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MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS BEGINNER'S GUIDE



QUICK-START



MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS BEGINNER'S GUIDE

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INTERSTATE 525, EARLY MORNING

"MORNING..."



"I'M FINALLY HERE..."

THE NEW KID

A FREEDOM CITY STORY

"FREEDOM CITY..."



STORY: STEVE KENSON

ART: TONY PARKER

LETTERING: HAL MANGOLD

SO, YOU WANT TO BE A HERO...

Welcome to the *Mutants & Masterminds Beginner's Guide*! This is your introduction to the exciting world of super-powered roleplaying using the World's Greatest Superhero Roleplaying Game. The *Beginner's Guide* is intended for readers who may have played other roleplaying games and are interested in learning how to play *Mutants & Masterminds*™ (or *M&M* for short). It is also suitable for readers who have *never* played a roleplaying game before, but are interested in learning how.

In this book, you'll find a step-by-step guide to roleplaying, an introduction to *Mutants & Masterminds*, and a guide to how to play the game, both on your own and with friends.

WHAT IS A ROLEPLAYING GAME?

A *roleplaying game* (or *RPG* for short) is a game of the imagination, where you and some friends get together and create fictional characters, then play out their adventures around a tabletop. One player takes the role of *Gamemaster* (or *GM*) and describes the setting and the challenges your characters encounter. The Gamemaster plays the supporting characters and villains in the story. The GM also acts as referee to adjudicate the rules of the game and make sure everything's handled as fairly as possible.

Your imagination is the only thing limiting the sorts of adventures you can have, since you and your friends create the world, the characters, and the adventures. It's like writing your own comic book, with *your* characters as the heroes! All of the action takes place in your imagination, and the story can go on for as long as you want, with one exciting adventure after another. You can pick up and play the game whenever you want, and stop at any point, like reading the chapters of a book or saving and putting a video game on hold.

Mutants & Masterminds is what is known as a *tabletop* RPG, in that it is usually played sitting around a table (although it can just as easily be sitting around your living room or rec-room, if you like). You might already be familiar with computer roleplaying games, either console games (played solo on as part of an online network) or massive multiplayer online roleplaying games (or MMORGs, as they're known). These games actually developed out of tabletop roleplaying games, shifting a lot of what took place only in the players' imaginations onto a video display. While tabletop RPGs lack the "special effects" of their computerized counterparts, they provide you with a greater ability to create exactly the kinds of stories and characters you want, and what effects are better than your own imagination?

Although it's a tabletop RPG, *M&M* (like many RPGs) is often played online these days, either via e-mail ("play by e-mail" or PbEM) or in online forums ("play by post" or PbP). Some even play RPGs via live online chat.

WHAT IS MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS?

In the *Mutants & Masterminds* roleplaying game, you take on the role of a costumed superhero safeguarding the world from threats ranging from marauding super-criminals to alien invasions, hulking monsters, natural

disasters, and would-be conquerors. You can play virtually any sort of hero you want, limited only by your imagination and the type of story your group wants to tell.

M&M is based on the world's most popular roleplaying game system, so it's likely to be familiar to experienced gamers. However, you should read the material in this book carefully, since there are some differences unique to *Mutants & Masterminds*. If you're entirely new to roleplaying games, you can learn how to play from the material in this *Beginner's Guide*.

DICE

Mutants & Masterminds uses a twenty-sided die—available at game and hobby stores—to resolve actions during the game. References to "a die" or "the die" refer to a twenty-sided die unless stated otherwise. The die is often abbreviated "d20" (for twenty-sided die) or "1d20" (for one twenty-sided die). So a rule asking you to "roll d20" means, "roll a twenty-sided die."

MODIFIERS

Sometimes modifiers to the die roll are specified like this: "d20+2," meaning "roll the twenty-sided die and add two to the number rolled." An abbreviation of "d20-4" means, "roll the die and subtract four from the result."

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

Here's what you need to start playing the *Mutants & Masterminds* Superhero Roleplaying Game:

- This book, which contains the rules on how to play the game.
- A pencil and some scratch paper for making notes.
- At least one twenty-sided die (d20). You may want to have one die for each player, or you can share dice.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

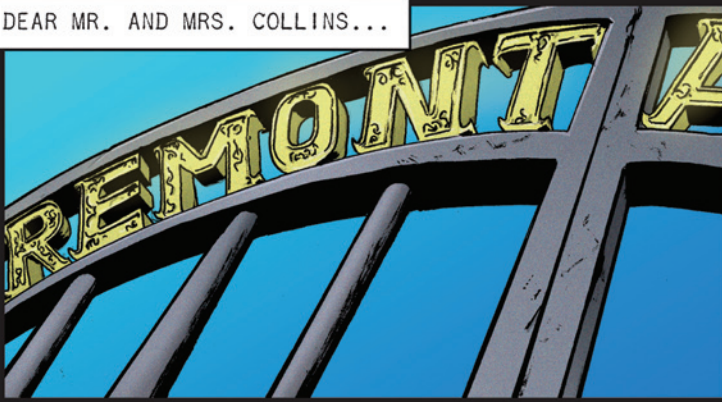
The *Mutants & Masterminds Beginner's Guide* is intended as an introduction to the *M&M* RPG, to provide new players with an easy guide to how to play the game. It's useful for Gamemasters looking to introduce players to the world of roleplaying games in general or to *M&M* in particular.

The *Beginner's Guide* is divided up into sections, framed by the story of Nathan Collins, a new student at the Claremont Academy, a school for super-powered youngsters in Freedom City. As you follow Nathan's story of learning about his powers and abilities through these pages, you also learn how to play your own hero in *Mutants & Masterminds*.

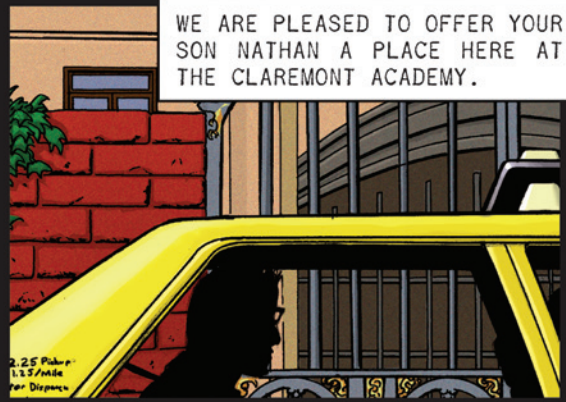
The next section, **The Basics**, tells you about the essentials of the *M&M* game system, as well as taking a look at a hero's game information and what it means. **Into the Doom Room** is a short solo adventure to give you a taste of the game and how it's played using the novice hero Firepower. **Meet the Next-Gen** takes a look at Firepower's new classmates at the Claremont Academy, the young heroes called the Next-Gen, and shows you some of the variety you'll find in *M&M*. Finally, **Super-School Slugfest** gives you and some friends a chance to play out a fight as the Next-Gen students practice in the Doom Room.

The *Beginner's Guide* concludes with a glossary of important game terms and an appendix entitled **What's Next?** that details how you can learn more about the World's Greatest Superhero Roleplaying Game.

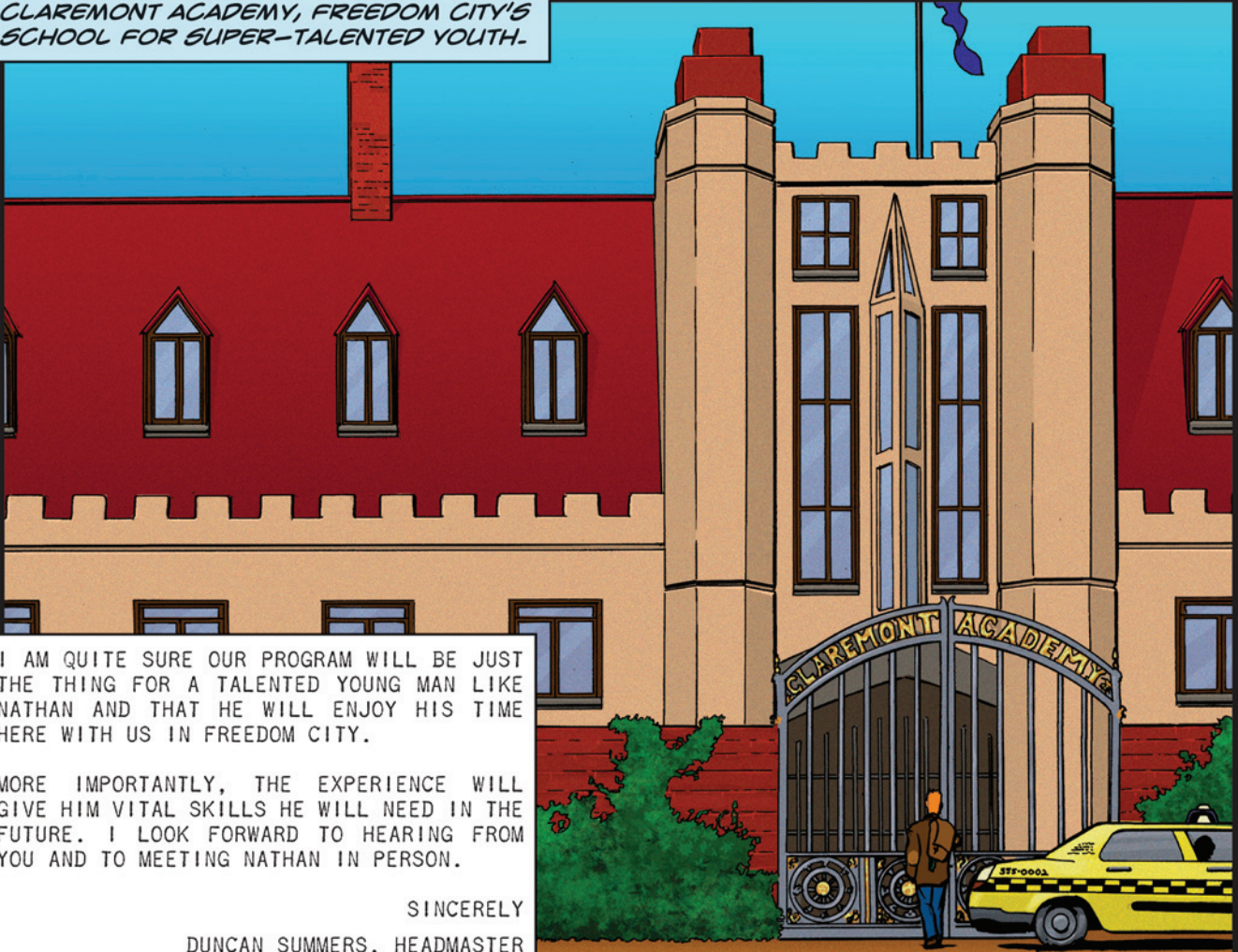
DEAR MR. AND MRS. COLLINS...



WE ARE PLEASED TO OFFER YOUR SON NATHAN A PLACE HERE AT THE CLAREMONT ACADEMY.



CLAREMONT ACADEMY, FREEDOM CITY'S SCHOOL FOR SUPER-TALENTED YOUTH.



I AM QUITE SURE OUR PROGRAM WILL BE JUST THE THING FOR A TALENTED YOUNG MAN LIKE NATHAN AND THAT HE WILL ENJOY HIS TIME HERE WITH US IN FREEDOM CITY.

MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE EXPERIENCE WILL GIVE HIM VITAL SKILLS HE WILL NEED IN THE FUTURE. I LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU AND TO MEETING NATHAN IN PERSON.

SINCERELY
DUNCAN SUMMERS, HEADMASTER



"THIS IS IT..."



WELL,
HERE GOES
NOTHING...

THE BASICS

Mutants & Masterminds provides a framework for your imagination to create adventures. It has rules to help you decide what happens in your stories and to resolve conflicts between characters and the challenges they face. With it, you can experience adventure as a hero fighting against the forces of evil. Any adventure you can imagine is possible.

THE CORE SYSTEM

Mutants & Masterminds uses a standard, or core, system to resolve actions. Whenever a character attempts an action with a chance of failure, do the following:

1. Roll a twenty-sided die (or d20).
2. Add any modifiers (for things like skills, abilities, powers, or conditions).
3. Compare the total to a number called a *Difficulty Class* (abbreviated *DC*).

If the result equals or exceeds the Difficulty Class (set by the GM based on the circumstances), your character succeeds. If the result is lower than the Difficulty Class, your character fails. So a DC of 10 requires a result (die-roll plus modifiers) of 10 or greater to succeed, meaning someone with a +0 modifier has a 50/50 chance of success. That's it: as easy as 1-2-3!

This simple system is used for nearly everything in *Mutants & Masterminds*, with variations based on what modifiers are made to the roll, what determines the Difficulty Class, and the exact effects of success and failure.

THE GAMEMASTER

One of the players in a *Mutants & Masterminds* game takes the role of *Gamemaster*, or *GM*. The Gamemaster is responsible for running the game, a combination of writer, director, and referee. The Gamemaster creates the adventures for the heroes, portrays the villains and supporting characters, describes the world to the players, and decides the outcome of the heroes' actions based on the guidelines given in the rules. It's a big job, but also a rewarding one, since the Gamemaster gets to create the whole world and all the characters in it, as well as coming up with fun and exciting stories.

If you're going to be the Gamemaster, you should read through this whole book carefully. You should have a firm grasp of the rules, since you're expected to interpret them for the players to decide what happens in the game. You might want to have the *Mutants & Masterminds* core rulebook, since it has plenty of advice for Gamemasters on how to run the game and create adventures and settings, but you can start to run *M&M* with just the *Beginner's Guide*, if you like.

RULE NUMBER ONE

Like all games, *Mutants & Masterminds* has rules. At a first glance through the main rulebook, it might seem like there are a *lot* of rules, but most of them are just variations on the core system. Once you get the hang of how the game works, the rules are pretty straightforward.

The first, and most important, rule of *Mutants & Masterminds* is:

Do whatever is the most fun for your game!

While we've made every effort to ensure *M&M* is as complete a game system as possible, no system can cover every situation an imaginative group of players might dream up. From time to time, the rules may give you strange or undesirable results. If so, ignore them! Modify the outcome of die rolls and other events in the game as you see fit to make it fun and enjoyable for everyone. It's *your* game, so run and play it the way *you* want!

THE HEROES

The other players in a *Mutants & Masterminds* game create heroes, the main characters of their own adventures, like an ongoing comic book or animated series. As a player, you create your hero following the guidelines in the core rules with the guidance of your Gamemaster. The *Beginner's Guide* features a half-dozen ready-made heroes for you to use, and the *M&M Player's Guide* or the *Mutants & Masterminds* rulebook give you everything you need to create heroes of your own.

Characters in *M&M* are defined by their *traits*, certain qualities with numerical values assigned to them that tell you at a glance what a particular character can and can't do. Traits are broken down into five main categories: abilities, skills, feats, powers, and drawbacks, all described here.

ABILITIES

All characters have certain basic *abilities*. These are *Strength*, *Dexterity*, *Constitution*, *Intelligence*, *Wisdom*, and *Charisma*. They each have a numeric *ability score* averaging 10 or 11 for a normally capable human being, with an *ability modifier* of +0. Higher ability scores grant *bonuses* while lower ability scores impose *penalties*. As part of creating your hero, you decide how strong, smart, and tough your hero is by choosing the appropriate ability scores.

STRENGTH (STR)

Strength measures sheer muscle power and the ability to apply it. Your Strength modifier applies to: damage dealt by your melee or thrown weapon attacks, Climb and Swim skill checks, how far you can jump and throw things, and the weight you can lift, carry, and throw.

DEXTERITY (DEX)

Dexterity is a measure of coordination, agility, speed, manual dexterity, and balance. It's particularly useful for heroes relying more on speed and agility than sheer strength and toughness. Your Dexterity modifier applies to: Reflex saving throws, for avoiding danger based on coordination and reaction time, Initiative checks, Acrobatics, Stealth, Sleight of Hand, and other skill checks based on Dexterity, and Dexterity checks for feats of agility and coordination when a specific skill doesn't apply.

CONSTITUTION (CON)

Constitution is endurance, health, and overall physical resilience. Constitution is important because it affects a character's ability to resist most forms of damage. Your Constitution modifier applies to: Toughness saving throws for resisting damage, Fortitude saving throws for resisting disease and poison, fatigue, and effects involving the character's health, and Constitution checks to recover from damage and injury.

INTELLIGENCE (INT)

Intelligence covers reasoning ability and learning. Intelligence is important for characters with a lot of skills. Your Intelligence modifier applies to: Knowledge, Search, and other skill checks based on Intelligence, and Intelligence checks to solve problems using sheer brainpower when a specific skill doesn't apply.

WISDOM (WIS)

While Intelligence covers reasoning, Wisdom describes awareness, common sense, intuition, and strength of will. A character with a high Intelligence and a low Wisdom may be an "absentminded professor" type, smart but not always aware of what's going on. On the other hand, a not so bright (low Intelligence) character may have great common sense (high Wisdom). Your Wisdom modifier applies to: Will saving throws, for resisting attempts to influence your mind, Notice, Sense Motive, and other skill checks based on Wisdom, and Wisdom checks to resolve matters of intuition when a specific skill doesn't apply.

CHARISMA (CHA)

Charisma is force of personality, persuasiveness, leadership ability and (to a lesser degree) physical attractiveness. Charisma is useful for heroes who intend to be leaders as well as those who strike fear into the hearts of criminals with their presence. Your Charisma modifier applies to: Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidation, and other skill checks based on Charisma, and Charisma checks to influence others through force of personality when a specific skill doesn't apply.

SKILLS

Skills represent training in a particular sort of task, everything from complex acrobatics to defusing bombs, programming computers, or piloting a plane. A skill acts as a bonus for actions involving those tasks. Someone trained in climbing can climb faster and with more confidence than someone who isn't trained, for example. Skills are measured in *ranks*, reflecting how much training a character has in the skill, used as a bonus to the die roll when using the skill. To use a skill roll:

**d20 + skill rank + key ability modifier
+ miscellaneous modifiers**

The higher the roll, the better the result. You're usually looking for a total that equals or exceeds a particular Difficulty Class or another character's check total.

SKILL RANK

If you have ranks in a skill you're considered *trained* in that skill. You can use some skills even if you don't have any ranks in them, known as using a skill *untrained*.

ABILITY MODIFIER

Each skill has a *key ability*, the ability modifier applied to the skill's checks. Each skill's key ability is noted in its description.

MISCELLANEOUS MODIFIERS

Miscellaneous modifiers to skill checks include situational modifiers for favorable or unfavorable conditions, bonuses from feats or powers, or penalties for not having proper tools, among others.

SKILL DESCRIPTIONS

The skills possessed by the characters in this *Guide* are listed here with their descriptions. Each skill's key ability is listed alongside its name. The core *M&M* rules provide information on other skills as well as expanded information on these basic skills.

ACROBATICS

DEX

You can roll, tumble, and perform acrobatic maneuvers. A successful DC 10 Acrobatics check lets you move over or around obstacles at half normal speed, or you may do so at full speed with an Acrobatics check result of 15 or higher.

ABILITY BENCHMARKS

So, what's an "above average" or "gifted" ability score? The **Ability Benchmarks** table provides some guidelines on where a particular ability score falls in comparison to the general population.

Note that although 24 is defined as the "peak of human achievement" in an ability score, a character with an ability score greater than 24 isn't necessarily "non-human," merely superhuman in comparison to *ordinary* people. Many "normal human" characters in the comics have truly superhuman ability scores, particularly Dexterity, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma.

A character can have a superhuman ability score without necessarily being anything other than an amazingly talented, well-trained human being. The limits of what "normal" characters can accomplish is up to the Gamemaster and depends very much on the style of the setting.

ABILITY SCORE	MODIFIER	DESCRIPTION
1	-5	Completely inept or disabled
2-3	-4	Weak; infant
4-5	-3	Younger child
6-7	-2	Child, elderly, impaired
8-9	-1	Below average; teenager
10-11	+0	Average adult
12-13	+1	Above average
14-15	+2	Well above average
16-17	+3	Gifted
18-19	+4	Highly gifted
20-21	+5	Best in a nation
22-23	+6	Best in the world
24-25	+7	Best ever; peak of human achievement
26-27	+8	Low superhuman
28-29	+9	Moderate superhuman
30	+10	High superhuman
40	+15	Very high superhuman
50	+20	Cosmic

You can also make a DC 10 Acrobatics check to move along a precarious surface (narrow ledge, tightrope, etc.) at half normal speed, or you may do so at full speed with an Acrobatics check result of 15 or higher.

BLUFF

CHA

Bluff is the skill of making the outlandish seem credible. It covers acting, fast-talk, trickery, and subterfuge.

A Bluff check is opposed by the target's Bluff or Sense Motive check when trying to con or mislead. A successful Bluff check indicates the target reacts as you want—at least for a round—or believes what you say.

You can use Bluff to *feint* in combat, misleading an opponent so he can't avoid your attacks as effectively. If your Bluff check succeeds, the target loses any dodge bonus against your next attack.

You can also use Bluff to *trick* an opponent into taking a potentially unwise action, such as trying to hit you while you are standing in front of an electrical junction box or at the edge of a precipice. If your Bluff check succeeds, your opponent is heedless of the potential danger.

CLIMB

STR

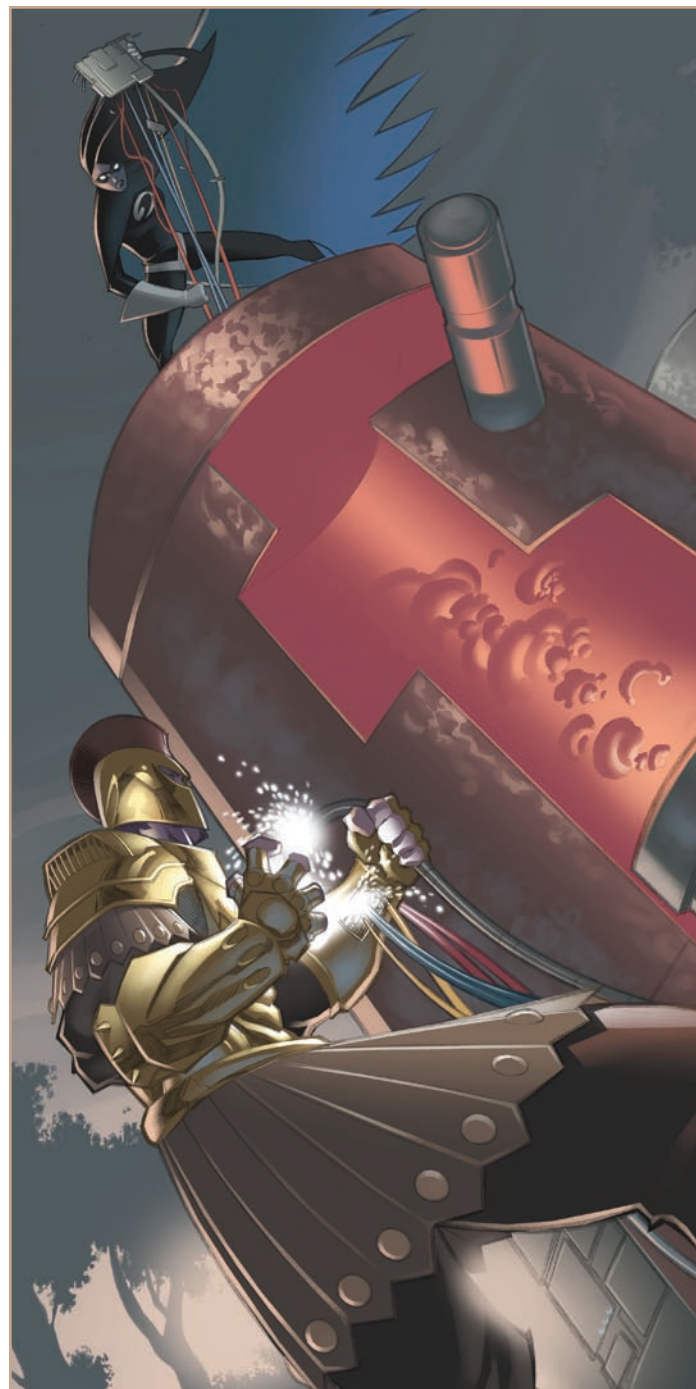
With each successful Climb check, you can move up, down, or across a slope, wall, or other steep incline (even a ceiling with handholds). A failed Climb check indicates you make no progress, and failure by 5 or more means you fall from whatever height you already attained. Climbing a rope with a wall

to brace against or a knotted rope is DC 10. Climbing a rough surface like a natural rock-face or tree is DC 15, as is climbing a chain-link fence or pulling yourself up when dangling by your hands.

COMPUTERS

INT

You're trained in the operation of computers and modifying or writing software. Most normal computer operations—using software, getting your e-mail, etc.—don't require a Computers check and can be done untrained. However, searching an unfamiliar network for a particular file, writing programs, altering existing programs to perform differently, and breaking computer security all require skill checks (and training).



The DC to overcome computer security is determined by the quality of the security installed to defend the system, from DC 20 to DC 40. If the check fails by 5 or more, the system immediately alerts its administrator there has been an unauthorized entry. An alerted administrator may attempt to identify you or cut off access to the system.

CONCENTRATION

WIS

You can focus your mind and concentrate despite difficult conditions, including taking damage. Make a Concentration check whenever you might be distracted while engaged in some action requiring your full attention, maintaining powers with a concentration or sustained duration. The DC is generally 10 + power rank. If the check succeeds, you may continue with the action. If the check fails, the action fails.

DIPLOMACY

CHA

You're skilled in dealing with people, from etiquette and social graces to a way with words and public speaking. You can change others' attitudes with a successful Diplomacy check: a DC 15 check is sufficient to make an indifferent subject friendly towards you, while a DC 20 check will make even an unfriendly subject at least indifferent.

HANDLE ANIMAL

CHA

You know how to handle, care for, and train various types of animals. A DC 10 check can get an animal to perform a trick it knows, while a DC 25 check is needed to get an animal to do something it wouldn't normally do. Teaching an animal up to three tricks takes at least a week and a DC 20 Handle Animal check.

INTIMIDATE

CHA

You know how to use threats (real or implied) to get others to cooperate. Make an Intimidate check, opposed by the target's Intimidate or Sense Motive check or Will saving throw (whichever has the highest bonus). If your check succeeds, the target cooperates as if friendly. The target retains his normal attitude, but will talk, advise, offer limited help, or advocate on your behalf while intimidated.

You can use Intimidate in combat to *demoralize* an opponent, shaking their confidence. Make an Intimidate check as a standard action. If it succeeds, your target is shaken (-2 on all attack rolls and checks) for one round.

KNOWLEDGE

INT

This skill encompasses several specialties, each treated as a separate skill. You can make a Knowledge check to answer a question in your specialty. The DC is 10 for easy questions, 15 for basic questions, and 20 to 30 for difficult questions. The GM may make a Knowledge roll for you sometimes, so you don't always know whether or not your information is accurate.

LANGUAGE

SPECIAL

Languages are unusual skills in that they are not based on an ability score and do not require checks. Instead, your rank in Language measures how many languages you can speak, read, and write. Unskilled characters can speak, read, and write their native language. For each rank in Language, you are fluent in an additional language.

NOTICE

WIS

Make a skill check to notice something. Notice checks generally suffer a penalty of -1 per 10 feet between you and the thing you're trying to notice. If you're

distracted, you take a -5 penalty on Notice checks. Making out details—such as clearly hearing conversation or reading text—requires you to exceed the DC by 10 or more. The GM may make Notice checks secretly so you don't know whether there was nothing to notice or you just failed to notice it.

RIDE

DEX

Use this skill to ride an animal mount, such as a horse or more exotic creatures like dolphins, griffins, or even dragons. Routine tasks, such as ordinary movement, don't require a skill check. Make a check only when riding in a dramatic situation (being chased or attacked, for example, or trying to reach a destination in time). The GM sets the DC for the check based on the situation.

SEARCH

INT

You can search an area for clues, hidden items, traps, and other details. Notice allows you to immediately notice things, Search allows you to pick up on details with some effort.

You must be within 10 feet of the area you want to search. You can examine a 5-foot-by-5-foot area or a volume of goods 5 feet on a side with a single check.

The DC for a Search check to find a concealed object is usually based on the Stealth or Slight of Hand check of the character who hid it. The GM can assume characters with the time take 20 on their check to conceal an object (see **Taking 20**, on page 11).

SENSE MOTIVE

WIS

You can tell someone's true intentions by paying attention to body language, inflection, and intuition. A successful Sense Motive check allows you to avoid the effects of some interaction skills. You can also use the skill to tell when someone is behaving oddly or assess trustworthiness.

Make a Sense Motive check to resist or ignore the effects of certain interaction skills, such as Bluff or Intimidate. If the result of your check exceeds your opponent's check result, you are unaffected.

You can use this skill to make an assessment of a social situation. With a successful check (DC 20), you can get a feeling when something is wrong. You can also tell if someone is trustworthy and honorable (or not) with an opposed Sense Motive and Bluff check.

SLEIGHT OF HAND

DEX

You can perform feats of legerdemain such as picking pockets, palming small objects (making them seem to disappear), and so forth. A check against DC 10 lets you palm a coin-sized object. Minor feats of sleight of hand, such as making a coin disappear, also have a DC of 10 unless an observer is focused on noticing what you are doing. When you perform this skill under close observation, your check is opposed by the observer's Notice check.

When you try to take something from another person, your opponent makes a Notice check. To obtain the object, you must get a result of 20 or higher, regardless of the opponent's check result. The opponent noticed the attempt if his check result beats your check result, whether you take the object or not.

STEALTH

DEX

You're skilled in going unnoticed. Your Stealth check is opposed by the Notice check of anyone who might detect you. While using Stealth, you can move up to half your normal speed at no penalty. At more than half and up to your full speed, you take a -5 penalty to the skill check.

SKILL BENCHMARKS

In general, 1-4 ranks in a skill is a basic level of training, familiarity with the basics of the skill. A character with 5-8 ranks has a professional level of training, sufficient for someone using the skill in their primary profession. Someone with 9-12 ranks is an expert; the character is recognized and likely known as an expert in the skill, while 13-15 ranks represent virtual mastery of the skill. More than 15 ranks is such an amazing level of skill that the character is recognized as being among the best-trained people in the world!

These guidelines apply to attack and defense bonus as well if you substitute "combat skill level" for skill rank. So a hero with attack +7 has a "professional" level of training, while someone with a +15 bonus is a true master of combat skills.

SURVIVAL

WIS

You use this skill to survive in the wilderness, including finding food and shelter, and safely guiding others. A DC 10 check is sufficient to get along in the wild, hunting and gathering supplies. Increase the DC by +2 per additional person in your group. A DC 18 check keeps you from getting lost and avoids any natural hazards in the area.

SWIM

STR

You can swim and maneuver underwater. A successful Swim check allows you to swim one-quarter your speed as a move action or half your speed as a full-round action. If the check fails, you make no progress. If the check fails by 5 or more, you go underwater. If you are underwater you must hold your breath to avoid drowning. The DC for the Swim check depends on the condition of the water: DC 10 for calm water, 15 for rough water, and 20 or more for storm-tossed waves. Rescuing another character unable to swim (for whatever reason) increases the DC of your Swim checks by +5.

FEATS

Feats are special abilities—talents or knacks. A feat allows your hero to do something other characters can't normally do, or makes your hero better at doing certain things. They give the hero an advantage over others.

The feats of the heroes in the *Beginner's Guide* are described with each hero's game information.

POWERS

Powers are special abilities beyond those of ordinary human beings. They're like feats, only more so. Whereas a feat might give your hero a minor special ability, powers grant truly *superhuman* abilities. You choose the powers you want your hero to have. *Mutants & Masterminds* presents a wide range of powers, along with *power modifiers* and *power feats*, allowing you to mix-and-match to create nearly any super-power you desire.

The powers of the heroes in the *Beginner's Guide* are described with each hero's game information.

DRAWBACKS

Finally, heroes often have challenges to overcome. They have *drawbacks*. Overcoming drawbacks is part of what makes a real hero. Drawbacks range from physical disabilities to unusual weaknesses or vulnerabilities. You choose your hero's drawbacks, allowing you to define the sorts of challenges your hero must overcome in the game.

The drawbacks of the heroes in the *Beginner's Guide* are described with each hero's game information.

GAME PLAY

A session of *Mutants & Masterminds* resembles an issue of a comic book or an episode of an animated series. The Gamemaster and the players get together and tell a story by playing the game. The length of a game session can vary, from just a couple hours to several hours or more. Some adventures may be completed in a single session while others may take multiple sessions, just as some comic book stories are told in one issue, while others span multiple issues. The episodic nature of the game allows you to choose when to stop playing and allows you to start up again any time.

Just like a comic book, a *Mutants & Masterminds* adventure consists of a series of interrelated *scenes* or *encounters*. Some scenes are fairly straightforward, with the heroes interacting with each other and the supporting cast. In these cases the GM just asks the players to describe what their heroes are doing and in turn describes how other characters react and what they do.

When the action starts happening, such as when the heroes are staving off a disaster or fighting villains, time becomes more crucial and is broken down into *rounds*, each six seconds long, and the players generally have to make die rolls to see how their heroes do.

DIE ROLLS

There are a number of different die rolls in *Mutants & Masterminds*, although they all follow the core system of a 20-sided die + modifiers vs. a Difficulty Class. The three main die rolls in *M&M* are *checks*, *attack rolls*, and *saving throws*.

CHECKS

To make a *check*, roll d20 and add any modifiers for traits (abilities, skills, or powers) relevant to the check. The higher the total, the better the outcome. The average (and therefore default) modifier is +0.

Check = d20 + modifiers vs. Difficulty Class

DIFFICULTY CLASS

Checks are made against a *Difficulty Class* (DC). The DC is a number set by the GM, which your check must equal or exceed in order for you to succeed. In some cases, the results of a check vary based on how much higher or lower the result is than the DC. The average or default DC is 10, meaning a character with an average modifier (+0) has an equal chance of success or failure (50/50).

DIFFICULTY CLASSES

DIFFICULTY (DC)	EXAMPLE (SKILL USED)
Very easy (0)	Notice something in plain sight (Notice)
Easy (5)	Climb a knotted rope (Climb)
Average (10)	Hear an approaching security guard (Notice)
Tough (15)	Disarm an explosive (Disable Device)
Challenging (20)	Swim against a strong current (Swim)
Formidable (25)	Break into a secure computer system (Computers)
Heroic (30)	Climb a slippery overhang (Climb), overcome a sophisticated security system (Disable Device)
Superheroic (35)	Convince the guards even though you're not wearing an ID badge and aren't on their list, they should let you into the building (Bluff)
Nearly impossible (40)	Track a trained commando through the jungle on a moonless night after 12 days of rainfall (Survival)

OPPOSED CHECKS

Some checks are *opposed*. They are made against a randomized number, usually another character's check result. Whoever gets the higher result wins. An example is trying to bluff someone. You roll a Bluff skill check, while the GM rolls a Sense Motive skill check for your target. If you beat the target's Sense Motive check result, you succeed.

For ties on opposed checks, the character with the higher bonus wins. If the bonuses are the same, roll d20. On a 1–10 one character wins and on 11–20 victory goes to the other character; decide which character is "high" and which is "low" before rolling. Alternately, you can just flip a coin to see who wins in these cases.

OPPOSED CHECK EXAMPLES

TASK	OPPOSING SKILL	SKILL
Sneak up on someone	Stealth	Notice
Con someone	Bluff	Sense Motive
Win a swimming contest	Swim	Swim
Steal a key chain	Sleight of Hand	Notice
Break computer security	Computers	Computers

STAGED CHECKS

Sometimes it's not just a matter of whether a character succeeds at or fails a check, but by *how much* the character succeeds or fails. This is called a *staged* check and applies the degree of success or failure to the outcome.

Generally, a staged check is measured in multiples of 5, with every 5 points the die result is above or below the DC staging the check result up or down. So a check that succeeds by 5 more than the Difficulty Class (such as a result of 15 against DC 10) is one stage better than a roll of 10, 11, 12, 13, or 14, which exceed the DC, but not by 5 or more. The specific outcomes for a staged check are described along with the check.

TRYING AGAIN

In general, you can try a check again if you fail, and keep trying indefinitely. Some tasks, however, have consequences for failure. For example, failing a Climb check may mean the character falls, which makes it difficult to try again. Some tasks can't be attempted again once a check has failed. For most tasks, when you have succeeded once, additional successes are meaningless. (Once you've discovered a room's only secret door using the Search skill, for instance, there's no further benefit to be gained from additional Search checks.)

If a task carries no penalty for failure, you can take 20 and assume the character goes at it long enough to succeed, or at least determines the task is impossible at the character's level of ability (see **Taking 20**).

CONDITION MODIFIERS

Some situations make a check easier or harder, resulting in a bonus or penalty to the modifier for the check or the check's Difficulty Class.

The GM can change the odds of success on a check in four ways:

1. Grant a +2 bonus to represent conditions improving performance.
2. Impose a -2 penalty to represent conditions hampering performance.
3. Reduce the DC by 2 to represent circumstances making the task easier.
4. Increase the DC by 2 to represent circumstances making the task harder.

Bonuses to the check and reduction in the check's DC have the same result: they create a better chance of success. But they represent different circumstances, and sometimes that difference is important.

CHECKS WITHOUT ROLLS

A check represents performing a task under a certain amount of pressure. When the situation is less demanding, you can achieve more reliable results. Applying these rules can speed up checks under routine circumstances, cutting down the number of rolls players need to make.

TAKING 10

When you are not under any pressure to perform a task, you may choose to take 10. Instead of rolling the check, calculate your result as if you had rolled a 10. For average (DC 10) tasks, taking 10 allows you to succeed automatically with a modifier of +0 or greater. With a higher modifier, you can succeed at more difficult tasks as a matter of course by taking 10; with a +5 modifier, for example, you can take 10 and automatically succeed on a task with a DC of 15 or less. You cannot take 10 if distracted or under pressure (such as in a combat situation). The GM decides when this is the case.

TAKING 20

When you have plenty of time and the task carries no penalty for failure, you can take 20. Instead of rolling the check, calculate your result as if you had rolled a 20. Taking 20 means you keep trying the task until you get it right. Taking 20 takes twenty times longer than a single check, or about 2 minutes for a task requiring a round or less. If there are consequences for failure—such as setting off an alarm or slipping and falling—you cannot take 20 on that check.

COMPARISON CHECKS

In cases where a check is a simple test of one character's ability against another, with no luck involved, the character with the higher score wins automatically. Just as you wouldn't make a "height check" to see who's taller, you don't need to make a Strength check to see who's stronger; the character with the higher Strength score is. When two characters arm wrestle, for example, the stronger character wins. If two flying characters race, then the faster character wins, and so forth.

In the case of identical bonuses or scores, each character has an equal chance of winning. Roll a die: on a 1-10, the first character wins, on an 11-20, the second character does.

AIDING OTHERS

Sometimes characters work together and help each other out. In this case, one character (usually the one with the highest bonus) is considered the leader of the effort and makes the check normally, while each helper makes



the same check against DC 10 (and can't take 10 on this check). Success grants the leader a +2 bonus for favorable conditions. For every 10 full points the helper's check exceeds the DC, stage the bonus up by +1, so a result of 20-29 grants a +3 bonus, 30-39 a +4, and so forth. In many cases, outside help isn't beneficial, or only a limited number of helpers can aid someone at once. The GM limits aid as he sees fit for the task and conditions.

TYPES OF CHECKS

You use three main traits for checks in *M&M*: skills, abilities, and powers.

SKILL CHECKS

A skill check determines what you can accomplish with a particular skill. It is a roll of d20 + your rank in the skill and the key ability score of the skill against a Difficulty Class. Skill checks are often staged (see **Staged Checks**). For example, if you fail a Climb check, you don't make any progress in the climb. If you fail by 5 or more—an additional degree of failure—then you fall.

ABILITY CHECKS

An ability check is like a skill check, but measures raw ability, without any skill, like strength, endurance, or intellect. It is a roll of d20 + your ability modifier against a Difficulty Class. Ability checks tend to be all or nothing (you can either accomplish the task or you can't) although they are sometimes staged like skill checks. Attempting a skill without training (in other words, without ranks in the skill) is an ability check using that skill's key ability.

USING OPPOSED CHECKS

Opposed checks offer the GM a useful tool for comparing the efforts of two characters quickly and easily. This applies not only to skills, but also powers and, in some cases, abilities. If two or more characters compete at a particular task, you can resolve it with an opposed check. The character with the highest check result wins. Of course, you can play things out if you want, but sometimes it's good to be able to resolve things with a quick opposed check and move on.

As Gamemaster, if you find yourself without a particular rule to resolve a conflict or contest between characters, the opposed check is your friend. Pick the appropriate skill, power, or ability, make checks for the characters and compare the results to see how they did.

EXAMPLE ABILITY CHECKS

TASK	KEY ABILITY
Jumping across a gap	Strength
Tying a rope	Dexterity
Holding your breath	Constitution
Navigating a maze	Intelligence
Recognizing someone you've seen before	Wisdom
Getting noticed in a crowd	Charisma

POWER CHECKS

A power check uses one of your hero's power ranks as its modifier. It is a measure of what the hero can accomplish with that power. It is a roll of d20 + the power's rank against a Difficulty Class. Many powers do not require power checks; they just work automatically, while other powers have some automatic aspects and others requiring checks. Powers targeting others usually require an attack roll (see the following).

ATTACK ROLLS

An *attack roll* determines whether or not you hit an opponent in combat. It is a d20 roll + your attack bonus. The Difficulty Class is your target's Defense, which measures their ability to avoid getting hit. If you equal or exceed your target's Defense, your attack hits. Otherwise, you miss.

NATURAL 20

A natural 20 on an attack roll (where the die comes up 20) *always* hits and may be a *critical hit*. Compare the attack roll result to the target's Defense, if it is less, the attack hits (due to the natural 20) but is not a critical. If it equals or exceeds the target's Defense, then the attack hits and the saving throw against the attack's effect has its DC increased by +5.

NATURAL 1

A natural 1 on an attack roll (where the die comes up 1) *always* misses, no matter how good your attack modifier may be.

SAVING THROWS

Saving throws are reactions to avoid different forms of danger, ranging from damage and injury to traps, poisons, and various powers. A saving throw is a d20 roll + the appropriate ability modifier (Con for Toughness and Fortitude saves, Dex for Reflex saves, and Wis for Will saves) and your base save bonus, along with any bonuses for powers. The Difficulty Class is based on the strength of the hazard, such as the power of an attack or the strength of a disease or poison.

Like skill checks, saving throws are sometimes staged. For example, a Toughness save against damage results in no damage at all if you beat the DC, but could result in a glancing blow, a stunning blow, or an immediate knockout if you fail, depending on how much the save result misses the DC.

THE COMBAT ROUND

When things really start happening in *Mutants & Masterminds*, game-time is broken down into six-second segments called *rounds*. A round isn't very much time. Think of it like a panel in a comic book, just long enough for a hero to do something. The types of actions your hero can perform during a round are standard actions, move actions, full actions, free actions, and reactions. During a round you can...

... Take a standard action and a move action.

... Take a move action and then another move action (in place of your standard action).

... Take a full action.

You can perform as many free actions and reactions in a round as you wish, although the GM may choose to limit them to a reasonable number just to keep the game moving.

STANDARD ACTIONS

A *standard action* generally involves acting upon something, whether it's an attack or using a power to affect something. You're limited to one standard action a round.

MOVE ACTIONS

A *move action* usually involves moving. You can take a move action before or after your standard action, so you can attack then move, or move then attack. You cannot, however, split your move action before and after your standard action. Move actions also include things like drawing weapons, standing up from being prone, and picking up objects.

FULL ACTIONS

A *full action*, or full-round action, occupies all your attention, meaning you can't do anything else that round. Full actions include charging an opponent at full speed, or moving full speed, as quickly as you can. Certain powers or maneuvers require a full action to perform, as do some skills.

FREE ACTIONS

A *free action* is something so comparatively minor it doesn't take any significant time, so you can perform as many free actions in a round as the GM considers reasonable. Free actions include things like talking (heroes and villains always find time to say a lot in the middle of a fight in the comic books), dropping something, ending the use of a power, activating some powers, and so forth.

REACTIONS

A *reaction* is something you do in response to something else. A reaction doesn't take any time, like a free action. The difference is you might react when it's not even your turn, in response to something else happening during the round.

HERO POINTS

Heroes in *Mutants & Masterminds* have *hero points* you can spend to improve your hero's abilities in various ways. You can spend a hero point to improve a die roll, push an ability or power beyond its normal capabilities, bounce back from being hurt, and various other effects.

The most basic use of a hero point is to re-roll die rolls. When you aren't happy with a particular die roll, you can spend a hero point to roll the die again, taking the better of the two rolls. If the second roll is a 10 or less, add 10 to it, to get a result of 11 to 20. That means when you spend a hero point to re-roll, you'll always get a better than average result (how much better depends on what you roll). This is the use for hero points in the *Into the Doom Room* scenario in the next section.

Your hero regains hero points at the start of each game and the GM awards you points during the game for heroic actions, overcoming challenges, and facing complications and defeats.



FIREPOWER

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+0	+1	+1	+2	+1	+1
10	13	12	14	12	12

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+9/+1*	+5	+9	+6

*without Force Field

SKILLS

Acrobatics 4 (+5), Bluff 4 (+5), Concentration 4 (+5), Knowledge (current events) 2 (+3), Knowledge (popular culture) 2 (+3), Notice 4 (+5), Sense Motive 4 (+5)

FEATS

Attack Focus (ranged) 2: Firepower is more effective with ranged attacks, giving him a +2 on his attack bonus with them (included in his combat abilities).

Dodge Focus 3: Firepower is skilled at dodging attacks; he has a +3 dodge bonus to his defense (including in his combat abilities) but loses that bonus when he is stunned or otherwise unable to dodge.

Improved Initiative: Fast-acting, Firepower has a +4 bonus to his Initiative checks (including in his Initiative in his combat abilities).

Power Attack: When Firepower makes an attack, you can take a penalty of up to -5 on his attack bonus and add the same number (up to +5) to the attack's saving throw DC. Firepower's attack bonus cannot be reduced below +0 and save DC modifier cannot more than double. The changes to attack and saving throw DC are decided before you make your attack roll and last until Firepower's next round. This feat does not apply to effects requiring no attack roll or allowing no saving throw.

DRAWBACK

Power Loss: Firepower's flames can be extinguished by immersion in water. When this happens he loses use of his Flame Aura, Flight, and Force Field powers until he dries out.

Nathan Peter Collins knew better than to play with fire. He learned that lesson from Dr. Phineas, an old family friend. Doc Phineas always encouraged Nathan's intellect and interest in reading, even if Nate sometimes preferred comic books to Popular Science. Nathan, in turn, was happy to help Doc out in his workshop from time to time.

So it was lucky when he came by one day after school to find the workshop in flames. Without even thinking of himself, Nathan ran inside and managed to pull the unconscious Dr. Phineas out, although not before getting a strong lung-full of acrid smoke and suffused with strange chemicals. Dr. Phineas' experimental fuel was a failure, but the chemical, the fire, and the adrenaline triggered some-

DAMAGE TRACK		
Bruised	Staggered	Unconscious
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Injured	Disabled	Dying

COMBAT

Attack +5 (melee), +7 (ranged), Grapple +5, Damage +0 (unarmed), +11 (fire blast), Defense +9 (+3 flat-footed), Initiative +5

POWERS

Fire Control 11: Firepower can generate and control fire, giving him three primary abilities he can use one at a time, each requiring a standard action:

- **Flame Blast:** He can project a blast of flames with a +11 damage bonus (Toughness save, DC 26).
- **Fireball:** He can hurl a ball of fire that explodes with a 35-foot radius. Everyone in the area must make a Reflex saving throw (DC 17) or suffer +7 damage (Toughness save, DC 22). A successful Reflex save lowers damage to +3 (DC 18 Toughness save).
- **Flare:** Firepower can target an opponent with a bright flash of fire, causing temporary blindness. If the ranged attack hits, the target makes a Reflex save (DC 21). If the save fails, the target is blinded: losing any dodge bonus to defense and having a 50% chance of missing with attacks (roll a die: on a 10 or less, the attack misses). On the next round, the victim can make a Fortitude save (DC 21) to shake off the effect; each round, giving the victim a +1 bonus to recover until the save is successful.

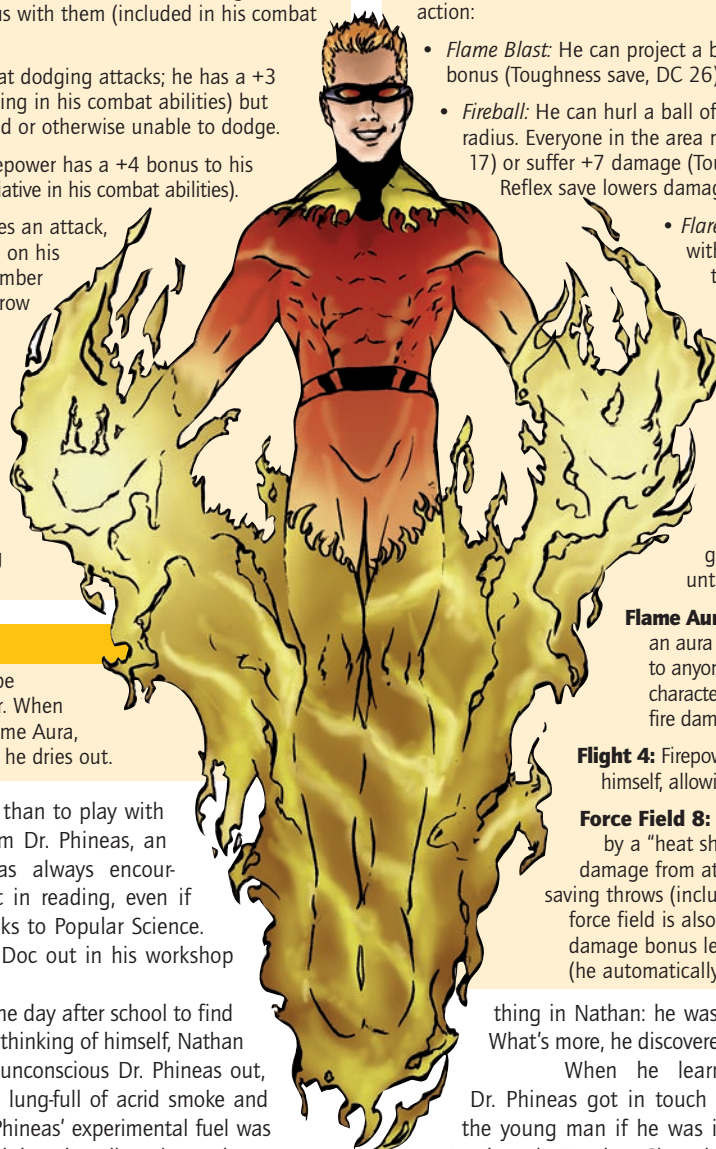
Flame Aura 6: Firepower can surround himself with an aura of flames, automatically causing damage to anyone who touches him. The opposing character makes a Toughness save against DC 21 fire damage (15 + 6 for the aura's rank).

Flight 4: Firepower can project a jet of fire behind himself, allowing him to fly at up to 100 miles per hour.

Force Field 8: While aflame, Firepower is surrounded by a "heat shield" able to deflect some of the damage from attacks. He adds +8 to his Toughness saving throws (included on the Saving Throws line). His force field is also Impervious, meaning attacks with a damage bonus less than +8 don't even affect Firepower (he automatically saves against them).

thing in Nathan: he was completely untouched by the flames. What's more, he discovered he could create fire at will!

When he learned of Nate's newfound abilities, Dr. Phineas got in touch with an old friend of his and asked the young man if he was interested in a visit to the Claremont Academy in Freedom City, where our story begins.



INTO THE DOOM ROOM

So you've read about *Mutants & Masterminds* and how it works and you've gotten a look at Firepower and what a hero's character sheet looks like. Now you're ready for some actual play experience, so we're going to ask you to join Firepower on his first trip into the Claremont Academy's infamous "Doom Room" in order to test out his superhuman powers.

Into the Doom Room is a short scenario you can play on your own, without any need for a Gamemaster. Just follow the instructions given in each step, which will demonstrate how you roll the die, take actions, and otherwise do things in the game. When you're finished, you should have a pretty good idea of what Firepower can do and how to play a game of *Mutants & Masterminds*. Then you'll be ready to move on to the full-scale **Super-School Slugfest!** adventure at the end of this book, where Firepower gets to meet his new classmates, and *fight* them!

HOW TO PLAY

For *Into the Doom Room*, you'll take on the role of Firepower, the newest student at the Claremont Academy for young superhumans. You'll need a copy of Firepower's character profile, found earlier in this book, a 20-sided die, and a pencil or pen and some scratch paper to keep notes.

Begin reading the scenario with **Section #1**. At the end of each section, you will be given a choice of actions and outcomes. Decide what you want to do, or determine the outcome of the specified die roll, and turn to the appropriate numbered section to continue the adventure!

HERO POINTS

Firepower starts out this scenario with 1 hero point (see **Hero Points** in the **Basics** section on page 12 for full information). Certain sections of the adventure also award additional hero points for encountering setbacks or overcoming challenges.

You can spend a hero point at any time during the scenario to re-roll a die roll, taking the better of the two rolls. If the second roll is a 10 or less, add 10 to it to get a result from 11 to 20, since spending a hero point always ensures at least a slightly better than average result (an 11 or better). So if you spent a hero point to re-roll and get a 7, it becomes a 17 (7 + 10), plus whatever modifier applies to that roll.

You can keep track of Firepower's hero points using tokens like poker chips or glass beads or simply mark them off on his character sheet as the scenario progresses.

ANATOMY OF A HERO: NATHAN P. COLLINS, AKA FIREPOWER

Now, let's look over the character profile of Nathan Collins, code-named Firepower, the Claremont Academy's newest student, to see what kind of character he is. We'll also use Firepower's character profile in the sample scenario in the next section, and as an example of how to create your own hero later on.

ABILITIES

Firepower isn't exactly superhuman in the abilities department; after all, apart from his powers, he's really just a fairly normal sixteen year-old kid. For all that, Nathan is still above average—having positive modifiers for all but one of his abilities.

SAVING THROWS

Firepower's major saving throws are Toughness, due to his Force Field power (more about that later) and Reflex, based on his agile style. His Fortitude and Will saves are decent, but nothing to write home about. He's got some chance of avoiding hazards based on those saves, but he's hardly going to shrug them off.

SKILLS

Firepower's skills are fairly simple. He's got some things you'd expect from a teenager, like Knowledge of current events and popular culture. He's got some ability in **Acrobatics**, reflecting his aerial agility, and some skill in picking up on things (**Notice**), including when someone is trying to pull the wool over his eyes (**Sense Motive**). He's not too bad at doing that himself (**Bluff**) and has learned some basic **Concentration** to help him control and maintain his powers.

FEATS

Firepower doesn't have a lot of feats, and the ones he has are focused on giving him some options in combat. His Attack Focus and Dodge Focus improve his attack and defense bonuses for fewer points than just increasing attack and defense, at the cost of making Firepower less effective in close combat or when he's caught off-guard and unable to maneuver. His Power Attack feat gives him some extra offensive ability, if he's willing to go all-out

against a foe, while Improved Initiative makes it more likely for him to go first at the start of a fight

POWERS

Firepower's focus is on his super-powers, namely his ability to generate and control fire. That's the **Fire Control** power, which he has at 11 ranks, respectable for a starting hero. Nathan has already learned a few tricks with his **Fire Control**. Specifically, he can shoot blasts of fire, hurl exploding fireballs that cover an area, and create harmless flashes of bright fire that can temporarily blind opponents.

Firepower can surround himself in an aura of flames that burn anything (or anyone!) touching him. His **Flame Aura** does less damage than his powerful fire blasts, but still enough to make any foe think twice about grabbing or hitting Firepower bare-handed. Nathan's **Flame Aura** also includes a heat shield that deflects some of the brunt of attacks against him, functioning as a Force Field power.

Firepower also has the **Flight** power. When surrounded with flames, Nathan can lift off the ground and project fire behind him to fly like a rocket at speed of up to 100 miles per hour.

COMBAT

Firepower focuses on ranged attacks, not being much of a hand-to-hand fighter, so his base (melee) attack bonus is a +5—competent, but not a master, by any means. His Attack Focus feat improves his bonus to +7 with ranged attacks, his primary form of combat.

DRAWBACKS

Firepower has a particular drawback: water can douse his flames, and when that happens, he loses the benefits of his **Flame Aura**, **Flight**, and **Force Field** powers.

SECTION 1

You stand outside the door, doing your best not to feel nervous. The new uniform fits you perfectly. Mr. Summers says it's made from "morphic molecules" and won't burn when you use your powers like your regular clothes do. Good thing, since you don't want to flash your new classmates on the first day.

What's in there? You wonder, looking at the blank door. The other students call it the "Doom Room," not exactly inspiring confidence. Headmaster Summers says this is "just a test," but a test of what?

"All you have to do is cross the room," he said, like it was just as easy as it sounded. Somehow you suspect it won't be that simple. Then the light over the doorway goes from red to green and it slides open with a faint hiss of air. Fluorescent lights come on inside and you step out into the Doom Room.

It's big, with high ceilings and sheer walls covered in smooth metal panels. The floor is much the same, making the room almost featureless, save for the one-way black window halfway up the wall, and the doorway on the opposite side. The one you have to reach.

No sooner have you stepped inside then the door slides shut behind you. You turn to look and suddenly the floor beneath you is gone! A trap door!

Make a Reflex saving throw for Firepower! The Difficulty Class is 15. Roll the die and add Firepower's Reflex save bonus (+9) to the result. If the total is 14 or less, give Firepower a hero point and go to **Section 2**. If the total is 15 or more, go to **Section 3**.

SECTION 2

Your fiery aura flares to life around you as you try to fly up and out of the pit. You flame-up in time to keep from hitting the bottom, but not fast enough to escape as the pit door slides closed above you, cutting off the outside light and leaving the pit lit only by the reddish glow of your flames.

Just then, you hear the sound of rushing water! The bottom of the pit is filling with water, which is rising towards you! If you don't get out before the water reaches you, it will extinguish your flames and you'll be trapped! Looking up at the top of the pit, you think your flames can cut through the metal covering, but can you do it in time?

Burn through the metal hatch. Firepower's flame blast has a damage bonus of +11. The hatch covering the pit has a Toughness bonus of +10. It will take 30 seconds (or five rounds) for the water to rise high enough to put out Firepower's flames and trap him. Each round, Firepower can try to cut through the metal plate.

Roll a Toughness saving throw for the metal: roll the die and add the hatch's Toughness (+10) and compare the result against the Difficulty Class to save against Firepower's blast, which is 26 (the base DC of 15, plus his damage bonus of 11).

- *If the result is equal to or greater than 26, Firepower's flames leave burn marks on the metal, but have no real effect. Roll again for the next round.*
- *If the result is between 21 and 25, Firepower does some damage. Roll again for the next round, but reduce the hatch's Toughness bonus by 1.*
- *If the result is between 16 and 20, Firepower melts a hole in the metal plate big enough to fly out of the pit. Go to **Section 4**.*

If Firepower fails to melt through the hatch cover after five attempts, go to **Section 5**.

SECTION 3

Your fiery aura flares to life as the pit drops open beneath you and instead of falling, you hover a short distance off the floor. The hatch closes over the yawning pit and you wonder what other surprises the Doom Room has in store for you.

Go to **Section 4**.

SECTION 4

You get your bearings and fly towards the door on the other side of the room. Hidden panels slide open and weapons arrays sprout from the walls on either side. They suddenly erupt with a barrage of blaster-fire!

You throw up your arms to shield yourself and keep on going. The blaster bolts spatter against the flaming energy field around you like water from a hose (although it's a good thing they're not!).

Firepower's Force Field power has the Impervious power modifier, meaning attacks with a damage bonus less than the Force Field's rank (8, in this case) don't have any effect at all.

You're just starting to think this might be as easy as flying across the rest of the room when the intensity of the blasters increases; they're adapting to your shield! You're too late to dodge out of the way as the increased power slams against your shield.

Make a Toughness save for Firepower! The Difficulty Class is 25: a base 15, plus 10 for the damage bonus for the blasters. Roll the die + 9 (Firepower's Toughness save bonus).

- *If the result is equal to or greater than 25, Firepower's Force Field entirely withstands the blast and he suffers no damage.*
- *If the result is between 21 and 24, the increased blast bruises Firepower a bit: mark a check or slash under the **Bruised** section of the damage track on Firepower's character sheet. Each bruised mark subtracts 1 from Firepower's Toughness saving throws. Go to **Section 7**.*
- *If the result is between 16 and 20, the blast bruises Firepower (like the previous result) and also stuns him. Go to **Section 6**.*
- *If the result is between 11 and 15, Firepower is staggered: check off the **Staggered** box on the damage track on Firepower's character sheet. Any further damage—that is, any Toughness save that's less than the required DC, means he's unconscious. If that happens, go to **Section 5**. Otherwise, give Firepower a hero point for the setback and continue on to **Section 6**.*
- *If the result is 10 or less, Fire power is knocked out by the blast. Go to **Section 5**.*

SECTION 5

As your flames flicker out and your consciousness begins to follow, your last thought is to wonder what Mr. Summers will think of your performance. Then you pass out.

Go to **Section 14**.

SECTION 6

The force of the blast momentarily stuns you. Unfortunately, that also means you have a hard time continuing to fly and maintain your flame aura! If you lose control of your powers now, the beams are sure to get you.

Make a Concentration check for Firepower! A stunned hero must make a Concentration skill check to maintain the effects of certain powers (those with concentration or sustained durations) like Firepower's Flight and Force Field powers.

Roll a die and add Firepower's Concentration skill bonus of +5. The Difficulty Class is 18: a base of 10 plus the highest applicable power rank, which in this case is 8 (the rank of Firepower's Force Field). If the total of the check is 18 or higher, go to **Section 7**. If it is 17 or less, go to **Section 5**.

SECTION 7

You soar past the blaster array just as more hidden panels slide open along the walls, floor, and ceiling of the Doom Room. From the band running all the way around the inside of the room, from floor to ceiling and wall to wall, a series of bright laser beams form a shifting grid, a wall of moving lasers coming between you and your goal. There's no way around them, the only way is straight through, but there's no way of knowing if you can withstand a direct hit from one of those powerful-looking beams!

Make an Acrobatics check for Firepower! Firepower has to fly right through the shifting grid of lasers, no mean feat of acrobatics. Fortunately, he has at least some skill in that area.

Roll a die and add Firepower's Acrobatics skill bonus of +5. The Difficulty Class is 15. If the total of the check is 14 or less, go to **Section 8**. If it is 15 or higher, go to **Section 9**.

SECTION 8

You try to slip past the laser-net, but you're just a split second too slow and a laser beam clips you as you pass through!

Make a Toughness save for Firepower! The Difficulty Class is 25: a base 15, plus 10 for the damage bonus for the laser. Roll the die + 9 (Firepower's Toughness save bonus). Keep in mind any penalties Firepower might have from being bruised before.

- *If the result is equal to or greater than 25*, Firepower's Force Field entirely withstands the laser beam and he suffers no damage. Go to **Section 9**.
- *If the result is between 21 and 24*, the laser blast *bruises* Firepower a bit through his force field: mark a check or slash under the **Bruised** section of the damage track on Firepower's character sheet. Each bruised mark subtracts 1 from Firepower's Toughness saving throws. Go to **Section 7**. If Firepower was already staggered and he gets this result, he's knocked out. Go to **Section 5**.
- *If the result is between 16 and 20*, the laser blast bruises Firepower (like the previous result) and also *stuns* him. Go to **Section 6**.
- *If the result is between 11 and 15*, Firepower is *staggered*: check off the **Staggered** box on the damage track on Firepower's character sheet. Any further damage—that is, any Toughness save that's less than the required DC—means he's unconscious. If that happens, go to **Section 5**. Otherwise, give Firepower a hero point for the setback and continue on to **Section 6**.
- *If the result is 10 or less*, Firepower is knocked out by the blast. Go to **Section 5**.

SECTION 9

You get past the laser net, and you're almost home free! The far side of the Doom Room and the doorway that is the goal of your test are just ahead. You just have to remain on your guard...

Make a Notice skill check for Firepower! Is Firepower alert enough to avoid danger? Find out by rolling the die and adding his Notice skill bonus of +5. The Difficulty Class is 15. If the total of the roll is 14 or less, award Firepower a hero point and go to **Section 10**. If the total of the roll is 15 or more, go to **Section 11**.

SECTION 10

You've made it! You reach for the door, and are surprised when your hand passes right through it! An illusion! The door is some sort of trick. That's when the robot steps out and the hologram of the false wall fades, revealing the real wall just behind it.

Go to **Section 12**. Firepower is *surprised* for the first round of the fight against the robot, meaning the robot gets one free attack against him before you roll for initiative, and Firepower is flat-footed, making his defense +3 instead of +9. For more, see **Section 12**.

SECTION 11

As you reach for the door, something catches your attention: the shadows, or lack thereof, falling on the far wall. It's an illusion! You step back a bit, on your guard as a hulking robot steps out through the hologram of the false wall which fades, revealing the real wall just behind it. It seems you have one more test to overcome before you reach your goal.

Go to **Section 12**.

SECTION 12

Fight the Doom-Bot! Firepower has to fight the Doom Room robot to get to the door and win the test. The robot has the following game traits:

DOOM ROOM ROBOT

Str 30	Dex 9	Con —	Int —	Wis 11	Cha —
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POWERS

Blast 10: The robot can shoot blasts of force from its hands, making attack rolls with a +5 bonus. If a blast hits the DC of the Toughness save is 25 (15 + the blast's damage bonus of +10).

Immunity 30 (Fortitude): As a machine, the Doom Room robot is immune to any effects with a Fortitude saving throw. It automatically makes such saves, making it immune to things like disease and poison, suffocation, and so forth.

Protection 10: The robot's armor plating gives it protection from damage, increasing its Toughness saving throw. This bonus is already included in the robot's +10 Toughness save bonus.

COMBAT

Attack +5, Damage +10 (unarmed), +10 (blast), Defense +5 (+3 flat-footed), Initiative -1

SAVES

Toughness: +10	Fortitude: —	Reflex: +2	Will: —
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Damaged

Disabled

Combat in *Mutants & Masterminds* proceeds in turns called *rounds*, with each round lasting for about 6 seconds. Think of a round like a panel in a comic book: just enough time for a hero or villain to do something like move or take a swing at an opponent. Each character involved in the fight gets to make one attack each round. To have Firepower fight the Doom Room robot, go through the following steps:

A. ROLL INITIATIVE

At the start of a fight, all characters involved roll for initiative to see what order they go in. Roll the die for each combatant and add the character's Initiative modifier: +5 for Firepower (because of his Improved Initiative feat) and -1 for the robot (because it's fairly big and slow). The characters then go in order from highest result to lowest.

Flat-footed: On the first round of combat, before taking their first turn, characters are *flat-footed*. This means they're off-balance, not quite ready to act yet. A flat-footed character loses any dodge bonuses to Defense, meaning opponents are often easier to hit if you get to go before them. Once a character has taken his first turn in the combat, he's no longer flat-footed.

So, if Firepower wins initiative and gets to go before the robot, the robot is flat-footed, reducing its Defense bonus from +5 to +3, its flat-footed Defense. Likewise, if the robot happens to go before Firepower, his Defense bonus goes from +9 to +3, his flat-footed Defense, making it much easier for the robot to land an attack.

B. ATTACK

The character with the highest initiative gets to make an attack. Roll a die and add the character's attack bonus. The DC for the attack roll is 10 + the target's Defense.

So for Firepower attacking the robot (Defense +5), the DC is 15 (10 + 5) or 13 (10 + 3), if the robot is flat-footed. Likewise, for the robot attacking Firepower, the DC is 19 (10 + 9, Firepower's Defense bonus) or 13 (10 + 3), if Firepower is flat-footed and has lost his dodge bonus.

If the total of the attack roll is equal to or higher than the target's Defense, you hit. Otherwise, the attack misses.

C. TOUGHNESS SAVING THROW

If an attack hits, it either does damage or has a special effect (for some super-powers). The effects of super-powers are given in the power's description.

Damaging attacks have a *damage bonus*, which determines how much the attack hurts the target. A target hit by a damaging attack must make a *Damage saving throw* to resist the damage. Like any other check, this is 1d20, plus the target's Damage saving throw bonus. The DC of the check is 15 + the attack's damage bonus. So the DC for a Damage save against an attack with a damage bonus of +12 is 27 (or 15 + 12).

If the Damage saving throw succeeds, the target takes no damage. They completely shrug off the attack. If the Damage save fails, the target takes some damage. How much depends on how badly the save fails.

D. APPLY DAMAGE

If a target's Damage saving throw fails, they take damage. What sort of damage depends on two things: the type of attack, and the amount by which the target failed the Damage saving throw, as shown on the table below:

TOUGHNESS SAVING THROW

SAVING THROW...	EFFECT
Succeeds	No Effect
Fails	Bruised
Fails by 5 or more	Stunned + Bruised
Fails by 10 or more	Staggered + Stunned
Fails by 15 or more	Unconscious

If the Toughness save succeeds, the target suffers no damage. If the save fails by less than 5, the target is *bruised*. If it fails by 5 or more, the target is both *stunned* for one round and *bruised*. If it fails by 10 or more, the target is *staggered* and also *stunned* for one round. If it fails by 15 or more, the target is *unconscious*.

- **No Effect:** The damage has no significant effect. The combat continues.
- **Bruised:** Mark a check or slash under the **Bruised** section of the damage track on character's sheet. Each bruised mark subtracts 1 from the character's further Toughness saving throws. A target that's already staggered getting this result is knocked out; see *Unconscious*, following. The robot suffers this result as a mark under the *Damaged* column of its damage track.
- **Stunned:** The attack bruises the character (like the previous result) and also *stuns* him. If the robot is stunned, it loses one action. If Firepower is stunned, he loses one action and must make a Concentration skill check to maintain the effects of his Flight, Force Field, and Flame Aura powers.

Roll a die and add Firepower's Concentration skill bonus of +5. The Difficulty Class is 18: a base of 10 plus the highest applicable power rank, which in this case is 8 (the rank of Firepower's Force Field). If the total of the check is 18 or higher, Firepower maintains the affected powers. If it is 17 or less, his Flight, Force Field, and Flame Aura powers stop working until Firepower can take an action to re-activate them. Assume this happens automatically on his next turn. Since Firepower loses a turn due to being stunned, the robot may get one attack against him without his Force Field, which could be bad for Firepower.

You can spend one of Firepower's hero points to ignore the stunned result; Firepower is just bruised instead (see the previous result).

- **Staggered:** The character is *staggered*: check off the **Staggered** box on the damage track on the character's sheet. Any further damage—that is, any Toughness save less than the required DC, means the character is unconscious (see the following result).
- The robot is *disabled* by this damage result, no longer functioning and out of the fight. If this happens, go to **Section 13**.
- **Unconscious:** The character is knocked out and out of the fight. If Firepower goes unconscious, go to **Section 5**.

E. REPEAT

Once the first character in the initiative order has gone through Steps B, C, and D, move on to the other character and repeat. Then go back to the top of the initiative order and continue the process until one side or another achieves victory.

If Firepower defeats the robot, go to **Section 13**.

If the robot defeats Firepower (by knocking him unconscious), go to **Section 5**.

SECTION 13

Mr. Summers' lined and hard face shows a tight-lipped smile and the slightest nod of approval.
"Congratulations," he says. "You did very well for your first time taking on the Doom Room. I'm sure as you practice, you'll do even better in the future. Feeling up to meeting your new classmates?"

SECTION 14

You regain consciousness on an infirmary bed, surrounded by high tech sensors and equipment, as well as concerned-looking costumed teens, your fellow students at the Academy. You turn your head to see Mr. Summers as he approaches your bedside.
"Welcome back," he says. "You did well for your first time taking on the Doom Room. I'm sure as you practice, you'll do even better. Feeling up for meeting your new classmates?"



BOLT

STR	DEH	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+0	+3	+1	+0	+0	+1
10	16	12	11	10	12

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+4/+1*	+4	+8	+4

*flat-footed

SKILLS

Bluff 4 (+5), Computers 2 (+2), Concentration 4 (+4), Knowledge (popular culture) 6 (+6), Notice 4 (+4), Search 4 (+4)

FEATS

Defensive Attack: When Bolt makes an attack you can take a penalty of up to -5 on his attack bonus and add the same number (up to +5) as a dodge bonus to his defense. Bolt's attack bonus cannot be reduced below +0 and his defense bonus cannot more than double. The changes to attack and dodge bonus last until Bolt's next action.

Defensive Roll 3: Bolt is skilled in "rolling" with a hit to lessen its damage, giving him a +3 bonus on Toughness saving throws. He loses this bonus whenever he also loses his dodge bonus.

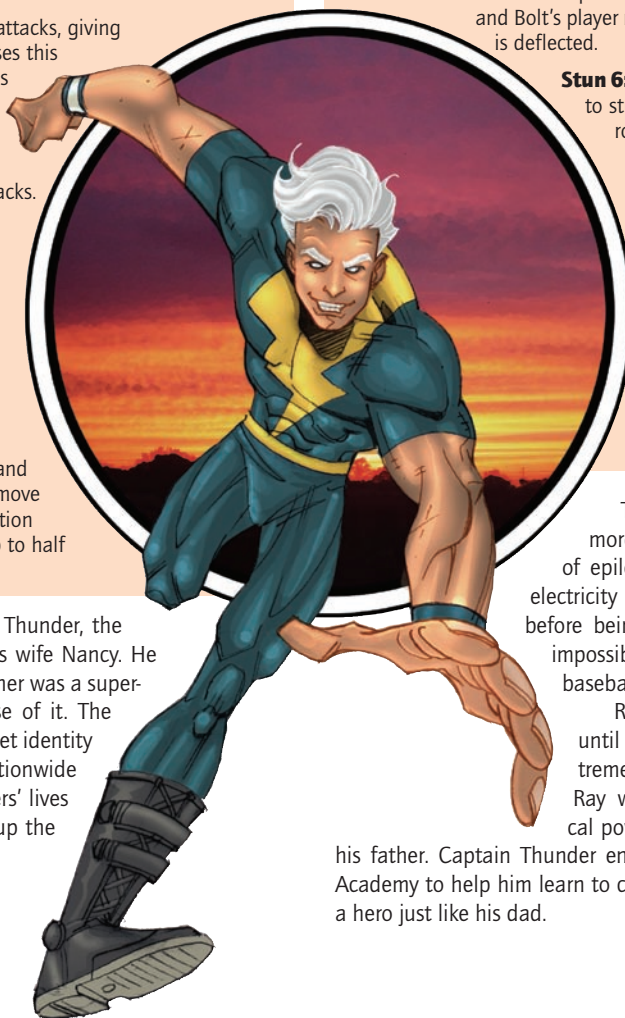
Dodge Focus 4: Bolt is skilled in dodging attacks, giving him a +4 dodge bonus to defense. He loses this bonus along with his normal dodge bonus when stunned or otherwise unable to dodge.

Evasion: His speed and dodging ability allow Bolt to better evade area effect attacks. If he successfully makes his Reflex save against an effect allowing a save for half damage, he takes no damage instead.

Improved Initiative 2: His great speed gives Bolt a +8 bonus to his Initiative checks.

Move-by Action: Rather than making a move action and then a standard action or vice versa, Bolt can split up his move action to take half his movement before and half after his standard action, so he can move (up to half his speed), take a standard action (like attacking), and then move again (up to half speed).

Ray Gardener, Jr. is the son of Captain Thunder, the leader of the Freedom League, and his wife Nancy. He has known since childhood that his father was a superhero and Ray always idolized him because of it. The entire world learned Captain Thunder's secret identity years ago when a foe unmasked him on nationwide television. From that point on, the Gardeners' lives were never the same, and Ray has grown up the son of a celebrity.



DAMAGE TRACK		
Bruised	Staggered	Unconscious
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Injured	Disabled	Dying

COMBAT

Attack +5, Grapple +5, Damage +0 (unarmed), +9 (blast), Defense +8 (+2 flat-footed), Initiative +11

POWERS

Blast 9: Bolt can throw blasts of electricity from his hands that have a +9 damage bonus (Toughness save, DC 24). Make a ranged attack roll for Bolt to hit with one of his blasts.

Deflect 9: Bolt is fast enough that if he chooses not to attack in a round, he can try to deflect a physical object hurled at him. Make a die roll with a +9 modifier (Bolt's Deflect rank) against a DC of the attack's attack roll result. If Bolt equals or exceeds it, he deflects the attack. So, for example, if an attacker hurls a weapon at Bolt and gets a 19 on the attack roll, and Bolt's player make a Deflect roll and gets a 20, the attack is deflected.

Stun 6: Bolt can shoot modulated bolts of electricity to stun opponents. Make a ranged attack roll for Bolt to hit. If successful, his target must make a Fortitude saving throw. On a result of 15 to 12 the target is *dazed* for a round: unable to take actions, but retaining dodge bonus to defense. A result of 11 to 7 means the target is *stunned* for a round: unable to take actions and losing dodge bonus for defense. A result of 6 or less means the target is knocked unconscious and out of the fight.

Speed 8: Bolt can move at superspeed, running up to 2,500 miles per hour!

The beginning of his teen years were made more difficult by the development of a form of epilepsy due to an overabundance of neural electricity in Ray's brain. He suffered several seizures before being placed on medication, which made it impossible to play the sports he loved, particularly baseball.

Ray's epilepsy grew increasingly chronic until he suffered a seizure accompanied by a tremendous burst of electricity! It turned out Ray was a super-powered mutant with electrical powers similar to, but not quite the same as, his father. Captain Thunder enrolled his son as a student at Claremont Academy to help him learn to control and use his powers. Ray plans to be a hero just like his dad.

MEGASTAR

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+10	+1	+1	+0	+1	+1
30/10	13	12	11	12	12

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+11/+1*	+10	+6	+8

* normal identity

SKILLS

Bluff 6 (+7), Knowledge (popular culture) 4 (+4), Notice 6 (+7), Sense Motive 4 (+5)

FEATS

Attack Focus (melee) 2: Megastar focuses on using his fists, so he has a +2 bonus with melee attack rolls, included in his combat abilities.

Benefit: "Meg," the MEGAS control computer, sometimes offers Megastar advice and suggestions. The GM can roleplay Meg and her occasional advice as best fits the story.

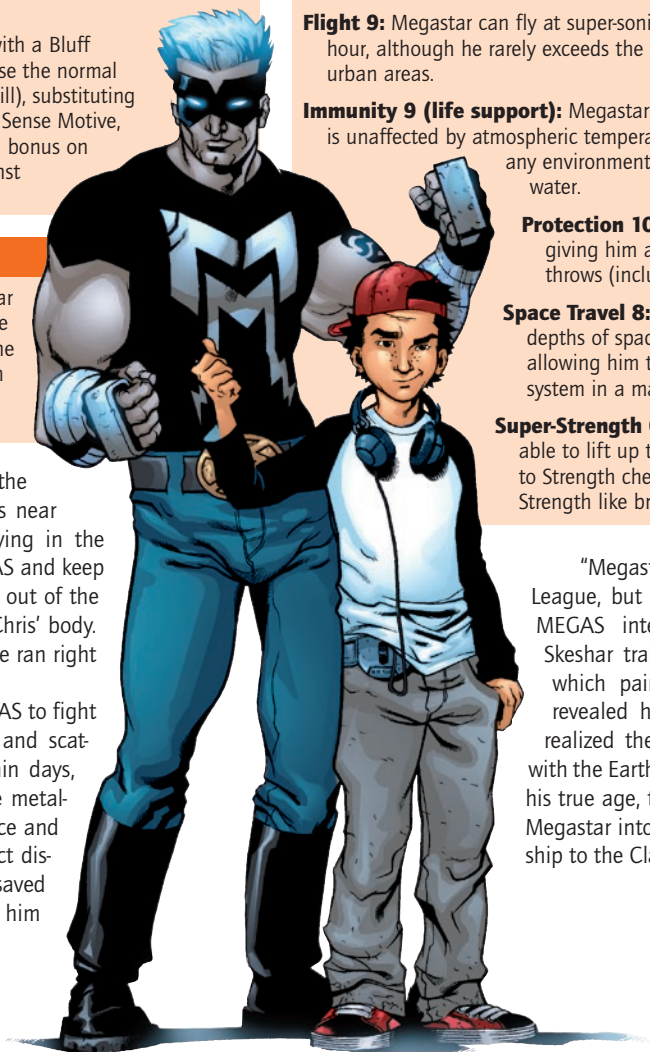
Taunt: Megastar can demoralize an opponent with a Bluff skill check rather than an Intimidate check. Use the normal rules for demoralizing (see the **Intimidate** skill), substituting Bluff for Intimidate. Targets resist using Bluff, Sense Motive, or Will save (whichever is best) and gain a +1 bonus on their resistance check per taunt attempt against them in the same encounter.

DRAWBACKS

Normal Identity: As Christopher Beck, Megastar is just an ordinary kid without any powers; use the Strength and Toughness modifiers after the slash. He has to touch the "tattoo" on his arm to transform into Megastar and it's the only action he can take that round.

Christopher Beck was camping when the alien scout ship crashed in the woodlands near Freedom City. The crewman he found dying in the wreckage gasped, "Keep it safe. Take the MEGAS and keep it safe from..." A glowing silvery metal dripped out of the box in the pilot's dead hands. It flowed over Chris' body. He panicked and tried to run. Unfortunately, he ran right into the shock nets of the shape-shifting Grue.

He instinctively used the powers of the MEGAS to fight off the aliens: ripping nets apart like tissue and scattering them with blasts of cosmic force. Within days, Chris learned an incredible amount about the metallic liquid: the Metamorphic Encephalic Guidance and Attack Suspension was an ancient alien artifact discovered a frontier world. All Chris knew was it saved his life, was wicked cool, really smart, and gave him super-powers.



DAMAGE TRACK

Bruised	Staggered	Unconscious
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Injured	Disabled	Dying

COMBAT

Attack +5, Grapple +5, Damage +0 (unarmed), +9 (blast), Defense +8 (+2 flatfooted), Initiative +11

POWERS

Blast 10: Megastar can shoot blasts of cosmic force from his hands that do +10 damage (Toughness save, DC 25).

Enhanced Strength 20: His Megastar form enhances Chris' strength considerably, giving him Strength 30 rather than his normal Strength 10.

Flight 9: Megastar can fly at supersonic speeds, up to 5,000 miles per hour, although he rarely exceeds the speed of sound in close quarters or urban areas.

Immunity 9 (life support): Megastar doesn't need to eat or breathe and is unaffected by atmospheric temperature or pressure, so he can survive in any environment, including outer space or under water.

Protection 10: Megastar is superhumanly tough, giving him a +10 bonus on Toughness saving throws (included in his saving throws line).

Space Travel 8: Megastar can fly through the depths of space up to 250 times to speed of light, allowing him to reach the outskirts of Earth's solar system in a matter of minutes.

Super-Strength 6: Megastar is superhumanly strong, able to lift up to 50 tons. He has a +6 bonus to Strength checks for sustained applications of Strength like breaking inanimate objects.

"Megastar" then tried to join the Freedom League, but a Lor squadron sent to recover the MEGAS interrupted his try-out. Lor Captain Skeshar trained an energy beam at Megastar, which painfully pulled the MEGAS off and revealed his true teenaged form. When they realized the MEGAS had permanently bonded with the Earthling, the Lor left in disgust. Knowing his true age, the Freedom League couldn't accept Megastar into their ranks, but got Chris a scholarship to the Claremont Academy.

NEREID

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+8	+3	+3	+0	+2	+2
26	16	16	10	14	15

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+9	+6	+6	+5

SKILLS

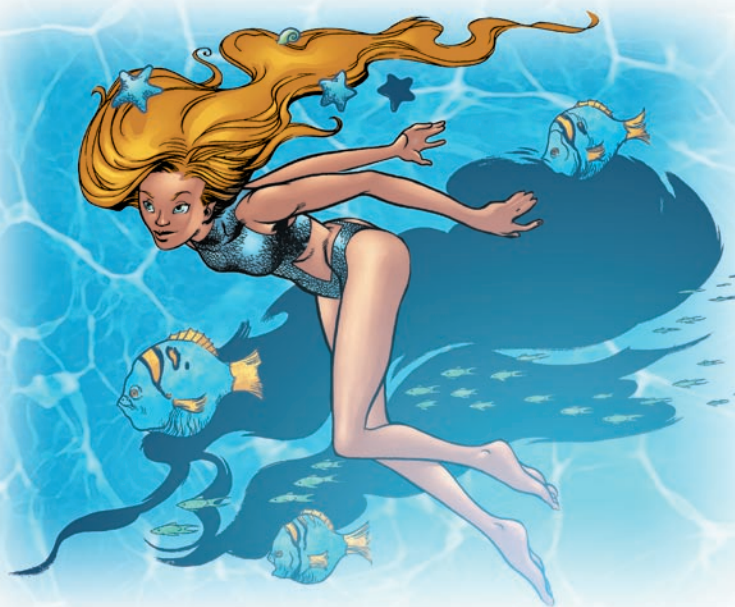
Acrobatics 8 (+11), Diplomacy 4 (+6), Handle Animal 2 (+4), Jump 2 (+10), Knowledge (earth sciences) 2 (+2), Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 2 (+2), Language 1 (Atlantean), Notice 4 (+6), Ride 4 (+7), Survival 2 (+4), Swim 5 (+13)

FEATS

Attack Focus (melee) 2: Nereid focuses on close combat, so she has a +2 bonus with melee attack rolls, included in her combat abilities.

Environmental Adaptation: Adapted to life underwater, Nereid takes no penalties for operating in an aquatic environment.

Favored Environment (aquatic): In fact, Nereid is so well adapted to operating underwater that she can apply either a +1 bonus to attack rolls or a +1 dodge bonus to defense when she is underwater. She can vary the bonus from round to round, choosing where to apply it at the start of each round.



Thetis is the granddaughter of the original Siren, the 1940s superheroine and now Queen Mother of Atlantis. Thetis' father is Theseus, the King of Atlantis, formerly the superhero Sea-King. Both he and her grandmother felt Thetis needed an understanding of the surface world and its people if she was to deal with it as Queen of Atlantis someday. So they made arrangements for Thetis to attend the Claremont Academy as a student while also getting some training in the use of her powers. Thetis adopted the code-name Nereid, from the mythic spirits of the sea.

DAMAGE TRACK

Bruised	Staggered	Unconscious
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Injured	Disabled	Dying

COMBAT

Attack +7 (melee), +5 (ranged), Grapple +19, Damage +8, Defense +7, Knockback -4, Initiative +3

POWERS

Immunity 1: Nereid can breathe underwater and is immune to any chance of drowning.

Super-Senses 1: Nereid's eyes are adapted to see in the murky depths, giving her low-light vision; she can see twice as far in dim lightning as a normal person.

Super-Strength 4: With muscles adapted for the ocean depths, Nereid is super-strong, able to lift up to 4 tons and with a +4 bonus to Strength checks for sustained applications of Strength like breaking inanimate objects.

Swimming 6: Nereid's powerful leg muscles can propel her through the water at up to 100 MPH and she doesn't need to make Swim skill checks for normal swimming.

Water Form 6: Nereid has the magical power to transform into water as a free action, gaining the following abilities when she does so:

- **Concealment:** In water form, Nereid is all but invisible in water; attacks have a 50% chance of missing her (roll a die; on a 10 or less, the attack misses, regardless of the attack roll).
- **Elongation:** Nereid's water form is somewhat elastic, allowing her to reach up to five feet in any direction.
- **Immunity:** In watery form, Nereid doesn't need to breathe at all and she's immune to atmospheric conditions.
- **Insubstantial:** Her watery form is fluid, allowing Nereid to flow through small cracks and openings and preventing anyone from holding on to her.
- **Suffocate:** Nereid's water form can flow around a foe, cutting off their air. Make a melee attack roll for Nereid. If successful, her opponent must make a Fortitude save (DC 15). If the save fails, the target suffers a -1 penalty on attack rolls, defense, and Reflex saves, can only take a standard or move action each round (not both) and moves at half speed. An additional Fortitude save (also DC 15) is required each round with failure meaning the victim passes out. The DC of the save increases each round Nereid maintains the Suffocate effect (by taking no other actions).
- **Swimming:** Nereid's swimming speed is increased tenfold in water form, allowing her to shoot through the water at up to 1,000 MPH like a silvery streak.

Thetis has found adapting to life in the surface world both exhilarating and frustrating at times. Thetis was raised as royalty in Atlantis, so she's used to having things her way. It has also taken her some time to get used to the customs of surface-folk, although she enjoys much of the culture Freedom City has to offer.

Nereid has all the normal water-breathing powers of her Atlantean heritage, so she is strong and able to swim at great speeds. She can breathe both water and air, and operate easily underwater. She also shares some of her grandmother's supernatural gifts and has the mystical ability to transform herself into water.

SEVEN

STR	DEK	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+0	+1	+1	+2	+3	+3
10	13	12	14	16	17

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+10/+1*	+4	+6	+9

*without force-field

SKILLS

Bluff 6 (+9), Concentration 8 (+11), Diplomacy 4 (+7), Knowledge (arcane lore) 8 (+10), Knowledge (history) 4 (+6), Notice 8 (+11), Sense Motive 6 (+9), Sleight of Hand 4 (+5)

POWERS

Flight 2: Seven can magically levitate, allowing her to fly at up to 25 MPH.

Force Field 9: With a protective spell, Seven can surround herself with a shimmering force field as a free action. It gives her a +9 bonus on Toughness saving throws (included on her saving throws line). If she is ever stunned, she must make a Concentration check (DC 19) to maintain her force field, otherwise it drops and must be re-established (taking a free action to do so).

Magic 10: Seven is a talented witch, able to cast a number of different spells. She can use her magic for the following effects:

- **Air Control:** Gusts of air knock targets off their feet. Make a ranged attack roll for Seven. If she hits, the target rolls Acrobatics, Dexterity, or Strength (whichever has the higher bonus) against Seven's roll of d20 + 10. If she wins the contest, the target is knocked prone and must take a move action to get back up.
- **Blast:** The spell creates a bolt of mystic force that does +10 damage (Toughness save, DC 25). Make a ranged attack roll to hit with the Blast.
- **Earth Control:** Seven can control the movement of up to 24 tons of earthen material (soil, sand, or stone), directing it as she wishes.
- **ESP:** Going into a light trance, Seven can see and hear things up to 20 miles away as if she was actually present at the point where she focuses her mystic senses. She often gazes into a crystal ball, mirror, or pool of water when using this spell.
- **Fire Control:** Seven can direct the movement of existing flames with this spell or snuff them out with a power check (d20 + 10 vs. DC 10 + the fire's damage bonus).
- **Obscure:** A spell of obscurement creates clouds of impenetrable fog, filling an area up to a mile across and making it all but impossible to see. Attacks made in the area have a 50% chance of missing, and characters unable to perceive their foes lose their dodge bonus against them.
- **Snare:** This spell entraps targets in bands of mystic force. If the ranged attack roll is successful, the target makes a Reflex saving throw (DC 20). On a failed save, the target is entangled: -2 on attack rolls and defense, and -4 to Dexterity. If the save fails by 5 or more, or the target is hit with a second snare, the target is bound and helpless: unable to move and reduced to Defense 5 (as if the character's defense modifier were -5, regardless of normal defense).
- **Water Control:** Seven can control the movement of up to 24 tons of water (fresh or salt), the equivalent of roughly a 10-foot cube of water.

Super Senses 1: Seven is attuned to the ebb and flow of magic and can sense magical powers used near her with a successful Notice check (DC 10, +1 per 10 feet distance between Seven and the power's user).

DAMAGE TRACK

Bruised	Staggered	Unconscious
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Injured	Disabled	Dying

COMBAT

Attack +5 (melee), +8 (ranged), Grapple +5, Damage +0 (unarmed), +10 (blast), Defense +8 (+3 flat-footed), Initiative +1

FEATS

Attack Focus (ranged) 3: Seven focuses on attacking for a distance, giving her a +3 bonus on ranged attack rolls, included in her combat abilities.

Dodge Focus 2: Seven has a +2 dodge bonus to her defense, lost whenever she loses her normal dodge bonus.

DRAWBACKS

Power Loss: Seven must cast spells to use her powers, requiring her to speak and gesture freely. If unable to do so, she cannot use her Flight, Force Field, or Magic powers.

Serena Vervain grew up in the West End of Freedom City, raised by her grandmother Lillian after her parents died in an accident. Her Nana taught Serena about herbs and folk remedies, read her stories and faerie tales, and told her about the little people and the spirits, both good and bad. Serena learned not to talk to other children about these things; they were part of the secret world she shared only with her Nana.

When Serena turned thirteen, she learned the truth. She came from a bloodline of witches that stretched back to the founding days of Freedom City. The gift often skipped generations, as it did with her mother, but Serena showed signs of being the most gifted witch in her family's history. As Serena's gifts awakened, she learned her family had enemies, some of them ancient, and she would need protection from them.

Her grandmother enrolled Serena at the Claremont Academy, where she could hone her gifts and benefit from both its protection and its education. There she took the codename "Seven," as seven is a magical number and she was the seventh fully realized witch of her bloodline.



SONIC

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1
12	13	12	12	13	12

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+10/+1*	+4	+7	+4

*without force-field

SKILLS

Bluff 6 (+7), Concentration 8 (+9), Intimidate 6 (+7), Knowledge (current events) 2 (+3), Knowledge (physical sciences) 2 (+3), Notice 6 (+7), Sense Motive 6 (+7)

FEATS

Attack Focus (ranged) 3: Sonic focuses on ranged attacks, giving him a +3 bonus on ranged attack rolls (included in his combat abilities).

Precise Shot: Sonic has enough precision with his ranged attacks that he can ignore the normal -4 penalty for shooting a ranged attack at someone engaged in melee combat with an ally of his, since he has no chance of hitting his ally.

Taunt: Sonic can demoralize an opponent with a Bluff skill check rather than an Intimidate check. Use the normal rules for demoralizing (see the **Intimidate** skill), substituting Bluff for Intimidate. Targets resist using Bluff, Sense Motive, or Will save (whichever is best) and gain a +1 bonus on their resistance check per taunt attempt against them in the same encounter.

Lemar Phillips had a pretty ordinary childhood growing up in Lincoln. He got into his share of trouble, although he was a good kid. He ran with a pretty rough crowd until he caught the attention of Wilson Jeffers, the director of the Lincoln Youth Center. Wilson helped give Lemar some direction and in many ways became the father figure he lacked at home.

One night, Lemar tried to stop a friend from getting involved in a gang robbery. Instead, he got dragged along against his will. Things went wrong and the gang botched an attempt to steal an experimental sonic disruptor, damaging the device in the process. When it exploded, Lemar took the brunt of the blast to save his friend's life. He miraculously survived and found he had gained the device's power to generate ultrasonics.

Lemar told Mr. Jeffers about his newfound abilities and Wilson Jeffers in turn shared his secret with Lemar: he had been the Black Avenger years before, a member of the Freedom League and the hero of Lincoln. Jeffers began training the boy to master his powers, and Lemar adopted the identity of Sonic.



DAMAGE TRACK

Bruised	Staggered	Unconscious
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Injured	Disabled	Dying

COMBAT

Attack +6 (melee), +9 (ranged), Grapple +7, Damage +1 (unarmed), +9 (blast), Defense +8, Initiative +1

POWERS

Flight 5: Sonic can fly through the air on waves of sound at up to 250 MPH.

Force Field 9: With a free action, Sonic can surround himself with a protective field of sonic vibrations, giving him a +9 bonus on Toughness saving throws (included in his saving throw line). If he is ever stunned, he must make a Concentration check (DC 19) to maintain his force field, otherwise it drops and must be re-established (taking a free action to do so).

Sonic Control 9: Sonic can generate and control sound frequencies, giving him the following abilities:

- **Deafen:** Emitting an ear-splitting blast of sound, Sonic can deafen people in a radius of 45 feet up to 450 feet away. Targets in the area make a Reflex save (DC 19). If the save fails, the target is deafened: losing any dodge bonus to defense against foes they can't hear or see (sneaking up behind them, for example). On the next round, the victim can make a Fortitude save (DC 19) to shake off the effect. The target gains +1 bonus to the save each round after the first, until the save is successful.
- **Sonic Blast:** Sonic can shoot sonic blasts of force as ranged attacks that do +9 damage (Toughness save, DC 24).
- **Sonic Cancellation:** Sonic can send out counter-vibrations that block out all sound in a radius of 500 feet, rendering the area totally silent.
- **Stun Blast:** Modulating his sonic blast, Sonic can strike with a ranged attack that stuns targets. If he hits, the target makes a Fortitude save (DC 16). On a result of 15 to 12 the target is *dazed* for a round: unable to take actions, but retaining dodge bonus to defense. A result of 11 to 7 means the target is *stunned* for a round: unable to take actions and losing dodge bonus for defense. A result of 6 or less means the target is knocked unconscious and out of the fight.

Super-Senses 1: Sonic can hear ultra-sonic frequencies, like those used in dog whistles or certain remote control devices.

Duncan Summers offered Sonic the opportunity to attend the Claremont Academy, but Lemar insisted on only doing so after his regular classes at Joseph Clark High School in Lincoln. Afternoons and evenings, Sonic patrols and trains with Mr. Jeffers and his teammates in the Next-Gen.

THEY'RE KNOWN AS...



SEVEN



WELCOME TO
CLAREMONT,
NATHAN.

"SEVEN'S MAGICAL TALENTS HAVE GROWN CONSIDERABLY
IN HER TIME HERE, AS HAVE HER LEADERSHIP SKILLS."

NERED



IT IS A
PLEASURE TO
MEET YOU.

"WE HAVE STUDENTS FROM VERY
FAR AWAY... LIKE ATLANTIS."

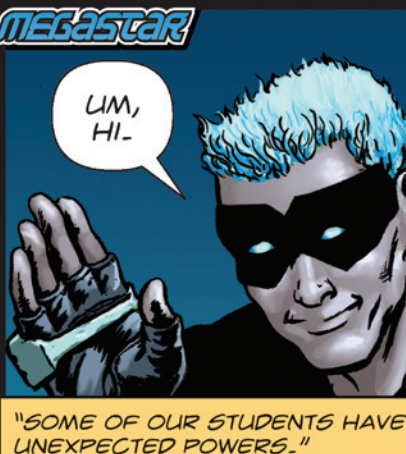
SONIC



YO.

"...AND VERY CLOSE BY, LIKE
HERE IN FREEDOM CITY."

MEGASTAR



UM,
HI.

"SOME OF OUR STUDENTS HAVE
UNEXPECTED POWERS."

BOLT



HEY,
CAPTAIN
THUNDER IS
MY DAD.

"WHILE OTHERS SEEM
DESTINED FOR THEM."



SO YOU'VE
TAKEN ON THE DOOM
ROOM... YOU UP FOR A
REAL CHALLENGE
NOW?

SUPER-SCHOOL SLUGFEST!

Now that Firepower has met his new classmates and you've had a chance to experience some action in the Doom Room, it's time to give Firepower a chance to throw down with the rest of the Next-Gen and to give *Mutants & Masterminds* a try with some friends!

Super-School Slugfest is more like a traditional *M&M* adventure, or at least an encounter from a complete adventure. It assumes one of the players takes on the responsibility of Gamemaster, although you *can* run the scenario without a GM, if you're all willing to agree to settle rules questions and disputes amongst yourselves. Still, if you're at all interested in Gamemastering, you might want to give it a try here and see if you like it.

In this scenario the members of the Next-Gen—the senior super-powered students of the Claremont Academy—go through a combat training exercise alongside newcomer Firepower. It's every hero for him- or herself, with bragging rights in the student lounge going to the victor!

PREPARATION

To play **Super-School Slugfest**, you need to do the following:

- 1 First, decide who will be Gamemaster. The GM moderates the game, handles any rules questions, and plays the actions of the Doom Room training program. The Gamemaster should read all of the rest of the scenario before play begins. If you're going to be a player, *do not read any further!* You might spoil some surprises. (Hey, didn't we tell you to stop reading? Go on! Shoo! Give this book to your GM.)
- 2 Okay, Gamemaster, have your players (up to six) choose which characters they want to play from Firepower and the five members of the Next-Gen and either give them copies of the character sheets or time to copy the character stats down on a piece of paper for reference. If two or more players want to play the same character, you can have them "dice-off:" each player rolls the die, with the highest roll getting to pick first.
- 3 Briefly familiarize your players with the material from the **Basics** section of this book. If there's time or you have multiple copies of the *Beginner's Guide* (or both), you might want to have the players read through the **Basics** section on their own and try out the **Into the Doom Room** scenario to familiarize themselves with how the game is played. Otherwise, feel free to summarize and show them how to play as the game goes along.
- 4 Lay out the map sheet (or a copy thereof) from the inside cover of this book and have each player use a counter for his or her character. Place the counters, one to a square, on the map on one side of the Doom Room.

ONLINE GAME AIDS

You can download free electronic copies of the Doom Room map and counters at www.mutantsandmasterminds.com rather than having to damage the cover of this book, if you prefer: simply print out the map sheet and print the counters on cardstock, or print them out on regular paper and glue them to a sheet of cardstock before cutting them out to make counters. You can also use miniature figures, if you have them available, to represent the Next-Gen characters on the map.

TAKING ACTION

When everyone is ready to go, read the following out loud to the players:

You stand in the Doom Room, tense and ready for the practice session to begin. Headmaster Summers' voice comes over the hidden intercom speakers:

"Remember, students, this is an exercise in restraint and control as much as combat ability. The object of this session is to overcome your opponents without seriously hurting anyone, including yourselves. I will be monitoring you and providing some... additional challenge from the room's systems. Begin!"

ROLL FOR INITIATIVE

When Summers starts the exercise, have each player make an *initiative roll*: roll the die and add the character's Initiative modifier (listed on the **Combat** line). On a piece of scrap paper, write down the characters' names in initiative order from highest to lowest. This is the order in which the characters will act for the rest of the conflict.

Example: *Players all roll for initiative and get the following results for their characters:*

Bolt: rolls 5 + 11 modifier = 16

Firepower: rolls 6 + 5 modifier = 11

Megastar: rolls 14 + 1 modifier = 15

Nereid: rolls 18 + 3 modifier = 21

Seven: rolls 8 + 1 modifier = 9

Sonic: rolls 12 + 1 modifier = 13

So the initiative order for the conflict is: Nereid, Bolt, Megastar, Sonic, Firepower, and Seven.

GETTING CAUGHT FLAT-FOOTED

On the first round of combat, after rolling initiative but before taking their first turn, characters are *flat-footed*, meaning they're off-balance, not quite ready to act yet. A flat-footed character loses any dodge bonuses to Defense, meaning opponents are often easier to hit if you go before them. Once a character has taken his first turn in a combat, he's no longer flat-footed. Keep this in mind for any actions taken in the first round of the conflict.

TAKE ACTIONS

Start with the character at the beginning of the initiative order and ask that character's player what he or she would like to do. Each character can take a standard action, a move action, and any number of free actions on the player's turn.

STANDARD ACTIONS

A standard action allows you to do something. You can make an attack, use a skill, feat, or power (unless it requires a full action to perform; see below), or perform other similar actions. During a combat round, you can take a standard action and a move action. You can take the move action before or after, but not during, the standard action.

ATTACK

With a standard action, you can make an attack against any opponent within the attack's range.

SHOOTING OR THROWING INTO MELEE

If you make a ranged attack against an opponent engaged in melee with an ally, you take a -4 penalty on your attack roll because you have to aim carefully to avoid hitting your ally. Two characters are engaged in melee if they are opponents and adjacent to one another. (An unconscious or otherwise immobilized character is not considered engaged unless he or she is actually being attacked.)

If the target is two or more size categories larger than any allies in melee, you ignore the -4 penalty.

DEMORALIZE

You can make an Intimidate check to demoralize an opponent as a standard action. By taking a -5 penalty on the check, you can attempt to demoralize as a move action. Demoralized characters are shaken (-2 to attack rolls, saving throws, and checks) for 1 round.

DISARM

As a standard action, you may attempt to knock an item such as a weapon or device out of an opponent's hand. Make an attack roll against the defender. If you attempt to disarm with a ranged attack, you are at -4 on your attack roll. If your attack succeeds, make an opposed roll of your attack's damage against the defender's Strength. If you win, the defender is disarmed. If you attempted the disarm action as an unarmed attack, you now have the weapon. Otherwise, the defender drops it. If you make a disarm attempt with a melee weapon and lose, the defender may immediately make an attempt to disarm you as a reaction, without an attack roll.

FEINT

You can make a Bluff check to feint as a standard action. By taking a -5 penalty on the check, you can attempt to feint as a move action. If your Bluff check succeeds, the target loses any dodge bonus against your next attack.

TAUNT

With the Taunt feat, you can make a Bluff check to demoralize an opponent as a standard action. By taking a -5 penalty on the check, you can attempt to taunt as a move action.

MOVE ACTIONS

A move action allows you to move your speed or perform an action taking a similar amount of time, such as climb one-quarter of your speed, draw or stow a weapon or other object, stand up, pick up an object, or perform some equivalent action (see the **Actions in Combat Table**).

You can take a move action in place of a standard action. For example, rather than moving your speed and attacking you can stand up and move your speed (two move actions), draw a weapon and climb one-quarter your speed (two move actions), or pick up an object and stow it in a backpack (two move actions).

If you move no actual distance in a round (usually because you have traded a move action for an equivalent action like standing up), you can take a 5-foot "step" before, during, or after the action. For example, you can stand up (a move action), take a 5-foot step, and attack (a standard action).

MOVE

The simplest move action is moving your speed. Many nonstandard modes of movement are also covered under this category, including climbing and

swimming (up to one-quarter the character's speed), crawling (up to 5 feet), and entering or exiting a vehicle. Various powers grant additional movement abilities, with speed determined by the power's rank.

FREE ACTIONS

Free actions consume very little time and, over the span of the round, their impact is so minor they are considered to take no real time at all. You can perform one or more free actions while taking another action. However, the GM puts reasonable limits on what you can do for free. A good rule of thumb is your Dexterity or Intelligence bonus +1 in free actions per round, with a minimum of one. For instance, dropping an object, dropping to a prone position, speaking a sentence or two, and ceasing to concentrate on maintaining a power are all free actions.

DELAY

By choosing to delay, you act at a later point in the initiative order than your rolled initiative. When you delay, you voluntarily reduce your initiative for the rest of the combat. When your new, lower initiative count comes up later in the same round, you can act normally. You can specify this new initiative total or just wait until some time later in the round and act then, fixing your new initiative at that point.

Delaying is useful if you need to see what your friends or enemies are going to do before deciding what to do yourself. The price you pay is lost initiative. You never get back the time you spent waiting to see what was going to happen.

DROP AN ITEM

Dropping a held item is a free action (although dropping or throwing an item with the intention of accurately hitting something is a standard action).

SPEAK

In general, speaking is a free action. Some Gamemasters may limit the amount you can say during your turn, although superheroes and villains can generally say quite a bit in the midst of combat. Issuing orders to followers or minions in combat is a move action.

TURN A POWER ON OR OFF

You can activate or deactivate a power as a free action. However, you can't activate *and* deactivate the same power in the same turn, the power's activation lasts until your next turn, when you can then deactivate it, if you choose. You can't turn off permanent powers.

REACTIONS

A reaction is something that happens in response to something else, like a reflex. Like free actions, reactions take so little time they're considered free. The difference between the two is a free action is a conscious choice made on the character's turn to act. A reaction is a reflex or automatic response that can occur even when it's not your turn to act. Characters can react even while unable to take normal actions, such as while stunned. A saving throw is an example of a reaction, something you instinctively do to avoid danger. Some powers and other traits are usable as reactions.

RESOLVE ACTIONS

Resolve the effects of the character's action or actions.

Once a player has taken a round's worth of actions for his or her action, move on to the next character in the initiative order and ask that character's player for actions, going back to the beginning of the **Take Actions** section to resolve that character's actions, and so forth until you have gone through all the characters. Then go back to the start of the initiative order (the character with the highest initiative) and on to the next round and the following section.

THE DOOM ROOM STRIKES BACK!

After the first round of conflict, Mr. Summers gets the Doom Room in on the action. Roll a die (with no modifier) and use that number as the Doom Room's place in the initiative order. So, if you roll a 7, then the Doom Room (under Summers' guidance) "acts" on initiative 7. If the roll ties with a character, have the Doom Room's turn come on the next available turn after that character. So if a character is already going on 7, have the Doom Room act on 6, for example.

Each round, when the Doom Room's turn comes up, roll a die and consult the **Doom Room Actions** table. Follow the directions given under the description for that result. On a roll of 1-10, the Doom Room takes no new action that round, but any already active items continue to function.

DOOM ROOM ACTIONS

d20 ROLL	ACTION
1-10	The Doom Room doesn't do anything new this round; continue the action as usual and roll again next round.
11	Pit Trap
12	Cage Trap
13	Rampaging Robot
14	Flame Cage
15	Steel Tentacles
16	Stun Gas
17	Vertigo Beam
18	Homing Missiles
19	Sonic Screamer
20	Freeze Ray

Doom Room actions randomly target one of the heroes each time they come up: either pick a hero at random or have the players roll dice, with the lowest roll affected by the action.

PIT TRAP

A trap door opens under a character, revealing a pit underneath. If the character is flying, this trap has no effect, otherwise, have the character's player make a Reflex saving throw (DC 15). A successful save means the character leaps aside at the last moment and avoids the pit. A failed save means the character falls in and the trap door closes.

The fall requires a Toughness saving throw (DC 15) to avoid injury. A failed save results in damage (see the table in the **Resolve Actions** section). Getting out of the pit isn't easy, either: it requires the ability to reach the hatch, some 10 feet overhead (either a power or a DC 20 Strength check to climb up to it).

Then the character has to get the hatch open, requiring a DC 30 Strength check or a damaging power: the hatch is Toughness +10 and rolls Toughness saving throws like a character. A failed save reduces the hatch's Toughness by 1. Failure by 10 or more breaks the hatch and allows the character to escape. A successful Toughness save for the hatch means no appreciable damage from that attempt.

CAGE TRAP

A cage of steel bars springs up around a character. Have the player make a Reflex saving throw (DC 15). A successful save means the character avoids

the cage before it closes and is not trapped. A failed save means the character is trapped in the cage, limiting movement and tactical options.

Getting out of the cage requires some means of slipping through the narrowly spaced bars (like Nereid's water form) or the sheer ability to bend or break the bars. Use the same guidelines for breaking through the metal hatch under the **Pit Trap** (previously).

RAMPAGING ROBOT

The Doom Room produces a fighting robot from a hidden compartment. The robot attacks a random character each round in addition to the Doom Room's other actions so long as it is active. The robot has the following traits:

DOOM ROOM ROBOT

Str 30 **Dex 9** **Con —** **Int —** **Wis 11** **Cha —**

POWERS

Blast 10: The robot can shoot blasts of force from its hands, making attack rolls with a +5 bonus. If a blast hits the DC of the Toughness save is 25 (15 + the blast's damage bonus of +10).

Immunity 30 (Fortitude): As a machine, the Doom Room robot is immune to any effects with a Fortitude saving throw. It automatically makes such saves, making it immune to things like disease and poison, suffocation, and so forth.

Protection 10: The robot's armor plating gives it protection from damage, increasing its Toughness saving throw. This bonus is already included in the robot's +10 Toughness save bonus.

COMBAT

Attack +5, Damage +10 (unarmed), +10 (blast), Defense +5 (+3 flat-footed), Initiative -1

SAVES

Toughness: +10 **Fortitude: —** **Reflex: +2** **Will: —**



Damaged

Disabled

FLAME CAGE

A projector in the wall or floor surrounds the target character in a cage of flames, limiting movement and mobility. Touching the cage provokes a Toughness saving throw (DC 21); a failed save means the character remains trapped. A successful save allows the character to escape. A trapped character can attempt to escape again each turn until she succeeds.

The cage can also be doused with an appropriate power: make an opposed check of d20 + the power's rank versus d20 + 6 (the cage's damage). If the power wins, the flames are doused and the character is free. Suitable powers include things like Nereid's water form and Seven's spells (particular Air or Water Control), even Firepower's own Flame Control.

STEEL TENTACLES

Four flexible steel tentacles spring from the wall, floor, or even ceiling of the Doom Room to ensnare a character. Have the player make a Reflex saving throw (DC 18). A successful save means the character escapes the tentacles' grasp. A failed save means the character is entangled in the tentacles: -2 to attack rolls, Defense, and Dexterity checks and unable to move away from that location. If the save fails by 5 or more, the character is completely bound up in the tentacles and cannot take any action requiring physical movement. A bound character is Defense 5 (and therefore easy to hit).

Escaping from the tentacles requires either a DC 28 Dexterity check or breaking the tentacles themselves; use the guidelines for breaking through the metal hatch under the **Pit Trap** (previously).

STUN GAS

A jet of stun gas engulfs the character. Have the player make a Reflex saving throw (DC 18), followed by a Fortitude saving throw (DC 14 if the Reflex save succeeds, DC 18 if it fails). If the character has the Evasion feat (as Bolt does), then no Fortitude save is required if the Reflex save succeeds.

A successful Fortitude save means there's no effect. A failed save means the character is dazed: unable to act for one round, but retaining normal Defense. If the Fortitude save fails by 5 or more, the character is stunned: unable to act for one round and losing dodge bonus to Defense for that time. If the save fails by 10 or more, the character is unconscious and out of the fight.

VERTIGO BEAM

The Doom Room strikes with a beam that upsets the sense of balance, inducing nausea and vertigo. Have the character's player make a Will saving throw (DC 14): a failed save means the target suffers a -2 penalty to attack rolls and Defense for the next round. If the save fails by 5 or more, the target can only take a move action on the following round, not a standard action. If the save fails by 10 or more, the target passes out and is out of the fight.

HOMING MISSILES

A volley of three small homing missiles launches from a hidden panel in the Doom Room, locking on to a particular target. The missiles attack with a +4 attack bonus and do +8 damage if they hit. If they miss, they turn around and head back towards their target for another pass on the Doom Room's turn, making another attack roll. They do this up to five times until they hit something.

Characters can either attack or try and out maneuver the missiles. They are Defense 18 (DC 28 attack roll to hit them) and any successful attack detonates them. Alternately, a character who spends his or her entire round evading the missiles can make a DC 18 Dexterity or Acrobatics check, with success meaning the missiles veer too close to a wall and explode without hitting anyone.

SONIC SCREAMER

A device extends from the Doom Room's ceiling, emitting a powerful ultrasonic shriek. Have all of the players make a Will save (DC 16) for their characters: a failed save means the target suffers a -2 penalty to attack rolls and Defense for the next round. If the save fails by 5 or more, the target can only take a move action on the following round, not a standard action. If the save fails by 10 or more, the target cannot take any action at all (other than clutching his or her ears in pain). Each round, on the Doom Room's action, have the players roll another Will save, so long as the Sonic Screamer is active.

Sonic can negate the Screamer using his Sound Control power (blanketing the room with a sound-negating field): have Sonic's player roll d20 + Sound Control rank vs. DC 16. Alternately, an attack on the Screamer (Defense 18) disables it.

FREEZE RAY

An extending weapon fires a beam that traps a target in ice. Have the player make a Reflex saving throw (DC 17). A successful save means the character escapes the freeze ray. A failed save means the character's legs



are ensnared in ice: -2 to attack rolls, Defense, and Dexterity checks and unable to move away from that location. If the save fails by 5 or more, the character is completely trapped in ice and cannot take any action requiring physical movement.

Escaping from the ice requires either a DC 28 Dexterity check or breaking the ice; use the guidelines for breaking through the metal hatch under the **Pit Trap** (previously), except the ice is only Toughness 7. Firepower can melt the ice automatically with his flame power as a standard action.

CONCLUSION

The test ends when only one hero is still capable of action, or when none of them are (due to the Doom Room and their teammates). In the role of Headmaster Summers, congratulate the students for having completed the training session, either praising the winner for coming out ahead or telling them all that you expect them to do better next time, if they fell victim to the Doom Room's various traps.

Congratulations to you on completing your first *Mutants & Masterminds* adventure! Even more superheroic adventure and excitement await you in the *Mutants & Masterminds* roleplaying game. Check out the options available in the **What's Next?** section at the end of this book!

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following are terms with specific meanings in the *Mutants & Masterminds* rules. You may want to consult this *Glossary* while reading through this book when you encounter an unfamiliar term.

ability score: The numerical rating of an ability.

ability: One of the six basic character traits: Strength (Str), Dexterity (Dex), Constitution (Con), Intelligence (Int), Wisdom (Wis), and Charisma (Cha).

action: A character activity. There are standard actions, move actions, full actions, free actions, and reactions.

adventure: A story for players to experience, like a single issue of a comic book.

alternate power: One power that may be substituted for another, but not usable at the same time as the other(s), giving a single power different options or "settings."

array: A collection of alternate powers.

attack bonus: A modifier used to measure a character's combat skill.

attack roll: A roll to determine if an attack hits. To make an attack roll, roll d20 and add the appropriate modifiers for the attack type. An attack hits if the result is equal to or greater than the target's Defense. An attack die roll of 20 always hits, while a die roll of 1 always misses.

attack: Any of numerous actions intended to harm, disable, or neutralize an opponent. An attack is usually a standard action.

bonus: A positive modifier to a die roll.

campaign (also series): A series of linked adventures, forming the backdrop against which the characters interact and participate in the setting. Think of a campaign as an ongoing comic book series.

character: A fictional individual in the game. The players control *player characters*, while the Gamemaster controls all *non-player characters* (NPCs).

check: A method of deciding the outcome of an action (other than attacking or making a saving throw). Checks are based on a relevant character ability, skill, power, or other trait. To make a check, roll d20 and add any relevant modifiers. If the check result equals or exceeds the Difficulty Class of a task or the result of an opponent's check, it succeeds.

condition: A character's overall health and state of being.

critical hit (crit): An attack inflicting additional damage. To score a critical hit, an attacker must first score a threat (usually a natural 20 on an attack roll, depending on the attack being used) and the attack total must exceed the target's Defense. A critical hit does +5 damage.

damage bonus: A modifier used to determine the damage of an attack.

damage: Harm caused to a character by injury, illness, or some other source.

DC: Difficulty Class.

deal damage (also inflict damage): Cause damage to a target.

defense bonus: Modifier used to determine how difficult a character is to hit in combat.

Defense: A measure of how difficult a character is to hit in combat. Defense equals 10 + defense bonus.

descriptor: A term describing the nature of a power. A descriptor may define how certain effects appear or function.

Difficulty Class (DC): The number a player must meet or beat for a check or saving throw to succeed.

dodge bonus: Half the defense bonus (rounded up). Characters lose their dodge bonus when they are flat-footed, stunned, or otherwise incapable of reacting to an attack.

dying: Near death and unconscious. A dying character can take no actions.

effect: An aspect of a power with a particular game effect.

encounter (also scene): A portion of an adventure, like a chapter of a story.

extra: A power modifier that enhances a power, increasing its cost.

fail: Achieve an unsuccessful result for a check, saving throw, or other die roll.

flat-footed: Especially vulnerable to attacks at the beginning of a fight. Characters are flat-footed until their first turn in the initiative cycle. Flat-footed characters lose their dodge bonus to Defense.

flaw: A power modifier that limits a power, reducing its cost.

free action: A minor activity, requiring very little time and effort.

full action (also full-round action): An action requiring all your effort in a round. Some skills, feats, and powers require a full action (or longer) to use.

Gamemaster (GM): The player who portrays characters not controlled by the other players, makes up the story setting for the game, and serves as the referee.

hero (also superhero or player character): A character controlled by a player, one of the main protagonists of an adventure or series.

hero points: Points players can spend to gain bonuses with particular actions.

lethal: Damage that can disable or kill a target.

melee attack: An attack used in close combat.

melee weapon: A handheld weapon designed for close combat.

modifier: Any bonus or penalty applied to a die roll.

move action: An action intended to move a distance or to manipulate or move an object. You can take up to two move actions per round.

natural: A natural result on a roll is the actual number appearing on the die, not the modified result obtained by adding bonuses or subtracting penalties.

non-lethal: Damage that stuns or knocks out a target, but does no permanent harm. Unless specified otherwise, damage in *Mutants & Masterminds* is non-lethal.

non-player character (NPC): A character controlled by the Gamemaster (as opposed to a character controlled by a player).

penalty: A negative modifier to a die roll.

player character (PC, also hero): A character controlled by a player, one of the main protagonists of an adventure or campaign.

power feat: An enhancement or alternate use of a power.

power modifier: An increase or decrease in a power's capabilities, also increasing or decreasing its cost.

power: A superhuman trait, like the ability to fly or shoot blasts of energy.

range increment: Each full range increment of distance between an attacker and a target gives the attacker a cumulative -2 penalty to the ranged attack roll. Normal ranged attacks have a maximum range of ten range increments. Thrown weapons have a maximum range of five range increments.

ranged attack: Any attack made at a distance.

ranged weapon: An energy, projectile, or thrown weapon designed for attacking from a distance.

rank: A measure of a character's level of ability with a skill or power.

reaction: An action that takes place in response to some circumstance. Reactions take no time or effort on the character's part, occurring automatically.

result: The total value of a die roll plus all applicable modifiers, which is compared against the Difficulty Class. So, for example, the result of an attack roll with a +8 modifier where the die comes up an 11 is 19 (or 11 + 8).

round: A six-second unit of game time used to manage combat. Every character in combat may take at least one action every round.

saving throw (save): A roll made to avoid or reduce harm. The four types of saving throws are Toughness, Fortitude, Reflex, and Will.

staggered: Badly beaten and barely holding on to consciousness. Staggered characters can take a standard or move action each round, but not both.

standard action: An action intended to do something within about 3 seconds. You can perform a single standard action per round.

target (also subject): The intended recipient of an attack, action, or power.

trained: Having at least 1 rank in a skill.

trait: Any of a character's game-defined qualities: abilities, bonuses, skills, feats, and powers are all traits.

unarmed attack: A melee attack made with no weapon in hand.

untrained: Having no ranks in a skill. Some skills cannot be used untrained.

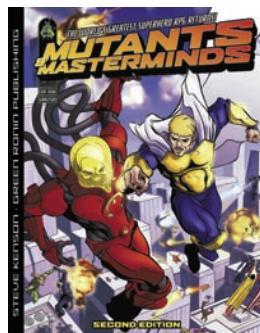
villain (also supervillain): An adversary controlled by the Gamemaster.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Now that you've had a chance to read through the *M&M Beginner's Guide*, and hopefully to enjoy playing *Mutants & Masterminds* yourself, what's next? If you're interested in knowing more about the World's Greatest Superhero RPG, or perhaps even running an *M&M* game of your own, look no further than Green Ronin Publishing's complete line of *Mutants & Masterminds* products!

MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS CORE RULEBOOK

The *Mutants & Masterminds* core rulebook gives you everything you need to play and run the game, all in a beautiful full-color hardcover book. In addition to all the material found in the *M&M Pocket Player's Guide*, the core rulebook has chapters of advice on Gamemastering, how to run the game, how to create your own unique superheroic setting, villain and supporting cast archetypes, and two introductory adventures to kick-off your game! Both "The Heist" and "A League of Their Own" can serve as good follow-ups to the introduction in this book.



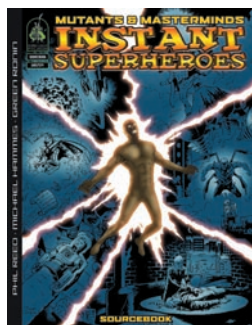
MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS POCKET PLAYER'S GUIDE

If you're just interested in playing *M&M*, then the *Pocket Player's Guide* is the resource for you. This handy digest-sized softcover book has all the rules found in the *M&M* core rulebook you need to play the game, without the Gamemaster-oriented material on how to run the game. The *Pocket Player's Guide* has everything you need to create your own heroes, including a selection of hero archetypes, and all the rules you need to reference while playing the game, all in an easy to use and inexpensive format.



INSTANT SUPERHEROES

If you're looking for even more examples of *M&M* heroes, check out the *Instant Superheroes* sourcebook, a collection of ready-to-play character archetypes for the most popular superhero concepts. *Instant Superheroes* offers nearly three-dozen archetypes, each with a couple variations, for nearly a hundred characters! It's an indispensable resource for *M&M* players and Gamemasters alike.



FREEDOM CITY CAMPAIGN SETTING

Thinking about running *Mutants & Masterminds*, but don't want to have to come up with a setting of your own? Look no further than the award-winning *Freedom City* campaign setting sourcebook! In its pages you'll find a fully detailed fictional city suitable for use as a setting for *Mutants & Masterminds* adventures.

The sourcebook features a detailed history of Freedom City, maps and information on its various neighborhoods and districts, background material and adventure ideas, and a host of costume-clad inhabitants. You'll learn about the world-spanning Freedom League, the Atom Family, explorers of the imagination, and all about the young heroes-in-training at the Claremont Academy, including the Next-Gen.

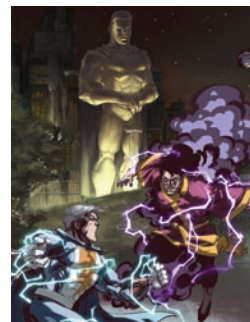
Defend Freedom City from sinister villains like the Crime League, Dr. Simian, Talos and the Foundry, or the threat of SHADOW! The sourcebook describes dozens of supervillains you can use as foes for your *M&M* adventures. Packed with ideas, *Freedom City* is an entire *Mutants & Masterminds* series in one book!



MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS GAMESMASTER SCREEN

You're running your first *Mutants & Masterminds* game and everything is going smoothly, until you need to find that key reference or table to know the outcome of a critical die roll. Even looking it up in the index isn't fast enough for the pace of your game. You need a quick-reference, with the most important information right there in front of you. You need the *M&M Gamemaster Screen*!

The *Gamemaster Screen* is a cardstock folding screen, one side containing all the useful charts and references a Gamemaster needs, the other featuring a panoramic image of the Freedom League versus the Crime League in Freedom City, along with charts useful to the players during the game. With the *M&M Gamemaster Screen* in front of you, you'll never have to stop the action. Even if it *doesn't* have what you're looking for, it provides cover so your players will never know...



MASTERMIND'S MANUAL

Think you've mastered the World's Greatest Superhero RPG? You haven't until you've read the *Mastermind's Manual*. The first rules supplement for *Mutants & Masterminds*, the *Mastermind's Manual* puts the power of the rules in your hands and gives you the tools to modify the game to suit any style, tone, or genre you want!

The *Mastermind's Manual* expands the core rule systems for creating characters, including modifying power levels or even eliminating them altogether for an unlimited power game. It adds new levels of depth and detail with options like skill challenges, new skills and feats, and new game systems for handling chases, weapon proficiency, tactical combat, and more.

Learn how to use the *M&M* system to the fullest and become a true Game Master. Build the setting and the game you want to run and your players want to play. Master the possibilities!



ULTIMATE POWER

Ultimate Power is the complete guide to super-powers for *Mutants & Masterminds*, written by M&M designer Steve Kenson. Its pages are packed with detailed power descriptions, expanding the material from the M&M rulebook alongside new powers, power modifiers, power feats, and applications. Also included are optional rules for more detailed applications of powers and guidelines for creating your own powers.

Ultimate Power makes creating any sort of super-powered hero or villain a breeze: all the work is done for you! Just choose the powers you want your character to have from the book's wide selection. No assembly required. If what you want is: *more power*, then *Ultimate Power* gives it to you, and then some!



TIME OF VENGEANCE

A threat from the forgotten past looms over Freedom City! Who will be able to save the city and its people from... the Time of Vengeance?

Time of Vengeance is a full-length adventure for *Mutants & Masterminds*, presenting an all-new group of villains to threaten Freedom City and challenge your heroes. It's also an opportunity for a relatively new group of heroes to go from nobodies to the new protectors of the city of Freedom, provided they survive the wrath of a villain bent on destroying their new charge!



...AND MUCH MORE!

Green Ronin Publishing has many more exciting *Mutants & Masterminds* products, including the *Golden Age* and *Iron Age* sourcebooks, describing the comic book eras of the 1940s and the 1980s in detail as settings for superhero game-play. Also coming in 2007 is the *Paragons* campaign setting: a world much like our own where super-powered paranormals change the course of ordinary events, creating a world where anything could happen... and does!

GET ONLINE

Need more *Mutants & Masterminds* right now? Then hop online and come visit www.mutantsandmasterminds.com, your source for the latest in M&M news and information, including updates and free enhancements from Green Ronin Publishing.

At the M&M website, you'll find the latest news, *Super-Vision* design journals for upcoming products, errata and frequently asked questions files, and free downloads and enhancements, including free adventures and game aids!

SHOP THE ONLINE STORE

At mutantsandmasterminds.com, you'll find links to the Green Ronin online store, where you can order the latest M&M products, from game books to T-shirts to Cosmo the Moon Monkey! You can also purchase and download electronic copies of our products in PDF format.

JOIN THE THINK TANK

Visit the Atomic Think Tank forums at www.atomicthinktank.com or via the mutantsandmasterminds.com website for the official forums to meet with other players and fans to discuss the World's Greatest Superhero RPG!

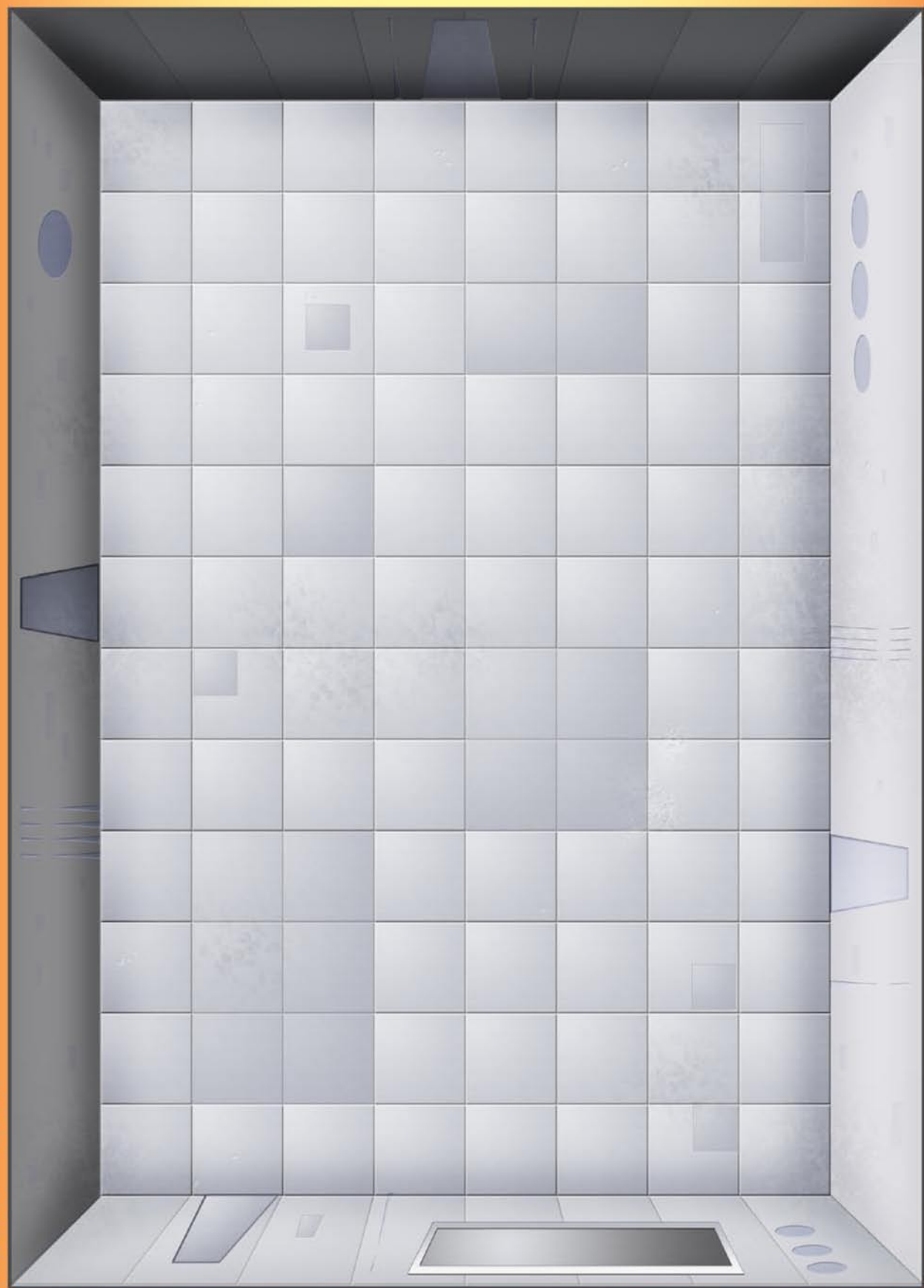
The forums include fans offering assistance with questions, posting their own game ideas or characters stats, and interacting with Green Ronin staff, including the *Mutants & Masterminds* line developer. You can have your own questions answered, find a group to play with, or just hang out and talk about the latest comic book or movie.

M&M SUPERLINK

The fun and excitement don't stop with Green Ronin's official M&M products. Thanks to the Open Gaming License, there's also *M&M Superlink*, a series of licensed products from other game publishers specifically for use with *Mutants & Masterminds*. Whenever you see the M&M Superlink logo you'll know you're getting a product you can use to enhance your M&M game. Many fine Superlink products are available in electronic format and print-on-demand from RPGNow.com.



THE DOOM ROOM!



1 square = 5 feet

THE NEXT GEN



SEVEN



SONIC



NEREID



MEGASTAR



BOLT



FIREPOWER

FACES THE TRIALS OF...

THE DOOM ROOM!

PIT TRAP



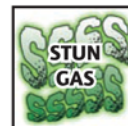
RAMPAGING ROBOT



CAGE TRAP

FLAME CAGE

STEEL TENTACLES



STUN GAS

VERTIGO BEAM



HOMING MISSILES

SONIC SCREAMER



FREEZE RAY