BIG EYES, SMALL MOUTH

A UNIVERSAL JAPANESE ANIME ROLE-PLAYING GAME

Written and Designed By

MARK C. MACKINNON

Role-Playing In An Anime World!

Big Eyes, Small Mouth is a multi-genre RPG, inspired by the dynamic characters and stories found in Japanese animation. Comedy or horror, fantasy or science-fiction ... if you can imagine it, you can play it! The game rules accuratley reflect the "anime atmosphere" by emphasizing role plaing rather than numbers and charts. Additionally, character creation can take less than ten minutes, and is extensive enough to offer characters magic, mechs, psionics, heightened abilities, unique artefacts — the options are nearly limitless!

Big Eyes, Small Mouth also features:

- amazing artwork by talented fan artists
- easy-to-follow flowcharts
- clear, concise tables throughout the text
- a quick and elegant combat system
- advice for both the Game Master and player for this and many other RPGs
- game "seeds" to assist Game Masters develop adventures
- comphrenensive glossary, biliography, and resources
- hours and hours of fun!

Ages 12 to Adult.
Requires 2 six-sided dice.

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1997 wasn't that long ago — was it?

Big Eyes, Small Mouth First Edition was a huge product for Guardians Of Order. It launched the company and formed the foundation for many of our successful future releases: *The Sailor Moon RPG, Tenchi Muyo! RPG, Big Eyes, Small Mouth Second Edition, Silver Age Sentinels,* and even the d20 System spin-off, *BESM d20.*

Only seven years later, *BESM* First Edition looks positively antiquated by Guardians of Order standards; not due to poor quality, but due to the company constantly raising the bar and improving itself.

Over the years, some of the original files that *Big Eyes, Small Mouth* have been lost or can no longer be accessed — who would have thought we needed that Syquest drive again? We've recreated the book as closely as possible to the original, dropping some irrelevant information, and adding in some previously unseen colour images where the original book only had black and white art. Those of you who don't want to use any colour ink, here's your warning — remember to print this book in black and white! The rest of the book is identical to that little grey book released seven years ago — *Big Eyes, Small Mouth.*

Mark C. MacKinnon
President
May 2004

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Dedicated to Karen McLarney, and my parents Dianne and Angus MacKinnon, for their words of encouragement and undying support.
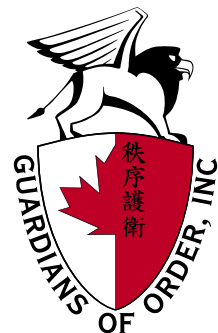
Foreword

It's finished!

This has been quite a journey for me, and I'd like to thank you for being part of it. *Big Eyes, Small Mouth* is my first foray into the role-playing market, following on the heels of the first Guardians Of Order product, *Toying With Destruction —A Large-Scale Battle System For Toys.* BESM was designed from two basic principles: Japanese anime can provide an ideal setting for role-playing and open-ended rules put the power in the hands of the player.

The initial inspiration for the game came to me after watching the entire first season of *Ranma 1/2* in just a few days. I began watching tape after tape of other anime series and movies and soon realized that nearly every genre of Japanese animiation would translate very well to a role-playing scenario. I noticed that most of the anime-influenced RPGs currently on the market were grounded in mecha-style anime, which left a rather large unexplored domain. I set out to fill that void by creating a system that would allow for a wide variety of character talents, skills and oddities, but was not hidden behind a heavy assortment of charts, numbers, and complex rules. *Big Eyes, Small Mouth* is the end result, and am happy to say that it's everything I had hoped it could be — easy to learn, fun to play, and in the spirit of anime.

This book begins with a brief introduction of anime and role-playing before moving to character creation. This is the largest section of *BESM* since the type of characters created and the abilities they possess will greatly affect the direction of an adventure. Each step of character creation is clearly defined with examples and ideas to assist the players. *Chapter 3: Combat and Other Actions* details the bulk of the game mechanics and shows the GM how to use the rules and dice-rolling most effectively. The fourth chapter provides helpful advice for both the GM and player, and lists a variety of game setttings to use in single-session or campaign play. This chapter also gives over a dozen "game seeds" that can be developed into full adventures. Finally, the back of the book contains a glossary, bibliography, and a blank character sheet.

I did not create this game in a vacuum. The ideas, suggestions and efforts of many people helped get *Big Eyes, Small Mouth* to press, and I owe them much thanks: Karen McLarney, Dianna and Angus MacKinnon, Aimo, Paul Wynns, Theodore Serafica, Sean McLeod, Jesse Scoble, Peter Loveridge, John McLarney, Patrick Pote, The Game Publishers Association, Erick Wujcik, Manon Jutras, and all the playtesters.

I hope you have as much fun playing *Big Eyes, Small Mouth* as I did creating it!

Mark MacKinnon
July 1997

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

What is Anime?

Anime is the accepted term that refers almost exclusively to animation from Japan. Anime has garnered much more acceptance and respect in its native country than North American cartoons have in Canada and the US. One reason for its success stems from its diverse subject matter, ranging from comedy to horror, from science-fiction to fantasy. While North American cartoons tend to target younger audiences (with a few exceptions), much of the mainstream anime deals with subject matter that interests a variety of ages. Anime is often based on a published manga (Japanese comic), which is then released on television, directly to video, or as a theatrical release. Additionally, original animation videos (OAVs) are available which usually use the characters and setting of an established manga or television series but a previously unpublished story.

In 1952, Osamu Tezuka and his animation studio Mushi Productions brought the first anime series, *Tetsuan Atom*, to Japanese television. Later, this series became popular in the West as *Astroboy*. Though relatively few anime series have made it to North American television *(Gatchaman* in the guise of *Battle of the Planets*, *Sailor Moon* and *Dragonball* to name a few), the early 1990s saw a sharp increase in licensed commercial translations available on video. Hundreds of titles are now available in North America, and when added to the plethora of illegal imports subtitled in English by anime fans, the volume of anime in circulation is astounding.

Most of the action in anime shows are not realistic by any stretch of the imagination. Characters jump higher than houses, swords cut through concrete walls without effort and mechs move at speeds that defy physics. Characters are often one-dimensional stereotypes, with personalities that can be accurately described with a single word or two. But it is partially from this outrageous
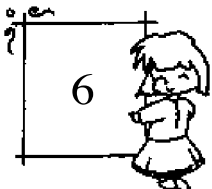
Chapter 1: Introduction

presentation that anime draws its strength and its devoted fan following. *Big Eyes, Small Mouth* relies heavily on that "anime experience", and helps you create your own larger-than-life anime character — a character whose only limitation is your imagination.

What is a Role-Playing Game?

For many people, a role-playing game (RPG) is the "mature" version of the games we used to play as children — "House", "Cops and Robbers" and "Superheroes". A rule system assists in settling conflicts and resolving actions, often with the use of a random generator (dice, cards, etc.) to add an unpredictable element to the game. A game requires a handful of players and one person to act as the Game Master (GM) or referee. The players tell the GM what their anime alter-egos would like to do, and the GM describes the results of their actions. The GM is also responsible for creating the plot and the setting for the game adventures, and works closely with the players to keep the game interesting and fun for all.

In *Big Eyes, Small Mouth* players assume the role of an anime character suitable to the time period and setting of the adventure the GM will be using. The game system helps players assign some strengths and weaknesses to their characters, using numbers to indicate relative ability. The remaining elements of a character's background, family, knowledge, hobbies and interests are not covered by the rules and are described by each player according to his or her choice of character personality.

As a player, you control your character's actions in the game. He or she can be likened to one of the major characters in an anime movie, working through the unexpected twists and turns of the plot with the help of other major characters. Your character's actions can greatly effect the outcome of the adventure, but you must keep in mind that every action has a consequence which could return to haunt your character in a future session. Role-playing is a group effort, however, and positive interactions between your character and the characters of the other players is vital to everyone's enjoyment of the game.

Chapter 1: Introduction

As a GM, your contribution to the game will be much greater than that from any one player. You must establish the genre, setting, conflicts and plot of the adventure as well as all the non-player characters (NPCs) your gaming group will meet during the game. NPCs are similar to the background characters in a movie — few are given quality screen time with the major characters unless they are central to the plot. Additionally, you must be able to project your imagination to the players by describing the world in which they live in vivid detail. Then to top it off, your plot must remain sufficiently flexible to allow the characters' actions to make a definite impact on the adventure. A plot that is too rigid may leave players feeling their characters have lost the free-will to effect their own destiny. Should you assume the role of GM, you must possess creativity, good judgement and the ability to improvise in unexpected situations. It takes extra time and effort, but the reward of a well-played adventure can be almost euphoric.

Each role-playing adventure or episode will require one or two sessions, each several hours in length. A number of episodes using the same characters can be linked together to form an anime campaign. Campaigns require more commitment from everyone involved, but watching the characters grow as the greater plot unfolds makes the extra effort worthwhile. The most engaging campaigns can last upwards of 5-10 years, but keeping a campaign running for 8 months to a few years is considered tremendously successful.

Playing *Big Eyes, Small Mouth*

Big Eyes, Small Mouth was designed to be a multi-genre anime game, and can accommodate nearly any setting or time period. This is not to say that the system is not without limitations, however. The rules are very simple to use, and thus do not afford a measurable level of realism. This key element is one of the central strengths of the game, ideal for either the first-time or experienced role-player. Additionally, the combat engine was designed to capture the feel of anime combat and does not account for such details as hit locations, permanent injury, or blood loss. The role-playing interactions between GM/player and player/player is the primary focus of *Big Eyes, Small Mouth*, and to this end a nearly transparent system is preferred. There are many other fine RPGs on the market should you desire a game with a more complex system.
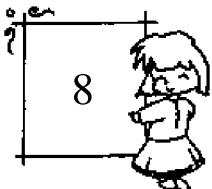
CHAPTER 2
CHARACTER CREATION

Creating a new character for a role-playing game should involve a great deal of interaction between player and GM. It is at this time that the GM can relate the broad types of characters he or she believes may be best suited for the upcoming adventure or campaign. At the same time, the player has an opportunity to bounce ideas off of the GM to better understand the boundaries of character abilities and knowledges.

In *Big Eyes, Small Mouth* you can choose to spend as little as five minutes creating a character, or upwards of an hour — the difference is in the amount of detail and individuality given to the character. The creation guidelines are easy to understand, flexible, and places the power in your hands. At no time during an RPG campaign do you have more control over the destiny of your character.

Throughout the seven steps of character creation, you can follow the progress of Susan's character, Peneekie. The examples are presented in italics following the main text.
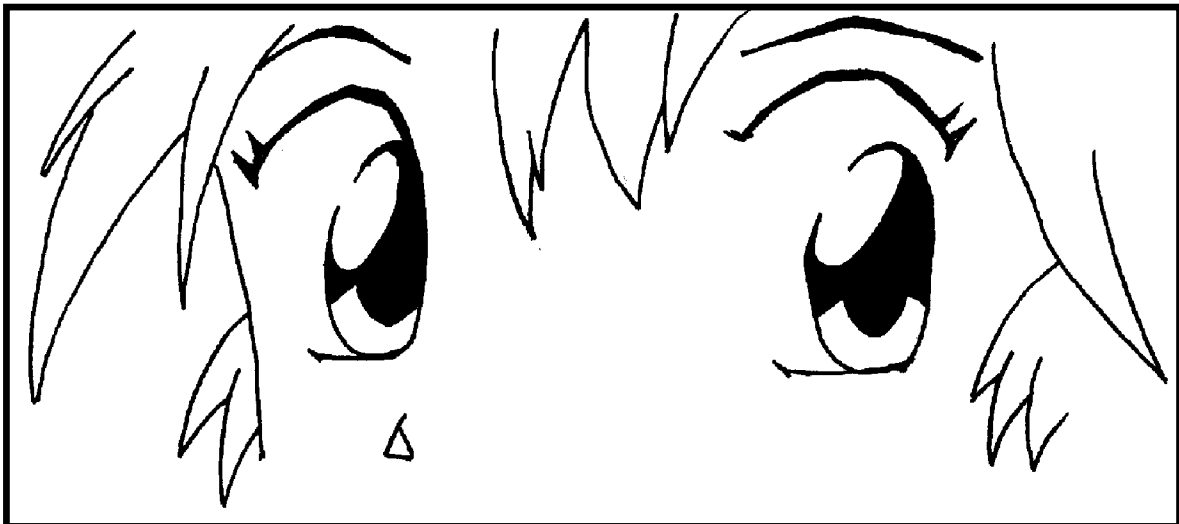
BIG EYES, SMALL MOUTH
Character Creation Flowchart

Step 1: GM Discussion
Talk to the GM about game specifics, including genre, setting, campaign duration, story boundaries and expected time commitment. See pg 11.

Step 2: Character Outline
Decide on the basic archetype or stereotype for the character you wish to play. You should focus on one or two of the character's main personality traits. See pg 12.

Step 3: Assign Stats
Roll 2 dice and add 10 to the result. Distribute the total among your character's Body, Mind and Soul Stats. Stats cannot be lower than 1, nor higher than 12. See pg 13.

Step 4: Character Attributes
Distribute 10-20 Character Points among a number of Character Attributes appropriate to your initial outline. Attribute levels range from 1 to 5. See pg 15.

Step 5: Character Defects
You are encouraged to take up to 3 Defects appropriate to your anime character. This will provide you with more role-playing opportunities, and give you Bonus Points to use for acquiring additional Character Attributes. See pg 35.

Step 6: Derived Values
Calculate your character's three derived values — Combat Value, Health Points and Energy Points — using different Stat Value averages. See pg 41.

Step 7: Background Points
Earn 1-3 Background Points by giving the GM a background history, an important character story, or a character drawing. Background Points are used to acquire additional Character Attributes. See pg 44.

Chapter 2: Character Creation

Step 1: GM Discussion

Before any characters are created, the GM should outline such details as genre, setting, campaign duration, story boundaries and expected time commitment. As a player, you should listen closely to the GM's descriptions since it will impact directly on the anime character you wish to create. It's certainly not useful if you decide to create a computer hacker character should the GM set the game in late seventh-century Japan! Ask for clarification of any rule modifications the GM plans to use, as well as any background restriction on your character. If you have any game preferences involving issues such as combat intensity, maturity level, drama versus comedy ratio, etc., let the GM know about them. Players should help the GM create the game they all want to play.

The GM tells Susan that he plans to run a mini-campaign once a week during the month of June. The satirical game will be set in Tokyo in the near future, and will feature high school characters in their senior year. Susan lets the GM know that she would like to see a fair number of outrageous fight scenes, coupled with a focus on superficial student relationships. After talking for a while longer, both Susan and the GM think that the game will be quite successful.
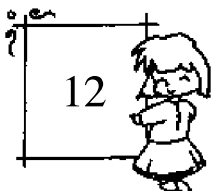
Chapter 2: Character Creation

Step 2: Character Outline

While it is vital to have a good character outline prepared before assigning points and abilities, it's equally important not to over-detail your character before exploring all the rule options. To get the most from playing an anime RPG, your character should fit one of the basic archetypes (or stereotypes) highlighted in TV series, OAVs and theatrical releases. Such archetypes can include the Hero, the Combat Master Grandpa, the Techno-Wizard, the Whiner, the Martyr, the Criminal, the Fop, the Hunter, or even the Guy-with-the-unhealthy-obsession-with-girls-underwear. The possibilities are numerous, but only a few will fit into any one game genre smoothly.

A character should have room to grow independently of your initial concept, and thus should not be "perfectly complete" at the end of the creation process. Though the starting archetype should play an integral part of the character most of the time, it should not rule all of his or her actions. You may be surprised to find your cowardly character engaging in acts of heroism on occasion, but if the actions fit the situations, don't worry about it. A character that you have spent hours perfecting and detailing may quickly become stagnant and uninteresting once play begins. The best anime character outline is usually one-dimensional and focusses on one or two of the character's main personality traits.

Susan wants her character Peneekie to be a crime-fighting student who protects the innocent from local street gangs. Peneekie has a profound respect for police officers, simply adores cute little animals, and is perpetually searching for the perfect boyfriend.

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Step 3: Assign Stats

Stats are numerical assignments that reflect your character's base capabilities. Higher Stat numbers indicate an advanced level of accomplishment or achievement. Three Stats are used in *Big Eyes, Small Mouth* — Body, Mind and Soul.

Body Stat   This Stat represents the physical aspects of your character. Overall health, strength, endurance, speed, rate of healing, manual dexterity and ability to withstand physical trauma are all governed by the Body Stat.

Mind Stat   This Stat represents the power of the psyche and the ability to comprehend complex ideas. A character with a high Mind Stat is intelligent, witty, and a quick learner.

Soul Stat   This Stat represents the essense of the inner self and of willpower. A high Soul Stat places your character in balance with Nature, and helps focus his or her life-force to draw on personal energies in time of need. The Soul Stat also represents the elements of Luck.

Your character's achievements in each of the three Stats are largely decided by your personal preference. Roll 2 six-sided dice, add 10 to your roll, and distribute the total over the three Stats. Stats cannot be lower than 1, nor higher than 12. Additionally, your character can only ever have one Stat at level 12. If your character is unequalled (level 12) in more than one Stat, he or she becomes One With the Universe and is removed from play! Each Stat Value is markedly better than the previous level (see **Table 2-1: Stat Value Descriptions**).

There are no right or wrong ways to distribute points among the Stats. Some people prefer to target one Stat in which to excel, which gives their character a weakness in another. Other people create well-rounded characters that are not particularly adept in any one area, nor are they deficient. You may find yourself playing a number of characters with different Stat Value distributions until one strikes you as your best option.
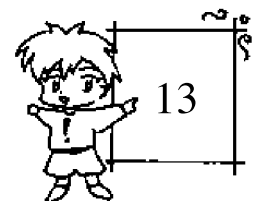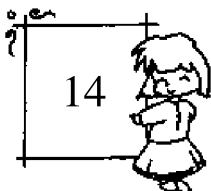
Chapter 2: Character Creation

Susan decides that Peneekie should be strong and agile with a tremendous force of will, but unfortunately is not very intelligent. Susan rolls a 9 on two dice for a total of 19 points to distribute over her three stats (10+9=19). In keeping with her character outline, Susan assigns Peneekie the following Stats: Body of 7, Mind of 3, and Soul of 9.

If your dice roll was low (a total of 17 is average) or you simply wish to have higher Stat Values, you can increase your character's Stats through options available in *Step 4: Character Attributes*. Three Derived Values — Combat Value, Health Points and Energy Points — are based on your character's Stats and are detailed in *Step 6: Derived Values*.

Table 2-1: Stat Value Descriptions

Stat Value	Description
0	Completely and utterly useless.
1	Inept.
2	Significantly below human average.
3	Below human average.
4	Average human adult.
5	Above human average.
6	Significantly above human average.
7	Highly capable.
8	Extremely capable.
9	Best in the land.
10	World-class ability.
11	Legendary ability.
12	Best in the universe. Unequalled.

Step 4: Character Attributes

While your character's base capabilities are represented by the three Stats, his or her skills, knowledges and other abilities are assigned through Character Attributes. You have 10, 15 or 20 Character Points with which to flush out your character concept, depending on whether the GM plans to run a low-, average-, or high-power game. For introductory adventures, 15 Character Points is recommended. The Attributes available are listed in **Table 2-2: Character Attributes.**

Character Attributes can each have a Level of 1 through 5. Increasing the Attribute value by 1 Level requires 1, 2, 3 or 4 Character Points, depending on the Attribute. The Character Point cost is printed in bold beside each Attribue name. The Attribute descriptions indicate game effects, limitations and the Stat most relevant to the Attribute's use should a dice roll be needed (See *Chapter 3: Combat and Other Actions,* page 47).

In many ways, this step is the most important step during character creation. You are defining much of what your character will do during the game sessions since Attributes come into play more often and more directly than Stats. Think carefully about the balance between a few high-level Attributes and a large number of low-level Attributes. You should also refer back ocassionally to your character's original archetype in order to keep your Attribute choices focussed and on track.

The GM has given Susan 15 Character Points with which to assign Peneekie's Character Attributes. Since Peneekie defends the innocent from street gangs, Susan gives her Combat Mastery at Level 2 (6 points) and Speed at Level 2 (2 points). Peneekie is also specialized in Karate with a Focussed Combat Attribute at Level 1 (2 points). With the remaining 5 Character Points, Susan gives Peneekie the following Attributes: Fortified Body at Level 2 (2 points), Size Change at Level 1 (1 point) and Appearance at Level 2 (2 points).

Chapter 2: Character Creation

Table 2-2: Character Attributes	
Acrobatics	Appearance
Art of Distraction	Combat Mastery
Cybernetic Body	Damn Healthy!
Divine Relationship	Energy Bonus
Extra Attacks	Flunkies
Focussed Combat	Fortified Body
Heightened Senses	Item of Power
Magic	Massive Damage
Own a Big Robot (OBR)	Powerful Mind
Psionics	Shape Change
Size Change	Special Attack
Special Defense	Speed
Strong Soul	Unique Character Attribute

Acrobatics (1 point/level)

Acrobatics gives a character the ability to perform a wide array of gymnastic feats including flips, jumps, bends and contortions. At higher levels, the Acrobatics Attribute also allows the character temporarily change the Law of Gravity (or at least it sure <u>looks</u> that way!) See page 41 of *Step 6: Derived Values* for more information on the Defense Combat Value.

Relevant Stat: Body

Level 1   Knows a wide range of basic acrobatic manoeuvres.
Level 2   Skilled. Twice as talented as the previous level.
Level 3   Very Skilled. Twice as talented as the previous level.
Level 4   World-class skill. Twice as talented as the previous level. Defense Combat Value is increased by 1 point.
Level 5   Unparalleled skill. Twice as talented as the previous level. Defense Combat Value is increased by 1 point.
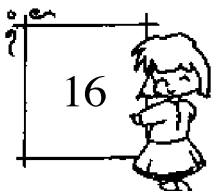
Chapter 2: Character Creation

Appearance (1 point/level)

This Attribute reflects physical attractiveness and prowess. A character lacking points in this Attribute is considered to be of average appearance. Values of 4 or 5 increase the Art of Distraction Attribute by 1 or 2 points respectively, but only when the character is visible to his or her audience.

Relevant Stat: Body

Level 1   Moderately attractive.
Level 2   Quite attractive.
Level 3   Very attractive.
Level 4   Extremely attractive. Increase Art of Distraction Attribute by 1 level.
Level 5   Legendary beauty. Increase Art of Distraction Attribute by 2 levels.

Art of Distraction (1 point/level)

The Art of Distraction Attribute allows a character to distract a number of people or animals at a critical moment, provided he or she has some method of communicating with the them (eg. talking, hand signals, television broadcast, written word, etc.) This Attribute may be modified by the Appearance Attribute should the character be visible to his or her audience (see description above).

Relevant Stat: Soul

Level 1   Can distract one person or animal.
Level 2   Can distract up to two people or animals.
Level 3   Can distract a small crowd (1-10 people or animals).
Level 4   Can distract a medium crowd (11-50 people or animals).
Level 5   Can distract a large crowd (50+ people or animals).

Combat Mastery (3 points/level)

This Attribute reflects the character's intimate knowledge of a wide range of offensive and defensive combat techniques, covering all aspects of armed and unarmed encounters (including ranged weapons). See page 41 of *Step 6: Derived Values* for more information on the Combat Value.

Relevant Stat: None

Level 1 Combat Value is increased by 1 point.
Level 2 Combat Value is increased by 2 points.
Level 3 Combat Value is increased by 3 points.
Level 4 Combat Value is increased by 4 points.
Level 5 Combat Value is increased by 5 points.

Cybernetic Body (2 points/level)

In a high-technology setting, it is possible for a character to have partial or total replacement of body parts with cybernetic equivalents. The prosthetics usually function better than the original flesh-and-bone counterparts, but may have undesirable side effects. The GM may assign Armour Levels to the cybernetics should an attack target them directly (usually Level 2 or 3). Discuss this Attribute with the GM to determine the specific functions of the cybernetic body part.

Relevant Stat: Body

Level 1 Cybernetic body part offers a small advantage to the character.
Level 2 Cybernetic body part offers a moderate advantage to the character.
Level 3 Cybernetic body part offers a good advantage to the character.
Level 4 Cybernetic body part offers a great advantage to the character.
Level 5 Cybernetic body part offers an extreme advantage to the character.
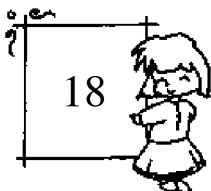
Damn Healthy! (1 point/level)

Possessing this Attribute increases the Health Points of the character, allowing him or her to withstand more damage in combat. The Damn Healthy! Attribute, along with the Body Stat, also reflects a character's resistance to sickness, disease, and other physical ailments. See page 42 of *Step 6: Derived Values* for more information on Health Points.

Relevant Stat: None

Level 1   Health Points are increased by 10 points.
Level 2   Health Points are increased by 20 points.
Level 3   Health Points are increased by 30 points.
Level 4   Health Points are increased by 40 points.
Level 5   Health Points are increased by 50 points.

Divine Relationship (1 point/level)

A character possessing a Divine Relationship has powerful forces acting as his or her Guardian, which can beneficially influence the outcome of important events. This relationship is represented through the re-rolling of undesirable dice rolls.

Relevant Stat: None

Level 1   May re-roll any 1 dice roll each role-playing session.
Level 2   May re-roll any 2 dice rolls each role-playing session.
Level 3   May re-roll any 3 dice rolls each role-playing session.
Level 4   May re-roll any 4 dice rolls each role-playing session.
Level 5   May re-roll any 5 dice rolls each role-playing session.

Energy Bonus (1 point/level)

Possessing this Attribute increases the Energy Points of the character, allowing him or her to draw on a greater pool of energy reserves in times of need. See page 42 of *Step 6: Derived Values* for information on Energy Points and their uses.
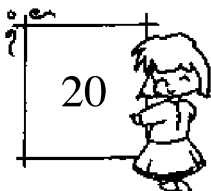
Relevant Stat: None

Level 1   Energy Points are increased by 10 points.
Level 2   Energy Points are increased by 20 points.
Level 3   Energy Points are increased by 30 points.
Level 4   Energy Points are increased by 40 points.
Level 5   Energy Points are increased by 50 points.

Extra Attacks (4 points/level)

This Attribute reflects the character's ability to use every combat situation to his or her benefit. Each round, the character may take additional offensive and defensive actions, provided that the attacks and defenses are all similar in nature (eg. all hand-to-hand, all ranged, etc.) Also, unless two or more opponents are very close together, the armed or unarmed hand-to-hand attacks must target the same person. The attacks are usually carried out at the same time.

Relevant Stat: None

Level 1   Character gains 1 extra attack and defense each round.
Level 2   Character gains 2 extra attacks and defenses each round.
Level 3   Character gains 3 extra attacks and defenses each round.
Level 4   Character gains 4 extra attacks and defenses each round.
Level 5   Character gains 5 extra attacks and defenses each round.

Flunkies (1 point/level)

Flunkies can give a character the ultimate ego trip. They hang around the character doing whatever he or she wants, and never ask for anything in return. They can provide a character with more free time ("Got some more homework for you my faithful friend..."), can keep the character safe from danger ("Quickly! Interpose yourself between me and that rabid wolf..."), or can simply make the character's life easier ("My shoe is untied. Fix it!") Flunkies aim to please, even at their own expense. Flunkies are also known as groupies, stooges or toadies.

Relevant Stat: Soul

Level 1   One flunky with limited abilities.
Level 2   2 or 3 flunkies with limited abilities.
Level 3   2 or 3 flunkies with a number of abilities.
Level 4   4 to 6 flunkies with a number of abilites.
Level 5   More than 6 flunkies with diverse abilities.
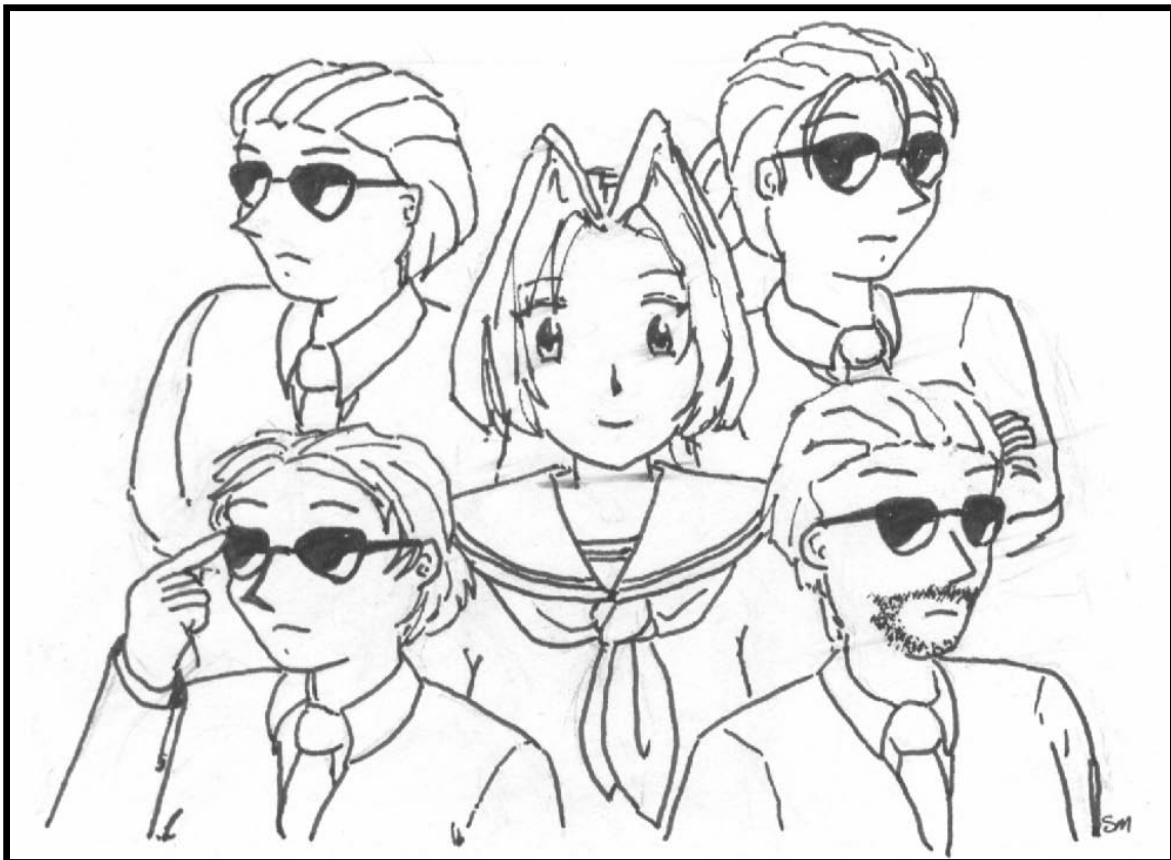
Focussed Combat (2 points/level)

This Attribute is similar to the Combat Mastery Attribute, but refers to only one specific form of combat. This can include one type of weapon, one martial art or one combat condition (underwater, free-fall, darkness, at sunset or sunrise, during a full moon, etc.) See page 41 of *Step 6: Derived Values* for more information on the Combat Value.

Relevant Stat: None

Level 1   Combat Value is increased by 1 point for the specific condition.
Level 2   Combat Value is increased by 2 points for the specific condition.
Level 3   Combat Value is increased by 3 points for the specific condition.
Level 4   Combat Value is increased by 4 points for the specific condition.
Level 5   Combat Value is increased by 5 points for the specific condition.

Fortified Body (1 point/level)

A character with a Fortified Body receives a bonus to the Body Stat. The increase cannot raise the Stat above 12.

Relevant Stat: None

Level 1   Body Stat is increased by 1 point.
Level 2   Body Stat is increased by 2 points.
Level 3   Body Stat is increased by 3 points.
Level 4   Body Stat is increased by 4 points.
Level 5   Body Stat is increased by 5 points.

Heightened Senses (1 point/level)

A character with Heightened Senses will have an acute perception of taste, touch, sight, smell and hearing compared to those of an average human adult. Alternatively, a character may possess only one Heightened Sense at a greatly increased level of perception (shown in brackets below).

Relevant Stat: Body

Level 1   Slight heightening of all senses (or twice as sharp).
Level 2   All senses twice as sharp (or four times as sharp).
Level 3   All senses three times as sharp (or six times as sharp).
Level 4   All senses four times as sharp (or eight times as sharp).
Level 5   All senses five times as sharp (or ten times as sharp).

Item of Power (2 points/level)

This Attribute describes any item that either directly enhances a character in some way, or one that serves as a tool or weapon. A weapon may increase the amount of damage delivered upon a successful attack, or could possibly increase the character's Attack Combat Value. Additionally, the item may require an energy source to function. If this source of energy is the character's Energy Points (usually draining 1-10 Energy Points each use), the Character Point cost of the item may be reduced by a total of 1-3 points at the GM's discretion. Discuss this Attribute with the GM to determine what game effects the Item of Power possesses, and the exact nature of how the item works.

Examples: sword that can cut through anything, item that mimics any magical effect, bullet proof leather jacket, jewelry that destroys any evil, family heirloom of legendary power, etc.

Relevant Stat: None

Level 1   Item offers a small advantage to the character.
Level 2   Item offers a moderate advantage to the character.
Level 3   Item offers a good advantage to the character.
Level 4   Item offers a great advantage to the character.
Level 5   An extremely powerful item that offers the character a huge advantage.

Magic (4 points/level)

Magic is the study of the Arcane Arts, using the mystical forces of Nature to alter reality. This is a very open-ended Attribute and should be discussed with the GM at length to determine the effects and limitations of Magic in his or her game adventure. Proper use of Magic will not unbalance the game, but can provide role-playing opportunities through its innovative use.

A character with the Magic Attribute has the potential to cast spells from a vast variety of magical disciplines. However, limiting the character's knowledge of Magic to just one discipline reduces the Attribute cost to only 2 Character Points per level. Such specializations can include protection spells, elemental spells, weather spells, charm spells, necromantic spells, spells involving animal spirits, etc.

Casting a spell requires the Mage to draw upon the power of his or her Soul to reach a new Balance with Nature. This link with the mystical world allows reality to be altered to accommodate the existence of the spell. Such spell creation is quite exhausting however, drawing on the character's Energy Points at the rate of 3 points per level of the spell (whether the casting was a success or a failure). Should the spell effects target more than one person or object, the casting drains another 3-6 Energy Points from the character (at the GM's discretion). The GM will decide the Attribute level needed to cast a particular spell.

Magical Spell use is classified as either contested (directly affects another character or NPC) or uncontested (does not directly affect another character or NPC). Uncontested spells do not usually require a Stat Check dice roll unless the GM deems the casting conditions to be difficult (eg. casting a spell during combat, while underwater, casting an unfamiliar spell, etc.) Contested spells do require a dice roll, but the type of roll depends on the purpose of the spell being cast. For offensive or defensive combat spells such as lightning bolts or forcefields, a normal attack or defense Combat roll is required (*Chapter 3: Combat and Other Actions,* page 50). For contested non-combat spells (eg. making a cat's fur fall out, casting an illusion to fool a security guard, etc.), the player must roll a successful Soul Stat check (*Chapter 3: Combat and Other Actions,* page 61).

The following descriptions serve only as guidelines. Creativity is encouraged when using the Magic Attribute.

Relevant Stat: Soul

Level 1   Can cast short-duration spells of no real power (eg. make noises, tie knots, make a gentle breeze, etc.) Spells of this type are Level 1 spells.

Level 2   Can cast medium-duration spells of no real power (eg. light, protection from elements, climb walls, etc.) Spells of this type are Level 2 spells.

Level 3   Can cast short-term spells of some power (eg. lightning from fingers, X-ray vision, levitate, etc.) Spells of this type are Level 3 spells.

Level 4   Can cast medium-duration spells of some power (eg. flight, wards of protection, limited invisibility, etc.) Spells of this type are Level 4 spells.

Level 5   Can cast spells of great power and of nearly any duration (eg. summon spirits, create matter, teleportation, weather control, etc.) Spells of this type are Level 5 spells.

Massive Damage (2 points/level)

A character with the Massive Damage attribute knows precisely how and where to hit any opponent in order to inflict incredible amounts of damage. This knowledge can be applied to any form of physical combat, including armed, unarmed, martial arts, and ranged weapons. Naturally, the character's attack must be successful to inflict any damage. Physical strength is not the key to delivering massive damage — the ability to see the weakness in any human, alien or animal body is far more important.

The damage modifier only applies to attacks in which the character has direct influence. For example, a character throwing a grenade is in direct control of the attack, but the same character does not have influence over a nuclear bomb on a three-day timer. For more information on physical combat and damage, see page 49 of *Chapter 3: Combat and Other Actions*.

Relevant Stat: None

Level 1   All delivered damage in physical combat is increased by 5 points.
Level 2   All delivered damage in physical combat is increased by 10 points.
Level 3   All delivered damage in physical combat is increased by 15 points.
Level 4   All delivered damage in physical combat is increased by 20 points.
Level 5   All delivered damage in physical combat is increased by 25 points.
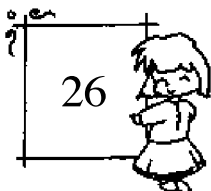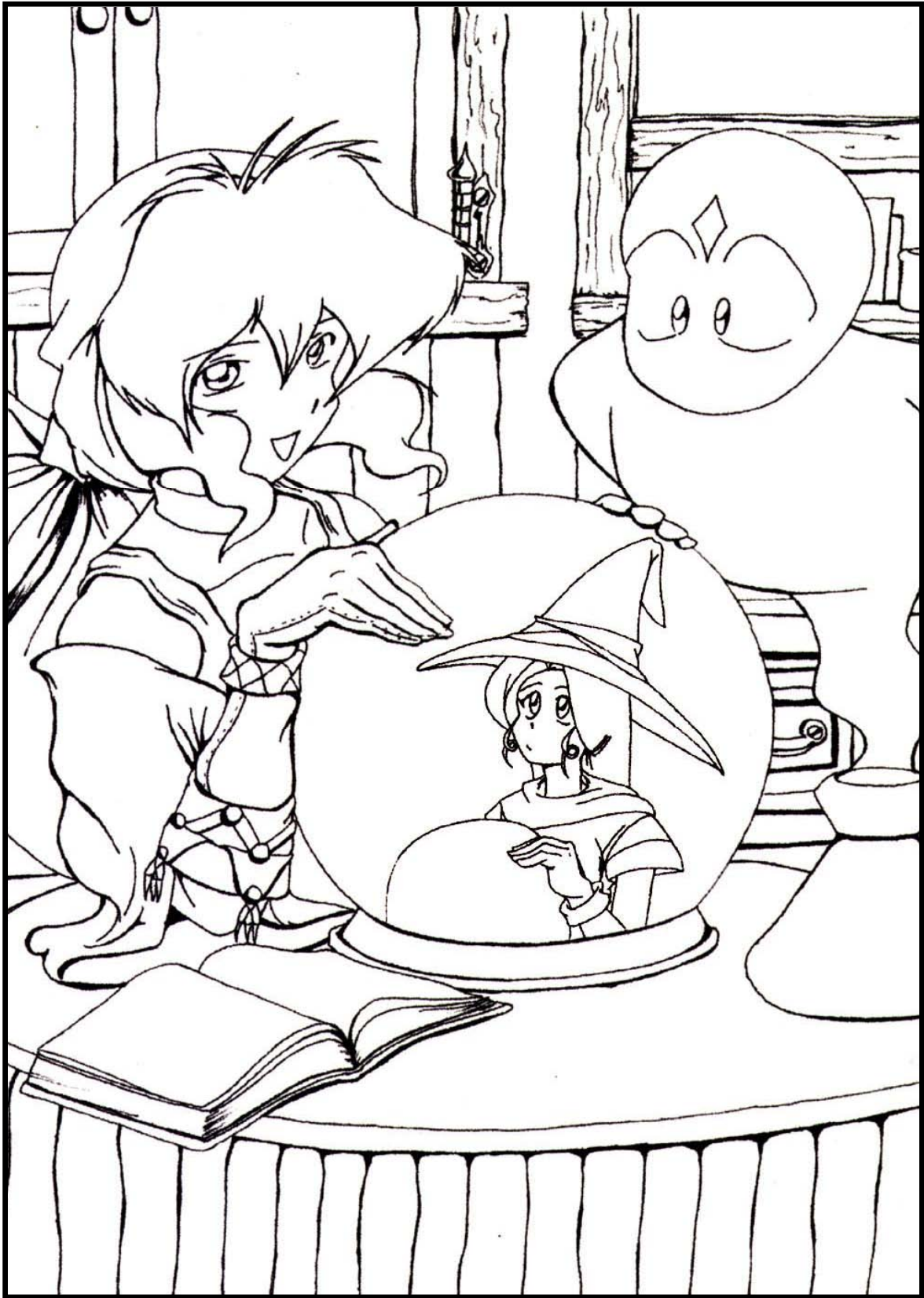
Own A Big Robot (OBR) (4 points/level)

The OBR Attribute gives an anime character total ownership of a mechanized robot (called a mech). The details of design, storage, maintenance costs and game impact of the mech should be discussed with the GM. Piloting is usually done from a cockpit inside the mech, though lower-technology or "retro" mechs may be operated via remote control. Note that the pilot of the mech may sustain partial damage from an attack should the armour prove insufficient protection. For more information on Armour and Weapons, see page 53 of *Chapter 3: Combat and Other Actions*.

   Relevant Stat: None

Level 1   Full suit of body armour. +1 Attack Combat Value, Armour Level 1, low-power weapons (Weapon Damage 1-8).

Level 2   Small robot mech (20 feet tall). +2 Attack Combat Value, Armour Level 2, medium-power weapons (Weapon Damage 8-12).

Level 3   Mid-sized robot mech (100 feet tall). +3 Attack Combat Value, Armour Level 3, high-power weapons (Weapon Damage 12-20).

Level 4   Large robot mech (500 feet tall). +4 Attack Combat Value, Armour Level 4, extremely powerful weapons (Weapon Damage 20-30).

Level 5   Huge robot mech (1000 feet tall). +5 Attack Combat Value, Armour Level 5, primal damage weapons (Weapon Damage 30-60).

Powerful Mind (1 point/level)

A character with a Powerful Mind receives a bonus to the Mind Stat. The increase cannot raise the Stat above 12.

   Relevant Stat: None

Level 1   Mind Stat is increased by 1 point.
Level 2   Mind Stat is increased by 2 points.
Level 3   Mind Stat is increased by 3 points.
Level 4   Mind Stat is increased by 4 points.
Level 5   Mind Stat is increased by 5 points.
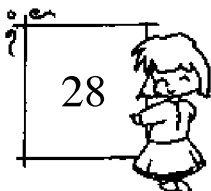
Chapter 2: Character Creation

Psionics (4 points/level)

Psionics are paranormal psychic powers that are gained through heightened perception of the true nature of the mind. This is a very open-ended attribute and should be discussed with the GM at length to determine the effects and limitations of Psionics in his or her adventures. Like the Magic Attribute, Psionics will not unbalance the game through reasonable use, and can provide many excellent role-playing opportunities.

A character with the Psionics Attribute has the potential to use psychic powers that stem from a diverse array of disciplines. However limiting the character's powers to just one discipline reduces the Attribute cost to only 2 Character Points per level. Such paranormal disciplines include telepathy (mind reading), empathy (sensing emotions), telekinesis (moving objects), divination (foretelling the future), pyrokinesis (heat control), clairaudience (hearing through time and space), clairvoyance (seeing through time and space), astral projection (separation of mind from body), and many others.

The use of Psionics can quickly drain the personal reserves from a character, but the Energy Point cost varies greatly due to the chaotic and unpredictable nature of the paranormal. To determine the Energy Point drain of a successful or unsuccessful action, the GM must first assign the task a Difficulty Rating (DR) from 1 (the easiest) to 5 (the most difficult). The majority of actions using Psionics have a rating of 2 or 3, but great physical distance from a target usually increases the difficulty. The following are just a few examples of difficulty ratings for single targets (higher for multiple targets):

DR 1   Meditation.

DR 2   Reading a willing friend's mind, moving small objects, hearing conversation in an adjacent room.

DR 3   Astral projection, melting metal, mind control of an animal, seeing through walls, seeing a few details of past events.

DR 4   Thought placement in a human's mind, predicting the far future, moving large objects, secretly reading a human's mind.

DR 5   Establishing mind contact with another being, predicting the near future, speaking with the dead, sight across a great distance, extracting specific thoughts from an unwilling person.

The player then rolls a number of dice equal to the difficulty rating of the action. The dice total minus the character's Psionics Attribute level are the total Energy Points reduced from his or her remaining points. On a rare occasion, the total of the dice roll will be less than the Attribute level. This actually returns Energy Points to the character — he or she becomes invigorated by the psychic activity whether the attempt was successful or not. For example, if a result of 2 was rolled for an action with a DR of 2, a character with Level 5 Psionics would have his or her Energy Points increased by 3 (since 2-5 = -3).

A Psionics action is classified as either contested (directly affects another character or NPC) or uncontested (does not directly affect another character or NPC). Uncontested Psionic actions do not usually require a Stat check dice roll unless the GM deems the character is distracted, lacks concentration, or is using an unfamiliar psionic ability. Contested actions do require a dice roll, but the type of roll depends on the nature of the psychic activity. When use of Psionics mimics any physical attack (eg. throwing rocks with telekinesis), a normal attack Combat roll is required (*Chapter 3: Combat and Other Actions*, page 49). However, if a character is trying to touch or contact an unwilling person's mind in any way, the player must roll a successful Mind Stat check (*Chapter 3: Combat and Other Actions,* page 61). If a character with Psionics above Level 1 attempts to psychically damage or control a person's or animal's psyche, Mind Combat ensues (*Chapter 3: Combat and Other Actions*, page 58).

Relevant Stat: Mind

Level 1   Little psionics control. Cannot initiate Mind Combat.
Level 2   Moderate psionics control. Twice as talented as the previous level.
Level 3   Good psionics control. Twice as talented as the previous level.
Level 4   Great psionics control. Twice as talented as the previous level.
Level 5   Psionic mastery. Twice as talented as the previous level.
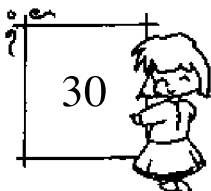
Shape Change (2 points/level)

Shape Change is the ability to alter one's form into a variety of shapes at will. This does not confer the ability to change size or mass, however. For example, a 200 pound character could only change his or her shape into another 200 pound form, be it a cockroach, elephant, or dinosaur. Changing shape requires about 1 minute for easy or practiced changes, and longer for more difficult ones.

Relevant Stat: Body

Level 1   Can induce minor physical changes such as eye, skin or hair colour, as well as altering tiny body features.
Level 2   Can induce radical changes in body texture as well as limb and torso structure.
Level 3   Can change into other living creatures, but lacking the skill to use the physical body correctly (eg. cannot fly if changed into a bird; cannot breath fire if changed into a dragon).
Level 4   Gains any physical ability a creature possesses while adopting that creature's form.
Level 5   Can morph very quickly into anything of comparable size at will, with full control over the new form.

Size Change (1 point/level)

This Attribute reflects the ability to increase or decrease the stature and mass of the character. Changing size requires about 30 seconds for each level listed below (eg. about 2 minutes for a Level 4, 200% increase).

Relevant Stat: Body

Level 1   25 % increase or decrease to three-quarters of body mass.
Level 2   50 % increase or decrease to one-half of body mass.
Level 3   100 % increase or decrease to one-quarter of body mass.
Level 4   200 % increase or decrease to one-tenth of body mass.
Level 5   1000 % increase or decrease to one-hundredth of body mass.

Special Attack (2 points/level)

A Special Attack is one that is not accounted for under the Combat rules, including specific damage effects. Discuss this Attribute with the GM to determine what game effects the Special Attack possesses. See page 41 of *Step 6: Derived Values* for more information on the Attack Combat Value.

Examples: Energy Point drain, weakness detection, disease transfer, Health Point drain, paralysis touch, venom or poison production, hypnosis, disintegration ray, any attack that mimics a magical effect, etc.

Relevant Stat: None

Level 1   +1 to Attack Combat Value, plus a small special attack effect.
Level 2   +2 to Attack Combat Value, plus a moderate special attack effect.
Level 3   +3 to Attack Combat Value, plus a large special attack effect.
Level 4   +4 to Attack Combat Value, plus a major special attack effect.
Level 5   +5 to Attack Combat Value, plus a very powerful special attack effect.

Special Defense (2 points/level)

A Special Defense is one that is not accounted for under the Combat rules, including total or partial immunity to one type of attack. Discuss this Attribute with the GM to determine what game effects the Special Defense possesses. See page 41 of *Step 6: Derived Values* for more information on the Defense Combat Value.

Examples: Armoured skin, immunity to any one attack, invulnerability, resistance to elements, danger sense, mind block, any single magical defense, etc.

Relevant Stat: None

Level 1   +1 to Defense Combat Value, plus a small special defense effect.
Level 2   +2 to Defense Combat Value, plus a moderate special defense effect.
Level 3   +3 to Defense Combat Value, plus a large special defense effect.
Level 4   +4 to Defense Combat Value, plus a major special defense effect.
Level 5   +5 to Defense Combat Value, plus an extremely powerful special defense effect.
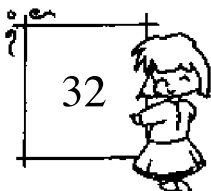
Speed (1 point/level)

The Speed Attribute dictates how quickly a character can potentially move (run, swim, fly) in comparison to an average human adult. A character's speed at Levels 1, 2 or 3 is slightly faster than a character with a Body Stat of 10, 11 or 12 respectively (ie. Speed Level 2 is slightly faster than a Body Stat of 11.) Starting at Level 3 the character gains an Initiative bonus; at Level 4 the character's Combat Value is also increased (*Chapter 3: Combat and Other Actions*, page 49).

Relevant Stat: Body

Level 1   One and one-half times faster than an average human adult.
Level 2   Two times faster than an average human adult.
Level 3   Three times faster than an average human adult. +1 to Initiative.
Level 4   Four times faster than an average human adult. Combat Value is increased by 1 point. +2 to Initiative.
Level 5   Five times faster than an average human adult. Combat Value is increased by 1 point. +3 to Initiative.

Strong Soul (1 point/level)

A character with a Strong Soul receives a bonus to the Soul Stat. The increase cannot raise the Stat above 12.

Relevant Stat: None

Level 1   Soul Stat is increased by 1 point.
Level 2   Soul Stat is increased by 2 points.
Level 3   Soul Stat is increased by 3 points.
Level 4   Soul Stat is increased by 4 points.
Level 5   Soul Stat is increased by 5 points.

Chapter 2: Character Creation

Unique Character Attribute (1-4 points/level)

This section covers any and all Character Attributes not detailed above that an anime character might possess. Often one single point in a Unique Character Attribute is sufficient to give the character "flavour", but more points can be allotted to enhance the effects on game play, and must be added if the Attribute would be of considerable benefit. Discuss the Attribute with the GM to determine what specific game effects the Unique Character Attribute possesses. Several examples are listed in **Table 2-3: Unique Character Attribute Examples.**

Relevant Stat: Varies

Level 1   Little character or game effect.
Level 2   Moderate character or game effect.
Level 3   Large character or game effect.
Level 4   Major character or game effect.
Level 5   Extreme effect on the character or game.

Table 2-3: Unique Character Attribute Examples

Animal Companion	Any Single Magical Effect
Control Over Electricity	Elemental Control
Forcefield	Fly
Healing Touch	Immortality
Invisible Friend	Link With Animals
Magnetic Personality	Midas Touch
Plant Affinity	Regeneration
Stretching Powers	Time Travel
Voice of Power	Water Breathing
Wings	X-ray Vision

Step 5: Character Defects

Defects are small disadvantages through which your character must suffer in order to overcome the hardships of day-to-day life. Anime characters are far from perfect, and Defects serve as an excellent, and often comical, role-playing opportunity. Defects only impede your character to a limited extent however, and are not intended to totally negate his or her many abilities. By taking a Character Defect you can gain one or two Bonus Points (BP) to use for acquiring Character Attributes (explained in *Step 4: Character Attributes*). After you have selected your character's Defects, return to Step 4 to use your Bonus Points. The Character Defects available are listed in **Table 2-4: Character Defects.** It is suggested that you take no more than 3 Defects for your character.

The Defect descriptions below indicate the possible effect on role-playing and any adjustments made to Stats or other character values. When in doubt, consult the GM for details on how he or she plans to implement your character's Defects.

Susan assigns the Easily Distracted Defect to Peneekie to reflect her character's obsession with police officers and other defenders of injustice. Since the distraction will be encountered frequently, Susan gains 2 Bonus Points to assign to Attributes. Susan returns to Step 4 and raises her Speed Attribute from Level 2 to Level 4, which requires 2 Bonus Points.

Table 2-4: Character Defects

|	
Awkward	Cursed
Delicate Body	Easily Distracted
Empty Mind	Hollow Soul
Inept Combat	Involuntary Physical Change
Owned by a Megacorp	Phobia
Special Requirement	Unique Character Defect

Awkward

A character with the Awkward Defect has not yet learned how his or her body works, and consequently is very clumsy. This Defect has the nasty tendency of hindering the character at crucial moments — in times of stress, when great concentration is required, and sometimes even in combat. Awkward characters often lack self-confidence because they are afraid of messing up yet again. See page 41 of *Step 6: Derived Values* for more information on the Combat Value.

1 BP	Generally clumsy and accident prone.
2 BP	Very awkward. Combat Value is decreased by 1 point.

Cursed

A Cursed character has likely offended a great being of power in his or her past, or is the direct descendent of someone who had (Curses often pass through bloodlines). The Curse can take a near limitless number of forms, but should not provide a character with an obvious advantage (remember, it's a <u>curse</u>!) The exact nature, background and limitations of the Curse should be discussed with the GM.

1 BP	The character suffers from a small disadvantage.
2 BP	The character suffers from a large disadvantage.
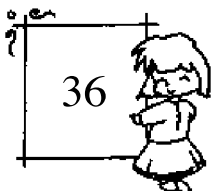
Delicate Body

A character with a Delicate Body suffers a penalty to the Body Stat. The penalty cannot lower the Stat below 1.

1 BP   Body Stat is decreased by 1 point.
2 BP   Body Stat is decreased by 2 points.

Easily Distracted

Anime characters are known to become Easily Distracted by events, objects or people (called triggers). Notable examples of triggers include food, movie stars, gossip, hot cars, music and "cute" members of the opposite sex. A character with this Defect will become completely enthraled with the trigger until it can no longer influence him or her.

1 BP   Distracted by one specific trigger, or by a trigger that is encountered infrequently.
2 BP   Distracted by a number of related triggers, or by one trigger that is encountered frequently.

Empty Mind

A character with an Empty Mind suffers a penalty to the Mind Stat. The penalty cannot lower the Stat below 1.

1 BP   Mind Stat is decreased by 1 point.
2 BP   Mind Stat is decreased by 2 points.

Hollow Soul

A character with a Hollow Soul suffers a penalty to the Soul Stat. The penalty cannot lower the Stat below 1.

1 BP   Soul Stat is decreased by 1 point.
2 BP   Soul Stat is decreased by 2 points.

Inept Combat

This Defect reflects a character's poor judgement in combat situations, which can often place him or her in precarious positions. A character with the Thoughtless Combat Defect suffers a penalty to the Combat Value. The penalty cannot lower the Value below 1. See page 41 of *Step 6: Derived Values* for more information on the Combat Value.

1 BP   Combat Value is decreased by 1 point.
2 BP   Combat Value is decreased by 2 points.

Involuntary Physical Change

A character with this Defect will undergo a physical change when a specific game condition is met. Changes can include height, weight, sex, colour, body shape, as well as partial or whole transformations into plants or animals. The alternate form should not give the character an obvious advantage over his or her normal form, but may provide an unexpected or unique benefit. For example, a character who changes into a fish when he or she gets wet may be the only survivor from a sinking ship. The exact nature of the involuntary change and the conditions under which it will occur should be discussed with the GM.

1 BP   A barely useful physical change, or one that will occur infrequently.
2 BP   A disadvantageous physical change, or one that may occur frequently.
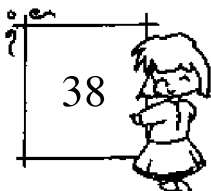
Owned By A Megacorp

Free-will has little meaning for a character Owned By A Megacorp. Control over the character can be exerted through a variety of methods including blackmail, brainwashing, legal contract, cybertechology or just highly effective propaganda. Dire consequences await a character whose actions conflict with the mandate of the owning corporation. It's important to remember that some megacorps are more commonly known as "the government".

1 BP   Megacorp has partial ownership of the character.
2 BP   Megacorp has near total ownership of the character.

Phobia

A Phobia is an illogical or irrational fear of an event, object or person that can limit a character's choice of actions. Avoiding potential situations that could trigger the phobia takes high priority in the character's life. Note that a Phobia that effectively cripples the character with fear does not constructively add to the role-playing experience.

1 BP   A minor fear, or one that is encountered infrequently.
2 BP   A significant fear, or one that is encountered frequently.

Special Requirement

This Defect forces the character to meet a Special Requirement before an action or task can be completed. The requirement may be a physical object, an event, an action, an environmental condition or even a state of mind. The Special Requirement Defect covers a wide range of possibilities and details should be discussed with the GM.

Examples: can only enter society at night, need to make ritualistic animal sacrifices, chemical addiction, bonded to an item or animal, need to recharge cybernetic battery, need to always carry a virtual pet, etc.

1 BP   The Special Requirement is easy to obtain or is needed rarely.
2 BP   The Special Requirement is difficult to obtain or is needed often.

Unique Character Defect

This section covers any and all Character Defects not detailed above that an anime character might possess. The boundaries and limitations of the Defect should be discussed with the GM. Several examples are listed in **Table 2-5: Unique Character Defect Examples**.

1 BP   Defect occurs rarely, or has small effect on the character.
2 BP   Defect occurs frequently, or has large effect on the character.

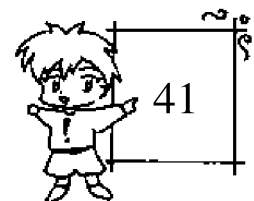| Table 2-5: Unique Character Defect Examples	
Amnesia	Any Weakness or Vice
Berserker Rages	Doomed Destiny
Hemophiliac	Lack of Energy
Physical Affliction	Powerful Enemies
Rejected by Society	Terrible Allergies

Step 6: Derived Values

After you have modified your character's Stats through Defects and Attributes, you can calculate his or her Derived Values. These values are based directly on the Body, Mind and Soul Stats and thus do not afford any choices of point distribution.

Combat Value

This value governs all facets of physical conflict, including your character's skills in attacking, defending and delivering damage. A higher Combat Value reflects an increased skill level and knowledge of all physical combat forms: armed, unarmed, martial arts and ranged weapons. There are two separate components of the Combat Value — Attack and Defense. Character Attributes and Defects may modify either component separately, but unless otherwise noted, the term Combat Value refers to both Attack and Defense.

Increased skill in combat can only be achieved through harmony of the Complete Self. Lack of self unity through weakness of any facet of the character will restrict his or her ability in combat. Consequently, the Body, Mind and Soul are all of equal importance to the combat master: Body Stat for a forceful attack and defense, Mind Stat for quick wit, knowledge of combat techniques and anticipation of an

opponent's actions, and Soul Stat for the winning spirit and good fortune. For example, a petite female standing five feet tall with martial arts training can take down an opponent nearly twice her size — knowledge and determination is just as important as brute force. To calculate the base Attack Combat Value, add together all the Stat Values and divide by three (round down). The Defense Combat Value is two less than the Attack Combat Value. **[(Body+Mind+Soul)÷3]**

> *Peneekie originally had a Body Stat of 7, a Mind Stat of 3 and a Soul Stat of 9. The Fortified Body Attribute at Level 2 raises her Body Stat to 9. Her Attack Combat Value is therefore equal to 7 [(9+3+9)÷3=7]. The Speed Attribute at Level 4 gives her a +1, while the Level 2 Combat Mastery provides an additional +2. Peneekie's Attack Combat Value is thus raised to 10, with the Defense Combat Value at 8 (2 less than 10). The Attack and Defense Combat Value rise to 11 and 9 respectively should Peneekie use her Focussed Combat Attribute in Karate.*

Health Points

This Derived Value dictates the amount of physical damage your character's body can sustain before it ceases to function (death of your character). Damage points delivered in combat are subtracted from your character's current Health Point total. If the total ever falls below zero, a fatal blow was delivered to your character. The base number of Health Points is equal to the sum of the Body Stat and Soul Stat, multiplied by 5. **[(Body+Soul)x5]**

> *With a Body Stat of 9 and a Soul Stat of 9, Peneekie's Health Points start at 90 [(9+9)x5=90].*

Energy Points

This Derived Value represents the personal reserves and fortitude your character has at his or her disposal when carrying out difficult tasks. Energy Points are needed to fuel the Magic and Psionic Attributes, but can also be used to temporarily increase Stats or Health Points. The increase usually lasts for a few
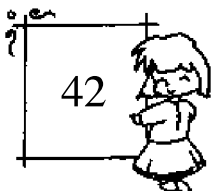
minutes — the duration to finish an important task. Any Stat can be raised by 1 point for every 10 Energy Points drained from your character's total. The new Stat Value can be used during Stat check dice rolls, but does not affect your character's Combat Value. Health Points can also be increased by 1 point for every 5 Energy Points sacrificed and may keep a character who has fallen below zero Health Points alive long enough to receive medical attention.

Additionally, Energy Points reflect the difficulty faced by another person who is attempting to dominate your character's mind through a Psionic attack. The Energy Points can be likened to "Health Points for the psyche", and are quickly drained during Mind Combat (*Chapter 3: Combat and Other Actions*, page 61).

To calculate your character's initial Energy Point total, add together the Mind Stat and Soul Stat and multiply by 5. **[(Mind+Soul)x5]**

With a Mind Stat of 3 and a Soul Stat of 9, Peneekie's Energy Points start at 60 [(3+9)x5=60].
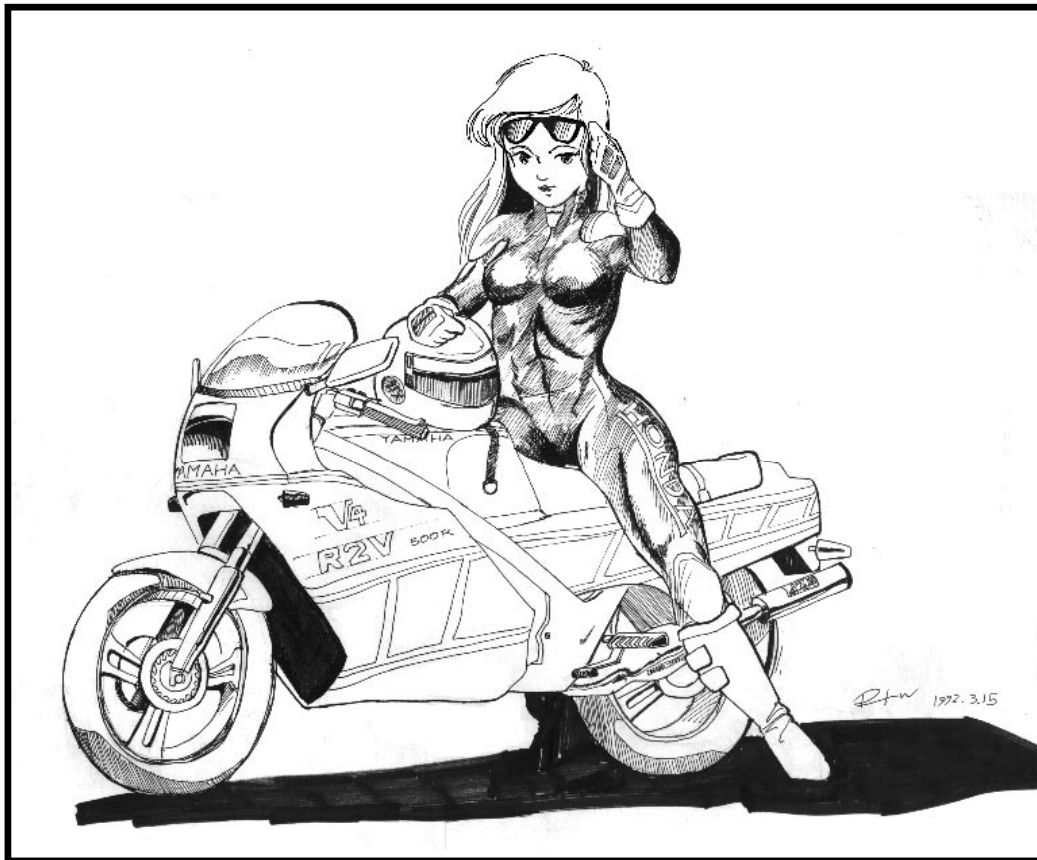
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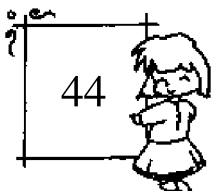
Now that the numerical component of your character is complete (Stats, Attributes, Defects and Derived Values), you should concentrate on fine-tuning his or her personality. One of the most effective ways to better visualize your creation is to provide detail through a background history, an important character story, or a character drawing. Spending time to develop your character without a rule structure will enhance your role-playing greatly, and can give the GM a window into your character's motivations. As an incentive, the GM will award you 1-3 Background Points for each contribution you complete, which are then distributed among the Character Attributes. If any of your character's Stats are changed after using the Background Points, you must recalculate the three Derived Values.

This final step in character creation also serves as your last chance to answer important character questions before gameplay begins. Where does he or she live? Work? Earn money? What are your character's skills? Knowledges? Likes? Dislikes? What about family? Friends? Romantic interests? Enemies? Details add realism to your character, but you should not become obsessed with them. Leaving room for growth can provide numerous character development opportunities during the course of the adventures.

> *Susan has some thinking to do about her character Peneekie before the first game session. Susan promises the GM that she will write a two-page history about Peneekie which will help Susan better visualize her character. The GM gives Susan 2 Background Points which she uses to raise Peneekie from Level 2 in the Appearance Attribute to Level 4. This choice does not change any of Peneekie's Stats, so the Derived Values need not be recalculated.*

The character sheet for Peneekie is shown the next two pages, complete with Stats, Attributes and Defects as developed over the course of character creation.

BIG EYES, SMALL MOUTH
THE UNIVERSAL JAPANESE ANIME RPG

Body **9**   Mind **3**

Combat Value

Attack **10** | Defense **8**

9
Soul

Health Points **90**

Energy Points **60**
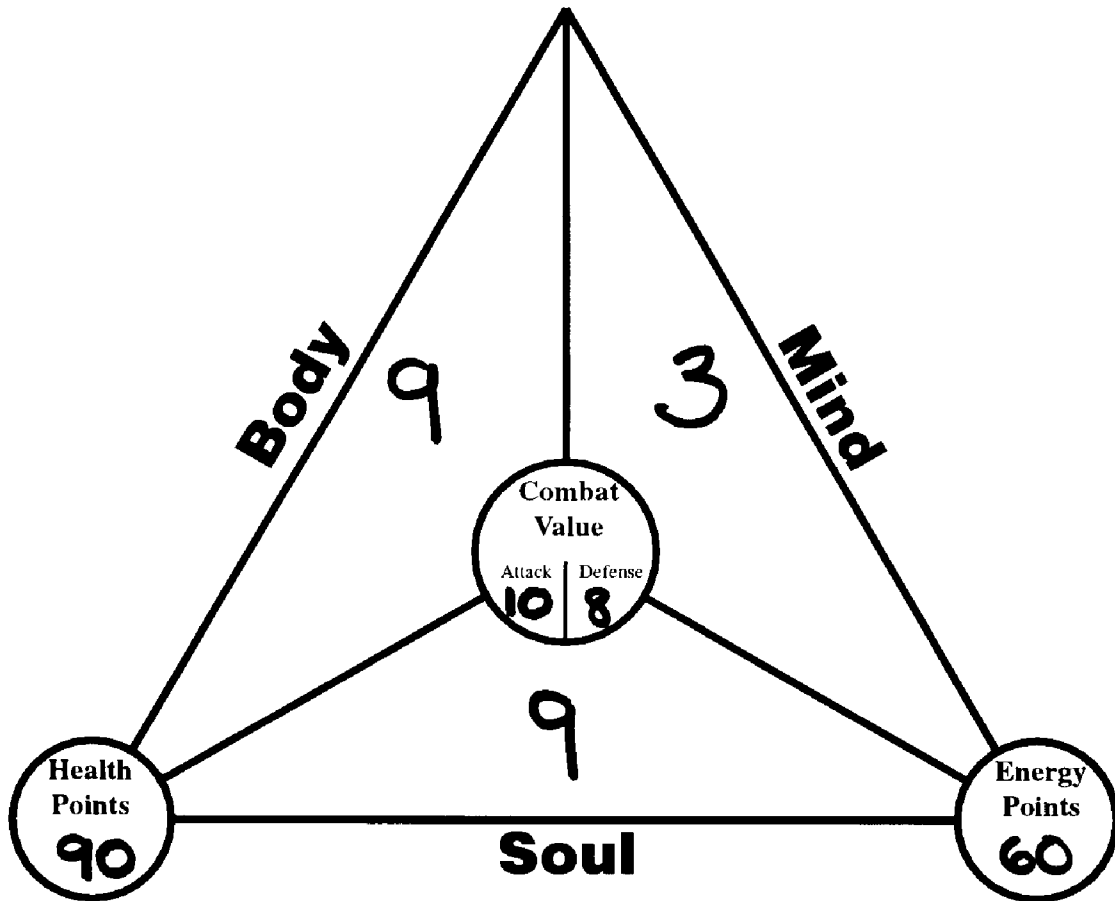
Character Name: _Peneekie Fujisawa_

Age: _15_   Height: _5'2"_   Weight: _120 lbs_

Physical Description: _Red hair, athletic build._
Wears a standard blue/white school
uniform during day & jeans, t-shirt & leather
jacket after school & on weekends. Oh yeah...
Peneekie has very large eyes & a tiny mouth.

Character Attributes

Level	Points/Level	Attribute and Notes
2	3	combat mastery (+2 to combat value)
4	1	Four times faster than normal (+1 combat value,
		+2 initiative)
1	2	Focussed combat (+1 cv with karate)
2	1	Fortified body (+2 to body stat)
1	1	Size change (25% increase or decrease to 3/4)
4	1	appearance - extremely attractive

Character Defects

Bonus Points	Defect and Notes
2	easily distracted (by police officers in uniform)

Weapons, Possessions and Notes

Carries handcuffs, a nightstick (damage=4) and 5 needle-shaped shuriken (damage=3). Also carries a police-band radio to call for backup when fighting street gangs. At home she cares for 7 hamsters & 96 ferrets.

CHAPTER 3
COMBAT AND OTHER ACTIONS

Combat Ideology

Conflict is an essential component of any role-playing game. Physical conflict or combat is particularly prevalent in many anime movies and consequently can play an important role in an anime RPG. In *Big Eyes, Small Mouth,* important is not the same as frequent.

The combat rules detailed herein were designed to mimic anime-style combat — dramatic, quick and very unrealistic. Combat should not become the primary focus of an adventure, since it is most effective when used sparingly. The rare occurrence of combat will highlight its importance and increase the dramatic tension. Other forms of conflict such as Man vs. Himself, Man vs. Nature and Man vs. Technology can offer a more diverse spectrum of role-playing opportunities than a sword fight every ten minutes.

Anime combat is fun to watch, and should be fun to play. The simple combat engine of *Big Eyes, Small Mouth* provides the groundwork to make this possible.

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BIG EYES, SMALL MOUTH
Combat Flowchart

Roll less than or equal to Attack Combat Value on 2 dice.

→ Success →

Delivered Damage equals Attack Combat Value plus Weapon Damage Value. Armour may modify damage.

Physical Combat Attack

Physical Combat Attack

START
Determine Initiative Order.

→ Hold Action →

Can act on any lower Initiative number.

→ Non-Combat Action →

Describe action to GM. Forfeit Attack for this round.

Mind Combat

Mind Combat

Establish mind contact (if necessary) using Psionics Attribute (Standard Difficulty Rating is equal to 5).

→ Attempt to Break Contact →

Defender only: Roll less than or equal to one-half Mind Stat on 2 dice. -10 Energy Points.

Attack

Roll less than or equal to Mind Stat on 2 dice. Automatic success if opponent is not defending. -5 Energy Points.

→ Success →

Target's Energy Points is reduced by sum of attacker's Mind and Soul Stat. Double damage if opponent is not defending.

Each round a character may defend against one Physical Attack. Roll less than or equal to Defense Combat Value on 2 dice for Success.

Physical Combat

Whenever a character enters into physical conflict with another character or NPC, the Physical Combat Phase begins. Each round of combat covers from 1 to 10 seconds of time from the characters' perspectives, depending on the characters' actions and circumstances (the exact time scale is not relevant). Characters are permitted to take a maximum of one offensive action and one defensive action each round (more if they have the Extra Attacks Attribute). Alternatively, characters may forefit his or her attack in favour of one non-combat action. Should the conflict not be resolved at the end of the round, subsequent rounds of combat will follow.

The Physical Combat Phase is subdivided into four categories: Initiative, Attack, Defend and Deliver Damage.

Initiative

Initiative determines who acts first in combat. Each player involved in combat rolls one die and adds the result to his or her character's Attack Combat Value. The GM does the same for any NPCs engaged in the conflict. The

character with the highest total has "gained initiative" and acts first, followed by others in descending order. Should two or more characters or NPCs have the same Initiative, their actions are simultaneous. This means that both characters attack and deliver damage at the same time; if one character drops below 0 Health Points in the attack, he or she still gets to attack before dying.
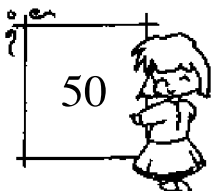
Attack

When it comes time for a character to act during combat as determined by Initiative, he or she may attack any one target or small group of targets (should the type of attack allow for multiple targets, such as certain magic spells). A single attack includes one of the following: a martial art manoeuvre, an unarmed assault, an attack with a weapon, the firing of a ranged weapon or an assault with a thrown object. Use of the Magic or Psionics Attributes that mimic physical attacks are also resolved during this time, but attacks involving direct or indirect mind contact are governed by the Mind Combat rules (page 58). A character may decide to hold his or her attack until any time later in the round, in order to see what the other characters will do.

To succeed in the attack against an opponent, the player must roll less than or equal to his or her character's Attack Combat Value on 2 dice (including all Attribute bonuses and Defect penalties). The GM has the option of modifying the dice roll should the attack be particulary easy or difficult (see **Table 3-4: Dice Roll Modification**, page 63). Remember that an easy attack gains a negative modifier to the dice roll since the goal is to roll under the Attack Combat Value! A roll of 12 always fails while a roll of 2 always succeeds. Damage is delivered for any successful attack that is not avoided through the opponent's defense roll.

To reflect some of the brutally successful attacks in anime movies, a natural dice roll of 2 ("snake eyes") is considered to be a critical success and cannot be negated by an opponent's defense. A critical success also inflict increased damage on the opponent, as outlined on page 53 and in **Table 3-1: Critical Damage**.

Defend

If a character is the target of a successful attack, he or she may attempt to defend against it. Defensive actions are not carried out according to Initiative order, but are resolved immediately after the attack. Each character can defend only once each round against one attack, regardless how many people are

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attacking the character. Should the player choose not to attempt a defense (perhaps in anticipation of a more powerful attack still to come), the decision cannot be changed later in in the round.
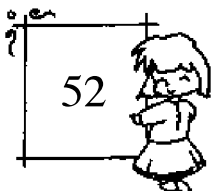
To successfully defend against an attack, the player must roll less than or equal to his or her character's Defense Combat Value on 2 dice (including Attribute bonuses and Defect penalties). The GM has the option of modifying the dice roll should the attack be particulary easy or difficult (see **Table 3-4: Dice Roll Modification**, page 63). Remember that a more difficult defense gains a <u>positive</u> modifier to the dice roll since the goal is to roll <u>under</u> the Defense Combat Value! A roll of 12 always fails while a roll of 2 always succeeds. If the defense roll was successful, the attack is negated and no damage is delivered to the character.

Non-Combat Actions

Rather than taking an offensive action during any round, a character may use a non-combat action on his or her Initiative. Such actions include untying a rescued captive, running, talking at length, singing, writing a note, changing clothes, etc. The non-combat action may also be used to safely withdraw from a melee combat, provided no character or NPC attacks during a later Initiative in the same round. Note that speaking a few words in combat does not constitute an action.

Deliver Damage

The amount of damage delivered to the target reflects the character's understanding of advanced combat techniques, as well as the inherent deadliness of different weapons. The damage of a successful attack is equal to the sum of the attacker's Attack Combat Value and Weapon Damage Value. If a weapon was not used, damage is simply equal to the attacker's Attack Combat Value. This value reflects the equal importance of the Body Stat (force of the blow), Mind Stat (knowing the vulnerable areas of the body), and Soul Stat (determination and luck) when inflicting injury upon an opponent. The player can elect to reduce the damage below this maximum, to a minimum of 1 point of damage. This damage is subtracted from the target's current Health Point total. In the event of a critical success (attack roll of 2), the attacker rolls one die and matches the result to those listed below in **Table 3-1: Critical Damage**. Should the player roll a 6, the target is instantly killed or destroyed by the single blow, regardless of the target's remaining Health Points.

Damage can also result from a non-combat action such as falling from a tree or getting hit by a speeding truck. The GM should assign a total damage value from 1 (slight damage) to 30 (a very painful injury), depending on the situation.

Should the Health Points ever drop below zero, the character has suffered a mortal would and will die within an appropriately dramatic length of time.

Table 3-1: Critical Damage

Die Roll	Damage Modifier
1-3	Double Damage
4-5	Triple Damage
6	Instant Kill/Destruction

Weapons

Hand-to-hand combat can quickly turn deadly if weapons are used, due to the increased trauma inflicted upon the body. In *Big Eyes, Small Mouth* weapons are assigned a Weapon Damage Value ranging from 1 (least damaging) to 20 (most damaging). Some extremely powerful weapons such as heavy machine guns, explosives and bombs have even greater Damage Values. In combat, the Weapon Damage Value is added to the attacker's Attack Combat Value to determine the total damage delivered by a successful hit (see previous section on delivering damage). Should the assault with a weapon not fall under a character's direct influence (for example, a bomb on a three-hour timer), the damage is equal to the Weapon Damage Value only.

Table 3-2: Weapon Damage Values lists the Damage Values of common anime-style weapons. Many weapons are listed by their Japanese names, with a corresponding English interpretation given in brackets. Should a weapon not be listed, the GM should assign a Damage Value based on one that is similar in form and function. Descriptions are provided for the more exotic weapons only.

Table 3-2: Weapon Damage Values

Weapon	Damage
Axe	
Hand	5
Battle	8
Blow Gun (with darts)	1
Bo (wooden staff)	6
Brass Knuckles	2
Club	4
Crossbow (with bolts)	8
Dai-Kyu (longbow with arrows)	6
Explosives	
Grenade	10-15
Dynamite	15-25
Bomb (small)	20-30
Bomb (large)	30-50
Fan (weighted)	2
Guns	
Handgun	5-12
Rifle	10-18
Machine Gun	15-25
Hammer	4
Kama (hand sickle)	6
Katana (long sword)	10
Manriki-Gusari (weighted chain)	6
Naginata (long pole with blade)	8
Nunchaku	5
Rock or Stone	1-10
Shuriken	3
Tando (dagger)	5
Wakizashi (short sword)	7
Yari (spear)	7

Fan

Though not a particularly realistic weapon, weighted fans have made their mark in many martial arts movies and video games. They can possess bladed edges and have the capability to block incoming attacks. Some fans can even return to the owner once thrown (similar to a boomerang). Ridiculous perhaps, but an excellent weapon for an anime character.

Kama

The one-handed kama resembles the small straight-backed sickles used by farmers. It is a weapon of the commoners, but is also a deadly weapon in the hands of a skilled warrior.

Manriki-Gusari

This weapon consists of a metal weight at the end of a long thin chain. By holding the unweighted end, a character can swing the chain rapidly above his or her head. The weighted end then delivers a crushing blow when it strikes the enemy. Alternatively, the chain can be used to entangle limbs or disarm an opponent.

Nunchaku

The nunchaku is arguably the most recognizable ninja weapon from popular martial arts moves. It consists of two short wooden rods, each about a foot in length, joined end-to-end by an equally short metal chain. Usually the attacker holds one of the rods and sets the other end twirling with great speed. At the appropriate moment, he or she strikes the enemy quickly and with deadly precision. The nunchaku also serve as an effective defense, capable of entangling the weapons and arms of an opponent.

Shuriken

Though commonly called "throwing stars", the term shuriken means "a dagger hidden in a palm". Thus any thrown object small enough to conceal in the palm is classified as a shuriken. The design of the weapons range from stars to triangles to needles or darts. The points of the shuriken are often dipped in poison to enhance their deadliness.

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Armour

When physical conflict is unavoidable, armour may provide an anime character with the necessary protection to save his or her life. All genres, time periods and settings will have some type of armour available, though its use may be restricted according to the values of a particular society. Availability and cost of armour may also pose an obstacle for player characters seeking to better protect themselves. Different forms of armour include traditional chain or platemail, leather jerkins, bullet-proof jackets, cybernetic body implants, objects that can act as shields or even full body hardsuits or mechs (see the Own A Big Robot Attribute, page 28). The design and the level of protection afforded by the armour can vary greatly, but the function is always the same: keep the person wearing it alive!

Armour is classified into Armour Levels from 1 (the least protective, and easiest to obtain) through 5 (the most protective, and most difficult to obtain). *Big Eyes, Small Mouth* offers GMs two different rule structures to account for armour in combat. A GM should only use one of the options to cover all uses of armour in a single game. Type A simply adds 30 Health Points to the character's current total for each Armour Level. Though not representative of how armour actually works, Type A offers ease-of-use without calculations to slow the pace of combat. Type B offers a more "realistic" option by subtracting 3 points from the delivered damage of an attack for each Armour Level. Consequently all successful attacks are less damaging, and some particularly weak attacks may not damage a character at all. See **Table 3-3: Armour Benefits** for an expanded list of armour modifiers.

The effectiveness of Type A armour and Type B armour are not exactly the same. Characters with lower Health Point totals are usually better protected by Type A armour than Type B, while at higher Health Point totals Type B offers the greater advantage. Additionally, the relative amount of protection at low Armour Levels is greater for Type A than Type B. Higher Armour Levels afford greater relative protection for Type B armour.

Table 3-3: Armour Benefits		
Armour Level	**Type A**	**Type B**
1	Health Points +30	All Damage -3 Points
2	Health Points +60	All Damage -6 Points
3	Health Points +90	All Damage -9 Points
4	Health Points +120	All Damage -12 Points
5	Health Points +150	All Damage -15 Points

Mind Combat

Though mind combat does not involve swords or guns, it is no less deadly to a character who is outclassed by his or her opponent. This conflict is a clashing of two psyches, each struggling to subdue the other by tearing down neural pathways, erasing memories and destroying brain cells. Physical strength does not play a role in this battle, only the power of the Mind. Each round of mind combat covers from 1 to 10 seconds of time from the characters' perspectives. The exact time scale is not relevant, since one round of physical combat should cover the same amount of time as one round of mind combat.

Mind combat can only be carried out once mind contact has been established, usually through the use of the Psionics Attribute (and occasionally the Magic Attribute). Once two minds have touched, the initiator of the contact may withdraw at any time. Alternatively, physical damage to the initiator or perhaps use of an appropriate Item of Power Attribute can break the contact. The character whose mind is being invaded must declare if he or she is concentrating on a mind defense each round (the invading character has automatic defense). A defending character cannot carry out any physical action for that round, but may attack the aggressor in mind combat. Unlike physical combat, a defending character cannot negate the effect of an attack, but prevents the aggressor from gaining a psychic damage bonus.

To break an unwanted mind contact, the player cannot initiate any other character actions for one round and must roll less than or equal to one-half his or her character's Mind Stat on 2 dice (rounded up). Each attempt drains 10 points from the character's Energy Point total whether successful or not. If the roll is successful, the aggressor is forced from the character's mind.

If any character in mind contact forfeits all physical actions for the round (including attack, defense, and non-combat action), he or she can attack through mind combat. Each attempt drains 5 points from the character's Energy Point total. A successful attack requires the player to roll less than or equal to his or her character's Mind Stat on 2 dice (a Mind Stat check). The GM has the

option of modifying the dice roll should the attack be particulary easy or difficult (see **Table 3-4: Dice Roll Modification**, page 63). Remember that an easy attack gains a <u>negative</u> modifier to the dice roll since the goal is to roll <u>under</u> the Mind Stat! A roll of 12 always fails while a roll of 2 always succeeds. Although the initiator of the mind combat may be outclassed by an opponent with a higher Mind Stat, the character still has the advantage — he or she can withdraw from the opponent's mind at any time.

The psychic damage of a successful attack is equal to the sum of the attacker's Mind and Soul Stats. If the target was not defending during the round of the attack, the damage is <u>doubled</u>. This damage is subtracted from the target's current Energy Points total. If a character's Energy Point total ever drops below zero while in mind combat, his or her mind has been broken and is now at the mercy of the opponent. The victor can end the character's life, search through memories, plant powerful suggestions, erase thoughts or simply render the character unconscious. Any changes to a character's mind (other than death) will remain until reversed by another character skilled in the Psionics Attribute. Exactly how this must be accomplished should be decided by the GM. Role-playing a character whose mind has been altered is challenging, but can also be very rewarding when played with consistency.
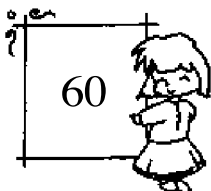
Restoring Lost Points

Even after being brought to the brink of death through injury or energy loss, anime characters are often up and running within a day. Their wounds heal quickly with few complications, while their spirit returns their internal energy just as quickly. Consequently both Health Points and Energy Points are restored rapidly to the characters. Point restoration can only bring characters back up to their original starting point totals.

Health Points

Points are restored at the rate of the character's Body Stat every hour of rest. For example, a character with a Body Stat of 6 rejuvenates 6 Health Points every hour. The rate is doubled if the character is in the care of a skilled healer, but halved if he or she does not spend time to rest.

Energy Points

The average of the Mind and Soul Stats reflects the number of Energy Points returned to the character every hour. For example, a character with a 5 Mind Stat and an 11 Soul Stat regains 8 Energy Points every hour (5+11=16; 16÷2=8). The character's rate of energy return cannot usually be increased nor decreased.

Other Character Actions

An anime character's daily life is filled with many more activities than just those associated with physical or mind combat. When a character attempts an action that is not a common part of his or her life, a dice roll can help determine if the attempt is successful or not. This random element is common to most role-playing games since it gives a skilled character a better chance at succeeding in a particular task than an unskilled character.

The majority of the non-combat dice rolling in *Big Eyes, Small Mouth* fall under the domain of Stat Checks. When a player announces the intended action of

his or her character, the GM must decide which Stat or Stats would be relevant to the action in question. Should two or three Stats be closely related to the action, an average Stat Value must be calculated (round up). For example, a character with a fear of heights who is forced to walk across a narrow tenth-story ledge may need to roll under the average of his or her Body Stat (manual dexterity) and Soul Stat (willpower to overcome fear). A successful Stat check involves the player rolling less than or equal to the single Stat Value or Stat Value average of his or her character on two dice. Should the dice roll be greater than the target number, the action has failed.

Very low rolls (2 or 3) are extremely successful while very high rolls (11 or 12) can result in a disastrous failure. The GM has the option of modifying the dice roll should the attack be particulary easy or difficult (see **Table 3-4: Dice Roll Modification**, page 63). Remember that a more difficult task gains a <u>positive</u> modifier to the dice roll since the goal is to roll <u>under</u> the Stat Value or Stat Value average! Regardless of the Stat Value, a roll of 2 always succeeds and a roll of 12 always fails.

Example 1: *Youtzi has the Size Change Attribute at Level 3 and wants to increase her mass by 50% (a Level 2 ability). The GM decides to use the Body Stat for the Stat check, which gives her a Stat Value of 6. However, the GM decides her Level 3 ability makes the task easier and allows Youtzi to subtract 1 from her dice roll. The player rolls a 6 on two dice which is then decreased to 5. The action was a success but not spectacular — it takes Youtzi a while to change her size, but there are no complications.*
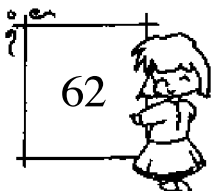
Chapter 3: Combat and Other Actions

Example 2: *Sinanji wants to climb a 20 foot metal pole covered in grease. There are no Attributes that detail climbing as a sub-skill and thus the GM decides to use the average of the Sinanji's Body Stat of 8 (representing dexterity) and Soul Stat of 6 (representing sheer luck). His Stat Average is 7. The GM assigns a +2 modifier to the dice roll to reflect the difficulty of the task. The player rolls 12 on two dice — a disastrous failure, even without adding the +2 difficulty factor! The GM tells the player that Sinanji climbs 15 feet up the pole, loses his grip and tumbles to the hard ground, suffering 5 Health Points of damage.*

Table 3-4: Dice Roll Modification

| Modifier	Difficulty
-4	Trivial. Why roll dice?
-3	Nearly Trivial
-2	Extremely Easy
-1	Easy
0	Average Difficulty
+1	Slightly Difficult
+2	Difficult
+3	Quite Difficult
+4	Extremely Difficult
+5	Outrageously Difficult
+6	Practially Impossible

Chapter 3: Combat and Other Actions

It is important for the GM to realize that not all actions require Stat checks. Obviously mundane character activities like walking a dog or cooking breakfast should never need dice rolls unless there are <u>exceptional</u> circumstances surrounding the character's actions. The following is a list of suggestions when the dice should and should not be rolled. If a dice roll is unnecesary, the character should gain an automatic success for the action.

Roll Dice when...
- the unpredictability of the dice adds to the excitement of the game.
- the action is foreign to the character.
- the character is distracted or cannot concentrate.
- another character or NPC is working directly against the character.
- only pure luck is involved (use Soul Stat).
- the action is not of trivial difficulty.
- outside forces influence the actions.
- the player wants to roll the dice.
- the character has recently suffered physical or mental injury.
- the action requires an Attribute Level equal to, or one level less than, the character's current Level. For example, if the action requires a Level 3 Attribute and the character is currently at Level 3 or 4, a dice roll should be required.

Do not roll dice when...
- a roll would reduce the enjoyment of the game.
- the action is routine for the character.
- the action requires a trivial amount of talent compared to the character's Stats.
- the action difficulty is at least two Levels below the character's current Attribute Level. For example, if the action requires a Level 1 Attribute and the character is currently at Level 3, 4 or 5, a dice roll is unnecessary.

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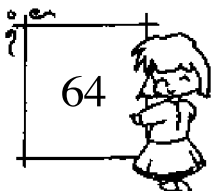
CHAPTER 4

ROLE-PLAYING IN AN ANIME WORLD

Advice For The GM

1. Watch lots of anime. There is no better way to capture the intense atmosphere of the anime genre than by watching the adventures for yourself. Many video rental outlets now carry an extensive anime selection, and an even greater number of illegal fan-subtitled videotapes are available to the experienced internet user. Be sure to watch titles from a variety of genres (comedy, horror, mecha, thriller, science-fiction, fantasy, etc.) in order to better shape your adventure or campaign. Watching Japanese anime is time well spent.

2. Clearly define the setting and genre of your game to the players before they create characters. Since *Big Eyes, Small Mouth* is a universal multi-genre RPG, players need to know character boundaries that may best suit the adventure.

3.   Encourage innovative thinking during character creation. Help players avoid falling into the trap of playing characters from established anime productions by giving them the freedom to create. The only real boundaries placed on the characters should be the players' imaginations.

4.   Make every character a main focus of the game, and give equal attention to all players. Balancing game time is often the most difficult challenge for GMs of all levels of experience. Talk with each player outside the game to ensure that he or she is satisfied with the character's involvement in the adventure. Unhappy players can make a game unworkable.

5.   Do not turn combat into the primary focus of the game. When combat does erupt during the adventure make it fast, exciting and fun for all players. Combat should not occur too often however, or it will take away from the other role-playing aspects of the game. Staging several big combats during each playing session can desensitize the players and turn them against physical conflict ("Oh great...yet another unearthly tentacle monster to fight. Am I supposed to be scared?") Use combat sparingly and its dramatic impact will be increased ten-fold.

6.   Keep dice rolling to a minimum. Quite simply, if a dice roll is not necessary or does not constructively add to the game, do not make the roll. GMs should feel comfortable making decisions about the direction of events during a session without the use of dice. See page 64 in *Chapter 3: Combat and Other Actions* for suggestions when dice rolls may or may not be necessary.

7.   Give players latitude when it comes to using special effects for their characters. Some examples include wind-blown hair, triple-take actions shots, cool musical soundtracks, blurred backgrounds during combat scenes, and countless others. These effects can inject humour into any game and fit perfectly into the anime genre.
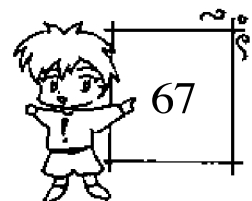
8.   Use Character Defects to the benefit of the game. Though they penalize the characters, defects should not penalize the players by hindering their role-playing efforts. Be sure to map out how you plan to implement all Defects before play begins. Using them effectively will add excitement and paranoia to your game.

9.   Downplay the abilities of unimportant NPCs. If an NPC is not a major character in the adventure, he or she should not outclass the player characters in Stats or Attributes. It's recommended that minor NPCs should have very few Health and Energy Points (15-25 points each) and have a limited number of talents. This guideline forces the unimportant NPCs into supporting or background roles (where they belong) and allows the major NPCs to capture the attention of the player characters.

10. Go outside the rules. If you dislike a rule presented in *Big Eyes, Small Mouth*, you are encouraged to modify it to suit your needs or simply discard it completely. Do not let your vision of how an anime role-playing game should work be suppressed by anything you read in this book. These pages are filled with guidelines and suggestions, but certainly do not reflect the One True Way to role-playing success. Use what you like, discard what you do not, and fill in the blanks with your own ideas.

Advice For The Player

1.   Watch lots of anime. You want to play an anime character in an anime setting using anime role-playing rules — that should give you sufficient cause to rent a couple of videos.

2.   Be innovative in character design. *Big Eyes, Small Mouth* was designed to be flexible, allowing you to create the anime character of your desire. Do not hesitate to develop Attributes or Defects not listed in *Chapter 2: Character Creation* — talk with the GM about your ideas. Playing an original character of your own design is much more enjoyable than limiting yourself to someone else's ideas.
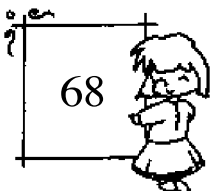
3. Assign your character a few Character Defects. Your purpose is not to create a "perfect" character, but a character that is fun to play. Defects not only generate laughter during each session, but can expand your role-playing options. Besides, you'll find that you never have enough Character Points to satisfy your desire for Attributes! Assign some Defects and you'll get a few more points.

4. Limit the skills and knowledges of your character. *Big Eyes, Small Mouth* allows you to decide what your character knows, and what talents your character possesses. Focus on a reasonable level of knowledge for your character as suggested by age, years of education, years in the workforce and the Mind Stat. If your character can skydive, pick locks, perform brain surgery, counsel homeless children, direct movies, discuss quantum chemistry and raise a family of seven, you should have one excellent explanation waiting for the GM. Give your character limitations and you give yourself quality role-playing options.

5. Create an archetypical or stereotypical character rather than one that is well-rounded. This suggestion is particularly important for one-shot single session adventures, where there is little time to explore all facets of your character. An archetype always gives you a focus for your character and a strength from which you can draw while role-playing. This guideline simply follows the trend observed in most anime productions.

6. Do not play a well established character from an anime television series or movie. It's very difficult to accurately portray a character created by someone else, but easy to be disappointed should you be unable to role-play him or her "correctly". Develop your own character and your portrayal can be much closer to the original design. Naturally if the GM plans to run a scenario based directly on an established anime production this suggestion does not apply.

7.   Don't create a character who prefers to be alone. Role-playing is about GM/player and player/player interaction. Deny yourself one of those opportunities and the enjoyment of the game is diminished for everyone.

8.   Don't obsess about the rules. Every GM has his or her individual style when running a game. If your GM wants to play "fast and loose" with the system, go with the flow. *Big Eyes, Small Mouth* rules should only be used when it benefits the game. If you and your group can thrive on fewer rules (or without any rules) don't let this book hold you back!

9.   Trust the GM to do what is best for the game. Any worthy GM realizes that players come first in the game, and it is his or her obligation to make it enjoyable for everyone. Trust the judgement of the GM and the game will flow more smoothly.

10. Give the GM constant feedback — both positive and negative. On a regular basis (perhaps after each session) let the GM know what you like and dislike about the direction and momentum of the game. Without player input, the GM may not realize in which areas he or she need improvement. Be polite and diplomatic, but also be honest. The game can only get better, not worse, when you voice your comments and concerns.


Ma
Kamshi

Character Advancement

Character advancement is unnecessary in a short adventure, but during a lengthy campaign players may wish to improve the skills and abilities of their characters. Advancement is not a requirement, but can reflect the characters' earned knowledge through conflicts with the environment, with other characters or NPCs, or even with themselves. GMs are encouraged to award all characters one bonus Character Point every two or three role-playing sessions. Each player can assign these Character Points to Attributes immediately, or accumulate them for future use. The point cost of increasing an Attribute is identical to the cost during character creation (*Chapter 2: Character Creation*, page 9). Players are encouraged to assign advancement points to Attributes their character has used often. Alternatively, players can rationalize their decision to the GM should their character acquire a new Attribute.

For example, a player could decide that his character has been reading books on the Occult in his spare time and just recently started experimenting in Necromancy. Although the character lacked the Magic Attribute during creation, the player's rationalization can still advance his character to Level 1 Magic with specialization in Necromantic spells (requires 2 Character Points).

GMs can award points more frequently for faster character advancement or less frequently for slower character advancement. The GM also has the option of rewarding exceptionally talented or active players with an extra character advancement point.

Aimo
1996
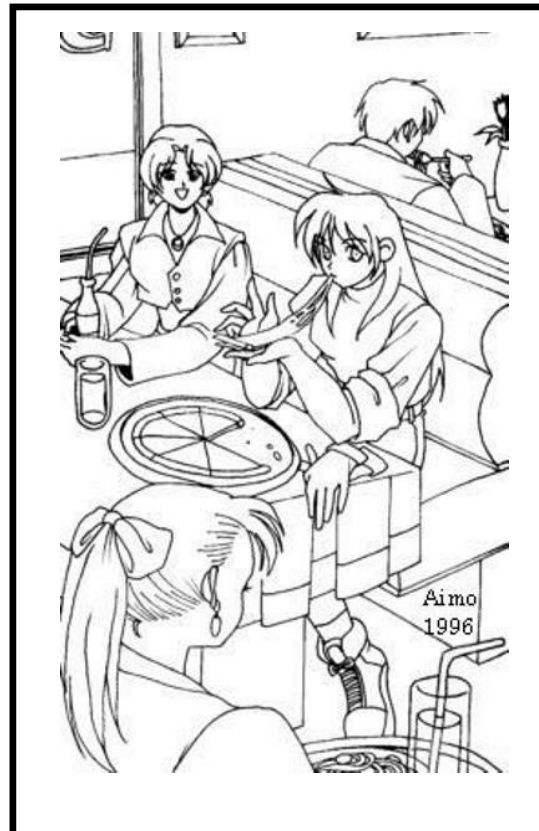
Adventure Settings

The GM's choice of setting for the anime adventure or campaign will have a tremendous influence on the scope of the game and type of characters created by the players. The GM should choose a setting with which he or she feels comfortable, allowing the plot to develop more naturally. GMs can choose a setting based on the most common ones listed below, or create an entirely new setting specific to the GM's campaign world.

Ancient Japan

In this low-technology setting, Honour is the most important of all virtues. This is a setting where everyone knows the martial arts and great military warriors rule the lands.

High Fantasy

Elves, Dwarves, Wizards and Priests are all common inhabitants of the high fantasy realms. Great dragons span hundreds of feet, blocking out the sun as they search for prey. Monster hoards terrorize villages, but are no match for the elite soldiers of the Queen's Army. This sword and sorcery adventure is arguably the most popular setting for role-playing games.

Recent History

The two world wars, the industrial revolution or the peace movement of the 1960's can make an ideal setting for the GM with an interest in recent history. The level of detail and accuracy is in the hands of the GM.

Modern, Comedy

This setting is ideal for characters still in high school. Anime students never have any real commitments and their daily challenges involve catching boyfriends or girlfriends, surviving school and finding part-time jobs. Lots of laughs with a strong emphasis on superficial characters.

Modern, Drama

This setting easily adapts for genres from adult horror to action thriller. Current technology levels can play an important role, with plots often revolving around crime syndicates. The rule system usually plays a more visible role in this serious setting.

Near Future

Technology is on the uprise and megacorporations dominate the world. Corrupt government agencies and the threat of global war keep the average citizen living in terror. The furthest reaches of our solar system have been explored.

Far Future

This post-holocaust society is permeated with magical technologies and artificial intelligences (A.I.s). Contacts with other solar systems have been established and interstellar travel is common. The rising galactic empires are a threat to all peaceful societies. There is little time left before all is lost.

SW
1994.2.21
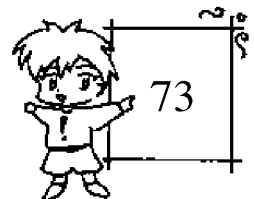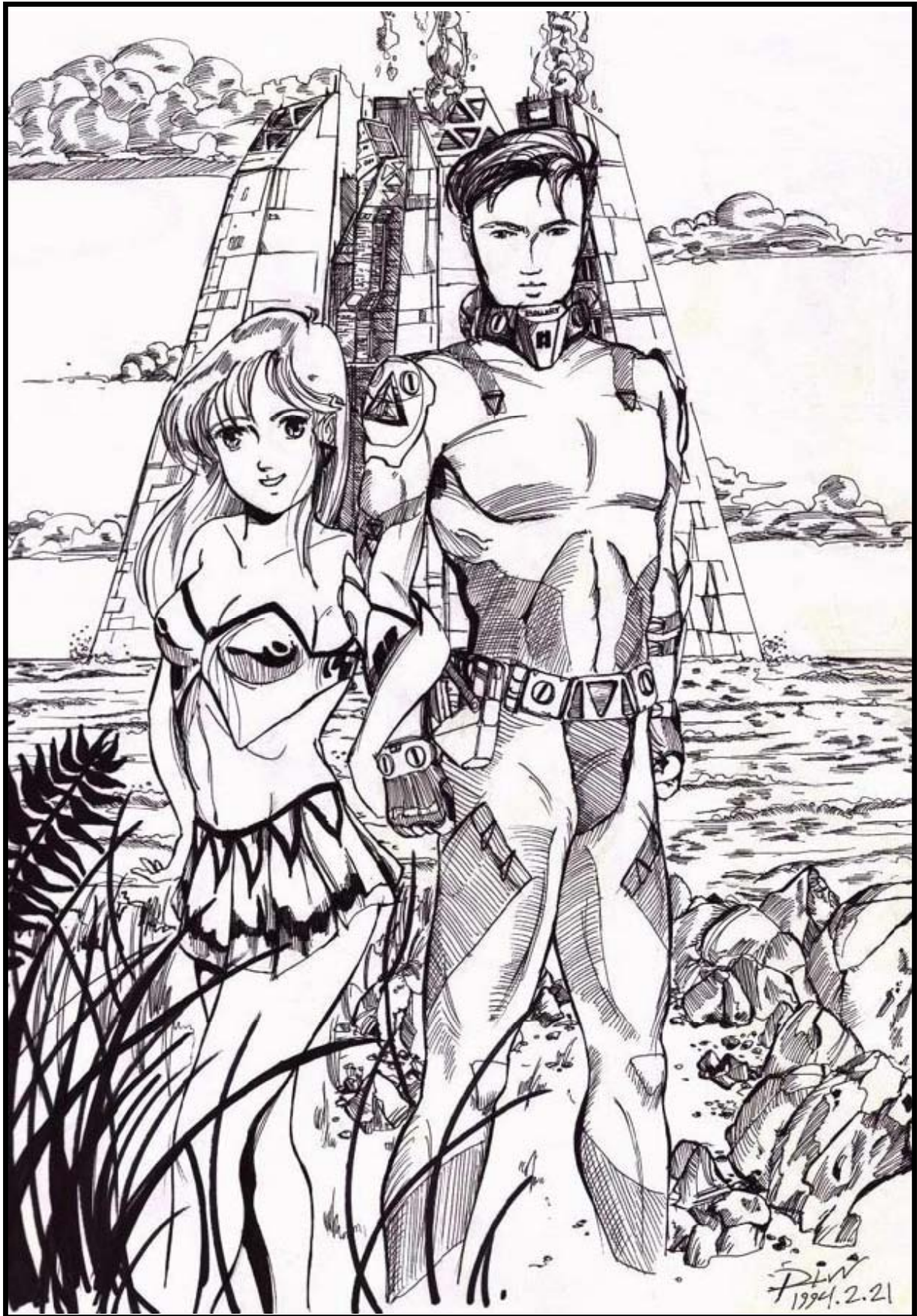
Game Themes

This section outlines two possible game themes — "The Quest" and "Dark Forces Rising" — in each of the settings detailed in the previous section. GMs can use these ideas as "game seeds" from which an adventure can unfold. The examples serve to illustrate the flexibility of *Big Eyes, Small Mouth* as a multi-genre anime system, and demonstrate how an entire game scenario can revolve around a single underlying theme.

"The Quest"

<u>Ancient Japan</u> — A great plague is sweeping the land, killing entire villages. The clan wisewomen talk of an immortal saviour marked with the Sign of Rebirth. The characters must find the great healer and plead for his help.

<u>High Fantasy</u> — The characters had been adventuring the kingdoms together when they found an ancient tome in the ruins of an abandoned castle. It described an artifact called the Pool of Destiny that grants immortality to all that gaze upon their reflections within it. The characters immediately set out to discover its location.

<u>Recent History</u> — During World War II, ally intelligence learns of a terribly destructive weapon recently constructed by German scientists. The characters' commanding officer sends them on a dangerous search and destroy mission into the heart of the enemy ranks.

<u>Modern, Comedy</u> — The school principal has offered the characters a deal too good to refuse. In exchange for retrieving the science fair project blueprints this evening from the basement of a heavily-guarded rival high school, the principal will conveniently lose the characters' disastrous performance files. One problem: the school dance is tonight and all the characters have dates!
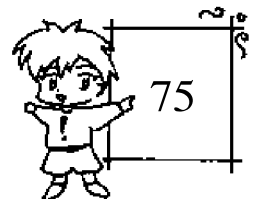
<u>Modern, Drama</u> — As officers of the law, the characters must put down Public Enemy #1 — a drug smuggling syndicate known as the Blue Army. The criminals have infiltrated all of Tokyo and have friends across the city in influential places. If the leader can be caught, the rest of the syndicate would fall apart.

<u>Near Future</u> — Artificial Intelligences (A.I.s) have long been outlawed and deemed a threat to mankind. When the message "I think. I am alive." recently appeared on a top-level national defense computer, the government was terrified of the implications. The characters have been hired as mercenaries to find this A.I. and shut it down permanently.

<u>Far Future</u> — The Earth is near death. Exploration missions to the nearest inhabitable planet have disappeared without a trace. As members of the agency in command of the explorations, the characters must determine what has happened at the potential New Earth.

"Dark Forces Rising"

<u>Ancient Japan</u> — The unstoppable army of a brutal warlord has been destroying every village along its path to the Great City. People say that the army is a walking undead, controlled by demons working for the warlord. The characters must act quickly because their small village is the last obstacle between the hoard and its destination.

<u>High Fantasy</u> — Dark Faeries have abandoned their homelands to invade the mortal realm. The world will turn to eternal darkness if they destroy the Five Statues of Light. Three have already fallen at the hands of the Faerie. The characters can save the world, but must defeat the Queen of Faerie in her Tower of Doom.

<u>Recent History</u> — The government is fostering hatred within its people...hatred of the enemy. Don't they understand that the only hope lies in Peace and Love for all mankind? Flowers are not enough! The characters must find a way to convince the State to end the senseless war.
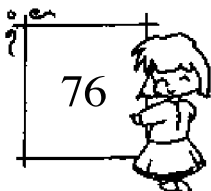
# Chapter 4: Role-Playing in an Anime World

<u>Modern, Comedy</u> — The characters are in trouble. Swedish exchange students have formed a new gang and are out to get anyone on the honour roll. They're mean, they like their chocolate, and they have already put four students in the hospital. Straight A's have never caused the characters so much grief!

<u>Modern, Drama</u> — A portal has opened from another dimension that is an evil mirror image of the Earth. These aliens have subversively infiltrated Tokyo's government, killing their identical "good" twins and assuming their positions. The government agency for which the characters work have constructed a device to seal the portal, but it requires 48 hours of electrical charging before its ready to use. The aliens have just recently discovered the agency's plan, and are on a mission of destruction.

<u>Near Future</u> — A large fast food megacorp has been growing rapidly since it hired a new Propaganda Director. In fact, the polls show it stands to form the government in the next election. A mid-sized donut company has hired the characters to sully the megacorp's reputation before the election, claiming that donuts will be outlawed should the megacorp win. The money is good, but what are the risks?

<u>Far Future</u> — A great Force of Darkness has been destroying all life on planets in a dozen star systems. The only hope of destroying the enemy lies in an alliance between the four major galactic governments. The characters are dispatched as diplomats and negotiators to ensure an agreement is reached before it is too late.
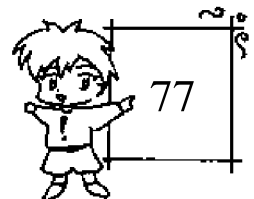
Resources

Anime Glossary

Anime (Ah-NEE-May)

Short for animation, but almost exclusively refers to Japanese animation.

Bishônen (Bee-SHOW-Nehn)

Literally "beautiful boy". *Bishônen*-anime is a genre of that focusses on relationships between beautiful young men.

Dôjinshi (Dough-JIN-Shi)

Fan-produced *manga*. Many quality dojinshi are now available on web-sites, offered as free entertainment from one fan to the entire anime fandom.
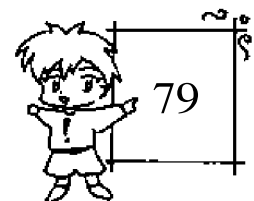
Etchi ("H")

The Pronunciation of the letter "H", but is often used in reference to *hentai* or "H" anime See entry on *hentai*.

Fan-sub

Fan-subtitled anime that is in direct violation of international copyright laws. Though technically illegal, this activity is directly responsible for the industry's tremendous growth in North America. Fan-subbers typically purchase original Japanese anime titles on laserdisc (or record them from Japanese TV) and subtitle them in English using a computer. The tapes are copied multiple times and then distributed for free or for a small fee. People that charge higher prices for fan-subs are viewed as enemies of the fan-sub community and called "bootleggers".

Hentai (HEN-Tie)

Adult-oriented anime with terribly violent and sexually explicit scenes. This genre of anime is sometimes called "tentacle porn" because many of the *hentai* productions involve sexually agressive demons (with numerous appendages) that prey on unwilling victims.

Kanji (KAN-Gee)

A form of character symbols or ideograms used to write the Japanese language.

Manga (MAHN-Gah)

A Japanese comic. Most anime series or movies produced are based on an established *manga* story.

Mecha (MEK-Ah)

A type of anime that revolves around mechanized robots, spaceships and hardsuits. Mecha anime is very popular in Japan and has thus been the focus of most of the anime-based role-playing games published to date.

OAV

An Original Animation Video (direct-to-video release). Often this method of anime presentation is preferred over producing a television series or a theatrical release, since the home video market is well supported by the large number of VCRs worldwide. OAVs remain a popular choice for titles not based on an already established premise (such as a novel or *manga*). Also known as OVA.

Otaku (Oh-TAH-Koo)

Japanese slang for an unhealthy fan obsession (such as an anime-*otaku*). Recently the anime industry has taken the term for itself and tried to remove the negative connotations. For many people, the word *otaku* now simply means "anime fan".

Shôjo (SHOW-Joe)

Literally, "young girl". *Shôjo*-anime is a genre that specifically targets school girls, with plots that explore emotions, relationships and self-reflection.

Shônen (SHOW-Nehn)

Literally, "young boy". *Shônen*-anime is a genre that is more aggressive and action-oriented than the *shôjo*-style storytelling. Themes often include military duty, martial arts combat and fighting against evil.
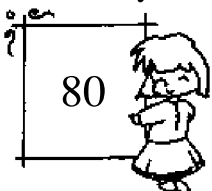
Bibliography

This bibliography only lists a fraction of the anime TV series, OAVs and theatrical movies that have been release on video in North America. They have served as inspirations for *Big Eyes, Small Mouth* and are favourites of many anime fans. Each entry gives the English title, Japanese title (in brackets, if different from the English title), copyright notice, years of production, North American video distributor (as of 1997) and anime format.

3 x 3 Eyes (Sazan Eyes)
© Yuzo Takada/Kodansha/Plex/Star Child
1991-92, Streamline Pictures (OAV)

Akira
© Akira Committee
1988, Streamline Pictures (Theatrical release)

Appleseed
© Masamune Shirow/Seishinsho/TBM
1988, Manga Video (OAV)

Astro Boy (Tetsuwan Atom)
© Mushi Productions/Video Promotions, Inc./NBC Enterprises/Screen Gems
1963-66, The Right Stuf (TV series)

Blue Seed
© Yuzo Takada/Takeshobo-BS Project
1995, A.D. Vision (TV series)

Bubblegum Crisis
© Artmic/Youmex
1987-91, AnimEigo (OAV)

Dirty Pair
© Haruka Takachiho/Studio Nue/Sunrise Inc./NTV
1985-90, Streamline Pictures (OAV)

Dominion Tank Police (Dominion)
© Masamune Shirow/Hakusensha/Agent 21/Toshiba Video Softwares, Inc.
1989, U.S. Manga Corps (OAV)

Resources

Dragon Ball
© Akira Toriyama/Toei
1986, Vidmark (TV series)

El-Hazard, The Magnificent World (Shinpi no Sekai El Hazard)
© A.I.C./Pioneer LDC Inc.
1995, Pioneer Animation (OAV)

Fist of the North Star (Seikimatsu Kyûseishu Densetsu Hokuto no Ken)
© Toei Animation Co. Ltd.
1986, Streamline Pictures (Theatrical release)

Ghost in the Shell (Kôkaku Kidô-Tai)
© Masamune Shirow/Kodansha Ltd./ Bandai Visual Co., Ltd./Manga Entertainment
1995, Manga Video (Theatrical release)

The Guyver (Kyôshoku Sôkô Guyver)
© Takaya Productions/D.S.S./Bandai/Movic, Inc./Tokuma Shôten
1987-90, Manga Entertainment (OAV)

Kimagure Orange Road
© Toho/Studio Pierrot
1988-89, AnimEigo (OAV)

Maison Ikkoku
© Rumiko Takahashi/Shogakukan, Inc./Kitty/Fuji TV
1986-88, Viz Video (TV series)

Mermaid Forest (Ningyo no Mori)
© Rumiko Takahashi/Shogakukan, Inc./Victor Musical Industries, Inc.
1991, U.S. Manga Corps (OAV)

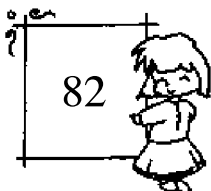**Mermaid's Scar** (Ningyo no Kizu)
© Rumiko Takahashi/Shogakukan, Inc.
1993, Viz Video (OAV)

Neon Genesis Evangelion (Shin Seiki Evangelion)
© Gainax/Project EVA/TV Tokyo/NAS
1995-96, A.D. Vision (TV series)

Ninja Scroll (Jubei Ninpucho)
© Yoshiaki Kawajiri/Madhouse/JVC/Toho Co. Ltd./ Movic, Inc.
1993, Manga Entertainment (Theatrical release)

Oh My Goddess! (Aa, Megami-sama)
© Kosuke Fujishima/Kodansha/TBS/SS Films
1993-94, AnimEigo (OAV)

Project A-Ko
© Soeishinsha/Final-Nishijima/Pony Canyon
1986-90, U.S. Manga Corps (OAV)

Ranma 1/2
© Rumiko Takahashi/Shogakukan Inc./Kitty/Fuji TV
1989-94, Viz Video (TV series, OAV and Theatrical release)

Record of Lodoss War (Lodoss Jima Senki)
© Group SNE/Kadokawa Shôten/Marubeni Corp./Tokyo Broadcasting System
1990-91, U.S. Manga Corps (OAV)

Robotech
© Harmony Gold USA/Tatsunoko Prod. Co./ZIV International

1985, Family Home Entertainment and Streamline Pictures (TV series)
Derived From Superdimensional Fortress Macross (1982-83), Southern Cross (1984) and Mospeada (1983-84)

Sailor Moon (Bishôjo Senshi Sailor Moon)
© Toei Animation Co. Ltd./DIC Productions
1992-94, Dic Toon Time Video (TV series)

Samurai Pizza Cats (Cats Toninden Teyande)
© Tatsunoko Production Co. Ltd./Saban International
1991, Video Treasures (TV series)

Slayers
© H. Kanzaka/R. Araizumi/TV Tokyo/SOFTX/Marubeni
1995, Software Sculptors (TV series and OAV)

Tenchi Muyô!
© A.I.C./Pioneer LDC, Inc.
1992-96, Pioneer Animation (TV series, OAV and Theatrical release)

Urotsuki Dôji
© Toshio Maeda/JAVN Inc./West Cape Corp.
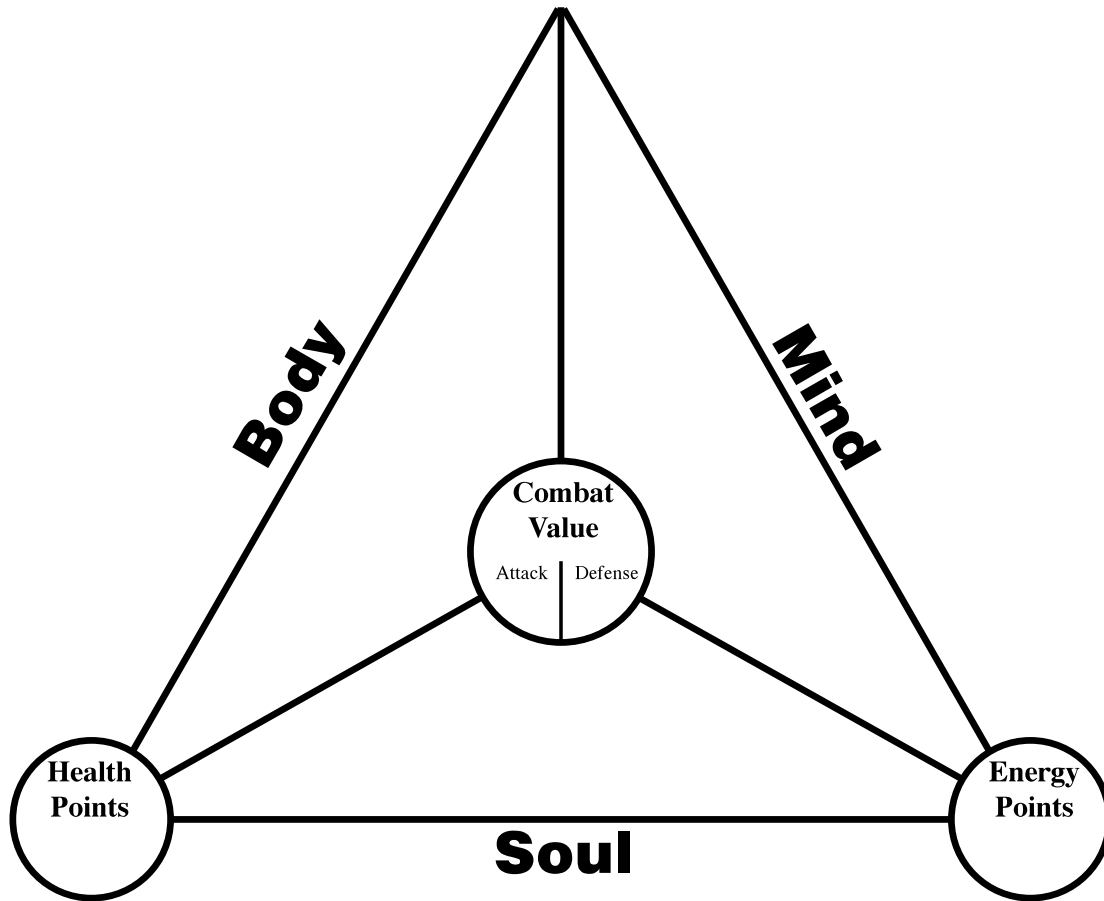1989-93, Anime 18 (OAV)

Wicked City (Yojû Toshi)
© Japan Home Video Co. Ltd.
1987, Streamline Pictures (OAV)

BIG EYES, SMALL MOUTH
THE UNIVERSAL JAPANESE ANIME RPG

Body

Mind

Combat Value

Attack | Defense

Health Points

Energy Points

Soul

Character Name: _____

Age: _____ Height: _____ Weight: _____

Physical Description: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Character Attributes

Level	Points/Level	Attribute and Notes
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Character Defects

Bonus Points	Defect and Notes
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Weapons, Possessions and Notes

_____

_____

_____

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