4SIGHT

A 24-hour Role-Playing Game

by

Justin D. Jacobson

In an instant, you can change your future.
In 4 seconds, you can change the world.

Background

The year is 2023. You are a member of an elite covert military group referred to among those with clearance as "PAST-4." Psychological Advancement Scientific Trials - Section 4. You have been tasked to undertake those missions even the most lauded special forces units cannot hope to accomplish. You have recovered stolen weapons-grade fissionable materials in Algiers; you have rescued hostages from an underground terrorist bunker in Iran; you have assassinated renegade heads of state. Every day brings new challenges.

In this ceaseless war, each of you brings unique skills and talents to the team—the benefits of your prior life, your life before exposure to PAST-4 protocols. But you also have a secret weapon. Over the last 20 years, military scientists have developed a suite of treatments to accelerate clearly defined sectors of brain function. These treatments include gene therapy, advanced hypnosis, cybernetic implants and others. The result is hyper-advancement of the particular brain function. Other sections have focused on advancements in motor skills, language, and sensory input, but the results have been mixed at best. Only Section 4, focusing on information processing, has shown dramatic achievement.

You.

Section 4 experiment subjects have experienced a phenomenon that can only be described as limited precognition. Members of Section 4 are capable of "seeing" up to 3.97 seconds into the future at recent testing. With training, this ability has itself yielded a number of discrete manifestations.

4SIGHT is a traditional role-playing game in structure. One participant takes the role of the Game Master (or GM); the others participants take the role of player characters (PCs). These rules are presented in a fashion common to RPGs. Part 1 introduces the basic mechanics. Part 2 presents rules for characters. Part 3 presents rules for conflicts. Part 4 provides resources and advice for the GM.

Design Goal: Develop a target-number system where the result of the check is more important than as a zero-sum, on-off outcome.

Part 1: Basic Mechanics

This section is meant to introduce the fundamental resolution system as a foundation for understanding the remaining sections of the book. The system is described more fully in Part 3.

4SIGHT uses a target-number system. When a character attempts to do something that is uncertain or is opposed by another character or other force, the player rolls a die, adds any applicable modifiers and compares it to the target number assigned to the conflict by the GM. 4SIGHT uses a six-sided die as the core die (abbreviated d6 hereafter). Unlike most target-number systems, the importance of the result of the throw is meant to vary greatly depending on whether a player relies on his innate abilities or accesses his special training or powers. A character attempting something they have no inherent ability or skill to accomplish will have the outcome determined greatly by the vagaries of chance. Conversely, a skilled character will prevail at his chosen course of action most of the time, and a character tapping into the power of 4SIGHT will only be concerned with just how successful they can be. In this way, the character's chosen focus takes on greater importance.

On any given check, the following modifiers may apply: (1) the appropriate trait, (2) affinity or specialty in the given area, and (3) specific conditions as determined by the GM. Additionally, if a player's 4SIGHT manifestation applies, the result is then multiplied by the result of a 4SIGHT die.

If the result of the roll, including all applicable modifiers equals or exceeds the target number, the check succeeds. If the result is less than the target number, the check fails. The amount by which the check succeeds or fails determines the specific result.

Part 2: Characters

This part describes a character's various attributes and how to create a character.

In addition to a physical description, personality, background, and all of the other details that flesh out a person's identity, characters have a number of mechanical scores that affect gameplay. All characters have traits (fundamental physical and mental abilities), affinities and/or specialties (areas of particular training), and at least one of the possible 4SIGHT manifestations (kewl powerz).

Generally, character creation follows the following procedure:

1) Assign trait scores.
2) Select affinities and/or specialties.
3) Select 4SIGHT manifestation.
4) Flesh out the character.

Traits
All characters (both PCs and NPCs) have trait scores. These are the fundamental attributes of the character, e.g., how strong or smart they are. The character traits and their descriptions are as follows:

Strength – A measure of the character's raw, muscular power. This trait is used when lifting a heavy object, trying to break down a door, or trying to leap across a chasm.

Dexterity – A measure of the character's reflexes and hand-eye coordination. This trait is used when dodging an incoming attack or navigating a labyrinth of eyebeam triggers.

Constitution – A measure of a character's overall health and fortitude. This trait is used to fend of poison or disease and resist going into shock.

Intelligence – A measure of a character's reasoning and memory. This trait is used to solve a riddle, break a cryptogram, or recall an obscure fact.

Wisdom – A measure of a character's resolve and willpower. This trait is used to resist interrogation, march on past the point of exhaustion, or resist the charms of an alluring femme fatale.

Charisma – A measure of a character's likeability and persuasiveness. This trait is used to fast-talk past a posted sentry or convince a local peasant to provide shelter in their root cellar.

An average person has trait scores of 0. Non-Player characters (NPCs) may have starting trait values below 0. For example, an elderly person might have a Strength score of -1 or lower. Generally, these negative scores will not be relevant. However, PCs are better than the average person. A PC's traits have a starting score of 1. At character creation, the player distributes a total of six points among the character's traits as he chooses. For example, a player could put five points in Strength and one point in Intelligence. The result would give the character a Strength of 6 and an Intelligence of 2, making him one of the strongest people in the world and fairly intelligent to boot, in addition to being above average in other areas.

Expertise
Characters receive extensive training in various areas. These include general groups of expertise called affinities and more focused areas within those groups, called specialties. At character creation, each player chooses a total of three affinities and/or specialties. When making a check, players receive a bonus die if it falls within one of their affinities and two dice if it falls within one of their specialties. This process is described more fully in Part 3.

Following are the affinities and their respective specialties. With the assistance and approval of the GM, players should feel free to create new areas of expertise.

Combat (archaic ranged weapons, firearms, melee weapons, hand-to-hand combat, defensive tactics)

Espionage (surveillance, stealth, cryptography, demolitions, security bypass)

Social Skills (interrogation, undercover work, carousing, persuasion, customs/etiquette)

Sciences (linguistics, chemistry, medicine, mathematics/computers, physics)

Physical Skills (driving/ground vehicles, piloting/air vehicles, endurance, athletics, swimming)

Additionally, all characters may select one "wild card" specialty. This should be an obscure and specific arena of knowledge and should not be covered by one of the affinity groups. Suitable wild card specialties may include: Chinese cooking, shiatsu massage, pottery, art appreciation, Russian literature, sports trivia, etc.

4SIGHT

Characters in Section 4 are able to manifest their precognitive abilities in various ways. Each player chooses one of the following manifestations. Whenever a character's manifestation applies, he gains a benefit to any associated checks as described more fully in Part 3. With the assistance and approval of the GM, players should feel free to create new 4SIGHT manifestations.

Sixth Sense – The character senses danger. This manifestation applies when a character is being attacked or endangered by a physical threat.

Anticipatory Deadeye – The character is able to postulate the precise location of a target's greatest weakness. This manifestation applies when the character is attacking or striking something.

Reductive Efficiency – The character sees the most direct means to accomplish any physical task. This manifestation applies when the character is trying to complete something quickly.

Accelerated Computation – The character is able to see the outcomes of numerous permutations. This manifestation applies when the character trying to solve a puzzle or overcome a mental obstacle.

Conclusory Empathy – The character is able to evaluate a person's response to stimuli. This manifestation applies when the character is interacting with another person or an animal, excluding combat.

Deep Sight – The character is able to chain together snippets of events in the immediate future to deduce general theories about more distant events. He cannot see the future with the clarity of other manifestations. This is a more stable but ultimately less powerful manifestation.

Precognitive Flare – The character experiences unexpected flashes of the future. This manifestation may apply at any time, but the character has no control over it.

Fleshing Out
In addition to the mechanical qualities of the character, a player should provide a full description of him. This should include a physical description, background, mental makeup and more.

Part 3: Gameplay

This part introduces rules for how to conduct play, including conflict resolution and combat.

GM Narration and Player Narration
The GM narrates the story, describing to the players the events as they unfold and the actions of the NPCs. She lays out the obstacles the PCs will confront. As the narrative plays out, the players narrate their characters' actions in response to these events. Players are free to dictate what their characters attempt to do; however, the GM narrates the specific results of those actions (with one exception, described below). Thus, a player could state that his character was going to attempt to crack a bank vault, but the GM ultimately determines if the attempt is successful and what follows in either case. Generally, when the outcome of a PC's action is uncertain, the GM will call for a check.

Basic Checks
A basic check is made by rolling a d6. If a PC is attempting the action, the player rolls the die for the check. If an NPC is attempting the action, the GM rolls the die. The target number for the check depends on how unlikely the desired outcome is. Thus, the player has some degree of control over the check by limiting or expanding the desired result. The following table presents target numbers for various levels of attempts and examples of the check for an *average* person. Thus, a player can have a general idea of what the target number for a given check should be by determining how likely it is that he would be able to complete the task himself.

Target Number	Chance of Success	Average Example
1	100%	Strolling down the street
2	84%	Climbing a rope ladder
3	67%	Following tracks in soft mud
4	50%	Swimming in a strong current
5	33%	Picking an ordinary lock
6	17%	Gaining entry to the enemy camp
7	0%	Killing a man with one blow

Additionally, the GM may make modifications to the target number based on the specific conditions or circumstances present at the time the check is made. For example, while anyone can stroll down the street without difficulty under normal conditions, hurricane-force winds may cause the target number to rise to 4 or 5.

<u>Modifiers</u>
When a check is called for, the GM determines what traits, areas of expertise, specialties and 4SIGHT manifestations are applicable.

When making a check, the character always adds her trait to the result of the die roll. If the GM determines that more than one trait may be applicable, the higher trait score is added. Players may attempt to describe ways that other traits may be applicable, but the GM's decision is, of course, final.

If the check falls within a character's affinity, he adds the result of one d6 to the check. If a character's specialty applies, he adds the result of two d6. A character may not add dice for both an affinity and a specialty or for more than one affinity or speciality, even if they both apply.

If the GM determines that a 4SIGHT manifestation is applicable and the character elects to use it, the player makes the check as normal, including all other modifiers. The player must decide whether or not he is going to use the manifestation prior to making the check. The final result is then multiplied by the result of another d6 roll. However, a result of "1" on a manifestation roll means that the character has suffered an adverse 4SIGHT episode. He suffers a -20 to the check and falls unconscious. Additionally, characters who have suffered an adverse episode lose access to their 4SIGHT manifestation until they have had an opportunity to rest for a full 24 hours.

Two 4SIGHT manifestations operate differently: Deep Sight and Precognitive Flare.

PCs with the Deep Sight manifestation have a more stable but more muted form of precognition. The constantly receive subtle suggestions about how the future will play out. The manifestation is always active. Every time a PC with this manifestation makes a check, he rolls a d6. On

a result of 1-4, he gains no benefit. On a result of 5-6, the result of the check is doubled. PCs with this manifestation do not risk adverse episodes.

PCs with the Precognitive Flare manifestation have no control over their ability. They may receive sudden bursts of information about the future when they least expect it. Every time a PC with this manifestation makes a check of any kind, the GM secretly rolls a d6. On a result of 1-4, the manifestation does not activate. On a result of 5-6, the PC has a precognitive flare. The PC then makes a manifestation check as normal. As with other manifestations, a result of 1 on that check indicates an adverse episode.

Results

For most checks, if the result is less than the target number, the character fails. If the result of the die roll equals or exceeds the target number, the character succeeds. Sometimes, that is all that is necessary to determine. However, it is often important to know the amount by which the check falls short of or exceeds the target number. If the check fails, the greater the difference between check and the target number, the more catastrophic the failure. For successful checks, the following table summarizes the degree of success based on the difference between the result of the check and the target number.

Difference	Level of Succes
3 or less	Bare
4-10	Moderate
11-20	Good
21-40	Excellent
41 or more	Perfect

Bare – The character has succeeded at doing what they attempted to do. However, they have not gained any additional benefit from doing so. There may be some aspect of the endeavor that did not work out quite as planned. For example, the character may have been noisy or slow in accomplishing the task.

Moderate – The character succeeds without any major problems but also without any boons. He accomplishes what he set out to do but nothing more.

Good – The character achieves the result desired and does so in a particularly efficient or beneficial manner. The result may confer some other unintended benefit. For example, the task may have been completed more quickly than expected.

Excellent – The character has done a nearly perfect job of doing what he was trying to do. The results are better than what was hoped for. He may have gained a significant advantage in addition to the result desired.

Perfect – The character has completed the task in the best possible way. The player gets to narrate the specific outcome in as much detail as possible, gaining several remarkable (though still physically possible) advantages. This is the one exception to the rule that the GM narrates the outcome of a check.

Example 1: Section 4 operative Crossbow is attempting to break into a safe that is suspected to contain a weaponized virus. The GM decides this is a difficult task—impossible for an average person to accomplish—and assigns a target number of 7. The GM decides this task is governed by Intelligence. Crossbow has an Intelligence score of 4 and a specialty in security bypass. Thus, he rolls a d6 and adds +4 (for his Intelligence) and the result of 2d6 (for his specialty). He rolls poorly and gets a final result of "9." He succeeds at cracking the safe; indeed, there was ultimately no question that he would succeed. However, the difference between the check result and the target number is only 2—a bare success. The GM decides that his clumsy safecracking effort has caused a breach in the virus containment system, and the virus will be released into the air within the next 30 minutes.

Example 2: Crossbow has the Accelerated Computation manifestation. The GM decides that the manifestation applies to the task, and Crossbow elects to use it. He rolls an average result and gets a "14." He rolls a "4" on his manifestation die. The check result is multiplied by that number, yielding a final result of "56." The difference between the check and the target number is "49"—a perfect success. The player narrates the results

of his character's actions. He decides that his character was not only able to retrieve the virus while leaving the containment system behind and covering his tracks so that the safe's owner is none the wiser but also that he recovered some important documents about the criminal organization's future plans.

Opposed Checks

In some cases, the actions of an agent are opposed by someone of equal import. This may be another member of the team, an arch-villain, or a member of Omega Section. In such cases, the GM may call for an opposed check. Instead of determining a target number, the GM makes a check for the opposing character, using whatever trait, areas of expertise, specialties or (in rare cases) 4SIGHT manifestations apply. (If the PC is opposed by another PC, that player makes the check for the opposing PC.) If the PC's check equals or exceeds the NPC's check, the action succeeds. Thus, in the case of a tie, the aggressor (the person initiating the action) succeeds. As with a basic check, the difference between the checks determines the degree of success or failure.

Example 1: Agent Megabyte is trying to hack into a terrorist computer network, which is being defended by the cell's leading computer expert. Megabyte has an Intelligence score of 3 and an affinity in science. The terrorist computer expert has an Intelligence score of 1 and a specialty in computers. Megabyte gets a "5" on his basic roll and a "2" on the d6 he gets to roll for his affinity. Adding his Intelligence, Megabyte's result is a "10." The terrorist computer expert rolls 2d6 for his specialty and gets an "11." Adding his Intelligence score yields a check result of "12." Megabyte fails at trying to hack into the network. Because the difference in the checks is only 2, the GM decides that the terrorist computer expert gains no special benefit for his success.

Example 2: Megabyte has the Accelerated Computation manifestation. The GM decides it applies, and the player decides to use the ability. He gets a "4" on his 4SIGHT roll. Multiplying the result of his check (a "10") yields a final result of "40." The terrorist computer expert gets a "12." Megabyte prevails and is able to hack into the computer. The difference between the checks is 28—an excellent result. The GM decides that not only has Megabyte been able to get the information he was looking for but that he has not left any indication of his infiltration.

Combat

As military operatives, PCs will invariably find themselves in the heat of battle. Despite the superior training of the agents, combat can be extremely deadly.

Combat is handled essentially the same way as an opposed check. Dexterity is the principal trait for both attackers and defenders. However, the GM may decide that other traits apply in particular cases. For example, a PC attacking with a two-by-four might apply their Strength instead. Characters with affinities for combat gain a bonus die when both attacking and defending. Characters with a specialty in a particular weapon gain two bonus dice when attacking with those weapons. Characters with a specialty in defensive tactics gain two bonus dice when defending against any attack. Characters with the Sixth Sense and Anticipatory Deadeye manifestations may use their abilities in appropriate circumstances.

There are two principal differences between combat checks and other types of checks. First, in combat, dice "explode." That is, any time a "6" is rolled on a die, the character rolls another die and adds the result to the check. Multiple 6's yield multiple rolls. Second, if the attack succeeds, the difference between the checks determines the nature of the injury sustained. The specific injury sustained depends on the method of attack and is narrated by the GM.

Difference	Injury
3 or less	Minor
4-6	Moderate
7-10	Severe
11 or more	Grievous

Any time a character suffers a grievous injury, they must make a Constitution check with a target number of 7. If the check succeeds, the character is still able to function. If the check fails, the character is knocked unconscious or killed depending on the nature of the attack.

Additionally, characters who sustain injuries suffer penalties to all their rolls (not checks) depending on the severity of the injury. Each time the player rolls a d6, he subtracts the penalty from the result.

Injury	Penalty
Minor	-1
Moderate	-2
Severe	-3
Grievous	-4

Combat proceeds with alternating checks among the participants.

Equipment

It is not necessary to keep track of specific items of equipment at the outset of an adventure. Agents are assumed to have a full complement of all necessary equipment, including the latest weaponry and high-tech gadgets. In particular, characters are assumed to have whatever tools or items are necessary for their areas of expertise and their specialties. For example, a character skilled in demolitions will have an assortment of fuses, blasting caps, and explosives. Of course, circumstances can change during the course of an adventure. Characters can expend their resources, and the GM should notify them when they are running low on or running out of any particular item, such as ammunition. Similarly, a character that is captured and thrown naked in a jail cell can't pull a pair of bolt-cutters from his … well, you get the idea.

Part 4: Gamemaster Material

Timing
Unlike some games, strict time-keeping is not necessary. In most cases, the GM and players can continue to describe a particular event, engaging in a single check at the conclusion to determine the outcome. The narrative element should be in the foreground, with the check providing a randomizing factor to make the event more dramatic by virtue of its uncertainty.

Mooks
When having the PCs face off against a horde of nameless, faceless underlings, it isn't necessary to stat out every mook. Rather, treat the enemy as a single threat with a target number based on their overall skill and number. You can describe the dwindling number of foes based on the results of the checks of the various participants. For example, if the PCs obtain a number of good results in the initial wave of combat, they GM may determine that the enemy horde was cut down to a man. Conversely, if they have only a few moderate success, they may have weakened but not defeated them. In such a case, the target number should be reduced for subsequent checks.

Omega Section
Every hero needs an arch-nemesis. For the PCs, it is Omega Section. A rogue section of PAST (formerly section 6), Omega Section grew drunk on their own power. One day, they simply disappeared without a trace. Since that day, the head of Omega Section has leased out its operatives to the highest bidder. As such, they can be found with their hands in many nefarious plots, using their own special powers for personal gain no matter what the cost.

Section 6 was tasked with exploring the interplay between the brain and other body functions. Members of that section do not have 4SIGHT manifestations. However, they gain a bonus d6 for every check involving physical activity.

Character Advancement
Characters who survive a mission should be awarded a character advancement point. Additionally, the GM should award a bonus

advancement point to the player who did the best job. This may be awarded for a particularly clever play, for realistic in-character dialogue, or for whatever other type of behavior she wants to encourage in the play group.

Prior to the next mission, characters may but need not spend any advancement points they have earned as follows:

Trait = 2 points
Affinity/Specialty = 3 points
4SIGHT Manifestation = 10 points