

# FRANKenGAME

a 24-hour role-playing game

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### • Important Note •

*If you are going to be playing Frankengame, now is a good time to stop reading. Your Gamemaster (GM) should read the entirety of this document and then decide how much they will let you peruse. It's entirely possible to play this game without reading any further, as long as you have an experienced GM capable of guiding the players.*

## INTRODUCTION

Frankengame is a 24-hour role-playing game. It was conceived, designed, developed and published in a single 24-hour timeframe.

The GM will describe the setting. There are several rough suggestions for a setting in the Frank's House section (see below). But the GM will need to flesh out the setting as necessary.

The players will create horrible mutants, or fiendishly warped demons, or corpses stitched together and given life by electricity. The point is that all the player characters will have traits and characteristics from several different sources.

Frankengame is best used for a "one-off" game session instead of a campaign, but you can make of it what you will.

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## What is a role-playing game?

If you're reading this, you probably know what a role-playing game (RPG) is. If you don't know, then we highly suggest a game called *Dungeons & Dragons*. You can find D&D at most large bookstores and almost all hobbyist game stores.

## Requirements

You will need one person to be the Gamemaster, two or more players, some regular dice (d6s, in the parlance of gamers) in two colors, pencils, papers and a place to play. Each player will need a small handful (around 10 is good, but you may need 12 in rare cases) of dice, split in two different colors. Since players will rarely roll more than 6 dice at a time, you can easily share dice amongst all the players. The GM should get all the really lucky dice.

Unlike many RPGs, *Frankengame* does not play well with just one player. You must have a minimum of two players and more is better, if your group can handle it.

## YOUR Inner Frank (Character Creation)

Player characters are known as "Franks", for obvious reasons. Each player will create and control one Frank. The GM and all players should be present for character creation.

Players start by determining their initial statistics: **Physical**, **Mental** and **Social**. Each Stat starts at 1. Players have five extra bonus points to distribute. They may only add +2 to any one Stat.

The **Physical** Stat covers how strong, fast, tough, and agile the Frank is. Basically, if requires the use of the body to accomplish, this is the Stat to use.

The **Mental** Stat covers how intelligent, wise, quick to react, knowledgeable and perceptive of the natural world the Frank is. If it can be done without interacting with another person and without lifting a muscle, this is the Stat to use.

The **Social** Stat is the most difficult to define. This is how charismatic, intimidating, perceptive of other people and empathetic the Frank is. If it has to be done by interacting with others, this is the Stat to use.

### • Example •

Sue is creating her Frank. She starts with Physical 1, Mental 1 and Social 1. She adds three points to Physical, and two points to Mental. Her new statistics are Physical 4, Mental 3 and Social 1.

Players now need three slips of paper each to write down three Traits. These are special abilities or talents that a

Frank possesses. Write one Trait per slip of paper. Each Trait must list when the Trait is used, the Statistic associated with the Trait and the Bonus. Every player must make a +1, +2 and +3 Trait, but they can be associated with any Stat.

Traits cannot be completely generic, but must cover some specific ability.

### **Sample Physical Traits**

Running when chased  
Carrying large amounts of stuff  
Dodging sticks and stones

### **Sample Mental Traits**

Playing card games  
Solving puzzles  
Resisting the temptation of others

### **Sample Social Traits**

Public speaking  
Intimidation of Weak Minded Fools  
Bluffing at Poker

#### **• Example •**

Sue now writes down three Traits. She decides on: *Hitting small things with big things* (Physical +1), *Examination of cluttered areas* (Mental +3), and *Cause Fear and Terror in Children* (Social +2).

The GM gets to review each Trait. If the GM decides that the Trait is weak and useless, she may make you rewrite the Trait or even require that you take it (and you will draw one less Trait for each Trait forced on you for being a naughty Frank.) If the GM decides that the Trait is too powerful, they should make you rewrite it or throw it away.

Once the players have completed writing all the Traits, and the GM has approved them, then place them all into a pot (or other convenient container.) The GM will pick a player to start and mix the traits in the pot. One at a time, players will draw a trait from the pot until all Franks have three Traits.

#### **• Example •**

Sue draws *Hitting small things with big things* (Physical +1), which was one of the Traits she wrote, and *Blocking melee attacks with big fat arms* (Physical +3) and, finally, *Making people laugh by falling over things* (Social +2), which were two Traits that she did not.

#### **• Tip! •**

Once you know the Stats and Traits of your Frank, go ahead and name him (or her or it) according to the setting. A physical description or drawing (it does not have to be a well done drawing) will help settle the nature of your Frank in your mind. Remember, that with rare exceptions, most Franks are ugly, hideous creatures that cannot begin to pass for what is normal.

All players should then discuss amongst themselves, and with the help of the GM, decide on a common background. All the Franks must have some sort of relation with each other. Depending on the background, this could be that all the Franks were summoned by the same magician, were created by the same Mad Scientist or grown in the same vat of mutated super-goo.

The final, and only, value that must be calculated is **Health**. This is the Physical Stat plus the value of all Physical Traits plus 1d6.

• **Example** •

Sue must now calculate her Frank's Health. She has Physical 2, plus 4 from the two Traits (1+3), plus she rolls a 6! Her total Health is 12. Sue has one monster of a Frank!

## Frank's GoNe WILd

(Game Mechanics)

*Frankengame* is played out through a series of scenes. A scene takes as much time as needed to be a complete scene, as determined by the GM. A chase scene could take a few minutes of game time, where a filibuster speech could take all night. The GM should give characters the ability to act whenever it is thematically important. For the chase scene, this would be whenever an important decision would make a difference, so it would depend on traffic, the number of choices along the chase path and if there is any sort of fighting along the way. A filibuster would probably only have a couple of action sequences, and they would be set hours apart.

Time is an illusion, and *Frankengame* time doubly so.

The GM should describe the scene and let the players decide on a course of action. Depending on the granularity of detail needed, the GM can just describe the results of an action, or they can call for a test. A test is a roll of the dice to determine if the GM or the player was able to accomplish their stated task. There are two types of tests: action tests and opposed tests.

Once all characters have had a chance to act, the next round of actions can begin.

### The Action Test

If a character attempts an action that no other character can try to stop, then use the normal Action Test. The player rolls a number of dice equal to the

appropriate Stat plus one appropriate Trait (if any). The GM will determine when a player can use a Trait, if there is any controversy.

The player can divide the Stat + Trait dice into two pools: action pool and quality pool.

The action pool determines if the player actually succeeds at their desired action. The quality pool determines the quality of the success, assuming the action succeeds.

**An easy test** requires a roll of 4 on one of the action dice.

**A normal test** requires a roll of 5 on one of the action dice.

And, as expected, **a difficult test** requires a roll of 6 on one of the action dice.

**Each quality die** requires a roll of 4 or greater.

If the player rolls no successful action dice, the action failed.

If the action was successful, the quality of success will depend on the number of quality dice rolled. If no quality dice are rolled, or none of the quality dice roll a 4 or higher, then the action barely succeeded.

Each quality die result of 4 or higher moves the quality of success up one rank.

### The Opposed Test

If one character attempts to stop another character from succeeding, then you need to use an Opposed Test. The player attempting the action is the aggressor. Opposed Tests do not have to be Physical. There are

Opposed Mental Tests, like Chess, and Opposed Social Tests, like scaring the village headsman.

Both characters will roll their appropriate Stat + relevant Trait. The opponent decides on how they will separate their dice pools before the aggressor.

For each successful action die roll of the opponent, reduce the number of successful action die rolls of the aggressor by one.

#### • Example •

Sue attacks a villager. The villager attempts to block the attack. Sue has Physical 4 and a +1 Trait. The villager has Physical 2. Sue is the aggressor. The villager decides on 1 action die and 1 quality die. She decides on 2 action dice and 3 quality dice. This is a normal test for Sue and a difficult test for the villager. Sue rolls a 3, 5 on her action dice. The villager rolls a 5. Sue's attack will hit, since she rolled at least one successful action die. Sue's quality dice roll a 4, 5, and 6, and the villager rolls a 4. Sue generates 3 qualities of success and the villager reduces this to 2. Sue has a typical result, which is 4 Health worth of damage.

If both characters fail, then the aggressor's action fails.

If the aggressor succeeds, and the opponent fails, then the aggressor's action succeeds as if it were a regular action test.

If both characters succeed, then you need to compare the total number of success dice. Subtract the opponent's success dice from the aggressor's. If the aggressor has 0 or more success dice

then the action succeeds. The quality of success is based on the final number of success dice.

#### Success result table

Success Dice	Quality of Success	Base Damage
0	Barely Succeeded	1 Health
1	Poor	2 Health
2	Typical	4 Health
3	Good	6 Health
4	Excellent	8 Health
5	Amazing	10 Health
6+	Unbelievable	12 Health

The quality of success may determine how long an action took. If the Frank barely succeeded, the action may have taken longer. If the result was unbelievable, an action that may normally take hours might have been completed in minutes.

#### A practical example of tests: Combat

Since combat is one of the most common of activities, we'll use it as an example of using the test system. A round of actions takes about 5-10 seconds during combat.

To hit another character, roll Physical. If the target is aware of the attack, and able to dodge/parry or block, then roll an Opposed Test otherwise use a standard Action Test. A GM may only allow a number of defenses per action round. This is especially important if a mob is used. As a guideline, a character can defend a number of times in a round equal to their Physical Stat.

Hitting a character is usually a normal test.

Hitting a character that is wearing armor, or ducking behind objects in a room, is a hard test.

Hitting a character that is already engaged in combat with another character is an easy test.

Defending is usually a difficult test, unless the character has a shield or defensive weapon capable of parrying, which would make the test normal.

#### Character Health

Franks may take damage from mobs, environmental effects like fire, falling or even other Franks. The amount of damage from combat depends on the number of success dice. As a general rule, double the number of successes, with a minimum of 1 point of damage. The GM may alter the amount of damage based on the situation, the weapon used, or for any reason.

For other types of damage, use the following guidelines:

- Persistent damage, like fire or drowning: 1d6 per action round or every 10 seconds.
- Falling damage: 1d6 per 10 feet, after the first 10 feet.
- Collapsing stone walls or falling rocks: 2d6

Each point of damage reduces the character's temporary Health by one. If a character's Health falls to 0 or below, then they fall unconscious or are otherwise incapacitated. Depending on the type of game the GM is running, Franks may die if they take additional damage.



Franks heal quickly. A Frank with a Health of 1 or greater is restored to full Health at the beginning of the next scene. A Frank that has a Health of 0, or has been KO'd, is restored to half Health (round up) at the beginning of next round. Other characters heal 1d6 Health per day.

## FrAnk's HOUse (Settings)

Since *Frankengame* does not have a specific setting, the GM must create the details based on the tone of game they want to run. Here are some rough setting outlines to give ideas.

### The Lair of the Mad Scientist

This is the classic Frankenstein setting. The players have been individually sewn together by a raving mad scientist (more like, by his Igor) and then brought to life by lightning in a stone castle as the peasants from the neighboring village storm the gates. Torches and pitchforks are cheap in this setting.

The time is probably in the mid or late 1800s. The place is European. The tone of the game can range from melodramatic to keystone cop-level comedy.

Common NPCs for this setting include The Mad Scientist, his crazed and deformed assistant Igor, the young & beautiful bride, the village headman, the young male lover and a cast of hundreds of raving lunatics known as the Mob.

The Castle is the primary location. There is also the Village, and the dark woods between. A winding path leading up into the mountains, with a bumpy dirt road that sits precariously over a yawning crevice is the only path to and from the Castle.

Inside the Castle, you have the Laboratory, which is either at the very top of the castle, in a creaking tower,

or buried deep beneath, only accessible by a secret door.

Conflict naturally arises between the Mad Scientist, his dreams for world domination or the revival of a long-lost love, or even his desire to push back the ever-present hand of death for the betterment of mankind and the stability of Village life. The villagers represent the status quo, the Mad Scientist is progress gone wrong, and the Franks are both the result and the cause of the problem.

Players should feel like outsiders. If they were dug up from the village cemetery, then they may even have strong feelings for some of the remaining villagers. They may recognize their former home. But no matter what happens, they will not be accepted until it is too late. They have no home to return to.

Things usually end badly in this setting. When the mob attacks the Castle, there is little that can be done to find a peaceful resolution. With a storm in the background, and fiery ruins at their feet, the Franks will be cast from their stone womb at best. Being burned alive is more likely. Again, it depends on the tone of the setting. You might end it with a musical number that involves the Franks, the villagers, the dying Mad Scientist, and a chorus girl line. It's up to you.

### Summoning Circles Gone Wrong

This could also be called Fantasy Franks. This is a high-fantasy world, with orcs, elves and dragons, among other things. Conjunction magic must be present, either openly or held in

secret by a few. Other types of magic may or may not be available. You should decide in advance how far the Traits are allowed to go. In this setting, you will have wide discretionary powers when setting Traits.

The Franks are demons, summoned from the beyond and not necessarily the nether planes. Either demons are *just not right* in the material plane, or there was some sort of mistake made during the conjuration. In any case, they are noticeable different from the regular inhabitants and cannot blend in easily.

The players should have an idea of who or what conjured them in the first place. Depending on your setting, demons may or may not be hated or feared. (See the Myth series by Robert Asprin for various ideas of dealing with interplanar travel and conjuration.)

If taken seriously, this could be a dark fantasy game, with the Franks trying for redemption by defeating their own inner demons. Their former humanity, if any, warped beyond recognition by the forces of Chaos. Additional Traits can be acquired by devouring the souls of innocents on the midsummer's night. The most powerful Franks can rise to become dark rulers of their own domains, plagued by parties of adventurers or by the armies of nearby rulers.

Less seriously, fantasy settings are ripe for puns, clichés and digs at other fantasy worlds. Around every corner could be another bumbling magician, conjuring more demons to pay for his morning cup of joe. Bungling demon-



hunters can be recurring nightmares for the Franks to deal with.

Common NPCs, the usual fantasy suspects, are: the magician who conjured the Franks, his apprentice, the King & Queen, the loyal subjects, the wandering adventurers, the High Priest and opposing demons.

Locations are as varied as the usual fantasy setting: dungeons, castles, keeps, wizard's towers, dwarf cities and so on.

Depending on the reaction of the commoners to Demons, you can even start the adventure in a tavern. The Franks may have been summoned to settle a bar bet or to finish a bar fight.

### Mutants & Mayhem

After World War III, the next war will be fought with sticks and Franks.

This is our world, but after the effects of a nuclear war, or a biological agent gone wild. Most everyone is dead, and those that survive often wish they were. There is no government, only a series of small communities. Some are run as best as able by people put into a difficult position of decide who lives and who dies so the supplies will last, and others are ruled with a steel fist by gangers and savages.

Set this in your hometown and you can use familiar props and locations, or set this in an urban setting that you know well. It's also possible to run a game set in the wastelands of radioactive deserts.

The Franks are all mutants. Either radiation doesn't behave like it actually does and they were changed into Franks instead of falling over dead as cancerous eunuchs, or there was another mutation agent at work. The Department of Defense may have been developing a Super Soldier nanovirus that went wild, or the Russians lost control of a mutating black plague. There are plenty of justifications for how the Franks were created.

You should determine when the apocalypse occurred. Was it recent enough that the survivors remember the wail of the civil-defense alarms? Or did the War happen so far in the past that it is now a myth or legend?

Mutants may all be horrible creatures, hunted by the remaining "norms", or they could be creatures that come in the night to plunder and pillage any unprotected survivors. They could be living at the bottom of society, or ruthlessly controlling it from the very top. In any case, there should be a strong class system in place. Unequal class systems breed conflict, which is important for the purposes of telling this story.

The Franks should be outside even the outsiders. Even if the mutants are running the world, the Franks should be outside the mutant society.

Compared to the other settings, there may or may not be a strong central NPC for the Franks to be organized around. Instead, there is almost always a place. The Vats, the Lab, the Military Base, the Holding Pens, the Arena or the Wastes. Whatever that place is, it's

where the Franks were formed into a group. It's their connection with each other, as much as their mutant forms.

Common NPCs include: mutants, normal humans ("norms"), vault dwellers, robots, giant mutated insects, villagers, gangers, scavengers, nomads and the wandering hero with a dog.

## Dr. Frankenstein, I Presume (GM-ing Frankengame)

This section offers some advice and guidelines for GM-ing a game of *Frankengame*.

### The Golden Rule: GM Fiat

As the GM, you are in charge of the game. If you don't like something, change it. If you like something, change it and make it better. If you want the players to succeed or fail to better serve the story, do it! But play fair. Even as you control the actions of the player's opponents, you, yourself, are not the antagonist. You, like the players, are part of a shared drama (or comedy, or buddy picture, you get the point.) Guide the game, and make sure that all of your players are having fun.

#### • Tip! •

You can also drastically change the game by deciding on how much humor you want to interject into the session. The players will follow the cue of the GM, or you can discuss it beforehand as a group, but running a batch of messed-up Franks does inherently lend itself to some amount of humor.

If you go more *Young Frankenstein* than *Hellraiser*, for example, then you are opening yourself to more wacky behavior from your players.

### Alternate Character Creation Rules

As an alternative, you can open the Trait system up during character creation. Instead of writing a specific

Trait, you can let you players write any sort of bonus (or even penalty) that can then be swapped. As an example, you could allow "Two extra arms: Gets two attacks during combat."

The more you trust your players, the more you can let the Trait system go wild.

### **Sample alternative traits**

*Improved Constitution:* Add +5 to Health

*Animal Legs:* faster movement (Note that movement is not expressly defined, so this character would just be allowed to move faster and farther than other characters.)

*Sewn Mouth:* -1 Social to tests that require speaking

*Neck Bolts:* +1 Social when intimidating non-Franks

### **The Session**

A typical Frankengame session revolves around the nature of the Franks themselves. They are outcastes from society. Depending on the setting, they may have once been part of that society and may long to return to it.

The Franks do not have complete control over their destiny. They were forged, or summoned, or created by an outside source. This source probably seeks to control the Franks or use them against their will.

### **Introduction & Discovery**

A typical theme involves the reintroduction of the Franks to society. The Mad Scientist commands them to gather new sources of spare parts from

the local village. They encounter innocents for the first time.

### **The Conflict**

The Franks are placed in conflict with society and their creator. They might not want to raid the town for more people, knowing that the newcomers will become Franks themselves. The town may reject their advances.

### **Coming to a Head**

The conflict drives towards resolution. The villagers storm the castle. The creator goes insane (well, more insane) and attempts to destroy his creation. At the end, everything goes up in flames.

### **Standard NPCs**

A standard human is going to have Physical 2, Mental 2, and Social 2. A strong, healthy athletic human might have Physical 3.

A wise, intelligent human might have Mental 3.

A charismatic leader might have Social 3.

Starting Health for a standard NPC is their Physical Stat + 3. The GM may increase or decrease this as appropriate.

Special NPCs can even have their own Traits, as the GM desires.

### **Sample Named NPCs**

#### **Alfonso, the Woodsman**

Physical 3, Mental 2, Social 1, Health 6  
Trait: *Swing Axe* (Physical +1)

#### **Iona, the Cute Orphan Girl**

Physical 1, Mental 1, Social 2, Health 3  
Trait: *Look pitiful and defenseless* (Social +2)

## Count Gasten von Kelpchize, Mad Scientist

Physical 3, Mental 4, Social 3, Health 10

Traits: *Order his creations around* (Social +2),

*Cackle madly* (Social +1), *Wield Sword* (Physical +1)

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## Frank's Appendices

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### Designer's Notes

This is my second attempt at a 24-hour RPG. A malfunctioning video card and a sliced thumb thwarted my first attempt. The two events are not related, as may seem at first glance.

The initial idea was the random passing around of character statistics during character creation. I like the idea of requiring group PC generation, first seen by me in the *Amber Role-Playing Game*. The idea of randomly passing statistics changed into the more defined Traits.

Since the character generation was going to consist of these patched together characters, it immediately suggested the Frankenstein theme. The dice pool test system was something that's been beating around the back of my head for a while, looking for home. This game seemed as good as any, since I wanted to keep the mechanics simple and the size of the dice pools to a minimum.

The layout was done in Word. I'm not an artist, but I was able to use Photoshop to create the chapter headings. Again, using multiple fonts instead of just one fit the game theme. Finally, I used CutePDF to make the final .pdf file.

Thanks for reading. If you have any questions or comments, please leave me feedback at: [makerofgames@gmail.com](mailto:makerofgames@gmail.com)



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## Character Sheets

Name			
<b>Stats</b>		<b>Traits</b>	Description/Picture
Physical	□□□□□□		
Mental	□□□□□□		
Social	□□□□□□		
Health			
Background/Notes			

Name			
<b>Stats</b>		<b>Traits</b>	Description/Picture
Physical	□□□□□□		
Mental	□□□□□□		
Social	□□□□□□		
Health			
Background/Notes			

Name			
<b>Stats</b>		<b>Traits</b>	Description/Picture
Physical	□□□□□□		
Mental	□□□□□□		
Social	□□□□□□		
Health			
Background/Notes			

Name			
<b>Stats</b>		<b>Traits</b>	Description/Picture
Physical	□□□□□□		
Mental	□□□□□□		
Social	□□□□□□		
Health			
Background/Notes			

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