

The Altair Saga D12 (AS12) TTRPG Resolution System

Narrative-Mechanical Translation and Negotiation

Aim: To define a documentation of a self-inclusive generic TTRPG formal system intended to be hacked as the base of a formal system. The DumplingDungeoneer series of TTRPG extends from this system.

In this document, “you” refers to the players who have governance over the performance of the narrative.

“Anything that could go wrong, will go wrong.”

- Edward Murphy

1.0 Ruling Conventions:

1.1 Meeting Convention

Meet it, beat it - If two values compared are equal, the outcome is always favourable.

1.2 Rounding Convention

Divide it, down it - If a value has any fractional component, it is floored.

1.3 Rule Ambiguity Convention

Always ultimately at the GM’s discretion.

1.4 Rule Overloading

Detailed ruling (most likely, but not limited to information outside of this document) will always override/overload the generalised ruling.

1.5 Roll or Choose (ROC) Convention

When rolling on a table or chart, you may ignore the rolled value and simply choose the most appropriate entries.

2.0 Dice

Definition

A dice is a geometric object with numbers inscribed on its flat faces.

For a dice with **N** facings, this document will denote them as **XdN**, where **X** is the total number of that type of dice and **d** is the notation of a dice.

Example:

A d6 is a six-sided dice. A d12 is a twelve-sided dice. A 2d8 are two of eight-sided dice.

Every single element of this system revolves around dice rolling as a method for negotiation and conflict resolution. It is use for, but not limited to:

- Determine success, failure (fortune, misfortune) and the degree of either outcome.
- Make artificial choices, uncertainty judgement and automate decision making.
- Used as a random number generation engine.

2.1 Usage Dice

Definition

Elements within this system can be **assigned a [Usage Dice](#)** to it. Where the dice is made reference to in order to determine certain aspects of that element. These elements can range from objects, items, beings to locations, concepts, and thoughts.

2.1.1 Usage Dice References:

Ranks - Polyhedral dice are ordered in ranks of d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, d20. When a dice is said to **rank up**, the appointed dice is replaced with a dice of the next rank of a higher N value, or the lower N value to **rank down**.

Roll Usage Dice - Roll the usage dice and take the value rolled.

Maximum/Minimum - Take the maximum/minimum value of the usage dice.

Certain Values/Fractions - Take certain values of the usage dice. The values can be referenced as individual, sliced values (**i.e.** from (inc.)/between 2 to 6, 2 out of 6) or even preferences such as *best/beneficial/favourable* or *worse/detrimental/unfavourable*.

2.2 Dice Rolls

Definition

To roll a dice, a polyhedral dice is tossed and allowed free motion. After the dice settles on a uniformly flat surface and is stationary, the skyward — face up symbol is taken as the value rolled.

2.2.1 Aspects of Dice Rolls

- **Intentionless** - The toss must be of sufficient force and distance to eliminate deliberate human control of the roll.
- **Empirical and Judicative** - The dice's facing, symbols and the value it represents must be objectively agreeable by all involved parties. If not, the roll is void.
- **Honesty and Integrity** - It is expected that all parties involved in a dice roll obey this and the above three aspects with integrity and honesty to further their activity in a mutually beneficial manner. It is worthy of note that any relevant conduct is not necessarily required to remain fair and unbiased as long as honesty and integrity is maintained.

<<For example, it is mutually beneficial for GM to hold biased leverage. Compared to the players, it may be necessary for GM to have a greater degree of control.>>

This system uses polyhedral dice to dictate the possibilities of the outcome of actions with consequences which are under tension with stakes on the line. The group of polyhedral dice to be used consists of seven dices referred below:

This standard set of dice will be referred throughout the document as d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, d20.

This process translates a description of physical action and intent of outcome to an algorithmic roll against a probability which will model the action. The model involves a disassociation between what the roller “intended/wanted” to happen and what “did” happen in the fiction.

This is done in order to inject artificial uncertainty into the story so that it stimulates drama through the curious discovery of mystery. The fiction is dictated by happenstance. The driving force is responsive roleplaying.

Intent

<<It is the chance to incorporate every factor, positive and negative, intentional and accidental that may influence the chances. The result is to be embraced respectfully as the natural outcome and used to narrate or respond to.>>

3.0 Check Value

Definition

A check is a criteria comparison. A dice roll decides binary success or failure against a value to [Check](#) against. The check value is a numerical criterion used to check for the success and failure of the dice roll.

A [Dice Roll](#) intended to produce a binary outcome will hereby be referred to as a check.

3.1 Basic Checks

Target Check

A dice roll against a certain [Target](#) value.

Outcome is either exceeding the value or not exceeding the value.

If the roll:

Roll on or over **target**, check is successful.

Roll under **target**, check is unsuccessful.

Usage Check

A dice roll against an assigned usage dice's maximum value of a referenced item.

Outcome is either exceeding the value or not exceeding the value.

Contest Check

A dice roll with respect to another dice roll.

Outcome is either one greater than another.

Support Check

Instead of doing an attempt, instead choose to support another character's attempt. Must be explained and roleplayed believably.

Examples:

For every X number of characters supporting the attempt, **Roll XdN and take the Best/Worst** value. (*trends to one* if the number of characters supporting tends to infinity)

or

Roll Target Check, if successful the supported character's attempt receives a [Circumstantial Modifier](#) (+-2). (*Reaches one* if character supporting tends to infinity)

3.2 Derived Checks

Derived checks are checks that often serve as prerequisites for basic checks to be available to be invoked. Derived checks may be invoked independently without acting as a prerequisite.

Luck Check

A dice roll for the sake of determining if something that is unknown by the players is true or false against a percentage % value.

Reaction Check

A dice roll that encompasses the act of perception, information processing and reaction time. Anytime an action resolves, that is near instantaneous, you can make a reaction check, to determine if you can invoke an action in response to that action.

3.3 Additional Terminology

Positivity and Negativity

Scenarios will arise when interpreting and applying positive and/or negative connotations to expressions. Appropriately interpret and mediate the meaning with respect to the players as following:

- **Positivity** corresponds to advantage/fortune/best, or a gain to the players.
- **Negativity** corresponds to disadvantage/misfortune/worst, or a loss to the players.

Modifier (Bonus)

A value to add to the result of a roll. Can be either positive or negative.

When referred to as numerical modifiers with the suffix -bonus(es), the modification is taken literally as $\pm X$ to whatever numerical value.

Reroll

Reroll the check and take the new value.

Roll XdN Take Best/Worst

Reroll the check X times and take most favourable/least favourable.

Circumstantial Modifiers

A bonus given to a roll depending on narrative circumstances. If the narration offers certain advantages or disadvantages to a character's endeavour in completing a **Task**. A **Target** may then become easy or hard depending on the relevant circumstances:

Hard, upgrade value (+2 to rolls).

Easy, downgrade value (-2 to rolls).

Intent:

<<Keeping this bonus +-2 is straightforward to reference to. The degree of this bonus also will not alter the outcome drastically. This modifier should be no larger than the average value of a single dice. This modifier should not stack.>>

Ranking

When a usage dice up/down ranks, the dice appointed for that algorithm is (typically permanently) exchanged for its next upper/lower rank dice.

4.0 Task Target

Definition

A **Task** is something that is to be completed, set by the GM. This may be a problem, obstacle or opponent who resists the advancement of the narrative plot.

Typically, tasks take time and **Effort** to complete due to a resistance. **Thus, a task is risky.**

If the task is simple and poses no resistance, it can be considered **achievable without risk**. Hence, without rolls.

Whether a task calls for a dice roll depends on the following:

No Resistance? Default success.

Resistance? Roll.

Impossible? Default fails.

Example:

Opening locks, killing enemies with a fork or breaking a door will have resistance and may be risky. But picking up a fork or opening a door that is not barred is a task with no resistance nor risk.

Same as to an entity, if they are willing to talk, they talk. If they are not willing, or outright hostile, there is a resistance.

To try to complete a task, a character must make an **Attempt** with regard to the task. A **Task** requires **Work** to be done in order to complete it. All tasks are given an **Effort** value.

5.0 Action Attempt

Definition

An **Attempt** is an action a character plans to do. The action's chance of success and failure is decreed by a **Target Check**.

Attempt may be attacking/dodging, but not just applicable for combat. An action attempt is anything a character may perform with the intent to make progress towards a task to complete it.

Example:

Try to open locks. Try to punch the lock. Try to punch an enemy. Try to talk to the enemy. Try to seduce the enemy.

The **Usage Dice** used to roll for an attempt is the **character's assigned usage dice**.

Item Bonus

The character may choose to support the attempted action with an **Item**, rolling the **item's assigned usage dice** as well.

If unsupported by an Item:

Roll only the character's assigned usage dice.

If supported by an Item:

Roll the character's assigned usage dice and the item's assigned usage dice as a bonus to the roll.

Example:

To open a lock with your bare hands requires an attempt roll with only your character's assigned usage dice, a d6.

If you are using a lockpick to help you, the attempt roll is made with your character's assigned usage dice, a d6, and the lockpick's assigned usage dice, another d6. Rolling 2d6 for the attempt.

The same roll on the item represents its effectiveness, or the amount of **Work** done to the task.

6.0 Target Difficulty

Definition

Target is a numerical value that represents the difficulty and tension within a scene. For this case, a target check is often referred to as a **Tension Check** and the target value as the **Tension Value**. This is the numerical value to be rolled over for an **Attempt** to be successful and do **Work** on a **Task**.

The higher this value is, the more difficult it is for checks to succeed.

The target is set at the beginning of a **scene** and **remains unchanged for that scene**. The target value of scenes is displayed for every player and applicable to every character involved with the task for **any attempt to perform any action**.

The target value also represents the difficulty for player characters to resist an attempt to have work done **against them** during the scene.

Intent

*Unified tension implies drama and action of the story. The target has no relation to physical depictions of elements within the story. Rather it is a mechanical representation of the narrative tension, used to adjudicate **Dice Rolls**.*

Note target value is independent of locations and only depends on the tension in the narrative plot.

7.0 Effort Value

Effort is a numerical value representing the amount of **Work** character must be put into completing a **Task**.

When effort is reduced to zero, the task is completed. When completed, the task is gone/poses no threat.

Example:

A simple padlock will have a low effort. A complex lock will have greater effort.

A completed problem may still gain effort through narrative conditions.

Through implications, a task originally completed may regain effort due to some narrative parameter.

Example:

Door locks itself as you close it. Surrendered enemy changed mind. Overcome a sheer cliff... is still a sheer cliff when going down.

7.1 Effortless Tasks

Sometimes a task is simple, yet still has a resistance. These kinds of tasks **do not have an effort**, and the success or failure of the attempt roll is enough to determine its completion.

Example:

Opening a door during the heat of moments or looking for the lock that stopped you from opening it.

Intent: Abstractive Effort

Effort may be seen as health, but it is not just health. Effort represents all aspects of the task/problem's tendency to resist completion. Completion does not necessarily represent death or destruction of the task.

Example:

Yield, Fainting, Surrender, Exhaustion, Paralyzing Injury, Destruction, Befriended, Allured, Asleep, Seduced, Frightened, Threatened, Complying.

8.0 Work Done

When an **Attempt** is successful, it will do **Work** on the task and reduce the **Task's Effort**. Thereby making progress to completing the task.

When an attempt does work, the amount of work is the value rolled from the **assigned Usage Dice of the item rolled during the attempt**. The rolled value is deducted from the task's effort value, thus making progress.

Without an item used to support the attempt, the result is solely on whether the attempt roll **succeeds or fails**. Thus, this unsupported attempt roll may only complete tasks that **do not have an effort value**.

Example:

Picking a lock with your hands will be rather hard, in fact impossible to make progress. But the hand can open the door easily.

Using a lock pick will be easier and can make progress. Using the key may just complete the task immediately.

Additional Effects

Depending on narrative, as described by the player or the GM, additional effects/conditions may be improvised. Ultimately at GM's discretion.

Example:

(I.E. Shooting for the Eye. Kick in Groin. Attack Head, Body, Limbs, hiding.)

Intent: Abstractive Work

Work may be seen as damage, but not just damage. Work represents all aspects of the character's capability or the item's capability to complete a problem.

Example:

Talking, Convincing, Debating, Literally act/working, Adjusting, Cutting, Pounding, Pondering, Picking, Investigating, Perceiving, Cooking, Roasting, and Beating The Shit Out Of.

9.0 Conclusion:

A **Task** has an **Effort Value** and the player must make an **Attempt** against a **Target Value** to do **Work** to deplete the effort to 0 in order to complete the task.

Appendix A: Step by Step Acton Resolution

A step by step dissection of conflict resolution

Aim: When a character takes an action and/or makes an attempt they should follow the steps described in this document for structured play.

Establishing a Task from an Attempt

1. If the character is a PC, have the player that control the PC describe the preceding action in detail, covering:
 - Action as spoken.
 - Desired outcome/intent of procedure.
 - Superfluous narrative flair (Optional, but highly desirable).

This is an **Attempt** made by the PC.

2. GM phases the action to generate a Task:
 - a. **Is the current scene under tension?**
 - i. If yes, the PC is under pressure. Move on.
 - ii. If not, the action resolves.
 - b. **Are there any risks involved?**
 - i. If yes, there are chances of failure. Move on.
 - ii. If not, the action resolves.
 - c. **Are there any stakes for the party(ies) involved?**
 - i. If yes, there are consequential outcomes for success and failure, groundworks for fortune and misfortune to take hold. Move on.
 - ii. If not, the action resolves.
 - d. **Is the action achievable?**
 - i. If easily achievable, a check is not required and the action resolves with success.
 - ii. If impossible to achieve, a check is not required, and the action is resolved with failure.
 - iii. If it is achievable, but not easy, a check is then required to determine success or failure.

- e. **Will the action be met with resistance as if a Task needs to be completed?**
 - i. If yes, the action is directed at a **Task**. Assign the task an appropriate **Effort Value** as per your Formal System's rules (typically of the maximum value of its **Usage Dice**).
 - ii. If not, the task is effortless and ignores step 6.
 - f. **Will the action be met with opposition from a character?**
 - i. If yes, roll a **Contest Check** with that character.
3. Determine the **Target Difficulty Value** as per your Formal System's rules. This target difficulty value should reflect the severity of the stakes involved.

Task is established, rules from now on are for resolving a check.

4. Determine other parameters to add to the action, consider:
 - **Is an item used to support it?**
Players describe how the item is used by the PC to perform the action. Handle any gameplay connotation with the item according to the TTRPG formal system used.
 - **Are there other characters supporting it?**
Describe how the character supports the action and have that character make a **Support Check**.
 - **Are there any other narrative circumstances that may cause the action to be harder or easier to perform?**
Describe how that element influences the action or changes the task to apply a **Circumstantial Modifier**.

The description must be done in a convincing manner to add the corresponding parameter. Ultimately at the GM's discretion.
5. Perform the check, note:
 - Is it successful? If applicable, what is the work done?
 - What is the consequence?
6. If the action is done to complete a **Task**, calculate the deduction to the **Effort Value** of the task.
 - If the Task is Effortless, merely a successful **Attempt** will complete it.
 - If the Task still has Effort Value remaining, it has yet to be completed.
7. Resolve the action by narrating the outcome/consequences of the action back to the players.

Rule of Thumb:

If failing a check means that “nothing” about the PC’s circumstances will change - DO NOT make a check to begin with.

The task therefore does not warrant a check and is either easily achievable or impossible to achieve.