

OKKAM

by Skip Rainsmyth - last updated 9.24.23

“It is vain to do with more what can be done with fewer.” - William of Occam

“No, no! The adventures first, explanations take such a dreadful time.” - Lewis Carroll

“The secret we should never let the game masters know is that they don’t need any rules.” - Gary Gygax

WORK IN PROGRESS!! This document is just a rough mechanical outline. Fleshed out writing and explanations will come later.

PC CREATION

- Name & Concept (*Brother Robustus Grimdark, the Knight-Errant; Suzuki 9, the Deckmaster; Gretchen Blutstein, the Teenage Witch; etc.*).
- **4 Features:** useful traits, skills, powers, talents, knowledge, backgrounds, etc. (*burly, charming, survival, linguistics, blacksmithing, druidic magic, laser eyes, orcish, cooking, etc.*) Figure out the limits and costs of any supernatural Features, as well as how they work, as a group (*leaves the PC exhausted, requires time and/or materials, can only be used once a day, etc.*).
- **2 Flaws:** vices, fears, weaknesses, or disabilities (*naive, clumsy, claustrophobic, addiction, etc.*). Flaws should be things that regularly complicate the PC’s life.
- **1 Drive:** an appetite, purpose, or compulsion that fulfills the PC (*steal something of value, help someone in need, explore somewhere new, discover a secret, etc.*). Drives should be broad enough to come up often but specific enough to require some effort. Drives are not specific quests or missions! They are behaviors that the PC exhibits frequently.
- Optionally, write a **Description** of the PC's appearance, personality, and background. If you do, start with 3 Points.
- Write their **Gear:** 1 primary tool or weapon, 1 signature garment, 1 personal memento or treasured item, 1 expendable resource (*food, ammo, money, batteries, etc.*), and 2 other things.
- PCs can carry as much Gear as makes sense. If the PC doesn't have the right Gear for an action, they can't do it. Gear can be gained, lost, broken, or stolen.
- Limit starting Concepts, Features, Gear, etc. to fit the story.

GAMEPLAY

- If a PC’s action has no real pressure and/or risks, or if the action is very likely to succeed, the GM just describes the outcome, along with any associated requirements (*time, materials, cost, Conditions, etc.*).
- If an action is impossible or has no effect, the GM says why.
- When PCs act under pressure, when the stakes are interesting, or when an outside force or character acts against them, the GM asks their player to roll dice.
- Roll 2d6 normally, +1d6 if Features help, -1d6 if Flaws interfere. Try to roll Hits (4, 5, or 6 on a die).
- Most actions only need 1 Hit to succeed. Extreme or expert-level challenges require 2 Hits. Incredible or foolhardy feats need 3 Hits.
- If the roll succeeds, the player describes the outcome.
- If it fails, the GM describes the outcome. The action may still succeed, or something worse might happen, but either way there is a **Consequence:**
 - a lesser or different effect than intended
 - a side effect, complication, or escalation
 - a loss of Gear or resources
 - a new detrimental Condition
 - anything else that makes sense.
- GM can interrupt PC actions or tell them to roll dice to react at any time (*ok, before you can climb the giant's leg you'll have to roll to avoid their stomp and fists; the sorceress raises a clawed hand and casts a spell on you, roll to avoid being enthralled*).
- PCs may suggest alternate ways to react (*instead of dodging, can I just stand there and shield myself?; rather than resist with willpower, I will jump underwater to drown out the sound; etc.*). ???

GOALS

- The PCs keep a list of **Goals** they've all agreed are worth pursuing (*protect the mayor during the riot, discover Shadow's true identity, extract Bertrand's file from the office, build a castle, etc.*). The list is unlimited and Goals can be added or removed at any time, but the players and GM all have to agree.
- Goals cannot be trivial or unimportant. They should require planning and effort to achieve.
- Players may add 'sub-goals' or more immediate Goals on the road to achieving larger Goals, as long as they are based on new information, requirements, etc. **(??? fix this wording; e.g. if there is a Goal that says *make friends with Hungry Bear* and the PCs find out that Hungry Bear likes a cake made from a rare berry, they may add *Find rare berries for the cake*)**
- If a Goal becomes unattainable, it is removed from the list and no Points are earned.
- Update Goals at the beginning of every session. If it's the first session, the GM introduces the scenario and then the PCs create their first Goals. Each PC also adds one personal Goal to the list to help explain why they are here right now instead of leading a normal life and why they are with the others.

CONDITIONS

- **Conditions** temporarily 'enable' or 'disable' Features and Flaws. They can also make actions automatic or impossible if they are compounded with Features or Flaws. Too many harmful Conditions can debilitate a PC.
- The GM gives PCs Conditions when they take actions or use Gear that would grant Conditions, as a result of a failed roll, or at any other time that makes sense.
- Write the Condition name, effect, and what it will take to end them (*Broken Foot - disables Athletic Feature - medical attention; Potion of Levitation - enables Flying Feature - 1 hour; Enthralled - enables Must Obey the Contessa Flaw - disrupt the Contessa's concentration; Inspired - disables Cowardly Flaw - when the battle ends; etc.*).

POINTS

- PCs get 1 **Point** whenever they:
 - complete a Goal (or make/meet a substantial milestone on the way to a Goal?).
 - fulfill a Drive.
 - fail a roll and accept the consequences (no Points if you choose to reroll)
 - solve a problem using Features or Gear creatively (everyone must agree)
 - roll doubles on 2d6 or triples on 3d6.
- Spend 1 Point to:
 - reroll all the dice (can be done multiple times)
 - Describe a **Stroke of Luck**: have a piece of gear the PC forgot to bring, a small helpful circumstance, a preparation flashback, a chance occurrence just in the nick of time, etc.
- Spend 3 Points to:
 - add 1d6 to a roll (up to a max roll of 3d6)
 - add/remove/change a Feature/Flaw/Drive (after establishing it, learning it, or otherwise fulfilling the appropriate conditions in-game). 3-5 Pts.?
- Players can give Points to others (**Help**).

OTHER RULES

- PC vs PC conflict or competition - players roll dice, best result wins, reroll ties
- Die of Fate - for truly random things; 1d6, higher result = better for PCs
- Downtime - what is the PC working on (*making/finding Gear, gaining Features, working on Flaws, etc.*)? GM says time, requirements, steps, etc. When done, spend Points to edit the character sheet (1 for Gear, 3 for Features/Flaws). Downtime activities can be added to Goals as well!
- Missing Players - PC fades into the background for the session, can't act but can't be directly targeted. Still earns Points and still shares the fate of the group, when applicable.
- PC Death - talk w/ group, can they die or be exiled, etc? PCs can also leave story voluntarily whenever
- GM must never: roll dice; decide a PC's words, thoughts, or actions for them; force players into specific actions; ???

DESIGN NOTES / Qs

- Group Efforts/actions?? All roll and take average?? More than half must succeed? One 'takes lead'?
- Conditions only really work once... what happens if you're Clumsy (1d6) and then get a concussion? What happens when you're Sneaky (3d6) and then drink an Invisibility potion?
- No situational/scene advantage/disadvantage... is that ok?
- Do Features and Flaws need to be separate things? If not, just make them all 'Tags' or something? Talk about helpful and harmful Tags instead of Flaws and Features?

PLAYTEST:

- Points economy
- Hit on 4,5,6 or just 5,6 - difficulty/fail rate
- Gear: freeform, or inventory grid (12 named slots, +3 if Feature grants, +3 for special Gear (bag of holding, duffel, etc.)? Small things can be bundled, large things count as 2-3 slots). Or just freeform but certain # of slots, e.g. you can carry 10 items - more with Features or Gear.
- Points: need a cap? Reset at beginning of session? Or just let them pile up

OKKAM

Character Sheet

Name & Concept:

Points:

Description:

Goals:

Drive:

Features:

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Flaws:

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Gear:

Hand	head	pack	pack		
Hand	body	pack	pack		
Pocket	pocket	pack	pack		

Conditions, Downtime, notes, etc.: