A FREE TABLE KEEPER · LONG ISLAND DUNGEON MASTER

What a Nat 20 Buys

A d6 of what a natural 20 hands the table on a check or a save, when the book gives it nothing.

one d6 · any level · no stat blocks · fifth edition (SRD 5.1)

The book gives a natural 20 nothing on an ability check or a saving throw except a 20 on the die. This table is for the roll where one lands and the total meets the DC, so the referee has something worth handing over. An attack roll is not covered: a 20 there is already a critical hit.

Choose the row. Roll the d6, or pick the row that fits, and say it before the next die is rolled. If the row cannot happen on that roll, take the next row down the list.

I have refereed for 30+ years, and a 20 that gets the same answer as a 12 is a 20 wasted.

What the 20 buys

D6	WHAT THE 20 BUYS
1	**Half the time.** The task took half as long, rounded down. A ten-minute search took five. Nothing else about it changes.
2	**Nobody noticed.** No creature nearby noticed the attempt unless it was already watching that exact spot. Any sound the attempt made went unheard.
3	**One straight answer.** Answer one question about the thing the roll was made on, truthfully, in one sentence: the lock, the creature, the forged page, the stretch of floor. The question is about that thing and nothing past it.
4	**The next try is easier.** The next ally to attempt the same task on the same thing within ten minutes has advantage on the roll, once.
5	**It cost nothing.** Nothing is used up, broken or lost to the attempt: the pick holds, the rope keeps its length, the vial is not spent. On a saving throw that still deals half damage on a success, the character takes none.
6	**The player tells it.** The player says in one sentence how the attempt looked, and that is how it looked. It names a manner, not a consequence, and the referee strikes anything that changes what is in the scene.

Where it stops

What it does not do. The 20 does not lower a DC, skip the next obstacle, take the stakes out of the roll just made, or undo a failure. A 20 that misses the DC on its total gets the miss.

On a lock or a save. A lock, a trap and a saving throw get the same rows as any other roll, and row 3 never answers past the lock itself. The referee chooses or rolls the row, and a row that would end the danger the roll was about is the wrong row: take the next one down.

When nothing hung on the roll. A 20 on a check with no stakes gets a nod and the next question. The table is for rolls that mattered.

The tables are mine. 30+ years of real tables.

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