

The Artifact Mini (4e)

The Artifact is an RPG about a constructed world that “Earthers” are trying to colonize. The world is old and already inhabited. It’s not inhabited by aliens, it’s population is more or less human as far as anyone can tell.

The planet is so old and there has been so much conflict that few know all of it’s history.

Most people live underground in the Incremental Cities. Anyone on the surface for long is in danger of being attacked by orbital bombardment.

There are three major factions. The Chezbah have highly advanced technology including nanotech cybernetics. They serve the entity Loc.

The Kelrath are xenophobic and the most populous of the nations.

The Scimrahn struggle to survive, being hunted by the Chezbah. They are Earth’s ally.

Earth is dying and interstellar teleporters are sending people and equipment to The Artifact. You are looking for a new home.

Attributes

The main tools the characters will prove themselves by. Each attribute is a measure of a character’s ability.

Physical Group

Strength - The character’s muscle.
 Constitution - How tough the character is.
 Reflex - The speed the character reacts at.

Functional Group

Agility - The character’s physical accuracy.
 Dexterity - Ability to manipulate with skill.
 Charisma - The social influence of the character.

Mental Group

Psyche - Mental toughness, sense of self.
 IQ - Fact recall and reasoning ability.
 Intuition - Awareness of surroundings.

This is an average person’s attribute stat block.

Attribute	1	2	3	4	Stress
Physical					Physical
Con	6	3	1	0	
Str	6	3	1	0	
Ref	6	3	1	0	
Functional					Functional
Agi	6	3	1	0	
Dex	6	3	1	0	
Cha	6	3	1	0	
Mental					Mental
Psy	6	3	1	0	
Int	6	3	1	0	
IQ	6	3	1	0	
HP	10				

How to Roll

When a player rolls, it is with the goal of rolling low. When a roll is under a character’s Attribute, they get one success. They can get more successes by rolling even lower than the attribute. If they roll under a Boost, they get a success. Boosts only ever give one success.

Attributes are rolled on a d20

Boosts and Drains are rolled on d10s.

Determine which attribute is appropriate to the task. All attributes have 4 success columns rolling lower on these columns means better results for the character. Pick up a d20 to roll.

If the character has a skill that applies, it counts as a Boost. Equipment or other special conditions can give more Boosts. Boosts are rated between 1-9, a 0 on the d10 always adds a success. Pick up as many d10s as the character has Boosts. Usually this is 0 to 3.

If there are conditions that make the task harder, add in a Drain. A drain cancels out a success. If the character has more Drains than Boosts add d10s until you have as many dice as there are Drains. Usually this is 0 to 2.

Roll all the dice at once. The d20 is compared to the attribute and its success columns. It will result in 0-4 successes.

Take the highest Boost and pair it with the highest Drain. Assign one of the rolled dice to the pair, player's choice. If the die assigned is lower than the Boost, add a success. If it's lower than the Drain, remove a success. If the die is under both, they cancel each other out.

Now take the second highest Boost and Drain. Resolve it the same way as the first pair.

Continue through all the Boosts and Drains this way until all the dice are assigned.

Successes are spent to buy effects.

Initiative

Each round all characters get 1 action to spend and they roll against their Reflex attribute. Each success means the character gets an extra action that turn.

Rolling for a challenge costs one action. Every time the player rolls for a character, it should cost an action.

The lower the attribute roll, the sooner the character takes their turn.

Offensive Actions

When attacking another character, successes are spent on the following.

Extend Range - Increases the distance a weapon can hit by its range again. Example, a weapon with a range of 300m can hit a target up to 600m away when using this stunt once, or 900m away using it twice. This stunt can be used as many times as possible.

Target Hit - The target is hit by the attack.

Avoid Armor - Modifies a Target Hit. Cut armor rating of a target in half. Can be selected again to cut armor rating in half again.

Avoid Shields - Modifies a Target Hit. Avoids half of the hit points of a target's shields. Selecting again avoids shields entirely.

Lower Damage - Modifies a Target Hit. If the player declares before the roll they are taking lower damage, they get a Boost 5 to their roll. If taken once, damage is reduced to half. If taken again, damage is reduced to a quarter of its original damage. Beam weapons can use this condition to do half damage to two targets. If selected again, to do quarter damage to three targets. Selecting this on a burst means that one in ten shots hit. Selecting again means that one in twenty shots hit. Defender picks hit location.

Wear Down - Induce 10 stress of choice.

Extra Damage - Subtract target's shield HP, Armor Rating and armor HP then multiply remaining damage by 2 for one target. Can only be used once.

Defensive Actions

A character can spend an action to roll for their defense. Each success counters the successes of someone trying to harm or impede them. This action is spent immediately after the offensive action.

Each success on a defense roll reduces on success in any actions against the character that turn.

Create a Boost or Drain

A character can spend an action to create a Boost to help themselves and others or they can create a Drain on someone.

The player describes how an effort will help going forward. They are putting effort into making a challenge easier. They roll against an appropriate attribute along with any skill boosts that apply.

The player declares which character or task they are trying to get a boost for. They also describe what kind of action the boost will be useful for such as attacks, social interactions, skill challenges or anything they can justify being able to prepare for.

Created Boosts start off with a rating of 1 and last until the end of the character's next turn.

Each success can be spent on the following.

Increase the Boost's rating by 2.

Make the Boost last 3 more turns.

Share the Boost with another character.

Add another task or character the Boost will work on.

Similarly a player can spend their character's action to place Drains on another character.

The player describes how the drain will make a kind of task harder for that character. Trying to grapple another character and make it hard for them to attack is an easy example.

Created Drains start off with a rating of 1 and last until the end of the character's next turn.

Each success can be spent on the following.

Increase the Drain's rating by 2.

Make the Drain last 3 more turns.

Add another character the Drain will work on.

Stress

Instead of taking damage for minor effects like cold or being wet the GM can inflict stress. Stress effects on of the three attribute groups. They are Physical, Functional and Mental. Each grouping effects three of the attributes.

Players can put extra effort into a roll by taking stress. Each stress taken reduces the number rolled on the attribute die by 1.

For every 5 stress taken, the character gets a Drain on any attribute rolls in the group. The Drain starts at 1 and goes up one for every five stress. If the group's drain goes over 9, the character takes one point off one of their attributes in that group.

Skill Challenges

Challenges do not have to be from other characters, they can come from the environment, a mystery to solve or in the form of repairing damaged equipment.

Set a number of Challenge Points for the task. Three for minor tasks, nine for tasks that are the focus of a scene.

Each roll against the challenge gets a consequence. Use attributes and skills appropriate to defeating the challenge.

Successes are spent reducing the CP or the challenge, reducing the die roll of the consequence or disallowing a type of consequence.

Time - The skill used is ineffective for 1d6 attempts. Attempts can be waited out.

Damage - Someone or something takes 1d6 damage ignores Resistance rating.

Parts - Materials are needed. Take 1d6 rounds collecting materials or reduce the Boost on equipment by 1d6

Stress - The character rolling takes 1d6 stress.

Social Exchanges

A character can put a social condition on another character. The player rolls for the character trying to place the condition under Cha or IQ adding any skills that apply. The opposing character can defend if desired using IQ or PSY.

For each success, the character applying the social condition can induce or disallow a choice or inflict 2 mental stress points.

When inducing a condition, the player selects a condition that they want the other character to take. If the other player rejects this option, they take 5 Mental Stress.

If the player chooses to disallow a condition, the opposing player must take 10 Mental Stress if they insist on that option.

The opposing character picks a condition they will have to follow. If a condition has been induced and the opposing player didn't select it they take the penalty. If they select an option that was disallowed they take that penalty.

The conditions are as follows.

Attachment - the effected feels some kind of attachment, amusement, affection or camaraderie with the initiator. Drain 4 to any action not perceived to be in the interest of the initiator. This condition ends if the initiator harms the effected doing damage or causing stress.

Aggression - The effected feels hate, anger, loathing or indignation toward the initiator. They focus their hostile actions on the initiator and have a Drain 2 to IQ and Intuition based tests while in the presence of the initiator and a Drain 4 to any actions that are not aggressive toward the initiator. This condition ends when the effected harms the initiator by doing damage or causing at least 5 stress.

Passive - The effected is either soothed, perplexed, lost or troubled. They lose two actions a turn until they can pass a IQ or Psyche roll.

Coercion - The effected is intimidated by fear of loss or enticed by a significant bribe. Bribes may give a Boost to the initiator's roll. The effected loses 1 action per turn if they do not work to do what the initiator instructs. This condition's effect ends when the task is completed.

Conformity - The effected is under peer pressure to act as others in their social group or class is behaving. They must follow a behavior that at least appears to be what the majority is doing until the condition ends. This condition ends when the character appears to be accepted by their group.

The Conformity condition is a failsafe in most exchanges. If not disallowed, it lets a character do what their allies want, not necessarily what the initiator wants.

When To Roll

When a player wants their character to carry out a plan of action, they discuss what they intend for the character to do. If the narration explains how the plan is carried out, the character performs their intended plan without any test needed.

If the GM feels there is an interesting obstacle to explore have the player roll against an Attribute and add any appropriate Boosts and Drains to the roll

Interesting obstacles can be, something the characters have never done before, the obstacle has special conditions that need to be met before overcoming it, the obstacle represents the skill of another character opposing or to test how well the character does.

Never roll if the characters have ample time and there are no important consequences to a challenge. In these situations narration is enough to handle the situation.

Players may want to roll in a situation because they would rather have their character's skill solve the problem. When a player wants to roll, let them. Always narrate the results.

Healing

Stress is relieved at a rate of one in each attribute group per hour of sleep. Every four hours of sleep the player can roll against the character's Con. Each success reduces another stress point from each attribute group.

Every six days that pass in game time, the player can roll against the character's Con. For each success, the character heals one hit point.

A medicine roll can reduce 1 stress per success every 15 minutes in game time.

A medicine roll can reduce the number of days it takes to heal by one day per success.

Making Characters

You are young, trained enough to be competent in most situations at your job.

Roll for the nine attributes, roll either 1d6x2 or 2d6 your choice. The full roll result is put under the 1 success column.

Cut the attribute in half and round down and put the result in the 2 column. Cut the 2 column number in half, round down and record the number in the 3 column. Cut the 3 column number in half, round down and record it in the 4 column.

Your character gets 10 Hit Points

Pick a perk

1. A powerful weapon
2. Pilot a vehicle like a small mech or fighter
3. Highly skilled take 5 skills at 2
4. You are a Native Scimrahn and have some alien tech.

Choose an occupation, pick a primary skill at 3 take 3 other skills at 1

Pick a country your character is from, what about the home they're leaving makes them different?

What will make the character feel at home in this new world? Record the character's idea of home.

Skills are Boosts that help with tasks they are things like medical ability, accuracy with a kind of weapon, the ability to pilot a vehicle.

Equipment

Characters should have any equipment their occupation would need. If the character needs something where it's uncertain falls into this, roll against the character's IQ attribute and their primary skill as a Boost to see if they have it.

All characters can take body armor as equipment that gives an AR of 6 and has 10 Hit Points.

All Characters start with some kind of hand weapon.

Hand held weapons do 10 points of damage with a range of 300 meters. Weapons start at 5 Kg. Trade the following traits for weapon enhancements

1. Short ranged, cut range in half. Can't take long ranged.
2. Lower Damage -1 to damage. Can't take higher damage enhancement.
3. Heavy, weighs 10 kg more.
4. High recoil, take one physical stress per use unless the character uses an action and passes a Con roll.
5. Blinding, take one mental stress per use unless the character uses an action and passes a Ref roll.
6. Rare Ammunition carry only 2d4 shots.
7. Unreliable Drain 3 to hit with. Can't take reliable enhancement.
8. Slow, the weapon's rate of fire is cut in half round up. Can't take if the ROF is 1.

Add enhancements. If the player took "a powerful weapon" perk add two enhancements.

1. Long ranged, triple the range of the weapon.
2. Higher damage, +10 damage
3. Light/small, cut weight in half.
4. High capacity, the weapon can be used for long periods of time.
5. Reliable Boost 2 to hit with.
6. Burst weapon, +10 to the weapon's rate of fire.

Armor

Armor absorbs damage first before it gets to the character. It does this two ways, with its Resistance and it's own Hit Points.

Resistance reduces the amount of incoming damage by it's rating. Any damage over the armor's Resistance goes to the armor's Hit Points. Once armor is reduced to 0 HP it is destroyed.

Armor starts off with a Resistance of 5 and 8 Hit Points. Trade the following traits for enhancements. Traits can be taken multiple times.

1. Heavy, Drain 1 to Physical rolls
2. Cumbersome, Drain 1 to Functional rolls
3. Can't see, Drain 1 to Mental rolls.

Add enhancements.

1. Durable +1 to Resistance
2. Dependable +2 HP

Vehicles

Vehicles like small Mechs and anti-grav fighters are common starting vehicles for characters that are pilots.

Vehicles start with Resistance of 20 and 200 HP. They have one weapon that does 200 points of damage. They move at 500 meters per turn on ground and air. They have a force field that can absorb 200 HP each turn.

1. No shields, no force field.
2. Non-combat, no weapons
3. Slow flyer, when vehicle leaves the ground its speed is cut in half.
4. Low armor, Resistance is cut in half.
5. Flimsy, HP cut in half.
6. Slow runner, cut speed near the ground in half.

Add enhancements.

1. Powerful shields +50 HP to shields.
2. Powerful weapon +100 damage.
3. Fast Flyer, +200 meters per turn away from the ground.
4. Fast runner, + 100 meters per turn when near the ground.
5. High armor +20 to resistance.
6. Dependable +100 HP

Alien Tech

A Scimrahn character starts off with a device that gives them a Boost 6 on a specific type of challenge like hiding, healing or accuracy with a single weapon. Try to imagine what the tech is and how it works. Describe it.

1. Reduce Boost by 1
2. Limit the ways the device helps by giving conditions where it does not work.

Add enhancements

1. Increase Boost by 1
2. Add task that the device helps with.

Skills

These are suggestions, players can make their own. Each skill applies to one kind of Attribute roll.

Medicine (IQ)
Repair (Dex)
Pilot (Dex)
History (IQ)
Navigation (Int)
Computer Operation (Dex)
Evasion (Ref)
Running (Str)
Swimming (Str)
Foraging (Int)
Preparation (Ref)
Bluffing (Cha)
Intimidate (Cha)
Ranged Weapons (Agi)
Thrown Weapons (Agi)
Swung Weapons (Agi)

Character Sheet

Name _____
 Perk _____
 Home Country _____
 Home _____

Attribute	1	2	3	4	Stress
Physical					Physical
Con	_____	_____	_____	_____	
Str	_____	_____	_____	_____	
Ref	_____	_____	_____	_____	
Functional					Functional
Agi	_____	_____	_____	_____	
Dex	_____	_____	_____	_____	
Cha	_____	_____	_____	_____	
Mental					Mental
Psy	_____	_____	_____	_____	
Int	_____	_____	_____	_____	
IQ	_____	_____	_____	_____	
HP	_____				

Skills

Weapon		Armor	
Damage	_____	Resistance	_____
Range	_____	HP	_____
Weight	_____	Physical	_____
Rate of Fire	_____	Functional	_____
Modifier	_____	Mental	_____
Payload	_____		

Equipment

Vehicle

Type _____

Fight Speed	_____	Damage	_____
Ground Speed	_____	Range	_____
HP	_____		
Resistance	_____		
Shield	_____		