# Core Rules

## Things Needed for Gameplay

- Pencil and character sheet.
- (Optional) map/grid and character tokens (graph paper, mat, VTT).
- Dice: `d4`, `d6`, `d8`, `d12`, `d20`.
    - In practice, one of each is sufficient (you roll one die at a time).
    - (Optional) **d100** for random tables or generators.

- If you only have `d6`, use the **2d6** variant (at the end).

## Glossary of Terms

These words appear in the rules — here they are explained "in plain language":

- **GM (Game Master)**: leads the world, describes situations, controls opponents, sets Difficulty and consequences.
- **Player**: describes the actions of their character and makes rolls.
- **Test**: a dice roll that resolves an uncertain outcome.
- **Attributes**: **Strength (S)**, **Dexterity (D)**, **Might (M)**. They indicate *what die you roll*.
- **Attribute Die**: the size of the die assigned to an attribute (e.g., D = `d12`).
- **Difficulty (D)**: the number that must be met or exceeded for the action to succeed.
- **Success**: result ≥ Difficulty.
- **Exceptional Success**: **maximum result** on the die (e.g., 12 on `d12`, 20 on `d20`) — success + additional benefit.
- **Complication**: an additional problem after failure (noise, loss of time, worse position, loss of resource).
- **Success at a Cost**: the action succeeds, but you pay a price (compromise, loss of resource, exposure, risk).
- `Luck` **Point (LP)**: a limited resource that allows you to salvage scenes (reroll / boost die / turn failure into success at a cost).
- **Hearts**: the "life" of a character (stamina, wounds, condition — depending on the world).
- `Power` **Points (PP)**: a resource for powers and "above standard" plays (magic, psionics, gadgets, "cinematic" actions).
- **Defense**: the threshold for hitting an opponent in combat (instead of multiplying rules about armor, armor class, etc.).
- **Cover**: an obstacle between you and the target. Usually hinders ranged attacks or observational actions.

## 1. Character

Creating a character is quick. A character is: **concept + role + traits + resources + equipment**.

## 1.1 Concept

One sentence: who you are and what genre you are playing.

> *Example: "A former corporate agent, now a bounty hunter who operates in the shadows and trusts no one."*

## 1.2 Role (choose one)

Roles are deliberately "world-neutral". In fantasy, you might call them something else, in cyberpunk something different, but they function the same way.

- **Assault** — pressure, combat, overcoming obstacles, breaking through the front.
- **Specialist** — stealth, precision, technique, observation, planning.
- **Adept** — powers, influence, knowledge, improvisation (magic/psionics/technology depending on the world).

## 1.3 Attributes and Dice

You have three attributes:

- **Strength (`S`)** — physical `power`, endurance, melee combat, forcing.
- **Dexterity (D)** — reflexes, precision, sneaking, shooting, driving.
- **Might (`M`)** — "the special stuff": magic, psionics, advanced technology, social bluffing, intuition — depending on the convention.

**At the start, distribute the dice as follows:**

- one attribute has `d12`,
- one has `d8`,
- one has `d6`.

**Suggested distribution by role (the simplest):**

- **Assault:** `S` `d12`, D `d8`, `M` `d6`
- **Specialist:** D `d12`, `M` `d8`, `S` `d6`
- **Adept:** `M` `d12`, D `d8`, `S` `d6`

> *Example: if you have D = `d12`, then when shooting, sneaking, and dodging, you usually roll `d12`.*

## 1.4 Resources

- **Hearts:** 5.
- `Power` **Points (PP):** 3.
- `Luck` **Point (LP):** at the beginning of each session, you have **2 LP**.

`Luck` **Point (how it works):** spend **1 LP** to choose one:

- **Reroll** your test (keep the better result), or
- **Increase the die by 1 step** for that one roll (`d6` → `d8` → `d12` → `d20`), or
- **Turn a failure into a 'success at a cost'** — the action succeeds, but the GM immediately adds a price (e.g., noise, loss of time, loss of resource, worse position, attracting attention, damage to equipment).

**Recovering LP:** at the beginning of the next session, you return to the limit. The GM may grant **+1 LP** for bold risks, great narrative decisions, or playing consequences.

## 1.5 Talents (optional, but recommended)

Talents are **2 short phrases** that describe what your character is good at (no lists, no tables).

- Examples: "Mechanic", "Scout", "Negotiator", "Medic", "Hacker", "Veteran", "Explorer".

**How Talents work:** if a Talent genuinely helps in a test, the GM may **increase the die by 1 step** (or neutralize a penalty).

- A Talent does not grant automatic successes.
- Usually, **a maximum of 1 Talent** affects a single test.

## 1.6 Equipment

List:

- 1 "key" tool (weapon / kit / gear without which you cannot do your job),
- 1 protection (armor, shield, camouflage — depending on the world),
- 3 trinkets useful in the adventure.

Equipment in the core rules is mainly **permission** (enables actions), not a numerical bonus.

## 1.7 Example of a Complete Character

- Concept: "Information thief who steals data from systems, not from pockets."
- Role: Specialist
- Attributes: **S** `d6` , **Z** `d12` , **M** `d8`
- Resources: 5 Hearts, 3 MP, 2 AP
- Talents: "Hacker", "Shadow"
- Equipment: pistol, light armor, lockpicking kit, rope, flashlight

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## 2. Core Rules: Tests

This part is the most important — if you understand it, you understand the system.

### 2.1 When You Make a Test

You make a test when both conditions are met:

1. the outcome is uncertain (it may succeed or fail), and
2. the stakes are real (failure will change something / cost something).

If the action is trivial and without pressure — the GM may say "it succeeded" without a roll.

### 2.2 How to perform a test (step by step)

1. The player states **what they do** and **why**.
2. The GM chooses an attribute: **S** or **Z** or **M** .
3. The GM sets the **Difficulty (D)** and explains what failure means (the stakes).
4. The player rolls the **attribute die**.
5. Compare the result with D and determine the consequences.

### 2.3 Difficulties (T)

We use simple thresholds. If in doubt, choose the lower threshold, and let the "difficulty" show through the consequences.

- **T 3** – easy (almost certain, but sometimes worth checking under pressure)
- **T 4** – standard (typical challenge)
- **T 5** – hard (requires competence or an advantage)
- **T 6** – very hard (risky without an advantage)
- **T 8** – heroic (for the best or with good preparation)
- **T 12** – legendary (rarely "clean"; usually as a campaign goal, plan, ritual, or under great conditions)

### 2.4 Test Results

- **Result ≥ T → Success.** You achieve the intended effect.
- **Result < T → Failure.** You do not achieve the effect, and the situation changes (complication or cost).
- **Rolled 1 → Failure + complication.** A complication definitely occurs.
- **Maximum result on the die → Exceptional success.**

- In addition to success, you gain an **additional benefit** (faster, quieter, stronger, safer, additional effect).

> *Example of success with a cost: "You manage to force the door, but you make noise and someone comes to check."*

## 2.5 Advantages and Disadvantages (without counting)

Instead of adding +1/−1 to rolls, we change the **size of the dice**.

- **Better situation → upgrade the die by 1 step**
  `k6` → `k8` → `k12` → `k20`
- **Worse situation → downgrade the die by 1 step**
  `k20` → `k12` → `k8` → `k6` → `k4`

**Examples of advantages:** preparation, good tools, positional advantage, surprise, support.

**Examples of disadvantages:** darkness, slippery surfaces, time pressure, noise, distraction, cover.

**Order of rules:** for speed, assume that for one test you usually apply **a maximum of 1 advantage and 1 disadvantage** (they can cancel each other out).

## 2.6 Ally Assistance

An ally can sacrifice their action (or time in a scene outside of combat) to assist.

**Effect:** for this one test, **increase the die by 1 step**.

Assistance must be described sensibly (providing cover, handing over tools, distracting, stabilizing, giving hints).

## 2.7 Repeating Tests

If the test fails, do not repeat it "ad infinitum" without changing the situation.

- Either you do something differently (different attribute / different tools / different approach),
- or you accept the cost (time, alarm, resource),
- or you withdraw.

## 2.8 Examples of Tests (Outside of Combat)

**Example A — Stealthy Passage**

- Player: "I will cross the yard before the spotlight returns."
- GM: Dexterity (D). It's under time pressure → Difficulty **T 5**.
- The character has the Talent "Shadow" → advantage, die increased by 1 step.
- Roll: D `d12` = 4 → failure. GM: "They don't notice you right away, but someone hears a rustle and starts checking the area (complication: pressure increases)."

**Example B — Forceful Breach**

- Player: "I will kick down the metal door before the guards reach the corner."
- GM: Strength (`S`), Difficulty **T 6** (very hard without tools).
- Someone helps by holding the lock and wedging the door → die increased by 1 step.
- Roll: `S` `d12` = 12 → exceptional success: the door gives way immediately and you do it quieter than expected.

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## 3. Movement and Distances (Grid is an Option)

By default, NDE operates without a map: you describe the scene and the positions of the characters.

## 3.1 By Default: Descriptive Distances

Use four zones:

- **Close** — within arm's reach, melee combat.
- **Nearby** — a few steps away, easy to close in.
- **Far** — the other side of the scene, requires clear movement.
- **Very Far** — sniper/vehicle range/"at the edge of the scene".

In a turn, you can usually change the distance by **one zone** (e.g., Far → Nearby).

## 3.2 Option: Grid Play (for Tactics)

If you prefer specifics:

- 1 square = 1–2 m.
- Movement per turn: **up to 5 squares**.
- Diagonals are allowed (count as a regular square).

## 3.3 Cover and Line of Effect

- **Full cover:** it is impossible to interact "in line" (shot, observation, many powers).
- **Partial cover:** makes it difficult — usually **lowers the die by 1 step** for the attacker/watcher.

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## 4. Combat

Combat is a standard scene with tests, only organized in turns.

### 4.1 When Combat Begins

Combat begins when:

- at least one side wants to harm the other, and
- it matters who acts and when.

If the situation is brief and obvious, the GM may resolve it with a single roll.

### 4.2 Turn Order (Simple Version)

Simply put:

- First, all players act (in any order),
- then the opponents act,
- and so on in a loop.

### 4.3 What Do You Do on Your Turn

In your turn, you have:

- **Movement** (changing zones / up to 5 squares in grid variant),
- **1 Action** (attack, test, assist, use `power`, equipment, interact with the scene).

### 4.4 Attack: How It Works

1. Choose a target and describe the attack.
2. Choose an attribute:
   - **melee** → roll **Strength (S)**,
   - **ranged** → roll **Dexterity (D)**,
   - **powers** → usually roll **Might (M)** (see Chapter 5).

3. Determine the target's **Defense**.
4. Roll the dice and compare it to the Defense.

## 4.6 Damage and 'How Much They Can Endure'

- A hit deals **1 Heart**.
- A **Critical Success** deals **2 Hearts** *or* provides a strong effect (disarm, knockdown, push out of cover) — choose one.

Simplest enemy archetypes:

- **Minion:** goes down after 1 hit.
- **Elite:** has **2 Hearts**.
- **Boss:** has **3 Hearts** (or 5 in final scenes).

> *Note: 'goes down' does not necessarily mean death. They may be unconscious, fled, surrendered, or taken out of action.*

## 4.5 Opponent Defense (Guideline)

- **Weak:** Defense **4**
- **Typical:** Defense **5**
- **Elite:** Defense **6**
- **Boss:** Defense **8** (legendary boss: **12**)

Cover and conditions usually change the size of the attacking dice (easing/difficulty), not the Defense.

## 5.7 Ranges (defaults)

- Melee: adjacent.
- Ranged: any visible target.
  - If you want a limit: treat up to 10 squares as no penalty; beyond that <span class="rpg-token token-`tn`"> `TN` +1 step.

## 5.8 Multiple foes in close

If many minions are adjacent to one hero, either:

- raise <span class="rpg-token token-`tn`"> `TN` by 1 step (pressure), or
- have failure include an extra complication (lose position).

Keep it fast: one resolution → one outcome.

## 4.7 Examples of Combat

### Example A — melee combat with a lackey

- The Storm ( `S` `d12` ) attacks the lackey (Defense 5).
- Conditions are favorable (surprise) → die increases by 1 step, but it is already `d12` , so the increase gives `d20` .
- Roll `d20` = 7 → hit, the lackey is down.

### Example B — shot at the elite from cover

- The Specialist ( `Z` `d12` ) shoots at the elite (Defense 6).
- The target is in partial cover → difficulty, die drops to `d8` .
- Roll `d8` = 6 → hit, the elite loses 1 Heart (leaving them with 1).

### Example C — boss and Stroke of `Luck`

- The Adept ( `M` `d12` ) tries to incapacitate the boss (Defense 8) with `power` .
- Roll `d12` = 4 → failure. The player spends 1 LS for a reroll.

- Reroll = 10 → success. The boss loses 1 Heart, but the GM adds a cost: "the effect is loud, an alarm goes off."

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## 5. Powers ( P ) and `Power` Points (PP)

In NDE, "`Power`" is a category of special effects. Depending on the world, it may mean:

- magic, psionics, rituals,
- advanced technology, drones, live hacking,
- cinematic hero moves (e.g., "masterful concentration"),
- social influence in games where conversation is a "`power`."

## 5.1 When You Spend `PM`

You spend `PM` when you try to achieve an effect **above standard**.

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## 5.2 How to Use `Power` (Step by Step)

1. Describe the effect you want to achieve.
2. The GM determines the Difficulty and the cost in `PM`.
3. Spend `PM`.
4. Roll `M` and compare it to the Difficulty.

**Failure:** the effect does not work; `PM` is lost; a complication arises (overload, trace, revelation, side effect).

## 5.3 Levels of Effects (Difficulty / Cost)

- **Trick** (short trick): **T 4 / 0–1 MP**

  light, sound, minor illusion, momentary distraction.
- **Standard**: **T 5 / 1 MP**

  projectile, shield, impulse, jump, enhancement.
- **Strong**: **T 6 / 2 MP**

  area, control, healing, paralysis, "hack during combat."
- **Great**: **T 8–12 / 3 MP**

  an effect that changes the scene or has campaign consequences.

## 5.4 Exceptional Success in `Power`

If you roll a maximum on the `M` dice:

- increase the scale (larger area / longer / stronger), or
- add an additional benefit (quieter, more precisely, safer), or
- the GM may grant **1 MP** (if it fits the fiction).

## 5.5 Recovering MP

- After a conflict scene, you recover **1 MP**.
- After a safe rest, you return to full.

## 5.6 Examples of Powers

**Example A — Shield for a Dash**

- Player: "I set up a short cover to dash to a better position."
- GM: Standard **T 5**, cost 1 `PM`.

- Roll `M` `d12` = 9 → success: you dash safely.

**Example B — Failure with Consequence**

- Player: "I stop the elite in their tracks."
- GM: Strong **T 6**, cost 2 `PM`.
- Roll = 1 → failure + complication: you lose 2 `PM`, and the effect rebounds, revealing your position.

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## 6.1 0 Hearts

If you drop to 0 Hearts:

- you are **out of action** (wounded, stunned, in shock — depending on the convention),
- an ally can sacrifice an action to get you back on your feet with **1 Heart**.

## 6.2 Rest

- After a scene of conflict, if you have a moment to catch your breath and the basic conditions, you may return to full Hearts.
- In harsher campaigns, the GM may require a safe resting place to return to full strength.

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## 7.3 Rest

After a scene of combat/conflict, if you have a moment of safe rest (and basic conditions), you return to full:

- Hearts,
- Mana.

This keeps the system fast and does not require lengthy healing.

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## 7. Character Development

**When you grow:** after an adventure, mission, or important chapter of the story (usually every 1–3 sessions).

Choose **one**:

- **Increase** one attribute by 1 die step (max. up to `d20`), or
- **+1 Heart** (max. 7), or
- **+1 MP** (max. 5), or
- **New Trait** (a one-sentence, specific ability agreed upon with the GM).

> *Example: The Specialist increases Strength from* `d12` *to* `d20`*, as the campaign has entered a phase of chases and shootouts.*

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## 8. Variant Only `d6` : 2d6

If you do not want to use different dice, play with **2d6**.

## 8.1 Attributes as Modifiers

Instead of die sizes, distribute the modifiers:

- one attribute has **+2**
- one has **+1**
- one has **+0**

**8.2 Test**

Roll **2d6 + ability modifier**.

**Result:**

- **6 or less** – failure with consequence
- **7–9** – success at a cost
- **10+** – full success
- **12** – exceptional success (additional benefit)

**8.3 Difficulty of the Situation**

Instead of changing the thresholds, give:

- **+1** for advantage, preparation, a good plan,
- **−1** for hindrances, pressure, cover, chaos.

**8.4** `Luck` **Roll in 2d6**

Spend 1 `Luck` Point to:

- reroll 2d6, or
- add **+1** to the test result, or
- turn a failure into a success at a cost.

**8.5 Quick Mapping (Optional)**

If you ever want to "convert" a character between variants:

- `d6` ≈ +0
- `d8` ≈ +1
- `d12` ≈ +2
- `d20` ≈ +3 (for very experienced)

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1. What exactly is the player trying to achieve?
2. Which attribute applies: `S`/D/`M`?
3. What's the <span class="rpg-token token-`tn`">`TN` (4/6/8/12), and does the situation shift it by a step?
4. Any help (bump die)?
5. Roll → success/failure.
6. On failure: which complication (or retaliation in combat)?
7. On critical: which extra benefit?

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**1. Introduction**

7.2 Additional tools are not required, but they can sometimes facilitate management.

**9.1 Protection (armor) as a simple resource**

If you want "protection" to have a clear effect:

- a character with protection has **1 Armor token per scene**,
- when they would lose 1 Heart, they can instead expend an Armor token.

**9.2 Time Pressure as a Timer**

If the scene has a time limit, the GM sets a "counter" (e.g., 3 steps). Each failure moves the counter by 1. When it reaches the end — a consequence occurs (alarm, target fleeing, passage collapsing).

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**9.3 Retaliation (Risky Combat Variant)**

If you want the fight to be more "intense" and fast-paced:

- when you **attack in melee** and **miss**, you lose **1 Heart**, provided the opponent could realistically reach you. This is a variant — in the core of NDE, the consequences of failures in combat mainly arise from fiction and the GM's decisions.