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# Introduction

Welcome to the POW! Core Rules, the centerpiece of a simple, adaptable game system designed for quick-moving, action-based role-playing sessions. POW! is simple enough for beginners, yet flexible and expandable enough to appeal to the most battle-hardened role-player.

True mastery of the POW! engine can only be achieved through years of difficult physical chores, daily meditation, and the careful yet obscure guidance of Shaolin monks. No, wait... that's Kung Fu. Actually, POW! is easy to pick up. In fact, you should be well on your way once you read through this set of Core Rules.

A quick look around the Internet will turn up dozens of "Generic Role-Playing Systems," most of them easy-to-use, many, like POW!, also free. So what makes POW! different?

Lights, Camera, and of course Action!

- **POW! is Rules-Light.** This means that the engine has very few dice mechanics, very few variables, and almost no specific rules for Dodging Arrows while Riding a Heavily Encumbered War Elk Through a Swamp at Midnight. POW! leaves out many of the crunchy bits in favor of more streamlined gameplay.

- **POW! is Camera-friendly.** Which isn't to say that it photographs well, but rather that the style of gameplay is camera-like. POW! games move along in frames, snapshots of action that give everyone a chance to act, much like scenes from a comic book, or photographs in a scrapbook.

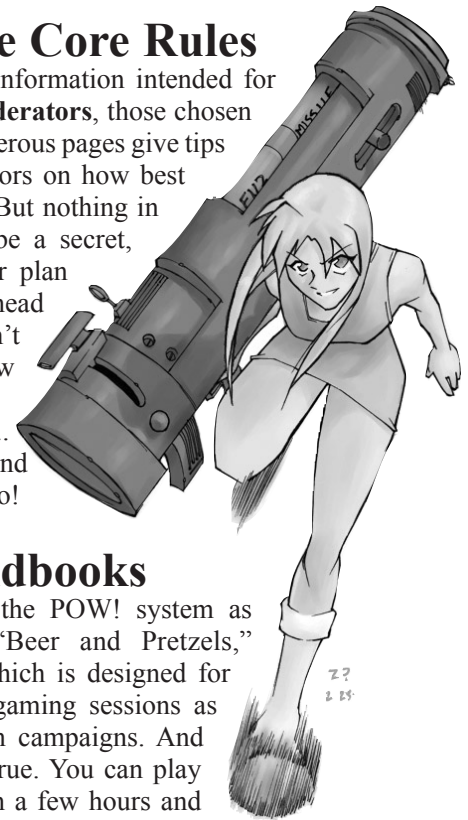
- **POW! is Action-centric.** While this is a role-playing game (defined in more detail on the next page), POW! doesn't pretend to be the sort of game which demands that players spend six hours trying to negotiate peace treaties. You can do that if you like, but POW! isn't designed for it. POW! means action, as in SNAP, CRACKLE, CRASH, BANG, BOOM!



## About These Core Rules

These rules contain information intended for both players and **Moderators**, those chosen to run the game. Numerous pages give tips and hints to Moderators on how best to do their business. But nothing in here is intended to be a secret, so even if you never plan to run a game, go ahead and read it all. It won't hurt to understand how things work.

And who knows... one day you might wind up running a game too!



## About Worldbooks

You could describe the POW! system as what's known as "Beer and Pretzels," meaning a system which is designed for informal, one-night gaming sessions as opposed to long-term campaigns. And to an extent, this is true. You can play a session of POW! in a few hours and never again use the same characters.

But the POW! Core Rules are not at all designed to be used all alone. POW! is intended for use with POW! Worldbooks, which provide an assortment of settings that can all be used with the same core ruleset. POW! is the skeleton, a framework giving shape and support while allowing many different skins (the Worldbooks) to be wrapped around the outside.

Thus, while the POW! Core Rules are simple, designed to allow for free-flowing, fun sessions not bogged down by dice or numbers, the Worldbooks add a depth of detail that's greater than a typical Beer and Pretzels game can offer.

So sure, it's Beer and Pretzels Role-Playing. But one night you might be in the mood for Chocolate-Raspberry Ale and Parmesan-Sourdough Pretzels, and the next you might just want a nice Lager and some crunchy pretzel bits with mustard.

Whether you follow everything in here exactly as it stands, or adapt the rules for use in your own way, we sincerely hope that you will use POW! to have fun. That's why we designed POW!, and we hope that's why you picked it up.

### Options, Notes and Samples

Throughout the text, you'll often see little grey boxes like this one. Each of these features either: a sample to illustrate a rule in the text; a special note to further explain something; or an optional rule, which may be used or ignored, as your particular gaming group decides. You can read through the entire POW! Ruleset and ignore every one of these if you wish. But of course, then you'd miss the Thai Chicken Wraps.



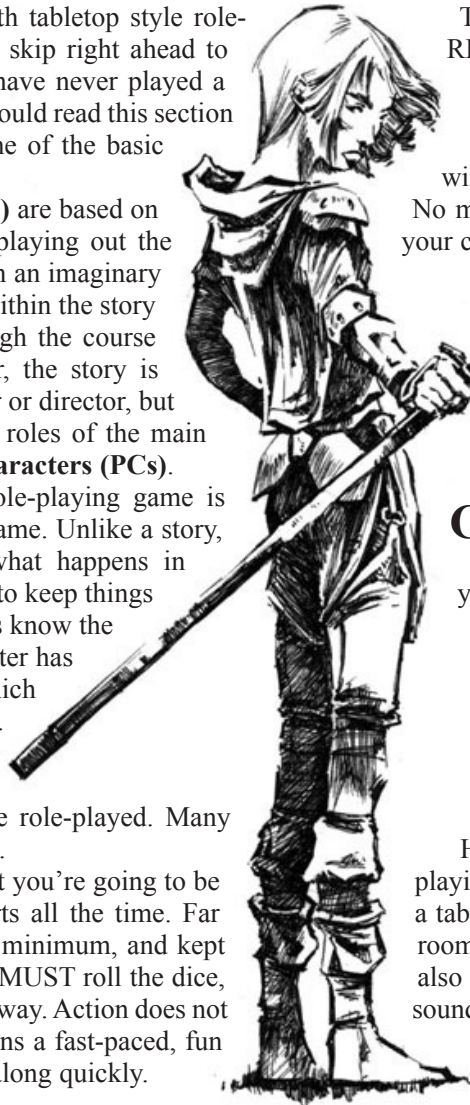
# About Role-Playing

If you're already familiar with tabletop style role-playing games, you can just skip right ahead to *Getting Started*. But if you have never played a role-playing game before, you should read this section to familiarize yourself with some of the basic concepts of this sort of game.

**Role-playing games (RPGs)** are based on the concept of controlling and playing out the actions of an imaginary person in an imaginary world. Like in a movie, events within the story move the main characters through the course of a plot. In an RPG, however, the story is determined not by a single writer or director, but by the players, who act out the roles of the main characters, known as **Player Characters (PCs)**.

Much of the action of a role-playing game is determined by the rules of the game. Unlike a story, where the author determines what happens in advance, an RPG relies on rules to keep things fair, and to make sure the players know the limits of the world. Each Character has a variety of **Statistics (Stats)**, which define what that character can do. These Stats determine **Success** or **Failure** when the character performs an action that can't be role-played. Many actions thus hinge on **Dice Rolls**.

But you shouldn't worry that you're going to be rolling dice and consulting charts all the time. Far from it. Dice rolls are kept to a minimum, and kept simple, to ensure that when you **MUST** roll the dice, you can get the rolling out of the way. Action does not mean rolling lots of dice. It means a fast-paced, fun atmosphere where things move along quickly.



The most important thing you should know about RPGs is that they are not necessarily about winning or losing. Your characters will have many different goals to achieve and many different obstacles to overcome, and through the course of an adventure they might win or lose, succeed greatly or fail miserably... or die.

No matter what happens, it's important to remember that your characters are characters, and this is just a game.

Sometimes your character will get to his/her goals. Sometimes he/she won't.

The experience of getting there is the fun part; it's the journey that's the point of the game, not the destination. There's no real way to "win" in an RPG, but when you think about it, all that means is that you can't lose, either!

## Getting Started

Aside from a group of friends and a bit of spare time, you'll need the following items on hand:

- *POW! Core Rules* (what you're reading)
- *Two 6-sided dice* (more to speed things up)
- *Pencil and paper* (best results if these are sharp and blank, respectively)
- *POW! Worldbook(s)* of your choice
- *Character Sheets* for your *Worldbook(s)*
- *Assorted beverages and/or snacks*

Having collected these items, settle into your role-playing spot. Generally this will consist of chairs around a table, although you can probably make do in the living room as long as no one falls asleep on the couch. You may also opt for some music to set the mood, such as anime soundtracks for Power Grrrl, fantasy movie scores for Red Mist, or your old Rocky Horror Picture Show album for a Rock Opera session.

## Glossary

**Actions** - Individual, specific "moves" a character makes that describe what he or she is doing within the game.

**Character Points** - A number of points (typically 10 to 20) which you spend on your PCs Stats and Specials.

**Dice Roll** - A roll of 2d6, plus a Stat, compared to a **Difficulty** to determine **Success** (if the roll is higher than the Difficulty) or **Failure** (less than the Difficulty).

**Difficulty** - A number (typically from 0 to 20) determined by the Moderator to represent how hard an action is to perform.

**Experience Points** - Reward given to Characters and Players for good role-playing, used to increase Stats and Specials.

**Frame** - A loose representation of the time it takes for every character in a given situation to use up all their actions.

**Moderator** - The person who describes the action within the game instead of playing the game him/herself.

**Player Characters (PCs)** - The imaginary people whose roles are acted and described by the people playing the game. Those acted by the Moderator are **Non-Player Characters (NPCs)**

**Role-playing games (RPGs)** - Game in which players take on the roles of imaginary people, reacting to events described by a Moderator. You can't win or lose - you can only have fun.

**Specials** - Skills, Traits and Powers characters possesses that set them apart from normal people; the heart of POW!

**Statistics (Stats)** - Numbers that describe what a PC is capable of doing. Players add Role-Playing; the Stats make it a Game.

**Stat Pools** - Multiply your Stat score by itself to get its Stat Pool, which represents damage that Stat can take over time.

## The Moderator

To keep things on track and help manage the game, POW! sessions usually have one person appointed by consensus to act as a **Moderator**. The Moderator is called different names in different POW! Worldbooks (and rather different names by the players, under their breath), but the role is the same. Many of the notes in this book pertain only to Moderators, but even if you're only going to be a player all the time, you can read it all. It will help you understand the game a bit more.

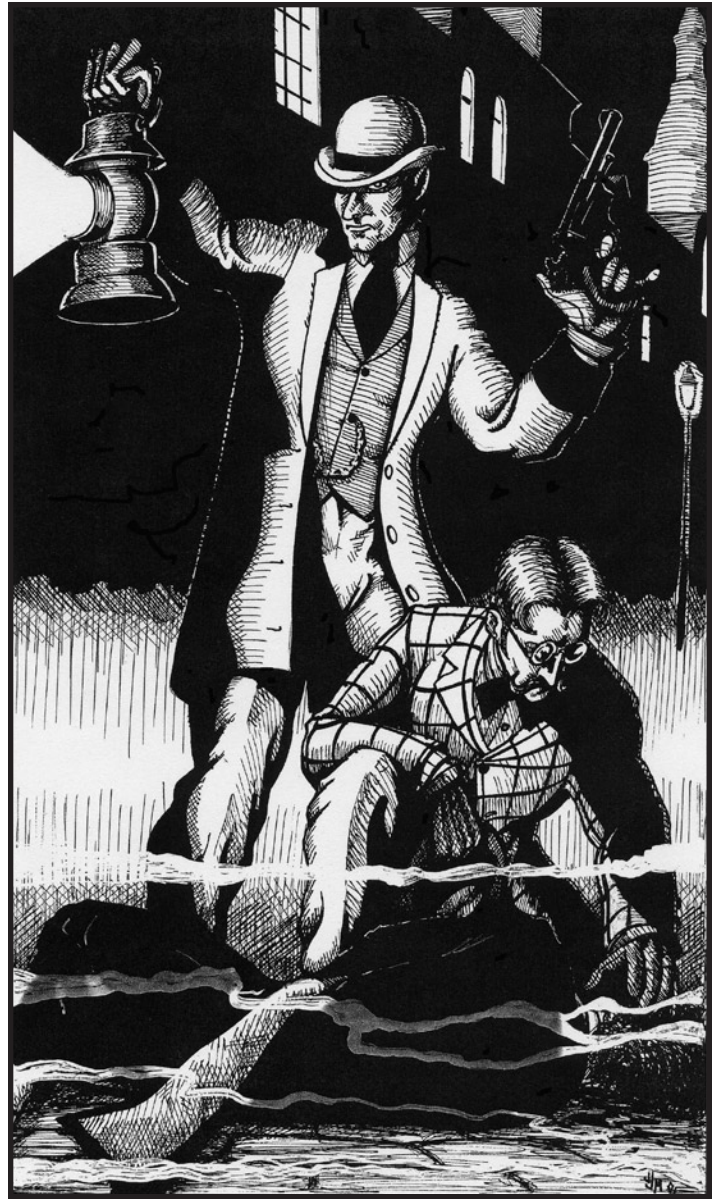
The Moderator is nominally in charge of the game, and acts as the primary storyteller. He or she helps the other players keep track of the rules, and resolve any disputes which might arise. Most importantly, the Moderator's job is to make sure everyone enjoys the game and to keep things moving. This role can often be difficult, so she gets first choice of snacks.

Choosing a Moderator is important to having a good gaming experience. The Moderator is usually the person who knows the most about the rules and has the most experience playing the game, but someone who's a great player might be a bad Moderator if they're not good at thinking on their feet, or are uncomfortable being in charge.

As the Moderator usually does not play the role of a PC, but rather assumes the roles of other characters in the game story, called **Non-Player Characters (NPCs)**, he or she should be comfortable at play-acting various voices, somewhat organized, and able to think on-the-fly for when players ruin carefully laid plans. Not everyone's cut out for Moderating, so don't feel bad if it doesn't work out for you.

If disputes arise over who is going to be the Moderator, you are taking it way too seriously, so we suggest a round of thumb wrestling or perhaps the old Scottish game of Caber-tossing (boulder hurling) to settle the dispute\*. Alternately, just give the role to whoever happens to be the oldest. They'll be honored that you're acknowledging the greater wisdom that comes with age. Or something like that.

After you pick a Moderator, everyone else should create characters and get ready to play, at which time the Moderator should claim a copy of the rules and jot down all the names and Stats once players have finished making their characters. And then it's Game On!



*The search for the right Moderator for your group may be grueling, but it's worth it. A good Moderator makes a world of difference.*

### **Special Note - What's Missing?**

Experienced role-players will no doubt quickly notice that several things are missing from the POW! system; things that are present in most other Role-Playing Games. These include items such as Race, Class, Skills, Proficiencies, Saving Throws, Hit Points, Magic Spells and the like.

These omissions fall into two categories. First are things that are specific to a particular world setting, and do not apply to all game worlds. Magic Spells and Race fall into this category. Such things will be dealt with in specific Worldbooks on a case by case basis. While one world might have Elves and Magic, another might not.

Also falling into this category are such things as the way gravity and time work; since POW! games can take place in a wide assortment of worlds and universes, we feel it would be naive to assume that the physics of all those places work in identical ways. Hence, they are dealt with in Worldbooks.

The second category includes items that are simply not part of the POW! system. The reason for their omission here is simplicity. While the general evolution of Role-Playing Games has been towards more complex and realistic rulesets, with an emphasis on skills and numerous classes, we feel that adding such elements to the POW! engine would have created a more unwieldy game system. There are enough of those out there.

*\*ethereal FORGE assumes no liability for any damage, injuries, death, arrests, or kilt jokes which may result from such activities.*



# Creating a Character

Having a POW! character sheet or a piece of paper in hand, each player should create a character, a process which should only take a few minutes. Each Worldbook has more info about making characters, so be sure to review it first, but in general the same five-step process applies:

## Step 1 - Pick a Name and Basic Concept

Give your character an appropriate **Name**. If you're playing a game about teen heroes, Spy Girl or Electro Boy might be appropriate; the same would not be true in a desert wasteland.

Your **Basic Concept** is a brief (10-15 word) statement about your character, such as "A barbarian warlord who is quick to fight" to "A high school student in search of the world's best pizza." This concept will help the Moderator decide what your character is able to do, so be specific.

When you have time, you can further describe your character (eyes, hair color, etc.) or draw a sketch using the space provided. Go wild!

## Step 2 - Pick Statistics (6 stats, 0 to 5 points each)

Depending on the Worldbook you're using, you will get between 10 and 20 **Character Points** to divy up among your character's six Statistics. These are a set of numbers that help to define what your character can do. The six Statistics, which are organized in alphabetical order, A through F, are:

**Agility** - Quickness, speed, dexterity.

**Brawn** - Strength, mass, physical power.

**Cognition** - Mental strength, IQ, wisdom.

**Damage** - Constitution, health, toughness.

**Energy** - Endurance, mental power, willpower.

**Fellowship** - Charm, leadership, sex appeal.

You can spend as many as 5 and as few as 0 points per Stat, but it's usually a good idea to put at least 1 in each. Any remaining points can be used to buy Specials (Skills, Traits and Super Powers) in Step 4, so you will probably want to save a few, unless you're intentionally creating someone "normal."

If for some reason you wish to randomly generate scores, roll 1d6, treating a roll of "6" as a "0."

### Optional Rule - The Price of Greatness

As spending time on one thing limits the amount of time you can spend on another, having a "Super" ranking in one Stat can limit you. If a Stat is raised to 5 (during creation or afterwards), you acquire a "greatness flaw" relevant to that Stat. This is also true if you raise a Stat during gameplay; if it would conflict, you must lower the other Stat before you can raise the new one.

**Agility** - Being so incredibly agile means you have to sacrifice a lot of body mass, and a significant amount of muscle tone as well. Brawn limited to a maximum of 4.

**Brawn** - You spend more time in the gym, lifting weights and exercising, than you do in the library, learning stuff. Cognition is limited to a maximum of 4.



Creating a character is about being someone you can't be in real life.

Here's an idea of what scores mean:

- 0 - Inept** - Can't tie your shoes, can't read, have no real close friends, etc.
- 1 - Average** - Just like everyone else in your world.
- 2 - Above Average** - Smarter/faster/superior than most people in your character's world.
- 3 - Great** - Enough to get on the varsity team, or your name in the newspaper headlines.
- 4 - Ultra** - Heroic, borderline superhuman. People talk about you around the water cooler.
- 5 - Super** - Your character may get his or her own comic book one day.

**Cognition** - You spend more time reading, investigating and studying than you do paying attention to your health. Damage is limited to a maximum of 4.

**Damage** - All that thick skin and extra flab might make you harder to hurt, but it also means you fatigue easier than others. Energy limited to a maximum of 4.

**Energy** - Your razor-sharp, monklike focus on internal Ki energy means you don't have to make a lot of friends. Fellowship limited to a maximum of 4.

**Fellowship** - You spend a lot of time sitting down for drinks to chat with others, which has given you all sorts of joint problems. Agility limited to a maximum of 4.

# Creating a Character

## Step 3 - Calculate Statistic Pools (Stat x itself)

Now that you've finished picking your Statistics, you need to figure out your Statistic Pools. These are used to keep track of things your character has which can be depleted, such as energy or health. There is one Pool for each of your Stats - Agility has an Agility Pool, Brawn has a Brawn Pool, etc.

Each pool is equal to the appropriate Stat score multiplied by itself. Thus, a Stat of 1 gives a Point Pool of 1 (1x1 is 1); a score of 2 means a pool of 4, and so on. If applicable, a Stat of 0 means a pool of 0.

<u>Statistic</u>	<u>Pool</u>
1	1
2	4
3	9
4	16
5	25

You can record this however you want: on the POW! Character sheet, these show as a series of bubbles, and you fill in those that

don't apply, starting from the right, leaving the valid ones empty. But you can also record these as a series of numbers on scratch paper, crossing them out and making tick marks, or whatever works best for you.

## Step 4 - Pick Specials

In each POW! Worldbook, there are a list of Specials, grouped by Statistic. These are actions, powers and abilities unique to that setting which give your character an advantage over ordinary people. Without any Specials, there's not much that's Special about your character, so you'll certainly want to take a few.

Here's an example:

**Ambidexterity** (Agility-based Special)

**Minimum Score:** 3

**Purchase Cost:** 2

**Pool Cost:** 0

**Action Cost:** 0 (always in effect)

**Effect:** The character can wield two one-handed weapons at the same time, one in each hand. If the weapons are identical (two pistols, two swords), there is no additional action cost - one action is spent for both attacks (although two rolls must be made). If the weapons are different (a gun and a knife, a knife and a pickle), then a separate action must be spent for the second attack, both actions taking place simultaneously without an increase in difficulty. Both actions affect the same target.

**Upgrade Cost:** 1

**Upgrade Effect:** The character can attack two separate targets in range, simultaneously, spending one action, even if the two weapons are different.

Each Special has a Statistic and a minimum score associated with it. You can only take that Special if your matching Stat meets or exceeds that minimum. For example, if your character had a 5 rating in Brawn, she could pick from any of the Brawn Specials. However, if she only had a 3 in Brawn, and there was a Special that required a Brawn of 4, she'd be ineligible. Most Specials require scores of at least 2 or higher, so keep that in mind when creating a character.

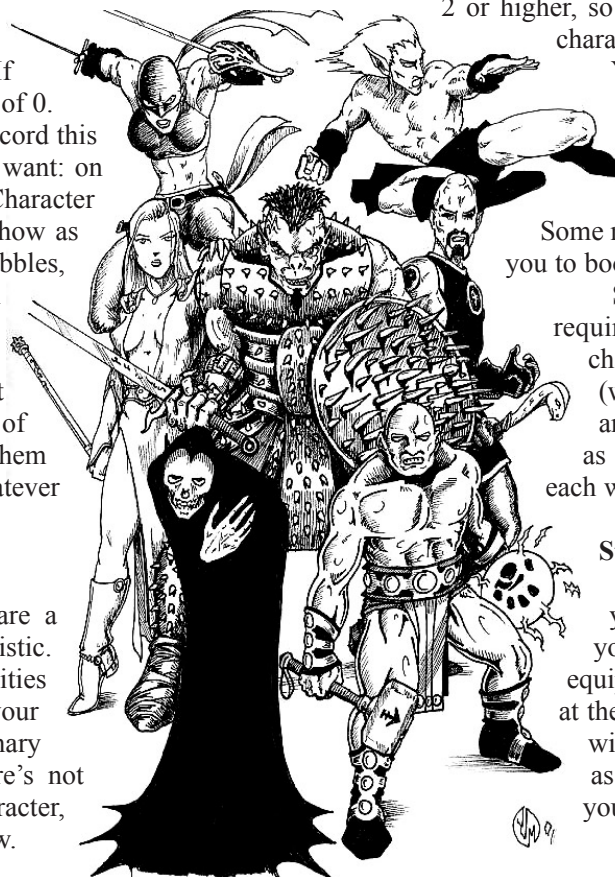
You can select as many Specials as you like, provided you have enough points after picking Stats. Each has a point cost, with better ones costing more points than others.

Some might have "Upgrades," which allow you to boost that Special's capabilities.

Specials might have some other requirements; some may require your character to have a piece of equipment (which you will need to buy in Step 5), and some might require other Specials as prerequisites. The description of each will explain what is required.

## Step 5 - Buy Your Character Stuff

Inside each POW! Worldbook you'll find a list of equipment that your character can buy. This is the equipment your character starts out with at the beginning of the game, and the list will be different for each Worldbook, as will the type and amount of money your character starts out with.



### Optional Rule - Size Category

In general, you'll be playing someone or something that's about as large as an average human, so your Size Category will almost always be a 0. This will make things like combat a breeze, since your "0" won't be modifying anything from the default Difficulty (explained later). However, if you choose (and the Moderator allows), you can be smaller or larger:

<u>Description</u>	<u>Height/Length</u>	<u>Examples</u>	<u>Category</u>
Microscopic	< 1 inch	ant, mosquito, wasp	-5
Miniscule	1-6"	hummingbird, mouse	-4
Tiny	6-12"	rat, bird, kitten, pixie	-3
Extra-Small	1-2 feet	small dog, cat, rabbit	-2
Small	2-4'	average dog, child, dwarf	-1
Average	4-8'	large dog, elf, human	0
Large	8-12'	horse, half-ogre, orc	1
Extra-Large	12-16'	ogre, minotaur, troll	2
Huge	16-20'	elephant, rhinoceros	3
Massive	20-24'	cyclops, giant	4
Gargantuan	> 24'	mecha, giant robot	5



# Time and Activity

Every POW! session, regardless of the particular setting, is run as if the action were taking place in a comic book, in panels or **Frames**. This is not to say that everyone speaks in word balloons and strikes funny poses (unless you're playing Power Grrrl, that is). Rather, what's important is the concept of how time works, frame by frame.

Think, for a moment, of how a comic book is laid out. Each page is filled with a series of frames, each frame containing a chunk of time devoted to a particular action. During character development arcs, a single full-page frame can represent hours or days of time, while in the middle of a full-blown brawl, each frame can represent a single exchange of blows. POW! divides time up into frames in just this way.

## Non-Combat Situations

When in a non-combat situation, a frame is as long as it needs to be, so long as everyone gets a chance to participate in the action taking place (i.e., they're "in frame"). Outside of combat, an action can even be a complex series of smaller actions. For example, acting in a Broadway play could be a single action although it consists of many Acts, scenes and lines. However, if you wanted to actually role-play your character role-playing a role in that play, you could split it up into multiple actions.

For the most part, players can feel free to have their characters perform any uncontested actions that are appropriate at that time and help to move the plot, and the Moderator should give players a certain amount of leeway in determining exactly what's appropriate, using each character's Basic Concept as a guide (see page 8). Everyone should get a turn.

## Combat Situations

When entering a challenging or combat situation, time is compressed. Each frame now represents all the actions that can be performed by each person involved. Once those actions are used up, the frame ends. Two Stats are used in determining what you can do within a frame - **Agility** and **Energy**.

A character's **Agility Stat, plus 2d6, determines his or her Initiative**, which is the order in which those involved can perform their actions within the frame. Each participant in an activity rolls 2d6 and adds their character's Agility Stat (with ties being broken by additional rolls, as necessary). Order then proceeds from highest to lowest, with each participant using one or more of their actions as they see fit.

A character's **Energy Stat determines the Number of Actions** he or she can take in each frame: with an Energy of 2, a character can take 2 actions. If for some reason a character has an Energy of 0, he still gets a single action, but it always comes at the end of the Frame, after everyone else has gone.

Your character can burn actions as fast as you want him to (for example, if he had an Energy of 5 you could use all 5 actions at once, when his turn came up), or you could opt to use actions selectively as responses to other actions later in the frame. You may even opt to hold all your character's actions until later in the frame if you prefer, using them whenever you see fit to do so.

However, you may not carry actions from one frame to another. If you opt to skip one of your character's actions, it is lost when the frame ends.

### Sample Frame of Combat

Adam, Bob and Chuck meet in an alley. Chuck pulls out a knife and declares his intention to attack the other two. Each player rolls 2d6 and adds their Agility. Chuck is first, Bob second, Adam last:

**Adam:** Agility 2, Energy 2, roll 7, total Initiative 9

**Bob:** A3, E3, roll 10, total Initiative 13

**Chuck:** A5, E3 roll 11, total Initiative 16

**Chuck's Turn:** Chuck has an Energy of 3, so he gets 3 actions in the frame. He spends two to attack Adam and Bob once each. Adam, with an Energy of 2, gets 2 actions in the frame, and he spends one to dodge Chuck's attack on him. Bob has an Energy of 3, and he also spends his first action dodging Chuck's attack. Chuck opts to hold his last action, so it's Bob's turn.

**Bob's Turn:** Bob spends his second action attacking Chuck, who spends his final action dodging. Bob attacks again with his third action, and Chuck (who is out of actions) can do nothing. Bob lands a blow and ends his turn.

**Adam's Turn:** After Bob's done, Adam has one action yet to spend. He rushes in to throw a kick at Chuck, and since Chuck is still out of actions (having spent two of them attacking right away), he is again unable to defend against Adam's attack.



# Time and Activity

## So What Can I Do?

In stress situations or combat, actions have limitations. For any **Single Action**, a participant can do one of the following (or an equivalent):

- **Attack (melee)** any opponent that's in range (range = your character's height).
- **Attack (ranged)** an opponent within range (varies).
- Actively **Defend** against one attack.
- **Change** a weapon or other object in hand with another.
- **Use** an object (drink a potion, throw a grenade, etc.).
- **Move** up to twice your character's height (rounded up).
- Use a **Special**, unless the Special says otherwise.

**Full Frame** activities begin when the character enters the Frame, and end when the Frame ends. Examples include:



- **Reloading** most weapons, as it takes a Full Frame to eject a clip, put a new one in, and ready the weapon.
- **Move** at top speed up to ten times your character's height (rounded up).
- **Complex** series of actions which must be done in sequence to achieve a goal. For example, "I unlock the car, open the door, get inside, start the engine, put it in Drive and pull away."

To perform a Full Frame activity, a character must spend all their actions for that frame. Once they've spent an action singly in the Frame, they can no longer do Full Frame activities. there's just not enough time.

## Parry, Riposte, & Dodge

Actions can **always** be spent to react to other actions (such as dodging), even if a character's turn (based on Initiative) has not come up; they can't initiate, but they can react if they have actions to spend. If a character is out of actions, it doesn't mean she's just standing there taking punches, but it does mean that she's not able to reply effectively. Try to save a few actions.

### Optional Rule - Party Fouls & The Die O' Fate

A Party Foul is an action that is unfun and counter to the gaming experience, like spilling beverages, going to the bathroom when it's your turn and making everyone else wait, spending too much time rules lawyering or arguing a Moderator call, etc. Common sense must be applied – no one should be penalized for having to go home, getting sick, or other such unfortunate things.

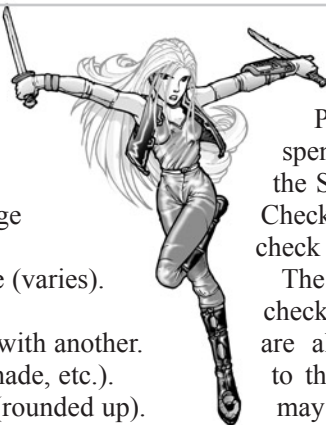
When a player calls a Party Foul on another, the players must come to a consensus on whether the foul was indeed committed. If yes, the person who committed it is a Foul. If not, then the one who called it is the Foul. If no consensus can be reached, you are taking things too seriously and need to stop it.

Party Foulers are dealt with by rolling the Die O' Fate. The roll must come to rest on a hard surface (often the table, although the floor will also suffice if the roller gets a bit overzealous.)

The fate of the Foul is as the Die O' Fate dictates:

- 1 - **Stand in the corner for d6x10 seconds.**
- 2 - **Bow on the floor and beg forgiveness.**
- 3 - **Drop and give me 2d6 pushups, soldier!**
- 4 - **Apologize in pig-latin.**
- 5 - **Take a 1d6 penalty on your next roll.**
- 6 - **Off the hook. The Foul goes unpunished.**

Remember, this is supposed to be fun, not vengeful or humiliating. If your group isn't into it, don't press the issue.



## Using Specials

To use a Special, a character must have enough Pool points, Stat points and Actions. The character spends any costs associated with the Special (listed in the Special's description) and then makes a Difficulty Check (see next page) as with any action. Whether the check succeeds or fails, the points spent are gone.

The Moderator may decide at times that a Difficulty check is not necessary. For example, if the characters are all going to fly off to the villains' lair, they may not need to make checks to fly there; it could be assumed that if they have the Specials, they know what they're doing. When they get there and start dueling, it's another story.

### Height vs. Length

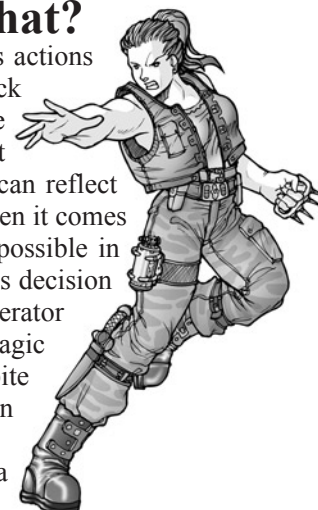
Where "height" appears, substitute "length" if it is appropriate (e.g., dog, pony, etc.). If both apply (e.g., centaur), use the longer axis.

## Why Can't I Do That?

In most cases where a character's actions are contested, a Difficulty check can be applied to determine the outcome of the situation. If it seems impossible, the Difficulty can reflect that (see next page). However, when it comes down to a decision as to what's possible in a certain situation, the Moderator's decision should always be final. If the Moderator says that a character can't cast a magic spell because he just took a big bite of tunafish sandwich, the player in question must abide by the ruling.

If things get heated and a player insists on disputing a call, try one of these:

- Have the players vote. If they agree that a player is right, let 'em have one.
- Compromise. "I'll let you do X but you can't do Y later on, OK?"
- If possible, save the dispute for after the game. Clearer heads often prevail when character lives aren't on the line.





# Difficulty Checks

Most attempts to do anything in the POW! system rely on one of your six Statistics, compared to a **Difficulty Number**. If the Stat is higher than the Difficulty, the attempt automatically succeeds; no roll is necessary.

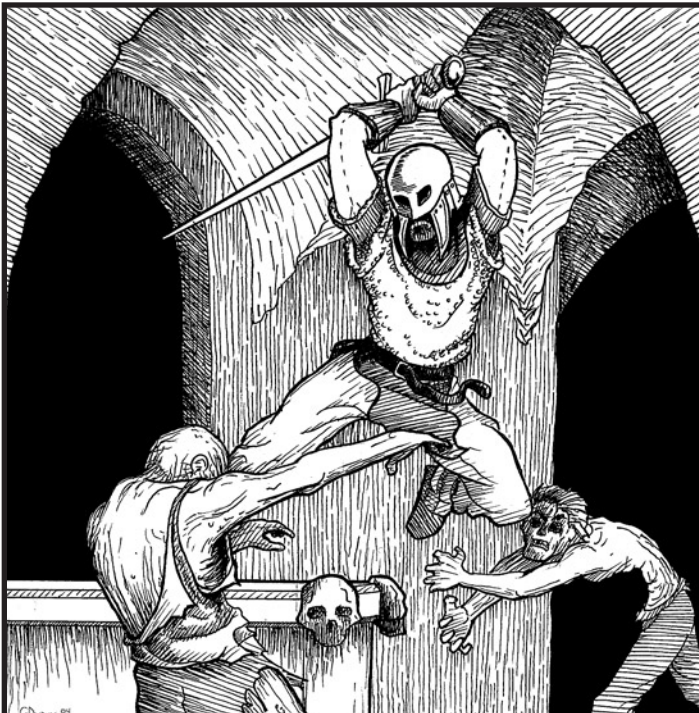
In most cases, however, a character's Stat will be lower than the Difficulty, in which case that player will roll two 6-sided dice (2d6) and add it to his character's Stat, giving a typical result falling somewhere between 2 and 17 (Attribute range = 0 to 5, 2d6 range = 2-12). If the total result is equal to or greater than the Difficulty of the action, the check succeeds. If lower, the check fails, as does the attempt.

Difficulty is determined in one of several ways, depending on the activity. It can be predetermined (as in the case of some Worldbook adventures), derived from an opponent's Stats, or determined by the Moderator on a case by case basis. This will always be subjective, but clever Moderators will learn to keep track of the insane things that players try to do, and the Difficulty ratings applied in those situations.

In general, a Difficulty will fall within a range of 0 to 20:

- 0 - Infantile** - A baby could do it, blindfolded.
- 5 - Easy** - Failure is possible, but it's unlikely.
- 10 - Average** - Just about anyone can do it, given time.
- 15 - Hard** - The action is actually quite difficult.
- 20 - Impossible** - Luck/cooperation is needed.

Note that "Average" does not imply 50/50 odds on a single attempt, but merely that an average person could eventually accomplish the task under normal (non-stressful) conditions.



*John wants Roland the Mighty to leap from the sarcophagus, twist in the air, kick the zombie in the chest and then swing his bastard sword at its head. John's generous Moderator assigns this move a Difficulty of 15.*

## *Stats Make The Difference (or, Why 2d6?)*

Two guys attempt to do a cartwheel – average Difficulty (10). The janitor, with an average Agility of 1, needs a 9 or better on a 2d6 roll, possible about 28% of the time. The Olympic gymnast with a 5 Agility needs a 5 or more (83% chance). Given a few tries, anyone can do it, but in a stressful gymnastics competition the gymnast will beat the janitor easily.

## “Skill Checks”

POW! is skillless, assuming that a character knows the basic skills they need to survive, as defined by their Basic Concept. Adults in a modern setting can drive and do taxes, but adults in a medieval setting might instead know heraldry or farming. A cheerleader would know how to cheer, tumble and flip, but might have a hard time with math homework or heavy combat. A barbarian would be highly skilled in combat, but would probably be bad at cheering (as well as math homework).

Actions that fit a Basic Concept are Difficulty 5. If the action doesn't fit (i.e., a cheerleader disarming a bomb, or a barbarian writing a poem), add 5, 10 or more, as appropriate.

## Difficulty Modifiers

To the basic Difficulty rating of 0 to 20, various OPTIONAL modifiers can be applied, as the situation warrants and the Moderator sees fit. These might include the following:

**Cooperation** - For each additional ally who assists in a given task (breaking a code, bandaging a friend, fighting a foe), the Difficulty decreases by 1 (maximum of 5).

**Bad Weather** - Fighting in the rain, building a fire in a swamp, or driving a car over ice increases Difficulty by 5. Trying to read in a storm, or find water in the desert, increase it by 10.

**Darkness & Light** - Low light increases Difficulty by 5, and total darkness increases it by 10. Operating where there is too much light can result in increases of 5 or 10, as appropriate.

**Distractions** - Someone chattering while you're picking a lock or defusing a bomb might increase Difficulty by 5. Loud music or a jackhammer might increase it by 10 or more.

**Prone** - Anyone knocked prone during battle (from tripping, etc.) adds 5 to their attack Difficulty, and their foes take a -5 Difficulty modifier to hit them in return. It takes 1 action to stand up from a prone position during combat.

**Simultaneous Actions** - Typically, actions are sequential. But should a character explicitly try to do two things at once (i.e., run and shoot), the Difficulty for each action increases by 5.

**Size Modifier** - Hitting big things is easier than hitting small things. A human (0) vs. an ogre (+1) reduces Difficulty by 1; an ogre (+1) vs. a dog (-1) increases it by 2. (see page 5)

**Surprise** - Surprise gives an advantage of 5 to the individual who is not surprised, reducing their Difficulty from 10 to 5 for the initial action in that frame (see next page).

# Combat Basics

No matter how hard you try, sooner or later diplomacy is going to fail, and your character is going to face a fight-or-flight situation. It's quite possible to simply run away all the time, but that would probably get pretty dull. A much better option is learning how to fight back.

Combat is handled in the same way as other Difficulty Checks. When making combat checks (attack, defend, etc.), the Statistic used is Agility, added to 2d6, which is compared to the Difficulty. If none of the modifiers on the previous page apply, the default Difficulty for combat is your foe's **Agility plus 10**. However, this can vary from situation to situation.

If an opponent is **surprised** or otherwise unaware of an attack, or the attacker is exceptionally sneaky, the attacker's Difficulty is **Agility plus 5** (Easy). If an opponent is **actively dodging** (which requires they spend an action, and declare that they are doing so as their opponent decides to attack them), then the Difficulty becomes **Agility plus 15** (Hard). This might also be the case if the characters are fighting someone who has a tactical advantage, such as a giant ape in a jungle setting.

**Note:** those with average combat skills who choose to simply flail away at their target, Frame after Frame, will miss quite a lot, especially when their foe does not wish to be hit. Cooperation, strategy and the use of Specials will make the difference between victory and defeat. The POW! system is designed that way on purpose.

## Ranged Combat

In the Worldbooks you'll find base attack ranges (Difficulty 10) for missile weapons; firing weapons at twice that range adds +5 to the Difficulty, at triple range adds +10, and so on until the shot becomes impossible. Firing at point blank range (0 feet, not merely melee) subtracts 5.

### Optional Rules - Doubles, Triples and Criticals

The addition of special circumstances based on certain die results is an obvious and often fun addition to a game. Any or all of the following can be used as the Moderator sees fit:

**Doubles Rule:** If a player rolls doubles, he can roll again and add the result to his total. This can be repeated as many times as the player keeps rolling doubles, offering an additional shot at success if the initial roll was a failure. Thus, if you roll snake eyes (two 1's), you roll again. If you get a 7, you add 7 and 2 and get 9, which is then added to the relevant Stat and compared to the Difficulty. (Odds are 1 in 6, or about 17%)

**Triples Rule:** Since two dice are being added to a Stat which ranges from 0 to 5, it is possible that the Stat will match the two numbers on the dice (e.g., You roll two 4's, and the relevant Stat is also a 4). In this case, a "natural triple" gives an automatic success, no matter what the Difficulty is. This allows characters with a Stat of 1 to "luck out" and do amazing things by rolling Snake Eyes. (Odds 1 in 36, or roughly 3%)

**Criticals Rule:** If a player's total (natural initial roll plus Stat) exactly matches the Difficulty, the action has double effects (double damage in combat, etc.) This option is best saved for high-drama, high-powered games where characters are more capable of heroic feats. (Odds vary)

### Optional Rule - Combat Tactics and Leadership

Agility, Brawn, Damage and Energy all play an important role in combat... but what about Cognition and Fellowship? Indeed, they can, and if you choose to use them, here's how to do so:

**Fellowship** is, in part, your ability to inspire and lead others, and can be used to determine "Combat Leadership." For every Full Frame in which a character does nothing but explicitly offer tactical advice to another, their Fellowship Stat is added to that other person's roll for any combat-related action.

The Moderator may allow players to use **Cognition** in a similar way. For every Full Frame in which they do nothing but EXPLICITLY STATE that they are sizing up the situation, and thinking about "Combat Tactics," they can add their Cognition to the first Difficulty check they make in the next frame.

More on Full Frame activities can be found on page 7.

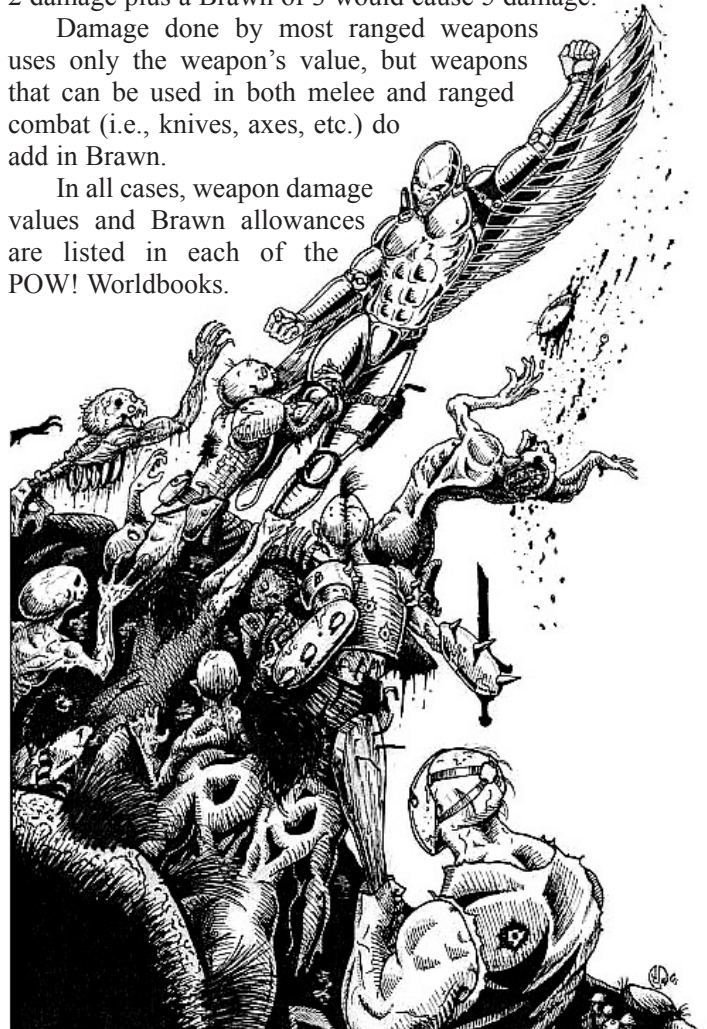
## Causing Damage

Damage done by a successful unarmed attack is equal to the attacker's Brawn Stat - a Brawn of 3 thus does 3 damage.

Damage done by a melee weapon is equal to the weapon's damage value plus the character's Brawn. So a club that does 2 damage plus a Brawn of 3 would cause 5 damage.

Damage done by most ranged weapons uses only the weapon's value, but weapons that can be used in both melee and ranged combat (i.e., knives, axes, etc.) do add in Brawn.

In all cases, weapon damage values and Brawn allowances are listed in each of the POW! Worldbooks.



*Shrike rolls a critical. Now he just needs to roll a few dozen more to survive.*



# Taking Damage

Your **Damage Pool** is a numerical representation of the amount of damage your character can take before suffering serious injury. For every point taken during an attack, you cross out one point from your character's Pool (or fill in a bubble, or make a check, etc.). Taking damage in this way causes no real effect. A character might be getting small cuts or bruises, or suffering fatigue, but he's well enough to function.

When the Damage Pool is depleted, any additional damage taken affects the Damage Stat directly. Thus, with a Damage Stat of 4, his Damage Pool is 16, one can take 16 points of damage with no effects, followed by 4 points to the Damage Stat.

With a reduced Damage Stat, a character is still capable of functioning, but she can no longer use any Specials that have a higher minimum Stat (see next page). At 0, the character remains alive, able to function and move, but in danger of death.

## Stat Saves

If a blow lands that would reduce your character's Damage Stat below 0, you must roll his current Damage score or less on a d6. If you succeed, the character's Damage is 0. If you fail, the character's Damage falls below 0, as indicated by the damage.

If a character's Damage Stat is reduced to less than 0, he is rendered unconscious and dying, or dead, as circumstances and the Worldbook dictate; in Red Mist, death is frequent, but in Power Grrrl, it might be impossible to die.



Corin the Brave politely helps Akbar the Cursed test his armor.

### *Sample Frame - Armor and Damage Demo*

Dave and Ed, not particularly skilled warriors, nevertheless get into a scuffle. Both of them have a Brawn of 1 and a Damage of 2, giving them each a Damage Pool of 4. Both are also wielding clubs that do 4+Brawn damage.

Dave wins Initiative and swings his club at Ed. His action is a success, and he hits, doing 5 points of damage. Since Ed is not wearing any armor, he takes the full 5 points. Ed depletes his entire Pool of 4, and subtracts the remainder of 1 from his Damage Stat, leaving 1. Ouch.

Ed now strikes at Dave, using the same sort of club. He hits, doing 5 points of damage. Dave is wearing Spiked Padded Armor with a Frame Rating of 3, however, so he subtracts 3 from 5 and takes 2 points from the attack, leaving 2 points in his Damage Pool. He also subtracts 3 points from the Damage Rating of the armor, leaving 17.

But Ed has another action, and he again hits Dave, doing another 5 points of damage. Since this is the same Frame, Ed's armor can't absorb any more, so he takes the full 5 points. His armor is unharmed. Unfortunately for Dave, he only has 2 points left in his Damage Pool. The blow depletes his Pool, sending 3 points through to his Damage Stat.

Since his Damage is only 2, normally this blow would kill Dave (or at least knock him unconscious), but Dave gets one last chance to stay alive. He rolls a 1d6 and compares the result of 1 to his Damage Stat. Since he rolled his Stat or lower, he survives, but barely. His Damage is reduced to exactly 0. If he had failed the roll, he would be at -1 Damage, and dying.

## How Armor Works

Wearing armor can help prevent some of the incoming damage from reaching the vital portions of your character's anatomy, and so one of the key pieces of equipment she'll probably want to invest in is some sort of armor. Since armor varies from setting to setting, it's not discussed much here; instead, each POW! Worldbook will have a section devoted to armor appropriate for that setting. Here's what it looks like:

### *Spiked Padded Armor*

**Frame Rating:** 3

**Damage Rating:** 20

**Cost:** 3 Gold Shils

**Description:** Cheap padded armor with some spikes at the shoulders and wrists. Quite uncomfortable.

All armor has two values: a **Frame Rating**, and an overall **Damage Rating**. The Frame Rating is the maximum amount that the armor can absorb within a single Frame of combat; any damage received above this number is taken by the victim. Damage Rating represents the armor's overall total damage capacity; once this number is exceeded, the armor becomes totally worthless and can no longer absorb any damage whatsoever until it is repaired (assuming that's possible).

# Stat Reduction

**W**hile most attacks cause reduction to Damage, some attacks and circumstances result in reductions of a similar nature to other Stats. As with Damage, reduction is first drawn from the appropriate Stat Pool. When the Pool is depleted, further reductions are taken from the Stat itself. So with a Brawn of 2, and a Brawn Pool of 4, a character can take 4 points to her Brawn Pool, then a further 2 points directly to her Brawn Stat.

As with Damage, any situation that would reduce a Stat below 0 allows a 1d6 roll; if the result is less than or equal to the Stat, the Stat is at 0. If the result is higher, the Stat is reduced below 0, and that Stat cannot be used for anything (combat, other actions, Specials, etc.).

For example, if Brawn is reduced to 0, a character can still attack, lift light objects, carry things, and so on. However, if her Brawn is reduced below 0, she cannot do anything that requires Brawn, such as causing damage, lifting objects, etc.

## Specials and Stat Recovery

Most Specials require minimum Stat scores, and if a Stat is reduced below that number, a character cannot use that Special until he recovers those lost points. This effect is immediate; if points are lost, any actions after that point, even within the same frame, are subject to this limitation.

Stat points (including Damage) are regenerated at a rate of one point per day of rest (meaning no action can be taken during that day). This includes “negative” points, so a Brawn Stat that was reduced from a score of 3 to -2 would require 5 days of rest (from -2 to -1, -1 to 0, 0 to 1, 1 to 2, and 2 to 3).

Pools (including Damage) refill at a rate of one point per frame of rest (no actions may be taken that frame). However, a Pool can only refill in relation to the current Stat score, so if an Energy of 5 was reduced to 4, that pool could only refill to 16 (4x4). Only after a day’s rest, when Energy returned to 5, could the Stat pool refill back up to a total of 25 (5x5).

### Optional Rule - Scars and Wounds

When a Stat is reduced below 0, permanent effects may set in even after the Stat has been returned to normal. This should have role-playing consequences, but typically shouldn’t penalize Stats or Specials in any mechanical, numerical way (Moderator discretion). They can include:

- Agility** - The character develops a limp, muscle twitch or other noticeable affliction.
- Brawn** - The character is in constant pain from a serious muscle pull or dislocation.
- Cognition** - The character suffers a nasty head wound, concussion or chronic headaches.
- Damage** - The character suffers from ugly, permanent, noticeable scars or open wounds.
- Energy** - The character suffers from depression, fatigue, insomnia or a like condition that causes tiredness.
- Fellowship** - The character suffers a scar, or develops a lisp or other speech impediment.

### Thai Chicken Wraps

**RUB** - In a small dish, mix equal parts salt & sugar, as much pepper as you like and about that same volume of crushed garlic. A few drops of sesame oil is a nice touch, but don’t add too much! A little goes a long way.

**CHICKEN** - Take two boneless, skinless breasts of chicken. Pat them dry with paper towels, then rub them with the above garlic mix. Broil until cooked through - don’t overcook! When it’s done, let it rest for a few minutes, then slice it into strips.

**RICE** - Boil some water and prepare a cup of Minute Rice. When it’s done, drain it and set it aside. Couscous also works.

**CARROTS** - While the chicken is cooking, peel two whole carrots and a medium-smallish lump of ginger. Grate them both and sauté them together in a small amount of olive oil. If you like, add a few drops of sesame oil at the end.

**PEANUT SAUCE** - You can use bottled Peanut Sauce (available in the Asian Foods section of your supermarket), or mix equal parts chunky peanut butter and rice wine vinegar until smooth. Add sugar to taste and stir until mixed thoroughly. It should be smooth, but not runny.

**PREPARATION** - Take a flour tortilla (one per person, naturally) and heat it in the microwave for 10 seconds. Place a spoonful of rice on the center of the tortilla, then a bit of carrot and some chicken. Add peanut sauce to taste, and a few fresh mint leaves. Roll and enjoy. Serves four.



*Jj'bar the Scout is about to have his Damage Stat reduced.*



POW!

# Experience and Improvement

Characters can, of course, earn experience based on their adventures within the game world. But Players, too, earn experience for participating.

## Character Experience

All characters should get an **Experience Point** award at the end of each game, based on how well they accomplished their in-game goals. Every character should receive one point, and then one or more points based on how much they contributed:

- 0 - Inept - Did nothing, just along for the ride.*
- 1 - Average - Helped in fights, not much else.*
- 2 - Above Average - Helped win a few combats, used Specials to aid the party quite a lot.*
- 3 - Great - Really saved the party's hide more than one time, or solved a major puzzle.*
- 4 - Ultra - Accomplished some major task, saved a major figure, saved the party's life.*
- 5 - Super - Literally saved the world.*

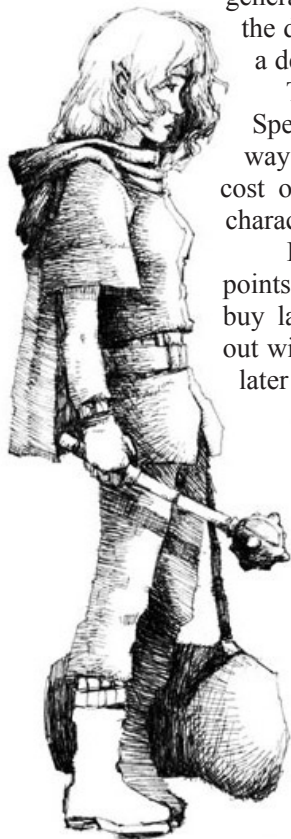
Characters will gradually accrue experience points over time, which can then be used to improve their Stats and purchase Specials between (but never during) game sessions. The formula used to determine Stat increase costs is the same used to

<u>Desired Stat</u>	<u>Cost</u>
1	1
2	4
3	9
4	16
5	25

generate Stat Pools - the cost is equal to the desired Stat score, times itself. Thus, a desired Stat of 3 costs 9 points.

The cost for purchasing or upgrading Specials is determined in much the same way - the cost is the initial purchase cost of the Special (as if bought during character creation) multiplied by itself.

For example, a Special that costs 2 points during Creation costs 4 points to buy later. It's obviously cheaper to start out with a Special than it is to purchase it later on in the life of the character.



**Optional Rule - Secret Ballot**  
The Moderator can ask each player to secretly pick one other player whom they felt was the best Role-player that session. Gather up all the secret ballots and award an extra point or two to the player who got the most votes. If everyone votes for him or herself, nobody gets the award. And if everyone conspires to help each other earn awards, you've got them cooperating!

## Player Experience

Players should get experience points based on how well they role-played, and how they participated as a member of the gaming group. Everyone should receive at least one point per game unless they were being a total goof-off the entire time, and giving out more than 5 at a time should be quite rare.

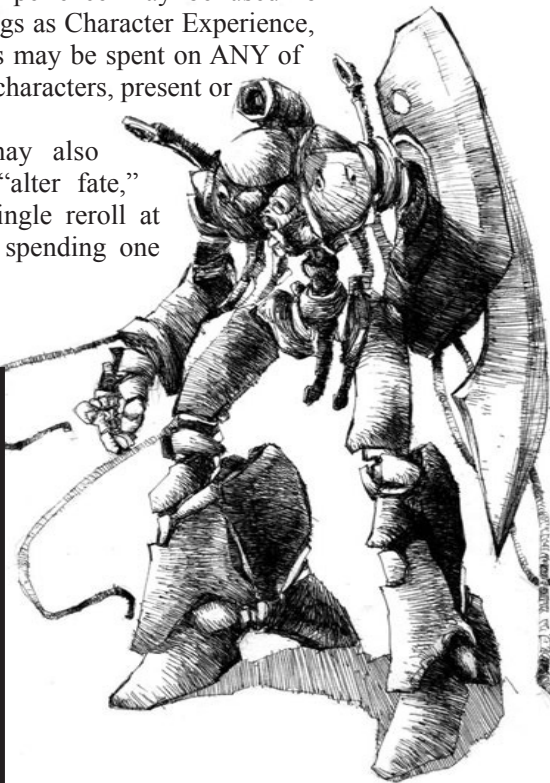
When in doubt, give out one point to everyone, and extra points for anyone who played well, reserving larger awards for truly exceptional circumstances. In determining their awards, it might be helpful to use the same scale used for Characters:

- 0 - Inept - Contributed nothing, was disruptive.*
- 1 - Average - Showed up, rolled dice, nothing special.*
- 2 - Above Average - Actively participated and interacted throughout the session.*
- 3 - Great - Did a fantastic job of role-playing.*
- 4 - Ultra - Really got into character and did heroic stuff.*
- 5 - Super - Was a real delight to play with, and/or had everyone laughing and/or crying.*

Player Experience may be used for the same things as Character Experience, but the points may be spent on ANY of that player's characters, present or future.

These may also be used to "alter fate," allowing a single reroll at any time by spending one point.

**Optional Rule - Rank and Level**  
Many systems keep track of a character's power increase through "levels" gained at specific experience increments. Instead, the POW! system encourages awarding "levels" during the course of gameplay. Teen Freshmen gain "a level" by passing 9th grade and becoming Sophomores, and a warrior might gain "a level" by increasing in rank from Sergeant to Lieutenant.  
If this isn't quite enough for your particular gaming group, award them each a "character level" when they complete a gaming session, as a means of tracking how many adventures they've managed to survive!



## Awards and Rewards

**B**esides Experience points, characters can and should receive other, more concrete rewards as a direct result of their actions.

Specific examples must be determined with regard to the POW! Worldbook you're using, but provided here are some generic things that can be doled out at the end of a session, or at the end of any important action sequence, if you feel that the characters really deserve some sort of reward, and you haven't thought of anything beforehand.

Simply choose something appropriate to the particular group of characters you're working with. If you can't decide, you'll notice that these are numbered from 2 to 12, to allow you to roll 2d6 randomly.

Any or all of these "rewards" could easily have negative repercussions in the long run; such is for the Moderator to decide, as the situation warrants. As always, the Moderator's supreme sense of logic should take precedence over a random roll. If it doesn't make sense, just don't do it.

**2 - Transportation.** The bad guys having been dispatched, their horse/wagon/limousine/sailboat/spaceship is now yours. The keys are under the sun visor.

**3 - A Mascot.** A non-humanoid lifeform of some sort takes a liking to the characters; could be a dog, alien, robot, ghost, animated plant, etc.

**4 - Armor/Clothing.** Maybe that villain's breastplate survived, or the Baron replaces your wet, torn clothing with a new outfit.

**5 - Weapons.** If the bad guys were using them, so can you. If appropriate, these might be magical, or merely high quality.

**6 - Jewelry.** The princess rewards you with a medal, or the bad guys had matching amulets, or there was a ring in the gutter, etc.

**7 - Cold, Hard Cash.** 2d6x100 units of whatever the local currency is (Gold, Credits, Dollars, Euros, etc).

**8 - A Job.** Having completed one particular task, another job opportunity has now presented itself (possibly related, possibly not).

**9 - A Career.** A source of recurring, semi-permanent employment has opened up; the legality of such is another issue entirely...

**10 - A Follower.** Impressed by your actions, someone (a local, the princess you rescued, etc.) decides to join you in your quest.

**11 - Press.** Somehow, the media has noticed your exploits, and before you know it the entire town/world/galaxy is talking about you.

**12 - Keys to the City.** Your group will be treated better the next time they return to the city/bar/etc. They may not know this until they get back, however.



*Felonius the Unfortunately Named Rogue reaps the rewards of victory.*



## Sample of Gameplay

**A**mber, Bart and Charlie are playing a group of teenage superheroes in the world of Power Grrrl. **Amber's** character is called Electrobabe, and has the power of electricity; **Bart's** character is Electrobabe's pet dog Sparky, a giant (human-sized) Irish Wolfhound; and **Charlie** is Cutter, Electrobabe's skinny next door neighbor who has a thing for knives. The game is moderated by **Daphne** - her comments are indicated in *Italic*.

**Daphne:** *"The ground in front of you erupts and the sidewalk splits open, a small tremor knocking you off your feet. Green smoke pours out of the hole."*

**Amber:** "Oh no. I think I broke a nail."

**Charlie:** "Cutter pulls out a knife and says 'Come here, let me fix it for you.'"

**Bart:** "Sparky growls at Cutter."

**A:** "No thanks! I'll just make an appointment with my manicurist. I pull out my cell phone."

**D:** (Rolling) *"Three large, green Lizard-men crawl out of the ground and stalk towards you. Only Sparky notices them, due to all the thick gray smoke and your chattering."*

**B:** "Woof woof woof! I try to get their attention."

**A:** "Down Sparky. I just fed you. Bad dog!"

**D:** *"You two notice Sparky going crazy, and look up in time to see three Lizard-dudes step out of the thick smoke. They're all holding clubs and dripping with sewer slime. The smell is really and truly awful. It smells like a sewery-smelling sewer."*

**A:** "Ewww, gross. Sic 'em, Sparky."

**B:** "Ok. I mean, woof. I attack the nearest lizard."

**D:** *"Not so fast. First we need to determine Initiative. Everyone roll 2d6 and add your Agility."* (The group rolls and adds: Amber gets 7, Bart 12, Charlie 11 and Daphne 13 for the Lizard-men.)

**D:** *"The Lizards win initiative. One attacks each of you. They look pretty darn steamed that you're ruining their nap."* (She determines that since no one is surprised, the Difficulty for combat actions is Agility plus 10. Since the Lizards have Agility scores of 2, the characters have a Difficulty of 12, while the Lizards need a 12, 13 and 15 to hit Electrobabe, Sparky and Cutter, respectively.)

**D:** *"The first Lizard-guy swipes at Electrobabe. Are you going to try and dodge?"*

**A:** "No, I want to save my actions for now."

**D:** *"Ok, he swings and (rolls a 10 and adds the Lizard's Agility) he gets a 12. It's a hit. His club does 2 points and he has a Brawn of 3, so that's 5 points."*

**A:** "Ow! I only have 4 left in my Damage Pool. You boys better do something."

**C:** "You're the one with super powers. Fry them."

**A:** "Duh. I will, when it's my turn."

**D:** (Rolling) *"The other two fail on their actions, and they all save their other actions for now. It's Sparky's turn."*

**B:** "I growl and jump on the nearest Lizard and rip his slimy throat out. (rolls a 4) I got a 4, plus Agility is 7. I hit?"

**D:** *"Nope. You miss by a lot."*

**B:** "Grrrr. Ok, I use my second action and attack him again (He rolls a 9). That's 9, plus 3 is 12. That hit?"

**D:** *"Yep. What's your Brawn?"*

**B:** "Woo hoo! Brawn is 5, plus my teeth do 3, so 8 damage."

**D:** *"You rip into him, but he's still alive and functioning."*



## Sample of Gameplay

**C:** “Not for long. I ignore the Lizard in front of me and hurl one of my trusty throwing knives at the one Sparky just bit.”

**D:** *“He sees you looking towards him and decides to use his second action to dodge whatever you’re throwing.”*

**C:** “We’ll see about that. (He rolls a 10) That’s 10, plus 5 is 15. Does that hit?”

**D:** *“It would have, but he dodged. The knife flies right by him.”* (The default difficulty is 10, plus the Lizard’s Agility of 2; by spending an action to dodge, the Lizard increased difficulty to 15, plus 2 is 17. Hence, a miss.)

**C:** “Fine by me. There’s more where that came from. I throw another knife at him. (He rolls a 9). That’s 9 plus 5 is 14 to hit. Dodge this, buddy.”

**D:** *“He’s out of actions so he can’t dodge. You hit him.”*

**C:** “That’s 1 for the knife and 3 for Brawn, since my knives allow me to add that, so a total of 4.”

**D:** *“He’s taken 8, so that’s 12 total. Let’s see...”* (The Lizard’s Damage Stat of 3 gives him a Pool of 9. The extra damage from the knife drains the rest of the Pool, and leaves 3 spillover damage, which is taken directly from his Damage Stat. This puts the Lizard at exactly 0 Damage.)

**D:** *“The Lizard goes down, apparently wounded and dying. He’s not dead yet, but he’s not in a fighting mood any more.”*

**A:** “Can I go yet?”

**C:** “I’m holding my other two actions for now. Go for it.”

**D:** *“Not so fast there. In all the confusion, the Lizard in front of Electrobabe decides not to wait any longer, and he attacks. Since he had a better Initiative than you he can go first. (She rolls a 6). Total of 8, so he missed.”*

**A:** “Eat electric death, pond scum. I zap him with a Lightning Bolt. (Rolling) I got a 9, plus I add Energy instead of Agility for this because it’s my Lightning Power, so I got a 14 to hit.”

**D:** *“That hits. Roll your damage.”*

**A:** (She rolls 5d6, one per point of Energy) “19 points. Zap!”

**D:** *“Wow. OK, let’s see here...”* (The Lizard’s Pool of 9 is erased, leaving 10 damage. Since this will reduce the Lizard’s Stat below 0, he gets a Stat Save. Daphne rolls 1d6 and gets a 4. Since this is higher than the Lizard’s Damage Stat of 3, he fails the save. Which means...) *“Nineteen points blows right through his Damage Pool and fries his Damage Stat as well, with points left over. There’s nothing left of the Lizard but a little black smudge on the pavement.”*

**A:** “I strike a heroic pose and shout, ‘Take that, evil-doer!’ How’s that for Girl Power?”

**D:** *“Your theme music starts playing. Just don’t forget to drain your Energy Pool, Ms. Superhero.”*

**A:** “Right. (Her Special Lightning Power costs 10 Energy per use, so she subtracts 10 from her pool of 25; she has 15 left.) Now I zap the one by Charlie.”

**C:** “Yikes! Before she starts shooting lightning at me, I’m spending an action to run behind a tree.”

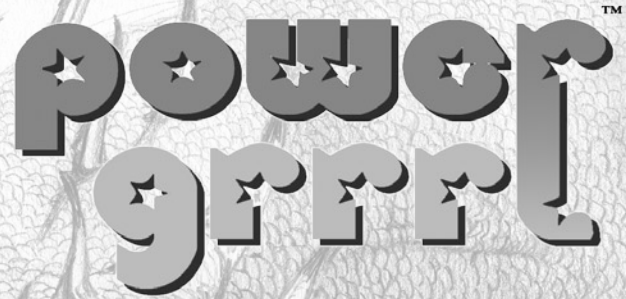
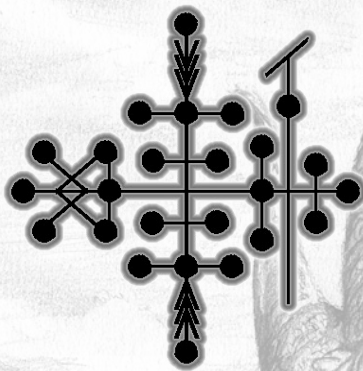
**D:** *“Fine, but you all forgot that the Lizard had an action left too. He runs the other way and before you can shoot at him, he jumps back into the hole and flees to the Lizard Kingdom.”*

If there were still people to fight, the next frame would continue with everyone acting in the same order. But with no more enemies to fight, the frame ends and so does the combat. Now the characters can pursue the remaining Lizard into the sewers to find the evil Lizard King, or spend some time recovering from their wounds, or maybe just head to the mall to buy some clothes. Anything is possible in the world of Power Grrrl (check out the Power Grrrl Preview on page 17).





# Worldbook Settings



**Decay** - The Philadelphia project was just a story... or was it? Vodun necromancers, ruthless armies of zombies and Tesla-era technology meld into a horrifying collage in the realm of Decay. (Alternate History/Horror)

**Elves!** - Little elves, big elves, poison elves, light elves, dark elves, Carey Elves, Elvis elves and more all battle it out in a world where humans are just a myth, and magic is just a forest away. (Fantasy/Humor)

**H4X0RS: teh l33t h4x0ring g4m3 - r u l33t?** If so, plunge headlong into a world of camping, gibbing, defacing, script kiddies, bad techno and rollerblading. Be sure to bring your s3x 4pp34l. (Humor)

**Orlympics** - What do you do when you've finally conquered the planet and enslaved the lesser races, like elves and humans? You throw an Olympic-style game to celebrate, as only Orcs can. (Fantasy/Humor)

**Iconoclast** - In the 22nd Century, the world is run by corporations who use people like icons on a chessboard. Can you and your cybernetically-augmented, genetically-altered friends become Iconoclasts? (Cyberpunk)

**Power Grrrl** - The fate of the world rests in the well-manicured hands of Power Grrrl and her band of teenage super-heroines who battle the insidious villainy of Madam Maple, Dr. Fute, and their evil cronies. (Supers/Anime/Humor)

**Red Mist** (from the world of Sacour) - Savage, barbarian warlords roam the cold plains of the planet Sacour's main continent, turning all who stand in their way into a fine, red mist. Ride on! (Fantasy)

**Robot Wars** - Bring out your gestalts and strap on a few extra heat sinks, because the sparks are gonna fly when bots big and small go head to head and tread to tread in an all-out Bot Battle Royale. (Sci-fi/Humor)

**Rock Opera** - More motorcycles, mad scientists, greased hair, leather jackets, rainstorms, scary castles and bad puns than any other game set in a mythical 1950s. Let's do a Transylvanian time warp, baby. (Alternate History/Humor)

**Sacour** - Bickering city-states, factions and tribes battle for dominance in a world trapped between primitive barbarism and a brand new Renaissance, as bold adventurers strive to stay alive. (Fantasy)



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**W**hat's in a Worldbook? Here are some samples taken from the **Power Grrrl** Worldbook, featuring new Specials, World-specific rules, Bad Guys, new Awards, the Power Grrrl FAQ, and much more...

Yesterday, you saved the city from destruction by stopping an alien invasion. Just after breakfast, you single-handedly captured two wanted supervillains and defeated a double handful of robotic assassins. But all of that's nothing compared to the single biggest challenge that lies before you on this fateful day, worse than aliens and robots and villains all put together – Gym class.

Welcome to the world of Power Grrrl, where teenage superheroes battle evil supervillains in a world where youth equals power. You'll face off against the deadliest bad guys imaginable, honing your secret skills to precision, all the while trying to maintain a passing Grade Point Average at school. Are you up to the challenge?

## Dozens of New Specials

**Burst of Strength** (Brawn-based Special)

**Minimum Score:** 2

**Purchase Cost:** 2

**Pool Cost:** 4

**Action Cost:** 1

**Effect:** The character can temporarily (but immediately) boost Brawn by a number equal to a d6 roll. This Brawn lasts for a single frame. The character can spend an additional action and 4 points from her pool to maintain the Brawn for an additional frame (and so on after that, until out of points). Effects do not stack (i.e., two Bursts cannot be used at the same time), although this does work with other Brawn powers.

**Upgrade Cost:** 3

**Upgrade Effect:** As above, but add 2d6 points of Brawn for the same cost (if optional Criticals rules are being used, the ability to "die-double" applies).

## Nasty Bad Guys

Madame Maple is Power Grrrl's most hated enemy, appearing in 10 different episodes, more than any other villain. Being an adult, she has no official super powers, but she is pretty darn smart, and almost manages to foil the Power Grrrl gang a few times before she's ultimately defeated by friendship, loyalty and the American Way. She speaks with a Canadian accent.

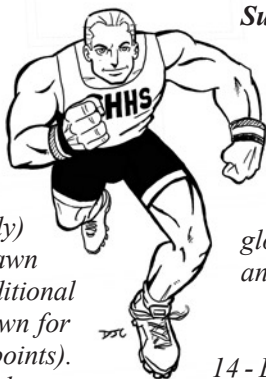
Stats for Madame Maple:

A:1 B:1 C:4 D:2 E:2 F:0

Gordy is Madame Maple's moose. He can't talk, and it's doubtful he can even think, but he always manages to show up just in time to pull Madame Maple out of the clutches of our heroes.

Stats for Gordy, Madame Maple's moose:

A:1 B:2 C:1 D:2 E:4 F:0



## Additional Game Mechanics

**Subjective Gravity** - Gravity works differently on different people within the Power Grrrl universe. For ordinary Joes like adults, it pulls with about the same force as it does in our world. But for those with Super powers, it pulls with far less intensity, somehow being altered by the energies that surround a teenager possessed of such power.

It's this subjective gravity that allows one to fly, even though their bones are "realistically" far too dense to make that possible. It's also what allows characters to jump farther and higher, run faster, and achieve many of the other fantastic feats they pull off on a daily basis. Exactly how it works is a mystery to the scientists of the Power Grrrl universe; all they know is that it's the way things work.

## Tons of Cool Gear

**Suburban Cowboy Getup**

**Frame Rating:** 5 (4)

**Damage Rating:** 70 (56)

**Cost:** \$300 (\$240)

**Description:** Don't break my achy-breaky heart, or my face either. Heavy oilskin duster, big black cowboy boots, leather chaps, thick gloves and spurs, topped off with a ten-gallon hat and a bandana to boot.

## Adventure Ideas

14 - **Bad Hair Day** - Power Grrrl has to get to school for a biology test, but she's all out of conditioner! She scrambles madly around the house and around town, but all the stores are closed! Returning home, she checks the calendar and discovers that it's a holiday - she doesn't have school at all. She goes back to bed.

## A Complete Game Setting

Metro City is a mid-sized city located in the Northeast part of the mythical country that is Power Grrrl's world. Despite the northern climate of the surrounding area, Metro City benefits from a peculiarity of the local weather systems which keeps it moderately warm all year long – summers are cool and dry, with temperatures averaging 75 to 80, and winters are rainy but warm, with temperatures rarely falling below 50 degrees. It snows in the nearby mountains, but never within the city.

**Go, Go Power Grrrl!  
You're Pretty Tough!!!**

[www.powergrrrl.com](http://www.powergrrrl.com)







Basic Concept:

Character Name:



Hi, My Name Is:

FOLD HERE

FOLD HERE

## Combat

- Step 1** - Determine Initiative. (Agility Stat + 2d6); highest goes first
- Step 2** - Choose Actions. (Energy Stat = # of Actions per Frame)
- Attack (melee) an opponent in range (your character's height).
  - Attack (ranged) an opponent within your weapon's range.
  - Actively Defend against one opponent's attack.
  - Change a weapon or object in hand with another.
  - Use an object (drink a potion, throw a grenade, etc.).
  - Move up to twice your height (round up) in any direction.
  - Use a Special.
  - Use all Actions for Full Frame activity (Moderator discretion)
- Step 3** - Make Check. (Agility Stat, plus 2d6, compare to Difficulty, which = Target Agility + Modifier).
- +5 - Easy; target is surprised or unaware
  - +10 - Average, typical modifier
  - +15 - Target is actively dodging (costs 1 action)
- Step 4** - Determine Damage. (Weapon modifier + Brawn).
- Step 5** - Reduce Armor (if any), Pools and Damage (or other Stats).
- Step 6** - If Stat would go below 0, make a 1d6 Stat Save. If the result is greater than the Stat, reduce to 0. Otherwise, reduce normally.

*(Repeat Steps 2-6 as needed)*

## Character Creation

- Step 1** - Pick Name And Basic Concept.
- Step 2** - Pick Your Statistics (6 statistics, 0 to 5 points)
- Step 3** - Calculate Statistic Pools (Stat multiplied by itself).
- Step 4** - Pick Specials.
- Step 5** - Buy Stuff.



## Statistic Checks

- Step 1** - Determine Difficulty.
- 0 - Infantile - A baby could do it, blindfolded.
  - 5 - Easy - Technically failure is possible, but it's unlikely.
  - 10 - Average - Chances of success are close to 50/50.
  - 15 - Hard - Success is not assured, the action quite difficult.
  - 20 - Impossible - Luck or cooperation will be required.
- Step 2** - Determine appropriate Stat.
- Step 3** - Make Check (Stat, plus 2d6, compare to Difficulty)
- Step 4** - Reduce Stat (if applicable).
- Step 5** - If Stat would go below 0, make a 1d6 Stat Save. If the result is greater than the Stat, reduce to 0. Otherwise, reduce normally.

FOLD HERE AND TAPE TO  
OTHER SIDE TO STAND UP

