

MECHANIKA

EMPIRES OF BLOOD & STEAM

CORE RULEBOOK
PLAYER & GAME MASTER
VER. 1.1

CHARACTER CREATION INFORMATION TEASER



©2014 Xaos Publishing. All rights reserved. Reproduction or posting without the written permission is expressly forbidden. This is a work of fiction. The work contained here are those of a fictitious alternate universe. Names, characters, places and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events or locales or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental and does not reflect the actual historical progression of our inhabited universe. Warning: Intended For Mature Readers Only. This book contains detailed accounts of drug & alcohol use. Xaos Publishing does not encourage any person to try any intoxicating substance. Xaos Publishing does not condone the use of any intoxicant legal or otherwise. Xaos Publishing does not endorse or condone violence as portrayed in this or any of our works. Should you happen upon any elder god during your time playing our games tell them we said hi but don't mention where to find us.

Xaos World & Game design by M.P. Yorty
Cover design by Dustin Finnicum
Book design and production by Joshua Baker
Editing by Joshua Baker
Book illustrations by Joseph Dufresne
Technical Writing by Josh Suttin
Illustrations ©2014 Xaos Publishing

CHARACTER CREATION

EVERY PARTY NEEDS A GOBLIN, THEY JUST DON'T NEED 10 OF THEM. WELL NOT FOR VERY LONG.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Your character is the center of your story. The material in this chapter will help you define who your character is, and how he interacts with the world. In Mechanika we want you to feel like your character is more than just figures on a page; we want your character to feel like a living entity with feelings, personality and more. This chapter will walk you through the steps necessary to create your own Mechanika hero.

The steps to character creation are simple and easy:

- 1) CREATE A PERSONA
- 2) SELECT A RACE
- 3) ASSIGN ATTRIBUTES & WOUNDS
- 4) ASSIGN ACTIONS & WEALTH
- 5) SELECT SKILLS
- 6) SELECT PERKS
- 7) SELECT FLAWS
- 8) SPEND REMAINING EXPERIENCE POINTS (EP)
- 9) GEAR UP & SELECT CHARACTER BONDS



1) CREATE A PERSONA

The first step to creating your character is to create a Persona. This is the character's personality and his role in the world. Your Persona defines your character and it gives you a purpose. We start this process by defining the character's motivations, and thus how he will interact not just with your group, but with the world around him.

CONCEPT

The first step to creating a Persona is to come up with your character's Concept. A Concept should be a sentence, or at least five words, that can be used as an overview of the character. The Concept is very important because it's a guide to the rest of character creation and also is one of the ways your character gains Destiny points.

A Concept should not be extremely narrow or wide because both create unique problems. A wide Concept like "Helpful Hero" is too general to build a character from, and also provides very little opportunity for the GM to award Destiny. The same issue goes for narrow Concepts like "Hero to Orphaned Girls". This provides very little for the character to do to gain Destiny points and provides little to build off of. A good example of a Concept would be "Hero to the Downtrodden." This Concept provides a wide group to help and a good amount of information to build the character.

Examples:

Sky Pirate with a Heart of Gold
Shrewd but Honorable Eccentric Detective
Ruthless Cold Vigilante
Tortured Pessimistic Engineer
Plucky Energetic Bodyguard Seeking His Place

HIGHER SELF

The next step is to create a Higher Self. A Higher Self exemplifies something positive about your character. Higher Self should be just a few words and is important because this is the second way a character can gain Destiny points. Your character's Higher Self should encompass his

most positive trait. A good example is “Never Accepts Payment from the Poor,” or “Always Helps a Lady in Distress.” These examples provide great opportunities to role-play your character, and are broad enough to allow the character to gain Destiny.

When you choose your Higher Self, make sure it is open-ended enough to allow you to role-play it in every session to some capacity, and that it fits in with your Concept.

Examples:

- Never Leaves a Comrade Behind*
- Loyal Above All Else*
- Honest in All Things*
- Everyone Deserves a Chance*
- Solves Any Crime*

LOWER SELF

Now we come to the third step of creating your character’s Persona, his Lower Self. A character’s Lower Self is something negative about the character, perhaps a hidden fear, bad habit, or dark desire. A Lower Self should be something that is just a few words long and portrays the darker side of his Persona. You gain Destiny for role playing your Lower Self as well as the other sides of your Persona, so make sure it is a trait you want to role-play consistently.

Great examples of Lower Self are “Falls for Anything in a Skirt,” “Very Shallow,” or “Cheats to Come Out on Top.” These all provide great role playing opportunities and help to flesh out your character.

Examples:

- I’m the Best There is*
- Everyone’s Hiding Something*
- Always Itching for a Fight*
- People are Merely Tools*
- No Sense of Loyalty*

2) SELECT A RACE

The second step is to decide on a Race. This is one of the biggest choices you will make because this both determines what abilities your character receives, and also how many perks she gets. The character’s race also defines how you are perceived as you travel from empire to empire.

The world of Mechanika is inhabited by many races. A few basic are defined here, but this core offering is barely scratching the surface of possibility. Many other races choose to dwell outside of civilized society, lurking in the Earth’s dark places.

Humans are the most predominant race currently known, making up 80% of the population. The other 20% are a mixed bag of Goblin, Sylvan, and a handful of others we will address later in the book or in future volumes. (Find the full listing in Chapter Three: Races.)

Note the penalties and benefits of your chosen race.

Every race also has a number of unique perks and flaws available to them. Humans gain a Supernatural perk and three Non-Supernatural perks, and all other races gain one Supernatural and two Non-Supernatural perks. Supernatural can be traded for two Non-Supernatural perks.

OVERVIEW OF AVAILABLE RACES:

Humans	Jack of All Trades	+1 Two Attr.
Goblins	Clever & Destructive	+1 INT +1 AGI
Moreauvians	Large & Powerful	+1 STR +1 FOR
Sylvans	Magical & Enigmatic	+1 INT +1 PRE
Dwarves	Ancient Artificers	+1 FOR +1 WIL
Dhampyr	Cunning & Cold	+1 AGI +1 PRE

In-depth information can be found in the Races chapter

3) ASSIGN ATTRIBUTES & WOUNDS

ATTRIBUTES

The next step is to craft the physical aspects of your character. These aspects are known as attributes. Attributes determine things like how much your character can lift, how much information she remembers, how fast she can run, and other qualities of the character.

This part of creation goes over the basic build up of the character and serves as the core to build her other abilities from. Almost all creatures in the Mechanika world will have attributes, and these attributes describe how formidable that creature is at any specific task.

Your character has seven attributes that determine the characters mental, social and physical aptitude. They help gauge how successful your character will be in their skills, as well as how sturdy or smart they will be. The seven attributes are listed below.

STRENGTH – A measurement of how physically strong your character is. Strength determines how much your character can lift, as well as how much damage he can inflict with his body or with melee weapons. Strength also dictates how much gear your character can carry, and determines the types of armor and weapons he is proficient in.

AGILITY – How nimble your character is and how fast she can move her body. Agility determines what firearms a character can use, how well she can dodge, how fast she is, and how many actions she receives each round.

FORTITUDE – This dictates how fit and hearty your character is. Fortitude determines how many points of Constitution he has, how well he can resist poisons or diseases, and survive the elements and resist trauma, such as drowning.

INTELLECT – A measurement of the character’s mental capability and reasoning skills. Intellect determines her ability to solve puzzles, gain access to knowledge and language skills, and learn scholarly magics.

WILLPOWER – How much mental duress your character can take. Think of it as his mental fortitude. Willpower directly determines how many points of Stress he has, and bolsters his beliefs, principles, and dedication to a cause. It is the attribute used for **Petitioning**, allows for **Focus** and the use of psychic powers. Willpower also determines his ability to resist Mental Attack and **Fear**.

PERCEPTION – How aware your character is of the environment around her. If she is perceptive, she has a better chance of finding hidden objects, avoiding ambushes, and detecting the intention behind people's words.

PRESENCE – What makes a character stand out in a crowd, for better or for worse. It directly determines how many points of Ego he has. Characters may have a high Presence for a variety of reasons. Some reasons include being attractive, being charming, being odd, being interesting, and even from being unusually hideous. If your character has a high Presence he will be better at Blood Magic, and social situations.

Characters start with all attributes at 0, unless your Race has given you a penalty or bonus. It is not a bad thing to have an attribute at zero; zero describes the basic Human average. During character creation you are given 5 points to spend between all attributes. During the character creation no single attribute may be raised above +3 regardless of bonuses from Perks or Race..

Example:

A character gains +1 to Intellect for being a goblin. That character may only add 2 more points to intellect during character creation, bringing the total to +3.

WOUNDS

Every character in Mechanika has their limits. Every character has a breaking point. This is illustrated by the Wounds system. The Wounds system gives you a visual representation of how injured you are by using damage grids. Each character has three different grids, one for each type of wound you can sustain in Mechanika.

Constitution for physical damage; damage to your body. This is measured by Fortitude.

Stress for mental damage; damage of your mind. This is measured by Willpower.

Ego for social damage; damage of your pride. This is measured by Presence.

Each character starts with 6 points in each grid.

The Wounds breakdown is as follows: Three Bruised wounds, Two Hurt wounds, and One Grievous wound.

When you look on the Wounds section of the character sheet you will see empty boxes by their respective wound types. Above the first three boxes write the letter

B (Bruised), Above the next two boxes write the letter H (Hurt), and finally above the next box write the letter G (Grievous). When your character takes damage you record it by filling in the boxes under the appropriate wound level.

Example:

Your previously unharmed character is shot for 2 damage. With a heavy heart you fill out the first two boxes under "Bruised".

You are not limited to having only six wound levels though. Characters you create are extraordinary in mind, body, and presence. A character gains bonus wounds depending on the attribute tied to that type of wound. Fortitude for Constitution, Willpower for Stress and Presence for Ego.

Character gain bonus point in each wound grid as follows:

If the attribute is +1/+2 award an extra Grievous wound.

If the attribute is +3, award an extra Hurt wound.

If the attribute is +4 award an extra Bruised wound.

Characters can also take penalties to wound levels if the attribute tied to that wound type is not their strong suit:

If the attribute is -2, lose 1 Bruised wound.

If the attribute is -3, lose 2 Bruised wounds.

If the attribute is -4, lose 1 Hurt wound.

WOUND ADJUSTMENT BASED ON TYPE

Attribute Modifier	Wound Adjustment
+1/+2	+1 Grievous
+3	+1 Hurt
+4	+1 Bruised
-2	-1 Bruised
-3	-2 Bruised
-4	-1 Hurt

4) ASSIGN ACTIONS & WEALTH

ACTIONS

When the bullets start flying your character only has precious seconds in which to act each round. Actions determine what she can do in that window of opportunity.

Mechanika characters have a set number of actions they can complete per game turn. Every character has one Movement Action, and at least one each of Combat Action and Defensive Action.

A character can absolutely have more actions in a round, and this is determined by their Agility.

ACTIONS GAINED

Agility Modifier	Defensive Action	Combat Action
+1	1	0
+2	1	1
+3	2	1
+4	2	2
+5	3	2
+6	3	3

WEALTH

Wealth is a general indicator of how much money your character has. This does not include gear or housing. This is income she has access to, but does not necessarily always carry on her person. Characters start the game with five weeks of pay that they have saved. This initial money may be used to purchase gear, or they may save it for later.

All characters start with a Wealth level of -1 (Poor) after they have purchased their initial supplies. Both the starting money and the Wealth level can be increased by Perks or by spending EP. Find information on Wealth in Chapter Six: Settings of this book. (Page 226)

5) SELECT SKILLS

SKILLS

The next step in fleshing out your character is to define and hone their raw abilities. This is done by choosing skills. You have many skills to choose from, allowing you to channel some of that raw Strength or fierce Intellect. The full skill descriptions are found on (Page 50).

All skills fall under one of these three basic categories.

UNIVERSAL SKILLS – These skills are broad and universally known. No special training is required to take the skill, or to excel at it.

Example:

Athletics, Search, or Brawl. These skills do not require anything beyond having the training to use them.

SPECIALTY SKILLS – These skills are very broad with many specialties for each one. It is nearly impossible to be good at every single aspect of that skill, so when characters choose these skills, they must also choose a specialty. These skills can be purchased multiple times, and each time they are purchased you may select a different specialty.

Examples:

Marksmanship, Weapon Skill, Knowledge, or Linguistics. You may not simply take Marksmanship, you must define that further with a specialty such as Pistols.

SUPERNATURAL SKILLS – Supernatural skills are incredible feats of power that may only be taken if the character has the Supernatural Perk that unlocks that skill.

Examples:

Incantation, Channeling, and Engineering; skills that can only be unlocked by taking the Magister, Warlock's Bloodline, or Artificer Supernatural Perks, respectively.

At character creation, all skills begin at -1 except **Knowledge** and **Profession**, which begin at -2 (this may vary if your Race gives you a penalty or bonus).

Your character receives 16 levels to spend on her skills. Any skill, except for Supernatural skills, may be improved at this stage of skill allocation, but a skill can never be raised higher than the attribute that governs that skill. Some skills have two attributes tied to them, in this case you may use the highest attribute to determine the max level for that skill.

Example:

If your character has a Strength 0 and an Agility of +2 he may raise his Athletics skill to +2, because Athletics is tied to both Strength and Agility.

The attribute tied to the skill in question often determines how that skill is used in a situation.

Example:

Two characters wish to bypass a wall using Athletics. One is strong and powerful, the other quick and nimble. The strong character could use her brute strength to lift the gate, but the agile character could simply scale the wall and leap to the other side.

Finally, a character may set aside up to three skill points to improve Supernatural skills that will be purchased with a Supernatural Perk. Only three skill points can be put aside at this stage of character creation.

6) SELECT PERKS

PERKS

Mechanika characters are unique and powerful, with special abilities that set them apart from the average Joe.

These special abilities are known as Perks. Perks can offer a character many different advantages ranging from simple stat bonuses, to fantastic new powers.

Perks in our world fall into three categories:

PERKS – These are regular Perks and they contain no supernatural element. They typically add a bonus to skills or grant unique advantages and abilities that come from training or unique circumstances. They may not be supernatural, but they are still amazing.

RACIAL PERKS – Each Race has special benefits and drawbacks associated with it. Racial Perks are those Perks that exemplify a Race's unique advantages. They can only be purchased if you are a member of that Race at character creation.

SUPERNATURAL PERKS – Supernatural Perks have extraordinary elements, and grant unusual and alien powers to a character. These can vary from Lycanthropy, to incantations, to zombie followers.

All characters except for humans start with two Perks and one Supernatural Perk. Humans start with three Perks and one Supernatural Perk.

Racial Perks are unique to each Race. Up to two Racial Perks may be chosen, but for each Racial Perk you must also take a Racial Flaw.

Characters must choose all of their Perks at character creation and may not save them for use after creation is complete. If a Perk raises a skill level, it still cannot be raised higher than the attribute it is tied to. Instead, the character will save the skill bonus until the attribute tied to that skill is high enough to allow the bonus given by the Perk.

7) SELECT FLAWS

FLAWS

No one is perfect. Everyone has an unhealthy obsession, a crippling fear, or a dark secret. In Mechanika these qualities are known as Flaws. These are penalties the character takes that create problems or detrimental situations, and make things more challenging. Two types of flaws exist:

FLAWS – Regular drawbacks that can create difficult situations for the character and possibly her party.

RACIAL FLAWS – Unique to the character's race. Taking a Racial Flaw grants the character a Racial Perk.

A player may select up to three Flaws at character creation. Flaws chosen will grant Experience Points (EP) to the character, which can be used for Perks, skill boosting, or anything else you may spend EP on. Some Flaws will grant more or less EP based on their severity. The amount of EP granted may scale between one and five. The GM should determine the final amount.

Flaws that occur based on incidents that happen in-game do not give the player EP.

Your character may also select up to two Racial Flaws in order to select up to two Racial Perks. Each Racial Flaw chosen allows you to select one Racial Perk. A character may select additional Racial Flaws, but they do not allow additional Racial Perks.

8) SPEND REMAINING EXPERIENCE POINTS

SPEND EXPERIENCE

This is where you may spend the EP you gained from your flaws to further improve your character. At this point skills may be improved, Perks may be purchased, and wealth may be increased.

REMEMBER: This final stage of improvement follows the rules for normal character advancement. This means that you must purchase the next level up every time. The cost for improving your character with EP is as follows:

SKILLS

SKILLS: To improve a skill costs 3 EP times the desired level.

Example:

3 EP to improve to +1, 6 EP to improve to +2, 9 EP to improve to +3, etc.

SUPERNATURAL SKILLS: Supernatural skills are more powerful, and therefore more expensive. To improve a Supernatural skill costs 4 EP times the desired level.

Example:

4 EP to improve to +1, 8 EP to improve to +2, 12 EP to improve to +3, etc.

Example:

*Mortimer the Red has an **Incantation** skill of +0, and he wants to improve it to +3. This is a Supernatural skill, therefore it costs 4 EP times the level he wants to improve to. Mortimer must buy each level individually, so he must spend 4 EP to improve to +1, 8 EP to improve to +2, and finally 12 EP to improve to +3, meaning all together Mortimer needs to spend a total of 24 EP to improve **Incantation** to +3.*

ATTRIBUTES

Attributes are the most expensive of all your raw stats, with good reason; these represent the core aspects of your character and serve as the foundation to build everything else from. To improve an attribute costs 5 EP times the desired level.

Example:

5 EP to improve to +1, 10 EP to improve to +2, 15 EP to improve to +3, etc.

WEALTH

Wealth is improved at the same rate as regular skills. To improve a Wealth level costs 3 EP times the desired level.

Example:

3 EP to improve to +1, 6 EP to improve to +2, 9 EP to improve to +3, etc.

PERKS

You may also use EP to purchase additional Perks. To buy a regular Perk costs 4 EP per perk, or per rank of the perk.

Example:

4 EP to purchase a Perk, 4 EP to improve to +1, 8 EP to improve to +2, 12 EP to improve to +3, etc.

A Supernatural Perk costs 8 EP per perk, or per rank of the perk.

Example:

8 EP to purchase a Supernatural Perk, 8 EP to improve to +1, 16 EP to improve to +2, 24 EP to improve to +3, etc.

NEGATIVE LEVELS

When attempting to raise a negative level up to 0 you must spend the base cost for each type per level you are raising towards 0. 3EP for Skills, 5EP for Attributes, etc.

Example:

Keloh has a Athletics skill of -2. Raising that skill to -1 will cost him 3EP; to raise it again to 0 will again cost 3EP. At that point the normal cost to improve takes effect. From 0 to 1 3EP, 1 to 2 6EP, etc.

MODIFIERS

There are many aspects of a character that will improve their ability to gain ranks in skills or abilities. A character with a high Intellect will pick up **Knowledge** or **Occult** skills much more quickly than **Brawl** or **Stealth**. These modifiers are based directly on the character's attribute modifier.

ATTRIBUTE MODIFIERS

HIGH ATTRIBUTE: Having an attribute modifier of +2 or more reduces the EP cost of regular skills tied to that attribute by 1 EP.

HIGH INTELLECT: Having an Intellect modifier of +3 or more reduces the EP cost of Magical Tiers and Artifice Houses by 2 EP.

HIGH PRESENCE: Having a Presence modifier of +3 or more reduces the EP cost of new **Blood Magic** Perks by 2 EP.

HIGH WILLPOWER: Having a Willpower modifier of +3 or more reduces the EP cost of new Wyrd or **Petitioning** levels by 2 EP.

9) GEAR UP, & SELECT CHARACTER BONDS

EQUIPMENT

The final step in character creation, gearing up! This is where your character gets to go out to the markets and pick up all the supplies she needs. Choose your equipment carefully, and remember to plan ahead for your character. If you get a revolver, you probably want to grab some extra bullets. This is also a perfect opportunity to pick

up some items that may be hard to find in-game, such as Remarkable Revitalizers or Void grenades. After your character is all suited up and stocked, he will be ready to join up with his new allies and explore the world of Mechanika.

CHARACTER BONDS

Your character has been created and they are looking pretty good. Trust me though, chum, without some back up you're gonna be spawn-bait in no time. So how did you meet these other intrepid explorers you're entrusting your life to?

In Mechanika, what brings a group together and gives them a sense of purpose is called a Bond. A character's Bonds determine how the group knows each other and what trouble you've gotten up to in the past. Character Bonds are a fun way to determine relationships in your group and to aid in role playing.

A group may have several Bonds. Bonds provide yet another way to earn Destiny points, and create a solid starting point to a serial. Here are some example Bonds:

SHIPMATES – The characters know each other from serving aboard a ship. The characters may have shared bunks or simply become friends while aboard.

BOARDING HOUSE – The characters live in the same boarding house and have done so for at least a few weeks. The characters may even share the same chambers.

DETECTIVE AGENCY – The characters run a detective agency, perhaps even living on the premises.

FAMILY – The characters are related in some manner and know each other through their family ties.

GUILD – The characters are all members of the same guild, and share past adventures together.

These are just a few examples of Bonds and players are encouraged to create their own. Bonds come in a wide variety of forms and situations so have fun creating one that fits your group!

