

# SKILLS

*The lava ate his stilts and Berde's fear didn't leave him until he reached the ledge. The thief whistled silently to himself, kicked off the smoldering clogs that remained and ventured into the hold as a servant among others, directing his steps without haste towards the treasury.*



A roleplaying game is a conversation. The Gamemaster describes the scene, you describe how your PCs behave, the GM describes how any NPCs react, you reply, and it goes back and forth. That is how the story is told and progresses. But sooner or later, a decisive situation will arise, a point of no return, a conflict that conversation alone cannot resolve. Then it's time to break out the dice and use one of your skills.

attribute that is connected to that skill. If you have some sort of gear that may be helpful, you will get extra dice from that as well.

Then you roll all the dice at once.

## SIXES MEAN SUCCESS

To succeed with your action, you must roll at least one six. A six is called a *success*, and these are marked in the rules with a symbol of two crossed swords: ✂. If you roll more than one ✂ you can achieve additional effects in some cases – this is specified by each skill.

## ROLL THE DICE

There are sixteen skills in total in the game, and they are all described later in this chapter. Every skill is connected to one of the four attributes: Strength, Agility, Wits, and Empathy.

When you perform an action, you first describe what your player character does or says. Then you grab a number of six-sided dice equal to your skill level plus your current score in the

## ONES WEAR YOU DOWN

Ones can be bad for you – they can mean that you suffer damage, exhaustion, fear, or that your weapon has been damaged. Ones have no effect on your first roll, only if you choose to push your roll (see below). A one is called a *bane*, and is marked with a skull symbol: ☠.





## DIFFERENT COLORS

Whether a certain die you have rolled originates from your attribute, your skill, or your gear, may be important. For that reason, you should use dice of three different colors. The dice from attributes are called Base Dice, the dice from skills are called Skill Dice, and the dice from gear are called Gear Dice or Weapon Dice (specifically for weapons).

## CUSTOM DICE

There is a set of beautifully engraved custom dice available for *Forbidden Lands*, sold separately. The symbol ✕ is engraved directly onto these dice. Every dice set contains nine D6s, four of which are Base Dice (white), three Skill Dice (maroon), and two Weapon Dice (black), as well as one D8, one D10, and one D12 (more on how these are used later in this chapter). You can play the game with one of these sets, but it might be easier if you have two sets or even three.

## ROLLS WITHOUT SKILL

If you don't have the skill required for the particular action you want to perform, you can roll anyway – simply roll your Base Dice and any applicable Gear Dice.

### EXAMPLE

*Josie's Sorcerer Nirmena is exploring a ruined castle along with her fellow adventurers. Suddenly, an undead ghoul comes out of the shadows and lifts its rusty sword to strike Nirmena. She turns and runs toward a tower to find safety there, but stops in her tracks as the floor has collapsed in*

*front of her. She decides to leap across the chasm. Nirmena has Agility 3 but no skill level in MOVE. She gets to roll only the Base Dice to make the jump.*

## THE ART OF FAILURE

If you roll no ✕ something goes wrong. For some reason, you failed to achieve your goal. Feel free to elaborate on why with the help of the GM. She might even let a failed roll have further consequences to move the story forward in a dramatic way.

Failure must not stop the story completely. Even when you fail, there must be a way

### THE 16 SKILLS

Might (STRENGTH)  
Endurance (STRENGTH)  
Melee (STRENGTH)  
Crafting (STRENGTH)  
Stealth (AGILITY)  
Sleight of Hand (AGILITY)  
Move (AGILITY)  
Marksmanship (AGILITY)  
Scouting (WITS)  
Lore (WITS)  
Survival (WITS)  
Insight (WITS)  
Manipulation (EMPATHY)  
Performance (EMPATHY)  
Healing (EMPATHY)  
Animal Handling (EMPATHY)





forward – perhaps at the cost of time, risk, or silver, but still a way. The GM has the final say on the consequences of failure in that particular situation.


You have one last chance if you really want to succeed – you can push the roll.



## PUSHING YOUR ROLL

If you are desperate to succeed with a dice roll, you can choose to push it. This means that you grab all the dice that did not come up as a six (X) or a one (☠) and roll them again. You get a new chance to roll X.

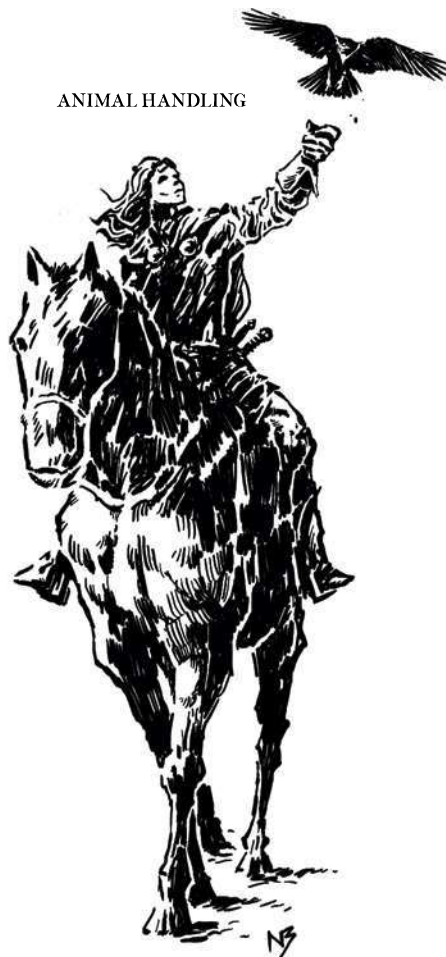
You cannot choose which dice to reroll.



**DON'T ROLL TOO OFTEN**

It's hard to succeed in the *Forbidden Lands*. If you lack the right gear or friends that can help you, there is a great risk of spectacular failure. With that in mind, you should never roll dice unless it is absolutely necessary. Save the dice for dramatic situations or tough challenges. In any other situation, the GM should simply allow you to perform whatever action you wish.

ANIMAL HANDLING



When you push, you must roll all dice that did not come up as X or ☠.

Usually, you would only push a roll if you failed it – although you can push your roll even if you rolled X first, to get more X to increase the effect of an attack for example. Pushing a roll is not without risk – more on that below.

How a pushed roll plays out in story terms depends on what kind of action you are performing. It doesn't have to be a physical effort,



it might be about complete mental focus or an emotional struggle.

**SKILL DICE:** When you push a roll, ones from the Skill Dice do not count as ☠ and can be re-rolled even if they do come up as a one. Hence, the symbol ☠ does not appear on the Skill Dice in the custom dice set for the game.

**GEAR DICE:** If you push your roll, you must also push any Weapon Dice or Gear Dice.

**ONLY ONCE:** You can only push your roll once. If you don't succeed on your second try, you just have to deal with the consequences.

#### LORE



#### ☠ IS ACTIVATED

When you push yourself hard, there is a risk that you will suffer damage or exhaustion, or that your weapon will be destroyed. After you have pushed your roll, look at all the dice on the table. In the first roll, ☠ had no effect, but when you push they become active. It doesn't matter if the ☠ came up in the first roll or the second.

- ❖ For every ☠ you have rolled on a Base Die when you push, you suffer one point of damage to the attribute you have used (read more about damage in Chapter 5).
- ❖ For every ☠ you have rolled on a Weapon Die when you push, your weapon's bonus is decreased by one (read more about that below).

Remember that ones on the Skill Dice never count as ☠ (see above).

#### DESCRIBE YOUR ACTION

You create a story together in *Forbidden Lands*. A dice roll is a dramatic peak – first you should describe what you are trying to achieve, so that everyone knows what is at stake. Then you roll your dice. Interpret the result and describe what happens. Describe what you do, what you say, or what you are thinking. If you push your roll, describe how. Do it yourself, don't wait for the GM – the GM should only stop you if you go beyond the results you have rolled.





### CHANCE OF SUCCESS

When you roll a lot of dice, it can be hard to predict the chance of success. The table below shows the chance of success when rolling with 1–10 dice. The third column shows the chance of success if you push the roll.

NUMBER OF DICE	CHANCE OF SUCCESS	PUSHED ROLL
1	17%	29%
2	31%	50%
3	42%	64%
4	52%	74%
5	60%	81%
6	67%	87%
7	72%	90%
8	77%	93%
9	81%	95%
10	84%	96%

### WILLPOWER

To push yourself to the brink of your abilities is risky, but it can also have positive effects – it gives you the force of will required to use the powerful kin talents and profession talents.

For every ☠ you roll on the Base Dice (Weapon Dice do not count) when you push, you get a Willpower Point (WP) in addition to any damage you suffer. The Willpower Points

are required to use your powerful kin talents and profession talents. These are listed by each of the pre-made PCs on page 134 and forward.

Mark your WP on your character sheet. You can never have more than 10 WP.

In this quickstart, only the players (not the GM) uses Willpower Points. In the full *Forbidden Lands* game, the GM has her own pool of Willpower Points, and can push rolls to get more WP just like players.

#### EXAMPLE

*Josie rolls her three Base Dice for Nirmena's jump. None of them come up ✕ and one shows ☠. Nirmena throws herself across the chasm but midway realizes that it's too far to the other side. Josie decides to push the roll. She rerolls her two Base Dice that didn't show ☠. One of them now comes up with a ✕! Nirmena stretches out her hand and just barely catches the edge on the other side of the chasm. Panting, she climbs up, temporarily safe. Because of the ☠ rolled, she suffers one point of damage to Agility. She also gains one Willpower Point.*

### ONLY ONE CHANCE

As a rule, you only have one chance to succeed with any action. Once you have rolled the dice – and pushed the roll – you may not roll again to achieve the same goal. You need to try something different or wait until the circumstances have changed in a substantial way. Or let another player character try.

This rule does not apply to combat, where you



can attack the same enemy over and over until he is sprawled bloody on the ground.

## GROUP ROLLS

When you face a challenge with your fellow adventurers, you don't roll dice separately. Instead, you choose who among you is best suited to take on this challenge. The others may help her (see below) if it's relevant to the situation. If the roll fails, it counts as a failure for all of you – you are not allowed to try one time each.

This rule does not apply in combat, where each adventurer is free to attack any enemy they like.



SLEIGHT OF HAND



## MODIFICATION

Sometimes, external factors help you to succeed. This gives you extra Skill Dice to roll. Other times, something hampers your action.

This gives you fewer Skill Dice to roll than normal. This is called modification.

Modification +1 means you roll one extra Skill Die, +2 means you roll two extra Skill Dice, and so on. Modification -1 means you roll one Skill Die fewer than normal, -2 means two fewer, and so on.

Modifications only ever affect Skill Dice – never Base Dice or Gear Dice.

Several modifications can apply to the same roll – add them together. A modification of +2 and one of -1 add up to +1.

**NEGATIVE DICE:** If, after modifications, you end up with exactly zero Skill Dice, you just roll your Base Dice (and any applicable Gear Dice). If you go below zero, you must roll this negative number of Skill Dice. These dice are called negative dice. Any ✕ on negative dice eliminate an equal number of ✕ on Base or Gear Dice. If you push your roll you must re-roll negative Skill Dice too (except the ones showing ✕ of course).

You can get modifications in several different ways: through talents, through the difficulty of the action itself, and through help from others.



## DIFFICULTY

Normally, the GM doesn't assess how difficult an action is. You only roll dice in challenging situations – period. But sometimes, the GM might want to underscore that external factors either help or hinder an action. Use the following table for guidance:





DIFFICULTY	MODIFICATION
Trivial	+3
Simple	+2
Easy	+1
Average	0
Demanding	-1
Hard	-2
Formidable	-3

There are also cases when modifications are imposed by the rules, like when you aim carefully with a ranged weapon (see page 52), shoot at long distance, or if you're in a bad bargaining position when you attempt to MANIPULATE someone. Some talents can also give you a positive modification in certain situations.

## HELP FROM OTHERS

Other PCs or NPCs can help you succeed at a skill roll. This must be declared right away, before you roll your dice. It must also make sense in the story – the individual helping you must be physically present and have the capacity to support your action. The GM has the final say.

For each person helping you, you get a +1 modification. No more than three people can help you with a single roll, meaning your maximum modification from assistance is +3.

In combat, helping counts as the same type of action as the one you are supporting (fast or slow).

NPCs can help each other in the same way as player characters. Letting NPCs act in groups instead of individually is often an easy way to manage large numbers of NPCs in conflicts.

### EXAMPLE

*Nirmena tries to help her fellow adventurer, the dwarf Tyrgar, to climb up the old ruined tower. Tyrgar has Agility 2 and skill level 2 in MOVE. Thus, he gets to roll two Base Dice and three Skill Dice (two for his skill level and one for the help from Nirmena). He rolls one ✕ and makes the climb.*



MOVE



## OPPOSED ROLLS

Sometimes rolling a ✕ isn't enough to succeed with your skill roll. In some cases, you have to beat your foe in an opposed roll. To win an opposed roll, you have to roll successfully and roll more ✕ than your adversary. Every ✕ your adversary rolls eliminates one of your ✕. Only you (the attacker) can push your roll.

Sometimes you and your adversary roll for different skills, sometimes the same. Opposed rolls are common when you MANIPULATE or use STEALTH, and when someone uses those skills against you. The GM can also use opposed rolls when she deems it appropriate, like rolling MIGHT vs MIGHT to determine the outcome of an arm-wrestle.

### EXAMPLE

*Moving through the old tower, Nirmena spots another undead guard. She tries to sneak by it, into the ancient library beyond. Nirmena has a current Agility score of 2 and skill level 1 in STEALTH, and thus gets to roll two Base Dice and one Skill Die. The undead has Wits 1 and skill level 2 in SCOUT,*

### PERFORMANCE



*and rolls one Base Die and two Skill Dice. Nirmena rolls one ✕ but so does the guard. Nirmena stumbles, but Josie decides to push the roll. She gets lucky and rolls another ✕! She manages to stay silent, and sneaks past the undead guard without being spotted.*



## NPCs AND SKILLS

Non-Player Characters use skills in the same way as player characters. The GM rolls dice for them, and they can push their rolls just like PCs can. But the GM only has to roll for actions that affect a PC directly – for example, if the NPC is attacking a player character or is attempting to save her. When an NPC performs an action that does not directly affect a PC, the GM can simply decide what happens, without rolling dice.



## GEAR

To increase your chance of success, you can use gear. Gear can take the form of a weapon in combat, a rope to climb, or an old book to understand a legend. You will find many weapons in Chapter 5.


Useful gear gives you Gear Dice. This is called the Gear Bonus. When it comes to weapons, the terms commonly used are Weapon Dice and Weapons Bonus. You roll Gear Dice together with Base Dice and Skill Dice, and they are counted the same way: sixes equal ✕.









## GEAR GETS WORN

When you use gear and push your roll (see above), there is a risk your gear may be damaged. For every  you roll with your Gear Dice when pushing the roll, the item's Gear Bonus is decreased by one. It simply doesn't work as well anymore – a weapon dulls, a rope frays, the fragile pages of a book fall out and crumble to pieces. If the Gear Bonus reaches zero, the item is broken and cannot be used again until repaired.

Luckily, damaged gear can be repaired. It takes a few hours of work and a successful roll with the CRAFTING skill. If the roll is successful, the Gear Bonus is recovered by one point for every , up to the starting value. If the roll fails, the Gear Bonus is permanently decreased to its current score. If the Gear Bonus has been reduced to zero and the attempt at repair fails, the item is permanently destroyed.

### EXAMPLE

*To climb up to the next level of the tower, Nirmena uses a rope. She thus gets to roll two Base Dice (current Agility 2) and one Gear Die (the rope has a +1 bonus). She has a bit of bad luck, fails the roll, and decides to push. She makes the roll, but one of the Gear Dice comes up a . The rope is scraped against a sharp rock and nearly breaks. Its Gear Bonus is reduced to +1.*


































## ARTIFACT DICE


Usually, gear only adds extra D6 to your roll. However, there are master crafted artifacts and magic items that adds an extra D8, D10,

or even a D12, in addition to the normal Gear Dice. Artifact Dice are never degraded by wear. Rare items of this kind are described in the *Gamemaster's Guide*. Items that give you Artifact Dice to roll are divided into three categories, depending on the type of dice they give:

- ❖ D8: Mighty
- ❖ D10: Epic
- ❖ D12: Legendary

When you roll an Artifact Die, any result of 6 or higher counts as . Really high results count as several . See the table below.

RESULT	D8	D10	D12
6			
7			
8	 	 	 
9	–	 	 
10	–	  	  
11	–	–	  
12	–	–	   

The *Forbidden Lands* custom dice have the number of  engraved directly on the dice.



## PRIDE

Once per game session, you can use your Pride (see page 32) when you have failed a skill roll. You can activate your Pride even after you have rolled the dice, and pushed your roll. When

