

# Toaster: A Roleplaying Game

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## Table of Contents

<b>1: INTRODUCTION</b> _____	<b>2</b>	DIFFICULTY MODIFIERS _____	21
WHY "TOASTER"?	2	Percentages _____	21
THE RULES _____	2	Unopposed Actions _____	22
(Optional Rules) _____	2	Opposed Actions _____	22
THE DICE _____	2	(VARIABLE OUTCOMES) _____	23
The d10* _____	2	(Fumble) _____	23
AVERAGING _____	2	(Failure) _____	23
<b>2: CHARACTER DEFINITION</b> _____	<b>3</b>	(Marginal) _____	24
ATTRIBUTES _____	3	(Success) _____	24
Attribute Ranks _____	3	(Critical) _____	25
Standard Attributes _____	3	(A Note on Critical and Fumbled	
(Other Attributes) _____	4	Results) _____	25
SKILLS _____	4	(LUCK) _____	25
Skill Base _____	4	(Luck Points) _____	25
Skill Rank _____	4	(Luck Rolls) _____	26
(Specialization) _____	5	<b>4: COMBAT</b> _____	<b>27</b>
(Variable Skill Cost) _____	5	THE COMBAT ROUND _____	27
Sample Skills _____	5	Initiative _____	27
TRAITS _____	11	Normal Actions _____	27
Neutral Traits _____	11	Long Actions _____	28
Sample Traits _____	11	ATTACKING AND DEFENDING _____	28
Ranking Traits _____	14	Attack Sequence _____	28
CHARACTER CREATION _____	15	Shields _____	29
Concept _____	15	Range Penalties _____	29
Attributes and Skills _____	15	(Weapon Length) _____	29
Traits _____	15	(Stance) _____	30
Possessions _____	16	WEAPON AND ARMOR CLASS _____	30
CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT _____	16	Weapon Class _____	30
Experience _____	16	Armor Class _____	30
Traits _____	16	WC/AC Rolls _____	30
SAMPLE CHARACTERS _____	17	(WC/AC Roll Options) _____	31
Rhoenda Dumas _____	17	(Strength Requirements) _____	31
Father Colin Mallory _____	18	(Partial Armor) _____	31
<b>3: CHARACTER ACTIONS</b> _____	<b>19</b>	SAMPLE WEAPONS AND ARMOR _____	32
AUTOMATIC ACTIONS _____	19	Hand-to-Hand Weapons _____	32
DICE ACTIONS _____	19	Ranged Weapons _____	32
Unopposed actions _____	19	Armor _____	32
Opposed Actions _____	19	EFFECTS OF DAMAGE _____	33
WHICH SKILL? _____	20	Stun Points _____	33
Related Skills _____	20	Wounds _____	33
Attribute Rolls _____	20	Character Size _____	34
(Complementary Skills) _____	20	(Unnamed Characters) _____	34
(Working Collaboratively) _____	20	(Bleeding) _____	34
(EXTENDED D10* ROLLS) _____	21	Healing _____	35
(Rolling Nines) _____	21	(MISCELLANEOUS COMBAT TABLES) _____	36
(Rolling Zeros) _____	21	(Attack Critical or Defend Fumble) _____	36
(Calling 4s) _____	21	(Hit Location) _____	37

## 1: Introduction

If you are looking for an innovative, groundbreaking, revolutionary roleplaying game that will lead a paradigm shift in the hobby, this is not it. For experienced roleplayers, there is nothing new, not a single original idea, presented in Toaster that cannot be found elsewhere. Rather, Toaster is just an exercise in creating a straightforward roleplaying system that has enough flexibility to be used in a wide range of campaigns.

Like other rpgs available on the Internet, Toaster assumes that the reader is familiar with roleplaying and roleplaying games. I do not want to bore you or myself with sections on "How to Roleplay" and you probably do not want to be bothered with those either.

For those new to the roleplaying, <http://www.microtactix.com/whatrpg.htm> summarizes the concepts and terminology used.

### ***Why "Toaster"?***

That humble household appliance, the toaster, is a good model for simplicity of concept and design. Toasters have one basic function, a simple user-interface, and so long as you don't try to shove anything too large in it, they are generally very reliable. Toaster is also a humble roleplaying game built around a few basic concepts and mechanics, using simple math and die rolling, and it can handle most genres and settings with no difficulty.

With a toaster, you can cook bread, breakfast pastries, frozen waffles, English muffins, or perhaps even bagels. Toasters work great for all these applications, but do not try to bake a cake with one. Likewise, this game is not specific to any genre, so you can use it in a wide variety of campaigns, but it will not work for every setting or every style of roleplaying.

### ***The Rules***

The rules in Toaster are designed to give Players a sketch of the system and how it might be applied in a variety of circumstances. However, many of the details have been made vague or left out completely. GMs and Players are encouraged and expected to customize the details to best fit their campaign and gaming style. As development of Toaster continues, more of the details will be filled in.

### ***(Optional Rules)***

For the sake of completeness, Toaster includes some rules that are superfluous to the basic game. Mostly, these are included as examples of how the game can be detailed and expanded to fit the tastes of the GM and Players. These optional rules are indicated by parenthesis.

### ***The Dice***

Toaster uses a ten-sided (d10) die for most things, though six-sided dice (d6) are used for the optional combat tables.

### ***The d10\****

Toaster uses the notation d10\* to indicate that a 10-sided die is rolled, with the "0" treated as a zero. If the notation is simply d10 with no asterisk, then the "0" is equal to ten.

### ***Averaging***

The most complex mathematical function used in Toaster is averaging. To average two numbers, add them together and divide by two. When fractions come up, lop off all digits to the right of the decimal place. For example, to take the average of 5 and 8, add them together to get 13. Then, divide by two to get 6.5, but drop the fraction to get a final value of 6.

## 2: Character Definition

### **Attributes**

Attributes encompass a character's natural physical and mental abilities. When describing a character, the first thing mentioned might very well be the character's attributes. There are four attributes, though the GM and Players may agree to add or change attributes to best reflect the needs of the campaign.

### **Attribute Ranks**

Attributes are typically ranked from 0 to 10, with rank 4 representing a fairly average individual. Higher attributes are possible, but should be reserved for superhuman characters.

Score	Ability
0	Disabled
1	Terrible
2	Poor
3	Mediocre
4	Average
5	Fair
6	Good
7	Great
8	Excellent
9	Extraordinary
10	Legendary
11+	Superhuman

### **Standard Attributes**

#### **Physique**

Physique represents a character's physical power, toughness, health, and fitness. Characters with a low Physique tend to be weak and sickly, tiring easily and suffering from one ailment or another. On the other hand, a high Physique indicates a character who rarely gets ill, can deliver quite a blow, and can take a hit well. A good physique is important for athletes, warriors, and other people who push their bodies to the limits of endurance and punishment. Physique does not necessarily imply physical size; a very large person can be of poor health just as smaller persons can be very resilient and strong. Size is treated as a Trait (see below).

#### **Coordination**

Coordination is a measure of the character's physical control, speed, and grace. Coordination covers agility, balance, flexibility, nimbleness, dexterity, hand-eye coordination, aim, reflexes, and foot speed. Characters with poor Coordination are clumsy, slow, and awkward. A high Coordination is typical of people with natural balance, poise, and quickness. Coordination is vital for athletes, performers, or anyone who uses a weapon.

#### **Intellect**

Intellect is a person's ability to learn, reason, and observe -- applying knowledge, experience, and creativity to solve problems. This learning can be from scholastic sources, what is called "book learning," or from the lessons taught by nature and experience. Characters with a low ranking Intellect take longer to learn, notice new things, or figure out problems. A high rank in Intellect indicates a person who can quickly accumulate new experiences and ideas and use them toward problems. Anyone who uses their

mind and experience rather than their brawn, such as a scientist, artist, general, farmer, or craftsman relies on their Intellect.

## Aura

Aura is a combination of a person's inner mental and spiritual strength, how well the person interacts with other people, and the character's luck. A character with a low Aura lacks confidence and resolve, which also causes others to view the character negatively. A high Aura indicates a character who is full of confidence and a strong personal drive, which helps give them an attractive, larger-than-life appearance. Aura is important for leaders, celebrities, and anyone who interacts with the public.

## (Other Attributes)

The GM may wish to add primary attributes based on the needs of the genre and campaign. For example, in a campaign that features mystical and magical powers, an attribute called Attunement could be added to describe the characters' natural affinity for magical talents. The GM might also wish to split an existing attribute up into separate attributes. For a game with lots of investigation and social interaction, Charisma could be its own attribute and not linked to Aura.

## Skills

### Skill Base

The skill base represents a character's level of training. This training can include spending time in a classroom, reading texts, hands-on experience, and other forms of training.

The skill base has a score from 0 (no training, formal or informal) to 10 (years of dedicated study). The GM may allow a character to have a skill base over 10, but only in those cases where a character has a low attribute and needs an extra-high skill base to make up for it.

### Skill Rank

The skill rank combines the character's natural talent (attributes) and training (skill base). The skill rank is an average of the character's skill base and attribute. For example, a character with an attribute of 6 and a skill base of 9 has a skill rank of 7. Some traits can also affect skill ranks.

Which attribute to use for a given skill is left to the GM and Players to agree upon. In some cases, more than one attribute is appropriate, and this can depend on how the skill is used. For example, woodworking might depend on Coordination while crafting things but on Intellect for identifying and appraising objects. One method to resolve this issue is to use two or more skill ranks, one for each attribute. When the skill is used, the GM chooses the one which is most appropriate for that situation. For simplicity, though, the GM and Player might agree on a single attribute to use.

The skill rank is a direct reflection the character's ability. For added flavor, the GM may assign descriptors based on the skill rank. The table below gives some examples.

Skill Rank	General Ability	Tradesman Rank	Karate Belt
0 to 2	Unskilled	Novice	White
3 to 4	Student	Apprentice	Yellow
5 to 6	Proficient	Journeyman	Green
7 to 8	Expert	Adept	Brown
9 to 10	Master	Master	Black
11+	Grand Master	Grand Master	Other (Red?)

## (Specialization)

If a character has a rank of 4 or more in a particular skill, the Player is allowed to designate one specialty. The specialty is a subset of the skill, applying to a very specific application of the skill. For instance, a character with the throwing skill may specialize in knives or a blacksmith can specialize in making armor. When the character uses the skill within the specialty, the character has a +1 to the skill roll, which is the same as saying the character's skill rank is 1 higher.

Once a character has reached a rank of 8 or higher in skill, the Player may either choose a second specialty or double the current specialty. Thus, the character could have two specialties at +1 or a single specialty at +2.

The GM should allow specializing on a case-by-case basis and only in those circumstances when it enhances the character description without abusing the system. If the GM and Players cannot think of 3 independent areas to specialize in, then the character should not be allowed a specialty. Also, the GM may place a limit on the number of skills a character can have a specialty in, perhaps limited to the few core skills that best define the character's role.

## (Variable Skill Cost)

Some skills are more difficult to learn and improve than most. Other skills are easier to pick up and are developed quickly. The GM can simulate this effect by adjusting the cost of a skill's base, using the skill's difficulty as a guide. During character creation and advancement, each skill point applied to a skill improves the skill's base by 1. If variable skill cost is being used, then it takes more points to increase a more difficult skill. Likewise, it takes fewer points to improve an easier skill.

Difficulty	Cost
Easy	0.5
Average	1.0
Challenging	1.5
Difficult	2.0
Very Difficult	2.5

For example, to increase the skill base from 2 to 3 would normally cost 1 skill point. However, a difficult skill would require 2 points. To raise a challenging skill from a base of 5 to a base of 8 would require 4.5 points (an increase of 3 times the cost of 1.5). The cost of various skills is very dependent on the campaign, and is left to the GM to decide on a case-by-case basis. Very exotic skills, such as those involving mystical powers or those far outside mainstream education may have even higher skill costs than those listed above.

All skills are presumed to be on more-or-less equal footing. Even though some skills might be more useful in a particular adventure than others, over the course of a campaign, all a character's skills should play a valued role. Unfortunately, this is not always the case, and some skills are definitely "more equal" than others, such as martial arts described below. The GM can try to balance out the role of skills by increasing the cost for the most useful and lowering the cost for skills which help round out a character's abilities but which have minimal utility in the campaign.

## Sample Skills

The GM and Players need to decide which skills are appropriate for their campaign. The types of skills available will depend greatly on the time period, genre, and tone of the game. For instance, in modern times, astrology and astronomy are very distinct, whereas in ancient times, these fields were one and the same. Similarly, a campaign set in a historically accurate medieval Europe might distinguish weapon skills among the hundreds of varieties of swords, maces, flails, and polearms available at the time. On the other hand, a campaign focused on solving mysteries and crimes in the pre-war America of the 1920s and 30s might lump all such weapon skills into a single ancient weapons skill.

Many of the skill definitions, especially those within skill groups, are left intentionally loose. The Players can choose how specific they want their characters' skills to be. The more narrowly a skill is defined, the more detailed and specific the character's knowledge and ability will be. For instance, a character who has a skill in the history of World War II will know more details about the war than a character who knows history of the 20th century. On the other hand, the latter character will know more about events before and after the war than the former character would. Choosing to define a skill narrowly or broadly does not preclude a character from having a specialty. For instance, a character can know history of World War II, specializing in the campaigns of Patton, while a character with a skill in history of the 20th century can specialize in the history of technology in the century.

Some of the skills listed below with an asterisk, like Artistic Skill, are actually a group of skills listed under a single heading. Rather than list every possible skill, the Players and GM can decide which skills are available and appropriate for the campaign. These skills tend to vary significantly based on the time period and technology of the setting as well as the genre of the campaign. For instance, in a fantasy campaign, the available language skills might be Human, Elvish, Dwarvish, and The Forbidden Mystical Tongue of Myrdun. A game set in the Wild West might focus on English, Spanish, Chinese, French, and hundreds of Native American languages, whereas in a modern campaign, the GM might say that any of the world's languages are available.

### Acrobatics (Coordination)

Acrobatics involves all manners of leaping, tumbling, swinging, and diving. Acrobatics cannot normally be used in place of the dodge skill, though a GM may count acrobatics as complementary to dodge. Acrobatics can augment dodge, however, and allow the character to perform extreme maneuvers like jumping out of an upper story window into a pool below to dodge a bomb blast. In these cases, the GM would require a dodge roll to avoid the blast and an acrobatic roll to land in the pool safely.

### Act (Aura)

Acting is the ability to pretend. Acting is used by an actor on the stage, a storyteller around a campfire, an impersonator, a Player in a roleplaying game, and someone trying to tell a convincing lie or faking an emotion. To detect if someone is acting, a character makes an opposed action roll based on the empathy skill against the actor's acting skill. The GM may allow the acting skill to also include the ability to make believable disguises using makeup and costuming or the GM may require this to be bought separately as an artistic skill.

### Artistic Skill\* (Coordination, Intellect, Aura)

Artistic skills can range from simple cave paintings to oil painting to post-modern industrial sculpture to computer generated holographic interactive animation. Performance art like dance, singing, and music are also included here, as are the literary arts like poetry, composition, screen writing, etc. For these other art forms, the Players and GM may choose to use a different attribute like Coordination, Intellect, or Aura.

### Bargain (Aura)

Bargaining is the skill of negotiating a sale. The skill comes into play both when selling and buying wares. Bargaining can involve haggling, bartering, trading, or simply making a convincing sales presentation. In a sale situation, the characters involved each make an opposed action roll based on their bargain skills.

### Brawl (Coordination)

Brawling encompasses all forms of unarmed combat including punching, kicking, gouging, biting, head butting, hair pulling, and grappling. The GM may wish to use the martial art skill for those characters with training in a formal style of unarmed combat, like boxing, karate, or wrestling. Brawl can

be used to defend against any brawling attacks, but if used to defend against an attack with a weapon, the GM may increase the difficulty. The brawl skill can never be used to defend against a ranged attack.

### **Climb (Coordination)**

Climbing is the skill of scaling walls, rocks, mountains, trees, fences, and other obstacles. The difficulty depends on the number of handholds, how steep and slick the surface is, and other conditions like weather and weight. The use of mountaineering and climbing equipment can make the difficulty lower and can reduce the danger of falling. Failing a climbing roll does not automatically mean the character falls; if the skill roll was not a major failure or fumble, the GM may rule that the character is stuck and cannot continue further and/or require the character make a strength roll to hang on.

### **Craft or Trade Skill\* (Intellect)**

Being skilled in a craft gives a character familiarity with the tools and tricks of the trade as well as the ability to appreciate and appraise the work of fellow craftsmen. Characters with a good skill rank and some business sense can make a decent living practicing their trade. In a primitive society, fire building, tool making, and skinning are valuable craft skills. In a modern society, trade skills include electrician, plumber, and computer programmer. Some trades are timeless: jeweler, weapon smith, farmer, animal trainer, tailor, etc.

### **Dodge (Coordination)**

Dodging is the skill of not being hit. Dodge can be used as a defense against any type of attack, ranged or hand-to-hand. Area of effect attacks like grenades and bombs might be avoided by dodging, but the GM may impose an added difficulty factor or deem the attack unavoidable. If dodging an attack requires an extraordinary maneuver, like jumping out a window, the GM may also require an acrobatics skill roll.

### **Drive (Coordination)**

Driving is the ability to properly direct and control an automobile, motorcycle, or similar terrestrial vehicle. Airborne craft and boats use different skills. For very exotic modes of transportation, like tanks or hovercraft, the GM may require the character learn an entirely different skill. The terrain and road conditions, weather and visibility, traffic, and speed all affect the difficulty of driving.

### **Empathy (Intellect or Aura)**

Empathy is used to determine people's emotions, to read faces, tone, and body language, and to detect if someone is acting or lying. The empathy skill can be used as an unopposed action to detect a person's emotional state or an opposed action against a person's acting or persuasion skills. Empathy with animals is not covered by this skill, but the GM may allow Players to create such a skill for their characters.

### **Intrusion (Coordination or Intellect)**

Intrusion represents the skill to circumvent or disable security devices, whether a door lock, a simple window latch, or a high-tech computerized surveillance system. Successful intrusion often requires that the character possess the right tools, like a set of lock picks, a jimmy, or a laptop computer with retina identification software. A failed intrusion skill roll means the character was unable to get past the security; the GM determines whether or not any alarms were triggered or if another attempt is possible.

### **Knowledge Skill\* (Intellect)**

A knowledge skill is any database of specific knowledge the character possesses that is not covered by another skill. For instance, a character might have knowledge of known and suspected mobsters in a city, baseball statistics, the marriages of a famous king or celebrity, or the answers to trivia questions. A knowledge skill can have practical use, like knowledge of art history would allow a character to appraise

works of art. Other times, knowledge skills have little practical value, but they do help round out the character's experiences and add color the character's background.

### Language Skill\* (Intellect)

Knowing a language allows the character to converse in that language with some degree of fluency. A skill rank of 4 represents the same level of fluency as a moderately educated adult native speaker. Lower ranks indicate a speaker with a limited vocabulary and poor use of grammar. Higher ranks in a language skill are useful when interpreting obscure references and jargon, such as a modern English speaker reading Middle English. Characters automatically have a skill base of 4 in their native language.

Each language must be learned separately, though the GM may allow a bonus based on the rules for related skills. In modern industrial societies, reading and writing skills tend to be developed simultaneously, so a language skill need only be purchased once. However, in illiterate societies, reading and writing count as two separate skills.

### Lip Reading (Intellect)

Reading lips allows a character to understand what others are saying by watching the movement of their lips, assuming the character knows the language they are speaking. Lip reading is especially useful for eavesdropping on conversations in a noisy environment or from a great distance using binoculars. The GM should apply a penalty to the skill roll if the character does not have a full view of a person's mouth, because of the direction the person is facing, the person's facial hair, or obstructions between the character and the person.

### Martial Arts (Coordination)

Martial arts include any formalized form of fighting. The Player and GM need to agree on what form a character's martial arts takes, whether it be kung-fu, Aikido, savate, boxing, professional wrestling, or countless other possibilities.

Possessing the martial arts skill allows the character access to specific maneuvers and options in combat not available to characters who only know brawling. Characters using martial arts gain a +2 bonus when fighting against those with only brawling. For this reason, the cost of the martial arts skills should be 1.5 or 2 times the cost of the brawling skill.

### Navigation (Intellect)

Characters who wish to blaze new trails and go where no one has gone before should have good navigation so they find their way home. The tools and techniques used for navigation become more sophisticated with advances in technology, but the basics of reading maps and stars remain constant. This skill is also used to create navigation charts and maps. Navigation becomes more difficult when the character is introduced to a new region, hemisphere, or planet.

### Perception (Intellect)

The perception skill is a character's ability to pick up clues from the environment, whether they are visual, audible, or olfactory. This skill is used whenever a character is searching for somebody or something, trying to overhear a conversation, or notice someone sneaking past or wearing a disguise. In many cases, the perception skill is used as an opposed action against another's stealth skill. Characters with exceptionally good perception rolls can recognize individual by their voice, smell, or subtle visual clues.

### Persuasion (Aura)

Persuading others into a particular belief or course of action can involve a number of techniques including logical, compelling arguments, or fast-talk, double-speak, half-truths, and implied facts, or old-fashioned threats and intimidation. A character can use favors, promises, gifts, or outright bribes to

sweeten the offer and make it more compelling; the GM may lower the difficulty of the persuasion skill roll because of such incentives.

### **Pilot Aircraft (Coordination or Intellect)**

Piloting covers a variety of airborne craft from airplanes to helicopters to hang gliders. The GM may wish to break this skill up into sub-categories by type of aircraft and may include spacecraft as a sub-category. Alternatively, the GM may require Players to designate a specialty for the pilot skill and apply a penalty whenever a different type of craft is flown. Piloting encompasses the ability to takeoff, fly, and land the craft safely plus how to read navigation charts. Adverse weather and wind conditions increase the difficulty for piloting skill rolls.

### **Pilot Ship (Coordination or Intellect)**

The pilot ship skill covers both motor powered and sailing vessels and how to navigate on the water. The GM may wish to split the skill into sub-categories based on vessel size and power, following guidelines similar for the drive and pilot aircraft skills. As with those other skills, weather conditions, especially winds and waves, have a great bearing on the difficulty of any skill roll.

### **Question (Aura)**

Questioning is used to elicit information from a person by use of interrogation, intimidation, or clever conversation. Characters may throw in other incentives, like bribes, to elicit cooperation. Targets of questioning may not even be aware that they are being pumped for information, though the GM may allow them to make an opposed action roll using their empathy skill against the question skill.

### **Ride (Coordination or Aura)**

Riding includes the ability to ride animals like horses, camels, or elephants, and using animals to pull carts, carriages, and sleds. The skill requires both the physical ability to mount, ride, and control animals, but also the ability to communicate and care for them. Unlike driving or piloting a machine, riding often comes down to a test of wills and personalities between rider and mount.

### **Run (Coordination)**

The running skill dictates how fast the character can run over short and long distances. There is no direct translation from a character's skill rank to a velocity figure like miles per hour. In a race or chase situation, all running characters make an opposed skill roll based on the running skill; the highest roll wins the race. The GM can add in difficulty factors based on obstacles and if a character has a head start. The running skill can also be used when characters are making leaps and jumps across and over obstacles.

### **Seduction (Aura)**

Seduction is the fine art of manipulating people based on physical attraction and desire. While seduction is aided by physical appearance, body language, dialogue, and the appropriate atmosphere are often more influential. Some use seduction for the sole purpose of attracting a companion or sexual partner for an evening, while others use it to augment persuasion and questioning skills.

### **Science or Engineering Skill\* (Intellect)**

Science skills use logic and reasoning, hypothesis and experimentation, data collection and analysis to answer questions and solve problems about the universe around us. In modern times, there has been an explosion of knowledge and specialized fields in medicine, mathematics, computer science, chemistry, biology, physics, and engineering, whether mechanical, electrical, civil, or chemical. There are also multi-disciplinary fields like cognitive and forensic sciences. More so than perhaps any other skill, the capabilities of science and engineering are greatly limited by the technology of the day, and GMs and Players should not allow modern knowledge to influence character actions in pre-modern times. In other

words, just because a character from ancient Egypt has a skill in chemistry, that character cannot make gunpowder.

### **Social Science Skill\* (Intellect)**

Social sciences study people: how they behave, how they live, what they have done, etc. Generally, there are eight basic disciplines of social science: anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, political science, psychology, and sociology. There are also related fields like theology, law, folklore, media, advertising, criminology, etc. In pre-modern societies, social sciences might not be more sophisticated than local history, myths, politics, and gossip.

### **Stealth (Coordination)**

Stealth includes sneaking, hiding, using camouflage, and concealing objects from view. Stealth is usually used in an opposed action against another character's perception skill. Factors like good lighting, little cover, squeaky floors, and extra sensor equipment will increase the difficulty of being stealthy. Poor lighting, lots of cover, and background noise will make the stealth roll easier.

### **Sleight of Hand (Coordination)**

Sleight of hand is the bread and butter of any stage magician, pick pocket, card cheat, or cutpurse. It is an art of speed, deception, and misdirection that shows the hand is quicker than the eye. If a character is trying to move, steal, or place small objects without being noticed, the character must make an opposed action roll using the sleight of hand skill against the perception skills of any onlookers. The more commotion or confusion present, the easier sleight of hand becomes.

### **Streetwise (Intellect or Aura)**

Streetwise describes a character's familiarity with life on the city streets, especially the seedier side of society. A streetwise character knows how to find illegal substances or activities and how to interact with the people who deal in those goods and services. Characters use streetwise when in search of an informant or a prostitute, illegal guns or drugs, or an underground nightclub or gambling hall. Because of the shady and suspicious nature of these people, it often takes a fair amount of time and many successful streetwise skill rolls to reach the character's goal.

### **Survival (Intellect)**

The survival skill allows a character to live in the wilderness away from the conveniences of civilization. With the survival skill, a character can find or create shelter from the elements, forage for food, find drinkable water, build a fire, etc. Without a successful use of this skill, a character will slowly die from exposure, hunger, and dehydration.

### **Swim (Coordination)**

How fast a character can swim is handled in the same way as the running skill. The GM should add in a difficulty factor based on a character's natural environment; in a race between a human and shark, the shark has a definite advantage. Characters with a non-zero skill base in swimming can stay afloat with no fear of drowning, though the GM may require a roll for extreme conditions like weather and waves, fatigue, or injury.

### **Teach (Intellect or Aura)**

Teaching is the ability to pass along knowledge and skill to a student. Teaching involves much more than passing on rote knowledge, and should involve a lot of teacher-student interaction. For teachers to be successful, they must have a skill base greater than that of their students in the skill they wish to teach.

### Track (Intellect)

Tracking is used to find, identify, and follow tracks made by people, creatures, and vehicles. Tracks can include footprints, broken foliage, disturbed underbrush, game trails, territory markings, and other signs of passage. Weather, time, and terrain affect the difficulty of tracking. The skill is also used to cover up tracks; tracking can be used as an opposed action against another character's tracking skill.

### Throw (Coordination)

Throwing is the skill of hurling objects through the air to hit a target. The throwing skill encompasses anything a character may wish to throw: rocks, balls, spears, knives, etc. The skill rank determines how far and accurately a character can throw as well as being able to control which side of an object, like a throwing axe, hits a target.

### Weapon Skill\* (Coordination)

Weapon skills fall into two broad categories: ranged and hand-to-hand. Ranged weapons, like bows and guns, do not include thrown weapons, which are covered by the throw skill. Hand-to-hand weapons include swords, clubs, flails, chairs, and anything else a character can pick up to hit another character with. How weapons skills are grouped together will depend greatly on the campaign setting, and is left open for the GM and Players to determine.

## Traits

Any of the character's abilities that are not described by attributes or skills are called traits. Positive traits give characters some advantage or special bonus. Conversely, negative traits put the character at a disadvantage, penalizing the character. Traits are ranked from -5 to +5. Negative traits have negative ranks; positive traits have positive ranks. The further from 0 the rank, the more extreme the trait is.

Trait Rank	Effect
+/- 5	Critical
+/- 4	Major
+/- 3	Severe
+/- 2	Moderate
+/- 1	Mild
0	Superficial

### Neutral Traits

Neutral traits have a rank of 0. These traits provide no net benefit or detriment to the character. A neutral trait can be nothing more than a very minor, yet interesting, quirk -- a footnote on the character description. Examples of these types of traits include: always dresses in a black-motif, attracted to redheads, collects stamps, or plays solitaire a lot.

A neutral trait can provide the character some benefit but it comes with added baggage that counterbalances the good points. For example, the character might have a cousin who is connected with the mafia. Most of the time, this trait is inconsequential to the game. However, in dire need, the character may be able to call upon help from the mafia. On the other hand, the cousin could also call the character for help in some mob-related activity. All told, the positive and negative aspects balance each other out, and the trait is counted as neutral with rank 0.

### Sample Traits

#### Addiction or Dependence

The character is addicted or dependent on something. This negative trait can be a result of addictive and narcotic drugs, compulsive and obsessive behavior, or the character's natural physiology. This trait

applies to the chain cigarette smoker, strung out junkie, epileptic who requires drugs to control seizures, or an alien species that requires an unusual atmosphere to breathe. The value of the trait depends on how easy the substance is to obtain, how often the character needs it, and what the repercussions are of not feeding the habit. A rank of 0 indicates a mild habit that has no real effect on the campaign but helps add to the character's description. On the other hand, a rank of -5 could represent a severe dependence on a substance that is very difficult or dangerous to obtain and even more dangerous if not obtained.

## Attributes

Characters may have higher or lower attribute ranks than normal. Characters with higher attributes have more natural ability and need to rely less on learned skill and experience. Conversely, having lower attributes requires a character to spend more time and effort learning skills to make up for a lack of innate ability. Modifications to attribute ranks should be imposed after the character's initial attribute ranks have been determined.

Players can choose to increase or reduce whole attributes or may choose to modify only a sub-set of an attribute. For instance, if a character is exceptionally strong, the Player can increase the character's Physique or choose to raise just the character's strength. Whenever the character is called upon to use strength, the Player uses the new increased value, but for all other uses of Physique, the normal value is used.

**Positive:** Each +1 trait increases a sub-attribute by 1. Each +2 trait increases an attribute by 1.

**Negative:** Each -1 trait decreases a sub-attribute by 1. Each -2 trait decreases an attribute by 1.

## Connections and Contacts / Debts and Obligations

Connections and contacts is a positive trait that can help the character with extra resources and expertise when called upon. Conversely, a character's debts and obligations can interfere with a character's life. The rank of connections depends on how often the character can call upon them, how powerful they are, and how the character is expected to repay them. Similarly, the rank of obligations depends on how often the character must fulfill them, and how dangerous or extensive the obligation is.

## Disability

The character possesses a physical or mental disability that makes life more challenging. The disability can hamper a character's skill rolls or prevent a character from even attempting a specific action. For example, being hard of hearing would increase the difficulty in perceiving sounds while total deafness would make any attempt to listen an automatic failure.

## Experience

Most characters begin play with an average amount of training and experience, reflected in the number of skill points the character has. Having more experience at the start of a campaign is considered a positive trait, whereas starting the campaign with fewer skill points is a negative trait. How many skill points, more or less, a character starts with depends on the rank of the trait.

**Positive:** 5 extra skill points per +1 trait.

**Negative:** 5 fewer skill points per -1 trait.

For example, a character with a +3 experience trait has 15 more skill points and a character with a -2 trait in experience has 10 less skill points to distribute.

## Extraordinary Senses

The character has sensory abilities beyond most characters. Examples include ultrasonic hearing, long-range vision, tracking scent, infrared vision, or even exotic senses like sonar and x-ray vision. When

using this sense, the character uses the perception skill as per normal senses. The GM and Players must agree upon the exact nature of the sense including what can block the sense or prevent it from working properly.

### Personality Traits

Personality traits include a character's attitudes, fears, prejudices, and morals. In the most severe cases, when these traits become a hindrance to the character, the GM may allow the Player to count it as a negative trait. Personality traits considered beneficial in the campaign setting count as a positive trait. The rank of a trait will depend on how often the personality trait comes into play and how severe it is.

### Physical Size

A character's size influences how much damage the character can take before feeling negative effects. Larger characters can sustain more physical punishment than smaller ones. The term "size" refers to both height and weight, so an exceptionally tall character might be of the same relative size as a shorter character who has more bulk. The precise measurement of a character's height and weight is left to the Player. Ranks beyond  $\pm 5$  are not available for human characters without the use of supernatural powers.

Rank	Size
+10	The character is the size of a dragon or two-story house.
+8	The character is the size of an elephant or small dwelling.
+6	The character is the size of a bear or horse.
+4	The character is exceptionally large, in the top 5% of the population.
+2	The character is large, in the upper 25% of the population in size.
0	The character is of average size, in the middle 50% of the population.
-2	The character is small, in the lower 25% of the population in size.
-4	The character is exceptionally small, in the lower 5% of the population.
-6	The character is the size of a housecat or badger.
-8	The character is the size of a rat or mouse.
-10	The character is the size of a bug.

Size affects how much damage the character can withstand in combat. The effect of Stun and Wound Thresholds are detailed in the Combat chapter.

Size Trait	Stun Threshold	Wound Threshold
+4	6	6
+2	6	5
+0	5	5
-2	4	5
-4	4	4

Large or small characters can also adjust their Physique sub-attribute (see the Attributes trait, above) to increase or decrease the amount of damage they sustain in combat.

### Skill Package

This trait can be used to simulate a character with a natural affinity for a specific group of skills or as a way to create setting-specific careers. The Player defines a group of 4 to 6 closely related skills, such as skills involving music, language, science and math, art, or even weapons skills. Each +1 of this trait increases the skill base for all these skills by +1. For example, a character with a +4 affinity for animals

would have a +4 applied to the skill base of animal empathy, animal training, riding, and veterinary medicine.

Sample careers:

**Bodyguard:** Brawling, Empathy, Perception, Streetwise, Weapon (pick one)

**Diplomat:** Act, Empathy, Knowledge (Etiquette), Language (pick one), Persuasion

**Scout:** Navigation, Perception, Stealth, Survival, Track

**Thief:** Intrusion, Sleight of Hand, Stealth, Streetwise, Weapon (pick one)

## Social Standing

A character's social standing determines a character's resources, friends, spheres of influence, public perception, and wealth. Being of a higher social rank is a positive trait, whereas it is a negative trait to be of lower social standing. However, characters of high social class typically have responsibilities and duties that can interfere the campaign activities. A person's social class can have negative or positive effects depending on the circumstances. An untouchable at a celebrity ball will run into all kinds of grief and problems. Conversely, a nobleman who attempts to conduct business in an impoverished section of town might run into considerable resistance.

Rank	Social Standing	
+4	Royalty	Fortune 500
+3	Nobility	Upper Class
+2	Aristocracy	Lower Upper Class
+1	Merchant Class	Upper Middle Class
0	Professional Class	Middle Class
-1	Commoner	Lower Middle Class
-2	Peasant	Upper Lower Class
-3	Indentured Servant	Lower Class
-4	Slave, Untouchable	Homeless

## Ranking Traits

The table below offers a guideline when deciding upon the appropriate rank of a trait or when creating a new trait.

Severity	Frequency		
	Rare	Common	Constant
Minor	1	2	3
Moderate	2	3	4
Major	3	4	5

Severity is a measure of how drastically the trait affects the character or the campaign.

Frequency reflects how often the trait would come into play or make a difference in the game. Rare traits might only be used over other gaming session. A common trait is used about once a session or a few times during an adventure. A trait that occurs constantly gets used many times in a gaming session. Just because a trait cannot be turned off, it does not mean that the trait should automatically be treated as a constant trait. What is important is how often it makes a contribution, positive or negative, to the story.

## Character Creation

Character creation should be an interactive process between the Players and the GM. The Players should come up with character concepts, and assign skills and traits that are appropriate for the campaign. The GM should guide the Players, offering suggestions to make the most interesting and appropriate characters possible.

### Concept

All character creation should start with a basic concept. The concept can be a simple one-sentence description or a fully detailed essay of several hundred words with an extensive description of the character's background, personality, and appearance. However extensive, the character concept should provide a basic outline of the character's abilities and provide clues about how the character's attributes, skills, and traits will look.

### Attributes and Skills

The characters' starting Attribute and Skill ranks depends on the style of the campaign, agreed upon by the Players and GM. In an average campaign, for instance, the characters will be ordinary with few, if any, exceptional abilities. In a larger-than-life campaign, the characters may have many exceptional abilities.

Campaign Style	Attribute Points	Skill Points
Average	16	45
Above Average	20	55
Heroic	24	65
Larger Than Life	28	75

Players distribute attribute points between the four attributes. If the GM has created new Attributes, the attribute points should be increased accordingly.

Each skill point applied to a specific skill increases the skill's base by 1. All characters automatically have a skill base of zero in all skills except their native language, which has a skill base of 4 at no cost of skill points.

### Traits

Characters can have any number of positive traits of any rank. However, the character must balance these positive traits with negative ones. The sum of all the character's positive and negative ranks must equal zero. The ranks of the negative ranks do not have to match the positive ranks, so long as their total ranks match. For instance, a rank 3 positive trait could be balanced with a rank -3 negative trait or three negative traits each with rank -1.

The GM and Players may agree to set a maximum limit on the total positive, or negative, ranks allowed. This helps prevent Players from loading up characters with negative traits so that they can have more positive traits. For example, they could agree that characters can have up to 5 total ranks of positive traits. In this case, the character cannot have a total of 6 or more positive trait ranks even if they are balanced by negative traits.

## Free Traits

For higher-level campaigns, the characters may be given a number of positive trait ranks that do not have to be balanced by negative traits.

Campaign Style	Free Traits
Average	0
Above Average	3
Heroic	6
Larger Than Life	9

## Possessions

The GM determines what kind of equipment characters have at the start of a campaign. This can be based on a set amount of starting money or whatever seems appropriate given the character's profession, skills, and the setting.

## Character Advancement

One of the enjoyments of roleplaying is to see characters grow in experience and ability. However, characters must grow in a natural and believable way. The GM and Players must agree on how a character will advance in ability, and work the advancement into the story.

## Experience

At the conclusion of an adventure, which can span many game sessions, the GM rewards each character with 1 to 5 experience points. An average adventure is worthy of 2 experience points. These points are doled out as a function of the fulfillment of the characters' goals and overcoming challenges. GMs may also wish to reward good roleplaying and Player inventiveness with character experience.

Experience points convert directly to skill points. A character can improve the skill base of any skill used in the course of the adventure. Characters can improve other skills that were not used in the adventure if the GM and Players agree on why the characters' skill improved. Perhaps the character had undergone some training from other characters during the adventure or will spend time after the adventure to seek out a professional tutor.

## Traits

Traits cannot normally be changed after character creation, since they tend to be more permanent aspects of the character's description than skill ranks. However, if deemed appropriate for the character and campaign, a GM may allow a Player to rearrange a character's traits.

One way to reduce or remove a negative trait is to increase or add another negative trait. Alternatively, an equal number of positive traits can be decreased or removed. The sum of all negative and positive traits must always equal zero.

## Sample Characters

The characters presented in this section were created using the deterministic method, with no random die rolling.

### Rhoenda Dumas

#### Concept

Rhoenda is a rogue and a vagabond. In a fantasy world dominated by an oppressive and corrupt holy empire, those who would speak out for their freedom are deemed criminals and hunted down as enemies of the empire. Rhoenda lives by her wits and her sword, always one step ahead of the chopping block. She earns her living by taking from those who benefit most from the empire's corruption.

#### Attributes

Attribute	Rank	Notes
Physique	5	Rhoenda is physically fit, but not muscular.
Coordination	7	She possesses exceptional quickness, balance, and agility.
Intellect	5	Though she has no formal education, Rhoenda's mind is sharp.
Aura	3	Rhoenda is a loner and uncomfortable interacting with other people. For tests of will, her Aura is treated like a 6 (see her Traits, below).

#### Skills

Skill	Base	Rank
Acrobatics	3	5
Brawl	3	5
Climb	5	6
Craft		
Picking Locks	1	3
Dodge	7	7
Empathy	3	3
Language		
Tharis	4	4
Perception	5	5
Ride	1	4
Stealth	5	6
Survival	4	4
Throw	5	6
Track	1	3
Weapons		
Crossbow	3	5
Knife	5	6
Sword	9	8

Her native language, Tharis, is purchased at no cost.

#### Traits (3 Free Traits)

Hunted by Imperial Authorities: -3  
 Connections to Criminal Underground: +2  
 Attribute: +3 to Aura rolls involving willpower or inner strength (3 traits)  
 Experience: +5 skill points (60 total) (1 trait)

#### Possessions

Blouse, pants, and hard leather boots  
 Rapier and 2 daggers with scabbards and sharpening stone  
 Satchel with change of clothes, soap, and candles  
 Length of rope with grappling hook  
 Change purse with 7 gold coins and a few coppers

## Father Colin Mallory

### Concept

In this modern world, all it not what it seems. Powers of unspeakable evil vie for control of the world, using foul creatures and the most vile persons humanity has to offer as their minions. Father Mallory is fighting a war against evil, with only his Faith and a strong left hook. He grew up a scrappy street-smart kid in Irish Boston and retains many of those qualities. He stays in close contact with the community, helping run an after-school sports clinic for kids.

### Attributes

Attribute	Rank	Notes
Physique	6	Father Mallory is a strong, impressive figure.
Coordination	3	He is not known as a graceful individual.
Intellect	4	Though educated, Colin is of average intelligence.
Aura	7	He possesses an insurmountable will and personal presence.

### Skills

Skill	Base	Rank
Brawl	5	6
Dodge	3	3
Empathy	7	7
Knowledge		
New England	2	3
Languages		
English	6	5
Latin	6	5
Perception	2	3
Persuasion	5	6
Question	3	5
Social Sciences		
History	4	4
Theology	6	5
Teach	5	6
Throw	5	4

He is very well read in his native language, English, and has added 2 to the skill base, raising it to 6.

### Traits (0 Free Traits)

Catholic Priest: +0 (Has potential benefits but with some significant obligations)

Physical Size: +1 (Stun Threshold of 6, Wound Threshold of 5)

Attribute: -1 (Treat Physique as rank 5 during feats requiring stamina or endurance)

### Possessions

Catholic priest robes, worn bible, crucifix and other accoutrements

Lives in a small apartment with minimal furnishing

Church office is cluttered with books, papers, and sports equipment

Carries \$27 cash in a weathered wallet

### 3: Character Actions

When a character attempts to do something, the GM must determine if the action occurs automatically, with no die rolling, or if a roll is required. The GM must also decide which skill (or skills) is most appropriate for the situation.

#### ***Automatic Actions***

If an action is sufficiently mundane, run-of-the-mill, boring, and does not add drama to the story, the die rolling can be skipped. Examples are any actions that are very likely for anyone to accomplish: climbing a ladder, shattering a wineglass in a fireplace, carrying on a normal conversation, or standing up from a prone position. If more adverse conditions exist, like climbing a ladder while in a sword duel, trying to hit the fireplace from 20 paces away, conversing in an unfamiliar language, or trying to stand on slick ice, then a roll would be required.

If a character has some skill in a particular activity, then more complex actions also become automatic. A person with riding skills can ride a trained horse over smooth ground without a roll, a doctor will automatically know what to do for a broken arm, and a photographer does not require a roll to take decent pictures. These activities might be difficult, and require a die roll, for untrained individuals, but characters with a non-zero skill rank in these areas should not need to roll.

At the other extreme, if the action is so outrageous and impossible that it could never succeed, the GM can declare the action a failure without requiring a die roll. Whether or not these acts of sheer folly warrant a chance at success will depend a lot on the genre and the level of realism desired. Some GMs and Players like to roll in these cases, just on the slim chance that it might actually be pulled off.

#### ***Dice Actions***

If an action is sufficiently perilous, dramatic, or uncertain, then the GM can require a die roll.

The die roll can be used not to tell whether or not a character succeed at something, but rather how well the character performed. In these cases, a failed roll means that the results were not very good even though technically a success. A medically trained person does not need to roll to set a broken bone, but a failed roll could indicate that there are complications. Anyone can take a snapshot, but a roll is required to take a good picture.

#### **Unopposed actions**

When the character is not acting directly against another character, the action is called unopposed. There is still opposition based on the circumstances and the difficulty, but it does not come directly from another character who can also react to the situation. Examples of unopposed actions include picking a lock, hitting a stationary target, drawing a picture, and deciphering a code.

- 1) The GM determines which skill is most appropriate for the situation.
- 2) A d10\* is rolled and added to the skill rank.
- 3) The GM may apply modifiers to the roll, up or down, depending on the difficulty.
- 4) If the total is 10 or above, then the action succeeds. If not, then the action fails.

#### **Opposed Actions**

When two (or more) characters are engaging in actions against each other, this is an opposed action. These include a character searching for another who is hiding, one character is trying to hit the other, making a sale to a wary customer, or playing a competitive game of strategy.

- 1) The GM determines which skill is most appropriate for each character, who may be using different skills.
- 2) A d10\* is rolled separately for each character and added to their respective skill ranks.

- 3) The GM may apply difficulty modifiers to one or both rolls, depending on the circumstances and whether one character has an advantage.
- 4) Whichever character gets the highest total wins.

In some cases, the characters are not directly interfering with each other, like trying to hit the same target or trying to woo the same person. Each character must make a roll just as with an unopposed action, trying to reach a target of 10. The winner is either the character who had the highest total or the one who did not fail. The winner of the outcome did the best job, like getting closest to the bull's-eye or winning favor over the other. It is possible for both characters to fail, and these circumstances are sometimes the most interesting.

If the opposed action results in a dead tie, the GM should follow the same guidelines for marginal results described below.

### **Which Skill?**

Most of the time, a character will attempt an action which falls within the definition of a specific skill. The selection of which skill to use is not always obvious, however.

### **Related Skills**

There are times when a character does not have a very good skill rank in the required skill, but the character does possess some skill in a closely related skill. For instance, a character who knows how to drive a car can use some of that knowledge when trying to pilot a speedboat.

The GM may allow characters to use a related skill in place of a more appropriate one. Doing so makes the task more difficult and the GM should increase the difficulty appropriately. Typically, an additional modifier of -3 (or worse) should be applied to the skill roll. The GM should never feel obligated to allow the use of related skills and may require the character to use the most appropriate skill or even declare the action an automatic failure.

### **Attribute Rolls**

Some actions do not require training in a specific skill but rely more on natural ability. For example, if a character is trying to remember a clue, this relies more directly on memory and intelligence than any one skill.

The GM may call for a skill roll based on an attribute instead of a skill. The roll is made exactly as per any other action roll, except that the character's attribute is used directly, with no averaging. If there is an appropriate skill then it must be used, even if the character does not possess it. In this case, the attribute is averaged with the skill base of zero, which equals one-half the attribute.

### **(Complementary Skills)**

Most of the time, actions require only one specific skill. However, the character might have other skills which could help in the task. In these cases, the GM may give a small bonus to the roll, increasing the chance of success. How much this bonus is will depend on the character's level in the complementary skill and how helpful the skill would be. In any case, the bonus should not be larger than +2 or so.

### **(Working Collaboratively)**

When two or more characters try to work together on the same task, the GM must decide if such assistance will improve the chances of success. If so, roll a d10\* for every character involved in the collaboration. The highest roll is then added to the character with the highest appropriate skill rank.

The GM may require that all participants have a minimum skill rank before they can be helpful. For instance, the GM may say that a particular task requires a skill rank of 4 or more. Alternatively, the GM may determine that in order to be a valuable assistant, the characters cannot have a skill rank more than 2

ranks below the highest skilled character. Those characters whose skill rank is too low would not be allowed to roll.

There may be a practical limit to how many characters can assist at once. For instance, if everyone is trying to break down a door, then realistically only a few people can actually get close enough to be of any help. The GM may also determine that some minimum amount of skill is required before a character can be of assistance, and the die rolls from unskilled characters can be ignored.

It is also possible to worsen the chances of success by having too many people trying to help -- too many cooks spoil the broth. In these cases, every character makes a d10\* roll, but the lowest roll is used and added to the character with the highest skill.

### ***(Extended d10\* Rolls)***

Extended d10\* rolls generate more extreme results, both positive and negative, than typically occur using the standard rules.

### **(Rolling Nines)**

Anytime the d10\* comes up a "9", a second die can be rolled and added to the first. Hypothetically, this process of rolling 9s and be extended indefinitely, though the GM should probably set a practical limit of only one extra roll. This limit will depend on the level of realism the campaign has. If the characters are expected to perform outlandish feats, surviving despite impossible odds, then there should not be a limit.

### **(Rolling Zeros)**

If a "0" is rolled on a d10\*, it results in an automatic failure of the attempted task and may result in a fumble. To check for a fumble, the skill roll is tried again. If this second roll results in a failure or another "0," then the character has fumbled, resulting in an extraordinary mishap or setback. Fumbles are discussed in more detail below. If this second skill roll is a success, the action is still a failure, but the character successfully avoids a fumble.

### **(Calling 4s)**

Rather than roll a die, a Player may simply "Call a 4." The die roll is automatically considered a 4 and added to the skill rank. This prevents rolling a zero but it also eliminates the possibility of rolling a nine. In essence, the character is playing it safe, but still hoping that a 4 will good enough to succeed. Calling 4s can also be used when rolling for damage and armor (see below) to speed up combat.

## ***Difficulty Modifiers***

Deciding the proper difficulty modifiers can be tricky, but GMs are encouraged not to dwell on the decision. Keeping the action moving and maintaining the flow of the game is more important than debating whether to apply a modifier of +2 or +3.

## **Percentages**

The default difficulty for the majority of actions is +0. The percentage chance of success is then 10% per ability rank. For example, a character with a skill rank of 6 has a 60% chance to succeed. Each plus or minus 1 applied to the roll alters this chance, up or down, by 10%. The same character would have an 80% chance to succeed if the difficulty modifier was +2, but only a 30% of success if the difficulty modifier was -3.

## Unopposed Actions

When a character tries an unopposed action, the GM should look at all the factors that make the task easier or more difficult than most. Sometimes, the rules will dictate an appropriate modifier, such as the range of a missile weapon. Most of the time, however, the difficulty is determined solely by the GM's judgment.

Difficulty	Modifier
Child's play	+5
Simplistic	+4
Very Easy	+3
Easy	+2
Straight-forward	+1
Average	+0
Challenging	-1
Difficult	-2
Very difficult	-3
Excruciating	-4
Hellish	-5

Modifiers above +5 and below -5 are possible, but not recommended. If the task is so easy that the modifier is above +5, then it probably should be treated as an automatic action. A good rule of thumb is that if the character can succeed even if a zero is rolled, then do not bother rolling. Then again, GMs who use extended d10\* rolls might require a roll on the 10% chance that a zero is rolled, resulting in a failure or even a fumble.

Similarly, if a task is so difficult that it has a modifier below -5, then the GM might declare it an automatic failure. If using extending d10\* rolls, it is possible to roll considerably high and perform actions with very negative difficulty factors. Again, it all comes down to the level of realism and if the characters are expected to do the impossible.

As a general rule, if the character knows that a task will be more difficult than most, then the GM should tell the Player what the modifier is. If, on the other hand, the task has difficulties that are unknown to the character, then the GM should apply the difficulty modifier in secret.

## Opposed Actions

Difficulty modifiers for opposed actions work exactly the same way and use the same scale as unopposed actions. The key to remember with opposed actions is that adding a modifier to one character has the same effect as subtracting the same modifier from the other character. So, if a character is at a disadvantage that the GM considers "Very Difficult," then either a -3 is applied to the character's roll or +3 is added to the opponent's roll, but not both. Follow the rule that if the character knows about the difficulty, then the modifier should be applied to the character's roll; otherwise for hidden difficulty factors, apply it to the opponent's roll.

## (Variable Outcomes)

For added drama and realism, the GM may wish to employ a more descriptive approach to the outcome of actions beyond "it succeeded" and "it failed." Based on the roll total, and how close it is to the target number, the GM can describe the outcome differently. For unopposed actions, the target is 10, but for opposed actions, the target is the total of the other character.

How Close To Target	Outcome
Under by more than 5	Fumble
Under by 2 to 5	Failure
Within plus or minus 1	Marginal
Over by 2 to 5	Success
Over by more than 5	Critical

## (Fumble)

A fumble is a mishap, setback, or catastrophe. Very often, a fumble will leave characters worse-off than if they had not tried the action in the first place. Fumbles have been known to break equipment, injure the character or other people, and put the character in very awkward and often embarrassing situations. Fumbles should not be used as an excuse for the GM to be cruel such as outright killing or maiming characters. Fumbles can be humorous and/or make the game a lot more interesting.

### Examples of Fumbles

- While picking a lock, the picks get broken off and/or jammed in the lock.
- While hiding in tall grass, a mouse runs up the character's pant leg, making the character jump up and shriek.
- While trying to override a self-destruct mechanism, the countdown clock is sped up to double speed and/or makes the self-destruct irreversible.
- While lost a foreign land, the character asks a passer-by for directions but accidentally says "Direct me to your pickle."
- While riding, the mount turns around and wanders off in the opposite direction or the character is thrown off resulting in a bruised posterior and ego.
- While trying to patch a pirate uplink to a secret government satellite, the character fries the electronics, triggers the satellites security alerts, or receives reruns of *The Rocky and Bullwinkle Show*.

## (Failure)

With a failure, characters do not succeed with what they were trying to accomplish, but without the added negative effects of a fumble. If the action was particularly perilous, like swimming across a raging river, then a failure could be harmful or even deadly. For less dangerous activities though, like building a makeshift radio, a failure simply means that the character will have to start over and try again. The character may or may not have some idea of what went wrong, and the GM should indicate any information that might be helpful in the future.

Whether or not a second attempt can be made will depend on the circumstances, like how much time and how many resources the character has. The GM should disallow any repeat attempts if the task is obviously beyond the character's capabilities or resources. A character might also try a different tactic to resolve a problem, like using threats or blackmail instead of persuasion to illicit somebody's help.

## **(Marginal)**

A marginal result is neither a clear success nor failure. The character may have accomplished only a portion of the task at hand or perhaps succeeded but with some negative side effects. Marginal results are an opportunity to add suspense to the game. The character might literally be hanging from a thread, teetering between victory and defeat. In these cases, a second skill roll might be needed to determine the fate of the character, though the second skill used might be different than the first one rolled. If the character missed the target by 1, it should be interpreted more towards the negative, while making the target by 1 should yield a more positive outcome.

### **Examples of Marginal Results**

- While leaping over a chasm, the character misses the other side, but manages to grab hold of a loose vine ten feet below the edge. Now, the character must find a way to climb up the side of the cliff.
- While sneaking past an unwary guard, the character bumps into a chair, which alerts the guard who does not see the character right away. Now, sneaking past is going to be more difficult.
- While bandaging a nasty cut, the character manages to stop the bleeding, but the wound will linger and/or leave a noticeable scar.
- While cooking for royalty, the character's cuisine is adequate and does not offend the guests, but it does not impress them either.
- While interrogating a local snitch, the character gets some information clouded in half-truths, and it will take better persuasion to get the whole truth.
- While stealing a car, the character gets the car started, but the car suffers from unforeseen problems like being low on gas, having bad performance, or a having busted taillight that could attract the attention of the police.

In opposed actions, the GM should interpret a marginal result as a tie or draw with no clear victor. In combat, this typically means the attacker struck a blow, but at only half the normal damage. In some cases, it is either more realistic or it behooves the story to have a clear victor in the contest. In these cases, there are several methods the GM can use as a tiebreaker.

### **Examples of Tiebreakers**

- **Highest Roll:** If the characters' totals were not exactly equal, then the character who rolled the higher number is the victor.
- **Skill Rank:** The best-trained individual with the highest base skill rank wins.
- **Luck:** Whoever spent the most Luck points during the skill attempt wins, else victory goes to the character with the highest Luck.
- **Do-over:** Simply repeat the skill attempt until a clear victor emerges. The second skill roll might involve a different, though related, skill. Subsequent skill rolls can also be given bonuses or penalties based on the circumstances.
- **Other:** Any consistent method created by the GM such as the Players' characters always win, flipping a coin, who brought the best food to the game, etc.

## **(Success)**

With a success, characters clearly accomplish their tasks, but not a particularly spectacular way. The character receives no special bonuses or attention from a moderate success, except on the merits of the task itself. Compared to a critical result, a mere success will appear boring and mundane.

## **(Critical)**

A critical result is the best possible outcome for a given situation—everything worked out exactly the way it was supposed to, or even better. The GM should reward the character with an added bonus based on the situation. Typically, the task was completed in record time or appeared very impressive to onlookers. Critical results can go a long way in boosting a character's ego and reputation. It is also possible for a critical to include benefits unrelated to the task at hand.

### **Sample Bonuses from Critical Successes**

- While crafting an item like a sword or a piece of artwork, the resulting product is of exceptional aesthetic beauty and would be worth far more than similar objects.
- While bargaining to buy an item, the character gets a deal on another item the character had been searching for.
- While hacking through a computer system, the character breaks the security in almost no time and/or is able to blame the security breach on a rival.
- While fixing a car engine, the character is able to tune it so well that it gets added horsepower and performance. For a week or so, anyone driving the vehicle has a bonus of +1 to all driving related rolls.
- While searching a room for valuables, the character also discovers a secret passageway or finds private, incriminating letters that will be useful in the future.
- While performing in a public marketplace, the character draws such a crowd and gets such an ovation, that the king invites the character to perform in his court.

## **(A Note on Critical and Fumbled Results)**

The GM must keep in mind the difficulty of the task when interpreting a critical or fumble. To achieve a critical for a simple task is hardly worthy of notice. Realism can limit what can be accomplished with a critical; there are some things that simply are not possible no matter how high the skill roll was. The same is true for fumbles. If it was sheer folly to attempt the task in the first place, then a fumble might not mean anything more dramatic than a failure. GMs should feel free to downplay the significance of a critical or fumble if it hampers the believability and realism of the story.

In opposed actions, keep in mind that a critical success for one character is a fumble for the other. If the GM awards a bonus for the critical success, it is overkill to further penalize the character who fumbled. The GM should apply one or the other, but not both. Whenever possible, the GM should describe the outcome from the point of view of the Players' characters.

## **(Luck)**

There are several ways to simulate a character's luck in a roleplaying game. This section is intended to show some of the possibilities. GMs and Players are encouraged to work out their own methods that suit their campaign.

### **(Luck Points)**

Every character starts a campaign with a number of luck points, equal to the character's Aura attribute. The GM may wish to increase the number of available luck points for more cinematic and less-realistic games or reduce the amount of luck for gritty, realistic genres. Luck points can be spent in a number of ways to help characters grasp victory from the jaws of defeat. It is assumed that all luck points are applied to action rolls, though the GM may allow luck to be used for rolling damage.

- After a roll is made, the roll can be increased by +1 per luck point spent. This does not counteract the effects of rolling a 0 and fumbling, however. Plus, the GM is not under any obligation to tell the Player how many luck points are needed for the character to succeed.
- Before a roll is made, a number of luck points are allocated. +2 is added to the roll for every luck point spent. Rolling a 0 is still counted as a fumble, though.
- After a roll is made, four luck points can be spent to re-roll the die. This will cancel the first roll and can be used to avoid fumbles.

Spent luck points return at a rate determined by the GM. Typically, the character returns to full luck points at the beginning of the next adventure. For prolonged adventures that take many gaming sessions, the GM may allow a faster return of luck points. Other GMs may require characters to buy back luck points with experience points, perhaps at 3 experience points per point of luck.

### **(Luck Rolls)**

In the course of play, questions will arise that can have significant effects on the characters. Whenever the GM does not know the answer to one of these questions, the GM may ask for a luck roll, based on the character's Aura attribute. These are treated as any unopposed action roll, and the GM may even apply a difficulty based on how likely an event might occur. If the roll succeeds, the situation comes out in the character's favor; in other words, the character got lucky. If the roll fails, the character is faced with an unfortunate situation, doubly so if the luck roll is a fumble.

Example: A character is running from some thugs and breaks into an unoccupied car on the side of the road. The Player asks if the keys are in the ignition. The GM had not planned for this eventuality, so the GM has to decide on the spot whether or not there are keys. If there are, it will make the character's get-away must easier. If not, then the character will have to find other means of escape. The GM asks the Player to make a luck roll. Since this is a large city with a fair number of car thefts and other crimes, not many people would leave their keys in the car, and the GM adds a -2 modifier to the luck roll.

The GM can interpret the outcome of the luck roll to dictate the situation. In the above example, if the luck roll was a fumble, the car's owner could have seen the break in and gone after the character. On a failure, the character finds no keys and will have to either hot-wire the car or abandon it. With a marginal result, the GM decides the keys are in the car, but they are hidden; the character must spend some time looking for them. On a success, the character finds the keys in the ignition. A critical result could mean that the character finds other useful items in the car or perhaps the car belonged the thugs, who no longer have a means to continue the chase.

If more than one character is involved in a scene, the GM could allow any or all of them to make a luck roll or even use the guidelines for collaborative skill use (see below). To prevent characters from over using their luck rolls, the GM might wish to reduce a character's luck by one if the luck roll succeeds. The luck would return in the same manner as luck points, above.

## 4: Combat

Combat is handled like other actions, though most often combat involves opposed actions. An entire chapter is dedicated to combat because few things in roleplaying are as dramatic, tense-filled, and dangerous to the characters as combat. Because of this, there are more specific, detailed rules about combat -- enough to warrant its own chapter.

### *The Combat Round*

In tense, action-filled, adrenaline-charged moments like combat, time seems to slow down. Toaster reflects this by breaking down the sequence of events into rounds. During each round, every character has a chance to act and be part of the action. The exact length of a round is set by the GM, based on the actions of the characters—three to five seconds is generally reasonable.

### Initiative

At the start of each round, each character involved in or near the action should make an initiative roll. 1d10 is added to the character's Coordination. The character with the highest initiative can act first, the second highest acts next, etc. Once every character has had a chance to act, the GM may start at the top of the list and allow everyone another chance to act. This process continues until every character has exhausted their available actions and a new round begins.

Characters may choose to skip their chance to act when their initiative number comes up. They may wish to wait for another character to act or for something special to happen. Skipped characters can take their action at any time after they were skipped. However, if they skip their first action, then they have to take their action before other characters start their second action; otherwise, they have waited too long and lost their opportunity to act. When a skipped character cuts into the action and it directly interferes with another character, the GM may require the characters to make opposed Coordination rolls to see who actually gets to act first.

### Normal Actions

During a round, a character may normally perform two actions. These can be two automatic actions, two dice actions, or one of each. If one of the character's actions involves movement, then the character can perform both actions simultaneously. In this case, the character's non-movement action takes place after every other character has had a chance to take their first action.

### Sample Actions

- Firing a gun while swinging from a chandelier.
- Running down a corridor while dodging darts shooting out of the walls.
- Riding a mount through a melee while swinging a sword at an enemy foot soldier.
- Diving for cover then throwing a grenade.
- Scrambling up from a prone position then running away.
- Scanning a room for a specific individual then shooting.
- Parrying a blow and then attacking with a hand-held weapon.

Simple activities, like walking a yard or two, talking, or making a quick hand signal, do not generally count as actions. The GM may allow a character to perform multiple automatic actions at the cost of reducing the character's initiative. For example, if a character in a gunfight has to draw a gun, the GM might subtract 3 from the character's initiative, making the character shoot later in the round than if the gun had already been drawn. The GM must decide if a character's activities are complex and time-consuming enough to warrant counting as an action.

## Long Actions

Some things that characters want to do may require the character's full concentration and may take several combat rounds to complete. Examples include picking a lock, hot-wiring a car, searching for computer files, etc. In these cases, the GM may disallow the character from performing any other action until the current task is completed. The character always has the option of stopping a long action to take another action; however, the character may be forced to start their long action from scratch.

## Attacking and Defending

### Attack Sequence

When an attack is made against another character, there are five distinct steps that should be followed. Each of these steps can be complicated by various factors, such as fumbles and miscellaneous modifiers. Steps 3 through 5 only apply if the attack roll exceeds the defense roll.

#### 1) Attack roll

The attack roll is made as per any skill roll, using whatever weapon or unarmed combat skill the character is using. If the attack roll is a fumble, the attack automatically misses, and no defense roll is necessary. The GM can also penalize the fumbling character by increasing the difficulty of the character's next attack and/or defense roll or by using a fumble-based table.

**Hand-to-Hand Attacks:** The attack roll must exceed the character's dodge or parry skill whichever is most appropriate. If the attack roll does not exceed this amount, the attack misses and there is no need to make a defense roll.

**Ranged Attacks:** The attack roll must be 10 or greater, taking into account any difficulty factors, such as those caused by range. If the attack roll is less than 10, the attack automatically misses and there is no need to make a defense roll.

#### 2) Defense roll

**Hand-to-Hand Attacks:** The defense roll is made with either the dodge skill or the skill rank of a weapon being used to parry. Keep in mind that shields count as weapons. Except in martial arts based campaigns, the GM should probably disallow using an unarmed combat skill to parry an attack made by a weapon.

**Ranged Attacks:** If the attack is ranged, then the defender must either dodge or parry with a shield. The GM should only allow a hand-to-hand weapon skill parry a ranged attack in martial arts based campaigns and with significant difficulty.

If the defense roll is equal to or greater than the attack roll, the attack is unsuccessful. On a successful attack, continue on to the damage roll, step 3. If the GM is using Variable Outcomes, a marginal success still counts as a successful attack. In these cases, the damage roll in step 3 is reduced.

#### 3) Damage roll

If the attack is successful, the attacker rolls  $1d10^* + WC$  (Weapon Class) of the attack to determine how much damage is delivered. If the attack roll was a critical success, the GM may increase the damage; conversely, on a marginal success, the damage may be decreased.

#### 4) Protection roll

The defender rolls  $1d10^* + AC$  (Armor Class) to determine how much damage is prevented by the defender's natural resistance to damage and/or other means of protection, like armor or force fields. This roll can be modified by the use of armor-piercing weapons and/or the results from a critical hit table.

## 5) Apply damage

If the damage roll exceeds the protection roll, the two are subtracted. This difference is how much damage the character actually takes. If the protection roll equals or exceeds the damage roll, then no damage is taken from the attack.

## Shields

Shields are specially designed for defense and give the wielder a bonus while defending, based on the size of the shield. The bonus is applied to the shield's parry skill roll. If a character chooses to dodge or parry with a different weapon, the shield bonus does not apply.

Shield Size	Bonus
Small	+1
Medium	+2
Large	+3

Shields can sometimes impede a character from making an effective attack because the shield gets in the way. To represent this, the GM may penalize an attack by an amount comparable the defensive bonus the shield provides. For instance, a character wielding both a sword and medium shield would suffer a -2 penalty when attacking with the sword.

## Range Penalties

Attacks made at point blank range incur no range penalties. Attacks from a further distance incur a penalty, reducing the likelihood of striking the target. Which distances qualify as short, medium, etc. range depends on the weapon and local conditions. The use of scopes and similar enhancements reduces the range penalty, as does taking a round to aim.

Distance	Penalty
Point Blank	0
Short	-1
Medium	-2
Long	-3
Extreme	-4

## (Weapon Length)

Hand-to-hand weapons have range limitations based on their respective lengths. To fight with a short sword, one has to be closer to the opponent than when using a long spear, for instance. When using longer weapons, it is possible to be so close to an opponent that it is difficult to make a decent strike.

If two combatants are using roughly the same length of weapon, then the GM can ignore the effects of length. When making an attack from a non-optimum range, there is a -2 penalty to the attack roll. If the attack succeeds, the attacker is now at optimum range. If the attack fails, the range has not changed. If the weapon lengths are only slightly different, the GM may decrease the penalty to -1.

Example: A foot soldier with a pike is fighting a dismounted knight using a broad sword. At the beginning of combat, they are at optimum pike range—the knight will have to fight past the point to close with sword. The knight attacks with a -2 penalty and succeeds, which means that the knight was able to close to appropriate sword distance. The soldier, thinking fast, drops the pike and attacks with a dagger. Since the dagger requires closer range than the sword, the soldier attacks with a -2 penalty. The attack succeeds, so now the two are right next to each other. If the knight wishes to attack with the sword again, there will be a -2 penalty. The knight may try to kick or punch the soldier at no penalty, since the distance

required for a dagger and unarmed combat are about the same, though the GM may set the penalty of -1, since the dagger does have a longer reach than a fist alone.

### **(Stance)**

In combat, a character can choose to take an offensive or defensive stance. The character can increase an attack roll by sacrificing the defense roll, or visa-versa. The GM may allow the character to add a +1 or +2 bonus to an attack roll so long as a corresponding penalty is applied to the character's next defense roll, even if the defense roll is not made until the next round. Or the character may choose to increase the defense roll and penalize the character's next attack roll. If the character completely foregoes attacking (or defending) for the next two actions, the GM may allow a character a +3 bonus to defend (or attack).

## **Weapon and Armor Class**

The weapon class (WC) of a weapon indicates how much damage it can deliver. Similarly, the armor class (AC) of protection says how much damage it can stop. WC and AC use the same scale, so that a WC of 8 does the same amount of damage as an AC of 8 prevents.

Toaster uses the shorthand convention "WC/AC" to refer to both weapon class and armor class. This notation does not mean to divide the weapon class by the armor class. The only division Toaster uses is when calculating averages.

### **Weapon Class**

Those weapons that rely on a character's strength, like a sword, bow, or bare fist are called muscle-powered weapons. The WC of these weapons is the average of the weapon's WC and the character's Physique.

The tables below list some common muscle-powered weapons along with the WC of each. For instance, the WC of a bare fist is 0 and a kick has a WC of 2. A character with a Physique of 7 has a WC of 3 when punching and a WC of 4 when kicking. A bastard sword used two-handed has a WC of 9, so this same character would have a WC of 8 when using it.

For weapons that do not require strength to do damage, like handguns or grenades, use their WC directly without adding any factor from the character's Physique. For example, all characters, regardless of their Physique, have a WC of 9 when using a .44 magnum.

### **Armor Class**

To calculate a character's AC, add all the various forms of protection to the character's Physique and divide by 2 (round down). All characters have a base AC equal to half their Physique when not wearing any clothing or protection. Some characters may have innate protection, like extra thick hide, scales, or an exoskeleton, which can increase this AC.

For example, a character a Physique of 5 and thick lizard-like skin (AC 4) is wearing a Kevlar vest (AC 5); the character's total AC is 7.

### **WC/AC Rolls**

When a hit is scored in combat, the attacker rolls to determine the damage delivered by the blow. Meanwhile, the defender rolls to see how much damage is stopped. In each case, the roll is  $WC/AC+1d10^*$ . If the AC roll is higher than the WC roll, no damage is delivered. If the WC roll is higher, the defender takes damage equal to the WC roll minus the AC roll.

For example, a character with a WC of 5 has hit a character with AC of 4. The attacker rolls  $1d10^*$  and gets a 7, resulting in a total damage of 12. The defender rolls  $1d10^*$  and gets a 3, which stops a total of 7 points of damage. The victim of the attack takes a net 5 points of damage.

### **(WC/AC Roll Options)**

Using the above standard for WC/AC rolls, there is no correlation between how good an attack roll was and how much damage is done. GMs and Players may wish to modify the WC/AC roll so that it integrates the attack results. Below are some alternatives; many assume the GM is using the variable outcomes rules.

- Use the same 1d10\* result for both the attack and WC roll as well as the defense and AC roll. For example, a Player rolls a 7 on a 1d10\*, adding the character's attack skill. If the attack is successful, the Player takes that same 7 and adds the character's WC to determine how much damage is done. With this method, high attack rolls correspond to high WC rolls, and low defense rolls translate into low AC rolls.
- Use a critical hit table for attacks that were a critical success. The WC is rolled normally, but the Player also rolls on the critical hit table, which can increase the WC roll or have other advantageous effects. An example of a critical hit table appears in at the end of the chapter. Critical hit tables can also be used to include tactical benefits to the attacker instead of or addition to extra damage.
- Roll WC normally, but then increase the damage by the difference between the attack roll and defense roll. So, if an attack roll of 14 hits against a defense roll of 8, the damage roll is increased by 6.
- Roll the damage roll twice for critical or marginal hits. For a critical hit, use the higher roll; for a marginal hit, use the lower roll.
- On a marginal hit, halve the damage applied to the character, after subtracting the AC roll.

### **(Strength Requirements)**

In order to use a weapon in combat effectively, the character must have a minimum strength to lift and wield it. If the character is not strong enough, the weapon can still be used, but not as well as it could be.

Listed with each weapon is a strength requirement. If the character's Physique equals or exceed this minimum, then there are no problems using the weapon. If the character's Physique is too low, the character suffers a penalty equal to -1 per point of Physique below the requirement. For instance, if a weapon has a strength requirement of 5, but the character only has a Physique of 3, then there is a -2 penalty every time the weapon is used, for attacking or defending.

### **(Partial Armor)**

The AC listed assumes that the protection covers the majority of the character's body. The armor may only protect a small section or the character may use different types of armor in different locations. If the GM and Players care about this added detail and realism, they should use a hit location table. When a hit is scored, apply the appropriate AC based on where the attack landed and what AC is protecting that portion of the body.

## Sample Weapons and Armor

### Hand-to-Hand Weapons

Weapon	Base WC	STR Req.
Bare Fist	0	0
Reinforced Fist	1	0
Kick	2	0
Club	6	3
Mace, Light	7	4
Mace, Heavy	8	5
Flail	9	6
War Maul	10	7
Knife	4	1
Dagger	5	1
Short sword	6	2
Saber	7	3
Broadsword	8	4
Bastard sword	9	5
Great sword	10	6
Hatchet	5	3
Axe	7	4
Battleaxe	9	5
Spear	7	4

### Armor

Armor	Base AC
Winter Clothing	2
Leather, Soft	4
Heavy Hides	5
Leather, Hard	6
Leather, Reinforced	7
Chain mail	8
Plate	10
Kevlar, Light	4
Kevlar, Reinforced	7

### Ranged Weapons

Weapon	Base WC
Rock	2
Spear	6
Bow	8
Crossbow	10
Small caliber handgun	10
Medium caliber handgun	12
Large caliber handgun	14
Small caliber rifle	12
Medium caliber rifle	14
Large caliber rifle	16
Shotgun	20*

\*: Reduce the damage by WC by 5 times the range penalty. At extreme range (-4), the WC is 0, but still make a damage roll.

## Effects of Damage

The physical damage a character sustains should be more than numbers on a page. Players should roleplay their character's aches and pains, and have their characters react appropriately in the face of physical danger.

### Stun Points

Every point of damage that gets past a character's defenses counts as one stun point. Stun points reflect the effects of bruises, pain, and being bashed around. If a character accumulates too many stun points, the character can get disorientated, groggy, or even get knocked out. For every 5 cumulative points of damage, the character's condition worsens by a degree, suffering a penalty to all actions.

Total Stun	Character is...	Penalty
0 to 4	Fine	None
5 to 9	Bruised	-1
10 to 14	Battered	-2
15 to 19	Dazed	-3
20 to 24	Stunned	-4
25 or Over	Unconscious	

For example, if a character has taken 13 stun points, the character is battered and suffering a -2 penalty. If knocked out, the character will remain unconscious for as long as the GM deems appropriate.

### Wounds

For every 5 points of damage suffered from a single attack, a character takes a wound. Wounds may be bleeding gashes, broken bones, or massive tissue damage. Unarmed attacks do one less wound than indicated by the table below, down to a minimum of no wounds.

Damage from Single Attack	Wounds
0 to 4	None
5 to 9	1
10 to 14	2
15 to 19	3
etc.	etc.

Accumulated Wounds	Penalty
0	0
1	-1
2	-2
3	-3
4	-4
5 or more	Mortally Wounded

As a character accumulates wounds, physically demanding tasks become more difficult. For every wound, the character has a -1 penalty to all actions. The GM may also choose to impose a smaller penalty for mental activities. If a character is suffering penalties from stun points in addition to wounds, apply only the worst of the two penalties. Thus, a character who is dazed (-3 penalty) and has 4 wounds (-4 penalty) would have -4 applied to all actions.

A character who is mortally wounded is incapacitated and on death's door. Once a character has accumulated 5 or more wounds, the character must make a mortality check. This is an attribute check based on Physique at -1 per wound over 5. Any roll of 0 means the character dies immediately; any other failed roll means the character will die after a number of rounds equal to the roll. For example, a roll of 6 means the character will die after 6 rounds. If medical attention is given during this time, the player can

re-roll the mortality check. The success of the first aid or medical skill roll can act as a positive modifier to this roll. See the rules on healing, below.

Assuming a mortally wounded character is conscious, the GM should give mortally wounded characters a chance to perform simple actions, such as a world-saving shot or heartfelt soliloquy before shuffling off the mortal coil.

If the mortality check succeeds, then the character maintains a grip on life for a number of rounds equal to the roll minus 9. After this time, the character must re-roll Physique with the standard modifiers.

## Character Size

A character's size affects how much damage a character can sustain—larger characters can take more physical punishment than smaller ones. If a character is significantly smaller or larger than average, the character should take the Physical Size trait.

Average characters suffer a -1 modifier for every 5 points of cumulative stun points they take. Larger characters suffer -1 modifier every 6 points of cumulative stun points. Smaller characters suffer -1 modifier every 4 points of cumulative stun points.

Average characters take a wound for every 5 points of damage sustained from a single attack. Exceptionally large characters take a wound for every 6 points of damage, whereas very small characters take a wound for every 4 points of damage taken from a single attack.

Stun Threshold				
4	5	6		
Total Stun	Total Stun	Total Stun	Character is...	Penalty
0 to 3	0 to 4	0 to 5	Fine	None
4 to 7	5 to 9	6 to 11	Bruised	-1
8 to 11	10 to 14	12 to 17	Battered	-2
12 to 15	15 to 19	18 to 23	Dazed	-3
16 to 19	20 to 24	24 to 29	Stunned	-4
20 or Over	25 or Over	30 or Over	Unconscious	n/a

Wound Threshold			
4	5	6	
Attack Damage	Attack Damage	Attack Damage	Wounds
0 to 3	0 to 4	0 to 5	None
4 to 7	5 to 9	6 to 11	1
8 to 11	10 to 14	12 to 17	2
12 to 15	15 to 19	18 to 23	3
etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.

## (Unnamed Characters)

Cinematic campaigns often have a number of unnamed characters who are not meant to pose a real threat to the main characters. Collectively, these characters are known as mooks, thugs, cannon fodder, faceless minions, red-shirts, or similar terms. Whenever an unnamed character takes one or more wounds, the character is considered incapacitated and out of the fight. Whether or not the unnamed character is also mortally wounded depends on the weapon, the wishes of the attacker, and the judgment of the GM.

## (Bleeding)

For each wound a character has, the character takes 1 stun point per round from blood loss. For every 10 stun points taken from bleeding, the character suffers another wound. This added wound does not

normally increase the bleeding rate, though the GM might increase the rate of bleeding if the character is moving or aggravating the wounds. If the character continues to lose blood until the total wounds reach 5 or more, the character can bleed to death.

To stop the bleeding, medical skills must be applied. The wound penalty is applied to the medical skill roll. If the medical roll fails, the character must find other means of healing.

Alternatively, the GM might look the difference between the medical skill roll and 10 to determine the number of bleeding stun points stopped. In this case, the wound penalty is not applied. For example, a character who has 4 wounds is taking 4 stun points per round. Medical aid is attempted, with a roll of 13. Now the character is only taking 1 stun point per round from bleeding. Future medical rolls will still need to succeed by 4 or more to stop that last point of bleeding.

## Healing

Stun points recover fairly quickly. For each ten minutes of rest, a character's accumulated stun points reduce by the character's Physique (minimum of 1). The GM may wish to modify this recovery rate to reflect the realism of the campaign.

Wounds take longer to heal. Assuming minimal medical care, such as bandages and plenty of rest, a character's health may improve. At the end of a full week of rest, the character must make an unopposed roll based on Physique, applying any wound penalties. If the roll succeeds, one of the character's wounds heals. If the roll fails, the character's condition does not improve and the character must wait another week. If the roll is a fumble, the character's condition worsens, increasing the wound severity and penalty by 1.

For instance, a character with 4 wounds rests for a week and at the end of the week makes a Physique roll, applying the -4 modifier. If the roll succeeds, the character's wounds are reduced to 3, and the character suffers only a -3 penalty. Another week of rest will have to pass before any more improvement is made.

If the character receives medical attention, the character administering to the wounded should make a medical skill roll. This roll is modified by the wounded character's wound penalties. The amount by which the medical roll is made acts as a positive modifier to the wounded's Physique roll. In the case of first aid, this modifier is only applied once. Furthermore, if first aid was successfully applied soon after the character received the wounds, the GM may allow the character to make the first Physique roll at the end of a day or two instead of a full week. For long-term care, the modifier can be applied to all Physique rolls until the character either fails a roll or is wounded further.

For example, a character is shot, resulting in 2 wounds. The paramedics arrive soon and administer first aid. The paramedic gets a 14 on the first aid skill roll, which includes a -2 modifier for the wounds. The first Physique check the character makes will have +4 modifier due the excellent job of the paramedics.

The GM may wish to apply modifiers to the healing roll based on the medical facilities and technology. Lower technology increases the chances for infections, bones setting wrong, quack medicine, and other factors that can impede the healing process. Higher technology can not only increase the chances of recovery, but also decrease the time between Physique rolls.

### **(Miscellaneous Combat Tables)**

The tables below are designed to add more variability and excitement into combat. Many other roleplaying games use similar tables, most of which can be applied to Toaster. The tables presented here are just examples. GMs and Players may want to create tables specially tailored to the campaign.

#### **(Attack Critical or Defend Fumble)**

When an attacker scores a critical hit, or the defender fumbles, roll on the table below to determine the added effect. To use the table, roll a d10\* followed by a d6.

d10*	d6	Effect
0		No real effect
	1-3	The attacker appeared exceptionally graceful and skilled
	4-6	The defender appeared exceptionally clumsy and inept
1-2		A. Defender loses weapon
	1-3	Weapon dropped to ground at defender's feet
	4-5	Weapon dropped out of reach of defender
	6	Weapon breaks and is unusable
3-4		B. Defender is left off balance and out of position
	1-3	Defender suffers -2 penalty to all actions next round
	4-5	Defender suffers -4 penalty to all actions next round
	6	Defender trips and falls to ground
5-6		C. Attack bypasses defender's protection
	1-4	AC bonus from armor does not apply; use Physique only
	5-6	AC equals zero
7-8		D. Attack does extra damage
	1-3	Add 2 to the damage roll
	4-5	Add 5 to the damage roll
	6	Add 10 to the damage roll
9		Multiple effects; all effects are cumulative
	1-3	Roll for two categories Roll a d6: 1=A+B, 2=A+C, 3=A+D, 4=B+C, 5=B+D, 6=C+D
	4-5	Roll for three categories Roll a d6: 1-2=A+B+C, 3-4=A+C+D, 5-6=B+C+D
	6	Roll once for each category (A+B+C+D)

### (Hit Location)

When a hit is scored, the GM and Players may wish to know where on the body it landed. The GM can make up something that sounds appropriate or use a more random method, such as the hit location table. Designating the location of a hit can improve the narrative detail of the game and help the Player roleplay their characters' injuries. The GM and Players may also declare than a limb which takes more than a couple of wounds becomes disabled and useless until healed.

The table assumes that the wounded character is roughly humanoid. More exotic tables would be required for the non-humanoid races and species found in many fantasy and science fiction stories. To use the table, roll a d10\* and a d6 without adding them. For example, if the d10\* comes up a 3 and the d6 is a 6, this indicates the area around the hips or groin.

d10*	d6	Location
0		Head/Neck
	1	Neck/Throat
	2	Jaw/Mouth
	3	Eyes/Nose
	4	Ear (either)
	5-6	Forehead/Skull
1-3		Torso
	1	Shoulder (either)
	2-3	Chest/Upper Back
	4-5	Abdomen/Lower Back
	6	Hips/Groin
4		Left Arm
	1	Hand
	2-3	Forearm
	4	Elbow
	5-6	Upper Arm
5		Right Arm
	1	Hand
	2-3	Forearm
	4	Elbow
	5-6	Upper Arm
6-7		Left Leg
	1	Foot/Ankle
	2-3	Shin/Calf
	4	Knee
	5-6	Thigh
8-9		Right Leg
	1	Foot/Ankle
	2-3	Shin/Calf
	4	Knee
	5-6	Thigh