POWERGAME

A Superheroic Roleplaying Game System

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome aboard. This roleplaying game system has been in development since 1994 and it has changed considerably along the way. My original intent was to create a parody superhero game which could fit all the rules on one sheet. But instead I created a monster, which mutated and grew on its own. Fast forward to today: we have a rules-light but apparently quite workable superhero roleplaying game, which has been translated into Portuguese, played at Israeli conventions, and praised enough to make a modest man like me blush (well, almost). It still amazes me that the game's web site has gained roughly 10,000 hits per year since it was opened. Powergame can also be used in other genres and less cinematic settings, although superheroes seem to be the most popular campaign type out there.

If you are new to roleplaying in general, I suggest you try to find a person who is already familiar with the hobby and ask him or her to introduce you to its mysteries. Powergame uses simple rules which should be easily grasped by novice gamers, but the Game Master (GM), the person who referees the game, should have some previous experience.

Design Philosophy

Powergame hopes to find that mythical middle ground between realism and speed of play. My goal was to have as few different rule mechanisms as possible, and to use those few systems to resolve as many things as possible. I also tried to create rules which would work reasonably well in both low-power and four-color campaigns. It logically follows that there are other games that simulate a specific genre better, but I honestly think that Powergame handles its wide scope of potential characters and their abilities pretty well, and scales from street level to cosmic battles without breaking. A certain degree of responsibility is placed on the Game Master's shoulders, as the game is quite open-ended and its rules vulnerable to exploitation and, erm, powergaming.

Important rule concepts are marked with bold typeface when they are first introduced.

Detailed examples are presented in yellow boxes.

Optional or advanced concepts, things that are not necessary to know but can be useful in some campaigns and game styles, are presented in gray boxes.

Once again, here is my *Universal Excuse for Loopholes and Bad Writing*: the rules of this game are only guidelines for conducting various situations which might come up during play. In other words, if you do not like the system, tough. Besides, it is a free game, so you have not lost anything except a little time. But I welcome all feedback and in fact it is greatly appreciated, as it is likely to be the only compensation I receive for designing and developing the game. My e-mail address is mikko.kauppinen@kotiposti.net and the Powergame Home Page is located at http://www.uta.fi/~trmika/gameindex.html.

What Is New

This revised 6th edition of Powergame introduces the biggest change to the system in a long time: the removal of secondary attributes and the introduction of two new basic attributes (now known as just attributes), Speed and Intelligence. Health has been renamed Toughness, because Protection is now a part of it, and Wits has been renamed Alertness to better reflect its new purpose. With this change, the power level tables for Speed and Toughness have also been modified slightly. Finally, Psyche has been renamed Will, because I like all the attributes to have simple, descriptive, easily understood names.

In other news, the not-quite-full-power levels, 1-1 and 1+1, are now a more integral part of the system, even if they are treated as half PLs for some purposes. Other changes include the separation of luck from experience, the two different levels of Good and Bad Things (and the addition of some new ones), and the streamlining of the power limitation and vulnerability rules for a more unified approach (they are now measured in Bad Things as well). The various low-powered heroes have been shaken a little, the time-honored method of determining the power levels of your superpowers has changed a little, there is now a full section on making your character more than just a bunch of numbers, the entire contents have been reorganized and partially rewritten for clarity, the basic rules now include lists of modern weapons and vehicles… I hope even longtime Powergamers will find some pleasant surprises here.

THE BASICS

Powergame is based on one simple rule mechanism: **you take a number of normal, six-sided dice equal to your character's relevant ability, roll them all and calculate the total. This total is compared to an opposing roll, which is usually made by the GM, and the larger total wins**. It is as simple as that.

Okay, it is not always as simple as that. But this basic mechanism is the basis for everything that follows. Before we go on and take a look at all the little details, it is time to introduce the first special term used by this game. Powergame revolves around so-called **power levels** (abbreviated **PL**), which range from zero to eight and are used to rate all things of any importance in the game universe. The accompanying table illustrates what different power levels mean compared to typical human ability. Power levels are further discussed in the Appendix, where you can find out how far a PL 5 ability can reach, or how fast someone with a PL 4 ability can move.

PL	Ability description
0	Impaired ability. One cannot be this bad at anything without a distinct reason.
1-	Poor ability. The character is clumsy, slow, weak-willed, or lacking in some other area.
1	Average ability. More than half of the world's population belongs here in any given category.
1+	Good ability. A clear advantage over average humans.
2	Amazing ability. This is where humans peak.
3	Superhuman ability. Mere mortals cannot be this good.
4-7	These levels indicate increasing amounts of superhuman ability.
8	Cosmic power, an ability that knows no limits.

Power levels 1- and 1+ are designed to differentiate between characters without superhuman abilities. It would be pretty boring and unrealistic, even in a simple game like this, if all normal people were either impaired, average, or amazing. For various reasons, these two power levels were not assigned "full" PL numbers. Collectively, the **power levels 1-, 1, and 1+ are known as the *typical human power levels***.

Beginning player characters cannot have abilities higher than PL 6. They can never have abilities higher than PL 7. Beings with abilities rated at PL 8 are the supreme entities of each GM's Powergame universe. A good example from the Marvel Comics universe would be the Beyonder, or Thanos during the Infinity Gauntlet saga. PL 8 abilities, whatever they are, are never subject to penalties or bonuses.

Task Resolution

As you already know, the basics are simple: you roll a number of six-sided dice equal to the power level of your relevant ability and add the dice together, while the GM rolls a number of dice equal to a difficulty PL or the relevant PL of a non-player character. The bigger roll wins. If your roll is twice as big as the opposing roll, you achieve a **critical success**; if the opposite is true, you suffer a **critical failure**. A **tie** means that the relative situation between two characters or a character and some obstacle does not change, which the GM can interpret as he wishes.

PL 0 means that you roll one die and subtract three from the result, or **1D6-3** in RPG-speak (results that are negative are treated as zero). The two funny-looking power levels, **1-** and **1+**, mean that you roll 1D6 and either subtract or add one to the result (**1D6-1** and **1D6+1** in RPG terminology). Note that using an ability rated at PL 0 or PL 1- makes it more likely than usual to suffer a critical failure, as it is possible to roll a zero, which is always a critical failure against any other result. The table on the right shows some statistics for different PLs.

PL	Range of results	Average result
0	0-3	1
1-	0-5	2.5
1	1-6	3.5
1+	2-7	4.5
2	2-12	7
3	3-18	10.5
4	4-24	14
5	5-25	17.5
6	6-36	21
7	7-42	24.5
8	8-48	28

In many cases, the opposing power level can simply be read from a NPC's character sheet. In some cases, however, your character must succeed against passive opposition, such as a lock that you are trying to pick, or a mountain you are trying to climb. Appropriate difficulty levels for various tasks are discussed in the accompanying table. The descriptions are written from the viewpoint of an average human.

PL	Difficulty description
0	Easy task. Success is almost guaranteed.
1-	Demanding task. Success is more likely than failure, but the risk is quite real.
1	Difficult task. 50% chance of failure.
1+	Grueling task. Failure is more likely than success.
2	Herculean task. Even the best and brightest fail 50% of the time, and critical failures are common.
3	Absurd task. Better left to superhumanly capable characters.
4-8	These levels indicate increasing amounts of superhuman difficulty, with PL 8 indicating a task that would challenge even gods.

In some situations the power levels may be modified up or down before rolling. They can never rise above PL 7, however. If a character's power level is reduced below zero for some reason, he can still roll against PL 0. When power levels are modified, one must note that the three **typical human PLs (1-, 1, and 1+) only count as half a level when going up or down**. Thus, if you have a PL 1- ability and receive a +1 PL

bonus, your ability is temporarily raised to PL 1+, not PL 1. If you have a PL 2 ability and receive a -1 PL penalty, you go to PL 1, and so on.

PL 8 abilities, which are unavailable to player characters, are never subject to penalties or bonuses.

For example, let's assume that a superhero called Fusion Man (whose physical strength is rated at PL 4) tries to lift a F-16 fighter plane. The GM determines that this task is of PL 4 difficulty because of the plane's weight, after consulting the relevant table in the Appendix. Both the player and GM roll 4 dice.

Now, let's say that the GM rolls 14, an average result. If the player running Fusion Man rolls 15-24, he manages to lift the plane. If he rolls 8-13, he fails but suffers no further ill effects. Should he roll 7 or less, he has suffered a critical failure, probably hurting his back and possibly damaging the plane in his haste to put it back down. Finally, on a result of 14 exactly he huffs and puffs a lot, rocking the plane a bit and almost lifting it. However, he can try again, as the relative situation has not changed permanently, meaning that he still might be able to lift the plane.

Note that a critical success was not possible in this example, as the maximum result for 4 dice is 24, which is not twice as big as 14.

The GM can rule that a given task is **trivial**, which means that you do not have to roll but succeed automatically if you have any related ability or skill, or **impossible**, when he thinks that even an ability reduced to PL 0 would be too generous.

Assisting someone in a task is possible. If the GM believes that a group of characters could reasonably help each other in lifting a heavy boulder or researching some topic, for example, the **difficulty is lowered by one PL**. However, **the helpers' abilities must be within one PL from the main character's ability** - an ordinary human cannot help a superhero hold up the collapsing Brooklyn Bridge. The character with the highest ability can then roll against the reduced difficulty.

For example, when Professor Smith-Jones, an adventuring academic with PL 2 Intelligence (the various character attributes are described right after this chapter), is leading his team of hand-picked students into a library to look for information on a vengeful and very real ancient god, the GM judges that this task is of PL 3 difficulty. Normally, even Professor Smith-Jones, one of the most brilliant minds on the planet, would have a tough time finding the right ancient tome or scroll. Tonight, with his brightest students assisting him, all of whom have 1+ Intelligence, he can roll against PL 2 difficulty. It's still not a certain triumph, but at least he has even odds now...

Reduced Dice Rolling (suggested by Marcelo Sarsur)

Let's face it, dice rolling can sometimes become a chore instead of a funny and exciting event. This is especially likely to happen to the GM, who must roll dice for all NPCs and task difficulties. In this case, he may want to adopt a diceless mechanism for resolving unresisted tasks. Under the diceless method, the GM simply assigns the task a **difficulty number** within the relevant PL range. For example, picking a PL 2 lock could have a difficulty number between 2 and 12. For extra quick task resolution, he may just **treat each die as 4**. In the above example, the lock would then have a difficulty number of 8.

It is easy enough to mix the normal and diceless method. For example, even if the GM wishes to roll the difficulty for most unresisted tasks, he could decide that a particular computer system has a difficulty number

of 17 against cracking attempts, or that a rusty old lock has a difficulty number of 2 against lockpicking attempts.

CHARACTER CREATION

Powergame supports several different ways of creating a character. You can do it randomly, non-randomly, or, if your GM allows it, by simply writing up the kind of character you want to play and handing it to the GM for approval. There are also several built-in character types with varying amounts of power to suit the needs of different campaigns. But before we get down to the actual mechanics of creating a character, let us take a look at the various elements that make up a player character. They are collectively known as **abilities**.

Attributes

Almost every player character starts its existence as a normal human being. Exceptions exist, but they are discussed in the gray sidebars. All humans and most sentient races can be defined by eight innate **attributes**. They determine the character's raw potential in various areas. The eight attributes and what they cover are summarized in the table below.

Attribute	What it tells you
Strength	How much can you lift? How hard do you hit? How often do you hit in melee combat?
Toughness	How difficult is it to hurt you? How many wounds can you take before dying? How resistant are you to illness or poison?
Agility	How hard are you to hit? How often do you hit with ranged weapons? How nimble are your fingers?
Speed	How fast can you move? How quickly can you react?
Charisma	How charming are you in the eyes the opposite sex? Are you a good leader of people?
Intelligence	How easily do you learn? How good are you at abstract reasoning or deduction?
Will	How strong is your will? How well can you defend yourself from psionic attacks?
Alertness	How easily you can spot what is hidden? How hard are you to surprise?

As you have learned, an average human ability in any given area is rated at PL 1. Thus it follows that every human character starts out with PL 1 in all eight attributes. But that will change, and never more radically than with the addition of…

Superpowers

Powergame was originally designed to be a superhero roleplaying game. This is why **superpowers** have such a large role in the character creation rules, coming second only to the attributes. However, if you are creating a character for a more low-key campaign, this section might not be relevant at all.

Possible powers are limited only by the player's imagination and the GM's approval. Obviously, comic books are the best source for ideas in this department. Some of the most common superpowers are **super-attributes**. What is a superhero saga without people who are superhumanly strong, fast, or smart? Superhuman levels of skill are

also superpowers; they are referred to as **superskills**. As Powergame does not have a fixed skill list (see the next section for more on skills), the GM must limit superskills as he sees fit. The descriptions of the Good Things called *Special Knowledge/Skill/Talent* (explained in the Good and Bad Things chapter) might offer some help. Superskills are not based on attributes like normal skills; they have a PL of their own, against which rolls are made. But while super-attributes and superskills are nice, many players most relish the decidedly **supernatural powers** their characters can have, such as the ability to fly, to shoot heat rays out of your eyes, to become invisible, or to project a force field that stops incoming attacks.

You can pick any powers you like, as long as the GM agrees. Every power has a power level which covers both your raw potential and skill in harnessing that potential. The way this power level is determined depends on the way you are creating your character.

Some powers are harder to use or otherwise more limited than others. This can be portrayed with **limitations**. The idea is that **you can increase the power's PL by one if you limit the power somehow**. The GM must accept all limitations, as all limitations do not make sense with all powers. Examples include:

- Range limited to touch
- Slow activation: must spend one action preparing the power every time it is used
- Limited duration: the power must be "kept up," during which other targets cannot be engaged
- Targeting limitations: affects only humans, does not affect yellow targets…
- Limited availability: can only be used during the day, only while in sunlight…
- Gadget: the use of the power is tied to a piece of super-equipment or magical item; for example, a PL 2 Flight power could be raised to PL 3 by linking its use to a jet-pack or rocket belt

The table below lists six time-honored ways to gain superpowers. It can be used to kickstart your imagination if all else fails.

1D6	Hero origin
1	The hero was born with unusual powers, or gained them upon reaching puberty or adulthood. The latter are often called mutants. In some worlds mutants are persecuted; in others they are no different from other heroes.
2	The hero gained powers after being exposed, accidentally or not, to an energy form, chemical, or something else suitably powerful. Radiation is probably the all-time favorite candidate.
3	The hero gained powers in a scientific or magical experiment. He may or may not have been a voluntary test subject.
4	The hero was endowed with powers by a supernatural being, force, or entity (a god, another hero etc.).
5	The hero gained powers through personal study, training, or research. This is particularly appropriate for mystical knowledge, physical training, or gadget-building skills.
6	The hero was literally created by someone else. This applies to robots, androids, magical constructs, clones etc.

Power Customization

Limitations are one way to customize your powers. But if you do not feel like limiting your power dramatically in order to gain an increase in power, you can limit just one aspect of it to gain an increase in another. Suitable aspects are *power, skill, range, area of effect*, and *duration*. **If you reduce one of these by one PL, you can increase another by one PL**. **No single aspect can be increased by more than one PL**.

Some aspects are not viable for all powers. For example, duration is usually a moot point for most attack powers, as they are used in a quick flash of action, after which the damage is permanent until healed. But a limited duration would work well for mind control powers.

For example, you might have a power called Heat Ray Vision at PL 3. You decide that you would like it to do more damage, but you do not want to limit it drastically in order to do that. Also, all your Good Things are already spent elsewhere and you do not want to give up any of those abilities. But you think you can live with reduced range - after all, PL 2 range is still good for several hundred meters. Thus your power is written up like this: Heat Ray Vision 3 (Power 4, Range 2).

Skills

Superhero or not, every character has a list of **skills** which he is familiar with. Skills describe, literally, what the character can do; they also represent his profession, education, hobbies, and other experience. Skills can be written down by simply mentioning the character's profession (Doctor of Medicine, US Navy F-14 pilot, small-town used car salesman) or expanded into long, detailed lists (driving, swimming, playing guitar, Chinese cooking, firing, disassembling, and cleaning the Colt M1911A1 pistol). Any combination of the two is also fine. One suggested method is to write down the character's profession and then add hobbies and any other skills not obviously learned in the job.

Skills do not have a PL of their own; they are based on the character's attributes. Deciding which attribute is used with which skill is a GM call, though the players will no doubt offer their suggestions, often without being prompted. Depending on the situation, it might not even be the same attribute every time.

It Must Be Art...

It is hard to say which attributes cover which artistic talents and skills. But I will give some suggestions; Game Masters can change them if they feel differently about things.

Acting in films or on stage is best covered by Charisma. Dancing is clearly related to Agility. Visual arts like painting and sculpting, maybe also making films, are well served by Alertness. Writing poetry or prose can be handled with Intelligence. Musical abilities are difficult, and probably best discussed with the GM separately for each character. For example, a rock musician famous for her incendiary live performances could base her skill on Charisma, while her witty lyrics and classic tunes would be created with Intelligence. A master pianist could roll against Agility, as it covers manual dexterity. Cooking, should it be considered an art or not, is perhaps most closely related to Intelligence - although Alertness covers tasting...

As you can see, it is difficult to give solid answers. Maybe it is best just to wing it when these situations come up.

You have a free hand in writing up your character's list of skills, but the GM must approve it afterwards. Nobody can do everything. Most **unfamiliar skills are used with a -1 PL penalty**; some extremely easy skills or those common to almost all people sharing the character's background can be considered to be part of the character's skill list even if they are not mentioned. They can be used without a

penalty. For example, most people from modern, Western countries know how to read and write. At least most PCs do...

On the other hand, some skills are so difficult that they are impossible to use if you do not have the necessary training. Nuclear physics, brain surgery, and genetic engineering are good examples. These are known as **specialized skills**.

In addition to attributes, superpowers, and skills, characters have...

Good and Bad Things

Other RPGs would probably talk about advantages, disadvantages, traits, or qualities here, but I like to call these additional abilities **Good** and **Bad Things**. Besides, it allows for two nifty new abbreviations, **GTs** and **BTs**. Most of these abilities could be called "everyday superpowers." They include things like Wealth, Connections, and Reputation. Good Things are purchased with points, the amount of which varies according to your character type and creation method. Bad Things give you more points for Good Things. You will always receive some Good Things for free, but you never have to take any Bad Things unless you want to.

In addition to purchasing various special advantages, Good Things can also be used to improve your attributes *within human limits* only. **One GT will buy you an increase in one attribute from PL 1 to PL 1+**. **If you are willing to spend three GTs, you can increase one attribute from PL 1 to PL 2**. You can go no higher by using Good Things - for that you need actual superpowers. However, **if you already have a super-attribute, you can increase it by one PL by spending three GTs**. This also works for other superpowers, including superskills. But **you cannot increase any given attribute or superpower by more than one PL by using GTs**. The only exception are Special Attribute GTs, which allow you to further improve some aspect of an attribute that has already been increased by the use of GTs.

It is also possible to **buy new superpowers: they cost nine GTs each, except for superskills, which only cost six GTs**. Their power levels are determined normally, according to the character creation method you are using (these are explained later).

This might be a good time to note that **you cannot raise any attribute or power beyond PL 6 by using GTs**. In the Powergame reality, PL 6 is the limit of humanity's cosmic potential. They can only achieve PL 7 with the help of other powerful beings. For example, Dark Phoenix, while it looked and acted like Jean Grey, was really an alien being. The PL 6 limitation applies equally to non-human characters in order to maintain play balance.

Bad Things work the opposite way. **Reducing one attribute from PL 1 to PL 1- equals one BT**, which gives you an additional point for the good stuff. And **reducing an attribute from PL 1 to PL 0 is worth a whopping three BTs**, but this can put you at a serious disadvantage.

But back to those everyday powers that were mentioned above. **One GT will buy you an basic version** of such an ability, while **three GTs will get you the Super version**, something that is definitely unusual. Bill Gates is Super Wealthy, while Adolf Hitler was Super Infamous. The tables below list a sample selection of Good and Bad Things, but you and your GM are free to invent more. The Super version might not make sense in every case; the GM has final say whether or not that kind of an ability exists in his game.

As is readily apparent, Good Things that only affect a limited area of game mechanics, such as one narrow aspect of an attribute, give a +1 PL bonus to some subset of dice rolls instead of adding one point to all rolls. Their Super versions give a +2 PL bonus. Bad Things act in the opposite fashion. Armed with this guideline, you should be able to construct new GTs and BTs to suit the special needs of your campaign. Many GTs and BTs have no effect on game mechanics; they only affect the way a given situation is roleplayed.

Good Thing	Explanation
Good Reputation	People who know you or have heard of you think highly of you. You might have a reputation as a person who gets the job done and done well.
Fame	Many people have heard of you and possibly idolize you, whether you deserve it or not. Good reputation is usually gained by deeds, this does not have to be. People with Super Fame are as famous as Elvis, Madonna, or Michael Jackson.
Good Family Name	Your family is rich, well-known, or well-connected, possibly all of the above. This is another form of Good Reputation or Fame.
Wealth	You have lots of money, property and possessions. Super Wealth means that you have more money than some nations.
Good Looks	You are quite beautiful or handsome. This does not have a lot to do with charisma; you can be extremely good-looking but a nasty person to deal with. Super Looks is guaranteed to land you a job in Hollywood or in modeling, and a horde of slavering fans wherever you go.
Connections	You know a person, group, or organization who is in position to help you somehow when you ask them to. Of course, sometimes they might ask you a favor in return. Super Connections could mean that you know the President of the USA personally and, through him, can use the resources of the nation to assist you.
Good Luck	You are allowed to re-roll one roll, any roll, per game session and pick the better result of the two. This can be done after seeing the opposing roll. Super Good Luck is even better: it allows you to automatically succeed in any one roll during a game session, but only if it had been possible to succeed by rolling dice. For example, if you need to roll 19 but have only a PL 3 relevant ability, even Super Good Luck is powerless.
Animal Friendship	For some reason, you can easily befriend animals. Wounded, angry, or frightened animals may still pose problems. Super Animal Friendship is possessed by people like Tarzan.
Special Knowledge	You have an extremely thorough knowledge of a city, country, culture, organization, field of technology, or some other thing. Your education and skills give you some knowledge of related issues, but this ability goes much deeper than that. It gives you more and better information. In game terms, you gain a +1 PL bonus whenever making a roll related to your specialty. These rolls are usually Intelligence-based. Super Special Knowledge gives you a +2 PL bonus, and makes you one of the leading experts in the entire world.
Special Skill	You are truly gifted in some field of physical performance. As opposed to Special Knowledge and its mental focus, this gives you a +1 PL bonus to a certain kind of physical activity. You can be a great archer, driver, swimmer, rifleman, or something else. The GM should disallow very wide specialties: being able to shoot every firearm in the world like an expert could be unbalancing in even a simple RPG like Powergame. But if your GM does not think so, go for it! Super Special Skill gives you a +2 PL bonus, at which point you can literally boast "nobody does it better."

Special Talent	This is similar to Special Knowledge, but is more focused on performance. You can have a talent for languages, mathematics, visual arts, music... whatever you want and the GM allows. By now you can guess that the basic version gives you a +1 PL bonus to related rolls, whereas the Super version gives you a +2 PL bonus and makes you the Michelangelo of your chosen specialty.
Special Attribute	This allows you to improve one aspect of one attribute, if you do not wish to pay three GTs to increase the whole attribute but desire something more dramatic than an overall PL 1+ attribute. For example, you could get a +1 PL bonus to your Strength for lifting things or hitting people in melee combat, or you could improve your Charisma for purposes of charming the opposite sex, or boost your Will for resisting mental attacks. The aspect must be defined between you and your GM; it should be quite limited and described as clearly as possible. You are encouraged to come up with a cool name for your Special Attribute. Using the four examples above, you could take *Weightlifter, Black Belt, Ladies' Man*, or *Iron Will*. A special note for combat monsters: for a measly one GT, you can improve an aspect of your Speed to get a 1+ PL bonus to your initiative rolls. Call it *Lightning Reflexes* and you are sorted. If your chosen Special Attribute would lift you to a superhuman level of ability (for example, if you increase your Agility for dodging purposes from PL 2 to PL 3), be sure to check with your GM if this is okay. It might be too farfetched for the campaign he has in mind. For typical four-color superhero games it should present few problems. There is no Super version of Special Attribute.
Acute Sense	One of your senses gains a +1 PL bonus when used. The Super version will net you a +2 PL bonus.
Sixth Sense	You tend to sense when bad things are about to happen to you. Whether it is a sniper on the grassy knoll or a bomb underneath your car, you get a bad feeling when your life is threatened. Your GM will decide how well this ability works in his game. I suppose you could buy a Super version, giving you a virtual spider-sense, but that might be more like a superpower. Work it out.
Time Sense	You always know what time is it. If you have been knocked out and transported to the other side of the world in a box, you still have a rough idea of the time.
Direction Sense	You always know which way is north, and you never seem to get lost.
Night Vision	You see better in bad lighting conditions than most folks. This can negate penalties in combat, for example. Again, a Super Night vision could mean that you can see in anything but total darkness, but in some campaigns this might be classified as a superpower.
Light Sleeper	You awake easily to any disturbance, and thus it is harder to surprise you when you are sleeping. You get a +1 PL bonus to any related Alertness rolls. If you are a Super Light Sleeper, you get a +2 PL bonus.
Empathy	You can interpret people's body language and facial expressions very well, making it very hard to lie to you. You can also sense the general mood of a group of people, for example, if a demonstration is going to turn ugly.
Intuition	You are able to jump to correct conclusions in a way that amazes other people, based on little obvious evidence. Sherlock Holmes had this ability, and in fact his was the Super version. These give you a +1 PL and +2 PL bonus to appropriate Intelligence rolls, respectively.
Photographic Memory	You remember almost everything you have seen. If you buy a Super version, the GM might allow you to remember *literally* everything you have experienced.
Sidekick	This is a single individual who is a very good friend of your character, and loyal to the bitter end. They will fight side by side with you against the Invasion Armada of Dimension X, but they are still thinking beings and will not tolerate abuse endlessly. They even have their own lives to lead, and therefore might occasionally be unavailable to help you. You need to buy a Super Sidekick to get an unquestioning servant who is always there for you. Sidekicks tend to be less capable than their masters, and are often in need of rescuing.

Lucky Weapon	You get a +1 PL bonus to hit with your chosen weapon, but its damage does not change. James Bond had a Lucky Walther PPK, for example. If you lose your faithful companion, a similar replacement can take its place. This Good Thing can only affect one weapon at a time, unless you buy the Super version, in which case you can have two lucky weapons. They are most commonly a matched pair (like Chow Yun Fat's twin Berettas) or some traditional combination (like a katana and wakizashi).
Woo Style	This ability negates the penalty for wielding two weapons at once. The basic version will negate the penalty for one weapon, while the Super version will negate the penalty for both.
Fast Draw	You do not need to spend an action when readying a weapon from holster or shoulder sling.
Quick Reload	You have practiced speedy reloads so much that they take you only a briefest moment of time. You do not need to spend an action when reloading. If the weapon takes more than one action to reload, you need to take only half as many actions to do it, rounding down.
One-Man Army	This ability allows you to fight against two opponents in melee combat without them gaining a bonus to hit you. The Super version allows you to take on as many attackers as there is room for, without *any* of them gaining a bonus.
Lucky Vehicle	You get a +1 PL bonus to driving or piloting rolls when commanding your favorite vehicle. It can be replaced if destroyed. This Good Thing can only affect one vehicle at a time. It is possible to extrapolate other lucky items: "I have *always* painted my masterpieces with these tools."

Bad Thing	Explanation
Bad Reputation	People seem to think that you cannot do your job properly or that you are just a no-good character in general.
Infamous	You are infamous, justifiably or not. Think Attila the Hun or Jack the Ripper and you get the idea.
Bad Family Name	Your family is shunned because of its history, recent deeds, or maybe even a curse. It affects the way people think of you regardless of your own deeds.
Social Stigma	You are constantly hassled by others. You might be stopped by the police for no reason, have difficulties dealing with the local bureaucracy, or be called names by total strangers. The most likely reason for this is belonging to a minority group, be it ethnic, religious, or political. This does not affect your standing with people who know you better - unless they share the prejudice, but then they probably would not be your friends.
Taboo Behavior	You act in a fashion considered repugnant by the moral majority. This includes sexual disorders, among other things. As with Social Stigma, it does not affect people who know you or who do not share the prejudice. Taboos are highly time-, place-, and culture-related.
Poverty	You have little money and belongings. You must work hard to survive. Super Poverty means that you have basically nothing and live on the streets.
Enemy	You have made a powerful Enemy, who wants to see you dead or at least humiliated, hurt, and ridiculed. A Super Enemy is bad news: something like the KGB or Mafia might qualify.
Bad Luck	Once per game session, the GM can re-roll one roll that affects you and pick the result that is more painful or humiliating for you. Super Bad Luck is even worse: the GM can make you automatically fail one roll during a session.
Weak Spot	This is the opposite of Special Attribute. It reduces one aspect of one of your attributes by one PL. For example, you could have average PL 1 Charisma, but be a total fool in front of the opposite sex (PL 0 Charisma). The aspect must be defined between you and your GM; it should be quite limited and described as clearly as possible. It is possible to apply Weak Spot to an attribute that has already been increased by superpowers or Good Things. You are encouraged to name your Weak Spot: see the Explanation of Special Attribute for ideas.

There is no Super version of Weak Spot. |
Impaired Sense	One of your senses receives a -1 PL penalty when used. The Super version punishes you for -2 PL. A total loss of one sense is a Vulnerability. Those are explained below.
Animal Enmity	Animals never like you and, if there are multiple choices, always seem to go after you first.
Physical Addiction	You are hooked on some substance; alcohol and tobacco are the two most obvious candidates. You can also be an occasional users of more serious drugs. A hopeless addiction is treated as a Vulnerability, which are explained later.

Mental Addiction	You desire gambling (or money in general), power, sex, or 24-hour use of the Internet.
Illness	You have a more or less permanent illness that inconveniences you to some extent. Examples include diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, and various allergies. Terminal illnesses should be treated as Vulnerabilities, which are explained later.
Injury	You were once seriously injured, and it haunts you to this day. Examples include brain damage (a -1 PL penalty to Intelligence, Charisma, and/or Will), leg injuries (a -1 PL penalty to Agility and/or Speed), kidney damage that makes frequent hospital visits mandatory etc. If an injury gives you more than one penalty, it is of course worth more points.
Speech Impediment	In one way or another, you have trouble talking clearly.
Age	You are either younger or older than your society considers fit for an "adventurer." People tend to doubt your abilities. Note that it is the player's responsibility to choose suitable attributes and other abilities for his child or elderly hero.
Dependents	There is a person or several people who depend on you for their well-being. You must spend a lot of time with them to make sure everything is well, which can hinder adventuring. Examples include children, disabled or sick adults, or very old people.
Dark Secret	You have a skeleton in your closet. It can be a literal skeleton in the office closet, but usually it is something else that you do not want other people to know about. A Super Dark Secret must be truly devastating, something like " I was a concentration camp guard back in the day" or "yes, of course I am a serial killer, would you like some liver with that Chianti?"
Deep Sleeper	You are able to sleep well even when there is noise present, While this might sometimes be handy, it also makes you easier to sneak up upon and terribly sleepy in the morning. You receive a -1 PL penalty to relevant Alertness rolls.
Bad Looks	You will not make a favorable first impression by looks only, and you can forget about being a romantic lead in a Hollywood blockbuster. (Being a creepy villain is still possible, though.) Super Bad Looks mean that children run away crying and all but the most open-minded adults are upset.

Got it? If you feel that you do not have enough points for all the good stuff, you can burden your character with...

Bad Things Redux: Vulnerabilities

Krypton's finest son suffers from a terminal allergy for kryptonite. Why should your hero settle for anything less? Take a **vulnerability**, and gain more Good Things to improve your other abilities with. They are not mandatory, just another option to develop your PC. Vulnerabilities exist in real life as well: phobias are a good example. There are also some conditions that are classified as vulnerabilities, but act more like overall power limitations. They are called *Gizmo*, *Ritual Magic*, *Spellcaster*, and *Transformer*.

Vulnerabilities often have a power level just like attributes and superpowers. This PL is used for opposing rolls against one of your character's abilities. For example, if your PC had a PL 3 Fear Of Heights - a very serious phobia indeed - he would have to defend against a PL 3 attack using his Will in appropriate situations. A normal human with a PL 1 Will would likely be paralyzed or driven insane by such a strong phobia if, say, he was forced to board an airplane. Other vulnerabilities may attack different abilities, and not all vulnerabilities have power levels. Those that do **must be taken at a high enough PL to be at least equal to the ability that they roll against** - otherwise they would not necessarily be dangerous at all, especially to characters with superhuman abilities. Milder versions could be taken as Bad Things.

For every PL that you assign to a vulnerability you gain three Bad Things. Normally **you can take only one vulnerability**, but if you can justify having more than one to your GM, by all means take a few. Vampires, for example, have a whole bunch of vulnerabilities. They have so many supernatural abilities that they need several weaknesses to be able to pay for them all. Below are some sample vulnerabilities.

Vulnerability	Description
Substance or Condition	Your hero is uncommonly vulnerable to something, be it Kryptonite, water, or sunlight. This thing will actually hurt him like an attack.
Phobia	Possible phobias include fear of darkness, enclosed spaces, fire, flying, heights, open spaces, snakes, or spiders. When a PC with a phobia encounters the object of his fear, he must make a Will roll against the difficulty PL of the phobia. If the PC wins, he can function more or less normally. If the phobia wins, it takes over and the player must roleplay accordingly.
Mental Affliction	These are numerous and new ones seem to be discovered every day. Well-known ones include depression, manic depression, mindless aggression, obsessive behavior, and split personality. The affliction is usually in effect, and the PC must win a Will roll against the difficulty PL of the affliction if he wants to override it temporarily. Mild versions of these are just personality traits: most of us are occasionally depressed and we all have our little habits.
Addiction	If you have an addiction as a Bad Thing, you are expected to roleplay it out. But if you have one as a vulnerability, you must make a Will or Toughness roll (GM call) whenever you want to fight it. Longtime drug users fit this category well.
Serious Illness	These can be quite difficult in play, but are offered as a suggestion nevertheless. An illness as a vulnerability usually means a life-threatening condition, such as cancer or AIDS. Its effects are seldom as immediate and frequent as those of a phobia, for instance, but they tend to be lethal in the long run. One way to play this is to have the PC make annual (or whatever the GM sees fit) Toughness rolls against the illness' difficulty PL. If he wins, he has bought himself some extra time; if he loses, his condition becomes worse. If the PC seems to struggle on forever, the GM has a right to advance the illness regardless of dice rolls. AIDS is expected to kill within ten years or something like that.
Total Sensory Impairment	The complete loss of taste or smell is worth three BTs. And if one goes, the other tends to suffer too. Deafness is worth six BTs. Blindness is worth nine BTs, and if you want to know why, it is because that number is sufficient to buy a superpower that can compensate for the loss. Also, humans are visual animals, and sight is our most important sense.
Gizmo	All of the hero's superpowers come from a Gizmo, whatever it is. Popular choices include armored battlesuits, magic rings, amulets or other artifacts, and magical weapons. Small items are easy to carry and quick to wield, but they are also easier to steal than power suits. The latter are slow to put on if you are caught with your titanium pants down; assume 1D6+1 turns at least. This limitation is worth six Bad Things.
Ritual Magic	The hero must perform an elaborate magical ritual each time he uses a power. Alchemy, spirit summoning, and generic chanting are perennial favorites, but you can certainly dance naked in the rain instead. The PL of the desired power determines the duration of the ritual. See the Appendix for more information on power duration, range, and other effects. This limitation is worth nine Bad Things.
Spellcaster	The hero must cast a magical spell each time he uses a power. This takes only a single action, but that can be too long sometimes. This limitation is worth six Bad Things.
Transformer	The hero must change form before he can use his powers. Presumably his normal, powerless form is that of a human. Good and Bad Things plus skills are usually shared between the two forms. The transformation takes one action (not one turn; these terms are explained in the Combat chapter). The two forms must be as obviously different as, say, Bruce Banner and The Hulk. This limitation is worth three Bad Things.

Character Types and Creation Methods

You have probably already skipped ahead to this section when you realized that I was not going to talk about the actual character creation mechanisms for a good long time. Shame on you. Go back and take a look at the abilities your PC can have, because I am finally about to tell you how you can have them.

Powergame supports three basic methods of making up a character. The original method was purely **random**, and it is the truest to the quick-and-dirty spirit of these rules. But I soon realized that all people do not like randomness, and so there is also a non-random method called **PASS** (after "Thanks, I'll pass"). Oh, okay, it can also be derived from Point Allocation SyStem. In its brutal simplicity it is as follows: **every time you are instructed to roll 1D6 in the character creation rules, you can take three as the result instead**. Keep that in mind, as you can mix the two methods and use PASS for only selected rolls.

There is a suggested order in which the various character abilities should be determined during creation. It goes like this:

1. **Write down your beginning attributes** (for most characters, everything starts at PL 1).
2. **Determine the number of superpowers** you have. **Choose which powers** you want to have.
3. **Determine the power levels** of your superpowers. **Take some power limitations**, if the original PLs feel too low.
4. **Determine the number of Good Things** you have and choose them. You can buy more GTs and improve your other abilities with Bad Things and Vulnerabilities.
5. **Choose skills** for your character.
6. Finally, **make your character more than just numbers on paper**. The Wrapping Up section contains some helpful ideas.

Keep in mind that you need not follow this order. It is also possible to go back and forth, making adjustments when your character concept evolves. But if you make a roll during creation, that roll must be kept.

Oh, the third character creation method? It is called **modeling**, and it is simplicity itself. If you have an absolutely perfect character concept in mind that cannot be easily realized with PASS, and for which the random method is too, well, random, you can just write up the character the way you see it should be. In fact, you can always use this approach, as the GM has to approve all characters anyway: just hand him your PC, and if he likes it, why spoil the mood by telling that it was not generated with the official, approved, certified, and torture-tested methods? But if you do not have a concept ready, you might give the other two methods a try. They are explained below. And even if you do use the modeling approach, it is worth reading the rest of this section as it also discusses the different character types.

Detailed Modeling (suggested by Randall Orndorff)

This is an option for characters created with the modeling method. It goes further than Power Customization, which is suitable for all kinds of characters. Since you have no points or rolls to worry about, there is no reason why you should not end up with the exact power you want, the one that fits your character concept. The same applies for super-attributes. The aspects that normally can be defined separately are *power, skill, range, area of effect*, and *duration.* However, for modeled characters you can invent other aspects if they are needed.

For instance, say you wanted to play a teenage girl who just discovered that she could project extremely destructive energy. We could call it an Energy Blast 3, but we want to show that she has very little skill. So let us break it down a little, to Energy Blast 3 (Skill 1). This means that range, damage, and other assorted details of her power will still be resolved by her generic rating of 3, but whenever she rolls to hit, she will only roll 1 die. This is a good representation of someone with good raw potential, but without the skills to use it yet.

There is no reason why you could not break it down even further, like this: Energy Blast (Skill 1, Range 3, Power 5, Area of Effect 2). Duration does not really apply to Energy Blasts. For a character who has incredible Strength but little finesse, we could come up with Super-Strength (Skill 1, Lifting Capability 5, Damage 4).

Here is an example that is more qualitative than quantitative: Weather Control 3 (Lightning Control 2, Whirlwind 5, Precipitation 6). In short, do what feels right for your character, the setting, and the party, and I doubt you will go wrong! Finally, here is an example of just how detailed you can get: Power Negation 4 (Area of Effect 2, or 10 meters, centered on the character using Power Negation. Will only work if the possessor of the power can sense the presence of the targets, usually by seeing them or hearing them. The power cannot stop magic at all, and trying to cancel psionics can cause a dangerous backlash doing PL 4 damage to the user of Power Negation.)

The game was originally geared for building typical **four-color superheroes**. They can be designed by rolling **1D6+1 for the number of superpowers** and again rolling **1D6+1 for the number of Good Things** they receive for free. After you have picked your powers, they must each be assigned a PL. These are determined by **rolling 1D6 per each power you have and adding the rolls together. After you have calculated this "pool of PLs," you divide the power levels between your superpowers as you wish**. PL 6 is the maximum that you can assign to any power. Hardcore randomists can simply roll a PL for each power, although this can lead to disappointments in the form of PL 1 not-so-superpowers. If you gain more superpowers during character creation, it is all right to combine those PLs with the original pool and divide them anew.

Wizard Powers

The so-called wizard powers are those which allow the character to accomplish a vast array of different feats. Green Lantern's ring and some forms of magic are merely two examples of wizard powers. A player who rolls only one power might be tempted to try and make it as omnipotent as possible. GMs can easily stop this, of course, but some guidelines for these powers are still in order, because they do come up in comics.

If a wizard power is used to do several things at the once, the PL of each new ability after the first is reduced by one PL. For example, a PL 5 wizard power would follow this curve: PL 5-4-3-2, until PL 1 is reached. To

illustrate, let's say that the operator of the power, a mind magician, draws a huge dragon from the nightmares of some roleplayer. It might have PL 5 Fiery Breath, PL 4 Thick Skin, PL 3 Winged Flight and PL 2 Duration, in addition to various PL 1 abilities. If the magician is able to keep concentrating on the illusion, he could drop the duration ability and give the dragon PL 2 Strength, for example.

If the wizard power is somewhat like Green Lantern's or Invisible Woman's, the material strength and size of the creation are usually the most important. Someone with a PL 5 power could put up a shield which would protect a PL 4 area with PL 5 Protection or vice versa. Should he want a giant hammer to strike down his enemies, it could do PL 5 damage to PL 4 distance or vice versa. This is rather powerful, but such characters tend to be very capable.

Shapeshifting might also count as a wizard power if it is versatile enough. Relevant abilities for various forms include at least Size, Toughness, and Speed. For example, a character with PL 3 Shapeshifting could become a PL 3 Macro-Size giant with PL 2 Toughness, or shrink to PL 3 Micro-Size and still zip about at PL 2 Speed, thus becoming virtually impossible to catch.

After you have selected your skills, powers, Good and Bad Things, and possibly limitations or vulnerabilities, you can to go to the next section, "Wrapping Up." If you are curious about what the other character types are, stick around.

Super normals are characters who have dedicated themselves to honing their body and mind to human perfection, like Batman, Daredevil, and Captain America. They rarely have actual superpowers, but certain low-key abilities like Daredevil's radar sense and heightened normal senses are not out of the question. Instead of the usual 1D6+1 superpowers, **super normals receive 6D6 Good Things**. In a typical case, if you use PASS and take the 18 GTs, you can increase four attributes to PL 2, which nicely represents the extensive training and natural talent these heroes usually have, and still take one superskill or a bunch of normal GTs.

Action heroes have no superhuman abilities at all, thus they receive no superpowers and cannot purchase any with their GTs. But they do get **2D6+2 GTs**, twice the normal amount, which allows them to kick some mook butt. James Bond, Indiana Jones, and Dirk Pitt are archetypal action heroes.

Common people are cannon fodder to all other character types, but in some campaigns they might be the only type available. They receive **two Good Things** for free and no other special abilities.

Alien Races

If sentient alien races feature in your GM's campaign, he should have worked out the abilities of a typical member of the race. Insectoid killer aliens might, for example, have PL 3 Strength, Speed and Toughness, and PL 2 Agility, while their Intelligence might be only PL 0 in human terms. If alien PCs are allowed, you can pick a "baseline" template prepared by the GM and then go through character creation using those abilities instead of humanity's PL 1 across the board. If an alien race naturally has many superhuman abilities, it is probably best to limit its representatives to super normals and action heroes (different character types are explained later). Otherwise humans will stand little chance.

If a player wants to have an alien character, but the GM has no alien races prepared, or the player is not happy with any of them, the GM may let the player to create an alien PC using normal superhero creation rules. The

powers of that character could then portray a typical representative of the alien race. Various technological and magical beings (androids such as Vision, golems, T-1000 series killer robots) can be similarly created.

Ultra-Powerful Characters

There are some characters who are powerful enough to be considered gods, divine beings, or whatever you want to call them - what they have in common is *power*. Power that is great enough to stand out in a game named like this. They might be aliens (Superman) or actual gods of long-forgotten pantheons (Thor and Hercules). Nevertheless, they look like us but are even more powerful than most superheroes. They are not generally recommended as PCs, but your GM might have no problem with such characters.

Ultra-powerful characters are created exactly as normal superheroes, with one important distinction. **Their attributes do not start at PL 1**. Instead, the starting PL for each attribute is determined by rolling 1D6. You can also use PASS, or mix the two methods. Ultra-powerful characters (I guess I could call them UPCs; you can never have enough acronyms) do not get any extra superpowers or Good Things in addition to their extraordinary attribute levels.

A note to GMs: if you decide that this kind of a race exists in your campaign world, you can pre-determine its attributes. This way, if a player wants to play a godling, you can control the character's power levels to some extent. Of course PC gods tend to be more powerful than average members of their race; this is taken into account by giving them super powers, some of which might further increase their basic abilities. Just consider Thor, who is more powerful than an average Asgardian.

Wrapping Up

When you have done everything described above, write down that your brand-new PC has **three luck points** to his name. Their use is explained in the Experience and Luck chapter. You cannot spend these points on anything during character creation.

Try to **answer at least some of the following questions** to make your character a living, breathing person instead of a collection of words and numbers. You do not have to write a short story about your character's life so far, but even the most one-dimensional fictional characters usually have some tags which define them. And do not forget to **select a good name for your character**. Bob the Barbarian, Spider-Man III, or kew1d00d are not good names. Not all heroes have both a civilian name and a hero name, but everyone has one or the other.

The Game of the Name

If you are stumped with the name - I know many people can be, myself included - here is a trade secret that will get you far in life, or at least make other players in your group marvel at your originally named PCs. Grab a book, music CD, or DVD. Do not steal the names of the main characters or performers, unless they are relatively unknown. Instead take a look at the people who made it. And avoid the most familiar names here as well: it is no better to have a PC named Spielberg than one called Schwarzenegger. For example, by picking up my *Cambridge International Dictionary of English*, I can rattle off reasonably fresh names without really trying: "Hello, meet Ray Ponsford." "Why, there goes Felicity Boynton, my old friend from the university." "So you talk to the two people who happened to walk by? Okay, they are a young couple named Philip and Annie Cresswell..." See? It sure beats having your world populated by John Smiths and poor copies of famous characters.

- Where and when were you born? Do you still live there?
- Who were your parents? Where are they now?
- How was your youth? What do you recall most fondly (or bitterly)?
- What is your level of education or training? What do you do for living? Does it have anything to do with your education?
- What are the most significant experiences of your adult life? Any great tragedies or boons? Anything truly weird?
- How and when did you gain your superpowers or extraordinary abilities? Have they changed since then?
- What kind of a person you are? Have your powers changed you?
- What do you value (abstract ideals, people, things)? Are you religious?
- Are you in love? Do you have a family?
- Beyond your family and relatives, who do you know (people like colleagues, friends, neighbors, rivals)?
- How do you look? How do you dress? Do you wear a special costume?
- Finally, is there anything that really makes you different? What makes you really *you*?

You should already know some of the answers after creating your character. You can also think of these things first; perhaps they will help you create an interesting new superhero. A person who grew up in the middle of nowhere is less likely to have seen numerous battles between superheroes and villains, and to have gained his own powers after an accidental exposure to superpowers' side-effects. A deeply religious person might react negatively, even recoil in horror if she suddenly developed an ability to talk to the spirits of the dead and command them, instead of designing herself a frightening costume and becoming a vigilante. Someone with a special forces background might be far more willing to kill supervillains than other heroes, because that is how he was trained. A superhumanly intelligent gadgeteer might devote herself to the design of useful everyday appliances instead of building ray guns and time machines. A pacifist could become a hardened killer, or vice versa. Try choosing two details that seem to clash and explain why they do not.

Put some effort in your character. Anyone can make a boring stereotype, but can you make an *interesting* stereotype? Again, what makes you really *you*?

Man, if I would always follow my own advice I would be famous.

Let's make a hero. I rolled for a random hero origin and got "created by someone else." Hmmm... okay, let's make a character that is slightly different. We shall create a *golem*.

Stories of golems come from Jewish legends. They are usually creatures made of clay, who have been given a semblance of life by magical means and ordered to protect and serve their creators. What if we had a golem with free will, or at least something quite close to that? Better yet, let's not have the clumsy, hulking golem familiar from D&D, but a thing of beauty and grace. Accordingly, her creator named her Shifra. She was created to be an archmage's eternally young and faithful companion, and the ancient wizard succeeded so well that his creation outlived him - by centuries, in fact. She looks, acts, and feels just like a human, so we shall base her on human attributes, that is, every attribute starts at PL 1.

I decide to use PASS as much as possible to guarantee at least average abilities. Skipping skills for a while (you can freely go back and worth while creating a character), I begin to choose Shifra's superpowers. PASS will give me four choices. *Super-Strength* is an obvious selection, as a creature made of clay and powered by magic is surely stronger than a mortal man. *Super-Toughness* is another easy choice - she is much harder to hurt than a being of flesh and blood. *Magical Sustenance* comes next - Shifra does not age or need to eat, drink, or breathe. One power left... I am running low on ideas and give her *Super-Agility*. After all, she is not a stereotypical golem.

Now, PASS gives me four times three, or twelve power levels to distribute between Shifra's four powers. To account for her long survival, I put 5 PLs in Magical Sustenance. Strength gets 3 PLs, Toughness 2, and Agility 2. I also decide to put a limitation on Magical Sustenance, namely that Shifra cannot eat or drink even if she wanted to. This will make it harder to fit in amongst normal people. The power's PL is raised to 6, which should be good enough.

Next, I want to improve one of her other powers, and in order to do that I choose the Vulnerability *Dependent on People* at PL 1, the same as her Will and therefore the lowest PL the Vulnerability can be acquired. This reflects the fact that Shifra was created to entertain and accompany another man. Even with him dead for centuries, she still feels a need to have someone to be with. Being as beautiful as she is, there's usually no shortage of voluntary companions, but when they realize she is not human things go sour. A damned existence if I ever knew one. I use the three GTs to improve Shifra's Super-Toughness by one PL.

Now, let's grab some Good Things to brighten up the day - I'm starting to feel sorry for my sample character. PASS gives us four of those as well. I take *Good Looks, Photographic Memory, 1+ Speed*, and *Special Talent: Dancing*. Finally, because it suits the character well, I take a Bad Thing: *Weak Spot (Charisma -1 PL for leadership purposes)*. Shifra is more used to being led than issuing orders. I use the resulting GT to improve her overall *Charisma to PL 1+*. And that about wraps it up as far as game rules are concerned. I write down the three luck points every beginning character receives. Shifra now looks like this:

- Strength 3, Toughness 3, Agility 2, Speed 1+, Charisma 1+, Intelligence 1, Will 1, Alertness 1
- Superpowers: Strength, Toughness, Agility, Magical Sustenance 6 (does not age or need to eat, drink or breathe, and cannot even if she wanted to)
- Skills: Originally trained much like a courtesan hundreds of years ago, Shifra is a skilled singer and musician, and an extraordinary dancer who excels in many different forms from the Renaissance to modern times. Over time she has learned almost a dozen languages, various sports, fashions and music of different eras, a very good overall grasp of history, and respectable combat skills (she has saved her companions' lives more than once). Shifra is deadly in a fight, being superhumanly strong and hard to kill.
- Good Things: Speed, Charisma, Good Looks, Photographic Memory, Special Talent: Dancing
- Bad Things: Weak Spot: Easily Led
- Vulnerability: Dependent on People 1
- Luck Points: 3

This would be the time when you start to think of answers for those wrapping-up questions. But this example is already pretty long, so I'll leave Shifra's history for some other time. However, here's something that just came to me when I was looking at a list of Jewish surnames: in order to better fit in among humans, Shifra has adopted the last name Bach. After *that* Johann Sebastian Bach. Yes, she knew him. No, they were not married. Just one tiny detail from the life of this wandering Jewish myth...

PERSONAL COMBAT

So now you have a character who is itching to prove himself. In the superhero genre (and many others), the ultimate test for your abilities is a big fight. In most roleplaying games, combat rules are the most complicated part, and Powergame is no exception. But, at its heart, the combat system is still very simple. It is the number of modifiers and special cases that makes it *seem* complex.

Combat takes place during **turns**, which represent a purposefully vague length of time. Several seconds is a good default time. For ease of calculation, **ten turns equal one minute**. The old Marvel Super Heroes RPG used to say that each turn represented a comic book panel, and that is still a very good analogy. **During a turn, characters can take one action**, or more if they are particularly lucky. Actions include:

- Making an attack with your fists, a gun, a superpower, or something else
- Drawing your weapon
- Reloading a typical weapon (see the Modern Weapons chapter for reload times)
- Evading enemy attacks (as opposed to dodging, which is an automatic reaction)
- Using a superpower for some other purpose than attacking
- Activating a superpower that requires it
- Doing something else that you can accomplish in one turn
- Doing a part of a task that will take more than one turn

Movement is not a separate action: you can usually move as a part of your action. But **if you start the turn knocked down, moving will require an action**. If you just want to fight, that can be done from the ground. A combat turn proceeds as follows:

1. All participants **roll for initiative**, unless they are surprised. It is possible to gain a bonus action with a critically successful roll.
2. Characters **take actions in initiative order**, unless they decide to wait and see what others do.
3. **When attacks are made, they can be avoided by a successful dodge**. Dodges do not count as actions. A critically successful dodge will give you a counter-attack. A critical hit can bypass the defender's armor protection.
4. **If the attack hits, the attacker makes a damage roll, which the defender can try to resist**. Resisting damage does not count as an action. If the damage roll is successful, wound effects are applied. They depend on the power level of the attack. Critical wounds are far more dangerous than normal wounds.
5. **When everyone has acted, a new turn begins** and initiative is rolled anew.

We shall now discuss the above elements in more detail, beginning with…

Initiative

Initiative rolls are made against the Speed attribute. If you have a movement superpower like Supersonic Flight or Tsunami Swimming, you can roll against them, but only if you are in the proper element. Speed covers your innate reflexes and works everywhere. You can also have a power called, for example, Combat Reflexes, which applies everywhere. Some Good Things can affect the roll.

Characters act in the order of initiative results, from the highest to the lowest. Ties act simultaneously. A character can also elect to wait and let others go first, or to ready a **trigger action**, which means that he prepares for some specific event and gets to act immediately if it takes place. Trigger actions can be held for successive turns, as long as the character does nothing else but waits (dodging is possible, though).

If your initiative roll is a critical success compared to the highest roll on the opposing side (or all opposing sides, if there are several), you gain a **bonus action**. This action can be used at the same time you normally act, or held for later. It must be used during the turn it was gained, however.

It is possible for a character to have no idea that he is about to be attacked, and therefore be completely **surprised**. In this case he **loses initiative automatically and can do nothing but dodge on the first turn**. Also, his **attacker gains a 1+ PL bonus to hit**. Alertness rolls can spot hidden assailants and help avoid surprise.

Attacking

The most common action in combat is to attack. Attack rolls are made against an attribute, superpower, or skill. Good Things, such as Special Skills and Special Attributes, can affect the roll. All **melee attacks are rolled against Strength**, unless you have a relevant superskill. **All attacks with ranged weapons are rolled against Agility** or a relevant skill. **If you do not have any combat training or experience, you may suffer the penalty for using an unfamiliar skill, or -1 PL**. People are not born fighters. **Superpowers roll against their PL**, or the power's skill aspect if it has been customized somehow.

If you are firing a weapon, every attack normally uses one round from the weapon's magazine. Fully automatic bursts against a single target use three rounds. Fully automatic bursts against several targets use 1D6+2 rounds *per target*. Belt-fed weapons use twice as many rounds, and vehicle weapons use ten times as many rounds. It is impossible to fire a neat three-round burst with a 20mm autocannon.

If you try to hit several targets with one attack, you also suffer a -1 PL penalty. This is only possible with superpowers, fully automatic weapons, explosive warheads, or other such implements of widespread property damage. Weapons that have an explosive area effect have the notation "**EX**" next to their damage PL (see the Modern Weapons chapter). **The area of effect of an explosive attack is one PL less than its damage PL**, unless otherwise noted. **Regardless of how many**

targets you are trying to hit, you always make only one attack roll (unless you are using two weapons) which the defenders try to dodge separately. It is often best to aim the explosion at one target and hope to catch the others in the blast, as this inflicts no penalty to the attack roll.

You should always try to describe your attack as clearly and colorfully as possible before rolling. Saying "I'll punch him" every time gets very old, very quickly. Descriptions also help the GM to judge results of the attack and describe its outcome. If you are trying a trick shot (see the Special Attacks table below), you *must* describe it fairly precisely.

Dodging

After the attacker has rolled to hit, his target must roll to dodge. If the defender has not already acted during the turn, he can forgo his intended action and evade instead. **Evading gives a +1 PL bonus to dodge rolls**. **Dodge rolls are made against Agility**, or a relevant superpower, such as Teleporting. If the dodge roll is higher than the attack roll, the attack misses. On a tie, it is a very near miss. If the dodge is a critical success, the *defender* gains a **counter-attack** which must be used instantly or it is lost. It can only be used against the attacker whose poor performance caused the counter-attack. If the defender still has his normal action left, he must wait for his turn in the initiative order to use it. Only the counter-action is used instantly. On the other hand, if the attacker is the one who gets a critically successful result, he has achieved a **critical hit** (see below). Finally, if the attack is a normal success, the attack hits its target solidly but without any special effects.

If you are trying to dodge an **area-effect attack**, such as an explosion or a superpower, **you cannot dodge it entirely unless your Speed PL (or some other movement power) is at least equal to the attack's area of effect PL**. If it is not, a successful dodge only reduces damage by one PL, and a critically successful dodge by two PLs. Cover modifiers apply but evading has no effect. All defenders roll against the same attack roll.

> **Psionic Combat**
>
> Psionic combat differs from the flesh and blood kind only a little. Instead of Agility, **psionic attacks are "dodged" with Will**. Cover, darkness, position, and other such modifiers do not usually apply to psionic combat. If the attacker knows his target is within range, he can attack. If the attack hits, **its effects are also resisted with Will** instead of Toughness (see How Much Does It Hurt, below). Finally, **damage from psionic attacks reduces your Will**, not your Toughness. Relevant superpowers may naturally substitute for Will.
>
> Psionic damage heals faster than physical wounds. Instead of days (normal wounds) and weeks (critical wounds), psionic damage heals in hours and days, respectively. See the Healing section for more information.

Special Situations

Situation	Modifier
Advanced sights	This includes telescopic sights on small arms, and systems like heat-seeking, radar-guided, or laser-guided warheads on heavier weapons. Smart weapons, should they exist in the campaign world, also count. Advanced sights give a +1 PL bonus to hit, but the attacker must spend one *turn* sighting in. Note that vehicle-scale advanced sights rarely give a bonus against human-scale targets. The notation "**ADV**" next to a weapon's range PL means that it is usually equipped with advanced sights.
Darkness, fog, smoke etc.	Bad lighting conditions give a -1 PL penalty to hit, unless they are negated by superpowers (night vision, radar sense), equipment (light intensifier goggles), or the *Night Vision* Good Thing.
Ganging up on one target	Each attacker gets +1 PL to hit; this is not cumulative even if there are a dozen attackers. Also applies if one attacker is grappling the target and the other is trying to hit him.
Good cover	Good cover is something that is able to stop or considerably slow down the attack. It must cover at least half of the target. Cover gives the attacker a -1 PL penalty to hit.
Indirect fire	Mortars, howitzers, and some other weapons attack their targets indirectly. This gives a -1 PL penalty to hit.
Multi-barreled weapons	These gain a +1 PL bonus to hit because of their high rate of fire and wider spread of projectiles. Yes, this applies for double-barreled shotguns if both barrels are emptied at once.
Superior position in melee combat	A situation where the defender is knocked down and the attacker is standing, for example. Gives the attacker a +1 PL bonus to hit.
Two-weapon combat	This is only possible with two one-handed melee weapons or two small guns, unless you have Strength at PL 3+. Gives you a bonus attack, but both attacks suffer a -1 PL penalty to hit. Can be negated with the *Woo Style* Good Thing.

Special Attacks

Attack type	Modifier
Colliding or ramming	The damage PL of a collision or ramming attack is determined by the current Speed PL of the fastest participant. In a collision, everyone suffers this damage, but in a deliberate ramming attack the attacker takes one PL less damage, being prepared for impact. Size matters as well. If the participants are of different Size, the larger party takes one PL less damage for each PL of size difference (PL 0 is the minimum damage, though). For example, if a car (PL 3 size) hits a pedestrian (PL 1 size) at top speed (PL 4), the poor victim would take PL 4 damage while the car would take only PL 1 damage.
Grappling	Roll to hit normally, using Strength: a success indicates the target is held until he wins an opposed Strength roll as his action. A critical success does normal Strength damage to the defender if the attacker so wishes. He can also settle for restraining the target without doing damage, in which case the defender must achieve a critical success in the Strength contest to break free. Garrotes and other strangling weapons give a +1 PL bonus to your Strength for the purpose of doing damage.

Disarming	Uses the grappling rules, but a normal success indicates both parties are holding on to the weapon until someone wins an opposed Strength roll. A critical success indicates an instant disarm; the weapon lands somewhere nearby. During the struggle for the weapon, if either party gets a critical success in the Strength roll, he can roll normal weapon damage against the opponent, who cannot dodge it. Or he might just take the weapon away, if he does not want to hurt his opponent.
Falling	Falls do damage equal to the distance fallen on the Area of Effect table in the Appendix, *not* Range table. First you must make an Agility roll against the fall's PL to see how hard do you land (in effect dodging an "attack"), then you proceed normally to find out how badly you were hurt.
Trick shots	Shooting a weapon out of someone's hand, for example, or tripping a foe so that you will enjoy a superior position next turn. Trick shots require a critical hit; no damage is done. Trick shots must be declared in advance.

How Much Does It Hurt

Assuming the attacker hit his target, it is time to roll for damage. Before doing so, there are some things to consider. First, the attacker can **pull his punch**. This simply means that the attacker can choose to use a lower PL than his attack would normally indicate. The decision must be made before rolling the dice. It is not possible to pull your punch if you are using an area-effect weapon or a superpower for area attack; they are just not capable of such finesse. And as long as we are talking about area-effect powers, you should note that **if a superpower is used for area attack, it does one PL less damage than normally**. **Fully automatic weapons are nasty**: if such a weapon is used to attack only one target, the attacker may add one point to the result for every die in the damage roll (for example, a machine gun burst would roll 3D6+3 for damage). If the burst is spread out between several targets, no extra damage is made.

Damage rolls are made against the attacker's Strength, if he is fighting unarmed; **the PL of the superpower he is using** (or its damage aspect, if customized); or **the damage PL of his weapon**. Sample weapons are described in the Modern Weapons chapter. Note that some weapons have the notation "**AP**" next to their damage PL. This means that the weapons fires **armor-piercing** ammunition that penetrates the target's defenses more easily than ordinary attacks. In game terms, it means that **the defender receives a -1 PL penalty when resisting the damage**. Most armor-piercing weapons also produce a **secondary blast**. If the GM believes that an AP attack should produce a secondary blast, he should take the weapon's damage PL and count down three steps on the Area of Effect table in the Appendix. This will produce a rough approximation of the area of effect. For example, a PL 4 LAW rocket will hurt anyone standing within a couple of meters from the point of impact (from PL 4 to PL 3, PL 2, and finally PL 1+). The secondary blast is an ordinary area attack; it is not armor-piercing itself.

The defender can try to resist the damage by rolling against **Toughness**, **the PL of a relevant superpower** such as a force field, or **the PL of the armor he is wearing**. Sample armor types are given in the accompanying table. Note that **most armor gives you only partial protection, and can thus be bypassed with a critical hit** (I bet you were wondering if those were any good). Powersuits are an exception; they

give full body coverage unless otherwise noted. But **even against a completely protected target, a critical hit does some good: the defender receives a -1 PL penalty when resisting the damage**. The attack found a particularly weak spot in the armor. **The same penalty applies for completely unarmored targets**, indicating a hit to the head or vital organs.

Armor type	Melee attack protection	Ranged attack protection
Leather armor	1+	1
Chainmail	2	1+
Plate mail	3	2
Generic protective gear	1+	1
Light modern armor (Kevlar vest)	1+	2
Heavy modern armor (full tactical gear)	2	3
Average powersuit	4	4

So what happens if the damage roll is successful? Well, then you are in a world of pain. Check out the table below:

Damage roll result	Effects
Failure or tie	Bruises and scratches. Nothing serious.
Normal success	**The target receives -1 PL penalty to all actions until healed** (note that rolling for initiative, resisting damage, and dodging are not actions). If you suffer several normal wounds, there is no further penalty. The shock from the first wound is bad enough to kick your adrenaline production into overdrive. It will take a critical wound to cause more penalties. Furthermore, **every normal wound reduces your Toughness to the next lowest PL**. When it drops below PL 0, you collapse and are out of the fight until healed. **These reductions inflict no actual penalty** beyond that mentioned above, but it is important to keep track of wounds to know when you pass out.
Critical success	*Each* critical wound inflicts a -1 PL penalty on all actions. These penalties are cumulative with each other and with the penalty from normal wounds, if it applies. After several critical wounds your best bet is to surrender and hope for mercy. Also, **a knockout roll must be made, using Toughness against the damage PL**. You always use your original, unmodified Toughness for this roll. A failure means that you are unconscious or in total shock for a while. 1D6+1 turns is a workable default. A critical failure means that you are unconscious for at least 2D6 *minutes*, or until the GM says you wake up. Even if you are not knocked out, you are *knocked down*. This is mainly important in close combat, where the attacker would enjoy a superior position on the next turn. Finally, **your Toughness is reduced rapidly: one step down on the power level scale for each PL of the attack that caused the critical wound**. **These reductions inflict no actual penalty** beyond that mentioned above, but it is important to keep track of wounds to know when you pass out. If your Toughness ever drops below PL 0 and you have one or more critical wounds, you collapse and are **near death**. Compare your *original* Toughness to the Duration table in the Appendix to see how long you can survive without medical attention. If your Toughness is ever reduced to its negative equivalent and you have one or more critical wounds, for example, to PL -2 if it originally was PL 2, you die instantly.

Let's have an example of combat. Meet Detective Crowe, LAPD. His abilities are *Strength 1+, Toughness 1+, Alertness 1+, Will 1+* (non-PL 1 attributes), *Quick Reload, Intuition, Special Skill: Pistol Shooting*, and *Special Knowledge: L.A. Underworld* (GTs). Crowe carries a 9mm Beretta 92F pistol and wears a light Kevlar vest. He also has one luck point saved.

Crowe has just entered a shady bar in order to meet an informant who's supposed to have information about a certain fugitive named Roy McDougal. He's a little surprised when McDougal is also inside, in the company of another dangerous-looking man to boot, and there's no sign of the snitch. Is it a trap? Thankfully, they don't recognize him, which gives him time to draw his pistol, point it at the suspects, and yell, "LAPD! Hands up! Don't move!" The perps look at each other, then at Crowe, and then slip their hands inside their jackets (hey, this is a combat example).

Everyone rolls for initiative. We assume that the bad guys have PL 1 in all relevant abilities. Crowe rolls 6, while McDougal and his friend roll 1 and 3. The detective's in luck: his roll is a critical success, giving him a bonus action. He again tries to get them to surrender peacefully, shouting, "FREEZE! I *will* shoot!" Then he uses his bonus action to ready a trigger action, intending to shoot at the perps if they still go for their guns. Alas, they do. The unknown second man goes first, using his action to pull out a snub-nosed .38 revolver. Crowe has no choice but to shoot. He rolls 2D6 (one for Agility, one for his Special Skill) and gets a measly 3. The gunman tries to dodge, and rolls 6, giving him an immediate counter-attack! With surprising speed, he lunges to the side and blasts away, rolling 5. Crowe gets only 3 and is hit. Luckily, it's not a critical hit, and his PL 2 armor will protect him. The gunman rolls 11 for damage (he's really on the roll now) and Crowe rolls 6, just enough to avoid a critical hit. Still, he now has a -1 PL penalty to all actions and his Toughness is reduced to PL 1. At the end of the round, McDougal produces a knife. The detective would sigh in relief if he had time. A second gun would *really* have ruined his day.

Everyone rolls for initiative again, Crowe rolls 4, while McDougal and his associate roll 2 and 4. Crowe shoots at the gunman who simultaneously tries to do the same to him. He rolls 3 and the criminal fails to dodge, rolling 2. Crowe rolls 2D6 for damage and gets 11, while the suddenly luckless perp rolls 5. It's a critical wound: his Toughness drops to PL 0, he gets a -1 PL penalty to all actions, and he must make a knockout roll against the damage PL. He rolls 1, which is a critical failure even though Crowe only rolls 3. The gunman is down and out. But he does get a chance to shoot back (remember, they tied the initiative roll). He rolls 1, which Crowe dodges easily with a roll of 4 - a counter-attack! However, his opponent is already down, so Crowe declines the opportunity. Finally, McDougal advances and tries to stab the detective. He rolls 3, but Crowe dodges with 4.

The third round of combat begins. Ordinarily, Crowe would try to subdue the knife-wielding fugitive, but since he's been wounded he's not going to take any chances - he will keep shooting. The detective rolls 6 and McDougal 1. A bonus action results. Crowe fires at contact range, rolling 4, but McDougal pushes his hand aside at the last moment, rolling 5 to dodge. Another shot (the bonus action) rings out: Crowe rolls 6, while McDougal rolls 3 - it's a critical hit. This is bad news, as McDougal must now resist a PL 2 attack with Toughness temporarily reduced to PL 0. The rolls are 10 against 0, which means critical damage. Miraculously, he rolls 4 to resist a knockout against Crowe's unlucky 3, so he's only knocked down. But he's still near death, so he uses his action to do the only sensible thing: drop his knife and surrender. Crowe kicks away the knife and asks the bartender to call the cops.

Healing

No skill check is required to wake up someone who has been knocked unconscious. The procedure takes **1D6+1 turns**. The victim will continue to suffer any penalties until his wounds are healed.

A **PL 1 difficulty first aid skill roll will stabilize someone who is dying**. This procedure takes **2D6 minutes**. Please note that first aid, especially in this sense, is not an automatic skill. Anyone can apply a Band-Aid, but stabilizing a person in critical condition is another matter entirely. In game terms, unskilled first aid receives a -1 PL penalty.

If someone has been wounded, but not critically, it takes 1D6 days to heal. Halfway through this period, you recover half of the lost Toughness, rounded down; the rest is recovered at the end of the healing period. **If you have suffered critical wounds, healing takes 1D6 weeks**; the same rule for halfway recovery applies. These rates only apply if you are in a hospital or equivalent facility (somewhere with trained personnel, proper equipment, and supplies). If you are not, healing takes twice as long. You must have complete rest during this time or healing will not take place. Futuristic technology may speed up healing.

Regenerative or healing superpowers speed the process up considerably. **Divide the rolled healing time by the PL of the relevant power to find out the actual healing time**. If the result is less than one day or one week, depending on the wound type, you heal in 1D6 *turns*. Also, you can always roll 1D6 for the healing period, whether in a hospital or not.

There are rumors of beings who have the power of resurrection. Bringing someone back from the dead is usually a PL 7 difficulty task, and the methods by which this is accomplished vary widely. Deities can just snap their fingers, while highly advanced civilizations may possess the medical technology needed to resurrect a person, as long as the body is found. Resurrection is very much different from creating an undead monster of some poor victim's body. The latter tends to be easier than PL 7, but the resulting life is somewhat lacking in quality.

The difference between healing and regeneration superpowers is basically this: you must be conscious to use a healing power, while regeneration works automatically. However, the latter cannot be used on other people, whereas a healing power can be used on yourself *and* others (unless a power limitation is taken). Resurrection powers cannot be used to heal or vice versa.

Finally, if these powers are used to cure diseases and other ailments, the GM must determine a suitable difficulty.

MODERN WEAPONS

As the default setting for Powergame campaigns is a modern superhero world, this chapter only gives examples of modern weapons. But the tables in the Appendix should make it possible to determine the game statistics for a wide variety of equipment, be it modern, futuristic, or ancient. Weights are given for an unloaded weapon whenever possible.

Reloading times vary. A weapon with a box magazine can be reloaded with one action. Any weapon that is loaded with single rounds, like a revolver or shotgun, can be reloaded at three rounds per action, although there are quickloaders for most combat revolvers. Belt changes take two actions (which is why it is handy to have a loader to assist you). Heavy weapons take 1D6+1 *turns* to be reloaded.

Weapon	Type	Damage	Range	Magazine	Weight
Beretta 92F (M9)	9mm pistol	2	1	15 box	0.98 kg (2.2 lb)
Browning Hi-Power	9mm pistol	2	1	13 box	0.99 kg (2.2 lb)
Colt M1911A1	.45 pistol	2	1	7 box	1.1 kg (2.4 lb)
Desert Eagle	.50 AE pistol	3	1	7 box	1.8 kg (4.0 lb)
Freedom Arms Model 83	.454 revolver	3	1+	5	1.4 kg (3.1 lb)
Glock 17/19	9mm pistol	2	1	17/15 box	0.7/0.65 kg (1.5/1.4 lb)
Glock 22/23	.40 pistol	2	1	15/13 box	0.75/0.65 kg (1.65/1.4 lb)
HK Mk23 Mod 0	.45 pistol	2	1	12 box	0.85 kg (1.9 lb)
HK USP Compact	.40 pistol	2	1	10 box	0.78 kg (1.7 lb)
PM Makarov	9 x 18mm pistol	2	1-	8 box	0.72 kg (1.6 lb)
Ruger Mark II Target	.22 pistol	1+	1	10 box	1.2 kg (2.65 lb)
Ruger SP101	.38 revolver	2	1-	5	0.7 kg (1.5 lb)
Ruger Super Redhawk	.44 Magnum revolver	2	1+	6	1.65 kg (3.65 lb)
SIG P226/P228 (M11)	9mm pistol	2	1	15/13 box	0.84/0.73 kg (1.85/1.6 lb)
S&W Model 686	.357 revolver	2	1	6	1.1 kg (2.4 lb)
Walther PPK	.32 pistol	1+	1-	7 box	0.6 kg (1.3 lb)
Colt M635	9mm submachine gun	2	1+	32 box	3.2 kg (7 lb)
HK MP5A5	9mm submachine gun	2	1+	15/30 box	2.93 kg (6.5 lb)
HK MP5K-PDW	9mm compact SMG	2	1	15/30 box	2.79 kg (6.14 lb)
HK MP5SD6	9mm silenced SMG	2	1+	15/30 box	3.4 kg (7.5 lb)
Uzi	9mm submachine gun	2	1+	25/32 box	3.5 kg (7.7 lb)
Beretta M3P	12 gauge shotgun	3	1	5 box	3.54 kg (7.8 lb)
Franchi SPAS-12	12 gauge shotgun	3	1	7	4.0 kg (8.8 lb)
Remington 870 P	12 gauge shotgun	3	1	7	3.4 kg (7.5 lb)
AK-74 Kalashnikov	5.45 x 39mm assault rifle	3	2	30 box	3.6 kg (7.9 lb)
AKM Kalashnikov	7.62 x 39mm assault rifle	3	2	30 box	4.3 kg (9.5 lb)
AKS-74U	5.45 x 39mm short carbine	3	1+	30 box	2.7 kg (5.95 lb)
FN FAL	7.62mm battle rifle	3	2	20 box	4.3 kg (9.5 lb)
HK G36C	5.56mm short carbine	3	1+	30 box	2.8 kg (6.3 lb)
M4A1	5.56mm carbine	3	2	30 box	3.3 kg (7.3 lb)
M16A2	5.56mm assault rifle	3	2	30 box	3.4 kg (7.5 lb)
Steyr AUG	5.56mm assault rifle	3	2	30 box	3.6 kg (7.9 lb)
Accuracy International AW	7.62mm sniper rifle	3	3 ADV	10 box	5.9 kg (13.0 lb)

Barrett M82A1	.50 heavy sniper rifle	3 AP	4 ADV	11 box	13.4 kg (29.5 lb)
Steyr SSG 69	7.62mm sniper rifle	3	3 ADV	5 box	4.5 kg (9.9 lb)
SVD Dragunov	7.62 x 54mm sniper rifle	3	3 ADV	10 box	4.3 kg (9.5 lb)
FN MAG	7.62mm machine gun	3	3	100 belt	10.85 kg (23.9 lb)
FN Minimi	5.56mm light machine gun	3	2	30 box/ 200 belt	6.9 kg (15.2 lb)
M2HB	.50 heavy machine gun	3 AP	4	110 belt	38.2 kg (84.2 lb)
M60	7.62mm machine gun	3	3	100 belt	10.5 kg (23.1 lb)
PK	7.62 x 54mm machine gun	3	3	100/200 belt	8.9 kg (19.6 lb)
AA-10 "Alamo"	air-to-air missile	5 EX	5 ADV	-	vehicle-mounted system
FIM-92A Stinger	portable anti-aircraft missile	4 EX	4 ADV	1	15.1 kg (33.3 lb)
M46	130mm field gun	5 EX	5	1	towed system
M67	hand grenade	3 EX	1	-	0.39 kg (0.86 lb)
M72A3 LAW	66mm rocket launcher	4 AP	2	-	2.1 kg (4.6 lb)
M203	40mm grenade launcher	3 EX	2	1	1.4 kg (3.1 lb)
OTO Melara modello 56	105mm pack howitzer	4 EX	4	1	towed system
Rheinmetall tank gun	120mm smoothbore gun	5 AP/EX	4	1	vehicle-mounted system
RPG-7	85mm rocket launcher	4 AP	2	1	7.9 kg (17.4 lb)
SA-7 "Grail"	portable anti-aircraft missile	4 EX	3 ADV	1	19.8 kg (43.7 lb)
TOW 2	anti-tank missile	5 AP	4 ADV	1	vehicle-mounted system
ZU-23	23mm twin anti-aircraft gun	3 EX	4 ADV	50 x 2	towed system

VEHICLE COMBAT

Using vehicles is much like strapping on an armored battlesuit. It follows that vehicle combat has only a few differences compared to personal combat - at least when we are talking about reasonably-sized vehicles with small crews. These quick rules are not intended to simulate combat between battleships, aircraft carriers, or Constitution-class starships.

One of those differences I mentioned is the **handling modifier** that affects many vehicles. If the vehicle's Speed is within one PL of its Size, it will not have a handling modifier. If its Speed is two or more PLs higher, it gets a +1 PL bonus to maneuver rolls. If the opposite is true, it will have a -1 PL penalty. Note that if the vehicle is classified as **agile**, or capable of sudden directional changes (like helicopters, vectored-thrust jets, or some UFOs), it gets +1 PL bonus to its normal handling modifier.

Maneuver rolls can be made in many different situations, for example when you must avoid hitting a fallen tree on the road. High-speed chases also require maneuver rolls. **The GM can assign the chase an overall "chase number"** depending on how crowded the area is, how much traffic there is, and so on. The easier it is to escape, the lower the number. He can also roll 1D6 to determine it randomly, or simply take three. **When any side has won a number of opposed maneuver rolls equal to this number, he wins the chase**. Depending on his intent, this can mean getting away clean or getting close enough to ram the other vehicle. In a chase that is purely dependent on speed, the faster vehicle will always win.

Vehicle maneuvers are **rolled against the relevant skill of the vehicle's pilot or commander**, whichever is better (although an inept but egotistic commander can overrule a better pilot). Most motor vehicle skills are based on Alertness. Motorcycle, bicycle, and futuristic hoverbike skills should probably be based on Agility. Rowboat skill is based on Strength. All maneuver rolls are affected by the handling modifier of the vehicle.

Vehicular initiative is also an opposed maneuver roll. The resulting initiative is the same for passenger. **A critical success in a vehicle initiative roll prevents the opposing vehicle from shooting back during that turn. It does *not* give a bonus action to the winning crew**. This represents the winning vehicle maneuvering out of the losing vehicle's weapons' firing arc.

In combat, **attacks using a vehicle's weapons are rolled against the gunnery skill** of the vehicle's gunner, weapon officer, or an equivalent crew member. They may gain a +1 PL bonus for **advanced sights** - see the Special Situations table in the Personal Combat chapter. **Dodge rolls are again maneuver rolls**. The **dodge receives a +1 PL bonus if the vehicle has appropriate counter-measure systems**; for example, flares to fool heat-seeking missiles. It is possible to **aim specifically for the vehicle's passengers**. In this case, they are still protected by the vehicle's armor, unless the vehicle is open, like motorcycles. If the attack hits, determine randomly which passenger is affected. Normally, passengers are only hit if the vehicle suffers critical damage.

Collisions are a common source of vehicular damage. They follow the rules explained in the Special Attacks table in the Personal Combat chapter. If the vehicle is equipped with some kind of a **passenger protection system**, be it seat belts, airbags or security foam (as seen in the film *Demolition Man*), **reduce the collision damage PL for crew and passengers by one** before rolling the dice. Of course, ejection seats or escape capsules are the ultimate protection against crashes, provided that there is time to use them. High-tech vehicles may even have automatic ejection systems, which eject the crew when a collision look inevitable.

Vehicles roll against an attack's damage PL by using their Armor PL. They suffer the same effects as humans as a result of successful damage rolls. **A vehicle's Toughness is equal to its Size; note that its Armor might be different from Toughness**. In addition, **every time a vehicle is struck with critical damage, a randomly chosen passenger must roll to resist equal damage**. Vehicles are destroyed immediately when their Toughness drops below PL 0. And **when a vehicle is destroyed, *everyone inside* must also resist against the final attack's damage PL.**

Sample Modern Vehicles

It should be easy enough to rate different vehicles with the tables in the Appendix. You can find lots of information about civilian and military vehicles on the Internet. Having said that, here are a few examples. The treatments are *extremely* brief, but hopefully they give you some idea of what different vehicles can do. Aircraft weights are given in the maximum take-off configuration.

Vehicle	Speed	Size	Handling	Equipment	Crew
Aérospatiale Super Puma transport helicopter	5 (280 kph)	4 (9.3 tonnes)	+1 PL (agile)	PL 3 armor	2+25
Harley-Davidson FLHR Road King motorcycle	4 (180 kph)	2 (326 kg)	+1 PL	PL 2 armor	1+1
Honda Accord sedan	4 (200 kph)	3 (1.4 tonnes)	-	PL 3 armor	1+4
Lamborghini Diablo sports car	5 (325 kph)	3 (1.6 tonnes)	+1 PL	PL 3 armor	1+1
Lockheed C-130H Hercules transport aircraft	5 (620 kph)	4 (70.3 tonnes)	-	PL 3 armor	6+92
M1A1 Abrams tank	3 (72 kph)	4 (54.5 tonnes)	-	120mm main gun with advanced sights, .50 heavy machine gun, 7.62mm machine gun, PL 5 armor	4
M113 armored personnel carrier	3 (67 kph)	4 (11 tonnes)	-	.50 heavy machine gun, PL 4 armor	2+11
M998 HMMWV "Hummer" utility vehicle	4 (104 kph)	3 (2.2 tonnes)	-	Machine gun or 40mm grenade launcher can be fitted, PL 3 armor	1+3
MBB/Kawasaki BK 117 multi-purpose helicopter	5 (278 kph)	3 (3.2 tonnes)	+2 PL (agile)	PL 3 armor	1+7
Sukhoi Su-27 "Flanker" fighter	6 (Mach 2.35)	4 (30 tonnes)	+1 PL	30mm cannon, 10 air-to-air missiles with advanced sights, PL 3 armor	1
ZSU-23-4 anti-aircraft gun	3 (44 kph)	4 (20.5 tonnes)	-	Four 23mm cannon with advanced sights, PL 4 armor	4

EXPERIENCE AND LUCK

Powergame has a very simple experience point system. For each successfully completed adventure you get **one experience point**. If the adventure was really, really difficult and dangerous, like saving the world from invading alien hordes, the GM may give you two points. If you do badly, spoil other people's fun, or otherwise irritate the GM, he can give you no points whatsoever.

What to do with experience points, then? First, you can **increase your attributes and powers**. The increases have to be bought one PL at a time; **the cost is the new PL, squared**. For example, raising a power from PL 3 to PL 4 would cost 16 experience points. If you raise an attribute from PL 2 to PL 3, you better have a good explanation ready, since this means your character has just acquired a new superhuman ability. Likewise, if you go from PL 0 ability to PL 1, give a reason why your PC is no more impaired.

New superpowers are a more difficult matter. The heroes in comic books simply do not acquire new powers unless there is a plot reason for it. It struck me that Powergame could use the same method. If you feel that your adventures could give your PC a new power, or that is time for him to evolve a little, discuss it with the GM. He is after all responsible for the "script" of your shared "comic book." Sometimes you might find the GM changing your PC's powers without your urging. It may be uncommon, but it happens, and changes of that kind are not always positive. And sometimes the GM might not even tell you, letting you to discover the changes when you try to use your powers. *That* should be rare, though, so do not worry… **New powers cost one experience point per PL, if the GM agrees that you can have one**.

New skills only take some training, but you have to prove to the GM's satisfaction that your character has had enough of it. **New Good Things cost one or three experience points**, depending on whether you choose the normal or the Super version. The GM may require you to explain why your character suddenly gains a new ability. You might also be allowed to use your experience points to **remove certain Bad Things or to make Vulnerabilities less severe**. These must always be discussed with the GM on a case-by-case basis.

Finally, **one experience point can be converted into 1D6 luck points** (you can use PASS and take three). This can be done in the middle of an adventure if you are running low on luck and need some extra assurance.

The Role of Luck

If you are facing a truly desperate task, which absolutely has to succeed or the Conquerorman will destroy life as we know it, you can use luck points to improve your chances. **One luck point will allow you to re-roll any one roll and pick the better result of the two**. You can decide to spend the point after you have seen the opposing roll or have already rolled yourself; for example, when you have just been hit by the devastating laser cannon blast which you were *so* sure you could dodge. **Three luck points allow you to automatically succeed in any one roll**, if success would have been possible by rolling dice. For example, if you are rolling three dice and need to get 17 or better, something that is rather unlikely, you can spend three luck points to do so.

All **PCs receive three luck points at the beginning of their careers**, after the creation process is over. This further distinguishes them from normal folks and improves their changes to survive that all-important first adventure. Very important NPCs receive this benefit as well. But remember that luck points are not that plentiful and running out of luck at the wrong moment can really ruin your day - permanently. The damage rules are merciless to lightly protected characters who are out of luck.

ONE GAME TO RULE THEM ALL?

All good things must come to an end, they say, and maybe they are right. Maybe. This text is about to end (well, except for the Appendix), but it has been only the beginning. The beginning of all those wonderful adventures and campaigns you are about to experience. And do not for a moment think that Powergame is limited to superhero campaigns. It was designed for them, yes, but the superhero genre happens to cover so much ground that if your system can handle all of it without breaking, it can handle pretty much everything. Want some proof? All right.

- **Fantasy**: Monsters and other sentient races with weird abilities are nothing but superheroes and villains, and magic is just another name for superpowers. Legendary warriors are also very simple to create in this system. Ditto for magical items: besides gives the user all-new abilities, they can give him bonus PLs to attack and damage rolls.
- **Horror**: For monsters, see above. For losing your marbles, invent a superpower that attacks Will and give more horrifying monsters a higher PL. The same works for fear checks.
- **Science Fiction**: Again, aliens are just superpowered beings in disguise. Highly advanced technology can be simulated by giving it superpowers. Huge mecha can be either vehicles or Gizmo powersuits.
- **Historical Periods**: If no supernatural abilities exist, it is child's play. You just have to make up statistics for common equipment. If we are talking about alternative history where magic is real, for example… well, you should know the drill by now. Buy a good book or two about the era, or buy the relevant *GURPS* sourcebook. I do not play GURPS, but I really like its supplements. Armed with *GURPS Old West*, for example, you should be able to run a fine Western game.

I hope you have enjoyed the show. This being the end, for now, it is about time to thank Serena M. Aman, Daniel Brown, Kendall P. Bullen, Centurion, Carl L. Congdon, Andrew Craig, Frank Crowell, Dotan Dimet, Eric Garrison, Kathy Heim, Michael Hopcroft, Hyong Kim, Mike Jacobs, Philip Jeffes, Peter Knutsen, Malagigi, Joshua Marquart (a.k.a. Cheese), Duncan Milner, Martin Moore, Randall Orndorff, Steve Perrin, Marcelo Sarsur, Georg "Kalimar" Seipler, Larry Smith, Christopher Weible, Mattias Wikström, the good folks on the Powergame Mailing Lists old and new, and everyone else who expressed interest, gave helpful feedback, or just told me that they had seen Powergame. I doubt the system would have held my interest this long without you. *Thank you*, ladies and gentlemen.

Fight the good fight.
Be nice.
Take care.

-Mikko

Appendix: Power Level Tables

General Ability

PL	Description
0	Impaired ability. One cannot be this bad at anything without a distinct reason.
1-	Poor ability. The character is clumsy, slow, weak-willed, or lacking in some other area.
1	Average ability. More than half of the world's population belongs here in any given category.
1+	Good ability. A clear advantage over average humans.
2	Amazing ability. This is where humans peak.
3	Superhuman ability. Mere mortals cannot be this good.
4-7	These levels indicate increasing amounts of superhuman ability.
8	Cosmic power, an ability that knows no limits.

Damage

PL	Description
1-	Weak attacks. Less powerful than an average punch.
1	Average punch or kick.
1+	Small or improvised melee weapons (knives, nightsticks, bottles, light chairs). Slings and thrown knives. Small-caliber firearms (.22 rimfire, .25 Auto, .32 Auto).
2	Large melee weapons (swords, clubs, spears). Bows and crossbows. Large beast attacks (lions, crocodiles, gorillas). Medium-caliber firearms (includes most handguns and rifle rounds like .30 Carbine and .44-40).
3	Large-caliber firearms; includes shotguns, most rifles and a few handguns (.454 Casull, .50 Action Express; anything more powerful than .44 Magnum). Small explosions (hand grenades, 30-40mm grenade launchers, light mortars). Huge beast attacks (elephants, dinosaurs). Huge melee weapons (two-handed swords, lances, polearms, axes).
4	Portable rocket launchers. Light artillery pieces.
5	Heavy artillery. Modern tank main guns. Tactical missiles. Bombs.
6	Nuclear weapons.
7	Beyond modern human technology. Godlike power. Death Star superlaser.
8	Cosmic power. Matter transformation, creation or destruction. Forces that can do basically anything.

Toughness

PL	Description
1-	Less resistant than a human body. Small animals.
1	Average human body. Man-sized animals.
1+	Athletic human body.
2	Incredibly resilient human body. Ancient body armor. Large animals. Weak structures and small vehicles (thin walls, motorcycles, ultralight aircraft, inflatable boats).
3	Modern body armor. Ordinary structures and vehicles (typical outer walls, automobiles, airplanes, boats). Huge animals.
4	Light armored vehicles and reinforced structures. Armor that is thicker than "bulletproof" but thinner than approximately 100mm.
5	Main battle tanks. Battleships. Bunkers. Star Wars AT-AT Walkers.
6	Deep nuclear weapon shelter.
7	Beyond modern human technology, and beyond most future technologies as well. Some superbeings might reach this level.
8	Cosmic power. Matter transformation, creation or destruction. Forces that can do basically anything.

Range

PL	Effective range
1-	About 10 meters (30 ft). Short-barreled pistols.
1	Less than 50 meters (165 ft). Most thrown objects. Normal pistols and shotguns.
1+	100-150 meters (350-500 ft). SMGs, very long-barreled pistols, and short carbines. Bows.
2	Several hundred meters (1000-2000 ft). Ordinary rifles, light machine guns, and anti-tank rockets.
3	About one kilometer (3300 ft). Sniper rifles and medium machine guns.
4	A few kilometers. Heavy machine guns. Short-range tactical missiles. Tank guns. Mortars.
5	Dozens of kilometers. Long-range tactical missiles. Artillery fire.
6	Intercontinental. Strategic missiles.
7	Interplanetary. Death Star superlaser.
8	Infinite. Cosmic power.

Speed

PL	Description
1-	Out-of-shape humans.
1	Average humans. Top speed around 20 kph (12.4 mph).
1+	Athletic humans.
2	Olympic-level runners. Top speed around 35 kph (21.7 mph).
3	Bicycles. Many animals. Speedboats. Armored combat vehicles. Top speed less than 100 kph (60 mph).
4	Average cars. Very fast boats. Civil helicopters. Top speed less than 250 kph (155 mph).
5	Prop-driven airplanes. Sports cars. Combat helicopters. Top speed less than Mach 1.
6	From supersonic aircraft to spacecraft. Rifle bullets. Missiles.
7	Faster than light spacecraft. Time travel becomes possible.
8	Be where you want to be.

Area of Effect

PL	Area (diameter)
1-	20-30 centimeters (one foot).
1	Roughly one meter (one yard).
1+	Several meters.
2	A dozen meters.
3	Several dozen meters.
4	Roughly one hundred meters.
5	From several hundred meters to one kilometer.
6	Several kilometers.
7	Planet-spanning.
8	Cosmic.

Duration

PL	Power duration
1-	Several seconds (1 combat turn).
1	Up to a minute (1D6+1 turns).
1+	Minutes.
2	Hours.
3	Days.
4	Weeks.
5	Months.
6	Years.
7	Practically forever.
8	Literally forever.

Difficulty

PL	Description
0	Easy task. Success is almost guaranteed.
1-	Demanding task. Success is more likely than failure, but the risk is quite real.
1	Difficult task. 50% chance of failure.
1+	Grueling task. Failure is more likely than success.
2	Herculean task. Even the best and brightest fail 50% of the time, and critical failures are common.
3	Absurd task. Better left to superhumanly capable characters.
4-8	These levels indicate increasing amounts of superhuman difficulty, with PL 8 indicating a task that would challenge even gods.

Macro-Size

PL	Description
1-	Smaller than man-sized. Trash can. Manhole cover. Bicycle. No more than 50 kg (110 lb).
1	Roughly man-sized. Racing or light motorcycle (Yamaha YZR500). 100-125 kg (220-275 lb).
1+	Medium motorcycle. Lamppost. 200-250 kg (450-550 lb).
2	Heavy motorcycle (Honda GL1500 Gold Wing). Snowmobile. Trash dumpster. 400-500 kg (900-1100 lb).
3	Most automobiles. Small helicopter. Bulldozer. Small tree. A few tonnes.
4	Fighter jet (F-16). Tank. Construction crane. Loaded subway car. Large tree. Two-meter boulder. Dozens of tonnes.
5	Anything from hundreds of tonnes (fully loaded train, Boeing 747, Statue of Liberty) to thousands of tonnes (Eiffel Tower, pedestal of the Statue of Liberty, British Type 42 destroyer), and several hundred meters long.
6	Golden Gate Bridge. Empire State Building. Hundreds of thousands of tonnes.
7	Death Star. Small planetoid.
8	Off the scale.

Micro-Size

PL	Description
1-	Child-sized. Less than one meter tall (3 ft). Barely smaller than PL 1- Macro-Size.
1	Doll-sized. Less than half a meter tall (1-1.5 ft).
1+	Action figure-sized. Roughly 10 cm (4 inches).
2	1/72 scale toy soldier-sized. A couple of centimeters (1 inch).
3	Barely visible to plain eyesight. A tiny dot.
4	Cell-sized.
5	Molecule-sized.
6	Atom-sized.
7	Sub-atomic particle.
8	Infinitely small, smaller than anything we know of.