Quick-Play: A diceless RPG for quick, casual games.

The Quick-Play system is designed for quick startup and rapid play. Quick-Play was written and created by Eric Waters, and is available at http://student20productions.wordpress.com for no charge. Quick Play is considered a Public Domain creation – use it however you want; you don't even have to give credit if you don't want to.

Character Creation

To create a quick play character, rate the following stats from 5 to 1, with 5 being the highest level of competence and 1 being the lowest. Depending on the game, you can either assign a 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 to stats as appropriate for the character (standard), distribute 15 points among them (flexible), or distribute 20 points among them (powerful).

- **Power**: A measure of physical strength and endurance
- **Finesse**: A measure of physical acuity, dexterity, and agility.
- **Expertise**: A measure of mental acuity, memory, intelligence, and so on.
- **Presence**: A measure of social ability, charisma, and strength of will
- **Pneuma**: A measure of mystical or other super human abilities. In games that do not have such things, this stat can be replaced with something more appropriate (Cyberware in a Cyber-Punk game, Sanity in a horror game, and so on)

Once you have assigned values to your Stats, you can select one skill for each stat for every point in that stat (so if the character had 3 Finesse, you would select 3 Finesse skills for the character). Skills are left to your imagination – they are merely things within each stat that the character is good at. Sample skills can be found on page 3. After Skills are selected, character creation is done.

Conflict Resolution

Generally speaking, characters should be able to do whatever they come up with, provided that their Stats and Skills support the action. For instance, someone with Power 3 can do more than someone with Power 2, and someone with Power 3 and an appropriate skill can do more than someone with Power 3 alone. If there is doubt as to a character's success, however, a Conflict occurs. To resolve a conflict, take the following steps:

1. The Game Master selects a number,; the range of selectable numbers depends on the perceived difficulty of the task:
   a. **Easy**: A number from 1 to 10
   b. **Difficult**: A number from 1 to 20
   c. **Hard**: A number from 1 to 30
   d. The scale can continue as high or low as you like – the bigger the spread, the more difficult the task. GMs are encouraged to write the number down to avoid accusations of bias.
2. The player selects one number within the same range for every point he or she has in the Stat. If the player chooses the number the GM selected, the character succeeds. If the character is using an appropriate skill, the character succeeds with a number one less than, equal to, or one more than the GM's number (the GM's number ± 1).

If the conflict is between two player's characters, one player (the "defender") chooses a number with a range equal to 10x his or her appropriate stat, +5 if he or she has an appropriate skill. The other player (the "attacker") then follows Step 2, above.

Combat

Combat is essentially a series of Conflicts. Turn order is determined by comparing Finesse scores, followed by quick negotiation between players or GM decision based on circumstance. Characters then do one thing on their turn[1] Players pick numbers both for offensive (hitting people) and defensive (dodging attacks) actions. Generally, Power is used for Attacking and Finesse is used for Defending, although each attack should be judged based on circumstance – it's not unreasonable to use Finesse to attack with a handgun or dagger, or to use Expertise for a clever use of cover in a defense, for instance. Each time a character is hit, he or she takes a point of damage. Characters can take up to 10 points of damage, after which they fall unconscious. Characters can also take the following special actions:

- **Avoid Attack**: If the character would normally be hit, he or she is missed. A character can do this once per combat per point of Finesse he or she has.
- **Catch Breath**: The character's damage taken is reduced by an amount equal to the number of points he or she has in Pneuma. This can be done once per combat. If the game isn't using the Pneuma stat, this should be replaced with something else more appropriate.
- **Insightful Attack or Defense**: The character can pick an extra number for attack or defense. The character can do this once per combat per point of Expertise he or she has.
- **Intimidate or Impress**: The character can reduce the range for his or her next Attack or Defense by 5 (so if it was going to be a number from 1 to 20, it would now be a number from 1 to 15). The character can do this once per combat per point of Presence he or she has.
- **Power Strike**: The character can declare that a hit deals 2 damage instead of 1. The character can do this once per combat per point of Power he or she has.

[1] In this context, "One Thing" means attack, run away, dive for cover, charge, shove, and so on. Small things like drawing weapons and talking don't count.

Magic and other Special Powers

Magic – and all other supernatural powers – is handled with the Pneuma Stat and associated Skills. Roughly speaking, if a character is going to be using such abilities, this should be reflected by the character's background and his or her skill selection. Characters can produce supernatural effects only within the context of their Pneuma skills; unlike other stats, Pneuma is useless (except as described in combat) without appropriate skills. Any stat used to replace Pneuma should follow similar guidelines.

Use of Special Powers requires creativity and restraint. Since the way magic and other abilities work varies greatly from one game/setting to another, no hard and fast rules can be given. Keep in mind, however, that higher stats mean better effects, so if a character with Pneuma 3 and a Weather Control skill is allowed to call down lightning on a bad guy, a character with Pneuma 5 and the same skill should be able to do a whole lot more- summon a tornado, for instance.

Experience and Advancement

Quick-Play isn't really meant for ongoing games, but if it is used for multiple sessions, characters should be allowed to advance. Every few sessions, or after a particularly good bit of role playing, the GM may allow the players to either advance a Stat by 1, or to pick a new skill. A character can only have one skill per point he or she has in the associated stat (unless that stat is at 6), so stat advancement must occur before any new skills are picked. Stats are capped at 6; once a character has a 6 in a stat, he or she may have as many skills as advancement allows related to that stat

If you find yourself playing the same characters long enough to advance more than one stat on any one character to 6, you should seriously consider using a more formal game system. I suggest 16 Bit Heroes, Dungeons & Dragons, Mutants and Masterminds, GURPS, or d20 Modern.

Sample Skills

Below are a few sample skills, just to give you ideas. Depending on the game group, skills could be more or less specific than these. Five examples are given for each stat, except Pneuma, which has five examples each for Magic, Super Powers, and Psychic abilities.

What the names of these skills mean is up to you; complete descriptions of each skill are left out on purpose. Discuss any skill selections with the rest of the group (or the GM if you're the secretive type), just to make sure that everyone's on the same page as to what your interpretation of the skill is.

Power Skills
- Brawling
- Raw Strength
- Marathon Runner
- Sports
- Alcohol Tolerance

Finesse Skills
- Handguns
- Acrobatics
- Slight of Hand
- Figure Skating
- Stealth

Expertise Skills
- Engineering
- History and Lore
- Safecracking
- Literature
- Photographic Memory

Presence Skills
- Attractive
- Diplomacy
- Con/Fast-talk
- Seduction
- Terrifying Visage

Pneuma Skills – Super Powers
- Force Fields
- Flight
- Body of Fire
- Energy Blast
- Super Strength

Pneuma Skills – Magic
- Conjuration
- Charms
- Necromancy
- Shamanistic Ritual
- Transfiguration

Pneuma Skills – Psychic Abilities
- Telepathy
- Psychokinesis
- Remote Viewing
- Psychometry
- Teleportation

Special Rules

The following are special rules. All of these are optional, but might make things more fun or make the game flow more smoothly.

Right Skill, Wrong Stat
If someone has a perfectly appropriate skill, but they have it assigned to the wrong stat for the situation, the player can gain the skilled bonus anyway. For instance, perhaps someone has a Finesse related Acrobatics skill, but wants to use it in an Expertise related way – reciting the last 10 Gold Medal Winners in the Olympics in the Parallel Bars event, for instance. The player would use their Expertise stat to select the numbers for the conflict, but would receive the benefit of being skilled.

If you think this makes skills too generic, fine: reduce the skill benefit so that success is only achieved if the player picks the exact number or one above it (instead of the exact number ±1).

Variable Damage
If the damage system described in combat is too simplistic for you, you could have it so that a successful hit deals damage equal to the stat used (so a hit made using the Power stat would deal Power damage), +2 if there was a weapon involved. A *Power Strike* special action would deal 1 additional damage.

If you use this special rule, you should probably increase the damage characters can take to 20 or 30 to keep combat from becoming a two-or-three hit affair (although maybe that's what you're looking for…)

Random Conflict Numbers
If you have access to dice when you play, you could have the GM or a "Defending" player roll dice in secret to determine the target numbers. You could use 1d10 for easy, 1d20 for normal, and then use a d4 for the tens number and a d10 for the ones number to create numbers from 1 to 40. Or however you want to handle it.