Limitations

In addition to attributes and skills, characters will have quirks, traits, virtues and flaws. Generally, players choose limitations to give their character more points, a background story and more role-playing depth. Then, they use the points earned from the limitations to purchase a few more skills, or special talents.

Players can take as many limitations as their GM will allow. In most games, 3 or 4 is a good limit. Each GM will have a different idea of what is reasonable and even then a bizarre character concept might be an exception. Each limitation is worth from 1-6 buy points to the character. He can use these points to buy skills, raise existing skills, or purchase advantages.

A list of limitations is provided below. However, it is possible that the GM or a player will need to create a new limitation and give it a point value. The value of the limitation should be based on how often and how severely it limits the character.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Limitation** | **Points** |
| The limitation is interesting, but the effect is minimal or occurs very infrequently. The limitation rarely affects the character’s decision-making process. More of an interesting side note than a limitation. It will however cause problems often enough to make sure the character remembers it exists. Say once every couple gaming nights, or more often, but it is a weak effect. | 1-2 |
| The limitation will hamper the character often, but is not a continuous factor in the life of the character. If it comes up once a gaming night, and it is annoying, this is a good category for it. The limitation will affect the character’s decision-making. | 3-4 |
| The limitation is a constant issue that drives the character’s decisions. The character will almost never pass up a chance to follow the dictates of this limitation. This is a powerful limitation that should really cause the character trouble. These should not be taken lightly because they can really hamper a character. If the limitation is not well thought out and fun to role-play, it will become a chore. | 5-6 |

##### Boss

The character has a boss. This can be an individual or organization that will periodically give him orders. This could be a mission or quest, or could be a request for more mundane duties. In addition, some bosses will require the character to pay a tithe or dues. The award for this limitation depends on how often the boss interferes in the character’s life.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Boss** | **Points** |
| The boss generally permits the character to do as they please. The character is a freelancer, or the organization is so loosely organized that they have no means of regularly contacting the character. He might be expected to check in periodically, and otherwise he will rarely be contacted. | 1-2 |
| The boss is not a constant factor in the character’s life, but has frequent need of his services and will call upon him fairly often (once every 2-4 game sessions is a guideline). This boss will occasionally need the character for mundane duties. | 3-4 |
| The boss is a constant presence and will appear in some fashion in nearly every gaming session. When the character is not risking his life for the boss, he will have mundane duties to perform. The boss is central to the character’s story. | 5-6 |
| The boss generally pays the character well, or equips him well for his missions. | -1 |
| The boss requires a substantial tithe or dues from its members. | +1 |

The GM should note that having a boss is like having a code of behavior except that the code is due to a character’s internal motivation, while a boss is more of an external motivation. Characters should generally NOT be permitted to take both a boss and then a code of loyalty to that boss without consulting the GM first. In most cases, they should take only one of those two limitations.

##### Code of Behavior

The character has a code of behavior, ethics or morals that dictates his actions. This code might limit the character’s choice of tactics in a fight, cause him to protect those weaker than himself, keep him from fleeing an obviously losing battle, or otherwise force him into unpleasant situations. The player and GM should write up the code and the limitations placed on the character’s actions before deciding how many points to award. Some examples:

* Thieves’ Code – Will never rat out other thieves. The authorities are our enemies. Never use force when stealth will do. Money is all-important. Kill anyone who breaks this code. Always be loyal to your “family.” (4 points)
* Swordsman’s Code – Never attack an unarmed opponent. Never fight a single combat with the element of surprise on your side. Never turn down a legitimate challenge. Practice and strive to be the best. Never pass up a chance to hone or prove your abilities. (3 points)
* Code of the Woodlands – Protect the forest and its denizens. The ways of nature are the ways of life. Avoid the cities. Fire mages, lightning mages and loggers are our enemies. (3 points)
* Templar’s Code – Follow the teachings of the Church. Always follow direct orders from a priest or priestess. Dying for the Church is honorable. Destroy all enemies of the Church. (4 points)
* Code of Revenge – I have been wronged. I must hunt those who have offended me and destroy them. I will never tire of the hunt and never pass up an opportunity to get closer to my prey. It is my life. (6 points)

Obviously, anything is possible. The GM should award points based on how often and how severely the code hamper’s the character’s actions. This depends on the campaign style and the GM. For instance, the Code of the Woodlands might only be worth one point if the game is to take place in a sylvan woodlands with little or no encroachment from civilization. If the PCs will have to spend time in cities, or on the fringe of growing farmlands, it may be worth more, since the character will likely have to deal with city dwellers and those who would destroy his lands.

##### Compulsion

The character finds himself compelled to action in inconvenient and inappropriate circumstances. This is much like a code of honor, in that it dictates the character’s response to a situation. However, a compulsion usually pertains to less acceptable actions. Generally, the chance to succumb to a compulsion is based on the number of points awarded.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Points** | **Chance** |
| 1 | 20% |
| 2 | 35% |
| 3 | 50% |
| 4 | 65% |
| 5 | 80% |
| 6 | 95% |

This is just a guideline and should be adjusted based on the GM’s discretion and the situation.

* Alcohol – The character will drink whenever the opportunity presents itself. The character will be afflicted with chronic drunkenness and hangover. A drunk character gets a –3 to skills and attribute checks (except for STR and TOU), but gets 5 extra HITS due to pain resistance.
* Cleanliness – The character is a neat freak and will spend most of his free time cleaning his armor, weapons, clothing, his room, etc. If there is nothing to clean, the character will find something. This character will have a very hard time entering any situation where he will obviously become soiled.
* Drinking/Eating – The character is a glutton and will not pass up a chance to partake if food or drink. Assuming the situation is not life and death, the character will not resist food. They will consume until sated. Afterward, the character will be at a –2 to physical skills for an hour or so due to a bloated and sluggish feeling.
* Gambling – The character loves to gamble and bet. This includes organized games, as well as simply betting on everyday events. The character will almost always be trying to engage others in a bet and will accept all bets that are not obviously rigged.

##### Dependent

The character has a friend, lover, relative or rival that is continuously in need of rescue, support, money, a should upon which to cry or whatever. The PC will have to spend time dealing with these situations which always come at the most inopportune times.

The points awarded are based on the dependent’s relationship with the character, the frequency with which they muddle the character’s life and their stats, skills and needs. Dependents that appear often, are incompetent or have their own disadvantages will be worth a lot of points. Rugged adventurers that never need the character are worth few, if any, points.

* Distant Cousin Eldin – The PC belongs to a wealthy family and has one particularly annoying cousin named Eldin. Eldin is nice enough, but has the unfortunate delusion that he would make a good adventurer. In reality, he has just enough skill to get into bad situations, but not enough to get out. Occasionally, that places him in harm’s way and he needs the character to save him. It does not happen often, but when it does, it is serious trouble. 3 points if Eldin appears infrequently; 5 if he appears often.
* Baby in a Carriage – The PC has responsibility for an infant. It is always with him and he must feed, clothe and change it. In addition, the baddies that face the character will use this helpless child to get at the character and generally make his life miserable. This is worth 6 points.
* Aunt May – The PC has an old, but spry old aunt that generally takes care of herself. However, she does need the character’s financial support and tends to drain his funds. It is rare that Aunt May gets into real trouble. Worth 2 points.

##### Dislike/Hatred

The character dislikes a certain group, species or behavior. He will often attack, cast spells on, steal from or otherwise make miserable the life of his hated targets. The award is based on the frequency and reaction of the PC. If the character merely gives a snide remark and avoids the hated group, then the limitation is worth 1 or 2 points. If the character has a stronger reaction, then 3 or 4 points might be appropriate. If the hated group is particularly strong or prolific, then the award might be more.

* Dislikes Grunj – The PC buys into the Bostonian stereotypes about the grunj. He feels they are dirty and dumb. He will avoid contact with them and when he does encounter them, he will be rude and condescending. (1 point or 2+ for a slightly stronger reaction)
* Hates Talak – The PC’s family was killed by these monsters and the player looks for any chance to avenge the deaths. These opportunities come rarely, but are quite dangerous. (4 points or 5+ if the character is in a western region where Talak are more prevalent)
* Dislikes Mages – The PC does not like magic and will avoid those who wield it. He will try to stay away from mages, and if he is forced to travel with one, he will ignore him. He will not allow beneficial spells to be cast on him. (3 points or 4+ for a stronger reaction)

##### Distinctive Feature

The character has a feature that sets him apart from others. He will be easy to recognize and remember, easy to pick from a crowd and his enemies will have less trouble tracking him down.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Feature** | **Points** |
| Feature can be concealed with the proper clothing, or a simple disguise. | 1-2 |
| Feature can be concealed with a major effort and someone who has the skill disguise. | 3-4 |
| Feature can only be concealed with magic. | 5-6 |
| Feature causes an adverse reaction to anyone who sees it. | +1 |

* Dueling Scar – The PC has a scar obtained from a youthful duel. It is across the face and cannot be concealed unless the character wears makeup, or a hood (which in itself is conspicuous). Unless the scar is particularly hideous, it does not cause an adverse reaction. Quite the opposite, many women find themselves interested in the story behind the scar. (2 points)
* Huge Nose – Just what it says. This PC has a legendary nose, like Cyrano de Bergerac. People will remember him for his nose and he probably has a nickname or two dealing with it. Social situations are difficult because people will be commenting, making fun of or staring at the nose. Difficult to conceal without a ton of makeup, or magic. (4 points)
* Awful Smell – If you buried something and dug it up some time later, that would describe this character’s smell. He can easily be noticed in a closed room and outdoors close, or downwind. In a tight spot, he is downright repulsive and causes eyes to water. (5 points if a bath will cover the stench and 6 if only magic will do the trick)
* Evil Aura – The character has no physical features, but makes others uneasy. In social situations, this is definitely a penalty. In addition, animals tend to bark and growl at the character. (2 points)
* White Hair – The PC has stark, white hair. This is unusual and people tend to take note of it. (1 point)
* Albino – Not only white hair, but pale skin and eyes as well. Harder to conceal than white hair. (3 points)

##### Hunted/Monitored

The character has someone who is interested in his activities. The organization/individual will watch the character closely. If the character performs an action that affects the monitoring organization, they will know and intercede. Alternately, the character has already performed such an action and the organization is out to punish the character.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Hunted** | **Points** |
| Hunter is weak, or generally disinterested in the character. It is a rare occasion when the hunter remembers to take action against the character. Alternately, the hunter could be tenacious, but unable to affect the character most of the time. | 1-2 |
| Hunter can find the character often enough and has the power to make his presence known. The hunter will appear in several of the character’s adventures, conspire with his enemies and cause trouble. They are not a constant presence, but enough of one to make the character regret his transgressions against the hunter. | 3-4 |
| These guys are either extremely powerful and appear once in a while, or more normal opponents who appear all the time. The character ought to really regret messing with these people because they are always plotting the character’s demise. When they cannot act directly, they will take the time to leave messages, spread nasty rumors and otherwise harass the PC. | 5-6 |
| Hunter is only monitoring the PC. Generally, they do nothing until the character causes trouble, then they act. | -1 |

* Sandalfeet – The Sandalfeet are definitely trouble. They will cause the character problems whenever he is in a major city. Their agents are everywhere. The PC might be the target of assassination attempts, theft or ugly rumors. (5-6 points)
* Grundel the Mage – Grundel is a moderately powerful mage. He is hunting the PC due to an old dispute. Though he is dangerous, he often has little time for the PC as he is busy with his studies. (3 points)
* Old Lover – Like Carrie Fisher from the Blues Brothers, this person will come after the player tenaciously. However, the lover’s skills are nowhere near up to the task and the revenge attempts are usually laughable. More of a nuisance than a real threat. (1 point)
* Well-Meaning Father – This hunted is not out the kill the PC. In fact, he does not want his poor little son or daughter to be maimed in the dangerous world and does not understand the adventuring life. So, he has hired the best bounty hunters in the land to capture the PC and bring him back to the safe manor life. (2 points)

##### Neurosis/Psychosis

These limitations are reserved for the truly twisted and as such, ought to be left for the GM to give to the crazed villains. The player and the GM (and possibly even the other players in the group) should discuss the situation before any PC takes a limitation this severe and potentially disruptive. Most of these limitations affect the character’s behavior continuously and in terrible ways and so are worth 6 points.

* Compulsive Liar – The character cannot pass up an opportunity to tell a story. He will make up details about his life to impress people. He will be deceitful to everyone he knows. This character has a difficult time telling the truth, even at the expense of a comrade, or when faced with his own contradictions.
* Megalomaniac – The character thinks he is a powerful figure and is destined to rule others. He will continuously plot schemes to increase his personal power on the way to his “destiny”. These schemes might include assassination attempts, research into demonology, necromancy, astrology and blackmail attempts -- anything that will increase his personal power. People are pawns in his delusional game of power politics.
* Psychopath – This character is cold-blooded and feels it is his right to do anything to anyone at any time. This includes torture and murder. He feels he is the only being in the world with thought and emotion and others exist only for his amusement.

##### Physical Handicap

The character has limited physical capacity.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Handicap** | **Points** |
| Minor limitation, or only affects the character in rare circumstances. Much of the time, it is a nuisance and only rarely does it hamper the character to a dangerous degree. | 1-2 |
| Moderate limitation that affects the character continuously. It is a constant inconvenience and critical functions are made more difficult and dangerous. | 3-4 |
| Severe limitation that seriously affects the character’s ability to survive in his world. Something others take for granted, this character must struggle with. Very limiting. | 5-6 |

* Minor Limp – Character has –1” movement and overland travel is slowed. Any running or jumping test is at –2. (3 points)
* Hobbled – Character has a –2” move and running and jumping tests fail. This is a serious impediment to overland travel, causing the rate to be halved. (5 points)
* Nearsighted – Character cannot make out details at range and takes a –4 to all sight perception checks that require him to see at a distance. All missile fire is at –2. (4 points)
* Deaf – Cannot hear and communication is difficult. (6 points)
* Blind – Cannot see. (6 points)
* Migraines – Character gets terrible headaches. These can occur at the GM’s discretion, or as a guideline the PC can have a 1 in 6 chance of having a headache on a given day. The character will be at a –1 to all activity and –2 to anything requiring mental concentration. (2 points)
* Heavy Sleeper – Character has a hard time getting up, regardless of the circumstances. In a crisis, the character gets a –4 to any PER rolls to notice trouble and wake up. In addition, anyone using reasonable care will not wake the character. For the first hour after the character wakes, he is at a –1 to all action due to this grogginess. (2 points)

##### Quirk

The character has a small quirk that makes him memorable. This is similar to a distinctive feature, but includes mannerisms and attitudes as well as appearance. All number of minor, odious habits fall under this category. These are generally worth 1 point to a character. Behaviors that are worth more points fall into the code of honor and compulsion categories.

* Wears Red – Character likes the color red and will always dress in red if not in disguise and it is not obviously inappropriate. He will probably have a nickname like “blah The Red” or “Red” or something like that. He is easier to remember and describe.
* Bites Nails – Character bites his nails when nervous or in new social situations. This is probably a –1 or –2 to most social skills.
* Continuous Narrative – Character mutters a constant narrative of events to himself. This is generally audible to others, though it can be whispered in stealthy situations.
* Flirt – The PC loves to be around members of the opposite sex and flirts when he can. Generally, this is not a problem, but it can be when the flirtations are inappropriate (i.e. the character flirts with a married woman or a noble lady).

##### Special Need

The character needs a substance, ritual or event not normally required to survive. If the character is deprived of this thing, he will waste away and die. The rarity of the substance and the speed at which the character will perish determine the points awarded. Most normal people do not have special needs. Only in certain special cases will this limitation be available to PCs. The player and GM will have to work out the special need and its value.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Need** | **Points** |
| The substance is common, or at least not hard to find within the time period required. It may be purchased in certain towns and villages, or is something that exists in nature. In odd circumstances, the character might have to worry about finding this substance, but it is not often a problem. | 1-2 |
| The time in which the character withers is reduced, making acquiring the substance more of an issue. Alternately, the substance is odd enough that it is not easily found. Perhaps it exists only in a certain locale, or can be bought in the largest cities only. The character will have to remain close to his source of material, or carry a store to be safe. | 3-4 |
| A severe need. If the character is away from his substance for any length of time, he starts to suffer. Alternately, the substance could be so rare, that special expeditions will have to be organized to find it. The character should be obsessed with finding and attaining this substance. | 5-6 |

##### Susceptible

The character is adversely affected by something that does not normally harm people. The damage taken is the major factor in determining the award. The substance must be common enough to be a threat. Damage can be taken in 3 ways:

1. Simple proximity to the substance is enough to do damage to the character. Every minute of game time, the GM rolls and applies damage to the susceptible character.
2. Weapons made from the substance do more damage to the character.
3. Spells and other effects that include the material will do more damage and the character will have a harder time saving.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Effect** | **Points** |
| Character takes 2d3 points of damage each minute. Weapons do +2 damage and spells do +2 points/die. The character gets –2 to all saves against the material. | 1-2 |
| Character takes 2d6 points of damage each minute. Weapons do +4 damage and spells do +4 points/die. The character gets –4 to all saves against the material.. | 3-4 |
| Character takes 2d10 points of damage each minute. Weapons do +6 damage and spells do +6 points/die. The character gets –6 to all saves against the material. | 5-6 |
| The material is very rare. | -1 |
| Character must be in physical contact with the material and not just in the same room. | -1 |

##### Ugly

A special type of distinctive feature. It means that people consider the character unattractive. The character’s CHA is not affected, but all initial reactions and social skills are at –3 until the target gets to know the character. This is worth 2 points.

##### Unlucky

The character is inherently unlucky. This will affect him in minor ways during the game. The GM should afflict this character with minor equipment problems, misunderstandings and generally make it known that things do not go this character’s way.

More importantly, if during the night’s gaming, this character needs to make an important roll, it will automatically fail if either the player or GM rolls a 1 or 12 on his d12. This failure will happen in an inconvenient way if both player and GMs roll 12s. If either rolls a 1, the failure is more improbable and fantastic. If both roll a 1, then it is a horrendous failure that might cause the character to be placed in serious trouble. The GM should have fun with this one.

The award for this limitation is based on the maximum number of times it can affect a character during a gaming session. Once per night is worth 4 points. Twice per night is worth 8 points. Three times is worth 12 points.

**Example of Unluck**: Tangent the mathematician and his companions are on board a ship fighting an undead sea captain. This captain seems to be resilient to most types of damage. However, fire seems to harm him. One of Tangent’s companions empties an oil lantern on the zombie and sets him alight. The zombie is burning, but is still dangerous. Tangent comes up with an interesting idea. He casts speed on the zombie, hoping to speed him and the rate at which he is consumed by the flames.

Tangent casts his spell and rolls a 12. His player groans… Tangent is unlucky! The GM chuckles as he rolls his die and gets a 1. Normally, this would be a great success. However, since a 12 was rolled, the unluck is triggered and the skill check automatically fails. Worse yet, a 1 appeared in the roll as well meaning that the failure was “improbable and fantastic.”

The GM has a bit of a revelation and determines that Tangent **did** succeed in casting his spell. Only he cast it too well and the zombie, as well as the surrounding wooden ship, is now burning out of control.

##### Unathletic

This character takes a -3 to all skill tests dealing with athletic ability. This includes running, jumping, climbing, swimming, and acrobatic tests. In addition, this character's overland movement rate is 75% of normal. Unathletic is worth 2 points.

##### Wimpy

A character with wimpy has a low tolerance for pain. He hates to see people in pain, and cannot stand to have it inflicted on him. Such a character will take a -2 to all TOU rolls that deal with unconsciousness, or wounding. In addition, he is more easily wounded and for the purposes of determining if a wound effect occurs, the wimpy character is treated as though he has 8 less hit points than he actually does. Finally, this character takes a -4 to all interrogation checks. Wimpy is worth 4 points.