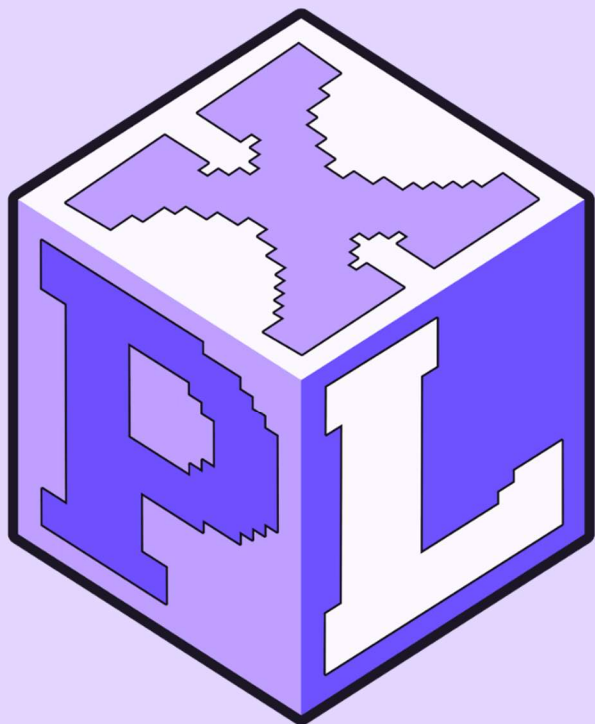


PXL

Narrative Role Playing Game



The Best RPG for Storytellers

A Special Thanks to:

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And Zachary Romano

Without whom, this game would never have gotten to where it is today.

This book is for all the dreamers out there who wanted more than traditional games could offer. For those select few who care more about the story and freedom of creation than following a strict set of rules. And for all you who are just starting out role playing and can't afford it. I was that high school kid, scrounging up money for D&D and Pathfinder books; dice; miniatures—everything that goes along with the traditional tabletop games. My goal was to create a complete role playing solution for under 30 dollars that you can quickly and easily play with your friends and have a great time.

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The Three Pillars

Three design pillars are central to this game's design. They are:

Simplicity

The rules should be simple and easy to learn. The dice and rules should stay out of the way as much as possible, and merely help shape the story. You can run the game with as few dice rolls as you like.

Accessibility

The game should be affordable and easy to play. For this reason, we use D6. You shouldn't have to purchase anything beyond the book. And if you don't have D6, they are the cheapest and easiest to find.

Capability

The game should be capable of allowing you to create any character you can imagine, without limit. You should be able to perform any action you desire without excessive homebrewing.

Thank you for choosing to play my game.
I hope you have fun.

- Light Mosser

PXL™ NRPG Official Rules

The PXL™ Narrative Role Playing Game focuses heavily on cinematic scenes and the freedom to allow players to do whatever they can come up with, so long as their goals are reasonable. Remember that word. **Reason** is a subjective mechanic that will differ from table to table and game to game. It is the most important mechanic in this entire role playing solution.

How to Read This Book

While the rules of this game are relatively simple, there are a lot of key words. Unfortunately, due to how interconnected the mechanics of the game are, this is one of those situations where you will run into terms that won't make sense until you read how that mechanic works. In attempt to make the reading experience easier, new terms will be **bolded** the first time you encounter them, as seen in the section above. There is also a at the end, with page numbers telling you where to find each rule. This book is intended to be read from front to back, with each section leading into the next.

Theater of the Mind

It is *strongly* recommended to use “Theater of the Mind” for this game. That means using your imagination rather than a tabletop grid.

A note to the GM: When using theater of the mind, communication is paramount. You should describe important things in the environment— and don’t be afraid to describe them multiple times. A player might miss a description the first time or misunderstand you. You must also assume the characters are competent— if they do something clearly foolish and the player says they didn’t understand, you must be willing to believe them and roll back the clock. Then take time to better explain what was misinterpreted. “Theater of the Mind” requires trusting your players and working with them to ensure they have the best time possible.

Ranges: Sometimes it is important to be able to measure distance so that you know whether or not you are close enough to something to interact with it. The PXL™ NRPG uses four ranges: Adjacent, Close, Mid, and Far.

- **Adjacent:** You can touch your target with your hands, or easily maneuver so you can. About 5 feet away or less.
- **Close-Range:** Your target is near enough that you can move to it with relative ease. About the distance across a small room.
- **Mid-Range:** Your target is far enough that you cannot easily approach them. You may be able to reach them with effort, but otherwise they are too far away to touch with your bare hands. About 60 feet or less.
- **Far-Range:** The longest range that would be considered reasonable to influence. Anything beyond far-range is effectively gone. About the length of a football field.

You can freely move one range each round without difficulty. Moving further may require you to use your **minor action** to make a **quick check** such

as **Mobility** to get to it, or else spend the round moving closer.

Ranges may be adjusted in situations that make sense. For example: You may increase what is reasonable for far-range if your bowman has the high-ground, or decrease it if they have low-ground.

If you are playing in a larger-scale setting using vehicles (such as at sea or in space), you may convert the ranges to what makes sense for those vehicles— the goal is to keep in the general spirit of the guidelines. For example: Close range between starships in outer space may be as much as several hundred feet, while long range may be many miles.

Using a Grid: If you really must use a grid to play, the following conversions are recommended:

Range	Distance
Adjacent	5 Feet (1 Tile)
Close	30 Feet (6 Tiles)
Mid	60 Feet (12 Tiles)
Far	300 Feet (60 Tiles)

Dice Engine

Rolling Dice

Six-sided dice (D6) are used to add an element of uncertainty to the game, because games are not fun if there is no chance of failure. There are a few ways to utilize the dice in the PXL™ NRPG – checks, and bonus dice.

Checks

Checks are a way of determining how well your character does something. When the Game Master (GM) calls for a check, roll a number of dice equal to your skill. Each die is counted separately, and a 4, 5, or 6 counts as a hit. *For example:* You roll three dice and get a 3, 4, and 5. This would count as two hits in total—the 4 and 5 are each worth one hit, and the 3 is not.

You only ever roll a maximum of three dice, unless you have **advantage** or **disadvantage**. Any effects that would have you roll an additional die past the third will instead grant one extra hit on a roll that already has at least one hit.

Types of Checks:

Quick Check – A simple pass or fail check— the most common type of check. Use for yes or no questions or encounters too short to warrant a **challenge**. If the player gets a hit, they succeed. If they do not, they fail. Quick checks may or may not be **Stressful Checks**. May use **gates**.

Examples include picking a lock or noticing something hard to see.

Variable Check – A type of check where the more hits the player gets, the more successful they are. Oftentimes, the player will succeed regardless of their roll. A good roll just means they succeed *more*.

Examples include searching a room for evidence, competing in a long-jump competition, or bargaining with a merchant.

Challenge - A series of stressful checks. Use for narratively significant encounters that you want to zoom in on. It will typically take at least 3 rolls to complete a challenge. This can be used for anything you want to have lasting effects.

Examples include sessions built around stealth, major and lengthy social encounters, and—most

commonly—combat. Almost all combat should utilize challenges, with few exceptions.

Group Check – Only one party member rolls for the group. Same as a quick check, but if two or more party members (including the one making the check) are proficient in the skill, only the player with the higher skill rolls. This is called “leading the check”. Up to three other proficient party members may roll an **Assist**: When a player makes a check, another player may **assist** them, so long as the second player’s character is proficient in the relevant skill. To assist, the assisting player first needs to *describe how they are* assisting. The assist method has to be reasonable. The assisting player then rolls one **assist die**. This die is treated as though it was rolled by the player making the check. That player will then drop the lowest die from their roll (which may be the assist die). *Up to three players* may assist in a check, with each assist die causing the next lowest die to be dropped from the roll. Assist dice stack with advantage.

Negative Group Check – Sometimes having more people working at the same task makes things harder. A good example of this is stealth— the larger a group of people, the harder it will be for them to move unnoticed. This is where negative group checks come in. They function the same as regular

group checks, except the check gains +1 **brutal** for each character past the first. Additionally, all players who are assisting in the check may divide any incoming stress among themselves.

Group Challenge - A challenge where the group as a whole gains a health bar (rather than individually) and takes turns rolling their checks. Increase the number of required hits by 1 for each group member past the first.

Example: A group of three try to sneak past some guards. If your default number of hits for the challenge is three, increase it to five for the group challenge.

Saves - This is a type of roll used when the environment is actively working against the player. They are useful as punishment for failed quick checks, damage from traps, or extra effects in combat encounters. To save, the player will roll dice equal to their relevant skill. They then take stress equal to the Risk minus the highest die result. Anything that would normally grant additional hits will instead block one additional stress. The default Risk for a save is 6.

Dice Rules and Terms

Hits: This is how progress against an enemy or obstacle is measured.

Critical Hits: On any check, rolling two 6's will grant an additional hit, for a total of three hits. Rolling three 6's will grant an additional three hits, for a total of six.

Complication: When a player rolls a check and is **at risk**, the GM will roll to complicate. To do this, they roll two six-sided dice (2d6) and subtract the value of the highest die from the **Risk**. The player takes stress equal to the resulting total.

Perfect Hits: When you roll at least one 6 on any check, all hits in that check are called "perfect". Perfect hits set the Risk for this check to 6. When telling your GM how many hits you rolled, be sure to tell them whether they are perfect or not, so they know if they need to reduce the Risk for their complication.

Rounds:

Turn Order: When in **rounds**, the players must take their turns in order from most Risk being taken to least Risk being taken. Outside of that rule, any player may take their turn at any time, once during each round.

Stressful Checks: These are checks that put you at risk. When making a stressful check, the GM will roll to complicate.

Risk: Many checks, along with every challenge and mitigation have a Risk value, which determines how dangerous (“risky”) the check is. In combat, a player may choose to take Risk from up to four enemies of their choice—assuming it makes sense for the enemy to target them. The standard Risk for a check is 7. The standard Risk to mitigate is 6. Risk may be higher or lower depending on the situation.

Assist: When a player makes a check, another player may **assist** them, so long as the second player’s character is proficient in the relevant skill. To assist, the assisting player first needs to *describe how they are* assisting. The assist method has to be reasonable. The assisting player then rolls one **assist die**. This die is treated as though it was rolled by the player making the check. That player will then drop the lowest die from their roll (which may be the assist die). *Up to three players* may assist in a check, with each assist die causing the next lowest die to be dropped from the roll. Assist dice stack with advantage.

”

Core Rules

Stress and Resources

There are four kinds of stress: Physical, Roguish, Mental, and Social. As with anything in this game, the GM may choose to use as many of these as they like, or even add their own. The kind of stress taken depends on what makes the most sense with the situation at hand.

The Stress Bar System - Stress and **Damage** are handled using stress bars rather than standard health pools you may see in other games. This is represented with four different kinds of bars: **Tolerance**, **Universal**, **Health**, and **Armour**. For each bar, you have 3 **stress boxes**: a **1-box**, a **2-box**, and a **3-box**. You use these boxes to **take stress** gained from checks. Each one can handle an amount of stress equal to or lower than its value. Once a box takes any stress, you check it off. Only one stress box per bar may be checked off for the result of any given check. If you take more stress than one box can handle, *the remainder carries over to the next bar*. The health and **critical** bars are exceptions to this rule.

Health Bars - Health bars represent lasting damage. There are four kinds of health bar, each relating to a different kind of stress:

Physical stress correlates to **harm**.
Roguish stress correlates to **alert**.
Mental stress correlates to **psyche**.
Social stress correlates to **reputation**.

Health bars and boxes function the same as stress, having a 1-box, 2-box, and 3-box. The difference is that you can check off as many boxes as you have available. They represent long-lasting damage and can only be unchecked by undergoing efforts related to the damage done. Upon receiving more stress than your health boxes can handle, your health bar **breaks**.

Breaking the Health Bar - Upon breaking the health bar, you lose. Whatever the challenge was, this is it for you. You're caught, you lose reputation, you go crazy, or worse— you die. Along the way, you may enter the **critical state**.

Types of Health Bars - You may have health bars of any kind, but the most common ones are:

- **Harm** - Your wellbeing. Heal through the methods outlined in “**Healing**”. Breaking this bar results in **fate checks**.
- **Psyche** - Your psychological state. Heal through means appropriate to your setting, or use the standard **healing**. Breaking this bar can result in losing your mind.
- **Reputation** - How you or your party is perceived by others. Heal by doing deeds to prove yourselves. Breaking this bar can result in things such as exile or becoming wanted as a criminal.
- **Alert Levels** - How active security is in an area. Heal by laying low for a while or moving on from the area so it is no longer relevant. Breaking this bar results in your presence and/or identity becoming known.

Aside from physical health, these are all optional rules built in for your convenience. Feel free to use whatever methods you like to keep track of these factors.

Armour: A special kind of hit bar that characters do not inherently have. It is applied before stress, and functions identically to it. Armour is also available for each type of stress. The main difference is that it comes from items and **assets** you obtain along your adventure, rather than having it from the start. Because of this, you may have anywhere between 0 and 6 armour (using between one and three armour boxes). The most armour you can ever have in any one type of stress is 6 (one full bar). To represent the armour you have, indicate boxes on your armour bar that add up to your total armour value. If you have exactly 3 armour, you may choose between the two options available (a 1 and 2 box, or a single 3 box).

Action Points: By default, you have 6 action points (**AP**), which can be used to accomplish tasks unique to your character. They serve as a generic resource that allows players to perform powerful actions while still being limited in their power. AP can represent magical power, gadgets on your person, heavy armour, extreme physical ability, luck, etc. Note that it may not always make perfect narrative sense when a player runs out of AP. This is a purely mechanical solution to keep the players from being all-powerful, while still allowing them unique abilities. Other systems may use spell points, ki, combat points, etc. Here, they are all rolled into one.

Activating/Invoking: You can **activate** a circumstance, environment, item, or narrative trait by

spending 1 AP to temporarily **upgrade** a skill for a roll, or incur a narrative effect. For 2 AP, you may **invoke** a circumstance, environment, item, or narrative trait to automatically succeed at something.

Bargaining: Sometimes, if your goal is less reasonable, you may bargain with the GM by spending some agreed upon amount of AP to accomplish something great. The amount of AP will differ based on how unreasonable the GM thinks the action is. This is a way to allow the GM to say “yes” to more actions, even if they find the ask to be a bit much.

Hero Points: Whenever you fail a check of consequence (one that either has **Risk** or otherwise negatively affects the narrative), you gain a **hero point**. Hero points can be spent to increase the result of any single die in your own future rolls by 1. Multiple hero points can be used in the same roll— on one die, or on many. You may have a maximum of 3 hero points.

Optional Rule: Story Points - Story Points are a type of narrative currency. Each player (including the GM) starts with one Story Point and can hold a maximum of two (the GM may hold as many as necessary). Story Points are a very powerful resource that allow you to pitch in new ideas or adjust your previous actions (within reason). Perhaps you *totally* meant to buy rope before leaving town. Spend

a Story Point, and you can make that a reality! Or perhaps you want to do some research, but there's no library in town. Spend a Story Point, and maybe there's a local book-collector who is willing to part with some information. Think of these as a way to *bribe your GM*. They can also be used as a substitute for any other resource in the game.

Conversely, the GM is encouraged to give out Story Points when your character stays true to their values— especially when doing so might not be the most “optimal” play. We focus on telling stories here! Sometimes the story doesn't always go perfectly. The GM may also attempt to bribe *you* by offering a Story Point to convince you to act on a character's flaws or values.

Going Down

Fate Checks - Once you have taken more physical stress than you can handle, you begin making fate checks. If in combat, your turn is moved to the end of the order, and you will make one check each round, starting on your next turn. Draw four boxes— two **life boxes** and two **death boxes**. When making a fate check, you will roll exactly one die. Your skill does not matter here— everything is **left to fate**. Upon rolling a 1 or 2, you will gain one failure. Upon rolling a 5 or 6, you will check one life box. Upon rolling a 3 or 4, you will gain both one failure and one success. If you check two death boxes before checking two life boxes, you die. If you check both your second life box and your second death box in the same roll, you still survive. If using the optional **injuries** rule, your failures will affect how bad the injury is.

Assisting Fate Checks - When another player is **left to fate**, you may enter a **medicine challenge** to assist them. Every three hits will check one Life box for the wounded player. If any stress cannot be blocked by your mental and universal stress bars, the wounded player immediately checks one Death box.

Magical/enhanced healing will count as one hit in the Medicine challenge per point of healing. For example: 6 points of healing checks two Life boxes.

Overkill - When your physical health bar breaks, the amount of stress you have yet to take may vary. Upon your health bar breaking and entering **fate checks**, consult the following chart for the adjustments made based on the amount of stress that gets through.

Stress	Overkill Effects
1	Nothing
2	Nothing.
3	Nothing.
4	Roll immediately.
5	Roll immediately with a -1.
6	Roll immediately with a -2.
7	Roll immediately and suffer one failure.
8	Roll immediately with a -1 and suffer one failure.
9	Death on impact.

Recovering Resources

Healing - To heal, you adjust the value of checked boxes to match the amount you are healing. *For example, if you had 5 stress taken (meaning your 2 and 3 boxes are checked) to heal 1 you would uncheck your 2 box and check the 1 box.* If there are ever multiple options on how to adjust the boxes, the player may choose.

To heal health, you may do it through **resting**, **medicine**, or **magical/enhanced healing**.

Magical/Enhanced Healing - A player may gain magical healing either through someone possessing the “**Healer**” trait, or using an item such as a healing potion or serum (based upon your setting). Each point of healing will heal one health.

Recovering AP - You will recover any lost AP whenever you **rest**. Additionally, any time you check a universal stress box, you gain AP equal to the value of that box. Any additional AP beyond your base AP amount will be lost upon a rest-- so use it! Your GM may allow the use of items to restore AP, if it fits the setting. For example: mana potions.

Rests and Upkeep

Between scenes, your GM may allow you to take a rest. Rests are not dictated by a specific amount of time, but rather can be given out as frequently or infrequently as needed. A rest can represent any amount of time, from a few minutes to several weeks. Oftentimes they are overnight or over a few days. During a rest, you may also gain access to the optional **upkeep** rules.

Rests - On each rest, you will:

- Reset your AP
- Uncheck all tolerance boxes
- Uncheck all armour boxes
- **Heal** one universal stress
- Heal 1 health from each health bar. To heal, reduce the total damage taken by 1 (this may require shifting around what box is checked).

Suggested Economy: Wealth - This is an abstract currency that aims to minimize bookkeeping while still allowing for meaningful spending. In this system, you may still barter, work, or do anything else related to money.

With wealth, there are only two denominations of coin: Silver and Gold

There are five silver to one gold. The entire economy is based around a single gold piece. The following chart demonstrates some suggested values of goods and services.

Suggested Prices for Wealth	
Consumable	1 Gold
Effective Item	2 Gold
Magic Item*	10/30/90/270 Gold
Hirelings	1 Gold
Services	1 Gold

* Price depends on the quality of the item.

Market Adjustments to Prices*	
Low Gold Price	-2 Silver per Gold
High Gold Price	+3 Silver per Gold
Low/High Silver Price	-/+ 1 Silver (only use if the price is less than 1 gold)

*(Use these to determine the low and high market values for goods.)

Copper pieces are below silver in value— but they are not listed. Why? Because anything worth less than a silver, you may simply pay for without expending a resource. Want to give a beggar some coins, buy a girl a drink, or purchase a small trinket? You can just do it.

Actions

When engaged in a challenge, time is measured by actions. Each player has two actions in a **round**: **major actions** and **minor actions**.

- **Major actions** can be just about anything. An attack, hiding from an enemy, an attempt to pick a lock, or any other check can all be main actions. Most things you do will use your main action.
- **Minor actions** are reserved for smaller things you do on the side. Many **mechanical traits** will tell you that they require your minor action to use them. Other things like drinking a potion, using an item, or trying to make social checks or perform difficult maneuvers during combat will also use the minor action. Minor actions are not used as frequently.

Commit - When engaged in combat, you have access to a special minor action called “commit”. When committing, you will use your minor action to roll a certain number of **bonus dice**, which can be added through various traits and **assets**. These bonus dice will deal **extra combat hits** on your check, though they will not influence your **major action’s** roll at all.

Rounds - When in a challenge, the players all take turns in a round. Determining who goes first in a round

follows this order: Players with the highest **Risk** go first, while players with lower Risk go next (in order from highest to lowest Risk). Players asserting aggression go before players who are not asserting aggression. Aside from that, the group just decides when each person in a round goes. Turn order in this game is dynamic-- it can change from round to round.

There is also a space in between rounds where various effects such as special enemy attacks may occur. These effects are called **round actions**. But that is more for the GM to worry about.

Character Anatomy

Every Character is made up of **traits** and **skills**.

Traits are special descriptors of your character that make them unique. Things like “Flight” “Fire Control” and “Beautiful”. Traits can be activated to gain mechanical benefits, and also provide passive benefits in the narrative. To improve a skill or gain a trait, it must make sense in the narrative.

Skills are numbered attributes that represent your ability to perform a certain action. All skills start at 1, allowing you to roll at minimum one die. The higher the skill, the better you will do in that area. Some specialized checks require that you be **proficient** in order to attempt them.

Proficiency - To be proficient in a skill, you must simply have at least one **pixel** invested in it. Some situations, such as lockpicking or computer hacking, require that you are proficient in the skill to even attempt them. Proficiency also has other benefits, such as allowing you to assist another player in a check. In some cases, having shown narrative intent to learn an advanced skill may allow you to roll for it, even without any current pixel investment.

There is a set list of skills determined by the GM, organized by colored categories. The typical skills are:

Red (Physical):

Might | Mobility | Combat | Grapple | Guard

Blue (Mental):

Lore | Spell | Focus | Insight | Medicine | Study |
Computers -

Green (Roguish):

Stealth | Sense | Thief | Sleuth | Nimble | - Drive -

Yellow (Social):

Charm | Guile | Perform | Inquire | Menace |
Merchant | Provoke | - Animal -

Traits are more abstract and thus more varied. You may come up with any trait you like, so long as it fits the setting and the GM approves; you will also find an index at the end of this guide with a list of pre-made and pre-approved traits. There are three kinds of traits: **Narrative**, **Background**, and **Mechanical**.

Narrative Traits - These are the most important part of your character. They help make you feel unique and help you stand out from the other players. They change how you interact with the world. They change

what is considered **reasonable** for your character. Traits like “Flight” and “Fire Control” are narrative traits. You might also have a more passive trait that accentuates your skill or another aspect of your character. It may allow you to attempt something that might not be feasible for another player. Traits like “Agile” or “Beautiful” also fall into this category. If an action would be unreasonable, a narrative trait may make it reasonable. If an action would be reasonable, but a narrative trait is still pertinent, the player may **activate** the trait to gain advantage on a related check. For example: flying over town to improve your ability to search for something.

Background Traits - A special kind of narrative trait that is intended to give insight into a character’s background and history. It should *not* give an obvious bonus or necessarily come into play frequently. These traits may be very powerful in some situations and allow for huge narrative opportunities— but first and foremost, they must be used to add depth and backstory to a character. A background trait’s relevance will depend heavily on the story and may require the player to go out of their way to get into a situation where it is relevant.

Mechanical Traits - These are traits that change the rules of the game for your character. They convey no true narrative benefit (in that they don’t really help you outside of making checks), but allow you to do

things others cannot. This can include things like rerolling dice or recovering extra resources. You and your GM may work together to come up with whatever mechanical trait you want, but there are premade ones in the **index**. Premade mechanical traits include “*Multi-Attacker*”, “*Armoured*” and “*Reliable*”.

Fighting Styles - Each character is proficient in up to two fighting styles to begin with. Fighting styles prevent players from being able to use each and every weapon they come across. Each fighting style should be specific to a type of weapon or technique, and have a disadvantage for every benefit. There are three general fighting styles: **melee**, **ranged**, and **unarmed**. The following table shows some specific examples:

Fighting Style	Benefit	Disadvantage
Sword	None	None
Bow	Can attack at long range	Disadvantage in adjacent range
Unarmed	Can be used without a weapon	Cannot benefit from special weapons

Items and Capability - Every character is considered “capable” of what they are good at. This means that, with the exception of magic items or other

extraordinary gear, it does not matter what gear the players have. Whether they fight with a greatsword or a rifle, heavy plate mail or simple leathers, the character functions the same. If a character is good at dodging hits, that is what they are doing to avoid damage (even if using a trait such as “*Armoured*”). If they are good at whirling around with close range magic spells rather than fighting with a sword, that is what they are doing in combat. This game focuses on the narrative, not the small stuff. In the same way, every character is presumed to have the tools required to perform their tasks (such as lock picks for someone with **thief**), unless the story or setting dictates otherwise.

Level

1

Story

1

Temporary Effects

1

Items and other Assets

1

Skills, Extra Hints, Minor Dice Pool

1

Abilities

1

Armour

1 2 3

1 2 3

1 2 3

Tolerance

1 2 3

1 2 3

1 2 3

Universal Health

1 2 3

1 2 3

1 2 3

Planes & Values

1 2 3

1 2 3

1 2 3

Skills, Extra Hints, Minor Dice Pool

1 2 3

1 2 3

1 2 3

Abilities

1 2 3

1 2 3

1 2 3

Player Name

1

Critical Health

1 2 3

1 2 3

1 2 3

Planes & Values

1 2 3

1 2 3

1 2 3

Skills & Landmarks

1 2 3

1 2 3

1 2 3

Background Trait

1

Skills & Landmarks

1 2 3

1 2 3

1 2 3

Player Name

1

Critical Health

1 2 3

1 2 3

1 2 3

Planes & Values

1 2 3

1 2 3

1 2 3

Skills & Landmarks

1 2 3

1 2 3

1 2 3

Background Trait

1

Skills & Landmarks

1 2 3

1 2 3

1 2 3

Player Name

1

Critical Health

1 2 3

1 2 3

1 2 3

Planes & Values

1 2 3

1 2 3

1 2 3

Skills & Landmarks

1 2 3

1 2 3

1 2 3

Background Trait

1

Skills & Landmarks

1 2 3

1 2 3

1 2 3

Core Rules

Flaws and Values - It is recommended to keep track of a character's flaws and values so that you can better make decisions in difficult moments when you aren't sure what your character would do. They are recorded right on the front page so that you can be reminded of them. *Flaws include vices such as alcoholism or general distrust of others, while values include virtues such as standing up for your beliefs or being willing to die for someone.* They can also be used in tandem with **story points** to allow the GM to introduce further conflict into the story.

Goals and Conditions - This is a place to keep track of the progress on any conditions placed on you such as injuries, as well as goals you are working towards.

Character Creation

Each character starts with 1 free narrative trait of their choice, as well as 1 free **background trait**. They also start with 5 **pixels (px)**.

Each trait past the first two costs 1 pixel each. Some traits may be deemed too powerful for the setting, and you will have to purchase it in increments by leveling it up. In this situation, the initial trait costs 1 pixel, the second level costs 2, and the third level costs 3. Each level increases what is reasonable for that ability. (An ability would have to be incredibly powerful to be leveled up twice, and thus should happen very rarely.)

Each skill costs a number of pixels equal to its current value to level up. For example: It costs 1px to level a skill from 1 to 2, and it costs 2px to level a skill from 2 to 3. The highest level a skill may be is 3.

Levels - Your level, or **resolution**, is equal to how many pixels you presently have. Pixels are designed to be very valuable, and to allow for more frequent, but minor, rewards than the typical leveling experience. Once you gain a pixel, you may spend it whenever you like— even in the heat of the moment! The maximum resolution is 20 before **advancing**.

The GM's Toolkit

Dice Modifiers

Sometimes the dice need to be modified. The circumstances may be in the players' favor, or against them. The players may have items or traits to help them along their way. An enemy may be particularly strong. Whatever the case, these modifiers are here to help any GM adjust the situation in whatever way they see fit.

Advantage/Disadvantage - The player rolls an additional die and drops the lowest/highest. It is strongly recommended to only use this modifier for environmental situations cause by a player's creativity or negligence (or a plan gone wrong). For example, when a player attacks an enemy while stealthed, they should gain advantage for catching the enemy by surprise.

Enhance/Diminish - Adjust the required roll for a hit. An enhanced roll will require a lower value (a 3 would be a hit) and a diminished roll will require a higher value (a 4 would be a miss). There can be multiple layers of enhance/diminish. If a roll would be diminished to require higher than a 6 to get a hit, the task is impossible for the player.

Bonus Dice - Some items or traits may grant bonus dice on a roll. These are additional dice you roll if you

get a hit on your initial roll. These dice may grant special effects on success, but typically grant additional hits to your roll. They do not affect the outcome of your roll, nor are they capable of getting a critical hit. By default, bonus die will function exactly as a regular die, with a 4, 5 or 6 granting a hit. However, some bonus dice will have higher or lower chances of success. You may see a bonus die written with a number 2-6 next to it. This number denotes the minimum number needed to succeed with the die. For example, a bonus die (5) would require you roll a 5 or higher to succeed with it. Bonus dice without notation are assumed to be a bonus die (4). There is no limit to the amount of bonus dice you may roll.

Gates - Applying a gate means that it will take an additional hit to pass the check. During a quick check, this means that rolling below the required total will result in failure. During a challenge, this means that the player progresses the bar a number of hits equal to their total hits rolled minus the number of gates. This number cannot go below zero. *For example, with one gate, a player would need to roll two hits to pass a quick check, and would deal one hit less on each roll during a challenge.* A single gate is often sufficient to make a challenge much more difficult. Be careful not to place too many gates on an encounter. The following guide shows the recommended difficulty for use of gates:

The GM's Toolkit

Easy/Trivial	No roll if proficient. Regular roll if not proficient.
Normal	Regular roll
Difficult	1 Gate (2 hits required)
Like, Really Hard	2 Gates (3 hits required)
Extreme/Beyond Your Scope	3 Gates (4 hits required)

All Things in Balance

Building Encounters

When building an encounter in any game, experience is the best thing to go by. However, it is often useful to have a basic guideline on what to go off.

The following table provides basic templates for generic encounters.

Threat Level	Name	Alt Name	Hits	Risk	Engage
-4	Trivial 4		1/10	7	1
-3	Trivial 3		1/5	7	1
-2	Trivial 2		1/2	7	1
-1	Trivial 1		1	7	1
0	Weak Enemy	Inconvenience	2	7	1
1	Basic Thug	Basic	3	7	1
2	Competent	Moderate	5	7	1
3	Leader	Challenging	7	8	2
4	Skilled Warrior	Difficult	10	8	2
5	Commander/Mini-Boss	Very Difficult	10	9	3
6	Veteran/Boss	Extremely Difficult	12/15	10/9	4
7	Force of Nature	Impossible	20	10	5

Making the Encounter Unique

After choosing a basic template, add **tags** to modify it to better suit your needs. Example tags include:

Modifiers	
Positive	
Hearty	+ Hits
Dangerous	+ Risk
Elite	+ Engagement
Resistant	Diminish Rolls
Tough	Armour Gates
Nimble	Dodge Gates
Slippery	Grapple Gates
Brutal	+1 to minimum risk
Negative	
Frail	- Hits
Feeble	- Risk
Tunnel-Vision	- Engagement
Weakened	Enhanced Rolls

When modifying the number of hits, use the next threat level up on the encounter table as one level up or down. For example: A level 3 encounter with the *Hearty* tag would use the hit value of threat level 4, increasing the number of hits from 7 to 10.

Special Tag: Brutal

Brutal is a special tag that changes what perfect hits do. Encounters with brutal will increase the risk on a perfect hit from the usual 6 to 7.

Example Build: Minotaur

For example, let's say we want to build a Minotaur. First, we'll look at the template table and choose a difficulty level. The template includes two different wordings of each difficulty level to help make the decision more apparent. A mini-boss seems about right for a Minotaur, so we'll go with level 5, giving us a base of 10 hits, 9 risk, and an engagement value of 3.

Next, we'll add some modifiers to help this encounter feel more like a minotaur. Hearty, Dangerous, and Brutal sound good. Remember, adding more positive modifiers than negative will make the encounter more difficult than the table says. Just something to keep in mind. In fact, let's add Tunnel-vision to the minotaur to help balance it back out.

After adding those modifiers, we'll have: 12 Hits, 10 Risk, and 3 Engagement. We can also give the encounter some traits to really make it feel like it walked straight out of the labyrinth! Let's give the minotaur a "Scent" trait that allows it to track you with its nose.

Challenge Bars - Keep track of the amount of hits players have gotten on the challenge by drawing circles or boxes for each hit required. Check off one box per hit, and when they are all checked, the challenge is completed.

Combat

Enemy Health - The number of **hits** required to defeat an enemy is commonly referred to as “health” for simplicity’s sake. If an enemy requires 3 hits to defeat, we say that it has “3 health”.

Multiple Enemies - Each enemy is treated as its own challenge, with its own **health**. When that challenge is completed, the enemy is defeated. When facing swarms of weaker creatures, you may represent multiple of them with a single hit box. For example, fighting a swarm of wasps, or a high level party fighting a group of goblins.

Mob Rules - When a player is facing multiple opponents at the same time, their **Risk** is increased. The Risk for each check they make will be equal to the highest Risk among the enemies, plus one for each additional enemy, with a maximum of plus three. For example, when fighting 5 opponents where the strongest has a Risk of 8, the adjusted Risk would be 11. It would remain at 11 until there were less than 4 opponents, at which time it would drop to 10, then 9, then 8. If the highest Risk opponent is defeated or moves on, reduce the Risk accordingly.

Engagement - Every enemy has an engagement rating. This is the number of targets the enemy is capable of putting at risk. Most enemies will have an engagement of 1, but some more powerful enemies, such as mini-bosses or bosses, will have higher engagement. (It is common to set the engagement of a boss to be equal to the number of players in the party. When building encounters, it is assumed that each active player will be at risk.) If an enemy is focusing on a number of players lower than its engagement rating, the Risk for those players is increased by 1 for each missing player.

Example: Two players are fighting an enemy with 9 Risk and an engagement of 3. Since there are only two players, they each take 1 additional Risk, for a total of 10. If a single player were to face this enemy, the Risk would increase by 2, up to 11.

An enemy will not normally engage more players than its engagement rating, but if they were to, reduce the Risk for each player by 1 per additional player.

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Skills

Skills are the primary way of showing what you are good at in this game. Your skill level determines how many dice you roll, and therefore how well you perform at a given task. The game master may come up with any skills they like and think will be used in their game. The GM then presents that list to the players, and the players may choose to invest in them freely. Below is a list of recommended skills.

Sometimes more than one skill could reasonably apply to a check— that's okay. Give your players the option. Likewise, if a player argues that a different skill than the one you called for applies, feel free to assess how much you agree with them. If you can see their point, but don't quite agree that's as fitting as the skill you called for, you can let them make the check diminished.

Trained Skills - If a skill is denoted with (Trained) next to it, it means they must be proficient in that skill to increase it. A character becomes proficient in a skill if they either advance it to a 2 at character creation, or if they train it using the study action during upkeep later on.

Red (Physical):

Might | Mobility | Combat | Grapple | Guard

Green (Roguish):

Stealth | Sense | Thief | Nimble | - Drive -

Blue (Mental):

Lore | Spell | Focus | Intuition | Medicine | Study |
Computers –

Yellow (Social):

Charm | Guile | Perform | Inquire | Menace |
Merchant | Provoke | - Animal -

Physical

Might - How tough are ya? Might is your physical strength and endurance. Think Thor.

Mobility - This includes all things speed, agility, and movement. Think triathlete. Running, jumping, swimming, climbing..

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Combat - The skill used in combat. If you plan to beat people up, you need this skill.

Grapple - Another combat-oriented skill. This is your ability to pin and maneuver others. Can only be taken if using the **optional rule grappling**.

Guard – Another combat-oriented skill. Your ability to dodge, block, parry, or otherwise avoid painful things in combat.

Mental

Lore - Lore is a unique skill that you can take multiple times. You do not simply take “Lore” as a skill. You know the lore of something. Religion, history, physics, etc. It is effectively anything you are particularly knowledgeable about, and you may choose any matter to be versed in.

Lore checks may be used in place of a social check if the related field makes sense, e.g. Street lore may work when speaking with a gang, and science lore may work when speaking with a scientist. This is at the GM's discretion.

Spell (Trained) - The most versatile skill in the game, spell relies on various traits that allow you to perform feats through magic or other means, rather than through the typical skills that would be used. The

catch is that using spell costs AP. Usually invested heavily if at all.

Focus - This is your mental fortitude. Defense against mental attacks, ability to maintain concentration and more. Also used in study checks. Extremely important in some games-- others, not so much.

Intuition - Your ability to fill in the gaps between information. Find a hidden passageway behind that bookshelf that just seems a little off; deduce where a noble might hide his spare key; or read the face of someone who you're sure isn't telling the truth. You have a sense of when people are lying, or when something just isn't quite right. To use this skill, you will tell the GM your predisposition of the situation. The GM will then roll for you. On success, they will tell you the truth. On failure, you will believe what you were predisposed to. If you have no predisposition and are simply trying to get basic information (such as a person's mood), you will instead gain no information on failure, and the player may roll if desired.

Study – Your ability to learn new things. Learn the guards' patrol pattern, gain more detailed information about a crime scene, discover the faint footprints in the dust, or locate information in a library. Similar to **Sleuth**, but this skill focuses on information that is in front of you right now, without drawing conclusions from your character's intuition. Also used to learn new skills, traits,

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or fighting styles. Basically, anything involving learning new information by actively seeking it falls under this skill.

Medicine (Trained) - Used for helping comrades when they are down or wounded. Can also be a valuable skill for helping NPC's.

Computers (Trained) - A skill very useful in modern and futuristic settings, computers can be used for things like hacking, decoding, and monitoring cameras. Depending on the setting, this might even allow you to disarm bombs.

Roguish

Stealth - Keeps you hidden when you don't want to be seen. Sneaking around? Never saw ya.

Sense - Your ability to see the unseen. Keen sight, good hearing, sense of smell-- whatever. You notice things others don't. Good at knowing when danger is nearby.

Nimble - Your ability to move carefully and controlled. Balance on a tightrope, maneuver through a field of lasers, or reach your hand carefully between the spines of a venomous cactus.

Thief (Trained) - "I wanna steal." - Most players. Does it bother you when other people have things and

you want them? Also good for various penetration feats, such as lock-picking, safe-cracking, and casing.

Drive (Trained) - Usually geared toward motorized vehicles, this skill can let you live out your dreams of being a sweet getaway driver. Or you could use it in a chariot or cart race, I guess.

Social

Charm - Get people to like you through your words. Good for sweet-talking and diplomacy.

Guile - Lie to people to get what you want. You have a way of getting people to believe what you say.

Perform - Primarily used for the perform action during upkeep. Could also be used for distraction. It is not the ability to lie.

Inquire - Word on the street is that you can use this to find the word on the street. Basically free information when you get to town. Also used for getting information out of people.

Menace - Convince people to do what you want through force, threats, or a generally menacing aura.

Animal - You're an animal person. When the horses are freaking out or you get attacked by a bear, you're the one who can help.

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Merchant - Used for all things marketing. With it, you can barter, sell goods, appraise items, and assess the marketplace. It is a skill almost exclusively for making money! But I still challenge you to use it in creative ways!

Traits

The players may work with their GM to create any trait they feel fits them. This is a list of premade, suggested traits for you to browse, both to spark ideas and to give a baseline of what a trait should look like. These can all be modified to fit different specialties. Try messing around with them for creative builds. For example, taking "Armoured" for Stealth can make you very hard to detect.

Magic

Extra AP

Increase your base AP by 2 for each time this trait is taken. You may take this trait any number of times.

Recommended.

Battlemage

Activate to roll Spell in place of Combat.

Spellblade

You may activate to add dice equal to your Spell score to your commit.

Grapple

Constrictor

When grappling, you may add a number of dice equal to your Grapple score to your commit pool (against opponents you have grappled).

Wrecking Ball

If you have an opponent grappled, you may activate to roll Grapple as Combat.

Big Finish

You may use your minor action to end your grapple(s), converting all grapple progress into combat hits against the previously grappled opponent(s).

Pacify

You may use your minor action to reduce the Risk from any opponent you are grappling by 3 (to a minimum of 7) until your next turn. This Risk reduction does not affect your own rolls.

Rogue

Sneak Attack

When attacking out of stealth, you may activate to roll Stealth as Combat.

Backstab

When hidden, add a number of dice to your commit pool equal to your Stealth score.

Guerrilla

You may activate to make a Stealth check as a minor action.

Support

Assistant

You may assist even if you are not proficient in the skill.

Helpful

You may activate to use your minor action to assist.
You may not target the same player with multiple assist actions in one turn.

Inspire

Before another player makes any check, you may spend 2 AP to upgrade their skill. Stacks with “Expert”. This does not grant proficiency. Please roleplay how you inspire them!

Provocative

You may activate to use your minor action to provoke.

Narrative Traits

"Skill" Expert

You may spend 1 AP to upgrade the chosen skill by one for a check.

Photographic Memory

You can remember fine details (useful for if you don't like taking notes).

Mechanical Traits

Hide in Plain Sight

You can make Stealth checks in difficult locations-- even mid-combat.

Non-Threatening

Enemies favour other targets over you.

Reckless Attack

You may choose to take increased Risk up to 3 to add the same amount of dice to your secondary combat pool. May only use when at risk.

Champion

You may activate to take an additional action each round. You still suffer all consequences as though it were your first action. Can only use when at risk. Uses minor action.

Combat Traits

(All traits may be applied to combat, but these traits can be applied to combat exclusively.)

Offensive Duelist

When taking full Risk against a high-engagement opponent, add one die to your secondary combat pool per additional point of engagement you are taking.

Multi-Attacker

For each enemy you are taking Risk from beyond the first, (maximum 3 past the first), you may choose to add one die to your secondary combat pool. If you choose to do this, any hits you make from a commit action must be used on enemies that are not your primary target.

Defensive Duelist

Reduce Risk by 1 when taking full Risk on a high-engagement opponent. Upgrade> By 3

Multi-Defender

Reduce Risk when facing Mobs by 1.

Upgrade > By 1 per additional enemy beyond the first (maximum 3).

Hit More

Reliable “Skill”

Reroll a single 1 on checks for the chosen skill.

Good Under Pressure (Skill)

For every relevant health box checked, add one commit die. Testing: Upgrade > Roll 2 commit dice instead

Calm Under Pressure (Skill)

Gain reroll with level equal to the number of relevant health boxes checked.

Retaliate (Skill)

After mitigating stress, you may spend 1 AP to get one hit on the challenge.

High Roller: “Skill”

If all of your dice hit, deal 1 extra hit.

Overwhelm

Spend AP to add dice to your commit on a roll for the chosen skill at a 1:1 ratio.

Feint

You may activate to add dice equal to your Guile score to your commit pool.

Get Hit Less

Armoured

Can use AP as armour at a 2:1 rate.

Testing: Upgrade > Can instead use AP as armour at a 3:2 rate or a 2:1 rate.

Shrug Off (Health)

You may heal yourself for at a 2:1 ratio in the chosen health bar, as well as having a 50% chance to heal 1 additional health. Upgrade > You may also choose to heal yourself at a 3:2 plus a 50% chance.

Sample Builds

Barbarian

Skills

Combat: 2

Might: 3

Menace: 2

Mobility: 2

Traits

Shrug Off (Physical)
Good Under Pressure (Combat)
Armoured (Physical)
Consistent (Combat)
Combat Recovery

Rogue

Skills

Stealth: 3
Sense: 2
Nimble: 2
Guile: 2
Mobility: 2

Traits

Sneak Attack
Guerilla
Backstab
Stealth Expert

Wizard

Skills

Spell: 3
Focus: 2
Study: 2
Inquire: 2

Sample Builds

Traits

Spell: Fireball

Spell: Telekinesis

Spell: Invisibility

Extra AP (x2)

Bard

Skills

Charm: 3

Guile: 2

Perform (Lute): 3

Traits

Inspire

Assistant

Helpful

Jack of All Trades

6 Steps to Character Creation

Step 1: Identify Your Core

Come up with **one** word you would use to describe your character. This word will be referred to as your core. This will act as a guide to help you make some of your most difficult character decisions. Take your time, even if it takes days; this is important.

Step Two: A Blueprint for a Hero

Fill in the following template with details from your character. Some blanks will be open to interpretation, while others require more specific directions. These specific directions are denoted with parentheses. Some information is not required. Optional parts of the template are typed in a gray font. Black-font material is necessary to the creation of your character. Also, feel free to alter the template to help ideas flow better. See the “Duard” attachment for examples.

My name is (Name). (Passion) is my greatest passion, and/but I'd have to say I'm best at (something you're good at). I grew up (adjective), (verb)(prepositional phrase). When I was a child, I always wanted _____, but _____. My mother was/is a (adjective/occupation), and my father was/is a (adjective/occupation). My best friend, (Name) (something they do/did for you).

6 Steps to Character Creation

I struggle with _____, but I (solution to struggle) with my/by remaining (character trait). I firmly believe in/that _____. I know that I may face danger on the road ahead, (how you feel about that). I use my _____ to deal with sticky situations, and I developed my technique (how/why you developed it). (Someone/something) taught me (belief/philosophy/skill/knowledge). I always try to keep that in mind.

I feel burdened by _____. I seek _____. I'm known for my _____. Others have said (what they say about you), (how you feel about that). People have always (past tense verb) me, (how you feel about that). _____ set(s) me apart from others, (how you feel about that). I hold my (noun) very dear, because _____. I got it (how and when you got it). Everything changed when (life-changing event). I finally got the opportunity to (reason you met your group, i.e. get away from your hometown. Something your character has been wanting to do.).

Emotions? _____ infuriate(s) me. If you want to tick me off, just _____. The thought of _____ brings me great sorrow. Just bringing it up can put me in a bad mood. Sometimes the little things are what can really make a person happy. I've always loved _____. Despite my best efforts, I have never been able to overcome my fear of _____.

I've always felt (something metaphysical, i.e. the call of adventure, that something is watching me, etc.). I want _____. And I will (state your immediate goal).

*As an extra tip, give your character a secret. This is something no one knows about you, not even the DM. You may try filling in this sentence: Something no one knows about me is ____.

Step 3: Add Detail

Write a backstory for your character using the details established in **Step 2** as a guideline.

Step 4: Understanding

Using the information you uncovered in your backstory, try to understand how your character would act and think. In this step, you should also realize exactly what your character's goal is, why they seek that goal, what they would be willing to do to achieve it, and how they would prefer to go about achieving it. You can think of this goal as a dream that your character aspires to. You may also want to go back and fill out any additional information you can in **Step 2**.

Step 5: Flaws and Values

It is common to hear about character flaws, but values are more rarely discussed.

Flaws: More than simple vices, a flaw can be a negative conviction that can cause trouble for the character. Playing to flaws within reason can greatly increase character depth.

6 Steps to Character Creation

Values: Moral choices you believe in that may cause you to go out of your way to uphold. *Examples may be:*

- *I will always help those in need.*
- *Children deserve to be happy.*
- *A good goblin is a dead goblin.*
- *Honor is more important than treasure.*
- *I would do anything to keep my family safe.*

Step 6: Some Hard Questions

- What do you live for?
- What would you die for?
- What would you kill for?

Additional Tips:

Try to come up with a unique fighting style for your character. It tends to make combat much more enjoyable, and adds depth to your character's history. It can also spark some really cool ideas.

6 Steps to Character Creation

Always try to envision anything your character is doing. If you can't picture them doing something, they probably wouldn't do it.

Making a character that you relate to, that is, one that is *partially* based off of your own desires and personality, can make the adventure a lot more fun, since it feels a little bit like it's yourself in living in this new world.

Have fun!

Created by Light Mosser.