

SYSTEM

Routine game actions in routine situations almost always succeed. A character shouldn't have to roll to determine if they drove successfully to work, or cooked a basic meal. However, when the action becomes dramatic or extraordinary, players and the gamemaster should roll dice for the resolution.

It is important to know whether characteristics and skills succeed when danger threatens, or if they fail miserably in the face of stress. Dice allow crises and decision points to be resolved without the constant intervention of the gamemaster. Dice rolling is what turns Basic Roleplaying into a game system, not just a case of "Mother May I?" with the gamemaster taking the role of mother.

A gamemaster does not necessarily need to roll against themselves. If a non-player character is attempting to do something to another part of the environment, whether it's lifting a rock, convincing another non-player character of something, or leaping a chasm, the gamemaster may always just decide what the result is instead of rolling, but can always roll for a random result if desired. This keeps the dice rolling to a minimum and focused on the players' actions.

SUCCESS OR FAILURE?

The most important question in a roleplaying game is: "Do I succeed, or do I fail?" The next most important is: "How well do I succeed or fail?" Some skills (especially combat skills) are inherently dramatic and/or dangerous. These are always rolled for. Players and the gamemaster use percentage dice (D100) most of the time to determine success or failure.

Characteristic rolls use the same system as skill and combat rules. The table below cross-indexes a character's ability chance against the roll ranges for a special success, a normal failure, and a fumble.

SUCCESS OR FAILURE RESULT

ABILITY	SPECIAL SUCCESS	FAIL	FUMBLE
01-05	1	01-05	06-00
06-07	1	Per ability	Per ability
08-10	01-02	Per ability	Per ability
11-12	01-02	Per ability	Per ability
13-17	01-03	Per ability	Per ability
18-22	01-04	Per ability	Per ability
23-27	01-05	Per ability	Per ability
28-29	01-06	Per ability	Per ability
30	01-06	Per ability	Per ability
31-32	01-06	Per ability	Per ability
33-37	01-07	Per ability	Per ability
38-42	01-08	Per ability	Per ability
43-47	01-09	Per ability	Per ability
48-49	01-10	Per ability	Per ability
50	01-10	Per ability	Per ability
51-52	01-10	Per ability	Per ability
53-57	01-11	Per ability	Per ability
58-62	01-12	Per ability	Per ability
63-67	01-13	Per ability	Per ability
68-69	01-14	Per ability	Per ability
70	01-14	Per ability	Per ability
71-72	01-14	Per ability	Per ability
73-77	01-15	Per ability	Per ability
78-82	01-16	Per ability	Per ability
83-87	01-17	Per ability	Per ability
88-89	01-18	Per ability	Per ability
90-92	01-18	Per ability	Per ability
93-95	01-19	Per ability	Per ability
96-97	01-19	01-95	96-00
98-100	01-20	01-95	96-00
(higher)	20% of ability	01-95	96-00

SKILL ROLLS

All characters have trained abilities described in Skills (see Character Creation), with ratings ranging from 00% (no chance of success) to 100% or higher (almost always succeeding). A character's skill points are added to the skill's base chance for a total chance of success. The player or gamemaster announces that a character will attempt a skill, and a percentage dice roll is made. If the roll is equal to or less than the chance of success, the skill succeeds. If the roll is over the chance of success, the skill fails.

Difficulty. A wide variety of conditions (weather, distractions, equipment, etc.) can affect whether it's easy or more difficult to use a skill.

- ♦ **Automatic:** when it's completely certain that the character will succeed, and nothing major is at stake, the skill automatically succeeds – don't even bother to roll.
- ♦ **Easy:** double the skill chance. Dice should still be rolled even if the skill chance is now over 100%, as there's still a chance of a special success or a failure.
- ♦ **Normal:** the standard; conditions and circumstances are negligible.
- ♦ **Difficult:** divide the skill chance in half (rounding up).
- ♦ **Impossible:** no roll should be allowed; the skill attempt just fails, with any appropriate consequences. The gamemaster may either declare no roll can be attempted, or let the player roll and describe how badly they fail in the attempt.

Special Success. Not all successes are equal. A special success is equal to one-fifth (1/5) the chance of success, rounded up (use the final chance if modified by a difficulty). For example, a skill of 60% means that any roll of 01 through 12 is a special success (as 12 is 1/5 of 60%). In normal skill use, a special success means the skill succeeded especially well and should have an enhanced result, roughly twice as good as a regular success, left up to the gamemaster to determine. In combat, a special success does additional damage (see Combat: Special Successes).

SKILL VS. SKILL

Often, one character attempts a skill that must be countered by a non-player character, or vice versa: an opposed skill roll, such as a player character using Stealth to move undetected versus a non-player character using Listen to detect intruders. All acting parties make their appropriate skill rolls and compare the results:

- ♦ If all parties fail, the consequences are either obvious, a stalemate is achieved, or no one achieves their goal.
- ♦ If only one party succeeds, the successful skill is accomplished without challenge.
- ♦ If the rolls are successful and tied (same quality of result), the character with the highest skill rating is successful.
- ♦ If more than one party succeeds normally, the highest successful quality of roll (a special success is better than a success) is the one that achieves the desired result; the lesser successful result is shifted (a normal success becomes a failure).

Think of levels of success as a three-stage affair: special success > success > failure. When comparing levels of success, one level of success essentially cancels an opposed level of success.

- ♦ **Special Success vs. Special Success:** each degrades by two levels of success, becoming two failures (though an experience check is still allowed, as the rolls are still “successful”).
- ♦ **Special Success vs. Success:** the special success becomes a success; the (normal) success becomes a failure.
- ♦ **Special Success vs. Failure:** the special success achieves double the intended result, unopposed by the failing roll.

In cases where both parties fail, the gamemaster can determine whether it means both parties fail their goals or the acting parties somehow foul each other and create a stalemate that must be resolved to proceed. When a stalemate occurs, the best option is to change the conditions or circumstances, such as using a different skill, creating a distraction, or changing tactics.

THE RESISTANCE TABLE

Some actions require more than skill or natural ability: obstacles must be overcome for the character to succeed. In these cases, call for a resistance roll, pitting characteristics or other measurable quantities against one another. To make a resistance roll, cross-index the active characteristic (the party trying to influence the outcome) to the passive characteristic (the one resisting change) on the resistance table below. The cross-indexed value is the percentage chance the acting force has of success.

RESISTANCE TABLE (percentage chance for the attacking/active value to succeed against the defending/passive value)

DEFENDING ↓ / ATTACKING →	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
1	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
6	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—
7	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—
8	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—
9	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—
10	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—
11	—	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—
12	—	—	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95
13	—	—	—	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90
14	—	—	—	—	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85
15	—	—	—	—	—	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80
16	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75
17	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70
18	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65
19	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60
20	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55
21	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50

For success, one of the sides, active or passive, must roll D100 equal to or less than the indicated number. If the passive force is not attempting to resist, it does not roll. For example, a character with STR 13 (active) has a 40% chance of picking up a SIZ 15 rock (passive); the rock doesn't resist, so it doesn't roll. A roll of 40 or below lifts the rock; 41+ means it's too heavy, and the character can rest and try again later.

In general, the side controlled by a player is the one that should roll, whether active or passive. If it is uncertain who should roll, let the passive side (the defender) roll.

One of the most common uses for resistance rolls is STR vs. SIZ, to pick things up. Sample object sizes:

OBJECT SIZ EXAMPLES

OBJECT	SIZ
Glass window	3
Door	4-8
Chair	4-9
Table	4-12
Lamp post	30
Home wall	25-35
Brick wall	30-50
Concrete wall	30-50
Concrete and steel wall	35-55
Small air vehicle	40
Automobile	50
Vault door	60
Medium land vehicle	60
Steel beam	65
Air vehicle, jet fighter	80
Medium tank	80
Air vehicle, airliner	110

Other uses for the resistance table: arm wrestling (STR vs. STR); squeezing through a hole in the wall (SIZ vs. the hole's SIZ, where the character wants to lose); drinking someone under the table (CON vs. CON); a psychic battle or stare-down (POW vs. POW); resisting a poison (the poison's potency vs. the poisoned character's CON); getting noticed when another person is also trying to be noticed (APP vs. APP).

The resistance table works on the principle that two equal forces have a 50/50 chance of winning if pitted against one another. The rest of the time, use a skill vs. a skill, or best judgment.

EXPERIENCE

At the end of the adventure, the gamemaster asks each player to make an experience roll for each skill successfully used and checked: a roll higher than the skill chance (a reverse of the normal procedure), reflecting that as a character gets more highly skilled, it gets harder to improve. If the experience roll is higher than the skill, the player rolls 1D6 and adds this total to the skill. For example, for a skill of 35%, any roll of 36 or greater is a success; if the player rolls 36-00, add 1D6 to the existing 35%. A roll of 100 is always an improvement, even if the skill is higher than 100%.

A character can learn from a teacher with dedicated study and an adequate amount of time. At the end of that period, the teacher attempts a Teach skill roll and a roll on the relevant skill to be taught. If the Teach skill is higher than the teacher's skill value, it is reduced to the skill's value for the purpose of instruction. If both skills are successful, the student may make a successful experience check as described above. This is subject to the gamemaster's approval and may involve money being spent; a character cannot learn more than one skill at a time in this fashion.

When a skill has been successfully checked for experience, erase the current skill value and write the new total on the character sheet. Repeat this process for each skill checked successfully, until completed.

Generally, this is done at the end of a single adventure, though the gamemaster can allow for multiple chances for skill improvement for a longer adventure with several distinct “downtime” periods. In the case of a long period (months at least) between adventures, the gamemaster may also allow characters four “free” experience checks of their choice, representing activities undertaken in downtime, rolled as regular experience checks.