

# T H E D R E S D E N F · I · L · E · S THE ROLEPLAYING GAME

## THE VERY BASICS

**Dresden Files Roleplaying Game** is at its core a straight forward skill based system. When attempting an action roll four Fate Dice (**d4F**) add a relevant skill value and compare that to a target number. If you **meet or surpass** the target number you've succeeded.

There are two types of skill checks that will come up in the game:

**Simple Actions** are when no one is opposing the action. The GM sets the target number (the **Difficulty**) based on the **Ladder** and situational effects.

**Contests** (or **opposed rolls**) are when someone is actively trying to prevent the character from taking the action. Both characters roll their 4dF + their skill with the higher value succeeding as if it were an action with a target number of the lower numbers. (Ties are no success by either party.)

## SHIFTS

**Shifts.** The degree of success (how much higher your skill and die roll is than the Difficulty) is counted in shifts... think of "shifting" up or down the ladder by one rung for each number over the Difficulty.

## SKILLS

Skills are the primary way characters interact with the game world. Ability is measured on a scale of -2 to +8, with +1 representing a professional who uses that skill regularly but not spectacularly.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH SKILLS?

**Trappings.** In short, skills can be used to do whatever the table agrees it can do. The rulebook also has a list of common uses of skills called **trappings** explaining how to use a skill to do interesting stuff and suggested difficulties.

**Attack.** Most skills can be used to hurt, harass or annoy another character. Attacks are **opposed**. The **degree of success** of the Attack is the amount of Stress the target takes (plus Weapon Rating and minus Armor Rating).

**Defend.** When you're the target of an Attack you may roll a skill to defend, which becomes the **difficulty** of the attack. **Defending is not an action, and happens on other character's turns.**

**Full Defense.** Instead of taking an action a character can make a **full defense**, gaining +2 to any defense rolls, no matter what skill is used.

**Assess.** You can use a skill to gather information. The target number will either be determined by the GM or a contest against whoever's trying to hide the information. If successful you can learn an **Aspect** of the target.

**Declare.** A player can introduce new facts into the game world with a successful skill roll. Difficulty is based on likelihood and how much fun the new fact may be. This can be used to create a new **Aspect** on a character, location or item. Declarations can often be performed as a supplemental or free action.

**Maneuver.** This is a catch-all term for doing something that introduces a new, temporary **Aspect** on a character, location or item. Difficulty is usually either 0 or based on the roll of a contesting character.

**Block.** You may use a skill to set up a preemptive defense against a specified future action. The **block strength** is the **effect** of the roll. Characters attempting that specific action must surpass the **block strength** with their skill effort in order to take the action.

**Sprint.** A skill can be used to move through a zones. Each shift can be spent moving through one zone. Spend a number of shifts equal to the **border rating** to pass it.

## SKILLS & TIME

Most skill use is instantaneous, but some things take longer to do than others, and some effects last longer than others. When a skill roll exceeds the difficulty, you may be able to decrease how long it takes or increase how long it lasts depending on the situation and GM's judgment. If allowed, each **shift of effect** can move the duration up or down the **Time Increments** table one step.

## STRESS & CONSEQUENCES

Every character has three **stress tracks**: Physical, Mental, and Social. When an attack is successful it generates **stress** equal to the **effect** of the skill roll (plus a **weapon value**, less an **armor value** if applicable). When taking stress mark off the box (and just that box) that corresponds to the amount of stress taken on the appropriate stress track. If that box is already filled in, **roll up** the damage by checking off the next higher unchecked box. If there are no higher unchecked boxes the character is **Taken Out**.

Instead of being taken out, or if you just don't want to take the stress from an attack, you can instead take a **consequence**. A consequence reduces the amount of stress taken (even reducing it to 0).

| Type     | Stress Reduction |
|----------|------------------|
| Mild     | -2               |
| Moderate | -4               |
| Severe   | -6               |
| Extreme  | -8               |

A character is limited in the number of consequences he can take at one time, typically one of each.

Consequences are **Aspects**.

## TAKEN OUT & CONCESSIONS

If a character takes stress beyond the boxes he has available, he is **taken out**. The character cannot participate in the rest of the scene and the player or GM who took him out may dictate what this looks like in the game.

A character can end a conflict early by offering a **Concession**. The character still cannot act for the remainder of the scene, but his player gets to choose how it happens.

**When a character is Taken Out or offers a concession,** he receives one Fate Point for every consequence he took during that conflict.

## RECOVERY

A character recovers stress at the end of a conflict (unless he is immediately brought into a new one). Consequences take longer to recover from, based on their severity.

## ASPECTS

Aspects are phrases describing what's important about a person, place or object. An Aspect can be used by anyone, **even if it belongs to someone else**, but the Aspect's owner needs to be part of the action (most typically its target).

Most uses of Aspects **cost a Fate Point** to use. Some earn you points, some can be used for free. If an Aspect has **just been created** (or revealed) with an Assessment, Declaration, Maneuver or as a Consequence, the **first use is free**. (That use can be from another character.)

Any number of Aspects can be used on one roll, but no Aspect may be used more than once on a single roll.

Assume all uses cost a Fate Point unless told otherwise.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH ASPECTS?

**Invoke.** If an Aspect is applicable to the action at hand you can **gain +2** to a roll, or **reroll** the Fate Dice.

**Invoke for Effect.** Make a Declaration without a skill roll.

**Compel.** Either receive a Fate Point when one of your Aspects works to your disadvantage, or spend a fate point to avoid that disadvantage. You may also compel other characters' Aspects by paying the player or GM a Fate Point.

**Tag.** Invoke an action that was just created with a maneuver or declaration or revealed with an assessment without spending a Fate Point. **Only the first use of a new Aspect is free.**

## FATE POINTS

Fate Points are a key currency of the game, allowing players to do better in things that are important to them or their character.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH FATE POINTS?

**Gain +1.** A point can add +1 to any roll.

**Aspects.** You can Tag, Invoke, or Compel Aspects for a point.

**Stunts.** Some stunts require the expenditure of Fate Points.

**Beg the GM.** If you really, really want something, offer the GM a point. Who knows, maybe he'll take the point and let you have your way.

## STUNTS & POWERS

**Stunts** are cool things characters can do to further set them apart from the average guy on the street. There are lots of them and they are beyond the scope of this brief. Know what your Stunts allow you to do.

## MAGIC

There are two styles of magic available. **Evocation** is for quick castings, **Thaumaturgy** is for ritual magic, trading speed for power.

### WHAT CAN EVOCATION DO?

Evocation can be used to **attack, block, maneuver, or counter spell.**

### EVOCATION PROCESS

1. Determine the effect.
2. Describe the effect as a basic action: **attack, block, maneuver, or counterspell.**
3. Decide how many shifts of **power** you will use.
4. Roll Discipline with a **difficulty** equal to the desired power.
5. Take **Mental** stress based on power of spell.
6. Suffer **backlash** or **fallout**, if applicable.

### WHAT CAN THAUMATURGY DO?

Thaumaturgy can be used to duplicate **simple actions**, and to **maneuver**. There are also guidelines for: **summoning and binding, conjuration, divination, veils, and wards.**

Thaumaturgic spells need power equal to the **complexity** of the spell, but that power can be obtained over multiple rolls.

### THAUMATURGY PROCESS

1. Determine the effect.

2. Describe the effect as a skill use. The difficulty of the skill use becomes the spell's **complexity**.
3. If **Complexity > Lore**, you must **prepare** to overcome the deficit.
4. Choose an amount of power to add the spell and roll Discipline with a difficulty equal to power. If successful, you may add more power next turn by making another Discipline roll.
5. If the (or any) Discipline roll fails, suffer **backlash** or **fallout**.

### PREPARATION

If the complexity of the spell is greater than the caster's Lore, you must make up the difference by:

**Invoke Aspects.** Tag an Aspect to gain **2 shifts**.

**Make Declarations.** Declare a mini-scene relevant to preparation creating an Aspect to tag.

**Apply Consequences.** For every Consequence you're willing to take or inflict on another gain a number of shifts equal to the value of the Consequence.

### WHAT CAN MAGIC DO?

**Simple Actions.** Magic can duplicate other skill uses, including situations where mundane use would be impossible. Use standard difficulties or opposed skills as the required power.

**Attack.** Attack one or more target in your zone. Power can be spent on:

**Weapon Rating.** 1 shift of power increases the Weapon rating by 1.

**Multiple Targets.** 2 shifts of power allows the spell to target everyone in a zone the caster can see. Power can also be spent between more than one target.

**Block.** Block a specific type of action. Power can be spent on:

**Block Strength.** 1 shift of power adds 1 to the block strength.

**Armor Rating.** 2 shifts of power grants 1 point of Armor Rating.

**Border.** 1 point of power creates or adds 1 point to the level of a border between zones.

**Duration.** 1 shift of power adds 1 additional exchange of duration.

**Additional Allies.** 2 shifts will let you provide the block to multiple allies in a zone. 2 more shifts extends this to an additional zone.

**Maneuver.** Maneuvers are broad actions. An unresisted maneuver needs **3 power**. Resisted maneuvers need enough power to beat the target's resistance roll. Power can also be spent on:

**Duration.** 1 shift of power makes temporary Aspects last an additional exchange.

**Counterspell.** Evocation can disrupt a magic effect. A counterspell needs at least as much power than the effect it is disrupting.

## BEING TAKEN OUT BY MAGIC

A number of lasting, even permanent magical effects are represented by taking out the opponent and then inflicting a lasting Aspect or other change to them. (If you can kill someone you can also turn them into a chair.)

## CONFLICTS

Conflicts can be physical, mental, emotional, or any combination thereof.

## EXCHANGES

Conflicts are broken down into **exchanges**. Each character gets to act once per exchange.

## INITIATIVE

Characters act in order based on their:

**Alertness** for primarily **Physical** conflicts.

**Empathy** for primarily **Social** conflicts

**Discipline** for primarily **Mental** conflicts.

The GM may specify other skills.

## ZONES & BORDERS

The space in which the conflict occurs may be broken down into abstract **zones**. Usually you may only interact with other characters in the same zone as you.

Some zones have **borders** with making it more difficult to move into them. Borders are measured by their **border rating**.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO IN AN EXCHANGE?

Each character gets one **basic action** per turn. They may also be able to take one **supplemental action**. Characters can take any number of **free actions** during turn (within reason). Instead of taking a basic action a character can make a **full defense**.

## WHAT ARE BASIC ACTIONS?

The basic actions are **attack**, **maneuver**, **block**, and **sprint**.

## WHAT ARE SUPPLEMENTAL ACTIONS?

Supplemental actions are additional actions that don't require a skill roll. **Performing a supplemental action reduces the basic action's roll by 1.**

**Moving to single adjacent zone** is a supplemental action (regardless of barriers).

## WHAT ARE FREE ACTIONS?

**Free actions** are even smaller than supplemental actions. **Defense rolls are free actions.**

## WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SUPPLEMENTAL AND FREE ACTIONS?

Basically, a supplemental action is whatever the GM says a supplemental action is.

## TIME INCREMENTS

Instant  
A few moments  
Half a minute  
A few minutes  
15 minutes  
Half an hour  
An hour  
A few hours  
An afternoon  
A day  
A few days  
A week  
A few weeks  
A month  
A few months  
A season  
Half a year  
A year  
*and so on*

## THE LADDER

|    |           |
|----|-----------|
| +8 | Legendary |
| +7 | Epic      |
| +6 | Fantastic |
| +5 | Superb    |
| +4 | Great     |
| +3 | Good      |
| +2 | Fair      |
| +1 | Average   |
| 0  | Mediocre  |
| -1 | Poor      |
| -2 | Terrible  |

## WHAT SKILLS CAN DO

**Attack** – Inflict Stress  
**Maneuver** – Create a temporary Aspect  
**Declare** – Create an Aspect or fact.  
**Assess** - Discover an Aspect  
**Block** – Prevent a specified future action

## STRESS

**Stress = Shifts + Weapon Rating - Armor**