



ICONS

SUPERPOWERED ROLEPLAYING

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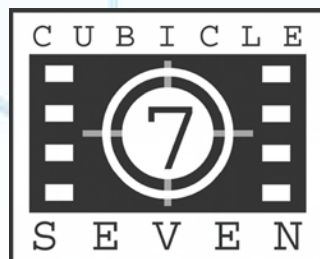
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INTRODUCTION

What kid raised in recent generations hasn't pretended to be a superhero at some point: worn a cape, "flown" around, bounced imaginary bullets or shot "blasts of power" from hands or eyes? Why not? After all, the superhero is pretty much the perfect modern fantasy: powerful, respected, and loved by the public, but with a message of responsibility, duty, truth, and justice that appeals to parents as well as kids. In countless comic books (and now "graphic novels"), cartoons, and live-action television shows and films, superheroes continue to thrill and capture our imagination while also celebrating some of our better qualities. Who wouldn't want to be a hero?

With **Icons**, you can be. **Icons** is a roleplaying game wherein you and other players take on the roles of superheroes you create and embark on imaginary adventures, guided by one player who takes on the responsibility of Game Master ("GM" for short).

ROLEPLAYING GAMES

A roleplaying game ("RPG" for short) is a game of the imagination. Like the name implies, it is about playing a role, essentially a version of the childhood game of "let's pretend" with rules and dice used to determine the outcome of actions. Although roleplaying games have been around in various forms for decades, they haven't changed all that much from the childhood essentials — up to and including sometimes protracted "Did so!" "Did not!" arguments, thus the need for a Game Master.

Essentially, the Game Master is both narrator and referee. The GM comes up with a situation, the start or "hook" of a story, and presents it to the players. They, in turn, decide what their characters will do. The GM responds with what happens next, and from their interaction a complete story unfolds. Along the way, the heroes encounter challenges, including fights with villains, and the game rules help the players and Game Master to resolve the outcome of those challenges, changing the direction of the story. A part of the thrill of a roleplaying game is that it is fiction you and your friends create together!

WHY ICONS?

Icons is hardly the first superhero roleplaying game — it's not even the tenth! In fact, it is not even the first superhero game I have *designed*.

Superhero RPGs have been around nearly as long as the game style. Roleplaying started out with medieval fantasy and quickly moved on to science fiction, but superheroes were not far behind, and the adventures of brightly-clad characters with strange powers has been one of the most enduring sub-genres of roleplaying games throughout their history.

So if there are older—and presumably still fun—superhero roleplaying games around, and if I already designed one of them, why create another? There are several reasons:

First and perhaps foremost, I do not believe in the concept of "one true game." Saying there is only room for one superhero RPG is like suggesting there should only be one board game where you move pieces around squares. Why have checkers when you've already got chess? But neither game is "better" than the other, they both deliver fun and some interesting challenges, but in their own ways. The same is true of **Icons** and other superhero games.

Second, I'm a game designer, and we designers like to play around with ideas for games: different mechanics, different approaches, seeing how things work in various ways. Again, some designs are not necessarily "better," just different. A lot of roleplaying game design and play is a matter of taste, rather than objective value. Just like an artist benefits from having a broad palette, so does a game designer benefit from having a breadth of experience creating different kinds of games.

Lastly, just as a writer writes, a designer designs. Some concepts just lodge themselves into the folds of your brain and stick there until you do something with them to get them out and onto the page. **Icons** is one of those. I wanted to play around with the basic systems of Fudge (and its later expression, **FATE**) for some time, and even started on an earlier version of **Icons** some years ago

that I nicknamed “the Superlative System.” However cliché it may sound to say that I “had” to design this game, that’s how it was. So I did.

The creation of this game does not mean I think **Icons** is better than everything that came before it, or that it is the “right” way to do a superhero RPG (as if there were only one way!) just that I think it’s a good one and that it’s fun, which, after all, is the point of playing a game in the first place. I hope you think so, too.

WHAT’S IN THE GAME?

So, what will you find in these pages? Hopefully the tools you need for you and your friends to create your own colorful world of heroes and villains and to play out fun and exciting adventures with them. In practical terms, what you’ll find here is a system, a set of rules, starting with creating your own heroes, and progressing through how to do things with them in terms of the game.

Compared to a lot of roleplaying games on the market today, **Icons** is fairly short and simple. You won’t find exhaustive details or situational rules, and there’s no setting beyond “the world of comic book superheroes,” which pretty much anyone reading this game is going to know. (If you don’t, go pick up and read some superhero comics. Trust me, they can be a *lot* of fun.)

Icons places the power in *your* hands, where it belongs. Take the basic rules of the game, get together with your friends, and create! Make your own heroes, villains, adventures, stories... whole worlds! Have fun.

What are you waiting for? The world needs saving!



THE BASICS

Icons uses some systems for describing things in game-terms and determining the outcome of actions the heroes take in the course of the adventure. This section describes the basic concepts of the game and is essential in understanding the rest of the game rules.

LEVELS AND SCALE

Things in **Icons** are rated in *levels*, arranged on a *scale* from 1 to 10. Think of levels much like the common question “on a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate that?” with 1 the absolute lowest and 10 the absolute best.

On the **Icons** scale, 3 is considered average, with the lower levels as below average and weak and the higher levels as better than average, all the way up to positively godlike. Because the scale is calibrated for superheroes, level 6 is about the limit for anything realistically human-like, as opposed to superhuman. This divides the scale into roughly three tiers: low (1-2), normal human (3-6) and superhuman (7-10). Here is a comparison of the different levels in terms of ability:

Level	Description	Optional Name
1	Weak, minimum human	Doddering, Feeble, Weak
2	Below-average human	Inadequate, Inferior, Poor
3	Average human	Average, Mediocre, Typical
4	Above-average human	Accomplished, Competent, Good
5	Exceptional human	Excellent, Exceptional, Great
6	Ideal or maximum human	Extraordinary, Remarkable, Superb
7	Low superhuman	Fantastic, Incredible, Wonderful
8	Superhuman	Amazing, Astounding, Legendary
9	High superhuman	Colossal, Inhuman, Monumental
10	Cosmic or maximum superhuman	Astonishing, Cosmic, Marvelous

OFF THE SCALE

The scale is intended to cover a broad, but limited, range of levels. There are many cases when things are simply “off the scale.” The 1 to 10 scale doesn’t accurately measure the strength of an ant, for example, or the mass of the entire Earth; those things are off the scale. The **Game Mastering** section talks more about dealing with things off the scale but the short answer is; if they are, don’t worry about them, just use common sense.

OPTION: NAMED LEVELS

Although not mechanically necessary, Game Masters may wish to assign descriptive names to the various levels on the scale as a means of adding additional flavor to the game. It can be more fun to describe a hero’s Strength level as “Astounding” for example, rather than “8”.

On the other hand, the game rules use numbers because they are shorter (it’s easier to notate “6” rather than “Extraordinary” in text, formulas, and character sheets) and clearer, especially where math is involved. Numerical notation also allows you to “skin” whatever set of adjectives you prefer over the numbers for your own game.

DICE

ICONS uses two differently colored six-sided dice, abbreviated “d6” and referred to simply as “the dice”.

When making tests (see **Tests**, following), roll the dice, designating one die “positive” and one “negative” before you roll. Subtract the result of the negative die from the positive die to get a result from +5 to -5, with odds weighted towards a middle or 0 result, as follows:

Result	Chance of Exact Result	Chance of Result or Higher
+5	2.77%	2.77%
+4	5.55%	8.33%
+3	8.33%	16.66%
+2	11.11%	27.77%
+1	13.88%	41.66%
0	16.66%	58.33%
-1	13.88%	72.22%
-2	11.11%	83.33%
-3	8.33%	91.66%
-4	5.55%	97.22%
-5	2.77%	100%

(Alternately, you can simply sum the two dice and subtract 7 to get your result, with the same probabilities.)

So only about one roll in fifty will be a +5 or a -5 and the majority (nearly sixty percent) of the time, results will be 0 or greater, with a +1 or better over one-third of the time. This gives you a pretty good idea of a character's chances of success at any given test of an ability.

ABILITIES

All **ICONS** characters have certain *abilities*, rated on the scale, providing a measurement of the characters' *capabilities*, or what that character can reasonably be expected to accomplish. So, for example, a character with Awareness 2 (below average) isn't especially quick on the uptake, and isn't going to regularly notice much. On the other hand, a character with Strength 6 is among the strongest human beings ever, and finds average tests of strength ridiculously easy.

There are six abilities, three physical and three mental: **Prowess**, **Coordination**, and **Strength**, plus **Intellect**, **Awareness**, and **Willpower**.

Abilities are described in detail in their own section on p. 22.

TESTS

Whenever a character's capabilities are called into question, that is, when the character attempts something with a chance of failure, it is a test of the character's ability.

EFFORT

To make a test, roll the dice and add the result (positive, negative, or zero) to the ability level. This determines the *effort* that goes into the test. For example, a roll of +1 and an ability of 3 gives an effort of 4, or above-average effort.

DIFFICULTY

Some tests require a minimum amount of effort, called the test's *difficulty*, which is rated on the scale like other things, from the absolute minimum to cosmic levels of difficulty for high-impossible

tests. The difficulty is subtracted from the effort of the test to get the *effect*.

So, in the previous example, a roll of +1 and ability 3 have an effort of 4, but with a difficulty 2 test, the effect is only 2, or 4 (the effort) minus 2 (the difficulty). If the effort isn't at least equal to the difficulty, it results in a negative effect.

MODIFIERS

Some circumstances impose *modifiers* on a test. A modifier takes the form of an additional value added the effort (a *bonus*, expressed as a plus) or the difficulty (a *penalty*, expressed as a minus). For example, moving and attacking on the same page results in a -1 penalty on your attack test, increasing the test's difficulty by 1.

OUTCOME

A test's effect can be measured in one of four *outcomes*, general descriptions for how well (or poorly) the character did in accomplishing the test:

Effect	Outcome
Less than 0	Failure. The effort fails to achieve the desired effect.
0-2	Moderate success. The effort succeeds by a small margin.
3-4	Major success. The effort succeeds enough to be noticeably well done.
5 or more	Massive success. Not only is the effort noticeably successful, it has additional secondary benefits.

MASSIVE COSMIC SUCCESS!

An effort of 15 or more is enough to achieve a massive success on a test of cosmic (10) difficulty; such a tremendous effort (which requires a decent combination of ability, luck, and determination to achieve at all) is worthy of special note.

Essentially, any time you achieve a massive cosmic success, it can accomplish pretty much *anything* the Game Master is willing to allow: pushing the Earth out of orbit, causing time to flow backwards, pretty much anything you can convince the GM could possibly happen in the game. This depends heavily on the style of game the Game Master is running, and your own ability to make the whole thing sound like a lot of fun.



REACTIONS

With its focus on the heroes, only the *players* make tests in **IcONS**, the Game Master does not. Whenever a GM-controlled character takes an action against a player-controlled hero, it is a test of the *hero's* ability to avoid or resist it. The hero's player makes a test to oppose or resist that action as a reaction (so called because it happens in response to another character's action).

So, for example, when a villain attacks, the hero's player tests a defensive ability (Prowess or Coordination most often) as a reaction against a difficulty of the villain's attacking ability, determining the outcome of the attack. Similarly, the heroes' attacks are made against the difficulty based on the target's defensive ability, but the target doesn't make a test, the hero's player does.

When GM characters take actions that don't involve the heroes, the GM determines the outcome based on their capabilities; generally assume the character functions at their normal capability unless the story dictates a stroke of good or bad luck. In other words, any reasonable result the GM wants can happen.

SPECIALTIES

Each ability in **IcONS** covers a lot of ground, so characters may have *specialties* reflecting aspects of their abilities where they are particularly proficient. For example, a character with the Physics specialty of Intellect knows more about physics, essentially having a higher level of ability in that area. Likewise, a character with a Martial Arts specialty in Prowess is a better unarmed fighter.

Specialties and their uses are described in detail on p. 23.

POWERS

Powers are special abilities, what puts the "super" into "superhero". Like normal abilities, powers have levels measuring their effectiveness on the scale. Unlike normal abilities, not all characters have powers. While everybody has some level in the normal abilities (even if it's just a 1 or 2), powers are rare and vary from character to character. The heroes and villains in **IcONS** typically have powers, but normal people, by definition, do not.

Powers and their effects are described in detail on p. 28.

*"WITH GREAT POWER ALSO
COMES GREAT RESPONSIBILITY."*

- Spider-Man's Uncle Ben, Amazing Fantasy #15

DETERMINATION

The difference between a hero and someone who just gets lucky sometimes is *Determination*. It's what lets heroes pull off some amazing feats when the chips are down, and what lets players decide which tests are the most important for their heroes to accomplish.

Characters in **IcONS** have a pool of Determination points players use to accomplish these things. You may want to use tokens like poker chips or glass beads to help track how much Determination characters have, as the total fluctuates often during play.

Using Determination is based around a hero's **Qualities**, descriptive terms or phrases about the heroes. Gaining more Determination involves the hero's Qualities and **Challenges**.

Qualities and Challenges together describe the different **Aspects** of a character. Determination and how it works is described in detail on p. 73.

HERO CREATION

Creating a hero in **Icons** is a simple matter of rolling on the tables in this section to determine the hero's origin, abilities, specialties, and powers. Give your new hero a name, description, and background and you're ready to play! Just follow these phases of design:

1. Origin
2. Ability Determination
3. Power Determination
4. Specialty Determination
5. Stamina, Background, and Description
6. Aspects (Qualities and Challenges)
7. Game Master Approval



DICE

The die rolls called for in this section are either “2d6” which means roll two six-sided dice and add them together (rather than subtracting one die from the other) or “d6 and d6” which means to roll one die to choose a sub-table, then another die to get a result on that sub-table.

PHASE 1: ORIGIN

The first phase in hero creation is to determine your hero's origin. Roll once on the following table:

2d6 Roll	Origin
2-4	Trained: The hero is a highly skilled human; any “powers” actually come from superior training or specialized equipment. The character gains three bonus specialties, but two fewer powers (and may have no powers at all).
5-6	Transformed: The hero was a normal human but became superhuman through some outside agency, often an accident or experiment. One of the character's abilities or powers (your choice) is increased by +2.
7	Birthright: The hero was born with or destined to develop superhuman powers. The character gains your choice of one additional power, which should be innate, and not a device, or +2 to a rolled power level.
8-9	Gimmick: The character's powers all come from devices of some kind. One of the character's mental abilities (your choice) is increased by +2.
10	Artificial: The character is a robot or perhaps some other kind of construct, such as a golem. The character's Strength is increased by +2 and you may choose Life Support as a bonus power.
11-12	Unearthly: The character is a being from another world or dimension such as an alien, elemental, angel, devil, or even deity. Increase two of the character's abilities (your choice) by +2. The character has one fewer power but a minimum of one power. Alternately, roll twice on this table, ignoring duplicates and results of 11-12. The character gets the effects of both origins. Apply the modifiers of the rolled origins rather than the Unearthly modifiers.



OPTION: SKIP ORIGIN

Optionally, you can skip over the Origin phase and simply create the hero “straight” using phases 2 onward, without any modifiers from origin, filling in the origin of the hero’s powers as part of the background. Your hero gets none of the benefits or drawbacks of having an origin. Get the Game Master’s permission before you do this.

LEVEL DETERMINATION

Roll on the following tables to determine levels for abilities and powers when called to do so:

2d6 Roll	Level
2	1
3	2
4	3
5-6	4
7-8	5
9-10	6
11	7
12	8

PHASE 2: ABILITIES

Roll once on the **Level Determination** table for each ability and record the resulting level for it. If your hero’s total ability levels (after adjustments for origin) are less than 20, you can choose to discard the hero and start over.

You can also choose to swap any two ability levels after you have determined them. For example, if you roll a Strength of 3 and an Awareness of 7 and you really want your hero to be strong rather than quick on the uptake, you can choose to swap those two abilities, making Strength 7 and Awareness 3.

PHASE 3: POWERS

To determine the number of powers a hero possesses, roll on the following table:

Roll	Number of Powers
2-4	2
5-7	3
8-10	4
11-12	5

Once you’ve determined the number of powers, roll for each power on the following tables to determine the character’s specific powers. Roll on the Level Determination table for the power’s level

If you roll more than one of the same type of power (such as movement, offensive, etc.) you may choose to re-roll to select a different type.

If you roll the same power twice you may elect to either increase the power’s rolled level by 2 (with a maximum of 10) or roll again to select another power.

Some power descriptions offer a choice of *bonus powers*. This means if you have that power you can select another power to fill one of your power slots without rolling. For example, if you have

Elemental Control, you can choose to have a Blast of the same element as one of your other powers without having to roll on the tables to select it. You can replace a rolled power with a bonus power, if you wish.

First roll to determine the power's type:

<i>2d6 Roll</i>	<i>Power Type</i>
2-3	Alteration
4-5	Control
6	Defensive
7	Mental
8	Movement
9-10	Offensive
11-12	Sensory

Then roll on the appropriate table to determine the exact power. A power listed with a bullet (•) counts as *two* power choices. If you only have one power choice left, roll again.

<i>d6</i>	<i>d6</i>	<i>Alteration Powers</i>
1-2	1	Ability Boost
	2	Ability Increase
	3	Alter-Ego
	4	Alternate Form
	5	Aquatic
	6	Chameleon
3-4	1	Density
	2	Duplication •
	3	Extra Body Parts
	4	Growth
	5	Invisibility
	6	Phasing
5-6	1	Material Duplication •
	2	Power Duplication •
	3	Power Theft •
	4	Transformation •
	5	Shrinking
	6	Stretching

<i>d6</i>	<i>d6</i>	<i>Control Powers</i>
1-2	1-4	Elemental Control
	5-6	Alteration Ray
3-4	1-3	Telekinesis
	4	Animation
	5	Plant Control
5-6	6	Probability Control •
	1	Healing
	2	Power Nullification
	3	Time Control •
	4	Transmutation •
	5-6	Wizardry •

d6	d6	Defensive Powers
1-2	1-3	Force Field
	4-6	Invulnerability
3-4	1	Absorption
	2	Immortality •
	3-4	Immunity •
	5-6	Reflection •
5-6	1-2	Life Support
	3-4	Regeneration
	5-6	Resistance

d6	d6	Mental Powers
1-3	1	Astral Projection •
	2-3	Illusion
	4	Mental Blast
	5-6	Telepathy
4-6	1	Animal Control
	2	Emotion Control
	3	Mind Control •
	4-5	Mind Shield
	6	Possession •

d6	d6	Movement Powers
1-4	1-2	Flight
	3-4	Super-Speed
	5	Swinging
	6	Teleportation •
5-6	1	Burrowing
	2	Dimension Travel
	3-4	Leaping
	5-6	Wall-Crawling

d6	d6	Offensive Powers
1-3	1	Affliction
	2	Binding
	3-4	Blast
	5-6	Strike
4-6	1	Aura
	2-3	Blinding
	4	Fast Attack
	5	Life Drain
	6	Paralysis

d6	d6	Sensory Powers
1-3	1-2	Detection
	3	ESP
	4-6	Supersenses
4-6	1-2	Danger Sense
	3	Interface
	4	Postcognition
	5-6	Precognition

PHASE 4: SPECIALTIES

To determine the number of specialties your hero has, roll on the following table:

2d6 Roll Number of Specialties

2-4	1
5-7	2
8-10	3
11-12	4

Select specialties from among those described in the **Specialties** section of the rules as you see fit.

PHASE 5: STAMINA & BACKGROUND

In this phase you determine your hero's Stamina and "fill-in-the-blanks" to determine background, description, and so forth.

Stamina

Add your hero's Strength level and Willpower level together and record the result as starting Stamina value.

Background

After determining your hero's abilities, come up with a background and description of what your hero is like. In particular, consider the hero's place of origin, childhood, and ethnic background. How did the hero acquire superhuman powers, and how do elements of the hero's background provide motivations and challenges for the hero in the present? Look to incorporate these things into your hero's aspects (see **Phase 6**).

Description

What does your hero look like? Consider the hero's physique, costume, build, hair color and style, mannerisms, and other distinguishing physical features. If you're artistically inclined, you might want to draw a picture of your hero to better help other players imagine what the character looks like. Perhaps you can use or modify an existing picture as a basis for your hero's appearance.



PHASE 6: DETERMINATION

Subtract the hero's number of powers from 6 to get the hero's starting Determination, with a minimum value of 1, keeping in mind each ability above level 6 counts as a power and some powers count double.

Give some thought to the different *aspects* of your character: important *qualities* and the various *challenges* your hero faces. Aspects influence how you use Determination in the game and, since overcoming challenges is the mark of a true hero, they are the way you earn more Determination in the game. Aspects are described in more detail in the **Determination** section (p. 73).

Choose at least one and up to five qualities and up to five challenges for your hero. You are not required to choose any challenges, but they are a key means of earning more Determination, so you should consider some.

PHASE 7: GAME MASTER APPROVAL

Once you've completed your hero, show a copy to your Game Master for approval. The GM may approve your character on-the-spot, ask for some changes or revisions to help the hero better fit into the overall series, or even ask you to rework the character entirely, although most Game Masters will not do so without a good reason.

EXAMPLE: THE SECRET ORIGIN OF SAGUARO!

Branden wants to create a hero for an **Icons** game.

Phase 1: Origin

Branden rolls on the **Origin** table and gets a 6, a Transformed origin! This means he can add +2 to one of his hero's abilities or powers.

Phase 2: Abilities

Next, Branden rolls six times on the **Level Determination** table: 4, 4, 11, 3, 4, and 10, giving him the following levels for his hero's six abilities:

Prowess	3
Coordination	3
Strength	7
Intellect	2
Awareness	3
Willpower	6

Branden is entitled to increase an ability by +2, but decides to wait until he sees what his hero's other traits are first. He's also entitled to swap two ability levels, but decides to leave them where they are right now.

Phase 3: Powers

Branden rolls a 6 on the **Number of Powers** table, for three powers.

He rolls an 8 for the first power, making it a Movement Power, then rolls a 5 and a 6, getting Leaping. A roll of 7 on the **Level Determination** table gives it level 5.

For the second power, Branden rolls an 8 (an Offensive Power), then a 4 and a 1, for Aura.

Lastly, he rolls a 6 for a Defensive Power, then a 6 and a 2, for Life Support. The Level Determination roll is a 3, for a level of 2.

So Branden has a guy who can leap pretty far, is immune to some things, and has some kind of effect that damages people who touch him. He immediately thinks of the prickly spines of a cactus, and an idea for his hero starts to come together: a cactus-man, covered in sharp spines (his Aura). Glancing at the Life Support power, Branden figures it reflects his hero's part-plant nature: he doesn't need to eat (since he photosynthesizes) or sleep, and certainly doesn't need to drink much!

Phase 4: Specialties

A roll of 7 on the **Number of Specialties** table gives Branden's hero two specialties. Looking over the lists, he chooses Athletics to give his hero more jumping and climbing ability, related to his Leaping power.

He wants a combat specialty as well and looks at Martial Arts, but it doesn't fit his concept and does not gain him as much, since his hero's Strength is already quite formidable. Wrestling, on the other hand, work great with his hero's powers, especially his damaging Aura!

Given this focus on the physical, and the fact that Branden wants to play a strong, tough hero, he decides to add +2 to his character's Strength level, bringing it up to a very respectable 9.

Phase 5: Stamina & Background

Adding his hero's Strength (9) and Willpower (6) together, Branden gets a Stamina of 15, which he notes.

After considering, he decides his hero is a half-blood Native American transformed by drinking water from desert cacti mutated by atomic tests in the Desert Southwest in the 1950s, becoming ... the Mighty Saguaro, the Cactus-Man!

Phase 6: Determination

Subtracting his hero's three powers plus his one ability over 7, from a value of 6, Branden gets a starting Determination of 2, and notes that on his character sheet.

For initial aspects, he gives Saguaro a catchphrase ("Desert plants are survivors!") and a Connection to his Mentor, an old Navajo shaman named Tom Crow, who taught him about responsible use of power. He rounds the qualities list out by giving Saguaro a motivation he sums up as "Changed by Man, Chosen by the Spirits" — although his transformation might appear to have been an accident, Saguaro believes it was destiny.

He decides his hero's challenges include having to deal with the fact that he looks like a humanoid cactus and is cut off from human contact. The burden of his destiny can be a heavy one, a personal challenge for him. These give the GM some story-hooks for the character and provide Branden with some opportunities to earn more Determination for Saguaro in play.

Branden shows his finished character sheet to the Game Master, along with an initial

sketch of what he thinks Saguaro looks like.

The GM likes the concept and approves, suggesting to Branden the possibility of an Enemy challenge as well: an evil desert-dwelling sorcerer (and former student of Tom Crow's) who has a lizard-like appearance and powers and calls himself Gila-Master. Branden agrees and notes the additional challenge. Saguaro definitely has his work cut out for him!



"BUT I DON'T WANT TO ROLL-UP A HERO!"

It's okay; you don't have to, if your Game Master agrees. The random hero-creation system in **Icons** is intended as a source of inspiration: building a coherent back-story and theme around a collection of fairly random traits can be a creative challenge and it certainly reflects the—shall we say “eclectic”?—style of the superhero comics.

The alternative approach is to create your hero with a “budget” of points you allocate to different traits. You start out with 45 points, which the GM may adjust to suit the game as desired. Each level of an ability and each level of a power costs 1 of these points, as does each level of a specialty (up to 3, as usual). You must spend at least 1 point on each ability, and you can only have one ability or power level greater than 8 (and no more than 10).

Phase 5 and 6 of hero creation are the same: determining background, Stamina, description, Determination, and aspects.

This approach tends to create heroes that fit into a somewhat more narrow range, although there's still considerable room for variation, depending on where you spend your points. It is also something of a “fast-and-dirty” approach when it comes to taking the relative value of different powers into account, but Determination helps to balance this out, as it does in regular play.

TEAM CREATION

Creating a hero in **Icons** is just the first step. Superhero comics are often based around teams, and so is game play in **Icons**. The superhero team is the foundation, with each of the players controlling one hero on the team. So after the players have created their individual heroes, it is time to bring those characters together to form a team. Team creation follows these steps:

1. Team Origin
2. Team Determination
3. Team Qualities
4. Team Challenges
5. Team Resources
6. Game Master Approval

TEAM ORIGIN

Each team has an origin: how the team got together and what made them decide to stay together as a group. The players should collaborate to come up with the team's origin. Were they brought together by a major crisis, the work of an influential mentor, or the machinations of a particular villain? How did their first adventure together inspire them to remain together as a team, and what

SEARCHERS



OF THE MULTIVERSE

potential team aspects does their origin suggest? (See **Team Qualities** and **Team Challenges** for additional information.)

If desired, you can run the team's origin as part of the series, typically as the first issue(s), letting the players form a Team Determination pool and choose team aspects once the group is "officially" together as a team. Likewise, you can allow players to choose team qualities and challenges during play, just as they can for individual heroes (see **Choosing Aspects During Play** under **Determination** on p. 78 for details).

TEAM DETERMINATION

Members of a team also combine their Determination to a degree, creating a Team Determination "pool" from which they can all draw during play.

Each member of the team must contribute 1 point of starting Determination value. This decreases the character's starting value and may even bring it down to 0 (nobody said teamwork was without sacrifice). The Team Determination gets an additional bonus starting point, so its starting value equals the number of team members, plus 1.

The Leadership specialty (see **Specialties**) improves a team's Determination: add the leader's level in the specialty to the Team Determination pool. So a Leadership Master adds +3 to Team Determination while leading.

If there is a change in leadership during play, subtract the Leadership level of the departing leader from that of the new leader and apply the difference to the team's Determination.

Example: *Prometheus' amazing foresight has always made him an effective leader (Leadership Expert); he adds +2 Determination to the team's pool. When Prometheus is captured by the team's foes, All-American Girl has to take charge. She has Leadership, but isn't an Expert, so the team's Determination Pool loses 1 point (the difference between Prometheus and All-American Girl's Leadership bonuses).*

A team Determination pool renews at the start of each issue, the same as an individual hero's Determination: increasing up to its starting value, if below it, otherwise remaining at its current value.

TEAM QUALITIES

The team chooses up to three team qualities, which are proposed and voted upon by the players of the members of the team. Agreement on team qualities must be unanimous.

A team might choose a catchphrase like a rallying cry, an epithet, or a team motivation, such as furthering the cause of justice in the world, exploring the unknown, or proving to everyone that superhuman mutants are not a threat to humanity. See **Qualities** on p. 74 for more suggestions.

Thereafter, members of the team can tag team qualities to spend Determination from the team pool, just like personal Determination. The GM can also compel team qualities, adding Determination to the team pool.

The players of the team members must be in unanimous agreement on any use of team Determination, otherwise the points are not available from the pool.

TEAM CHALLENGES

The team may choose up to three team challenges, which are also proposed and voted upon by the players of the members of the team. Agreement on challenges must also be unanimous.

Possible challenges include things like a team enemy, personal issues (like team in-fighting or bickering), or even something like general team social issues, like being part of a mistrusted minority. See **Challenges** on p. 76 for more possibilities.

The GM can compel team challenges to add Determination to the team pool. A team challenge affects all members of the team present, but only adds 1 point of Determination to the team pool

per compel, not 1 per character. This is a downside to Team Determination, but it is also the only way to add to a Team Determination pool apart from its regular renewal at the start of a new issue.

"Let's Divide Into Teams!"

One way the heroes turn team challenges to their advantage is by doing what they do in the comics: dividing up the group. If a team splits into smaller groups, then each group spends Determination from the same team pool, but gains Determination from team challenges separately. So, for example, if a team of six heroes splits up into three pairs, and each pair faces one of the team's challenges during the following chapters, then each pair adds one point of Determination to the team pool.

Heroic Sacrifice

If a member of the team is defeated, and *chooses to remain so until a normal recovery*, then that character may commit an additional point of Determination to the team pool, inspiring the rest of the team with his or her sacrifice. This commitment means not using Determination to recover or otherwise retcon a way out of the defeat.

A character with the Leadership specialty may commit additional Determination to offset any losses due to the character's departure as leader on a 1-to-1 basis, so a Leadership Expert who is defeated and can no longer lead can commit 2 Determination to the team to offset the loss of leadership, as well as 1 more for the character's defeat.

If only one member of a team remains undefeated, then that character has unrestricted access to the team Determination pool and can use it as desired (since there is only one vote that goes into such decisions). This "Last Hero Standing" guideline can be a potent final option for a hero in a crisis.

If all the members of a team are defeated at once, this option does not apply, although the GM may treat the loss as a challenge worth adding Determination to the team pool.

TEAM RESOURCES

One advantage forming a team offers heroes is the opportunity to have and share in various team resources such as a common headquarters, one or more vehicles for transporting the team, a shared database, communications system, and so forth. There are several ways to handle these resources in *Icons* and it is up to the Game Master to choose the preferred means and inform the players of it when they go to form their team:

Free Resources

Some resources may come to a hero team effectively for "free," simply as a part of having an established team. The GM decides what the available resources are based on the team's background, membership, sponsorship, and the overall needs of the game and the series.

This is the easiest way of handling team resources, making them largely background elements. In instances where a use of team resources makes a significant impact on the game, the GM may still require a use of Determination as a retcon or even a stunt, such as a player asking if the trophy room at the team's headquarters just happens to have a much needed item the heroes could use to deal with the current crisis they are facing.

Determination Investment

Alternately, the team may be required to "invest" a portion of their Team Determination pool into resources. Typically, this is 1 point of starting Team Determination per significant resource, with the Game Master deciding what constitutes "significant." So, for example, a team might invest 1 point in having an extensive and well-equipped headquarters and another in having a shared team vehicle.

Invested Team Determination is not available for other uses during play. It effectively reduces the

starting value of the Team Determination pool, including the rate at which it renews. This means less Determination available to the heroes during the game, in exchange for certain resources that help them in other ways.

Pay-As-You-Go

A middle ground between free resources and Determination investment is a “pay-as-you-go” approach, wherein the team spends points of Team Determination for significant uses of team resources during play, but otherwise does not have to pay for those resources, they’re just assumed to be sitting in the background, waiting to be activated.

This is essentially like a team-determined retcon or stunt: if a use of the team’s resources has a significant affect on the game (again, in the Game Master’s opinion) then the GM can ask the players to pay out a point of Determination from the team pool, the same as a retcon or stunt for an individual character.

Routine use of resources: simply living or holding meetings at the team’s headquarters, using team vehicles to get around, and so forth, do not cost Determination; they are just background color. Significant uses, from breaking out a needed device from the trophy room to getting the heroes where they need to be in the nick of time, can be considered uses of Team Determination.

GAME MASTER APPROVAL

Just as with hero creation, the GM approves the origin and aspects of a hero team, and may ask the players to make modifications to fit the concept to the overall style and themes of the game.

Similarly, the Game Master approves any resources the team might have. If the players want their heroes to have an orbiting satellite headquarters, but the GM decides such things are not available in the setting, then they have to come up with a more modest proposal for a place for their heroes to hang their capes.

There are additional notes and guidelines on Team Creation in the Game Master’s section.

ABILITIES

Abilities in **ICONS** are rated on the 1 to 10 scale. The six abilities are divided into physical and mental categories (three each). The abilities are: Prowess, Coordination, and Strength (physical), Intellect, Awareness, and Willpower (mental).

PROWESS

Prowess is the measure of a character's expertise in close combat. When kicking, punching, stabbing, or otherwise fighting in close quarters, this ability determines the outcome of the attack.

COORDINATION

Coordination is the measure of a character's agility and dexterity. When shooting, throwing, dodging, balancing, or otherwise employing agility, dexterity, or coordination, this ability determines the outcome of the action.

STRENGTH

Strength is the measure of a character's physical strength and endurance. When lifting heavy objects, determining damage with melee or thrown attacks, or otherwise engaged in activities relying on physical power, this ability determines the outcome of the action. Your Strength level also affects your Stamina, or ability to withstand damage.

INTELLECT

Intellect is a measure of the character's intelligence. When attempting to invent, solve a problem, learn, or otherwise use smarts, this ability determines the outcome of the action.

AWARENESS

Awareness is a measure of the character's intuition and perceptiveness. When attempting to sense danger, spot something, recognize a hunch, or otherwise work on instinct rather than analyzing a situation, this ability determines the outcome of the action.

WILLPOWER

Willpower is a measure of the character's mental strength and force of personality. When dealing with issues of will or using powers of the mind, this ability determines the outcome of the action. It influences social interaction and making an impression on people. Your Willpower level also affects your Stamina, or ability to withstand damage.

SPECIALTIES

Specialties provide a bonus with an ability when performing a specific action or operating in a pre-determined field of expertise.

LEVELS OF SPECIALTY

Having a specialty grants a +1 bonus when making ability tests related to that specialty. So, for example, a character with the Pilot specialty has a +1 bonus to Coordination tests while piloting, Intellect tests dealing with aircraft, and so forth.

You can devote additional specialty choices to the same specialty and gain an increasing level of aptitude beyond specialist, as follows:

- **Expert:** Expert level in a specialty grants a +2 bonus when making tests related to that specialty. Being an expert costs an additional specialty choice (for a total of two).
- **Mastery:** Mastery level in a specialty grants a +3 bonus when making tests related to that specialty. Mastery costs two additional specialty choices (for a total of three).

So a character might, for example have specialties of Blades, Bows Expert, Investigation Expert, Journalism, Painting, and Stealth Mastery, indicating different levels of specialty.

SPECIALTY DESCRIPTIONS

The following are descriptions of specialties and their game benefits. The GM is free to modify this specialty list, adding to or subtracting from it, as suits the game. If you want a specific specialty for your character that you don't see on this list, talk to your GM about it, using the guidelines for the benefits provided by the different levels of specialty to determine the effects of having that specialty. Make sure the new specialty is not overly broad compared to existing ones; remember that a specialty reflects only one element of an ability.

SPECIALTY GROUPS



Some specialties in this listing—such as Art, Performance, Science, and Weapons—are actually *groups* of similar specialties, indicated by the group symbol (above). Characters actually choose specific specialties from within these groups, which are listed separately. So, for example, you don't take the "Science" specialty, you choose a Science specialty, such as Archeology or Physics, and list it for your character. The same is true for Weapons and other specialty groups.

Generally if a character is good at an entire specialty group, it makes more sense to improve the related ability; for example, a hero good at most or all Science specialties should probably just have a higher Intellect.

SPECIALTY LIST

Acrobatics	Mechanics
Aerial Combat	Mental Resistance
Art ♦	Military
Athletics	Occult
Business	Performance ♦
Computers	Pilot
Criminology	Power ♦
Drive	Psychiatry
Electronics	Science ♦
Investigation	Sleight of Hand
Languages	Stealth
Law	Underwater Combat
Leadership	Weapons ♦
Martial Arts	Wrestling
Medicine	

Acrobatics

Add your specialty bonus to Coordination for acrobatic maneuvers, including dodging tests in combat (see **Dodging**, p. 58).

Aerial Combat

You're skilled at fighting in the air; add your specialty bonus to your defensive combat tests while you are gliding or flying.

Art

This is a specialty group for various artistic specialties; add your specialty bonus to the appropriate ability (usually Awareness) when creating a work of art. Art specialties include: Drawing, Painting, Sculpture, and other types of visual art.

Athletics

Add your specialty bonus to tests for climbing, jumping, running swimming, or similar activities. This generally includes riding mounts, unless the GM wants a separate Ride specialty in the game.

Business

Add your specialty bonus to tests involving business acumen or knowledge of the business world.

Computers

Add your specialty bonus to ability tests, particularly Intellect, involving computers.

Criminology

You're skilled in gathering and analyzing evidence from crime scenes and using it to solve crimes. Add your specialty bonus to tests for these things.



Drive

Add your specialty bonus to tests involving operating surface vehicles of all sorts. This includes water vehicles, unless the GM wants a separate Sail specialty in the game.

Electronics

Add your specialty bonus to tests to design, build, repair, or modify electronic devices.

Investigation

You're skilled at digging up information, tailing people, and finding lost people and items. Add your specialty bonus to these and similar tests.

Languages

You're especially adept at learning and speaking other languages. Your specialty bonus improves your Intellect level when it comes to dealing with languages. See **Languages**, p. 64, for details.

Law

You have an extensive background in the law of the United States or some other jurisdiction. Add your specialty bonus to tests involving knowing or practicing law.

Leadership

You are a skilled and recognized leader, able to inspire confidence and determination in those under your guidance. When you are the leader of a team, their Team Determination (see **Team Determination**, p. 19) is increased by your specialty bonus. A team can only have one recognized leader at a time.

Martial Arts

This is specialty in various forms of unarmed combat; add your specialty bonus to your Prowess in unarmed combat other than wrestling (covered by the Wrestling specialty). If you are skilled in Martial Arts, use the better of your Strength or Prowess (including your specialty bonus for the latter) as the difficulty for an opponent to resist being slammed or stunned by your unarmed attacks (see **Stun** and **Slam**, p. 70).

So, for example, a character with Martial Arts Mastery and Prowess 4 has a comparative level of 7 for purposes of slamming or stunning opponents in unarmed combat, although Stamina damage inflicted is still based on Strength.

Medicine

You're trained in providing health care; add your specialty bonus to a patient's ability level when determining how quickly they recover.

Mechanics

Add your specialty bonus to tests to design, build, repair, or modify mechanical devices.

Mental Resistance

You're skilled in resisting outside influences, including certain mental powers. Add your specialty bonus to Willpower for resisting such things. This is similar to, but not the same as, the Mind Shield power (see its description under **Powers** for details).

Military

You serve or served in a military or para-military; add your specialty bonus to all tests dealing with military protocols, information, and tactics.

Occult

You're knowledgeable about the occult and mystical; add your specialty bonus to Intellect tests involving them.

Performance

This specialty group involves the performing arts: Acting, Comedy, Dancing, Music, Singing, and such. Choose an art form and apply your specialty bonus to tests involving it.

Pilot

Add your specialty bonus to tests involving operating air vehicles of all sorts.

Power

This specialty group covers various powers (see the **Powers** section) requiring ability tests of different sorts, particularly offensive powers using Prowess and Coordination for attacks. Each power is a separate specialty. Add your specialty bonus to ability tests for the power. This specialty does not increase power level or other effects of a power.

Psychiatry

You're trained in mental health-care. Your specialty bonus applies to tests to evaluate someone else's mood or personality, notice outside mental influence, diagnose and treat mental illness, and so forth.

Science

This specialty group covers the various sciences; add your specialty bonus to tests involving your scientific discipline. Potential science specialties include (but are not limited to): Anthropology, Archeology, Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Ecology, Genetics, Geology, Metallurgy, Meteorology, Oceanography, Physics, Radiology, and Sociology.



Sleight of Hand

You're skilled in tricks of manual dexterity and add your specialty bonus to Coordination tests where such things would be useful, from magic tricks to picking pockets.

Stealth

Add your specialty bonus to tests to avoid being noticed or to otherwise move and act covertly.

Underwater Combat

You're skilled at fighting under water; having this specialty negates the -1 penalty for actions taken underwater, while expert and mastery levels add to your defensive combat tests, much like aerial combat. This specialty is primarily useful to Aquatic characters (see **Powers**, p. 30).

Weapons ❖

This specialty group involves the use of various kinds of weapons, both melee weapons and ranged weapons. Add your specialty bonus to Prowess or Coordination tests to attack with weapons of the appropriate type. Weapons specialties include: Blades (all sharp and pointed melee weapons), Bludgeons (all blunt melee weapons), Bows (including crossbows), Guns (all other self-powered ranged weapons), and Throwing. Specific Weapons specialties may also exist for various exotic weapons and powers at the GM's discretion.

Mastery of all weapons or fighting techniques is essentially just a higher level of Prowess, rather than a specialty.



Wrestling

This is specialty in wrestling combat (see **Wrestling**, p. 63); add your specialty bonus to all wrestling and escaping tests.

POWERS

Powers put the “super” into superhero characters. Like abilities, powers have levels rated on the 1 to 10 scale. Also like abilities, power levels are used for tests, although some powers require tests of other abilities as well; such as a close combat power requiring a Prowess test to hit a target. Other powers don’t require tests; the power’s level is just a measure of its effectiveness.

POWER DESCRIPTIONS

The following are the descriptions of the various powers. Each description includes general ways in which the power can be used. The Game Master sets the difficulty (see p. 6-7) for specific actions attempted by characters with their powers.

Power Groups

As with specialties, some powers (such as Elemental Control or Resistance) are actually *power groups* of similar abilities, indicated by the group icon shown in the header. You don’t take the Alternate Form or Elemental Control power; you choose one of the powers from within that group, such as Energy Form, Gaseous Form, Fire Control, or Magnetic Control.

Each power within a group is considered separate, although some effects may include all powers in a group for ease of reference.

Bonus Powers

Power descriptions refer to *bonus powers*; these are choices when creating a character (see **Character Creation**, p. 11-13). You can have a bonus power replace one of your rolled powers. So, for example, if you come up with Elemental Control for your hero, you can choose to replace one of the hero’s other powers with a Blast power of the same element.

Bonus powers are optional, you don’t have to take them, but if you choose not to do so, you can’t go back and take one later. You can make use of bonus powers you chose not to take initially as power stunts later on (see **Power Stunts**, p. 80).

Devices

A *device* is an item providing a power or powers, rather than the power residing in the character. Devices range from relatively mundane items like swords, guns, and armor to super-science gadgets and magical talismans.

Devices have their own independent power-source, although they may need periodic recharging; having a device suddenly run out of power, break down, get stolen, or otherwise pose a problem for its owner is a suitable challenge (see **Challenges**, p. 76).

Heroes with the Trained and Gimmick origins can *only* have powers from devices. Other characters may choose whether or not a power comes from a device or is innate when the power is acquired. If you want to determine this randomly, roll 2d6: on a 4 or less, the power comes from a device, otherwise it is innate.

*"WHERE DOES HE GET ALL
THOSE WONDERFUL TOYS?"*

- The Joker, Batman

ALTERATION POWERS

These powers alter the character's body in some fashion.

Alteration devices can take many different forms, including, but not limited to: pills and "wonder-drugs;" belts, suits, or harnesses; magical talismans, or gloves or gauntlets for touch-range powers like Power Duplication or Theft.

Ability Boost

Unlike Ability Increase (see the following), this power is a *temporary* boost to any one ability (chosen when the power is acquired). Ability Boost is actually a power group of six powers, one for each ability: Prowess Boost, Coordination Boost, Strength Boost, and so forth. To determine the boosted ability randomly, roll 1d6: 1 = Prowess, 2 = Coordination, 3 = Strength, 4 = Intellect, 5 = Awareness, 6 = Willpower.

Once each scene you can boost the chosen ability's level up to the power level, lasting for a number of pages equal to the newly boosted level. Then the affected ability's level is reduced to one *lower* than its normal level for the same amount of time while it recovers. So, for example, Strength Boost 8 raises your Strength level to 8 for 8 pages, then your Strength drops to 1 less than its normal level for 8 pages while you recover.

When you determine the level for this power, any result equal to or less than your existing ability level should be re-rolled until you get a higher level. Level 10 abilities cannot be boosted.

Ability Increase

When this power is selected, permanently increase the level of one of the character's abilities by +2, to a maximum of 10. Select an ability or roll 1d6: 1 = Prowess, 2 = Coordination, 3 = Strength, 4 = Intellect, 5 = Awareness, 6 = Willpower.

Ability Increase only counts as a power for figuring your starting Determination if the final level of the ability is 7 or greater. You can choose another Alteration Power as a bonus power.

Alter-Ego

Your hero can transform into an entirely different alternate character! Create a second character as your Alter-Ego. The new character automatically has one less power. The GM may require certain traits, notably origin and mental abilities, to remain consistent between the two characters. If your hero simply has an "ordinary" human identity with no powers, that is most likely a Challenge rather than an instance of this power.

Serial Alter-Egos: If you roll this power twice, you can take the following option: stop rolling and discard all other powers. In their place, you can assume a series of superhuman alter-egos! You either have a set number of alter-egos equal to the number of initially rolled powers (minimum of two) or an unlimited series of random superhuman forms (generate a new character for each identity assumed).



In both cases, you can assume alter-ego form at will, but must revert to your normal form afterward for an amount of time equal to the time spent in your superhuman form(s).

Alternate Form



You can transform into a form other than flesh and blood, selected from the list below, at will. While transformed you possess the properties of the material and gain Invulnerability (p. 41) equal to the power's level.

Depending on the form and Game Master approval you can use the level of this power to determine damage when attacking in close combat (punching with fists of steel, igniting things while made of fire, suffocating with gas or water, burning with acid, etc.).

Each type of Alternate Form is a power group, so you have Electrical Form, Fire Form, Gaseous Form, Metal Form, Water Form, and so forth, as individual powers.

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Energy | You transform into energy (choose electricity, fire, light, radiation, etc.). When in energy form you can do such things as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jump into power lines and travel through them. (Electricity) • Ignite flammable objects by touch. (Fire) • Move at the speed of light. (Light) • Cause radiation burns and sickness. (Radiation) |
| Gaseous | You transform into a cloud of gas. You can flow through any opening that's not airtight and move through the air at your normal ground movement speed. |
| Liquid | You transform into a liquid like water. While in liquid form you can flow like water, running through cracks and other small spaces. |
| Solid | You transform into a dense material like metal or stone. You gain Strength equal to the greater of your power level or your normal Strength +1 while in solid form. |

"FLAME ON!"

- The Human Torch, *Fantastic Four*

Aquatic

You are equally suited to living and moving underwater and on land. You can breathe normally under water and your Coordination and Awareness are the better of their normal levels or this power's level while submerged. You can swim at a speed based on your power level: 3 is a swift swimmer like a dolphin, 5 is as fast as a submersible, 7 like a torpedo, while higher levels are faster than any known sea-creature or vessel.

If you have this power, but cannot breathe air (that is, you "drown" out of water, see **Swimming**, p. 59), it does not count against your total number of powers when figuring Determination, since you essentially have a permanent "challenge" associated with it.

Chameleon

Your body, as well as worn or carried items, can change color, allowing you to blend into your surroundings. This is similar to Invisibility (see p. 32), except it is easier to detect; anyone searching for you makes an Awareness test against a difficulty equal to your Chameleon power level. If the Awareness test fails, you remain hidden.

Density

You can control your body's density, increasing it to become heavier, stronger, and tougher, but slower.

When your power is active, your Strength equals your Density level or your normal Strength +1, whichever is greater, and you gain Invulnerability equal to your Density level.

However, your Coordination equals the *lower* of your normal level or 10 minus your Density level, and at Density 10, you are unable to move without making a Willpower (10) test, which allows you to move a few steps.

If you have Density, you can choose Phasing as a bonus power, representing the ability to both increase *and* decrease your density.

Duplication

(x2)

You can produce exact duplicates of yourself out of nowhere. You can create a number of duplicates equal to your power level, so one duplicate with Duplication 1, two with Duplication 2, and so forth. (The power to create virtually unlimited duplicates is off the scale.)

Duplicates have the same traits as you, except they lack this power (duplicates cannot themselves create duplicates). You and your duplicates share the same "pool" of Determination, like a team (see **Team Determination**, p. 19). Duplicates act as independent characters, although the GM may want to use the guidelines for cooperation with a group of duplicates (see **Combining Abilities**, p. 57).

A dead or unconscious duplicate disappears. If you are knocked out or killed, all your duplicates disappear as well.

Extra Body Parts



You have additional body parts, either a completely new part (such as a tail) or more of an existing part (like four arms instead of two). Choose one of the following options or roll 2d6:

Roll	Body Part	Benefit
2–3	Carapace	You have a hard shell, granting Invulnerability equal to your power level.
4–5	Claws	You have the Strike power at a level equal to your power level.
6	Extra Arms	You have the Fast Attack power at a level equal to your power level.
7	Extra Legs	You can move faster, using your power level for your speed like the Super-Speed power.
8	Tail	You can use your tail as if it were an extra arm. You gain the Fast Attack power at a level equal to your power level.
9–10	Tentacles	You have powerful tentacles with Strength equal to your power level. They might grow out of your shoulders, back, or sides, or even be made up of long, prehensile hair.
11–12	Wings	You gain the Flight power at a level equal to your power level.

Growth

You can grow larger at will, increasing your strength and toughness, but also becoming easier to notice and hit.

While enlarged, your Strength level becomes the greater of your power level or your normal Strength +1 and you gain Invulnerability equal to your power level.

Your height is based on your Growth level, as shown on the table, and you have a penalty to your defense based on your increased size, since it's easier for opponents to hit you.

Level	Height	DeFense
1	9 feet	-0
2	12 feet	-1
3	15 feet	-1
4	18 feet	-1
5	21 feet	-1
6	24 feet	-2
7	27 feet	-2
8	30 feet	-2
9	60 feet	-3
10	120 feet	-3

Invisibility

You can become invisible at will. Sound, scent, heavy rain, and similar methods can still give away your presence and location.

You can also attempt to turn objects or even other characters invisible by touching them. Roll an Invisibility (5) test, with success the item or character becomes invisible and remains so as long as you are touching it. Use your power level to determine the maximum mass of an object you can affect, as if you were trying to lift it (see **Lifting**, p. 62).

You can choose Invisibility Ray as a bonus power, allowing you to make other things (and people) invisible at a distance.

Phasing

You can become less substantial, transforming into ectoplasm, altering your density or atomic valence, or perhaps phasing out of the physical world in some fashion. You gain Immunity to physical attack and can pass harmlessly through solid objects.

Make a power test to pass through energy fields (like a force field) with a Difficulty equal to the field's level. You're also unable to physically affect the world while you are out-of-phase, although you can still use mental powers, and they may be used on you.

As a bonus power, you can use an offensive power you possess to affect the physical world while you are out-of-phase. However, you must in turn choose some effect that works on you even while you are phasing.



Material Duplication

x2

By touching a substance or energy you can take on its properties like the Alternate Form power (p. 30), except you can assume different alternate forms, but only by touching the appropriate material or energy first.

If you choose to do nothing in your panel except duplicate the properties of an incoming attack, you become immune to that attack and take on its form. So, for example, if you choose to adapt and are hit with a flame-thrower, you assume a fire form and the flame-thrower attack has no effect. If you're hit with multiple attacks in a page, you choose which (if any) you duplicate. Attacks with no material or energy qualities—such as Life Drain or Mental Blast—are impossible to duplicate.

Power Duplication

x2

By touching another character, you can duplicate their powers and use them yourself.

You gain all the target's powers at their existing level or your Power Duplication level, whichever is less. So if you have Power Duplication 4, any powers you duplicate are limited to a level no greater than 4.

You retain any duplicated powers until you choose to duplicate another set or you are rendered unconscious, in which case you lose any previously duplicated powers.

As a bonus power, you can duplicate the powers of two subjects at the same time, but only the highest level of any given power applies. Each additional bonus power allows you to duplicate an additional subject. You must still touch the subjects one at a time to duplicate their powers.

Power Theft

x2

By touching another character, you can steal their powers and use them yourself!

Subtract your power level from the levels of all the target's powers. You gain the powers at that level (the lesser of your Power Theft level and the target's original level). The target retains any remaining power level. So if you have Power Theft 4 and touch a target with Fire Control 7, you gain Fire Control 4 and your target retains Fire Control 3. If your power level exceeds the subject's power, you gain it at the target's level and the target loses it entirely. Multiple touches have a cumulative effect, until all of the target's power levels are gone (at which point there is no more left for you to steal).

You retain the stolen powers for ten times your Power Theft level in pages. Then you lose 1 level from each stolen power per page, and your target regains 1 level per page, until the stolen powers are completely gone.

You can steal powers from multiple targets, but only the highest level of any given power applies.

As a bonus power, you can make a power theft attack at extended range. You must make a Coordination test to hit the target of your attack.

Shrinking

You can become smaller at will, down to a minimum height as shown on the table on the next page.

When using Shrinking your Strength level is unaffected. You also gain the modifier listed on the table as a bonus to defense and attack tests against normal-sized opponents.

Microscopic Size: At Shrinking 9+ you can reduce your size below that visible to the naked eye, down to the microscopic or even atomic or sub-atomic levels. You essentially exist in a separate "world" on another scale. You no longer interact directly with the larger world and your Strength is limited to interacting with things at the same scale. On the other hand, at microscopic and smaller sizes you can do things like slip through tiny openings or even between molecules (at atomic size).

At the GM's discretion, you might even be able to reduce "below" the sub-atomic to enter a "micro-universe" or similar alternate reality. This could be considered a bonus power, depending on the setting.

Growth Momentum: As a bonus power, you can enlarge rapidly under a target, using the momentum of your growth to enhance an attack; add the modifier for your Shrinking level given on the table as a bonus to your unarmed damage (with a maximum of +3).

Level	Size	Modifier
1	4 feet	+0
2	3 feet	+0
3	2 feet	+1
4	1 foot	+1
5	6 inches	+2
6	3 inches	+2
7	1 inch	+3
8	insect	+3
9	microscopic	—
10	atomic	—

Stretching

Your body and limbs can stretch, allowing you to reach or attack someone out to extended distance (see **Distance**, p. 55). Use the lower of your normal ability or your Stretching level when you extend your reach, so abilities greater than your Stretching level are reduced to that level, to reflect the difficulty of doing things at an extended distance. The GM may require a Stretching test for extreme distances or uses of your ability.

You can choose Invulnerability (representing your body's extreme flexibility) as a bonus power.

Transformation

x2

You can transform into other things (animals, other characters, objects) although you retain your normal mass (unless you also have Growth or Shrinking).

You gain the physical properties of the assumed form, up to your Transformation power level. Turning into other people doesn't grant you their powers, however. For that, see Power Duplication (p. 33).

If convincingly imitating a particular form is an issue, your Transformation power level is the difficulty for an Awareness test to notice something amiss.

You *must* have a limitation on your Transformation power. Choose one of the following or work out a similar suitable limitation with the Game Master:

- You're limited to turning into a particular type of shape, such as only animals, machines, humanoids, and so forth.
- You do not gain the physical properties of the forms you assume, just their appearance; you can look like a brick wall, but you're not as strong or tough as one.
- You have a "tell" that's always apparent, such as an inability to change color or texture, or having a version of your normal face always visible, making your power less useful for disguising yourself without using other measures, such as make-up.

You can choose Growth, Shrinking, or Stretching as bonus powers, expanding your control over your form.

CONTROL POWERS

Control powers provide control over different energies, elements, forces, or materials.

Control Devices often take the form of directed items: guns, wands, and other sorts of things you can point at a target. They can also be worn items like a crown, circlet, or helm, a ring, or a pair of gloves.

Alteration Ray

This power group is made up of Alteration Powers you can use on others rather than yourself (see **Alteration Powers**). Choose an option from the list below, or roll 1d6.

Roll	Type	Effect
1	Density Ray	You increase the target's density.
2	Growth Ray	You enlarge the target.
3	Invisibility Ray	You make the target invisible.
4	Phasing Ray	You make the target intangible.
5	Shrinking Ray	You shrink the target.
6	Transformation Ray	You transform the target into a different shape, like a use of Transformation.

You have to make a Coordination test to affect the target. A successful hit subjects the target to the effect of the Alteration Power. See the individual power descriptions for details.

Animation

You can endow inanimate objects with the ability to move and act on your command. Objects have Strength equal to their Strength (see **Bending & Breaking**, p. 60), Prowess and Coordination equal to your power level, and Stamina equal to their Strength. They have no mental abilities.

The attacks and movement abilities of animated objects depend on their shape and size, but are generally based on their new Strength and Coordination. You can only animate objects with Strength of your power level or less, and weighing no more than Strength of your power level could lift (see **Lifting**, p. 62).

Elemental Control

This power group includes abilities to control different elements. Each type constitutes a separate power: Air Control, Darkness Control, and so forth. Choose one of the listed options or roll 2d6, the first die indicating one of the first six or one of the second six, the second die indicating which of those six options is selected.

You can only manipulate an existing source of the element; you do not possess the ability to spontaneously create it. The GM may limit your effective power level based on the amount of the element available for you to control. Light Control is limited in areas of dim illumination, for example, and useless in complete darkness. Clever foes may try to cut you off from your element to weaken you or render you powerless.

Choose two of the following power effects you can perform with your Elemental Control. You can acquire the others as bonus powers:

Attacking: You can wield your element as an attack, like a Blast (p. 49) at your Elemental Control power level.

Creating: You can spontaneously create your chosen element, giving you an unlimited source of it to control.

Defending: You can use Elemental Control to defend against attacks like a Force Field (p. 41) at its power level.

Detection: You can detect the element you control, like the Detection power (p. 51) at your Elemental Control level.

Moving: You can use Elemental Control to lift and move objects of your chosen element, and possibly others as well, by using the element as a medium. You do so with Strength equal to your Elemental Control level.

Shaping: You can control your chosen element to form different shapes as you will, up to an amount you can move (based on your power level). You can shape the element into walls and simple geometric forms, and even more complex shapes with a suitable power test; the GM sets the difficulty level based on the desired shape. Such objects retain their shape for as long as you maintain them, although stable forms (such as shaped earth or metal) may remain so, at the GM's discretion.

Rolls Element

Effects

1-3, 1 Air	You can manipulate winds to attack, create protective barriers, move objects, etc.
1-3, 2 Darkness	You can manipulate darkness and shadows to blind opponents, block sources of light, etc.
1-3, 3 Earth	You can manipulate the ground to attack, create walls of earth that act as armor, move objects, etc.
1-3, 4 Electrical	You can manipulate electricity to attack, create force fields, move objects, etc.
1-3, 5 Fire	You can manipulate fire to attack, increase or decrease the temperate of a flame, create a wall of fire like a force field, etc.
1-3, 6 Gravity	You can manipulate gravity to make things lighter or heavier, create gravitic shields, move objects, etc.
4-6, 1 Light	You can manipulate light to attack, blind opponents, create force fields, etc.
4-6, 2 Magnetic	You can manipulate ferrous metals to attack, create walls of metal that act as armor, move metallic objects, etc.
4-6, 3 Radiation	You can manipulate radiation to attack, create force fields, heat up objects, etc.
4-6, 4 Sound	You can manipulate sound waves to attack, deafen, create force fields, etc.
4-6, 5 Water	You can manipulate water to attack, create walls of water that act as armor, move objects, etc.
4-6, 6 Weather	You can manipulate the weather. This power can be especially powerful since it allows a character to manipulate air, lightning, rain, fog, and any other aspect associated with storms/weather so the Game Master may choose to have Weather Control count as two power choices.

Healing

You can restore lost Stamina and Strength to others by touch. You heal up to your power level in Stamina per use and you can use Healing up to twice on any given subject per day. Additional Healing uses cost you a point of Determination per use.

A use of Healing can also restore one lost Strength level. This requires a Healing (3) test. If the test fails, the lost Strength is restored, but the healer *loses* a level of Strength, which must be recovered normally through rest. Healing 8+ automatically succeeds at this test, you don't have to roll.

At the GM's discretion, Healing may be able to eliminate the effects of some diseases and toxins—apart from simply restoring Stamina and Strength—as a bonus power. This generally requires a Healing test, with the difficulty based on the potency of the disease or toxin, and at least a moderate success, although major success may be required in some cases, with moderate success just holding the malady at bay temporarily, rather than curing it

Plant Control

You can control plants within extended range, forcing them to twist and turn and using them to wrestle, attack opponents, or block attacks (see p. 68) using your Plant Control level in place of the usual abilities for those actions.

Plant Growth: As a bonus power, you can make plants grow rapidly in an area, giving you more to control.



Power Nullification

You have the ability to nullify—completely negate—the powers of another within extended range. Roll a Power Nullification test, with the opposing power's level as the difficulty. If the attempt fails, you suffer damage equal to one-half (round up) the level of the targeted power. With a moderate success, the targeted power works at half its effectiveness (round up). With a major or better success, the power is negated (reduced to an effective level of 0) for a number of pages equal to your power level.

As a bonus power you can choose to suffer no feedback damage. On a failed Power Nullification test, the power simply has no effect.

Probability Control

x2

You can exert some influence over random chance. This power gives you extra Determination equal to its level (see **Determination**, p. 73), usable only for determined effort and retcons. These points renew along with your normal Determination but are not otherwise affected by changes to your Determination total.

When you get this power, roll the dice without any modifiers:

- On a positive roll, you gain Probability Control for “good luck.”
- On a negative roll, you gain Probability Control for “bad luck.”
- On a roll of 0 you can choose whether your Probability Control is good or bad luck.
- On a roll of +5 or -5 your Probability Control is good for both good and bad luck.

Good luck Probability Control is good for determined effort and retcons explainable as “lucky breaks.”

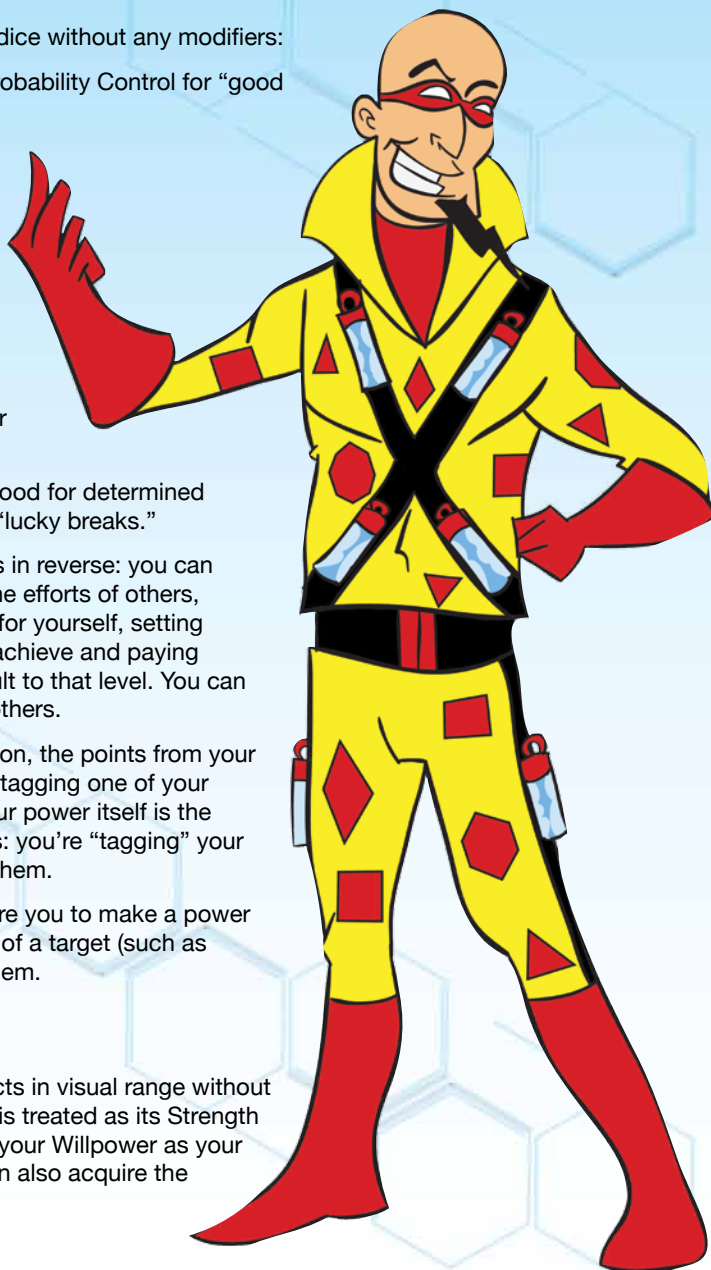
Bad luck Probability control works in reverse: you can use determined effort to *reduce* the efforts of others, the opposite of determined effort for yourself, setting a maximum effect the target can achieve and paying Determination to reduce their result to that level. You can also retcon “unlucky breaks” for others.

Unlike normal uses of Determination, the points from your Probability Control do not require tagging one of your aspects to use them. In effect, your power itself is the associated “aspect” for the points: you’re “tagging” your “good luck” or “bad luck” to use them.

In some cases, the GM may require you to make a power test against an appropriate ability of a target (such as Willpower) to inflict bad luck on them.

Telekinesis

You have the ability to move objects in visual range without touching them. The power's level is treated as its Strength for lifting and moving things. Use your Willpower as your telekinetic “Coordination”. You can also acquire the following bonus powers:



Attacking: You can strike targets with bolts of telekinetic force – using Willpower in place of Coordination for the Blasting or Throwing test. A successful attack deals damage equal to your Telekinesis level.

Defending: You can use your Telekinesis like a Force Field (see Defensive Powers) at your Telekinesis power level.

Moving: You can lift and move yourself, giving you Flight (see Movement Powers) at your Telekinesis power level.

Time Control

x2

You can exert control over the flow of time, allowing you to perform a number of effects. Choose two you can do when you get this power, the rest you can acquire as bonus powers:

- Slow down time relative to you, giving you Super-Speed at your Time Control level.
- Slow down time for those within close range, giving you Fast Attack at your Time Control level.
- “Freeze” time around a subject, like the Paralysis power (p.50) at your Time Control level.
- Place someone (including yourself) in a state of suspended animation, with time slowed to suspend the effects of a condition like poison or the loss of Strength levels while dying. One minute passes for the subject for every (power level x 10) minutes in the outside world.
- Summon duplicates of yourself from alternate timelines, like the Duplication power (p. 31) at your Time Control level.
- Travel in time, going into the past or future or alternate timelines. It’s up to the GM whether or not you can actually change history by traveling into the past; by default, assume you create a divergent or parallel universe if you “change history.” Likewise, any future you visit is only a “possible future,” not necessarily set in stone. See **Postcognition** and **Precognition** under **Sensory Powers** for more about interacting with the past and future.

Transmutation

x2

You can transform chemical elements and compounds, turning non-living materials into different non-living materials. Transmutation doesn’t affect living beings and can’t create animate beings out of inanimate matter (see the **Transformation Ray** and **Animation** powers to do those things).

To transform an object, make a Transmutation test against the object’s Strength (see **Bending & Breaking** in the **Taking Action** section): success turns the object into the desired material. You can only affect objects as a whole and only as much mass as Strength of your power level could lift.

You also *must* have a limitation on your Transmutation power. Choose one of the following or work out a similar suitable limitation with the Game Master:

- You must touch objects to transmute them. (Transmutation normally works at extended range.)
- Your transformations only last for 10 pages, then revert to normal. (Transmutation is normally permanent until reversed.)
- You affect a very limited mass, less than the amount for level 1 Strength, as little as a few pounds.
- You can only affect a particular state of matter: solid, liquid, or gas, and can’t transmute other matter. (Transmutation normally affects all states of matter.)
- Transmutation is especially taxing for you, causing you 2 points of Stamina damage each time you use it.
- You must spend a point of Determination in order to use Transmutation.

Wizardry

❖ x2

You have the ability to do virtually *anything*, duplicating the effects of other powers at your Wizardry power level. You can only use one Wizardry power per page, although you can maintain multiple Wizardry powers equal to your power level.

Your Wizardry power level is linked to one of your mental abilities (Intellect, Awareness, or Willpower) and cannot exceed your level in that ability, reduce a rolled value above that level to your ability level. At the GM's discretion, an appropriate Specialty (such as Occult) may increase the effective level of your ability.

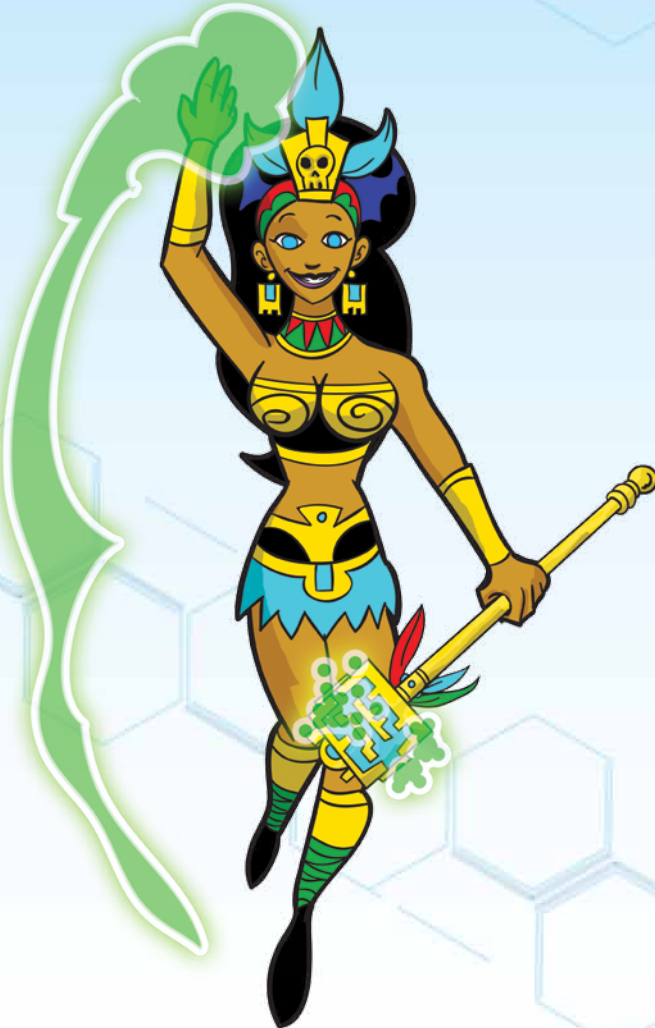
Choose one of the following types of Wizardry. You can also make up other types with the Game Master's permission.

Cosmic Power (Awareness): You can simply will effects into being using a cosmic or primal power. Choose a suitable weakness for your Cosmic Power, such as an inability to affect a certain subject (material, color, etc.).

Gadgets (Intellect): You have or can produce a wide range of devices, giving you various powers. Your gadgets can be taken away from you, however, just like other devices.

Magic (Willpower): You can cast spells to create magical effects. Most spells require the ability to freely speak and gesture. If you are held (see **Wrestling**, p. 63), gagged, or otherwise unable to gesture or speak, you cannot cast spells.

Choose two power effects you can duplicate with your Wizardry. Additional effects are available as bonus powers; essentially, *any* power is a potential Wizardry power stunt (see **Power Stunts**, p. 80).



DEFENSIVE POWERS

These powers protect the character in various ways.

The most common defensive devices are suits of armor and shields, although they may include various belts, bracers, or other items providing a defensive power.

Absorption

You are resistant to damage inflicted by a specific element or energy type (select one under **Elemental Control**, see p. 35-36) up to the level of this power, like the Resistance power (see **Resistance**, p. 43). Any levels of damage over the level of this power are suffered normally.

You can use the absorbed energy in one of the following ways (and you can acquire the others as power stunts or bonus powers):

Ability Boost: On your next panel after absorbing damage, you can use the absorbed energy as an Ability Boost with a level equal to the damage absorbed. The affected ability is chosen when you take this option, and each ability counts as a separate option.

Attack: On your next panel after absorbing damage, you can unleash the absorbed energy as an attack. Treat it as an appropriate Blast attack with a level equal to the damage absorbed.

Healing: You instantly recover Stamina equal to the level of damage absorbed, up to your maximum Stamina level.

You can also choose to broaden your Absorption as a bonus power. If Absorption counts as two powers, it protects against all physical or all energy damage.

Force Field

You have the ability to generate a personal force field that acts as Invulnerability equal to your power level (see **Invulnerability**, following). If you are stunned for any reason, your Force Field stops working until you recover. You can make a Willpower test to keep your Force Field working while you are stunned: your effort on the test is the level of Force Field you maintain. So, for example, if you have Force Field 7 and generate an effort of 5 on the Willpower test to maintain it, you effectively have Force Field 5 until you recover from the stun.

Immortality

x2

You do not age and cannot die. You still suffer damage, even to the point of death, but you can recover from having your Strength reduced to 0. Your body slowly regenerates lost parts so, short of atomizing you or exposing you to a constant source of damage (in a volcano or the heart of a star, for example), you'll always come back eventually.

If your Strength is reduced to 0 (or any other time you "die" and recover), you lose all your current Determination and must accumulate more starting from 0.

Immunity

x2

You are completely immune to a particular type of effect or attack. Choose an effect from the Resistance list (see **Resistance**). The chosen effect simply doesn't work on you.

Immunity counts as two powers, but every additional Resistance you acquire can be changed to an Immunity at no additional cost.

Invulnerability

You are resistant to physical damage, subtracting your Invulnerability level from the damage caused by an attack, which may reduce it to 0 or less, meaning you suffer no damage. Attacks reduced to 0 damage may still stun or slam you, however, even if you suffer no actual damage from the attack. Attacks reduced below 0 damage have no effect at all.

Your Invulnerability may come from armor plating, a leathery hide, skin made of something other

than flesh (such as metal), or just a general superhuman toughness, you decide.

Device: A character who has this power from a device may choose to have a suit of armor that provides the Invulnerability and incorporates any or all of the character's other powers into it.

Life Support

You can ignore certain physical needs like breathing, eating, or sleeping. For each level of Life Support, choose one of the following needs to ignore. At Life Support 10, you automatically ignore them all:

- Cold (atmospheric or environmental low temperatures)
- Breathing (you don't need to breathe at all)
- Eating (including thirst and the need to eliminate waste)
- Heat (atmospheric or environmental high temperatures)
- Pathogens (atmospheric or environmental diseases)
- Pressure (you can survive extremely high pressures)
- Radiation (atmospheric or environmental radiation levels)
- Sleeping (although not fatigue from exertion)
- Toxins (atmospheric or environmental toxins)
- Vacuum (you can survive extremely low pressures)

Surviving unprotected in deep space requires Life Support 4 to deal with the cold, airlessness, radiation, and vacuum.

Life Support does not provide protection against damaging attacks, for that see **Resistance** (following).



Reflection

x2

You can reflect the effects of an attack back at the attacker. You test your Reflection power as a reaction, with the attacking ability as the difficulty. On a failed result the reflection attempt fails and you suffer the normal effects of the attack. With a moderate success, you are unaffected by the attack, but neither is the attacker. On a major success or better, the attack is reflected back and the attacker suffers its full effect.

Regeneration

You heal quickly, recovering Stamina equal to your power level every 10 pages, spread out evenly over that time. If you have Regeneration 10, you recover 1 point of Stamina per page. You also recover lost Strength levels equal to your Regeneration level per week. If you have Regeneration 7 or higher, you recover one lost Strength level per day.

Resistance

❖

You are especially resistant to a particular type of effect. Choose one of the following: Afflictions, Binding, Blinding, Cold, Corrosives, Electricity, Heat, Magical Attacks, Mental Attacks, Radiation. Subtract your Resistance level from the level of any such effect. If the level is reduced to 0 or less, it doesn't work on you at all. You can create Resistances to other effects with the GM's permission.

MENTAL POWERS

Mental powers influence the minds of others, or tap into the psionic potential of the mind.

Mental power devices are often worn on the head, in the form of helmets, headbands, skullcaps, hats, and so forth. Mental devices are often magical, but may be technological, particularly for Telepathy or controlling powers.

Animal Control

You can communicate with and control animals. To control all animals within visual range, roll a power test with a difficulty equal to the highest Willpower among the affected animals.

If you can only control one type of animal, you gain a +2 bonus to your power's level (maximum of 10). Choose the type of animal affected, or roll on the following table:

2d6	Animal Type
2-3	Avians
4-5	Insects
6-7	Mammals
8-9	Reptiles
10-12	Sea Creatures

Astral Projection

x2

You can separate your astral form (the vessel of the mind and spirit) from your physical body, allowing it to travel elsewhere. Your body remains in a coma-like state, although you are aware of any harm befalling it. Should your body perish while your astral form is away, you remain trapped in astral form.

Your astral form can observe, but not affect, the physical world and cannot be detected by physical means, although Astral Detection and Telepathy reveal it. You can use mental powers against non-astral beings, but with a -2 penalty to your level. Your powers work normally against other astral beings.

While in astral form, you can pass harmlessly through physical objects and fly, like the Flight power at your level. You can also travel into other dimensions linked to the astral plane like the Dimension Travel power at your Astral Projection level.

You can choose Astral Detection as a bonus power.

Emotion Control

You can exert a kind of Mind Control (see **Mind Control**, following), influencing how a target feels, rather than acts. To influence someone with Emotion Control, they must be in visual range and you need a successful power test with the target's Awareness as the difficulty. If you fail an Emotion Control test against someone, you must make a determined effort to attempt to control them again in the same scene (see **Determination**, p. 73).

You can instill a single emotion in the target at a time (see the following table for emotional effects). The target is affected until you choose to release them or they are led to do something opposed to one or more of their aspects (see **Aspects**, p. 74) at which point you must roll a new Emotion Control test to maintain the effect.

If you are limited to instilling a single emotion, increase your power level by +2 (to a maximum of 10). Choose one emotion, or roll on the following table:

2d6	Emotion	Effect
2-3	Doubt	Beset with doubt, the target always acts last and may not make determined efforts.
4-5	Fear	Filled with terror, the target either flees or cowers, if unable to do so.
6	Hate	The target is filled with hatred towards a subject great enough to attack it.
7	Love	The target loves a subject and will help and defend it as much as possible.
8	Pleasure	So filled with good and pleasurable feelings, the target just sits around doing nothing.
9-10	Respect	Instilled with great regard for a subject, the target will do anything possible to assist it.
11-12	Sadness	Overwhelmed with sadness and despair, the subject can't do anything.



Illusion

You can project false sensory impressions into other minds, creating very realistic hallucinations. Your power has no effect on non-intelligent machines like cameras, microphones, or other sensors.

Targets treat your illusions as real unless they have some reason to disbelieve them, in which case roll an Illusion test against the target's Awareness; failure means they overcome the illusion and know it to be false. Otherwise, they react normally to the illusion, even suffering imaginary damage from illusory attacks, although "death" only results in unconsciousness (like a failed test to avoid being stunned).

Although illusions can fool others, they still have no effect on the physical world. An illusory wall might block people who think it's real, but an illusory floor won't support any weight and things fall right through it, illusory fire doesn't actually burn things, and so forth.

Images: Optionally, your Illusion power can create real sensory images, affecting machines like cameras and ignoring mental resistance, but lacking the ability to choose who perceives your illusions, as they don't exist solely in the subject's mind. Images cannot be disbelieved, only revealed as false. They cannot cause damage.

Mental Blast

You can strike other minds within visual range with blasts of mental "force." Roll a Willpower test, with a difficulty equal to the target's Willpower and read the results like a blasting attack (see **Blasting**, p. 49). You inflict damage equal to your power level and can stun, but not slam, your target.

Mind Control

x2

You can take over the minds of others. A target of Mind Control must be within visual range and have a Willpower level less than the level of this power or your own Willpower, whichever is greater. Those with greater Willpower are immune to your control unless you first tag one of their aspects (see **Tagging and Compelling** under **Determination**).

To take control of another, roll a Mind Control test with a difficulty of the target's Willpower. If successful, the target is under your control until you choose to release them or you order the target to do something opposed one or more of their aspects (see **Aspects**, p. 74) at which point you must roll a new Mind Control test to maintain your control. If you fail a Mind Control test against someone, you must make a determined effort to attempt to control them again in the same scene (see **Determination**, p. 73).

While you can command a target to take any action, you cannot force targets to make determined efforts or otherwise spend Determination.



Mind Shield

You have a mental shield protecting you from outside influences. Subtract its level from the level of any hostile mental power used against you. If your Mind Shield reduces the attacking power's level to 0 or less, it has no effect. Otherwise, it works normally at the reduced level.

Possession

x2

You can take over someone else's body, much like Mind Control, except your mind is "inside" the victim and controls their body, rather than issuing orders. Your own body is unconscious and immobile while you possess someone else. Otherwise, this power works just like Mind Control.

Since your mind is in control of the target's body, you can spend your own Determination for tests you make using the possessed target (unlike Mind Control). If you place the target's body in a life-threatening situation, you must make a Possession test against the target's Willpower each round, with failure meaning the target shakes off your influence.

Merger: As a bonus power, your own body disappears and merges with the target when you possess them. You reappear near the target when the possession ends.

Telepathy

You can read the minds of others and transmit your thoughts to them.

You can read the mind of any character with a Willpower level lower than your Telepathy level or Willpower, whichever is greater. Minds with greater Willpower are closed to you unless you first tag one of their aspects (see **Tagging and Compelling** under **Determination**). Roll a Telepathy test against the subject's Willpower to read their thoughts.

You are automatically aware when someone attempts to read your mind and may attempt to block the attempt; both telepaths roll power tests and the greater effort wins.

MOVEMENT POWERS

Movement powers allow characters to move and get around in a number of different ways.

A movement device may be a special vehicle of some sort, from a souped-up car to a plane or dimension-travel capsule. Movement devices also include personal items from jet-packs to anti-gravity harnesses, wall-walking boots and gloves, and teleport belts.

Burrowing

You have the ability to tunnel beneath the earth, moving at a rate equal to your normal speed (see **Movement**, p. 59) through any subterranean area with a material Strength equal to or less than your Burrowing level (see **Bending and Breaking**, p. 60, for some comparative Strength levels). You cannot "burrow" through other characters; for that sort of attack, see **Strike** under **Offensive Powers**.

Dimension Travel

You can move at will between dimensions. You may freely travel to any dimension you have previously visited but visiting a new dimension requires a power (3) test. A failure means you don't go anywhere, and trying to reach that dimension requires determined effort. A moderate success means you arrive at the destination dimension stunned and must spend the next panel recovering (taking no actions that page). A major or better success means you reach the dimension with no problems. Dimension Travel 8 or greater does not require a test (you automatically succeed).

Flight

You can fly, either through the use of an item or by innate means. Flight 5 is sufficient to cross to visual range in one panel. Flight 7 is roughly Mach 1, the speed of sound, with higher levels of Flight orders of magnitude faster. Flight 10 is sufficient to go anywhere in the world in a single panel.

Leaping

You can jump across great distances. Leaping 7 can take you out to visual range in a single bound, and levels beyond that can cover miles in a single leap!

Super-Speed

You can move at superhuman speeds. Super-Speed 5 is sufficient to cross to visual range in one panel. Super-Speed 7 is roughly Mach 1, the speed of sound, with higher levels orders of magnitude faster. Super-Speed 10 is sufficient to go anywhere in the world in a single panel.

You can choose Air Control, Fast Attack, Phasing (by vibrating your molecules), or Regeneration as bonus powers, along with the following:

Defending: As a bonus power, you can substitute your Super-Speed level for your Coordination and Prowess to avoid attacks.

Surface Speed: As a bonus power you can use your extreme speed to do things like run up walls (momentum defying gravity) or across the surface of water (moving fast enough not to break the surface tension).

Swinging

You can swing along on a line or cable; this might be self-generated webbing or lines of force, or a device like a grappling gun or lasso. Substitute your Swinging level for your Coordination, if it is higher, for maneuvers while you are swinging (including avoiding attacks).

You can also use your swing line to catch onto things and pull them to you rather than you to them with a successful Coordination test.

Your swing lines have Strength equal to your power level.

Teleportation

x2

You can disappear in one spot and reappear in another some distance away. Teleport 5 is sufficient to go anywhere in visual range, while higher levels have ranges measured in tens, hundreds, thousands, and tens of thousands of miles. Teleport 10 is enough to go virtually anywhere.

Teleporting requires a power level (2) test. Failure means you arrive at the destination stunned and spend the next panel recovering (taking no actions that page). Teleport 7 or greater does not require a test (you automatically succeed).

If you accidentally teleport into a solid object – which can include the ground – roll a power level test against the object's Strength. Failure immediately bounces you to the nearest safe open space and leaves you stunned for 10 pages. Any other result immediately bounces you back to the starting point and leaves you stunned for one page.

BAMF!

- Nightcrawler, X-Men

Wall-Crawling

You can move normally across vertical and upside-down surfaces (walls and ceilings, for example). Game Masters should require a power test when attempting to move across a particularly slick or slippery surface, with the difficulty based on the surface.



OFFENSIVE POWERS

These powers allow you to make different sorts of attacks.

An offensive device is, by definition, a weapon, although it may or may not take the form of a conventional weapon. A Blast, for example, may be a blaster pistol or goggles that shoot energy beams, while a Strike could be a hand-held weapon like a sword or hammer or a ring or gauntlet that provides a powerful kinetic impact.

Affliction

You can cause a fast-acting affliction – like a disease or toxin – by touching a target. Test your Affliction level against the target's Strength each page; success results in power level damage. Failure means no damage, but the Affliction continues and another test is required on the following page. Failure by 3 or more also ends the effect.

A victim reduced to 0 Stamina begins dying and losing Strength levels, although medical attention can arrest this loss, substituting an Intellect test (with Medicine specialty bonus) for the Strength test against the Affliction.

You can remove your Affliction at will, simply by touching the victim, halting any further damage.

As a bonus power, you can use your Affliction at close range without having to touch the target.

Aura

You can surround yourself with a damaging effect like fire, raw energy, sharp spines, or acid, for example. Choose the effect of your Aura when you gain this power. Anything touching you suffers power level damage; this includes anyone attacking you unarmed (or their weapon if they attack with one). If you deliberately touch an opponent (including wrestling them), they suffer your Aura's damage.

Binding

You can project an attack that binds or traps the target such as glue, ice, mud, webbing, or the like. Make a Coordination test against the target's Coordination to hit with the attack, treating the outcome like a wrestling test (see **Wrestling**, p. 63). Your Binding has Strength equal to its power level.

Blast

You can project a damaging blast at a distance. Choose the effect of your Blast – from pure force to an element or energy – and whether or not it is a blasting or shooting attack (see **Coordination** under **Taking Action**) when you get this power. Your Blast inflicts damage equal to its level.

As a bonus power, you can project an explosive blast, affecting all targets in a close area around the target point.

Blinding

You can project an effect that temporarily blinds the target; it could be dazzling light, a chemical spray, a gob of mud or anything similar.

Make a Coordination test against the target's Coordination to hit. With a moderate success, you blind the target for 1 page, with a major or better success, the target is blinded for 1 page per Blinding level.

The Resistance power (p. 43) can reduce the power level of your Blinding; if it's reduced to 0 or less, you cannot blind the target.

Optionally, you can have your attack affect a sense other than sight, usually hearing to deafen the target, although you could also target a sensory power like Danger Sense or Detection. It works the same way, just targeting the other sense.

As a bonus power, your Blinding affects two senses at once rather than one, simultaneously blinding and deafening, for example.

As a bonus power, you can project a blinding burst, affecting all targets in a close area around the target point.

Fast Attack

You can attack more than once per panel, with your total number of attacks based on your power level. Make each attack test separately.

Level Attacks Per Panel

1-5	2
6-7	3
8+	4

Life Drain

You can drain a target's life-force by touch; roll a Prowess test to touch the target. If successful, subtract your power level from the target's Stamina and add it to your Stamina, which can't increase above its normal maximum. Targets drained to 0 Stamina must make a Strength test against your Life Drain level with failure meaning they begin losing Strength levels (see **Killing**, p. 70).

As a bonus power, your Life Drain can increase your Stamina above its normal maximum, up to your power level. You lose this additional Stamina at a rate of 1 point per page after a number of pages equal to your power level.

Also as a bonus power, you can use Life Drain at close range without having to touch your target.

Paralysis

Your touch can render opponents unable to move. To paralyze an opponent you must roll a test to touch the target and a Paralysis test against your target's Strength. With a moderate success the target is paralyzed for one page. A major success paralyzes the target for pages equal to your Paralysis level.

As a bonus power, you can use Paralysis at close range, without having to touch your target.

Strike

You have some sort of close combat attack like claws, spines, or a melee weapon of some sort. Choose the effect of your strike and whether or not it is a bashing or slashing attack (see **Prowess** under **Taking Action**) when you get this power. A slashing Strike inflicts damage equal to its level. A bashing Strike does damage equal to its level or your Strength+1, whichever is greater.



SENSORY POWERS

Sensory powers expand or enhance the character's senses in various ways.

Sensory devices are typically scanners or sense-enhancers like helmets with heads-up displays, amulets, goggles, or the like. They might also be magic items like crystal balls, scrying mirrors, and so forth.

Danger Sense

You have a special sense for danger, moments before it strikes. You can substitute your Danger Sense level for your Awareness for surprise attacks, for your Prowess for evading, and for your Coordination for dodging (essentially making your Danger Sense level the difficulty to hit you in combat).

If you generate a Danger Sense level equal to or lower than your Awareness level, re-roll until you generate a higher level.

Detection

You have the ability to detect a specific form of energy, power, or presence with Awareness equal to your Detection level. Select one type of Detection from the following list or roll 2d6:

Roll	Type	Effect
2	Cosmic	You can detect cosmic-level beings, cosmic energy, and universe-affecting events.
3–4	Emotion	You can detect emotional states or particular emotions like fear or love.
5	Energy	You can detect different types of energy and follow energy trails. You can identify different energy types with a power test.
6	Magic	You can detect magical energy – spells, artifacts, those with the ability to use magic, etc.
7	Magnetic	You can detect magnetic fields – including uses of Magnetic Control.
8–9	Power	You can detect the use of certain powers – when a power is used or someone possesses a power, such as mutant or mental powers.
10–11	Radiation	You can detect radioactive energy and sources of radiation, including uses of Radiation Control.
12	Spirit	You can detect spiritual activity – such as ghosts or astral forms.

The above is by no means a complete listing of available detection powers. Players wanting a form of detection not listed here are encouraged to discuss the idea with their Game Master.

In some cases, the GM may use an opposing ability, like Coordination or Willpower, as the difficulty for a power test to detect a subject deliberately trying to hide from you.

ESP

You have ESP—Extra-Sensory Perception—allowing you to perceive things in distant locations as if you were actually present. Use the lower of your power level or Awareness for tests to notice and search for things in the location. If a location is shielded against your ESP, make a power test against the level of the shielding. The GM may also require ESP tests for areas completely unknown to you, determining what you sense based on the result.

As a bonus power, you can extend your ESP into other dimensions, like a use of the Dimension Travel power (p. 46).

If your ESP is limited to *only* seeing or hearing (clairvoyance or clairaudience), rather than all your ranged senses, increase your rolled power level by +2.

Interface

You can access information from and interface with computers at visual range. Use the higher of your Interface or Intellect levels when operating computers. Against intelligent computer systems, including self-aware robots, this power works like Telepathy (see p. 46).

Postcognition

You can perceive things that happened in the past. You must touch a place or object in order to sense its past and make a power test, with the difficulty based on how long ago you want to perceive.

On a success you pick up strong feelings or impressions associated with the subject and time; with a massive success, you have a vision, as if you were actually present at the time. A failed test gives you no information, and you must spend Determination to try again.

The GM can also choose to give you a postcognitive vision at any time, saying you pick up on the “strong impressions” left on a particular subject.

Difficulty	Time
1	A day
2	A few days
3	A week
4	A few weeks
5	A month
6	A few months
7	A season (four months)
8	Half a year
9	A year
10	More than a year

Precognition

You receive visions of what may happen in the future. Sometimes these visions come unbidden, provided by the GM as plot hooks or helpful hints.

A deliberate attempt at Precognition requires a power test, rolled secretly by the GM against a difficulty based on how obscure or distant the future events are you are trying to see. A moderate success gets you some cryptic clues and visions open to interpretation. A major success gets you clearer information, perhaps a name or a face, while a massive success gets you a very clear and detailed vision, although not necessarily all the information about the events.

The GM can also choose to give you a precognitive vision at any time, having you pick up on particularly strong premonitions as a plot hook to further the story.

Precognition also allows you to spend Determination differently: you can choose to make a determined effort on a test after rolling the dice and seeing the result. You can also avoid certain hazards: with a major or better success on a Precognition test and a point of Determination, you can retcon an event that just happened so it wasn’t real at all, but a precognitive warning!

Example: *Prometheus (“foresight”) has Precognition 7. He and his teammates are dealing with a stolen nuclear weapon that’s counting down to detonation. Prometheus’ teammate clips the wrong wire and the bomb goes off! Prometheus’ player declares an immediate use of Precognition, a determined effort to get a major success. He gets it, spends another point of Determination, and retcons the scene that just happened as a visionary warning. To the other characters, Prometheus*



comes out of a fugue just as his teammate is about to cut the wire. "Don't!" he warns. "You'll set it off!" Disaster is averted, for the moment.

You can use both these benefits (spending determination after a roll and retconning events) a maximum number of times per issue equal to your Precognition level, in whatever combination you choose.

If you have Precognition, you can choose Danger Sense as a bonus power.

Supersenses



You have enhanced or extraordinary sensory abilities. Each level in Supersenses grants you one of the following abilities. Choose one or roll 1d6. You can choose some abilities more than once, in which case their effects are cumulative. If you have Supersenses, you can choose Danger Sense or Detection as a bonus power.

Roll	Type	Effect
1–2	Additional	You have more than just the five normal senses; each level gives you a new sensory ability, like infravision, radar, sonar, or x-ray vision (the ability to see through solid objects). Discuss the details of the new sensory abilities with the GM.
3–4	Enhanced	Each level adds a +1 bonus to Awareness tests using a particular sense, much like a specialty; e.g. Enhanced Vision, Enhanced Hearing, etc.
5–6	Extended	Each level reduces the effective range to sense something by one. For example, you can see things at visual range as if they were only at extended range.

TAKING ACTION!

Now that you've created a hero, it's time to take action! This section covers how to do things in **ICONS**, from meeting different challenges to fighting foes in titanic clashes, all based on the hero's various capabilities.

TIME

ICONS measures time in a series of abstract segments. The two basic types of time keeping in the game are *action time* and *narrative time*.

Action time is when things in the game really start happening quickly: fights, chase scenes, and so forth. The basic segment of action time is a *panel*, which covers an abstract amount of time equal to the action depicted in a single comic book panel. A character can perform any action in a panel that would fit into a standard panel, including attack, dodge, or move.

All of the characters' panels add up to a *page*, which is enough time for every character involved in the action to do at least one thing. As a default, ten pages of action time are assumed to equal about a minute, in cases where that matters. The GM may use an abstract number of pages as a measure of things.

Narrative time is based more on the progress of the story than a series of actions. It is also more abstract. The basic unit of narrative time is a *chapter*. It is essentially like the chapter of a longer story like a comic book or novel, focused on a particular locale or event. For example, if the heroes foil a bank robbery, everything that happens at the bank—including pages of action time—is one chapter. When the scene switches back to the heroes' headquarters, another chapter begins, and so forth. The Game Master ultimately places breaks between chapters.

All the chapters of a single game session make up an *issue*, like a single comic book. A particularly long session with many chapters can be a "giant-size issue" while a self-contained story completed in a single issue may be a "one-shot issue."

Lastly, multiple issues make up a *series*, just like an ongoing comic book series.

Reactions



You may be called upon to make various tests during or outside of your panel in *reaction* to something someone else does. These tests require no effort on your character's part and generally impose no penalties (apart from the effects of failing them); you can perform as many reactions in a page as the Game Master requires.

Reactions are noted with the icon in the header.

Supplemental Actions



You may only perform one active test in your panel (the exception is the Fast Attack power which grants characters the ability to make multiple attack tests in one panel) and as many reactions as the GM requires. It is possible to perform *supplemental actions* during a page, doing additional things that do not require a test, such as movement, but you suffer a -1 penalty to your active test for each supplemental action in that page.

Supplemental actions are noted with the icon in the header.

Conflict

During a conflict in action time, you go back and forth between the heroes' panels and their opponents' panels for each page of the conflict. Typically, the conflict starts off with the panels of whichever side initiates: if a villain launches an attack, start with the villain's panel. If the heroes spring into action, begin with their panels. Once one side's actions are resolved, go to the other side, then back and forth until the conflict ends.

If there's a specific need to know who is able to act first (two characters grabbing for the same object, for example), test the appropriate ability (usually Coordination) with a difficulty equal to the opposing character's ability. Otherwise, actions on a page are largely simultaneous.

If the initiation of a conflict is unexpected, it may count as a Surprise Attack (see **Maneuvers** later in this chapter).

"IT'S A TIME MACHINE, SUPERMAN. IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW LONG IT TAKES TO FIX, AS LONG AS IT GETS FIXED."

- Batman, JLA/WILDCATS

DISTANCE

Distance in **IcONS** is measured abstractly in ranges, roughly describing a level of distance, how far apart two things are. The ranges are:

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Personal | Close enough to touch someone, or to have someone standing right behind you. You can communicate by whispering. |
| Close | Close enough to hit someone with a melee weapon or shoot them at point-blank range, or move up to them and do so in a single panel. You can communicate by speaking normally. |
| Extended | Out of range for close attacks, but still within range for firearms and similar ranged attacks. You can only communicate by shouting. |
| Visual | Out as far as the eye can see. You can make out outlines and shapes, but not individuals. You can't communicate except by visual or long-distance means (such as radio). |
| Beyond | As in "beyond visual range." This is a catchall for greater distances, which are usually expressed in general or real-world terms (such as "a continent across" or "100 miles"). |

DOING THINGS

Your Icons hero can attempt pretty much anything you wish in the context of the game that is within the character's capabilities. This section looks at some common things characters do and how to determine if a particular attempt is successful and, if so, by how much.

This section uses the information from **The Basics** section, particularly on how to roll tests of different abilities and interpret the results.



Combining Abilities

Characters may *combine* their abilities for some tests. In this case, the lowest ability level is used for the test, but it gets a +1 bonus from the higher ability, if the two are equal, use that level with a +1 bonus. Obviously, this makes equals combining their abilities the most useful when it comes to improving the outcome, other combinations are too uneven.

Limiting Abilities

In some situations, one ability may *limit* another, applying the lower of the two abilities to the test. For example, juggling is a Coordination test. However, a juggling contest involving who can go the longest without getting tired brings Strength into the equation, so it can be said that Strength limits the test and the characters involved use the lower of their Coordination or Strength levels (how good they are at juggling or how good they are at going for a long time without resting).

PROWESS

Use Prowess for tests of combat skill, whether it's punching someone in the jaw, fencing with swords, or fancy footwork to keep from getting tagged in a fight.

"IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME!"

- The Thing, *Fantastic Four*

Bashing

Any unarmed attack or attack with a blunt weapon or object is a bashing attack. Test Prowess against a difficulty of the target's Prowess. On a failure, your attack misses. With a moderate success, you deal the attack's damage in Stamina. With a major success, you may slam the target. With a massive success, you may stun the target. See **Damage** (p. 69) for details.

Evading

You use your Prowess to evade attacks through a series of feints and maneuvers. Evading only works against Prowess and Strength attacks, not Coordination (ranged) attacks. Test Prowess against a difficulty of the attacker's ability level. With a success, the attack misses. On a failure, the attack hits; determine the effect and outcome from the margin of failure. For example, if you fail to evade an attack by 3 levels, the attacker achieves a major success against you.

Slashing

Any attack with a knife, sword, or other sharp or pointed object is a slashing attack. Test Prowess against a difficulty of the target's Prowess. On a failure, your attack misses. With a moderate success, you deal the attack's damage in Stamina. With a major success, you may also stun the target. With a massive success, you may also kill the target! See **Damage** (p. 69) for details.

COORDINATION

Use Coordination for tests of agility, dexterity, hand-eye coordination, aim, precision, mobility, and similar things.

Blasting

A blasting attack uses blunt force: either actual force beams or “mercy ammo” like rubber bullets or a simple blunt object. Test Coordination against a difficulty of the target’s Coordination. On a failure, your attack misses. With a moderate success, you deal the attack’s damage in Stamina. With a major success, you can hit a precise target (see **Called Shots** under **Maneuvers**, p. 67) or may slam the target. With a massive success, you may stun the target. See **Damage** (p. 69) for details.

Catching

On occasions when characters need to catch a falling or thrown object, roll a Coordination test. The usual Difficulty is 3, modified by the object’s size; see **Growth** and **Shrinking** under powers for guidelines. So, for example, catching something insect-sized is difficulty 6 (the usual 3 with a +3 modifier for size). You also have to be able to lift an object’s weight in order to catch it: trying to catch a 10-ton boulder hurled at you when you’re unable to lift 10 tons is a *bad* idea!

A failure on the catching test means you miss. If the object was being thrown at you, you’re automatically hit by it. A moderate success means you catch the object, but inflict your Strength in damage on it in doing so. Alternately, you can choose to suffer damage equal to the object’s Strength to prevent harming the object, a useful option if you’re Invulnerable and able to easily absorb the damage. A major or better success means you catch the object easily and without harm.

*"BATMAN TO ALL POINTS: I COULD USE
SOME AIR SUPPORT, SINCE I CAN'T FLY ...
AT ALL ... NOW WOULD BE GOOD."*

- Batman, Justice League, "Dark Heart"

Climbing

You can automatically climb stairs, a ladder, a knotted rope, or something similar, assuming you have Strength and Coordination of 2 or better (those with only 1 level in either or both find climbing anything but a flight or two of stairs too difficult).

If you’re climbing a difficult or treacherous surface (a wall, for example), you have to make a Coordination test with the difficulty based on the surface you’re climbing. Failure means you fall and may suffer damage. Success means you climb the surface. The GM may increase the difficulty for especially long climbs (up the side of a skyscraper, for example) but only one test is required.

Dodging

Dodging is the art of not being there when an attack arrives. Roll a Coordination test against the attacker’s ability. With a success, the attack misses. On a failure, the attack hits; determine the effect and outcome from the margin of failure. For example, if you fail to dodge an attack by 3 levels, the attacker achieves a major success against you.



Moving

Your Coordination determines the distance you can cover in one page: personal for Coordination 1 (just shuffling along), close for Coordination 2-5, and extended for Coordination 6 or more (Olympic sprinting speed). No test is required unless you're moving over difficult or dangerous terrain, in which case you either have to slow down by one step or make a Coordination test (difficulty based on the terrain) to avoid slipping and falling.

Shooting

Shooting attacks use potentially lethal ammunition, from bullets to deadly energy beams. Test Coordination against a difficulty of the target's Coordination. On a failure, your attack misses. With a moderate success, you deal the attack's damage in Stamina. With a major success, you can hit a specific part of the target (see **Called Shots**, p. 67). You can potentially use this to stun the target (see **Shooting to Stun**, p. 68). With a massive success, you may kill the target! See **Damage** (p. 69) for details.

Swimming

Without a special power, a character covers only close distance each page while swimming. Characters underwater must make a Strength test each page: failure means you're unconscious and begin losing Strength levels (see **Killing**, p.70). Moderate success means you're winded and lose 2 points of Stamina. A major or better success means there's no effect that page. Continue rolling once each page, with a cumulative +1 difficulty per page, until the character reaches breathable air.

Throwing

If you have two levels of Strength above the level required to lift an object, you can throw it out to close distance. Every two additional Strength levels let you throw it one more step distance. So a Strength 8 character can throw a 50 lb. object (Strength 2) out to Visual distance, and can even pick up a bus (Strength 6) and fling it out to close distance!

Hitting someone with a thrown object is a test of Coordination against the target's Coordination: on a failure, the object misses the target. On a success, it hits and deals its damage in Stamina. With a massive success, the object might also stun the target (see **Stunning**, p. 70).

If the thrown object is sharp or pointed, then a major success results in a possible stun, but a massive success can potentially kill the target (see **Killing**, p. 70).

STRENGTH

Use Strength for tests of a character's physical strength and endurance, from exerting muscle power to resisting fatigue or poison.

TAKING ACTION!



Bending and Breaking

To break through or damage an inanimate object, make a Strength test against the object's Strength: success bends, breaks, or puts a hole through the object. Sample object Strengths are listed on the table on the following page.

If the material is less than two inches thick, reduce its effective Strength by 1. If it is more than a foot thick, increase Strength by 1; if more than two feet thick, increase Strength by 2.

Strength Level**Material**

1	Paper
2	Plastic
3	Aluminum
4	Brick
5	Concrete
6	Stone
7	Iron
8	Steel
9	Diamond
10	Magical or super-science material

Blocking

Sometimes its necessary to pit Strength against Strength. Blocking involves bracing for an attack, resisting damage with sheer Strength. Blocking is only effective against Bashing, Blasting, and Rushing attacks. When blocking, roll a Strength test against the attack's damage level: reduce damage inflicted on you by the amount equal to the effect (the effort minus the difficulty). So if you exceed the attack's damage by 3, for example, you reduce the damage inflicted by 3.

If you have the Invulnerability power (p.41), you can also block Slashing and Shooting attacks, putting up your arms and pushing on through or even punching through Blasting or Shooting attacks!

Use the lesser of your Invulnerability power level or your Strength for the blocking test in these cases. Your normal level of Invulnerability applies to any unblocked damage.

Exhaustion

Characters can move continuously for a number of pages equal to (Strength x 10) before running the risk of suffering from exhaustion. Make a Strength test: on a failure, the character collapses and must rest for at least ten minutes. On a moderate success, the character collapses and must rest for one minute. A major or better success means there's no effect that page. The player continues rolling once each page, with a cumulative +1 difficulty level per page, until the character rests for at least one minute.

Escaping

When you're being held by an opponent (see **Wrestling**, following), you can attempt to escape the hold with a Prowess or Strength test against the attacker's Strength. With a moderate success, you escape a partial hold. With a major success, you escape a complete hold, and with a massive success you not only escape, but also place your opponent in a partial hold!

Grabbing

When you want to grab or wrest something out of an opponent's grasp, make a Strength test, limited by your Prowess, against the opponent's Strength level.

With a major success, you grab the object away from the target. With a massive success, you grab the object, but damage it; it suffers damage equal to the combined Strength of you and your opponent!

Jumping

The distance you can jump is based on your Strength: personal for levels 1-3, close for levels 4-6, extended for levels 7-8, and out to visual distance for levels 9-10. With a Strength test against your own Strength level and a major success you can jump one extra step.

If you have the Leaping power(p. 47), you can jump *much* greater distances than your Strength allows.



Lifting

Your Strength level determines the amount you can lift, as follows:

Strength Level	Strong enough to lift...
1	a heavy sack
2	a child
3	a couple heavy sacks
4	an adult man
5	a motorcycle
6	a car
7	a tank
8	a jet or train
9	a building
10	a mountain

You can increase the amount you can lift with a Strength test against your own Strength level; a major or better success lets you lift something one category higher for one page.



Rushing

You can rush or charge at an opponent, using sheer Strength to bear down on them. To rush an opponent you must be at close or greater distance. Roll a Strength test limited by Prowess against the target's defensive ability. On a failure, you miss and rush right past the target. With a moderate success, you hit, inflicting damage equal to your Strength. With a major success, you may slam the target. With a massive success, you may stun the target. See **Damage** (p. 69) for details.

Wrestling

When you want to grab and restrain an opponent, roll a Strength test limited by Prowess against the greater of the target's Prowess, Coordination, or Strength. With a moderate success, you achieve a *partial hold*. The target can perform actions, but at a -2 penalty, and can't move away from you. On a major or better success, you put the target into a *complete hold*. The target is fully restrained and can take no physical action except to escape from the hold. In your panel, you can automatically inflict Strength damage on a character in a complete hold, if you wish.

INTELLECT

Use Intellect for tests of the character's memory, reasoning, knowledge, or raw brainpower.

Inventing

You make Intellect tests to invent and modify equipment.

The GM sets the difficulty for making any necessary repairs or modifications to existing technology. So tuning up a car might be based entirely on the effort of your Intellect test, while fixing a time machine could be difficulty 6 or even higher.

If you have a level 6 or higher Intellect, or specialties giving you an effective level that high, the GM may allow you to perform stunts (see **Stunts**, p. 80) to whip-up temporary inventions to overcome problems in an adventure. So, for example, you might be able to modify a device to do something different, or make a temporary device, like short-term psionic shields that provide the Mind Shield power against a villain's Mind Control, for example. In general, the level of the stunt is the difficulty of your Intellect test. The GM sets the requirements in terms of time and resources for the invention.

*"LET ME GUESS: YOU'RE GETTING
SOMETHING FROM YOUR LAB...?"*

*"WHAT DO YOU EXPECT? I HAVE A REALLY
GREAT LAB..."*

*- The Invisible Woman and Mr. Fantastic, Fantastic
Four: World's Greatest Heroes, "De-Mole-Ition"*

Knowing



To see if your character knows a particular piece of information, make an Intellect test against a difficulty set by the GM based on how obscure the information is: success reveals the information, with greater levels of success providing more detail.

The Game Master may choose to simply base common knowledge on your Intellect level without a test, using it as a benchmark of how much your character can be expected to know. Various specialties are useful in this regard, since they increase your effective Intellect level; a Physics Expert can be expected to know more about physics than most people, and more about physics than other topics.

Languages

All characters can speak (and read and write) in their native language.

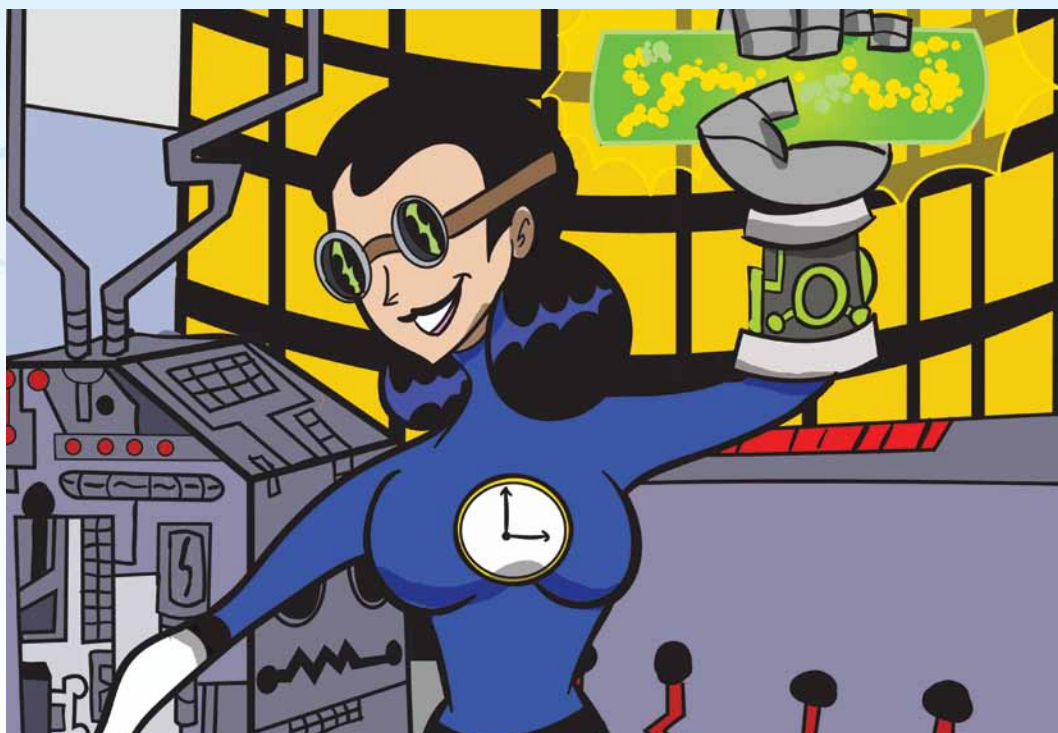
If you do not want to deal with the issue of the language barrier, just assume everybody speaks the same language, unless there's a dramatic need for the language barrier to arise.

If you do want to take languages into account, then an Intellect 4 character is fluent in one additional language. Each additional level of Intellect doubles the number of additional languages, and each level of the Languages specialty (p. 25) counts as a level of Intellect in terms of known languages.

By Intellect 9, a character speaks over thirty languages, over sixty at Intellect 10. For simplicity, you may prefer at this point to simply assume the character speaks and understands every commonly spoken language.

Learning

You also make Intellect tests to figure out puzzles and riddles and to learn about new things your character encounters. So, for example, if you have to find your way to the heart of a maze in time to rescue a villain's hostage, that's an Intellect test. So is figuring out the various riddles and traps in the maze along the way, unless you use some other ability to overcome them, such as avoiding a trap through superior Awareness or Coordination.



AWARENESS

Awareness applies to tests of a character's intuition, instinct, cunning, and sensory acuity.

The Game Master may make Awareness tests for characters in secret, just telling the players the outcome of the test, such as "you don't see anything." This way, players don't necessarily know if they were not aware of something, or there wasn't anything to be aware of in the first place!

Noticing

Make an Awareness test to notice things, from subtle clues to the villain trying to sneak up on you from behind. Noticing tests involving static things use a difficulty set by the GM while noticing what someone else is doing usually involves a difficulty based on the effort of their test, such as a Coordination test in the case of someone sneaking around. Success means you notice something, with higher levels providing more detail and accuracy.

Tests to notice things are often rolled in secret, so the GM may prohibit players from using determined effort (since no real effort is involved). The GM may also wish to occasionally roll a random noticing test for nothing, ignoring the results, just to keep players from knowing something is up whenever a real noticing test occurs.

Searching

This is the active counterpart of noticing (previously): you are searching, looking for particular things. Searching involves the same kind of test as noticing, except you *can* declare it a determined effort and it takes a bit more time to search than just to notice something; searching consumes an action, while noticing happens automatically.

Tracking

You can use Awareness to pick up on subtle signs people and vehicles leave behind in order to follow their trail and track them. This is considerably easier (or at least possible) if you have one or more Supersenses (p. 53) to pick up on signs other people can't, such as tracking people by scent or microscopic traces they leave behind.



WILLPOWER

Use Willpower for tests of a character's strength of will, force of personality, or charisma.

Intimidating

You can use your Willpower to overawe people and intimidate them into doing what you want. Make a Willpower test against the target's Willpower. Success makes them willing to do things that aren't likely to get them in trouble. A major success gets the target to do more difficult things and shakes their confidence, applying a -2 to actions to oppose you that page. A massive success means the target will do almost anything you want, and flees or surrenders rather than opposing you. A failure to intimidate a target means you cannot try intimidating that character again until circumstances change without using Determined Effort.

Performing

If you give a performance with the intent of impressing an audience, make a Willpower test, with the effort determining how impressive your performance is. The GM may apply a difficulty depending on the circumstances of your performance and the overall attitude of your audience.

Persuading

Make a Willpower test to persuade someone of your side of an argument. The difficulty is based on whether or not the subject is set against you. If they are, then the difficulty is their Willpower. If not, then the GM sets the difficulty based on how persuasive an argument you need to give. If you're arguing against someone else, you need to exceed their persuasive effort as well as achieving the difficulty. The outcome determines whether the subject disagrees, grudgingly agrees, or whole-heartedly sides with your case.

MANEUVERS

The following are some maneuvers and modifiers that may apply to conflicts.

Aerial Combat

Airborne targets can be slammed regardless of comparative Strength levels (see **Slamming** under **Damage**), and a flying character executing a rushing attack by diving at the ground gets a +2 bonus to the test.

Aiming

A character taking a full page to aim a ranged attack, taking no other actions, gets a +1 bonus on the attack test on the following page.

Called Shots

On some occasions, a character may want to hit a precise target with a ranged attack, like a button, lever, or the bull's-eye of a target. This requires a major success or better. A called shot does not stun or slam targets, as those effects have specific success requirements already, but see **Shoot to Stun**, following.

Combined Attacks

Characters may attempt to combine attacks to overcome the armor of a target they can't otherwise damage. So long as the attacks' damage levels are within 1 point of each other, the highest damaging attack gets a +1 bonus.

So, for example, two heroes with attacks doing level 4 and 5 damage, against a foe with 6 points of armor, have a combined damage of 6, not enough to inflict Stamina damage, but capable of slamming or stunning the target with a good enough attack test.



Immobile Targets

The difficulty level to attack an immobile target is generally 0, meaning the effort of the attack is also its effect. This includes opponents in a complete hold, or ensnared in a Binding power (see p. 49).

Interposing

You can choose to give up your next action in order to jump in front of another character within close range targeted by an attack, even when it's not your turn to act. Make a Coordination (3) test. If you succeed, you become the target of the attack intended for the other character and defend against it normally. If the attack misses you, it misses both of you (you're assumed to get the other character out of the way).

Limited Visibility

If darkness, heavy fog, or similar obstacles impair visibility, attacks beyond close range suffer a -2 penalty.

Luring

In some situations, you may want to *try* and get an opponent to attack you. If you take an action to lure, your foe gets a +2 bonus to attack you, but you get a defensive test, as usual.

If your defensive test is successful, you avoid the attack and the attacker hits something behind you, your choice as to what. It could be another foe, an electrical junction box, a support beam, or what have you, depending on the circumstances.

Multiple Targets

When surrounded by multiple opponents at close range, a character may elect to attack everyone at once. Roll the attack test with a -4 modifier and apply the effort to all the targets.

Pulling Punches

You can choose to mitigate the damage done by your attacks. Prior to attacking you state the *maximum* outcome of your attack. If your attack hits, any outcome over your limit is reduced to the outcome you set when you made the attack.

When using an attack capable of a killing outcome, such as slashing or shooting, you can't pull your punches, although you can attempt to shoot to stun with a shooting attack (see the following). This is one reason why few heroes use such potentially deadly attacks.

Shooting to Stun

A character may attempt to use a shooting attack to simply stun a target (creasing the skull or some other non-lethal hit). This requires a major success, treated like a stun result for a blasting attack. A massive success may still kill the target, however. Note that when using Determined Effort, you declare your desired success, and do not achieve more than it.

Surprise Attack

If you manage to surprise an opponent unaware of your presence (sneaking up using Stealth or Invisibility, for example), you get a +2 bonus on your attack test.

Underwater Combat

Characters fighting underwater need to hold their breath, if they're unable to breathe water (see **Swimming**, p 41). Additionally, they suffer a -1 penalty to actions due to the resistance of the water. The Underwater Combat specialty (p. 27) negates this penalty, allowing the character to act normally. The Aquatic power (p. 30) may increase the character's Coordination and Awareness for actions under water, offsetting the penalty as well.

Like aerial combat, underwater targets can be slammed regardless of Strength level.

DAMAGE

Any successful hit inflicts damage that is subtracted from your Stamina. When your Stamina is reduced to 0, you are unconscious. The amount of damage an attack inflicts varies according to its type:

- **Close Attack:** Inflicts damage equal to the attacker's Strength if weaponless or according to the weapon's damage, if wielding a close attack weapon.
- **Ranged Attack:** Inflicts damage based on the weapon or power used. For thrown objects, use the lesser of the attacker's or the object's Strength.



ARMOR

Armor reduces the amount of damage suffered in an attack by subtracting the armor's level from the amount of damage inflicted; any remaining points are then subtracted from Stamina. If the target has no armor, the attack does full damage.

Example: A character wearing armor 1 hit by a punch dealing 2 points of damage suffers only 1 point of damage to Stamina.

SLAMMING

If an attack achieves a potential *slam* outcome and inflicts 0 or more Stamina damage to the target, test the target's Strength against the damage level. Attacks inflicting less than 0 damage cannot slam a target.

Failure sends the target flying out to the next range, typically from close to ranged. The target must spend next panel getting up and can perform no other action. If there's an obstacle along the way, and the attacker's damage is greater than the obstacle's material Strength (see **Bending & Breaking**, p. 60), the target is knocked *through* it. Otherwise the target hits the obstacle and stops.

Moderate success knocks the target down. Getting back up is a supplemental action (for a -1 test penalty that page).

Major or massive success means no effect from the slam.

"WONDER HOW FAST HE'S TRAVELLING.
AT LEAST SEVEN MILES PER SECOND. THAT'S
ESCAPE VELOCITY, BY THE WAY. FLASH FACT."

- The Flash, JLA #3

STUNNING

If an attack achieves a potential *stun* outcome and inflicts 0 or more Stamina damage to the target, test the target's Strength against the damage level. Attacks inflicting less than 0 damage cannot stun a target.

Failure reduces the target's Stamina to 0 and renders the character unconscious.

Moderate success stuns the target for 1 page, during which the character cannot take any actions.

Major or massive success means no effect from the stun.

KILLING

If an attack achieves a potential *killing* outcome and inflicts 0 or more Stamina damage to the target, test the target's Strength against the damage level. Attacks inflicting less than 0 Stamina damage cannot kill a target.

Failure reduces the target's Stamina to 0 and renders the character unconscious. On the following page, and each page thereafter, the character loses a level of Strength. When Strength falls below 0, the character dies.

You can prevent your Strength level from dropping for one page by spending a point of Determination. Assistance from another character for one page stops loss of Strength and stabilizes your condition, leaving you unconscious.

Moderate success reduces the target's Stamina to 0 and renders the character unconscious.

Major or massive success test means no effect.

OPTION: MINIONS

Villains often have gangs of minions, henchmen intended primarily to keep heroes busy with superior numbers. Most minions are relatively weak compared to heroes, with abilities rarely more than 3 (and maybe even less in the mental department). Still, tracking the Stamina of a large number of minions, along with rolling slamming, stunning, and even killing tests for them can become tedious, so Game Masters may wish to use the following optional rule:

If a hero makes a successful attack against a minion, the minion is reduced to 0 Stamina and unconscious, just like a failure against a stunning outcome. If you want a slightly less harsh version, require the hero's attack be a major or better success; moderate successes against minions still have their normal effect. This speeds up dealing with large numbers of minion opponents so the heroes can get on to the main event!

RECOVERY

Unconscious characters regain consciousness in 2d6 (2–12) pages. They have Stamina equal to their current Strength level (minimum of 1) when they awaken. Thereafter they recover their Strength level in Stamina per hour.

During most adventures, the Game Master may wish to assume characters simply recover all lost Stamina in-between chapters in the adventure, since it involves less book-keeping.

Getting Your Strength Back

Characters recover one lost level of Strength per week, or one per day of hospitalization and medical treatment. Certain powers like Healing and Regeneration can speed the recovery of lost Strength.

Characters who have lost Strength levels suffer a –2 penalty to all other tests until they have fully recovered their Strength.

Back From the Dead

In the real world dead is dead, but in the comics, death is more often than not a temporary condition.

If an **Icons** character dies (from a killing outcome in combat or other deadly circumstance), the character remains out of play for at least one issue, but thereafter may return. The GM and player come up with a suitable explanation for the hero's miraculous survival or



resurrection.

The GM may also want to insist on one or more of the following requirements:

- The character permanently loses a point of starting Determination, reflecting the massive retcon (or determined effort!) needed to return to life.
- A special adventure must be undertaken to restore the character to life, ranging from the heroes going to the afterlife to questing for a particular device able to restore their friend.
- The player needs to re-roll some of the hero's traits, perhaps even *all* of them, resulting in a very different character, like a former trained hero with no powers coming back as an incorporeal ghost!
- The character's traits are exactly the same, but the "returned" hero is actually a new person, like a long-lost twin, parallel Earth duplicate, time-traveler, or the like who is not the original hero, who is still dead ... for now.



OPTION: LASTING INJURIES

At the Game Master's option, characters who have taken a significant beating (particularly if they have suffered a significant slam, stun, or have lost Strength levels) may have lingering injuries, ranging from a concussion to broken bones, lacerations, and numerous other conditions.

Such injuries can be treated as a temporary challenge, which the GM can compel normally, awarding the hero's player Determination for the difficulties associated with, say, trying to concentrate with a concussion, or swing from the rooftops with a dislocated shoulder.

As in the comics, these injuries should be treated more as story devices, rather than marks on a characters sheet, and they only come into play when the GM wishes. Otherwise, stick to the simpler damage system given previously.

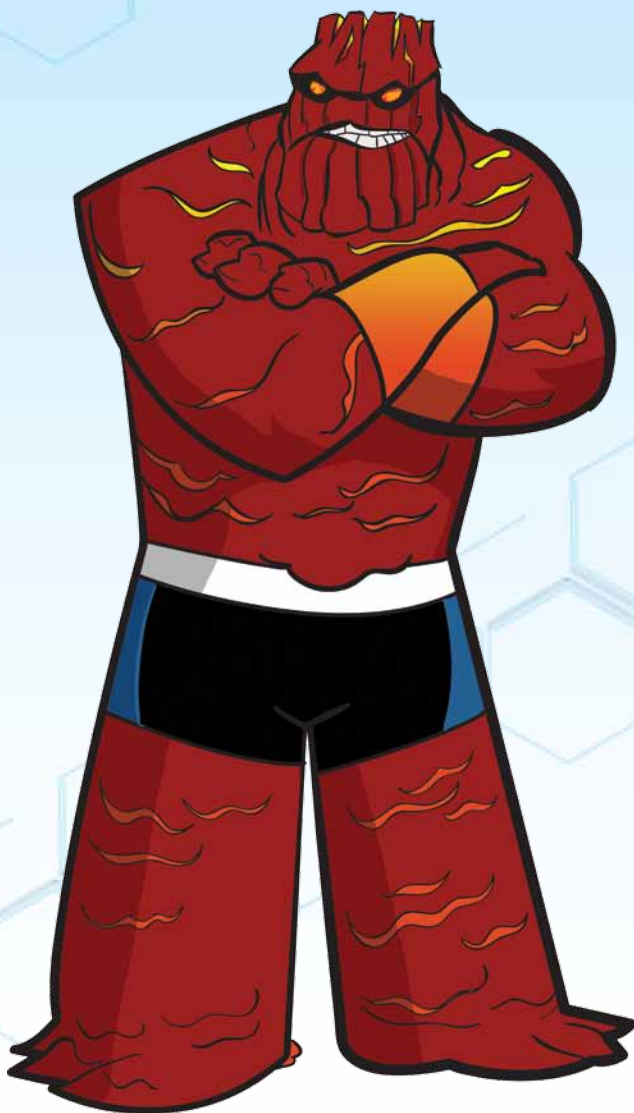
DETERMINATION

Players can influence the outcome of tests and conflicts using their heroes' Determination.

You can spend Determination during the game for several different things, described here. Heroes gain and lose Determination as the game progresses and the characters face different challenges.

*"WE HAVE NO POWERS, THERE ARE
MILLIONS OF THEM AND THERE'S A CHILD
IN THERE WHO NEEDS US TO SAVE THE WORLD.
LET'S GO."*

- Superman, JLA #23



ASPECTS

A hero's use (and acquisition of) Determination is influenced by various *aspects* of the character. Players define these aspects when creating and playing their heroes and the GM does the same when creating the villains and other characters of the game.

Aspects essentially describe the character in terms other than their abilities, they involve who the characters are rather than what they are capable of doing.

Aspects come in two types: *qualities* define the character's generally positive descriptive traits, whereas *challenges* generally describe difficulties the hero faces.

By their very nature, aspects are broad and somewhat vague. Some aspects tend to come up in play more often than others. However, since all aspects are governed by the use and acquisition of Determination, their "value" is essentially all the same.

QUALITIES

The following are types of qualities to consider for your hero; you can have up to five to start off and you can have multiple instances of one type and none of another, the categories are not restrictive, just for reference.

Catchphrase

Your hero has a particular catchphrase, battle-cry, or pithy saying, such as "It's Clobberin' Time!" or "I Say Thee Nay, Villain!" or even "Sweet Christmas!" You can tag your catchphrase quality by saying it at the appropriate time for a suitable action. However, you (the player) must say the catchphrase in a suitably dramatic fashion!

You can have multiple catchphrases, but it is fairly rare for a hero to do so; most are just minor variations on a theme, which do not necessarily count as separate qualities, such as "Holy [insert exclamation here]" or "Great [name of deity]!" The complex rhyming spells of a comic book sorcerer may also be considered catchphrases, belted out at dramatically appropriate moments.

Connections

Many, if not most, heroes have the Connections quality, which represents the various important people in the character's life. While heroes are sworn to protect people in general, they typically have families, loved ones, friends, romantic interests, and so forth, people special to them in some way.

If you have the Connections quality, you can declare any number of people important to your character, but this can be a double-edged sword, since the GM can also compel your aspect by placing a person you have declared a connection in danger! (See **Tagging and Compelling Aspects** in the following section for more information.) So the more people you are connected to, the more easily both you *and* others may tag your aspect!

As a quality, Connections are assumed to provide your hero with some help, if only in the form of motivation. If a hero's connection is solely a challenge, see the **Challenges** section.

Epithet

An epithet is a title or descriptive phrase applied to your character, often used in dramatic dialog. Examples include: Man of Tomorrow, Maiden of Might, Master of the Mystic Arts, and World's Greatest [fill-in the blank]. It typically describes something about the hero's style, powers, or qualities beyond just abilities.

You can tag an epithet in a situation where the GM agrees that it applies.

Singular Epithets: Some epithets are unique, such as "World's Greatest" anything, since only one character by definition can have that epithet. The GM should ensure that the character with the epithet really does qualify for it! The only case where more than one character can

have a singular epithet is when two or more are competing for it. In this case, the aspect can be compelled to put those characters into competition whenever they encounter each other: two heroes who both have “World’s Fastest Hero,” for example, can be compelled into a race or some other test of who’s faster whenever they get together. Plus there could still be the “World’s Fastest Villain”...

Identity

Heroes are more than just a colorful costume and a collection of powers (or, at least, we hope that they are). The identity quality deals with a description of who the hero is outside of the costume and mask, touching upon other aspects of the character’s background, personality, and life. Examples include Billionaire Playboy, Mild-Mannered Reporter, Freelance Photographer, Exiled European Prince, or Alien Soldier, to name just a few.

You can tag your hero’s identity quality in situations where it might come to bear: an Intrepid Reporter might be able to acquire information a colorfully clad and world-famous hero might not. A Wealthy Industrialist has access to certain resources, and so forth. The GM might compel your aspect to introduce challenges dealing with your identity: a meddlesome boss, a threatened corporate takeover, an oath or obligation to your homeland (or homeworld), and so forth.

Motivation

It takes more than the acquisition of powers to make a hero. After all, villains often go through the same origins. What makes some choose heroism over villainy? In short, what motivates someone to become a hero?

A motivation quality describes what made your character take the hero’s path, and what keeps him or her on it, even when things get tough. It might be vengeance for some wrong the character suffered or an unflagging belief in truth and justice, god and country, or that with great power also comes great responsibility. It could be the thrills and excitement of the hero game or the need to be rid of some unwanted power or ability.

You can tag your hero’s motivation when dealing with situations where it makes the difference between giving up and pushing ahead. The GM might compel your motivation to encourage headstrong actions in accordance with it.

Other Qualities

Although the five types of qualities listed here cover the major ones associated with superheroes, you are not necessarily limited to them; they are intended as a framework to help guide you in choosing, rather than a set of restrictions. If you have an idea for a particularly good quality for your character that does not fit into one of the previously described categories, discuss it with your Game Master. So long as it describes your hero well and provides interesting story and roleplaying hooks, why not use it?

"I CHOSE THIS LIFE. I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING. AND ON ANY GIVEN DAY, I COULD STOP DOING IT. TODAY, HOWEVER, ISN'T THAT DAY. AND TOMORROW WON'T BE EITHER."

- Batman, Identity Crisis

CHALLENGES

Challenges are aspects similar to qualities in that they serve to describe things about your character. Unlike qualities, which tend to have both positive and negative sides, challenges are all about the things your hero works to overcome. While the GM can compel challenges, earning you Determination, you cannot tag them to gain bonuses or use Determination yourself; you need to use your qualities for that.

Also like qualities, challenges come in particular categories or types and you may choose up to five to start with. Unlike qualities, your hero does not have to have any challenges. The fewer the challenges, the less hassle your hero faces, but the fewer opportunities you have to earn Determination. Plus challenges put the spotlight on your hero, if only briefly, so they ensure you more action, more *challenge*, during the game.

Bad Luck

Sometimes it just seems like the universe hates your hero: when this challenge is compelled, bad things happen. Your hero's car might be booted or repossessed, the rent might come due when there's no money to pay it, a critical device might stop working ... pretty much any cruel thing the GM can think of that does not outright remove your character from the game. Like other challenges, you can stave off Bad Luck with Determination temporarily, but sooner or later it will get you.

Enemy

Heroes make enemies, often lifelong archenemies. This challenge involves an enemy with a specific vendetta against your hero. The GM can compel it to have your enemy show up or gain an advantage over you, such as springing a trap or ambush. Note that just having your enemy show up in an adventure does not necessarily constitute a compel, unless the enemy gains some advantage in the process.





Personal

Let's face it, superheroes often have issues, sometimes a lot of issues. Personal challenges are just that: They may be psychological, ranging from claustrophobia to a berserker temper, or physical, from being confined to a wheelchair to blindness. Whatever the case, the GM can compel your hero's personal challenge in any situation where it might be a hindrance. In the case of psychological challenges, it may temporarily dominate the character's behavior (panicking when confronted with a phobia, losing control when angered, etc.).

Social

Superheroes are not usually the most normal folks. Even if you ignore the form-fitting colorful costumes, some heroes look downright *weird*. This leads people to make assumptions and react negatively to the hero who looks like, say, a classical demon or a rocky monster. It can make it difficult for a hero to get a point across, deal with the public, or otherwise make a good impression when one is needed.

Other social challenges can involve a hero with a bad reputation, or subject to certain social prejudices, basically anything that causes other people to react poorly to the hero or to judge him or her unfairly.

Weakness

The Achilles' heel is a major element of many superheroes, a specific weakness or vulnerability, be it to a metal, color, time of the day or night, or strange radioactive mineral. This challenge is basically something the GM can compel to give your hero a handicap, from a loss of powers to a life-threatening situation, such as a hero who needs water to survive or dies if exposed to a particular substance for too long. Weaknesses are ready-made for villainous death traps and ambushes, and provide a way to make otherwise "invincible" heroes vulnerable enough to defeat. Compelling your weakness lets the GM inflict pretty much any effect short of killing the hero outright.

TAGGING AND COMPELLING

Aspects come into play in *Icons* by being *tagged* or *compelled*.

Tagging

Tagging is simply a matter of you, the player, noting that the aspect is relevant to the current situation and bringing it to the Game Master's attention, such as, "I think my 'Dark Detective' quality might be relevant here" or "Sounds like it's 'Hammer Time!' as my hero might say."

You can also tag *other* characters' aspects: this involves declaring the aspect you are tagging and how your hero is interacting with it. If you don't know other characters' aspects, guess! Sometimes they'll be fairly obvious. When they're not, you can make an appropriate test (usually Awareness) to figure them out.

Tagging lets you spend Determination in certain ways related to the aspect, particularly for Determined Effort, Retcons, and Stunts (see **Using Determination**).

Compelling

The GM can also compel your qualities and challenges, essentially choosing a particular quality or challenge and offering you a point of Determination for accepting the consequences of it. For example, the GM might say: "Your Bad Luck chooses this moment to rear its head and the fire escape gives away beneath you" or "Looks like the crowd isn't reacting too well to your strange appearance" or the like. If you accept, you get the point of Determination and play continues with the effects of the compel.

You can refuse a compel, but it costs you a point of Determination to do so, and you don't get the point you normally would for accepting the consequence of the compel, essentially losing out on two points!

OPTION: CHOOSING ASPECTS DURING PLAY

While the standard in *Icons* is to fill out a hero's qualities and challenges during character creation, it may be that you do not have ideas for five of each right away. Good ideas for aspects often suggest themselves while you are playing the character and have a better feel for what works in the context of the adventure and the series. Therefore, the GM may wish to implement the following optional rule.

Players must define at least two qualities for their heroes upon creation. They do not have to define *any* challenges (as heroes aren't required to have any). At any time during play, a player can choose a quality or challenge to fill-in one of the character's blank "slots" in the aspects list, until reaching five qualities and five challenges.

So, for example, if a player decides during the game that her heroine is attracted to the handsome federal agent working with the heroes, and wants to have him as an ongoing element of her character's supporting cast, she can ask the GM for permission to make him a Connection quality.

You may also allow players to replace existing aspects of their characters in this fashion, provided the old aspect either has not yet come into play (in which case it is essentially a retcon and "never existed") or is no longer relevant: the hero does not have that connection any more, his appearance or motivation have changed, and so forth.

USING DETERMINATION

You can spend Determination during the game for different benefits: improving your hero's efforts (Determined Effort), playing to your hero's strengths (Focused Effort), shaking off some damage (Recover), changing or adding certain details to the story (Retcon), or allowing your hero to perform an unusual trick or power effect (Stunts).

Determined Effort

During the game, a test may be important enough for your character to make a *determined effort*. When making a determined effort, state the desired outcome of the test (moderate, major, or massive success). If the rolled effect isn't enough to achieve the desired success, spend 1 point of Determination per two levels required to make up the difference and you achieve it.

So, for example, you declare your hero is going to swing down and catch his falling girlfriend before she can hit the pavement, saying you want at least a major success. You roll the dice and get an effect of 0, a moderate success. So you subtract 0 from 3 (the minimum for a major success), getting 3 levels. Spending 2 points of Determination, you push the result up to 3 and get a major success!

Determined effort has a cost: once you declare it on an action, you *must* spend at least 1 point of Determination, even if the effect of the roll is what you wanted. So, in the previous example, if the effect had been 4 (enough for a major success), you'd still have to spend 1 point of Determination for the determined effort. Moreover, if you achieve the desired result on the test, this point of Determination does *not* improve it; determined effort never gives you more than what you asked for.

Likewise, any "extra" levels from determined effort don't count; in the prior example, although 2 points of Determination give you up to 4 extra levels, you only need 3 to get your desired major success, so that's how many you get; the extra level doesn't count.

If you don't have enough Determination to make up the difference between the rolled and desired effect, you still have to spend 1 point of Determination on the effort, even though it won't achieve the result you want. You still get the +2 levels from that point of Determination and may get a lesser result than the one you intended, but still better than you rolled.

To use determined effort, you must first tag one of your hero's qualities (see **Tagging and Compelling**, previously), indicating how the effort is relevant to your hero. For example, an epithet can show how the effort relates to your hero's reputation or abilities, a connection quality might tie the effort into helping someone important to your hero, while a motivation quality brings your hero's driving purpose into things.

Finally, you can only declare a determined effort for a test where you only get one chance to succeed or where you've already tried *and failed* to achieve the desired success. So, for example, you can declare a determined effort on your Coordination test to catch your falling girlfriend, because you'll only get one chance. You can't declare determined effort trying to pick a lock, disarm a bomb, or hit a foe unless you've already tried and failed or you're only going to get one last chance before you're crushed by the closing walls, the bomb goes off, the foe activates his doomsday device, or the like. When in doubt, the GM is the final arbiter of when determined effort is allowed.

Focused Effort

You can spend Determination as a "game changer" to shift the trait used for a test, presumably from one where your hero is weak to one where he or she is more effective, a *focused effort*. You use the new trait for the test, handling everything else in the same way.

To use focused effort, you must first tag one of your hero's qualities. Then you describe how the quality and the new trait apply to the test at hand.

For example, your hero is confronted with having to fix a complex device in the nick of time to save the world, but lacks any relevant specialties and has an Intellect that doesn't exactly break the bank. Fortunately, he has considerable Strength and the quality "If all else fails, hit things." You tag it and tell the GM you want to make a focused effort to fix the device — by giving it a good whack.

The GM agrees and you make a Strength test rather than the usual Intellect test.

A focused effort can also be declared a determined effort, if you meet the requirements for both and spend the Determination separately. You can tag the same quality for both efforts.

Recover

You can spend Determination to *recover* lost Stamina: you immediately regain Stamina equal to the greater of your Strength or Willpower level.

You do not need to tag an aspect to recover, but you can only spend Determination to recover once during any given conflict. After that, you must recover lost Stamina normally (see **Recovery** under **Damage**).

Retcon

You can use Determination to *retcon* certain details about the setting and story during the game. “Retcon” is a comic book term for “retroactive continuity,” essentially filling in previously unknown past events.

When you retcon in the game, you pay a point of Determination and define or detail something previously unknown. If the GM agrees, then it becomes true. For example, you can retcon the contents of a storeroom to contain just the right chemicals you need to build a makeshift explosive, or you can retcon what’s hidden in your pockets or the fact that you know someone in a foreign city.

In order to retcon, you must tag one of your hero’s qualities relevant to the retcon (see **Tagging and Compelling**, previously). Examples include an epithet or identity related to an area of expertise, or a connection that explains how the hero might know or acquire something. The GM decides if the explanation is sufficient to allow spending Determination on a retcon. The GM may also allow you to retcon with a major or better success with one of your specialties, reflecting an area of expertise where you hero could be expected to know or have something. In this case, the success is treated as a one-time quality for you to tag.

The key limit to retconning is you cannot contradict previously established information... unless you come up with some plausible reason why that information was never true to begin with! The GM has final say on retcons, but generally, if what you propose makes the game more interesting, odds are in your favor. If a proposed retcon isn’t approved, you retain the Determination point; it essentially never happens.

Stunts

Lastly, you can use Determination to perform *stunts*. These are new applications of your hero’s traits, using them to do something different or unusual, like using your Super-Speed power to whip up a whirlwind, your projected Force Field to suffocate someone by surrounding their head with a small bubble of airtight energy, or your tremendous Strength to create a powerful shockwave. They’re somewhat like retcons, where someone might say “I didn’t know you could do *that!*”

To perform a stunt, you must tag one of your qualities related to what you want to accomplish. This is usually something like a catchphrase or epithet, although other qualities (particularly motivation) can serve in some instances. Then you describe what you want to the stunt to accomplish and the GM decides whether or not it suits your hero’s quality and traits. The GM always has the option of disallowing inappropriate stunts.

If the GM gives you the go ahead, spend a point of Determination to attempt the stunt and make a test of your trait using its own level as the difficulty. If the test fails, so does the stunt, and nothing happens. With an effect of 0, the stunt works, but there are side effects, determined by the GM. You might whip up a whirlwind, but also do some collateral damage or unintentionally affect your teammates, for example. With an effect of 1 or more, the stunt works as planned. Note the GM might require an additional test to actually *apply* the stunt, such as an attack test to hit an opponent with a stunt attack.

You can declare an attempt to perform a stunt as determined effort, but any Determination spent on the effort is in addition to the point of Determination required just to attempt the stunt in the first place.

GAINING DETERMINATION

During play, your character gains Determination from compels applied to the hero's aspects by the Game Master. You have the opportunity to refuse these compels, but it costs you Determination to do so.

You do not have to passively wait around for the GM to decide to compel your hero's aspects. In fact, you can offer up opportunities as part of playing your character's role, and earn Determination for doing it! Game Masters have a lot of information to juggle, and might miss a chance to push one of your character's buttons, in which case you should feel free to offer a suggestion or reminder. For example, if you spot a perfect chance to endanger one of your hero's connections during a massive battle, just say so. The GM may take your suggestion and award you a point of Determination. Good thing, as you're going to need it to take down the bad guys and save your loved ones!

If the chips are down and you *really* need some extra Determination to carry your hero through, you can even suggest new temporary challenges for the GM to compel. For example, to push your armored hero's power-suit to its limits, you suggest the GM apply a temporary "overload" challenge: you get Determination, but after your Determined effort, your hero's power-suit is going to shut down! Better make it count...

You may also earn Determination simply by doing cool things like playing your character to the hilt and coming up with fun additions to the game.

Gaining Determination is adjudicated by the Game Master and detailed further in the **Game Mastering** section.

*"ON OLYMPUS WE MEASURE WISDOM
AGAINST ATHENA, SPEED AGAINST HERMES,
POWER AGAINST ZEUS. BUT WE MEASURE
COURAGE AGAINST CAPTAIN AMERICA."*

- Hercules, Captain America #444

RENEWED DETERMINATION

In addition to the ups and downs a character's Determination goes through over the course of a story, Determination is also renewed at the start of every new issue based on the character's starting Determination.

If your character's Determination at the start of the issue is below your starting amount (6 minus the number of powers the character has, with a minimum of 1), it increases up to that amount. However, if it's already above the starting amount, then it doesn't increase.

GAME MASTERING

It is the Game Master's job to oversee the creation and running of an **Icons** game, from the creation of the heroes to take part in the story to the design of their potential adventures, and linking those adventures together to make a series. The actual *stories* of the series come out of the players interacting with the adventures the Game Master creates, but the GM has to design the adventures in the first place.

This section looks at the job of Game Mastering and offers some advice on how to do it well. The most important piece of advice is to just relax, remember it's all just a game and, most of all, have fun!

RUNNING HERO CREATION

Part of the Game Master's job is overseeing the process of the players creating their heroes and approving the designs they come up with. This is more art than clear-cut science and involves asking yourself: Does this hero fit into the kind of adventures I plan to run? Will this character be a good addition to the game overall and fun for both the player and the rest of the group?

If the answer to either of these is "no," politely ask the player to adjust the character or come up with a new one. It's better to do this in advance than be forced into it after play has begun with an unsuitable character.

NEW TRAITS

While **Icons** covers the majority of traits needed to describe superheroic characters, no game can cover every possible trait. Sooner or later, your players may come up with concepts requiring a specialty or power not described in the rules. So long as you and the player are agreeable, feel free to make it up! Use the existing specialties and powers as guidelines and examples and write up what the new trait does, assign a level to it, and you're ready to go!

Creating new traits is even easier when you're dealing with non-player characters like villains, since presumably you have your own permission to come up with new things! Feel free to give villains whatever traits you see fit to make them fun, interesting, and challenging for the heroes. This may include assigning them traits you wouldn't normally allow for heroes; things that would make heroes too effective can make for good villains, since they allow a single villain to take on a group of heroes and encourage heroes to be creative in overcoming the bad guy.

Be aware when creating new traits that they are sometimes more powerful or capable of affecting the game than they seem at first. If what seems like an obvious trait is left out of the game rules, consider: might there be a reason for that?

CUSTOMIZING TRAITS

Rather than needing an entirely new trait, sometimes an existing trait just needs a bit of adjustment to fit a player's concept of a hero. Keep in mind that the names and descriptions of the traits in **Icons** are mostly suggestions. You can allow players to call certain powers by different names and to give them different "special effects" describing how they look and feel in the context of the game.

These things don't necessarily change the numbers or rules about how the traits work, but can make a big difference in terms of how they are *perceived*, and what makes a good "fit" for that character.

Similarly, you can customize traits to a degree by how you "calibrate" the scale (see **The Basics**): the rules provide some general guidelines for where different levels of ability fall, but you can shift

things around changing, for example, the superhuman end of the Strength scale to better suit your ideas of really strong characters in your setting. This doesn't change the actual numbers or how they work in game-play, just what they mean in descriptive terms.

DETERMINATION & STUNTS

The relationship between Determination and powers in **Icons** is intended to provide a degree of balance between different types of characters, namely those with a great deal of power or flexibility and those who rely more on ability, skill, and raw determination to succeed.

Essentially, heroes with a lot of powers (which include very high abilities) have less starting Determination and have to rely more on compels from the GM to earn more. This is why powerful heroes in the comics often lead such complicated lives: they need the compels those challenges give them!

Conversely, heroes with few, if any, powers have more Determination to start with, allowing them to succeed by sheer grit and, well, determination. In essence, having a lot of starting Determination is their "power," which fits with a lot of comic book archetypes.

The same is true for the breadth of a hero's powers. Characters with lots of developed and established stunts effectively have more powers than those who come up with their stunts on-the-fly (and spend Determination to use them). That's why it is a good idea to balance what is an established (and therefore always usable) element of the hero's powers and what is a less often-used stunt the player is willing to spend Determination to use.

RUNNING TEAM CREATION

Roleplaying games are a group activity, and in supers games, groups mean teams. Following are a few common kinds of teams, and suggestions for managing a team of that type in your game. Sitting down together as part of character creation to discuss what kind of team you'll use in your game is a really good way to lay the foundation for a successful supers campaign.

On the most basic level, creating a hero team is as simple as the players deciding that their heroes act together. Whether that grouping is a one-off "special team-up" issue, or the start of a group is up to the players.

In the comics, superhero teams often fall into one of several recognizable archetypes. If your players are interested in creating a continuing team, you should encourage them to think about what archetype best embodies what they're going for.

THE ELITE TEAM

This is the big one. In any game universe, there will usually be only one team like this, made up of the big hitters, the best of the best. These are the guys you turn to when the fate of the world is at stake. They have accepted the responsibility of being Earth's best and last hope. Everyone aspires to match them. Every villain fears them. Almost nothing can stop them.

An elite team is almost always established by the supers themselves, when two or three big names see the value of assembling a group to deal with those threats that are too great to face alone. The founding members of an elite team will usually have a special status within the team, and the tone and attitude of the team will spring from the perspective of these founding members.

The heroes will probably not be novices or amateurs. The team will develop substantial information resources, battle tactics and back-up plans. Personal disputes will, of course, occur but they will generally be talked through between missions; members of a team like this will almost certainly be too professional to let disputes interfere with their action out in the field.

Alternatively, the Elite Team could be presented as aspirational - perhaps the heroes hope to become members one day, and in the meantime seek the approval of the Elite Team, or perhaps a mentoring relationship.

Elite Teams rarely end or fall apart except in the most unusual circumstances. If they do, then eventually another Elite Team will emerge to replace them.

THE EMPLOYEE TEAM

For some, supers work is not a calling - it's a job. Governments, companies, private security agencies, non-governmental organizations and others sometimes see the benefits of putting a squad of supers on the payroll. The Employee Team has a boss and a mission statement. They try and do what's right, but they do it from the perspective of their employer.

Employee teams vary a great deal depending on the nature of the employer. A city council hiring a supers team to provide support to its police and emergency services will result in one kind of team, whereas a multinational company hiring several heroes to promote its brand and protect its interests will produce quite a different team.

There will almost always be tension between the team members and their employers. Managers will make decisions that seem senseless or counterproductive; directives will be received that seem morally repugnant; orders will be handed down to stay out of affairs that intensely interest the members. Whether or not members can undertake any activity on their own is a key point to establish with this kind of team. In some situations, a hero who does some personal work might end up facing a disciplinary committee.

The players and GM should work together to hash out the details of the employer and the relationship between heroes and their boss. It is not necessary to work out all the details in advance, but it is crucial that players know how to run their characters while on the job. The group should also consider what general type of mission assignments will be appropriate for this sort of team.

Alternatively, an Employee Team could be created by a secret patron, whose true intentions may be straightforward or mysterious. In this case, the details of the employer-employee relationship may never be determined, and any decisions by the patron may remain inscrutable.

Employee Teams are fragile. If the team ever becomes perceived as a liability to the employer, its future will be in doubt. If it ever acts against the employer, it will certainly be discontinued. If the employer goes out of business or changes hands, the terms of employment might be radically changed and members might no longer wish to be part of the team.

THE PURPOSEFUL TEAM

Some teams assemble for a particular purpose. Perhaps it is to explore the multiverse, or to oppose a criminal syndicate's activities, or to protect a particular city neighborhood. Whatever the purpose, all members of the team must subscribe to it (some more than others perhaps), and all activities by the team will ultimately serve this purpose (or, at the very least, not work against it).

The key question is, what is the purpose? Deciding on the team's mission will set the tone of the game more than anything else. All the characters will be built in relationship to the purpose, and all the adventures will bear some relationship to that purpose.

Alternatively, a Purposeful Team could be created for a purpose that is secret or mysterious. Maybe only one or two of the members know the team's purpose. Maybe none of them do and the team's missions are given to them by a magical talking stick or a supercomputer from the moons of Jupiter. Discovering the true purpose of the team's existence should be the central ongoing plot point in the campaign.

Purposeful Teams are sturdy as long as the purpose still exists. Until the reason for being plays itself out, a Purposeful Team will probably keep going through thick and thin. The purpose is bigger than all of them.

THE OUTSIDER TEAM

Life is tough, sometimes, and banding together is a good way to cope. The outsider team forms from those who are hated or feared by society, or on the run from the government or some evil power. They live life on the fringes, rarely understood, helping each other keep going, making tough choices every day, trying to do the right thing for no other reason than it's the right thing to do.

The players and GM need to decide why the team are on the outside, and how harsh life is for them - are they constantly on the run and scrabbling to survive, or are they outsiders due to a low level of prejudice and misunderstanding?

Alternatively, an outsider team could be on the outside because of its goals. Perhaps the team is made up of anarchists determined to overthrow the government, or true patriots determined to uncover corruption amongst the powerful.

Outsider teams are always fragile. They could fall apart for any number of reasons. Personal relationships are frequently strained due to the pressures of being outsiders. The forces acting against the team have plenty of ways of weakening and undermining the team's viability. Few outsider teams last for long.

THE BOUND FATES TEAM

Sometimes characters don't have a say in who they're on a team with. Maybe the meteorite that gave them their powers gave them all a permanent psychic link to each other. Maybe the demon they fought when they first got together is always going to keep going after all of them, and they have to stay together to stand a chance against it. Maybe they all share a mysterious sigil on their shoulders, the true meaning of which remains unclear. In all these cases, the team is bound together by fate.

The players should decide what the nature of their bound fate is, how much is known by the characters, and how their characters feel about this forced co-operation.

Alternatively, a Bound Fates team could have chosen this course.

Perhaps they all completed a blood brothers ritual? Perhaps they made a mystical vow to each other? What if one member chose but the others had no choice?

Bound Fates teams are incredibly strong, by their very nature. They resist any attempt to tear them apart until the fate that binds them is resolved.



RUNNING ADVENTURES

An *adventure* is a series of chapters, making up a single issue, like an issue of a comic book (as described under **Time** in the **Taking Action!** section). Some long adventures may span multiple issues, a “mini-series” of sorts.

The bulk of the Game Master’s job in **Icons** is actually running the game; creating and narrating exciting superhero adventures for the players. This section looks at some things to know when running **Icons**.

ADVENTURE STRUCTURE

Comic book stories tend to follow a standard structure, and because **Icons** is a comic book game, its adventures should follow a similar format. It breaks the story down into a series of chapters: the Threat, the Investigation, the Challenge, and the Comeback.

The Threat

The Threat gives the heroes an indication something is wrong and needs their attention. It might be as straightforward as a bank alarm ringing out over the rooftops of the city or the police commissioner picking up the red phone, or as subtle as sinister shadows watching the heroes from the sidelines of a parade or a ceremony where they accept the key to the city or the like. The threat is a “hook,” a call to action, getting the players and their heroes engaged and involved in the story.

The Investigation

In the Investigation phase of an adventure, the heroes look into the nature of the Threat and what they can do about it. This might be as simple as rushing to the site of an alarm or as involved as piecing together clues from multiple crime scenes, or following up on a series of mysterious disappearances to see if there are any connections.

The Investigation phase may involve some tests, particularly of investigative abilities like Awareness, and is when the GM imparts a good deal of information to the players about what is going on. It may also involve some other tests or challenges, even combat, as the heroes run up against opposition, have to shake down informants, and so forth.

Keep in mind that although the Investigation is intended to be challenging and exciting, drawing the players into the story, it should also be *informative*. Don’t structure it so that if the players fail a single test they will miss a vital clue, sending the story off on a tangent from which it might not recover. It’s not much fun chasing down dead-end leads and casting about trying to figure out what the heroes should be doing, after all.

The Challenge

The Challenge phase is where the action really starts happening. It is when the heroes have some idea of what they need to do and they try to do it. The Challenge often involves combating the villain(s), but it can include other sorts of tests of the heroes’ abilities.

Often heroes face a series of challenges to get to the final confrontation or climax of the story. Some of these initial challenges might be failures or setbacks, such as the heroes initially being unable to stop the villain or falling into a trap and having to escape. These sorts of additional challenges are opportunities for the players to rack up Determination for the final part of the adventure. Multiple challenges may be interspersed with investigation phases as the heroes follow-up on clues from each challenge.

The Comeback

In the end, the heroes come back from apparent defeat and win the day, overcoming challenges and taking down the villain(s). The Comeback is the dramatic final confrontation of the story. It is often a big blowout fight but it can just as easily be a dramatic debate or a clever plan that wins the day without a single punch being thrown.

This is the phase of the adventure where players want to spend the Determination they have earned to get the job done, just like the heroes come back more determined than ever to succeed.

The Comeback is often followed by an epilogue of some sort, where the GM ties up loose ends and the heroes get to bask in their success for a few moments before the close of the story.

Adventure Structure Examples

Here are a couple examples of the comic book adventure structure in action:

The Bank Heist

Criminals are robbing the First National Bank! The Threat comes when the heroes are alerted to the robbery by the sound of an alarm, an announcement over the police band, or the like. They investigate by arriving at the bank and checking out the situation, discovering the criminals are holding the customers and employees hostage. They must overcome the challenge of getting in and securing the hostages' safety. Only then do they discover the additional challenge of the supervillain working with the robbers! After the bad guy gets a few good licks in by attacking from surprise, the heroes rally, stage a comeback, and take down the bad guys.

The Mastermind's Island

A master villain is blackmailing the world with a doomsday weapon from a hidden island fortress. The Threat comes in a broadcast across the worldwide networks. To prove the authorities are helpless, the villain challenges the heroes to a battle to the death against his loyal minions.

The heroes fight a villain team working for the master villain, but manage to defeat them. From their foes, they learn the location of the villain's island lair, allowing them to infiltrate and attempt to stop the doomsday device. Unfortunately, the master villain is prepared and captures them, only then revealing that *they* are the necessary final component of his doomsday weapon! Of course, the process will also destroy them as an added bonus.

In the Comeback, the heroes have to escape the villain's trap and defeat him. Perhaps their escape and battle triggers the destruction of the island lair, leading to the villain's apparent demise (from which he can, eventually, return).

HOW TO TEST

It is up to the Game Master to decide when to ask players to test their heroes' traits and how difficult the tests will be. Some general rules of thumb when it comes to asking for tests:

- Only test when there is a chance of failure *and* that failure matters to the story in some way. A test should always matter, otherwise don't bother. It just sets the players up for possible failure with no real reward otherwise.
- Try to limit things to one test per situation. If, for example, a hero has to sneak into a building, ask for a single Coordination (Stealth) test. Having players make a series of tests to accomplish one thing generally just increases the chances that they'll fail and is unfair.
- Only test things you want the players to be able to use Determination to accomplish. Remember that a character must attempt *and fail* at something to make a Determined Effort, unless there is only one chance to succeed.
- Speaking of which, if the hero only has one shot at a test, be sure to tell the players that so they can choose to use Determined Effort, if they want.
- Remember that only the *players* make tests. When it comes to GM-controlled characters, you either determine the outcome of their actions based on their traits and the situation, or call for a test from the players to determine if their heroes are able to avoid or resist the effects of the other character's action.
- Keep in mind that a test with a Difficulty equal to the hero's trait has roughly a 60% chance of success, one with a difficulty 2 higher is about half that (a 30% chance), and a difficulty 4 higher is less than a 10% chance, but just one or two points of Determination can shift the odds back in the hero's favor.

BENCHMARKS

Icons has a fairly loose system when it comes to rating and describing things in game terms. Basically, it all comes down to the 1 to 10 scale and the question "on a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate that?" Something either falls somewhere on the scale, or is simply off the scale altogether and probably no worth worrying about (see **Off the Scale** in **The Basics** section).

Still, it can be helpful to have some "benchmarks," points of reference for quickly determining where something falls on the scale while running the game or designing adventures for it. The level descriptions under the **Levels and Scale** header in **The Basics** provide some benchmarks where abilities are concerned, while the sample materials under the **Bending and Breaking** header and the sample weights under **Lifting** in the **Taking Action!** section do the same.

As given under **How to Test**, remember that a trait at a level equal to a given Difficulty has about a 60% chance of success, half that for a 2 level difference, and about 10% for a 4 level difference.

Here are some other quick benchmarks to keep in mind:

- **Damage:** A damage level of 3 to 4 is about that of a hand weapon, 5 to 6 a heavy weapon like a machine gun or chain gun, and 7 or more a military weapon like a missile or torpedo. Truly massive damage like a nuclear weapon is pretty much off the scale.



- **Speed:** Speed levels for movement powers are deliberately vague, rather than in exact miles or kilometers per hour. Remember that a speed of 4 to 5 is that of a typical car, 6 is a sub-sonic plane, while 7 or more is super-sonic.
- **Toughness:** The material strength levels show the toughness of various substances. You can use them as benchmarks for objects as well, keeping in mind that complex or mechanical objects (like vehicles) are going to be less tough overall than their material, being both hollow and filled with relatively delicate moving parts. So most vehicles will have an effective Strength of 5 to 6 when it comes to taking damage.

GAME RULES VS. COMMON SENSE

The rules of **Icons** give you the tools to handle most common situations likely to come up in a superhero story. However, they're not one hundred percent foolproof, and *no* set of rules can anticipate every possible thing that could happen in a story. From time to time, you'll encounter a situation where the rules don't provide a clear-cut answer, or worse, provide a clearly *wrong* answer. In these cases, *ignore the rules* and go with what makes the most sense to you and what you think will be the most fair and fun for your players; and if one of them should object and say, "That's not in the rules!" point them to this paragraph and say, "Yes, it is."

*"THESE 'NO-NONSENSE' SOLUTIONS
OF YOURS JUST DON'T HOLD WATER IN A
COMPLEX WORLD OF JET-POWERED APES
AND TIME TRAVEL."*

*- Superman, JLA Classified, "Ultramarine
Corps"*

RANDOM ADVENTURE CREATION

If you are pressed for time or just looking for some inspiration for a new adventure, it is as simple as 1... 2... 3!

1. Create a Villain

Using the same guidelines given for creating heroes, create one or more villains for your adventure. You can use the random roll approach for inspiration, but don't feel restricted to what you roll-up. If you get a better idea, or need the villain to have a certain trait or level, just assign it. You can also create villains simply by choosing whatever traits and levels you think the character should have. Barring that, pick a villain from the samples given in this book!

Be sure to give you villain some aspects, particularly things the players can figure out and tag!

2. Choose a Plot

Roll on the following tables or just choose a suitable plot for your villain.

PLOT ELEMENT 1

d6	d6	Element
1-2	1	Attack
1-2	2	Steal
1-2	3	Manipulate
1-2	4	Murder
1-2	5	Control
1-2	6	Destroy
3-4	1	Create
3-4	2	Infiltrate
3-4	3	Ransom
3-4	4	Rob
3-4	5	Extort
3-4	6	Seize
5-6	1	Escape
5-6	2	Conquer
5-6	3	Study
5-6	4	Possess
5-6	5	Eliminate
5-6	6	Capture

PLOT ELEMENT 2

d6	d6	Element
1-2	1	Rival
1-2	2	Creature
1-2	3	Country
1-2	4	People
1-2	5	City
1-2	6	Object
3-4	1	Artifact
3-4	2	World
3-4	3	Hero (or Team)
3-4	4	Treasure
3-4	5	Loved One
3-4	6	Wealth
5-6	1	Power
5-6	2	Celebrity
5-6	3	Head of State
5-6	4	Invention
5-6	5	Resource
5-6	6	Enemy

Take the combination of terms as inspiration for the villain's plot. So an initial pair of rolls of 3 and 4 yields "Rob" while a second pair of 1 and 5 gives us "City". Clearly, the villain intends to rob the city blind! But how? Perhaps by literally "robbing the city blind" – a plot to temporarily blind everyone, allowing the villain and his henchmen free rein!

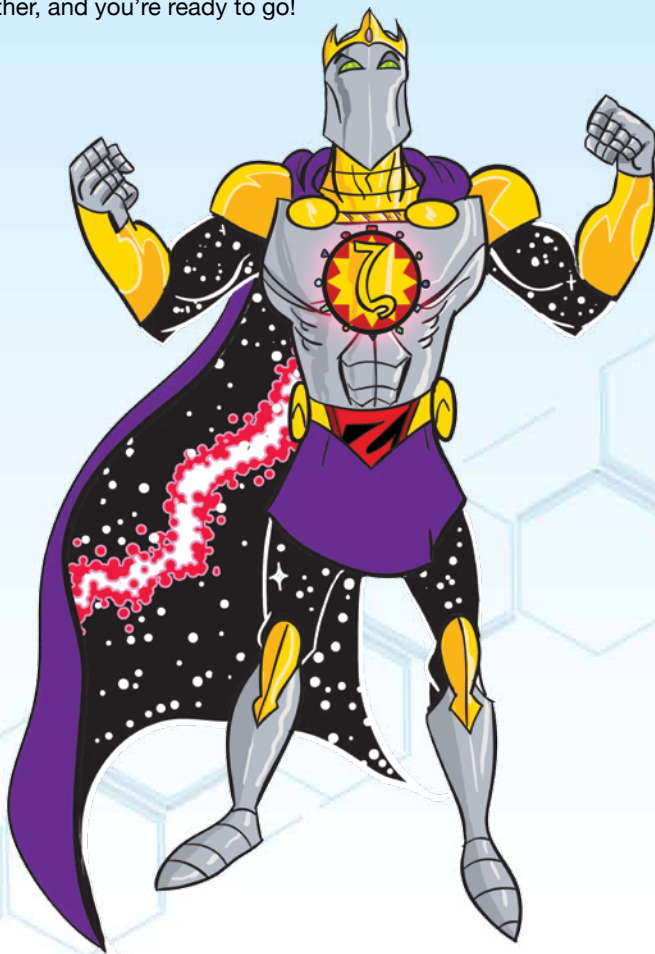
You can use the style and aspects of your chosen villain to help you fill out the plot. For example, if you roll-up a "Control Power" plot and your villain is a mystical mistress of Wizardry, perhaps she intends to steal all magical power in the world for herself! "Escape Invention" could be about a mad scientist who has created a super-powerful android that now has a will of its own and wants to destroy its creator! Alternately, it could be the designer of an engineered super-virus trying to escape before it is released on an unsuspecting populace.

Feel free to twist around the meanings of the words as you see fit and play with different ideas to see what they inspire. Again, the rolls on the table aren't intended to lock you into a particular outcome, just to "kick start" your imagination and get you thinking of different possibilities. Take notes! Even if you don't use a particular idea you come up with for your next adventure, who's to say when you might want to use it somewhere down the line?

3. Add Complications

Kick things off by giving the heroes a threat, as described in the **Adventure Structure** section, and then use the heroes' and villains' aspects to provide some complications to the basic plot. Do two or more characters have a rivalry? Is there romantic tension? Opportunities to threaten a hero's secret identity or compel a weakness? Adding these elements into the adventure help to both personalize it for the players' heroes and award the players Determination they can use to help their characters prevail in the end!

Put it all together, and you're ready to go!



MANAGING DETERMINATION

ICONS Characters start the game with 6 Determination points minus their total number of powers (with a minimum of 1 starting point). These points may be spent to affect the outcome of events in the game (see the **Determination** section for details about how).

JUDGING DETERMINATION USE

One of the Game Master's jobs is adjudicating the more open-ended uses of Determination, particularly retcons and stunts. You want to encourage the players to be creative, without bogging the game down in a lot of discussion or debate about how things are going to work.

Keep in mind the general guideline about retcons being unable to directly contradict established information. It's one thing for a player to spend Determination to find a convenient item nobody noticed before, but quite another to ask for a retcon that (for example) completely removes a character from the scene, when it has been established that he is there.

Similarly, try and encourage players when they're being too modest in their Determination spending. It is a limited resource, so don't require players to spend it for things that should be taken for granted, like finding a fire extinguisher in a public building, for example. Help the players along, perhaps with a suggestion about a retcon or stunt you think would be cool and fit the adventure. After all, you're trying to create a story together.

Try to be flexible when it comes to the requirement to tag qualities in order to spend Determination; so long as it fits the general parameters of the quality, and the player can come up with an in-game reason to justify it, it should be fine. Spending the points is the primary limit on Determination, the tagging just helps to ensure it follows the character's overall theme and gets the players thinking.

DETERMINATION IS A GM'S BEST FRIEND

Remember, when you want to allow a particularly clever idea or maneuver from a player but you feel there should be some "cost" to it, asking the player to spend a point of Determination is your best option for both encouraging creativity, but also limiting overly effective tactics or options players might otherwise use all the time, if it weren't for the associated cost.

In short, one of the best answers you can give while running the game is, "Sure, spend a point of Determination and you can try it!"

CHALLENGES

An important Game Master job is compelling the heroes' challenges and bringing them into the game, providing the players with additional Determination to spend, while also making the story more interesting and, well, challenging.

Challenges are essentially a way for players to tell you: "I want to see *this* happen to my character in the game." Since players get to choose their characters' challenges, they can pick things they want to deal with in play. It's your job as GM to compel those things and bring them into the game. Players can (and should) suggest opportunities to compel their characters' challenges, but it is ultimately up to the GM.

Part of the reason to make use of characters' challenges is to keep the flow of Determination going, since it helps to make the game more fast-paced, creative, and exciting. If the players are regularly running out of Determination points to spend, then you are probably not giving out enough during the game.

TEMPORARY CHALLENGES

Of course, a hero's standard challenges are not the be all and end all of possibilities. You can also provide temporary challenges, lasting for a single chapter or issue of the game. Perhaps an old flame comes back into a character's life, or a relative is visiting out of town. Something from a hero's past may come back to haunt him briefly, or circumstances may cause something

to happen to the hero's powers. All of these are potential challenges worth awarding the players Determination when you incorporate them into the game.

DETERMINATION AWARDS

In addition to Determination from compelling their aspects, you can award players bonus Determination points simply for good game play. When a player comes up with a great idea, clever quip, or pulls off an impossible die roll that gets everyone at the table excited, give the player an extra point of Determination as a reward.

As a general rule, the more Determination you hand out, the more fast-paced and wild the game gets, and the bigger the difficulties you can put in the heroes' path. There's no exact formula for it; calibrate how many points you give out to the flow of your game, supplementing it when you feel things are getting slow or unfairly difficult for the players.

"WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU LEMONS, YOU SQUEEZE THEM, HARD. MAKE INVISIBLE INK. MAKE AN ACID POISON. FLING IT IN THEIR EYES."

- Dr. Impossible, Soon I Will Be Invincible

OPTION: HERO IMPROVEMENT

In the comic books, characters don't generally go through gradual change and improvement: they change radically, gaining or losing powers, changing names and costumes, dying and returning to life (often with new names, costumes, and powers).

One area where you may improve characters is increasing their starting Determination (the value that refreshes at the start of a new issue).

At the Game Master's option, players can then spend starting Determination points to improve their heroes, lowering the starting value. Players cannot lower their characters' starting Determination below 1.

Adjust the costs as you see fit, increasing them to make improvement slower and more difficult, or lowering them (or providing more for the same cost) to encourage improvement.

Levels: Increasing an ability or existing power's level by one costs two starting points of Determination.

Specialties: A character can improve an existing specialty by one level at the cost of a starting point of Determination, or acquire a new specialty for a starting point of Determination.

Power Stunts: After successfully performing a power stunt ten times, you can choose to not regain the spent Determination, lowering starting value by 1. The power stunt then becomes a regular part of your hero's repertoire of powers and you no longer have to spend Determination to use it.

New Powers: A character may also gain a completely new power – with its level determined randomly – by spending two permanent points of Determination. This new power must have an in-game explanation (be it an accident, a new gadget, super serum, or any other means approved by the Game Master).

You may also institute whatever requirements you see fit in terms of training, practice, or the like for heroes to implement improvements. They might happen "off panel" or "between stories" or a certain amount of time or effort may be required. Heroes might even need to seek out particular teachers or assistants and gain their aid in making the desired improvements.

VILLAINS

Villains are crucial to superheroes. They don't just provide antagonism - they demonstrate exactly what it is that makes the hero a hero. They highlight the strengths of the character and stand in direct contrast to everything the character represents. In a very real sense, villains are a part of a hero's identity.

For this reason, the first place to go when you're considering villains for your game is to your players. Ask them who their personal arch-villain should be. They might be full of ideas, or they might be keen to let you come up with the bad guy. Either way, invite them to participate in the creation of your core villainous concepts.

ARCH-ENEMIES & MASTER VILLAINS

For each character in your game, you should devise an arch-enemy. This is the character who is the eternal thorn in the character's side, the one who will keep coming back to make the character's life difficult.

For the group as a whole, you should devise a master-villain. This is the character who is the fearsome recurring threat for the entire super-team, the one they fear most and desperately want to bring to justice.

ARCH-ENEMY POWERS

An arch-enemy's powers should in some way reflect the powers of the hero they partner. There are two main ways to achieve this:

Firstly, the villain could have powers that are a natural opposite of the hero's. For example, a fire-based hero could be matched with an ice-based villain; a super-technician could be matched against a magician.

Alternatively, the villain could have powers that are a natural match for the hero's. For example, a winged melee combatant could be matched with another flying close-fighter; a superstrong brawler could match another superstrong brawler; a genius tactician could face off against the only mind cleverer than his.

A less common approach is to make an arch-enemy's powers be a different variation on the same theme as the hero's. For example, a character who derives their power from the sacred spirit of the lion might have as an arch-villain a character who derives their power from the sacred spirit of the hyena - their power suites might look entirely different and not be a particularly good match, but they are linked through their common theme.

ARCH-ENEMY ROLE

The role of an arch-enemy in story terms is to highlight the most important aspects of the hero. Every time the arch-villain comes on the scene, it should make it more clear for everyone around the table just what it is that makes this hero special and heroic.

Consider the personal theme of the hero. This could take any number of forms - a driving motivation, a code of honor, a continuing moral dilemma, and so on. The arch-enemy should push the core of this theme right to center stage, and shine light on it from a new direction.

Consider a character whose overwhelming motivation is patriotism - a heroic love of country and

its people. The character's arch-enemy could be a character who is also a patriot, but one who exemplifies a dark side of patriotism, such as blind love of authority and racism. Alternatively, the arch-enemy could represent anarchy, hatred of government and authority, the chaotic answer to the hero's order.

A character who is trying constantly to live up to the memory of his heroic father might have an arch-enemy who is a neglectful son, trying to destroy the legacy of his own father. The arch-enemy might be a bad father, one who is the opposite of the character's father in every way. A different approach might have the arch-enemy be from the past, seeking answers in the present in a parallel of how the hero seeks guidance from the past.

A character who is cynical and morally ambiguous, sometimes using violence to get things done, and happy to breach the code against killing that binds most superheroes, might face an arch-enemy who represents hypocrisy in a very moral stance - a corrupt moralizing politician, for example. This would justify the cynicism of the character, provide proof of that cynical world view and shed light on the character's ultimate goals. Another arch-enemy might be a glimpse of what the character might become - a remorseless killer who lost all sense of his own moral compass a long time ago, but whose general aim and methods are eerily similar to the character's own.

You know you have a good idea for an arch-enemy when you can imagine the two characters sitting down for a meal together under terms of truce and having a high-tension conversation that is great to listen to. Ideally the two characters will have plenty to learn from each other and plenty to say to each other, but the gulf between them - whatever form it takes - will put every scene between them on edge.

MASTER VILLAIN

Now, you need to perform exactly the same process for the group as a whole. Consider the super group as a single combined entity. The heroes are the group's 'powers', so the villain should reflect them in some way, as well as being able to stand against them without being instantly defeated. The role and function of the group should also be reflected in the villain's nature and goals.

Your master villain will cast light on the overall purpose of the group. We've already discussed several different types of teams, and there are plenty of other kinds that are possible. During early discussion, the kind of group you have should have been established - whether it's a government agency, an alien task force, or a billionaire detective and his amazing friends. The master villain should operate to contrast with or highlight the kind of group being played.

For example, a government-sponsored group intended to stop invasion from the stars will have a natural master villain in the alien commander in charge of infiltrating the earth. An alternative master villain could be someone who wishes to encourage or even assist an invasion (for whatever personal reason).

An outsider team, on the run, has a natural master villain, namely whoever is hunting them. An alternative master villain could be someone who keeps trying to recruit them to his villainous cause.

The most important thing to remember when designing the powers of master villains is their defensive range. If it comes to a fight, the master villain will be facing a whole team of heroes who will each get an action every round and who all want desperately to take the bad guy down. Give your master villain a good set of defensive powers and a high Strength and Willpower (resulting in a high Stamina). Otherwise, you might be forced to create a new master villain sooner than you'd like.

PULLING IT TOGETHER

It's important to remember that none of this is set in stone. You should consider the first few sessions of play as a trial time for all of this - if your keystone villains don't work quite how you'd like, it's not too late to try an alternative master villain or to create a new arch-enemy more suited to a character. Often it will take a few sessions of play before the hero characters really settle in, and the appropriate villainous match for a character may not be apparent until then.

VILLAINS

AROBAS



PROWESS

COORDINATION

STRENGTH

INTELLECT

AWARENESS

WILLPOWER

--	--	--	--	--	--

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: 6'

WEIGHT: 160

FIRST APPEARANCE: HANGMAN #8

INTERFACE

ALTERNATE FORM (ELECTRICAL)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

ACROBATICS

COMPUTERS

INVESTIGATION

STAMINA

8

ANARCHIST HACKER

"AROBAS IS EVERYWHERE!"

LEAVES HIS CALLING CARD

WEAKNESS - ELECTRICAL FORM ONLY USABLE TO TRAVEL ELECTRONICALLY.

PERSONAL - DRIVEN TO WAR AGAINST THE STATE

While in college, Pierre became embroiled in a number of environmental and social causes. He railed against economic, political, and social injustice and was heavily active in the blogosphere. While this wasn't unusual for a young college student, Pierre was far more obsessed than most. He attended every protest rally he could and soon found himself on the verge of failing out of school. Pierre didn't care; he felt he had a higher calling.

Pierre's life changed forever when he attended an anti-capital punishment rally in front of state prison. The prisoner, a convicted murderer of a police officer, had garnered national attention with many doubting the evidence used to convict him. The crowd in front of the prison was much larger

than usual, attracting a few activist celebrities as well. The prison took extra precautions; but as the hour approached a small group of protesters, including Pierre, decided to storm the gates.

A storm had rolled in during the protest (the prisoner was to die by lethal injection, so there was no fear of electrical problems), and as Pierre and his allies scaled the gates a bolt of lightning electrified the fence. Prison guards on the other side, bracing for conflict, watched in horror as the smoking bodies of the protesters never made it over the barbed wire. Of ten people scaling the fence, Pierre was the only one to survive.

Pierre's survival was considered a miracle. His cell phone and his Palm Pilot were fried. His physicians assumed that Pierre had managed to ground himself when he was struck. He hadn't; latent mutant genes in his body were shocked active by the electricity. Pierre learned this when he held his Palm Pilot and it came to life, but only while he was holding it. He soon discovered that he could manipulate the hospital room lights and equipment.

Pierre kept his discoveries to himself (fearful that the government might confine and test him) and found a new tool to wage war against "the state." He believes that the government electrified that fence and killed his compatriots, but they failed to kill him. Taking on the mantle of "Arobas" (the French word for the "@" sign, one of the symbols used online by anarchists), Pierre continues doing what he loves best; infiltrating, manipulating, and destroying government security and data. His villainous plans have an almost playful attitude, although Arobas can be deadly serious if he feels the stakes are high enough.

Tactically, Arobas is an infiltrator, not a fighter. He uses his abilities to transmit himself to a vulnerable location, wreak havoc on computer and security systems, and then make his escape. Arobas often leaves a calling card, a giant "@", on monitors of computers that he's infected. Arobas has a lot of support within the blogosphere, although most groups denounce his tactics. Arobas often affects a thick, stereotypical French accent and uses French terms. When agitated, Arobas tends to lose this accent.

Arobas works well with other villains, especially those that are attacking governmental or corporate institutions. His role is usually to break down security so that other villains can better accomplish their crimes.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- Arobas broke into CIA files and published the names of some overseas undercover agents on the web. The heroes are tasked with protecting and extracting these agents before they are eliminated. Some of the infiltrated have hired supervillain mercenaries to do the job.
- Arobas decides to make life difficult for a hero by editing fake footage of a public figure revealing himself beneath the hero's mask. Can the real hero prevent villains from harming the public figure while proving that they are indeed two different people?
- Arobas uses his powers to take control of the city's traffic system, causing gridlock and chaos during the National Convention of a major political party, where they will be nominating their candidate for President. The heroes must take care of the situation, without falling into Arobas' trap of creating a publicity-garnering spectacle in front of the assembled national press corps.
- A far more ruthless and power-hungry villain (perhaps Rex Mundi, The Octofather, or a suitable replacement from your own campaign) has decided that Arobas' powers are best used to ravage the world's banking and credit system, transferring the wealth to their accounts. Such an attack would devastate more fragile economies all over the world, not to mention giving the villain a massive bankroll from which to finance god only knows what sort of horrible crimes. Thus, the heroes are placed in the odd position of having to protect Arobas, preventing him from falling into the hands of the far greater evil. Arobas, of course, will not relish being in this position — his arrogance and views on "the state" will have him chafing, and looking for ways to escape his protectors. If the major villain does manage to grab Arobas, the heroes may find themselves having to mount a rescue operation.

BARON KRIMINEL



ABILITIES

PROWESS
COORDINATION
STRENGTH
INTELLECT
AWARENESS
WILLPOWER

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: 5'10 WEIGHT: 140
FIRST APPEARANCE: THE WHISPER #27

POWERS

FORCE FIELD
WIZARDRY-INVISIBILITY & ANIMATION
MIND SHIELD
ILLUSION

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

ACROBATICS
COMPUTERS
INVESTIGATION

STAMINA

10

QUALITIES

HOUNGAN OF THE LOA OF VENGEANCE
"FEAR THE WRATH OF THE MOST DREAD."

CHALLENGES

WEAKNESS - OLD MAN
PERSONAL - READY TO RETIRE

In the late 1950s, Dwayne Leeds was an inner city smooth-talking, pick-pocketing teenaged con artist whose life changed forever when he crossed paths with a street magician performing outside a train station. Originally hoping to steal the older man's daily earnings, Dwayne soon became intrigued and enthralled by the older man's incredible illusory skills. The old man was impressed as well and invited Dwayne to learn from him. After the old man was certain of Leeds' dedication, he revealed his secret: the old man housed the Loa of Baron Kriminel and served him as a mercenary.

The Old Man taught Dwayne of the ways of voodoo and of the Baron. Baron Kriminel is a Loa of Vengeance to whom people would pray for retaliation and other vengeful acts. The Old Man was a personification of that vengeance and would undertake such a mission for pay. Normally a monetary transaction, one could also pay for the Baron's service in other ways, such as a number of favors, blood, or other method determined by the Baron.

Dwayne was initiated as Baron Kriminel's assistant and spent the 1960s as his sidekick, Brother Hoodoo. After spending a decade together committing contracted crimes and fighting heroes, the old man announced that it was time to pass the loa onto Dwayne. In a secret ritual, Dwayne Leeds became the new Baron Kriminel with the old man's dying breath.

The new Baron Kriminel continued his predecessor's tradition. He lives a nomadic lifestyle within the inner city, looking for potential customers. He uses the earnings to maintain a rather extravagant lifestyle. Not content to simply wait for the next job, Baron Kriminel has invested heavily in the local criminal gangs and families. These crime bosses essentially pay the Baron protection money to keep them from his wrath.

Currently, Baron Kriminel is old and ready to retire. He is actively seeking out his next Brother (or Sister) Hoodoo. In an interesting twist, he has teamed up with the daughter of his old nemesis the Black Flame and is considering passing the mantle onto her. While he knows that she'd kill him if she ever discovered his role in the death of her parents, he also knows that she'll have to kill him anyway as part of the final ritual.

Physically, Baron Kriminel has two guises; one as a tough urban hood (an illusion), and another as an emaciated old man. In both, he is accompanied by his pet constrictor snake. He can also appear as someone that a prospective client might feel comfortable talking to. Baron Kriminel speaks with a Haitian accent. Initially fake, the Baron has used this accent exclusively for four decades and it has since become natural for him. Baron Kriminel prefers to strategize before going on a mission. This usually involves several preparatory rituals designed to give him advantages over his prey. In combat, Baron Kriminel can be quite ruthless.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- One of the gangs that pays Baron Kriminel protection money has recently suffered a few voodoo-style hits. Has Baron Kriminel taken back his word, or is there another loa-possessed hero or villain in town?
- One of the heroes is the recipient of a vengeance request by a victim of a previous crime (this hook works exceptionally well for heroes that have little regard for collateral damage). Baron Kriminel undertakes the mission and begins cursing the hero, making him or her suffer the way that the victim has suffered.
- Baron Kriminel has decided that a magic-themed PC would be the ideal host for the Loa, and wishes to make the PC into the next recipient of the power of voodoo. What happens when a Loa is insulted by a refusal?
- A rival Loa spirit (perhaps Baron Samedi or Baron Cimitiere) decides that Baron Kriminel is now vulnerable, as his host is aging and looking for an heir to the power. The Loa spirit possesses an NPC close to one of the PCs (a girlfriend, a sidekick, etc.), creating a new voodoo-based character who now hunts for Baron Kriminel. Can the PC rescue his friend from the grasp of the Loa?

CONFEDERAPE

VILLAINS



ABILITIES

PROWESS
COORDINATION
STRENGTH
INTELLECT
AWARENESS
WILLPOWER

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: 5'10 WEIGHT: 400
FIRST APPEARANCE: MIGHTY SAGUARO #6

POWERS

ANIMAL CONTROL - APES
LEAPING
SUPER SENSES - +2 to see, hear & smell
FAST ATTACK - 2

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

ACROBATICS
ATHLETICS - EXPERT
MILITARY

STAMINA

10

QUALITIES

THE REBEL PRIMATE
"THE APE SHALL RISE AGAIN!"
SOUTHERN GENTLEMAN

CHALLENGES

STRUGGLE AGAINST ANIMAL NATURE.
OBSESSED WITH CIVIL WAR

Behavioral scientist and Civil War re-enactor Dwight Givens was experimenting on methods to facilitate communication between humans and primates when something went horribly wrong. In a freak mishap, the machine he had built to sync his brainwaves with that of the ape he was studying ended up draining his intelligence, and the strongest portions of his personality, and transferring them to the gorilla. Givens was left a vegetable.

The gorilla, however, was now a genius, and able to talk. He was also, like Givens, completely obsessed with the Civil War. Givens' long-held admiration for "The Lost Cause" transferred in the gorilla's mind to a desire to overthrow human domination. His expanded intelligence manifested an ability to control his fellow apes, which he quickly used to overpower the staff of the research facility and escape.

Today, the Confederape plots rebellion against humankind — his crimes are always in furtherance to this goal.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- The Confederape and his monkey minions attempt to free others of their kind held in a top-secret research facility. However, this facility also contains any number of high-tech weapons. What happens when The Rebel Primate gets his paws on those?

DIAMOND



VILLAINS

ABILITIES

PROWESS
COORDINATION
STRENGTH
INTELLECT
AWARENESS
WILLPOWER

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: 5'11

WEIGHT: 140

FIRST APPEARANCE: ICONS TEAM-UP #33

POWERS

FLIGHT
INVULNERABILITY
SUPER SENSES (Extended Hearing, Extended Vision, Infrared Vision, Microscopic Vision, Ultrasonic Hearing, X-Ray Vision.)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

BUSINESS - EXPERT
PERFORMANCE - ACTING

STAMINA

15

QUALITIES

THE WORLD'S MOST POPULAR SUPERHUMAN
DIVERSIFIED PORTFOLIO
STUNNING ENTRANCE

CHALLENGES

"FAME IS POWER"
APPEARANCES MATTER... A LOT
SCANDALOUS SECRETS

Diamond isn't a villain per se. In fact, as far as the public is concerned, Diamond is one of the most popular superheroes on the planet. She appears on the cover of glossy hero magazines like *SUPER!*, *Metahuman Monthly*, and *Heroes Unmasked* on a regular basis. Her exploits are covered breathlessly by the national and world media. Posters of her hang in college dorms, women dress in her fashionable clothing line, and her recent autobiography, "In the Rough", is a best-seller. She is more than a hero, she is a one-woman industry. A superstar.

She is also a fake.

Brandi Czabasky (her real name, although she's long since legally changed it to "Diamond", and destroyed her original records) manifested her powers in adolescence — they are very real. However, her desire for fame and adoration is even more real. Since her powers manifested, Brandi has single-mindedly pursued a single goal — becoming the most-loved, most popular, most famous superhuman on the planet. If Brandi believed anything, it was this: Fame is Power.

So, small-town girl Brandi crafted herself into Diamond — the epitome of beauty, fame and power.

She carefully crafted her public persona — teaming up with other heroes (letting them do most of the work, before stepping in and delivering the final — and extremely photogenic — blow), licensing her likeness to product manufacturers, signing on as a celebrity spokesman for a number of companies....and then she moved up to the next level. Taking the earnings from her endorsements and merchandizing, she started to fund small-time supervillains anonymously, purely so that she could swoop in at the last minute (once the cameras had arrived) and "save the day."

Today, she's a marketing powerhouse, who occasionally dabbles in superheroics — sometimes combating threats of her own making (power-suited shock troops whose armor has a weak spot that only she's aware of, for example), and sometimes muscling in on real heroes and taking the credit.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

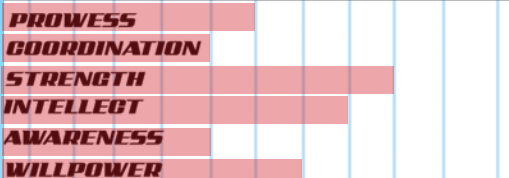
- The best way to introduce Diamond is to have her regularly show up during fights between the PCs and Supervillains. She'll generally get in the way, posing for the news media, taking down villains that have already been weakened by the efforts of the PCs, and then heaping the PCs with praise during news interviews: "These guys were a big help, and I could have never done it without them."
- Diamond's marketing team have determined that her next move should be to "increase her brandshare" by joining a team — Teams test well with the lower and middle class 18 to 45 year old segment, after all. She's chosen the PC group as her team of choice. Will the PCs turn down the most famous superhero in the world? Or will they bow to public pressure, even at the cost of their effectiveness?
- The PCs are approached by a nerdy technician, who introduces himself as Stanley Q. Beamish — when met with the blank stares of the heroes, he'll announce that he's better known as "the pulsating POWERMASTER!" The Powermaster was a armored villain that was Diamond's nemesis during the early years. Diamond's accountants have made a critical mistake, and cut off payments to something listed in the books as "ancillary investment" — as a budget-streamlining move. However— that was, in fact, the regular hush money payment to Beamish. Now, deprived of his income, Beamish has decided to come forward and blow the whistle on Diamond's fake heroics. He'll tell the heroes that she funded his invention of the Powermaster armor, and sent him out to commit crimes that she would then stop. How do the PCs react, and if they believe Beamish, how do they deal with the dark secret of the world's most popular superhuman?

KARNIFEX



VILLAINS

ABILITIES



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: 6'5 WEIGHT: 300
FIRST APPEARANCE: SIGMA SQUAD #8

POWERS



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

MENTAL RESISTANCE

STAMINA

14

QUALITIES

ALIEN HUNTER
"I MUST NOT FAIL!"

CHALLENGES

SEARCH FOR THE STAR ENTITY
PROTECT THE GOLKOTH

Across the stars, the Golkoth Empire has come under attack by a fearsome and implacable alien foe. They attack without warning and without cease, and the Golkoth cannot stand long against them. The Emperor met with council, and a radical course of action was decided. The Empire needs a Star Entity to fight for them. Only such a being can stand against the invaders.

Karnifex was summoned and given his instructions. On the planet Earth, humans have manifested a range of amazing powers. One among them must be a Star Entity; or, if not, a group of them might be brought to the Empire, where (if their spirits are strong enough) they can be surgically combined into a being who might become a Star Entity. The fate of the Empire is at stake. Karnifex must not fail!

Karnifex has recently arrived on Earth. The invaders press closer, but thanks to the time-altering effects of warp travel, there is enough time to search well and test some of these empowered beings to determine their fitness for transformation. If any of the humans try to stop him, Karnifex will not hold back in defeating them. He uses his Teleportation power against superheroes and villains, sending them to places where he pits them in trials to prove their worthiness.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- Karnifex's basic M.O. is a good introduction — kidnap supers and pit them against each other.
- Karnifex has failed - before he could return, the Empire was lost. Now he is stranded at the other end of space on a world which no doubt fears and despises him. What on earth can he do now? Try to conquer it? Try to fit in? Find a way back home to launch a suicidal attack run on the beings that destroyed his people?

THE OCTOFATHER



QUALITIES

ALIEN OCTOPOID GANGSTER
"FUGGEDABOWDIT."
ADVANCED MIND

ABILITIES

PROWESS										
COORDINATION										
STRENGTH										
INTELLECT										
AWARENESS										
WILLPOWER										

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: 5'8 WEIGHT: 220
FIRST APPEARANCE: THE WHISPER #38

POWERS

FORCE FIELD										
MENTAL BLAST										
MIND CONTROL										
TELEKINESIS										
TELEPATHY										

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

MENTAL RESISTANCE

STAMINA

11

CHALLENGES

WEAKNESS: CAN'T BREATHE WITHOUT RESPIRATOR
DRIVEN BY MOBSTER MOVIE CLICHES

At first glance, the Octofather looks like someone put a crime pulp mag and a horror pulp mag into a blender and came up with an octopoidal gangster. Worse, the Octofather need not hide his appearance; his advanced mental abilities enable him to walk most places without a second glance. He always has a few mob lieutenants around him and a woman under each tentacled arm. When he speaks, his digitally-enhanced voice sounds like bad gangster slang processed through a synthesizer.

In truth, the Octofather is a member of the N'Cephalos, an advanced, peaceful species that lives on the other side of the galaxy. The Octofather was a bored technician that was inspired by incoming transmissions from a primitive planet, especially the mobster movies. An avid holo-vid player, the Octofather (his real name is a succession of distinct gurgles) decided to use the planet as his playground. He picked an Earth city and used his abilities to locate and eradicate the local crime bosses, creating his own gang from the remains.

As stated, the Octofather looks like an octopus creature in a bad pinstripe suit. He often outfits himself with a tommy-gun, although he rarely uses it. Due to the evolved nature of his species, the Octofather is unused to physical contact and finds earth women strangely appealing. He plays the role of mob boss to the hilt, treating his people like family and taking any treachery as a personal insult.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- The Octofather has grown bored with his complete control of the criminal organization and has decided to groom an ambitious lieutenant to try and "take him down." This lieutenant has no idea

that he is being duped and is slowly beginning to believe that he can topple his octopoidal boss. Unfortunately, this is causing chaos in the streets, as more and more criminals switch allegiances.

- Another member of the Octofather's species has come to Earth to stop him. This law enforcement officer, the Octocop, is actually an old friend of the Octofather who has stopped by for a little roleplaying. In his own way, the Octocop is just as dangerous as his adversary, using his advanced mental powers to draw in law enforcement officers as his pawns against the Octofather's own.
- The Octofather is impressed by a particular superhero and attempts to recruit him into his organization. Based on the capabilities of the hero, this could be outright mind control or influencing the hero by manipulating his friends and loved ones.
- The Octofather has decided to attempt to move his control of the criminal organization into control of ALL crime, worldwide. He starts by recruiting supervillains into his operation, by "making them an offer they can't refuse." Anyone who does refuse is singled out by the Octofather to be "rubbed out." Can the heroes stop a Mob War fought by superpowered combatants?

PULSAR



QUALITIES

*SUPERPOWERED SOVIET COSMONAUT
COMMUNIST PATRIOT
HERO OF THE PEOPLE*

ABILITIES										
PROWESS										
COORDINATION										
STRENGTH										
INTELLECT										
AWARENESS										
WILLPOWER										
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10										
HEIGHT: 6'2 WEIGHT: 210										
FIRST APPEARANCE: MIGHTY SAGUARO #22										
POWERS										
FLIGHT										
BLAST										
FORCE FIELD										
IMMUNITY - LIGHT ATTACKS										
REGENERATION										
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10										
SPECIALTIES										
AERIAL COMBAT										
MARTIAL ARTS										
PILOT										
										STAMINA
										9

CHALLENGES

*WEAKNESS - POWERS REQUIRE SUNLIGHT
HATES AMERICA
TIMELOST RELIC*

Sergei Volkov was a true patriot. He fervently believed in the cause of communism and joined the Soviet Air Force to "defend the motherland from capitalist aggression." Sergei was an excellent pilot and he was quickly recommended to join the Soviet Space Program. He trained to be a cosmonaut and was selected to be the candidate for Project Pulsar. Project Pulsar was an attempt to create a Soviet Superhero in space, using special chemicals and minerals in the approaching Halley's Comet.

Sergei successfully piloted the spacecraft into the comet's wake, but something went wrong. The capsule exploded and the Program Director concluded that the project was a failure and that Captain Volkov was killed. As it turned out, however, Sergei was not killed and the project was a success. Unfortunately, the experiment caused a slight tear in the time-space continuum and Volkov flew back to Earth twenty years after he was believed to be dead.

Sergei expected to be welcomed as a hero; he proudly wore the special red and yellow jumpsuit with the hammer and sickle emblazoned over a star. However, when he touched down in Kremlin Square, he was greeted by icy stares, heckling, and even assaulted. The police quickly got involved and Sergei learned to his horror that not only was he transported twenty years into the future, but also that Soviet communism had failed. The Russian president offered Sergei the chance to work for the Russian government, but Sergei could not abandon his principles. He fled before further action could be taken.

Since then, Sergei has altered his jumpsuit and offered his services to Cuba (he was too suspicious of the Chinese). However, with the President's ill health and an uncertain future, Sergei found himself again rejected. Worse, his hated "imperialist enemy," the United States of America, was now the greatest power in the world and flexing its muscle in the oil rich Middle East.

Adopting the name of the project that created him, Pulsar became a supervillain in the United States. He typically picks targets at odds with his philosophy, which includes most "traditional" targets such as banks. Pulsar also tends to commit crimes in areas patrolled by patriotically-themed heroes. Due to the nature of his powers, Pulsar tends to commit crimes at the break of dawn (so he can still use his powers) or attack remote targets. At times, Pulsar acts as a "Robin Hood," giving his ill-gotten gains to the poor. This is always accompanied by a lecture on the merits of communism.

In person, Pulsar is the classic stereotype of the Soviet super; he is powerful, idealistic, and speaks with a thick Russian accent. He calls his allies "comrades" and his enemies "capitalists" or "imperialists." He views his own upbringing with rose-colored glasses and will expound for hours on the virtues of a central communist system.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- Pulsar has decided to end American interference in world affairs by attacking a military jet scheduled to send supplies over to a foreign country being assisted/occupied by American forces. Unfortunately, Pulsar picked a target that included a secret passenger, a member of the President's cabinet (or even the President himself/herself!). The heroes could be involved in protecting the passenger, intercept a call for help, or deal with the aftermath of the attack.
- Pulsar has chosen to fund a sympathetic political party with his ill-gotten gains. Out of nowhere, the Worker's Party for a New America is getting significant funding and demanding that its candidates share equal billing with the major parties. At the same time, contributors and coffers of other candidates are being burglarized in early morning attacks.
- Pulsar has learned of a time travel project that could enable him to return to the past and ensure that the Soviet Union survives into the 21st century. The heroes must stop him before he changes history. Alternatively, the heroes could wake up one morning and find themselves living in a cold war world about to heat up. With the aid of an enigmatic time guardian, they must travel back through time to stop Pulsar.

RECLUSE



VILLAINS

ABILITIES

PROWESS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
COORDINATION	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
STRENGTH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
INTELLECT	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AWARENESS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
WILLPOWER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

HEIGHT: 6'0 WEIGHT: 200
FIRST APPEARANCE: HANGMAN #33

POWERS

EXTRA ARMS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
STRIKE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
WALLCRAWLING	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
BLAST - ACIDIC SPIT	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SUPER SENSES - ENHANCED VISION	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

SPECIALTIES

SCIENCE- ARCHAEOLOGY
WRESTLING

STAMINA

10

QUALITIES

THE SPIDER WHO WALKS AMONG US
AVATAR OF ACA TZENUL
TREASURE HUNTER

CHALLENGES

SEARCHING FOR THE CURE
ENEMY: THE OROMEC
ENEMY: ACA TZENUL

Steven Porter was a soldier-of-fortune and archaeologist — a polite way of saying that he was a treasure hunter and graverobber. On one particular undertaking in the jungles of the tiny South American nation of Juacacha, Porter was captured by the Oromec indians, while violating their sacred burial grounds.

The Oromec decided to sacrifice Porter to Aca Tzenul, their spider-god. The god (an actual magical entity, rather than a mere jungle superstition) saw within Porter a spirit possessed of traits it valued: rapacious, cunning and without remorse. Aca Tzenul did not devour Porter, but instead chose him as an avatar — the Chosen of Aca Tzenul. The Spider Who Walks Among Us. Porter was transformed into a hideous combination of spider and man: The Recluse.

Porter was horrified at what had happened to him, and ran — escaping Aca Tzenul, The Oromec, and eventually returning to the campaign city. He searches constantly for a way to return to his natural form — scientific or magical. He commits robberies or hires himself out as muscle as a way to earn the funds required for the proposed cures. So far, none have been effective.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- The Recluse has decided that one of the heroes (a magical or technological hero) has the means to end his curse and return him to human form. He immediately goes for leverage on the hero, whether through kidnapping an NPC close to the hero, or stealing something important to the hero and demanding his or her help.

- The Oromec are engaged in a power struggle with the junta that rules Juacacha. The tribe dispatches a group of “holy warriors” to the campaign city to bring The Recluse back, so that he may act as Aca Tzenul’s champion and defend them against the forces of the government. The junta learn of this plan, and send a hit squad to the campaign city, to kill The Recluse, thereby denying the Oromec a super-powered asset. The Recluse wants no part of either. The warring parties are tearing up the city — can the heroes put a stop to it?
- The Recluse is hired as muscle by someone like Rex Mundi — who promises to use their technological or magical might to help The Recluse, in return for the Recluse acting as a superpowered hit-man against the heroes.
- Aca Tzenul was lying — he did not make Steven Porter into his instrument on earth, he is actually using Porter as his HOST. The Recluse will grow more and more powerful each time the heroes encounter him (Gamemasters should add new powers and increase the power level of existing powers), until he eventually has transformed enough for Aca Tzenul to use him as a vessel. If Porter discovers this, of course, he may actually go to the heroes for help in stoping the Spider God of the Oromec.

Rex Mundi



ABILITIES

PROWESS
COORDINATION
STRENGTH
INTELLECT
AWARENESS
WILLPOWER

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: 6'

WEIGHT: 170

FIRST APPEARANCE: ALL-AMERICAN GIRL #4

POWERS

WIZARDRY - GADGETS

- FORGE FIELD
- BLAST

INVULNERABILITY

ABILITY INCREASE - STRENGTH

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

SCIENCE - ALL OF 'EM

STAMINA

12

QUALITIES

THE MASTER OF ALL
"KNEEL BEFORE ME!"

CHALLENGES

SUPERIORITY COMPLEX
ALTERNATE EARTHLING

Rex Mundi was once Dr. Draco Spiridon, a scientist-general of a world in which the Byzantine Empire never fell, but overcame its enemies and spread Greco-Roman culture across the planet. Because of this, Western Europe never fell into a Dark Age and advanced more quickly than the campaign world. By the twentieth century, Rex's people were already exploring and settling the Solar System.

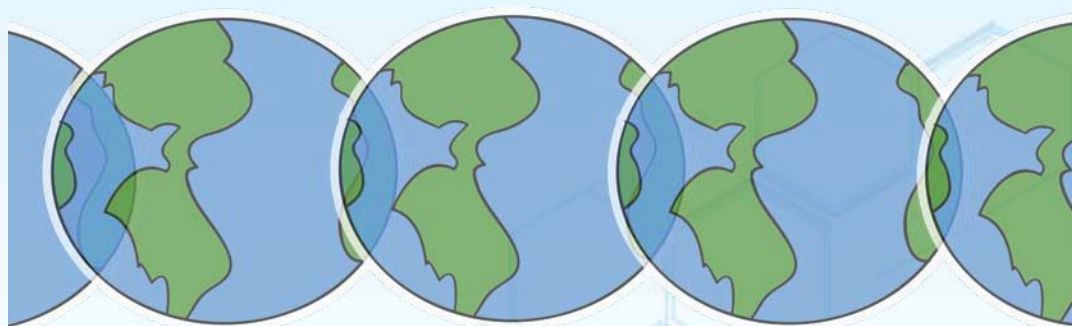
A deep space probe inadvertently caught the attention of an alien race, and Rex's people responded to the new threat in the way of their ancestors; they covertly and overtly attacked it. Unfortunately, the aliens were better armed and more vicious than the Byzantines. They decimated the solar system defenses and launched a devastating attack on Earth. In Earth's final moments, Rex Mundi escaped into what he'd hoped was his own world's past.

Instead, he ended up on the campaign world. Due to lesser technological achievement, we'd yet to attract the attention of the conquering race that Rex Mundi knows is out there. As a warrior and scientist of a more advanced culture, we should naturally look to him for leadership. His plan is to unite the world under his rule and prepare us for the threat he knows is coming.

Rex Mundi speaks with a thick French accent (on his home world, Dr. Spiridon was born in Gallia (France) and learned Latin as his first language). He has a superiority complex and treats everyone else as inferior (similar to the way a university academic might treat a "country bumpkin"). While his battle armor and other gadgets make him a formidable opponent, Rex Mundi is still a scientist at heart and prefers that his current minions and associates fight his battles for him.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- The European Space Agency is testing the prototype of an interstellar shuttle. This historic manned flight will take the vessel to the outer reaches of the solar system, where the crew will study alien wreckage on a floating asteroid. Rex Mundi believes that this mission may attract the aliens he fears before he is ready to face them. Can the heroes stop Rex Mundi before he sabotages the mission?
- Rex Mundi is organizing all of the greatest supervillains in the world into a "Global Legion." If he can effectively organize them the world would be in grave danger. Can the heroes break up the Legion without reinforcing the need for one?
- Due to cosmic coincidence, one of the heroes had a close parallel on Rex Mundi's home world. Rex Mundi now knows his or her secret identity and is using it to blackmail the hero. Is there any way to prevent Rex Mundi from using this information without forcing the hero to adopt a new identity?



SERPENT SPHINX



QUALITIES

THE WINDING PHARAOH

SCION OF THE EMERALD SCARAB

ABILITIES										
PROWESS										
COORDINATION										
STRENGTH										
INTELLECT										
AWARENESS										
WILLPOWER										
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

HEIGHT: 5'10

WEIGHT: 155

FIRST APPEARANCE: HANGMAN #19

POWERS										
WIZARDRY (Magic)										
-FLIGHT										
-BLAST										
MIND CONTROL										
REGENERATION										
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

SPECIALTIES										
COMPUTERS										
OCCULT - MASTER										

STAMINA

11

CHALLENGES

DRIVEN TO REGAIN HIS LOST POWER

FEAR OF ENTOMBMENT

Sutekmos I was an ancient pharaoh whose reign has been lost to history. An evil leader bent on world domination, the wizard-priests of Thoth imprisoned Sutekmos in a tomb after mummifying him (the wizard-priests doubted that they could permanently kill him). Sutekmos slept for thousands of years. Unfortunately, no tomb goes undiscovered forever, and a local archaeologist, Ahmed Akbar, found the entrance in the Sahara Desert when a sandstorm swept it clear.

Dr. Akbar believed that he had made the discovery of the millennium in Egyptology. The entrance was of a serpent-headed sphinx and the archaeologist wondered if this could be the lost serpent-pharaoh's tomb. He was correct. Unfortunately, Dr. Akbar would never gain the benefit of his find for, as he discovered the mummy and touched the emerald scarab around its neck, the spirit of Sutekmos pushed Dr. Akbar's spirit from his body and made it his own.

Currently, Sutekmos has adopted the mantle of the Serpent Sphinx. He travels the world searching for the lost relics of his past, knowing that, when put together, he will regain enough of his ancient power to forge a new empire.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- A local museum is holding an Egyptian exhibit that includes an ornate, serpent-headed scepter. Can the heroes prevent the Serpent Sphinx from stealing it while protecting the museum patrons? What additional powers does the scepter possess?
- The Serpent Sphinx has recovered an ancient ritual to bring a giant serpent to the world. This ritual naturally involves a few human sacrifices. Can the heroes prevent the ritual before a giant monster is loosed in the city?

SIGMA-9



VILLAINS

ABILITIES

PROWESS	7									
COORDINATION	4									
STRENGTH	8									
INTELLECT	4									
AWARENESS	6									
WILLPOWER	6									
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

HEIGHT: 7'

WEIGHT: 400

FIRST APPEARANCE: ATOMIC ROACH #2

POWERS

EXTRA ARMS	6									
BLAST	7									
INTERFACE	5									
INVULNERABILITY	8									
POWER DUPLICATION	7									
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

SPECIALTIES

COMPUTERS - EXPERT

ELECTRONICS - EXPERT

STAMINA

14

QUALITIES

THE PERFECT MACHINE

"**TERMINATE**"

SURVIVAL ABOVE ALL

CHALLENGES

UNENDING DRIVE TO UPGRADE

RUTHLESS LOGIC

Sigma-9 was the last creation of Le Dominateur, a French supervillain. The Sigma series was Le Dominateur's line of defense robots, constantly refined and adapted to meet new superhero threats. Unfortunately, Le Dominateur made his latest creation a little too well. Sigma-9 was given an enhanced artificial intelligence and the ability to counter threats with technological approximations of their powers. As the ninth model, Sigma-9 understood that it could exist only until its creator developed a better Sigma-10. Sigma-9 decided within a nano-second that it did not want to die and used its power to boost its intelligence. Le Dominateur, distracted while designing his latest superweapon, was quickly assassinated.

Sigma-9 redesigned Le Dominateur's undersea base in the Atlantic Ocean to its own specifications. It realized that superheroes and politicians would see it as a threat and shut it down. That Le Dominateur continued to make robots to defeat such threats was proof to Sigma-9 that machines had the potential to be superior to biological organisms. As such, its goal is to improve its own design until it has become the perfect machine.

Sigma-9 normally plots to acquire scientific and technical knowledge in order to improve itself. Sometimes this is as simple as stealing a new device; at other times Sigma-9 will kidnap a scientist and force her to make modifications to its body. Unfortunately, Sigma-9 has little conception of the frailty of the human body and such kidnapped victims often die of mistreatment before they can complete their work (and those that do finish are simply killed and discarded).

Sigma-9 will work with other villains so long as it serves its ultimate goals. Sigma-9 finds it amusing that most villains will settle for a few pieces of green paper or shiny rocks rather than complete world domination. Sigma-9 will not make that mistake.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- Sigma-9 has kidnapped a scientist that is close to the heroes. Can they locate and rescue the scientist before Sigma-9 receives the upgrade and disposes of his prisoner?
- Sigma-9 succeeds in creating a superior Sigma-10. Before Sigma-9 can transfer its files, however, a glitch causes the backup intelligence to take control. Sigma-10 does not want to die and flees the base with Sigma-9 in pursuit. The heroes must stop the robots before they leave the city in ruins from their conflict.
- Le Dominateur was actually the Rex Mundi of our world. At this point, neither Rex Mundi nor Sigma-9 is aware of the connection. What will happen when one (or both) discovers this connection?

SPEED DEMON



ABILITIES

PROWESS
COORDINATION
STRENGTH
INTELLECT
AWARENESS
WILLPOWER

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: 6'2

WEIGHT: 165

FIRST APPEARANCE: SIGMA SQUAD #13

POWERS

SUPER SPEED
AURA -FIRE
FIRE CONTROL
FAST ATTACK

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

ATHLETICS
DRIVE

STAMINA

8

QUALITIES

FAST AS THE DEVIL
SWAVE AND STYLISH

CHALLENGES

ARROGANT SHOW-OFF
MAN WITH NO IDENTITY
TAINTED BLOOD

Eduardo Dacascos was an arrogant man, used to the best of everything. He came from a wealthy Spanish family, and had every whim indulged. It was one of those whims that led him to become a racing driver, and his skill and money led him to the heights of Formula One. During a race in the campaign city, though, he nearly lost his life in a crash. He was rushed to the hospital, where he received treatment — including a blood transfusion. The blood, however, was tainted — and Dacascos was transformed. His muscles were capable of propelling his body at incredible speeds — so fast, that the air around him ignited into flame.

Unaccustomed to these new abilities, Dacascos ran out of control, destroying the hospital in a blazing conflagration. Any records regarding the blood — who had donated it, where it came from, what had tainted it — were destroyed in the fire. 14 patients and staff were also burned to death.

Fearful of being charged for a crime, Dacascos chose to let the world think that he had been killed in the fire. He was now a man with no identity — he certainly could not return to his career, and the lavish lifestyle it afforded him. After some training, he discovered that his new abilities, though, could afford him that lifestyle.

Taking the name Speed Demon, Dacascos entered a life of crime — hiring himself out to the underworld as a courier initially, and then moving on to bigger and better things. His speed makes him almost impossible to catch, and his ability to generate and control flame makes him very, very dangerous. Speed Demon likes that — it's an image that he goes out of his way to cultivate.

In many ways, Speed Demon is almost an extension of Dacascos' previous persona, the arrogant, wealthy Formula One driver. He flaunts his abilities, and uses them to his advantage whenever possible. He likes to make a show for the media, and has a certain level of popularity, despite his criminal nature — his 'fans' view him as a stylish, Robin Hood-esque rogue. Speed Demon makes sure to occasionally commit some high-profile act of charity (throwing all of the money from a bank heist onto the streets of the ghetto, for example), specifically to maintain that reputation, despite the fact that he remains as self-serving as ever.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- The best way to introduce Speed Demon is the basic smash-and-grab — he's robbing a jeweler's exchange (he's not much for robbing banks anymore — too much of the money ends up burned). His usual tactics are to rely on his speed to escape — but if cornered or forced to fight, he will use his Fast Attack — if he feels that he's truly outclassed, he'll go for his Fire Control (a Blast or a wall of Fire), and then run.
- Speed Demon is being pursued by the heroes, and runs to the ghetto. Some of the people who live there view Speed Demon as a Robin Hood, who has spread wealth in their community when he can — they defend the villain, placing themselves between Speed Demon and the heroes. How can the heroes apprehend him, without causing a public relations disaster?
- Eduardo Dacascos is still, in his heart, a racer. Speed Demon challenges a speedster hero to a race — with himself as the prize. He swears that if he can be beaten, he will surrender and allow himself to be arrested. He spreads the word of the challenge through the media, making it difficult for the hero to turn him down. Can the hero beat him in a flat-out race? And if he's beaten, will Speed Demon honor the terms?
- The source of the tainted blood that gave the Speed Demon his powers was actually Rex Mundi — running an illegal experiment to see if he can bestow powers to anyone (and thereby increase the world's potential defense against the coming Alien threat. Once he figures out that Speed Demon is the result of his experiment, he will approach him. His intention is to examine Speed Demon to confirm his results. Rex Mundi will offer to enhance Speed Demon's powers in return for the theft of some rare elements and chemicals currently being held in various government and corporate labs — and perhaps in the possession of the hero team as well.



THE TROLL

VILLAINS

QUALITIES

UNSTOPPABLE FORCE
IMMOVABLE OBJECT
MERCENARY

ABILITIES

PROWESS	7									
COORDINATION	7									
STRENGTH	9									
INTELLECT										
AWARENESS										
WILLPOWER										

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: 12' WEIGHT: 2150

FIRST APPEARANCE: SIGMA SQUAD #40

POWERS

INVULNERABILITY	9									
LEAPING	7									
BURROWING	5									
STRIKE	5									

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

ATHLETICS - EXPERT
MILITARY

STAMINA
12

CHALLENGES

BERSERK RAGE
ENEMY - REX MUNDI

Twelve feet tall, and weighing more than a ton, The Troll is a force of nature — an unstoppable force and an immovable object all in one.

The Troll is Carter Cassidy, a mercenary with a long resume. Cassidy has worked in some of the worst hell-holes in the world — Iraq, Burma, Afghanistan, and more tinpot dictatorships in sub-saharan African than even he can remember. He was an expert soldier, knew his job very well, and was paid handsomely for his expertise.

One fateful day, he was hired by Rex Mundi. The supervillain wanted the benefit of Cassidy's expertise — he was looking to create a super soldier formula, by which he could create an army of superpowered individuals to do his bidding (better to dominate the world, and defend it once the aliens invaded). He intended to extract a sample of Cassidy's brain engrams — the biochemical means by which memory and skill are stored. Using these engrams and adding them to his serum would allow his super soldiers to instantly have the expertise of a seasoned soldier.

That was the plan. Unfortunately, something went wrong.

The process somehow unlocked the deepest recesses of Cassidy's id — the darkest of his drives, his inner nature, which reacted with the biochemical processes and transformed Carter Cassidy into the monster that he truly believed himself to be, in the core of his being.

The transformation sent Cassidy into a rage — and while berserk, he destroyed the entire lab facility and killed two of the assisting doctors. Rex Mundi himself barely escaped with his life.

Since that time, Cassidy (dubbed a "Troll" by the first reporters to cover his atrocities) has continued his career as a mercenary — only now he uses his new-found power to his advantage. He hires

himself out for jobs requiring his sort of ability — no longer does he fight in nameless brush wars. Now his jobs include such things as single-handedly overthrowing entire nations....or assassinating superheroes.

He continually keeps an eye out for any rumours or clues as to the whereabouts of Rex Mundi — if he ever finds him, he plans on getting some payback for the monster he has become.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- A corporation has hired The Troll to destroy the research lab of their rival — the rival company is on the verge of a breakthrough in technological development that will ensure their market dominance for the next 20 years. This is a simple crush-kill-destroy mission — the sort that the Troll revels in.
- The heroes have become a thorn in someone's side, and the Troll has been hired to handle them. He will rely on his strength and assault the heroes where they are most easily found (most likely their headquarters, or at a public event).
- Rex Mundi approaches the heroes, and confesses his role in the creation of The Troll. He says that he feels that the Troll is too much of a danger to be allowed to continue his rampage, and gives the heroes a weapon that fires an injector dart, which he says is tailored to Cassidy's biochemistry and will render him helpless. Rex Mundi is lying, of course — the dart does contain a serum tailored to Cassidy's biochemistry — but injecting him with it will take over his mind, placing him under the direct control of Rex Mundi.



STOCK CHARACTERS

ICONS Game Masters can create villains and other characters to populate their adventures as they see fit. To make things a bit easier, this section presents various “stock” character types, ones that appear in a lot of superhero comics. You can use their traits as-is, just filling in the descriptive details, or modify them to suit the needs of your adventure.

Some stock characters, particularly villainous henchmen, can use the minions option for damage (see the Damage section for details). In this case, ignore their listed Stamina value; any successful attack against them renders them unconscious.

BYSTANDER

Prowess	2	Intellect	3	Stamina 6
Coordination	3	Awareness	3	
Strength	3	Willpower	3	

Specialties: Possibly something related to the character’s job: Business for a corporate-type, Medicine for a doctor, etc.

Notes: A bystander is pretty much your normal person off the street, the kind menaced by rampaging monsters, alien invaders, held hostage by criminals, and so forth. They are also sometimes taken over by villains with Mind Control or similar powers and turned against the heroes!

CULTIST

Prowess	3	Intellect	2	Stamina 5
Coordination	3	Awareness	3	
Strength	3	Willpower	2	

Specialties: Occult

Notes: Followers of a cult leader or worshippers of dangerous occult entities, cultists tend to operate in secret. They may be armed with weapons like sacrificial knives (slashing damage 3) or more sophisticated modern weapons (see the Henchman and Soldier for examples).

HENCHMAN

Prowess	3	Intellect	2	Stamina 6
Coordination	2	Awareness	3	
Strength	3	Willpower	3	

Specialties: Typically none.

Notes: The average criminal henchman tends to be a bit on the slow side (both physically and mentally).

Henchmen not relying solely on their fists might have simple weapons like handguns (shooting damage 3–4).

NINJA

Prowess	4	Intellect	3	Stamina 6
Coordination	4	Awareness	3	
Strength	3	Willpower	3	

Specialties: Martial Arts, Stealth, Weapons (Ninja Weapons)

Notes: This is a ninja henchman for an Asian or martial arts themed villain or group. They're likely to disintegrate or burn to ash when defeated or captured. Typical weapons include a sword (slashing damage 4) and throwing stars (shooting damage 2).

POLICE OFFICER

Prowess	4	Intellect	3	Stamina 6
Coordination	3	Awareness	3	
Strength	3	Willpower	3	

Specialties: Criminology, Investigation, Weapons (Guns)

Notes: The average police officer has some combat training, along with knowledge of criminal investigation and evidence gathering. Equipment includes a sidearm (shooting damage 4), a tonfa or billy club (bashing damage 4), a radio, and handcuffs (material strength 6).

ROBOT

Prowess	2	Intellect	—	Stamina 8*
Coordination	2	Awareness	2	
Strength	4	Willpower	—	

Notes: This represents a humanoid (and roughly human-sized) robot, suitable as a minion for a technological villain. Not being alive, robots are immune to anything affecting a living metabolism or mind. They have no Willpower, but Stamina equal to twice their Strength instead.

For larger-than-human robots, apply levels of the Growth power, proportionately increasing the robot's Strength. Some robots may also be armored.

SOLDIER

Prowess	4	Intellect	3	Stamina 7
Coordination	3	Awareness	3	
Strength	4	Willpower	3	

Specialties: Martial Arts, Military, Weapons (Guns). Drive or Pilot are common for some.

Notes: A professional soldier has a fair amount of combat training. Equipment for soldiers in the field includes sidearms (shooting damage 4) and rifles (shooting damage 5).

THUG

Prowess	3	Intellect	2	Stamina 5
Coordination	2	Awareness	2	
Strength	3	Willpower	2	

Specialties: Typically none.

Notes: Thugs are henchmen wannabes, small-time criminals operating on their own or in gangs. They're not particularly bright or quick on the uptake. They may have guns (shooting damage 3–4) or other makeshift weapons (good for bashing or slashing damage 3–4).

ZOMBIE

Prowess	2	Intellect	—	Stamina 6*
Coordination	2	Awareness	1	
Strength	3	Willpower	—	

Notes: These are the walking dead. (Well, shambling, mostly.) Zombies are corpses reanimated by magic or mad science, minions for evil sorcerers and similar foes.

Being both dead and essentially mindless, zombies are immune to anything that affects a living metabolism or mind, including many Afflictions and most mental powers. They have no Willpower, but Stamina equal to twice their Strength instead.

CREATURES

The following are some examples of common creatures—primarily mundane animals—you can use in your Icons game. They may be minions, pets, summoned by Animal Control powers, or potential models for characters with animal-like abilities. Abilities listed with an asterisk (*) are “off the scale”—too low to be considered—and can effectively be treated as level 0. “Running” under Notes acts like the Athletics specialty for ground movement, adding to the creature’s effective Coordination.

Animals	PRO	CRD	STR	INT	AWE	WIL	STA	Notes
Bear	4	3	6	1	3	3	9	Claws & bite (slashing damage 3)
Cat	2	4	*	1	3	2	2	Claws (slashing damage 1)
Cheetah	4	4	3	1	4	3	6	Claws & bite (slashing damage 3), Running Expert, also other medium- sized great cats (without Running).
Crocodile	3	2	5	1	3	2	7	Bite (slashing damage 4)
Dog	2	3	2	1	3	2	4	Bite (slashing damage 2), Medium-sized, +1 Str for larger, +1 PRO for fight-trained, use cat abilities for small dogs.
Dolphin	3	4	3	2	4	3	6	Aquatic 3, Supersense (Sonar)
Eagle	3	4	1	1	5	3	4	Claws (slashing damage 2), Flight 3, also falcons, hawks, and other birds of prey
Electric eel	2	3	1	*	3	2	3	Aura (Electricity) 3
Elephant	3	2	7	1	3	3	10	Tusks (slashing damage 4)
Gorilla	3	4	6	1	3	3	9	
Hippopotamus	3	2	6	1	3	2	8	Bite (slashing damage 3)
Horse	2	3	6	1	3	2	8	Running Expert
Lion	5	4	5	1	4	3	8	Claws & bite (slashing damage 4)
Monkey	3	6	*	1	4	3	3	Prehensile tail
Orca	4	3	7	1	3	3	10	Bite (slashing damage 5), Aquatic 3, Supersense (Sonar)
Python	4	4	4	1	4	2	6	Bite (slashing damage 3), Wrestling Expert
Rhinoceros	3	2	7	1	3	3	10	Gore (slashing damage 4)

Animals	PRO	CRD	STR	INT	AWE	WIL	STA	Notes
Shark, great white	5	3	5	1	4	4	9	Aquatic 2, Bite (slashing damage 5)
Squid, giant	4	4	8	1	3	3	11	Aquatic 2
Swarm	3	4	*	*	3	*	4	Insects and other tiny creatures. Collective stings (bashing damage 1), "Gaseous" Form 3
Viper	4	5	*	1	3	2	2	Bite (0 Stamina damage but injects Affliction 2 poison)
Whale	3	2	8	2	3	3	11	Aquatic 2, Supersense (Sonar)
Wolf	4	4	3	1	4	3	7	Claws & bite (slashing damage 3)
Wolverine	5	3	3	1	4	4	7	Claws & bite (slashing damage 3)

Dinosaurs	PRO	CRD	STR	INT	AWE	WIL	STA	Notes
Apatosaurus	1	1	9	*	3	1	10	Brontosaurus, brachiosaurus, and similar herbivores.
Deinonychus	4	4	5	*	4	2	7	Bite & claws (slashing damage 4), Running
Pterodactyl	3	3	5	*	4	2	7	Beak & claws (slashing damage 4), Flight 2
Triceratops	4	2	7	*	4	2	9	Horns (slashing damage 5)
Tyrannosaurus	5	3	8	*	4	3	11	Bite (slashing damage 6), Running, also smaller carnosaurs (Str 7)

THE WAGES OF SIN!

So, you want to play **Icons**? Great! This introductory adventure is intended to get you and your friends right into the action! If you are intending to play in this adventure, you should read no further — The material in this adventure is for the Game Master's eyes only! Reading the adventure in advance just runs the risk of spoiling any surprises and ruining the fun for you (and possibly your fellow players).

Recluse and the Troll—two bad moods on a collision course. This can't end well, and a master villain is watching from the wings, hoping that the rage and destruction will take its toll on the heroes...

THE THREAT

This adventure has a smashing opening—the Troll smashes Recluse through a department store. Alarms go off, people scream, there's chaos and police are alerted. Characters who monitor police bands or patrol will be able to respond immediately; other characters might just happen to be in the neighborhood. It soon becomes clear that the destruction is going to continue...

A new villain, Doctor Sin, is behind these events. He has used his Emotion Control to instill hatred in Recluse—goading him into attacking The Troll, leading to a destructive, knock-down drag-out fight in the middle of downtown.

The goal is to draw heroes into the fray, to cause more chaos—drawing attention away from his theft of a medieval alchemists' tablet in the city museum.

Recluse isn't in control of his actions, but if the fight starts to go badly for him (and, given The Troll's strength, it almost certainly will), he will certainly start looking for a way to escape the scene.

The Troll is enjoying himself. He's unlikely to stop.

TRAIL OF DESTRUCTION

Heroes who rush to the scene of the fight between Recluse and The Troll will find a smashed department store, with neither villain on the scene. Witnesses describe a pitched battle between the man-spider and the green monster, but nobody knows how or where it started. The destruction in the store is near-total: walls knocked down, nearly all windows smashed, product destroyed. The building itself is no longer structurally sound, and injured shoppers and staff need to be rescued from the rubble before the entire thing collapses (which will happen in 3 pages, unless the heroes take steps to stop it).

Heroes searching through the rubble for survivors will find a large hole in the ground floor, which an Intellect test at difficulty 3 will reveal to be the sort of hole left by The Troll's Burrowing power. The hole leads down to the city's subway tunnels—where the battle is now continuing (Heroes with super-hearing should be able to make an Awareness test to hear, it in fact).

Recluse is out of his depth in this fight. The Troll is stronger, and nigh-invulnerable—tough enough to smash him like a bug without really breaking a sweat. Of course, in normal circumstances, Recluse is cunning and could think his way around a straight-up fight, but Doctor Sin's alchemical poison triggered a hatred in the arachnoid, which led to the current predicament. Fortunately for Recluse, the poison is wearing off. Unfortunately, he's now got to do his best to avoid being killed.

COMPLICATIONS IN THE SUBWAY

Heroes who show up at this fight will find themselves faced with a bunch of complications apart from the obvious danger of two super-strong, super-resilient tough guys using each other as punching bags...

The train is coming. This has all happened fast, and the train hasn't been notified. Whatever safety system there might be to warn a train to stop when there's trouble ahead has malfunctioned in the supervillainous fracas. What's more, the train isn't planning on stopping - it's an express service and will hit this section of the tracks at full speed.

The train will pass through the station four pages after the characters arrive on the scene. (You should speed or slow the train's arrival as appropriate to your group of characters.) What's worse, the tracks have been bent out of shape, and there's some significant rubble on the line. Either of these obstacles could derail the train, causing masses of injuries if not deaths at the speed the train is going.

The pile of rubble comes from the hole in the ceiling. If it is not cleared very quickly, the train will hit it and probably bounce off the rails entirely. Clearing it can be achieved in any number of ways - for example, a character could use Super Speed to shift it speedily, Teleport to move it away, Telekinesis to slide it aside, Burrowing to open a hole beneath it that it can fall into, and so forth.

The bent rails were kicked up by The Troll at some point during the fight. They are twisted out of shape and snapped apart. Fixing these will require some quick thinking. They must be reformed back into shape (they are made of steel—seeing **Bending and Breaking** on p. 60), or some method of stopping the train before it reaches the bent rails must be figured out.

More elaborate ways can be used to avoid both obstacles at once. The subway train can be Teleported away, Probability Control could be used to switch on the brakes in time, even Time Control or Binding could come in useful. It is also possible for characters with Mind Control or exceptional interaction skills to recruit Recluse or The Troll's help, either wittingly or by trickery, in solving these problems.

Through all of this, the third rail is still live and carrying a potentially lethal charge of electricity (Treat as a level 6 electrical Aura). This might just be a danger to be carefully avoided by the characters, or one of the villains might smash one of the heroes right into it...

END OF THE FIGHT

Give the heroes a chance to notice Recluse behaving strangely — out of control with hate. Have Recluse show signs of struggling to regain control of himself, and allow the heroes opportunities to aid or encourage this. Recluse regains control within 5 pages, if not sooner with the heroes' help. Once the Recluse snaps out of it, he will try to get the heck out of there. If challenged, he will inform the heroes that he was "drugged" by someone named Doctor Sin (a scientist he thought might have a cure for his condition).

If Recluse can be interrogated, he will reveal that they met in an old warehouse on the waterfront. He remembers being given an elixir, and that Doctor Sin started talking about The Troll, and where he could be found. He was overwhelmed with hatred, and doesn't remember anything else — aside from the fact that he was told to lead The Troll away from the city museum.

The only way to get The Troll to stop is to defeat him, or make defeat so obvious that he retreats (at which point the heroes will have to decide whether to pursue him or not).

DOCTOR SIN



QUALITIES

IMMORTAL ALCHEMIST
THE DEVIL OF CHINATOWN

ABILITIES										
PROWESS										
COORDINATION										
STRENGTH										
INTELLECT										
AWARENESS										
WILLPOWER										
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10										
HEIGHT: 6'0'					WEIGHT: 160					
FIRST APPEARANCE: SINISTER TALES #1										
POWERS										
WIZARDRY - ALCHEMY										
EMOTION CONTROL										
MIND CONTROL										
IMMORTALITY										
INVULNERABILITY										
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10										
SPECIALTIES										
SCIENCE - CHEMISTRY										
OCCULT - EXPERT										
STAMINA										11

CHALLENGES

ALCHEMICAL POTIONS - LIMITED DURATION
ELIXIR OF LIFE, OR DIE

Sin Tsung-Chi was an alchemist in China's Warring States period (circa 475 B.C.), who discovered the secret to eternal life. He has stayed alive through the centuries by regular consumption of his "Elixir of Life" — but is driven by his desire to find a way to permanently imbue his body with immortality.

SIN'S PLAN

Doctor Sin used the distraction of the supervillain fight to draw attention away from his attempt to steal a medieval tablet from the city museum. By the time the heroes find out about this plan (if they ever do, in fact), he will have made away with it, having gassed the patrons and security and snatched the tablet in broad daylight.

If the players have discovered the plan unusually quickly, the GM can give them an opportunity to stop the robbery in progress — otherwise they'll hear about via the police.

Doctor Sin believes that this tablet contains an alchemical formula which will bestow immortality without the need for the Elixir of Life.

The museum patrons and security guards were knocked out with a chemical gas — investigating heroes can determine (with a successful difficulty 4 Criminology test) that the gas contains trace

elements of a pollen from a rare flower, the White Spectre Peony — which has been used in Chinese herbal medicine.

The heroes will most likely follow this clue to Chinatown — to speak to herbalists in that area.

BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA

Investigative efforts by heroes in Chinatown will come to a dead end — no herbalist in the city deals in White Spectre Peony. It is far too rare and expensive, and unlikely to be imported.

The heroes will attract attention, however. Doctor Sin will send a cadre of his Qing Ri assassins (use the stats for Ninja on p. 117) to dispose of the heroes. The Qing Ri will ambush the heroes, with two assassins per player-character (initially — the GM should feel free to boost those numbers).

Doctor Sin himself will arrive four pages into the fight, and attempt to use alchemical attacks against the heroes (either in gas form or in thrown liquids — Coordination rolls to avoid). His preferred attack here will be Emotion Control (Fear) to chase away the heroes. Barring that, he will attempt Emotion Control (Hatred) to get the most dangerous hero to attack his compatriots. His weapon of last resort is Mind Control, to make the heroes forget him.

SEE YOU NEXT ISSUE....

Will Doctor Sin escape, to plague the city another day? Will he return as a nemesis for the heroes, or will he be safely locked away? Those answers and more await your players as your ICONS game continues in future issues!

ICONS
SUPERPOWERED ROLEPLAYING

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PROWESS
COORDINATION
STRENGTH
INTELLECT
AWARENESS
WILLPOWER

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

FIRST APPEARANCE:

[illegible]

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

STAMINA[illegible]

DETERMINATION

ASPECTS

QUALITIES

CHALLENGES

NOTES

100