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First published in 2018 by Legendsmiths, LLC. **LS-ADDRESS**

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Stock Number: **LGSM002001** ISBN-13: 978-1729588178 ISBN-10: 1729588174
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This is a game where people make up stories about wonderful, terrible, impossible, glorious things. All the characters and events portrayed in this work are fictional. Any resemblance to reality, your brand of fantasy, or the established reality of your imaginary fantasy that models reality is absolutely, unequivocally, coincidental.

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The body text was set in 9 pt. Freight Text Pro Bold and the headers were set in 32, 22, 18, 12, 10, and 9 pt. Freight Neo Pro Medium. Tables are in Freight Sans Condensed Pro 9pt., Light for text, Medium for table headers. Box and Table Headers are Freight Neo Pro Medium 10pt. Character Sheet uses Freight Sans Pro. The index was set in Freight Neo Pro Bold 12 pt. and Freight Sans Condensed Pro 8½ pt.

GO NOVA!

Welcome to NOVA6, the Legendsmiths roleplaying system where **action moves at the speed of narrative!**

If you've never played a roleplaying game before, you and some friends get together and create a group of characters that are at the center of a story you build together. It's not all just conversation, though—sometimes the choices you make when telling your story will have an uncertain outcome, and you will use dice and the rules in this book to resolve that drama.

We present NOVA6 Core in a universal fashion, to support many genres, and we also provide guidance on how to build your own games and settings that will make your stories and adventures even more unique.

For more NOVA6 support, check out www.nova6.com!

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO PLAY?

Pencils, paper, about seven regular dice with six sides (ideally a set for each player), and some tokens to track various things within the game—poker chips, bottle caps, pennies, etc.

PLAYERS AND GAMEMASTERS

In NOVA6, you are either a player or a gamemaster. As a player you portray one of the protagonists of the game, called a *player character (PC)*. You choose and describe what your character says and does. You also handle the mechanical side of your character—rolling dice, choosing abilities, and keeping track of results of those activities.

As a *gamemaster (GM)*, you take responsibility for the world the characters inhabit. You decide and describe what every *non-player character (NPC)* says and does. You describe the scenes and create situations they encounter. You also act as the final arbiter of the rules, determining the outcome of the characters' actions and how they shape the story.

You all work together to create a fun, engaging experience. NOVA6 is a collaborative endeavor—share ideas and look for opportunities to make the story as entertaining as possible.

DICE NOTATION

NOVA6 uses a common abbreviation “#d” for when dice are called out in the text. The “#” is the number of six-sided dice and the “d” is there as a reminder that the rules are referring to dice. A plus “+” or a minus “-” sign may also be included to indicate whether the dice are a bonus or a penalty.

For example, 2d means two six-sided dice, and if written as +2d would mean the rules intend the dice as a bonus.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CORE RULES	1	TALENTS	43
THE BASICS	2	Building Talents	43
Six Skills	2	Balancing Talents	43
Four Actions	2	Core Talents	44
Action Test	2	FEATURES	45
THE DETAILS	4	Gear	46
Four Basic Actions	4	Assets	47
Advanced Actions	5	Flaws	47
Time and Duration	7	Archaic Weapons	48
Extended Action Framework	8	Archaic Armor	49
Modifiers	10	Modern Weapons	50
BASIC EFFECTS	12	Modern Armor	51
Advantage	12	GAME CREATION	52
Damage	13	SETTING	53
Soak	14	Who are the Protagonists?	53
Universal Properties	15	What is the World Like?	53
SCALE	18	What is the Scope?	54
STRESS & CONSEQUENCES	19	What are the Issues?	54
Stress	19	What People and Places are Important?	55
Consequences	19	THEMEPACK	56
Making a Sacrifice	20	Theme Traits	56
Grave Aspect	20	Aspects	57
Taken Out	20	Skills	57
Recovery	21	Talents & Features	58
ASPECTS	22	Gear & Assets	58
Types of Aspects	22	Stress Tracks	59
Using Aspects	23	Special Rules	59
PLOT POINTS	25	Character Creation Rules	59
The Plot Point Economy	25	RUNNING THE GAME	60
The GM and Plot Points	25	GAMEMASTERING	61
STUNTS	26	Start and End Scenes	61
Rule of Awesome	26	Interpret the Rules	61
Core Stunts	27	Create Scenarios	61
CHARACTER CREATION	28	Play the World and NPCs	62
WHAT MAKES A GOOD CHARACTER?	29	THE UNWRITTEN RULES	64
CHARACTER CREATION STEPS	30	Rule Zero	64
Character Sheet	30	The Golden Rule (of Fate)	64
Core Aspects	32	The Rule of Five	64
Level	33	ADVENTURES	65
Skills and Talents	33	Character Advancement	65
Gear and Assets	34	Session	65
Name	34	Scene	66
Plot Refresh	34	Act	67
Stress Boxes	34	Scenario	67
Attacks & Defenses	34	Story Arc	67
SKILLS, TALENTS, AND FEATURES	35	Saga	67
SKILLS	36	MOVEMENT	68
Core Skills	36	Zones	68
Skill Ranks	36	Encumbrance	68
Perks	36	Falling	68
Fight	37	GLOSSARY	69
Interact	38	LEGAL APPENDIX	72
Move	39	Open Game License Version 1.0a	72
Physique	40		
Resolve	41		
Wits	42		

CORE RULES

THE BASICS

NOVA6 is meant to move quickly: choose an appropriate *skill* and *action*, make an *action test* to determine the outcome, and describe how you achieved that outcome.

SIX SKILLS

NOVA6 Core uses a core set of six *skills*: Fight, Interact, Move, Physique, Resolve, and Wits. These are used to resolve all actions in the game. See p. 4 for more detail.

- **Fight** is used for all forms of physical combat.
- **Interact** covers the entire gamut of social interactions
- **Move** is used to skillfully move and maneuver.
- **Physique** represents your physical strength, power, and endurance.
- **Resolve** represents your mental strength, power, and endurance.
- **Wits** represents your higher-order reasoning, knowledge, and perception.

FOUR ACTIONS

In NOVA6, there are four *basic actions* that cover anything a character might want to do. See p. 4 for more detail.

- Use **Create advantage** to improve your circumstances for a future action.
- Use **Overcome** to bypass any obstacle between you and your goal.
- Use **Attack** to cause harm to a target.
- Use **Defend** to negate an attack or create advantage action against you.

ACTION TEST

When making a test you *gather the dice* and *determine the outcome*.

ONLY PLAYERS ROLL

This keeps the focus of the action on them. If an antagonist attacks, the player rolls to defend. If an antagonist tries to flee, the player rolls to keep up.

This also forces the GM to really consider why dice are being rolled in the first place. If resolving a situation with a roll seems awkward, maybe it shouldn't be a roll at all.

GATHER THE DICE

1. Gather *bonus dice* from one skill, one perk, talents, features, advantages, and conditions.
2. Gather *penalty dice* from the difficulty, disadvantages, and conditions. Use two different colors of dice to keep track of bonuses and penalties, if it helps.
3. Remove pairs of bonus and penalty dice.
4. Set aside two bonus dice to earn an additional stunt point if you succeed. You may do this multiple times. If you have more than four bonus dice, set aside enough to get down to four or fewer bonus dice.
5. Determine if you are up, down, or even:
 - If you have bonus dice remaining, you are *up*.
 - If you have penalty dice remaining, you are *down*.
 - If you have neither bonus dice nor penalty dice remaining, you are *even*.
6. Add 3d to your remaining dice and roll:
 - If you are up, choose any three dice to be your *action dice*.
 - If you are down, the lowest three dice are your action dice.
 - If you are even, the only three dice you rolled are your action dice.

DETERMINE THE OUTCOME

Your action dice determine the outcome of your action.

1. Add together your action dice to determine your total.
2. If your total is equal to or greater than 11, you succeed.
3. If your total is less than 11, you fail (or succeed at a cost).
4. If your action dice are triples, you earn a stunt point if you succeeded or the GM earns a stunt point if you failed.
5. Certain talents and features may trigger if your action dice contain doubles.

SIMPLE SUCCESS AND SIMPLE FAILURE

Succeeding on the action test without earning a stunt point is known as *simple success*: you got what you wanted without embellishment or cost.

Conversely, failing on the action test without the GM earning a stunt point is known as *simple failure*, and failure should be interesting or meaningful in some way. Otherwise, don't bother rolling—narrate the outcome and move on.

SUCCESS AT A COST

Failure doesn't always mean you don't achieve your goal. Sometimes you get what you want, but it costs you something—time, loss of an asset or resource, damage, or a new aspect. Work with the GM to determine an appropriate and interesting cost.

You attempt to leap over a pit and fail. Does this mean that you A) fall in, B) decide not to leap after all, or C) almost make it across and are hanging on the far edge? Option A is rarely an appropriate choice for simple failure, although it may be a fitting use of a GM stunt. Option B is appropriate if losing your action is significant, such as when you are being pursued. Option C is an example of success at a cost. It is appropriate in many situations, especially if there is a narrative consequence associated with the outcome (e.g., an ally must scramble to your aid instead of stopping a stone door from slamming shut, you likely need another action to climb out and simple failure there would result in a fall).

STUNTS AND STUNT POINTS

Beyond simple success and failure, stunts are where things get exciting. Stunts allow players to improve their success to achieve bigger effects, discover new information, change the situation to their advantage, work more quickly, and more.

There are three main ways players will earn stunt points:

- Succeeding with triples
- Trading bonus dice (two dice for one stunt point, by default)
- Invoking an aspect

Similarly, GMs earn and spend *GM stunt points* on behalf of NPCs, but they earn stunt points when players fail with triples or by trading penalty dice.

See Stunts, p. 26, for more details on how to use your stunt points.

ACTION TEST FORMAT

NOVA6 presents specific skill tests as the skill (capitalized) followed by the action. For example, Wits create advantage. When referring to a specific application of a skill, that will be shown in parentheses after the skill: Wits (notice) create advantage.

NARRATIVE CONTROL

NOVA6 uses plot points to give players more narrative control. With plot points, players can introduce new elements to the scene, invoke and discover aspects, turn failure into success, perform stunts, and much more. Plot points are a finite resource, but you will have ample opportunities to earn them throughout play.

THE DETAILS

This section expands the concepts presented in *The Basics* (p. 2) and provides additional detail around action resolution, time and duration, the structure of extended actions, action modifiers, basic effects, stress and consequences, aspects, and plot points.

FOUR BASIC ACTIONS

The four basic actions should be all you need to handle any choice a character might make. Each action provides a summary description of how it is used, including some examples. Additionally, each action includes details for a simple success.

CREATE ADVANTAGE

The *create advantage* action covers a broad range of activities, unified around the theme of using your skills to take advantage of the environment or your situation.

Sometimes that means you're doing something to actively change your circumstances (throwing sand in an opponent's eyes), but it could also mean discovering new information that helps you (learning a weakness through research) or taking advantage of something you've previously observed (an opponent's nasty temper).

SIMPLE SUCCESS

- Create a +1d brief advantage for you or an ally.
- Choose a simple success option from the advantage basic effect (p. 12).

OVERCOME

Locked doors, yawning chasms, and fiendish puzzles. When there is an obstacle between you and your goal, you use the *overcome* action to deal with it. Look at it as the catch-all action—if it doesn't fit into one of the other three actions, it's probably an overcome action.

SIMPLE SUCCESS

- Overcome a -1d disadvantage.
- Move from one zone to another.

ATTACK

The *attack* action is the most straightforward of the four actions—when you want to hurt someone in a conflict, it's an attack. An attack isn't always physical in nature—some skills allow you to attack mentally, or even socially. The target of an attack uses the defend action.

SIMPLE SUCCESS

- Cause 1 damage.

DEFEND

Whenever someone attacks you in a conflict or tries to create advantage against you, you get a chance to *defend*. As with attacks, this isn't always about avoiding physical sources of danger—some of the skills allow you to defend against attempts to harm your mind or damage your reputation.

SIMPLE SUCCESS

- Negate a create advantage or attack action against you or an ally.

ADVANCED ACTIONS

The action rules laid out thus far are enough to play and have fun, but this section provides some additional details for a slightly crunchier game. Feel free to use these rules or not.

UNSKILLED TESTS

Tests are almost always based on a skill. However, sometimes you will need to make an *unskilled test*—these are tests for which no skill applies. Examples include determining the order in conflicts, determining if you have a specific piece of gear, or winning games of pure chance (if the outcome matters). An unskilled test does not include skill ranks, though talents, features, and conditions may still provide bonus or penalty dice.

GROUP TESTS

Group tests occur when you need to evaluate the group's performance against a single objective. Decide if the group succeeds when any character succeeds or only when everyone succeeds, and whether participation is mandatory.

ANY SUCCEED

Any character that succeeds earns success for the group.

Other members of the group can add any stunt points to the group success, to a maximum of three stunt points, or use them individually.

Examples include group search attempts, unskilled labor, and so on.

A gang of four meddling kids are trying to search for clues to a g-g-ghost that is haunting an old fun house in an abandoned amusement park. Frank and Daisy succeed with one stunt point each, and Wilma also rolls a success, so the gang succeeds as a whole with two stunt points.

Unfortunately, their pal Shabby just can't seem to keep it together and fails with two stunt points. It turns out while the gang finds some useful clues, Shabby runs into the g-g-ghost, staggers back in terror, hits the ride's control lever, falls into one of the carts on the track, and is whisked away! Zoinks!

ALL SUCCEED

All characters must succeed for the entire group to succeed.

You can use stunt points to offset the failures of other members of the group or use them individually. Stunt points cannot be used to improve the group's success as a whole.

Certain tests may allow players to opt out of the test and be counted as a failure automatically to avoid complications from GM stunt points. Tests where everyone individually must overcome an obstacle typically don't allow players to opt out. Tests where one character can directly compensate for another's lack of skill (e.g., asset creation) may allow players to opt out.

Examples include sneaking past a guard as a group, climbing a cliff face, building a raft, and so on.

Group Sneak. A group of four adventurers are trying to sneak past an enemy camp with a Move (stealth) test. Three of the characters succeed and earn one stunt point which they use to offset the failure of the fourth character.

Group Build. The PCs need to construct a raft to cross a river with a Wits (craft) test. Stunt points are used to ensure the raft is large enough to carry all members of the group.

MULTIPLE ACTIONS

You can perform *multiple actions* on your turn, but each additional basic action after the first imposes -1d to all actions until the start of your next turn.

Multiple actions should only be used for distinct skill/action pairs. You would use multiple actions if you wanted to scale a building and then attack a ninja (Move overcome and Fight attack). You would not use multiple actions if all you're doing is attacking two ninjas. You would instead perform a *combined test* to make a single Fight attack and use the Increase Scope stunt to affect multiple targets. When performing combined tests like this, use the highest individual difficulty, along with any other modifiers.

If failing at an action precludes subsequent actions, do not make the subsequent action tests. In the example of scaling a building to attack the ninja, failing at the Move overcome action would preclude the attack, so you would not roll the Fight attack.

Run, Hide, and Attack (Move overcome, Move create advantage, Fight attack). Your plan is to run around the corner (-0d), hide from your pursuers (-1d), and then spring out and shoot them (-2d). Because each action is a distinct skill/action pair, you would make three tests, each at a -2d multiple action penalty. This means that the Move overcome would be at -2d, the Move create advantage at -3d, and the Fight attack at -4d, though you're hoping that the advantage you create will be enough to offset the penalties to your attack.

Climb, Run, and Jump (Move overcome combined test). You attempt to climb to the roof (-1d difficulty), run to the far edge (-0d), and then jump to an adjacent building (-2d). Because these are all Move overcome actions, you make a single Move overcome combined test with the highest individual difficulty: -2d for the jump. Simple success means you succeeded at the climb but not the run or jump, while the Increase Scope stunt would mean that you also succeeded at the run but not the jump (1 stunt point) or that you succeeded at all three (2 stunt points).

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Special actions refer to either basic actions applied with special circumstances or actions that fall outside of the four basic actions.

REACTIONS

Reactions are basic actions you take in response to actions against you. For example, when someone tries to hit you with a baseball bat, you defend with Fight as a reaction. Someone trying to sneak past you would trigger a Wits reaction. Reactions do not penalize your other actions, but modifiers apply to reactions as normal.

SNAP ACTIONS

Snap actions are minor actions you can take during your turn. You can take a single snap action without penalizing your other actions, but additional snap actions count as basic actions (and thus impose multiple action penalties).

Focus. When you take the *focus* snap action, you gain +1d to the next basic action you take, but any other actions (including reactions) suffer a -1d penalty until the start of your next turn. You may not take multiple basic actions if you use the focus snap action.

Ready. When you take the *ready* snap action, you may ready one accessible item, reload a weapon, or activate an item (e.g., open a door, flip a switch).

TIME AND DURATION

The Time and Duration Steps table summarizes the units of time used to measure action intervals and effect durations. When the rules say that something takes one step more or less time, it means you should find the step for the current effect and then move one step down (more time) or one step up (less time).

Time and Duration Steps Table

Duration	Description	Time	Plot Stage
Instant [I]	Starts and ends immediately	-	Turn
Brief [B]	Lasts until the end of the target's next turn	Seconds	Round
Temporary [T]	Lasts until the end of the next scene break	Minutes to Hours	Scene
Lasting [L]	Lasts until the end of the next act break	Hours to Days	Act
Long-Lasting [LL]	Lasts until the end of the next scenario break	Days to Weeks	Scenario
Enduring [E]	Lasts until the end of the next story break	Weeks to Years	Story arc
Permanent [P]	Lasts until redefined	Possibly Forever	Saga

SPECIAL DURATIONS

The Special Duration table highlights two durations that are not part of the standard time and duration steps progression.

Special Durations Table

Duration	Description
Quick [Q]	Lasts until the start of your next turn
Maintained [M]	Lasts until you no longer spend an action to maintain

ACTION INTERVALS

Most actions don't take more than your turn to complete, but some actions may require a longer *interval*, as indicated in the text with a plot stage in brackets—for example, Wits [scene]. If you need to perform the action more quickly, you can use stunt points for the *Decrease Time* stunt.

While breaking into the offices of Megacorp, the GM offers Ryan that searching the CEO's office requires a Wits [Scene] create advantage test, but that much time could be risky. Ryan decides to risk it and hopes to earn a stunt point to search the office quickly enough to avoid discovery.

EXTENDED ACTION FRAMEWORK

Usually, when you want to do something straightforward—swim across a raging river, hack someone’s cell phone—all you need to do is make one overcome action against a difficulty that the GM sets. You look at your outcome and go from there.

But sometimes things are a bit more complex. We’ve talked about the four basic actions (create advantage, overcome, attack, defend), but in what framework do those happen?

CHALLENGES

A *challenge* is a series of overcome and create advantage actions that you use to resolve an especially complicated situation. Each action deals with one task or part of the situation, and you take the individual results together to figure out how the situation resolves.

To set up a challenge, decide what individual tasks or goals make up the situation, and treat each one as a separate action test. Depending on the situation, one character may be required to take several actions, or multiple characters may be able to participate. The GM isn’t obligated to announce all the stages in the challenge ahead of time—they may add, remove, or change elements of the challenge as it unfolds to keep things exciting.

The characters are the crew of a ship caught in a storm. They decide to press on to their destination despite the weather, and the GM suggests this sounds like a challenge. Steps in resolving this challenge could be calming panicky passengers, repairing damaged rigging, and keeping the ship on the right heading.

CONTESTS

When characters compete against one another for the same goal, but do not directly try to hurt each other, it’s a *contest*. Examples include chases, arguments, and sporting events.

Contests are resolved through a series of *exchanges*. In an exchange, each player character takes an action, usually overcome, to determine how well they do—the number of *successes* they generate for themselves or their opponent.

The difficulty modifier for the action is usually set by the skill rank of the NPC involved in the contest or by the environment. NPCs can trade dice for stunt points as normal to earn extra successes each exchange, with their remaining skill ranks used as the contest difficulty.

EXCHANGES

For player characters, simple success counts as a single success towards the total successes required for the contest, and each stunt point can be used to earn an additional success or to remove a success from another participant.

NPC successes are tracked individually against each PC. NPCs earn a single success when that PC fails a test, and GM stunt points can be used as additional successes.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The GM defines the number of successes required to win the contest, tracking the result of the exchanges over time. A quick contest would require three success, a longer contest (two to three turns in length) would require five, and a long contest would require eight.

The GM will also decide if individual participants can succeed or fail independently and what happens if a participant fails.

Alligator Dave is trying to chase down some smugglers. The GM has decided this will be a Move (boats) [5 successes] challenge. Dave will need to accumulate 5 successes before the smugglers. The smugglers have Move 2d and thus will earn 1 extra success in each exchange, possibly more if Dave fails. Dave will need to earn some stunt points to have any chance of catching up with these ne'er-do-wells.

CONFLICTS

Conflicts are used to resolve situations where characters are trying to harm one another. It could be physical (a sword fight, a wizard's duel, a battle with laser blasters), but it could also be mental (a shouting match, a tough interrogation, a magical psychic assault) or even social (attempting to show up a rival suitor, a tense negotiation).

SETTING THE SCENE

Establish what's going on, where everyone is, and what the environment is like.

- Who's in the conflict?
- Where are they positioned relative to one another?
- When is the conflict taking place? Is that important?
- What's the environment like?

The GM should write a couple of situation aspects on sticky notes or index cards and place them on the table. Players can suggest situation aspects, too.

INITIATIVE

The order of action in a conflict is determined by an *initiative* test, which is an unskilled test. Player characters that succeed can act before their opponents, while player characters that fail act after their opponents. Beyond that, players can decide the order in which they act. Interrupting or reacting to a character's action requires succeeding at a separate initiative test.

Each stunt point on an initiative test provides one free bonus action that can be used during the conflict.

CONFLICT TIME

A *round* starts with no one having taken a turn and lasts until all characters have taken a turn, at which point a new round begins. By default, a round is about 6 seconds, though they can certainly be longer for larger scale conflicts, such as space battles.

Each character that gets to act in a round takes one *turn*. During your turn, you can take one or more actions. Once you have taken your actions, your turn is over and the next character takes their turn.

BONUS ACTIONS

At the end of each round, everyone has the opportunity to take a *bonus action*. Certain talents and features grant bonus actions, as does earning a stunt point on an initiative test or spending a plot point. A bonus action is a single action that cannot be used to move between zones.

If multiple characters are taking bonus actions, they are resolved in the same order as initiative.

MODIFIERS

Modifiers come in two flavors: bonus dice and penalty dice. Things that make you more likely to succeed grant bonus dice, while things that make you more likely to fail impose penalty dice.

Bonus dice are indicated as $+#d$, where $\#$ is the number of bonus dice to be added to your action test. Conversely, penalty dice are indicated as $-#d$, where $\#$ is the number of penalty dice to be added to your action test. Certain modifiers, such as conditions, can help or hinder depending on the circumstances—these are simply indicated as $\#d$, where $\#$ is the number of dice added as bonus or penalty dice as appropriate.

Oops! I Forgot Some Modifiers

Don't sweat it, just keep playing. If the modifier is the difference between success and failure, spend a plot point and succeed or earn a plot point and accept the failure if that modifier would have meant success.

SUMMARY

SKILL RANKS

The character's skill ranks are added as bonus dice.

Skill ranks are written in plain Title Case, followed by a number of dice indicating the number of ranks: Wits 2d.

DIFFICULTY

The difficulty of a test will add from -0d to -5d.

Difficulties are written in plain Title Case, followed by a number of penalty dice: Fight -1d.

PERKS

If the character has a relevant perk, add +1d. Only one perk can be applied per test.

Perks are written in italic Title Case: *Leaping*.

TALENTS & FEATURES

Specific talents and features will add bonus dice in specific situations.

Talents & Features are written in bold, italic Title Case: **Well-Trained**.

ADVANTAGES & DISADVANTAGES

Advantages and disadvantages add bonus (+) or penalty (-) dice respectively.

Advantages and disadvantages are written in bold lower case, followed by a number of dice and (optionally) a duration: **off-balance -1d [T]**. If no duration is listed, it is brief [B].

CONDITIONS

Conditions are added as bonus dice if they help an action or penalty dice if they hinder an action. For example, darkness is a bonus to Move (stealth) but a penalty to Wits (notice).

Conditions are written in bold, italic lower case, followed by a number of dice indicating the magnitude of the condition and (optionally) a duration: **darkness 2d**. If no duration is listed, it is permanent [P].

DIFFICULTY

The *difficulty* of a test is a number of penalty dice from -0d to -5d. The default difficulty for a test is -0d. In the case of opposed tests, the difficulty represents the opponent's skill ranks, as well as their relevant perks, talents, and extras. For unopposed tests, the difficulty represents the inherent challenge of the task (some locks are harder to pick than others) but does not include disadvantages or conditions.

As a general rule, -0d represents a simple task, -2d represents a challenging but achievable task, and -5d represents a nearly impossible task.

SCALED TESTS

Scaled Tests are the result of an opposing skill or effect with *scale* (p. 18). Scaled tests require you to earn a number of stunt points equal to the scale of the test in order to achieve a simple success. Otherwise you fail.

CONDITIONS

Conditions are modifiers that apply to all relevant tests, either as bonus dice if they help you or penalty dice if they hinder you. Conditions have a default duration of permanent [P].

Examples include things like *short range 2d*, *bad weather 1d [T]*, and *brightly lit 1d*. Ignore conditions that apply to you and your opponent equally, as the bonus and penalty dice will simply cancel each other out.

Note cards, sticky notes, or erasable tokens are useful to keep track of conditions during play. Avoid getting wrapped up in trying to account for every little influence on a particular action—focus instead on the things that matter most.

RANGE

Range can either help you (stealth, evading a ranged attack) or hinder you (hearing an assassin, making a ranged attack). If your modified range (after accounting for things like optical aids or super sight) is -4d or more, you can't make out any meaningful detail.

Range	Mod
Close (5m)	0d
Near (10m)	1d
Short (25m)	2d
Medium (50m)	3d
Long (100m)	4d
Far (250m)	5d
Distant (500m)	6d
Obscure (1,000m)	7d
Remote (2,000m)	8d

SENSES

The ability to sense your surroundings is pretty critical to acting within them without some kind of penalty. For example, if you can see in the dark and your target cannot then you are at an advantage. Conversely, if your target can see well and you cannot, then you are at a disadvantage. Sense-based conditions range from 1d (slightly obscured) to 4d (completely obscured).

SIZE

Size provides a bonus to smaller creatures when attacking with or defending against physical attacks and sneaking by or perceiving other creatures. Conversely, larger creatures suffer a penalty. For example, a *small 1d* creature attacking a *huge 2d* creature would have a total size modifier of +3d. A *large 1d* creature attempting to spot a *small 1d* creature would have a total size modifier of -2d.

Size Table

Size	Modifier	Profile	Example
Colossal	4d	50m	Ship, whale, building
Gargantuan	3d	25m	Stone column, house, small whale
Huge	2d	10m	Elephant, rhino, truck
Large	1d	5m	Bull moose, polar bear, small car
Medium	0d	2.5m	Human
Small	1d	1m	Human child, average dog; heavy object
Tiny	2d	0.5m	Small human child, small dog, cat; medium object
Diminutive	3d	0.25m	Book; light object
Miniscule	4d	0.1m	Can or another small container; personal object

COVER

Cover is a condition that provides a bonus to defend if you hide behind it, or a penalty if you attack a target behind it. Cover can also provide soak, depending on the material. A typical wood wall provides 2-4, stone provides 3-6, and steel provides 5-7. Half cover has the coverage 1 property, while near-total cover has coverage 2.

BASIC EFFECTS

NOVA6 uses three basic effects: advantage, damage, and soak. This section describes each effect, along with how the effect is written, the results of simple success, and how the *Increased/Decreased Effect* stunts affect that result.

PROPERTIES

Each effect may also include additional *properties* that further define how an effect works, typically by enhancing or limiting the effect.

UNIVERSAL PROPERTIES

Universal properties are listed at the end of this section (p. 15) and can be applied to any of these basic effects.

EFFECTS IN WRITING

The rules use a short-hand syntax when describing effects in the text as follows:

- **Advantage:** +1d advantage [B]
- **Damage:** Damage 1; physical (bludgeoning) or mental (emotional) [T]
- **Soak:** Soak 1; physical or mental [B]

ADVANTAGE

Advantage effects represent anything that create an advantage (bonus dice) or disadvantage (penalty dice). Examples include gear (jet packs, climbing gear) and spells (jump, true strike). Each advantage or disadvantage will have a short description that identifies when and how it applies.

SIMPLE SUCCESS

The base level of effect is a +1d advantage for you or an ally with a brief [B] duration.

Optionally, you can choose one of the following outcomes:

- Impose a -1d brief disadvantage on a target. If the disadvantage limits the target's movement, the disadvantage applies to any movement-related actions, possibly requiring an overcome action where none was required before.
- Create a new brief situation or character aspect.
- Discover a situation or character aspect that you didn't know about.
- Create an asset (p. 47) with a single use.
- Move a target within the zone (1d) or between zones (2d).

INCREASE EFFECT

The Increase Effect stunt for advantage effects increases the magnitude of the advantage or disadvantage by 1d.

DECREASE EFFECT

The Decrease Effect stunt for advantage effects decreases the magnitude of the advantage or disadvantage by 1d.

Does the advantage or disadvantage apply to everything?

Advantages and disadvantages are open-ended and conditional. That means they apply to anything that makes sense. Grabbing someone doesn't limit their Wits, but it does limit their Move. Does it limit their Interact? Possibly, since being in a compromised position usually doesn't help you persuade someone more easily, but then it probably depends on what you actually say in that situation.

DAMAGE

Damage effects represent anything that cause physical or mental stress, with the ultimate result being incapacitation or death. Examples include physical weapons (guns, knives), spells (fireball, magic missile), and mental attacks (fear, psychological torture). Every damage effect has a *damage rating* (typically between 1 and 4) and *damage type* (physical or mental). Many damage effects also include a damage subtype (e.g., bludgeoning or emotional). The target suffers damage equal to the damage rating, though soak may reduce this.

SIMPLE SUCCESS

The base level of effect is damage 1 and the default duration of consequences resulting from damage is temporary [T].

INCREASE EFFECT

The Increase Effect stunt for damage effects increases the damage rating by 2.

DECREASE EFFECT

The Decrease Effect stunt for damage effects decreases the damage rating by 2.

DAMAGE PROPERTIES

DAMAGE SUBTYPES

Damage subtypes do not change damage but may interact with certain talents or features. Depending on your setting, you might define one or more for your themepack. The most common subtypes are:

- Physical: ballistic, **bludgeoning**, fire, impaling, and slashing.
- Mental: **emotional**, fear, and psychic.

Bold descriptors are the default damage subtypes. Additionally, you may find these uncommon physical descriptors useful: acid, cold, endurance, force, lightning, necrotic, poison, radiant, and thunder.

DIRECT

Damage effects with the *direct* property ignore the target's soak but must also specify a special effect or condition that completely negates the attack. For example, a poison gas could be direct (air filtration or no need to breath). If the target is wearing a gas mask, they would not be affected by the poison gas.

PIERCE

Pierce represents the ability of damage to punch through soak. Each point of pierce negates 1 point of soak.

REACH

Damage effects with the *reach* property can be used to attack past an opponent or obstacle.

SOAK

Soak effects represent anything that can protect a character from physical or mental harm. Examples include physical armor (full plate, leather jacket), spells (mage armor, bark skin), and exceptional abilities (tough hide, mental barriers). Every soak effect has a *soak rating* (typically between 1 and 8) and a damage type (physical or mental) against which it applies. Each point of soak rating reduces incoming damage by 1.

SIMPLE SUCCESS

The base level of effect is soak 1 with a brief [B] duration.

INCREASE EFFECT

The Increase Effect stunt for soak effects increases the soak rating by 2.

DECREASE EFFECT

The Decrease Effect stunt for soak effects decreases the soak rating by 2.

SOAK PROPERTIES

COVERAGE

Soak with the *coverage* property can be completely bypassed with a well-placed attack. Coverage specifies the number of stunt points the attacker must spend to bypass the soak.

HAMPERED

Hampered is a dice penalty to all Physique (endurance), Move create advantage, and Move overcome rolls. Each rank in Physique negates 1d of hampered.

HARDENED

Hardened soak is more difficult to pierce. Each point of hardened negates 1 point of pierce.

IMPROVED PROTECTION

Improved protection is a special stunt that reduces the duration of any consequences by one step (lasting becomes temporary, temporary becomes brief). It can only be chosen once per attack.

LIMITED SOAK

Soak can be further limited to apply only against a specific damage subtype (p. 13) or other special effect, or to apply against everything but that. Examples include a force field that only works against fire or faerie resilience that works against everything but cold iron.

UNIVERSAL PROPERTIES

AREA

An *area* effect works against everyone within a specific area. The area property specifies the number of zones affected, as well as the shape of the area (cone, line, sphere, etc.)

When an NPC targets PCs, the NPC's skill should be modified as normal for conditions. Any remaining bonus or penalty dice are applied as a modifier to the Move defend action of PCs in the area. Simple success grants 1 stunt point for use on the *Decrease Effect* stunt, as does each additional stunt point.

When a PC targets NPCs, they make a single attack test with modifiers for conditions, but not for defender skill ranks. NPCs can trade dice of Move for stunt points as normal for use with the *Decrease Effect* stunt, and if they have 1d remaining they get an additional stunt point.

You can use stunt points for the *Increase Scope* stunt to increase the number of targets affected the *Increased Effect* stunt.

Selective

When using an area effect with the *selective* property, you may choose which targets within the area are affected.

Aimed

When using an area effect with the *aimed* property, only targets that you could target normally are affected. In most cases this means you need to be able to see someone to target them.

AUTO

Auto effects must also take the uses property.

Auto effects can affect multiple targets in quick succession or a single target multiple times. Examples include machine guns or a flurry of punches that is too exhausting to use more than once.

You gain +3d to the action but the *uses* property is automatically exhausted.

Single Mode

If you use an *auto* effect without applying the action bonus the *uses* property cannot be exhausted.

Auto Only

Auto only effects must always apply the auto action bonus.

BURST

Burst effects must also take the uses property.

Burst effects are a reduced form of *auto* effects. Examples include certain pistols and assault rifles, or spells like magic missile.

You gain +1d to the action, and risk exhausting your ammunition as normal.

Single Mode

If you use a *burst* effect without applying the action bonus the *uses* property cannot be exhausted.

Burst Only

Burst only effects must always apply the burst action bonus.

OBJECT

Many effects manifest in the game as objects. At its most basic, an effect that has the object property cannot be used if the object is not on your character.

By default, all objects require one hand to use. You can redefine that with the *required hands* property.

REQUIRED HANDS

Most objects require hands to use—think most weapons, a phone, or even a bag. However, some non-object effects also require hands—magic is often described as requiring a free hand.

The *required hands* property specifies the number of hands required to use an effect. One Hand (1H) is the default.

One Hand (1H)

The effect requires one hand to use it.

Two Hands (2H)

The effect requires two hands to use it.

Versatile

The effect can be used with one hand or two. When used with two hands, increase the simple success effect by +1. For example, increase the damage of a versatile weapon by +1 when using two hands.

RANGED

Ranged effects can affect targets at a distance.

If ranged lists a single value, you take no range penalty for using it out to that maximum range, and the effect cannot be used beyond that range.

If ranged lists two values, the first is the range out to which you take no range penalty. Beyond this range, you take a cumulative -1d penalty for each additional range step. The second value is the maximum range—the effect is ineffective beyond this range.

Thrown

Effects with this property increase their maximum range by one step per 2d of Physique.

Reliable

Declaration stunts that would render a *reliable* effect inoperable cost an additional stunt point. Thus, creating a brief aspect (such as *Malfunctioning*) would cost 1 stunt points, a temporary aspect (such as *Jammed*, *Broken String*, or *Overheated*) would cost 2 stunt points, and a lasting aspect (such as *Broken Axle*) would cost 3 stunt points.

RELOAD

Effects with the *reload* property require the specified amount of time to reload. For example, a weapon with reload (snap action) would require that you spend a snap action on your turn to reload the weapon.

SKILL MINIMUM

Weapons with a *skill minimum* require a certain skill rank to use effectively. Failure to meet the skill minimum imposes penalty dice equal to the difference. For example, if you try to use a heavy weapon that requires Physique 2d, but your Physique is 1d, you would suffer -1d to any attacks with that weapon.

SLOW

You cannot use the *Increase Scope* stunt to affect additional targets.

TIRING

Weapons with the *tiring* property take a toll on the wielder. The tiring property can be triggered with a stunt point from an attack, at which point it inflicts 1 stress on the wielder of the same type that it causes. For example, a tiring physical weapon (axe) would cause physical stress, while a tiring mental weapon (mind blast) would cause mental stress. This is direct stress and cannot be reduced or prevented by soak.

UNRELIABLE

Declaration stunts that would render an *unreliable* effect inoperable cost one less stunt point (to a minimum of 1). Thus, creating a brief condition would cost 1 stunt point, a temporary condition would cost 1 stunt points, and a lasting condition would cost 2 stunt points. This can reflect poor craftsmanship, damage, or just general instability

USES

An effect with the *uses* property has some limitation on how many times it can be used. Examples include ammunition for guns, batteries for robots, and mana for spells.

The *uses* property can be triggered with plot point or a stunt point from any successful defend action against the effect, at which point the uses are exhausted. Once the uses are exhausted, the effect cannot be used until it recovers, typically at the end of an act break.

Ammo

With *ammo*, you can only regain uses by acquiring more of the appropriate ammunition. Only one set of ammunition can be ready at a time. If you carry or find extra ammunition, you can ready a new set during a scene break.

High Capacity

High capacity lets you prevent *uses* from being exhausted once per scene.

SCALE

Scale represents a significant increase in scope and effect. Scale is rated as 0 or higher, with the default being 0 (human scale). Scale and size, while related, are not the same thing—small sources can produce large scale effects. Most creatures and natural effects in the world are Scale 4 or less.

The Scale Benchmarks Table provides examples of effects for Damage and Soak, as well as Speed and Disatance.

Scale Benchmarks Table

Scale	Description	Damage	Soak	Speed	Distance
0	Normal	Anti-personnel weapon	Personal armor	Human	Small yard, 10m
1	Inhuman	Large caliber weapon, large animal attacks	Powered armor, bear	Most animals, slow car	Large yard, 25m
2	Remarkable	Anti-materiel weapon, huge animals	Vehicles, rhino, light buildings	Most vehicles, cheetah	City-block, a field, 100m
3	Incredible	Light cannon	Ships, buildings, armored vehicles	Fast cars, fast trains	Fields or blocks, 250m
4	Amazing	Tank cannon	Tanks, vault, warships	Planes	Burroughs, 1km
5	Colossal	Artillery	Skyscraper	Rockets	Towns, 10km
6	Unearthly	Tactical nuke	Surface bunker	Orbital	Cities, 100km
7	Fantastic	Small nuke	Subterranean bunker	Subluminal	Countries, 1000km
8	Astounding	Large nuke	Mountain	Relativistic	Planets
9	Stellar	Asteroid impact	Continent	Superluminal	Stars (parsecs)
10	Cosmic	Lunar impact	Planet	Warp	Universe

EFFECTS OF SCALE

Scale negates scale, one for one.

Each remaining point of scale negates one opponent's stunt points. If no stunt points remain, one point of scale can turn a simple success into simple failure (or vice versa).

A character attacks a wild boar (scale 1) with a spear (scale 0) and succeeds with one stunt point. The boar's scale negates the stunt point leaving only a simple success, angering the boar. On the boar's turn it attacks, and the character gets only a simple success on their defend. The boar's scale turns the character's success into failure, and the boar damages the character.

DIFFERENT SCALES FOR DIFFERENT ABILITIES

A character or feature can have different scales for different abilities, like scale 2 Physique but only scale 0 Resolve. Being strong won't help them resist mind control. Scale can apply to an entire character, mental or physical capabilities, particular skills, particular applications of a skill, or particular effects.

CHANGING THE DEFAULT SCALE

If you are running a game about daring cats stopping the mouse-pocalypse, it would make sense to define scale 0 as cat level capabilities, with dogs at scale 1 and humans at scale 2. Define the average PC as scale 0, and fit everything else around them.

STRESS & CONSEQUENCES

Simple success with an attack causes damage equal to the damage rating of the effect (1 by default). Damage causes *stress*, while *consequences* reduce damage. Suffer enough stress or consequences and you are *taken out*.

SUMMARY OF DAMAGE RESOLUTION

Damage and soak properties are resolved in the following order:

1. Hardened reduces pierce
2. Pierce reduces soak
3. Soak reduces damage
4. Damage causes stress and consequences

STRESS

Stress represents a short-term toll on your character and is usually recovered during a scene break. By default, you have two *stress tracks*, mental and physical, each with three *stress boxes*.

When you suffer damage, check off the stress box with a value equal to the damage. If that box is already checked, check off a higher value stress box. If there is no higher available box you must take a consequence, grave aspect, or both to reduce the damage.

If you cannot take any more consequences or grave aspects, you are *taken out*.

CONSEQUENCES

Consequences represent more serious injury to your character that can result in you being taken out. Recovering from consequences can take a long time.

When you would suffer damage, you can reduce the damage you would take by two per 1d of the consequence's magnitude. For example, taking a single 3d consequence would reduce incoming damage by 6.

Consequences are usually the result of reducing incoming damage, though some effects may inflict consequences directly. When you record a consequence, give it a descriptive name and note whether it was physical (p) or mental (m), the magnitude, and the duration (*Broken Arm 2d [L](p)*, *Brain Freeze 1d [T](m)*, *Stunned 4d [B](m)*). Consequences are temporary [T] by default, though some effects can impose consequences of longer or shorter duration. If you accumulate consequences totaling 4d or more, you are taken out.

INVOKING CONSEQUENCES

Besides contributing to being taken out, consequences can be invoked similarly to aspects. By spending a plot point, you can invoke all of an opponent's consequences to gain advantage or impose disadvantage with a brief [B] duration and magnitude equal to the total of their consequences. Likewise, your consequences can be invoked by an opponent.

BRIEF CONSEQUENCES

It is possible to be taken out by a brief consequence. You typically recover from a brief consequence at the rate of 1d per round, but can take no actions during that time, including bonus actions. Once you have recovered enough that you do not have 4d or more of total consequences you are no longer taken out.

MAKING A SACRIFICE

You can reduce the damage you would suffer by two if you sacrifice an appropriate asset or aspect, such as a piece of equipment. Especially useful assets (such as a wallet at a crime scene or a magical shield) might even offset four damage.

This option requires GM approval.

Zombie Horde. A horde of zombies are going to drag you to the ground and make you the guest of honor for dinner. As painful as it is, you declare that they grab your backpack instead (including everything in it), giving you the opportunity to escape.

Broken Shield. A skillful enemy hits you hard with a Fight attack. Knowing you would be taken out otherwise, you sacrifice your shield and declare it is smashed to pieces as a result of the attack. You better think of something, because you probably won't survive the next blow.

GRAVE ASPECT

Grave aspects are new aspects your character acquires from which you are unlikely to recover over the course of a scenario.

You can spend a plot point and choose to suffer a grave aspect when you take damage. Alternatively, you can choose to be taken out instead of spending a plot point.

Reduce the damage you would take by two and acquire a new aspect with a duration one step greater than that of the effect.

You have filled all your stress boxes, have 3d of consequences already, and take another two damage [L]. To stay in the conflict you reduce damage by two and gain the *Injured Hand [LL]* grave aspect.

For every two additional damage you reduce, increase the duration by one step to a maximum of permanent [P].

Suddenly, a *Thing Man Was Not Meant To Know* appears. You fail your Resolve (fear) test horribly and take 8 mental damage [L]. Luckily, your 2 mental stress box is unchecked so you mark that off, leaving 6 damage to convert into a grave aspect with a permanent duration (3 steps from lasting). Thinking carefully, you take the *I Will Never Be Alone Again [P]* mental grave aspect.

TAKEN OUT

If you are taken out, you can no longer act in the scene. Whoever takes you out narrates what happens to you. It should make sense based on how you got taken out—mental consequence causes you to run from the room in shame or terror, or maybe a physical consequence results in you knocked unconscious.

The duration of your consequences determines when your character re-enters the game.

THE END

Your group should decide whether characters can meet a permanent end. In some games, oblivion is an important reality that characters must face. When you establish character loss as a real possibility, consider the following guidelines:

- A single lasting consequence of 4d or more ends your character. To be slightly more forgiving, spend a plot point to be taken out instead.
- Lasting consequences of one type (physical or mental) totalling 4d or more requires treatment at the end of the scene, or your character ends.

CONCEDING

You can choose to concede during a conflict at any time with an appropriate story. When you concede, you earn a plot point and get some narrative control over the way in which you are taken out and the consequences of being taken out. Conceding can be offered as part of success at a cost (p. 3).

RECOVERY

During a conflict, you can spend your entire turn to take a *recovery*. When you take a recovery, you attempt an overcome action (Physique for physical, Resolve for mental) to clear a single checked stress box. Stunt points may be used to clear additional boxes.

REST

At the end of a break, you have the opportunity to take a rest. Breaks occur between plot stages (scene, act, scenario, story arc) as long as there is an appropriate pause in the action. This roughly corresponds to the duration of the plot stage itself: a scene break might require a few minutes to catch your breath, while an act break might require a few hours of sleep.

When you take a rest, you gain the following benefits:

- Clear all checked stress boxes.
- Remove all consequences with a duration less than the appropriate plot stage. For example, at the end of an act break you would remove all temporary consequences.
- Reduce the magnitude of each consequence with a duration equal to the appropriate plot stage by 1d. For example, at the end of an act break you would reduce the magnitude of all lasting consequences by 1d.
- You may attempt an overcome action (Physique for physical, Resolve for mental) to reduce the magnitude of a single consequence with a duration equal to the appropriate plot stage by 1d. Stunt points may be used to reduce the consequence further.

Rest Break Table

Break	Time Required	Consequence Reduced 1d	Consequence Removed
Scene	Minutes	Temporary [T]	—
Act	Hours	Lasting [L]	Temporary [T]
Scenario	Days	Long-Lasting [LL]	Lasting [L]
Story arc	Weeks	Enduring [E]	Long-Lasting [LL]

TREATMENT

Treating physical consequences is a Wits create advantage action, while mental consequences are an Interact create advantage action. Success provides the recipient advantage on their next Physique or Resolve overcome action to reduce consequences.

Treating consequences takes an entire break, so you would be performing multiple actions if you both rest and treat consequences. Apply the normal penalties for multiple actions during a break if you are treating multiple people at the same time.

ASPECTS

An *aspect* is a word or phrase that describes something special about a person, place, thing, situation, or group. Almost anything you can think of can have aspects. Aspects are written in bold Title Case, optionally followed by a duration. If no duration is listed, it is permanent [P]. A person could be *The Greatest Swordswoman on the Cloud Sea*. A traumatic event might leave you *Shocked [L]*. A gun might become *Jammed* at an inopportune time. Any limitation to how or when an aspect applies should be inherent in its name.

TYPES OF ASPECTS

There's an endless variety of aspects, but no matter what they're called they all work pretty much the same way. The main difference is how long they stick around before going away.

GAME ASPECTS

Game aspects are permanent fixtures of the game, hence the name. While they might change over time, they never go away. Game aspects are usually defined during campaign creation, though events during play can change or add game aspects. They describe problems or threats that exist in the world and are going to be the basis for the story.

Everyone can invoke or compel a game aspect at any time; they're always there and available for anyone to use.

Examples: *The King is Dead*, *Winter is Coming*, *A Rebel Alliance*

CHARACTER ASPECTS

Character aspects are just as permanent, but smaller in scope, attached to an individual PC or NPC. They describe a near-infinite number of things that set the character apart, such as significant personality traits or beliefs, backgrounds or professions, an important possession or noticeable feature, relationships, problems or goals, and titles, reputations, or obligations a character may have.

Examples: *Captain of the Skyship Nimbus*, *On the Run from the Knights of the Circle*, *Attention to Detail*, *I Must Protect My Brother*

SITUATION ASPECTS

Situation aspects are temporary, intended to last only for a single scene or until they no longer make sense. Situation aspects can be attached to the environment the scene takes place in—which affects everybody in the scene—but you can also attach them to specific characters with the create advantage basic action.

Examples: *Moonless Night*, *Unruly Mob*, *Covered in Tar*, *Dense Thicket*

USING ASPECTS

Players and GMs can invoke or compel aspects. Invoking an aspect allows a character spend a plot point to gain some benefit, while compelling an aspect earns a character a plot point by accepting a complication.

INVOKING ASPECTS

The primary way you're going to use aspects is to *invoke* them. If you're in a situation where an aspect is beneficial to your character or detrimental to your opponent, you can invoke it. In order to invoke an aspect, briefly explain why it is relevant, spend a plot point, and choose one of these benefits:

- Reroll all of the dice
- Turn simple failure into simple success
- Turn simple success into simple failure
- Create a basic effect
- Add or negate a stunt point

The group must buy into the relevance of a particular aspect when you invoke it. The GM is the final arbiter. The use of an aspect should intuitively make sense, or you should be able to provide a brief narrative as to why it makes sense.

You can invoke multiple aspects on a single roll, but you cannot invoke the same aspect multiple times on a single roll. So, if a reroll doesn't help you enough, you would have to pick another aspect (and spend another plot point) for a second reroll or to turn failure into success. You must be involved in an action to invoke an aspect—you can't invoke an aspect on behalf of someone else.

You hit the bandit, but you really want to make a lasting impression. You decide to spend a plot point and invoke your *Dreadful to Behold* aspect to add a stunt point, which you use to fill him with dread.

INVOKING ASPECTS MORE THAN ONCE

You may not invoke an aspect more than once in the same scene unless it is subsequently compelled or invoked against you. Multiple players can invoke the same situation aspect during a scene—the limitation is relative to the individual.

COMPELLING CHARACTER ASPECTS

The other way you use another character's aspects in the game is called a *compel*. If you're in a situation where having or being around a certain aspect means a character's life is more dramatic or complicated, someone can compel that aspect.

To compel an aspect, explain why the aspect is relevant, and then make an offer as to what the complication is. You can negotiate the terms of the complication a bit, until you reach a reasonable consensus. Whoever is getting compelled then has two options:

- Accept the complication and receive a plot point.
- Pay a plot point to prevent the compel from happening.

The complication from the compel occurs regardless of anyone's efforts—once you've accepted and taken the plot point, you can't use your skills or anything else to mitigate the situation. You must deal with the new story developments that arise from the compel.

If you pay to prevent the complication from happening, then you describe how you avoid it, possibly with help from the group. Sometimes it just means that you agree that the event never happened in the first place, and sometimes it means narrating your character doing something proactive. Whatever you need to do to have it make sense works fine, as long as the group is okay with it.

The GM is the final arbiter here—not just on how the result of a compel plays out, but on whether a compel is valid in the first place. Use the same judgment you apply to an invocation—it should make instinctive sense, or require only a small amount of explanation, that a complication might arise from the aspect.

PLAYERS COMPELLING PLAYERS

You can spend a plot point to compel another character and propose a complication. The plot point goes back into the GM's unlimited pool. The GM can always compel for free, and any player can propose a compel on their own character for free.

You are among the guests of honor at the governor's mansion when you spot a very valuable Remington bronze. You decide to liven things up and offer a compel for your "*Collector*" of *Fine Art* aspect. The GM thinks this sounds like a lovely idea and gives you a plot point from the general (unlimited) pool and introduce a new plot element: a well-to-do socialite apparently saw you steal the bronze and now wants to meet!

ASPECTS ARE TRUTH

Besides knowing how to use aspects, it's important to understand how NOT to use them. First and foremost, aspects represent the truth of things. If a car is *On Fire*, it's going to burn. No one needs to spend a plot point to make that happen. However, if the drifting smoke from the fire interferes with a sniper's shot, that is an example of invoking the aspect. A *Giant of a Man* does not need to spend a plot point to reach the jar on the high shelf, but they do if they are going to turn failure into success as they reach out to grab their falling friend.

This is also true when it comes to establishing facts. If a character is a *Sorcerer of the Azure Order*, we know that the character is a sorcerer and they are a member of something called the Azure Order. But if a player introduces a hated enemy of the Azure Order and explains how it complicates their life, that's a compel. Character aspects serve as a great guide for when not to roll: pilots know about planes, the king's advisor understands the rules of succession, and accountants can balance books.

PLOT POINTS

Plot points are one of your most important resources in NOVA6—they provide you with a degree of narrative control, enabling you to nudge the story in a desired direction.

Plot points are always earned from and spent to an unlimited pool.

THE PLOT POINT ECONOMY

For the most part, the use of aspects revolves around plot points. You indicate your supply of plot points by using tokens, such as poker chips, glass beads, or other markers.

Ideally, you want a consistent ebb and flow of plot points going on throughout your sessions. Players spend them to be awesome in a crucial moment, and they get them back when their lives get dramatic and complicated. If your plot points are flowing the way they're supposed to, you'll end up with these cycles of triumphs and setbacks that make for a fun and interesting story.

REFRESH

Each player has a *refresh* that specifies how many plot points they start each act with. The default refresh is three plot points. If you have more plot points than your refresh, you do not reset to your refresh but instead keep the extra.

EARNING PLOT POINTS

You earn plot points from the pool in the following ways:

- Accept a compel
- Have your aspects invoked against you
- Concede in a conflict

SPENDING PLOT POINTS

You spend plot points into the pool in any of the following ways:

- Invoke an aspect or consequences
- Compel another character's aspects
- Refuse a compel
- Activate a talent or feature (if required)
- Take a bonus action in a conflict
- Add a story element related to an aspect

THE GM AND PLOT POINTS

The GM also gets to use plot points, but the rules are a little bit different than the rules for players. As the GM, you can spend these plot points on any NPC action, and you can earn additional plot points if any NPCs accept a compel or have their aspects or consequences invoked against them.

GM REFRESH

The GM starts each scenario with one plot point per PC, and refreshes their plot points at the end of any break. This also means that if the PCs don't get a break, the GM's plot points don't refresh either.

STUNTS

Stunts enable you to go beyond simple success and failure to create additional effects, modify the base effect of an action, discover new information, change the circumstances and more.

Your action dice (p. XX) determine any free stunt points you might earn from rolling and you can always invoke an aspect to get one more.

You then spend your stunt points on one or more stunts and describe the outcome.

EARNING STUNT POINTS

You earn one stunt point (SP) on a success when you:

- Trade 2 bonus dice before rolling
- Roll triples
- Spend a plot point and invoke an aspect

Additionally, you may earn one when you:

- Trade 1 bonus die before rolling a Specialized skill
- Roll doubles with a Focused skill
- Apply a special Talent

RULE OF AWESOME

The Rule of Awesome states:

Stunts should always result in awesome.

If you choose a stunt that would result in no additional effect, the GM will explain why nothing happened—this should reveal about one stunt point's worth of information. That stunt point is still used, but the result is that you learn something important about the situation or your adversary that will be useful instead.

If you spent more than one stunt point, you can then spend all but one of your stunt points on a different stunt.

CORE STUNTS

Spend a stunt point to perform a *stunt*. The cost for stunts with multiple levels of effect is indicated by the symbols ①, ②, or ③.

The Core Stunts Table includes a variety of stunts that cover most situations, but this should not be considered an absolute list. Use these as a guideline for anything that might be appropriate for the situation.

Core Stunts Table

Name	Description
Create Effect	Create a basic effect appropriate for the skill. See the individual basic effect (such as Advantage, Damage, or Soak) for details. This can be used to introduce an object or create conditions.
Declaration	Declare something about the scene, such as a situational aspect or NPC. The declaration must be a result of or related to your action (e.g., while attempting to sneak past a guard, you describe how the guard decides to take a smoke break). If a declaration would contradict critical story elements, the GM will work with you to come up with an appropriate alternative. ① Subtle change: introduce a situational aspect. ② Minor change: introduce an NPC extra to the scene. ③ Major change: introduce a group of NPC extras or an NPC principal to the scene.
Discovery	Ask the GM to reveal additional information. ① Some additional information related to your discovery, usually well hidden or restricted to a limited few. ② Most of the information related to your discovery, but not the darkest, most forbidden, or lost secrets. ③ All discoverable details concerning your target or outcome, including deepest secrets.
Increase Effect/ Decrease Effect	Increase or decrease a basic effect. See the individual basic effect (such as Advantage, Damage, or Soak) for details.
Increase Scope	① Some targets in the zone, either an additional principal or 2-3 extras of equal or lesser skill. ② Most targets in the zone, either all extras or 2-3 principals. ③ All potential targets within the zone.
Increase Time/ Decrease Time	Increase or decrease a duration or interval. Choose only once. Brief ↔ Temporary ↔ Lasting ↔ Long-Lasting
Reaction	Perform a single action as a reaction that cannot generate stunt points. Choose this stunt only once per turn. You cannot move between zones as a reaction. This is a very versatile stunt. For example, it can be used to make a counterattack, attempt a Recovery test, or take a ready snap action.
Recover Special	Reduce a brief [B] advantage, disadvantage, or consequence by 1d per stunt point. Talents and feature may have special stunts, denoted by [S]. Unless otherwise noted, special stunts can only be activated once per action.
Trigger Property	Trigger a property as per its rules.

CHARACTER CREATION

WHAT MAKES A GOOD CHARACTER?

Whether you're talking about fantasy, science fiction, superheroes, or gritty cop shows, *NOVA6* works best when you use it to tell stories about people who are proactive, competent, and dramatic.

Characters should be **proactive**. They have a variety of abilities that lend themselves to active problem solving, and they aren't timid about using them. They don't sit around waiting for the solution to a crisis to come to them—they go out and apply their energies, taking risks and overcoming obstacles to achieve their goals.

This doesn't mean that they don't ever plan or strategize, or that they're all careless to a fault. It just means that even the most patient among them will eventually rise and take action in a tangible, demonstrable way.

Characters are **competent**. They aren't bumbling fools who routinely look ridiculous when they're trying to get things done—they're highly skilled, talented, or trained individuals capable of making visible change in the world they inhabit. They are the right people for the job, and they get involved in a crisis because they have a good chance of being able to resolve it for the better.

This doesn't mean they always succeed, or that their actions are without unintended consequence. It just means that when they fail, it isn't because they made dumb mistakes or weren't prepared for the risks.

Characters lead **dramatic** lives. The stakes are always high for them, both in terms of their personal struggles and the challenges they face. Like us, they struggle with their issues, and though the external circumstances of their lives might be a lot bigger in scope than what we go through, we can still relate to and sympathize with them.

This doesn't mean they spend all their time wallowing in misery and pain, or that everything in their lives is always a world-shaking crisis. It just means that their lives require them to make hard choices—and live with the consequences.

CHARACTER CREATION STEPS

Follow these steps to create a character:

1. Grab a character sheet.
2. Choose your core aspects: high concept, background, motivation, and trouble.
3. Record your level (1 by default).
4. Spend 6 + level advances on skills and talents.
5. Choose gear and assets as appropriate.
6. Choose a name.
7. Record your plot refresh (3 by default).
8. Record your physical and mental stress boxes (3 each by default).
9. Record attacks and defenses (if appropriate).

THEMEPACKS AND GAME CREATION

NOVA6 Core *themepacks* define the core aspects, skills, and talents used to create characters for a game. This chapter uses a default Universal Themepack that is appropriate for most games of NOVA6 Core.

See Game Creation, p. 52, for details on creating your own themepack.

CHARACTER SHEET

Character sheets are used to record the important character data in a common format. This is helpful when learning the game or building characters for the first time.

THEMEPACK SPECIFIC SHEETS

Themepacks often include a custom character sheet with game-specific character options—before playing, check if there is a character sheet for your game’s themepack.

TRACKING ADVANCES—BOXES

NOVA6 uses a simple approach to track character advances: *check a box*. This simplifies the character-building process by tracking the key choices you make in an easy to tally format.

SIMPLIFY

If you separate the character-building process from the character recording process, you can certainly simplify the character sheet. Even something as small as a business card can be enough for recording all relevant character data.

Don’t record skills or talents you don’t have. For example, Mimi Kazan has no Physique, but we do record Fight 0 since she has a relevant perk (*pistols*) we want to track:

Miriam “Mimi” Kazan	Level 1	Refresh 3
I am a <i>Down and Out Private Investigator</i> who was <i>Born and Raised in New York City</i> . I feel <i>Compelled to Help Those in Need</i> because I <i>Escaped from a Life of Crime</i> .		
Fight 0 ; <i>pistols</i>	Gear & Assets	
Interact 2 (Focused); <i>persuade</i>	Snub-nosed .38	
Move 1 ; <i>move through a crowd</i>	Dressed to the nines	
Resolve 1	I know a place to stay	
Wits 1 ; Well-Trained	Sgt O’Mally is a friend	
Physical Stress [1][2][3]	Mental Stress [1][2][3]	

NAME

LEVEL | PLOT REFRESH

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

CORE ASPECTS

High Concept

Background

Motivation

Trouble

OTHER ASPECTS

GEAR & ASSETS

ATTACK

Weapon Damage Pierce Type

DEFENSE

Armor Soak Hardened Type

PHYSICAL | MENTAL STRESS

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥

CONSEQUENCES

Description Magnitude Type Duration

SKILLS

Ranks F P S

 Fight

Perks:

 Interact

Perks:

 Move

Perks:

 Physique

Perks:

 Resolve

Perks:

 Wits

Perks:

SKILL TALENTS

Check the box next to the chosen skill.

Focused. Gain +1 SP on doubles with this skill. Max rank for this skill increases by 1.

Practiced. Choose a simple success with this skill if you are *up* without rolling, or you may reroll any ones on an action test once.

Specialized. Gain a perk and the ability to trade 1d for +1 SP on success with this skill.

CORE TALENTS

Danger Sense. Surprise attacks have no advantage against you.

Lucky. +2 refresh.

Quick. +1d on Initiative, +1 bonus action per conflict, and +1 SP on doubles.

Resolute. +1 mental stress box and +1 mental soak.

Tough. +1 physical stress box and +1 physical soak.

Well-Trained. Gain 3 perks that provide +1d to a specific action, or all actions if narrowly defined.

CORE ASPECTS

Your character is defined by four core aspects: High Concept, Background, Motivation, and Trouble. These aspects capture the most fundamental and important elements of your character and are what set you apart from other characters—a group might have two fighters, but you'll be the only *Outcast Berserker in Search of a Home*.

HIGH CONCEPT

Your high concept is a phrase that sums up what your character is about—who you are and what you do. It's one of the first and most important aspects for your character.

Think of this aspect like your job, your role in life, or your calling—it's what you're good at, but it's also an obligation and likely filled with its own challenges. A well-defined high concept comes with some good and some bad. Examples include: *Former Advisor to the King*, *Down and Out Private Investigator*, or *Gang Enforcer for the Triad*.

BACKGROUND

Your background represents your roots. It can represent where you are from geographically, but it can also represent your emotional or spiritual history. If change is inevitable, then your background is who you used to be. Background is a great opportunity to provide contrast to your high concept.

The *Troubled Warrior Seeking Peace* (high concept) may have once been *A Simple Farmer* (background). Other examples include *Reluctant Heir Apparent*, *Disavowed CIA Officer*, or *Born and Raised in New York City*. Backgrounds will often resemble high concepts but represent a different time in your character's life.

MOTIVATION

Your motivation is the thing that drives you—what makes you get out of bed in the morning and do what you do. Characters often work together toward a common goal, but they are unlikely to have identical motivations. Even the members of a highly-disciplined military unit are going to have varying motivations. One might be serving primarily out of a *Love of Country*, while another is *Compelled to Help Those in Need*. Other examples include *Reclaim the Underworld*, *Redeem my Family Honor*, or *Spread the Light of Lensae*.

Choosing a motivation that puts you in conflict with another member of the group can make for some fun roleplaying, provided both sides can handle the conflict maturely and keep it from disrupting the overall development of a shared story.

TROUBLE

Finally, every character has some sort of trouble aspect that is a part of their life and story. If your high concept is what or who your character is, your trouble is the answer to a simple question: what complicates your existence?

Trouble brings complication into your character's life and drives you into interesting situations. Your trouble shouldn't be easy to solve—if it was, your character would have already done so. Nor should it paralyze your character completely. You shouldn't have to deal with your trouble at every turn, unless that's the point of the story. Examples include *Escaped from a Life of Crime*, *In Debt to the Mafia*, or *Irrepressibly Greedy*.

Your trouble should not restate or follow directly from your high concept—saying that a *High-Society Cat Burglar* (high concept) is *Compelled to Steal Shiny Things* (trouble) might be a little obvious and probably best left as part of the high-concept. Use your trouble as an opportunity to flesh out your character and bring in new and diverse elements.

LEVEL

The GM decides the starting *level* for the game. Level is an abstract measure of overall character experience and capability and determines the initial number of advances you can use to develop your character.

For information on gaining levels, see Character Advancement in Adventures, p. 65.

What Level Am I?

An average person is level 0. Someone with skill in a field (scientist, soldier) might be level 1 or 2, while someone accomplished in a field might be level 3 or 4. A luminary in their field (Nobel prize winner, four-star general) might be level 5 or 6. The world's foremost expert (Stephen Hawking, George Patton) might be level 7 or 8, while history's greatest exemplar might be level 9 or 10 (Isaac Newton, Alexander the Great). Levels above 10 typically represent characters you only find in fiction (Emmett "Doc" Brown, Andrew "Ender" Wiggin).

SKILLS AND TALENTS

You acquire skills and talents by spending *advances*. These represent a character's overall capabilities and (with GM permission) can also be used to acquire special features from the themepack.

A rank in a skill or a talent costs one advance, while features can cost one or more advances. When you put an advance in a skill or talent, fill in the first (leftmost) available box for that skill or talent.

SKILLS

Skills determine your success or failure with any test. At level one, you are limited to one rank in any skill.

See Skills, p. 36, for more details, as well as examples of perks for each skill.

PERKS

Perks represent additional proficiency with a single action, or with all actions for a narrow focus of a skill. Perks are acquired via the Specialized or Well-Trained talents.

TALENTS

Talents provide special abilities or enhanced capabilities, sometimes even breaking the rules to do so. Work with your GM to fill in missing talents that are important for your character.

See Talents, p. 43, for additional details on core talents,

RECOMMENDATIONS

Most characters should consider the following talents at least once at some point in their development: **Focused**, **Practiced**, and **Specialized**. If you take one of these talents, we recommend that you fill in the corresponding "F", "P", or "S" box on your character sheet to indicate the skill to which it applies.

Focused. You have great potential and can do things no one else can do—the archer that can pin a fly to the wall at a hundred meters.

Practiced. You may not be flashy, but you always get the job done—the safecracker that has seen it all.

Specialized. You are remarkable in a specific application of a skill—the world's foremost freeclimbing expert.

GEAR AND ASSETS

Gear and *assets* are features representing items or relationships associated with your character. The universal themepack assumes you can choose any gear and assets that align with your core aspects, skills, and talents. Choose one key piece of gear or asset for each of your core aspects.

See the Features section for more details about Gear (p. 46) and Assets (p. 47), especially if your game requires equipment for extended survival, exploration, or other activities.

NAME

We can't all be the *Hero Without a Name*. It just gets confusing.

PLOT REFRESH

Characters start with a plot refresh of three. That means they'll start each act with at least three plot points. Talents, such as Lucky, can change this.

We find that the easiest way to indicate your plot refresh is to fill in the bubbles for plot refresh you don't have. For example, if you have a plot refresh of 3, you would completely fill in the 4 and 5 bubbles. At the end of a session you can then put a line through a bubble to indicate your current plot points.

STRESS BOXES

Characters start with three physical stress boxes and three mental stress boxes, but may gain more from skills, talents, or both.

Two ranks of Physique or Resolve grant one additional physical or mental stress box respectively, while four ranks of Physique or Resolve grant two additional stress boxes.

The Tough and Resilient talents also grant one additional physical or mental stress box respectively.

Like with plot refresh, we find that the easiest way to indicate your stress boxes is to fill in the stress boxes you don't have. For example, if you have 4 physical stress boxes, you would completely fill in the 5 box. Then, as you take damage, you can put a line through stress boxes that are lost and erase the lines as you recover.

ATTACKS & DEFENSES

Depending on the game, you may have specific attacks (e.g., weapons and spells) or defenses (e.g., body armor and super powers). Record them under the appropriate section.

You're Done—Go Play!

SKILLS, TALENTS, AND FEATURES

SKILLS

Skills describe broad groups of competencies at something that your character might have gained through innate talent, training, or years of trial and error. They are the basis for everything your character does in the game that involves challenges and chance.

CORE SKILLS

Each core skill (Fight, Move, Interact, Physique, Wits, Resolve) provides examples of how you can use the skill to perform the four basic actions of NOVA6 Core, as well as examples of perks most often associated with a specific skill.

Should you decide to modify the skills, or expand on them, the core skill descriptions should give you a good foundation on which to build your game and themepack.

SKILL RANKS

Skills are measured by ranks: 0 (untrained), 1 (trained), 2 (skilled), 3 (expert), and 4 (master). Rank 5 is only available as part of a Feature (see p. 45) when appropriate for your game.

Each rank in a skill gives +1d to rolls you make with that skill. Higher ranks require that a character be higher level: rank 2 requires 3rd level, rank 3 requires 5th level, and rank 4 requires 7th level.

Skill Ranks Table

Rank	Description	Bonus Dice	Requirements
0	Untrained	-	-
1	Trained	+1d	-
2	Skilled	+2d	Level 3
3	Expert	+3d	Level 5
4	Master	+4d	Level 7
5	Superhuman	+5d	Feature

PERKS

Perks are specializations within a specific skill. When making a test with that skill, you gain +1d if you have an applicable perk. Having more than one applicable perk does not grant additional bonus dice. A perk doesn't have to exactly match a skill application, as long as it is related. The *Keen Eyes* perk could apply to a Wits (notice) test.

Perks can be defined as nearly anything. In general, broad perks only apply to one specific basic action, while more narrow perks apply to all relevant actions.

For example, specializing with all light blades is broad and would need to be limited to a specific action, such as attack or create advantage. Specializing with rapiers is narrow and would not require choosing a specific action. The respective Fight perks would be *Light Blades (attack)* and *Rapiers*. The GM is the ultimate arbiter of what is broad and what is narrow.

FIGHT

The Fight skill covers all forms of physical combat: unarmed and armed, ranged and melee.

EXAMPLE PERKS

Daggers, Sneak Attack, Judo (defend), Grappling, Firearms (attack), Bows (create advantage), Shortbow, Pistols.

OVERCOME

You won't typically use Fight outside of a conflict, though you might use it to demonstrate your prowess or perform a trick shot. It could also be used in a regulated bout or sporting event, which would allow you to use this skill in a contest.

CREATE ADVANTAGE

You can use Fight to create advantage in physical conflicts, including many classic maneuvers: stunning strikes, disarms, trick shots, suppressing fire, and so on. You could even use Fight to assess another fighter's style, spotting weaknesses in their form that you can exploit.

ATTACK

Fight is most often used to make attacks. The range of an attack depends on the weapon—your typical melee weapon requires you and your target to be in the same zone, while ranged weapons work over greater distances.

BASIC ATTACK

Physical (bludgeoning) temporary damage 1.

DEFEND

You use Fight to defend against melee attack or create advantage attempts, as well as pretty much any action where violently interposing yourself could prevent it from happening. You can't use this skill to defend against ranged attacks, unless the setting is fantastical enough that you can swat arrows from the air or use laser swords to deflect blasters, and even then such an ability might require a talent or a perk.

INTERACT

The Interact skill covers the entire gamut of social interactions, from making friends to interrogating suspects. Interacting with NPC extras is typically just a single overcome action, but NPC principals or PCs may require a contest.

EXAMPLE PERKS

Deceive (create advantage), Duping Guards, Provoke (attack), Intimidating

OVERCOME

You can use Interact to overcome almost any obstacle that can talk, or that can at least understand.

Examples include bluffing your way past a guard, tracking down a missing person, intimidating a stoolie for information, or convincing a jailor to let you go.

CREATE ADVANTAGE

Interact can be used to create a wide variety of advantages, generally representing emotional states, social maneuvering, or deception.

Examples include instilling someone with confidence, infuriating your opponent, telling convincing lies, or getting key information from your network.

ATTACK

You can use Interact to cause emotional harm to a target as a mental attack. Your relationship with the target and the current circumstances determine if you can use this action—usually you need some kind of relevant connection, aspect, or asset.

Attacking someone to make them angry or reckless is actually a create advantage action, not an attack.

BASIC ATTACK

Mental (emotional) temporary damage 1.

DEFEND

You use Interact to defend against all Interact actions.

MOVE

The Move skill represents your ability to skillfully maneuver, whether on foot or in a vehicle, including chases or races. Additionally, it covers all movement styles—quick, stealthy, elusive, etc.

EXAMPLE PERKS

Athletics (overcome), Climbing, Driving (create advantage), Motorcycles, Stealth (overcome)

OVERCOME

Move can be used to overcome and move past any physical obstacle—climbing a wall, ramming a barrier, sneaking past a sentry, etc. You use overcome actions with Move to move between zones in a conflict, especially if there are conditions or aspects that restrict movement.

MOVEMENT

As a single overcome action you can move into an adjacent zone. If your path is unimpeded, you do not need to roll. If you want to move farther or if your path is obstructed, however, you need to succeed at a Move overcome test. Success generally means you move one additional zone or overcome an obstacle, with each stunt point adding an additional zone.

Run and Jump. You are chasing an assassin across the rooftops, and need to leap from one building to the next. You succeed at a Move overcome with a stunt point. You leap the gap between the two zones and make it another zone with your stunt point.

CREATE ADVANTAGE

Move is often used to create advantage for a subsequent action, such as getting to higher ground or setting up an ambush. You can also use Move to dodge and give yourself advantage against physical attacks.

ATTACK

Move is almost never used to make attacks—unless you're attacking a target by ramming them with a vehicle, in which case the vehicle takes the same damage as the target.

DEFEND

You can use Move to defend against attack and create advantage attempts in physical conflicts, as well as to prevent opponents from moving past you if you're in a position to physically interfere. Move can also be used to hide and defend against attempts to find you with Wits (notice).

PHYSIQUE

The Physique skill represents your strength, power, and endurance. Where the Move skill helps you avoid, the Physique skill helps you withstand.

Stress Boxes. Two ranks in Physique grants +1 physical stress box, while four ranks grants +2 physical stress boxes (total).

EXAMPLE PERKS

Strong (overcome), Bend Bars, Healthy (defend), Poison Resistance, Bear Hug (create advantage)

OVERCOME

You will often use Physique to overcome obstacles that benefit from the application of strength, such as locked doors and big rocks, or endurance, such as marathons and holding your breath.

CREATE ADVANTAGE

Physique can be used in physical conflicts to hold someone in place once you've grabbed them, or as a way of discovering a target's physical impairments, such as the grizzled mercenary's bum leg. Physique can also be used to create a physical obstacle, such as blocking a door with a piece of furniture or smashing a beam to create a shower of debris.

ATTACK

Physique is not used to injure people directly—see the Fight skill for that.

DEFEND

You use Physique to defend against physical ailments, such as fatigue, poison, and disease, or to provide active opposition to a target's movement, provided you're in a small enough space to block access with your body or you have grabbed them and are trying to prevent their escape.

RESOLVE

Resolve skill represents your mental fortitude, the same way that Physique represents your physical fortitude.

Stress Boxes. Two ranks in Resolve grants +1 mental stress box, while four ranks grants +2 mental stress boxes (total).

EXAMPLE PERKS

Fearless, Games (overcome), Chess, Psionics (attack), Telepathy

OVERCOME

You can use Resolve to pit yourself against obstacles that require mental focus or patience. Puzzles and riddles sometimes fall into this category, as does any mentally absorbing task, such as doing complex math in distracting circumstances. As a general rule, use Resolve when success is a function of time rather than intellect.

Contests of Resolve might reflect games where patience is paramount or, in settings where magic or psychic abilities are common, a battle of wills.

CREATE ADVANTAGE

You can use Resolve to create advantage for yourself on other primarily mental tasks, representing a state of deep concentration or focus. Examples include blocking out distractions as you analyze a crime scene with Wits or focusing on an enemy to analyze his movements with Fight.

Creating advantage in this way should only be appropriate when spending an action to create advantage has some element of risk associated with it, such as time, or in a broader contest where multiple skills may affect the outcome.

ATTACK

Resolve isn't really used for attacks. However, in settings that allow psychic abilities you might use Resolve for psychic conflicts. Such an ability usually requires a talent or feature.

DEFEND

You use Resolve to defend against mental attacks and attempts to influence your emotions, including all Interact actions. Resolve represents your control over your responses.

WITS

The Wits skill covers the entire range of higher-order reasoning, from knowledge and professional aptitude to insight, perception, and problem-solving.

LANGUAGES

In most settings, you can read, write, and speak your native tongue. You can spend a plot point to declare you know a language for the scene. If you want to know the language without spending a plot point, buy it as a Wits perk.

EXAMPLE PERKS

Deduction (create advantage), Crime Scenes, Language, Notice (defend), Hidden Doors

OVERCOME

You can use Wits to overcome any obstacle that requires applying your knowledge, cunning, or senses to achieve a goal. For example, you might use Wits to decipher an ancient language on a tomb wall, know the atomic weight of antimony, or spot a hidden passage. Other examples include fixing equipment, analyzing a crime scene, or winning at chess.

Note that this isn't license for GMs to call for Wits rolls left and right to see if you know how to change a light bulb—that's boring. Instead, use Wits rolls when success or failure would result in something interesting.

CREATE ADVANTAGE

You can use Wits to create advantages that represent planning, know-how, insight. For example, you might use Wits to jury-rig or sabotage a device, research a creature's weakness, or deduce that a murder victim was recently divorced based on subtle clues. Other examples include eavesdropping on a conversation, calculating the trajectory of a rocket, or creating a forged document.

Note that while Wits may help you notice that a buyer is sweating, getting them to reveal why, intentionally or otherwise, requires Interact.

ATTACK

Wits is not usually used to attack, though it is used to make attacks with indirect fire weapons and other advanced weapon systems, such as orbital lasers.

DEFEND

About the only time you'll use Wits to defend is to spot an ambush (defend against Move create advantage) or to discover that you're being observed (defend against Wits). It is also used to defend using advanced defense systems, such as planetary defense satellites.

TALENTS

Talents are the secret ingredients that make characters truly unique and let them break the rules—system rules or setting rules. If there’s something that not everyone can do, the ability to do it is probably a talent.

Talents also reinforce the themes of your setting. In a cyberpunk setting, talents can represent the archetypes you expect to see: **Mercenary**, **Hacker**, **Drone Pilot**, and so on. Each of those talents would provide a unique benefit related to the archetype.

BUILDING TALENTS

Reason from the desired effect—what does the talent ultimately allow you to do? This approach helps you make talents that are interesting and relevant to your setting. Once you have the description of the effect, consider the ways that you can represent that effect mechanically.

Talents can break any rule in NOVA6, so feel free to get creative. Some examples:

- New stunts or improvements to existing stunts.
- Access to features: powers, signature gear, vehicles, sidekicks, etc.
- Bonus actions, stunt points, etc.
- Extra stress boxes, soak, refresh, etc.

Tweaking the core talents is also an excellent place to start.

BALANCING TALENTS

Keep in mind when balancing a talent that it represents an entire level of advancement. Players are often choosing between a talent or another rank in a skill, so use that as a guide for the relative power of a talent. If taking a skill rank would provide more benefit than the talent, the talent isn’t powerful enough. If taking the talent provides two skill ranks of benefit, the talent is too powerful.

Creating talents can be a balancing act, but don’t let that worry you. Do your best to make it balanced, and if it turns out that you messed up one way or the other, fix the talent and give the affected players a plot point during the next session as a way of saying you’re sorry.

If you created a talent, but have decided that it’s too powerful, you have a several options:

- Eliminate some of its benefits.
- Limit how often the talent can be used (e.g., once per scene).
- Add a cost (e.g., pay a plot point).
- Split the talent into two talents and make the first a prerequisite for the second.

Regardless of what you decide, make the talent fun and interesting. Consider that over the course of a complete character advancement in NOVA6 Core that you will take seven advancements when you start and 9 more by level ten. Make each one count.

CORE TALENTS

The core talents listed here are appropriate and recommended for almost any game.

DANGER SENSE

Surprise attacks—attacks that would normally have an advantage due to the element of surprise, such as from a Move (stealth) or Interact (deceive) create advantage action—have no advantage against you. They are treated as regular attacks, against which you can defend normally.

FOCUSED

This talent can be taken multiple times, choosing a different skill each time.

Choose a skill when you take **Focused**. Instead of earning a stunt point on triples when you succeed with this skill, you earn a stunt point on doubles and two stunt points on triples. In addition, your maximum rank in the skill is increased by one, although you must still use an advancement to increase the skill.

NPCs with the **Focused** talent generate one GM stunt point on a failure with doubles, and two on triples.

LUCKY

You gain +2 refresh.

PRACTICED

This talent can be taken multiple times, choosing a different skill each time.

Choose a skill when you take **Practiced**. You worked hard to make your skilled action test routine. You may choose to achieve simple success without rolling on an action test when *up* (more bonus dice than penalty dice), or you can reroll any ones on an action test outcome once.

QUICK

You gain +1d on initiative tests and one free bonus action each conflict. Instead of earning a stunt point on triples when you succeed on initiative, you earn a stunt point on doubles and two stunt points on triples.

RESOLUTE

You gain 1 mental stress box and 1 mental soak.

SPECIALIZED

This talent can be taken multiple times, choosing a different skill each time.

Choose a skill when you take **Specialized**. You gain a perk with this skill, and once per test with this skill you may set aside one bonus die to earn an additional stunt point if you succeed.

TOUGH

You gain 1 physical stress box and 1 physical soak.

WELL-TRAINED

This talent can be taken multiple times.

You gain 3 perks.

FEATURES

Features let you build or tailor special elements to fit your game. If your game were a movie, this is where the special effects budget would go.

Some examples of features include:

- Magic and supernatural powers.
- Specialized gear or equipment.
- Vehicles owned by the characters.
- Organizations that the characters control or patronage.
- Special locations.
- Dramatic events.

Character features require GM permission or a theme-specific cost to acquire. Permission is the narrative justification that allows you to take a feature in the first place. Theme-specific cost is how you pay for the feature, both to have it as part of your character and possibly the cost to activate it.

THE BRONZE RULE

The Bronze Rule (also known as the Fate Fractal from the game Fate) states:

Anything can be a character.

Your gun? Sure. The storm outside? Absolutely. The scene itself? Why not? You can give anything aspects, skills, talents, and stress boxes, and here's the thing that makes this technique cool—they don't have to be the same ones the PCs get. It doesn't make sense for the storm outside to have Fight and Physique, but what about Cold and Sleet? Your gun doesn't need a physical or mental stress track, but what about an ammo stress track? And scenes already have aspects all over the place!

If you can represent a new thing as a character, it's typically easier to do that than to create a new rule out of whole cloth. Not everything works this way, and there are some things you might not want to represent this way, but it's a powerful tool that you can apply to a wide variety of situations.

There's another extension of this technique—new rules for characters can be represented using the existing components of a character. You can represent magic through skills, super powers using talents or extras, and being corrupted by an ancient and seductive force with a stress track.

CREATING A FEATURE

Making a feature starts with a conversation. This should happen during game creation or character creation.

You or your group needs to decide on the following:

- What elements of your setting are appropriate for features?
- What do you want the feature to do?
- What character elements do you need to fully express the feature's capabilities?
- What are the costs or permissions to have features?

Once you've figured all that out, look to the examples in this book to help you nail down the specifics and create a write-up similar to what we have here. Then you're done!

GEAR

Gear is the universal themepack approach to handling the concept of equipment and common items without having to track items explicitly.

Choose a *load level* and then make *gear test* as necessary during the game to determine if you have a specific item.

LOAD LEVEL

A character's load level is an abstract representation of their level of preparedness. Heavier loads provide advantages but are typically more expensive and can impose the *burdened* condition, which applies as a penalty to Physique (endurance) and all Move tests (see Encumbrance, p. 68).

It is generally assumed that you remove your load at the start of a conflict, though this can be risky if you must flee or concede.

Your load level determines the frequency of Wits (survival) test in a survival situation, as well as a modifier to any required gear test. Your load should also have an aspect to describe the type of gear it contains, such as *Forest Survival* or *Traveling Scholar*.

Load Level Table

Load Level	Burdened	Survival Test	Gear Test
Unprepared	-	-1d, daily	none
Basic	-	daily	-1d
Light	-1d	daily	+0d
Medium	-2d	weekly	+1d
Heavy	-3d	monthly	+1d

GEAR TEST

A gear test is an unskilled test. Your load level, talents, and features can all provide bonus dice on this test, while the rarity or legality of the item in question can provide penalty dice. On a success, you have access to the item for the scene. You can use the *Increase Time* stunt to gain access to the item until the end of the act (or longer) instead.

NEW TALENT: PREPARED

You gain +1d for any gear test and once per scene you have an extra stunt point for gear. Instead of earning a stunt point on triples when you succeed, you earn a stunt point on doubles and two stunt points on triples. You can use one stunt point to provide a piece of gear to all PCs, and one stunt point will allow you to keep the item for the scenario.

ASSETS

Assets represent things that have value relative to the current objective or plot. They may be key pieces of information, a favor, a jury-rigged tool, or some other useful thing.

By default, you can use an asset once, indicated by putting a one in brackets: [1]. You can, however, spend a plot point to ignore this limitation.

You create an asset by spending one stunt point when you create advantage and give it one of the basic effects or define the asset as an aspect. For example, *Junkyard Turbo Charger* [1], or *Angle on Jimmy the Fish +2d* [2].

You can use additional stunt points for the following:

- Increase the magnitude of the asset's advantage effect by 1d.
- Increase the base damage of the asset's damage effect by one.
- Increase the base soak of the asset's soak effect by one.
- Add pierce 2 to the asset's damage effect.
- Add hardened 2 to the asset's soak effect.
- Increase the duration of a single use to an entire scene.

FLAWS

Flaws are features that make things more difficult for a character and are generally paired with an advance or some other helpful feature. They are only included as part of a themepack. For example, a fantasy creature might have a flaw that makes them vulnerable to iron along with a feature that gives them the ability to fly.

Flaws should be used sparingly, and only when the flaw affects a character most of the time. Otherwise, an aspect would be enough to handle most character flaws.

LIMITATION

Frail. You have -1d on all Physique rolls, and you cannot put ranks in Physique.

One-Eyed. You have -1d on all rolls that rely on sight, including Wits (notice) and Fight with ranged weapons.

SHORTCOMING

Pushover. You are taken out by three consequences instead of four.

Unlucky. You start with 1 refresh instead of 3.

VULNERABILITY

Susceptible to Magic. Attack and create advantage actions against you with magic gain +1 stunt point.

Vulnerable to Iron. Attack actions against you with iron weapons that inflict at least 1 stress inflict +1 stress.

ARCHAIC WEAPONS

All archaic weapon damage has a duration of lasting unless otherwise specified.

BOWS

Ammo, bodkin arrows. [S]: +3 pierce

Ammo, broadhead arrows. +1 damage vs. unarmored targets

Shortbow. Damage 1 (pierce 3); ranged (near/medium), physical (impaling), reliable; 2H, reload (snap action), uses (ammo)

Bow. Damage 1 (pierce 4); ranged (short/long), physical (impaling), reliable; 2H, skill minimum (Physique 1d), reload (snap action), uses (ammo)

Longbow. Damage 1 (pierce 5); ranged (medium/far), physical (impaling), reliable; 2H, skill minimum (Physique 2d), reload (snap action), uses (ammo)

CLUBS

Club. Damage 2[T]; physical (bludgeoning)

Greatclub. Damage 4[T]; physical (bludgeoning); 2H

Mace. Damage 2 (pierce 2); physical (bludgeoning)

Morningstar. Damage 2 (pierce 3); physical (bludgeoning), versatile; skill minimum (Physique 1d)

Quarterstaff. Damage 2; physical (bludgeoning), temporary, versatile

CROSSBOWS

Ammo, bodkin bolts. [S]: +3 pierce

Ammo, broadhead bolts. +1 damage vs. unarmored targets

Crossbow, light. Damage 1 (pierce 4); ranged (near/medium), physical (impaling); 2H, reload (snap action), uses (ammo)

Crossbow, heavy. Damage 1 (pierce 6); ranged (short/long), physical (impaling); 2H, skill minimum (Physique 1d), reload (snap action), uses (ammo),

HEAVY BLADES

Sword. Damage 3; physical (slashing)

Bastard Sword. Damage 3; physical (slashing), versatile

Great Sword. Damage 4 (pierce 2); physical (slashing); 2H

HAFTED WEAPONS

Axe. Damage 3 (pierce 1); physical (slashing); tiring

Battle Axe. Damage 3 (pierce 1); physical (slashing), versatile; tiring

Great Axe. Damage 4 (pierce 3); physical (slashing); 2H, skill minimum (Physique 1d), tiring

LIGHT BLADES

- Dagger.** Damage 1; physical (impaling); +1d to conceal
Short Sword. Damage 2; physical (impaling)
Rapier. Damage 1 (pierce 3); physical (impaling)
Scimitar. Damage 2 (pierce 1); physical (slashing)

POLEARMS

- Javelin.** Damage 1 (pierce 2); ranged (close/medium, thrown), physical (piercing)
Halberd. Damage 4 (pierce 4); physical (slashing), reach; 2H, skill minimum (Physique 1d)
Glaive. Damage 3 (pierce 3); physical (slashing), reach; 2H, skill minimum (Physique 1d)
Spears. Damage 1 (pierce 3); ranged (close/short, thrown), physical (piercing), reach, versatile

MISCELLANEOUS

- Ammo, sling bullet.** +1 damage
Gauntlet. Damage 2; physical (bludgeoning)
Shield. Damage 2; physical (bludgeoning)
Sling. Damage 1; ranged (near/medium); 2H, uses (ammo)
Whip. Damage 1; physical (bludgeoning), reach, [S]: **grappled -1d** [M]

ARCHAIC ARMOR

LIGHT ARMOR

- Padded.** Soak 1; physical; coverage 1
Leather. Soak 2; physical; coverage 1
Studded Leather. Soak 2 (hardened 1); physical; coverage 1, hampered -1d
Cap. +1 coverage for light armor
Full Suit. Add hampered -1d, remove coverage property
Shield (wooden). +1d to defend with Fight

MEDIUM ARMOR

- Hide.** Soak 3; physical; coverage 1, hampered -1d
Chain Shirt. Soak 4; physical; coverage 1, hampered -1d
Breastplate. Soak 4 (hardened 1); physical; coverage 1, hampered -2d
Helm. +1 coverage for medium armor
Full Suit. Add hampered -1d, remove coverage property
Shield (metal). +1d to defend with Fight

HEAVY ARMOR

- Ring Mail.** Soak 5; physical; coverage 1, hampered -2d
Chain Mail. Soak 6; physical; coverage 1, hampered -2d
Plate. Soak 6 (hardened 1); physical; coverage 1, hampered -3d
Great Helm. +1 coverage for heavy armor; -1d with Wits (notice)
Full Suit. Add hampered -1d, remove coverage property
Shield (tower). Ready as an action to gain +1d of cover

MODERN WEAPONS

All modern weapon damage has a duration of lasting unless otherwise specified.

PISTOLS

Ammo, magnum. +1 damage, +1 pierce, +1 maximum range increment; skill minimum (Physique +1d)

Pistol, light. Damage 1 (pierce 3); ranged (close/medium), physical (ballistic); uses (ammo); +1d to conceal

Pistol, medium. Damage 1 (pierce 5); ranged (close/medium), physical (ballistic); uses (ammo)

Pistol, heavy. Damage 2 (pierce 4); ranged (close/medium), physical (ballistic); skill minimum (Physique 1d), uses (ammo)

Revolver. Add reliable and slow properties

RIFLES

Ammo, magnum. +1 damage, +1 maximum range increment; skill minimum (Physique +1d)

Rifle, varmint. Damage 1 (pierce 4); ranged (medium/long), physical (ballistic); 2H, uses (ammo)

Rifle, light. Damage 2 (pierce 7); ranged (long/far), physical (ballistic); 2H, uses (ammo)

Rifle, medium. Damage 2 (pierce 8); ranged (long/distant), physical (ballistic); 2H, skill minimum (Physique 1d), uses (ammo)

Rifle, heavy. Damage 3 (pierce 8); ranged (long/obscure), physical (ballistic); 2H, skill minimum (Physique 2d), uses (ammo)

Rifle, extra-heavy. Damage 3 (pierce 8, scale 2); ranged (long/distant), physical (ballistic); 2H, skill minimum (Physique 3d), uses (ammo)

Scope, 4x. Reduce range modifier by 2d, minimum range (short)

Scope, 8x. Reduce range modifier by 4d, minimum range (long)

Scope, 12x. Reduce range modifier by 6d, minimum range (distant)

Bolt-Action. Add reliable and reload (snap action) properties

SHOTGUNS

Shotgun, buckshot. Damage 4 (pierce 2, burst only); ranged (near/short), physical (ballistic); 2H, skill minimum (Physique 2d), uses (ammo)

Shotgun, slug. Damage 4 (pierce 2, scale 1); ranged (short/medium), physical (ballistic); 2H, skill minimum (Physique 2d), uses (ammo), slow

Breach-load. Add reliable and reload (action) properties

AUTOMATIC WEAPONS

Assault Rifle, light. Damage 2 (pierce 7, burst); ranged (long/far), physical (ballistic); 2H, uses (ammo, high capacity)

Assault Rifle, medium. Damage 2 (pierce 8, burst); ranged (long/distant), physical (ballistic); 2H, skill minimum (Physique 1d), uses (ammo, high capacity)

Machine Gun, light. Damage 2 (pierce 7, auto); ranged (medium/long), physical (ballistic); 2H, skill minimum (Physique 1d), uses (ammo, high capacity)

Machine Gun, medium. Damage 2 (pierce 8, auto); ranged (medium/far), physical (ballistic); 2H, skill minimum (Physique 2d), uses (ammo, high capacity)

Machine Gun, anti-vehicle. Damage 3 (pierce 8, scale 2, auto); ranged (medium/distant), physical (ballistic); 2H, skill minimum (Physique 3d), uses (ammo, high capacity)

Submachinegun, light. Damage 1 (pierce 3, auto); ranged (close/medium), physical (ballistic); 2H, uses (ammo, high capacity)

Submachinegun, medium. Damage 1 (pierce 5, auto); ranged (close/medium), physical (ballistic); 2H, uses (ammo, high capacity)

Submachinegun, heavy. Damage 2 (pierce 4, auto); ranged (close/medium), physical (ballistic); 2H, skill minimum (Physique 1d), uses (ammo, high capacity)

EXPLOSIVES

Dynamite, stick. Damage 2; ranged (near/short, thrown), area (1 zone, sphere), physical (fire); +1 scale per doubling of the number of sticks

Grenades, fragmentation. Damage 4 (pierce 3); ranged (near/medium, thrown), area (1 zone, sphere), physical (ballistic)

Grenades, concussion. Damage 3; ranged (near/medium, thrown), area (1 zone, sphere), physical (force), direct (sealed armor)

Grenades, flash-bang. Damage 1 plus **blind and deaf -2d [T]** (defend with Physique); ranged (near/medium, thrown), area (1 zone, sphere), physical (force), direct (sight and sound flash defense)

MODERN ARMOR

BODY ARMOR

Body Armor, Light. Soak 1 (hardened 5 vs. ballistic); physical; coverage 1

Body Armor, Medium. Soak 2 (hardened 6 vs. ballistic); physical; coverage 1, hampered -1d

Body Armor, Heavy. Soak 3 (hardened 7); physical; coverage 1, hampered -2d

Combat Helmet. +1 coverage for body armor

MISCELLANEOUS

Leather Jacket. Soak 1; physical; coverage 1

Motorcycle Body Armor. Soak 2; physical; hampered -1d

GAME CREATION

SETTING

There are two major steps to creating a NOVA6 game: defining the setting and using that to choose or build your themepack.

When defining a setting, the GM and players will answer five key questions:

- Who are the protagonists?
- What is the world like?
- What is the scope?
- What are the issues?
- What people and places are important?

WHO ARE THE PROTAGONISTS?

The first step in creating your NOVA6 game is deciding what sort of people the protagonists are going to be. You're not making characters yet, but if everyone wants to be a ragtag group of rebels on a dilapidated spaceship, defining a pseudo-medieval setting with knights and dragons might be a waste of time.

Your decisions here will tell you virtually everything you need to know to get the ball rolling: what the protagonists are good at, what they might care about, the problems they're likely to face, the kind impact they could have on the world, and so on. You don't need complete answers, but you should at least have a rough idea.

Crimson Suns: Post-Apocalyptic Fantasy

Ryan and his players have talked about the kind of game they want to play next, and everyone agrees that a post-apocalyptic fantasy game à la Dark Sun would be fun. The protagonists will be unlikely heroes, setting out to change the world for the better.

WHAT IS THE WORLD LIKE?

Next, you will need to provide some broad strokes that define the world in which your protagonists will live. You're probably already familiar with the idea of a setting, but in short, it's everything that the characters interact with: people, organizations, technology, strange phenomena, and mysteries.

If you're using a setting that already exists, such as from a movie, novel, or game, then many of these ideas are ready for you to use. Of course, you may have ideas of your own to expand the setting, such as new organizations, villains, and locations.

Inventing your own setting is significantly more work, but many people find it to be very rewarding. It's beyond the scope of this book to tell you how to make a setting, but there are a lot of resources available, both in print and online, on defining and refining the world you envision. One word of advice, though—don't try to invent too much up front. As you'll see over the course of the chapter, you're going to be generating a lot of ideas just through the process of game and character creation, so the details will come in time.

The world is hot and unforgiving, *Scorched by Two Suns and Millennia of Magical War*. Most inhabitants just barely get by, with very little hope for the future. *Storms of Wild Magic* constantly threaten to sweep through, twisting reality and leaving devastation in their wake. *Ruins of Past Civilizations Dot the Landscape, Buried by Shifting Sands*.

WHAT IS THE SCOPE?

Next, decide how personal or epic your story will be. The setting itself might be small or it might be vast, but where your stories take place determines the scope of your game.

At one extreme are stories about characters dealing with personal problems—personal demons, family issues, neighborhood crime. The world at large may have big problems, but the characters have no role to play in solving them. This is not to say that the characters' problems are inconsequential, but rather that they affect fewer people.

At the other extreme are stories about characters out to save the world, or even all of existence. These characters still have personal problems, they just play less of a role in their day-to-day lives. But no matter the scope of the game, the stakes are high for the characters.

The group decides that they want to start somewhere between the two extremes. The characters are not out to save the world (yet), but their adventures will take them outside of their village. Perhaps they will take on the insane mage that has been terrorizing the area or discover a new source of water for the region.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

Next, decide what threats and forces will spur the protagonists to action. Every setting needs to have something going on that the characters care about—a peril they want to fight, a wrong they want to right, etc. These are the setting's issues.

To define these issues, you will come up with two aspects that are available to invoke or compel for the duration of the game. The issues should reflect the scope of your game and what the characters will face. These are broad ideas—they don't just affect your characters. Issues take two forms:

- **Current Issues:** These are problems or threats that exist in the world already, possibly for a long time. Protagonists tackling these issues are trying to change things, to make it a better place. Examples: a corrupt regime, organized crime, rampant poverty and disease, a generations-long war.
- **Impending Issues:** These are things that have begun to rear their ugly heads and threaten to make the world worse if they come to pass or achieve a goal. Protagonists tackling these issues are trying to keep things from slipping into chaos or destruction. Examples: an invasion from a neighboring country, the sudden rise of a zombie horde, the imposition of martial law.

Make sure that to add some thematic flourishes to the aspects. *Ambitious Russian Mob Boss* is more interesting than *Organized Crime*. Feel free to write down some context or additional details along with the aspects, if it will help everyone remember why the issue matters.

Ryan wants to start things off with two issues, so after some discussion the group decides to have one current issue and one impending issue. For the current issue, Shawn suggests *Cult of the Serpent God*, a cult lead by an insane mage trying to become a god. For the impending issue, Nicole suggest *Water is Running Out* to reflect that all villages in the region are slowly drying up.

MORE OR FEWER ISSUES

The default number of issues is two: either two current issues (for a story solely about trying to make the world a better place), two impending issues (for a story about striving to save people from threats), or one of each. The latter option is common in fiction: think about the stalwart heroes who work against some impending doom while already discontent with the world around them.

Of course, you don't have to use the default number of two issues—one or three also works, but it will change the game a bit. A game with one issue will revolve around just that issue—a quest to rid a city of evil, or to stop evil from happening. A game with three issues will show off a busy world, one where the characters are strained against multiple fronts. If you think you need to focus down or expand the scope of your game, talk it over with the group and start by tweaking the number of issues to best fit what you're after.

CHANGING ISSUES IN PLAY

Issues can change as the game progresses. Sometimes, the issue evolves into something new. Sometimes, the characters will succeed in preventing or resolving the issue. And sometimes, new issues will emerge. The issues you define now are just to start things off.

WHAT PEOPLE AND PLACES ARE IMPORTANT?

Finally, decide on important people and places. At this point, you've got your issues figured out and you may have thought of some organizations or groups that feature prominently in your game.

Now put some faces to those issues and those groups, so that your protagonists have people to interact with when they're dealing with those elements. Do they have any particular people who represent them, or exemplars of what the issue refers to? If you have any ideas at this point, write down the person's name, relationship to organizations or issues, and an aspect defining their high concept.

Do the same for any notable places in your setting. What are the important places where things happen? Any place where you expect multiple scenes to take place is a great starting point. Just like with people, write down the location name, relationship to people, organizations, or issues, and an aspect defining its high concept.

You may flesh these people and places out later, depending on their role in the story. New people and places will be introduced to and leave the story as it progresses.

If there's a piece of your setting that's meant to be a mystery that the protagonists uncover, define it only in loose terms. The specifics can be detailed as they are revealed in play.

Looking back at the elements that have been introduced so far, the players decide to introduce some people and places that relate. Shane introduces the Mage Hunters and defines their high concept as *Assassins Trained to Kill Mages*. Shawn wants to expand on the cult he introduced, so he introduces Sahir Thaeabin, *Snake Sorcerer with a God Complex*. Nicole introduces a nearby oasis where most of the nearby villages get their water. She decides that the locals just call it The Oasis, and she gives it the *Only Water for Miles Around* high concept. Finally, Ryan decides that the characters are meeting for the first time in Stonegate, *Heavily Fortified Trade Center* and the largest city of the region.

THEMEPACK

Now that you have defined your setting you need to build a themepack that reflects it. A themepack specifies the game elements of characters, as well as any special rules, features, gear, and so forth. NOVA6 Core includes a universal themepack that is appropriate for the majority of games, but creating your own themepack will let you really capture the important elements of your setting.

Each themepack specifies at least the following:

- Theme Trait(s)
- Aspects
- Skills
- Talents & Features
- Gear & Assets
- Stress Tracks
- Character Creation Rules
- Special Rules

THEME TRAITS

Each themepack needs to have one or more theme traits. A character's theme traits are aspects that represent the most important narrative element of the character. Deciding how you want to represent them will make a big difference in how characters are defined.

In the universal themepack, a single theme trait is represented as the *High Concept* aspect and is completely freeform to allow for the most flexibility. A classic fantasy game might have two traits, *Species* and *Class*, with a predefined set of options for each, while a 1920s investigative horror game might have one trait that defines the character's *Profession*, with choices that reinforce the setting and a freeform option for wildcards. In general, it is best to have one major trait or two minor traits. Any more risks muddling the theme of the game.

In some games it may be appropriate to bundle specific skill, talents, or features with a trait option. For example, a fantasy race might get a bonus rank in Physique. If you do so, balance positive features with negative features or fewer starting advances.

Ryan and his group have already defined the setting for their Crimson Suns post-apocalyptic fantasy game. They could use the universal themepack, but Ryan is going to create a custom themepack to help reinforce the most important elements of the setting.

First, he needs to decide how he wants to structure theme traits. He wants to incorporate the classic fantasy tropes. He decides to use two theme traits, *Species* and *Class*, with a predefined list of options for each. Each species will also get a special feature to help reinforce how they have survived in such a hostile world, but that will come later.

ASPECTS

In addition to the theme trait, you should include a few more aspects to help round out characters. In the universal themepack, besides the *High Concept* there are *Background*, *Motivation*, and *Trouble*. For a classic fantasy game, *Alignment* might be a more familiar approach than *Motivation*.

See Aspects, p. 22, for more information on how to use aspects.

Next, Ryan will have to decide what other aspects are important, besides the theme traits. He likes the *Trouble* aspect from the universal themepack. It's a dog-eat-dog world, but he wants to know what the characters won't do, so he also includes a *Proscription*—what is the line the characters won't cross?

SKILLS

When creating your game, you may want to modify the core skill list or create your own. Reinforcing the story by creating skills specific to your theme can make for a richer game experience since they are one of the primary mechanical ways to reinforce the setting for your game.

When thinking through your modifications, focus on the main themes of your game. A game of deep political intrigue could warrant several social skills, while a classic hack and slash dungeon crawl might only need one, or even none! See Skills, p. 36, for more detail.

Crimson Suns is a traditional fantasy-adventure setting, so the core skills should work well. However, because magic is an important part of the setting, he decides to introduce a new Magic skill. His final skill list ends up being: Fight, Interact, Magic, Move, Physique, Resolve, and Wits.

EXAMPLE SKILL LISTS

CORE SKILLS

Fight, Move, Interact, Physique, Wits, Resolve

APPROACHES (FATE ACCELERATED)

Careful, Clever, Flashy, Forceful, Quick, Sneaky

CLASSIC FANTASY

Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma

SATURDAY MORNING CARTOON

Chutzpah, Physique, Smarts, Zip

TALENTS & FEATURES

Talents and features are an important way for players to make their characters unique and awesome. NOVA6 Core includes a default set of talents that we strongly recommend you include in every game.

Talents are special abilities that enhance a character's core capabilities. This includes adding new uses for skills, enhancing existing uses for skills, or adding abilities that fall outside the scope of skills entirely. See Talents, p. 43, for more detail.

Features are broader than talents. A feature is anything that gets special treatment in the rules and that is technically part of a character or is controlled by a character. See Features, p. 45, for more detail.

Beyond the core talents, you should think through some of the archetypical “schticks” of characters in the setting. In a setting where highly-trained archers keep the wild beasts at bay, a talent that reflects that exceptional prowess with bows would be appropriate. If magic or psionics are an important part of the setting, you will want to represent them with talents or extras (if not their own skill).

There are three main thematic elements that Ryan wants to reinforce with talents and features: magic, the different species, and the dire nature of life in the wasteland.

For each species, he creates a special feature that will capture the essence of what makes them unique: dwarves are hardy and focused, elves are swift and deadly, halflings are savage and stealthy, humans are natural spellcasters, and mantids are inscrutable hunters.

For magic, he creates a series of talents that culminates in the powerful **Archmage** talent. On the opposite side, he creates a talent that makes the character more resistant to magic, and another to represent the special training that the secretive Mage Hunters receive.

Finally, he adds a talent that makes characters more resistant to the harsh environment of Crimson Suns, making them more resistant to dehydration and reducing how often they will have to check for heat exhaustion, which is a new rule he wants to include.

GEAR & ASSETS

Your approach to gear and assets will also significantly affect the feel of the game. If players are tracking individual coppers and struggling to afford that new bow they've had their eye, that will feel very different from a game in which players have access to whatever gear they need.

One approach is to provide characters with some amount of starting money and let them buy whatever they want. On the one hand, this is easy and flexible, but it can also take a lot of time. It also tends to encourage a certain paranoid mindset in which players end up buying a dozen bells “just in case”.

Another approach is to provide specific roles with a package of gear from which to choose. For example, the warrior may get to choose a longsword or axe, a short sword or shield, and full leather armor or scale hauberk. The rogue would have different options. This significantly speeds up character creation and reinforces roles, while still allowing some flexibility.

The third approach is to treat gear and assets as abstract and allow players to write down a few special items. This approach tends to be more appropriate for games where gear is not all that central: mystery games, social games, etc. For example, in a 1920s investigative horror game you may decide that each character needs three things: a **Memento**, a **Personal Item**, and a **Contact**.

Ryan wants to reinforce the differences between classes, so he decides to create different sets of starting gear and assets for each class. Beyond that, he expects players to track and spend actual coins, in true old-school fashion.

STRESS TRACKS

You will need to decide what stress tracks are important for your game. The universal themepack includes Physical and Mental stress tracks. When making this decision, think about the ways a character in the setting can be hurt, and if doing so can result in them being *taken out*.

For a game of political intrigue, you might decide that a Reputation stress track is important, as characters conduct character assassination and disinformation campaigns. Another game might decide that Corruption resulting from meddling with forbidden magics is worth tracking separately.

When it comes to stress track, less is more. If you have too many, it not only makes it harder to keep track, but it also makes it harder to work together to take out an opponent, as each character is causing a different kind of stress. If you do decide to add an additional stress track, ideally it creates new opportunities for stress and taken out that previously didn't exist and does not require the introduction of new damage types or forms of attack.

The recommended default number of stress boxes for any stress track is three. You can start with more or fewer, but do so with caution. Start with the default and see how it goes.

Ryan decides that food and water are important enough in the setting to represent them as a Food & Water stress track. His hope is this will increase the tension around surviving in such an inhospitable setting. He sets the default at three, but has the **Desert Dweller** talent provide an additional stress box.

SPECIAL RULES

You will need decide if there are any expanded or custom rules that will be important to your setting. Your group may find it helpful if you create a *Special Rules* summary sheet.

Ryan is going to use the expanded Food & Water rules, with some minor changes to work with the new Food & Water stress track. He also wants to create special rules for wild magic zones, where centuries of magical battles have warped and twisted reality, and heat exhaustion.

CHARACTER CREATION RULES

Once you have all the individual elements of characters defined plus any special rules, you will want to modify the default step-by-step character creation rules to walk players through making a character with your new themepack.

For details on the universal themepack, see Character Creation, p. 30.

Now that he has all the elements of his themepack defined, Ryan needs to modify the character creation rules. He starts with the steps from the universal themepack, but makes a few changes to reflect the unique elements of the Crimson Suns themepack:

1. Choose your species and class.
4. Choose gear and assets from the list for your class.
7. Record your physical, mental, and food & water stress boxes (3 each by default).

With that done, the Crimson Suns themepack is ready to go!

RUNNING THE GAME

GAMEMASTERING

If you're the gamemaster, then your job is a little different from everyone else's. This section is going to give you a bunch of tools to make that job easier during play. The role of the GM was discussed briefly in the NOVA6 introduction, but let's take a more detailed look at your unique responsibilities.

START AND END SCENES

One of your primary responsibilities during the game is to decide definitively when a scene begins and ends. This might not seem like that big a deal, but it is. You're the person primarily responsible for the pacing of each session. If you start scenes too early, it takes a long time to get to the main action. If you don't end them soon enough, then they drag on and it takes you a long time to get anything significant done.

The players will sometimes help you with this, if they're keen on getting to the next bit of action, but sometimes they'll naturally be inclined to spend too much time bantering in character or focusing on details. When that happens, it's your job to step in like a good movie editor and say, "I think we've pretty much milked this scene for all it's worth. What do we want to do next?"

INTERPRET THE RULES

It's also your job to make most of the moment-to-moment decisions about what's legit and what's not regarding the rules. Most often, you're going to decide when something in the game deserves a roll, what type of action that is (overcome, attack, etc.) and how difficult that test is. In conflicts, this can get a little more complicated, like determining if a situation aspect should force someone to make an overcome action or deciding whether a player can justify a specific advantage they're trying to create.

You also judge the appropriateness of any invocations or compels that come up during play and make sure that everyone at the table is clear on what's going on. With invocations, this is straightforward—if the player can explain why the aspect is relevant, you're good to go. With compels, it can get a little more complicated, because you need to articulate precisely what complication the player is agreeing to.

CREATE SCENARIOS

...and nearly everything else too.

Finally, you're responsible for making all the stuff that the characters encounter and react to in the game. That not only includes NPCs with skills and aspects, but it also includes the aspects on scenes, environments, and objects, as well as the dilemmas and challenges that make up a scenario. You provide the prompts that give your group a reason to play this game to begin with—what problems they face, what issues they must resolve, who they're opposing, and what they'll have to go through to win the day.

PLAY THE WORLD AND NPCs

As the gamemaster, it's your job to decide how everyone and everything else in the world responds to what the characters do, as well as what the characters' environment is like. If a player botches a roll, you're the one who gets to decide the consequences. When an NPC attempts to assassinate a player character's friend, you're the one who gets to decide how they go about it. When the characters stroll up to a food vendor in a market, you get to decide what kind of day the vendor is having, what kind of personality they have, what's on sale that day. You determine the weather when the characters arrive at a dark cave (hint: *Dark and Stormy*, of course).

Fortunately, you don't have to do this in a vacuum—you have a lot of tools to help you decide what would be appropriate. The process we outline in Game Creation should provide you with a lot of context about the game you're running, whether that's in the form of aspects like current and impending issues, specific locations that you might visit, or NPCs with strong agendas that you can use.

Characters' aspects also help you decide how to make the world respond to them. As stated in the Aspects and Plot Points sections, the best aspects are double edged swords. You have a lot of power to exploit that double edge by using compels. That way, you kill two birds with one stone—you add detail and surprise to your game world, but you also keep the player characters at the center of the story you're telling.

This facet of your job also means that when you have NPCs in a scene, you speak for and make decisions for them like the players do for their characters—you decide when they're taking an action that requires dice, and you follow the same rules the players do for determining how that turns out. Your NPCs are going to be a little different than the PCs, however, depending on how important they are to the story.

TYPES OF NPCs

Non-Player Characters (NPCs) are characters controlled by the GM and are of two types: principal and extra.

PRINCIPALS

Principals are essential to the story and will interact with the player characters in significant ways. Principals are created like any other player character, including (especially) core aspects.

EXTRAS

Extras have limited interaction with the player characters. They might be recurring characters, but in general they will exist either as lackeys, toadies, bit parts, or characters with little control over the plot. Extras have half as many advances as a PC or principal of the same level and generally only need a high concept aspect.

Stress & Consequences

Extras only track stress—they cannot take consequences to reduce stress, and even a 1d consequence takes them out. By default, an extra has three stress boxes. Tougher extras have four to seven, while smaller or weaker extras might have only one or two.

PROMOTING EXTRAS

Player characters sometimes create unexpected job openings, or a seemingly unimportant extra gets caught up in the action in an unexpected way. In this case, fill in the remaining details for the NPC, such as aspects and name, and take enough advances to bring them to the same level as a player character of the same level.

In some instances, it might be desirable to promote an extra to principal more gradually. Use your judgement, but one additional advance per appearance by the extra is a good starting point.

UNOPPOSED NPC ACTIONS

If the PCs are doing nothing to interfere with an NPC, the outcome should align with the story in whatever way the you decide is most appropriate and interesting. If there is some question as to whether an NPC could succeed at an action, communicate that the NPC will succeed on their next action unless the PCs do something to interfere.

As a guideline, NPCs will spend a full turn to overcome an obstacle with a difficulty equal to their skill and will spend an extra turn creating advantage to overcome an obstacle with a difficulty 1d higher than their skill. They will not attempt actions of greater difficulty unless there are other conditions that favor the NPC.

TRADING DICE

If you need to understand how well an NPC does on an unopposed test, assume that they succeed unless they have an aspect that suggests otherwise. Then trade dice as normal for stunt points. If they have the *Specialized* talent, they can trade 1d for a stunt point one time, otherwise they trade any remaining dice at 2d for one stunt point.

GROUPS OF NPCs

When dealing with large numbers of NPCs, think of the difference between the NPCs' skill rank and the difficulty of their course of action as an indicator of the number of NPCs that will succeed. A difference of 4d or more indicates that no NPCs would succeed. NPCs in this situation would only make such a doomed attempt if the conditions or their aspects demanded it. A difference of 1d means that roughly a quarter would make it, halving for each additional die (2d equals an eighth, and 3d a sixteenth). NPCs that don't succeed either made the attempt and failed or refused to make the attempt at all.

Bandit Chase. A bandit is chasing you through the ruins of a village. As an expert in freerunning, you easily scale some of the ruins (-2d difficulty) and end up on the roof (-3d difficulty). Bandits are not known for their acrobatics, but they are also not incapable of climbing (Move 1d). The GM informs the player that the bandit is in pursuit and is struggling to keep up (spending an extra turn to get onto some of the ruins), but they stop short of the roof (which is -3d difficulty compared to their 1d of skill).

Goblin Horde. A horde of goblins is chasing you towards the remains of a bridge over a chasm. You decide to make the leap in the hopes that they cannot pursue and the GM describes it as Move -3d. You attempt the leap and succeed. The GM knows that the goblins have Move 1d (2d different from the difficulty), and thus describes that most of the horde stops, several (25%) attempt the leap, with many of them falling into the chasm and only a few (half of those who attempted—an eighth of the horde) land beside you.

THE UNWRITTEN RULES

Here we discuss the unwritten rules of gamemastering, both in general and for NOVA6. Well, they're more like guidelines. And they're written.

But "The Written Guidelines" didn't sound as good.

RULE ZERO

Many roleplaying games include some variation on Rule Zero, which states: "The GM is always right." But we're not a fan of that, so we'll rephrase it:

The GM should sacrifice the rules for the sake of fun.

Either way, the intent is the same: these rules are meant to be used to create a fun experience for everyone involved. If the rules are getting in the way of doing so, they're wrong. Period.

THE GOLDEN RULE (OF FATE)

Fate introduced the Golden Rule of Fate, which states:

**Decide what you're trying to accomplish first,
then consult the rules to help you do it.**

This might seem like common sense, but it is called out because the order is important. In other words, don't look at the rules as a straitjacket or a hard limit on an action. Instead, use them as a variety of potential tools to model whatever you're trying to do. Your intent, whatever it is, always takes precedence over the mechanics.

Most of the time, the very definition of an action makes this easy—any time your intent is to harm someone, you know that's attack. Any time you're trying to avoid harm, you know that's defend. But sometimes, you're going to get into situations where it's not immediately clear what type of action is the most appropriate. As a GM, don't respond to these situations by forbidding the action. Instead, try to nail down a specific intent, in order to point more clearly to one (or more) of the basic game actions.

THE RULE OF FIVE

NOVA6 is built on a five-point scale:

None, one, some, most, all.

Numerically, it ranges from 0 to 4. The skill system parallels this scale, as does the magnitude of all modifiers. For example, consider a darkness spell. If the spell fails, it has no effect (0d). Simple success creates a shroud in the area, imposing -1d to rolls that rely on sight. Stunt points can increase this: -2d or -3d represents a progressively deeper darkness, while -4d represents total darkness. In most cases, this means that rolls that rely on sight simply fail.

Another example is area effects. If a character attacks a zone with a grenade, the five-point scale indicates how many targets are affected. If the attack fails, the grenade is delivered poorly and no one is affected. Basic success affects one target, while stunt points can increase this to some, most, or all targets in the zone.

ADVENTURES

You build an adventure by staging the plot at typically three levels: scenario, story arc, and saga.

Sagas are built using two or more story arcs, which are built using two or more scenarios.

Scenarios then are built from acts, which are built from scenes.

Scenes are the most basic adventure building block and are resolved with a mix of actions and extended actions.

All of these will resolve during one or more sessions of play, linked together by specific rewards in between.

This framework is not a hard set of rules but a collection of guidelines. Think of it as a vocabulary that you can use to describe the structure of your adventure rather than as a specific formula.

CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

Characters will advance during breaks as the adventure progresses. As their level increases, advancements are only awarded at later stages of the plot. For example, characters cannot advance beyond fourth level as a reward for an act break.

However, what really drives advancement is story. If the characters accomplish something major, rewarding them with a level is probably a good idea, regardless of which stage of the plot you are in.

SESSION

A *session* is a period of real-world time during which you play your game. There is no minimum or maximum length of time, but generally sessions last from 2-8 hours, and most commonly 4-6.

Depending on the pacing of the game, a session maps most easily to an act, but we all know that those pesky players can affect that pacing dramatically.

SCENE

You describe the action within an act as a series of scenes, each with a clear objective that helps you move the story on to the next scene.

A scene is often framed as a challenge, contest, or conflict.

SCENE BREAK

A scene break is a short pause that enables the characters to catch their breath and prepare for the next scene. This takes about 5 minutes in the game world, but the specific time is not as important as ensuring that there is an opportunity to pause without concern for any impending threats or activity, and that the focus of the story is ready to move to the next scene.

REWARD

Characters are able to rest (p. 21). Characters may choose to forego resting and gain one plot point instead.

LOSING A SCENE BREAK

Each scene has a clear objective related to moving the story forward. What happens when a scene ends in failure, such as losing a conflict or a contest? Is the story done?

No, the consequences of failure should still carry the story forward but without the benefit of a scene break. Perhaps the characters are captured by the villain, or they lose their way in a more dangerous part of the dungeon.

You fail to prevent the villain from escaping. As the villain departs, they taunt you and trigger a trap, thrusting you into the next scene without an opportunity to rest.

ACT

You build an act using two or more scenes that all relate to an overall objective for the act. In a typical scenario, three acts are used to introduce, explore, and conclude the scenario's story.

ACT BREAK

An act break is a significant pause in the action and story that enables the characters to reorient themselves during a scenario for the next act. In general, characters can recover and retool during an act break.

REWARD

When a character completes an act break, they rest and refresh their plot points.

If the characters enhanced the story in some significant way (e.g., completing a side-quest, creative roleplaying that wins the day, overcoming overwhelming odds), they also gain a level (to a maximum of 4th level). This can only happen once during a scenario

SCENARIO

A scenario is a unit of game time usually lasting from one to four sessions and made up of a number of acts (usually two to five). The end of a scenario should be a significant milestone.

SCENARIO BREAK

A scenario break is a usually a significant pause in the action that can range from days to months. Characters recover from all but the most serious of consequences during a scenario break.

REWARD

When a character completes a scenario break, they rest and refresh their plot points.

They also gain a level (to a maximum of 7th level).

STORY ARC

A story arc is a significant storyline for the characters built upon multiple scenarios. A story arc is like an act in that each story arc represents one phase of an overall saga.

STORY BREAK

A story break represents a major break from the overall saga. Story breaks often support character development outside of the main story, such as visiting a distant land to acquire a unique artifact, training with a reclusive martial arts master, or conducting meaningful research in support of a personal goal.

REWARD

When characters complete a story break, they rest, refresh their plot points, and gain a level.

SAGA

A saga is a series of story arcs that generally represents the entirety of a character's adventures. Often referred to as a campaign, the end of the saga generally means it is time to move on to new characters, new challenges, and a new saga. The next saga may or may not continue in the same continuity, or even the same themepack.

MOVEMENT

ZONES

Zones are a convenient way to divide a larger space into smaller spaces without worrying about an exact map. A zone is small enough that you can interact directly with someone (e.g., walk up and hand them something)—around 10 meters square. In general, a conflict should need five or fewer zones. Zones should give a tactical sense of the environment, and help you capture the essential details of the scene.

Here are some additional guidelines:

- If you can describe the area as bigger than a house, you can probably divide it into two or more zones.
- Large open areas should be divided into multiple zones—think of a gridiron football field.
- If it's separated by stairs, a ladder, a fence, or a wall, it could be divided into zones.
- “Above X” and “below X” can be different zones, especially if moving between them takes some doing—think of the airspace around something large, like a blimp.

When you're setting up the zones, note any zone aspects or conditions that could make moving between those zones problematic.

NON-PHYSICAL CONFLICTS

Even though this section discussed zones in terms of describing a physical conflict, this is not necessarily the case. Zones can just as easily be used to describe other conflicts, such as cyber or mental conflicts. In a cyber conflict, zones could be nodes on a network, while a mental conflict might range between memories, mental constructs, or even conflicting desires and fears. Any conflict where you might move from “here” to “there” or otherwise maneuver for position could be an opportunity to use zones.

ENCUMBRANCE

Both *soak* (p. 14) and *load* (p. 46) can impose conditions that make it more difficult to move, fight, and travel long distances. The penalties from *soak* and *load* stack.

Each rank in *Physique* offsets 1d of *burdened*, or 1d of *hindered* if there are no dice of *burdened* remaining.

SOAK

Soak may impose the *hindered* condition, which applies as a penalty to *Physique* (endurance), *Move* overcome, and *Move* create advantage tests.

LOAD

Load level may impose the *burdened* condition, which applies as a penalty to *Physique* (endurance) and all *Move* tests.

FALLING

Falling. *damage 2 (pierce 1) per story; physical (bludgeoning), lasting.*

Falling damage is determined by the number of stories you fall, with one story being approximately 4m. A successful *Move* overcome reduces the damage by 2.

A fall of three stories will take out most extras, while a fall of five stories will take out most principals or player characters. A fall of ten stories is most likely lethal without some mitigating circumstances.

GLOSSARY

- Act.** A narrative unit comprised of two or more scenes that marks the transition from one stage or minor plot of a scenario to another.
- Action.** The act you perform during your turn, either create advantage, overcome, attack, or defend.
- Action Dice.** Three dice used to determine success or failure of an action test.
- Action Test.** Basic resolution mechanic in which three or more dice are rolled.
- Advance.** Earned at character creation and when gaining a level. Used to improve a character.
- Advantage.** Modifier, often resulting from the create advantage action.
- Aimed.** Area property. Must be able to see targets.
- Ammo.** Uses property. Must acquire additional ammo to regain uses.
- Area.** Universal property. Can affect an entire zone or more.
- Aspect.** Descriptive phrase that can be invoked with plot points or compelled to earn them.
- Attack.** One of the four basic actions. Inflicts damage.
- Auto.** Weapon property, +3d to attack, but uses are automatically exhausted.
- Auto Only.** As Auto, but must be used on every attack—no single fire mode.
- Basic Action.** The four actions (create advantage, overcome, attack, defend) used to resolve all actions in NOVA6.
- Bonus Action.** Extra action taken at the end of a conflict round.
- Bonus Dice.** “Good” dice that negate penalty dice and contribute to success.
- Break.** Downtime between plot stages that allow characters to rest and recover.
- Burst.** Weapon property, +1d to attack, but uses can be exhausted as normal.
- Burst Only.** As Burst, but must be used on every attack—no single fire mode.
- Challenge.** Series of overcome and create advantage actions to resolve complex situations.
- Compel.** Offering someone a plot point in exchange for introducing a complication related to one of their aspects.
- Condition.** Modifier, adds bonus or penalty dice on relevant tests.
- Consequence.** Result of taking damage. Can result in a character being taken out.
- Contest.** Series of exchanges to resolve an extended competition between characters.
- Cover.** Condition that helps a character hide or defend.
- Coverage.** Armor property, specifies the number of stunt points to bypass the armor.
- Create Advantage.** One of the four basic actions. Creates an advantage or disadvantage.
- Damage.** Basic effect that inflicts stress and is negated by soak.
- Damage Rating.** Amount of damage that a damage effect will inflict before soak.
- Damage Type.** Description of the type of a damage effect, often physical or mental.
- Defend.** One of the four basic actions. Counters attack and create advantage actions.
- Difficulty.** Modifier, adds penalty dice representing how challenging an action is.
- Direct.** Weapon property, ignores the target’s soak.
- Doubles.** Action dice result in which two of the three dice are the same.
- Down.** Action test with more penalty dice than bonus dice.
- Even.** Action test with the same number of bonus dice and penalty dice.
- Exchange.** One round of a contest, during which each participant makes an action test.
- Feature.** Special abilities or flaws that may or may not be bought with advances.
- Gamemaster (GM).** Person that is responsible for adjudicating rules and creating scenarios.
- Gear Check.** Unskilled test to determine if a character has a piece of gear.
- Hindered.** Condition, applies as a penalty to Physique (endurance), Move overcome, and Move create advantage tests.

Hardened. Armor property, reduces the pierce of weapons.

High Capacity. Universal property, can prevent uses from being exhausted once per scene.

Improved Protection. Armor property, stunt that can reduce the duration of consequences.

Initiative. Unskilled test to determine the order of participants in a conflict.

Interval. Specifies how long an action test takes to attempt.

Invoke. Spending a plot point to gain a benefit because an aspect would help you.

Lasting. Weapon property (and duration), increases the duration of resulting consequences to lasting duration.

Modifier. Bonus or penalty dice.

Multiple Actions. Taking multiple actions on a turn imposes a cumulative -1d penalty.

Non-Player Character. Character that is controlled by the GM, also called an NPC.

NOVA6. The game you are playing.

NPC. Character that is controlled by the GM, also called a non-player character.

NPC Extra. An unnamed or secondary NPC that is controlled by or associates with an NPC principal. Also known as mooks, flunkies, or toadies.

NPC Principal. A named or significant NPC that behaves like a PC.

Overcome. One of the four basic actions. Overcomes an obstacle or disadvantage.

PC. Character that is controlled by a player, also called a player character

Penalty Dice. “Bad” dice that negate bonus dice and contribute to failure.

Perks. Specializations in a skill that add +1d when applicable.

Pierce. Weapon property, reduces the soak of targets.

Player Character (PC). Character that is controlled by a player, also called a PC.

Plot Point. Resource used to invoke and compel aspects, activate talents and features, and take bonus actions.

Ranged. Weapon property, such weapons can be used at range.

Reach. Weapon property, such weapons can attack past opponents.

Reaction. Special action that does not impose multiple action penalties. Asked for by GM.

Rest. Overcome action to recover a stress box.

Refresh. Number of plot points the character resets to after a break.

Reliable. Universal property, costs an additional stunt point to render inoperable.

Reload. Weapon property, requires the listed action to ready the weapon after firing.

Rest. Down time between plot stages to recover from stress and consequences.

Round. Time in a conflict during which each participant takes a turn.

Scale. Measure of capabilities and skills much greater than human level.

Scenario. A narrative unit comprised of multiple acts that concludes a major plot ends in a significant milestone.

Scene. A narrative unit with a clear objective that helps advance the story, usually involving a challenge, contest, or conflict.

Selective. Area property, can be limited to only affect desired targets.

Session. A period of real-world time during which you play your game.

Simple Failure. Failure without additional cost or complications.

Simple Success. Success without additional benefit or awesomeness.

Skill Minimum. Weapon property, requires skill listed to use the weapon without penalty.

Skill. Used with four basic actions to resolve most action tests.

Snap Action. Special action that does not impose multiple action penalties.

Soak. Basic effect that protects the character from damage.

Soak Rating. Amount of damage that the soak effect prevents.

Special Action. Actions that fall outside of the four basic actions.

Stress Box. Checked off as the character takes damage.

Stress Track. Series of stress boxes linked to a specific damage type.

Stunt Point. Resource used to embellish the results of a successful test.

Stunt. One of the things that stunt points can be spent on to embellish results.

Take Your Time. Increases time to complete a test in exchange for +2d on the action test.

Taken Out. Eliminated from a conflict, either temporarily or more permanently.

Talent. Special abilities that enhance a character's core capabilities

Teamwork. Working together to succeed at a test. Cost of failure is shared.

Test. Short for Action Test, the basic resolution mechanic in which three or more dice are rolled.

Themepack. Complete set of resources needed to run a game in a specific setting.

Tiring. Weapon property, can cause stress to the wielder.

Triples. Action dice result in which all three dice are the same.

Unreliable. Universal property, costs one less stunt point to render inoperable.

Unskilled Test. An Action Test that does not rely on any particular skill.

Up. Action test with more bonus dice than penalty dice.

Uses. Universal property, represents effects that can "run out".

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