

Fox Paw Games Presents...

EDGE SYSTEM

A Cinematic Role Playing Game System for All Genres

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Edge System

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0 Introduction

Welcome to the *Edge System*, a simple role playing game dedicated to providing a fast-paced, minimally intrusive set of rules to serve as an objective aid in the act of group storytelling known as Role Playing.

0-1 What is Role Playing?

Remember those old days when you were a kid, and you and your buddies would play “Let’s Pretend?” You would all take up a role in an improvised story. However, there was absolutely no structure, and there was absolutely no way of figuring out if something would work, thus inevitably leading to arguments and hissy-fits and the story would never be finished. Role playing games provide some of that much-needed structure (usually in the form of dice-rolling) so there would be a fair way of determining if the cop shot the robber or if the knight slew the dragon. Basically, role playing games are “Let’s Pretend” with rules.

But, there is another important distinction. Almost every player gets one character, but there is one player who has to work with a cast of thousands and create the main plot for the story. This person is called the “Game Master,” but he or she can also be called the Referee, That Guy/Girl Who Keeps Track of Everything, The Boss, God (or Goddess; and many game masters may jokingly “wish” to be thought of as such) or even the Narrator. We just use “Game Master” or GM for shorthand. It’s just the way it’s usually been.

The Other players are simply called “Players” and their characters, their *Sims*-like avatar in the game’s world, are

called “Player Characters” (or PCs). Characters controlled by the GM are called “Non-Player Characters, or “NPCs.”

There is one more thing. Some groups treat the game more like an improvisational theater, dressing up like the characters they are portraying and acting as though the game and the adventure were really a play without a script. I do not recommend that kind of Live Action Role Playing (or “LARP”) personally, and especially not for 2/3 of the American population (more conventional exercise is healthier by far), but there are games written that are made to be played Live Action, provided that everyone is responsible. Once again, The *Edge System* is not intended for Live Action games.

0-2 How is Edge System Different?

For those among you who have already played many role playing games, you may be wondering why an Edge System game is worth any degree of investment. Fortunately for you, here is a list of what makes the Edge system different from many other games.

Rapid Combat: Fighting is a simple matter of picking a stat (justified by an attempted strategy in the terms of the story), possibly applying a few points to help carry that strategy through, and then rolling against an opponent who is pretty much the same doing the same thing. No “situational modifiers” are involved except for the ones you put onto your character. There is no tracking of “Hit Points” save for an optional wounding system for those who like to add a little grit and drama to their games. *Most of*

the time is spent narrating the flow of combat, and the dice merely tell you who's getting the upper hand at that moment. This system then proves excellent for swash-bucking musketeers, dueling immortals, police detectives in the line of fire, and over-the-top superheroes, among other action-oriented types.

Resource-Based Skill Use: You still roll dice to determine if you succeed or fail, but you also have greater control over your odds. In most games; skills are a constant factor, while this game renders them a fall-back in the name of dramatic sense. Why waste your skills on a bunch of minions when the big-bad is just about to show up; and you'll need all your best stuff for *him*? Now when you use your skills (called "Talents" in this system), you have to think about whether it is worthwhile to do so. To compensate though, your attributes are usually enough for most actions.

Simplicity through Minimal

Intrusion: The mechanics are minimalist without insulting your intelligence and imagination, relying upon your sense of fun, logic, and drama to let you tell the story you want to tell. There are rules, but these rules are only applied when the players and GM want them to be applied. The core system itself is actually contained within 12 pages worth of text.

0-3 Warning: Some Tradition

While I have gone on about the innovative aspects of the Edge System, there are a few points where the old ways, methods that have had a proven history of working out well, are maintained with the intention of creating a fun game overall. The most apparently egregious case is the use of periodic

improvement ("experience levels" for those who need a less technical term).

Experience levels are often griped about because it means that characters have to work towards improvement, with many a long haul in between, yet when all that work pays off and the character is upgraded, it comes as a blessed relief. It grants a very real sense of accomplishment that would otherwise not be obtained. Furthermore, by nodding to the olden days of gaming, it serves as a poignant reminder of the hobby's classic heritage.

Another move that would raise a few brows in modern times is the mixing of fixed attributes in freeform everything else. Older games have ignored the idea of things being absolutely freeform in favor of what is usually a restricted rules set, while newer games hold that anything fixed is a bad thing. This designer likes the idea that some things are available to everyone without having to write it down on the character sheet. It's a bit of indulgence on the author's part. However, the reason the rest of the game is freeform is because that allows the greatest control possible among all of the game's participants. This is also why game balance is treated as a bit less important overall among the characters. Speaking of which...

0-4 A Word on Balance

(Warning: *Star Wars* is used extensively for reference in a portion of this section. This is not meant to infringe on the copyrights of Lucas Arts, but rather as a point of reference to aid in demonstrating a particular point. Reference is not itself a copyright offense, so there are no laws being broken here. Also, I use a fair amount of popular opinion, which may not necessarily coincide with my own. This

is nothing against the game incarnations of *Star Wars*, but rather it is used as an illustration.)

One thing about this system that may bother veteran gamers is that in the *Edge System*, the designer acknowledges that there is no way to create a perfectly balanced group of characters. Really, are the characters really on an even playing field in fiction? I would have to say no, based on personal observation.

One of the things about your average role playing game that appears to be hindering it in a lot of ways is the obsession some game designers have with attaining perfect game balance. This is usually done by reducing the effectiveness of nearly everything that has even an inkling of “cool.” However, when Luke Skywalker began to go on some adventures, he was easily outclassed by Han Solo, who in turn would have easily been outclassed by Obi-Wan Kenobi. In fact, the only character who was inferior to Luke was C-3PO. However, *Star Wars Episode IV: a New Hope* proved to be a great movie to lots of folks. In the latest incarnation of the *Star Wars* role playing game (as of 2007), the Jedi were seriously weakened so they could be balanced with non-Jedi. However, in the series itself, the Jedi were the best of the best of the best. This decision to make the Jedi weak compared to the source material is based on the notion of “Game Balance.” And the game sadly suffered for it in the opinion of many gamers.

However, the original *Star Wars* trilogy can still work as a game, if you

want to accommodate for different power levels. What I am about to say here will defy conventional logic. The players, playing C-3PO, Luke Skywalker, Han Solo, and Obi-Wan, can work together as a functional team in a role playing game. They just all have to be mature about how they play, allowing each other a chance to shine. The GM must also allow everyone a chance to shine, without playing favorites. The obsession with the almighty Game Balance is based on the assumption that players lack the capacity for such maturity, and worse yet that everyone will try to play Obi-Wan and make certain he doesn’t get killed by Darth Vader this time. Not all gamers are like that.

Now, I acknowledge that these types of players exist, and if they have a group that likes it that way, more power to them. Contrary to popular opinion, they are not what comprise of the “whole of gaming.” Now, how does all this relate to the *Edge System*?

Well, in the *Edge System*, there is a lot of freedom. And because of this freedom, not everything is perfectly balanced. In fact, there are things that most gaming veterans would deem “broken.” They may appear to be many, or nearly none, depending on your assessment and personal opinion. However, all this freedom provided in this game is bound to lead to one thing: unbalanced characters. In short, in the *Edge System*: The emphasis is on telling a fun story, rather than competition between players.

1 Character Creation

Before you can take part in the Edge System (or any role playing game for that matter), you need to create a character. Fortunately, if you just follow the steps below, you should be able to make a character relatively quickly (though putting thought into the process will naturally result in more time being taken.)

1-1 Concept and Points

Characters in the Edge System always begin as an idea, generally an idea appropriate to the setting established by the GM (with or without player input). There are too many possible ways a concept can be made to be listed here. What matters is that the player comes up with an idea that he will enjoy.

Some Edge System games may incorporate this kind of material into the basic choices themselves, but this tends to limit the options. Not all games involve elves or aliens. Below are a couple of considerations to think over:

Name: What is your character's name? What works for a name will vary from setting to setting. If you're looking at modern day realism, you should probably stick to ordinary names like John, Jack, and Lisa. In a more fantastical setting, feel free to let your imagination take a part in the process. In fiction, you can actually let a name convey certain things about a character. Brock implies a strong individual, for example.

Background: While you may have chosen a background talent, this is a good place to think of events that set up your reason for going out on adventures.

In a superhero setting, you'd need to justify the character's powers, and in most other settings, a pivotal event is usually enough as long as it sets up a motivation for your adventures. ("The sorcerer Althazar slew my village and raised its people from death to be his minions. I had the strength of will to resist his control and I seek vengeance upon him for the murder of my village"). Generally speaking, the background needs to be workable for the Game Master, who may himself (or herself) need to adjust the game's background for the purposes of taking in a fun idea.

If a setting has multiple species (as is typical of most fantasy and science fiction settings), then you should state the character's species.

A character's **personality** should stem from the character's background as well. To do this, simply let one thing logically lead to another. This tends to work out more easily during the course of play as you get a bit more of the character's "feel" into you.

Gear: In most role playing games, equipment is intended to make things easier. Weapons make fighting easier, and computers make research easier. In the Edge System, equipment is descriptive and served to justify possibilities (such as talents or powers). Look at your character sheet and just come up with some stuff your character would carry on their adventures. Then seek the GM's approval

During this, the GM comes up with a power level either for the characters or the game as a whole, and the points are assigned based on this power level.

The point-pools are as follows:

Power Level	Points
Normal	50
Heroic	60
Super	100
Mega	150

1-2 Attributes

Attributes are on a scale of 1 to 10. The values measure as follows:

Value	Description
0	Virtually incapable.
1	Feeble
2	Weak
3	Average
4	Capable
5	Very Capable.
6	Incredible. Among the best in town
7	Augmented
8	Monumental. Among the best in the land.
9	Legendary
10+	Mythical. This character is among the best in the world.

The attributes are as follows and they cost two character points per point:

Strength (S): This is a character's raw, physical power, reflecting not only how much the character can lift, but also how tough he or she is. This is used for just about any physically oriented action that relies on old-fashioned brute force or a bit of stamina.

Agility (A): This is the character's general mobility and swiftness. If you're character is supposed to do something quickly, or demonstrate great maneuverability outside of combat, you roll with this attribute.

Mind (M): This is how smart the character is, and is used to demonstrate reasoning or intuition. Rolls with this

value also go with any display of wit and mental acuity.

Will (W): This is a measure of how tough your character is mentally. This attribute is generally most useful when performing actions requiring that one be headstrong and mentally resilient.

Interaction (I): Do you need to talk with someone or flatter an important person's daughter? That's what Interaction is for. Use this attribute when you need to talk or communicate without necessarily presenting any well-reasoned arguments. (Intellectual debate is still a matter of Mind).

Luck (L): Okay, you have no way out of a given bind? Do you need random chance to intervene? That's what this attribute is for.

1-3 Edge Points

Edge Points are a way that characters can fairly consistently keep a bit of an advantage in a situation, even after their talents have run out. To determine how many Edge points a character has at the beginning of each session, add together all six of the character's attributes and divide by three.

No matter how powerful the characters get, they will never have more than 20 Edge points.

1-4 Talents

This step shows the second of three ways a character's points can be spent.

Talents are special skills and capabilities that can make it easier to perform actions throughout the adventure. Talents work as a pool of points that are spent throughout the story, only to recover between stories or at a time when the GM feels the characters are sufficiently revitalized.

The average talent for heroic characters is rated at 5, and no talent

may ever exceed 20. Most normal folks only have a talent for their background and a talent for their profession, rated at 3. Note that if a talent is particularly versatile, it may find itself running out quickly as the player uses it for quite a few different situations. **Talents cost one point per level. One level equates to one point in the pool.**

Examples of talents: Swordsman (helps when using a sword), Knight (helps when doing actions typical of a chivalric warrior), Inventor (helps when building things and toying with technology), Kid (seriously helps when using childlike wiles to get out of trouble, or when using your small size to get out of a tight spot), Religious Devotion (useful to resist blasphemous urges and actions).

1-5 Powers

This is the third benefit points can give you.

Powers are special abilities that enable a character to do things beyond what people can normally do. Their costs are determined by two factors: How much they can do, and how effective they are.

1-5-1 Power Costs, Part One: Versatility

Below is how you determine the base cost of a power: by deciding how many uses it has. This is not about how many times the power can be used, but rather about how useful the power is overall. This approach is simple.

Create up to ten uses for a given power. More than ten uses creates a power theme (see below). Each use should also be marked by a code for how useful a given power is: The codes are as follows based on their use:

Low power (L) uses are for those abilities that do not do a whole lot. Examples include simply removing one part of the character's body, flying, or creating pretty lights.

Medium power (M) uses are fairly standard. Examples include confusing an enemy, attacking them outright, healing wounds, or performing Super scale actions.

High power (H) uses tend to be highly versatile. Examples here include bringing a person back to life, performing mega scale actions (you need Super scale first), or transforming a subject into a form that will hinder them (such as a man into a tree).

Very high power (V) uses are generally seen as "Game breakers" such as raising an army of corpses from their graves or leading the citizens away from a village with enchanting music a la the Pied Piper of Hamelin.

Every use creates MUST fit together naturally. It's not fair to put together uses that do not intuitively mix together into one power. The overall cost is one point per use.

1-5-2 Power Cost, Part Two: Effect

This stage is two fold. First, one must determine the Effect cost of the power. This is done by taking the averages as follows:

<u>Use Code</u>	<u>Points</u>
L	0.5
M	1
H	2
V	3

You simply take the highest of the codes.

The **Effect** rating is typically use when you roll with the power in question. This is not always the case

though. Sometimes, a use will define the effect, as shown in some of the example powers.

1-5-3 Power Themes

For the most part, powers are chosen as particular themes. If you have limited psychic power, for example, you list all the various powers you have and then determine your effect from there.

Power themes are similar, but reflect limitless power in an area. As such, the costs are a bit different. You pay ten points as a base cost for having more than ten possible uses. Then you pay 4 points per level of effect to reflect the nearly game-breaking status of such an ability. Examples would include granting wishes like a genie, or being a master wizard or psychic extraordinaire.

1-5-4 Binary Powers

Some abilities, instead of having an effect rating, are either “You have them” or “you don’t” In these cases, their uses must specify an attribute that employs them instead. For purchasing them, assume that the power has an effect rating of 3.

1-5-5 Sample Powers

Below is a list of some of the powers you can create with this system. This is not a complete list and if you can add on other uses, go right ahead and do so. Total Costs reflect a theoretical Effect rating of 3.

Alternate Form:

Uses (1): Alternate form is made with 15 points per level (H)
Effect Cost: 3
Total Cost: 7

Ambulatory Anatomy:

Uses (3): The character may detach limbs, extremities, and head (M).
Decapitation is not lethal (M). Parts may move under own power (L)
Effect Cost: 1
Total Cost: 6 (Binary)

Animal Speech:

Uses (1): The character can speak to animals (L).
Effect Cost: 0.5
Total Cost: 3

Attack power (Pick a special effect):

Uses (1): The character has an offensive ability such as an energy blast of a freeze ray (M).
Effect Cost: 1
Total Cost: 4

Companion (Also applicable for vehicles and AIs):

Uses (1): Each level of effect grants 10 points for an ally (M)
Effect Cost: 1
Total Cost: 4

ESP:

Uses (1): Character can detect unusual things based on Psychic impressions (M).
Effect cost: 1
Total Cost: 4

Flight:

Uses (1): The character can fly at 25 MPH at Effect 1, and twice that speed per effect rating past that. (L)
Effect Cost: 0.5
Total Cost: 3

Healing:

Uses (2): The character can heal the wounds of others (see section 3-7-3) (M). Resurrection (H).

Effect cost: 2

Total Cost: 8

Immortal:

Uses (2): Character does not age (L). Character can only die in one way (contested by Effect) (H).

Effect Cost: 3

Total Cost: 11

Intangibility:

Uses (1): Character can phase through any object (H).

Effect Cost: 2

Total Cost: 7

Invisibility:

Uses (1): The character can become impossible to see (H)

Cost: 2

Total cost: 7

Regeneration:

Uses (1): Wounds heal each time the character rests (section 3-7-3). (M).

Effect Cost: 1

Total Cost: 4

Stretching:

Uses (1): Character can stretch limbs out to any length (M). Character can alter their own shape as long as they are within their mass and coloration (L)

Effect Cost: 1

Total Cost: 4

Summoning:

Uses (2): Each effect level allows the character to summon a creatures of 15 points per effect level (H). Character can summon hordes of creatures (V)

Effect Cost: 3

Total Cost: 11

Super Attribute:

Uses (1): Access to Super Scale actions with specified attribute (M)

Effect Cost: 1

Total Cost: 4 (Binary)

Note: Super Attribute can be upgraded to Mega Attribute. Add a use to enable Mega Scale actions (H)

Super Speed:

Uses (4): Run incredibly fast (L). Act with great speed (M). Create tornados by running around in place (M). Enter a "Speed" dimension (H).

Effect Cost: 2

Total Cost: 10

Super Swimming: This is like Super Speed (see above), but only underwater.

Telepathy:

Uses (1): Send and receive mental messages (L).

Effect Cost: 0.5

Total Cost: 3

Teleport:

Uses (1): "Blink" from place to place as long as character is familiar (H)

Effect Cost: 2

Total Cost: 7

1-6 Disadvantages

Here are a couple of ways you can gain points back. These are called "Disadvantages" because they exist to make trouble for the character.

Faults are the weaknesses a person has. Instead of providing pools of points to help the character, they impose a -2 penalty to related courses of action. A fault gives the character 1 more. **Do not take a fault you don't want the GM to exploit.**

Examples of faults: Bad Temper (-2 penalty to do something that tests your calmness/patience), Crippled (-2 to movement-based actions requiring that one stays on their feet), Poor Vision (-2 to any action requiring sight), Bad Reputation (-2 to any action where your reputation matters), Old (-2 to any actions involving your failing health), Distracted (-2 to any action requiring serious focus), Phobia (-2 when dealing with feared object)

Restrictions are weaknesses that utterly forbid certain actions, whether because of a physical handicap or a deeply ingrained mental/psychological block. In addition, they can act much like a fault when it comes to actions that would be difficult for someone so handicapped (i.e. a blind person can still fight, but it'll be harder). They provide a benefit of 2 more points. **Do not take a Restriction that you don't want the GM to exploit.**

Examples of restrictions: Pacifist (won't fight), Blind (can't see), Paraplegic (can't walk), No voice (can't speak, sing, etc.), Serious Phobia (Won't involve oneself with object of fear)

You cannot have more than five Faults or Restrictions in total!

2 Action Resolution

2-1 Basics

Take an Attribute (or power) and add a roll of two dice (2d6) against a difficulty set by the GM. The goal is to meet or exceed the target number in question

Difficulty	Action Scale			
	Normal	Heroic	Super	Mega
Easy	8	9	12	15
Average	10	11	14	17
Hard	12	13	16	19
Very Hard	15	16	19	22

2-1-1 Action Scale

There are four scales in which actions may be carried out. Each scale implies a different situation and while the numbers may themselves appear to cross over, what is done in these scales does not. (Under no circumstances will an ordinary character stop a car with their bare hands).

Normal Scale is the realm of normal folks. There is no minimal attribute for performing actions at this particular scale, although the difficulties are centered on an attribute of 3. *Examples: Cooking a meal for a college student (Easy), Pulling a tricky turn in your car while on an icy road (Average), Remembering precise terms and theorems (Hard), and pulling off a motorcycle jump over a few cars (Very hard).*

Heroic Scale is where things get a little more impressive. Such actions are scaled around an attribute rating of 4 on average. *Examples: Hit a Stationary target (Easy), Perform a jump with an automobile (Average), Jump over a fiery*

chasm (Hard), and Smash a glass window with your fists (Very hard).

Super Scale is the realm of comic books. To perform an action at Super Scale, the character needs the “Super Attribute” power for the appropriate attribute. Also, Super Scale actions are only possible in games where superhuman feats are fairly normal for the genre. The power’s effect rating on which these actions are centered is 7. *Examples: Cut the neck off of a bottle with your bare hands (Easy), lift a car and throw it a few yards (Average), Convince a small country that you do not lead to enter a war (Hard), and rescue the entire population of a burning apartment complex (Very Hard).*

Mega Scale is the realm of mythic heroes whose tales will be told forevermore throughout the ages. This is the power of Greek heroes, aliens from Krypton, and cosmic emissaries. Mega Scale actions are only possible in games where superhuman feats are fairly normal for the genre. To pull any of these off, you need a “Super Attribute” power for the attribute in question, and the difficulties are centered on a power effect rating of 10. *Examples: Lift a Jet and throw it to Hong Kong (Easy), Catch a comet headed towards Earth and pitch it into the sun (Average), Smash a mountain with a few well placed punches (Hard), and Drink Bacchus under the bar (Very Hard)*

2-2 Talents, Edge and Faults

A talent is a pool of points to aid in specific actions. One point provides a +1 bonus to the roll for that action. Once a

point is spent, it does not come back until the character has had ample opportunity to refresh (usually between adventures). If you have doubts about whether a talent's points can be used for a bonus, ask the GM, who should use his/her judgment based on what such a talent suggests and how it might be used for the given action. Points must be spent before the dice are rolled.

Edge points can be used in exactly the same way.

You cannot spend more than three points on any single roll.

Also, don't forget the faults, which provide a -2 penalty to any action where the fault would logically apply. Restrictions simply mean the action is impossible to begin with.

2-3 Teamwork

When two or more persons co-operate, they may add their attributes, talent and Edge points (to a total of 3 per person), and faults; but only one pair of dice is rolled for the action.

When working against multiple people, the other side does the same thing. **On an unopposed action, just add one of the values below for each additional participant an action ought to take, depending on the action's scale.**

Scale	Addition
Normal	+3
Heroic	+4
Super	+7
Mega	+10

2-4 Contests

In some cases, actions are against other characters. When this occurs, there can be either a contest or a conflict. To resolve a contest, the players (or player and GM) simply roll the dice as

instructed, and the highest roller wins. These rules are used for either quick actions between two folks, or conflicts of limited interest that are best handled quickly.

2-5 Conflicts

Conflicts represent a contest that takes longer, at least dramatically speaking. These can represent races, debates, or any other dramatically prolonged moment of opposition.

A conflict is separated into "rounds" of appropriate length, a series of which makes up a "bout." Conflicts are handled one bout at a time, just like in the movies, and also like in the movies, these are all about getting the appropriate edge first before the conflict is finalized (hence why the system is called the "Edge System"). Both sides make a roll with the appropriate attribute. The higher rolling side gains the edge for that round, adding the difference towards a goal of 10. After each round is rolled, however, a bit of narration (by both sides) is necessary to explain how the edge was gotten. This keeps on going until one side or the other reaches a goal of 10 points, in which case, the victor may finalize the conflict in any way that is appropriate to the situation (and genre).

If a conflict is truly intended to take a long time, then the target could be as high as 20 or even 30. The highest goal the author would recommend is 50, but that can be pretty hard to track.

2-5-1 Extended Conflicts

Sometimes, a conflict feels more logical when extended, especially if you are out to get an edge. In this case, the process of the round is the same, but each bout begins with giving the sides ten points to start with and an ultimate

goal of 20 (or 10 per side). Then, as each side rolls, the highest roll is not only added to the winner of that specific round, it is also taken away from other sides of the conflict, as decided by the victor.

This continues until one side has reached the desired total and all other sides have been drained to zero. Once taken down to zero, the side in question is out of the conflict.

3 Combat

3-1 Expanding the Conflict rules

Combat is basically a kind of conflict, but one with quite a few more permutations. Here, each side breaks up into one-on-one bouts; the overall fight then focuses on one bout at a time (as opposed to traditional rounds) from left to right (or right to left, or whatever). What follows then are the specific details of combat.

Also, talents may be used in any conflict, especially in a fight.

In some types of fights, such as a swashbuckling rapier duel, the rules for an extended conflict may be more appropriate.

3-2 Pairing Up

Each side of a combat rolls one die, adds the highest of a group's Agility or Mind scores (whichever is higher), and any ties are re-rolled. The side with the higher roll gets to choose whom they fight against.

Unselected opponents may then choose whom they get to fight.

3-3 Selecting Tactics

At the beginning of each round in a bout, the characters involved each select a tactic, which essentially means you get to pick an attribute for use in combat for that round. The players of the fighting characters each decide a desired outcome as is appropriate to the game and the GM chooses what attribute works for that. Then the players proceed like a standard conflict.

3-4 Multiple Fighters on one person

If multiple folks take on one opponent, they add their attributes together just like in teamwork.

If the one was meant to take on a whole group (such as a dragon or powerful super-villain) then the group-fighter may multiply his or her appropriate attribute by the number of opponents facing the character. Only NPCs can be group fighters unless the players are facing off against nameless extras. Even then, there must be a logical reason for the NPC to be a group-fighter.

If Extras are involved, then the whole group of extras gets treated as one opponent, with its stats multiplied by the number of opponents.

3-5 Withdrawal

If a fight looks bad, you might want to try and get out, possibly choosing another bout to enter at a later point. If you are aiding someone else, then you can withdraw, your side losing a number of points towards the goal as equal to the average of the character's attributes. If it's a one-on-one fight, you may withdraw and lose all of your points, having to start over again. On order to Withdraw, you must make the choice before you roll for the round, and if you manage to roll greater than your opponent, you get out of the bout. If everyone on one side withdraws, the enemies are said to be routed.

A fighter can also force a withdrawal if s/he is facing multiple opponents. After the initial roll for the progress of the fight, one person on the winning side of the round can make a quick contest to

put one other person out of the bout, giving their side a greater advantage. Failure, however, forces the person attempting it to withdraw (possibly with a wound (see 3-7: Option: Wounds)).

These rules do not work for extras, which never withdraw and tend to crawl out of the woodworks in vast swarms as they are taken out.

3-6 Leftovers

If, after all the bouts, there is at least one person on each side, a new battle begins, entirely from scratch, but this new battle only involves those who have come out victorious or those who have not yet lost.

3-7 Option: Wounds

Sometimes, it makes sense for a character to get hurt. This can be the result of a battle, or it can come from having a trap sprung on the character. When ever the GM sees an opportunity for a wound, usually at the end of a bout, the character receives a temporary (or permanent) disadvantage reflecting the nature of the wound. If a character has as many wounds as equals their Strength value, then the next wound will kill the character.

A wound must be significant, and not a mere scratch. Good examples include cleft (or torn) tendons, horrendous bruising, or even a severed limb (a restriction).

3-7-1 When Wounds are Inflicted

If a GM seeks a more objective approach to inflicting wounds, then there are three guidelines.

Bout's End: This way, if a character has been defeated, the winning combatant may choose to leave a nasty wound, determined below in the next section, Inflicting Wounds (3-7-2). In

some games, an outright kill would also be appropriate.

Fifth Degree: During Combat, any roll where the result would be five or more points can provide an opportunity for wounding. In this case, simply roll a die and compare to the chart in section 3-7-2 for a result. Death in this case is certainly not instant; the character will die after the bout, or might linger until a good dramatic point. Extras, characters of no importance, never get wounded. They're just removed from the fight and more show up.

When it Makes Sense: Outside of a fight, there is still the possibility of danger. In these cases, the GM should allow for opportunities to avoid injury, but failure could result in getting hurt.

3-7-2 Inflicting Wounds

Sometimes, intuition doesn't present a clear-cut kind of injury, and sometimes GM's fiat might not seem fair. Here's a solution for problems like these. Simply roll a die and consult the wound chart below. Add half of your opponent's previous wounds as well for the total (rounding up).

Roll Wound Type

- | | |
|-----|----------------------------|
| 1-2 | Temporary Fault (TF) |
| 3-4 | Temporary Restriction (TR) |
| 5 | Permanent Fault (PF) |
| 6 | Permanent Restriction (PR) |
| 7+ | Death (not always instant) |

By taking the approach there, you have a more objective method. And as always, if a result seems too extreme (smashed fingers should not be fatal), the GM can always tone it down to a more logical/realistic kind of wound.

3-7-3 Recovery from Wounds

If someone attempts to heal the wound through medicine, magic or some other appropriate means (based on the GM's fiat) it takes a Mind roll against a hard difficulty of Normal Scale to remove a fault resulting from a wound, and a roll against Very hard difficulty to remove a Restriction based on a wound. If the wound is permanent, then the difficulties move up to heroic scale. It would take Very Hard difficulty on Super Scale to resurrect somebody who has died.

Except for the resurrection part, a week of rest should be enough to allow a Strength roll to do the same kind of healing, but be sure to roll for each wound, as long as they are temporary. Some wounds will heal faster than others and in the movies, the healing rate will usually be a lot faster than in reality where most folks will require physical therapy after a femur gets busted. Under medical care, the difficulty is reduced to Medium (for faults) and Hard (for restrictions).

A character might never recover on their own when it comes to Permanent

Wounds. Resting does not grant an opportunity to heal them unless the character has powerful regenerative capabilities.

Finally, **as late as immediately after a fight, a player may spend five edge points per wound to make it go away.** (To quote the black knight from Monty Python and the Holy Grail, "It's only a flesh wound.") However, there has to be a justification for such a speedy recovery. That's usually a simple matter of "It wasn't so bad." However, permanent wounds like missing limbs and gouged eyes are a lot harder to explain and probably require regenerative powers to heal. If the campaign is especially gritty, such a fast recovery might not be allowed at all.

3-7-4 Wounds are Optional!

In some games, or even some conflicts, wounds don't make much sense. If your fight is about a couple of cartoon animals outwitting a cartoon hunter, then tracking wounds makes no sense at all. This is because injuries do not last in cartoons, and cartoon "injuries" are not as bad as real injuries.

4 Improvements

4-1 Gaining Experience Points

Over the course of one's adventures, a person will gain opportunities to improve and advance themselves. Here is how this is done.

Player has...	Reward
Participated in the adventure	2
Contributed to group success	+1
Contributed to group enjoyment	+1
Played in character	+1
Was affected by a Disadvantage ¹	+1
Per great moment in the game ²	+1

4-2 Upgrades

Experience points are used to acquire upgrades, increases in the count of character points. **You need two fifths the character's point total, with a minimum of 20 experience points, to earn 5 character points.** Look to the right for a precise calculation of that: **Also keep in mind that once you get the upgrade, you lose the experience you spent on that upgrade.**

To justify this increasing requirement, it gets harder to improve on yourself as people get better, and it's not exactly easy to begin with. Simply put, improvement is by nature a slow process. One simply has to work through the process. And hard work means you get a sense of accomplishment, which this incremental approach also works to offer.

¹ This is awarded once per fault, as the fault first makes trouble. If a restriction creates trouble, that's 2 points, once per restriction.

² "Great moments" normally refer to moments of remarkable role playing, but they can also refer to moments that get a group to really go "Wow! That's awesome" or laugh out loud at a really funny line or even go "aw" at something truly heartwarming. Even a well done tear-jerker can count if the group seems to enjoy it.

Point Total	Experience Goal	Point Total	Experience Goal
50*	20	180	72
55	22	185	74
60	24	190	76
65	26	195	78
70	28	200	80
75	30	205	82
80	32	210	84
85	34	215	86
90	36	220	88
95	38	225	90
100	40	230	92
105	42	235	94
110	44	240	96
115	46	245	98
120	48	250	100
125	50	255	102
130	52	260	104
135	54	265	106
140	56	270	108
145	58	275	110
150	60	280	112
155	62	285	114
160	64	290	116
165	66	295	118
170	68	300	120
175	70	(+5)^	(+2)^

* Totals under 50 are also subject to this goal.

^ For every five points in addition, add two points to the new goal

4-3 Experience for Edge Points

This may give the players a bit more of an advantage over the villains, but experience points can also be used as an emergency supply of Edge points. All that has to be done first is to allocate a few experience points and put them in place of any spent Edge points.

Experience points spent in this manner that do not get spent during the

game do not return to the character, as

this is the risk that comes with using the character's experience in this manner.

5 The Game Master

5-1 Introduction to Game Mastering

Now comes the part of the game where all the mandatory fluff goes. Oh, actually, it's not really fluff. Well, you've read through all the hard "crunch" of the rules and now there is a significant portion to deal with: the "squishy" aspects. This means there will be a lot of material to cover here, so please; bear with me on this. We'll start with the role of the Game Master, and then we'll touch upon how to get a campaign together and then go from there in what (at least to this author) would be a logical progression. Throughout, there will be a lot of general advice for you to at least consider. However, what you will not see here is anything about a specific setting. I expect that if you're playing a game in which everything has a possibility of happening, that you either don't care about a coherent setting or you can do the legwork yourself with the help of your friends. Either way, this chapter is about advice. Enjoy.

Before you can be a Game Master (GM for short), you will need to know what it means to be one. Unfortunately, the GM has a big job, but it can be a very rewarding one. The GM has two jobs, however.

5-1-1 Game Master as Storyteller

The first, and most important, part of the GM's job is that s/he is an entertainer. Her/his job is to come up with interesting stories to tell. However, these stories must also be interactive and allow for just about anything the players

might do. Additionally, it pays to know the genre.

Generally speaking, a GM's job is to wing it most of the time, having the story be put together depending upon the exact events of the game. While a lot of planning beforehand can help with some contingencies, it's usually a given that players will find something that the GM has not planned for. This may be intentional, or it may not be. Either way, the GM

5-1-2 Game Master as Referee

Not only are you a storyteller, but you are also in charge of ensuring everyone plays by the rules. Additionally, the GM must play by the rules most of the time. (Occasional fudging *for the story* is acceptable). Additionally, the GM must solve any rules disputes to the best of his or her ability. If you do not know a given rule, you must look it up as quickly as possible. (Suggestion: Buy some sticky-notes and use them to find any rules you have trouble with. Just stick them to the pages where you can see them as easily as possible. It's your book now.)

5-2 Referee's Advice

Before we can go into any storytelling, you, the GM, must know a few things as a referee. These are two important skills that must be known by the GM, and they are as follows:

5-2-1 Fair Judgments

It is important for the GM to make decisions during the game. No set of rules could possibly cover every circumstance, and in order to keep the

rules simple, I had to keep the rules down. Unfortunately, that means circumstances can come up that don't have rules already set up for them. How much does something weigh? What are the character's odds of hacking into a computer system? These are all things the GM must decide for the group, based on what the GM feels is right for the circumstances. Here are a couple of hints on how to do that:

Consider what's going on. Nothing happens without a context. If you have someone about to attack the player characters, things are going to be harder. If the system to be hacked is not well protected, then it should be fairly easy. It's that simple.

Be Consistent. If something has been decided, then the GM should quickly log the decision in a notebook. The reason for this is so you can reuse any rulings made and be consistent with your rulings. After all, nothing spoils the fairness of a situation like making a certain task any easier or harder just because you couldn't remember a previous ruling.

5-2-2 Table Rules

When you gather with your friends, there should be set certain rules to allow the game to run smoothly. Below is a list of things to make rulings about.

Rules about rolling the dice.

Generally, when it comes to rolling the dice, they should be rolled on a flat surface. But what if the die lands on an uneven surface and the number is unclear? (That's a "cocked die.") Should the dice be rolled for all to see or can players be trusted not to lie about their rolls? Should the GM roll the dice for all to see? Work these all out with your players.

Rules about table talk. Sometimes, things happen and the players are suddenly detached from the game. They start talking about things that the characters are not involved in. They trade jokes and movie references, and the game is disrupted. As the GM, you should arrange how much table talk is accepted. One rule some GMs use is the "What you say, your character says" rule. This is somewhat silly, as players do have to announce their character's actions while the character acts instead of speaking, but it does limit the table talk. Otherwise, you should talk to your players about how much is acceptable. If there is too much table talk, it's best to end the game for the night and let the players chat and hang out instead. Evidently, they're having more fun with just hanging around and chatting. And don't be afraid to join them in the fun.

Rules about contact with other people's stuff. There is a rule taught in elementary school which says not to touch other people's stuff. This is simple, people should not touch other people's gaming materials without permission. It's just something that some people need reminders of. Of course, there is pretty much no problem whatsoever with gamers sharing dice or if you offer miniatures, just so long as everybody is careful about handling everything.

In all cases however, there is only one true mandate set out by this game.

Fun First: In the opinion of the game's designer, it is impossible to sufficiently emphasize this; a game is meant to be *fun*. This means that everyone engaged in the game is meant to have a good time, including all the players and the GM. The goal is to collaborate in telling an interesting story that engages all of the people involved.

In essence, have a good time. If you didn't tell a critically good story, that's hardly a problem as long as it was enjoyable.

Although this seems like common sense, many games have taken the move of de-emphasizing the enjoyability of a game in favor of telling the players and the GM how to play the game correctly. In the Edge System, although we give ideas about how to play the game, they are simply ideas typed via a computer, and by no means holy commandments written on stone tablets.

You will probably be seeing this notion crop up frequently through this chapter. This is because, in the opinion of the designer, the importance of fun cannot be emphasized enough in a game. This is nothing personal against you. This is not meant to condescend. Rather, the point is to simply try to place a proper emphasis on the notion that a game is, first and foremost, meant to be fun.

5-3 Getting Players

Okay. Here you are with the Edge System rulebook and a few ideas you want to play with. Now you need a batch of players. Fortunately, it is possible to get together some friends willing to play. Here's a look at how you can do this.

5-3-1 How Many Players Do I need?

As many as you think you can handle. Large groups often make for slow games that a GM can't effectively handle. Generally speaking, it is best to have a small group of good friends, folks you know you can make happy with a session of group storytelling. Most groups have a GM and four or five players. You may conform or deviate from this norm as you are comfortable.

5-3-2 Learn their Schedules

First and foremost, learn the schedules of your players. When do they have classes or when do they have to work? More importantly, when would be a good time to play? Some folks have few obligations and may play at any time. Others may have to play at specific times (if at all) because of numerous obligations. This is why it pays to learn the schedules of your friends; so you know what kinds of obligations they have and can arrange a common time for most of you to take part in a game. It should also be understood that the average role playing session is four hours long, usually played on a Friday or Saturday night when most folks have a day or two of rest to look forward to. That's a huge chunk of time. Some potential players, laden with obligations, may not be able to play. Such is life, and life does indeed take precedence over a game. This should be understood by everyone. Once you have learned everybody's schedules, it would also help to arrange a time for a 'conceptual meeting.' The best time for that would be the same time for a game session, to help the players get into the new addition to their schedules.

5-4 The Conceptual Meeting

The Conceptual meeting is where you come in with a list of ideas in your head and ask the players to contribute ideas of their own. In short, this starts off with a brainstorming session. Simply bring some paper for everyone and ask them to write down as many ideas as they can think of. In giving them each separate pieces of paper, they are free to record without the reactions of the other players. You too will be recording ideas.

As this is effectively a game session, you shouldn't worry too much about time.³

Once everyone has gotten down all the crazy ideas, the GM should then take each sheet, record all the ideas on a new sheet, and pass the new sheet around for each player, asking them to rate each idea provided on a scale of one to ten (or some other scale that is agreed upon by the group). Each player gets to vote on each idea and may repeat the numbers. After all the players vote, the GM may then vote. Then, each vote is averaged.⁴ Examining each average, you must then select the five (or more) top-ranking ideas. Tell your group about these ideas and then thank them for their input.

5-4-1 Player Goals

Now we come to the next step, learning what your players want out of this game. Take a fresh sheet of paper (perhaps a notebook that you plan to use for the game) and write down a few things from each player about what they want out of the game (two or three goals works well). Do not accept "fun" as an answer. Everybody wants that. Ask them what they consider fun. By providing the players with what they want from the game, they can enjoy it, provided the desires are reasonable. Here's a list of some of the general categories of player goals:

Challenge: This player wants to be challenged and have to think things through. Maybe his particular challenge is combat, or her choice of challenge is

puzzles and mysteries. They simply need something to test their abilities, and if they are given that in sufficient amounts, they'll be perfectly happy.

Cool: Some players may want to create a character that they think is "cool." This is probably someone similar to someone they enjoy seeing in action movies or dramas. Maybe they just like the thought of being a cinematic hero or maybe they have a self-image that they want to go beyond. A good way to please this kind of player is to give them some control over how they fail in a task, so that the failure makes them look fallible, but not bad. Emphasis should pretty much go to being cool with this player.

Drama: Every gamer wants a story to some extent, but this player was likely drawn in because of the idea that role-playing is a practice in group storytelling. S/he wants to go into detail on the things related to the plot and will likely do his/her best to create a deep, involving character. Some of these players may have aspirations like novelizing their games or playing in a manner to rival Shakespeare, but most of them are generally more realistic than that and just want a fun story. The best way to handle such a goal is to ask about plot elements and story elements that the player enjoys and keep them in mind as the game is played.

Escapism: This player is not the most satisfied in life. To him or her, the point of the game is to escape the troubles of the real world for a while and be something presumably better than what he or she really is. Sure, a hero has to save folks from evil forces, but that's a lot more fun than worrying over your lover's choice to dump you.

Experimentation: This player likes to do things that most other games don't

³ If you are an anal-retentive sort, then set a timer for 30 minutes for now, and learn to lighten up.

⁴ Although I assume that averaging is simple enough, some GMs might be rather young and have yet to learn it in school. So here is how you average a set of numbers: Add together all the numbers and then divide by the number of numbers. For instance, the average of 3, 7, and 2 is 4 ($3+7+2=12$. $12/3=4$)

really let him or her get away with. In many cases, this is just for the perverse pleasure of being weird. Sometimes, it's just because the player wants a new perspective. This player may work best with an oddity. Also, try to help the other players to keep an open mind about whatever strange things crop up.

Laughs: Perhaps this player likes the idea of comedy. Frankly, lots of folks like to play for laughs as that's as fun as things can get (if done right). Generally, they have a particular brand of comedy in mind. Don't be afraid to coax some information on their humor out of them. If you can introduce the right degree of hilarity, this player will be pleased. If you give them a little input into their failures, then they can fail with funny results as well (maybe the character doesn't just miss with that swing, but overextends, stumbles past something sharp that cuts his belt, and his pants fall down). Also note that comedy needs plenty of ability to come up with something funny on the spot and that it may wear a bit thin for some players. As such, there is some need for a serious moment and the player should understand this. S/he might even embrace it every now and then.

Simulation: Some players may want to have the experience of emulating a given genre or a given situation. And some folks seek out realism. Admittedly, the Edge System was not made with realism in mind, nor does it have just one genre or situation to emulate. Instead, that sort of thing is left up to the collective gaming group to handle. Simply put, ask what this player is specifically looking for, and then try to work with the answers.

Theme: Sometimes, there are players who feel that they must vindicate their doctorates in Literature. Or,

alternately, there is someone who just thinks that exploring various themes (social, psychological, or whatever) is fun. The best way to deal with these folks is to just give them something they can evaluate for thematic purposes. Symbolism and "relevant" questions are good things to use with these kinds of players.

Tragedy: One type of player has an interest in making their character suffer in a certain way. Maybe she wants her character's heart to be broken, or maybe he wants his inability to make a crucial decision to have him fail dramatically. These players, called "tragedians," want a cathartic payoff. The best way to handle a tragedian is to communicate. Out of the game, talk to the player about the kinds of mishaps they want for their characters, and then work in your game to set up these tragedies. Also, some input into their failures would be a good idea, to create dramatic results from their mishaps that coincide with their tragic flaw. The important thing, however, is not to let their tragic ideal get put down by going emo. Let misfortune happen, but then give them a chance to do something about their tragedy. Most tragedians will go for a chance to buck up, suck it up, and do their best not to screw it up again, which is also how character development happens for most tragedians.

This is not a complete list of goals, but they should give you an idea of how to deal with many of the desires players may have. Beyond that, you should just ask about what the players have in mind and take notes. Once everything is written down, this ends the Conceptual meeting. If there is time left, you might want to start with creating characters. If not, well, then the next session goes to that.

5-5 Character Creation

So, now you have a rough idea of what the game is going to be like. This is good. However, there is one thing missing thus far: the protagonists. This is where you now have to ask questions about the characters themselves.

Already in the Edge System, there is going to be some mix in the power levels, on the subtle angles that there will be some folks good at particular things and others who are adequate at a bunch of different things. That there is no such a thing as perfect balance and it is certainly possible to exploit the rules. This was done in the name of simplicity and freeform play. Now, assuming this itself has not deterred you, you should be prepared to think about how divergent your group should be.

If you are just starting to learn the game or if you are new to role-playing, then perhaps the players should be kept into the same general category for power level, as per the beginning of the Character creation chapter (page 3). The power level chosen should coincide with the basic concept. You may want try for a group consensus on what kind of power level to go for. This is best done by asking each player what character they each have in mind. And then you use this concept to pick a power level for that character. When you get this taken care of for each character, average them with the following ratings. Assign a realistic approach a rating of 1. Give cinematic rating a 2. Rate 3 for immense power, and assign a 4 for extreme power. Once each power level is decided and rated, you average them and take the average (rounded off) and assign that to all the players.

If your group is very experienced at role-playing, and capable of playing with

wildly divergent power levels, then you can give each player a power-level based solely on the concept of the character, thus enabling a young farm-boy to fight alongside an experienced outlaw, his massive companion, and an elderly mystic knight.

Then, the rules go as per the character creation chapter. However, the players are going to need your help on various things, such as what traits are acceptable and what powers can be purchased. All that stuff, unfortunately, is up to you. It will naturally vary with each game. The best advice I can give is to go with your gut instinct, and where it cannot decide, be somewhat permissive. If the players are all creative, imaginative types, you may be getting a lot of options presented. Don't panic. This is actually a good thing.

Once the characters are created, you'll have to approve each write-up, examining them for anything that doesn't strike you as "right." Feel free to make suggestions about a given character and how to work such a character into the game's power level. After all that, the adventure can begin in the next session; getting the players to anticipate what may happen, and giving you a chance to create a starting adventure with all the characters and elements that the previous two sections have been all about acquiring.

5-6 Creating an Adventure

Okay. Now you have everything you need to start the game, right? Well, not quite. You need an adventure. Unfortunately, most folks can't really create adventures made especially to your group, as each group has a variety of needs all their own. So, how do we work with this? Simple: You'll learn from this part of the chapter how

adventures are made. This should be able to help you out enough.

5-6-1 Premise

The premise of an adventure is a basic idea. This can be anything from “Save the mayor’s daughter” to the discovery of an alien colony under the neighbor’s basement, to just about any quick concept you can think of. There are just a few things to remember in a game:

Consider the desired tone: Some groups are interested in laughter and comedy. However, your players might prefer a more serious tone. Furthermore, it is *your* game. You play it with whatever tone you want.

Okay, now that I’m out of manifesto mode, let’s just say this. Most games suggest consistency in tone and it’s generally a good idea to do likewise here, at least in terms of the adventure. As such, it works best to play the game with the tone you and your players agreed upon. If you’re playing for laughs, play with a premise that inspires humor.⁵ More serious games should employ premises that inspire drama.⁶

Fit the Premise to the Ideas: You and your group have collaborated on a list of five or more ideas. They exist to be used and really should be used. Not every idea needs to be employed, but one or two should be a good guideline within the premise of an adventure. The point is simply to make the adventure fit the nature of your game.

Similarly, consider the goals of the players. If they just want to goof around in the game’s universe, then go with a silly premise. If they seek drama, then be more realistic.

⁵ Furthermore, do not be afraid to go into silliness.

⁶ Similarly, don’t be afraid to borrow from other sources.

Allow for Evolution: Sometimes, certain premises, especially those based on the loose ends of a previous adventure, may introduce a new idea. This is perfectly fine. In some series, the crazy elements come in through evolution of the storyline, usually to tie up some loose ends and create even more. That’s how *Sluggy Freelance*, *El Goonish Shive*, and *Ninja High School* got to be the way they are now. Stranger still, they even manage to make strange things like thuggish bunnies, transformation guns, and steam-obsessed mad scientists make sense in their given worlds.

5-6-2 Scenes

In an adventure, there are a few roughly essential scenes. What these scenes are will vary with each adventure, but a good way to look at it is to consider each scene a significant encounter. This does not mean that each scene should be a fight. Far from it. However, each scene does require two things:

Interactive Opportunity: Every scene needs opportunities for the characters to do things with each other, with objects, or with other people present in the setting. When designing a scene, provide opportunities for everyone to do something. Even a fight counts as an opportunity to interact, even though most folks don’t think of it that way. Usually, this should relate to the goal of a scene. This brings us to the other part.

Goal: Each scene should have a particular goal. This can be things like “Discover what’s going on” or “Survive the fight with the mega-demon.” Sometimes, goals can even be complex objectives like “find the three keys necessary to open the door before the

room behind it fills up with water and drowns the people locked in.” Whatever happens, the goal should be accomplished if the players are to be able to move on. Because of this, you need to make your goals fair, or otherwise be able to change the goal in such a way that the adventure can continue, most likely along a new course due to the results of the players’ actions. This then means that the actions of the players will have consequences just like in real life (and in most role playing games).

Another handy bit of info for preparations is that it’s a good idea to have many different scenes available for the adventure. When you put in that much preparation, you should have an easier time of going with the flow of the game. Fortunately, each scene is fairly easy to make up because you only need two things for each. The ease of creating scenes should be helpful as no plan truly survives contact with the players.

5-6-3 Casting Call

Okay. Now you have your premise and your scenes. You still need another thing. You need major characters. Take a look at the scenes you’ve devised and consider what kinds of characters you will need. Once you have that figured out, follow the guidelines with your beginning characters, but choosing a power level appropriate to the character’s concept. Also, you should consider whether or not this character is an appropriate challenge for your players, if indeed the character is meant to be a challenge. You can also go beyond the power levels set up in this book and create characters of lower, higher, or in-between power levels. What follows are the basic stats for an average human being:

S 3 A 3 M 3 W 3 I 3 L 3

One professional Talent 3. One background Talent 3

Note that this is for anyone who generally shouldn’t be statted out, like the man or woman on the street. This person rather clearly breaks the rules of character creation by not spending the full points. You might be wondering, “What the heck is up with that?”

The answer is fairly simple.

Unlike your players, who must follow a protocol to create their characters, you have full freedom as the GM. You can make your characters however you please. (If you’re blessed with a perfect role playing group, then you might be able to grant them the same freedom, though this is somewhat unlikely.)

Of course, there is one question left unanswered. How does a given GM-made character measure appropriately to the players? Take a look at the character sheets and examine their strengths and weaknesses. Estimate from there.

Sadly, this is really more of an art than a science, based chiefly on intuition as opposed to cold facts. In fact, all the tasks of a game master are arts rather than sciences. All you are getting here are suggestions that should (hopefully) help you in this art.

5-6-4 Edge Points

A useful note for GM-made characters is that they do not have individual Edge Points. Instead, the entire adventure gets a number of Edge Points equal to the sum of the players’ Edge Points. For example, if the players all had ten Edge Points each and there were four players, then the adventure itself would have 40 Edge Points for use against the players. Just remember that

no more than three points (of a combination of Talent and Edge) can be invested into a single roll of the dice.

5-7 Winging It

So, you did your preparations, and now you are ready to run the game itself. Well, here's a guide to actually playing a role playing game.

The players and the Game Master gather around in their designated meeting area (like a game store, somebody's house, a chat room online, or even your mother's basement if you really want to get stereotypical) and they organize their character sheets, get out any props like character representations or counters, as well as dice, sheets of paper, and even a few pencils or pens, and then finally when everyone has

Normally, before the game actually starts, there's some chumming up and conversing; talking about movies, video games, private lives, and general stuff folks talk about among friends. Give the players some time to do this, but keep in mind that there is a game to go on.

Start the players off with the first scene of the session. Give a good description of the scenery and give a quick description of the people as well. If this is your first session, have the players describe their characters as well, along with what their doing. Once everything is established, then you may begin an opportunity to interact with the environment. This will generally be what kicks off the adventure. The best way to get an interaction going is to have something happen that the players' characters would probably respond to. Alternatively, the players themselves

may start an interaction. If all else fails, have something crazy happen to start off the madness. Just get something going. If this goes against the rest of the scenes you've planned, then take a page from Douglas Adams, author of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* and its many sequels:

Okay. Now that you have this firmly in mind, here's some advice on how to wing it. This advice will be three fine



**DON'T
PANIC!**

- 1) If the players ask a question about whether or not there is something, quickly think about how it might affect the game. If it'll lead to something cool or interesting,
- 2) ~~Something cool or interesting~~ one event naturally follow another. As long as everyone is having a good time, what's the harm in having a wildly divergent story? The only caveat here is to keep the story from getting boring. This brings us to idea number 3.

- 3) If things get to a stall (in other words, things get boring) then look for a scene that's appropriate to the current situation and use that to get back on track. If you're stuck for a scene, recap the events and use that to get the players back on the track of running around screa—er, having an adventure. If all else fails here, then you should probably call for a break. That way, you can take some time to gather your bearings, review the recent events, and set up a few quick scenes as possibilities to get the game going again. Once the break ends, resume

the game with one of your new scenes. Of course, as general advice, a ten-minute break every once in a while (perhaps following each hour of play) is a good idea in general.

With the above considered, you should be able to get the game going for a session. Once the story is told, or the session's allotted time (usually four hours) is up, that's the time to wrap up the session.

When the session ends, there is one more thing to do. Award the players with Experience points. Chapter 4 has all the rules for that. Finally, let everyone gather their materials and start on their way home.

6 Vehicles

Below is an optional system for handling Vehicles. This is intended for any setting in which vehicles play a major role, such as any Mecha-combat game or a game featuring a team of superheroes who derive their powers from a set of special vehicles.

6-1 Vehicle Type and Points

A Vehicle can be purchased as a companion, using the same guidelines.

A Vehicle can actually be shared by a group; with all contributors buying the power and then combining the pool. Each character who improves the power gets to add their upgrades to the vehicle.

Another consideration is to consider what type of vehicle you are dealing with. This determines the baseline ability of said vehicle. For example; since a plane naturally flies, it's silly to purchase flight for a plane; yet if you want to create a submersible jet, you'll have to buy for it the ability to swim.

6-2 Creating Vehicles

The key differences are the available points above and the following factors below.

6-2-1 Vehicle Attributes

Unlike Characters, Vehicles only have two attributes.

Strength (S) reflects the power and durability of a vehicle's chassis (body or hull). Larger vehicles tend to have a greater Strength rating. Also, the number of intended occupants can reflect this value as well. At Strength 1 or 2, that's how many occupants the vehicle is meant to have. For each level above, double the number (rounded off of

course. A 4-door automobile will have a Strength rating of 3.) A vehicle can also be stronger than its occupants imply. If the characters are meant to use the vehicle as a home for extended periods of time (such as a typical starship), add 5 to the rating. Any Strength Roll using a Vehicle uses the vehicle's Strength.

Agility (A) reflects the vehicle's maneuverability. Larger vehicles actually show little investment in this value, but if a vehicle is meant to make sharp turns and do barrel rolls, a high Agility is a good idea. Whenever there is any vehicular maneuvering, the pilot (or driver) uses the lower of either the vehicle's Agility or their own Agility (or Mind if thinking fast is the important thing)

6-2-2 Vehicle Edge Points

Vehicles do not get Edge Points. The pilot (or driver) must instead invest his/her own.

6-2-3 Vehicular Talents and Powers

If your vehicle is a standard model in its setting, then talents and powers are unnecessary. However, if the vehicle is exceptional, then powers are a good investment. The rules are just like those used for characters.

6-2-4 Vehicle Disadvantages

Most vehicles do not have disadvantages. However, if the vehicle has a few deficiencies compared to other vehicles of its type (a rusty car may be less durable), then faults make perfect sense. However, vehicular faults also grant the owners experience points (once per fault per session). If a vehicle has

any restrictions, then these restrictions must be relative to other vehicles of their type. Psychological faults and restrictions do not exist for vehicles.

6-2-5 Intelligent Vehicles

Sometimes, you want an intelligent Vehicle. If this is the case, get a companion and create the vehicle like that. If a Vehicle is an alternate form (for instance, you're playing a Giant transforming robot), then follow the rules as per your typical alternate form. Just use the Strength and Agility scores presented above as guidelines.

6-3 Vehicle Actions

If you are using a vehicle, use its Strength or Agility in the place of your own whenever it's appropriate. If you must compare a vehicle's strength to that of a person, the vehicle gets a +2 bonus immediately.

6-4 Vehicle Combat

If you have to fight using a vehicle, follow the normal rules, but consider your vehicle for the purposes of narration and tactics. Vehicles are also subjected to wounds (if you use those in your game)

7 Artificial Intelligence

Yet another optional rule set, intended primarily for science fiction games, is the Artificial Intelligence. An artificial intelligence is any computer system that acts in any way beyond the standard computer. Most computers are simply databases, while an AI acts with apparent sentience. A fantasy equivalent could be a bound spirit.

7-1 AI points

When creating an AI, it is best to purchase one just as you would a companion. It will be more powerful than your typical companion, but it is also incapable of physical interaction.

7-2 AI Creation

The following rules are the AI's exceptions to the rules for character creation. The AI is explicitly made with no ability to interact with the physical world. If you want your artificial intelligence to do so, then create a normal character and say the character is a robot or "hard light hologram" or some other suitable explanation.

7-2-1 AI Attributes

Artificial intelligences have the following attributes:

Mind (M) reflects the reliability of an AI's database, as well as the ability to creatively interpret commands in a helpful manner. An AI with a high Mind might even question the input to see if such input is desired.

Will (W) determines how resilient the artificial intelligence is to any measures to damage it (such as hacking or a memory wipe). If a computer is on the defensive, this is how it fights back.

Interaction (I) reflects the illusion of sentience that an AI naturally has. A low Interaction score marks them as edging into the Uncanny Valley, and as such the AI will seem creepy. However, a high interaction score will make it seem more likable because of its increased realism.

Luck (L) reflects the tendency for chance to favor the AI in question. An unlucky AI might be prone to viruses or being hacked (thus necessitating Will) while a lucky one might be able to get the input right on the first try without any question.

7-2-2 AI Edge Points

Artificial Intelligences do not gain edge points. The user must invest in them instead.

7-2-3 AI Talents and Powers

These are the programs of an AI. The rules are just the same as if you were creating a regular character.

7-2-4 AI Disadvantages

Faults and Restrictions on an AI do not reflect physical interactions. This is because an AI is not a physical being except in the form of a computer or computerized object (or a magical object in a fantasy game). Otherwise, the rules work as follows.

7-3 AI Actions

When an artificial intelligence is used for any actions, its attributes replace the user's attributes as befitting the situation.

7-4 AI Combat

This doesn't happen often unless the conflict is between AI's interacting in cyberspace. Another situation for AI

combat would be if a hacker tries to corrupt a file or two. An AI's wounds (if used) reflect various damages to the AI's programs.

Point Total: _____ Experience Goal: _____
Experience Earned: _____

POWERS

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

Give Your Game An Edge!

- **Rapid Combat:** Fighting is a simple matter of picking a stat (justified by an attempted strategy in the terms of the story), possibly applying a few points to help carry that strategy through, and then rolling against an opponent who is pretty much the same doing the same thing. *Most of the time is spent narrating the flow of combat, and the dice merely tell you who's getting the upper hand at that moment.* This system proves excellent for swash-bucking musketeers, dueling immortals, police detectives in the line of fire, and over-the-top superheroes among other action-oriented types.
- **Resource-Based Skill Use:** You still roll dice to determine if you succeed or fail, but you also have greater control over your odds. Why waste your skills on a bunch of minions when the big-bad is just about to show up; and you'll need all your best stuff for *him*?
- **Simplicity through Minimal Intrusion:** The mechanics are minimalist without insulting your intelligence, relying upon your sense of fun, logic, and drama to let you tell the story you want to tell. The core system itself is actually contained within 12 pages worth of text (or maybe a bit less than that without chapter breaks).

Finally, you get a game that truly encourages you to play the way you want to play; fast and loose without all the rules, tactics, and gosh-awful bogging down. Battles are resolved in minutes rather than hours, the true tests of your mettle are going to cost you something, and the speed of play is much faster than in most other games. And you aren't even forced onto a given theme like in most of today's "Narrative" games; ironically giving full freedom to your own narrative imagination.

Now is the time to play YOUR game the way YOU want to play it! No more bowing to the "artistic visions" of other designers! This is your vision now. And don't you want to give that vision an Edge?