

SKILL SYSTEM

The breadth and depth of the ability to do things in the world is measured in large part by the skills characters develop. While social class and raw talent might create limitations, characters may theoretically acquire any skill during either the initial generation or the unfolding campaign. They may focus on improving a narrow range of skills within a specific pursuit or instead choose to acquire a wider range across disparate vocations.

SKILL GROUP

All skills belong to one of seven Skill Groups—six mundane (Combat, Craft, Lore, Nature, Physical, Social) and one special (Esoteric). Each mundane Skill Group carries a sunsign modifier between -15 and +15, as determined during character generation. Sunsign modifiers affect the Fate Rolls of mundane skills.

While skills of the Esoteric group may never receive the benefit of Fate Rolls, the character's sunsign does affect various arcane tasks, such as spellcasting, astromantic readings, and even the consumption of magic elixirs, as explained in CHAPTER 6: THE MYSTERIES.

MASTERY LEVEL

Mastery Level (ML) measures a character's ability in an attribute or skill. It is rated between 0 and 100 (or higher).

Maximum Mastery: the maximum ML characters may attain in a skill equals seven times its Skill Base (SB×7).

STAR RATING

Professional competence is often expressed on a 0–5 star scale. Many publications already list the ratings of NPCs, but they may also be determined randomly:

D100	STAR RATING	ML	RANDOM ML	COMPETENCE
01–10	zero	≤ 49	1d20+29	Amateur
11–30	★	50–59	1d10+49	Novice
31–60	★★	60–69	1d10+59	Aspirant
61–85	★★★	70–79	1d10+69	Professional
86–95	★★★★	80–89	1d10+79	Expert
96–00	★★★★★	90+	1d10+89	Paragon

SKILL INDEX

The Skill Index (SI) of a skill equals one-tenth its Mastery Level (rounded down). Skill Index is used in several rules, most prominently for making Secondary Rolls (page 62).

Examples: Mastery Level 84 has a Skill Index of 8; ML25 has SI2; and ML102 has SI10.

MASTERY TEST

Any action a character takes that involves uncertainty or risk requires a Mastery test. Characters make a test to resolve a single, discrete endeavor that takes an instant to complete—striking a foe, casting a spell, recalling lore.

SUCCESS LEVEL

To make a test, roll d100. A result equal to or less than the ML is a success (S); a result greater is a failure (F). A roll where the units (second) die is a 5 or 0 is a critical. Thus, a roll of 73 against ML70 is a failure; but a roll of 75 is a critical failure. This gives four possible **success levels** (SL):

SUCCESS LEVELS	
CF	CRITICAL FAILURE: task fails very badly.
F	FAILURE: task fails.
S	SUCCESS: task succeeds.
CS	CRITICAL SUCCESS: task succeeds especially well.

Split CF: sometimes a test result indicates two possible critical failures—one if the die roll ends in a zero (CFO) and one if the die roll ends in a five (CF5).

EFFECTIVE MASTERY LEVEL

Bonuses or penalties can modify the chance of an ML test. After accounting for these adjustments, the result is called the Effective Mastery Level (EML). Regardless of actual modifiers, most tests have a minimum EML05 and a maximum EML95. There is usually some chance for failure and success—the rules will note the exceptions.

ASSISTANCE

Characters making a test can receive assistance from others who have at least **half** the ML of the tester.

- Assistants contribute a bonus equal to their own Skill Index to the tester's EML.
- A tester can receive no more than a total +10 bonus from assistance, no matter how many assistants.
- There might be a physical limit to how many assistants can help. For example, only one or two could likely assist a surgeon testing Physician skill.

Example: a character with Tracking ML72 makes a test. Two others with Tracking ML43 and ML16 offer assistance. The first lends a +4 bonus to the test (EML76). The second cannot help because ML16 is less than half the tester's ML72.

Opposed Mastery Test

Sometimes characters make tests against one another—Stealth versus Awareness; Melee versus Dodge; Eloquence versus Eloquence. In such Opposed Mastery tests, the character who succeeds (S or CS) and also achieves the highest success level is declared the victor.

(LOWEST) CF → F → S → CS (HIGHEST)

VICTORY STARS

Certain opposed actions call for a comparison of how far the victor's success level exceeds the loser's. Each difference in success level equals one step of victory—also called one **victory star**. If both opponents fail (F or CF), neither one earns victory stars.

When a rule increases or decreases success level, there is no limit to the calculated victory margin. So, a Success (S) against a Critical Failure (CF) equals a two-star victory. If the second test suffers a -1 to success level from some condition, the victory increases to three stars (S versus CF-1). There is still no qualified difference between a CF and a CF-1, just the quantified effect of increasing stars.

Ties: a tie in an opposed test is often a perfectly acceptable outcome—there is no victor (zero stars). It simply signifies no advantage to either party.

Tiebreaks: some rules require tied Successes or Critical Successes to be broken. In such tiebreaks, a one-star victory goes to the character who rolled a higher number on the d100 used in the opposed Mastery test. If the rolls were the same, then the victor is whoever has the higher ML—or whoever rolls a higher d10 if even ML are equal. Unless noted otherwise, tied failures are not broken.

Tiebreak Example: in an opposed test, Nolora has an EML42 and rolls a 32 (S). Faldrik has an EML74 and rolls a 61 (S). Two opposing successes usually equal a tie (zero stars). However, if this successful tie needs to be broken, Faldrik receives a one-star victory because his d100 roll of 61 is higher than Nolora's 32.

ATTRIBUTE TESTS

Attributes have a Mastery Level equal to five times their ratings. Attributes have an Index equal to one-tenth ML; they may be used in Opposed tests; and they may generate Success Levels and Success Values.

TARGET LEVEL

Sometimes a d100 test is made against a number that is not technically a Mastery Level. In this instance, the number is called a Target Level (TL), but it is treated as an ML in all other respects. The Healing Roll is an example of a TL (page 185).

Skill Value Test

Whereas a Mastery test measures the success of one distinct action, sometimes characters undertake a venture that requires repeated, long-term skill-use, such as crafting a weapon or sailing a vessel. Rather than making dozens of tests throughout the process, the character resolves the task with one **Skill Value** (SV) test.

Skill Value tests not only expedite game-play but also produce more realistic in-world results. During a long crafting job, the extremes of any one roll (CF or CS) would likely be offset by all the other theoretical rolls. A Skill Value test reflects more strongly the proficiency of the tester and is not as 'all-or-nothing' as a Mastery test.

To make a Skill Value test, follow these four steps:

[1] Skill Index: note the Skill Index (SI) of the tested skill. This equals Mastery Level divided by ten (rounded down).

[2] Skill Value Modifier: make a regular Mastery test that includes any bonuses or penalties. The resulting success level produces a Skill Value Modifier:

CF: -2 SV F: -1 SV S: 0 SV CS: +1 SV

[3] Skill Value: the sum of the Skill Index (step 1) and Skill Value Modifier (step 2) equals the Skill Value (SV). Many skills uniquely interpret the SV result, as explained in their entries. Otherwise, the following generic table can be used:

SV	SKILL VALUE TEST
≤ 0	NO VALUE: test fails to produce a usable result.
1–2	LITTLE VALUE: test produces a limited or flawed result.
3–4	BASE VALUE: test produces an average result.
5	★ BONUS VALUE: test produces a one-star optimal result.
6	★★ BONUS VALUE: test produces a two-star optimal result.
7	★★★ BONUS VALUE: test produces a three-star optimal result.
8	★★★★ BONUS VALUE: test produces a four-star optimal result.
9+	★★★★★ BONUS VALUE: test produces a five-star optimal result.

Critical Failure: this is the special outcome of rolling a CF in step 2.

[4] Critical Failure: whatever the resulting Skill Value in step 3, rolling a CF on the Mastery test in step 2 can have independent, negative consequences. This varies according to the skill in question and will be noted underneath each SKILL VALUE TEST table.

Skill Value Test Example: a character crafting a sword makes a Skill Value test of Weaponcraft ML71. The skill has SI7 (step 1). The Mastery test includes various modifiers that give a total -10 penalty, so the test is against EML61.

The dice roll is 40 (CS), which grants +1 SV modifier (step 2) for a final SV8 (step 3). In the case of the Weaponcraft skill entry, such a four-star result gives the character a chance to have produced a masterwork weapon—see page 90.