
Legend of the Five Rings
ROLEPLAYING
BEGINNER GAME
READ THIS LAST
Rulebook

STOP! Open the Adventure Book First

The rules presented in this book are intended for players who have already played through the included Adventure Book. The adventure featured in that book is designed to walk you through all of the basic *Legend of the Five Rings Beginner Game* rules in an easy, play-as-you-learn format. So grab some friends, crack open the Adventure Book, and get started!

GETTING STARTED

Now that you have played through the introductory adventure, there is no need to stop there. The Emerald Empire is yours to explore, and this book is filled with all the rules you will need to carry on with your adventures. All of the rules introduced and taught in the adventure can also be found here for ease of play, and many of the concepts have been expanded with further detail.

WHAT'S IN THE BOOK?

- **Chapter 1: Playing the Game (page 2).** Rules for building and interpreting dice pools, performing checks, and investing experience points to enhance the *Legend of the Five Rings Beginner Game* characters.
- **Chapter 2: Skills (page 14).** Descriptions and common uses of each of the various skills that a character might learn in the course of their adventures.
- **Chapter 3: Equipment (page 22).** Common weapons, armor, and gear.
- **Chapter 4: Scenes and Conflicts (page 27).** Rules for handling combat, movement, and character health.
- **Chapter 5: Non-Player Characters (page 40).** Additional opponents that you can use to challenge your heroes.

GAME RULES

Many of the rules presented here will be familiar now that you have played through the tutorial adventure, although this section provides greater depth.

What Players Need to Play

Continuing with your *Legend of the Five Rings Beginner Game* requires very few materials. Aside from at least one copy of this rulebook, players will need pencils or pens and the custom dice used in the *Beginner Game*.

The players and GM might also find it helpful to obtain the *Legend of the Five Rings* dice-rolling application. More information can be found at https://www.FantasyFlightGames.com/en/Legend-of-the-Five-Rings-Roleplaying-Game.

NARRATIVE PLAY

The *Legend of the Five Rings Beginner Game* asks the players to step into their characters' roles and narrate how they attempt to overcome obstacles set forth by the Game Master (GM), creating a collaborative story in the process. While this rulebook provides specific rules for how to resolve actions, the game relies heavily on both the Game Master and the players to use their imaginations—tempered with common sense—to explain what happens.

At the table, the game works most smoothly if the GM and the hero players focus on the general flow of the story and having a good time together rather than on minor questions of precision or rules interactions—the GM can always look these up later! The rules are guiderails to help the group tell an entertaining samurai genre story together, not absolute restrictions on what can or cannot occur in that unfolding tale.

CULTURAL SIDEBARS

The Legend of the Five Rings Beginner Game is written, in broad terms, for a Western audience by mainly Western authors and game designers. However, it is inspired by the culture, religion, history, and storytelling of Japanese and other Eastern traditions. Rokugan is, of course, a very distinct entity from historical or even mythic Japan, but it owes its existence to the genre of samurai fiction. Sidebars like this one can help you better understand the setting.

RULES NOTES

We'll use these sidebars to explain some cultural aspects that can have influence on the rules. You'll also see them used to cover some rules that don't apply all the time but are nonetheless useful for playing.



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For more information about the *Legend of the Five Rings Roleplaying Game* line, free downloads, answers to rule queries, or just to pass on greetings, visit us online at **www.FantasyFlightGames.com/en/Legend-of-the-Five-Rings-Roleplaying-Game/**

CHAPTER 1: Playing the Game

This chapter covers the basic rules that govern the game, such as making checks, interpreting and resolving their results, and the various attributes that make up a character.

CUSTOM DICE

The *Legend of the Five Rings Roleplaying Game* uses two types of custom dice: six-sided dice and twelve-sided dice, each of which has faces depicting special symbols for this game. When a player rolls these symbols, the dice inform narrative outcomes and give players cues that can inspire them as they tell a story together.

Roll and Keep

The core mechanic of rolling dice in *Legend of the Five Rings* employs a concept called **ROLL AND KEEP**. When their character attempts to resolve a task in a story, a player rolls a number of dice and then chooses to keep a number of those dice. This activity is called a **CHECK**.

Only kept dice are resolved, which gives the player the strategic opportunity to decide which symbols will make for the best story in a given situation. Many die faces indicate both positive and negative outcomes, and a player must weigh the benefits and costs of keeping such dice.

Ring Dice

The black six-sided dice are **RING DICE**, which reflect a character's core personality and fundamental aptitudes. In text, they are represented with the ■ symbol.

Skill Dice

The white twelve-sided dice are **SKILL DICE**, which reflect a character's training in a particular area of expertise. Skill dice provide slightly more potent outcomes than Ring dice, and in text, they are represented with the ⬠ symbol.

Dice Symbols

The custom dice in *Legend of the Five Rings* contain four unique symbols. These symbols appear in various combinations on the dice, and are summarized as follows:

Success

The **SUCCESS SYMBOL** represents the character's effort when performing a task. The more symbols rolled, the more likely it is that the character succeeds.

Explosive Success

The **EXPLOSIVE SUCCESS SYMBOL** represents the character pushing themselves to succeed against the odds. In addition to counting as a symbol, it gives the character a chance to roll even more dice and increase their chances of success. See under **Step 6: Resolve Symbols of Kept Dice** on page 5. Importantly, this symbol means that a character can potentially succeed on tasks they otherwise could not hope to accomplish—allowing grit and a bit of luck to overcome the odds, as it often does in fictional samurai dramas.

Opportunity

The **OPPORTUNITY SYMBOL** represents the chances of a secondary benefit or positive side effect when the character performs the check. This could be the character noticing an important detail about the ongoing events, the chance to catch their breath and steady themselves, or even do something that could prove helpful later. Importantly, Opportunity can be used whether a character succeeds or fails on a check, creating situations where characters can fail in a task but accomplish something useful anyway.

Characters often have special abilities that they can only use by spending Opportunity (see page 6).

Strife

The **STRIFE SYMBOL** represents an upwelling of emotion within the character. This emotion can be positive or negative, but the more it accumulates, the harder time a character has maintaining the proper and stoic decorum of a samurai. Samurai drama as a fictional genre is often defined not by the external battle, but by the wars characters must wage within themselves. Strife does not affect success or failure on the check but instead accumulates until the character can calm themself or they reach a tipping point.

MAKING A CHECK

To make a check, a player gathers a specified number of Ring and Skill dice. We refer to that collection of dice as a **DICE POOL**. Then, the player rolls those dice, selects a number of dice up to the character's ring value to keep, and then resolves the positive and negative effects of the symbols on all kept dice.

Fundamentally, a check always results in one of two outcomes: success or failure. It also may include outcomes such as strife and opportunity.

When to Ask for a Check

The GM gets to decide when it's worthwhile for a character to make a check. As a rule of thumb, consider the following questions:

MINIMUM VALUES

When an effect reduces a value, it is assumed to reduce it to a minimum of 0 unless stated otherwise. One noteworthy exception is the target number (TN) of checks, which can only be reduced to a minimum of 1.

ROUNDING

Whenever a formula results in a fraction, round up to the nearest integer.

WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE?

A roleplaying game revolves around the idea that the players give the Game Master the benefit of the doubt on most matters of setting the scene and story). This isn't to say that there can never be any discussion, but if the GM shoots down an idea or wants to stick to a point, the players should accept it and move on. In turn, the GM should give the players' ideas fair consideration. The GM gets to approve the players' ideas and determines what happens. With that said, cool, exciting, or dramatic ideas should be encouraged, so long as everyone is getting their turn in the spotlight. Remember, everyone is there to have fun (including the GM).

If someone isn't comfortable with something going on in the story, that's another matter entirely. Players should feel free to tell the GM if something in the story is making them uncomfortable, and vice versa, and it can be a good idea to set up a way beforehand to clearly indicate when such concerns arise.

- Could the character fail? Could they possibly succeed?
- Are the consequences of success different from the consequences of failure?
- Are the consequences of success and failure both interesting?

If you answered "no" to any of these questions, don't have the character make a check. The player can simply decide that their character succeeds (or fails, if they prefer), and you and your player can work together to narrate the results.

A check is resolved by following these six steps:

Step 1: Declare Intention

When a player declares that their character is attempting a task with the possibly of failure with significant consequences, the GM may call upon that player to make a check. When that happens, you and the player should first establish the "**INTENTION**" of the check. This is basically what should happen if the check succeeds. It can be as simple as "my character is going to hit that rōnin with my sword," or more complicated, such as "my character is going to convince this noble that rumors about her husband's infidelity are true. The **OUTCOME** of the check determines whether or not the character succeeds in achieving their intended objective, and whether any complications or other narrative results arise in the process.

The GM performs these, and all following steps, for non-player characters (NPCs).

Step 2: Determine Skill, Ring, and Target Number of Successes

A check is resolved by rolling dice and selecting results from a dice pool; a number of Ring dice (■) and Skill dice (⬠). Follow the process below to determine which skill and ring the character will use:

1. **Determine Skill Group:** First, the GM and player determine the activity the character is trying to accomplish, which determines the **SKILL GROUP** used. See **Skill Groups** on page 14 of **Chapter 2: Skills** for more guidance on the activity each skill group governs.
2. **Determine Skill:** Next, the GM and player determine the body of knowledge that best applies to the specific activity—this provides the specific **SKILL** to use. The player can propose a skill, or the GM can call for a particular skill based on the circumstances. As with all matters, the GM is the final arbiter over appropriate uses of skills. See **Chapter 2: Skills** on page 14 for a list of individual skills.
3. **Determine Approach:** Next, the player provides a brief description of their character's methods to overcome the challenge using the chosen skill, as well as the outcome they desire to achieve through their check. Then, the GM selects which of the five elemental **APPROACHES** corresponds to the methods the player described. This determines which of the Five Rings the character uses for the check. See page 10 for more details on **Rings**, and **Chapter 2: Skills** for a detailed list of approaches, which correspond to the general set of concepts for each ring described below:
   - **Air:** The Air Ring represents grace, perceptiveness, cunning, and precision.
   - **Earth:** The Earth Ring represents resilience, memory, patience, and discipline.
   - **Fire:** The Fire Ring represents passion, invention, candor, and ferocity.
   - **Water:** The Water Ring represents adaptability, awareness, gregariousness, and power.
   - **Void:** The Void Ring represents mysticism, wisdom, intuition, and instinct.

Sometimes multiple approaches are viable for the same task; in these cases, the GM can offer the player a choice of which approach they want to use. Note that at other times, the ring a character uses will be specified by an ability, effect, or stance. In these cases, the character uses the indicated ring rather than one specified by the GM.

TARGETING AND CHECKS

Sometimes, a check affects one or more characters other than the character performing the check. These characters are considered **TARGETS** of that check.



4. **Determine Target Number of Successes:** Finally, the GM selects a **TARGET NUMBER OF SUCCESSES** ("**TN**"). This target number should be based on the innate difficulty of the task, the complexity of the outcome the player described, and the appropriateness of the methods the character is using. This is the number of successes the character must achieve to succeed. For some common checks, such as combat checks, there are preset base TNs and recommended modifiers that apply to many situations. The GM should announce the TN of the check to the player at this point.

Here are some sample guidelines for how difficult a task should be:

- **TN 1:** An easy task, such as carrying half one's weight or finding a misplaced item.
- **TN 2:** An average task, such as jumping a ten-foot ditch, hitting someone with a sword, or recognizing someone in disguise.
- **TN 3:** A difficult task, such as scaling a cliff without a rope or finding a well-hidden object.
- **TN 4:** A very hard task, such as diving safely from a waterfall or remembering someone's exact words.
- **TN 5:** An extremely hard task, such as stirring a demoralized army with rhetoric alone or hurling a person across a room with one hand.
- **TN 6:** An extraordinarily challenging task, such as discerning someone's whereabouts from the kind of mud on their sandals or felling a tree with a single axe blow.
- **TN 7:** A truly heroic task, such as outwrestling a huge troll or naming all of one's ancestors in order.
- **TN 8+:** A legendary task, such as shattering stone with one's bare hands or outwitting a Fortune.

CHOOSING A SKILL FROM A DIFFERENT GROUP

After selecting the skill group that governs a particular type of task, the GM and player determine the specific skill the character uses. However, sometimes the skill that reflects the most relevant body of knowledge is actually in a different skill group.

When this happens, use the more fitting skill; it behaves as if it were a skill of the group already selected for resolving the check, and it uses that skill group's approaches instead of its usual approaches. For more details on this topic, see **Using Approaches from Other Skill Groups** on page 14.

Step 3: Assemble and Roll Dice Pool

The player assembles the dice pool. This is done by picking up a number of Skill dice equal to the character's ranks in the selected skill and a number of Ring dice equal to the value of the ring associated with the selected approach. Then, the player rolls all of these dice. All of these dice are **ROLLED DICE**.

Then, any effects that modify rolled dice (such as the resolution of advantages) are applied.

Step 4: Apply Advantages (If Applicable)

After the player rolls the dice, the player and GM have a chance to decide which (if any) of the character's **ADVANTAGES** (see **Advantages**, on page 13) apply for this check. Each advantage can only be applied once per check. Often, no advantage will apply to a check—in which case, skip this step.

The GM must agree an advantage fits the situation for them to be applied to the check.

Resolving Advantages

If one or more advantages were applied, the player may choose and reroll up to two dice.

Step 5: Choose Kept Dice

After applying advantages, the player looks at the results and decides which of the rolled dice they will keep (we call those **KEPT DICE**) and which dice they will discard (we call those **DROPPED DICE**). The player chooses a number of kept dice from 1 to the ring value for the approach the character used for the check, then removes all of the dice not kept.

Then, any effects that modify kept dice are resolved.

Step 6: Resolve Symbols of Kept Dice

Once the dice pool has been reduced to only kept dice, the player resolves the remaining results on those dice.

Dice results are resolved in the following order:

1. : For each result, the player may roll 1 additional die of the same type as the one showing the result. After rolling a die this way, the player chooses whether it will be kept or dropped. If the die is kept, the player resolves its results in addition to the rest of the kept dice in the dice pool (including further results).

2. : For each result, the character suffers 1 strife. Strife represents the emotional swell that comes alongside facing challenges—the frustration of a difficulty, the anger of humiliation, the surge of victory, or a complex combination of feelings that threatens to peel back the samurai's outwardly calm persona. Accumulated strife is measured against a character's composure. For more on strife in various situations, see **Strife and Composure**, on page 7.

3. : The player may spend results to resolve any applicable opportunity abilities. Opportunities represent narrative flourishes and game effects that are created by the player and the GM and occur whether a check succeeds or fails. Each ring has a number of example mechanical effects and story cues that may be resolved if a character used that approach for the check (see the back cover of this book)

4. : If the sum total of and results **equals or exceeds** the TN of the check, the character successfully performs the task they intended to perform. If this total is less than the TN of the check, the character instead fails to perform the intended task.

Narrating a Check's Results

So long as the character succeeds at a check, their player gets to narrate the outcome of the success within the confines of the intention described in **Step 1: Declare Intention**. The player is also responsible for describing the emotions from any they accumulated, such as the grief at being forced to cut down a loved one at their lord's order, or the glee at finally taking personal vengeance against a hated foe.

Finally, the player is responsible for interpreting the they spend as part of the check. Sometimes, the GM will need to approve or contribute to the interpretation of the , such as if the character noticed an important detail or remembered a relevant fact. **Example Ways of Spending** on the back cover also provides a number of simple, purely mechanical options players can use in almost any circumstance. If the player does not (or does not wish to) designate a way to spend the generated on a check, it is unspent.

UNIVERSAL TIEBREAKER

Many effects stipulate a tiebreak mechanism (such as higher honor, lower honor, higher focus, etc.), but some effects do not specify a means of breaking the stalemate if these values are tied as well. While sometimes a draw is possible, at other times effects require an additional level of tiebreaking beyond what is provided to resolve properly. In these cases, the GM should have PCs supersede NPCs and Adversary NPCs supersede Minion NPCs. If there is still a tie, the GM should determine a random means of resolving it (such as flipping a coin, or having the participating parties play rock-paper-scissors).



BUSHIDŌ: CHŪGI, DUTY AND LOYALTY

A samurai's life is not their own. It belongs to the samurai's lord, family, and clan. Out of loyalty to one's clan, even honesty and honor must sometimes be sacrificed. It is not honorable to lie, but it may be very honorable indeed to lie to protect the honor of one's lord.

ADDITIONAL RULES FOR CHECKS

The following supplementary rules describe ways that checks can be adjusted or affected during play.

Assistance

While a samurai must face some tasks alone, allies can frequently offer critical assistance during major challenges. There are a number of ways that one character can provide assistance on another's check (such as those described in **Downtime Activities**, on page 27, and in **Conflict Scenes**, on page 28), but the effect is always the same. The GM decides for any particular check how many characters can realistically provide assistance, based on the circumstances and the players' narration of how they are providing help.

During **Step 3: Assemble and Roll Dice Pool**, if a character making a check receives assistance from one or more other characters, the character making the check rolls 1 additional Skill die per assisting character who has 1 or more ranks of the skill being used, and 1 additional Ring die per assisting character who has 0 ranks in the skill being used.

At the GM's discretion, during **Step 4: Apply Advantages**, up to one advantage from each assisting character can be applied to the check.

Then, during **Step 5: Choose Kept Dice**, a character making a check with assistance may keep up to 1 additional die per assisting character.

Finally, during **Step 6: Resolve Symbols of Kept Dice**, each assisting character may choose to suffer 1 strife to negate 1 result on the check.



Opportunity

Opportunity (✵) is a symbol that allows players and GMs a cue to add interesting secondary effects to the tasks characters attempt. It can be spent to add in minor details that are not related directly to the success or failure of the check, but nonetheless make the story more exciting or realized. Usually, the more ✵ symbols a character spends on a single effect, the greater its magnitude.

The most fundamental way to use ✵ is to add a narrative detail that surfaces as the character undertakes the task—a new piece of information that does not directly affect success or failure but creates interesting new avenues for the story. When a player character is making a check, their hero player suggests this detail, and the GM then approves it or poses an alternative option.

Opportunities for Different Rings

The ring the character chose can help to inform the detail the player creates. **Table 1-1: ✵ Descriptors** offers some key phrases players can use when thinking about the opportunities they want to introduce.

Like all good improvisational tools, ✵ can be extremely effective when used to build upon details that already exist in the scene. **Example Ways of Spending ✵** on the back cover offers concrete examples that players can employ or draw upon as inspiration for novel uses of ✵ for the five elements.

Table 1–1: ✵ Descriptors

ELEMENT	OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTORS
Air ✵	Subtle, precise, cunning
Earth ✵	Defensive, thorough, reassuring
Fire ✵	Flashy, creative, inspiring
Water ✵	Affable, flexible, perceptive
Void ✵	Mystical, wise, instinctive

Scaling Opportunity Abilities

A character can only resolve a given opportunity once per check, but many opportunity abilities can scale for effect. If an effect reads "✵+" in the cost to activate it, the character may spend 1 or more ✵ when activating this ability. These abilities provide a single scaling effect based on the number of ✵ spent, specified within the text of the ability.

Bonus Successes and Shortfalls

Sometimes it is important to know the amount by which a character succeeded at a task (or the extent of their failure). Successes in excess of the target number of successes (bonus successes) might help the character succeed more thoroughly. On the other hand, if the character fails, the amount by which they fell short of the target number of successes (their shortfall) can reveal the depths of their failure.

Determining Bonus Successes

If a character succeeds on a check, their **BONUS SUCCESSES** are the number of ◯ and ◯ results in excess of the target number of successes for the check.

Determining Shortfall

If a character fails a check, their **SHORTFALL** is the amount by which the sum of their ◯ and ◯ results fell short of the target number.

Checks to Resist Effects

While most checks targeting other characters are made against static values (such as the target's vigilance), some are opposed by an opponent's more active efforts. When a character succeeds at a check to **RESIST** an effect (whether the effect comes from a check or another source), they avoid the ill effects they would otherwise have suffered.

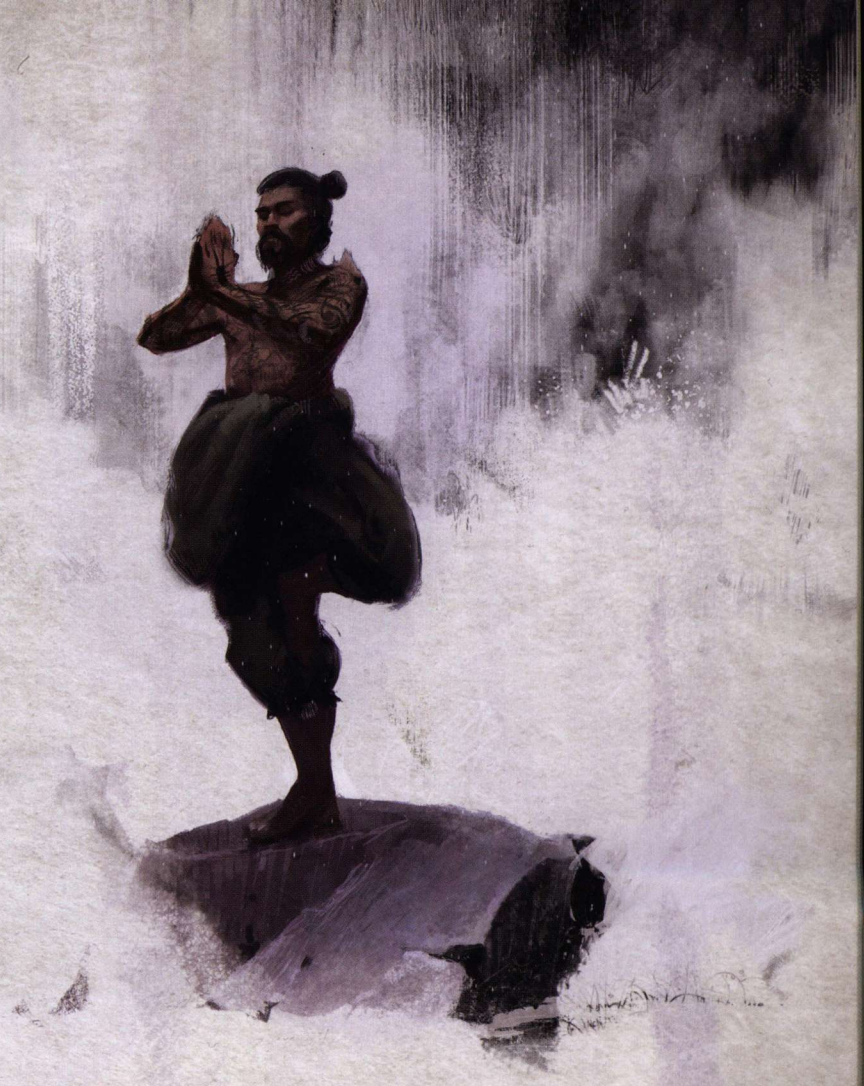
When setting the TN for a check to resist the effects of another check, if the effect does not have a listed TN, the GM should come up with a TN for the check. If they want to take the other character's effort into account, they can use the bonus successes of the acting character to modify the resisting character's TN.

Competitive Checks

If the GM needs to compare the performance of two or more characters on similar checks where neither is clearly resisting the other, each character's bonus successes (or the amount by which the character fell short) provide this information. The character with the most bonus successes (or smallest shortfall, if all failed) performed the task best, most quickly, or most efficiently (or least poorly, in the case of failure).

STRIFE AND COMPOSURE

Rokugani ideals state that samurai are to maintain proper decorum at all times, keeping their emotions on a tight leash in almost all situations. However, achieving this ideal would hardly be a worthy accomplishment if the world did not heap challenges, joys, frustrations, and sorrows upon every soul. Even those raised under the strictest standards of emotional self-control or committed to finding spiritual peace risk cracking from time to time under the pressures of rule, courtly life, love, or warfare.



Accumulating Strife

Strife is in all things, and therefore a common result on both Skill dice and Ring dice is a face containing ◯ ◯. When kept dice contain ◯ results, the character suffers strife as a cost of their effort. This mental, emotional, and spiritual turbulence can reflect run-of-the-mill frustration, the joy of a challenge, old sorrows dredged up by the present situation, fear, shame, rage, passion, hope, the thrill of victory, deep ambivalence, or any number of other feelings. If the check is a crucial one for the character, the GM should ask the player to narrate the emotions stirring in the character's heart.

Characters can also acquire strife for other reasons, such as when their turmoil arises in play (see page 12). Players should feel free to suggest times that their characters should suffer strife to the GM, and the GM can inflict strife on characters as circumstances dictate.

Players are responsible for tracking how much strife their characters have accrued. The GM should track strife for NPCs, though some NPCs use simplified rules for strife.



Composure

Each player character has a **COMPOSURE** value, which represents the character's ability to withstand strife. As a character's strife approaches that character's composure value, they move toward an emotional tipping point, at which the character must express their feelings in one way or another. This can come in the form of a minor slip-up or a major public scene, depending on what the player feels is appropriate for their character in that moment.

Removing Strife

There are a number of ways characters can remove strife, described below:

- At the end of each scene, a character removes any strife in excess of half their composure.
- Unmasking, as described in the following section, removes all of a character's strife.
- Successfully resolving a complication (see **Complications** on page 12) removes all of a character's strife.

Becoming Compromised and Unmasking

Although specifics vary by region and tradition, Rokugani culture at large idealizes a samurai who maintains a stoic outward demeanor. Joys and sorrows alike are to be accepted with the same stern affect. However, the truth of the matter is that no human being can uphold this ideal perfectly all the time—without an outlet for this emotion, a character will eventually become unfocused, distracted, and exhausted.

Becoming Compromised

While a character's strife exceeds their composure value, the tumult of emotions that has built up causes the character to become compromised. While a character is compromised, they are at their emotional limit, which their player should roleplay through making various subtle references that they are working very hard to repress their emotions. Additionally, when making a check, a compromised character cannot keep any dice showing 🌀 symbols (to a potential minimum of 0 kept dice).

A character ceases to be compromised when their strife drops below their composure.

UNMASKING DURING CONFLICT SCENES

During a conflict scene, a character may unmask during their turn. If they do, they resolve the effects (such as those under **Example Ways of Unmasking**, or of their own invention with the GM's permission), then decrease the TN of the next check they make by 1 as normal.

The Act of Unmasking

Becoming emotionally compromised is bad for any human being in Rokugan (and it makes the character more likely to struggle at tasks), but a character only remains compromised as long as their player making various subtle references that they are working very hard to repress their emotions.. Once per scene, when a character is compromised, their player may have their character unmask., briefly expressing the true emotions beneath the guise of a perfect samurai that society demands they maintain. Keep in mind that a character can stay compromised as long as their player deems it appropriate, and can seek other ways to soothe their emotions. However, these often take time.

The act of unmasking gives a character the chance to achieve immediate emotional clarity and openness, at the cost of potentially disturbing the scene. Unmasking is an outpouring of raw emotion—anger at difficult circumstances or injustice, joy as a result of success over harsh trials, mirth at a humorous occurrence, or despair at a tragic turn of events. Importantly, the player never loses control of their character while unmasking, because the player chooses when and how the character unmasks. The form of the unmasking should be suited to the scene in which it occurs and the various emotions that led the character to become compromised.

Benefits of Unmasking

When a character unmasks, they remove all of their strife. Then, the player roleplays the way in which their character lets their façade fall, and the GM determines any narrative and mechanical consequences this has. Players and GMs can look to the following example ways of unmasking for inspiration, or design their own to fit the scene and the character! Like the examples, these should involve a suitable penalty, and perhaps be linked to the current scene.

Unmasked characters can also say and do things they normally couldn't—and while such behavior might have a cost in honor or glory, a valid point raised in anger is still valid. After a character unmasks, they reduce the TN of the next check they make by 1.

Example Ways of Unmasking

No matter the method the player decides to roleplay, there should be narrative consequences to unmasking, usually both for good and for ill. Sometimes, the GM and player will need to work together to determine how best to suit the temporary slip of their composure to the scene.

The following are a few example ways a character can reveal their inner emotions, but players are encouraged to invent their own means of unmasking based on their character's personality and the circumstances. As always, the GM should inform the player of any honor, glory, or status their character might have to forfeit before the player commits to the course of action.

- **Challenge of Honor:** The character can bear their indignities no longer, and challenges an antagonist in the scene to a duel (though not necessarily to the death). The duel might be fought immediately, or the participants might request an opportunity to prepare for their battle. See **Duels** on page 33.
- **Compromise:** The character does something that stands in contrast to their values, oaths, or view of right and wrong to bring about the results they desire. Unmasking in this way might let a character enact a solution to a problem they would normally never consider, but to do so, they must usually forfeit honor equal to their honor rank (or more, at the GM's discretion).
- **Expose an Opening:** The character reveals a vital flaw in their argument, defenses, or position, often related to one of their turmoil (see page 12). Unmasking in this way allows others to strike at this weakness; the TN of the next check by a hostile character (as defined by the GM) that targets the character is 1.
- **Panicked Flight:** The character departs the scene immediately, without regard for propriety. Unmasking in this way might allow a character to run away from certain defeat and live to fight another day, but to flee from battle or another scene with high stakes in this manner, they must usually forfeit honor equal to their honor rank, glory equal to their glory rank, or both.
- **Inappropriate Outburst:** The character says something out of line or commits a deep breach of etiquette, shocking onlookers. Unmasking in this way might let a character raise a vital argument forbidden by propriety or reveal something that society demands they keep within, but to do so they must usually forfeit glory equal to their glory rank (or more, at the GM's discretion).
- **Rage:** The character fails to contain their fury and lashes out at people or objects around them. Unmasking in this way might let a character launch a first strike against an unready foe or let them reinforce a threat by destroying a nearby object, but to act so violently in an inappropriate context, the character must usually forfeit honor equal to their honor rank, glory equal to their glory rank, or both.

MASKING ONE'S EXPRESSIONS

Rokugani culture prizes an expressionless display that reveals nothing to viewers. For that reason, masks are often used (especially by the Scorpion Clan) to disguise facial expressions. Losing control over one's emotional state (or even displaying it openly) is a major social gaffe that causes the person to lose honor.

THE CHARACTER

Characters possess a number of major mechanical attributes and abilities that reflect their upbringing, natural affinities and weaknesses, accumulated knowledge, and training. These are described in the following pages.

The Five Rings

Each of the Five Rings represents a character's personality as well as their natural inclination toward a certain approach to solving problems. When making a check using a given ring, a character rolls a number of Ring dice equal to the value of that ring. For player characters, each ring has value between 1 and 5, though some supernatural beings might possess values that fall outside of this range.

The rings are as follows, and they represent the following different means of facing a challenge:

Air

The **AIR RING** represents a graceful, cunning, and precise personality. This approach is swift or layered with nuance, as the character moves too quickly or speaks too obliquely to be pinned down. A character with a high Air Ring value is eloquent, physically and socially deft, and shrewd.

Earth

The **EARTH RING** represents a character's aptitude for taking a steady, thorough, and grounded approach to problems. This approach is cautious and considerate, as the character works to get results without suffering losses or taking unneeded risks. A character with a high Earth Ring value is likely to be physically tough, mentally resilient, and reliable.

Fire

The **FIRE RING** represents a ferocious, direct, and inventive personality. This approach is explosive and intense, as the character works to get results no matter the cost to themselves or others. A character with a high Fire Ring value is likely to be passionate, curious, physically strong, occasionally brusque, and a fast learner.

Table 1–2: Ring Rankings

RANK	PROFICIENCY IN THAT APPROACH
1	Weak
2	Average
3	Above Average
4	Exceptional
5	Legendary

Water

The **WATER RING** represents an adaptable, powerful, and perceptive personality. The approach is balanced and reversible, as the character works to get results without overextending themselves or underperforming. A character with a high Water Ring value is naturally affable, physically flexible, observant, and easygoing.

Void

The **VOID RING** represents a centered, unflinching personality; it can also represent the "flow state." By letting go of the suffering inherent in one's ego-driven desires, the samurai can transcend earthly limitations. It is the enlightened approach, accepting the nature of all of the elements at once, yet allowing no one element to dominate. A character with a high Void Ring value is likely to be spiritually sensitive, wise, and introspective.

Skill Ranks

Skills represent a character's training in a particular art. When making a check using a given skill, a character rolls a number of Skill dice equal to the number of ranks they possess in that skill. For player characters, Skill ranks have a value between 0 and 5, though certain supernatural beings might possess Skill ranks that fall outside of this range.

Advantages

Advantages are intrinsic quirks of a character's body, mind, personality, or spirit.

For more details, see **Advantages**, on page 13.

Attributes

Attributes are numerical values that are determined by a character's rings and other decisions made at character creation, and can be altered over the course of play. They have various mechanical and narrative effects, as described in this section.

Table 1–3: Skill Rankings

RANK	PROFICIENCY IN THAT SKILL
0	Lack of any formal training
1	Beginner
2	Apprentice
3	Professional
4	Expert
5	Master

Turmoil

In many genres of fiction, including samurai drama, a character's primary conflict is often internal. While external foes and challenges frequently drive the plot and force the protagonist to face their own jagged edges, a samurai's primary battle is often fought within their own heart. Internal desires, duties, and expectations must all be weighed against one another, and to achieve one, a character must often sacrifice the others.

Each player character has their **TURMOIL** defined in their character folio, which represents the clash between their personal desires and the role their lord has bestowed upon them. Turmoil should help to guide the hero players in roleplaying their characters, and give them insight into the matter that trouble the hearts of their characters.

NINJO: nin-JYOH

Ninjo ("human feelings") is a character's innermost personal desire, ideal, or crisis. As part of the character's turmoil, it represents the self, and the thing that might cause the character to question or forsake the ideas of Bushidō and their obligation to their lord.

GIRI: gee-REE

Giri ("sworn duty") is the means by which a character serves their lord. It is the theme or issue that will be tested against the character's personal beliefs and feelings, and the conflict between the two defines the character's turmoil.

Introducing Complications

The GM and hero players alike should use the characters' turmoil to introduce dramatic turns to the story. Once per game session, the GM can introduce a significant challenge in a scene related to a character's turmoil, called a **COMPLICATION**. This brings a new narrative element into the scene—the unexpected arrival of a character who was not previously present such as an old rival or former friend, or the emergence of a crisis that exemplifies the character's turmoil, such as a hard choice between fulfilling desires and duty. The expanded adventure *In the Castle of the Emerald Champion* suggests a number of complications that the GM can bring into the story, and GMs can look to these as examples as they think about creating their own!

When a character's turmoil results in the introduction of a complication, the hero player chooses how the character reacts. The character can react to this twist stoically, in which case the narrative element is still introduced but there are no other effects. Or the character can be deeply moved by this moment, in which case the character suffers 3 strife and gains 1 Void point (see **Void Points** on page 11).

Hero players can also use complications to enhance the drama of the story! If a hero player has an idea for a turn in the story and the GM agrees that it makes sense as a complication, it occurs in the same manner described above. Note that each player character can still only have one complication per session, regardless of who suggests it.

THOSE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE CELESTIAL ORDER

In Rokugan, entertainers, geisha, leatherworkers, butchers, torturers, and gravediggers are all considered to be at the very bottom of the Celestial Order. They perform work that is considered too impure for the rest of society, but without which society could not function. Their status is permanently 0, and it cannot be increased unless they erase all evidence of their past.

Foreigners are much rarer in Rokugan, but they hold no formal status in its society and existing outside the Celestial Order entirely. However, a few are quite influential in a practical sense, thanks to economic agreements with the Tortoise Minor Clan and other groups specifically permitted to trade with them.

Finding Resolution

While a character's personal desires and duty can cause them problems, pursuing these goals can also help them find peace. When a character successfully diffuses a complication related to their turmoil, they remove all of their strife.

Honor, Glory, and Status

Characters have three attributes that help players to think about the forces that are constantly pulling upon a samurai. **HONOR** reflects the character's personal investment in Bushidō, and their belief in the righteousness of this code. **GLORY** reflects society's view of the character, and their reputation in the wider world. **STATUS** reflects circumstances of the character's birth and, occasionally, achievements that elevate their rank in the world.

Value and Rank

A character's honor, glory, and status attributes have a value from 0 to 100. When an effect calls for a character's **HONOR**, **GLORY**, or **STATUS RANK**, use the tens digit of the character's applicable attribute (or 10, if the value is 100).

Table 1–4: Honor Examples

VALUES	SAMPLE CHARACTERS
0–19	Honorless Dogs
20–29	Pragmatic Samurai
30–64	Idealistic Samurai
65–79	Dedicated Samurai
80+	Paragons of Virtue

Table 1–5: Glory Examples

VALUES	PROFICIENCY IN THAT SKILL
0–19	Infamous
20–39	Beginner
40–64	Apprentice
65–79	Professional
80+	Master

Table 1–6: Status Examples

VALUES	PROFICIENCY IN THAT SKILL
0–9	Outcasts and Criminals
10–24	Peasants and Rōnin
25–39	Samurai and Monks
40–69	Ministers, Generals, and Lords
70+	Aristocracy

Increasing Honor, Glory, and Status

These three attributes can increase over the life of a character, usually via an honor, glory, or status reward from the GM. Performing certain deeds, succeeding in narrative goals, and playing to one's core character motives can advance one or more of these attributes.

Forfeiting Honor, Glory, and Status

Some deeds are intrinsically dishonorable, inglorious, or sacrilegious. To perform such a deed, the player must forfeit honor, glory, or status, reflecting the fact that the character is purposefully disregarding the code of Bushidō, damaging their reputation, or abdicating political responsibility or power. Note that this is a is conscious choice on the part of the player, rather than a penalty imposed by the GM. The GM should inform the player of the number of honor, glory, or status points their character must forfeit before a proposed deed takes place, giving the player the chance to have their character step back from the threshold or commit to seeing it through.

If the player decides to make the forfeit, they reduce their character's honor, glory, or status by the required number of points (to a minimum of 0). Then, the character undertakes the deed. Note that a character can forfeit more of one of these attributes than they actually have, but the attribute's value cannot be reduced below 0.

Honor

Honor represents a character's personal investment in the concept of Bushidō and that character's belief that they are upholding the values it entails.

Glory

Glory represents society's view of a character's success in their mandated role. For a samurai, this reflects the reputation they have won as an effective agent of their lord, as well as the general consensus about whether or not they uphold Bushidō. In particular, glory is affected by the opinion of a character's sworn lord. A character whose lord deeply respects their commitment and openly celebrates their achievements is likely to have a high glory. In contrast, a character who is seen as a necessary evil, or who has lost the faith of their lord, has a low glory.

Status

Status is an attribute that reflects a character's social standing, based on both political sway and the mandate of the Celestial Order. Values can range from 100 (The Emperor) to the thirties (average Great Clan samurai, such as the PCs) to single digits for merchants and bandits to 0 for the lowest members of society who most samurai do not even consider to be human beings.

As a member of a Great Clan, each PC has a status of 35. This generally does change unless they lose their place in the samurai class through events in the story or receive a significant increase in their social standing, such as an appointment to a high office or a marriage into a more influential family. As such, it isn't used in the *Beginner Game*, but GMs may want to introduce it in later adventures as the PCs become more advanced.

TECHNIQUES

Techniques are advanced abilities granted to characters by their schools and, rarely, from other sources. These differ from School Abilities, which all PCs gain at the start and do not need to purchase with XP.

There are several different types of techniques, such as *kata* (specialized combat techniques) and *kihō* (philosophical and spiritual methods for aligning one's inner energy, or *ki*, to that of the wider cosmos and tap into its limitless potential). Others, like invocations, are prayers and offerings to powerful spirits in exchange for earthly support, or are religious rituals performed by spiritualists. *Shūji* are verbal and social techniques, allowing those who employ them to communicate clearly, avoid social traps, motivate their allies, and manipulate their rivals. The most forbidden of these arts are the vile *mahō*, which are dark pacts made with wicked spirits in exchange for diabolical powers, practiced only by sorcerers called *mahō-tsukai*.

All of these techniques have their usages and effects described in their entries; note that PCs and NPCs alike can have techniques, though the details may differ from a PC's version to the version assigned to an NPC.

BUSHIDŌ: *MEIYO*, HONOR

Praises and curses are not what define honor; the samurai reserve their judgment for themselves. And yet, most samurai can't ignore insults to their honor, and often fight duels or even wars over such slights. This contradiction is one of many in Rokugani society.

ADVANTAGES

Beyond their rings and skills, characters are also shaped by their advantages—the quirks that make them who they are.

Advantages

Advantages represent a character's natural aptitudes of body, of mind, or of character. Most apply to a narrow field of activities.

If an advantage applies to a player's check, they may choose and reroll up to two dice.

DISADVANTAGES

Disadvantages—the natural opposite of advantages, which make characters more vulnerable in certain circumstances—are an advanced rule from previous editions of *Legend of the Five Rings*. They are not included in the *Legend of the Five Rings Beginner Game* because the hero players already have many facets of their character to track, but they are included in the *Legend of the Five Rings Core Rulebook*.

USING ADVANTAGES IN PLAY

Advantages all confer certain narrative effects, some of which give players quite a bit of leeway to shape the story. Frequently, an advantage means that the character is able to do things within the scope of the narrative that others cannot, or can accomplish things more quickly. Remember, though, that most advantages have a narrative downside somewhere, leading to circumstances where they cannot help the character.

Advantages tell a certain story about the character, hero players can use them to inform their roleplaying. Similarly, GMs can use them to influence how NPCs react to and behave around a character.



CHAPTER 2: Skills

More so than almost any other mechanic, skills define the knowledge and competency of a character in the *Legend of the Five Rings Roleplaying Game*. While rings represent a samurai's general outlook and natural talent, skills represent what they have learned throughout the course of their lifetime. Each skill represents an area of personal competency—a particular body of knowledge and practical experience.

SKILLS AND CHECKS

When making a check, a player first states what their character wants to accomplish, which determines the skill group used for the check. Then, the GM and player determine which skill in that group is the most fitting for the task. Finally, the player describes the method their character employs, which the GM uses to determine their approach. Each skill group has five approaches (one for each element) that reflect the various methods a character might use to leverage a skill of that group. Each of these approaches encompasses a number of concrete ways of using the competency that a skill reflects to achieve different goals. Approaches have slight differences in their application for individual skills, as described in the individual skill entries in this chapter.

SKILL GROUPS

Skills in the *Legend of the Five Rings Roleplaying Game* are divided into five categories based on their primary use:

- **Artisan skills:** Artisan skills allow characters to engage in the process of creating and understanding art.
- **Martial skills:** These skills allow characters to contest with others and overcome the limitations within themselves.
- **Scholar skills:** Scholar skills allow characters to recall information, identify things related to an area of expertise, observe their environment, and draw conclusions.
- **Social skills:** Social skills allow characters to affect the emotions and thoughts of others through rhetoric.
- **Trade skills:** Trade skills allow characters to procure resources from their environment and perform work.

BREAKDOWN OF A SKILL

Each skill is made up of two elements:

Description

Each skill's **DESCRIPTION** explains the body of knowledge that the skill encompasses and how it differs from other skills in general terms.

Approaches

Each skill group has five different **APPROACHES** that correspond to the Five Rings. Each skill entry includes examples and details of how these approaches function for that particular skill.

CHOOSING SKILL GROUP, SKILL, AND APPROACH

The process of choosing a skill group, skill, and approach is summarized in **Table 2–1: Choosing Skill Group, Skill, and Approach** on page 16. Additionally, the chart includes descriptions of hindrances that might make each approach more difficult or even impossible. When you are unsure which skill group, skill, or approach fits best, ask yourself the listed questions in this table and answer them in sequence to determine the best option at each stage.

The character folios do not label the different types of elemental approaches for each skill group. When first learning to play this game, it's enough to know that a character needs to make a Command check and do it passionately to bellow orders in combat, and that means they would make a Command [Fire] check.

However, once players understand the rules, the GM can introduce the idea that each elemental approach has its own label, depending on what skill you're pairing it with. So a Command (Fire) check is using the "Incite" approach to roil the emotions of one's troops on the battlefield. But a Command (Earth) check is using the "Reason" approach to use logic and facts to reinforce a character's orders.

Using Approaches from Other Skill Groups

For some tasks relating to a given skill, the approaches of a different skill group are actually more fitting than the default approaches for the skill's own skill group. GMs should feel free to resolve skill checks using the approaches of other skill groups whenever common sense dictates.

Skills and Opportunities

In addition to the basic uses of ✲ on checks (see **Example Ways of Spending ✲**, on the back cover), players and GMs may want to adopt uses more closely tied to the employed skill. **Example Ways of Spending ✲** can be the basis for creating skill-specific ways of using ✲ to make such skill checks even more memorable and interesting for the player.

ARTISAN SKILL GROUP

Artisan skills are seen as the noblest pursuits in Rokugan, and they are generally only practiced by the highest elements of the social strata.

Elemental Approaches for Artisan Skills

A character's natural aptitudes likely push them to a variety of endeavors, even within the sphere of expertise a single art represents. The elemental approaches for Artisan skills function as follows:

Refine Approach (Air Ring)

Understanding nuance is part of the Air Ring, as is the careful addition, manipulation, or removal of detail.

A character uses **REFINE** when they want to improve the core function of a piece by adding or manipulating details, improve the core function of a piece by removing unnecessary things, or add a subtle message or complex nuance to a piece.

Restore Approach (Earth Ring)

The Earth Ring represents a character's tendency toward cautious, well-considered approaches that show due respect for history, and so the repair and upkeep of art is governed by the Earth approach to Artisan skills.

A character uses **RESTORE** when they want to refurbish a damaged or degraded work of art to its previous state, perform routine maintenance on a work of art, or store or transport a work of art safely.

Invent Approach (Fire Ring)

Pure invention is the domain of the Fire Ring, and so creating new works of art is the Fire approach to Artisan skills.

A character uses **INVENT** when they want to create a new piece from raw materials, draft a new work, develop a technique or tool to assist in the creative process, or brainstorm possible new works that they could make.

Adapt Approach (Water Ring)

Water is an element of change, and so for Artisan skills, the Water approach determines a character's ability to reframe, combine, divide, or entirely transform their own creations and those of others.

A character uses **ADAPT** when they want to break a piece down to serve as raw materials for a new work, modify a creation to serve a different function, or reflect upon the other ways that a piece could function.

Attune Approach (Void Ring)

The Void Ring governs self-knowledge and self-reflection, so the Void approach to the Artisan skill revolves not around learning about a work of art per se, but around learning about oneself by entering deeply into the mindset the piece evokes.

A character uses **ATTUNE** when they want to use a piece of art as a lens to disentangle their own emotions or contemplate Enlightenment, spiritually center their being around a work, imbue an item with supernatural properties, or awaken the supernatural properties of an object.

Artisan Skills

Artisan skills represent a character's expertise with works of surpassing beauty that capture the imaginations of those who see them and that win renown for their creators at court.

Aesthetics

The Aesthetics skill covers activities that create non-utilitarian visual art, such as *bonsai* (trimming plants to encourage their growth in an artistic fashion), *ikebana* (flower arrangement), *origami*, painting, and rock gardening.

Composition

Literature allows a character to create powerful compositions that sway readers, and to understand the literary devices and allusions that underlie such influential works. Composition also governs the act of putting words on a surface in ink in a pleasing way, such as in *shodō*.

Design

Design covers the act of making clothes for times of peace and formal occasions. Carefully selected garments and adornments are vital weapons and armor to courtiers, allowing them to send subtle signals to others and avoid humiliation at the hands of enemies.

Smithing

The Smithing skill covers the creation of arms and armor for both ceremonial use and battlefield application.

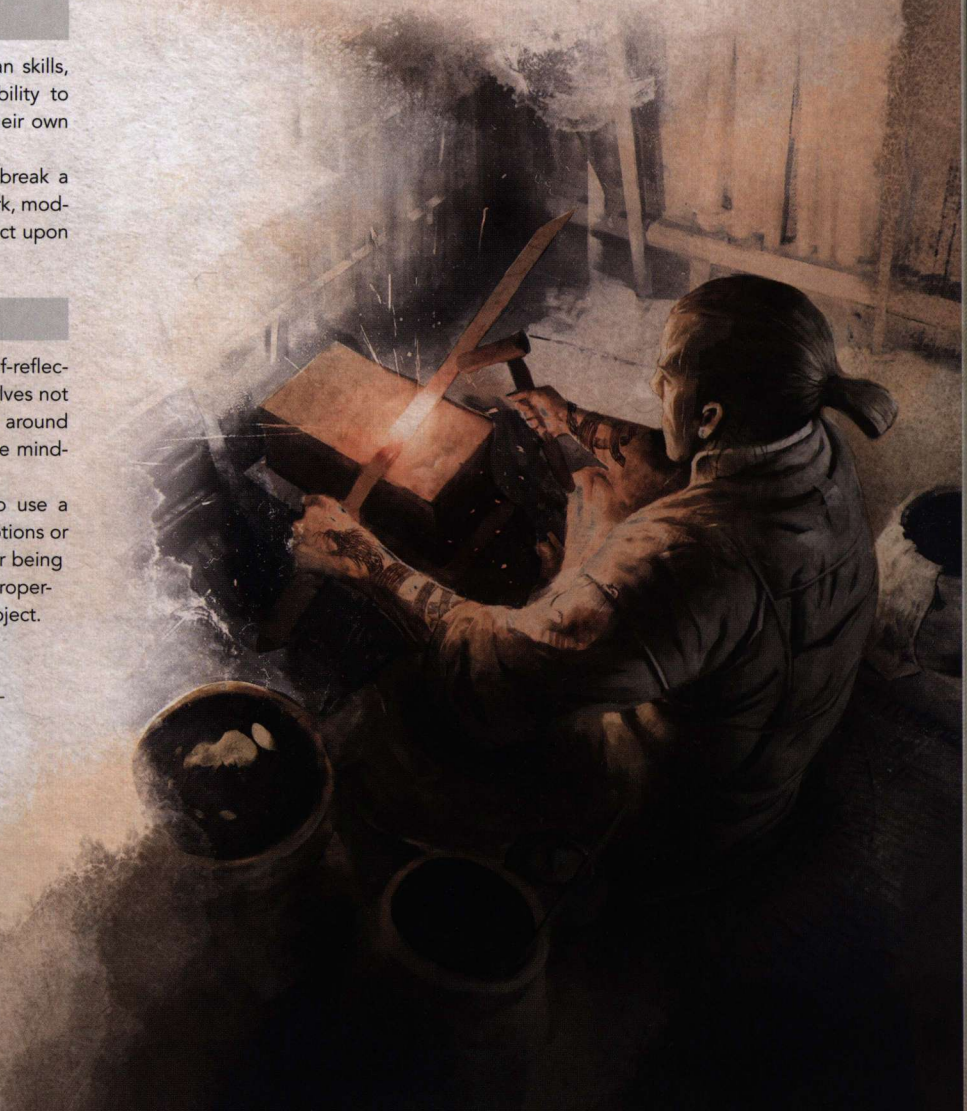


Table 2–1: Choosing Skill Group, Skill, and Approach

WHAT DO YOU WANT? *Determines Skill Group*	WHAT SPECIFIC EXPERTISE DO YOU NEED? *Determines Skill*	WHAT METHOD DO YOU USE? *Determines Approach*
To craft a piece of art (***Artisan Skill Group***)	**Artisan Skills** (*choose one*) • Non-utilitarian art (***Aesthetics***) • Literature and poetry (***Composition***) • Finery and worn art (***Design***) • Armor and weapons (***Smithing***)	**Artisan Approaches** (*choose one*) • **Restore** a damaged piece through upkeep (***Earth***) • **Adapt** an existing item or work into something else (***Water***) • **Invent** a new piece from raw materials (***Fire***) • **Refine** an existing item to make it work better (***Air***) • **Attune** yourself to a piece of art (***Void***)
To overcome an opponent or challenge with force (***Martial Skill Group***)	**Martial Skills** (*choose one*) • Performing athletic feats and resisting physical harm (***Fitness***) • Using close-quarters arms (***Martial Arts [Melee]***) • Using missile weapons (***Martial Arts [Ranged]***) • Fighting bare-handed and with improvised weapons (***Martial Arts [Unarmed]***) • Mastering oneself and controlling emotion such as anger, fear, and hate (***Meditation***) • Fighting with squads and armies (***Tactics***)	**Martial Approaches** (*choose one*) • **Withstand** opposing force to wear it down (***Earth***) • **Shift** opposing force to work against itself or for you (***Water***) • **Overwhelm** opposing force with a quick burst of power (***Fire***) • **Feint** to lure opposing force into a position of vulnerability (***Air***) • **Sacrifice** to let opposing force score a victory so that you can achieve a greater end (***Void***)
To know or learn a piece of information (***Scholar Skill Group***)	**Scholar Skills** (*choose one*) • Current events, historical trends, and etiquette in Rokugan (***Culture***) • Law, bureaucracy, posts, and positions in the Emerald Empire (***Government***) • Healing, health, injury, or disease (***Medicine***) • Psychology, people's emotions and their motivations (***Sentiment***) • The spiritual realms, mystical beings and phenomena, and religious rites (***Theology***)	**Scholar Approaches** (*choose one*) • **Recall** it from memory (***Earth***) • **Survey** the surroundings for clues about it (***Water***) • **Theorize** possibilities of its nature (***Fire***) • **Analyze** a specific thing for details about it (***Air***) • **Sense** it with your instincts or a hunch (***Void***)
To influence a person (***Social Skill Group***)	**Social Skills** (*choose one*) • How to assert authority over others, especially of lower status (***Command***) • How to appeal formally to others, especially of higher status (***Courtesy***) • How to discuss and play games to socialize—and also be good a them (***Games***) • How to communicate with and influence an audience (***Performance***)	**Social Approaches** (*choose one*) • **Reason** with them to act based on logic and duty (***Earth***) • **Charm** them to develop positive feelings toward you (***Water***) • **Incite** them to act on their raw emotions and desires (***Fire***) • **Trick** them into believing something you want them to believe (***Air***) • **Enlighten** them to understand a fundamental truth (***Void***)
To get resources or perform work (***Trade Skill Group***)	**Trade Skills** (*choose one*) • Sales, trading, and speculation (***Commerce***) • Farming, construction, and production (***Labor***) • Sailing and living on the ocean (***Seafaring***) • Criminal organizations and activities, and their personnel (***Skulduggery***) • Living in the wilds beyond civilization (***Survival***)	**Trade Approaches** (*choose one*) • **Produce** what you need through your own physical toil (***Earth***) • **Exchange** one type of labor or resources for another (***Water***) • **Innovate** a new way to get what you need (***Fire***) • **Con** someone to get something for nothing (***Air***) • **Subsist** in your environment without disrupting it (***Void***)

MARTIAL SKILL GROUP

In theory, any samurai could be called to battle in service of their lord at any moment. In practice, only *bushi*, the martial members of the caste, are expected to march to war with any frequency, defending their homes or claim lands in the name of their lord.

Elemental Approaches for Martial Skills

Each approach of a Martial skill represents a tactical goal that a character can pursue while fighting or undertaking a related activity—maintaining a solid guard, moving fluidly, crushing a foe with unrelenting force, or others. The elemental approaches to Martial skills function as follows:

Feint Approach (Air Ring)

The Air approach to Martial skills is opportunistic and evasive, using agility and cunning to create and exploit openings. It vaults over obstacles gracefully, taking advantage of new positions the enemy did not expect.

A character uses **FEINT** when they want to evade oncoming force with minimal effort, move precisely and subtly, slip past a foe's defenses into an advantageous position, land acrobatically (and safely), or practice a technique that relies on grace above all else.

Withstand Approach (Earth Ring)

An Earth approach to a Martial skill focuses on solid basics, firm defenses, and simple, reliable tactics. A character practicing this approach moves through obstacles slowly and carefully, without risking harm.

A character uses **WITHSTAND** when they want to meet hardship head-on and shrug it off, move slowly and carefully, wear their foe down, lift and carry heavy objects, or practice a technique that relies on endurance above all.

Overwhelm Approach (Fire Ring)

The Fire approach to a Martial skill focuses on the use of direct and crushing force, against which no foe would dare stand firm.

A character uses **OVERWHELM** when they want to meet force with opposing force of their own, move rapidly and heedlessly, break objects and obstacles with brute might, force their foe to meet them head on, practice a technique that relies on power above all, or terrify an enemy through aggressive action.

Shift Approach (Water Ring)

The Water approach to a Martial skill focuses on meeting force with softness and softness with force. Instead of attempting to overcome a foe at their strongest point, the Shift approach relents until the moment the foe overextends, then turns to crushing power in an instant.

A character uses **SHIFT** when they want to redirect force rather than stop it, move via the most expedient path, use their foe's energy against them, slide through tight spaces or shifting crowds, or practice a technique that relies on flexibility above all.

Sacrifice Approach (Void Ring)

The Void approach to a Martial skill is formless, and it gives away no information. By being without form until the moment of action, it is entirely unpredictable.

A character uses **SACRIFICE** when they want to meet force without any resistance to create an opportunity, act unpredictably, move without regard to their own life, make an intentionally risky move to sow doubt in the opponent's mind, practice a technique that relies on centering oneself within the universe above all else, or leave the outcome of a strike to fate.

Martial Skills

Martial skills represent a character's experience at fighting, preparing for war, and making decisions on the battlefield.

Fitness

Fitness is a reflection of a samurai's capacity to perform feats of physical prowess and grace.

Martial Arts [Melee]

Martial Arts [Melee] deals with close combat using weapons, in both practice and theory.

Martial Arts [Ranged]

Martial Arts [Ranged] covers combat with thrown and projectile weapons, in both practice and theory.

Martial Arts [Unarmed]

Martial Arts [Ranged] covers combat with body parts (such as fists and feet) in both practice and theory, as well as some improvised weapons.

Meditation

Martial skills are defined by struggle, and for many warriors, the greatest struggle is the one within. Meditation is the skill that covers these battles fought in one's own mind, the skill used to process internal emotions, recover mental control when shocked, and resist confusion and supernatural influence of one's mind.

Tactics

Tactics governs leadership on the battlefield, from the general's tent to the front line, and reflects a character's awareness of the flow of battle and their ability to both stick to their orders and also seize opportunities that arise to greatest effect.

MINOR CLANS

In addition to the seven Great Clans and the Imperial Families, there are innumerable Minor Clans of samurai throughout Rokugan. None can match the Great Clans in power, prestige, or wealth, but they are still samurai and just as noble and honorable (usually) as those of the Great Clans.

SCHOLAR SKILL GROUP

Scholar skills revolve around acquiring, recalling, expanding, and leveraging the information that a character has absorbed over the course of their life.

Elemental Approaches for Scholar Skills

The elemental approaches of Scholar skills function as follows:

Analyze Approach (Air Ring)

The Air Ring frequently deals with nuances and subtleties, and therefore the Air approach to a Scholar skill, Analyze, focuses on uncovering and understanding details.

A character uses **ANALYZE** when they want to study the details of a physical object or idea, learn about a particular trait of a subject, infer something about a person from their countenance, their statement, or an object, find an object they know to be hidden in an area, search a small area in detail, or untangle an apparent contradiction.

Recall Approach (Earth Ring)

An Earth approach to a Scholar skill is thorough and detailed; it starts by establishing the fundamentals and then builds from there. Once a character has been prompted to discuss a topic, Recall allows them to draw forth facts that expand upon that topic and know which facts are relevant to the situation at hand.

A character uses **RECALL** when they want to remember and recite information, commit things to memory via rote memorization, create a detailed timeline of a topic to date, or pore over their own memories of something they observed firsthand.

Theorize Approach (Fire Ring)

Fire is creative and flashy, even in its approach to the Scholar skill. Theorize, the Fire approach for Scholar skills, is imaginative, and always sees the possibilities instead of the certainties.

A character uses **THEORIZE** when they want to connect the dots between two seemingly unrelated pieces of information, conjecture an explanation for a physical phenomenon or unexplained occurrence, brainstorm possible solutions to a problem, come up with a list of foreseeable outcomes of a future event, or determine that something is conspicuously missing from an area.

Survey Approach (Water Ring)

The Water Ring is practical and results-oriented. Survey, the Water approach to a Scholar skill, focuses on information as it pertains to the environment right in front of the thinker.

A character uses **SURVEY** when they want to identify something they are currently observing, become oriented in an environment, narrow their search for something to a small area, look for physical clues related to a topic in their surroundings, or perceive lurking threats in an area.



Sense Approach (Void Ring)

A Void approach to a Scholar skill is an attempt to look beyond worldly circumstances to see that physical appearances and even time are illusory. Sense, the Void approach to a Scholar skill, is rooted in an understanding that supernatural forces are at the root of the world and that what is yet to come is already written in what the viewer can observe now.

A character uses **SENSE** when they want to rely on their instincts and hunches for information, understand the spiritual ramifications of an action, predict the likelihood of a particular outcome to a future event, or sense a supernatural presence or influence in their vicinity.

Scholar Skills

Scholar skills are those for which the primary sphere of expertise is not practice in the physical sense, but a body of knowledge that must be acquired, maintained, and honed through academic study.

Culture

The Culture skill covers knowledge of the Emerald Empire's customs, traditions, trends, and practices.

Government

The daimyō of the samurai clans, who rule the various provinces of the Emerald Empire in the Emperor's name, must be part warlord, part courtier, and part bureaucrat, and they must act effectively in each of these spheres to maintain their rule. This encompasses a strong understanding of political machinations, a solid foundation in logistics, and a familiarity with Rokugan's strict and sometimes arcane legal system, which favors status rather than testimony and propriety over evidence.

Medicine

More practical in its application than some other Scholar skills, Medicine covers knowledge of the human body and its function.

However, Medicine is also a practiced art, and so it often behaves like an Artisan skill (using those approaches to apply the knowledge uncovered with the Scholar approaches). The following action related to the Medicine skill is available to all characters.

First Aid

Patching up cuts and bruises in the field is a key use of Medicine. As a Support action, a character may make a **TN 2 Medicine (Water) check** targeting a character at range 0–1 (including themself). If the healer succeeds, the target heals fatigue equal to 1 plus the healer's bonus successes but cannot benefit from the First Aid action again until they have been treated more thoroughly in a proper facility. The healer may spend ✵✵+ to affect one additional target per ✵✵ spent this way.

Sentiment

The Sentiment skill reflects a character's ability to understand the psychology and emotions of others. It is also used to see through lies—and understand why those lies are being told.

SEEING THROUGH LIES

Sentiment is the skill used to discern whether someone has lied to you, and each approach possesses a different means of doing this. However, remember that this is not the first defense a character has against being lied to—a character's vigilance sets the TN of an opponent's check to successfully lie to that character in the first place (see **Checks to Resist Effects**, on page 7). Therefore, most of the time, a character should not make a check to resist a lie with their Sentiment skill by default.

Theology

Theology covers knowledge of religious philosophy, doctrine, and practice. A character can use Theology to know about kami, the Fortunes, and the powers and deities associated with Shinseism and other religious traditions, as well as to perform supplications to these powers.

Theology is also the skill used for most invocations, the powerful appeals to the kami that shugenja make to wield astonishing elemental powers. Monks, courtiers, and even bushi also study Theology frequently, for a variety of personal and societal reasons.



SOCIAL SKILL GROUP

The Social skills relate to interpersonal interaction, and they reflect a character's degree of comfort and adroitness at dealing with others. Dedicated warriors must still be able to command their troops or provoke their enemies, and many people outside of the samurai class must be able to be as persuasive as any courtier to get by in life.

Elemental Approaches for Social Skills

Each Social skill represents a character's expertise at dealing with people in a certain context, and each approach dictates a set of results a character can produce when influencing others with that particular ring and skill pair. The elemental approaches of Social skills function as follows:

Trick Approach (Air Ring)

The Air Ring represents a character's subtle control over their outward countenance and choice of words, as well as their attention to the priorities and façades of others. Thus, the Air approach for a Social skill is Trick, and allows the character to lie, persuasively convey information, and draw out the faults and features of others from the subtle cues they display.

A character **TRICKS** someone when they want to get that character to believe something untrue, partially true, or only technically true, obscure a key truth from them, deflect their attention away from someone or something, convey an idea to the character in a deniable way, or imply something to them without stating it outright.

Reason Approach (Earth Ring)

The Earth Ring is cautious and grounded. When used with a Social skill to influence others, it is rational and conciliatory, counseling a slow, thoughtful approach to problems. A speaker using this approach appeals to reason and obligation rather than passion and desire, reminding the listener of their duties or the risks they face should they act rashly.

A character **REASONS** with someone when they want to convince that person to listen to reason rather than emotion, soothe that person's emotions, comfort that person, instill discipline in them, get that person to wait rather than act rashly, or convince someone to uphold an existing oath rather than pursue their personal desires.

Incite Approach (Fire Ring)

A Fire approach to a Social skill seeks to persuade through emotional appeals and charisma, rallying others around exciting or novel ideas by inflaming their existing passions, desires, and fears.

A character **INCITES** someone when they want to rouse that person's emotions (positively or negatively), get their attention, persuade them to listen to emotion rather than reason, get that person to ignore the potential consequences of a proposed plan, or get them to prioritize their existing desires over their oaths and responsibilities.

BUSHIDŌ: *MAKOTO*, SINCERITY AND INTEGRITY

A samurai does not merely speak with honesty. They must also live with sincerity, committing themselves fully to their ideals and to Bushidō, so that there is no division between thought and action. When a samurai commits to a course of action, they see it through completely and do not turn from the course.

INVESTIGATION

Investigation and intrigue are often an important aspect of the *Legend of the Five Rings*. As a result, there is no single skill used to perceive one's surroundings, as this would favor certain characters in a fundamental activity. Instead, any skill can be used to investigate the topic to which it pertains, using the approaches from the Scholar skill group, listed on this page.

For instance, a priest could use Theology (Void) to try to sense a disturbed spirit in their vicinity, or a skilled artisan could use Smithing (Air) to analyze a sword for telltale marks of use. The GM should be flexible with the players' suggestions about how they explore their environment, so long as they provide a solid rationale for their means of investigation!

If the GM needs to have characters notice a clue, they should determine how obscure the clue is, then have one of the characters with a high enough vigilance notice it (see page 11).



Charm Approach (Water Ring)

Flexibility and change are the domain of the Water Ring, and so, Charm, the Water approach for Social skills, revolves around fostering positive emotions in others toward oneself. This approach is frequently based around mutual understanding, sympathy, and shared feelings, or at least the facsimile of these.

A character **CHARMS** someone when they want to get that person to like them, build a pleasant rapport with them, offer sympathies to them, instill a new desire for something (or someone) in them, or win their sympathy.

Enlighten Approach (Void Ring)

A Void approach to a Social skill seeks to get others to evaluate the wider situation and state of existence. Enlighten, the Void approach to Social skills, allows a character to attempt to shake someone to their core, calling into question the person's fundamental truths.

A character **ENLIGHTENS** someone when they want to challenge that person's deeply held beliefs, force them to question a moral or philosophical truth they believe to be certain, cause that person to remember an experience they had forgotten (or wish to forget), or shock that person out of a stupor (mundane or supernatural).

Social Skills

Social skills represent a character's deftness and experience in dealing with other people in various contexts, from court to the battlefield.

Command

The Command skill is used to instill order, whether in court or on the battlefield. It is generally used with subordinates rather than peers or in the context of a clear command structure, as it revolves around telling others what to do (and, usually, expecting them to do it).

Courtesy

The essential Social skill of Rokugan's highest circles of power, the Courtesy skill represents a character's ability to influence others' opinions, persuade others to a course of action, outmaneuver their opponents, win arguments, steer a conversation in a desired direction, and deliver cunning put-downs—all without ever openly giving offense or stepping beyond the complex rules of Rokugani etiquette.

Games

Games are an important tool at court, serving as a vital outlet for the rivalries that develop in the highest circles of power and as an opportunity to maintain and develop relationships, especially outside of the strict confines that one's station would usually dictate.

Performance

The Performance skill pertains to the act of entertaining others with active arts, from song to dance to storytelling. Performances of sufficient caliber can help to bridge political divides, influence people to rethink their lives, or even set off artistic or political movements.

SUITING THE SKILL TO THE AUDIENCE

Rokugan's highly stratified society has specific rules for how people must address their superiors, peers, and subordinates. This means some skills work better when dealing with characters of different status levels.

When a character makes a Social skill check targeting another character, the GM can consider applying the following modifiers:

Courtesy: If the target is of higher status, reduce the TN by 1.

Command: If the target is of lower status, reduce the TN by 1.

Games/Performance: If the target has the same status, reduce the TN by 1.

TRADE SKILL GROUP

The majority of the populace of the Emerald Empire survive thanks to their skill at various trades, from farming to commerce to more specialized tasks like medicine and sailing. Samurai are generally not expected to gain expertise in such fields, but some find these skills too useful to ignore.

Elemental Approaches for Trade Skills

Each approach of a Trade skill is a means by which a character can extract resources from their environment or perform work of some kind that provides for their needs or those of society.

Con Approach (Air Ring)

The Air approach to a Trade skill revolves around understanding the value of things better than everyone else and then ruthlessly exploiting this advantage to get something for nothing.

A character uses **CON** when they want to sell a product for an amount higher than its common value, pick someone's pocket, falsify a manifest or other record, offer someone a bribe in a deniable fashion, or disguise a shipment of contraband as legal goods.

Produce Approach (Earth Ring)

The Earth approach for a Trade skill covers the activities a character must undertake to establish a foundation for living.

A character uses **PRODUCE** when they want to harvest resources from their environment, mass-produce items related to their trade, repair or maintain trade equipment, build and repair foundations and basic structures, or create records or tallies of their work.

Innovate Approach (Fire Ring)

The Fire approach for a Trade skill allows a character to use creativity and drive to make their work easier, create new things, or find new ways to solve problems.

A character uses **INNOVATE** when they want to create a novel product or service, develop a new tool for their trade, find new uses for a product or new applications for a service, or expand to new markets.

Exchange Approach (Water Ring)

The Water approach for a Trade skill revolves around finding things and making acquisitions—of basic supplies, of commodities, and of customers.

A character uses **EXCHANGE** when they want to purchase items related to their trade at the best price, barter goods or services for other goods or services, or track down specific items within a marketplace.

Subsist Approach (Void Ring)

A Void approach centers around finding the resources that already exist and using them only as much as needed.

A character uses **SUBSIST** when they want to live in harmony with their natural surroundings rather than try to change them, instinctively know what changes will occur in their environment, or know whether an activity will help their chances of survival or not.

Trade Skills

Trade skills are the means by which most people of the Emerald Empire make their livelihoods.

Commerce

The Commerce skill covers the buying and selling of goods for a profit, as well as related activities.

Labor

From farming to construction to simple ditch-digging, there are countless tasks that must be completed for the Emerald Empire to continue functioning.

Seafaring

Though many Rokugani live their whole lives without seeing the ocean, it has an enormous impact on the entire country, far beyond its shores and inlets.

Skulduggery

Criminal elements exist in every major city, and often outside of them in the form of bandits and other dispossessed individuals who eke out a living at the expense of others. Skulduggery also includes the craft of spies, for while their goals may be different than those of petty criminals, many of the tricks they use are similar.

Survival

Samurai tend to have only a passing familiarity with this sort of subsistence living, though some clans and schools—in particular, the Dragon, given their rugged environs, and the Unicorn, with their love of travel and the hunt—encourage their members to learn basic proficiency at survival in the wild.



"LOW" SKILLS

Trade skills pertain largely to the tasks of the common people of the Emerald Empire, and though they are not intrinsically dishonorable or inglorious, some of them are considered inappropriate for privileged individuals such as samurai to perform for themselves in many contexts.

When at court, for example, discussing money in any but the most clandestine terms is terribly uncouth, and directly buying or selling items would be quite unacceptable. Similarly, a samurai would not want to be seen doing manual labor in most aspects—though on the battlefield, personally assisting in reinforcing a defensive barricade might become a necessity due to circumstances.

CHAPTER 3: Equipment

Samurai must rely on more than their own wits and prowess to secure their lord's interests on the battlefields or in the courts. Countless arms, armor, and implements of war have been devised to suit any and every combat situation, while the courtier has an arsenal of their own to maintain, including clothing and jewelry, art and artist's tools, and other signifiers of status. More important than the tools themselves, however, are the hands that have wielded them—the most precious items aren't the most expensive to create, but rather the ones that have figured in the lives and legends of great samurai.

BUYING ITEMS

As a downtime action or during a narrative scene in which a character has access to a market, an armory, or a similar location, the character can purchase the item for its listed price, attempt to get the merchant to seek restitution from their lord's local representative, or otherwise attempt to acquire the item. The standard currencies in the Emerald Empire starts with the copper zeni. Ten zeni equal one silver bu, and five bu equal one gold koku.

WEAPONS

It is said that the sword is "the soul of the samurai," and indeed katana are the weapons most commonly used by the warriors of the Great Clans. Nevertheless, countless martial traditions have been founded around the use of other weapons. To help differentiate them from one another mechanically, weapons have the following attributes:

Name: The name of the weapon.

Skill: The specific skill used to wield the weapon.

Range: The distance in range bands at which an attacker can hit a target with the weapon. Generally a single number (e.g., "1") or a range of values (e.g., "1–2"). Note that range is both a maximum and a minimum; a target closer than the lowest listed value of a weapon's range cannot be attacked with that weapon.

Damage: The base number of fatigue inflicted by a hit from the weapon. Many Attack (Weapon) actions inflict this number of fatigue plus additional fatigue equal to the number of bonus successes scored on the successful combat check.

Grips: The different ways to wield the weapon. If a weapon has multiple grips listed, each may have one or more additional effects or alterations to the profile that the grip applies to the weapon. Whenever a character readies a weapon, they must choose one of its grips to use. A character may switch between grips whenever they have the opportunity to ready a weapon.

Special Qualities: Any abnormal effects not covered by a weapon's profile. These qualities frequently relate more to the wearing of the weapon than the wielding of it, and they distinguish battlefield armaments from accoutrements appropriate in polite company.

A SAMURAI'S DAISHŌ

Throughout this section, you'll likely see mention of a daishō (pronounced "DYE-show"). This is a katana and wakizashi, a longsword and a short sword, wielded by a single samurai and sometimes forged at the same time as a pair. The katana is the bushi's weapon, while the wakizashi signifies that the bearer is a member of the samurai caste. While courtiers and shugenja carry *wakizashi* and are not forbidden from carrying katana, most do not bother to do so—after all, their duty is not usually to fight with weapons, but instead to support their lord in other ways. Bushi generally carry both, but few wield both at the same time, instead using the blade that is better suited to the circumstances of an engagement.

Some bushi substitute another weapon (usually a sword) for a katana in their daishō. The *chokutō*, the straight-edged predecessor to the *tachi* and eventually the katana, is favored by many blade-masters of the Phoenix Clan, while members of the Unicorn Clan often wield a scimitar. Mirumoto duelists are known for using a katana and wakizashi together, but some specialize in other paired weapons, including hook swords, *dao*, or even a *jian* paired with an open hand.

ARMOR

To defend against the many threats leveled against them, samurai have taken to armoring themselves with a wide variety of components, as well as non-protective garb worn for status or travel.

To mechanically differentiate the types of armor, armor has the following attributes:

Name: The name of the armor.

Special Qualities: Any nonstandard effects not covered by an armor's profile.

SPECIAL QUALITIES OF EQUIPMENT

Samurai are warriors, but not all weapons and armor are appropriate for all situations. As such, weapons and armor have qualities that pertain to their appropriateness in various contexts, as described here. Wearing a weapon in the wrong context might merely be a faux pas in some circumstances, but it can be a declaration of war in others.

Ceremonial

Ceremonial gear, from tokens to ornate armor, are indicative of the wearer's rank.

When a character makes a check to ascertain information about an item with the Subtle quality (or a person wearing it) increase the TN of the check by 1.

When a character makes a check to convince others of their identity, if they are wearing the appropriate Ceremonial item openly (such as a robe with the symbol of the Emerald Magistrate if they are, in fact, an Emerald Magistrate), they reduce the TN of the check by 1.

Concealable

Some weapons and armor are easy to hide on one's person, due to size or a design that incorporates them into another, more innocuous item.

Unless explicitly worn openly or revealed for use, a Concealable item is assumed to be hidden. When observing the wearer of a hidden item, a character must succeed at a **TN 3 Design (Air)** or **Smithing (Air) check** to discern that the wearer is armed or armored.

Armor with the Concealable quality can be worn underneath robes and other loose-fitting clothes.



NATURAL WEAPONS

Natural weapons are a part of one's body, and thus cannot be conveniently removed. They always count as being readied unless the character has been bound in some way.

The Natural quality cannot be applied to weapons unless they are actually a part of one's body, and as the GM, you are the arbiter of whether and how this applies.

Concealable weapons can also be drawn more quickly in combat. Whenever a character selects their stance during a conflict, they may ready or sheathe 1 Concealable weapon.

Cumbersome

This item is extremely heavy or unwieldy.

When a character makes a check to involving moving or repositioning themselves (such as a Fitness check to run quickly or climb a wall), if they are wearing Cumbersome armor, or carrying one or more Cumbersome weapons or other items, they increase the TN of the check by 1.

In addition, if a character moved during their turn, they increase the TN of Attack action checks while using a Cumbersome weapon by 1.

Mundane

Mundane items are objects that are found in all contexts of daily life. As such, they are permitted in most social circumstances, and people from any stratum of society are allowed to wear them openly.

MONEY IN ROKUGAN

The main denomination of currency in Rokuga is the koku, *this being a unit of currency that can buy enough rice to feed someone for a year. There are five silver* bu *per 1 gold koku, and 10 copper* zeni *per bu. As examples, 2 zeni can buy a tatami floormat, 1 bu can buy a bottle of sake or a brazier, and 1 koku can buy a nice tea set.*

Money is something that samurai rarely need care about, as their lord and clan will take care of concerns such as food, shelter, weapons, armor, and other necessities. Currency can, though, be used for secretive dealings, furtive purchases, and even trade. Samurai are not supposed to care about trade and similar matters, but this is yet another conflict between proper behavior and reality in Rokugan.

Table 3–1: Weapons

NAME	RANGE	DAMAGE	GRIPS	SPECIAL QUALITIES	PRICE
WEAPONS THAT USE THE MARTIAL ARTS (MELEE) SKILL					
Bō (staff)	1–2	6	2-handed: –	Mundane	2 bu
Bokken (training sword)	1	3	1-handed: – 2-handed: Damage +2	Mundane	1 bu
Chōkutō ("straight sword")	0–1	4	1-handed: –	Ceremonial	20 koku
Club	0–1	5	1-handed: – 2-handed: Damage +1	Mundane	1 bu
Jitte (baton with hook)	1	1	1-handed: –	Concealable, Snaring	5 bu
Katana (sword)	1	4	1-handed: – 2-handed: Damage +2	Ceremonial, Razor-Edged	20 koku
Kusari-Gama ("chain-sickle")	1	3	2-handed: Range 2–3	Concealable, Snaring, Wargear	5 koku
Naginata (pole weapon)	2	6	2-handed: –	Cumbersome, Wargear, Razor-Edged	10 koku
Nodachi ("field sword")	1–2	5	2-handed: –	Ceremonial, Razor-Edged	20 koku
Ōtsuchi (warhammer)	0–1	9	2-handed: –	Cumbersome, Wargear	30 koku
Shuriken (throwing star)	0	2	1-handed (stab/slash): – 1-handed (thrown): Martial Arts [Ranged], Range 1–3	Concealable	1 koku
Tantō (knife)	0	2	1-handed: – 2-handed: Damage +2	Concealable, Mundane, Razor-Edged	1 koku
Tetsubō ("iron club")	1	8	2-handed: –	Cumbersome, Wargear	20 koku
Unicorn Scimitar	1	4	1-handed: –	—	20 koku
Wakizashi (short sword)	0–1	3	1-handed: – 2-handed: Damage +2	Ceremonial, Razor-Edged	15 koku
Yari (spear)	2	5	2-handed: –	Wargear	5 koku
WEAPONS THAT USE THE MARTIAL ARTS (RANGED) SKILL					
Yumi (bow)	2–5	5	2-handed: –	–	3 koku
WEAPONS THAT USE THE MARTIAL ARTS (UNARMED) SKILL					
Improvised Weapon	0–1	1	1-handed: – 2-handed: Damage +2	Mundane, Concealable	–
Unarmed	0–1	1	Punch: Snaring Kick: Range 1, Damage +2 Bite: Range 0, Damage +1	Natural	–

READIED WEAPONS

A readied weapon is a weapon that a character is prepared to use, either offensively or defensively. A character may ready a weapon at will during narrative time, or as an action during a conflict scene. When a character has the opportunity to ready weapons, they may choose any number of weapons at range 0–1 that they can hold at once. For most characters, the maximum number of readied weapons is a pair of 1-handed grip weapons (one in each hand) or a single 2-handed grip weapon.

SHEATHED WEAPONS

Sheathed weapons are those on a character's person, properly stowed for quick access but not yet readied for use. A character can sheathe a weapon at will during narrative time, or as an action during a conflict scene. Some techniques, such as *iaijutsu* (the art of drawing and cutting with a katana or wakizashi in a single move), refer to whether a weapon begins sheathed or not.

RAZOR-EDGED

Rokugani swordsmiths prize their ability to forge especially honed edges that swordmasters can put to extremely deadly effect.

Whenever a character inflicts a critical strike with a Razor-Edged weapon, the target suffers the Bleeding condition (see page 38) in addition to any other effects. Note that this weapon quality isn't included for katanas used in *The Topaz Championship* adventure to keep the rules easier to understand. It's up to you whether you add this quality back to such weapons as they continue their adventures. Weapons with razor-edges are very deadly (as they should be!) and can cause an enemy to fall very quickly.

RESISTANCE (X)

Armor offers physical protection, and the greatest of samurai armor, such as the Plated Armor worn by warriors of the Crab Clan, can deflect even mighty blows.

When a character wearing armor with the Resistance (X) quality would suffer damage from a physical source, they reduce the amount of damage they suffer by the value of X (to a minimum of 0). A character can only wear one item with the Resistance quality at a time.

Note that supernatural sources of harm (such as kihō and invocations) ignore resistance.

SACRED

Items with the Sacred quality are imbued with purifying power—often in the form of jade, the mystical stone said to be the tears shed by Amaterasu, the goddess of the sun and protector of humanity against the terror of the night. Such items are anathema to the creatures of the Shadowlands and other horrors that prey upon humanity, and they can banish even powerful creatures of darkness.

Characters carrying a Sacred item ignore the effects of the Defiled terrain quality (see page 36).

When a supernatural creature makes a check targeting the wearer of one or more Sacred items, increase the TN of the check by 1.

SNARING

These flexible (or, in some cases, harshly curved) weapons are excellent for snaring, grabbing, and disarming.

When performing an Attack check with a Snaring weapon, a character may spend ✲ ✲ to inflict the Prone condition (see page 39) on one target.

SUBTLE

An item with the Subtle quality is made to appear as if it were a Mundane item and ideally will not stand out.

When a character makes a check to ascertain information about an item with the Subtle quality (or a person wearing it) increase the TN of the check by 1.

WARGEAR

Implements with the Wargear quality are at home on battlegrounds, but in few other contexts—and are decidedly inappropriate for most social situations. Wearing Wargear openly makes people nervous, which in turn impedes negotiations and other attempts at reconciliation between aggrieved groups.

Whenever a character suffers one or more strife due to the actions of someone wearing one or more Wargear items, they suffer that amount of strife plus one instead.

TABLE 3–2: ARMOR

NAME	SPECIAL QUALITIES	PRICE
Ceremonial Clothes	Ceremonial	1 koku
Concealed Armor	Concealable, Resistance (2)	5 kok
Sanctified Robes	Ceremonial, Sacred	2 koku
Traveling Clothes	Mundane	2 bu
Inconspicuous Garb	Mundane, Subtle	2 bu
Ashigaru Armor	Wargear, Resistance (3)	5 koku
Lacquered Armor	Ceremonial, Cumbersome, Wargear, Resistance (4)	25 koku
Plated Armor	Cumbersome, Wargear, Resistance (5)	40 koku

AMMUNITION

As long as a character has a quiver of arrows available, they are assumed not to run out of standard ammunition. If a character goes an especially long time without having a reasonable opportunity to refill their quiver (such as when visiting a guard outpost or a castle with an armory), the GM may state that the quiver is running low, with only 3 standard arrows remaining. The character then gains 1 Void point.

A character can refill a depleted quiver by visiting a location where they can purchase a fresh supply of arrows (for 20 zeni), or by making arrows using the Survival skill if the character has the proper supplies like a bowyer's kit.

EQUIPMENT

While it may seem that clan samurai live only for battle, their lives are richer and more complex than they may seem at first glance. Aside from their daishō and armor, samurai require a number of items to meet their needs and make their lives more comfortable, edifying, and enjoyable.

Bowyer's Kit (Price: 2 Bu)

This set of small knives and sharpening tools allows a skilled samurai to craft new arrows from branches and feathers. When in a wooded area, a character may make a **TN 2 Survival (Earth) check** to replenish a depleted quiver.

Finger of Jade (Price: 5 Koku)

A finger of jade is a length of the precious green stone worn about the neck on a thong to ward off the corrupting effects of the Taint. It counts as having the Sacred quality. This protection is only temporary, as the longer the jade is exposed to the Taint, the more corrupt it becomes. As the jade absorbs the Taint, it slowly softens and turns black.

A finger of jade has the Sacred special quality.

Poison (1 Vial) (Price: 2 Bu)

In the courts of the Emerald Empire, the wheels of politics are sometimes turned by unsavory means. The Scorpion Clan is certainly not above using poison to weaken or eliminate political rivals—not that one could ever prove their culpability—and many samurai turn to such measures in times of desperation or fear.

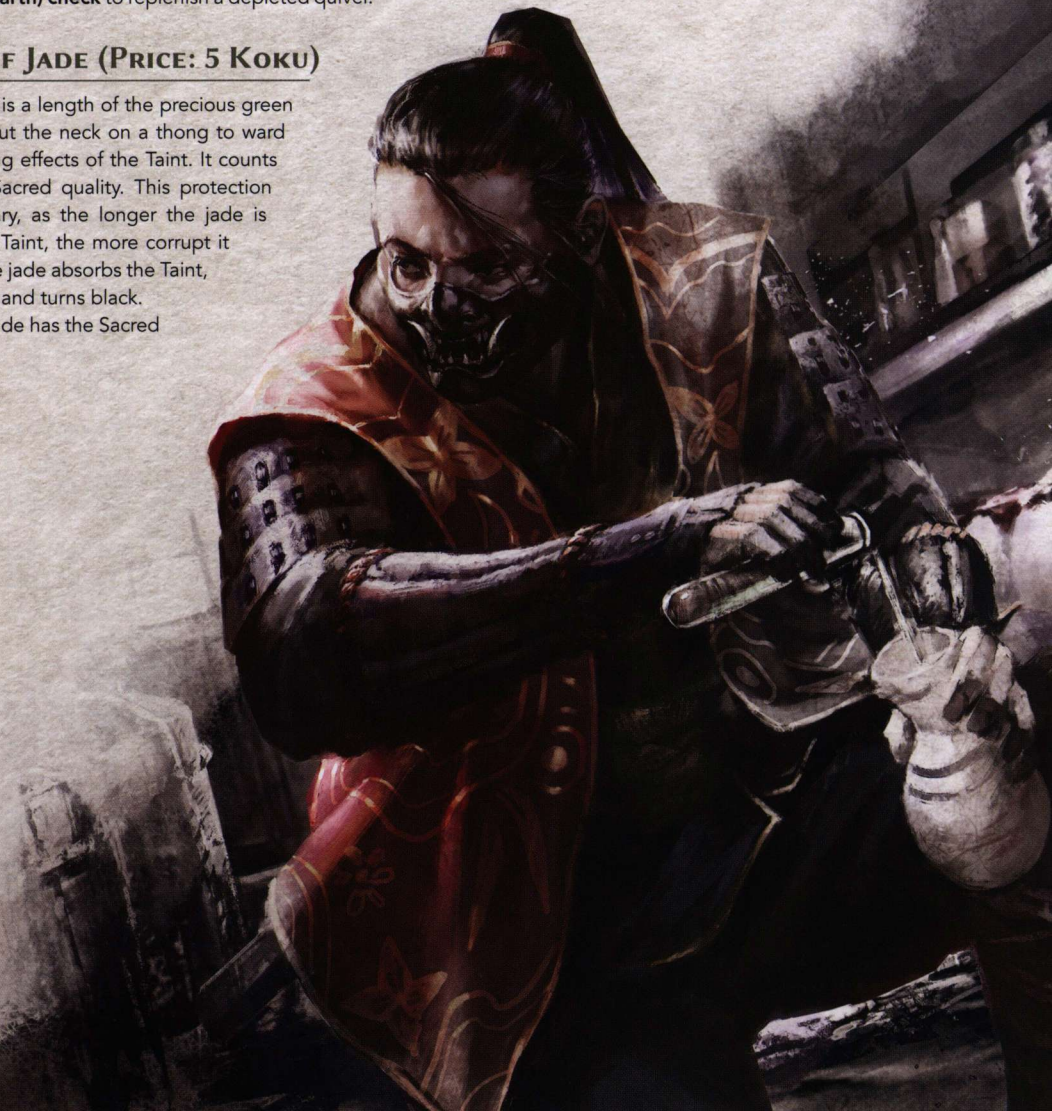
When a character is poisoned, they suffer a critical strike (see page 38). As an action, a character may make a **TN 1 Medicine (Earth) check** to properly (and safely) apply a poison to a weapon. Only a single poison can be applied to a weapon at a time. A poison applied to a weapon remains effective until after the weapon is used to perform a successful Attack action.

Additional Equipment

- Calligraphy Set (Price: 1 bu)
- Medicine Kit (10 uses) (Price: 2 bu)
- Tent (Small) (Price: 1 koku)
- Tent (Yurt/Large) (Price: 10 koku)
- Traveling Rations (1 Meal) (Price: 5 zeni)

I COULDN'T POSSIBLY ACCEPT

One tradition in Rokugani culture is that when given a gift, the recipient must politely refuse, expressing how they are unworthy of such a fine present. This doesn't mean they actually refuse, of course. The gift giver must offer again, and again a third time before the recipient can accept with everyone's honor satisfied.



CHAPTER 4: Scenes and Conflicts

Players in the *Legend of the Five Rings Roleplaying Game* use their characters to explore Rokugan, navigate the opposing demands of ninjō and giri, advance themselves and their clan, and preserve the Emerald Empire. In each game, their characters operate in scenes where conflict takes place, and each is an opportunity to display their honor and glory.

GAME SESSIONS

In the *Legend of the Five Rings Roleplaying Game*, a **GAME SESSION** is a period of time during which the GM and players gather to venture into the imaginary realm of Rokugan to pursue stories of adventure, intrigue, and drama together. Each session can be broken down into one or more scenes, which are the anecdotes within the group's shared story during which players have their characters explore the world, overcome obstacles, and deepen their relationships with each other.

SCENES

A **SCENE** is a portion of a game session. Much like a scene in a book or film, it continuously follows one or more characters as they engage in some activity. The GM decides when a scene begins and when it ends. At the outset of a scene, the GM should furnish some basic details of what is going on to the players to help ground them in the upcoming activity. At the end of a scene, the GM might want to provide a bit of denouement, or some additional details that help transition to the next scene.

Each scene encompasses a set of related events during which characters undertake tasks and move the story forward. There are three types of scenes: narrative scenes, downtime scenes, and conflict scenes. Each type of scene is best suited to a particular set of story activities, as described in this section.

NARRATIVE SCENES

NARRATIVE SCENES constitute a large portion of game-play. These are scenes in which PCs interact with their environment, each other, and non-player characters (NPCs) in an unstructured manner. Most narrative scenes have a narrow focus and take place over a relatively short period of time, from a few minutes to a few hours of game-world time.

At their heart, narrative scenes are an opportunity for roleplaying. The participants might be a mix of NPCs and PCs, or a narrative scene might take place exclusively between the PCs. During these scenes, the GM should encourage the players to speak in character if they wish, and to describe their specific actions in addition to their overall goals.

As the players make choices (and checks, when appropriate) for their characters, the GM reveals the details of the scene to them and reacts to their choices and actions. The example of play used in the *Read This First* booklet is a great illustration of a narrative scene; though there is plenty of action, there is no actual conflict to resolve.

During these scenes, the GM need not track the order of actions, nor the exact flow of time. If the order of actions becomes important, the GM should transition the scene to a conflict scene. If the group has exhausted roleplaying options for the scene, but the activity continues in the story, the GM can transition the scene to a downtime scene, allowing the PCs to pursue goals in an abstract manner rather than calling for the players to narrate their every word and action.

DOWNTIME SCENES

DOWNTIME SCENES can be as short as a few hours of rest or as long as a journey from Otosan Uchi to the Kaiu Wall. Generally, downtime scenes have low dramatic stakes, though they can still be extremely important to the narrative arcs of the characters and overall story. During a downtime scene, time is not regimented formally; instead, the GM and players should choose to roleplay only the moments that matter, treating these anecdotes as narrative scenes that intersperse the downtime scene. A journey might last weeks, but contain only a few individual interactions that the players and Game Master wish to act out as narrative scenes.

Characters can be called upon to make checks during downtime scenes, based on their desired activities or circumstances that the GM introduces. However, if the order and economy of actions becomes important, the GM should switch the scene to a conflict scene.

Downtime scenes are also an excellent opportunity for roleplaying, but they lend themselves better to characters pursuing their big-picture goals. If a player wishes to jump into a more interpersonal interaction between their character and someone else in the downtime scene, the GM should consider briefly shifting the scene to a narrative scene.

Downtime Activities

During each downtime scene, each player chooses one or more **DOWNTIME ACTIVITIES** that their character is pursuing. Downtime activities are meant to help give players clear options for their characters during downtime scenes.

What Can Be Accomplished in a Downtime Scene?

Not all activities are suitable to all downtime scenes. For example, a downtime scene that consists of an hour or two before the player characters storm a castle to rescue a friend would accommodate one PC gathering necessary supplies for the break-in (a ladder, rope, and disguises) or another's efforts to gather local malcontents to assist in the effort. However, the same downtime scene would likely not be long enough for another PC to forge a sword, as this is an extremely time-intensive process. As in all matters, the GM is the final arbiter of whether an activity can reasonably be completed during a particular downtime scene.

CONFLICT STRUCTURE

When two or more characters are acting in opposition to one another over an extended period of time, the GM may call for a conflict scene. If the contest can be resolved with a brief interaction, then it should be resolved with a check and a check to resist or with a competitive check (both are covered on page 7).

There are two primary types of conflicts, **SKIRMISHES** and **INTRIGUES**. Each uses the same core framework but has unique rules for the options characters can pursue and for its resolution. This section also includes rules for **DUELS**, which are not a full conflict of their own, but can sometimes occur during conflicts (or other scenes).

- **Skirmishes:** From pitched battles between rival factions to targeted raids against enemy clans, skirmishes tend to be chaotic, small-scale battles with a few combatants on each side.
- **Duels:** Duels can occur in skirmishes when a champion calls out their opposite for single combat, or they can occur outside of battle when a matter cannot be resolved with will, wits, and rhetoric alone. In such cases, honor sometimes demands that a samurai seek resolution by drawing steel.
- **Intrigues:** The most impactful conflicts in all of Rokugan are often the words traded between high-ranking samurai—or, at least, they begin with those words.

STRUCTURED TIME

Conflicts take place during **STRUCTURED TIME**, in which characters act in a set order, and they are limited in what they can accomplish before the other characters have the chance to respond. Some conflicts also track the relative positions of the characters involved in the space they occupy, albeit in an abstracted manner. If a scene does not require this level of detail on who is acting when and where, it should likely be handled as a narrative scene (see page 27) or a downtime scene (on the same page) instead.

LENGTH OF SCENES IN REAL TIME

As the GM, it's up to you to decide where one scene ends and a new one begins, based on both narrative time and real-time considerations. Individual scenes should usually last from half an hour to three hours, though you can end a scene at any time you see fit or extend one as needed. Remember that your PCs regain the use of certain abilities and remove strife at the end of a scene, so ending a scene allows characters a chance to refresh slightly.

CONFLICT BREAKDOWN

The following section provides details on how a conflict scene is resolved. All conflicts follow this form, though some individual conflict types have rules that simulate unique parts of the scenario they represent.

Phase 1: Determine Initiative

At the beginning of any conflict, the GM begins by describing the scene to the hero players. This lets them learn about the unfolding situation and identify possible plans of action for the scene. Each player can take this opportunity to ask the GM questions they have about the surroundings.

Then, each character makes an **INITIATIVE CHECK**.

Initiative Checks

At the start of a conflict scene, each participating character makes an Initiative check. If the order in which characters make their Initiative checks is for any reason relevant, the character with the highest honor makes their check first, followed by the other characters in descending order of their honor.

Each type of conflict uses a skill for its Initiative check, as listed below.

- **Skirmish:** TN 1 Tactics check.
- **Intrigue:** TN 1 Sentiment check.

If a character succeeds on their initiative check, they can ready one weapon or do another simple task to prepare for the coming conflict. If a character fails, they are caught flat-footed and cannot take this preparatory measure.

A character can use any ring for their check, and it determines the stance (see page 29) they will enter at the start of the conflict.

There are also several special ways that characters can spend ✿ on initiative checks based on ring, which can be found in the table **Example Ways of Spending ✿**, located on the back of this book. These often focus around adding details to the scene like terrain, objects in the environment, and weaknesses of foes.

Determine Initiative Values

A character's initiative values is always generated in one of two ways, regardless of whether a character succeeded or failed:

- If a character is prepared for the conflict, the character uses the value of their focus attribute plus any bonus successes from the check.
- If a character is not prepared for the conflict (such as when ambushed or caught by surprise), the character uses the value of their vigilance attribute plus any bonus successes from the check.

Set Initiative Order

Usually, the character with the highest initiative value acts first during **Phase 2: Take Turns**, and then the rest of the characters act in descending order of initiative.

After each character resolves their Initiative check, that character enters the stance associated with the ring they used for the check.

Phase 2: Take Turns

After characters have gotten their bearings in the scene, play proceeds to this phase, during which characters can use the many means at their disposal to pursue victory in the conflict. In a duel, this might mean trading sword strokes or unleashing powerful elemental invocations, while in an intrigue scene, it likely means making verbal arguments and setting one's schemes into motion.

The characters involved in the conflict now act in the initiative order over a series of rounds. The number of rounds the characters should play out before proceeding to **Phase 3: Resolution** is defined in the description for each type of conflict.

Rounds

Before any character acts during **Step 2: Perform Actions**, a new round begins. Any effects that occur "at the beginning of the round" resolve.

Then, starting with the character with the highest initiative and descending in order, each character takes one turn each round.

After the last character in the initiative order ends their turn, the round ends, and any effects that occur "at the end of the round" resolve. Then, the GM declares either that the conflict has ended (in which case, the conflict proceeds to **Phase 3: Resolution**) or that it has not ended (in which case, the participants repeat **Step 2: Perform Actions**, beginning a new round). Certain types of conflict stipulate a specific number of rounds, while others can rage on until the characters achieve their objectives.

Turns

During a character's turn, the character performs the following steps:

Step 1: Beginning of Turn

When a character's turn begins, that character becomes the active character. Any effects that occur "at the beginning of the character's turn" resolve at this point.

Step 2: Set Stance

Next, the character sets their **STANCE**. This is a character's poise, footwork, tact, or some combination of the above depending on what the conflict entails. It is the primary means of repositioning on the battlefield, in addition to dictating the sorts of Attack actions characters can perform. In a social setting, stance instead pertains to body language, tone, and physical positioning.

Each turn, a character can remain in the stance they were already in or switch to a new stance. Because stance influences a character's action, players should give a brief bit of additional description when declaring their stance, to reflect the action they intend to perform from that stance.

ONCE PER SESSION ABILITIES AND EFFECTS

Some abilities can be used "once per game session," and some effects apply "until the end of the game session." Such abilities and effects are written assuming a session that lasts from two to four hours. As the GM, you might find yourself running much shorter or longer game sessions (assuming player attention and the supply of snacks hold out). If you do, you may want to consider refreshing such abilities more or less frequently. For instance, you could treat a pair of one-hour-long opportunities to play as a single "game session" for the purposes of such effects, or break an eight-hour marathon session into two "game sessions." You should always feel free to use real-time hours to define a "game session," as long as you communicate these divisions clearly to the players.

In addition to determining which ring a character uses for the action they perform during **Step 2: Perform Action** and for any other checks they make while in that stance, each stance confers a passive benefit during a conflict, as described in **Table 4–1: Stances and Effects**, on page 30.

As part of setting a stance, a character may set the grip with which they are wielding a weapon (see page 22). A character may also drop any number of items on the ground. Readying a new weapon requires an action, however.

Step 3: Perform Action

After setting their stance, a character may perform one **ACTION**. The actions that a character can perform are determined by the sort of conflict they are engaged in, but most actions involve a check. When making a check as part of an action, the character must use the ring associated with their stance. To choose an action that stipulates a specific ring, the character must be in the matching stance. A character can also move some distance (narratively or in specific increments, depending on the way the conflict type handles movement) before or after performing an action.

Some actions are focused around speech, and thus a character can say as much as the GM deems reasonable in that time. However, as a part of any action, a character may always speak up to five words (or six words, as long as the last word is "fool" or a similarly dismissive form of address).

Step 4: End of Turn

After a character performs an action and completes any associated activities (such as movement in a skirmish), the turn ends. Any effects that occur "at the end of the character's turn" resolve at this point. The character ceases to be the active character, and the turn or the next character in the initiative order begins.

Phase 3: Resolution (Conflict Ends)

Once the characters involved have completed their objectives (or definitively failed to do so), the conflict has reached an obvious end, or the GM feels that the scene should naturally draw to a close, the conflict concludes. Any effects that occur "at the end of the conflict" resolve at this point. Play proceeds to a new scene as directed by the GM.

Table 4–1: Stances and Effects

NAME	DESCRIPTION	EFFECTS
Air Stance	You move into a stance that favors mobility, circling around your opponents gracefully while their attacks slide harmlessly past you.	Increase the TN of Attack and Scheme checks targeting you by 1.
Earth Stance	You concentrate on your foundation, employing tactics that keep you rooted and defended while you await the exact right moment to act.	When making Attack and Scheme checks that target you, other characters cannot spend ✵ to inflict critical strikes or conditions on you.
Fire Stance	You go on the attack, bearing down on your foes and trusting your momentum to carry you forward to victory.	When you succeed on a check, you count as having 1 additional bonus success for each ⟲ result on your check.
Water Stance	You remain flexible, ready to adapt as the situation demands or turn your opposition's force against them.	During your turn, you may perform 1 additional action that does not require a check. You cannot perform the same action twice this way during a single turn.
Void Stance	You assume a centered stance in which you clear your mind of distractions and allow the universe to act through you.	You do not suffer strife from ⟲ results.

Resolving an Action

Actions are the main way that characters interact with others and the environment during a conflict. Hero players and GMs can work together come up with new actions for their unique circumstances, and each type of conflict provides a number of example actions available to all characters to provide guidelines on what can be accomplished in a single action.

When a character has the opportunity to perform an action, the action occurs in the following order:

Step 1: Declare Action

The character declares that they are performing the action (either an action of their own creation, that the GM has approved, or an example action provided by the relevant conflict), and what they generally intend to accomplish with it. If the action lists one or more targets, the character must choose those targets. The target of an action is also considered to be the target of any check associated with that action.

Step 2: Make Check

If the entry for the action specifies a check, the character makes the listed check using the ring matching their current stance. When performing this action, the character may spend ✵ to resolve any listed **NEW OPPORTUNITIES**, in addition to the usual uses of ✵.

A check made as part of an action is described as an "Action Type" check. For example, the check to smite a wretched goblin with one's katana would be described as "an Attack check using the katana, targeting the goblin."

Step 3: Resolve Effects

Then, the character resolves the effects of the action. Each paragraph in the "effects" section of the action denotes a single, distinct effect, which are resolved in the order they appear in that action.

Step 4: End Action

Any effects that occur "after a character performs an action" resolve.

Action Types

Each action has one or more types:

- **ATTACK** actions are actions that a character can use to inflict harm on another character. An Attack action always specifies at least one target, who suffers the listed effects if the character succeeds at performing the action.
- **SCHEME** actions allow a character to attempt to influence targets with whom they can communicate, manipulating them, wearing them down, or bringing them around to a different point of view.
- **MOVEMENT** actions are actions that allow a character to reposition themself in their environment.
- **SUPPORT** actions build up the character's position or aid others, protecting them or helping them to set up for their own actions.

SKIRMISHES

Skirmishes are pitched battles between limited numbers of combatants. This type of conflict can represent anything from a clash of scouting forces before a mass battle, to a teahouse raid that involves a few dozen combatants, to a pitched battle between a few individuals in an alleyway. Duels have formalized rules in Rokugan, but in a skirmish, the winner is simply the one who survives, whatever that might require.

Initiative Check

For a skirmish, the Initiative check is a **TN 1 Tactics check** to gain a read on the battlefield conditions and enemy.

Initiative Order

Characters act in descending order of their initiative value for the scene.

If two or more characters tie for initiative, player characters act before NPCs. If there are still ties, the character with the lowest honor acts first, then the other tied characters act in ascending order of honor.

Phase 2: Take Turns

During this phase of a skirmish, the characters fight for their lives!

Rounds

Each character takes one turn each round in the order dictated by the characters' initiative values.

Skirmishes do not have a fixed round limit. However, when things are clearly going badly for one side, many combatants will retreat and regroup. If a warrior believes they have a chance to escape and survive, most will not voluntarily choose to fight to the death. Honor forfeited when retreating can be regained, but an ignoble death is more enduring.

Turns

During their turn in a skirmish, a character can do the following:

- **Choose Stance**
- **Perform 1 Action**
- **Move up to 1 range band (before or after performing an action)**
- **End Turn**

Stances

During a skirmish, stances govern a character's physical posture. When setting their stance during a skirmish, a character may also adjust their grip on a weapon they have already readied (see **Grips** on page 22).

Movement and Positioning

Of all conflict types, skirmishes make the most detailed use of the range bands, as described on page 36.

Movement

Once during their turn, before or after performing an action, a character may move 1 range band. A character may move additional range bands as an action via the Maneuver action (see page 32).

Range Bands

In skirmishes, range bands are used to measure the distances between characters, objects, and positions on the battlefield. See page 36 for more information.

BUSHIDŌ: YŪ, HEROIC COURAGE

A samurai lives three feet from death at all times. Only fear of death can destroy life; the samurai replaces it with an understanding of danger. To face death with courage is the essence of being a samurai, for true samurai understand that dying with courage will be rewarded in their karmic rebirth in the next life.



Actions

A character performs one action (or no actions, if they so choose) during their turn during a skirmish.

A hero player has their character perform an action by describing what they want to accomplish to the GM, making any necessary checks, and then resolving the effects the GM assigns to the action. This section contains a number of example actions characters might perform in a skirmish, but GMs and hero players should not feel limited only to the listed options if they wish to modify the examples or invent their own actions!

Assist

Description: You offer another character a plan of attack they might use, an insight about the opposition, or moral support.
Activation: As a Support action, you grant assistance to one target at range 0–2.
Effects: You describe how you are helping the other character, and if the GM approves it, you provide assistance (see page 6) on the target's next check.

Challenge

Description: During a conflict, you call out to a particular foe, attempting to draw them into a **Duel** (see page 33).
Activation: As a Scheme action, you may make a TN 1 Command check targeting one character in the scene.
Effects: If you succeed, you and the target fight a duel at the end of the round. If the target has not yet acted this round, they skip their turn. Interfering with the duel is a grave offense, and anyone else who attempts to interrupt the duel or harm either combatant must forfeit honor equal to their honor rank (and glory equal to their glory rank if they are caught doing it)!

Calming Breath

Description: During a conflict, you inhale deeply before exhaling, drawing upon your inner strength.
Activation: As a Support action, you may use this action.
Effects: Remove 1 strife or 1 fatigue.

Guard

Description: You focus on warding off foes from yourself or an ally by positioning yourself defensively, taking cover, throwing strategically-placed strikes to keep foes cautious, or even firing shots menacingly close to the enemy.
Activation: As a Support action using one readied weapon, you may make a **TN 1 Tactics check** targeting yourself or one other character within range of that weapon.
Effects: If you succeed, you are **GUARDING** the target until the beginning of your next turn. Increase the TN of Attack checks against the guarded target by 1 plus your bonus successes.

Maneuver

Description: You shift on the battlefield, moving to a more advantageous position.
Activation: As a Movement action, you may use this action. Optionally, you may make a **TN 2 Fitness check** as part of this action.
Effects: Move one range band. If you made the check and you succeed, you may move 1 additional range band, plus one range band per two bonus successes.

Prepare Item

Description: You prepare, ready, or stow one weapon or other item.
Activation: As a Support action, you may use this action.
Effects: Prepare one item for use, ready a weapon in a grip of your choice, or stow an item.

Strike

Description: You make an attack against a single foe.
Activation: As an Attack action using one readied weapon, you may make a **TN 2 Martial Arts check** using the appropriate skill for the weapon, targeting one character within the range of the weapon.
Effects: If you succeed, you deal physical damage to the target equal to the weapon's base damage plus your bonus successes. You may also spend ✵ ✵ to inflict a critical strike on your target.

Use Skill

Description: Use Skill is a ubiquitous and versatile action that covers almost any activity you can imagine. You make a check using a skill for a mechanical or narrative effect of that skill, as described in **Chapter 2: Skills** (see page 14). The GM is the final arbiter of what you can or cannot accomplish in a single action. If an action requires multiple rounds to complete, the GM might have you make multiple checks to see it through.
Activation: As an action, you make a skill check to attempt a task you have described to the GM.
Effects: If you succeed, you may use the skill for its narrative effects, engage in any sample use that can be completed in a single action, or pursue another task that the GM deems appropriate. For suggested uses of ✵, see the back cover of this book.

Wait

Description: You bide your time, waiting to spring into action.
Activation: As a Support action, you may declare a non-Movement action you will perform upon the occurrence of a specified event before the end of the round.
Effects: When the specified event occurs before the end of the round, you may perform the declared action. You must still use the ring matching your stance for this action.

If the specified event does not occur this round, you may perform one action of your choice (other than Wait) at the end of the round.

DUELS

Duels are stylized engagements between two warriors. While they are fought between individuals, the fates of whole families, clans, or the entire realm might ride on a duel. Unlike skirmishes, duels in the *Legend of the Five Rings Beginner Game* are resolved with a single roll from each fighter, so that they can be embedded into skirmishes and even intrigues. The *Legend of the Five Rings* Core Rulebook contains more detailed tactical rules for duels, designed for campaigns specialized around duelist characters.

When fighting a duel, each warrior chooses a weapon before it begins. Duels can be fought with any weapon or combat techniques, though it is customary for both warriors to use the same sorts of implements (swords, bows, unarmed strikes, or even invocations). Iaijutsu duels, the most traditional kind in Rokugan, are fought with sheathed katanas, and neither combatant is permitted to wear armor, but when making challenges on the battlefield, such rules are often set aside.

When to Use a Duel

Duels are fought all the time in Rokugan, from good-natured exhibition matches in the dōjō to deadly clashes that carry the weight of generations-long grudges. Most duels happen because one character challenges another (usually over an affair of honor). In an honor-bound society like Rokugan, this often means that most of those challenged to a duel feel that they have no choice but to accept. Duels should be used for one-on-one martial contests that are substantial enough that they cannot simply be settled with a check and a check to resist.

Duel Objectives

DUEL OBJECTIVES set the terms of the duel and the conditions under which it will end. These should be agreed upon, of course, before either party draws steel. Common objectives are:

- **To First Strike:** When fighting in a duel to first strike, a combatant is expected to wield a practice weapon, such as a training sword or a blade with no edge. Such duels are common in training situations, or when neither party intends serious damage on the other.
- **To First Blood:** A standard Rokugani duel of honor between two aggrieved parties. Live weapons are used, but there is only a small chance of a lethal outcome in these contests.
- **To the Death:** The most serious objective. Any duel with live weapons is likely to end with one or both parties dead, but some duels demand that at least one combatant perish.

Conducting a Duel

Each participant describes their intended action, also describing how they factor in any relevant advantages, terrain, and similar effects, then each chooses a weapon and makes a competitive check (see page 7) with the relevant skill for the weapon or technique they are using in the duel and the ring that their description dictates. The TN for this check is 1, but it might be adjusted by relevant factors at the GM's discretion.

Resolving a Duel

The character who has more bonus successes is victorious in the duel. Depending on the agreed-upon objective, the outcomes are as follows:

- **To First Strike:** The victor inflicts 3 strife on the opponent.
- **To First Blood:** The victor inflicts 3 strife plus a critical strike (see page 38) on the opponent.
- **To the Death:** The victor inflicts 3 critical strikes on the opponent, plus damage from the weapon used in the attack and extra damage equal to the number of bonus successes. At the GM's discretion, this may be lethal to the opponent!

If neither character succeeds, the one with the lower shortfall is victorious (albeit inelegantly). They inflict a critical strike on their opponent, possibly reflecting an accidental injury that could occur even during a practice duel.

If the characters are tied, both are considered victorious and defeated for the purpose of inflicting any critical strikes. Neither actually wins the duel, though, which is judged to have ended inconclusively.





INTRIGUES

INTRIGUES are social engagements, opportunities to persuade the opposition to adopt one's viewpoint, gather favor from superiors, sow the seeds of one's plots, or subtly besmirch the reputation of hated rivals. Intrigues are how the fortunes of clans rise and fall. The power and influence of all ruling families rests in no small part on the skill of their courtiers, who excel in this arena.

When to Use an Intrigue

Intrigues are most useful when a large number of characters are participating in a social exchange, and managing that many active participants requires a greater degree of structure than a narrative scene accommodates. For a conversation between only two participants, a full intrigue is often unnecessary, though the rules for persuading NPCs described in this section offer helpful guidelines for determining how much effort it will take to win someone to a cause.

BUSHIDŌ: REI, COURTESY

A samurai is neither a bully nor a brute killer. They must treat their enemies with courtesy, and even more so their allies. The virtue of Courtesy insists that even a samurai of a Minor Clan be treated with respect.

Similarly, a full intrigue is generally excessive when only one group involved has a concrete objective to pursue. If the PCs simply need to convince an NPC to give them something they require, the GM should feel free to have the PCs make appropriate skill checks as they act through a narrative scene. The NPC will of course seek to serve their own self-interests during these interactions, but that does not usually constitute the sort of agenda that lends itself to a full intrigue.

An intrigue conflict is especially useful for a complex court scene in which multiple factions vie for the favor of a powerful lord or try to discredit or gain political capital over one another. It can also be useful for trials, interrogations, and similar interactions that have a natural structure based on Rokugani law or custom. Overall, an intrigue is especially useful for letting several PCs pursue a variety of goals simultaneously in an organized fashion.

Social Objectives

In addition to the various rules listed for all conflicts, intrigues use the rules for **SOCIAL OBJECTIVES** described in this section. Social objectives help to give an intrigue structure, and they give the GM a guideline on when the intrigue should draw to a close.

At the start of **Phase 1: Determine Initiative** during an intrigue, each participating character chooses their social objective. This is a concrete goal that the character hopes to accomplish during the scene; this goal also helps to define when the conflict should end.

The GM assigns each social objective a rhetorical points value, to indicate when the characters have successfully achieved their goal. Usually, this is a number from 3 (an easy goal, like learning about a careless NPC's weaknesses) to 10 (a hard goal, like persuading your lord to reverse a decision). Each successful Social skill check contributes one rhetorical point, plus one additional point per bonus success on the check. Rhetorical points are cumulative, and they persist until the end of the scene or until the objective is achieved.

The GM should also decide upon objectives for any Adversary NPCs in the conflict who have an agenda of their own, but the GM should not tell the players these objectives (unless they discover them via other means, such as through their Initiative checks).

Initiative Check

For a skirmish, the Initiative check is a **TN 1 Sentiment check** to gain a read on the room and its occupants.

Initiative Order

Characters act in whatever order they like, but each character can only act once per round. If two characters wish to act at the same time, the one with the higher initiative value for the scene goes first. However, preempting a character of higher status in this manner requires a character to forfeit 1 honor.

Intrigue Breakdown

Intrigues follow the standard conflict structure. This includes performing Initiative checks to "read the room" but as Intrigues don't use actual initiative order no values are needed. Characters also select stances as normal, though here they dictate their pose and physical posture.

To summarize, a character does the following during their turn when in an Intrigue:

- **Choose Stance**
- **Perform 1 Action**
- **End Turn**

Actions

As in a skirmish, characters perform actions that the hero players and GM describe for them. These can be actions created for the specific scene or example actions such as Assist (page 32), Calming Breath (page 32), Challenge (page 32), Use Skill (page 32) actions, as well as Persuade. As in skirmishes, these are sample actions; players and GMs are free to modify them and invent new ones!

Persuade

Description: You attempt to foster or quell an idea, emotion, or desire in a person.

Activation: As a Scheme action, you make a Social skill check targeting one or more characters who can hear you. The TN of the check is equal to the highest vigilance among your targets. Additionally, apply the following modification to the TN based on the skill you chose:

- **Command:** You present a plan with authority, sweeping your targets along with all the confidence a lord should have among their vassals.
- **Courtesy:** You present a proposal backed by honeyed words and clever implications—perfect for dealing with one's superiors, but perhaps overly deferential when addressing equals or subordinates.
- **Games/Performance/Other Skills:** You offer a diversion from the affairs at hand, turning the conversation to a less pressing topic.

Effects: If you succeed, you make a rhetorical point that counts toward an appropriate social objective in addition to the narrative ramifications of your successful check, plus additional points equal to your bonus successes.

SILHOUETTE, RANGE BANDS, AND TERRAIN

During scenes, concepts such as the size of objects, distance between points, and nature of the surrounding terrain sometimes become important. The following rules offer guidance on how to model these phenomena during the game.

Silhouettes

Objects in *Legend of the Five Rings Beginner Game* are classified into a number of different size categories called silhouettes. While these categories are abstract and are frequently more useful for description than for specific mechanical consequences, they do have some important ramifications for certain techniques (see page 13).

As a general rule, most creatures cannot carry any combination of objects and creatures with a silhouette total greater than their own (for example, an adult human can pick up one child and one small dog, or one other adult human, without notable effort, but they cannot carry a horse on their own). Player characters can sometimes make checks to temporarily exceed these limits, with TNs based on the examples in **Step 2: Determine Skill, Ring, and Target Number of Successes** (see page 3). The GM should apply common sense when it comes to matters of carrying capacity and items.

Table 4–2: Examples of Silhouettes

SILHOUETTE VALUE	EXAMPLES
0	Handheld objects, cats, small dogs, kistune (fox form)
1	Children, large dogs, goblins
2	Adult humans, kitsune (human form), tengu
3	Horses, carts, trolls
4	Ogres, elephants
5	Dragons

BLOOD, PURITY, AND TABOOS

There are a number of contradictions inherent in Rokugani culture. For example, touching blood or the handling of corpses is considered unclean and taboo for all Rokugani. But samurai are expected to be proficient hunters, and indeed hunting is considered one of the primary pastimes of the upper classes. Furthermore, bushi are warriors who are expected and required to kill without hesitation.

Fortunately, these and many other taboos are expected to be broken with regularity and simple rituals are performed to restore purity. There is no social stigma associated with these activities unless, of course, a samurai gains a reputation for enjoying bloodshed too much, or putting off the purification ritual for questionable reasons…

Range Bands

Instead of measuring discrete units of space, the *Legend of the Five Rings Beginner Game* handles the concept of distance between two people or objects abstractly, using range bands. Range bands are a set of numbered, approximate distances that can be used to define spatial relationships between two points when that information is needed.

Range bands allow narrative scenes and conflicts—especially skirmishes—to move at a faster pace, glossing over some specifics. It also means that representations on a tactical map are not strictly necessary for such scenes using structured time, though they can still be useful for helping the GM and players keep track of relative positions and maintain consistent range bands.

Note that range bands increase in scale as they increase in number—the difference in the distance between range 0 and range 1 (from arm's reach to sword reach) and the distance between range 5 and range 6 (from a hundred or more meters to the edge of perceptible range) is quite substantial. This is meant to reflect the difficulty inherent in maneuvering to close with or escape from a foe, while allowing characters to reposition on a strategic level more easily when they are not being impeded.

There are seven range bands, which function as follows:

Range 0 (Touch)

Range 0 represents direct contact—a distance from the character out to their arm's reach, roughly. At this range, two foes can grapple and use small weapons such as knives on each other without difficulty, but longer weapons are hard to wield effectively. Objects at range 0 might be at the person's feet, or even on their person, and a character can interact with them. Closing to range 0 with someone in a public social context is generally considered impolite.

Range 1 (Sword)

Range 1 represents the optimal range for a sword and other weapons of similar length—about 1 to 2 meters. A character can generally interact with people and objects at range 1. Most skills that have a manual aspect require the target or object to be at range 0 to 1.

Range 2 (Spear)

Range 2 represents the range at which pole weapons such as spears and naginata have the greatest advantage—a distance of 3 to 4 meters.

Range 3 (Throw)

Range 3 represents the range at which thrown missile weapons are most effective—a distance of 5 to 10 meters.

Range 4 (Bow)

Range 4 represents the midrange for missile weapons like bows—a dozen to a hundred meters. Generally speaking, this range coincides with the edge of earshot for most characters.

Range 5 (Volley)

Range 5 represents the distance to the outer edge of the range at which missile weapons are generally accurate—a hundred to several hundred meters. For most characters, this is as far as they can pick out any details.

Range 6 (Sight)

Range 6 represents the maximum distance at which one can interact with a human-sized target, though interactions are relatively minimal at this range of more than a few hundred meters to several kilometers. To move a distance of range 6 or farther, a character must generally undertake a journey in narrative time.

Terrain

Battles are often decided by the ground on which they are fought; knowing when to attack and when to reposition for more favorable conditions is a key part of strategy.

At the outset of a duel, skirmish, or mass battle, the GM should establish any relevant terrain features, which the characters can identify as part of their Initiative check. Each terrain feature occupies a number of range bands around a particular point, as determined by the GM.

Terrain Qualities

While within a terrain feature, a character is subject to any effects its qualities entail.

An area can have multiple terrain qualities. For instance, a burning building would likely possess both the Dangerous and Obscuring qualities, while a thick forest would have the Entangling and Obscuring qualities.

Dangerous

Dangerous terrain is physically hazardous to enter or even linger in. This is a mundane terrain quality, and it can be found in most regions.

Effects: Whenever a character performs a check while within Dangerous terrain, the character suffers damage equal to the 🌀 results on the check.

Examples: Fire, intense cold, thawing ice, steep inclines, jagged rocks, an uncovered foundation, rubble.

Defiled

Defiled terrain is afflicted by the vile touch of the Shadowlands. Even those uneducated in the dark secrets of the realm beyond the Kaiu Wall feel a pervasive sense of wrongness when standing on such unholy ground. This is a supernatural terrain quality. It occurs much more commonly the closer one is to the dreaded Shadowlands, but it can also be found in places where atrocities were committed in the past.

Effects: At the end of the scene, each character who entered Defiled terrain must make a **TN 2 Fitness** or **Meditation check**. Each character who fails the check suffers 2 strife and 2 fatigue.

Examples: An *oni*'s lair, a battlefield filled with unburned dead, a haunted castle, the secret hideout of a mahō-tsukai.

Entangling

Entangling terrain is ground that seriously hampers the mobility of anyone within it. This is a mundane terrain quality, and it can be found in most regions.

Effects: While a character is within Entangling terrain, increase the TN of all checks to move and for Movement actions by 2.

Examples: Sucking mud, briar patches, deep snow, icy ground, moving water.

Hallowed

Hallowed terrain is particularly close to the Spirit Realms, and thus invocations are easier to perform in such a location. This is a supernatural terrain quality, and it exists in most regions at places of power where kami dwell, as well as in places where miracles have occurred in the past.

Effects: While within Hallowed terrain, a character reduces the TN of Meditation and Theology checks by 1.

Examples: A shrine to a kami, a particular place of natural beauty, a location where a powerful spirit resides.

Obscuring

Obscuring terrain limits the visibility of (and to) anyone within, making it very difficult to land strikes. This is a mundane terrain quality, and it can be found in most regions.

Effects: A character in Obscuring terrain cannot see beyond range 2 of their current position into the Obscuring terrain (though they can see out of it, if they are within range 2 of an edge). A character outside of Obscuring terrain cannot see into it beyond range 2 of the edge. Increase the TN of all Attack checks targeting characters in Obscuring terrain by 1.

Examples: Dense foliage, darkness, cramped indoor quarters, heavy rain or snow, choking smoke.

HARM AND HEALING

At least in theory, all samurai are members of a warrior caste, and war is a grave affair. Killing is not something that most enjoy—and neither is dying—but both are realities of a warrior's life. Those who unsheathe their blades on a regular basis can expect to suffer some number of battle wounds, and they are likely familiar with all manner of injuries, from minor cuts and bruises to gaping, bloody gashes to fatal cuts.

Damage

When a character suffers bodily harm, it is represented through damage, a numerical abstraction of an occurrence of trauma to the body.

Dealing Damage

When an effect deals damage to a character, there are two possible results:

- The character defends against the damage, suffering fatigue to dodge, block, or otherwise avoid a telling blow.
- The character does not (or cannot) defend, and suffers a critical strike.

Some effects and abilities increase damage dealt, while others reduce damage dealt. When dealing damage to a character, first apply any increases to the damage, and then apply any reductions to the damage.



BUSHIDŌ: GI, HONESTY AND JUSTICE

A samurai does not make honesty or justice a matter for debate; they know that there is only truth and falsehood, justice and injustice.

Defending Against Damage

When an effect deals damage to a character, the character must defend against the damage. When a character defends, they reduce the damage by their resistance. Then, the character suffers an amount of fatigue equal to the remaining damage.

Note that characters suffering the Incapacitated condition (see page 39) cannot defend against damage, and thus characters must simply suffer critical strikes while they are incapacitated. A character who is not Incapacitated may spend 1 Void point to voluntarily suffer a critical strike instead of defending, representing the character allowing themself to be struck for a tactical advantage.

Fatigue

Fatigue represents a character's growing exhaustion as a battle wears on—shortness of breath, gaps in their perception, strained muscles, and minor bruises and injuries that might accumulate from blocking, evading, and defending against oncoming strikes.

When a character suffers fatigue, their player should record it on their character sheet.

Consequences of Fatigue

After a character suffers fatigue, if their fatigue exceeds their endurance, the character suffers the Incapacitated condition (see page 39). This represents the character being physically overwhelmed to such a degree that they can no longer take effective action or mount a meaningful defense.

Recovering from Fatigue

From rest and various game effects, such as the Medicine skill, characters can heal fatigue. When a character heals an amount of fatigue, their player should remove that many fatigue from their character sheet.

At the end of each scene, a character heals any fatigue in excess of half of their endurance.

After a full night's rest, a character heals all of their fatigue.

Critical Strikes

Critical strikes represent incidents that cause grave injuries, permanent scars, and even death to characters.

Suffering Critical Strikes

When a character suffers a critical strike, they suffer ill effects based on the number of critical strikes they are currently suffering from.

- **First Critical Strike: Painful Blow**
  The character immediately suffers 3 strife, but there is no other ongoing effect.
- **Second Critical Strike: Minor Injury**
  The character increases the TN of the next check they attempt by 1, but there is no ongoing effect.
- **Third Critical Strike: Disabling Injury**
  The character increases the TN of all checks they attempt by 1 until the critical strike is healed.
- **Fourth Critical Strike: Serious Injury**
  The character suffers the Incapacitated condition until the critical strike is healed.

Treating Critical Strikes

Treating one or more of a character's critical strikes requires a Medicine (Earth) check with TN equal to the current number of critical strikes the character is suffering. Thus, a **TN 3 Medicine (Earth) check** would be needed to remove a critical strike from another character suffering from three critical strikes. A character can treat themself if necessary (applying any penalties the critical strike applies to their check as relevant).

If the healer succeeds, the injured character heals one critical strike, plus one critical strike per bonus success. Each character can only have their critical strikes treated this way once per scene.

CONDITIONS

While many negative effects of battle are expressed through fatigue, strife, and scars, sometimes a character is subjected to a temporary negative effect called a condition. While a character is suffering a condition, all of its effects are applied to them.

Bleeding

Description: The character is losing blood, internally or externally.
Effects: While Bleeding, when a character suffers strife from keeping 🌀 on dice results, the character suffers the same amount of damage, ignoring their armor's resistance.
Removed When: Any character at range 0–1 of a Bleeding character may make a **TN 2 Medicine (Earth) check** as a Support action to remove the Bleeding condition.

Burning

Description: The character is ablaze.
Effects: While Burning, after performing an action, the character suffers 3 damage, ignoring their armor's resistance, and 3 strife.
Removed When: A character may attempt to smother the flames with a **TN 2 Fitness (Water 1, Air 4) check** as a Movement and Support action; if they succeed, they remove the Burning condition.

Compromised

Description: The character is emotionally overwhelmed.
Effects: While Compromised, a character cannot keep dice showing 🌀 results.
Removed When: The character's strife is reduced to a value lower than or equal to their composure.

Dazed

Description: The character's vision is obscured or their focus is hampered, making it harder for them to attack.
Effects: While Dazed, a character increases the TN of Attack and Scheme action checks by 2.
Removed When: At the end of their turn, if the character did not perform an Attack or Scheme action, they remove the Dazed condition.

Disoriented

Description: The character's senses are scattered, leaving them vulnerable to attack.
Effects: While Disoriented, a character increases the TN of Movement and Support action checks by 2.
Removed When: At the end of their turn, if the character did not perform a Movement or Support action, they remove the Disoriented condition.



Enraged

Description: The character is consumed by rage and fights with a fury that is terrifying to behold.
Effects: While Enraged, the character increases all damage they inflict and suffer by 2. The first time an Enraged character kills another character each scene, the Enraged character gains 1 Void point.
Removed When: An Enraged character may make a **TN 3 Meditation (Void) check** as a Support action to remove the Enraged condition. Otherwise, the condition is removed at the end of the scene.

Exhausted

Description: The character is physically and mentally drained. Characters who go more than twenty-four hours without sleep (or less time under trying circumstances, at the GM's discretion) suffer this condition.
Effects: An Exhausted character does not remove strife and fatigue at the end of each scene.
Removed When: An Exhausted character removes this condition after a full night's rest.

Incapacitated

Description: The character is largely incapable of action due to the scope of the harm they have suffered.
Effects: While Incapacitated, a character cannot perform actions that require checks, but can still make checks to resist effects. If the character suffers any further damage, they suffer the Unconscious condition.
Removed When: The character's fatigue is reduced to a value lower than or equal to their endurance.

Prone

Description: The character is lying flat on the ground.
Effects: While Prone, a character cannot move more than one range band during their turn (probably by crawling).
Removed When: At the end of their turn, if the character did not perform a Movement action, they may choose to remove the Prone condition (by standing up).

Unconscious

Description: The character has been knocked out, has fallen asleep, or has otherwise been rendered totally unaware of their surroundings.
Effects: An Unconscious character cannot move, perform actions, or otherwise significantly act upon the physical world. An Unconscious character can still make checks to resist effects, but they cannot generally make checks that represent any agency on their part.

Unconscious characters cannot normally defend against damage, but at the GM's discretion, an Unconscious character who is not Incapacitated may spend 1 Void point to instinctively awaken in time to defend.
Removed When: Any character at range 0–1 of an Unconscious character may make a **TN 3 Medicine (Fire) check** as a Support action to remove the Unconscious condition. Characters also generally awaken from Unconsciousness after several hours.

BUSHIDŌ: JIN, COMPASSION

One of the Seven Tenets of Bushidō is Compassion. Samurai are expected to use their considerable gifts, training, and experience to aid their fellow humans. Some people feel they should extend compassion to peasants, while others believe it should just be shown to members of the samurai class. Your players can decide for themselves which option they prefer.

CHAPTER 5: Non-Player Characters

Non-Player Characters (NPCs) are the other inhabitants of the world, with whom the player characters interact. In story terms, the PCs are the main protagonists, and NPCs can be thought of as the supporting cast: bit characters, friends and allies, rivals, and antagonists. Although they can be extremely important to the arc of the narrative (the call to aid from an old friend or the diabolical scheme of a villain might be the sorts of events that initiate a story), in most scenes, these characters are not the focus. Like other elements of the world outside of the PCs, NPCs are controlled and portrayed by the GM.

NPC PROFILE BREAKDOWN

GMs can of course invent their own NPCs, but many printed materials provide premade NPCs, along with the various rules needed to run them in play. An NPC profile consists of the following elements:

- **NPC Type:** This denotes the importance of the NPC in the story. Minor characters are **minions**, who have simplified profiles for ease of use. More narratively significant characters are **adversaries**, who have rules similar to those of a player character, so that the GM can more easily use them in a variety of situations.
- **Conflict Rank:** Each NPC has a rank in two categories: combat ( ) and intrigue ( ). These ranks are broad estimates of the NPC's capabilities as an opponent in each of those spheres. To compare, after the PCs finish the adventure in the *Legend of the Five Rings Beginner Game* they would have either 1 and 2, or 2 and 1.
- **Rings:** Each NPC has a set of ring values, just as a player character does (see **The Five Rings**, on page 10). Note that NPCs can have ring values that a PC cannot possess.
- **Attributes:** Each NPC has a set of attributes, just as a player character does. Note that NPC attribute values are assigned as needed to create appropriate opposition for multiple PCs, rather than being derived from their ring values.
- **Demeanor:** Some Social skill checks against an NPC can be easier while others can be harder. Each NPC profile thus includes a demeanor, showing an increase to the TN of Social skill checks with certain rings and a decrease to the TN of Social skill checks with other rings (to a minimum of TN 1). GMs should feel free to modify these as desired based on how that NPC profile is used in an adventure.
- **Skill Ranks:** Each NPC has a number of ranks in skill groups or skills that apply to their checks (see **Chapter 2: Skills**, on page 10). NPCs have ranks in entire skill groups, though, such as "Martial skills 1." This would mean that the NPC possesses 1 rank in each Martial skill: Fitness, Martial Arts [Melee], Martial Arts [Ranged], Martial Arts [Unarmed], Meditation, and Tactics.
- **NPC Abilities:** NPCs generally possess one or more abilities that set them apart from other NPCs. Some may also have abilities with the same name as techniques available to PCs; in these cases, the NPC abilities differ from the versions available to player characters, and function as they are described in the NPC's individual profile.
- **Weapons and Gear:** Each NPC has a weapon, representing their favored implement in combat, as well as gear including items that offer resistance to damage. GMs should add or replace these items, especially weapons, as desired to create more unique NPCs suited for specific encounters or settings.

NPCS AND INITIATIVE CHECKS

As a GM, you generally don't need to have Minion NPCs make Initiative checks—most of the time, they can just use their Vigilance (if they are surprised) or Focus (if they expected a fight) for their initiative value.

You should feel free to have Adversary NPCs make such checks, especially in scenes that use initiative, but you should feel equally free to have them skip Initiative checks if there are a large number of Adversary NPCs, or if it would not make sense narratively for them to make these checks. After all, hubris is a common downfall of antagonists in stories!

NPC Types

There are two types of NPCs: minions and adversaries.

Minions

Minions are characters of lesser importance in the scope of the story. Because they have a smaller role in the story, they have simplified character profiles to help GMs get to the most pertinent information quickly. Of course, some minions are more powerful than others—being a minion doesn't mean that a character is weak per se, but simply that their expected role in the story doesn't require a more complex set of rules.

Minions behave like other characters, with the following exceptions:

- When a minion's fatigue exceeds its endurance, or it is dealt a critical strike, it is simply defeated (definitively vanquished for the scene) or killed, based on the preference of the character who defeated it.
- Minions should only spend on abilities listed in their profile.
- Minions never have Void points.

Adversaries

Adversaries are NPCs of substantial narrative significance. These might be rivals or powerful allies to the PCs, and they generally stand on the same footing as player characters. Their profiles are organized somewhat differently than a PC's profile for the GM's convenience, but each adversary is a match for one or more PCs in the adversary's arena of expertise. Adversaries behave like standard characters, and may even have Void points.

NPCs and Strife

NPCs accumulate strife in the normal manner. Generally speaking, the first time they become emotionally compromised during a scene, they should unmask at their first opportunity. While the GM is free to have an NPC remain compromised under specific circumstances, having NPCs unmask rewards the PCs for playing to their strengths during intrigues and other encounters, and can make for exciting dramatic turns!

SAMPLE NPCS

The following profiles are intended to provide GMs with a basic set of options for the Non-Player Characters in their *Legend of the Five Rings* games.

Humans

In most campaigns, humans will likely make up the majority of NPCs the PCs encounter.

Peasant

MINION — CONFLICT RANK: 1 1

Most of Rokugan's inhabitants are peasants. These hard-working people live their lives largely beneath the notice of samurai and yet without their toil, society would not exist.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
20	HONOR	ENDURANCE	6
30	GLORY	COMPOSURE	12
10	STATUS	FOCUS	6
–2, +2	DEMEANOR · SHREWD	VIGILANCE	2

ARTISAN 0	MARTIAL 0	SCHOLAR 0	SOCIAL 1	TRADE 1

WEAPONS AND GEAR

Fists: Range 0; Damage 1; Natural.

Gear: Rags, cloth headband, shoddy farm equipment, a handful of zeni.

NPC ABILITY: NONE

Ashigaru

MINION — CONFLICT RANK: 2 1

Most armies consist of a small number of samurai who form elite units and the command cadre. They are backed by a large number of *ashigaru*: levied or even career soldiers who serve the Great Clans but are drawn from the lower classes.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
25	HONOR	ENDURANCE	6
35	GLORY	COMPOSURE	5
19	STATUS	FOCUS	3
+2, –2	DEMEANOR · GRUFF	VIGILANCE	2

ARTISAN 0	MARTIAL 1	SCHOLAR 0	SOCIAL 1	TRADE 1

WEAPONS AND GEAR

Yari (Spear): Range 2; Damage 5; Wargear.

Gear: Peasant's garb, ashigaru armor (Resistance [3], Wargear), helmet, a handful of zeni and bu.

NPC ABILITY: RANK TACTICS

When an ashigaru provides assistance (see page 6) to the Martial skill check of another character at range 0–2, that character adds one kept skill die showing a result instead of rolling an additional die.

PRONUNCIATIONS

Ashigaru:
ah-SHEE-gah-ROO



Bandit

MINION — CONFLICT RANK: 1 | 1

Most bandits in Rokugan are ill-trained, ill-mannered ruffians. Many fall into the life because they lack better prospects; others have always had a knack for unsavory work, or even enjoy it.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
15	HONOR	ENDURANCE	6
19	GLORY	COMPOSURE	6
1	STATUS	FOCUS	4
+2, –2	DEMEANOR · GRUFF	VIGILANCE	2

ARTISAN 0	MARTIAL 1	SCHOLAR 0	SOCIAL 0	TRADE 1

WEAPONS AND GEAR

Yari: Range 2; Damage 5; Wargear.

Yumi: Range 2–5; Damage 5; Wargear.

Gear: Worn robes (Mundane), sake jug (empty), a pouch containing a handful of zeni.

NPC ABILITY: AMBUSH TACTICS

When performing an Attack action against a target with the Dazed or Disoriented condition, increase any damage dealt by 2.

Experienced Bandit

ADVERSARY — CONFLICT RANK: 2 | 1

Bandits and other criminals who are successful for more than a short time are usually those who are good at talking others into taking the most extreme risks their dangerous lifestyle entails, and using their less-cunning comrades for all they are worth.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
10	HONOR	ENDURANCE	9
10	GLORY	COMPOSURE	8
5	STATUS	FOCUS	6
+2, –2	DEMEANOR · AMBITIOUS	VIGILANCE	3

ARTISAN 0	MARTIAL 2	SCHOLAR 0	SOCIAL 1	TRADE 1

WEAPONS AND GEAR

Katana: Range 1; Damage 4; Ceremonial, Razor-Edged.

Gear: Ashigaru armor (Resistance [3], Wargear), sake jug (half empty), a pouch containing a handful of bu.

NPC ABILITY: DIRTY TRICKS

When performing an Attack action check, an experienced bandit may spend ✵ to make one character at range 0–2 suffer the Disoriented condition.



Rōnin

ADVERSARY — CONFLICT RANK: 3 | 2

Rōnin are masterless samurai, and thus exist in a strange place in society: they are of the warrior class, but they lack prestige, financial backing, and the privilege of status. They fight for money, but nominally do so for noble ends. What sets a rōnin apart from any other rootless warrior is honor: a desire, on some level, to uphold Bushidō and its virtues in the way of the samurai class.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
30	HONOR	ENDURANCE	10
40	GLORY	COMPOSURE	11
20	STATUS	FOCUS	5
+1, –2	DEMEANOR · DETACHED	VIGILANCE	3

ARTISAN 0	MARTIAL 3	SCHOLAR 1	SOCIAL 0	TRADE 2

WEAPONS AND GEAR

Katana: Range 1; Damage 4; Ceremonial, Razor-Edged.

Gear: Daishō, worn robes (Mundane), straw hat, empty sake jug, pouch containing a handful of koku, bu, and zeni.

NPC ABILITY: SCHOOL OF THE WOLF

Once per round, when an Attack action check targeting the rōnin succeeds, the rōnin may spend 1 Void point to change the target to another character (other than the attacker) at range 0–1 of the rōnin.

NPC ABILITY: STRIKING AS WATER

When the rōnin makes a **Martial Arts [Melee, Ranged, or Unarmed] (Water) check**, the rōnin may spend ✵+ to ignore up to 2 points of the Resistance (X) quality of the target's armor per ✵ spent this way.

NPC ABILITY: IAIJUTSU CUT

As an Attack action using one sheathed katana or wakizashi, the rōnin may make a **TN 2 Martial Arts [Melee] check** targeting one character at range 1–2. The rōnin draws and readies the sheathed katana or wakizashi in a one-handed grip. If the rōnin succeeds, they deal damage to the target equal to the weapon's damage plus twice their bonus successes.

Warrior Monk

ADVERSARY CONFLICT RANK: 4 3

Monastic orders are fairly common throughout Rokugan, especially in the lands of the Dragon and Phoenix Clans. Although these individuals dedicate themselves to many different religious faiths and philosophical doctrines, they are consistent in their renunciation of worldly affairs and search for greater truth within the universe and themselves. Some monks train in the arts of battle to unify their bodies and minds, and even wield powerful kihō, unlocking their inner *ki* energy to shape the universe around them.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
55	HONOR	ENDURANCE	12
45	GLORY	COMPOSURE	12
25	STATUS	FOCUS	4
+1, –2	DEMEANOR - DETACHED	VIGILANCE	3



ARTISAN 1	MARTIAL 3	SCHOLAR 2	SOCIAL 1	TRADE 0

Weapons and Gear

Fists: Range 0; Damage 1; Natural.

Walking staff: Range 1–2; Damage 6; Mundane.

Gear: Monk's robes (Mundane).

NPC Ability: Earthen Fist

As an Attack action, a warrior monk may activate this kihō. They make a **TN 3 Martial Arts [Unarmed] (Earth) check** to deliver an unarmed strike targeting one character at range 0–1. If the warrior monk succeeds, they deal 4 physical damage to the target, and the target must resist with a **TN 3 Fitness (Air 2, Water 4) check** or suffer the Prone condition. Until the end of the scene, treat the base damage of the warrior monk's unarmed profile as being increased by 4, or 8 if the target is Prone.

Veteran Bushi

ADVERSARY CONFLICT RANK: 4 2

Samurai dedicated to warfare, bushi defend the interests of their clans and the Chrysanthemum Throne across Rokugan. Trained in precision and perseverance, armed with the best equipment available, and honed in battle, an experienced bushi is a dangerous opponent even when outnumbered or caught off guard.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
65	HONOR	ENDURANCE	12
60	GLORY	COMPOSURE	9
39	STATUS	FOCUS	5
+2, –2	DEMEANOR - ASSERTIVE	VIGILANCE	3



ARTISAN 1	MARTIAL 3	SCHOLAR 2	SOCIAL 0	TRADE 0

Weapons and Gear

Naginata: Range 2; Damage 6; Cumbersome, Wargear.

Katana: Range 1; Damage 4; Ceremonial.

Gear: Daishō, lacquered armor (Ceremonial, Cumbersome, Resistance [4], Wargear), plain robes (Mundane).

NPC Ability: Sworn Protector

Once per round, when an Attack action check targeting another character at range 0–1 succeeds, the bushi may use this technique to spend 1 Void point to intervene. The bushi becomes the target of the attack instead of the original target.

NPC Ability: Striking as Fire

When the bushi makes a **Martial Arts [Melee, Ranged, or Unarmed] (Fire) check**, they may spend ✿ to cause one target who would have suffered 1 or more fatigue to suffer a critical strike instead.



Scholarly Shugenja

ADVERSARY CONFLICT RANK: 4 3

The elite priests of the samurai class, shugenja are trained by secretive schools within each of the Great Clans and some Minor Clans. Every shugenja is privy to secrets unknown even to the vast majority of priests and other clergy across the Empire, and each school works hard to hide the full extent of its mystic knowledge from the others, lest they find weaknesses or ways to use it for themselves.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
55	HONOR	ENDURANCE	10
65	GLORY	COMPOSURE	12
39	STATUS	FOCUS	6
+2, –2	DEMEANOR - AMBITIOUS	VIGILANCE	3



ARTISAN 1 | MARTIAL 1 | SCHOLAR 3 | SOCIAL 1 | TRADE 0

Weapons and Gear

Wakizashi: Range 0–1; Damage 3; Ceremonial, Razor-Edged.

Gear: Sanctified robes (Ceremonial, Sacred), scroll satchel, pack of offerings.

NPC Ability: The Fires From Within

As an Attack action, the shugenja may activate this invocation. They make a **TN 3 Theology (Fire) check** targeting up to three characters at range 1–3. If the shugenja succeeds, each target suffers 3 damage plus the shugenja's bonus successes. The shugenja may spend + to choose 1 additional target per spent this way, and also spend + to treat the maximum range of this technique as 1 higher per spent this way.

NPC Ability: Path to Inner Peace

As a Support action, the shugenja may activate this invocation. They make a **TN 2 Theology (Water) check** targeting a character at range 0–2. If the shugenja succeeds, each target heals fatigue equal to 3 plus the shugenja's bonus successes. The shugenja may spend + to target 1 additional target 1 per spent this way. Each target cannot be affected by the Path to Inner Peace invocation again until the end of the scene.

Seasoned Courtier

ADVERSARY CONFLICT RANK: 1 5

While some conflicts are settled on the fields of battle, the vast majority of strikes and feints between the Great Clans of Rokugan take place at court. While courtiers are rarely as skilled in personal combat as bushi, they are no less deadly. People live and die by their words as much as by the swords of bushi.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
65	HONOR	ENDURANCE	6
65	GLORY	COMPOSURE	12
41	STATUS	FOCUS	6
+2, –2	DEMEANOR - SHREWD	VIGILANCE	2



ARTISAN 3 | MARTIAL 0 | SCHOLAR 2 | SOCIAL 3 | TRADE 0

Weapons and Gear

Wakizashi: Range 0–1; Damage 3; Ceremonial, Razor-Edged.

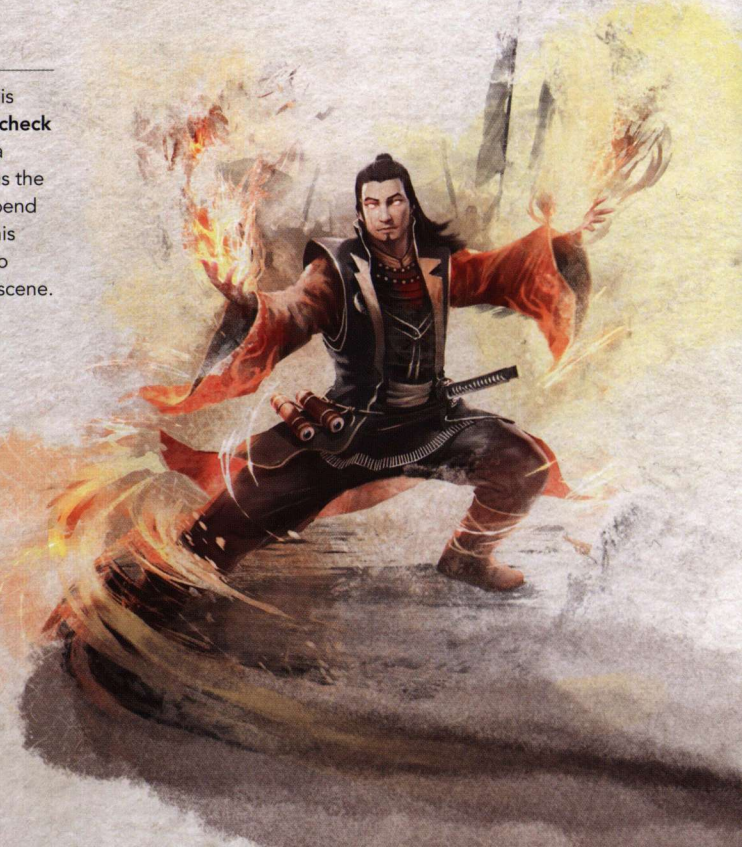
Gear: Extravagant robes (Ceremonial), calligraphy set, tea set.

NPC Ability: Prey on the Unready

When making a Social skill check targeting a Dazed character, reduce the TN by 1.

NPC Ability: Fanning the Flames

When making a **Social skill (Fire) check** targeting one or more characters, the courtier may spend + to make one target per spent this way gain the Dazed condition.





Provincial Daimyō

ADVERSARY | CONFLICT RANK: 7 | 6

The typical daimyō is stern, serious, and inured to flattery. While most no longer take up arms often, they can be extremely deadly in battle, for they often possess arms and armor of surpassing quality and a lifetime of experience fighting to maintain what is theirs, both at court and in combat.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
70	HONOR	ENDURANCE	14
80	GLORY	COMPOSURE	16
65	STATUS	FOCUS	7
+2, –2	DEMEANOR - GRUFF	VIGILANCE	4

ARTISAN 1	MARTIAL 4	SCHOLAR 3	SOCIAL 3	TRADE 2

WEAPONS AND GEAR

Katana: Range 1; Damage 4; Ceremonial, Razor-Edged.

Gear: Daishō, ceremonial robes (Ceremonial), plated armor (Cumbersome, Durable, Resistance [5], Wargear), chop (seal) of office.

NPC Ability: Lord's Command

Once per scene, as a Support action, a provincial daimyō may advise a character who can hear them on how to complete a task they wish the character to perform. The character may use the provincial daimyō's ring or skill in place of their own for the next check they make to complete this task before the end of the game session.

NPC Ability: Void Points

A provincial daimyō has 2 Void points which can be used per the normal rules for spending Void points.

Supernatural Creatures

Though seemingly serene and civilized, the Emerald Empire contains all manner of strange and magical creatures. They are all invariably the children of the Sun and Moon, but their motives and ways of life are utterly alien to humans. Supernatural creatures can make each journey across wild forests, secluded mountains, and other areas away from cities into a unique and mysterious adventure.

PRONUNCIATIONS

Daimyō: DIE-myoh

Goblin

MINION | CONFLICT RANK: 1 | 1

Although more commonly found in the Shadowlands, Goblins also infest much of Rokugan's mountains and wilderness areas. Small and malicious by nature, they are rarely a threat unless they attack in large numbers.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
0	HONOR	ENDURANCE	3
9	GLORY	COMPOSURE	4
0	STATUS	FOCUS	3
+2, –2	DEMEANOR - COWARDLY	VIGILANCE	2

ARTISAN 0	MARTIAL 1	SCHOLAR 0	SOCIAL 0	TRADE 1

WEAPONS AND GEAR

Goblin-sized yari (spear): Range 1; Damage 5; Wargear.

Goblin-sized yumi (bow): Range 1–4; Damage 5.

Gear: Salvaged armor (Resistance [1]).

NPC Ability: Small

Goblins are Silhouette (1).

NPC Ability: Surefooted

Goblins ignore the negative effects of terrain.



PRONUNCIATIONS

Kitsune: kee-TSOO-nay

Tengu: TEN-goo

KITSUNE

MINION — CONFLICT RANK: 1 2

Kitsune are mischievous spirits that originate from the Realm of Animals, or Chikushō-dō. They commonly take on the forms of foxes, often with multiple tails that grow in number with their age, and inhabit deep forests. Kitsune frequently interact with humans, and can even take on human forms to mingle in human affairs.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
25	HONOR	ENDURANCE	6
20	GLORY	COMPOSURE	8
20	STATUS	FOCUS	4
+2, –2	DEMEANOR - CLEVER	VIGILANCE	2

ARTISAN 0 | MARTIAL 0 | SCHOLAR 0 | SOCIAL 2 | TRADE 1

WEAPONS AND GEAR

Bite: Range 0; Damage 2, Natural, Razor-Edged.

Gear: None.

NPC ABILITY: TRICKSTER

Kitsune delight in playing pranks on humans. After an odd, possibly embarrassing, occurrence has happened to them, a character may make a **TN 2 Theology (Void) check** to determine if a kitsune was involved. However, oddly, kitsune are also often associated with good fortune; the character may spend ☘ ☘ from this check to accept the prank in good form and regain one Void point.

NPC ABILITY: SHAPESHIFTER

As a Support action, a kitsune can transform into human form (or back again). While in their fox form, they have Silhouette (1). While in human form, they are always curious and eager to learn more of human ways, but also seek to hide their true nature. When they become Compromised, their fox feet, ears, or tails reappear.

TENGU

ADVERSARY — CONFLICT RANK: 2 2

Tengu are avian humanoids with large wings, part of an ancient race that predates the Empire. They do not age, although their lives can be cut short from violence or mishap. Their long years means they have had centuries to practice the sword and learn many of the hidden secrets of Rokugan. It is rare to encounter one, as they tend to lead solitary lives, but they do come forth when they detect humans worthy of their wisdom and training.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
80	HONOR	ENDURANCE	8
64	GLORY	COMPOSURE	16
30	STATUS	FOCUS	3
+1, –2	DEMEANOR - DETACHED	VIGILANCE	2

ARTISAN 0 | MARTIAL 3 | SCHOLAR 2 | SOCIAL 2 | TRADE 1

WEAPONS AND GEAR

Katana: Range 1; Damage 4; Ceremonial.

Gear: Impressive robes (Resistance [2]).

NPC ABILITY: MASTER OF ILLUSION

Once per scene as a Support action, a tengu can use their illusion powers to appear human or become invisible until the end of the scene. A character must make a **TN 4 Theology (Void)** or **Survival (Void) check** to detect a tengu while it is invisible.

NPC ABILITY: FLIGHT

While in their winged form, a tengu may move via flight vertically and ignore the negative effects of terrain.

NPC ABILITY: VOID POINTS

A tengu has 2 Void points which can be used per the normal rules for spending Void points.

Ogre

ADVERSARY CONFLICT RANK: 3 1

Ogres are huge, violent creatures from the Shadowlands that can also be found north of the Wall. Once intelligent creatures, long ago they were twisted into little more than beasts that live only to kill and devour anything they can catch. They thrive in mountain passes and remote trails, where they can prey on passersby, but also raid small villages when their hunger grows too strong.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
0 HONOR	3 1	ENDURANCE	16
5 GLORY	2 3	COMPOSURE	8
0 STATUS	1	FOCUS	4
+2, –2 DEMEANOR - GRUFF		VIGILANCE	2

ARTISAN 0 | MARTIAL 3 | SCHOLAR 0 | SOCIAL 0 | TRADE 1

WEAPONS AND GEAR

Giant club or tree branch: Range 2; Damage 7; Cumbersome.

Gear: Tattered hides (Resistance [1]).

NPC ABILITY: CRUSHING BLOW

Whenever an ogre inflicts a critical strike, the target suffers the Prone condition as well as any other conditions from the critical strike.

NPC ABILITY: RAGE OF THE BEAST

Once per scene, after an ogre suffers a critical strike, it becomes Enraged until its critical strikes are removed.

NPC ABILITY: HUGE

Ogres are Silhouette (4).



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EXAMPLE WAYS OF SPENDING

ELEMENT	NARRATIVE USES	MECHANICAL USES
Any	: Add an exciting story detail that stems from your check but is unrelated to your success or failure. : Determine the easiest way to accomplish the task you were attempting (including the skill and approach that have the lowest TN when used).	: If you failed, provide assistance (see page 6) to the next character to attempt a similar check. : If you succeeded, provide assistance (see page 6) to the next character to attempt a similar check.
Air	Air : Observe an interesting detail about a character in the scene. At the GM's discretion, you may use this to add a detail that did not previously exist to an NPC in the scene (such as an advantage). Air +: You are extremely subtle in executing the task, and you attract the minimal amount of attention. Additional spent this way increases the subtlety of your method.	Air +: Choose one character in the scene per spent this way; learn their demeanor and current strife. Air *: Choose a Water or Fire opportunity from this table and resolve it. The cost of this Opportunity is double its normal cost.
Earth	Earth : You suddenly recall an important piece of information not directly related to your check. At the GM's discretion, you may use this to reveal a small preparatory action you took earlier, such as bringing along a common item useful to your current task. Earth +: You act extremely carefully, maintaining your balance and keeping a safe distance from sources of harm. Additional spent this way increases the efficacy of the precautions you take.	Earth +: Choose one character in the scene per spent this way; each chosen character removes 2 strife. Earth *: Choose a Water or Fire opportunity from this or another table and resolve it. *The cost of this Opportunity is double its normal cost.*
Fire	Fire : You notice something conspicuously missing or out of place in the vicinity that is not directly related to your check. At the GM's discretion, you may use this to add an absence to the scene (such as a missing pair of shoes that indicate that the occupant is not home). Fire +: You perform the task in a particularly flashy way, drawing the attention of others who observe you. Additional spent this way makes you even more noticeable.	Fire +: Choose one character in the scene per spent this way; each chosen character suffers 2 strife. Fire *: Choose an Air or Earth opportunity from this or another table and resolve it. *The cost of this Opportunity is double its normal cost.*
Water	Water : You spot an interesting physical detail present in your environment not directly related to your check. At the GM's discretion, you may use this to add a (previously unnoticed) piece of terrain or a mundane object to your environment. Water +: You perform the task very efficiently, completing the task more quickly or saving supplies in the process. Additional spent this way further reduces the time or materials required.	Water +: Remove 2 of your strife per spent this way. Water *: Choose an Air or Earth opportunity from this or another table and resolve it. *The cost of this opportunity is double its normal cost.*
Void	Void : You gain some spiritual insight into the nature of the universe or of your own heart. At the GM's discretion, you may use this to reveal a fact about your character that has not been previously established but relates to the situation in some way. Void +: You feel a chill down your spine, notice a sudden silence, or otherwise detect a sign of the supernatural around you. Additional spent this way gives you an increasingly precise location for the supernatural occurrence.	Void : Name Air, Earth, Fire, or Water. If your next check uses that ring, reduce its TN by 1. Void *: Choose an Air, Earth, Fire, or Water opportunity from this or another table and resolve it. *The cost of this opportunity is double its normal cost.*

CRITICAL STRIKES

When a character suffers a critical strike, they suffer ill effects based on the number of critical strikes they are currently suffering from. Each critical strike persists until it is healed (see page 38)

- **First Critical Strike: Painful Blow**
  The character immediately suffers 3 strife, but there is no ongoing effect.
- **Second Critical Strike: Minor Injury**
  The character increases the TN of the next check they attempt by 1, but there is no ongoing effect.
- **Third Critical Strike: Disabling Injury**
  The character increases the TN of all checks they attempt by 1 until the critical strike is healed.
- **Fourth Critical Strike: Serious Injury**
  The character suffers the Incapacitated condition until the critical strike is healed.

SYMBOLS AND DICE

Skill Die  Ring Die 



Success results represent the character's effectiveness on the check. If the total number of results on kept dice are greater than or equal to the TN of the check, the character succeeds. Each beyond this is a **bonus success,** which can confer additional benefits on some types of checks.



Explosive success results count as results, and additionally, for each kept die with an result, the player may roll 1 additional die of the same type and then choose whether to keep or drop this die. If they keep a new die that contains an result, they can repeat this process, chaining results into further results as long as they roll . These additional dice do not count towards the maximum number of kept dice.



Opportunity results do not contribute directly to success or failure, but instead represent positive, incidental narrative effects of the character's actions. This might mean the character notices an interesting detail, performs the task in a particularly deft manner, or gets a hint about a different solution that might work.



Strife results reflect the character's emotional state and how it changes during the task. Strife can represent negative emotions like frustration or fear, or positive emotions like the thrill of a challenge or joy.