minim

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Hello! Minim is a simple role-playing game rules system! A RPG is really fun and you should try it – it is a hobby that promotes problem-solving, creativity, teamwork, storytelling, is free to play and can be enjoyed by all ages[1]! From Wikipedia:

> table-top role-playing game, is a form of role-playing game (RPG) in which each person playing the game will make-believe that he or she is a character in the game. A person playing the game will tell the action of his or her character, and a system of rules will tell whether the action can be done or not. The game will happen in a made-up world that is controlled by another person playing the game, called a gamemaster (GM). The gamemaster tells the game's story to the players, tells them where they are in the game world, and plays the part of all the Non-Player Characters (NPCs) and monsters that the players meet.

You can find a lot more information and ready-to-play adventures and other products and manuals in many bookstores, libraries, online...

The normal quantity of players for a gaming session is from 3 to 5 plus a game-master. A gaming session lasts anywhere from a couple of hours to a whole day.

Why rules?

You can be wondering: *this game is more like group storytelling, why should I bother with rules at all?* The rules come in to prevent the sort of thing that happens when children play robber and cop: *I shoot you! No, you miss! No, I got you, you're dead! No, you missed me...* The rules described here also help the game-master to prepare fair and interesting situations for the player characters (PCs).

The game-master has the last word on any decision about rules and everyone should remember that the game is meant to be fun for everyone or else why play? The GM needs to try his best to provide challenges that are neither too easy nor too hard for the player character group.

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1   Although certain products are targeted to either younger or older generations

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Philosophy

minim is short-hand for *minimalistic*. It tries to be a very simple game that can be played using only normal dice (six-sided die) – ideally 2 per player. Miniatures or extra dice can be used to represent in-game situations but they are entirely optional!

This means that the rules are easy to learn as you read this document and that new rules are intuitive to make on-the-spot for cases that are not covered here.

Being so simply structured it also becomes quite easy to convert existing characters, adventures and concepts and also create news ones. One of the core ideas behind this design was for it to be almost as simple to create NPCs during a game as out of it, unlike most other systems which require a varied amount of preparation in advance.

To keep the rules this simple and short unfortunately some realism has to be discarded. I did my best to keep it as realistic as possible in the sense that dangerous actions can quickly become fatal if not dealt with some care.

It is also a generic system, which means that you can play anything from pirate-of-the-Caribbean to medieval fantasy to science-fiction settings using a single system of rules. And even mix them all if you are feeling like it!

The focus of this game is to keep the narrative flowing fast and bother the players as little with rules as possible while maintaining some semblance of realism.

Rules

Attribute and skill values

There are 3 attributes (physical, social and mental) and each of them have 5 skills. Attributes and skills will be defined on this scale:

Value	Attribute	Skill
1	Very weak	Null
2	Weak	Practiced
3	Mediocre	Professional
4	Strong	Specialist
5	Very strong	Master

Tests for actions

To determine if an action is successful choose the 1 attribute and 1 skill that are the most relevant and for each of them roll 1 die. For each roll, the *partial result* is determined through a simple comparison:

- If the roll is lower than the attribute or skill's value then you have a success (+1)
- If the dice roll is the same as the target value, you have a neutral result (0)
- Otherwise, a higher roll than the target value is a failure (-1)

Then sum the first and second partial results to get the attempted action's *final result*:

Sum	Result
+2	Critical success! The outcome was achieved in great manner. Benefits will be enhanced; or the result will last longer; or be attained more quickly...
+1	Success. The intended outcome of the action is achieved.
0	Neutral. A slightly positive or slightly negative unintended outcome happens; or the outcome is partially achieved, allowing for a more favorable second attempt...
-1	Failure. Nothing happens but retrying is usually possible if the situation allows for it.
-2	Critical failure. The outcome of the action was not achieved and disaster ensues: the exact opposite of what was tried is achieved; or someone is hurt or put in danger in the process...

Sometimes it will be hard to decide which skill to use for a certain action. In these cases you can instead use the relevant attribute value for both rolls. This is called an *attribute test*.

Test bonuses and penalties

Often you will find that in-game circumstances will make certain actions easier or harder than they normally are. For example: trying to run with your legs tied up would be much harder than normal! Bonuses can be:

- +1 to skill and attribute values for small advantages
- +2 to skill and attribute values for big advantages

Similarly penalties can be:

- -1 to skill and attribute values for small disadvantages
- -2 to skill and attribute values for big disadvantages

Multiple bonuses or penalties can apply to a single action. For example: a hero could be trying to hit a monster while he has the upper ground (small advantage) but his sword's tip is broken (small disadvantage) and the monster is completely unaware to their presence (big advantage). Sum all applicable bonuses and penalties together to get a final modifier then apply it to the values being tested.

Regardless of bonuses and penalties, attribute and skill values can only go as low as 1 or as high as 5.

A character can gain a +1 bonus by taking a much longer amount of time performing an action than it would usually require (unless circumstances make it impossible to properly concentrate on the task).

Characters

Each player character starts with one attribute with value 4, another with 3 and a last one with 2. They can then distribute 6 points on the skills of their highest attribute, 4 on skills of the middle one and 2 on the skills of the lowest. They can then distribute 4 points into one or more abilities of their choosing.[2]

These are normal starting characters which are medium-to-strong habitants in the game world. Stronger or weaker starting characters can be made if the game-master approves of it. Traditionally they grow in power as the game progresses by acquiring in-game equipment or more rarely gaining a bonus skill point or on occasion a bonus attribute point. An idea is to reward the best player or best action at the end of the session with a bonus skill point although this could quickly add up into very powerful characters.

Non-player characters can be made with as many points as the game-master (or *narrator*) desires. Ideally he should not be spending points at all but using the table given before to determine the values for NPC skills and attributes as they come into play[3]. Naturally a powerful villain will have more points than the average peasant and animals like dogs and cats will have even less.

Physical

The physical attribute governs everything that a character tries to do with it's body.

Brawl: fighting at close quarters with a weapon, improvised weapon or bare-handed. Martial arts. Grappling.

Coordination: manipulating objects with your hands. Driving, cleaning...

Fire: using missile ranged attacks like a firearm or bow-and-arrow to hit a target.

Sport: athletics, acrobatics. Balance. Running, jumping, reaching...

Stealth: moving undetected.

Social

The social attribute is the realm of interaction with other humans or sentient beings. It also comprehends the perception of the external world and self-esteem.

Animal handling: interaction with beasts and critters. Riding. Farming. Survival.

Coercion: intimidation, bribery. Street smarts.

Communication: manipulating, barter, banter, partying, discovering rumors... Detecting lies.

Languages: each character starts with 1 language and learns a new one with each point spent in this skill. It can also be used as a normal skill to try to understand an unknown language.

Perception: awareness, readiness. Sight, smell, taste, hearing and touch.

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2   A more realistic approach to character creation is having them start with 16, 10 and 5 skill and 6 talent points then buy each skill level independently: to get to level 3 you need 5 points (2 for level 2 plus 3 for level 3). For talents you need to also buy the first level. This economically encourages players to buy a larger set of skills, avoiding wasting too much on any single option.
3   The same method can be applied to PCs too but take care not to turn the game into the situation described in the introduction.

Mental[4]

The mental attribute represents the intellectual prowess of the character.

Art: creating anything. Painting, drawing, stonework, jewelery... Repairs, manufacture, building, assembling... Forgery.

Cure: medicine, healing. First aid[5].

Security: locksmithing, lockpicking, burglary. Traps. Security systems, alarms, surveillance...

Technology: what is considered technology proper depends on the setting in question. A medieval setting could present magic scrolls and artifacts as a type of technology. Futuristic or contemporary scenarios could have computers, machines and robots... This only covers the operation of technology. Constructing, building or assembling technical devices in every setting is done by using *art*.

Wisdow: knowledge. Learning. Researching. Remembering facts.

Abilities

Abilities are actions that do not need normal tests to be used. Instead, a player rolls a single die and if the result is equal or lower than the ability value the action is successful. In case of success 1 point is lost in the ability which means continuous use becomes ever more difficult. The lost points are recovered when the character has a chance to rest (usually at the end of the day).

Again the values for abilities range from 1 to 5 points.

As a guideline for ability power an ability that targets a single character should cause 2 points of damage and abilities that affect an area (multiple targets) cause 1 point of damage. Players should decide what their own abilities can do based on this rule and as always the GM has the final word on what is allowed.

Unlike skills there is no set list of abilities. Each character is expected to be unique and feature it's own. There is no problem, of course, in using famous abilities (like Hadouken, The Force, Magic Missiles, Ultima or the Round-House kick) or reusing existing ones and adapting them. An ability does not necessarily needs to involve combat or magic: detecting lies or leadership could be abilities as well.

Magic

Any spell is a single ability. Magic cure works like the comparison rule: 1 damage point is cured if the spell affects a group or 2 if it affects a single target.

Spells can also give bonuses and penalties to individual and groups in the same values or cause one of the neutral attack effects described in the combat section to a certain area.

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4   *Sanity tests* are an optional type of mental check that can be used to simulate fear and panic for games that are more serious or realistic or special occasions on any game. A sanity test is made when something disturbing happens like the sight of something very weird, gory, horrifying... It is a mental attribute-only test and before rolling the player has to predetermine a reaction in case he fails. Example reactions are fleeing, attacking and being stunned. If he fails the test he performs the action. If there is a critical failure he will panic and do a much more exaggerated and harmful version of what he decided for or the very opposite at the GM discretion.

5   Cure can be used shortly after a wound has been received to recover 1 health point. A character can only do this on a single wounded, once per scene. Any wounds that are not treated in the scene they were caused on need to be healed naturally as explained in the section about recovery.

Money

Money is a very unique ability that represents the wealth of a character and is recommended to all because having no points in it means the character has literally no possessions of value except for a few items he carries around with himself.

It can also be used as an ability in a test to try to purchase an expensive or rare item. In this case though the ability point is lost permanently.

Other cultural traits like reputation, patronage and any sort of allies could also be handled in a similar fashion.

Destiny

Before any other character acts this can be used to add a small advantage or penalty to the action.

Willpower

Each player character starts with 3 willpower points and can have 5 at most. A willpower point can be spent at any time to provide a +1 bonus to an action. It can only be used once per action and represents inner strength reserves the character could muster.

1 willpower point is recovered at rest and whenever a character acts in accord with their *virtue* or *vice* if the GM finds it appropriate. Both of these are decided when the character is created and one represents a good, productive trait while the other is a negative, twisted personality flaw.

Health

Each character starts with 5 health points. Each time a point is lost the character is said to have *received 1 point of damage* but both manners of thinking are equivalent. If for any reason a character is brought down to only 2 health points he will suffer a -1 penalty in all his actions. If he reaches 1 health point the penalty grows to -2. If a character ever reaches 0 health he is dead or at least unconscious[6].

Recovery

At each rest period the player can roll a die. If the result is equal or less than the number of health points his character currently has he gains an additional point. This means that it is much harder for a badly wounded character to recover but also that a character in the brink of death can recover to full health at an average of 14 rest periods (2 weeks if resting at the end of each night) so the GM will need to impose penalties if a more realistic setting is desired.

A medic can spend a day taking care of a group of patients and if successful in a *cure* test each will receive a +1 bonus to their current health level for the purposes of the recovery test for this rest period.

A whole day in rest will also give a +1 bonus to a recovery test made on the end of that day. The same applies if the character has a comfortable resting place.

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6 Characters in a cartoon-themed game world need not die! They can just be removed from the game for a number of scenes rolled on a die and then come back as if nothing happened! On fantasy games featuring magic resurrection is a common if costly practice.

Combat[7]

Fights against monsters or any sort of foe are a lot of fun and some groups play combat-oriented games with little to no narrative storyline while others rarely if ever do. In RPGs combats can be a fun way to intercede (or advance!) the story and are heavily focused on tactical movement, planning and strategy (the way the player group as a whole chooses to handle different enemies with different abilities over time).

Combat in *minin* is made to be fast and short. Characters with high physical abilities and skills can be very deadly and even the weakest foes in number can suddenly become effective if they start to score many neutral attack rolls! A typical player group against a very large number of creatures has little chance, especially in the dozens as can happen in some other games. A battle with 16 participants is the very maximum recommended amount and even then it could slow the game down.

Using miniatures, extra dies or drawing to create a map and represent characters as they act in such situations can be very helpful but are not mandatory. Erasable drawing boards are extremely useful for quickly creating maps to place the markers on!

Initiative

Especially when a battle starts but also during other moments of the game it becomes easier to determine in exactly what order each character in scene gets to act. This is done by a *perception* test. Characters who score higher act first. How to untie rolls is up to the GM and the number of tied opponents: a single die dispute, whoever has the higher physical attribute value and choosing an arbitrary order are all valid options.

As soon as the acting order is defined the next character has his *turn:* a period of time at which he can act, doing a single action such as attacking, moving, equipping something, shouting...

Surprise

Some combats start with one side unaware of being attacked. It could happen in an ambush or if that group is distracted... In such cases a surprised character cannot act on the first round of battle unless it passes a *perception* test. Neutral rolls mean the character cannot act and failures mean it will also be unable to defend at all on the first turn (which gives a +1 bonus to attackers).

Weapons and armor[8]

Any weapon or armor has a -2 to +2 quality value associated with it. A typical *leather armor* is a 0 item while a mighty magical *sword of flames* is +2.

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7   Combat scenes do not need to be necessarily gory. Super-hero combats are often clean with just *wham!, smash! & pows!*
8   Optional encumbrance rule: you can carry at most 5 items. If you have 4 you suffer a -1 penalty to all rolls or -2 if you are carrying 5 items. A character in fantasy settings can buy a *Happy adventurer's kit*. The HAK is a backpack containing 1 use of each common item such as ropes, torches, food... It is assumed that the character replenishes these items at each possible opportunity (when spending a day resting in a city, for example).

Attacks

Brawl can be used to fight mêlée, *fire* to shoot missiles and *sport* to throw objects at a distance. The attacker makes a physical test plus the appropriate skill to try to hit his target. In case of success sum 1 point of damage plus the bonus of the attacker's weapon minus the target's armor to determine the total number of damage points dealt[9]. Add an extra point if the attack was a critical hit. Any successful attack deals at least 1 point of damage.

A character that spends it's action defending imposes a -1 penalty to any attack against him until his next turn.

Neutral results or critical failure examples

In a neutral result apply one of these effects to the target without causing damage. In case of a critical failure during an attack you can apply one of these to the attacker himself. Roll two dice and look-up below:

First die	Second die	Effect
Even	1	Distracts. Attackers get +1 to hit until target's next turn.
Even	2	Falls to the ground.
Even	3	Forces target to move back.
Even	4	Disarms.
Even	5	Starts grappling the target.
Even	6	Roll again.
Odd	1	Stuns. Target loses next turn.
Odd	2	Target is flat-footed. It cannot move next turn.
Odd	3	Target interacts with the surrounding area.
Odd	4	Target drops an item or piece of equipment.
Odd	5	Target's equipment is damaged.
Odd	6	Roll again.

Of course it is always nicer when someone can think of or create an effect that is relevant to the action being performed instead of checking a table every time this happens. It can be hard to be original all of the time too though so the table can help a lot!

9   So for example if a character successfully attacks with a +2 sword a target with a +1 armor will deal 2 damage (1+2-1).

Challenge

One of the hardest parts of being a game-master is trying to create (in advance or during a session) a fun adventure for the PCs to experience. Combats are especially hard to get right when you start because if a combat is too hard it becomes easy to kill the PCs and if it is too easy it can be fun but it will not necessarily challenge the group. So here is a guideline system that can be used to plan combat situations in advance.

We will use the concepts of *power level* and *challenge value* here. Power level indicates the value of the characters' abilities and skills. A character with all abilities and skills at value 3 is considered to be power level 3. Of course this is only a guideline tool since actual characters probably will not have all attributes and skills at the same values. Each power level translates to a challenge value:

Power level	Challenge value
1	1
2	2
3	4
4	8
5	16

Player characters start between level 3 to 4, so roughly at challenge value 6.

You use the power level to find the challenge value for each character and then sum them together to find out the total value of each group. So:

- A group of 2 foes at power level 3 has a total challenge value of 8 (2x4).
- A group of 5 characters at power level 4 has challenge rating 40 (5x8).

This way you can compare the PC group with a NPC group or groups and determine what are their chance to win. A hostile group that has half the challenge value of the PC group will be easy to dispose of, while one with the same challenge value is hard (50% chance of either side winning) and could likely see the death of a PC! So take it slow until everyone is familiar with the game and rules.

PCs also have the advantage of possessing *willpower* points to spend for help but remember that since the game is based on the casting of the die it is possible for bad luck to turn a would-be easy combat into a challenge of itself!

Environmental challenge modifiers

Some combats have special mechanics that affect the battle area. For example: fighting on a crumbling cave might cause ceiling rocks to fall upon the characters' head! This would be a neutral environmental condition since rocks could fall on anyone in the battlefield and needs not be taken into consideration for challenge measurement.

Conditions that affect a group more than another though need to be taken into consideration when calculating challenges. For example: a group that could prepare the room with traps and advantages before a fight begins surely will be much harder to deal with than the same group caught in the middle of their sleep in a comfortable room! Each such advantage will modify the group challenge up to 200% or down 50/% their original value.

Another example: a room that lets a group start with the high-ground could grant it a 150% modifier to their challenge.

Dungeons

The most traditional RPG adventure is the dungeon. An interesting place that a player group explores and conquers during a session. Although the term *dungeon* implies dank, dark underground structures it could just as well be a forest or skyscraper, as long as there can be connected sub-areas in which players can find combat, treasure, traps and interesting features to explore and experience.

In *minim* a guideline to constructing dungeons is to take the PC group's challenge value and offer the same amount of challenge throughout the sub-areas of the dungeon. This way it becomes an increasingly difficult task to conquer all of it but the group can explore at their leisure and go rest when their resources are exhausted. Or maybe press on and push their luck despite having had a hard time with a previous encounter? Offering healing opportunities in order to create a larger, more difficult one is also acceptable.

Don't forget to offer treasure throughout the *dungeon* so that it becomes a rewarding activity while giving incentive for the group to push on into the next challenge!

Random dungeon

A random dungeon has 1 die plus 1 rooms, 1 die divided by 2 combats and 1 die divided by 2 features:

1. Trap:
    1. On treasure
    2. On treasure
    3. On combat
    4. One of the combats is an ambush
    5. In a room
    6. At the entrance
2. Hidden treasure
3. Tests a physical skill to access an area
4. A combat can be resolved by roleplay or negotiation
5. One combat is subject to environmental modifiers
6. One of the sub-areas holds a key that unlocks a:
    1. Hard combat and great treasure
    2. Hard combat and good treasure
    3. All of the dungeon's treasure
    4. Mediocre treasure
    5. Bad treasure
    6. A whole new set of sub-areas