

Action Spectra

Core Rules

Action Spectra Core Rules

Play-test version A

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Arrogant Game Design



Welcome to Make Believe

The calling and power of make believe is within all of us. We use make believe in metaphor to describe one thing as another, which it is not. We use make believe to teach, describing situations and events, and then discovering solutions and lessons. We use make believe to congregate, to share another's perceptions by imaging ourselves as them. We use make believe to have fun.

It is this sense of fun, the whimsy we enjoyed as children, that we as adults seek to recreate. But instead of the free form, organic make believe of childhood, let us structure it somewhat; let's find a language to share a world, share our characters and share our adventure. Now we are not just playing make believe, we are playing a role-playing game.

In this game the players choose a setting, a world in which to adventure. This can be as familiar as the world in which we live in, or as fantastic as those crafted by Tolkien, Lewis, Baum or Howard. One of the players is chosen to act as the Game Master (GM). It is his responsibility to describe the world and its inhabitants to the other players. The rest become Players, who craft individual Player Characters (PC), heroes, adventurers and protagonists who set out into this world to achieve glory, save the day, explore, or search out whatever goal so interests them.

Most typically, the GM will create a set adventure for the players, designing the specific locales, people and objects the PCs will encounter. The GM describes all that the PCs sense in this world, and the players in turn describe their actions to the GM. Then, using the rules and his judgement, the GM describes the effects of the PC's attempts to the players.

And that, in short, is a role-playing game. A game in which players interact to make-believe their characters solve a problem or participate in some communal experience. We have been playing make-believe all our lives. But now we structure it with rules. And in Action Spectra we choose to structure our rules by *colors*.



Welcome to the Colors

From time immemorial, humans have associated colors with moods, energies, powers...dreams. The connections between colors and connotations are partially physical, biological even, but primarily social. In western cultures, the colors of black and white represent a polarity between evil and goodness, the unknown and the knowable. Purple has been a regal and ancient color (because for centuries only the richest kings and pharos could afford purple dyes). The blue of the sky has associated that color with the eternal heavens and the cool indelibility of the ocean. Red will always be associated with blood, but also the passions and energy that comes with it. Thus it can represent not only vigor and strength, but also rashness.

Action Spectra has used these classical associations to indicate a person's holistic make-up. Drawing from contemporary color theory and adapting from "New-Age" practices, we use six colors to describe the fundamental make-up of a human being. The central precept of Spectra is that there is no mind-body dualism as commonly perceived in Western philosophy and game design. We ignore René

Descartes' legacy and instead assume that both the mental dexterity necessary in adapting to a new problem and the physical dexterity to move quickly out of the way can both be represented by the color orange.

A different dualism appears in these rules, however, that between "warm" and "cold" colors. The warm colors are red, orange and yellow. They tend towards more "active" connotations (as will be discussed in later chapters). Green, blue and purple, the cool colors, tend to be more passive, and are often used to resist actions against a character. Red and orange are strongly connected to the body, physicality and combat, whereas blue and purple are related to will power, experience and spiritual or magical prowess.

Granted, these assumptions are gross over simplifications, not only of the way the universe behaves, but also from the theories from which we derive these connotations. Further, since the symbolic nature of the colors is ultimately arbitrary, Players and Game Masters are able to redefine the scheme, changing the colors to preferred ones or replacing the colors entirely with symbols of one's own choosing.

Welcome to Action Spectra

Action Spectra is a role-playing game engine designed to provide quick and effortless resolution to a role-playing scenario. It was designed as a generic engine, allowing players to explore any set of characters in any setting the group may choose. It is also designed to be easy to learn and easy to play. The rules are not as in depth or as scientific as many other systems.

Overview of the Book

To help you learn the Action Spectra system we will first describe the six colors we use and what they are used for. Then we discuss the principal ways they are used: on dice, in color bars and as "pips." We continue by discussing how they are used when a character attempts actions or "feats." And finally describe how to use them to create a character for your game. We conclude the book with a list of skills which are explained under the feats section and a selection of miscellaneous information useful in running the game.

The Colors

Action Spectra uses six colors to represent the division of a character and the actions that can be taken in a game. Each color represents a number of aspects of the human make-up, physical, mental and emotional.

Red

Red is the color of blood, passion, fury, anger and raw physical strength. When speaking in general terms, red represents “Vigor,” and is represented in color bars as “R”. Some actions that use red include breaking objects and many athletic feats such as jumping and throwing things. Attacking with large, heavy, unbalanced weapons such as clubs and axes also primarily use red. Some words associated with the color red are: Action, Angrily, Ardor, Audacity, Boldly, Braggart, Brawn, Brute force, Dominant, Dramatic, Enthusiastic, Explosive, Fearless, Fervor, Fiery, Forceful, Hate, Intense, Liveliness, Loving, Lovingly, Lust, Might, Muscle, Passion, Physique, Potent, Power, Rage, Romantic, Spirited, Spunk, Strength, Swagger, Tempestuous, Vehemence, Verve, Vibrant, Vim, Vitality, and Zealous.



Canny, Charismatic, Charmingly, Craftily, Craftsmanship, Deftness, Dexterity, Eloquent, Graceful, Insightful, Knack, Mastery, Nimbleness, Nimbleness, Persuasive, Savvy, Shrewd, Skillfully, Sneaky, and Wistful.

Yellow

Yellow is the color of energy, speed and endurance. It represents not only physical quickness but also mental aptitude and emotional resiliency. When speaking in general terms, yellow represents “Energy,” and is represented in color bars as “Y”. Actions that use yellow include physical feats such as running and sprinting, as well as intellectual exercises in fields such as engineering, mechanics and languages. Some words associated with yellow are: Acumen, Animated, Apprehensive, Bright, Chipper, Comprehension, Devoted, Drive, Fast, Fearful, Fleet, Flighty, Gaiety, Hasty, Hostile, Impulsive, Intense, Joyful, Life-force, Lively, Motion, Pep, Perky, Quickly, Quick-witted, Sharp, Sprightly, Swift, Verve, Vivacious, and Youthful.



Orange

Orange is the color of deftness, creativity, and elegance. It is not only deftness of the body, but also the mind—one’s ability to slide the mind around a problem. When speaking in general terms, orange represents “Artistry,” and is represented in color bars as “O”. Some actions which use orange are creating and performing works of art, wielding weapons that require finesse such as swords and knives, working with fine mechanics and performing slight of hand tricks. Some words associated with the color orange are: Agility, Adeptness, Adroitness, Adventurousness,



Green

Green is the color of awareness, perception and empathy. It is used to describe one’s perceptions of the physical world and the inner turning of another’s soul. This can include a character’s ability to “tune into” the world around them, to become one with the universe. When speaking in general terms, green represents “Awareness,” and in color bars is



The Colors

represented by "G". Actions that use green include sneaking around, controlling and training animals and piloting vehicle. Using guns and rifles primarily use green to perceive the distant targets, but so does hand to hand combat which involves reading your opponent for openings and weaknesses. Some words associated with green are: Alertness, Attentiveness, Attuned, Balanced, Eagle-eyed, Empathic, Empirical, Humane, Intuitive, Keenness, Measured, Observant, Perception, Receptive, Sensitive, Sympathetic, Synchronicity, Vigilance, Wary, and Watchful.

Blue

Blue is the color of toughness, endurance, strength of will. It represents not only mental and physical toughness but strength of personality as well. When speaking in general terms, blue represents "Implacability," and is represented in color bars as "B". Blue is rarely used in actions; it is more of a passive trait used to resist being hurt, or being ordered about. Some words associated with blue are: Apathetic, Back-bone, Brave, Commanding, Control, Durable, Endurance, Enduring, Eternal, Fortitude, Hardy, Passive, Patient, Purposeful, Robust, Ruthless, Stalwartly, Stout, Studious, Sturdy, Tenacity, Toughness, Uncaring, and Unflinching

Purple

The last of the true colors, purple is the color of personality, experience and wisdom. It is a representation of the knowledge gained over a lifetime. When speaking in general terms purple represents "sagacity," and is represented in color bars as "P".



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Purple is often used to see how knowledgeable a character is in such fields as religions, history and literature as well as medicine and more esoteric pursuits such as magical and occult studies. Some words associated with purple are: Astute, Contemplative, Cryptic, Distinguished, Earnest, Enlightened, Experienced, Knowledge, Learned, Majestic, Mystical, Nerdy, Noble, Philosophical, Practical, Pragmatic, Prestige, Regal, Regency, Renowned, Scholarly, Sovereignty, Venerable, Wise, and Worn.

White

When white light is projected through a prism we see that it contains all the colors of the spectrum. The same is true for white in this game. White represents all colors and can be used as any color the player wishes. When white is used in a color bar it is represented by "w".

Black

Black is the void, signifying a complete absence of color. Black has no attribute and represents no physical or mental quality. We use it merely a place marker on the die to show the lack of a color on that face. Under normal circumstances black is never used in yields or color bars, but if it need be it is represented by "x".

Symbols

Certain game worlds allow for additional symbols which allow characters to perform powers beyond the realm of normal man, such as magical or mystical powers, or superheroes. The setting will determine if there are special symbols, what they are, and how they are used.

Dice and Pips

The colors listed above are used to represent every thing in the game world. An astute person would have a lot of yellow and green in his make up to represent his quick wit (yellow) and his understanding of people and things around him (green), while a big ol' gun would have a lot of red to represent the huge amounts of painful damage it can cause. People and things are represented not only by the colors listed above, but also by their distribution on dice or in "pips." The arrangement of colors on dice or as pips show the ability and quality of a person or thing.

Character Dice

Most characters are defined using one or more "character die." A character die is a six-sided die, but instead of numbers on the faces, the eight colors (or other symbols) are used. Whenever a character takes an action, he rolls all his character dice, and sees what colors are generated in the "yield". Roughly speaking, the more dice a character has, the more powerful or the more likely he is to succeed in his actions and the more effective his actions will be.

While dice that make up a player character are all unique, other characters and objects often use a set of generic dice. There are three types of generic dice. A die that has one of each color on it is called "balanced." A die that has two red faces, two orange faces and two yellow faces is called "hot," while a die that has two green faces, two blue faces and two purple faces is called "cold."

Character Pips

Pips are free floating instances of color that are not attached to a die and can be either permanent or temporary. Permanent pips are attributes of people and objects. They can be use over and over when an object or power is used in a certain fashion. For instance a motorcycle might have a yellow pip the character may include whenever driving.

Temporary pips are bonuses that can be used once for a quick advantage. These pips can be spent to increase a character's chance of success when attempting a feat. They can also be depleted when things go wrong. Once spent these pips are gone for good.



Object Dice

Certain important or powerful objects are described using colored dice (either alone or in addition to permanent pips). Whenever a character uses the object in any feat, include the object's dice with the character dice in the roll.

Objects With Personality

Many devices, both in literature and in reality, have their own personality to them. They seem to choose interesting moments to act up, to not work, or might surprise you by succeeding in a task you really didn't think it could do. The computer might freeze up just before the dissertation is finished, the television might only like the Spanish language stations, or the car might actually decide that despite its shimmering and clunking, it will actually get over the very, very steep hill. The magic sword might have an agenda and only work when wielded justly, the spaceship might have a deranged Artificial Intelligence, and gets to chose when to go to light-speed or the magic carpet might fly only when it damned well wants to.

Dice and Pips

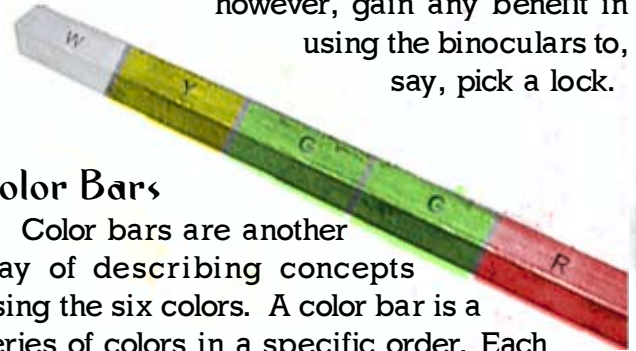
To represent the fickle nature of these objects, purple faces on an object die represent its “personality.” When an object yields a purple face, the GM gets to choose whether to consider it “in phase” with the action or not (see **Feats** page 9). In this case, it will be in phase if the object “wants” to do it. Remember, most objects “want” to be left alone, turned off or sit quietly in the garage. Especially old and worn objects.

Object Pips

Most objects won't have dice, however. Few of them, in fact, will have any colors associated with them at all. They will just give a character the opportunity to do something. For instance, a late model gray sedan, with absolutely no personality, for better or worse, would just give the character's the ability to get across town without wearing them out. If an object is of exceptional quality it might have permanent pips which can be used to increase a character's chance of success.

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A permanent pip is an instance of color yielded when using an object for a specific purpose. For instance, a good set of binoculars might have a green pip when used to see something at a distance. Whenever a character looks through them, he will automatically gain one green in his yield. He will not, however, gain any benefit in using the binoculars to, say, pick a lock.



Color Bars

Color bars are another way of describing concepts using the six colors. A color bar is a series of colors in a specific order. Each individual color in the color bar is called a “pip” and a collection of identical pips in a row is called a “set.” For example, in the standard vitality color bar: RRY there are three pips: two red pips, and one yellow. There are also two sets: one red set, and one yellow set.



Feats

In role-playing games, the Game Master describes a scenario, a setting, and other characters in the adventure, and then the players describe what their characters will do. We call what a character wants to do a “feat.” Sometimes, the character succeeds. Other times he fails.

When to Check for Success

A player does not have to roll his dice for every action he wants his character to make. Most actions and decisions are straightforward and will automatically succeed. It is only when the attempt is made under great stress or circumstances that a check is necessary. Or if the success or failure of this attempt is important or integral to the story, a check should then be made. For instance, when a character wishes to drive a car, and if the GM decides it's likely he knows how to drive to begin with, he does not have to roll to succeed. Even if his destination is all the way across town and it is four-thirty on the Friday before a three-day weekend, he still shouldn't have to roll. If, however, he needs to be cross-town by five on Friday before a three-day weekend in Boston or Washington, D.C., or else the aliens will succeed in their fiendish plot to enslave all of our cows... then he should probably make a roll.

In the end, a player rolls for success only when the GM decides it's necessary.

Doing Things

Yields

When a player rolls his character dice he generates a “yield.” The yield is the list of colors in the roll, any object dice, and any applicable pips that are floating around. For instance, a player rolls three dice and the colors red, red and green come up on the dice. The roll yielded two reds and one green. If he used a piece of equipment that gave a blue pip to the

action, the yield would be two reds, one green and one blue.

In Phase

When a player announces his character is attempting a feat, the GM decides what color (or colors) are “in phase” with the action. This means which colors' definitions are most appropriate with the nature of the feat. An attempt to break down a door would be in phase with red, while seeing if the character knows the capitol of Zimbabwe would be in phase with orange. (It's Harare.)

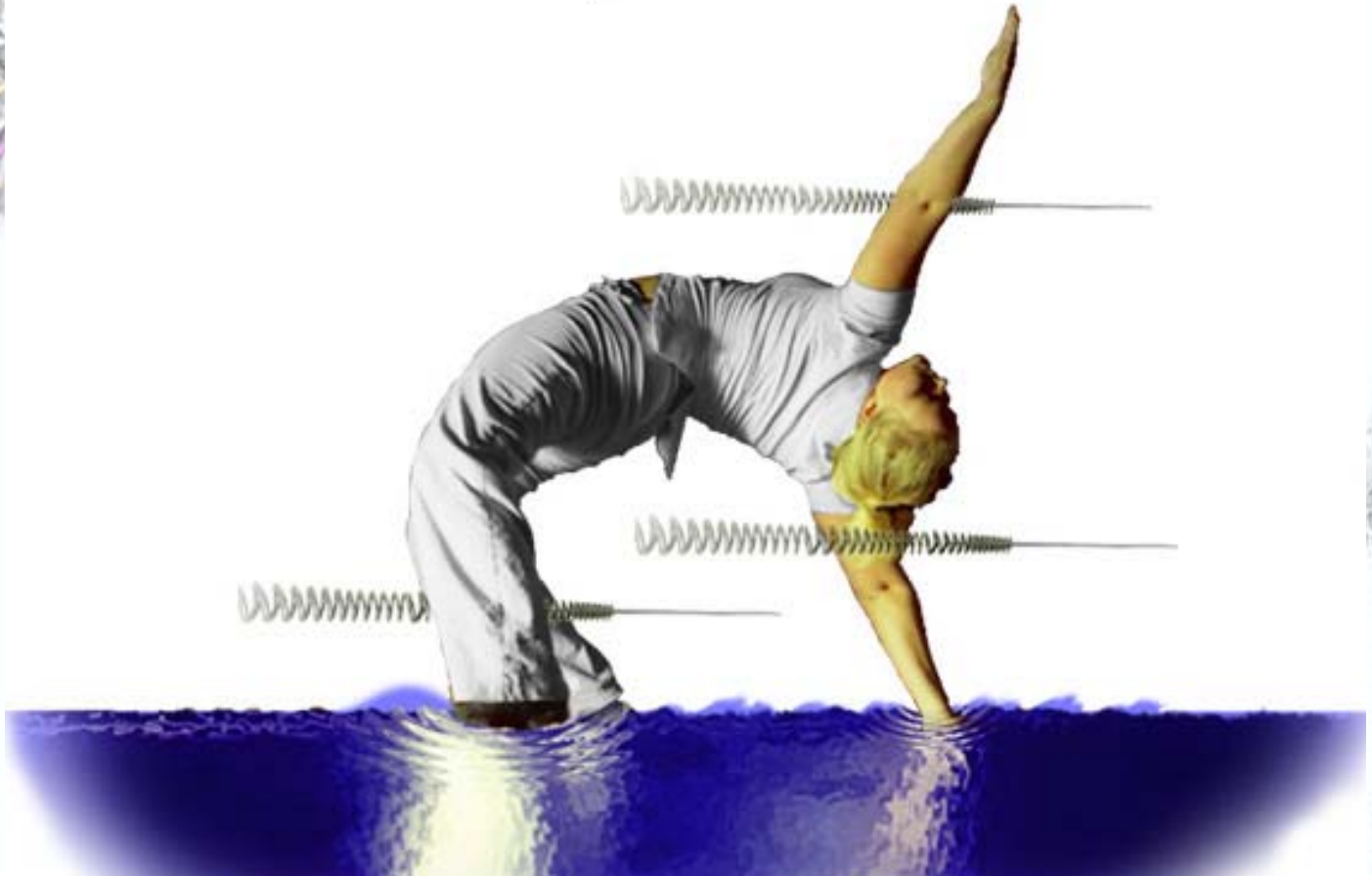
The Count

The number of colors in phase with the action that are in the yield is called “the count.” The higher the count, the more successful the action is, the farther the character jumps, the more damage he deals, the more detailed information he recalls.

Some feats are significantly more difficult than others. In these instances, the GM can require a higher count in order for the feat to be successful. Below is a scale by which to judge the effectiveness of higher counts:

COUNT	DESCRIPTION
1	GREAT
2	PHENOMENAL
3	UNBELIEVABLE
4	SUPER/INHUMAN
5+	SHOULD HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE

Sometimes other situations, such as enemy action, can reduce the count making an action less effective. See “Stopping Someone”.



Doing Things With Skills

When a character is created, he starts with a number of skills: trained abilities that he has studied or practiced over time. Each skill is defined by a color bar. For instance, the skill Stealth has the color bar $GOPB$. Each pip in the color bar represents a level of achievement within the skill. As a character studies the skill, he gains the same color bar, one pip in a time, and in order. Now, whenever the character attempts a feat involving that skill, any of the colors he possesses in **his** color bar are considered in phase with the action. So, in this instance, a character begins by taking the skill at the first level, and gains the Stealth Skill color bar G . As he studies more, his color bar progresses from G to GO . Now as this skilled character tries to sneakily creep into a guarded manor, both green and orange are considered in phase with the action as opposed to just green. Purple isn't in phase because the character hasn't progressed far enough along in the study of the skill yet.

Stopping Someone

Conflict is the heart of a story. Somebody wants something, and somebody else doesn't want the first somebody to get it. Stopping someone is integral to adventure gaming. Whether it's stopping someone from hitting you, getting into a vehicle or lighting a match, a player character is going to come into conflict with someone else.

When a character or NPC declares an action, another character can try to stop it. The GM determines what attribute color or skill is in phase both for the action and the stopping action. The count yielded by the stopping character reduces the count yielded by the acting character by an equal amount. If the acting character's count drops to zero, he has been Stopped.

For instance, consider two characters, Arthur and Zara, with a telephone on the table between them. Arthur wants the phone to make a call. Zara doesn't want him to get the phone. Arthur's player declares he is going to grab

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the phone. Zara's player declares she's going to stop him by knocking the phone out of the way before he can reach it. The GM decides that grabbing the phone is in phase with yellow, (as "energy" representing speed) and is a simple task requiring a count of one. To knock the phone out of the way also is in phase with yellow. Arthur rolls his dice and receives a count of two. Zara rolls and gets a count of only one. Her count of one reduces Arthur's count to one ($2-1=1$), which is still enough to get to the phone before her.

A character trying to Stop Someone should declare the action in as specifically as possible, at least in the form of "I stop X by doing Y." For instance, "I stop him from escaping by gunning the engine and getting in front of his car." Or, "I stop her from down loading the file by quickly pulling out the power cord."

Occasionally a character can try to Stop Someone without even knowing it. Take the example of a pickpocket. Pickpocketing is in phase with green (as in the description in **Skills** below), and to notice someone is attempting to pickpocket you is also in phase with green. A GM who knows that an NPC is trying to pickpocket (or sneak up on or whatever) on a character may require the character a roll without telling him why. The player's count reduces the acting NPC's count as normal for stopping someone. If the acting character fails, it is because the victim "stopped him" by

noticing the attempt. If one character is acting against another in a way that is naturally resistant (the opportunity to spot someone being stealthy, resist a poison attempt or whatever) the GM should

have the victim roll to Stop Someone, even if the victim doesn't quite know why.

As you will read in **Fights (or Applied Doing**

Things), the amount of damage an attack does depends upon the count of the attacker. If a character attacks and rolls a count of two, but the victim defends himself with a count of one, the victim will still take damage, but not as much, since he reduced the attacker's count to one.

Stopping And Then Some

There will also be times when a character not only wants to stop someone from doing something, but they will also want to do a little bit...more. Suppose that a character wished to not only stop an opponent from opening a door, but also to put that opponent in a grappling hold to keep them from doing anything else.

To accomplish this, the character would "Stop and Then Some." Whereas trying to stop another character can meet with partial success—you may not completely succeed, but you can reduce the count another character achieves when trying to stop and then someone the blocking character must completely succeed, both at the stopping and at the secondary action. If either part fails, the whole feat fails.

Going back to Arthur and Zara, instead of just knocking the phone out of the way, Zara is going to Stop and Then Some by grabbing the phone first and then smashing it. Arthur's grabbing the phone is still in phase with yellow. Zara's grabbing it is in phase with yellow and smashing it in phase with red (for vigor or strength). This time Arthur yields only one yellow, while Zara gets one yellow and one red. Her count of one for stopping Arthur by grabbing the phone reduces his count to zero. And her count of one for smashing the phone is sufficient to do so. Since she both reduced Arthur's count to zero and has a count of one herself, she succeeds in both grabbing the phone and breaking it on the table. Even if she had yielded two yellows but no reds she would not have succeeded in grabbing the phone before Arthur because she declared she was going to Stop and Then Some.

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Feats

Fights (or Applied Doing Things)

Many feats are easily resolved. One character tries to do this, and he either does it or doesn't. Sometimes someone will try to stop him, but that's about as complex as it gets. In many exciting stories, however, one of the most common feats a character will try is to hurt someone else. It's easy enough to figure out if someone can hurt someone else, but what happens then? While fights are resolved using the same rules as other feats, there are a number of nuances that merit their own discussion.



Getting into a Fight

A fight is initiated as soon one character declares he is going to hit, shoot, or otherwise try to harm another character. If all combatants are aware of what is going on, players must roll for initiative to determine the order in which each character acts. Roll each player's character dice; actions are declared and resolved in the order of yellows yielded. If there is a tie, the tying players roll again until one receives more yellows than another.

GMs should resolve issues such as surprise and charging into battle based on the dramatics of the situation. No rules are presented, because the GM must improvise these results—have opponents respond in appropriate ways,

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perhaps allowing players to roll against awareness to see if they spot someone sneaking up on them. All in all, the results should be determined on the need of the moment and the story that is developing, not a rule.

Hitting Someone

Hitting a target is resolved through an appropriate skill test. The GM may modify the necessary count as the situation warrants. If a character is trying to hit something at range (by throwing or shooting something) the distance between the character and the target can modify the count needed. The range is based on the individual weapon used, and the GM's discretion. A target that is "pretty close" only needs to yield one color in phase to hit. A target that is "kind of far" needs to yield two, and a target that's "far away" needs three. Remember, ranges vary for different weapons; what's far for a baseball isn't far for Surface to Air missile.

The count yielded by this target test will affect the amount of damage done, so the players must pay attention to how well they did on this test.

Not Getting Hit by Someone

Whenever someone's trying to hit someone else, there's someone trying not to be hit. Defending oneself in a fight uses the rules for Stopping Someone—in this case stopping him from hurting you. The appropriate skill check is determined by the GM and the situation. In most cases it will be obvious, for instance if two characters are in a brawl one will attack with brawling, and the other will use brawling to Stop the attacker. If the fight is a sword fight, then the skill use would be Swords. A gunshot might be stopped by an Artistry check or an Acrobatics check to move too fast for the attacker to get a good shot. A GM should allow any reasonable attempt to be made, and once he determines what sorts of defenses are appropriate, should maintain those guidelines. Each success gained from the check reduces the number of successes yielded by the attack.

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Likewise, a character in a fight has the opportunity to Stop And Then Some, turning his defense into an attack. A good example of this is many martial arts that study combinations of blocks and attacks, or techniques such as Judo where the attacker is thrown after being blocked. Remember though, Stopping And Then Some is all or nothing. If the resulting action, be it a judo throw a punch or whatever, fails then the first attack was not stopped at all. Also, the And Then Some must be appropriate to the Stopping maneuver. You can block a punch, and then counter punch, but not dodge a shot and fire your own gun. Dodging is not an action relating to firing the gun. A gunslinger might, however, try to Stop and Then Some by firing his gun first (needing green to hit and yellow to fire first).

Hurting Someone

Once a character successfully hits another, he gets to roll to see how much damage is done. The player rolls one character die for the count yielded in the skill attempt (less any from the target Stopping the blow). The player gets to choose which of his dice to roll for the damage. For instance, in a fist fight Sluggo hit Rocky with a count of two. Sluggo now rolls any two of his dice to determine what sort of damage was done.

Each color yielded is compared to the target's "vitality" to determine the effects of the damage. Vitality is a color bar that indicates

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what kind and how much damage a character can take. For normal humans, the vitality color bar is RRY (see **Making a Character** for more information on vitality).

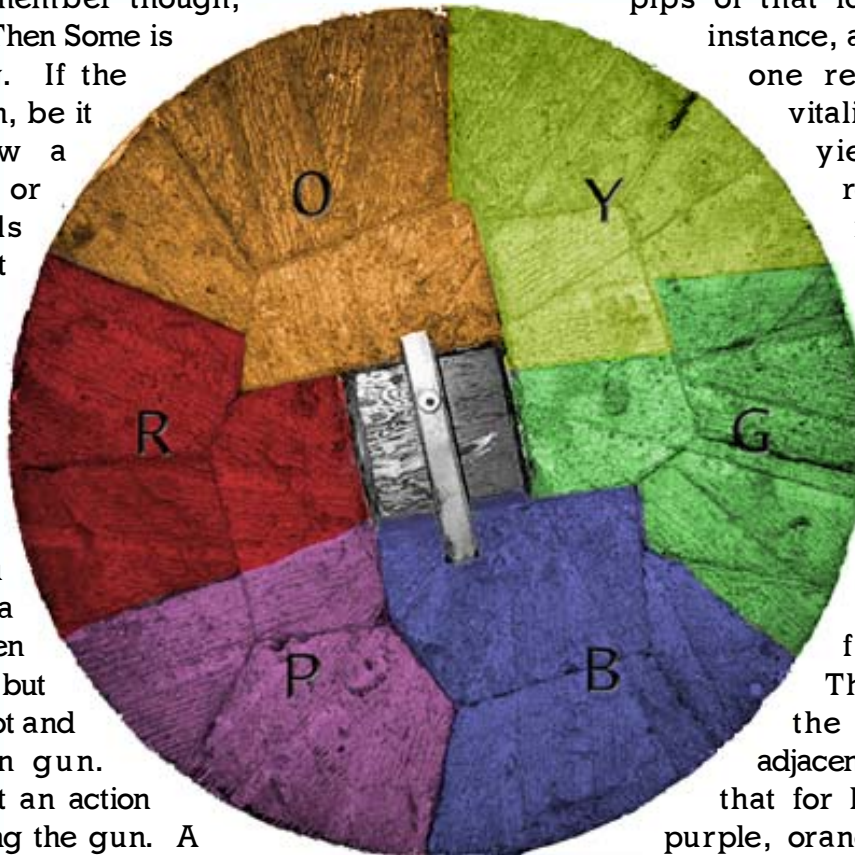
For each color yielded that's identical to a color on the vitality color bar remove all the pips of that identical set. For instance, a damage roll yields one red. The target's vitality is RRY. The red yielded for damage removes all the reds in the color bar (the set), leaving the target with a vitality bar of Y.

Any color yielded from the damage roll that is adjacent to colors on the vitality bar removes one pip from adjacent set. The diagram shows the color wheel and adjacent colors. Remember that for human characters purple, orange and green are adjacent colors. Continuing the above example, if a second roll yields one orange pip, one of the adjacent color (yellow) is removed. The target has been reduced to a blank vitality bar.

Damage is applied by first using any matching colors, and then adjacent colors.

Not Getting Hurt by Someone

When a victim is hit by an attacker, he has a chance to negate the amount of damage taken (even after trying to Stop Someone). Players are allowed to roll their character dice when taking damage. If the roll yields a blue, then the attacker rolls one less die for damage. Only one die can be removed in this manner (with the exception of characters with the Toughness skill; see page 22).





Another way to prevent damage to a character is for the character to be wearing armor. Armor is also described by a color bar. Every pip on the armor's color bar can negate a pip of the same color yielded by the damage roll. For instance, a suit of armor has a color bar of oo, and an attack yields oYY. One of the orange pips from the armor negates the orange in the attack, so the victim only takes YY damage. Since there are no more orange pips in the damage, the second o in the armor's color bar has no effect. Armor with white pips can negate a pip of any color in the damage yield.

H urting

The effects of damage are left intentionally vague and subject to the GM's interpretation. When a character's vitality bar is completely depleted, one of his character dice (of the hurt player's choice) is removed from play. The vitality bar is then reset to its normal value. If any single attack does more than enough damage to remove the pips on a vitality bar, any excess colors yielded for that attack are lost.

Until the damage is healed or the character

has had a chance to "catch his breath" the specific nature of the damage shouldn't be declared. For instance, a GM should not decide that damage is in the form of a severed limb until after the fight is over (or if the narrative situation warrants it).

For instance, Rocky is taking a beating. His vitality bar is RRY, and Sluggo hits him for a count of three. Rolling his dice Sluggo yields RRO. Rocky blows his toughness roll and does not prevent any damage. The first red removes the whole red set, and the orange removes one adjacent yellow (the only one). Rocky's vitality bar is now totally empty. He loses one die, and the vitality bar resets to RRY. Since the bar was reset, the extra yellow Sluggo rolled is wasted and doesn't affect Rocky at all. Good thing for Rocky.

A character that loses all of his dice passes out, loses consciousness and cannot act until the GM determines that an appropriate amount of time has passed.

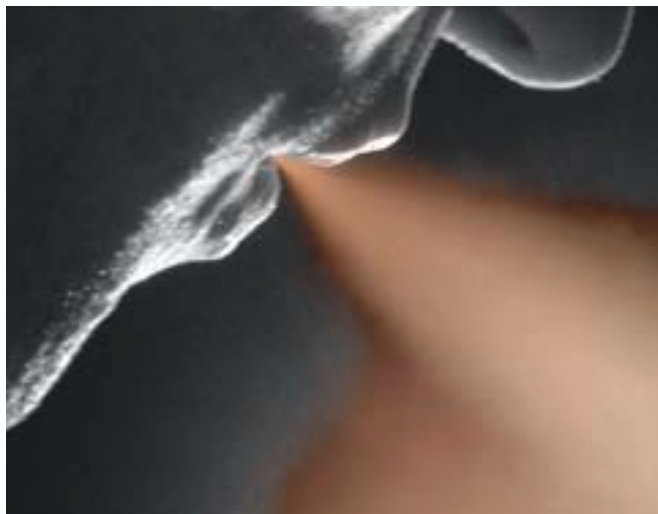
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Catching Your Breath

The effects of damage in Spectrum are not necessarily permanent. In fact, a character can regain a die lost to damage just by “catching his breath”. Catching his breath in this sense means pausing for a length of time as determined by the GM. How long this takes is completely up to the GM, and should feel similar to a “beat” in a story. In a fast moving action story, this beat will take less time, perhaps long enough for the characters to hide in the bushes out front, or maybe the time it takes for the elevator to get to the roof of the building. In other stories it might take longer, maybe even requiring a good night’s rest.

Only one lost die from any one fight can be regained in this manner. Therefore, a character who takes several hits in a fight and loses two dice can catch his breath and gain only one die back. He cannot regain another die by catching her breath until she has been hurt in a different fight.

There is, of course, an exception... a GM can reward a player with a “second wind” in addition to or instead of catching his breath. The second wind is represented by regaining any number of dice, but should be used only at dramatically appropriate moments or to reward a player for a clever idea or a truly clever line appropriate to the genre of the game and the adventure.



Action Spectra

Getting Better

Like the rest of the damage system, the specifics of healing is left largely up to the GM. Typically, a character can regain one die lost through hurting by catching his breath. A second die can be regained after a full day’s rest and a third or more requires weeks and then months of professional care.



Damaging Objects

Objects can be hurt just like characters. Objects have vitality bars and may have armor. Once the vitality bar has been depleted or when the object loses its last die (if it has any) the object is broken.

A broken object can’t catch a second wind; they need to be repaired. When an object is hurt a character must make a roll to fix it (often an artistry check, or using the mechanic or some other appropriate skill). If the skill attempt is successful, the object regains a die, but that die changes one pip to purple (GM’s choice). This is how an object gains personality during play.

Example Vitality Bars

OBJECT	VITALITY	ARMOR
COMPUTER	○	
ROPE	Y	
CABLE	Y	W
WOOD DOOR	RO	
STEEL DOOR	RRY	WW
CAR	RRR○○Y	WW

Feats

Battles of Wits

Characters do not interact with one another solely physically, but also socially. It is common for the results of social interactions to be roleplayed out, if a player makes a persuasive case the GM allows the NPC to be persuaded. But sometimes the GM is uncertain how an NPC will react, or doesn't care, or perhaps the character is far more suave, charming or elegant than the character he's playing. At these times the GM may declare a Battle of Wits.

A Battle of Wits works much like a Fight does, a character declares an action (in this case an argument), and the opponent tries to Stop the action by resisting it. Where as in a Fight the player must explain and describe the way a character attacks (be it swinging a sword or firing a gun) in a Battle of Wits the player must describe or

actually make the argument to see if the opponent is swayed.

Types of Arguments

For the purposes of Action Spectra there are three types of arguments each in phase with a specific color: the passionate argument (red), the artistic argument (yellow), and the deceptive argument (orange).

The passionate argument is any that appeals directly to a target's emotions. Arguments that evoke pride or patriotism, anger and avarice are all passionate arguments. By being aware that one's emotions are being manipulated, a character can prevent being swayed by them. Thus green is used to oppose the passionate argument.

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The artistic argument uses well-crafted arguments and edifices of logic to convince a target. Any arguments based on facts and logic fall under the artistic argument. But if someone is determined not to be convinced by logic, no amount of explanation will sway him from his position. Thus blue opposed the artistic argument.

The deceptive argument uses trickery and false logic to convince someone. Any argument that depends solely on the character's charm or is simply patently false relies on the character's artistry to pull it off. These deceptions are opposed by the sagacity of purple.

Quick Checks

In most situations, a quick check in a Battle of Wits is sufficient. If the encounter isn't particularly important, if there isn't a great deal at stake or if the moment is just a routine encounter between people use the Battle of Wits like any other feat. The player declares the action, the GM determines what it is in phase with (based on the nature of the argument) and the player rolls the character's dice. The GM then rolls the target's dice in opposition (see Stopping Someone) and reduces the character's count by the target's success. If the character still has one or more success in his yield, his argument worked and he gets what he wants. Some skills will increase the colors in phase with arguments and resisting them just as in Fights.





For example, Lenny is playing the very logical Scientific Officer of a major star-ship. He needs to get into engineering in order to stop the ship from blowing the universe apart, but a guard has orders not to let anyone in. Lenny's character explains to the guard how, if he doesn't get in there, everything is going to explode, but if he does get in he can throw the "do not blow up" switch. The GM decides this argument is based on facts and logic, and thus is an artistic argument in phase with orange. Lenny rolls and yields two successes. Rolling for the guard the GM gets one green and one blue. Since artistic arguments are opposed by blue the guard only has a count of one, which leaves Lenny with a count of one himself. The guard is not so stubborn as to let his captain's order over-ride Lenny from throwing the switch.

Extended Battles

When a player needs a more lasting impression to be made, the GM may call for an extended Battle of Wits which functions much more like a Fight than a quick check does. The general process is the same, with one character making an argument and the other opposing it, but the arguing character's yield (after being reduced by the opponent) is compared to the opponent's vitality bar in the same manner as combat: like colors remove all like colored pips, and adjacent colors remove one pip. When the vitality bar is completely defeated the target loses a die, just as in combat. Once all the dice have been eliminated the target is convinced. Use the full, natural vitality bar for this check.

Physical damage to a character does not affect their decision making process in a Battle of Wits. (Unless the particular genre you are playing in allows it. Debonair swashbucklers might be as wounded by a clever (yellow) insult as a thrust of an epee.)

Three Strikes

There is one significant difference between a Battle of Wits and an actual fight: it is far easier for someone to stop listening than to stop a fight. Once a particular type of argument (passionate, artistic or deceptive) has failed on a target that type can no longer be used. Thus, if Lenny is arguing with his captain he can keep using logical arguments until one of them fails. After that the captain will no longer be swayed by logic and Lenny will have to switch to something that moves his passion or, perhaps, deceive his captain.

Relevancy

No matter what kind of argument a character uses it has to have some relevance to the issue at hand. If it doesn't the GM can rule the point as moot and the argument failed. Arguments that fail because of relevancy are counted against the three strikes rule.



Making a Charater

Characters are defined not only by their dice and pips, but also their skills, abilities and their place in the world around them. To play Action Spectra, the players must agree on a setting, the type of world or milieu the adventure will take place in, and then each make up their own characters to take part in the adventures.



different situations. Develop a background and history of the character, how did he come to be in this place, how does he know the other characters in the group. Along every step of the way keep talking with the GM and other players, help one another develop the stories for their character and find ways to work the characters together in the group.

While most of a character's abilities are defined by his character dice, some additional information will be necessary to keep track of. Using a small sheet of paper or an index card make a "character card." At first all that need be recorded on the card is the character's name and then his skills.

Choose Dice and Pips

The GM determines the number of dice and pips each character starts with based on the genre and the type of game the group wants to play in. Use the chart below as a guideline in selecting the number of dice and pips to use:

Choose Setting

When a group of players begin a game, they must decide in what setting their adventure is going to take place. Action Spectra can be easily used in any setting, whatever setting your group agree on. Once a setting has been chosen, talk about the kinds of adventures you could play and what sort of characters would play in that adventure. Around this time the GM should also choose how many dice each of the characters should begin with. A good guideline to follow is in the chart below.

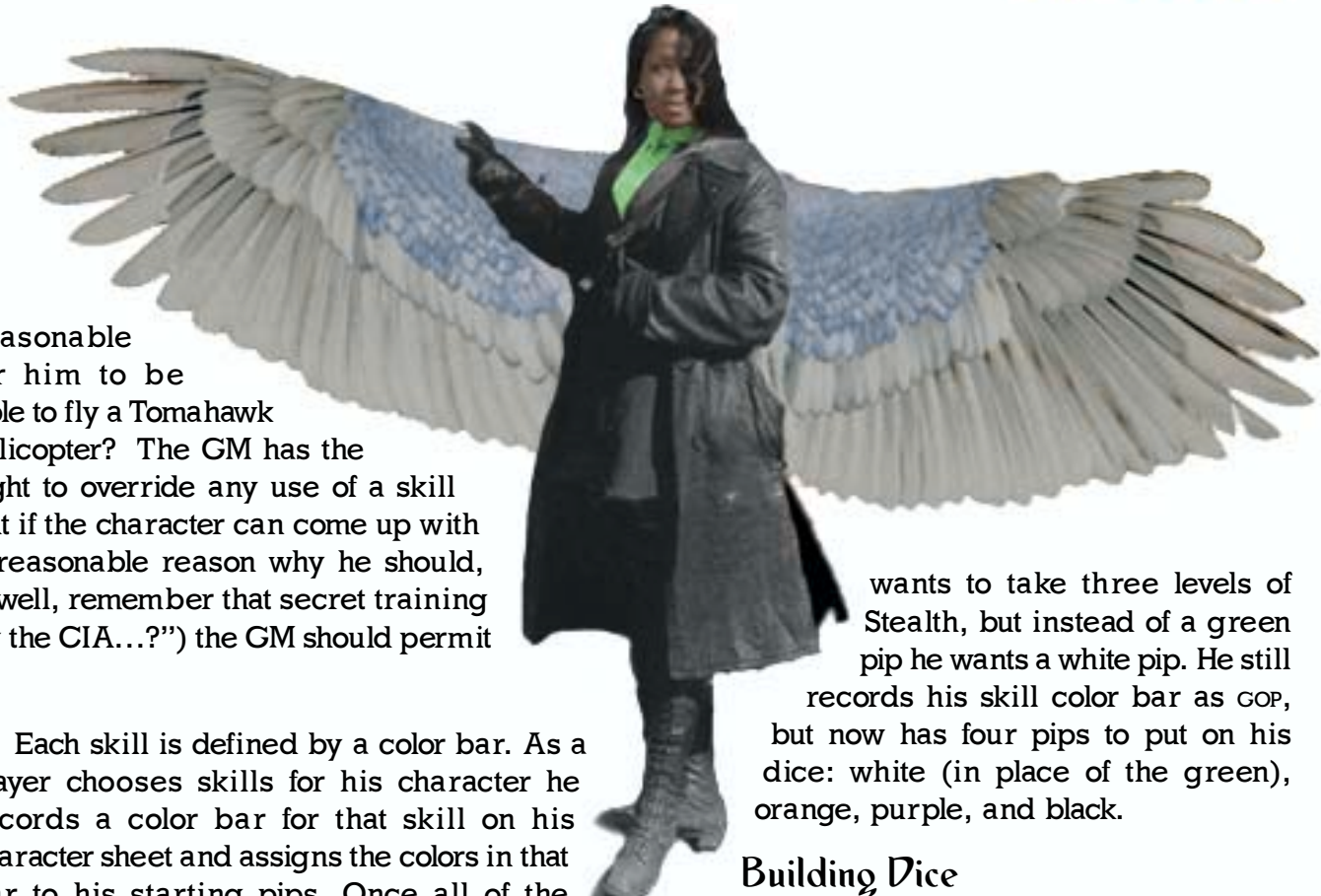
LEVEL	DICE	MIN.	AVE.	MAX.
PEON	1	N/A	4	N/A
NORMAL	2	5	7	10
HERO	3	10	13	16
ICON	4	12	16	20
BEYOND HUMAN	5+	14	20	26

Select Skills

Skills are the things that a character has learned to do or has been trained in. The skill list in Spectrum is very broad; for instance, there is only one skill for controlling a vehicle, Piloting. Piloting is used for every type of vehicle, from a four-door coup to a helicopter. So in theory a character with the piloting skill could drive any vehicle he wished to. But as you play your character your should keep in mind your character's background. Is it

Make a Concept

Next each player has to choose the character he specifically wants to play. Decide what this character can do, what sort of abilities he has. Think about the character's personality, what does he care about, how would he react in



reasonable for him to be able to fly a Tomahawk helicopter? The GM has the right to override any use of a skill but if the character can come up with a reasonable reason why he should, (“well, remember that secret training by the CIA...?”) the GM should permit it.

Each skill is defined by a color bar. As a player chooses skills for his character he records a color bar for that skill on his character sheet and assigns the colors in that bar to his starting pips. Once all of the starting pips have colors they will be assigned to the character dice (see **Building Dice**). The character’s color bar must match the order of the skill’s color bar, but it does not have to include all four colors. The character’s skill color bar must match the skill’s color bar in progression. For instance, the Stealth skill color bar is **GOPB**. Jim wants his detective to be fairly stealthy so he assigns his character the Stealth skill of **GOP**, using three of his 13 pips. This means whenever the detective does something stealthy, Green Orange and Purple will be in phase with that action, not just Green. He could have assigned two pips to Stealth, but they would have to have been Green first then Orange second.

Instead of assigning a pip a color from the skill color bar a player may choose to make the pip white. But if he does so he also has to take a black pip. So in the example above, Jim is starting with 13 pips on his three dice. He still

wants to take three levels of Stealth, but instead of a green pip he wants a white pip. He still records his skill color bar as **GOP**, but now has four pips to put on his dice: white (in place of the green), orange, purple, and black.

Building Dice

Once all the skills are bought the player has a list of pips, colored, black and white. Now the player assigns each of those pips to the dice. If starting with fewer pips than a character has sides of dice, some sides will have to have black (or blank) pips. In choosing which pips to put on which die you directly influence the probability of any given color coming up. You have a strong character with lots of red pips. Do you put all of them on one die guaranteeing a red on every roll? Or do you spread them out over a number of dice, decreasing the chance of getting one on any given roll but allowing you the chance to get higher counts? Have fun deciding.

The Hidden Math

At first glance, there doesn’t seem to be much use in buying a skill at the first level. For instance, if you want to fix a car engine, that’s in phase yellow. Even if you don’t have the skill, you can succeed by rolling enough yellows. So

Making a Charater

how does having one yellow in the engineering skill help you? It puts a yellow pip on your character dice, improving your chances in succeeding in engineering feats as well as any actions in phase with yellow. Additionally, it helps to further define your character's background and inclinations.

Really Building the Dice

There are a number of techniques you can use to put color on dice for use in game. We've included three options ranging from Cheap to Expensive. Whichever method you chose, we recommend finalizing the composition of pips on the dice before doing any of the real work.

So Cheap It's Practically Cheating and Doesn't Seem to Me Like Much Fun But Who Am I to Say?

Take a piece of paper or index card. Draw one column for each die and number six rows from one to six. Now record what colors would be on each die and when you need to roll your character dice cross-reference the number rolled with the color on the chart.

Example:

ROLL	DIE 1	DIE 2	DIE 3
1	RED	BLUE	ORANGE
2	RED	GREEN	YELLOW
3	YELLOW	ORANGE	PURPLE
4	ORANGE	RED	PURPLE
5	BLACK	RED	BLUE
6	WHITE	BLACK	WHITE

The player needs to rolls three dice and gets 2, 5, and 5. Cross-referenced with his table the roll yields two reds and a blue. Yeah, it's not pretty, but it works. This sort of table works really well for NPCs that are more specialized than can be represented by hot, cold, and balanced dice but not important enough to merit their own dice.

Cheap

Get white stickers or labels and a batch of permanent markers. Cut the labels, color them

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and stick them on six sided dice you can get at any game shop or toy store.

Inexpensive

Most office supply stores and some stationary stores sell colored dots used for labeling systems or even garage sales. They fit very nicely over standard sized dice. While they do require a larger initial payment, you will get enough dots to last you for a long time.

More Expensive and Time Consuming

Use a little putty to fill in the black, indented pips of a die. Carefully sand the putty down on a piece of fine grain sandpaper. Let the putty set and then paint each face of the die with white primer. Once the primer has dried, paint each side the appropriate color with paint available at most model and hobby shops.



Making a Charater



Playing the Character

The dice and skills are useful for defining a character in game terms, but far more important is his definition as a *character*. Players should spend time thinking about the character, who he is and what he's like. Think about how he would react in different situations. Also consider his limitations. Perhaps you want to play a brilliant scientist who is confined to a wheelchair because of a devastating disease. Even though he is a passionate and quick thinking man (with lots of red and orange pips on his dice) he simply cannot take actions that would involve walking and using his body. And since the player will have talked this decision through with the GM during character creation, the GM should not allow the player to take any action which do not fit the characters described ability and background.

Another useful technique for knowing a character better is to write down a list of adjectives for each pip in his character dice. During play refer to these words and try to use them while describing his or her actions. The words listed in the opening chapter should provide good guidelines.

Record Vitality Bar

The GM determines the vitality bar of each character which describes the amount of physical damage and punishment he can take. Normal humans and human like creatures should have a vitality bar of RRY. If a character is decidedly non-human, the GM may want to create a unique color bar for him.

The vitality bar describes what sort of damage is necessary to hurt the character or object in question. First choose the colors based on the types of attacks that can hurt the character.

- R FORCEFUL STRIKES
- O SMOOTH OR BALANCED STRIKES
- Y PENETRATIVE STRIKES
- G OPPORTUNE STRIKES
- B WILLFUL STRIKES
- P WELL AIMED STRIKES

A human is hurt by strikes that are hard (forceful – R) or deep (penetrative – Y). The Greek hero Achilles, who was only vulnerable in the heel, might only be struck by opportune attacks. A vampire might be hurt by blows backed by faith (willful – B) or blows to the heart (well aimed – P).

To determine how many pips of each color to use in the vitality bar, consider how important that type of attack is to hurting the character or object.

- 1 PIP NECESSARY
- 2 PIPS VERY NECESSARY
- 3 PIPS ESSENTIAL
- 4 PIPS THE ONLY WAY

To hurt a human it is very necessary to be forceful (two red pips), and necessary to penetrate (one yellow pip). The only way to hurt Achilles was an opportune blow to his heel (four green pips). Perhaps when killing a vampire it is essential to have faith (three pips of blue) and necessary to strike the right spot (one pip of purple).

So to complete our examples, our color bars are: for a normal human RRY, Achilles GGGG, and a vampire BBBP.

Skills

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When a character takes an action the GM determines what color or attribute is in phase with that action. But as a character learns more about that action, as he becomes skilled in it, he is able to use more attributes to achieve his goal. For instance, performing slight of hand primarily uses orange for manipulating the object. But as a character practices the skill, he learns to use his wit and cleverness, which we represent as the color yellow or Energy. Further down he is able to apply his Awareness and experience or Sagacity to become more successful. Each skill listed below has a color bar that describes the order in which a skilled character can use attributes to succeed in a feat using that skill.

By the nature of the Action Spectra system the skills themselves are broad and vague. A lot is left to the player's good sportsmanship and the GM's common sense to know if a character actually would have the knowledge of any specific application of a skill. The GM should be lenient in these situations, but the players should also not abuse the flexibility of the rules and the spirit of the game. Any skills which are described as "being resisted by X" means that the target character should get a passive roll to defend against the action even if he does not know it is being used against him.

Streetwise

BGPR

Streetwise represents a character's ability to find their way through the shadier aspects of society. Seeking out the criminal element, finding and selling stolen goods and not saying the fatally wrong thing at the wrong time are all actions checked against streetwise.

Riding

BORG

Any attempt to ride and control a living animal (of any sort) falls under this skill. It should be used both when a character rides a strange type of animal and when trying to get the animal to do a difficult or dangerous feat.

Will

BPCR

Will is used by a character to resist being emotionally swayed. When a character must remain stubborn, committed or resistant he may use will to stop from being influenced.

Wilderness survival

BPOY

A character with wilderness survival can live on his own in the wilds. He will be able to find his way, obtain enough food and water to live, and (at a higher degree of success) even hunt or track game.

Toughness

BYRP

When rolling to reduce damage, any color the character has in this skill is in phase instead of just blue.

Animal Handling

BRGO

This skill contains any actions involving the training, disciplining, and control of animals. This skill is used in understanding an animal and making it do what you want.

Zen

GBPO

Zen is the skill that reflects a character's connection to and awareness of the world. It can be used to see the world as it really is.

Warfare

GBRY

Warfare broadly covers all aspects of large unit tactics, including the ability to organize troops and plan strategic actions or defenses against an enemy.

Guns

GOYB

Guns covers using pistols, rifles, machineguns and other such weapons in fights. The GM or adventure may rule that certain, larger weapons (especially machine guns and vehicle mounted weapons) require a higher count to succeed.

Disguise

GPOR

Disguise is used by a character to change his or someone else's appearance. It is also used to continue the deception by the way the character walks, acts and talks.

Skills

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Primitive Ranged Weapons

GROY

Using any ranged weapon that amplifies the user's strength through primitive means, such as bows, blowpipes, slings, bolas and catapults.

Stealth

GYPO

Stealth allows the character to move about silently, avoid detection and follow or "trail" someone without being noticed. It also is used for "discrete" actions such as picking pockets and palming small objects. Stealth can be resisted by Zen.

Piloting

OBYG

Piloting is the control and use of any vehicle. This is used for complex and dangerous maneuvers, not just out running errands.

Pikes

OYRG

This general skill covers attacking and blocking with long, off-balanced weapons such as pikes, staffs, pole-arms and brooms and mops.

Healing

OPBG

Healing may cover everything from herbalism in primitive societies to surgery in contemporary society and bioengineering in futurist ones. At the lowest levels (sagacity alone) it represents a basic understanding of first aid, CPR and the like. It is unrealistic for a completely untrained character to perform advanced surgery even at the first few levels of skill. Any attempt to heal a character beyond "catching their breath" should require a check against the healing skill.

Charisma

ORYB

Charisma is the skill of winning people over with charm, efficaciousness and strength of will. People may not necessarily agree with the character's arguments, nor are they inspired by the loyalty or fear that "command" provides, but rather they just *like* the character and will go along, despite their better judgment. Charisma may be resisted by Will.

Art

OGRY

Covers the creation and study of any "passive" art form, such as sculpture, painting, writing, flower arranging, etc.

Swords

ORYG

Using any of a number of types of swords to attack and block. Broad swords, short swords, rapiers and epees all are covered by the sword skill, as well as the use of shields in conjunction with a sword or similar weapon.

Religions

PBOG

This covers knowledge of major theological practices, entities and rituals. In a pantheistic culture, it also provides insight into the way various parties and deities interact with one another, current power struggles within the church and the heavens and any other related information.

Insight

PGBY

Insight is a general skill that covers wisdom and understanding as well as the ability to intuit the underlying meaning or patterns of things.

Writings

PGOB

Writings is a catch all for any number of educational subjects such as Literature, History, Legends and Lore, Ancient Writings, Philosophy and other liberal arts type pursuits.

Biology

POGY

Biology is the art and understanding of things fleshy. It can include veterinary skills, some chemistry and even botany and xenobiology, the study of alien creatures.

Business

PRGO

Business covers the ability to make good economic decisions and to navigate the world of finance.

Science

PYGB

This is used in all fields of physical science including physics, quantum mechanics, astronomy and other "hard" sciences.

Skills

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Performance

RG0B

Performance covers any artistic display to entertain, and entrance a live audience.

Hand to hand combat

RBOG

This covers any number of martial arts from boxing to Tae Kwon Do to down and dirty street fighting. Any attack that doesn't use a weapon of any sort is a hand-to-hand attack.

Athletics

ROYB

All physical feats such as running, leaping, climbing and swimming fall under the athletics skill.

Command

RPGY

Command covers the various techniques used to make someone do something based just on your individual presence as opposed to deception or clever arguments. Command can be resisted by Zen.

Thrown weapons

RYGO

Any weapon that pretty much needs to be chucked to get to its target uses the thrown weapon skill. Rocks, knives, grenades, spears and such all use the thrown weapon skill.

Axes and Clubs

RYOB

This general skill covers the use of any large, heavy, unwieldy weapons including axes, clubs, war hammers, and even shields to attack and block.



Mechanics

YBGR

Mechanics covers building and repairing any technical device.

Cyber

YGOB

Cyber is used to operate computers and software. This skill will allow a character to write computer programs and use or modify a computer's software. It does not include the building or repairing of the computers themselves. Cyber can also be used in any instance where a deep understanding of mathematics is required.

Tricks

YBOG

Tricks covers any slight of hand, of particularly deft manipulation of small objects such as prestidigitation, escaping from bonds hiding objects and misdirection. Tricks can also be used to convince someone of something that is simply not true. Tricks can be resisted or exposed with Insight.

Electronics

YOGP

Electronics covers the building, use and repairing of any electronic device, from radios to computers and anything in between. The GM may decide that higher levels of the skill represent more abilities, for instance the first level bought at sagacity allows the character to use the device, energy allows the character to rebuild and repair it, and artistry is required to actually create a new device.

Engineering

YOPG

Engineering is a technical skill that allows a character to fix, build, and destroy large structure and edifices.

Languages

YPOG

Any attempt to speak or understand a language other than the character's native tongue requires a languages check. The more complex the concept being conveyed, the greater the count necessary to succeed. Players should not get to check to understand languages to which they have never before been exposed.

Running Action Spectra

Action Spectra

If you've never played a role-playing game before, it still might not be exactly clear how a game actually works. How does the GM present the adventure to the players? Who acts when? Just what does it actually look like? Most simply put, it looks like this:

Four people are sitting around a kitchen table: Gary, Adam, Beth and Charlie. They are playing a game of Action Spectra. Gary has been chosen to run the adventure and be the GM. The group decided that they want to play a science-fiction space opera. They've chosen some themes and settings, and Gary wrote up an adventure. The players have just finished making their characters and building their dice. Adam is playing Zephon, a dashing and charming (if not too bright) starship captain. Beth is playing Yoodoo an enigmatic alien technical expert. And Charlie is playing Xavier Thugbluster, a hired gun with a heart of gold. (Inventing names is not Charlie's strong suit).

The players know what their goals for this adventure are: to get fuel for their stranded spaceship. Gary describes the basic setting that the characters find themselves in and concludes:

Gary: "Okay, so you've found out that the Magistrate will have spare Gartuhlian rods to fuel your space ship. His fortress is hovering about twenty feet off the ground. The ramp-draw-bridge thingie is being raised, closing off the entrance. What are you going to do?"

Having explained the situation, and what the world is doing, the players now decide what their characters will do.

Charlie: "Well, since I'm driving the speedster-bike I'll jump the bike off a nearby rock and get into the fortress before the door closes."



No one said there was a nearby rock, but since there's no reason for there not to be and since it would be a cool stunt to pull off there suddenly has always been a large rock right there. Gary likes to encourage his players to use interesting stunts by letting them make up elements of the scene themselves.

Now the group must determine if Xavier's stunt will succeed. Using the rules, Gary decides Xavier's stunt falls under a piloting roll. Xavier has the second level of piloting, which means both orange and green are in phase with the action. He rolls his dice and yields a count of two, more than enough for him to succeed.

Gary: "Okay, so you slam the nose of the hover bike against a nearby rock flipping you into the air. You time it exactly right and slip through the entrance just as the ramp is closing. Four Bernelli guards fire on you with laser rifles."

So Gary not only describes the results of Charlie's actions but also leads that into the next event.

Adam: "I shout, 'We only want to talk!'"

Beth: "Yoodoo will try to stop them from shooting her by dodging out of the way."

Charlie: "I'll stop the one nearest me from shooting me by shooting him first."

Now that all the players have described how they'll react, Gary tells them how to determine their successes. First, since the NPCs (the guards) acted first, he rolls their dice to see if they succeed. They're unskilled, so he says only green is in phase for their actions (after looking up the guns skill on the skill list). He rolls their dice (when writing the adventure he decided they'd each have one hot

Running Action Spectra

and one cold die) to see how many successes they make. Next he has Beth and Charlie rolls their character dice. Since Beth is trying to Stop Somebody, her yield will be subtracted from the guard's yield. Since Charlie is trying to Stop and Then Some, he must fist succeed in shooting the guard and get more successes than the guard yielded. Since Zaphon only spoke (yelled, really) Gary decides that it's an automatic success. There's no reason Adam should roll just to talk.

Well, one thing leads to another and the encounter with the guards finally end with the player characters being captured and brought before the Magistrate (which we all kind of knew had to happen, right?) Most of the action in this encounter is going to be the discussion between the Magistrate and the three captives. So each of the players speaks as though they were their character while Gary plays the role of the Magistrate.

Gary: "The Magistrate sits on a giant shining silver throne. The mighty engines of the floating fortress reverberate through the walls of the audience chamber and it's high ceiling. The room is lined with guards and looker-ons."

Charlie: "How many armed guards do I see?"

Here Gary could make Charlie roll to see how many green pips he yields (for awareness) but decides that this is a simple action that doesn't need a roll.

Gary: "At least two dozen, and there are a number of other weapons in the crowd. You are dragged in front of the Magistrate who booms in a loud voice, 'ah, so this is the scum that had the audacity to enter my fortress uninvited?"

Charlie: "'Yeah, and if you had any idea—"

Adam: "Charlie shut up! I say to the Magistrate in my most soothing tones, 'we most humbly beg your forgiveness and indulgence, oh Mighty One. Had we understood that one of your great stature presided over this magnificent fortress we would never have been so bold. But in truth, it was desperation which drove us. Our vessel, damaged and fuelless crashed no so very far from here, and we are just seeking some rods to get off planet with. It is a matter of great urgency as my dear Aunt Thelma is even now in her death bed and..."

Adam goes on for a little bit, laying out his sob story. Now, Gary doesn't fall for the tale at all, but he also knows what's going on. The real question is, does the Magistrate fall for it? This is a battle of wits, so Gary has Adam give a variety of different arguments and roll for each one. Eventually Adam whittles away the Magistrate's resistance, reducing him to one single die.

Gary: "You've almost got him convinced, but you need to keep going."

Adam: "Right, well... "And as you know, Your Greatness, that as the Lady Thelma sits high on the Imperial Court, and any act which detained us would be frowned upon by his Highness..."

Being another out-and-out lie, Adam has to make another Charisma roll. This time he gets two successes and the Magistrate gets none. Rolling two dice Adam yields one green and one orange. The green doesn't match nor is adjacent to any colors left in the vitality bar. The orange, however, is adjacent to the remaining red, reducing it and emptying the Magistrate's bar. He has been convinced.

So it looks like the characters are going to sneak away with it this time. But never fear, the adventure doesn't end there, because Gary decides that someone in the crowd recognizes Xavier from his checkered past and holds a grudge...

That's the basic give and take of a roleplaying game. It's a brief example to show you how the players and GM interact in the session. We hope it helps those of you who have never played an RPG before. And for those of you who have, we hope you could spot a bit of yourself and your friends in the description.

A Few Friendly Hints

The Action Spectra game engine works best when used for adventures that emulate television and film stories, especially fast moving action movies. Once the GM is used to the symbolism of the colors, task resolution becomes very quick. He doesn't have to distract himself from the action of the game. So when designing and running adventures, there are some key principles to take from these genres.

It always gets worse. Keep the characters leaping from frying pans to fires. Every time they resolve one challenge it's time for a worse one. But the next challenge must come naturally from the first, it must be a logical consequence to what has happened before. This can be used on both a large plot scale and on a more immediate scale. When a character does something, try to think how to escalate the action. Sure, he succeeds, but now something worse is coming. For instance, plucky scientist-heroine Thelma Phule is being chased down the corridors of the top-secret spy base by the local goons with big guns. She finds a door and runs through it thus getting away from the goons. Now, what is on the other side of the door? Something worse. The something worse can be worse in two ways: it can be immediately worse, or it can be overarchingly worse.

A more immediately worse case would be stumbling into the five highly trained martial artist goons in their sparring class. This leaves the character with a choice (and choices are the fun part of roleplaying), either turn around and face the thugs with guns, or stay here and face these new super-goons. Other similar ideas are the sudden appearances of bottomless pits, scorchingly hot boiler rooms...anything as long as it is more.

The other option is to raise the stake of the game. Prof. Phule has slipped away from the goons with guns, and is physically safe for a moment, but in this room she sees the map showing the locations of all the bombs across the world which are going to be detonated exactly at midnight. Even though she's in no immediate danger, the adventure has become more important. The stakes are higher. Things got worse.



Running Action Spectra

Know when to give them a break. Here's the thing about action: it can't be constant. There has to be pauses to let the players (and the characters) catch their breath. But you shouldn't give them that breath until they need it. Ideally, it will come the exact moment before they break. Take them all the way you can, and then give them a release. Give them a slower scene, let them learn some important information, talk to a knowledgeable NPC, take a moment and plan out their next action. And when they return to the action, start it just below the point where it had been and then punch it up even higher.

But don't let them get away. They'll either come to their senses or get bored. Either way, the game will drag to a painful and embarrassing halt. While they will need time to rest and regroup if the characters have the chance to go home or even just call for help, they might and the game will stall. Even during the breaks they have to know that the pressure is still on them. And if they try, if they make a run for it, then make the world ten times more viscous. Draw them back into the adventure. It's okay to use tricks on them, dropping in events that weren't planned in the adventure. The players have to know that there's something at stake. They have to feel a portion of the pressure to succeed. They need a reason to try.

It doesn't necessarily make sense. You either read or wrote the adventure. You know what's going on. You're players only know what has happened. They don't know what's going on. So, when the adventure starts bogging down who's to say a half dozen psychotic Elvis impersonators *wouldn't* break in through the café window and start shooting up the place? Or something like that. Keep throwing encounters at them, exciting stuff, people trying to kill them. Whatever. It doesn't have to make sense at the moment, it can always make sense later. As long as you're able to figure out what the Elvises were up to before the players were, and as long as it doesn't contradict anything else that happened in the adventure, and as long as when they figure the whole thing out they can say, "oh, so that's why that happened" it will work.

Preferably, you should have a good idea of who would come into the scene to mix up the adventure and why. The bad guys who had been trailing the characters for a week finally caught up or something. You should already know who is involved in the adventure and what they want. Perhaps you even have a list of possible random encounters to toss in to the mix in case things slow down or get off track. The thing to remember is, you can improvise when you want, and come up with an explanation for it afterwards. But the explanation has to *work*.



Running Action Spectra

Action Spectra

The bad guys are stupid. It's sad, but it's true. On some fundamental level the bad guys have to be stupid. Their plan has to have a flaw. There has to be some weakness for the hero to exploit. The smart bad guy would find out who is against him, sneak up behind the good guy and kill them without a word. But we don't see that in a lot of action stories because it would work and the hero would die without even knowing there was a plot afoot. With the possible exception of certain detective genres if the bad guy was smart, he'd win. Often in the first twenty minutes.

Bad guys let heroes off easy. They like to watch them suffer. See the anguish of their failure. Do stupid stuff which leaves the hero alive and lets him vanquish in the end. Does it make sense? Not really. Is it what would reasonably happen? Maybe not. But the players will accept it, because they know how these kinds of adventures work. The bad guys don't have to be idiots, but they have to be just dumb enough to let the players succeed.

Let them have their day (but make it Hell). People like to make believe they're heroes. And the thing about heroes is, they win in the end. But in order for the story to be fun, the heroes have to work for it. Let the players have their day. When they come up with a good idea, let them do it. And when they succeed at that, let something worse happen. That's the way it goes in the movies. Challenge your players, force them to make decisions, put them up against puzzles and mysteries, make them jump through the hoops. But when they're ready, and when they half a half decent plan (which often takes players some time), give them a good shot at succeeding.

In many senses the GM roleplays the whole of the world, the NPCs, the weather, the random acts of god. And even though the GM runs and even designs the adventure, he should not take an adversarial role against the players. The goal is to challenge the players, not crush them.

Sometimes the players fail. Yeah, it can happen. Sometimes the choices the players make lead to inevitable failure. That's okay. If the characters don't have chance of failing, then there's no reason to try. But failure in role playing games can have many forms, and they don't all have to be failure. The goal of the game can shift, or there could be more to the plot, giving the players another chance to succeed. Or you can make new characters, a new adventure and play again. Don't be afraid to be arbitrary. If the character fails at an action, the story doesn't have to end. Something else can come along. So the valiant space hero failed a piloting check and crashed his space ship on the barren planet? Well, it just so happens there's a secret pirate base there. Maybe the hero can steal one of their space ships. Failure can be just another opportunity for adventure.



Running Action Spectra

Things GMs Should Know

This book does not cover all the situations that a GM is going to run into while playing a game of Action Spectra. In fact, it probably hasn't managed to cover most of them. Directly, that is. You should have enough of an idea of the principles of the game and how to apply the rules in general to give you a good base on which to make specific determinations during play. But there are a number of little things which didn't quite fit in other places. Things that, while not critical, the GM should know.

Weapons

It might have to do with roleplaying's wargaming roots, or it might go deeper into some aspect into the human psyche, but in a lot of adventure games, players try to hurt other characters and other characters try to hurt the player characters. A lot. And in a lot of different ways. Sometimes with weapons, sometimes with poison, sometimes with causing the characters to end up in painful situations. It's a scary world out there, and a lot of it is aimed at the PCs.

When people try to hurt other people, they often use weapons. Over the course of human history mankind has designed a variety of nasty and painful devices to use in war, heated arguments and diplomacy. Below is a list of sample weapons. The chart shows both pips added to the character's roll when hurting someone, as well as guidelines for ranges. The ranges should not be used as hard and fast rules, but rather as guidelines to quickly tell how difficult it is to hit someone. Some weapons of quality might also add pips for use in attacks or defending. Those are left to the nature of the individual weapon and the GM's discretion.

Hand to Hand Weapons

WEAPON	DAMAGE
KNIFE:	R
STAFF:	Y

The user of a staff automatically gets one additional skill level for any attempt to block an attack.

STUN STICK	RO
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The stun stick will only add the R and O pips if it is turned on. Otherwise it's just a stick and adds no pips to damage

LARGE CLUB	O
SWORD	YO
AX	RO



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Thrown Weapons

WEAPON	DAMAGE	CLOSE	PRETTY CLOSE	KIND OF FAR	FAR
ROCK	P	2 YD.	4 YD.	8 YD.	12 YD.
KNIFE	Y	4 YD.	7 YD.	9 YD.	10 YD.
AX	R	5 YD.	8 YD.	10 YD.	12 YD.



Missile Weapons

WEAPON	DAMAGE	CLOSE	PRETTY CLOSE	KIND OF FAR	FAR
BOW	O	10	25	50	100
PISTOL	RY	10	30	100	200
RIFE	RY	30	60	200	500

The rifle can only attack two targets in a single action.

SNIPER RIFLE	RY	100	500	1000	MILE
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The sniper rifle can only attack one target a turn. And the player must aim for a round to aim it before firing.

SHOTGUN	RYY	15	30	40	45
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A shotgun can only attack one target in a single action.

MACHINEGUN	RY	30	60	200	500
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When attacking the attacker can roll twice to hit a single target or multiple targets. The damage done by the weapon only counts once though

BFG	ROW	30	60	200	500
BLASTER	WW	15	30	40	45

Blasters are energy weapons that don't do any serious long term damage. Damage from blaster should be removed within an hour. Maybe.

LASER	OO	30	45	100	200
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When attacking with a laser the attacker get one automatic success

BIG LASER	WWW	100	500	1000	MILE
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When attacking with a Big Laser the attacker gets one automatic success. It takes a whole second for the laser to recharge after being fired. The character may take an action, but he can not fire the gun

Running Action Spectra

Explosive Weapons

Explosive weapons are a little bit trickier. They have a few ranges listed. The first set of ranges is just like the ranges for missile and thrown weapons. If the explosive is fired from a gun or cannon or a vehicle, you use these numbers to see if the character hits its target. Then there is the blast area; anyone who is within this distance to the explosion takes damage. The final number is the “too close for comfort” range. Characters at this distance don’t get the full effect of the explosion, but they can still get a little hurt. They each take one yellow pip of damage.

WEAPON	DAMAGE	C/PC/KoF/F*	BLAST AREA	TCFC RANGE
MOLOTOV	WW	2/4/6/8	2 YD	3 YD
GRENADE	OWW	5/10/20/25	10 YD	15 YD
ROCKET	WWW	30/80/250/800	20 YD	35 YD

*ranges in yards

Armor

Through out history man has also made himself armor to protect from the weapons his neighbor was making. These range from chain and plate armor to Kevlar vests and personal force fields. Every pip on the armor’s color bar can negate a pip of the same color yielded by the damage roll. If the armor has one or more white pips, that pip can be used to negate any pip of color done against the target. The bearer of the armor gets to decide what damage the white pips are applied to. Some armor is especially heavy and can restrict a characters movements. Whenever a character in heavy armor tries to do something dexterous or significantly physical (jumping, dodging, running, climbing, etc.) there is a penalty applied. This penalty adds to the count necessary to succeed in the action. For example, Sir Balin is dressed in full plate male for a tournament. He needs to leap a stream to run down a vile foe. Normally a count of one would be enough for this action to succeed. But since he is in plate mail he needs a count of three.



ARMOR	COLOR BAR	ACTION PENALTY
LEATHER	○	+0
CHAIN	W	+1
PLATE	WW	+2
KEVLAR	WW	+1
FORCE FIELD	W TO WWW	+0

The strength of the Force Field depends on the amount of power available.

Running Action Spectra

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Other Painful Situations

For all our flippancy, people aren't the only reason a character can get hurt. Any number of environmental factors can hurt people. Again, this book cannot contain rules to cover every situation that might harm a character, especially since most damage done to PCs come from player mistakes and stupidity. Fire, falls, explosions, asphyxiation, poisons, getting hit by a car, having an anvil dropped on your head, the possibilities are endless. To help you, here are some guidelines when you need to figure out how badly someone is hurt. Ask yourself what level of situation it was and compare your answer to the chart below.

Generic Stupidity Chart

OPS	1 PIP
SHOOT	2 PIPS
THAT WAS DUMB	1 DIE
THAT WAS REALLY DUMB	2 DICE
YOU ARE TOO STUPID TO LIVE	3+ DICE

For 1 and 2 pip results, the player takes off that many pips from his vitality color bar. If this removes the last pip, a die is lost until he catches his breath or is healed. The GM chooses the color randomly or selects one that's appropriate for the source of damage. For other results completely remove the number of dice indicated. This will reset the character's vitality bar back to its normal value.

Non-Player Characters

Every person in the adventure that isn't controlled by one of the players is a non-player character. Many of these NPCs are unimportant background or color. A few, however, need to be developed before play begins. For an NPC the players will interact with for a significant portion of the adventure create a personality, a history, abilities and goals of the NPC. In addition to notes on how to play the character, you will need a description of the character's skills, abilities and dice. For ease, you can usually just note number of hot, cold or balanced dice. For instance, a typical modern day cop would roll one hot die and one cold die for every action. The most important and interesting NPCs will have die charts as discussed in "Really Building Dice." You can either roll unmarked six-sided dice against this chart or actually build the NPCs dice for ease in play.



Continuing the Adventure

Some adventures are self-contained, after the game is over the heroes can go home, ride off into the sunset and live happily ever after. But at times we want to know more, what happens next, where did the hero go from there?

There are plenty more adventures for your characters and that setting. As you play more your world setting will grow and expand, you will introduce more and more detailed NPCs, more plots, more things to discover. Your world will grow and so will the player's characters.

Although Action Spectra was primarily built for short, individual adventures, great fun can be had playing in a campaign, or a series of linked adventures with common characters. The players and their characters will develop a history, more personality, and war stories to share. They will grow and change as both the characters and the players learn more about the world and each other.

Character Improvement

In addition to the knowledge gained over a series of adventures the characters should have the opportunity to grow in their abilities and skills. After each adventure in an ongoing campaign the GM may award pips which can be used to improve characters or improve their chances in a game.

Awarding Pips

The GM should award each player one or two pips at the end of the adventure based on the character's performance. The color of the pip should relate to the character's actions. If a player's deep-space scout spent a whole adventure running and fighting from foes and danger, perhaps she should gain a red or yellow pip. Or if his wizard brokered peace between the trolls and the giants, maybe he should get a green pip. If the players played particularly well, give them more pips. They don't all have to be the same color.

Additionally, if a player comes up with a great idea or roleplays a scene exceptionally well, or does some other notable feat, the GM may award him pips immediately.

When a character gains pips in this manner the player should make a note on his character card until the pip is spent.

Using Pips

There are three ways that these pips can be used: they can be added into any one yield, they can improve skills, and they can buy additional character dice.

Any time a character needs to generate a yield the player may "use" pips gained as experience, adding that pip to the yield for that feat. Once a pip has been used this way it is spent and may not be used again. The pip should be marked off the character's card.

These pips can also increase skills just as they are used during character creation. In order to increase a skill you must already have the necessary preceding pips in your skill color bar. For instance, John's starship captain has the following skills:

COMMAND:	BR	BRPG
PILOTING:	GY	GYBP

After his last daring escapade, the GM awarded him with a purple pip. He could put that pip into Command at increase his color bar to BRP. He cannot put it into piloting because he needs to spend a blue pip before he can get to purple.

Players can also use the pips to build additional dice, although this is a long and costly process. First, the player must buy a blank die by spending one pip of each color. Remember, white can count for any color. When he has spent all those pips he gains another die with six black sides. Now as he gains pips from adventuring he may replace those pips with the black on the die's faces and include the die in all character rolls.



Now Go To It

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That's it. Those are the rules. Believe it or not you're ready to run an adventure. So what do you do from here? Grab some friends, make up some dice, and start rolling. If you don't know where to start for an adventure steal one from a book or movie. Change it around a bit so there are some surprises, but don't worry too much if anyone recognizes it.

While the players are making their characters write down the names and important skills of the chief characters you expect them to run into. Either make up dice or a die chart for them, or note how many balanced, hot or cold dice the character should get and you should be all set.

Or, visit our website at www.arrogantgames.com where we will have adventures, settings and additional rules that you can use, such as a complete system for magic powers and superheroes. In fact, check back with us regularly as we will be providing more information and more support just as fast as we can.

Which ever you chose, to make up your own adventure or use one of ours, just relax and go for it. Make your descriptions of what happens around the PCs as vivid and exciting as you can, respond to whatever actions they decide to take and let the dice roll!

You'll do fine. Trust us.

Good luck and great gaming!

Arrogant Game Design



Glossary of Terms

Action Spectra

Adjacent colors, colors next to each other in the standard color wheel. The color wheel goes red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple. Purple is adjacent to red.

Adventure, the set of event that happen to player characters during the course of a game.

Harare: Capital of Zimbabwe

Balanced die, a die with one of each of the six basic colors: red, orange, yellow, green, blue and purple

Catching your breath, an unspecified period of time in which a character regains a character die by not doing much of anything.

Character, the persona, skills and dice a player uses during a game.

Character dice, a set of dice that determine the characteristics of a character.

Cold color, green, blue and purple, which represent relatively inactive concepts.

Cold die, a die with two green faces, two blue faces and two purple faces.

Color bar, a series of colors in order which are used to describe an ability.

Count, the number of colors rolled or generated that are in phase with an action.

Damage, specifically pips applied to a vitality bar, which can reduce the number of dice a character may roll.

Feats, any action a character may attempt that has any possibility of failure.

Game Master, the player responsible for describing the world around the PCs and determining the success and failures of actions.

GM, see Game Master

Harare, capital of Zimbabwe.

Hot colors, red, orange and yellow, the more active colors.

Hot die, a die with two red faces, two yellow faces, and two orange faces.

In phase, a color or set of colors that are appropriate to an attempted feat.

Non-playing character, any character not under control of the players, a supporting character run by the GM.

NPC, see Non-Player Character.

Object dice, a set of dice added to a character's roll whenever an object is used.

Object pips, a set of pips that are added to a yield when an object is used in a specific manner.

PC, see Player Character

Permanent pip, a pip of color that is added to every feat of a certain type that a character engages in.

Phase

Pip, the basic unit of color.

Player Character, a persona controlled by one of the Players.

Set, a series of pips of the same color.

Setting, the world or milieu in which an adventure takes place. Typically it is used to describe a whole world and genre as opposed to a specific place.

Skill, any ability in which the character may train to improve and thereby increases the number of colors in phase with feats related to the skill.

Skill check, a roll of dice and pips to see if a character succeeds at a feat.

Stopping and then some, preventing another character's feat and succeeding at your own at the same time.

Stopping someone, increasing the yield another character must achieve to succeed at a feat.

Symbols, a design placed on a die which allows a character to perform feats beyond the scope of the human ability.

Temporary pip, a pip of color that is added to one specific feat and then is expended.

Toughness, a feat to avoid feeling the effects of damage

Appendix A: Psionics

Sometimes the mind is the only tool needed to do the job. Be they otherwise logical aliens, investigators into the occult, or mystics from an ancient age many worlds and stories involve characters who can shape the world by their thoughts alone: characters who have tapped into the power of Psionics.

New Symbols

Psionics introduces two new symbols to Action Spectra. If it is appropriate to the game-world and the Game Master agrees, a character can take and use the new symbols just as they can the colors. There are no skills that use the symbols, but a character can assign one or more of them to a die face instead of a color during character creation. This means the character will both lose a color on his dice, and a pip in his skills.

When making checks, whites may be used as either of the new symbols if the character already has that symbol on his dice.

Kinetic

Kinetics represents the mind's ability to manipulate and control the physical world. It can be used to move objects without touching them (telekinesis), as well as to affect energy and energy sources (dynekinesis). Kinetics is represented by the Greek letter Kappa (K).

Telekinesis this is the ability to move things with solely with psychic energy. A Telekinetic can move, throw or even warp and destroy objects with this power. A character with kinetics can move up to 20 lbs. with his mind without making a roll. Anything over that requires a feat roll. Increase the necessary count by one for each 50 pounds after the first 20. If a character wishes to throw an object very quickly he must roll a at least one kinetic (more for heavier objects as above). To warp, alter or destroy the physical nature of an object requires a count of three or better.

Dynekinesis is the ability to manipulate energy with just the mind. In most settings a character will have to choose one type of energy to manipulate (fire, electricity, magnetism). The count of any dynekenetic check is reduced by one for each 50 watts of power above the first 50 the psychic tries to affect. (Note: 50

watts is enough to light a light bulb, power a one pound electromagnet, or ignite a green twig on fire, or do one die of damage to a target) A character with kinetics can increase, decrease or modulate an existing energy source without making a feat check (up to 50 watts). A count of one is required to produce energy from one's own body. A count of two is required to control or move an energy source about.

Pathic

Pathic is the mind's ability to communicate directly with other minds (telepathy), sense things otherwise hidden to mortal senses (ESP), and to separate itself from the body entirely and enter another state of consciousness (astral projection). Pathic is represented by the Greek letter Psi (ψ)

Telepathy is the ability to read other's thoughts and to projects one's own thoughts directly into another's mind. A character with pathic can know what another character or animal is thinking without making a feat roll. With a count of one, a character can read the thoughts on the surface of the brain, the broad conscious inner monologue of the target. A character can also project his voice into another's mind with just a count of one. With each additional count the character can sends his voice to another target. A count of two will let the character connect his mind completely to a target, dominating him and taking control of his body. The character will first have to win a psychic battle with the target to gain full control, though (see page 38). If a character is in physical contact with the target the required count for a feat is reduced by one. If the character does not have eye contact with the target, reduce the yield by one.

Extra-sensory Perception (ESP) allows a character to see entities and energies that are otherwise invisible. It can also let a character

Appendix A: Psionics

become aware of distant events or events that occurred in the past. A character with ESP can automatically see spirits and entities in that exist on the edge of reality. A simple feat with a count of one will allow him to be aware of something even if the character could not normally perceive it, such as something occurring on the far side of a wall, or behind him. A count of two is required for a character to be able to sense who had been in a room sometime in the past.

With astral projection a character can actually separate his mind from his body. While separated, the character has no control over his physical body and will not be aware of anything happening to it. The spirit is connected by a spiritual "cord", perceivable by any character with pathic or ESP as a silvery cord stretching from the spirit to the body. As long as the cord is intact, the spirit can return instantly to his body. If the cord is severed, the spirit must travel back to his body normally. A character traveling by astral projection can move 10 feet a second. A count of one pathic is required to separate ones spirit from the body. A count of one will also allow the spirit to shift immediately up to a mile away from his current position. Normally, astral projections are visible only to characters with pathic. A spirit can become visible to individuals without ESP by performing a feat with a count of two. A count of two will also permit an astral projection to take over another individual's body. If the individual is currently occupied by a spirit (that is, most everyone who's not larking about as an astral projection) the character must first defeat the target in a psychic battle.

Psychic Battles

Characters with either kinetic or pathic can attack a mind directly in a psychic battle. A psychic battle is resolved as an extended battle of wits with a few important distinctions. The "Three Strikes" rule does not apply. A character can attack with the same type of attack over and over. Both the attacker and the defender

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can take physical damage from the battle. Any dice lost in a psychic battle are lost until the character catches his breath or heals. Pathic pips can be used as white pips during the battle.

Any character, even one without pathic or kinetic, can resist a psychic battle. Although they cannot initiate one, once engaged the character has the opportunity to deal damage back.

Appendix B: Aliens

Action Spectra

In the far-flung reaches of the Lost Galaxy, the ancient race of Humanity is far from alone. Other species travel, trade and live in their midst. And when playing adventures there, these aliens can be used as both player and non-player characters.

Seven such alien species are described here. Each entry contains a brief description, the vitality bar for individuals of that species (along with any natural armor they may possess), and a list of powers or special effects unique to that species. Most of the powers are innate and can be automatically used by any one of that species. Some powers, however, are listed with a skill color bar. This skill can only be purchased by members of that race. It is purchased and improved just as any other skill. If a character with the power doesn't have the skill, he may still attempt an action using that power as a default to the first color in the color bar.

Trents (Cshh Sshhh Tsh)

HEIGHT VARIABLE (3 FEET MINIMUM)

WEIGHT: 100-140 LB

VITALITY: RRY

ARMOR: Y

Description: Trents are sentient plants. Their bodies consist of hard seedpods about 3 feet in diameter surrounded by tough, sinewy vines. Their entire structure is covered by spade shaped leaves and flower like structures serve functions of the mouth and eyes. These flowers protrude about four feet from the seed torso. Other vines can reach out, grab and manipulate objects. In general the vines are wrapped around one another to form rough equivalents of arms and legs, the shape and number of these limbs is up to the Trent. No matter how many limbs a Trent has it only has the brain capacity to perform the standard numbers of tasks in a round.

Regeneration: Trents have remarkable regenerative abilities; they recover one pip of damage per hour. In addition, any vines or limb cut of a Trent can be re-grown and the limbs that they formed can be instantly reshaped if any vines remained.

Hibernation: Trents can survive in hostile environments up to and including the vacuum of space by going into hibernation. Hibernation causes the vines surrounding the Trents body die off as their seed shell seals air tight. Once in an acceptable environment the Trent wakes up and begins to sprout. Upon first emerging from hibernation a Trent has no dice and can only move about sluggishly. The Trent

regains one die every two days after recovering from hibernation. Years in hibernation do not age a Trent.

Light: Trents require bright natural or artificial sunlight to remain active. Once illumination is removed the Trent must make a roll yielding one blue every 5 minutes in order to remain awake. A Trent that succumbs to darkness does not enter hibernation, but if left for days its vines may shrivel and die off.

Water: Trents also need high atmospheric moisture to survive. If a Trent is put into an excessively dry environment the Trent will go into hibernation within 3 days.

Elementals (Cruckuatssss)

HEIGHT: 8' QUADRUPEL, 11' BIPED

WEIGHT: 700-800 LB

VITALITY: RYYY

ARMOR: WW

Description: Elementals are silicon-based entities. They have a thick body with hard diamond-like spines projecting from the back. They have four legs with opposable digits on all appendages. Elementals have no heads, and their eyes and mouth are on the lower end of their torso. Not unlike ancient earth's bears, they tend to walk on all fours but when necessary they can rise up on their hind legs to use their front legs to manipulate things. The bipedal stance puts a great strain on their rear legs, however so Elementals avoid standing upright if possible.

Very Strong: Elementals are quite physically strong. Elementals all have one permanent red

Appendix B: Aliens

character pip that can be included in any yield regarding a physical feat.

Slow: Elemental experience time on a different scale from carbon-based species. One second for them is two seconds to humans and other carbon-based aliens. Because of this an Elemental can only act every other round when in combat with carbon creatures.

Hassss

HEIGHT: 4' TALL 12' LONG

WEIGHT: 180-260 LB

VITALITY: RRY

ARMOR: NONE

Description: The Hass are a reptilian species that most resemble serpents. They have a central serpentine body with a frill of small tentacles of varying length projecting from the sides of their body. In general they have two to four tentacles that are long enough to serve as arm and a total of six to ten tentacles for finer manipulations. When moving, the front 4 feet of their body is held vertical above while the remaining length is propelled in a snake-like slithering. If need be Hassss can raise them self up to nearly the full length of their body.

Leap: A Hassss can curl up and leap a very long distance. The Hassss must spend a round coiling their body to prepare for the leap. After coiling it can leap up to 100 feet reaching a speed of 60mph.

Poison: Hassss have fangs that they can use to inject poison into a creature that they bite. This poison is unique to Hass biochemistry though and only effect creatures from their own planet. The poison does WWW per round if effective.

Cold Blooded: Hassss are cold-blooded limiting the temperature range they can survive in. If the temperature rises above 100 degrees or below 50 degrees Fahrenheit the Hass will take one pip of damage for every ten minutes it is exposed to the temperature.

Food: Hassss are only able (or willing) to eat live food. However they only have to eat once every 2 days.

Worms

HEIGHT: BASED ON HOST

WEIGHT: BASED ON HOST

VITALITY: BASED ON HOST

ARMOR: BASED ON HOST

Description: Worms are a parasitic species. They can inhabit and control almost any carbon-based species (Trents, Hass, Grays, Humans) and their host does not have to be intelligent (although they prefer the intelligent ones). In their natural form, Worms appear like a large centipede about 3 feet in length with a sharp pin shaped head. The head is used to burrow into their targets connecting to the target's neural system. Most of a Worm's body is neural tissue containing the Worm memories as well as the chemical factories needed to adjust to a wide variety of host.

Worm have no real society or even a name for them self outside of the ones their host species give them. This is mostly because a worm out side of a host is a relatively primitive creature only concerned about fulfilling it base drives. Only by linking their minds to that of their hosts do worms attain curiosity, complex planning and the other mental hallmarks of a logical species. Worms have terrific memory but with out a mind to interpret the memories the potential is untapped.

Symbiosis: The main ability of a Worm is it's ability to join with a host. The Worm attaches it self to the host nervous system (the spine in humans) and links its mind up to the mind of the host forming a new entity under the worms control. In game terms the worm's dice are added to the host's. (Note: There should be a way to distinguish these dice incase the worm and the host separate). The Worm can then use both skills it possesses and any skills possessed by the host. If there is overlap use the higher of the two skills. Worms usually have only one die associated with them. To make a Worm character the player should construct two different characters: a one die Worm, and the host character using the remaining dice available during character creation.

Appendix B: Aliens

Locking: Worms can release chemicals into their host to improve the efficiency of the body. This can have a stressful affect on the host's body, however. A worm may lock his character dice into position allowing the showing face to act as a permanent character pip. The character may roll his dice and choose one of them to lock in that position. He may only lock one die per action, but any number of dice may be locked. Any feat attempted by a Worm with a locked die automatically includes those colors in their yields. Each time a character locks a die, he takes one pip of damage (of the GM's choosing). Further, for each ten minutes that a die is locked the character takes another pip of damage. To unlock the dice, the character must rest for at least a minute and all locked dice become unlocked.

Control: When ever Worm and its host lose a die from damage or a Battle of Wits the host may temporarily break free of the worms control. The host makes a Will roll using just its skill and dice which the Worm may resist with a Charisma check using its skill and die. The host gains its freedom for the count times four minutes. After this time is up, a new check has to be made between the host and the Worm.

Artificials (OIOIOIOIOIIIOOII)

HEIGHT: VARIABLE

WEIGHT: VARIABLE

VITALITY: RYY

ARMOR: NONE

Description: Artificials consist of any one of a number of machine races that came from the service robots that many of the sentient races used. Their appearance is highly variable, based on solely on the function the artificial unit was intended to serve. Many Artificials resemble another biological to ease their interaction with that race.

Computer Interface: Artificials can interface with computers. They gain an automatic success when using any computer controlled system or when trying to get data from a computer. However any malicious program in a computer system can attack the artificial when interface.

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Use a the psychic battle rules (from Appendix X) to resolve this situation if it arises.

Crunching (PGBO): Artificials have the ability to predict probably outcome of multiple possible action. To do this the Artificial must concentrate for two rounds doing nothing. After this time the player rolls the Artificial's crunching skill. For the next count rounds, the player can name two different actions the character could take. The player rolls for both actions and picks the best one. This is the action the Artificial actually took, and the other option never happened at all.

Repair: Artificials are unable to naturally heal like biological species. An Artificial can never regain lost pip or dice except through mechanics checks. The catching ones breath rules do not apply to Artificials.

Recharge: Artificial need to recharge their batteries for 3 hours once every 24 hours. If they fail to do this they will shutdown until some one come around to recharge them.

Psychology: Even though many Artificials are free races, the concept of service remains a crucial part of their psychology. All Artificials have sworn their loyalty and service to some race, group or individual. To betray this loyalty would be psychologically equivalent of committing suicide. Artificials explain that they have no drive to eat, sleep, reproduce, expand their territory, better their species, or even ensure their survival. All of these drives are artifacts of evolution and Artificials are more than happy to be with out them. They seem to bring the biological species no end of unhappiness. The only drive an Artificial has is to serve and better their masters and that drive validates their existence.

Grays (Unknown)

HEIGHT: 3-4'

WEIGHT: 40-50 LB

VITALITY: RY

ARMOR: NONE

Description: Grays are a diminutive humanoid species with potent psychic powers. The bodies of Grays are quite small and frail in

Appendix B: Aliens

contrast to the large heads that are about twice the size of a human's. They have large black eyes devoid of pupils, small vertical slits for nostrils, no real nose and a very small mouth.

Psychics: Grays are gifted psychics and only communicate with one another telepathically. When creating a Gray character, you may sacrifice two colored pips on a die (meaning the character takes two black pips) to gain a permanent psychic character pip.

Weakness: While psychically strong, Grays are physically and emotionally weak. Any physical feat attempted by a Gray has its count automatically reduced by one.

Curiosity: Grays are intensely curious. They want to figure out how everything works no matter how dangerous or immoral the act of discovery may be.

Spiders (Tričick)

HEIGHT: 4'-4.5'

WEIGHT: 210-270LB

VITALITY: RRYYY

ARMOR: NONE

Description: Spiders are an insectoid species that look like a cross between a starfish and a tarantula. They have a circular body surrounded by five stout limbs. There are grasping digits on all their limbs and any one can be used as a hand. Spiders have no eyes but fine hairs that act as sensory organs cover their body. A mouth is located on the underside of the body in the center of their frame. There is no front or back to a spider; they have complete radius symmetry about their center.

Blind: Spiders have no eyes and are unable to perceive light. While their other senses make up for this deficit they will be unable to read pigment based writing, see light based displays, or use long range weapons that have not been modified for their senses.

Echolocation: A Spider's primary sense is echolocation. They produce subsonic clicks that can sense nearly anything in their environment. In general this sense extends 200' around the spider and it is totally aware of everything in this area. In addition the click can be directed

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in a specific direction to extend the range up to 1000'

Electorsense: Spiders are able to sense electric and magnetic field up to 30' away. This includes the electric field produced by the nervous system of most living things. Spiders use this sense to read their magnetic writing system as well as specially designed electrical displays.

Climbing: Due to their body design spiders are exceptionally good at climbing up vertical surface. They get 2 automatic success for any climbing check.

Appendix C: Magic

There are many types of magic practiced through out the Realms. Druids compel the powers of the land and nature, while wizards tap into ancient and arcane powers that are the basis of the universe itself. And some daring souls have even learned how to combine the two powers into a mighty force.

New Symbols

Two new symbols are introduced in this magic system, gaea and arcane. There are new skills that use one or more of the symbols as well. If it is appropriate to the game-world and the Game Master agrees, a character can take and use the new symbols just as they can the colors. For each level of a skill color bar a character takes, one pip of the appropriate symbol is added to the character's dice.

Gaea

Gaea is representative of the power of nature. A character with gaea can learn spells that control plants and animals, visions and illusions and even life-force itself. In color bars gaea is represented by the letter "I."

Arcane

Arcane represents the power of formulaic spells. It gives the caster power over the basic forces and elements of the world. In color bars arcane is represented by "A."

Using Magic

The magic symbols are used just as the colors are. A character with one or more pip on his dice can try to perform any of the magical feats appropriate to that power. Additionally, special skills called "spells" can be taken to allow the character to use other colors to perform feats. Since it is harder to visualize what count is necessary to perform magical feats than normal feats, use the chart below as a guide.

COUNT DIFFICULTY

- 1-3 SOMETHING THAT COULD BE DONE WITHOUT MAGIC WITHOUT NEEDING A FEAT CHECK.
- 4-6 SOMETHING YOU COULD DO WITHOUT MAGIC AT A COUNT OF ONE
- 7-10 SOMETHING YOU COULD DO WITH A COUNT OF TWO

- 11-15 SOMETHING THAT COULD ONLY BE DONE THROUGH MAGIC
- 16-25 SOMETHING THAT COULD ONLY BE DONE BY A POWERFUL MAGE
- 26-50 ACTIONS MORE TYPICALLY ASSOCIATED WITH GODS.

For instance, a character with arcane might be able to perform the following feats:

- LIGHT A CANDLE (1)
- PUT OUT A FIRE QUICKLY (4)
- WALK THROUGH A FIRE WITHOUT GETTING BURNT (7)
- CREATE AND THROW GIANT BALLS OF FIRE (11)
- TURN A BONFIRE INTO AN INTELLIGENT, WALKING FIRE ELEMENTAL (16)
- RAIN DESTRUCTIVE FIRE OVER AN ENTIRE NATION (30)

Holdings

Many feats that are performable by magic require a count far higher than anyone could reasonably generate on a single roll. To get a higher count a character with arcane or gaea can "hold" his count from one turn to the next. Each round add the count of the roll to the round before. If a wizard yields a count of zero in two consecutive turns or is otherwise disturbed while casting the spell, the count made up to that point is lost and the character must start over. Optionally, if the hold is broken in this manner, the GM may declare some sort of magical backlash based on whatever the count was before the hold was lost.

New Skills

The following skills are called rituals. Rituals differ from other skills in that the magical symbols sometimes repeat in the color bar. This forces a character to devote more of his dice to the magical symbols producing a less well-rounded character.

Appendix C: Magic

Action Spectra

Plant

IGBO

This ritual gives the caster the ability to control, shape or manipulate any living plant.

Beast

IBRG

Beast gives the caster control over living animals. If the animal has dice, it gets the opportunity to resist the spell using Blue or another color if the GM thinks is appropriate.

Metamorphosis

IOB

The caster can transform living tissue, changing one creature into another.

Life-force

IIPG

This ritual gives power over the natural life-force of living things and spirits of the dead. It can be used to summon and dispel spirits.

Illusion

IIGP

The Illusion ritual lets the caster create and control false images. The more complex the illusion, the more senses it fools, the higher count necessary to create it. Characters perceiving illusions can see through it using Awareness.

Fire

ARYP

This ritual provides power over fire.

Mind

AAPG

The mind ritual allows the caster to control and manipulate sentient minds. To dominate another character's mind, the caster needs to defeat him using the psychic battles rule. (See appendix a: Psionics.)

Spirits

AGPB

The caster can summon, take control, and manipulate the spirits of the dead or unliving.

Demons

AAR

This dangerous ritual allows the caster to summon, bind and control demons. Before the caster can control a powerful demon, he may have to defeat it using the psychic battle rules. (See appendix a: psionics.)

visions

AGG

The visions ritual gives the caster the ability to see and know things that are hidden. Low counts are needed to see spirits and things that are invisible to the mundane eye, while higher counts can give the caster glimpses into the past and even future.

weather

IAP

All manner of meteorological affects can be controlled, created and manipulated with this ritual.

Magic Items

There are all sorts of magic items in the various Realms. Most are represented simply using permanent pips or object dice. A few special ones can be used to actually aid in casting spells.

Wands

Wands provide permanent pips for use in rituals. While the pips can be used in any ritual the caster knows, they can only be used in instances that relate to the nature of the wand. For instance, the Wand of Falling Things provides an arcane pip to any ritual involving, well, things falling. So a caster could use the Wand to cast the Weather ritual to conjure up rain (because it falls from the sky, see?) but not to make it really, really cold.

Staffs

Staffs are potent magic items that have their own object dice, usually with three magic symbols and a few colors. Any time a character is casting a ritual he may add the staff's die to the roll.

Scrolls & Tomes

Scrolls provide additional pips for the casting of specific rituals. If the pip provided is a magical pip, than anyone, even someone without any magic symbols on his dice, can attempt the ritual. Multiple scrolls can be combined into highly prized magic tomes.

Appendix D: Making a Character

Adam is making a character for a space-opera adventure. He decides he wants to play Captain Zephod, a dashing and charming starship captain. His GM has decided that they will be playing a heroic adventure and characters will start with three dice and sixteen pips.

Choose Skills

Adam begins by going through the skills and making a list of skills he thinks Zephod should have. For easy reference he records the skill color bar beside them.

STREETWISE,	BCPR
TOUGHNESS,	BYRP
WARFARE,	GBRY
GUNS,	GOYB
PILOTING,	OBYG
CHARISMA,	ORYB
HAND COMBAT,	RBOG
ATHLETICS,	ROYB
COMMAND,	RPGY

Now he goes and chooses how far into the color bars he will go, keeping in mind that he only has sixteen pips to assign and he will want a couple white pips as well. As he assigns pips, Adam realizes that he doesn't have nearly enough for all the skills he wants, and so decides not to give Zephon Streetwise and Athletics. He ends up with the following list:

TOUGHNESS,	BY
WARFARE,	G
GUNS,	GO
PILOTING,	OBY
CHARISMA,	OR
HAND COMBAT,	R
COMMAND,	RPG

This is a total of fourteen pips. He uses a white pip instead of a green and a red, and since using a white pip requires an additional black pip his total is sixteen pips: two red, three orange, two yellow, two green, two blue, one purple, two white, and two black.

Design The Dice

Now that Adam knows how many pips of which color he has, he has to assign the pips to his three dice. Since three dice have a total of 18 sides, he has an additional two black pips to assign. In general, he decides to spread the colors out so he can get as high a count as possible. To help resist damage he makes sure to put one of the blue pips on a die without a white so he's more likely to get either a blue or a white when rolling against damage.

DIE 1	DIE 2	DIE 3
BLACK	BLACK	BLACK
BLACK	WHITE	ORANGE
WHITE	ORANGE	RED
ORANGE	RED	GREEN
YELLOW	YELLOW	BLUE
GREEN	BLUE	PURPLE

Now all that's left is to write a brief description of Zephod on the character card and to actually make his unique colored dice.