

Skill Tests

Savage Worlds keeps things pretty simple when it comes to skills and skill usage. When you dig down into it, there are really only two types of skill rolls: personal and team. Personal skill rolls are those that only involve the character and his capabilities. This could be a single skill roll, opposed roll, social conflict, dramatic task, or even mass battles. Team skill rolls are those that involve a lead character assisted by other characters or a group of characters rolling as one. This could be a cooperative roll, group roll, or multiple rolls (such as a chase scene) where everyone is performing a different function.

However, during character creation and gameplay, players and GMs may have ideas that aren't so simple or they want to use their skills in ways that aren't readily defined. While it may be easy enough for the GM to create house-rules at the table to compensate, keeping it consistent and laying down a foundation of rules to follow may be cumbersome and cause that game session to grind to a halt. The *Ultimate Characters Guide* presents two more functions for skills: supporting and complementary.

Supporting Skills

Supporting skills are those that could feasibly be used within a cooperative roll to benefit the lead character. Although the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook clearly states a character cannot make a cooperative roll without having the same skill as the lead characters, this skill function states otherwise (with an emphasis on feasibility).

During a cooperative roll, a task is chosen that the entire team is a part of or is capable of assisting a single character performing the task. A lead character is chosen to make the skill attempt while his allies make skill attempts that add bonuses to the leader character's roll. They are assisting in that character's efforts, probably because he has the highest die type. However, who's to say skills other than the chosen task skill cannot be used. This is the function of supporting skills.

Supporting skills come into play when the chosen task the lead character is attempting can feasibly be assisted by other skills. This is especially true if the player can provide a reason why that skill can be applied as a supporting skill. While it sounds as though this could break the game's mechanics, a lead character still needs to be chosen and that character must possess the skill required to perform that task. Everyone else is simply providing support through other actions.

Here's an example: Ardricai has been chosen to lead his team through the woods, following the trail of the dastardly Darsal'quin. Within the team, Ardricai has Tracking d8 while only one of his compatriots, Mountain, has Tracking, but at d6. Thus Ardricai is elected to lead the team and the cooperative roll. However, the players have proven to the GM that their characters can support the Tracking roll through other means. Mountain has Notice d8 and is using his skill to look for awkward disturbances through the woods such as drops of blood, spilled water, scratches on trees, or a dropped weapon. Cyril has Climbing d8 and intends to climb the trees to get a better vantage point and let Ardricai know where the optimal paths

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through the woods are. Drenimor has Survival d8 and uses his knowledge about where the best places to find food and water are along with optimal places for shelter are to theorize the best way through the woods.

During the cooperative roll, Ardricai is the lead character and rolls Tracking. Three characters have pointed possible supporting skills and proven to the GM how those skills can be applied to the task. Because they don't have Tracking, they cannot take the lead, but they can help Ardricai while using his Tracking skill. Mountain rolls Notice, Cyril rolls Climbing, and Drenimor rolls Survival. All three get one success and thus add +3 to Ardricai's Tracking roll.

The above is a very basic example, but it demonstrates how it's possible for other skills to apply to cooperative rolls. From here, the GM is free to make a determination as to whether or not a skill does apply, how well it applies, and how many times it can be used.

Here is a listing of every skill and example supporting skills depending on the task being performed. Please note: supporting skills **must** match the task being performed. The lead skill (the skill chosen by the lead character for the cooperative roll) has multiple uses, but supporting skills must feasibly align to the chosen use of that lead skill. (Although this is a comprehensive list, it's not exhaustive and players are encouraged to create their own supporting skill connections.)

Boating

Boating covers a wide array of boating activities including handling the boat, activities on the boat, and traversing the water. While driving (or sailing) a boat or performing functions typically only found on a boat, the Boating skill is usually the only thing that applies. When traversing the water, other skills can support the task at hand.

Notice: Navigating near a coastline can be dangerous work. Finding someone to serve as a lookout can aid the helmsman steer clear of any obstacles or watch the nearby land to estimate how deep the water may be.

Here are some simple rules when using supporting skills for cooperative rolls:

1. The player must prove why or how the skill supports the lead character.
2. No supporting character may choose a skill already chosen by another supporting character at the same time. If the task is broken into rounds, then "at the same time" means each round. If the task is a single task that just takes a long time, then "at the same time" means the entire task.
3. If the supporting skill directly applies as proven by the player, each success and raise adds +1 to the lead character's roll.

If there is some debate on whether or not the supporting skill truly applies or only indirectly applies, halve the bonuses applied, rounded down.

Repair: If the boat is in need of repair or is fleeing after being attacked, a character could run down below to make repairs, allowing the boat to continue moving at full speed. Alternatively, he could be jerry-rigging something to help the boat move faster.

Shooting: For small boats, it may be imperative for someone to distract a pursuer by firing off their weapon, albeit with the standard penalty for unstable platform. This could help to slow the pursuer down or force the driver of the other boat to become distracted, veering slightly and being forced to recover.

Climbing

When everyone is climbing at the same time, no one's really available to assist their compatriots. But when a single character is climbing to establish the proper footholds and break points the rest of the team will use to ascend or descend a vertical surface, those on the ground, or up above, can offer their assistance.

Notice: If a character on the ground has a good vantage point of what the climbing character is going to encounter, and they can still be heard, the supporting character can alert the climbing character of rock hazards, possible loose ground, or optimal locations to grab onto. Being heard can be a case of within yelling distance or across a radio communication.

Driving

The Driving skill is really only necessary under stressful conditions. During these times, it pays off to have someone monitoring the surrounding so that the lead character can solely concentrate on driving.

Investigation: Investigation is used for gathering information from electronics devices. Nowadays, getting up-to-the-minute reports on traffic, construction, and weather from a handheld device can make a big difference when time is of the essence and the driver can't do it himself.

Notice: Being on the lookout for what's immediately in front of or around the driver can provide better clues for where he needs to go. Things like watching for red lights, deer crossing the road, busy street markets, or even keeping an eye on a pursuers' maneuvers all provide vital information to the driver's decisions.

Streetwise: Calling someone up on the phone can be just as valuable as looking up information on a handheld device. While letting someone else do the monitoring, the character on the phone can relay important messages to the driver for determining an optimal route.

Throwing: If you're being pursued, maybe there are large items in the back of the SUV that can be hurled at the pursuer. A good throw into the street forces the other car to go around the obstacle, causing them to slow down slightly, giving the characters a bit of an edge.

Fighting

When combat begins en masse, Fighting cannot be supported as everyone is doing their part to combat the opposition. But what happens when there's only one big bad villain left and only one character can feasibly Wound him? The GM can opt for a cooperative roll using supporting skills, giving the lead character some type of edge in the combat. (In a gentleman's duel, this would never be acceptable!)

Intimidation: If the supporting character can find a way to make the villain hesitate or flinch, the lead character can find a better chance to make their strike.