

DOES PLAY DICE

FIVE DICE. FIFTEEN MINUTES. A NIGHT OUT.

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DOESPLAYDICE.COM

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Basic Rules

Introduction

Does Play Dice is a game about story-telling. Think of it as group improv with a little chaos added to the mix with the introduction of the dice. Each player needs pencil, paper, and a set of 5 dice, one each with the following number of sides: 4, 6, 8, 12, and 20.

Gather Your Party

1. You can play with any number of people, but the ideal group is between 5 and 7 players. Most of the players will create a Character and come together to form a Party. As a Party, they'll work together towards a common goal.
2. The exception: one player is the Narrator. The Narrator creates the overall story along with the challenges the Party will face. The Narrator also calls for Skill Checks as needed to determine an Outcome.

Set the Scene (for the Narrator)

3. First, you want to create the overall story for the Party. It might be a Hollywood movie-style heist, a murder mystery dinner party, or a fantasy-based dungeon crawl with wizards, dragons, and mounds of treasure. There are resources and inspiration and world-building guides for you everywhere, but you can also simply download a module, game, or setting that someone else has created. Eventually, we'll post some here.
4. Provide the important details your players need to create their Characters. They need to know if they're creating a highly skilled criminal, a guest at a fancy dinner party, or a dungeon delver. They need to know the time period, the level of technology that's available, and other basic details of the setting you've created for them. Last, they need to know which dice to choose from for their Skills. Of the 5 dice in a set, choose 3, keeping in mind that smaller dice represent less experience, while larger dice represent more. (When making a Skill Check, the highest roll wins.)

Get Into Character (for the Party)

5. For each Character, decide who you are and your place in the world. If you like, you can collaborate with other players to create Characters with shared backgrounds or experiences, but everyone will work within the guidelines provided by your Narrator.
6. Write down all of the details about your Character that matter: name, background, school or job, habits, quirks ... anything that makes you you.
7. Last, assign one die of the three chosen by the Narrator to each of your Skills: Body, Mind, and Soul. Checks on them are called Physical, Mental, and Spiritual. We'll see how they're used below. For now, just know that higher numbers are better.

SKILL	CHECK	WHEN IT'S USED
Body	Physical	Strength, senses, fine motor skills, stamina
Mind	Mental	Knowledge, memory, reasoning, aptitude
Soul	Spiritual	Connection: intuition, empathy, persuasion, deception, nature

Roll Some Dice

8. Ok, let's play! The Narrator will describe what's around you. If you have questions, ask. Talk to your Party. Talk to the people around you. (Anyone your Narrator describes that isn't in your Party.) When you want to do something, describe it to the Narrator. If what you want to do is easy ("I open the door"), the Narrator will describe what happens next. ("You open the door and find an office filled with dusty books.") But what if you want to do something that isn't easy? What if the door is locked? This is the core mechanic of the game that makes it different from other forms of story-telling or improv by introducing an element of chance: we roll for it!

9. What the Character rolls depends on how they choose to approach the challenge. You might try force open a locked door, a Physical challenge. Or you can search the area around the door for a hidden key or a secret latch. Searching is a Mental challenge. Alternatively, if there's a particularly smooth talker in the Party, they might have learned about a secret knock from one of the guards. Learning that valuable tidbit would most likely involve a Spiritual Challenge. Whichever you choose, when the Narrator calls for a Skill Check, you'll roll the die that you assigned to the applicable Skill: Body, Mind, or Soul.

10. The Narrator rolls against you. They decide how difficult the challenge you're attempting is and roll the corresponding die according to the table below. Let's assume you're attempting to shoulder check the door and the Narrator knows the door is pretty thick and the lock sturdy. Despite what we see in the movies, knocking down a door isn't an easy thing to do, so the Narrator decides in this case that it's a Highly Difficult challenge, or a d12.

DIE	ABBREVIATED	CHALLENGE DIFFICULTY
4-sided	d4	Easy
6-sided	d6	Moderate
8-sided	d8	Challenging
12-sided	d12	High difficulty
20-sided	d20	"Impossible"

11. Now, both of you roll. The Character rolls the die assigned to the Skill; let's assume that's a d6. The Narrator rolls the die corresponding to the Difficulty, which we determined above is a d12. Highest roll wins, and the Outcome will reflect that. If the Player has the higher roll, perhaps they force open the door in one attempt and catch whoever is on the other side by surprise. If the Narrator rolls higher,

however, the door doesn't budge (not immediately), and anyone on the other side is now alerted to the Party's presence. And what if it's a tie? In that case, both sides should get something out of it. Maybe the Character knocks down the door, surprising everyone inside, but they injure their shoulder in the process and suffer some minor or temporary setback as a result.

Winning the Game

The Narrator may set up a winning condition: completing the heist, solving the murder, or slaying the dragon. But keep in mind that the real goal is having fun and telling a story together! #winning

The odds

Every possible roll in the game, worked out exactly. Your Skill die across the rows, the Narrator's Difficulty die across the columns.

SKILL \ CHALLENGE	D4EASY	D6MODERATE	D8CHALLENGING	D12HIGH DIFFICULTY	D20"IMPOSSIBLE"
D4	37.52537.5	2516.758.3	18.812.568.8	12.58.379.2	7.5587.5
D6	58.316.725	41.716.741.7	31.312.556.3	20.88.370.8	12.5582.5
D8	68.812.518.8	56.312.531.3	43.812.543.8	29.28.362.5	17.5577.5
D12	79.28.312.5	70.88.320.8	62.58.329.2	45.88.345.8	27.5567.5
D20	87.557.5	82.5512.5	77.5517.5	67.5527.5	47.5547.5

win tie lose — percentages, from the player's side, rounded to one decimal place. Each cell adds to 100 before rounding.

The tie is governed by the bigger die

There is a clean rule hiding in that grid, and it is exact rather than approximate:

Which means the most generous rule in the game — *both sides get something* — fires **most often for beginners attempting easy things**, and almost disappears at the top of the range.

A new player with a d4 Skill trying something Easy triggers it on a quarter of their rolls. Two experts in a d20 standoff trigger it on one roll in twenty. The game gets more decisive exactly as the stakes rise, and it is at its most collaborative exactly where new players are standing.

An even match is never a coin flip

Matched dice do not split 50/50, because the tie takes its share out of the middle first:

MATCHED PAIR	WIN	TIE	LOSE
d4 vs d4	37.5%	25%	37.5%
d6 vs d6	41.7%	16.7%	41.7%
d8 vs d8	43.8%	12.5%	43.8%
d12 vs d12	45.8%	8.3%	45.8%
d20 vs d20	47.5%	5%	47.5%

The tie is a real third outcome, not a rounding error. At the bottom of the range it is a quarter of all play.

Reading the grid

- **Down a column** — what a bigger Skill die buys you against a fixed challenge. Against a d12, moving from d4 to d20 takes you from 12.5% to 67.5%.
- **Across a row** — how fast a challenge outruns you. A d8 Skill is favoured against Easy and Moderate, level with Challenging, and outmatched above that.
- **The diagonal** — an even contest, where win and lose are exactly level.

Character Vitae

Your character is a résumé. Not a stat block — a short account of who someone is, what they've done, and what they're good at. Fill in what matters and leave the rest blank.

Character name

Played by

Background — where you're from, your place in the world

School or job

Habits and quirks — anything that makes you you

Connections — who you know in the Party, and how

Skills

Your Narrator picks three of the five dice. Assign one to each Skill. Bigger die, more experience.

SKILL	WHAT IT COVERS	YOUR DIE
Body (Physical)	Strength, senses, fine motor skills, stamina	☐
Mind (Mental)	Knowledge, memory, reasoning, aptitude	☐
Soul (Spiritual)	Connection: intuition, empathy, persuasion, deception, nature	☐

Notes — what happened, what you're carrying, what you owe

Your three core stats

Every character has three core stats: **Body**, **Mind** and **Soul**. A roll on one of them is a **Physical**, **Mental** or **Spiritual** check. Your Narrator chooses three of the five dice for the game, and you give one to each stat. A bigger die means more experience, and higher rolls are better.

Which stat you roll depends on **how you go about something**, not on what you're trying to do. Faced with a locked door, you can put your shoulder into it (Physical), hunt for a hidden key or a secret latch (Mental), or remember the guard who mentioned a secret knock (Spiritual). Same door, three ways through it. If you can describe it, the Narrator can tell you which stat it takes.

Body — Physical checks

Strength, senses, fine motor skills, stamina. Body is everything your physical self can do: how strong, how quick, how sharp-eyed, how steady-handed, and how long you can keep going.

Reach for Body when you're forcing, lifting, climbing, running, swimming, fighting, or dodging. It's also the steady hand that picks a lock or stitches a wound, and the sharp eye that catches a glint in the

grass or the creak of a floorboard. And it's the stamina to march all night or hold your breath that little bit longer.

Mind — Mental checks

Knowledge, memory, reasoning, aptitude. Mind is what you know, what you can remember, and how well you can work something out.

Reach for Mind when you're recalling a name, a history or a rumour, reading a map or an old language, solving a puzzle, working out how a mechanism fits together, spotting the number that doesn't add up in a ledger, planning a route, or picking up something new in a hurry.

Soul — Spiritual checks

Connection: intuition, empathy, persuasion, deception, nature. Soul is how you connect with everything outside yourself: people, animals, the land and the weather.

Reach for Soul when you're talking someone round, telling a convincing lie, reading the mood of a room, sensing that something is wrong before you can say why, or comforting someone who is frightened. It's also calming a spooked horse, finding your way by the feel of the land, coaxing something to grow, or reading the sky for the storm that's coming. Some characters draw on it as a kind of divine intuition.

Soul or Spirit: say whichever you like at the table. They mean the same thing.

When a stat runs low

Each stat has its own stamina, and it runs out in its own way: a Body pushed too far drops, a Mind overwhelmed can't think, and a Soul worn down can't face the room. See [Combat, harm and recovery](#) for how that works, and [Skills and training](#) for how a stat gets better.