

Yarn 0.2

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YARN is a tabletop role playing game (*TTRPG*) system using even polyhedral dice, from d2 to d12. For d2, roll any die, with odd (1) or even (2).

In Yarn always round down, including to the nearest die.

Σ

When the rules call for you to find Σ (the Greek letter *sigma*) for a given rank, use this table. Each Σ is the sum of all ranks up to and including the current one. 'Sigma of 4', or $\Sigma[4]$, is equal to $1 + 2 + 3 + 4$, or 10.

rank	Σ
1	1
2	3
3	6
4	10
5	15
6	21

rank	Σ
7	28
8	36
9	45
10	55
11	66
12	78

Characters

Points and Qualities

You will play the role of a player character (*PC*) in a story. Your character will have details that make them interesting, but functionally, you use *points* to assign *ranks* to your *qualities* which reflect your capabilities and limitations.

Rank and Die

A quality may have an associated die. If so, the die is twice the *active rank*. With an active rank of 4 you get a d8.

Level

PCs have *levels* that reflect how powerful they are. You begin at level 0, with 100 starting points. You can add up to 50 points in 3 *drawbacks*. Use these starting points to assign ranks to your qualities. There may be limits or conditions, such as no starting quality with an active rank higher than 5.

Leveling up

Each time you achieve a *milestone*, you *level up* by one. Each level up improves your character in several ways:

- You gain 10 plus Σ [new level] points to raise qualities.
- At odd levels you gain a new *specialty*.
- At even levels, your level *bonus* die increases.
- You get your level in *fortune* each session.
- You also gain one *flashback* with each level.

You can't raise qualities by more than 1 rank when you level up. Qualities you've acquired at rank 0 between levels can now be raised to rank 1. You may raise one attribute, but not the same attribute on consecutive level ups.

You may begin play at a higher level than 0, in which case you still increase one milestone at a time as you create your character, spending points for each level up. Make a note of the event representing each advance, to help flesh out your character's history and progression.

Attributes

Attributes are qualities innate to all characters, and provide the base dice for most activities.

An attribute's starting rank costs $\Sigma[\text{rank}]$ points. When leveling up, raising an attribute costs $[\text{new rank}]$ points.

The active rank of an attribute is half the purchase rank, so the purchase rank is equal to the die. For example, a rank 7 attribute would have an active rank of 3 (d6).

Three attributes are physical (strength, dexterity and health), three are mental (intelligence, will and charisma).

Strength: Use strength to lift or move things. Your strength also determines melee damage, and can be part of resistance rolls.

Dexterity: When trying to be physically nimble, coordinated or quick, use dexterity. When you're attacked, dexterity determines your defense.

Health: Resistance rolls always include your health as the primary. This also measures endurance, so you get your health rank in *effort* when fully rested.

Intelligence: If you're trying to think, solve a problem, remember something or recognize patterns, use intelligence. Some perception rolls also use intelligence.

Will: To focus your mind, to stay resolute, or to make some perception rolls, use will. Some resistance roll also use your will.

Charisma: If you're trying to persuade, entertain, deceive, befriend or seduce, use charisma. You may use charisma in some perception rolls as well.

rank	descriptive	die
1	feeble	1
2	impaired	d2
3	diminished	"
4	below average	d4
5	average	"
6	above average	d6
7	very	"
8	remarkably	d8
9	extremely	"
10	incredibly	d10
11	-est	"
12	legendary	d12

Skills

A *skill* is a learned quality. *Feats* are usually associated with skills. A skill's starting rank costs $\Sigma[\text{rank}]$ points. To raise the rank when leveling up, spend [new rank] points. The active rank of a skill is equal to the purchase rank, so the die is double that. If a skill is rank 4, the die is a d8.

Some skills are common to everyone at rank 0. Others are *basic*, meaning you can attempt a feat even if you don't have skill, but you keep one less die.

A skill may be *advanced*, with prerequisites for learning it or raising its rank, such as the active rank of another quality. You can't attempt a feat using an advanced skill unless your rank is at least 0 in that skill.

When you learn a skill later, after the game has started, it's at rank 0, and when you level up, you can raise it to rank 1 (d2).

Specialties

As your character gains experience, they become exceptionally good at certain things. A specialty allows you to keep another die for feats that qualify. This is more specific than a skill. For example, if you have blades as a skill, you might have katana as a specialty.

Advantages

An *advantage* is beneficial, but unlike an attribute, it's not innate, nor is it learned like a skill. You can start with up to three advantages, totaling no more than 50 points.

The starting point value for an advantage is $\Sigma[\text{rank}]$. When leveling up, raising an advantage costs [new rank] in points.

Most advantages have a *frequency* that reflects how often they come into play. Signify this with a colon, with frequency and active rank (3:4 for instance). add the frequency and active rank to get the purchase rank. For example, if the frequency is 3 (commonly) and the active rank is 4 (d8) , then the purchase rank is $3 + 4 = 7$.

frequency	
rarely	0
seldom	1
infrequently	2
commonly	3
often	4
frequently	5
continually	6

Drawbacks

Drawbacks generate more starting points for your character. The active rank of a drawback is the penalty, adding to the challenge for a feat. You can take up to 3 drawbacks to start, totaling no more than 50 points.

The starting point value for an advantage is $\Sigma[\text{rank}]$. Raising an advantage costs [new rank] in points.

A drawback's frequency may be variable, like an advantage; add frequency to active rank to get the purchase rank.

Play the game with your drawbacks in mind. If you're afraid of snakes, you won't easily agree to having one in your presence. Should you not play your drawbacks, the group may insist you pay them off with points when you level up, or even reduce your other qualities.

You may acquire more drawbacks during the game, but these don't generate points for your character except possibly when using a flashback.

Property

You start with the tools of your trade, as well as clothes, possibly a job with starting money that you can spend to get more equipment and property. If you have special weapons or other unique items, that information can be kept track of as qualities that can be taken away.

Powers

In some games, your character may have abilities beyond mere advantages. These will be setting-specific, as will how they work in game terms.

Playing the Game

One participant is the *narrator* of the story, describing the setting and the non-player characters, or *NPCs*. You and the other players decide what your player characters, or *PCs*, do and say. The narrator decides the actions and words of *NPCs*, with possible input from the *group*.

Yarn is played in *sessions*, *scenes* and *rounds*. Some sessions may have several scenes, while others might focus on one or two. In a scene, you might not need dice to converse, move about, perform routine tasks, ask questions and make plans. But if your action isn't routine, you roll dice to determine the outcome.

Sessions

A single session is like an episode or chapter. Whoever is narrating may open a session with an introduction, including a brief recap of the previous events.

Then the game proceeds in scenes, which depict the immediate experiences of the characters. A session may consist of multiple scenes.

Scenes

Before a scene, the narrator may summarize intervening events in a montage, and you may have a roll to make for your announced activity from the last scene.

The narrator then starts by describing the situation in which your characters find themselves. This may be fairly general, but more information can be revealed later.

The game then proceeds in rounds for the rest of the scene. If there isn't time pressure or imminent danger, you don't need initiative. During your turns, you can ask questions, decide what your characters are doing and saying, and rolling dice when an outcome is in doubt. If needed, you can use initiative during a player's turn.

After a scene, if enough time in the game may pass before the next scene, the narrator may ask you what you're planning to do with that time.

A session may end in the middle of a scene. When this happens, the group can choose a good spot to leave it on a cliff-hanger, to foster anticipation for the next session.

Feats

You can perform routine actions, such as moving around, picking things up, reading, driving, etc... without needing to roll dice. When attempting a feat, you're trying to do something that isn't routine (or impossible), so you roll dice to determine the outcome.

Challenge

The narrator sets a *challenge* for the feat, based on defense (if any) and other penalties that make it difficult.

Success roll

Roll dice, and if the total is equal to or greater than the challenge, then you succeed.

Margin

The difference is the *margin*. If you roll under the challenge, the margin is negative.

Rounds

Universal Event: In a round, first the narrator may have a *universal* event affecting multiple characters. You may have an *object* roll to make.

Turn Order: The players then decide which of them will take the first *turn*. If they can't decide, the narrator chooses. After the first player is done with their turn, they select which player will take the next turn, who then chooses the next player, and so on, until all of the players have had a turn. Then start the next round.

Turns

For your turn, the story is from your character's point of view. They directly affect or are affected by what happens.

Current Attribute: The first thing you do on your turn is choose a *current* attribute. When your actions are aligned with this attribute, you can do more.

Initiative: Next, if the order of events is important, roll an *initiative* feat, with your current attribute as the primary, and a secondary (usually dexterity). The total of your roll becomes your initiative for your turn.

Events and phases: Events, including your character's *phase*, are resolved in descending order of initiatives. For ties, you decide the order of events within that initiative.

Subject: You are only active once in a round, during your phase, when your character is the *subject* of the story. While your character is active, you can do things and move around with remaining steps, in any order. Other characters, including PCs, can't initiate independent

actions or movement. You will only get one feat during your phase, but it may be part of a *combination*.

Object: When your character is the *object*, you're passive; you can't initiate independent actions. An event or attack that targets your character while they are the object takes place either before or after your phase. You may have two object rolls to make during your turn, one before and one after your phase.

Other Turns: During other players' turns your character is passive, not the object or subject, and can't be directly targeted by NPCs, but may become an incidental target, and may have an opportunity for a declared *reaction*.

Reaction: You may save enough steps at the end of your phase, and declare a triggering event or condition, and what your reaction will be while you are passive, if that condition is met, you can react immediately (not with a feat) after that action. You cannot attempt a feat For instance, you could announce you are turning to face an attacker should they try to get behind you, and save a step to do so.

NPCs: Each NPC gets one phase in a round, usually with at least five steps. In order to target you, they have to be active during your turn. If an NPC has a higher initiative than yours, they're active before you. If their initiative is less than yours, they wait until after your phase.

An NPC that is active during your turn moves and acts in relation to your character, or to other NPCs. The other PCs can't be directly targeted, but they may become collateral targets (auto-fire, area effect, etc...).

Getting Dice

Each feat has a *primary* attribute that gives one base die. For example, when dancing, dexterity is the primary. You must roll your base die. You may choose *bonus* dice that apply, but no more than one bonus of each type.

Secondary: You can get a bonus die from a *secondary* attribute, chosen by the narrator. For dancing, the narrator might give you a secondary die for charisma.

Skill: If it applies, a skill bonus die is twice the rank.

Advantage: You can get an advantage die, such as for being quick, or having a good memory.

Enhancement: A feat may be *enhanced* by another factor, usually an outside force or piece of equipment. This could be a targeting device, or powered armor, or a bless spell, or a library computer, or a magic sword.

Time: You can use extra steps to get a bonus. It costs $\Sigma[\text{rank}]$ in steps to get the bonus die. Rank 4 (d8), would take $\Sigma[4]$, or 10 additional steps. You can't get a time bonus higher than the highest bonus from another source.

Effort: You start with as much unused *effort* as your health rank. Effort can be used to add a die to a roll for certain actions. The die you gain is equal to the lower of your primary and secondary attributes.

Level: You get a die equal to your level for some rolls, such as perception, resistance or when you're unopposed. If it's higher than other bonuses, reduce it to the next highest die.

Rolling

When you have gotten your dice, roll them all and then determine the total as follows:

Kept Dice

Unless otherwise specified, you keep your choice of two of the dice you rolled. You may wind up keeping fewer or more dice.

- If you are attempting a basic skill in which you don't have at least rank 0, then keep one less die.
- If your target is *evading*, keep one less die.
- If you're using one of your specialties, then keep an additional die.
- If you're using a ranged weapon in the same zone (*point blank*), keep an additional die.

Fortune

Each session, you have as many fortune as your level. They don't accumulate; those you don't use you lose.

- You can use one fortune to keep an additional die.
- A fortune can also be used to '*explode*' a die. When a kept die has come up maximum (an 8 on a d8 for instance), then after you add it to your total, you can use a fortune to re-roll it and add that to the total as well. If the die comes up maximum again, you can use another fortune to explode it again, and so on.

Total

Add all of your kept and exploded dice to get the total.

Steps

Think of steps as either increments of movement, or as the steps involved in performing some task.

Your current attribute's rank is how many steps you get for the round. The step cost for actions based on your current attribute is one for one.

You can use two steps to get one step towards an action not based on your current attribute. Some activities require a type of attribute to avoid this, such as shifting, which requires two steps if your attribute is not physical.

When you're active, you can use your remaining steps to move around and do things in any order you wish.

action	steps	notes
shift or turn around	1	physical (x2 mental)
punch, knife, pistol	2	
kick, sword, rifle	3	
heavy weapon	4	
grab item	1	
drop item	0	
use tool	1+	
evade	1	physical
active defense	1	physical
active perception	1+	mental (x2 physical)
think	1+	mental
drop to ground	1	
get up	2	

Movement

As long as you are mobile and still have enough steps remaining, you can move. Each *shift* of about 5 feet, or 1 ½ meters, takes a step during a physical turn. You only get one feat during your phase, but you can spend steps moving both before and after a feat.

Movement is only aligned with physical attributes. If your current attribute is mental, each shift requires two steps.

Zones

Sometimes, it's enough to know the distance between characters or features in a scene, especially if they are not spread out laterally relative to each other. If relative position becomes important, such as in combat, the setting for the scene can be expressed in simplified *zones*.

The exact size of zones is not as important as their relationship to each other. In combat, one zone can be a small room, or about 10 feet (3 meters) across.

More than one character can be in a zone (as long as it's plausible), but they are not automatically *close*.

Moving to an adjacent zone usually takes two shifts, but this can be adjusted for the situation. For instance, if you're waiting around the corner as someone passes the open door, you can close for one step.

Closing with someone in the same zone usually takes one shift, as does pulling away.

Attacking

When you attack, announce a *location* on your target. The narrator gives the location a *threshold* number.

Commit the steps for that attack, then roll dice, using the target's defense and any other penalties for the challenge, to see if you succeed and to get the margin. If you do succeed, determine damage. Subtract protection from damage to see what gets through. The target then makes a resistance roll to find the severity of the injury.

Using Margin

If you succeed, you can use margin as a resource for that attack. You can split your margin up between uses.

If the margin from your attack exceeds the threshold, you can use it to hit that location for specific effects.

Margin can increase damage. Add the margin committed, times the damage multiplier, to minimum damage.

If it's a kinetic attack, you can increase knock-back. To get extra shifts, use $\Sigma[\text{shifts}]$ margin. For example, if you want to knock them back by 3 shifts (15 feet), you would use $\Sigma[3] = 6$ margin.

You can use margin to restrain, subdue or incapacitate. Apply margin is a penalty on their attempt to escape.

If you miss a roll, the narrator may use negative margin to complicate the outcome for you.

Melee reach

A standard melee weapon (or a kick) has a reach of 0. It can hit a target in the same zone without closing.

A long weapon can attack someone in an adjacent zone.

A short weapon or punch can attack if you've closed.

A weapon that's designed to thrust can also lunge, adding one shift to weapons range for an additional step. Close becomes 0, and 0 becomes 1.

Only very long weapons (long chains or lassos for example) can reach 2 zones or more distance. Some weapons may have a penalty for closer distances, or might even have a minimum distance.

These distances are situational, and you should adjust them if needed. For example, if you're waiting around a corner in one room as someone walks by the open door in the other room, you can close with a single step. Have it make sense in the situation.

Distance attacks

Thrown or propelled weapons may have an increased challenge, based on their distance rating. If your target is in the same zone, they're point blank (keep an extra die). For each distance increment, add one to your challenge.

For example, you're firing a pistol with an increment of 2, so anything less than 2 zones away has no penalty. If your target is 2 zones away, add one to the challenge, at 4 zones, add two, at 6 zones, add three, etc...

Defense

Your defense, assuming you're fully mobile and aware, starts at your dexterity rank. To this you add penalties for other factors, such as distance, lighting, cover, etc... If you're actively defending, also add your skill rank (if applicable). You can't evade and actively defend.

Damage

Damage is a standard number for the weapon; you don't roll for it. You may be able to use margin to increased the damage, depending on the attack. An attack may apply a multiplier of more than 1. A multiplier of 2 would add margin times 2 to the damage.

Damage is written as the minimum, and if the margin applies, the multiplier. It could be 7, or $5+x$, or $10+2x$

Melee damage is your strength rank, plus a modifier for a weapon, and any margin you commit to damage.

Some weapons might do special damage, or have special armor effects.

Protection

If you do take damage, subtract the location's protection (usually torso armor) from the damage, and if any clears through, your character is injured.

Resistance and injury

If you're injured, make a resistance roll with the cleared damage as the challenge. Resistance rolls use health, and either strength or will (depending on the the attack).

If you succeed, the injury is severity of one. If you miss the roll, increase the severity by the difference.

Each time you accrue your health in total severity, you're at an additional +1 penalty for every roll you make.

Location

When you've announced a location in your attack, and your margin is at least equal to the location number,

then you can use margin to make it a more specific injury. In that case, use the location's protection.

If your attack does hit a location, then in addition to the standard penalty for total severity, the injury is specific, with corresponding effects on the target.

A location can be injured more than once, and each injury is kept track of separately. You can target an existing injury, and if successful, it increases the severity of that injury, along with cumulative effects for the location.

location	margin	effects
arm	3	Severity is penalty for that arm
leg	3	Severity slows relative speed
weapon	4	1 x health, drop weapon
hand	5	1 x health incapacitates hand
head	6	1 x health = unconsciousness
neck	7	1 x health impairs breathing
eye	8	1 x health blinds
heart/lungs	9	1 x health is soon fatal
brain	10	1 x health is instant death
injury	+2	Adds to specific injury's severity

Effort

You have as many effort at the start of the game as your health rank. Effort can be lost as a result of extended arduous activity, like running or fighting. You can also use effort to gain a bonus die for a feat.

Effort is reset after a full rest (8 hours), although some may be regained after a shorter period.

Healing

Your character reduces their total severity by 1 at a time, usually once per day of relative rest. If you have specific injuries, you decide which injury heals by one severity, but the same injury can't heal twice in a row.

Your rate of healing may change based on medical treatment or on level of activity. Some injuries may be serious enough to require more time, special care, or even be impossible to heal from without something like magic or advanced medical technology.

Flashbacks

You have a flashback for each level, usable on your phase during a scene, allowing you to claim a previously unspecified quality, by means of a remembered sequence explaining how you attained that benefit.

You and the group together determine the specifics of the remembered event, with guidance from the Narrator. The group may not give you exactly what you wanted (it can be a bit like a Genie's wish).

A flashback need not involve your character. It could be finding an item, when the group collaborates on some moment of its history that helps identify its abilities; or it could be reconnecting with an old ally who has gained a new ability from when last you knew them.

The point total of the new quality can't surpass your current level, unless some new drawback can factor into the flashback, for extra points.

Death

The group should decide if it's even possible for a player character to die as a result of the events in the story. If it is, you may all agree it will be scripted in some way, that it doesn't come as a surprise, at least not to the player whose character doesn't make it.

Then there is letting the dice decide. When it's possible to perish unpredictably in your game, most players are more circumspect about their activities. The daredevil becomes the exception.

If it is possible for your character to die from injuries, you should all agree to a total severity that, if reached, is fatal. A standard suggested total is one plus level, times your health. So, with a health rank of 7, at level 0 you would die at 7 total severity; at level 1 you would die at 14 severity; at level 2, you 'd die at 21 severity; etc...

More specific injuries may incapacitate, or even be fatal. You may agree that a called shot to the head, with severity equal to your character's health, means unconsciousness, and if to the vitals, death.

In a long enough story, your character may of course die of old age. If so, then physical and eventual mental decline would first begin at an appropriate age.

If your character does die, or become incapacitated for an extended period, you may be able to create a new character to join the story, or the narrator may have back-up characters on hand to choose from. When bringing in a new character, they start at the same level as the lowest level PC in the group.

Examples

Details

Your character becomes more interesting as the game progresses, but it helps paint a scene if you have at least a few details at the beginning. The setting and assumptions for the game will inform and possibly modify what's here. These examples are for modern humans.

Age

For the starting age of your character, check to see how many of your starting points are tied down in qualities other than attributes. Take starting points (including drawback points), minus the points spent on starting attributes. Divide this by 10, then add 17, plus one year per level. That's your minimum age. You can choose to be older, if you have a justification for your character.

Background

You may have a clear idea of where your character is from within the setting, and what that may mean for your qualities. If your story is somewhat vague, then many of those details can be discovered later, through flashbacks, or discussed between sessions with the narrator.

Description

Your background helps guide your choice for hair color, skin, eyes, features, build, voice etc... Part of what makes you distinct is also describing what you wear and the way you wield or carry your signature weapons and items.

Kind

These rules assume modern humans as the basis for the qualities. Use advantages and drawbacks to customize your character based on kind, such as elves having access to enhanced vision, longevity and magic, or halflings being undersized as a drawback. Of course, a specific setting may have its own rules about kind.

Milestones

Your characters advance by leveling up, and this happens when you reach milestones in the story. These can be explicit, some stated goals or conditions, or you may prefer to let the events of the game suggest when a milestone has been reached, as long as the policy is clear to the players.

If the characters level up after each session, it means the time scale of the overall narrative is extended, over months and years of game time between sessions, when such advancement is plausible.

More standard is to treat a larger story arc as a novel, or a season of a show. This could be many sessions, and at the end of that arc is when the characters level up.

The group may also agree that each character has a unique milestone, decided by either the group or by the narrator, when they can achieve an additional level up before a group milestone is reached. If so, then only after all characters have achieved their unique milestones do the characters become eligible for new unique milestones. No character can then be more than one level higher than the others.

Group

- After a long struggle, the culmination of a war
- Finally solving a major extended mystery
- Events leading up to an important ceremony

Unique

- Finally defeating (or being defeated by) a long-running personal rival
- Winning the hand of the princess by personally seeking out and slaying a formidable monster

Skill Ranks

The active rank of some qualities, especially skills, can correspond to a degree or certification, as a descriptive.

rank	degree	die
0	novice	0
1	initiate/trainee	d2
2	apprentice/professional	d4
3	journeyman/expert	d6
4	master	d8
5	grandmaster/doctor/professor	d10
6	Unsurpassed/leading edge	d12

Prerequisites

When a skill or other quality is dependent on one or more prerequisites, it can be no higher in rank than Σ of the lowest prerequisite's rank.

For example, assume you need math for biology, and biology for medicine. Your math and biology both have to be rank 2 to get a rank of $\Sigma[2]$, or rank 3 in medicine.

Skills List

This list assumes a modern analog. The setting may have differences. For example, if it's archaic, science may be a skill, and the basic fields of science here are specialties.

These skills are grouped by type. Each skill is underlined, and suggested specialties are indented.

Common skills, such as literacy and rudimentary math, may start at rank 0 for everyone, depending on the setting. Characters may be able drive, or ride a horse.

Basic skills are available for everyone, with no prerequisites. You can also attempt feats with basic skills even if you don't have them at rank 0, but you keep one less die.

An advanced skill is marked with an (a), and is dependent on another factor. When you're creating your character or raising a skill rank, this is usually the rank of another quality, such as an affiliation or archetype, or even another skill. A skill can have a rank up to Σ [lowest prerequisite].

If a skill or specialty is marked with (*), it means you need to specify the particular option, such as which instrument you play, and the list would be too long to include.

During play, learning or improving an advanced skill may have a quest requirement, such as traveling to the place where it is taught, to study with a master.

Combat skills

Guns

- revolver
- pistol
- rifle
- shotgun
- auto-fire
- energy pistol
- energy rifle

Gunnery * (a) (military)

Shield

- kite
- center grip
- tower

Blades

- knife
- shortsword (gladius)
- one-handed sword
- two-handed sword
- katana
- rapier

Ax

- hatchet
- ax
- battle ax
- great ax

Pole arm

- spear
- lance
- glaive
- poleaxe

Bludgeon

stick/cudgel
baton/club
hammer
mace
staff

Unarmed

punch
kick
grapple
trip/flip/throw

Bow

short bow
longbow
crossbow

Throwing

rock
ball
disc
shuriken
knife
dart
javelin
ax
sling
atlatl
boomerang

Transportation

Driving

car
truck
tank
motorcycle

Pilot

plane
VTOL
helicopter
jet
space fighter
star ship
dirigible

Boat

rowboat
small boat
sailing
motorized ship

Submersible

small
large
SCUBA

Riding

horse
camel
elephant
bull

Navigation

sea
land
orbital
astrogation

Science

Math

Physics (a) (math)

astro
nuclear

quantum
cosmology
relativity
thermodynamic

Chemistry (a) (math)

Explosives (a) (chemistry)

Biology (a) (math)

Medicine (a) (biology)

Diagnosis

Surgery

Geology (a) (math)

Astronomy (physics)

Engineering

Mechanical

Armaments

Electrical

Robotics (a) (electronics, mechanics)

Cybernetics (a) (biology, robotics)

Computer hardware (a) (electronics)

Computer software (a) (math)

programming

applications

Construction

demolition

Architecture –

Business

Management

personnel

resources

Accounting

Finance

Productions

Trades

Metal smith

- armorer
- weapon smith
- gunsmith

Carpentry

Weaving

Leather work

Tailor

Mechanic

- auto
- diesel
- electrical
- steam
- clockwork

Electronics

Fine Arts

Painting

- watercolor
- oil
- acrylic
- graffiti

Drawing

Photography

Sculpture

Animation

Agriculture

Farming

Livestock

Literature

Writing

fiction

stage

screen

poetry

Appreciation

critique

great works

lesser-known works

analysis

Performing Arts

Play Music * (instrument)

Compose

Prestidigitation

Mimicry

Acting

Stage

Screen

Improv

Dance

Ventriloquism

Acrobatics

apparatus *

Athletic

Sport *

Running

distance

sprint

Swimming

surface

underwater

Climbing

equipped

free climbing

tree

building

Jumping

long jump

high jump

Catching

Gymnastics

apparatus *

Knowledge

Streetwise

Outdoor Survival

terrain *

Cartography

Fishing

Hunting

Farming

Culture *

Language *

Linguistics

History

era *

Archaeology (a) (geology, history)

Botany

Herbology

Zoology

Theology

Religion *

Gambling

game *

Thief

Pickpocket

Sleight of hand

Pick lock

safe cracking

key lock

digital

Stealth

Alarm systems (a) (electronics)

Spot

Hold out

Hide

Black Market

Charisma

Negotiation

Diplomacy

Barter

Seduction

Command

Schmooze

Lie

Specialties

Some special features of a skill require a specialty.

For example, if you have throw as a skill, you could throw a boomerang, but you could only reliably expect it to come back to you if you had it as a specialty.

The group may allow what is listed as a specialty to be gained instead as an independent skill, to acquire such features without using a specialty. This does not however come with the extra kept die of a specialty.

Advantages

Affiliation

Your character is affiliated with or is a member of some group, organization or order. By having an affiliation, you may be rank 0 in some basic skills (no unfamiliarity penalty). It can lend you credibility on related matters, though it need not be public. This may also unlock advanced skills, and/or provide patronage benefits. The affiliation may have requirements for gaining and/or maintaining membership, to retain the full benefit.

Once you have an affiliation, in addition to access to advanced skills and advantages, you can raise the rank of your status within the organization. Higher ranks may convey additional benefits, such as increased resources, or authority over lower ranked members.

- **A guild/union**
- **A martial arts school**
- **A magical discipline**
- **A college or university**
- **A religion**
- **A government**
- **A royal family**
- **A political party**
- **A military branch**
- **A sports team or league**

Special Item

If your character has a special item, such as a weapon, artifact or device, then in addition to other normal effects for a normal, widely available item, it provides an advantage bonus to some feat or aspect of the game. The fact that it can be taken away means it is allowed to be all the more powerful. Reduce the frequency based on how easy the item is to take away, with the minimum still being a frequency of 0, before adding the active rank to determine the purchase rank.

portability	frequency
implanted	-1
attached	-2
worn	-3
jewelry	-4
carried	-5

For a weapon this could be any benefit that is approved by the group. It could be an enhancement bonus to the attack roll, or to range, or or a combination or benefits, depending on how you divvy up the ranks.

For example, a magic sword is at active rank 5 (d10). In the current game, combat has frequency 3, so the advantage would usually have rank equal to $5 + 3 = 8$. The group decides the portability modifier would be -4, but frequency can't be less than 0, so the purchase rank is 5, and you get a +5 (d10) sword for $\Sigma[5] = 15$ points.

Wealth

The frequency is 0. Multiply your starting money by 4 for each rank (cumulative). So, multiply starting money by 4^{rank} . In a modern setting, your character might get \$5000, plus another 5,000 in assets for every year past 18, to start.

Influence

Your words and decisions reach and affect a lot of people. This is different than an affiliation or archetype, but it can enhance either. A freelance reporter might want to have both the reporter archetype, and the advantage of influence on top of that, to signify a wide readership. This is also not fame, which would be a disadvantage (you could have both).

Influence will vary in frequency, depending on the setting and scope, as well as the size of the group affected.

Improved sense

One of your senses is heightened, improved in range and effectiveness. Your active rank gives a bonus die to rolls using that sense. Frequency is based on sense:

Sense	frequency
taste	0
balance	1
touch	2
smell	3
hearing	4
sight	5

Quickness

Add a bonus die to initiative rolls. Frequency is usually 3.

Dark vision

You are able to see in the dark. What form this takes depends on the setting. The frequency is usually 3, and at intensity 6 you can see as though it is broad daylight.

Ally

Someone is willing to act on your behalf. The rank tells you their level of capability. With active rank of 4 this is someone comparable to a PC. Thus, if they're frequently with you (frequency 5), the purchase rank is $5 + 4 = 9$, and the cost is $\Sigma[9] = 45$ points.

Drawbacks.

Though you start with three drawbacks, you may acquire more during the game, or pay off existing drawbacks.

When you pay down a drawback, you're reducing its purchase rank by one. This costs the current rank in points. You can't usually go below rank 0 (residual effect).

You may develop or discover more drawbacks during the game, but you can only get points for these if they are revealed as part of a flashback.

Fame

Your face is known, and it's hard for you to move unnoticed in public. If you're famous, you may have paparazzi lying in wait to get you in an embarrassing moment. This can be in addition to influence, which can alleviate some of the pitfalls of fame.

Physical impairment

A physiological condition, disfigurement, or limitation to an anatomical function. This could include something as simple as a slight limp (for perhaps 3 points, 2:0), to being missing an arm (which could be 36 points, 4:4), to being a disembodied brain (78 points, 6:6). The penalty for some impairments would be variable, and could affect the difficulty for some success rolls, or for movement.

Infamy

Your reputation is such that if your identity is known, people will distrust, dislike or fear you. You can be both famous and infamous.

Impaired sense

One of your senses (usually the standard 5) functions at a penalty. For primary senses (sight and hearing), the penalty is the rank. for other senses it's twice the rank.

Dependent

A person or group looks to you for support. The rank reflects how much help, how often they need it, and how far you'll go to meet those needs. A retired grandparent who still has some mobility might be worth 21 points. A younger child would need frequent and substantial care, and so would be worth 36 points. A whole family or small group could be worth up to 45 points. A very large group (a species for example) that continually depends on you, and that you would stop at nothing to protect, has frequency and active rank both at 6, for 78 points.

Enemy or rival

Someone or something wishes you ill. Their capabilities and the intensity of their animus all add to the rank.

Phobia/vulnerability

You're vulnerable to or afraid of something. If it's rare (like hairless cats), then your reaction is probably worse. When it applies, you are inhibited (keep one fewer die). Your active rank is also added to penalties.

Powers

When you are using powers, you may decide that they can add another bonus category when getting dice. One of the main differences is that the range of results will be scaled up for feats using powers. Someone with one rank of super strength should be stronger than a normal person can be.

If powers beyond the ordinary are possible, they can be handled in a variety of ways. Here are suggestions:

Power pool

One method is to have a separate pool for points used to purchase powers, in addition to starting points.

Note that level doesn't matter quite as much if you use a separate power pool, as starting characters are more capable due to powers, and the return for level up points is less significant. When leveling up, you may be able to improve a power's rank at two regular points for each power point.

Powers as skills (spells)

In some games, powers may be handled as skills. There is no separate pool for power points. For this reason, spells are advanced, requiring an advantage such as sorcery, or an affiliation, of sufficient rank. The base attribute is usually mental, but the secondary can vary depending on the spell and circumstance. A game of magic may have magic as an attribute on which to base spells.

If spells are skills, then there may be some limiting factor about casting them, such as gestures, or incantations, spell points, slots, extended casting time, or even materials. One method is to have as many spell points as the total of your base mental attribute rank, plus Σ [class rank], in spell points, with higher spells taking more points. Points can restore after a night of sleep, or at some other interval, like effort, or they may take a recharge from another source, such as sun or moon light, or a special location or object, or even a supernatural being.

A magical affiliation typically has a spell list and a system for learning and casting them. The list may be extensive, and all of the spells are advanced, with your rank with the affiliation as the prerequisite. An affiliated mage will also gain patronage benefits base on their rank.

Your character may instead have the advantage of sorcery naturally, or through your own efforts, not through an affiliation. You found it, took it, were given it, or were born with it, but you didn't acquire magic at a school. Thus, your spell list may be less extensive and support from an organization won't be available. The up side is that sorcery comes with an advantage bonus die or other benefit.

Talents

Your game may have powers that are available as advantages. These may not be full-blown super-powers. For example, you might have feather-fall, where you land lightly when you fall (just how lightly would be rank dependent), but not levitation.

Bases

There are 15 possible combinations of two attributes. Not all combinations may be of use to you, but here are some examples of types of feats, along with suggestions about the primary attribute and the range.

Fighting

If you're striking a target in melee combat, you probably uses strength and dexterity, but which is the primary depends on the weapon or fighting technique.

In some situations, such as when grappling, health can even provide one of the dice.

Shooting

When you fire a gun or bow, or throw something, dexterity will probably be the primary. If you are running around while you're shooting, health will be the secondary. If you're throwing an ax, it will be strength. If you're manning a turret, use intelligence. If you're aiming and shooting at a target, use will. If you want to sign your name with bullet holes in the wall, obviously charisma is the secondary attribute.

Perception rolls

During your phase you can ask the narrator questions about what is readily apparent in the situation. Anything not immediately obvious requires a step to make a perception roll. This counts as your feat.

Your level die applies to perception rolls, signifying your increased experience.

For example, if there is an obvious chest in the corner in normal lighting, you will see it. You could ask the narrator what color it is, or rough dimensions, or its general condition, because those are readily apparent. If you want to determine if the chest is booby trapped, or read the inscription, that would require a step and a roll.

When you do have to roll, there are three combinations of mental attributes. Each offers a different kind of perception roll. Which attribute is primary may be important in some situations, and you decide this, by what you're choosing to examine and how. The applicable attributes should be decided on a case-by-case basis, but as usual, the narrator will be able to choose the secondary attribute.

- Intelligence and will are the base dice for most things, like spotting, listening, and other sense-based rolls, and interpret literal messages.
- Intelligence and charisma can be used to perceive forms, and shapes and artistic content, and interpret metaphorical messages.
- Will and charisma are usually the dice for determining if someone is lying or bluffing.

Lifting and moving

Lifting and moving are going to have strength as the primary, but the secondary attribute can vary. For explosive strength, will is the secondary. For pushing an heavy wagon up a hill, health is the secondary. If you're loading a wagon with cargo, then intelligence could even be the secondary.

Knowledge

You may be trying to remember some piece of information, such as a procedure, pattern or relationship. This will of course use mental attributes, and intelligence will probably be the primary.

Resistance

Resistance is a feat, but some bonuses may not be available, depending on the situation. If it's a physical resistance roll (health and strength), then skill, effort or time won't usually apply. A mental resistance roll (health and will) may have a skill bonus that applies. Regardless of the type of harm, your level bonus die always applies to resistance rolls.

Control

Driving, riding, flying a plane, operating machinery, even telepathic manipulation, involve controlling. Different feats call for different bases, even within the same skill. For example, fleeing on a horse through the forest, avoiding trees, would use intelligence and dexterity along with ride skill. If during the chase something spooked your horse, you might need to use ride skill with will and charisma, to settle it down.

Weapons

weapon	damage	range	notes
punch	0+x	close	2 steps
kick	+1+x	0	3 steps
knife	+2+x	close	2 steps
short sword	+3+x	0	2 steps
long sword	+5+x	0 **	3 steps (4 for lunge)
katana	+4+x	0	3 steps
rapier	+3+x	0 **	2 steps (3 for lunge)
pistol (.38)	7+x	2	2 steps
rifle (30.06)	10+x	4	3 steps
shotgun (12g)	12+x	2*	Armor x2, 3 steps
arrow (med. bow)	7+x	2	3 steps
spear	+2+2x	1	4 steps -3 at close
glave	+4+2x	1	4 steps
great axe	+6+2x	0	4 steps

*damage diminishes with distance. Full damage is point blank. Total damage is -2 per zone distance.

**lunges can attack at range 1, but keep one less die at close range.

Armor

You may have a barrier against injury, usually worn as armor, subtracting from damage inflicted by an attack. Usually, only damage that clears your armor will result in injury. Armor may be affected by type of damage.

type	armor	notes
heavy cloth	1	
leather	2	
heavy leather	3	
chain mail	6	½ prot. vs. impaling & crushing
scale mail	5	
partial plate	6	
plate mail	7	
ballistic	8	
lt. advanced	10-11	
md. advanced	12-14	
hvy advanced	15-18	

Combinations

Actions that are preparatory for a feat, or that follow it up, don't require rolls. Thus, they have to either be routine (moving, picking things up, reading text, etc...), or part of a *combination*, a sequence of actions that you roll for all at the same time.

Supporting actions

At some point during a combination, you will roll for a single feat, but this roll and other aspects of the resolution may be modified by the supporting actions.

A supporting action may be preparatory, or it may be cumulative (multiple attacks), or it may be after the feat (a finishing touch). In the case of a finishing touch, it may require margin be reserved from your feat to have that part of the combination succeed.

An example of a preparatory action is getting a bonus for a jump roll by running before you jump. The number of steps before you jump is the rank of the bonus. The maximum bonus is still equal to your primary die. If your strength is 9 (d8), then you can run an additional 4 steps to get an enhancement of d8 on your jump roll.

For a multiple attack, each attack beyond the first costs one less step, the attack roll gets a modifier, and minimum damage is increased by one.

So, if your sword takes 3 steps, and you attack 3 times, the first attack still costs 3, but two extra attacks only cost 2 steps each, for 7 steps total. You get a rank 2 (d4) enhancement bonus on your attack, and the minimum damage is increased by 2.

Or, if it's a sub machine gun that costs 2 steps, then firing continually for 8 steps could get a d12 bonus and +6 damage: 2 steps for pulling the trigger (3 bullet grouping), plus 1 step for each of 6 groupings, thus costing $2 + 6 = 8$ steps.

A followup action, or 'finishing touch', could include a jumping side kick. After the attack you have to stick the landing, and you need to reserve at least 1 margin to land. If you barely succeed in your attack, you could still do damage, but fall to the ground afterwards.

Defense

A defensive action takes one step in a physical turn or two in a mental turn. The step is committed at the end of your phase. You can adopt a stance for active defense (add skill to defense), or you can instead choose to evade for one step (attacker keeps one less die). Either way it's in effect till your next turn.

Challenges

Some things are automatic, and you don't need to roll. This set of routine actions should actually grow as your character progresses in a skill or other quality, so that what once required a roll, now happens without using your feat for the turn. Keep track of what actions become routine. Similarly, the difficulty of a feat can depend on your rank with the skill or with another quality.

Here are descriptives to go with some challenges.

trivial	3
easy	4
normal	6
moderate	9
difficult	13
formidable	18
daunting	24
insane	31
impossible	39
unimaginable	48

Flashback

Your characters find themselves in a dusty old library, closed for several decades. The information you need is in there somewhere, but none of your characters, who are all millennials, has a clue about using a library, and no one has cell service. The Dewey Decimal System might as well be Aramaic.

Fortunately, your third level character, the oldest of the PCs, sees the library, and it triggers a memory of your time as a grad student, helping sort and digitize the contents of local physical collections.

The narrator works with the group to flesh this idea out in a short scene where you were fired by an administrator who made advances that you rejected. In the flashback, we also learn that your character is color blind. This gives you 3 points, to go with 3 for your level. You spend 6 points to be rank 3 (d6) as a librarian. We then return to the present and we learn that you were an expert librarian all along and know your way around.

"Why didn't you tell us that before?"

"No one ever asked."

Options

Other attributes

Depending on the setting, you may have attributes beyond the usual 6. Each additional attribute adds 15 to starting points. These are some possibilities:

- ◆ **Reflexes:** How fast do you respond to stimuli?
- ◆ **Body:** Not just how big, but how dense are you?
- ◆ **Perception:** How acute are your senses?
- ◆ **Intuition:** How often are your hunches right?
- ◆ **Magic:** How powerful can your spells be?
- ◆ **Psionics:** Are your paranormal abilities strong?
- ◆ **Luck:** Does chance seem to favor you?
- ◆ **Appearance:** How attractive are you?

Rolling attributes

Instead of getting starting points and buying your attribute ranks, your group can roll them up randomly.

For each attribute, roll 3d10 and divide by 3, then add one. If the result is less than 6, round up, otherwise round down.

If you have no attributes at rank 7 or higher, re-roll your character. If you don't have at least 2 attributes at rank 7 or better, you can raise your next highest attribute to a 7.

This means you have one in a thousand chance of starting with an 11. It also means you have one in a thousand chance of starting with a 2.

Dice sets

You may wish to limit the sets of dice available. The number of full dice sets (d2 to d12) available is the maximum quantity of any dice in a roll. You can always downgrade to the next lower die.

For instance, if you have only three sets of dice, and when you're getting dice, you come up with 4d6+d4, downgrade one of the d6s to a d4, and roll 3d6+2d4.

The same standard should apply to all players and the narrator, even if you're all rolling your own dice.

Odd bases

If your primary and secondary attributes for a feat are both odd, you can bump the lower die up by one. For example, if you're running and trying to make it over a series of hurdles, with dexterity of 7 (d6) and health of 9 (d8), you could bump the lower die by one and roll 2d8.

Range

When you roll, there may be a range of possible results, based on the main quality for that feat. This quality can be an attribute, a skill, an advantage, or even a drawback. The situation should make this clear. For example, you might add the margin times 10% to the *minimum* for the result. Sometimes, you can achieve the minimum without having to roll. If you do roll for a chance at more, you of course run the risk of failure.

For example, when lifting, the main quality is your strength. Use your strength rank times 10 lbs. (or 5 kg). With a strength of 5, so the minimum is 150 lbs. If your margin is 5, add 50% to that, to lift 225 lbs.

Cooperating

When you are chosen to take the next turn, before initiative is rolled, you may invite other characters (including NPCs) to join your turn, your choice of who. They need not accept. If they do you are all *cooperating*.

If initiative becomes an issue, then all of the cooperating characters roll initiative as though it was their phase, based on choosing primary attributes. The actual initiative for the cooperating group (including you) is the lowest of the included characters. All of the cooperating characters' phases are at that initiative, and each may have to make an object roll before and after their phase. As the current player, you still decide the order of events for that initiative, including the other PCs' phases.

Complications

When you miss your roll, the margin is negative. If you just barely miss, failure is enough of a consequence. Anything more than that leads to complications, just how severe determined by how great the negative margin is. Complications are decided by the group.

For example, if you miss your roll by 6 the group might rule that you broke your bow string.

Trouble

When a player uses a fortune the narrator gets one trouble. These accumulate from session to session, and the narrator can later use them to impede any character or the whole group, in a variety of ways.

One trouble can be used by the narrator when you roll a 1 in a dice roll, to make you choose that as one of your kept dice.

Trouble may also be used to put impediments in your way, such as bringing in reinforcements when the group is winning, or revealing a trap. It can also be used to make you roll for what would ordinarily be routine.

Tension

In some situations the group may want the sudden outbreak of hostilities to be less common. The scene may start calm and uneventful, but when something is at stake, especially when the scene reveals competing interests, the tier of tension may escalate.

Safe

The default tier while conscious is safe, when no one is an adversary. Any competition is about negotiation, debate and at most polite argument.

Risk

You may have to accept risk at some point, where you actually stand to lose something, even if it's just money or reputation. You can also risk exhaustion or injury, as with some athletic activity. When at risk, you're more on your guard. Any argument here is more likely to become heated. Risk also means a state of vigilance.

Danger

Danger is when fight, flight or fright kicks in. It could be battle, or a hot chase, or a bomb ticking down, or a football player running headlong at you. You're having to deal with immediate potential harm or subdual. Constant danger is tiring, so it's hard to maintain for long periods.

Escalation

Normally, a situation only escalates or de-escalates one tier at a time. A conversation turns to debate, and then someone is misunderstood. A heated argument ensues, and then a vicious remark triggers a fight.

More Tiers

You may have additional tiers of tension, such as parlay before risk, and brink before danger, or even battle at the highest tier. Remember that this reduces the chance of fighting occurring during the game.

The Imagining

A fun option for creating a game from scratch is to use the *Imagining*, where character creation and setting creation happen concurrently.

Process

Decide who will choose first, then go clockwise from there. The first player names a quality. The other players determine what type of quality it is, and that choice provides the first clue about the setting and what the game will entail. Then the next player chooses a quality, and so on, with each new quality narrowing the game further. After two or three rounds, the types of activities on which the game will focus will begin to emerge, and subsequent choices can be informed by that.

After ten rounds, you have some details about the activities your characters are good at, enough to complete your characters with points after the Imagining.

Then, you should all discuss more concretely the implications of the qualities chosen, agreeing on the general parameters of the setting and style for the game.

With the general ideas in place, each player helps the character to their left finish their character with points. The level may be decided before you start the Imagining, or you may all decide after ten rounds what the point totals should be for the characters.

Then you hand the game off to the first narrator.

Narrating

There is still only one narrator at a time. The last player in the circle is the narrator for the first session. The current narrator always chooses the next, until every player has had their time. The office can pass each session, or you may agree it will pass when the highest level character achieves their next milestone, or something in between.

While a player narrates, their character may play a subsidiary role, not gaining points for those sessions, possibly even being separated for a time, while the focus of the story remains on the other players' characters.

Setting and Style

As it emerges, the setting will inform the choices for qualities, and how advantages work. Some settings may have special rules, especially as relates to affiliations and archetypes. The way skills are broken down into basic and advanced, as well as specialties, may be unique.

Your group can discuss what you prefer and enjoy, determine style. If you all strongly prefer a fast-paced action adventure, you should together be clear about that at the start. If you want a thoughtful mystery with clues and intellectual challenges mixed with the possibility of danger, that kind of game is fun too. Most players like a mix. They may have tendencies, but variety of experience is an important ingredient in a good story.

Part of style is power level. The setting isn't going to inherently provide that. A western could have superheroes. A super-magical far future can still have a role for normal people on a low-power but vital mission

(like Frodo in LotR). During the Imagining, the power level should be somewhat clearer after two rounds, and everyone should honor that increasingly with subsequent choices. If everyone for four rounds has chosen knowledge, skills and connections to focus on, and suddenly you come out with 'telekinesis', they will justifiably make it a minor advantage, to preserve balance with the other qualities.

Co-moderation

Once all of the players have some experience with helping narrate, you can if you wish begin to move towards co-moderation, where all of you share that role during play. During your turns, the other players narrate for you. The NPCs are divvied up between all of you, based on who you agree will best embody those characters, or who fit the stylistic needs of the situation.

One player may still be the official narrator for just that session, acting mostly as an organizer of the ideas and a describer of some things, and possibly writing a summary of the session afterwards. The idea is to stay out of the way during most of the session, so that the players all contribute to developments in the story. The narrator becomes less of a director and more of a conductor of an improvisational orchestra.

Descriptives

Some gamers enjoy keeping the numbers behind the scenes as much as possible. To do this, you can use descriptives for the ranks of your qualities and other information during the game.

Using Yarn

Yarn is Not...

Like most TTRPGs, Yarn is not win or lose. The objective is to have fun, enrich our experience and collaboratively tell stories, in ways that are enjoyable. Characters may experience major successes and victories in the story, but they could as interestingly be defeated and flee into hiding, or wind up on an unexpected path.

Yarn is fairly simple, but not basic. The framework is here for using dice, expressing qualities and organizing events, and for giving the players a variety of options, but it should only be a framework. The extrapolation and elaboration of the players ideally help create the content, filling in blanks, and that requires a commitment from them. The narrator is an improvisational director or conductor, and your turn is a chance to take a solo.

Though Yarn is flexible, it is not a 'universal game engine'. What is a specialty in one setting may be a basic skill in another. Wholly incompatible advantages could exist. Magic may work differently, and power levels between two games may be very dissimilar. The things they will all share are dice conventions, points and the idea of qualities, so that they speak the same language.

Yarn is not labor intensive. A setting and its denizens might be expressed in great detail, but that element should be above the game system, which should remain as simple as possible for the group's preferred style.

Boundaries

If there are boundaries any player might not be willing to cross in the story-telling, agree on that from the start. Some players may prefer not to depict certain content, such as explicit violence or sexuality. If events lead that way, the group may decide it will be handled 'off-camera'. You may agree to avoid some types of content entirely.

Starting Level

While it is possible to start with a zero level character and work your way up, like an enlistee in the military, most games will probably have more able characters. For a character suitable for special missions and other major challenges, you want the characters to start at 3rd level or higher. To be a full-fledged hero you should be at least 5th level. A 10th level character could be a super-hero.

The Group

Often it's not you or the narrator who decide things. The group means all of the players except you. Many of the details of what happens, especially for things like complications and flashbacks, can be decided by the group. That means the players can suggest possibilities for what happens to your character, and the narrator can incorporate the most interesting or entertaining ideas, weaving them into the story.

This follows a larger spirit of co-moderation, where the narrator is not in complete control, and where the role of narrator may even pass from player to player.

Scale

Yarn doesn't specify time or distance scales. This is for a reason. A scene could be immediate, like combat or a conversation, or it could have a longer time-frame, such as an extended chase sequence or going through boxes of evidence. Longer periods can be covered in montages, but this flexibility keeps the focus on the most interesting events, regardless of scale, rather than slow the game by zooming in on what are by nature long activities.

In battle, a zone might be roughly 10 feet (3 meters) across, and a round could be measured in seconds.

The characters may instead be infiltrating a compound, and a round might be a minute, with the activities more generalized, with each building a zone.

Melee combat isn't an option at longer scales. At some point it's a battle. The rolls will be strategic, the engagements more abstracted. Morale may play a part.

If the characters have split up, the sequences can be at different scales, as long as the players all get turns. You can catch one group up later, after a scene if needed.

Dialogue

An NPC may have a soliloquy, or there may be announcements over a speaker, etc..., but dialogue will mostly be during players' turns, where the story is focused. If a group is in a polite real-time conversation, you can allow everyone to cooperate, but it should still be someone's turn, and they will then decide the order in which characters speak, if it ever becomes an issue.

NPCs

Some characters only appear in the background, like a random person in a market or a theater. If an NPC might interact with the players, they may be just an extra, and they can be represented as a single number for challenges, and dice for active rolls. For example, a rookie cop might be challenge of 7 to hit, and have 3d6 (keep two) for feats, including attacks and resistance rolls. A worthy opponent might be challenge 11 and d8+3d6 keep three.

If an NPC is going to last longer than a battle, or a scene, then they may have qualities more akin to what a PC has. They may even have fortune, and use effort, etc...

Using Flashbacks

The best flashbacks are little scenes unto themselves, and NPCs from your character's past can even emerge as a result. The group should never let you off easy when you use a flashback. Just gaining a quality isn't enough; the game becomes more interesting because we find out more about how your character became who they are, or about some other important event in the past.

Your flashbacks shouldn't contradict what has already happened in play. If you've been ineffective in a fight, you're probably not going to suddenly remember your days as a prize fighter and come back to win. If you do want to introduce a seeming incongruity, explain it in a way that makes some sense in the context of the game, or the group may simply not allow it.

Your character may have a theme to their flashbacks, such as cases they've worked on, or teachings from a mentor.

YARN

Player

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Points

Character

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Level



Quality

Rank Dice

Pts

Notes

[illegible]

Effects:

Severity

Effort

Flashback

11

Player

Character

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Quality

Rank Dice

Pts

Notes

[illegible]