

FALOR

(Fast and Loose Roleplaying)

CORE RULES
V3.0

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Characteristics

Characteristics are the basic inherent qualities of characters. These are the things that make them stand out and set them apart from others. Characteristics may include things like specific “attributes”, species or “race”, occupation or lifestyle or “class”, philosophy or dedication to a specific deity or cause, etc.

The specific Characteristics allowed in a game are generally devised by the GM or setting designer before play. In more democratically contrived settings the Characteristics may be suggested and voted upon by all the players.

The choices for each Characteristic normally have anywhere between several and an unlimited number of options.

When players roll to see if their characters succeeds at an action they typically add +1 to the roll for each Characteristic that seems reasonable to apply to such an action. A few creatures may add more than +1 for specific characteristics, but these non-player characters (NPCs) are normally lacking in some other quality.

Normally player characters (PCs) have 5 Characteristics.

Skills

It’s assumed that characters can perform most activities normal to their culture and society at a moderate level of competence without any additional training (ie. swimming well enough to stay afloat, riding a bicycle, tying shoes, driving an automatic transmission car, etc.). However, any character who as trained to be better than the average citizen in some area indicates this by taking a skill in that particular area.

Some settings may have a particular list of skills, or at least paranormal skills. In many cases however it’s not unreasonable for players to make up skills they think are reasonable and which they do not find listed for that setting.

Skills do not have power levels. Either a character has a particular skill or they don’t. A few skills may build upon other skills and have the others as pre-requisites though.

Some skills may have a other skills as a pre-requisite. For instance in a game where PC understanding of technology is anywhere between the middle ages and modern era a character might be required to take a *Common Modern Technology* skill before taking the

Aircraft Piloting one. However, be careful in making one skill reliant on the previous, reliant on the previous, ad nauseum. This sort of thing tends to force characters to advance along narrowly defined channels. While narrow channels can be ok for some things skill advancement flexibility is generally laudable.

Buying Skills

At creation all characters start out with 10 skills. At a later time they may acquire other skills by spending Plot Points and coming up with a plausible explanation as to how the skill was acquired.

In these cases the group as a whole is the arbiter of what is plausible and what is not.

Specific Procedures

Some skills, especially certain paranormal skills such as “spells”, may have an inherent implausibility rating. When using such a skill against an opponent use either the opponent’s characteristics or the skill’s implausibility rating, which ever is higher.

Tools

At the start of play it's normally assumed that characters have all the tools they need to execute their Skills successfully. You can list a few of these tools that you think might be important or overlooked, but generally if it's a tool of the trade you probably have it.

Powerful Tools

However, some tools are exceptionally powerful or useful and are not simply things that can help a character to execute a Skill, but things that basically fulfill the function of a Skill on their own.

Characters may find such items, make them, or in some cases purchase them. Normally the GM may remove such tools from the character's hands at any time

through a plausible piece of narration.

However, the player whose character obtains such a tool can spend a Plot Point to 'bond' the tool to that character for purposes of the story. This does not necessarily mean that the tool is physically adhered to the character, but just that the character won't lose the tool, or that if the tool is lost or taken it will work it's way back to the character.

Certain tools may be ruled by the GM as "unbondable" due to their fragile nature or their role as "McGuffins": devices introduced to allow the story to be resolved in a specific manner (ie. a jewel the size of a man's heart that must be returned to the idol's eye to avert a disaster).

Play

Contests

During large portions of the game the GM will provide narration to describe the setting, background, and actions of non-player characters (NPCs). Normally a player may intervene at any point and state actions their character wishes to undertake and reasonable results of these actions. If the action and it's outcome are very likely the player should not roll for the result, it should just be assumed that the action takes place. "Likely actions" include those where the character has Characteristics and Skills that would support such an action, or cases where the action is a trivial thing normally possible for characters in this setting (ie. driving at a normal speed, tying a shoe, wrapping a package, etc.).

Similarly the character should not roll for actions which are truly impossible in the setting (ie. in a "realistic" military game having a character jump so high they clear a 2 story building without some special powers or assistance).

The player should roll when the action and results their character wants *could*

potentially happen in the setting, but in cases when there's some disagreement between the player and GM (or between one player and another) as to whether the player's conception of events or the GM's conception is cooler or in some way preferable.

This means that a combat situation could potentially be resolved without a shot being fired if the GM prefers the players to narrate how events went down.

Action round

For intense situations, such as combat, characters take turns attempting tasks during a roughly simultaneous period of time. This period of time is referred to as an action round.

During an action round players and characters perform the following activities:

1) Players state what sort of actions their characters are going to take. State their actions in the following order based on the sort of actions they are going to take:

1. Daring action
2. Brute force

3. Social interaction
4. Perceptiveness or craftsmanship.
5. Clever strategy and planning.
6. Magic or other paranormal powers.

All players state tasks their characters are trying to perform. The GM should let them know if the Characteristics they chose are inappropriate for the actions they want to perform.

2) On their turn the characters each attempt their tasks. Each task involving a contest between characters has an action's initiator and an opponent. Sometimes the opponent will simply be "the universe" in which case the GM will assign an Implausibility modifier.

Initiator of the contest will roll as follows to determine the action's outcome:

1d12 + Initiator's relevant characteristics - Opponent's relevant characteristics

3) Depending on the outcome of the die roll the initiator or opponent or both may narrate the outcome of the character's action. The roll results should be compared to the following chart to determine what part each of the players has in narrating the outcome:

Roll Results

Roll	Outcome
10 or more	The initiator narrates the entire result of the action in all its glory.
7-9	The initiator narrates the task outcome but the opponent may limit or modify that outcome slightly. However, the opponent may not void the character's success entirely.
4-6	The opponent narrates the the outcome of the task but the initiator may limit or slightly mitigate any negative results.
3 or lower	The opponent narrates the entire result of the exchange as they see fit.

4) After the outcomes of the actions are determined the players should agree in what order they took place. Generally people should just go with whatever order seems coolest to all involved.

Limits

When the GM or player gets to narrate the

entire result of the action, they may describe the result in any manner they wish, as long as it doesn't violate the physical and metaphysical laws of the setting. Generally if the player rolls 10+, the GM should only intercede in narration if the player tries to narrate about activities, circumstances, or events that are beyond the reach and scope of the Skills or tools being employed.

Also note that a successful roll doesn't necessarily mean that the character succeeds in their action. It just means that the player of that character is allowed to narrate the action with full control. Players may choose to have their character's action be a failure, or have some unusual role-related result other than success. Similarly, if the GM wins a contest this doesn't mean that the opposing characters have necessarily failed in their task. It merely means that the GM has greater control over how the task turns out.

If the initiator or the opponent has a limited action (ie. the roll is between 4 and 9) the action is narrated as normal, but the other player involved in the action is able to set a limit on how effective the outcome is. Such a limit should never entirely undo the primary narrator's version of the outcome, but only mitigate or modify it to some degree. For instance, an action where the GM narrates a character's arm as being cleaved off may be modified to indicate that the arm was severely battered and numb.

In cases where there is a disagreement as to whether a limitation goes too far the player to the right of the narrator should arbitrate any contentions.

Non-opponent contests

Some contests are not against a specific opponent, but just to complete a difficult task, or struggle against some unguided force (like a weight). In such cases the "opponent" is the GM, and instead of totaling up characteristics to cause a negative modifier to the die roll an Implausibility modifier is used.

The following Implausibility Modifier scale, can be used to gage the difficulty of the task.

Implausibility Modifier Scale

Mod.	Difficulty
0	Easy for almost anyone. Even possible untrained.
3	Moderately difficult.
5	Very difficult.
11+	Superhuman qualities, impressive tools or teamwork necessary for any chance of success.
X	Impossible, no roll can be made

Teamwork

Some tasks can or must involve collaboration, others can't. When characters collaborate use the highest Characteristic total for any of the characters. Each additional character involved typically adds 1 to the roll if they have some Characteristic that could help. Some things have to be done in serial (three people just can't work together to pick a lock). For any collaboration a leader must be declared before things start. If the group wins then the leader narrates the outcome.

If the group loses the contest then the opponent narrates the outcome for each of the losers and the leader sets limits on the narration (if applicable).

Multiple tasks

Normally characters can only undertake one task in a round except when reacting to other character's actions (ie. defending against attacks). However some skills or special conditions might allow them to take multiple actions in a round.

When a character is taking multiple actions in a round each of them should be rolled separately unless one action relies on the success of the other, in which case just roll for the action with the highest Implausibility modifier.

Grouped tasks

Some tasks, by their nature, effect a large group of people at a time. These include things like tossing a grenade into a crowded area, causing a rock slide over a heard of caribou, or capturing the minds of an audience with a moving speech.

When such a contest takes place simply roll 1d12 + the initiator's relevant Characteristics. Then subtract each opponent's relevant Characteristics from this separately and individually to see how the opponents each are able to deal with the outcome.

Time
Action rounds
5 minute increments
Hours
Days
Weeks
Months
Years
Decades

Taking time

Some tasks benefit from additional time. A general rule of thumb is that you add +1 to a roll for every order of magnitude by which the character increases the time they take. For simplicity, you can say the task gets a +1 for each step beyond it's base duration that it moves up the depicted at right.:

Resources

Resources are quantities of stuff that can be used to help you in different circumstances. Resources can include tangible things like money, scrap metal, and medical supplies; or they can represent less tangible things like social influence, magical mana, physical strength reserves, or psychic might. Normally Resources are not kept track of as discrete items and quantities like \$2.56 or "the arcane components I gathered today include wormwood, mercury, and amaranth seeds",

but as abstract numbers of points.

Generally the GM has final say as to whether resources apply to a specific setting or not. For instance a game set in the stone age is likely to have *strength reserves* as a resource and maybe *medicinal herbs*, *magical mana*, or *social influence*, but is unlikely to include *money* as a resource.

Spending Resources

Resource points may be spent to increase

the result of a die roll on a 1 for 1 basis. For most settings GMs are encouraged to be liberal in determining what sort of rolls a given resource can be applied to. For instance it probably wouldn't be out of order for *money* to be applied to socially related rolls to indicate a bribery attempt or *social influence* to be used by a magician who is dealing with some sort of extra-dimensional entities.

In addition to spending Resources to increase die rolls it might be necessary to expend some Resources just to accomplish tasks (like spending money to purchase common items). Generally in cases like this the amount of resources available should be glossed over. For instance a character without any money can't buy anything. A character with 1 point of money might be able to buy anything \$20 or less without actually significantly decreasing his bankroll (ie. spending any points of *money*) but an expenditure of \$60-100 would decrease his *money* to 0 points.

With this scale a character with 2 points would have to spend significantly more to decrease their resources than a character with only 1 point would.

Gaining Resources

Characters can gain resources through specific resource increasing activities. Some examples of these activities might include:
Mana - Using specific rituals to gain more mana or searching out powerful spell components.

Medicines - Buying more, distilling and researching, or searching for rare herbs.

Might - Training, resting up, eating well.

Money - Making and selling things, doing work, searching the bodies for treasure, picking pockets, etc.

Monkey - The monkey, he is mysterious and hides in the jungle. How does one obtain the monkey? Who can say.

Social Influence - Schmoozing, intimidating folks, spreading rumors, listening and gathering useful facts to use at a later time.

Normally when undertaking one of these activities the character makes a roll of their relevant Characteristics. A failure (roll of 6 or lower) indicates no resources gained. A partial success (roll of 7-9) indicates that 1 point of the appropriate Resource was gained. A complete success (10+) indicates that 2 points were gained.

The basic Improbability modifier of these rolls is equal to the amount of the relevant Resource that the character currently has (ie. if the character already has *Social Influence* of 4 then there's a -4 modifier to any attempts to gain more). Additional modifiers may be applied as well to indicate an environment better or worse suited to gaining the Resource. For instance an impoverished village will probably make it tough to gain *money* while a Place of Power™ would probably aid a wizard's mana-gathering attempts.

Plot Points

Plot Points are a universal, catch all Resource. But even beyond that they allow the player to influence aspects of their character and events in the story.

As with other Resources the number of Plot Points gained is based on the degree of success. But whereas other Resources are accumulated through specific accumulating activities, Plot Points can only be gained by successful rolls when the character is in the thick of things, in some risky or delicate situation.

Plot Points can be expended to produce any of the following results:

Point Cost	Effect
<i>n</i>	Each point spend adds +1 to a roll.
1	Attempt an action even without the proper skill.
2	Bond a tool.
4	Gain a new skill.

Running Things

The GM is sort of in charge of the game, but not so much as a totalitarian ruler, more as a shepherd for what is plausible and reasonable in the setting and plot. The GM may be the one who sets the scene, comes up with some of the opponents and challenges, and referees major bones of contention, but in many cases the players, through their characters, will be directing major portions of the action. Think of this as a collaborative effort in which the players are out to describe the cool things their characters get to do. The GM usually only needs to have them undertake a contests when there's a conflict over what should happen as the result of their character's actions.

In other matters the GM usually designs the setting and sets the NPCs (non-player characters) in motion. When designing the setting the GM should probably take the player's interests (and his or her own interests) into account. Will the players want to play in the setting you've designed? Will you lose interest in it pretty quickly even if they love it?

GMs might want more or less player input when designing a setting. If the GM has a particular concept they want to try out and thinks the players might enjoy they are perfectly free to design all elements of the setting. At the opposite end of the spectrum, some GMs might let players design characters with a certain set of general guidelines, and from the characters generated attempt to build a setting which ties the diverse characters together. A third, middle path, would be to propose a particular setting or theme for players, and then ask them if they have any preferences about particular details of the setting, tone, character abilities, or direction of the adventure and try to take these preferences into account.

Suggested Skills

One method of characterizing a setting is to present a few suggested Roles for players to choose from, or at least for them to get ideas from. Players may choose these Roles as presented, ditch them entirely, or use them

with some adjustments.

Required Characteristics and Skills

In some circumstances it may be useful to require characters to take a certain category of Roles. If the game is largely centered around "Super" characters, it would not be unreasonable to require that all characters have some relevant category of Characteristics, or strange Super Skills (like "Human Lightning Rod!"). In most settings it's assumed that characters are human, but in settings where non-human PCs are relatively common, it might be reasonable to race one of the Characteristics.

Out of Character Knowledge

In some cases the players occasionally gain information about events and conditions of which their characters have no awareness. This information is generally referred to *out of character* (OOC) knowledge. In many games the players are expected to act and empower their characters as if this knowledge was not available since it would be "unrealistic" for the character to suddenly gain knowledge just because their player had it.

However, even though the character doesn't necessarily act consciously on the information doesn't mean the player has to totally ignore OOC knowledge either. If it makes the story go to everyone's liking and no one disagrees then it's perfectly ok for a player react to OOC knowledge as long as their character has plausible reasons for their actions.

Example:

PC1 descends into a mine shaft to check for a treasure rumored to be down there while PCs 2 and 3 guard the top of the shaft. While PC1 is looking around down a tunnel PCs 2 and 3 are attacked by a whole bunch of thugs.

PC1's player is aware that the other PCs are getting attacked, but the character is unaware of this fact since he's too far away to

hear. Normally this might mean that PC1 has to sit by while the others get to do something exciting. But PC1's player decides that PC1 has forgotten his pick-axe and has to go back and get it. On the way back he hears the fighting and hurries up the shaft to get a piece of the action.

NPC Scenes

Most of the action scenes in the RPG will revolve around the PCs actions and observations. However, the ability of players to use OOC knowledge could lead to some interesting story motivating NPC scenes. NPC scenes are sequences of events that the GM narrates which the players are then aware of but their characters are not.

Example:

A hundred miles north in Umbrage the dwarven agent Roth, one of the most feared men on the continent, has been held for the better part of a decade in prison by the ogres. Through years of work he's shaved a huge sliver from one of his cell bars to produce a sort of spring-steel short-bow. Yesterday he made a bloody escape after firing pieces of silverware through several of the guards throats. Now he's at large and probably intent on bring back the old kingdom again.

If the players think the scene is interesting enough they can find reasons for their characters to get involved with the repercussions of that scene.

A few words of caution though to GMs deciding to use NPC scenes:

Try to keep NPC scenes *brief*. On the rpg.net forums there are probably at least a dozen player horror stories about GMs narrating entire fight scenes between NPCs where the PCs were only able to watch from the sidelines.

If you are rolling dice to determine the outcome of an NPC scene this is a good indication you are doing something wrong.

Remember: The story should revolve around and focus largely on the PCs and what they get to do. NPC scenes should mainly be used to set the stage for the PCs actions rather than to upstage the PCs and make their actions seem insignificant.

Options

Disadvantages

Characters are normally defined by their skills and characteristics. However, you might want to allow characters to have Disadvantages as well. A Disadvantage is sort of like an anti-skill. It represents things that you can't do or have trouble with.

Minor Disadvantages (such as fear of spiders in a land where the threat of spiders is very rare) should just be ignored and treated as an interesting character quirk. More severe Disadvantages either provide a negative modifier to die rolls or prevent a character from undertaking a skill at all.

In exchange for these inhibitions a character's Disadvantages allow them to take

extra plot points which are usually used to buy other skills or tools but could be put to other uses. Below is a table suggesting the benefits of taking a Disadvantage:

Penalty	Benefit
-1	4 Plot Points
-2	8 Plot Points
-3	12 Plot Points
-4	16 Plot Points
Skill Unusable	20 Plot Points

The GM may rule that the Plot Points provided by a Disadvantage must be spent on Skills or Tools especially during the course of shorter "one shot" games.