

The Good, Better, Best System

Second Edition, 2007

Introduction

The GBBS is a universal, minimalist, free form conflict resolution system for role playing games. It's a totally independent tool. You can use it to resolve any or all conflicts in any game you play.

This system is meant for people who want minimal rule complexity and maximal game speed. The GBBS won't tell you what you *need* to roll, you have to tell it what you *want* to roll.

Defining Conflicts

Before you roll the dice, you need to define the conflict to be resolved. The players need to agree on **what exactly happens on a success, what exactly happens on a failure**, and what are the approximate **odds of success and failure** (good, better, or best?).

This system doesn't even require that you have any kind of characters. You just need enough facts about your game world to be able to define a conflict.

Usually it's still good to define someone or something as the active or aggressive participant in a conflict. This way you have a perspective from which to evaluate what is a desirable result and what's an undesirable result (i.e. what's a success and what's a failure).

A note about Game Masters

You don't necessarily need to have a Game Master. Having one might be helpful, though. When someone is designated as the GM, he or she can minimize arguments by having the final word on things.

Rolling the dice

All you need is this one (classic) task resolution mechanic:

Roll 2d6 and add modifier

If the result is **eight or more** it's a **success**

If the result is **seven or less** it's a **failure**

The modifier is a number added to the result of the 2d6 roll. It can range from -3 to +3. Think of the positive modifiers simply as **Good (+1)**, **Better (+2)**, and **Best (+3)** chances for your protagonist, and think of -1, -2 and -3 as good, better and best chances for the opposition.

An unmodified roll is a challenging roll. The odds are slightly against success. For the odds to favor success, add at least a +1 to the roll. Give penalties only for clearly bad odds, and reserve the -3 for those super desperate plunges.

Recap of the basic conflict resolution process:

Select a point of view from which to approach the conflict

Define the exact consequences of success and failure

Determine the dice roll modifier

Roll the dice

Other types of randomness

The basic mechanic is used to determine success and failure. For a **simple yes or no**, you can call odds or evens and roll any die. For **generating random amounts**, you can use a die roll of suitable range. You can apply bonuses, penalties or multipliers as needed.

This is all the rules you need to play a role playing game. There's no problem that can't be solved with either conflict resolution, yes or no, or generating random amounts.

This document is completely free, in every sense of the word

Optional rules

You can keep using any and all of your favorite rule gizmos. Some additional rules I like to have in my games include initiative rolls, critical results and karma points.

For initiative, use any random amount roll with modifiers. Higher scores get to act first. For example, roll 1d6 and add up to +3 for competence.

For critical results, consider any conflict resolution result of a natural 2 a critical failure, and any natural 12 a critical success.

Karma points can be awarded to players, and they can be used to improve the odds on a roll. For example, you can use two karma points to bring your odds from -1 to +1, or from 0 to +2. The maximum total positive modifier on any roll is still +3. You can limit the amount of points possible to add to any single roll.

My favorite way of recording injury is damage levels. With the GBBS, it might feel natural to use five levels (i.e. Healthy, -1, -2, -3, and Incapacitated).

I also like to use story stats to tie multiple conflict resolution rolls into a bigger whole. Combat is a painfully obvious example. Story stats and health levels might not work well together, though.

With story stats, you assign a few "hit points" to all participants, maybe more to some than others. Each successful "attack" reduces the target's points by one. When the points reach zero, the participant is at the mercy of whoever took his, hers, or its last point.

The story stats don't really portray actual damage that much. They just portray things starting to look worse and worse, due to whatever dramatically appropriate reasons. This is a very cinematic method for portraying physical combat. For an intellectual debate, though, story stats might be quite realistic.

About moods, and genres, and realism, and stuff

All systems have some sort of bias towards some style of role playing. This system is probably biased towards storytelling.

I still insist that this system can be used for the ultimate simulationist game, too. You just need to have your facts straight when you define your tasks.

Whatever your genre or style is, the most important thing is to maintain it, and to **account for it when you define your conflicts**.

That being said, rolling more often, and for smaller details, can create a more game-like feel, whereas rolling less often, and for bigger effects, can create a more storytelling-oriented feel.

About Avatars, Characters, or other intermediaries

You can **use any method** to make your whatchamacallits. Because the conflict resolution roll is independent from any kind of stats, it really doesn't matter.

You can flip through all your RPG books to **get inspiration** from the different stats, classes, templates, attributes, feats, abilities, advantages, perks, flaws, quirks, skills, maneuvers, and specializations your thingamabob might need.

If you do not happen to own any RPG books, I suggest you search the Internet for *Action! System*, *Tri-Stat dX*, *Generic Fuzion rules*, *FUDGE rpg* and *GURPS Lite*.

You can use any part(s) from any system(s). Just remember to **ignore all the rules**.

You can also make a totally free form character. Start with a general concept. Next, come up with a few major details that set your baby apart from the masses. Then just write these things down on a piece of paper, as complete sentences, and there you have it, the character you have always dreamed of.

Whatever method you use, I encourage you to **concentrate on the hopes, dreams, goals, fears, and secrets** of your character, or, dare I say, the *character* of your character.

This document is completely free, in every sense of the word