

# THE RULES MANUAL





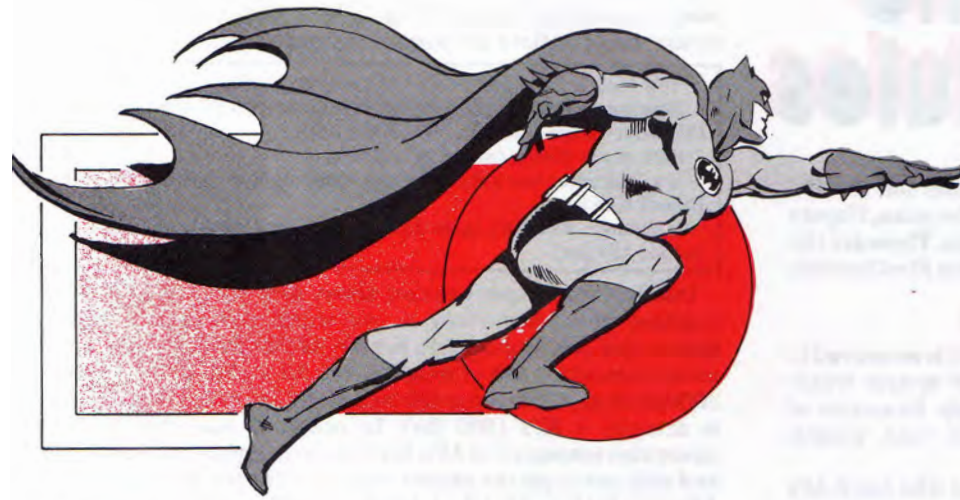
# RULES MANUAL



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# Introduction



Now that you have read the *Read This First* booklet and played through the *Welcome to Gotham City* solo adventure, you should have a pretty good idea of what the **DC HEROES Role-Playing Game** is all about.

This book contains all of the rules you will need for play. Everything found in this book is built upon the basic concepts that were introduced in *Read This First*. If you are still a little fuzzy on some of the basics, don't worry: a quick review of everything you have learned so far follows.

## The Gamemaster and the Players

Each of the participants in the **DC HEROES RPG** has a vital role to play. One of the participants is always the "Gamemaster" (GM for short), while the others are "Players."

Each of the Players takes on the role of one of the heroes from DC Comics. In effect, the Players temporarily become the heroes. They decide what the heroes will do in a series of situations. Should Batman swing down on his Batrope to knock the thug unconscious or should he just throw down a Batarang to do the job? Is it better for Superman to go and confront Lex Luthor now, before any more people are injured, or should he wait until he has more hard evidence of Lexcorp's involvement in the epidemic that is sweeping the eastern seaboard? These are the kind of questions that the Players playing Batman and Superman must answer. In the *Welcome to Gotham City* solo adventure, you were playing the role of Batman.

The Gamemaster does not take on the role of an individual hero. Instead, s/he sets the stage for the adventure in which the Players' heroes will participate. S/he functions like the writers who script DC Comics: the GM decides which villain(s) the heroes will encounter during the adventure, what the villains are after, and how they hope to accomplish their goals. The GM also plays the roles of the villains and the minor characters that the heroes encounter along the way. Suppose, for example, that you are playing Batman and you decide to go ask Commissioner Gordon for help on a case. The GM would then assume the role of Gordon and decide whether or not the commissioner can be of any help to you.

One of the Gamemaster's other responsibilities is to serve as a sort of referee. S/he must make sure that all the Players are following the rules of the game, and be prepared to make snap decisions as to what the Players' Characters can and cannot do. The Gamemaster also ultimately decides the outcome of the heroes' actions.

In short, the Gamemaster functions as a sort of storyteller. S/he keeps play flowing smoothly, interprets the rules, and designs the challenges that the heroes must tackle. If you are unsure of exactly what the GM does during play, refer back to the *What is a role-playing game?* section of *Read This First*.

## Playing the Game

The rules are a framework that help the GM decide what will happen in certain situations. Let's say for example, that you and a friend are playing Batman and Robin. After an exhaustive search you finally manage to find the Joker's hideout. As you enter the hideout, however, the Joker sends ten thugs out to kill you. What happens now? Well, instead of just making some arbitrary decision like, "it's a hard battle, but you win," the GM uses the Combat rules in **Chapter Three** to actually play out the situation and see who wins.

Suppose that Batman and Robin win the battle against the thugs, but by the time the battle is over, the GM decides that the Joker has left the hideout and escaped. Batman will probably want to interrogate one of the thugs and see if the thug can tell him where the Joker may have gone. Batman is a pretty scary guy; but is he scary enough to make the thug tell him what he wants to know? Instead of just pulling an answer out of thin air, the GM can use the Character Interaction rules in **Chapter Four** to figure out how much information the Batman gets out of the thug.

There are rules for all of the activities that the heroes commonly perform in the DC Comics, in order to help the GM decide what happens whenever the heroes (or villains) try to perform those activities. If a Player wants his/her Character to take an action that is not covered in the rules, it is up to the GM to decide what happens next; but the rules cover such a broad range of possible actions that this rarely happens.

You should also note that the GM can choose to supersede or change any of the rules. If you do not like something, go ahead and change it. If you think that the way the Players are rolling the dice is spoiling the adventure, feel free to step in every once in a while and supersede the rules. But take extra care in situations like this. You should probably only change a rule or overrule a dice roll when you have a very good reason to do so. The GM's key responsibility is always to make sure that everyone (including him or herself) is having fun!

You will find a lot more advice on how to be a successful Gamemaster in **Chapter Seven** towards the end of this book.

# The Rules

There are eight simple ideas behind the rules for the **DC HEROES Role-Playing Game**. In order to play the game, Players must be completely familiar with these eight ideas. These are the same concepts that were covered in the *Read This First* booklet.

## Idea One: Attribute Points

Just about everything in the **DC HEROES RPG** is measured in Attribute Points, or APs for short. It is the AP system which allows the rules of the game to function cleanly. Examples of quantities that are measured in APs include: time, weight, distance, information, volume, and money.

APs are entirely interchangeable. A Character who has 6 APs of Strength, for example, can lift an object that weighs 6 APs (about 3000 lbs); while a Character who has 6 APs of Flight can travel 6 APs of distance (600 feet) every 0 APs of time (4 seconds or a single phase of action). Note that zero is always used as a unit of measurement, and for all quantities, zero represents the base value around which the individual measurement system is designed:

APs	Measure	Amount
0	Weight	50 lbs.
0	Distance	10 feet
0	Information	1 paragraph
0	Time	4 seconds
0	Money	\$25

Each additional one AP of a quantity doubles the amount measured by the previous AP. For instance, 0 APs of weight is equal to 50 lbs, 1 AP is 100 lbs, 2 APs is 200 lbs, 3 APs is 400 lbs, and so on. With his Strength of 25, Superman can lift 25 APs of weight, or approximately 972,800,000 lbs (about 81,000 tons).

### Example:

APs	Measure	Amount
5	Weight	1,600 lbs.
5	Distance	320 feet (about 100 yards)
5	Information	32 paragraphs (a term paper)
5	Time	4 minutes, 16 seconds
5	Money	\$800

Each AP actually represents a *range* of values rather than an absolute figure. As we said earlier, 0 APs of weight is equal to 50 pounds, and 1 AP of weight is 100 pounds. A Player might wonder, then, how many APs of weight is something that weighs 75 pounds? The answer is 1 AP, because 1 AP of weight actually represents the entire range of values from 51-100 lbs; 2 APs of weight represents the range of values from 101-200 lbs, and so on. Similarly, 0 APs of distance is 0-10 feet, while 1 AP is 11-20 feet, and 2 APs is 21-40, etcetera.

The *Benchmark APs Table* on the inside of the *Gamemaster's Screen* lists values for the first 20 APs of each of the most commonly used quantities in the game (time, distance, weight, volume, information, and money). In the case of the last four quantities, examples are provided right on the table. For example, the entry for 10 APs of weight reads: "DC-9 Airplane (25 tons)." This means that 10 APs of weight is approximately 25 tons, which is the approximate weight of a DC-9 airplane. These

examples prove very helpful during play. Suppose, for example, that Superman wants to lift a large house. The GM probably has no idea exactly how much a house weighs, but could guess that it would weigh more than a battle tank (11 APs) and less than a blue whale (12 APs) meaning that the house probably weighs about 12 APs. Since Superman has a Strength of 25 APs, he can easily lift the house.

It is important that GMs and Players learn how to convert real world quantities into APs, and APs back into real world measurements. Here are some more examples:

How long is a football field (100 yards)? (5 APs)  
 How long is 3 days? (17 APs, but remember that 17 APs represents the entire range of values from 2 to 4 days)  
 How much does a car weigh? (6 APs)  
 If a Character has a Strength of 8, how much weight can s/he lift? (about 6.25 tons)  
 If Wonder Woman's lasso has a length of 4 APs, how long is it? (about 150 feet)

One last important caution about APs: APs are not added together in the same way as real world measurements. This means that 3 APs plus 3 APs is *not* 6 APs! Look at the real world measurements. 3 APs of weight is 400 lbs, and 6 APs of weight is 3000 pounds; 400 lbs plus 400 lbs is *not* 3000 lbs. 3 APs plus 3 APs is actually 4 APs (800 lbs). In order to add together two quantities measured in APs, take the larger of the two AP values and add one to get the proper result: 7 APs plus 3 APs is 8 APs; 9 APs plus 9 APs is 10 APs; 1 AP plus 14 APs is 15 APs; and so on.

## Idea Two: Attributes

Every Character in the **DC HEROES RPG** has nine natural abilities called *Attributes*. These are: Dexterity (DEX), Strength (STR), Body (BODY), Intelligence (INT), Will (WILL), Mind (MIND), Influence (INFL), Aura (AURA), and Spirit (SPIRIT). The Attributes for each DC Character are listed on his/her Character card or in the *Background/Roster Book*.

Each Attribute measures a different aspect of a Character.

*Dexterity* is a measure of a Character's quickness and agility. Batman is very good here.

*Strength* reflects a Character's physical power and is a measure of the amount of weight that s/he can lift or move. Strength is one of Superman's best Attributes.

*Body* is a measure of a Character's toughness and represents his/her resistance to physical injury. This is an Attribute where Captain Marvel excels.

*Intelligence* shows how smart a Character is. Hawkman is an example of a very intelligent hero.

*Will* gives an indication of the strength of a Character's willpower, and his/her ability to draw conclusions from facts. Hal Jordan of the Green Lantern Corps has one of the strongest forces of willpower in the whole universe!

*Mind* determines how mentally tough a Character is and how likely s/he is to resist mental damage. Aquaman has a very powerful Mind.

*Influence* measures the strength of a Character's personality. A Character with a high Influence is Guy Gardner of the Green Lantern Corps.

*Aura* indicates how easily a Character can affect the emotions of others, and how effectively s/he could take command of a group. Wonder Woman has an exceptionally high Aura.

*Spirit* is the strength of a Character's spirit and a measure of how likely s/he is able to resist fear and mystical or magical damage. The Spectre has one of the highest Spirit ratings around.

Attributes are measured in APs. This means that a Character with an INT of 5 is about twice as smart as a Character with an INT of 4, and so on (remember, each AP of measurement doubles the quantity being measured). Normal humans, like innocent bystanders and minor Characters that frequently crop up during the course of an adventure, have ratings of 2 APs in every Attribute. By looking at Batman's Attributes, it becomes obvious

that Batman is much stronger than a normal man (he has a STR of 5 APs), much faster than a normal man (his DEX is 10), and much smarter than a normal man (Batman's INT is 12). In fact, Batman is a lot better at everything than a normal man! In fact, very few heroes have ratings of 2 APs or lower in any of their Attributes. This is because heroes in DC Comics are almost universally faster, smarter, tougher; and in general, better than a normal man could ever hope to be.

Each Character's Attributes are arrayed in a special three by three pattern:

### BATMAN

DEX:	10	STR:	5	BODY:	6
INT:	12	WILL:	12	MIND:	12
INFL:	10	AURA:	8	SPIRIT:	10

The top row of the Attribute box (DEX, STR, and BODY) is made up of a Character's *Physical* Attributes. Physical Attributes are used when a Character is facing (or making) a Physical Attack such as a punch in the mouth, or a bolt of lightning; or whenever a Character is performing physical activities like jumping over a fence or swinging on a flagpole.

### BATMAN

DEX:	10	STR:	5	BODY:	6
INT:	12	WILL:	12	MIND:	12
INFL:	10	AURA:	8	SPIRIT:	10

The middle row of the Attribute box (INT, WILL, and MIND) is made up of a Character's *Mental* Attributes. Mental Attributes are used when a Character is facing Mental Attacks such as a psionic blast, or mind control; or whenever a Character is performing mental activities like solving a riddle or trying to remember a fact.

### BATMAN

DEX:	10	STR:	5	BODY:	6
INT:	12	WILL:	12	MIND:	12
INFL:	10	AURA:	8	SPIRIT:	10

The bottom row of the Attribute box (INFL, AURA, and SPIRIT) consists of a Character's *Mystical* Attributes. Mystical Attributes are used when a Character is facing Mystical (or magical) Attacks such as Magic Blasts or enchantments, and whenever a Character is performing activities that depend upon the force and quality of his/her personality, like dealing with other people.

Each of the Attributes is also grouped a second way, in columns.

### BATMAN

DEX:	10	STR:	5	BODY:	6
INT:	12	WILL:	12	MIND:	12
INFL:	10	AURA:	8	SPIRIT:	10

The left column of the Attribute box (DEX, INT, and INFL) is made up of a Character's *Acting* and *Opposing* Attributes. DEX, INT, and INFL are called *Acting/Opposing* Attributes because they are most frequently used as Characters' Acting or Opposing Values on the Action Table. DEX is used as the Acting Value if a Character is trying to carry out a Physical Action, like striking an adversary; while DEX is also used as the Opposing Value if a Character is trying to oppose a Physical Action, like the adversary striking back. Similarly, INT is used as the Acting or Opposing Values if a Character is trying to carry out or thwart a Mental Action, and INFL is used as Acting or Opposing Values if a Character is trying to carry out or halt a Mystical Action. The Acting Value indicates how likely a Character is to succeed at a given action, and the Opposing Value indicates how likely

# ACTION TABLE

## Opposing Value Columns

Acting Value Rows		1 to 2	3 to 4	5 to 6	7 to 8	9 to 10	11 to 12	13 to 15	16 to 18	19 to 21	22 to 24	25 to 27	28 to 30	31 to 35	36 to 40	41 to 45	46 to 50	51 to 55	56 to 60	+5
	0																			
1-2	6	11	13	15	18	21	24	28	32	36	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	+5
3-4	5	9	11	13	15	18	21	24	28	32	36	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	
5-6	4	7	9	11	13	15	18	21	24	28	32	36	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	
7-8	4	5	7	9	11	13	15	18	21	24	28	32	36	40	45	50	55	60	65	
9-10	3	4	5	7	9	11	13	15	18	21	24	28	32	36	40	45	50	55	60	
11-12	3	3	4	5	7	9	11	13	15	18	21	24	28	32	36	40	45	50	55	
13-15	3	3	3	4	5	7	9	11	13	15	18	21	24	28	32	36	40	45	50	
16-18	3	3	3	3	4	5	7	9	11	13	15	18	21	24	28	32	36	40	45	
19-21	3	3	3	3	3	4	5	7	9	11	13	15	18	21	24	28	32	36	40	
22-24	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	5	7	9	11	13	15	18	21	24	28	32	36	
25-27	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	5	7	9	11	13	15	18	21	24	28	32	
28-30	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	5	7	9	11	13	15	18	21	24	28	
31-35	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	5	7	9	11	13	15	18	21	24	
36-40	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	5	7	9	11	13	15	18	21	
41-45	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	5	7	9	11	13	15	18	
46-50	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	5	7	9	11	13	15	
51-55	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	5	7	9	11	13	
56-60	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	5	7	9	11	
+5																				C

+5: One Column Shift for each +5.

C: Cancel - One +5 Row cancels one +5 Column.

his/her opponent is to fail in the attempt to oppose the action. If Manhunter was trying to punch someone, for example, his DEX would be his Acting Value and would tell the Player how likely Manhunter is to strike his target. His opponent's DEX would be the Opposing Value and would tell the Player how likely the adversary is to avoid Manhunter's blow.

BATMAN

DEX:	10	STR:	5	BODY:	6
INT:	12	WILL:	12	MIND:	12
INFL:	10	AURA:	8	SPIRIT:	10

The middle column of the Attribute box (STR, WILL, and AURA) is made up of a Character's *Effect* Attributes. STR, WILL, and AURA are called Effect Attributes because they are most frequently used as a Character's Effect Value on the Result Table. STR is used for Physical Actions, WILL for Mental Actions, and AURA for Mystical Actions. The Effect Value is a measure of how well a Character will perform an action that is successful. In the previous example, Manhunter's STR would be his Effect Value, and would determine how hard he would hit his target if the punch connects.

BATMAN

DEX:	10	STR:	5	BODY:	6
INT:	12	WILL:	12	MIND:	12
INFL:	10	AURA:	8	SPIRIT:	10

Finally, the third column of the Attribute box (BODY, MIND, and SPIRIT) is made up of a Character's *Resistance* Attributes. Resistance Attributes are most frequently used as a Character's Resistance Value on the Result Table when s/he is opposing an action. Resistance Values are compared with Effect Values in order to determine how great an effect any action has. Also, Resistance Attributes represent how much damage a Character can sustain before losing consciousness. BODY represents

Physical damage from punches and energy bolts; MIND stands for Mental damage from psionic blasts, and mental strain; and SPIRIT shows Mystical damage from magical bolts or enchantments. In the example, Manhunter's opponent's BODY would give the Player an indication of whether the villain will be kayoed, merely stunned, or not affected at all by the punch.

Putting the Two Groups Together

A chart that shows how the two classifications of Attributes are related is as follows:

First Group	Second Group		
	Acting/ Opposing	Effect	Resistance
Physical	Dexterity	Strength	Body
Mental	Intelligence	Will	Mind
Mystical	Influence	Aura	Spirit

One final note: all of the previous paragraphs said that a Character's Acting/Opposing Attributes are *usually* used as his/her Acting/Opposing Values, and that a Character's Effect Attributes are *usually* used as his/her Effect Value, and so on. This is because certain special cases might require a Player to use a Character's Acting/Opposing Attribute as his/her Character's Acting and Effect Values, for example; or s/he might be asked to use the Character's Resistance Attribute as his/her Opposing and Resistance Values, and so on. All of these special cases are detailed later in this rulebook and in the *Character Handbook*.

Idea Three: Rolling The Dice

There are two types of actions that Characters can perform in the DC HEROES RPG: *Automatic Actions* and *Dice Actions*. Automatic Actions are actions that are automatically success-

RESULT TABLE

Resistance Value Columns

	X	0	1	3	5	7	9	11	13	16	19	22	25	28	31	36	41	46	51	56	+5
			to 2	to 4	to 6	to 8	to 10	to 12	to 15	to 18	to 21	to 24	to 27	to 30	to 35	to 40	to 45	to 50	to 55	to 60	
1-2	+1	A	1	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	+5
3-4	+1	A	2	1	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
5-6	+1	A	3	2	1	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
7-8	+1	A	5	4	3	2	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
9-10	+1	A	8	6	4	3	2	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
11-12	+1	A	10	9	7	6	4	3	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
13-15	+1	A	12	11	9	8	7	5	3	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
16-18	+1	A	14	13	11	10	9	8	6	4	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
19-21	+1	A	18	17	16	14	12	10	8	6	4	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
22-24	+1	A	21	20	19	17	15	13	11	9	7	5	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
25-27	+1	A	24	23	22	20	18	16	14	12	10	8	6	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
28-30	+1	A	27	26	25	23	21	19	17	15	13	11	9	7	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
31-35	+1	A	30	29	28	26	24	22	20	18	16	14	12	10	8	N	N	N	N	N	*
36-40	+1	A	35	34	33	31	29	27	25	23	21	19	17	14	12	9	N	N	N	N	*
41-45	+1	A	40	38	36	34	32	30	28	26	24	22	20	18	16	13	10	N	N	N	*
46-50	+1	A	45	43	41	40	38	36	34	31	28	26	24	22	20	17	14	11	N	N	*
51-55	+1	A	50	48	46	44	42	40	38	36	34	32	30	27	24	21	18	15	12	N	*
56-60	+1	A	55	53	51	49	47	45	43	41	39	36	33	30	27	24	21	18	15	13	*
+5		A	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	C

• For every 5 APs of Effect Value over 60, increase the RAPs by 5.  
• Shift the Effect Value up one row for each +5 column and use the 60 Resistance Value.

A All. The Result APs are equal to the Effect Value.  
C Cancel. One +5 Row cancels one +5 Column.  
N No Effect. The action has no effect on the target.

ful. Batman can always walk across a room, for example, or call Commissioner Gordon on the Batphone. Dice Actions are actions that have some chance of failure, no matter how small. Punching an adversary, interrogating a thug, and trying to convince Commissioner Gordon to loan Robin a police car are all Dice Actions. In order to decide whether a Dice Action succeeds or not, a Player consults the Action and Result Tables and rolls dice. If a specific Action is not spelled out here in the rules, the GM must decide whether it is an Automatic Action or a Dice Action.

Each of the dice that came in the box has ten sides and is referred to as a D10. When the rules instruct a Player to roll 2D10, s/he rolls both dice and adds the numbers together. The side with the 0 on it is considered a ten, not a zero, when it comes up on a roll. Therefore, a roll of double 0s would be read as a twenty, a 0 and a 4 would be fourteen, and so forth.

If doubles are rolled on the dice, the Player has the option of rolling the dice again, and adding the result to the original roll. S/he can keep re-rolling and adding as long as s/he keeps rolling doubles.

The only exception to this doubles rule is a roll of double ones. **Whenever double ones are rolled, whatever action the Character was attempting automatically fails.** The Player may not follow the doubles rule and roll again. Even if a roll of double ones follows one or more earlier doubles rolls, the action still fails. If a Player rolls double sixes, then double fours, then double ones, for example, that action fails.

Whenever someone rolls the dice and consults the Action and Result Tables, it is called an Action Check.

## Idea Four: The Action Table

The *Action Table* is used to determine whether or not a Dice Action will succeed. The Action Table is almost always used in conjunction with the Result Table (**Idea Five**). Both the Action and Result Tables can be found on pages 5 and 6 of this book, as well as on the back of the *Gamemaster's Screen*.

Every time a Character attempts a Dice Action, the Player must make what is called an "Action Check." Every Action Check involves four factors: the *Acting Value* (AV), the *Effect Value* (EV), the *Opposing Value* (OV), and the *Resistance Value* (RV). The rules describe what is used as the Acting, Effect, Opposing, and Resistance Values for most of the Action Checks that will come up during play. If a Character is trying to perform a Dice Action that is not covered by the rules, the Gamemaster must decide what to use as the AV, EV, OV, and RV of the Action Check. Remember that the leftmost column of a Character's Attribute box contains the Attributes that are most frequently used as Acting or Opposing Values, the middle column contains the Attributes that are most frequently used as Effect Values, and the right hand column contains the Attributes that are most frequently used as Resistance Values.

The Action Table is made up of numbers organized in Columns (up and down), and Rows (side to side). The Acting Values are located in the leftmost Column, and the Opposing Values are located in the top Row. The other numbers represent "success numbers" for Dice Actions.

In order to explain the Action Table, let's take an example. Suppose that Frank is playing Batman and wants to punch the Joker. This is a Physical Action that uses Batman's DEX as the Acting Value and the Joker's DEX as the Opposing Value. In order to see if Batman's Action succeeds, Frank follows the step-by-step procedure below:

**STEP 1** Locate the correct Acting Value Row, using the guide numbers on the left side of the Table. Attempting to strike someone in simple hand-to-hand combat is a Physical Action, so Batman's Action Attribute is his DEX of 10. Frank locates the 9-10 Row on the Table.

**STEP 2** Locate the correct Opposing Value Column. The Joker will try to physically dodge Batman's blow, so the Joker's Opposing Attribute is his DEX also, which is 4. Frank finds the 3 to 4 Column on the Table.

**STEP 3** Locate the *Success Number* by finding where the 9-10 Row intersects the 3 to 4 Column. The number they intersect at, 5, is Batman's Success Number. Frank must roll 5 or above on 2D10 (both dice) for Batman to strike the Joker.

**STEP 4** Roll the dice. Let us suppose that Frank rolls double 2's. He can roll again. Now he rolls a 3 and a 7. Add the numbers from both rolls together:  $2 + 2 + 3 + 7 = 14$ . Since the total of 14 is greater than the 5 needed to hit, the Action is considered successful.

**STEP 5** Check for a *Column Shift*. Anytime a Character rolls greater than his/her Success Number and the roll is 11 or over, s/he is eligible for a Column Shift. Frank rolled over 11, and above his Success Number, so he may be eligible for an Effect bonus, called a Column Shift. In the example above, Frank rolled a 14 when the Success Number was 5.

**STEP 6** Determine the number of Column Shifts. Since the dice roll was at least 11 and higher than the roll needed for success, Frank can begin to count his Column Shifts. He puts his finger on the spot where the Acting Value Row intersects the Opposing Value Column at the number 5.

If he moves his finger one Column to the right, the new number Frank is pointing to (7) is still lower than the number he rolled. He can continue moving to the right until he reaches 11, the point where Column Shifts begin. Frank has made one Column Shift. 11 is marked in red on the table to remind the GM and the Players where Column Shift bonuses start.

Frank can now move one more Column further to the right, since the dice roll of 14 is greater than the number (13) in that Column, too. He now made two Column Shifts. The number in the next Column to the right is 15. Since 15 is greater than the dice roll, he does not earn a third Column Shift.

The Column Shifts earned will increase Batman's results in the next step, The Result Table.

## Important Rules on Column Shifts

### 1. Column Shifts Start at 11

Start counting Column Shifts at 11. For example: if the Success Number is 3 and a 12 is rolled, the Player only receives 1 Column Shift, even though s/he moves over many Columns.

### 2. Turning the Corner or

#### *Going Off the Edge of the Action Table*

Sometimes, the dice roll for an Action Check is so high that when counting Column Shifts, a Player goes all the way to the right edge of the Action Table.

Look at the Action Table and find the 46-50 Row of the Acting Values. If a Player has a Character with a Strength of 50 APs and s/he rolls above 15, s/he will go off the chart.

In this case, s/he "turns the corner" and counts upwards along the right hand edge as if it were the continuation of the Row. S/he keeps going until the dice roll number is smaller than the next entry.

For example: the Character with 50 APs of Strength first rolls double 6's, then rolls double 5's, then rolls 7 for a total of  $12 + 10 + 7 = 29$ . Suppose his/her Success Number is a nine. For the correct Column Shifts, s/he counts one to eleven, two to 13, three to 15, then s/he "turns the corner" and counts four to 18, five to 21, six to 24, seven to 28 and stops. S/he must stop because the next number is 32 which is larger than the dice roll of 29.

## Idea Five: The Result Table

The *Result Table* is always used in conjunction with the Action Table. Once the Action Table has determined whether or not a Dice Action succeeded, the Player then looks to the Result Table in order to figure out how well the Action was performed. If the Action Table indicated that the Action failed, there is no need to look at the Result Table at all. In the example from **Idea Four**, Batman successfully hit the Joker; but what happens now? Did Batman knock the Clown Prince of Crime out cold, or just scuff him up a bit? This is where the Result Table comes into play.

The Result Table works like the Action Table, except that the Player compares Effect and Resistance Values, instead of Acting and Opposing Values. If Batman were attempting to punch the Joker, his Effect Value would be his STR and the Resistance Value would be the Joker's BODY. Let's continue with the example.

### STEP 1

Locate the Effect Value ratings on the left side of the Result Table. Since punching the Joker is a Physical Action, Batman's STR is the Effect Value in this case. Batman's STR is 5, so Frank should look to the **5-6** Row of the table.

### STEP 2

Locate the Resistance Value ratings along the top of the table. In this case, the RV is the Joker's BODY. The Joker's BODY is 4, so Frank should look to the **3 to 4** Column of the table.

### STEP 3

Now the Player must take into account any Column Shifts that were earned on the Action Table. Do this by adjusting the Column that is being used for the Resistance Value a number of Columns to the *left* equal to the number of Column Shifts earned on the Action Table. Since Batman earned two Column Shifts against the Joker, Frank would count two Columns over to the left from the **3 to 4** Column (Joker's original RV), leaving him on the 0 Column.

Notice that the leftmost Column is labelled "x," and that each entry in the "x" Column reads "+1." If the Column Shifts are carried further to the left than the "x" Column, pretend that there are an infinite number of Columns to the left of the "x," and that all of the entries in the first imaginary Column read "+2," all of the entries in the second imaginary Column read "+3," and so on. Therefore, if the RV of an Action Check was 1 and the Action received six Column Shifts, the Result would be in the imaginary Column that reads "+5."

### STEP 4

Find the number of *Result APs* (or RAPs) by cross-indexing the Effect Value with the final Resistance Column. Unlike the Action Table, the Player does not roll any more dice to use the Result Table. If the Result is "A," (which stands for "All") the number of RAPs earned is equal to the full Effect Value of the Action Check. If the result is a +1 (or +2, +3, etc. in one of the "imaginary" Columns), the number of RAPs earned is equal to the full Effect Value of the Action Check plus one (or two or three, etc.). If the result is an "N," the Resistance Value of the Action was just too high, and the Action fails. In the example, Batman would have earned 5 RAPs against the Joker (remember that the Joker's RV was shifted down two Columns which yields an "A" result; since Batman's EV is 5, he earns 5 RAPs).

Result APs, or RAPs, are a measure of how well an Action was performed. RAPs are measured like normal APs, meaning that an Action that earns 3 RAPs was performed twice as well as an Action that earned 2 RAPs and four times as well as an Action that earned a single RAP.

RAPs are used for all sorts of things, depending upon the type of Action Check being performed. In combat (like Batman punching the Joker), for example, the RAPs that Batman earns indicates the amount of "damage" he does to the Joker. The Joker can only take a certain amount of damage before he becomes unconscious and unable to fight back. The rules in this

book and in the *Character Handbook* detail what the RAPs mean for most of the Actions that are likely to be performed. If an Action is not covered in the rules, it is up to the Gamemaster to decide what the RAPs mean, if anything.

Sometimes, the RAPs earned in an Action Check will be unimportant; the rules or the GM will simply state that one or more RAPs indicates success. For example, suppose Blue Beetle is trying to jump over a tall fence. This is a Dice Action because it is possible that he will fail. It does not really matter if Beetle clears the fence by one foot or ten feet. He will either make it, or he will not. This is an example of an Action in which the GM will tell a Player that s/he must earn one or more RAPs for success; if Beetle receives one RAP, twenty RAPs, or any RAPs, he successfully jumps over the fence, otherwise he fails.

## +5/Column/Row

At the very end of both the Action and Result Tables is a **+5 Column**. This number is used when a Character is completely off the chart either in number of Column Shifts, comparison of Attributes, or just plain dice rolling.

On the Action Table, the Opposing Values, Acting Values, and the Success Number increase in five point increments. The same is true for the Result Table's Effect and Resistance Values.

For example: Characters with a DEX of 61-65 as an Opposing Value are off the chart. Just add +5 to the Opposing Value for every 5 APs. Therefore, a Character with an Acting Value of 1-2 would have to roll an 85 to hit a Character with an Opposing Value of 61-65, a 90 to his a 66-70, and so on.

C stands for Cancel. Anytime two Characters are off the table, they cancel each other's advantage. A 70 Effect Value against a 70 Resistance Value is resolved as a 60 against 60. A 75 Acting Value against a 70 Opposing Value is resolved as a 65 against 60, and so on.

Since it is so important to learn how to use the Action and Result Tables quickly and easily, here are some more examples. How many RAPs would be earned in each of the following situations?

The Acting Value (AV) is 5, the Opposing Value (OV) is 9, the Effect Value (EV) is 8, the Resistance Value (RV) is 6 and the dice roll is 24 (somebody must have rolled some doubles)?

*There are three Column Shifts, so the Action earns 8 RAPs.*

The AV is 22, the OV is 9, the EV is 11, the RV is 20, the dice roll is 11?

*There is one Column Shift (remember that Column Shifts do not start until the 11 Column), but the Result Table reads "N" so no RAPs are learned and the Action fails.*

The AV is 6, the OV is 6, the EV is 3, the RV is 1, and the dice roll is 18?

*There are three Column Shifts, so the Action earns 5 RAPs (all of the APs of the Effect Value, plus two from the "imaginary Columns" off the left hand of the Result Table).*

The AV is 6, the OV is 6, the EV is 3, the RV is 1, and the dice roll is 9?

*The Action fails because the Success Number was an 11 and the dice roll was only a 9.*

The AV is 6, the OV is 6, the EV is 7, the RV is 5, and the dice roll is 11?

*There are no Column Shifts, so the Action earns 3 RAPs.*

## Idea Six: Powers, Skills, Advantages, and Drawbacks

Take some of the Character cards and flip them over. On the back, there are listings of Powers, Skills, Advantages, and Drawbacks. Characters have these elements because many of the heroes in DC Comics can do things that their Attributes alone cannot explain. Superman's STR of 25 allows him to bend steel with his bare hands and change the course of mighty rivers, but what is it that gives him the ability to fly, or to use X-Ray Vision? The answer, of course, is his Powers.

*Powers* are Abilities that are never possessed by ordinary people. Examples of Powers include Superman's Flight and X-Ray Vision, Green Lantern's Force Manipulation, and Black

Canary's Sonic Beam: an ordinary joe on the street will never have these abilities. No matter how hard he tried, Jimmy Olsen could never learn to use X-Ray Vision like Superman. Powers are measured in APs just like Attributes. Some heroes, like Batman, don't have any Powers at all.

**Skills**, on the other hand, are special heroic Abilities that can be learned by ordinary, everyday people. It is conceivable that Jimmy Olsen could learn to be as good a detective as Batman if he were to put in the years and years of rigorous study and training. Examples of Skills include: Dr. Fate's Occultist Skill, Black Canary's Martial Artist abilities, and Blue Beetle's Charisma. Powers are also measured in APs.

**Advantages** are special capabilities that are not measured in APs. Some Advantages may be found in ordinary people, while others are not. Examples of Advantages include Starfire's Attractive Appearance, Batman's Connection with the Gotham City Police Department, and even Captain Marvel's ability to instantly change into his heroic identity.

**Drawbacks** are special situations that are unique to an individual Character. Unlike Powers, Skills, and Advantages, however, Drawbacks (as their name implies) are harmful to the Character. Examples of Drawbacks include Superman's Vulnerability to Kryptonite, Aquaman's inability to remain out of the water longer than one hour, and Batman's single-minded pursuit of justice.

Rules governing all of the individual Powers, Skills, Advantages, and Drawbacks can be found in the *Character Handbook*. Usually, Powers and Skills will function as a Character's AV, EV, OV, or RV while making certain Action Checks. Advantages tend to modify Action Checks, or permit a Character to make certain Action Checks s/he could not make otherwise. Some even allow a Character to perform certain Automatic Actions s/he could not make without them. Specific details regarding the effects of Powers, Skills, Advantages and Drawbacks are covered in the *Character Handbook*. Take some time now to look up a couple of examples of Powers, Skills, Advantages, and Drawbacks in the *Character Handbook* and read their descriptions before going on to **Idea Seven**.

## Idea Seven: Hero Points

So far, we have shown that whether or not a Dice Action succeeds is dependent upon a combination of the Characters' Abilities and the Players' luck. But in the comics, the heroes always seem to have luck on their side whenever they need it most. Superman has no problem stretching his Abilities past their limits in a dire situation, and Batman never seems to miss an important clue. The **DC HEROES RPG** accounts for this phenomenon by giving Players some control over their Action Checks through the use of *Hero Points*.

Hero Points function like money: once a Player or the GM decides to use them, they are gone, although there are ways of getting more Hero Points during play. Hero Points allow a Player to temporarily increase his/her Character's Acting and Effect Values whenever s/he is attempting a Dice Action, thus giving him/her a greater chance of success. Hero Points may also temporarily increase a Character's Opposing and Resistance Values whenever s/he is resisting a Dice Action, causing his/her opponent to have a lesser chance for success.

In the example of Batman punching the Joker, Frank would have the option of spending Hero Points on his Acting Value to increase the likelihood that he will hit the Joker, or spending Hero Points on his Effect Value to increase the amount of damage he will do if he does hit the Joker, or he could opt to spend Hero Points on both the Acting and Effect Values. At the same time, the Joker could spend Hero Points on his Opposing Value to decrease the chance that Batman will hit him (villains have Hero Points too), or he could spend Hero Points on his Resistance Value to decrease the damage that Batman will do if he hits, or the Joker could opt to spend Hero Points on both the Opposing and Resistance Values.

Each Hero Point that is spent increases the Acting, Effect, Opposing, or Resistance Value by one AP for that Action Check only. The Players decide when to have their heroes spend Hero Points, and the GM decides when the villains and minor Characters will spend Hero Points; although many minor Characters will not have any Hero Points to spend. The number of Hero Points that each Character begins with is listed on his/her Character card or in the *Background/Roster Book*.

The following rules pertain to the expenditure of Hero Points:

### RULE 1

First of all, the Players and/or the GM must decide whether or not they are going to spend Hero Points *before* rolling the dice for the Action. Neither the Players nor the GM are allowed to wait and see how well they do without spending Hero Points and then decide to spend afterwards. Once the dice have been rolled, it is too late to spend Hero Points.

Similarly, once someone has decided that s/he is spending Hero Points, s/he must spend the points. Even if the dice roll would have achieved the desired result without the Hero Points, they are still gone, and may not be taken back.

### RULE 2

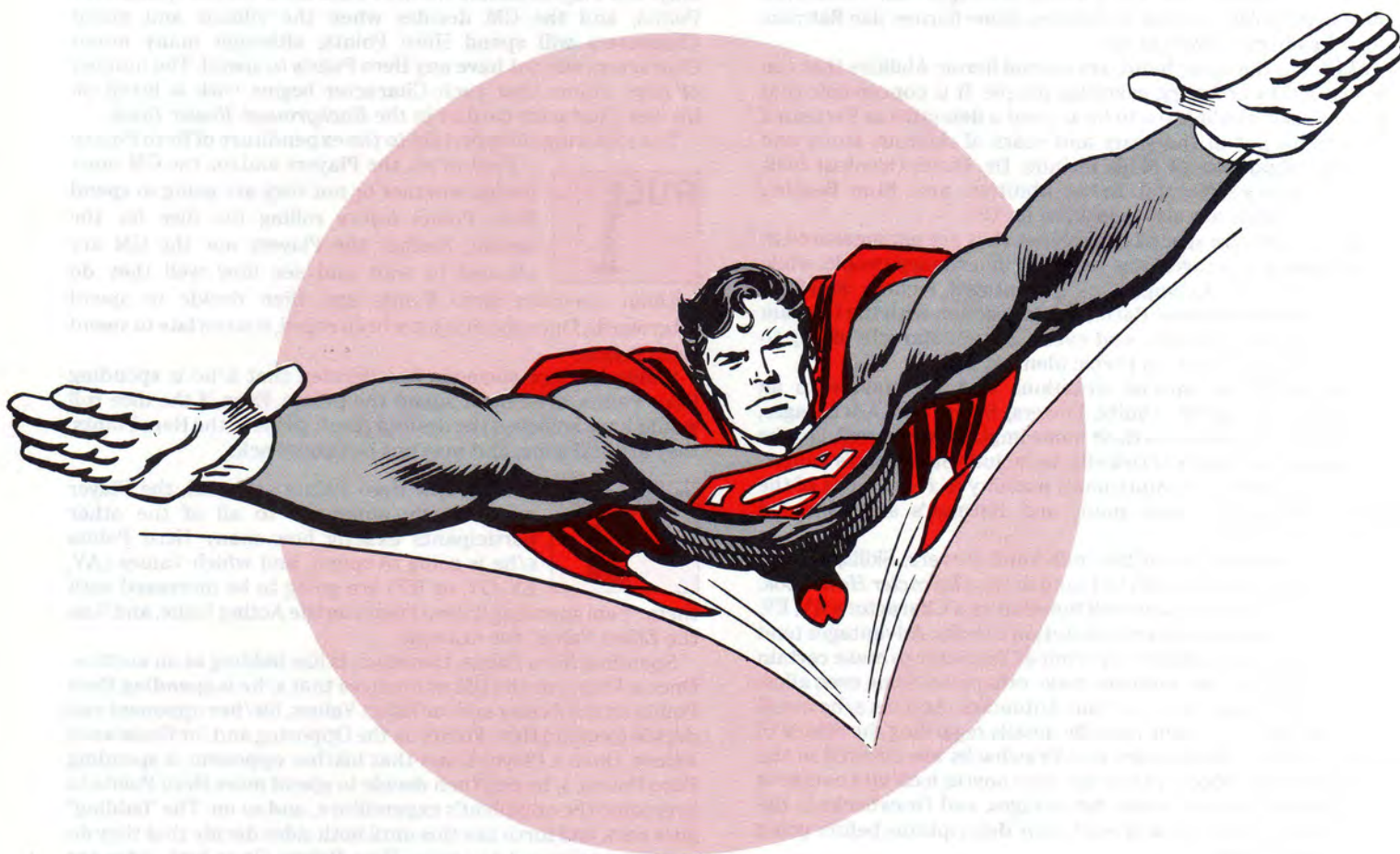
Whenever Hero Points are used, the Player must clearly announce to all of the other participants exactly how many Hero Points s/he is going to spend, and which Values (AV, EV, OV, or RV) are going to be increased with them: "I am spending 2 Hero Points on the Acting Value, and 3 on the Effect Value," for example.

Spending Hero Points, therefore, is like bidding at an auction. Once a Player or the GM announces that s/he is spending Hero Points on the Acting and/or Effect Values, his/her opponent can decide to spend Hero Points on the Opposing and/or Resistance Values. Once a Player hears that his/her opponent is spending Hero Points, s/he can then decide to spend more Hero Points to overcome the opponent's expenditure, and so on. The "bidding" goes back and forth like this until both sides decide that they do not want to spend any more Hero Points. Once both sides are content with the number of Hero Points they are spending, the dice are rolled and the Action is resolved.

### RULE 3

There is a limit to the number of Hero Points that may be spent on any one Action. A Player may never increase any of his/her Character's Values (AV, EV, OV, or RV) to more than double its beginning value through the use of Hero Points. For example, Batman can never spend more than 10 Hero Points on his Acting Value in combat with his beginning DEX of 10; nor can he spend more than 6 Hero Points on his Resistance Value due to his beginning BODY of 6.

A more detailed example will demonstrate everything we have explained about Hero Points so far. Batman is going to punch the Joker again. Batman's beginning AV and EV are 10 and 5 respectively (his DEX and STR) and the Joker's OV and RV are 4 and 4 (his DEX and BODY). Since Frank wants to make sure that he will take the Joker out right here and now, he decides to spend 3 Hero Points on his Acting Value and 2 on his Effect Value. The GM now has a chance to spend his own Hero Points; and since the Joker likes being conscious, the GM decides to spend 1 Hero Point on his Opposing Value and 3 on his Resistance Value. Now Frank has a chance to revise his own expenditures. Since he really wants to finish off the Joker, he decides to go for the gusto and up his commitment to 10 Hero Points on his Acting Value and 5 on his Effect Value. Since his original AV and EV were 10 and 5, Batman has reached his limit for this Action, and can spend no more Hero Points. Since Batman is going for the maximum Hero Point expenditure possible, the GM decides to do the same for the Joker, spending 4 on his Opposing Value and 4 on his Resistance Value. This brings the Joker up to his own limit. Since neither side can spend any more Hero Points, the Action is now resolved with a final AV/EV of 20/10 and a final OV/RV of 8/8.



## Idea Eight: Automatic Actions

There are two types of actions in the **DC HEROES RPG**. **Ideas Four, Five, and Seven** gave details on how to resolve Dice Actions. The other kind of action is called *Automatic Actions*.

Automatic Actions are automatically successful. If the Flash wants to run at the speed of sound or Superman wants to fly, they automatically succeed. The Action and Result Tables are not used for Automatic Actions. The only possible problem is determining exactly which actions are Automatic Actions and which are Dice Actions. Here are some simple guidelines:

### RULE 1

If a Character is using a Power, Advantage, or Skill to perform an Action, the appropriate description in the *Character Handbook* will indicate if the Action is a Dice Action or an Automatic Action.

### RULE 2

Any Action that involves Characters' Attributes is automatically a Dice Action. If the GM decides that Nightwing can use his INT to try to solve one of the Riddler's riddles, for example, it is a Dice Action. In this case, using Nightwing's INT/WILL as the AV/EV because it is a Mental Action, against whatever OV/RV the GM decides is appropriate, with one or more RAPs necessary for success.

There is one important exception to this rule. Using the STR Attribute to lift an object is always an Automatic Action. If a

Character has a STR of 7 APs, s/he can automatically lift any object that weighs 7 APs or less.

### RULE 3

If neither of the first two guidelines are applicable, the GM should always fall back on the old rule that any Action in which there is a chance that you will fail, no matter how small, is automatically a Dice Action. Speaking, for example, is an Automatic Action because there is no chance of failure; Characters can almost always talk. Trying to convince Commissioner Gordon to lend someone a police car, however, is a Dice Action because there is a chance that the commissioner will not grant the request.

It is always up to the GM to determine whether or not any Action is a Dice Action or an Automatic Action.

## Pushing Automatic Actions

Sometimes, a hero needs to fly faster, jump farther, or lift more weight than s/he is normally able to do. In these situations, the hero must "Push" his/her Abilities, straining his/her capabilities to their limit. A Player may only Push when s/he is attempting to perform an Automatic Action that is based on a Power or Attribute. To "strain Abilities" while attempting a Dice Action, a Player spends Hero Points to increase the AV, EV, OV, or RV, as discussed in **Idea Seven**.

In order to Push, the Player must make an Action Check using the APs of the Ability that s/he wants to Push as the AV/EV. An Action Check is made because Pushing itself is a Dice Action since there is a chance of failure. Since the Character is

essentially fighting against his/her own limits, the APs of the ability the Player is Pushing also serve as the OV/RV. The RAPs from the Pushing Action are temporarily added to the ability being Pushed. Hero Points may be spent to increase the Acting or Effect Values of the Pushing Action Check. RAPs that are added to an Ability only last for 0 APs of time (about 4 seconds, or one phase of combat). At the end of that time, the Ability returns to its original level; although the Player may immediately try to Push the Ability again, if desired.

In addition to any Hero Points spent on the Pushing Action Check, the Pushing Player must pay a special "Push Fee" equal to three Hero Points for every AP temporarily added to the Ability. The Player can choose to add fewer APs to his/her Character's Ability than s/he is entitled to, in order to save Hero Points on the fee.

If a Player fails in an attempt to Push an Ability, the Ability instantly "burns out" and is reduced to zero APs (the Character is exhausted from the effort). Burned out Abilities must be regained through the use of Recovery, which is explained later.

Here is an example of Pushing an ability: Marv is playing Cyborg when an Army tank is dropped on top of him in the middle of a fight. According to the *Benchmark APs Table*, Cyborg would need a STR of 9 to be able to lift the tank off of himself. Cyborg's STR is only 7, but if he were to strain his Abilities to the utmost, he just might be able to lift the tank anyway. Since lifting the tank would normally be an Automatic Action, Marv can Push Cyborg's STR to try and get it off his back. Marv must make an Action Check with an AV/EV of 7/7 (Cyborg's STR) and an OV/RV of 7/7 (again, Cyborg's STR). Just to add a little insurance, he decides to spend 2 Hero Points on his Acting Value, raising it to a 9. If Marv rolls an 11, he will receive one Column Shift and 2 RAPs. He may then add these two RAPs to Cyborg's STR for 0 APs of time (4 seconds), temporarily raising his STR to 9. Marv must pay a "Push Fee" of 6 Hero Points (3 Hero Points x 2 RAPs = Push Fee of 6). If Marv rolls a 7, however, he will fail his Push attempt, and Cyborg's STR will be instantly reduced to 0 APs until it can be Recovered.

## Automatic Actions Versus Dice Actions

The differences between Automatic and Dice Actions have already been explained at great length. However, there are several situations where the distinction between the two becomes unclear. Guidelines for distinguishing between Automatic and Dice Actions are as follows:

Most Automatic Actions assume that a Character is trying to perform the action under optimal conditions. Sometimes, however, Players will be forced to attempt Automatic Actions under unusual circumstances. The Flash can always use his Superspeed Power to run at incredible speeds, for example, but what if he is trying to run across a slippery oil slick or through a patch of rubbery glue? Similarly, Superman can always lift an object that weighs 25 APs, but what if he has been poisoned by a special drug that causes his Power to keep fading in and out?

In situations like these, the Automatic Action becomes a Dice Action instead. Remember that any Action in which there is any chance that a Character will fail is a Dice Action, and in the previous examples, there is certainly a chance that both Superman and Flash will fail. In this case, use the APs of the Ability in question (Flash's Superspeed or Superman's STR) as both the AV and the EV of the Action Check. The OV/RV of the Action Check is derived from the *Universal Modifiers Chart*. In order to use the *Universal Modifiers Chart*, the GM must decide how difficult the Action is that the Character is trying to perform, using the terms listed as a guideline. The terms describe the Action from the perspective of a normal man. Running across an oil slick, for example, might be a "Strenuous" action with an OV/RV of 6/6. If the drug plaguing Superman was quite potent, the GM might rule that lifting a heavy object is "Herculean," and thus has an OV/RV of 12/12. For all Automatic Actions that are turned into Dice Actions by special situations, the RAPs of the Action Check then temporarily function as the APs of the appropriate Automatic Ability. If Flash gets 5 RAPs

on his Action Check, he runs across the oil at a speed of 5 APs (the RAPs temporarily substitute for his APs of Superspeed). If Superman gets 10 RAPs on his roll, he can lift a 10 AP object.

As soon as an Automatic Action is turned into a Dice Action, the Ability upon which the Action is based may no longer be Pushed. Instead, the Player may now spend Hero Points on his/her AV and EV if s/he wants to increase the chance for success.

## The Universal Modifier Table

There are often special circumstances that will influence Dice Actions in a similar fashion. Whenever Green Arrow shoots his bow, it is a normal Dice Action; but what if Green Arrow wants to shoot the bow while he is dangling from a trapeze? In cases like this, look to the *Universal Modifier Table's* Dice Action column in order to find a Column Shift modifier that is applied to the Action's Opposing Value. Shooting an arrow while dangling from a trapeze might be an "Extreme" Action with Column Shift modifier of +4. This means that the Opposing Value of the shot is automatically increased by four Columns.

The *Universal Modifier Table* is only invoked when the GM feels it is appropriate, and it is always up to the GM to rule upon the difficulty of the Action in question.

### Universal Modifier Table

Description	Standard Action Modifier	Automatic Action OV & RV
Easy	-1	N/A
Average	0	N/A
Challenging	+1	2
Difficult	+2	4
Strenuous	+3	6
Extreme	+4	8
Pushing the Limit	+5	10
Herculean	+6	12
Beyond the Limit	+7	15
OV & RV: Opposing Value and Resistance Value N/A: Not Applicable		

## Going for Broke

There will be times when Players will want to be especially precise or careful with their Actions. Suppose, for example, that Captain Atom wants to hit a main support pillar with his Energy Blast in order to knock the whole building down. In situations like this, Characters are *Going For Broke*.

Any time a Character makes a Dice Action outside of combat, s/he has the option of Going For Broke. When a Player decides to Go For Broke, s/he increases the difficulty of the Action in order to reap greater rewards for success. First, s/he declares the number of Column Shifts s/he is willing to increase the Action's Opposing Value. A Player may only declare an even number of Column Shifts (2, 4, 6, or 8). If s/he then rolls the new Success Number, s/he gets to lower the Resistance Value of the Action by a number of Column Shifts as summarized on the following table.

### Going For Broke

Opposing Value Columns Declared	Resistance Value Bonus Column Modifiers
+2	-3
+4	-6
+6	-9
+8	-12

Hero Points may always be spent in conjunction with an attempt to Go For Broke. Going For Broke is never used in Combat (there are special types of attacks that cover this same ground).



## CHAPTER TWO

# APs and the World

Just about everything in the world of the **DC HEROES Role-Playing Game** is measured in Attribute Points, or APs for short. In order to become proficient in the **DC HEROES RPG**, the GM and the Players should become proficient with the AP system. Some guidelines for using APs are as follows:

## General Rules

### RULE 1

When working with APs, it is important to remember two things. First, each additional one AP actually doubles the amount of the quantity measured by the previous AP value. For example, Zero APs of distance is equal to 10 feet, 1 AP of distance is 20 feet, 2 APs of distance is 40 feet, and so on. Likewise, a Character with an INT of 4 is twice as smart as a Character with an INT of 3, who in turn is twice as smart as a Character with an INT of 2. Remember that in addition to weight, distance, volume, time, and money, Attributes, Powers, and Skills are all measured in APs.

### RULE 2

It is impossible to add or subtract AP measurements as if they were real world measurements. If Superman wants to lift two elephants, each with a weight of 7 APs, their combined weight is not 14 APs. Seven APs of weight is approximately 3 tons, so both elephants together would weight 6 tons, which is equal to 8 APs of weight. Whenever a Player wants to add two quantities together that are measured in APs, s/he takes the larger of the two quantities and adds 1 AP to get the final result: for example, 8 APs + 2 APs = 9 APs, 11 APs + 12 APs = 13 APs, 99 APs + 99 APs = 100 APs, and so on.

Similarly, subtraction works differently with APs also. Whenever quantities are subtracted that are measured in APs, take the larger of the two quantities involved and subtract one, unless the two quantities are equal, in which case the result is zero (not 0 APs, just zero, zip, nothing). Therefore, 6 APs - 4 APs = 5 APs, 91 APs - 2 APs = 90 APs, 44 APs - 44 APs = zero, and so on.

### RULE 3

When converting real world measurements into APs using the *Benchmark APs Table*, remember that each AP actually stands for an entire *range* of values rather than an absolute figure. One AP of distance, therefore, represents any real world distance between 11 and 20 feet, 2 APs represents any distance between 21 and 40 feet, 3 APs represents any distance between 41 and 80 feet, and so on. The listings on the *Benchmark APs Table* are always the upper limit of the AP value in question. This means that two and a half hours (150 min) is the greatest quantity that can be considered 12 APs of time, five tons is the largest amount measured by 8 APs of weight, and 3 cubic feet is the most that is equal to 2 APs of volume.

## Movement

There are many occasions where the GM and the Players will need to know how quickly someone can run a certain distance, or how far someone can travel in a given amount of time. APs make calculations like this a breeze.

### RULE 4

Speed is also measured in APs. The speed at which a Character can move is equal to his/her DEX score, or the APs of any movement Powers (Flight, Running, Swimming, etc.). The ground speed of all Characters without a movement Power is limited to 4 APs, regardless of the Character's DEX (even Batman, with his DEX of 10, can still only run at a speed of 4 APs). If a Character is swimming instead of running, his/her Speed is limited to 3 APs regardless of DEX, unless the Character has the Swimming Power. A Character can move a distance equal to his/her Speed every 0 APs of time (4 seconds, or one phase of combat). Moving is an Automatic Action, but unless a Character has a movement Power, no one may ever Push movement.

### RULE 5

Since speed is measured in APs, it allows the GM or the Players to calculate things like how far or how quickly their Characters can move, by using simple formulas. To determine how far a Character can move in a given amount of time, for instance, simply add the Speed in APs to the Time in APs to

get the Distance traveled in APs. (Speed + Time = Distance) This means that if Batman were to run at a speed of 4 APs for 3 APs of time (32 seconds), he would cover 7 APs of distance, or about five hundred yards (Batman is fast).

Now, let's suppose that Manhunter finds a bomb that is about to explode. The blast radius of the bomb is fifty yards (4 APs of distance), and the bomb is set to explode in 6 seconds (1 AP of time). Can Manhunter run away from the bomb before it explodes? Manhunter's speed is 4 APs and he has 1 AP of time in which to run. This means he can cover a distance of 5 APs (100 yards), since Speed (in APs) + Time (in APs) = Distance (in APs). 5 APs is out of the bomb's blast radius of 4 APs, so Manhunter is long gone by the time the bomb explodes!

## RULE 6

APs can also be used to determine how quickly a Character or object can move a certain distance. This is calculated by taking the Distance in APs and subtracting the Speed in APs which results in the Time in APs. (Distance - Speed = Time) For example, to figure out how fast Batman can run a mile (10 APs), subtract Batman's Speed (4 APs), which leave 6 APs of time, or about 4 minutes! Batman could easily compete for the gold medal at the Olympic Games.

Here is another example: the Milky Way Galaxy is 69 APs long, and Green Lantern has 40 APs of Flight. How long would it take him to fly from one end of the Galaxy to the other and back? In order to fly the whole distance he must make two trips of 69 AP, for a total of 70 APs total. Seventy APs of distance minus Green Lantern's Flight speed of 40 APs is 30 APs of Time, or about 138 years. Hopefully, he knows a short cut.

## RULE 7

Finally, APs can be used to determine an object's Speed if the distance it will travel in a certain time is known. The equation for this transformation is Distance in APs minus Time in APs is Equal to the Speed in APs. (Distance - Time = Speed) For example, suppose that Lex Luthor has fired a nuclear rocket toward Metropolis. It will take the rocket fifteen seconds (2 APs of time) to cover four hundred and ninety miles (19 APs of distance) between Luthor's secret lab and the city. How fast is the rocket travelling? Well,  $19 - 2 = 17$  APs of Speed. Green Lantern or Superman could easily catch this rocket, but Starfire or Rocket Red probably could not catch it without Pushing their Flight Powers.

All three of these equations are very useful during play. For convenience they have been reprinted on the inside of the *Gamemaster's Screen*:

Distance = Speed + Time  
Time = Distance - Speed  
Speed = Distance - Time

## Throwing Things

DC Comic book Characters, especially big, strong ones like Superman, throw heavy objects around all the time. Lifting is an Automatic Action using the STR Attribute, but calculating how far something can be thrown once it has been lifted may not seem so simple. However, APs again make this easy to figure out.

## RULE 8

To find out how far a Character can toss an object, simply subtract its weight in APs from the Character's STR. The result is the distance in APs that s/he can throw the object. (STR - Weight = Throwing Distance) Throwing an object is an Automatic Action, but trying to hit something with a thrown object is a Dice Action.

For example, Superman with his STR of 25 can throw a 50 lb. sack of grain (0 APs of weight) 25 APs of distance, or about 32000 miles. Superman can throw a battle tank (weight of 9 APs) 16 APs of distance, or roughly 64 miles.

## RULE 9

A Character may move at full speed as long as s/he is carrying a weight that does not exceed his/her STR Attribute. If a Character is Pushing his STR in order to lift a very heavy object, it would obviously reduce his/her speed. In order to find out how much, simply subtract the STR from the weight s/he is carrying and reduce his/her speed by the result. (Weight - STR = Speed Reduction) In the example where Cyborg Pushed his STR to lift the tank, his Running speed would drop from 5 APs down to 3 APs while carrying the tank ( $9 - 7 = 2$ ), and his Jumping speed would drop from 7 APs down to 5 APs.

## RULE 10

The following formula is used to figure out the speed that an object travels when thrown: take the throwing Character's STR, and subtract the Weight in APs of the object being thrown. The result is the object's speed. (STR - Weight = Throwing Speed) Superman can throw a car (weight of 6 APs) at a speed of 19 APs (about 480,000 MPH). The Earth's escape velocity (the speed necessary to break free of a planet's gravity) is 15 APs, meaning that any time a Character can throw an object with a speed of 15 APs or greater, s/he can throw the object out of the atmosphere and into outer space!

**Note:** Other planets may have different escape velocities, depending on their density, composition, and atmospheric content. It is the GM's call on determining the escape velocity of alien worlds.

## Breaking Things

In addition to throwing trucks and buildings around, DC Comic book characters also smash down brick walls and bend steel in their bare hands.

## RULE 11

Like Characters, every inanimate object has certain Attributes measured in APs. All inanimate objects such as houses, trees, chains, lampposts, mailboxes, or what have you have a BODY that functions just like a Character's BODY. An object's BODY is an indication of how much damage the object can take before it breaks. A list of BODY Benchmarks for inanimate objects can be found on the inside of the *Gamemaster's Screen*.

Breaking an inanimate object is a Dice Action, using a Character's STR/STR or APs of an appropriate Power as the AV/EV. (This is one of the special situations that we mentioned in **Chapter One**, in which an Effect Attribute is also used as an Acting Value.) The object's BODY/BODY is used as the OV/RV. If at least one RAP is earned on this Action Check, the object is damaged or bent; and if the object is big enough, like a fence or a house, one or more RAPs puts a hole in it that is large enough to walk or climb through. If a number of RAPs are received on this Action Check that are greater than or equal to twice the object's BODY, the object is completely destroyed. The RAPs from these Action Checks are cumulative. Suppose Starman is trying to destroy an object with a 10 BODY, but he only receives 3 RAPs on his Action Check. This means Starman will have to keep pounding away at the object until the total RAPs from all of his Action Checks are greater than or equal to 20, at which point the object will be totally destroyed.

Let's take a look at another example. Suppose Superman was trying to smash through a steel wall (BODY of 12). He would then make an Action Check using 25/25 (his STR/STR) as the AV/EV against an OV/RV of 12/12 (the wall's BODY/BODY). If he receives one or more RAPs, he smashes a hole in the wall large enough to walk through. If he receives 24 RAPs, he brings the whole wall down.

For one more example, let's say that Captain Marvel is trying to bend a lead pipe (BODY of 7). He would then make an Action Check using 20/20 as the AV/EV (his STR/STR) against an OV/RV of 7/7. If he receives one or more RAPs, he bends the pipe. If he receives 14 or more RAPs, he can completely destroy the pipe.

# Combat

Sometimes Characters will be faced with no other alternative than to join in battle. Very few villains will give up without a fight, and vicious assassins who come gunning for heroes are an all-too-frequent occurrence. Using the rules in this chapter, just about any combat situation can be played out in detail.

Most of the time, while playing the **DC HEROES Role-Playing Game**, time, movement, and specific actions are not really a problem. Usually, everybody simply keeps telling the GM what they want to do, and the GM tells them what happens as a result, using the rules as a guideline. Once combat begins, however, everything must slow down so the GM can determine the exact sequence of events. Suppose, for example, that Batman wants to throw a Batarang at the Riddler, while the GM decides that the Riddler wants to shoot a gun at Batman. Who gets to go first? Instead of arbitrarily making a decision, the GM invokes the combat rules.

Combat is played out in a series of turns called *phases*. Each phase of combat lasts 0 APs of time, or about 4 seconds. The rules in this chapter will explain exactly what each Character can do once it is his/her turn in combat. During combat, the GM will also keep track of the positions of everyone involved in the battle, constantly updating the positions as the Characters move and stumble.

The GM has the option of invoking the combat rules whenever s/he feels it is appropriate. There are times when the GM might want to invoke them even when there is not really any combat happening, in order to establish everyone's exact position and play out a sequence of events in which timing might be critical. Suppose, for example, that a little girl falls off the roof of an apartment building. Can Firestorm save her? In this case, the GM should probably invoke the combat rules in order to establish the exact positions of Firestorm and the girl, and to figure out whether or not Firestorm will be able to act before the girl hits the ground.

Before we outline the general combat rules, it is important to emphasize a few points.

## I. Time

Combat is always played out in sequential "phases." One phase of combat lasts approximately 4 seconds, or 0 APs of time. During each phase of combat, each Character will get a turn to do something. The following rules will explain how to decide who gets the first turn, and who gets the second turn, etc.

## II. Actions

When it is a Character's turn in combat, s/he can perform up to three Actions; but only one of these Actions can be a Dice Action. A Character could, for example, move (Automatic Action), pick up an object (Automatic Action), and then throw the object at something (Dice Action); or move (Automatic Action), punch the villain (Dice Action), and summon the police via radio (Automatic Action). The three Actions may be performed in any order, the Dice Action does not have to come first or last, and a Character does not have to perform all three Actions if the Player so desires.

The one-line quips that so often punctuate comic book combat are free and do not take up any of a Character's three allowed actions, but stopping to plan strategy or to carry on a lengthy conversation with a friend does count as an Automatic Action. In fact, during any phase in which a Character discusses strategy or carries on a lengthy conversation, s/he cannot perform a Dice Action. If it is much longer than "Let's get him!" it should be ruled a lengthy conversation.

There is only one other rule concerning Actions during combat: a Character may never perform more than one movement Action in a single phase. Cyborg, for example, cannot run his full speed of 4 APs, and then Jump 7 APs all in one phase. Similarly, Superman could not run along the ground using his Superspeed and then fly away using flight in the same phase.

## III. Keeping Track of Position

It is always up to the GM to keep track of the position of the various combatants during a battle. The easiest way to do this is to draw out a quick map of the terrain and pencil in the first initial of each Character involved in the appropriate locations at the instant the battle begins (the GM decides where everyone begins, based on the situation). Once the battle gets started, the GM can erase each Character's initial and reposition it as necessary. When drawing up a map of this sort, make sure to include a scale so that each Player can see how far everyone may move, etc.

Another option for keeping track of positions is to set up small dioramas and use miniature figures for each of the combatants. Grenadier Models has figure sets available for the Justice League, the Legion of Superheroes, the Outsiders, the New Teen Titans and the Watchmen for anyone who is interested. Setting up dioramas and using miniatures costs money and takes up time, but it adds a breathtaking new dimension to play.

A key rule to remember when plotting Characters' positions is to keep things moving. Do not spend a lot of time drawing out elaborate maps and diagrams once play begins. Rough sketches drawn in a minute or less will suffice. In fact, once everyone in the group has a lot of experience with the game, it is often unnecessary to keep written track of the combatants positions at all.

## IV. Combat Sequence

Each combat phase consists of five separate steps. Each of these steps is outlined below:

1. **Activate Automatic Powers**
2. **Roll for Initiative**
3. **Declare Actions**
4. **Perform Actions**
5. **Make Recovery Checks**

### STEP 1

#### Activate Automatic Powers

Every Character has an opportunity to immediately activate any of his/her protective Automatic Powers at the beginning of each phase of combat (i.e. turn the Power on). Any Power activated in this fashion goes into effect before anyone can perform an Action during that phase, other than activating their own Automatic Powers. Thus, even if Green Lantern manages to win the first turn in a combat phase, Sinestro could always put up a Force Field before the Emerald Warrior can strike.

Activating an Automatic Power always counts as an Automatic Action in combat. If a Character activates one of his/her Automatic Powers before Initiative is rolled (as explained in the next step), it still costs one of the three allotted Actions once it is his/her turn to act.

Deactivating a Power never counts as an Action; but a Character may not activate and deactivate the same Power in one phase. Brainiac 5 could not turn off his Force Shield, punch Starfinger, and then turn his Force Shield back on, for instance.

The only Powers that may be activated are protective Powers like Force Field, Icing, Invisibility, Two-Dimensional, Dispersal, Force Shield, Mental Shield, Joined, and Magic Shield. The effects of each of these Powers are explained in detail in the *Character Handbook*. All other Automatic Powers, like Flight or Telescopic Vision, may not be used until it is that Character's turn in the phase. Each use of an Automatic Power counts as an Automatic Action every time one is used, and Dice Powers count as Dice Actions whenever they are used. Once a protection Power has been activated, it does not count as another Action to use it. For instance, it does not cost Booster Gold a separate Action every time someone tries to punch him and he uses his Force Field to defend himself, as long as he has already spent one Action to activate it. The same is true even if the Force Field was activated during a previous phase. A protection Power will always stay activated until the user voluntarily deactivates it or is rendered unconscious.

The Insta-Change Advantage may also be activated during the protection Power step, also at a cost of one Action.

**Note:** Some Powers like Skin Armor, Iron Will, or Awareness are always considered on and never need to be activated to take effect. See the Power descriptions in the *Character Handbook* for details.

## STEP 2

### Roll For Initiative

This is the step where the order in which everyone will act during the current phase is decided.

Each hero has a listed *Initiative* rating in his/her Attribute box. A Character's Initiative rating is equal to the sum of his/her Action Attributes (DEX, INT, and INFL), though there are Powers, Skills, and Advantages that can temporarily or permanently affect a Character's Initiative rating. These are described later.

At the beginning of every phase of combat, each of the participants rolls a D10, adds the result to his/her Initiative rating, and records the final total on a piece of scrap paper. The GM rolls for the villains and minor Characters, while the Players roll for their heroes. The Character with the highest recorded total wins the first turn, and gets to act first during the phase, while the Character with the second highest total gets to act second, etc.

If two Characters' Initiative totals are tied, a hero always takes precedence over a villain or minor Character. If two heroes (or villains or minor Characters) are tied, the Character with the higher INT is considered to have won the Initiative struggle. If the Characters are still tied, have them re-

roll their Initiative totals until the tie is broken.

### Hero Points

Before rolling Initiative for a phase of combat, each Player may choose to spend Hero Points to increase his/her Character's Initiative total. S/he may spend as many Hero Points as desired on a single Initiative roll (there is no limit), and each Hero Point spent will increase the Initiative total by one for that phase only.

Hero Points to be spent on Initiative must be declared aloud before any dice are rolled, allowing the GM and the other Players present a chance to spend their own Hero Points to counter such a move. All of the participating Players then continue to bid, as described in **Chapter One**, until everyone is happy with the number of Hero Points they are spending. Once a Player has declared that s/he is spending Hero Points on the Initiative roll, s/he must spend these Hero Points regardless of how many Hero Points the other Players decide to spend, or how the final totals would have come out without any expenditures.

The GM may opt to have any of the Characters s/he is controlling spend Hero Points to increase their Initiative scores, as well. These should be declared out loud at the same time the Players are bidding, and before any Initiative rolls are made.

No one may ever "Push" one of their Acting Attributes in order to temporarily increase their Initiative rating.

### Powers, Skills, and Advantages

Several of the Powers, Skills, and Advantages described in the *Character Handbook* can modify a Character's Initiative rating. For the sake of convenience, all of them are recapped here:

**Martial Artist:** Characters with the Martial Artist Skill always automatically add two to their Initiative ratings, even when they are not performing a Martial Arts attack. Characters with the Martial Artist Skill have an Initiative listed which already takes the Martial Artist bonus into account. Robin's Base Initiative would be 18 (the sum of his DEX, INT, INFL), but is listed as 20 because he always adds 2 to his Initiative due to his Martial Artist Skill.



**Superspeed:** Characters with this Power add their APs of the Power to the total of their Acting Attributes when calculating their Initiative ratings. For example, the Flash has a 6 DEX, a 4 INT, a 3 INFL, and 10 APs of Superspeed; therefore, his Initiative rating is 25. A Superspeed Character receives this increased Initiative rating, even when s/he is not using Superspeed during the phase (unless his/her Superspeed Power has Burned Out, see **Recovery**).

**Water Freedom:** Characters with this Power may substitute their APs of Power for their DEX while calculating their Initiative rating in situations where they are submerged in water. A Character's submerged Initiative rating is always listed in brackets after his/her true Initiative rating. For example, Aquaman's Initiative would be listed as 22 [27].

**Lightning Reflexes:** Characters with this Advantage also add 2 to their Initiative ratings in all situations. This bonus has already been figured into the Initiative ratings found in all of the Attribute boxes of the Characters who have this advantage.

#### Example:

The New Titans are engaged in combat against the Penguin, the Riddler, and a pair of thugs. Present in the battle are Nightwing (Base Initiative of 28), Changeling (Initiative of 17), Cyborg (Initiative of 19), Jericho (Initiative of 21), the Penguin (Initiative of 20), the Riddler (Initiative of 25), Rocco (Initiative of 9), and Lefty (Initiative of 9).

First, the GM announces that the Penguin and the Riddler are each spending ten Hero Points to increase their Initiative totals for this phase. The Titans' Players now have an opportunity to spend Hero Points of their own, and Nightwing and Cyborg's Players each decide to spend ten Hero Points to match the two villains. Since the GM feels that the Riddler and the Penguin really want to go first, however, s/he declares that the villains are upping their commitment to 20 Hero Points apiece. All of the heroes now have an opportunity to raise their own Hero Point expenditures (and then the villains would receive another chance to spend more Hero Points, and so on until everyone is satisfied), but the Players all decline to spend more Hero Points at this time.

Next, everyone rolls a D10 and adds the result to his/her Initiative Rating, plus any Hero Points s/he spent to increase Initiative for this phase. Nightwing's Player rolls a 6, so his Initiative total is 44 for this phase ( $28 + 10 \text{ Hero Points} + 6 = 44$ ); Changeling's Player rolls a 0 (10) for an Initiative total of 27 ( $17 + 10 = 27$ ); Cyborg's Player rolls a 4 for a total of 33 ( $19 + 10 \text{ Hero Points} + 4 = 33$ ); and the Jericho Player rolls a 9 for a total Initiative of 30 ( $21 + 9 = 30$ ). The GM rolls a 4 for the Riddler, giving him a total Initiative of 49 ( $25 + 20 \text{ Hero Points} + 4 = 49$ ); a 1 for the Penguin, resulting in an Initiative total of 41 ( $20 + 20 \text{ Hero Points} + 1 = 41$ ); a 7 for Rocco, leaving him with an Initiative total of 16 ( $9 + 7 = 16$ ); and an 8 for Lefty for a total Initiative of 17 ( $9 + 8 = 17$ ).

During this phase, therefore, the combatants will act in the following order: the Riddler (49), Nightwing (44), the Penguin (41), Cyborg (33), Jericho (30), Changeling (27), Lefty (17), and Rocco (16).

**Note:** After this phase of combat is complete, the process starts all over again, and everyone must roll new Initiative totals, and spend

more Hero Points if desired. Spending Hero Points only increases Initiative for one phase; if the GM wishes to keep the Riddler's Initiative of 45 ( $25 + 20 \text{ Hero Points}$ ), s/he must spend 20 more Hero Points on the next phase.

## STEP 3

### Declare Actions

The next step is for all of the combatants to declare what their Characters are going to do during the current phase.

Beginning with the Character that has the lowest total Initiative score after rolling, the GM and each of the Players involved announces out loud their Actions for the phase in the order of Initiative scores, lowest to highest. The GM announces the Actions of any villains or minor Characters that s/he is controlling.

Notice that it is the individual with the lowest total Initiative score that must declare his/her Actions first. This is in order to give those Characters with a higher Initiative (who will be performing first in the phase) a chance to find out what everyone else is going to do before they must decide what to do themselves.

When a Player declares his/her Actions, s/he must indicate what his/her Character's three Actions will be, and the order in which they will be performed. Conditions may be placed upon Actions. For example, Starman could declare that he is going to fly into a building (Automatic Action), look around (Automatic Action), and use his Flame Project if he spots someone that looks hostile (Dice Action with a condition); or he could declare that he is going to fly high into the air (Automatic Action), and if anyone shoots at him, he will blast them back (Dice Action with a condition). Conditions do not have to be placed on any Dice Action if the Player does not wish it. For instance, Animal Man could declare that he is going to bash the thug who just shot the puppy, no matter what else happens during that phase (an unconditional Dice Action).

**A Note on Fair Play:** Good GMs and Players will always separate what they know from what the Characters they are playing know. If the Players' heroes are trying to sneak up on a villain from out of a manhole cover, for example, a good GM would never have the villain declare that s/he is going to rip off the sewer cap and blast away before the heroes attack, because there is no way that the villain could possibly know what the heroes are planning, even though the GM does.

## STEP 4

### Resolve Actions

Each of the combatants resolves his/her declared Actions in order of Initiative scores, from highest to lowest. Note that this is the opposite of the order that Actions were declared in **Step Three**.

Resolving Automatic Actions should be easy enough, just use the appropriate rules. Rules governing all of the Powers and Skills can be found in the *Character Handbook*. Some of the common Automatic Actions that Characters will perform in combat, such as movement, lifting and throwing objects, were described in the previous chapter. A Character who is trying to Push an Automatic Action would resolve the Push attempt at this time.

Resolving Dice Actions is a little trickier since it involves consulting the Action and Result Tables. Remember that any Hero Points that are going to be spent on Acting, Effect, Opposing, or Resistance Values must be announced before the dice are rolled (see **Chapter One**). Always apply the results of a Dice Action (such as damage to persons or property) immediately after the Action has been resolved. If a Character is knocked unconscious before it is his/her turn during the phase, s/he loses the chance to act.



## STEP 5

### Make Recovery Rolls

After everyone has resolved their Actions, each of the combatants has the option of making a "Desperation Recovery Check." The order in which the Characters make their

Recovery rolls is unimportant.

Desperation Recovery Checks allow a Character to "heal" damage. They are fully explained later on in this chapter.

## V. The Nuts and Bolts of Combat

Bashing someone, whether the Character is using a fist, a foot, or a fancy Power, is always a Dice Action. This means that every attempt to damage someone in combat has an AV, EV, OV, and RV.

The AV/EV of a combat Action depends upon the sort of attack being made. If a hero is simply attacking his/her opponent in hand-to-hand combat (punching, kicking, etc.) the AV/EV of the attack is equal to the hero's DEX/STR (DEX is the Physical Acting Attribute, and STR is the Physical Effect Attribute). Characters with the Martial Artist Skill can often use APs of the Skill to enhance their Acting and/or Effect Values in hand-to-hand combat. Since this Skill is so common, all Players should be familiar with the Martial Artist entry in the *Character Handbook*.

If a Character is attacking his/her opponent with a Power, its description in the *Character Handbook* will describe what to use as the AV and EV of the attack. Usually the APs of the Power serve as the AV and the EV of such an effort.

Figuring out the OV/RV of a combat blow is a little more difficult, since the OV/RV always depends upon the type of attack being made. Basically, there are three types of combat attacks in the **DC HEROES RPG**: Physical Attacks, Mental Attacks, and Mystical Attacks, which correspond to the three types of Attributes.

**Physical Attacks** attempt to damage the target's physical self. Physical Attacks include all hand-to-hand blows, gun shots, bomb blasts, and Powers such as Energy Blast, Lightning, or Sonic Beam. Physical Attacks are far more common than Mental or Mystical Attacks because anybody can make a Physical Attack, just by throwing a punch or a kick. A Character's OV/RV against Physical Attacks is usually equal to his/her Physical Opposing and Resistance Attributes (DEX/BODY).

**Mental Attacks** attempt to do damage to the target's mental well-being. A Character may only make a Mental Attack if s/he has an appropriate Power, such as Mind Blast or Mind Control. A Character's OV/RV against Mental Attacks tends to be equal to his/her Mental Opposing and Resistance Attributes (INT/MIND). Characters like Brainwave from Infinity, Inc. make Mental Attacks.

**Mystical (or magical) Attacks** attempt to damage the target's life force. Again, a Character may only make a Mystical Attack if s/he has an appropriate Power, like Magic Blast or Spirit Drain. A Character's OV/RV against Mystical Attacks is normally equal to his/her Mystical Opposing and Resistance Attributes (INFL/SPIRIT). Characters like Doctor Fate make Mystical Attacks all the time.

When using a Power to attack, the *Character Handbook* will describe whether the attack is Physical, Mental, or Mystical. Note that a Power that is classified as a Mental or Mystical Power does not necessarily cause a Mental or Mystical Attack. Many Mental Powers, for example, cause Physical Attacks. A Power only causes a Mental or Mystical Attack if its description specifically says so.

If a Character is attacking without using a Power to attack, s/he is automatically making a Physical Attack.

Certain Powers and Skills might alter a Character's OV or RV against any of the previously-described attack forms. These include, but are not limited to Skin Armor, Force Field, Mental Shield, Iron Will, Force Shield, Acrobatics, Magic Shield, and Martial Artist.

Combat blows are resolved as normal Dice Actions. In most instances, the RAPs earned by an attack equal the amount of damage sustained by the target. When using certain Powers or attack maneuvers, however, the RAPs might have a different use. If so, the Power description found in the *Character Handbook* will describe these effects in detail.

## VI. Damage

The maximum amount of damage that any Character can sustain before falling unconscious is equal to his/her Resistance Attribute (**Note:** Resistance Attribute, NOT Resistance Value) against a given type of attack. Batman, for instance, could take 6 RAPs of damage from Physical Attacks (his BODY is 6), 12 RAPs of damage from Mental Attacks (he has a 12 MIND), or 10 RAPs of damage from Mystical Attacks (he has a 10 SPIRIT) before he would fall unconscious.

All damage is cumulative. This means that if Batman receives 2 RAPs of Mystical damage this phase, and then 2 more RAPs the next, he will have taken a total of 4 RAPs of Mystical damage. In other words, once a Character takes damage s/he keeps it until it can be Recovered (described later in this chapter).

Players should keep a running total of the amount of each type of damage their Characters have sustained on a sheet of scrap paper. The GM keeps track of the damage sustained by the villains and minor Characters. Mark down the Character's Resistance Attribute against each attack form, and tick off damage as it occurs. If Fred were playing Batman, for instance, he would record a 6 for Batman's beginning Physical state (Batman has a 6 BODY). If Batman then takes 2 RAPs of Physical damage, Fred would scratch out the 6 and record a 4, to show that the Caped Crusader can take 4 more RAPs before Batman lies unconscious. The latest numbers that have been recorded in each category (Physical, Mental, and Mystical) are called the *Current Conditions*. Every Character should have a Current BODY Condition, a Current MIND Condition, and a Current SPIRIT Condition. If Fred was playing a Character with a MIND of 7 and a BODY of 4, for instance, and the Character took five RAPs of Mental damage and one RAP of Physical damage, Fred would record a new Current MIND Condition of 2 ( $7 - 5 = 2$ ) and a Current BODY Condition of 3 ( $4 - 1 = 3$ ).

The instant that any one of the three Current Conditions reaches zero, the Character instantly drops unconscious. Once unconscious, a Character may take no Actions, obviously. Characters remain unconscious until their Current Conditions are all restored to levels above zero. Regaining Current Conditions is described under **Recovery**. Unconscious Characters automatically have an OV of 0 against any further attacks of any type that are made against them.

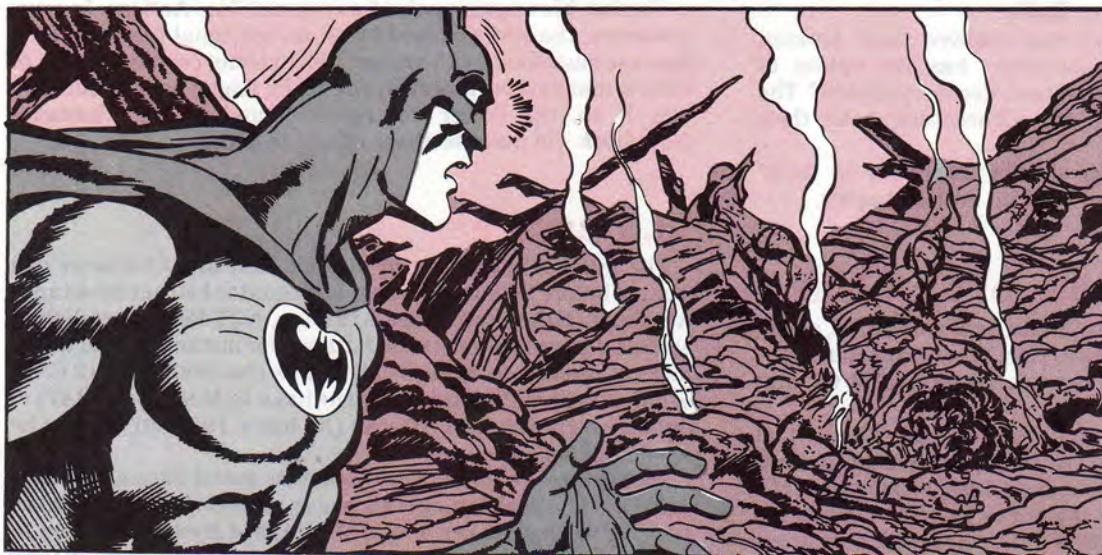
The damage that is sustained is *never* subtracted from any of a Character's Attributes in any way. If Batman took 2 RAPs of Physical damage, he would still have a BODY of 6, and would still use 6 as his RV against Physical Attacks.

### Bashing Combat and Killing Combat

All combat in the **DC HEROES RPG** is classified as either *Bashing Combat* or *Killing Combat*. Characters that are engaging in Bashing Combat are not trying to kill one another, just drive each other out of the fight. Characters engaged in Killing Combat are deliberately trying to end their opponent's life.

There are no separate Killing or Bashing Attacks. *Every* Attack can be either a Killing or a Bashing Attack at the whim of the attacker. This includes guns, knives, rockets, fists, Energy Blasts, Mental Blasts, and every other form of attack. Unless the attacker specifically states that s/he is entering Killing Combat before an attack is resolved, the attack is automatically assumed to be Bashing Combat.

Bashing Combat can never reduce any of a Character's Current Conditions below zero. If the Joker's Current BODY Condition has been reduced to 2, for example, and Batman



punched him for 3 RAPs of damage, the Joker's Current BODY Condition would only drop to zero and the Clown Prince of Crime would fall unconscious.

Killing Combat, on the other hand, can reduce a Character's Current Conditions to negative values. Once a Current Condition reaches a negative value that is greater than his/her original Resistance Attribute for that category, s/he is dead forever. When Robin's Current BODY Condition was reduced down to -5, for example, it was the end of the Boy Wonder.

Any time any of a Character's Current Conditions have been reduced below zero, s/he is badly wounded and slowly dying. The Current Condition in question will lose an additional 1 AP for every 8 APs of time (15 minutes) that elapses in game time until the Condition has been raised back up to 0 or better by Desperation Recovery, or through use of the Medicine Skill.

Ninety-nine percent of all combat in the **DC HEROES RPG** is Bashing Combat. Most heroes simply do not kill, and very few villains are willing to escalate a battle into a killing situation. **Chapter Seven** will explain how Hero Points are given to each participating hero at the end of any adventure as a reward. Heroes that willingly engage in Killing Combat during the adventure automatically forfeit this reward and receive no Hero Points at all, which can be a pretty steep penalty. A hero that responds with Killing Combat only after being attacked in Killing Combat, however, loses one-half of the Hero Points s/he would have earned for participating in the adventure (round fractions down).

There is one other important rule concerning Killing Combat. Many forms of damage caused by the environment are automatically considered Killing Combat. These include: Knockback Damage (being knocked into walls and such), damage from falling great heights, damage from natural fires (not a Character's fire-based Powers) and damage from remaining underwater for too long. The rules for each individual situation will always specify when an attack automatically does Killing damage.

## Last Ditch Defense

Whenever a Character takes damage, whether Killing damage or Bashing damage, the Player may immediately spend Hero Points to reduce the amount of damage sustained. Each Hero Point spent takes away one RAP of damage; but a Player may never spend more Hero Points on Last Ditch Defense than the basic value of the Resistance Attribute against the type of damage just sustained. For example, Batman can spend up to 6 Hero Points for Last Ditch Defense against Physical damage, up to 12 Hero Points for Last Ditch Defense against Mental damage, and up to 10 Hero Points for Last Ditch Defense against Mystical damage.

The decision of whether or not to use Last Ditch Defense must be made at the instant the damage is taken, and only damage that was just sustained can be spent away. If Wonder Woman takes 5 RAPs of Physical damage, for example, she could immediately spend 5 Hero Points to negate the damage, but she cannot spend more than 5 Hero Points in order to spend away damage that she might have taken earlier. This also means that unless she chooses to spend the 5 Hero Points at the instant she takes the damage, she cannot go back and remove it later with Last Ditch Defense; it must be Recovered.

Here is a detailed example of damage and how it works. Green Arrow has a BODY of 5, so George begins a battle by recording a Current BODY Condition of 5. First, Green Arrow is hit for 3 RAPs of Physical damage, but George spends 3 Hero Points on last Ditch Defense, so the Emerald Archer takes no damage, and his Current BODY Condition does not change. Next phase, he is hit again for 8 RAPs of damage, and George decides to use Last Ditch Defense again; but Green Arrow is only able to spend 5 Hero Points on Physical damage, since his BODY is only 5, so Green Arrow keeps 3 RAPs of damage despite the Last Ditch Defense. His Current BODY Condition is now 2 ( $5 - 3 = 2$ ). In the next phase, the Arrow is struck for 12 RAPs of damage; and since George cannot spend enough Hero Points on Last Ditch Defense to avoid being driven unconscious, he decides to forget about Last Ditch Defense altogether. Green Arrow's Current BODY Condition is now zero and he is unconscious. Since his attacker did not announce that s/he was entering Killing Combat, the last attack could not drive Green Arrow's Current Condition below zero. Since s/he is a ruthless fiend, the attacker decides to attack Green Arrow again, even though the archer is unconscious, and this time s/he announces that he is entering Killing Combat, striking for 7 RAPs of damage. George uses Last Ditch Defense to remove 5 of these RAPs, leaving Green Arrow's Current BODY Condition at -2. He is now slowly dying and his Current BODY Condition will fall another 1 AP every 15 minutes (8 APs of time) until it reaches -6 (one more than his BODY Attribute), at which point the Arrow will be pushing up the daisies. Hopefully, someone will come to his aid in time.

Note that Green Arrow cannot avoid taking further damage from his wound by using Last Ditch Defense after combat is over. The "slow death" damage from Killing Combat wounds is automatic. Notice, too, that Green Arrow did not have to be conscious for George to use Last Ditch Defense against further attacks.

## VII. Recovery

Healing damage from attacks is called *Recovery*. There are two types of Recovery: Resting Recovery and Desperation Recovery.



## Resting Recovery

A Character automatically receives a *Resting Recovery Check* after a certain amount of time passes since the last time s/he was damaged. If the Character's Current Condition was reduced by a Bashing Combat attack, s/he receives a Resting Recovery Check one hour (10 APs of time) after the last time s/he took damage. If the Character's Current Condition was reduced by a Killing Combat attack (even if the Current Condition was not reduced below zero), s/he receives a Resting Recovery Check twenty-four hours (15 APs of time) after the last time s/he took damage.

Characters Recover each one of their Current Conditions separately. Suppose, for example, that the Atom's Current BODY Condition is 1, his Current MIND Condition is 0, and his Current SPIRIT Condition is -1. His Current BODY and MIND Conditions were attacked in Bashing Combat, while his Current SPIRIT Condition was reduced by Killing Combat (that must have been a rough battle). One hour after he last took Physical and Mental Bashing damage, he gets to make Resting Recovery Checks to boost up his Current BODY and MIND Conditions. Twenty-four hours after he last took Mystical Killing damage, he may make a Resting Recovery Check to improve his Current SPIRIT Condition.

Resting Recovery is always performed after the appropriate amount of time has passed since the last time damage was sustained. If Nightwing takes 3 RAPs of Physical damage, and then receives another RAP of damage to his BODY 55 minutes later, he must now wait another full hour before he may make a Resting Recovery Check to increase his Current BODY Condition.

If, after making a Recovery Check, a Character is not fully "healed," s/he must wait the appropriate amount of time (one hour or twenty-four hours, depending upon the type of damage sustained) all over again before s/he may make another Resting Recovery Check.

Incidentally, a Character may only Recover if s/he has actually taken some sort of damage. A Character can never increase his/her Current Conditions above their starting value.

## Desperation Recovery

In the comics, it seems that heroes are always able to regain consciousness in the nick of time when their lives are on the line. How many times has an unconscious Batman been thrown out of an airplane, only to wake up just in time to save himself with a device from his utility belt?

This is called Desperation Recovery. At the end of any phase of combat, each of the heroes has the option of making a *Desperation Recovery Check*. Villains never use Desperation Recovery; although heroes may spend Hero Points to allow villains to Recover, as described later.

In order to make a Desperation Recovery Check, the hero must pay a fee of 15 Hero Points. These Hero Points may be paid for by the Character who wants to Recover, or they may be paid by another Character as long as the Character who is paying is touching the Character who wants to Recover, the Character who is paying knows that the Character who wants to Recover is in trouble, and the Player whose Character is paying wants to spend the Hero Points. Getting a hero to pay for the Desperation Recovery Check in this manner is the only way a villain could ever use Desperation Recovery.

If a Character's Current Condition is less than zero, a Desperation Recovery Check only costs him/her, or whoever is paying, 1 Hero Point; but Desperation Recovery Rolls under these circumstances may only increase the Current Condition to 0, and the Character may not make any further Desperation Recovery Checks until s/he has made at least one Resting Recovery Check; that is, until after one hour has passed. Once a Character's Current Condition is raised above zero, s/he no longer continues to lose Current Condition APs due to a Killing attack.

If a Character is entitled to Desperation Recovery, the Player may make a Recovery Check as described in the following section. Any RAPs from this roll are immediately added to the Character's Current Condition. Each Desperation Recovery Check must be paid for separately: if Bob wants to Recover both his Character's Current BODY Condition and MIND Condition, for example, it would cost Bob 30 Hero Points.

## Medical Treatment

Another way that damage can be Recovered is through the application of medical treatment. This is covered under the Medicine Skill entry in the *Character Handbook*. Using the Medicine Skill is often the only way to save the life of someone who is dying because one of his/her Current Conditions have been reduced to below 0. Using the Medicine Skill can restore BODY, MIND, and SPIRIT damage.

## How To Roll Recovery Checks

Recovery is a Dice Action. To make a Recovery Check, a Player makes an Action Check using the appropriate Resistance Attribute (BODY for Physical damage, MIND for Mental damage, and SPIRIT for Mystical damage) as both the AV and EV. If the Current Condition is zero or above, the OV and RV of the Action Check is zero. If the Current Condition is below zero, the OV and RV of the Action Check is equal to the amount that the Current Condition is below zero. If the Question's Current BODY Condition was at -2, for example, the OV/RV of his Recovery Check would be 2/2.

As an example, let us say that Batman's Current BODY Condition is 0. One hour after he last took Physical damage, he gets to make a Resting Recovery Roll. The AV/EV of this roll is 6/6 (Batman's BODY); the OV/RV is 0/0. The Player rolls an 11, and Batman receives 7 RAPs, thus restoring his Current BODY Condition to 6. He cannot restore all 7 RAPs, since he can never heal any of his Current Conditions up beyond their starting points.

## Damage To Powers and Attributes

If a Player attempts to Push a Power or Attribute and fails, the Power or Attribute "burns out" and is instantly reduced to 0 APs. Powers and Attributes that have been reduced in this way are Recovered just like Current Conditions. One hour after the Power or Attribute burns out, the Player may make a Resting Recovery Check, using the APs of the Power as the AV/EV against an OV/RV of 0/0. Any positive RAPs are restored to the AP level of the Power or Attribute being Recovered.

Similarly, certain rules and Powers call for "damage" to Powers and/or Attributes. If the Martian Manhunter's Flight Power takes 5 RAPs of damage, for example, it is temporarily reduced by 5 APs (to a minimum of zero). Powers and Attributes that have been damaged like this are Recovered as though they were Current Conditions. Note, however, that in the case of

Powers and Attributes, any damage that is sustained is actually subtracted from the APs of the Power or the appropriate Attribute until Recovered. In other words, if Starfire's Energy Blast Power of 12 APs takes 3 RAPs of damage, she will only have a 9 AP Energy Blast until she Recovers the damage.

Using Desperation Recovery on Powers or Attributes costs 25 Hero Points instead of the usual 15. Under no circumstances can APs of a Power or Attribute ever be reduced to less than zero.

## VIII. Knockback

Powerful blows thrown by the participants in comic book combat tend to send their targets reeling backward—away from the attacker. This phenomenon is called *Knockback*.

Every attack that does Physical damage has the potential to knock its target backwards. The distance (in APs) that the target is Knocked Back by an attack is equal to the number of Column Shifts that the attacker rolled on the Action Table while resolving the attack. If Amanda Waller needed a 9 to strike Captain Boomerang, for example, and she rolled a 13, she would receive 2 Column Shifts, so "Boomerbutt" would be Knocked Back 1 AP of distance (about 20 feet). Mrs. Waller is not one to be trifled with.

The maximum distance that a target may be Knocked Back by an attack is equal to the Effect Value of the attack minus the target's weight in APs. Most human Characters weigh 2 APs. This means, for example, that the Flash could never Knock a thug Back more than 2 APs of distance in hand-to-hand combat (the Flash's STR of 4 - the thug's weight of 2 = 2 APs of distance), while Superman could never Knock a thug Back more than 23 APs of distance (Superman's STR of 25 - the thug's weight of 2 = 23 APs of distance). Anyone who rolls a number of Column Shifts that would give him/her greater than the maximum amount of Knockback for that target, gives the maximum amount instead. If the Flash rolled up 5 Column Shifts against the thug, he would still only Knock the creep Back 3 APs.

### Knockback Damage

When a target is Knocked Back, it travels the appropriate distance in a straight line away from the attacker. If the target's path sends it reeling into an obstacle or another Character, both the target and the obstacle (or Character) immediately receive a Physical Attack with an AV/EV equal to the distance that the target was Knocked Back. Any Character or obstacle attacked in this fashion, including the original target, defends with an OV/RV equal to its BODY/BODY. Hero Points may be spent to increase the OV/RV if a Character is involved, but the AV/EV of the Knockback cannot be increased with Hero Points, nor may Hero Points be used to add to the OV/RV of an inanimate object. Characters take normal Physical damage from such attacks, while obstacles may break, as described in the last chapter. If the target does not strike an obstacle, s/he takes no additional damage from being Knocked Back, unless the Knockback pushes the Character off a cliff or into a volcano or something.

Knockback damage is automatically considered Killing Combat. How heroes can "pull their punch" to avoid accidentally killing their opponents with Knockback is described later in this chapter.

**Example:** Suppose Superman hits a villain with a BODY of 6, and Knocks the brute Back 7 APs (about 400 yards) into a brick wall with a BODY of 7. Both the villain and the wall instantly undergo Physical Attacks with an AV/EV of 7/7 (the distance the target was Knocked Back). The villain defends against the Knockback damage with an OV/RV of 6/6 (his BODY/BODY). Any RAPs from this Action Check are Physical Killing damage. The wall defends with an OV/RV of 7/7 (its BODY/BODY). If the attack receives one or more RAPs on the wall, the wall sustains that much damage, and the villain flies through the wall and continues along his path. If the attack on the wall receives 7 or

more RAPs, the villain completely destroys the wall as he comes through. If the attack on the wall receives no positive RAPs, the target simply slams into the wall and comes to a stop.

## IX. Combat Maneuvers

So far, all of the combat rules have assumed that the attacker was making a simple, straightforward attack. In the comics, however, heroes and villains tend to employ a number of unusual or extraordinary *combat maneuvers*.

Everytime a Character makes any kind of attack, s/he has the option of employing any one of the following combat maneuvers. Some maneuvers are limited to certain types of attacks, as explained in their descriptions. The Player must declare which combat maneuvers his/her Character is using, if any, at the time s/he declares actions for the phase.

### A. Critical Blow

A *Critical Blow* is an attempt to direct an attack at a weak point in the target's defenses. Critical Blows are harder to connect with; but when they do connect, they do a lot more damage.

In hand-to-hand combat, a Critical Blow can also be used to represent kicks, elbows, haymakers, or any other attack that has a relatively small chance for success but a high damage potential.

Whenever a Player declares that his/her Character is attempting a Critical Blow, his/her adversary receives +2 Column Shifts to the Opposing Value. For example, a Character with a 7 DEX defends against Critical Blows in the 11 to 12 Column. If the attack succeeds, however, the defender receives -3 Column Shifts to his/her Resistance Value. For instance, a Character with a BODY of 8 defends against Critical Blows in the 1 to 2 Column. These Column Shifts to the defender's RV are in addition to any received on the Action Table, but are not counted when figuring the Knockback caused by the attack.

Critical Blows can be used in conjunction with any sort of attack.

### B. Devastating Attack

A *Devastating Attack* is an all-out attempt to overwhelm the target's defenses. Essentially, the Devastating Attack is a more powerful version of the Critical Blow.

Devastating Attacks increase the target's OV by +4 Column Shifts; but decrease his/her RV by -6 Column Shifts, in addition to any earned on the Action Table. The Column Shifts to the opponent's RV do not affect the amount of Knockback caused by the attack.

Devastating Attacks can be used in conjunction with any sort of attack.

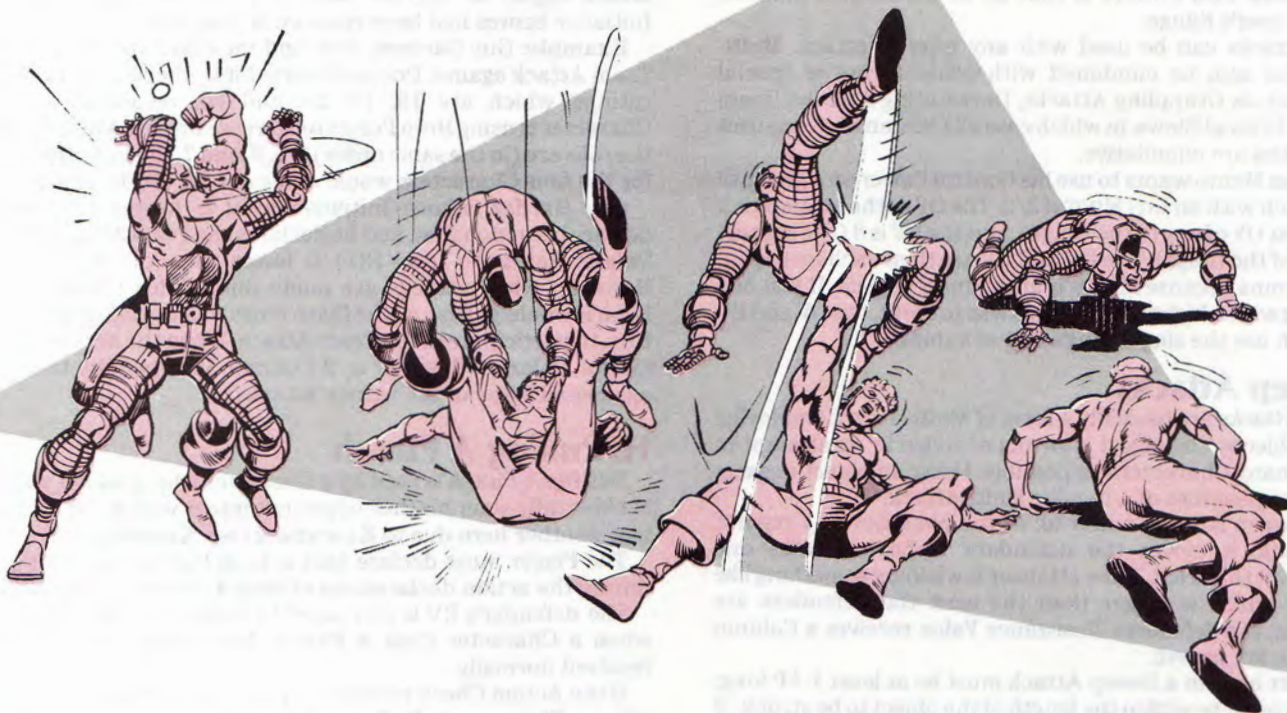
**Note:** Critical Blows and Devastating Attacks are essentially the same thing as "Going For Broke," which was described in **Chapter One**. The normal Going For Broke rules cannot be employed in combat; an attacker must choose to make a Critical Blow or Devastating Attack instead. This means that the more powerful +6/-9 and +8/-12 versions of Going For Broke may never be used in combat.

### C. Flailing Attacks

A *Flailing Attack* is the opposite of a Critical Blow. It is a slow, deliberate attack that places a higher premium on striking the target than upon inflicting damage.

The defender's OV against a Flailing Attack is decreased by two Column Shifts, while his/her RV is increased by three Column Shifts. In hand to hand combat, a Flailing Attack might represent a feint or a flurry of quick, less powerful blows.

The Flailing Attack may be used with any sort of attack, and can be employed in conjunction with Grappling Attacks, Multi-Attacks, and Team Attacks.



## D. Grappling Attack

A *Grappling Attack* is an attempt to grab another Character and restrict his/her movements. Slow, strong Characters often prefer Grappling Attacks because they can be used to keep a quicker but weaker opponent in one place, where s/he can be pounded into jelly. Grappling Attacks can only be made in close hand-to-hand combat. It is impossible grab someone with a gun or an Energy Blast, but if the attacker has an appropriate Power, like Stretching for instance, s/he may make long distance Grappling Attacks.

An attempt to Grapple another Character is resolved as a normal Physical Attack (DEX/STR as AV/EV, DEX/BODY as OV/RV). If this attack earns one or more RAPs, the target and the attacker become Grappled, and the defender takes damage as usual. The effects of a successful Grapple are as follows:

1. Until the Grapple is broken, both the attacker and defender can Physically attack only each other. Mental and Mystical Attacks may still be made upon any target in range, including the Character with whom the attacker is Grappled.

If a target that becomes Grappled has not yet acted during a phase and has earlier declared that s/he would be performing an action which is now illegal, s/he does not get to act in the phase at all.

2. Neither the attacker nor the defender can use any Power that does Physical damage to attack his/her opponent, unless the Power has a range of Touch.

3. Grappled Characters use their STR as their AV and OV, as well as for their EV, while engaging in hand-to-hand combat.

4. Unless a Grappled Character has APs of movement that are greater than the STR of the Character with whom s/he is Grappled, s/he cannot move. If the APs of movement are greater, s/he can move a distance equal to his/her movement APs minus the STR of his/her opponent. A Character with 8 APs of Flight that is Grappled by an opponent with a STR of 7, for instance, could only fly 1 AP of distance per phase.

Anyone that moves while Grappled takes his/her opponent with him/her, and the two Characters remain Grappled.

5. A Character that attacks a target with whom s/he is Grappled never causes any Knockback, despite any Column Shifts received.

All of these effects are suffered by both the Grappled Character and the Character who made the Grappling Attack until the Grapple is broken.

## Breaking a Grapple

Attempting to break a Grapple is a Dice Action; and the intention to do so must be declared by either of the Grappled combatants during **Step 3** of the combat phase. An attempt to break a Grapple uses the breaker's STR/STR as the AV/EV and his/her opponent's STR/STR as the OV/RV. If the Action Check earns one or more RAPs, the Grapple is broken and both Characters may begin to move and fight normally. An attempt to break a Grapple never causes any damage to the opponent.

A Grapple is also broken at the end of any phase when all of the involved parties agree to stop Grappling, or if either of the Grapplers falls unconscious.

## E. Multi-Attack

A *Multi-Attack* is an attempt to attack more than one target in the same phase. Multi-Attacks are obviously more difficult to perform than attacks upon a single target.

A Multi-Attack is resolved with one Dice Action. The OV of the attack is the highest OV of any of the defenders, while the RV of the attack is the highest RV of any of the defenders. In addition, the OV and RV are each increased by a number of Columns, as summarized on the following table:

# of Characters Attacked	Opposing Value Column Shifts	Resistance Value Column Shifts
2	+1	+1
3-4	+2	+2
5-8	+3	+3
9-15	+4	+4
16-30	+5	+5
31-60	+6	+6
61-125	+7	+7

Any RAPs earned by a Multi-Attack are suffered by all of the targets.

In hand-to-hand combat, a Character may only Multi-Attack a number of opponents equal to his/her APs of movement, and

only if the attacker has enough movement to move into striking distance of each of the targets. The only restriction upon using Multi-Attacks with Powers is that all of the targets must be within the user's Range.

Multi-Attacks can be used with any type of attack. Multi-Attacks can also be combined with other forms of special attacks such as Grappling Attacks, Devastating Attacks, Team Attacks or Critical Blows, in which case all Column Shift bonuses and penalties are cumulative.

**Example:** Mento wants to use his Control Power on a group of 8 thugs, each with an INT/MIND of 2/3. The OV of the attempt is 2 (the highest OV of any of the thugs), and the RV is 3 (the highest RV of any of the thugs). The OV and RV are then each increased three Columns because Mento is attacking 8 targets. If just one single thug with a higher INT or MIND was present, the OV and RV would both use the single thug's higher values.

## F. Sweep Attacks

*Sweep Attacks* are basically a form of Multi-Attack employing physical objects. The object is swung or rolled in an attempt to strike as many Characters as possible. Using an object negates some of the penalties of a regular Multi-Attack.

While Sweep Attacks suffer all of the penalties of a regular Multi-Attack, it moves the defenders' Opposing Value one Column Shift to the left. If the attacker is wielding something like a boulder which is larger than the area the defenders are standing in, the defenders' Resistance Value receives a Column Shift to the left as well.

An object used in a Sweep Attack must be at least 1 AP long. Defenders must be within the length of the object to be struck. If the RAPs of damage are greater than the BODY of the object used in the attack, the object is destroyed.

Character's can throw or roll objects in a straight line through the defender's area. Each area must be smaller than the length APs of the object for a Sweep Attack to be made.

**Example:** Cyborg attempts a Sweep Attack against a group of 5 thugs in Metropolis Stadium. The thugs are running across the football field, so Cyborg rips up a 1 AP long goal post and throws it at them, lengthwise. Unfortunately, only 4 of the thugs are in a straight line so only 4 thugs can be attacked.

The goal post weighs 4 APs. With his Strength of 8, Cyborg can only throw it 4 APs of distance. The GM determines that only three of the four thugs are within this range, so only three can be attacked.

Cyborg's Player rolls the attack as a normal Multi-Attack. Because it is a Multi-Attack against three opponents, Cyborg suffers a +2 Column Shift to the OV, but because of the Sweep Attack, he may reduce this to only a +1 Column Shift.

## G. Team Attack

A *Team Attack* is an attempt to gang up on a single defender in order to overwhelm his/her defenses. Team Attacks are especially useful for a team of weaker heroes that is going up against a tougher opponent.

Since the defender has more than one adversary ganging up on him/her, his/her Opposing Value receives Column Shifts to the left on the Action Table, as follows:

Number Of Team Members	Opposing Value Column Shifts
2	-1
3-4	-2
4-8	-3
9+	-4

Each team member in a Team Attack rolls his/her own Action Check, and applies the Column Shifts separately.

If desired, each Player may spend his/her own Hero Points separately.

A single opponent may be Team Grappled (see previous paragraph on Grappling Attacks).

The team member who has the lowest total Initiative Score declares the Team Attack during **Step 3** of the phase, and the attack begins on his/her turn, as if all the team members' Initiative Scores had been reduced to this level.

**Example:** Guy Gardner, Fire, and the Flash are attempting a Team Attack against Doctor Polaris. First, check their Initiative ratings, which are 18, 19, 25, and 20, respectively. If no Character is using Hero Points to increase his/her Initiative, and the rolls are (in the same order) 8, 3, 9, and 7, the Initiative totals for the four Characters would come out 22, 26, 34, and 27.

Guy Gardner, whose Initiative total is lowest (22) would declare his action first, and he declares the Team Attack. Doctor Polaris' Initiative total (27) is lower than the Flash's (34). However, when attacks are made during this phase, Doctor Polaris would go first, as the Flash must wait until Guy Gardner's turn to participate in the Team Attack. When the heroes attack, Doctor Polaris will suffer a -2 Column Shift penalty to his OV against all three of the heroes' attacks.

## H. Pulling A Punch

*Pulling A Punch* is used by a Character who does not want to accidentally slam his/her opponent into a wall or off a cliff or into another hero due to Knockback (see **Knockback**, p. 20).

The Player must declare that s/he is Pulling his/her Punch during the action declarations of **Step 3** of the combat phase.

The defender's RV is increased +1 Column Shift to the right when a Character Pulls A Punch. The Action Check is then resolved normally.

If the Action Check receives any Column Shifts on the attack when a Character is Pulling A Punch, the attacker may decide how many APs the defender is Knocked Back, up to the maximum number of Knockback distance APs possible in that attack. The attacker may even opt not to have the defender be Knocked Back at all. The Column Shifts transferred from the Action Table to the Result Table for the purpose of determining RAPs are not changed.

"Pulling A Punch" may be used with any sort of attack; even those in which no actual "punch" is thrown, such as an Energy Blast or a machine gun.

## I. Planned Knockback Attack

Instead of aiming a blow or attack at an opponent with the intent to do harm, a Character can focus the blow upon Knocking Back the target. This is called a *Planned Knockback Attack*.

Planned Knockback Attacks are resolved like normal Dice Actions, except that the RAPs earned equal the amount of distance that the target is Knocked Back instead of the amount of damage the target sustains. The target takes no damage from a Planned Knockback Attack unless s/he is Knocked Back into a wall or obstacle as described previously under **Knockback**. The total distance that an attack may Knock Back a target is still limited to the Effect Value of the attack minus the target's weight.

A Planned Knockback Attack may be made in conjunction with any sort of Physical Attack.

## J. Charging Attack

A *Charging Attack* is an attempt to run, fly, or leap into an opponent in order to use the velocity of the move to cause additional damage.

In order to make a Charging Attack, the attacking Character must move at least 1 AP and end his/her movement with a hand-to-hand attack upon the opponent, thus expending both an Automatic Action, and a Dice Action. The AV of a Charging Attack is equal to the attacker's DEX; the EV is equal to the attacker's APs of movement or movement Power. The OV/RV is the defender's DEX/BODY, as usual.

The problem with Charging Attacks is that they can be just as dangerous to the attacker as they are to the defender, since the attacker is using his/her own body as a weapon. An attacker

making a Charging Attack has a chance of taking damage along with the defender. After resolving the Charging Attack upon the defender, look directly to the Result Table, using the EV of the Charge as an EV, and the attacker's BODY as an RV to find the amount of damage sustained by the attacker. The attacker may spend Hero Points to increase his/her RV against the Charging damage or to remove damage through Last Ditch Defense. The attacker's RV against a Charging Attack never suffers any Column Shifts due to Critical Blows, Devastating Attacks, or good dice rolling. The attacker only takes damage from a Charging Attack if the attack actually hit its target (i.e. the attacker rolled his/her Success Number on the Action Table), although the attack need not have actually damaged the target to damage the attacker.

**Example:** Suppose that while flying through New York, Starfire spots an escaping villain and decides to make a Charging Attack. During her turn in the phase, Starfire dives out of the air and flies straight into the fleeing villain. First, the Player would resolve the Charging Attack against the villain. Starfire's AV is her DEX and her EV is her APs of Flight. The villain's OV is his/her DEX and the RV is his/her BODY. Suppose that Starfire rolled high enough to receive two additional Column Shifts to the villain's RV, and the attack inflicted enough damage to knock the villain unconscious. The Player would now check to see if Starfire herself took damage, by looking directly to the Result Table. The EV is equal to the EV of the Charging Attack (Starfire's APs of Flight), and the RV is Starfire's BODY. Starfire's RV does not suffer the additional +2 Column Shifts for her good dice roll. The RAPs found on the Result Table equal the amount of damage Starfire takes from her own Charging Attack.

Charging Attacks can also be used to damage inanimate objects. Charging Attacks may never be made in conjunction with a Multi-Attack.

## K. Take Away

A *Take Away* is an attempt to grab an object or item away from another Character in combat. Take Aways are most frequently used to deprive an opponent of his/her weapons or Gadgets.

A Take Away is a normal Dice Action using the attacker's DEX/STR as the AV/EV, and the defender's DEX/STR as the OV/RV, though the defender automatically receives a special +2 Column Shift bonus to his/her OV, and a +1 Column Shift bonus to his/her RV. If the Take Away attempt earns one or more RAPs, the attacker automatically gains possession of any one item formerly in the possession of the defender. The attacker must specify which item s/he is trying to Take Away before rolling the dice, if there is more than one possibility. Whether an item can or cannot be Taken Away depends on whether or not it is listed in upper and lower case letters, or in all capitals (see **Chapter Five: Gadgets**). Manga Khan could not Take Away Booster Gold's battlesuit in the middle of combat, for example, but he might be able to Take Away Blue Beetle's BB Gun.

In order to attempt a Take Away, a Character must obviously be in close hand-to-hand combat position, unless s/he has an appropriate Power, like Stretching. Take Aways never inflict any damage upon the defender.

## L. Trick Shot

A *Trick Shot* is an attempt to hit a specific part of a target for a particular result. Batman using his Batarang to capture the Riddler is a Trick Shot, as are most of Green Arrow's stupendous arrow shots.

This type of attack gives the defender +2 Column Shifts to the right for his/her Opposing Value. RAPs are applied as damage to a defender only if the Trick Shot is an offensive action. Otherwise the action is considered successful if the RAPs are 1 AP or greater.

If Batman did not want to hurt the Riddler with his Trick Shot, for example, he could just entangle the villain in his Batarang line by earning one or more RAPs on his Trick Shot.

The +2 Column Shift rule may be modified by the GM to reflect the particular circumstances and difficulty of a shot, by using the *Universal Modifiers Chart* found on the *Gamemaster's Screen*.

## X. Defensive Combat Maneuvers

*Defensive Combat Maneuvers* are employed like regular offensive maneuvers: a Player must declare which maneuver s/he is using during **Step 3** of the combat phase. Defensive Maneuvers, however, go into effect immediately after they are declared. Even if a Character has a lower total Initiative Score than his/her attacker, the Character employing a Defensive Maneuver still gets to use the maneuver to fend off the attack.

Defensive Maneuvers only affect Physical Attacks.

### A. Block

A *Block* is an attempt by the defender to interpose some object between an incoming blow and his/her person. If the Block maneuver succeeds, the object takes the damage instead of the defender.

A Block is a Dice Action, and in order to make a Block, the Character must have some object in his/her hands or on his/her person that can be used to Block. The AV and EV of a Block attempt are both equal to the defender's DEX. The OV and RV are both equal to the Acting Value of the incoming attack. If the Block Action Check earns one or more RAPs, the Block succeeds, and the attack is then resolved normally, using the defender's DEX as the OV and the BODY of the object used to Block as the RV.

Any RAPs caused by the attack are inflicted upon the object's Current BODY Condition instead of the defender's. If an object is damaged during a Block attempt (it takes at least 1 RAP of damage), it can no longer be used to Block. However, GMs may wish to suspend this rule if the object being used to Block has been specifically designed for blocking, such as a broadsword or a shield. If an object is destroyed during a Block attempt (it takes RAPs of damage greater than or equal to its BODY), the object can no longer be used to Block and the attack carries through and damages the defender anyway. In this case, look to the Result Table, using the EV of the attack as the EV and the defender's BODY as the RV, applying all of the Column Shifts earned by

the attack in order to determine the RAPs of damage sustained to the Character's Current BODY Condition.

If the original Block Action Check fails, the attack is resolved normally and the defender automatically suffers a -2 Column Shift penalty to his/her OV against it.

A defender may Block more than one attack per phase, but the OV/RV of each subsequent Block attempt is increased by +1 Column Shift. This is one of the few exceptions to the "one Dice Action per phase" rule. Only Physical Attacks may be Blocked.



The OV and RV of a Block attempt are also modified according to the size of the object used to Block, as summarized in the following table:

Approximate Size Of Object	OV and RV Column Shifts
Human Hand	+1
Small Shield, large Dictionary	0
Garbage can lid	-1
Desk, small table	-2
Door	-3
Automobile	-4
Semi Truck	-5
House	-6

**Example:** A thug is shooting at Wonder Woman, and she decides to use her bracelets to Block the incoming bullets. The AV/EV of the Block attempt is equal to Diana's DEX/DEX (13/13), and the OV and RV are both equal to the thug's Acting Value (in this case, his Weaponry Skill: 4/4). Since the bracelets are roughly the size of a human hand, the Block attempt receives a +1 Column Shift penalty. The Success Number for the Block attempt is 4. Diana rolls an 8 and receives 11 RAPs: she has Blocked successfully. The thug's attack is now resolved normally, using the thug's Weaponry Skill as the AV, the gun's Effect Value as the EV, Diana's DEX as the OV, but the BODY of the bracelets (30) is used as the RV instead of Diana's BODY.

## B. Dodge

A Player who declares a *Dodge* has his/her Character's OV against all Physical Attacks increased by +1 Column Shift for that phase. Characters with the Acrobatics/Dodging Subskill may add their APs of Skill to their OV instead of the one Column bonus.

Dodging is an Automatic Action, but a Character may never perform a Dice Action of any sort during a phase in which s/he Dodges.

## XI. Initiative Maneuvers

Finally, there are two special *Initiative Maneuvers* available to the one Character that has the highest final Initiative Score during each phase of combat. The Initiative winner may choose to use one of these two maneuvers, or neither of them, but never both. Both of the maneuvers are Automatic Actions and can be used in conjunction with all of the previously-described combat maneuvers.

### A. Pressing The Attack

If the Initiative winner chooses to *Press The Attack*, any targets that s/he attacks during the phase have their Opposing Values decreased by -1 Column Shift, but the Initiative winner also has his/her OV decreased by -1 Column Shift against any attacks that are directed at him/her.

Pressing The Attack can be used in conjunction with any sort of Attack (Physical, Mental, or Mystical), or any special attack maneuver.

### B. Laying Back

*Laying Back* is the opposite of Pressing The Attack. The Initiative winner has his/her OV increased by +1 Column Shift against all attacks made against him/her during the phase, but any targets that s/he attacks have their OVs increased by +1 Column Shift as well.

Laying Back can also be used in conjunction with any sort of attack or defensive combat maneuver.

## XII. Special Combat Situations

### A. Weapons

*Weapons* are not usually used by heroic Characters. Only a few heroes who do not have offensive Powers, like Batman, Nightwing, and Hawkman, use weapons with any frequency. Even then, their weapons are used to stun, entangle, or for some Trick Shot effect, rather than to injure or kill an opponent.

Non-Player Characters, on the other hand, use weapons all the time. You will find a complete listing of normal weapons and their effects in **Chapter Five: Gadgetry**.

In general, weapons which are thrown by a Character have no STR or DEX APs. Batman's Batarang or Nightwing's Combat Disc are two examples. Instead, they use the STR and DEX APs of their thrower as the Acting and Effect Value.

Guns and missiles are different. They can have EV APs which must be substituted for the STR of the firer. Some guns even have AV APs which may be substituted for a Character's DEX.

### B. Surprise

*Surprise* can occur when a Character is not aware of his/her attackers. Surprise happens before combat begins. Characters who are already engaged in combat may not be Surprised.

Before a Surprise is sprung, the GM must give his/her Players a special Perception Check (see p. 26) that allows them to detect the Surprise, be it a hidden bomb, an ambush in a warehouse, or a sudden attack on their headquarters. The GM does not need to tell his/her Players why they are making the roll, or even what the Opposing Values are; the Players can try to figure out the Success Number for themselves.

For this special Perception Check, the INT/WILL of the defender is the AV/EV, and the INT/WILL of the attacker who set the ambush or trap is the OV/RV. Any positive RAPs means that the ambush, trap, or Surprise has been detected one phase before it occurs.

The Military Science Skill may be substituted for either the AV or OV. Also, the potentially Surprised Characters might have Powers that make the Surprise easier or more difficult to detect. In either case, the APs of these Powers may be used instead of INT/WILL as the AV/EV.

The effects of Surprise are as follows: 1) Surprised Characters may not make any Dice or Automatic Action during the first phase of combat (they have no Initiative), and 2) Surprised Characters have their Opposing Value moved -2 Column Shifts to the left on the Action Table.

### C. Blindside

*Blindsides* are a type of Surprise that can happen during combat when a Character is struck from behind or from a vantage point which s/he cannot see. The defender must not be aware of the precise location of the attack or attacker for a Blindside to be called. It is up to the GM to rule whether or not an attack is a Blindside.

Sensory Powers such as Full Vision, or perhaps a lucky glance in the right direction at the right time could make a Character aware of an attacker's position, but if the attack comes from out of sight or beyond the range of the Sensory Power, then the Character is Blindsided.

When a Character is Blindsided, his/her Opposing Value is shifted -1 Column Shift to the left on the Action Table for all attacks from that attacker until s/he can locate the source of the attacks (see **Perception Checks**, page 26).

### D. Darkness

When a Physical Attack occurs in natural darkness, the attacker must be able to see the defender in order to hit him. In the dark, normal sight can recognize shapes up to 100 yards away (5 APs distance). A full moon will double this range to 6 APs.

Even if seen, the defender receives +2 Opposing Value Column Shifts to the right in natural darkness.

This rule covers only naturally occurring darkness. The darkness that results from the use of the Darkness Power is discussed in the *Character Handbook*.

An attacker can compensate for the natural darkness penalties by using an appropriate Power, such as Ultra Vision, Thermal Vision, or Flash.

## E. Underwater

When Characters are taking part in an underwater adventure, the following rules should be applied. However, the Water Freedom Power negates all underwater penalties except for thrown items.

- Add +1 Column Shift to the right on any Dice Action's Resistance Value involving movement. This also applies to Knockback.

- Subtract 2 from all movement rates except Swimming.

- Submerging to a great depth will harm Characters. Each AP of depth over 5 causes the descending Character to suffer a Physical Attack with the APs of depth as the AV/EV and the Character's STR/BODY as the OV/RV. This is automatically a Killing Combat attack. A new attack is made every time the Character descends an additional one AP of depth.

- Subtract 5 from the Initiative score of each Character that is underwater.

- A Character may hold his/her breath for 5 APs of time (two minutes). For each additional AP of time that s/he remains underwater, the Character must make an Action Check using his/her STR/STR as the AV/EV and his/her BODY/BODY as the OV/RV. Hero Points may be spent on both the AV and the EV. Any positive RAPs, up to a maximum of 5, are the APs of time that the Character may remain underwater before having to make another Action Check. If the Character does not receive any RAPs, s/he has 5 APs of time (2 minutes) to either resurface or find a source of oxygen. If the Character does not do this, s/he will lose consciousness and drown in 2 more APs of time if not rescued, for a total of eight minutes since the Action Check failed. Regardless of die rolls, a Character cannot stay underwater for more than twice the APs of his/her BODY.

- Water is not always clear. Normal vision underwater is 5 APs (300 feet). For every 2 APs of depth, 1 AP is subtracted from the normal range of vision due to darkness. At the GM's discretion, vision may also be impaired by mud or dirt suspended in the water.

- Items which are not continually propelled, such as thrown rocks or arrows, have a range that is 2 APs shorter than normal when fired through water. Thus, a Character with a STR of 11 who could normally hurl a stone weighing 4 APs 7 APs of distance ( $11 - 4 = 7$ ) may only throw the same stone 5 APs of distance underwater ( $11 - 4 - 2 = 5$ ).

- All attacks made using Powers or Skills underwater suffer a +2 Column Shift penalty to the OV. The GM may rule that some Powers are inoperative underwater, or s/he may use the *Universal Modifiers Chart* to determine any further penalties when performing Actions underwater.

- If a Character has Running or Superspeed of 12 APs or greater, s/he may run across the surface of water as if it were solid.

## F. Falling

Whenever a Character falls a distance greater than 10 feet (0 APs), s/he runs the risk of injury. Make an Action Check using the APs of distance that the Character falls multiplied by 2 as the AV/EV, and the Character's BODY/BODY as the OV/RV.

If the distance that the Character is falling is greater than 7 APs, treat it as 7 APs: 14/14 is the highest possible AV/EV of a fall. Falling damage is automatically considered Killing Combat.

## G. Explosives

Explosives are area effect attacks; they do full damage to everyone in the target area (a circular area with a diameter of 10 feet, or 0 APs) and less damage in the area around the blast. Explosions are always considered Killing Combat.



Each target Character is attacked equally and separately. Each Character can receive RAPs from a successful attack, although the RAPs are still determined by using the Acting and Result Tables.

The effect of an explosion diminishes rapidly as distance from the blast increases. Each AP of distance from the target area reduces the blast's AV/EV by 2 APs. Thus, if a Character is standing 3 APs from the target area of a 10 AP howitzer blast, the AV/EV is reduced by 6 APs to 4/4. A Character who is standing 4 APs away from the same blast would be attacked with an AV/EV of 2/2. If double ones are rolled for the attack, the explosive was a dud.

Explosive attacks are not considered Multi-Attacks, and there are no Column Shift penalties if the explosion affects more than one target. Each individual in the radius of an explosion is attacked separately.

## H. Throwing Things

Strong Characters like to pick up heavy objects and heave them at their opponents in combat. In such a case, the AV of the attack is equal to the thrower's DEX, and the EV of the attack is equal to the thrower's STR. See the previous chapter for the rules regarding whether or not a Character can pick up an object, and how far s/he can throw that object.

## XIII. Perception Checks

One of the things that separates heroes from normal humans is their uncanny ability to perceive something happening in the world around them and deduce how to use that information to their advantage. Frequently, heroes will detect clues that would otherwise go unnoticed, spot hidden assassins trying to escape in a crowd, or make accurate deductions based on their gut instincts.

In game terms, this phenomenon is simulated with the use of *Perception Checks*.

A Perception Check is a Dice Action that is rolled by the Gamemaster to see if a Character is aware of something in the world around him.

The Character's Acting Value is his/her INT and the Effect Value is his/her WILL. If what the hero may perceive is an item or a Physical Action that is hidden by a person, the Opposing Value and Resistance Values are the target's INT/MIND. If the perceived is a mood or emotional state, the OV/RV is the target's INFL/AURA. If it is an event, clue or something which does not fit into the above categories, the OV and RV are taken by the GM from the *Universal Modifiers Table*.

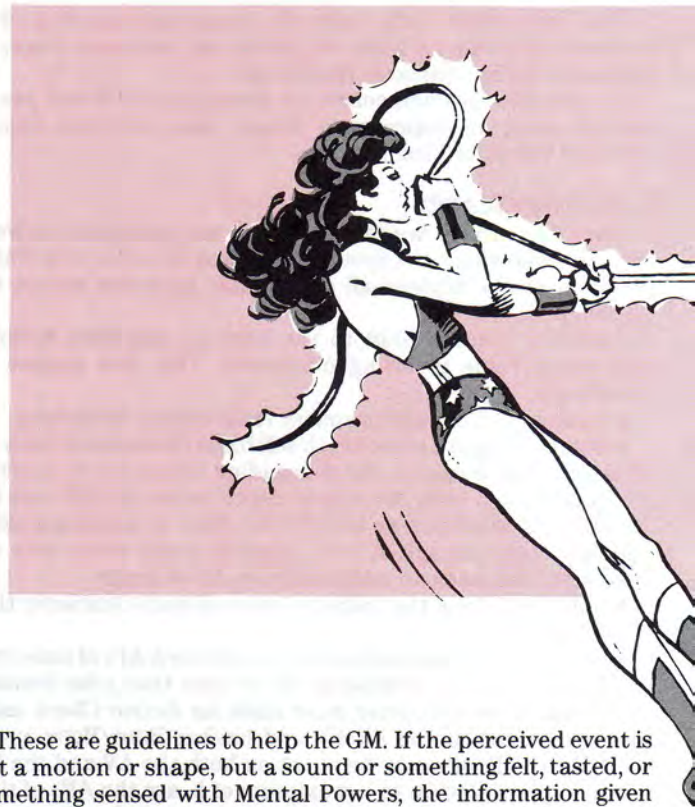
This is an Action Check that should be made by the GM in secret, and the information should only be given to the Player if the roll yields positive RAPs.

A Player may initiate a Perception Check by saying that s/he is on the alert, but this only happens during a situation where the Character would normally be alert, such as in a stakeout sequence.

Hero Points may be added to increase the Character's INT/WILL up to twice the regular value. If there is nothing to be perceived in that phase, the Hero Points are lost.

Depending on the RAPs received on the Action Check, the Character may perceive more or less information, according to the following chart. If the Action Check receives only one RAP, the Character only learns a brief tidbit about the object perceived. If the RAPs earned are equal to one-half of the Action Check's RV, the Character gains more information, and so on.

RAPs	Information Perceived
N	Nothing perceived.
1 RAP	A quick glance; a shadow moving.
½ RV	A recognizable shape or movement, with direction and at a certain distance from the perceiving Character.
Full RV	A definite object or event.
Over RV	Details about the object or event.



These are guidelines to help the GM. If the perceived event is not a motion or shape, but a sound or something felt, tasted, or something sensed with Mental Powers, the information given out is left to the GM's discretion.

## XIV. Example of Combat

Angela is playing Wonder Woman, who hears a scream and uses her Directional Hearing Power to pinpoint the scream's source in a nearby forest. Rushing to investigate, she finds her nemesis the Cheetah standing over the mauled corpse of a forest ranger. At this point, the GM decides to invoke the combat rules.

### PHASE ONE

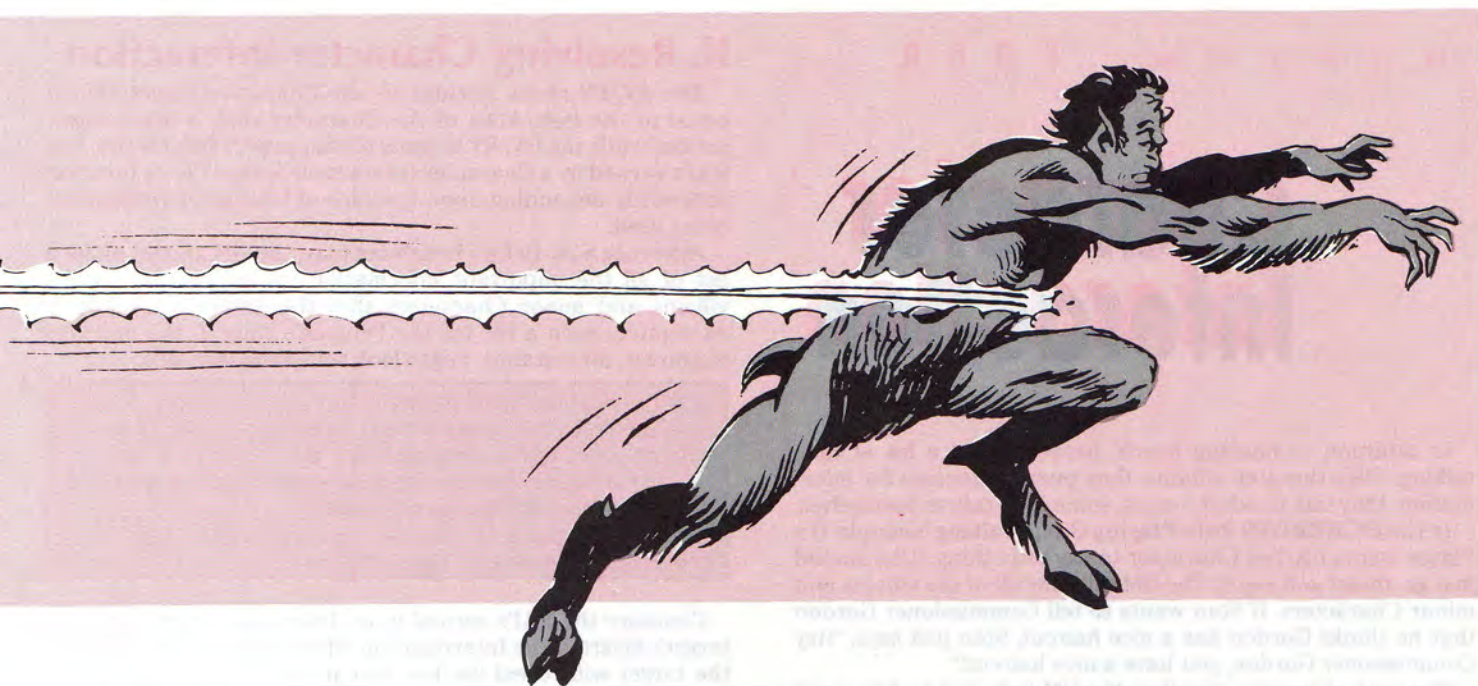
Both Angela and the GM decline to spend Hero Points to increase their Initiative. Angela rolls a 5 and adds it to Wonder Woman's Initiative of 36 for a total of 41, while the GM rolls a 9 and adds it to the Cheetah's Initiative of 33 for a total of 42. During this phase, Angela must declare Wonder Woman's Actions first, but the Cheetah will take the first turn.

Angela declares that Wonder Woman will unfurl her lasso (Automatic Action), and use her Acrobatics Skill to Dodge (Automatic Action) in case the Cheetah attacks. Since Wonder Woman is only performing two Actions, she could try something else if she wanted, but Angela declines.

The GM then declares that the Cheetah will use her Jumping Power to spring upon Wonder Woman (Automatic Action), and attack using her Claws (Dice Action). The GM also determines that the Cheetah will opt to Press The Attack (she is only allowed to select this maneuver because she is the Initiative winner) while slashing out with her Claws.

Since the Cheetah won the Initiative, she resolves her Action first. The GM notes that she has jumped up to Wonder Woman, and resolves the attack. The Cheetah's Acting Value is her DEX of 13 and her Effect Value is her Claws Power of 9. Wonder Woman's Opposing Value is her DEX of 13 plus her Acrobatics Skill of 11 (because she Dodged) for a total of 24, and her Resistance Value is her BODY of 13 (because striking with Claws is a Physical Attack). In addition, Wonder Woman suffers a -1 Column Shift penalty to her OV because the Cheetah Pressed the Attack. Looking at the Action Table, the GM finds that the Cheetah's Success Number is 18. The GM rolls a 14 for the Cheetah's Action, so she fails.

Wonder Woman then resolves her own Action and unfurls her lasso. No dice roll is needed because this is an Automatic Action. This ends the first phase.



## PHASE TWO

The GM decides to spend 5 Hero Points to increase the Cheetah's Initiative, and Angela follows suit, spending 5 of her own Hero Points on Wonder Woman's Initiative. Both of the participants roll a 7, so the Cheetah's Initiative total is 45 and Wonder Woman's Initiative total is 48.

The GM announces that the Cheetah will try to escape if Wonder Woman lassos her (Dice Action with a condition), and that in any case, she will run off into the forest (Automatic Action).

Angela decides that Wonder Woman will lasso the Cheetah (Dice Action) and move out of the range of her opponent's Claws (Automatic Action).

Since she won Initiative, Wonder Woman takes the first turn. First, Angela resolves the attempt to lasso the Cheetah. The AV is Wonder Woman's DEX of 13 and her EV is the lasso's STR of 15. The Cheetah's OV is her DEX of 13 and her RV is her BODY of 10. The GM determines that Wonder Woman needs one or more RAPs for success, but Angela rolls a 9, which fails. The GM then notes that Wonder Woman has put some distance between herself and the Cheetah.

The Cheetah has no need to resolve her escape attempt (the condition was not met), so the GM simply notes that she runs into the woods and out of sight, ending phase two.

## PHASE THREE

The GM decides to spend 5 Hero Points to increase the Cheetah's Initiative; Angela does not spend any. The GM rolls a 7 for an Initiative total of 45; Angela rolls a 4 for an Initiative total of 40.

Angela declares that Wonder Woman will chase after the Cheetah in the forest and look around to see if she can spot the villainess' hiding place.

The GM declares that the Cheetah will hide behind a tree and try to ambush Wonder Woman as she runs by. Note that the Cheetah wants to delay her second Action until after Wonder Woman takes her Actions. Unless the GM objects, this is perfectly reasonable.

The Cheetah goes first, and the GM notes that she is now hiding behind a tree.

Next, Wonder Woman runs into the forest, and the Cheetah springs out to attack. Before the attack, however, Wonder Woman gets her chance to spot the Cheetah. Since this is a Perception Check, Wonder Woman's AV is her INT of 9 and her EV is her WILL of 12. The Cheetah's OV and RV are both 13, her

APs of the Thief Skill. Angela rolls an 18 and gains 3 RAPs. Wonder Woman manages to catch a glimpse of the Cheetah out of the corner of her eye as the villainess attacks. The Cheetah can still attack, but since Wonder Woman made her Perception Check, she will *not* catch her victim unawares and receive a Blindside bonus.

The Cheetah's AV/EV is 13/9 (her DEX/Claws). Wonder Woman's OV/RV is 13/13 (her DEX/BODY). The GM rolls an 18 and earns 3 RAPs. Angela decides to spend 3 Hero Points on Last Ditch Defense rather than take the 3 RAPs of damage to her Current BODY Condition. This ends the third phase.

## PHASE FOUR

Angela decides that she had better end this fight in a hurry, so she spends 15 Hero Points on Wonder Woman's Initiative. The GM does not spend any Hero Points for the Cheetah. Angela rolls a 2 for an Initiative total of 53; the GM rolls a 6 for an Initiative total of 39.

The GM declares that the Cheetah will continue to slash at Wonder Woman using her Claws.

Angela declares that Wonder Woman will punch the Cheetah.

Since she won Initiative, Wonder Woman takes the first turn. Because she is intent on ending the battle, Angela decides to spend 6 Hero Points on her AV and 15 Hero Points on her EV. Wonder Woman's AV is now 19 (her DEX of 13 + 6 Hero Points), and her EV is 31 (her STR of 16 + 15 Hero Points). Since the GM spent all of her Hero Points earlier in the adventure, the Cheetah has run out of Hero Points and the GM cannot spend any on defense. The Cheetah's OV/RV is 13/10 (her DEX/BODY). Angela rolls an 18, netting her 30 RAPs. Even if the Cheetah had Hero Points to spend on Last Ditch Defense, she would still be unconscious (with a BODY of 10, she can only spend 10 Hero Points at a time on Last Ditch Defense).

Another victory for the good guys!

## XV. Putting It All Together

The combat rules are long, and seem rather complicated at first, but once the Players get used to them, combat is really not that complex. Before going any further, get some Players together and play out a couple of sample combats. When everyone feels familiar enough with the combat rules, continue on to **Character Interaction**.

# Character Interaction

In addition to bashing heads, heroes spend a lot of time talking. They threaten villains, they pump witnesses for information, they talk to other heroes, some even talk to themselves.

In the **DC HEROES Role-Playing Game**, talking is simple. If a Player wants his/her Character to say something, s/he should just go ahead and say it. The GM talks for all of the villains and minor Characters. If Stan wants to tell Commissioner Gordon that he thinks Gordon has a nice haircut, Stan just says, "Hey Commissioner Gordon, you have a nice haircut!"

The tricky bit comes in when the GM is forced to figure out how a villain or minor Character will react to what the Players say. In the previous example, it's pretty obvious that Commissioner Gordon would probably answer something like, "Oh, thank you;" but what happens if Batman is interrogating one of the Penguin's thugs: "Where is the Penguin's hideout? Tell me *now*, you diseased scum!" The thug obviously does not want to talk, but Batman has methods of convincing these types to cooperate, so who wins?

It is pretty obvious that rules are needed to help the GM figure out what happens in situations like these, so here they are. Welcome to *Character Interaction*.

## I. Types of Character Interaction

Character Interaction is usually a Dice Action. There are three different types of Character Interaction: Interrogation, Persuasion, and Intimidation.

*Interrogation* is used whenever someone wants to gain information from somebody else. A successful Interrogation is a combination of asking the right questions, correctly interpreting the answers, and applying whatever pressure is necessary to get results. It is only necessary to resort to the Interrogation rules when the subject is unwilling or unable to reveal information. A police officer investigating the scene of a crime, for instance, would have to use Interrogation to gain information from a hysterical victim because the victim is unable to think clearly and answer the officer's questions. Similarly, Batman would have to use Interrogation on the Penguin's thug in the prior example, because the thug does not want to reveal the location of Penguin's hideout.

*Persuasion* is used whenever one Character is trying to convince another to believe something or to perform some service. It is only necessary to resort to the Persuasion rules if the service or belief is not in the subject's own best interests. Batman usually does not have to Persuade Commissioner Gordon to arrest a criminal, for instance, since Gordon wants to capture criminals himself. However, Batman might have to Persuade Gordon to lend him men or equipment that could be employed elsewhere. Likewise, after Commissioner Gordon's men have surrounded a street criminal and trained their weapons upon him, the Commissioner usually does not need to use Persuasion to talk the street criminal into dropping his weapon and surrendering.

*Intimidation* is used when one Character is trying to scare or panic another. Batman is great at Intimidation.

Intimidation is the only one of the three types of Character Interaction that is used with any frequency in combat.

## II. Resolving Character Interaction

The AV/EV of an attempt to use Character Interaction is equal to the INFL/AURA of the Character that is using Interaction, while the OV/RV is equal to the target's INFL/SPIRIT. The RAPs earned by a Character Interaction Action Check function differently depending upon the type of Character Interaction being used.

*Interrogation:* Before beginning play, the GM should make a list of all the important information known by each of the villains and minor Characters that the heroes are likely to encounter. Such a list for the Penguin's thug in the previous examples, for instance, might look something like this:

1. The Penguin hired me away from a local syndicate boss.
2. The Penguin usually doesn't hire guys like me, I wonder why he didn't find somebody more "professional."
3. I'm not sure what the Penguin is planning, but whatever it is, it's happening tomorrow night.
4. The Penguin's hideout is a jewelry shop in East Manchester, but I'm sure he's gone by now.

Compare the RAPs earned in an Interrogation effort to the target's SPIRIT. If the Interrogation effort only receives one RAP, the target will reveal his/her first point of knowledge to the Interrogator. If the Interrogation effort receives RAPs equal to at least one half the target's SPIRIT (round fractions up), the target will reveal the first half of his/her information (round fractions down if the target has an odd number of information pieces). If the Interrogation effort receives RAPs that equal or exceed the target's SPIRIT, the target will reveal all of his/her information. If the thug in the example has a SPIRIT of 3, for instance, Batman would learn the first point of information (the bit about how the thug was hired) if the Caped Crusader earned at least one RAP during the Interrogation, the first two points of information if he earned at least two RAPs (half the thug's SPIRIT rounded up), and all four points of information if Batman earned three or more RAPs.

Oftentimes, it is far too much trouble to make up an information list for every single Non-Player Character in an adventure. In these cases, the GM can often make snap decisions during actual play. If the GM had not made up an information list for the thug in the previous example, for instance, s/he might simply decide just before the Batman Player rolls the dice that the thug will reveal the location of the Penguin's secret hideout if Batman's Interrogation effort receives 3 or more RAPs. In any case, a Character obviously cannot reveal anything to an Interrogator that the GM decides s/he does not know.

*Persuasion:* All of the Non-Player Characters in an adventure start off with a basic *attitude* toward the Players' heroes which influences how difficult it is for the heroes to Persuade the NPC in question. It is up to the GM to figure out the attitude of each of the NPCs before the adventure begins. Each of the attitudes is discussed below:

Attitude Adjustment Table

Attitude	OV & RV Column Shifts
Awestruck/Enamored	-2
Friendly	-1
Neutral	0
Suspicious	+1
Hostile	+3
Opposed	+5
Personal Vendetta	+7

*Awestruck/Enamored* Characters are willing to help the Player's hero in any way they possibly can. They will take considerable risks for the hero. Best friends and lovers will fit in the Awestruck/Enamored category.

*Friendly* Characters are willing to help the heroes by giving them any assistance or information they can, as long as revealing the information is not suicidal, and will be willing to run errands or get help for the Persuading Character. They will not voluntarily risk their lives for the heroes.

*Neutral* Characters are willing to give some information to the hero, such as directions or the name of his/her employer, as long as the information is not vital to their own safety. A Neutral Character will not go into detail, and if s/he is pressed, s/he will become Suspicious. A Neutral Character will not interfere with the actions of Player Characters, as long as the actions do not endanger him/her, but they will not help a Player Character.

*Suspicious* Characters will give a Player's hero the time of day, but not much else. They will not let the Persuading Character try anything which looks as though it could cause trouble. Suspicious Characters are prone to calling the authorities or some other help.

*Hostile* Characters, including those Characters *Opposed* to the motivation of a Player Character, will not normally cooperate in any way with the Persuading Character.

This does not mean that they will be mulish and silent . . . they may be talkative and deceitful. They will try to further their own interests at the expense of the Persuading Character. Villains, as well as their allies and thugs, always begin at least Hostile to Player Characters.

*Personal Vendetta* indicates that the Character in question has a personal reason for wishing the Persuading Character dead, injured, or otherwise mutilated. S/he will go out of his/her way to lead the Player's hero into death traps, ambushes, and other deceptions.

These attitude descriptions also serve as a guideline for figuring out when a Persuasion attempt is or is not necessary. According to the description above, for example, it is unnecessary to use Persuasion to convince Friendly Characters to give a hero information, since they will do so automatically. Awestruck Characters rarely need to be Persuaded to do anything for the hero.

Whenever a hero tries to Persuade a Character, the OV and RV of the attempt both receive Column Shift modifiers as indicated on the *Attitude Adjustment Table*. A Persuasion attempt against a Suspicious Character, for example, has its OV and RV both increased by +1 Column. If the RAPs earned in a Persuasion attempt equal the target's SPIRIT, the target will agree to the hero's request, or will believe what the hero is saying. If RAPs earned in the Persuasion attempt exceed the target's SPIRIT, the target's attitude is permanently changed one step in the Persuader's favor (from Suspicious to Neutral, or from Neutral to Friendly, etc.). Characters that begin with an attitude that is Hostile or worse can never have their attitudes increased higher than Neutral in this fashion, and all such Characters will automatically return to their original attitudes after an amount of time equal to the RAPs earned by the original Persuasion roll has elapsed.

Again, the GM may find it too troublesome, or even impossible, to assign attitudes to each and every one of his/her NPCs before play begins. In these cases, it should be no problem to make snap decisions during actual play for most of the minor Characters that the heroes encounter. If Superman stops and asks an innocent bystander on the streets of Metropolis for directions to the nearest bookstore, for example, the GM may assume that the bystander is probably Friendly, since most of Metropolis'

residents revere Superman.

Also, the GM should feel free to rule that a Character has a separate attitude toward each one of the Players' heroes. The Penguin, for instance, is probably Opposed to everyone in Justice League International, except for Batman, against whom he has a Personal Vendetta.

Finally, the GM should keep strict control over exactly what the heroes are and are not allowed to accomplish through the use of Persuasion, taking the comics as a model. Under normal circumstances, Superman cannot Persuade Lex Luthor to build a giant machine that will destroy all of the Kryptonite on Earth, just as Batman cannot Persuade the Joker to suddenly become a good guy. However, Superman might be able to Persuade Luthor to help him track down one of Lexcorp's inventions that has gone awry before it kills off half of Metropolis, and a captured Batman might be able to Persuade the Joker to delay his execution for a while, giving the Caped Crusader time to devise a daring escape.

*Intimidation*: A target is Intimidated if the RAPs earned by the Intimidation Action Check equal or exceed his/her SPIRIT. An Intimidated target remains Intimidated for an amount of time equal to the RAPs earned by the Intimidation Action Check, minus his/her SPIRIT.

During a combat phase, any Intimidated Characters always take their turn after all non-Intimidated Characters, regardless of Initiative totals. The Intimidated Character with the highest Initiative total moves first among the Intimidated Characters, and so on. Also, an Intimidated Character may be automatically prevented from taking hostile actions or moving by his/her Intimidator, although the Intimidator cannot perform any Dice Actions in a phase that s/he exerts control over an Intimidated target. The Intimidator's control over the target is limited to preventing him/her from taking hostile actions or moving; the Intimidator can never compel the target to act in any other way or dictate actions to the target.

For example: Batman comes across a thug robbing a jewelry store. The Caped Crusader spreads his cape out to form a silhouette against the moonlight and leaps down upon the thug with a vicious howl (a classic Intimidation attempt). The AV/EV of the attempt is equal to Batman's INFL/AURA, and the OV/RV is



equal to the thug's INFL/SPIRIT. First, Batman must earn RAPs that equal or exceed the thug's SPIRIT for the Intimidation to have any effect. The thug has a 3 SPIRIT, and Batman receives 5 RAPs. The thug would then remain Intimidated for 2 APs of time ( $5 - 3 = 2$ ) or about 16 seconds (4 combat phases). During any combat phase during which the thug is still Intimidated, Batman automatically moves first, since non-Intimidated Characters always move before Intimidated Characters. In addition, Batman can prevent the Intimidated thug from attacking or moving during any combat phase ("Don't you dare move, you squirming maggot!"), as long as the Caped Crusader is willing to forego his Dice Action during that phase.

### III. Time

It takes one combat phase (4 seconds or 0 APs of time) to make an Intimidation attempt. Interrogation and Persuasion attempts, however, normally take about fifteen minutes (8 APs of time). Attempting to Interrogate or Persuade someone in less time increases the OV and RV of the effort. There are no bonuses for taking more time than is necessary. Add one to both the OV and RV of an Interrogation or Persuasion effort for each 1 AP of time less than 8 spent making the attempt (attempting to Interrogate or Persuade someone in a single combat phase, or 0 APs of time, therefore, adds 8 to the OV and RV of the attempt).

### IV. The Charisma Skill

Characters with the Charisma Skill have certain advantages in Character Interaction. The Skill is so common that all Players should be familiar with the Charisma Skill entry in the *Character Handbook*. Basically, the APs of Charisma may substitute for the AV and EV while making a Character Interaction Action Check.

The Charisma Skill has three Subskills, one for each of the three types of Character Interaction. This means that a Character who is limited to the Charisma/Interrogation Subskill, for instance, may only use his/her Charisma Skill for Interrogation efforts. For Persuasion and Intimidation, s/he would use his/her INFL/AURA as usual.

### V. Interaction Maneuvers

As in combat, there are certain special *Character Interaction Maneuvers* that can be employed while involved in Character Interaction. Unless otherwise stated, each of these maneuvers can be employed in Persuasion, Interrogation, and Intimidation attempts.

All of these maneuvers are optional. A Player may always choose to make a straight Interaction roll without using any of the maneuvers, if s/he so desires.

**Note:** In order for Character Interaction Maneuvers to be truly effective during play, the GM should keep the Attributes of all the villains and minor Characters hidden from the Players until someone actually tries to use one of these special maneuvers on a target.

#### A. Bluff

A *Bluff* is an attempt to fool or trick someone. If Lois Lane is holding a pistol that she knows is unloaded on a mugger, she might try to Bluff her assailant into believing that the pistol is loaded (an Intimidation attempt).

A Bluff attempt must be announced before the Dice are rolled. A Bluff may be performed in conjunction with Interrogation, Persuasion, or Intimidation.

When a Character attempts a Bluff, compare his/her INT score to the INT of the target. If the Bluffer's INT is higher, the target receives -1 Column Shift to his/her OV and RV against the Persuasion, Interrogation, or Intimidation attempt. If the Bluffer's INT is lower, however, the target receives +2 Column Shifts to his/her OV and RV against the attempt. If both the Bluffer and the target have equal INTs, there are no Column Shifts to the OV or RV, and the Interaction Action Check is resolved normally.

#### B. Wear Down

A *Wear Down* is an attempt to outlast the target and break his/her will through repeated requests or intense questioning.

Wear Downs work exactly like Bluffs except the WILLS of the involved Characters are compared instead of their INTs. Wear Downs may only be used in conjunction with Interrogation or Persuasion.

The base time consumed by an Interrogation or Persuasion effort in which a Wear Down is being employed is increased to 10 APs (one hour).

### C. Force

A *Force* is an attempt to physically Force the target to do what the Character wants or to answer his/her questions. Forces work like Bluffs and Wear Downs, except the STRs of the Characters are compared.

A Character automatically has his/her attitude lowered one step towards anyone who tries to Force him/her. Forces may be used in conjunction with all three types of Character Interaction.

### D. Charm

*Charm* is an attempt to dazzle the target with the hero's personality. Charms work like the other three maneuvers already described, except that the AURAs of the involved Characters are compared.

Charm may only be used in conjunction with Interrogation or Persuasion attempts.

### E. Multi-Attack

It is possible to Intimidate more than one target at a time. Treat this as a Multi-Attack as described in the Combat rules. It is not possible to Persuade or Interrogate more than one Character at a time.

## VII. Character Interaction Against the Players' Heroes

Many villains have the Charisma Skill in addition to the heroes. What happens if a villain or minor Character tries to use Character Interaction against one of the Players' heroes?

Resolve such attempts as usual and determine the results. A Player, however, need not be bound by the result of a Character Interaction roll. S/he always has the option of spending a number of Hero Points equal to the RAPs earned by the Character Interaction Action Check in order to completely ignore its effects.

Suppose, for example, that the Penguin receives 15 RAPs in an attempt to convince Robin to reveal Batman's secret identity (an Interrogation effort). Normally, Robin would reveal Batman's secret because 15 RAPs exceeds the Boy Wonder's SPIRIT, meaning that Robin must reveal all he knows (see **Interrogation**). If Robin is a Player Character, however, the Player may spend 15 Hero Points in order to avoid revealing anything.

There is no limit to the number of Hero Points that can be spent by Players in order to avoid the effects of Character Interaction. Spending Hero Points allows a hero to ignore the effects of all three types of Character Interaction (Interrogation, Persuasion, and Intimidation).

## VIII. Role-Playing

When using the Character Interaction rules, it is not really necessary for Players to speak for their Characters word for word. Many Players will simply say something like, "I'm going to Interrogate the thug and use a Bluff." This is certainly acceptable; but this will not help a Player earn additional Hero Point awards for good role-playing at the end of the adventure (see **Standard Awards**, page 51).

Players should be encouraged to avoid sentences like the one above, and replace them with something like, "You'd better start talking, creep. We already know who all of your accomplices are, and some of them are turning state's evidence. Unless you cooperate and do likewise, you're in for a long trip up the river . . ." Players who role play well before rolling the dice are bound to be rewarded by the GM later.

Similarly, Players that keep to the spirit of their Characters and react to situations as their Characters would react will also probably receive additional rewards as well. For instance, Superman always respects the law, Batman relentlessly pursues crime, Wonder Woman wants to spread her message of peace to as much of the world as possible, and so on.



# Gadgetry

Weapons and gadgets, both fantastic and mundane, have long been a staple of comic books. What would Batman be without the Batmobile, the Batarang, or the Batcomputer? What could Green Lantern do without his Power Ring, or Green Arrow without his Bow?

This chapter explains how to incorporate gadgets, weapons, and vehicles into the world of the **DC HEROES Role-Playing Game**.

## I. Basic Concepts

### A. Abilities

Like Characters, *Gadgets* can have Attributes, Powers, and Skills. A car, for example, has the Running Power because it can move fast, and a STR because it can carry weight. All Gadgets have a BODY, which defines how much Physical damage they can take before they cease to function.

When using a Gadget, a Character can usually use all of its Powers and Skills as though they were his/her own. If Changeling is driving a car, for example, he could travel at the speed indicated by the car's Running Power. A Gadget's Attributes, on the other hand, are usually only applicable in certain special situations. If the car has a STR of 5, for instance, Changeling could use it to haul 5 APs of weight stored in the back seat and trunk of the car, but he obviously could not use the car's STR to throw a punch, or to bench press 1000 lbs.

Whenever a Gadget has an Attribute that is italicized in its description, the user has the option of substituting that Attribute score for his/her own matching Attribute score in all situations. If a Gadget has an Attribute that is not italicized, the Attribute can only be applied under certain special circumstances. A bulletproof vest might have a BODY of 4, for example, meaning that the user of the vest can substitute its BODY of 4 for his/her own BODY when defending against Physical Attacks, or in just about any other situation in which the BODY Attribute is relevant. A gun, however, might have a BODY of 4 (not in italics), meaning that the BODY of the gun only applies to efforts aimed at damaging the gun itself, not its user. Similarly, Rocket Red's Battlesuit has an italicized STR, because Red can substitute the STR of the battlesuit for his own STR in all situations, whether it is lifting things, throwing things, or as his EV in hand-to-hand combat. On the other hand, a crane would have a non-italicized STR, because a Character could only use the crane's STR under certain circumstances, like lifting large objects at a construction site. Exactly when Powers, Skills, and Attributes that are not italicized may be applied is up to the GM, using the function for which the Gadget was designed as a guide.

Note that the previous paragraph speaks of a Gadget's Attributes substituting for its user's Attributes. A Gadget's Abilities always substitute for those of its user; they never add to those abilities. A Character with a BODY of 3 who puts on an armored suit with a BODY of 4, now has a BODY of 4, not 7. Similarly, a Character with the Flame Project Power rated at 5 APs who picks up a napalm gun with the Flame Project Power rated at 8 APs, now has 8 APs of Flame Project, not 13.

## B. Reliability Numbers

Many of the Gadgets described in these pages have a new Ability listed in their descriptions: "R #." "R #" stands for *Reliability Number*. A Gadget's Reliability Number is a measure of how frequently the Gadget jams, breaks down, or just plain fouls up. The lower the Gadget's Reliability number is, the more reliable the Gadget is. Some Gadgets are so reliable that they do not have a Reliability Number at all: these Gadgets never break down. An example of a Gadget that never breaks down would be Green Lantern's Power Ring; Green Arrow's old nuclear warhead arrow was a Gadget that broke down frequently.

### Reliability and Dice Actions

Anytime a Gadget is used to perform a Dice Action, and the Player rolls less than or equal to the Gadget's Reliability Number on the first dice roll made to resolve that Action (that is, before rerolling due to doubles), the Gadget's Ability breaks down and the Action is immediately cancelled.

If Joe's stun gun had a Reliability number of 4, for example, and he rolled double 2's on his first roll while resolving a Dice Action, the gun would immediately break down since Joe rolled less than or equal to 4. Joe does not get to re-roll the doubles since his Action is immediately cancelled. If Joe had rolled double 3's on his first roll and 4 on the second roll, however, the Gadget would not break down, since the roll of 4 or less did not come on the first roll made to resolve the Action.

### Reliability and Automatic Actions

The first time that a Character uses each one of a Gadget's Abilities to perform an Automatic Action on each day (15 APs of time), the Player must roll two dice just prior to resolving that Action, although the Action itself is still Automatic. If this dice roll is less than or equal to the Gadget's Reliability Number, the Gadget's Ability breaks down and the Automatic Action is cancelled. Each of a Gadget's Abilities that are used to perform Automatic Actions need only be checked for Reliability once per day. Thereafter, the Character may continue to use that Ability to make Automatic Actions for the rest of the day without checking against Reliability. Making an Automatic Action with a different Ability that has not yet been checked for Reliability that day, however, necessitates a new roll.

When Black Canary starts her car in the morning, for example, and begins to drive (an Automatic Action), she must check against the car's Reliability Number. Thereafter, she can drive the car for the rest of the day without checking against Reliability again. The first time Dinah turns on the radio, which is another Automatic Action using a different ability, she must make another check against Reliability to see if the radio functions properly. From that point on, she can continue to use the radio for the rest of the day without making any further Reliability checks.

### Reliability Failure and Gadget Breakdown

If a Gadget breaks down due to Reliability failure, the APs of any Ability or Abilities it was using to resolve the Action that caused its breakdown are instantly reduced to 0 APs. In this case, the Gadget must be Repaired before the broken down Ability may be used again.

A car that fails its Reliability roll when started up, for example, would have its Running Power reduced to 0 APs. A submachinegun which fails its Reliability roll while resolving an attack would have its AV and EV both reduced to 0 APs, since both Abilities were involved in the Action which caused the gun to break down.

## C. Gadgets vs. GADGETS

Some Gadgets have their names printed in upper and lower case letters in their Gadget description, like the Batarang and the Submachinegun, while others have their names printed in all capitals: BATMOBILE and POWER RING, for instance.

This convention has been adopted to quickly identify Gadgets that can and cannot be stripped away from their user by employing a Trick Shot or the Take Away maneuver in combat (see page 23). Gadgets that have their names printed in upper

and lower case letters can be Taken Away in combat, while those printed in all capitals cannot. Whether or not a Gadget can be Taken Away during combat is defined at the time the Gadget is built.

## D. Gadgets and Damage

Gadgets take damage just like people. Players should keep track of their Gadget's Current BODY Condition as they would for their Characters. Unlike Characters, however, a Gadget can have its Current BODY Condition reduced to less than zero in normal Bashing Combat.

Gadgets are also treated like inanimate objects (see page 13). A Gadget that has taken one RAP of Physical damage will still function, but has a hole in it that is large enough to walk or climb through, assuming that the Gadget is large enough to sport such a hole. A Gadget that has its Current BODY Condition reduced to zero or below will no longer function, and must be Repaired in order to resume functioning. A Gadget that has its Current BODY Condition reduced down to a number of points below zero equal to its starting BODY is permanently destroyed and cannot be Repaired.

Gadgets never Recover damage like Characters. They must be Repaired.

Only Gadgets that have a MIND or SPIRIT are vulnerable to Mental or Mystical damage. All Gadgets have a BODY and are vulnerable to Physical damage.

## E. Hero Points and Gadgets

The user of a Gadget may spend Hero Points to increase the Acting, Effect, Opposing, and Resistance Values of any Dice Action involving the Gadget, as though all of its Abilities were his/her own.

In addition, a Gadget's Automatic Powers and Attributes can be Pushed as described on page 10. A failed attempt to Push a Gadget's Ability instantly reduces the Ability being pushed to 0 APs. Such a Gadget must then be Repaired before it will function again.

# II. Building Gadgets

Characters with the Gadgetry Skill can actually create new Gadgets in their laboratories during play. Creating a Gadget is a five step process:

1. Design the Gadget and decide whether or not the Gadget can be Taken Away
2. Allow the GM to approve the Gadget
3. Calculate and pay the Gadget's Hero Point Cost
4. Buy parts
5. Add Powers and Attributes to the Gadget

### STEP 1

#### Design the Gadget

When a Player designs a Gadget, s/he decides exactly what Powers, Skills and Attributes the Gadget will have and assigns each Power, Skill, and Attribute a value in APs. A Gadget may never have Advantages.

Here are a couple of examples. Suppose Chuck wants his Character to build a car. The car must have a BODY, and it should probably have the Running Power, so it can move fast, and a STR, so it can carry Chuck's Character and his friends. In addition, Chuck decides to supe the car up a bit, give it radar (the Radar Sense Power), and install a pair of laser weapons mounted in the headlights (the Heat Vision Power). Now Chuck has to assign AP values to all of the car's Powers and Attributes. Since the car cannot be Taken Away in combat, its description is in all capitals. His final design for the car looks like this:

**CAR** [STR: 4, BODY: 5, Running: 7, Radar Sense: 5, Heat Vision: 7]

As another example, let us suppose that Nightwing wants to build gas masks for all the members of the Titans, because he suspects that they will be facing gas wielding foes later on in the current adventure. A gas mask must have a BODY, and should

probably have the Sealed Systems Power. Nightwing must then decide how many APs of each to assign to the mask. Since the masks come on and off pretty easily, they can probably be Taken Away in combat. Finally, he comes up with:

**Gas Mask** [BODY: 2, Sealed Systems: 9]

All of the mundane weapons (guns, knives, and so forth) listed in the Gadget descriptions have been assigned EVs and sometimes AVs, rather than specific Powers and Skills. If they desire, Players may assign their own Gadgets AVs and EVs. A design for a revolver might look like this: **Revolver** [BODY: 4, EV: 4].

In addition to Powers, Skills, and Attributes, gadgeteers may also assign Gadgets Miscellaneous Drawbacks. Ultimately, any Drawbacks that are assigned to a Gadget will make it cheaper to produce. If a villain were producing the revolver in the example above, for instance, s/he would probably want to assign it a Miscellaneous Drawback such as: "Revolver is limited to firing six shots before it must be reloaded; reloading is an Automatic Action, but the user may not fire the revolver in the same phase s/he reloads." If Chuck were designing the car described before, the Miscellaneous Drawback: "Must stop to refuel every 18 APs of distance travelled" might be in order. Since the GM must approve the Gadget's design, make sure that all Drawbacks selected are logical and appropriate. For example, the revolver described previously should never have a Drawback like "It may only be fired by persons born on a Tuesday."

A Gadget's Powers and Attributes may also be assigned in conjunction with any appropriate Bonuses and Limitations. Bonuses will make the Gadget more expensive to produce, while Limitations will make the Gadget cheaper. Assigning an italicized Attribute to a Gadget is automatically a +2 Factor Cost Bonus to the Attribute in question.

During this step, the gadgeteer also decides whether or not the Gadget can be Taken Away in combat. Common sense should provide all of the clues needed to make this decision. Obviously, a car or a battlesuit cannot be Taken Away and it would be awfully hard for someone to slip a Power Ring off of Guy Gardner's finger in the middle of a fight; but guns, knives, swords, and control boxes are another story. Gadgets that can be Taken Away are generally cheaper to produce.

### STEP 2

#### Allow the GM to Approve the Gadget

The next step is up to the Gamemaster. S/he must take a good look at the Gadget and judge whether or not its design is feasible.

The GM should feel free to overrule any Gadget that s/he is not comfortable with, including those that seem too powerful or unlimited in scope. The GM should also overrule any Gadget that is just plain silly or impossible, like a car with an italicized STR and WILL. Pay particular attention to any Miscellaneous Drawbacks that have been assigned to the Gadget, making sure that they actually limit the performance of the device in some way.

Gadgets that are rejected might be redesigned, or simply outlawed.

It is up to the GM to determine whether or not a Character must have the Genius Advantage to build the Gadget. The rule for figuring out whether or not the Genius Advantage is necessary to build a Gadget is simple: if the device cannot be built right now, in the late 20th century, in the real world, the Character must have the Genius Advantage to build it in the game; otherwise Genius is unnecessary. This means that Chuck's Character does not need the Genius Advantage to build a car, or even a car with a radar, because we can build radars right now. However, he would need the Genius Advantage to build force field belts, teleportation machines, invisibility helmets, laser pistols, and so on. The GM has final say on whether or not a Gadget fits current technology, although Players may try to convince him/her that a Gadget is feasible, by producing scientific journals, newspaper articles, or other sources of information that may support their design.

## STEP 3

### Calculate Hero Point Cost

Gadgeteers must spend Hero Points in order to build Gadgets. Calculate the Hero Point Cost of a Gadget as if it were a Character, using the rules found in the *Character Handbook*. Add up the costs of all of the Abilities that are being purchased for the Gadget by looking to the AP Purchase Chart and cross-indexing the Factor Cost of each Ability with the number of APs of that Ability that is being purchased. Remember to take into account the Factor Cost modifiers of any Bonuses or Limitations being built in conjunction with the Gadget's Abilities, and add in the Base Cost of any of the Gadget's Powers and Skills. Attributes have a Base Cost of 0. A few other considerations which can modify the final cost are as follows:

### Reliability Number

Before building the Gadget, the gadgeteer must choose its Reliability Number from the following table. All of the Abilities purchased for that Gadget have their Factor Costs modified as indicated.

Reliability Table

Reliability Number	Factor Cost Modifier
0	+3
2	+2
3	+1
5	0
7	-1
9	-2
11	-3

### Italicized Attributes

Assigning an italicized Attribute to a Gadget adds +2 to the Factor Cost of that Attribute.

### AV and EV

AV has a Factor Cost of 2 and a Base Cost of 5. EV has a Factor Cost of 1 and a Base Cost of 5.

### Miscellaneous Drawbacks

After adding up the Hero Point Costs of all of the Gadget's Abilities, subtract ten Hero Points from the Gadget's cost for each of its Miscellaneous Drawbacks. A Gadget may never have its cost reduced by Drawbacks to lower than one-half (fractions rounded up) of its cost without those Drawbacks. A 33 Hero Point Gadget with two Miscellaneous Drawbacks, therefore, would have a final cost of 17 Hero Points, not 13 Hero Points; as would a 33 Hero Point Gadget with five Miscellaneous Drawbacks, or ten or twenty or a thousand Drawbacks.

### Gadget Bonus

Because Gadgets by their very nature have certain inherent shortcomings, Players may divide the Hero Point Cost of any items they build as a *Gadget Bonus*. Divide the Hero Point Cost of a Gadget that can be Taken Away in combat by a factor of four, rounding fractions up. Divide the Hero Point Cost of a Gadget that cannot be Taken Away in combat by a Factor of 2, rounding fractions up.

The division is always the last step a Player performs when calculating a Gadget's Hero Point Cost.

**Example One:** Alex needs to calculate the Hero Point Cost of the following Gadget: **Machinegun** [BODY: 6, AV: 5, EV: 5, R #: 2], Miscellaneous Drawback: Machinegun may only be fired ten times before it must be reloaded.

AV has a Factor Cost of 2, but +2 must be added to the Factor Cost because of the gun's Reliability Number of 2, leaving Alex with a final Factor Cost of 4. Five APs at a Factor Cost of 4 cost 16 Hero Points. EV has a Factor Cost of 1, but again +2 must be added to the Factor Cost because of the gun's Reliability Number, resulting in a final Factor Cost of 3. Five APs at a Factor Cost of 3 cost 12 Hero Points. Alex's total so far is 28. BODY has a Factor Cost of 6, which must be raised to 8 because of the

Gadget's Reliability. Six APs at a Factor Cost of 8 cost 48 Hero Points, bringing the total up to 76. The Base Costs of AV and EV must also be added in (5 each), bringing the total Hero Point Cost of the Gadget up to 86 Hero Points. BODY has no Base Cost. Alex next subtracts 10 Hero Points from his total because of the Miscellaneous Drawback, dropping the total to 76. Finally, Alex divides this total by 4, since the Machinegun can be Taken Away in combat, leaving him with a Final Hero Point Cost of 19 (76 divided by 4 equals 19).

**Example Two:** The Hero Point cost of Batman's Batarang is calculated as follows: **Batarang** [BODY: 7, Gliding: 2]. BODY has a Factor Cost of 6, but 3 must be added to the Factor Cost of all of the Batarang's Abilities, because of its Reliability Number of 0 (note that no R # is listed), raising the Factor Cost of the BODY to 9. Seven APs at a Factor Cost of 9 costs 72 Hero Points. Gliding has a Factor Cost of 1, raised to 4 due to Reliability. Two APs at a Factor Cost of 4 costs 4 Hero Points, bringing the total Hero Point Cost so far up to 76 Hero Points. Next, add in the Base Cost of Gliding, 10 Hero Points, bringing the total cost up to 86 Hero Points. Finally, divide this total by 4 since the Batarang can be Taken Away in combat, leaving a final Hero Point Cost of 22 (86 divided by 4 equals 22).

A Player building a Gadget must pay the final Hero Point Cost before s/he can proceed any further with construction.

## STEP 4

### Buy Parts

The next step is to buy all of the parts and equipment needed to build the Gadget. This is a normal Wealth Check, as described on page 44. The dollar cost of the parts necessary to build the Gadget, and the OV/RV of the Wealth Check necessary to purchase the parts, is equal to the highest AP rating of any of the Gadget's Abilities plus one for each additional Ability assigned to the Gadget. The dollar cost of the Machinegun in the former example, therefore, is 8 APs (BODY of 6 plus 1 for AV plus 1 for EV equals 8), while the dollar cost of the Batarang in the latter example is also 8 APs (BODY of 7 plus 1 for the Gliding Ability equals 8).

If the Wealth Check does not gain any positive RAPs, the Character obviously cannot begin to construct the Gadget. In this case, the Player must wait until his/her Character is entitled to another Wealth Check as described in **Chapter Six**. The Player may spend Hero Points or take additional time to improve his/her Wealth AV and EV as explained on page 44.

As soon as the Player successfully makes the necessary Wealth Check, s/he may begin actual construction.

## STEP 5

### Constructing the Gadget

All that remains is to actually construct the Gadget. Each one of the Gadget's Abilities must be installed separately. The BODY of the Gadget must be installed first, and then the rest of its Abilities may be installed in any order the building Player chooses. Installing an Ability is a Dice Action using the gadgeteer's APs of Gadgetry Skill as the AV/EV and the APs of the Ability being installed as the OV/RV. One or more RAPs are necessary for success.

If a Gadgetry Check fails, the Ability in question is not successfully installed, and the gadgeteer must attempt to install that ability all over again. In order to make another attempt to install an Ability after having failed an earlier attempt, the gadgeteer must pay a special *failure fee* of 10 Hero Points.

### Time

The base time that it takes to make a Gadgetry Skill Check is one week (18 APs of time). Each one AP of time the Player adds to this base time before s/he rolls the dice allows him/her to add one to the AV and EV of the Gadgetry Check. Each AP of time the Player decides to subtract from this base time before s/he rolls the dice subtracts one from the AV and EV of the Gadgetry Check.

To compute the actual time it will take to install the Ability, subtract the RAPs earned by the Gadgetry Check from the base time. The result is the amount of time in APs that it takes the Character to install the Ability. If the Gadgetry Check does not receive any RAPs (ie. the Ability is not successfully installed), the entire base time, plus any time that the Gadget builder deliberately added to the Gadgetry Check, is automatically consumed.

Suppose for example, that Batman earned 4 RAPs while installing a 7 AP smokescreen (the Fog Power) into the Batmobile. In this case, it would take him 14 APs of time to install the screen ( $18 - 4 = 14$ ), or about sixteen hours. Batman cannot begin to install any other Abilities in the Batmobile until this time has passed. If Batman had failed the Gadgetry Check needed to install the smoke-screen, he would have had to wait 18 APs of time and pay the 10 Hero Point failure fee before he could try again.

During the time a Character spends working on a Gadget, s/he cannot perform any other activities, except eating, sleeping, and other natural functions. Once s/he has spent the necessary time to install the Gadget's first Ability, s/he may then move on to the second Ability, and then the third, and so on. Once all of its Abilities have been installed, the Gadget is ready for use. A Gadget may not be used until all of the Abilities in its original design have been successfully installed.

## Laboratories

*Laboratories* made Gadget production more efficient. A laboratory's AP rating is the maximum APs of a Gadget Ability that may be built there. If a Character builds a Gadget in a 5 AP laboratory, the maximum Attribute, Power, or Skill for that Gadget is 5 APs. The Reliability Number of a Gadget is not affected by the AP value of the laboratory where it was built.

Unless a Character making a Gadgetry Check to install an Ability has access to a Laboratory which has a rating in APs that equals or exceeds the number of APs of the Ability s/he is trying to install, the OV and RV of the effort each receive a bonus of +2 Column Shifts to the right.

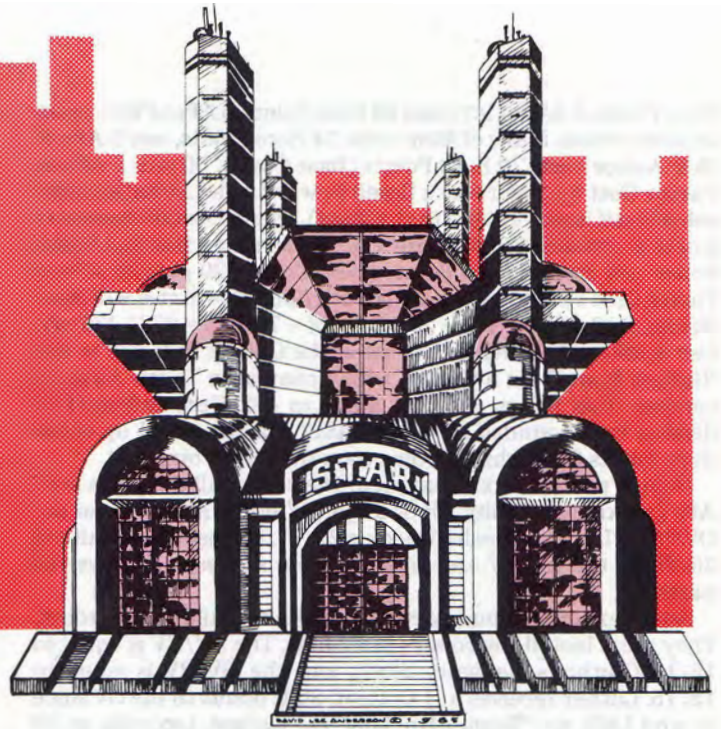
When a Character is planning to build a laboratory, its AP value must be decided before it is built. The minimum building time for a laboratory is two weeks. The maximum time is up to the Character(s) building the laboratory, but the cost of building must be completely paid before Gadgets may be built there.

The following table lists the maximum APs for laboratories and their cost in Hero Points.

**Laboratory Costs**

Aps of Laboratory	Cost In Hero Points
5	5
7	10
10	40
12	70
15	120
20	200
25	300
30	500
35	1,000

Laboratories have a Reliability Number of 0, but must be maintained. To maintain a laboratory, the Character(s) who own the lab must make a Wealth Check once per game year. The



OV/RV of this Check is equal to the APs of the lab. Positive RAPs indicate success. If the maintenance cost is not paid, the laboratory falls into disrepair and cannot be used to construct Gadgets.

## Multiple Gadgeteers

If multiple Characters with the Gadgetry Skill are all working on a Gadget at the same time, they have several options. Either one gadgeteer can work on installing one Ability while the other gadgeteers work on the other Abilities; or two or more gadgeteers can team up to install the same Ability.

If the gadgeteers are working on separate Abilities, resolve each installation attempt separately as normal. However, the two or more Characters may make their attempts in the same time span, allowing the Gadget to be completed in less time.

If two or more Characters with the Gadgetry Skill are combining their abilities to work on installing the same Ability, the highest Skill level present is used as the AV and EV of the attempt; but the OV of the effort receives negative Column Shifts as though the Characters were performing a Team Attack in combat. That is, 2 Characters get -1 Column Shift to the OV, 3-4 Characters get -2 Column Shifts, and so on.

Multiple gadgeteers working on the same item may split its final Hero Point Cost between themselves as they see fit; and all gadgeteers may attempt to purchase the parts necessary to build the device.

## Example of Building a Gadget

Lex Luthor decides to build a giant robot to destroy Superman (when will he ever learn?). He enlists the aid of Lexcorp scientist Brian Lally to assist him in this nefarious endeavor. Luthor has a Gadgetry Skill rating of 15 APs, while Lally's is 8.

First, Luthor must design the robot. He decides that it will look something like this:

### GIANT ROBOT

[DEX: 10, STR: 20, BODY: 15, INT: 5, WILL: 5, MIND: 5, Bomb: 20, Skin Armor: 5, R#: 5]

Limitation: the robot is susceptible to the explosion of its own Bomb Power.

Miscellaneous Drawback: the robot must be recharged every 24 hours.

Next, Luthor must pay the robot's Hero Point cost. Luthor will not have to add to the Factor Costs of the robot's Abilities, since the Reliability Number is 5. 10 APs of DEX costs 112 Hero Points, 20 APs of STR costs 390 Hero Points, 15 APs of BODY costs 240

Hero Points, 5 APs of INT costs 28 Hero Points, 5 APs of WILL costs 24 Hero Points, 5 APs of MIND costs 24 Hero Points, and 5 APs of Skin Armor costs 70 Hero Points (Base Cost of 50 plus 5 APs at Factor Cost 5). The robot's Bomb Power has a Limitation (the robot itself is susceptible to the blast), which the GM decides is worth a -2 bonus to its Factor Cost. This means that the Bomb Power will cost 85 Hero Points (Base Cost of 20 plus 20 APs at Factor Cost 1). Altogether, the robot's Abilities will cost 973 Hero Points (112 + 390 + 240 + 28 + 24 + 24 + 70 + 85 = 973). Finally, Lex is allowed to divide the cost of the Gadget by 2 due to the "Gadget Bonus" for a Gadget which cannot be Taken Away in combat. This brings the cost down to 482 Hero Points (973 divided by 2 rounded up equals 482). Having saved up some Hero Points for a while, Luthor pays the Hero Point cost.

Buying parts is Lex's next step. The cost of all the parts is 27 APs (maximum Ability AP of 20 plus 7 other Abilities), so the OV/RV of Luthor's Wealth Check is 27/27. Lex uses his Wealth of 25/25 as the AV/EV and rolls a 13. He successfully buys the parts.

Now Lex and his buddy can get down to building the robot. They must install the robot's BODY first. The AV/EV is equal to 15/15 (Luthor's Gadgetry Skill), and the OV/RV is equal to 15/15. Luthor receives a -1 Column Shift bonus to the OV since he and Lally are "Team Attacking" the Gadget. Lex rolls an 18 and receives 8 RAPs. It takes Luthor and Lally one hour to install the BODY (Base Time of 18 APs - 8 RAPs = 10 APs building time = one hour).

Since it will probably be the most difficult, Luthor decides to install the STR next. The OV/RV is equal to 20/20, but Luthor still receives the -1 Column Shift bonus for the Team Attack. In addition, he decides to spend 4 Hero Points apiece on his AV and EV, raising them to 19/19. Lex rolls a 12 and receives 4 RAPs. It takes him 14 APs, or sixteen hours to install the STR.

DEX is installed next. The OV/RV is 10/10, but Luthor does not receive the Team Attack bonus, because Brian Lally will be installing the robot's INT simultaneously. Luthor rolls an eleven, yielding 8 RAPs. It takes him an hour to install the DEX.

Meanwhile, Brian Lally works on installing the robot's INT. The AV/EV is Lally's Gadgetry Skill (8/8), while the OV/RV is the robot's intended INT (5/5). Lally rolls a 15 and gets 8 RAPs. He finishes the robot's INT at the same time Luthor finishes the DEX.

Luthor next installs the robot's WILL and MIND while Lally works on the Skin Armor Power. Neither of them experiences any problems. They finish these in roughly forty-five minutes.

Last but not least, they once again Team Attack the robot in order to install the self-destruct mechanism (20 APs of Bomb Power). The OV/RV is once again 20/20, and Luthor again receives the -1 Column Shift bonus. He opts to spend 7 Hero Points each on his AV and EV, raising them to 22. He rolls a 9, and gets 7 RAPs. It takes the pair about 2 hours to install the Power.

The robot is now ready to be unleashed against the Man of Steel. The whole process of building it took about twenty-one hours to complete.

### III. Modifying Existing Gadgets

Heroes with the Gadgetry Skill may attempt to add another Ability to an already existing and functioning Gadget at a later time. Resolve such an attempt as though it were a new Gadget: calculate and pay the Hero Points, buy the parts, and roll the dice. An attempt to modify an existing Gadget automatically has its OV and RV shifted +2 Columns to the right, because the Character is adding an Ability to the Gadget for which it was not initially designed.

Suppose, for example, that Tom wanted to add 8 APs of Running to Booster Gold's battlesuit. Running has a Factor Cost of 1. Since the Reliability Number of Booster's suit is 2, however, there is a +2 Factor Cost modifier, raising the total to 3. Eight APs at a Factor Cost of 3 cost 30 Hero Points. Tom adds in the Base Cost of running (5 points) to raise the total to 35 and then divides the total in half, since Booster's suit cannot be Taken

Away, leaving a final Hero Point Cost of 17. Tom must then spend 17 Hero Points and make a Wealth Check to buy the necessary parts to install Running. The OV/RV of the Wealth roll is 8/8, since he is installing 8 APs of Running. Tom decides that Booster will use the laboratory at the JLI Embassy, which is rated at 15 APs, which means he will not have to pay any additional Hero Points to install the Ability, since 8 APs of Running is less than the lab's 15 APs. The OV/RV of the Gadgetry attempt is 8/8, each shifted +2 Columns to the right because Booster is modifying an already functioning Gadget, for a final OV/RV of 11/11. If Tom gets positive RAPs on his Gadgetry Check, the Running Ability will be successfully installed.

## IV. Repairing Gadgets

Damaged Gadgets must be Repaired. By Repairing a Gadget, a Character can restore any APs that it has lost from its Current BODY Condition (or Current MIND or SPIRIT Conditions, if the Gadget has a MIND or SPIRIT) or any APs of a Power, Attribute, or Skill lost to Reliability break down. Each of a Gadget's Abilities must be repaired separately.

Repairing a Gadget is a Dice Action. The AV and EV of the attempt are both equal to the Gadgetry Skill of the Character conducting repairs, while the OV and RV are both equal to the starting AP value of the Ability under repair. If Lex Luthor were trying to Repair an armored suit with a BODY of 6 that had taken damage to its Current BODY Condition, for example, the OV/RV of the attempt would be 6/6.

If the Ability under Repair has been reduced to a negative value, the Character conducting repairs must buy parts to Repair that Ability. The OV/RV of the Wealth Check necessary to buy the parts is equal to the Ability's starting AP value. Repairs cannot begin until any necessary parts have been purchased.

### Repair Kits

Characters may purchase a *repair kit*, which acts as a laboratory when Repairing damaged equipment in the field. If the Gadget has been totally destroyed, new equipment may not be created through the use of a repair kit. Gadgets may not be repaired beyond the APs of the repair kit. Partial repairs are not possible; for instance, a Character may not Repair a Gadget with a BODY of 15 APs using a repair kit of 7 APs.

Repair kits cost 10% as much as a laboratory of the same APs, with a minimum cost of 1 Hero Point for each repair kit. Repair kits have a Reliability Number of 5, which is checked when a Repair attempt is made using the kit. If the repair kit breaks down, the Repair attempt automatically fails. It is not possible to Repair a repair kit if it breaks down. A new repair kit must be purchased.

Unless the Character conducting Repairs has access to a Laboratory (see **Laboratories**) or repair kit that has a rating in APs that equals or exceeds the starting AP value of the Ability under Repair, both the OV and RV of the attempt receive +2 Column Shifts to the right. If the Repair roll is less than or equal to the Reliability Number of the repair kit, the Check automatically fails, and the repair kit breaks down and must be replaced. This does not do further damage to the Ability being repaired.

It takes just as long to Repair an Ability as it does to install an Ability in a new Gadget (see **Time**). The AV and EV of the Repair attempt can be increased or decreased if the Character conducting Repairs is willing to spend more or less time on the effort. The RAPs earned in a Repair attempt equal the number of APs restored to the Ability under Repair.

Repairing an Ability does not cost any Hero Points; although the gadgeteer may spend Hero Points to increase his/her AV or EV for the attempt as usual.

## V. Replacing Destroyed Gadgets

Gadgets that have had their Current BODY Conditions (or Current MIND or SPIRIT Conditions, if the Gadget has a MIND or SPIRIT) reduced to a negative value which exceeds their BODY are

permanently destroyed and cannot be Repaired. Since plans and notes for creating these devices already exist, however, they can be rebuilt or duplicated with much less effort than it would take to completely recreate the Gadget from scratch.

To recreate an already existing device, simply pay its Hero Point Cost and buy the parts. No Gadgetry Rolls are necessary; and the entire device can be rebuilt in two days time (16 APs). Only a Character with at least as many APs of the Gadgetry Skill as the Gadget's original creator can rebuild Gadgets in this way. The Character that actually builds the device need not necessarily be the Character that pays the Hero Points for the device or buys the parts. If the Gadget is a major element in one or more Characters' Subplots, the GM may rule whether the device may be replaced in this manner, or whether it must be completely redesigned and rebuilt.

## VI. Omni-Gadgets

*Omni-Gadgets* are devices whose exact Powers and Attributes are unknown. They are only defined when the Gadget is taken out and used. The same Omni-Gadget might be transformed into a gas grenade, a suction cup for the hands and feet, or a flame-thrower that will melt Killer-Frost's ice-wall.

In other words, Omni-Gadgets simulate a comic book character's ability to have exactly what s/he needs to get out of a situation when s/he has only a finite number of Gadgets with him/her.

The only limitation of Omni-Gadgets is the range of devices they can turn into. The Ranges are:

- A Physical Attributes
- B Mental Attributes
- C Mimicked Power
- D Italicized Attributes

No matter what an Omni-Gadget has been transformed into, it always has a BODY equal to its AP rating. An Omni-Gadget may be used for one battle, or for a duration of time equal to its AP rating, whichever is shorter. Omni-Gadgets may never possess Skills or Advantages.

Omni-Gadgets can be built just like regular Gadgets. The major difference is that all Omni-Gadgets have but one single Ability: their AP rating. The Factor Cost of this Ability begins at 5, though each Range of Abilities that the Omni-Gadget can mimic adds to the Factor Cost:

Ability Range	Factor Cost Modifier
A	+1
B	+1
C	+1
D	+2

An Omni-Gadget's AP Rating has a Base Cost of 10 Hero Points; and an Omni-Gadget has a Gadget Bonus divisor of 5. Whether or not an Omni-Gadget may be Taken Away in combat is always up to the GM, depending upon what it has been transformed into. Omni-Gadgets can be replaced after they have been used or destroyed just like any other Gadget, although it is not necessary to "buy parts" to replace an Omni-Gadget.

It is even possible to build Omni-Gadgets and then connect them to another Gadget.

## VII. Mystical Gadgets

Magical or Mystical Gadgets function as normal Gadgets, using all of the prior rules. When constructing or Repairing a Mystical Gadget, however, the builder uses his/her Occultist Skill in place of the Gadgetry Skill. Also, Mystical Gadgets are not constructed in laboratories. Rather, they are built in workshops, which are treated as though they were laboratories.

The Genius Advantage is never needed to construct a Mystical object, and it is possible to create an "Omni-Object."

## VIII. Gadgets in Combat

Gadgets can be targeted in combat just like Characters. A Gadget's Resistance Value against Physical Attacks is equal to its BODY. A Gadget's Opposing Value against Physical Attacks depends upon the type of Gadget:

1. Gadgets with a DEX always use their own DEX as their OV.
2. Gadgets that are being carried or worn by a Character use their owner's DEX as their OV. Aiming at a Gadget that is being carried or worn is always a Trick Shot.
3. Vehicles have an OV equal to their driver's Vehicle Skill rating; motionless vehicles have an OV of zero.
4. Gadgets that do not fit any of the other categories have an OV of zero.

Remember that Gadgets without a MIND or SPIRIT are immune to Mental or Mystical Attacks.

### Armor and Armored Suits

Characters wearing armor (i.e. a Gadget with an italicized BODY), may substitute the BODY of the armor for their own BODY when computing their RV against Physical Attacks. They may also spend Hero Points equal to the BODY of the armor to increase their RV in Physical Combat. Such Characters have a starting Current BODY Condition equal to their own BODY, however, not the BODY of the armor, and can only spend Hero Points to negate damage equal to their own BODY through the use of Last Ditch Defense.

Attacking an armored Character with the intent to damage the armor rather than the Character is a Trick Shot.

## IX. Real World Gadgets

If anyone builds a Gadget modeled after a real piece of equipment, there are some guidelines that should be followed. First, find the Power or Skill which best mimics the abilities of the Gadget. A car's land movement works in the same way as the Running Power; a camera's ability is similar to Recall, with the Drawback that the information is only stored in visual form; and so on. This process has its limits: Gadgetry is meant to simulate the wonderful sorts of widgets a hero usually creates, not the technological works of a modern industrial society.

If there is no Attribute, Power or Skill which seems logical for the device, list the abilities of the device in terms of effect and if possible, assign a rough AP Value to the effect.

### A. Standard Equipment

*Standard Equipment* falls into one of five categories: buildings, electronic equipment, vehicles, weapons, and special equipment. Standard Equipment is equipment available from any large department or specialty store. Standard equipment is purchased with the money generated by a Characters Wealth Action Check according to each Character's Wealth AP rating (see **Chapter Six: Wealth**). The cost of Standard Equipment is outlined below. Any standard item not on the list can be obtained, using real prices as a guide.

#### Buildings

Most hero groups are going to eventually want some kind of headquarters building. This section outlines the purchase costs of a basic building. These costs do not include any special devices the Players may wish to install in the building. This is strictly for the cost of the building, including the cost of the land.

Some buildings have more than one living area, office, or divided area within the structure that are known as units. For example, a high-rise apartment building has 250 units, or 250 apartments in it. The number in parentheses on the **Building Costs and Heights Table** is the number of units in that type of building. The Purchase Price shown is for the whole building; the Rent Per Month listing is for one unit in the building.

## Building BODYs, Weights, Costs and Heights

Building Type	BODY	WEIGHT (in APs)	Purchase Price	Rent Per Month	HEIGHT (in Feet)	HEIGHT (in APs)
High-Rise Apartment (250)	20	17	19	4	300	5
Brownstone Six Flat (6)	14	14	14	5	40	2
Abandoned Factory	16	20	16	6	50	3
Skyscraper Offices (1000)	25	23	23	6	1,200	8
High Rise Office Building (200)	19	16	14	6	300	5
Small Office Building (12)	15	15	17	6	40	2
Single Office Building	13	12	13	7	15	1
House	10	10	12	6	15	1
Mansion	15	15	20	16	50	3
Warehouse	14	14	16	9	60	3

### Walls

Walls are assumed to be ten feet by ten feet (0 APs x 0 APs). If they are larger than this, find the total BODY or Weight APs of the wall by adding the APs of height and length to the BODY or Weight APs in the table below. For example, a solid steel wall which is 2 APs long by 3 APs wide would have a BODY of 17 and a Weight of 18. However, it is usually easier to assume that any Character who is breaking down a wall is simply trying to break down one ten foot by ten foot section of it.

The *Cost Modifier* listed on the table is the number of APs by which a Player must increase the construction or purchasing cost of a building if all of its walls are built of the material.

### Wall BODYs, Weights and Cost Table

Wall Material	BODY	WEIGHT (in APs)	Cost Modifier
Brick	8	7	+1
Concrete	10	8	+1
Reinforced Concrete	11	10	+2
Promethium	20	12	+100
Steel	12	13	+3
Wood	6	5	0

### Entrances and Openings

Sometimes in battle, combatants charge through, fly through, or are thrown through windows, doors, and other openings in a building. The next table lists the BODY and Weight of such openings, as well as the cost of replacing them should they happen to be smashed or otherwise damaged in a fight. **Note:** Bulletproof glass is expensive and heavy: outfitting a window with bulletproof glass increases both the cost and the weight of the window by 1 AP each over a window with regular glass.

### Entrances and Openings Table

Entrance/ Opening	BODY	WEIGHT (in APs)	Cost (in APs)
Interior Door	3	1	3
Exterior Door	4	1	3
Large Double Door	5	2	4
Steel Reinforced Door	7	3	6
Bank Vault Door	14	14	9
Small Window	4	1	2
Medium Window	4	1	4
Large Window	4	1	6
Bulletproof Glass	7	+1	+1

### Furnishings

Furniture has been known to suffer in bouts between heroes and villains. A short list of the BODY and weight APs of the sorts of furniture and appliances that are most frequently used in combat follows:

### Furnishings and Appliances Table

Furnishing/ Appliance	BODY	WEIGHT (in APs)	Cost (in APs)
Bathtub	5	3	6
Single Bed	3	1	4
King Sized Bed	4	2	5
Couch	4	3	6
Small Desk	1	0	4
Large Desk	3	1	5
Dresser	2	1	6
Kitchen Sink	4	1	3
Piano (Baby Grand)	3	3	7
Refrigerator	4	3	5
Large Dining Table	2	2	6
Dining Room Chair	1	0	3
Washing Machine	3	3	4

### Landscaping

Whenever Characters begin uprooting the flora or get Knocked Back into a redwood, the following table should help decide just who or what breaks.

### Landscaping Table

Type of Plant	BODY	WEIGHT (in APs)	Cost (in APs)
Bush	2	0	0
Sapling (3 ft. to 8 ft.)	2	2	1
Small Tree (9 ft. +)	4	4	5
Medium Tree (16 ft. +)	7	6	7
Large Tree (31 ft. +)	10	9	9
Larger Tree (61 ft. +)	12	12	N/A
Huge Tree (126 ft. +)	14	15	N/A

### Electronic Equipment

The following table lists a number of electronic gizmos that Characters may wish to buy to aid them in their crimefighting endeavors. A detailed description of each item also follows.

A *bug* is a miniaturized microphone which can secretly pick up conversations and transmit them to a waiting radio receiver which is a mile (10 APs) or less away. A Character with either the Detective or the ECM Subskill of Military Science may attempt to detect a bug. Characters without these Skills must make an Unskilled Perception Check to detect the device.

A bug has an OV/RV of 5/5 against being detected. If the Perception Check yields positive RAPs, the bug is discovered.

An *electric eye* is a sensor consisting of a beam of light and a photosensitive receptor. Any object interrupting the beam of light will trigger the alarm that is connected to the electric eye.

## Electronic Equipment Table

Type of Item	Cost (in APs)
<i>Stealth/Security Devices</i>	
Bug	6
Electric Eye	5
Infrared Sensor	6
Surveillance Microphone	6
Nightsight	7
Radio	5
Television Camera	9
Monitoring System	13
Tracer	5
<i>Computer Systems</i>	
Home Computer	8
Mini Computer	9
Business Mainframe	12
Research Mainframe	15
Advanced Research	18
S.T.A.R. Kilotrax	21
<i>Robots</i>	
Clyde	10
Utility	13
Security	17

Characters must make a Perception Check and gain positive RAPs against an OV/RV of 5/5 to detect the beam or the receptor before tripping it.

An *infrared sensor* picks up heat from an object. An alarm is usually attached which is activated when the temperature of an object in range is equal or greater than a specified temperature, usually human body temperature. An infrared sensor can detect any person within 100 yards (5 APs). To detect an infrared sensor, Characters must make a Perception Check against an OV/RV of 6/6 and gain positive RAPs.

A *directional microphone* is used to pick up conversations which are out of range of normal hearing. It works as the Extended Hearing Power of 6 APs. Detecting a surveillance microphone requires a Perception Check against an OV/RV equal to the distance in APs that the microphone is from the subject.

A *nightsight* is a low-powered telescopic sight which also amplifies the available light at night. Starlight on a cloudy night has enough light for a nightsight to work. A nightsight has an overload switch which shuts it down when the light in the area has reached a point of high brightness. It is treated as though it has Telescopic Vision and Thermal Vision rated at 5 APs apiece.

The listed *radio* represents a portable receiver-transmitter with a range of 5 miles. It is treated as though it has Super Ventriloquism of 13.

A *television camera* is a mini-cam which is mobile, like those used for local newscasts.

A *television monitoring system* is a security system with cameras at all entry points to a building and many cameras at other spots in a building. In one central location there is a bank of monitors where the television signals are sent. Security cameras can be detected on a successful Perception Check against an OV/RV of 3/3.

A *tracer* is a small transmitter which sends a steady signal to a radio receiver. The range of a tracer is 5 miles (13 APs). A tracer may be detected by a Detective, or the ECM Subskill of Military Science. Characters who do not have such Skills must make an Unskilled Perception Check against an OV/RV of 5/5 to detect the device.

*Computers* are essentially Mental Gadgets, possessing APs of INT, WILL and MIND. Artificially intelligent computers may possess APs of INFL, AURA, and SPIRIT as well.

Automated systems may have a limited ability to mimic various Skills, such as Detective or Scholar. Unless a computer is

in control of some physical system (such as a robot), it will be unable to perform Skills which require any physical manipulations of an object. For example, a computer could not build a Gadget by itself simply by having the Gadgetry Skill.

A computer may use a Skill at its own APs of the Skill, or it may be used to enhance the Skill use of a Character who also has the Skill. In this case, reduce the Opposing and Resistance Values of the Action by the computer's number of APs of the Skill, to a minimum of zero APs.

**Example:** Alfred is in the Batcave. He uses the Batcomputer (an advanced research computer with INT of 6 APs, and the Detective Skill of 6 APs) to analyze a clue he found earlier. The clue has Opposing and Resistance Values of 10/10. Alfred does not have the Detective Skill, so the computer works at 6 APs. Alfred learns nothing from the computer.

Later, Batman, with 12 APs of the Detective Skill, uses the computer to analyze the same clue. The OV/RV against Batman's Detective Action is 10/10. However, using the computer reduces the Opposing and Resistance Values by its APs of Skill. Therefore, the OV/RV of the Clue falls from 10/10 to 4/4. Batman rolls a 6. He succeeds, but he would have failed if he had not used the Batcomputer. Batman has an Effect Value of 12 versus a Resistance Value of 4. Batman receives 9 RAPs of knowledge.

*Artificial Intelligence* gives a computer self-awareness. This computer then becomes an NPC played by the GM. The GM should be aware of the programming included in the computer; if the computer is programmed to obey its operator (which most are), only an extreme provocation could induce the computer to oppose the operator. A computer with Artificial Intelligence may not enhance its own Skill use.

### Home Computer

[INT: 1, BODY: 1, Recall: 9, R#: 3]

This *home computer* is the most advanced home computer system available. It comes with all of the peripherals, such as disk drives, terminal, and printer.

### MINI-COMPUTER

[INT: 2, BODY: 2, Recall: 12, Split: 1, R#: 3]

A *mini-computer*, despite its name, is larger than a home computer. It comes with terminal, disk drives, printer, and plotters. A mini-computer has an ability which works as the Split Power (see the *Character Handbook*) at 1 AP, making duplicates of its "mind." Each "mind" may run separate programs.

### BUSINESS MAINFRAME

[INT: 3, BODY: 2, Recall: 15, Split: 2, R#: 3]

A *business mainframe* comes with several terminals, printers, and disk drives. A business mainframe has an ability which works as the Split Power at 2 APs, making duplicates of its "mind." Each "mind" may run separate programs.

### RESEARCH MAINFRAME

[INT: 4, BODY: 2, Recall: 15, Split: 2, R#: 3]

A *research mainframe* comes with terminals, extended memory, printer, and plotter. It has an ability which works as the Split Power at 3 APs, making duplicates of its "mind." Each "mind" may run separate programs.

### ADVANCED RESEARCH MAINFRAME

[INT: 6, WILL: 2, BODY: 2, Recall: 18, Split: 5, R#: 2]

### ARTIFICIALLY INTELLIGENT VERSION

[INT: 6, WILL: 2, MIND: 1, INFL: 1, BODY: 2, Recall: 18, Split: 5, R#: 2]

An *advanced research mainframe* computer comes with the standard mix of terminals, extended memory, printer, and plotter. A research mainframe has an ability which works as the Split Power at 5 APs, making duplicates of its "mind." Each "mind" may run separate programs.

### S.T.A.R. KILOTRAX

[INT: 8, WILL: 6, MIND: 6, BODY: 3, Recall: 20, Split: 7, R#: 2]

### ARTIFICIALLY INTELLIGENT VERSION:

[INT: 8, WILL: 6, MIND: 6, INFL: 5, AURA: 5, BODY: 3, Recall: 20, Split: 7, R#: 2]

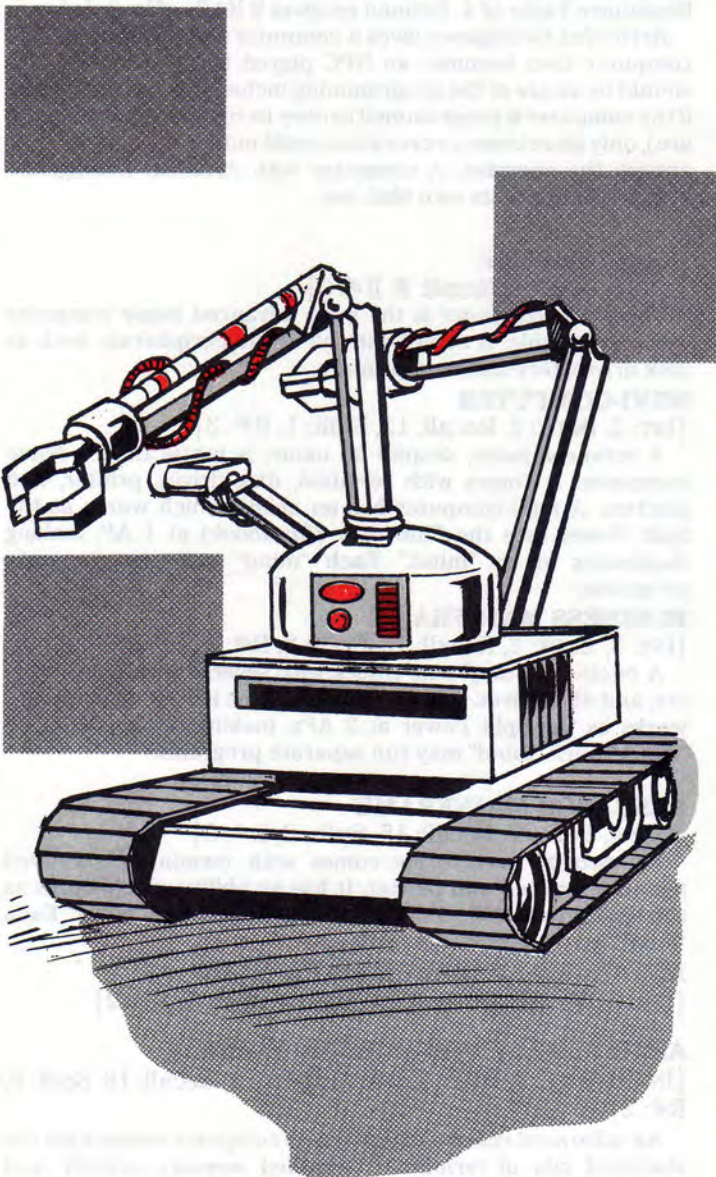
The *S.T.A.R. Kilotrax* is an experimental design that will only be sold to Characters who have a High-level Connection with S.T.A.R. Labs (see **Advantages** in the *Character Handbook*). It comes equipped with all of the familiar peripherals; external information hyper-storage unit (a technological double-leap up from a disk drive), terminals, printers and plotters. A Kilotrax has an ability which works as the Split Power at 7 APs, making duplicates of its "mind," each of which may run separate programs.

#### Ultra-C Processor

[INT: 18, BODY: 1, R#: 4]

**Miscellaneous Drawback:** burns out after 2 minutes time, reducing its INT to 0.

The Kilotrax has the *Ultra-C Processor Booster*, which is a Gadget which substitutes INT for the INT of the Kilotrax while it lasts. The Gadget has an INT of 18 APs, so the INT of the Kilotrax may be increased to 18 for 2 minutes (5 APs) before the device burns out. S.T.A.R. Labs is still working to perfect the Booster.



### ROBOTS

The following *robots* are the commercial models available from S.T.A.R. Labs. They include an internal computer which can be programmed by the owner of the robot. A robot may be considered an automatic system which can be run by another computer.

#### CLYDE

[DEX: 1, INT: 1, BODY: 2, Life Sense: 2]

**Miscellaneous Drawback:** must be recharged every 24 hours.

A *Clyde* is a light-duty work robot operated by the built-in equivalent of a home computer. It may operate one limited automatic system at a time; it comes equipped with enough limited automatic systems to make it a mediocre housekeeper. It has an infrared sensor with a limited range (40 feet, 2 APs) which allows it to detect intruders. Clyde comes with a voice synthesizer with a vocabulary of a twelve year old and the speaking ability of a six-year-old.

#### UTILITY ROBOT

[DEX: 2, STR: 4, BODY: 6]

**Miscellaneous Drawback:** must be recharged every 24 hours.

S.T.A.R.'s *utility robot* is a sturdy, general purpose industrial robot that is usually programmed to maintain and monitor non-mobile robot workers. It comes equipped with a built-in mini computer. Some models have voice synthesizers, but most do not communicate or understand human speech.

#### SECURITY ROBOT

[DEX: 4, STR: 6, BODY: 5, AV: 7, EV: 8]

A *security robot* has the equivalent of a business mainframe computer compacted into its armored interior. A security robot carries three or more weapon systems, and has the Weaponry Skill as an automated system at 7 APs. A security robot has Military Science as an automated system at 5 APs, and a variety of electronic sensors at 5 APs which can be used to detect Characters who are within 100 yards.

## B. Vehicles

Any Gadget which can transport one or more Characters from one location to another under its own power is considered a *Vehicle*.

### Air Vehicles

*Air vehicles* are vehicles that allow one or more Characters to fly or glide through the air. This includes all gliders, airplanes, blimps, and most 20th Century spacecraft.

#### Jet Pack

[STR: 3, BODY: 2, Flight: 6, R#: 2]

#### GLIDER

[STR: 4, BODY: 6, Gliding: 7]

#### SINGLE PROPELLOR AIRPLANE

[STR: 5, BODY: 8, Flight: 8, R#: 2]

#### FLYING BOAT

[STR: 7, BODY: 10, Flight: 8, Swimming: 2, R#: 2]

#### BOEING 747

[STR: 11, BODY: 12, Flight: 10, Radar Sense: 18, R#: 2]

#### F-15 EAGLE

[STR: 8, BODY: 10, AV: 6, EV: 8, Flight: 11, Radar Sense: 20, Hardened Defenses, R#: 3]

Carries four air-to-air missiles.

#### SPACE SHUTTLE

[STR: 12, BODY: 11, Flight: 15, Flame Immunity: 5, Radar Sense: 20, Hardened Defenses, R#: 3]

#### ZEPPELIN

[STR: 11, BODY: 9, Flight: 6, R#: 5]

#### HELICOPTER

[STR: 7, BODY: 7, Flight: 7, R#: 2]

## Land Vehicles

*Land vehicles* range from a simple two-wheeled pedal-driven bicycle to the most complex tanks and armored transport trucks used by the army. For the most part, they are completely unable to fly, swim, or burrow.

### Motorcycle

[STR: 3, BODY: 5, Running: 7, R#: 2]

### COMPACT CAR

[STR: 4, BODY: 6, Running: 7, R#: 2]

### SPORTS CAR

[STR: 4, BODY: 6, Running: 8, R#: 2]

### ROLLS ROYCE

[STR: 4, BODY: 7, Running: 7, R#: 2]

### SMALL TRUCK

[STR: 9, BODY: 11, Running: 6, R#: 2]

### EIGHTEEN WHEELER

[STR: 10, BODY: 13, Running: 7, R#: 2]

### M-1 ABRAMS TANK

[STR: 9, BODY: 15, Running: 6, Hardened Defenses, R#: 2]

### JEEP

[STR: 4, BODY: 6, Running: 7, R#: 2]

## Water Vehicles

To travel on or underneath a body of water, Characters must make use of a *water vehicle*. These can be as simple as a canoe or a rowboat, or as complex as an aircraft carrier or a nuclear submarine.

### MOTORBOAT

[STR: 4, BODY: 4, Swimming: 4, R#: 2]

### SPEEDBOAT

[STR: 3, BODY: 4, Swimming: 6, R#: 3]

### HOUSE BOAT

[STR: 6, BODY: 7, Swimming: 3, R#: 2]

### YACHT

[STR: 11, BODY: 13, Swimming: 5, R#: 2]

### OCEAN LINER

[STR: 20, BODY: 18, Swimming: 5, R#: 2]

### DESTROYER

[STR: 15, BODY: 18, AV: 11, EV: 15, Swimming: 6, Radar Sense: 17, Hardened Defenses, R#: 3]

### BATTLESHIP

[STR: 18, BODY: 24, AV: 15, EV: 20, Swimming: 6, Radar Sense: 17, Sonar: 12, Hardened Defenses, R#: 3]

### NUCLEAR SUBMARINE

[STR: 19, BODY: 24, AV: 10, EV: 13, Swimming: 5, Water Freedom: 6, Sonar: 12, R#: 5]

## C. Weapons

All firearms (pistols, rifles, machineguns, etc.) are made with the following **Miscellaneous Drawback**: the gun may only be fired a number of times equal to its Ammo rating before it must be reloaded; reloading is an Automatic Action, but a Character may not perform a Dice Action during a phase in which s/he reloads.

### Bow and Arrow

[STR: 6, BODY: 3, EV: 3, R#: 5]

STR of Bow is its Range.

### .38 Pistol

[BODY: 4, EV: 3, Ammo: 6, R#: 3]

### .45 Automatic

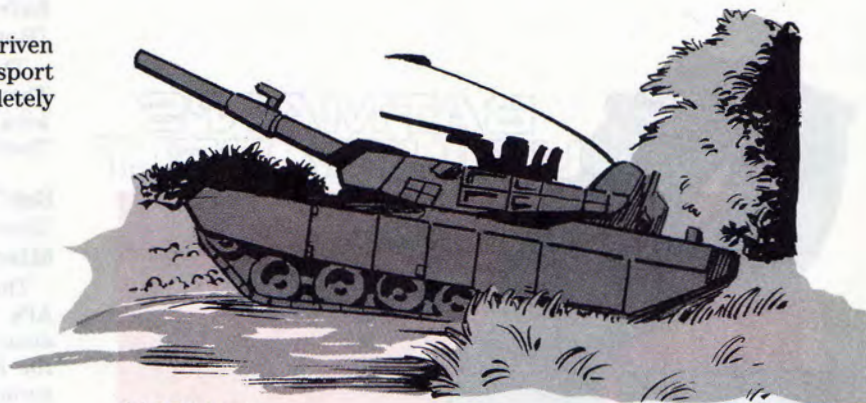
[BODY: 4, EV: 4, Ammo: 7, R#: 3]

### Laser Pistol

[BODY: 4, AV: 3, EV: 4, Ammo: 10, R#: 2]

### Laser Rifle

[BODY: 4, AV: 4, EV: 4, Ammo: 10, R#: 2]



### .44 Magnum

[BODY: 4, EV: 5, Ammo: 6, R#: 3]

### Sawed-Off Shotgun

[BODY: 4, AV: 5, EV: 5, Ammo: 2, R#: 3]

### Submachinegun

[BODY: 4, AV: 5, EV: 5, Ammo: 4, R#: 3]

### Automatic Rifle

[BODY: 4, AV: 4, EV: 6, Ammo: 8, R# 2]

### Machinegun

[BODY: 4, AV: 5, EV: 8, Ammo: 6, R#: 3]

### Flame Thrower

[BODY: 4, Flame Project: 6, R#: 4]

### Bazooka

[BODY: 5, EV: 8, R#: 2]

### 105mm Howitzer

[BODY: 6, AV: 5, EV: 9]

### AIR TO AIR MISSILE

[BODY: 2, AV: 6, EV: 13, Radar Sense: 19]

### Knife

[BODY: 8, EV: 3]

### Sword

[BODY: 8, EV: 4]

### Club

[BODY: 3, EV: 3, R#: 5]

### Mace

[BODY: 8, EV: 4]

## Sights

The Telescopic Vision of a sight acts the same as the Automatic Power Telescopic Vision and negates some range modifications. For example: a rifle with a 4 AP sight would treat a target 9 APs away as if it were only 5 APs away. Sights do not increase the actual range of a weapon.

### Tube Sight

[BODY: 1, Telescopic Vision: 1]

### Telescopic Sight

[BODY: 2, Telescopic Vision: 4]

### Nightsight

[BODY: 2, Telescopic Vision: 4, Ultra Vision: 12, R#: 2]

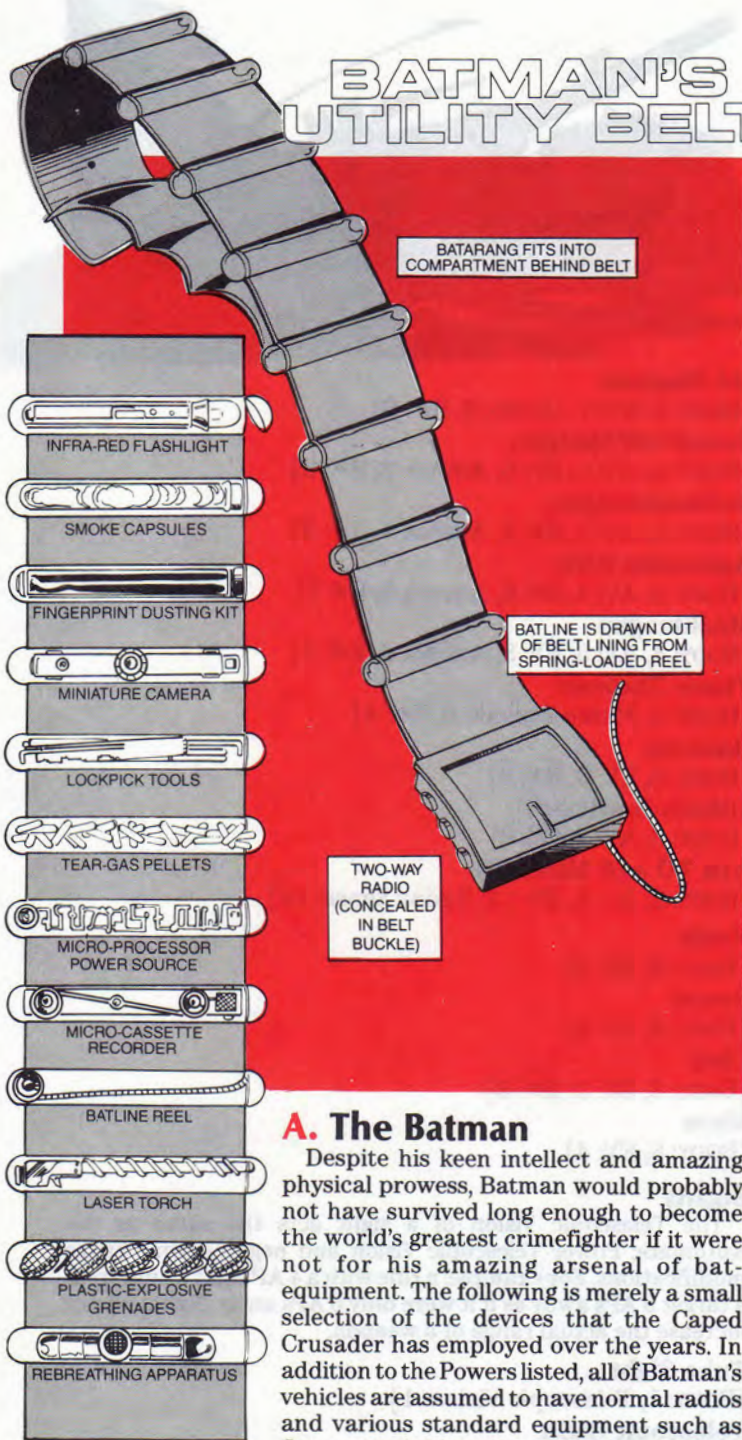
### Laser Sight

[BODY: 3, Telescopic Vision: 6, R#: 3]

## X. Special Gadgets

This section details the equipment of some of the most famous DC heroes: Batman, Nightwing, and the New Titans. If Players wish to use special Gadgets such as these, their Characters must either build such devices themselves with the Gadgetry Skill, or purchase similar Gadgets from S.T.A.R. Labs. This purchase is paid for by making a normal Wealth Check (see **Chapter Six**).

# BATMAN'S UTILITY BELT



## A. The Batman

Despite his keen intellect and amazing physical prowess, Batman would probably not have survived long enough to become the world's greatest crimefighter if it were not for his amazing arsenal of bat-equipment. The following is merely a small selection of the devices that the Caped Crusader has employed over the years. In addition to the Powers listed, all of Batman's vehicles are assumed to have normal radios and various standard equipment such as flares, repair kits, and navigational aids.

### Batarang

[BODY: 7, Gliding: 2]

The *Batarang* fits into a compartment inside Batman's utility belt. It is a curved piece of metal with a scalloped wing design that makes it look somewhat like a bat. A well-balanced throwing weapon, it is used to trip criminals up, knock weapons from their hands, deflect projectiles, and when attached to the Batline (STR: 12, BODY: 1), to wrap the line around building projections so that Batman can swing through the air. The Batarang is most often used for distance combat. When making a Physical Attack with the Batarang, the thrower's DEX is used as the AV, and the thrower's STR is used as the EV. The Gliding Power allows the Batarang a greater range than normal: add the APs of Gliding to the thrower's STR to get the maximum range it can be thrown.

### Infrared Flashlight & Bat-Goggles

[BODY: 1 Thermal Vision: 12]

The *Infrared Flashlight and Bat-Goggles* have 12 APs of Thermal (IR) Vision. As long as the flashlight is illuminating the area, the Character can see as if it were daylight, as per the Thermal Vision Power.

### Bat-Torch

[BODY: 2, Heat Vision: 9, R#: 5]

**Misc. Drawback:** Range of torch is only a few inches.

The *Bat-Torch* generates heat as per a Heat Vision Power of 9 APs. The torch can cut through walls, bars, or windows. Its attack is Physical. When one RAP of damage has been done to the BODY of the target object, a hole is cut through it large enough to walk through. The BODY of various materials is listed on the *Gamemaster's Screen*. If this device is used against another Character, the attacker is considered to have entered Killing Combat.

### Micro-Cassette Bat-Recorder

[BODY: 1, Recall: 12, R#: 2]

**Misc. Drawback:** Only works on audio information.

The *Micro-Cassette Bat-Recorder* can Recall any sound within the normal hearing of the operator for 12 APs of time. The cassette tape is considered the re-load pack for this item.

### Miniature Bat-Camera

[BODY: 1, Recall: 12, R#: 2]

**Misc. Drawback:** Only works on visual information.

The *Miniature Bat-Camera* can Recall any visual image (it takes a picture) of anything that the photographer sees. A clear picture can be taken at a distance of up to 12 APs from the photographer.

### Plastic Bat-Explosives

[BODY: 1, Bomb: 7]

*Plastic Bat-Explosives* have an Explosive Effect of 7 APs. Handle an attack with Plastic Bat-Explosives in the same manner as an Explosive Attack in Combat, except that the user may be injured if s/he is caught in the blast radius.

### Bat-Rebreather

[BODY: 1, Sealed Systems: 12, R#: 2]

The *Bat-Rebreather* is a small device that functions in the same manner as a gas mask, and has a Sealed Systems Power of 12 APs. The Bat-Rebreather adds 12 APs to the Resistance Value of the Character who is wearing it. It is effective only against airborne poison gases, including tear gas.

### Bat-Shuriken

[BODY: 6, EV: 2]

Batman can throw up to four *Bat-Shuriken* at one time. He adds one to the die roll for each additional shuriken he throws past the first. Batman tends to use these only for Trick Shots against wimpy opponents.

### Batcall

[BODY: 4, Animal Summoning: 12, R#: 3]

**Misc. Drawback:** Animal Summoning only works on bats. Batman can use this device to summon a huge flock of bats that will converge on the location of the *Batcall*. It works best at night, but can be used at dusk or dawn.

### BATCOMPUTER

[INT: 6, BODY: 6, Detective: 6, Gadgetry: 6, Medicine (Forensics): 6, Military Science: 6, Scientist: 6, Recall: 13, Split: 5 R#: 2]

The *Batcomputer* is located in the Batcave, and has micro-wave links to both the Batwing and the Batmobile. Over the years, Batman has used it to compile one of the most comprehensive information storage and retrieval systems in the world.

The Batcomputer has access to files on criminals and wrongdoers from law enforcement agencies throughout the world, making it one of the Caped Crusader's most powerful tools in his war on crime.

## BATMOBILE

[STR: 7, BODY: 9, Running: 8, Fog: 7, Heat Vision: 7, R#: 2]

In appreciation for saving his life, stunt driver Jack Edison constructed the *Batmobile* for the Caped Crusader. The *Batmobile* is unparalleled by any other four-wheeled vehicle on the road today. It has a maximum speed of 225 miles per hour and is capable of off-road movement.

The body of the automobile is made of a special ceramic that makes it impervious to all small arms fire. A microwave linked terminal allows Batman access to the Batcomputer. A Smoke Screen can be released from the rear of the *Batmobile*, and the Laser Headlights can quickly blast open a wall or a door of a villain's hideout. Smoke Screen use is handled in the exact manner as Fog Power, with the limitation that the Smoke Screen cannot move with the car. The Laser Headlights mimic the Power of Heat Vision in all respects. See the *Character Handbook* for an explanation of these Powers.

## BATGLIDER

[STR: 3, BODY: 5, Flight: 2, Gliding: 8]

The *Batglider* is a heavily-modified hang glider, capable of takeoffs and landings from vertical surfaces, using a pair of jets attached to its wing pylons. In addition to its pilot, the *Batglider* can carry up to 200 pounds on its wing pylons, but doing so requires removing the jets. The *Batglider* is collapsible, and can be reduced to the size of a backpack for transport.

## B. Nightwing

Like his mentor, Batman, Nightwing uses many different types of special equipment in his fight against crime. A small sampling of some of the Gadgets he carries with him is as follows:

### Combat Disk

[BODY: 7, Gliding: 3]

Nightwing's *Combat Disk* is a derivative of Batman's Batarang, and is thrown only at opponents to make Physical Attacks, with the DEX of the thrower being the Acting Value and his/her STR being the Effect Value. Add the APs of Gliding to the thrower's STR to calculate the maximum range of the weapon.

### Gas Mask

[BODY: 2, Sealed Systems: 8, R#: 2]

The *Gas Mask* is effective only against airborne poison gases, including tear gas. The APs of Sealed Systems are added to the Character's Resistance Value against any and all poison gas attacks.

### Stun Bomb

[BODY: 1, Bomb: 5]

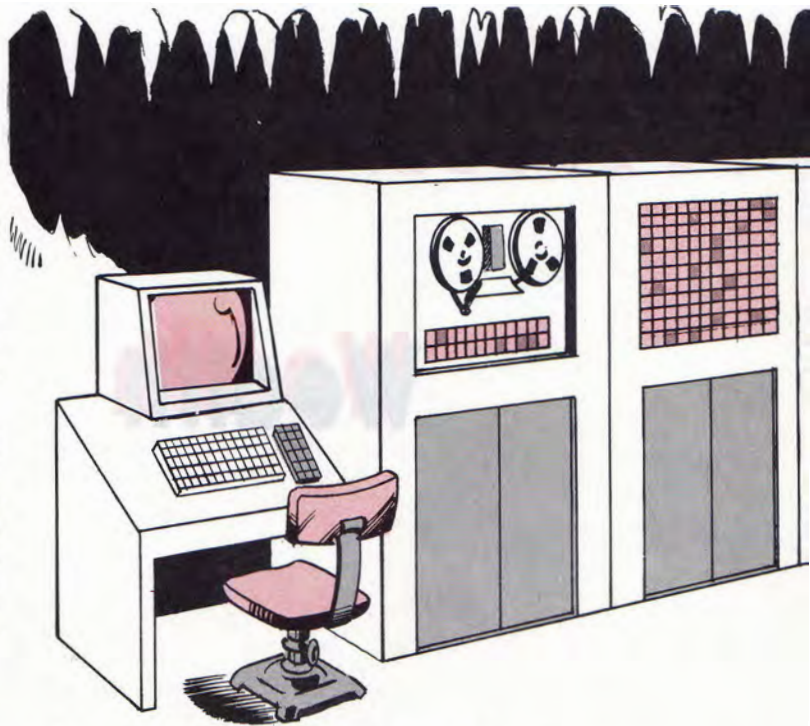
The *Stun Bomb* is thrown during a Physical Attack to render the target unconscious. Handle the attack as an explosive attack (see *Combat*), using the thrower's DEX as the Acting Value, and the APs of the Stun Bomb's Explosive as the Effect Value. No target's current BODY APs will be reduced below 0; the Stun Bomb can only be used for Bashing Combat.

### Wrist Rockets

[STR: 5, BODY: 5]

The *Wrist Rocket* functions in a manner similar to a grappling hook. However, the Wrist Rocket fires a steel arrowhead which tows a long, thin line behind it. The arrowhead then imbeds itself into the target object, allowing Nightwing to climb the line, which is 5 APs long.

To use the Wrist Rocket, the Acting Value is the Exotic Weaponry Skill of the user, and the DEX of the target (normally 0



for a stationary object) is the Opposing Value.

The Effect Value is the STR of the Wrist Rocket. Since the arrowhead is to be imbedded in the material and is not intended to cause any damage, subtract 6 from the material's BODY to determine the Resistance Value. One or more RAPs means that the arrowhead has been successfully imbedded into the material.

## C. The New Titans

The following are some of the vehicles used by the New Titans. Like Batman's vehicles, all of these are assumed to have radios and other standard equipment.

### Skycycle

[STR: 4, BODY: 6, Flight: 8, R#: 2]

The *Skycycle* is an antigravity sled that provides limited flight capability to the Titans' non-flying members. Open to the elements and having only minimum equipment, the *Skycycle* is an inexpensive means of gaining mobility.

### T-BARGE (For Personnel)

[STR: 5, BODY: 5, Swimming: 3, R#: 2]

### T-BARGE (For Cargo)

[STR: 15, BODY: 6, Swimming: 3, R#: 2]

The *T-Barges* are used by the Titans to carry personnel and cargo across the East River to Titans' Tower. Access to the barges is restricted to individuals who have specially coded I.D. cards.

### T-HELICOPTER

[STR: 9, BODY: 8, Flight: 7, R#: 2]

The *T-Helicopter* is capable of carrying all of the Titans. It is usually used for short trips.

### T-JET

[STR: 12, BODY: 9, Flight: 11, Radar Sense: 16, Hardened Defenses, R#: 2]

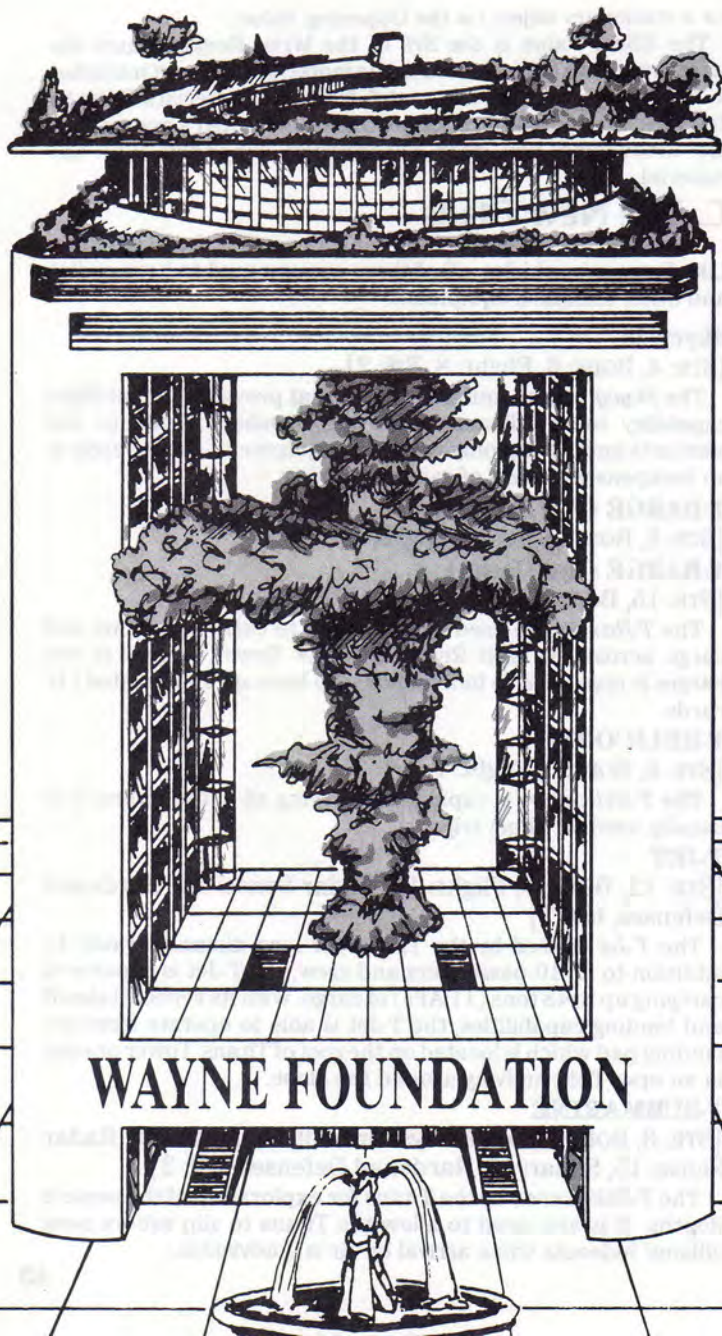
The *T-Jet* is used by the Titans for long distance travel. In addition to its 10 passengers and crew, the *T-Jet* is capable of carrying up to 48 tons (11 APs) of cargo. With its vertical takeoff and landing capabilities, the *T-Jet* is able to operate from the landing pad which is located on the roof of Titans' Tower or even in an open field halfway around the globe.

### T-SUBMARINE

[STR: 8, BODY: 8, Sealed Systems: 19, Swimming: 5, Radar Sense: 15, Sonar: 15, Hardened Defenses, R#: 2]

The *T-Sub* is used by the Titans for exploration of the ocean's depths. It is also used to allow the Titans to slip ashore near villains' hideouts when arrival by air is inadvisable.

# Wealth



One of Batman's most effective weapons in the war against crime is Bruce Wayne's vast personal fortune. Wayne's millions have allowed him to design and build his incredible crime-fighting Gadgets, to set up charities, and to finance philanthropic foundations aimed at reforming criminals all over Gotham City.

Each and every Character in the **DC HEROES Role-Playing Game** has a *Wealth* rating that indicates how much money the Character has at his/her disposal. Like Attributes, Powers, and Skills, Wealth is measured in APs. Zero APs of Wealth is equal to \$25. A Character's listed Wealth rating measures his/her weekly salary. A Character with a Wealth rating of zero, for example, makes \$25 a week or less, while a Character with a Wealth rating of 8 makes between \$3,200 and \$6,400 a week.

Wealth is the only AP value that cannot be increased by spending Hero Points gained during adventures (see **Chapter Two** of the *Character Handbook*). Rules involving the increase or loss of Wealth are found in **Appendix A: Advanced Rules**, later in this book. Those rules should only be used when Players are completely familiar with the following Wealth rules.

## Buying Items

Wealth is used to purchase goods and services. Purchasing a good or service is a Dice Action using the purchaser's APs of Wealth as the AV/EV and the dollar cost of the good or service (measured in APs) as the OV/RV. Hero Points may be spent as usual to increase the AV/EV of a *Wealth Action Check*. If a Player earns one or more RAPs on the Wealth Action Check, the Character succeeds and the item is bought. If the Action Check fails, the Character simply could not scrape up the cash for the purchase.

Normally, a Character is only allowed one Wealth roll per game week, whether successful or not. If the Player wishes, his/her Character may purchase more than one item at a time with this roll. The OV/RV of an attempt to purchase multiple items is equal to the total cost (in APs) of all the items being purchased with the roll.

If a Character has already used his/her one Wealth roll and it becomes necessary to make another Wealth roll later in the week, the Player may purchase the right to make additional Wealth Checks by spending Hero Points. The second Wealth roll in a one week period costs a number of Hero Points equal to twice the Character's Wealth rating, the third Wealth roll costs a number of Hero Points equal to three times the Wealth rating, and so on. The only limit to the number of additional rolls Players are allowed to make in this fashion is the number of Hero Points they are willing to spend.

The only goods and services that Characters need to purchase through the use of Wealth are those that will have a direct bearing upon adventures. Green Arrow would need to use his Wealth to purchase a new bow, or the scuba gear that he will need for an undersea investigation; but he does not need to make a Wealth roll every time he buys a hot dog or a newspaper.

## Charity

A Character who does not make any Wealth rolls during a one week period can donate part of his/her weekly earnings to charity. Making a charitable contribution in this fashion nets the Character 5 Hero Points which can be saved and spent as s/he sees fit.

## Purchasing Parts For Gadgetry Attempts

As seen in **Chapter Five**, a gadgeteer must purchase parts using his/her Wealth score before attempting to design and construct a Gadget. The dollar cost of the parts necessary to install each of the Gadget's Abilities is equal to the Ability's rating in APs. The gadgeteer has the option of buying all of the parts necessary to build the device at once, using a single Wealth roll as discussed above, or buying the parts of each of the Abilities with separate Wealth rolls. Naturally, an Ability cannot be installed until the parts necessary to install that Ability have been purchased.

# Gamemastering

*Role-playing* is storytelling. The rules of good storytelling apply to role-playing, but role-playing also has its own special rules as well. This chapter gives you those basic rules that make a good Gamemaster and a good story. Experienced role-players probably know these basics already, but it is best if they skim over these pages, especially the sections on creating adventures and Standard Award guidelines. **Chapter Eight: Subplots** will also provide a good review for experienced Players who are new to the **DC HEROES Role-Playing Game**.

## I. Principles of Being a GM

The *Gamemaster*, or *GM*, has the most important job in a role-playing game. S/he is like the director of a play, and the Players' Characters are like the characters in that play. Both the GM and the Players are also the audience and, as the participants and the audience, they can play against each other's actions and enjoy the unfolding story they create at the same time.

Unlike the director of a play, the GM works from only a slim framework. S/he cannot predict how the story will end, for the *real* story is the interaction between the GM and the Players. And unlike characters in a play, the Players have much more freedom to influence the story; they may even bypass whole sections or add new events that the GM did not expect.

The Gamemaster oversees the story, making sure it is on the right track and that the Players are having fun. S/he alone knows the sequence of events and their possible outcome. S/he also knows the atmosphere that s/he wants to convey to the Players. What s/he does not know is exactly how the Players will react to each situation that s/he creates, but if s/he sets the scene successfully, the Players will respond in the spirit of the game that the GM has created.

The GM must do all of the bookkeeping for the *Non-Player Characters*, or *NPCs*, keeping track of their Hero Points, locations, damage, and Gadgets. S/he must also keep track of the time spent by the Player Characters and make all the necessary dice rolls for his/her *NPCs*. This can be a very demanding task, especially for a new GM, but the job will soon become easier as everyone involved learns the game mechanics.

A Gamemaster is a storyteller, a director, a playwright, an actor, a bookkeeper, and in the end, a chemist. S/he mixes different story lines, plot elements, and characters with the Players to see where their combined imagination will lead them.

## Work Together

The **DC HEROES RPG** is an interactive game in which the GM and the Players work together. As the GM, you should not attempt to have complete control of the game's flow. If the Players do not react according to your plans, so much the better. A story is not as much fun if you know exactly how it will end before it starts.

Try to let the Players think on their own. Let them solve a problem their way, instead of trying to pressure them into solving it your way. The Players will often approach a situation in completely different ways from any that you might imagine.

The GM has the final word on all the actions of the game. Once you have made a decision, your Players must yield. However, be fair and honest and use your authority very sparingly. GMs who exercise too much power often find themselves without any Players.

## Role Play, and Encourage Others to Role Play

The Players should be encouraged to role play their Characters' Motivations. A Player whose Character is Batman should impress upon the other Players that Batman is hardnosed, fair, and more than a little neurotic about seeking justice.

The GM is responsible for creating events that allow the Players to act out their Characters' personalities. If a Character's Motivation is Upholding the Good, give that Character the opportunity to do good deeds. You could also put him/her in situations that test his/her mettle, like choosing between two evils.

make sure that they are true to their Motivations and Drawbacks.

Most Players' Characters' Motivations are based on respect for the law. Heroes do not break the law casually. If your Players' Characters start to indiscriminately wreak havoc, the long arm of the law will bring them to justice. If the Players start to act like villains, they should receive **no** Hero Points for that adventure. Period.

## Do Not Kill the Characters

A good playwright does not kill off major characters in the middle of the first scene. Likewise, a good GM realizes that the current adventure is only one part of a larger campaign. Major Characters should seldom be killed. If a Player is extremely foolish or careless, his/her Character may die, but that will happen without any real effort on the GM's part.

The sole object of the villain's plot should rarely be to kill the heroes. Instead, the villain will usually want the heroes out of the way so that s/he can commit his/her crimes unhindered. S/he may want to play with the heroes or annoy them, like Mr. Mxyzptlk does to Superman.

If a villain decides to kill a Player Character, s/he usually wants his/her victim conscious, so that s/he can gloat over the "inescapable" trap that s/he has devised. A villain usually leaves the hero in the "inescapable" trap and goes off to complete his/her dastardly deed. Resourceful heroes can usually escape from "inescapable" traps. Player Characters should be allowed the opportunity to escape and continue the campaign to its conclusion.

## Plan Ahead

The GM should spend at least an hour and a half before the game starts, preferably before the Players arrive, reviewing notes for the upcoming adventure. Make sure any handouts and visual aids are prepared, including maps and diagrams, and that you have worked out the Attributes, Powers, Skills, and information for all of the major villains and minor Characters. Keep the *Gamemaster's Screen* and lots of ten-sided dice handy. The more you plan, the more smoothly the game will proceed.

## Plan for the Future

If you look at each week's game as a single issue of a comic book, you can see that if you stay only one week ahead of the game, the result will be a choppy campaign. The Players will become more involved in the game if they have a long term objective. When Justice League International went into outer space to rescue Mister Miracle, the quest continued for many issues before the team finally confronted Manga Khan and Darkseid on Apokolips. Occasionally, you can take a break to play one of the Character's Subplots, or a side adventure that takes place in the course of the overall scenario (like the JLI's fight with Lobo during the Mr. Miracle chase).

## Challenge the Players' Minds

The DC Universe is very rich in possibilities for adventure. The game is not a series of slugfests. Challenge the minds and imaginations of the Players with clues and veiled information.

Do not make the adventure too easy. Part of the fun of role-playing is the tension in the game. Will evil triumph? Can a Character escape from a particularly nasty trap? It is important for the GM to inject this excitement into the game.

### Create a Stable Environment

The world of your heroes will expand as the game goes on, but the basic outlines should not change. If the bank building was on the corner of Fourth and Elm yesterday, it should still be there today. A stable environment helps create an imaginary world with which the Player's Characters can deal. It also creates a place that can handle many types of adventures.

Gamemastering is the most demanding role in the game. It can also be the most fun. If your Players are having fun too, you have what it takes to run a great campaign.

## II. Running the Adventure

Before you learn how adventures are created in the **DC HEROES RPG**, you should know what it is like to be the Gamemaster for one. Many of the principles already described are explained in greater detail here, as well as new ideas to try on your Players.

### Play in a Comfortable Setting

Be sure to have enough chairs and tables for everyone. Make sure the lighting is good and the room is not stuffy or noisy. Have your *Gamemaster's Screen* and other props nearby and ready to use. The better the setting, the less distractions you will have from the game.

### You Are the Players' Senses

The Players will depend on you to give complete and accurate descriptions of what their Characters see and hear. Helping these descriptions to come alive is one of the GM's most enjoyable jobs. When describing the scene, remember to describe

the colors, sounds, even the smells and textures of the Characters' surroundings.

Even more important, try to explain to the Players what the place *feels* like. Their gut reactions to a scene are as important as what they see and hear.

For instance, say the Question walks into a room where people have just stopped arguing; no words are spoken by the Characters, but the GM might describe the scene like this:

*"You see two men, seated across from each other at an ancient oak table. The parlor is filled to capacity with dark, heavy furniture, and the drapes are closed against a winter gale. In the dark room, your eyes are immediately drawn to the people's faces."*

*"One man, dressed in a dark business suit, is glaring at the other and fiercely gripping the edge of the table with his long-fingered hands. His knuckles are white from the effort. The other man, dressed in a smoking jacket, sits sideways in his chair, facing away from the man in the business suit. The second man is fiddling nervously with a pipe."*

*"A handsome woman in a pale blue evening gown stands nearby. Her face is ashen; her eyes are wide with horror. You get the impression that she is suppressing a scream."*

*"They do not speak, but the feeling of tension in the room is almost as strong as the smell of dust all around you."*

Details like this make the scene come to life, and give the Players lots of information without being boring. On the other hand, too much description will slow play. Always strive for balance.

### Role Play the NPCs

Be creative and get into the role-playing spirit with all of the NPCs, even the most insignificant. Sometimes you will be required to play many roles at once or play one right after another. This is when a GM needs to be an actor. Have fun with this, act outrageous, use funny voices, or pretend to be blind or deaf, whatever suits the occasion.

When you are speaking to the Players, do not say, *"The gas station attendant tells you the villain passed by a second ago."* Say instead, *"Yeah, a big ugly guy in a weird costume with numbers printed all over it, he ran down that alley just a minute ago, kicked some lady's dog too . . . say . . . aren't you guys P.I.S.T.?"*

All NPCs are important, because they convey a lot of the information that Player Characters need in the game. They are the way the GM affects the unfolding events. A helpful NPC can speed up the game, or an untrustworthy NPC can set the group up for betrayal and ambush.

Playing your NPCs is one of the best ways to encourage your Players to role play. Keep the Players interacting with you on this level, but do not let them spend a lot of time talking to an NPC who has little or nothing to do with the adventure. If this happens, cut the discussion short.

### Try Using Props

Props can be a big help when you are describing a scene. Role-playing NPCs and describing the scene gives the Players something to listen to. Try giving them something to look at as well. A prop can be anything visual: a map, a note in secret code, a jigsaw puzzle they must put together, or something else that the GM can invent.

The GM could simply describe the scene, and then hand the Players a prop that will lead them to a clue, or may even be a clue in itself. Props representing the Characters themselves, such as lead miniatures or cardboard figures, can be used to keep track of the heroes and villains in combat (see **Chapter Three**). Such props will quickly show the Players where their Characters are in relation to the villains and innocent bystanders.

### Keep the Group Together

Running two or more different groups is hard to do and boring for the Players who are out of the action. Furthermore, if the main villain catches one of the groups of Characters, there may not be enough of them to defend themselves.



## Keep Them on Track

At any given time, Players usually have many options from which to choose. They may be tempted to wander away from the main adventure. Your devious clue might be so devious that it becomes obscure and leads the Players in the opposite direction that you intended. It can be very frustrating for you and the Players to spend a lot of time running around in circles.

Once in a while, it might be a good idea to “nudge” the Players in the right direction. NPCs are good for this. In the DC Universe, the Phantom Stranger spends most of his time “nudging” other heroes. NPCs can spot the box of matches containing the vital clue, or identify the blood stain on the carpet, or whatever it takes for the story to continue. You may also want to try news flashes, kidnapping a Character, even taunts by the villains (especially those with Irrational Attractions or Psychological Instabilities).

Your help does not have to be free. The Players might lose Hero Points for missing clues or straying from the story. See the **Standard Award Guidelines** later in this chapter for more information.

## Now They See It, Now They Don't

Keep the game fun by keeping the Players guessing. A clever GM once created a villain called the Deceiver who fooled the heroes into thinking he was the Joker. The Deceiver even carried out his crimes dressed as the Clown Prince of Crime. When the heroes moved in to capture him, they were totally unprepared for his Illusion Powers.

Look at your old adventures. If you notice a pattern in them, it may be time to shake your Players up. Throw in a helpful NPC or a seemingly helpful NPC who creates more problems for the heroes than s/he solves. Lead the Characters on a wild goose chase while the villains trash their headquarters. Have a villain assume the identity of one of the heroes or even the city police commissioner.

Players quickly recognize patterns in your adventures. If you always give long descriptions for only dangerous scenes, they will soon recognize the dangerous situations before the villains can spring their attack. If the adventure always begins with a phone call or a body flying through the headquarters window, the Players will soon grow tired of these clichés. Even dice rolling can be spotted and noted. Nothing is quite as enticing as a few false dice rolls, especially if you smile at the “results” and say nothing.

## Surprising Developments

The GM is not always in control. Sometimes, the Characters overcome your best-laid plans and capture the villains in the first encounter. Your whole story is in shreds and you still have an entire afternoon to fill. Now what do you do?

Don't be annoyed by the new developments, even if they make more work for you. Call a break in the action and give yourself some time to think. Does the villain have friends or henchmen who will attempt to free him/her from the heroes' clutches? Perhaps you might decide to suspend the Recovery Rules just this once and allow him/her a Desperation Recovery Check. Will his plans go on without him? Perhaps the villain was *really* working for some other, more powerful villain who now has to step in and take over personally. In any case, be sure to award the Players their Standard Award for the first adventure, even though it did not work out the way you envisioned it.

## III. Don't Panic

### Gamemastering the Unknown

After you have been a Gamemaster for awhile, you will run into situations which are not covered in the rules. This may throw you into a temporary panic. Try to stay calm, since panic is no fun. This section will give you some general guidelines to follow when weird situations occur.

## The Fundamental Rule

Have faith in yourself. Make a decision and get on with the game. Do not spend time arguing with Players about the decision; get the adventure moving again. You can spend time after the adventure discussing your decision with the Players.

Think of it this way: Batman is embedded in a huge block of ice that was created by an evil villain. Does the thought balloon read “*Gee, my chances of escaping should be better than this!*” with a pouting Batman pictured beneath? It certainly does not. It probably reads: “*I have got to get out of this . . . right . . . now!*” with Batman struggling to break free. The latter is more in keeping with the DC tradition of heroes. Try to keep the adventure moving the same way.

## Skills vs. Powers

There will be times when a Skill will come into conflict with the effect of a Power. Skills can negate the RAPs of certain Powers. Only Powers that mimic natural Opposing factors can be affected.

### When Will a Skill Negate the RAPs of a Power?

1. When a hero uses the Escape Artist Subskill of Thief to free himself from a block of ice created by another Character's Power. The APs of Ice Production mimics the Opposing Value for normal restraints.

2. When a hero uses Persuasion to try to neutralize the effect of Phobia or Control placed on another Character. Again, the APs of the Power substitutes for the natural Opposing Value of being Persuaded.

3. When a hero uses his/her Tracking Subskill to find an Invisible villain hiding in a room. The APs of Invisibility are used as the Opposing Value of the condition of the trail.

### When Won't a Skill Negate the RAPs of a Power?

1. A hero cannot use Charisma to oppose a Phobia or Empathy Power attack on himself. The Phobia Power is used as the Acting Value and therefore cannot be affected.

2. A hero cannot use the Detective Skill to analyze and find a weak point in an opponent's Skin Armor Power. Detective does not give the Character the ability to analyze for weak points, just for clues (see the *Character Handbook*).

Skill versus Power effect is resolved on the Action and Result Tables. The APs of the Skill are the Acting and Effect Value, and the RAPs of the Power are the Opposing and Resistance Values. Any successful Action Check negates all the effects of the Power on the Character using the Skill.

For example: Changeling of the New Titans has been successfully attacked by Phobia of the New Brotherhood of Evil, using (logically enough) the Phobia Power. He now believes that the Titans are his most fearsome enemies in the universe.

Nightwing tries to Persuade him by using his Charisma. If Nightwing gets a successful result (that is, he gains positive RAPs) using his APs of Charisma as the Acting and Effect Values and the RAPs of the Phobia Power as the Opposing and Resistance Values, then Changeling will no longer believe that Nightwing is a horrible monster. Changeling will still, however, believe that the other Titans are enemies to be feared.

## Powers vs. Powers

When two similar Powers come into conflict, compare the RAPs of each Power to determine the outcome.

For example: Mudman is using his Power of Earth Control to patch a break in a dam. He gets a total of 11 RAPs. The villain, Destructo, tries to use his Telekinesis Power on the earth that Mudman is Controlling and move it away from the dam. Subtract Destructo's RAPs from Mudman's RAPs. The result is the number of RAPs that are usable by the Character with the greater RAPs. If Destructo's RAPs came to 5 APs, Mudman would subtract 5 from his original 11, which would leave him with 6 RAPs of Earth Control.

## Skills vs. Skills

Like Powers vs. Powers, when two Skills are being used against each other, subtract the smaller number of RAPs from the larger number of RAPs; the remaining RAPs are the RAPs of the action.

## Combining Actions

When Characters want to combine Actions, you should remember that the APs of Attributes, Skills or Powers are not additive. A Strength of 7 and a Strength of 7 is not the same as a Strength of 14. See **Chapter Two** for more information on how APs are combined.

If Players want to combine the efforts of their Characters for a Dice Action, use the *Team Attack Chart* to reduce the Opposing and Resistance Value for the action (see **Combat Maneuvers** in **Chapter Three**).

If the action is Automatic, like lifting a weight, the action becomes a Dice Action, with Team Attack bonuses. The highest Effect Value of the group is used for both the Acting and Effect Values. The Opposing and Resistance Values are the APs of the action. Any positive RAPs means they are successful.

For example: Three Characters, all with 6 APs of STR, are trying to lift a rock that weighs 8 APs. The OV/RV is 8/8 (the rock's weight). The Team Attack bonus gives them +1 Column Shift. Even with the bonus, the Characters need to roll a 13 or better to lift the rock.

A Character must have the appropriate Attribute, Power, or Skill with APs within three Columns of the APs of the most powerful Character in the combination, or else his/her efforts make no contribution. For example, a Character with a STR of 6 APs could not contribute to a combined lifting action with a Character with a STR of 14, because 6 and 14 are four Columns apart on the Action Table. The amount of contribution which a STR 6 Character would make when combining a lifting action with a STR 14 Character is negligible.

## Using the Universal Modifiers Chart

The *Universal Modifiers Chart* is explained in **Chapter One**. Here are some examples of how it works during actual play:

### Situations of Increased Opposing Value

In some situations, if a Character is attempting to lift or hold an object, the Opposing Value may be increased because the object is slippery and, therefore harder to grab.

Modifier Example Chart One

Slipperiness	OV Modifier
Melting Ice Cube	4 (Difficult)
Greased Pig	+2 (Difficult)
NASA Teflon (.004 friction coefficient)	8 (Extreme)

Notice that the description of the modifier for the ice cube and the greased pig is the same, but the modifiers are different. This is done because picking up an ice cube is an Automatic Action, while the pig can Oppose the attempt to pick it up.

### Situations of Increased Resistance Value

Sometimes an object may be particularly resistant to certain forms of attack. The GM has the option of increasing the Resistance Value of the object. Remember the object has the same BODY even though the Resistance Value has been increased. A laser beam is less effective when fired at a reflective surface. The surface is no harder to hit, so the Opposing Value is not increased.

Modifier Example Chart Two

Situation	RV Modifier
Laser fired at highly-polished steel	+2 (Difficult)
Laser fired at a mirror	+4 (Extreme)
Laser fired at a new STAR Labs polished laser resistant metal	+7 (Beyond the Limit)

## IV. Creating An Adventure

You are reading a DC comic book when suddenly an idea hits you: what if our role-playing group had to face Darkseid? You can almost see parts of the story falling into place, but the picture is not complete. More than just a good idea is needed to tell a story. But what?

This section is concerned with creating good adventures that have a plot, Characters, and a sense of fun. While the Players and GM work together to create this adventure, the GM provides the *framework* that holds it together. A framework operates on two levels: the framework for an adventure (see **Running An Adventure**), and creating a framework for the campaign in which the Characters will live.

An *adventure* is a series of connected Encounters involving one plot by a villain or villains, like the plot in **Exposed!** Your group of Players may be able to finish an adventure in a few hours, or it may take several get-togethers to complete. A *campaign*, on the other hand, is a series of loosely connected adventures that lead to a specific goal, like rescuing Mister Miracle. Once you have gone through a number of campaigns and adventures, you and your group will have created an entire world in which to play your Characters.

### A. The Elements of an Adventure

An adventure consists of eight elements: Background, Non-Player Characters, Encounters, the Timeline, linking, balancing, Troubleshooting, and Subplots. Subplots are discussed at length in **Chapter Eight: Subplots**.

#### 1. Background

The *background* is the main story line; in fact, the background is the adventure. It could be the villain's scheme, a natural disaster, or a crime. All the events that lead up to the beginning of the adventure should be detailed here, as should the ultimate aims of the villains. Basically, background is the story before it is put into game terms.

The hardest part of creating the background for your adventure is thinking of what to do. The easiest way to find ideas for good adventures is to simply look around you. DC Comics and your local newspapers are good sources for ideas, as are science fiction and fantasy books. Once you've developed the idea for your story, concentrate on three parts: the villains involved, the goals of the major villains, and the events leading up to the adventure.

#### Events Before the Adventure

It is important to know the history of the plan. Has the major villain worked a long time on setting it up? Has it been revealed to anyone besides the bad guys? By building a history, you can be more flexible within the adventure itself. If the Players defeat the villain too soon, it gives you something to fall back on when you need to quickly create a logical extension of the adventure.

For example: *In today's adventure, the Terminator and Cheshire have been hired by Brother Blood to steal the data banks from the Titans' Kilotrax computer. Brother Blood's involvement in the assassination of a United Nations diplomat is documented in these data banks. This evidence could jeopardize the acceptance of Brother Blood's country, Zandia, into the U.N. The Terminator plans to send the Titans on a wild-goose chase to catch a gang of bank robbers while he steals the files from Titans' Tower.*

*The bank robbers controlled by Brother Blood are ordinary humans, but each of them is armed with an extremely powerful pulsed-laser weapon.*

Since Brother Blood, the Terminator, and Cheshire are all DC Characters that have long histories in the DC Universe, their statistics can be found in the *Background/Roster Book*. Any GM who wishes to use these villains can simply find the appropriate issues of *The New Titans* at his/her local comic book store to see how they operate, and so on.

## 2. Non-Player Characters

### The Major Villain(s)

The most important Non-Player Character in any adventure is the *major villain*. A major villain is the leader and controller of the rest of the hostile NPCs that the heroes encounter in the adventure. It is his/her plan that the other criminals are following. Sometimes, there will be a group of major villains working together equally. In this case, the group is considered the major villain.

If the villain you are using is from the DC Comics, his/her statistics may be listed in the *Background/Roster Book*, or one of numerous sourcebooks sold separately. If you are making him/her up from scratch, first imagine what s/he is like, what Powers, Skills and Abilities s/he has, and what Drawbacks or Limitations s/he might have. Try to think of his/her costume, and the way s/he carries him/herself: does s/he swagger with self-inflated ego, or is s/he slimy and kind of creepy? The Motivations for villains are found on page 10 of the *Character Handbook*.

After you have a rough idea of what the villain is like, you can design him/her like you would a heroic Character. Complete instructions for designing a villain can be found in the *Character Handbook*. Remember to balance your villains with your Players' Characters (see **Balancing the Adventure**).

Once the villain is established, try to mesh your original story with his/her personality. Certain villains will go after certain goals due to their Motivations or certain Drawbacks. The Joker, for instance, has an Irrational Attraction to practical jokes, and the Riddler always leaves riddles as clues. Major villains could want money, rare objects, power, or revenge. The final goal of their plan could be obscured by many false leads and diversions. One part of the plan could hinge on successfully completing a seemingly unrelated situation.

### Minor NPCs

You do not need to go into as much detail for every NPC in the adventure. Start with the NPCs closest to the major villains. If they have special Abilities, give them Attribute, Skill, and Power statistics where appropriate. If they are normal humans, assume that they have all Attributes rated at 2 APs. Exceptional humans such as soldiers, scientists, or doctors, may be given 3s or 4s at the GM's discretion.

Since you have already thought about your major villain, you should now be thinking about what type of flunkies s/he would want working for him/her. The Joker is more likely to have street thugs with warped senses of humor working for him, while Brother Blood surrounds himself with religious zealots. Is your villain afraid of independent thinkers, or might s/he be afraid of betrayal? Does s/he hire smart, streetwise punks or lumbering strongmen? You can use thoughts like these when designing the basic characteristics of other NPCs.

Once the NPCs are created, each of them should be rated for his/her level of hostility or agreeability towards the heroes (see **Chapter Four: Character Interaction**), as well as how much information s/he knows. Characters making Character Interaction or Control attempts may try to find out this information.

Remember to design any special equipment or weapons that the major villain and his/her NPCs might have.

### Recurring NPCs

Besides the villains and their henchpersons, there can be other NPCs involved in the story. For example, Troia's husband Terry Long, Superman's sweetheart Lois Lane, or Batman's ally Commissioner Gordon might be NPCs in an adventure. NPCs can include the heroes' friends, major outside Characters that are allied to neither the heroes nor the villains, and the villains themselves. If a Subplot is being run within the adventure (see **Chapter Eight: Subplots**), all of its NPCs should be worked out. All Attributes, Powers, Skills, Advantages, and Drawbacks should be worked out for recurring NPCs.

For example, two NPC scientists might be created for the scenario described previously: *One of the scientists, Mike*

*Martin, is under the control of Brother Blood and will help the Terminator and Cheshire to bypass the Titans' security systems and break into the computer. The other scientist, Chuck Polta, suspects the first, but has no hard evidence against him.*

Other NPCs in this scenario might include the guards at the bank, innocent bystanders, the bank robbers, and Brother Blood's Purifiers.

## 3. Encounters

*Encounters* are the logical breakdown of the adventure. They include the fights between the heroes and the villains, time spent searching for clues, and playing out Subplots (see **Chapter Eight**). Each Encounter has an interior structure which helps the GM keep things straight. Encounters can be broken down into four components: the Set Up, Players' Information, GM's Information, and Maps and other charts.

### The Set Up

The *Set Up* for each Encounter should consist of notes on the situation that the Characters will face. The GM should ask him/herself how the scene could change because of what the group has done previously. You must also anticipate the possibility of there being several different approaches to an Encounter; each different approach will change how the Players see and experience the Encounter.

For example: *When the Titans approach the bank that Brother Blood's henchmen are robbing, they will encounter a different situation if they come in through the back door than if they come in through the roof. They will also change the Encounter if they approach the building silently and enter using a key they discovered in a previous Encounter. The villains might then be surprised, and the elaborate trap they planned will be useless.*

### Players' Information

The *Players' Information* section is reserved for descriptions of what the Players' Characters can see, hear, and smell when they first come upon the Encounter. This is a crucial section and will call upon all of your role-playing ability to make the situation seem believable and real. For the sample adventure, the GM might write:

*As you enter the bank lobby, you hear the quiet hum of machinery. There is a smell you can't quite identify, something like sulfur. You notice a small flickering light in the otherwise dark room.*

Begin by telling the Players what their Characters will normally notice first about their surroundings. Focus on details. Once the description has been read, it is the Players' turn to react to the situation. They might move immediately, ask questions, or confer among themselves. Remember that the villains will not wait for a plan to be formulated. If the group hesitates, have the villains start things moving.

### GM's Information

What you know as the GM is put into the *GM's Information* section. These notes are important, because it is easy to forget details like the placement of the villains and their strategy. An example of GM's Information for the sample Encounter might go something like this:

*If the villains' lookout warns them of the Titans' approach, the villains will kill the lights, but will keep the generators for their laser operating. They are using the laser to cut through the bank vault's door, so the room smells like sulfur. Brother Blood's henchmen are in positions behind the generators, armed with poison gas guns.*

### Gas Guns

[BODY: 3, Fog: 5, Poison Touch: 5, R#: 5]

Limitation: Fog and Poison Touch work in conjunction with one another as poison gas.

Any statistics that are unique to the specific Encounter, whether for innocent bystanders, particular NPCs, or equipment (like the Gas Guns) should be listed with the GM's Information for ease of reference.

## Maps and Charts

It is essential that the GM map out the locations where the Encounter will take place. You might want to sketch the floor plans of a building or the features of an open landscape. Maps are invaluable to conducting an Encounter. They can show you where the heroes are in relation to the villains, and where each can go next.

You do not have to number and identify each building on a map, but if you draw up plans of the places where action might occur, you will find it easier to plan what the villains and NPCs will do next. You might also want to include floor plan sketches of any buildings in the area that the heroes might visit during the adventure. These sketches can be saved and reused in later adventures.

The maps might even help you visualize new NPCs that live or work in this area.

## 4. The Timeline

A *timeline* is a listing of the events as they would happen if the Player Characters did not interfere. In other words, it is a quick look into a possible future. This information will make it easier for you to change things once the game gets going.

The **DC HEROES RPG** is a very time-dependent game. The villains will not wait at the scene of a crime if the heroes are caught in rush hour traffic. A villain will probably have more than one part to his/her plan, and the time s/he requires to execute the plan may take days, hours, or only minutes. Time pressure will add to the excitement of the game. If a nuclear bomb is going to vaporize Manhattan twenty years from now, the heroes might as well shampoo the dog before they start to look for it. Continuing the previous example:

### ***Brother Blood's Timeline: May 21***

- 11:00 AM *Bank robbers take up positions.*
- 11:15 AM *Bank robbers attack bank.*
- 11:25 AM *Bank robbers intentionally bungle attempt, take hostages, and alert authorities.*
- 11:35 AM *Titans summoned to the scene.*
- 11:40 AM *The Terminator and Cheshire sneak onto Titans' Island.*
- 11:50 AM *Bank robbers start shooting hostages.*
- 11:55 AM *Bank robbers wire building for demolition.*
- 12:00 Noon *The Terminator and Cheshire successfully sneak into Titans' computer room.*
- 12:20 PM *Data banks are transferred to Brother Blood's personal mainframe computer via phone lines.*
- 12:25 PM *Bank robbers blow up bank building to cover their escape.*
- 12:30 PM *The Terminator and Cheshire plant explosive charges, then leave Titans' Tower.*
- 12:35 PM *Titans' Tower explodes and falls into the East River.*

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*In the adventure, the Titans go after the bank robbers, but are alerted that the Terminator and Cheshire will attack their computer. On the timeline, the GM has set the invasion of Titans' Tower for 12:00 noon. At that precise moment, the Titans are mopping up the bank robbers. They are alerted. Can they make it back in time?*

On the timeline, the GM has allowed the Terminator 10 minutes to break in and steal the data banks. It looks good that the Titans will be able to make it back in time to stop him. Without a timeline, the GM would have to guess when the Terminator and Cheshire would make their attack.

## 5. Linking Encounters

There must be a logical reason for the heroes to move from one Encounter to another; the Encounters should not be random events, but should flow naturally one to another. This can be accomplished in several ways, but clues and NPC Information are fairly easy links for an adventure.

## Clues

*Clues* are usually designed by the GM before the Encounter begins. This process is called a clue structure. A full explanation of a clue structure is in the *Character Handbook* under the entry for the Detective Skill.

However, all clues do not have to be designed this way. Players may uncover the clue themselves, without the help of their Characters' Powers or Skills. For example, you might require the Players to solve one of the Riddler's riddles themselves, rather than just giving them the answer due to a dice roll. Be careful when you include Riddler-type clues. Clues that are too hard for your Players to solve will frustrate both you and the Players.

## NPC Information

*NPC Information* is what a captured villain or an innocent bystander might know. This information can be uncovered by using the Character Interaction rules found in **Chapter Four**, or by using the Charisma Skill. In a pinch, an NPC might even volunteer information, but in most cases, the Players' Characters will have to ask NPCs for information. They will rarely offer it on their own.

The information needed by the Characters to continue the adventure should be relatively easy to find, otherwise the game will grind to a halt. Don't give detective-type clues to Characters who don't have the Detective Skill, unless it is obvious that the Players will be able to figure it out themselves. Be considerate. If finding a clue requires a special Skill or Power, make sure the Characters are appropriately equipped.

## 6. Balancing the Adventure

A balanced adventure matches the heroes' Abilities with the task they are facing. The adventure should pose some uncertainty or risk, otherwise it will not be exciting. The heroes should have a good chance at succeeding. If the task is nearly impossible, the adventure will only be frustrating for your Players. This section will give you some tips on how to balance your adventures.

### **The "15" Rule**

An unmodified roll of 15 should be sufficient for any crucial task in the adventure. A Player must be able to roll 15 or better *without* spending Hero Points to increase the AV or EV of his/her Character. A 15 or better occurs about one out of five times, or 20% of the time.

In these situations, a Character with Hero Points will usually spend them, while a Character who has none still has a slim chance of succeeding. If the necessary roll is greater than 15, you are counting on the Player to recognize that the roll is crucial, and his/her Character will have and spend the number of Hero Points needed to succeed. This is not always wise.

Of course, there will be times when you design an adventure which suspends the "15" Rule. That's fine, as long as you have developed a way in your Troubleshooting section of keeping the adventure going if the heroes fail in the task.

### **The One-Shot Warning Rule**

Players deserve to know if a critical task may only be attempted once. If Players do not know that such a task is a one-shot deal, many will save their Characters' Hero Points, assuming that someone else can try the task, or that they may try it again.

If you decide to put the warning in the form of clues or riddles, you should be prepared for the Characters' failing the critical task. The more straightforward the warning, the greater the chance that the heroes will succeed at the task.

### **Balancing Combat**

Combat can be difficult to balance because of the three different basic types of fighting: Physical, Mental, and Mystical. The Players may have a group of heroes who are Physically and Mystically very tough, but whose Mental defenses are weak. What if they meet a group of villains who have strong Mental Powers?

To answer this question, you have to run through the combat. When running through a mock combat between your group of Characters and the major villains, do the following:

1. Try to have each Character attacked through his/her weakest area, whether Physical, Mental, or Mystical.
2. If the numbers of Characters on a side differ, make logical choices for Multi-Attacks and Team Attacks.
3. Make the attacks in strict order of Initiative ratings, without rolling the dice.
4. Assume that all combatants spend no Hero Points.
5. Assume that all Characters roll all 15s.

Once you have run two phases of combat, put the heroes and villains into the three following categories: unhurt, injured, and unconscious. If a Character has taken no damage, s/he is *unhurt*, if s/he has been damaged but is still conscious, s/he is *injured*, and if s/he is unconscious, s/he is *unconscious*.

If you want an equal battle and it does not last two phases, then you will have to adjust the Abilities of the villains. Raise them if the villains lost horribly, and lower them if the bad guys won easily. Then try the test combat again.

For example, five heroes from the People's Intergalactic SWAT Team take on four nefarious villains from the Hit Squad. After two phases of test combat, the "scorecard" reads something like this:

P.I.S.T.:
0 unhurt, 4 injured, 1 unconscious
Hit Squad:
1 unhurt, 1 injured, 2 unconscious

You use the scorecard to adjust the adventure by adjusting the Hero Point total of the villains as follows:

**Unhurt Heroes:** For every unhurt hero, pick a villain or villains to be his/her opponent. Give these villains the same number of Hero Points as the unhurt hero, plus bonus Hero Points. Find out how many Hero Points the villain would have to expend to damage the hero, assuming a roll of 15, and add a bonus of five times this number to the villain's total Hero Points.

**Injured Heroes:** There is no Hero Point adjustment for injured heroes.

**Unconscious Heroes:** There is no Hero Point adjustment for unconscious heroes.

**Unhurt Villains:** For every unhurt villain, pick a hero or heroes who will most likely equal him. Find out how many Hero Points the hero would have to expend to damage the hero, assuming a roll of 15, and subtract five times this number from the hero's Hero Point total. This is the number of Hero Points for the villain. If the number winds up being negative, give the villain no Hero Points.

**Injured Villains:** Give each injured villain a number of Hero Points equal to the average number of Hero Points for the heroes, unless the villain has been assigned Hero Points as explained previously under *Unhurt Heroes*.

**Unconscious Villains:** If there are more unconscious villains than heroes, give the villains the average number of the heroes' Hero Points plus 10%. If there are more unconscious heroes than villains, give the villain the average number minus 20%.

## A Warning

This system should not be applied blindly. The **DC HEROES RPG** is too varied a system to have a simple, clear-cut balancing rule. Common sense will have to be used, but the balancing system should help to even out combats.

## 7. Troubleshooting

**Troubleshooting** an adventure means looking for things that might go wrong in the adventure before they happen and anticipating ways to solve these potential problems. Look over the adventure and try to find any loopholes. Could the Characters accidentally miss a vital Encounter? Might they reach a point where they need information that they missed? Is there a

chance that they will jump from the first Encounter to the last Encounter in ten minutes? Are they going to be misled by a clue and move completely away from the point? Whenever you can answer "yes" to a question like these, you must make adjustments to the Encounters to eliminate potential problems.

## V. Standard Awards

### A. Guidelines

Adventure modules published by Mayfair Games give you the Standard Award for each adventure. However, when you are running your own adventures, you will need to use the following *Standard Award Guidelines* to calculate the Standard Award for each adventure.

In determining a Standard Award, there are four aspects of the adventure that need to be considered: the Level of Opposition, Critical Points for completing the scenario, the Area of Consequence of the villain's plot, and the Severity of the scheme. The following sections describe how to assess each of these areas.

### The Level of Opposition

The first step in arriving at the Standard Award for the adventure is to determine the *Level of Opposition* that the Characters will face in overcoming the villain in combat. To calculate this, you should look at your adventure and set up the last battle between the villains and the heroes. You should then estimate how many phases it would take for either one side or the other to win. Once this is done, apply your conclusions as follows:

#### **No Match** (*Superman versus the Penguin*)

The heroes are expected to win in 1 to 2 phases. The Villains have no chance to escape. **Hero Points: 0**

#### **Inferior** (*The Flash versus Captain Boomerang*)

The heroes are expected to win in 3 to 5 phases. The villains have some chance to escape. **Hero Points: 15**

#### **Equal** (*Starfire versus Blackfire*)

There is an equal chance for either the heroes or the villains to win. Both sides have equal chances of escaping. **Hero Points: 20**

#### **Superior** (*Green Arrow versus Major Force*)

The villains are expected to win in 3 to 5 phases. The heroes have some chance of escaping. **Hero Points: 25**

#### **Overwhelming** (*Manhunter versus Darkseid*)

The villains are expected to win in 1 to 2 phases. The heroes don't have a chance of escaping. **Hero Points: 40**

### Critical Points

The next step is awarding points for *Critical Points* that the Characters must accomplish in order to get from one Encounter to the next, or a task for which failure could cause the adventure to end. Critical Points should *not* include defeating the villains in combat (because after all, isn't that the whole point?). These tasks could be clues that must be found and interpreted at the scene of the crime, thugs that have to be interrogated, or even a chasm that must be crossed to get to the villain's mountain hideout.

The major criteria in deciding if a task is critical is whether or not there is an alternative for the Player Characters that will put them back on track if they fail in the task.

For example, in the Titans adventure already described, discovering the Terminator's scheme to invade Titans' Tower would be a Critical Point. If the Titans fail to do so, the GM would have the option of blowing up the Tower and having the Player

Characters investigate the explosion. Finding out about Brother Blood's involvement in the plot might be another Critical Point for this adventure.

An adventure might have no Critical Points, one Critical Point, or several Critical Points. As a GM, you should be careful not to weigh down your adventures with *too* many Critical Points, as it may become impossible for the Players to finish the adventure. Be flexible in your adventure design, reserving Critical Points for truly important events.

The difficulty of Critical Points should be evaluated according to the following chart. Assume that the Character who is most likely to succeed in the task (that is, the hero with the most APs of the Attribute, Skill, or Power needed to perform the task) will make the attempt without spending any Hero Points. Find the Success Number of the Dice Action and compare it to the Chart Below, assigning the appropriate Hero Points. If a Critical Point does not require a Dice Action, it is considered "Miscellaneous."

Difficulty	Success Number	Hero Points
Easy	3-4	1
Seldom Fails	5-7-9	2
Even Odds	11-13	3
Seldom Succeeds	15-18	8
Long Shot	21+	20
Miscellaneous	N/A	5

## Area of Consequence

Hero Points are also awarded based on how large an *Area of Consequence* will be affected if the villain succeeds in his/her plan. Awards based on area are as follows:

Area Of Consequence	Hero Points
Personal	0
City/Local	3
State/Large Portion of a Country	4
Nationwide	5
International	7
Worldwide	15
Multiple Worlds (2 to 25)	20
Galactic	25
Universal*	50

\*When we say Universal, we mean *Universal*; nothing less than the *Crisis On Infinite Earths*.

## Severity

The final evaluation for awarding Hero Points is how *Severe* the consequences will be if the villain's plan succeeds.

**Fatal:** The villain's scheme could result in the deliberate deaths of innocents, such as a town being destroyed by a mystical storm that kills the inhabitants, the assassination of a public figure, or blowing up the world. **Hero Points 15**

**Permanent Nonfatal:** The effects of the villain's plan will remain unless extraordinary action is taken to undo it, such as establishing a totalitarian government, wrecking a bridge that must be rebuilt from scratch, or framing a hero for a crime s/he did not commit. **Hero Points: 10**

**Temporary Nonfatal:** The villain's plot will eventually disappear over a period of time, or the effects will be reversed, such as a bank robbery (since the money will eventually be returned by insurance companies), making the heroes look like idiots on television, or knocking a hole in a prison wall that can be repaired without rebuilding the entire jail. **Hero Points: 5**

## Example of a Standard Award

Once all four of the areas of the adventure have been evaluated, add all of the Hero Points awarded in each area together. This sum is the total Standard Award for the adventure.

To demonstrate how this system works in an adventure, we will calculate the total Standard Award for the Titans adventure that has already been described.

**1. Level of Opposition:** The final battle should be the Titans versus the Terminator and Cheshire at Titans' Tower. Despite their prowess, the Terminator and Cheshire will probably be overwhelmed by the Titans' greater numbers. Therefore, the Level of Opposition is Inferior (15 Hero Points).

**2. Critical Points:** The Titans have two Critical Points: finding out that the Terminator and Cheshire are breaking into Titans' Tower, and discovering Brother Blood's involvement with the pair. Since it does not require a Dice Action to discover the break in at the Tower (the Players must deduce the fact from clues), the first Critical Point is Miscellaneous (5 Hero Points). Accessing the computer to find out what files the Terminator was stealing will lead the Titans straight to Brother Blood, so the second Critical Point is Easy (1 Hero Point). The total for Critical Points adds up to 6 Hero Points.

**3. Area of Consequence:** Since the point of Brother Blood's scheme is to smooth Zandia's entrance into the U.N., the Area of Consequence for this adventure is International (7 Hero Points).

**4. Severity:** Since Titans' Tower would be destroyed and Zandia would enter the U.N. if Brother Blood's plot succeeds, both of which would be extremely difficult to undo, the Severity is Permanent Nonfatal (10 Hero Points).

The final Standard Award for this adventure would look something like this:

### Level of Opposition:

Inferior ..... 15

### Critical Points:

Discovering Titans' Tower Break-In

*Miscellaneous* ..... 5

Uncovering Brother Blood

*Easy* ..... 1

### Area of Consequence:

International ..... 7

### Severity:

Permanent Nonfatal ..... 10

**Total Standard Award ..... 38**

## B. Distributing Standard Awards

In the **DC HEROES RPG**, experience is measured in Hero Points. Hero Points are gained through Characters' actions and by events which occur during the adventure. Once a Player has begun playing his/her Character's crimefighting career, s/he can receive Hero Points for five kinds of achievements: participating in adventures, role-playing the Character well, saving the lives of innocent bystanders, thwarting the plans of the villains, and role-playing Subplots (see **Chapter Eight**). A sixth award, the miscellaneous award, may be granted by the GM on rare occasions, like not entering Killing Combat in a desperate situation. Each of these accomplishments is worth a single Standard Award per adventure.

As described previously in this chapter, an adventure is defined by a single plot by a villain or group of villains. Once the plot has either succeeded or been foiled, that adventure is over; then the Players are awarded Hero Points. An adventure may require several gaming sessions to resolve, and the Standard Awards should not be given out until the entire adventure is over.

The following situations can occur in any adventure. Each situation is worth a single Standard Award. The Standard Award is simply a benchmark and is subject to change from adventure to adventure. Participating in a battle against The Toyman should not count as much as going up against Darkseid. Therefore, a sliding scale for Standard Awards is created to judge each adventure on its own merits (see **Standard Award Guidelines**). A Standard Award can range from 5 to 500 Hero Points, depending on the villains you send up against your Players' heroes.

Each Player receives Hero Points equal to one Standard Award for *each* of the following categories that his/her Character fulfills.

### Important Note About Killing Combat

**Note:** Unless your group is playing in a more realistic genre (see **Appendix A: Advanced Rules**), a Player whose Character initiates Killing Combat forfeits *all* Hero Points that s/he would have received for the adventure. If a Player's Character enters Killing Combat only *after* s/he has been attacked in Killing Combat, s/he only forfeits one-half of the Hero Points that s/he would have received for the adventure.

## Standard Award Categories

### Participation

Any Player whose Character takes part in the adventure receives the Standard Award for this category. If a Player Character is run as an NPC by the GM due to the absence of the Player, the GM may opt not to give this award.

**Note:** Players who consistently forfeit the Participation award may be asked by the GM to not participate in future adventures.

### Role-Playing

A Character in the DC Universe will have friends, colleagues, and a persistent foe with whom to interact. If the Player's role-playing is consistent with the Character's personality, Drawbacks, and Motivations, the Player receives the Standard Award for this category.

If the Player's actions violate his/her Character's Motivations, or if the Character seems to undergo sudden personality changes, the Player should not receive this Standard Award.

Players who are always on the lookout for ways to add new facets to their Characters, or who role play consistently, even though their actions could place their Characters in jeopardy may be eligible for Standard Award bonuses. Any exceptional creativity in role-playing should be rewarded by the GM, who may choose to award any amount from 1 Hero Point to one full Standard Award as s/he sees fit.

### Saving Innocent Bystanders

If the conflict between the heroes and the villains endangers the lives of innocent bystanders, heroes should always attempt to save the bystanders. If Player Characters succeed and save innocent bystanders, this award is given.

Only those NPCs who blunder into the action by mistake are considered innocent bystanders. If Metallo plans to blow up Metropolis, for instance, and Superman thwarts him, the citizens of the city are *not* considered innocent bystanders.

### Thwarting the Villain

This award is given to all Players whose Characters foil the plan of the villain or villains. The award is given at the end of the adventure in which the plot is finally crushed. The villain or villains do not necessarily need to be captured for the Players to receive this award: some villains in the DC Universe habitually escape capture, even though their plans have been wrecked.

### Subplots

Role-playing a Subplot is worth one Standard Award, or fifteen Hero Points, whichever is greater.

All Players whose Characters were involved in a Subplot receive the award for role-playing a Subplot (see **Chapter Eight**).



### Miscellaneous

The GM may give any Player an extra award from 1 Hero Point up to one Standard Award for any heroic actions that are not covered in the other categories. For example, capturing an arch-criminal who has evaded justice for an extended period of time, or inventing an ingenious solution to the perfect death trap are heroic activities deserving of praise. This award is completely at the discretion of the GM and does not have to be given out at all.

For more information on Standard Awards and their use in Character growth and experience, see the *Character Handbook*.

# Subplots

A *Subplot* tells a story which is secondary to the main adventure but important to the Players' Characters. Subplots give Players a chance to deal with the other aspects of their Characters, apart from bashing villains: Raven convincing Cyborg to have a talk with his father, Batman just trying to get some sleep in a Gotham infested with thugs, and Donna Troy getting married are just a few examples. Subplots can be light-hearted or serious, short stories or continuing sagas. Subplots are the group's chance to have their Characters involved in the same sorts of stories which make DC Comics so interesting. Subplots allow the story lines in a campaign to be developed between the GM and the Players in a way which is unusual in role-playing games. This chapter discusses the creation of Subplots and gives GMs and Players hints on how to run them in an ongoing campaign.

Subplots get Players to speculate about their Characters' personalities and to initiate new story situations, rather than just react to situations the GM poses for them. Once the Players begin to use Subplots, they will have more fun having their Characters interact with NPCs. There is an additional incentive for the use of Subplots, also: if the Players role play the Subplots well, they will be awarded extra Hero Points (see **Standard Award Guidelines in Chapter Seven**).

Subplots invite the Players to do a lot of role-playing. If the GM and the Players have spent time preparing a Subplot, the Characters will become heroic personalities rather than merely fighting machines grinding through villain after villain.

Using Subplots forms a unique creative position: the GM becomes half writer of exciting adventures and half biographer of Characters who have some life of their own. Get the ideas into play and enjoy watching the story being acted out and growing with each new session.

## I. Gamemastering Subplots

This section will give GMs instructions on how to plan and execute Subplots before and during the course of play. Hints for Players on their end of Subplots are contained in **II. Playing Subplots**, later in this chapter.

### A. Initiating Subplots

Remember that the Players' Characters are the forces of good. They tackle those tasks that ordinary individuals and the government cannot. Heroic Characters are independent "trouble shooters" who follow the action. If the suggested Subplot would severely restrict a Character's ability to be a hero, or if it would take him/her out of play entirely, the Subplot cannot be used without modification. A Subplot's purpose is to enhance the Character's role as a hero in the game, not to remove him/her from the game.

When a Player has an idea for a Subplot, discuss it with him/her to see if it is playable. If the story idea is complex, take a little extra time in advance to work it into the campaign.

### B. Questions For The Player

If the Player has only a vague idea for a Subplot, or if s/he has developed one portion of a Subplot, you can help to develop the idea further by asking the following questions:

#### 1. What is the focus of the Subplot?

This is the central event or issue in the Subplot, the one the story revolves around. Batman trying to get some sleep, Dick Grayson trying to find Donna Troy's parents, Donna Troy getting married — each of these is the focus of its Subplot, the element which connects all of the events in the Subplot.

#### 2. What brings the focal issue into play?

The event may be a continuation of a previous Subplot, or it may be a totally new episode in the life of the Character. If it is new, how does the event get started?

For example, Batman's Subplot started because he was exhausted from so many nights as Batman and too many days as Bruce Wayne — his previous adventures had forced him to be awake almost all of the time.

#### 3. Who else is involved in the event?

This does not have to include an existing NPC or Player Character. The answer may be more general, e.g. the pharmacist, the daughter of a reputed mobster, the aging halfback of the Gotham Goliaths, or a cute professor at the university.

In the wedding of Donna Troy, dozens of Characters were involved. All of the New Titans except Raven were at the wedding. Many of the old Teen Titans attended, and several other DC heroes were present. The wedding was the focal event of the Subplot, and it was the central element for the Subplots of several other Characters as well. Most Subplots, of course, will be less elaborate than Donna Troy's wedding.

#### 4. What are the Character's feelings? Does the hero know how other Characters might feel?

The Subplot's focus could be an exciting new development the hero wants the world to know about, such as Donna Troy's wedding, or something more private, such as Batman trying to get some sleep. Perhaps the hero feels he is alone or in conflict with the rest of the world over this event. Perhaps the hero is completely out of touch with how the rest of the world views this event.

Cyborg's fear of the reaction of other wedding guests to his appearance generated his own Subplot for Donna Troy's wedding.

#### 5. How can the Subplot be resolved?

Encourage the Player presenting the Subplot to consider all of the positive ways the Subplot could end. The more alternatives he comes up with, the more interesting the Subplot can be.

The Player should also think about a few of the hurdles which his/her Character may have to overcome. Who or what might stand in the Character's way? Obstacles will challenge the Character to come up with alternative solutions in the Subplot.

Not all Subplots need to be opposed by another Character or by force. Sometimes the Subplot will be fun to play just because it is a good story idea. The wedding of Donna Troy was a good focus for a Subplot because it tied together so many stories and was also the high point of the romance Subplot with Wonder Girl and Terry Long.

#### 6. What else might happen to the Character as a result of the Subplot?

The hero could become rich, be ruined financially, be embarrassed socially, be hunted by the law, be cast out of the hero group s/he associates with, travel to Paris, win a scholarship to a university . . . just about anything is possible. Use your imagination!

## C. The Gamemaster's Response

When a Player suggests a Subplot, give yourself time to decide what will make the Subplot work and how it will fit into the campaign. Then ask yourself the questions given below. As you do this, be aware of any changes or additions which might make the suggested Subplot more playable or more interesting. It is the GM's prerogative to tailor the suggested Subplots to fit the campaign.

## GM Questions:

1. Does the Subplot fit into this campaign, with these Characters?
2. Does the Subplot sound like it will be fun?
3. Is the Subplot related to the main adventure in any way?
4. How can you begin the Subplot? How will it proceed?
5. What NPC's will the Subplot involve?
6. What locations need to be prepared?
7. Which of the other Player Characters could be involved in the Subplot?

These questions will be covered in depth in the following example.

## D. Subplot Example:

A group of Players creates a group of heroes in Central City, known as The Justice Crusaders. The heroes include Crunch, Echano, Foxbat, the Grenadier, and War Rock. The Grenadier's Dark Secret is that he is an artificial life form Character created by S.T.A.R. Labs. He has a Catastrophic Fear that people (other than the ones at S.T.A.R. who created him) will discover that he is not human. This means that when faced with the possibility of his true nature becoming known, the Grenadier will make protecting his Dark Secret his top priority. He will even forego stopping the villain if stopping the villain would endanger his secret.

The Player of the Grenadier might suggest the following Subplot: One of the S.T.A.R. Labs' scientists who worked on the team that created the Grenadier has run into financial difficulty. Somehow, the Grenadier discovers that the scientist is going to sell the story of his own creation to a cheap tabloid for a lot of money.

In this example, the Player has answered most of the questions listed for a Player suggesting a Subplot.

### 1. What is the focus of the Subplot?

The Subplot revolves around revealing the Grenadier's secret.

### 2. What brings the focal issue into play?

This revelation was prompted by the financial difficulties of one of S.T.A.R. Labs' scientists.

### 3. Who else is involved in the event?

The scientist, the newspaper reporter, and the newspaper staff will be involved in the Subplot (at least until the Grenadier's secret is made public).

### 4. What are the Character's feelings?

The nature of his Drawback indicates that the Grenadier would be extremely frightened of having his secret revealed. He probably feels betrayed by S.T.A.R. Labs, and he is determined to preserve his secret.

### 5. How can the Subplot be resolved?

If the article is not published, the Grenadier will have achieved his major goal.

This Player did not answer the sixth question (*What else might happen to the Character as a result of the Subplot?*), but the GM can generate several possibilities.

For example: The Grenadier and S.T.A.R. Labs might get into a simmering, if not roiling, argument over the exposure of his secret. The public may react with disgust to the knowledge that Central City is being protected by a machine-hero, or perhaps Central City is sympathetic to the Grenadier, and the hero only fears that the city's reaction will be bad. The Grenadier might attempt to establish a new identity to once again hide the fact that he is an android. Maybe the sleazy tabloid would be willing to make a deal with the Grenadier; it could kill the story if the newsmaking hero agrees to supply them with exclusives.

## Answering The GM Questions

The next step in the process is to discuss the GM's questions and answer them for the Subplot.

### 1. Does the Subplot fit in this campaign, with these Characters?

Suppose that, instead of protecting the Grenadier's secret, the Player decides it would be a really neat Subplot to have the Grenadier run for the Presidency of the United States. Well, maybe not... has the Grenadier established himself as a politician before the Player thought of this Subplot? Does the Grenadier have the financial backing, the staff, the friends in the right places, and enough political I.O.U.s to make a legitimate run for the presidency?

What about the Grenadier's role as a hero? The President of the United States has jobs and duties which would severely restrict the Grenadier's ability to be a hero. So, if the Grenadier were elected, he would have to give up being a hero and concentrate on running the country. If this Subplot were approved and were successful, the Player of the Grenadier would have, in effect, removed his Character from the game. Subplots are not supposed to work this way.

The GM reviews the Subplot as outlined by the Player. The Subplot of protecting the Grenadier's secret seems perfectly in line with this campaign, and fits the Grenadier character.

### 2. Does the Subplot sound fun to the Gamemaster?

Subplots will be some additional work for you. On the other hand, the fact that the Player has taken some initiative is a pretty good guarantee that he will be interested in the Subplot. If you think you will have fun running it, then keep going down the list of questions. If not, stop here and disallow the Subplot.

The GM thinks that the Grenadier Subplot is a subplot with a serious tone. The situation will have dramatic, perhaps even some tragic, elements. The Player suggested the Subplot, and the GM believes he can handle it. If handled right, it could be an entertaining "soap opera," with lots of opportunity for over-acting in the roles of the NPCs. The GM decides he would like to do the Subplot.

### 3. Is the Subplot related to the main adventure?

Interweaving subplots with the main adventure is neat, but it isn't always easy. Sometimes it cannot be done at all. You might decide to keep the Subplot unrelated to the main adventure.

In the main adventure of the example, let's say that Brother Blood was founding a church in Central City. The story line does not have anything to do with S.T.A.R. Labs. Rather than alter the main adventure, the GM decides to keep the Subplot unrelated.

### 4. How can you begin a Subplot? How does it proceed?

A Subplot which is related to the main adventure can begin when the adventure begins, and will naturally flow along with the main adventure. If the Subplot is unrelated to the main adventure, then the GM will have to create a starting point and connect the events of the Subplot together.

In the example of the Grenadier's secret, the GM decides that the hero first learns of the Subplot through an encounter on the street. The next time the Grenadier goes out in public, a Mirror-Inquirer headline will happen to catch his eye, or else he will overhear a discussion of the headline between two people on the street. The headline will read **"S.T.A.R. LABS CREATING SUPERPOWERED FREAKS!"** The paper is scant on details but promises to reveal the full story in the Sunday edition. If the Grenadier reads the story he will find a reference which, while attributed only to a reliable source inside of S.T.A.R. Labs, gives a physical description which matches the description of Dr. Arthur Molin, the Grenadier's creator.

The GM sketches out a story line which is centered around the Grenadier and Dr. Molin. He begins to think about the other NPCs he will need to carry out the story.

### 5. What NPC's will the Subplot involve?

Do the NPC's already exist in the campaign? If they don't, you will have to spend time creating them. Flesh them out and make them interesting, concentrating on their motives and the aspects of their personalities which are most important for the Subplot. You can decide later whether or not the NPC loves pistachio ice-cream or why s/he hates the Mets.

If the Subplot is a completely new story, several Characters may have to be sketched out by the GM. The GM should concentrate on the one or two NPC's s/he considers to be the most important. If the Subplots a Player suggests to you (or a

combination of Subplots submitted by all Players) would require you to detail more than three new Characters for the next session, you may want to think about delaying or disallowing some of the Subplots.

Deciding what NPC's you will use will help you develop the story elements of the Subplot. Why are these Characters involved in the Subplot? How do the Characters interact? Do you need any more NPCs to help the story flow logically?

Continuing the example, the GM has already created Dr. Arthur Molin, head of the S.T.A.R. Labs team which built the Grenadier. He has decided that Dr. Molin will be the Character who is having the financial difficulties. The GM decides that the Subplot will also need Eric Sandeen, a loan shark who has financed the run of gambling losses which put Dr. Molin in this bind, as well as Drew DeSilver, the Mirror-Inquirer reporter who is getting the exclusive on S.T.A.R. Labs research programs. The GM also sketches out the NPCs who are the hired muscle for Eric Sandeen, as well as Brian Ludescher, the we-print-anything-that-sells Editor of the Mirror-Inquirer. While he is at it, the GM creates the Sunday Mirror-Inquirer headline, "**S.T.A.R. LABS BUILDS BIONIC BEASTS . . . THEY'RE AMONG US!!!**," just in case it's needed.

#### 6. What locations need to be created for the Subplot?

In creating a Subplot, there are two different terms used for a group of locations. The area in which the Characters regularly adventure is called the *larger environment*. The specific locations in which the Characters regularly interact is called the *general environment*. As GM, you will deal most often with the larger environment, but the Players will interact more often within the general environment. Locations in the general environment should be planned in greater detail than those in the larger environment. The Players may surprise you by deciding to interact with a piece of the larger environment you have not detailed. If this happens, wing it and make the best of it.

For example, if the Subplot occurs in a cemetery (part of the larger environment), the cemetery would need to be detailed. But what sort of detail? The amount of detail needed depends on what will occur in the setting. If the cemetery setting is strictly for enhancing a mood, the details may be sketchy: "*The rows of tombstones which stretch over the hill, the neatly trimmed lawns and precisely pruned trees are the work of the living. But, bleached with moonlight, cloaked in the cold night air, the cemetery feels like a place for, and of, the dead.*" If the cemetery is the scene of a crime where the Players' Characters need to search for information, the details will be different and more concrete: "*The elm tree three feet to your right has a heavily scarred trunk. A trail has been gouged out of the ground from the spot where you are standing to a gravesite 0 APs away, as if a piece of heavy, angular equipment has been dragged from here.*"

The GM in the Grenadier example decides the action (at the level of the general environment) will most likely take place at S.T.A.R. Labs, which is a location he has already detailed. He thinks that he will need to outline three more locations: the home/headquarters of Eric Sandeen, the editorial room of the Mirror-Inquirer, and the illegal casino that Dr. Molin frequents. The GM guesses that the Grenadier would most probably search for information at Eric Sandeen's, and if combat takes place in the Subplot it will most likely happen there. He sketches out a floorplan with the necessary information (such as clues to Sandeen's illegal operation) as notes. The GM anticipates that the confrontation at the editorial room will be verbal, so he emphasizes the details which will give atmosphere to the harried, cheap nature of the offices.

The Casino has information; any of the customers will tell the Grenadier (as long as he is not in hero costume) that Eric Sandeen will bail anyone out of his gambling debts for a steep price. The GM also notes the clue points if the Character uses his Gadgetry or Scientist Skill (some of the games are rigged). The toughs who are operating the gambling tables are some of Eric Sandeen's hired muscle. Sandeen is greedy: he sets up rigged games and then loans the losers money at an exorbitant interest

rate, stinging them twice. The casino will need descriptions of a floorplan, the toughs, the rigged games, losing patrons, and an overall feeling of desperation.

If creating the necessary locations looks possible, go on to the next question.

#### 7. Which of the other Player Characters could be involved in the Subplot?

Try to involve other Characters in the Subplot, if at all possible. For the other Players, a One-Player Subplot is usually as exciting as watching someone else read a comic book. To help solve this problem, One-Player Subplots may be resolved over the course of many game sessions. Subplots in the comic books do this; then a one-Character Subplot will suddenly be featured for an issue. You should use DC's hero-group comics as a rough model for your Subplots; don't give one Player attention at the other Players' expense.

Decide whether including other Players will enhance or needlessly complicate the Subplot. The Grenadier's Subplot is a natural for a one-Character Subplot: after all, the Grenadier has kept this secret from everyone but the S.T.A.R. Labs technicians who built him. The other Characters do not know that the Grenadier is anything other than the red-blooded all-American guy he pretends to be.

Let's say that after some consideration, the GM decides to include two other Characters: Foxbat and Echano.

Foxbat is a friend of the Grenadier's. The GM decides to have Dr. Molin call the group headquarters and "warn" Foxbat that the Grenadier is under tremendous pressure and that, unless observed closely and discreetly, the Grenadier will probably become violent. In Dr. Molin's opinion, the Grenadier would later regret his violent action, but perhaps Foxbat could prevent his friend from going nuts? The GM decides that Dr. Molin is afraid of what the Grenadier may do to him when the Mirror-Inquirer story hits the streets and hopes to have Foxbat around if the Grenadier does anything rash.

The second new Character, Echano, will play a minor role unless Echano's Player manages to make some deductions of his own. Echano is also an android Character, but his robotic nature is known to the world because of an earlier Subplot. While he was not built by S.T.A.R., Echano does have a Low-level Connection there. Echano will be contacted by S.T.A.R. Labs, who wants to examine his programming, especially his "self-concept software," the portion of his beliefs which deal with his view of himself as a machine. If Echano asks for any details, a S.T.A.R. technician will explain that one of the lab's androids is having a difficult time accepting the fact that he is not human, and that he fears the android will harm Dr. Molin if a solution cannot be found. If the Player of Echano compares notes with Foxbat, the Characters should at least be suspicious of the Grenadier's true nature.

## A Rule of Thumb

Not all Subplots need be this elaborate, but some may grow to encompass an entire adventure in themselves: the Wedding Issue of *The New Teen Titans* #50 is a superb example of a story which would consist entirely of Subplots being resolved or rejuvenated. In other DC comics, Subplots will get only two or three panels in any single issue. Start with Subplots which can be handled in short bursts which are linked from adventure to adventure, rather than with a monster Subplot which squeezes aside the main adventure. It will probably take Players a few adventures to develop the personalities of their Characters to the point where running a Subplot for a whole session of gaming will go smoothly.

If you have answered all of the questions above, then you are ready to run the Subplot. You can tell the Player that you will run his/her Subplot during the next session. Be sure you know what you are getting yourself into, then go ahead and take the plunge. Once Players become directly involved in creating the story you will be developing new ideas which would not have occurred to you without their input, and the Players will be able to develop Characters as lively as those in DC Comics.

## What if a Subplot is too much work?

Being a GM is meant to be fun, even if there is work involved. If filling out a Subplot is too much work to include in the next session, and you think the Subplot is worth running, you can do one of three things:

1. Ask the Player to modify the Subplot to make it less work for you.

2. Ask the Player to do some of the work him/herself. This works best if some of the locations or NPCs are neutral to the Subplot, i.e. if having the Player know the NPC or location does not give the Player a significant edge in resolving the central event of the Subplot.

3. Tell the Player that the Subplot will not work in the next session, but promise to run it in one of the upcoming sessions. If you do this, plan to run the Subplot some time no longer than three sessions away.

If none of the above seems possible, then do not run the Subplot. Tell the Player that the Subplot will be too much work for you. If you feel the idea was a good one, encourage the Player to come up with a Subplot which would be a little less effort for you.

## E. GM-Suggested Subplots

As GM, you may see opportunities for a Subplot which a Player has missed or ignored. You may see ways of reviving a Subplot which has lain dormant for several sessions, you may have a new twist you want to add, or you may have an entirely new Subplot you want to try out.

When you generate your own Subplot you go through the same process as you would for a Player-suggested Subplot.

When you come up with a Subplot for a Player (or Players) you have the advantage of working out all of the details before you spring the Subplot idea on the Players. The disadvantage is that the Player(s) may not like the idea. If a Player consistently rejects your Subplots by “pulling the plug on the Subplot,” you can either give up on the Subplot or the Player. Subplots are easier to come by than Players.

### Suggesting Subplots

A Player has the option to pull the plug on a Subplot at any time. Therefore, it is a good idea to clear a Subplot idea with the Players whose Characters will be involved in the Subplot. At the same time, you do not want reveal all of your story before the Players get their Characters into it, or else the sense of discovery and involvement will be lessened. Giving the Players the information they need, without spoiling the story, is done this way:

Tell the Players whose Characters will be in the Subplot the following information about the Subplot: Subplot type, its Severity, the Area of Consequence, the tone of the Subplot, and the degree of the Subplot.

#### Subplot Type:

The *type* of Subplot falls under one of the categories listed under **III. Subplot Categories**, later in this Chapter. The categories are: family, friends, job, death guilt, secret identity, secret past, power complication, public reputation, romance, and, of course, miscellaneous.

#### Severity:

The *Severity* of a Subplot is similar to the severity of an adventure, as described in the **Standard Award** section of **Chapter Seven**. The three levels of severity, from least severe to most severe, are temporary non-fatal, permanent non-fatal, and fatal. If the worst consequence of the Subplot will tend to fade over time, then the Subplot is temporary non-fatal. If the Subplot could have consequences which will destroy a relationship, cause a loss of friendship or a job, or other permanent effect, then the Subplot is permanent non-fatal. If the Subplot could result in the death of a Player Character or an NPC, then the Subplot is fatal. Very few Subplots in DC Comics have fatal consequences. Avoid fatal Subplots in your campaign.

## Area of Consequence:

The *Area of Consequence* is the same as the Area of Consequence of an adventure, as described in the **Standard Award** section of **Chapter Seven**. Most Subplots have a Personal Area of Consequence, but some may have local (or greater) Areas of Consequence. For instance, a Character may be urged to run for mayor, or run a corporation with thousands of employees in several cities.

## Tone of the Subplot:

Is the Subplot serious? Is it funny or frivolous? Is it melodramatic? Is it scary? Joyful? The *tone* of a Subplot is the primary emotion or feeling of the story in the Subplot.

## Degree of the Subplot:

How lengthy is the Subplot? Will it take place during one adventure, or will it continue for several adventures? The *degree* of a Subplot is your guess as to how many adventures the Subplot will take to resolve.

For example, *Batman #383* had a Subplot in which the Batman's goal was simply to get a good night's sleep. Opposing him was his own sense of duty as the Batman, and a continuous stream of events and thugs that kept him awake. A GM could tell a Player, “Hey, this miscellaneous Subplot is temporary non-fatal, personal, has a humorous tone with a dash of serious characterization, and a degree of one adventure.” The Player has enough information about the scope of the Subplot to decide whether s/he would like to play it or not. If s/he likes it, s/he will tell the GM to run the Subplot. If s/he doesn't, s/he will “pull the plug” on it right there, before the GM has started running it in an adventure.

## F. Putting It All Together

When you have decided on all of the elements for a Subplot, you have to put them into a framework, as you do with an adventure. Draw up a rough sequence of events, noting when a particular sequence is crucial. Outline the central event. Then build the other events, including the NPCs he will encounter, the goal of the Player Character, and the setting. This may be a very loose outline or a detailed description, depending on the Encounter and your style.

These notes will help you run the Encounter. Put the information in a form you feel comfortable with — don't feel forced to follow the form given here.

The GM in the Grenadier example put his Subplot together as follows:

#### Subplot:

Grenadier's fear of being discovered as an android; Dr. Arthur Molin's gambling debts leading him to offer the sleazy Mirror-Inquirer the exclusive on the creation of the Grenadier.

#### Background:

Dr. Molin is \$37,000 in debt to Eric Sandeen, a loan shark. Dr. Molin's compulsive gambling keeps him losing an average of \$700 a week . . . it's just that he has dropped \$20,000 in the last month on a real string of “bad luck.” Eric Sandeen is asking for payment of the entire debt by Monday of next week. Sandeen's motivation is to frighten Molin into giving him access to S.T.A.R. Labs technology. Scrambling desperately for the money, Dr. Molin has contacted a college friend, Drew DeSilver. Dr. Molin is willing to sell the story of how S.T.A.R. Labs is creating artificial life in the form of humanoids with abilities far above human norm. DeSilver realizes this story would sell papers for weeks. The deal is set for \$25,000 cash to be paid next Saturday, prior to publication in that Sunday's Mirror-Inquirer.

#### Subplot Timeline:

**Encounter 1:** Friday morning

**Encounter 2:** Most likely Friday morning

**Encounter 3:** Most likely Friday night

**Encounter 4:** Friday or Saturday

**Article Publication:** 1:00 am, Sunday Morning

## Encounter 1: The Bait

The Mirror-Inquirer headline: "S.T.A.R. LABS CREATING SUPER-POWERED FREAKS!!!" will appear Friday morning. The headline should alert the Grenadier to the fact that his role as a human hero is in jeopardy. All the Grenadier has to do is pick up on the information in the article. He should then take the initiative.

Simultaneously (in game time), Foxbat will be receiving his call from Dr. Molin warning Foxbat of the Grenadier's instability, and Echano should receive the request from S.T.A.R. Labs to allow them to examine his self-concept software.

The sequence of the first Encounter is: Grenadier, Foxbat, Echano. If the Grenadier ignores the Mirror-Inquirer clue, Dr. Molin will blurt out something like 'that newspaper story could really upset the Grenadier' to Foxbat. It is entirely up to Foxbat what he does with this information.

**Note:** If the Grenadier does not pick up on any of the information, then the Subplot stops. As Grenadier's Player suggested the Subplot, he should be alert for clues about it. If he misses it, delay the Subplot until next session — and have the article and the due date of the repayment be reset to fit the next session. If the Grenadier does not pick up on the first Mirror-Inquirer story, other media will pick it up as a "is this really true, or strictly an attempt to hype sales?" story. If the Grenadier misses these clues, his identity as an android is published.

**Maps:** not needed.

**Clues And Information:** as given.

**Other Characters:** as described.

## Encounter 2: To Catch a Falling S.T.A.R.

The Grenadier will probably go to one of two places: S.T.A.R. Labs or the editorial offices of the Mirror-Inquirer. The Mirror-Inquirer staff will be *Hostile* towards the Grenadier and will tell him to go away. Drew DeSilver, the reporter covering the story, is not here.

At S.T.A.R. Labs, Drew DeSilver is interviewing Dr. Molin, gathering the information for this Sunday's paper. Drew DeSilver is posing as a subcontractor from a firm called Futurbotics in order to gain access to Dr. Molin. As Dr. Molin is revealing company secrets, he will be fired if S.T.A.R. finds out that he is feeding the information to the Mirror-Inquirer.

Dr. Molin has not yet revealed the Grenadier's secret. Dr. Molin will terminate the interview in order to speak with the Grenadier. Molin will be nervous and evasive. He will try to divert the Grenadier's attention to the problem of his debt to Eric Sandeen; if the debt is taken care of, there will be no need for DeSilver's story. Dr. Molin hopes the Grenadier can help him with Eric Sandeen. He will admit to his gambling debts but will deny talking to the Mirror-Inquirer.

If Foxbat is present, Dr. Molin will be much calmer. He will always prefer to meet with the two heroes together than to meet with the Grenadier alone.

**Maps:** S.T.A.R. Labs map, editorial office sketch.

**Clues and Information:** If a Character investigates DeSilver's connection with Futurbotics (either through the Justice Crusader computer or by calling Futurbotics) he will discover that DeSilver does not work there.

The Mirror-Inquirer will admit that DeSilver is one of their reporters . . . one of their best.

**Other Characters:** Foxbat is optional. Echano is idle, unless invited along by Foxbat or Grenadier.

## Encounter 3: Rolling the Dice

Dr. Molin will want to go to the casino with Grenadier, to show him Eric Sandeen's operation. However, he will go alone on Friday evening if the Grenadier has not yet shown up at S.T.A.R. Labs.

If the Grenadier shows up at S.T.A.R. Labs looking for Dr. Molin after he is gone, a lab technician will tell him where he can be found: Dr. Molin's gambling addiction is a poorly kept secret.

At the casino, the Grenadier will be not be allowed in if he arrives in his hero costume. If in street clothes, he must arrive with a "host," such as Dr. Molin, or he will be denied admittance. The hero or heroes will have to gamble or they will be asked to leave. If a fight ensues, and Sandeen's musclemen lose, Sandeen's boys will take it out later on the "host" who came with the heroes. Dr. Molin is aware of Sandeen's thugs, so he will ask the heroes to be on their best behavior.

**Maps:** Casino

**Clues and Information:** The games are rigged (OV/RV of 6/6 against Perception Checks). Gambling is illegal in this city, so there is no evidence linking Eric Sandeen to the casino, just innuendo.

**Troubleshooting:** The goal here is to obtain evidence on Sandeen. Possible solution: gamble, lose big, and borrow from Eric. Record the transaction. Be open to Player suggestions on other solutions.

**Other Characters:** Foxbat could be at the Casino. Echano should have an appointment at S.T.A.R. Labs for the same period in which Dr. Molin is at the Casino. Remember lab techs will give reasons for the testing if Echano asks, giving clues to the fact that Grenadier is an android.

## Encounter 4: Double or Nothing

At some point, the Grenadier will probably go to Eric Sandeen's. Sandeen's toughs will admit the heroes if they are in costume, but will not allow the heroes in if they are in street clothes (unless they are here to ask for a loan). If the heroes are in costume, Eric will be slimy and ingratiating, professing how much he admires the heroes and their work.

While he is talking, Sandeen will have one of his toughs in another room call the police. Once the phone call is made, Sandeen will ask the heroes to leave the house. If they show any reluctance to do so, the toughs will jump them. Sandeen does not expect them to win, merely to have the police arrive to find the house in shambles and the heroes inside; he wants the heroes arrested and out of the way . . . Eric does not want any interference when he is so close to S.T.A.R. Labs, so close to the "big time."

If the heroes are in plain clothes, Eric will be arrogant, setting outrageous terms for the loan. If the heroes reveal their heroic identities at this point, Eric will panic and order his thugs to attack. After the first phase, or whenever it becomes apparent that the thugs are going to lose, a remaining (conscious) thug will offer to testify if the heroes will just leave him alone. If the heroes agree, then Eric will be arrested and Dr. Molin's debt will be wiped out.

Unless they do this before 8 p.m. Saturday evening, they will be too late to stop Dr. Molin from telling the full story to Drew DeSilver.

**Map:** Eric Sandeen's home and headquarters.

**Clues and Information:** If the heroes get a loan and record the transaction (on tape, via hidden microphone, whatever) they can go to the police and have Eric Sandeen arrested. This solution requires no fighting at all.

In a hidden compartment in Sandeen's desk (OV/RV of 3/3 against a Perception Check to spot it), there is a large notebook which records the loans and repayments. This is evidence of Sandeen's loan sharking operation.

## G. Running Subplots

Subplots are set up for role-playing. The mechanics involved will be secondary to the story. Have fun: act a little outrageous when you are role-playing an outrageous Character. Move the story along with your own role-playing, parcelling out the information and the plot twists. Let the Subplot develop from the interaction of your Character and the Players' Characters. You may even want to forget you have the Action Table for awhile.

When running Subplots you should remember that they are Subplots. If you do not want Subplots to bury your adventure you will have to keep a tight rein on the number of Subplots

active at any one time. If you want some help with pacing, check out your favorite DC Comic. How much space is spent on Subplots and how much is spent on the main adventure? Are the Subplots and the main adventure connected or independent? The **DC HEROES RPG** gives you the opportunity to create and participate in the kind of stories you enjoy reading. Use those stories as your guide.

## Following the Story

The story in a Subplot can go just about anywhere after the first couple of Encounters, depending on where the heroes have been and what they have done. Try to keep the action centered to the locations you have detailed. The Players are bound to come up with possible connections and solutions different from yours. If their solutions lead to dead ends, let them know. If the Players try something original, try to accommodate them. Develop the art of "winging it."

When you are winging it, use the framework of your larger environments to help you. Keep a pad of paper handy to take notes on what you tell the Players. This will help prevent the "Gee, last time Mr. Osmond's mom was dead. Why is she alive now?" syndrome.

## Turning a Subplot On and Off

You can turn Subplots on and off. Cutting off a Subplot means directing the focus of the game elsewhere, such as back to the main storyline. In comics, this is the panel which reads "meanwhile, somewhere else in the Universe..." Try to give the Subplot scene a logical breaking-off point, and then inform the Player that the Subplot is being turned off for now. As your Game-master skills improve, you will have a better story-sense which will help you decide when it is appropriate to turn-off a Subplot.

## The Art of Fading Out

You are in the middle of a Subplot, things don't go as expected and a Player pulls the plug on the Subplot. Now what do you do? You take the story to a point where you can turn it off, and return to the main adventure. After the session, you have to figure out a way to erase the effects of the Subplot, had it concluded. This is called "fading out" the Subplot.

In the Grenadier Subplot example, assume that after **Encounter 1**, the Player changes his mind, and pulls the plug. Muttering under his breath, the GM decides to "fade out" by having S.T.A.R. labs trace the leak to Dr. Molin, and threaten to fire him if he breathes another word to DeSilver. The administrators of the lab then lean on the Mirror-Inquirer to be quiet, money and high-tech gear change hands, and Eric Sandeen is mollified. Now all the Grenadier has to worry about is a few thugs with the firepower of a battalion or two.

If a Player does not pull the plug often, and does in a Subplot which is becoming uncomfortable, do everything you can to wrap the Subplot up neatly without involving his Character. If a Player pulls the plug only when a Subplot is not working out the way he wants it to, stop running Subplots for him... but do fade out the last Subplot he was in.

It is not fair for a Player to pull the plug on a Subplot in the final Encounter. Tell the Player that you will turn off the Subplot, but its consequences cannot be avoided at this point. You can work out the details of the consequences after the session is over.

Fading out is a good way to avoid Subplots with fatal consequences. Death is an awfully tough thing to undo. If the consequences are non-fatal, there is usually some way to recover from the Subplot.

## H. Problems And Solutions

*What do I do with Players who just want to use Subplots to gain a few extra Hero Points at the end of an adventure?*

Just because the Player has a Subplot written down on his/her Character sheet, and then tells you s/he is running that Subplot this session of the game, is not enough to give him/her the Hero Points for the Subplot. Even if the Player grudgingly performs an action which could be part of a Subplot, this does

not mean s/he earns the Hero Points for a Subplot.

For example, Dave has a Character with a Family Subplot: his mother is ill with a disease which requires extensive hospitalization, and she wants to have her children see her. Dave cannot simply declare that he is running his Family Subplot, fly to the hospital, say "Hi, Mom," and then fly off to battle and expect an award for his Subplot.

A Subplot assumes first that the Subplot storyline is important to the life of the Character. Second, a Subplot is intended to increase the role-playing interaction between the NPCs and the Player's Character. Neither statement is true of the fly-by example.

A good rule of thumb to use when awarding Hero Points for Subplots is this: If the Subplot is not important enough to the Player to have him/her devote the same effort and game-time as he would to a dangerous encounter with a villain, then it is not worth awarding Hero Points for the Subplot.

Since you may be the only one in your group to read this chapter, you may have to coach the Players on playing Subplots. Once they really start playing Subplots you won't have this problem.

*What do I do with the "I become emperor of the world" Subplots suggested by a Player?*

When Players come up with Subplots they will naturally put themselves at the center of attention. Very often the Subplots will have a positive impact on the life of the Character. The Grenadier example was unusual; the Player of the Grenadier wanted to play out Subplot involving one of his Character Flaws. But listen to Subplot suggestions for the story element contained in them; even the most self-centered suggestion may have the kernel of a really interesting story. You do not have to run a Subplot you do not like.

*How many Subplots should I run at once?*

Remember your main story. Make it a conscious choice when you accept a slew of Subplots for a session or series of sessions. If they are run correctly, Subplots will take time — time which will not be spent on the main story line. If you have a great villain and a terrific story to set him in, you may want to reduce the number of Subplots you run in the sessions in which that adventure takes place. You may want to put all of the Subplots on hold. They do in DC Comics.

If you decide to run more than one Subplot, it is strongly suggested you run no more than 3 at once. Three Subplots is usually pushing the limits of Player boredom and GM confusion.

*What can I do about Subplots which are ruined by one Player's miserable dice roll?*

The **DC HEROES RPG** is a game with elements you cannot control. The dice just do not behave sometimes. Try to adjust for possibly wild dice rolls by developing Subplots which are not dependent on the rolls of the dice. You don't have to take out the uncertainty factor completely — just make allowances for it. If just one roll of 2 or 21 will ruin the story, think about modifying the story to give yourself more of a cushion against Players' luck.

*What can I do about Players who are floundering in a Subplot?*

If the Players are missing a vital clue, try to give them hints. An NPC may know a little bit more than you originally planned. If they keep bumping into dead ends, create a way to get them back on the correct path. If the Players keep wandering off on the fringes of a Subplot, turn it off and direct the Players back to the main adventure.

*Why do Players always pull the plug on my Subplots?*

When you are developing your own Subplots, evaluate them from the Player's standpoint. If you are developing Subplots which constantly have a negative impact on the Characters, you will either lose the Players or end up with a depressed group, neither of which is much fun. Have an evenhanded approach.

Keep an eye out for Subplots which have slept long enough to be interesting again. Be prepared to retire some which have worn out, and inject a new Subplot every once in awhile. By varying the Subplots you increase the Players' interest, so they will be more willing to play through a Subplot.

## II. Playing Subplots

Your Character can save the universe time and time again, but can he keep a job? What does his family or co-workers think when he disappears for days at a time? What about his girlfriend?

Comic book stories deal with more than the ever-present threat of the villains. They deal with the everyday lives of the heroes and how they cope with the world. In many cases, these stories can become just as important as whether or not the villain can be stopped.

In the **DC HEROES RPG**, this can be an exciting part of any game session. You, the Player, can create your own Subplots by using the guidelines below. You get to write some of the ongoing saga of your Character instead of just letting the Gamemaster have all the fun. A Subplot is a way for you to directly participate in the creation of the story in which your hero is the central figure.

The goal of Subplots is to give your Character a life of his/her own that is independent of the everyday grind of bashing villains. But there is an added incentive: role-playing Subplots can earn your Character, and other participating Characters, Hero Points (see **Standard Awards in Chapter Seven**).

### A. Creating A Subplot

Subplots are chosen by category. These categories are listed later. You may choose as many Subplots as the GM will allow, although in the beginning, it's probably best to choose one Subplot per Character.

It is not necessary to choose Subplots when you are designing your Character. Subplots may be added after Character Design — if they do not contradict existing facts about the Character.

Each Subplot is subject to the approval of the GM, and he will often add new elements to the Subplot to help it.

Take the time to work out a Subplot with your Gamemaster. Talk with your fellow Players as well. Maybe two or three people can share the same basic Subplot or link their own Subplots together.

It is important to cooperate with the GM and the other Players when you are role-playing Subplots. Otherwise, no one will have any fun while you are off writing your own story. The **DC HEROES RPG** is a cooperative game: the more people involved with your Subplot the better. Also, the number of Hero Point awards is greatest for cooperative play. Once you've chosen a Subplot, outline the basics of the story.

If there is one basic rule for creating Subplots, it is: *Start slowly*. Don't try to cram everything in during the first few sessions. Keep it simple, and let the Subplot be created as you go from adventure to adventure. In the beginning, just pick one of the basic categories listed below and ask yourself a few basic questions like:

#### 1. Who is involved in my Subplot?

List all the people who will be in this story. Try to describe each of them in one or two sentences. At first, use only two or three people in any one Subplot.

#### 2. What is currently happening in the Subplot?

What will happen in the Subplot that will test your hero? How does the Subplot hinder or help your Character's actions?

#### 3. What are the Character's feelings?

Think about how the Character might feel about what's happening to him. Does the Character realize how NPCs and other Characters feel? Does the Character have any particular course of action planned in the Subplot?

The **Gamemastering Subplots** section earlier in this chapter has more information on Subplots. If you are stuck, read that section again for advice on coming up with interesting and playable Subplots.

### B. Playing Your Subplot

Once the Subplot is created, it is up to the GM to introduce it into the play of the game. If the GM is busy with the main adventure, s/he might not have time for a Subplot. On the other hand, a whole game session could be nothing more than an

elaborate Subplot involving everyone in the group. Other times, the Subplot could be wrapped up with the main adventure. In any case, here are some rules to follow while playing Subplots:

Subplots can have more than one solution. Subplots should not, like the main adventure, have only one way of ending. You are never locked into a solution for a Subplot. Like real life situations, which rarely have neat and tidy resolutions, Subplots can continue for many adventures without being resolved, or they can resolve themselves in unexpected or surprising ways.

Subplots can be positive for Players and NPCs. In the main adventure, your Character is usually up against a bunch of maniacs trying to take over the world (or at least large chunks of it). It is often a life and death situation with only one victor: hopefully you.

Subplots are different. Everyone can "win" in a Subplot. Sometimes there are no winners and no losers — just fun. For example, in "A Night in the Life of Batman" in *Batman* #383, a whole Subplot was built around Batman trying to get some sleep after a long night of fighting crime. No life or death struggle there — and role-playing this scenario could be really fun. You do not have to compete with NPCs in the Subplot as you do with the villains in the main adventure.

Subplots can be frivolous, melodramatic, even silly. Usually, the main adventure is pretty serious. The Subplot can be anything: sad, happy, weird, intense, or even bland. The more positive a Subplot is, the more fun you'll have.

### C. Pulling the Plug

Subplots should be fun, not morbid or cruel. If you don't like the way the GM is running your Subplot or if you are just bored with it, just "pull the plug" and refuse to accept the GM's judgement. You cannot use this rule to change what has happened in past gaming sessions, but any Subplot event that has just happened can be negated.

For instance: The GM announces that your girlfriend is murdered by the villain. If you feel this is too much and no fun to play, simply say that you refuse to accept this event.

On the other hand, if at the start of the adventure you accepted the fact that your girlfriend was kidnapped by the villain, you cannot suddenly change your mind and say she isn't captured. But if the Gamemaster has the villain tie her to the nose cone of a nuclear missile — you can "pull the plug" about her new situation.

The Gamemaster can also "pull the plug" if s/he feels the Subplot is out of his/her control. This can happen at any time and for any reason.

If the plug is pulled and the Subplot is killed, you and anyone else in the Subplot are not eligible for any Hero Points gained by





THE ONLY SURPRISE, IF YOU ASK ME, IS THAT OUR HOST STILL HASN'T ASKED VICKI VALE TO MARRY HIM.

ACTUALLY, I'M ONLY DOING WHAT ANY GOOD ASSISTANT DOES -- HELPING HER BOSS ATTAIN HER GOALS...

AH...

... WHICH IN THIS CASE MEANS INSPIRING MR. WAYNE TO A ROMANTIC MOOD.

--I'VE GOT A GOOD MIND TO STRAIGHTEN YOUR CURLS WITH THIS GLASS OF CHAM--

WHILE THE ATTENTION IS EXTREMELY FLATTERING, LADIES, ALFRED INFORMS ME THAT A VISIT TO THE WINE CELLAR IS IN ORDER.

NOT FOR MORE CHAMPAGNE, I HOPE-- IT SEEMS BOSS VALE HAS QUITE ENOUGH.

NOT FOR YOUR MOP, I DON'T!

WHY, YOU DEAR, SWEET, RAZOR-TONGUED SHE-WOLF--



playing that Subplot, but there is no penalty for pulling the plug. Sometimes, you might not want to completely stop a Subplot, but just put it on the "back burner." Talk it over with the Gamemaster; s/he might award some Hero Points for partially completed Subplots.

### III. Subplot Categories

This section lists the basic categories for Subplots. Some Subplots may be natural to a Character due to his/her Drawbacks, or they may spring right from your mind without affecting the basic structure of the Character's design at all. The following list is not intended to be all-inclusive or limiting to your imagination, but to give you a few ideas concerning some of the most commonly used Subplots. If you create a different Subplot and the GM approves, use it.

#### Criminal Past

The Character has been a criminal at some time in his past. This may cause problems with the police, the media, the public, or other heroes. Even though the Character has reformed, others may not be ready to forgive and forget that Character's past mistakes. It is also possible that a villain will try to recruit the Character, which is certain to raise eyebrows.

The Character may try to hide his past, or he may try to improve his image by performing good deeds. He may try to deal with his past in any way he chooses, but he will not be able to ignore it.

If you choose this Subplot, determine the extent of the Character's criminal career, who his associates were, and why he turned from a life of crime.

#### Secret Past

Like a criminal past, a secret past assumes that the Character has a secret that s/he wishes to keep undercover. The secret could be anything from a person who is trying to kill the Character for an imagined or real insult, escaping from a mental institute, or coming back from the dead, to a Character who lived in a Tibetan monastery. This Subplot may also be associated with a Dark Secret Drawback.

A Character will most likely try to hide his/her secret past, but it could come back to haunt him/her: people from his/her former life could appear, or others might insist that they help him/her, even to the detriment of his/her new friends.

If you choose this Subplot, work out the details of the former life and the lives of those people who might have been part of it. You should also have a reason why s/he left the former life.

#### Death Guilt

At some time during the Character's career, s/he killed someone accidentally, or maybe s/he feels responsible for someone's death. This guilt affects his/her ability to fight crime, making him/her constantly doubt his/her worth and his/her ability to do the right thing.

Death Guilt is a good example of the Guilt Drawback, and it might prevent the Character from using force in situations that resemble the one s/he feels guilty about. Death Guilt may also cause the Character to become obsessed with the well-being of another Character whom s/he wishes to protect from dying under circumstances similar to the first death.

Death Guilt may be used as a Subplot as a result of one Character accidentally killing another Character during the game or being unable to prevent the death of another Player's Character.

If this Subplot is chosen with the Guilt Drawback during Character Design, decide who was killed, outline the circumstances of the death, and determine how widely the circumstances are known.

## Enemies

An Enemies Subplot is a continuing series of confrontations between the hero and his/her adversary. The adversary is not necessarily a villain, but can be someone who is continually and callously interfering in the hero's life: a snoopy neighbor, a bully who torments the hero's alter-ego, or a law enforcement official who does not like self-appointed champions of justice. This Subplot may involve a villain or villainous organization that is out to get the hero. Describe the relationship between the enemy and your Character, and how long the antagonism has been going on.

## Family

There are several possible Family Subplots. Here are a few suggestions.

1. The Character is an orphan, with all of the insecurities that come from losing one's parents.
  2. The Character is adopted, and he wants to find his/her biological parents.
  3. The Character has a relative who is dependent on him for financial and/or emotional support.
  4. The Character is the "black sheep" of the family. He resents his estrangement and is suspicious of the intentions of any group of people that might resemble a family, especially groups of heroes.
  5. One of the Character's parents or close relatives is a villain. S/he isn't certain where his/her loyalty lies and is torn between claims to his/her loyalty.
  6. One of the Character's parents or older siblings is a well-known heroic Character. S/he lives in the shadow of the other's reputation, in his/her attempts to become an individual.
- If you choose a Family Subplot, describe the Character's family relationship to the GM.

## Friends

A Friend Subplot revolves around the relationship between the Character and one or more of his/her friends. The possibilities include the following:

1. The friend is being harassed by a villain or his/her henchmen, and needs help, even though it will distract the Character from his/her main goal in the adventure.
2. The friend is related to a villain who constantly plagues the Character. The friend is torn between family loyalty and his/her friendship with the hero.
3. The friend has a serious personal problem that cannot be overcome with any of the hero's Powers and Skills. If the Character helps his/her friend, s/he will have less time to devote to the adventure.

If you choose a Friend Subplot, describe the friend and his/her relationship to the hero. Friend Subplots work well even with groups of people.

## Job

Job Subplots can come in many different varieties. In most cases, they should center around the occupation that you have chosen for your Character. Here are some ideas for Job Subplots:

1. Heroing is complicating the Character's personal life.
2. Financial problems require the Character's attention.
3. A rival for his/her job is making a bid for the Character's position in his/her absence.
4. The time the Character spends on heroic activities makes it difficult for him/her to hold down a responsible job.

If you choose a Job Subplot, tell the GM how it relates to the Character's Occupation and Wealth. Remember to mention any important co-workers.

## Power Complication

Something has gone wrong with the Character's Power, and there is a harmful side effect to using it. Maybe the side effect is

curable if the Character can figure out a way to get the problem treated. The Character must find a solution before he loses the Power altogether and is either forced to retire or is killed by the side effect.

If you choose a Power Complication, outline which Power(s) is/are affected, and describe the side effect. At first, the side effect should be minor, but, as the condition worsens, the Character needs to pay more attention to the problem.

**Note:** the GM could decide to give the Character extra Hero Points if the complications become permanent. This is totally up to the GM, however.

## Public Reputation

The Character considers his/her reputation important, so threats to his/her good name receive a high priority. What would your Character do if villains or sleazy reporters try to undermine his/her reputation?

If you choose this Subplot, brief the GM on your Character's reputation, and how s/he tries to live up to it, as well as who is trying to tarnish the hero's good name.

Remember that if you choose too awesome a reputation, your Character will be hard put to live up to this exalted image and lose a lot of face very quickly.

## Romance

A love interest can affect the Character in several ways. Perhaps s/he must protect his/her loved one from villains. Or s/he might have to plan his/her time carefully so that s/he can spend a few precious hours with his/her loved one.

How does the Character feel about the fact that s/he has abilities far above those of ordinary people, and yet is involved with an ordinary person? How completely can s/he confide in the one s/he loves? Do they love each other equally, or is it unrequited love?

If you choose Romance, describe the NPCs involved in the Subplot and their relationship to the Character, including the duration and seriousness of the relationship.

## Secret Identity

With a Secret Identity Subplot, the Character chooses the Secret Identity Drawback during Character Design to separate his/her heroic deeds from his/her more normal lifestyle. The difficulty of maintaining a Secret Identity is the main ingredient of this Subplot. How secret is his/her identity? Does anyone know who s/he really is, and if so, how many share the secret? Do any villains know the secret? How might his/her "normal life" friends be endangered if his/her Secret Identity is revealed?

If you choose a Secret Identity, describe the Character's normal identity, and tell who, if anyone, knows the Character's Secret Identity.

## School

Saving the world on a consistent basis can eat away at study time, and facing life-threatening situations can make one forget about upcoming exams. For some reason, teachers and professors do not seem to understand this.

A School Subplot involves the Character's effort to stay in school long enough to finish his/her education. This type of Subplot should be discussed with the GM.

## Wealth

There are basically two types of Wealth Subplots: sudden fortune and sudden bankruptcy. In a sudden fortune Subplot, the Character comes into a large sum of money without warning, causing him/her to have to deal with the sudden influx of money. If you choose the sudden bankruptcy Subplot, your Character loses all of his/her money due to some uncontrollable event, and must somehow learn to get along without his/her previous financial reserves. Be sure to consult with the GM on this Subplot, so that the Character's Wealth rating can be adjusted accordingly.

## Miscellaneous

Discuss any other Subplot ideas you may have with the GM. They may fit nicely into an adventure.

# Advanced Rules

## I. Negative APs

What happens when a calculation using the AP system reaches a negative AP value? For instance, suppose Jimmy Olsen is trying to push a car that will not start. Jimmy's STR is 2, and the car has a weight of 6 APs. According to the equation: Distance = STR - Weight, Jimmy can move the car a distance of -4 APs per phase; but how far is -4 APs? He certainly is not pushing it backwards at forty feet per second!

Negative APs do not stand for negative amounts; they represent fractional values. Each -1 AP reduces the base value of the measurement system by half, just as each +1 AP doubles the base value. Therefore, -1 AP of distance is equal to 5 feet (half of 10 feet), -2 APs of distance is equal to 2 ½ feet (half of five feet), and so on. -4 APs of distance, then, is equal to about six inches, meaning Jimmy could push the car about six inches per phase.

A Benchmark Table of negative AP measurements for some commonly measured quantities is as follows:

Negative AP Benchmarks			
APs	Distance	Weight	Money
0	10 feet	50 pounds	\$25
-1	5 feet	25 pounds	\$12
-2	2 ½ feet	12 pounds	\$6
-3	1 foot	6 pounds	\$3
-4	6 inches	3 pounds	\$1.50
-5	3 inches	1 ½ pounds	75 cents
-6	1 ½ inches	¾ pounds	25 cents
-7	¾ inch	6 ounces	10 cents
-8	1 centimeter	3 ounces	5 cents
-9	5 millimeters	1 ounce	2 cents
-10	2 ½ millimeters	½ ounce	a penny

Negative AP values, like the positive AP values, often call upon the Players to exercise common sense. Can Batman really throw a quarter pound hamburger with a weight of -7 APs, a distance of 4 miles? Of course not. The GM should feel free to overrule any actions that common sense tells him/her are impossible.

A value of -100 APs represents absolute zero. If a Character can ever reduce an object's Current Body Condition down to -100 APs or lower, it ceases to exist: nothing, not even particles or atoms, remains.

## II. Effect Units

**Note:** The complicated ideas found here are the mathematical foundation upon which the AP system rests, but are unnecessary to understanding the game.

An *Effect Unit*, which is 0 APs, is the base value for measurement on the Effect Chart. The following measures are the upper limits of one Effect Unit (0 APs) and their real world equivalents. They are given here to help you use the Effect Chart.

Measure	Amount	Metric
Weight	50 pounds	25 kilograms
Distance	10 feet	3 meters
Volume	1 cubic foot	25 liters
Time	4 seconds	Not applicable
Money	\$25.00	Not applicable

## The Effect Chart

The *Effect Chart* that follows is used to translate APs to Effect Units of real world measurement. Often, this is not necessary, since the Action and Result Tables are set up to use APs, which in turn produces a result in APs (the RAPs). Sometimes, however, you may need to "translate" real world measurements into APs (How many APs does the Daily Planet Building weigh?), or turn APs into real world units (How far is 6 APs?). The Effect Chart can be used to do this.

### Units

The number of Effect Units and their equivalent in APs is called the *Effect Unit Multiplier*. The number of APs is equal to the Effect Unit Multiplier found below it on the chart. For example, 0 APs is equal to 1 Effect Unit, 5 APs is equal to 30 Effect Units, and so on. If the measure in question were weight, then 5 APs is 1500 pounds (50 pounds times 30 Effect Unit Multipliers equals 1500 pounds); if it were time, 5 APs is 120 seconds or two minutes (4 seconds times 30 Effect Unit Multipliers equals 120 seconds); and so on. The Effect Unit Multiplier is the upper limit of a range of Effect Units. The range of an Effect Unit Multiplier is from 1 unit more than the next lower Effect Unit Multiplier up to the highest Effect Unit Multiplier. For example, the Effect Unit Multiplier 30 covers the range of Effect Units from 16 to 30.

### Multiples

The top row of the Effect Chart only goes from 0 through 9 APs. So how are you supposed to figure out what 14 APs weigh?

Take the units (far right) digit of the AP value that you wish to find the value for and look up the corresponding Effect Unit Multiplier, which in this case is 15. You then multiply this number by the Effect Unit Multiplier that is across from the APs remaining (in this case 10); the Effect Unit Multiplier of 10 APs is 1000. 15 times 1000 is 15000, so 14 APs is 15000 Effect Units, which is 750000 pounds, or 375 tons.

### UNITS

APs	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Effect Unit Multiplier	1	2	4	8	15	30	60	125	250	500

### MULTIPLES

APs	Effect Unit Multiplier
10	1,000
20	1,000,000
30	1,000,000,000
40	1,000,000,000,000
50	1,000,000,000,000,000
60	1,000,000,000,000,000,000
70	1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000
80	1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000
90	1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000
100	1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000

### APs and Effect Units

Find the number of APs on the APs row. The Effect Unit Multiplier below is the number of Effect Units for those APs. If there are 10 APs or more, find the Effect Unit Multiplier of the units (far right) digit and then multiply the result by the Effect Unit Multiplier of the number of APs by which you exceeded the units digit. (see **Multiples**, above).

### Effect Units to APs

If you know that a tank weighs 50 tons and a Character is trying to lift that tank, how do you know how many APs it weighs?

First, convert the real world weight to Effect Units of weight by dividing the total weight by the equivalent of one Effect Unit (in this case, 50 pounds). There are approximately 40 weight Effect Units in a ton, so a tank weighs 2000 Effect Units.

Second, size the number of units to fit the Effect Chart. The

largest Effect Unit Multiplier is 500, so there is a problem in calculating the tank's weight. When you are faced with this problem, strike off three digits from the number of Effect Units, *from right to left*. Continue striking off groups of digits until the remaining number of Effect Units is smaller than the Effect Unit Multiplier. For every group of digits struck, add 10 APs to the APs determined below.

The tank weighs 2000 units. Striking three digits at a time from the right to left leaves you with a 2. Two is smaller than some Effect Unit Multiplier, so you stop this step, remembering to add 10 APs to the APs found in the third step below.

Third, find the Effect Unit Multiplier which is equal to or greater than the (modified) number of Effect Units. Above this Effect Unit Multiplier are the APs of the Effect Units.

The 2 from step two is an Effect Unit Multiplier of 1 AP, so the tank weighs 1 AP plus the 10 APs from step two, for a total of 11 APs.

### Confused?

Do not worry about being precise. Precision is for math exams, not for role-playing games. The Effect Chart is used to give a ballpark figure with which you can play the game. It is more important to come up with a number quickly than to come up with the absolutely correct number. After a while, you will be able to eyeball the Effect Chart and come up with numbers which are close enough for your purposes.

## III. The Action and Result Tables

If the AV and OV of an Action Check are different values, but fall on the same Column on the Action Table before any Column Shifts are applied, the Player may subtract 1 from the Success Number if the AV is higher, or must add 1 if the AV is lower. Success Numbers can never be reduced down to less than 3 in this fashion.

Consequently, if the EV and RV of an Action Check are different values, but fall on the same Column of the Result Table before any Column Shifts are applied, the acting Player may add 1 to the RAPs earned by the Action Check if the EV is higher, or must subtract 1 if the EV is lower.

This rule helps guarantee that an edge in APs will always make a difference while performing actions.

**Example:** Suppose a Character with a DEX of 6 and a STR of 5 is trying to punch a Character with a DEX of 5 and a BODY of 6. Since both the AV and OV of the action fall on the same Column on the Action Table (the **5 to 6** Column) and the AV (the attacker's DEX) is higher, 1 is subtracted from the normal Success Number, leaving a final Success Number of 10. Since both the EV and RV fall on the same Column of the Result Table and the RV (the defender's BODY) is higher, 1 is subtracted from the final RAPs earned by the Action Check (regardless of Column Shifts).

## IV. Hero Points

The Gamemaster may allow the Players to spend Hero Points to alter the actual playing environment to suit their fancy. Suppose, for example, that Solomon Grundy is fighting Hawkman in a lab, and Grundy is choking the Winged Wonder over a lab table. At this point, the Hawkman Player might ask the GM, "How many Hero Points would it cost me to have a conveniently placed beaker of acid lying on the table behind me that I can grab and throw into Grundy's face?"

All such alterations must make logical sense and are subject to strict GM approval. The Hero Point cost for the alteration is also up to the GM; a minor alteration, as in the Hawkman example, might cost 5 to 10 Hero Points, while a major alteration like, "How many Hero Points would it cost to have a witness that just happened to see the entire crime come up and volunteer information?" might cost as much as 50 or 100 Hero Points, or may even be rejected by the GM altogether.

## V. Surprise Tactic Bonus

Combat in the comics is generally a high-strung, fanciful

affair. It is rare for two comic book combatants to simply come out punching and kicking. Generally, comic book characters like to try things like shooting the supports out to cave the roof in on their opponent, or bouncing a shot off three walls so it can come around and strike the opponent from the rear.

In the **DC HEROES RPG**, all of these maneuvers are Trick Shots, and since it is harder to succeed with a Trick Shot than a normal attack, there is no real incentive to employ these surprise tactics. GMs can correct this flaw by granting a special Hero Point bonus equal to one-quarter of a Standard Award to any Player whose hero regularly employed such maneuvers throughout an adventure. "Regularly employed such maneuvers" means that the hero used at least one trick tactic in every one of the adventure's major battles.

## VI. Stunning

A Character who takes an amount of damage equal to his/her BODY, SPIRIT, or MIND from a single attack is Stunned by that blow, even if the blow does not knock the target unconscious because s/he neutralized part of its effects through the use of Last Ditch Defense.

A Stunned Character may take no Dice Actions during the phase in which s/he was Stunned (if s/he had not already acted in that phase), and may not make a Dice Action during his/her next phase. Stunned Characters still receive their full OV, RV and defenses against any and all attacks made upon them. Stunned Characters may make Automatic Actions at the GM's discretion.

## VII. Fires, Collisions, and Natural Disasters

Heroes save people from fire and natural disasters all the time. Here are the rules for handling these situations in the **DC HEROES RPG**.

**Fire** is a Physical Attack that is always considered Killing Combat. The AV/EV of a fire can range from 3/3 for a small fire, to 8/8 for a raging inferno. When the GM decides to include fire in the gaming environment, s/he should draw out a map indicating the exact location and AV/EV of the flames. A single fire can be made up of several areas of varying AV/EV. Generally, the AV/EV of an area of flame will increase by 1/1 each phase until it reaches 8. The area covered by the flames will spread at a rate of 0 APs of distance in all directions every phase.

Flames can be "attacked" using water. The AV/EV of such an attack is equal to the volume of water thrown on the flames. The OV/RV is equal to the flames' AV/EV. The RAPs from such an attack are subtracted from the AV/EV of the flames. Once the flames' AV/EV is reduced to 0/0, the fire is extinguished.

**Earthquakes** have the Earth Control Power rated at between 6 and 25 APs, depending upon the severity of the quake. A typical quake will last from 0-12 APs of time. The effects of an earthquake are lessened as though the quake were an explosion: every AP of distance away from the center of the quake reduces the quake's effects by 2 APs.

Earthquakes can be prevented or halted by an extremely strong Character pushing the earth back into place at the fault. The OV/RV of such an attempt is equal to the quake's APs of Earth Control.

**Tornados** have the Air Control Power rated at between 7 and 15 APs. They generally move at a ground speed of 7 APs per phase, randomly shifting directions several times per phase.

Everyone that a tornado passes over is automatically attacked Physically. The RAPs from the attack indicate the distance that the target was Knocked Back from the tornado, as well as the RAPs of Physical damage taken. All of the heroes and important Characters within 10 APs of a tornado have a 1 in 10 chance of being attacked by a 7 AP Lightning bolt each phase. The GM should not bother rolling to see if innocent bystanders are struck, since heroes usually take the blast for them.

**Hurricanes** have the Air Control Power rated at between 7 and 18 APs. Hurricanes function the same way as tornados, except that a hurricane affects everything within a radius equal to its APs of Air Control. It will usually take about twenty

minutes to an hour for a hurricane to pass over an area.

**Poisonous or Radioactive Gas Leaks** have the Fog Power rated at between 7 and 25 APs. The cloud's APs of Fog Power also function as the AV/EV of an attack that is made against all living targets that are exposed to the cloud. Skin Armor offers no protection against poisonous or radioactive gas.

**Collisions:** A moving vehicle or object that strikes a target is actually conducting a Charging Attack upon that object (see **Chapter Three**). Remember that the vehicle will often take damage from a collision as well as the target.

## VIII. Gadgets and Inanimate Objects

When inanimate objects such as walls, trees, mailboxes, or whatever are targeted by an attack, the OV/RV of the effort is equal to the object's BODY/BODY and the AV/EV is equal to the attacker's STR/STR or APs of Power. Gadgets, however, have a variable OV (0 or the DEX or Skill level of their user) and an RV equal to the Gadget's BODY, meaning that a Gadget is usually more vulnerable than an inanimate object with the same BODY score. This is because Gadgets are assumed to have all sorts of vulnerable moving and working parts. Lois Lane can disable a car made of solid steel by pulling out the ignition wires, disconnecting the battery, or something, but she certainly could not harm a solid steel mailbox.

An *inanimate object* is defined as any item that has only a non-substitutable BODY. Anything else is a Gadget. Trees, mailboxes, buildings, and jungle-gyms, therefore, are inanimate objects and have an OV/RV equal to their BODY/BODY. Cars, robots, guns, and Batarangs, on the other hand, are Gadgets, since they all have Abilities other than their BODY.

Whether an object is classified as an inanimate object or a Gadget, 1 RAP of damage is enough to knock a hole in the object that is large enough to walk or climb through, assuming that the object is large enough to sport such a hole. If Superman punched a normal tank and did 1 RAP of damage, for example, he would put a hole in the tank large enough to fly through, so he could move into the vehicle and attack its crew. The tank would continue to function in this case until its Current BODY Condition was reduced to zero or lower.

When a Player is building a Gadget, s/he may add +2 to the Factor Cost of its BODY in order to exempt the Gadget from this rule. This is referred to as *Hardened Defenses*. If Superman punched a tank constructed with Hardened Defenses, he would have to reduce its Current BODY Condition down to zero and disable the tank before he could get at the crew.

## IX. Wealth

### Upkeep

Once per game month, each Character must spend a Wealth Check to pay for his/her upkeep (rent, food, and other sundry expenses). The OV/RV of this roll is equal to the Character's Wealth rating, so an "11" is needed for success. If this Check gains positive RAPs and receives more than 2 Column Shifts, the Character may add 1 AP to his/her Wealth rating for each Column Shift earned in excess of the first two (s/he got a raise, inherited money, or had a good business month). If the Wealth Check fails, however, and the die roll was more than 3 lower than the Success Number (a 7 or less), the Character must lower his/her Wealth by 1 AP. If the roll was 6 or more points less than the Success Number (a 5 or less), the Character must lower his/her Wealth by 2 APs (financial hard times). A failed Wealth Check also means that the Character must attempt the Upkeep Wealth Check again the following week, or spend the Hero Points to make another roll the current week, and keep trying until s/he finally succeeds.

Hero Points may never be spent to increase a Character's AV/EV while making an Upkeep roll.

Example: Wally West, the Flash, starts with a Wealth rating of 4. While making one of his monthly Upkeep rolls, Wally rolls a 50 and receives 11 Column Shifts. His Wealth is now 13 (4 + 11 - 2 = 13); Wally just won the lottery.

## Bankruptcy

If a Character's Wealth score is reduced to 0, or a monthly Upkeep Check fails with a roll of 2, the Character immediately goes broke, no matter what his/her Wealth score was, and must enter into a Wealth Subplot during the next adventure. Whether or not the Character loses any Wealth and how much is lost depends upon what happens in the Subplot and the GM's good graces. Booster Gold, the Flash, and Blue Beetle have all recently lost all of their fortunes in this manner.

## Savings and Loan

Each week during which a Character does not make a Wealth Check or a charitable contribution, s/he can "out bank" a Wealth Check as savings. Players should record the number of Wealth Checks they have banked on their Character sheet.

Whenever a Wealth Check is made, the Player may expend banked Checks to increase the chances of success. Expending one banked Check allows the Player to temporarily add 1 to your Wealth score for a single Wealth Check. Expending 3 banked Checks temporarily adds 2 to the Character's Wealth, 7 banked Checks adds 3 to the Wealth, 15 banked Checks adds 4 to the Wealth, and 31 banked Checks adds 5 to the Wealth.

Players may also take out loans. S/he may use the amount of money s/he is borrowing to make a single free Wealth Check, meaning that s/he does not need to spend Hero Points to make this roll if s/he has already made a Wealth Check that week. From that point on, however, the Player must then make a Wealth Check each month for the duration of the loan, to make a loan payment. To figure out the dollar cost of each payment, and the OV/RV of the payment Wealth Check, the Player must decide how much money s/he wants to borrow, and over how long s/he wants to spread out the payments. The formula for computing the dollar cost of each payment is as follows:

Monthly Payment (in APs) = Amount Borrowed (in APs) + 20 - Total Time of Loan (in APs).

**Example:** Suppose Phil decides that his Character is going to borrow \$10,000 (9 APs of money) and spread his payments out over 16 months (24 APs of time). In this case, the OV/RV of his monthly payment is 5 (9 plus 20 minus 24 equals 5).

If a Character ever fails to make a loan payment, s/he must keep trying to make the payment until the end of the month. If the end of the month rolls around and s/he has still failed to make the loan payment, all of the items that s/he purchased with the original Wealth roll that you earned through the loan are repossessed. This includes any Gadgets that were built with parts that were purchased on the roll.

## X. Alter Ego Character Creation

Many heroes, like Dr. Fate, Captain Marvel, and Firestorm are actually more than one Character at the same time. Captain Marvel is lowly Billy Batson until he shouts the name of his mentor, Shazam; while Dr. Fate is a composite being made up of Eric and Linda Strauss. Billy's Abilities are obviously different from those of Captain Marvel, just as the Strauss' Abilities differ from those of Dr. Fate.

These are called *Alter-ego* Characters because they can assume multiple identities, each of whom has different game statistics. Most heroes have the same game statistics whether they are in costume or not. You can create your own Alter-ego Characters in the **DC HEROES RPG** by following this procedure: create each of the Character's identities separately, as though each identity was a separate Character. Take the total Hero Point cost of the most expensive identity, multiply it by five, and add in the costs of all of the other identities. Compute the final Hero Point cost of the Character by dividing this Hero Point total by the total number of identities plus 5.

Example: If it cost 150 Hero Points to build Billy Batson, and 1400 Hero Points to build Captain Marvel, it would cost 1020 Hero Points to create the entire Character: 1400 Hero Points times 5 plus 150 Hero Points is 7150, divided by 7 (two identities plus five) equals 1021 Hero Points total.

Naturally, you must specify how the Character switches between his, her, or its differing identities before beginning play.

## APPENDIX B

# Genres

The physics of the DC Universe tend to operate differently depending upon which comic book is under discussion. Some DC Comics are gritty and realistic, some are straightforward heroic fare, while others are far-fetched and fanciful.

### I. Genre Types

The rules in this book are intended to depict the mainstream adventure side of the DC Universe. However, play can switch over to the more gritty or ridiculous by invoking Genre Rules. There are five basic genres: Humor, Action, Mock-Real, Gritty, and Real. The GM should choose the one which s/he feels is most appealing to his/her Players. Once you decide upon the genre for your campaign, however, it should remain constant, unless a special occasion warrants a temporary change.

#### Humor

These adventures are ludicrous even by comic book standards. The laws of science are completely suspended in the humor genre: anything can happen and usually does. Nothing ever causes Killing damage in the Humor genre, not even Knockback or nuclear bombs. This is usually the only genre in which the Dumb Luck Power may be used. Examples of the Humor genre include: *Ambush Bug*, *Mazing Man*, and *Captain Carrot and His Amazing Zoo Crew*.

#### Action

Most of the DC Comics are set in this genre. This is where basic hero-versus-villain punch-'em-ups are found. Use the regular DC HEROES RPG rules for Action adventures. Examples include: *Justice League International*, *The Doom Patrol*, *Firestorm*, and *Superman*.

#### Mock-Real

These adventures are only slightly more realistic than the Action genre. Guns and bombs can kill people, but such deaths happen very rarely. The laws of nature apply more strictly in Mock-Real adventures than they do in Action adventures. Mock-Real books include: *The New Titans*, *Wonder Woman*, *Batman*, *Suicide Squad*, and *Captain Atom*.

#### Gritty

Gritty adventures present a somewhat more accurate version of combat and Skill use, though the occasional use of "comic book" tactics is not uncommon. Gross violations of scientific reality rarely occur in these adventures. Examples include: *Green Arrow*, *Swamp Thing* and *The Question*.

#### Real

Real titles present an even more accurate version of combat, and psychological complexity. Science works in these adventures almost exactly the same as it does in the real world. Examples include: *Watchmen*, *VFor Vendetta*, *Underworld*, and *Hellblazer*.

## II. Genre Rules

Genre	Killing Combat	Hero Points	Pushing	Recovery	Other
Humor	Never	Unlim.	Unlim.	24 min.	A
Action	No	Unlim.	Unlim.	24 hrs.	None
Mock-Real	Yes	Unlim.	Unlim.	24 hrs.	None
Gritty	Yes	½*	2	48 hrs.	B
Real	Yes	1 Col.*†	1	72 hrs.	B, C, D

### Killing Combat

In all genres with a "Yes" in this column, all attacks using guns, knives, and explosives are automatically considered Killing Combat. "Never" indicates that Killing Combat never occurs in the genre.

### Hero Points

A "½" in this column means that all Characters may only spend a number of Hero Points to improve their AV, EV, OV, or RV equal to one-half of the Ability in question rounded up. If a Character has a 7 DEX, for example, the Player may increase his/her AV or OV up to a maximum of 11 through use of Hero Points. A "1 Col." notation means that all Characters may only spend enough Hero Points to move their AV, EV, OV, or RV by a single Column. An asterix ("\*") means that Hero Points may not be spent to alter the AV or EV of Gadgets; while a dagger ("†") means that Hero Points cannot be used to alter Initiative scores.

### Pushing

This column indicates the maximum number of APs that may be gained by Pushing an Automatic Ability.

### Recovery

This is the amount of time that must pass before a Character that has had any of his/her Current Conditions reduced below zero is allowed to make a Resting Recovery Check.

### Other

**A:** Certain Powers can only be used in the genre. **B:** Multi-Attacks can affect a maximum of 2 opponents unless the attacker is using a weapon with its own Acting Value. **C:** Devastating Attacks are not allowed. **D:** Add 50 to the Base Cost of the Charisma Skill for all Characters generated for use in this genre; in addition, INFL, AURA, and SPIRIT all have a mandatory Base Cost of 10 Hero Points that must be paid, leaving Players with 30 fewer Hero Points for generating their Characters. **E:** Player Characters do not suffer Standard Award penalties for initiating Killing Combat.

## III. Customizing Genres

There may be times when none of the genres previously listed will be "just right" for the campaign you wish to run. In this case, a new genre can be invented. By manipulating the values in the columns on the Genre Rules table, the GM and Players can design a separate genre of their own. For instance, if a group wished to play Sgt. Rock and the Combat-Happy Joes of Easy Company, the GM and Players might generate a genre that looked something like this:

**Genre:** Sgt. Rock/World War II  
**Killing Combat:** Yes  
**Hero Points:** ½†  
**Pushing:** 4  
**Recovery:** 48 hours  
**Other:** C, D, E



.....

**STEP ONE:** Dial the Wheel so that the Acting Value Window lines up beneath the Opposing Value of the Dice Action.

**STEP TWO:** With numbers lined up, find the Acting Value of the Dice Action. The number showing next to the Acting Value is the Success Number that the player must roll.

**STEP THREE:** Roll the dice. If the Action is successful, count Column Shifts by turning the Wheel clockwise. Count the number of spaces that the Wheel is turned until a number greater than the number rolled appears in the window next to the Acting Value.

**STEP FOUR:** Dial the Wheel so that the Effect Value Window lines up beneath the Resistance Value of the Action and turn the Wheel counter-clockwise the number of spaces equal to the number of Column Shifts earned. When counting Column Shifts, never turn Wheel past the word "BREAK". Instead, add the number of remaining Column Shifts to the EV in order to find the RAPs earned. In this case, skip step five.

**STEP FIVE:** With numbers lined up, find the Effect Value of the Action. This is the number of RAPs received on the Action.

## APPENDIX C

# The Action Wheel

Included in the box is an *Action Wheel*, which can be used in place of the Action and Result Tables. At the GM's discretion, the Action Wheel may be given to the Players while the GM uses the *Gamemaster's Screen*. Otherwise, the GM may opt to use the wheel him/herself. This is how the Action Wheel works.

**STEP 1**

Dial the Wheel so that the red line marked "Action" lines up directly beneath the Opposing Value of the Dice Action.

**STEP 2**

Look down the Action slot to the Acting Value of the the Dice Action. This is the Success Number that the Player must roll.

**STEP 3**

Roll the dice. If the Action is successful, count Column Shifts by turning the Wheel clockwise. Count the number of spaces that the Wheel is turned until a number greater than the Success Number appears in the slot next to the Acting Value.

**STEP 4**

Now dial the Wheel so that the red line marked "Effect" lines up directly beneath the Resistance Value of the Action and turn the Wheel counter-clockwise a number of spaces equal to the number of Column Shifts earned.

Never turn the Wheel past the grey line marked "Break." Instead, add the number of remaining Column Shifts to the EV in order to find the RAPs earned. In this case, skip **Step 5**.

**STEP 5**

Look down the Effect slot to the number that appears next to the Effect Value of the Action. This is the number of RAPs received on the Action.

# Animals

This appendix contains a list of animals that can be used in adventures. Of course, this list is by no means all-inclusive, but the GM may use this list to work out the approximate Abilities of similar animals.

The Powers, Skills, and Advantages listed do not represent enhanced Abilities, but rather the natural Abilities and Skills that the animal has which mimic that Power.

## ALLIGATOR

DEX:	2	STR:	3	BODY:	3
INT:	0	WILL:	1	MIND:	1
INFL:	2	AURA:	0	SPIRIT:	2
INITIATIVE:	4	[6]			

### • Powers:

Swimming: 2, Water Freedom: 4, Claws: 4

### • Description:

Alligators live in fresh water, especially swamps. They are able to stay submerged for several hours. Alligators may reach a size of 10 feet (0 APs) and a weight of 5 to 6 APs. They are now found only in Louisiana, Florida, and southern China.

## BAT

DEX:	3	STR:	0	BODY:	1
INT:	0	WILL:	1	MIND:	1
INFL:	1	AURA:	0	SPIRIT:	1
INITIATIVE:	4				

### • Powers:

Flight: 3, Radar Sense: 3

### • Description:

Bats are nocturnal flying mammals. During the day they sleep in caves, scavenging for food at night. Despite popular belief, bats almost never attack humans. A particularly large and ferocious bat inspired Bruce Wayne to become the Batman.

## BEAR

DEX:	3	STR:	5	BODY:	5
INT:	1	WILL:	3	MIND:	2
INFL:	2	AURA:	0	SPIRIT:	2
INITIATIVE:	6				

### • Powers:

Claws: 4

### • Description:

Bears can be found almost world-

wide. They are omnivores whose weight ranges from 2 to 5 APs: their Strength changes correspondingly.

## BOA CONSTRICTOR

DEX:	1	STR:	3	BODY:	3
INT:	0	WILL:	1	MIND:	1
INFL:	2	AURA:	0	SPIRIT:	2
INITIATIVE:	5				

### • Advantages:

Lightning Reflexes

### • Description:

Boa Constrictors will always attempt Grappling Attacks. Their Lightning Reflexes only operate during the first phase of combat. They inhabit the forest and jungles of Central and South America. They can reach a size of up to 15 feet (1 AP).

## BUFFALO (BISON)

DEX:	2	STR:	6	BODY:	5
INT:	1	WILL:	1	MIND:	1
INFL:	1	AURA:	0	SPIRIT:	2
INITIATIVE:	4				

### • Powers:

Running: 4

### • Description:

Buffalo are herd animals. Hunted nearly to extinction in the 19th century, they are now only found in wildlife preserves in the southwestern United States. Buffalo can reach a weight of 5 to 6 APs.

## CHEETAH

DEX:	4	STR:	3	BODY:	3
INT:	1	WILL:	2	MIND:	2
INFL:	2	AURA:	0	SPIRIT:	2
INITIATIVE:	9				

### • Powers:

Running: 6, Claws: 4

### • Skills:

Military Science (Tracking): 2, Thief (Stealth): 3

### • Limitations:

Running is limited to two consecutive phases.

### • Advantages:

Lightning Reflexes

### • Description:

Cheetahs inhabit Africa and south-

ern Asia. They are generally solitary animals. They can be trained to hunt.

## CHIMPANZEE

DEX:	3	STR:	3	BODY:	2
INT:	1	WILL:	2	MIND:	2
INFL:	2	AURA:	0	SPIRIT:	2
INITIATIVE:	5				

### • Skills:

Acrobatics: 6

### • Description:

Chimpanzees are native to the jungles of Africa. They are surprising strong for their size: a 90-pound chimp is much stronger than a normal man. Chimps are social creatures.

## COBRA

DEX:	2	STR:	0	BODY:	2
INT:	0	WILL:	0	MIND:	1
INFL:	2	AURA:	0	SPIRIT:	2
INITIATIVE:	4				

### • Powers:

Poison Touch: 3, Ultra Vision: 4, Analytical Smell/Tracking Scent: 7

### • Description:

Cobras may be found throughout south Asia. Being cold-blooded, they are sluggish in extreme temperatures. These snakes are generally aggressive.

## COCKROACH

DEX:	4	STR:	0	BODY:	1
INT:	0	WILL:	0	MIND:	1
INFL:	0	AURA:	0	SPIRIT:	1
INITIATIVE:	4				

### • Powers:

Invulnerability: 2, Full Vision: 3, Systemic Antidote: 8

### • Description:

Cockroaches may be found in any inhabitable corner of the Earth. Prolific and hardy, these insects have a high resistance to radiation and, it is believed, will live for millennia after man has become extinct.

## DOG

DEX:	3	STR:	1	BODY:	2
INT:	1	WILL:	1	MIND:	2
INFL:	0	AURA:	0	SPIRIT:	1
INITIATIVE:	4				

### • Powers:

Analytical Smell/Tracking Scent: 7, Extended Hearing: 3

### • Description:

Dogs, both domestic and wild, may be found throughout the world. They are social animals that are gentle when domesticated, and they congregate in fearsome packs in the wild. The wild dog packs of Africa are even feared by lions.

## DOLPHIN

DEX:	3	STR:	3	BODY:	3
INT:	2	WILL:	3	MIND:	2
INFL:	2	AURA:	2	SPIRIT:	2
INITIATIVE:	7				

- **Powers:**

Active Sonar: 7, Swimming: 5

- **Description:**

Dolphins inhabit most areas of the sea, though they may sometimes be found in major rivers hundreds of miles upstream. They are usually found in groups. Dolphins are very intelligent and are friendly towards man.

## EAGLE

DEX:	5	STR:	2	BODY:	2
INT:	1	WILL:	1	MIND:	1
INFL:	1	AURA:	2	SPIRIT:	2
INITIATIVE:	9				

- **Powers:**

Flight: 5, Telescopic Vision: 9, Claws: 2

- **Advantages:**

Lightning Reflexes, Sharp Eye

- **Description:**

Eagles may be found throughout most of America, Africa, and Eurasia. They are usually found in mated pairs. They stake out a territory that can extend to a hundred square miles. They will fiercely defend their territory from other large birds of prey.

## ELECTRIC EEL

DEX:	1	STR:	1	BODY:	1
INT:	0	WILL:	0	MIND:	1
INFL:	1	AURA:	0	SPIRIT:	1
INITIATIVE:	2 [5]				

- **Powers:**

Swimming: 2, Lightning: 4, Water Freedom: 4

- **Description:**

The electric eel inhabits the rivers of South America. Its electrical discharges are powerful enough to paralyze an animal as large as a horse.

## ELEPHANT

DEX:	3	STR:	7	BODY:	7
INT:	1	WILL:	1	MIND:	1
INFL:	1	AURA:	0	SPIRIT:	1
INITIATIVE:	5				

- **Description:**

The Asian elephant may be found in the forests of Ceylon, India, Burma, Southeast Asia, and Malaysia. It can reach a height of 9 feet and a weight of 5 tons. The African elephant can reach a height of 13 feet and can weigh upwards of 6 tons. An elephant requires one half ton of food a day.

## GNAT

DEX:	7	STR:	0	BODY:	1
INT:	0	WILL:	0	MIND:	1
INFL:	0	AURA:	0	SPIRIT:	1
INITIATIVE:	7				

- **Powers:**

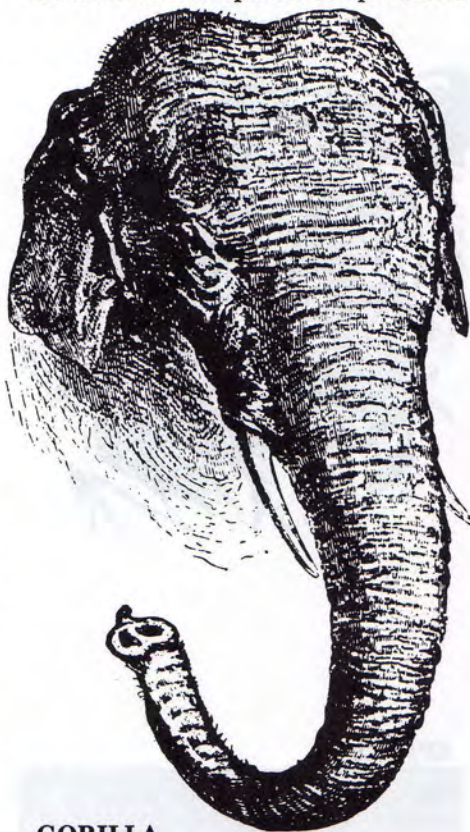
Shrinking: 12

- **Limitations:**

Shrinking is Always On

- **Description:**

Gnats are found in most parts of the world. Some species are parasitic.



## GORILLA

DEX:	2	STR:	5	BODY:	5
INT:	1	WILL:	2	MIND:	2
INFL:	1	AURA:	0	SPIRIT:	1
INITIATIVE:	4				

- **Description:**

Gorillas live in Africa in groups of ten to twenty. They reach a height of 6 feet, and a weight of over 600 pounds.

## HAWK

DEX:	5	STR:	1	BODY:	1
INT:	1	WILL:	1	MIND:	1
INFL:	1	AURA:	0	SPIRIT:	1
INITIATIVE:	9				

- **Powers:**

Flight: 6, Telescopic Vision: 7, Claws: 2

- **Advantages:**

Lightning Reflexes

- **Description:**

Hawks may be found throughout the world. They nest in pairs and feed on snakes and small rodents.

## HORSE

DEX:	2	STR:	4	BODY:	5
INT:	1	WILL:	1	MIND:	2
INFL:	0	AURA:	0	SPIRIT:	1
INITIATIVE:	3				

- **Powers:**

Running: 5

- **Description:**

Horses are found throughout the world, although they are very rarely seen living in herds in the wild.

## LION

DEX:	3	STR:	3	BODY:	4
INT:	1	WILL:	2	MIND:	2
INFL:	2	AURA:	0	SPIRIT:	2
INITIATIVE:	8				

- **Powers:**

Claws: 4

- **Skills:**

Military Science (Tracking): 2, Military Science (Camouflage Self): 3

- **Advantages:**

Lightning Reflexes

- **Description:**

Lions roam the veldt of Africa and western India. They travel in prides of one male, three to six females, and several cubs. They can be trained.

## OCTOPUS

DEX:	2	STR:	2	BODY:	1
INT:	1	WILL:	1	MIND:	1
INFL:	1	AURA:	0	SPIRIT:	1
INITIATIVE:	4 [5]				

- **Powers:**

Extra Limb (x8): 3, Water Freedom: 3, Stretching: 2

- **Skills:**

Military Science (Camouflage Self): 3

- **Description:**

The octopus lives in the temperate zones of the world's oceans. A shy creature, it seldom bites, even when handled. They move either by wriggling their eight tentacles or by propelling themselves backward using a jet stream of water. In combat, octopi always attempt to Grapple.

## OWL

DEX:	2	STR:	1	BODY:	1
INT:	1	WILL:	1	MIND:	1
INFL:	1	AURA:	0	SPIRIT:	1
INITIATIVE:	6				

- **Powers:**

Flight: 4, Ultra Vision: 6

- **Skills:**

Thief (Stealth): 3

- **Limitations:**

Stealth only used during Flight.

- **Advantages:**

Lightning Reflexes

- **Description:**

Owls may be found in forests worldwide. They are nocturnal birds of prey, that are aided in their search for food by their silent flight and keen night vision. They are fierce fighters, and are able to kill animals as large as small dogs.

### RABBIT

DEX:	2	STR:	0	BODY:	1
INT:	0	WILL:	0	MIND:	1
INFL:	1	AURA:	0	SPIRIT:	1
INITIATIVE:	2				

- **Powers:**

Running: 5, Digging: 2

- **Description:**

Found in most parts of the world, rabbits are prolific breeders. Rabbits are herbivores.

### RHINOCEROS

DEX:	3	STR:	6	BODY:	9
INT:	1	WILL:	1	MIND:	1
INFL:	2	AURA:	0	SPIRIT:	2
INITIATIVE:	6				

- **Drawbacks:**

Serious Physical Restriction: the Rhino's maximum range of sight and hearing is 3 APs distance.

- **Description:**

Rhinos live in India, Africa, and Malaysia. They are extremely bad-tempered, aggravated by its poor senses of sight, hearing, and smell.

### SCORPION

DEX:	1	STR:	0	BODY:	1
INT:	0	WILL:	0	MIND:	1
INFL:	2	AURA:	0	SPIRIT:	2
INITIATIVE:	3				

- **Powers:**

Poison Touch: 2

- **Description:**

Scorpions, which live in temperate, subtropical, and tropical regions, are more of a pest than a danger, but can have a fatal sting.

### SHARK

DEX:	6	STR:	4	BODY:	6
INT:	0	WILL:	0	MIND:	2
INFL:	2	AURA:	0	SPIRIT:	2
INITIATIVE:	8				

- **Powers:**

Swimming: 6, Water Freedom: 6, Claws: 7

- **Description:**

Sharks may be found in all the major oceans of the world. There are thousands of species of shark, only a few of which are dangerous. The man

eaters include the Great White Shark, the Tiger Shark, and the Mako Shark (which has been known to leap aboard boats). Sharks are usually solitary creatures, though some varieties, like the fearsome Hammerhead Shark, live in packs.



### TIGER

DEX:	3	STR:	3	BODY:	4
INT:	1	WILL:	2	MIND:	2
INFL:	2	AURA:	0	SPIRIT:	2
INITIATIVE:	8				

- **Powers:**

Analytical Smell/Tracking Scent: 3, Running: 4, Claws: 4

- **Skills:**

Military Science (Camouflage Self): 2, Thief (Stealth): 4

- **Advantages:**

Lightning Reflexes

- **Description:**

Native to southeast Asia and Africa, tigers are aggressive creatures that generally live alone.

### VULTURE

DEX:	4	STR:	1	BODY:	2
INT:	0	WILL:	1	MIND:	1
INFL:	1	AURA:	0	SPIRIT:	1
INITIATIVE:	5				

- **Powers:**

Flight: 5, Telescopic Vision: 8

- **Description:**

Vultures soar high over temperate and tropical regions of the world. They feed on carrion, which has earned them the loathing of the human race.

### WHALE

DEX:	3	STR:	12	BODY:	12
INT:	1	WILL:	2	MIND:	2
INFL:	2	AURA:	0	SPIRIT:	2
INITIATIVE:	6				

- **Powers:**

Swimming: 4, Sonar: 7

- **Description:**

Whales swim in all oceans and most seas of the world. They are some of the largest mammals on Earth.

### WOLF

DEX:	2	STR:	1	BODY:	2
INT:	1	WILL:	1	MIND:	1
INFL:	2	AURA:	0	SPIRIT:	2
INITIATIVE:	7				

- **Powers:**

Analytical Smell/Tracking Scent: 7, Extended Hearing: 3, Claws: 2

- **Skills:**

Thief (Stealth): 4

- **Advantages:**

Lightning Reflexes

- **Description:**

Contrary to popular belief, wolves are not the enemies of man. Wolves' primary prey are field mice. They now only inhabit the northern regions of Earth's major continents.

### SPIDER

DEX:	4	STR:	0	BODY:	1
INT:	0	WILL:	0	MIND:	1
INFL:	0	AURA:	0	SPIRIT:	1
INITIATIVE:	4				

- **Powers:**

Poison Touch: 3, Full Vision: 2, Glue: 1

- **Description:**

Of the thousands of varieties of spiders known to man, only a few are dangerous. These include the Black Widow and the Australian Red Back Spider.

### SPIDER MONKEY

DEX:	3	STR:	1	BODY:	1
INT:	1	WILL:	2	MIND:	2
INFL:	1	AURA:	0	SPIRIT:	1
INITIATIVE:	5				

- **Skills:**

Acrobatics: 4

- **Description:**

Spider Monkeys are long-limbed inhabitants of the South American tropics. Curiosity is one of their strongest traits.

# Designer's Notes

## (or, "Why We Did What We Did")

Designer's Notes. I always wanted to write one of these.

First off, I suppose I ought to explain the circumstances which brought about the **DC HEROES Role-Playing Game** Second Edition in the first place. Since the **DC HEROES RPG** was first published way back in 1985, the DC Universe has undergone drastic change. At the time the first edition of the game was being prepared, the landmark *Crisis On Infinite Earths* series which forever reshaped the face of the DC Universe was still little more than a gleam in the eyes of Marv Wolfman and George Perez. Now, three years later, after all the ramifications of the Crisis seem to have been neatly tied up, we thought it would be a good idea to go back and redesign the game in order to place it within the current continuity. A quick comparison between the Character Cards from the new edition and those of the old will show you just how much has changed in the last three years.

We've also taken this opportunity to expand upon the basic rules and streamline their application. Now, let's get to some of the specific changes . . .

### Basic System

The basic Action/Result Table system works so well that we wisely decided to leave it alone. The only real changes in the basics are found in the Pushing rules. You will notice that the Abilities which can and cannot be Pushed are a little more clearly defined this time around. The Hero Point fee for Pushing was added in order to insure that most Push attempts will only result in an increase of one or two APs. You can still gain a lot more through a Push, but now you've got to pay for it.

The basic ground movement rate was lowered by 1 AP, because the old system had half the characters in the DC Universe breaking the world record for the 100 meter dash by 4 seconds (without steroids, yet!)

### Combat

Combat, too, remains relatively unchanged. Characters are now allowed to spend Hero Points to up their Initiative scores in order to explain the occasional panel in which the Joker manages to get the drop on Batman, or Luthor slips away before Superman can follow him. Most of the changes in the combat system simply provide the Players with more options. Thus we now have Charging Attacks, Flailing Attacks, Blocks, and Dodges.

The Pressing the Attack and Laying Back maneuvers were added in order to give the guy or gal who wins Initiative more of an edge.

### Gadgets

Hoo boy! We had some problems here. So what else is new?

It's no secret that everyone was less than satisfied with the

Gadgetry rules from the original edition—that's why we went and published the *Hardware Handbook*. The problem is that even fewer of you were satisfied with the changes. This meant that we had to go back and start from scratch.

It seems that there were four big problems surrounding Gadgets: how do you compute the OV/RV of an attempt to build them? How do you determine their Hero Point and dollar costs? How do Uses, Duration, and Charges work? How do Characters begin play with Gadgets already built?

The first question was easily resolved: the OV/RV should obviously equal the number of APs of the Ability you are trying to install; it's quick and simple. But what about Gadgets with more than one ability? No problem, in this case you make more than one roll.

The second question proved more difficult. The cost of a Gadget should obviously be based upon the amount of Hero Points it would cost you to build all of the Gadget's Abilities into a Character, but probably shouldn't equal that cost, as per *Hardware Handbook*, since Gadgets can run out of juice, be taken away, dropped, forgotten, or pulverized. Finally, we came up with the idea of the Gadget Bonus Divisor, which divides down the Hero Point costs for Gadgets enough to make them worthwhile. Once we had this problem solved, question four was easily answered: simply allow beginning Players to pay the Hero Points costs of their initial Gadgets, with no rolls necessary.

The real problem turned out to be question three. Charges were cumbersome and no one liked to keep track of how long Batman had used each and every item in his utility belt. In addition, the rules for Charges also resulted in a number of silly inconsistencies: the knife that wears out every month, the car that only drives for a couple of hours once you turn the radio on, and the famous fork that wears out after each meal. Most **DC HEROES RPG** GMs, we found, simply ignored the Charges altogether.

Greg Gorden, Tom Cook, and I finally came up with the answer to the Charges problem during a friendly conversation at a gaming convention in Milwaukee when we evolved the concept of "Reliability Numbers." Now you can use all of your Gadgets without any bookkeeping. "R #s" seem to simulate reality a little better as well, and add a new twist to combat (oh no, the BB Gun is jammed!).

### Character Interaction

Now, everyone can talk; not just those Characters with the Charisma Skill. This change was added in order to give new prominence to the Character Interaction rules and to give the Mystical Attributes some usefulness. The Interaction Maneuvers were created in order to encourage the Players to use some "strategy" in interaction situations.

## Wealth

The problem with the old **DC HEROES RPG** Wealth rules was that money was so easy to come by. If you were a Billionaire, each Hero Point you spent was equal to \$5,000,000. Picture, if you will, an entire hero group made up of Billionaires. The Penguin is on a crime spree in Gotham City, and plans to steal the \$20 million dollar Mizell diamond from Gotham Museum. Instead of capturing the fiend, the Players simply offer him \$100 million (20 Hero Points) to go straight and leave them alone. It's awful hard for the GM to come up with a reason why the Penguin won't accept their offer. If you have a hard time swallowing that, imagine this: the heroes are interrogating a street thug who refuses to talk. The heroes respond with, "Okay, if you tell us where the Mutants' hideout is located, we'll give you ten million dollars in small unmarked bills" (2 Hero Points). Again, this seems to go against the grain.

Now, Wealth is a little more in line. Buying something now requires a Dice roll in order to reduce bookkeeping and to add that vague "comic book" feel to the whole affair. After all, sometimes Bruce Wayne simply spends a lot of money on some super-weapon that will help him capture a criminal; but sometimes he doesn't.

## Character Creation

From your letters, it seems that most of you wanted more detailed Character creation rules with more options. Well, that's what we've given you.

The idea of Factor Cost was introduced in order to help insure that the costs of the various Powers and Skills would be proportional to their usefulness. In the original edition, remember, the costs of all Powers and Skills were uniform. Now the useless Powers are cheap, while the "galactic domination" Powers are expensive. In addition, all of the Factor Costs were calculated using a set formula, allowing us to keep the costs of any future Powers and Skills that are added to the system consistent with those found here.

We also added several new Powers. Most of the new Powers are Mystical for two reasons. First, we wanted to strike a better balance in the ratio between Physical, Mental, and Mystical Powers; and second, *Swamp Thing* and *Hellblazer* are my favorite books. This job is not without its advantages, small as they may be.

Advantages were created in order to provide more options for Character creation, and to provide a wider pallet for describing the pre-generated heroes from the DC Universe. Now, all of the human level Characters (like Batman, the Question, Sgt. Rock, and the Blackhawks) no longer look exactly the same. Incidentally, the Advantages also tend to encourage heroes to use the full range of their Abilities in play instead of relying solely upon their fists and force field belts.

Most Drawbacks are what were formerly called Limitations. A distinction between Drawbacks and Limitations was drawn in order to add a little more logic to the Hero Point cost system.

## Mystic Link

Mystic Link still exists, but you'll notice that it is a lot different now. This is because DC has decided that magic will no longer carry its former advantages in the post-Crisis universe. Magical characters are now no better or worse than anyone else.

## The Spy Skill

The Spy Skill was dropped from the game because it is now irrelevant. Photo Interpretation is simply a Perception Check, Coding is a simple INT roll, and Brainwashing is an application of a Gadget or drug with the Hypnosis or Control Powers (why should we have three separate sets of mechanics for mental domination?). Connoisseur was turned into an Advantage. If you want to create a Character that is particularly good in any of these areas, use the Scholar Advantage.

## Your Questions

Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to answer some of your frequently asked questions:

*Shouldn't my favorite Character have X APs of STR, rather than Y?*

Nope. At least, we don't think so. I should also probably point out that the vast majority of our Character statistics are based on reams of "inside information" provided to us by the kind folks at DC; we don't just make these things up.

In fact, this is an appropriate time to again thank Bob Greenberger and his cohorts. Bob spent quite a bit of time answering questions like "If an evil alien scientist captured Wonder Woman, Captain Atom, and Martian Manhunter, and subjected all three of them to a giant laser, gradually increasing the power until each fell, who would drop first?" (Wonder Woman, of course); and, "When the Justice League goes out to dinner, who picks up the check?" (Batman).

If you are dissatisfied with some of the ratings given to the Characters, feel free to tinker with them, though you might want to warn your Players if Captain Cold is going to show up with a 30 DEX and a 26 STR.

Personal note to the guy in the Captain Marvel suit at the Superman Expo: Hey, if it was up to us Cap would have a higher STR than Superman. DC just didn't see it that way.

*Can you send me statistics for my favorite Character?*

What, you want more? Aren't the 250 Characters included in the box enough?

As much as we'd like to, we really don't have the staff or the time to fulfill requests like this. Usually, if you write us a letter asking about a Character we can tell you where you can find the stats. If the stats haven't been published, it means that we haven't worked them out yet.

New Character statistics appear in the quarterly **DC Heroes Newsletter**. Send us your lists of whom you would like to see. The most popular candidates will find themselves in print.

*How can I get the DC HEROES Newsletter?*

Write and ask. Couldn't be easier.

*What modules and sourcebooks will Mayfair publish next?*

Whatever you ask for. Seriously, we look at your requests, and if there is a certain title that everyone seems to be clamoring for, we'll usually do it. How does a mystical sourcebook and a Swamp Thing/Hellblazer Match-Play sound?

*Is it true what they say about Mayfair editors?*

Yep, except for the part about the balloons. The art department is worse, though.

Anyway, that's about all we have space for. So how come I haven't answered your question about the design of the game? Because I haven't heard it yet. If you have any questions or comments, write to me c/o Mayfair. I'm outta here.



