

Remove ✦AP entirely.

All Actions cost ⚡Energy.

At the start of each Round, regain 3 ⚡Energy automatically.

Reactions cost additional ⚡Energy.

Impact: Collapses Action economy into a single resource track.
