

KISS RPG

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Kiss is a set of simple and all-purpose tabletop role playing game rules. Even though this document is focussed on the classic medieval fantasy setting, these rules are highly adaptable for most campaign types.

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Chapter 1. Dice and Tests

To see if something succeeds, you roll a d10 (called the *base die*) against a given target number, usually set by the GM. If you equal to or higher than the target number, you succeed.

Base Die

When you roll a 10 on your base die, you may roll it again and add the result. You can do this as long as you keep rolling tens. If your base die has been modified (for instance, the base die is reduced as a consequence of damage and stress), this rule still applies as long as you roll the highest possible number on the die. Adding rerolls like this is called an *open-ended die* or *exploding die*. [2: Exploding Dice: <https://anydice.com/articles/exploding-dice/>]

NOTE

It is not just the base die that can be open ended. Certain traits, powerups, abilities, equipment and karma uses can make dice open ended. If you see a die notation with a + at the end of it, it means that the die is open-ended. For instance, **d6** just means you roll a d6, but **d6+** means you roll an open-ended d6.

Skill Die

When a hero is particularly good at doing a specific thing (fighting, swimming, magic, etc.) she may add a skill die to her roll when she performs those actions. This is referred to as a skill test. Unless otherwise specified, the skill die is not open-ended.

Hero Die

When a hero has become sufficiently advanced and experienced, she gains the ability to add a hero die to certain rolls. This number of sides on the hero die depends on how experienced the hero is.

Chapter 2. Karma

Character begins every session with exactly 2 karma points (this is called the *karma reset*).

If you fail a meaningful roll (i.e. one that actually affects you, the party and/or the plot), you are awarded a karma point. There are many ways to spend these points. Some of them are described below:

TIP

High powered campaigns might reset the karma to 3 or 4, while more realistic campaigns might reset karma to 1 or 0. Some groups might prefer not to reset the karma pools at all, possibly imposing upper limits on how many karma points a character can accumulate. In such settings, you could reduce the number of experience points awarded to the players, forcing them to convert karma into XP. More on this later.

Exploding roll

At the cost of 1 karma, before you roll any dice, you can declare that you want to make the roll *open ended*, meaning that all the dice rolled (base, skill, and hero) are made open-ended. This can also be applied to damage tests and other tests that are not normally open ended.

Make a roll easier

At the cost of 2 karma, before you roll any dice, you can declare that you want to make a test *easier*, meaning that you get roll the entire test twice, and choose the best outcome. This must be declared *before* the roll is made.

Make a roll heroic

If you have a hero die, you can spend 1 karma point to add that hero die to any roll you want. You must declare that you are making a heroic roll *before* you roll any dice.

Redo a test

At the cost of 3 karma, you can declare that you want to reroll a failed test. This is be done *after* the dice are rolled, but before the GM tells you whether the test succeeded or not.

Learn from your failures

You can convert 10 karma points into 1 experience point.

TIP

Some groups might want to impose a limit on how many times you can »learn from your failures« per session. Others might want to lower the number of XP awarded per session, instead relying on the players' accumulated karma to be converted to XP.

Chapter 3. Traits

The first game-mechanical thing to do when creating a new character is to describe her via traits. You must choose 3 positive traits and 1 negative trait. You **can** choose more traits if you like, but for every positive trait you add, you must also add a negative one.

NOTE

In KISS, concepts like attributes, races, background, heritages, etc. have been replaced by traits.

Positive traits

Connected

Once per session, at the cost of 1 karma, you can declare that you have a vague connection with someone (maybe you met them, briefly worked for them, etc.). Additionally, when engaged in social challenges where you can invoke a common mutual acquaintance, all your rolls are open-ended.

Captain

You have access to the »Ship Owner« powerup.

Darkvision

You can see in complete darkness, but only in shades of gray.

Famous

Once per session, at the cost of 1 karma, you can declare that a given person knows about you or your family and sees you in a positive light. This makes all your subsequent social challenges against that person open-ended.

Sprinter

During combat you can get extra Steps at the cost of 1 karma point per Step.

Unencumbered

You can carry 15 load points worth of gear instead of the usual 10.

Magic User

You have access to the [magic](#) powerups.

Mnemonist

You can accurately recall anything you have ever seen or heard at the cost of 2 karma point. It only costs you a single karma point to redo tests in challenges that rely purely on your memory and experience.

Nightvision

You can see as well in dim light such as starlight or moonlight as if it were daylight.

Nimble

Same effect as the »tiny« trait. A character that is both tiny and nimble will be able to avoid two

attacks per scene, provided you have karma to spend.

Overpowered

You have 8 powerup slots instead of 6.

Polyglot

When you hear or read a language that was not hitherto known by you, you can declare that you are familiar with it, enabling you to read, write and speak it. This can be done once per session and it costs 3 karma points.

Socialite

Once per session you can overcome a challenge of trust or etiquette by invoking your background and heritage. Doing so costs one karma point.

Street Smart

It only costs you a single karma point to redo tests during challenges that involve shady city connections, finding your way in cities, or evaluating black market prices.

Strong

Once per scene you may redo tests that relies heavily and primarily on your bodily strength. Doing so costs 1 karma.

Stubborn

When you have the “dying” condition, you are awake and conscious. You can take actions like any normal character, but doing so costs a karma point.

Tiny

Once per scene you can completely avoid an attack. If you declare your intent to avoid the attack before the attacker rolls their dice it costs 2 karma points. If you want to avoid the attack after the attacker rolls their dice it costs 3 karma points.

Tough

Once per scene you can avoid avoid getting a Consequence from a single attack. Instead of getting a wound and resetting your stress points, your stress points are set to their maximum value, but you do not get the wound. Doing this costs one karma point.

Wealthy

§§§§ How does wealth work when we don't use wealth?

Well-equipped

You have 10 equipment slots instead of 8.

Negative Traits

Addicted

You have an addiction (alcohol, drugs, sex, gambling). Once per session, at the cost of 3 karma points, the GM can enforce your addiction to create a conflict, problem or disadvantage to you or the party.

Average\$\$\$\$

You base die is not open ended.

Diminutive

The GM can make you reroll your base die in intimidation check in exchange for 1 karma points.

Favor

You owe a favor to a powerful person, organization, or entity. Once per session, at the cost of 3 karma points, the GM can invoke this debt to create a conflict for you or your party.

Hunted

You are hunted, wanted, or stalked by a creature, person, organization, or entity. Once per session, at the cost of 3 karma points, the GM can invoke your stalker or their underlings and create a conflict for you or your party.

Infamous

Once per session, at the cost of 2 karma points, the GM can rule that you failed a given social challenge because of your bad reputation.

Infirm

You easily get sick. At the cost of 2 karma points the GM can make you reroll the base die of a check to resist disease or poison. At the cost of 3 karma points the GM can invoke your fragile health to create a situation that is hazardous to you or your party.

Kleptomaniac

You are addicted to stealing. Once per session, at the cost of 2 karma points, the GM can enforce your obsession to create a potential conflict, problem or disadvantage to you or the party.

Limp

Your Step Rate is 4 instead of 5. This means only get 4 Steps per combat round instead of 5. When you exchange your Action for extra Steps, you only get 4 Steps.

Obsessed

You are obsessed with a person, place, thing or phenomenon. Once per session, at the cost of 3 karma points, The GM can enforce your obsession to create a conflict, problem or disadvantage to you or the party.

Poor

\$\$\$\$ Not much stuff.

Short Legs

Same effect as the »Limp« trait. A character that is both Limp and has Short Legs will only have a Step Rate of 3.

Thickheaded

Once per session, at the cost of 2 karma points, the GM can enforce your stupidity and make you redo a relevant test.

Ugly

Once per session, at the cost of 2 karma points, the GM can rule that you failed a given social challenge because of your physical appearance.

Uncouth

Once per scene, at the cost of 3 karma points, the GM can rule that you failed a given social challenge due to your social ineptitude.

Underpowered

You have 4 powerup slots instead of 6.

Weak

You have trouble with forced marches, etc. At the cost of 3 karma points, the GM can limit your ability to perform demanding physical tasks over long periods of time. At the cost of 2 karma points the GM can enforce your weakness by making you redo tests that relies heavily on endurance.

Chapter 4. Skills

There are 6 skill levels: Untrained, Novice (d4), Journeyman (d6), Advanced (d8), Expert (d10), and Master (d12).

Example: A character who is a Journeyman in the Melee Combat skill will roll d10 d6 whenever she makes a melee attack (provided her base die is d10).

New characters start with 3 skills at the novice (d4) level, 2 skills at the journeyman (d6) level, and 1 skill at the advanced (d8) level, all other skills are untrained.

Table 1. Skills

Skill	Description
Acrobatics	Climb, jump, tumble and stunts.
Analysis	Research or investigate an area, item, situation, etc.
Appraisal	Estimate price and authenticity of artwork, gems, coins, weapons, armor, buildings, etc.
Arcana	Cast magical spells. You must have the Magic User trait to learn this skill.
Athletics	Run, march, swim, endure physical stress.
[Craft]	[craft] can be a craft, art or science such as alchemy, blacksmithing, carpentry, engineering, gambling, masonry or painting.
Creature Lore	Guestimate an approximation of a key knowledge such as Steps, Stress Threshold, a Skill Score, etc.
Deception	Disguise, bluff, lie, impersonate.
Geography	Travel routes, local area knowledge, imports/exports, local prices, local laws.
Healing	First Aid, identify diseases and poisons.
History	Local lore, ancient lore. Knowledge of the old gods, of ancient cultures, races heroes and items.
Insight	Gain insight into the motivations and feelings of another person.
Melee Combat	Attack with melee weapons.
Negotiation	Intimidation, haggling, interrogation.
Range Combat	Attack with ranged- and thrown weapons.
Reaction	Avoid traps, dodge explosions and other area effects.
Riding	Horses, stags, griffins.
Stealth	Hide, sneak, camouflage.
Survival	Hunting, gathering, direction sense.
Thievery	Pick locks, slight of hand.
Willpower	Resist interrogation and magical domination.

Chapter 5. Gear

New characters start with 2 items from the Weapons table, 1 item from the Armors table, and 4 items from the Gear tables.

Load Points

Items have Load Points that represent how difficult they are to lug around. A character can carry 10 load points worth of items. Certain traits, spells, enchantments, can modify the character's carrying capacity.

Equipment Slots

A character has 8 equipment slots, meaning that she can carry 8 "relevant" items. Items that are not essential to the game (undergarments, grooming equipment, love letters from the sweet heart, etc.) or that have negligible weight (maps, drawings, letters, jewelry) do not count.

Food, money, ammo

We do not bother with those things in KISS. Unless the GM says otherwise, you never run out of ammo, food or petty cash. Wealth is measured in XP, and XP can be converted to items.

Table 2. Weapons

Weapon	Load	Close	Near	Far
Unarmed Combat	0	1	-	-
Knuckledusters	1	d4	-	-
Knives	1	d4	d4	-
Staves, clubs, batons	2	d6	-	-
Javelins	1	d4	d6	-
Light swords, axes, spears	3	d8	-	-
Heavy swords, axes, polearms	4	d10	-	-
Short bows, light crossbows	2	-	d6	d4
Long bows, heavy crossbows	4	-	d10	d8
Slings, hand crossbows	0	-	d4	-
Musket pistols	1	d6+	d4	-
Scatterguns	3	d10+	d4	-
Musket Rifles	4	1d4	d10+	d6+

+ denotes that the die is open-ended.

Load is the number of Load Points you lose when wearing this armor.

Close damage the weapon deals to opponents that are Close to you.

Near damage the weapon deals to opponents that are Near you.

Far damage the weapon deals to opponents that are Far away from you.

Table 3. Armors

Armor	Load	Stress	Hit	Steps
Unarmored	0	10	8	±0
Leather	1	11	8	±0
Hide Armor	2	12	9	-1
Hardened Leather	1	13	8	±0
Scale Mail	3	13	9	±0
Chain Shirt	2	14	9	-1
Chain Mail	3	14	10	-1
Breastplate	3	14	11	-2
Banded Mail	4	15	11	-2
Half Plate	4	15	12	-3
Full Plate	5	15	13	-3
Shield	1	±0	+1	± 0
Helmet	1	+1	±0	± 0

Load is the number of Load Points needed by the armor.

Stress is how many points of damage you can suffer before suffering a consequence.

Hit is the target number needed to hit you.

Steps is the effect on your Step Rate.

Chapter 6. Powerups

Having chosen traits, the second thing to do is to choose your powerups. You have 6 powerup slots (meaning that you can choose up to 6 powerups). You get 10 experience points with which to purchase powerups, and you can choose any powerup that has an XP cost of 3 or lower.

NOTE

In KISS, concepts like money, gear, special items, contacts, special abilities, spells, etc. are all considered powerups. When you gain experience from adventuring, you can purchase additional powerups, or increase the oomph of the ones you already have.

Heroism

The heroism powerups boost the characters overall abilities without being linked to any particular abilities, spells, or items.

Lucky

The *lucky* powerup increases your karma reset value, giving you more karma every time a new session starts.

Table 4. Lucky Powerup

Level	XP	Description
1	2	Your karma reset value is 3
2	2	Your karma reset value is 4
3	2	Your karma reset value is 5

Take the hit (XP cost: 1)

When one of your opponents attacks one of your allies, you can spend 1 karma and declare that the opponent attacks you instead. This only works if the opponent is able to attack you the same way as they intended to attack your ally.

Hero

The *hero* powerup gives you the ability to add a hero die to your rolls. The higher level you attain in *hero*, the bigger your hero die.

Table 5. Hero Powerup

Level	XP	Description
1	10	Your hero die is d4

Level	XP	Description
2	2	Your hero die is d4+
3	3	Your hero die is d6
4	4	Your hero die is d6+
5	5	Your hero die is d8
6	6	Your hero die is d8+
7	7	Your hero die is d10
8	8	Your hero die is d10+
7	9	Your hero die is d12
8	10	Your hero die is d12+

Magic

Magic powerups are essentially spells. Some spells cost karma to cast. Some spells power levels can be increased if you pay a lot of karma. If you don't have enough karma to cast a spell, you can cast it as a ritual: 15 minutes per karma point required. Casting spells as rituals causes one stress point of damage per karma.

Spells can be instant, sustained, or have a fixed duration.

- Instant spells are fire-and-forget.
- Fixed-duration spells last as long as the duration description of the spell.
- Sustained spells must be sustained by spending a number of Steps each round. See the [Combat](#) chapter for more info about Steps. All spells that are not instant or do not explicitly have a duration are considered to be Sustained.

Cantrip

Cantrips are seemingly simply effects that can aid the magic user in everyday situations, but they can actually be extremely powerful, especially at the higher levels. Any non-instantaneous effects of cantrips (for instance the light effects) require concentration.

Table 6. Cantrip Powerup

Level	XP	Description
1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a small sound originating from a nearby location. • Light a nearby candle. • Instantly clean a dirty object no larger than your fist. • Instantly Heat or cool a meal or a drink.
2	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a small illusionary image about the size of your fist, located in your hand or somewhere else on your person. • Make an object no larger than your fist shine with the same brightness as a candle. • Instantly clean a part of a dirty surface. The cleaned area can be as large as a dinner plate.
3	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repair a break or tear no larger than your fist. This effect also removes rust, scratches and wear. • Telekinetically move nearby object that weighs no more than • Make an object no larger than your fist shine with the same brightness as a torch. • Instantly light a bonfire. • Instantly create one basic meal, including water. • Open a tiny portal to a personal alternate dimension where you can store items no larger than your arm. The items can be retrieved when you cast this spell again.
4	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summon a spiritual servant that can do simple tasks such as cleaning, sewing, mending. The spiritual servant has the same physical strength as a small child, but same size as the caster. • Instantly create a bonfire, even though you have no fuel. • Instantly create one "fancy" meal, including water and ale.
5	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tiny hut\$\$\$\$. • Instantly tidy and clean dirty and untidy up room. • Instantly sort a row of books by author, subject and/or title. • Permanently make a small object shine with the same brightness as a large bonfire. • Instantly create a luxury banquet for 4 persons, including several courses and fine wine. • Instantly retrieve one item from your personal space directly into your hand.

Illusion

Illusion spells create images and sounds that appear to be real, but fundamentally aren't. At the higher levels, illusions can be so real that they can inflict damage and otherwise interact with living beings. Illusions can be disbelieved at the GMs discretion. It often involves pitting the disbeliever's Willpower test against the illusionist's Arcana.

Table 7. Illusion Powerup

Level	XP	Description
1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a small, animated illusory image the size of your head that lasts as long as you sustain it.• Disguise self. Change your clothing, gender, race and physical appearance. light sword. You can use your Arcana skill to attack with the weapon.• \$\$\$\$ Message (range: 50 meters)
2	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create an illusory melee weapon that has the same characteristics as a light sword. You can use your Arcana skill to attack with the weapon.• Disguise other. Change clothing, gender, race and physical appearance of an ally in sight.• Disguise self for 8 hours.• \$\$\$\$ Message (range: 500 meters)
3	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create an illusory ranged weapon that has the same characteristics as a heavy crossbow. You can use your Arcana skill to attack with the weapon.• \$\$\$\$ Ephemeral Bolt.• \$\$\$\$ Invoke duplicity.• Illusory Dwelling.• Illusory Wall of fire.• Disguise Other for 8 hours.• Disguise up to 8 allies in sight.

Level	XP	Description
4	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an illusion of a creature you know. You inhabit the illusion and can act completely as if you <i>are</i> that creature. You can even interact with your surroundings and do things such as lift a mug of ale and take a swig, open a door, etc. You can cast spells through the illusion, but you cannot concentrate on any spells. This illusion lasts for up to 24 hours, it can be dispelled by you at will, and it is dispelled automatically if you suffer damage, fall asleep or go unconscious. Food ingested while inhabiting the illusion does not affect you; you do not get full, it does not satiate your hunger or thirst, nor can you get drunk or poisoned. While the illusion is active you cannot control your own body at all, so it would be a good idea to lay down. \$\$\$\$ You cannot be • \$\$\$\$ Mirror Image (3 · Invoke Duplicity) • \$\$\$\$ Illusory summoned horde of monsters. • \$\$\$\$ Message (no range limit) - costs 1 karma per sentence (about 20 words). • Disguise up to 8 allies in sight for 8 hours.

Equipment

Ship Owner (XP cost: 3, 5, or 8)

You own a spaceship. The amount of XP you pay for this powerup determines the size of the ship.

Fancy Item\$\$\$\$

You get a fancy item corresponding to the number of experience points put into this powerup. It is up to you and the GM to figure out how you get your hands on this item. If you loose or break this item, you do not get the XP back.

NOTE

that the GM may "give" you an item, but you must still pay a sum of XP in order to be able to attune to it (use it).

Chapter 7. Combat

There are a number of common terms used in combat. When you understand them all, you'll have a pretty good idea how combat works.

Initiative

Combat is divided into rounds, in which combatants act in turn. At the beginning of each round, each side chooses one character to roll a Reaction skill test. The side with the highest roll gets to go first that round.

NOTE

This means that sometimes, one side gets to act twice in a row.

Rounds

During a combat round, you have 5 Steps and 1 Action which you can take in any order. For instance, you can take 3 Steps, your main Action, and then up to 2 more Steps.

Step Rate

Normal characters have a Step Rate of 5. This means that they get 5 Steps each round, however certain traits can modify the number of Steps you get each round. For instance, a creature with [Short Legs](#) would only have a Step Rate of 4, meaning that they get 4 Steps every round, and only gain 4 more Steps when they converted their Action to Steps. Certain items, such as armors and helmets, may further reduce your Step Rate.

Steps

The most common use of a Step is to move 1 square in any direction, but there are more uses than that. You can:

- Spend one Step to move 1 square in any direction.
- Spend 3 Steps to get up from prone position.
- Sustain a spell by expending a number of Steps equalling your Step Rate.

NOTE

Some groups (or encounters) do not use squares, but may instead use a more narrative based approach. In these cases, you should be able to expend 4 steps to move from near range to close range of an opponent or expend 8 steps to move from near range to far range of an opponent.

Actions

The most conventional use of an action is to attack. However, you can also:

- Spend your Action to attack an adjacent opponent with the Melee Combat skill.
- Spend your Action to attack an opponent with the Ranged Combat skill.
- Spend your Action to cast a spell.
- Spend your Action to get 5 more Steps.

Range

There are 3 types of range: *Close*, *Near*, and *Far*.

Close

An opponent in Close range is typically in a square next to you, and can usually be attacked with melee weapons.

Near

Opponents Near you are usually within 5 squares of you. This means that you can take 5 Steps to move up to the opponent and attack with the Melee Combat skill. Almost all ranged weapons can reach opponents Near you. The GM should determine the "range" of the Near distance on a per-encounter basis.

Far

Opponents that are Far away from you can only be attacked with Ranged Combat. It would require at least 15 Steps to reach such opponents.

NOTE

Environmental effects such as wind, rain, poor lighting, etc. can reduce the range thresholds of the Near and Far distances. For instance, the GM might rule that, for a given battle taking place during a thunderstorm at night, the Near distance is 2 squares and the Far distance is 6 squares.

Stress

Damage, wounds, stress and strain are represented by Stress Points. If a character accumulates 10 Stress Points (this is called the Stress Threshold), they receive a Consequence and reset their stress-counter. Stress points do not carry over.

Armors can increase a character's stress threshold such that they can accumulate more than 10 points of damage before suffering consequences.

Damage from *vorpal* attacks are carried over and can therefore cause multiple consequences from a single attack. Luckily vorpal attacks require special weapons and/or special heroic powerups.

Example

If a character with 8 stress points receives additional 24 stress points from a single strike, they get one consequence, and the stress counter is reset to zero. Thus it would not have mattered if the character got a 2-point wound or a 1000-point wound.

Example

If a character with 8 stress points receives additional 24 stress points from a single *vorpal* attack, they get 3 consequences, and the stress counter is now 2 ($8 + 25 = 32 = 3 \cdot \text{consequence} + 2 \cdot \text{stress}$).

Stress and consequences is a way of ensuring that characters do not get one-shot-killed. Under normal circumstances, it would require a number of hits to kill a character. Vorpal attacks ensure that certain rare kinds of attacks can still kill a character in one go.

Table 8. Stress and Consequences

Consequences	Effect
0	No effects, base die is nominal (usually d10).
1	Base die is one step below nominal (usually d8).
2	Base die is 2 steps below nominal (usually d6).
3	Base die is 3 steps below nominal (usually d4).
4	Unconsciousness.
6	Death.

NOTE

Some NPCs can suffer more or fewer consequences, and some have higher or lower stress thresholds than normal characters.

Appendix A: Appendix

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