

FREE!
Take Me!

critical



MESS

ZINE

Comics, Tabletop RPGs, Games, Fun, & More!

CriticalMess.com

#1

#1 (02-05-2025)

Table of Contents

1. Cover
2. Contents List
3. CM Comic #1
4. PDP Intro (Pen & Paper Roleplaying Game)
5. Rolling Dice
6. Character Attributes
7. Suggested Rolls
8. Character Stats #1
9. Character Stats #2 & Spending XP
10. Character Skills
11. Assets Common
12. Assets Uncommon
13. Assets Rare
14. Flaws Common
15. Flaws Uncommon
16. Flaws Rare
17. Combat
18. Actions In Combat
19. Status Conditions #1
20. Status Conditions #2
21. CM Comic #3

Critical Mess: Webcomic #1





Intro - Explanation of Game

Pencil, Dice, Paper (also known as P.D.P.) represents the three core elements of any tabletop roleplaying game. P.D.P. is a straightforward and versatile roleplaying system suitable for any genre and players of all experience levels. It's a flexible framework of rules designed to work alongside material and system extensions created by both players and the Game Master (GM). Here we will present the basics of the system, with some examples for further customization down the line.

Rolling Dice - Determining the Outcome of Character Actions

P.D.P. uses standard six-sided dice (d6) as the core mechanic. Players roll a certain number of dice based on their intended actions in the game, with the GM determining the required rolls and applying situational modifiers. A player's dice pool typically combines two key **Attributes**, such as **Mind**, **Mouth**, or **Body** paired with **Force**, **Finesse**, or **Resistance**. Additional factors like **Skills**, **Flaws**, and **Assets** can further modify the starting dice pool. You add 1d6 to the roll for each point in the called for **Attributes**.

When interpreting dice rolls, the goal is to roll 6's, which count as successes. Each 1 rolled cancels out a success by subtracting from the total. Most tasks require only one success to succeed, but in contested rolls against another player or NPC, the highest number of successes determines the winner. The GM can also incorporate degrees of success or failure, such as critical success for multiple successes or critical failure for no successes combined with one or more 1's, adding more nuance to the outcomes.

Character Attributes - Core Character Mechanics

New characters start with 6 Attribute points to allocate between **Mind, Mouth, and Body**, and another 6 points to distribute between **Force, Finesse, and Resistance**. Each of these six attributes must be assigned at least 1 point and no more than 4 points.

Mind: Represents your character's intelligence, knowledge, problem-solving abilities, and mental capability. It's used for tasks involving reasoning, memory, or willpower.

Mouth: Reflects your character's charisma, communication skills, and social savvy. It's used for persuasion, deception, intimidation, or any interactions involving verbal or nonverbal expression.

Body: Represents your character's physical strength, endurance, and general fitness. It's used for tasks requiring brute force, physical stamina, or against physical challenges.

Force: Measures your character's ability to exert power, whether physical or mental. It's used for actions that involve strength, directness, or dominance.

Finesse: Represents precision, dexterity, and control in your character's actions. It's used for tasks requiring accuracy, agility, or delicate handling.

Resistance: Reflects your character's toughness and ability to withstand harm, hardship, or strain. It's used for enduring damage, resisting effects, or maintaining stability in adverse situations.

Examples - Suggested Combinations of Attributes for Rolls

Here are some examples of attribute combinations and how they might be used in gameplay:

- **Mind + Force** → Solving a problem through sheer mental determination (e.g., deciphering a difficult puzzle under pressure).
- **Mind + Finesse** → Quickly recalling obscure knowledge or making precise calculations (e.g., picking apart a riddle or hacking a system).
- **Mind + Resistance** → Withstanding mental strain or resisting fear (e.g., enduring interrogation or resisting magical influence).
- **Mouth + Force** → Commanding authority through sheer presence (e.g., giving an inspiring speech or intimidating someone).
- **Mouth + Finesse** → Convincing someone with charm and subtle persuasion (e.g., fast-talking a guard or bluffing in a poker game).
- **Mouth + Resistance** → Remaining steadfast in an argument or resisting manipulation (e.g., staying composed under social pressure or resisting another social check).
- **Body + Force** → Using raw strength in a physical task (e.g., breaking down a door, wrestling an opponent, or making a melee attack).
- **Body + Finesse** → Relying on agility and coordination (e.g., making a ranged attack or performing acrobatics).
- **Body + Resistance** → Enduring pain or harsh conditions (e.g., surviving extreme cold, heat, or resisting poison).

Character Stats - Core Character Mechanics #1

Health/Max Health: Represents how much damage your character can endure. If your character's **Health** drops to 0, they become unconscious and are considered dying. Another character can attempt to stabilize you with a successful **Mind + Finesse** roll, leaving you unconscious for 1d6 hours. Otherwise, you must make a **Body + Resistance** roll each round while dying. A successful roll keeps you alive for another round, while a failed roll results in taking one **Wound**.

Health can be restored manually through various means or recovers naturally at a rate of 1d6 per week of rest. Your character's **Max Health** is calculated as **Resistance + Body + 3 + Modifiers**.

DT: Represents your characters Damage Threshold. Your character's **DT** is equal to half their **Max Health**, rounded down. If you take damage from any one source that equals or exceeded your **DT** then your character automatically takes one **Wound**.

Wounds: Your character can sustain up to 4 **Wounds** before dying automatically. **Wounds** are gained by failing dying checks or taking damage that exceeds the character's Damage Threshold (**DT**). Each **Wound** imposes a -1 die penalty to all checks made while the character remains wounded. A single **Wound** can be healed with a successful **Mind + Finesse** check, up to once per day, per patient.

Initiative: This is rolled whenever combat begins or when actions need to be tracked in round-based increments. Characters take their turns in order, starting with the highest number of successes and proceeding to the lowest. Your character's **Initiative** is determined by adding their **Finesse + Body**.

Character Stats - Core Character Mechanics #2

Movement: **Movement** determines how far your character can travel when using a **Move Action**, typically measured in gridded squares. The GM sets the distance each square represents, with 5 feet being the standard. Your character's **Movement** is calculated by adding **Force + Finesse + Body**. You can't break your movement up between actions once a **Move Action** has started. Any leftover **Movement** is lost after taking another **Action**.

Luck: Every new character begins with 1 point of **Luck**. The GM can award additional **Luck** points as rewards for specific actions or achievements. Players can spend a **Luck** point to re-roll any failed roll, gaining an extra +1 die to the re-roll.

XP: **XP** is awarded by the GM at the end of each session. Players can spend **XP** to improve their character's **Stats, Attributes**. They may also use them to acquire new **Skills**, and **Assets**, as well as pay off **Flaws**. The GM determines the cost of upgrades, the amount of **XP** awarded, and the criteria for earning it.

Spending XP

Suggested Skills Point Cost: 5 XP multiplied by the new Skill #

Suggest Assets Cost: Common 5 XP, Uncommon 10 XP, Rare 15 XP

Suggested Flaw Removal Cost: Common 10 XP, Uncommon 20 XP, Rare 30 XP

Character Skills - Character Specializations

Skills: A character typically has a number of **Skills**, which represent specializations. Each point in a **Skill** adds 1d6 to any roll involving that **Skill**. For example, if a character has a Knife **Skill** of 2, they would add 2d6 to any roll involving the use of a knife.

All **Skills** are thought up by the players, at the GM's discretion of course. It is suggested that **Skills** be extremely focused so as not to be abusable to much in any given situation. It is also suggested to consider the genre of play when selecting **Skills**. A **Skill** in Pistols for instance wouldn't usually appear in a standard fantasy setting.

A new character starts with 5 **Skill** points, which can be distributed across up to 5 different **Skills**. **Skills** can also be purchased later using **XP**. Ultimately, **Skills** are chosen and purchased with guidance from the GM.

Examples - Suggested Character Skills

Specific Weapon Type, Jumping, Swimming, Diving, Climbing, Running, Grappling, Operating Specific Vehicle Type, Operating Specific Tech Type, Using Specific Magic Type, Listening, Searching, Spotting, Lying, Spotting Lies, Charming, Seducing, Specific Crafting Type, Translating Specific Language, Specific School of Knowledge.

Assets

Assets provide positive modifications to the standard game rules, allowing characters to do things that would normally be restricted.

Assets can be purchased later using **XP**. The nature and cost of each **Asset** are ultimately determined with the guidance of the GM.

New characters may begin playing with one equivalently rare **Asset** for every **Flaw** they choose.

Example Common Assets

Quick Reload: Reload a weapon as a **Free Action**.

Quick Draw: Draw a weapon as a **Free Action**.

First Aid: Heal up to 2 **Wounds** per patient, per day. Instead of only 1.

Quick Reflexes: Gain +1d6 on **Initiative** rolls.

Iron Will: Gain +1d6 when resisting mind-affecting effects like fear, persuasion, or illusions.

Example Uncommon Assets

Lucky: 1 Guaranteed **Luck** point at the start of each session.

High Pain Tolerance: DT is 75% of **Max Health** (rounded down), instead of 50%.

Lethal: Anytime you do damage you do 1 point extra.

Fast Instincts: Roll your **Initiative** twice at the start of combat, take the best result of either roll.

Combat Medic: You can attempt to stabilize a dying ally as a **Free Action** instead of a regular **Action**.

Thick Skinned: Reduce all incoming damage by 1.

Danger Sense: Once per session, you can force the GM to reveal if a situation is an ambush or trap.

Uncanny Dodge: Once per fight, you can halve the damage of any one attack against you.

Hard to Kill: When you would take a **Wound**, roll 1d6. On a 6, you ignore the **Wound**.

Example Rare Assets

Speedy: + 3 Movement.

Tough: +3 Max Health.

Flaws

Flaws alter the standard game rules in a negative way, creating challenges or hindrances for the character. The specifics of each **Flaw** are decided and purchased with the GM's guidance.

A player doesn't have to assign any **Flaws** at character creation if they don't want to start with any **Assets**. It should be noted that in some cases, the GM may allow players to use **XP** to remove a character's **Flaws** later on. With the cost of doing so determined by the rarity of the Flaw and at the GMs discretion.

Example Common Flaws

Slow Reload: Reload a weapon as two **Actions** instead of one.

Slow Draw: Draw a weapon as two **Actions**, instead of 1.

Bleeder: Anytime someone attempts to close one of your **Wounds** they require two successes, instead of one.

Phobia: Choose a common fear (heights, fire, water, spiders, etc.). You take a -2d6 penalty on all rolls when confronted with your fear.

Compulsive: Choose a compulsion for your character, whether it's gambling, stealing, or obsessively checking things.- 1d6 to all rolls made while trying to resist an impulse or compulsion.

Example Uncommon Flaws

Panic-Prone: Whenever **Initiative** for combat is rolled you must also make a **Mind + Resistance** check. A failed check means your character can't act in the first round of combat, no matter what their **Initiative** roll was.

Clumsy: Your character is prone to accidents, missteps, and dropping things at the worst possible moment. -1d6 to all rolls involving **Finesse**.

Addicted: Your character has an unhealthy reliance on something (e.g., alcohol, drugs, gambling) and struggles to function without satisfying the addiction. -2d6 to all rolls when not indulging in their addiction.

Unlucky: You do not add the extra die to a **Luck** point reroll like you would normally.

Low Pain Tolerance: DT is 25% of **Max Health** (rounded down), instead of 50%.

Non-Lethal: Anytime you do damage you do 1 point less.

Slow Instincts: Roll your **Initiative** twice at the start of combat, take the worst result of both rolls.

Example Rare Flaws

Slow: -3 Movement.

Weak: +3 Max Health.

Slow Learner: Gaining new **Skill** points costs double the normal **XP**.

Slow Grower: Gaining new **Attribute** points costs double the normal **XP**.

Fragile: Any damage you take is increased by 1.

Combat

In combat each participant starts by rolling **Initiative** to determine who goes in what order. The highest roll goes first and then play proceeds down from there. Each combatant gets to take up to two **Actions** per round. Unless using an **Action** as a reaction you may only act during your turn. Know that should actions be spent as reactions they still cost one of your two Actions for the whole round. Each combatant can take up to as many **Free Actions** as they want each round, at any point in the round.

Attacks

Most mental attacks require a successful **Mind + Finesse / Force** roll, while most physical attacks require a successful **Body + Finesse / Force** roll. This is as always at your GMs discretion. They may decide to have you make another combination of rolls in order to successfully pull off an attack.

Damage

Successes on the attack roll are added to a weapons damage modifier and inflicted as damage on the target of the attack.

Actions in Combat

- **Move:** Move your character up to their **Movement**.
- **Crouch:** Impose a -1d6 to ranged attacks from enemies, but they gain +1d6 to melee attacks against you.
- **Prone:** Impose a -2d6 to ranged attacks from enemies, but they gain +2d6 to melee attacks against you.
- **Stand Up:** Stand up from crouching or prone.
- **Aim:** Add +1d6 to your next attack roll.
- **Attack:** Make an attack against someone or something. (Double use of this **Action** in one round leads to a -2d6 on the second attack roll)
- **Help:** Aid another character. You grant them +1d6 to their roll.
- **Defend:** Make a **Mind + Finesse / Resistance** roll to defend against a mental attack, or a **Body + Finesse / Resistance** roll to defend against a physical attack. Each success subtracts one die from all applicable attacks made against you this round.
- **Reload:** Reload equipped weapons ammunition supply.
- **Object Interaction:** Equip a weapon, interact with/use an item.
- **Skill Usage:** Use a **Skill**/make a check.
- **Reaction:** Set an **Action** to happen when a certain trigger happens on another's turn. Last until your next turn and then any held reactions are lost.

Free Actions in Combat

- **Generally Speaking:** Talking with no **Skill** check.
- **Drop Held Object:** Dropping an object from one's hand.
- **Look, Listen, Smell, Touch, Taste:** Using a sense based **Skill**.

Status Conditions #1

- **Blinded/Deafened:** -3d6 penalty to any rolls that involve sight or sound.

Usual Duration: 1d6 rounds.

- **Dazed:** Unable to take any **Actions**. You may still defend against attacks though.

Usual Duration: One turn.

- **Frightened:** Must move away from the source of fear if possible. -2d6 penalty to all rolls while still near the source of fear.

Usual Duration: Until the source of fear is no longer within range. Remove with a successful **Mind + Resistance** roll.

- **Paralyzed:** Unable to take **Actions** or defend against attacks.

Usual Duration: Remove with a successful **Body + Resistance** or a **Mind + Finesse** roll.

- **Poisoned/Weakend:** -1d6 penalty to all rolls and you only get one **Action** per round instead of two.

Usual Duration: Remove with a successful **Body + Resistance** roll or a **Mind + Finesse** roll.

- **Slowed: Movement** is reduced by half and you only get one **Action** per round instead of two.

Usual Duration: Until the source that is slowing you is removed.

Status Conditions #2

- **Burning/Bleeding:** 1 damage each turn.

Usual Duration: Extinguish the fire with a successful **Body + Finesse**, or stop the bleeding with a successful **Mind + Finesse** check.

- **Enraged:** +1d6 to attack rolls. Must attack the nearest target (friend or foe), or make a successful **Mind + Resistance** check to act normally.

Usual Duration: Until the end of combat, being knocked out, or killed.

- **Marked:** 1 extra point of damage whenever you take damage from the entity that marked you.

Usual Duration: Until the entity that marked you is dead or changes its mark.

- **Frozen/Overheated/Exhausted:** -1d6 penalty to all rolls, and your **Movement** speed is reduced by half.

Usual Duration: Until warmed up, cooled off, or given rest.

- **Hungry/Thirsty:** -2d6 penalty to all rolls.

Usual Duration: Until fed or hydrated.

- **Vulnerable:** +1d6 extra damage suffered from all attacks.

Usual Duration: 1d6 rounds.

Critical Mess: Webcomic #3



Zine Created - 02.05.2025

#21 (02-05-2025)