



HERO System Basics

Q: What is the HERO System?

A: The HERO System is Hero Games's award-winning roleplaying game system. Voted the Best Roleplaying Game of All Time by InQuest Magazine, it offers you more freedom to create exactly the character you want than any other system available.

The HERO System is unique because it's the only game on the market offering players and GMs the means to create any character they want, and yet keep that character balanced against other characters and threats. It's a point-build system based around the concept of special effects. The rules are written generically, allowing the gamer himself to decide exactly what a power or ability does, and then define it in game terms. For example, you won't find a "Lightning Bolt" or "Wings" power in the book that says, "Here's how you blast people," or "here's how you fly." Instead, the game elements are defined generically. Instead of Lightning Bolt there's Energy Blast and Killing Attack - Ranged; instead of Wings there's Flight.

As a player, you might decide, "I want my character to be able to fly - he has wings." Instead of just writing down whatever the game's designers say "Wings" do, you decide how to represent Wings in game terms, using Flight and some Power Modifiers. A character with the ability to fly by manipulating gravity would build his power using Flight in different ways, since gravity manipulation and wings, while both enabling a character to fly, work differently.

The result of this is that you aren't constrained by what the game's designers think. You apply your own creativity and the unmatched flexibility of the HERO System to create what you want.

Around the Hero Games offices, we like to explain it this way: Most games are like boutique stores: they cover one subject really well, but don't really provide anything else. A few systems, including other supposedly "generic" or "multi-genre" ones, are like department stores. They offer you lots of stuff, but you have to find it, and they may not have something you want. The HERO System is like Home Depot. It provides the tools to build anything you want - but you have to know what you want and how to do the work.

Q: That sounds a little complicated. Is there an easier way?

A: The HERO System may sound daunting, but it's much easier than it seems at first blush, partly because of its high degree of internal consistency. Once you figure out how something works, that same rules logic often applies in many other situations.

If you're having trouble, try posting a question on the message boards here on the website. The hundreds of Hero gamers who monitor them every day will gladly offer you suggestions, advice, and assistance.

Q: What's the difference between "Superheroic" and "Heroic"?

A: Generally speaking, the HERO System divides all characters (and campaigns) into two types: Heroic and Superheroic. In a Heroic campaign, characters are usually more or less normal people (though highly competent and capable, compared to average folk). They have Skills, Perks, Talents, weapons, and equipment. In some genres, such as fantasy, they can do spectacular things like cast spells, but they are not "superhumans" per se. In game terms, they do not pay Character Points for weapons or equipment; instead, they pay for the appropriate Skills (like Weapon Familiarity) and get gear as part of the game (they buy it, steal it, build it, or what have you).

Superheroic campaigns feature characters built with more Character Points than Heroic character (or at least they usually do). Typically these characters possess superpowers, like those of comic book superheroes, or similar abilities that set them apart from normal people. Superheroic characters have to pay Character Points for their weapons and equipment; they don't get anything "for free."

Q: What's the current edition of the HERO System?

In August/September 2009, Hero Games published the *6th Edition* of the HERO System. It comes as a two-book set, *Volume 1: Character Creation* and *Volume 2: Combat And Adventuring*.

Q: Does Hero Games still publish sourcebooks for the 5th Edition rules, or have any plans to?

No and no - now that the *6th Edition* is out, it's the only version of the rules we plan to support. However, as discussed below, the fundamentals of the rules haven't changed; even if you don't want to upgrade to 6E, you can easily use 6E supplements and sourcebooks in a 5E game with minimal effort.

Q: What are the major differences between the 5th Edition and the 6th Edition?

A: The fundamentals of the game - the type of dice used and how they're used, Character Points, the SPD Chart, and so on - haven't changed. The two "biggest" changes in most gamers' eyes are (a) the elimination of the "hex" (everything's just measured in meters now, making the game easier to learn and play), and (b) the "decoupling" of Figured Characteristics (PD, ED, SPD, and the like all still exist, but they don't derive from the "Primary" Characteristics at all). But beyond that there are lots of minor tweaks to costs and values, changes to several Powers, new Powers and Power Modifiers, and so on.

