IDRP
Revision : 1.6

Imagination Driven Role Playing

IDRP is a simple role playing system for experienced players seeking for a story driven playing experience. The system emphasizes imaginative descriptions of actions over the mechanical abilities of the characters.

1 Definitions

Die Roll Roll three 6-sided dice and add the results together. This is the only type of roll needed in this system.

Point Sum Used to describe the relative cost of a skill or ability. The sum is calculated by adding the level of the ability and all the smaller numbers down to 1 together. Example: The point sum at skill level 4 is 10 (1+2+3+4).

2 Characters

As in any role playing game, the characters are the most central part of the system. Each player should control the actions of one character.

2.1 Character Creation

Character creation is begun by writing a character life story, which should explain who the character is and how his/her life has been so far. The story should be roughly one page or more in length. This story is then converted to a mechanical character by the GM or some other player. The system is not balanced against min-maxing, so this procedure is used to guarantee sane character creation.

2.2 Basic Abilities

The characters have six basic abilities, defined in birth and early childhood. These abilities are:

Ability	Abbr.	Synonyms
Constitution	**Co**	Stamina, Endurance, Fitness
Agility	**Ag**	Dexterity, Quickness, Reflexes
Strength	**St**	Muscularity, Raw power
Will-power	**Wi**	Self discipline, Concentration
Aura	**Au**	Magical aptitude, Sixth sense
Memory	**Me**	Mind capacity, Knowledge

tween −3 and +3. Zero represents the average in the population. The values are defined from the character description story. *Point sum* is taken from each ability, the total point sums of all six abilities must be zero (but see below).

2.3 Skills

Skills represent the learned talents and knowledge accumulated over the character's earlier life. Skills are derived from the character description story. The skills are bought with skill points. Beginning characters should be created with 85 skill points. Each level of a skill costs the *point sum* of its value in skill points. See below for a more information on skills.

2.4 Advantages and Flaws

The character story might contain some information which has a dramatic impact on the character, but can't be expressed in skill levels or ability scores. If the advantage (knighthood, powerful friends, etc.) or flaw (missing leg, severe phobia, etc.) is great enough, the character gains an advantage or flaw point. For each advantage point, the character loses either 2 points worth of basic abilities or 6 points worth of skills. For each flaw, the character gains 2 extra ability points or 6 skill points.

3 Success Checks

When the character attempts to do something, the player must describe the action in detail (how it is done with hints of the outcome). Repeating old descriptions is strongly discouraged. The length and detail level of the description should be appropriate for the relevance of the action. If the character's life depends on the outcome, the description should be very detailed.

For example, during an intense combat against a drunken sailor, the player of our hero, Grant the Barbarian, might announce:

> *"I will take a firm grip on my mighty two-handed sword and swing it horizontally with all my might. In attempt to cut the foul-smelling foe in two pieces, my swing will be targeted straight at his hip. As my sword starts moving forward I will yell: FAARGH!".*

3.1 Mechanics

When the character attempts some feat which involves some basic ability or skill and the outcome of the attempt is not obvious, a success check must

difficulty level of the action. If the die roll is less than or equal to the difficulty level, the attempt succeeds, otherwise it fails. A die roll result of 3 is automatically a great success and 4 also automatically succeeds. The die roll 17 fails automatically and 18 fails catastrophically. The exact results depend on the action. The greater the marginal of success or failure, the greater will the result be from the attempted.

3.2 Difficulty Levels

The difficulty level is determined by a basic ability (e.g., check against constitution to keep consciousness when hit in the head) or a basic ability and a skill (e.g., hit someone with a sword). In the latter case, the relevant ability (GM choice) and the skill are added together.

The GM selects the basic difficulty level which is added to the ability or ability + skill total. Suggestions (the base is given for ability checks/skill checks):

Difficulty	Base	Examples
Trivial	14/11	Descending from the roof with a rope.
Easy	12/9	Climbing on the roof with a rope.
Normal	10/7	Default case: something is attempted at short distance and minor effects.
Hard	9/5	Hitting someone with a weapon for major injury.
Very Hard	7/4	Affect someone so that he can't make any actions (e.g., with a spell).
Extreme	5/2	Injure multiple persons.
Absurd	3/0	Stop multiple persons.
Never Done	1/-2	Cause dramatic effects never seen.
Truly Epic	0/-6	Cause dramatic effects never even dreamed to produce.

Continuing our example, The GM might now assign the difficulty level *Hard* for the sword swing of our hero (the normal difficulty for such feat). GM decides that the swing is based on Strength. The target number for the skill check would thus be 4(base) + 2(St) + 6(Sword-skill) = 13. However, the GM might adjust the difficulty.

3.3 Adjusting Difficulty

The description given by the player for his attempt gives a modifier between −5 and +5 to the attempt

(GM choice). Using an old description (or exactly the same spell), gives a negative modifier of at least −2. If the character retries something which he previously failed, the description of the approach must be largely different or the maximum penalty (−5) should be applied by the GM.

Attempts get harder if the distance is long (over 10 meters) or very long (over 50 meters), the effect is greater than light injury, multiple targets are affected, etc. Attempts get easier if you have a superior position, touch range, long preparation time, etc.

A list of suggestions on difficulty level adjustments:

Level	Reason
+1	Long range (over 10 meters)
+2	Very long range (over 50 meters)
+3	Extreme range (over 100 meters)
−1	Superior position (prone target for attacks, static target for bows, etc.)
+1	Extra target(s) (spells)
+2	Mass targets (spells)
−1	Very short duration (spells, defensive)
+1	Long duration (more rounds than casters skill in this area)
+2	Very long duration (days)
+3	Duration in days
−1	Extra time spent on casting the spell
+1	Spell causes more than minor injuries (in benefit)

Continuing our example, the GM might now decide that the description of the action, although stereotypical, was unique for this campaign and contributed to the feel of the game positively. Thus he awards +2 on the skill for this action. Other modifiers don't apply, so the total to roll against is 15. See section Tactical Situations below for details on defending against an attack.

3.4 Zero-Level Skills

Depending on the action (and GM), skill checks with zero-level skills may either be automatically doomed (spells), attempted with 1–2 extra difficulty levels (unknown weapons) or just handled normally like the skill level would actually be 0 (physical endurance).

3.5 Checks with Multiple Dependencies

Sometimes when a character attempts some complicated feat the GM might decide that the action depends on multiple abilities or skills. In this case, the *lowest* of such abilities or skills is used in the success check.

4.1 Stamina Skills

Physical Endurance and Mana Reserve are examples of stamina skills. Easy check against these skills should be made when an appropriate consuming action is attempted (long distance run, long battle, any spell) and the corresponding stamina has been previously consumed.

The GM should increase the difficulty of the stamina check when the character is tired. A few minutes of consuming physical activity (combat, running) or a major spell increse the difficulty by one level. The casting of many small spells will also eventually cause difficulty level raise for the Mana Reserve skill check. Great spells can cause more than one level increase is difficulty when cast.

Character needs rest to restore lost levels of stamina. Full night's sleep will restore all physical stamina and usually also mana stamina.

4.2 Skill Specialties

A specialty area in a skill may be selected for the character. Any action on the specialty area gets a bonus of +1 on actions. Examples of specialities are short sword for swords skill, canines for animal magic and distance running for physical endurance. The GM should restrict specialities so that they are taken only for skills which are sufficiently mastered (high skill levels).

4.3 Skills and Levels

A non-comprehensive list of suggested skills can be found in Table 1. Level 1 represents basic knowledge, 3 good knowledge, 5 is for professional, 7 for expert, 10 for legendary expert. The native tongue is not a skill.

5 Tactical Situations

Tactical situations represent those times when everybody wants to do something at the same time (combat). Everybody has one action per turn and turns alter clockwise around the table (counterclockwise in illuminated conspiracy scenarios). At the beginning, an initiative check is made and the character who succeeds with the greatest margin begins. It is suggested that the players are seated in decreasing order of initiative skill levels.

Every round of turns around the gaming table is one round of in-game activity. The round has a length of about 2–5 seconds in the game time. The personal round of the character begins on his own turn and the next one starts at the next own turn.

If a person is attacked he gets a chance to describe his defense. Both involved parties make a

Stamina Skills	Combat Skills
Mana Reserve	Initiative
Physical Endurance	Unarmed Combat
Physical Skills	Axes
Climbing	Bows
Sprinting	Shields
Acrobatics	Pole-arms
Swimming	Swords
Throwing	Short Blades
Riding	Clubs
Driving	**Magic Skills**
Stealth	Ice Magic
Sport (define)	Light Magic
Mental Skills	Air Magic
Animal Handling	Water Magic
Astrology	Earth Magic
Survival	Fire Magic
Lore (define)	Body Magic
Mathematics	Nature Magic
Medicine	Mana Magic
Tracking	Healing Magic
Games (define)	Creation Magic
Perception	Knowledge Magic
Music	Mind Magic
Script	Movement Magic
Language	Death Magic
Navigation	Communication Magic
Professional Skills	Protection Magic
Agriculture	**Religion**
Craft (define)	Religion
Law	Communal Invocations
Sailing	Protection Invocations
Teaching	Healing Invocations
Trading	Unlife Invocations

Table 1: Skills

skill check and the greater margin wins. However, usually failures in the skill check by attacker cause the attack to fail anyway. Using same skill or activity twice during the same round increases the difficulty by one level (better get that shield, defending with the sword you used to attack is +1 level in difficulty). Successful physical attacks cause minor injuries (margin difference less than 5) or greater. Armor protects by decreasing the result difference by its level (leather 1, chain 3, plate 5).

6 Injuries and Recovery

Minor injuries cause the use of the body part to increase in difficulty by one level. Major injuries disable the body part and critical injuries will kill if not healed quickly. Two major injuries tend to down the whole person (check against constitution). Injuries heal in a time determined by the

Shield	13	
Dagger	11	
Shortsword	12	
Broadsword	12	
Greatsword	13	
Club	11	
Staff	11	
Leather Armor	9	Armor level 1
Ring Mail	11	Armor level 3
Plate Mail	13	Armor level 5

Table 2: Common Items

GM (minor injuries should heal in a few days).

7 Magic

Magic is treated like any other skill. Typically Mana Reserve is used with Aura. The player must describe a unique way of casting the spell and the difficulty is determined by the overall effect of the spell.

Small spell failures just cause spell to misfire or miss the intended target. Larger failure marginals tend to be dangerous for the caster.

7.1 Magic Items

Magic items are unique pieces of art which have mysterious abilities. Or are they just tools to boost the player's imagination for better action description bonuses? In any case, they definitely do not have any abilities expressed as action bonuses.

7.2 Spell Foci

A spell focus is any item which acts as a catalyst for a spell. If it is very rare and consumed in the process it will greatly aid the casting of the spell if described correctly (think dragon horns, not horse shoes). A non-destructively used catalyst usually only helps player to come up with an interesting explanation on the spell in question.

8 Equipment

Complete list of possible equipment is beyond the scope of this document. Some notes on common combat related items are given for easier handling. See Table 2.

8.1 Breakage

Many items tend to break when used harshly. Particularly combat tends to cause breakage of weapons and shields. When an item is exposed to significant stress it must pass a success check on its strength to stay in one piece. When a weapon is used in an attack and the result is a tie, items tend to clash heavily on each other. Some suggestions on typical strengths of items are given in the item table.

It should be noted that items with particular value for the story (such as magic items) usually survive these checks since the players having them tend to describe the items' attempt to stay in one piece quite well. These saving speeches should not be allowed for unimportant or mundane items.

9 Character Development

After each session, the GM should award 1–5 skill points to be used on character's skills. The exact amount of points should depend on the creative effort put into playing the character in role rather than actual success in in-game terms.

Players should use these points on skills which are trained by their characters (used in the adventure or logically available anyway).

10 Credits

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