ART Engine

Action Results Table
Tabletop Role Playing System

2012 Edition

By Joe Williams

Updated Aug 8, 2013

Table of Contents

Chapter 1
Introduction

What is ART?

ART is the role playing system first used in *Legendary Lives* and later in *Lost Souls.* The system takes its name from the Action Results Table, the universal chart at the heart of all task resolution.

The ART Engine contains rules common to all settings, but is not a complete game in itself. While an industrious group may find enough in these rules to create their own setting, most people will want to use a published setting designed for use with the ART Engine. A setting will provide background information, details for creating appropriate characters, and tips for constructing adventures and foes.

An ART adventure should be fast, freewheeling and wild. All die rolls are made by the players, while the narrator describes what happens based on ten possible outcomes. The rules emphasize creativity, player participation and spontaneity. It's a game where the players can try anything and any roll can send the adventure in a new and unexpected direction.

Things rarely go the way the players plan—often with hilarious results. A light, comedic touch graces even the most serious of scenarios. The ART Engine isn't suitable for angst-heavy tales, since you never know when the next roll might elicit a tension-shattering laugh.

Requirements

To play a game using the ART Engine you will need pencils and paper, percentile dice, a narrator to run the game, one or more players to take on the roles of the adventurers, a character sheet for each adventurer, and two six-sided dice used for character creation (optional).

Before Play Begins

As with most role playing games, an ART adventure requires preparation from both the players and the narrator.

Each player creates an adventurer to control during the game. Not only do players fill in numbers on a character sheet, they must also give thought to their characters' goals and reasons for participating in adventures. What motivates them to put themselves in harm's way? How do their hopes and needs influence their behavior?

Concrete actions are the truest expression of a character's personality. It's pointless to say a character is driven by revenge if they never act vengefully. Therefore, when describing a character's personality, a player may wish to think in terms of how they will want to act during gameplay. Will they fight their way through conflict? Avoid conflict? Or talk their way out of tough situations?

Together the players decide how their characters know each other and how they are related. How much tension and conflict is there between them? How did this motley crew band together, and what ties bind them?

The players present this information to the narrator. It's the responsibility of the narrator to come up with an outline for an adventure that integrates the characters and their relationships. Some of their goals may even become quests that can earn them Glory.

How much preparation is needed depends on the narrator's style. The system was intended to be run with minimum preparation, allowing the narrator to freely improvise. The adventure outline may be as simple as a list of possible situations, a description of the foes the characters are likely to meet, and the settings they'll explore. Or it could be a step-by-step guide through the entire quest, with every possible alternative worked out in advance.

Summary of Play

The players each control a single character in the game, reacting to people and events according to the personality of their role. Their decisions directly affect what happens. They decide where to go and who to question, when to fight and how to solve problems. They control what their characters say, how it's said, and what they attempt.

The narrator serves as the player's senses, describing settings, situations, the passage of time, and all events outside the players' control. Vivid imagery and sometimes simple maps or sketches aid the narrator in explaining what the characters experience.

The narrator portrays every character the adventurers meet, assuming new roles as needed even if it means posing as several characters at one time.

The players must set goals for their characters and actively pursue those goals. They are responsible for *wanting* something. There are many goals for the players. They can seek to increase their skills, or gain fame or fortune. They can try to forge relationships with the other adventurers characters. They can seek to perform epic deeds, both good and evil. But they must always be trying to accomplish something meaningful.

In return, the narrator must present the players with situations that are related to their goals, whether it's to advance those objectives or foil them. A story develops naturally out of the actions of the players and their rolls on the ART.

The narrator decides what happens impartially. Even if the narrator thinks a particular outcome would be more dramatic, exciting, or interesting, the narrator must abide by the tyranny of the dice and construct a narrative within the limits they impose. Paradoxically, the randomness of the dice can foster unexpected and unique developments that could never be scripted. Rather than restricting the players to a pre-conceived plot, the narrator can let the story go wherever the players and the dice take it. Running the game is an exercise in improvisation, where the narrator synthesizes events from the character's objectives, the die rolls, and all that has gone before.

Using the Dice

ART uses percentile dice almost exclusively. Percentile dice, also called d100, consist of two ten-sided dice. It's usually best to have a pair for each player.

Together, these two dice are used to generate numbers from 1 to 100. To do this, designate one die as high. Then roll both dice simultaneously, and read the high die first. If both dice show zero, the result is 100 (also called 00, or double zero).

Example: You roll 6 on the "high" die and 1 on the other die. The result is 61.

Who Rolls the Dice

The dice help the narrator decide exactly what happens out of a range of possibilities. They provide uncertainty, suspense and challenge. **The narrator never rolls the dice, but interprets the die rolls made by the players.**

Kicker Die

When you roll percentile dice, the "low" die representing the ones digit is called the kicker. What you roll on the kicker can trigger special effects based on your perks, equipment and the abilities of your foes.

For example, if you have a perk that triggers on a kicker of 3, any roll ending in 3 will trigger the perk.

A kicker roll can trigger no more than one beneficial and one harmful effect. If the kicker die can trigger more than one advantageous special effect, the player must decide which to use. The narrator decides which harmful effect fires if there is a choice.

Terminology

People

Narrator: The person who runs the game; the referee or gamemaster. In these rules, the narrator is not considered a player.

Player: Someone who is playing an adventurer in the game. Unless otherwise specified, the rules always address the player.

Character: A single unit in the game, whether a human, dinosaur, or unknown creature.

Adventurer: An individual character controlled by a player.

Foe: A character controlled by the narrator. While most narrator-controlled characters are adversaries, some can be neutral or even friendly.

Henchman: A friendly narrator controlled character operating under the direction of an adventurer.

Abilities

Traits: Traits define what your character is good at doing. There are two kinds of traits: attributes and skills. The traits of adventurers are assigned a numerical score while foe traits are rated from Catastrophic to Extreme.

Comparison of Traits

Foe Attribute	Adventurer Trait
Catastrophic	0
Pathetic	1
Feeble	2-5
Inferior	6-8
Poor	9-13
Passable	14-17
Good	18-21
Great	22-25
Super	26-28
Awesome	29
Extreme	30

Attributes: Attributes broadly describe a character. All characters, even foes, have the same set of attributes.

Skills: Unique proficiencies that develop during play, skills improve an adventurer's chances to perform a narrowly defined action. Characters can have completely different skills.

Typical foes do not have skills, but rely completely on their attributes.

Perks: A perk is a special ability that allows your character to do something other characters cannot.

Glory: Characters who successfully complete a quest gain a set amount of Glory that they must split between themselves. Glory is used to increase Fame or to buy perks. Characters can lose Glory by refusing or failing quests.

Gameplay

Adventure: An outline that assists the narrator in creating situations and responding to the actions of the players.

Quest: An objective that the adventurers take upon themselves. Narrator controlled characters can present the players quests, or the players can come up with their own quests by stating their objectives to the narrator in advance. Characters earn glory by completing quests.

Session: A single gaming session. Each character gains an experience point at the end of every gaming session.

Between Adventures: An adventure may take one or more sessions to complete. The adventure ends when the characters complete their primary mission and return to base, where they rest and train for their next adventure. Characters heal between adventures, and players may buy new perks between adventures. The end of an adventure is always the end of a session. Preparation before a character's first adventure is also considered between adventures.

Combat Round: A round represents approximately six to ten seconds. Rounds are highly structured. You don't have to be in combat to use combat rounds. Rounds are used in any situation where there is intense conflict between characters, or circumstances where seconds count.

Exploration Phase: Exploration phases are everything that happens outside of combat rounds. An exploration phase can represent anything from a few minute to days. Phases are free-flowing, chatty, and loosely structured.

Abbreviations

Success and failures use a combination of a number and a letter.

1s	One success
1f	One failure
2s	Two successes
2f	Two failures

Attributes use three letter abbreviations.

AGI	Agility
ALE	Alertness
CHA	Charm
CRA	Craft
CUN	Cunning
DEF	Defense
DEX	Dexterity
FAT	Fate
KNO	Knowledge
STA	Stamina
STR	Strength

Ranks use two letter abbreviations.

CT	Catastrophic
PT	Pathetic
FB	Feeble
IN	Inferior
PR	Poor
PS	Passable
GD	Good
GT	Great
SP	Super
AW	Awesome
EX	Extreme

Wounds use one letter abbreviations.

L	Light wound
M	Medium wound
H	Heavy wound
C	Critical wound
D	Deadly wound

Adding Ranks

Many things in the game are measured in ranks, from Catastrophic to Extreme. Ranks can be added together by following these steps:

- Start with the lowest rank.
- Replace pairs that are no more than one rank apart with a single rank that is one higher than either.
- Repeat until no more ranks can be combined.
- Use the highest rank remaining.

Example: *You have a Poor gem and an Inferior gem. Their ranks are no more than one apart, so you can combine their value. Their combined value is Passable (one higher than Poor).*

Example: *You are hiding from three foes with Alertness of Feeble, Inferior and Great. Feeble and Inferior can be combined into Poor. However, Poor and Great are more than one rank apart and cannot be combined. The combined Alertness of your foes is Great.*

Chapter 2
Creating an Adventurer

Your Character Sheet

Characters have different strengths and weaknesses, just like real people. Strong characters might decide to fight their way past an enemy. Charming characters might try to talk their way out of trouble. Cunning characters may try to bluff their way past, while agile characters might try to sneak around. In the same way, different characters with different abilities will try different methods to accomplish the same objective.

In game terms, a character is described by **attributes**. All characters have the same set of attributes listed on their character sheet.

Attributes

Agility measures your character's balance, coordination, grace, speed, reflexes, and physical flexibility. It's important for movement and defense.

Alertness is your character's perception, and the acuity of their senses. It is the ability to notice and interpret things and is important to aiming.

Charm is the impression your character makes on others. It combines presence, charisma, credibility, and style. It's useful for convincing others to follow your lead.

Craft is your character's affinity for building, repairing and operating machines and other devices. It's used to repair armor, set or disable traps, or operate technological devices. It does not include operating vehicles, which is covered by other attributes.

Cunning measures how devious, sly and creative your character is. It's used when cheating, scheming, and performing acts of trickery.

Dexterity rates hand-eye coordination, finesse, and your character's ability to do precise work with their hands, such as picking a lock or disarming a bomb.

Fate measures luck and destiny. It shows whether your character was born under a lucky star, or an ill-fated comet. It's used to resolve seemingly random outcomes.

Knowledge shows how much your character has learned in variety of fields. It measure how easy it is for your character to remember important details, and how quickly your character comprehends new things.

Stamina comprises fitness, endurance, and ability to withstand adverse conditions. It determines how much damage your character can take.

Strength is your character's brawn and muscle power. It determines how large of a weapon you can use and how much armor you can wear.

Determining Attributes

During character creation, attributes are assigned a rating from 2 to 12. A typical human would have a score of 4, but this would be considered low for an adventurer. The higher your score, the more likely you will succeed at actions that depend on that attribute.

Your narrator will tell you which of the following two methods you should use to create your character.

Random Method

Roll two six-sided dice and add them together. Assign the score to one of your attributes. Continue rolling and assigning your scores until all your attributes are filled in.

Balanced Method

Calculate your attributes in any order you want by adding any two numbers from the list below to determine an attribute's score. Each number can be used only once.

1, 1, 1, 2, 2, 2, 3, 3, 3, 3, 4, 4, 4, 4, 5, 5, 5, 6, 6, 6

Example: *You strike a 4 and a 3 off the list and apply them to your Agility, for a score of 4 + 3 = 7.*

Defense

Defense is a combination of your character's resistance to injury and ability to avoid harm. Each hit location has its own Defense score. Add your Agility and Stamina on the table below to find your base Defense for your various body parts.

Defense for each body part is a completely separate attribute. Changes to Agility and Stamina will not affect your Defense scores. Defense can be increased by wearing armor.

Base Defense

AGI + STA	Head	Torso	Arm	Leg
4	1	3	1	2
5	1	4	2	2
6	1	4	2	3
7	2	5	2	3
8	2	5	3	4
9	2	6	3	4
10	3	6	4	5
11	3	7	4	5
12	3	7	4	6
13	4	8	5	6
14	4	8	5	7
15	4	9	6	7
16	5	9	6	8
17	5	10	6	8
18	5	10	7	9
19	6	11	7	9
20	6	11	8	10
21	6	12	8	10
22	7	12	8	11
23	7	12	9	11
24	7	12	9	12

Unarmed/Fist Attack

Each weapon you carry has its own attack rating. If you must fight without a weapon, your attack is Strength -1 or Dexterity -1, whichever is lower.

Starting Skills

You start the game with a number of skills equal to your Knowledge. Select your skills from the list appropriate for your setting. Sample skills are listed in a later chapter.

Each skill has a base attribute that it's normally derived from. **Starting skills equal their base attribute plus five.**

On your character sheet, write the name of the skill, it's score, and the attribute on which it's based.

Trying to guess in advance what skills will be useful can be frustrating. With your narrator's permission, you can pick your starting skills during play. When the narrator asks you to make a trait roll, you can choose, before rolling the dice, to create a skill out of that action. This uses up one of your starting skills. See Advancement in the How to Play chapter for details on creating skills on the fly.

Example: *The Climb skill is based on Strength. If you take Climb as a starting skill, it would equal your character's Strength plus five.*

Fame

All newly created characters begin with Fame of one. You expend Fame to improve trait rolls, take another action in combat, revive fallen companions, or use certain perks. Keep track of expended Fame as tally marks next to your Fame score.

Whenever you roll an Awesome result on the ART, your Fame recovers; simply erase the tally marks.

Glory

You gain Glory by successfully completing quests. The narrator will tell you how much Glory the group receives. Your group must decide how to split the Glory between the characters who participated in the adventure.

When you have enough glory, you can spend it to buy perks or increase your Frame.

The cost to increase Fame by one point is ten times your current Fame. Increasing your Fame from 1 to 2 costs 10 Glory; from 2 to 3 costs 20 Glory; and 3 to 4 costs 30 Glory. You can increase your Fame whenever you have enough glory. There is no limit to how high you can increase your Fame.

You can buy perks between adventures. A list of perks is included in a later chapter.

Characters can lose Glory by refusing or failing quests, but glory can never be reduced to less than zero.

Fortune

Fortune represents your character's wealth and resources. A character with high Fortune will have access to better equipment.

Your Fate determines your starting Fortune. After character creation, Fortune and Fate are no longer connected and can change independently. You can increase Fortune by finding valuable treasures during adventures.

Fortune

Fate	Starting Fortune	Description
2	Catastrophic	Destitute
3	Pathetic	Impoverished
4	Feeble	Poor
5	Inferior	Struggling
6-7	Poor	Getting by
8-9	Passable	Comfortable
10-11	Good	Well-off
12	Great	Prosperous
—	Super	Affluent
—	Awesome	Wealthy
—	Extreme	Rich

Fortune isn't "spent" or "expended" to purchase equipment. Instead, you can equip any gear that has a cost up to your character's Fortune. For example, if you had Fortune of Passable, you could equip as many items having a cost of Passable or less that you could carry.

Equipment acquired during an adventure is treated a little differently. If the item is *purchased*, it follows the same rules as for initially equipping your character: you cannot purchase an item with a cost greater than your Fortune. Equipment *found, stolen or received as a gift* during an adventure can be equipped even if its cost exceeds your Fortune.

Equipping Others

A wealthy character may be tempted to equip the entire group. For each additional character that you equip, you must reduce your Fortune by 1 rank for the purpose of buying gear. So if you have Passable Fortune and you equip yourself and two other characters, you could only choose gear with a cost of Inferior or less.

Treasures

Treasures are awarded by the narrator during play. The players must decide among themselves how to distribute treasures.

Treasures have a Fortune value. If, at the end of an adventure, you discard a single treasure with a Fortune value greater than your Fortune, you get to increase your Fortune by one rank. You can never increase your Fortune by more than one rank per adventure no matter how many treasures you discard. The discarded treasure is gone and cannot be used in the future.

You can maintain your current Fortune if you discard a combination of treasures that equal or exceed your Fortune (see *Adding Ranks* in the prior chapter). If you fail to discard enough treasures, you must reduce your Fortune by one rank.

Example: *Tim and Tony finish an adventure with four treasures.*

Tim, who has Passable Fortune, takes a Great jade jaguar. At the end of the adventure Tim sells the jade jaguar to increase his Fortune by one rank, to Good.

Tony, who is struggling by with Poor fortune, gets the remaining treasures. There's a Feeble necklace, a Pathetic book, a Pathetic gem and a Pathetic collection of trinkets.

Using the rules for adding ranks, Tony adds the Pathetic book + Pathetic trinkets = Feeble.

Feeble + Pathetic gem = Inferior.

Inferior + Feeble necklace = Poor.

The combined value of the treasures is Poor, which equals Tony's Fortune. He gets to maintain his Fortune at Poor.

Gear as Treasures

Looting bodies is a time-honored tradition in role playing games. The value of used equipment is three less than the equipment's cost. For example, a Super sword would count as a Passable treasure.

Gear

List your equipment in the Gear section of your character sheet. You can have no more than 2 items ready and 4 items at hand. Other items must be stowed about your body. **The total number of items you can carry cannot exceed your Strength score.**

Ready items are instantly available, those at hand take one action to get out, and stowed items require a sustained Passable Dexterity roll with a goal of 5 successes.

Multiple small items can be carried in one slot. Characters can make a kit of associated items, and then put the kit in one slot. A kit of medical supplies would fill one slot, as would a pouch of ten iron spikes and a hammer hung from your belt. Objects carried together must be small and easily stored together.

Armor

Armor grants a Defense bonus to the body part that it covers. You can wear different kinds of armor on each body part. For example, a Poor character who found a Good helmet could wear it with their Poor breastplate, gauntlets and boots.

Armor is heavy and tiring to wear. **The total Defense bonus of your armor cannot exceed your Strength plus Stamina.**

Armor is listed on the Defense section of your character sheet, not in the Gear section. Armor does not count against the number of items you can carry.

Armor Defense Bonus

Armor Cost	Defense
Catastrophic	+0
Pathetic	+1
Feeble	+2
Inferior	+3
Poor	+4
Passable	+5
Good	+6
Great	+7
Super	+8
Awesome	+9
Extreme	+10

Example: Your Strength is 7 your Stamina is 4 and you have Passable fortune. You can wear up to +5 armor, but your total armor cannot exceed 11. You decide to wear a +5 passable helmet, +2 feeble jerkin, +3 inferior gloves and +1 pathetic boots.

Shields

A shield increases your Defense, but can be used a limited number of times per round. You must decide before making your Defense roll whether to use your shield against that attack.

- A shield must be at hand for you to use it.
- You cannot use a shield while wielding a weapon two-handed.
- You cannot use a shield if you are attacked by surprise or from behind.
- You cannot use a shield when you are attacked in the legs.
- Shields protect against melee and ranged attacks, but not falls or most other hazards.

Using a shield's Defense bonus is a free action. You can also use a full action to parry with a shield (see the Combat Rounds chapter for the rules on parrying).

Tower Shields: A tower shield will protect all your body parts, including your legs, but increases the cost by two ranks

Example: You are carrying a good shield. Once per round you can add the shield's +3 Defense bonus to your Defense.

Shields

Cost	Defense	Max Uses Per Round
Catastrophic	+1	1
Pathetic	+1	2
Feeble	+2	1
Inferior	+1	3
Poor	+1	4
Passable	+2	2
Good	+3	1
Great	+2	3
Super	+3	2
Awesome	+2	4
Extreme	+3	3

Melee Weapons

Melee weapons are used in close hand-to-hand combat, and include any weapon where you hold one end while you hit someone with the other end.

Melee weapons can be one-handed, two-handed, or hand-and-a-half. Two-handed weapons occupy both your "ready" slots, preventing you from equipping a shield. They are almost impossible to conceal and they cannot be used one handed. Hand-and-a-half weapons are also too large to conceal, but they can be used one- or two-handed as desired.

Brute force weapons, such as axes, hammers and clubs, use Strength to attack. Weapons that require more finesse, including swords, knives, whips, and spears, use Dexterity to attack. Dexterity weapons cost a little more than their more crude counterparts.

Melee Weapons

Cost	Attack 1-handed	Attack 2-handed
Catastrophic	+0 STR	+2 STR
Pathetic	+0 DEX	+2 DEX
Feeble	+1 STR	+3 STR
Inferior	+1 DEX	+3 DEX
Poor	+2 STR	+4 STR
Passable	+2 DEX	+4 DEX
Good	+3 STR	+5 STR
Great	+3 DEX	+5 DEX
Super	+4 STR	+6 STR
Awesome	+4 DEX	+6 DEX
Extreme	+5 STR	+7 STR
Extreme	+5 DEX	+7 DEX

Example: Your character has 9 Dexterity, 7 Strength and Poor Fortune. A poor weapon would modify your Strength, but since your Dexterity is higher, you choose an inferior weapon instead.

Forgoing a shield, you equip a rusty +3 two-handed sword. Your attack is your Dexterity of 9 + 3 for a total of 12.

Thrown Weapons

Adding the thrown feature to a melee weapon allows you to hurl your weapon at a target. Once you throw a weapon it is gone until you can retrieve it. How far you can throw a weapon depends on your Strength, as shown below. This feature is appropriate for blades, hammers, axes, and small spears. Two-handed weapons cannot be thrown.

Thrown Only: Some small one-hand weapons, such as throwing stars or throwing knives, are designed to be thrown but cannot be used in hand-to-hand combat. Thrown-only weapons can be carried in kits of five per inventory slot. They cost the same as a regular melee weapon.

Thrown Range

Strength	Thrown Range	Grenade Range
2 to 6	Pathetic	Feeble
7 to 20	Feeble	Inferior
21 to 25	Inferior	Poor

Ranged Weapons

Ranged weapons allow you to attack targets at a distance. Characters use Alertness to attack with ranged weapons.

In order to use a ranged weapon correctly, you must have the Strength Requires (STR Req). You suffer -1 on your attack for each point of Strength that you lack.

Handgun: derringer, revolver, pistol.

Rifle: hunting rifle, carbine, assault rifle, sniper rifle.

Bow: bow, crossbow.

Rifles, shotguns and bows are all two-handed weapons. They occupy both your "ready" slots, preventing you from equipping a shield. They are almost impossible to conceal and they cannot be used one handed.

It's assumed characters carry plenty of ammunition and reload as necessary during a fire-fight. A character can fire several times in a combat round. Therefore a single "attack" may expend multiple bullets or arrows. Reloading is not a separate action. You may wish to consider an occasional missed attack as a turn spent reloading—you missed because your weapon was empty and you reloaded.

Ranged Weapons

Cost	Handgun			Rifle			Shotgun			Bow		
	Attack	STR Req	Range	Attack	STR Req	Range	Attack	STR Req	Range	Attack	STR Req	Range
Catastrophic	+0 ALE	—	FB	+2 ALE	—	PR	+3 ALE	—	FB	+0 ALE	—	IN
Pathetic	+1 ALE	—	FB	+3 ALE	—	PR	+4 ALE	—	FB	+1 ALE	—	IN
Feeble	+2 ALE	—	FB	+2 ALE	—	PS	+3 ALE	—	IN	+2 ALE	4	IN
Inferior	+0 ALE	—	IN	+3 ALE	—	PS	+4 ALE	3	IN	+0 ALE	—	PR
Poor	+1 ALE	—	IN	+4 ALE	3	PR	+5 ALE	5	FB	+1 ALE	—	PR
Passable	+2 ALE	—	IN	+4 ALE	5	PS	+5 ALE	7	IN	+2 ALE	6	PR
Good	+3 ALE	2	FB	+5 ALE	7	PS	+6 ALE	9	IN	+3 ALE	8	PR
Great	+4 ALE	4	FB	+6 ALE	9	PS	+7 ALE	11	IN	+4 ALE	10	PR
Super	+3 ALE	6	IN	+5 ALE	11	GD	+6 ALE	10	PR	+3 ALE	12	PS
Awesome	+4 ALE	8	IN	+6 ALE	13	GD	+7 ALE	12	PR	+4 ALE	14	PS
Extreme	+5 ALE	10	IN	+6 ALE	15	GT	+7 ALE	13	PS	+5 ALE	16	PS

Firearms can have any of the features listed below.

Silent: Bows and crossbows are naturally silent. You can add a silencer to a pistol or other firearm, but it reduces muzzle velocity. A silenced firearm suffers -3 on attack.

Tripod: You can add a tripod to a two-handed firearm, giving it an additional +2 Attack. However, you must be prone to use the tripod, and it takes four rounds to set up and two rounds to dismantle.

Autofire: Adding the autofire feature to a firearm (handgun or file only) increases the Strength Required by +2.

Autofire weapons normally attack in bursts. You can, however, fire an area of effect (AOE) spray.

Decide how many characters you want to spray, from 1 to 4. The number of targets gives you an adjustment to your attack rolls. This modifier is in addition to the usual modifier for your weapon.

As with any AOE attack, you do not get to pick individual targets. For details, see the AOE attack rules.

Once you have determined the specific targets, roll a separate attack on each target. Whenever you roll Catastrophic while attacking with a spray, you run out of ammunition and your turn ends. You cannot use the weapon again until you buy more ammunition or otherwise acquire it during the adventure. You can carry spare ammunition, but each reload takes up an inventory slot.

Autofire Spray

Characters Attacked	Attack Modifier
1 character	+3
2 characters	+2
3 characters	+0
4 characters	-2
1 large target*	x2 attacks at +0

*When you spray a single large target (something the size of an elephant or larger), you have the option of attacking once at +4 (concentrating your fire) or attacking twice at +0.

Area of Effect (AOE) Weapons

Most weapons can attack just a single character at a time. An area of effect (AOE) weapon, such as a grenade, fully automatic firearm, or spell can affect more characters as long as they are close together (within Pathetic range of each other).

If there are multiple characters in range of an area attack than can be hit, you must attack those characters with the lowest Fate roll. In cases of a tie,

you get to decide who is in the field of fire. It's possible you will hit friendly adventurers. In this case, you do not roll to attack an adventurer. Instead, the unlucky player rolls Defense against damage of IN(L) FB(M) PT(H) CT(C). See the next chapter for an explanation of what this means.

Roll a separate attack on each character in the field of fire. Any character who has not already taken their turn can fall prone, thereby increasing their Defense by +1 column, but this will count as their action for the turn. The decision to fall prone must be made before rolling Fate.

Grenades

Grenades are thrown area of effect (AOE) weapons, including Molotov cocktails, improvised explosive devices, and modern grenades. Grenades are destroyed when used. You can carry 4 grenades per inventory slot.

Grenades have a maximum range based on your character's Strength (see Thrown Range table, above). The cost of the grenade determines how many characters it will affect.

A Catastrophic attack roll with a grenade means that shrapnel hits the adventurer with the lowest Fate roll below Good, even if the character isn't in range. If all players roll Good or better than none is hit. Otherwise, the unlucky player must roll Defense for a random location and takes IN(L) FB(M) PT(H) CT(C) damage.

Grenades

Cost	Attack	Characters Attacked
Catastrophic	+1 DEX	2
Pathetic	+3 DEX	2
Feeble	+5 DEX	2
Inferior	+1 DEX	3
Poor	+3 DEX	3
Passable	+5 DEX	3
Good	+0 DEX	4
Great	+2 DEX	4
Super	+4 DEX	4
Awesome	+0 DEX	5
Extreme	+3 DEX	5

Chapter 3
How to Play

Actions

What a character does during a turn is called an action. Actions can be anything: from traveling through the jungle, to fixing a jeep, to fighting a dangerous enemy. The choices are limitless. The rules provide instructions for many common actions, but players are certain to try things not listed. This is to be expected in a game where the players can try anything.

Many actions will succeed effortlessly, others will fail automatically and some will require a die roll to resolve. Whether a roll is necessary is at the narrator's discretion, using these guidelines.

Automatic Success

Characters succeed automatically when performing a routine action under normal conditions (walking, tying a shoelace, etc.).

The narrator should also allow automatic success if the outcome would have no substantial effect on the story. An action without consequences isn't worth spending time on. If there's nothing to gain or lose, then success should be automatic.

The narrator decides how long it takes to complete an automatic action, based upon real-world equivalents. The assumption is that the character can keep working at the task until it is complete, no matter how long it takes. If the length of time it takes or the degree of success is important then a roll must be made.

In a pinch, the narrator may allow automatic success when the character's success benefits the flow of the adventure.

Opposed actions are never automatic. If there is someone or something trying to prevent you from doing what you want, a trait roll is mandatory.

Automatic Failure

The narrator should use automatic failure if success would be so absurd as to break the suspension of disbelief, or if success would ruin the requirements of the adventure. A player who tries to sprout wings and fly between mountaintops is asking for automatic failure.

Just because something sounds unlikely doesn't make it impossible. Pulp fiction is filled with miraculous escapes and implausible feats. Many things that seem impossible in real life are commonplace in pulp adventures. The same spirit applies to ART games.

It's often possible that some unforeseen circumstance could be invoked to explain success in even a seemingly impossible situation. If something seems impossible to the narrator, perhaps the player can explain how success could be achieved.

In most cases, the narrator should allow a trait roll and let the dice decide. The narrator can assign extremely high difficulties for actions that seem unreasonable. Automatic failure is reserved only for those cases where failure is truly inevitable.

Trait Rolls

Trait rolls are used to resolve situations where there is a range of possible outcomes *and* you have something to gain or lose.

If the narrator can think of only one possible result then that outcome is automatic and no roll is needed.

If you have nothing to gain or lose, then the narrator should simply move the story along by granting automatic success without resorting to a needless die roll. There must be the possibility of a penalty or reward (or both!) to make a trait roll worthwhile.

In general, whenever there is uncertainty, conflict or disagreement over what will happen in the game, the question is answered with a trait roll. You never get to decide when to make a trait roll. The narrator will tell you when to roll and what attribute to use. You get to decide what skills to apply to the roll, if any.

Summary of a Trait Roll

The narrator must:

- Announce the attribute used to perform the action.
- Decide the difficulty of the action.

The player must:

- Decide whether to abort the action.
- Identify which skill, if any, to use in place of the attribute.
- Find the skill or attribute total on the ART.
- Decide whether to use Fame to improve the trait.
- Decide whether to "take 25".
- Roll the dice.
- Tell the narrator the column result.
- Trigger any effects based on the kicker die.
- Regain Fame (on Awesome).
- Improve your skills (on a roll of 99-00).

The narrator must:

- Apply any column shifts to the roll.
- Count successes or failures, if applicable.
- Describe the outcome.
- Determine the time required to perform the action (for actions performed during exploration phases).

Choosing the Attribute

The rules dictate what attribute is used to perform common actions. In a game where the players can try anything, there will be times when your character will try something not covered in the rules. Ultimately, the narrator must decide which attribute you will use to do things, choosing the most appropriate one from the character sheet.

The narrator should strive to be consistent and fair. Asking one player to make a Dexterity roll and another to make an Agility roll when both are trying to accomplish similar things could be construed as showing favoritism.

Specialized Actions

Some actions are so specialized or complex that they are outside the competence of an average adventurer. Such actions require a perk to perform. A prime example is piloting an airplane. Characters with the Piloting perk can roll Knowledge to pilot an airplane. Characters without the Piloting perk have very little chance of success.

If you absolutely must attempt an action that requires a perk and you do not have the perk, you must roll on row 1 of the ART. You do not gain any benefit from your attributes or skills.

Setting the Difficulty

The difficulty of a trait roll is the minimum roll required for a successful result. Difficulty ranges from Pathetic (very easy) to Awesome (very hard).

Using common sense and instinct, the narrator must summarize everything about the situation that's external to the characters into the difficulty rating. When characters are starting out, they should face difficulties of Pathetic, Feeble or Inferior. As their skills improve, their challenges should increase. Only experienced adventurers should attempt difficulties beyond Passable.

Actions with Catastrophic difficulty are automatically successful, although players may need to make Catastrophic rolls to determine the degree of success. Likewise, Extreme difficulty results in automatic failure, but players may need to roll to determine the degree of failure.

The narrator may announce the difficulty with the attribute but this is not required. The narrator may even set the difficulty after the roll is made.

Difficulty

Difficulty	Challenge for Average Adventurer
Catastrophic	Boring (Automatic Success)
Pathetic	Routine
Feeble	Simple
Inferior	Tricky
Poor	Troublesome
Passable	Hard
Good	Daring
Great	Reckless
Super	Foolhardy
Awesome	Desperate
Extreme	Impossible (Automatic Failure)

Unopposed Rolls
Player vs. Environment

An unopposed action is one where you are trying something that is not opposed by another character.

The narrator sets the difficulty from the perspective of someone who is not especially familiar with the activity, a hypothetical "average" adventurer. The individual skills of the character attempting the action are not a factor. Any character attempting an identical action should face the exact same difficulty.

For example, a locksmith might find opening a lock routine (Pathetic). But an "average" unskilled adventurer would find it hard (Passable). The narrator must go with the Passable difficulty.

The narrator must also consider any unique circumstances that would make the action easier or harder. Running across broken ground is clearly harder than running across a paved street, even if the distances are the same.

The narrator should adjust the difficulty for equipment the character is using that might make the job easier. Climbing a cliff with a rope is easier than scaling it unaided.

Lastly, the narrator needs to factor in any special precautions you take. By using your wits you should be able to augment your chances of success, while thoughtlessness will increase your chances of failure.

Opposed Rolls
Player vs. Foe

When you are acting against a foe, the difficulty is simply the relevant trait of your opponent. The narrator never rolls for foes. Instead, the player rolls, using the foe's attribute as the difficulty. Failures for the player are treated as successes for the foe and vice versa.

The narrator must adjust the difficulty for the situation. Hiding in a dark alley is easier than hiding in an open street, even when the same character is searching for you. The character's Alertness might provide the base difficulty, but it must be tempered by where you try to hide.

Difficulty cannot be reduced below Catastrophic or above Extreme.

Example: You try to sneak past a goblin chieftain having Inferior Alertness. The narrator asks you to make an Inferior Agility roll. You get a Feeble roll and get caught.

Your friend now has to sneak past the chieftain to rescue you. Your friend sets up a diversion by setting fire to some rags on the other side of the cavern. Even though the chieftain's Alertness is Inferior, the narrator decides to make things easier by asking for a Pathetic Agility roll to sneak past while the chieftain is distracted.

Player vs. Player

Adventurers will sometimes turn on each other. It might be in the spirit of good sportsmanship, or it could be with lethal intent.

In some cases the narrator can simply have the players each make a trait roll with the higher roll winning. This is useful in contests such as arm wrestling and racing.

Other actions may require the acting player (the player whose turn it is) to roll first. The result is the difficult for the defending player. The narrator can further modify the difficulty for any special circumstances, just as they would with a foe. Successes and failures are always calculated from the defender's point of view. Failures for the defender may then be treated as successes for the attacker.

No one can directly control another player's character by using a skill, although it may be

possible with a perk. The narrator can stress what the character thinks and feels, but the defending player still gets to decide what the character does. However, a player who does not consider their character's feelings could be penalized by losing Fame or experience points.

Example: You try to pick the pocket of another adventurer. You roll Great on your Dexterity. Your target rolls Poor on their Alertness, resulting in 3 failures. The narrator lets you take three small items from your victim's inventory.

If, on the other hand, your target had rolled Great, your attempt would have been foiled.

Foe Tests

Since the narrator never rolls for foes, they cannot perform trait rolls. If the players are not directly involved with a foe's action, the narrator should simply determine the outcome using common sense.

In cases where the narrator absolutely needs to know the result of a foe's action as if it were an adventurer, the narrator simply uses the foe's attribute rating as the result.

When the foe's attribute is too low to accomplish as task, then for each consecutive turn that the foe repeats the action they receive a +1 column bonus for the purpose of determining success.

Example: A foe with Feeble Attack attacks a foe with Good Defense. The result is a miss because the attacker's trait is less than the defender's.

If the foe can attack four more times, increasing their Attack each turn, they will hit their opponent on their fifth attack.

Henchman

Players use Charm (or sometimes Cunning) to enlist a henchman and to see how well the henchman follows orders. Players make rolls for their henchmen by converting their attributes to a numerical value.

Henchman Traits

Attribute	Roll on Row
Catastrophic	1
Pathetic	1
Feeble	5
Inferior	8
Poor	13
Passable	17
Good	21
Great	25
Super	25
Awesome	25
Extreme	25

Adding Difficulties

When a player is opposed by a group of foes, it's often easier to have the player roll once against the combined difficulty of all the foes. Difficulties can be added together by following the rules for Adding Ranks as described in Chapter One.

Example: Four foes with Alertness scores of Passable are searching for you. The first two Passable scores combine into Good. The remaining two Passable scores also combine into Good. The two Good difficulties then combine into a final combined difficulty of Great.

Example: Three foes with Alertness scores of Feeble, Inferior and Great are searching for you. Feeble and Inferior combine into Poor. Poor is more than one rank below Great, so it cannot be combined. The highest remaining difficulty is Great.

Column Shifts

Some rolls, such as attacks, movement and initiative, do not have a difficulty rating, making it impossible for the narrator to alter the chances of success by tweaking the difficulty. In such cases, the narrator may assign a column shift instead. Column shifts are adjustments made to the player's result.

A positive column shift means to move the result a column on the right. A negative adjustment means to move to the column on the left. For example, if you roll your character's Strength at +2 columns, and you make a Good roll, the roll is adjusted two columns to the right, making the result Super.

Column shifts can be applied directly to a foe's attributes. A foe with Poor Strength that has +1 column would have Passable Strength.

A column shift cannot increase a roll beyond Extreme, nor below Catastrophic. In most cases, the narrator will want to avoid shifting by more than three columns.

As with difficulty, the narrator doesn't have to tell you the column shift before the roll is made. However, if the narrator does announce the column shift, you must apply the shift to your roll before telling the narrator the result.

Player Steps

Changing Your Mind

Once the narrator announces the difficulty and attribute, you can abort the action before making the die roll. Aborting an action counts as an action.

The narrator doesn't have to tell you the difficulty for a task, but at the very least they should warn you when you are undertaking something they consider especially dangerous, giving you the opportunity to change your mind before attempting the action.

Example: For your action you say you will attempt to jump from one rooftop to another, thinking the buildings must be close together. The narrator, envisioning a wide alley between the buildings, says you'll need a Great Agility roll. This is much more difficult than you expected. Rather than take the chance of falling to your death, you abort the action. Next turn you will try something safer.

Using Skills

Before rolling the dice, you may choose to use a skill in place of the attribute the narrator asked you to roll against. The skill must be based on the attribute the narrator asked you to roll against, and it must be relevant to the action you are attempting.

It's up to you to decide which skill to use, if any. Using a skill unrelated to the action is cheating.

The narrator may ask you to announce which skill you are rolling against.

Trait Modifiers

Trait modifiers are added or subtracted from your character's attribute before making a roll. A magic item that grants +2 Defense would increase the Defense of the character who wore it by 2 points. Trait modifiers cannot increase an ability above 25 or below 1.

Some trait modifiers, such as those provided by perks or equipment, are virtually permanent and should be noted on your character sheet. You must include these trait modifiers even though your narrator doesn't specify them.

Your narrator may assign a trait modifier when applying a column shift or adjusting the difficulty would not work. For example, if the difficulty is Awesome then increasing the difficulty won't make a difference. In such cases, a trait modifier would be more appropriate.

The narrator may also wish to use a trait modifier in order to preserve the number of possible successes and failures. Awesome difficulty provide nine shades of failures, but only one kind of success. Passable difficulty, on the other hand, offers five possible kinds of failure and five possibilities for success. A narrator who wishes to have many shades of success while also making success very unlikely could set a low difficulty with a substantial trait penalty. The use of trait modifiers in this way should be rare.

Trait modifiers apply only to adventurers. To apply a modifier to a foe, the narrator must reverse the modifier and then apply it the player's attribute. So if a foe has +1 to attack, any player attacked by that foe would have -1 on their Defense roll. To avoid confusion, the narrator may wish to refrain from applying trait modifiers to foes and use column shifts instead.

Using Fame Before Rolling

For every point of Fame that you expend *before* making a die roll you gain +2 on your trait.

Using the ART

Add your attribute, skills and any modifiers to determine your trait. Locate the total on the leftmost column of the ART (Action Results Table).

After finding the correct row, roll percentile dice and read across the chart to find the die range in which the roll falls. Tell the narrator the column you rolled. The result can range from Catastrophic (a low roll) to Awesome (a high roll).

Example: Your character is climbing a cliff. The narrator asks you to make a Poor Strength roll

Your character has Strength 8. You roll the dice and get 73.

Read across row 14 of the ART until you find the range labeled "69-78." Since your roll of 73 falls within this range, you look at the top of the column to discover you have made a "Passable" roll.

Taking 25

Instead of rolling the dice, you may simply choose to "take 25." Determine the result as if you had rolled 25. You must announce you are "taking 25" before you roll the dice.

Triggering Perks

Some perks are triggered by certain results. Others fire when you roll a certain number on the kicker die (the kicker is the low or "one's" die). If the kicker can trigger more than one advantageous special effect, you must decide which effect it fires.

Regaining Fame

If you rolled Awesome, you recover all expended Fame. You cannot regain Fame if you spent Fame to improve your roll.

Advancement

If you roll **00 on an attribute roll,** you may immediately increase the attribute that you rolled against by one point.

If you roll **99 on an attribute roll,** you may immediately create a new skill. *Exception: You cannot create skills from Defense rolls.*

If you roll **99-00 on a skill roll,** you may immediately increase the skill by one point.

Creating Skills

To create a skill, write down the specific action you were performing. The attribute you were rolling against becomes the base attribute for the new skill.

Tell the narrator the skill you created and how you think it will work. The narrator assigns a starting bonus for the skill, either +1 or +3.

A general skill receives a starting bonus of +1. A more narrowly defined specialty receives a bonus of +3. If the proposed skill is too general, the narrator can disallow it.

The score of your newly created skill equals its base attribute plus the starting bonus. Once created, skills are no longer tied to their attributes and they may change independently.

Starting Bonus

Bonus	Description	Example
+1	General	Attacking with 1-handed axes
+3	Specialty	Attacking orcs with 1-handed axes

Example: You are climbing a cliff using your Strength of 5. You roll 99, which allows you to create a new skill. You create Climb, a general skill. The narrator assigns it a starting bonus of +1. Your Climb skill equals your Strength of 5 +1 = 6.

Later you try to climb a tree to escape some ravenous wolves. The narrator asks you to make a Strength roll. You may roll against your Climb skill of 6 instead.

Example: You are climbing a cliff using your Strength of 5. You roll 99, which allows you to create a new skill. You create Climb Cliff, a specialty. The narrator assigns it a starting bonus of +3. Your Climb Cliff skill equals your Strength of 5 +3 = 8.

Later, you try to climb a tree to escape some ravenous wolves. The narrator asks you to make a Strength roll. You cannot use your Climb Cliff skill because you aren't climbing a cliff.

Successes & Failures

Successes and failures define the possible results of a roll. For example, an adventure might say that a character searching for clues will find one clue for

each success on a Poor Alertness roll; or one red herring for each failure.

To determine the number of success or failures:

- If you rolled under the difficulty, simply count the number of columns between the difficulty and the column you rolled to get your total failures.
- If you rolled the difficulty or more, count the number of columns between the difficulty and the column you rolled, and add 1 to the total. The result is the number of successes you rolled.

Examples: The difficulty is Great and you rolled Poor. The result is 3 failures.

The difficulty is Poor and you rolled Great. The result is 4 successes.

The difficulty is Poor and you rolled Poor. The result is 1 success.

Interpreting Successes & Failures

You achieve the best possible outcome on an Awesome roll, while the worst possible result befalls you on a Catastrophic roll. In general, the higher the difficulty the less astounding an Awesome roll becomes. If the difficulty is Awesome, then an Awesome roll is both the best possible outcome and the most meager success—the mere fact that you succeeded is amazing enough. Conversely, a low difficulty makes a Catastrophic roll less devastating. A difficulty of Feeble carries with it less risk than a difficulty of Great.

Between these extremes are a range of possible results. There is no general rule for translating successes and failures to game results. Instead, the narrator must interpret each outcome as appropriate for the situation. The table below gives broad guidelines.

Interpreting Success & Failures

5f: Complete disaster. The worst thing possible happens. Your screw up causes significant problems, possibly even physical harm. Things are much worse than when you started.
4f: Blunder. You failed completely and looked foolish in the process, creating some new complication that will have to be solved. Things are worse than when you started.
3f: Setback. You made a terrible mistake. You may have forgotten a crucial step, or you what you did is so wrong that it will have to be corrected.
2f: Inconvenience. Something is preventing you from realizing your intentions.
1f: Stymied. The action is harder than you expected. Your best efforts accomplished nothing.
1s: Marginal success. With considerable difficulty, you finish most of what you wanted, but there is something left that you simply cannot do. Your workmanship is shoddy and will not last long.
2s: Moderate success. Your work is adequate, but you cannot do everything you intended or you cannot do it as well as expected.
3s: Solid success. With an effort, you accomplish everything you intended. Nothing fancy, just solid success. You meet expectations.
4s: Complete success. You succeed completely, efficiently and look good doing it. You exceed expectations.
5s: Bonus. Since this is the best possible outcome, the narrator may let you describe the results. You regain all your expended Fame, and may receive an additional, unexpected advantage.

Describing the Results

The number of successes or failures is an essential guideline in deciding what happens in the game. The more successes rolled, the more completely, quickly, easily, or spectacularly you succeed. The more failures, the more devastating the outcome.

Part of the craft of being a narrator is in adapting the quality of a character's roll to actions not covered in the rules. Simply saying an action is "great" or "feeble" is not enough. Neither is saying the results are "successful" or a "failure." The narrator must describe what happens in terms of concrete events. The result of the roll must be woven into the narrative.

By interpreting the degree of success and failure, the narrator controls the tone of the game, making it as comical or serious as they like. Individual creativity is at work here, flavoring the game with the narrator's personal sense of what is appropriate and fun. Not all narrators will make the same judgment call in the same situation, and that is part of the beauty of the system.

Despite this apparent freedom, the narrator should strive to be consistent and fair. If you make a Poor roll, the narrator would be unjustified in having complete disaster befall you.

In many situations, a player will spontaneously suggest an interpretation for the narrator. If it's acceptable, the narrator should let it stand! This takes the burden off the narrator and gives the players a stronger sense of participation. Their contribution can only enrich the story, making it more enjoyable for everyone.

This is especially true of Awesome rolls. Who better to describe what happens in these situations than the player who made the roll? Your narrator may allow you to describe your outstanding feat in your own words, adding additional details as appropriate.

Rewards & Penalties

Most situations involve the potential for a reward and a penalty. You either talk your way into the closed crime scene or you get detained by the police as a person of interest. You handcuff the suspect or he gets away. You pick the lock or you set off an alarm. You climb the mansion fence or you fall and hurt yourself.

At other times the only reward is the avoidance of something bad. Something of yours has been put at risk (usually your Health) but you have nothing to gain. You either resist the poison gas or it sickens you. You either dodge the falling piano or it hits you. Simply avoiding something bad can be a great relief and satisfying in itself.

Situations where you have something to gain but nothing to lose have less dramatic potential but make for creative puzzle solving. Because there isn't a penalty, you are free to try different things. A low roll in this case means a missed opportunity that can never be recaptured. You either pick the lock or you don't. If you don't, what do you do next? Do you smash the window and wake up the neighborhood?

Do you look for an open second-floor window and climb up?

The game mechanics provide for various types of penalties: wounds, fatigue, time wasted, or lost equipment, but there are less tangible penalties. Anything that complicates your adventurer's life can be seen as a penalty. On a personal level, you may be risking your pride, popularity, or a leadership role in the group. A low roll could limit your future choices or send the narrative in a direction that's disadvantageous. You might miss an opportunity or make an enemy.

Each gaming group has its own limits on acceptable penalties. Some groups might find graphic torture, mutilation, rape and amputation all fodder for fun times. Others will want to limit penalties to more lighthearted complications—as frivolous as a meddlesome relative at an inopportune moment. The most interesting penalties offer new situations. They can balance frustration with challenge, humiliation with amusement, disgrace with opportunity for redemption.

Rewards are a much less delicate subject than penalties. Anything that makes a player happy is a reward. Rewards include progress toward a goal, overcoming an adversary, or avoiding injury. Just being the center of attention and in control of the situation can be a reward.

Combined Efforts

When a group works together to accomplish a simple task, it may make sense to combine their efforts into one result. Not only does this increase their chances of success, it reduces the number of outcomes the narrator must invent.

The maximum number of characters that can combine their efforts is limited by common sense; too many and they start to get in each other's way.

In a combined effort, not all the characters need to be adventurers. Only the adventurers get to roll for a result. The narrator controlled characters simply use their trait ratings.

Non-Compounding Tasks

A non-compounding task is one where everyone is doing the same thing, but their efforts don't make

the task easier for any one individual. Examples include sailing a ship or searching a room.

Each player in the group makes a trait roll. The highest result is the outcome for the group. But if any of the players rolls Catastrophic, something that character does causes the entire effort to end in disaster.

Example: Three adventurers and a narrator controlled character attempt to pole a raft across a lagoon. The narrator asks for Passable Strength rolls

The players roll Inferior and Poor. The narrator controlled character has Strength of Inferior.

The best result of the group is Poor, which equates to 1 failure. With an effort, the adventurers make landfall amongst some reeds far from the beach they were aiming for.

Compounding Tasks

A compounding task is one where having another person help will make it easier, such as lifting a heavy object.

As with a non-compounding task, each player in the group makes a trait roll and if anyone rolls Catastrophic the effort ends in disaster. The narrator then adds the results using the rules for adding ranks (see Chapter One).

Example: Three adventurers attempt to carry an injured friend to safety. The narrator asks for a Great Strength roll.

The players roll Good, Poor and Inferior. Inferior and Poor combine into Passable. Passable and Good combine into Great. The overall result is Great, and the three characters, after much struggling, slowly carry their friend.

Complex Actions

Actions that can be resolved with a single trait roll are called simple actions. Simple actions are great for moving the game along at a brisk pace. But sometimes the narrator may want to draw out a piece of action to give it more emphasis. The narrator can break the task into separate steps. Each step requires its own trait roll, often using different traits and difficulties.

Complex actions are always more difficult than simple actions. This adds dramatic tension, but also makes success harder to achieve.

The narrator must be prepared to narrate each step of the complex action and explain why each roll is needed.

- The narrator sets the attribute and difficulty for each step separately.
- You typically get to decide which step to try first. Some steps cannot be completed before others, and this will have to be kept in mind.
- The number of successes (or failures) you get is the bonus (or penalty) to your next trait roll.
- ***If you get Catastrophic on any roll the action ends immediately in disaster.***
- On a failed roll, the narrator decides which step must be completed next. On successful roll, you get to decide which step to perform next.
- Continue until all steps are completed.
- The narrator interprets the final roll as the outcome of the complex action.

Example: You are participating in a debate. The narrator decides you will need to roll Charm, Cunning and Knowledge against the attributes of your foe and lets you decide which to use first.

You start with Cunning and get a Good result. Your foe has Passable Cunning, giving you 2 successes. The narrator describes how your sly innuendo puts your opponent on the defensive. You gain +2 on your next roll and you get to decide which attribute to use next.

You choose to roll Knowledge next. You have 3 Knowledge but your +2 bonus allows you to roll on the 5 row of the ART. You get a Feeble result versus your foe's Poor Knowledge, which equals 2 failures. The narrator concludes that your arguments hold little intellectual weight and your facts carry a whiff of fallacy. The advantage you had at the beginning is lost, and you must make you final roll at -2.

You roll Charm at -2 and, with a very high roll, you get a Super result to conclude the debate. Your Super result versus your opponent's Poor Charm gives you 5 successes. The narrator describes the standing ovation you receive while your red-faced opponent is dwarfed by your dazzling presence.

Assist Rolls

The players can work together to complete a complex action. Not all the characters will be doing the same thing, but their efforts will combine into one objective. A classic example is a surgeon being assisted by other doctors and nurses.

Resolving an assist roll is identical to resolving a complex action, only the steps are completed by different characters. Anyone providing assistance or support to someone else must take their turn before the character they are helping.

If anyone rolls Catastrophic the action ends immediately in disaster.

Example: Jane, with the Piloting skill of 11, is helping you land a plane via radio.

Jane is assisting so she rolls first. Because she can't see the airplane, the narrator decides she must make a Great Piloting roll. She rolls on row 11 and gets a Super result, which equals 2 successes. Her instructions give you +2 on your trait roll.

Now it's your turn. The narrator happens to know that landing an airplane by following competent instructions isn't as hard as it sounds, and asks for a Passable Craft roll. The narrator doesn't require you to have the Aircraft Piloting perk because you aren't piloting solo.

You have Craft of 6 but no relevant skills. Adding +2 because of Jane's assistance, you roll on row 8 of the ART and get a Poor result, which equals 1 failure.

The narrator describes a very rough landing that damages the landing gear, but everyone gets down safely. No one will be flying that plane any time soon.

Assist Roll or Combined Effort?

The narrator must decide whether a task requires an assist roll or a combined effort.

A combined effort is always easier for a group, even if elements of the group have no aptitude in the effort. It's suitable to simple tasks that don't require much skill.

Assist rolls are appropriate in cases where each character in the group must contribute to the effort. Any weak link can reduce the chances of success for the entire group.

Impede Rolls

It's always easier to hinder someone than to help them. This is treated in much the same way as an Assist roll, but the character being impeded suffers a *column* penalty to their trait roll equal to the number of successes rolled by the character that is doing the hindering. The maximum penalty is -3 columns.

Sustained Actions

A sustained action requires more than one turn to resolve, with a trait roll made each turn to track the character's progress. Unlike a complex action, which uses different traits and difficulties, a sustained action normally uses the same trait and difficulty until it is done.

In addition to setting the trait and difficulty, the narrator also sets a *goal.*

The goal is the total number of successes or failures required to complete the action. Most sustained actions have a goal of 10, although it can range from 5 to 30. Normally the goal is the same for successes or failures, but they may have different goals if the narrator wishes.

The player makes a trait roll each turn and keeps a running total of successes and failures. When either running total reaches the goal, the action ends. The last roll determines the degree of success or failure. So if the last roll was Feeble (2 failures), the overall action would be Feeble (2 failures).

Example: The narrator requires a sustained Passable Strength roll with a goal of 10.

Turn 1: Get a Good roll = 2 successes.

Turn 2: Get a Great roll = 3 successes for a running total of 5 successes.

Turn 3: Get a Pathetic roll = 5 failures.

Turn 4: get a Passable roll = 1 success, for a running total of 6 successes and 5 failures.

Turn 5: Get a Feeble roll = 3 failures, for a running total of 6 successes and 8 failures.

Turn 6: get a Passable roll = 1 success. Tally is at 7 successes and 8 failures.

Turn 7: get a Great roll = 3 successes. Tally is at 10 successes and 8 failures. The number of successes has reached the goal and the attempt ends with a Great result (3 successes).

Sustained or Complex Action?

A complex action requires a pre-set number of rolls against different attributes. A sustained action requires an open-ended number of rolls against a single attribute.

A sustained action allows you to change your plans in the middle of the action, as opportunities present themselves or you become more desperate. An example of a sustained action is a chase, where it may take several rolls for you to escape your pursuer and you may attempt different actions along the way.

A sustained action is also suitable for when you need to complete an action in rounds that would normally be reserved for phases. This allows you to decide each round whether to continue with the sustained action or do something else. For example, if your jeep breaks down and your group is attacked while you are trying to repair it, the narrator may allow you to work on jerry-rigging repairs while the battle rages. Your companions might have to fight a defensive battle, protecting you while you restart the jeep to make good your escape.

Defense Rolls

During an adventure, your character will be exposed to frequent danger. The same process is used whether you are attacked by a foe, fall a great height, or step on a trap.

- Determine hit location.
- Roll Defense for the body part attacked.
- Compare your Defense roll to the hazard's damage code to determine what kind of wound you take, if any.
- Record damage on your character sheet.

Hit Location

Before you can roll your Defense, you must first determine which body part the damage is directed against. To determine hit location, roll a ten-sided die on the table below. This

If your attacker is half your height, add +1 to your roll. If your attacker is at least twice your height, subtract -1 from your roll.

By expending 1 point of Fame, you may override the roll and choose the location.

Hit Location

d10	Roll Defense For This Body Part
1-2	Head
3-5	Torso
6-7	Arm
8-0	Leg

Damage

Every hazard has a damage rating listing Defense results and the corresponding wound.

For example, if you are attacked by a foe with damage of IN(L) FB(L) PT(M) CT(H), you would take light damage on an Inferior or Feeble Defense roll, medium damage on a Pathetic roll, and heavy damage on a Catastrophic roll.

If your Defense roll is more than the highest rank listed, you completely avoid taking damage. You dodge the toll's club, elude the trap, or the damage glances harmlessly off your armor.

There are many variations. A highly poisonous dart with CT(D) damage would rarely hit but when it does it would instantly defeat a character. At the other extreme, SP(L) GT(L) GD(L) PS(L) PR(L) IN(M) FB(M) PT(M) CT(M) would be a hazard that hits easily but does little damage.

Example: You roll Feeble Defense against a foe with IN(L) FB(L) PT(M) CT(H) damage. You take a light wound.

Example: You roll Good Defense against a foe with damage of PS(L) PR(L) IN(M) FB(M) PT(M) CT(H). You avoid taking any damage at all.

Example: You roll Pathetic Defense against a foe with PR(L) IN(M) FB(H) PT(C) CT(D). You take a critical wound.

Recording Damage

When you are injured, you must circle the corresponding wound for that body part. If the appropriate wound is already circled, you must mark off the next highest wound that isn't already circled. For example, if you take medium damage to

your head, and the M for your head is already circled, you must circle the H wound instead.

A light wound is a mere scratch or bruise. A medium wound is a flesh wound: a gash or painful contusion. A heavy wound is a seriously deep cut or cracked bones. A critical wound represents a grievous injury. A deadly wound is crippling.

A character who takes a critical wound suffers the penalty shown on the Critical Wound table.

Once you take a deadly wound you are defeated.

If you take *any* damage to a body part that already has a deadly wound, you are immediately defeated.

Critical Wounds

Hit Location	Critical Wound Penalty
Head	Stunned. Lose your next turn.
Torso	Winded. Cannot attack on your next turn.
Arm	Drop weapon or shield (your choice).
Leg	Knocked Down.

Defeated Adventurers

Each time you are defeated, you suffer an immediate and permanent reduction of -1 to Fame (down to a minimum of zero).

When you are defeated, your adventurer is incapacitated until the end of combat. You fall down and cannot move at more than a crawl. You can talk, but you cannot perform any action requiring a trait roll.

At the end of combat, your character is no longer incapacitated but still suffers a penalty for being gravely wounded, as shown on the Deadly Wound table. The penalty remains in effect until the character's deadly wound is healed through first aid, healing, or with med-kit (see *Healing*).

Deadly Wounds

Hit Location	Deadly Wound Penalty
Head	-2 columns on all Alertness and Knowledge rolls.
Torso	-1 column on all trait rolls.
Arm	-2 columns on all Dexterity and Attack rolls; cannot use 2 handed weapons or a shield.
Leg	-2 column on all Agility and Defense rolls; cannot move during combat rounds.

Killing Incapacitated Adventurers

An incapacitated adventurer can be dispatched by anyone in just one round. Generally foes will not bother to kill an incapacitated adventurer. Instead, the foes will focus their attacks on active threats. Should foes win a battle, they may loot the bodies and leave the adventurers for dead, allowing them to recover hours later through natural healing.

Certain Death

Some situations are so dangerous that the only possible outcome is death. There is no possibility of incapacitation or unconsciousness. In such situations, no Defense roll is made. The character is simply killed on the spot.

Certain death is always the result of a choice by the player. The player must be advised that the action they are taking will result in certain death. The player must then be given the opportunity to abort the action and try something else.

If the player insists on sacrificing their character, then a highly dramatic death scene should be played out.

A dead character can no longer be used in the game. You will have to create a new character and the narrator will have to introduce the character when convenient, usually during the next gaming session.

If the narrator expects a scenario to be especially deadly, the narrator may ask the players to create more than one character during the preparation stage. Should one character die, you will have another ready to take its place.

Healing

First Aid

If you are conscious, you can apply first aid to yourself or another character. First aid takes several minutes to apply and cannot be done during combat.

It costs 1 Fame to heal a wound. You can heal as many wounds as you can afford.

Natural Healing

After a full night of rest, you may make a Stamina roll to heal. You may erase one wound that does not exceed the roll. On a Super or Awesome roll you may erase up to two wounds.

Healing

Stamina* Roll	Maximum Wound You Can Heal
Inferior	Light
Poor	Medium
Passable	Heavy
Good	Critical
Great	Deadly
Super	Deadly + Light
Awesome	Deadly + Medium

*Roll Knowledge if using a med-kit.

Example: Your character goes to bed with light and medium wounds. In the morning you roll your Stamina to heal. You roll Inferior. You do not heal that night. You must go another day with your injuries.

The next night you roll again. This time you get a Passable result. You erase a medium wound.

Med-Kits

Medicinal plants, magical potions, and modern remedies can heal wounds much more quickly than bed rest. Such remedies are called "med-kits" for purposes of this discussion.

Med-kits have a limited number of uses. Each attempt to use a med-kit consumes one of its uses. Using a med-kit allows you to attempt to heal as if you had slept overnight, but the character being healed doesn't roll Stamina; instead the character applying the med-kit rolls Knowledge.

Med-kits are used during encounter phases and take minutes to apply. They cannot be used during combat.

Some med-kits grant a bonus to your trait roll to perform the healing. A +5 Med Kit x3 (that is, a med-kit that adds +5 to its user's Knowledge and that can be used three times) would be quite a rare treasure.

Example: During a fight you take heavy wounds to your arms and torso. After the battle, you use a med-kit with 3 uses.

You roll Pathetic on your Knowledge. This is too low so you fail to heal.

You expend another use of your med-kit. This time you get lucky with a Great roll. You can heal up to a critical wound. You choose to heal the heavy wound on your torso.

Combined Damage

Combining damage ratings allows for multiple attacks to be resolved with a single Defense roll. The process is more complicated than adding difficulties. The narrator may wish to calculate the combined damage of similar foes in advance.

1. Pick the damage code that has the most potential damage. This is the damage rating you'll be adjusting. Line up the damage ratings by column. Find the first column where the damage codes are the same and increase it by one level.

```
            ↓
    FB(M)  PT(M)  CT(H)
+   FB(L)  PT(M)  CT(H)
=   FB(M)  PT(H)  CT(H)
```

2. If the damage codes are different lengths, line them up by column.

```
                      ↓
    PR(L)  IN(M)  FB(M)  PT(H)  CT(C)
+          IN(L)  FB(M)  PT(H)  CT(H)
=   PR(L)  IN(L)  FB(J)  PT(H)  CT(C)
```

3. If the first letter that's the same is repeated in more than one column, increase the rightmost copy of the letter. *In this example, L is the first repeated letter. It's repeated in both the Inferior and Feeble columns. The rightmost copy of L is in the Feeble column, so that is the damage rating that is increased.*

```
               ↓
    IN(L)  FB(L)  PT(M)  CT(H)
+   IN(L)  FB(L)  PT(M)  CT(H)
=   IN(L)  FB(M)  PT(M)  CT(H)
```

4. Never increase the letter in the first column. If the first repeated letter is in the first position, add an L to the start of the damage code instead.

```
               ↓
           IN(L)  FB(M)  PT(H)  CT(C)
+          IN(L)  FB(M)  PT(H)  CT(C)
=   PR(L)  IN(L)  FB(M)  PT(H)  CT(C)
```

5. Damage ratings with no commonalities cannot be combined. In this case, simply use the damage rating with the most potential damage, or resolve the attacks separately.

```
    PR(L)  IN(M)  FB(H)  PT(C)  CT(D)
+          IN(L)  FB(M)  PT(H)  CT(C)
=   PR(L)  IN(M)  FB(H)  PT(C)  CT(D)
&          IN(L)  FB(M)  PT(H)  CT(C)
```

Example: You are attacked by four foes having IN(L) FB(L) PT(M) CT(H) damage. The combined damage is PR(L) IN(M) FB(M) PT(M) CT(H).

```
           IN(L)  FB(L)  PT(M)  CT(H)  #1
+          IN(L)  FB(L)  PT(M)  CT(H)  #2
=          IN(L)  FB(M)  PT(M)  CT(H)
+          IN(L)  FB(L)  PT(M)  CT(H)  #3
=   PR(L)  IN(L)  FB(M)  PT(M)  CT(H)
+          IN(L)  FB(L)  PT(M)  CT(H)  #4
=   PR(L)  IN(M)  FB(M)  PT(M)  CT(H)
```

Special Types of Damage

Sustained Damage

Fire and acid can cause sustained damage. You must make a Defense roll against the hazard's damage rating. If you take damage, you must roll again the next round for the same hit location. You must keep doing this each round until you roll high enough to not take damage.

There's usually a way to stop the damage, for example dropping and rolling or diving into water to put out a fire.

Example: You get attacked by a jet of flame that does sustained damage of PR(L) IN(L) FB(M) PT(M) CT(H). You roll 9 for the hit location, and so you roll your leg Defense. You roll Inferior Defense. You take a light wound to your legs and your legs catch fire.

The next round you must roll your leg Defense again. You roll Poor and again take light damage to your legs, which is increased to a medium wound because the light wound is already circled.

The third round you roll Passable Defense. You take no damage and the fire goes out.

Fatigue

Not every hazard causes wounds. Poison, exhaustion, and sickness cause fatigue damage. Each point of fatigue that you take causes you to suffer -1 on all rolls until the source of fatigue is removed. Fatigue from different sources is cumulative.

How long fatigue lasts depends upon its source, and is often determined with a trait roll.

Example: You are poisoned! The poison causes 1 fatigue and lasts for 1 round for each failure on a Passable Stamina roll. You roll Inferior on our Stamina roll, so you suffer –1 on all rolls for 2 rounds

Example: Your character is exposed to a terrible disease. Your character suffers 1 fatigue for every failure on a Great Stamina roll, and recovers 1 fatigue for each day of rest.

Falling Damage

The distance a character falls determines the amount of damage, as shown on the Falling table. The narrator may adjust the damage based on the landing surface. Some examples are shown on the Falling Modifiers table.

Falling Damage

Distance	Damage Code
10'	IN(L) FB(L) PT(M) CT(M)
15'	PR(L) IN(L) FB(M) PT(M) CT(H)
20'	PS(L) PR(L) IN(M) FB(M) PT(H) CT(H)
25'	GD(L) PS(L) PR(M) IN(M) FB(H) PT(H) CT(C)
30'	GT(L) GD(L) PS(M) PR(M) IN(H) FB(H) PT(C) CT(D)
40'	SP(L) GT(L) GD(M) PS(M) PR(H) IN(H) FB(C) PT(C) CT(D)
50'	SP(L) GT(L) GD(M) PS(M) PR(H) IN(C) FB(C) PT(D) CT(D)
60'	AW(L) SP(L) GT(M) GD(M) PS(H) PR(H) IN(C) FB(C) PT(D) CT(D)
70'	AW(L) SP(M) GT(M) GD(H) PS(H) PR(C) IN(C) FB(D) PT(D) CT(D)
80'	AW(L) SP(M) GT(H) GD(H) PS(C) PR(C) IN(D) FB(D) PT(D) CT(D)
90'	AW(L) SP(M) GT(H) GD(C) PS(C) PR(D) IN(D) FB(D) PT(D) CT(D)
100'	AW(L) SP(M) GT(H) GD(C) PS(D) PR(D) IN(D) FB(D) PT(D) CT(D)

Falling Modifiers

Distance Modifier	Landing Surface
-20'	Deep snow, water
-10'	Dense vegetation, sand
-5'	Grass or mud
Normal	Dirt or wood floor
+5'	Stone floor, pavement
+10'	Rocks
+20'	Jagged rocks, spikes
-10'	Jumping down

If you fall more than 100 feet, you must make a Defense roll for each 100 feet and any amount over 100. For example, if you fall 130 feet, you would roll your Defense for a 100 foot fall and then again for a 30 foot fall. Roll hit location separately for each Defense roll.

Example: You attempt to climb a sheer cliff. The narrator asks for a Passable Strength roll. You roll Feeble (3 failures) and plunge toward the rocks below. Because you rolled 3 failures, the narrator decides that you fall 10 feet per failure (30 feet) onto rocks. This is the same as falling 40 feet. The fall does SP(L) GT(L) GD(M) PS(M) PR(H) IN(H) FB(C) PT(C) CT(D) damage to a random body part.

Example: You are jumping over a ten-foot deep pit. The narrator asks for a Passable Agility roll. You get Catastrophic (5 failures). You fall into the pit. It's a ten foot drop onto a stone floor, which does PR(L) IN(L) FB(M) PT(M) CT(H) damage.

Example: You are edging along an icy mountain ledge. The narrator asks for a Good Agility roll to keep your balance. You roll Passable (1 failure). The narrator declares that you lose your footing and slip toward the edge.

You ask if you can catch yourself with your ice axe. The narrator requires a Passable Strength roll. You roll Feeble (3 failures). Losing your grip on your ice axe, you fall into the deep snow far below.

It's a dizzying plunge of 50 feet into deep snow, which does GT(L) GD(L) PS(M) PR(M) IN(H) FB(H) PT(C) CT(D) damage as you plop into a snowdrift.

Insanity

When characters are confronted by extremely dangerous and unnatural situations, the narrator may require them to make Stamina rolls. The difficulty is based on the situation. Some examples are given below. A character should never roll when facing something they are accustomed to. An assassin wouldn't have to roll Sanity just because they found a mangled corpse.

Look up the number of successes or failures that the player rolls on the Sanity Check table.

Sanity Difficulty

Difficulty	Description	Example
Inferior	Disgust	Find a mangled corpse.
Poor	Fright	Touch a mangled corpse unexpectedly.
Passable	Shock	Find the mangled corpse of a loved one.
Good	Panic	Attacked by a loathsome and obviously dangerous creature.
Great	Fear	Receive a visit by an IRS agent.
Super	Extreme terror	Witness a horrifying event: river runs with blood, body parts rain from the sky, etc.
Awesome	Mind numbing horror	Faced by own worst fear.

Sanity Check

Sanity	Result
2s	You've coughed up scarier things than this.
1s	You're disturbed but keep your cool.
1f	You grit your teeth and swallow your rising panic.
2f	You are paralyzed with fear for 1 round.
3f	You flee in terror. Each round, make an Inferior Stamina roll. Once you accumulate 7 successes you regain your self control.
4f	You cry, whimper, scream, or huddle in a corner until slapped or shaken or until you recover by yourself after 5 minutes.
5f	You faint. Each round, make an Inferior Stamina roll. Once you accumulate 7 successes you awaken. If you roll any failures then you will awaken with no memory of the event that frightened you.
6f	You faint for 1 minute per failure on an Extreme Stamina roll. In addition, you are unable to speak for 12 hours.
7f	You go catatonic for 1 hour per failure on an Extreme Stamina roll. During this time, you cannot move or speak, but you can be led around by others. Once you recover, you gain a permanent phobia related to the event that frightened you. Decide on the phobia with your narrator.
8f	Your character goes completely insane. Each day, you may try to make a Great Stamina roll to recover. You still control your insane character, but you must behave in an irrational fashion. The narrator may require the insane character to do certain things or to behave in a certain way, including requiring the character to plot against former friends, or go into a violent frenzy. After your character recovers, your character may suffer a permanent mental illness.

Hidden Rolls

Players always make their own rolls. Sometimes the mere fact that the narrator asks for a roll will suggest that something is happening. The narrator may use misdirection to maintain uncertainty.

Example: You decide to search a room for a secret door. The narrator tells you to make an Alertness roll. You roll Poor. The narrator tells you that you're certain the bookcase opens up as a secret door. You can even see a faint outline, but you just can't find the means to open it. Even though you know the result of the roll you do not know whether the door is really there or not. The narrator is simply saying the character thinks there is a secret door; the character may be entirely mistaken.

Example: You walk into a room and the narrator tells you to make an Alertness roll. You roll Feeble. You know something is up, but you don't know what. The nagging feeling that you missed something may cause you to search the room; or maybe you think you're entering an ambush and you draw your pistol. Both reactions are acceptable.

Reaction Rolls

Reaction rolls are trait rolls that the narrator requires you to make. You are not initiating the action. Instead, you are reacting to something external.

For example, when entering a room, the narrator might ask for an Alertness roll to determine whether you spot the spy hidden behind the tapestry.

The narrator can ask you to make any number of reaction rolls in a turn. They do not count against what you can do on your turn and they can happen at any time, often during another character's turn. They help the narrator decide what happens to your character in situations that are beyond your control.

Defense rolls are normally made as reaction rolls.

Example: A princess is trying to seduce your character. The princess has Great Charm. The narrator asks you to make a Great Cunning roll to resist her. You roll and get a Great result, barely resisting her wiles, despite your attraction.

Alertness Rolls

The narrator calls for an Alertness roll when the detective has a chance to notice something of importance that is not immediately obvious. Alertness rolls often have high difficulty, but they are free reaction rolls that don't count as part of your actions for the turn. A character who is deliberately

searching for a specific thing should have a much lower difficulty.

Alertness can be used by the narrator as a means to provide the adventurers more information when they are stumped.

Success gives you helpful information about your environment, a tactical advantage in a threat situation, or a hint that may otherwise go noticed. Your character may spot an ambush before they enter it. They might notice faint scratches on the floor (only upon further investigation do they determine they're from a bookcase that has been moved). Or they may notice a discoloration on the hardwood floor (but they must conclude for themselves that it's from where a carpet once lay).

Typically the narrator will describe what the characters see, hear or otherwise sense and will leave it to the players to figure out its meaning. On a high Alertness roll the narrator may describe the meaning as well ("There's a discolored spot on the hardwood floor. It looks like there used to be a carpet that blocked the sunlight from the window, but the carpet must have been removed recently.")

On a failed roll a characters may miss a hint altogether or they may be misled by a red herring—the narrator simply draws their attention to some detail that does not help the characters but may prove interesting in its own right.

The narrator should be creative in coming up with reasons for why you failed to notice what you were rolling for. Perhaps something got in your way or you were distracted. If so, what was the distraction? Or maybe your character simply wasn't paying enough attention.

Example: Without knowing it, you pass a concealed door. The door is well hidden, so the narrator asks you to make an Alertness roll without telling you why. You roll Super. The narrator figures that this is good enough for you to notice something is not quite right about the wall on the left.

Suspecting a secret door, you stop and search the wall. Since you are specifically searching for the door, the narrator asks you to make another Alertness roll, this time dropping the difficulty to Good.

You roll Feeble. You blunder foolishly, leaving you worse off than when you started.

Improvising, the narrator announces you found a small niche in the wall. As you probed the crack with your finger, you felt a sharp sting.

You snatch your hand back to see a scorpion clinging to your finger, its poisonous stinger embedded in your flesh.

Knowledge Rolls

Often the narrator will need to determine if your character knows a relevant fact about the current situation. Upon seeing an ancient temple, you may need to roll Knowledge to find out if you recognize the architecture as Sumerian, or the glyphs as Aztec.

Often the narrator will require you to make an Knowledge roll to determine how much information to provide you when setting up the scene. In other cases, you may ask details that will cause the narrator to require an Knowledge roll.

Skills can give you a bonus to specific areas of knowledge, such as science, nature, history, occult lore, cultures, religion, and so on.

Fate Rolls

Sometimes the narrator simply needs a result to decide some issue not under the character's control. In these circumstances, the narrator can request a Fate roll. The difficulty is set based on the likelihood of the event happening.

Example: The adventure write up says the adventurer's camp will be attacked at night. The narrator asks the players, who are taking turns standing guard, to make Fate rolls. The attack occurs on the shift of the player with the lowest result.

Questions of Importance

You can do more on your turn than just perform an action. You can also introduce unexpected elements into the game environment or unexpected twists that not even the narrator expected.

A question of importance is one where the answer:

- is not trivial or inconsequential
- is not obvious and inescapable
- has not been predetermined by the narrator

A question of importance is resolved by a trait roll. For practical reasons, you are limited to one question of importance per turn, plus one action.

As a simple example, say you are in a room rifling through a CEO's desk and three security guards barge in through the only door. Your question of importance could be, "Can I get out a window?"

A narrator who hasn't already established whether the windows offer an egress could allow a Fate roll. If the roll is high enough, it might mean the windows open onto a fire escape, or it might mean you are close enough to a tree (or another rooftop) to jump out, or there might be a ledge outside that will let you climb down. But if the roll is low, the windows might be shatterproof or you could be so far up that jumping is out of the question.

Note that climbing or jumping will probably require another trait roll to resolve. So just because the answer is positive, it doesn't mean it's going to be easy!

Player Story Additions

Questions of importance can affect the course of the story in minor ways. The point is that the narrator, like the players, doesn't know everything and doesn't control everything. The narrator's job is to interpret the rolls of the players and build a story around them.

Using Perks to Control Story

Some perks allow the player to expend Fame to affect the story in deeper ways.

The Military Contact perk could allow a player to ask if the man guarding the hideout is an old war buddy. The narrator should let the dice decide, with the chance that the man turns out to be an old war enemy always a possibility.

Chapter 4
Exploration Phases

Exploration Phases

Exploration phases are used when the characters are exploring, traveling, investigating, or interacting with friendly or neutral foes where there is no conflict. Much of the game is played in phases. The game shifts to rounds only when the situation becomes tense enough that formal turn order is needed, such as in a hostile encounter with foes.

Setting the Scene

The narrator begins the first phase of a scene by describing the environment, how the characters got there, and any other necessary details the players may need to make decisions about what to do next.

Declaration of Intention

At the beginning of a phase, all players declare what their characters are doing. The adventurers may act as a group, or they may each do something different.

The players can discuss their options with each other and the narrator. They can declare their intentions in any order, and players can change their minds in response to what other players decide. If this open-ended process bogs down, the narrator can ask the players to make Knowledge rolls and have players declare their intentions in *reverse* order (starting with the player who rolled the lowest result).

Each action has an appropriate scale of minutes, hours or days. All players must choose actions that have the same scale. A player who insists on declaring an action that requires a longer scale than the other players can do nothing until the scale switches to the longer time frame (or the player chooses an action that requires the same scale as the other players).

Time Scale of Phases

Scale	1 phase represents
minutes	1 minute
ten minutes	10 minutes
hours	1 hour
days	1 day

Resolving Actions in Phases

Once all the players have declared their intentions, they can begin to resolve their actions.

The narrator resolves the actions in whatever order is convenient or most dramatic.

How Long Did It Take?

If all the characters are doing things that take approximately the same amount of time, the narrator can simply move the game forward without counting phases. But in more complicated situations, the narrator may wish to track how long it takes for the characters to finish what they are doing.

The simplest method is for each player to make a trait roll. The action requires 1 phase for each column rolled under Extreme. An Awesome roll requires 1 phase, a Super roll 2 phases, a Great roll 3 phases, and so on.

Example: You are traveling to a neighboring town. The trip normally takes a few hours (in other words, the scale is in hours). The narrator asks for an Knowledge roll just to see how long the trip takes you. You roll Pathetic, which is the 9th column from the right on the ART. You get lost along the way and the trip takes you 9 hours to complete.

Example: You are trying to fix the engine of your car. The narrator asks for a Passable Craft roll and sets the scale in hours. You get an Inferior result (2 failures). You tinker with the car for 7 hours but fail to diagnose the problem.

Example: You go to the library to research an obscure region of South America to find a hint on the location of a legendary mine. The narrator asks for a Poor Knowledge roll and sets the scale at days. You get a Great result, the third column from the right on the ART. It takes you 3 days to successfully complete your research.

Rolling Again

How many times can a character repeat an action, hoping for success? It depends on the stakes.

If there was a penalty for failure, you can try the action however many times they want, suffering the consequences for each failure.

If there was no penalty for failure, then you cannot try again. The task is beyond your character's abilities, and any subsequent attempt will automatically fail. You must wait until the next adventure before receiving another chance to succeed.

This "one roll rule" applies only to actions performed in exploration phases. Actions performed in combat rounds can be tried repeatedly.

Example: A character falls in a 10 foot pit, taking damage from the fall. The player then tries to climb out. The narrator sets the scale at minutes and requires a Passable Strength roll.

The player rolls Inferior. The narrator decides that the character climbs for 7 minutes before falling back into the pit. Once the damage is resolved, the player may try climbing out again, risking another roll.

Example: You are trying to open a sealed safe in the comfort of your study with all the tools you need. The narrator asks for a Poor Dexterity roll with a scale of hours. You get Pathetic. You spend 9 hours on the lock before admitting you just don't have the skill to crack the safe. You will have to wait until the next adventure before trying again.

Example: You try to pick a lock. The narrator sets the scale in minutes and asks for a Passable Dexterity roll.

You get a Feeble result (3 failures). You spend 8 minutes picking the lock when a guard comes by on his rounds!

After you deal with the guard you try picking the lock again. Again the narrator asks for a Passable Dexterity roll. This time you get an Inferior result (2 failures). Again the narrator thinks of an appropriate penalty: after 6 minutes your lock pick breaks in the lock.

Fortunately you have a spare lock pick, but you first have to remove the broken pick from the lock. In your toolkit you have a pair of needle nose pliers. The narrator asks for an Inferior Strength roll. You get a Super result. In just 2 minutes you free the broken lock pick.

You go at the lock again, again attempting a Passable Dexterity roll and this time getting a Poor result (1 failure). The narrator cannot think of an appropriate penalty. You spend 6 minutes picking the lock before admitting you have no clue what you are doing. You must reluctantly give up.

Setting a Time Limit

Before rolling the dice, you may announce the number of phases you are willing to devote to the task. Because you are rushing, you suffer -2 on your trait for each phase under 10 that you allot.

If the number of phases rolled is more than the time limit, the task is left incomplete.

Example: You are trying to repair a car. The narrator asks for a Poor Craft roll and sets the scale in hours. Realizing that you will succeed in 6 hours or less, you set a time limit of 6 hours. This if 4 less than 10, which means you will suffer a 4 x 2 = -8 penalty to your Craft trait for rushing.

Influencing Another Character's Action

Because success or failure is determined at the start of the action, it's possible for circumstances to change between when the roll is made and when the action is completed. This makes it possible for someone to intervene to help or hinder the character.

If you are trying to help another player who has failed a roll, you must be able to complete your action before they do.

Example: Rick and Shari try to climb a cliff. The narrator requires a Passable Strength roll and sets the scale at 10 minutes. Rick rolls Feeble. He will climb for 80 minutes before falling.
Shari rolls Great and climbs out in 20 minutes.
From the top of the cliff she can see Rick struggling. She asks the narrator, is Rick close enough for her to reach? To keep things interesting, the narrator decides Rick is barely within arm's reach.
Shari reaches down and grabs Rick's outstretched hand. The narrator asks for a Passable Strength roll for her to pull him to safety and sets the scale in minutes.
Shari rolls Passable. She grabs hold of Rick and stops him from falling. It takes her another 5 minutes for her to pull him up.

Movement During Phases

Characters can move vast distances during even a five minute phase. Only the general position of the characters is tracked: they might be at the library, driving to another town, or traveling cross country.

For the most part, characters can travel without making a roll. The narrator simply decides how long the travel takes based upon the distance, the mode of transportation, and the conditions.

Shadowing

Following someone without being noticed is a complex action that requires two rolls. You must be moving at least as fast as your target. For example, you cannot shadow someone on foot if they are in a car.

First roll Alertness to keep your target in sight. The difficulty is your opponent's movement trait (Stamina if moving on foot, Craft if in a vehicle, or Strength if mounted). How well you do on your Alertness roll determines how much distance you

can leave to your target. As with any complex action, successes count as a trait bonus to your next roll while failures count as a penalty.

The second roll is to avoid being detected. Roll Agility if on foot, Craft if in a vehicle, or Strength if mounted. The difficulty is your opponent's Alertness. Success allows you to safely follow your target for one phase per success. At the end of this duration, you must make another set of rolls. Phases can be minutes or hours at the narrator's discretion.

One failure means you lose your target (see tracking to pick up their trail). Two or more failures means that you target spots you and tries to elude you. See Chases in the Combat Rounds chapter for more information.

Tracking

Before you can begin tracking, you must have first found signs of passage. This itself requires an Alertness roll. If you fail this first roll, you cannot find any tracks to follow and you cannot even attempt to track your target.

Tracking is a sustained action. The goal is based on how far apart you are from your target.

You must alternate Alertness and Stamina rolls. The first roll is always an Alertness roll. The difficulty of the Alertness rolls is based on the terrain, the age of the tracks, the weather, and whether your target is trying to cover their tracks.

The difficulty of the Stamina roll is based on your target's speed. The difficulty can be extremely high if your foe is in a vehicle and you are on foot.

When your running total of successes or failure reaches the goal, the action ends in success or failure. On a failed roll you lose the scent. You cannot roll again because the trail has grown cold.

On a successful roll you catch up with your target. You can then use the Shadowing rules if you want to continue following them, or Chase rules if you want to overtake them.

To draw out a tracking scenario, a successful tracking roll may lead you to a location that your subject is no longer at, but which contains clues or other opportunities for adventure. The narrator may then require another set of tracking rolls to pick up the subject's trail.

Chapter 5
Combat Rounds

Combat Rounds

Hostile encounters between adventurers and foes are played in rounds. The narrator shifts the game to rounds when fighting begins or the situation becomes tense enough that who goes first matters.

A round represents just a few seconds of game time (as opposed to the real time it takes to describe your character's actions, roll dice, and play out the round).

Initiative

Initiative is the order in which the players and their foes take their turns during a round. Initiative is established at the start of the encounter and does not change.

The players each roll Alertness to determine their character's initiative, while foes use their Alertness rating.

Characters act in descending order of initiative, from Awesome to Catastrophic.

- Ties between adventurers are resolved by agreement between the players or by a die roll.
- Ties between foes and players go to the player.
- Foes with tied initiative act in whatever order the narrator wishes.
- Characters with Awesome or Super initiative receive a bonus round at the beginning of the encounter.
- Characters with Pathetic or Catastrophic initiative lose their first turn.

Example: *Jen rolls Super initiative, Bill rolls Poor and Sam rolls Pathetic. The foes have Poor Alertness, except for a Boss with Super Alertness.*

Bonus Round:
Jen gets to acts during the bonus round.
Then the boss acts after Jen.

First Round:
Jen goes first (on Super)
The boss foe goes second (on Super)
Bill goes next (on Poor)
The foes act (on Poor)
Sam, with a Pathetic roll, loses his first turn.

Second Round:
Jen goes first (on Super)
The boss goes next (on Super)
Bill goes next (on Poor)
The foes act (on Poor)
Sam goes last (on Pathetic)

Simplified Initiative

If the keeping the turn order straight is too cumbersome, the narrator can simply go around the table clockwise, starting with the player who rolled highest on initiative. Foes act when the turn order reaches the narrator. The foes go first if all the players roll under the foes' highest Alertness.

Taking Your Turn

On your turn, you announce what your character is doing and then resolve your action. Once your turn is done, play proceeds to the next character in order of initiative.

Even when it's not your turn you may need to roll in response to an action taken by another character. Often you'll need to make a Defense roll to defend against an attack. These rolls can happen at any time and are in addition to whatever actions you initiated on your turn.

Actions

In general, you may perform one action per round. Actions may or may not require a trait roll to resolve. The actions you can take during combat rounds must be something that could take place within a few seconds. Most actions take one round, but sustained actions may require several continuous rounds. Typical actions include:

- Attack
- Use a combat perk
- Dodge
- Jump
- Climb
- Sneak
- Aiming
- Movement
- Draw a weapon (automatic success)
- Ready a slung shield (automatic success)
- Stand up (automatic success)
- Open a door (automatic success)
- Knock over a table
- Take cover
- Interact with the environment
- Pick up something

Free Actions

Free actions do not count against what a character can do during a turn and can be performed at any time during the player's turn. Reaction rolls can occur even when it is not the player's turn. A player can perform any number of free actions in a round, within reason. Free actions include:

- Talking
- Move within Pathetic range
- Dropping an item at hand
- Taking the safety off a gun
- Reloading
- Questions of importance
- Reaction rolls
  - o Defense rolls
  - o Most Alertness rolls
  - o Fate rolls
  - o Resistance rolls
  - o Other narrator required rolls

Automatically Successful Actions

Once per round, you can try to convert an automatically successful action into a free action. Make a trait roll at Passable difficulty. The trait depends on the action:

- Draw a weapon or ready a slung shield: Roll Dexterity.
- Stand up: Roll Agility.
- Open a door: Roll Strength.

If you succeed, you perform the action as a free action.

On a Feeble to Poor roll you accomplish what you intended, but your turn ends.

On a Pathetic or Catastrophic roll, not only do you fail to do what you wanted, but your turn ends.

Triggers

At the start of your turn, before you act, you may announce that you are waiting to act until some trigger occurs. The trigger might be someone drawing a gun, moving, or poking their head out from cover. You don't have to say what you're going to do, you just need to describe the trigger.

The trigger stays in effect until the start of your next turn.

If the triggering event happens, your turn interrupts the turn of the other character. After you finish your turn, the other character can then complete their turn. In this way, you can flee (or attack) if someone comes in through a doorway.

More importantly, the order of initiative changes. For the rest of the encounter, your turn will occur before the character who triggered your action.

Multi-Action

At the end of your turn, you may expend 2 Fame to immediately take another turn. At the end of that turn, you may spend 3 more Fame to immediately take a third turn.

Range & Movement

Distances between groups of characters and other objects are measured in the familiar Catastrophic to Awesome scale.

Ranges

Range	Distance	Initiative
Pathetic	0 to 3 meters/yards	CT to PT
Feeble	4 to 25 meters/yards	FB to IN
Inferior	31 to 50 meters/yards	PR to PS
Poor	61 to 100 meters/yards	GD
Passable	101 to 200 meters/yards	GT
Good	201 to 400 meters/yards	SP
Great	401 to 800 meters/yards	AW
Super	beyond 800 meters/yards	—

Encounter Range

The narrator decides how far apart the adventurers and the foes are at the start of the encounter. The starting range indoors or in a dense jungle will normally be Pathetic to Inferior. In the woods it is Feeble to Poor. In an urban environment ranges can be Inferior to Passable. Only in more open environments can the encounter range can be Good or higher.

The narrator may wish to set the encounter range by using the highest initiative roll, as shown on the Range table.

Player Movement

You can always interact with any character or object that's within Pathetic range. Moving within Pathetic range is a free action.

Increasing or reducing the distance between you and your opponents by one range class requires an Agility roll. The difficulty of the roll equals the range to your target. If your roll fails, you do not increase or reduce the range that turn. If you succeed with 4 or more successes, the move is a free action and you can perform another action, such as attacking, dodging or moving again.

Example: You have a sword and your opponent has a bow. Your encounter starts at Inferior range.

On your first turn, you try to close on your opponent. You make a Passable Agility roll and reduce the range from Inferior to Feeble. Your opponent fires at you but misses.

On your next turn, you again try to close within sword range. You roll Pathetic on your Agility. This s under the range to your target so you do not get to close this turn.

On the third turn, you again try to close. You get a Great Agility roll. The range, and therefore the difficulty, is only Feeble. You get four successes. You move to Pathetic range as a free action. You're allowed another action on the same turn, which you use to attack.

Foe Movement

Foes do not make attribute rolls. Just compare the foe's Agility to the range.

If the foe's Agility is less than the range, they get a +1 column bonus to their Agility for each consecutive turn that they devote to moving. Once the foe succeeds in moving, or does something else, they lose the accumulated bonus.

Example: A foe with Poor Agility is at Passable range to a player character.

Turn 1: The foe tries to close on the adventurer. Their Poor Agility isn't enough to close the distance in one turn.

Turn 2: The foe moves again, and receives a +1 column bonus to Agility, bringing them to Passable. This is good enough to close to Poor range.

Turn 3: The foe moves again. Their Poor Agility equals the range, and they close to Inferior range.

Turn 4: The foe moves again, closing to Inferior range.

Turn 5: The foe moves, closing to Feeble range.

Turn 6: The foe moves, closing to Pathetic range.

Turn 7: The foe attacks in hand to hand combat.

Rough Terrain

Rubble, thick vegetation, and loose debris constitute rough terrain. Moving through rough terrain increases the difficulty by 1 column.

Sneaking

If a foe hasn't seen you or is distracted, you can try sneaking to increase or decrease the range without being seen.

Sneaking increases the difficulty of moving by 1 column.

Calculate the result as normal, but also compare your Agility to the combined Alertness of the foes in the vicinity. If your Agility is less, then you are spotted. But if your Agility roll is higher, than you move without being seen.

Stopping Movement

An adventurer at Pathetic range with a foe can try to prevent that foe from moving away. When the foe tries to leave, you may declare your intention to stop them. This is a free action that can be performed even if you have already taken your turn.

Rolls your Agility versus the foe's Agility. On a successful roll, your adventurer prevents the foe from leaving. The foe loses their turn in the failed attempt to escape.

Multiple players in the space can try to stop the foe as a combined, compound action.

Each adventurer can attempt to stop only one foe per round.

By the same token, a foe can try to prevent an adventure from moving away from melee. The player must roll Agility versus the foe's Agility. If the player fails the roll, their character loses their turn and fails to move away.

Chases

Chases take place in combat rounds and are played out as a sustained action. The narrator sets the goal based on how far apart the characters are and the conditions of the environment. In an area with lots of cover, you may need only 5 successes to escape; in open plains you may need 15 successes.

The chase is resolved by making Agility rolls against the Agility of your opponent. After three Agility rolls, subsequent rolls are made against Stamina.

During a chase, the pursed character may attempt dangerous stunts. The narrator may present

situations, or the player may ask *questions of importance* to create their own opportunities.

A stunt *doubles* the successes or failures of the characters' roll for that round.

Some stunts may require an additional roll to resolve, and may end the chase prematurely.

Example: During a trip to New York, you run afoul of a street gang. You're alone, unarmed, and outnumbered. You make a break for it and the thugs give chase.

The narrator announces you will need 10 successes to escape. The foes have Inferior Agility.

Round 1: You roll Agility and get Feeble for 1 failure. The thugs close in on you.

Round 2: At the start of your next turn you ask the narrator if there is a fire escape nearby. The narrator asks you to make a Fate roll. You get a Good result, and sure enough there's a fire escape you can get to by climbing up the nearby dumpster. Climbing the ladder counts as a stunt.

You roll your Agility and get a Passable result. Normally this would be 3 successes, but because of the stunt it counts as 6 successes.

You zip up the ladder and the thugs slowly climb up after you.

Round 3: Now that you are on the roof of the building, you leap across an alley onto the roof of another building. This is another stunt, but it requires an additional roll to resolve the jump.

The narrator asks for a Passable Strength roll to make the jump. You roll Passable (1 success). You make it, but just barely. Your midsection slams into the ledge of the other building, your legs dangling thirty feet above the pavement.

The chase ends with you hanging from the coping of one rooftop while the thugs closer behind you.

One of your pursuers jumps across after you. With Passable Strength, he can't do any better than you did. The narrator asks you to make a Fate roll. You roll Feeble, and the narrator announces the thug missed the ledge altogether and instead grabbed your legs. You must roll Good Strength to avoid losing your grip on the ledge and plummeting into the alley.

You roll Great on Strength and hold on.

The other thugs stop their pursuit.

Round 4: With one hand you loosen your belt and point your toes down. Your trousers slip off your legs and the thug goes along with them.

The other thugs climb down the fire escape to look after their buddy, while you pull yourself onto the other roof and, pantless, make good your escape.

Of course, you wallet was in your pocket. Whether the thugs find it or the police find it, you can expect a visitor at your home later.

Combat

Foe Attacking Player

When your character is attacked by a foe, you must make a Defense roll against the foe's damage rating. See Defense rolls in the How To Play Chapter for details.

Some foes can attack multiple times in one round, using tooth and claw.

When multiple, identical foes attack the same character, the narrator may wish to reduce the number of Defense rolls required by combining the foe's Damage scores into one.

Player Attacking Foe

When you attack a foe, you roll your Attack for the weapon you are using. What you roll is the damage you inflict. If you roll Great then you do Great damage. If you roll Poor you do Poor damage.

Foes take damage in a completely different fashion from player characters. First of all, foes don't have hit locations and damage is not distributed between a foe's body parts.

A foe's Defense looks like this: "Passable, Good, Great, Super, Awesome."

If the damage is less than the foe's lowest Defense level then the foe is not wounded.

Otherwise, the narrator marks off the corresponding level on the foe's Defense. For example, if the foe takes Great damage, the word "Great" would be marked off Defense.

If the appropriate wound level is already marked off, the narrator marks off the next highest available level. **Once the right-most Defense level is marked off, the foe is defeated.** This can happen even if there are lesser wound levels that still haven't been marked off.

A defeated foe is killed outright. The roll that defeats the character is called the killing blow. If the killing blow is a low roll, such as Inferior or Poor, the foe is slowly whittled down by minor wounds and finally collapses. A Super or Awesome killing blow is more dramatic, often involving severed limbs, a punctured heart or decapitation.

Example: You attack a foe having Defense of Poor, Passable, Passable, Good. You roll Passable. The narrator marks off the first Passable wound on the foe's Defense.

Round 2: You attack again and get another Passable roll. The narrator marks off the second Passable wound.

Round 3: You get another Passable roll. Both Passable scores have been marked off, so the narrator marks off the next highest wound level, Good. This is the foe's rightmost Defense level. The foe is killed.

Example: You attack a foe having Health of Passable, Good, Great, Super. You roll Awesome, killing the foe with a single devastating blow.

Foe Attacking Foe

Sometimes, foes fight between themselves. If the players are not involved, the narrator controls the fight completely. No dice are rolled. The narrator describes how badly the combatants are wounded, who wins, how long it takes, and so on, according to logic and the dramatic necessities of the adventure.

Player Attacking Player

The attacker rolls their Attack trait for the weapon they are using. What they roll is the damage of their attack, as shown on the Player versus Player table.

Next, the attacker rolls hit location to determine where the attack is targeted.

Lastly, the defender rolls their Defense just as if they were defending against a foe.

Player versus Player

Attack Roll	Damage
CT	None
PT	CT(L)
FB	PT(L) CT(M)
IN	FB(L) PT(M) CT(H)
PR	IN(L) FB(M) PT(H) CT(C)
PS	PR(L) IN(M) FB(H) PT(C) CT(D)
GD	PS(L) PR(L) IN(M) FB(H) PT(C) CT(D)
GT	GD(L) PS(L) PR(M) IN(M) FB(H) PT(C) CT(D)
SP	GT(L) GD(L) PS(M) PR(M) IN(H) FB(H) PT(C) CT(D)
AW	SP(L) GT(L) GD(M) PS(M) PR(H) IN(H) FB(C) PT(C) CT(D)

Example: You attack another adventurer. You roll Good on your attack, inflicting PS(L) PR(L) IN(M) FB(H) PT(C) CT(D) damage. You roll 1 on a ten-sided die to determine hit location; it's a blow to the head. Your target rolls Poor on head Defense, which translates to light damage.

Multiple Foes Attacking a Player

When multiple foes gang up on a player, the narrator may require one Defense roll against the group instead of rolling separately for each foe.

Combining the damage rating of foes is different from simply adding difficulties. The narrator must decide what the combined rating is.

Fumbles

If you roll Pathetic on an Attack roll and you are using a ranged weapon, all adventurers within Pathetic range of your target must roll Fate. The lowest roller takes IN(L) FB(L) PT(M) CT(H) damage.

If you roll Catastrophic on an Attack roll (melee or ranged) you open yourself to a counter attack. Your target gets an immediate free attack on you, if you are within range.

Foe Fumbles

Foes don't roll to attack. Instead, a foe fumbles if their target rolls Awesome Defense. The defender gets an immediate, free counter attack on the foe.

Parrying

Parrying counts as your action for the round. You announce you are parrying after you roll Defense and the amount of damage has been determined. You cannot parry if you are attacked by surprise or from behind. You cannot parry if you have already taken your turn. You can parry with a weapon or shield that you have at hand.

- A one-handed melee weapon can only parry another one-handed melee weapon, or a small natural weapon.
- A two-handed weapon can parry any melee weapon.
- A shield can parry any melee weapon or ranged weapon. You cannot parry with a shield and use its Defense bonus on the same round.
- You cannot parry with a ranged weapon.
- You cannot parry with your bare hands unless you have a perk that allows it.

Roll your Dexterity. The difficulty is based on the wound you're defending against, as shown below. On a successful roll, you parry the attack and take no damage. Otherwise you take the full damage.

On a Pathetic parry roll your weapon/shield is knocked from your hand. On a Catastrophic roll your weapon/shield shatters.

Parry Difficulty

Damage Being Parried	DEX Difficulty
Light	Passable
Medium	Good
Heavy	Great
Critical	Super
Deadly	Awesome

Example: You roll Inferior against a PS(L) PR(L) IN(M) FB(M) PT(H) CT(C) attack, which does medium damage. You haven't taken your turn yet, so you announce that you are parrying with your shield. The

difficulty to parry medium damage is Good. You roll your Dexterity and get a Great result, easily deflecting the attack at the cost of your turn.

Combat Options

Besides attacking, there are a number of other actions a character may attempt during a fight. This section covers some of the most common actions.

Force Back

When you are within Pathetic range of foe and you are using a melee weapon, you can try to force the foe into a nearby hazard by rolling your Strength against your foe's Strength or Agility, whichever is higher. This is a sustained action and may require several rolls. The narrator sets the goal based upon how far you want to maneuver your opponent: a goal of 1 for every foot distance is a good average (for example, if you were trying to force your foe off a five-foot wide ledge, the goal would be 5).

As with any sustained action, keep track of cumulative successes and failures. If successes reach the goal first, then you force your opponent into the position you want. But if failures reach the goal, you foe outmaneuvers you and you end up falling into the hazard. If you're not careful, you may find yourself falling into the trap.

Knock Down

You can knock a foe down by rolling your Strength against your foe's Strength or Agility, whichever is higher.

If the number of failures you roll times two exceeds your Agility, you fall down instead.

Protecting

If you and a companion are within Pathetic range, you can try to protect your companion by interposing yourself in front of a foe's attack. You must roll Agility against the foe's Alertness. If you succeed, you jump in front of your friend and the foe must attack you instead of the intended target.

You announce that you are protecting the target immediately after the narrator announces the attack.

Protecting counts as your action for the turn. You cannot protect if you have already performed an action that round.

Playing Dead

When you are hit in combat, you can pretend your wounds are fatal and play dead. Make a Cunning roll. Foes with Alertness greater than your Cunning roll will see through your ruse. All other foes will assume you are dead and leave you alone, at least until all other threats are removed and it's time to feed or loot the fallen.

Aimed Attack

By taking careful aim, you gain +1 column to attack on your next round. Aiming is a full action.

Dodging

Dodging is an automatically successful action that you may take on your turn. You gain +1 column on all Defense rolls until the start of your next turn.

When a foe dodges, reduce all attacks on that foe by -1 column until the start of that foe's next turn.

Disarm

You may use your weapon to disarm your opponent. Roll your Attack. The difficulty is your adversary's Dexterity or Strength, whichever is higher. Increase the difficulty by +1 column if you are using a one-handed weapon and your opponent is using a two-handed weapon. Increase the difficulty by +2 columns if you are using a ranged weapon to shoot the weapon out of someone's hands.

On a successful roll you knock your opponent's weapon five feet away.

If you are using a melee weapon to disarm your opponent and you roll Catastrophic, your own weapon is knocked five feet away.

Attacking Objects

Some objects, such as mirrors and pottery, can be easily smashed—there is no roll required. For more sturdy objects, such as a barricaded door or

locked safe, the narrator uses the rules for a sustained action (assuming the action is occurring during combat rounds).

Combat Modifiers

Your tactics will affect how well you fight. Foolish maneuvers will result in a penalty, while imaginative attacks should give you a bonus. Here are some suggested modifiers:

Combat Modifiers

Attack	Condition
+2 col	Attack a prone opponent with a melee weapon
-1 col	Shooting a prone opponent with a ranged weapon
-1 col	Melee from a prone position
+1 col	Firing a rifle from a prone position
-3 col	Attacking an opponent you cannot see
+1 col	Taking a complete turn to aim
+1 col	Attacking in a grapple
+2	Firing a handgun two handed, but suffer -1 on Defense rolls until your next turn

Grappling

To initiate a grapple, you must be within Pathetic range of your foe and you must have at least one hand free. Roll your Agility versus your foe's Strength or Agility, whichever is higher. If you attack from surprise, roll against your opponent's Strength, Agility or Alertness, whichever is *lowest.*

- Reduce the difficulty by one column if you use both hands to grapple.
- Increase the difficulty by one column if you attempt a silent grapple (covering your opponent's mouth to keep them from crying out).

If you fail your roll, your opponent gets a free attack against you and you suffer -1 on your Defense for each failure you rolled on your grapple attempt. You can try to grapple again on the next round.

If you succeed in your Agility roll, you have successfully grappled your opponent. **The number of successes you rolled is the bonus you get on all actions performed in the grapple (attack, pin, takedown, or take weapon).**

On the round that you successfully grapple you get a free follow-up action on your opponent.

Other characters may join the grapple without making an Agility roll. Joining a grapple is an action.

Takedown

You can throw your opponent to the ground by rolling your Strength against your foe's Strength or Agility, whichever is *lower.* You may either join your opponent on the ground to continue the grapple, or you can break the grapple and remain standing.

Other characters in the grapple must choose to fall or break the grapple.

Fighting in a Grapple

While you are grappling, you and your opponent can only use your bare hands or short melee weapons such as knives or hatchets.

Fighting in a grapple is dirty and deadly. Combatants gain +1 column on their attacks.

Attacks on a grapple from outside the grapple will hit a random character. Players in the grapple roll Fate. The character (friend or foe) with the lowest Fate is hit. On a tie, the attacker decides who is hit.

If someone inside a grapple uses a handgun, the attack is made on a random character using the rules for attacking into a grapple. You can end up shooting yourself in true cinematic fashion.

Pinning a Foe

While engaged in a grapple, you can try to pin your opponent.

Roll your Strength against your opponent's Strength or Agility whichever is higher. Your opponent is pinned for 1 round for each success that you roll.

A pinned character can do nothing until released, nor can you do anything while holding your enemy (except perhaps drag them around using brute Strength).

Taking a Weapon

While engaged in a grapple, you can try to wrestle your opponent's weapon away from them by rolling your Strength against your foe's Strength.

Chapter 6
Perks

Piloting   10 Glory

Grants the Pilot skill, which allows you to pilot an aircraft. Your piloting skill begins equal to your Dexterity.

Instead of general piloting, you can specify a type of aircraft when you first take this perk. Your starting skill piloting that aircraft equals your Dexterity + 5, but you cannot pilot other aircraft.

Specialties: propeller airplane, jet, helicopter, hot air balloon, dirigible.

Mimicry   15 Glory

Grants the Mimicry skill, which allows you to imitate animal sounds with our voce or impersonate another person's voice. Your mimicry skill begins equal to your Cunning.

Lip Reading   10 Glory

Grants the Lip Reading skill, which allows you to tell what someone is saying by watching their lips. Your lip reading skill begins equal to your Cunning.

Transportation   15 Glory

You own or have access to an exclusive method of transportation appropriate for the setting, such as a private train, an airplane, helicopter, ship, hot air balloon, carriage, etc.

Flurry   20 Glory

When you successfully attack and the kicker die comes up 0, you get a free follow-up attack on the same target.

Advanced Flurry   30 Glory

As above, but you get a free attack when the kicker die is 0 or 1.

Combat Tactics   30 Glory

When you attack and the kicker die comes up 0, you get +2 on all your attacks in the next round.

Strategic Positioning   10 Glory

When you get a 0 kicker on a Defense roll, you gain +2 on your next attack roll.

Defensive Maneuver   10 Glory

When you get a 5 kicker on a Defense roll, you gain +2 on all subsequent Defense rolls until the start of your next turn.

Riposte   10 Glory

When you successfully Parry and you roll 0 on the kicker die, you can immediately counter with a free attack.

Advanced Riposte   10 Glory

When you successfully Parry and you roll 0 or 9 on the kicker die, you can immediately counter with a free attack.

All Out Attack   5 Glory

At the start of a round, before anyone has taken their turn, you can announce you are performing an all-out attack that round. You gain +3 on your attack rolls, but suffer –1 on all Defense rolls that round.

Feint   5 Glory

Feinting is an action where you attempt to mislead your opponent, causing them to open themselves to your next attack. When you feint, roll Cunning versus the Cunning of your opponent. For each success you roll you gain +2 on your next attack on that opponent. Works only in melee.

Suppressive Fire   5 Glory

You may lay down suppressive fire with a fully automatic firearm. Your target cannot move and suffers -1 column on all attacks until the start of your next turn.

Bounceback   10 Glory

You can stand up as a free action.

Quickdraw   10 Glory

You can draw your weapon as a free action.

Breakfall   10 Glory per rank

You know how to fall without taking damage. Reduce the distance fallen by 10' for each rank of Breakfall. Maximum of 5 ranks.

Surprise Attacks   10 Glory

You gain +5 on your attack when attacking during a bonus round (see initiative).

Backstab   10 Glory

You must be within Pathetic range of your foe to attempt a backstab, and you must be making a melee attack. Getting behind a foe is an action that requires a Cunning roll versus your foe's Alertness. For every success that you roll, you gain +2 on attacks against that foe. The bonus lasts until your foe hits you with an attack.

Bulletproof Armor   30 Glory

You gain +5 Defense against firearms while wearing your bulletproof armor. Must be applied to a piece of armor that you equip at the start of the adventure. If the armor is lost during the adventure, you lose this perk until the end of the adventure.

Armor Piercing Rounds   10 Glory

Your firearm attacks cannot be stopped by bulletproof armor.

Intuition   10 Glory

By expending 1 Fame, you can ask the narrator to provide guidance on your current quest.

Tumbling   15 Glory

You may take a -1 column penalty to your movement roll in combat. If the roll is successful, you gain +1 column on all Defense rolls until the start of your next turn.

Coordinated Attacks   10 Glory

You gain +2 on your attack for each friendly character who has already attacked your target on this turn.

Dual Wielding   10 Glory

You can use a one handed weapon in each hand. Choose one of the weapons as the primary weapon. The other weapon is the secondary weapon. When dual wielding, use the attack of the primary weapon and add +2 as a bonus to your attack.

Unarmed Combat   25 Glory per rank

You gain +1 per rank on unarmed attacks, up to a maximum of +5.

Haymaker   20 Glory

Expend 1 Fame to attempt a knockout punch. Roll your Strength against your foe's Stamina. You knock out your foe for three rounds per success rolled.

Called Shot   20 Glory

You can decide what body part your attacks hit (head, torso, arms, legs). Normally this is advantageous only against foes having certain body parts that are more heavily armored than others.

Shield Use   15 Glory

You gain +1 uses per round with a shield.

Armor Use   10 Glory per rank

Add +3 per rank to your Strength and Stamina for purposes of determining the maximum armor your character can wear. Maximum rank of 5.

Healer   20 Glory per rank

A number of times per day equal to your rank, you can perform healing as if you were using a med-kit. Maximum rank is 5.

Chapter 7
Skills

Sample Skills

This list covers some skills common to many settings, but is by no means complete. Not every skill is appropriate to every setting. When in doubt, consult your narrator.

Skills are listed according to their base attribute, from which they most often derive.

General skills have a starting bonus of +1. Specialties have a starting bonus of +3.

Agility

Balance

Maintaining balance in dangerous situations. Specialties: Tightrope walking, balancing on ledges, balancing on moving vehicles, keeping your footing on a storm tossed ship.

Wriggle

Squeezing through narrow gaps. Specialties: Fit in small space, crawl through tunnel, squeeze through bars, wriggle through air vents.

Swing

Swinging from a pendulum. Specialties: Swinging from a rope, from a trapeze, from a chandelier, from a pole.

Escape

Escaping restraints. Specialties: Escape handcuffs; escape ropes, escape strait jacket, escape grapple.

Sneak

Evading detection. Specialties: Moving unnoticed, hiding in shadows, hiding in jungle, hiding in desert, hiding in forest.

Run

Moving during combat. Specialties: Pursuing during a chase, escaping during a chase.

Kick

Kicking an object so that it goes where you want.

Watercraft

Operating watercraft. Specialties: by type raft, rowboat, canoe, sailboat, motorboat, speedboat, yacht, fishing boat, ship, etc.), by activity (maneuvering, docking, pursuing, outrunning), avoiding reefs.

Alertness

Search

Searching for things. Specialties: search room, search desk, search for valuable, frisk suspect, find hidden compartments, find secret doors, find hidden items, find traps.

Notice

Noticing things in the environment. Specialties: Noticing things: by environment (the woods, the city, a dungeon, etc.)

Initiative

Getting initiative during combat.

Listen

Hearing and recognizing faint sounds. Specialties: Eavesdrop, hear noise, recognize voice, listen through door/wall, identify sound.

Track

Finding and interpreting tracks. Specialties: Finding tracks, following tracks, and interpreting tracks.

Navigate

Finding your way. Specialties: by environment (at sea, in the desert, in the forest, in the mountains, in a cave, in a dungeon), using certain tools (compass, GPS, satellite locator).

Crime Scene

Processing a crime scene.

Rifle

Attacking with rifles, carbines and sniper rifles.

Assault Rifle

Attacking with assault rifles, machine guns and other two-handed fully automatic weapons.

Shotgun

Attacking with shotguns, whether two-handed on sawed off.

Bow

Attacking with bows.

Crossbow

Attacking with crossbows.

Handgun

Attacking semi-automatic pistols and revolvers.

Submachine Gun

Attacking with one-handed fully automatic firearms.

Drive

Driving motor vehicles with four or more wheels. Specialties: by type (sedan, sports car, pickup truck, SUV, minivan, truck, bus), by activity (high speed pursuit, eluding pursuit, performing jumps, taking hairpin curves).

Motorcycle

Driving motor vehicles with fewer than four wheels. Specialties by type (motorcycle), by activity (high speed pursuit, eluding pursuit, performing jumps, taking hairpin curves).

Charm

Persuade

Convince people with an emotional appeal.

Friendship

Make friends.

Empathy

Read the emotions of others.

Harmlessness

Appear harmless.

Seduction

Romantically seduce others.

Leadership

Assume command by giving directions.

Interrogate

Question a prisoner (non-violent).

Integrate

Integrate with another culture.

Sincerity

Being believed when telling the truth.

Craft

Repair Watercraft

Repair and maintain watercraft.

Repair Vehicle

Repair and maintain motor vehicles.

Armorer

Repair and maintain armor, shields and weapons.

Traps

Set and disarm traps.

Hack

Defeat digital security systems.

Electronics

Operate and repair electronics. Specialties: Repair computers, operate computers, repair communication device, operate communication device.

Mechanical

Operate machinery.

Technology

Operate technological devices.

Security Devices

Operate and defeat security devices. Specialties: hotwire an electronic lock, defeat an magnetic lock, defeat fingerprint reader, defeat motion sensor.

Cunning

Bargain

Deal making. Specialties: Bargain, barter, bribery, negotiate.

Hide

Concealing objects. Specialties: concealing weapons, smuggling contraband, camouflaging people in certain environments—forest, desert, swamp, jungle, urban.

Lie

Having your falsehoods believed. Specialties: Fast talking, conning people, selling used cars, manipulating people into doing something that is not necessarily in their best interests.

Deception

Hiding the truth from others without lying. Specialties: Hiding your true motives, hiding the extent of your personal knowledge, distorting the facts.

Torture

Torturing a prisoner.

Forgery

Creating false documents. Specialties: Forge signature, create false ID, counterfeit money, copy works of art.

Streetwise

Ability to make a contact in the criminal underworld to do something illegal. Specialties: Locate fence, smuggler, safecracker.

Dexterity

Locks

Opening mechanical locks. Specialties: Open combination lock, crack safe, slim-jim car door, pick deadbolt, pick padlock, jimmy window, open treasure checks, open ancient locks.

Disguise

Create a disguise.

Filch

Steal small objects. Picking pockets, shoplifting,

Attacking with blades.

Hatchets

Attacking with one-handed axes.

Blades

Attacking with knives and one-handed swords.

Clubs

Attacking with one-handed clubs, maces and small staves.

Javelins

Attacking with one-handed pole arms.

Hammers

Attacking with one-handed hammers.

Whips

Attacking with whips, chains and other one-handed flexible weapons.

Flails

Attacking with one-handed military flails and morning stars.

Thrown Weapons

Attacking with grenades, throwing stars, and other thrown-only weapons.

Slings

Attacking with a sling.

Fate

Gambling

Winning by pure luck.

Knowledge

Memory

Remembering things seen or heard just once. Specialties: Remembering maps, remembering enemy plans, remembering messages, remembering directions.

Med Kit

Healing with a med kit.

Assess

Identify the monetary value or cutrual/historical importance of an object.

Detect

Detect forgeries. Specialties: Detect forged artwork, detect forged documents, detect counterfeit money.

Programming

Computer programming.

Science

Knowledge of physics, chemistry, biology.

Religion

Knowledge of religion.

Occult

Knowledge of the occult and supernatural.

Medical

Knowledge of medicine. Specialties: Determine time of death, determine cause of death, diagnose disease, prescribe medicine, knowledge of poisons and antidotes.

Poisons

Knowledge of poisons and antidotes.

Forensics

Knowledge of fingerprinting, blood splatter analysis, and other forensic techniques.

Cultures

Knowledge of the customs of other societies.

Languages

Knowledge of languages. Specialties: By language.

Stamina

Sanity

Resisting insanity (see Sanity Rolls).

Swimming

Willpower

Withstanding adverse conditions. Specialties: Resisting torture, interrogation and seduction.

Sports

Skiing, skydiving, surfing, waterskiing, etc.

Run

Running long distances.

Heal

Making healing rolls (see Healing).

Hiking

Hiking long distances.

Forage

Ability to survive in a hostile environment. Specialties: Foraging, trapping, fire making, shelter building.

Strength

Jump

Specialties: high jumping, long jumping, pole vaulting, hurdling.

Ride

Riding a mount. Specialties by type of animal (horse, camel, elephant, etc.).

Bully

Intimidating others.

Climb

Scaling obstacles. Specialties: Mountain climbing, cliff climbing, tree climbing, fence climbing, rope climbing, rappelling.

Smash

Breaking through barriers or destroying inanimate objects. Specialties: Kicking in doors, bending iron bars.

Lift

Lifting heavy objects. Specialties: lift gate, carry person, weightlifting.

Great Swords

Attacking with two-handed swords.

Battle Axe

Attacking with two-handed axes.

Staff

Attacking with two-handed clubs and staves.

Spear

Attacking with two-handed pole arms.

War Hammer

Attacking with two-handed hammers and mauls.

Great Maces

Attacking with two-handed maces.

Picks

Attacking with two-handed military picks.