



System

The System

Exalted: Reloaded runs with what gamers call a dice pool system. That is, the character's pairing of an Attribute and a Skill gives a number of 6-sided dice to roll, and some of those dice (depending on the power level of the character) are added together to give a result.

Essence

The world of Exalted has beings of a variety of power levels, from average humans, to newly born Solar Exalts, to ancient Dragon Kings. The key trait that governs the relative power level of all these characters is Essence.

Everything in Creation has essence for it is the building block of Creation. Essence is the power that links all things and from which all wonders spring. Most beings have no control over their essence, while some, such as the Exalted, can channel their Essence to wield the power of the gods.

In terms of mechanics, Essence has the following impact on player characters:

- Total number of Attribute points to spend (Essence x 4)
- Total number of Skill points to spend (Essence x 5)
- Maximum starting Attribute and Skill levels.
- Number of starting Background points..
- Essence Dice: the number of dice the player gets to add to form the character's dice pool to determine success or failure.
- Total number of bonus points (Essence x 3)

As you can see, a character's Essence has a huge impact on his abilities and is a very strong indicator of his overall power level.

Skill Checks

Attempting important actions requires a skill check. This is done by combining the relevant attribute and relevant skill, which will give you a number indicating the number of dice in the dice pool. For example, trying to hit someone with a sword requires a Melee skill check. The relevant traits are Dexterity and Melee. These dice are then

What's wrong with Exalted?

Some may wonder why on earth I'm spending my time on such a large project. "Why not use the Exalted rules as they are written?" some people might ask. Well, it's a good question, and I do have an answer. I'm one of the many gamers who loves the Exalted setting yet hates the system. It's too crunchy, involves too many dice, and is way too slow for my tastes. Did you know each and every attack in Exalted 2nd Edition takes 10 steps to resolve? As a gamer with limited time, I find such an approach to gaming to be utterly lame. I've long thought about using a different rules set to run Exalted, but never really had the time to actively pursue such a goal. But now I do have the time. And with a dependable RPG group, I have the inclination as well.

The mechanics in this game are inspired by a couple of things... the EABA dice mechanic (roll xD6, take the sum of the best 3) and the simplicity of White Wolf's "pip" system. While working on a similar project for my Delta Green game, it occurred to me that a scaling dice pool and a scaling "best x" mechanic ala EABA could provide a good method for scaling up and down the various power levels in Exalted. I also liked the simplicity and intuitiveness of the White Wolf's Attribute and Skill system. So I began thinking of ways to combine the two. What you see here are the results of my effort. I hope you enjoy.

rolled together, and from these results the player can choose his Essence Dice. Obviously, he or she is going to want to take the best X. So a swordsman with an Essence of 3, 3 Dexterity and 2 Melee would roll 5 dice and then choose his 3 Essence Dice from the resulting roll. Exalted, on the other hand, with a greater Essence score (5) can choose 5 Essence Dice. As you can see, this gives the Exalted much higher average dice rolls than humans, indicating his greater power.

But what exactly are the players rolling for? It's the GM's job to adjudicate these actions by deciding on a Challenge Rating (CR) for each task; each CR has a numerical value that must be equal to or exceeded on the dice roll to make for a success. The scale of difficulty is different depending on the character's power level, as an "Average" human feat is far different from an "Average" Exalted feat.

There are six levels of difficulty in Exalted: Reloaded: Average, Challenging, Hard, Formidable, Heroic, and Superheroic. Tasks rated as Average are such that an average human with a typical dice pool of 3 dice would be able to accomplish the task nearly every time. On the other end of the scale, Superheroic tasks would, for the same

Essence and Power Levels

To give you an idea of what Essence means in the game world. Here is a very rough guide to power levels in Creation:

Essence 1-2: Animals and minor spirits

Essence 3: Mortal Humans, spirits

Essence 4: Young Dragon-Blooded, God-Blooded, Demons of the First Circle, Minor Elementals

Essence 5: Young Celestial Exalted (including Abyssals), Mature Dragon-Blooded, Major Elementals

Essence 6: Mature Celestial Exalted, Senior Dragon-Blooded, Demons of the Second Circle

Essence 7: Senior Celestial Exalted, Young Deathlords

Essence 8: Mature Deathlords, surviving First Age Lunar Exalted (Leviathan, Ma-Ha-Suchi, etc.)

Essence 9: Senior Deathlords (The First and Forsaken Lion), Third-tier Gods

Essence 10: Second-tier Gods

person, be possible, but highly unlikely. See the sidebar for the statistics behind this mechanism.

There are no hard and fast rules for determining Challenge Ratings. GM's should take into account "realism" (obviously, it is impossible for a human to lift, say, a large boat, no matter how well the player rolls), and how he would like to see the story develop when he issues CR's to players. One helpful guideline to keep in mind is the limitations on the average human. The upper end of the Exalted scale should allow the Exalted to accomplish things that are humanly impossible.

Another type of Skill Check is known as a Contested Skill Check. This involves two characters making Skill Checks (often based on the same pairing of Attribute + Skill) and comparing the results, with the winner being the one with a higher roll. This sort of Skill Check is common in Social Combat, one-on-one tests of skill, and efforts to persuade someone.

In all cases, it's the GM's job to determine which Attribute to pair with which Skill. Most cases will involve common pairings (such as Dexterity + Melee), but in some circumstances, the GM might decide on a different pair.

Penalties

Actions are also influenced by a variety of internal and external factors that may hinder the character. There are two ways to penalize a character's actions. As a general rule,

things that make the action more difficult, such as darkness or poor footing, would cause the CR to go up. These would be external factors. But for internal factors, such as injuries, pain, and cumbersome armor, the GM's best bet is to give the player a dice penalty, such as -1d or -2d. This reflects the internal factors that are making it difficult for the character to perform up to his capability. There may not seem to be much of a difference between these two ways of penalizing characters, but in terms of the statistical probabilities, there is.

Botches

Anytime a player rolls all "ones" on a Skill Check this is considered a Botch. For larger dice pools, this sort of outcome is highly unlikely, but for smaller pools it is a real possibility. A Botch means that not only did the character fail at what he was attempting, but he failed in a spectacular manner. Working together, the player who rolled the Botch and the GM should decide on some sort of very, very bad outcome for the character.

The Rule of Six

As anyone who has rolled a die knows, sixes are good. After any Skill check, players are welcome to set aside any dice that show a 6. These dice can no longer be considered potential Essence Dice, meaning it can't contribute towards reaching the target difficulty number. What do these dice do? It depends on the skill used. In combat, for example, they can be used for extra damage. On an Investigation roll, perhaps it can be used to gain some important information. In short, they are used to give some sort of bonus to the player.

Why the Rule of Six?

In the White Wolf system, extra successes on an attack contribute to greater damage. In other words, a skilled warrior is not only more likely to hit, but he's more likely to do more damage. In the Exalted: Reloaded system, this sort of system wouldn't work as the target numbers grow exponentially and the results of rolls at higher powers grow massive. This idea occurred to me as a reasonable way to give more skilled combatants a better chance of doing damage. From there, I began thinking of ways it could be applied to other skills, such as giving result bonuses and giving player free minor declarations.

Crunching the Numbers

There is a statistical foundation for the Exalted: Reloaded system. This is a more detailed description of the various Challenge Ratings and the appropriate target number needed on the dice roll to indicate success for the average human (total dice pool of 3). This information can be used to help the GM decided on the Challenge Ratings for different tasks.

Average Challenges (Target # 7): An average person has a 90% chance of accomplishing these tasks successfully.

Challenging Challenges (Target # 9): An average person has a 74% chance of accomplishing these tasks successfully.

Hard Challenges (Target # 11): An average person has a 50% chance of accomplishing these tasks successfully.

Formidable Challenges (Target # 13): An average person has a 26% chance of accomplishing these tasks successfully.

Heroic Challenges (Target # 15): An average person has a 9% chance of accomplishing these tasks successfully.

Superheroic Challenges (Target #17): An average person has a 2% chance of accomplishing these tasks successfully.

Remember, these are the probabilities for humans. Charts elsewhere in this manual will give you similar statistical data for the Exalted

System Summary

What does the player want to do?

What is the relevant Attribute and Skill pairing?

How difficult is the task?

Are there any internal hindrances making the task more difficult to accomplish?

What are the results of the Skill Check?

Essence, Challenge Ratings, and Target Numbers

Essence 3-4

Average: 7

Challenging: 9

Hard: 11

Formidable: 13

Heroic: 15

Superheroic: 17

Essence 5-6

Average: 13

Challenging: 16

Hard: 19

Formidable: 22

Heroic: 25

Superheroic: 28

Note: This may sound a bit confusing at first, but remember that chances are your Circle of Exalted will all be on the same scale of power, making the use of other scales only a rare occurrence. Having multiple Challenge Tables was necessary because the dice pool mechanic doesn't allow for a strict linear progression of difficulty. Think of the Challenge Ratings above as a rough way to state how difficult a task is in light of his level of power. Obviously, a Formidable task for a human is far different from a Formidable task for an Exalted. By comparing Target numbers across charts, you can come up with rough equivalences. For example, a Challenging Task for an Exalted has a target # of 16; applying that same number to the Essence 3-4 table above, we can see that the same task would be an Heroic endeavor for a human. Given the mathematical limitations of a d6, "best 3" dice pool, we can see that there are some actions that an Exalted can do that are simply impossible for the non-Exalted to accomplish. The GM should keep this fact in mind when adjudicating challenges.