
SHADOWRUN LIFE HISTORY

This is a set of tables intended to help players create backgrounds for their characters. It's mainly intended for players new to the game of **Shadowrun**, who don't have a firm grasp on the Sixth World yet, and for players new to roleplaying in general.

CREDITS

Writing: Gurth <gurth@xs4all.nl>

Inspiration: the Lifepath tables in Cyberpunk 2020

Version: 1.0 • 8 July 1998

This file © 1998 by Gurth/[Plastic Warriors](http://www.xs4all.nl/~gurth/plastic.html). You may distribute it at will, as long as you don't distribute modified copies or charge money for it. **Shadowrun**® is a registered trademark of [FASA Corporation](http://www.fasa.com), original Shadowrun material copyright © 1989-1998 by FASA Corporation.

Take a look at the **Plastic Warriors** WWW site at <http://www.xs4all.nl/~gurth/plastic.html>

MAKING ROLLS

The following sections give a variety of tables to roll on, but you're not required to use them in precisely that way. If you want to pick an entry from a table instead of rolling up a random one, go ahead—unless the gamemaster has valid objections, of course. Gamemasters should be wary of players who try to abuse this freedom by picking all the table entries that give bonuses while avoiding those that somehow penalize the character.

Players are encouraged to flesh out the results of the rolls by coming up with explanations for why those particular things happened, instead of just noting down the result.

Unless it's specifically noted otherwise, make only *one* roll on each table. Start at the top of each section, and work your way down; the end of the section tells you where to go next. Often, this will simply be the next section, though sometimes you'll find yourself jumping to another section entirely.

SHADOWRUN BOOKS

There are references to a number of **Shadowrun** books in the text; don't worry if nobody in your group owns

them, though. The tables have enough information to give an idea of what's going without an absolute *need* to refer to the books mentioned.

MONEY, CONTACTS, GEAR, ETC.

Some of the tables or explanations indicate you get Edges, contacts, equipment, or some other benefit. **You should pay for these using your Resources or Building Points!** You don't get them for free, so if you can't pay for them, you have two options: 1) roll again on the same table until you get something you can afford (or pick one), or 2) ask the gamemaster if you can have it anyway. The gamemaster might allow it after all, but will probably let you start with a debt.

For example, should your rolls tell you that you gain a friend (a contact), but you don't have the 5,000¥ to pay for an additional contact (remember you get two for free, but we'll assume you already "used" those), the gamemaster will probably say no. On the other hand, if you get a piece of equipment costing 5,000¥ but don't have the money, the gamemaster may want you to pay as much as you can—say, 2,000¥—and let your character start with a debt equal to the rest; that's 3 grand in this case. Naturally, to whom you owe this debt depends on what the cause of the debt is.

Related to this are things like fines—you need to pay them from your Resources money too, and you should pay them immediately; you can't "save" them as debts and pay them off later. If that means you can't buy all the stuff you want, that's tough luck. The only exception would be if you absolutely CANNOT pay, like when you have 500¥ starting money and find you have to pay a 1,000¥ fine. In this case, the same rules as above apply for debts.

On the other side, sometimes you get small bonuses in the form of free money. Should you get one of these, you add it to your Resources money, and can use the money to buy stuff from during character generation.

STYLE & ATTITUDE

Everybody has certain affectations for clothing, hairstyles, and other things that fall under the description of "style." Closely related are the things you like and dislike. Find out what yours are by rolling on the tables below.

CLOTHING

1D6	Dress
1	Business suits
2	Leather (preferably real, but synthetic if you're on a budget)
3	Jeans
4	Military
5	High fashion
6	Bland and average

NEXT: Hair Style

HAIR STYLE

1D6	Style
1	Buzz cut
2	Short
3	Long
4	Very long
5	Pigtails
6	Mohawk

NEXT: Hair Color

HAIR COLOR

1D6	Color
1-3	Natural
4-5	False natural (bleached, etc.)
6	Dyed in bright colors

NEXT: Likes

LIKES

1D6	Likes
1	Tattoos
2	Earrings/Piercings
3	Jewelry and/or (Pseudo-)magical trinkets
4	Body painting
5	Sunglasses (mirrorshades or other)
6	Personal electronics (phones, walkmans, etc.)

NEXT: Family

FAMILY

This section establishes what kind of family you come from, and what your childhood was like.

BACKGROUND

This is mostly an indicator of what your family has done for most of their lives, and thus the environment you grew up in.

2D6	Background
2	Corporate executive
3	Crime syndicate
4	Corporate manager
5	Middle class
6-7	Corporate worker
8	Military
9	Petty criminal
10	Homeless or unemployed
11-12	Tribal

NEXT: Parents

PARENTS

Roll 2D6 to decide whether anything has happened to one or both of your parents.

2D6	Parents
2-3	one parent dead (even = mother, odd = father), other parent alright
4-10	both parents alright
11-12	both parents dead

If your parents are still alive, you can take one or both of them as contacts, if you are still in touch with them.

NEXT: Brothers & Sisters

BROTHERS & SISTERS

You have 1D6–3 brothers and/or sisters (negative numbers count as none, of course); orks roll 2D6 instead of 1D6–3. For each sibling, roll a die to decide if they're male or female: even is male, odd is female. Again, if you're still in touch with them you can add one or more of them as contacts, if you want to.

NEXT: Education

EDUCATION

Not everybody gets a chance to get an education in the 2050s, let alone finish one. Roll 1D6 on the table below, applying modifiers for the following factors:

BACKGROUND

Corporate Executive: +3
Corporate Manager: +1
Crime Syndicate: +1
Homeless or Unemployed: -2
Middle Class: +1
Tribal: -1

PARENTS

Both parents dead: -1

1D6 Education

- 1 or less You dropped out of primary school; roll 1D6: 1-3 = you get the Illiterate flaw, 4-6 = you get the Uneducated flaw.
- 2 You finished primary school but dropped out of high school; roll 1D6: 1 = you get the Illiterate flaw, 2-3 = you get the Uneducated flaw.
- 3-5 You finished high school; take the High School Education edge.
- 6 or more You went to college; roll 1D6 for the edge you get: 1-3 = College Education, 4-6 = Technical School Education.

NEXT: What Have You Done With Your Life So Far?

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH YOUR LIFE SO FAR?

Now the basics of your family background have been established, it's time to decide on some of the major events that took place during your life until this moment. To do this, there is a whole new set of sections which you'll go through more than once (probably), and after each one you'll come back here to check whether the present day has been reached or not.

You start out at age 16, and first of all you roll on the Annual Event table, which shows you what happened that year, if anything. Go to the section indicated and follow the instructions there, then come back here and roll 2D6. Apply the Rule of Six to both dice, and add the final result to 16. If the result is higher than your current age, add 1 to your age and roll on the Annual Event table again.

If your 2D6+16 roll ends up less than or equal to your age, stop rolling on the tables. You've reached the current game year, and do not get to roll up any more important events; if you have Resources money left you can spend it, of course, but your life history has been determined.

An alternative method is to decide on the age your character will be, and roll on the Annual Events table a number of times equal to your age, minus 16. For example, a character aged 22 would roll six times.

ANNUAL EVENTS

The table references you to the section that fleshes out the main events of each year of your life so far.

1D6 Event

- 1 Nothing worth remembering
- 2 Friends
- 3 Enemies
- 4 Wins
- 5 Losses
- 6 Roll twice, ignoring and re-rolling 6 on both of those rolls.

NOTHING WORTH REMEMBERING

As it says, nothing very important happened. You just spent a year doing normal things that everybody else does too.

NEXT: What Have You Done With Your Life So Far?

FRIENDS

You made a friend! Make rolls on the tables below to find out something about this friend. If you have the resources for it, you can add him or her as a contact; if not, the friend probably disappeared somewhere along the line and you could run into them during the game.

MALE OR FEMALE?

On an even roll, the friend is male; an odd roll means she's female.

NEXT: Your Friend's Age

YOUR FRIEND'S AGE

At the time you met him or her, your friend's age was equal to $(2D6 \times 3) + 1D6 + 5$ years.

NEXT: The Relationship

THE RELATIONSHIP

Roll 1D6 on the table for an idea of the way you and your friend think of each other.

1D6	Result
1	Like a teacher and a student; usually, the older will take the role of teacher, though this isn't always the case.
2	As lovers; roll 1D6 to find out how the love affair worked out: 1 = the other person died; 2-3 = you broke up for some reason; 4 = you both went your own ways on friendly terms; 5 = you're still involved with each other; 6 = you got married to each other.
3	As someone with a common interest, for example a hobby.
4	One of you has worked for the other in a professional capacity.
5	You know each other from school (or however you grew up if you didn't go to school), and ran into each other again.
6	You often had business dealings with your friend and the friendship grew from there.

NEXT: What Have You Done With Your Life So Far?

ENEMIES

Shadowrunners often make enemies simply by doing what they're supposed to do; you can also have made enemies in other ways, though, so let's not rule out anything just yet.

If your gamemaster uses the rules for Enemies from the **Companion**, the tables provide suggested ratings for those enemies.

MALE OR FEMALE?

Roll 1D6: an odd roll means you have a female enemy, while an even roll gives you a male enemy.

NEXT: Who Is The Enemy?

WHO IS THE ENEMY?

Enemies tend to have faces by which you can recognize them.

1D6	The Enemy	Enemy Rating
1	A gang member.	0-2
2	A corporate manager or executive.	2-4
3	A corporate employee.	0-1
4	A government official.	1-2
5	A shadowrunner.	1-3
6	A policlub member.	0-4

NEXT: What Happened?

WHAT HAPPENED?

Somehow, they got angry with you. Not necessarily for something you did, but fact is that they are. What happened according to them?

1D6	The Cause
1	You double-crossed or betrayed them.
2	You killed or injured them or someone they hold dear.
3	You insulted them.
4	You failed to take responsibility.
5	You turned them down.
6	They just don't like your face.

NEXT: What Have You Done With Your Life So Far?

WINNINGS

You had a stroke of luck, and something went right for once. Let's find out what you got out of it...

1D6	Winnings
1	A prize in the lottery: 1D6×100¥. Apply the Rule of Six to this die.
2	A piece of equipment (your choice) worth 2D6×100¥. Apply the Rule of Six to both dice.
3	A favor from someone (go to the Friends section to find out who owes you).
4	A formula for a spell or source code for a Matrix program, with a Force or Rating equal to 1D6. You still have to learn the spell/write the program to use it, though.
5	You get on good terms with an organization. Roll 1D6: 1-2 = a corporation, 3-4 = a gang, 5 = a government agency, 6 = a policlub.
6	You're discovered to be a very limited magician ¹ ; take one of the Magical Talent edges, by the roll of 1D6: 1-3 = Spellcasting talent (1D6: 1 = Combat, 2 = Detection, 3 = Health, 4 = Illusion, 5 = Manipulation, 6 = roll again), 3 = Summoning talent (3 points), 4 = Summoning talent (5 points), 5 = Astral Sight, 6 = Poor Link.

NEXT: What Have You Done With Your Life So Far?

¹ Note that this roll assumes you use the edges as originally intended by Steve Kenson—that is to say, that anyone can have such an edge, not just magicians (which is what the **Companion** says).

LOSSES

Sometimes, things start going badly. From there, it sometimes escalates.

1D6 Losses

- 1 You had an accident or were involved in some kind of fragged-up run; make the rolls necessary for **Deadly Wounds and Permanent Damage** on page 113 of **SRII**. Pay $2D6 \times 500\text{¥}$ (using the Rule of Six) in medical fees, in addition to the costs for replacement body parts (if required).
- 2 You were arrested and spent $1D6-1$ months in prison, plus you have to pay a $2D6 \times 200\text{¥}$ fine (apply the Rule of Six to all rolls here). You automatically have a SIN and a criminal record linked to it. Take the Police Record flaw.
- 3 You were wounded and spent some time in hospital; pay $1D6 \times 250\text{¥}$ and roll for scarring for a Serious wound per page 56 of **Cybertechnology**.
- 4 Someone you thought was a friend walks out on you. Roll 1D6: 1-5 = they don't want to have anything to do with you anymore; 6 = you gained an enemy, so go to the **Enemies** section above.
- 5 An organization is after you; roll 1D6 to find out who: 1 = a minor corporation, 2 = a megacorp, 3 = a gang, 4 = a government, 5 = a policlub, 6 = someone else (tell your gamemaster to dig up his or her copy of **Threats**). This gives you the Hunted flaw at a point value equal to $1D3 \times 2$.
- 6 Your apartment got looted or was on fire. For each piece of equipment and vehicle you own, roll 1D6: even = it's gone; odd = it's not. You don't get any money back for lost equipment.

NEXT: What Have You Done With Your Life So Far?

AN EXAMPLE

Here's a lengthy example of how to use the life history tables. We're making a human street shaman called Jake, and have most of his game stats finished. Now we start at the **Style & Attitude** section to find out more about him.

First we make the rolls for his clothes, hair, and so on. These end up as follows:

- Clothing: 3 — Jeans
- Hair Style: 2 — Short
- Hair Color: 1 — Natural
- Likes: 5 — Sunglasses

So, from that we know Jake tends to wear jeans and shades (let's give him the standard mirrorshades, shall we?), has his hair cut short, and doesn't dye it. We decide on brown hair.

Now, Jake's family. With a 2D6 roll of 6, he grew up with parents who worked as wageslaves for a corporation. Another 2D6 roll ends up as a 3, so one of his parents has died; an odd roll indicates his father. We decide he's been

killed in an accident at the Mitsuhamma electronics factory where he worked.

For his brothers and sisters, we roll a 6: Jake has three siblings. More rolls tell us all of them are male, so Jake has no sisters. He still sees his oldest brother fairly often, so we take him as a Corporate Rigger contact.

For Jake's education we get a 1... Jake dropped out of primary school, so he gets a flaw; a 6 here means Uneducated, so at least Jake can read and write, though he doesn't have much elementary knowledge. He spent most of his teens on the street rather than in school.

Now the fun part: Jake's life from age 16 onward. For the first year (age 16), we roll on the Annual Events table, getting a 2—Jake made a friend. A roll of 6 is a male friend, while for the friend's age we get $(5 \times 3) + 4 + 5 = 15 + 4 + 5 = 24$. The relationship roll is a 6 again, showing that Jake met this friend through the petty crimes Jake used to commit, probably fencing the stuff Jake stole.

Back to the section titled **What Have You Done With Your Life So Far?**, we roll $2D6+16$, for 22. This isn't less than Jake's age, so we continue on to age 17. The following years give these results:

17: 5 — Losses; 2 — Jake was arrested and spent 3 months in prison. He also had to pay 2,500¥ and take the Police Record flaw (costing him 6 Building Points).

18: 3 — Enemies; 6 — male; 5 — a shadowrunner; 4 — Jake failed to take responsibility for something the runner thought he did. (Jake did a small shadowrun but pulled out when he thought it got too dangerous; the enemy doesn't share that assessment.)

19: 1 — Nothing happened. Jake didn't do much that will have an impact on his later life.

20: 3 — Enemies; 3 — female; 5 — another runner; 1 — Jake double-crossed her. (Jake went on another run, but kept the money for himself instead of sharing it with the rest of the team. One of the is after him to get her share, and more.)

21: 2 — Friends; 3 — female; age 40; 4 — Jake worked for her. (This is someone for whom Jake did a successful shadowrun, and who is pleased with his work. Jake adds a Mr. Johnson to his contacts.)

22: 3 — Enemies; 1 — female; 6 — a policlub member; 2 — Jake injured or killed someone. (Jake got into an argument with members of the policlub, hospitalizing a few. The club's leader is out for his blood.)

As we now rolled 5 and 1 for the $2D6+16$ roll, for a total of 21, we stop rolling here, since the roll is less than Jake's current age. He is 22 years old and has mainly taken some hits in life: he went to prison and made three enemies who could make life difficult for him in the future.