FUDGE IN A NUTSHELL

Although **Fudge** is designed to be customized by each gamemaster, there are some game design decisions at the core of **Fudge** that are used by most **Fudge** GMs.

Characters and Character Traits

Fudge characters are described by "traits," including attributes (any trait that everyone in the game world has), skills (any trait that isn't an attribute and can be improved through practice), gifts (any trait that isn't an attribute or skill but is something positive for the character), and faults (any trait that limits a character's actions or earns him a bad reaction from other people). Supernormal powers are treated as potent gifts.

Fudge uses ordinary words to describe some traits, especially attributes and skills. The following terms of a seven-level sequence are the words suggested by the **Fudge** author and used in Grey Ghost Games products:

Superb
Great
Good
Fair
Mediocre
Poor
Terrible

There is an additional level not listed above: Legendary, which is beyond Superb. GMs may restrict Legendary traits to non-player characters.

Character Creation

Fudge provides two basic means of creating characters: the "subjective" and "objective" systems.

In the subjective system, the player and GM work together to describe the character in **Fudge** terms, building from a strong character concept. In the objective system, a character's traits start at a default level (Fair for attributes; Poor for most skills) and the GM grants each player a number of "free" levels to allocate. She may also grant "free" gifts, or require one or more faults. The player can then spend two free levels to raise an attribute from Fair to Great, for instance; or sacrifice a number of levels to gain a gift; or give his character a fault in return for levels to apply somewhere else.

The trading "values" of various traits and trait levels are:

1 attribute level = 3 skill levels
1 gift = 6 skill levels
1 gift = 2 attribute levels
1 gift = 1 fault

Scale — Strength and Mass

Some characters or creatures have certain attributes that are way beyond the human norm. Prime examples include Strength, Mass, and Speed. Such attributes are rated in Scale, which acts as a modifier in interactions between creatures or items of different Scale.

In a human-based game, Human Scale is 0. A race of greater-than-human average strength would be Scale +1 Strength or more, while a race of lesser average strength would be Scale −1 Strength or less. Individuals

are then of Fair or Good Strength, etc., relative to those of their own Scale.

In a "Bunnies" game, where the player characters are rabbits, Rabbit Scale would be 0, while Human Scale would likely be +7. In a "Mecha" game, where the player characters were giant robots, Mecha Scale would be 0, while Human Scale would depend on the actual size difference between the mechs and humans; a Human Scale of −15 relative to the Mecha Scale of 0 would not be unreasonable.

To calculate appropriate Strength/Mass Scale values, figure that each level of Strength Scale represents an increase of about 1.5 times the Strength and Mass of the previous Scale level. This is because the **Fudge** core rules define each level of Strength (from Terrible to Superb) to be 1.5 times stronger than the previous level. (This progression isn't necessarily true for other attributes. Superb Dexterity is only about twice as good as Fair Dexterity, and each level of Speed is 1.2 times faster than the previous level.) Strength Scale increases at the same rate: a Scale 1 Fair Strength individual is 1.5 times stronger than a Scale 0 Fair Strength individual.

Note that Scale 1 Fair Strength is not exactly equal to a Scale 0 Good Strength — Scale really measures Mass, or Density, and affects how easily a creature may be hurt. A Scale 1 Fair Strength fighter has an advantage over a Scale 0 Good Strength fighter, even though their Strengths are equal. The Scale 1 fighter is less affected by the other's damage due to his greater mass.

Action Resolution

For any action the player character wishes to perform, the GM must determine which trait is tested. (This will usually be a skill or an attribute.) If the action is unopposed, the GM determines the difficulty level. Some actions are so easy that the character succeeds automatically; others are impossible (no rolls needed).

Unopposed Actions

When a character performs an action that isn't influenced by anyone else, it is referred to as an unopposed action. Examples include jumping a wide chasm, climbing a cliff, etc.

Difficulty Level: The GM will set a difficulty level when a character tries an unopposed action. Usually the difficulty level will be Fair, but some tasks are easier or harder.

Rolled Degree: This refers to how well a character does at a particular task. If someone is Good at Climbing in general, but the die roll shows a +1 to the character's skill, then the rolled degree is one level higher than the character's skill level — Great, in this case. Rolled degrees from Superb +1 to Superb +4 are possible; a GM may thus set a difficulty level beyond Superb for nearly impossible actions. Likewise, there are rolled degrees from Terrible −1 down to Terrible −4. The GM should use her imagination in determining the consequences of such abysmal failures.

Opposed Actions

Actions are opposed when other people (or animals, etc.) may have an effect on the outcome of the action. In this case, the player of each contestant rolls some dice, and the results are compared to determine the

outcome.

Relative Degree: This refers to how well a character did compared to another participant in an opposed action. The relative degree is expressed as a number of levels. If a PC gets a rolled degree result of Good in a fight, and his NPC foe gets a rolled degree result of Mediocre, the PC beat his foe by two levels — the relative degree is +2 from his perspective, −2 from hers.

Fudge Dice

Fudge dice are six-sided dice with two sides marked + (+1), two sides marked - (−1), and two sides left blank (+/-0). Rolling four **Fudge** dice (4dF) gives results from −4 (sub-Terrible) to +4 (trans-Superb). To determine the result of an action, roll the dice; use the result to modify the trait level being tested. For example, a +3 dice result added to a Fair trait is a Superb rolled degree; a −1 result added to a Fair trait indicates a Mediocre result.

Wounds

Combat damage to a character can be described as being at one of seven stages of severity:

Undamaged (no wounds at all)
Just a Scratch (no real game effect)
Hurt (−1 to traits)
Very Hurt (−2 to traits)
Incapacitated (only the most basic actions allowed)
Near Death (unconscious; death without medical help)
Dead

Determining Wound Levels: **Fudge** offers many ways to track combat damage. The Objective Damage System assumes each character will have an Offensive Damage Factor (the total of modifiers, including any applicable Strength and Scale bonuses, that reflects the deadliness of the weapon used) and a Defensive Damage Factor (the total of modifiers, including Scale and armor, that reflects the character's ability to withstand or avoid damage). To determine how much damage is done in a given combat round, the following formula may be used:

Winner's Relative Degree + Offensive Damage Factor − Loser's Defensive Damage Factor

Damage:	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9+
Wounds:	Scratch	Hurt	Very Hurt	Incap.	Nr. Death

Most characters can withstand three Scratches, one Hurt, and one Very Hurt. Further Scratches are marked as Hurts, further Hurts are marked as Very Hurt, etc. For more cinematic games, GMs may adjust the wound boxes, allowing two Hurts instead of one, for example.

To learn more about Fudge, please check out
www.fudgerpg.com

LICENSE

Fudge is a roleplaying game written by Steffan O'Sullivan, with extensive input from the Usenet community of rec.games.design and other online forums. The core rules of Fudge are available free on the Internet at **http://www.fudgerpg.com** and other sites. Fudge was designed to be customized, and may be used with any gaming genre. Fudge gamemasters and game designers are encouraged to modify Fudge to suit their needs, and to share their modifications and additions with the Fudge community.

The Fudge game system is copyrighted ©2000, 2005 by Grey Ghost Press, Inc., and is available for use under the Open Game License. See the **fudgerpg.com** website for more information.

Open Game License Version 1.0a

In accordance with the Open Game License Section 8 "Identification" the following designate Open Game Content and Product Identity:

OPEN GAME CONTENT
The contents of this document are declared Open Game Content.