

# NUGGET

This is a trimmed-down version of the LODE system found in Silver Branch products. It aims to be a simple tool for introducing people to roleplaying games or putting a game together in a hurry. It's more traditional than innovative. NUGGET lacks the detail to handle specific genres (e.g. superheroes or fantasy) really well, but it's enough for simple games where characters are basically normal people with special skills - horror, crime, low fantasy, science fiction, monster collecting...

NUGGET is a simple set of **roleplaying game (RPG)** rules. A group of people sit around pretending to be imaginary characters having adventures in a fictional setting. Each controls a player character (**PC**), except one who takes the role of Game Master (**GM**), setting up situations for the PCs and controlling the other characters they meet (non-player characters, **NPCs**). The players say what their characters do and the GM tells them what happens next. The story progresses through scenes of particular actions at a location. You'll need pencils and paper and about 10 six-sided dice.

## Basics

Characters are described with **Advantages and Disadvantages** compared to an average, untrained person. If a task is neither trivial nor impossible, you roll a "pool" of a variable number of dice to see whether you succeed. The pool is made up of the Base Dice that an average person would get, plus one die per Advantage (Adv) from a Skill (knowledge and training) and an Attribute (natural talent), minus one die per relevant Disadvantage (Dis); e.g. Research + Brains.

**Base Dice (BD)** set difficulty. Just rolling your Advantages is BD 0, a task that needs a professional. If anyone can have a decent try it's BD +2 (probably the commonest). If only the best can pull it off it's BD -2 (subtract 2 from your Advantages). Near-impossible tasks are BD -4. The GM can give an extra Adv or Dis for special situations. If you end up with no dice it's just too hard.

Count each die that shows 4, 5 or 6 as one **success**. A single success means you just barely do it, though not very well; 3 successes is a good, solid result; 5 or more successes is truly impressive. No successes (all rolls 1, 2, 3) means **failure**. If they're all 1's that's a **fumble**: you messed up and the GM describes the awkward consequences.

**Exceptional success** can be handled in one of two ways. For a realistic or gritty style run the game "lid-on": if all dice come up as 6's you get one extra success. For high-energy, unpredictable action run it "lid-off": each die that shows 6 can be rolled again for a possible extra success, and further 6's give further re-rolls.

**Opposed rolls** happen when two characters come into conflict - a physical fight, interrogation, haggling, arm-wrestling or a chess match. Both characters make appropriate rolls. The one with more successes gets their way, and the difference tells you how decisive it was. Ties usually go forward (dramatically!) to another roll.

## Making a Character

### Attributes

These describe natural talent at general kinds of things. As NUGGET is very simple there are just four:

- Brawn** - strength, toughness, stamina
- Agility** - speed, coordination, flexibility
- Brains** - noticing, remembering, working things out
- Will** - determination, self-control, charisma

Most people are rated at 0, the average point. Some are talented at +1. A few are exceptional, rated +2. Some are particularly poor, rated -1. Player characters are well above average. You have 2 points to raise Attribute levels. Spend both on one at +2, or split them between two at +1. If you take one at -1 it gives an extra point to spend.

### Skills

These are areas of knowledge, training and experience, like Fighting with Swords, Piloting Starships, Chemistry or Investigation. They go in levels 1-4: Basic, Professional, Expert, Master. NUGGET doesn't give a list, so you'll have to name your own, neither too broad nor too narrow.

Write down your **Occupation**. This is what your character spends their time doing - Space Smuggler, Doctor, Private Detective, Barbarian Warrior, Schoolgirl, etc. It gives 1 level with a cluster of Skills, and you don't have to list them all: whenever it makes sense for an action to fit within the Occupation you get an Advantage on the roll (but use a specific Skill if you have one written down).

Pick one **Core Skill** that's central to your Occupation (e.g. Medicine for the doctor, Sword Fighting for the barbarian, Pilot Starship for the smuggler) and write it down separately as level 2 (professional).

You can also buy 2 levels of **Hobby Skills** that are not part of your Occupation (the doctor might be an amateur stage magician). Spend them on two separate hobbies or focus on just one. Alternatively, you can increase specific Skills from your Occupation - your work is your life!

### Finishing off

Write down 1-3 **Goals** - things that are important to the character, which could be people, objects, organisations, principles or things they want to achieve.

Write down your **Initiative** bonus: the total of Agility and Brains Advantages and the levels of your highest Fighting Skill. (Disadvantages subtract; it can go negative.)

Write down your **Physical Resistance** (2 + Brawn Advantages) and **Mental Resistance** (2 + Will Advantages). These scores are the number of dice you'll actually roll (BD 2) - it speeds things up if they're handy.

Write down **Destiny Points**, with space for it to change over time. You start with 1 point.

You have ordinary items of **equipment** to allow you to perform your Skills - beyond that it depends on the game.

## Combat

**Initiative**. When it comes to high-speed action, things happen in **rounds**: chunks of time a few seconds long divided into 10 **phases**. At the start of a round everyone rolls one die and adds the result to their Initiative bonus. The GM counts down from 10 to 1, and your initiative

total tells you when you can take your **action** (e.g. punching, throwing, shooting). After phase 1 the next round starts, until the fight is over. If your total is over 10 you can act twice; once on 10 and again on the remainder (e.g. 14 => 10, 4), up to 10, 8. If your total is less than 1 you're too confused to take an action this round. If several characters act on the same phase they go in order of Initiative bonus. You can defend against an attack at any time, but one roll counts against all attacks in that phase. You can also do one simple thing for free each round any time after you're ready for your first action - e.g. drawing a weapon, picking something up or running a short distance. More involved actions like all-out sprinting take an action. You can delay an action till later in the round.

**Attack and defence.** Attack rolls use the relevant Skill plus Agility, usually BD +2. Defences, like parrying or dodging, are similar but use any close combat Skill (e.g. not Gun), and against projectile weapons are BD 0 to BD +2 depending on cover. If the attacker gets more successes it's a hit and does damage; otherwise it misses.

**Damage.** Add the difference between attack and defence successes to the **base damage**, below. Hand-to-hand attacks add Brawn Advantages as well.

|   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 0 | unarmed                            |
| 1 | knife, small club                  |
| 2 | sword, big club, axe, spear, arrow |
| 3 | big sword, polearm, handgun, SMG   |
| 4 | rifle, shotgun                     |
| 6 | machine-gun                        |
| 8 | tank gun                           |

The target rolls Physical Resistance to withstand the attack, with successes taken away from the total damage. (A fumble adds 1 to damage!) Read the result off here:

|     |                         |
|-----|-------------------------|
| 1-2 | Hurt                    |
| 3-4 | Injured                 |
| 5-6 | Injured and Unconscious |
| 7+  | Injured and Dead        |

Note Hurts and Injuries on your character sheet : they build up and give penalties while they last. **Hurts** are bruises and cuts that slow you down - each subtracts 1 from Initiative for future rounds and takes 5 minutes of rest to disappear. **Injuries** are serious wounds - each takes 1 off Initiative and gives a Disadvantage for all rolls except Resistance, and takes a day of rest and care to recover. "Unconscious" and "Dead" are self-explanatory. Someone with medical supplies can try **first aid**: roll Medicine + Brains, BD 2. Each round the patient and healer do nothing else, one success can be spent to heal a Hurt.

**Combat details.** Any **armour** worn subtracts from damage: 1-3 points for archaic types, possibly up to 5 for modern types. Firearms with **spray/burst firing** give an Adv to hit. **Shields** give an Adv to defend. **Surprise**, e.g. if an opponent has successfully sneaked up, means no defence roll is possible. **Unseen opponents** turn attack and defence into Fighting + Brains rolls, BD 0.

## Special rules

### Weird stuff

This includes things like magic and psychic powers. NUGGET doesn't try to cover these. The way they work makes a big difference to the feel of a game, and that needs

detail. One simple way is to set them up as Skills, rolled normally but costing a physical or mental Hurt for fatigue unless a success is spent to be good enough to avoid it. The players and GM need to agree how much or little these can do. Possibilities include "Telepathy", "Moving Objects", "Fire Magic" and "Illusion". Mind-based attacks use Brains with Will as base damage, or just a roll with Will.

## Destiny Points

These are a mixture of karma, luck and self-esteem, given by the GM during play and spent to direct the character's path. Use counters for Destiny during a session and write it down at the end. Gain a point for doing something cool like beating an enemy, performing a dangerous stunt, or just making everybody laugh. Gain a point if the character takes an important step toward one of their **Goals** in a scene - but a point can also be taken away if a Goal is seriously thwarted, like your beloved aunt getting hurt or the Empire taking over your base! (If you are already at zero and would lose a point, the GM gains one to a general pool for the opposition.)

Destiny can be spent in several ways. Spend one to make a roll again and keep the result you prefer. If the GM allows it, spend one to be unconscious instead of dead (some games should be dangerous, but usually heroes can survive all sorts of harm). Buy a new level of a Skill between adventures for (new level x 5) Destiny Points. Specific games may have further uses for Destiny, like establishing a minor, plausible coincidence.

## Opponents

In general, give opponents the abilities they ought to have rather than trying to balance points. **Hordes** are low-level riff-raff with an Occupation and modest Attributes and Skills. With a group, put them all on the same initiative. Instead of tracking damage, "Hurt" makes one miss an action and "Injured" takes them out of the conflict. **Major villains** work like PCs, with abilities as good or better, plus other advantages like henchmen or fiendish devices. They start with Destiny - often one point per PC - and can get more for advancing their plans.

Animals, monsters, aliens etc can have Attributes beyond the normal range: up to +4 and down to -2. This is most common with Brawn, related to size.

## Threats

Apart from combat, characters get exposed to all sorts of things that can do them physical or mental harm, like fire, poison, falling, or terrifying monsters. They're all handled the same way: the GM gives a damage rating from the table below, which is opposed by the appropriate Resistance and applied as above.

|    |                                    |
|----|------------------------------------|
| 1  | Irritating                         |
| 3  | Painful/Tiring (desert)            |
| 5  | Damaging (ordinary fire, drowning) |
| 8  | Deadly (strong electricity)        |
| 10 | Extreme (space, deep ocean)        |

Record mental damage separately: Hurts and Injuries add to those from physical damage, but heal independently. An "Unconscious" result from a Threat gives an impairment lasting about a scene, e.g. blinded by a flash, fleeing in mindless terror. "Dead" gives a permanent condition - curing it could be a story seed.