FS3 Player’s Guide

Version 1.0

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# Welcome to FS3

FS3 is a generic roleplaying game skills system, specifically designed and optimized for online text-based RPGs (MUSHes). FS3 provides rules for:

* Character Creation
* Generic Conflict Resolution (Ability Rolls)
* Combat
* Character Improvement (Experience)

## FS3 Principles

What makes FS3 different from other skill systems?

1. **A lean skill list.** Most skill systems offer a bewildering array of skills, making character creation a chore. FS3 focuses on the skills that are truly relevant to the “action” of the game, whether that’s flying fighter jets or riding horses.
2. **A custom dice system.** The FS3 dice system is designed for games where skills are rolled infrequently and deviations from the ‘expected’ results raise eyebrows. On the whole, characters succeed more often than they do in other systems.
3. **A roleplay-friendly combat system.** The FS3 combat system is designed to be fast and flexible, providing some colorful tactical options without bogging roleplay down in a lot of mechanics.

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## Customizing FS3

Like GURPS, FUDGE, and other similar systems, FS3 is a rules framework, not a complete game unto itself. The core rulebook provides examples for a sci-fi military setting, but FS3 can be used for anything from high fantasy to gritty historical drama. Skill lists, weapons, armor, etc. will need to be customized for the setting. More about customizing FS3 can be found in the FS3 Storyteller’s Guide.

## Definitions

Here are some of the common terms used in the FS3 system.

Player – A person playing the game.

Storyteller – The player who is driving the story of the game. (Called the Gamemaster/Administrator in some games.)

Player Character (PC) – A major character whose actions are controlled by a player. One can think of PCs as the heroes of a story.

Non-Player Character (NPC) – A secondary character, normally controlled by the Storyteller but sometimes by other players. One can think of NPCs as the villains or extras in a story.

You – The term “you” and “your” are used interchangeably to refer to you as a player (“roll your dice”), or as your character (“pick your skills”).

# FS3 Basics

This section describes the basic concepts of the FS3 conflict resolution system.

## Abilities

**Abilities** reflect things that your character is able to do. Running, shooting guns, flying spaceships, talking your way out of a tense situation – these are all things that could be covered by Abilities. There are two kinds of Abilities: Attributes and Skills.

## Attributes

**Attributes** reflect a character’s natural talents. Attributes influence related skills, giving an advantage (or disadvantage) compared to someone with equivalent training. They also come into play when no particular skill applies to a given situation.

Barring disability or genetic mutation, Attributes never change; they are set in stone when you are born. For example, you may overcome an academic challenge through hard work and study, but you will not change your underlying academic aptitude.

Attributes are rated on a 1-12 scale. All characters will have a rating in every attribute.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Rating** | **Attribute Meaning** |
| 1-3 | Poor |
| 4-6 | Average |
| 7-9 | Good |
| 10-12 | Exceptional |

## Skills

**Skills** reflect a character’s knowledge and training. Skills are fluid, changing over time. You choose an initial set of skills during character creation, and may improve them or learn new skills during the course of the game.

Skills are further broken down into three categories:

* **Action Skills** are those relevant to the game’s central “action”.
* **Background Skills** flesh out your hobbies and interests.
* **Language Skills** allow you to read and write languages.

The Storyteller will define the list of Action Skills and Languages based on the game setting. There is no fixed list for Background Skills; you can have anything from *Underwater Basket Weaving* to *Soap Opera Trivia*.

Skills are rated on a 0-12 scale. Characters only have ratings in skills they have taken the time to learn and practice. All other skills are considered to be at rating 0.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Rating** | **Skill Meaning** |
| 0 | Untrained |
| 1-3 | Rookie |
| 4-6 | Professional |
| 7-9 | Veteran |
| 10-12 | Expert |

## Common Knowledge

It would be silly to expect your character to have a skill on his character sheet for every single thing he knows. Some things are just common knowledge, and it can be assumed your character knows them without requiring you to specify it.

Exactly what falls under “common knowledge” will vary by game. Basic computer knowledge would be assumed in a modern urban setting, but not so much in a WWII game or a game set in the wilds of Africa.

When in doubt about whether something would be common knowledge, consult your Storyteller.

# Ability Rolls

Ability Rolls are used to determine the outcome of a character’s action, whether it’s shooting a gun or jumping a chasm.

## When to Roll

Ability Rolls should be used judiciously; it is unnecessary (and silly) to roll for every little thing. RPGs are about *role*play not *roll*play.

For example: If someone does a good job roleplaying their way through bluffing a guard, it probably ought to work. Likewise, if someone attempts to schmooze the princess with the worst pickup line ever, it probably shouldn’t work, no matter what you roll.

|  |
| --- |
| **The Golden Rule of Ability Rolls:**  As long as there are no objections from anyone involved in the scene, it is perfectly acceptable to just assume success or failure based on roleplay. |

Some situations where you should consider using an Ability Roll:

* The character is under stress.
* Characters are in conflict with one another.
* There are exceptional circumstances that might affect the outcome.

For example, Swimming is a skill that you probably wouldn’t roll under normal circumstances. But if you’re trying to save someone from drowning, or are in a swimming competition, or trying to stay afloat in stormy seas with your clothes on, an Ability Roll would be appropriate.

## What to Roll

In nearly all cases, you will use a Skill for an Ability Roll. In unusual cases, you may substitute an Attribute. Sometimes there will be a Modifier applied to the skill (see Modifiers, page 5) as explained below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Ability** | **Modifier** | **Example** |
| A skill **directly** related to the task at hand. | 0 | Using Firearms to shoot a gun. |
| A skill **loosely** related to the task at hand. | -30 | Using Veterinary Medicine to treat a gunshot wound on a human. |
| An attribute related to the task at hand **if** the task is considered “common knowledge” (see Common Knowledge, page 4). | 0 | Using the Athletic attribute to run a footrace. |
| None of the above situations apply. Make an Untrained skill roll using a skill rating of 0. | n/a | Trying to perform abdominal surgery with no prior training. |

## Modifiers

Modifiers can be applied to Ability Rolls to increase or decrease your chance of success. A modifier is a simple percentage, so a +20 modifier gives you a 20% greater chance of success.

Some general guidance for modifiers is given in the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Situation** | **Modifier** |
| Task is easy. | +30 |
| Task is routine. | 0 |
| Task is hard. | -30 |
| Taking your time / no stress. | +20 |

Note: Easy/Routine/Hard is from the perspective of a typical professional. Brain surgery may be difficult, but it’s routine for a brain surgeon.

## Ruling Attribute

Every skill has a Ruling Attribute, which is the attribute most closely related to that skill in most cases. The Storyteller sets the Ruling Attribute for Action and Language skills as part of the skill list. You choose the Ruling Attribute for Background skills during character creation.

The Ruling Attribute applies an automatic Modifier to all Ability Rolls using that skill, as shown in the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Ruling Attribute**  **Rating** | **Modifier** |
| 1 | -8 |
| 2 | -6 |
| 3 | -4 |
| 4 | -2 |
| 5 | 0 |
| 6 | +2 |
| 7 | +4 |
| 8 | +6 |
| 9 | +8 |
| 10 | +10 |
| 11 | +12 |
| 12 | +14 |

There may be situations where the Ruling Attribute is actually not the most relevant one for a given situation. In such cases it is acceptable to substitute another Attribute and use its rating instead.

*Example: Joanna chose a Background Skill of Singing, with a Ruling Attribute of Creative. When trying to remember lyrics from an obscure song, she may want to use a Ruling Attribute of Academic instead.*

## How to Roll

FS3 uses a custom dice mechanic. The chart below helps you determine the Roll Result, which determines success or failure:

1. Roll percentile dice. Note: A roll of ‘00’ should be treated as 100.
2. Add/subtract the Ruling Attribute modifier to the die roll.
3. Add/subtract any other modifiers to the die roll.
4. Find the row in the result table corresponding to the ability rating.
5. Find the entry in the row that includes the modified die roll.
6. Look at the top of the column to determine the roll result.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Roll Result | | | | | |
| Ability  Rating | **-2**  **Terrible**  **Failure** | **-1**  **Bad**  **Failure** | **0**  **Failure** | **1**  **Success** | **2**  **Good**  **Success** | **3**  **Great**  **Success** |
| 0 | 1 – 15 | 16 – 35 | 36 – 65 | 66 – 99 | 100 | n/a |
| 1 | 1 – 20 | 21 – 32 | 33 – 40 | 41 – 88 | 89 – 100 | n/a |
| 2 | 1 – 14 | 15 – 24 | 25 – 35 | 36 – 74 | 75 – 94 | 95 – 100 |
| 3 | 1 – 12 | 13 – 21 | 22 – 30 | 31 – 72 | 73 – 93 | 94 – 100 |
| 4 | 1 – 7 | 8 – 15 | 16 – 25 | 26 – 55 | 56 – 85 | 86 – 100 |
| 5 | 1 – 6 | 7 – 12 | 13 – 20 | 21 – 52 | 53 – 84 | 85 – 100 |
| 6 | 1 – 4 | 5 – 9 | 10 – 15 | 16 – 49 | 50 – 83 | 84 – 100 |
| 7 | 1 – 2 | 3 – 4 | 5 – 10 | 11 – 28 | 29 – 73 | 74 – 100 |
| 8 | 1 | 2 – 3 | 4 – 8 | 9 – 26 | 27 – 63 | 64 – 100 |
| 9 | 1 | 2 – 3 | 4 – 7 | 8 – 25 | 26 – 53 | 54 – 100 |
| 10 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 – 13 | 14 – 42 | 43 – 100 |
| 11 | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 – 12 | 13 – 31 | 32 – 100 |
| 12 | n/a | n/a | 1 | 2 – 10 | 11 – 20 | 21 - 100 |

## Opposed Rolls

When two characters are directly in conflict, you can use an Opposed Roll to determine the outcome. In an Opposed Roll, each character makes an Ability Roll as normal. The two roll results are compared using the chart below to determine the overall winner.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Character “A” Roll Result | | | | | |
| Character “B” Roll Result | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| -2 | Both Fail | Both Fail | Both Fail | “A” Wins By A Lot | “A” Wins By A Lot | “A” Wins By A Lot |
| -1 | Both Fail | Both Fail | Both Fail | “A” Wins By A Little | “A” Wins By A Lot | “A” Wins By A Lot |
| 0 | Both Fail | Both Fail | Both Fail | “A” Wins By A Little | “A” Wins By A Little | “A” Wins By A Lot |
| 1 | “B” Wins By A Lot | “B” Wins By A Little | “B” Wins By A Little | DRAW | “A” Wins By A Little | “A” Wins By A Lot |
| 2 | “B” Wins By A Lot | “B” Wins By A Lot | “B” Wins By A Little | “B” Wins By A Little | DRAW | “A” Wins By A Little |
| 3 | “B” Wins By A Lot | “B” Wins By A Lot | “B” Wins By A Lot | “B” Wins By A Little | “B” Wins By A Little | DRAW |

### Opposed Rolls With Common Knowledge

If one character in an Opposed Roll has a relevant skill and the other is substituting an attribute under the Common Knowledge rule (see Common Knowledge, page 4), give the character rolling the skill a +20 modifier. This reflects the fact that the skilled character has an advantage because of his training.

### Opposed Rolls Involving More Than Two Characters

The Opposed Roll chart deals only with two characters, but it’s possible for multiple characters to be in conflict with one another simultaneously. In such cases, you can simply compare the raw Roll Results to determine the overall winner.

# Character Creation

This chapter describes the process of making up a Player Character (PC). NPCs are described in the Storyteller’s Guide.

The general steps in Character Creation are:

1. Describe your concept.
2. Choose your abilities.
3. Choose your quirks.

## Concept

The most important part of a character is the concept. The concept is a short (2-3 sentence) blurb to address the character’s occupation, personality and recent backstory. For example:

*Lieutenant Nikos is a Viper pilot just transferred to the squadron. She lives hard and fast, and with a reverent appreciation for the way of life she has spent her life defending.*

Some games may require you to come up with a more detailed backstory beyond the concept. Some things to consider:

* Family
* Education
* Employment
* Geography (where you’ve lived and visited)
* Interests
* Beliefs

By touching on some or all of the above points, you can turn a character into a three-dimensional, believable person.

## Abilities

The next step in character creation is to choose abilities, including Attributes and Skills. Each character receives a pool of Ability Points to spend on abilities. The number of points will be determined by the individual game based on their desired power level and number of abilities.

* Attributes cost 1 point per rating.
* Skills cost 1 point per rating.
* Games may impose a minimum number of Background Skills required.
* Each game will have a specific list of Attributes, Action Skills and Language Skills.
* There is no list for Background Skills; they are free-form so you can choose whatever you want.

### Ability Limits

Individual games may impose limits on how many high abilities you can have, and how many points in Attributes and Action Skills you can have. This is intended to prevent unbalanced characters.

### What Skills Should I Pick?

Your character sheet is not meant to be an exhaustive list of everything your character knows. That would be silly. Here is some guidance for what skills to choose:

* Choose any Action or Language Skills that your character would know. They are likely to come up during the course of the game, so take them they apply.
* Choose Background Skills that are **important** to your character. Just because you played “catch” as a child doesn’t mean you need to take the Baseball skill. Take Background Skills to reflect hobbies, interests, special education (college major, perhaps), or professional skills not reflected by Action Skills.
* Remember that some things may be considered “common knowledge” based on the game, and you don’t need to take skills for those. See Common Knowledge, page 4 for more information.

### Choosing Appropriate Levels

Even rating 1 in FS3 represents a fair amount of training and practice in a skill. Ratings 4 and higher indicate professional level of competence, meaning you could conceivably do it for a living. It would be rare for someone to have a hobby at higher than rating 3 unless he is a really serious hobbyist!

## Quirks

Quirks are little things that make your character unique. They can be physical, social, virtues, vices, or other noteworthy traits. Quirks have no specific game effect. They could provide modifiers to rolls at the Storyteller’s discretion, but mostly they are just there to spur roleplay. Be creative!

* You must have at least 1 quirk.
* Games may impose a maximum number of quirks allowed.
* There is no list of quirks; you can choose whatever you want.

### Choosing Quirks

Quirks are not for power gaming. “Perfect Memory” and “God’s Gift To Women” are too powerful to be quirks, but “Never Forgets a Face” and “Girl In Every Port” are legitimate alternatives.

Quirks just reflect **notable** qualities of your character. What's notable for one character may not be notable for another, so just because someone picks 'Honest' as a quirk does not mean you have to have that quirk to be honest.

Why would you want to pick "negative" quirks? Well, first of all - it's fun to play flawed characters. You can get a lot of roleplay mileage out of them. But also keep in mind that many quirks are two-edged swords, and can work for you or against you depending on the situation.

# Experience

todo

# Combat

todo