

CRiSis

Narrative Conflict Resolution

[Good Idea Games](#), 2007

Beta 1.0

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The Conflict Resolution System (CRiSis) was written to be a light-weight, simple system to encourage dramatic role-play. It was designed to be simple to learn, and easy to implement right out of the book. However, Evil High was designed to be a platform-independent game setting. The core game setting can be run under any game system the GM prefers.

Is my favorite system appropriate for Evil High?

Probably, but even if it's not, a clever GM can supplement key parts of the CRiSis Engine to fill in the gaps. Evil High character creation wants a simple points based character tool that allows for a trade-off between super powers and skills/resources. Not all villains have powers after all. After balanced and appropriate characters have been created, nearly any game system will do for managing the dramatic action.

Dramatic Bonus Dice!

By roleplaying certain villainous tropes, players are rewarded with bonus dice.

Once per scene, a player can earn a bonus die for a single roll, by prefacing their action with their catch phrase.

Once per season, a villain may make a monologue, and provide secret and true information to the heroes. All players will receive a bonus die for the encounter featuring the monologue.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION SYSTEM (for anytime a CRiSis arrises!)

Sooner or later, the players will encounter a situation where they are challenged to perform a difficult or necessary task. The skills that each player so carefully selected for their character now come into play as they use these abilities to get what they want, or fail bitterly in the attempt. It is at this point that excitement or anticipation should be highest, and dice rolling becomes necessary.

This process is called "Testing a Skill" and is the heart of conflict resolution in Evil High. Whenever a character is presented with a critical task or challenge, they must then employ their expertise or lack thereof, in an attempt to succeed at whichever problem they are facing. Under circumstances like these, an attempt must be made and the player cannot decide to skip the roll.

This game uses readily available TEN-SIDED DICE (abbreviated as D10) for all dice rolling. This is because math is easier with tens.

MAKING SKILL TESTS

To make a skill test, the GM announces a target difficulty, then the player rolls a number of ten-sided dice equal to the character's appropriate skill level, usually between one and four dice, and adds the appropriate grade bonus or penalty to each roll, and examines the results.

If any of the dice rolled are equal to or exceed the target number, then roll is a success. If the result is lower, then the roll is counted as a failure.

There are two ways to test a skill: as a simple skill test and as an opposed skill test. A simple skill test is a test against a target number established by the GM based on the conditions under which the test is made, and the player rolls however many dice are appropriate for the skill and situation.

An opposed skill test is a skill test that one character makes against the skill of another character; such as when two players are engaged in a contest like attack and then defense. For an opposed skill check, the aggressor makes a skill roll, modified by the appropriate class grade. The defender then must make their skill roll, also modified by their grade. In CRiSis, ties go to the aggressor.

If a player is forced to test a skill that his or her character does not possess, they must roll a single die and compare the unmodified result, even if they would normally gain a bonus from a class grade. This is called an "Unskilled Test." In an opposed skill test, the character making the unskilled test never rolls first to establish the target number, even if they normally would. If, for example, a character with no skill in projectile weapons fires a net-gun into a hero proficient in defense, the character with the defense skill rolls first to set the target number for the attacker.

READING THE BONES

Target numbers for skill tests are based on the discretion of the GM. When a skill must be tested, the GM selects a target number appropriate to the difficulty of the task. This number should be based on the following examples:

Difficulty 5: Simple Task (untrained 60% success).

Difficulty 6: Modest Challenge (untrained 50% success).

Difficulty 7: Strong Challenge (untrained 40% success). Climbing a steep hill without tools.

Difficulty 8: Difficult (30% untrained success).

Difficulty 9: Very Difficult (20% untrained success).

Difficulty 10: Incredibly Difficult (untrained 10% success).

For more elaborate or complicate actions, multiple successes may be required as well.

If a character is trained for a simple skill test, a roll is generally unnecessary, and may just slow down the game.

Target numbers for opposed skill tests is set by the aggressor, and is called the "establishment roll." The second roll is called the "resolution roll." Most of the time, the action that would naturally take place first is rolled as the establishment roll, but certain abilities or circumstances can change the order of opposed skill test rolls (such as making an unskilled test as part of an opposed skill test).

Once dice have been rolled, there are two primary methods of determining whether a roll is successful or not. Under most circumstances, a single successful die roll is enough to declare success, but for particularly complicated or prolonged skill tests, the GM may decide to require multiple successes. If appropriate, these can be made with multiple skill checks.

For example, if Becky wants to create a super vaccine as part of an evil plan, it will take her a considerable amount of time and effort. Exactly how much can be determined by her rolls. The GM declares that it will take 10 successes to create the super vaccine that she wants, and every skill test is one day of work. She has an Academic Decathlon skill of 3, so she rolls 3 dice for each test. Her rolls result in the following number of successes: 1,0,2,3,1,2,3. A total of 11 successes over 7 rolls. It has taken her 7 days to create this vaccine. Depending on the circumstances, a GM may impose a time limit (such as 5 days) that could force a plan to move forward with incomplete research.

Multiple skill checks can also be used to simulate other longer, simple tasks, in order to get through some events quickly (such as a training montage, or an inconsequential robbery).

AGGRESSIVE NEGOTIATIONS

Success and failure when testing a skill can be a fluid concept. While a success on a skill test will almost always allow the character to realize their stated goals, such as stunning a guard with a prototype electric boomerang, failure is a less predictable beast. This is not to suggest that failure should be beneficial, just that failure is better when it has unexpected consequences.

For simple tests, the result of the skill check is up to the GM to describe, whether the roll was successful or not. A failure of a climbing test may not necessarily result in a fall, but could instead cause a branch to break on a tree, alerting the savage guard llamas to the players' presence. The results should be appropriate, but not always expected.

In the event of an opposed skill check, both players are encouraged to contribute to the description of their encounter. Keep in mind that common sense should still be the guiding light of any such negotiations. Shooting a gun at someone has very few alternative successes other than "the bullet hits the guy," but in general, most skills can be twisted in a way that could yield unusual results when tested. Taking the boomerang example from above, if the victim were a player character, they could declare that succeeding on his defense roll doesn't prevent the boomerang from hitting him, but does reveal the exact location of the attacker.

Dramatic Flair

Players in Evil High are encouraged to behave according to particular Villain tropes that sometimes defy common sense. To encourage this behavior, CRiSis provides bonus dice to players for the following circumstances:

Once per encounter, a player may get a single bonus die for a single bonus roll, by loudly declaring their catch-phrase.

Once per Season, if a player properly monologues to Super High (appropriately revealing all the details of their sinister plot), all players get an additional +1 to all of their rolls for the rest of the encounter.

GM's NOTE:

One important thing to note is what I like to call "the Rule of Conservation of Dice." There are several rules like this that you will find throughout the book, but this might be the first. Essentially, the rule is that you should not make a character roll for something that is routine or inconsequential. This can include things that might seem quite significant, but do not in fact affect the flow of the game, such as a millionaire character wishing to acquire a relatively modest yacht. Without any major modifications, the yacht is just a mundane boat and should not require a skill test because it is easily within the means of the character. However, if the millionaire or his cronies want to use that yacht as a high-speed getaway vehicle then they'd better start succeeding on some skill tests to make the modifications. A good rule of thumb is that if it was acquired with little or no effort then you may expect to lose it with little to no effort as well.

GM's NOTE:

High average is an important concept to learn if you're into games of chance and probability, but serves a special purpose in role-playing games as well. A ten-sided die has ten sides or faces, each with a number from 1 to 10. Thanks to the way that numbers work, the halfway point on a ten-sided die is not 5 but 6. If that doesn't make sense right away then try this: hold out your ten fingers and start counting them from left to right. The digits on your left hand, if you have five of them, are the first half of ten and those on your right hand are the second half. So which finger, or number, was the first in the second group? Plainly put, the fact that you count up from one, and five plus one is six (or your right thumb), means that six is the middle result for a ten-sided die. This concept is important for this game in that a GM must be able to set target numbers that are appropriate to the difficulty of the task. The cornerstone of that ability is seeing the probability of a success or failure, given a target number. In other words, target numbers below 6 are easier than average while target numbers above 6 get progressively more difficult. Skill tests against target number 6, if there are no modifiers, have a flat 50% chance of success.

GM's NOTE:

When in doubt, let the dice do the talking. You will no doubt encounter situations where the players, or yourself wish to do something that seems so extremely unlikely that the sensibilities of other people around the table are offended. If you find a disagreement over whether a particular action is even possible, settle it through the rules: roll some dice. Obviously, if the action in question is patently impossible (the Normal Kid trying to jump to the moon) then you may feel confident ruling it as such, but if the distinction is less than obvious, let the dice make the call. If the test fails then the status quo has been reinforced, but on the off-chance that this unlikely, and therefore very difficult, test succeeds... Either way, you can expect that the target number for such a test will be remarkably high.

GM's NOTE:

In regards to presenting your players with a series of skill tests, such as the ubiquitous training montage, never forget that one of the objectives of these scenes is to move the plot or story along quickly, without getting bogged down in details. A series of skill tests used in this fashion should never be interrupted by a combat scene unless it is absolutely necessary. The whole point of condensing an entire robbery, or what have you, into a series of dice rolls is so that it won't take up a lot of time and a combat scene will negate that.