

GAME MECHANICS

This section covers the rules players will need. These rules cover most of the situations a character will encounter in the course of his adventures. The most obvious exception is combat, which is covered in detail in Personal Combat and Starship Combat.

Skill Rolls

Any time a character attempts an action whose outcome is uncertain or whenever someone attempts such an action against another character, a skill roll is the means for determining the outcome. A skill roll is a roll of dice against a number assigned to a character's level in a particular skill. The skill involved depends on the attempted action.

Base Target Numbers

To determine the Base Target Number for a particular skill roll, subtract the character's appropriate skill level from the Characteristic Base designated for that skill on the Master Skill List. For example, if a character has an Athletic Characteristic of 10 and Running Skill Level 2, his Base Target Number for a Running Skill Roll would be 10-2, or 8. (Characteristics and Attributes are discussed in full in Character Generation.)

Modifiers

Modifiers to a skill roll reflect elements of the game situation that might affect a character's use of his skill. A modifier is a penalty or bonus applied to the Base Target Number to reflect the difficulty of the task at hand.

There are as many modifiers as there are possible skills and situations to which they might apply. Rather than publishing an exhaustive list of possible modifiers for every skill, each skill description includes guidelines to help the gamemaster assign a modifier for the various possible situations.

The Standard Modifiers Table is used to approximate any situation. This method depends upon the gamemaster's judgment and the cooperation of the players. So long as the gamemaster remains an impartial moderator and the players agree to abide by his judgments, resolving any conflict should be a simple matter.

Task	Modifier
Easy	-1 to 5
Average	No Modifier
Difficult	+1 to 5

Making a Skill Roll

To make a skill roll, the player rolls two six-sided dice (2D6). If the result is equal to or higher than his Base Target Number for an appropriate skill, plus or minus any modifiers assigned by the gamemaster, the character has succeeded at the attempted task.

Automatic Success and Failure

On any skill roll, a die roll result of 12 is an automatic success and a result of two is an automatic failure, regardless of the target number, unless the gamemaster dictates otherwise.

Margin Of Success/Failure

Sometimes it is important to know not only if a character succeeds or fails, but how well or how dismally. This is determined by the Margin of Success, which is simply the number of points by which the skill roll succeeded or by which it failed.

For instance, if a character needs a 7 or more to succeed, he has a margin of success of 2 if he rolls a 9. By the same token, the margin of failure would be 3 if he rolled a 4 when he needed at least a 7.

The gamemaster can use Margins of Success or Failure to precisely determine the results of a skill roll. In most circumstances a roll that succeeds by a wide margin will have a better outcome than one that comes up right on the target number. Conversely, a roll that fails by a wide margin will be more disastrous than one that misses by only a few points.

Opposed Skill Roll

Any time two or more characters are using skills against one another, it is considered an Opposed Skill Roll. To determine the outcome, simply compare the margin of success for each character involved. Opposed Skill Rolls are a handy way to resolve a variety of situations involving many different skill combinations.

Untrained Skill Use

Any time a character must make a skill roll for a skill he does not have, he is attempting untrained skill use. The die roll is made just as for a normal skill roll, but uses three six-sided dice (3D6) instead of 2D6. Total the two lowest dice to determine the outcome.

Automatic Success and Failure

When making an Untrained Skill Roll, an automatic success occurs only if all three dice are a 6, but an automatic failure occurs if two of the dice roll a 1.

Saving Rolls

Any time a character attempts an action for which the rules provide no specific skill, or when someone attempts an action against him for which skill use would be inappropriate, he makes a saving roll. Saving rolls are easier to make than skill rolls. They are appropriate for simple situations such as deciding whether or not a character remembers something, which would require a Saving Roll against the Mental Attribute.

To make a saving roll, the gamemaster determines which Attribute or Characteristic applies, and assigns any modifiers he sees fit. The saving roll is the same as a normal skill roll, but the player rolls three six-sided dice (3D6) instead of 2D6. He adds up the two highest dice to determine the outcome.

Automatic Success and Failure

When making a Saving Roll, an automatic success is scored if the two highest dice total 12, and an automatic failure occurs only if all three dice roll a 1.

The Edge

The Edge reflects the difference between player characters and NPCs—the difference between heroes and the rest of us. Each point of Edge can “buy a new die roll during a game, with the following limitations: a player can buy one reroll at any one time, and the number of rerolls he can purchase in any gaming session is equal to the starting value of his character’s Edge. Rerolls cannot be purchased for another character.

If a gamemaster decides to break an adventure into multiple sessions of play, he may decide to stretch a single cycle of Edge use through out the adventure, regardless of the number of gaming sessions it takes. He must spell this out at the beginning, however, so players do not squander all their Edge in the first session.

Edge use is simple. Say, for example, that a character needs a 7 or less to hit a target. He rolls a 5. Burning 1 Edge point, he rerolls the dice and gets his 7. When Edge points are used, they only go away until the end of the session or adventure. A gamemaster could allow Edge regeneration in midstream, but if he does, players should probably realize it means their characters are in way over their heads!