

The Land of Karn

Fantasy Role-Playing Game

Basic Version

Basic Game Mechanics

The LoK System is a skill-based system, but skills don't cover everything in the game and everything that characters can do. Sometimes there are other events or needs that aren't covered by skills. Most of these should be able to be handled by the GM, but as guidelines I set some standards. Quite often a GM will call for an Attribute Check (usually called an INT Check or a Resistance Check), which is based off the attribute. Most of these are handled using the Attributes as a base and rolling as if using a skill (usually with some major modifiers), but the final say always comes down to the GM.

Attributes

There are ten basic attributes used in the LoK system and almost all creatures, races and living organisms have some level in at least most of them. Each of these attributes are listed as a number, usually between 5 and 95, with higher being more adept in that area. The average person in the world of Karn, from the slaves to the nobles, has a 40 in each attribute. Each of the attributes are explained below.

Attribute Descriptions

The following small sections are basic descriptions of each of the ten attributes and what they are mainly representative of. All attributes fall under one of three categories: Mental, Personal, and Physical Attributes. Some attributes get used more directly while others are used mainly as guidelines. This section helps explain which are which and how to use them.

Mental Attributes

These attributes govern the mind and internal workings of the character. This covers Intelligence, Resistance, and Alertness.

Intelligence (INT)

The Intelligence attribute is a measure of a person's intelligence, ability to retain knowledge, and what I like to call mental agility. How a person handles information and how much of it makes sense to them is all determined by this attribute.

Most skills that involve knowing and remembering things (like languages and lore) use the INT attribute as a base. Many other skills use INT as part of their maximum since active thinking and memory are used in addition to other attributes. INT checks may be asked to be made when the GM wants to see if a character knows certain knowledge, recognizes something, remembers something, or other things using the mind and memory.

INT is also a person's connection to and control over the forces of magic in the world of Karn. A person's personal level of magic energy and how well they control spells are all dependent on INT since it takes an active and fast mind to be able to control these forces.

Resistance (RES)

Resistance is a measure of how much stress and strain the mind can handle. This is mainly used to resist against mental strain, psionics, torture, and other stresses, like how easily scared or confused they can get. Due to this, RES checks are usually made to see how well a person handles the stress of the situation.

Although there are not many of them, some skills are based off the RES attribute, but most of them are psionic skills (which is an area left out of the Basic Version of the rules). There are a few others out there, but mostly this is used as a defensive attribute rather than an active one for skills.

Alertness (ALT)

Alertness is a mix of things that had no other real home but all seem to fall within the same general category. It is a person's level of awareness to their surroundings, how well they notice things, and level of concentration or focus they have. ALT checks are mainly used to see if a person notices something in their surroundings, what I like to call "Roll Noticing Stuff."

Alertness is used as the basis for many skills requiring good concentration or noticing important details. ALT is also used as a reference point as to how long learning many new skills can take.

Personal Attributes

These are attributes that generalize the appearance and personality of characters. This covers Charm and Beauty.

These are also called "Racially Dependent" attributes since how they are used depends on the races involved. This means the attribute number is a rating within a single race or culture, not for all people in the world. This also deals with the idea that what one race thinks of as beautiful and charming, another may think of as ugly and obnoxious.

For example: Even a Goblin with a Beauty of 80 will be thought of as an ugly little bastard by the average Frenal. Or, as is common with Dwarves (who think loud and blunt is very charming), the average Frenal will still find them to be uncouth and not very charming.

Charm (CHR)

Charm is a measure of the person's charisma and attitude among their own race and culture (or race and culture they were raised among, if it was different than their own). This is mainly used for interaction with others, usually those of the same race or community. Charm is mostly just used as a guideline, but can have the occasional CHR check pop up when trying to impress someone.

Few skills use CHR as a base since it is usually an arbitrary attribute used for reference. Charm, however, can almost be used as a skill of its own if the game allows it. Depending on the style of game Charm can be used as a guideline for role-playing it out, rolled in combination with role-playing to get a result, or even rolled as a skill to see how the character handles a situation. I suggest one of the first two options for most games, but then I am a strong supporter of the story-based game.

One important note about Charm is its dependence on the upbringing and race of the person. When races and cultures mix, the charm of the characters may be affected (both positively and negatively). Just keep in mind how different cultures (and in some cases races) believe different things to be charming and wrong. When a character has a charm not based on the race they are but based on some other culture due to how they were raised, make sure to make a note of it. This is best marked by putting the race or culture name in parenthesis next to the charm number, like CHR 45 (Frenal) or CHR 45 (Tribal Orc).

Beauty (BTY)

Beauty is simply a measure of how attractive a person is to most others of its own race and culture. Other races (or even some individual people) may look at them differently. This is because beauty is in the eye of the beholder and completely arbitrary in some situations.

This is designed to be a guide to help GM decide how others react to the person, so BTY checks are almost never called for. Almost no skills use BTY as a base and any that do should even be altered by the way different races react to them.

Physical Attributes

These attributes represent nearly every physical aspect of the characters, except for beauty. These attributes include Strength, Endurance, Agility, Dexterity, and Speed.

Strength (STR)

Strength is a measure of a person's pure physical strength and raw power. The higher the STR attribute, the more they can lift, carry, and higher their potential for damage. Any time a person uses their strength to attempt something (like holding on to something or lifting something) a STR check is most likely required.

STR is used for skills requiring brute strength, so it is most common in the combat section of the skill list. There are a few other skills that use it, but not as much as combat does.

Endurance (END)

Endurance is a measure of a person's ability to handle pain, damage, physical stress, and fatigue. A person's hit points are based off of their END, as is how long they last doing physical activity. END checks are often made when people physically exert themselves to

see how well they handle it.

END is rarely used for skills, but is very important to the length of time a person can do the skills they have.

Agility (AGI)

Agility is a person's ability to move their body as a whole and how well they maintain balance. How well and with what style someone can move about (even when making difficult movements) is all based on the AGI of the person. AGI checks are made to see how a person handles an attempt to make one of these movements and keep their feet in tricky situations.

AGI is often used as the basis for skills that depend on movement. They are common in combat and performing arts.

Dexterity (DEX)

Dexterity is a person's ability to control their fingers and make finite movements and control. This is often called manual dexterity or finger manipulation in the real world. This is very different from AGI since it is about the finite control and not the overall flow of the body. DEX checks are often made to see if a person is able to catch, control, or manipulate something (usually something small).

Skills with the DEX attribute as a base are usually technical skills that require finger control. Many craftsman and artistic skills fall into this category.

Speed (SPD)

Speed is simply a person's ability to move swiftly. The higher the number, the faster that person is able to move. This is often used for running, reacting quickly, and gaining the initiative. Usually, a faster person can outrun a slower one, but SPD checks can allow the slower to get lucky and catch up.

Very few skills are based on SPD since it just a measure of how fast a person can move, but some combat skills use it to some extent.

Attribute Checks

Every once and a while the GM or a skill will require an attribute check, which are listed as RES check or Strength check (sometimes by other nicknames a group might use, like 'Notice' or 'Spot' checks). These are often done to check to see if a character notices something, can keep their balance, or otherwise handle some situation they are put into (and there is no skill in used for it). Sometimes a playful GM will

just have them make attribute checks (most common with ALT checks) from time to time just to keep them on their toes.

These are rolled one of three ways. The standard way is used when you have to roll against your attribute to see if you can do something. The others are used when one character is either opposing another character or some other type of external force.

Sometimes multiple characters can work together to add to their chances of success. After all those working together make their rolls they add all the successes together. Failures are not added to the total (and if none of them succeeded then only the one who failed by the least is counted). Then compare this total to the opposition (usually a number set by the GM, since this is most common with Opposing Force Checks).

Attribute Check Modifiers

Sometimes there will be bonuses or negatives to these checks, either through some effect or a GM ruling. These modifiers normally affect the attribute and not the roll (unless it is very clearly stated before hand).

For example: A character with an AGI of 52 has to make an AGI check at -20. It is rolled on a D% and that is then compared to the characters AGI - 20 (for a total modified AGI of 32). So if they rolled a 48 it would now be a failure (by 16 points) rather than a success (of 4 points, based on the unmodified AGI).

Standard Attribute Check

Standard attribute checks are done almost like making a skill roll. You roll against your attribute, complete with the possibility of critical success and failure, but attributes can not go up this way (no matter what you roll). When you make a roll, tell the GM how much you succeeded or failed by and he will tell you of the outcome (if any). Just as with skill checks the GM may have secret modifiers to make the check easier or more difficult but the players won't necessarily know what they are.

For example: A character with a AGI of 64 is trying to walk across a thin beam over a deep ravine. The GM says he has to make an AGI check or else run the risk of falling. They roll a 61 (making it by 3) and the GM says they almost fall, but are just able to make it.

Critical failures are always failures, although the effects of those failures depend on the situation, the roll, and what the GM decides happened based on all factors. Sometimes this can even cause harm to the character making the check or others around them.

Unlike the Critical Failures, Critical Success does

not guarantee success in all cases, although a roll of a critical success will affect the outcome quite a bit. If the chance of success is close it should make the outcome a great success, but if the outcome is impossible even a critical can't make it happen to be true. All outcomes need to be judged by the GM based on each situation and the roll.

Opposing Characters Check

Opposing character attribute checks are when two characters (PCs and/or NPCs) are working against each other for some goal or trying to out do each other. These are done by having both players (and/or the GM) make a attribute checks and comparing them. The one who has the higher success (or lower failure) is the winner. This is mainly used when one character is holding another or one is running away from another.

For example: A character with a STR of 40 is being held by one with a STR of 65. The little one tries to escape and the GM tells them to make opposing STR checks. The first rolls a 22 (a success of 18) and the second only rolls a 59 (a success of 6). The GM says the little guy wiggles his way free and escapes.

Critical success and failure can play a factor in these as well, but just as with a standard check they can not guarantee a success in all cases. Critical failures are always bad and successes are always far better than expected, but if the two sides are far too outmatched they can't overcome the impossible. In most of these kinds of cases the GM won't even have them roll.

Opposing Force Check

Opposing Force Checks are made whenever a character needs to act against some external force that isn't another living thing with attributes (like a blocked door or raging river). Making an opposing force roll is pretty much just like the opposing character check, only against a static number set by the GM rather than a roll by the opposition. This chosen number can be any number the GM sees fit (even far above 95).

Sometimes these attempts require further attribute checks to see if the characters hurt themselves making the attempt (especially if they are extremely hard to do). This is also the kind of check that it is most common to have multiple characters working together to overcome.

For example: A character with a STR of 65, another with a STR of 51, and a third with a STR of 40 are behind a set of bars. They want to try and escape by bending them. The GM decides a total STR check of 80 would be needed to bend the bars open (but

doesn't tell them this number) and says they have to make an opposing force STR check. The first rolls a 19 (succeeds by 46), the second rolls a 68 (fails by 17), and the last rolls a 9 (succeeds by 31). Together they have a success of 77 (ignoring the one who failed), but this is not enough to bend the bars. The GM then has them make standard END checks to see if they strained anything in the attempt. He even applies a small penalty to the middle one for failing his STR check.