

OKKAM

by Skip Rainsmyth - v24.7.31a

"It is vain to do with more what can be done with fewer." - William of Occam
"No, no, the adventures first! Explanations take such a dreadful time!" - Lewis Carroll

SETUP: Discuss what kind of story your group wants to tell. When and where does it take place? Who are the main characters? What will they be doing? Why are they together? How do any important elements of the game world (*magic, technology, politics*) work?

Choose a **Guide** to create and control the game world and its inhabitants, moderate the rules, and narrate the story. Other players create **PCs**: the main characters.

PLAYING A PC: Act like the main characters! Describe the actions you take to overcome challenges, pursue your goals, and make your mark on the world of the story. - Interact with the world as if it were a real place. Some ideas are dangerous, actions have consequences, and characters do not forget how they are treated. How would your PC really react to danger or drama? Where would they go for help or information? What would they do to increase their power or effectiveness? - Get engaged! Take notes, make maps, and ask questions to keep track of the story so far.

PLAYING THE GUIDE: Design your story's fictional world, and bring it to life by describing what the PCs see, hear, smell, and feel. Describe what happens around or to the PCs, and tell them what happens when they speak or act. Use their motivations and connections to create compelling obstacles, goals, and characters. Populate the world with potential friends, enemies, mentors, challenges, and rewards. Play the role of any supporting characters in the story. Moderate the conversation and the game rules. Make rulings when there is confusion or disagreement. Make the world seem real - play to find out what happens - make stuff happen - "*what are you trying to do? How are you doing that? What do you do next / what is everyone else doing while?*"

CHARGEN: Write the PC's name. Give them 5 **Tags**: skills (*swordfighting, hacking, linguistics*), traits (*burly, observant, charming*), or powers (must have one specific effect: *laser eyes, control plants, Fireball*). Give them 5-10 **Items**: tools, kits, resources, expendables, and trinkets related to their Tags (*whip, first aid kit, 50' rope, firearm w/ 3 clips, parent's watch*). PCs can carry as much as makes sense. If an Item is stashed or dropped, write its location. Give them 1 **Resolve**. Add 2 Resolve by writing the PC a description (appearance, personality, and mannerism/quirk), motivation (why are you here? What are you after?), and connection (bond with another character or organization).

Limit starting Tags and Items to fit the story. During the first session or two, players may choose Tags, Items, etc. as they play. After that, new Tags and Items must be gained by exploring the game world.

GAMEPLAY: The Guide describes the game world, makes things happen around or to the PCs, and asks their players "*what do you do?*". Other players ask clarifying questions, make plans, and describe what the PCs say and do. There are no turns; speak or act in any order. The Guide can make hazards or creatures act whenever they want. However, the Guide never directly harms or hinders PCs - they describe threats, and if the PCs fail to respond, the threat becomes reality.

Handle actions with common sense. Most things happen automatically if there is no immediately obvious risk. The Guide will say if an action is impossible (for instance, if the PC does not have the right Gear, Tags, etc.), or when the effect asked for is too large (you can't one-shot a dragon or pick up a house). PCs know common knowledge and anything related to their Tags - anything else must be learned by exploring the game world. Certain actions require special Items - if a PC is not equipped for an action, it's either impossible or they will take a penalty.

When PCs do risky things or act under pressure, roll 2d6. +1 if a Tag helps. +1 if they have Advantage (help, preparation, Conditions, circumstances). +1 if they spend 1 Resolve. -1 if they have Disadvantage (overwhelmed, ill-equipped, Conditions, circumstances). -1 if the action is a great Challenge (opposition, effect, complexity).

If the total is 8+, the action succeeds. If not, it fails; choose one: success but with lessened/partial effect, success but with a complication (causes a new problem, collateral damage, side effect), success but with a lost/broken/expended Item, success but with a hindering Condition, or something worse happens instead. If your group wants more immersion, the Guide can decide and narrate. If you want more collaborative storytelling, the acting PC or the group can decide and narrate. The PC's player may choose to **Exhaust** a Tag to reroll the dice; Exhausted Tags cannot be used again until the PC Rests. For group efforts, every player with a PC involved rolls; use the highest result.

CONDITIONS: **Conditions** are temporary effects that can cause/prevent risks when relevant, and/or give Advantage/Disadvantage. Write down what will end them (*10 minutes, a good night's sleep, medical attention, a quest*).

REST: A **Rest** is a period of downtime, recovery, and practice; a few days or more. After a Rest, PCs recover all spent Resolve, Exhausted Tags, and Conditions that would end with Rest. Also, check for Advancement.

ADVANCEMENT: If a PC has survived a major ordeal since the last Rest, +1 Resolve. If they have passed with, failed with, and Exhausted a Tag, the Tag becomes **Advanced**. It now gives +2 and can be Exhausted twice per Rest. If the PC has overcome a challenge with an Advanced Tag that clearly identifies them as the best there is, the Tag becomes **Mastered**. Mastered Tags give +3 and can be Exhausted thrice per Rest. New Tags are gained by seeking training, etc. in the game world; an appropriate amount of time, effort, and money is required. When the requirements are met, add the Tag.

DOWNTIME: Describe what PCs are working on in their downtime (*target practice, learning a language, building a ship*). At each Rest, describe their progress. When the requirements are met, they achieve their Downtime goal.

PVP: If PCs oppose each other, all players involved roll dice as normal. The player with the best result gets what they want. Reroll ties.

DIE OF FATE: To leave something completely to chance, the Guide asks a player to roll a single Die of Fate. A higher result is more favorable for the PCs.

DOWNTIME: Keep track of what the PCs are doing in their downtime (learning a language, target practice, building a ship). The Guide determines the time or steps required. Update downtime activities at each Rest. When you finish, update your Tags or Gear accordingly.

DEATH: Your group should decide if PCs can be removed from the story due to death, exile, insanity, etc. as a consequence of failure. PCs can also leave the story voluntarily at any time; just describe how it happens.

ABSENT PLAYERS: If a player is absent, their PC takes a background role. They cannot act, help, or be targeted directly. However, they still earn advancements and are subject to story events as if they were there.

GUIDE LIMITATIONS: The Guide never rolls dice and never dictates what a PC says, feels, or does without their player's consent.

BE NICE AND HAVE FUN.