

STORIES SYSTEM

an Animalball Game

by Mike Jones

Stories System is a very rules-lite set of guidelines for playing story-based role-playing games. It is intended to be fast-paced and unobtrusive, while still providing an exciting level of uncertainty and simulation. It is intended for games in which the exact nature of the rules is really secondary to telling a good story.

Additionally, the open nature of Stories System was specifically designed to accommodate rules and characters taken directly from other (less cool) role-playing games, using the other games' stats exactly as written—or even using no specific stats at all. That way, a character pulled from, say, a numbers oriented, rules-heavy fantasy game system could stand side by side with characters from esoteric science fiction settings or story-oriented gothic horror games, and all of these disparate characters would be able to interact seamlessly within the Stories System framework.

Stories System is also intended to be flexible and customizable, allowing it to be adapted for use with a variety of games and styles. Specific rules and stats can be added and modified as needed to match Stories System to any tone and genre.

A Note on Terminology

If you are reading this, then it is assumed that you already

have at least passing familiarity with pen and paper roleplaying games in general. As such, this document takes for granted that the user will be familiar with a host of general gaming terms and abbreviations, such as Character, PC, GM, NPC, etc, as well as various dice and their abbreviations. Eventually, Animalball may develop a Beginner's Version of these rules, but until that day, Stories System here in its raw form is intended for people with at least some prior roleplaying game experience.

Characters

Unlike most other RPGs, Stories System does not require any particular stats or numbers or formats for characters. At its heart, a character is really just a description. That is, enough information needs to be provided so that the player and game master both have a good grasp of the character's capabilities and are in general agreement on what the character is and isn't capable of doing.

Characters from other games: Characters created using other RPGs are perfectly fine in Stories System, as long as the character's abilities are clearly understood. So if you bring a gun junkie character from your Shadow Missions sci-fi game, and your character has a skill of 8 in rifles, that will work as long as you and your GM are both familiar enough with the Shadow Missions rules to

Legal Information

Stories System is a role-playing game engine written by Mike Jones and made available by Animalball Games. The basic rules of **Stories System** are available on the internet for free at <http://www.animalball.com>. **Stories System** is intended for use with many games and any gaming genre. Every Game Master using **Stories System** is encouraged to customize the rules of the system to suit his or her own game. Anyone who wishes to distribute such material for free may do so - merely include this ABOUT STORIES SYSTEM notice and the DISCLAIMER detailed at the end of this document. If used, the ABOUT STORIES SYSTEM and DISCLAIMER sections must be printed in a font which is at least 75% of the size of the predominant font used in your publication. If you wish to charge a fee for such material, other than as an article in a magazine or other periodical, contact Animalball Partners at:

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know that an 8 means he is an expert marksman. Or you could use your thief character from *Schemes & Skullduggery*, a fantasy style game, just so long as both of you are aware that S&S stats are on a 1-20 scale, so that an Intuition of 8 means the character is slightly below average. If your GM is unfamiliar with the game you are drawing your character from, you may have to provide a little extra explanation to define exactly what the terms mean.

Creating a character from scratch: You're not required to use characters from existing games, however. Stories System works equally well with characters created out of whole cloth. Again, the only requirement is that the player and GM are in agreement regarding the character's abilities. Provide enough detail to bring your character to life and give a fair idea of what he can do. Without any numbers at all, you should be able to describe any character you can dream of.

Some samples of descriptions from Stories System characters:

Wonder Lady is inhumanly strong, able to lift a Sherman tank over her head and throw it for half a block..

Theodo is quick and nimble.

Despite his required Bureau training, Daniel is completely inept with firearms. He carries the standard issue blaster, but only for show.

Mercy Proper is beautiful and confident and charming. She is used to getting her way and regularly uses her natural charms to that end.

Heath has been a swordsman since childhood. He is the town champion and even competes in regional tournaments. While he always does very well, he's never won a tournament, because he always seems to choke in the final round.

Rhana's distrust of magic has gotten her in trouble many times. She will not use magic herself and often is outright belligerent to those who do.

Paulo is absolutely loyal to the Alliance Service, and will do anything to protect and help fellow soldiers.

Each of these clearly describes one aspect of a character. These descriptions give an indication of what the character can do and/or how he or she will act or react in certain situations.

Creating Stats: While pure description is usually enough to capture the essence of a character, sometimes numbers and predefined descriptors help to define and refine things further and can also provide a convenient shorthand. Therefore, even if you are not creating a

character from some other game system, you can still define stats as you feel you need them.

You can define your stats or scales any way that makes sense, but Stories System recommends a modified 1-10 scale:

The 1-10 Scale: The general concept behind the 1-10 Scale is that pretty much all "normal" humans can be ranked on any trait or attribute or skill on a scale of 1-10, with 5 or 6 being the "average" human ability, and 1 and 10 representing the upper and lower 1% of the population, respectively. Looking at the chart, you'll notice that while we call it a 1-10 scale, it actually goes to 12 and beyond. 1 through 10 are used for the vast majority of characters, and it is recommended that 10 be a practical limit for player characters, but beyond that, 11 and 12 represent the absolute pinnacle of human ability. If needed, the scale also extends downwards to zero and less to indicate ineptness or inadequacy of earth-shaking proportions.

Table 1: 1-10 Normal Human Scale

Rating	Description	Skills	Typical Terms
0	Amazingly Terrible		Disastrous, Abysmal
1	The bottom 1%	Inept	Terrible, Horrible, Dismal
2		Unfamiliar	Poor, Bad, Weak
3		Novice	Not So Good, Low, Mediocre
4			So-So, Sub-Par
5	Human Average	Proficient	Typical, Fair
6			Normal, Average
7		Highly Qualified	Good, Improved
8			Remarkable, Considerable
9		Expert	Excellent, Great
10	The top 1%	Master	Amazing, Super, Incredible
11			Unequaled, World-class
12	Pinnacle of Human Ability		Paragon, Transcendent
13+	Beyond Human Ability		Superhuman

1-10 Normal Human Scale is the default. If a number is given in Stories System with no other qualifiers, it is

assumed to be on a range of 1-10 and is assumed to have normal humans as the average.

Other Scales: Of course, if the 1-10 Normal Human Scale doesn't quite suit your needs, feel free to create whatever ranking or description system best fits your characters. Just be sure that you are clear and define your terms so that there is no confusion between player and GM.

If you feel a need for more fine detail, you can always create a 1-20 Human Scale or a 1-100 Human Scale. Or if using a human standard doesn't cut it, you can define your scales however you please. If you need a way of comparing vehicles, you could have a 1-10 Vehicle Speed Scale. All dogs would have a zero intelligence on a human scale, but if you create a Dog Scale, then you can display the difference between smart dogs and dumb dogs. Or in a game where all the players were vampires, it would make sense to rank all stats on a Vampire Scale. Rather than using the Human Scale and having all the characters have Strength, Speed, and Charisma of 15 or 16, use a Vampire Scale where 5-6 is the "average" vampire, and puny humans all wind up being around 2 or 3.

Who's Better? So how do you compare characters who aren't measured on the same scale, or who don't use any scale at all? How do you know who's faster when Cyborgia comes from a Sci-Fi game and has mechanical legs and a Speed rating of 10 (out of 12), and Brolaxx is an extra-dimensional alien who's simply described as, "built for speed. Brolaxx can outpace even the fastest human runners, although with considerable effort"? The best answer is: make a judgment call based on what everyone knows of the characters. As simple as that. The GM can make a quick decision in the name of expediency, or she could ask for the opinions of the rest of the players, or even put it to a vote. Whatever everyone thinks is fair... or at least a decision everyone can live with. However, if it's just too close to call, or there's contention over the issue, just call them even and let the dice decide.

Action Resolution

And here is the meat of Stories System. As with most roleplaying games, oftentimes, the story can unfold for long stretches without having to pull out dice or charts or some other resolution mechanic. But eventually, the players will want to try or do something where the consequences are uncertain or not immediately obvious.

Anytime a character wants to accomplish anything in which the outcome is not already a certainty, use the following steps:

- 1) Player declares action
- 2) GM calls out a modifier (based on the individual, their skill, conditions, etc)
 - 2a) Player may ask for clarification of modifier, or may dispute, or remind GM of other factors (this will mostly be rare, but is included for fairness)
- 3) Player rolls dice, applying the modifier to the outcome
- 4) GM (with players) interprets results. High is good. Low is bad. The average, or "break point" is iffy.

Declare Action

For the player, this is the most vital step in the process. Declaring an action should involve not only a description of what the character will be doing, but also an idea of what he hopes to accomplish.

Some examples of declared actions:

I hit him with my sword.

I try a computer search for any information on the Martian Resistance.

I brace myself against the wall and take careful aim with the dart rifle. I'm aiming for the gap of exposed skin between his suit and helmet. I'll fire as soon as I get an opening.

I stand back to back with Wart, and fend off the goblins with my spear. I don't care if I hurt them, so long as I can keep them at bay until we edge our way over to the boat.

I flash a little cleavage and pout while I talk to him. I'm hoping to keep his focus on me while the other girls slip through the trapdoor.

I want to charge the first guard and knock him into his buddy. If that works, I'll use my momentum in the low gravity to vault over them, using their heads and shoulders for leverage if I need to. I want to hit the ground rolling and try to squeeze under that airlock door before it shuts.

Some of these are better than others. The best ones include both action and intent; and the more detail the better. Extra detail not only makes for a better story, but also improves communication and ensures that the players and GM share a common vision of the story as it unfolds.

Bottom line for players: the more precise you can be about what you are doing and why, the more likely you are to achieve the desired results.

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Assign modifier

Once a player has declared an action, the GM will assign a modifier that represents how difficult the GM thinks it will be for the character to succeed.

Based on the player's description of the action, the character's capabilities, and the GM's knowledge of the situation, the GM comes up with a modifier that describes *that particular character's* chances of succeeding at *that particular task*. Table 2 provides rough guidelines for modifiers when using the standard 3d6 dicing option.

So wait a minute, I hear you saying, what about my rating of 11 in Robot Repair? What's the point of numbers if the GM just makes judgments calls on everything? Well, that's the point. Rather than coming up with a system that is either crushingly complex or else just a rough approximation of reality (or both), Stories System allows the GM and players together to evaluate the chances and go for it. After all, who knows the characters better? And your Robot Repair 11? Well, that's part of your character's description. It lets the GM know that you are a world-class roboticist, and therefore, under typical circumstances, you're going to get a hefty bonus on any rolls related to robot repair.

Also note that in this sort of system, the player's description of the action is extremely important. If you can be particularly creative, it might increase your modifier. Just standing around hack'n'slash style saying "hit with sword... repeat" doesn't count for much—it makes you predictable and lowers your modifier.

Discussion/Dispute of modifiers: Typically, in a good gaming group that communicates well, this won't happen often, and when it does, it can be quickly and amicably resolved. Normally, once a player declares action, the GM can shout out a number, the player rolls, and the results are decided. It is all intended to move very quickly.

Table 2: Modifiers

+8 (or more)	[don't bother rolling]
+6 to +7	This should be really easy
+4 to +5	Relatively simple task
+2 to +3	Routine task
-1 to +1	Mildly difficult (around a 50/50 chance of success)
-2 to -3	Hard (expect failure, but you might get lucky)
-4 to -5	Long shot (maybe with luck and a good tailwind...)
-6 to -7	Roll and pray
-8 (or more)	[don't bother rolling]

forgotten. These discussions should be brief and friendly, after which the GM will make a final call on the issue. The GM's call stands and play moves on. If there are still further issues or perceived unfairness, then these should be addressed outside of the normal play session.

Roll Dice

By default, Stories System uses 3 standard six-sided dice (abbreviated to 3d6). A roll for action resolution involves rolling all three dice, adding them together and then applying the modifier.

The modifier chart (Table 2) and the results chart (Table 3) are geared towards a standard roll of 3d6. If different dice options are used, then these charts would need to be modified accordingly (see Adapting Stories System).

Interpret Results

The guiding principle behind interpretation can be

summed up as: High... good. Low... bad. Very simply, high numbers mean good things happen for the character, and low numbers mean bad things happen. The higher or lower the actual numbers, the more extreme the results. The following table provides general guidelines for the standard 3d6 dicing option.

The general idea is that 10-11 is average—right on the cusp between success and failure. Anything higher will equal success. Anything lower indicates failure.

Table 3: Results

Roll Result	General Result Description
18 (or more)	Critical optional – open to interpretation
16-17	Great Success – ideal; better than you expected
14-15	Success
12-13	Minimal Success – by the skin of your teeth
10-11	Push/Partial Success
8-9	Near Miss – oh so close
6-7	Failure
4-5	Miserable Failure – you make things even worse
3 (or less)	Critical optional – open to interpretation

The exact nature of those results is up to the GM and players (which is why we call it “interpretation.”) Some examples:

Kord: I brace myself against the wall and take careful aim with the dart rifle. I'm aiming for the gap of exposed skin between his suit and helmet. I'll fire as soon as I get an opening.

GM: (thinking that Kord's a good shot with plenty of time to brace and aim, but the distance is great and the target small) Plus zero... no modifier.

Kord: (rolls dice) 14! Sweet!

GM: A perfect hit. Your hands remain steady, and you are able to duck back down quickly before he can even turn to look. Through the gap in the wall, you see him waver and slowly sink to the floor as the drug takes hold of him.

Misty: I flash a little cleavage and pout while I talk to him. I'm hoping to keep his focus on me while the other girls slip through the trapdoor.

GM: (factoring in Misty's considerable charms, balanced against the guard's fear of messing up on the job) +2.

Misty: (rolls a 9) Ack. 11. Only halfway.

GM: Yeah, the rent-a-cop is obviously interested in your little display, but he acts like he hears something, "Did you hear that?" he asks.

[At this point, if Misty's acts fast and rolls well, maybe she can still distract him, but with her Partial Success result, the guard is going to turn around and spot the rest of the team at any moment.]

Sarra: I try a computer search for any information on the Martian Resistance.

GM: (knowing that the Resistance is actively hiding, and Sarra's computer skill is only about average) -3.

Sarra: -3? Seriously? I had experience in communications in the Royal Guard.

GM: Trust me. -3.

Sarra: (rolls an 8) Oh no... a 5. Does the computer explode?

GM: Nope. But you come up empty. There are references and historical data available, but nothing you guys didn't already know.

[Secretly though, the GM notes that Sarra's clumsy search triggered an alarm, and now the Resistance knows that Sarra's team is searching for them and will be on high alert.]

And while the GM has the final word on all results, the stories often turn out better when the players help interpret results as well. Often, the players don't have

enough information to explain everything, but it's not unusual for a player to come up with something the GM would never have thought of. This is especially true when bad things happen to players.

For really bad rolls, it is typical for players to throw out possible disastrous results, sometimes just for humor, but others are quite usable (and usually harsher than anything the GM would have done). Things like, “My gun jammed.” or “I trip over my own feet and wind up with a mouthful of dirt.” or “Great, I wind up hitting the cement post, and now I can't pull my sword out.” Players should be encouraged to take a hand in incorporating the dice rolls into the storyline.

Critical Results: At the very top and bottom ends of the chart are critical results. These are very extreme results that are entirely optional, depending on the style of game you are playing. Typically, Miserable Failure and Great Success are more than enough to cover most situations, but at the GM's discretion, even more extreme rolls may result in even more extreme consequences—things, good or bad, that are the stuff of legend. But again, that is up to the GM. For many games, it becomes unrealistic to allow such extremes and breaks the spirit of the game.

As an optional rule, the GM can decide to only allow Critical results when the dice show a natural 3 or 18 before modifiers are applied.

Action Sequences

Most roleplaying games divide time into rounds or segments or turns, and every character has a certain number of allowable actions in those timeframes. Stories System is not so regimented. Instead, action sequences in Stories System are divided into *story elements*. That is, action moves from decision point to decision point, and a story element can be as short as a second or two or as long as many minutes or hours.

For example, if the action in question is a knockdown, drag-out bar brawl, then each story element may be quite short. As each combatant tries new attacks or moves to new locations, the scene shifts, and the combatants constantly make new decisions and new rolls for each maneuver.

On the other hand, if the action is a yacht race, then each story element could last for hours. Once the ships are under sail, the characters roll to determine their performance, and then it could be quite a while before conditions change and someone decides to try a new tack, as it were.

For that matter, even a fast paced piece of action may be summed up in just a couple of rolls, especially if it is not central to the plot or if it would slow down the main story

to dwell on it too long. In the bar brawl example, if fighting is not really a central focus of the game in question, then the player and GM could sum up the brawl with a single roll. If the player rolls well, then the group can give a few sentences to sum up the dramatic and action-packed scrap, ending with the player's character coming out on top. A poor roll may indicate that the player's character had lost and is now in the clutches of the evil desperadoes.

In the end, it is up to the GM and players to decide how much time and detail to invest in each scene.

Order of Actions: There is no particular "turn order" in Stories System. Characters take actions as it makes sense for them to do so. If the zombie is lurching wildly towards Kelly, then she has about five seconds to take some sort of action before it gets her. The GM can make the call on exactly how much can be squeezed into those five seconds. And of course, as she acts, then her undead opponent has the opportunity to notice and change tactics as well.

If it ever becomes vital to know exactly whose action comes first, and the answer is not obvious from context, then have the competing characters each roll once (the GM can assign modifiers, if warranted), and the action with the best result would occur first.

Opposed Actions

This is one of the trickiest portions of Stories System—how to handle opposed actions. That is, when one character is seeking a specific goal, and another is simultaneously working at cross-purposes, how is that handled?

There are a couple of approaches available. The first, and most common, is simply to let both opposing characters make rolls, and then compare them to interpret the results. If both of them fail, then likely nothing happens. If one fails and the other succeeds, then interpretation is fairly easy. If both succeed, then the one with the higher result probably comes out ahead, although that might be mitigated if the opponent's roll was pretty close. For example:

GM: The two goons carry hand stunners which they wave threateningly as they try to block you from leaving. (The GM decides that their main objective is to prevent Josh from leaving. They will try physical restraint and will resort to stunners if he resists.)

Josh: I want to charge the first guard and knock him into his buddy. If that works, I'll use my momentum in the low gravity to vault over them, using their heads and shoulders for leverage if I need to. I want to hit the

ground rolling and try to squeeze under that airlock door before it shuts.

GM: (Josh is a decent brawler, and a low-gravity veteran, but he is also unarmed and outnumbered) -2 for you Josh, and the guards will roll at +3.

Josh rolls an amazing 16, for a result of 14—Success! But the GM rolls for the guard, achieving a final total of 16—Great Success. Thus, Josh has done a good job, but the guards are even better.

GM: Wow. At first it looks like you might get away with it. You easily push down that first goon and go flipping gracefully through the air. You hit the ground rolling, and you are almost to the door, but then the second guard manages to catch his balance and tags you with the stunner. Before you lose consciousness, the last thing you see is the door slamming shut in front of your face.

Alternately, opposed actions can be handled with a single roll by the player character. In this case, the GM simply factors the quality of the opposition into the player's modifier. This is especially effective and appropriate when the opposition consists of characters minor to the story. When the opposition is a major NPC, or especially when it is another player, then it is recommended that both parties get to roll and then compare results, as detailed above.

Status, Fatigue, and Injury

The status of characters within a story changes on a regular basis. Characters get tired or wounded. They get drunk or drugged. They get distracted and emotional. As with everything else in Stories System, these changes in status should be based on the context and the interpretation of dice rolls. If someone has been pushing themselves very hard for a long time, the GM may declare that the character is fatigued, and then that will factor into future actions until the character can rest. Alternately, the GM may allow the player a roll to see how affected he is by the exertion and how well his character deals with it.

Injuries and wounds are handled similarly. Stories System is not intended to be heavily focused on combat, but even still, people get hurt. Wounds and injuries, then, are simply described in real terms, and it is up to the GM to decide how much they affect performance and/or at what point a person's injuries become debilitating.

As a general guideline, when someone uses a weapon, the results of their action roll will give a good idea of how severe the injury is (see **Table 4: Wounds**). These rough results can be modified up or down depending on the size/power of the weapon and the protections available to the defender. A Moderate Injury with a steak knife, for

example, will not compare to a Moderate Injury with a shotgun. Similarly, the Severe Wound from a handgun may amount to just severe bruising if the victim is wearing a Kevlar vest.

Table 4: Wounds

10-11	Push/Partial Success	Nick/Scratch
12-13	Minimal Success	Minor Injury; Largely Superficial
14-15	Success	Moderate Injury; as intended by attacker
16-17	Great Success	Severe Wound; Incapacitating; Critical if Untreated
18+	Critical	Critical Wound; Life Threatening

Cinematic Combat Option: For some Stories System games, a very cinematic style of combat and injury is appropriate. In such games, PC's and important NPC's get injured normally, as above, with detailed descriptions and consequences. Typically these important (or named) characters can withstand quite a bit and still struggle on. Lesser characters, on the other hand, do not fare so well. These unnamed characters—minions, goons, plot devices—can usually take just one wound (of any level) and still keep going. If they get hit again, or if they take a severe hit right away, then they are out—either incapacitated or dead, depending on the nature of the game. All of the exact results will vary according to the characters and genre.

Situational Rolls

When in doubt, roll some dice. Situational rolls aren't necessarily based on the actions or skills of a particular character, but they are used to determine what happens in the story when there are random factors involved and things could go in many directions.

As with any roll in Stories System, high is good for the players and low is bad. The GM may apply modifiers to situational rolls. Anyone present may make the actual roll.

For example, the team enters a train car, and the GM needs to know if one or more of the terrorists is in the car at the moment. She calls for a situational roll. A high roll would mean the car is clear of bad guys. A low roll would mean that one or more is present. A near miss might mean that a terrorist is in the car, but he is looking the other way, and the players spot him before they step in. With a partial success, maybe there are no baddies about, but there is a conniving passenger who might raise an

alarm. Again, let the context and the dice rolls drive your imagination.

Adapting Stories System

Stories System is intended as a fast-paced, action-packed, rules-lite gaming engine for a variety of roleplaying game settings and styles. It is designed to be played exactly as is, without any extra rules or explanations. All you need to provide is a story, some players, and a handful of dice. When you're not sure what should happen next, roll some dice and make a call.

But sometimes, a GM will have a certain game or setting in mind that she feels requires more specific guidelines than Stories System provides, or a larger range of traits, or different dice. GM's are encouraged to change any or all of these factors to suit their own groups and games. The true core of Stories System is the action resolution mechanic—the four step process of Declare Action, Assign Modifier, Roll Dice, Interpret—but even that can handle some tweaking or reworking if a GM feels it is needed. Nothing is considered sacred.

Defining Stats: Sometimes a GM will decide that certain stats or traits are required, and may say, for instance, that all characters must have Strength, Speed, and Health ratings. And further, the GM will usually decide how those required traits are measured, using the 1-10 Scale or some other appropriate measure.

Defining Scales: The default for Stories System, if something more than pure description is desired, is the 1-10 Normal Human Scale, but GM's are free to define their own scale for measuring stats (see the Characters section above).

Borrowing from other Games: Just as characters from other roleplaying games can be used in Stories System, so can rules and mechanics from other games. If a GM likes the magic rules from *Mages of the Ages* or the insanity rules from *Horrific Unstoppable Horrors*, then there's no reason she couldn't simply use those mechanics exactly as defined in their respective games. Naturally, these may require defining specific stats (see above), such as a Mana Rating or Sanity stat, etc.

Changing the Dice: Stories System uses a standard roll of 3d6, because it produces a nice bell curve of results and because six-sided dice are very common. The most extreme results in Stories System (3 and 18) only come up less than one percent of the time, making them very dramatic events.

But GM's tend to have lots of different dice laying around, and are encouraged to find the combination that best suits their own games.

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Using a 1d20 roll would cover almost the same range as 3d6, but would be a flat curve, with extreme results occurring far more often. This could be good for a game of high drama or fantasy, where unbelievable occurrences are standard fare for the heroes.

A d% roll would have a similar flat curve, but would have a much wider range of results, which would allow for finer gradations of success or failure. Or alternately, a d% roll can be spread out on the Results Chart to reflect whatever odds the GM is looking for.

Using a greater number of dice (4d6, 3d10, 5d8, etc) provides a steeper bell curve, making average results far more likely, and extreme results even more extreme.

The main thing to remember when mucking with the dice is that the Modifiers and Results Chart need to be adjusted accordingly. In general, for whatever dice are used, the top and bottom ends of the dice range fit at the top and bottom of the Results Chart. The “average” roll, or “break point” for those dice should equate to the Push/Partial Success result. The remaining rolls are then spread evenly over the other results (see table 5). The GM will then need to

adjust the modifiers assigned to match.

Adding Crunch: Many groups prefer a more well-defined set of numbers than the default Stories System. They like to know that a stat of X translates to a target number of Y, or that these combat factors will result in modifiers of Z. A little crunch can be easily added to Stories System with things like deciding that every point of Charisma above 5 provides a +1 to Negotiation checks or that a Kevlar vest provides a +3 bonus to resist damage from firearms. Crunchy additions like these start getting further from the original intent of Stories System, but GM's may find other strengths to build on from the system while still creating a harder set of numbers.

Table 5: Alternate Dice Options

3d6	Result	d20	d%	2d12	3d10	4dF
18	Critical	20	100	24	30	4
16-17	Great Success	17-19	96-99	21-23	27-29	3
14-15	Success	15-16	86-95	18-20	23-26	2
12-13	Minimal Success	12-14	66-85	15-17	19-22	1
10-11	Push/Partial Success	10-11	36-65	12-14	15-18	0
8-9	Near Miss	7-9	16-35	9-11	11-14	-1
6-7	Failure	5-6	6-15	6-8	7-10	-2
4-5	Miserable Failure	2-4	2-5	3-5	4-6	-3
3	Critical	1	1	2	3	-4

Author's Note on the nature of Stories System

One of Stories System's greatest strengths for me is the "soft," open nature of its action resolution system. For the sorts of games I run, I find it adds a greater sense of realism. It retains the randomizing nature of the dice (on a pretty bell curve, no less), and yet the modifiers and results in each case are determined by what the GM and the group feel are reasonable and realistic. This requires a certain amount of trust and communication within the group however and certainly is open to abuse by some. It is not for everyone or for every game. There is no wrong way to implement Stories System, and all I hope for is that people find some value here and have some fun putting these ideas to use.

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