

OKKAM

by Skip Rainsmyth - v24.5.15a - WIP!!! text-only

'It is vain to do with more what can be done with fewer.' - William of Occam
'No, no, the adventures first! Explanations take such a dreadful time.' - Lewis Carroll

SETUP: Get a handful of six-sided dice, pencils, and paper. Sticky notes and small counters are also helpful. Write a **Story Map:** When and where does your story take place? Who are the main characters? Why are they together? What will they be doing? How do any important elements of the game world (*magic, technology, politics*) work? Use a familiar world from media, or use elements of other works to create your own. Edit the Story Map regularly as your adventure unfolds.

Most players will create and control a **Player Character (PC)**. These are the main characters of the story. Choose someone to be the **Guide**, who will create and control the game world and its inhabitants, moderate the rules, and narrate the story.

PLAYING A PC: Act like the main characters! Describe the actions you take to overcome challenges, pursue your goals, and make your mark on the world of the story. - Interact with the world as if it were a real place. Some ideas are dangerous, actions have consequences, and characters do not forget how they are treated. How would your PC really react to danger or drama? Where would they go for help or information? What would they do to increase their power or effectiveness? - Get engaged! Take notes, make maps, and ask questions to keep track of the story so far.

PLAYING THE GUIDE: Design your story's fictional world, and bring it to life by describing what the PCs see, hear, smell, and feel. Describe what happens around or to the PCs, and tell them what happens when they speak or act. Put obstacles between them and their goals, and use their flaws to create tension in the story. Populate the world with potential friends, enemies, mentors, challenges, and rewards. Play the role of any supporting characters in the story. Moderate the conversation and the game rules. Make rulings when there is confusion or disagreement. Make the world seem real - play to find out what happens - make stuff happen - "what are you trying to do? How are you doing that? What do you do next / what is everyone else doing while?"

CREATING PCS: Give the PC a name. Give them 3 **Tags:** broad traits (*charming, sneaky, Orcish*), specific skills (*linguistics, cooking, Wall of Flame*), personal codes (*help those in need, get rich or die trying, always accept a challenge*), or connections (*ex-military, member of the Guild, mentor in Thebes*). Supernatural powers should be limited to one specific effect. Give them 2 **current** and 2 **maximum Resolve**. Give them 1 **Gear** point and 9+Gear Slots (so: 10 to start). Most normal Gear like tools, resources, treasures, etc. take up 1 Slot. Small or expendable Gear (*toolkits, first aid, reagents, ammo, rations, light sources*) can be bundled: 3 uses per Slot. If your story uses currency, any amount takes up 1 Slot. PCs may start with as many of their Slots filled as they wish, but starting Gear must be reasonable. During the first session you can also fill them as you play. Afterwards, to get new Gear you must spend Gear points or find/buy/steal it. PCs can pick up and hold objects without writing them down, but as soon as an object is stored, it takes up a Slot. As the story progresses, you can store Gear elsewhere and note the location to free up slots - but they are not guaranteed to be there when you come back to collect them! Gear may be gained, lost, broken, or stolen. Limit starting Tags and Gear to fit your story. Only the PC's player may add, change, or remove Tags.

GAMEPLAY: The Guide describes the game world, makes things happen around or to the PCs, and asks their players "what do you do?". Other players ask clarifying questions, make plans, and describe what the PCs say and do to overcome challenges and pursue their goals. PCs have common knowledge and are experts on their Tags. Other knowledge must be discovered in the story. There are no turns exactly - speak or act in any order, but whenever someone rolls or completes a meaningful action, shift the spotlight to someone new, and try to give everyone roughly equal time in the spotlight. The Guide can make hazards or creatures act whenever they want. However, the Guide never directly harms or hinders PCs - they describe threats, and if the PCs fail to respond, the threat becomes reality.

The Guide also decides the outcome of PC actions. Most things should be handled using common sense. If a PC is skilled and prepared, and there are no obvious risks, the Guide describes any requirements (*time, resources, etc.*), and it just happens. Some actions are impossible without the right Tags or Gear. Spend 1 Gear point to fortuitously have a mundane piece of Gear related to a Tag (must have an open Slot). If an action is impossible or has no effect, the Guide says why. If an action has a cost, prerequisite, or something that must be done first, the Guide describes it. Some challenges may have details, defenses, hazards, minions, multiple steps, etc. that must be dealt with before they can finally be overcome. If an action is possible but has obvious risks, or when a PC reacts to or resists a threat, the Guide asks the PC's player to roll dice to see what happens. Players should understand the stakes and likely outcomes of success or failure before rolling. Discussion and negotiation is encouraged.

When asked to roll dice, the PC's player takes 1 base die. Add 1 die for each helpful Tag or Condition. Add 1 die for **Advantage** due to position, preparation, or helpful environmental details. Other characters may offer 1 **Help** die if they have a relevant Tag, and/or let one PC take the lead and roll for the whole group - however, it must make sense, and everyone else is exposed to the risks of failure. If the PC is reacting to or resisting a threat, add dice equal to their current Resolve (max 3). Finally, spend 1 Resolve to add 1 die (max 3). Remove 1 die for each hindering Tag or Condition. The Guide may subtract up to 3 dice for **Disadvantage** due to higher than normal difficulty, complexity, opposition, desired effect (*duration, power, area*), or hazardous environmental details (*weather, darkness*): -1 for Hard, -2 for Extreme, or -3 for Legendary. If you have less than 1 die, the action fails automatically.

Roll the dice and find the highest single die result. 6: the action succeeds! 5: it succeeds, but with a consequence. 1-4: failure - something worse happens, with a consequence. Multiple 6s indicate additional effects or advantages. The Guide describes the outcome and any consequences (*new or exacerbated harmful Conditions, loss of Gear, a lesser effect, story complications, etc.*). Reroll the dice by 'spending' a Tag (1 reroll max?). You must take the new result(?). Spent Tags cannot be used again until the PC Rests.

CONDITIONS: **Conditions** are temporary effects (*Dazed, Invisible, Cursed, Enhanced Senses, Broken Leg*). **They affect dice, and can make actions succeed or fail automatically when relevant.** The Guide gives PCs Conditions after a failed roll, when the PC uses certain Gear, or any other time that makes sense. The Guide also determines their type: Minor, Moderate, or Major. Minor Conditions end after 1 roll. Moderate Conditions end when the PC Rests. The Guide decides what events or actions will end Major Conditions (*medical attention, quests, etc.*). Too many harmful Conditions can debilitate a PC. **Conditions can become Tags if it makes sense.**

REST & ADVANCEMENT: A **Rest** is at least a few days of comfort or respite where PCs rest, reflect, practice, or indulge. After Resting, all spent Tags, Resolve, and Gear are restored. If you've accomplished something notable since the last Rest, choose an **Advancement** to show how you've grown or changed: 1 new Tag, +1 max Resolve, or +1 Gear. New Tags must be related to events in the story; you can take a similar Tag to show improved ability. New Tags, Gear, allies, and renown can also be gained outside Rest due to story events.

PVP: If PCs oppose each other, all players involved roll dice as normal. The player with the best result gets what they want. Reroll ties.

DIE OF FATE: To leave something completely to chance, the Guide asks a player to roll a single **Die of Fate**. A higher result is more favorable for the PCs.

DOWNTIME: Keep track of what the PCs are doing in their downtime (*learning a language, target practice, building a ship*). The Guide determines the time or steps required. Update downtime activities at each Rest. When you finish, update your Tags or Gear accordingly.

DEATH: Your group should decide if PCs can be removed from the story due to death, exile, insanity, etc. as a consequence of failure. PCs can also leave the story voluntarily at any time; just describe how it happens.

ABSENT PLAYERS: If a player is absent, their PC takes a background role. They cannot act, help, or be targeted directly. However, they still earn advancements and are subject to story events as if they were there.

GUIDE LIMITATIONS: The Guide never rolls dice and never dictates what a PC says, feels, or does without their player's consent.

BE NICE AND HAVE FUN.

OKKAM

Player Name:	Portrait/Description/Sigil/Quote:
Character Name:	
Resolve: / (Spend to add 1 die. Add current Resolve to react/resist rolls - max 3)	
Tags: (Spend a Tag to reroll) <input type="radio"/> _____ <input type="radio"/> _____ <input type="radio"/> _____ <input type="radio"/> _____ <input type="radio"/> _____ <input type="radio"/> _____ <input type="radio"/> _____ <input type="radio"/> _____ <input type="radio"/> _____ <input type="radio"/> _____ <input type="radio"/> _____ <input type="radio"/> _____	

Gear: / (Slots = 9+Gear. Spend to fill a Slot with a mundane item related to a Tag)

1	6		
2	7		
3	8		
4	9		
5	10		

Conditions/Notes/Etc.:

Design Notes/Qs:

- 'It must make sense' vs. 'the Guide must agree'?
- Give examples for everything in the actual rules text!
- Booklet, not trifold - w/ Story Modules/Maps, references, charsheets, stickers, tips, etc!
- Whenever possible, say 'yes' or 'yes but'... 'no, but..' can also be ok.
- ON A ROLL, NOTHING NEVER HAPPENS! Only roll for real decision points, where success or failure could take the story in different directions! Either it happens, it sort of happens or happens with a complication, or something worse happens instead.
- Roleplaying - problem solving. Players should be looking at the things on their sheets - skills, resources, gear, notes - for how to solve problems. Dice rolling should only occur when there are risks, and risks should be avoided if possible.
- Dont roll to search or deceive - do it! And if theres no risk and youre skilled, it happens automatically. If you ask, the guide should tell you.
- 3 or 5 uses per slot? 3 makes Gear pts. more attractive - can have more ammo, food, etc.
- Expendables that go with items (ammo, batteries, etc) bundled with the item? E.g. SMG (OOO), Flashlight (OOO)?
- Some special Gear can have rule-breaking properties: e.g. *Stimpack* - adds *Moderate Condition Amped (+3 to rolls involving speed/reflex)*, but cannot gain the benefits of the next Rest
- Expendables are used up when it makes sense - food and water when they are consumed, torches or batteries after a few hours (game time), quivers and clips after one or two firefights. Be sure to pack enough to last until you can Rest next! (consider renaming to Respite or something - emphasize the length!)

Some actions are impossible without the right Gear or skills (*speaking French, magic, climbing a cliff, picking a lock*). The Guide determines the requirements of PC actions (*the ritual needs a vial of rare ink and takes an afternoon; to damage the ship, you'll have to find a weak point; the candy bar costs two dollars*), as well as the outcome. The Guide can also break an action into smaller steps or offer a lesser effect (*to reach the mayor, you'll have to get past the mob, climb the platform, and distract the guards; you can't kill the slime in one hit, but you can do some harm*). Most actions should be decided with common sense. If it's likely to succeed, it does. If it's impossible or has no effect, describe why. When PCs act under pressure or act to avoid a risk, roll dice to see what happens.

Make challenges dangerous by:

- making them act more (forcing the PCs to react)
- Giving them minions, defenses, hazards, skills, etc. that must be dealt with first (you can't even hurt a dragon with a normal sword, you have to have the Blade of Slaying or an Arrow of Piercing; even then, you'd have to find its weak spot, get it to reveal the weak spot, and chip off the armor, all while dodging its flames and claws while it zips around the sky too fast to track destroying homes and businesses) (to warn the mayor, you'll have to navigate the angry mob, distract security, climb up the tall platform)
- Dishing out more serious Conditions and consequences on fails and partial successes.

OSR conversions: HD = clock segments to defeat. Stats = average, every relevant Trait is +/-4.

Maybe Clocks could still work - how many segments would that fight have had? Well, i wanted it to be a tense encounter, but not long - so like 1-1.5xPCs. That would be 4-6 turns. I think they did 4, so thats perfect. The mercs will be dramatic, so maybe 2.5x, or 10 actions.

- 'You can measure this with a fillable segment bar or circle, counters, or any other method you like.'
- Call it... Challenge Points? Or something?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
mixed	33	56	70	80	87	91	94	96	97	98
full	16	31	42	52	60	67	72	77	81	84