

## Praise for *Hero Kids*:

“★★★★★”

*“My son loves to play it and blew through the adventures so fast...”*

*“I was woken up at 6am this morning by my son, saying he wanted to play Hero Kids right now! There's no such thing as going back to sleep in a 7yo's universe!”*

*“The game was simple enough for my precocious three-year-old to enjoy, and my five year old to not be distracted from. With the included adventure we all had a lot of fun, including me.”*

*“The game mechanics are easy to understand and fast enough to keep young players interested and do not get in the way of the story that is unfolding.”*

*“The design is clever, well thought out, and guaranteed to make you jealous that you didn't come up with it first.”*

*“A great 'starter' RPG for kids, and even better gaming experience for parents to play with their kids. The core RPG experience has been boiled down to its bare essentials here.”*

# HERO KIDS

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[heroforgegames.com](http://heroforgegames.com)

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- Added full page Brecken Vale color map.
- Updated Brecken Vale map to new color version.
- Updated Materials section.
- Updated images to color.
- Fixed missing apostrophe and missing return.
- Updated Pirate Recruiter and Pirate Swordsman.
- Added perception skill.
- Reworded tracking and flying skills.



# HERO KIDS



FANTASY ROLE-PLAYING GAME FOR KIDS AGED 4 TO 10

BY

JUSTIN HALLIDAY

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	8
Pint-Sized Heroes	10
Big-Sized Problems	10
Heroes of Shapes and Sizes	11
The Brecken Vale	12
Materials	14
Included Stuff	14
Stuff You Need to Find	14
Awesome Stuff	15
Downloadable Extras	15
Playing the Game	16
Skirmish	16
Delve	16
Exploration	17
Role-Playing	17
Rolling For Stuff	18
Attacking and Defending	18
Special Attacks and Abilities	19
Examples, Exschamples...	19
Hero Cards	20
Melee Dice Pool (Strength)	21
Ranged Dice Pool (Dexterity)	21
Magic Dice Pool (Intelligence)	21
Armor Dice Pool	21
Health Boxes	21
Normal Attack	22
Special Action	22
Bonus Ability	23
Skills	24
Inventory	25
Equipment and Items	26
Equipment	26
Items and Boons	27
Health and Damage	28
Health	28



Damage	29
Knocked Out	29
<u>Healing</u>	<u>30</u>
Magic	30
Potions	31
Resting	31
<u>Encounter Setup</u>	<u>32</u>
Encounter Intro	32
Role-Playing	32
Map	32
Encounter Features	32
Ability Tests	32
Monsters	33
Tactics	33
Conclusion	33
<u>Running Encounters</u>	<u>34</u>
Preparation	34
Initiative	34
Rounds	34
Turns	34
Actions	35
Movement	35
Resolution	35
Rewards	35
<u>Adventuring</u>	<u>36</u>
Ability Tests	37
Inventory and Skills	38
Ability Test Difficulties	38
Ability Test Examples	39
<u>Exploration</u>	<u>40</u>
Choices	40
Secrets	40
Gates	40
Obstructions	41
Puzzles	41
Hazards	41
Traps	41
<u>Role-Playing</u>	<u>42</u>
Playing a Hero	42

Harnessing Imaginations	42
Guiding the Story	43
Coaxing Their Voice	43
<u>Advanced Combat</u>	<u>44</u>
Additional Attack Effects	44
Alternate Attack Effects	44
Attacking Engaged Targets	45
Combining Effects	45
Improvising Actions	46
Knocked Down, Prone, Get Up	46
Line of Sight and Cover	46
Moving Around	47
Ongoing Effects and Conditions	48
Pushing and Pulling	48
Splitting Attacks	49
<u>Creating Heroes</u>	<u>50</u>
What Sort of Hero?	50
Allocating Dice	50
Normal Attacks	51
Special Action	51
Bonus Ability	51
Inventory and Skills	51
<u>Considerations</u>	<u>52</u>
<u>Hints and Tips</u>	<u>54</u>
<u>Glossary</u>	<u>56</u>
<u>Heroes!</u>	<u>62</u>
<u>Monsters!</u>	<u>73</u>







# INTRODUCTION

*From their earliest years, the kids of Rivenshore are trained to survive in a wild and dangerous world.*

*While the warriors and sword-maidens of their clan are away from the Brecken Vale, protecting it from distant threats, it's up to the kids to deal with any emergencies that arise in the vale.*

*Each of the kids specializes in a different area, training and practicing, so they are prepared for the regular calamities that plague the inhabitants of the town.*

*Whether they're exploring the foreboding Darkenwold forest, rescuing lost miners from the abandoned Mines of Martek, saving a friend from the lair of giant rats, or venturing into a fearsome minotaur's maze, the kids of Rivenshore are always ready for action and first to volunteer to help a friend in trouble.*

*These are Hero Kids!*





The *Hero Kids* fantasy role-playing game contains everything you need to play a fun and interesting game with your kids, including:

- Heroes
- Monsters
- Rules
- Adventure ideas

*Hero Kids* comes bundled with an introductory adventure that is a great starting point for your kids. Further adventures and expansions are available, probably from wherever you got this core game.

---

Role-playing games are a unique and fun way of teaching our kids a huge number of skills, such as:

- |                 |                   |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| • Counting      | • Problem solving |
| • Math          | • Imagination     |
| • Probabilities | • Acting          |
| • Teamwork      | • History         |

Younger kids can start with counting and as they grow up they can work their way through the more complicated skills that RPGs develop.

And while the kids are doing all this learning, you can spend time together playing a fun game that offers endless opportunities for excitement and adventure.

# PINT-SIZED HEROES

*Hero Kids* isn't your average role-playing game. In fact, it's about two feet shorter than your average role-playing game because in this game, the kids are the heroes.

## Big-Sized Problems

*Hero Kids* is set in the sort of world where grown-ups are constantly getting themselves into trouble, and where the kids are the ones who sort it out.

- When several greedy miners get lost in the old mine, it's the kids who rescue them.
- When a horde of goblins raid the village festival and steal the prize pig, the kids are there to fight them off.
- When rustlers steal their favorite horses and ponies, the kids set out to get them back.
- When the tavern basement is overrun by unusually large and ferocious rats (again!), the kids drive them back out.
- When a rare unicorn is seen in the woods, the kids save it from mean goblins.
- When an urgent message must be sent to a reclusive mage, the kids set out to deliver it.
- When ghost pirates attack the village and capture everyone, the kids have to rescue themselves!



# Heroes of Shapes and Sizes

The hero kids include these scamps (and more):

*Warrior*



- Double melee attack
- Animal tracking

*Hunter*



- Split shot attack
- Versatile equipment

*Healer*



- Searing magic attack
- Healing abilities

*Warlock*



- Flame burst attack
- History and lore expert

# THE BRECKEN VALE

*Hero Kids* adventures take place in the Brecken Vale, an isolated valley that lies in the cold north of an ancient and dangerous medieval world.

*You live in a small village, **Rivenshore**, which is nestled in a tight valley beneath a range of towering mountains.*

*Rivenshore would be a beautiful place to live, if it weren't beset by an endless series of calamities.*

*The village is on the eastern shore of the **Camarva River**. The river runs fast and crooked from the mountains, down through the valley, the **Brecken Vale**, and out into a small bay. To the east of the village are the dark and wild **Darkenwold Woods**, which have claimed many foolish travelers.*

*The Brecken Vale is bounded by the **Druinhowe Mountains**, their snow-covered peaks cloaked in cloud.*

*The vale should be a haven for its civilized inhabitants, but instead it keeps them in close proximity to no end of threats that offer boundless opportunities for adventure.*







# MATERIALS

*Hero Kids* requires some materials to play; most are included, some you'll need to find, and there's some extras you can add to make the game awesome.

## Included Stuff

- **Heroes:** Warriors, hunters, and more are included. The PDF has hero cards for the players and stand-up minis for the map. Cut and fold them.
- **Monsters:** Monster cards and stand-up minis are included in the PDF; print and cut out these minis.
- **Adventure:** The included PDF adventure – Basement O Rats - has instructions for play.
- **Maps:** Grid maps are used for combat; these are included with all *Hero Kids* adventure PDFs.

## Stuff You Need to Find

- **GM:** If you're reading this, then we can assume that you are the game master (GM).
- **Players:** You'll need one or more of these.
- **Printer:** To print the cards, maps and stand-ups.
- **Dice:** You'll need at least one six-sided die (d6).
- **Pencils:** To mark off damage and healing potions.
- **Erasers:** You'll also need to remove the damage and recover used healing potions.
- **Scissors:** For cutting out the hero cards and stand-up minis, of course. Watch out for little fingers!



## Awesome Stuff

- **More Maps:** Apart from the included maps, you can use dungeon tiles, or poster maps from *D&D* and *Pathfinder Beginner Box*. For the more adventurous, you can even use *Duplo* blocks or *Lego Heroica* sets.
- **More Dice:** Three d6s is good, but six or more is better for the opposed rolls. Go raid your *Yahtzee* set for a bunch of them, ideally in different colors.
- **Candy:** A fun way of tracking the hero and monster health is to use candy to fill the damage boxes. When a hero damages a monster, that hero's player can eat the candy. But when a monster damages a hero, the GM gets the treat!

## Downloadable Extras

- **Extras:** You can expand your *Hero Kids* experience with additional adventures, pets, heroes, equipment, and expansions from DriveThruRPG:

<http://www.drivethrurpg.com/>



# PLAYING THE GAME

*Hero Kids* can be played as a quick and simple single-encounter skirmish game, a multi-encounter delve, an adventure with combat, exploration, and role-playing or even as a proper campaign with persistent heroes, a plot, and a wider world to explore.

## Skirmish

The simplest way to play *Hero Kids* is as a single-encounter skirmish, where a handful of heroes tackle a group of monsters in a pure tactical challenge. These skirmishes can be quick battles against minions, or more challenging battles against tougher monsters that require good teamwork, strategy, and resource management to overcome.

## Delve

Delves are short combat-oriented adventures that string together a handful of encounters as a quick adventure. Delves are often structured like this:

- Adventure hook
- Introductory encounter
- Middle encounter
- Boss encounter

There's infinite variation in any format or style of adventure, so this structure is not carved in stone and the GM is empowered to color outside the lines.



## Exploration

When the players are ready to branch out beyond just combat encounters, you can progressively introduce the following exploration elements to the game:

- Choices
- Secrets
- Gates
- Obstructions
- Puzzles
- Hazards
- Traps

The players need to use their brains and their heroes' capabilities, skills, and possessions to overcome these challenges.

You can find more details about these exploration elements in the Exploration section on page 40.

## Role-Playing

The final ingredient for the full experience of role-playing games is actual role-playing. The incorporation of role-playing into *Hero Kids* can take a number of forms:

- Players using their heroes' appearance and characteristics to determine how they act or speak.
- A simple conversation between our heroes and the quest-giver at the start of an adventure to tease out important information.
- A climactic conversation with the adventure's baddie before, during, or after the final battle!

# ROLLING FOR STUFF

The main thing you'll roll dice for in *Hero Kids* is combat. When in combat, there are three types of attacks (melee, ranged, and magic) and armor:



Heroes (and monsters) can only use an attack in which they have at least one die in their pool.

Each hero and monster's strengths and weaknesses are represented by the 'pool' of six-sided dice they have in each area, such as these examples:

				Awesome
				Good
				None
				Mediocre

The example hero card on page 20 shows how all this looks for a real character.

## Attacking and Defending

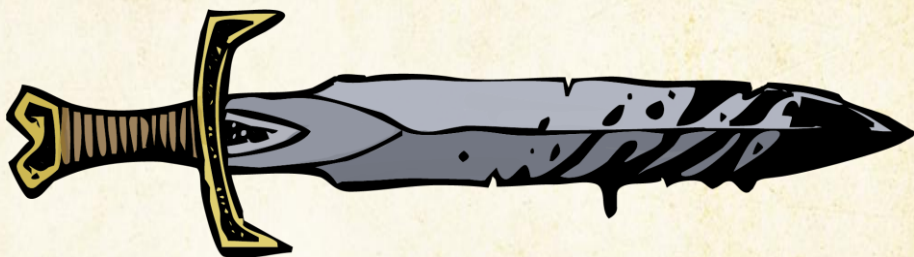
When attacking, the attacker rolls the dice pool for their chosen attack (melee, ranged, or magic) and the defender rolls their armor dice pool.

**If the attacker's highest die equals or exceeds the defender's highest die then the attack hits.**




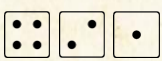

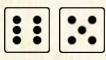
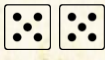





## Special Attacks and Abilities

The number of dice rolled by the attacker and the defender can be modified by their special actions or bonus abilities, such as warriors who gain extra dice to attack an enemy that an ally has recently attacked.



## Examples, Exschamples...

Let's check out some examples of attack rolls:

<i>Attacker</i>		<i>Defender</i>	
	vs.		Attack hits!
	vs.		Attack hits!
	vs.		Attack misses!
	vs.		Attack hits!
	vs.		Attack misses!

# HERO CARDS

The heroes and monsters are neatly contained on hero cards, which have all the information you need to play that character:



Heroes have the following characteristics:

- Melee Dice Pool
- Ranged Dice Pool
- Magic Dice Pool
- Armor Dice Pool
- Health Boxes
- Normal Attack(s)
- Special Action
- Bonus Ability
- Inventory
- Skills



## Melee Dice Pool (Strength)



The melee dice pool (melee pool) shows the number of dice the hero or monster uses for melee actions and Strength ability tests.

## Ranged Dice Pool (Dexterity)



The ranged dice pool (ranged pool) shows the number of dice the hero or monster uses for ranged actions and Dexterity ability tests.

## Magic Dice Pool (Intelligence)



The magic dice pool (magic pool) shows the number of dice the hero or monster uses for magic actions and Intelligence ability tests.

## Armor Dice Pool



The armor dice pool (armor pool) shows the number of dice the hero or monster uses to defend against attacks.

## Health Boxes



These boxes represent how much damage the heroes and monsters can take.

You can find more details about the heroes' health in the Health and Damage section on page 28.

## Normal Attack

All heroes and monsters have a normal attack action, which is their melee, ranged, or magic attack. Some characters may have more than one normal attack. These normal attacks deal 1 damage.

- **Melee Attack:** Melee attacks target adjacent characters. Melee attacks against prone targets gain 1 extra dice.
- **Ranged Attack:** Ranged attacks target characters up to 6 squares away (including diagonally) and must have line of sight. Ranged attacks against adjacent targets roll 1 fewer dice.
- **Magic Attack:** Magic attacks target characters up to 4 squares away (including diagonally) and must have line of sight.

## Special Action

In addition to their normal attack, heroes and monsters have a unique special attack or action.

These special attacks and actions are more complicated than the normal attacks, so the younger players might need help.



## Bonus Ability

Each character's bonus ability is a passive ability that reflects their special training, abilities, and nature. These abilities might enhance attacks or armor, or grant a unique benefit in specific circumstances.

- **Teamwork:** When a target is engaged, your attacks against that target gain 1 extra die.
- **Evasive Maneuver:** When you're damaged by an attack, you can immediately move 1 square.
- **Magic Resistance:** When defending magic attacks, your armor pool gains 1 extra die.

Additionally, some heroes have other unique abilities:



**Darkvision:** The hero can see in the dark and low light conditions.



**Flying:** The hero can fly, moving over obstacles and enemies.



**Mount:** The hero can carry another willing hero with them as they move.

## Skills

Heroes have skills to use in exploration, adventuring, and role-playing. Heroes gain extra dice when attempting ability tests where they have a relevant skill.

### *Intelligence*

These skills use the hero's intelligence (magic pool).



**Insight:** The hero is attuned to other creatures, and can intuit their motivations and intent.



**Knowledge:** The hero is learned and knows about history and lore.



**Monsters:** The hero has studied monsters and knows their strengths and weaknesses.



**Perception:** The hero is perceptive and attentive to details in the world around them.



**Persuasion:** The hero is good at talking and can win over hostile characters.



**Tracking:** The hero can follow the trail of people or animals from signs of their presence.

### *Strength*

These skills use the hero's strength (melee pool).



**Athletics:** The hero is strong and can climb or force past obstacles.



## *Dexterity*

These skills use the hero's dexterity (ranged pool).



**Acrobatics:** The hero is dexterous and can climb or dodge around obstacles.



**Crafting:** The hero can use tools to create or repair small craft items.



**Stealth:** The hero knows how to use disguises and to sneak around.

## Inventory

Heroes can hold items in their inventories. These items are used as an action. Healing potions remove damage. Other items are handy in exploration and role-playing:



**Potion:** Healing potions heal heroes to full health and can also be used on a damaged or KO'd ally.



**Rope:** Lengths of rope are very versatile and useful for overcoming terrain obstructions.



**Food:** Morsels are also very handy, especially for distracting monsters.



**Gold:** Valuables like gold are useful for persuading greedy enemies or game characters.



**Herbs:** Special herbs are the key ingredient used to make healing potions.

# EQUIPMENT AND ITEMS

## Equipment

Equipment includes armor, weapons, and unique magic items that the heroes can wear or wield.

A hero can only use one piece of equipment at a time. Heroes can own multiple pieces of equipment, but can only switch between them when not in combat.





## Items and Boons

Items are consumables that have a one-off effect. Heroes can hold any number of items, but they are discarded when used.

Items are used on the hero's turn as an action. This means that a hero can move in the same turn that they use an item, but they cannot use their normal attack or special action.

Boons are special favors that the heroes earn in their adventures. Unlike normal items, boons can be used at any time, even during an enemy's turn.



# HEALTH AND DAMAGE

In the course of their adventures the heroes deal damage, take damage, and recover health.

## Health

All heroes have three health boxes, which means that they can take two hits without penalty, but the third hit knocks them out:

Hero health boxes:

<div>KO</div>	<div>Hurt</div>	<div>Bruised</div>
---------------	-----------------	--------------------

Weaker monsters have less health, while tougher monsters have more health than the heroes:

Boss monster:

<div>KO</div>	<div>Hurt</div>	<div>Bruised</div>	<div>Grazed</div>
---------------	-----------------	--------------------	-------------------

Tough monster:

<div>KO</div>	<div>Hurt</div>	<div>Bruised</div>
---------------	-----------------	--------------------

Normal monster:

<div>KO</div>	<div>Hurt</div>
---------------	-----------------

Weak monster:

<div>KO</div>
---------------



# Damage

Generally speaking, all melee, ranged, and magic attacks deal 1 damage when they hit. In certain cases the damage can be increased (or even negated), such as through a hero or a monster's special action or their bonus ability.

Each time a hero or a monster takes damage, their controller marks off one (or more) health boxes, starting with Bruised, then Hurt, then KO.

Some heroes and monsters have special abilities that only trigger when they take damage or when they are at a specific health level, such as Hurt.

When you mark off the final box, KO, the character is knocked out and out of the fight.

## Knocked Out

When a hero is knocked out (KO'd), he or she has no actions until they are healed by an ally or their allies win the encounter (giving them a chance to rest and remove some damage).





# HEALING

The heroes have various methods of healing themselves and their allies during their adventures.

## Magic

Certain heroes – such as Healers – have the ability to magically heal themselves or their allies.



# HERO KIDS



**Healer:**


☐


☐













☐ KO

☐ Hurt

☐ Bruised



**Magic Attack: Searing Light**  
Magic attack at a target up to 4 squares away.

---

**Special Action: Healing Touch**  
Remove 1 damage from yourself or an adjacent ally.

---

**Bonus Ability: Potion Brewer**  
After an encounter, you can replenish 1 potion that you or an ally has used.

Inventory and Skills





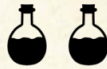

In combat, this ability is a special action, which means that the character can either heal someone *or* attack an enemy.

Outside of combat, magic healing can return all allies to full health (if this makes sense in the adventure).



## Potions

Heroes start each adventure with potions that are shown on their hero cards, like this:



Using a potion is an action.

It can be taken by the hero who is using it or administered to an adjacent ally, and it returns the hero to full health.

The potion is the GM's best friend (not literally, 'cos that would be weird). With potions you can regulate the amount of healing that heroes have available to them. So if the heroes are having trouble, you can throw them extra potions as treasure after encounters.

## Resting

The final method of healing is for our heroes to take a short rest after an encounter where they've been damaged (again, assuming this makes sense in the adventure).

When heroes rest they remove 1 damage, KO'd heroes recover to hurt, hurt heroes become bruised, and bruised heroes fully recover.

# ENCOUNTER SETUP

Encounters are described with the same details.

## Encounter Intro

Each encounter has a short introduction that you should read out to the players. It's in a box like this:

*You slowly enter the ruins, wary of the ghosts that inhabit them.*

## Role-Playing

Many encounters are purely role-playing, others open with role-playing before degenerating into combat.

## Map

Each combat encounter has a grid map that is used to stage the encounter. This map shows the terrain and starting positions for the heroes and monsters.

Heroes: (H)      Monsters: (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8)

## Encounter Features

Some encounter areas have unique elements, such as furniture or obstacles, which are described here.

## Ability Tests

Ability tests and skills that the heroes can use are detailed here. Read about Ability Tests on page 36.



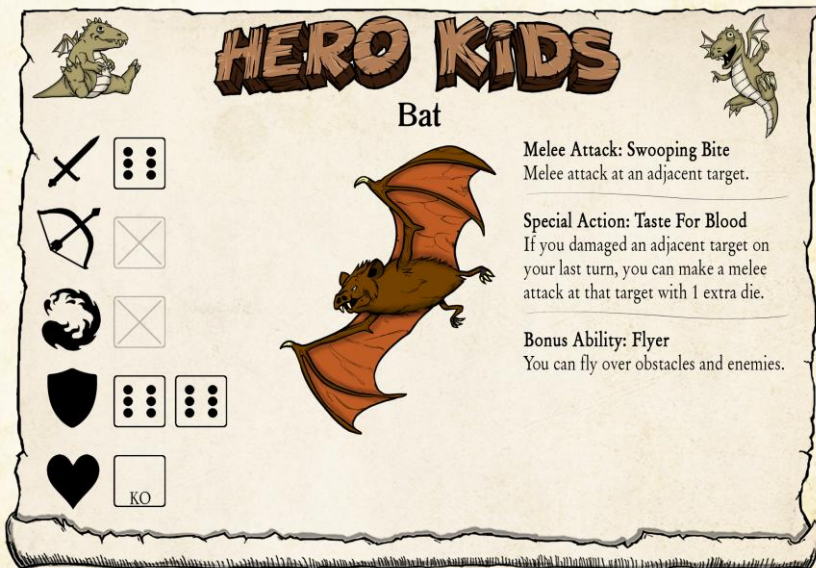
# Monsters

This section lists the number and types of monsters in the encounter based on how many heroes there are:

1 Hero:	1 x King Rat	①
	1 x Giant Rat	②
4 Heroes:	1 x King Rat	①
	4 x Giant Rats	② ③ ④ ⑤

The numbers are their starting position on the map.

Unique monsters have a monster card and stand-up included on the final pages of the adventure:



## Tactics

The monsters' tactics and goals are detailed here.

## Conclusion

What happens after the heroes have defeated their enemies or overcome the encounter's challenges.

# RUNNING ENCOUNTERS

Combat encounters have multiple parts:

- Preparation
- Initiative
- Rounds
- Turns
- Actions
- Movement
- Resolution
- Rewards

## Preparation

First set up the map and hero and monster stand-ups.

## Initiative

Once the map is set up, have one of the players roll a d6 for initiative and then you roll a d6 for the monsters. The side (heroes or monsters) with the highest roll wins and heroes win on a tie.

## Rounds

Combat encounters are divided into rounds, during which each hero and each monster has a turn.

Either the monsters or the heroes will have initiative, so run through each group until everyone's had a turn then switch to the other side. Keep looping through until one of the groups is entirely knocked out.

## Turns

On each hero and each monster's turn they can take an action and their movement, in any order.



## Actions

Actions include the hero's normal attack, their special action, and using items. The player can also use their hero's action to double their movement distance.

The possible actions include:

- Normal attack (melee, ranged, magic)
- Special action (defined on the hero's card)
- Use item (such as a healing potion)

## Movement

Heroes and monsters can move up to 4 squares each turn (including diagonally). Characters can move through their allies, but not through enemies. Walls and solid objects block movement entirely. Obstacles require 1 extra square of movement for each square entered and grant cover. If a character is knocked prone, it costs 2 squares of movement to stand up.

## Resolution

Combat is over when all the characters of a side are KO'd (hopefully this is the monsters).

If the players are defeated, then you'll need to improvise to get the story back on track.

## Rewards

If you're running a longer adventure then you might reward the heroes with some gold or extra potions and allow them to rest and recover some health.

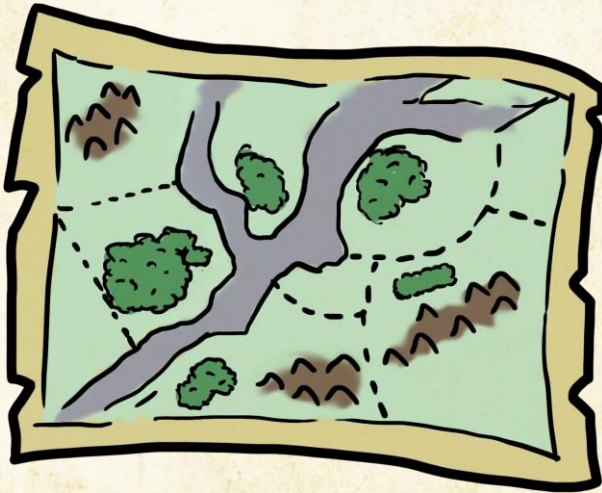
# ADVENTURING

Children's abilities explode between 4 and 10, so there's a large gap between the capabilities of the younger and older players of *Hero Kids*.

If you've got older players (or well-practiced younger players) and want to challenge them a bit more, you can integrate some adventuring mechanics.

Adventuring has a number of elements, which you can pick and choose whether to include:

- Ability tests
- Inventory and Skills





## Ability Tests

Once you've started integrating exploration (see Exploration on page 40) into your *Hero Kids* game, you can use ability tests to test whether the heroes' actions are successful. Ability tests allow the player to roll dice to determine the outcome of their action.

For an ability test, the players roll 1 base die, plus the dice pool from their hero's relevant characteristics, plus they gain 1 extra die if they have a relevant skill or item. If their highest die roll is equal or higher than the difficulty, then they succeed at the test.

The hero's three main characteristics are used as strength, dexterity, and intelligence, like this:



- Bash a locked door
- Jump a crevasse
- Lift something heavy



- Climb a wall or tree
- Hide from or sneak past a monster
- Pick a lock



- Decode a message
- Break a magic lock
- Know about a location or group

While exploration challenges may have an obvious solution (such as using force to open a locked door), alternate solutions are encouraged, including those that utilize one of a hero's other characteristics or the clever use of an inventory item or a skill.

## Inventory and Skills

While ability tests rely on the hero's fundamental characteristics (their strength, dexterity, and intelligence), more advanced players are encouraged to look to their hero's inventory and skills to see if they have anything in those areas to assist with their tasks. These areas are more important in exploration or full role-playing adventures where the players need to overcome obstacles, puzzles, hazards, and traps.

More ideas for integrating these advanced challenges into your games are included in the Exploration section on page 40.

When the players identify an inventory item or a skill that can assist them in an ability test, allow them to add an extra die to their pool.

## Ability Test Difficulties

These difficulty numbers can be used for ability tests:






Difficulty:	Target:
Easy	4
Normal	5
Hard	6

Keep in mind that each hero usually takes the ability test separately, so there's more chance of at least one of them making the test when there are more heroes.









## Ability Test Examples






First, tracking an animal, which is an Intelligence (Tracking) test. This character has no dice in their magic dice pool (which is used for intelligence tests), but they gain 1 extra die for their Tracking skill, giving a total of 2 dice for this ability test:

Base Die +	Characteristic	+ Inventory/Skills
	 	 

Alternatively, crossing a broken bridge is a Strength or Dexterity (Athletics/Acrobatics) test. Here the character has 1 base die, 2 dice from their ranged dice pool (they could use their melee dice pool here instead, if it was better), plus 1 extra die from their rope, giving a total of 4 dice:

Base Die +	Characteristic	+ Inventory/Skills
	 or  	 

Finally, a player wants to intimidate a game character. Normally, persuasion is an intelligence skill, but these players want to persuade using their hero's muscle, so this is a Strength (Persuasion) test. This character uses the 1 base die plus 2 dice from their melee dice pool (used for strength tests), and they have no inventory or skills to help, leaving them with a total of 3 dice:

Base Die +	Characteristic	+ Inventory/Skills
	 	 

# EXPLORATION

When your players are ready to tackle adventuring and exploration challenges, try some of these.

## Choices

Choices are the simplest form of exploration and allow players true interaction and agency:

- A simple t-intersection
- A room with multiple doors
- Several cave openings in a rocky cliff
- A choice of overland routes

## Secrets

Secrets are bonuses that astute players can discover if they're paying attention. As the players won't know what to look for, they may need to be presented with something unusual or given a hint:

- A dead end corridor with a faint breeze
- An empty chest with a hidden compartment
- A different colored or textured section of wall

## Gates

Gates are blockages that cannot be passed until the players have performed a specific action:

- An otherwise impassable locked door
- A drawbridge over a chasm with a hidden lever
- A character who withholds a vital clue



## Obstructions

Obstructions are physical blockages that can be overcome with simple actions:

- A doorway or cave entrance high up on a wall
- A river with a broken bridge
- An open pit in a corridor

## Puzzles

Puzzles are blockages that the players must solve:

- Shaped objects that must be matched to slots
- Levers that must be set to a specific pattern
- Tiles where only one color/icon can be stepped on

## Hazards

Hazards are obstacles that involve physical danger, but the danger is apparent before it is tackled:

- A deep pit trap filled with venomous snakes!
- A wobbly rope bridge over a deep ravine
- A room filling with poisonous gas

## Traps

Traps are the most dangerous exploration challenge because they can trigger a hazard or can even damage the heroes without warning:

- A hidden pit trap that is lined with sharp spikes
- A chest that shoots a poisoned dart when opened
- Treasure that triggers a rolling boulder when taken

# ROLE-PLAYING

Children are natural and enthusiastic role-players, they crackle with unbounded imagination.

## Playing a Hero

The heroes in *Hero Kids* offer children a large variety of character archetypes to play. These archetypes include the warriors, rogues, and mages present in most fantasy role-playing games. However, young players' understanding of these archetypes is more likely to come from movies or television. They'll know Hiccup, Rapunzel, Merida, or Aang.

*Hero Kids* gives children the opportunity to be an active participant in these characters' stories, not just a consumer of the stories.

## Harnessing Imaginations

Children's ideas for their heroes are liable to spin into wild imaginings. Heroes spontaneously develop new abilities, the world you describe is malleable, and the constraints of time and distance are ignored.

The game master's job is to translate each player's ideas into the rules of the game. The key is to balance their imagination with game system. It's important to encourage improvisation and creative play, while also developing the players' understanding of the rules of structured play as well as the limits of their agency and authorial ability.



## Guiding the Story

As the game master for a *Hero Kids* adventure; your primary tool is the simple question:

*“What do you do?”*

Whenever the players reach a decision point, pause and then ask them ‘What do you do?’

Sometimes even this open question can prove too much for some players, so your fallback is to provide several simple options tailored for the situation:

*“Do you want to investigate the sparkling pool or head back along the tunnel to the north?”*

## Coaxing Their Voice

Aside from encouraging the players to make decisions that guide the story, the other challenge of role-playing with kids is to get them to speak in their character’s voice.

When presented with a role-playing scene, such as an interaction with a character in the story, young players may freeze. It may take a while before they’re comfortable speaking in character, so start easy by guiding them with some options:

*“Do you want to tell the sheriff about the giant spiders?”*

Over time the players will build their confidence to make decisions and speak as their characters.

# ADVANCED COMBAT

Once you and your players have conquered a few encounters, you'll likely be ready to explore the characters' special actions and the further scope of *Hero Kids'* combat system. The depth of the system is encompassed in the unique actions and abilities of the heroes and monsters. These allow the characters to interact with each other and their environment, shaping combat and creating advantageous situations.

## Additional Attack Effects

Some attacks have additional effects that trigger regardless of the success of the attack, indicated with 'also' in the attack description. In this example, the swashbuckler's attack moves the target back and the character moves into their square:

*Melee attack at an adjacent target using 1 fewer dice; the target is also pushed back and you move into its square.*

## Alternate Attack Effects

While additional attack effects happen in addition to damage (remember, all attacks deal 1 damage), some attacks have alternate effects instead of dealing damage. For example, the mancer can attack with 1 extra die, but the target is moved without taking damage:

*Magic attack at a target up to 4 squares away with 1 extra die; if the attack hits it deals no damage but you can push or pull the target up to 4 squares.*



## Attacking Engaged Targets

To encourage players to coordinate their characters' actions, many characters gain benefits when their targets are engaged. A target is considered engaged when another enemy of the target is adjacent to them, or have been the target of any attack since the attacker's last turn. Some characters have special attacks only usable against engaged targets while others, such as warriors, automatically gain benefits through their Teamwork bonus ability:

*When a target is engaged, your attacks against that target gain 1 extra die.*

## Combining Effects

Combining multiple attack effects is a great way to maximize the effectiveness of characters, especially in the face of difficult enemies. This involves finding synergies in actions and bonuses.

For example, a warrior with two adjacent enemies could split their melee dice to attack both:

*Split your melee dice to make melee attacks at multiple adjacent targets.*

However, if both of those targets are engaged, then each of those attacks gains 1 extra die:

*When a target is engaged, your attacks against that target gain 1 extra die.*

As you can see, combining these actions and abilities effectively doubles the attack strength of the warrior.

## Improvising Actions

Players often come up with unexpected ways of dealing with enemies and obstacles, whether it's swinging through the rigging of a ghostly pirate ship, distracting an enemy with a well thrown chicken drumstick, or fashioning a tripwire with a length of rope. This creative improvisation by players should be encouraged and rewarded.

## Knocked Down, Prone, Get Up

When characters are knocked out (KO'd) or get knocked down, they become prone, which means they are lying down on the ground.

While prone, the character's actions all have 1 fewer dice, melee attacks against them gain 1 extra die, and characters gain 1 armor die when their attacker is not adjacent to them. To stand up, prone characters need to get up, which costs 2 squares of their movement.

## Line of Sight and Cover

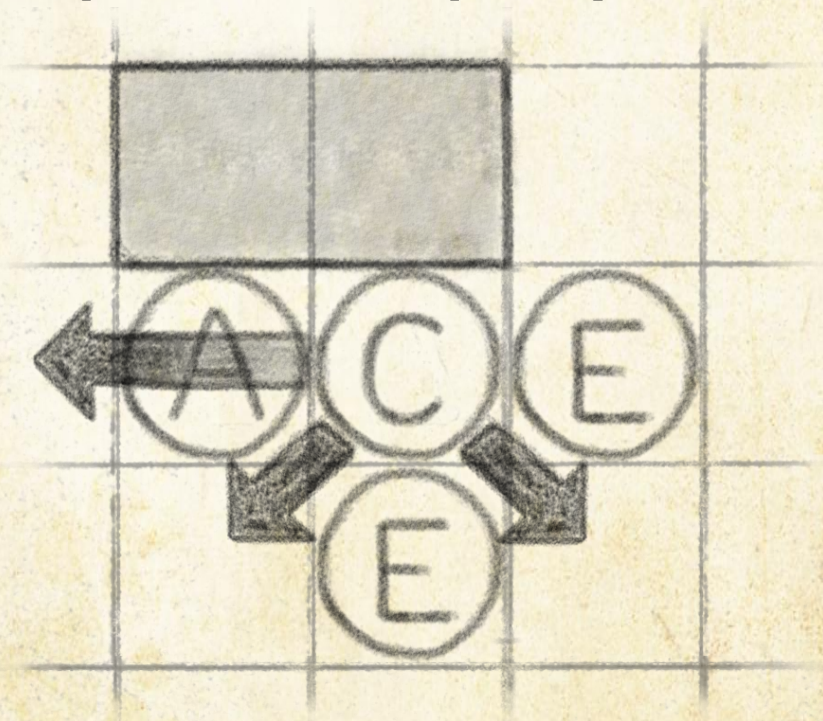
Ranged attacks require line of sight to the target, which means that there cannot be any solid walls between the attacker and the target. However, targets can gain cover from objects or obstacles that partially block line of sight. For example, low crates or walls can provide cover without totally blocking line of sight. When a target has cover from their attacker, that target gains 1 extra armor die.



## Moving Around

Moving around during combat is relatively straightforward, but there are a few areas for clarification. Characters:

- can move up to 4 squares (and they may have abilities or actions that affect their movement)
- can move diagonally
- can move through their allies
- cannot move through enemies
- must end their movement in an empty square
- cannot move diagonally around corners
- require extra movement squares to pass obstacles



## Ongoing Effects and Conditions

In addition to simply damaging or moving their targets, many characters (especially those capable of magic) can alter the battlefield, or hamper their enemies. The warlock's Freezing Strike bonus ability locks her enemies in place:

*When you roll a 6 on an attack die, your target cannot move during their next turn.*

While the stonemaster's Wall of Stone action allows him to raise stone walls that block enemies or provide cover to the stonemaster and his allies:

*Create an obstacle or impassable wall for each die in your magic pool on empty squares up to 4 squares away.*

## Pushing and Pulling

Some attacks have alternate or additional effects that allow the attacker to move the target by pushing them further away or pulling them closer. When pushing or pulling, the target must move in a straight line, cannot move through characters, can move through obstacles if they can pay the extra movement costs, and must end up in an unoccupied space:

*Ranged attack at a target up to 6 squares away (but not adjacent); if the attack hits the target takes no damage but is pulled to an empty square closer to you.*



## Splitting Attacks

Some characters can split their attack dice, which lets them attack multiple separate targets with one action, such as warriors with their Whirlwind Attack:

*Split your melee dice to make melee attacks at multiple adjacent targets.*

When splitting attacks, each attack must target a different character, characters cannot split their dice to attack the same character.

Warriors normally have 2 dice for their melee attacks, allowing them to attack one target with 2 dice, or to use their Whirlwind Attack to strike two targets with 1 die each. However, if a warrior gained 1 extra melee die, such as through a piece of equipment or an item, then they could attack two or three adjacent enemies (1 die each against three enemies or 2 dice against one target and 1 die against another).

# CREATING HEROES

In addition to the pre-made heroes that are included with *Hero Kids*, your kids can make up heroes of their own using a blank hero card, like this:

**HERO KIDS**

\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_

Normal Attack: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Action: \_\_\_\_\_

Bonus Ability: \_\_\_\_\_

Inventory and Skills \_\_\_\_\_

KO Hurt Bruised

Blank cards are included with the pre-made heroes.

## What Sort of Hero?

The first thing to consider is what sort of character they want; a melee fighter, a skillful archer or knife thrower, a well-armored warrior, a powerful warlock, or even a versatile hero who can use multiple attacks.

## Allocating Dice

Each of the pre-made heroes in *Hero Kids* is built with a four dice method.



When using this method, the heroes are built by allocating the four dice amongst the character's four abilities; Melee, Ranged, Magic, and Armor. However, the first die allocated to the Ranged and Magic abilities costs two dice, instead of one die.

## Normal Attacks

All heroes have normal attacks for each of their Melee, Ranged, and Magic abilities where they have at least 1 die:

- Melee attack against an adjacent target
- Ranged attack against a target up to 6 squares away (1 fewer dice against adjacent targets)
- Magic attack against a target up to 4 squares away

## Special Action

Each hero's special action is a unique attack or alternate action that reflects the hero's specialization.

## Bonus Ability

The hero's bonus ability is something that happens automatically, such as added dice to attacks or armor during combat in specific circumstances.

## Inventory and Skills

The last element of the heroes is their inventory and skills. Again, look to the character's specialization to think of appropriate items and skills in this area.

# CONSIDERATIONS

When playing *Hero Kids* you need to carefully consider the sorts of game events that we take for granted with more mature players.

## *Other People's Children!*

First, when playing with other people's children, make sure their parents approve of any content that will be in the game.

## *Violence*

One of the core gameplay elements of *Hero Kids* is combat, but this can be presented with more or less described violence, so adjust this for the age of the players. For example, when playing with younger players have the defeated enemies scamper away at the end of combat.





### *Language*

As with violence, make sure the language you're using is appropriate for the age of your players.

### *Religion*

Role-playing games often take place in ancient worlds with polytheistic or pagan religions. This may be a sensitive area for the parents of some kids.

### *Morality*

Adult players often explore more grey moral areas in role-playing games, but this game is for heroic kids who fight only for the good of their friends and community.



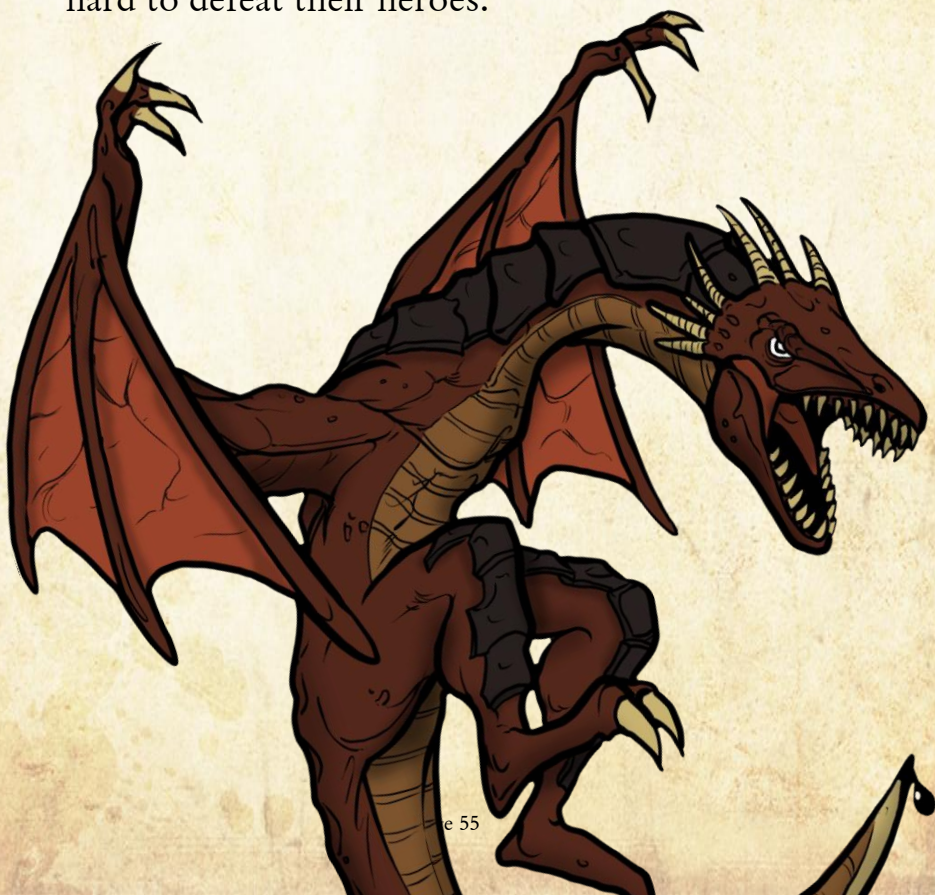
# HINTS AND TIPS

Here are some hints for playing *Hero Kids* with real life kids:

- Your players are young, so be patient and help them when they're making decisions.
- Get into the fun with funny voices for the monsters, especially the bosses.
- Get the kids involved in coming up with scenarios and stories for their heroes' adventures.
- Encourage improvisation so the players can use their actions, movement, and the obstacles and terrain of the encounter in interesting ways.
- Make sure all the players get their share of the action and attention.
- You might be used to playing 3 or 4-hour sessions with adult players, but keep the kids' sessions shorter (up to an hour).
- The heroes can take their action and move in any order, so the kids may want to make an attack and then move away from a monster.
- Remind the kids about their hero's special action, bonus ability, and healing potions (except for younger players, where you can just ignore their hero's special action and bonus ability).



- The players probably don't know all the clichés and tropes of fantasy role-playing games yet, so feel free to use them!
- Add or remove monsters from the encounters to tune them for your players.
- Keep the monsters moving so the fights don't turn into toe-to-toe slugfests.
- Bend the rules if they're getting in the way of the players' fun.
- Don't be afraid to skip, add, or change encounters if the game's running short or long.
- The kids are little, so play nice and don't try too hard to defeat their heroes.



# GLOSSARY

**Action:** Actions include normal attacks, special actions, using items (e.g. potions), and ability tests.

**Adjacent:** Characters are adjacent when they occupy squares that touch on an edge or a corner.

**Adventure:** A series of encounters that are linked together into a continuous story.

**Ally:** Anyone fighting alongside the character.

**Attack:** An action that uses one of the character's three attack characteristics to damage a target.

**Bonus Ability:** Each character has a bonus ability that automatically gives them an advantage or disadvantage and reflects their unique nature.

**Boss:** A strong monster with extra health.

**Bruised:** The first health box for most characters.

**Character:** Any hero, monster, or game character.

**Characteristics:** The character's details, including their dice pools for melee, ranged, magic, and armor.

**Combat Encounter:** A single combat engagement.

**Cover:** A target has cover if there is an obstacle between them and their attacker but line of sight is not totally obstructed (such as by a solid wall). Cover grants 1 extra die to the target's armor pool.



**Damage:** Attacks that hit enemies deal 1 damage, but abilities or special actions can adjust this.

**Dice:** All rolls are done with d6s (six-sided dice).

**Dice, Extra:** To add dice to the pool.

**Dice, Fewer:** To remove dice from the pool.

**Encounter:** A single combat, exploration, or role-playing scene.

**Enemy:** Anyone fighting against the character.

**Engaged:** A character is engaged if they have been the target of an attack since their last turn or if they are adjacent to an enemy other than the attacker and that enemy can take actions.

**Empty Square:** Squares without obstacles/characters.

**Equipment:** Equipment is gear that grants extra abilities or extra advantages in specific situations. Only one piece of equipment can be used at a time.

**Game Character:** A character controlled by the GM.

**Game Master:** The Game Master (GM) is you.

**Get Up:** To stand up from prone position. This costs 2 squares of a character's normal movement.

**Grazed:** An additional health box for bosses.





**Hero:** A character that is controlled by a player.

**Hero Card:** These cards have the hero's characteristics, actions, abilities, inventory, and skills.

**Healing:** Special actions, potions, and rest can remove some or all damage that a character has taken.

**Health:** The amount of damage that a character can take, expressed in one or more health boxes: KO, Hurt, Bruised, and Grazed.

**Hit:** Attacks hit when the highest rolled attack pool die equals or beats the highest rolled armor pool die.

**Hurt:** The final health box before getting KO'd.

**Inventory:** The items that the heroes carry.

**Items:** Items are consumables that heroes hold (such as potions) and can use on their turn as an action.

**Knocked Out (KO'd):** A character is knocked out (KO'd) when they take damage that fills their final health box. KO'd characters are prone and cannot take actions or move, but can be healed by other characters (through magic or using a potion).

**Knocked Down:** When a character is knocked down by an attack or effect, they become prone.





**Line of Sight:** Ranged and magic attacks require the attacker to be able to see their target. If the target is partially obstructed, they may have cover.

**Map:** Combat encounters take place on game maps, either one that is supplied or one you make yourself.

**Magic Attack:** Magic attacks target characters up to 4 squares away (including diagonally) and must have line of sight.

**Melee Attack:** Melee attacks target adjacent enemies.

**Minion:** A weak monster.

**Miss:** When the highest rolled attack pool die is lower than the highest rolled armor pool die.

**Monster:** Baddies with bad breath and bad attitudes.

**Movement:** Characters can move up to 4 squares each turn (including diagonally).

**Normal Attack:** Each hero and monster has one or more normal attacks, which are standard attacks using one of their characteristics and dealing 1 damage.

**Obstacle:** Obstacles require 1 extra square of movement for each square the heroes enter and may provide cover.





**Player(s):** The real-life people who control the heroes in the game.

**Pool:** One or more dice are rolled as a ‘dice pool’.

**Potions:** Potions are items that characters can use an action to administer to themselves or an adjacent target to heal the target to full health.

**Prone:** The character is lying on the ground, such as when they are KO’d or otherwise downed. While prone, characters’ actions have 1 fewer dice. Prone characters gain 1 armor die when their attacker is not adjacent to them. Melee attacks against prone targets gain 1 extra die.

**Pull:** Pulling a target moves that target closer to the hero or monster that performed the action.

**Push:** Pushing a target moves it further from the hero or monster that performed the action.

**Ranged Attack:** Ranged attacks target characters up to 6 squares away (including diagonally) and must have line of sight. Ranged attacks against adjacent targets roll 1 fewer dice.

**Rest:** Resting after encounters removes 1 damage if the character was damaged during the encounter.





**Round:** Combat encounters are divided into rounds, during which each character has a turn.

**Skills:** The things that characters are good at are skills, and are listed on the hero card.

**Special Action:** Characters can use their alternate special action instead of their normal attack action. Some special actions require specific conditions.

**Split:** Some characters can split their attack dice, allowing them to divide their dice to make attacks against multiple separate targets. Each attack must have at least 1 die, which can then be modified by the character's bonus ability or other conditions.

**Stand-Up:** These printable representations of the heroes and monsters are used on the map.

**Square:** Maps are divided into squares, each of which is about an inch square.

**Target(s):** Targets are the characters at which attacks are directed.

**Turn:** A character's opportunity to act, during which they can take an action and use their movement.



HEROES!



# HERO KIDS



## Warrior:



**Melee Attack: Slashing Strike**  
Melee attack at an adjacent target.

**Special Action: Whirlwind Attack**  
Split your melee dice to make melee attacks at multiple adjacent targets.

**Bonus Ability: Teamwork**  
When a target is engaged, your attacks against that target gain 1 extra die.

### Inventory and Skills







# HERO KIDS



## Warrior:



Hurt

KO

Bruised



**Melee Attack: Crushing Strike**  
Melee attack at an adjacent target.

**Special Action: Whirlwind Attack**  
Split your melee dice to make melee attacks at multiple adjacent targets.

**Bonus Ability: Teamwork**  
When a target is engaged, your attacks against that target gain 1 extra die.

### Inventory and Skills







# HERO KIDS



Hunter:



KO

Hurt

Bruised

**Ranged Attack: Hairwhip Strike**  
Ranged attack at a target up to 6 squares away (1 fewer dice against adjacent targets).

**Special Action: Lasso Hair**  
Ranged attack at a target up to 6 squares away (but not adjacent); if the attack hits the target takes no damage but is pulled to an empty square closer to you.

**Bonus Ability: Tangled**  
When defending melee attacks, you gain 1 extra die to your armor pool.

Inventory and Skills







# HERO KIDS



Hunter:



**Ranged Attack: Arrow Shot**  
Ranged attack at a target up to 6 squares away (1 fewer dice against adjacent targets).

**Special Action: Arrow-Split Shot**  
Split your ranged dice to attack multiple targets up to 6 squares away (cannot attack adjacent targets).

**Bonus Ability: Evasive Maneuver**  
When you're damaged by an attack, you can immediately move 1 square.

## Inventory and Skills







# HERO KIDS



Warlock:



**Magic Attack: Flaming Bolt**  
Magic attack at a target up to 4 squares away.

**Special Action: Flame Burst**  
Make 1 die magic attacks at all adjacent targets, including enemies and allies.

**Bonus Ability: Power Surge**  
When you are not at full health, your magic attacks gain 1 extra die.



Inventory and Skills







# HERO KIDS



Warlock:



KO

Hurt

Bruised



**Magic Attack: Water Whip**  
Magic attack at a target up to 4 squares away.

**Special Action: Waterwhip Strikes**  
Split your magic dice to make magic attacks at multiple targets up to 4 squares away.

**Bonus Ability: Freezing Strike**  
When you roll a 6 on an attack die, your target cannot move during their next turn.

Inventory and Skills



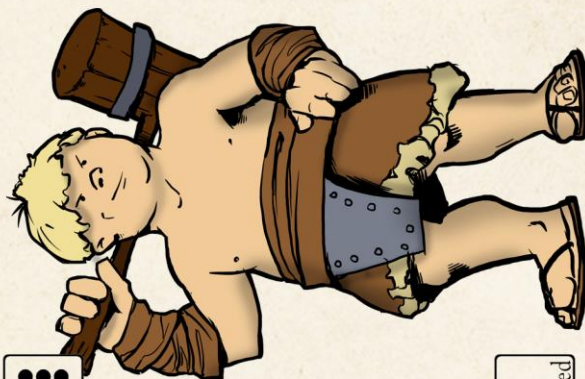




# HERO KIDS



Brute:



**Melee Attack: Hammer Smash**  
Melee attack at an adjacent target.

**Special Action: Knockback Attack**  
Melee attack at an adjacent target using 1 fewer dice; if the attack hits, the target is also pushed back 4 squares.

**Bonus Ability: Retaliation**  
When you hit a target that has damaged you since your last turn, you deal 2 damage.

Inventory and Skills







# HERO KIDS



Rogue: \_\_\_\_\_



**Ranged Attack: Swift Daggers**  
Ranged attack at a target up to 6 squares away (1 fewer dice against adjacent targets).

**Special Action: Sneaky Attack**  
If a target up to 6 squares away (but not adjacent) is engaged, you can make a ranged attack at that target with 1 extra die.

**Bonus Ability: Nimble**  
You can move up to 5 squares on your turn, ignoring obstacles, enemies, and allies.



Inventory and Skills







# HERO KIDS



Healer:



**Magic Attack: Searing Light**  
Magic attack at a target up to 4 squares away.

**Special Action: Healing Touch**  
Remove 1 damage from yourself or an adjacent ally.

**Bonus Ability: Potion Brewer**  
After an encounter, you can replenish 1 potion that you or an ally has used.

Inventory and Skills







# HERO KIDS



**Knight:**



**Melee Attack: Parrying Strike**  
Melee attack at an adjacent target.

**Special Action: Strikeback Attack**  
If an adjacent target has attacked you since your last turn, you can make a melee attack at that target with 1 extra die.

**Bonus Ability: Defender**  
When an adjacent ally is hit, you can take the damage instead of the ally.

**Inventory and Skills**





# MONSTERS!



# HERO KIDS

## Giant Rat



**Melee Attack: Horrid Bite**  
Melee attack at an adjacent target.

**Special Action: Pack Attack**  
If an adjacent target is engaged, you can make a melee attack at it with 1 extra die.

**Special Action: Coward**  
When you've been attacked since your last turn, you can move 2 extra squares.





# HERO KIDS



## Bat



**Melee Attack: Swooping Bite**  
Melee attack at an adjacent target.

**Special Action: Taste For Blood**  
If you damaged an adjacent target on your last turn, you can make a melee attack at that target with 1 extra die.

**Bonus Ability: Flyer**  
You can fly over obstacles and enemies.







# HERO KIDS

## Giant Spider



### Melee Attack: Spider Bite

Melee attack at an adjacent target.

### Special Action: Stinging Attack

Melee attack at an adjacent target with 1 extra die; your armor pool has 1 fewer dice until your next turn.

### Bonus Ability: Climber

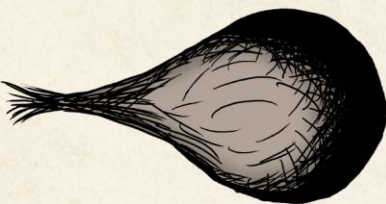
When you are adjacent to a wall, you can climb over enemies and obstacles.





# HERO KIDS

Spider Egg Sac





# HERO KIDS



## Hissing Snake



**Melee Attack: Fang Bite**  
Melee attack at an adjacent target.

**Special Action: Snapping Strike**  
Melee attack at a target 2 squares away with 1 fewer dice.

**Bonus Ability: Venomous**  
When you damage a target, it can't move on its next turn.





# HERO KIDS



## Giant Snake



**Melee Attack: Fang Bite**  
Melee attack at an adjacent target.

**Special Action: Reaching Strike**  
Melee attack at a target 2 squares away with 1 fewer dice.

**Bonus Ability: Venomous**  
When you damage a target, it can't move on its next turn.



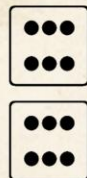




# HERO KIDS



## King Cobra



**Melee Attack: Fang Bite**  
Melee attack at an adjacent target.



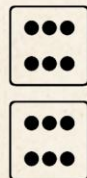
**Special Action: Venom Spit**

Ranged attack at a target up to 6 squares away with 1 fewer dice than your melee dice pool.



**Bonus Ability: Venomous**

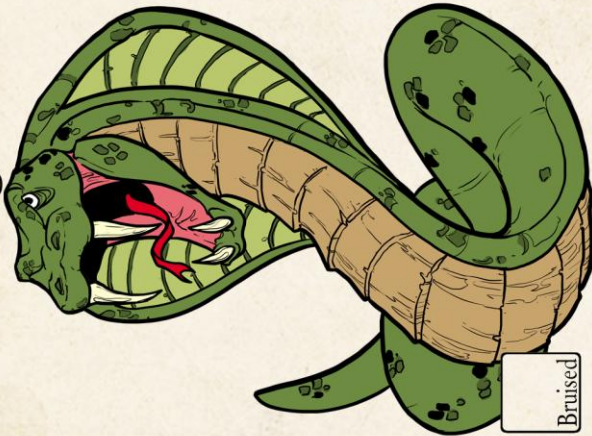
When you damage a target, it can't move on its next turn.



KO

Hurt

Bruised



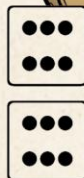
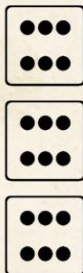




# HERO KIDS



## Giant Scorpion



KO

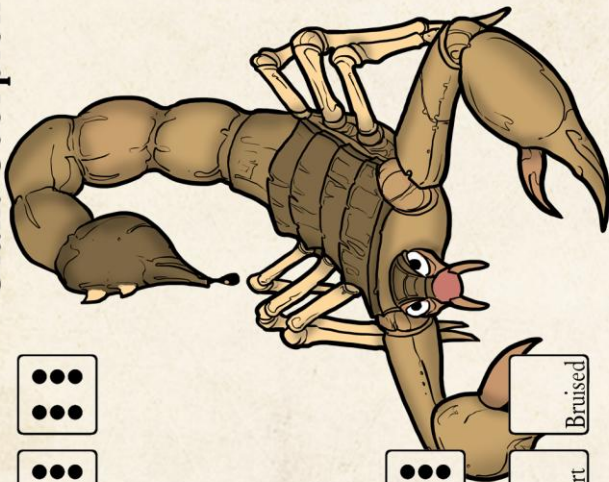
Hurt

Bruised

**Melee Attack: Stinging Stab**  
Melee attack at an adjacent target.

**Special Action: Snap, Snap, Stab!**  
Split your melee dice to make melee attacks at multiple adjacent targets.

**Bonus Ability: Venomous, Grappler**  
When you damage a target, it can't move on its next turn. When you damage a target, you can hold it adjacent to you until you decide to release it or it damages you. While you have a target held, your attacks against that target gain 1 die, your attacks against other targets have 1 fewer die, and you cannot hold another target.







# HERO KIDS



## Pirate Recruiter



**Melee Attack: Sap Strike**  
Melee attack at an adjacent target.

**Special Action: Surprise Attack**  
If an adjacent target has not had its first turn, you can make a melee attack at it; if the attack hits, it deals 1 extra damage.

**Bonus Ability: Bloodied**  
When you are not at full health, your attacks gain 1 extra die.





# HERO KIDS



## Pirate Swordsman



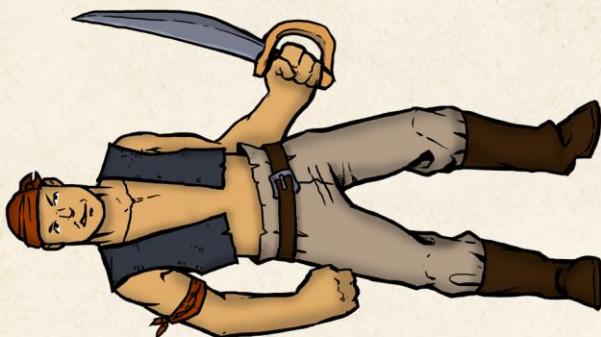
Hurt

KO

**Melee Attack: Cutlass Slash**  
Melee attack at an adjacent target.

**Special Action: Bullying Attack**  
If an adjacent target is engaged, you can make a melee attack at it with 1 extra die.

**Bonus Ability: Bloodied**  
When you are not at full health, your attacks gain 1 extra die.







# HERO KIDS



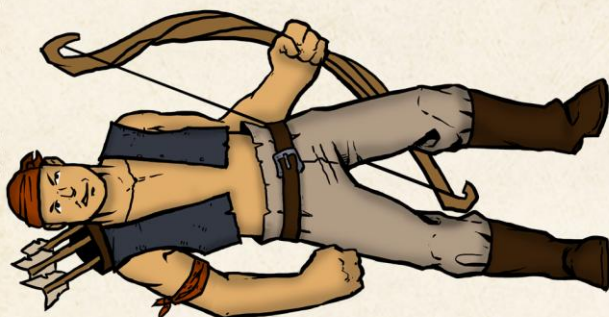
## Pirate Archer



**Ranged Attack: Arrow Shot**  
Ranged attack at a target up to 6 squares away (1 fewer dice against adjacent targets).

**Special Action: Distracted Shot**  
If a target within 6 squares (but not adjacent) is engaged, you can make a ranged attack at it with 1 extra die.

**Bonus Ability: Timid**  
When you are engaged, your attacks have 1 fewer dice (at least 1).







# HERO KIDS



## Pirate Duellist



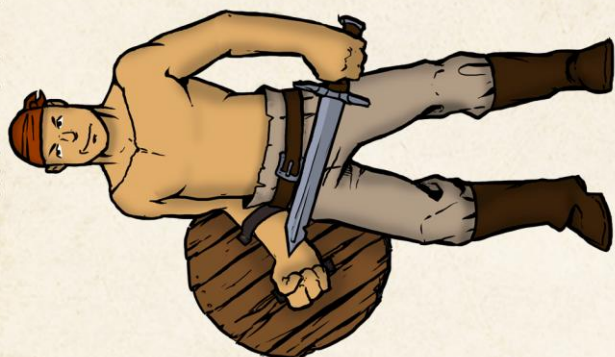
**Melee Attack: Duellist's Slash**  
Melee attack at an adjacent target.

### Special Action: Shield Bash

Melee attack at an adjacent target with 1 fewer dice; if the attack hits, the target is also pushed back 4 squares.

### Bonus Ability: Bloodied

When you are not at full health, your attacks gain 1 extra die.







# HERO KIDS



## Skeleton Shambler



**Melee Attack: Wild Swing**  
Melee attack at an adjacent target.

**Bonus Ability: Slow, Unstoppable**  
You can only move 2 squares with your move action. If you are KO'd, on your next turn you can remove that damage and use your entire move to get up.







# HERO KIDS



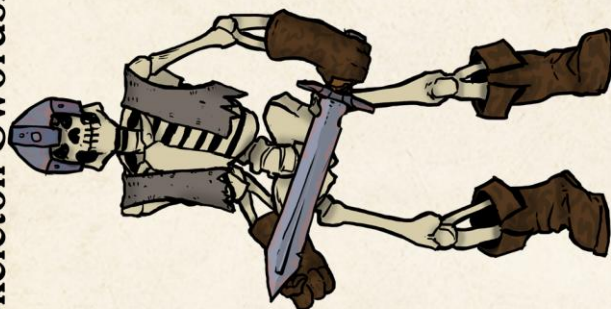
## Skeleton Swordsman



**Melee Attack: Slashing Strike**  
Melee attack at an adjacent target.

**Special Action: Bullying Attack**  
If an adjacent target is engaged, you can make a melee attack at it with 1 extra die.

**Bonus Ability: Rattled**  
When you are not on full health, your attacks have 1 fewer dice (at least 1).







# HERO KIDS



## Skeleton Archer



### Ranged Attack: Arrow Shot

Ranged attack at a target up to 6 squares away (1 fewer dice against adjacent targets).

### Special Action: Distracted Shot

If a target within 6 squares (but not adjacent) is engaged, you can make a ranged attack at it with 1 extra die.

### Bonus Ability: Rattled

When you are not on full health, your attacks have 1 fewer die (at least 1).

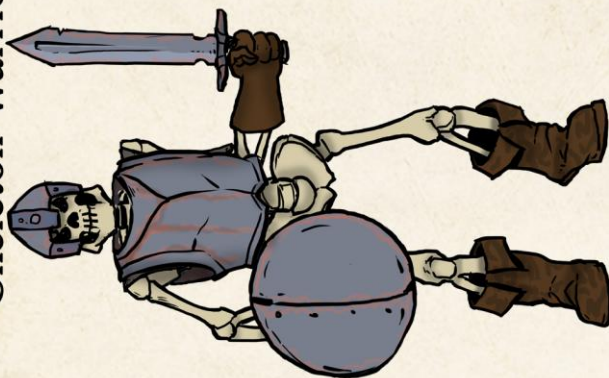




# HERO KIDS



## Skeleton Warrior



**Melee Attack: Slashing Strike**  
Melee attack at an adjacent target.

**Special Action: Bullying Attack**  
If an adjacent target is engaged, you can make a melee attack at it with 1 extra die.

**Bonus Ability: Rattled**  
When you are not on full health, your attacks have 1 fewer dice (at least 1).