

gameworld, however, we are expected to create rules that do in fact show these differences—a daunting task. We have attempted to take real world concepts and abstract them down into game mechanics as much as possible.

The mechanics for doing things in *Shadowrun* are actually abstract guidelines for all of an individual's actions, including combat, vehicle movement, and even how individuals think and react. These rules are not meant to be a direct copy of how things really work—they can't be. We try to approximate conditions and situations in reality as much as possible, but that can only go so far. That being said, we urge you to appreciate the rules in *Shadowrun* for what they are and not stress out when they don't simulate real life perfectly or fail to take into account certain conditions or factors. If something in these rules doesn't quite fit or make sense to you, feel free to change it. If you come up with a game mechanic that you think works better—go for it!

Above all, the rules are here to facilitate telling good stories. Don't get bogged down in rules disputes when it's important to keep the plot moving, just fudge it and move on. Don't allow powergaming to run out of control, but don't let an unexpected death or glitch derail the plot either. If you know in advance that a certain outcome would be more dramatic or amusing than what you are likely to roll, then don't bother to roll. When the rules get in the way of the story, ignore the rules and tell the story.

## DICE

*Shadowrun* uses a number of six-sided dice to resolve tests and other semi-random factors. A typical player may use up to a dozen dice at any one time, so having plenty on hand is a good idea.

## MAKING TESTS

*Shadowrun* is filled with adventure, danger and risk, and characters usually end up in the middle of it all. You determine what your character does in a situation and how well she does it by making a **test**—rolling dice and determining the outcome by how well or poorly you rolled. There are many situations in which the gamemaster will ask you to make a test to determine how well you perform, be it bypassing an alarm system, shooting an assassin, or persuading a security guard that one's presence in the corporate facility is legitimate. The gamemaster should not require a player to make a test when the action is something that the character should be expected to do without difficulty. For example, if a character is driving downtown to buy soymilk and NERPS, no test is necessary. If she's suddenly found herself in a car chase, however—perhaps she ran a red light and a Lone Star officer is in pursuit—then it's time to break out the dice.

## DICE POOLS

When a player makes a test, she rolls a number of dice equal to her **dice pool**. The dice pool is the sum of the relevant **skill** plus its **linked attribute**, plus or minus any **modifiers** that may apply. When a gamemaster calls for a test, he will provide the player with a description of the task at hand and which skill (and linked attribute) is most appropriate for it. The gamemaster and player then decide on the applicable modifiers—both

positive and negative—to determine the final dice pool. The player then rolls a number of dice equal to the dice pool.

*Netcat is trying to bypass the maglock on a security door. To break open the maglock and mess with its interior, she needs to use her Hardware skill of 3 and its linked attribute Logic, which she has at 5. The gamemaster determines that she has a +2 dice pool modifier to the test. That means Netcat's dice pool for hacking the maglock is 10 dice (3 + 5 + 2).*

## Attribute-Only Tests

For some tests, the gamemaster may decide that no skill is appropriate and instead picks two separate **attributes** that are relevant to the test (see *Using Attributes*, p. 130).

*Netcat fails to bypass the maglock, so her pal Fei tries to force the door open with brute strength. This calls for an attribute-only test, so Fei rolls Strength 3 + Body 3 (for a dice pool of 6 dice) to shoulder through the door.*

## Defaulting

If the character lacks the appropriate skill for the test, she can still attempt the action, but will find it harder to succeed than someone else who has the skill. Improvising in this manner is called **defaulting**. In some cases, however, a task may be too difficult for someone who lacks the proper skill to attempt (such as brain surgery, for example). In this case, the character simply fails. For more on defaulting, see p. 110.

Characters who default use only the linked attribute in their dice pool. Additionally, they suffer a -1 dice pool modifier.

*Now Fei is trying to follow a Triad soldier who she thinks may lead her back to his boss. The Shadowing skill is used to trail someone without being spotted, but Fei does not have that skill. The gamemaster allows her to default to Shadowing's linked attribute of Intuition instead. Fei has an Intuition of 3, so she rolls 2 dice (Intuition 3 minus a defaulting modifier of 1).*

## DICE POOL MODIFIERS

The *Shadowrun* rules often call for a plus or minus dice modifier to a test. These modifiers can result from injuries and situational factors that affect what the character is trying to do. The modifier affects the number of dice used in the dice pool. If more than one dice modifier applies, they are added together and applied to the dice pool.

Note that **threshold modifiers** (see p. 56) do not affect the dice pool. Unless otherwise stated, any modifier mentioned is considered to be a **dice pool modifier** as noted above.

*Fei is trying to see what is happening between two orks on a busy street corner. The gamemaster calls for a Perception Test modified by the fact that Fei is currently talking with a street vendor (-2 for being distracted) and that the street is busy (-2 for interfering sights and*