How to Make a Skill Check

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In Cresthaven RPG, **checks** are how you determine the outcome of uncertain actions. When your character tries to do something and the result isn't guaranteed, you'll make a check.

How To Use The Dice

When playing Cresthaven RPG, checks are used in a very specific way for non-combat actions. It's about you telling the DM what you're trying to do, and then describing how your character attempts it.

How do you figure out what happens?

1. **Tell the DM what you are trying to do.** Clearly state your character's goal. Examples: "I'm trying to climb this wall," "I want to pick the lock on this chest," or "I'm going to try and deceive the guards." Focus on what you want to achieve.
    - **Note:** You should *never* ask *IF* you can do something. Just state what your character is trying to do, and the DM will guide you on the process.

2. **Narrate how this is to be accomplished.** Describe in detail how your character attempts the action. This is the core of role-playing!
    - *Examples:* "I use my grappling hook to get a purchase on the wall and try to climb," or "Using my thief's tools, I carefully probe the tumblers to pick the lock," or "I pull the guard aside and spin a tall tale about an emergency to distract him."
    - Think about your character's strengths. Could your strong Fighter try to *smash* the lock instead of picking it? The DM will then determine if a check is needed and what type.

Basic Check Mechanics

Making a Check

To make a check, you roll a d20 and add relevant modifiers. If your total equals or exceeds the **Difficulty Class (DC)** set by the DM, you succeed.

Basic Formula: d20 + Ability Modifier + Skill Bonus + Other Modifiers ≥ DC =

Success

1. **Roll a d20:** This is your base roll.
2. **Add your Ability Modifier:** This comes from the **ability score** (Strength, Dexterity, Wisdom, etc.) the DM tells you to use for the task.
3. **Add Skill Bonuses:** If you have **training** in a relevant skill (like Climb, Search, or Deception), add your character's bonus for that skill.
4. **Add Other Modifiers:** This can include bonuses or penalties from equipment, magic, or unique situations.

Special Mechanics

Rolling Advantage / Disadvantage

Sometimes, circumstances or abilities will give you **advantage** or **disadvantage** on a d20 roll (including skill checks, ability saves, or attack rolls).

- **Advantage:** Roll two d20s and take the **higher** result.
- **Disadvantage:** Roll two d20s and take the **lower** result.

If you have both advantage and disadvantage from different sources, they cancel each other out, and you roll a single d20 normally.

Natural 20 Rule

A roll of **20** on the d20 (before adding any modifiers) is always an automatic success, regardless of the DC.

Ability Focus

If you have **Ability Focus** in the ability score the DM asks you to use for the check, you add your character level divided by 2 (rounded up) as an additional bonus.

Teamwork Bonus

When your entire party works together on a single task (e.g., searching a room), the DM might have you make one collective check. In this case, you use the highest relevant ability modifier among the group and roll with **advantage**.

Heroic Points

Each session you play, your character earns 1 **Heroic Point**. These points are tracked on your character sheet (or with physical tokens like RPG coins or glass beads) and accumulate.

You can spend Heroic Points to gain powerful benefits:

- **Re-roll a dice roll:** Spend 1 Heroic Point to re-roll any d20 roll (skill check, ability save, or attack roll). You **must** keep the new result, even if it’s worse.
- **Add advantage:** Spend 1 Heroic Point to gain advantage on any d20 roll.

Deal with the DM

Once per game, at the DMs’ discretion, a player may choose to make a Deal with the DM where in the player changes one d20 roll to a natural 20, but the DM then can change any other roll of the player’s to a natural 1.

Common Check Types

Here are some common types of checks you might be asked to make:

- **Climbing:Dexterity (Climb) Check**. Used when scaling walls, trees, or other vertical surfaces.
  - DC 10: Rough stone wall with handholds
  - DC 15: Smooth stone wall
  - DC 20: Sheer cliff face

- **Searching:Wisdom (Search) Check**. Used when actively looking for hidden objects, secret doors, or traps.
  - DC 10: Finding something poorly hidden
  - DC 15: Locating secret doors or traps
  - DC 20: Discovering well-concealed items

- **Listening:Wisdom (Listen) Check**. Used to detect sounds, quiet conversations, or approaching creatures.
  - DC 10: Loud conversation through a door
  - DC 15: Quiet footsteps in the next room
  - DC 20: Whispered conversation

Ability Saves

Ability saves are special checks you make to resist harmful effects like

spells, poisons, or dangerous environmental factors.

How to Make an Ability Save

Roll a d20, add the relevant ability modifier, and meet or exceed the DC set by the DM to succeed.

Common Ability Save Types

- **Poison (ingested/injected): Constitution Check**
- **Magic/Spells: Intelligence Check**
- **Death (when reduced to 0 HP): Constitution Check**
- **Paralysis/Petrification: Strength Check**
- **Breath Weapons/Gas: Wisdom Check**

Examples in Play

Example 1: Climbing with Skill

- **Situation:** Your Thief is attempting to climb a steep rock wall (DM sets DC 15).
- **Your Character's Relevant Stats:**
  - Dexterity: +3
  - Trained in Climb skill: +5 (This includes any base bonus for Climb)
  - Ability Focus (Dexterity): +2 (at character level 3)

- **Your Roll:** d20 (you roll a 12) + 3 (Dex) + 5 (Climb) + 2 (Ability Focus) = **22**
- **Result:** You succeed! (22 is greater than DC 15). Your Thief scales the wall easily and can now assist others.

Example 2: Climbing without Skill

- **Situation:** Your Fighter is attempting the same climb (DC 15), but wants to brute force it.
- **Your Character's Relevant Stats:**
  - Strength: +4 (used for brute force, but no Climb skill bonus applies)

- **Your Roll:** d20 (you roll an 11) + 4 (Str) = **15**
- **Result:** You succeed! (15 equals DC 15). Your Fighter just barely succeeds by powering through with raw strength.

Example 3: Team Search

- **Situation:** Your party is searching a dusty room for secret doors (DM sets DC 15). You decide to use the teamwork bonus.
- **Party's Relevant Stats:**
  - Highest Wisdom in party: +3 (This includes a character's Wisdom modifier + the base +1 for the Search skill)

- **Your Roll (with advantage):** You roll two d20s (e.g., an 8 and a 16), and take the higher (16).
- **Total:** 16 + 3 = **19** vs. DC 15
- **Result:** Success! Your party's combined effort reveals the hidden passage.