On a Roll:

Travels Through Time

An RPG system written in 24 hours by Dan Hull (aka BGG oddbod)

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What is an RPG? I think it's safe to assume that if you're reading this document, you already know the answer and I don't need to explain it to you!

The "On a Roll" RPG system

The "On a Roll" RPG system is designed to be somewhat setting agnostic. Its intended "setting" is the "real" world, if time travel were a reality, as well as possibly things like aliens, laser guns, and psychic abilities.

While the base system doesn't include fantasy elements like Elves and Dragons, or magic spells and talking animals, there's nothing to say an enterprising Game Master couldn't implement such elements into a campaign using these core rules.

The Game Master's Role

The role of the Game Master in this system is a demanding one. The GM is neither an adversary nor a friend to the players, but a story teller and a facilitator. The design of a full campaign will not be a light task, but it does not all have to be finished before play can begin, as explained in the campaign and adventure section below.

The somewhat extensive design effort that a successful GM must meet up front though are hopefully offset by the bulk of the "work" (if such fun play can be called work at all) by the players during the actual play sessions.

I have designed this system to allow for a wide range of GM styles and commitment levels too. As in all things, you will get out of it what you put into it. If you are looking to build a fairly loose, quickly assembled adventure, then that should be what you get out of it. If you are the type of GM that spends hours crafting a setting down to the finest detail, then that too is what you should get out of an On a Roll campaign.

The Players' Role

Be creative and smart, have fun, don't sweat the small stuff. As long as you try to make your character and the game interesting for yourself, you should also succeed in making it so for everyone else at the table too. Remember that the GM is not your enemy. He isn't here to kill you off (and not just because he can't… more on that later).

The Campaign

This system has a more structured format for campaigns and play sessions than most RPGs, but it's designed this way for a reason, so keep that in mind as you continue on.

A Campaign is an overarching storyline consisting of ten adventures. While the GM only needs to have fully designed the first adventure before you can start playing, it's generally a good idea to have at least an idea of where the overall story is going and who the main antagonist is at the heart of it all. You don't want to Lindelof your story or the players will be more disappointed than many Lost enthusiasts were. That's right; I made his name a verb to make a point.

Unlike most RPGs, not only does On a Roll have a maximum level for the characters, it has a planned end for their play, at which time a new campaign will start with all new characters who will experience adventures of their own.

Each campaign will start with all new characters, at level 1 the first time, and optionally at level 2 for more experienced players that don't need training wheels any more. At the end of a campaign, all the player characters are retired and are no longer played. They could certainly make a cameo in a future campaign as NPCs (friendly or otherwise).

The players may also opt to choose a new Game Master for each new campaign.

Like most RPGs, "On a Roll" is cooperative between the non-GM players. They will rely on each other throughout.

But there is also a friendly rivalry going on as the players will try to out-awesome each other by being cleverer than their counterparts. As a marker of this, each adventure will have a 'winner': the player that has acquired the most bonus chips by the end of an adventure.

The players should keep track of each winner, and at the end of a full campaign, whoever has won the most adventures is the champion. They not only get bragging rights, but if the group wants to try a new GM for the next campaign, the winner gets first dibs on the position. If they don't want to GM, then they get first choice on what snacks everyone should bring next time.

Adventures

Each adventure should be designed to take one play session, assuming your session length isn't too limited for it. At the climax of adventure one, the characters will find out about time travel and get their mandate for saving the world (or whatever the campaign's ultimate goal is) from the GM.

At the end of each adventure, all player **c**haracters also gain 1 level. There is no actual XP (experience points) in the On a Roll system, just levels. Often we learn as much from failure as from success.

More information on designing adventures can be found in the GM section at the end of this document.

The Play Area & Equipment

On a Roll is designed to be played using whatever combination of miniatures, maps (drawn or built), and props (2D or 3D)that works for your group. A grid can be helpful for combat and movement, but isn't strictly necessary. Square or hexes and specific scale doesn't really matter either, as long as it's generally consistent. The physical pieces are just there to make sure everyone is visualizing the same basic thing while you're playing.

Dice

The basic die needed is the 10-sided die, or d10. The average game will benefit from having at least 4 or 5 of these, and as players gain levels they might occasionally want more. In theory you could play with only 1d10, but you would have to keep track of a lot of rolls on paper and it would be pretty inconvenient.

Weapons will add other types of dice to the mix, though you generally won't need more than a few each of d4, d6, and d8. If you find yourself needing a d12, consider yourself very lucky.

Bonus Chips

Bonus Chips represent both the player characters' inherent ability to manipulate space-time and how much the GM wants to reward them for how they are playing. They can be represented by any physical token… poker chips or glass beads are good choices. Edible items are not a good choice as they tend to mysteriously disappear during play.

Players start each session with a number of chips equal to their level.

The GM should feel free (and even a little obligated I think) to give out additional Bonus Chips to players for creative solutions and awesome attempts. Also throw in a few for great role playing and your players will be happy, which is what every GM wants!

No player can have more chips at one time than their level +2, so they are encouraged to use 'em up so they can get more!

The players should keep a public, running total of the number of bonus chips given out by the GM during an adventure. At the end of an adventure, the player with the highest total "wins" that adventure. More information on the nature of winning a cooperative game can be found elsewhere in this document.

A player can spend chips to add extra dice to any roll they are about to make to meet a challenge. This must be declared before rolling any dice for the challenge. Any number of bonus chips can be spent at one time this way. Players may only spend bonus chips on a roll they are making. Only the Primary player in a challenge can spend chips on it.

After a player rolls on a challenge they may also spend chips to add a +1 to the roll's final result (whether or not they spent chip before the roll). Again, only the primary player may do this in a group challenge.

Spent chips simply go back into the pot that the GM keeps for handing out.

Players should keep in mind that the GM is unlikely to grant bonus chips for succeeding at a challenge through pure brute force of chip spending. But they will be awarding them for creativity and awesomeness, so if you come up with an outrageous plan that could only succeed with the help of a lot of bonus chips that is the point of the system and will likely net you more chips.

This can lead to "the rich getting richer" in an encounter if one player does very well, but since they don't carry over to the next adventure, every player has the chance to stand out. Chips should generally be awarded to the player(s) that came up with an idea, not just the one who executed it.

Boss characters also start with the same number of chips as the level of the players (which are spent by the GM just like the players do).

However, the GM cannot assign himself additional chips for any reason.

Bonus chips are not carried over between adventures; each one begins with the standard number of chips per player.

Player Characters – Design and Creation

An important part of playing an RPG is making, customizing, and advancing your own characters throughout the story arc of a campaign. First you'll need to start with creating a backstory for your character.

In the **On a Roll: Travels Through Time** system, all characters start as high school aged or equivalent teenagers (17-ish). As far as they know, they have no extraordinary abilities.

The players can start off as friends, enemies, strangers, rivals, etc. – It's up to the players to decide during creation.

Players can come up with a rich, complex profile and back story or just the bare bones of one, with plans to fill it in as they progress. Either approach is fine!

Race and Appearance

In the default On a Roll setting, the players are all humans. "Race" is understood like it is on modern day earth, as opposed to some RPGs where it actually refers to species, differentiating between elves, dwarves, and lizard aliens, for example.

If the GM designs a world that incorporates speciation and wants the players to have such a choice available to them, the GM will need to determine what additional rules are appropriate. Or they can wait until a rules expansion is released (hint hint).

Primary Stats

Players and all NPCs have three "Primary" stats: Strength, Dexterity, and Intelligence. These are broad, catch all categories describing the character's overall ability in three areas:

Strength: General health, flexibility and physical power

Dexterity: General litheness, coordination and speed

Intelligence: Anything non-physical, like smarts (street and book), experience, cunning, and wittiness

These stats will often be abbreviated to three letters: **STR**, **DEX**, and **INT**.

Primary stats have a value range from 0 – 5, which is indicated by a number in parenthesis after the stat name. Examples: STR(1), DEX(0).

Only something supernatural or super-human could increase a stat above (5), and only a handicap or injury will reduce them below (0).

A stat value of (0) doesn't mean they have none of that ability; it means they are strictly average. A positive value on a stat indicates a bonus given because the character is above average in that department.

When creating a character, the player will assign *one* skill to start at (1) and the other two will start at (0).

If the GM wants to allow it, and the player justifies it during creation of their back

story, a character may start with one stat at (-1) and apply a +1 to either of the other two stats. *Example*: a character that is slight of build and asthmatic or anemic could start with STR(-1). They could then start with either DEX(1), INT(1), ***or*** DEX(0), INT(2).

After creation, stats can only be increase through acquiring skills or through divine GM intervention that serves the story.

SECONDARY STATS

Each primary stat will have one (and only one) secondary stat associated with it. When creating their character, a player will choose a secondary stat for each primary stat.

Secondary stats do not have levels or values; they simply reflect the focused direction their associated primary stat takes. They are denoted on your character sheet in square brackets after the associated Primary Stat, like this:

STR(1) [Brute Force]

INT(0) [Witty]

Secondary stats cannot be changed after creation unless the player takes a later ability that has such an effect, or the GM agrees to allow it through some extraordinary course of action. It will take more than a training montage!

See *Appendix A* for a list of secondary stats.

SKILLS

Players start with one mundane skill, chosen from the list below. This skill starts with a value of (1).

· Excellent Bike Riding
· Driving Fast and Tight
· Sweet Talking
· Computer Skills
· Skating (board or whatever)
· Busting stuff
· Throwing things
· Acting Scary
· Finding Things

GMs are free to add to this initial list, and players should feel free to make suggestions for other mundane skills they could start with.

When the first adventure is complete, the GM will grant each player the following:

- The ability to time travel (mechanism depends on the fiction they craft)

- One new skill, at least tangentially relevant to the character's actions so far, and appropriate either to the current or the next adventure's setting. Appendix B has a list of options to start from.

At the end of each subsequent adventure, each player will choose to either increase the level of one of their current skills by one, or choose a new skill from the list of available skills as given to them by the GM.

Available skills are determined by the GM based on the setting and the overall campaign. GMs should default to being generous with the lists of available skills so that characters can be creative and develop interesting and strange combinations rather than being limited to a specific vision or ideal the GM may unwittingly develop.

However, while I recommend the GM make this list as broad as is reasonable for their campaign, you don't want to make a skill like **Wormhole Navigation** available to players who have never seen the inside of a space ship, regardless of their level.

Skills aren't necessarily mundane. They can include anything that a character can learn or acquire the ability to do, including magic spells and psychic abilities. The GM is always free to expand on the skill list in Appendix B as appropriate to their campaign.

Challenges

Challenges are what players face whenever they want to try something that a "normal" person would not be able to do without consideration or difficulty.

Actions like walking, talking, running short distances, driving a car in traffic, riding a bike across town, etc., are not challenges.

Things like landing a plane for the first time (with or without instruction), jumping a bike over a gulley without wrecking, winning a street race against Vin Diesel's character in The Fast & Furious, or hitting a target with a ranged weapon would be challenges.

Characters will attempt to overcome a challenge by testing their relevant stats or skills against a difficulty number. This is referred to as "Meeting a challenge".

If no person or semi-intelligent creature is trying to prevent the completion of the action, then the challenge is considered "**unopposed**" and the player simply tries to beat a target difficulty assigned by the GM.

Unopposed Challenges

To meet an unopposed challenge, the acting player rolls the appropriate number of d10 (depending on their applicable stat or skill) against a difficulty number assigned by the GM.

A success is achieved when at least one of the dice rolled matches or exceeds the assigned difficulty.

Rolling with a primary stat

If a character faces a challenge that they do not have an applicable secondary stat or skill for, they get a base of 1d10 + the value of the relevant stat in pips. Pips are explained below.

Rolling with a secondary stat

If a character faces a challenge that they have an applicable secondary stat for, they get a base of 2d10 + the value of the relevant primary stat in pips.

Rolling with a skill

If a character faces a challenge that they have an applicable skill for, they get a base of two 2d10 + 1d10 per level of the skill.

Pips and Doubles

"Pips" refer simply to modifiers that a roll receives from the level of a Primary Stat. For every level above (0) that a character has in their relevant Primary Stat, a challenge roll gets +1 added to the final result.

Example: a character is meeting a challenge with their **STR(2) [Brute Force]**. They roll 2d10 and get 5, 7. They then add +2 to the highest roll and the final result is 9.

Any doubles that are rolled on the dice may be added together, rather than counted separately, to meet the difficulty.

In this way, more dice increase the odds of success in two ways, and allow success against challenges with a difficulty greater than 10.

If doubles are rolled and the character also has a Pip bonus from their stat level, they add the level to the total of the doubles rolled.

Example: If the character in the previous example had rolled 5, 5, they would add those to get 10, and then add the +2 for STR(2), for a total of 12.

Challenge Difficulty

Unopposed Challenges will be assigned a difficulty by the GM. Unlike most RPG systems, the same challenge will not necessarily have the same difficulty for each player. The GM will need to use their knowledge of the character, the setting, the situation, and the stat or skill being used to determine a challenges difficulty.

Example: A level 1 player wants to get through a locked door without a key.

If it's a typical wooden door in a modern day house with a locked handle then the difficulty for kicking it open with **Brute Strength** (a secondary stat) might be 8.

But if the player has the skill **Busting Stuff**, the GM might assign a difficulty of only 6, since a wooden door is more susceptible to being busted up than just kicked in because it has various parts that could be broken, like the handle, the hinges, the frame, etc.

But if the door is a metal security door, with a sturdy handle and hidden hinges, the GM might decide that the skill **Busting Stuff** doesn't apply in the same way as with the wooden door. Therefore the difficulty of busting it up might be assigned a 12, while the difficulty of simply bashing it open with a stiff shoulder and a running start (e.g. **Brute Strength**) might only be 10.

Following through with the example, a player whose relevant skills are **STR(1) [Flexibility]**, and **Busting Stuff(1)** can decide to either use **STR(1)** and roll 1d10+1 against the 10 difficulty (since the secondary Stat Flexibility isn't useful according to the GM's determination, or to use **Busting Stuff(1)** and roll 3d10 against the 12.

However, a more creative (and thus better) way to get through the door might be to find a nearby fire extinguisher and use it to freeze the door handle, making it brittle, and then bashing it with the extinguisher. In this case the GM would probably assign an easier roll to a Busting Stuff challenge, since we are back to breaking up the door at a weak point. Now the player could end up rolling 3d10 to meet a challenge of 7 or so.

Not only would this make it easier to succeed, but it might prompt the GM to grant a bonus chit to the player for creativity (whether the attempt succeeds or not).

Using the Challenge System

At first glance it might look complicated, but the intent is to maintain flexibility while encouraging the players to try interesting and innovative solutions to meet challenges. The GM shouldn't worry too much about getting the exact right number. Instead they should try to reward player creativity by assigning easier numbers to interesting solutions when it makes sense, and slightly harder numbers if the players are simply trying to run headlong through every obstacle with big numbers.

In the above locked door example, the GM's note probably won't specify that the metal door has a certain strength of metal, or a certain handle and hinge design. They will instead convey a general idea of how hard the GM wanted to make it for the players to get past it. They can and work out difficulties on the fly based on the player's attempts.

The GM should always remember that the goal is not to thwart the players at every turn, but to encourage creative thinking and problem solving to get past challenges.

Group Challenges

If a challenge might be easier to overcome by more than one player (e.g. the above security door is a double door with plenty of room for three people to ram against it) then the players can attempt to meet the challenge as a group.

In this case, the GM sets the difficulty against the player chosen by the group as the **Primary** player in the challenge.

The other players may then contribute one pip to the final roll for any applicable base stat they have that's at least 1, or two pips for a secondary stat contributed. Skills do not contribute to a group challenge, except as used by the P**rimary** player in the challenge. Remember, only the P**rimary** player in the challenge can spend chips to add to the roll.

Example: The above double-wide security door has no handle to freeze, so they players decide they are going to try and bust it open together.

Before the GM assigns a difficulty number, the players decide that Joe, who has **STR(3) [Brute Force]**, will act as primary player.

Player character Robert has **STR(0) [Constitution]**, so he doesn't contribute anything to the effort except cheering.

Player character Marcy **STR(1) [Flexibility]** so she adds 1 pip to the final roll total.

Player character Bucky has **STR(2) [Brute Force]**. His Strength is higher than 1 (it doesn't matter how much higher), but since he also is also contributing **Brute Force**, he adds 2 pips.

The GM decides that this door is pretty tough, and assigns the challenge a difficulty of 12.

Joe, being the primary, starts with 2d10 + 3 for his high strength of 3. Marcy will add one pip, and Bucky will add 2.

This means the group is starting at 2d10+6. That's pretty decent odds, and if either d10

rolls a 6, or if they roll double 3s or higher, they will succeed.

Robert really wants to get through this door though, so he convinces Joe to spend a chit *before* rolling to add another die. Now the group is rolling 3d10 and adding 6 to the result.

If the roll ends up being 3, 4, 7, they would add their 6 pips to the 7 for a total of 13 and succeed.

If they rolled a 4, 4, 5, they would also succeed (the double 4's added together for 8, plus 6 pips for a total of 14).

However, if the roll was 2, 2, 5, it would be a failure unless Joe was willing to add yet another chit *after* the roll to increase the 5 to a 6.

Using gear in challenges

Items both mundane and extraordinary may be used by players in typical and unorthodox ways in hopes of improving their odds of meeting a challenge. Using an item in the way it was designed (e.g. a crowbar to pry something open, or a cutting torch to get through a metal plate) should result in a much easier difficulty being assigned to the task. An otherwise impossible task might become fairly trivial with the right tool in hand.

When players want to use an item in an unintended, but creative and possibly entertaining way (e.g. a cutting torch to weld ala the A-Team, or the claw end of a hammer to bust through a wooden barricade), the GM can either go easy on the difficulty number, or can assign a chip for use later if the character succeeds in their crazy plan.

Opposed challenges

During combat, or even in less lethal situations, characters will often find an NPC trying to prevent them from doing what they want. In such cases, the character will need to meet an opposed challenge. Examples include wresting something from their grasp, trying to beat them in a race, or attempting to talk them into giving you a discount or a freebie.

In such cases, both involved parties will roll dice as if meeting a challenge, but instead of comparing the result to a set difficulty number, they compare the numbers to each other. The higher result wins. Ties are re-rolled unless one of the parties is willing to spend chips to add pips to the result.

Movement (out of combat)

Movement out of combat should remain casual as far as rules go. Just move your characters and NPCs around as needed. If you get to a point where it matters who moves first, then you are already in combat, so those rules apply.

Combat

Combat is what happens when the players meet NPCs that intend them harm, or vice versa. The following pages detail the relevant rules.

Initiative

When the player characters encounter NPCs they sometimes end up fighting them. When

this happens, the first thing to do is to determine initiative. The resulting initiative list will dictate what order characters and NPCs can act in.

Each player will roll 2d10 and add them together to get their initiative number. If a character has either of the secondary traits **[Awareness]** or **[Quickness]** they roll 3d10 and add together the two highest dice. These bonuses do not stack, so someone with both secondary stats still rolls 3d10.

The GM will do the same for the NPCs, but the number of dice they get will be based on their role in the adventure. *Grunts* will get 1d10, *Lieutenants* will get 2d10, and the *Boss(es)* will get 3d10 plus any specific bonuses they may have. More details on NPC roles can be found in the GM section later in this document.

If there is a large group of NPCs (usually grunts) the GM can roll a single d10 for all of them and they will simply all go in the order assigned to that roll. Within the overall initiative order, the GM can have them act in any order from one round to the next.

Once initiative has been determined for everyone involved, write down or otherwise track the order from highest to lowest initiative and that's the order everyone will act in.

When every character has had their turn, it's called a **Round**. At the end of a **Round** characters start again at the top of the initiative list.

For simplicity, there is no delaying or saving your turn in a round. When a character's spot on the initiative list comes up, they can act or not act, that's it.

Surprise

If an encounter begins with one group (players or NPCs) surprising the other, the GM can decide to either give the unsurprised side an initiative bonus as if they all the Awareness trait, giving them each an extra die (having the Awareness trait already doesn't stack with this bonus), ***OR s***imply add 10 to the initiative roll of everyone on the unsurprised side.

Movement (in combat)

Movement during combat can be as strict or as fluid as the GM and players decide at the beginning of the campaign.

Strict Movement rules

If you are using a standard grid for the play area, where one square or hex represents an approximately 6 foot area then the available movement for an average character or NPC in one round will be 6 spaces. This represents a quick paced walk that still allows an action to be taken.

A character or NPC can also **Run** by forgoing any other action during their round and meeting an unopposed **DEX** challenge. Divide the result by two (rounding up) and that's the additional number of spaces they can move.

The secondary DEX trait **[Speed]** allows the player to roll an additional die to improve the odds of a good run distance.

Casual Movement Rules

If the players and GM agree to keep movement more casual, perhaps because you are still using miniatures and props, but not on a strict grid, then characters and NPCs can move approximately 6 inches in a normal movement, or 10 inches by running.

Characters with the Speed trait can move about 7 inches normally or 12 inches by running. Use a ruler, an agreed on length of string, or just eyeball it. As long as everyone agrees in advance to be casual about it, movement precision isn't nearly as important as the sense of play and style that everyone brings to the table.

MELEE AND RANGED COMBAT

Attacking (Melee)

Attacking an opponent at close range with fists or melee weapons (usually an NPC as long as the players aren't trying to kill each other for some reason) is handled as an opposed challenge.

Whenever an attack is declared, it is assumed the attacker is trying to **Wound** their opponent. Before any attack the attacker may instead declare a different goal, such as subduing, intimidating, tripping, etc. If a non-wounding goal is stated, but the method is through combat, then no other stats or skills that would otherwise be relevant can be used. If a player wants to intimidate an NPC using their **STR(1) [Imposing]** stat, they shouldn't attack them first.

If a participant has the **Fighting** skill, they will use that. Like other skill rolls, the **Fighting** skill will give the player 2d10 + 1d10 per level of **Fighting** they have.

If a participant doesn't have the **Fighting** skill, they can use either their **DEX** to roll 1d10 + DEX level, or their **DEX [Finesse]** to roll 2d10+ DEX level.

Whichever combatant gets the higher result succeeds in either hitting their opponent or achieving their previously stated goal. **Ties are re-rolled unless someone is willing to spend chips to add to their result.**

Using weapons

Combat without weapons is generally considered non-lethal unless an NPC is rendered unconscious and then is purposely killed.

Almost any gear or item found in the environment can be used as a weapon (although not always effectively).

Gear designed for use as a weapon will have a die value assigned to it (see *Appendix C* for a list of common weapon values). When using a weapon to make an attack, the attacker will roll the associated dice along with the opposed challenge dice they get from their stats or skills, treating it the same as the other dice (even though it may not have as many sides).

Some weapons will have better odds at hitting due to a broader area of effect (e.g. a long staff with multiple blades, or a flaming or electrified sword). This will be represented as a **Pip** bonus in addition to the die it has (e.g. 1d4 + 2).

The GM may assign bonuses or penalties to a fighting roll for unusual, unfamiliar, or extra powerful or weak weapons.

Example: Someone using a mono-filament sword might be given a bonus to their roll over what a regular sword would have, whereas a dull butter knife might result in a penalty making it less effective than a regular sharp knife.

Such decisions are at the discretion of the GM, who may or may not bother with that much detail.

Attacking (Ranged)

Using a ranged weapon is generally an unopposed challenge, unless the target is actively using some appropriately opposing skill, like running around dodging your shots, or using telekinesis to throw off your aim. In such cases an opposed roll would be used as described above in melee combat.

If a combatant is trying to hit a target that isn't engaged in the above shenanigans, then they will meet an unopposed challenge with the appropriate stat or skill. The default difficulty for hitting with a ranged weapon at a reasonable range (as determined by the weapon type) is 8.

Some weapons will have better odds due to a broader area of effect (e.g. shotguns, sweep phasers, etc), which will be indicated by a bonus number on the weapon's stats (see *Appendix C*), which is added to the resulting roll.

Examples:
An attacker with **Shooting(1)** using a sawed-off shotgun at close range would roll 3d10 (shooting) and 1d6 (shotgun), with a + 2 (sawed off). If the dice came up 3,4,6,4, the 4's would be added together giving 8, and the 2 would be thrown in giving a successful result of 10.

A different attacker with the same weapon has no shooting skill, but has **DEX(2)**, they would roll 1d10 and 1d6, with +2 for sawed off and +2 for their DEX. In this case, if either die comes up 4 or higher, or if they roll double 2's or 3's, then it's a hit.

DAMAGE AND WOUNDS

When an attacker succeeds in hitting his target in melee or ranged combat, there is a chance the target will be wounded (that's sort of the point).

When a character or NPC is hit by an attack, they must meet an unopposed challenge with their **STR** or their **Strength [Constitution]** using a difficulty of the result of the roll that hit them.

Example:
Joe is attacked by a grunt with a knife. The knife has a d4 as its value, and the grunt has **DEX(2)**, but no secondary trait or fighting skill. Joe has a **DEX(1) [Finesse].**

The grunt rolls 1d10 + 2 and Joe rolls 2d10 + 1. The grunt gets lucky and rolls a 7, giving him a 9. Joe rolls a 3 and 5, giving him a lousy 6, so the grunt hits.

Joe now must meet an unopposed **STR** challenge with a difficulty of 9 (the result of the grunt's successful attack roll). Joe has **STR(1)[Constitution]**, so he gets to roll 2d10 + 1. He rolls a 5, 7, giving him an 8 total (7+1), so he takes a wound.

Cover & Other Hit modifiers

Cover against ranged weapons assumes that the weapon isn't powerful enough to penetrate the cover. The GM can determine these criteria if needed for non-obvious cases.

Cover doesn't reduce the chance of getting a "hit", per se, but it does reduce the chance of taking a **Wound** from a hit.

Cover that provides adequate shielding for around 25%-50% of the target gives a +1 bonus to the challenge roll against the hit for W**ound** determination.

Cover of around 51%-75% of the target gives a +2 bonus to the challenge roll against the hit.

Cover of around 75%-90% gives a +3 bonus to the challenge roll against the hit.

Cover over 90% has the same effect as a miss… i.e. no wound can be caused by conventional weapons.

Armor works like cover, but it's always there if you're wearing it. If you have armor that can actually stop whatever hits you (bullet proof clothing or a partial force field, for example), then the armor's rating is added as a bonus to the challenge roll against the hit. One important difference is that armor works against melee weapons too, whereas cover from a wall or conveniently placed crate does not.

In the previous example of Joe fighting a grunt with a knife, if Joe had been wearing a hardened leather jerkin with an A**rmor** value of 1, he would have gotten a +1 to the challenge roll against the hit and he would have shrugged it off with no **Wound**.

The effects of Wounds

When a grunt takes a wound, they are removed from play. They are kind of wimpy and it only takes one good shot to put them out of commission.

The players can agree in advance if this means death, dismemberment, or simply running away discouraged; whatever fits with your desired fiction and play style.

For every **Wound** a player character or a Lieutenant takes, they get a -1 penalty to all challenge rolls, and their movement is reduced by 1 space. Wounded characters cannot R**un**.

If a Lieutenant takes 3 **Wounds**, they are removed from play in the same way the grunts are after 1 **Wound**.

If a player character takes more **Wounds** than the total value of their stats, they are "dead" (not really, see below). Secondary stats don't apply in this calculation unless the character has **STR [Constitution]**, in which case they can take one additional W**ound**.

Player Character Death

Given that the player characters are time travelers, the space-time continuum will not let them actually die of anything but old age.

When a player character accumulates more wounds than the total value of their stats as described above, they will appear dead to any observers, but in actuality will enter a

state of suspended animation (quantum, not medical).

The character will be unable to act and will be completely unaware of what's going around them until they are revived.

Some final bosses may also be time travelers, so don't necessarily walk away from a defeated boss unless you are sure he's not going to be revived behind your back.

Healing

When the players are no longer in combat (i.e. all immediate enemies are gone or neutralized), they can heal themselves and each other. There are various methods for healing, including skills, powers, and gear, which are outlined in the relevant sections.

A "dead" player character may be revived by healing enough of their wounds to bring them back below the threshold of their stats total. Generally it's not a good idea to revive someone to just above that threshold and then pick another fight, as they will go back to playing dead with the first wound.

Time travelers not only don't die from wounds, but they also heal remarkably quickly, too. Any skill, power, or gear used for healing will take full effect in a matter of minutes and the players can get back into the action quickly. Just don't dilly dally in that broom closet while bandaging each other up… remember there might be wandering patrols!

Terms / Glossary

Pip: Antiquated term referring to the dots on a 6-sided die. In On a Roll the term refers to the increase of 1 that can be applied to the result of a roll already taken in order to succeed at a challenge. Each chip spent is worth one pip added to the result (i.e. +1).

Chip: Generic term for a marker given by the GM to players at the start of an adventure and also during the game as a reward for excellent play. **Chips** can be spent to either add additional dice to a roll (before rolling) or to add a **Pip** to the result (after rolling).

NPC: Characters controlled by the GM. You probably already knew this.

GM Section

What follows are some notes specifically for the Game Master. There's nothing super-secret here, but the players may have a better experience if some of the mystery remains for a little while longer.

Acquiring Time Travel

The player characters are intended to be given the ability to travel through time at the end of the first adventure. The mechanism for this is left up to the GM, but there are a number of "typical" ways this can happen, like genetics, magic, and science. The source of it only matters as far as it shapes the world they are living in.

Designing Adventures

The bulk of each adventure should consist of a "set piece encounter". The beginning of the campaign and the connective activity between sessions should be mostly free-form, with the GM guiding players toward the main encounter. There should be minimal "random encounters" (if any) before the main encounter takes place. The goal is role-playing, not rolling.

Note that no more than one Bonus Chip should be assigned to a character for role playing or other reasons before the main encounter area of an adventure.

The main encounter should be a large map with lots of stuff happening, one large or multiple small groups that are aware of each other, and one boss in each (unless the campaign requires more).

Examples of encounter areas: A military base, an aircraft hangar, a small medieval village, the Battlestar Galactica, a moon base, etc.

The GM should put many roadblocks in the player's path, preventing them from easily reaching the climactic battle. But also be sure to include numerous paths through, which will reward smart thinking by the players. Just don't fall into the trap of over-engineering the set with specific methods being the only way to progress or you will just frustrate players that don't think the same way as you do.

It's always easier to adjust the difficulty of a few roadblocks than it is to create a whole new path on the fly because the players aren't seeing the one method you assumed they'd use.

Starting at Level 2

Experienced players may want to jump into the action a bit faster. If everyone agrees, the GM can give the details of the first adventure to the players in a story form, allowing the characters to make some basic choices if necessary to guide the setup for adventure two.

In this case, the players will create their characters normally at level 1, and then the GM will assign a new skill and the time travel ability immediately to each character. They will then be ready to start adventure two.

REPEATING CHALLENGES

If a challenge is unopposed and there's no inherent or external time pressure on the players, they may be tempted to just continue trying the same solution over and over.

In some cases, this should result in a "gimme", where the GM just lets the players meet the challenge as long as they have the right tools or skills. GMs should avoid putting too many of these challenges in their adventure, because they don't really serve the story; they just delay it.

No one wants to have to roll dice to force open an endless series of doors that simply have rusty hinges, and presenting players with five rusty doors that they can just push on until they open is the same as giving them one such door to go through. If it's really there to serve the story or just for atmosphere, then it doesn't need to be an actual challenge.

The ideal challenge will give the players one or two shots at meeting it the same way, and then require them to try something else. You can only bash your shoulder against a metal door a few times before you hurt yourself. You can only try to weld an armored plate to your car door once – if you fail then you've probably ruined either the door or the plate, or you've run out of fuel, or there's some other reason preventing an infinite number of attempts.

Another good option is to impose a time pressure of some sort, either real or imagined. Many criminal lairs will have patrols to worry about, especially once they have been alerted to the character's presence.

Even if you don't have actual patrols, it's probably a good idea to make the players think that there might be some. Random noises and radio chatter can be great for this, especially when disguised as simple atmosphere.

Appendix A: Secondary Stats

Secondary Strength stats:

Brute Force - Pushing, pulling, slamming, etc
Constitution - Overall health, ability to withstand punishment
Flexibility - Stretching and twisting with strength behind it
Imposing - Physically impressive

Secondary Dexterity stats:

Acrobatics - Jumping, tumbling, etc.
Finesse - Hand-eye coordination, stealth
Speed - Running and moving quickly in general

Secondary Intelligence stats:

Awareness - Perception, situational awareness
Knowledge - How much actual stuff you know and can put to use
Understanding - Grasp of theory, quick learner
Cunning - Tricking others, talking people into things (deceitfully)
Witty - Charm, conversational skills, talking people into things (nicely)

Appendix B: Skills

- Animal Friend
- Boating
- Breaking and Entering
- Climbing
- Detective
- Fencing
- Fighting
- Fixing Stuff
- Gambling
- Healing
- Intimidation
- Karate
- Languages (Polylinguil)
- Outdoor Survival
- Persuasion
- Piloting (large aircraft)
- Piloting (small aircraft)
- Politics
- Research
- Riding (animals)
- Shooting
- Sneaking
- Super Good Looking
- Swimming/Diving
- Tracking
- Wrestling

APPENDIX C: WEAPONS

Weapon	To Hit Value	Notes
Axe (large)	1d6 - 1	unwieldy
Axe (small)	1d4	
Bazooka	3d10 + 3	Minimum range, splash damage
Bow and Arrow	2d6 - 1	Long Range, high difficulty
Hammer, claw	1d4	
Hammer, sledge	1d6 – 2	unwieldy
Knife	1d4	
Laser Pistol	3d6	Medium Range
Laser Rifle	3d6	Long Range
Machine Gun	2d8	Medium Range
Pistol	2d6	Short range
Rifle	3d6	Long range
Shotgun, double	3d6	Short range
Shotgun, double sawed off	3d6 + 2	Very short range
Shotgun, single	2d6	Short range
Spear	1d4 + 1	Reach and coverage
Sword	1d6	

Designer's Notes

This was my first time entering the 24hr RPG contest, as well as my first time designing an RPG from scratch, so it's not surprising that I didn't have time to finish it to my satisfaction. What is surprising is how much it turns out can pour from my brain onto the screen in that short a period when I'm willing to stay up until 5am and then get up after 3 hours of sleep!

If this system is at all well received, I plan to add to it, refine it, and actually play test it. Also, editing for length will be important, as I tend to get verbose when I first start writing.

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