

# The Hero World RPG Architecture

A simple rules framework you can use to create your own tabletop RPG. v1.0

By Jim Davies ([jjim@jimdavies.org](mailto:jjim@jimdavies.org)), 2017  
<http://www.jimdavies.org/hero-world/>

You may publish games using this if you include "Powered by the Apocalypse and The Hero World RPG Architecture."

## Conflict Resolution

Character actions are described by the game designer in terms of *Moves*. A Move has a name and a list of *Perks*. In very simple games, players can do only one thing:

### Generic Move:

- I suffer no cost
- I basically succeed
- I get some extra benefit

But for most games the designer should create genre-appropriate Moves.

During play, the player chooses what they want to try to do, then chooses an appropriate Move. Each conflict, even an epic battle, is resolved by the roll of a four-sided die, where the "4" is treated as zero. The outcome determines some number of *Points*.

The player may buy as many Perks as they have Points. Then the players and the GM narrate the outcome of the conflict.

These rolls are almost always successful—this architecture is intended for heroic characters.

## Modifiers

The **die roll** can be modified by an Attribute, Help, and/or Difficulty. A Move will be associated with an Attribute (see box at right), the score of which modifies the number rolled.

There might also be a **difficulty** penalty:

Difficulty	Point penalty
Almost Impossible	-4
Very, very hard	-3
Very hard	-2
Hard	-1
Normal, default	-0
Easy	+1

If narratively appropriate for other characters to **help**, then one point per character helping (with a maximum of 2) is added to the number of Points. If all characters are fighting a big monster, one player will roll (usually the one with a +1 in their character's appropriate Attribute), and the others will offer help, but not roll. Costs are applied to all helping characters.

## Attributes

### ...at Game Design

Characters are mechanically described by Attributes representing stable traits. Choose Attributes relevant to the Moves, such as Strength, Mind, Social, Magic, Will, Agility, Psi, etc.

### ...at Character Creation

The player distributes +0, +1, etc. among their character's Attributes.

If the game has 1, 2, or 3 attributes, one Attribute gets +1 and the rest get +0.

For four or more Attributes, one gets +1, one get -1, and the rest +0.

## Health

Characters have an unchanging *Maximum Health* of 5. *Current Health* gets reduced during play. It is the ceiling on how many Perks can be bought. Heal 1 Current Health daily. Current Health of 0 means death.

$$\text{Points} = 1d + \text{Attribute} + \text{help} - \text{difficulty}$$

## Narrating Conflict Outcomes

Most Moves will have a Perk called something like "I suffer no cost." Failing to buy this Perk results in hardship for the character. In a fight this usually means losing a point of Current Health. But you can get much more creative. The cost might be hurting a relationship, falling into a ravine, losing gear, spending money, or some other setback. If a player chooses "I suffer no cost" but not any success condition, the player might have to try again, if narratively appropriate. In combat, enemies don't take damage, per se. Player characters suffer costs until the enemy is defeated. The Game Master never rolls dice.

## Creating Moves

Create genre-specific *Basic Moves*, such as magic, hacking, healing, staying sane, etc. You might want to make *Special Moves* only for members of particular character classes. Individual magical items or pieces of tech might also have their own list of Perks.

## Example Moves

### Stealth:

- I suffer no cost
- Nobody sees me
- Nobody hears me

### Read Person:

- I am not wrong about anything
- I know what they are feeling
- I know what they want
- I detect any deceit

### Combat:

- I suffer no cost
- My opponent is defeated
- I choose who hears
- I choose whether nearby things are harmed or unharmed
- I do it with special flair

### Manipulate:

- I suffer no cost
- My deception, if any, works
- They do what I tell them to
- They don't sense they are being manipulated
- They are intimidated, charmed, or drawn to me (my choice)

### Investigate / Notice:

- I suffer no cost
- My information is relevant
- My information is accurate
- My information is complete
- I find something extra

### Stunt:

- I suffer no cost.
- Stunt succeeds
- I do it with special flair