

For veterans of *Shadowrun, Third Edition* (and the first and second editions!), here's the lowdown on important mechanical concepts that have changed:

- Dice pools no longer exist in their SR3 form. They are now attribute + skill +/- modifiers.
- The target number for dice rolls is now always 5. Yes, all target numbers. Modifiers add or subtract from dice pools, not the target number.
- Each roll of 5 or 6 is a "hit" rather than a "success." Success is determined by the number of hits scored.
- The Rule of One is triggered more frequently, and may be triggered even when the roll is successful. See *Glitches*, p. 55. We feel your pain.
- The Rule of Six no longer applies, except when you are using Edge. See p. 67.
- Open Tests no longer exist.
- A new type of test—Extended Tests—has been added.
- The maximum for natural, unaugmented Physical and Mental attribute ratings is now 6 (plus metatype modifiers).
- Intelligence is divided into two new attributes: Intuition and Logic.
- Quickness is divided into two new attributes: Agility and Reaction (Reaction is no longer a derived attribute).
- Initiative is now a derived attribute (Reaction + Intuition).
- Two new attributes have been added: Edge (luck) and Resonance (for technomancers).
- Magic no longer starts at 6; it must be purchased just like other attributes.
- Bioware and cyberware both reduce Essence, but they are tracked separately and the lesser value counts at half.
- Exclusive Actions no longer exist.
- You may now purchase skill groups—groups of related skills with a cheaper bundled cost.
- All types of combat are now handled as Opposed Tests.
- Condition Monitors are no longer fixed at 10 boxes (see *Condition Monitors*, p. 65).
- Wound Levels are gone and Damage Codes were changed to a single Damage Value (see p. 152) and an Armor Penetration modifier (see p. 152).
- Matrix attributes and ratings are radically different (see *The Wireless World*, p. 205).
- Street Index, Legality, Concealability, and Weight have been removed from gear statistics in favor of simplified systems.

This section covers the key concepts and terms used in *Shadowrun*. Some are general roleplaying terms, and others are unique to this game system. Whether you are an experienced gamer or new to roleplaying, once you understand how these rules operate in *Shadowrun*, the rest will fall easily into place.

Some of the explanations provided here also appear in other appropriate sections in more detail. The first time a game term appears in this section, it is set in **bold** type.

PLAYING SHADOWRUN

Shadowrun is a roleplaying game that provides all the excitement of an adventure story in a collaborative format. Roleplaying games require one or more players and a gamemaster. The players control the main characters of the story, the protagonists of a plot whose outcome is uncertain. The gamemaster directs the action of the story and controls the opposition, the props, the setting, and everything else the player characters may encounter. The game is not a contest between the good guys (the players) and the bad guys (the gamemaster), however—they work together to build and experience tense and dramatic adventures and encounters. The gamemaster may control all the bad guys but he is actually in sympathy with the heroes. Players and gamemasters must work together to build and experience an intense and interesting adventure.

As a player in the game of *Shadowrun*, you control a player character (PC)—a shadowrunner. All of the character's statistics and information are noted on your Character Record Sheet. This is where you record your character's abilities, possessions, physical appearance, and other facts. Over time, you will likely expand your Character Record Sheet to include a detailed history of your character and her adventures in the 2070s.

During the course of the game, the gamemaster (GM) will describe events or situations to you. Using your Character Record Sheet as a guide, you decide what your character would do in a given situation. As you roleplay through some situations, the gamemaster will probably ask you to roll some dice, and the resulting numbers will represent your character's attempted action. The gamemaster uses the rules of the game to interpret the dice rolls and the outcome of your character's action. The gamemaster also controls any other characters that the player characters interact with.

THE ABSTRACT NATURE OF RULES

Shadowrun is a game and games have rules. That doesn't sound very odd; after all, you did plunk down your hard-earned nuyen to purchase this book of rules in order to play our game. But you also bought this book to become involved in a fictional world. The world of *Shadowrun*, however, is not the real world—no matter how closely it is based on it. It only makes sense, then, for us to make rules that reflect that fictional universe. In some cases this may mean certain game mechanics are structured more for ease of play or game balance than to reflect how things actually work. Not only do these rules sometimes reflect "creative license," but often they have to abstract things we take for granted in daily life. There are no "rules" for how well you play street basketball with your friends or how well you can write a web page. In this