

# IN MEDIAS RES RULES FOR SAVAGE WORLDS

in me·di·as res

in 'mēdēəs 'res, 'mādē, äs/

*adverb*

1. into the middle of a narrative; without preamble.  
"having begun his story in medias res, he then interrupts it"
- into the midst of things.

## Introduction

For a while I've called this a Dramatic Task even though it doesn't adhere to the SWDE guidelines for a Dramatic Task. I finally decided to give it a name and share it with the Savages community.

I use this as an opening of the gaming session because it begins the game in the middle of the action.

## No Bennies for Beginnies.

Unlike a Dramatic Task, the players will be trying to earn Bennies rather than trying to earn a set number of successes on their Trait rolls. Because of this, players will not begin with their typical three Bennies. That's right, everyone begins with no free Bennies! Characters who have the Luck Edge still start with one Benny, though.

The idea is to perform either Opposed rolls or successfully make Trait rolls that will earn a communal pool of Bennies for the group. After the set number of rounds have been completed, the Bennies may be divided up equitably or drawn from by players as they need to use them during the rest of the gaming session. Note: the GM should still award individuals Bennies for roll playing and such.

## Steps to Perform In Medias Res Rules

1. Determine the number of rounds. Typically, five is a good number.
2. Decide if the rolls will be Opposed rolls or Trait rolls.
  - a. If Opposed rolls, decide on which Attributes or Skills everyone will be making. Typically, it will be the same for both friend and foe. Essentially, the TN for the heroes will be derived from the foe's roll.
  - b. If Trait rolls, determine which Attributes or Skills each player will be using. Typically, the foe will not be making the same Trait roll for this. The TN will be 4 or a similar set number.
3. Determine any modifiers that may help or hinder either side. Typically, the range is from -2 to +2.

4. Deal Action cards to determine order of rolls.
  - a. For Opposed rolls, the foe will not be dealt Action cards as their rolls will be made immediately after each player's roll. The cards merely determine order of rolls.
  - b. For Trait rolls, Action cards are dealt to the foes. This represents their opportunity to attack, harass, or attempt to thwart the heroes' efforts.
5. A Success = 1 Benny added to heroes' communal pot. Failure = 1 Benny added to GM's pot. Each Raise = +1 Benny.

It should be noted that the characters are guaranteed to succeed; the group is just determining how well they performed during this opening action scene.

### **Example 1. The Speeder Bike Chase (Opposed Roll)**

The action opens with several Troopers chasing the heroes on their Speeder Bikes. Because everyone is piloting their bikes, Opposed rolls of Piloting skills make the most sense here. The GM determines that the forest terrain adds difficulty to the chase, but since both sides face the same terrain, it's a zero-sum game and ignores the penalty for both sides.



Action cards are dealt to each player to determine the order of the rolls. Each time a player rolls, he or she must decide whether to spend a Benny, should they happen to have one for some reason. They are not likely to have one, though, which makes things go faster. After Player A makes their roll, the GM rolls for the Troopers to determine the TN for Player A. Note: if the Trooper's roll beats Player A with a Raise, the GM gets 2 Bennies. Ties simply mean that neither side earns a Benny.

Player B goes next and the GM rolls again for the Troopers to set the TN for Player B.

Keep going until five rounds have elapsed.

### **Example 2. The Pawn Shop Scavenge (Trait Roll)**

In this zombie apocalypse setting, the heroes have set up camp on the roof of a building across the street from a pawn shop that is still locked up tight. The GM determines that since one player with Lockpicking skills will be trying to open the pawn shop while the other characters distract a horde of zombies who are milling about the area, that Trait rolls will be best.



The non-Lockpicking characters decide that they will stay on top of the roof and throw rocks, bottles, and other objects down the street to try and keep the zombies distracted.

The GM also decides that the person picking the lock will be dealing with a difficult lock and a high stress situation, so they will be making their rolls at -2. Everyone else will not suffer any penalty.

Action cards are dealt to all players as well as one card for the zombies as a group. On the zombies' turn, the GM may decide that one zombie doesn't fall for the ruse and manages to get an attack in. Players on the roof may decide that one of their number shifts from Throwing rocks to Shooting the errant zombie. Common sense should dictate the details, but the result still boils down to whether Bennies are earned and for which pool.

Note, too, that you could add to the task that the Lockpicker must make a set number of successes on top of all the other action to determine whether the pawn shop was accessed or not.

This is a fun way to start a session of Savage Worlds with drama and action rather than just passing out Bennies to everyone as usual.