

# MONTAGE TESTS

When a group of heroes works together overtime to accomplish a common goal that requires more than a single characteristic, the Director can call for a montage test. Such tests typically take place over a prolonged period of time and allow the heroes to work together to accomplish a common goal. Navigating a vast desert, convincing farmers to rise up against a tyrannical leader, and performing a ritual to open a magically sealed gate could all be accomplished with montage tests.

In a montage test, the players take turns making tests as their characters tackle a task together in a montage test round. Each hero acts one-at-a-time and gets a chance to make a test or assist a test to influence the outcome of the task (see [Assist a Test](#)). Once a hero makes a test or assists, they can't do anything else as part of the montage test until every other hero involved in the montage test also makes a test or assists. A hero can also choose to do nothing, which the players may do if they have no one to assist and fears their actions can only lead to a failure that would make the situation worse (see [Montage Test Outcomes](#)).

A hero can also spend their turn using an item, ability, or other option they have available that they believe can help in the montage test instead of or in addition to making a test or assisting. The Director should interpret the use of these options as narratively makes sense. For instance, a group of heroes wants to cross an ocean on a sailing ship before a storm begins. One hero lends a magic fan that creates wind to keep the sails full day and night. The Director decides this clever action gives the heroes 2 automatic successes, not tests necessary (see [Total Successes and Failures](#)). Another hero realizes they have a scroll that will allow them to teleport all passengers aboard the ship to their destination instantly. This action means the montage test is no longer necessary, and the heroes reach their destination while avoiding the storms. Bravo!

Once every hero has had a chance to act, the montage test round ends and a new one begins.

As the name suggests, montage tests happen in a cinematic montage. The montage test can take place over the course of several hours or days, and each individual test that's part of it is a brief vignette within the montage that stars one of the heroes. Combat encounters, negotiations, and other challenges and scenes can break up a montage test, as shown with the kingfissure worm attack in [Sample Montage Test](#).

## INDIVIDUAL TESTS IN MONTAGE TESTS

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The difficulty of each individual test in the montage test is set by the Director and can vary from individual test to test. For instance, if the heroes are preparing the defenses of a village threatened by a band of approaching raiders, the Director may decide that a character who wants to dig a trench around the village needs to make a challenging Might test. Another hero wants to train the untested farmers of the village in the ways of war, and the Director decides this is a severe Reason test. If a hero has a clever, out-of-the-box idea, the Director can decide it works without a test and count it as a success.

The Director or another player should track the total number of successes and failures the heroes have during the montage. The rewards and consequences of individual tests should be handled on an individual basis. We recommend that you rely on the default doom tokens or Stamina losses for consequences and vanish tokens for rewards to keep the montage moving.

## CAN'T USE THE SAME SKILL TWICE

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You can't use the same skill more than once in a montage test. A test or assist with a skill represents your entire contribution to the montage test with that skill, though another hero could use the same skill during the montage test. At the Director's discretion, this restriction can be lifted for prolonged montage tests or montage tests that are extremely limited in scope and only have a small number of skills that apply.

## TOTAL SUCCESSSES AND FAILURES

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A montage test requires the Director (or a willing player chosen by them) to track the total number of successful and failed tests the heroes make. Every montage test has a success limit and a failure limit. When the number of successful tests equals the success limit, the montage test ends and the heroes achieve total success (see [Montage Test Outcomes](#)). The montage test can also end when the number of failed tests equals the failure limit, and the heroes suffer total failure (see [Montage Test Outcomes](#)).

## 2 ROUNDS TOTAL

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A montage test should only last 2 montage test rounds. If the heroes don't end the montage test by achieving the success limit or failure limit, the montage test ends when the second montage test round is over. The Director can increase the number of rounds a montage test lasts if they wish to create a particularly grueling challenge.

The two-round limit keeps montage tests from becoming slogs and prevents all the heroes from simply using their turn to assist the hero with the best chance of success and being more active participants in the montage test.

## MONTAGE TEST DIFFICULTY

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The Director determines the success limit, failure limit, and timer of a montage test. They can share this information with the players or keep it secret—whatever is most fun and dramatic for the situation and group of players.

For groups with four heroes, a montage test's success limit should typically be between 6 and 12, and the failure limit and timer should be one-third of the success limit (rounded down). For an easier challenge, the Director can make the failure limit or timer or both half of the success limit.

In general, the higher the success limit, the harder and more complex the montage test will be for the heroes to overcome, since a hero can't make the same test twice. The Sample Montage Test Difficulty table gives a recommended success limit, failure limit, and timer for easy, moderate, and hard montage tests.

### ADJUSTING FOR GROUP SIZE

The Sample Complex Difficulty table is crafted for groups of four heroes. If you're using the Sample Montage Test Difficulty table, you can make the following adjustments based on the number of heroes in the group to keep montage tests achievable, but challenging:

- If there are three or fewer heroes, decrease the success limit and failure limits by 1 (to a minimum of 1) for every hero fewer than four. For example, if your group only has three heroes, an easy montage test has a success and failure limit of 3.
- If there are five or more heroes, increase the success and failure limits by 1 for every hero beyond the fourth.

### SAMPLE MONTAGE TEST DIFFICULTY

Difficulty	Success Limit	Failure Limit
Easy	4	4
Moderate	5	3
Hard	6	2

## MONTAGE TEST OUTCOMES

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A montage test can have three different outcomes: a total success, a partial success, or a total failure.

- If the heroes hit the success limit before hitting the failure limit or the timer runs out, they achieve total success.
- If the heroes hit the failure limit or the timer runs out and the heroes have achieved at least two more successes than failures, they achieve a partial success.
- If the heroes hit the failure limit or the timer runs out and they don't have at least two more successes than failures, they suffer total failure.

### TOTAL SUCCESS

If the heroes earn a total success, they achieve what they set out to do without complication. For instance, if the heroes engaged in a montage test to see if they could cross a desert to reach a city before a tyrant's army got there and leveled the place, on a total success they arrive at the city's gates with plenty of time to warn the people of the impending battle. The heroes earn 1 Victory when they achieve total success on an easy or moderate montage test and 2 Victories on a hard montage test.

### PARTIAL SUCCESS

If heroes earn a partial success, they succeed at what they set out to do, but there is a complication or cost involved. For instance, if the heroes engaged in a montage test to see if they could cross a desert to reach a city before a tyrant's army got there and leveled the place, on a mixed success they arrive at the city's gates with the enemy forces only minutes behind and barely any time to give a warning. Alternatively, the Director might allow the heroes to arrive well before the army, but they don't cover their movements well enough. The tyrant realizes the city has been warned and decides to call

in a favor to a powerful dragon to join the siege. The heroes earn 1 Victory when they achieve partial success on a hard or moderate montage test.

## TOTAL FAILURE

If the heroes suffer total failure, they don't achieve what they set out to do. Just like standard tests, failure on a group test shouldn't bring a story to a halt. Total failure should make things more interesting and challenging! For instance, if the heroes engaged in a montage test to see if they could cross a desert to reach a city before a tyrant's army got there and leveled the place, then they arrive at the city to find it is already under siege by the tyrant.

## SAMPLE MONTAGE TEST

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Four heroes must cross the vast and inhospitable Infinite Desert in order to warn the city of Ahset that the tyrannical Empress Vardo is coming to conquer them. If they arrive in time, they can organize the people and defenses of Ahset and have a greater chance of defeating the tyrant.

Crossing the desert is a montage test of hard difficulty. The success limit is 6 and the failure limit is 2.

- Urdoncara, a reaver, starts things off by asking to make an Intuition test using the Nature skill to predict the best times of day to travel and rest, hoping to avoid the worst of the desert's extreme temperatures and any sandstorms or other weather phenomena that occur, so that their journey is quickened. The Director decides this is a challenging test. Urdoncara makes the test and gets a result of 8, earning 1 success for the montage test.
- Loric, a tactician, wants to make a Reason test with the Climb skill to lead the ground over dunes and other hazards with minimal effort, so that the group makes good time toward their destination. The Director allows the attempt but says that knowing what makes one dune easier to climb than another is difficult and sets the difficulty at severe. Loric gets a 6 and fails with a major consequence, for which Loric loses 1d6 Stamina due to stress. The montage test currently has 1 success and 1 failure.
- Karrel, an elemental, thinks the group might cross the desert faster if they have specially modified sandals that distribute their weight and prevent their footsteps from sinking into the sand. The Director loves the idea and decides that making four pairs of the shoes while traveling the desert is a severe Reason test. Karrel gets to use their Tailoring skill here and winds up with a 10, so the group now has 2 successes and 1 failure on the montage test.
- Adrian, a conduit, offers to scout ahead for the group with an Intuition test using the Navigate skill to find the best path forward and avoid hazards like chasms and quicksand. The Director thinks this straightforward task of lookout in a vast desert is pretty easy and sets the difficulty at challenging. Adrian smashes it with a 14, and the Director decides to get creative with the reward. Adrian's lookout skills grant the next hero to act in the montage test a +1 on their test. At the end of the first montage test round, the heroes have 3 successes and 1 failure.
- Before the next montage test round, the Director pauses the montage test to run a battle with a kingfissure worm who attacks the heroes as they cross over an ancient ruin that is partially buried in the sand. After defeating the kingfissure worm, the test continues.
- Urdoncara wants to make an Might test with the Lift skill to carry most of the group's equipment as they cross the desert, freeing her allies to move quickly while she keeps up with her superior endurance. The Director thinks this arduous task has severe difficulty. Urdoncara gets a 10 thanks to the +1 from Adrian's great success. The montage test has 4 successes and 1 failure.
- Loric, eager to prove himself after his last failure, asks to make a Might test with the Lead skill to tie a rope to his waist and drag his weaker friends over the tallest dunes. The Director likes the idea, but doesn't think the Lead skill really applies here, and tells Loric that Lift is more appropriate, since the tactician is using their physical skill to drag their friends through the sand and not really doing anything interpersonal. Loric agrees. The Director says the test is challenging. The tactician rolls a 9. The montage test has 5 successes and 1 failure.
- Since the group just needs 1 more success to achieve total success, Karrel says she'd like to assist Adrian in whatever task he decides to take on. Adrian wants to recall lore about the Khem-hor inhabitants of the desert to remember their travel techniques using the History skill. Karrel has the Culture skill, which she can use to assist by providing information about the current cultural travel techniques of the Khem-hor. She makes a challenging Reason test to assist and gets a 10, which means she gives Adrian a bonus +1 on his upcoming test.
- Adrian attempts to recall lore about the Khem-hor, the inhabitants of the Infinite Desert, and see if he can remember any of their travel techniques he might have uncovered in his studies of the history of the region. The Director has him make a severe Reason test with an extra +1 thanks to Karrel's input on the current cultural climate of the Khem-hor. Adrian gets an 11, and the Director decides the conduit recalls a shortcut through a canyon tunnel that leads directly to

Ahset, avoiding a vast lake of quicksand. The heroes get their sixth success in the montage test, achieving total success, and earn 2 Victories.

The heroes could have attempted other tests during their travels, such as an Agility test with the Stealth skill to lead the group through dangerous shortcuts in the desert without being seen or waylaid by predators, a Reason test with the Nature skill to find plenty of food and water to keep the group hydrated and fed, or a Presence test with the Music skill to inspire allies to travel faster with song.