DR8 // Core
A narrative driven escalation framework

DR8 is a modular tabletop roleplaying framework, focused on solo-play and small groups, where everything is resolved through **Difficulty Ratings**.

Simple rules. Meaningful consequences.

This small document introduces a minimal set of core rules which are enough to enable players to resolve any possible situation, *independent of setting or genre*.

DR8's mechanics describe *if* a situation changes and *how strongly* the world reacts to player actions. *What those changes mean*, how player characters respond, and how they behave is always decided through narration.

Rules

CHARACTER CREATION

Each character is made out of **four attributes**. Each attribute starts with **one** point. On creation, distribute **four** additional points as you like.

Attributes describe how a character influences a test.

Strength

Agility

Wits

Toughness

Rules

TESTS AND DIFFICULTY RATINGS

Opponents, obstacles, and situations, everything, is represented by a Difficulty Rating.

If you perform a test, assign a DR and choose a fitting attribute. Then roll **2D10**.

After rolling, you may add the attribute for the test to **one** of the results.

Choose an attribute which reflects best how your character approaches the situation.

Different approaches to the same problem may use different attributes.

A complication or failure should meaningfully change the situation and can not be ignored without a clear reason.

The **DR** not only describes the difficulty of an action, **but also** how constrained acting within the current situation is.

Despite the system's name, DR8 isn't the default rating. It is the most interesting one.

Both results are **equal or above** the DR
Success

One of the results is **equal or above** the DR
Success with complication

None of the results is **equal or above** the DR
Failure

DR	Situation Constraints
DR5	Trivial
DR6	Open
DR7	Tense
DR8	Constrained
DR9	Locked
DR10	Extreme
DR12	Epic

SEVERITY - ESCALATING CONSEQUENCES

On a *Success with complication* or *Failure*, determine the **severity** of the consequence by subtracting the highest die result below the DR from the target DR.

Severity = DR - highest die below DR

The result should be used to decide how the situation escalates, based on situation and severity.

Severity tells you how much a situation changes and helps at the same time to shape the change intuitively.

Examples

The following examples show how DRs and consequences can shape a situation. They are not about playing optimally.

HOW TO CHOOSE A DR

Situation - You try to slip through a guard.

Assessment - The guard is not aware of you. The situation is *tense*, but nothing actively blocks your way. *Test has a* **DR7**.

Outcome - 9 / 5 -> *Success with complication* (Severity: 2). You make it through, but the guard hears something and grows suspicious!

SUCCESS WITH COMPLICATION IS STILL SUCCESS

Situation - A thug tries to rob you in a narrow alley.

Assessment - The thug is not very experienced, but you are *not* able to act freely in this alley. *Test has a* **DR8**.

Outcome - 8 / 7 -> *Success with complication* (Severity: 1). You successfully defended yourself, but the fight draws attention.

SUCCESSES MAY HAVE A BIG CONSEQUENCE

Situation -You need help from a NPC to break into a house, convincing her will be hard. *Test has a* **DR9**.

Outcome - 9 / 1 -> *Success with complication* (Severity: 8). The NPC helps you. Unknowingly, she also let the guards know what you intend to do!

FAILURE IS NOT THE END

Situation -You want to interfere with a ritual on your own. *Test has a* **DR12**.

Outcome - 10 / 3 -> *Failure* (Severity: 2). The ritual continues, but you are able to flee.

Example of Play

The following example demonstrates how **DR8 // Core** handles an everyday situation through escalating consequences during a solo-play session. It shows how *DRs, Results* and *Severity* shape a scene without any external sources. It may not be the most interesting play session, but it shows how **DR8** works.

A ⚠ in the text marks the consequence resulting from the previous DR roll.

Note on Oracles: *In some scenes an external Oracle was used to drive the play forward. Each use is marked with* ☸ . *In most situations* **DR8** *naturally answers what happens next without an Oracle.*

PLAYER CHARACTER

Garth, *Tax Collector for the Church* - Strength 3, Agility 1, Wits 2, Toughness 2

Garth's task is easy: Collect Taxes. But reality rarely plays along.

SCENE 1 - RUMOURS IN THE CRAFTSMEN'S QUARTER

Garth begins his duty in the Craftsmen's Quarter as usual. Moving from shop to shop, most people play along.

☸ People are talking about a woman doing unregistered business. Garth decides to investigate.

🎯 *Finding the Woman* - People are talking freely and Garth shouldn't have too much trouble to get the woman's location -> **DR7 Wits**

🎲 7 & 3 (+2 Wits) -> *Success with complication - Severity 2*

Garth finds the woman and she admits selling homemade "love potions" (☸), but claims business is slow and she can not afford to pay taxes (⚠).

💬 *Severity 2 is a small shift of the current situation. The scene moves forward, but resistance appears.*

Example of Play

SCENE 2 - PUBLIC PRESSURE

Garth presses on and demands the tax money, but doesn't want to escalate the situation yet. He remains calm and polite.

🎯 *Convince the woman* - The woman already showed open opposition. Whether she lies or not, it won't be easy -> **DR8 Wits**

🎲 3 & 3 (+2 Wits) -> *Failure* - Severity 3

The woman refuses to pay and Garth can't convince her. The argument attracts bystanders and the situation gets heated (⚠️).

Garth decides to leave and gives the woman until tomorrow to pay.

💬 *The Severity was large enough to change the tone of the scene. The failure doesn't punish Garth, but locks his approach and forces him to come up with a new plan. The scene reshapes without any external input.*

SCENE 3 - OPEN RESISTANCE

☸️ The woman is not alone. Multiple men standing with her and are going to intervene if necessary.

Garth still needs the taxes.

🎯 *Appealing to Reason* - Implied violence restricts Garth's options in this situation and she openly shows resistance! -> **DR9 Wits**

🎲 6 & 6 (+2 Wits) -> *Failure* - Severity 1

Garth gets warned to leave (⚠️). The woman won't pay and the men start to engage Garth.

He decides to leave.

💬 *Garth failed his roll but with a low Severity. This prevents the scene to explode and keeps the escalation low. Garth has still options left to change how he tackles the situation.*

Example of Play

SCENE 4 - THE END

Garth returns later that afternoon with a few soldiers by his side.

⚙ The men already left the scene and the woman is alone again.

The power distribution changed dramatically and Garth issues an ultimatum. Pay the tax or go to prison!

🎯 *Issuing the Ultimatum* - The woman is alone. And the soldiers are ready to detain the woman! -> **DR6 Wits**

🎲 10 & 5 (+2 Wits) -> *Success*

The woman pays the taxes and the situation is resolved.

💬 *The success feels earned, because Garth was able to navigate through the consequences to shape the situation in his favor. Every roll changed the situation and the* **Severity** *determined how much things shifted - instantly and intuitively. Failures redirected the story instead of ending it.*