



WHEN WAKES THE PROTAGONIST!

“We live in the stories we tell ourselves. In a secular, scientific rational culture lacking any convincing spiritual leadership, superhero stories speak loudly and boldly to our greatest fears, deepest longings, and highest aspirations. They’re not afraid to be hopeful, not embarrassed to be optimistic, and utterly fearless in the dark. They’re about as far from social realism as you can get, but the best superhero stories deal directly with mythic elements of human experience that we can all relate to, in ways that are imaginative, profound, funny, and provocative. They exist to solve problems of all kinds and can always be counted on to find a way to save the day. At their best, they help us to confront and resolve even the deepest existential crisis.”

- **Grant Morrison, Supergods**

ISSUE I

WHEN WAKES THE PROTAGONIST!

This Issue explores the various elements that comprise a Hero in terms of the Phaserip system, as well as numerous optional rules, an overview of the process of character creation, and some advice on role-playing.

Each Hero in Phaserip is composed of three types of characteristics:

- **ATTRIBUTES** – which are assigned an Echelons
- **FACTORS** – which are represented by a pool of points
- **TRAITS** – which provide a modifier to rolls.

ECHELONS

An Echelon is a single-word descriptor or adjective, used as the standard measure of potency or effectiveness in Phaserip. Echelons are representative of a scale from one to ten, quantifying everything from time to weight to distance. This makes it easy to estimate the rating of any element of the game.

For example, how hot is a fire, with Feeble being a lit match and Unearthly being the interior of a Volcano? Or how high is a precipice, with Feeble being an anthill and Unearthly being Mount Everest?

ECHELON	RANK	RATING
FEEBLE	1	2
PUNY	2	3
TYICAL	3	5
GOOD	4	10
EXCELLENT	5	15
LEGENDARY	6	20
UNCANNY	7	35
FANTASTIC	8	55
AMAZING	9	90
UNEARTHLY	10	150

Rather than definitive measures, Echelons represent a range of values, similar to weight classes in certain sports or benchmarks in a financial market. Echelons are presented as broad categories to facilitate common sense judgments on a case by case basis, and because the very nature of Heroism dictates that characters are constantly pushing and redefining their limits.

RANKS & RATINGS

Each Echelon is associated with two numbers; it's **Rank** and **Rating**.

An Echelon's Rank is its position on the one to ten scale, so the Echelon *Typical* is Rank 3 and the Echelon *Amazing* is Rank 9.

An Echelon's Rating, on the other hand, features a much broader number scale, from 2 (Feeble) up to 150 (Unearthly). Echelon Ratings are based upon the Fibonacci sequence, an algorithm representing a spiral pattern commonly found in nature, wherein each number is the sum of the numbers preceding it. Technically, this means the Echelon Ratings should be 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, and 144, but to make calculations during the game easier, the numbers are rounded to multiples of 5 or 10.

THESE GO TO ELEVEN...

Each Echelon corresponds to a column of The Action Resolution Graph! However, looking at The ARG!, you might notice several Echelons besides the standard ten previously mentioned. These are the **SHIFT ECHELONS**, so named as it is possible for characters to temporarily increase or decrease their Echelons to these levels via *Echelon Shifts*.

Below Feeble is **ABYSMAL**, describing subtleties or impotence below most human's notice, such as the Might of an insect, or subtle fluctuations in temperature.

Above Unearthly are **PLANETARY**, **STELLAR**, **COSMIC**, **CELESTIAL**, and **BEYOND**, designating increasing levels of potency. Roughly speaking, Planetary equates to the power level of a planet; Stellar to that of a sun or star. Likewise, Cosmic and Celestial describe forces equivalent to a galaxy or universe, while Beyond represents infinite powers that are far past mortal ken.

ATTRIBUTES

There are 7 Primary Attributes, representing common qualities or characteristics inherent to all Heroes. An Attribute is an assigned an Echelon, reflecting the Hero's degree of capability and determining the column of The ARG! employed for GESTs.

The Primary Attributes include Fighting, Agility, Might, and Durability, which are classed as a Hero's **Physical Attributes**, and Wits, Intelligence, and Willpower comprising a Hero's **Mental Attributes**.

FIGHTING

A Hero's combat prowess, pugnacity, and valour. Fighting appraises a Hero's skill in hand-to-hand combat, whether unarmed or wielding a handheld weapon.

AGILITY

A Hero's physical coordination and dexterity. Agility evaluates a Hero's balance, reflexes, and their ability to use different parts of their body together smoothly and efficiently.

MIGHT

A Hero's physical strength, brawn, and muscle power. Might determines how much weight a Hero can lift, the force they can exert, and damage they can inflict.

DURABILITY

A Hero's toughness, endurance, and stamina. Durability assesses a Hero's general physical constitution, and their ability to overcome or recover from sickness and injury.

WITS

A Hero's perceptiveness, intuition, and alertness. Wits demarks a Hero's sensitivity to and awareness of their surroundings, and their mental initiative.

INTELLIGENCE

A Hero's reason, diligence, and ingenuity. Intelligence estimates a Hero's problem-solving abilities, level of education, and adeptness with technology.

PSYCHE

A Hero's willpower, resolve, and courage Psyche denotes a Hero's ability to resist mental domination, overcome fear, and their overall mental endurance.

To look at them another way, Attributes correspond to the ability of Heroes to manipulate, impose upon, or resist their environment.

QUALITY	PHYSICAL	MENTAL
DEXTERITY	AGILITY	WITS
STRENGTH	MIGHT	INTELLIGENCE
ENDURANCE	DURABILITY	PSYCHE

FIGHTING

FEEBLE

The Hero is hopeless in a physical fight.
Pop Culture Example: C3Po

PUNY

The Hero is meek, avoiding confrontations or physical conflict whenever possible.
Pop-Culture Examples: Arthur Dent, Rusty Venture

TYPICAL

The Hero can throw a punch when necessary.
Pop-Culture Examples: Deadly Girl, Doctor Who

GOOD

The Hero possesses some informal fighting experience or basic self-defense training.
Pop-Culture Examples: Han Solo, Plastic Man

EXCELLENT

The Hero possess fighting abilities equivalent to that of a trained soldier or martial artist.
Pop-Culture Examples: Aeryn Sun, The Phantom

LEGENDARY

The Hero possess natural talent combined with extensive training or experience.
Pop-Culture Examples: Brokk Sampson, Conan

UNCANNY

The Hero possesses superior natural talent combined with training and experience.
Pop-Culture Examples: Spider-man, Superman

FANTASTIC

The Hero is deadly, the ultimate human fighting machine.
Pop-Culture Examples: Batman, Captain America

AMAZING

The Hero possess superhuman fighting capability combined with lifetimes of experience.
Pop-Culture Examples: Thor, Wonder Woman

UNEARTHLY

The Hero is nigh-invincible, possessing incalculable combat prowess.
Pop-Culture Example: Chuck Norris



AGILITY

FEEBLE

The Hero finds it difficult to move.

Pop-Culture Example: 7-Zark-7

PUNY

The Hero is clumsy and slow to react.

Pop-Culture Examples: Foggy Nelson, Tik-Tok

TYPICAL

The Hero possesses the average coordination and reflexes of a human adult.

Pop-Culture Examples: John Constantine, Peter Venkman

GOOD

The Hero possess dexterity equivalent to an athlete or someone who engages in regular athletic activities.

Pop-Culture Examples: Hellboy, Jem

EXCELLENT

The Hero possesses physical coordination equivalent to that of an Olympic athlete.

Pop-Culture Examples: Chiana, Wolverine

LEGENDARY

The Hero possesses peak human coordination and balance, equivalent to that of an Olympic acrobat or circus aerialist.

Pop-Culture Examples: Batman, Daredevil

UNCANNY

The Hero possesses coordination beyond the normal limits of the human body, allowing them to dodge a bullet at close range.

Pop-Culture Examples: Black Panther, Mister Miracle

FANTASTIC

The Hero possesses dexterity and reflexes of a magnitude allowing them to dodge lasers or multiple bullets at close range.

Pop-Culture Examples: Gatchaman, Wonder Woman

AMAZING

The Hero is capable of acrobatic maneuvers that seem to defy the limits of the humanoid structure, allowing them to dodge automatic weapon fire.

Pop-Culture Examples: Jack Hawksmoor, Spider-man

UNEARTHLY

The Hero possesses complete control over their body's movements, reshaping itself instantly at a thought.

Pop-Culture Example: Plasticman



MIGHT

FEEBLE

The Hero is very weak, requiring help to open the lid on a jar of jam.

Pop-Culture Example: Rygel The XVth

PUNY

The Hero is physically weak, incapable of lifting the body-weight of a human adult

Pop-Culture Examples: Sailor Moon, Timothy Hunter

TYPICAL

The Hero possesses the average strength of a healthy human adult.

Pop-Culture Examples: Doctor Strange, Zatanna

GOOD

The Hero's strength is equivalent to that of a professional athlete.

Pop-Culture Examples: The Flash, The Spirit

EXCELLENT

The Hero possesses peak human strength.

Pop-Culture Examples: Captain America, Red Sonja

LEGENDARY

The Hero possesses inhuman or enhanced human strength, capable of lifting a car.

Pop-Culture Examples: Hourman, Robocop

UNCANNY

The Hero possesses superhuman strength, capable of lifting an elephant.

Pop-Culture Examples: Spider-man, Steel

FANTASTIC

The Hero possesses metahuman strength, capable of rupturing a steel door.

Pop-Culture Examples: Hellboy, She-Hulk

AMAZING

The Hero possesses titanic strength, capable of lifting a blue whale.

Pop-Culture Example: Godzilla, Thor

UNEARTHLY

The Hero possesses godlike strength, capable of crushing titanium or lifting a mountain.

Pop-Culture Example: The Hulk



DURABILITY

FEEBLE

The Hero tires easily and should probably stay away from drafts.

Pop-Culture Example: Aunt May

PUNY

The Hero possesses below-average constitution and is easily winded.

Pop-Culture Examples: Alicia Masters, Woozy Winks

TYPICAL

The Hero possesses the constitution of a human adult who engages in moderate regular exercise.

Pop-Culture Examples: Howard the Duck, Sailor Moon

GOOD

The Hero possesses the constitution of a human adult who engages in intensive regular exercise.

Pop-Culture Examples: Ant-Man, Batgirl

EXCELLENT

The Hero possesses resilience equivalent to a professional athlete.

Pop-Culture Examples: Catwoman, D'Argo

LEGENDARY

The Hero's body is conditioned to withstand the greatest amount of pain & injury humanly possible.

Pop-Culture Examples: Batman, James Bond

UNCANNY

The Hero possesses a superhuman constitution, rarely tiring and capable of weathering attacks from conventional street weaponry.

Pop-Culture Examples: Big Barda, Spider-man

FANTASTIC

The Hero is superhumanly resilient, capable of weathering attacks from military-grade weaponry.

Pop-Culture Examples: Cyborg, She-Hulk

AMAZING

The Hero is near-indestructible, able to withstand most poisons, concussions, and temperature extremes.

Pop-Culture Example: The Tick, The Thing

UNEARTHLY

The Hero is nigh-invulnerable, almost impossible to permanently injure.

Pop-Culture Example: Superman



WITS

FEEBLE

The Hero is largely unaware of surroundings, with limited or impaired senses.

Pop-Culture Example: Man-Thing

PUNY

The Hero is easily distracted and often caught off-guard.

Pop-Culture Examples: Space Ghost, The Tick

TYPICAL

The Hero possesses average situational awareness.

Pop-Culture Examples: Guy Gardner, The Hulk

GOOD

The Hero is highly observant with an eye for detail.

Pop-Culture Examples: Green Lantern, Rocket Raccoon

EXCELLENT

The hero possesses a strong empathic sense, extraordinarily sensitive to surroundings.

Pop-Culture Examples: Kitty Pryde, Zatanna

LEGENDARY

The Hero has exceptional intuition and natural detective abilities.

Pop-Culture Example: Middleman, The Spirit

UNCANNY

The Hero is perspicacious, possessing superior situational awareness and skills of observation.

Pop-Culture Examples: Batman, Sherlock Holmes

FANTASTIC

The Hero possesses senses of animal acuteness.

Pop-Culture Examples: Beast Boy, Wolverine

AMAZING

The Hero possesses sensory awareness far exceeding human limitations.

Pop-Culture Example: Daredevil, Superman

UNEARTHLY

The Hero is at one with the universe, perceptive of cosmic disturbances.

Pop-Culture Example: Doctor Who



INTELLIGENCE

FEEBLE

The Hero is slow on the uptake and easily confused.
Pop-Culture Example: The Hulk

PUNY

The Hero is somewhat simple, tending to direct approaches for complex problems.
Pop-Culture Examples: The Maxx, The Tick

TYPICAL

The Hero possesses average reason and problem-solving abilities.
Pop-Culture Examples: Hellboy, Wolverine

GOOD

The Hero is sharp, possessing the problem-solving abilities of a university student.
Pop-Culture Examples: Captain America, Wonder Woman

EXCELLENT

Gifted; the Hero possesses natural scientific aptitude and the ability to build or repair modern technology.
Pop-Culture Examples: Batgirl, Kitty Pryde

LEGENDARY

The Hero possesses intellect and reasoning abilities equivalent to a university professor.
Pop-Culture Example: Batman, The Beast

UNCANNY

The Hero possesses an intellect equivalent to a leading authority in the world on a subject.
Pop-Culture Examples: Cyborg, Professor X

FANTASTIC

The Hero possesses an intellect beyond what is normally encountered on Earth, capable of conceiving of scientific or technological concepts far beyond current conventions.
Pop-Culture Example: Buckaroo Banzai, Iron Man

AMAZING

Super-genius; the Hero possesses genius-level proficiency in multiple intellectual disciplines and the capacity to adopt scientific concepts completely foreign to their society.
Pop-Culture Examples: Dr. Jonas Venture, Mister Fantastic

UNEARTHLY

The Hero possesses the intellectual capacity to master all worldly knowledge.
Pop-Culture Example: Brainiac V



PSYCHE

FEEBLE

The Hero is weak-willed, easily influenced and dominated.

Pop-Culture Examples: Meatwad

PUNY

The Hero is inexperienced or young, without a strong sense of self.

Pop-Culture Examples: Dean Venture, Rogue

TYPICAL

The Hero is able to confidently confront the typical obstacles and anxieties of everyday life.

Pop-Culture Examples: Arthur Dent, Deadly Girl

GOOD

The Hero is focused and dedicated, with the will to resist basic mesmerism.

Pop-Culture Examples: Daredevil, The Spirit

EXCELLENT

The Hero possesses extraordinary self control and can remain calm and collected during a major crisis.

Pop-Culture Examples: Black Widow, The Flash

LEGENDARY

The Hero possess sufficient will to override self-preservation instincts.

Pop-Culture Example: Spider-man, Wonder Woman

UNCANNY

The Hero possesses unyielding determination, capable of confronting mystical phenomena with no loss of resolve.

Pop-Culture Examples: Batman, Red Sonja

FANTASTIC

The Hero possesses an indomitable will, sufficient to confidently assert control over situations with planetary consequences.

Pop-Culture Example: Captain America, Superman

AMAZING

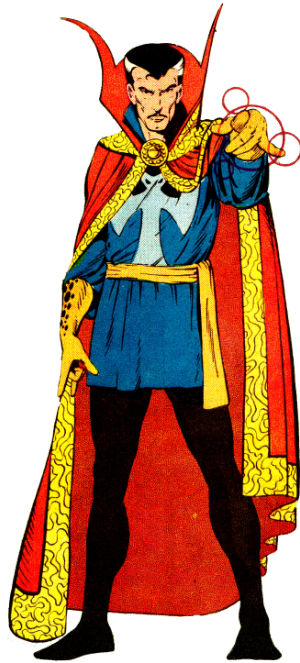
The Hero is dauntless, with a will formidable enough to challenge intergalactic or inter-dimensional menaces with no loss of resolve.

Pop-Culture Examples: Doctor Who, Green Lantern

UNEARTHLY

The Hero possesses godlike mental resolve, practically impossible to influence or dominate.

Pop-Culture Example: Doctor Strange



SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

OPTIONAL RULES

Secondary Attributes are options that cover several external aspects of a Hero's lives. Functionally, they work the same as Primary Attributes; each is assigned an Echelon which is used for applicable GESTs. The Secondary Attributes presented here allow players to deal simply with complex or mundane elements of the game. These are optional as they are not necessarily applicable to or appropriate for every game or campaign.

RESOURCES

A Hero's Echelon rating in Resources provides an abstract evaluation of a Hero's financial status. Resources are used to purchase items or services and, more generally, to determine a Hero's standard of living. A Hero with low Resources is always struggling to pay rent and bills, and usually cannot afford many luxuries, while a character with high Resources lives a privileged life of ease. See **ISSUE IV: TOOLS OF THE TRADE** for more detail on Resources.

FEEBLE

Poor; struggle to make ends meet.

PUNY

Lower middle class or student.

TYPICAL

Middle class with salaried employment.

GOOD

Middle class with professional employment.

EXCELLENT

Upper middle class, small business owner.

LEGENDARY

Upper class or large business owner.

UNCANNY

Millionaire or small corporation.

FANTASTIC

Billionaire, large corporation, or military.

AMAZING

Small country or Military.

UNEARTHLY

Plutonian; nearly limitless wealth.



RENOWN

Renown is an approximation of how popular and well-known a Hero is, and their general reputation for honesty and fair play, Renown influences the reactions of other characters to the Hero. A well-known and liked hero will find it easier to request favours and influence popular opinion.

Defeating a villain or saving the lives of civilians in public view will increase a Hero's Renown by one Echelon for a week's time. This benefit can only be earned once a week, no matter how many villains are defeated. At the end of the week make a Legendary GEST roll, with the Hero's current Renown used as the Difficulty. If the GEST succeeds, the Hero's Renown is permanently increased by one Echelon. On a Red Phase Result, the story of their success "goes viral", and the Hero permanently increases their Renown by 2 Echelons.



On the other hand, getting defeated by a villain in public view will lower a Hero's Renown by one Echelon for a month's time. No GEST is required to recover from this temporary setback. Again this penalty is only earned once during the time period it is in effect. Likewise, if a Hero fails to save a life or is slandered by the media, this will reduce their Renown by one Echelon for a month, but in this case, a Legendary GEST roll is required, again with the Hero's current Renown setting the Difficulty. A failure indicates the Hero's Renown is permanently reduced by one Echelon, while a Critical Failure (Violet Phase Result) indicates the Hero's Renown is permanently reduced by two Echelons.

A Hero accused of a crime or featured as wanted by the authorities permanently reduces their Renown by two Echelons. If they are later publicly cleared of all charges, they will regain one Echelon. If, however, they are found guilty by a court of law (regardless of the truth of the matter) their Renown drops to Abysmal.

These are just common examples, A GM will introduce other events as appropriate to the game and keep track of how these affect Renown, from a faux pas during a high society dinner to engaging in acts of charity. The two things to keep in mind are that the Public is fickle, and that bad news and rumours spreads faster and stays longer in people's minds than good deeds.

CONTACTS

“It’s not what you know, but who you know,” as the old adage goes. Some Heroes rely heavily on a diverse group of informants, allies, and confidants to aid them in their adventures and investigations. This is especially true of many Pulp Heroes. The optional Secondary Attribute Contacts is one manner of dealing with this simply in game terms.

The Contacts attribute is assigned an Echelon, representing the size, variety and usefulness of a Hero’s social network. When a Hero wishes to source their contacts for information or aid, they make a Contact Roll, which is effectively performed in the same manner as a GEST. Renown can be used to influence this roll (treat it as an Assisted GEST as described in Issue II: Saving The Planet). Likewise, the GM may assign a Difficulty to the roll depending on the circumstances.

Based on the Phase Result of the roll, the GM will describe the manner and degree of success or failure. Generally, only one Contact roll may be attempted per day, representing the time necessary to reach people via various forms of communication. The GM may allow exceptions to this based on the nature of the inquiry.

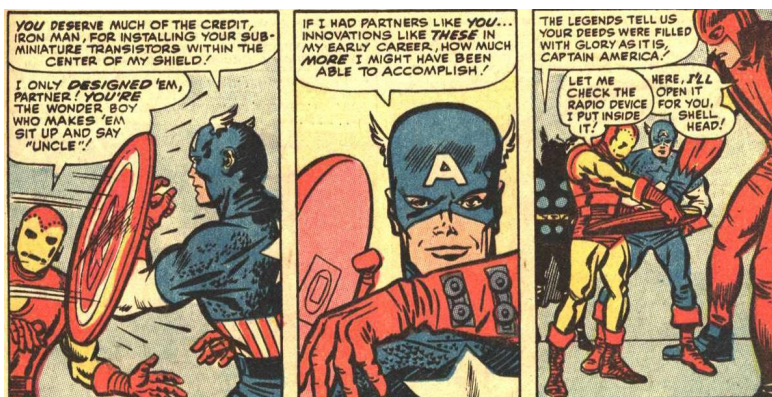


Secondary Attributes are essentially generalizations, and their appropriateness for any game depends on the genre and circumstances. In a fantasy campaign, it may be more appropriate to deal with money directly in regards to how many coins a Hero is carrying, while in a post-scarcity futuristic environment, the Resources Attribute may be superfluous at best. Likewise, a GM may decide Renown is simply not applicable to the campaign or want to deal with Contacts purely through role-playing.

SPECIAL ATTRIBUTES

OPTIONAL RULES

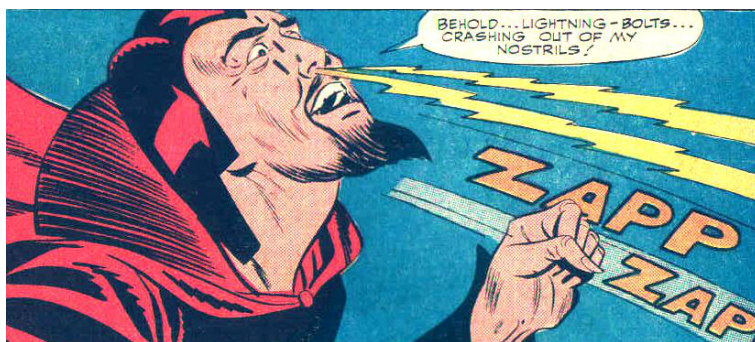
Special Attributes are unique abilities possessed by a Hero, including Paraphernalia, Superpowers, Weaknesses, Magick, and Magic Items. Like Primary and Secondary Attributes, Special Attributes are rated by an Echelon, which gives a general indication of the Attribute's potency. However, unlike Primary and Secondary Attributes, Special Attributes are unique to each Hero that possesses them. As these include a large variety of options, Special Attributes are covered in relevant future Issues. Which Special Attributes are available in any game depends entirely on the game's setting and conceits. A modern superhero game may potentially include all Special Attributes, an occult investigation game may involve a very limited amount of magick and magic items, while a historical game may include none.



PARAPHERNALIA

Unique gadgets, weapons, and gear employed by the Hero.

Paraphernalia are detailed in **ISSUE IV: TOOLS OF THE TRADE**



POWERS

Superhuman abilities, including mutant talents, psionic gifts, and physical enhancements.

Powers are detailed in **ISSUE V: THUS SPAKE ZARATHUSTRA**



WEAKNESSES

Special vulnerabilities or flaws that individually affect a Hero.

Detailed in **ISSUE V: THUS SPAKE ZARATHUSTRA**



MAGICK

Supernatural powers of the occult such as invocation, divination and conjuration.

Magick is detailed in **ISSUE VI: SEDUCTION OF THE INNOCENT**



MAGIC ITEMS

Weapons, tools, rings, or other artifacts imbued with supernatural powers.

Magic Items are detailed in **ISSUE VI: SEDUCTION OF THE INNOCENT**

FACTORS

Whereas Attributes are quantified by an Echelon, Factors are represented by a pool of points, a number that can decrease or increase frequently during the course of play. These include Health, Arête, and (optionally) Continuity.

HEALTH

A Hero's Health is equal to the sum of the Echelon Ratings of their Physical Attributes. So a Hero with *Typical* Fighting, Agility, Might, and Durability, each with an Echelon Rating of 5, would possess a Health of 20. This pool is depleted as a Hero takes **Damage**. If a Hero's Health reaches zero, they are incapable of physical action and are in danger of long-term injury. In *Phaserip*, serious injuries are denoted by **Attribute Loss**, whereupon one of a Hero's Primary Attributes are temporarily reduced. Damage and Attribute Loss are detailed in **ISSUE III: VS THE WORLD**.

At its most abstract, Health is a pacing mechanism, gauging how long a Hero will last in a fight before taking a debilitating injury or succumbing to exhaustion. To look at it another way, Health points are essentially spent by a Hero to "buy off" the Damage from a successful attack. Bracing against the impact of a blow, blocking, ducking or dodging at the last moment, all tax a Hero's physical reserves. When a Hero runs out Health, they are susceptible to an attack penetrating their defenses. Attacks too powerful for a Hero to counter or sustain inflict wounds, represented by Attribute Loss.



ARÊTE

The ancient Greeks, who first conceived of the concepts of heroes and heroism, also coined the term Arête. Roughly translated, Arête means the virtue or excellence of a thing. In Phaserip, Arête refers to that indefinable quality that sets apart a Hero from an ordinary person. More than that, it is the energy of the universe, of life itself, what drives a person or species towards their evolution and destiny.

Arête is defined by a tally of points, a resource that a Hero may draw upon to ensure the success of certain actions and the performance of heroic feats. Each Hero begins the game with an Arête pool based upon their current Psyche. A Hero's Arête pool will refresh daily, based upon their current Psyche at the time. This Arête is dependent upon a Hero getting the necessary rest and is not cumulative. If a Hero's current Arête pool is larger than their Psyche, this same amount is retained until spent or lost.

An exception to this is if a Hero's Arête is currently in the negative due to penalties. A negative Arête pool will not refresh until the Hero has atoned for whatever actions caused the pool to drop below zero.

The GM will provide Arête bonuses (and penalties) at any time during the game when it is appropriate, based on the actions of the Heroes. This will in some ways depend on the genre and setting of the game (characters in a medieval fantasy setting are likely to have different moral compunctions than a superhero in modern New York), but there will always be certain constants: saving a life is good, taking a life is not. Arête rewards and penalties are dealt with in much more detail in **ISSUE VII: SAVING THE WORLD**. Note that some Heroes accept a darker path that does not include much in the way of Arête. These antiheroes must compensate for this by making use of their other advantages.

A Wager of 5 points of Arête is always necessary before any GEST roll when a Hero intends to influence the outcome. These points are spent, even if the roll succeeds without the influence of Arête. Upon making the roll, the player can then spend any additional Arête, including the 5 points already spent, to increase the dice result.

However, if a player rolls a Violet Phase Result, this is considered a critical failure. A player cannot simply raise this to a Yellow Phase Result for a regular failure, they must raise this to a Green Phase Result or suffer the consequences of their roll. However, if a player does not possess enough Arête to raise any roll's result to the needed Phase result, they are not required to spend any more Arête beyond the 5 points they initially invested.

POWER STUNTS

The other major use of Arête is to fuel Power Stunts. A Power Stunt is an unconventional use of a superpower that creates an effect beyond the original power description. For example, using superspeed to create a whirlwind, or using a electricity generation to manipulate computer hardware. When a Hero wants to attempt a Stunt, they describe the effect they are attempting to achieve to the GM. Attempting a Stunt the first time costs 100 point of Arête, and, if successful, 50 points each subsequent attempt. After succeeding at a Stunt 3 times it is permanently added to the Hero's bag of tricks and no Arête expenditure is needed for further attempts. Power Stunts are discussed in greater detail in **ISSUE V: THUS SPAKE ZARATHUSTRA**.

CONTINUITY

OPTIONAL RULE

Phaserip is not the sort of game with the default premise that characters start at very low competency and steadily progress through levels of increasing powers and abilities. Most Heroes in Phaserip are conceived of in their prime, or at the height of their career or adventuring path. Think of a typical superhero in comics or pulp hero from fiction; the circumstances of their lives, their personal relationships, and their attitudes and behaviour may all change radically in the course of their adventures, but rarely are their skills or abilities altered.

However, in a long term campaign, characters should be allowed to grow and learn as their players see fit. To reflect this, experience or advancement in Phaserip is represented by the Factor Continuity, a pool of points similar to Arête. During play, a Hero earns Continuity whenever they fail at a GEST that they initiated.

Failing a GEST roll earns a character 5 Continuity points. If the Hero fails at a GEST that they invested Arête into (i.e. after the roll they did not possess enough Arête to raise the Phase Result to a success), then they earn 10 points of Continuity.

Why do characters gain Continuity when failing? There are two main reasons. First is that a character learns more from failure than succeeding. Failing gives a character an indication of their current limits, and insight into what they need to do to surpass this. Secondly, Continuity is as much as anything, a measure of how consistently a character acts over time. It is stasis, and its relationship to Change is much the same as a Hero's Stamina is related to Fatigue. When a Hero grows and changes, redefining themselves, they do this at the cost of diminishing their Continuity.

Once a Hero's Continuity pool reaches 100 points, they may spend these towards an **Advancement Reward**. These are not set benefits, but something the player should work out with the GM that naturally follows the course of the campaign, the Hero's actions, and the circumstances of the game. Advancement Rewards can take one of three forms:

MATERIAL AWARD

The GM arranges for your character to gain a desired item. A gadgeteer character achieves a scientific breakthrough, a wandering knight gets a magic scimitar tossed at them by a watery bint, etc.

WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

The GM arranges for "Something Nice" to happen to the character; they meet a new romantic interest, they get offered a job they've been pursuing, or they discover a clue as to the identity of that five-fingered man who killed their father.

PERSONAL IMPROVEMENT

The Hero changes or improves themselves in some way. This may come from taking the time to train, becoming a student or apprentice to a Master, or exposure to cosmic rays inducing some new mutation. Improving an existing Attribute costs the 100 Continuity for the Personal Improvement Award, as well as a number of Continuity points equal to the new Echelon's Rating. Learning a new Trait costs 100 Continuity.

TRAITS

Traits define a Hero's unique proficiencies and limitations. Traits are not assigned Echelons; rather they modify the Echelons of Attributes for specific GESTs. Traits provide two possible modifiers to a GEST roll depending on whether they are used *actively* or *passively*.

PHASE SHIFTS

A Phase Shift is applied *after* the GEST is rolled, and alters the Phase Result. For example, a character who scored a Green Phase Result on a GEST that received a +1PS would read it as a Blue Phase Result.

If a Trait specifically or directly relates to a task the Hero is attempting, that is considered an *active* use of that Trait and provides a Phase Shift (PS) modifier to the GEST's result. For example, a Hero with the Science! Talent attempting to mix a chemical compound, or a character with the Forestry Specialty attempting to find shelter in the woods.

ECHELON SHIFTS

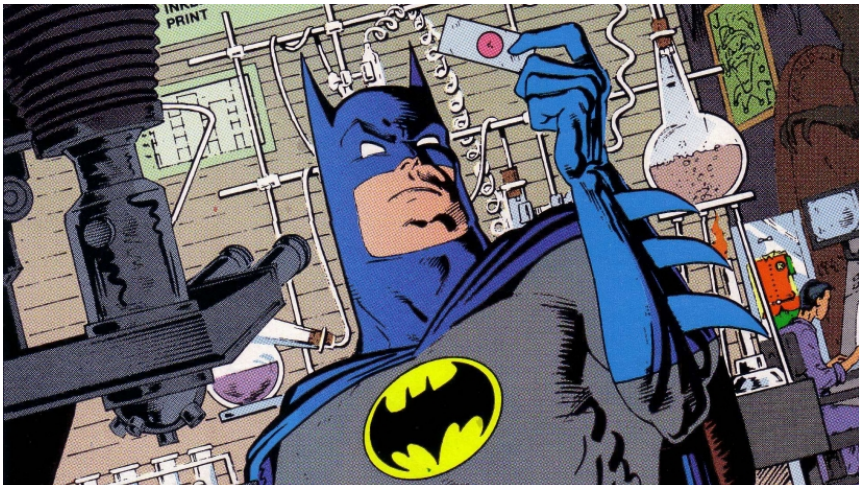
An Echelon Shift is applied *before* a roll, altering the Echelon column used for the GEST. For example, a Hero of Typical Agility who receives a +1ES would compare the results of their roll to the Good Echelon row of the ARG!

If a Trait indirectly relates to a task a Hero is attempting, is used to supplement an action primarily employing another characteristic, or another character is actively attempting to prevent the Hero from succeeding at the task, that is considered a *passive* use of that Trait and provides an Echelon Shift (ES) modifier to the Attribute used for the GEST. For example, a Hero who is attempting to find a book on a certain subject could apply a Talent in Academics as a passive bonus.

Only one Trait may be actively employed for any single GEST, however multiple Echelon Shift modifiers may be "stacked" or added together.

OPTIONAL RULE – LAW OF DIMINISHING RETURNS

To keep things simple and avoid excessive number crunching, a GM may impose a cap of +/- 3 ES applied to a GEST.



TRAIT COMPARISONS

Say there are 4 characters: one with the Talent **Academics**, one with the Academic Specialty **Law**, one with the Occupation **Lawyer**, and one with the Occupation **Police Officer**. The Academics Talent suggests a character may possess a basic understanding of the legal system in their country, without a lot of specific knowledge or personal experience. The Specialty Law, however, indicates a great deal of expertise in the legal system. The occupation Lawyer implies the same level of expertise as the Specialty Law with a superior understanding and experience with court procedures. On the other hand, the Occupation Police Officer suggests some basic knowledge of the legal system overall and specifically as it applies to police procedures and due process; not the extensive knowledge implied by the Traits Law & Lawyer, though slightly more relevant than the character with the Academics Talent.

The rule of thumb is that Traits only apply in Opposed Rolls when they provide one character with an advantage over another. If a Hero and opponent possess the same applicable Trait, the bonuses cancel each other out.

OUTCLASSING

As mentioned, under most circumstances, if two characters are competing or in direct opposition for the completion of a task, only Echelon Shifts are applied to the rolls. The one exception to this, however, is if a Hero *Outclasses* their opponent. What this means is that the Hero possesses an Echelon of three or more ranks higher in the Attribute used for the Opposed GEST. If one opponent or competitor Outclasses the other(s), then they may apply a Phase Shift modifier from an actively-employed Trait. See **ISSUE III: VS THE WORLD**.

TALENTS

The most common type of Trait are Talents. A Hero's Talents, and related **Specialties**, indicate their skills, aptitudes, and natural proficiencies.

Talents are generally broad in scope and assume competence in a wide variety of related activities, whereas Specialties are more narrow in focus. The rule of thumb is that the narrower in scope and more specific a Specialty, the more potent it is when compared to a more general Trait. If a Hero possesses both a Specialty and the relevant Talent, both passive bonuses are added when the Specialty applies.

A Hero's Talents and Specialties do not represent the whole of their knowledge and skills, merely those significant enough to warrant a bonus or penalty to the relevant Attribute.

ACADEMICS

The Hero is a scholar, well-read and versed in a wide range of educational subjects.

Specialties: Anthropology, Archaeology, Geography, History, Law, Mathematics, Politics, Psychology

AESTHETICS

The Hero possesses creative skills and a trained appreciation of beauty and art.

Specialties: Art, Cooking, Design, Fashion, Music, Photography, Poetry, Sculpture, Weaving

AGRICULTURE

The Hero is experienced with various aspects of farming, including husbandry, the growing of crops and caring for animals.

Specialties: Agronomy, Animal Care, Farm Equipment, Gardening, Horticulture, Repair

ATHLETICS

The Hero is skilled in sports and physical feats.

Specialties: Acrobatics, Climb, Parkour, Ride, Skate, (Sport), Swim

CHARM

The Hero is skilled in communicating with, influencing and gaining the trust and confidence of others. Charm covers a character's charisma, persuasiveness, and congeniality.

Specialties: Carouse, Etiquette, Leadership, Savoir Fare, Seduction

CHICANERY

The art of trickery: using cunning and guile in order to dupe or deceive others.

Specialties: Bluff, Disguise, Forge, Lock-picking, Pick-Pocket

CIRCUS

The Hero worked, grew up, or traveled with a circus or carnival, gaining the opportunity to learn a variety of unusual skills and an intimate knowledge of circus culture.

Specialties: Clown, Escapology, Sleight-of-Hand, Performance, Weight-Lifting

MARTIAL ARTS

The Hero is trained in a formalized hand-to-hand fighting style. Phascrip groups the Martial Arts into "schools", each named for an element, representing various styles with similar focuses and techniques:

EARTH

Forms of martial arts concentrate on using an opponent's strength against them, allowing a Hero to Slam or Stun an opponent, regardless of their comparative Might and Durability.

FIRE

Forms of martial arts focus on quick strikes and feints to catch an opponent off-guard, granting a bonus to a character's Close Combat GESTs in unarmed combat.

METAL

Offensive forms of martial arts that concentrate on powerful & sharp attacks, granting a bonus to a character's Damage when engaged in unarmed combat.

WATER

Primarily defensive forms that focus on holds and escapes, granting a bonus to Dodging and Clinch Combat.

WOOD

Meditative forms of martial arts that concentrate on searching out weak spots in an opponent's defense, allowing a Hero to ignore the effects of armour and Slam or Stun their opponent even if no Damage was inflicted. To gain these benefits, however, the character must observe the opponent in combat for at least one Page previous to engaging them.

MEDIC

The Hero is trained in diagnosing and treating ailments and injuries.

Specialties: First Aid, Herbalism, Pharmacy, Plastic Surgery, Psychiatry, Surgery, Vet

MILITARY

The Hero was trained by the armed forces and has experience with using military-grade armaments and vehicles, as well as an understanding of military tactics and organization.

Specialties: Artillery, Command, Demolitions, Dogfighting, Tactics, Tanks

OCCULT

The Hero is versed in the paranormal, supernatural or spiritual, and the Fortean sciences.

Specialties: Cryptozoology, Demonology, Exobiology, Folklore, Myth, Parapsychology, Theology

SCIENCE!

The Hero is educated in the study of the structure and behaviour of the natural world through observation, experimentation and analysis.

Specialties: Astronomy, Biology, Botany, Chemistry, Genetics, Meteorology, Neurology, Physics

SKULDUGGERY

The Hero is experienced in unscrupulous behaviour and the committing of crimes.

Specialties: Arson, Burglary, Death Traps, Intimidation, Torture

SLEUTH

The Hero is a proficient in finding and analyzing clues, investigating, and solving crimes.

Specialties: Cryptography, Espionage, Forensics, Observation, Interrogation, Stealth, Trail

SURVIVAL

The Hero is trained in sustaining themselves while living "on the rough" or outside the conveniences of modern society.

Specialties: Forestry, Hunting, Mountaineer, Streetwise, Tracking

TECH

The Hero is adept at the engineering, design, construction and use of modern technology.

Specialties: Computer, Cybernetics, Electronics, Hacking, Mechanic, Robotics

VEHICLES

The Hero is skilled in the driving and maintenance of motor-vehicles.

Specialties: Astronavigation, Boat, Drive, Mecha, Motorcycle, Navigation, Pilot, Submarine

WEAPONRY

The Hero is trained in the effective employment of weapons in combat.

Specialties: Archery, Explosives, Fencing, Firearms, Jousting, Swashbuckling, (Weapon Specialist)



STANDARD TRAITS

OPTIONAL RULES

Standard Traits are defined for every Hero if this option is used. There are six examples presented here; a GM may wish to use all, none, or only a few of these, depending on the campaign. Standard Traits are treated in much the same manner as Talents, though they tend to be used infrequently during play, often serving simply as a guide to role-playing.

ORIGIN

A Hero's Origin is the source of their abilities.

CALLING

A Hero's Calling is their primary motivation or Raison d'Être. The ultimate driving force that causes them to reject a normal life of safety and security.

STATURE

A Hero's stature defines their build and physique, and to a certain extent, their demeanour. Statures are not assigned any specific measurements, instead providing a general idea of how a Hero stands and moves.

CULTURE

A Hero's Culture describes their social or ethnic background. A Culture may be as specific or general as appropriate, and while more than one Culture may apply to a Hero, Players should choose the most predominant influence on the Hero's personality.

Sample Cultures: Asgardian, Atlantean, Australian, Beatnik, British, Cajun, Canadian, Chav, Chinese, Flapper, Geek, German, Goth, Hipster, Hyperborean, Irish, Japanese, Jewish, Martian, New Yorker, Norse, Olympian, Quaker, Roman, Russian, Scottish, Texan

OCCUPATION

A Hero's Occupation delineates what they do for a living and functions as a Specialty during play. It's not necessary for a Hero to purchase additional Talents or Specialties that are logically implied by their Occupation. A player is free to choose any Occupation for their Hero they find appropriate, though it should in some way benefit their Attributes and an appropriate level of Obligation must be maintained.



ORIGINS



ADEPT

The Hero's physical or mental capacities are honed to the peak of human ability.

Pop-Culture Examples:

Batman, Rome Williams, Sherlock Holmes

ALIEN

The Hero is not native to our planet or dimension

Pop-Culture Examples:

Doctor Who, Howard the Duck, Superman

ALTERED

Once a normal human, the Hero's physiology was transformed by some unique occurrence.

Pop-Culture Examples:

The Flash, The Hulk, Spider-man

ANOMALY

The Hero developed superhuman abilities naturally, via genetic mutation or heredity.

Pop-Culture Examples:

Gen 13, Liz Sherman, The X-Men

AWAKENED

Expanded consciousness granted this Hero access to abilities beyond human ken.

Pop-Culture Examples:

Doctor Strange, John Constantine, Merlin

ENHANCED

The Hero's abilities are modified or augmented by advanced technology.

Pop-Culture Examples:

Inspector Gadget, Iron Man, Robocop

LEGEND

The embodiment, avatar, or reincarnation of a mythic deity or euhemerized Hero from folklore.

Pop-Culture Examples:

Hercules, Robin Hood, Thor

SIX-OF-ONE

The Hero is an ordinary man or woman with no superhuman abilities.

Pop-Culture Examples:

Buck Rogers, Indiana Jones, The Spirit

SUPERNATURAL

The Hero was altered by occult powers or belongs to a mythic race.

Pop-Culture Examples:

Ghost Rider, Hellboy, Red Sonja

SYNTHETIC

The Hero was built rather than born.

Pop-Culture Examples:

Astroboy, Roger the Homunculus, The Vision

Optionally, a player may chose a **SECRET ORIGIN**, for a Hero unaware of their past

CALLINGS

ADVENTURE

Lives for excitement & challenge

Pop-Culture Examples: Finn & Jake, Plastic Man

ASIMOV

"Programmed" to be a Hero

Pop-Culture Examples: Astro Boy, Robocop

AVENGER

Dedicated to the pursuit of justice at all costs.

Pop-Culture Examples: Batman, Daredevil

BEAST

Struggles between a human and inhuman nature.

Pop-Culture Examples: Hellboy, Wolverine

CRUSADER

A dedicated champion or messenger for a cause.

Pop-Culture Examples: Professor X, Wonder Woman

CURSED

An outcast, unable to live a normal life.

Pop-Culture Examples: The Demon, The Hulk

EXPLORER

Exalts in the joy of discovery and travel.

Pop-Culture Examples: Doctor Who, Mister Fantastic

GUARDIAN

The protector of a people or place.

Pop-Culture Examples: Doctor Strange, Green Lantern

LEGACY

Follows a long line or tradition of Heroes.

Pop-Culture Examples: The Phantom, Starman

LOST

Trapped in a world they didn't create.

Pop-Culture Examples: Buck Rogers, Howard the Duck

PATRIOT

Embodies the ideals of a nation.

Pop-Culture Examples: Captain America, The Shield

REBEL

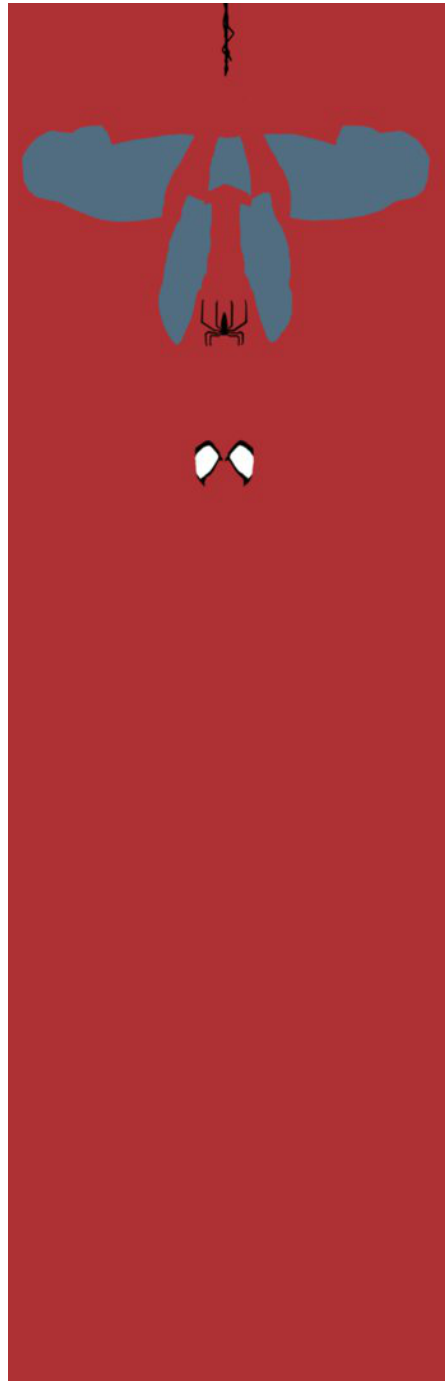
Struggles against an evil and oppressive authority.

Pop-Culture Examples: Longshot, Mister Miracle

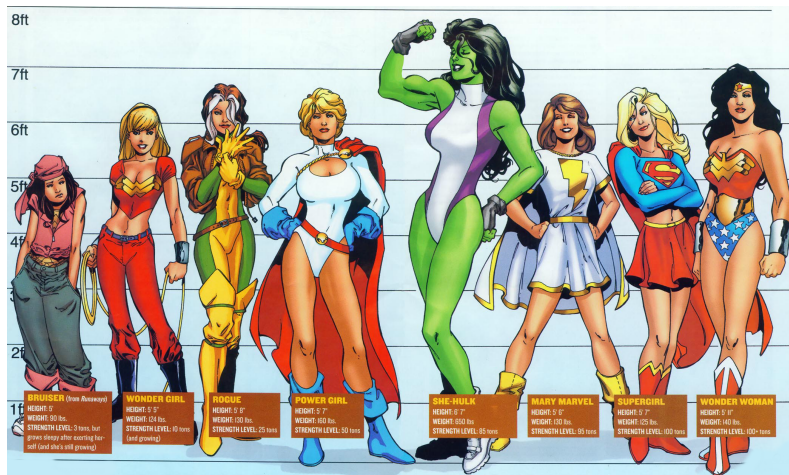
RESPONSIBILITY

An acute awareness of the burden of power.

Pop-Culture Examples: Spider-man, The Strobe



STATURES



AVERAGE

The Hero is neither fat, thin, tall nor short.

Pop-Culture Examples:

Arthur Dent, Dave Lister, Jimmy Olson

BRAWNY

The Hero is massive, brimming with muscles and raw upper body strength.

Pop-Culture Examples:

She-Hulk, The Savage Dragon, Thor

DASHING

Dynamic and stunning, the Hero moves with grace, exuding an air of confidence and style.

Pop-Culture Examples:

Hal Jordan, James Bond, Tony Stark

FERAL

Bristling with intensity, the Hero prefers to crouch rather than stand, giving the impression of a wild animal.

Pop-Culture Examples:

Beast Boy, Moonboy, Wolverine

HULKING

"Huge" is this Hero's prevailing feature, dwarfing those around them physically. However, they find it difficult to maneuver through most doorways and are unable to use many tools designed for human hands.

Pop-Culture Examples:

Concrete, The Hulk, The Thing

SHIFTING

The Hero's body is constantly altering in size and shape.

Pop-Culture Examples:

Jake the Dog, Plastic Man, Swamp Thing

SLEIGHT

The Hero is slender and lithe, moving with subtlety and ease.

Pop-Culture Examples:

Finn the Human, Raven, Spider-man

STALWART

The Hero seems as if carved rather than born. They move with deliberation, and are at the peak of athletic prowess.

Pop-Culture Examples:

Captain America, Superman, Wonder Woman

STOUT

The Hero is short and a bit portly. They may be an experienced veteran who let themselves go in the middle a bit, or simply prone to a heavier frame.

Pop-Culture Examples:

Bilbo Baggins, Blue Beetle, Tik-Tok

XENOTYPE

The Hero's body type is completely alien, incapable of passing for human.

Pop-Culture Examples:

Groot, Insect Queen, Rygel XVI

CHARACTER MODELING

In most RPGs, characters are created through a sequence of random rolls, or by spending a preset deviation of points to “buy” a character’s abilities and aptitudes. Phaserip does away with all this and instead uses a freeform method of chargen referred to as “Character Modeling,” which is essentially an interaction between the player and GM. In this manner, a player is unrestrained in their creativity, while the GM can ensure that the Hero will fit the game’s premise and is capable of meeting any challenges encountered.

As this is an interactive process with the GM, Character Modeling is discussed at length in **ISSUE VII: RULING THE WORLD**, as the GM will be introducing and walking players through the method, but essentially the process encompasses three steps:

AVENGERS, ASSEMBLE! I: THE PITCH

choose your favorite superhero

Strength Skill Brains Gadgets Heart

Character	Strength	Skill	Brains	Gadgets	Heart	Special Attributes
Captain America	50%	10%	10%	10%	20%	Greatest Strength Tactics, Greatest Human II, Devgenor Laser, Devgenor Rage
The Hulk	50%	10%	10%	10%	20%	Greatest Strength Rage, Greatest Brains Rage, Devgenor Brains 5%
Iron Man	10%	10%	10%	10%	60%	Greatest Strength Suit, Greatest Weakness Battery, Devgenor Motor 110%
Thor	10%	10%	10%	10%	60%	Greatest Strength God, Greatest Weakness Arrogance, Devgenor Strength 95%
Black Widow	10%	10%	10%	10%	60%	Greatest Strength Assassin, Greatest Human, Devgenor Motor 75%
Hawkeye	10%	10%	10%	10%	60%	Greatest Strength Marksman, Greatest Weakness Human, Devgenor Motor 80%

There was an idea to bring together a group of remarkable people, so when we needed them, they could fight the battles that we never could.

Mother Fkers, Assemble!**

Attribute	Percentage
Strength	14%
Skill	27%
Brains	16%
Gadgets	17%
Heart	26%

The player describes the Hero they want to play. This could be an established character from fiction or an original creation. Did you ever make up a Superhero growing up? Why not try gaming with them? The players could confer as a group, each taking specific roles (see Group Dynamics, below), or make an individual choice based on the premise of the game. The Pitch can be a verbal description, a written outline, or even an ‘idealized’ character sheet using the elements described in this chapter.

II: THE CATCH

Once that’s done, the GM takes the Pitch and uses it to draw up a Character Profile, assigning Echelons, Special Attributes, and Traits as required, or adjusting those submitted by the player as needed.

III: THE NEGOTIATION

The GM then hands the Character Profile back to the player, and the player can make their case for any changes they’d like, or ask for any explanations from the GM. Maybe the GM misinterpreted some aspect of The Pitch, or the Player thinks an Attribute should be rated higher. While the GM will have final say, players should have a lot of leeway in creating the character as fits their vision.

And that’s all there is to it. Obviously, this approach requires a degree of maturity and trust. But then, Phaserip is not the sort of game for selfish players or antagonistic Game Masters. You won’t find any rules herein for dealing with personal problems or trust issues. I game with groups of friends, and these rules are written from that standpoint.

For those who prefer a randomized approach, an alternate method of rolling up Heroes is provided in **APPENDIX A**. Of course, you can always skip this step entirely and just use one of the Pre-Made Heroes provided in **APPENDIX B**.

FOR THOSE ABOUT TO ROCK...

Over the course of this chapter we've gone through all the elements that make up a Hero in system terms, but a player's job is to bring these to life. The majority of what defines a character cannot be quantified by Echelons or numbers. Who is this Hero? What sort of life do they lead? Who do they love, and what do they hate? What a character can do is nowhere near as important, nor entertaining, as how they act, and relate to others around them. Here are some background questions to consider:

Do you have a Secret Identity?
Does anyone know your secret?
How did they find out?

What Great Tragedy happened in your life? Almost all Heroes are ultimately forged from some tragic event – the death of loved ones, a horrible accident, an exploded planet, etc. How did the tragedy change you and how does it continue to motivate you?

Where were you born? Do you have an accent or cultural quirks? What was your childhood like? Did you grow up in privileged luxury, or the child of a single parent working long hours just to put food on the table?

Do you have any siblings? What's your relationship with them? Did an older sister serve as a role model for you, or did you practically raise your younger brother? Do you stay in contact?

What do you do for a living? Are you competitive and ambitious or just working for the weekend? Are you doing what you love, or just getting by until you get your Big Break? How do you relate to your boss or co-workers?



Who are your friends? Do you have a few close confidants or lots of casual acquaintances? What's your romantic status? Are you in a long-term relationship, nursing a broken heart, or playing the field?

How do you regard the legal system or government in your country? Are you religious or political? Do you struggle with your faith? Do you pray?

You can answer all, some, some, or none of these questions. You may want to decide as they come up in the game, you could even leave some of it up to the GM. The point is really just to get you thinking about your Hero as a living, breathing person with a past and a life outside of the game.

PERSONALITY

I'll tell you the crazy secret to role-playing: flaws are more fun than strengths.

Sure, it's great to be able to lift boulders, shoot lasers, and laugh off bullets. But there is a reason that Han Solo is a far more beloved character than Luke Skywalker. Flaws are what make a Hero human, and it's that underlying humanity that endears them to us. How you embody your Hero's foibles and follies is ultimately going to be far more memorable and enjoyable than your victories in battle.

Oftentimes the personality of a character will come out and develop during a game. If you are playing an established Hero from fiction or media, you'll already have a basis on which to guide your performance. If you want some assistance in coming up with a distinctive personality, try picking at random (or rolling up) three characteristics from the chart below:

1	ABRASIVE	26	FANATICAL	51	LOYAL	76	ROGUISH
2	AGREEABLE	27	FASTIDIOUS	52	MACHO	77	RUSTIC
3	AMBITIOUS	28	FLAKY	53	METICULOUS	78	SARCASTIC
4	ARROGANT	29	FLAMBOYANT	54	MORBID	79	SCHEMING
5	BASHFUL	30	FOLKSY	55	NAIVE	80	SECRETIVE
6	BLUNT	31	FRIENDLY	56	NERDY	81	SENSITIVE
7	BRAGGART	32	FRUMPY	57	OBSESSIVE	82	SHY
8	BRASH	33	GREEDY	58	OLD-FASHIONED	83	SKEPTICAL
9	CALCULATING	34	GREGARIOUS	59	OPTIMISTIC	84	SMARMY
10	CARING	35	GRUFF	60	OVERCONFIDENT	85	SPIRITUAL
11	CHARMING	36	HEDONISTIC	61	PATRIOTIC	86	STERN
12	CONTEMPLATIVE	37	HONEST	62	PATRONIZING	87	STOIC
13	COSMOPOLITAN	38	HONOURABLE	63	PESSIMISTIC	88	STREETWISE
14	CRANKY	39	HUMBLE	64	PLAYFUL	89	STUBBORN
15	CYNICAL	40	HUMOURLESS	65	POLITE	90	SUPERSTITIOUS
16	DEDICATED	41	IDEALISTIC	66	PRACTICAL	91	TACITURN
17	DISCIPLINED	42	INDEPENDENT	67	PRECISE	92	THRILLSEEKER
18	DRIVEN	43	INDIVIDUALISTIC	68	PRETENTIOUS	93	TIMID
19	EARNEST	44	IMPATIENT	69	PROUD	94	UPTIGHT
20	EBULLIENT	45	INSECURE	70	PRUDENT	95	URBANE
21	ECCENTRIC	46	IRASCIBLE	71	PRUDISH	96	VERBOSE
22	EGOTISTICAL	47	JOLLY	72	PURPOSEFUL	97	WASPISH
23	ENTHUSIASTIC	48	JUDGEMENTAL	73	REBELLIOUS	98	WHIMSICAL
24	FACETIOUS	49	JUVENILE	74	RELIGIOUS	99	WISE
25	FAITHFUL	50	LECHEROUS	75	ROBOTIC	100	ZEALOUS

Acting consistently within a personality goes a long way to establishing your character. A player who alters their approach based on what they assume is the most optimal or advantageous to a situation can come across as schizophrenic or manipulative and untrustworthy. It's not only OK to let your personal foibles get you into trouble or cause complications, but that is one of the most enjoyable and natural ways of engaging with the gameworld. That said, don't fall into the trap of being a caricature. Don't let playing your character over-ride reacting to what's going on around you. And being a Hero can mean overcoming your own weaknesses as much as any external threat.

GROUP DYNAMICS



Ultimately, role playing games are group activities, and your Hero will be, at least during most of the game, acting as part of a team. Unfortunately, certain character types and personalities that are popular in fiction and media simply don't translate well into RPGs. Dark, brooding, anti-hero loners aren't actually that fun to hang around with, no matter how cool they may come across when the spotlight is only on them. This is why, when the Defenders formed up, no one bothered to give Frank Castle a call. This doesn't mean there is no place for dark or grim characters in Phaserip, it's simply a matter of tweaking them a bit to balance them out with the needs of the group. Notice that the Batman that shows up in Justice League isn't the same antisocial Dark Knight of Frank Miller comics.

That isn't to say that all the Heroes in a group need to get along like best super friends; some inter party conflict and strife is what makes Lee and Kirby's Fantastic Four or Giffen's JLA so entertaining and relatable. However, when the going gets tough, you can count on the Heroes to band together, help each other out, and work as a team.



On that thought, when gathering a team or creating characters as a group, it's often fun to adopt personalities that compliment and contrast one another. Two common examples of this are the "Four Man Band" and "Five Man Band" group archetypes...

FOUR MAN BAND

This is a team based upon the four Elements of Classical philosophy



AIR

Intellectual, curious, independent, and observant, but also obsessive, restless, and daydreamers.



WATER

Intuitive, empathetic, and spiritual, yet also so sensitive that they often have a hard time unplugging from life's chaos.



FIRE

Enthusiastic, dramatic and humorous, but also impulsive and temperamental.



EARTH

Practical, down-to-earth, and loyal, but can be stubborn or thick-headed.



FIVE MAN BAND

This is a bit more complex, but just as common a grouping, especially found in cartoons.

THE LEADER

Often earnest, charismatic, and driven.
Sets the tone for the group.

THE LANCER

Second-in-command, a direct contrast or counterpoint to The Leader. If the Leader is clean-cut and by-the-book, the Lancer is roguish and rebellious. If the Leader is brash and spirited, the Lancer is level-headed and relaxed.

THE BRAINS

The "smart guy" of the group, can be geeky and socially awkward or a playful prankster.
Often forms a pair with The Brawn, and together play the comic relief.

THE BRAWN

The powerhouse or brick of the group. Usually this is literal, with the Brawn being physically imposing, sometimes even a bit overweight, but sometimes the Brawn has immense psychic or energy powers instead. Also usually the oldest member of the group, tending to be easy going and practical, if a bit dim.

THE HEART

Often the Token Girl in media aimed at young boys, the Heart is the caretaker or spiritual core of the group, playing mediator and providing emotional support.
The glue holding the team together.



SOME FINAL ADVICE ON ROLE-PLAYING

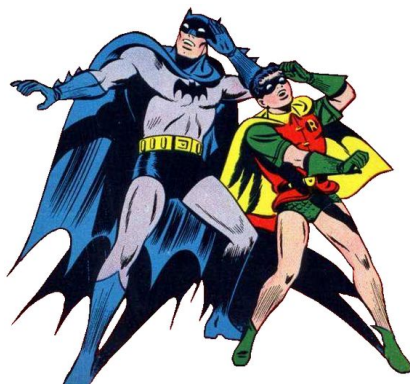


BE MORE BRAVE THAN IMPRESSIVE

No one expects you to roleplay your Hero perfectly. Very few of us are trained actors, (and even they have written dialogue, hours of practice, and multiple takes). RPGs are about having fun, not creating an artistic performance. Likewise, no one expects you to be as witty, loquacious, or charming as the Hero you are portraying. Put your heart into it, and people's imaginations will fill in the rest. It's the emotion and intent underlying, not the choice of words or accuracy of speech, that matters.

BE RADICAL, NOT COOL

Heroes lead big dramatic lives, and just as the situations in a Heroic adventure are more intense than real life, so should be a Hero's reactions. The key word here is *Melodrama*. A monotone and detached character who lets nothing affect them kills the mood and sucks the fun out of a game. In Improv theatre, they call this "Refusing The Call", and its anathema to fun! Vocalize your emotions, and always escalate the situation any chance that you get. A Hero isn't slightly attracted to someone, they fall head-over-heels madly in love! A Hero isn't slightly annoyed or inconvenienced by a Villain, they become righteously furious and *terrified of what they might do!* A Hero accepts the call. Be easy to persuade and manipulate, wrestle with your fears, and celebrate your joys!



PATHOS, NOT ANGST!

A Hero's journey is all about suffering and sacrifice. But a Hero shouldn't suffer silently. That's boring. This isn't *Vampire: The Moping!* Suffer like Ron Burgandy, not like The Crow! Have a breakdown, curse the world, and wail against the cruel hand of fate! Go on a bender! Pick pointless fights with friends, and push away your loved ones! Misery loves company, and you should let your suffering splash onto everyone around you!

And then make your recovery – either from rallying words of your compatriots, homespun wisdom from an elderly relative, or the call to action from a new threat – something Epic!