

Grimdark

Ghost of War

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CHAPTER 1: BASE SYSTEM

BASE SYSTEM

Grimdark uses a universal roll system. Every check in the game uses the same base system. The following chapter will describe it in detail.

THE BASE ROLL

Whenever a character uses a skill (in a non-trivial way), the player will roll a skill check. The check uses two d100 dice rolls, one for each attribute linked to the skill in question. If the roll result is equal to or lower than the target number (attribute value plus potential modifiers), it is considered a pass.

TRINARY OUTCOME

A Base Roll can have three possible outcomes:

- **0 Pass - Failure:** Both rolls are above their target numbers and the check fails.
- **1 Pass - Partial Success (PS):** One of the rolls is above the target number, the other a pass. The check achieved a Partial Success, that is the goal is reached but at a cost. The cost is decided by the GM according to the situation but the group is encouraged to provide input if there is no obvious cost. See the example below for two possible costs.
- **2 Pass - Full Success (FS):** Both rolls are passes. The check achieved a Full Success. The goal is achieved without problem.

EXAMPLE SKILL CHECK

Sister Aryanna of the Ordo Dialogis attempts to calm down Inquisitors Zu-Lin Yu and Otto Brecht who have come close to open hostility over a debate of how to handle the survivors of an Imperial Guard regiment fighting off a daemonic incursion...

- **Skill:** Pretty Words
- **Skill Modifier:** +5
- **Attributes:** Fellowship 47, Intelligence 34
- **Target Numbers:** 52 (47+5), 39 (34+5)
- **Rolls:** 64 (no pass), 23 (pass)
- **Result:** Partial Success

The player rolls two d100. The first comes up with a 64 and the second with a 23. This means that the check resulted in a Partial Success, since only one roll was below the target number (the second one). The goal will be achieved (stopping the Inquisitors from starting a intercine war) - but at a cost. For most social skills, a Partial Success will leave the a bad aftertaste with the target of the skill, making it potentially more difficult to interact with in the future.

Sister Aryanna speaks up and argues that executing the soldiers, who are by now very well trained to detect and fight the neverborn, would be massive waste of Imperial assets and simply cannot be tolerated at the current stage of the war. While her temper rose quickly and flamed up brightly over yet another debate between Yu and Brecht, her arguments are sound and not easily squashed even by a hardline puritan like Brecht.

Inquisitor Brecht will surely remember her interdiction - but the argument has been settled without bloodshed.

CHAPTER 2: PROFESSIONS & SKILLS

Grimdark's skill system is divided into so-called Professions, which group associated skills together. Raising a certain skill will also raise the profession bonus, which can be used in place of any profession skill. This represents the fact that specialists are also (somewhat) proficient in the general field.

A renown surgeon for cybernetic replacements is certainly also quite capable at first aid treatments after all, and a famous climber is quite likely a dangerous wrestler as well...

PROFESSIONS

A Profession represent the generalist ability of a character in a certain broad area of expertise. Each Profession covers a range of skills which are somewhat related. In addition, they provide a fast and loose overview of the character. Is he a brutal underhive ganger with high scores in the Betrayer, Athlete and Fighter professions? Or an ancient tech priest with a more accumulated knowledge in his left (augmented) toe, than a handful of highborn nobles put together, reflected by his Tinkerer, Technologist and Logic professions?

PROFESSION EXAMPLE

Sister Aryanna of the Ordo Dialogis and her death-cult comrade Krill'Ta are attempting to infiltrate a gathering of noblewomen of the Hive World Olrabus, suspecting the machinations of a genestealer cult in its midst. As a distrustful guard is denying them entrance, a hasty debate between the two members of the Inquisitors retinue using Ordo hand signs erupts. Should Aryanna attempt to tell a convoluted (and utterly crafted) story to convince the guard - or should Krill'Ta attempt to seduce the guard with her death world charm?

Both would be valid approaches, but seducing the guard may take Krill'Ta out of the next scene and leave the sister alone in the midst of the noblewomen. On the other hand, sister Aryanna isn't particular known for her abilities to lie - an ability which is far from well-perceived by her Ordo after all...

One central decision of Grimdark, contrary to many other game systems, is the fact that it does not assume that player characters or even a group of player characters, cover all or even most professions. There are many different ways to tackle any given situation scattered over the different professions that may appear redundant on a purely mechanical take. But each profession has its very own take and spin on "their" solution to a problem, along with certain role-play implications, limitations and situational modifiers. Thus a certain given

situation may be much easier to solve by one profession than by another - yet they all have their uses, without forcing someone to break out of character to tackle a certain solution.

On a mechanical level, Professions work (mostly) like skills. You can use them instead of any related skill. The main difference between skills and Professions, is the fact that you cannot raise Professions directly. The roll modifier is instead determined by the current Profession rating (see below).

Design Decision: Professions

- **Facilitate Player Creativity:** If a player has an idea, which is not covered by the existing skills, it is usually easy to discern the Profession to which the described action relates. Having the option to roll a Profession check in such a case, allows for great player creativity. GM and Players are encouraged to develop new skills for commonly used actions of players that are not foreseen by Grimdark.
- **Make Everyone a Generalist:** In many skill-based game systems, players may end up with specialist characters which are very proficient in skill A but absolutely untrained in skill B, although the two skills are actually quite closely related. This does not make a whole lot of sense, as every specialist is also necessarily a generalist in his field of purview - at least to some degree.

THE PROFESSION RATING

Each profession has a certain Profession rating, representing the total ability of the character in that Profession. This rating **increases by 2 for each new skill level learned** in an associated skill of the profession.

THE PROFESSION CHECK

A Profession check works just like a normal skill check with a single difference. Instead of using the respective skill modifier, it uses the Profession Rating. Everything else works the same, including the used attributes and situational modifiers of the respective skill.

PROFESSION CHECK EXAMPLE

Inquisitor Otto Brecht has been trapped into a hive corridor with all doors locked. The straight forward Inquisitors decides to try and force open one of the doors with his own strength, hoping to still remain his covert approach that way. If that fails, he can still blast open the doors with a grenade after all

...

Brecht is not particularly skilled at breaking things- he relies on the brute Nic'Or for such things - but he is keeping himself in top physical condition and is tough as nail. He should have a good enough chance to break open the doors...

That is, Brecht does not have the Break skill of the Athlete Profession, but he does have two ranks each in the Triathlete and Endure skills of that Profession. Thus, his Athlete Profession rating is: $2 * 4 = 8$.

- **Skill / Profession:** Break / Athlete
- **Skill Modifier:** 0 (untrained => use Profession)
- **Profession Rating:** 8
- **Attributes:** Strength 37, Toughness 44
- **Modifiers:** Locked Door (-10)
- **Target Numbers:** 35 (37+8-10), 42 (44+8-10)
- **Rolls:** 77 (no pass), 43 (no pass)
- **Result:** Failure

But the door won't budge. Going loud it is then. So be it. He never liked sneaking around anyway...