

MESTEZIA RPG

Mestezia is a Tabletop Role Playing Game (TTRPG). Specifically, it's both a tactical game with strong non-combat and combat mechanics and a fantasy setting inspired by myths, styles, and ecology from (mostly pre-Columbian) Latin America. This guide, the Core Rules, explains the game rules with examples from the player's point of view.

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PILLARS OF THE SYSTEM

In some ways Mestezia is similar to many other RPGs. It uses dice rolling to add suspense and variety, uses turns and grids in combat to add tactics, and has an exception-based ruleset. That means it has a streamlined set of core rules, and it defines powers by how they break the rules. Within these paradigms, it prioritizes:

- **Tactics.** Combats take time, as much as an hour to play through, and either you enjoy strategy and tactics or you won't like the system.
- **Non-combat Encounters.** The tactical gameplay extends into purely-collaborative encounters. They provide a framework for anything from epic wilderness journeys to palace intrigue to investigative mysteries. They combine the mini-game-within-a-game approach of traditional combat encounters with robust non-combat powers to play them.
- **Balance.** Different character types have distinct strategies and styles, but none are stronger than the rest, and the GM has tools to gauge the level of difficulty for the party.
- **Collaboration.** Parties are most effective when PCs specialize in different roles and work together. The mechanics encourage coordinating actions with teammates.
- **Active Players.** The system maximizes the amount of time players spend rolling dice, strategizing, and role playing. Record keeping is minimized and players are involved in encounters even when it's not their turn.
- **Focused GM.** NPC creation is gratifyingly fast. At the table, GMs roll no dice and do little math, allowing GMs to focus on strategy, story, and table management.
- **Heroic Adventure.** The resource economy incentivizes players to act heroically, to spend rather than to conserve mechanical resources. Mundane, simulationist details are abstracted to focus on the story and moments of glory and entertainment.



RPG BASICS

The Game World. As a player, your “piece” in this game is your **PC (Player Character)**, through which you can interact with the game world. The only limit to what you can do in the world is your imagination and, sometimes, how high you roll the dice.

Other Characters. Your PC will join with the other PCs to form an adventuring **Party**, which will live in a world run by the **GM (Game Master)**. The GM acts as narrator, rules referee, and plays all the **NPCs (Non-Player Characters)**. Being a GM can be a tough job, so be kind to your GM. Throw a coin to your...nevermind.

Role Playing. The core of an RPG is the role playing. It puts the RP in RPG. That’s where you act out what your PC does and experiences. Some people fully immerse themselves in acting, adopting special voices and trying to stay IC (In Character). Others stay more distant, describing what their PC does and chatting with other players OOC (Out of Character). Either approach can be a lot of fun as long as the others in the table are comfortable with it.

Character Sheet. Your PC has a lot of info relevant to it. To keep it all in one place, it’s written in a (multipage) Character sheet. You can either start with a premade character that has all the info filled in, or create your own character. You’ll also want to have a pencil to take notes or track your resources and 3 10-sided dice.

Turns & Rounds. Sometimes Mestezia will be played like a freeform storytelling session, and sometimes it will be more like a traditional game where everybody takes a turn. Your GM will tell you when to do each.

Grid & Minis. In combat, you’ll need to carefully track where everyone is relative to everything else. When that happens, you’ll use a hexagonal grid. Each space on the grid represents about a 5 foot radius. There will be a mini to represent PC and NPC on the grid.

RESOURCES

Resources represent stats that whose value changes as you gain and/or use the resource.

- **CP (Combat Points)** are a basic resource of a combat encounter and measure how much a PC can do in a round. Combat powers and weapons usually have a cost in terms of CP. All CP disappear after each combat encounter.
- **Sg (Power Surges)** represent infusions of power, whether from the gods, adrenalin, medicines, or other sources. Many powers, especially magic powers or rituals, have surge costs. You can spend FP to gain surges. There is no maximum number of surges.
- **FP (Fate Points)** are resources that your GM hands out, usually after an encounter. There is no maximum number of FPs. FP is not a reward and doesn’t reflect the importance of a scene or the quality of a player’s gaming. PCs can spend an FP to gain either 3 CP or 4 Sg.
- **HP (Hit Points)** measures a PC’s ability to withstand damage. Your PC starts with a Max HP (Maximum HP). When your PC takes damage, its current HP will decrease. If it reaches zero, your PC become Unconscious and may die.
- **Jolts** describe how much HP a character typically recovers when they heal. Jolts are about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the character’s MaxHP plus their Sturdiness bonus.
- **Slots.** As you adventure, you’ll have to
- **XP (eXperience Points)** measure your PC’s experience in adventuring. Your GM gives you XP for participating in scenes and encounters and for achieving plot milestones.
- **Level** measures a character’s overall power. Gaining a new level requires 50 XP.
- **Tier.** Every 5 Levels moves your PC into a new Tier, at which point it gains an extra die to your pool and increase how high you can get your skill values.

SKILLS

Skills represent qualities that a character possesses that can be described purely by a number, the stat's value. All PCs have the same set of stats, but will be stronger in some stats and weaker in others. There are two types of stats: combat skills and challenge skills.

COMBAT SKILLS

Combat Skills are only used in combat. At level 1, your PC's skill values will generally range from +0 to +3.

- **Aim.** Ability to target enemies
- **Damage.** Amount of damage dealt in successful attack
- **Defense.** Efficacy in preventing attacks from succeeding
- **Initiative.** Ability to react quickly & decisively
- **Sturdiness.** Recovery from exertion & injury
- **Speed.** Quickness of movement
- **Teamwork.** Effectiveness in coordinating with allies
- **Will.** Strength of mind and spirit

CHALLENGE SKILLS

Challenge skills are used primarily on out-of-combat aspects of your character, although sometimes they can be used in combat encounters as well. Like with Challenge skills, they are always described by a bonus and will range from +0 to +3 at level 1.

- **Analysis.** Logic, deduction, reasoning, mathematics, investigation, puzzle solving, interpretation
- **Arts.** Aesthetics, fashion, and fine, applied, and performing arts.
- **Biology.** The living world, including medicine, flora, fauna, ecology, and forensics
- **Competition.** Sports, strategy, tactics, games, assessment of strengths and weaknesses
- **Discipline.** Concentration, mental health & stamina, spiritual & emotional stability

- **Domestication.** Farming, fishing, mining, logging, pets, herding, riding, hunting
- **Gods.** Theology, philosophy, primordials, luck, instinct, intuition, fate
- **Hands.** Manual dexterity, hand-eye coordination, handicraft (pottery, weaving, sewing, brewing, woodworking, smithing, etc.)
- **Health.** Resistance to and recovery from injury, disease, toxins, or stress
- **Influence.** Charisma, wealth, societal position, reputation
- **Insight.** Understanding people, gut instinct, emotional & spiritual perception
- **Kinesthetics.** Agility, flexibility, reflexes, and balance.
- **Lore.** Memory, scholarship, history, research
- **Perception.** Physical or supernatural senses, marksmanship, awareness
- **Physics.** Astronomy, geology, meteorology, chemistry, mechanics, dynamics
- **Societies.** Institutions, governments, traditions, roles, cultures, languages, and communication
- **Spirits.** Other planes, occult knowledge, spirituality, and spiritual beings.
- **Strength.** Physical power, speed, endurance
- **Trickery.** Deceptions, lies, tall tales, acting, disguises, tricks, diversions, hiding, sneaking, pranks



SKILL CHECKS

Some actions automatically succeed (e.g. your PC scratches its nose without trouble). Some attempted actions automatically fail (e.g. your PC did not spontaneously sink through the floor, no matter how embarrassed it felt). However, many things fall into neither category; you have to make a check—a role of your dice—to see what happens.

Dice Pool. Checks always involve rolling multiple 10-sided dice. When you start the game, you'll have three dice to roll. Those three dice are your dice pool.

Modifiers. A modifier is a numerical bonus or penalty that you apply to each die when you roll your dice pool. For example, if you roll 8, 6, and 1, and your modifier is +3, then you treat the roll as being 11, 9, and 4.

Threshold. The threshold is the minimum number that you need to get when you roll your dice pool. Each die is treated separately; they don't add together. If the Threshold is 9, then with the roll from above, two of the dice made the threshold.

Grade. Your grade is the number of rolls that meet or exceed the threshold.

- 0 Fail
- 1 Low
- 2 Medium
- 3 High

Stacking. Stacking is when you add together numerical modifiers. Normally, bonuses and penalties stack, which means you add them together. For example, if you normally have +1 to Aim, but then an ally grants you another +1, then you have a +2 to Aim overall. If a rule says a particular set of modifiers don't stack, that means you don't add them together, you just use the biggest modifier that currently applies.

SKILL CHECK SEQUENCE

1. **Player:** Describe you're trying to do in-game.
2. **GM:** Decide what skills and threshold apply. The player can make a suggestion, but the GM decides.
3. **Player:** Roll dice pool and add modifiers to get the grade. Declare the grade so the GM can hear.
4. **GM:** Declare the in-game results of the check: knowledge learned, effects of actions, etc.

So a check would go something like this:

You: I duck out of the way!

GM: Roll a Kinesthetics check. Threshold is 9.



You: Let's see, the dice are 8, 6, and 1. I have a +3 bonus to Kinesthetics, so I rolled a 11, 9, and 4. Two dice meet the threshold. Woo hoo! It's a Medium!

GM: The dart whizzes above your head as you duck, plinking onto the wall and bouncing off it.

COMBO CHECKS

Checks may use more than one skill, which means you add the bonuses together. It's up to the GM to decide which skills apply to what you're trying to achieve. Generally, the more skills used in a combo check, the higher the threshold you'll need to meet. For example, if you want to bluff your way into the secret meeting, it might go something like this.

You: I try to bluff my way into the meeting. I take out my scroll and walk up to the guard frantically counting off numbers. When I get to the door, I pretend I'm a scribe and supposed to already be there.

GM: That would be a Influence + Trickery check. The threshold is 11.

You: I rolled 4, 5, and 10. Let's see, if I add both my skill bonuses together, that gives me a +4. So my rolls are 9, 14, and 8. Ugh, Low, but so close to a Medium!

GM: The guard gives you the stink eye and grips her weapon a little more strongly, but doesn't do anything further.

AID THE CHECK

Often, your allies can improve your check by making a check themselves. Each player adds +1 to one die for each Grade they make. Each ally can only add their bonus to one die, even if they make more than one grade. Continuing the bluffing example, an ally jumping in and Aid the original check like so.

Ally: I try to help her bluff. I run up to her and berate her for not making it in on time.

GM: Okay, that's also a Influence + Trickery for 11, too.

Ally: I rolled 12, 11, and 14. You get a +3 to the nine, and that's enough to push it to Medium!

GM: The guard opens the door and gestures you inside.

POWERS

Your PC's powers define the actions it can take that are different than those other characters can take. In this way they're different than skills. Everyone has the same set of skills, but a different set of powers. Also, powers only come into effect when actively used.

Powers are described in a standard way, with each bit of information about the power explained on its own line. For example, let's take

Berserker Charge

Cost: [Weapon + 1] CP

Before: Walk up to [Speed + 1] hexes

Target: Enemy in [Weapon Reach]

Threshold: Target's Defense

Check: [Attack + Strength]

Result: [Weapon + Grade] damage

Keywords: *Berserker Melee [Weapon] Charge*

BRACKET NOTATION

Sometimes, a feature will include something in square brackets, such as +[Grade] or [Strength + 1] or [Target's Jolt]. When you see this, replace whatever's between the brackets with an actual number that it represents. For example, if you make a check and get a Grade 2, then replace +[Grade] with +2 for that use of the power. If you have a Strength of +2, the power uses [Strength+1], that sums to +3.

NOTATION LINES

- **After.** Describes what happens after the power's Effect ends and its Results are resolved.
- **Before.** Describes what happens before the Check or, if there is no Check, before the Result or Effect.
- **Check.** The bonuses used for the power's Check.
- **Cost.** The resources you need to spend in order to use the power.

- **Effect.** A state imposed by the power. If a grade is specified (e.g. Effect 1) then the Effect only applies if the check result is equal or higher than the specified grade.
- **Halt.** Describes when or under what conditions an effect ends.
- **Invest.** The number of round segments until the result of effect resolves.
- **Keywords.** The power type, source, discipline, and damage types. Written in italics.
- **Prereq.** You must have the prereq in order to gain the feature. If you lose the prereq, you also lose the feature and must replace it with something else.
- **Result.** Describes what the power immediately. If a grade is specified (e.g. Result 1) then the result only applies if the check result is equal or higher than this grade.
- **Sustain.** Defines the requirements to continue an effect.
- **Target.** What a power can be used on. You, Allies, Party (You and Allies), Enemies, Creatures (You, Allies, and Enemies), Hexes, or Items. If no target is specified, You are the target.
- **Threshold.** The number or stat used as the check threshold for the power.
- **Trigger.** A circumstance that needs to occur immediately before you use the power. The triggering circumstance resolves before the power applies unless it says otherwise. If multiple powers trigger off the same event, players can decide the order that the triggered powers resolve.
- **While.** You can only use the power while you meet the specified condition (such as being bloodied or wielding a weapon). If you don't meet the While requirement, you can have the power, but you can't use it.

POWER CHECKS

Powers often depend on checks. The difference between skill checks and power checks is that with skill checks, you describe what you want to do in-game and the GM tells you what skill check would be appropriate. In contrast, powers define which skills they use; they don't require the GM to make a ruling. They still

No Aiding: The other difference between skill checks and power checks is that allies can't Aid your power checks like they can a skill check.

HALT & SUSTAIN

Sometimes a power will allow you to Halt a bad effect or Sustain a good effect by making a check. When that's the case, always use the same check and threshold you originally used in the power.

POWER CHECK SEQUENCE

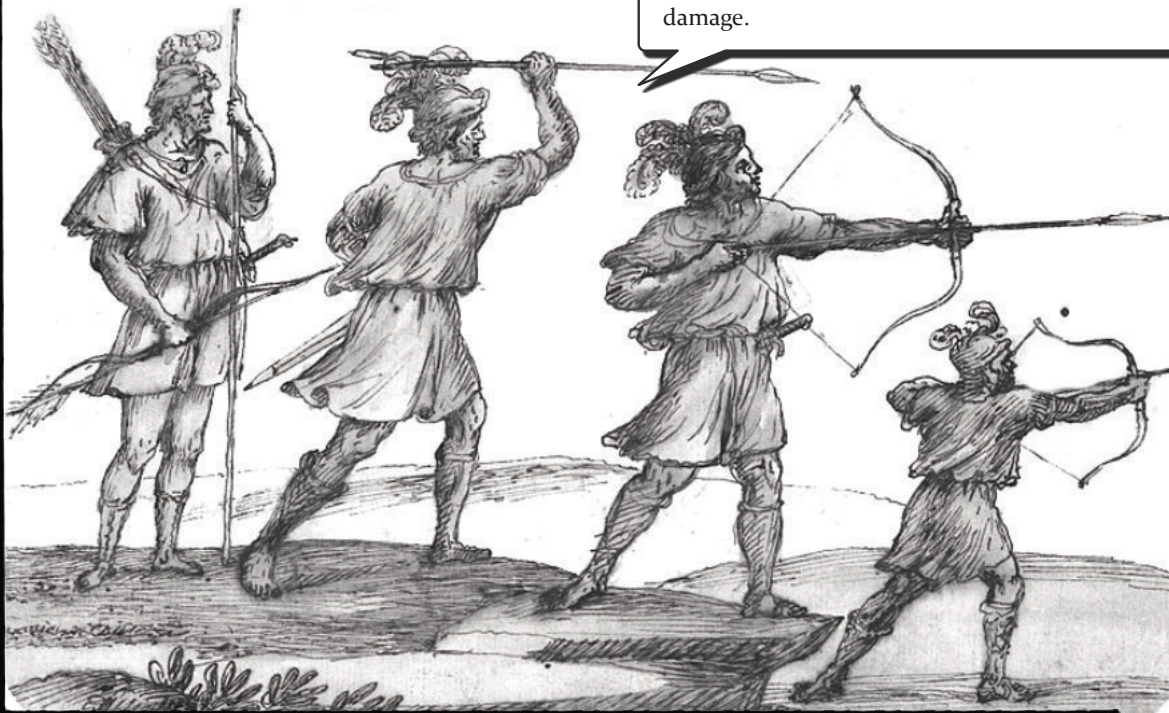
1. **Player:** Describe what you do in-game, then declare which power you're using. Declare any costs you spend to use it. The power will define the Threshold and Check. Declare those out loud, too.
2. **GM:** If the power defines the Threshold with a stat (e.g. "Target's Defense") rather than a number (e.g. "11"), then provide the number that goes with that stat.
3. **Player:** Roll dice pool and add modifiers to get the grade. Declare the grade so the GM can hear. Declare the results or effects of the power.

So a power check would go something like this:

You: I make an earsplitting call. Aikikikikiki! And then run at the Inquisitor. I'm using 4 CP to use my "Berserker Charge" against his Defense."

GM: His threshold's a 12.

You: Let's see, I have a modifier of +6; Ha, I rolled a High! It's a mighty blow. I do 15 HP damage.



POWER TYPES

Powers are categorized by type, which defines when and how your PC can use the power.

ATTACK

Attacks are quick powers that damage opponents. In encounters, they can only be used on your turn. They include:

- **Strikes** are basic, uncomplicated attacks
- **Shoves** move the enemy
- **Charges** allow you to move first and then attack
- **Grapples** restrain or control the enemy physically
- **Taunts** affect the enemy mentally

REACTION

Reactions are very quick powers. They can only be used when a triggering condition is met. By default, they resolve after the triggering condition. If more than one reaction is triggered by the same condition, the players can choose the order of resolution. They include:

- **Aids** help an ally's actions
- **Evasions** protect you from attacks
- **Hides** allow you to escape targeting and perception
- **Opportunities** allow you to respond with an attack
- **Shields** allow you to protect an ally

MASTERY

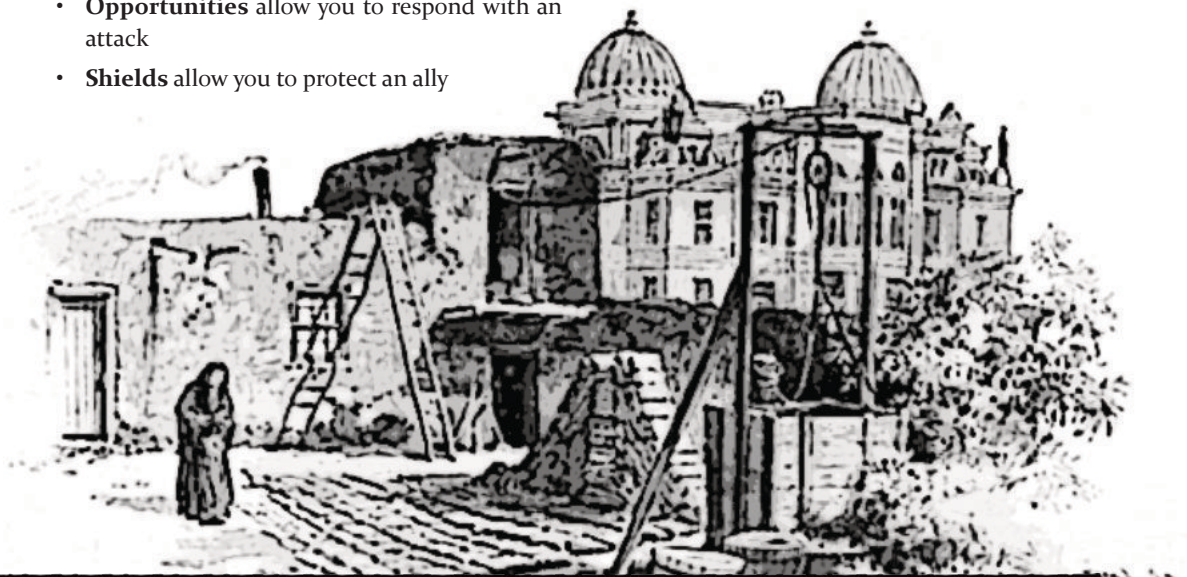
Masteries help in challenge encounters and often result in Breakthroughs or Setbacks. They include:

- **Tasks** must be used once per round on your turn.
- **Recoveries** can be used on other people's turns

UTILITY

Utilities can be used at any time. If a power is both a utility and a reaction or attack, then inside of combat it follows the rules of a reaction or attack respectively. They include

- **Bufs** improve checks or grant beneficial conditions
- **Conjurations** temporally create, summon, or alter items, creatures, or terrain features.
- **Enablers** allow Allies to use powers when they normally can't or directly affect CP, FP, or the Turn Order
- **Heals** increase HP or Sg or help remove negative conditions
- **Positions** move yourself and allies physically
- **Rituals** can only be used outside of combat because they take a long time to complete



DISCIPLINES

In addition to having a type, powers may belong to a discipline. Disciplines define what the power does in-game as well as the damage types of spell effects it creates for in an attack.

ALCHEMY

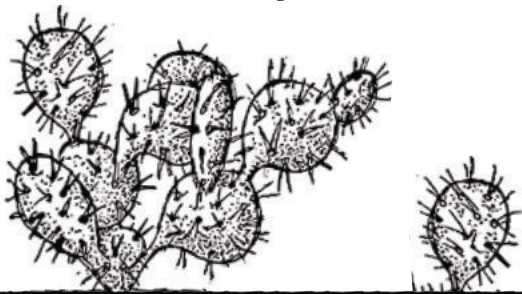
Alchemies create or change core physical substances.

- **Air.** Invisible gasses, wind or solid thought
- **Earth.** Solid, physical materials; sand, soil, rock, metal, crystals, minerals
- **Toxin.** Destructive chemical substances: poisons, venoms, acids, bases.
- **Water.** Rain, fog, humidity, or running water
- **Polymorphs** change the physical characteristics of a complex item or creature

BINDING

Bindings involve communication and connections.

- **Negations** remove effects and resistance elements,
- **Communication.** Understanding languages, empathy, telepathy, speaking with spirits
- **Divination.** Fortelling, detection, remote sensing, interpretation of divine signs
- **Enchantments** confer conditions or powers
- **Summonings** levy, create, or awaken creatures to serve the summoner. The summoned creatures are allies. They have no actions or turns of their own. The summoner spends its own CPs to command the creature. The Summoner can do so only if he or she has line of effect to the creature. When commanding the creature, the Summoner shares its knowledge but not its senses.



CHARM

Charms influence the target's actions, thoughts, or emotions.

- **Euphoria.** Effects that create ecstasy, may pull targets.
- **Fear.** Effects that inspire terror and panic, may push targets
- **Madness.** Causes confusion and mental turmoil, may cause targets to attack other combatants
- **Quietus.** Stills the mind and drains energy, may slow or stop targets

EVOCATION

Evocations create, manipulate, or negate energies. Things created through evocation cannot be attacked (they are not true items or creatures), nor are they affected by the natural environment. Evocations end immediately if the evoker dies.

- **Cold.** Dropping temperatures, condensing gasses, crystalizing liquids, and freezing solids
- **Fire.** Explosive bursts, fiery rays, heat, or ignition
- **Electricity.** Lightning, static, and electric currents
- **Necrosis.** Destructive process that rots wood, rusts metal, disintegrates stone, and decays flesh
- **Radiance.** Searing white light or shimmering colors
- **Sound.** Shock waves and sonic effects.

WEAPON

Weapon powers add the weapon's Cost, Reach, Damage, and Keywords to their own. They generally don't have require Investment.

- **Bludgeoning.** Blunt force physical trauma
- **Piercing.** sharp, targeted physical damage

TRAITS

Traits are aspects of a character that are not present in all characters. Unlike powers, they apply all the time, without needing to actively use them. Traits have the following types:

- **Feats** grant effects or improve Stats. The effects can be permanent or conditional, but not temporary.
- **Items** have an effect when the item is used.
- **Relationships** define formal connections to NPC organizations.
- **Stances** are effects that a character can choose to temporarily adopt, usually by spending CP, Sg, or time. You can only adopt one stance at a time. Many stances are associated with powers that can only be used while you are in that stance. You cannot sustain a stance while unconscious.
- **Upgrades** improve a specific or type of power or trait.

EXAMPLE TRAITS

Clockwork Engineer

To: Sound or Electricity Attacks

Add: Add [Tier+1] to any Sound or Electricity damage you do. Any creatures that you control that have the Construct keyword gain a +1 bonus to their Attacks.

Keywords: *Techno Upgrade*

Witchcraft Kit

Slots: 1

Details: Ceremonial garb, a travel brazier with a supply of incense and herbs, mortar and pestle, strings and small clothes of various colors and materials, and a ceremonial knife.

Keywords: *Occult Stowed Item*

NOTATION LINES

- **Add.** With Upgrades, defines something to be added to a power (preceded by a To line).
- **Cost.** The resources you need to spend in order to adopt the trait. Typically used with stances
- **Details.** In-game, non-mechanical information about the trait
- **Effect.** A state imposed by the trait
- **Group.** With Relationships, Group defines the characters to whom the relationship applies.
- **Keywords.** The power source, usage, and power type. Written in italics.
- **Prereq.** You must have the prereq in order to gain the feature. If you lose the prereq, you also lose the feature and must replace it with something else.
- **Replace.** With Upgrades, defines something to remove from a power (followed by a With line).
- **Slots.** For Items, the number of item slots the item occupies.
- **To.** With Upgrades, defines which power the upgrade applies to (followed by an Add line).
- **Trigger.** A circumstance that needs to occur in order to apply the trait. The triggering circumstance resolves before the trait applies unless it says otherwise. If multiple powers and traits trigger off the same event, players can decide the order in which they resolve.
- **While.** You can only apply the trait while you meet the specified condition (such as being bloodied or wielding a weapon). If you don't meet the While requirement, you can have the feature, but you don't apply its effects.
- **With.** With Upgrades, defines something to be put in place of the Replace line in a power (preceded by a Replace line).

SCENES

Playing an RPG creates a story, and it's useful to break the story into discrete episodes within the larger plot of the adventure. These episodes are called scenes and encounters.

A scene is a freeform exchange between the players and the GM. Aside from occasional checks, the scene is played out through role playing and discussion without any other rules or mechanics. The focus is on developing the story, learning about the world, and acting in-character. Sometimes there are clear transitions between scenes as players change location or skip ahead in time. However, often scenes blur together without a clear transition.

ROLE PLAYING SCENES

Role playing scenes have the players stay in-character or narrate their actions in detail. The in-game pace flows at about the same as real-time. Some groups may prefer very strong in-character role playing with minimal narration, while others may enjoy interspersing narration with jokes and player socializing. Either approach is fine, as long as the group agrees in general how you want to approach narrative scenes.

DOWNTIME SCENES

Downtime scenes are primarily summarized or described. Often very little plot happens in downtime scenes, but they're useful to cover practical details like shopping, camping, researching, training, etc. Because it's primarily summarized, downtime scenes often cover days or weeks of in-game time with very little time spent in real-world time.





ENCOUNTERS

In contrast to scenes, encounters are structured mini-games within the larger game. Crucially encounters have goals, ways to determine the party succeeds or fails. Your party may be trying to protect someone from assassination, capture an accused criminal, stop the spread of an epidemic, investigate a mystery, hold out in a location until reinforcements arrive, explore a dangerous new plane, kill the infected monster threatening a town, or break a doomsday device guarded by protectors.

If you succeed in the encounter, you'll have achieved the goal you challenged yourself with.

What failure looks like depends on the GM and the situation. You may gain some benefit even if it's not everything you were aiming for, or you may land in an even more precarious situation than you started with. Either way, you'll gain FP and move the story forward.

COMBAT ENCOUNTERS

Combat Encounters are a staple of RPGs. They pit the PCs against defined opponents. They use minis or tokens to represent their place on a battle grid, use Attack and Reaction powers, and are often (though not always) won by defeating enemies. Time is short during a combat, with each turn representing just a handful of seconds.

CHALLENGE ENCOUNTERS

Challenge Encounters are purely cooperative, there are no opponents. They don't use grids and minis, they do use Mastery and Ritual powers, and are typically won by gaining a set number of Breakthroughs before a maximum number of Setbacks. Time is variable in challenge encounters, with GM able to decide on a different ratio between real time and game time for each challenge.

ORDER OF PLAY

Encounters have clear transitions where the GM declares situation and rules specific to the encounter. Each player take turns, and the turns are organized into rounds of play.

1. **Define the Encounter.** In Challenges, the GM specify what skills can be used and the success and failure conditions. In Combat, they describe the battle grid and combatants and position characters on the grid.
2. **Establish the Turn Order.** A round is divided into 10 segments. Each player rolls a d10 to determine the segment in which they have their turn, with highest going first. If two players roll the same, they can decide who goes first. In Combat encounters, players add their initiative bonus to the roll. If their initiative is greater than 10, they go in segment 10 and start with Initiative - 10 additional CP in the first round.
3. **Each Round, in Turn Order,** each PC takes a turn. Turn order is handled a little differently between challenges and combat
4. **After the Encounter.** The GM awards FP and XP regardless of whether you succeed or fail. In combat, all unused CP is lost at the end of an encounter. Then the GM prompts you with details for you to begin the next scene or encounter.

CHALLENGES

Challenges may include solving a murder mystery, containing an epidemic, or achieving social success in an aristocratic court. A challenge might begin as follows.

You: We're going to search the city for the missing Cacique.

GM: Okay, we're going to do this as a Challenge. You may use Analysis, Cultures, Discipline, Influence, Perception, and Trickery. You have to get five Breakthroughs before you get four Setbacks. This whole challenge is taking place over the course of one evening. I'll leave it to you whether your turns happen simultaneously or sequentially, in-game. Any questions? No? Roll for Turn

TURN SEQUENCE

You may not skip or delay your turn unless a power allows you to do so. On your turn you do the following:

- **Use 1 Task Mastery.** You have to use a task mastery on your turn, most allow you to choose the skill or skills for the check.
 - a. **Choose your skills** to use if there's a choice and
 - b. **Describe to the GM** what it means in terms of role playing
 - c. **Roll your dice pool** and add modifiers to get the result. Declare it result out loud.
 - d. **GM describes** what this means in-game.
- **(Optional) Use 1 other power.** It may be a Ritual, a Utility, or a non-task Mastery. You may do so either before or after using the task mastery.

You: I'm going to go to the tallest lookout tower in the fort and carefully watch the traffic around the city. I want to watch for signs of the Cacique or the kidnappers or something suspicious. I'm going to **Accept the Challenge** using Discipline + Perception.

GM: Sounds good. Roll it. The threshold is 12

You: I rolled 16, 14, 11 and 7.

GM: You made it. Breakthrough! Your team has four Breakthroughs now. In the distance, something catches your eye. It looks like some ruffians carrying a luxurious tapestry into an abandoned warehouse, but the tapestry looks like it's moving.

Now, the GM may not always accept your description as matching the skill(s) you chose. If that's the case, they may guide you to choices that better match what you're trying to do. For example, it the next turn might go like this:

Player2: Ugh, I'm horrible at all these skills, so I'm going to try to **Build Momentum**. How about I use Analysis to try to convince the guard that I'm part of their crew and sneak in to the warehouse.

GM: That would be more like Trickery. Taking pity on you, I'll also accept Influence.

Player2: I'm even worse at Trickery and Influence! How about I try to convince the guard that our party is going to wipe the floor with them, and he's better off running quietly. Would that be Analysis?

GM: I'll accept it. Roll it. Threshold still 12.

Player2: I got one 13! Phew, made it! No Breakthrough, but the next player has a +1 to their check.

GM: The door guard looks at you nervously and scrambles to get out of the neighborhood. The warehouse looms before you and you hear a muffled voice deep within.

COMBAT

Like challenges, combat encounters can arise from different situations and have different goals. You may be trying to protect someone from assassination, capture an accused criminal, defend a location until reinforcements arrive, kill an rabid beasts threatening a town, compete in a wrestling match for fun and glory, or break a doomsday device guarded by protectors. Sometimes the best way to do this is to defeat the other side, but other times you're better off focusing on the strategic goal. What makes combats different than challenges is its detailed handling of space (by use of the battle grid) and time (by use of CPs).

TURN SEQUENCE

Unlike with challenge turns, your combat turns happen in strict order.

1. **Start Phase** only happens once per round, even if you delay. It always happens, even if you're unconscious. During your Start Phase, you Sustain effects. If you need to Sustain more than one Effect, you may chose the order. If you do not sustain a sustained effect, it ends
2. **Delay (Optional)**. You can choose to delay your turn an arbitrary number of turns or segments. This moves you down in the Turn Order. You cannot delay past the end of a round to go at the beginning of the next round.
3. **Reset CP**. You lose all unspent CP and gain 6 CP.
4. **Action Phase**. Use combat powers for which you can pay the cost. These include include Attack, Reaction, and Utility powers.
5. **End Phase** occurs exactly once per round, even if you're unconscious or delay. During the End Phase, you Halt Effects. If you have more than one Effect to Halt, you may choose the order in which they occur.

On any characters' Action Phases: Up to once per turn, you may exchange 1 FP for 4 Surges or for 3 APs. This may happen at any point in the phase. You may also use any Triggered Reaction powers for which you can pay the cost and can satisfy the

trigger. The triggering condition resolves before your triggered power, unless otherwise stated in the power description.

EXAMPLE DECLARATION

GM. The hairs on the back of your neck start to rise. Listening closely, you hear low snarls moments before you see a pack of white coyotes emerge from the fog. Their eyes look like black obsidian covered with gold dust. It's combat time! The plain is flat, but the fog cuts down on visibility and muffles sound. Anything more than 6 hexes away has Concealment 1. You can perceive coyotes over here (indicated places on the battlemap). You can set yourselves up anywhere over here (indicates other places on the map). Roll for Turn Order, and then I'll tell you what you know about the coyotes combat abilities.

SUCCESS & FAILURE

Like challenges, combat encounters can arise from different situations and have different goals. Your party may be trying to protect someone from assassination, capture an accused criminal, hold out in a location until reinforcements arrive, kill the infected monster threatening a town, or break a doomsday device guarded by protectors. And the stakes are sometimes death, but may also include a wager, capture, reputation, or prizes.

If you succeed in the encounter, you'll have achieved the goal you challenged yourself with. What failure looks like depends on the GM and the situation. You may gain some benefit even if it's not everything you were aiming for, or you may land in an even more precarious situation than you started with. Either way, you'll gain FP and move the story forward.

Remember, all unused CP is lost at the end of the combat.

ATTACKING

To attack an enemy on your turn, choose an *Attack* power and a target, then roll an Attack Check. If you attack multiple creatures with a single power, you only roll once. If they have different thresholds, they may get different results from the same check. *Opportunity* powers allow you to attack during other turns, as long as the Trigger is satisfied and you pay the cost.

Player (moving her mini on the battlegrid): I use one CP to move to here. Then I take a small poppet from my waist pouch, whispering Enrique's name three times. Then I cover it with a black cloth. I'm using three APs and a surge to cast Sleep on Enrique, attacking his Will.

GM: Okay, roll it. The threshold is 12.

You: I rolled a...3, a High! Enrique's eyes slowly shut, and he starts to snore. He takes 12 Quietus damage and gains the Unconscious condition, Sustain check to keep it going. He is out of the fight! Nobody touch him though, or he might wake up. I want to save my last CP to sustain the sleep, and I don't have any conditions to halt, so I'm done with my turn.

DEFENDING

If an NPC attacks you, roll a Defense Check. The GM may specify additional modifiers. *Hide* and *Evasion* powers replace the defense check. If you want to use one, declare it before you roll your dice pool. *Shield* and *Opportunity* powers do not replace the defense check, but they may trigger off an attack. You may declare them after the defense check is rolled.

GM: Then it's the mushroom's turn. It suddenly explodes in a mass of spores. It attacks your Defense+Health, Player. The Threshold is 10.

You: Let's see...16, 10, and 12. I got a High result. Do I even notice?

GM: You sneeze and take 1 HP damage.

Or if you have an Evasion power, your response to the mushroom's attack may be more like this:

DAMAGE

Damage is the amount of HP you subtract when you get injured. Attack and Opportunity powers often do damage. Sometimes, a power specifies a type of damage, e.g. "4 fire damage." If a power doesn't specify a damage type, the damage is untyped.

You: I sneer at the spores, drawing on my extensive training in allergy resistance. I spend a CP for my 'Bastion of Defense.' Let's see...16, 10, and 12. I got a High result, so I'll resist 2 damage.

GM: Most of the spores are blown back, but a few get through. They would have done 1 HP damage, but with your resistance, you don't take any of it.

You: Puny Spores! You are nothing compared to the mighty Ragweed!

HEALING

If your HP is less than your Max HP, Heal powers can add to the current HP. You can never have more than your Max HP. Many Heal spells often allow characters to regain HP.

List of Health Statuses

- **Healthy.** You have at least 3/4 of your max HP.
- **Injured.** You have less than 3/4 of your max HP.
- **Bloodied.** You have half your max HP or less.
- **Maimed.** You have 1/4 of your max HP or less.
- **Dying.** You're at 0 HP. You're Unconscious. Lose this condition by getting Healed.

EFFECTS

Effects are states that can apply to a creature (PCs and NPCs), a terrain space, or an object. Although some effects are unique to a specific power, many effects are common enough to have a keyword identifier. Those are called Conditions. Effects either last while they are Sustained by the caster or end when they're Halted by the target, their ally, or a triggering event.

Conditions Don't Stack. Identical effects apply concurrently and never stack, even if they're from different sources. So if one power makes you Sense Deprived for one round, and another makes you Sense Deprived for two rounds, you are Sense Deprived for two rounds total, not three, and the total penalty to Perception is the normal -2. Likewise, if you gain CA from multiple sources, you still only get the usual +1 to Attack.

CREATURE CONDITIONS

- **Advantage.** Gain +1 to Attack. Advantage is relative; in any pair of combatants, either, both, or neither might have Advantage against the other.
- **Boosted N.** You gain an extra N HP each time you Heal yourself or are Healed by another.
- **Clumsy.** Take a -1 to Defense and Kinesthetics.
- **Concealed N.** Gain a +N to Defense from Directed Attacks. Concealed is relative; in any pair of combatants, either, both, or neither might be Concealed against the other.
- **Dazed.** Grant Advantage and can't flank an enemy. Also, on your turn, you can gain 2 fewer CP. You can't take Reactions or exchange FP for CP.
- **Distracted.** Take a -1 to Will and to Discipline. Enemies can try to hide from you as if they had cover.
- **Dominated.** You're Dazed. The dominating creature chooses your action. The only powers it can make you use are Strikes and Utilities..
- **Entangled.** Slowed and can't shift
- **Faint.** You take a -1 to Health, Strength, and Speed.
- **Focused.** You grant Advantage to all.
- **Grabbed.** You're immobilized. The grab automatically ends if the grabber is subjected to an effect that prevents it from taking actions, or if the creature ends up outside the range of the grabbing power or effect.
- **Hasted.** Gain +2 to Speed and you gain one extra CP for your turn.
- **Immobilized.** You can't move from your space, except by Teleporting or being Positioned.
- **Insubstantial.** You take half damage from any attack that deals damage to you (rounded up to the nearest whole number). Ongoing damage is also halved.
- **Invisible.** All other targets treats you as if they're Sense Deprived in relation to you.
- **Lucky.** You gain a +1 to all checks.
- **Marked.** Take a -1 to Attack for any attack that doesn't target the creature that Marked you.
- **Ongoing N [Type] Damage.** Take N damage each round at the start of your turn. If you have Ongoing Damage of different damage types, they are considered different conditions and the damage stacks..
- **Phasing.** Ignore Rough terrain and can move through obstacles and other creatures. You must end your movement in an unoccupied space.
- **Prone.** Are lying down. You are Slowed, take -2 to Attacks. You also grant CA in Melee but gain Protected 1 on Ranged attacks.
- **Polymorphed.** Not in your native physical shape. You can only be affected by one polymorph at a time—the most recently cast one. A polymorph ends immediately on a creature that dies or gets polymorphed into a new shape.
- **Protected N.** Gain +N to Defense.
- **Regenerating N.** You regain N HP per round at the start phase of your turn.
- **Resistant [Type] N.** When you take damage of that Type, subtract N from the amount of damage you take. If you take damage that combines multiple damage types, then you

must Resist all of them for the resistance to apply. If your resistance is greater than the damage, then you take no damage.

- **Restrained.** Grant Advantage. You're Immobilized. You take a -1 penalty to attack rolls. You can't be Positioned, but can be teleported.
- **Sense Deprived.** You grant Advantage, can't flank, and take a -2 penalty to Perception checks. Also, your targets gain Concealed 5 from you.
- **Sickly N.** When you Heal, subtract N from the total HP healed. If the difference is 1 or less, treat it as 1 HP.
- **Slowed.** Your Speed becomes 1. You can't use Reactions.
- **Slippery.** Gain +1 Positioning checks, and to halt Restrained and Grabbed.
- **Stunned.** Grant Advantage, and you can't flank an enemy or use powers.
- **Unconscious.** Grant Advantage to all, take a -5 penalty to all Defense, and can't use powers or make checks. You fall prone..
- **Unlucky.** Gain a -1 to all checks.
- **Vulnerable [Type] N.** When you take damage of that Type, you take an addition N damage. If the type is undefined, it's considered untyped and you take the extra damage every time you take damage. If you are vulnerable to multiple damage types, the vulnerability applies when you take at least one of those damage types.
- **Weakened.** Your attacks deal half damage. Ongoing damage you deal is not affected.



TERRAIN

Combat takes place on a hexagonal battle grid. A hex on the grid represents about a 5-foot diameter area in the game world. Your speed and movement is measured in terms of hexes on the grid. For example, a character with a speed of 3 can move up to 3 hexes on the battle grid (or about 15 feet) using when they move.

Occupying a space. A creature occupies the hex it is in. This means no one else can be in it at the same time. You can move through a hex occupied by an ally, but you can't move through an enemy's space. You can't end your turn in a space occupied by another creature.

Zones are a set of connected hexes that share a terrain condition. A zone cannot be attacked. Sometimes, an Area power creates a zone by using its area of effect to define the boundaries of the zone. If a zone's creator is slain, the zone ends. Modifiers caused by zones of the same type do not stack even if the zones overlap.

Auras are zones centered on, and move with, a creature. The creature the zone is centered on is the aura's origin. An aura's effects do not affect the origin. If the aura's creator falls unconscious, the aura disappears.

TERRAIN TYPES

- **Aquatic.** Liquid. Generally water, but not always. Movement requires a Swim mode or a check.
- **Arboreal.** Tall structures placed closely together. Creatures may use a Climb mode or a check to get to the top, which is considered *High* ground and may have different terrain than the ground. Any creature on top can coexist in the same space as a creature on the ground in the same hex.
- **Aerial.** Air or gaseous. Movement through it requires a Fly mode, otherwise the character falls.
- **Flat.** Normal ground, the default terrain type.
- **Solid.** Filled with earth or other material - e.g.

a thick wall or underground. Movement through it requires a Burrow mode, teleportation, or the phasing condition.

TERRAIN CONDITIONS

- **Dim N.** Targets within or on the other side of a Dim N space gain the Concealed N condition.
- **Elemental (Damage Type) N.** Creatures who enter or start their turn in Elemental N terrain take N hit points of Damage Type damage
- **Eerie N.** Creatures who enter Eerie terrain must make a Will defense check. If they fail the check, they must treat it as Rough N terrain or use all their actions to move towards the closest boundary of the Eerie terrain.
- **Empowering (type)** Creatures of the matching type (e.g. primal) who end their turn in an Empowering spot gain an additional CP at the end of their turn.
- **Entangling.** Creatures who enter Entangling terrain must make a check gain the Entangled condition.
- **High.** Creatures in High terrain gain CA over those in spaces who lack it..
- **Interior.** Interior terrain has ceilings, with the height measured in hexes.
- **Reactive.** Reactive terrain has triggered powers.
- **Rough N.** Creatures must use N steps to move each hex in Rough terrain. If you don't have enough movement to enter a hex of Rough terrain, you can't enter it.
- **Shielding N.** Creatures gain the Protected N condition while in Shielding N terrain.
- **Slippery N.** Creatures must pass a check or gain the Prone condition after they move. Characters gain +1 to powers imposing forced movement if the target of the movement would moves through a slippery spot.
- **Unstable.** Terrain which is Unstable changes keywords or types based on a countdown.
- **Windy.** Creatures in a Windy hex take -1 to Perception. In addition, any Ranged Weapon Attack that originates, passes through, or targets a windy hex takes a -1 to Attack.

TARGETING

In order to target something, you have to meet two criteria:

1. **Within Reach.** The number of hexes between your character and your target must be less than or equal to the ability's reach. An ability's reach is the furthest hex from you it can target. So Melee 1 means it can target up to 1 hex away—the adjacent hex. Melee 3 means it can target up to 3 hexes away.
2. **Line to Target.** You must have an unblocked line from your hex to the target (for directed spells) or origin hex (for area spells). To do this, imagine that there are lines from the corners of the hex your PC occupies to the corners your target's hex. If you can find at least one line that doesn't pass through something that blocks it physically (e.g. a wall) or perceptually (e.g. invisibility shield), then there exists a line to target. Lines to Targets cannot be blocked by creatures; you can target through both enemies and allies.

Targets are defined by up to 4 aspects

1. **Qualifier**, such as "All enemies" or "1-2 bloodied creatures"
2. **Type.** Melee or Ranged
 - a. **Melee** powers target nearby creatures, hexes, or items. By default, characters have a melee reach of 1 hex, meaning they can target adjacent hexes.
 - b. **Ranged** powers target distant creatures, hexes, or items. If you throw something, you have a default reach of 5 hexes.
3. **Reach.** The maximum distance away the power can affect.
4. **Area Shape & Size.** Area powers affect connected groups of hexes. They always indicate a shape (burst, cone, path, or ray) and a size. If a Shape and Size is indicated, then it's always an Area power. If it isn't, then it's a Directed power.

All area abilities have a size, measured from an origin hex. For melee area powers, the origin hex is you, although it doesn't target you. For ranged area powers, the origin hex is the hex of your choice within the power's reach. Ranged powers do target you by default if you're in their area of effect. If an area's height is not specified, it's the same as the size.

Size 1

Size 2

Size 3

Burst. An area that starts in an origin square and extends in all directions to a specified number of hexes from the origin, creating a hexagon around it.



Cone. An area shaped like a triangle, with one of the corners of the triangle being the origin, and the size of the cone being the number of hexes from the origin along each side. (E.g. an equilateral triangle with sides of length size+1).



Path. A path is an area that starts at an origin hex and extends to an adjacent hex, from that hex to another adjacent hex, and so on. The size of the path is the number of hexes it travel from the origin. Each hex of the path can only touch at most two other hexes in the path. In other words, a path cannot cross or touch itself, but it can curve and twist.



Ray. A ray is a type of path where the hexes form a straight line. It starts in an origin hex and extends in one of the six cardinal directions for a number of hexes equal to the size of the ray.





COMMENTS?

Thanks for giving this a read! If you have the time, please email me at overpreparedgm@gmail.com or share the link so that others can try it out.

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