Rolling Dice

Shadow of the Demon Lord uses two kinds of dice: a twenty-sided die and a six-sided die (the ordinary cube die found in many games).

You roll a twenty-sided die (a **d20**) whenever you attempt an activity whose outcome is uncertain. The result of the die roll determines whether the attempt is a success or a failure.

You roll one or more six-sided dice (**d6**) for a number of effects. The most common situation is determining the damage dealt by an attack. For example, a *breathe flame* spell's effect requires you to roll three six-sided dice (expressed as "3d6") for damage. Sometimes you add or subtract modifiers to such rolls; for example, "1d6 + 2" means you roll one six-sided die and then add 2 to the roll to get the result. **Boons** and **banes** might require you to adjust a d20 roll by adding or subtracting a d6 roll.

Rolling a d20

You roll a d20 to determine an activity's outcome, making an **action roll**, an **attack roll**, or a **resistance roll**. Whenever you roll a d20, you follow these steps.

Roll the Die: Note the number you rolled.

Apply Modifiers: Add or subtract any **modifiers** from character **attributes** to the number you rolled. The rules or the GM determine what modifier you use, depending on the task you attempt.

Apply Other Adjustments: Add or subtract any other adjustments to the die roll, such as a bonus or penalty, or a boon or bane.

Determine the Result: Compare the final total to the **target number** for the roll. If the total equals or is greater than the target number, the result is a **success**. If the total is less than the target number, the result is a **failure**.

Action Rolls

You make an **action roll** when you attempt some activity that is not directly opposed by another creature and the outcome is not certain. Sometimes an action that would ordinarily be simple becomes more challenging when under stress, or when time is limited. Examples of action rolls include climbing, swimming, picking locks, and listening for faint sounds.

Modifier: The type of modifier depends on the action you attempt. For example, you would make a Strength action roll to smash down a door, applying your Strength modifier. If you would listen at a door, you would make a Perception action roll and use your Perception modifier.

Target Number: The target number for action rolls is always 10.

Success: The activity happens as described.

Failure: The activity does not happen, or you don't get the desired result. If you attempt the same activity again under identical circumstances, it automatically results in a failure. For example, if you attempt to scale a sheer cliff wall unassisted and get a failure, you cannot, under the same circumstance, climb that wall. To get up to the top, you would have to change the circumstance in some way. You might toss up a grappling hook and rope, find a ladder, hammer spikes into the stone, or put on climbing claws.

As another example, say you attempt to use lock picks to open a locked door. If you have plenty of time and you aren't under any stress, you can eventually open the lock without having to make a roll. However, if you are under pressure, you might have to make the action roll. If you get a failure, you can't try again to open the lock under those circumstances, though you will be able to do so once time is no longer an issue.

Action Roll Example: Joe's character, Helmut, tries to kick down a locked door. The GM decides Joe must make a Strength action roll. Joe rolls a d20 and gets a 9. He adds his Strength modifier (+2) to the number on the die, for a total of 11. Since the total is 10 or higher, Helmut kicks down the door.

Attack Rolls

You make an attack roll when you attempt to influence or harm another creature or an object. Examples of attack rolls include swinging a weapon to strike an enemy combatant, casting a spell to overwhelm a creature's mind, or using a mace to smash a statue. See "Combat" for more information.

Modifier: Attack rolls with a melee weapon, such as a battleaxe or a sword, normally add your Strength modifier. When you make an attack with a ranged weapon, such as a pistol or a crossbow, you normally add your Agility modifier to the attack roll. Special kinds of attack rolls might use a different attribute modifier. Some kinds of spells count as attacks; the spell's description tells you what modifier to use when making the attack roll.

Target Number: The target number for an attack roll is usually a creature's Defense score for weapon attacks, or an attribute score for other kinds of attacks.

Success: In general, a success deals damage to the target. For example, if you use a weapon to attack a creature and get a success, you roll for the weapon's damage. The creature takes damage equal to the result of the roll.

Failure: The target avoids the attack: you miss with your weapon, your shot goes wide of its mark, or the spell fails to harm or take hold on the target.

Attack Roll Example: Stacee's character, Anise, looses an arrow from her bow at a bear. She's attacking with a ranged weapon, so she adds her Agility modifier to the attack roll. Stacee rolls a d20 and gets a 4. She adds her Agility modifier (+3) to the number on the die for a total of 7. The bear's Defense is 15, so the result of the attack roll is a failure. The arrow misses.

Resistance Rolls

You make a resistance roll when you attempt to avoid or mitigate a harmful effect. A resistance roll can let you reduce the damage you would take from being caught in a *fireball* spell, leap out from danger after springing a trap, or resist a wave of mental energy that would stun everyone in an area.

You can make resistance rolls only when you are capable of using actions. If you are instructed to make a resistance roll when you cannot use an action, the result is always a failure.

Modifier: The rules for the effect you attempt to resist tell you what modifier to use. For example, you make an

Agility resistance roll to avoid being caught in the area of a *fireball* spell, while you make a Strength resistance roll to reduce the damage from a *death fog* spell.

Target Number: The target number for resistance rolls is always 10.

Success: If an effect allows you to make a resistance roll, its description tells you what happens on a success. Common outcomes are a reduction in the damage you would normally take, or avoiding a harmful effect.

Failure: You suffer the effect you attempted to avoid or reduce.

Resistance Roll Example: A vile pyromancer hurls a blast of fire from his fingertips, catching Heather's character, Jasper, in the area. Everything in the spell's area takes damage from the flames, but creatures can attempt Agility resistance rolls to halve the damage. Heather rolls a d20 and gets a 9. She adds her Agility modifier (+1) to the number on the die for a total of 10. Since the total is 10 or higher, she gets a success and takes only half the damage.

> ### Round Down
> Whenever you end up with a fraction, such as from halving damage, always round down to the next lowest whole number.

Bonuses and Penalties
Many situations in play can confer a bonus or a penalty on a d20 roll, representing an advantage or a disadvantage.

A **bonus** is always a positive number (+), which you add to the roll; a **penalty** is always a negative number (–), which you subtract. A single die roll might have bonuses and penalties from different sources. These are cumulative, so you need to total them up and apply the final result to your roll.

Boons and Banes
Circumstances can make d20 rolls easier or harder. Positive circumstances grant one or more **boons**, while negative circumstances impose one or more **banes**.

Boons
Boons improve your d20 die rolls. One or more boons might apply to a given roll. For each boon, you roll a d6 and then add the highest number rolled on *all* the boon dice to the result of your d20 roll. For example, if you make a d20 roll with three boons, you would roll 3d6. Say you get 1, 4, and 6 on those dice. The 6 is the highest number, so you add 6 to the result of your d20 roll.

Banes
Banes hinder your d20 die rolls. One or more banes might apply to a given roll. For each bane, you roll a d6 and then subtract the highest number on *all* the bane dice from the result of your d20 roll. For example, if you make a d20 roll with four banes, you would roll 4d6. Say you get 1, 3, 5, and 5 on those dice. Since 5 is the highest number, you would subtract 5 from the result of your d20 roll.

Combining Boons and Banes
Boons and banes cancel each other out, one for one. If two boons and one bane apply to a particular d20 roll, you make the roll with one boon (one bane cancels one boon). Similarly, if two boons and four banes apply to the roll, you would end up making the roll with two banes (two boons cancel two banes).

Attributes
Attributes describe a creature's basic capabilities in the game. Most creatures have four attributes: **Strength**, **Agility**, **Intellect**, and **Willpower**. Each attribute includes has two numbers: a **score** and a **modifier**. Together, these numbers reflect a creature's natural talent and formal training when attempting to do things in the game.

Score: An attribute's score ranges from 1 to 20. Player characters usually have starting scores from 8 to 13.

Modifier: An attribute's modifier equals its score – 10. This number is applied to d20 rolls using that attribute.

Using Attributes
Here are some guidelines about how you commonly use your character's attributes in the game. Each attribute is associated with one or more **characteristics**, described later.

Attribute	Characteristic
Strength	Health
Agility	Defense
Intellect	Perception
Willpower	Insanity

Strength
Strength describes your brawn, constitution, physical power, and durability.

Score: Your Strength score is the target number for any attack that would directly harm your body.

Health: This measures your ability to withstand damage. Your starting Health equals your Strength score. If your Strength score increases, your Health increases by the same amount.

Action Rolls: You make a Strength action roll when you attempt an athletic activity, such as climbing, running long distances, or swimming.

Attack Rolls: You make a Strength attack roll when you attack with a melee weapon or use brute force to shove, grab, or knock down another creature.

Resistance Rolls: You make Strength resistance rolls against the effects of poison, disease, and similar harmful substances or situations.

Lifting Weights: Your Strength score determines how much weight you can normally lift, as shown on the "Lifting Weights by Strength" table. The "Normal" column lists how much you can reliably lift over your head without having to make a check. The "Success" column lists the maximum weight you can lift by getting a success on a Strength action roll.

Size: Larger creatures can lift greater weights, while smaller creatures can't lift as much. Multiply a creature's lifting weight for its Strength by its Size (see "Characteristics") to determine how much it can lift. For example, a Size 2 creature with Strength 10 can reliably lift 200 pounds, or 400 pounds with a success on a Strength action roll.

Dragging and Shoving: A creature can drag up to about 5 times the weight it can normally lift. Using an action (see "Combat"), a creature can drag or shove such an object up to 2 yards across a reasonably flat surface, 1 yard up a sloped surface, or 3 yards down a sloped surface.

LIFTING WEIGHTS BY STRENGTH

Strength	Normal	Success
1	1 lb.	2 lb.
2	2 lb.	4 lb.
3	5 lb.	10 lb.
4	10 lb.	20 lb.
5	20 lb.	40 lb.
6	30 lb.	60 lb.
7	40 lb.	80 lb.
8	50 lb.	100 lb.
9	75 lb.	150 lb.
10	100 lb.	200 lb.
11	150 lb.	300 lb.
12	200 lb.	400 lb.
13	250 lb.	500 lb.
14	350 lb.	700 lb.
15	500 lb.	1,000 lb.
16	1,000 lb.	2,000 lb.
17	2,000 lb.	4,000 lb.
18	4,000 lb.	8,000 lb.
19	8,000 lb.	16,000 lb.
20	16,000 lb.	32,000 lb.

Agility

Agility describes your quickness, poise, and reflexes.

Score: Your Agility score is the target number for any kind of attack that needs only to touch you or that would trap you.

Defense: Your Defense score is the target number for enemy attack rolls using weapons. It equals your Agility score when you are not wearing armor or using a shield.

Action Rolls: You make Agility action rolls when you attempt physical activities that involve quickness and dexterity, such as jumping, leaping, escaping bonds, or squeezing through a tight space.

Attack Rolls: You make Agility attack rolls when you attack with ranged weapons or with melee weapons that have the finesse property (see "Combat").

Resistance Rolls: You make Agility resistance rolls to reduce damage from being caught in an explosion or to avoid sudden danger, such as a sprung trap.

Intellect

Intellect describes your cunning, wit, memory, and education.

Score: Your Intellect score is the target number for any kind of attack that would deceive or confuse your mind, thoughts, and senses.

Perception: You use Perception to notice and interact with your surroundings. Your base Perception score normally equals your Intellect score.

Action Rolls: You make Intellect action rolls when you try to recall obscure information, use logic to solve a problem, or attempt any other activity that requires knowledge or education.

Attack Rolls: You make Intellect attack rolls when you cast certain spells or when you try to deceive another creature.

Resistance Rolls: You make Intellect resistance rolls against effects that would weaken or harm your mind, deceive your senses, or confound or confuse you.

Willpower

Intellect describes your courage, discipline, and sense of self.

Score: Your Willpower score is the target number for any attack that would force you to act against your will, such as being charmed, compelled, or frightened.

Insanity: Terrifying or unnatural experiences can drive characters insane. Your Willpower score is the maximum amount of Insanity you can gain before you go mad.

Action Rolls: You make Willpower action rolls when you use determination to overcome a challenge.

Attack Rolls: You make Willpower attack rolls when you cast certain spells or try to persuade or intimidate another creature.

Resistance Rolls: You make Willpower resistance rolls against effects that would determine or restrict your actions. You also make Willpower resistance rolls to avoid gaining Insanity.

Professions

Professions describe areas of training that characters have received, as described in the character creation rules.

A profession may make certain tasks easier or even allow you to attempt otherwise impossible tasks, at the GM's discretion. For example, if you have the navigator profession, when you make an Intellect action roll to travel through the wilderness without getting lost, the GM could grant a boon on that roll or just rule that the action automatically succeeds.