

My Hero

A 24-hour RPG

Welcome to My Hero, a 24-hour RPG designed to let you play in the world of the 4-color comics (or in the black and white ones produced by some independent press these days.) This game assumes players are all familiar with superheroes, role playing games and role playing terms, but just in case here is one definition that needs to be made clear. “Player” is one of the human beings playing the game. “Character,” or “Hero,” is the creation of a player. If the Hero gets beaten up, the Hero can be fine in the next scene. If a player gets hurt, they might take a long time to heal. If anyone has trouble telling the difference between the player and the Hero, I suggest they switch to a less demanding game, like Checkers maybe.

To play this game you need the following:

- A copy of these rules

- A pile of superhero comic books

- Lots of blank paper

- Colored pencils and pens, probably one set for every player

- A digital watch

- At least 3 players, 4 or 5 would be better.

- A table and some chairs, good lighting, some refreshments, etc.

Of the players, one person will run the game. Some systems call this person the Game Master. Here, we call them The Man. A woman can be The Man, but you would still call her The Man. The Man’s job is to enforce the rules, interpret the rules and, if necessary, make up more rules. If a player disagrees with The Man, they are allowed to spend five minutes arguing with The Man, after which time if The Man has not changed his or her opinion, the player’s proper response is “Well, You The Man.” and they should then accept the ruling and continue to play. Players who violate the five-minute rule may have their Hero suddenly take Whomp damage (explained later) loose Brownie Points (also explained later) and may not be invited back to future game sessions.

Character Creation

(Note, for best results, the players should not read these rules before making their Heroes.)

Each player takes a blank sheet of paper and draws their Hero on it. After they are done, they hand these picture in to The Man who will then tell them what powers they have using the guidelines below.

Gender/Physical Prowess

Drawing is a	Example 1	Example 2	Super Powers
Muscle Man	Arnold Swartzenager	Red cape, blue suit, big S guy	Super Strong, Bulletproof
Girly Man	Tobey Maguire	Spider Person	Super Fast, Dodge/Deflect
Mundane looking	Some guy in the game group		None
Super Model	Kristen Dunst, Twiggy	The Invisible Chick	Ranged attack, Dodge/Deflect
“Angle is a Centerfold”	Pamela Anderson	Most women in comic books	Super Strong, Bulletproof
Genderless Stick Figure	Do you really need an example?		None (See Special below)

Does drawing have_____?

	Yes	No
A cape	Flight	Nothing extra
Armor	Bulletproof	Nothing extra
Power Armor	Bullet Proof, Super Strong	Nothing extra
Cybernetics	Super Strong	Nothing extra
A shield	Dodge/Deflect	Nothing extra
A medieval weapon	Super Attack	Nothing extra
A big gun	Ranged Attack, does fist/firearm damage	Nothing extra
Energy shooting out of something	Ranged Attack, does Super Power damage	Nothing extra
Invisibility	Dodge/Deflect	Nothing extra
Stretching	Ranged Attack, does fist/firearm damage	Nothing extra
A ninja outfit	Distraction	Nothing extra
Grenades	Distraction	Nothing extra
The secret ID wearing glasses	Super Sense	Nothing extra
A utility belt	Back Pockets	Nothing extra

Stick Figure Special: Anyone who draws a stick figure gets a character who is the boyfriend or girlfriend of one of the actual Heroes. The Man chooses which Hero and the gender of the friend. This person has no powers, can take only one Whomp, and basically gets

in the way and requires the Heroes to protect them. If they survive several adventures they might graduate to Sidekick (see Hero progression below)

Player's Choice: After The Man informs the players what their characters' powers are, each player gets to choose one power they are not entitled to from the drawing and adds that to their character. This power is slightly weaker than it would be if they actually deserved it, but is still more powerful than anything a non-Heroic person can do.

Example, a player decides his Girly Man Hero needs Super Strength, so he takes it as his choice. While a truly Super Strong character can lift a large car, this character can only lift a small one.

If the player complains after The Man informs them of their powers, remember the five-minute rule. Arguments like "But wait, My Hero is obviously flying, so she must have flight!" can be countered with "Well, they might just be falling from a great height, are you sure you don't want to change your Player's Choice power?" Is the Hero lifting a car in the drawing or having a car fall on them?

Whomp:

All the player's Heroes have 3 Whomp. Whomp are sort of like Hit Points, except when you run out of them the character is unconscious. Minor characters controlled by The Man will have one Whomp. If they take one Whomp in damage they might be dead, maybe unconscious, who cares, the point is they are out of the fight. Minor Villains have two Whomp. Typical Villains have 3 Whomp just like the players' Heroes, and like the players' Heroes are knocked unconscious when all their Whomp is gone. Major Villains can have as many Whomp as The Man wants them to have, usually between 4 and 8. In addition, once their Whomp reaches zero, they will activate some sort of fool-proof escape plan unless the players come up with a very clever solution to keep the villain from escaping. If the escape attempt fails, then one more Whomp will finish the Villain. The Hero making this last hit earns a Brownie Point.

Whomp is recovered between scenes and The Man will tell each player how much their Hero has recovered before the next fight or how long it takes you to wake up if a Hero is knocked unconscious.

Skills:

Well, I guess there is more to life than stomping villains. Every player gets to choose four skills for their Hero. One is a Transportation skill. Everyone believes they are above-average drivers, but unlike most people, the Hero actually IS above average at driving something. This can be a pogo stick, a car, a hypersonic airplane, or anything else the player wants. It is up to The Man to determine if a Hero can drive anything else other than what they have skill in. For instance, it is reasonable for someone with Motorcycle as their skill to be able to drive a car competently as well, but unlikely they will be able to figure out how to fly an airplane. Someone with Super Pogo Stick as their skill is probably taking the bus to work.

The other three skills a player chooses are a Professional skill, an Education Skill and a Hobby. Professional Skill is what the Hero does to pay the bills, such as photographer or doctor. It can be any reasonable profession and if you need some ideas check out the phone book's business section or read some job postings online. The Education skill is some skill the Hero learned in school, such as chemistry or math, history or liberal arts. For ideas, check out the list of classes available at a local university or trade school. The Hobby is something the Hero does to relax in their spare time. This skill could be anything from "Armchair Quarterback" to "Zoo Volunteer" to something useful like "Builds computers." If the player can't think of anything, assume the Hero just plays lots of computer games.

If the Hero attempts something they have skill in, they will eventually succeed. Given enough time, a doctor can cure any patient, or the patient gets better on their own. How much time it takes to succeed is up to The Man. If the Hero does not have the skill needed to try something, The Man can determine if they succeed or fail, or if they fail but they think they succeeded.

If the hero is attempting something against a Villain, or against another Hero, then there is a test of skills. A Professional Skill will succeed over an Education Skill, an Education Skill will succeed over a Hobby and a Hobby will succeed over someone without any relevant skills.

The exception to this rule is with criminal skills, such as computer hacking and arson. For some reason, a criminal Hobby will succeed over a Professional Skill countering it. Hey, I don't know why, that is just the way it is in the comics. Otherwise how can a 14 year old Hacker take over a Pentagon computer? Besides, there are not that many professional arsonists out there.

If both the Hero and Villain have the skill at equal levels, the player should explain what steps they are taking to do the task. If they make a good case, The Man can let them succeed, otherwise they fail. If two Heroes are working against each other and have equal skill, who ever has the most Brownie Points will win the contest.

Sample Heroes:

Muscle Man wearing a cape with a big S on his chest, mild mannered secret ID wears glasses

Powers: Super Strong, Bulletproof, Flight, Super Sense

Player's Choice: Ranged Attack (heat rays from eyes)

Skills: Transportation: Car

Professional: Reporter

Educational: Journalism

Hobby: Picking up chicks

Girly man with a bug symbol on his tights, webs shooting out of his hands, secret ID wearing glasses

Powers: Super Fast, Dodge/Deflect, Ranged Super Attack, Super Sense

Player's Choice: Super Strong

Skills: Transportation: Motor Scooter

Professional: Photographer

Educational: Chemistry

Hobby: Science

Mundane person completely covered in red and yellow power armor with energy blasts shooting out of their hands

Powers: Bulletproof, Ranged Attack, Super Strong

Player's Choice: Flight

Skills: Transportation: Helicopter

Professional: Business CEO

Education: Engineering

Hobby: Building armor

What do these powers do?

Super Strong: Character can lift a car. Their fists count as a Super Attack

Bullet Proof: Character has the Bullet Proof defense

Super Fast: Character moves before everyone else, except a Villain with Super Fast will move before the Hero will.

Super Sense: Some ability to detect things better than normal. This allows the Hero to find trouble better. Player and The Man define the power. This could be x-ray vision, a strange sixth-sense, or just super deductive reasoning for noticing clues.

Dodge/Deflect: Character is immune to ranged attacks while conscious because they either dodge or deflect them

Ranged Attack: Maybe laser eyeballs, maybe lightning bolts. Some sort of ranged attack that will do Super damage.

Flight: Character will move before anyone except someone with Super Fast and can avoid many obstacles in their path.

Distraction: Costs a Brownie Point to use, allows a Hero to escape the current fight. Not very Heroic, but maybe they can get help.

Back Pockets: This Hero carries a lot of stuff. Any reasonable piece of equipment they need they have, such as a flashlight or cigarette lighter. Unreasonable equipment they may still have, but it is up to The Man if they do or not and it costs them a Brownie Point to have it. “Why yes, I happen to have a spare Dilithium Crystal with me for just such emergencies.”

Villain-Only Superpowers: These are powers The Man can give the Villains but the Heroes cannot begin with. Some of these powers might be bought at auction later. See Hero progression below for details.

Nigh Invulnerable: Better than Bullet Proof. Need I say more?

Mega Power: Better than Super damage. Can be either close combat or a ranged attack but must be defined as such when acquired.

Mega Strength: Stronger than Super Strong. Fists count as a Mega attack and Villain can juggle tanks.

Super Genius: Smarter than anyone. Impossible to outthink and succeeds in all skill contests, but for some reason feels a strange need to taunt their adversaries and must leave clues about their intentions.

Super Sized: Larger than life and twice as ugly, uses taxi cabs as roller skates. No Hero can ever have this power because being this large would make it impossible to have an apartment or a secret ID or even buy clean underwear. A Super Sized Villain has Mega Strength and their close combat attacks count as a Mega Power. They are also Bullet Proof (at least) and can run faster than anyone who doesn't have Flight or Super Fast. On the other hand, they are so large they are easy to spot. Super Sized Villains have at least 8 Whomp.

After character creation, players introduce their Heroes to the group. They need to show their picture to the group but they do not need to describe their super powers if they choose not to. The Man then introduces some or all of the Villains for tonight's adventure. Yes, just like a comic book showing the villain on the cover before you even look inside, the players will have an idea what they are up against before they start. After this introduction, every player and The Man takes paper and colored pencils and draws. The Man can draw as many pictures with Heroes getting kicked as they want, or can have a few with the Villain getting

whomped, depending on how hard they want the adventure to be. Players draw at least four pictures, two with their Hero kicking Villain butt and two with a Hero getting his or her butt kicked by a Villain or Minion. Notice I said “a Hero”, so a smart player will not draw their own Hero getting kicked but will draw someone else’s Hero taking damage instead. The players will need to sign these masterpieces after they are done. When they are all done drawing, The Man will collect all of these drawing, turn them over and shuffle them randomly. The Man can, if they want to, photocopy some fight scenes from the comic books and add those to the pile as well.

Fighting

When a fight breaks out, all players state what their Hero is doing. They can do one action, and since talking and fighting do not interfere with each other in the comic books, the Hero can also say a few sentences in addition to their action.

Order of Actions:

- Super Fast Heroes/Villains move first
- Ranged attacks are calculated next
- Close Combat is calculated last.

Villains will proceed before Heroes, Heroes before Minions, Minions before Bystanders. If two Heroes are going at the same time, the Hero with the most Brownie Points will go first, unless the other Hero chooses to spend a Brownie Point, in which case they will go first. The other Hero may then choose to spend two Brownie Points to go first instead, and so forth. In the end the highest bidder loses the Brownie Points they bid but gets to do their action first.

After all Heroes, Villains, Minions and Bystanders have completed their action or been knocked out, the round is completed and the next round begins.

If a Hero is fighting a Minion, their attack is assumed to succeed and the Minion takes damage. Heroes with Flight may choose to avoid Minions, in which case the Minions can still attack the Hero with ranged attacks but the Hero can use their action to go straight to the Villain.

If the Villain attacks a Bystander, they will also automatically succeed unless a Hero does something Heroic and grabs the bystander or throws themselves in front of the attack. Rescuing a Bystander counts as the only action a Hero can do that round and to do it the Hero must have an unobstructed path to the Bystander.

If a Hero and Villain face off, each round in the fight, The Man will pull out a random sheet from that pile of drawings you made earlier. If that sheet shows a Villain getting hit, the Villain takes damage based on the attack used by the Hero and the Villain’s defenses on the Combat Results chart below. If the drawing shows a Hero getting whomped, the Hero fighting the Villain will take damage based on the Villain’s attacks and the Hero’s defenses on the Combat Results chart below. If the picture shows a specific Hero

in the group getting whomped, the attack hits that Hero instead of the Hero fighting the Villain. However, the player playing that Hero can say, “Now wait a minute!” If they call out these magic words, they have one minute to explain why that attack would not have hurt their Hero “You forgot my amazing Dodge, I’m immune to ranged attacks” or “Elastic Man isn’t even in that room right now.” If The Man feels this argument is successful, the player who drew the picture will instead have their Hero take one Whomp of damage even if they are not in the current fight (maybe a Minion got lucky, maybe the Hero was just unlucky). If the argument was unsuccessful, then the attack goes as drawn. If there is reasonable doubt and The Man can’t decide, the Hero with the most Brownie Points should win the argument.

After an image is used, it is put in a discard pile. Once all the drawings are used, the discard pile is reshuffled and used again.

Combat Results Chart	Attack Strength		
Defense	Fists and Firearms	Super Power	Mega Power
Nigh Invulnerable	No Damage	No Damage	1 Whomp
Bullet Proof	No Damage	1 Whomp	2 Whomp
Wimp (no defense)	1 Whomp	2 Whomp	4 Whomp

Other Defensive powers

Dodge/Deflect: Immune to all Ranged attacks

Distraction: Hero or Villain is ignored for one round and may escape.

The fight continues until the Heroes or the Villains are all whomped out or flee.

Someone reduced to 0 Whomp can do no actions. If a Hero is reduced to 0 Whomp before they get to do anything, then it sucks to be them and the actions the player stated the Hero was doing do not happen.

If the Villain Wins:

Villains are required by their Union Rules to take all unconscious heroes, leave their masks on and costumes intact, and tie them up in some sort of elaborate death trap. Villains also tend to give lengthy monologues about their secret plans before leaving the Heroes to die. Once the monologue is over, The Man then looks at the time and allows the players 15 minutes to argue out a plan. If the players can think of a way to escape, let them succeed and they get to fight the Villain again. If the players can’t think of a way to escape, or can’t agree on a course of action before the time runs out, well, let the Heroes die and have the players read more comics before creating new Heroes.

If the Heroes Win:

Congratulations, take the Villain off to jail. Earn some Brownie Points. The Man should award one Brownie Point to every Hero who actively participated in the adventure. One Brownie Point for every critical event a Hero accomplished to further the goals of the adventure. An additional Brownie Point goes to the Hero that contributed the most to the success of the adventure, and one Brownie Point to the Hero of the player who paid for pizza that night.

Hero progression

Heroes don't change much in the comics. The Bat Guy hasn't changed significantly since he first appeared, the Spider Guy is the same after over 40 years in print. Sometimes a character in a comic book does go through a dramatic change though, changing powers or gaining new one. In general, a Hero will stay the same through play. Once one or more players have accumulated at least 10 Brownie Points, The Man can offer up a Power Auction. The Man chooses a super power, announces what it is and then says "How much will you offer for this ability?" Players may then bid Brownie Points for the power. The highest bidder gets the new power but loses the Brownie Points they spent on it. Note that even if another player doesn't want the power, they should bid on it to drive up the price and make the other player spend more points for it. Otherwise the other player not only gains the power but still has a lot of Brownie Points to use in the game. If the Hero already has the power in question, they cannot buy it again for themselves, but may buy it for someone else. Players may not pool their points together for an auction and Brownie Points cannot be transferred from one Hero to another.

Side Kick:

If a player wishes to, instead of keeping the new power they bought at auction for their Hero, they can invest that power in a Sidekick. A Sidekick has 2 Whomp and begins with no powers except for the power the Hero just bought for them. The Sidekick's costume should look something like that of the Hero they are sidekicking with. The player who is running the Hero also gets to run the Sidekick and may choose their skills. Sidekicks earn Brownie Points just like other Heroes, but the controlling player can pool the Hero's and Sidekick's Brownie Points for determining skill success, combat results or to bid at auction. A player running a girlfriend/boyfriend may allow their character to be "promoted" to Sidekick, and in doing so may give the character over to the other player to play and generate a new character of their own (hopefully this time one that is drawn better) or may continue to run the girlfriend/boyfriend as a very underpowered Hero. If they continue to run the girlfriend/boyfriend, they may not pool Brownie Points with the other Hero but may bid for new powers for themselves at auction. Once they have 3 or more powers they become a full Hero with 3 Whomp.

Minions and Morons

Standard Goon with Gun:

1 Whomp Defenses: Wimp Weapon: Gun (Ranged) Other Power: None

Basically some guy working for the Villains. Can't hurt most Heroes but can stand in their way and waste the Hero's time while they get whomped. This can also be used for a policeman or a soldier.

Car

2 Whomp Defenses: Wimp Weapon: Ram (Super Power attack) Other Power: None

Not really a Minion, but can carry one to six Minions or Bystanders. Some combat happens so fast the car can be treated as a Minion or a Bystander on its own.

Tank

2 Whomp Defenses: Bullet Proof Weapon: Big Gun (Ranged, Super attack) Other Power: Super Sense

This is an armored tank with a big gun on it. It could belong to the U.S. Army or to a Villain.

Big Dog

1 Whomp Defenses: None Weapon: Bite (fist attack, no range) Other Powers: Super Sense

This is a big dog often used as a guard dog.

Sample Villains:

Duke Dong, the Giant Ape

Powers: Super Sized, Mega Strength 10 Whomp

This is a giant gorilla that escaped and threatens the city. He probably likes the Hero's girlfriend as well.

Zilla, Lizard God

Powers: Super Sized, Mega Strength, Mega Power (energy blast) 12 Whomp

This is a giant lizard breathing fire that got tired of eating Japanese and came to get a taste of the Heroes' hometown.

Mister Master Mind

Powers: Superfast, Dodge/Deflect, Super Genius, Ranged Attack (Super Power), Distraction 5 Whomp

Usually surround himself with a lot of minions (at least 3 per hero) and is prone to very elaborate plans.

Closing Comments:

This is my first attempt at a 24-hour RPG. It started at work over lunch, took a few more hours at home that evening after my son went to bed, and finished up at work again with an early lunch. So, in total, a lot less than 24 hours, probably closer to 6. If I had more time I would draw examples of Heroes and Villains, scan them and include them in the document. A short lesson on how to draw would be at the end. My goal was to have a diceless character generation and combat system. Character Generation only pays attention to Super Powers because in the superhero world, it doesn't matter if a player rolled 11 or 12 for STR, they still can't hold a candle to the woman who can toss a volkswagon at them, and so mundane statistics can be ignored in a game like this.

For the right artistic group this could be fun. The time limits are designed to keep the actions flowing and hopefully there would be a good mix of player cooperation and competition brought on by the design of the combat and Brownie Points system.

Start Time: 12:05, September 29th 2005, End time: 12:03 September 30th, 2005