
MODOS 2



A modular, open-source
role-playing game
by Michael Terlisner

Free Edition



Modos 2, free edition version 1.1

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Guide of Modos: You each open your eyes and find yourselves standing near each other in a brightly-lit wood. The trees are very sparse. Large outcroppings of rock fill in between the trees and pathways. Somehow, the trees cast no shadows, and what you first think is music to your ears is actually the sound of birds and insects chirping together. Please describe yourselves, including what you would normally carry while on an adventure. Let's start with Sir Brolf, Alex.

Alex: I'm Sir Brolf, a gnome, clad in full armor, long sword, and large shield bearing a red-dragon device on a yellow field.

Bridget: I give a quick salute, "the name's Blawesome." I'm wearing a skin-tight, black uniform with red beams that start at the shoulders, meet mid-torso, and then go straight down, forming a Y. "Y League."

Chuck: I'm playing Hax420. He's out-of-shape, has a blue T-shirt on, and very baggy sweatpants to offer some waist comfort. There are a few circuits running from under his collar into his head, and his left hand is obviously robotic. It looks like it's constantly trying to type something. Since he's from the future, can he understand what Blawesome said?

GM: Yup, although she seemed to have a strange accent. You notice some other people here and there. They wander sort of aimlessly, and look vaguely content. They wear only sandals and togas. A great, golden palace looms high ahead of you, looking slightly like a Las Vegas hotel. From its direction, a very tall person approaches you, and the person's head seems to be back lit by very intense, white light.

Chuck: Hax shields his eyes in pain, and some snack food falls to the ground from somewhere on his person.

Alex: I draw my sword.

Bridget: I turn bravely toward him, striking a superhero pose (makes a pose).

GM: "Well met, dearly departed. I hope your trip was pleasant?"

Bridget: "I demand to know where I am!"

Chuck: (At the same time) "excuse me sir, but are we dead?"

GM: You vaguely remember dying, but it feels like a dream that's hard to remember. The tall person says, "you are everywhere you need to be. You, fat one, are hardly dead! You are closer to eternal life than death!"

Chuck: "Um, why do I still have jackware, then?"

GM: "That is what we call 'residual self image.' But more importantly, there is a dispute that you may resolve for my brethren and me. This requires you to go back to Earth, to complete some tasks. Will you humor us?" You notice that the person is just as feminine as it is masculine, and its eyes seem to look right through your souls.

Alex: "Who art thou, and wherefore bidst thou our fealty?"

GM: The being responds with a grin, "you will know me as a 'Level 20.' You are free to deny my request, and remain here amongst the Content." It motions toward one of the people in the woods, looking lost but content. As the person sits down on a large rock, the rock absorbs him, as though he had fallen into a well. Then the rock changes shape, into a young tree.

Chuck: "I accept."

Bridget: "Back to Earth, then!"

Alex: "There shalt be questions..."

GM: As soon as you accept, the being waves a hand, and the world fades to black. You open your eyes again, to find yourselves in a stony, small, dungeon cell.

Alex: A dungeon? Home, sweet home!



Welcome to Modos 2! While the name might sound like that of a sequel, it's more like an evolution. This is the second version of Modos Role-Playing Game: the imagination-friendly, easy-to-learn, easy-to-modify game that's fast and fun with its original factory settings. If you find other role-playing games to be cumbersome or inflexible, give this one a try. With all of the rules available for free online, you're invited to share it with your friends, create your own rules modules (and lists and adventures), and above all, have fun!

What Is an RPG?

In case you're wondering, a role-playing game (RPG) is a game that encourages you to take on a role while you play, creating a fictional story in the process. A *tabletop* RPG is played on a table with friends, like a board game, and can include a play mat, miniatures, dice, scale models . . . pretty much anything the players desire to engage their imaginations. Tabletop RPGs usually require two different types of players. Most players play one role, or character, with the goal of interacting with the other players and the shared story to have a good time. These players are called player-characters (PC). The other player type is the game's master (GM), and he or she gets to tell the story, act as a referee, and play all of the other roles needed for the story.

What Is Modos 2?

This game was created to be an improvement of several aspects of the tabletop RPG. What hasn't changed is that a group of friends gets together to create a story and have a good time. You still have PCs who take on roles and a GM, called the **Guide of Modos**, for guiding the story.

The typical RPG defines a box in which the game is played. With Modos 2, the players define the box. To begin, the Guide creates a campaign theme that shapes the game you'll be playing: dark or light, realistic or fantastic, funny or serious, low-tech or high-tech, in the present or in an alternate time period. Then you make a character that starts with a concept, not die rolls, to help shape the future development of your character. You can personalize each character element, including the free-form Hero Point.

The Guide tells the story and PCs interact with the Guide, but if your character tries something that might not have the outcome you intend, the Guide will ask you to roll a d20 and add a bonus from one of your three character attributes to help out; higher rolls are always better. This is called a **Contest**. The Guide then makes an opposing contest to determine whether the outcome is favorable or unfavorable, and the two of you use this information to continue the story.

Sometimes, the Guide can continue to play out the scene with you and require more die rolls as needed to add drama or detail to the situation. This is part of a framework called an **Extended Conflict**. In it, you'll earn points called **Progress** to achieve your goal, whether that goal is slaying a beast, cracking a safe, or navigating an asteroid belt. Extended conflicts feature an action-based sequence of play versus the more common turn-based sequence, which allows players to remain engaged with the scene even when another player has the spotlight.

The game also features a modular format which allows GMs to add, subtract, and modify almost any part of the game. This means that you can easily: create your own modules to give the game a different feel, revamp an aspect of the game like character creation or combat, or adopt another GM's module because it sounds like fun.

These are the basics of the game. They are intended to be a light, capable chassis that frees up players to play fast and loose, or to support the addition of rules that create the exact gaming experience that your group desires.

Tools Needed

To get started, you'll want a full set of polyhedral dice (the six die types are d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, and d20) and a way to record some information for your character; a sheet of paper or an electronic tablet will do. There's a sample character sheet in the back of this book. You will also need a Guide of Modos, which requires great courage and dark rituals, to facilitate the game.

Contents Overview

The material in this book proceeds in this order: making characters, playing the game, and modifying the game. Chapter 2 explains the basics of characters and how to build them. Chapter 3 explains how skills work and provides a list of common skills, while Perks are described and listed in chapter 4. You will equip your character with the Gear from chapter 5, and assign Powers, if your character has them, from chapter 6. Chapter 7, Non-Player Characters, provides sample characters for you and the Guide to use. Then, you'll put the character rules into play with the conflict rules in chapter 8. You will see what's involved in adding modules to the game in chapter 9, so you can begin shaping the game to fit the needs of your gaming group. The book wraps up with appendices that include fast-play rules and a sample character sheet to get you rolling quick.



Reading Guidance

You'll find some features included for both comprehension and navigation. The file is bookmarked, and hyperlinks connect the table of contents to the chapters. Each chapter begins with a play example that demonstrates some of the concepts within that chapter. The character sheets used in these demos can be found in chapter 7. Each demo picks up where the previous demo left off, forming one continuous game session. Within the chapters, sidebars present discussions that aren't critical to playing the game, but contain helpful guidance, information, or insight. Finally, whenever game terminology might be confused with the normal usage of a word, the term is capitalized, and the primary instance of each is marked in bold type.

A Word of Warning

This book makes reference to many different RPG situations, some of which are not suitable for general readers. If you experience irritation or discomfort, discontinue use immediately.

Chapter 2: Player-Characters

Alex: Is the door open?

Guide of Modos: The cell door is closed and won't budge. You think it would be locked even if there were a handle on your side, which there isn't. There's just a tiny wooden panel at eye level, human eye level, that is shut.

Alex: Do I have all my gear?

GM: You are carrying everything you would be carrying on an average day.

Alex: That would be weapons, armor, and my riding pony.

GM: You carry a pony? Well it's not here, but your saddlebags are here. What about you two? What would you normally have?

Chuck: Hax never leaves his housing unit, so he has a solar-size bag of cheese puffs. And a TV remote.

Bridget: I just have a credit card and ID. Nothing else will fit in my suit.

Alex: You guys are no help! "Well, we can cut our way out with my sword. Eventually."

Bridget: No help? I use my Knuckle Blasts to blast the door.

GM: Roll a physical contest.

Bridget: (Rolls) unarmed 18.

Chuck: Unarmed? Knuckle blasts aren't a magic skill?

Bridget: No, I just customized my default attack.

GM: Some loose splinters burn off, but the door is otherwise intact. It doesn't seem like your blasts will break through the door, besides making things a lot warmer for you.

Chuck: "You guys are using the wrong tools for this job." Hax motions for you two to get out of his way, and then he holds up his robotic hand, and pries a nail from the door.

GM: Okay. Roll physical.

Chuck: I'm using a hero point since my character concept says I get bonuses when my robo-arm would help.

GM: You'll need it. The difficulty is Arduous.

Chuck: (Rolls) ugh, 11 minus 1 physical plus 3 from the hero point, for 13.

GM: (Takes half on the opposing contest) Con. You can't quite get a grip on the nail, but?

Chuck: But...while poking at the nail, Hax manages to chip some of the wood around it. Which provides more room for his next attempt.

GM: As you move in for another attempt, you hear a dull, sliding sound coming from the door. And that's when you realize the door is opening.

A player is someone who plays the game. A character is someone in the story, in-game. The Player-Character is the combination and interaction of the two. These PCs are the main characters of the Guide's story, whether heroes or villains. They have a small number of details for players to record, called **Character Elements**, and the collection of all character elements is called a **Character Sheet**. This chapter discusses how to complete your character sheet and how to play your character, in steps.

Step 1: Design Character Concept

Your character, like yourself, is an ever-changing personality with ambitions, motivations, style, quirks, and history. To get from a blank character sheet to a fully-developed character, it helps to have some guidance. This guidance is your **Character Concept**.

Before you write your concept, you should have a good understanding of the Guide of Modos's campaign theme: a general idea of what the story will be like. Also, have a chat with the other players. You can create relationships, dependencies, and tactics for your character by knowing who the other characters might be.

Begin shaping your concept by deciding who your character was before beginning his adventure or campaign, and whom you expect your character to someday become. Think about including things like a profession or job title, moral compass, and the major relationships that your character had or might someday have.

Include at least one character **Goal**: a short or long term plan that motivates your character. You should also have one **Flaw**: something that proves your character isn't perfect. These two aspects add depth to your character, and they will also help you earn hero points.

Step 2: Roll Attributes

Characters have three fundamental **Attributes** that affect their influence, durability, and presence, and each attribute has a score that reflects the power of that attribute. The first is called **Physical** (P), and it measures the capacity of your character's body. The next is **Mental** (M), which is a measure of the mind, as well as the nerves and senses on which the mind relies. The last attribute is **Metaphysical** (MP or Meta), which measures the power of a character's spirit, both in relationships and otherworldly aspects. If these definitions don't seem very specific, there's a reason; you can customize your attributes to represent strengths and weaknesses. For example, if your Flaw is "raised by wolves," your character might be a great hunter but naive with people. You could treat your Mental attribute as Animal Cunning, use your full

Mental bonus when tracking animals, but role-play terrible results when using Mental abilities to deal with people.

To determine the scores for your attributes, roll 3d4+3 three times. Arrange the three totals among the three attributes to support your character concept. If you feel that these scores poorly represent your concept, use 12, 10, and 8 for your starting scores instead.

Each attribute score has a corresponding bonus. The **Attribute Bonus** is a number that you add to every contest you make involving that attribute (contests are explained in chapter 8). A negative bonus is also called a penalty. Your attribute bonus for an even score is the score minus ten, then divided by two. Your attribute bonus for an odd score is the score minus eleven, then divided by two. So if your Physical is 15, your attribute bonus is +2, or if your Mental is 8, your attribute penalty is -1.

Step 3: Level Up

Once your attributes are set, you'll need some **Character Levels**. Levels are a general measure of your character's power, and they're what distinguish you from a completely average person. The Guide will tell you with how many levels your character should begin, based on the campaign theme and story. With each level, including level 1, your character gains three improvements to your character elements: a one-point increase to an attribute score, a skill point, and a perk.

Some character levels are named to give you a general idea of what each represents. The first four levels are, in order: Amateur, Professional, Expert, and Master. In the Legendary levels, levels 5 through 8, characters can perform more actions during conflict, use Powers above the 3rd power level, and improve hero points with the Legendary Hero perk. Levels 9 and above, called Mythic levels, include greater action and hero point improvements, and characters begin to perform actions of divine Difficulty.

Your character will increase in level, or "level up," when you pass certain milestones. These can be the end of an adventure or scene, the defeat of a mini-boss, or something else determined by the Guide (like the passage of time or number of enemies conquered).

Step 4: Choose Skills

A **Skill** is something that a character does well, which improves with training or experience, and normally relates to one attribute. The amount of training or experience is measured in **Skill Points**, which are reusable bonus points that you add to contests involving that skill. You cannot have

more skill points in any one skill than you have character levels.

When you gain a level, you can choose to add a skill point to any skill that makes sense for your character concept and campaign theme. You can choose your skills from the chapter 3 list or a rules module. You may also make your own skills, but they should not be more general than the chapter 3 skills, and your Guide should make sure that they conform to the campaign theme.

Step 5: Choose Perks

A **Perk** is a character element that gives your character a benefit beyond attributes and skills. For example, a perk could increase your metaphysical max damage or allow you to use hero points in a new way, but would not increase the result of a Physical contest made to endure cold weather.

Like skill and attribute points, you gain a new perk with each level. You can choose this from the list of perks in chapter 4 (or a rules module if you're using one), or you can create one with approval from the Guide.

Step 6: Design Hero Points

Any character in the game can have attributes, skills, and perks. What makes the PCs special is that they have **Hero Points**: special powers in the form of bonus dice that make your rolls more heroic. When you spend a hero point, you add d6 to the result when rolling a contest. PCs get one hero point per character level when each story-day begins, and they cannot have more than this number at any time. The Guide can reward you with hero points at any time, and will give you a hero point whenever you role-play your character's flaw in opposition to your character's goal.

To design your hero points, take a look at your character concept and decide what activities make your character heroic, and which ones could benefit from a bonus to contests. Think about the specific things that make your character interesting, things more specific than what's represented by an attribute or skill. However, consider that your hero point supply is somewhat limited, so what you can do with them will have something of a daily limit as well.

For example, Sir Brof is a gnome, but Alex wants to make that fact apparent when the story would benefit, not necessarily limiting his hero points to a particular skill. So Alex determines that his hero points are used to make Sir Brof excel where a gnome would – like hiding behind trees and bushes, creating little gadgets, and dodging the attacks of bigger creatures. So when the Guide calls for a contest that a gnome would do well, Alex lets the Guide know that he's

adding a hero point, and he notes that he has spent that point on his character sheet.

In contrast, Blawesome is a superhero. Her player, Bridget, wants to focus on specific special powers like blasts from her hands and telepathy. Since these two powers can be represented with the Magic rules, Bridget instead uses her hero points to represent Blawesome's flying ability, though it's not fully developed. When she needs super-flying power to move or to avoid an attack, she adds a hero point to her Movement or Parry contests.

Step 7: Gear Up

Shopping for your new character is easy; you have everything that would be expected, based on your character concept. It's a good idea to remember this general rule (because your Guide will): more money, more problems. Characters with few belongings might not have the right tool for every occasion, but they pay less tax, can relocate more easily, make less noise when they move, and don't have anyone to answer to. Characters with too much property may have a solution to any problem, but they are watched closely by taxing authorities, people who depend on them, and inevitably, thieves.

Weapons and armor can be found in chapter 5. These types of gear receive special treatment because they affect combat progress with an assigned die type. If you're not sure which type to use, assign each a d8 until the Guide can discuss it with you.

Step 8: Finishing Touches

Your character now has all the essential elements. Here are a few helpful finishing touches.

Health

Characters collect three types of Damage, which brings them closer to being Disabled as it accumulates. You will want to establish a Damage Pool for each attribute to collect this damage. Each damage pool has a Max Damage amount, which equals the score of its corresponding attribute. Since other players and the Guide don't always know what your max damage is, it's helpful to refer to your "health" instead, which is your max damage less the damage you have in your damage pool.

For example, when Blawesome uses her Fire 1 power, she takes 3 metaphysical damage as the MP cost. This damage goes in her MP damage pool. Her MP max damage is 10, so she can say that her MP health is now 7 (10 max damage minus 3 damage). Note that it is possible to have

zero health (but not less) without becoming Disabled. These topics are covered in more detail in chapter 8.

Skill Totals

You can save some game time by recording the total bonus that you will add to contests for certain skills. For each skill, there is a bonus from the normal attribute, from your skill points, and sometimes a miscellaneous bonus (like Magic Difficulty), that you add to your contest roll. Record the totals of these numbers next to your skills, so you don't have to do the math on the spot. Do this for each skill in which you have skill points, and for any frequently used skills, like Detect, Movement, Parry, Concentrate, and Willpower.

Background and Picture

The more you know about your character, the easier it is to play. Write down any other details that you think would make your character interesting, and add a picture too. If you don't have drawing skills, it's perfectly fair to borrow a picture from the Internet.

Role-Play Your Character

The game isn't about die rolls, rules, or character sheets. It's about creating a story. You help to create the story by describing what your character says and does. The rules and dice are only for helping you tell the story when needed. In particular, here are some ways to make your character and your story come to life:

- **Contest resolution.** The story doesn't end when the dice come out. If you roll a Pro (a favorable contest outcome), tell the group what you did right. If you roll a Con (an unfavorable outcome), describe what went wrong.
- **Customization.** Attributes and skills are deliberately abstract or generic. You can personalize them a bit by giving them some detail based on your character concept. For example, your character is great at creating forged documents, so you call his deceive skill "forgery." Or if he's a seasoned fighter, you record his deceive skill as "feinting" on your character sheet.

- **Taking damage.** Damage measures how close your character is to being Disabled. That's all it does. But you can customize damage to your character with a little role-playing. For example, if you take physical damage, you could describe your armor being banged up, breaking a limb, or shrugging off the pain and injury like a professional wrestler would.
- **Having flaws.** Most people, including well-written heroes, have flaws; that's what makes them interesting. Adding your character's flaws into your role-playing helps to bring the story to life for the other players, and is the best way to win hero points from the Guide.

Roll-Play Your Character

When the Guide thinks there's a good element of chance involved in what you want to do, she'll ask you to roll a contest. Because the dice will come out sooner or later, you should keep these things in mind:

- **Anticipate outcomes.** When your contest has been decided, be ready to tell its story which can be a Pro, Con, or Tie. If you don't know what your contest outcome means to the story, the Guide will fill in the blanks for you.
- **Use (all) the right dice.** Contests are always rolled on a d20. Your progress dice depend on your weapon used or situational advantage, but they can be a d4, d6, d8, d10, or d12. If you're already rolling a d12 and something improves your die type, just add a +1 to your d12 roll. You can save time by rolling your contest and progress at the same time, and even more time by taking half on some of your rolls (see Take Half in chapter 8).
- **Earn bonuses.** Role-playing well can earn you an additional bonus to your contests. If you described your effort well or you otherwise made the game more fun for everyone else, the Guide can grant your contest a +2 role-playing bonus. If your description suggests some sort of external advantage, the Guide can grant a greater bonus, called a Difficulty Bonus, to represent that advantage.



This page reserved for helpful sidebars.



Chapter 3: Skills

Guide of Modos: As you pick at the nail, Hax, the door swings away from you and a medieval-looking watchman steps in, wearing padded armor and a short sword. He hasn't noticed you yet. What do you do when the door swings open?

Chuck: Hax falls backward, trying to hide beside the doorway.

GM: Does he have any Sneak or Deceive points? They might come in handy here.

Chuck: Nope. He sucks at real life.

Alex: Can I draw the watchman's attention away from Hax and Blawesome?

GM: Sure Alex, roll metaphysical for that. It's Challenging, since Blawesome wasn't hiding, and Hax has no sneaking skill.

Alex: (Rolls d20 plus 1 metaphysical bonus) adding 1 Persuade for 15. I topple forward, like I was leaning on the door, and into the watchman. "Jolly good! Was hoping

someone would let me out!" Oh, wait, does it look like the watchman understands gnome-speak?

GM: (Takes half on the difficulty contest, so Alex gets a Pro) the engage skill would have been more helpful, but at least you're persuasive. The watchman seems to understand you, and staggers back, drawing his short sword. "Halt! Cease! What...who are you?" You see another watchman behind him, holding a prisoner with a black sack over his head.

Bridget: I crouch behind Hax, real nonchalant. "Where the heck are we, and how do you feel about trusting this...miniature knight?"

Chuck: Blawesome probably notices Hax's bad stench at that point. He takes one look at her up close and instantly clams up.

GM: Nice, Chuck. Take a hero point. The prisoner whips his head back into the other watchman's nose, who screams and clutches his face. The closer watchman spins around, looking like he wants to stab someone with his sword. What do you do?



Characters do things better – jumping across air shafts, rebuking dragons, discovering secret codes – when they have **Skill**: something that a character does better than the average person, and that improves with experience or training. The amount of training or experience that your character has in a skill is measured by skill points, which are a reusable bonus that you add to contests to improve your results. For comparison, you can refer to skill points with the names of character levels in chapter 2, so that your character would be an “amateur” actor with one skill point in the deceive skill, or a “master” actor with four points.

Gaining Skill Points

There are multiple ways to gain skill points, but the usual way is to gain a character level, which grants you a permanent skill point. You can add this point to any skill that makes sense for your character concept and campaign theme.

It is also possible to gain skill points on a temporary basis or from other sources. A Magic Power can grant you skill points, at the cost of the mental concentration of the character using the power. Gear can give you skill points while you are using it. This could be an enchanted item or a hardware attachment, but skill points gained this way can be lost if the item is broken or runs out of energy. The module that your campaign uses can provide more skill points as well. For example, a module that makes the game more skill-focused could remove attribute bonuses and perks, and simply award a lot of skill points instead.

Using Skill Points

Using skills is easy. As you tell the Guide what your character does, sometimes the Guide will decide that there's a chance it won't happen in the way you intended. At these times, the Guide might ask you how many skill points you have in a skill that relates to what you want to do. Your general ability with a skill increases as you gain skill points in that skill. So if you have three points in Movement, you could consider your character to be an “expert” swimmer, for example. If your action would be easy for a character with that level of skill, the Guide may let the story proceed. Or the Guide might ask you for a contest, and tell you which attribute to use for the contest. When you roll the contest, you can add the number of skill points that you have in a skill that would improve your outcome. If there's any uncertainty, tell the Guide what skill you are adding, because she might disallow some skills in some situations.

In the expert swimmer example, your character has fallen into a whirlpool, and swimming is your only option of escaping so the Guide asks you to roll a physical contest. You roll a d20 and get 7, plus your physical bonus of 2, plus your

3 movement skill points, for a result of 12. You let the Guide know what you rolled, saying something like “twelve with Movement skill,” or “adding three Movement points for twelve total,” and you describe your efforts: “I'm doing a furious butterfly-stroke, gasping for air!”

Skill Groups

Some skills are closely related to other skills, forming skill groups that are invaluable to each group of PCs. These are:

- **Defend skills.** Each attribute has a defend skill for preventing damage of that attribute type. These skills also defend against Magic powers, and have some tertiary uses as well. The skills are Parry for physical, Concentrate for mental, and Willpower for metaphysical.
- **Fight skills.** Two different fight skills are used to cause physical damage. These, along with the Magic skill, are the primary skills for defeating enemies in combat. The skills are Armed for using weapons, and Unarmed for using your body to attack.
- **Produce skills.** Four skills help characters to get what they need when those things can't be purchased or found. These skills can also be used for earning money, but they are not limited to these uses. The produce skills are Artist, Craftsman, Healer, and Scientist.

Skill Descriptions

The skills list in this chapter describes each skill in terms of what each skill does in-game and in terms of rules. Each skill description also has the following features:

Normal Attribute

A skill can be used with any contest when it applies to the situation, but each skill will normally be used with contests of one attribute, by default. This normal attribute is given in parentheses after the skill name.

Locked Skills

Some activities require so much initial training or specialization that they cannot be performed by anyone who doesn't have this training. Skills representing these activities are **Locked**, marked with an (L). Your character cannot perform actions related to these skills without unlocking them by taking at least one skill point in these skills.



Common Defenses

For skills that can be used as Attacks, the end of the skill's description lists which skills are commonly used to Defend against that skill.

Skill List

Armed (P)

For attacking with a manufactured weapon. You have trained to fight and disable or destroy your enemies, from at least arm's-length distance. Use this skill to deal physical Damage to opponents. Defense: parry.

Artist (type) (M) (L)

For producing art, including music, image, sculpture, dance, and costume. When you gain a skill point in this skill, it applies to one type of art. Art can have a synergistic effect with other skills, like Magic or Persuade, at GM discretion.

Concentrate (M)

For focusing your mind on what you want, and ignoring distractions. A concentrate contest Pro prevents all damage from one mental attack action. You can also use this skill to improve contests for maintaining Powers.

Craftsman (type) (P) (L)

For producing goods that are made by craftsmen like blacksmiths, carpenters, plumbers, cooks, or masons. When you gain a skill point in this skill, it applies to one type of craft. Use this skill to create, repair, or appraise goods.

Deceive (MP)

For changing the minds of intelligent creatures, regarding falsehoods and opinions. This skill can apply to different forms of deception like lying, bluffing, feinting, disguise, or misdirection. See Metaphysical Conflict in chapter 8 for more information. Defense: detect or knowledge, depending on the subject matter.

Detect (M)

For gaining information from your senses. Normally a non-action, this skill can require an action to use when you must focus or spend time to detect something. Defense: sneak, deceive.

Engage (MP)

For drawing attention from others. Use this skill to increase the size of your audience, become a distraction, or draw the

attention of enemies in battle. See Metaphysical Conflict in chapter 8 for more information. Defense: detect, willpower.

Handler (creature) (MP)

For training, grooming, and handling unintelligent creatures. When you take a skill point in this skill, choose a type of creature to which it will apply. Defense: willpower.

Healer (M) (L)

For assisting, accelerating, or replacing the body's natural healing mechanisms. The difficulty of using this skill increases with the severity of the ailment you are attempting to heal and the rate of recovery, and decreases with the quality of tools, materials, and environment available. This skill can remove physical or mental damage at a rate suggested by the campaign theme. It can also be used to produce items that can be used for healing, like salves, potions, or bandages. Characters normally heal one point of physical and mental damage per day without assistance.

Knowledge (subject) (M) (L)

For recalling facts, ideas, or opinions. When you take a point in this skill, choose a subject to which it will apply: lore, nature, or scholarship. Lore is knowledge shared verbally like stories, rumors, and gossip. Nature is knowledge of how the wilderness works and how to survive in it. Scholarship is the type of knowledge that is best studied in books. Your choice of knowledge cannot be used to emulate another skill. Characters without knowledge skill are limited to what the average person would know.

Larceny (M)

For acquiring things that do not belong to you. This can include activities like lock-picking, pick-pocketing, safe-cracking, and disabling traps. Defenses: detect, craftsman, scientist.


Magic (power) (MP) (L)

For using Powers: creating effects that are not physically possible. This skill applies to all metaphysical or quasi-scientific phenomena, like telepathy, spellcraft, and alien technology. When you take a point in this skill, choose a power from chapter 6 to which it will apply. You get a +2 bonus to your magic contests when you have no physical or mental protection. See chapter 8 for more information on using Powers. Defense: varies by power.

Movement (P)

For changing your location or position under your own power. This includes activities like climbing, swimming,





acrobatics, and parkour. Movement is used with contests made to change Posture, flank opponents, and to flee in extended conflict. Note that easy or short movements in conflict are normally non-actions. Defense: movement.

Parry (P)

For dodging or deflecting sources of physical damage. A parry contest Pro prevents all damage from one attack action.

Persuade (MP)

For changing the minds of intelligent creatures, regarding factual knowledge and opinions. This can include intimidation, diplomacy, and bribery. See Metaphysical Conflict in chapter 8 for more information. Defense: willpower.

Pilot (type) (M)

For directing vehicles or mounts. When you take a point in this skill, choose the type of vehicle or mount to which it applies. Defense: pilot.

Scientist (type) (M) (L)

For producing goods that are made by or designed with science. Alchemists, engineers, programmers, and chemists

all use this skill. When you take a point in this skill, choose the type of science to which it applies. Use this skill to create, repair, or appraise goods.

Sneak (P)

For avoiding attention. Use this skill to find places to hide, make little or no noise, or conceal objects. A Pro sneak contest indicates that your opponent does not have Awareness of you. Defense: detect.

Unarmed (P)

For combat using your body as a weapon. You have training in martial arts, wrestling, boxing, or another method of causing physical damage without a manufactured weapon. Defense: parry.

Willpower (MP)

For resisting forces or causing effects simply by wanting to do so. This skill is used to avoid all metaphysical damage from a single attack action. It is also used to remove damage from your metaphysical damage pool at an accelerated rate determined by your campaign theme. Characters normally remove one point of MP damage per hour.

Chapter 4: Perks

Alex: Do I have an idea who the prisoner might be? Are there any clues?

Guide of Modos: Maybe. Roll Mental.

Alex: I'm adding a hero point because gnomes are detail-oriented. (Rolls d20 and d6) 11 and 5, and -1 mental, is 15.

GM: You notice the prisoner's neckline, and realize that it looks just like the Level 20's neckline. Whoever the prisoner is, he rolls into a ball so his shackled hands can reach the edge of his hood. The watchmen jump into action.

Bridget: "Hax, Brolf needs help. Let's go!" I roll to the middle of the cell, charging my knuckle blasts. My hands pulse with fiery power.

Chuck: Well that's aggressive. Hax isn't as fearless as Blawesome is.

Bridget: I even have the Fearless perk to back it up.

GM: Okay "Fearless": the sword-wielding watchman kicks the prisoner in the ribs, and you hear him grunt painfully. What do you do?

Alex: I draw my sword and poke it at the unruly prisoner, somewhere around the sternum. "Don't move!" Then I whisper to these guys, "Level 20!" And I'll use my Small Size perk to keep away from the first watchman.

Bridget: I blast the watchman for hurting a helpless person!

Chuck: "Helpless?" More like "convicted." Hax struggles to get to his feet, but stays beside the doorway for cover. Too many pointy things out there!

GM: Bridget, right before your blasts discharge, you each feel a wave crash into you, feeling like a full-body ache. You see reality bend, and when the wave passes, you find that the scene has shifted to a street corner at night, with a police car parked behind you, emergency lights flashing. The two watchmen are now police officers, and the prisoner on the sidewalk wears handcuffs instead of a hood and shackles.

Bridget, you recognize the prisoner as the Baker, your drug-dealing nemesis. Your knuckle blasts go off, pushing the nearby officer toward Sir Brolf. The Baker seizes the opportunity to run! Sir Brolf, the stumbling officer is about to fall on you.

Alex: And the prisoner is getting away? Grr, I stand under the officer to help prop him up. "Capital costume change, good sir, but we have a culprit to catch!"

GM: The officer looks around in a panic, confused by the presence of a miniature knight and being struck by a fireball.

Chuck: Hax looks around in a panic too – he doesn't have a wall to hide behind anymore!



Being a hero has its prerequisites. PCs, however, get Perks: special benefits that characters gain with each character level. A perk is a minor new rule or a minor alteration to a rule or list item that applies to the character who has the perk.

Gaining Perks

The most common way to gain a perk is to level up. However, your character can receive extra or temporary perks in other ways. Sometimes the story will provide a perk; if a god turns your character into a dark elf, you might receive the owl's eye perk. That same perk could be a benefit from using a night observation device, or a Magic Power could endow you with that perk for the duration of the magic user's concentration. Additionally, a rules module could provide you new ways to gain perks, or allow you to begin play with certain perks. If you can receive a perk more than once, its description explains what each additional perk does.

Custom Perks

The perk list provided here is far from exhaustive. If you'd like to try out a new perk and don't see a comparable one, ask the Guide of Modos if you can make your own perk. The perk you create shouldn't outshine any other perks. If it does, the Guide can help you tone it down or create multiple perks.

Perk List

Armor Training (type)

You know how to make the most of one type of armor. Choose a type of physical protection. With this armor, your protection level increases by one die type. For example, if mail armor normally has d8 physical protection, armor training (mail) will raise its protection to d10 for you. If you take this perk again, it applies to a different type of armor.

Attribute Point (type)

Instead of gaining a perk, one of your attributes improves. Your score in this attribute increases by one point.

Backstabber

You make small weapons matter when enemies drop their guard. If you use a tiny or small, close range weapon to attack an opponent who doesn't use a Defense action against your attack, you cause two extra points of damage. This does not increase minimum damage above one.

Bonus Action (skill)

Your expertise in a particular skill lets you accomplish more when using that skill. With one skill, you gain a bonus action at the start of each extended conflict round for every four points that your score in the skill's normal attribute exceeds eleven. The bonus action must use the skill's normal attribute. If you take bonus action (magic), the perk applies to all powers you use. Taking this perk again does not increase your number of potential bonus actions, but it allows you to choose a different skill for your bonus action.

For example, if your character has a bonus action (persuade) perk and a metaphysical score of 20, you would gain two bonus metaphysical actions each round for Persuade contests, one for having at least 15 points in MP, and the second for having at least 19 points. If you then take bonus action (movement) and your character has a physical score of 15, you would gain another bonus action for Movement, but not for Persuade.

Diehard

You know how to survive in battle. You may add one hero point to any of your protection rolls. This does not reduce the minimum damage from an attack Pro below one.

Dual Wielder

You are trained in the use of a secondary weapon instead of a shield. If you bear a second weapon or a dual weapon in hand, you can use either weapon to add +2 to your parry contests.

Familiar Spirit

You have a special, metaphysical bond with your domesticated animal. If your pet's level is less than your character level, it gains a human-like personality and +4 to its metaphysical attribute score.

Fearless

Fear, magic or otherwise, holds no sway on you. You are immune to fear, even that created by a Power.

Heroic Companion

Your faithful companion, cohort, or sidekick gains a character level. This perk cannot raise your companion's level to equal or exceed yours.

Karma

Your attacks affect opponents on a metaphysical level. When your attack would cause Physical or Mental damage, you may choose to inflict one point of Metaphysical damage instead.

Large Size

You are much bigger than the average person. You may use a physical action with the movement skill to designate one defensive posture opponent as being in offensive posture, relative only to you. This designation remains until you designate a different opponent, or your designated opponent uses a movement action to undo this condition. Your opponent may flee or change postures as normal.

Legendary Hero

Your actions are the stuff of legend. If you are level 5 or higher, you roll hero points with a d8 instead of a d6.

Lucky Day

You have a tendency to be saved by luck. If taking damage causes you to exceed max damage in any damage pool, you may spend a hero point to undo the disabled condition.

Mana

Your spirit is more powerful than your body. Your metaphysical max damage increases by four. You may take this perk again to continue increasing your max MP damage.

Martial Artist

You know how to use your body as a fighting machine. When unarmed and unarmored, your attacks cause d6 physical damage and your physical protection is d4, instead of the base d4 damage and zero protection.

Mass Destruction

You know how to make many targets feel your magical power. You may add a number up to your metaphysical attribute bonus to a power's number of targets, but your power's MP cost increases by that number as well. This perk can be used only on powers with a Target attribute of "multi."

Mystic Ward

Your spirit is hardened against assault. You gain d4 natural metaphysical protection.

Mythical Hero

You are capable of feats that no other can perform. If you are character level 9 or higher, you use a d10 for hero points instead of a d6 or d8.

Off the Mark

You know how to get the jump on opponents. Whenever you roll an initiative contest, you gain +4 to that roll.

Oracle

You get information from a higher power. Spend a hero point to get a hint from the Guide of Modos.

Owl's Eye

You can see more of the light spectrum than normal people can. At Close range, you suffer no vision penalties due to the lack of ambient light. Taking this perk again extends your benefit by one range increment.

Power Implement

You have a physical tool with which you create magic powers. Choose a unique object to be your implement, like a staff, book, diadem, wrist console, or lute. When you use an action to manipulate this object on your turn, you can then combine that action with magic actions for a power that you have not unlocked. The Guide will help you determine which powers your implement can unlock.

For example, if your implement is a spellbook, you may use only powers that are contained within the spellbook. To use a power from your spellbook, you must first spend an action to use the book, which unlocks a power from the book. During that round, you use the power as normal, adding attribute bonus and magic difficulty to your contest(s), but not skill points, since you don't have the magic skill for that power.

Power Upgrade (new power)

One of your powers has evolved into something better. Choose a magic skill in which you have skill points. You may remove all skill points from this skill and add them to another magic skill that has the same power name or an effect related to your previous skill. Whether the effects are related is determined by you and the Guide.

Quick Draw

You are only an instant away from being armed at any time. Ready your weapon is a non-action for you, as long as that weapon was previously holstered, sheathed, slung, or otherwise within reach.

Quick Reload

You can reload your weapons in a flash. Whenever you reload a weapon, you need one less action than the listed reload time. Reload times reduced to zero in this way are treated as non-actions. Taking this perk again reduces reload times by another step.

Rage

You know how to finish your enemies. Whenever you roll damage, you may add one hero point to the damage result. This does not increase the minimum damage of a Pro attack above one.

Set to Stun

Your physical attacks have a stunning effect. When you cause physical damage, you may choose to deal 1 point of mental damage in addition. Opponents with mental protection may ignore this effect.

Skill Point (type)

Instead of gaining a perk, you gain another skill point. This perk does not alter your maximum skill point limit.

Sleepless

You can remain alert longer than most people. You are immune to sleep-inducing Powers, and need only half of the usual time for a full night of rest.

Small Size

You are much smaller than the average person. You may use a physical action with the movement skill to designate one offensive posture opponent as being in defensive posture, relative only to you. This designation remains until you designate a different opponent, or your designated opponent uses a movement action to undo this condition. Your opponent may flee or change postures as normal.

Specialize (skill)

Your training focuses on excelling at a particular skill. Choose a skill. If you choose a locked skill, this perk unlocks that skill. With this skill, your maximum skill points are not

limited by your character level. Taking this perk again applies to a different skill.

Special Move (fight skill)

You have been honing a combat technique that has dramatic results. Choose a Fight skill for this perk. Before you make an attack with this skill, you may choose to use some or all of your skill points on your damage roll instead of that attack contest. Taking this perk again applies to a different fight skill.

Stubborn

You have great mental endurance. Your max mental damage increases by four. You may take this perk again to continue increasing your max mental damage.

Thought Shield

Your mind is steel, resisting attack. Choose a type of mental protection. This mental protection increases by one die type. For example, this would grant natural protection of d4, or increase d6 mental protection to d8. If you take this perk again, it applies to a different type of mental protection.

Tough

Your body doesn't know when to quit. Your max physical damage increases by four. You may take this perk again to continue increasing your max physical damage.

Weapon Training (type)

You wield one type of weapon like you were born with it. Choose a physical weapon type. For this weapon type, your damage die increases by one die type. For example, if your service pistol normally deals d6 physical damage, with this perk it deals d8 physical damage instead. Taking this perk again applies to a different weapon type.

Chapter 5: Gear

Chuck: A foot chase? I give up. Hax is in no shape for running.

Alex: And I'm three feet tall, but I swore an oath of valor when I became a knight. "Let's go, Blawesome! Say, wherefore art we, anyway?"

Bridget: "It doesn't matter now! Follow me!" I sprint after the Baker.

Guide of Modos: Brolf and Blawesome, roll physical contests to chase the Baker. Alex, it will be Difficult if you want to take your saddlebags along, and you might want to put your sword away too.

Alex: Well, my armor already penalizes my movement so I will leave the bags, and sheathe my sword. (Rolls) 20!

Bridget: I'm adding a hero point; my super-flight power is kicking in. Take half on the contest (but rolls the hero point) 5, plus Movement is 18.

GM: (Takes half for opposing contest) Alex and Bridget both get Pros; Chuck gets a hero point for knowing his weaknesses. What happens?

Alex: I find a hole in a fence that lets me take a gnome-shortcut to catch him.

Bridget: I actually blur for a little bit when I take off.

Chuck: Hax shrugs, pulls out a handful of snacks, and swallows crooked when he thinks of exerting himself. Then

he coughs out chewed snacks in a big cloud. And he picks up Brolf's saddlebags for him.

GM: "Hold it right there, buddy. Put your hands where I can see them."

Chuck: Oh yeah. Cops. Hax complies, but tries to intimidate the cop by making a show of his robotic hand.

GM: Intimidate him into not arresting you? Has that ever happened?

Chuck: No, but I suspect that this cop has never seen a robotic hand before, either.

GM: Good point. Roll metaphysical for it. The other policeman returns, obviously out of breath.

Chuck: Adding a hero point for my robotic-hand-bonus. (Rolls) 6! I guess Hax made him scared, but in a bad way.

GM: Probably...(rolls) yeah. That's a Con. You realize that the gun he's pointing at you is actually a stun gun, which shocks the daylights out of you when it hits.

Chuck: Ha, no problem. Hax has mental armor! But not in the real world, I suppose. So instead he crumples to the ground and convulses. Does he take damage?

GM: Not unless you intend to put up a fight. As long as you don't resist, the cops cuff you and throw you in their squad car.





Armor List

It's dangerous to go alone. Taking a few brave adventurers with you might be helpful, but it is definitely helpful to have a shield and backup weapon. This chapter talks about character possessions and begins with a short discussion on what it takes to get gear.

Money

In the gear lists that follow, you'll find a generic currency called "units." These are provided to give you and the Guide of Modos an idea of the relative prices of gear in the game. The Guide can use anything from online shopping sites, to historical research, to other role-playing games for lists of goods and prices. This means that if you can imagine it, your character can get it. The campaign theme should suggest a particular currency that you can use to buy things, or you might use a rules module that presents an alternative system for acquiring goods. See chapter 2 (step 7) for determining your initial property.

Equipment

The first type of gear is equipment: that which can be equipped. This includes items that cause physical damage, called weapons, and items that protect from physical damage, called armor. While it is possible to acquire equipment that provides mental or metaphysical damage or protection, the most common type of equipment is the physical type presented here.

Armor

The best way to defend yourself in battle is to wear **Armor**, which provides **Protection** by reducing the physical damage of all attacks against you. Since you have no physical protection by default, it is a good idea to either wear armor that provides you with physical protection, to carry a shield which will add points to your Parry contests, or to do both.

Most armor types have a drawback: as their protection gets better, they impose a greater **Physical Penalty** (PP). This direct penalty to your Physical score indirectly reduces your physical attribute bonus and max physical damage as well. As a general rule, the physical penalty increases by one point for each die type of protection.

Weapons

All characters can do d4 physical damage by default, whether with fists, hard objects, or some other non-weapon. Equipping a weapon requires the use of one or more hands, but increases physical damage output significantly. Each manufactured weapon has the following attributes:

Ancient	Units	PP	Protection
Buckler	60	0	+1 parry, free hand
Shield, small	70	0	+2 parry
Shield, large	130	-1	+4 parry
Scutum	300	-2	+6 parry
Padded jack	50	-1	d4
Boiled leather	100	-1	d4
Brigandine	250	-2	d6
Mail	1500	-2	d8
Plate	6000	-3	d10
Modern	Units	PP	Protection
Shield, riot	300	0	+2 parry
Vest, flak	500	0	d4
Vest, ballistic	700	-1	d6
Bomb suit	6000	-5	d10
Future	Units	PP	Protection
Shield, force	300	0	+4 parry
Shell, terrestrial	500	-1	d6
Shell, spacewalk	1000	-1	d8
Shell, combat	3000	-2	d10

Weapon Size

Weapon characteristics vary by size category. All weapons require an action to ready them, but tiny and light weapons can be kept at the ready without causing fatigue.

- Tiny (T) weapons can be carried or ready indefinitely, require one hand to use, are easily concealable, can be thrown for damage, and normally do d4 physical damage.
- Light (L) weapons can be carried or ready indefinitely, require one hand to use, are concealable, and normally do d6 physical damage.
- Standard (S) weapons take an action to equip, require one hand to use, are hard to conceal, and normally do d8 physical damage.
- Heavy (H) weapons take an action to equip, require two hands, do not allow the use of a shield, cannot be concealed, and normally do d10 physical damage.





Damage

This is the die type that you roll to determine the weapon's physical damage for each attack.

Range

Each weapon has a Range attribute, which describes in which postures the weapon deals full damage. The weapon does one point of damage in the next further range increment, and no damage at successive range increments. These categories correspond to the Ranges described in chapter 8. Generally, weapons with a range other than Close are missiles or can fire missiles.

Special

In the Special column are other attributes, including the number of actions required to reload a weapon, and the indicator “dual” if that weapon counts as two weapons for the dual wielder perk.

Weapon Detail

Arquebus

An early form of firearm, the arquebus fires a bullet that easily penetrates medieval armor, so defenders cannot apply protection to its damage.

B.F.G.

This heavy, energy weapon does not cause Damage. Instead, each use of the weapon causes mass destruction described by the Guide, depending on your intended target and an Armed contest if the Guide requires it.

Blackjack

A spring-powered club covered in leather, this weapon does not penetrate armor, so the defender automatically rolls max protection.

Bolas

A string-and-weight weapon used for tripping or tangling the feet of its target.

This weapon can cause damage, oppose a change of posture, or oppose a flee action. The Guide can extend the tangling beyond one action as appropriate.

Weapon List

Ancient	Units	Size	Damage	Range	Special
Arquebus	500	H	d8	Short	Reload 3, ignores protection
Axe, battle	200	S	d8	Close	
Bolas	10	T	d4	Short	Oppose one flee action
Bow, long	750	H	d10	Short	Reload 1
Bow, short	500	H	d8	Short	Reload 1
Club	30	S	d6	Close	
Crossbow	300	H	d8	Short	Reload 2
Dagger	50	T	d4	Close	
Javelin	10	L	d6	Short	
Lance	150	S/H	d10/d8	Close	Mounted posture
Pike	80	H	d10	Short	1 damage at close range
Sai	60	L	d6	Close	+1 Parry
Spear	60	S/H	d8/d10	Close	Dual
Sword, great	500	H	d10	Close	
Sword, bastard	300	S	d8	Close	
Sword, short	150	L	d6	Close	
Whip	100	L	d4	Close	Gain Set to Stun perk
Modern	Units	Size	Damage	Range	Special
Baton	30	L	d6	Close	
Blackjack	50	T	d8	Close	Opponent gets max protection
Flamethrower	400	H	Special	Short	Unlocks Magic (Fire 3)
Machine gun	40000	H	d12	Medium	Reload 3
Pistol	600	T	d6	Short	Reload 1
Rifle	1000	H	d10	Medium	Reload 2
Shotgun	300	H	d8	Close	Reload 3
Stun gun	400	T	d4	Close	Deals mental damage
Switchblade	20	T	d4	Close	
Future	Units	Size	Damage	Range	Special
B.F.G.	50000	H	Nil	Nil	Narrative effect only
Blaster, hand	200	L	d6	Short	Reload 1
Laser pod	8000	L	d6	Short	Hands-free
Railgun	10000	H	d12	Long	Reload 2, attack 2
Rifle, plasma	5000	H	d10	Medium	Reload 2
Rifle, pulse	1000	H	d8	Medium	Reload 1
Sword, laser	1000	L	d8	Close	Ignores protection

Flamethrower

A fuel tank and flame-throwing wand, this weapon unlocks the Magic (Fire 3) skill. The Guide may award a special



damage pool for this power's MP cost instead of your metaphysical pool.

Lance

A special spear designed to be used on horseback, the lance does d8 damage and becomes a Heavy weapon if its user is not in mounted posture.

Laser pod

A shoulder-mounted weapon that fires heat rays at the selected target. This weapon requires no hands to use.

Machine gun

This weapon deals normal damage at Medium range as long as the target can be effectively engaged.

Pike

A very long spear used for killing at a distance. This weapon is best used from defensive posture (behind allies with shields), which is why its range is Short. It does minimum damage to opponents in Close range, zero damage at Medium range, and is too heavy to be thrown as a weapon.

Railgun

This heavy, energy weapon fires a small projectile at near-light speed. Attacking with it requires two actions, because the first action is needed to begin the firing process. It can effectively attack at Long range because it penetrates most barriers, making collateral damage an important consideration.

Rifle (any)

These weapons deal normal damage at Medium range as long as the target can be effectively engaged.

Sai

Also known as a parrying dagger, the sai is designed to catch or disarm attacks as much as it is designed to cause damage. Using it grants +1 to your Parry skill and a bonus to disarming your opponent to be determined by the Guide.

Stun gun

This electricity weapon does no Physical damage, instead dealing Mental damage. The defender may choose to use Physical or Mental protection, but not both.

Whip

This leather weapon has a stunning effect, granting you the Set to Stun perk while using it.

Special Items

Some possessions have a metagame effect on your character, making her more or less powerful than normal. These are called special items, because these items effectively increase or decrease your level, and possessing these items is usually a temporary event. What special items are available depends on the story and campaign theme.

Common examples of special items and the benefits they provide are: healing potions or stimpacks which perform the Cure 1 power, magical swords or psychically-charged bullets which bestow the weapon training perk, an exo-suit that increases your physical attribute or max damage by 4, or a grappling-boomerang that gives you a +8 bonus when using Movement to climb walls.

Inventory

The last type of gear is the kind that doesn't need description on your character sheet; you know what it is, you know what it does, and you know if you have it or if you don't. This is your inventory. These items have no game rule effect; they're purely for use in-game. Many of these are tools: fishing poles, ropes, flashlights. They are also cosmetic items: clothing, jewelry, makeup. Some are useful in the story, but still don't need more than a name on your character sheet, like the Tower Key or Map to Rivenfell. Keep an eye on the size of your inventory; the Guide might want to limit what you have or what you can carry.

Chapter 6: Magic

Guide of Modos: Blawesome and Sir Brolf are hot on the Baker's tail. As he runs along a sidewalk in this ominous looking, dark, high-rise area, a door opens and he crashes into it, and goes tumbling into the alley ahead. What do you do?

Bridget: "You can't escape justice, Baker!" I blast him with a fireball.

Alex: "No, Blawesome! I think he's the Level 20!"

GM: Well, Bridget? You're already summoning the power, but you could try to aim away at the last instant?

Bridget: No. The Baker has harmed too many people. I don't care if he is the Level 20.

GM: Okay. Just roll your MP cost and damage then, because he's easy to hit while he scrambles to his feet.

Bridget: My hair glows red for an instant, and then flames circle my hands, lashing out at the Baker. Take half on MP cost, and (rolls d8 for Fire 1 damage) 3 damage.

Alex: Weak. You could have done that much damage with your knuckle blasts. "Magic? What sort of demon are ye?"

GM: Remember Alex, the damage roll doesn't make the power bigger or smaller. It just determines how much Progress Blawesome makes against the Baker. What happens, Bridget?

Bridget: And my knuckle blasts don't look as cool as my fireball, Alex! I guess Brolf made me twitch at the last instant, so I looked away and ended up mostly blasting a dumpster. But some flammable trash catches on fire.

GM: The Baker glances up, sees the fireball coming, and splashes down flat into a puddle. The steam in the air afterward gives you a hint of where most of the power's energy went. The Baker stands up, steaming and laughing as he backs away into the darkness. "Oh Blawesome, he he, still against me? We could have been so good together!"

Bridget: "What's so funny Baker? Your time has come!"

Alex: "Wait, what does he mean 'together?'"

GM: As you ask, Sir Brolf, two things happen. One, a squad car pulls up in the street behind you, and two cops jump out, pointing pistols and yelling "freeze!" Hax420 is in the back seat.

Chuck: Yay, Hax is back!

GM: Two, you realize that the creature who opened the door into the Baker earlier is now standing behind you. It is eight feet tall, wearing black leather over what looks like chain mail armor, and seems to be about 300 pounds of muscle. And it's holding a lit stick of dynamite.

Chuck: Yay...



Super powers, sorcery, advanced technology, and mental telepathy turn a role-playing game into a *fantasy* role-playing game. They are all described as Powers in this chapter, and they are all available to characters who unlock a Magic skill for the Power they'd like to use.

Magic Basics

A **Power** is what happens when a character uses the magic skill. Anyone using this skill is a Magic-User. These are only terms for the rulebook, because your character can use powers (and name them) in whatever way fits your concept. It's not required to be "magic."

To use a power, you must first unlock the magic skill for that power. You can do this by choosing a skill point in Magic for that power when you level up, taking the specialize perk for that power, acquiring a power implement (and the power implement perk) that has access to that power, or using gear that creates the effect of that power.

Then you will perform the actions required for using the power. How to use these in conflict is described in chapter 8. What the actions are is up to you; they can be moments of intense thought, a song, a shaman ritual, or a special code punched into your wrist-computer. The actions correspond with one or more magic contests that are needed to judge how well (or if) you use the power, since powers become more difficult to use effectively at higher levels.

Once the magic actions are complete, you spend the power's **MP Cost**: a conversion of your metaphysical health into magical effect. At the same time, the power's effect happens. The rules-effect is explained in the entry in the power list, but you describe the in-game effect based on your character concept. The Guide will help your power stay in line with the campaign theme, if necessary.

Some powers have a more or less instantaneous effect, while others can remain in effect for as long as you

maintain them. Doing so requires an action on your part, which could be contested by others and places a limit on how many powers you can use/maintain at one time.

Power Descriptions

The powers in this chapter have several attributes that appear in the power's listing. They are, in order:

- **Name.** The reference name of the power. The name your character uses is up to you.
- **Level.** A comparison of the power's significance to other powers. **Power level** is equal to the number of magic actions required to use the power, and the number of defenses usually needed for a target to fully resist a power. Power level appears after the power name.
- **Range.** This describes, in terms of posture, how far from the magic-user a power's effect occurs. A power can take effect within this range as well. Ranges are described in chapter 8.
- **Target.** Describes a class of **targets** for the power. These are: self – affects only your character, single – affects any one character or character-sized target, multi – affects a number of targets equal to the power level or one oversize target.
- **Difficulty.** This is the D portion of D/M. **Magic difficulty** is the number you add to your Magic contest for a power. A positive number increases your contest, and a negative number decreases your contest. If this number makes your magic contest result less than one, the power is too difficult and you cannot use it at that time.
- **Maintainable.** This is the M portion of D/M. Some powers can continue their effects into subsequent rounds if you use an action to do so. These are marked with Yes, while instantaneous powers are marked with No. **Maintain Actions** are explained in chapter 8.
- **Effect.** This is what the power does. **Effects** are described in general terms so that you can customize them to your character. The effect begins on the final Magic action required to use it.
- **Half.** The **Half Effect** is what the power does after its target has made his first defense Pro. This entry begins with a notation for the normal attribute used for defending against the power, in parentheses.

Power Archetypes

Powers are not reserved for just metaphysical specialists; any type of character can use powers up to level 3 with the right magic skill. Here are the suggested powers for each character archetype:

Physical: alter, anti-fire/ice, armor, breathing, fire, float, ice, lightning, poison, repair, size, temper.

Mental: anti-lightning, awaken, berserk, blind, clairvoyance, fear, fog, hold, invisible, sleep, stun, telekinesis, telepathy.

Metaphysical: cure, curse, dispel, drain, fast, harm, lamp, mute, ruse, shell, summon.

Power List

Alter 1

Range: close
Target: self
D/M: +4/yes
Effect: you change your form or appearance into someone or something of a similar size. This power does not alter your character elements, but the Guide can award the +2 role-playing bonus (or penalty) where appropriate.
Half: no defense. An observer may use a Mental contest to notice something unusual about the magic-user.

Alter 4

Range: short
Target: multi
D/M: -8/yes
Effect: you change the shape of a large object, comparable in size to multiple single targets, or use the Alter 1 effect on multiple single targets.
Half: (P) target gains +4 difficulty bonus on remaining defense contests.

Alter 5

Range: medium
Target: multi
D/M: -12/yes
Effect: you change the substance of a single large object or multiple smaller objects into a new substance. The object, or portion of an object, affected must be one type of substance: metal, stone, wood, flesh, etc. For example, this power could turn an iron cauldron into gold, but it would not affect the soup inside the cauldron.
Half: (P) target gains +4 difficulty on remaining defense contests.

Anti-fire 2

Range: close
Target: single
D/M: 0/yes
Effect: the target gains d12 physical protection against only heat sources of damage.
Half: (P) no effect.

Anti-ice 2

Range: close

Target: single
D/M: 0/yes
Effect: the target gains d12 physical protection against only cold sources of damage.
Half: (P) no effect.

Anti-lightning 2

Range: close
Target: single
D/M: 0/yes
Effect: the target gains d12 physical protection against only electrical sources of damage.
Half: (P) no effect.

Armor 1

Range: close
Target: single
D/M: +4/yes
Effect: the target gains d8 physical protection. This power does not improve other protection.
Half: (P) no effect.

Awaken 2

Range: close
Target: single
D/M: 0/no
Effect: the target removes d10 mental damage.
Half: (M) no effect.

Blind 3

Range: short
Target: single
D/M: -4/yes
Effect: the target has vision difficulty, and takes a -6 penalty to contests requiring vision.
Half: (M) the penalty becomes -3.

Clairvoyance 3

Range: medium
Target: self
D/M: -4/yes
Effect: choose a point in space at medium range, or within 50 meters of you. You can see from this point, and you gain +12 difficulty on Detect contests there.
Half: (M) no effect.

Cure 1

Range: close
Target: single
D/M: +4/no
Effect: the target removes d8 physical damage.
Half: (P) no effect.

Cure 4

Range: short
Target: multi
D/M: -8/no
Effect: the targets remove d12 physical damage.
Half: (P) no effect.

Cure 5

Range: short
Target: single
D/M: -12/no
Effect: a dead target becomes Mostly Dead, or a Disabled target is no longer disabled and removes all physical damage.
Half: (P) no effect.

Dispel 3

Range: short
Target: single
D/M: -4/no
Effect: the targeted power terminates if your Magic contest is greater than the target's contest. To use this power, you must add the Magic difficulty penalty, but not bonus, of the power you are attempting to counter to your Magic contests. Dispel may target the magic-user maintaining the power, instead of the power's effect.
Half: no defense.

Exit 4

Range: close
Target: single
D/M: -8/no
Effect: the target teleports to another open location either in short range or within 25 meters of its current location.
Half: (MP) no effect.

Exit 5

Range: short

Target: single

D/M: -12/no

Effect: the target teleports to another open location either in medium range or within 50 meters of its current location.

Half: (MP) no effect.

Fast 3

Range: short

Target: single

D/M: -4/yes

Effect: the target gains a bonus physical action for the movement skill in the current round and each time you maintain the power.

Half: (MP) no effect.

Fast 4

Range: medium

Target: single

D/M: -8/yes

Effect: the target gains an action in the current round and each time you maintain the power.

Half: (MP) no effect.

Fear 1

Range: close

Target: single

D/M: +4/yes

Effect: if the target is in a non-defensive posture, it can use actions only for defense against this power, to move to defensive posture, or to flee conflict. In defensive posture, the target may act normally.

Half: (M) no effect.

Fear 3

Range: short

Target: multi

D/M: -4/yes

Effect: the targets must choose between two actions: defend against the power or flee.

Half: (M) the targets may act normally if they are in defensive posture, or may move into defensive posture instead of fleeing.

Fire 1

Range: short

Target: single

D/M: +4/no

Effect: the target takes d8 physical damage from heat.

Half: (P) no effect.

Fire 3

Range: short

Target: multi

D/M: -4/no

Effect: the targets take d8 physical damage from heat.

Half: (P) no effect.

Float 2

Range: close

Target: single

D/M: 0/yes

Effect: the target levitates a meter or two off the ground and above water.

This allows the target to take mounted posture without having a mount.

Half: (MP) no effect.

Float 4

Range: short

Target: single

D/M: -8/yes

Effect: the target levitates up to 50 meters off the ground and above water.

This allows the target to take mounted posture or flying posture without having a mount.

Half: (MP) no effect.

Fog 1

Range: close

Target: single

D/M: +4/yes

Effect: you create a disturbance in the air that obstructs vision. Vision-based contests in or through this effect take a -2 difficulty penalty. The effect is large enough to fill a small corridor, or surround one person. When you maintain this power, you may move it to another target/location in close range.

Half: no defense. Targets may escape the effect with an action to move away from it or through it.

Fog 3

Range: short

Target: multi

D/M: -4/yes

Effect: you create a disturbance in the

air that obstructs vision. Vision-based contests in or through this effect take a -6 difficulty penalty. The effect is large enough to fill a large chamber, or surround multiple people. When you maintain this power, you may move it to another target/location in short range.

Half: no defense. Targets may escape the effect by changing posture or fleeing.

Harm 1

Range: close

Target: single

D/M: +4/no

Effect: an undead target takes d6 metaphysical damage.

Half: (MP) no effect.

Harm 3

Range: short

Target: multi

D/M: -4/no

Effect: undead targets take d6 metaphysical damage.

Half: (MP) no effect.

Hold 3

Range: short

Target: single

D/M: -4/yes

Effect: target takes -12 penalty on movement contests. A movement Con means the character is stuck in place.

Half: (P) penalty becomes -6.

Holy 5

Range: medium

Target: single

D/M: -12/no

Effect: the target takes d8 physical, d8 mental, and d8 metaphysical damage.

Half: (any) target may negate one type of damage with a corresponding defense Pro.

Ice 2

Range: short

Target: single

D/M: 0/yes

Effect: target takes d8 physical damage from a cold source on the last magic action, and suffers -2 penalty on all physical actions.

Half: (P) defense during the last magic action negates the damage. Defense after the last magic action ends the physical penalty.

Invisible 3

Range: close
Target: single
D/M: -4/yes
Effect: the target becomes difficult to see. Characters cannot gain Awareness of the target unless the target draws attention. Contests that require seeing the target suffer a -6 penalty. Characters with Awareness of the target suffer only a -3 vision penalty to interact with the target.
Half: (MP) no effect.

Lamp 1

Range: close
Target: single
D/M: +4/yes
Effect: the target emits light as an oil lamp, granting a +2 bonus to vision-based contests within close range if the target area is dark.
Half: (MP) no effect.

Lightning 1

Range: close
Target: single
D/M: +4/no
Effect: the target takes d8 physical damage from electricity.
Half: (P) no effect.

Mute 2

Range: short
Target: single
D/M: 0/yes
Effect: the target has difficulty speaking, and takes a -8 difficulty penalty to Magic contests.
Half: (MP) the penalty becomes -4.

Poison 4

Range: short
Target: multi
D/M: -8/no
Effect: the targets take d8 physical damage. Protection cannot reduce this damage.
Half: (P) the damage becomes d4.

Psych 4

Range: medium
Target: single
D/M: -8/no
Effect: the target takes d8 metaphysical damage, and you remove from your damage pool the same amount of MP damage that the target takes after protection. The MP cost for this power is mental instead of metaphysical.
Half: (MP) the damage die becomes d4.

Pure 4

Range: medium
Target: single
D/M: -8/yes
Effect: the target removes d12 physical damage and gains d8 physical protection against poison. Poison powers cannot avoid this protection. The magic-user can maintain this power to continue the poison protection.
Half: (P) no effect.

Rub 5

Range: medium
Target: single
D/M: -12/no
Effect: the target becomes Mostly Dead.
Half: (P) the target takes d12 physical damage.

Size 2

Range: close
Target: single
D/M: 0/yes
Effect: choose to grant the target the large size perk or small size perk if it does not already have the perk. If the target has the opposite perk, it is temporarily negated.
Half: (P) target gains +4 on the remaining defense action.

Sleep 1

Range: close
Target: single
D/M: +4/no
Effect: the target lays down and goes to sleep as a non-action. The sleep persists as normal until the target wakes up by normal means, like loud noise or physical contact. Readyng a

weapon after sleep requires one action as normal.
Half: (M) no effect.

Slow 4

Range: medium
Target: single
D/M: -8/yes
Effect: the target's initiative contest becomes one less than the lowest initiative result, its turn moves to the end of the round, it takes a -2 difficulty penalty to movement and parry contests, and one of the target's actions each round must be used to defend against this power.
Half: (MP) the movement and parry penalty becomes 0.

Stun 2

Range: short
Target: single
D/M: 0/no
Effect: the target takes d10 mental damage.
Half: (M) no effect.

Summon 5

Range: medium
Target: multi
D/M: -12/yes
Effect: a huge creature or machine approaches and changes the conflict environment, potentially affecting postures, adding up to -10 difficulty penalty to related actions, or ending extended conflict if you choose. The summoned being does not cause Damage in extended conflict, but is very capable of destruction during role-playing or simple conflict.
Half: no defense (but to flee)!

Telepathy 2

Range: close
Target: single
D/M: 0/yes
Effect: the target gains a goal or flaw of your choice. This goal or flaw exists only in the target's mind.
Half: (M) target gains +4 on the remaining defense action.

Telepathy 4

Range: long



Target: self

D/M: -8/yes

Effect: you communicate with the target's conscious mind by mental telepathy. You can read the target's subconscious mind with your maintain action unless the target reacts with a

mental defense Pro which also applies toward ending the power.

Half: (M) the target gains +4 on the remaining defense actions.

Wind 5

Range: medium

Target: multi

D/M: -12/yes

Effect: the targets take -10 penalty on physical contests, or may choose to flee conflict as a non-action.

Half: (P) the penalty is reduced to -5.





This page reserved for additional powers.





How cool would your character be with another page of power options?



Chapter 7: Non-Player Characters

Guide of Modos: Since you're about to get into a dangerous fight, I have to ask: did everyone draw up those extra character sheets we talked about last week?

Bridget: I did.

Alex: (Groan) oh yeah, the backstory characters? No, I didn't.

Chuck: Just pick a good attribute and a skill, Alex. It took me two minutes.

GM: Or re-skin one of the NPCs. They're already written up.

Alex: We can use NPCs? How is that fair?

GM: They're made with the same rules that Sir Brolf is. Just pick a third-level NPC, give it a new character concept, and keep the other elements.

Alex: I don't even know where to start. You remember how long it took me to make Sir Brolf, right?

GM: Let's start with Sir Brolf, then. Based on his character concept, who is another character that he knows well, and might be likely to come to his aid?

Alex: Um, Sir Brolf has a squire. A human squire. He aspires to be a paragon of chivalry, like Sir Brolf.

GM: Okay, Chuck, would you find us a "squire" in the NPCs list?

Chuck: With pleasure.

GM: Now you need a...

Chuck: I found one.

Bridget: Whatever, Chuck. I'll find one.

GM: You need a goal and a flaw. But let's try this approach: what makes the squire interesting?

Chuck: I did! It's the Aquan Alien.

Alex: He gets nervous and drops things. Because of his inexperience.

GM: So the goal is to aspire to Sir Brolf's level of honor, and the flaw is that he has butterfingers?

Alex: Yeah, that sounds good.

Bridget: Chuck, you just picked the first one? (Scoffs.) The Aristocrat looks better. Just swap the deceive skill points for armed, and he's ready to go.



The Guide of Modos is responsible for playing all of the characters that the PCs do not play, so these characters are called **Non-Player Characters**. They are built in the same way that PCs are; you start with a character concept and add more elements as needed, using the steps from chapter 2.

This chapter features a selection of characters at different character levels. They can be used as allies, enemies, companions, villains, and even PCs. These characters are presented in the condensed character sheet format (a full character sheet is presented at the end of this document), which has the following elements:

- **Type and level.** This is a short title for the character followed by its character level.
- **Concept.** A brief description of the character including its goals and flaws as needed.
- **P#, M#, MP#.** These are the character's attributes and scores. If a score has been modified by another character element, the unmodified number appears in parentheses.
- **Skills.** This entry lists each skill that has skill points, with the total number of bonuses for that skill. Skill points are shown in parentheses if different from the total bonus. Defense skills are listed first.
- **Perks.** A listing of the character's perks. Perks that increase max damage give the new max damage in parentheses and are listed first. Bonus action perks are listed second, when present.
- **Gear.** This is a list of the character's equipment, followed by the physical damage or protection die that each item uses. Mental and metaphysical protection are listed here for convenience. Inventory and special items are included here as necessary.

NPC List

Agent, secret 5

A well-dressed spy who seems to be good at everything. The secret agent uses the Sleep 1 power for his stunning-neck-chop. Goal: defeat evil for queen and country. Flaw: tends to see everyone else as expendable.

P 14, M 12, MP 14

Skills: magic (sleep 1) +9 (1), armed +4 (2), deceive +4 (2)

Perks: attribute point (physical), attribute point (mental) x2, attribute point (metaphysical) x2

Gear: pistol d6, spy gadgets

Alien, aquan 3

A water-breathing fish-person that can hold its breath above water for a few minutes. Aquans naturally charge with electricity (lightning 3) and release it to intimidate and subdue threats. Goal: raid air-breathing sailors for their tools and jewelry. Flaw: must return to water before drying out.

P 10 (11), M 10, MP 12

Skills: parry +1 (0), magic (lightning 3) -1 (2), armed +2

Perks: skill point (lightning 3), dual wielder, mystic ward

Gear: coral armor d4 (-1 PP), spear d10, mystic ward d4

Alien, bioweapon 8

A genetically designed creature, with black, slimy skin and a long, bony tail. The alien reacts to close range enemy attacks with a natural attack (acid spray), and uses the special move perk to add three damage to its inner jaw attack. Goal: kill and eat every living thing. Flaw: paranoid, runs away when it takes damage. Otherwise, perfect being.

P 18, M 14, MP 6

Skills: detect +5 (3), movement +7 (3), unarmed +7 (3)

Perks: bonus action (unarmed), owl's eye, martial artist, armor training (natural), weapon training (natural), skill point (movement), special move, sleepless

Gear: natural attacks (claws, bite, jaw, or acid spray) d8, tough hide d6

Alien, giant protozoan 12

A ten-foot-high, floating, single-celled organism. Its nucleus pulses with light when it causes damage, which it does by sucking the life force of its victims through a fang-rimmed orifice. It uses Unarmed actions to prevent an opponent from changing posture, grabbing the opponent's head with its fangs. Then it uses its Drain 3 power to slowly consume its opponent. Goal: drain life force of animals to sustain itself. Flaw: gelatinous body doesn't react to damage, so giant protozoans often fight to the death. Flaw: its flotation is limited, so it cannot take special postures by floating.

P 16 (19), M 10, MP 15

Skills: movement +4 (1), unarmed +6 (3), concentrate +4, magic (drain 3) +2 (4)

Perks: tough x2 (24), bonus action (magic), bonus action (unarmed), weapon training (bite), armor training (cell membrane), mystic ward, large size, thought shield, owl's eye, attribute point (physical) x2

Gear: cell membrane d10 (-3 PP), fang bite d12 (heavy, close), thought shield d4, mystic ward d4

Alien, insect 2

A two-meter tall insect that travels in swarms. They look vaguely like praying mantes, and they're usually swarming and angry. Goal: protect the queen. Flaw: follows hive-mind orders, even when self-sacrificing.

P 14, M 12, MP 6

Skills: unarmed +3 (1), detect +2 (1)
Perks: owl's eye, martial artist
Gear: alien claw d6, alien carapace d4

Alien, prostetnic 3

A leather skinned, bulbous, bureaucrat of an ugly alien. As an amateur poet, the prostetnic uses its woefully bad poetry to attack helpless opponents (stun 2). Goal: follow orders selfishly, no matter the consequences. Flaw: inherently ill-tempered and dull.

P 10, M 15, MP 8

Skills: artist (poetry) +3 (1), knowledge (scholarship) +4 (2), magic (stun 2) +1 (0)

Perks: tough (14), power implement (poetry book), thought shield

Gear: book of poetry (implement contains stun 2), thought shield d4

Alien, superhero 10

This alien or mutant looks like a normal person who is in abnormally good shape. He typically teams up with other superheroes to defeat supervillains and their henchmen. Float 2 represents superhuman speed or limited flight power, while Cure 1 is his supernatural healing or resistance to damage. Goal: adhere to a strict, moral code and protect humanity. Flaw: feels obligated to solve the problems of others.

P 15, M 10, MP 15

Skills: parry +5 (3), magic (float 2) +5 (1), magic (fire 1) +9 (1), magic (cure 1) +9 (1), unarmed +4 (2), engage +4 (2)

Perks: tough (19), bonus action (magic), martial artist, weapon training (natural), armor training (natural), owl's eye, sleepless, mystic ward, thought shield, fearless

Gear: super punch d8, skin of steel d6, thought shield d4, mystic ward d4

Android, assistant 4

A clearly robotic person, this machine has a hard drive for a brain that is capable of normal thought and conversations. Goal: follow its owner's orders. Flaw: has limited senses of humor and practicality.

P 12, M 16, MP 8

Skills: knowledge (scholarship) +5 (2), scientist +4 (1), pilot +4 (1)

Perks: owl's eye, attribute point (mental) x2, sleepless

Gear: retractable uplink plug

Android, liquid metal 8

An android that utilizes nano-technology to reshape itself into whatever the most useful shape might be. These shapes do not include externally moving parts (like wheels or bullets). Goal: follow prime directive. Flaw: lacks sympathy.

P 16, M 12, MP 10

Skills: armed +6 (3), scientist +3 (2), pilot +3 (2), magic (alter 1) +7 (1)

Perks: bonus action (parry), owl's eye x2 (short), sleepless, martial artist, armor training (natural), mystic ward, thought shield (natural)

Gear: liquid metal armor d6, robo-hands/blades d6, thought shield d4, mystic ward d4

Android, transforming 10

A sentient robot that has the ability to shapechange into a vehicle. Transforming androids choose their shapes by choosing vehicles of similar size to themselves. Goal: to spread peace across the galaxy, or to conquer it. Flaw: tends to put faction goals before personal goals.

P 13 (15), M 10, MP 15

Skills: magic (alter 1) +7 (1), magic (float 4) -2 (4), movement +5 (4), armed +5 (4)

Perks: tough (17), stubborn (14), mana (19), bonus action (magic), large size, mystic ward, thought shield, skill point (float 4) x3

Gear: robot punch d8 (light), armor plating d8 (-2 PP), pulse rifle d8, mystic ward d4, thought shield d4

Aristocrat 3

An upper class leader/owner/administrator. Aristocrats dress well, speak well, and make lots of promises. Goal: to obtain and maintain power. Flaw: arrogance.

P 8, M 11, MP 14

Skills: deceive +4 (2), engage +4 (2), armed +0 (1), knowledge (scholarship) +1

Perks: skill point (armed), skill point (scholarship), skill point (deceive)

Gear: short sword d6, ornamental mace d6 or expensive watch

Blawesome, superhero 3

As an angry youth, she was imbued with superpowers by watching too many superhero TV shows while living beneath a cell phone tower. Her powers will someday let her read minds, create tactical nukes, and fly. Goal: to save little girls from her traumatic history of abuse. Flaw: tends toward misanthropy. She uses hero points to represent her innate flying ability.

P 15, M 8, MP 10

Skills: willpower +1, magic (fire 1) +7 (1), movement +3 (1)

Perks: fearless, martial artist, mystic ward

Gear: knuckle blasts (unarmed) d6, superhero suit d4, mystic ward d4

Cat, house 1

These make great pets for villains and wizards. Flaw: curiosity.

P 13, M 10, MP 8



Skills: movement +2 (1)

Perks: owl's eye

Gear: bite/claws d4

Cyborg 5

A flesh-covered android that specializes in terminating people. Goal: follow prime directive. Flaw: single-minded.

P 17, M 12, MP 6

Skills: armed +5 (2), scientist +2 (1), detect +3 (2)

Perks: bonus action (armed), owl's eye, sleepless, martial artist, armor training (natural)

Gear: metal skeleton d6, robo-hands d6

Dog, guard 2

A large dog trained to attack anyone on the wrong side of its nose. Goal: follow orders and avoid pain. Flaw: not highly intelligent.

P 14, M 10, MP 8

Skills: detect +2, unarmed +3 (1)

Perks: skill point (detect), martial artist

Gear: bite d6, hide d4

Dragon, mist 9

In misty valleys, behind waterfalls, and sometimes cloudy mountaintops, these dragons live solitary lives. They don't use their wings to fly. Instead, they use them to spread clouds of fog to useful places. Mist dragons use Fire 3 to deliver scorching-hot vapor, Alter 1 to turn into innocuous clouds of mist, and Fog 3 to cover their retreat. Goal: protect a sanctuary. Flaw: honor-bound to its agreements.

P 9 (11), M 12, MP 16

Skills: parry +1 (2), magic (alter 1) +8 (1), magic (fire 3) +1 (2), magic (fog 3) +1 (2), knowledge (scholarship) +3 (2)

Perks: tough x2 (17), mana (20), bonus action (magic), thought shield, mystic ward, weapon training (claws), sleepless, fearless

Gear: dragon hide d8 (-2 PP), dragon claws d10 (standard), thought shield d4, mystic ward d4

Dragon, sapphire 15

This dragon's scales seem almost blue, but that might just be the reflection of the sky as it swoops down to eat hapless villagers. It uses its Ice 2 power to either destroy heat sources or to temporarily slow opponents down while it flees or regroups. Goal: to rule its mountaintop domain and protect its young from mankind. Flaw: takes double damage from heat sources.

P 16 (19), M 12, MP 16

Skills: parry +6 (3), concentrate +3 (2), magic (float 4) -3 (2), armed +6 (3), magic (ice 2) +5 (2), detect +4 (3)

Perks: tough (19), stubborn (16), mana (20), bonus action (magic), bonus action (armed), thought shield (natural), mystic ward, armor training (dragon hide), owl's eye, large

size, sleepless, fearless, weapon training (natural), attribute point (physical) x2

Gear: dragon hide d10 (-3 PP), dragon bite d10 (heavy, close), natural attack d6, mystic ward d4, thought shield d4

Dwarf, miner 2

A short, hairy fellow, covered in soot and bearing a pick.

Goal: work hard for family and clan. Flaw: excessively stubborn.

P 12, M 8, MP 12

Skills: craftsman (stonework) +1 (2)

Perks: stubborn (12), owl's eye

Gear: mining pick d8 (heavy, close)

Dwarf, sentinel 3

A stocky person tasked with guarding important venues.

Goal: prevent trespass and wrongdoing. Flaw: mistrusting of anyone who is not a dwarf.

P 12 (16), M 8, MP 10

Skills: parry +6 (1), willpower +1, movement +2 (1)

Perks: tough (16), armor training (plate), attribute point (physical)

Gear: dwarven plate armor d12 (-3 PP), large shield (+4 parry), spear d8, short sword d6

Elf, gish 5

A fully armored elf who shoots spells, not arrows. Goal: maintain the sanctity of his realm and people. Flaw: anger management.

P 10 (12), M 8, MP 15

Skills: willpower +3 (1), concentrate +1 (2), magic (lightning 1) +7 (1), magic (fire 1) +7 (1)

Perks: mana x2 (23), bonus action (magic), armor training (mail), mystic ward

Gear: mail armor d10 (-2 PP), bastard sword d8, mystic ward d4

Elf, huntsman 2

A forest-dweller with an uncanny link to nature. Goal: maintain the balance of nature. Flaw: assumes every non-elf is a trespasser.

P 12, M 12, MP 8

Skills: armed +2 (1), knowledge (nature) +2 (1), detect +2 (1)

Perks: skill point (detect), weapon training (longbow)

Gear: longbow d12, knife d4

Extra 1

Innocent bystander. Extras make good cannon fodder. Uses movement skill for fleeing. Goal: be average. Flaw: takes up space.

P 10, M 10, MP 11

Skills: parry +1, movement +1

Perks: skill point (movement)



Ghost 4

The incorporeal essence of a formerly living creature. A Disabled ghost will disappear and reform near its corpse. Goal: one thing in the living world, a right or a wrong, keeps a ghost from resting. Flaw: has no body. Depending on the campaign theme, this might prevent a ghost from dealing or taking physical damage.

P 8, M 12, MP 14

Skills: magic (fear 3) +3 (3), magic (alter 1) +9 (1)

Perks: sleepless, owl's eye, karma, mystic ward

Gear: ghostly claws d4, mystic ward d4

Ghoul 3

A foul, dead creature with an evil light in its eye. Its Sleep 1 power can represent a paralytic touch or overcoming opponents with stench. Goal: drink blood, eat flesh. Flaw: surrounded by a thick cloud of stench.

P 13, M 12, MP 8

Skills: detect +2 (1), movement +2 (1), magic (sleep 1) +6 (1)

Perks: martial artist, sleepless, owl's eye

Gear: teeth & claws d6, dead hide d4

Giant, brute 3

A huge person with huge strength. Goal: maintain public order for the brute squad. Flaw: easily manipulated.

P 15, M 8, MP 10

Skills: unarmed +4 (2), persuade +1

Perks: tough (19), large size, martial artist

Gear: giant hands d6, giant hide d4

Goblin, thief 2

Short and scrawny, a troublemaker who works for the highest bidder. Goal: gather wealth in an anti-goblin world. Flaw: short, ugly and hairy.

P 12, M 12, MP 8

Skills: sneak +2 (1), larceny +2 (1)

Perks: small size, backstabber

Gear: dagger d4, lockpicks

Goblin, shaman 3

A trickster whose real talent is lying about his healing abilities. Luckily, his magical staff can cast real magic (powers available are clairvoyance 3, cure 1, fear 1, fog 1, lamp 1, sleep 1, and telepathy 2). Goal: maintain position of power within the tribe. Flaw: has zero confidence without his staff.

P 8, M 10, MP 15

Skills: deceive +3 (1), knowledge (lore) +2

Perks: bonus action (magic), power implement (staff), mystic ward

Gear: magical staff, mystic ward d4, dagger d4

Guard 2

Someone who is paid to watch and/or protect a person, place, or thing. Goal: to report trouble at her post. Flaw: personal safety is more important than duty.

P 12, M 12, MP 8

Skills: movement +2 (1), detect +3 (2)

Perks: off the mark, skill point (detect)

Gear: spear d8/d10 or pistol d6, whistle/radio

Hax420, "virt" (virtual fighter) 3

Born Jeremy Winkletter, Hax will be rescued from his offspring farm by a hacking syndicate that detected him and his skill online. His online prowess gets better as his physical condition gets worse. He uses hero points to bolster efforts made with his robotic gamer-hand. Goal: to gain fame as a virtual fighter. Flaw: bad body odor and no social skills.

P 8, M 13 (15), MP 10

Skills: concentrate +2 (1), knowledge (first-person shooters) +3 (2)

Perks: armor training (dual firewall), sleepless, weapon training (PIN key)

Gear: dual firewall d8 (M protection, -2 M penalty), PIN key d10 (M damage, standard, short)

Henchman 2

This thug does the dirty jobs that super villains won't. Goal: get paid while avoiding boss's wrath. Flaw: lacks common sense.

P 14, M 8, MP 10

Skills: unarmed +4 (2)

Perks: tough (18), stubborn (12)

Gear: pistol d6, blackjack d8

Horse, riding 3

A light, domesticated horse trained to be comfortable with a rider. Flaw: skittish around loud noise, like the sounds of combat.

P 16, M 10, MP 8

Skills: movement +6 (3), detect +1

Perks: bonus action (movement), skill point (detect), attribute point (physical)

Human, bard 2

An entertainer with a trick up his sleeve: his songs have magical power. Goal: gather stories and make money performing them. Flaw: eschews violence. His lute can be used for sleep 1, telepathy 2, fear 1, awaken 2, and mute 2.

P 8, M 10, MP 14

Skills: artist (musician) +2, engage +3 (1)

Perks: power implement (lute), skill point (artist)

Gear: dagger d4, lute

Human, knight 3

A sworn warrior with a small landholding. He is followed by a squire and does most of his fighting at tournaments. Goal: maintain the duke's favor. Flaw: knows more about battle than administration.

P 10 (13), M 10, MP 10

Skills: parry +3 (1), pilot (horse) +1, armed +2, knowledge (lore) +1

Perks: tough (14), skill point (pilot), skill point (parry)

Gear: lance d10, long sword d8, small shield (+2 parry), plate armor d10 (-3 PP), dagger d4

Munchkin, fellow 2

A tiny person who seems to be on a quest. Goal: to tend the garden and be sociable. Flaw: uncanny urge to go on adventures.

P 10, M 10, MP 12

Skills: sneak +1, knowledge (nature) +1

Perks: fearless, small size

Gear: sling d4 (tiny, short), dagger d4

Mutant, evil 6

Something looks/sounds/feels strange about this person, besides the stunning physique and glowing eye. Lightning 1 is a sample power – this NPC could know any first- or second-level power. Goal: perform evil deeds and disrupt society. Flaw: has bad luck against heroes (always loses on a Tie) and leaves lots of evidence behind.

P 12, M 8, MP 16

Skills: concentrate +1 (2), magic (lightning 1) +10 (1), unarmed +4 (3), magic (cure 1) +10 (1)

Perks: tough (16), mana (20), bonus action (magic), martial artist, mystic ward, skill point (magic)

Gear: mutant punch d6, cool uniform d4, mystic ward d4

Owl, trained 3

An owl that catches prey and returns to its master on command. Goal: get treats. Flaw: being able to fly means that this creature has very poor land and water mobility.

P 15, M 10, MP 8

Skills: detect +3, unarmed +3 (1)

Perks: owl's eye x2 (short range), skill point (unarmed)

Gear: beak and claws d4

Program, agent 10

A sentient program that takes the shape of other programs and dresses as a G-man. When an agent is Disabled, it disappears and reforms in the body of another program. Goal: eliminate external anomalies in virtual reality. Flaw: lacks human impulses, exists only in VR (Mental settings).

P 20, M 15, MP 8

Skills: parry +8 (3), magic (alter 1) +4 (1), unarmed +8 (3), movement +8 (3)

Perks: tough (24), stubborn (19), bonus action (parry), martial artist, weapon training (natural), armor training (natural), attribute point (physical) x3, off the mark

Gear: fist/headbutt d8, unnatural reflexes d6, pistol d6

Program, gladiator 4

A well-written program that maintains belief in its user. In virtual reality, this program manifests as a human and participates in mortal combat. Goal: win all contests to honor its user. Flaw: exists only in VR.

P 16, M 10, MP 8

Skills: parry +4 (1), movement +4 (1), armed +4 (1), unarmed +4 (1)

Perks: tough (20), stubborn (14), martial artist, thought shield (natural)

Gear: unarmed attack d6, natural armor d4, thought shield d4, data disc d4 (tiny, short)

Rat, tavern 1

A rat that lives in or near eating establishments. All the food scraps help it to grow large, and being around people makes it unusually aggressive. Goal: secure food before other scavengers do. Flaw: has at least one contagious disease.

P 13, M 10, MP 8

Skills: sneak +2 (1)

Perks: owl's eye

Gear: bite d4

Sage 3

A sage is a scholar, wise man, oracle, or similar learned one. Goal: be the most educated person around. Flaw: gaining unmatched knowledge requires neglecting some physical pursuits.

P 8, M 15, MP 10

Skills: knowledge (scholarship) +7 (+5)

Perks: specialize (scholarship), skill point (scholarship) x2

Gear: sage identifier (special robe, amulet, or badge)

Sidekick 1

An amusing accomplice, sometimes with a uniform. Goal: to uphold the ideals of her role model. Flaw: often fails at the worst, or funniest, times.

P 10, M 8, MP 13

Skills: detect +1 (2)

Perks: skill point (detect)

Gear: by profession

Sir Brolf, gnome knight 3

A chivalrous little fellow who was raised in an out-of-the-way duchy. Goal: he has little land-holding aspiration, so he hopes to bring honor to his family, and become known for chivalry. Flaw: very short, and puts his personal safety after that of others. He uses hero points to emphasize his gnome racial

stereotype - for things like tinkering or being a mysterious garden-dweller.

P 10 (14), M 8, MP 12

Skills: parry +5 (1), persuade +2 (1), handler (ponies) +2 (1)

Perk: weapon training (bastard sword), small size, attribute point (physical)

Gear: bastard sword d10, plate armor d10 (-3 PP), large shield (parry +4)

Skeleton 1

Animated bones of animals or people. Goal: to end other lives. Flaw: has no working organs.

P 13, M 10, MP 8

Skills: unarmed +2 (+1)

Perks: sleepless

Gear: skeletal claws d4

Street urchin 1

A poor child who knows how to get what he wants on the street. Goal: have enough money for food and clothes. Flaw: unkempt appearance invites bias.

P 11, M 10, MP 10

Skills: larceny +2

Perks: skill point (larceny)

Gear: shiv d4

Troll, bridge 6

A big, ugly monster that lives under bridges for their regular flow of water and supply wagons. Cure 1 represents its unnatural healing rate, which it uses as its fourth action whenever it has physical damage. Goal: rob to survive, and take anger out on people. Flaw: usually has a simple weakness like music, love, or fire.

P 18, M 8, MP 10

Skills: magic (cure 1) +5 (1), unarmed +5 (1), movement +6 (2), detect +1 (2)

Perks: stubborn (12), bonus action (unarmed), large size, martial artist, armor training (natural), weapon training (natural)

Gear: claw/bite d8, troll hide d6

Vampire 5

An undead person who seems alive, but not well. Close inspection reveals no breath or heartbeat. A Disabled vampire turns into a red mist or bat swarm, and returns to its coffin. There, it uses Cure 1 to restore its physical condition at an unnatural rate. Goal: to get revenge for being wronged in life. Flaw: undead, and hates the simple pleasures of living: water, sunlight, gatherings.

P 15, M 10, MP 10

Skills: magic (alter 1) +7 (1), magic (cure 1) +7 (1), magic (fear 1) +7 (1), detect +2

Perks: bonus action (movement), mystic ward, martial artist, owl's eye, armor training (natural)

Gear: claws/fangs d6, undead hide d6, mystic ward d4

Villain, evil 4

A middle aged/old evil genius out to conquer the world with his army of henchmen and evil spies. Always has an escape route ready. Goal: take power by force and blackmail, not by election or purchase. Flaw: always forgets one important part of the heroes' capabilities.

P 8, M 14, MP 12

Skills: knowledge (scholarship) +4 (2), engage +3 (2), deceive +4 (3)

Perks: skill point (persuade), skill point (engage) x2, off the mark

Gear: stun gun d4 (M)

Werebull 5

A big, hairy beast that is unusually tough against mental attacks (like a curse of confusion over a walk-through maze). The werebull uses Alter 1 to assume a purely human- or bull-shape as needed. Goal: collect maze visitors for feed. Flaw: defaults to anger when emotionally challenged.

P 18, M 8, MP 9

Skills: concentrate +3 (4), unarmed +5 (1)

Perks: bonus action (concentrate), martial artist, weapon training (natural), armor training (natural), thought shield

Gear: horns d8, bull hide d6, thought shield d4

Wizard, black 5

A master of dark wizardry who hides under a dark blue hooded cloak. Goal: attain ever greater mystical power. Flaw: pays little respect to those who don't have the secrets he seeks. His spell book contains these powers: armor 1, fear 1, sleep 1, ice 2, size 2, stun 2, blind 3, fear 3, fire 3.

P 8, M 12, MP 16

Skills: willpower +5 (2), magic (lightning 1) +10 (1), knowledge (scholarship) +3 (2)

Perks: mana (20), bonus action (magic), mystic ward, power implement, attribute point (metaphysical)

Gear: dagger d4, spell book (power implement), mystic ward d4

Wolf, mountain 3

A big, lean wolf with a sturdy coat that tends to hunt in small packs. Flaw: animal-minded.

P 15, M 10, MP 8

Skills: detect +2, unarmed +4 (2)

Perks: martial artist, weapon training (natural), skill point (unarmed)

Gear: bite d8, hide d4

Zombie 2

A dead body that moves nonetheless. Goal: consume brains.

Flaw: is undead.

P 10 (11), M 13, MP 8

Skills: concentrate +3 (2)

Perks: tough (14), sleepless

Gear: dead flesh d4 (-1 PP)

Traps

Another type of adversary that uses a character sheet is the trap. These are devices, substances, or powers intended to deter trespassers. Trap encounters can be handled with one or more difficulty contests, but drawing up a character sheet can clarify what skills it should have (what it does well) and determine what type of damage die it should use. A trap's character sheet is also useful in running an extended conflict. Here are some examples of traps drawn up as non-player characters:

Bear Trap 1

This is a small area covered in concealed bear traps. The trap has Awareness of any PCs who do not Sneak through or Detect the threat. The trap attacks by using reactions to PC movements. In addition to Fight actions, Larceny and Craftsman (trapsmithing) can be used as attacks to cause physical damage to the trap. It does not use actions to oppose PCs, but Difficulty applies against PC efforts to attack or evade the trap based on how well it is concealed (+4 by default).

P 18, M 13, MP 0

Skills: armed +5 (1)

Perks: off the mark

Gear: spiked clamp d6 (light)

Green Slime 3

A puddle of goo, ambulatory or otherwise, that causes acid burns on contact. Green slimes can drip from the ceiling or lie in wait as puddles on the ground. Their translucent nature makes them difficult to detect, so PCs do not automatically have Awareness of them. This trap attacks using reactions against passing victims, and some slimes will even use a physical action to block PC movement. Flaw: takes double damage from electrical attacks.

P 17, M 12, MP 4

Skills: sneak +5 (2), unarmed +4 (1)

Perks: martial artist, backstabber, off the mark

Gear: acid touch d8 (tiny), gooey physical protection d4

Magic Sleep Trap 5

An area in front of a chest, door, or corridor imbued with a curse that puts trespassers to sleep. This trap is clearly marked by a mysterious, glowing sigil, but a character must be able to identify the sigil to know about its curse. It ceases to exist when it becomes Unconscious or Catatonic, and can be countered by the usual means (mute, dispel, etc.). It uses actions to Detect PCs, to use the Sleep 4 power, and to defend against counterspells.

P 0, M 15, MP 20

Skills: magic (sleep 4) +5 (6), detect +4 (2)

Perks: bonus action (magic), specialize (sleep 4), skill point (sleep 4) x3

Gear: none

Chapter 8: Conflict

Guide of Modos: Now there's a chain- and leather-clad beast holding a lit stick of dynamite. Ready, fight! (The players roll initiative contests. The Guide rolls for the Baker and the bomber.)

Alex: I'm adding a hero point since gnomes can be super-quick. 14.

Bridget: Using Physical for muscle-memory, 9.

Chuck: Hax has no quickness but at least I can roll well! 19!

GM: Hax is initiating.

Chuck: Hax slides to the far side of the squad car and breaks the window open with his robo-hand.

GM: Good idea, but the police wanted you in handcuffs before putting you in the squad car, futuristic hand and all, so roll Physical if you want to try breaking out of those.

Bridget: Who's "convicted" now, Chuck?

Chuck: (Glares) he's hopeless at Physical, but a hero point should help. (Rolls contest and hero point) wow. 5. See? He thrashes around in the backseat, shaking the car a bit.

GM: Yup, that's a Con, but you are able to slide halfway out of the cuff on your robotic hand.

Chuck: Really? Then I'll use another action to completely escape!

GM: Your robotic hand slides out. Last action?

Chuck: I think I'll save it in case Hax needs to defend against that dynamite explosion. In the meantime, he's just pounding on the windows, trying to get the police's attention.

GM: Good idea. Alex, Sir Brolf is next.

Alex: I need to get the dynamite away from that monster! I draw my sword, and try to knock the dynamite out of his hand. (Rolls) physical 13?

GM: (Takes half) Con. The bomber laughs and lifts the dynamite out of your reach.

Alex: Lifting his arm up? Then I stab him in the stomach with my last action.

Bridget: And I'll blast the bomber with Knuckle Blasts, hoping some synergy will help.

GM: I hope it will, because now Brolf is too busy to defend later in the round. The Baker reacts as well, to start running away while you're all occupied with the bomber. Roll damage. (Alex and Bridget roll damage.)

Chuck: Roll damage? The bomber's not defending? And where are the cops?

GM: They're chasing after the Baker. The bomber isn't using an action to defend, no. He's saving them for more important things (winks). He turns to the side when Brolf stabs at him, and the blade glances off his chain mail (records Alex's damage in the bomber's physical damage pool). Then the knuckle blasts knock him off his feet, and you almost feel the ground shake when he falls (records Bridget's damage). Now it's his turn. The big bomber picks himself up, and tries to grab Sir Brolf with his open hand.

Bridget: Great, I have to chase the Baker or save Brolf. Um, I blast the bomber's hand that's grabbing Brolf.

GM: Roll physical. Blasting his arm, and not Sir Brolf, will be Difficult.

Bridget: "Not Sir Brolf?" Then I blast Brolf to knock him out of the way! So my contest is (rolls) 13. Do I save him?

Alex: Ow, no! Don't bother, I'll roll the damage, and my armor will protect against most of it. (Takes minimum damage.)

GM: (Rolls and subtracts Difficulty for Blawesome's attack) the bomber got 15. Your blasts startle him, but he grabs and drags Sir Brolf with him. He holds the dynamite between himself and Brolf, and the burning fuse lights both of their faces... until the fuse burns into the stick. That's when you're hit by another wave of pain...



Conflict, the presence of antagonism, risk or misfortune, is a fundamental part of exciting role-playing. This chapter presents several ways to address it, from a single contest to a magical battle that utilizes all five rules modules. The chapter starts by looking at general conflict rules and then it explores specialized branches of conflict related to each attribute.

General Conflict

Conflict arises when other characters or fate oppose what the PCs want to do. There are three ways to resolve it: role-playing, simple conflict, and extended conflict.

Role-Playing Conflict

The best way to resolve conflict is simply to role-play it, because this keeps the focus on the story and your character concept, without involving dice or rules. While the Guide of Modos has the final say on the outcome of your efforts, everyone benefits when you tell the group how your character, for example, nimbly traverses a high-wire to safety, convinces a guard to let him into the imperial ball, or concentrates to bring her tarot cards to life.

Simple Conflict

The Guide can call for a contest if you would like to resolve a situation in a different way than he would, if he would like to remain impartial on the outcome, or if he would simply like to leave things up to chance. A contest can resolve many different types of conflict, like safely landing a ten-foot drop or surviving a two-month, cross-country (or cross-galaxy) trip. The beauty of the contest is that you can use one or a few of them to quickly resolve a situation and keep the role-play going. When the Guide calls for one or just a few contests, it is called a **Simple Conflict**.

Whenever you need to characterize an outcome, you roll a contest: a d20 roll tied to a character attribute. To the die roll, you add your attribute bonus, skill points if you have a skill that would improve your effort, and any difficulty bonuses determined by the Guide. The total of these amounts is your **Contest Result**, or “Contest” for short.

Your contest is opposed by the Guide's contest, which he rolls for an opposing character or to represent fate or fortune. If your contest result is higher, your contest is a **Pro**: a favorable outcome. A Pro means that you accomplish what you generally intended to do, or that things go well for you in some other manner. If your contest result is lower, your contest is a **Con**: an unfavorable outcome. A con means that you get an outcome you didn't want, or that you achieve your goal in an unfavorable way. When the contests are the same, they are a **Tie**, and the Guide can ask for another

contest or give you a Pro for good role-playing or for having other factors in your favor.

Don't let the rolling of dice mean the end of role-playing! Let the other players know what the contest result means to you. The Guide can award a +2 role-playing bonus to your contest or give a hero point back to you if you make your contest interesting.

Difficulty

There are times when external or situational factors have an important influence on the outcome of contests. This is represented by the **Difficulty Bonus**, or just “difficulty.” This is a contest bonus which ranges from 0 to 20, assigned by the Guide, with benchmarks as described in the following table. Note that difficulty that reduces your contest, a negative bonus, is also called a difficulty penalty.

The Guide uses two types of contests to oppose yours. The first is a normal contest, like yours, rolled for a non-player-character. The other PCs can oppose you in this way as well. The second type involves luck or fate, instead of another character. This is called a **Difficulty Contest**, and it is what the Guide normally uses to oppose you when there's a chance that things could go wrong. A difficulty contest doesn't get an attribute bonus, but it almost always gets a difficulty bonus to represent how hard or risky your task is.

Difficulty	Bonus	Description
Easy	0	Not a challenge
Challenging	4	Some focus is required
Difficult	8	Serious effort
Arduous	12	Overwhelming effort
Impossible	16	Can't be done
Divine	20	Supernatural effort

Average Person Rule

When deciding on a difficulty bonus, the Guide asks himself a simple question: how difficult would this be for the average person? The answer depends on the campaign theme; an average person in the campaign might be very realistic, or she might do some very unrealistic things easily, like surviving high falls or wielding 80-pound swords. Then the Guide chooses a level of difficulty to apply, guided by the six benchmarks. If an average person would know how difficult an action might be, so would your character.



In addition to difficulty bonuses, the average person rule applies to what your character knows and can do. You can expect your character to have common knowledge for the game world, which is augmented by your concept, skills, and notes. If you have no bonuses to a particular contest, then you can also expect your character to perform about as well as the average person would.

Take Half Rule

With contests, damage, protection, and hero points, there can be a lot of die rolling going on. Before you make any die roll or rolls, you can announce that you “take half” of the highest number on the die, and that becomes your die roll. For example, your intelligence team has told you that you must cross a narrow ledge on the side of a tall office building to get to your objective. You have some Physical and Movement bonuses, and you don't want to roll low, so you take half on your contest, which makes your roll equal to 10. You add your bonuses to that, and get a result that makes you feel relatively safe – knowing you could have rolled lower than 10. Or your Guide might ask you to make a contest that would be considered Difficult for other characters. Since it should be easy for your character due to your character elements, you take half on your d20 roll for 10, add your bonuses, and tell the Guide your result. The Guide can then let you breeze through the situation or roll a difficulty contest against you if she's not sure what might happen.

Minimum Contest Result

If you roll a contest and your contest result is less than one, then your contest is automatically a Con. This can occur when you are trying something with a significant difficulty penalty or when your roll isn't high enough to beat the Magic Difficulty of the Power you want to use.

Difficulty Examples

These are examples of penalties to PC contests or bonuses to the Guide's difficulty contests. The Guide decides how to apply them and how much to apply, based on the situation and campaign theme.

Difficulty	Condition
4	Fighting in the middle of a melee.
8	Finding something in the dark.
12	Picking a lock underwater.
16	Scoring a head-shot on a hidden target.
20	Reviving the dead with a bellows or a kiss.

Extended Conflict

Simple conflict helps to move the story along with a few rolls or less. But when the conflict *is the story*, the Guide will begin an **Extended Conflict**: a conflict in which timing or detail become important to its outcome. These rules are generic, and they build on the contest rules in order to accommodate many different types of conflict.

To run an extended conflict, the Guide declares an initiative contest to establish whose actions have priority, and whose turn it is to initiate actions. Then the PC taking the first turn may declare his first action, and each character may choose to react or to save their actions for later. When the first player is done acting or has used all of his actions, the next turn begins. The round ends when the character with the lowest initiative contest ends his turn. Then a new round begins and all characters get another allotment of actions.

Actions

Extended conflict is, at its elemental level, a series of actions. An **Action** is something you do that takes time or effort. Common actions are attacks, defenses, and posture changes. If an action's outcome isn't clear or is contested, you roll a contest for it.

Because actions often require contests, and contests often benefit from specific skills, the usage of these terms can be intertwined. For example, if you want to slide under a door before it closes, the Guide might tell you to use a “physical contest,” meaning to take an action and roll a physical contest with it. Or if you are in an area literally throbbing with psychic disturbance, the Guide can tell you that you need a “willpower action” to resist the temptation to turn around and leave. Because Willpower's normal attribute is metaphysical, this is short for “an action with a metaphysical contest using the willpower skill.” Be sure to ask the Guide if you're ever in doubt.

Non-Actions

Your character isn't limited to a discrete set of actions each round. You can do anything else you want, as long as it wouldn't interfere with the other actions in the round. An unobtrusive action like this is called a non-action. Common non-actions are combat footwork (but not changing posture), shouting to teammates (but not Persuading them), and looking around (but not investigating).





Action Examples

Here are some examples of combat activities and how many actions they require. Your Guide can change these costs if the situation calls for it.

Cost	Activity
Action	Drink a shot
2 Actions	Quaff a potion
Action	Ready a potion
Action	Draw a weapon
Non-action	Drop a weapon
Action	Fire a bow
Action	Reload a bow
Non-action	See an enemy
Action	Spot hidden enemy
Non-action	Aim at a target
Non-action	Move to strike
Action	Move somewhere safe
Action	Block opponent's retreat
Non-action	Call for aid
Action	Radio for aid
3 Actions	Use 3 rd level power

Attack Contests

In extended conflict, one or more contestants attempt to make progress toward a goal. You make progress with an **Attack Contest**, which is any contest that would help you reach your goal. For example, if your goal is to knock out a boxer, your attack contest would be Physical, and would use the unarmed skill. If your goal is to win an asteroid dash, your attack contest would be Mental, and use the pilot skill.

You measure your **Progress** in progress points, which you roll on a d8. If factors work in your favor, the Guide can assign a higher die type, or a lower type if factors are against you. If your attack is a Pro or unopposed, add the progress result to your **Progress Pool**. If your attack is unopposed by a character but might still have an outcome, the Guide will oppose it with a difficulty contest. When your progress exceeds an amount determined by the Guide, called **Maximum Progress** (max progress), you have reached your goal.

Defense Contests

To prevent your opponent from reaching his goal, you roll a **Defense Contest**, which is any contest that undoes the effects of an Attack. For example, if your opponent is throwing a punch at you, you will want to immediately block or dodge that punch. Your defense contest would be Physical, with the parry skill. Or if you're trying to keep a

certain racer from winning the asteroid dash, you could roll your pilot contest against his. A defense Pro negates the progress that an attack made.

Even if you can't negate an attack with a defense Pro, you can still reduce the progress with **Regress**. This is any condition that hampers progress, like armor hampers weapon strikes, or tractor beams hamper racing spacecraft.

■ When you have Regress, you can roll it every time your opponent makes progress against you, and reduce his progress by that amount. You measure regress in points as well, and roll them on a d8. Like progress, factors can increase or decrease your regress die type. However, regress cannot eliminate progress; the **Minimum Progress** for an attack contest Pro is always one point.

Because extended conflicts can vary in form, it might not be appropriate to use Defenses, Regress, or both. Your Guide will let you know when a situation call for different extended conflict rules.

Rounds

A round is an extended conflict cycle. At the beginning of each round, every character in conflict gets three actions to use during that round. Characters make initiative contests to determine the priority of actions, and then they take turns acting, either on their turns or in reaction to other characters' actions. When the character with the last turn finishes his turn, the round is over and a new one begins until the conflict is resolved.

Rounds last as long as they must for each character to take a turn. However, conflict waits for no one; if the last character finishes his turn and you have remaining actions, you lose those actions when the new round begins. If you use all of your actions before the round ends, your character is considered "busy" until the next round begins; when someone else interacts with you, you're doing something related to the last action you took, not just standing around.

Turns

Characters take **Turns** in conflict to give everyone a fair chance to contribute to the scene. Turns do not always occur in the same way; depending on the story, your Guide might allow you to take your turn whenever you like, to alternate turns like chess players, to proceed with turns around your game-table, or to determine turn sequence in terms of initiative contests. The default method is to use initiative contests (see Initiative Contests).

During your turn, you can **Combine Actions**, which guarantees your contest results. To do so, after you've used an action on your turn, you must perform the same action



again, with the same attribute and skill. Combining the actions allows you to choose to use the contest result of your previous action or to roll a new one. If someone opposes your actions in the future, you treat your final contest as your result for all of the combined actions.

For example, you are starting a new round and have three actions available at the beginning of your turn. You want to combine actions to pole-vault across a pit of ravenous piranha-bots. The Guide tells you that the difficulty to vault across is Difficult (8). You roll Physical with Movement, and your first roll is 4 with 4 points of bonuses, for a result of 8. You want to pick up speed, so you combine an action, and roll a new movement contest for 21. Against 8 difficulty, you know the Guide must roll 13 or higher to prevent you from getting a Pro. Since 21 seems like a good result, you keep it and ask the Guide if you need another contest to finish the vault. He says that you picked up enough speed on the second action so you don't need a third, and then he rolls the difficulty contest for a result of 25: a Con for you. He asks you what went wrong, and you explain that you actually ran too far, so instead of planting a foot, you fell and planted the pole into a piranha-bot's head. You decide that since it's your turn and you have one action remaining, you'll use it to your advantage and combine your third action with the first two, keeping the 21 result, and hoping that it's high enough to propel you to a relatively safe area in the pit.

When you run out of actions or decide to save some for later in the round, let the Guide know that your turn is done. Then the next turn begins, or if you had the last turn for the round, all remaining actions are lost and a new round begins.

Bonus Actions

Sometimes you can use more actions than what you get at the beginning of the round. You earn **Bonus Actions** like these for different reasons, but they are treated like normal actions; you can combine them, the Guide can allow reactions to them, and you lose them at the end of the last turn in the round. You can gain bonus actions with the bonus action perk, by surprising your opponents, or by award from the Guide when the situation demands it.

Initiative Contests

At the start of extended conflict, the Guide will want to determine whose actions have priority: who is taking initiative. When the Guide calls for it, roll an **Initiative Contest** to determine your result. This is a contest with your choice of attribute bonus, depending on which attribute you think best represents your character's reaction time. Skill points do not contribute to this contest, but certain perks do.

Once initiative contests have been rolled, characters take their turns in order of highest initiative contest to lowest. On your turn, you are the **Initiating Character**, and your actions take priority over all others (see Reactions), even if you don't have the highest initiative contest. If it's not your turn, initiating characters and characters with higher initiative contests take priority over your reactions.

To get a new initiative contest, you must **Delay**. Delaying is when you postpone your turn (but not your actions) in order to start a new turn when you want it. To do so, just tell the Guide at the start of your turn that you want to delay, and let the Guide know at the end of another turn that you would like to take your turn. If you have already taken an action on your turn in the current round, you cannot delay until the following round. Delaying your turn to the end of a round means that fewer characters will likely have actions available to react to yours, and delaying your turn to the beginning of the next round means that you will have a higher initiative contest, which gives your actions more priority when you react.

When some characters begin a conflict with significant initiative advantage, they have **Surprise**. This usually occurs when some characters sneak up on others. If you take an action that will likely begin an extended conflict, the Guide can give you a surprise action: one bonus action before conflict begins. If your opponents are ready for conflict, but you have some other sort of surprise advantage, the Guide can instead award you a +4 difficulty bonus to your initiative contest.

If you are not the initiating character, you can use an action as a **Reaction** to his action. When you react, you must immediately (and respectfully) announce what you want to do in reaction to the initiating character's action. If you don't react, neither does your character. Typical reactions are defenses, like parrying an Attack or resisting a Power. However, reactions can also be any other single action, like a first level power or an armed attack, so there is always an element of risk involved when initiating actions.

The Guide determines if reactions can occur, since some reactions are not possible. For example, if a character on the far side of the room decides to press play on the remote control, which will result in a cursed-ghost video playing on the TV, you couldn't use a reaction to swat the remote from his hand because that's not something you could immediately do. However, if you have a level 1 telekinesis power, the Guide might allow you to use that as a reaction to swat the remote instead. The Guide also decides if reactions occur in order or simultaneously. If applying a sequence of reactions could make a significant difference, all reactions occur after the initiating character's action, and then in order

of descending initiative contests. Otherwise, the initiating action and reactions happen more or less at the same time.

Physical Conflict

This is the bread-and-butter of extended conflict: physical conflict, also known as combat. These rules are written to be somewhat abstract, which frees you up to use more imagination and resolve fast actions in a dramatic way. Combat builds on the general conflict rules by implementing a Posture system, and by treating Progress as Damage.

Posture

The Guide assumes that combatants seek and take the best positioning in combat when it is easy to do so. In other words, you fight near your allies, maneuver to open up strikes, use cover when it's available, and don't let enemies get behind you. Your combat position within this system is called your **Posture**.

By default, all characters in conflict are in **Offensive Posture**. This is where the majority of combat takes place. When you are in offensive posture, you tend to stay close to your allies, but you can easily engage most opponents who are in offensive posture as well. There can be objects or barriers in this posture, but it is usually pretty easy for your opponents to get around them, so they don't hamper movement. Offensive posture can represent a boxing ring, a small bar room, a street intersection, or any similar area where a melee could take place.

Sometimes you will be able to move to a position that reduces your odds of losing the fight. **Defensive Posture** usually represents being on the edge of a conflict, where you can take cover or be protected by your allies. This isn't always an option; some battlefields are too small to let you get away from your enemies, or you might not have enough allies to block enemies for you. The Guide will tell you if the conflict allows for defensive posture. The benefit of using this posture is that close range weapons (like fists and axes) can deal only one point of damage to you if your opponent is in offensive posture. Close range weapons deal no damage when your opponent is also defensive, and short range weapons deal only one point of damage when both characters are defensive. In defensive posture, your close range Powers cannot reach opponents, and their close range Powers cannot reach you. (Powers that cause Damage are treated like weapons in this case.)

Changing posture usually requires a physical action, and you can use Movement skill points to improve your contest when needed. Your enemies can attempt to oppose your movement to defensive posture with various methods

and skills, like cutting you off with another Movement, or hooking you with a special weapon. If you choose to leave battle from defensive posture (see Fleeing), your enemies cannot oppose you without a way to reach you, for example, with a lasso, bolas, or an extremely persuasive argument. Your ability to change posture, and the difficulty involved in the related contest, are also affected by the battlefield. For example, if your opponents' backs are to the wall, they can't be flanked and they can't take defensive posture. Or in a subway, there's no good opportunity to take Flying posture. In deep snow, each posture change could be opposed with Challenging difficulty or worse.

Range is a term that describes differences in posture. The game uses range in terms of posture to allow you and the Guide to make quick judgments regarding the effectiveness of weapons and powers without the use of math, rulers, or maps. To quickly determine range, it helps to see the postures of the characters in conflict on a straight line like this:

Flanking opponent	Defensive	Offensive	Offensive opponent	Defensive opponent	Flanking
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Close range represents the same posture, or one step away, like offensive to offensive (opponent). Short range is two steps of posture change, like defensive to offensive (opponent), or offensive (opponent) to flanking. Medium range represents more than two steps, and long range represents areas or targets outside the conflict.

For example, you walk up to a bonfire at night to greet a stranger, and he pulls a knife and takes a swing at you. You are both in offensive posture, which is close range. You tumble backward and duck behind your car, into defensive posture. You are now at short range. You shout "I've got a gun" as you pull your rifle from the back seat, so the stranger dives into the bushes on the far side of the bonfire, into defensive posture. You are now at medium range. You see the stranger flee into the dark night, but you could probably still take a decent shot at him with the rifle at medium range. If the stranger entered the building down the road, or climbed the hill way off in the distance, he would be at long range. When you no longer have any contact with the stranger, he is out of range.

Often, it's better to avoid a battle than to fight one. To leave combat, you use an action to **Flee**. This is usually a physical contest with the movement skill, but it includes any action that would get you out of a conflict. Like changing posture, a flee action can be opposed by other characters by blocking your retreat or restraining you if they are in position to do so. If you have allies in defensive posture or your opponents can Attack at short or medium Range, you must

first enter defensive posture to flee. Remember that it's safer to flee during your turn while you have initiative priority, which might allow you to avoid reactions from your opponents. If they can pursue you (e.g. you don't have any allies in offensive posture), then they can effectively chase you by taking their own flee actions. Being pursued can start a different extended conflict in which max progress means being caught or escaping.

Special Postures

The Guide may choose to use three additional postures to make combat more tactically interesting. These are Flanking, Mounted, and Flying postures.

Flanking posture allows you to get close to defensive enemies. You enter flanking posture by circumventing your enemy's offensive posture, if the battlefield allows. To do so, use a physical action to enter flanking posture. Your opponents can contest your flanking action with another movement action to block or avoid you, or some other action that would hinder you. If you roll a contest to flank and it's a Con, you remain in the posture where you started the flank action. In flanking posture, you treat your defensive opponents as though you are both in offensive posture, and treat your offensive opponents as though they are in defensive posture.

To bravely ride a horse, dirt bike, snow beast, or anything else into battle, you can take **Mounted** posture. In mounted posture, you use your mount's mobility to protect yourself and to attack where and when you choose. To take mounted posture, you must use an action to mount up, or if you were already mounted, use the first action of your turn to maintain the posture each round. This is usually a physical action to guide your mount or a mental action to pilot your craft. In mounted posture, all characters treat you as though you are in defensive posture, even flanking opponents. During your turn you can choose, on an action-by-action basis, to be in offensive posture or flanking posture if it's available. Doing so does not require an action to change posture; other characters treat you as if you are in that posture during that action. When the action ends, you are treated as though you are in defensive posture again. To attack another mounted character at close range, in a joust for example, at least one character must voluntarily end her mounted posture as a non-action. Otherwise, two characters in mounted posture are always at medium range from each other. Using a mount does not increase your number of actions per round, but it relieves you of spending actions to change posture.

For example, you react to blaster fire by ducking behind a cargo door. Then you sprint across a snowy

driveway, taking pot shots with your blaster to keep the enemy troopers' heads down. On your last action, you hop on a speeder and start it up, entering mounted posture. Until the start of your next turn, all opponents treat you as though you're in defensive posture. You zip around, ducking shots until your next turn begins, when you use a mental (pilot) action to keep the speeder under control – to maintain your mounted posture. You use your next action to try to run over some offensive posture opponents by using offensive posture during the action. You roll a Con and speed away, re-entering mounted posture once the action is over. You end your turn with one action in reserve. An opponent on a speeder starts chasing you with a laser sword in hand, and you accept his challenge by ending your mounted posture in defensive posture. He speeds up next to you, declaring flanking posture, and you clash swords with him by rolling a Parry Pro for your last action. Next round, if you spend an action before your turn to resume mounted posture, you'll still need to spend a second action to maintain it when your turn begins.

The last and most impressive posture is **Flying**. Taking flying posture requires an action, like mounted posture, and you must use the first action of your turn each round to maintain it. When you take flying posture, you are at medium range from all characters in conflict. This means that short range weapons deal minimum damage to you, and close range weapons cannot affect you. Like mounted posture, when you take an action during your turn, you choose which posture to use for that action (offensive, defensive, or flanking). If you attack another flying character, you treat each other as if you are both in offensive posture, but you remain at medium range from all other characters.

Physical Damage

The general extended conflict rules call for Progress as a measure of how close you are to reaching your conflict goal. In physical conflict, physical progress is called **Physical Damage** because it is treated differently in two major ways: 1) the progress that you make is determined by the type of weapon or power that you use, and 2) max physical progress is determined by your opponent's physical attribute score.

Causing Damage

In physical conflict, the most common sources of damage are **Weapons**, both natural and artificial. Your progress – the damage – that you make is determined by the **Damage Die** of that weapon. You roll this each time you make an attack with the weapon to cause damage.

Weapons have a range attribute which tells you in which postures the weapon is effective. Natural weapons (unarmed) are always close range. Weapons can still cause





minimum damage of one point when used at the next range increment beyond their effective range. For example, two gladiators are fighting a lion. The gladiator wielding a gladius (a close range weapon in offensive posture) provides cover for the javelin-thrower (short range weapon in defensive posture). The lion can still attack the javelin-thrower with its paws (a close range natural weapon), but will deal only one point of damage on a Pro. When the lion gets hit by a javelin, it runs away to lick its wound, entering defensive posture. Now, the javelin-thrower can still attack the lion with another javelin because the short-range weapon can cause one point of damage at medium range, but the lion's paws cannot damage the javelin-thrower, and the gladius-wielder cannot do more than one point of damage without using a movement action to approach the lion.

Regress in combat is called **Protection**. In physical conflict, it is represented by physical protection, or **Armor**. Whenever something causes physical damage to you, you reduce the damage by the amount rolled for your protection – even if you don't use a defense action. However, protection cannot reduce damage to zero; an attack Pro always deals at least one point of damage. **Natural Protection** begins at zero, but it can be improved with perks. Depending on your campaign theme, you can also utilize natural armor as though it were permanent artificial armor; for each increase in protection die type, it applies another point of Physical Penalty. For example, natural armor d4 would have a physical penalty of -1, or natural armor d8 would have a physical penalty of -3.

Tracking Damage

If max progress is the amount of progress you need to exceed to reach a goal, then max damage is the amount of damage you need to exceed to defeat an opponent. The difference is that you record your progress, while your opponent records your damage. Your maximum damage for any attribute is equal to that attribute score. When you take damage, you add it to the **Damage Pool** of the corresponding attribute, and if you take more than max damage for any attribute, you become **Disabled**. When you are disabled, you are helpless and cannot effectively use any skills or actions related to the attribute that took too much damage.

If you exceed your max physical damage, you are **Mostly Dead**. A character with this condition is physically disabled, and cannot use his body to significantly alter the story. The specific effects are determined by you and the Guide, given your situation in the story.

There are three common ways to remove damage from your physical damage pool. Each day, your character removes one point of damage naturally by **Healing**. A character with the healer skill can remove damage at a faster

rate determined by the Guide. Or you can use Powers; various Cure powers can remove physical damage as well.

However, Disabled characters cannot remove damage. Removing the Disabled condition requires role-playing and an agreement between you and the Guide on how to resolve the condition. The Guide might let you take on another Flaw (like scars or permanent wounds), there might be a specific item in the story needed for curing it, or it's possible that your character might die, if you think that's the best outcome for the story. This also depends on the campaign theme; characters might recover quickly from being near death, or they might spend years in traction and physical therapy to regain their physical well-being.

Mental Conflict

The mental attribute is important for some skills in physical conflict, and it is the basis for exclusively mental conflicts. This section looks at an important mental aspect in physical conflict called Awareness, and explains how to handle mental damage.

Awareness

A very important aspect of combat, whether you're trying to surprise your opponents or avoid their attention altogether, is **Awareness**. Simply put, awareness is your knowledge of the presence of threats. You must have awareness to react to opponents. Otherwise, you cannot contest their actions. For example, your hunting party is searching for an evil creature in the dark woods. If you don't have Awareness of the creature, you cannot use a reaction to oppose its flanking actions to get behind you, and you cannot Parry its attack when it pounces on you.

Having awareness is usually automatic and requires no action. The average person can look around and listen, especially if there is no other conflict in the area. If your opponents are being sneaky, or there is excess noise or darkness in the area, the Guide can ask you to make a Detect contest as a non-action, to gain awareness. Detect contests can require an action if you need to stop what you're doing in order to search properly.

Using the sneak skill is the most common way to avoid or delay being detected. How you use it depends on the situation, because the Guide can let you make a Sneak contest as a non-action, ask for it in place of a Movement contest and action, or require a Sneak action in combination with the action that you are trying to perform in a sneaky manner. For example, tip-toeing across a room might require one physical action with the sneak skill, picking someone's pocket might require one physical action with the larceny skill and a



sneak non-action to determine if you get caught, or stealing someone's dog might require a sneak action for every handler action you make to coerce the animal.

Awareness is directly related to Surprise. Those with awareness can surprise their unaware opponents, and those without it are likely to be surprised by their opponents, should extended conflict ensue.

Mental Damage

Mental battles use **Mental Damage** to track progress. When your mental damage exceeds your mental pool's max damage, you become **Unconscious**. Like Mostly Dead characters, Unconscious characters cannot perform mental actions or use mental skills, and are severely limited in how they can affect the story. Mental damage can represent stress, insanity, or just fatigue for example. Your character removes one point of mental damage naturally each day, but cannot recover from Unconsciousness without a Guide-approved resolution. Some characters who recover from Unconscious find that they have a nervous twitch, have lost certain memories, or begin behaving strangely.

Unlike physical damage, characters cannot deal mental damage naturally. They must rely on Powers, special weapons, and tools provided by the Guide to cause mental damage. For example, electric shocks, bright lights, or loud noise might cause mental damage. As the intensity increases, so does the damage die type.

Preventing mental damage is done with mental defense contests and mental protection. The Guide and campaign theme can allow you to use specific items like hearing protection or magical rings for protection, but the Thought Shield perk is always available to increase your natural mental armor to d4, or to increase another type of mental armor by one die type.

Metaphysical Conflict

The metaphysical attribute affects a character's intangible interactions with the world, which is most noticeable when influencing people and using the magic skill. Metaphysical progress can also be measured with Damage.

Influence

Your attempts to control or relate to others can be done with role-playing or extended conflict. Alternatively, here are some suggestions for simple conflicts to use when influencing characters.

The persuade skill can be used as an Attack with the purpose of giving a character another Goal. Your contest can

receive difficulty bonuses for factors likely to sway that character like offers of money and favorite foods, or by persuading in safe, happy surroundings. Your target can roll an appropriate Defense against you, and if you get a Pro, that character must consider your new goal in addition to its existing goals when making decisions. Whenever the new goal is at odds with her existing goals, the character makes an additional defense contest to purge the new goal; with a Pro, she has convinced herself that you were wrong.

Deceive behaves differently than persuade: it creates a new Flaw for your target: a false belief. A believable deception grants you a difficulty bonus on your attack while an unbelievable deception gets a difficulty penalty. Your target can Defend whenever evidence against your deception presents itself.

You can use Engage to reduce a character's ability to notice things other than yourself. Generally speaking, if you get an Engage Pro against the target's Detect contest, that person notices you instead of what you'd like him to ignore. Your contest takes a difficulty penalty based on how hard it is to ignore what your target is trying to detect. For example, your contest might take a difficulty penalty of impossible (-16) if you don't want your opponent to notice a collapsing tower while you engage him.

Magic

Using Magic in extended conflict requires the interaction of many rules, but it is easy to do in practice. In brief, to use a Power you use the magic skill for that power with a metaphysical contest. Add the power's magic difficulty to your contest, and add the power's MP Cost to your metaphysical damage pool. The power's effect now takes place. If your power allows a defense, your target can use a reaction to contest your Magic result. If this is a Pro, the target suffers only the Half Effect. If the power can last more than one round, you can maintain the power by using an action at the beginning of your next turn.

Magic Use Detail

Here is the full process for using Powers in extended conflict:

Use Magic. The magic skill allows you to use a Power. You must have at least one magic skill point dedicated to a power to use or "unlock" that power. Otherwise, you will need the power implement perk or specialize perk to unlock powers. In extended conflict, you must combine one Magic action for each level of the power. If you don't have enough actions, you can't use the power, even when you're not in extended conflict. If you roll a Con for one of the power's magic actions, whether by the minimum contest rule (your result is lower than one) or by outside opposition, the actions used up

to that point are lost, and you must begin again to use the power. Because the actions are combined, you can keep a Pro contest and use it for your remaining contests if you choose. Remember your final contest result; if the power has duration, anyone opposing it will roll against that result in the future.

Spend MP Cost. Once you have one magic Pro per power level, you convert metaphysical health into magical power by adding $d8 + (\text{power level})$ damage to your metaphysical damage pool. Metaphysical protection reduces this amount, but not below one point. This damage can make you Catatonic if you take more than your max metaphysical damage, as normal. If you take half, the MP Cost is just $4 + (\text{power level})$.

Take Effect. The power's effect now happens as the result of your final magic action. Other characters can react to it like any other action. Some effects are instantaneous; they begin and end right away. Be sure to have a copy of your Effects handy as you use them, for reference.

Maintain Power. For the powers that can be maintained, i.e. those that last beyond the end of the round, you must use an action to maintain the power. When you begin such a power, it generally lasts no longer than the beginning of your next turn. At that time, you must use an action to keep that power in effect through the next round: a Maintain action. If you do something other than maintaining the power at the start of your turn, the power ends. The concentrate skill improves your maintenance contests if they are contested.

Power Defense. Your targets may use actions to defend against your powers. The attribute for this defense contest is given in parentheses in the Half Effect entry, and your last Magic result is your attack contest. Against instantaneous powers, your targets must act right away with reactions. A Pro generally means they suffer no effect. Against powers with duration, one defense Pro reduces the effect on a target to the half effect, and to end the half effect, the target must roll a total number of defense Pros equal to the power's level.

Take Notes. Using powers can require a lot of die rolling and calculating, unless you speed things up by recording your numbers ahead of time and by taking half on the rolls. When you do so:

Magic contest = $10 + \text{magic skill points} + \text{MP bonus} + \text{magic difficulty} (+2 \text{ if not wearing armor})$

MP cost = $4 + \text{power level} (-2 \text{ if you have the mystic ward perk})$

You should also record the power's effect if you have room on your character sheet, to save you from flipping pages in

the midst of battle. If this isn't possible, look up your power before your turn.

Magic Example

You and your allies are surrounded by skeletons, and you want to use the Fear 3 power to make some of the skeletons flee. You wait until your turn to use the power, since a 3rd-level power requires three combined actions to use. On your turn, you use your predetermined contest for all three Magic actions ($10 + 2 \text{ magic (fear 3) points} + 3 \text{ MP bonus} - 4 \text{ magic difficulty} + 2 \text{ no-armor bonus}$) of 13, and you add the MP cost ($4 + 3 \text{ power level} - 2 \text{ MP protection}$) of 5 to your MP damage pool. During your first two actions, the Guide says that two of the skeletons react to attack your allies in offensive posture.

On your third action, three skeletons of your choice suffer the power's effect. Two of these skeletons use reactions to roll mental contests to defend against the power. One gets 15, a Pro against your 13, so it suffers only the half-effect; it can choose to take defensive posture instead of fleeing. The second skeleton defends with 13, but the Guide says the Tie becomes a Con for the skeleton since one of your allies wields a holy candle. That skeleton must defend again or flee. The third skeleton, who didn't react, has some Physical damage, so the Guide decides that it will likely suffer the Effect by just fleeing combat when it takes its next action.

After your turn, your allies continue to fight other skeletons. On the skeletons' turns, your first target uses its action to take defensive posture. The second skeleton has run out of actions, so while it suffers the power's effect, it is busy and can't flee until next round. The third skeleton uses its last action to flee the conflict, and your comrades let it go peacefully.

After the next round begins, the second skeleton uses a reaction to also flee the conflict. The first skeleton uses a reaction to get another defense Pro against your power. It needs only one more defense Pro to end the half-effect, since it has two Pros so far, and your power is level three. However, before your turn, you use each of your actions to Parry attacks from other skeletons. When your turn begins, since you do not have an action available to maintain your power, the power ends and your first skeleton target can behave normally again.

Metaphysical Damage

Each character has a metaphysical damage pool with a maximum amount of damage equal to his metaphysical attribute score. You can think of metaphysical damage as a weakening of the spirit, or as a loss of magical power. Take more than max damage, and you become **Catatonic**. In this condition, you cannot use metaphysical skills or actions and



generally cannot make an impact on the story. If you take a Flaw to recover from being catatonic, your character might become less sociable, more evil, or acquire a recurring

nightmare from experiences he had while near the spirit realm. Metaphysical damage is naturally removed at the rate of one point per hour.



Chapter 9: Modules

Guide of Modos: The dynamite explodes, and when you open your eyes, you see a sharp, dark landscape. Despite the jagged, electric-looking scenery, your eyes feel fine. Your ears feel strange, though, like all sound is being filtered through a low-tech computer. This is where we use Chuck's Mainframe module, and all physical contests and damage become Mental instead. You're all alone, and you're each wearing black superhero tights, like Blawesome's suit, but it's not a Y-League uniform. It has blue beams of light running along your sides.

Chuck: The Mainframe! "Now this, Sir Brolf, is home sweet home." By the way, Hax looks sort of like a champion body builder now, both his hands look normal, and he's carrying a one-handed heavy blaster, called his "PIN Key."

Alex: Are all of my limbs still attached?

GM: They look like they are. But as you look at your hand and other parts, they seem very artificial. A huge, blocky hovercraft hums past you. You don't feel its noise but it hurts your ears nonetheless.

Chuck: Hax pulls up a menu. Are there directions or maps?

GM: You tell us.

Chuck: Okay, he pulls up a video game menu in mid-air by waving his hand. It says, "options: continue, map, inventory, settings, and quit." Hax hits "map."

GM: The menu becomes a small, 3D landscape, with a red, pulsing light in the middle. On the map, you see a large chasm, and an island on the far side of it. There is a big office building behind you, over the ridge, and a skyscraper on the island. Blawesome realizes that the direction in which the Baker ran is now directly in-line with the skyscraper.

Alex: "By all that is holy..."

Bridget: "What is this place?"

Chuck: "It's not a place. It's a program. We are constructs within the program. And we don't play by physical rules

anymore." To prove his point, Hax transforms into a cyber-cycle, and then changes back.

Alex: "What? Huh?" I transform too.

GM: Roll Mental, Alex.

Alex: But Chuck didn't have to roll?

GM: It's easy for the average person. However, Sir Brolf is not an average person here.

Alex: (Rolls) 10 minus 1 mental, plus 1 persuade point since I'm persuading myself to do it, is 10.

GM: Con. Nice try, but Willpower is for persuading yourself. Tell us what happens.

Alex: Sir Brolf shimmers for a moment, and his feet turn into wheels. But then he shimmers again, and finds himself back in gnome-shape.

Bridget: Willpower, huh? I want to transform my hand into a knuckle blaster, like a cannon instead of a super power, hoping my intense Willpower can make it happen.

GM: Roll mental. Let's see if it comes naturally.

Bridget: (Rolls) oh no, 6!

GM: (Rolls difficulty) that's a Tie. Tell us about your effort?

Bridget: I channel my rage against the Baker through my arm, picturing it as an instrument of destruction.

GM: Blawesome's arm transforms into an arm-blaster. You can now use your knuckle blasts as a Mental weapon. And since you know Fire 1, you can spend the Fire 1 MP cost when you use the knuckle blaster to make that attack a short range weapon.

Alex: I groan with disgust. "Let's get to that tower, friends. Perchance I will have an insight on the way there. Or wake up from this nightmare..."



Community-designed content, custom rules for next week's game, and plug-and-play adventures are all made easily accessible by the modular format of the game. The rules catalog in Appendix D presents five rules modules to get you started: Core, Character, Extended Conflict, Combat, and Magic. To help you write your own modules or implement others, this chapter looks at two main types: the rules module and adventure module. But first, it describes the easiest way to customize your game: the list.

Lists

If the game's rules are a new house, then the lists are the furniture and decorations you add to make it your own. The lists can each be tailored to customize the game to the campaign theme without changing any rules. For example, the list in the Gear chapter contains gear for three different time periods of game play. The Guide will likely choose one to fit the campaign theme, add more items to that list, and remove or disallow gear from other time periods. There are five basic types of lists: skills, perks, gear, powers, and NPCs.

When using a new list, whether yours, the Guide's, or one from the community, share your thoughts with the Guide and other players about how well each element fits in the game. Sometimes lists need revision to meet the needs of your game-group.

Rules Modules

The rules presented up to this point comprise three fundamental rules modules: core, character, and extended conflict modules. In addition, the combat and magic modules have been included to add additional rules for excitement and fantasy, but they are actually very optional, and all are presented in the Rules Catalog appendix. You can use rules modules to replace or add rules as desired, to give the game a different flavor, or to completely overhaul the play experience.

Rules modules should have at least three sections: a concept, discussion, and catalog. The concept introduces the module and gives the reader an idea of what it presents. The discussion is the plain-English explanation of what the rules are and how to use them. The catalog is just the rules themselves: in a table and codified for easy reference.

There is an important feature built into the rules catalog to assist users of a rules module. While each rule has a name and number so that it can be easily referenced and located in a spreadsheet, it also has a list of dependencies: the rules on which it depends in order to have useful meaning. This feature is important because whether you are using a module or designing one, you can use the dependencies list to

quickly see which rules might be affected by the changes you're considering. One rule depends on another rule if changing the latter would have a significant effect on the former.

When creating a rules module, or even a stand-alone house rule, there are two types of changes to make: additions and alterations. An addition is simple: create your rule, list its dependencies (if any), and add it to the end of whichever module you're working in, with a new number. Marking new module or modified rules with an "M" helps the reader distinguish new rules from old. An alteration requires more work. The rule you're altering will maintain the same number, but after you alter it, you should check that rule's dependencies to see if they will also need altering, and check the rules that depend on the rule you're altering. An alteration can also be a deletion; when you remove a rule, it keeps its number for the sake of dependencies.

Sample Rules Module: Isolation

Concept

This rules module presents a specific type of story: that of a skeleton crew onboard a massive spaceship. The crew learns of a major problem: a homicidal alien is also onboard with them. The players play the members of the crew in a race against time to dispose of the alien or to escape the spaceship.

Discussion

The players may create their characters as normal, but the Powers list and Magic module are not available to them. The group should decide on what starting character level to use, 1, 2, or 3, with the game being easier as the level is higher. If a character dies, the player may choose to adopt one of three non-player characters from the Guide: Jonas the cat, Joe the android, or Faith, the ship's computer. See Alien Encounters for more information on these extra characters. Players may choose to include the following roles in their concepts: captain, science officer, executive officer, warrant officer, or engineer.

Play begins in the commissary, with the following announcement from the Guide: "Faith has awakened you from cryosleep with an ominous warning: 'unidentified life form onboard.' You may return to cryosleep when the threat is eliminated."

The Guide designs a spaceship map consisting of chambers and the air duct system that runs throughout the ship. Each junction between chambers, ducts, or both can be closed or opened via a touchpad at the junction, which requires an Action. These are all open by default, but Faith

can close them for emergencies. The crew can scoot through the air ducts at a slow pace (Movement -8); Jonas and other creatures are not slowed by the ducts.

Amongst the different areas on the ship, there is one commissary, one bridge, one mainframe for speaking with Faith, one airlock, and one shuttle. Some chambers, especially mechanical, are poorly lit and/or use a noisy pressure-valve system. These chambers impose significant difficulty penalties to sight or sound contests (minimum -4).

The Guide also places an adjustable torch (flamethrower d10, heavy, short), voltage wand (cattle prod d6, light, close), motion sensor, and cat box on the spaceship. Depending on the game's difficulty level, the PCs might also need to collect the parts for these items and assemble or recharge them before they can be used. The PCs may don spacesuits for protection (d4, -3 PP), but there are no other weapons or armor to be found on the ship.

Isolation uses three new features in addition to the base game rules to create a new style of game: the Tension Die, alien encounters, and win conditions.

The Tension Die

A ten-sided die (black, if you have one) – the Tension Die – counts from 1 to 10 over the course of Isolation, and the Guide places it where all players can see it, beginning on 1. The Tension Die increases in level by 1 whenever the PCs encounter the alien, when the PCs first visit the airlock, and when the PCs first visit the shuttle.

Alien Encounters

The Guide uses the Bioweapon Alien from the NPC chapter for the alien's character sheet. The Tension Level acts as bonus damage for each of the alien's attacks.

Whenever a PC enters a new room without knowing the alien's location, the Guide rolls a d10 to determine the alien's location. If the result is above the Tension Level, the alien is at long range. If the result is below the Tension level, the alien is at medium range (one or two chambers away). If the result equals the Tension level, the alien is in or ready to enter the same room as the PC. The exact alien location is a secret until PCs gain Awareness of the alien.

There are several ways to locate the alien. PCs can use the detect skill to listen for or spot the alien, but this is limited to one or two chambers of distance and has to beat the alien's sneak contest when it is being sneaky. The motion sensor can detect movement, both friend and foe, up to two rooms away. If the PCs can catch Jonas with the cat box, he will begin hissing when the alien is one room away as long as he is in the cat box. If he is free, Jonas flees instead. The

alien, when at medium range, automatically detects the PCs if they do anything loud, or if it gets a detect Pro against their sneak contests. If the alien is nearby but has no awareness of the PCs, the Guide may give clues that it's close: heavy footfalls, wet slime/slobber, or loud hisses.

When the alien detects PCs, it charges. The Guide may announce initiative contests by mimicking the sound of heavy alien feet as it approaches (or another appropriately scary sound). The alien generally attacks the nearest PC with as many actions/reactions as possible, but it has a special defense: when it becomes Mostly Dead, the conflict ends as it immediately sprints away from conflict (long range or beyond) and then removes the disabled condition and all of its damage. After d10 in-game minutes, the alien resumes its normal odds of appearing.

If PCs attempt to trap themselves in a room with the alien to prevent it from healing, conduct combat as normal. If the PCs become Disabled (die), the alien mysteriously escapes. If the PCs disable the alien, it manages to break the room's only light source and then escape by an unknown passage. Trapping the alien in a room by itself (besides the airlock) forces it to use its acid attack for d4 rounds to break into the next room to escape.

If a PC dies, the player can continue playing by adopting one of three NPCs, in order:

1st death: Jonas the cat. Jonas is limited to cat-behaviors and must flee conflict whenever the alien enters the chamber. However, Jonas automatically knows if the alien is in his chamber or the next. Jonas uses the House Cat character sheet from chapter 7.

2nd death: Joe the android. Joe is more capable than Jonas, but at Tension level 6, his Goal becomes: "preserve the alien for the Company, by any means necessary." The alien ignores Joe if Joe doesn't attack it. He uses the Assistant Android character sheet from chapter 7.

3rd death: Faith the computer. As the last adoptable NPC, Faith is limited in her actions. She can speak to other PCs only via text at computer terminals, and can open or close one door (or vent grate) per round. Note that opening or closing a door requires an action by other characters (Jonas cannot open or close doors). Faith cannot detect the location of characters, but she knows which doors or vents have opened or closed recently.

Win Conditions

There are two ways to defeat the alien: by flushing it out of an airlock or by escaping on the shuttle and detonating the ship.

Isolation Rules Catalog

Number	Title	Description and Dependencies
013	Tension Die	A d10 remains in view of the players, beginning on 1, to indicate the Tension Level of the game.
014	Increasing Tension	The Tension level increases by 1 whenever PCs encounter the alien or when PCs first visit the shuttle or airlock. 013
314	Disabled	When a PC exceeds max damage, he is dead. The player may play an NPC if one is available. 103, 105-107, 206, 207, 312, 313, 314
321	Alien Invincibility	The alien does not become Disabled after max damage. Instead, it flees and recovers health for d10 minutes. A trapped alien automatically escapes in d4 rounds. 206, 312, 313, 314
322	Alien Anger	The alien adds the number on the Tension Die to each damage roll it makes. M013, 206, 309, 310, 311
400	No Magic	This module removes the Magic module from play.

Airlock Flush: the less risky way to win is the airlock flush. This requires locating the airlock, luring the alien into it, closing the airlock inner door, and then opening the airlock outer door to flush the alien into space. The alien isn't likely to enter the airlock unless it thinks someone is already inside. If a PC is in the airlock when the outer door opens, he must wear a spacesuit to survive the vacuum. Furthermore, unless a PC manually opens the airlock, Faith must open it remotely for the PCs. Faith has orders to preserve the alien, so she will not open the airlock unless a PC, at the mainframe, tricks her into doing so. Note that each round spent persuading Faith is a round that the alien spends trying to escape the airlock.

Shuttle Escape: escaping on the shuttle and detonating the ship is the worse choice for two reasons: PCs who detonate the ship are unlikely to continue their jobs when they return home, and more importantly, the shuttle has enough life support for only two people to survive the trip home. Activating the ship's self-destruct sequence takes two full rounds (or six actions) on the bridge, and the shuttle will not launch unless the self-destruct sequence has been initiated. The Guide rolls to determine the alien's location during each activating action. Deactivating the sequence also requires six actions.

Adventure Modules

The second type of module is the adventure module: a document designed to give Guides of Modos the material needed to tell an interactive story through one or more game sessions. These can take any form, but will commonly contain an adventure theme, a general story plot and setting, an NPCs List, and suggested difficulty bonuses for the various contests involved in the plot.

What follows is a sample adventure module. It presents the plot in the form of a flowchart, which is cross-referenced to numbered descriptions on detail pages. Guides of Modos should read the details in their entirety, and then run the adventure from the flowchart, referring to the detail page(s) as needed.

Sample Adventure Module: the Golden Palace

This adventure puts PCs from most Earth-based genres in an afterlife-like scene, where they can explore a woodsy environment as well as their characters' abilities and the rules of the game. Because the adventure's intent is to act as a hub for various scenarios, this module is compatible with many campaign themes. The adventure implies that the PCs were accomplished adventurers who died untimely, so a starting character level of two or higher is recommended.

The plot page is a flowchart of adventure elements, each with a title and number that corresponds to its element on the detail page. Other references to the detail pages are given in parentheses. The adventure begins at the Start element in the upper left and flows to other elements depending on PC decisions. The Guide can use the flowchart elements or include new ones as desired. The adventure ends with two suggested End elements in the lower right of the flowchart. **Shaded text** on the details page is intended to be read aloud.

Adventure Details

1. Start

You awaken near each other in a large, soft tuft of grass. Birds sing and a warm breeze crosses your face, smelling of wildflowers. You find yourselves in a sort of orchard, with a slope going up on one side, and a more gradual slope going down on the other. Here and there, you see meandering people, wearing togas and sandals. The orchard trees are not currently bearing fruit, but some are covered in soft pink flowers.

The PCs are carrying and wearing what they would on an average day, despite their new surroundings. This is a good time for them to introduce or describe themselves (2). They have foggy memories of something bad happening recently (3), but can't remember what it was at the moment. They will each begin with their max number of hero points, but if you award them hero points (PCs can't keep more than one hero point per character level) for divulging their backstories, they'll realize that hero points are a renewable resource.

2. Socialize with PCs

The PCs can begin the game knowing each other, or come from completely different worlds. In the latter case, they might be interested in introducing themselves and trying to discover what might have led to them sleeping near each other in a completely unknown place. You can award a hero point if a player makes a good suggestion about what might have brought them all together in the afterlife.

3. Recent History

Each PC is an accomplished professional who died in their chosen line of work - probably some sort of adventuring. The PCs don't have memory of this, but they know something bad happened. The rest of their memories are intact, and they will likely feel a sense of duty to complete what they were attempting when they died. At present, they are unharmed and have empty damage pools.

4. Award Hero Points

In this adventure, a certain amount of divine luck flows around everything. You should award hero points for any good reason: creative thinking, encouraging role-playing, making suggestions appropriate to the adventure's theme, and the standard award for role-playing flaws when they conflict with goals.

5. Content People

The people who walk around, in all areas but across the stream (6), wearing togas and sandals are the Content. They have very vague recollections of their lives ("I had a good job, and I think my family was happy"), and in this place they have no need of food, shelter, or even sleep. They each have different, very heavy accents but can still be understood by each PC. The Content do not have residual self-image (9) because they have resigned themselves to living in this afterlife forever. They know about a place called the Golden Palace (10) which is on a plateau, and that miraculous things happen inside. However, because they are content, they have no desire to reach the palace.

6. Explore Downhill

Down a gentle slope, the orchard thins out near a long, winding stream. The water is perfectly clear, and you see all sorts of bright fish swimming through the water, despite how shallow the stream is. On the far side of the stream, the trees look more wild and dense, and you think you see more people wandering around. They seem somehow darker than those on your side of the stream, as if they are haunted. This area is the limit of the adventure; beyond the stream is only more woods. It's also the limit of the Discontent (7): the people in the wild woods. They are metaphysically prohibited from crossing the stream, but the PCs are not. PCs wanting to fight things can battle the Discontent as much as they want; there's no consequence for destroying them.

However, if a PC is disabled by a Discontent (or another PC), that PC reawakens in the tuft of grass (1) with a new character Flaw of his choice, and empty damage pools.

7. Discontent People

The Discontent are people who reject their status in the afterlife, and seem to be ruled by anger or fear. Over time they have collected countless Flaws, resulting in their disturbing, goblin-like appearances. Many have replaced their togas with animal skins or vegetable-woven apparel. The Discontent are instigators, happy to fight with the PCs. A Disabled discontent turns into a patch of mushrooms.

Discontent 1

A hunched-over person who looks sick, dirty, or both. Goal: discover satisfaction somewhere in the woods. Flaw: any and all.

P 10, M 10, MP 11

Skills: detect +1

Perks: backstabber

Gear: heavy branch or throwing stones d4

8. Rock Face

After a brief climb, you reach a rock face that seems to extend left and right around some sort of plateau. The rock face is about twice your height, and you can just see the tops of trees above. Below, you can see parts of the orchard through the trees, and a forest extends to the horizon.

PCs must negotiate this rock face to advance the adventure. A running jump (difficulty contest +12) could allow a PC to reach the edge. Climbing the rock is difficult (+8), but using teamwork makes the climb only challenging (+4). Some trees grow close enough to the rock face to try climbing them, but the highest branches do not fully support a PC's weight. The PCs might have unique solutions for reaching the plateau that are worth hero point awards.

9. Level 20

Before you stands a very tall person in a silver gown. It has no hair and looks very noble and peaceful. You can't tell if it is a he or a she, and you get the feeling that it knows all about you just by looking at you. There always seems to be a bright light right behind its head that you can't see directly.

The Level 20 is the only character for the PCs to meet on the plateau. Enough trees grow here to obscure the base of the Golden Palace (10), but its spire can be seen from anywhere on the plateau. The Level 20 wants the PCs to complete quests back on Earth as an experiment to see how good (or evil) deeds manifest within the palace, but doesn't explain this to them because it implies that the palace contains powers even greater than the Level 20's powers. Instead, it asks them to "settle a dispute" between it and its peers, and will convey the following information:
"You may refer to me as a Level 20. Yes, that is my name."

"I am a spirit of Earth, like yourselves. I can transport you there if you will settle a dispute for me and my peers."
"Our dispute is over the nature of good and evil. I cannot say more."
"You are here because you are dead. But fate has chosen you to return to life."
"You do not resemble the Content because you have residual self-image. Your minds hold on to the past, and want to return there."
"The Golden Palace is utter paradise, but is only available to Level 20s."
"You may become Level 20 when the time is right, but you will not do so here if you are content."

10. Golden Palace

Before you stands a majestic, square palace made of shiny, golden brick. A lone spire rises from its center, about sixty feet high. Somehow, you feel peace emanating from within the palace, and the world behind you seems dark and cold in contrast.

PCs are prevented from entering the palace by a metaphysical power, but the Level 20 may come and go as it pleases. Despite countless windows, no one can be seen within, and all the chambers appear bare.

11. Fight the Level 20

If a PC attempts to attack, the Level 20 collapses into a pile as if it were just an empty robe. This collapse continues as the robe sinks into the ground and disappears. A short time later, the Level 20 re-emerges in its normal form from the Golden Palace. Do not begin an extended conflict, because the PCs cannot make Progress toward defeating the Level 20.

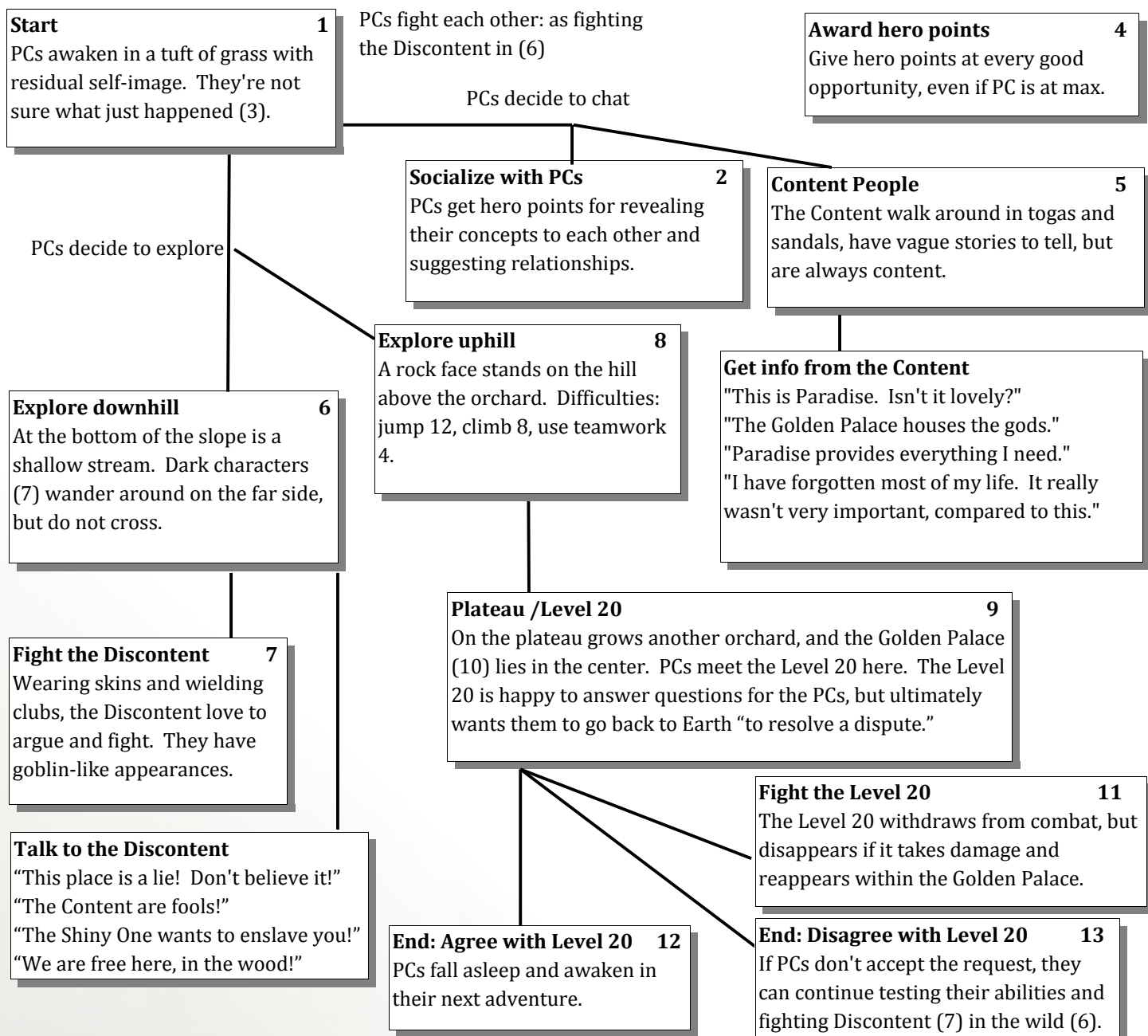
12. End – Agree

If the PCs agree to settle the Level 20's dispute, they feel a calm sleepiness come over them and they awaken in their next adventure, whatever that may be. When they complete an adventure, the PCs return here and the Level 20 bestows them with another character level. If the PCs gained Flaws by being disabled by the Discontent (7), those flaws are also removed when they gain a level.

13. End – Disagree

If the PCs do not agree with the Level 20, it respects their decision and welcomes them to remain in the afterlife. If asked, it recommends that the PCs spend their time waiting for fruit, enjoying the scenery, and fishing in the stream (6), the latter of which leads to harassment by the Discontent (7).

Adventure Flow Chart



This page reserved for rules modules.





This could be a rules module that lets you cause more damage, heal at-will, and use awesome miniatures on the battle map.



Appendix G: Guides of Modos

Guide of Modos: You trek for two hours across a polygonal, rolling landscape. Feeling no exhaustion, you reach a cliff that overlooks a sea of black water, which looks very strange under a black sky. What do you do?

Bridget: "Well Hax, what now?"

Chuck: "I expect some floating platforms will arrive soon." Do I need to roll willpower to make that happen?

GM: Hax is not the One, Chuck. But as you look across the sea toward the multicolored skyscraper in the distance, you notice dark shapes moving rapidly toward you.

Chuck: "Get ready!"

GM: As the shapes get closer, they seem to be rectangular platforms that fly in very straight lines. You can see only two platforms, but each might be large enough for two people. If you're going to jump, roll Mental. The difficulty is Challenging.

Alex: I'll jump onto the one Blawesome does. (Rolls) uh oh, I got 7 total.

Bridget: Adding movement to mental, (rolls) for 14.

Chuck: I'm going to use concentrate to time it just right. (Rolls) it's a 12.

GM: (Rolls a Challenging difficulty contest) Brolf and Hax get Cons. Pro for Blawesome. What happens?

Alex: I hesitate when Blawesome jumps, not wanting to hit her in mid-air, and just miss my chance to jump.

Chuck: Hax springs fearlessly, but too early, so he rolls when he hits the platform and almost falls off, dangling from the far edge.

Bridget: Time for some super powers! Can I grab Sir Brolf at the last instant and give him enough oomph to make the jump?

GM: Um, sure, as long as Brolf wouldn't resist. You can roll a quality contest to see if your jump was epic enough. Chuck, the edges of the platform are just as smooth as they look. Roll mental, quick, before you find out what's in the black water (takes half on the difficulty contest against Hax).

Alex: I'm not resisting!

Chuck: (Rolls) ahh 5! Can I add my First-Person Shooter skill, for 8 total?

GM: Yes, for a Con! What happens?

Chuck: Hax's fingers slowly slide toward the edge, as he fumbles to stow his PIN Key and free up his other hand. Then, just when his left hand slides off, his right hand appears and grabs on, and he pulls himself up. But as he's doing this, you hear the splash of the blaster he had to drop to save himself.



There is nothing to see here. Try the next appendix if you have questions, or look for “Modos RPG” on the web for the handy online resource.

Are you still here, reading an *appendix*? Good. The game needs sages like you to be Guides of Modos. As GM, you're responsible for guiding the story of the game that is created by your exposition, input and acting from the PCs, and the rolls of the dice.

In general, your job is to tell a story with the players, using information that you prepare before the game session: the characters, locations, gear, and motives that put everyone into action. During the session, you will describe situations, play NPCs, blend player ideas into the story, and run simple and extended conflicts to resolve some situations. After the session, you'll gather feedback on how your players would like to play the next session, and begin planning for it.

If you are a storyteller or organizer, the Guide of Modos role is for you.

With this in mind, the following is chapter-specific guidance on how to run the unique elements of the game. Use what you like and change what you don't, because whatever works best for you is likely to help you guide the players to a memorable game session.

Introduction

Campaign Theme

Because a Modos 2 story can take place anywhere, anytime, and in any style, it's important to properly introduce your players to your game. You do this by presenting your **Campaign Theme**.

The first and most important element of the campaign theme is the setting. It explains where, when, and how the story takes place. For example, your campaign might be a spaghetti western that takes place in 1800s New Mexico, or it might be a futuristic, cartoon-style story about a squadron of 100-meter-tall battlebots.

Your campaign theme makes suggestions about character levels, like at what level the PCs will begin, and when and how fast those levels will increase. It also suggests how many levels the typical NPC will have.

You can tailor other parts of your game to the campaign theme as well. Gear lists (especially) should reflect the theme, and the Powers list might be altered or removed, as well as named something more campaign-appropriate, like “spells” or “hexes.” The way you call for initiative contests

can also reflect your theme; you could say “8, 9, 10, draw!” for a wild west game, or “to arms!” for a medieval story.

GM Checklist

Some elements are required if you want to run a good game session. These are:

- **Players with characters.** Make sure your players are present and ready to play, and that their character sheets are complete and updated. A missing player can derail your plot, and an incomplete or missing character sheet requires you to spend time on building that PC instead of running the game.
- **Dice.** You need at least six polyhedral dice: d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, and d20 – or a good random-number generator. These are mostly for the players; you free up a lot of your time by taking half on your rolls.
- **A plan.** Before you start each session, you should have an idea and notes on how the story might go, and what people, places, and things will be involved in that story. Take notes as you go – these will help you plan for the future. If you have conflicts planned, include the Difficulties you expect to use, the Max Progress for non-combat conflicts, and the character sheets for the opposing characters.
- **Role-playing.** You don't need to be a trained thespian, but players expect at least a handful of characters to seem like real people. Add appearances, quirks, and motivations to the character concepts of your main characters, and feel free to do some acting.
- **Feedback.** You can provide feedback to the players by rewarding them with a +2 contest bonus or hero points when they are role-playing well or making a good effort. Collect feedback from the players after the session by asking how they felt about the story and game play. What you learn can lead to a better session when the group meets again.

GM Toolbox

The GM Toolbox is a set of five tools to help you to focus on storytelling instead of getting caught up in rules. It can help to keep these handy for reference during the game.

- **Rule Zero.** The unwritten, first rule was “the GM is always right.” In this game, rule zero means that you decide all final outcomes with input from players and from die rolls. How much dictating you do depends on your campaign theme; will you let your

players shape the story, let the dice decide, drive the story yourself, or use a combination of these? The final decision that moves the game along comes from you, not the rulebook.

- **Take Half.** You can take half on most of your rolls to save time and mental energy. This is true even when PCs take half, but you might want to roll against a PC who takes half too often or expects to get a Pro each time.
- **Average Person.** This rule says that all Difficulties are based on what an average person could do, and that all PCs can, by default, do what an average person could do. Before calling for a contest, ask yourself "how hard would this be for an average person in my story?" If the answer is "easy," don't ask for a contest. If it's not easy, assign an appropriate difficulty.
- **Let Players Play.** You don't have to create everything in the story! Since the players are the experts on their characters and histories, you can let the players make suggestions about what's in the family crypt, who kidnapped cousin Edith, or who the employees of a PC's corporation are. Put their creativity to good use.
- **Segmenting.** When in doubt about how powerful a new element is or how much difficulty should apply, divide it into as many useful and equal segments as possible. For example, if a player invents a perk that allows him to turn any sword into a flaming sword, you might say that the perk has three useful and equal segments: creating light akin to the Lamp 1 power, creating heat or starting fires, and causing extra damage. You could then let the player trade three perks for the new one. Another time to use segmenting would be when judging difficulty. If a player wants his character to run across thin ice, while suffering hypothermia, and carrying a wounded doe, you might divide the effort into three segments of difficulty (ice, hypothermia, and encumbered), so a single difficulty contest would advance three difficulty steps, from Easy to Challenging, to Difficult, to Arduous.

PCs will start each in-game day with their maximum number of hero points: one for each character level. It's your responsibility to award more throughout the day both when PCs earn them by role-playing their Flaws in spite of their Goals, and when players do things to enhance the game like staying in character and utilizing their backstories. Enhancing the game can include metagame things as well, like taking notes to help you maintain consistency and helping other players to respect the campaign theme.

You can generally award hero points as PCs earn them, but during combat you should be more vigilant. The need for Pro contests is more stark during combat, so players are more likely to seek hero points while fighting. You can award hero points for role-playing flaws, but keep in mind that many PC goals take a backseat to the fundamental goal of combat: disabling opponents. In this light, hero point awards during combat should tend toward missing opportunities to cause damage or taking more damage from opponents.

As an example of role-playing against one's goals, a player could earn a hero point for refusing to defend himself if his character is a pacifist, or for falling victim to a scam or trick if his character is gullible. In combat, a player might say that nine points of physical damage means his arm is broken, and refuse to use his sword or shield for the rest of the battle.

Unlike PCs, non-player characters don't get hero points, which is why your villain NPCs get a special type of benefit called the **Villain Point**. Villain points refresh at each encounter with the PCs, not each day. They should be used on the contests that make your villain uniquely evil or antagonistic, like lying (Deceive), mind-controlling innocent people (Persuade or Magic), or channeling evil power into a punch (Unarmed).

Skills

Difficulty

For some skills, the average person rule doesn't help much because you can't guess how difficult something might be, or the average person isn't even capable of using the skill. In these cases, you can use the level titles (amateur, professional, expert, master, legend, mythic) to help you decide which level might be capable of easily performing a skill-related task, and assign four difficulty points for each level above amateur. For example, if "greasing a frickwallow snattercharm" is something that might be easy for an Expert (level 3) in the field, then the difficulty contest would get a +8 bonus.

Player-Characters

Hero Points

Hero points are not just an occasional bonus to contests; they're an essential part of making player-characters come alive. So it's important that PCs have them and use them.

Detect

Using the detect skill is easiest in quiet, bright areas. As areas get louder, darker, or farther away, you can make them harder to detect in four-point segments of difficulty. For example, indoor neon lighting might provide no difficulty, while flickering lights would make detecting Challenging, and broken lights would make it Difficult.

Healer

With the healer skill, the amount and rate of damage removal for a given contest depends primarily on campaign theme. Fantastic healing has low difficulty and occurs quickly, requiring only a magic salve or miracle pill. Realistic healing has high difficulty, takes time, and requires lots of tools, sterile conditions, assistants, and plenty of bed rest. When describing how damage removal occurs, keep it consistent with how the PC has chosen to characterize his damage. For example, if a PC who is close to max physical damage is only "winded" according to the player, then it makes more sense for an NPC healer to provide a cold, wet towel and shoulder-rub than to put a cast on the PC's leg.

Magic

Magic powers already have a built-in difficulty, representing the increasing complexity of higher-level powers. But other difficulty factors can add a bonus or penalty to magic contests, depending on how magic works in your campaign. For example, noisy or dangerous distractions might call for a difficulty penalty on magic contests, while using special materials while using a power might offer a difficulty bonus.

Willpower

Willpower can be used to remove MP damage. A good default rate, earned by meditating, resting, or otherwise abstaining from adventuring, is two points per hour versus the normal one-point hourly rate. Your campaign theme can adjust this rate upward if wizardry or super-powers are commonplace things.

Perks

Altering the perk list offers a lot of room for game customization. When introducing new perks, try to keep their utility in line with the other available perks. There are some common signs that a perk is unbalanced: every PC has it by level two or three, it is the first and/or only perk that a PC uses in battle, or more than one PC wants to trade it for a previous perk as soon as you introduce it. If necessary, segment too-powerful perks so that they can be acquired in increments.

Gear

Character Wealth

The game doesn't assign wealth to PCs, instead letting players choose their wealth level by default. The reason for this is that money doesn't directly make a character more powerful, and can sometimes make a character more vulnerable. It's your choice to limit the funds of PCs, but keep in mind that having too much money can be just as challenging as not having enough. For example, characters with too much wealth might be frequently tailed by thieves (or worse, assassins), be dogged by needy dependents, or risk losing their wealth without committing large amounts of (non-adventuring) time to maintaining it.

Natural Weapons

Some characters don't carry a weapon; they use their bodies to cause damage in combat. Normally, these "natural" weapons cause d4 damage which can be improved by perks like Weapon Training or Martial Artist. An alternative to this is using Gear as a natural weapon. This type of natural weapon is treated in all respects as a normal weapon, except that it cannot be stolen or dropped, and it utilizes the Unarmed skill instead of the Armed skill.

For example, a warmech with a "natural" arm-cannon, a Heavy weapon that does d12 damage, should spend an action getting it ready: raising it into position or transforming it from a robotic hand. Since heavy weapons do not permit the use of shields, the warmech would need to spend an action to un-equip the arm-cannon, and another to ready a shield if it wanted to use its ballistic barrier to defend itself.

Ammunition

Ammunition is another concept that is not tracked by the rules. This is because projectile weapons have an inherent penalty in the respective reload times, and because there are many different ways to track ammunition usage. It's up to you and your campaign theme if you will allow unlimited ammo, track usage by action, track usage by projectiles fired, use ammo dice, or find another method for tracking ammo.

Special Items

Your PCs will probably come across some items in the game world that make them more powerful or dangerous: Special Items. These can be treated as temporary or permanent character elements.



To balance the effects of a temporary special item, you should limit its quantity, duration, or both. For example, a space-exploring character finds an alien gem that clings to her forehead, giving her psychic powers and a mental score bonus. The benefits of this item are comparable to awarding that character two or three more character levels, which isn't fair to the other players (if they didn't receive similar benefits). You could limit its duration by making its power fizzle out after an important scene. Alternatively, you could give the item offsetting penalties, like the loss of a perk and a physical score loss equal to the mental gain.

Since special items can mimic character elements, you can allow PCs to buy them with current or future level benefits, thus making them permanent items. For example, a PC in a commando unit buys a rocket launcher, and wants it to be his trademark weapon. Since a rocket launcher causes damage at short range to multiple opponents, it is comparable to a 3rd level Power. You allow the PC to start using the launcher now, but you require that he spend his next skill point on Magic (Rocket Launcher), and his next perk on Mana to help simulate his daily allotment of rockets.

Magic

The treatment of magic in your game depends on your campaign theme, which can dictate how magic appears and how it is used. Magic appearance can vary with your setting and resemble wizardry, witchcraft, psychic power, super-powers, technology, and more. In addition, you can change the usage rules or adopt other magic modules to run the magic in your game. Possibilities for this might be to abandon the MP Cost rules in favor of using daily power slots, or even to make the use of powers unlimited as long as the magic-user rolls a high enough contest and chooses powers from a level-appropriate list.

When adding new powers to the powers list, be sure to assign them a power level with other, comparable powers. If a power's level is too low, that power will be overused by both PCs and NPCs. If a power's level is too high, it's likely the power won't be used at all, in favor of easier powers to use.

Non-Player Characters

Character Sheets

Every NPC needs a concept - an idea of who he is and why he's in the story. Beyond that, you don't need a character sheet for an NPC unless you expect your PCs to be making more than a few contests against that NPC. Just let your story decide if the NPC's outcomes are Pros or Cons.

If the NPC needs to make contests and you have time to spare, create the NPC's character sheet just like you would create a PC. The only difference here is that most NPCs don't use hero points because they're not heroes.

If you don't have time to spare, you can quickly fill out a temporary character sheet for the NPC with a few easy steps. Pick a level for the NPC, using the level names as a guide. Assign 10 points to each attribute, and add a point for each character level to the NPC's primary attribute. Then choose a primary skill, tied to the NPC's profession, job, or role, and add a skill point to that skill for each character level. Don't add perks unless there are some obvious choices, but as a general rule, an NPC should have at least one Bonus Action perk if it is Legendary, and at least two bonus actions available if it is Mythical. Physical damage and protection are d8 unless another die type is obvious.

For example, your PCs are trudging through an alien jungle, and one of them hears movement in the foliage. Another PC remembers from his backstory that he lost an uncle to jungle-dwelling, poisonous bipeds, so you decide to include one in the story. You give it a quick description: "something big, green, and snarly pushes through the leaves toward you. It resembles a huge toad, but it has a snout and a red, leaf-like appendage bouncing on its forehead." With that short concept in place, you give it five levels (legendary), add five points to its physical score for a total of 15, give it five points in Movement, dedicate one perk to Bonus Action (unarmed), and another perk to some limited form of water-breathing. Finally, d8 seems like a good amount of unarmed damage for now, and d4 protection to represent scaly hide. After your game session, you'll build the creature from the ground up, so you'll have the detail you need to make the creature interesting and to present it consistently.

Another NPC shortcut to take is called **Reskinning**. When you need a character sheet but you don't have one ready, just use the sheet of another NPC that has similar characteristics. Then, you just substitute the new character concept for the old one, or "reskin" the NPC. So if you have a character sheet for an orc noble, but you suddenly need a character sheet for a viking lord, you can use the orc noble character sheet, applying the viking lord concept, until you have time to build a full character sheet for the viking lord.

Combat

When choosing NPC opponents, especially for use in combat, you'll create the most fair or even fight by matching total character levels, number of opponents, and equipment to the PCs. If your NPCs have a significant advantage in any of these categories, the PCs are likely facing a battle that they can't win. In this case, it's better to use simple conflict instead of

extended conflict because this allows you to focus more on the narrative, and it implies to the players that their goal is not, or should not be, max progress. On the other hand, some opponents are so fragile that it would be a waste of time to call for initiative contests to battle them. You can just role-play their defeat or call for a few cursory contests until the PCs defeat or disperse them.

How your NPCs conduct themselves in battle isn't easy to simulate if you are not yet comfortable with the combat rules. Until you get a feel for how combat works, try assigning one of the following sets of tactics to your aggressive NPCs, i.e. the ones who don't immediately flee from conflict.

- Solo-aggressive. Attacks while initiating or as a reaction when reasonable, unlikely to defend, flees at 25% health (e.g. superhero alien, bridge troll, ghoul).
- Solo-cautious. Delays to improve initiative contest, combines attacks while initiating, saves at least one action for defending, flees at 50% health (e.g. huntsman elf, secret agent, gladiator program).
- Team-aggressive. Offensive posture characters attack while initiating, saving one action for defense or to assist teammates, additional teammates flank whenever possible, go to defensive posture at 25% health (e.g. mountain wolf, insect alien).
- Team-cautious. Save attacks until teammates are in two postures (offensive and defensive), offensive characters defend while defensive characters attack from protected positions, characters at 50% health take defensive posture or flee (e.g. knight human, guard, aquan alien).

Conflict

Contests

The most frequent way that players will interact with the rules is when you ask for contests, so it's important to understand how to use them. The first thing to remember about contests is that they are not required. If a PC wants to do something and there's no reason why the character couldn't accomplish it, let him do it. If the activity seems like something that the character could do, let him do it. It's better to say "yes" than to say "no" or "roll" when you're guiding the game. However, if the PC knows that he's doing something risky, or if you anticipate an unfavorable outcome when the player anticipates a favorable outcome, then you should ask for a contest.

To do so, you must first decide if the activity is primarily physical, mental, or metaphysical. If it deals with objects or the character's body, it's a physical contest. Mental contests involve thinking, using ideas, speech, senses, and so forth. A metaphysical contest involves intangible powers that are generally external or separate from a character's body: spirit, magic, energy, or anything that is hard to characterize as physical or mental.

Ask the player to roll a contest of that type, which means adding the PC's corresponding attribute bonus to the die roll. You can name a skill for the contest as well, but consider allowing the PC to try a different skill and how that might alter the contest's outcome. At the same time, you roll the opposing NPC contest. If the PC has no opponent, your roll is just a difficulty contest with a bonus from the difficulty table.

Sometimes, the situation should grant an advantage or disadvantage to one side of the contest. You can make a snap judgment just by granting a difficulty bonus to the contestant who has better odds. But if the conflict is complex or has several actors, you will want to apply the right type of difficulty to the right contest(s). You know who should have the bonus or penalty if that bonus or penalty would disappear were that contestant removed from the conflict.

For example, martial artists A and B are sparring at sunset, and A is facing the sun. Since it will be easier for B to attack, it might seem like B should get a difficulty bonus to his Unarmed contest. However, since the blinding effect is on A, the difficulty is actually a penalty to A's rolls; she subtracts the Difficulty from her contests that depend on vision. Put another way, if A were removed from the conflict, there would be no blinding effect, so the difficulty applies to A's rolls, not to B's rolls. If A and B were sparring in a pitch black room, it would be more difficult for A to attack and more difficult for B to defend. The vision penalty would remain if you removed either character, so both characters should suffer the penalty. You may also note that these penalties offset each other, so you can ignore them as long as there are no other characters around who might benefit from the darkness.

The final step in resolving contests is describing the outcome with the player. In general, players describe what happens to their characters and you describe what happens to the NPCs. But as long as a player's idea fits with the story, let him tell it. Provide guidance if the player comes off the rails a bit. For example, a player gets a contest result of 25 while attempting to spear a mounted knight in the head, and it's a Pro. However, his damage roll is only 2, and the knight's protection reduces that to 1 point. The PC says, "25? I knock her clear off her horse!" But due to the minimum damage,

you clarify: "the hit does indeed knock her straight back, but she stays in the saddle and rights herself."

You can also let players describe their Cons. If a player volunteers to suffer a setback after rolling a Con, you should consider awarding a hero point for it. For example, a super-hero PC rolls a physical contest with the unarmed skill to catch a falling gas truck, and adds a hero point but gets a Con. The player could say "I punch straight through the tank's skin and it explodes around me," or "I watch in horror as the truck crashes before I can reach it," and you could modify the outcome or go with it, awarding a hero point if the player's description opposes his goals.

In the unlikely event of a contest Tie, you can narrate that the contest lasts longer than expected, requiring a follow-up contest, or that neither side gets a more favorable outcome than the other. You can also use a Tie as an excuse to ask a player to role-play just a little more, enough to earn the role-playing bonus (+2) and turn a Tie into a Pro. Ties can also become Pros for miscellaneous reasons, like creative use of Powers (like Alter), a player's utilization of character backstory, or consistent use of hero points to emphasize character concept instead of using them as generic luck bonuses.

Drama Rolls

If you're saving time by talking half on the majority of your rolls, your PCs will begin expecting their low contests to be automatic Cons. You can increase the amount of nail-biting that PCs do by occasionally "checking" a PC's low roll by rolling your difficulty contest afterward, in secret or in the open (for greater effect). Statistically, the PC's result will still be a Con, but the lower you roll is the more excited a PC will be to discover that her low roll was actually a Pro.

Difficulty Table

There are lots of specific types of difficulty that could require their own difficulty tables, like Darkness Difficulty, Jumping Distance Difficulty, Persuading Characters Difficulty, et cetera, but your freedom to determine the campaign theme means that those difficulty amounts would be different for each campaign. This is why there's the Average Person rule. The average person in the campaign sets the bar for how difficult any activity or outcome is to achieve. If a particular situation keeps coming up and causing disagreement, create a house difficulty table for it, and get player suggestions on where the benchmarks should lie. Feel free to assign difficulty in increments of less than 4 points; those benchmarks are just there to help you quickly determine a difficulty bonus in a pinch.

Non-Combat Conflict

You can set up extended conflict to simulate many different situations; its uses go well beyond combat. To do so, just make minor adjustments to the different elements of extended conflict: max progress, turns, actions, and progress.

For example, you want to create a chariot race in extended conflict. You know that you want the race to last about ten rounds, so you do some math to find the average amount of Progress that a character could earn in ten rounds: with a d8 progress die that rolls 4.5 points on average, at one attack contest per round, you set max progress at 45 points. You decide that each racer can make one race contest per round, so the remaining two actions can be used for defending against progress, directly attacking the other racer, or even a movement action to change lanes or choose a route further from the opponent. In addition, the NPC racer has a faster horse, so he rolls progress on a d10, and you let the PC know that she will have to be creative to win the race, since the numbers are not on her side. At the end of each round, you compare each side's progress, and use the actions of each character to tell the story of what happened that round.

If you want a high-stakes negotiation between two nations, you can turn the initiative contests into a mini-negotiation for goodwill, and during conflict you'll disallow reactions so that each nation must make a full argument and/or rebuttal during its turn.

Actions can be limited to a small set of skills depending on the conflict's goal. A character whose goal is to hotwire a space fighter before the authorities arrive might then have to choose which skill he thinks will accomplish his goal fastest: Scientist to override the circuit, Larceny to defeat the control lock, or Knowledge (scholarship) to recall the craft's schematics.

As a final example, changing the progress die can also give conflict a new feel. While a d8 is the default die type, a conflict that starts slow and gathers speed could use a higher progress die in each new round. Or characters who are ill-equipped for a conflict might use a lower progress die, like when a character tries to pick a lock with a paperclip and piece of gum. Another progress alteration might be making PCs responsible for securing their own regress prior to extended conflict, like allowing PCs to choose which protection to use before they must attempt to cross an electrified floor: metal stilts (no protection), rubber shoes (d4 protection), or a rolling wooden barrel (d10 protection, plus risk of falling off).



Environments

Here are some suggestions for making your story's environment feel more real to the players:

- Add difficulty bonuses or penalties to certain contests, like using Detect penalties in darkness, or Movement penalties on slippery ground.
- Alter posture rules, like conveyor belts moving defensive characters into offensive posture at the end of each round.
- Use an extended conflict for the environment itself. In a living jungle, the jungle itself could cause physical damage, apply difficulty to movement attempts, and oppose PC contests for communication, searching, or survival.

Reactions

Handling reactions correctly during combat is an important element in maintaining combat speed and tension. First, remember that reactions are a privilege. Since they represent a split-second decision to act on an opportunity or to prevent misfortune, reactions are not as freely available as actions are.

Generally, a PC should declare a reaction as soon as is politely possible after the initiating action. This means waiting until other players are done speaking, but not waiting until you've begun resolving the actions at that time. This makes it easy for a PC who's under attack to say, "I raise my shield and defend" or "I withdraw to cover," while a PC who wants to use Magic to react will lose his opportunity if he needs to stop and decide which Power to use.

Some PCs, with heavy armor, weapons, or both, may notice that characters cannot defend while attacking, and so choose to make attacks as reactions while their opponents are attacking. There is no rule against this, but the nature of reactions limits the effectiveness of this technique. When engaged with an opponent, a PC (or any character) can make a valid reaction to attack that opponent while he attacks. The opponent is likely to notice if his damage is climbing faster than the PC's, and if so, begin parrying or withdrawing to change the outcome. The PC can attack other opponents with reactions as well, but must first be in a position to do so. In other words, you can counter-attack as a reaction, but moving and engaging a new opponent should occur on your turn or utilize some reasonable non-actions. Furthermore, NPCs are also capable of noticing when someone's guard is down, so a PC who uses attacks as reactions is vulnerable to NPC reactions if he is engaged with multiple opponents.

Attacks and Defenses

Two types of contests have a special relationship with each other: attacks and defenses. Usually, an attack creates a condition that a defender wants to nullify or avoid with a defense Pro. A common example of an attack is a contest that adds damage to the defender's damage pool. Attacks can also be used to impose a difficulty penalty. If throwing a net, for example, the attacker's Pro might inflict difficulty on the defender's movement contests until she rolls a Pro to escape. Or, a wrestling attacker might use an Unarmed action each round to maintain a hold on a defender, who can't remove the hold's penalties until he gets his own Pro on an Unarmed defense action.

A defense isn't always required to nullify an attack. If an attack outcome could be unfavorable, regardless of what the defender does, then the attacker still needs to roll against a difficulty contest. For example, shooting at an opponent who is surrounded by the shooter's allies has a good chance of an unfavorable result, whether or not the target Defends. If the defender has used his actions for the round and can't react, the shooter should roll against a difficulty contest, due to the chance that he shoots, or actively avoids, an ally.

Initiative Contests

There are two common times to begin an extended conflict. The first is when conflict is planned, such as when a buzzer sounds or when a certain time passes. The second is when characters start quickly reacting to each other's actions, or when the situation demands quick reactions. This is when you call for initiative contests. If one character clearly set off a chain reaction of events, that character's action resolves just before the first character's turn. If one side of the conflict was expecting a conflict while the other was not, award initiative contest bonuses as appropriate.

For example, several PCs are tailing a mark covertly through a busy subway station. The mark walks casually along the platform, but suddenly bolts to get onto the train before the doors close. Several players shout at the same time, "I get on the train!" You can roll initiative contests normally and give the mark an action to get on the train, just before the round begins. Or you can grant a difficulty bonus to the mark's initiative contest, and simply start conflict with the turn of whoever had the highest contest.

In extended conflict, it can be helpful to track turn order, actions available, and various details like postures, Magic contests, and defense Pros against powers. The standard layout for this is the **Combat Card**, which places a character in each row in order of initiative contests, with each column representing a round. At each intersection, add a tick mark when that character uses an action in the current

round. Save some space for notes in each box, in case a character does something (or is affected by something) that you'll want to remember in future rounds.

Sample Combat Card

	1	2	3
Blawesome	xxx	xx	
P health 15, 12		chasing	
Baker	xxx	xx	
P health 12, 10	defensive	fleeing	
Bomber	xxx	xxx	
P health 24, 22, 19			
Sir Broff	xxx		
P health 10, 6			
Hax420	xxx	x	
P health 8	In car, def		

Defensive Posture

Offensive posture is where combat takes place by default. At the start of combat, you should decide if you'll allow any characters to take defensive posture, and if any characters will begin combat there.

Defensive posture is available in a combat that offers either cover from attacks or enough room for allies to establish an offensive line. For example, a boxing ring offers no cover and minimal room for tactical maneuvering, so characters could not take defensive posture in the ring. In a narrow hallway, it's easy to take cover in a doorway or behind furniture, and even easier to use comrades as a protective line, so characters could take defensive posture there.

Damage

You can let your players decide how their characters react to damage. There is no need to require a PC with physical damage to have physical wounds, but that player could earn role-playing bonuses or hero points if he role-plays a wound well. The player is only required to take notice when his character is disabled: when he has taken damage in excess of his max damage.

When a character becomes Disabled or recovers from it, it should usually serve some sort of story- or character-development purpose. The story doesn't advance, for example, when the party simply waits for six months while a bone fracture heals. A more interesting outcome would be for the character's concept to advance with the

character receiving a huge scar, one that perfectly matches a scar that has been appearing in the character's dreams...

Taking half on damage rolls and protection can speed up extended conflict, but rolling these dice allows for critical hits: when one side rolls as low as possible and the other side rolls as high as possible. You can use this occasion to narrate something special in the story, or you could add an interesting house rule like: critical damage causes an instant Disable, or critical protection means the attacker loses an action.

Protection

When an NPC opponent rolls an attack Pro, you will typically tell PCs how much damage they are taking in order to show them that the attack earned progress, and move combat along. A player will then likely choose to take half on protection if it would reduce the damage to minimum damage. When attacks become critical, such as when a PC is close to max damage, you can add a slow-motion effect to the conflict by stopping to ask a player to choose to take half or roll protection before you roll damage. This buys you and the player more time to describe each (final?) moment of the fight.

Modules

Feedback

When using anything beyond the standard rules - lists, rules modules, or adventure modules - it's important to get feedback from the players on how they feel about the changes. Some players will be vocal about liking or disliking a particular mod, while others might not let you know that something isn't working for them... until they leave the game. Check in with all the players, after each game session is a good time, to see if you should keep, change, or discard a rule or module.

Customizing Lists

The game assumes that you will add your own and others' content to it, and the easiest way to do that is with Lists. The key to customizing the Lists is to make new items comparable, or balanced, with other list items. For example, a new skill in the skill list isn't comparable if it's as useful as five other skills combined, or if it can only be used once every three game sessions. You can balance Gear by making it more or less expensive, or balance Powers by raising or lowering their power level, but Skills and Perks should be segmented into multiple items if they outshine existing list items.

Appendix A: Frequently Asked Questions

The questions here are sorted by chapter relevancy.

Chapter 2: Player-Characters

Q: Can I play a warlock? An elf-warlock? I don't see them in the book.

A: Players create their own races and classes, subject to the campaign theme, by writing them into their character concepts, choosing representative skills and perks, and designing their hero points accordingly. So, yes.

Q: How is using a hero point different from getting a high contest result?

A: A hero point lets you do virtually anything that you and the Guide agree would be something that the hero of the story could do a few times per day or per scene. Since this is often Arduous or Impossible, the hero point also raises your contest result a bit, giving your heroic act a better chance of having a favorable outcome.

Q: When should I use my hero points? I don't have too many.

A: Hero points make your character unique, so use them whenever they would let your character steal the scene. It's okay if they run out, because you can earn more from the Guide at any time. You might even suggest it to your Guide after you've really made your Flaw stand out.

Chapter 3: Skills

Q: I don't see the skill I want. Can I add it to my character sheet anyway?

A: If there's a similar or related skill, you should take that one and personalize it for your character. You can add any new skill that you and the Guide agree on.

Q: Detect is a Mental skill. Does it work for investigations? What if I want to use Metaphysical to rub elbows and gather information?

A: The normal attributes for skills, like Mental for Detect, are just recommendations. What you're doing determines if a contest is needed, and what type of contest it will be. So if you want to rub elbows and gather information from people, your Guide might ask for a metaphysical contest, and you can suggest using Detect since your character is trying to be perceptive.

Q: Do I need to take all the Defend skills in order to survive?

A: You don't need every Defend skill, since you can also protect yourself with Protection and/or increase your max damage. The most effective way to protect yourself is to avoid conflicts that you can't win.

Q: I use my physical damage to represent exhaustion. How does our party medic heal my damage if there are no wounds to care for?

A: The Healer skill can be used to do any number of things related to non-wound physical damage: stretching, massage, nutrition counseling, or acupuncture, for example. There's no reason why "preventative medicine" shouldn't remove damage, too!

Chapter 4: Perks

Q: Can I make my own perk?

A: Yes, but try to keep its significance at the same level as the other available perks, and ask your Guide if it looks okay.

Q: My character doesn't use armor. Can I take the armor training perk anyway?

A: Armor training can raise your natural physical protection from zero to d4, or to d6 if you have the martial artist perk. You'll lose the martial artist benefit, though, if you use a weapon or don armor.

Q: Will my character be invincible if I take the Tough perk at every level-up?

A: Your character will be hard to hurt in combat. But there are other types of conflict besides combat, and other ways to get hurt.

Chapter 5: Gear

Q: I'm playing a mutant with steel skin. Is there a way to get permanent armor?

A: You could wear plate armor, never remove it, and call it your "steel skin." Or you could design your own armor and get Guide approval. Remember that the physical penalty goes up as armor provides more physical protection.

Q: Where are all the magic items?

A: Your Guide keeps them in a secret vault. But you can create your own by using skills, perks, powers, and hero points to simulate them. For example, a weapon training (bastard sword) perk could turn your long sword into a



“magic long sword,” since it makes your weapon more dangerous than normal.

Chapter 6: Magic

Q: This Power breaks the game. My players can kill anyone with it. Will you fix it in the next update?

A: As a living, community-supported game, Modos RPG is always open to revision – especially by house rules and modules. But consider that killing things often makes things worse, not better. What might be the consequences if a PC gets a reputation for solving problems by killing?

Q: If using magic requires one or more actions, does that mean powers can be used only in extended conflict?

A: You can use powers outside conflict as well, but you can't use any power that you couldn't use during your turn in extended conflict. If there's a chance of an unfavorable outcome, the Guide may ask for a contest.

Q: There's nothing to correspond character levels to power levels. Can my 1st level character use a 3rd level power?

A: Yes: if your character has unlocked the magic skill for a power, has enough actions, can get higher than 0 (zero) on her magic contest after adding magic difficulty, and can survive the MP cost, then she can use a 3rd level power. Using a 4th level power, however, will also require her to have the bonus action (magic) perk, and have a metaphysical score of at least 15.

Q: If a power causes a Defense penalty, can I defend against it before the penalty takes effect, or does my defense contest suffer the penalty?

A: Normally, you do not suffer the defense penalty as long as you React to the power-user's final Magic action.

Q: Can I maintain more than one power at a time?

A: As long as you have the actions available to maintain and use Magic, you can. If you start your turn without enough actions to maintain each power, you'll have to decide which powers end at that point.

Q: How do I make a Power permanent?

A: A permanent power, like always having an anti-fire shell around you, requires dedicating an action to maintain that power permanently. For this reason, high-level magic-users are more likely to have permanent powers because they are more likely to have bonus magic actions to dedicate. Alternatively, you can work with your Guide to create a house rule for making powers permanent, like adding a Flaw or lowering your metaphysical score.

Q: Can I focus Fire 3 on just one opponent, and roll 3d8 for damage?

A: Not according to the definition of a multi-target power. Also, the Fire 3 power says targets take only d8 damage. However, since protection applies whenever damage applies, your Guide might allow you to roll 3d8 damage, and subtract protection from each die.

Chapter 7: Non-Player Characters

Q: How do I know what NPC level to use as opponents for my PCs?

A: For combat, a rule of thumb is to match total NPC levels to total PC levels, and match damage and protection dice, for a fair fight. For other tests of skill, compare skill points in the relevant skills, and adjust up or down if characters have progress or regress advantages.

Q: This NPC's weapon or armor isn't in the Gear list. Where did it come from?

A: If the weapon or armor doesn't have a size category or physical penalty, it's probably “natural” equipment that's buffed-up by perks. Otherwise, it's unique, and you might consider adding it to your Gear list.

Chapter 8: Conflict

Q: Why doesn't the Guide tell me which skill to use with my contest?

A: Because adding skill points to your contest is optional, but using an attribute is required. If the Guide suggests a skill or you would like to apply a particular skill, go ahead and try it.

Q: Can I use my attack contest to do something other than make Progress?

A: Anything is possible. You could try to impose a skill penalty on your opponent, disarm him, or anything else related to the skill you're using to attack.

Q: Can I combine actions for a better contest if I'm not in an extended conflict?

A: No, because actions aren't used outside of extended conflict. Combining actions is one way to represent the ebb and flow of luck in extended conflict. But you can always take half if you'd like.

Q: Is rolling 20 an auto-hit? Is 1 a critical miss?

A: Nope. Rolling 20 just gives you great odds of getting a Pro, and rolling 1 is an almost-guaranteed Con.

Q: My opponent and I both passed max damage on the same action! Are we both Mostly Dead?

A: That's possible, but whoever was initiating probably dealt a fatal blow before the other. It's up to the Guide whether the slower character (or non-initiating) could still deal any damage after becoming Disabled.

Q: My offensive posture opponent is punching me for 1 damage while I'm in defensive posture, but there's no way he could reach me. Why must I take minimum damage from his hits?

A: Remember that an attack Pro isn't a "hit"; it's progress toward disabling your character. You can narrate what that means to your character however you like. But if there's no conceivable way that your opponent could make progress toward defeating you, then your Guide should let your posture and range reflect that, or end the extended conflict.

Q: What's the point of the parry skill? It doesn't stop my opponent from attacking, and since it requires an action, it means I can't counter-attack.

A: Parry has several uses. 1) You can use it to hold offensive posture while your comrades take defensive posture. 2) You can use it to stall while you Delay your turn to gain the initiative. 3) It can buy you time while you wait for reinforcements, or for the train to hit your opponent who happens to be standing on the tracks...

Q: Am I allowed to know my opponent's health? How do I know if I should try to win the fight or flee?

A: This is up to your Guide, who may also give you clues relating to your opponent's health, whether physical ("she's staggering between attacks"), mental ("she's shaking her head as if trying to clear her view"), or metaphysical ("she seems to space out here and there").

Q: How do I defend against an enemy power without my opponents using reactions to attack me? I can't defend myself from a power and from an attack in the same action!

A: Reactions are a privilege, not a right. The Guide determines if your defense actions would leave you vulnerable to other attacks. In many cases, defenses and maintenance actions simulate something taking place over the course of the round, so an opponent wouldn't be able to directly react to such an action.

Q: Can I use my physical defense action against all attacks made toward me at the same time?

A: Yes, but the Difficulty of that would be tremendously high. If there are several opponents who could attack you, fleeing or changing posture is a better choice than trying to defend against all of them at the same time.

Q: Why can't I kill someone with one attack by slitting his throat? A d4 knife doesn't do enough damage.

A: In extended conflict, no, a knife doesn't do much damage. But extended conflict is not required for performing dirty deeds. Sometimes simple conflict, or just role-playing, will suffice.

Q: Shouldn't physical damage pools be bigger? Six or seven level 1 extras could kill my level 10 android in one round of combat!

A: Extended conflict is used to track Progress and focus on details. If those extras couldn't pose a threat to your android, then you wouldn't use an extended conflict, and damage pools wouldn't be necessary.

Q: Can I keep my powers in effect longer by delaying my turn?

A: No. Since you can't delay your turn until your turn begins, you'll have to choose between taking maintenance actions or delaying your turn.

Chapter 9: Modules

Q: How do I convert an adventure module from another game to this one?

A: Many things don't need converting; the story, setting, and character concepts can be imported directly into a Modos game. If a module presents stand-alone, new rules, you can drop them right into Modos as well. Converting other features is best done with liberal use of the average person rule, the difficulty table, and some carefully-placed house rules.

Q: I wrote an awesome module, and I want to share it with other Modos players. How do I do that?

A: Visit the Modos RPG website and leave your contact info and a link to where your module can be accessed. Your module will be posted in the searchable compendium there.

This page reserved for appendices.



And by “appendices,” I mean a multi-page epic battle.





And by “epic battle,” I mean a thorough real-play example that shows you all the rules in action.



Appendix B: Fast Play Rules

1 Concept

Write down your character's name, who he is, and give him a goal and a flaw. You'll start as a professional: level 2.

2 Attributes

Assign scores, 14, 10, and 8, to the three attributes: physical (P), mental (M), and metaphysical (MP). The related bonus for 14 is +2, for 10 is 0, and for 8 is -1.

3 Skills

Choose a skill that your character does well, and give it 2 skill points. Skill points are reusable bonuses that you add to contests involving that skill.

4 Perks

Choose two perks from the perk list. Perks are features that generally don't affect contests.

5 Hero Points

You can add d6, called a hero point, to your contests when doing something heroic. Your character starts each day with 2 hero points to spend, and earns more from the GM for role-playing your flaw in spite of your goal.

6 Gear

Use the gear list to equip your character, or assign a d8 to any weapons or armor you have. These are your damage die and protection die.

7 Role-Play

Describe or act out what your character does and says. If the GM asks for a die roll, help the GM describe the outcome.

8 Contests

If your character does something that might have an unfavorable result, the GM will ask you to roll a contest related to an attribute. This is a d20 roll to which you add that attribute's bonus. Add skill points if you have a skill that might help. If your total is higher than the GM's total, your contest is a Pro: a favorable outcome. If lower, it is a Con: an unfavorable outcome. A Tie can be a neutral result, a re-roll, or a Pro if the GM thinks you've been role-playing well. Use this information to role-play the outcome.

9 Initiate

To determine your turn in combat, roll a d20 and add the attribute bonus of your choice. This is your initiative contest.

10 Actions

In each round of combat, you get three actions to use during your turn or as reactions to other actions. On your turn, your

actions happen first. On other turns, your actions happen a moment after characters with higher initiative contests.

11 Attack

To attack an opponent, use an action to roll a physical contest (d20 + physical bonus) and add the skill points from a fighting skill if you have one. Roll your weapon's damage die separately. You add the damage roll to your opponent's damage pool if your contest is a Pro or if your opponent doesn't react by defending.

12 Defend

To defend against an attack, use an action to roll a physical contest and add Parry skill points if you have them. On a Pro, you take no damage. On a Con, you must take at least 1 damage.

13 Damage

Whenever you take damage, you reduce it by your protection against that type of damage. Add the difference to the damage pool of the corresponding attribute. If you have no protection, you take the full amount damage rolled. If you collect more damage than your attribute score, you are Disabled and cannot take actions until you and the GM resolve your condition.

14 Healing

Each day, you remove one point of physical and mental damage. Each hour, you remove one point of metaphysical damage. If you are disabled, you cannot remove damage.

15 Magic

If you have a magic skill, you can use a magic power. Roll a metaphysical contest and add your magic skill points for that power, adding the power's difficulty as well. You must spend one action per power level to use the power. Add 4 + (power level) to your metaphysical damage pool. Then the power's effect happens.

16 Magic Defense

To defend against magic, use an action to roll a defense contest against the power's magic contest. Against 1st level powers, one defense Pro saves you. Against higher level powers, one defense reduces the effect, and you must make additional defense contests to fully escape the power's effect.

17 Take Half

For any roll, you can skip the roll and say that you rolled half of the highest number on the die.



Appendix C: Rules Catalog

The following are the rules that make up Modos RPG. They are presented in five rules modules: core (000), character (100), extended conflict (200), combat (300), and magic (400). Each rule has a name for reference and a list of the rules on which it depends at the end of its description.

Rule	Name	Description and Dependencies
000	Rule Zero	The Guide of Modos is the player who ultimately decides what happens in the story, with input from dice rolls and player suggestions.
001	Campaign Theme	The GM creates a campaign theme for the game that describes what the PCs can expect from the game and story.
002	Contest	When a PC wants to do something that has a questionable outcome, the GM calls for a contest. The player rolls a d20 against the GM's d20. The higher result gets the better outcome.
003	Contest Result	A contest result is the sum of the d20 roll and applicable bonuses or penalties. The higher result in a contest is called a Pro, and gets a favorable outcome. The lower result is a Con, and gets an unfavorable outcome. A Tie can be rerolled or considered a neutral outcome. 002
004	Attack Contest	An attack is a contest with an outcome that can be nullified by another contest. 002
005	Defense Contest	A defense is a contest made in response to an attack which negates the attack if it is a Pro. 002, 003, 004
006	Awareness	A character has awareness when he is prepared to defend against an attack. A character without awareness cannot defend against attacks of which he is unaware. 002, 003, 004, 005
007	Bonus	Die rolls can be modified by static or random amounts called bonuses. Negative bonuses are also called penalties. A random amount is determined by another die roll.
008	Difficulty	When story conditions make a contest result more likely to be favorable, it gains a bonus called Difficulty. Unfavorable conditions impose a difficulty penalty. 002
009	Difficulty Table	Some difficulty bonuses are named to act as benchmarks. These are: Easy (0), Challenging (4), Difficult (8), Arduous (12), Impossible (16), Divine (20). 002, 008
010	Difficulty Contest	A Difficulty Contest is the GM's opposing roll of a d20 + the difficulty bonus that represents the odds of an unfavorable outcome. 002, 008
011	Minimum Result	A contest result below 1 is automatically a Con. 002, 003
012	Take Half	Any die roll may be replaced, before it is rolled, with a result of half of the die's highest number.
100	Character Concept	Every character has a concept which is a description of the character that gives it form within the story of the game.
101	Goals and Flaws	Players give their character concepts at least one goal and one flaw. 101
102	Average Person	In general, what would be easy for the average person is also easy for each Player- Character. The average person's capabilities are established by the campaign theme. 001
103	Attribute	Character attributes are the fundamental way in which a character exists in terms of rules. The significance of an attribute is measured by its score. The average score is 10.
104	Attribute Bonus	An attribute provides a bonus to contests that depend on it, equal to the score minus ten then divided by two if the score is even. If odd, the bonus is equal to the score minus eleven then divided by two. 103
105	Physical	The physical attribute (abbreviated P) is the measurement of a character's body. It can represent well-being, strength, stamina, speed, and any other corporeal characteristics. 103

Rule	Name	Description and Dependencies
106	Mental	The mental attribute (abbreviated M) is the measurement of a character's mind. It can represent reasoning, sensation, memory, focus, and any other thought-related characteristics. 103
107	Metaphysical	The metaphysical attribute (abbreviated MP) is the measurement of a character's spirit. It can represent a character's charisma, soul, aura, supernatural sensitivity, and any other mystical characteristics. 103
108	Skill	A skill is a character's ability that improves with training or experience. Each skill normally relates to one attribute.
109	Skill Point	Skill development is measured in skill points, which are a reusable bonus to contests involving that skill. 108
110	Maximum Skill Points	A character cannot have more skill points in one skill than he has character levels. 108, 109, 113
111	Locked Skill	A skill that cannot be used until a character has at least one skill point in it is called a locked skill. 108, 109
112	Perk	A perk is a special character benefit other than attributes and skills.
113	Character Level	A character has a level that acts as a general measure of his influence. Each level grants an attribute score point, a skill point, and a perk.
114	Hero Point	A hero point is a difficulty bonus of d6 that a PC may use to improve any of his contests. Hero points should reinforce character concept. 002
115	Hero Point Limit	A PC may not store more hero points at any time than he has character levels. 113, 114
116	Hero Point Sources	Hero points renew each in-game day. The GM may renew hero points as a reward, or whenever a PC role-plays his flaw in spite of his goal. 114
200	Action	Activities of significance are counted in comparable segments of time called actions. Each action permits making one contest if required by the GM.
201	Action Time	All actions in a round have roughly the same duration and occur more or less concurrently, despite the sequential nature of turns. 200
202	Round	A round is a cycle of conflict activity during which all characters in conflict may act. A character gets three actions per round. 200
203	Turn	Each round is divided into a series of turns, one for each character in conflict. A character may choose to take all, some, or none of its actions during its turn. 200, 202
204	Combined Action	A character may, during his turn, forego making a new contest if his next action is a continuation or improvement of the previous action taken during his turn. The new contest result is equal to the previous contest result. 002, 003, 200, 202, 203
205	Non-Action	An activity that does not, by itself, constitute an action is called a non-action. Non-actions may be used freely if they do not interfere with actions. 200, 201
206	Progress	A character progresses toward his conflict goal with Progress, measured in progress points. A character makes progress with an attack contest Pro. 002, 004
207	Progress Pool	When a character earns progress points, they accumulate in a progress pool. 206
208	Maximum Progress	A progress pool has a maximum capacity, called maximum (max) progress. Exceeding this amount indicates goal completion. 206, 207
209	Progress Die	The default progress (regress) die is a d8. The GM can assign a higher die type if the character has an advantage, or a lower type if the character has a disadvantage. 206

Rule	Name	Description and Dependencies
210	Regress	Regress is a character's ability to negate his opponent's progress. Whenever a character makes progress, the opponent may reduce that progress by subtracting regress, if it is available, from the progress made. 206, 209
211	Regress Limit	Regress may not reduce progress to zero. An attack contest Pro does a minimum of 1 progress. 002, 003, 004, 206, 210
212	Initiative Contest	Players determine the order of turns in a round and the sequence of priority of reactions by making initiative contests at the start of extended conflict. Players may choose which attribute to use for this contest. 002, 200, 202, 203
213	Initiating Character	The character taking his turn is called the initiating character, and his actions take priority over all others while initiating. 200, 202, 203
214	Reaction	The Guide may allow a character to take an action during an action of another character's turn, called a Reaction. All such reactions occur simultaneously with the initiating character's action. However, if one action might negate another, the initiating character's action occurs first, followed by each reaction in order of descending initiative result. 200, 202, 203, 212, 213
215	Surprise	A character earns a surprise bonus when he begins conflict against an opponent who is not aware of him. A surprise bonus is either a single action before initiative contests or a +4 bonus to the character's initiative contest. 002, 200, 202, 203, 212
216	Delay	At the start of his turn before using any actions, a character may postpone his turn until the end of any other turn or the beginning of a round. 202, 203
300	Positioning	Character positioning does not require an action unless it would result in a change of posture.
301	Offensive Posture	The default position in conflict is called offensive posture, which is where the majority of a battle takes place.
302	Defensive Posture	If a conflict presents a position that would protect a character from attacks, the GM may allow a second posture for it, called defensive posture. 301
303	Changing Posture	Changing posture requires a physical action. 300
304	Flee Action	A character may use an action to leave (flee) combat with a physical contest Pro. A flee action can be opposed with any action that would cause the fleeing character to remain in conflict, and must be used in defensive or flanking posture if available. 002, 003, 200, 301, 302
305	Flanking Posture	Flanking posture requires a character to treat offensive opponents as though they're in defensive posture, and to treat defensive opponents as though they're in offensive posture. One physical action is required to enter flanking posture, which can be opposed by offensive or defensive opponents. 002, 200, 301, 302
306	Range	Range categories mark differences in posture for weapons and powers. Each of the following postures marks one sequential step: flanking (opponent), defensive, offensive, offensive (opponent), defensive (opponent), flanking. Close range measures a difference of one or no steps. Short range measures a difference of two steps. Medium range includes all postures in conflict. Long range marks characters or targets that can be identified, but are not in conflict. 301, 302, 305
307	Mounted Posture	Mounted posture is for characters riding animals or driving vehicles when most combatants are not mounted. A character in this posture is treated as being in defensive posture. The character may choose, during his turn, to be treated as though he is in offensive or flanking posture for any of his actions, and returns to defensive posture treatment when that action ends. One physical action is required to enter mounted posture, and mounted posture ends if the mounted character does not use the first action of his turn to maintain it. 200, 202, 203, 301, 302

Rule	Name	Description and Dependencies
308	Flying Posture	Flying posture is for characters who are flying above a battle while most of the combatants are on the ground. A character in this posture is treated as though he is at medium range from all other characters in conflict. The character may choose, during his turn, to be treated as though he is in offensive, defensive, or flanking posture for any of his actions, and resumes flying posture when that action ends. One physical action is required to enter flying posture, and flying posture ends if the flying character does not use the first action of his turn to maintain it. Flying characters treat each other as though they are in offensive posture. 200, 202, 203, 301, 302, 305, 306
309	Physical Damage	When a character makes progress toward physically defeating a foe in combat, it is called physical damage. It can be expressed as wounds, exhaustion, damage to armor, bad luck, or anything affecting the character physically. Physical regress is called physical protection. 103, 105, 206, 210
310	Mental Damage	When a character makes progress toward mentally defeating a foe in combat, it is called mental damage. It can be expressed as confusion, brain fog, blacking out, bad luck, or anything affecting the character mentally. Mental regress is called mental protection. 103, 106, 206, 210
311	Metaphysical Damage	When a character makes progress toward metaphysically defeating a foe in combat, it is called metaphysical damage. It can be expressed as insanity, zoning out, possession, bad luck, or anything affecting the character metaphysically. Metaphysical regress is called metaphysical protection. 103, 107, 206, 210
312	Damage Pool	Characters track the damage that their opponents cause to them in damage pools that correspond to each attribute. 103, 206, 207
313	Maximum Damage	An attribute's damage pool can hold an amount of damage equal to the attribute score. Damage in excess of this amount is not stored, but results in a character becoming disabled. 103, 206, 207, 312
314	Disabled	When a character takes more damage than a damage pool can store, he becomes Disabled. The disabled character is severely limited in his activities, and generally cannot take actions corresponding to the type of damage that exceeded max damage. The disabled condition has a different name for each attribute: Physical - Mostly Dead, Mental - Unconscious, Metaphysical - Catatonic. 103, 105, 106, 107, 206, 207, 312, 313
315	Natural Healing	The default rate of damage removal is 1 point per day for physical and mental damage, and 1 point per hour for metaphysical damage. Disabled characters cannot remove damage. 105, 106, 107, 309, 310, 311, 314
316	Armor	Armor is the primary source of physical protection in combat. In general, as armor offers more protection, it reduces a character's physical attribute score. This reduction is called the Physical Penalty. 103, 105, 206, 210
317	Shield	A shield adds a bonus to a character's physical defense skill, while occupying a hand. Heavy shields reduce a character's physical attribute score. 005, 103, 105, 108
318	Weapon	Weapons are used to deal physical damage in combat. Larger weapons generally use a higher damage die type, require two hands to use, and require an action to ready. All characters can cause d4 physical damage even when unarmed, as a natural weapon. 103, 105, 206, 309
319	Weapon Range	Each weapon has a Range attribute that dictates in which posture it does its normal damage. At the next further range increment it does one point of damage, and no damage at further ranges. 103, 105, 206, 309, 318
320	Natural Armor	By default, there is no protection die for any attribute. Perks can improve natural armor, with d4 being the first level of protection. 309, 310, 311
400	Power	A power is an effect that a character creates by using a magic skill. 108
401	Power Level	All powers have a level that is a measure of their significance in relation to other powers. 400



Rule	Name	Description and Dependencies
402	Magic Action	Using a power requires one magic contest and action per power level. Multiple actions must be combined during the magic user's turn. 200, 202, 203, 204, 400, 401
403	Magic Minimum Contest	A magic contest result below 1 cancels a magic-use attempt, and the magic actions used up to that point are lost. 002, 003, 011, 402
404	Power Effect	A power's effect is the story- or rules-based effect that results from using the power's magic skill. A magic user must achieve a Pro on all magic actions and suffer MP Cost before a power takes effect. The effect occurs/begins at the same time as the final magic action. 002, 003, 200, 202, 203, 204, 400
405	Half Effect	The half-effect is the reduced effect of a power that a target suffers after one defense Pro. Each half-effect lists the attribute used to defend against the power. 002, 003, 103, 200, 202, 203, 204, 400, 404
406	Power Defense	If an effect is ongoing, its target may attempt a defense against the magic contest at any time to end the effect. After one defense Pro, the effect ends on that target and the half-effect begins. When the defender's number of defense Pros equal the number of the power's magic actions, the half-effect ends as well. 002, 003, 004, 005, 400, 402, 404, 405
407	MP Cost	To produce a power effect, a magic-user must take metaphysical damage equal to d8 + the power's level. This is called the MP Cost. 103, 107, 210, 311
408	Magic Difficulty	When a character uses a magic skill, he adds the corresponding power's Magic Difficulty to his contest(s). This difficulty begins at +4 for level 1, and decreases by 4 points per level after 1. Negative magic difficulties can reduce a magic contest below the minimum magic contest. 002, 008, 108, 402, 403
409	Power Targets	Each power has a Target listing. "Self" means that the power affects only the magic-user. "Single" means that the power affects one target. "Multi" means that the power affects one target per power level. The targets of a Multi power might need to be adjacent to each other, depending on the power effect. 400, 401
410	Power Range	Each power has a Range attribute. It determines the furthest range at which the power's full effect occurs. Powers that cause damage deal minimum (1) damage at one range increment beyond their range attribute. Whether a character at long range can take minimum damage depends on the situation. 301, 302, 305, 306, 400
411	Power Duration	All power effects are instantaneous unless the power is marked as Maintainable (M). A maintainable power lasts until the user begins his next turn with a non-maintain action or until the character delays his turn. 200, 202, 203, 216, 400, 404
412	Maintain Action	A magic-user may begin his turn with a mental action to continue one or more of the powers that he began or maintained earlier in conflict. This action doesn't require a contest unless another character wants to interrupt the power, or adverse conditions would make maintaining the power difficult. 002, 008, 103, 106, 200, 400



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Name

Level

Concept, Goal, Flaw

	Score	Bonus	Protection	Defense
P	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
M	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
MP	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Skills

Perks

Hero Points

Gear

Backstory, Special Items, Inventory

Damage Pools

	Max	Damage
P	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
M	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
MP	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

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