CORE RULES

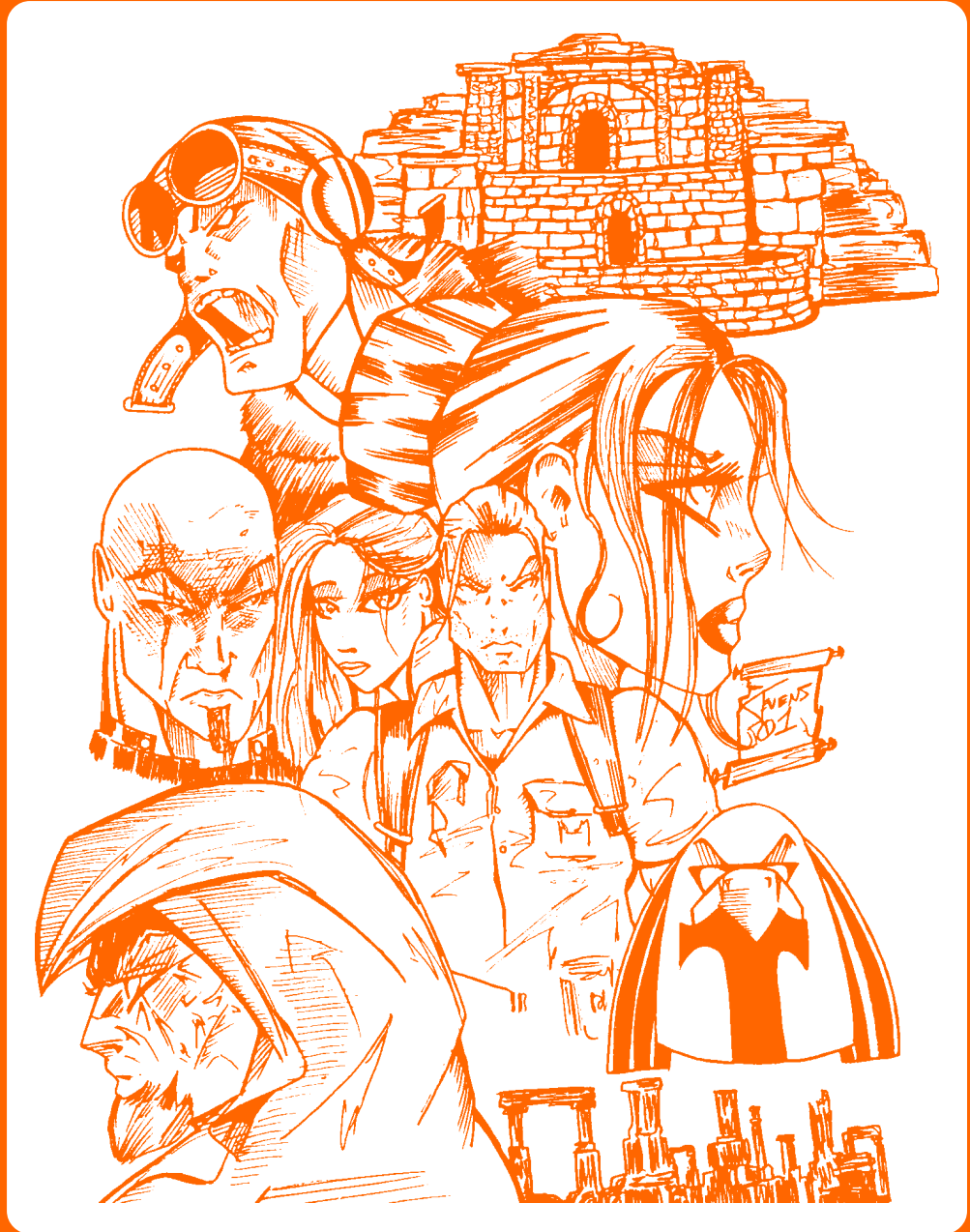## OPEN CORE

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What is the Open Core System?

- The Open Core System is derived from the best of today's Open Gaming Content, creating a new, strong, coherent and flexible role-playing game system - it's the house rules you've been waiting for.

- The Open Core System is effects-based to help you create that "perfect" character using attributes, skills, abilities, and disabilities.

- The Open Core System is "classless," a point-based system that can allow players and GMs to create a wide variety of characters and world.

- The Open Core System can handle a wide spectrum of genres "right out of the box," from science fiction to super-heroes to anthropomorphics to classic fantasy.

- The Open Core System uses a simple, time-proven base mechanic: 3d6 + Attribute + Skill VS. Target Number. Variant rules for other dice (1d20, etc.) are included.

- It's easy to convert characters and campaigns from other popular open gaming systems to the Open Core System.

- The Open Core System is fully extensible; Open Content from other systems can easily integrate into the Open Core System.

OPEN CORE

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THE DEVELOPER WOULD LIKE TO THANK:

Tim for the initial development, Jonathan for helping to take this over, Murphy's Law for years of play testing, my parents for putting up with a hobby that they probably didn't like me having when I was younger, my current gaming group (Aaron, Leighann, and Paul), and of course Colleen. She inspires my writing, even when it is "just" a set of rules.

This is dedicated to developers of open content around the world, there are always new permutations to be found.

ELECTRONIC EDITION 1

DESIGNER'S NOTES

Welcome to the *Open Core System*. What you have before you is the culmination of over two years of research and development. No game is designed in a vaccuum, particularly when it is a part of the Open Gaming "movement," those games and systems which are developed using what is known as open content under the Open Gaming License. The *Open Core System* started out as a set of house rules, rules pulled from a number of sources to use in my campaign at home. Through a chance meeting through the internet these house rules started on the path of development towards being a cohesive ruleset. Much of what has become the *Open Core System* is due to those early months of development. And then through a reversal of fortunes, all of the rights and marks to this system ended up reverting back to me. Through a new partnership with **Battlefield Press, Inc.** the *Open Core System* found a new home, and a renewed development path.

Now, the *Open Core System* has become more than just a generic ruleset derived from the best open content available, it is becoming a house system.In addtion to this generic ruleset we plan on using the *Open Core System* to power the second edition of the **Luftwaffe 1946 RPG** and the upcoming **Big Bang Universe RPG**.There is so much more in development as well - genre books and core settings are being discussed and worked out. The *Open Core System* is the next step in the evolution of the Open Content "movement."

The *Open Core System* is not a static game system, it evolves as ideas and concepts are worked out in play and testing.This version of the *Open Core System* has a few new developments to it in addition to the material that were in the preliminary electronic and print versions. There will probably be future evolution as well. For more information on the *Open Core System* check out the **Battlefield Press, Inc.** webforums at : http://www.battlefield press.com, and the *Open Core System* webpage at http://www.battlefieldpress.com/ocsystem.shtml.

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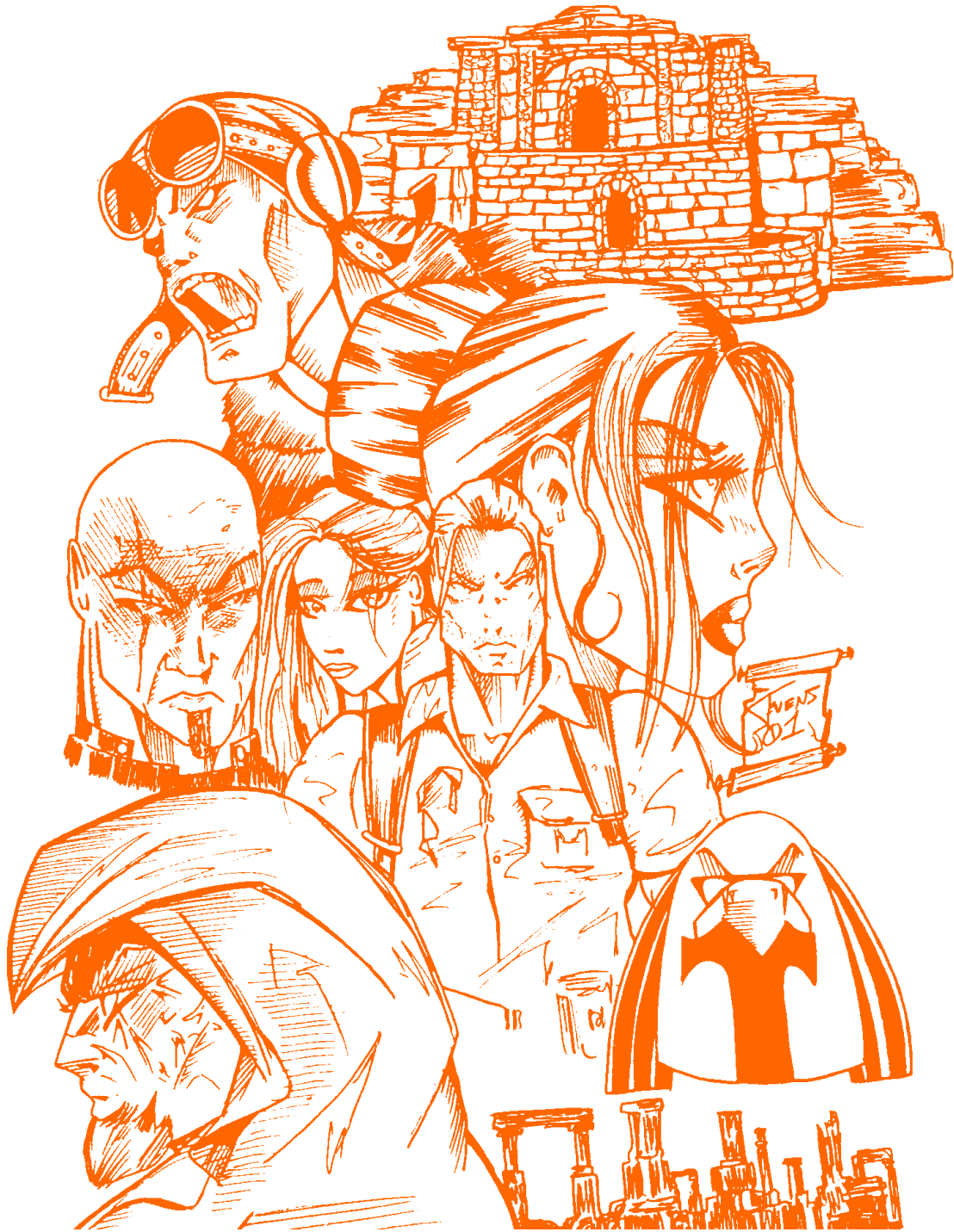
In this section we present a quick overview of the most basic rules of the game.

Dice

The game rules use three six-sided dice. It's traditional to abbreviate "three six-sided dice" by writing "3d6." In this custom, the first number is the number of dice being used (in this case 3) and the second number represents the type of dice being used (specifically, number of sides they possess), so "d6" means "six-sided dice."

Six-sided dice are the common, square-shaped dice that can be found in many board games. They can also be purchased in many general department stores, but chances are you have at least three of these dice somewhere in your house, in other games.

There are options to use other numbers and kinds of dice, which are discussed later and in other optional rules. For now all you need to play the game are 3d6—three six-sided dice.

The GM

One member of the group assumes the role of moderator and controls the Non-Player Characters ("NPCs" for short). This player is known as the Game Master, or GM.

In situations when the rules are unclear or need to be applied in a new or unique way, the GM uses his or her best judgment. The GM also constructs the basics of the game. Basics include the setting, theme, NPCs and some goals for the players' group, normally called a Party, but also referred to as a Team, Troupe, Group, or Cabal. We'll talk more about what makes a good Game Master later in this book.

Players and Characters

Each player has a fictional character, called a Player Character (or "PC"), a made-up person that the player will use during the game. The player chooses what his character does and says during the game.

Players are in no way assumed to actually *be* their characters. Players are real people. Characters are pretend. Think of the player as an actor, and the PC as a role that the actor is playing in a movie or play, and you'll begin to get the idea.

Attributes & Skills

Each character has attributes and skills that represent the character's personal ability or aptitude in various areas or for performing certain tasks.

Each attribute and skill has a numerical score. This score tells you how strong or proficient the character is in that area. Most characters will have scores from 1 to 10, which represents the normal human range of ability.

Attributes

There are six attributes, which are arranged in two groups: Body and Mind.

Each group contains a Power Attribute, an Aptitude Attribute and a Resistance Attribute.

New attribute groups can be added, providing more variety and additional attributes for characters, but the core rules use only these two.

Skills

Each character also has skills, which represent the character's general ability or aptitude in various tasks. There are skills for arts and crafts, using weapons, and even diplomacy. Skills reflect how good your character is at what he knows.

Skills are also arranged into groups. Each group contains from 5 to 8 related skills.

Each skill is associated with a specific Attribute Group. Persuasion, for example, is associated with the Mind Group, whereas the Swords skill is associated with the Body Group.

When a character attempts a simple task, such as walking or opening an unlocked door, the player doesn't need to roll dice. When a character attempts an action that has a chance of failure, however, such as attacking an opponent or maneuvering a car through an obstacle course, the player must make a skill roll.

Skill Checks

Skill rolls are used to determine if a character is successful at some attempted action or task.

Players decide if they want their character to perform an action. An action can be as simple as walking through a door, which would not require a skill roll. Sometimes there is a level of skill involved in performing the action, however, so the player may need to make a skill roll for his character. The GM decides whether or not an action requires a skill roll.

Attribute + Skill

If the GM determines that a player's chosen action requires a skill roll, the GM determines which Skill and which Attribute (from the Attribute Group associated with the skill) apply to the task.

If a character attempts to shoot an opponent with a revolver, the player must make a Pistols skill roll. Because the Pistols skill is associated with the Body Group, the GM must choose Strength, Reflexes, or Health as the attribute that the player uses with the Pistols skill. The logical choice is Reflexes, the Aptitude Attribute for the Body Group.

Difficulty Levels and Target Numbers

The GM then determines the Difficulty Level (or "DL") of the action being attempted. Each Difficulty Level has an associated Target Number (abbreviated as "TN"; see the *Difficulty and Target Number Chart*). The more difficult the action being

attempted is, the greater the Difficulty Level and the higher the Target Number.

The Target Number is the number that the player must meet or beat when making a dice roll in order for the task to be successful. A Target Number of 18 would be shown as "(TN 18)."

Making the Roll

To make a skill roll, a player rolls 3d6 and adds his character's attribute and skill scores to the number rolled on the dice. If this new total is equal to or more than the Target Number, the attempted action is successful. If the total is lower than the Target Number, the attempt fails.

Attribute Checks

Attribute rolls are made much the same as skill rolls, with the GM determining a Difficulty Level and assigning a Target Number. The difference is that instead of adding an attribute score to a skill score, the player simply rolls against the character's attribute score without any modifiers.

John's character has a Reflexes score of 8. The GM tells John to make an Difficult attribute roll (TN 21) using his character's Reflexes. He then rolls 3d6, and gets 13. Because 13 plus 8 equals 21, John's character's attribute roll is successful.

Damage

If a character suffers injury, such as from being hit by a weapon or falling into a pit, the injury is represented by *damage points*. Damage points are subtracted from the character's Life Points. When a character's Life Points are reduced to 0, the character is dying.

Attributes are scores that reflect the character's basic physical and mental abilities. In short, the core attributes define the character's "body and mind."

BUYING ATTRIBUTES

Characters have numerical scores that define their basic capabilities, called Attributes. Each character can also have traits, benefits, and skills. These are described in detail later in their own sections.

Attributes cost 1 Character Point for each level in an attribute. Buying a STR of 5 for a starting character, for instance, has a cost of 5 Attribute Points.

Each player gets a number of points to divide among the character's Attributes and Abilities. Another pool of points, called Skill Points, is used to purchase a character's Skills. The separate point pools are a method to allow the GM to help prevent the abuses of power gamers. (See the table below.)

Character Points

The six core Attributes represent your character's basic abilities, but his or her more specific acquired or innate talents and abilities are known as Character Abilities. Any Character Points remaining after you have purchased your character's Attributes, are available to acquire Abilities.

The Character Points given to all characters in *Open Core* are used to purchase Attributes and Abilities. Abilities can represent anything from racial abilities to super-powers. Also Points gained from Disabilities are equal to Character Points. Future Experience gained can be exchanged on an equal basis for Character Points.

can extend it beyond Rank 6 with GM permission. Acquiring an Ability or increasing it in Rank requires the expenditure of one or more Character Points (or Experience Points) depending on the Ability's Character Point cost per Rank. The Ability descriptions indicate the Character Point cost, its game effects and limitations, and the Ability most relevant to the Ability's use should a Ability check dice roll be needed.

One the character has been created, if the Player wishes to increase the Ranks of Abilities, or purchase new abilities for the character (with the GM's permission), experience points maybe traded for Character Points on a one to one basis.

The selection of Abilities is one of the most important steps during character creation. Through Abilities, you define your character's unique capabilities compared to other individuals. Think carefully about the balance between a few high-rank Abilities and a large number of low-rank Abilities.

If you find yourself needing more Character Points than you have been assigned, consider burdening your character with one or more Disabilities. Each Disability can provide you with an additional Character Points, which can be used to acquire more Character Abilities or further increase your character's Ability Scores.

Attributes can be improved after character creation by spending Experience Points (see *Experience*, page 155). To increase an attribute by one level costs 5 times the new level in

Campaign Power Level

Power Level	Character Points	Skill Points	Max Att.*	Max Skill*
Low-powered game	32	16	4	4
Average-powered game	40	20	5	5
High-powered game	64	32	8	8
Very high-powered game	80	40	10	10
Extremely high-powered game	96	48	None	None
Cosmic-powered game	120	60	None	None

* Attributes and Skills may be raised above the Campaign Maximums by Abilities (such as Skill Knack for Skills and Enhanced Attribute for Attributes). Character Points and Skill Points can not be spent directly on Attributes or Skills to raise them above the Campaign Maximums.

Character Points may be used to acquire Abilities, but since some represent exotic powers (such as magical or superhuman powers or abilities innate to non-human races), the GM may choose to place certain restrictions on their availability in his or her particular game setting.

There are many different Character Abilities, each representing a particular talent or special ability. Each Ability is rated with a Rank from 1-6 (or in a few cases, 1-10), but you

experience points.

Tom wants to increase his character's current STR from 3 to 4. It will cost 4 x 5 = 20 experience points to increase Tom's character's STR to 4.

Buying Skills

You get a number of points to divide up among the character's skills based on the Campaign's Power Level, as shown on the table above (Campaign Power Level). Skill Points are used to buy skills for your character. While Character Points can be exchanged for Skill Points at a ration of 5:1, Skill Points can not be exchanged for Character Points.

Maximum Attribute Scores

The recommended maximum score for any attribute depends on the campaign level of the game. Players may purchase up to the maximum score for any primary attribute. This limit does not include any bonuses for applicable Abilities (see the chapter on *Traits*), or Abilities if they are allowed in the campaign.

Jim is creating a character for a Average level game, with a maximum characteristic score of 5. Jim buys a REF score of 5 for his character and also buys the Enhanced Attribute [Reflexes] Ability as providing a +2 to his REF for his character. This makes the character's effective REF score a 7, which is higher than the suggested maximum attribute score for the campaign, but is allowable.

The GM is free to ignore this rule for his or her game.

Unspent Character Points

Any unspent Character Points may be converted to Skill Points at a rate of 10:1. Skill Points are used to buy skills. This means that for every 1 Character Point that a player wishes to spend on something besides his character's Attributes and Abilities, the player can "exchange" the Character Point for 10 Skill Points. Skill Points can't be used to increase a character's attributes, however.

BODY GROUP

The three attributes that define a character's "body" or physical being are Health, Strength, and Reflexes.

Strength (STR)

Strength (abbreviated STR) is the "Power" attribute for the Body Group. STR represents raw physical prowess, including the ability to lift, push and otherwise exert force.

The total weight that a character can lift to waist level without moving (i.e., dead lift) is shown on the *Basic STR Table*. A character is able to carry (lift and move) weight equal to half his lift capacity. A character can drag or pull twice his lift capacity.

Tom's character has a STR of 7. He can dead lift about 550 pounds, he can carry 275 pounds, and he can drag or pull up to 1,100 pounds.

Reflexes (REF)

Reflexes (abbreviated REF) is the "Aptitude" attribute for the Body Group. REF covers the character's agility, coordination, reaction, and overall speed. The higher a character's REF, the more dexterous and agile he is, and the better his sense of balance is. A REF of 0 represents total lack of control over one's muscles and movement (e.g., severe palsy or total paralysis).

Health (HLT)

Health (abbreviated HLT) is the "Resistance" attribute for the Body Group. HLT reflects the character's overall constitution, general health, resistance to disease, and overall fitness. The higher a character's health, the more resistant he is to illness and physiological degradation and injury. A HLT of 0 represents an absence of life (i.e., death).

MIND GROUP

The three attributes that define the character's "mind" or mental and emotional being are Presence, Intellect, and Will.

Presence (PRE)

Presence (abbreviated PRE) is the "Power" attribute for the Mind Group. PRE represents the character's general personality, charm, charisma, and innate persuasiveness. The higher a character's PRE, the more influential he can be. A PRE of 0 represents a total lack of personality, charisma, and emotion (e.g., a brick or a wall).

Intellect (INT)

Intellect (abbreviated INT) is the "Aptitude" attribute for the Mind Group. INT represents the sharpness of the character's mind, clarity of thought and overall alertness. The higher a character's INT, the brighter and more perceptive he is. An INT of 0 represents a complete lack of intelligence and thought (e.g., brain death or an inanimate object).

Will (WIL)

Will (abbreviated WIL) is the "Resistance" attribute for the Mind Group. WIL reflects the character's mental strength, ego, and force of conviction. The higher a character's Will, the greater his resolve, focus, and level of concentration. A WIL of 0 represents no resistance to emotional influence and/or a complete lack of self-awareness (e.g., an automaton, robot or zombie).

Basic STR Table

Score	Drag	Dead Lift	Carry	Damage	Example of Dead Lift Weight
0	0	0	0	0	
1	22 lbs.	11 lbs.	6 lbs.	1d6-2	Infant's weight, M1 Garand, shot-put
2	110 lbs.	55 lbs.	28 lbs.	1d6	Child's weight, full suitcase, 27" TV set
3	220 lbs.	110 lbs.	55 lbs.	1d6+2	Adolescent's weight
4	440 lbs.	220 lbs.	110 lbs.	2d6	Average man's weight
5	660 lbs.	330 lbs.	165 lbs.	2d6+2	Football lineman's weight
6	880 lbs.	440 lbs.	220 lbs.	3d6	Sumo wrestler's weight, small piano, GBU-12 500-lb bomb)
7	1,100 lbs	550 lbs.	275 lbs.	3d6+2	Large black bear, seal, large stag, small boulder
8	1,320 lbs	660 lbs.	330 lbs.	4d6	Grand piano, small nuclear warhead
9	1,540 lbs.	770 lbs.	385 lbs.	4d6+2	120mm mortar, large wooden canoe
10	1,760 lbs.	880 lbs.	440 lbs.	5d6	Motorcycle, sailboat, female polar bear