

# The Core Mechanic

## When to roll Dice

Not knowing what happens is part of the fun. You say what the characters do, and then roll dice to see how it goes. Any player can call for a dice roll to resolve an action, regardless of who's currently narrating. However, you may not need to roll if:

- **The action is trivial or impossible** – because you already know how it's going to turn out (see below).
- **Everyone agrees that the action should turn out a certain way** – because it's what will be the most fun for everyone.
- **Nobody cares how the action turns out** – usually because it won't have any lasting impact on the story or characters. Just skip ahead to the fun stuff!

## Action Resolution

**Resource Cost:** Each action costs an amount of resources determined by the difficulty of the action (see below). You can do an action even if you can't afford its resource cost, but you suffer a penalty on the check equal to the unpaid cost.

**Association:** Each action is associated with an attribute or a resource. If the rules don't cover a particular action, use your best judgment to choose the attribute or resource that seems most appropriate.

- **If the action is associated with an attribute**, that attribute must be used to make the check, but the resource cost may be paid from either linked resource.
- **If an action is associated with a resource**, that resource must be used to pay the cost, but the check may be made using either linked attribute.

**Difficulty:** When an action is performed under beneficial or detrimental circumstances, choose an appropriate difficulty:

- **Trivial** actions cost 0 resources points, and always succeed. If you need to know the numerical result of the check, assume the dice rolled two 6s.

- **Easy** actions cost 1 resource point, and are more likely to succeed than normal. Roll three dice, and use the higher two.
- **Normal** actions cost 2 resource points, and work as described below.
- **Hard** actions cost 3 resource points, and are less likely to succeed than normal. Roll three dice and use the lower two.
- **Impossible** actions cost 4 resource points, and always fail. If you need to know the numerical result of the check, assume the dice rolled two 1s.

**Making Checks:** To make a check, roll two dice and add an attribute. If the check result is 15 or higher, the action succeeds. If the result is 14 or lower, the action fails.

- **Critical Success:** If the check result is 20 or higher, the action is a critical success (*commonly referred to as a "crit" or "mastery"*). In addition to the effects of a regular success, a critical success may involve some additional positive result.
- **Critical Failure:** If the check result is 10 or lower, the action is a critical failure (*commonly referred to as a "fumble" or "botch"*). In addition to the effects of a regular failure, a critical failure may involve some additional negative result.

**Significance:** Every action should move the story forward in a meaningful way. Exactly what this means varies with the situation, so let's explore an example:

**You try to pick a lock, and fail.**

- **If you can just keep trying without consequence until you succeed**, it should have been trivial to begin with.
- **If you can't succeed no matter how many times you try**, it should have been impossible to begin with.
- **If the attempt involves a potential consequence**, then multiple attempts make sense. Consequences might include breaking your picks or the lock itself on a failure or critical failure, monsters coming

ever closer down the hallway behind you, etc...

- **If the roll was to determine your capability**, failure means it's beyond you, and you'll have to find another way forward, or go do something else. Had you succeeded, the lock would be picked, and the story would be different.

### The Action Economy

When several characters are doing things at the same time, divide the action up into a series of turns. The characters take turns in sequence until the scene reaches its natural conclusion.

**Turn Order:** The order in which characters take turns should be follow naturally from the events taking place. If you find the characters in a scene grouped into "teams," have the teams take turns together. When doing team turns, the characters on a team may act in any order they please, and are encouraged to work together toward their common goal.

**Rounds:** A round is one complete set of turns, beginning and ending with yours.

### Action Types

**Actions:** During your turn, you may perform one action, which cannot be used to move.

**Reactions:** You can react once per round, to any event you are aware of (movement, action, environmental happening, etc.). You can use your reaction to perform any action within reason.

**Movement:** During your turn, you may move as a free action, with a base difficulty of trivial. Movement as a reaction works normally.

### Opposing

Opposing happens when one character uses a reaction to prevent another character from doing something. Opposing can take two forms:

- **Hinder:** A character that tries to stop someone from performing an action is hindering the action. If the hindering character succeeds, roll a die and apply the result as a penalty to the hindered

action check result against all targets of the action.

- **Resist:** A character that tries to protect himself from an action is resisting the action. If the resisting character succeeds, roll a die and apply the result as a penalty to the resisted action check result against only the resisting character. Other targets of the action gain no benefit from the character's resistance.

**Opposition Stacking:** When multiple characters hinder a single action, the penalties always stack. When a character resists an action, the penalty stacks with any hindering penalties.