Ultramicrolite20

By greywulf 7-28-08, Revised by Domino Writing 3-20-10

This is Microlite20 boiled down even further. It's suitable for gaming while out walking or when you've forgotten your gamebooks. If you don't have 1d20, use 3d6 to get close enough.

There are 3 stats - STRength, DEXterity, MIND. Share a total of 5 points between them with a maximum of 4 in one. You can reduce 1 stat to -1 to get an extra point. These are your stat bonuses.

Choose 1 skill group (Physical, Subterfuge, Communication or Knowledge). Your character is at +4 to do anything relating to that skill group. The other skill groups are at +1.

Actions are resolved by rolling 1d20+skill bonus+relevant stat bonus. Roll equal or higher than the given Difficulty Class (DC) or higher than the opponent's roll to succeed. DC is usually 10 or 15.

Combat is resolved using Physical+STR bonus (for melee), Physical+DEX (for ranged) or Knowledge+MIND (for magic). Call your weapons whatever you want. To-hit is what matters, not the amount of damage it causes.

The DC (for melee or ranged) is the opponent's Armor Class: 10+DEX bonus+Armor. Leather is +3, Chain is +4, Plate is +5. A shield can add a further +1.

The DC (for magic) is the opponent's Will Save: 10+(MIND bonus x2).

If you get hit 3 times in a single combat encounter, you're unconscious. Roll Physical+STR DC15 to recover from the battle without serious injury. After a combat encounter, you reset to 0 (zero) hits. Larger critters can take more hits before dying; that's up to the GM.

If you survive 10 combats, add +1 to all of your skill groups.

For a modern-day game, read "bulletproof vest" for Chain and "riot gear" for Plate. Add +1 to ranged to-hit when using a pistol and +3 when using a rifle or shotgun. A character's super-spy code number is his stat bonuses in order, so Horace, below, would be "Agent 23."

Example
Horace the Wise is going to be STR +0, DEX +2, MIND +3, and chooses Communication as his main skill. He wears chainmail and a shield giving him AC18, has a Will Save of 16, and wields a mace melee weapon.
During the game, Horace tries to sneak past a guard, so rolls 1d20+Subterfuge+DEX. That's 15+1+2 for a total of 17. The DC was 15 (set by the GM); he's not noticed at all. Lucky Horace.
Later Horace encounters a lone goblin. It attacks with a vicious serrated dagger and rolls a 19, hitting him squarely across the stomach. Horace had better be careful. Two more blows and he's Goblin stew!
Thankfully Horace survives this and 9 other narrow scrapes. He adds 1 to all his skill groups and now rolls +5 Communication, and +2 for all other skills.
His current stats are:

Horace the Wise: STR +0, DEX +2, MIND +3, Communication +5, others @ +2
Armor Class 18 chain+shield, Will Save 16, Mace.