

The purpose of this document is to provide a high-level overview of the Star Wars RPG system that is easy to understand for experienced role-players who are familiar with d20 systems. Here I will explain the differences between Star Wars and the d20 system games you've played in the past. This won't explain everything you need to play the game, but will give you enough information to show up to your first game session ready to play.

## **Core Mechanics**

The first major difference in Star Wars is way you make skill checks and attacks. Instead of rolling a d20 and adding a modifier based on your skills and abilities, the number and types of dice you roll are determined by your skills and abilities. This game uses special dice with icons that introduce narrative elements, rather than numbers.

Characteristics are the equivalent of ability scores in d20 systems. Instead of Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma, Star Wars uses Brawn, Agility, Intellect, Cunning, Willpower, and Presence. Characteristics start at 5 or lower during character creation and max out at 6 during gameplay.

Similar to d20, every skill has a ruling characteristic. Skills start at 2 or fewer ranks at character creation and max out at 5 during gameplay.

There are 6 different types of dice that are used in making skill checks. Boost Dice (blue d6), Ability Dice (green d8), and Proficiency Dice (yellow d12) are all positive. Setback Dice (black d6), Difficulty Dice (purple d8), and Challenge Dice (red d12) are all negative.

Proficiency Dice represent an overlap of both innate ability and trained skill. Ability dice aren't as strong, and they represent either innate ability without training OR training without innate ability. Challenge Dice and Difficulty Dice similarly represent the difficulty level of the task that is being accomplished. Boost Dice represent external factors that make you more likely to succeed, while Setback Dice represent external factors that make you less likely to succeed.

When assembling your dice pool to make a skill check, you will need to know how many ranks you have trained in that skill, and what is the ruling characteristic for that skill. Whichever number is higher will be the total number of Ability Dice and Proficiency Dice. The lower number is how many of those dice will be Proficiency Dice (this is the overlap of your skill and ability). The difference will be the number of Ability Dice you use.

For example, the Melee skill is ruled by the Brawn Characteristic. If you have a Brawn characteristic of 4 and you have 2 ranks of the Melee skill, you would use a total of 4 dice (Brawn = 4). 2 of those dice would be Proficiency Dice (2 ranks of Melee), and the other 2 dice would be Ability dice (Brawn that does not overlap with skill). The same dice would be used if the numbers were flipped (Brawn = 2, Melee = 4), because it doesn't matter which of the 2 values is the higher and lower value.

The game also uses Force Dice (white d12). Force Dice are used when activating Force powers to determine the number of Force Points the characters may spend. The only symbols on Force Dice are white and black dots, which represent Light and Dark Force Points.

**SUCCESS** ★**ADVANTAGE** ☼**TRIUMPH** ☼**FAILURE** ▼**THREAT** ☼**DESPAIR** ☼**BOOST DICE** □**ABILITY DICE** ◆**PROFICIENCY DICE** ◆**SETBACK DICE** ■**DIFFICULTY DICE** ◆**CHALLENGE DICE** ◆

The number of success and failure symbols that are rolled determines how successful that roll is. Successes and failures cancel each other out. For a roll to be successful, the net result must be at least 1 success. Additional success symbols typically add to the degree of success. For example, in an attack roll each success symbol adds 1 to the amount of damage that is dealt to the target.

Advantage and threat symbols also cancel each other out, and any net result can be used by the players and/or GM to create other effects. These do not determine success of the roll, but instead they are used to add flavor to the game. A player character may use advantage to buy an extra maneuver, activate a weapon's special properties, or add a boost die to an ally's next roll. The GM might use threat to add a setback die to a player's next roll or inflict strain damage on a player character.

Triumph and Despair symbols appear only on the most powerful dice. Triumph is on the Proficiency die, while Despair is on the Challenge die. A triumph symbol counts as a success symbol, as well as a more powerful version of the advantage symbol. A despair symbol counts as a failure symbol, as well as a more powerful version of the threat symbol. These symbols can trigger effects that are more powerful than the ones triggered by advantage and threat symbols. They do not cancel each other out, as other symbols do.

## **Movement and Range**

Movement, range, and positioning are more abstract in Star Wars than in most d20 systems. Distances aren't measured by squares, meters, feet or any other solid factor. Instead, characters and objects are positioned in relative ranges. When setting up a scenario, the GM may describe certain things as being within a certain range of each other. "Engaged" is when two characters are close enough to engage in melee combat. "Short range" includes engaged and extends several meters. "Medium range" extends up to several dozen meters. "Long range" is further out, though its limits are not clearly defined. "Extreme range" is even further than long range, and is considered the furthest distance at which characters could interact. They may not be able to hear each other, even when shouting, and only high tech sniper rifles and vehicle weapons can target at this distance.

A single move can cover movement within short range (engaging or disengaging from a target), or from short range to medium range and vice versa. Moving between medium and long range or between long and extreme range requires two moves. This can be done across two turns, or by taking two movements in a single turn.

## **Beginning a New Session**

At the beginning of each session, the GM will make a roll to determine how obligation comes into play for the current session. This brings an element of the characters' backstories into play, and affects how NPC's will approach them.

Also at the beginning of each session, each player will roll a Force die. The dice results are added up to determine the Destiny Pool for the game session. Each black dot rolled becomes a dark side destiny point, and each white dot becomes a light side destiny point. Destiny Points are spent during gameplay to add dice to a dice pool, activate certain abilities, or attempt to introduce facts into the story (with GM's permission). The destiny pool is represented on-table by a series of two-sided tokens. When a player uses a light side destiny point, its corresponding token is flipped over to reveal its dark side. In turn, the GM uses dark side destiny points by flipping them over to the light side. This represents the Balance of the Force as it pertains to the game.

## **Initiative**

Initiative, while it serves the same function in Star Wars that it serves in d20 games, works in a much different way. Two different skills are used to determine initiative order, depending on the situation. When a character is expecting a combat situation to arise, use the "Cool" skill to roll their initiative. This represents their ability to keep their cool in a stressful situation. When a character didn't see the battle coming, they use their "Vigilance" skill. This represents their ability to be constantly aware and always watching for trouble. Either way, the skill roll is made without any difficulty dice. Initiative order is determined by the number of success symbols each character rolls, and ties are broken by advantage symbols. If a tie still exists, player characters beat NPCs.

The next part is where things get drastically different. The initiative order becomes a series of initiative slots. The combat will maintain a basic flow of NPCs and PCs taking turns, but the exact order that characters act in can change from round to round. Each slot is owned by one side of the battle, and that team decides which character fills each slot. The important thing is that each character acts only once per round. Check out the example below:

	Initiative rolls	Initiative slots	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3
Player 1	5 success 3 advantage	PC slot	Player 4	Player 1	Player 2
Player 2	4 success 3 advantage	PC slot	Player 2	Player 4	Player 1
NPC 1	4 success 3 advantage	NPC slot	NPC 2	NPC 3	NPC 1
NPC 2	3 success 2 advantage	NPC slot	NPC 3	NPC 1	NPC 3
Player 3	3 success 1 advantage	PC slot	Player 3	Player 2	Player 4
NPC 3	2 success 4 advantage	NPC slot	NPC 1	NPC 2	NPC 2
Player 4	2 success 2 advantage	PC slot	Player 1	Player 3	Player 3

Notice that in the initiative roll, Player 2 and NPC 1 had the same roll, but Player 2 beat NPC 1 because players take precedence in a tie. Also notice NPC 2 and Player 3 had the same number of successes, but NPC 2 had more advantage. The order of the rolls became the order for the initiative slots. Each round, the order the characters played in changed, but the slots continue to be held by the same side of the battle, and each character acted once per round. Players can use this to a strong advantage, such as in the example: Player 1 was able to take the last turn in round 1 and the first turn in round 2. Conceivably, he could make a double move on his first turn to come closer to the NPCs, then use his second turn hit an enemy with his action, then retreat with his move. If he had enough advantage in his attack roll, he could even gain a second move for round two and retreat all the way back to his original position before anyone else can react to his first movement. Alternately, he could move from short range to engaged and then hit with a melee weapon in round 1, hit again in round 2, then disengage (and possibly move out to medium range if his attack roll earned him enough advantage to gain an extra move).

### **Gaining and Spending XP**

Similar to d20 systems, XP is awarded at the end of each session. Typically, you will gain 10 to 20 points per session, with small bonuses for reaching key milestone in the plot or for exceptional role-playing. Rather than “leveling up,” players use their characters' XP to directly purchase upgrades to their characters' skills and talents, or to purchase new specializations. Each specialization comes with a “talent tree” full of character-building choices that pertain to that specialization.

### **The Force**

Once a Force power has been purchased, you may attempt to use it by rolling a number of Force dice equal to your character's Force rating. This gives you a pool of force points to spend on the power. Light Force points may be spent freely. Spending Dark Force points requires the use of Destiny points and inflicts strain damage on the character. Sometimes, your character will roll only Dark Force points, and will be forced to choose between accessing the Dark side or not using their power at all.