Scout Adventure RPG

Core Mechanics Guide

A simplified tabletop roleplaying system designed for Scout troops, ages 6-12. Uses D10 dice pools, emphasizes teamwork, and naturally incorporates Scout Law values through play.

Core Rules

Attributes

Every scout has three attributes, each rated 1-3 dice:

Attribute	What It Covers
Strong	Climbing, lifting, running, endurance, bravery
Smart	Solving puzzles, noticing things, knowing stuff, planning
Kind	Helping others, calming people/animals, convincing, leading

Starting Builds by Age:

Age Range	Starting Build
6-8	1/1/1 + 1 point (total 4 dice)
9-10	1/1/1 + 2 points (total 5 dice)
11-12	1/1/1 + 2 points, or allow one attribute at 4

Scouts distribute their bonus points however they want (so a scout might be 2/2/1 or 3/1/1).

Rolling Dice

1. Grab dice equal to your attribute
2. Roll them all

3. Every **7 or higher** is a **success**
4. Compare successes to difficulty

Difficulty Levels:

Successes Needed	Difficulty
1	Routine
2	Challenging
3	Hard
4+	Exceptional

Critical Success (Optional): If every die shows a 10, something extra-good happens. For younger groups, any 10 can be celebrated as a "super success."

Teamwork

Helping

If you're near a friend attempting something, you can add 1 die to their pool. You must describe what you're doing to help. Multiple scouts can help the same roll.

Working Together

For big obstacles, everyone pools their dice into one massive roll. Reinforces "we succeed together."

The "Yes, And" Bonus

If a scout explicitly builds on another scout's idea ("I'll do what she said, but also..."), they get +1 die to their roll.

Setbacks

When a roll gets zero successes, something goes wrong—but it's never a dead end.

Setback Type	Example	Effect
Hurt	Sprained ankle, scraped hands	-1 die to physical actions until helped
Stuck	Wedged in a gap, lost item	Can't move forward until freed/solved
Spooked	Startled, discouraged	-1 die to next roll only

Recovery

Another scout can spend their turn helping. No roll needed for minor setbacks—just describe the kindness. This makes helping mechanically valuable while keeping things simple.

Modes of Play

Campfire Mode (Narrative)

- No turn order
- Scouts talk, explore, make plans
- DM calls for rolls when outcomes are uncertain
- Good for: puzzles, conversations, investigation, travel

Action Mode (Structured)

Used when timing matters: chases, dangers, urgent problems.

When to Enter Action Mode:

- A storm is coming fast
- Something is chasing them
- A bridge is collapsing
- Someone needs rescue *now*
- A disagreement with an NPC gets heated

The shift itself builds tension: "Okay scouts, this just got serious—we're going around the circle now."

The Huddle Round

When Action Mode begins, the first round is always a Huddle. No dice, no actions—just talking in structure.

How It Works

1. DM states the problem clearly: "The bridge is breaking. You have maybe three rounds before it collapses. Huddle up."
2. Go around the circle. Each scout states one idea or observation. No interrupting. One or two sentences max.
3. After everyone speaks, DM asks: "What's the plan?" Group briefly discusses, then DM picks a speaker to declare the plan (rotate this role).
4. Action rounds begin.

Huddle Rules

- Hands down while someone else is talking
- No "that won't work" until everyone has spoken
- DM can ask quieter scouts directly: "What do you notice?" or "What would you try?"

The Talking Stick

For younger groups or groups that struggle, use a physical object. Only the scout holding it may speak. Pass it around the circle during Huddles. Make it thematic—a "planning stone" or "wisdom stick" the group found early in the adventure.

Action Mode Turns

Turn Order: Go around the circle physically. No initiative rolls. Predictable order helps younger kids stay engaged.

On Your Turn, Pick One:

Action	What Happens
Do Something	Attempt an action, roll dice
Help	Add 1 die to the next scout's roll this round
Protect	Take a setback instead of a nearby friend
Ready	Wait and react to something specific ("I grab the rope when she jumps")

Round End: Once everyone has gone, the situation changes—DM describes what happens, then a new round starts if needed.

Adventure Structure

Three-Act Flow

Most sessions should fit into 30-60 minutes:

Act 1: The Call

- Scouts encounter a problem or someone who needs help
- Establish stakes and urgency
- Let them ask questions, gather info, make a plan
- Ends when they decide to act

Act 2: The Journey

- 2-4 encounters/obstacles between them and the goal
- Mix of challenge types
- Setbacks create complications, not dead ends
- Teamwork opportunities built into obstacles

Act 3: The Resolution

- Final challenge or decision
- Should require something they learned or earned along the way

- Consequences of their choices made visible
- Someone thanks them; situation is better than before

Encounter Types

Vary these to keep engagement across different kinds of thinkers. Aim for at least one of each per adventure.

Type	Example	Primary Attribute
Physical	Cross a river, climb something, chase/escape	Strong
Puzzle	Decode a message, figure out a mechanism, track something	Smart
Social	Calm a scared animal, convince someone, resolve a dispute	Kind
Choice	Two paths, limited resources, competing needs	No roll—just decision
Group	Obstacle too big for one person, requires combined effort	All pool dice

---

Embedding Scout Values

Don't lecture—create situations where values are the practical solution:

Value	Design Approach
Helpful	Someone needs aid; helping them unlocks progress or information
Kind	Harsh approach backfires; gentleness works
Trustworthy	An NPC remembers a promise; keeping it matters
Thrifty	Limited resources force creative reuse
Brave	Something scary must be faced, but courage is rewarded
Loyal	A scout gets separated or in trouble; others must choose to go back

The debrief after the adventure can name what they did—"You were really brave there"—but during play, let actions speak.

Pacing Tools

Pressure: A timer element (storm coming, sun setting, someone waiting) keeps things moving without forcing combat.

Breathing Room: After tense moments, give a calm scene—a friendly NPC, a pretty view, a moment to rest. Younger kids especially need emotional resets.

Spotlight Rotation: Track who's had big moments. Steer opportunities toward scouts who've been quiet.

Failure Forward

If they fail the main goal, the situation should still change—just with complications:

- They rescue the lost hiker, but now they're all lost together
- They solve the puzzle too late, but discover a new problem to fix
- The spooked animal runs off, but drops something useful

No adventure ends with "you failed, nothing happened."

Scaling for Mixed Age Groups

Role Differentiation (Not Hierarchy)

Avoid "older kids lead, younger kids follow." Create niches instead.

Younger Scouts Excel At:

- Fitting through small spaces
- Appearing non-threatening to scared NPCs/animals
- Noticing things at ground level
- Asking questions NPCs find endearing
- Simple, direct solutions older kids overthink

Older Scouts Excel At:

- Planning and coordination

- Remembering details from earlier
- Abstract puzzle elements
- Steadiness under pressure
- Helping younger scouts without taking over

Design encounters that specifically require both.

Encounter Scaling Techniques

Layered Challenges

One obstacle, multiple components at different complexity levels.

Example—crossing a ravine:

- Physical component (anyone can attempt the climb)
- Puzzle component (figure out the safest route—older scouts)
- Kindness component (a younger scout is scared, someone needs to encourage them)

Parallel Tasks

Split the group briefly. Younger scouts handle a concrete task (distract the dog) while older scouts handle an abstract one (decode the map). Both are necessary.

Adjustable Difficulty

Same obstacle, different approaches:

- Younger scout attempts it: Describe concretely, accept creative solutions liberally, 1 success needed
- Older scout attempts it: Add a complication, expect more specific narration, may need 2 successes

---

DM Techniques for Mixed Groups

Question Targeting:

- To younger scouts: "What do you do?" (open, no wrong answer)
- To older scouts: "What's your plan?" (expects more reasoning)

Success Framing:

- Younger scouts: Celebrate any contribution loudly
- Older scouts: Acknowledge strategy and teamwork

Helping Direction:

- Encourage older scouts to help younger ones mechanically (adding dice)
- Frame it as "your experience helps" not "you're carrying them"
- If an older scout tries to do everything, introduce obstacles only younger scouts can handle

Spotlight Balance:

- Younger kids need more frequent, shorter spotlight moments
- Older kids can handle longer sequences with delayed payoff
- Alternate consciously

On-the-Fly Adjustments

Signal	Adjustment
Younger scout disengaged	Introduce something only they can do next
Older scout taking over	Add a complication requiring splitting focus
Younger scout frustrated by failure	Next challenge auto-succeeds with any reasonable attempt
Older scout bored	Add hidden complexity or moral wrinkle
Group fragmented	Force a group-pool challenge requiring everyone

---

Managing Group Dynamics

Idea Banking

When a scout's idea isn't used:

"Hold That Thought": "That's a good idea. We're trying something else first, but if this doesn't work, we'll need that."

Write it down visibly. Sometimes intentionally have Plan A hit a snag so the banked idea becomes necessary.

When Someone Shuts Down

In the moment:

- Give them a small, guaranteed-success task privately
- Let them be quiet for a round, then come back with an opportunity only they can do

After the session:

- Debrief about how huddles went
- Praise specific moments of good listening by name
- Don't single out struggles publicly

Structural prevention:

- Rotate who declares the final plan
- Rotate who rolls for group challenges
- Track whose ideas have been used; steer toward those passed over

The Lone Wolf Problem

When a scout acts without the team:

Soft consequence: It works, but creates a complication. "You made it across, but now you're alone and something is moving in the bushes."

Mechanical consequence: Acting without the team means no Help dice. Solo rolls are risky.

Avoiding Competition

- Don't track "who got the most successes"
- Final challenges should require contributions from multiple scouts
- Praise the "Protect" action heavily when used
- If someone brags, an NPC can gently model humility

Quick Reference

The Roll

Pool D10s → Count 7+ → Compare to difficulty (usually 1-2 successes)

Actions in Action Mode

- **Do Something –** Roll for it
- **Help –** Add 1 die to a friend
- **Protect –** Take their setback
- **Ready –** React to a trigger

Setbacks

- **Hurt** – -1 die to physical until helped
- **Stuck –** Can't proceed until freed
- **Spooked** – -1 die to next roll only

Huddle Rules

1. Go around the circle
2. One idea each, no interrupting
3. Then decide together