

# KISSing Dice

KISS is a double-acronym that *simultaneously* stands for '**Kismet, Insight, Stunts, and Specialties**' as well as '**Keep It Short and Sweet**'.

When you roll dice for a Task, you may KISS any die that disappoints you<sup>1</sup>. This means that you must advocate for it, using any of the options described below, and if your Peers agree, then you may pick up that die, and get ready to re-roll it.

Once you've exhausted all the options or simply decide you've got enough KISSes, roll all the dice you picked up and count any new successes struck.

## Kismet

'Kismet', in this instance, mainly refers to spending Lots and Ego rather than to using any of the other rules of Kismet. However, for extraordinary rolls, Fidelity and/or Health can also be used here while KISSing for separate effects too:

- Spending a Lot lets you **re-roll a die**, counting as a KISS, with no questions asked.
- Spending Ego doubles the successes counted from any **natural 6s** shown in the initial roll. (6s from KISSes or exploded dice don't count).
- Spending a full gauge of Fidelity **permanently advances your ability's rank by one step**, and that lets you immediately count any extra successes that the new rank unveils. (Including from KISSed and exploded dice).
- Changing a creed and **recovering a die of Health**, lets you immediately roll it and count an extra success if it strikes true. (Even if the difficulty factors *did not* reduce you down to just your Health dice).

**Important:** The latter two uses should only<sup>2</sup> be used when you feel that it's the right time or that it would be dramatically appropriate.

## #examples

## Insight

'Insight' means using special knowledge, secrets, backstories or character circumstances, and/or established facts to your advantage. This is usually done by referencing other things that have already happened in game, rather than coming from something you can point to on your own character sheet. For example:

- Things that you've discovered through play, or things you're just now putting together in the moment.
- Drawing on wisdom that your character should already know, given their history or personality.
- Using information from a previously established fact, or by producing evidence that supports your claims.

Thus, the best way to use insights as valid KISSes is to take lots of good notes during play. Which you should already be doing as a good Peer.

## #examples

### Stunts

Performing 'stunts' means **describing your actions with extra flair, or acting in character with substance and ardor**. When describing or roleplaying out a stunt, you may add to the drama of the scene or raise the stakes, but the trick is to always try to frame what you've said in a way that still leaves the window open for you to fail.

If you're receiving **help**, **an aiding ally may stunt in your place** if you can't think of anything to say or do yourself.

*When you KISS a die with a stunt, the re-roll won't decide if what you've described or said really happens, but rather how the world will react to what you've just done.*

Therefore, *stunts don't need Peer approval* in the way that Insights or Specialties do. This makes them quite potent, and so to limit their effectiveness, **you can only KISS a single die per task with a Stunt**.

Only the FC may veto<sup>3</sup> a stunt before it is rolled, if what you said is *too far-fetched* or simply doesn't make sense.

## #examples

### Specialties

- **Specialties** — Pointing to attributes that would help you:
- Up to four appropriate attributes — most commonly assets, disciplines, and natural merits — can each KISS a die.
- But each needs approval by your Peers.
- Each die can only be KISSed once per task, and you should try to do all your KISSing in one go.
- Once you have chosen which dice to KISS, pick them up and reroll them.
- Count any new successes using the same criteria as before; based on the ability caliber of your own and any ally's dice.
- Then spend those successes as described above (in step 5).

### Keep It Short and Sweet

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### KISSing Limits

- **There can only be one round of KISSing per roll.** Choose all the dice that disappointed you<sup>1</sup> and KISS to re-roll them all at once. If they *still* disappoint you then *you must accept your destiny*.
- **Each valid KISS lets you re-roll one die.** This should be clear from the rules as written above, but re-stating it explicitly may be useful to some players.

The implied consequences of these two facts is that the most dice you can potentially KISS per roll is equal to the amount of dice you have for that roll.

Finally, note that *you can only KISS Tasks, not Checks*.

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## Use of language

We sometimes use the word 'KISS' as a *noun*, referring to one's advocacy for a re-roll, and sometimes as a *verb*, meaning the action of the re-rolling itself, and even sometimes as a *transitive verb*, in reference to a die that will be or has been re-rolled.

'KISS', 'KISSed', 'KISSES', 'KISSing', and 'KISSable' are all words that you end up seeing, saying, and hearing a lot while playing this game. If you feel this language is ruining your game's **tone**, then just call them 're-rolls' instead.

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## Only KISS if you *want* to

Aside from making the fun acronym work, the use of the word 'kismet' at the start of KISSing should also prompt you to **think about your character's *personal destiny***, and to ask yourself, *'What story does this roll tell me about their path forwards? If I were to succeed or fail at this exact moment, if it all hangs on the outcome of one die, which way appeals most to me?'*

With those thoughts in mind, you may decide *not to KISS* after all and to simply accept your fate if that makes for a more appealing story. *But this decision is yours and yours alone*. Failure still has **consequences**, even if you chose that failure for yourself.

## Only KISS if you *need* to

Aside from the great narrative effects of KISSing dice, a useful side-effect is that these rules generally speeds up gameplay when KISSES wouldn't be necessary. There is a natural tendency to want to draw on every advantage or to 'fire on all cylinders' all the time while playing games, but since KISSES happen *after* the main roll has been *rolled*, your **target number of successes** and the **consequences of failure** have already been established.

Therefore, **the main roll represents your raw talent or instinctual skill**, and the KISSES represent the *special things that you only bring out if you need to*. Getting extra successes above your target doesn't mean much unless you pre-established it, so if the main roll was a clean success without the need for KISSES then you can almost think of that as *succeeding without breaking a sweat*, and can even describe it as such if you like.

## Clean Rolls (optional rule)

Taking that thought one step further: Some groups may even enjoy treating those 'clean rolls' as *exceptional successes* that have bonus effects, but this will affect the **tone** of your game, so be sure to always discuss it in **session zero**.

## KISSing Strategies

You can think of the four modes of KISSing as benefiting four styles of play:

- 'Kismet' benefits those who engage strongly with their principles and traits,
- 'Insight' benefits those who take good notes or pay attention to the world building and the details,
- 'Stunts' benefits those who like to immerse themselves in the roleplaying or the action, and
- 'Specialties' benefits those who prefer to optimize their character builds.

Meaning there's something for everyone. Rarely will one's KISSes come exclusively from one mode or another though, every roll will ideally show a mix of all four methods.

That said, there is something of a strategy that will emerge if you enjoy using all four avenues:

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You should try to use Lots and Ego as a *last resort*, since [excess lots convert to experience points](#). So you should exhaust the other options if they're available to you first.

## How to take good notes?

*Note-taking is a skill.* Like all skills, it requires practice and upkeep.

*Why do we take notes, you ask?*

It's not to remember things, I can tell you that.

No, **the point of note-taking is to think better**. Capturing notes is a *means to thinking*; retention is merely a side effect.

— Al Khan, [LeanAnki.com](#) (paraphrased)

Our best recommendation for a taking hand-written notes *during session* is called the Outlining method:

- **Outlining** means using single sentence bullet points and *emphasis* to capture the most meaningful information.
  - Then using sub-bullets to capture new or relevant information.
    - And using sub-*sub*-bullets to capture after-thoughts.
    - And clarifications.
- A more *advanced technique* is called **Zettelkasten**:
  - Which involves keeping your notes on *labeled index cards*, or using an application like [Anki](#) or [Obsidian](#) (not sponsored).
    - And then tagging those cards to 'link' them to the tags of other cards.
  - But this can get messy if you try to do it during play though.
    - So try to leave the organization of your notes until after each session.
- Writing a campaign diary or video-logging can also help you to organize your thoughts, *and you'll be rewarded for doing so with Ego*.

You may now be noticing that *the whole of Agora* is written with some of these note-taking practices in mind.

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## Notes

1. The phrase 'dice that disappoint you' is meant to refer to any dice you rolled that did not get a success. But if you have magic or advanced technology that causes the dice to [explode](#), then even a 5 may 'disappoint you'. However, if you KISS any dice that had already struck a success and then they do not strike a success again, you must keep the worse result. *Such is fate*.
2. You can, of course, use your Fidelity to advance the rank of an ability, or change your mind to recover your Health *at any time*; but the rules here mean that the best time and place to do those things is while KISSing; that is, *when it really matters*.
3. Generally, the FC should just add to your description of a stunt to slightly re-align it with what would be more reasonable, rather than flatly denying it. This makes the process more collaborative, and

fun, and encourages players to try seeking thrills rather than seeking permission.