

Story of Adventure: A Tabletop Role-Playing Game

J.H. Freedman

August 27, 2020

Contents

I	What is Story of Adventure?	5
1	Introduction to <i>Story of Adventure</i>	7
2	What is a Role Playing Game?	9
2.1	What is a Game Master (GM)?	9
2.2	What is a Player?	9
2.3	Sessions, Campaigns, and One-Off Adventures	9
2.3.1	Session	9
2.3.2	Campaign	9
2.3.3	One-Off	9
3	What makes Story of Adventure Different?	11
3.1	What is an Open Ended RPG?	11
3.1.1	Warning to the GM	11
II	Basic Mechanics	13
4	Challenges	15
4.1	Success, Pass, & Fail	15
4.1.1	Degree of Success and Failure	15
4.1.2	In Case of a Tie	16
4.2	Character vs Obstacle	16
4.2.1	Determined Threshold	16
4.3	Character vs Character	16
4.3.1	Damage	16
4.4	Cool tokens	17
5	Health and Energy	19
5.1	Health	19
5.1.1	Maximum Health	19
5.1.2	Permanent Wounds	19
5.1.3	Death	19
5.2	Energy	19

5.2.1	Maximum Energy	19
5.2.2	Technique Resource	20
5.2.3	Damage Diversion	20
5.2.4	Exersion	20
5.2.5	Passing Out	20
6	Encounters	21
III	Character Creation	23
7	Attributes	25
7.1	Buying Attributes	25
7.2	BURST	25
7.3	Attribute Meanings	25
7.3.1	Knowledge [KNO]	26
7.3.2	Power [POW]	26
7.3.3	Endurance [END]	26
7.3.4	Speed [SPD]	26
7.3.5	Foresight [ESP]	27
8	Abilities: Skills and Techniques	29
8.1	Skills	29
8.2	Techniques	29
8.3	AWESOME/AWFUL	30
9	Character Development	31
9.1	Advancement	31
9.1.1	Attribute Advancement	31
9.1.2	Ability Advancement	31
9.2	Injuries & Enhancements	31
9.3	Possessions	31
9.4	Persons, Places, & Things of Interest	31

Part I

What is Story of Adventure?

Chapter 1

Introduction to *Story of Adventure*

Chapter 2

What is a Role Playing Game?

2.1 What is a Game Master (GM)?

2.2 What is a Player?

2.3 Sessions, Campaigns, and One-Off Adventures

2.3.1 Session

2.3.2 Campaign

2.3.3 One-Off

Chapter 3

What makes Story of Adventure Different?

3.1 What is an Open Ended RPG?

3.1.1 Warning to the GM

Part II

Basic Mechanics

Chapter 4

Challenges

Passing challenges are the core to every game, let alone role playing games.

In SoA, you will almost always want acquire numbers as high as possible to pass these challenges. You will have plenty tools to help you in this goal: dice rolls, attribute effects & modifiers, and skills/techniques.

4.1 Success, Pass, & Fail

An important semantic to define is *Succeed* vs *Pass*:

- Success
 - The total meets one instance of the requirements of the Challenge.
- Pass
 - The Challenge itself is completed and the result is positive.
- Fail
 - The total does *not* meet the requirements of the challenge and the result is neutral or negative.

“The total” refers to the final number tested against the Challenge. This comes after possible rolls, modifiers, and other variables.

Neutral results occur when you try to do something and fail. Not every fail needs to result in disaster.

Most of the Challenges you will encounter require only one success to pass. However some challenges will require multiple successes or will result in a binary succeed/fail instead of counting the degree.

4.1.1 Degree of Success and Failure

In all cases that do not result in a tie (i.e. most of them) you will succeed or fail by an amount referred to as its “degree.”

$$highTotal - lowTotal = degree$$

Degrees can be used intuitively to interpret specific results from a binary pass/fail state.

Degrees can also be used as a variable to be used in further calculations (i.e. damage¹).

4.1.2 In Case of a Tie

The win of a tie *always* belongs to the character conducting the action².

4.2 Character vs Obstacle

These are the most common kinds in TTRPGs. They are non-combat related and can range from climbing a fence to painting a fence to breaking a fence.

These are *Obstacle Challenges* and are tied to your Attributes.³ These typically involve you rolling over a determined threshold decided by the GM. They may be treated as either a pass/fail binary or be treated with degrees of success or failure.

4.2.1 Determined Threshold

When the GM requests that you complete an Obstacle Challenge, they usually have a number in mind that must be met or surpassed. This is the *Determined Threshold*. The higher the number, the more difficult the challenge is. Other variations can include a Determined Threshold of Successes in which you must succeed a number of times to pass.

The GM may or may not tell you what exactly this threshold is. Sharing this information may create tangible tension but hiding it should be flat out scary.

4.3 Character vs Character

4.3.1 Damage

Damage is calculated by the degree⁴ of success/failure of the given challenge. The damage will then be distributed to health and/or energy. There are some contexts in which damage will go directly to health, but I recommend those to be few and far between.

¹Damage, x.x.x

²Actions, x.x.x

³Attributes, x.x.x

⁴degrees, x.x.x

4.4 Cool tokens

Cool tokens are a special mechanic to encourage sub-optimal play for the sake of guaranteeing successes later. This is to create creative play that puts the player at an explicit disadvantage. It is given by the GM when he feels like it will make the story better.

It may build character; it may be narratively interesting; it may be a character flaw; it may be a failed roll during high tension; etc.

Although “cool” is subjective, this does *not* excuse stupidity. *Never* assume the GM will give you cool tokens. Roleplay appropriately and see what happens.

Spending a cool token must be done and announced *before* you roll for your challenge. This is so the GM can hand you a *second* d100. For the result of your challenge; you may choose to use either of the dice or both.

It is recommended for the maximum Cool token cap to be 1 per player, but this suggested may be bent at the GM’s discretion

Usually you will chose to use both, but there are contexts in which you will prefer only one number (i.e. ESP)

Chapter 5

Health and Energy

5.1 Health

Health represents tangible, lasting damage to a character's body. Although most damage can get absorbed by energy, the GM may utilize Direct Damage.

5.1.1 Maximum Health

Maximum health is equal to the total spent Attribute Points¹

5.1.2 Permanent Wounds

5.1.3 Death

Once a character's health reaches or drops below 0, the character is dead. The good news is that death doesn't have to be permanent! This may be an opportunity for your friends to go on an adventure to revive you while you train in the afterlife and learn a new technique.

However, if the player desires, they may instead create a new character to be recruited by the adventuring party. Just know that it is a *choice* and not a necessity.

5.2 Energy

5.2.1 Maximum Energy

is equal to double your maximum health.

¹attributes points, x.x.x

Optional advanced rules
complicate max energy
calculations

5.2.2 Technique Resource

To use a Technique², an energy cost must be paid. The base conse is 10. With each advancement³, the cose increases by 5.

5.2.3 Damage Diversion

Except for Direct Damage, all other damage may be absorbed by energy instead of health. The damage may be split at the defender's disgression.

5.2.4 Exersion

When a character's energy drops to 0, the character is exerting themself. All instances that would normally go to energy instead go to health. You may choose to pass out at any time when exerting yourself. If there are no challenges you are currently participating in; or if there are

5.2.5 Passing Out

When you pass out, you may not act in any way until rested or healed. It is univerally frowned upon to attack a passed out opponent and only the most evil character would spitefully do such an act.

²techniques, x.x.x

³Advancement, x.x.x

Chapter 6

Encounters

The structure of how events take place are usually unimportant but are still expected to occur frequently. Hierarchy occurs as follows:

1. Encounter

- This encapsulates predetermined or indefinite rounds
- An encounter ends when
 - (predetermined) the round countdown reaches 0
 - (indefinite) only one team is able to take Turns

2. Rounds

- These encapsulate *every* character's Turn
- After every character has had their turn, a new Round begins

3. Turns

- These encapsulate *the selected* character's Actions
- Each character takes one Turn per Round

4. Actions

- These are when characters actually do things
- Each character gets two Actions per Turn
 - A Standard Action cannot be repeated multiple times per Turn
 - A Double-Action both Actions in one Turn

Part III

Character Creation

Chapter 7

Attributes

7.1 Buying Attributes

You have 50 attribute points (ap) to spend between your five stats. It is acceptable and expected to have stats of 0. No need to worry- that just means you are average in those areas. You will still make the necessary rolls; you just won't get bonuses

Because you start with 50ap, your starting Health is 50 and your starting Energy is 100¹ so be careful!

7.2 BURST

Once an attribute hits 100, it immediately BURSTs. This does a few things:

- Gain a permanent upgrade based on the affected attribute
- Gain a technique tied to the Attribute²
- Reduce the attribute to 10

These upgrades are different based on which attribute has BURST.

Despite the Attribute reduction, I recommend BURSTing whenever possible. However, I also recommend having backup Attributes to compensate for the initial shock.

7.3 Attribute Meanings

Notation

- d100 refers to two ten-sided dice rolled to create a number with a range of 100.

A hundred-sided die can be used but I recommend against it.

Alternatively, this roll can be done digitally to choose a random number within range of 100.

¹health and energy calculations, x.x.x

²Attributes, x.x.x

- XXX refers to the attribute “XXX” and everything that entails.
- [XXX] refers to the variable “XXX” itself.

7.3.1 Knowledge [KNO]

$d100 + [KNO]$

Roll a d100 and add [KNO] to the amount.

Any time you would ask, “Does my character know/notice...” you may roll a KNO.

In addition, [KNO] is added to your Skill checks.³

Upon a BURST, dump 100 points into your existing Skills however you please.⁴

7.3.2 Power [POW]

$2(d100 + [POW])$

Roll a 2d100 and add [POW] to each result

A POW may be utilized for most Double-Actions

Upon a BURST, permanently increase the POW multiplier by 1 (e.g. 2 → 3).

7.3.3 Endurance [END]

$(d100 \pm [END]) * 1 \text{ turn until pass/fail}$

If the endurance is being *stored* for the next turn(s), roll a d100 and add [END]. The desired effect occurs *when* the determined threshold is reached.

If the endurance is being *spent* from the previous turn(s), roll a d100 and subtract [END]. The desired effect occurs *until* the determined threshold is reached.

Any time your action would take multiple turns, you may run an END. Depending on context, an END may either be a basic action or a double-action.

Upon a BURST, permanently increase the *turn* multiplier by 1. This means you roll an additional action for *storing* and skip an additional action for *spending*.

Storing your endurance produces positive effects in later turns. You want to boost this number as high as you can as quickly as you can.

Spending your endurance prevents undesirable effects from happening. You want to keep the spent number low for as long as possible.

A Stack is a list of numbers to add together

7.3.4 Speed [SPD]

$total (d100 + [SPD]) \text{ until fail}$

Roll a d100 and add [SPD]. If you succeed, create a Stack and add the total. Roll again with +10 to the threshold. If you succeed again, add the total to the stack. Repeat the process until you reach the determined maximum successes (if applicable) or when you fail.

³Skill checks, x.x.x

⁴skill points, x.x.x

Any time your action encompasses multiple smaller actions, you may roll a SPD.

Upon a BURST, preminantly gain an addtional free reroll upon SPD failures.

7.3.5 Foresight [ESP]

guess within $\pm[ESP]$ against the opposing roll

Before an opposing roll, you may conduct ESP. If the roll is within the range of your predicted [ESP], you succeed.

Any time your character attempts to predict or react to external stimuli, roll ESP.

Upon a BURST, pick an additional number to guess.

Chapter 8

Abilities: Skills and Techniques

Abilities (i.e. Skills and Techniques) modify an attribute in some way. This an ability may refer to either a skill or technique works by replacing $[XXX]$ with $([XXX] + [skill/technique])$ in XXXs' formula. The easiest way to understand this is by looking at Skills...

8.1 Skills

Skills represent specific instances of getting a bonus to your KNO challenges. It affects the formula thusly:

$$d100 + ([KNO] + [Skill])$$

So if you have a [KNO] of 20 and a Knitting skill of 37; then a Knitting challenge, you will add your d100 roll to 57 to calculate the result.

Skills are used to perform a variety of quick tasks and can flesh out your character's past, present, and future. Before using Techniques, make sure you understand Skills first.

8.2 Techniques

Techniques represent specific uses of attribute based challenges. These are typically used in character vs character challenges but may be used in normal challenges as well.

Similarly to *Skills*, the calculations proceed normally but with $([technique] + [attribute])$ in the place of $[attribute]$.

8.3 AWESOME/AWFUL

To make your campaign¹ more interesting, I recommend utilizing AWESOME/AWFUL (A/A) abilities. This creates an additional ability with the value of +50 *and* an additional ability with the value of -50.

This may seem like a free bonus, but I recommend the player and/or the GM put the character in AWFUL situations to make the game interesting. When an AWFUL ability is rolled, store 1 Cool token.²

There may be situations in which your Skill or technique is a negative number. This acts the same as when it is a positive number but you subtract instead of add. You are, after all, adding a negative number

¹campaigns, x.x.x

²Cool, x.x.x

Chapter 9

Character Development

9.1 Advancement

At the end of a session, the GM may give players the opportunity to advance one attribute and/or ability

9.1.1 Attribute Advancement

When given the opportunity, you pick an attribute you used during this session. To advance it, roll a d10. The results are the amount of AP the attribute is increased by. A d10 is a ten sided die

9.1.2 Ability Advancement

When given the opportunity, you may choose to either advance an existing ability or add a new one.

9.2 Injuries & Enhancements

You will experience physical, mental, and spiritual changes on your journey. I recommend keeping track of these over the campaign

9.3 Possessions

You will acquire a lot of artifacts, equipment, and trinkets over your journey. (author's note: right now it's all one area. I'm considering segmenting based on playtesting)

9.4 Persons, Places, & Things of Interest

Index

Abilities, 29
Action, 21
 Double-Action, 21
 Standard, 21
Attribute
 END, 26
 ESP, 27
 KNO, 26
 POW, 26
 SPD, 26
AWESOME, 30
AWFUL, 30

BURST, 25

Campaign, 9
Challenges, 15
 Fail, 15
 Obstacle Challenge, 16
 Pass, 15
 Success, 15
 Tie, 16
Cool tokens, 17

d100, 25
Damage, 16
Death, 19
Degree, 15
Determined Threshold, 16
 of Successes, 16
Direct Damage, 19
Diversion, 20

Encounter, 21
Energy, 19

Game Master, 9

Health, 19

One-Off, 9

Passing Out, 20
Perminant Wounds, 19
Player, 9

Round, 21

Session, 9
Skills, 29

Techniques, 29
Turn, 21