

STORYTELLER SYSTEM



—

*Expanded Mechanics
and Permutations*

WORLD OF
DARKNESS



PART OF THE strength of the Storyteller system that powers the World of Darkness is that the Storyteller is able to make judgment calls on the fly. The Storyteller always determines which dice pool a player builds to attempt any feat or action, and they can always change it to better serve the narrative.

That said, characters often attempt the following relatively common activities during play. These specific dice pools and rules exist to guide the Storyteller. By design, these guidelines can be used across all the World of Darkness tabletop storytelling games. Note that specific circumstances in each game may supersede these suggestions; that's why they're guidelines. For example, a Hunter's quarry may have a specific power that inflicts a unique type of fire damage, or a rampaging spirit might be mollified by a particular type of intimidation or carousing from a werewolf. And everyone knows that sunlight is anathema to vampires....

Which is to say, as Storyteller, you have free rein to use these permutations as a baseline to design antagonists or challenges that test the capacities of your players' coterie, cells, packs, and other groups of protagonists.

Mental

THESE SYSTEMS COVER tasks involving the three Mental Attributes: Intelligence, Wits, and Resolve. Mental tests can provide you with information about things your *character* knows but the *player* does not, and to also determine if the *character* knows something the *player* knows.

Artistic Creation

SOME CHARACTERS ARE artists, musicians, or poets (or were while they were alive...) and cultivate their creative spark as a way to deal with the horrors they face or just to stave off the ennui of endless, deathless nights. Others attempt to clothe their Muse with inhuman glories. Camarilla Courts might compete in art as in all things, while a Hunter may pride themselves on their MC skills, while a mage might compose vast murals of occult graffiti.

Normally, players can have their characters create various pieces of art to their heart's content, but in some cases, when they wish to accomplish something with their art, such as impressing someone, it might be prudent to roll.

The Attribute in the pool varies: Intelligence is most common, but a clever satire might use Wits

or Manipulation, or a delicate ivory carving might require Dexterity or Resolve. Plastic arts use Craft as the Skill; performing arts use Performance; architecture and literary arts use Academics.

Art conveying a secret message (e.g., forbidden love, political samizdat, occult codes) uses the “encoded” Skill (e.g., Insight, Politics, Occult) but requires a higher rating in the “surface” artistic Skill.

The quality of the work depends on the number of successes the artist achieves or on the risks taken. A particularly egregious failure critical might betray unintended secrets to a knowledgeable onlooker (such as threatening the Masquerade for vampires); a clean critical might be worth a boon.

Computer Use

COMPUTERS ARE AS essential to modern chronicles as they are dangerous, and clever characters can use them for everything from finding information to sabotaging security systems to sharing damning photos of their rivals across social media.

Many Skills simply require (or assume) basic computer use; Investigation, for example, hardly functions in these nights without a few database searches. Academics and Science likewise comprise at least a quick Google or JSTOR trawl. Other Skills function on a computer just like they might off it — lying in a bar room and lying in a chat room both involve Subterfuge.

Hacking into a computer system by writing or deploying code script to subvert it uses Intelligence + Technology against a Difficulty dependent on the system’s security (4 for decent corporate security, 6 for secure databases, 8+ for the NSA). If the character rolls a total failure, they alert security to their presence. In some chronicles, hacking may be resolved as a conflict.

Most hacking in the real world is social engineering: convincing an administrative assistant to re-enter their password online, sending phishing emails, or just buying a bunch of passwords from an extremely online malcontent. Those hacks use different pools (Manipulation + Subterfuge or Intelligence + Streetwise, for example) and total failure attracts a different sort of exposure.

At the end of the day, what exactly can be accomplished by hacking and how long it takes is up to the

troupe, it and depends heavily on the level of realism in your stories.

Concealment

DISGUIISING ONE’S HIDEOUT, cleaning up bloodstains, disposing of bodies, camouflaging Elysium or a caern site — the occult nature of World of Darkness protagonists by definition demands concealment.

Camouflage in nature or burying a body there undetectably uses Intelligence + Survival as its pool. Urban camouflage uses Intelligence + Streetwise, though some characters get creative and use Academics (Architecture) or Craft (Interior Design) to make one building appear like another.

Building false compartments or secret chambers uses Intelligence + Craft (Carpentry) or Intelligence + Academics (Architecture), if you trust your workforce. Cleaning up a murder scene tests Resolve + Larceny; concentration and focus are essential, if you want to remove every drop of DNA.

The result of your concealment test becomes the Difficulty for anyone trying to spot what you have hidden.

Explosives

FROM IEDS BY a desolate roadside to an impromptu Primacord crypt opening, explosives can play a dramatic part in the lives and unlives of the players’ characters or those who cross them.

Creating explosives uses Intelligence + Science. Building a bomb uses explosives (made or sourced) as well as Intelligence + Technology (or Craft, for old-school bombs made of clock parts and colored wires).

The pool for using a pre-made bomb or explosive depends on its purpose; blowing a safe or breaching a wall uses Intelligence + Larceny, controlled demolition uses Intelligence + Science (Engineering), setting a car bomb uses Intelligence + Technology. Just tossing a grenade or a stick of dynamite is a regular throwing action (see below).

A total failure on any roll with explosives may cause an accident, ruin the materials, detonate the explosive prematurely, or result in something else at the Storyteller’s discretion. Fuck around (with explosives) and find out.

Perception

A CHARACTER'S SENSES may be keenly attuned to their surroundings, honed by long training, or supernaturally acute. Depending on what sort of creature they are, a character may find their senses challenged by an enemy's scent, distorted by rage, or overwhelmed by a bouquet of delectable blood.

Build most perception pools with Awareness as the Skill. The Attribute varies depending on whether the perceiver notices something in the moment (Wits), recognizes something (Intelligence), or picks something out of a cloud of distraction or detail (Resolve). "You hear a sound" uses Wits; "You hear the guard coming" uses Intelligence; "Despite the alarm going off, you hear soft footsteps behind you" uses Resolve.

Feeling a puff of air from a concealed door likely uses Wits; spotting an ambusher in camouflage likely uses Intelligence; noticing a very small detail after long study likely uses Resolve. The Storyteller should ask how much the action depends on instinct or sensory acuity, vs. memory or recognition, vs. pure mental focus.

Resolve also applies in general to detecting supernatural signs amidst the mundane information surrounding them. For example, vampires may be able to distinguish qualities in blood (or Blood) despite the distractions of Hunger.

Tests to perceive an idle target use the target's Stealth as the base Difficulty. For contests opposing perception vs. actively sneaking, see Sneaking, below.

Specifically searching a crime scene for clues or evidence uses Intelligence + Investigation. Other Skills may encompass dedicated perception tests as well; spotting a disease symptom on a human uses Intelligence + Medicine, for instance.

Preparedness

NOTHING SLOWS A story down more than a lengthy inventory scene in which players list every conceivable item or object they may need for a night's activities. The preparedness test avoids this scenario by allowing players to test during the session to see if they remembered to bring something along or pick it up earlier.

Characters need not roll for signature items: Of course the Martial Hunter brought their pistol,

the sneaky Nosferatu brought their lockpicks, and so forth. Everybody has the normal sorts of things people might have in their pockets: cellphone, pocket knife, pencil, or what-have-you. This test covers slightly outré or unusual things: rope, a shovel or other larger tools, extra burner phones. The less likely the item, the higher the Difficulty the Storyteller should set.

The Attribute for a preparedness test is Intelligence; the Skill should relate to the item or its use in some way. Roll Intelligence + Firearms to have brought a silencer, or Intelligence + Craft to remember a wrench, or Intelligence + Occult to produce a tarot deck from the folds of your trench coat.

Storytellers should ask for rolls only if failure is interesting, and preparedness is no exception. Is it worth a roll to see if the characters remembered to bring their tickets to the concert? Maybe not if they had nothing distracting them, but if they fled an overturned car after a high-speed chase, did they grab them from the glove box? Would not having the tickets bring the story to an unsatisfying halt?

Research

THE POOL FOR a research attempt, whether it's scouring an archive or paying a human grad student to look it up, is Intelligence + the relevant Skill (not just Academics or Science but anything from Finance to Occult). The character still has to direct the grad student, after all.

With the advent of the internet, finding out basic facts or even fairly recondite information has never been easier; the Difficulty for almost any mundane research test is 3 or 4 at most. Very obscure, occult, or deliberately concealed information increases the Difficulty. That sort of research often requires an extended test; a critical uncovers the needed fact faster, or leads to an unsuspected secret or trove of facts.

Tracking

UNLIKE SHADOWING (SEE below), tracking requires you to follow physical evidence in the wild — footprints, blood smears, bent grass — to find a target. The tracking dice pool is Wits + Survival; the base Difficulty equals the target's Survival. Inclement weather and elapsed time since the target's passage

also modify the Difficulty upwards. Extra successes provide more information about the target: rate of speed, estimated weight, number of people followed, etc.

Physical

THESE SYSTEMS GENERALLY cover actions involving the three Physical Attributes (Strength, Dexterity, and Stamina). These feats typically require a test.

Not everything is overtly an action here; some situations are environmental hazards or the result of failed actions. Note also that these systems are intended to serve a story's narrative flow rather than be overtly realistic. If your troupe's story involves survival in winter tundra, you might prefer a more granular system for cold and freezing, for example, and should use the proposed system as a baseline.

Climbing

CLIMBING USUALLY REQUIRES a test of Dexterity + Athletics. If the climber rolls a total failure, they either get tangled and stuck or fall, at the Storyteller's discretion. Using ropes and mountaineering equipment lowers Difficulty by -2 or more.

Cold and Freezing

AFTER AN HOUR of extreme cold, players must roll Stamina + Resolve (Difficulty 2) for their characters to keep moving. They test again each hour, increasing the Difficulty by 1 for each roll. On a failure, they stop moving. An hour after that, their flesh freezes solid and they very quickly die thereafter.

Cold affects different creatures in the World of Darkness differently. For example, vampires cannot die from cold, but they can suffer the effects of frostbite and even become entirely frozen in severe temperatures.



Driving

NOTE THAT VAMPIRES' Drive Skill isn't the same as Hunters' motivational Drive. (Going forward, other World of Darkness characters will update to the Driving Skill, to keep it distinct from Hunter Drives.)

Nobody needs a Driving roll to operate a vehicle normally. The pool when you do need a test depends on the nature of the complication; driving at high speed, making complex maneuvers, or evading traffic requires Dexterity + Driving. Weather that makes it hard to see the road is a job for Wits + Driving.

The Difficulty depends on all those conditions, alone or in combination. By and large, each possible complication (speed, maneuvers, traffic, weather) adds +1 to a standard Difficulty of 3 (with a light, responsive vehicle) or 4 (with a heavy, unwieldy one). An extreme version of any complication adds +2 to the Difficulty. Failing the roll slows or even stops the driver.

A complete failure under such adverse conditions might mean a crash or spinning out.

Falling

FALLING CHARACTERS SUSTAIN one level of Superficial damage per meter of uncontrolled fall. Landing on one's feet (negating the damage) requires a Dexterity + Athletics test at a Difficulty equal to meters fallen.

Feats of Strength

STORYTELLERS SHOULD FEEL free to set a Difficulty to perform any given feat of strength based on the character's Strength Attribute, and completely ignore the chart below. The usual pool for lifting or smashing things is Strength + Athletics; for throwing heavy things, the Storyteller might use the worst of Strength or Dexterity + Athletics.

Various supernatural creatures may also have ways to affect their Strength scores, which is why the scale goes beyond 10. Note, too, that different supernatural creatures are often represented differently in different core games. For example, vampires augment their Strength via the Discipline power Prowess (Potence 2) in **Vampire**, but would use a Standard or Exceptional Dice pool in **Hunter**.

For Storytellers who prefer hard-and-fast numbers, this chart provides the minimum Strength needed to deadlift various weights or perform feats of strength without a test. Characters of lower Strength may use a Strength + Athletics Attribute test to affect heavier weights than their Strength ratings allow.

Strength	Feats	Deadlift Weight (kg)
1	Crush a beer can	20 (Christmas tree, stop sign)
2	Break a wooden chair	45 (toilet)
3	Break down a wooden door	115 (manhole cover; empty coffin, refrigerator)
4	Break a wooden plank; break down a standard interior door	180 (full coffin, empty dumpster)
5	Break open a metal fire door; tear open a chain link fence or chained gate	250 (motorcycle)
6	Throw a motorcycle; snap handcuffs	360 (tall steel street lamp)
7	Flip over a small car; snap a padlock	410 (horse)
8	Break a lead pipe; punch through a brick wall	455 (telephone pole, grand piano)
9	Punch through concrete; break chains; rip open a car door	545 (tree trunk, small plane)
10	Rip open a steel pipe; bend an I-beam	680 (speedboat)
11	Overturn a car; punch through 2.5 cm thick sheet metal	910 (Predator drone)
12	Break a metal lamp post; throw a wrecking ball	1.3 metric tons (police helicopter, sports car)
13	Overturn an SUV; toss a sports car	1.8 metric tons (police car)
14	Overturn a bus; rip open a vault door	2.25 metric tons (empty shipping container; SUV, pickup truck)
15	Overturn a truck; toss an SUV	2.75 metric tons (Humvee)

Lifting is all or nothing — if you fail the roll, nothing happens. At the Storyteller's discretion, dragging an object may be easier than lifting it; increase the character's effective Strength by 1 in such a case.

Fire and Burning

UNLESS USED AS a weapon (such as in the case of a burning torch, incendiary rounds, or a flamethrower), fire deals Aggravated Health damage to a character based on the amount of their body exposed, as dictated by the Storyteller. Having one's hand shoved into an open flame might deal one point of damage, while being engulfed in a roaring inferno would deal three or more per turn.

Intrusion

INTRUSION COVERS BREAKING and entering, evading physical security devices, picking locks, cracking safes — and preventing others from doing the same. Intrusion feat pools almost always use Larceny as the Skill.

The Attribute in an intrusion pool depends on the precise task in the spotlight; picking a lock or dodging a laser sensor uses Dexterity + Larceny, while cracking a safe or bypassing an alarm circuit uses Intelligence + Larceny. Noticing a hidden camera might require Wits + Larceny; breaking a lock cleanly might use Strength + Larceny (and perhaps some supernatural benefit...).

Whatever the test, it needs to succeed on the first attempt against active security, or the intruder sets off the alarm. Most commercial buildings or large public facilities like museums, have Difficulty 4 or 5 security systems; bank vaults and secure facilities shelter behind higher Difficulties. A government building might have Difficulty 4 alarms and locks on the front door, but a Difficulty 6 secure wing, with a Difficulty 8 hazardous materials vault inside that. Some systems simply can't be cracked with low Larceny ratings; for example, Larceny 1 lets you pick a store-bought padlock but not defeat a keypad or crack a safe.

Setting up a security system uses Intelligence + Larceny. Add the margin from that roll to the Difficulty to penetrate the system and to the watchers' test to spot a sneaking attempt (see below).

Intrusion requires proper tools (lockpicks, circuit bridgers, etc.) to avoid a Difficulty penalty of -1 (improvised tools) or -2 (credit card and a bobby pin). At the Storyteller's discretion, characters may be able to use Intelligence + Technology to penetrate purely electronic security systems at +1 to the Difficulty. An

Intelligence + Technology test is a likely prerequisite for such heist staples as tapping into the closed-circuit camera feed or hacking into smart building software.

Pursuit

SOONER OR LATER, almost every chronicle will have some sort of pursuit. Vampires may have to pursue their prey, or flee from witnesses or Coalition operatives. Werewolves may chase their target across urban rooftops or rural wilderness. Hunters may find themselves running *to* or *from* the quarry, depending on how disastrously things have gone.

If the race pits two roughly equally matched characters (or vehicles), or the slower party has some countervailing advantage (helicopter overwatch, knowledge of the Cairo bazaar), resolve the pursuit as a basic contest.

A vehicle chase uses Wits + Driving for its dice pool, given the importance of keeping the quarry (or pursuer) in sight.

A foot pursuit contest uses Athletics for the Skill. The Attribute in a foot pursuit varies depending on the type of chase: A long marathon run might use Stamina, a sprint over a few blocks uses Strength, and a multi-level parkour pursuit over the rooftops of Mumbai uses Dexterity.

Depending on the nature of a chase, many pursuits can benefit from teamwork if more than one character is chasing a target (or can plausibly distract a pursuer).

Players who want more drama from a chase can run it as a conflict, where the combatants inflict damage on each other (representing things barged into or short, fleeting bursts of combat) using their pursuit pool. Any combatant may concede the chase at any time (allowing the quarry to escape, or the pursuer to catch up). Use the level of hazards in the environment as weapon damage.

Shadowing

ONE CHARACTER SHADOWS another by keeping them in sight, ideally without being noticed themselves. The pools used vary considerably with who knows what. So long as the shadower isn't spotted, use Wits + Awareness vs. the target's Resolve + Streetwise (representing normal precautions). If the quarry succeeds, the shadower(s) is spotted. If the shadower



is discovered, but doesn't know this fact, use Wits + Stealth or Streetwise vs. Wits + Awareness to shake the surveillance. If everyone knows, the feat is no longer shadowing; it's now a pursuit!

Award bonus dice to the shadower in busy areas vs. an unaware target, but to the quarry instead, if they know and are trying to shake off the tail. Award one additional dice in busy areas, or two additional dice in crowded areas or areas with many potential exits and blind spots (e.g., wooded parks, train stations, department stores).

Unless potential helpers are masters of disguise (or can somehow shapeshift to resemble the target), only the shadower's side benefits from teamwork. Vampires using Obfuscate may not need to test at all to shadow mortals.

Sleight of Hand

PICKING POCKETS, MAKING a brush pass with a contact, or just plain shoplifting are sleight of hand feats just like card tricks or palming an item. They use Dexterity + Larceny vs. any watcher's Wits + the *greater* of Larceny or Awareness.

At the Storyteller's discretion, diversions and distractions, as well as crowds or darkness, can give the light-fingered character bonus dice.

Sneaking

A SNEAKING (OR hiding) character pits their Dexterity + Stealth against a watching (or searching) character's Wits + Awareness in a basic contest. Darkness, background noise or other distractions, or being downwind may add a die to the sneaker's roll; security devices, scanners, or superior vantage points may add dice to that of the watcher.

Like shadowing, vampires using Obfuscate may not have to make tests to sneak. Other special effects may come into play as well, such as the rough impression a Hunter's ability to Sense the Unnatural may give, or a werewolf's Gift that grants them enhanced alertness.

Surprise

ACHIEVING SURPRISE IN a combat situation generally requires some sort of roll, such as Dexterity + Stealth vs. the best opposing Wits + Awareness. (Remember you can Take Half for large parties of Storyteller characters to speed up play.) This includes attacks from supernatural concealment effects such as Obfuscate.

Surprise can extend to non-combat and other narrative situations, as well. For example, a Kindred coterie may wait in Elysium to make an accusation of the ancilla bedeviling them when she arrives, before she can ingratiate herself with the Camarilla luminaries present.

The first attack or action with successful surprise should generally be made against a static Difficulty 1, allowing for devastating strikes, witty ambushes, or simply having one's tools at the ready to meet the challenge before the challenge knows what hit it.

Swimming and Water Environments

CHARACTERS WITH ONE dot or more in Athletics can swim. To determine whether a character makes a long swim without being pulled off course

by the current or drowning (or sinking, for vampires), roll Stamina + Athletics against a Difficulty set by the weather conditions.

Vampires caught in shallow water during the day take damage from sunlight as though they are under cloud cover.

DROWNING

AFTER A PERIOD of duress in water (or, uh, whatever other liquid the environment contains), players must roll Stamina + Resolve (Difficulty 2) for their characters to *not* start drowning. They test again each period, increasing the Difficulty by 1 for each roll. On a failure, they begin drowning. One additional duress period after that, their lungs have filled with water (or whatever) and they drown. This is usually fatal to anything that breathes, though they may be revived (before death) with a Resolve + Medicine test at a Difficulty 3-5, depending on the time spent submerged.

The Storyteller decides what a “period of duress” is, informed by the severity of circumstances, the violence of the current, the temperature of the liquid, etc.

Throwing Things

A CHARACTER THROWING a weapon at a target tests Dexterity + Athletics. For especially strong supernatural creatures, this may include things not usually considered weapons, like pieces of I-beam or cars. For Hunters (and hunters...), this often includes Molotov cocktails or even military-grade throwables like grenades.

Social Feats

THESE SYSTEMS COVER tasks involving the three Social Attributes (Charisma, Manipulation, and Composure). In general, Storyteller characters react to the characters based on their actions.

Many players don’t like having the dice dictate their character’s response to a Storyteller character, and they often prefer playing a full social interaction rather than roll a basic contest. One easy rule of thumb here is that a roll is reasonable if it reflects a supernatural power’s effect that deprives the character

of their autonomy, but in “mundane” circumstances, the player’s character is free to react as they wish.

Standard Social Feat Modifiers

Attitude	Difficulty modifier
Loyal/Devoted	-1
Friendly/Weak	+/- 0
Indifferent	+1
Suspicious	+2
Aggressive/Unfriendly	+3
Hostile/Violent	+5

Loyal/Devoted individuals may risk their careers, and possibly their lives, for you. They readily give any information they think will help you, whether requested or not, and may perform services such as watching captives, providing medical care, breaking down doors, or distracting the cops. They will follow your lead and agree to your plan with few questions asked, even if it seems risky.

Friendly/ Weak individuals will not readily harm you, and they may try to prevent others from harming you. They will answer any questions you ask, if they seem reasonable or safe. They will recommend reliable service providers, speak up on your behalf, or give the occasional helpful tip. They are willing to be convinced of your plans, and they will sign on if the benefits are clear.

Indifferent individuals will not go out of their way to harm you without clear orders or benefit. They may answer some questions, if politeness or profit beckon. They will not bestir themselves to help you without clear reason. Your plans strike them as risky and foolish, but they are unlikely to actively prevent you from trying them as long as they can stay safely out of it.

Suspicious individuals suspect your intentions might be unwholesome, illegal, or otherwise dangerous, but they have no reason to harm you — *yet*. They respond with minimal courtesy or professionalism. They are unlikely to listen to your plans, unless you show immediate reasons or benefits for doing so.

Aggressive/ Unfriendly individuals will harm you if they think they can get away with it, keep a wary eye on you, and will egg others on to harm you.

They will clam up in your presence, or they offer misleading answers to questions. They will give bad advice, if they give advice at all. They will not help you, and they will oppose your plans, regardless of their merits, unless helping you is the only thing keeping them comparatively unharmed.

Hostile/ Violent individuals will risk their careers, and possibly their lives, to hurt and possibly kill you. They will actively prevent others from giving you answers, help, or comfort of any kind. They may even help your enemies; they will certainly do everything possible to sabotage your plans, even if they cannot immediately torpedo them.

On a critical, the target becomes more favorable by one attitude level for the remainder of the scene: e.g., a suspicious bouncer becomes indifferent. On a total failure, the target becomes less favorable by one attitude level for the remainder of the scene: e.g., that suspicious bouncer becomes unfriendly.

You can also modify the Difficulty of a Social test depending on the power differential between the parties, incentives offered, and the type and manner of the request.

Circumstance	Difficulty Modifier
Target is of higher rank, status, or power	+1 or higher
Target is of lower rank, status, or power	-1 or lower
Character offers valuable trade or favor payable in advance	-2
Character offers some significant motivation (such as a boon for vampires)	-1 or -2
Target's personal or political agenda, agrees with request (for example, Convictions for vampires)	-1 or -2
Request is easy, safe, or profitable	-1
Request is complex or risky	+2
Request is unknown, dangerous, or costly	+3 or more
Skill or specialty well chosen for the target (e.g. Subterfuge (Seduction) for someone on the make)	-1 or -2
Skill or specialty poorly chosen for the target (e.g., Intimidation for a berserk werewolf)	+1 or +2

Artistic Performance

WHEN A CHARACTER performs live before an audience, roll Charisma + Performance: The more successes, the greater the quality. Just as with artistic creation, above, always indicate the purpose behind the roll. On a total failure, the performance was a total disaster (and the performer may have new enemies they didn't have when the performance began...).

Carousing

WITH A SIMPLE test of Charisma + Insight, you influence others to relax and have fun. Carousing encompasses showing a potential ally a good time, loosening an informant's tongue, and making instant drinking buddies who come to your aid when a brawl starts.

Carousing can represent any number of situations, from vampires Vampires seeking vessels at the nightclub to an evening of Hunters schmoozing an org informer on operations they have lined up to some weird mage bacchanal prior to a powerful ritual.

In certain circumstances, individuals who can't or don't drink (such as vampires) *may* lose one or two dice from this roll (or have to make a sleight-of-hand test (see above) to fake it), depending on how important sharing a beer or the equivalent is to the subject. This isn't a value judgment on the player's part; it simply represents some cultures' and subcultures' expected social activities and the consequences of not observing them.

Credibility

FLASHING A PHONY ID and brushing past the rope line, perpetrating a scam or con, presenting false credentials or fake ID, passing counterfeit artifacts, impersonating the authorities: Tests of credibility take many forms. The scammer's player uses Manipulation + Subterfuge while the mark's player rolls Wits + Insight.

A roll might not even be necessary if failure isn't important, or a low static Difficulty can represent the mark being ultimately disinterested, like a security guard who cares more about watching the clock than controlling access to the business suites.

Superior fake documents and other forgeries add dice (an additional one or two) to the scammer's pool; clever hacks might do the same thing if the scam requires online backup.

Storytellers and players interested in running a long con can set a suitably impressive Difficulty and play out an extended test.

Fast-Talk

A **FAST-TALKER TRIES** to obtain agreement from a target by deploying a barrage of half-truths and engaging nonsense. Fast-talk pools use Charisma + Subterfuge vs. the target's Composure + Insight.

Interrogation

ANYONE CAN SIMPLY ask questions. With interrogation, the character asks questions and *has leverage*. Interrogating someone peacefully (Manipulation + Insight) involves asking strategic questions designed to reveal specific facts. Use a basic contest between the interrogator's pool and the victim's Wits + Composure.

Violent interrogation (Manipulation + Intimidation) involves torturing the victim's mind and/or body until they reveal what they know. The victim resists with Composure + Resolve. Regardless of the outcome of the contest or conflict round, torture damages the subject; they take one point of Aggravated damage for each point of *their own* Resolve. Physical torture damages Health; mental torture damages Willpower.

On a total failure by an interrogator using torture, the subject dies, enters torpor, or goes mad.

Two or more interrogators can use teamwork (see the various core rulebooks); this partnership works even if one interrogator uses Insight while another uses Intimidation (the classic "good cop/bad cop" ploy).

The extent and relevance of shared information are up to the Storyteller. Especially after torture, a subject often skews the details or invents extra facts based on what they think the interrogator wants to hear.

In **Vampire** chronicles, torture is often a fast-track to earning Stains; in *any* chronicle, it's morally bankrupt behavior, just like in real life.

Intimidation

INTIMIDATION HAS TWO effects. Intimidation's passive effect doesn't involve a test — it ambiently gives a character plenty of space, whether on a bus or in a bar. The higher their Intimidation rating, the wider the berth others give them.

Intimidation works actively through subtle coercion or outright threat. Subtle coercion (Manipulation + Intimidation) uses a perceived threat: losing one's job, being arrested, pain and agony a few minutes or days later. This action is usually a quick contest against the target's Composure + Resolve. The loser backs down.

Blatant threats (Strength + Intimidation) begin there and can escalate to minor physical damage (biting off fingers, that sort of thing). This action is a contest against the target's Composure + Resolve or Strength + Intimidation (whichever is higher). The loser backs down; regardless of who loses, the character with the lower Strength takes the margin on the intimidation contest as Superficial damage to Health.

Oration

FROM A GENERAL'S rousing speeches to a politician's slick double-talk, the capacity to sway the masses creates and destroys empires. When a character speaks to an audience, from a small board meeting to a large crowd, roll Charisma + Performance.

If the character has time to prepare the oration beforehand, the player may roll Intelligence + Insight to tailor the speech to the crowd (assuming they know relevant information about that crowd). Success on this test reduces the subsequent oration Difficulty by 1; a critical reduces it by 2. Failure has no effect, while a total failure increases the oration Difficulty by 1 as the character inserts a gaffe into the speech.

Seduction

THE PARTICULAR SITUATION and style of a seduction determine the pool used. Negotiating a prime dance at a formal cotillion involves Composure + Etiquette. Picking someone up in a bar might start with Charisma + Insight, while picking them up at the gym may depend on Manipulation + Athletics. A coffee shop meet-cute could be Wits + Subterfuge.

Whatever the situation, the Looks Merit (see each game's Merits section) almost always adds dice to the pool.

Seduction may fit into certain types of supernatural character concepts as part of its theming. Many vampires, for example, are master seducers, as their very sustenance often depends on coaxing potential prey into a physical liaison. Many supernatural creatures also have the ability to augment social Traits with Disciplines, Gifts, or other effects, such as Presence for vampires.

Like any other test or contest in the game, the Storyteller can abstract a seduction into a simple test of Charisma + Subterfuge or turn it into an ongoing epic subplot throughout the chronicle. Attraction and seduction provides plenty of dramatic possibilities.

Note that seduction implies some amount of sexuality and desire for intimacy of some kind with others. Some players may be uncomfortable with certain expressions of seduction or descriptions of amorous contact. Be sure to establish boundaries and maintain standards of respectful play. Each of the World of Darkness core rulebooks has appendices devoted to this kind of respectful play and more.



Combat and Conflict Options

THE WORLD OF DARKNESS games generally place an emphasis on narrative over tactical detail, but some troupes prefer more granular combat and conflict systems. The following options can add more decision-making and fine control in combat, as well as model different types of conflict using narrative prompts.

Additional Conflict Options

ALL CONFLICT ACTIONS need not be straight attacks on the opposition. In fact, most engagements involve a goal that doesn't solely rely on eliminating all enemies, and there's no reason why players should be forced to confront their opponents head-on when they can achieve their ends with other means. Consider the following action variants when engaged in a conflict.

ADVANCE

Working directly toward the goal(s) of the conflict. This could be cozying up to an elder vampire when vying for a seat on the council, destroying evidence before the IAO goons arrest the cell, gathering influence in a housing project, hacking a security system before being discovered, Kindred feeding from students, etc. Depending on the conflict, a prior Maneuver (see below) might be required to advance effectively.

Advances are usually run as an extended test (see the dice systems in the appropriate core rulebook) with the player rolling to accumulate as many wins/successes as possible.

Note that Advance isn't applicable to all conflicts, the prime example being combat, where there are no goals except hurting the opposition and/ or getting the hell out of there.

MANEUVER

This option involves attaining an advantaged position, either in order to be able to take other actions at all, or to claim an advantage, such as flanking a foe, making sure one is alone with the object of their de-

sire, gaining access to important people, finding cover from oncoming shots, etc.

Depending on the situation, a successful maneuver should result in one of these benefits:

- A dice bonus to the next action. A 1-3 dice pool bonus is usually enough, perhaps depending on critical successes or on the margin achieved.

Example: *a feint in melee, studying an opponent's weakness before delivering the perfect insult, or finding just the right tools for a Hunt*

- Gaining a superior position. Whether by misdirection, speed, or stealth, this allows the attacker to strike or otherwise act upon the opponent unopposed (see Surprise, above), though gaining the advantage might be very difficult or require accumulating enough successes on an extended test.

Example: *flanking someone's cover in a firefight, disengaging to return with a surprise attack, or working your way into someone's grace as a setup for betrayal*

- In some cases a maneuver is required to make an attack or advance toward the goal in the first place. Only after a successful maneuver can the character attack the intended target or advance toward the goal.

Example: *finding the cell's Quarry during a city-wide conflict, arranging to be alone with a potential vessel in a conflict of seduction and intrigue, putting one's finances together to take over a company*

Block

Actively opposing another character's actions. This could be by positioning one's character in front of an attacker, throwing distractions in the path of someone working to gather support, laying down suppressive fire, etc. When blocking, the player sets the result of the block roll as opposition to the action you're blocking. This might be used directly in a contest (see the dice systems section of the appropriate core rulebook) or might establish a Difficulty for someone else's attempt at an action, at the Storyteller's discretion.

Sometimes it is also possible to block someone's block. If this is the goal, test at the furthest link in the chain of blocks first, and if successful, the later block does not take place.

All-Out Attack

Sometimes a combatant wants to go apeshit, discarding safety in exchange for greater effect. In this case, the attacker receives a +1 damage bonus, but cannot defend against any attacks. If using a ranged weapon, this tactic also empties the weapon. This option may not be used with surprise. If the attack fails, anyone acting against the combatant gains one additional die to their pools the next turn.

All-Out Defense

The opposite of going apeshit, of course. A character concentrating solely on their protection and nothing else (except, perhaps, a minor action — see below) gains a bonus die to all defense rolls for the turn. If the character has access to solid cover and can hide completely behind it, this advantage can make them impervious to ranged attacks, provided they aren't flanked (see Maneuvers, above).

Grappling

A combatant can attempt to grapple, hold, tackle, or otherwise restrain a foe by rolling Strength + Brawl. If they get more successes than their opponent, they do no damage, but instead restrain the target, preventing them from moving and engaging other opponents, though the target can still act against the grappler as normal. In the next round, the grappler may engage their foe in a contest of Strength + Brawl. If the grappler wins, they can choose from the following options:

- Damage the foe based on their margin of successes, as a normal attack;
- Bite the foe (if appropriate to their supernatural creature type) for an appropriate amount (ex. Vampires inflict two Aggravated damage per Bite Attacks on p. 213 of **Vampire: The Masquerade**); or
- Hold them in place.

If the grappled combatant wins, they escape and can move freely the next round.

Bite attacks against a grappled foe suffer no bite penalty to the attack roll.

COVER

Defending against ranged attacks is usually done with Dexterity + Athletics, representing the ability to keep moving and making oneself a hard target using any and all available cover.

Cover	Dice Modifier
No cover	-2
Concealment only (bushes, a small tree vs rifle-caliber bullets)	-1
Hard Cover (a car engine block, the corner of a concrete building)	+/- 0
Entrenchment (sandbags, military bunker)	+1
Murder Hole (IFV firing slit)	+2

A stationary target lacks a defense pool, instead defending with a static Difficulty of 1.

RANGED WEAPONS IN CLOSE COMBAT

If engaged in hand-to-hand combat, the wielder of a firearm uses Strength + Firearms against the opponent's Brawl or Melee pool. The opponent doesn't receive a penalty for lacking cover. Instead, the firearm user suffers a -2 dice penalty if targeting someone outside the scuffle as well as a -2 penalty for firearms larger than a pistol.

RELOADING AND TRACKING AMMUNITION

Combat systems in World of darkness games generally don't bother with ammunition expenditure for small arms, but an attack test often represents more than a single shot, so it can be wise to require reloading after a single attack with revolvers and other small-capacity firearms, after two attacks with most automatic pistols and rifles, and after three attacks from 30+ cartridge magazines.

Reloading is a two-dice minor action (see below) for most weapons (assuming a revolver has a speed loader).

CALLED SHOTS

Combat generally assumes the combatants are trying to be as effective as possible. For more granularity, though, some troupes prefer combat that allows them to target specific hit locations.

A combatant may seek to direct their attacks at a specific part of their target in order to produce a result other than maximal physical trauma: shooting out the

tires of a car, swatting a goblet out of the hand of the elder, or putting a bullet in the leg of a fleeing informant. Called shots are also used when attempting decapitation or when trying to put a stake in the heart of a vampire (see the relevant core rulebook).

To do so, the attacker declares their action and target before rolling the dice for their attack.

After the attacker tests, they *subtract successes*; hitting a specific location is not just harder, it also makes achieving a safe center-of-mass hit less likely. Usually, the modifier is -2 successes, though the Storyteller can modify this number up or down depending on the nature of the target. Hitting the tires of a car might incur a -1 penalty, while piercing the fuel line of a plane taking off is done at -4.

The exact effect of a called shot is up to the Storyteller, but it should not simply be more damage, as that is the assumed purpose of a normal attack. Instead, called shots are more likely to aim for less damage, going for a non-lethal incapacitation at the expense of effectiveness: inability to run and flee, flat tires, pierced fuel lines, etc.

CRIPPLING INJURIES

The Crippling Injury table allows for additional effects from extreme Health damage. After taking damage while Impaired, roll a d10 on the Crippling Injury table, adding the number of Aggravated damage currently on the track to the roll. This result can lead to further dice pool penalties (or even instant death), tracked independently from the abstract damage on the Health tracker.

Aggravated Damage + Roll	Crippling Injury
1-6	Stunned: Spend 1 point of Willpower or lose a turn.
7-8	Severe head trauma: Make Physical rolls at -1; Mental rolls at -2
9-10	Broken limb or joint: Make rolls at -3 when using the affected limb, or Blinded: Make vision-related rolls (including combat) at -3 Storyteller decides which makes most sense for this combat
11	Massive wound: Make all rolls at -2, add +1 to all additional damage suffered
12	Crippled: Same effects as Broken, but limb is lost or mangled beyond use
13+	Death (mortal) or appropriate incapacitation (torpor for a vampire, etc.)

Minor Actions

SOME ACTIONS MIGHT not warrant a full exchange, but are still too consequential to justify being done for free. These shouldn't be actions that require a roll or that might otherwise be opposed in some way. Minor actions subtract dice from your character's main action, and the Storyteller might put a cap on how many are possible in one exchange. Readyng a weapon, handling equipment, moving more than a few steps, running an errand, and typing in a password might all be examples of minor actions, depending on the scale of the conflict.

A character who wants to perform only minor actions in a turn may do so, with the Storyteller setting a cap on how many are possible in a turn.

Movement in Conflicts

MOVEMENT IN WORLD of Darkness stories is often abstracted, but it can nevertheless be a significant part of dramatic conflict. Perhaps a frenzied werewolf is trying to close with a ranged attacker, a skulking vampire attempts to flank an unknowing victim, or the conflict is very mobile, taking place all over the entire city.

Generally, handle movement beyond the immediate as Minor Actions (see above), but if the movement is significantly opposed, it can also be handled as a Maneuver (see further above).

If necessary, the Storyteller can usually provide a simple map of the conflict. In some conflicts, the troupe's Relationship Map might even become an excellent conflict map!

One-Roll Conflicts

A CONFLICT NEED not necessarily be resolved as a "zoomed in" series of exchanges as in the basic rules. It can also be resolved in a more "zoomed out" manner, especially if it holds less potential for drama or involves fewer players. (Or incidentally, if it involves too many actors to turn into a meaningful conflict!) One-roll conflicts can resolve any sort of conflict, from a relentless brawl to a night of trading bon mots and compliments at the Succubus Club.

Simply set a difficulty for the opposition based on its power. Each player participating in the conflict

then makes one roll of a conflict dice pool, without Willpower re-rolls or Traits specific to their supernatural creature type, at the set Difficulty. (The opposition doesn't roll.) The more players' characters who win, the better the results. If the majority of the players' characters win, the opposition might for example break, fall down wounded, storm off in a fit of pique, surrender, or whatever else makes dramatic sense.

SAMPLE DIFFICULTIES

- The opposition is significantly weaker or the goal is simple to achieve: Difficulty 2
- Both parties are equally matched or the goal is a significant challenge: Difficulty 4
- The opposition is much stronger or the goal is extremely hard to reach: Difficulty 6

Adjust the Difficulty by 1 to the side with the advantage in supernatural might (Disciplines, Fights, etc.).

Adjust the Difficulty by 1 to the side that has the advantage of position, preparation, or surprise.

Each character then takes (Health or Willpower as appropriate) damage equal to the difference between their successes and *twice* the Difficulty. This damage can not be mitigated by armor or supernatural means. The nature of the damage depends on the opposition and the weapons they are using — well-armed Coalition agents often cause Aggravated damage, for example. Do not halve Superficial damage in this case.

Optional: Where morality systems permit, instead of applying levels of damage, allow a player to mitigate the damage with Trait loss or accumulation (such as Stains for vampires). This represents having accomplished their goals with acts of greater callousness.

