

Fudge Lite

Version 3.1.0

<http://www.fudgelite.com>

Thanks to Steffan O'Sullivan for creating Fudge, and Vincent and Meguey Baker for creating Apocalypse World. This game wouldn't exist without them.

Pre-Game Setup

Session Zero

Before any in-character gameplay the GM and the players should get together to make sure that everybody is on the same page regarding the gameplay experience. This can be done as a separate session or at the beginning of the first session.

Suggested Topics

- Game genre (sci-fi, medieval fantasy, etc.)
- What sort of gameplay experience would we like? Are there any themes we would like to explore? What sort of tone are we going for? Are there any themes or tones that we would like to *avoid*?
- How seriously do we want to take this game? Is this a beer-and-pretzels game where everybody just wants to goof around, or are we seriously trying to accomplish goals here?
- Should PCs be able to die in combat, or should they only be incapacitated and left to the decisions of the GM?
- Is conflict between PCs allowed? If so, to what extent?
- Lines and veils: is there anything that should be avoided (lines) or handled off-screen (veils)? For example: detailed violence, torture, sexual content, sexual assault, dark themes, or any player anxieties or phobias.
- If a player is uncomfortable with something that's happening in the game, what safety tools are available to them? The [X-Card](#) is a popular one. It's literally just a card with an X on it that any player can tap or hold up to let the GM know that they're uncomfortable. (The X-Card is like a seatbelt. It might never be needed, but if it is you'll be glad it's there.)
- Is alcohol allowed at the table?
- How much time will the sessions last?
- Are phones allowed at the table?
- Would we enjoy it if the players helped to develop the world, or would we prefer it if the GM was solely responsible for worldbuilding? If the former, the GM should spend some time with the players to develop the setting, asking them questions about the world and incorporating their answers into the game.

Fudge ladder

- Superb
- Great
- Good
- Fair
- Mediocre
- Poor
- Terrible

Character Creation

The GM provides the players with a list of traits to assign Fudge ladder rankings to and determines ahead of time how many of each level can be assigned (e.g. 1 Superb, 2 Great, etc.) One possible set of traits is included below, but it assumes the game is going to have a large focus on combat and physical activity. The GM is encouraged to alter the list to fit their game better, or even create their own list of traits for the players to use. (See Appendix A for alternative lists of traits.)

Base traits:

Athletics
Melee Combat
Persuasion
Physical Awareness
Ranged Combat
Social Awareness
Stealth
Streetwise

Additional traits for medieval fantasy settings:

Cultural Knowledge (history, religion, customs, etc.)
Dungeoneering (knowledge of dungeon environments)
Languages*
Magic
Magic Lore
Magic Resistance
Nature (plant and animal knowledge, foraging, handle animal, navigation, and tracking)
Thievery (disable traps, open locks, pick pockets, and sleight of hand)

Additional traits for sci-fi settings:

Galactic Knowledge (planetary customs, history, xenobiology, etc.)
Hacking**
Languages*
Psionics*

Psionic Lore*

Psionic Resistance*

Repair**

Starship Use (Piloting, Gunnery, Astrogation)

*Optional

**Depending on the setting, the GM may wish to combine Hacking and Repair into a single Technology trait.

No trait should be obviously more or less useful than any of the other traits. If the trait is too specific, or the setting won't naturally challenge that trait, the GM should alter it to be more broadly applicable or just remove it. Conversely, if the trait is too useful the GM should split it up into multiple traits. As an example I found myself calling for Perception rolls too often in my games, so I split it into Social Awareness and Physical Awareness.

It's recommended that the GM split the traits Magic and Psionic into smaller categories to match whatever metaphysical system the setting uses.

Once the trait list is determined the GM decides how many traits are allowed at each level. Some example trait distributions:

1 Superb, 2 Great, 3 Good, 4 Fair, etc.

This is best used for games with many traits, or for games where the GM wants the PCs to have a lot of good traits.

Total traits Fair or better: 10. Total traits above Poor: 15

1 Superb, 2 Great, 2 Good, 2 Fair, etc.

This is best used for games with fewer traits, or when the GM wants PCs to be able to shine but only in specific areas.

Total traits Fair or better: 7. Total traits above Poor: 9

1 Great, 2 Good, 3 Fair, 4 Mediocre, etc.

This is best used for games with fewer traits, or when the GM doesn't want the PCs to have a very high level of competence in any specific area.

Total traits Fair or better: 6. Total traits above Poor: 10

2 Great, 3 Good, 4 Fair, etc.

This is best used for games with many traits where the GM wants the PCs to be well-rounded but not extremely good in any area.

Total traits Fair or better: 9. Total traits above Poor: 14

The important questions here for the GM are: What is the highest trait level I want the PCs to be at? How many of their traits do I want to be at least decent (Superb-Fair)? Do I want to give the PCs enough trait levels to be decent at all the traits, or do I want to force the players to specialize?

Injury Track

Each PC has an injury track that looks like this:

Minor injury [_][_]

Serious injury [_][_]

The player marks off one box of damage whenever the GM tells them to. Damage is taken sequentially; first the player marks off minor injuries, then serious ones.

Minor injuries go away when anybody (even the character themselves) spends a few minutes tending to the character's injuries. This cannot be done during combat. Serious injuries require the character to spend a significant amount of time recovering, but once they do they get to clear all of their injuries.

PC Death or Incapacitation

The consequences of a PC's last injury box being marked off depend on the expectations of the group and should be discussed at session zero. There are two options:

1. When a PC's last injury box is marked off they die.

OR

2. When a PC's last injury box is marked off they are incapacitated and can no longer meaningfully contribute to the scene. Another character can revive them by tending to their wounds for a few minutes and clearing their minor injuries. If the entire party is incapacitated they revive with their minor injuries cleared at a time and place of the GM's choosing.

The GM is encouraged (but not required) to use this opportunity to show an unpleasant truth or otherwise upset the status quo. Perhaps the PCs were captured by enemies, or their equipment was broken or lost, or their enemy achieved their goal, or an NPC ally died. Perhaps their street cred took a severe hit, and people who used to help them unconditionally now demand a price for their services. Perhaps another party completed the task and got the rewards instead. Perhaps a more powerful character intervened, and now they want the party to do them a favor in return. Or perhaps the PCs just got really lucky and a good samaritan helped them recover.

Gameplay

Trait Checks

When a PC attempts to do something significant the GM may call for a trait check. Trait checks are performed by rolling Fudge dice (or Fate dice). These are 6-sided dice with two "+" sides, two "-" sides, and two blank sides each. 4dF means 4 Fudge dice are rolled, for a result from -4 to +4.

The player starts with the appropriate trait and rolls 4dF, shifting the trait up or down the Fudge ladder by the result. The player compares the result to the GM-decided difficulty level (if unopposed) or to the opponent's relevant trait plus or

minus an optional GM-decided modifier (if opposed). A tie or better means the roller succeeds. If the GM is uncertain of the difficulty they can set it to Fair or zero modifiers.

Example: a PC with Athletics at Fair attempts to jump over a small river. The GM decides that the difficulty to do this would be Great, which is two levels higher than Fair, so the player would need to roll a +2 or better to succeed.

A failed roll doesn't *necessarily* mean the PC failed at their task, but the results are always worse than they would have been if the roll had succeeded.

If a player doesn't own any Fudge dice they can roll 4d6 instead, treating the result of 1 or 2 on a die as a minus, 3 or 4 as a blank, and 5 or 6 as a plus. Thus, a roll of 1, 1, 2, 5 would be equivalent to [-][-][-][+], which adds up to -2.

Superhuman Traits

Though the effects of rolls generally don't go above Superb, sometimes the difficulty of a roll is harder than Superb but still technically possible. For these rolls there is the Superhuman tier.

- Superb Superhuman
- Great Superhuman
- Good Superhuman
- Fair Superhuman
- Superb
- Great
- Good
- Fair
- Mediocre
- Poor
- Terrible

No matter how poorly a player rolls, the result never goes below Terrible.

Bonuses and penalties

Sometimes the GM will assign a bonus and/or a penalty to a player's roll. +1 is a good bonus, +2 is a very good bonus, and +3 is a very rare, very large bonus. The same modifiers also apply to penalties. Only the single largest bonus and the single largest penalty apply to any given roll.

Magic

The following spell difficulty guidelines are adapted from [Daneel's Simpler Magic System for Mini Six](#).

Poor, Mediocre:

Short Range (touch)

Short Duration (one action)

Single Target (one creature/object)

Cantrips/Orisons, See Auras, Speak Languages, Burning Touch

Fair, Good:

Medium Range (bowshot)

Medium Duration (several actions)

Medium Area (several people)

Charm People, Mystic Armor, Heal Wounds, Fire Ball, Polymorph

Great, Superb, Fair Superhuman:

Long Range (sight)

Long Duration (entire scene/encounter)

Large Area (crowd)

Resurrection, Group Teleport, Earthquake, Anti-magic Zone

Good Superhuman, Great Superhuman, Superb Superhuman:

Any Range, Duration, Area & Effect

Wish, Miracle

Increase the difficulty if the spell being cast meets more than one criterion of a spell of that level.

Character Advancement

Players gain 1 XP at the end of every session.

Trait improvement costs

Terrible to Poor: 1 XP

Poor to Mediocre: 1 XP

Mediocre to Fair: 1 XP

Fair to Good: 2 XP

Good to Great: 4 XP

Great to Superb: 8 XP

Superb to Fair Superhuman: 16 XP + GM permission

Gamemastering

The GM in Fudge Lite has specific rules that they're supposed to follow. If you are the GM please don't skip or skim this section, even if you have experience running other RPGs.

GM Agenda

The GM should be a fan of the PCs, presenting ample opportunities for them to shine and wanting them to ultimately succeed, even as the GM challenges

them. The GM can let them fail as a consequence of their actions or rolls, but the GM shouldn't be out to screw them over.

The GM shouldn't let the players get stuck in a narrative dead-end where nothing fun, interesting, or engaging happens. To support this the GM shouldn't plan what will happen ahead of time. If the GM has something specific in mind and the players don't trigger it, the game can become boring or frustrating. It's fine if the GM wishes to come up with details for the setting, some NPCs, and/or some locations (leaving room for improvisation), but the GM shouldn't write a plot or expect players to behave in a certain way. The setting should be malleable, allowing the GM to add, alter, or remove any detail that the player doesn't yet know about.

Running the Game

The core gameplay loop goes back and forth between the GM describing the situation and one of the players saying what they do (sometimes requiring a trait check).

When the GM gets to a place in their description where one or more players could make a meaningful decision the GM should find out what one of them does. If a PC is just walking down a path there's no meaningful decision to be made, because there's no reason for the PC to do anything other than keep walking.

The GM finding out what a PC does often takes the form of the direct question "What do you do?" asked to the group or to a single player, but it doesn't have to be phrased like that. As long as the GM finds out what a PC does, it doesn't matter what phrasing (if any) the GM uses.

The GM should not make something irrevocably bad happen without first giving a player a chance to do something about it. It's the difference between, "His fist is coming towards your face," and, "He punches you. Mark damage." The exception is if the GM is acting in response to a player's failure or negligence. In that case the GM can make something happen that is as direct and bad as they like, but they don't have to.

Trait Checks (GM Rules)

Whether or not a player's trait check succeeds, it should always cause the status quo to change in some way. If nothing would change because the player failed (or succeeded) at a roll, the GM needs to either put something at stake or just decide if the player succeeds or fails.

When a PC fails a trait check the GM should frame it as something that happened because they were up against strong opposition or a tough challenge, not because the PC was incompetent.

If the GM wishes to call for a trait check, but the relevant trait doesn't exist on the player's sheet, the GM can have the player's effective trait level be based

on how common the trait is. This can range from Fair for tasks that anybody should be able to do, like fighting, climbing, or basic math, to Poor for tasks that require specialized training, like particle physics or helicopter piloting.

Important information should not be locked behind trait checks. If there is any information that the GM thinks the players should have, the GM should make sure they get it without requiring them to roll for it.

The Spotlight

The spotlight is a metaphor for whichever player gets to act at the moment. One of the GM's jobs is to move the spotlight from person to person, making sure that everybody gets a reasonable amount of time to act before moving the spotlight to somebody else. This is not the same thing as traditional gameplay turns; it's more like taking turns in a conversation. Players can go in any order and jump into the situation whenever they wish to (as long as the fiction supports it).

When the GM moves the spotlight onto a player the GM should resolve that player's actions and situation up to a satisfactory point, then move the spotlight to someone else. This may take a single action or several actions (or even longer, if the situation calls for it). The GM can move the spotlight at any time, even if it would leave the player on a cliffhanger. There's no exact rule for how long the spotlight should stay on one player, but the goal is for every player to feel like they got a fair and satisfactory amount of time to contribute to the game.

GM Moves

A GM move is just a broad description of something the GM can do. Here's a list of GM moves that can apply to most games:

- Use an NPC's default behavior
- Reveal an unwelcome truth
- Announce future badness
- Inflict an injury
- Offer an opportunity, with or without cost
- Put a character in a spot
- Tell them the requirements or consequences and ask
- Make a countdown and mark a box
- Advance a countdown

When the GM wishes to make the situation more exciting or interesting, or when the GM checks to see what the players do and nobody acts, the GM can make a move that demands a reaction from at least one of the players.

When the GM isn't sure what should happen next they can make a GM move. This GM move doesn't have to demand a reaction from the players, though it can if the GM wishes.

The GM makes a move by picking something from the list and making it happen to one or more of the PCs. The GM isn't limited to only doing things on the list, but using the list as a reference can help the GM stay focused on running an interesting, engaging game.

The GM is free to adjust or rewrite the list to fit the desired gameplay experience. For example, here is a set of GM moves I wrote for a slice of life, non-combat, low-conflict setting I ran for my mom:

- Offer an opportunity, with or without a cost
- Show a conflict
- Give somebody a conflicting priority
- Encounter a character
- Share a person's history, problem, desires, or goals
- Let the player succeed, with or without a cost

When making a move the GM shouldn't say its name to the players. Instead, the GM should make it something that actually happens within the fictional world. The GM shouldn't say, "I reveal an unwelcome truth." Instead, they might say, "It turns out the bridge wasn't as stable as you thought! You hear a loud cracking noise from the stone under your feet."

Most GM moves end in a place where at least one player can make a meaningful decision, which means the GM should find out what they do.

GM Moves in Action

Use an NPC's default behavior

"Christine scoffs at you. 'Whatever, loser,' she says. 'Will one of you be a dear and take care of this wretch for me?' Two well-built men in tuxedos step forward with grins on their faces. One of them cracks their knuckles ominously. What do you do?" (Christine's behavior here is "Let your flunkies take care of things.")

"The jester cavorts and prances around the eating hall with a merry look on his face." (The GM doesn't ask what the players do because the description hasn't ended yet and the GM hasn't yet reached a point where the players can make a meaningful decision.)

"The dryad says something incomprehensible, spoken in a voice that is the wind rustling through the trees. What do you do?" (The dryad's behavior here is "Be alien.")

Reveal an unwelcome truth

"You punch him in face. The skin tears and pulls away, revealing the grinning skull of a lich. What do you do?"

"You successfully crafted the cloaking device, but even with your best efforts you couldn't make it work perfectly. The machine is unstable, prone to

malfunctions, and the resulting invisibility will be temporary at best. What now?"

"The man clad in black armor says, 'No, Lucas, I didn't kill your father. I *am* your father!' What do you do?"

Announce future badness

"The doorknob rattles as somebody attempts to open it. You hear the jangling of keys on the other side. The house's owner must have come home early. What do you do?"

"Looking through the telescope you see the telltale flashes of light that indicate missile fire and two tiny blobs that grow larger at an alarming rate. They'll arrive in less than a minute. What do you do?"

"With his dying breath he gasps, 'You may have stopped me, but the Crimson Legion... is... coming...'" (The GM doesn't ask what the players do because the description hasn't ended yet and the GM hasn't yet reached a point where the players can make a meaningful decision.)

"The miner says, 'Just so you know, there's trouble in them there mines. A creepin' darkness that don't look so good. Conrad didn't believe the warnings, said it was a load of superstitious nonsense. Never came back.'" (The GM sits back, waiting to see how the players respond.)

Inflict an injury

"Alex swings the crowbar wildly, painfully clipping your head. Mark off an injury. What do you do?"

Offer an opportunity, with or without cost

"His path takes him right underneath you and he doesn't seem to have noticed you perched on the overpass. You could drop onto him, but you'd take an injury doing that. Do you do it?"

"Nobody's eyes are on you. If you wanted to grab the amulet, now would be the time. Do you grab it?"

"You don't see an easy way for your group to get inside the building, but you notice an air vent large enough for your drone. Do you explore it with the drone?"

"You notice, just down the road, that a travelling vendor has set up a booth. It is decorated with eye-searingly bright colors. Would you like to check it out?"

"You failed the Knowledge check. I'll give you a free Fudge point if your character acts on the incorrect knowledge." (For more details, see the Fudge Points heading in the Alternative Rules and Extra Rules section.)

Put a character in a spot

"Your foot is stuck and the giant counterweight is swinging towards you. What do you do?"

"As you approach the scroll you hear a strange click as the ground under your feet shifts downward just slightly. The portcullis behind you starts loudly sliding downwards. You can stay inside with the scroll or you can run out of the room, but there isn't time to do both. What do you do?"

"The snarling monster swipes at the overturned car, trying to get at the woman trapped inside. You hear her scream in terror. What do you do?"

Tell them the requirements or consequences and ask

"'You want this sword?' the man asks. 'Sure, if you can beat me in a duel.' What do you do?"

"The guard is willing to look the other way while you sneak into the palace, but in exchange he wants that golden statue you obtained earlier. What do you do?"

"If you do this, it will cost your character their reputation and any contacts they have. Are you sure you want to go through with it?"

Make a countdown and mark a box

"I'm making a countdown of 6 boxes. When the last box is marked, the building collapses. If you're still inside when that happens, your character will die. What do you do?"

Advance a countdown

"The mermaid punches you in the gut. Bubbles of air leak out of your mouth despite your best efforts. Mark off a box on the oxygen countdown. What do you do?"

Combat

Combat is almost exactly the same as the rest of gameplay: the GM describes the situation, moves the spotlight between players, calls for trait checks and makes GM moves as appropriate. There is no such thing as combat initiative or rigidly-defined turns. The GM just moves the spotlight between the different characters, making sure that each player gets a reasonable amount of time to act before moving the spotlight to someone else.

Fictional Positioning and Combat Mechanics:

Injuries only apply to NPCs in situations where the NPC is able to respond to the threat. If an NPC is disabled or caught unaware they can be knocked out or killed regardless of their condition track.

Conversely, if an enemy is too well-protected fictionally, the player cannot roll to deal damage to them. A large dragon or a military tank won't be injured by somebody randomly punching them, no matter how well the player rolls.

Example Combat

The GM in this example is running a medieval fantasy game about exploring dungeons, killing monsters, and retrieving treasure. A warg is a larger, eviller version of a wolf.

GM: The cultist waves his staff ominously over the altar, but the more immediate threat are his two warg rider cronies who are rapidly approaching you. The goblins have wicked curved blades and they cry for your blood. How do you react to their charge?

Player: I cast a flash cantrip to blind them.

GM: What's your Intelligence?

Player: Mediocre.

GM: I'm gonna say casting flash in this context requires a Mediocre Intelligence, so you just need to roll 0 or higher on the Fudge dice.

The player rolls -1.

GM: Mediocre minus one level is Poor. Unfortunately, you lose your concentration and the spell fizzles out on you. One of the warg-riders charges at you, trying to knock you down. There's no time to cast another spell, what do you do?

Player: I jump out of the way!

GM: Dexterity check.

The player rolls -3.

Player: Mediocre Dexterity minus three is... one level below Terrible?

GM: Just Terrible. It doesn't go below that. Okay, so you try to get out of the path of the warg, but it's just too fast for you. The warg knocks you to the ground and tramples on you as it passes. Mark off an injury.

Player: That was my last minor injury. Freaking hell.

GM: You're on the ground and the warg appears to be looping around for another pass. What do you do now?

Player: I get up and try to run to safer area. You said the cavern had three exits? Which one is closest?

GM: That would be the one you came from.

Player: Okay, I make a break for it.

GM: Roll Dexterity against a difficulty of Fair.

The player rolls -1.

GM: Mediocre Dexterity minus one is Poor. You don't even get halfway there before the warg knocks you to the ground again.

Player: *whimpers* I'm gonna die.

GM: Yeah, maybe. You feel the teeth of the warg clamping around your arm,

trying to get tear through your leather armor. What do you do?

Player: It's latched onto my arm?

GM: Yeah.

Player: I draw my dagger and stab it into the warg's eye. What do I roll for that?

GM: There's no need for a roll, since there's nothing keeping you from just doing it. You drive your dagger into the eye socket of the warg, who seizes up and drops to the ground, dead. [The warg only had 1 injury box.] The goblin that was riding it makes a high, keening noise of pain. He looks at you with a wild fury in his eyes, and the dead warg's jaw is still clamped on your arm. What do you do?

NPCs

NPCs have a condition track and any traits the GM wants them to have. Traits that don't fit on the Fudge ladder are called gifts (when positive) and faults (when negative). NPCs also have behaviors that can be used as GM moves.

NPCs that aren't supposed to be serious obstacles to the PCs should only have 1 or 2 boxes in their condition tracks. NPCs with more narrative importance can have larger condition tracks, up to the size of a PC's.

Depending on their personality, some NPCs may try to end a conflict without winning it (ie. running away or giving up). They don't always have to fight to the end.

Example NPCs

Christine Cassiopeia

Setting: Modern-day upper-class.

Physical: Terrible

Social conflict: Superb

Gift: Super-rich.

Fault: A super-bitch.

Behavior: Make snide comments about somebody else's outfit. Let your flunkies take care of things.

Huai Dan

Setting: Xianxia (fantasy China, but with assholes everywhere).

Description: A qi cultivator.

Social: Fair

Combat: Great to Fair Superhuman

Gift: Capable of superhuman feats.

Fault: Has a very thin skin when it comes to perceived disrespect.

Behavior: Avenge any insults. Stand proud and boastful, even in front of a stronger foe. Steal cultivation resources from others.

Killbot 9000

Setting: Survival horror/action.

Description: Human flesh over a robot body. Easily capable of passing for human.

Physical: Good Superhuman

Combat: Fair

Gift: Virtually indestructible robot body.

Fault: Vulnerable to incredibly high pressures or temperatures.

Behavior: Track down and try to kill one specific human.

Troll

Setting: Medieval fantasy.

Description: Big. Dumb. Strong.

Physical: Great

Gift: Quick regeneration. On a failed player roll the troll may regain a condition.
-and/or-

Gift: Slow regeneration. The troll comes back to life a certain amount of time after dying (minutes, hours, days), eventually coming back to full health. Limbs regenerate, etc.

Fault: Pretty dumb.

Fault: Fire attacks and acid attacks both permanently deal damage to the troll.

Fault (optional): Permanently turns to stone in sunlight.

Behavior: Grab things, pick them up, and smash them against other things. Do the same thing to people.

Giant Spider

Settings: Medieval fantasy or horror.

Body: Great

Gift: Paralyzing venom in fangs.

Gift: Webspinning.

Behavior: Create sticky webs to catch prey, inject a paralytic venom with your fangs, then wrap your prey in a cocoon before sucking their fluids out.

Alternatively, the spider may store the cocooned character for later consumption. It depends on how hard of a move the GM wishes to make.

Brigand

Setting: Medieval fantasy.

Combat: Good

Behavior: Loot, pillage, and plunder. Obey your leader. Attack the innocent. Take by force.

Brigand Leader

Setting: Medieval fantasy.

Combat: Great

Leadership: Great

Behavior: Command your followers. Reward obedience. Crush any challenges to your authority. Boast recklessly.

Pyromaniac Fire Mage

Setting: Medieval fantasy.

Magical combat: Great

Physical combat: Mediocre

Gift: Spellcasting. Spells known: Fireball, Flamethrower.

Gift: Immunity to his own flames.

-OR-

Gift: Immunity to all flames

Behavior: Burn all the things! If anybody tries to stop you, burn them as well!

Psionic Monk

Setting: Space opera.

Combat: Great

Gift: Psionist. Psionic abilities: Telepathy/empathy, Telekinesis, Physical Augmentation (acrobatic jumps, fast movement), Suggestion.

Gift: Plasma Sword.

Behavior: Defend the weak. Destroy the wicked. Be at peace in all your actions.

Fallen Psionic Monk

Setting: Space opera.

Combat: Great

Gift: Psionist. Psionic abilities: Telepathy/empathy, Telekinesis, Physical Augmentation (acrobatic jumps, fast movement), Lightning.

Gift: Plasma Sword.

Behavior: Let your anger and hatred flow through you. Crush your enemies. Show no mercy.

Mooks (guards, stormtroopers, minions, cultists, etc.)

Setting: Any action setting.

Combat: Mediocre

Behavior: Mob the heroes, die in droves.

Ship-to-Ship Combat

Any ship (spaceship, sailboat, submarine, etc.) can have a wound track just like a PC or NPC and can regain "health" in the same manner as a PC; it takes a few minutes of effort outside of combat to fix a minor injury, and it takes a more significant amount of time to fix a serious injury.

Ship-to-ship combat is very similar to character-to-character combat. Any PC in the appropriate spot can use the appropriate trait to pilot the ship and/or fire weapons. The ship's qualities don't directly adjust the player's roll. Instead, the

GM takes them into account when making any adjustments to the difficulty of the roll.

"Yes, but"

A roll resolves the question, "Can I do this thing?" Sometimes, however, the GM may want to make the answer to the question part of the ongoing plot, taking longer to resolve than just a simple 4dF roll. In that case the GM will tell the PC what complications are in the way of accomplishing their goal. If the PC can overcome the complications they get the outcome they wanted.

This is an expansion of the "Tell them the requirements or consequences and ask" GM move.

Situations where "Yes, but" could be appropriate include, but are not limited to: crafting equipment, giving medical treatment, creating a new magical spell or effect, and improving traits.

Sample complications:

- It's going to require rare or expensive resources
- It will require assistance from somebody else
- It will require following a specific procedure
- You and your allies will risk danger or unwanted attention
- While you work on it, a specific situation will be getting worse elsewhere

The GM may allow the player to choose between different combinations of complications. ("Either it will take a lot of money and several weeks, or you can swallow your pride and ask Jorgen for help." "Never!")

Countdowns

Whenever something may happen in the future but hasn't happened yet, the GM can create a countdown for it. A countdown is just a series of boxes that get checked off when certain criteria are met. Once all the boxes are checked off, the thing happens.

Countdowns are incredibly versatile. The condition track technically counts as a player-facing countdown. Countdowns also can be used as Apocalypse World/Dungeon World Fronts, as skill challenges with success and/or failure conditions, and as a visible "ticking clock" to spur players into action.

Countdown Examples

Front countdown

Trigger: players fail to act against the kobold menace.

Kobolds attack the town

Kobold Mage steals the Tome of Dragons

The Dragon Lord Awakens

"Ticking clock" countdown

Countdown advances as a GM move

[_] [_] Stairwell collapses, limiting access to the second floor

[_] [_] Building creaks ominously. Players are informed it's about to collapse.

[_] House collapses, incapacitating anybody still inside.

Skill challenge countdown

Goal: get funding for a new spaceship

Trigger: make enough successful skill rolls to the relevant people

[_] [_] [_]

Skill challenge with linked failure countdown

Goal: get funding for a new spaceship

Trigger: make enough successful skill checks to the relevant people

[_] [_] [_]

Result: get the funding

Trigger: fail the relevant skill checks

[_] [_] [_] [_]

Result: get kicked out of the embassy

Alternative Rules and Extra Rules

Everything from here onward is completely optional. If you're happy with the rules as presented, you can stop reading and not miss anything. However, if you wish to alter the gameplay mechanics of Fudge Lite, this section is full of optional and/or alternative rules that you can use in your game.

Trading Traits

At character creation a player may trade traits for double the traits of the next level down. A Superb trait would become two Great traits, a Great trait would become two Good traits, etc.

Gifts and Faults

At character creation the player and the GM may collaborate to determine positive traits for the character that don't fit on the Fudge ladder (Gifts) and/or negative traits that don't fit on the Fudge ladder (Faults).

Subjective Character Creation

Instead of assigning a specific number of trait levels to the character, the player can work with the GM to develop their character concept. Then the player uses their understanding of the character to rank any traits that can be ranked on the Fudge Ladder.

Here are some questions that the GM can ask to help develop the PC. They are just examples, though, so don't feel like you need to follow the list. The goal is just to get a feel for who the character is and what they do.

- What is a goal the character has, or something they desire?
- What are they good at?
- What aren't they good at?
- How do they make a living?
- Do they have any friends or contacts?
- Do they have any enemies?
- How do they know the other party members and why do they trust them?

Quick Character Creation (Over the Edge)

The player comes up with one broad trait (class, occupation, etc.) and two narrower traits (specific skills) that define their character. Any one of the three traits may be Great, while the other two are Good. Any magical ability or superpower should be the broad trait unless it is defined very narrowly. The GM may also require each PC to have a fault. The character must be approved by the GM before it can be used.

Quick Character Creation (Wushu)

The player comes up with three traits that define their character. One should describe their motivation and be ranked Superb, one should describe their fighting style and be ranked Great, and one should describe their profession and be ranked Good. The GM may also require each PC to have a fault. The character must be approved by the GM before it can be used.

Fudge On The Fly Character Creation

Players don't have to decide on their trait rankings before play starts. The GM creates a list of trait slots similar to the one below, but adjusted to match the number of traits available to the players. When the GM calls for the trait check of a trait that hasn't yet been placed, the player must decide which slot it goes in. The player can only place a trait where there is an open slot for it.

Superb:

[_____]

Great:

[_____] [_____]

Good:

[_____] [_____] [_____]

Fair:

[_____] [_____] [_____] [_____]

Mediocre:

[_____] [_____] [_____] [_____]

[_____]

Poor:

[_____] [_____] [_____] [_____]

[_____] [_____] [_____] [_____]

[_____]

Alternatives to Fudge Dice

Custom Fudge Dice

If the player(s) don't have access to Fudge/Fate dice, they can make custom dice by coloring the die faces with colored permanent markers, letting it dry, and then sealing the color in with clear nail polish.

1d6-1d6

Instead of 4dF, the player(s) could roll 1d6-1d6, with the positive and negative dice determined ahead of time. The probability isn't exactly the same, but it's close. It will occasionally return a result of -5 or +5 (2.78% chance of each,) and the results are a little more swingy.

A way to do 1d6-1d6 without subtraction is as follows:

Assign one d6 to be positive and one to be negative. Roll them both. Whichever die has the lower absolute value, use that and discard the other. If the dice are tied, the result is zero.

d66 Table

Another option is rolling two six-sided dice on this table. The table is diagonally symmetrical, so it doesn't matter which side corresponds to which die.

	1:	2:	3:	4:	5:	6:
1:	-4	-3	-2	-2	-1	0
2:	-3	-1	-1	-1	0	1
3:	-2	-1	0	0	1	2
4:	-2	-1	0	0	1	2
5:	-1	0	1	1	1	3
6:	0	1	2	2	3	4

The biggest difference between this table and 4dF is that -4 and 4 are both slightly more likely to occur (1/36 instead of 1/81, or a difference of about 1.5 percent each).

1d100 table

If we're using tables, I might as well include a d100 table:

01	02-06	07-19	20-38	39-61	62-81	82-94	95-99	00
-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4

The probabilities are very close to an actual 4dF roll.

Leading Questions

Traditional RPGs have a clear line between the GM's role and the players' roles. The player determines what their character does, says, thinks and feels, and the GM determines everything else. However, it may be more enjoyable if the GM shares some of the creative responsibility with the players. The GM can do this at any time by asserting something about the world that is relevant to the situation at hand, then asking a player to explain or elaborate on it. For example:

"Alice, you recognize the NPC that just showed up and know that he's hiding something. What is he hiding and how do you know that?"

"Bob, you barely escaped this city with your life the last time you were here. Why was that?"

"Charlie, you helped Bob escape the city. Who still holds a grudge over that?"

Before doing this, though, the GM should check with the players to determine if this is something they would enjoy, since some players prefer a more traditional split of creative control. Session zero would be an excellent time to check this.

Condition Tracks

Fudge Lite uses injury tracks by default, but not all games use injuries as the primary measure of whether a PC is able to continue or not. For example, a game about bargaining with dark forces for power could track corruption instead of injuries, and a game about social conflict at cocktail parties could track embarrassment. An injury track that doesn't necessarily track injuries is called a condition track.

The GM is free to customize anything about the condition tracks, such as the number of different conditions the tracks track and what those conditions are, how many boxes each condition has, how long it takes the different boxes to recover, and what causes each track to recover.

For example, a game where players investigate mind-shattering elder gods and the cults that worship them might have only two boxes for injury (indicating that physical combat is something to be avoided) and a separate track for mental health that uses 6 conditions (3 minor, 3 serious). If either track is completely marked off, the PC is taken out.

Blank Conditions

The GM may choose not to define conditions ahead of time, instead deciding what each condition is as it's taken by the PC. For example, a PC might take the two minor conditions "twisted ankle" and "hurt feelings", and the serious condition "cracked ribs".

Marking Off Multiple Boxes

By default, players only mark off one condition box at a time. However, the GM may wish to allow variable amounts of damage. In this case, the GM might assign damage as follows:

Mediocre effect: 1 box

Fair effect: 2 boxes

Good effect: 3 boxes

Great effect: 4 boxes

Superb effect: 5 boxes

Using this table, getting punched might mark off one injury box while getting shot or stabbed might mark off four.

A GM using this rule should probably give the players more condition boxes to compensate for the increased damage.

Nonlinear Conditions

Instead of using minor and serious conditions the GM could create conditions that don't have to be marked in a specific order. These could be physiological states like sick, hungry, injured, and exhausted, and/or emotional states like afraid, angry, guilty, and hopeless. The specific conditions should be chosen to reinforce a specific gameplay experience. For example, a game about teenage drama would have different conditions than a game about wilderness survival.

Either the GM will decide which nonlinear condition to mark or the player will. When the GM doesn't have a specific condition in mind they should let the player decide.

If the GM uses nonlinear conditions they should include a final condition that represents being taken out of the scene or the game.

Condition Penalties

Marking in certain condition boxes may give the PC penalties to relevant trait checks. For example, this injury track gives the following penalties to physical actions:

Scratch: [][][]

Hurt (-1): []

Very Hurt (-2): []

Incapacitated: []

Be aware that this can lead to a death spiral where it becomes harder for a PC to keep from taking conditions because they already have conditions.

"How bad is it, doc?"

By default the PC marks conditions in order (minor first, then serious), but the GM may choose to judge the situation and tell the player which condition to

mark off instead. If the GM does this they should probably give the PCs a few more serious condition boxes to compensate.

Fudge Points

The GM may give the PCs 1-5 Fudge Points to start the game with. The GM should establish which of these uses the player may spend Fudge Points on:

- Reroll a trait check.
- Automatically succeed at any unopposed roll of Superb or lower difficulty.
- Alter a roll by 1.
- Reduce a condition's severity by one level, clearing it if it's already at the weakest level. A condition cannot be moved to a lower slot unless there is free space for it.
- Convert a failure to a success.
- Get a +4 result without rolling.
- Ensure a favorable coincidence in the world around them.

If using Fudge Points (FP), the GM will need to answer the following questions:

- Will the players get FP at the beginning of each session?
- If so, will it be up to a maximum or will there be a flat amount given?
- Can the players earn FP in-game? If so, how?

Both Fudge Points and XP can be used as a reward to encourage specific behavior from PCs. Fudge Points should be awarded when the GM wants to give the players one-time out-of-character bonuses, while XP should be awarded when the GM wants to represent long-term in-character character improvement.

Just don't make the player choose between XP and FP. It can lead to players hoarding XP because they don't want to trade a permanent asset for a temporary boost. Those players would then advance faster than the players that spend more FP, leading to imbalanced characters later on.

Smaller Bonuses and Penalties

If the GM wishes to apply a bonus or penalty less than one level they may use advantage dice or disadvantage dice. These dice are colored differently and replace regular Fudge dice when they are rolled. The player ignores any minus result on an advantage die and ignores any plus result on a disadvantage die. The two die types cancel each other out, so a player will never roll an advantage die and a disadvantage die in the same roll.

An advantage die is worth roughly 1/3rd of a Fudge rank. Here are some rough guidelines for GMs:

- +3 bonus: a superb bonus
- +2 bonus: a great bonus
- +1 bonus: a good bonus

2 levels of advantage: a fair bonus

1 level of advantage: a mediocre bonus

The same guidelines apply to penalties.

Minor Magic and Ritual Magic

Instead of magic being controlled by a single trait check, the GM can split magic into one of two types depending on how powerful it is.

Minor magic requires a roll of the player's relevant magic trait against a base difficulty of Fair. A minor magic spell cannot affect anything for longer than about half a minute, it cannot affect more than a small group of people per casting, it cannot affect anything further away than an average person could throw a stone, and it cannot check or uncheck more than a single condition at a time.

If your game uses the optional rule that allows more than one condition to be marked off at a time, minor magic cannot check or uncheck more than a Fair amount of boxes at a time.

Ritual magic doesn't have those limitations, but it does have requirements that must be met before the spell can be cast. The GM will tell the player what needs to be done to get the effect you want. Some examples include:

It has to take place at a certain location.

It requires a specific ingredient or ingredients.

It requires the assistance of a specific person or people.

The GM may require more than one of these.

Ritual magic does not require a roll to trigger the magic. Once the requirements are met and the ritual is performed, the magic takes effect.

Character Advancement

Instead of, or in addition to, a flat amount of XP per session, the GM can use as many of the following methods to reward players with character progression as they like.

The costs given on the advancement table should be multiplied by the average amount of XP the players are likely to obtain per session.

Keys

Keys are PC-specific behaviors that reward the players with XP. They are determined either through collaboration between the player and the GM, or by the player selecting one or more from a GM-provided list. (See Appendix B for a list of example keys.) The GM can award 1 XP any time a player hits their key, or 1 XP per key at the end of the session, or just 1 XP at the end of a session for hitting any key.

If a player feels that their current keys don't fit the type of character they wish to play, they may consult with the GM and then swap out one or more of their keys.

By selecting keys the player is telling the GM what sort of situations they're interested in getting into, so the GM should make sure to give them opportunities to hit their keys during gameplay.

End of Session Questions

The GM will provide the PCs with a list of questions for them to answer at the end of each session. For each "yes" answer the player gains 1 XP.

XP on a Miss

Every time a player fails a roll they gain 1 XP. This is meant to encourage players to use their weaker traits and take some of the sting out of a failed roll.

This rule should not be used if the GM calls for rolls when nothing is at stake. (That would be against the GM rules anyways, but it's still something to be mindful of.)

In-character Costs

The GM may choose to impose in-character requirements for a PC to improve their trait, as described in the "Yes, but" rule. This may or may not be used in conjunction with XP requirements.

Appendix A: Example Sets of Traits

Body, Mind, Soul

Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Wisdom, Intelligence, Charisma

Physical, Mental, Social

Careful, Clever, Flashy, Forceful, Quick, Sneaky

Fighting, Agility, Strength, Endurance, Reason, Intuition, Psyche

Earth, Air, Fire, Water, Void

Might, Speed, Intellect

Body, Coordination, Sense, Knowledge, Charm, Command

Brains, Chutzpah, Mechanics, Moxie, Violence

Agility, Smarts, Spirit, Strength, Vigour

Appendix B: Example Keys

The Shadow of Yesterday Keys

Key of Bloodlust: Hit your key when you overcome an opponent in battle.

Key of Conscience: Hit your key when you help someone in trouble or improve someone's life with your compassion.

Key of the Coward: Hit your key when you avoid danger, or stop a battle by means other than violence.

Key of Faith: Hit your key when you defend your faith or convert another to

your faith.

Key of Fraternity: Hit your key when you are influenced by your friend, or show how deep your bond is.

Key of Glittering Gold: Hit your key whenever you increase your wealth.

Key of the Guardian: Hit your key when you are influenced by your ward, or show how deep your bond is.

Key of the Impostor: Hit your key when you actively fool someone with your imposture.

Key of the Masochist: Hit your key whenever you are injured, physically or emotionally.

Key of the Mission: Hit your key when you take action to complete your mission.

Key of the Outcast: Hit your key when the fact that you are an outcast is highlighted in the scene in some manner.

Key of Renown: Hit your key whenever you add to your reputation, by words or by deeds.

Key of Power: Hit your key whenever you gain power or status, either by improving your own situation or weakening a rival's.

Key of Vengeance. Hit your key when you strike a blow against those who wronged you.

Key of the Vow: Hit your key when your vow significantly impacts your decisions.

Lady Blackbird Keys

Key of the Paragon: Hit your key when you demonstrate your superiority or when your noble traits overcome a problem.

Key of the Commander: Hit your key when your orders are obeyed.

Key of Hidden Longing: Hit your key when you make a decision based on your secret affection or when you somehow show it indirectly.

Key of Greed: Hit your key when you steal something cool or score a big payoff.

Key of the Daredevil: Hit your key when you do something cool that is risky or reckless (especially piloting stunts).

Key of Banter: Hit your key when your character says something that makes the other players laugh or when you explain something using highly technical jargon.

Key of the Traveler Hit your key when you share an interesting detail about a person, place, or thing or when you go somewhere exciting and new.

Key of the Broker: Hit your key when you bargain, make a new contact, or exchange a favour.

Key of the Tinkerer: Hit your key when you repair, design, or modify technology.

Key of the Pirate: Hit your key when you impress someone with your piratical capers or add to your notorious reputation.

Dungeon World Alignment Keys

Key of the Chaotic Barbarian: Eschew a convention of the civilized world.

Key of the Neutral Barbarian: Teach someone the ways of your people.

Key of the Good Bard: Perform your art to aid someone else.

Key of the Neutral Bard: Avoid a conflict or defuse a tense situation.

Key of the Chaotic Bard: Spur others to significant and unplanned decisive action.

Key of the Good Cleric: Heal another.

Key of the Lawful Cleric: Follow the precepts of your church or god.

Key of the Evil Cleric: Harm another to prove the superiority of your church or god.

Key of the Chaotic Druid: Destroy a symbol of civilization.

Key of the Good Druid: Help something or someone grow.

Key of the Neutral Druid: Eliminate an unnatural menace.

Key of the Good Fighter: Defend those weaker than you.

Key of the Neutral Fighter: Defeat an opponent.

Key of the Evil Fighter: Kill a defenseless, beaten, or surrendered person.

Key of the Lawful Paladin: Deny mercy to a criminal or unbeliever.

Key of the Good Paladin: Protect someone weaker than you.

Key of the Chaotic Ranger: Free someone from literal or figurative bonds.

Key of the Good Ranger: Combat an unnatural threat.

Key of the Neutral Ranger: Help an animal or spirit of the wild.

Key of the Chaotic Thief: Leap into danger without a plan.

Key of the Neutral Thief: Avoid detection or infiltrate a location.

Key of the Evil Thief: Shift danger or blame from yourself to someone else.

Key of the Good Wizard: Use magic to directly aid another.

Key of the Neutral Wizard: Discover something about a magical mystery.

Key of the Evil Wizard: Use magic to cause terror and fear.

Licensing information

The entirety of this document, except for Appendix B, is designated Open Game Content.

The Appendix B section "The Shadow of Yesterday Keys" is released under [CC BY-SA 2.0](#).

The Appendix B section "Lady Blackbird Keys" is released under [CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 US](#).

The Appendix B section "Dungeon World Alignment Keys" is released under [CC BY 3.0](#).

Open Game License Version 1.0a

The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc ("Wizards"). All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a)"Contributors" means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b)"Derivative Material" means

copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) "Distribute" means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d) "Open Game Content" means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) "Product Identity" means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts; creatures characters; stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) "Trademark" means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor (g) "Use", "Used" or "Using" means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) "You" or "Your" means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

3. Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.

5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of

any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder's name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you Distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.

10. Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12. Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

13. Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14. Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

15. COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Open Game License v 1.0 Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Fudge 10th Anniversary Edition Copyright 2005, Grey Ghost Press, Inc.; Authors Steffan O'Sullivan and Ann Dupuis, with additional material by Jonathan Benn, Peter Bonney, Deird'Re Brooks, Reimer Behrends, Don Bisdorf, Carl Cravens, Shawn Garbett, Steven Hammond, Ed Heil, Bernard Hsiung, J.M. "Thijs" Krijger, Sedge Lewis, Shawn Lockard, Gordon McCormick, Kent Matthewson, Peter Mikelsons, Robb Neumann, Anthony Roberson, Andy Skinner, William Stoddard, Stephan Szabo, John Ughrin, Alex Weldon, Duke York, Dmitri Zagidulin

Fudge Lite Copyright 2022; Author Brendan Jones, with a contribution from Daneel