

## KARMA

In *Shadowrun*, Karma measures the experience characters gain as they go out on an adventure. They don't get Karma for doing laundry (unless the laundromat is in the middle of a toxic spirit's domain, perhaps). Characters use Karma to improve attributes, skills, and special abilities (see *Character Improvement*, below).

At the end of an adventure, the gamemaster awards Karma to each character, based on how they performed. (Note that an adventure is not necessarily a single playing session. Intricate or involved adventures may last more than one session.) Characters who made substantial contributions to the adventure, as well as players who help make a game session enjoyable, tend to receive more Karma.

### AWARDING KARMA

Characters earn 1 Karma Point for surviving an adventure and 1 additional point if they fulfill the large majority (at least two-thirds) of their objectives. If an adventure is particularly challenging, they may receive an extra point, for valor above and beyond the call of duty. This award is applied equally to all characters that can walk away from the run at the end.

Additionally, individual characters may earn additional rewards for being particularly brave or smart, especially if the adventure's outcome hinged on their bravery or plan. Likewise, players can earn Karma awards for their characters for good roleplaying, well-timed humor, impressive drama, and just making the overall session fun and enjoyable.

As a general rule of thumb, characters should be earning an average of 4-5 Karma per adventure, and no more than 10 Karma. If Karma awards are too small, players will become frustrated at the slow advancement of their characters. Likewise, if Karma awards are too high, players will become bored as success comes too easily.

**Good Roleplaying:** Award 1 Karma to players who stayed mostly in character. Excellent roleplaying may merit 2 Karma points. The standards depend on the play style of the gamemaster and the group, but be flexible. *Shadowrun* is about having fun, not a course in method acting.

**Guts:** Brave fighters (especially if they're effective) get a point of Karma for their valor, two if they're particularly heroic. This shouldn't be an excuse for stupidity, though; valor is about risking life and limb when no other option is viable. Feel free to withhold this award for stupidly heedless bravery. (Life is tough; it's even tougher if you're stupid.) Characters who have the Guts positive quality may need to work harder to obtain this award.

**Smarts:** Players whose characters come up with a clever strategy, solve a puzzling clue, or pull off a good scam should get 1 point of Karma (maybe more, if the scheme was particularly dastardly). This award also applies to characters who know when it's smart enough when to surrender or run.

**Motivation:** Players whose characters really drive the story forward, or who are continuously motivated to get to the bottom of the story, may be deserving of a point or two of Karma. Characters who start subplots on their own accord, rather than waiting for the gamemaster to instigate them, are particularly deserving. Initiative is more than just a character attribute, after all.

**Right Place and Time:** Characters in the right place, with the right skill for the job, should get 1 point of Karma. However, don't award Karma just for good dice rolls. To qualify for this award, a character should have a vital skill and know when to

use it—when the moment presents itself, not in advance. It's one thing to know prior to a run that Lockpicking is needed to get into a secure area and buying a Lockpicking skillsoft on that anticipation. It's another thing to be trapped in a dead-end alley with the bad guys closing in, spotting an old doorway by chance, and then picking the

lock to let the team escape. The latter is what this award is for.

**Humor and Drama:** A player who paralyzes the entire group with laughter, all the while acting in character, deserves 1 Karma Point. Likewise, if a player acting in character impresses the group with a particular piece of high drama (or melodrama), that also merits a point of Karma. We're all in this for fun, after all.

## CHARACTER IMPROVEMENT

Players use Karma between adventures to improve attributes and skills, as well as to initiate/submerge and buy spells or complex forms.

Advancement takes place in the interim game time between sessions, sometimes called down time. Characters may not spend Karma to improve skills, attributes, or abilities in the middle of an adventure. Additionally, some advancements may be limited to occurring only once per down time; if the character wants to advance again, she will have to wait until after the end of the next adventure.

**Learning Time:** It is recommended that a character only be allowed to learn one new skill (or specialization, spell, or complex form) between adventures; the character cannot simultaneously improve any existing skills, attributes, etc. during this time. A character can be allowed to improve as many skills, attributes, etc. between adventures as she has Karma, assuming the gamemaster feels the improvement is warranted

### KARMA AWARDS

#### Situation

Character survived the adventure  
Character fulfilled most (2/3) objectives  
Adventure was extra challenging  
Character was particularly brave or smart  
Good roleplaying  
Character pushed the storyline forward  
Character had the right skills at the right place and time  
Player impressed group with humor or drama

#### Karma

1  
1  
1  
1 or 2  
1 or 2  
1  
1  
1 or 2