

INTERACTIONS

In *ACKS*, interactions between PCs and NPCs use a simple 2d6 reaction roll system which creates a bell curve of results ranging from Hostile (2) to Friendly (12). The system functions admirably well for happenstance encounters between strangers provided the range of modifiers are kept limited (-3 to +3). However, the system begins to break down when a large number of positive modifiers are applied without context or situational adjustment. Given sufficient bonuses, the results can be absurd – entire dungeons of monsters yielding without a fight.

The reaction rules in *ACKS* also make no provision for ongoing or repeated interactions. Can a Hostile creature ever be made Friendly? How long does it take? These revised Interaction mechanics answer these questions.

THE BASICS OF INTERACTION

Interaction occurs whenever an adventurer or party of adventurers encounters a creature or group of creatures not previously encountered. This is called an **initial interaction** and is resolved with an **interaction roll**. Various modifiers will apply to the interaction roll based on the **tone** of the interaction. The results of the interaction roll will yield an **attitude** such as Hostile, Unfriendly, Neutral, Indifferent, or Friendly. (The reaction roll rules in *ACKS* cover initial interactions, more-or-less.)

If satisfied with the attitude of a creature or group encountered, the adventurer or party need make no further interaction rolls. However, if the adventurer or party wishes to change the attitude of a creature or group that already has an attitude, they must engage in an **attempt to influence**.

If combat breaks out between the adventurer(s) and the creature(s), no attempts to influence may be made until the adventurer or party are defeated and captured, or the creature(s) are defeated or fail a morale roll.

TIME REQUIRED FOR INTERACTION

Interacting with NPCs takes time. The amount of time required to interact depends on how well the interacting individuals or groups know each other. The Time Interval for Interaction table, below, shows the amount of game time that characters must spend at each stage of interaction. Initial interactions between strangers happen almost instantly; persuading a foe of decades to join an alliance may take weeks or months.

	Stage	Time Required
	Initial Interaction	Instantaneous
	1 st Attempt to Influence	1 round (10 seconds)
	2 nd Attempt to Influence	6 rounds (1 minute)
	3 rd Attempt to Influence	1 turn (10 minutes)
	4 th Attempt to Influence	6 turns (1 hour)
	5 th Attempts to Influence	8 hours (1 work-day)
	6 th +Attempts to Influence	5 work-days (1 week)

SPOKESPERSON

When interactions occur between groups, each group will designate a **spokesperson**. The spokesperson is typically the group's leader or its highest Charisma character. The class, ability scores, proficiencies, and other characteristics of the spokesperson are applied on behalf of the group.

Sometimes a party of adventurers may not have a clear spokesperson, or may disagree as to who their spokesperson ought to be. In this case, whichever adventurer is encountered by or speaks to the other side first is considered to be the spokesperson for that stage. The Judge can call for an initiative roll to determine who speaks first if it is unclear.

EXAMPLE: Tavus is a paladin (CHA 18, Mystic Aura, Intimidation, +7 total bonus) nominally leading a party of 1st level adventurers. One of his comrades is an explorer named Morne (CHA 7, -1 penalty). The party encounters a group of 5 orcs. Tavus tells the Judge, "I draw my sword and tell them to surrender or die." Morne, who enjoys disrupting the paladin's plans, immediately says "I show my bare hands and say "let's talk!" The party erupts into dispute around the gaming table. The Judge calls for Tavus and Morne to each roll initiative. Morne wins, so he speaks first. The orcs consider him the spokesperson of the adventurers.

TONES OF INTERACTIONS

There are three types of interactions possible: Diplomatic, Intimidating, and Seductive, corresponding to the three proficiencies of the same name. Each tone of interaction has a different set of modifiers applicable to it. If a party is surprised by an encounter, the Judge chooses the tone based on whichever is least favorable for the party. Otherwise, the party's spokesperson chooses the tone of interaction for the initial interaction and at each stage thereafter. If tone is unclear from the spokesperson's statements or role-play, the Judge can ask for clarification or decide what tone has been adopted. Once the tone of interaction is settled, the Judge makes an interaction roll

EXAMPLE: Morne is the acting spokesperson for a party of adventurers that has just encountered 5 orcs. He raises empty hands and says "let's talk!" The Judge rules that this is a Diplomatic tone.

DIPLOMATIC INTERACTIONS

Diplomatic interactions occur when an adventurer makes a non-threatening appeal to the self-interest of a target or target's group. Calling on a guard to do his duty, a noble to protect his subjects, or a group of strangers to parley rather than fight are all examples of diplomatic interactions. The lengthy time intervals for ongoing attempts to influence with diplomacy represent long conversations, meetings, "diplomatic summits," and so on.

DIPLOMATIC MODIFIERS

The following modifiers apply to diplomatic interactions.

Alignment

Character believed to be Lawful; target is Lawful or Neutral +1
Character believed to be Lawful; target is Chaotic -1
Character believed to be Chaotic; target is Lawful or Neutral -2
Character's race is a historical enemy of target -2

Location

Character is trespassing in target's lair -1
Character is in own lair +1

Authority

Character has legal authority over target (lord, guard, etc.) +2 or more
Character owes target favors -1/unrequited favor
Target has authority over character -1 or more
Target owes character favors +1/unrequited favor

Ability Scores & Proficiencies

Character has Charisma Modifier +Modifier
Character has Bribery and offers appropriate bribe +1 to +3
Character has Diplomacy +2
Character has Mystic Aura +2
Target has Wisdom Modifier -Modifier

Threat

Character is brandishing weapon -1
Target believes character has harmed friends -2
Target has witnessed or has evidence that character harm friends -5
Target has been personally harmed by character -5 or more

Relationship

Target is already Hostile -2
Target is already Unfriendly -1
Target is already Indifferent +1

Interaction Roll	Initial Interaction	Attempt to Influence
2	Hostile, attacks	Shift 2 attitudes towards Hostile
3-5	Unfriendly, may attack	Shift 1 attitude towards Hostile
6-8	Neutral, uncertain	Shift 1 attitude towards Neutral
9-11	Indifferent, uninterested	Shift 1 attitude towards Friendly
12	Friendly, helpful	Shift 2 attitudes towards Friendly

EXAMPLE: A party of 1st level adventurers has just encountered five orcs. Morne, foolishly acting as the party's spokesperson, says "we come in peace!" Morne has a Charisma 7 (-1) and no relevant proficiencies.

The characters are believed to be of Lawful alignment and the target is Chaotic (-1) and the characters are trespassing in the target's lair (-1). Morne is not brandishing a weapon and the targets have evidence that the characters harmed anyone. The total penalty is -2. The total modifier is therefore +1-2=-3.

The Judge rolls 2d6-3, and gets an 11. The total of (11-3) 8 results in a "Neutral" response. "If you come in peace, why'd you invade our lair?" says the orc gang leader. The paladin, Tavus, now steps forward and attempts to influence the orcs. Since this is the first attempt to influence, it requires (1 combat round (10 seconds)). The paladin decides to continue with a Diplomatic tone, saying "We've come to work as mercenaries. We'd like to meet your chief to join his service."

Tavus has Charisma 18 (+3) and Mystic Aura (+2), for a total bonus of +5. The same situational penalty apply, as the characters are still believed to be of Lawful alignment and the target Chaotic (-1) and the characters are still trespassing in the target's lair (-1). The Judge therefore rolls 2d6+5-2; the dice yield an 7. This modifies to a 10, resulting in a shift in attitude by one category, from "Neutral" to "Indifferent". The orc gang leader says, "Eh, Aghrimun always was stupid, knew he'd get himself killed some day. Not sure I wat to bother the chief right now, but you can go find him yourself if you want."

The paladin decides to continue parleying. As this is a second attempt to influence, it will take 1 minute (6 rounds of interaction). His modifier is now 2d6+5-1, because he gains a +1 from the target being Indifferent. The paladin decides to make fun of Aghrimun's weakness and then says they should all go have a laugh about it with the chief. The dice yield a result of 3, modified to a 7, resulting in a shift in attitude by one category towards "Neutral". This reverts the orcs towards Neutral. "I ain't got no interest in cracking jokes with the likes of you," says the orc gang leader. "Get out of here before I decide I want to crack your skull."

INTIMIDATING INTERACTIONS

Intimidating interactions occur when an adventurer threatens to cause harm to a target or target's group if the target does not cooperate with the adventurer. It is, in many ways, easier to use intimidation than diplomacy. But intimidating interactions have several disadvantages.

First, intimidating interactions cannot achieve genuinely Indifferent or Friendly attitudes. Instead, these are replaced with the Fearful and Cowed attitudes. Fearful creatures will attempt to withdraw or escape at the first opportunity; if no opportunity to escape is available, they count as cowed while they remain intimidated. Cowed creatures act as if Friendly while they remain intimidated. While Cowed or Fearful, creatures are treated as Neutral for purposes of diplomatic or seductive interactions.

Second, unlike the attitude established by a diplomatic interaction, the attitudes established by intimidating interactions are temporary. A new interaction roll must be made if the adventurer encounters new allies of the intimidated creature. It should be resolved with the same roll as that used for the initial interaction with the new creatures. The Judge can also call for a new interaction roll anytime the conditions that led to the initial intimidation have materially changed.

The lengthy time intervals for ongoing attempts to influence with intimidation represent activities such as long-term brainwashing, dehumanizing treatment, and/or torture. The Judge may limit the use of such interactions by Lawful characters if desired.

INTIMIDATION MODIFIERS

The following modifiers apply to intimidating interactions.

Character

Character and party members outnumber target(s) +1
Character and party members outnumber target(s) by 3:2 or more +2
Character and party members outnumber target(s) by 3:1 or more +5
Character is in own lair +1
Character is brandishing weapon +1
Character is brandishing magic items +1
Character has target at disadvantage (blackmail, tied up) +2 or more
Character has legal authority over target +2 or more
Character is significantly higher level than target (3+ HD) +2

Target

Target's Morale Score -score
Target has Wisdom Modifier -Modifier
Target has witnessed character kill or torture target's associates +1
Target is in own lair -1
Target is armed -1
Target has spells or magic items available -1
Target and friends outnumber character and party members -1
Target and friends outnumber character and party members by 3:2 or more -2*
Target and friends outnumber character and party members by 3:1 or more -5*
Target has character at disadvantage (trump card, helpless) -5
Target has legal authority over character -2 or more
Target is significantly higher level than character (3+ HD) -2
Target believes he will suffer loss of face if submits -2 or more
Target believes he will be horrendously punished or killed if he submits -5 or more**
*If target is in lair, include number in lair as part of friends
**"The Dark Lord will do far worse things to me than you ever would" factor

Ability Scores & Proficiencies

Character has Charisma Modifier +Modifier
Character has Intimidation and either legal authority, outnumber, or outlevels target +2
Character has Mystic Aura +2

Relationship

Target is already Hostile -2
Target is already Unfriendly -1
Target is already Fearful +1

Interaction Roll	Initial Interaction	Attempt to Influence
2	Hostile, attacks	Shift 2 attitudes towards Hostile
3-5	Unfriendly, may attack	Shift 1 attitude towards Hostile
6-8	Neutral, uncertain	Shift 1 attitude towards Neutral
9-11	Fearful, attempts to withdraw/escape if possible	Shift 1 attitude towards Friendly
12	Cowed, helpful	Shift 2 attitudes towards Friendly

EXAMPLE: The party of 1st level adventurers has just slain the five orcs who refused to take them to their chief. Their bodies litter the floor and the adventurers' weapons are covered with orc-gore. Just then, another 10 orcs enter the room. Tavus (CHA 18, Mystic Aura, Intimidation, +7 total) steps forward. "Drop your weapons if you don't want the same to happen to you!" he says in orcish.

The characters are brandishing weapons (+1) and have some visible magic items (+1) but are not of substantially higher level and have no legal authority (0). The orcs are in their own lair (-1), are brandishing weapons (-1), and including friends in their lair outnumber the characters by more than 3:1 (-5). However they can see that the PCs have killed some friends (+1). Their chieftain is alive, giving them ML +2 (-2). The total modifiers are +7+1+1-1-1-5+1=+1.

The Judge rolls 2d6+1, and gets an 11. The adjusted total of 12 results in a "Cowed" response. The orcs drop their weapons. "We surrender!" they shout, dropping their weapons. "Take us to your chief," the paladin orders.

The characters reach the orc chief and seek to intimidate him as well. "Time to leave these caves, chief. This place is ours now," says Tavus. The characters are brandishing weapons (+1) and have some visible magic items (+1) but have no legal authority (0). The orc chief is in his own lair (-1), brandishing a weapon (-1), and has troops that outnumber the characters by more than 3:1 (-5). He knows that the PCs have killed some friends (+1). But he is 4HD, substantially higher level than the party (-1), has access to a witch doctor (-1), and will suffer loss of face if he submits to the adventurers (-2). With the chief alive, the orc morale is +2 (-2). The total modifiers are +7+1+1-1-1-5+1-1-1-2-2=-3.

The Judge rolls 2d6-1 and gets a 6. The adjusted total of 3 results in an "Unfriendly" response from the chief and other new orcs in the room. "I'll give you 10 seconds to get the hell out of my caverns, and then I start eating human-flesh," says the Chief.

Since the adventurers have now encountered allies of the orcs they intimidated, a new interaction roll is required for those orcs. It is resolved with the same roll as that used for the initial interaction with the orc chief. Since the result was 3, that means that the currently cowed orcs have their attitudes adjusted downward by one category, from "Cowed" to "Fearful". They begin to slink towards the sides of the room, hoping no one pays attention to them.

SEDUCTIVE INTERACTIONS

Seductive interactions occur whenever an adventurer appeals to a target's prurient interest. Seductive interactions can only be used with creatures with whom it would be possible to have passionate relations (not necessarily intercourse, but at least deep emotional passion.) The lengthy time intervals for ongoing attempts to influence with seduction represent extended periods of courtship such as private conversations, dates, social outings, cohabitation, and so on.

Age

Character is of younger age category than target attracted to youthful mates +1/category

Character is of younger age category than target attracted to mature mates -1/category

Character is of older age category than target attracted to mature mates +1/category

Character is of older age category than target attracted to mature mates +1/category

*Age categories only apply within Youth to Old range.

Status

Character has higher social status than target +1 per noble rank or equivalent

Character is substantially higher level than target +1

Character is substantially lower level than target -1

Kink

Character is of a race which particularly appeals to target +1 or more

Character is of a race which is unappealing to target -1 or more

Character's clothing is particularly appealing to target +1 or more

Character's clothing is particularly unappealing to target -1 or more

Character's physical traits are particularly appealing to target +1 or more

Character's physical traits are particularly unappealing to target -1 or more

Character's behavioral traits are particularly appealing to target +1 or more

Character's behavioral traits are particularly unappealing to target -1 or more

Privacy

Character and target are alone +1

Characters and target are in front of target's friends -1

Ability Scores & Proficiencies

Character demonstrates Performance or Art proficiency +1

Character has Mystic Aura +2

Character has Seduction and otherwise at least +1 in modifiers +2

Target has Wisdom Modifier -Modifier

Relationship History

Character already Hostile -2

Character already Unfriendly -1

Character already Indifferent +1

Character already Friendly +2

Character has taken advantage of target's friends in the past -1

Character has taken advantage of target in the past -2

Target would be at personal risk from liaison with character -2 or more

Reaction to Seduction

Interaction Roll	Initial Interaction	Attempt to Influence
2	Hostile, attacks or calls for aid	Shift 2 attitudes towards Hostile
3-5	Unfriendly, insults or rejects	Shift 1 attitude towards Hostile
6-8	Neutral, remains open	Shift 1 attitude towards Neutral
9-11	Indifferent, but secretly interested	Shift 1 attitude towards Friendly
12	Friendly, helpful	Shift 2 attitudes towards Friendly

EXAMPLE: Tavus's party is virtually annihilated by the orc chief and his minions. The only survivor is Anja, a priestess of Ianna (CHA 16, Seduction, total modifier +4), who has been captured to be eaten later. As the cook-fires are being warmed, Anja says to the chief, "Don't you want me for yourself?" and begins dancing for him (Performance: dance).

Anja is younger than the orc chief, who – like many males – is attracted to youthful mates (+1). She is substantially lower level than the 4D orc chief (-1) and of lower social rank (-1). The orc chief has no particular kink for human women like Anja, but no antipathy either. Anja is attempting a seduction in front of the chief's friends (-1). Anja has displayed a Performance proficiency (+1). The chief, having fought against the adventurers, is Hostile (-2). The modifiers from the situation add up to -3. Combined with Anja's Charisma modifier and Seduction, the total modifier is +4-3=+1.

The Judge rolls 2d6+1, and gets an 11, modified to a 12. The adjusted total of 12 results in a shift of 2 attitudes towards Friendly, from Hostile to Neutral. The chief says "Keep dancing and maybe I won't cook you. Or maybe I will."

The priestess decides to continue seducing the orc chief. As this is a second attempt to influence, it will take 1 minute (6 rounds of interaction), during which time she continues to dance. Her modifier is now 2d6+3, because she no longer suffers the -2 penalty from the chief being hostile. The dice yield a result of 3, modified to a 6, resulting in a shift in attitude by one category towards "Neutral". The chief remains Neutral. "I'm not all that impressed," he says.

The priestess dances as if her life depends on it in a third attempt to influence. It will take 1 turn (10 minutes). Her modifier remains 2d6+3. The dice yield a 9, modified to a 12, resulting in a shift of attitude by two categories towards "Friendly". The chief breaks out into a toothy grin. "She has endurance! I like that in a mate. Bring her over here, she's with me."

Several years later, the chthonic priestess Anja emerges as the head of a warband of orcs....