

CHAPTER 2: GAME RULES



All games have rules, and *SIFRP* is no different. Game rules ensure a framework through which the players interact with the imaginary world, providing a solid foundation for Narrators to construct adventures of their own design, create challenges, and, above all, create an enjoyable experience for everyone involved. Although *SIFRP*'s rules cover numerous situations, providing the needed mechanics for waging war, fighting battles, navigating the perils of intrigue, and much more, these rules are meant to enhance play but not define it. Which means, the rules are here when you need them, but when you're telling a story, don't get bogged down by the minutia of what modifier goes where, which ability to test, or spend overlong weighing which disposition your should take. The Narrator is free to alter or ignore any rule in this book in the interests of ensuring that the game's primary objective is met: playing should be fun.

USING THIS CHAPTER

This chapter lays out the fundamental workings of the *SIFRP* game system and presents the information in a way that's easy to understand and helpful in creating a good foundation for learning the specific expressions of the rules—character creation, combat, war, and intrigue. Make sure you read this chapter before moving on to the rest of the book, for the information contained here is critical to understanding everything else.

THE BASICS

SIFRP is a roleplaying game, a fantasy adventure game that sees the players taking the roles of **characters** and exploring the world created by George R. R. Martin in his *A Song of Ice and Fire* novels. Veterans of roleplaying games will undoubtedly find many of the concepts familiar, but for the novices, a roleplaying game is a special type of game where the action unfolds in your heads and not on your computer screen, in a hand of cards, or on a board. Each game is an adventure, sort of like an act in a play or a chapter in the story, and you and your fellow gamers play the parts of the most important characters of all. In some games, you may take your own initiative and set out to explore a corner of the world, lead attacks against rival houses, or focus on improving your lands. The Narrator, who presents difficulties and challenges you, may create scenarios for you and your fellow players to overcome. The longer you play the same character, the better your character becomes, earning Experience, Glory, and Coin, all of which can be invested in your abilities—the things you can do in the game—or your house, the heart and soul of your gaming group. Over time, the intertwined stories of your characters and their house become a new part of the ongoing saga of Westeros and *A Song of Ice and Fire*, your own particular corner of the world and the legends concerning it.

“Power resides where men believe it resides. No more and no less.”

—VARYS, MASTER OF WHISPERERS

THE CHARACTER

Each player controls one or more characters, sometimes called player characters or PCs. A character is your alter ego; it's the door to the Seven Kingdoms, your persona, avatar, or what have you. Your character has a range of abilities that grade the areas in which your character excels and those in which he could improve. Your character is more than just a set of numbers; your character should have a history, personality, goals, outlooks, ambitions, beliefs, and more. It's up to you to decide what your character looks like and how he or she behaves, for this is your character, and your satisfaction with the concept and capabilities will go a long way toward making the play experience fun.

THE DICE

Like many roleplaying games, *SIFRP* uses dice to resolve the success or failure of dramatic actions and choices that crop up during game play. *SIFRP* uses 6-sided dice (also called d6), the same kind of dice you'll find in many family games, but dice are widely available just about anywhere. To play this game, you'll need at least ten six-sided dice, but having more can't hurt.

USING DICE

Rolling dice is how you determine success or failure for attempted actions in the game. As shown under tests, you roll a number of dice whenever you would do something with dramatic consequences. To keep things simple, *SIFRP* tracks dice in three different ways.

The number of dice you roll describes your chances of success at any given task. The ability that best describes the action you're attempting to perform determines how many dice you get to roll. When rolling dice to try something, you're said to be testing the ability or rolling an ability test. These dice are called test dice, and you add them up after rolling them.

Sometimes, you'll get to roll additional dice called bonus dice. Bonus dice are never added; instead, they improve your chances at getting a better result. You never roll bonus dice alone; rather, roll them with your test dice, and then keep the best dice equal to the amount of your test dice. Bonus dice are abbreviated with #B, with # describing how many bonus dice you get to roll.

MODIFIER

A modifier is a bonus or penalty applied to a test result. Modifiers are expressed as +# or -#, with the # telling you what to add to or subtract from your test result. Modifiers are gained as a result of situational factors, such as smoke or fog, being injured, and so on.

RANDOM RESULTS

Whenever the game or the rules call for a random result, you roll a number of dice called for in the situation and sum the results. The rules call for random results with #d6. The # describes how many dice you need to roll. So if you see 3d6, then roll three six-sided dice and add the results together.

TESTS & DIFFICULTIES

Whenever you attempt something with dramatic consequences or when the outcome of the action is not certain, you test your abilities. A test is a roll of the dice with the aim of exceeding the action's Difficulty. The number of dice you roll is determined by the most relevant ability, so if you try to stab a gold cloak with your sword, you'd use Fighting, or if you're trying to scale a keep's wall, test Athletics. Testing abilities is easy once you get the hang of it, but it does involve a few simple steps.

STEP ONE: PLAYER DECLARES THE ACTION.

STEP TWO: NARRATOR PICKS THE MOST RELEVANT ABILITY.

STEP THREE: NARRATOR SETS THE DIFFICULTY.

STEP FOUR: PLAYER ROLLS A NUMBER OF DICE EQUAL TO THE ABILITY'S RANK.

STEP FIVE: PLAYER SUMS THE DICE AND APPLIES ANY MODIFIERS TO THE RESULT.

STEP SIX: PLAYER COMPARES THE RESULT TO THE DIFFICULTY.

STEP SEVEN: NARRATOR DESCRIBES THE OUTCOME.

STEP ONE: PLAYER DECLARES THE ACTION

Before you roll the dice, declare what it is you want to do. The Narrator determines whether the action requires a test. As a rule, if the intended action has no significant risk or no consequences for failure, there's no need for a test, though the Narrator is the final word on what requires a test and when. Actions that might require tests include, but are not limited to, fighting, climbing, jumping, recalling a bit of useful information, addressing the king, sailing a ship through inclement weather, and so on. In short, if the action's outcome isn't certain or it has dramatic consequences, it probably requires a test.

EXAMPLE

Nicole's character, Lady Renee, happens upon a pair of conspirators discussing their plans to kill her father, Lord Tybalt. Clinging to the shadows, she strains to hear their whispers.

STEP TWO: THE NARRATOR SELECTS THE ABILITY

Once the Narrator decides whether a test is appropriate, determine the ability to be tested. Abilities are flexible, allowing both you and the Narrator to use a variety of methods to overcome challenges in the game. A particular action may use one ability in one set of circumstances and another in a completely different environment. For example, you might use Persuasion to bluff your way past a guard or use Status to fall back on your notoriety and standing to remove the guard from your path. Even though these are two distinct methods, the intended outcome is the same—getting past the guard.

Generally, the Narrator determines the ability, but you do have some say in what ability you'd like to use. Just state what you want to use and

how you intend to use it, and—if reasonable—the Narrator ought to allow it. Obviously, using Language to scale a wall or stab an enemy is ridiculous, so common sense must prevail.

EXAMPLE

Since Renee eavesdrops on the conversation, the Narrator decides the relevant ability is Awareness.

STEP THREE: THE NARRATOR SETS THE DIFFICULTY

Once the ability is determined, the Narrator sets the test's Difficulty. The Difficulty describes the complexity and challenge of the action. To help assess how hard a task is, a Difficulty number has a descriptor, such as **ROUTINE** for Difficulty 6, **CHALLENGING** for Difficulty 9, and so on. See **Difficulty** on page 28 for details.

EXAMPLE

*The Narrator considers the scene. It's dark, so Renee can't see the conspirators or their body language. They're also some distance away and whispering. The Narrator decides the Difficulty is **FORMIDABLE (12)**.*

STEP FOUR: THE PLAYER ROLLS THE DICE

Knowing which ability to use and the Difficulty of the task, you roll a number of test dice equal to the ability. Many times, you may roll additional dice in the form of extra test dice or bonus dice.

EXAMPLE

Lady Renee has 3 in Awareness, giving her three dice off the bat. However, she also has 2B in Listening, a specialty of Awareness, giving her two bonus dice. She rolls five dice, but she only adds up the best three.

STEP FIVE: THE PLAYER SUMS THE DICE AND APPLIES MODIFIERS

Once you roll the dice, sum the ones you choose to keep and add or subtract any modifiers. The total is the test **result**.

EXAMPLE

Nicole rolls 5 dice (three test dice and two bonus dice from her specialty) and gets a 6, 6, 5, 2, and a 1. She discards two dice (the 1 and the 2 since they count for her bonus dice) and adds up the rest, getting a 17.

STEP SIX: THE PLAYER COMPARES THE RESULT WITH THE DIFFICULTY

Now that you have a total, compare the result to the action's Difficulty. If the result equals or beats the Difficulty, you succeed. If the result is less than the Difficulty, you fail.

EXAMPLE

*The test Difficulty was **FORMIDABLE (12)**. Since Nicole beat the Difficulty with her 17, she succeeds by a significant degree.*

STEP SEVEN: THE NARRATOR DESCRIBES THE OUTCOME

Once the outcome of the test is determined, the Narrator describes the results, providing any relevant consequences of success or failure.

EXAMPLE

Nicole's roll was good enough that she's able to hear most of the conversation, which the Narrator summarizes for her. Although both conspirators are careful to keep their identities concealed, Nicole now knows how they intend to go about their treachery, and with this information, she may be able to stop their nefarious plan.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

After a few tests, everyone should get the hang of how the process works without having to read through the steps. Just keep the basic elements of testing in mind, and the game should flow smoothly, allowing for Narrators to call for tests without slowing game play.

TYPES OF TEST

Rolling tests is more or less the same no matter what you're attempting. How you interpret success, however, varies with the type of test taken. *SIFRP* uses three standard tests for resolving actions. In all cases, you roll a number of test dice equal to the ability, plus bonus dice gained from a specialty and plus or minus any modifiers, and compare the result to the Difficulty to determine success or failure.

BASIC TEST

A **basic test** is the default test for just about every action. If the game or situation doesn't indicate another type of test, use a basic test to resolve the action.

- 🎲 Roll test dice equal to ability.
- 🎲 Roll bonus dice gained from Specialty or Assistance.
- 🎲 Discard a number of dice equal to the bonus dice rolled, and sum the remainder.
- 🎲 Add or subtract any modifiers.
- 🎲 Compare Result to Difficulty to determine success or failure.

EXTENDED BASIC TESTS

Some actions are so involved or try to achieve so much they require multiple tests to determine success. A character climbing a steep cliff may have to test Athletics several times to reach the top, while a maester researching the lineage of a family purported to come from the Blackfyre Pretenders might need several successful Knowledge tests to find the evidence he needs. When the situation demands, the Narrator may inform you that you need two or more successful tests to complete your action. Each test covers a particular span of time. Once you achieve the required number of successes, your task is complete.