Simple - A simple, intuitive and cinematic RPG metasystem

by lordanb

Author's Note (Please read this)

Hey, thanks for taking a look into my weird, weird RPG "metasystem", as I proudly decided to call it. I just want to talk about Simple a little, give some insight on why I made it this way and say why you should or shouldn't use it for you campaigns.

The main reason I created Simple is because my playgroup needed something like it. We started playing D&D for a short time and then quickly realized that we wanted to create another campaign with some looser rules and in a completely different, Mad Max based world. After a few campaigns of that, using a made-up system heavily based on D&D, we decided to play Call of Cthulhu, followed by The One Ring Roleplaying Game, followed by another made-up system for a Hellboy-based adventure and from there things just got crazier.

With every new idea for a new world and a new campaign, both me and one of my friends, who were alternating between GMing, had to create a new system that would accomodate this new world in a functional way. We would search online for resources that fit the world our next campaign would take place in, take some stuff from our previous makeshift systems and try to come up with something fresh and functional. This was a little bit tiring sometimes and often lead to unbalanced and/or unfair situations. It even got to the point that I spent so much time creating a new system for a certain campaign that by the time I finished it, I was just so tired I couldn't even come up with a good story for that same world I had created. That system was also a 40 page mess that had some glaring mistakes in it, but it was too long for a single person to re-read it all and fix every single unbalanced or disfunctional detail after testing it, considering it was made for a single, specific campaign.

Some time later, after talking with some friends about a JoJo's RPG, I stumbled upon SB's system and I was astonished by how short and comprehensive it was. Everything just made sense and it felt pretty dynamic to play with. So, I decided I would adapt it for our next campaign towards a medieval setting and see how it could work out. At some point during that adaptation, I realized it would be a lot more simple if I could just have a system that is easy to adapt, instead of multiple easy to play systems that took a lot of time to create. From that, I decided to create a new, simple and adaptable system, that would serve as a framework for all my future campaigns with my playgroup.

As such, Simple is at the same time completely generic (which is good) and extremely specific (which is not so good). It's completely generic because it is, effectively, only a set of rules that you can shove anywhere. You can literally choose any fictional world for your RPG and use the Simple system and it will fit, one way or the other. However, it's extremely specific since it was built by *me* to cater to *my* RPG needs. I just wanted something that I could choose a world, make some small

decisions that don't require any kind of deep thought or balancing, create characters and start playing. If I suddenly felt like creating a new enemy type or special weapon during a campaign, I wouldn't have to check other guidebooks or worry if it was unbalanced, there would be very few numbers and calculations involved and I could make it happen on the spot. Making the system short also meant anyone from my playgroup could read it and GM every now and then, so if someone said "Oh, I really like Avatar: The Last Airbender's world" I could just awnser "Ok, you know it better, GM it" - and then if they had a story in mind, in one afternoon they could have everything they needed ready for the first session.

Since Simple worked out well in our first test session, I decided to make it public.

Considering all that I explained here, I would say the following:

Simple **is recommended** to relatively new RPG players and for players that want a more easygoing gameplay. Since it aims for a more cinematic and light-hearted experience, it is, in general, easy to understand and play. However, it's interesting if the players and GM already have some experience with RPGs, since even just "filling the blanks" Simple leaves for you to create your world will require a little bit of thought. It works fine in short or one-session campaigns, but can also lead to a longer one if the playgroup so desires - Simple lays the groundwork for both, if you choose to put in the effort.

Simple **isn't recommended** to very experienced RPG players, unless they are simply trying something new. Simple doesn't have a lot of complex mechanics like other RPGs and doesn't reward players that create characters thinking about best possible builds and exploits. It's not for people that want to look at a gigantic skill tree or list and spend hours pondering what would make them powerful in the long term. You can create those from scratch with Simple, but I'm pretty sure there are better and more balanced RPGs out there if that's your thing.

However, "recommended" is the keyword here - I can't actually stop you from using Simple. It's just that, if you come to me saying that your level 90 character is completely broken and I should rework something due to that, I won't actually care too much about it, because it's not the purpose of the system. Although, if you say that you couldn't find a way to adapt something into Simple or make a suggestion about something that could make the system more adaptable without complicating it too much, I would be on it immediately.

If you have a lot of fun using this system, I would highly recommend following the link on Chapter 1 and donating to the person who made the JoJo's RPG, since I based a lot of Simple on their work and it's what inspired me to create this in the first place.

Hope you have fun with Simple!

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Simple is an RPG system made for those who want a role-playing game experience without having to deal with complicated stats and dice rolling filled with dozens of modifiers, aiming to deliver a

cinematic feel to an RPG campaign while keeping a good narrative flow and balanced gameplay.

Simple is heavily based of <u>"JoJo's Bizarre Adventure - The RPG", by SB</u>. The credit for creating a balanced and functional RPG system goes to SB, while Simple tries only to adapt it so that it can be used in worlds and scenarios outside of those from JoJo's Bizarre Adventure. If for some weird yet maybe understandable reason you decided to use Simple for your JoJo's campaign, please use SB's system and its expansions instead, as it is much more complete.

For those who aren't familiar with role-playing games (or RPGs, for short), an RPG is a tabletop game in which you (the player) play the role of a character (also known as Player Character, or PC) that lives an adventure in a fantasy world. This adventure, most commonly known as a "Campaign", is narrated by the Game Master (or GM), which is a special player who's in charge of creating the story and controlling all of the non-player elements of the world, be them characters (NPCs) and whatever happens to the PCs. The game functions in 4 very easy steps:

> 1) The GM narrates the situation in which the PCs are in, explaining their surroundings. He or she may also provide information through NPCs or describe their actions.
>
> 2) The players decide what their characters will do, according to the information provided by the GM.
>
> 3) The GM sometimes asks the players to roll some dice, to determine if their actions were successful (more on that later!). The GM then explains what happened with the characters and the immediate consequences of their actions.
>
> 4) Repeat.

Seems simple, right? Because it is! That's mainly because an RPG game session flows just like a storytelling moment, but with several people participating and altering the story. That's why RPG campaigns can go from 3 hours in a single afternoon to several sessions spread across months, according to the will of the players.

*Note: An **adventure** is a series of events on which players take the roles of their characters and venture through the world created by the GM. A **session** is a gathering of players and GM to go in an **adventure**. A **campaign** is a series of advetures with the same characters in the same general setting or world.*

However, there are always some rules to how you create your character and how to roll dice to determine your success in actions. That is what the RPG system stands for: it's the guidelines and base rules for a role-playing game, so that everyone can enjoy themselves and unleash their creativity while standing on the same ground of "how they're playing the game".

The Simple system is made with a general approach, meaning it can be used for an RPG campaign in whatever setting the players may choose, from traditional medieval battlegrounds to cyberpunk and

dystopic worlds. This document will describe the core system, which the players and Game Master should adapt to their world and scenario of choice. There will be a chapter explaining how the examples that are in other, separate files, work.

In short, Simple is a recipe for your simple, intuitive and cinematic RPG - a toolkit to building your own simple RPG system.

Note: To play Simple, you just need pencils, paper, your character sheet and at least 3 20-sided die (aka d20). Having more d20s makes things a lot more practical though.

Note: You may freely choose to only use parts of the Simple system, if you think your playgroup is too casual or too advanced for it. The creation of house rules to increase the enjoyment of your game session is encouraged.

Chapter 2 - Rolling tables and important values

Here in this chapter you will be presented with the tables and relevant values for *Attributes* in Simple. If you are new to RPGs and this doesn't sound familiar at all, relax. Simply take a look over the tables and move on to the next chapter, where you'll be introduced to the game mechanics and these will start to make more sense.

In your first game sessions, this chapter will be used constantly for value and roll referencing, but it should quickly become automatic for the players and GMs to know this data.

Standard Roll Results *(You may choose to alter these values if you feel like they are unbalanced or not suited for your playing style.)*

1 or less	2 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 15	16 - 20	21 or higher
Critical Failure	Definite Failure	Moderate Failure	Moderate Success	Definite Success	Critical Success

Attribute Die Rolls

Attribute	Dice to be rolled
A	Roll 3d20 and take the highest result.
B	Roll 2d20 and take the highest result.
C	Roll 1d20.
D	Roll 2d20 and take the lowest result.
E	Roll 3d20 and take the lowest result.

Injury Table *(You may choose to alter these values if you feel like they are unbalanced or not suited for your playing style.)*

(Attcker roll - Defender roll)	Injuries caused
<= 0	No injuries caused
1 ~ 8	Light injuries are caused

(Attcker roll - Defender roll)	Injuries caused
9 ~ 18	Heavy injuries are caused
>= 19	Major injuries are caused

Note: A GM may choose to subvert these values if they the situation calls for it. A very fragile enemy may need a lesser difference between rolls to be taken down and, as such, the 1 ~ 8 interval may cause a Heavy Injury on them and so forth.

Chapter 3 - Simply creating

Simple is made as a system that can adapt and apply itself to any kind of RPG world. As such, it has a very open and modifiable character sheet (some pessimistic minds may call it shallow and empty, but don't listen to them), meant to be altered to fit your gameplay campaign. This chapter will simultaneously cover character creation and the association of Simple with the RPG world of your choice.

1) Basic Information

When creating a character in Simple, the first thing you'll want to do is to establish their basic characteristics. Things such as a character's "name", "age" and "gender", among other characteristics. All of these traits should be noted on the top of your character sheet.

Two traits that should receive special attention are "Species" (or "Race") and "Class". Most RPGs have a race and/or class system to distinguish their characters from one another, but since Simple's goal is to be the base for any creative world or RPG system, the addition of these two characteristics is not mandatory. A GM may want to create a world where there are only humans and in this case there wouldn't be any sense to having a "Species" slot for you to fill in - and also no sense in having a pre-determined list of buffs and debuffs for selecting the human "Species".

As such, Simple handles "Species" and "Class" by these simply being codewords for a certain set of *Abilities* and *Advantages* (*AA* for short). That means that if in your RPG world there are only humans, there is no need to add a "Species" slot for your players to fill in their character sheets. In the case that there are different species to chose from, each one refers to a set of *AA* that your character will start the game with - and maybe also a set of *AA* they may be able to learn later through leveling up. The same is applied to the "Classes". There is a special space in the character sheet assigned as "Traits" to indicate such aspects of your character. If they don't apply, simply leave them blank.

Example: *Suppose that you are creating a system where all characters are of the 'Human' species with four available classes for your players to choose from: A, B, C and D. Each one of these classes means a character will have the following AAs: A is bound to AAs 1, 2 and 3, B is bound to AAs 4, 5 and 6, C is bound to AAs 7, 8 and 9 and D is bound to AAs 10, 11 and 12. There are also many other available AAs, named from 13 to 30, that aren't related to the class of a character. When a player states that his character has the class B, they should note it on the "Class" slot of their sheet 'B' and put 4, 5 and 6 on their "AAs" list. They will later be able to spend their Experience Points on AAs 13 to 30. For more detail check* **Chapter 3.5 - Abilities and Advantages** *and* **Chapter 5 - Examples***.*

Finally, all Simple character sheets will have blank spaces dedicated to "Physical Description" and "Personality". These are descriptions that every character should have and that can influence a lot in the character creation process.

"Physical Description" applies to how your character looks, from hair color, to height, to weight and to how they dress in general. A character's physical description may influence what they wear and carry and also be influenced by their *Attributes* and *AAs*.

"Personality" applies to how your character behaves, acts and reacts to those around them. If some GMs decide that a long personality description isn't required for their system, they may choose to ignore it completely or use easier alternatives (there no shame in basing said alternative on D&D's "Alignment").

A character's personality and physical description may be directly related to *AAs* they have and with their Background.

2) Backgrounds

Whenever you create a character, you need to design the story behind them. The way your character lived his or her life before the start of the game session surely must have influenced them in some way that is impactful in the present. Your character's *Background* is basically his or her story, motivations, memories and dreams.

Whenever a character is put into a story, they should have a reason to be there. It is important for the GM to define the world the adventure will take place so that the players can develop interesting backstories related to it. A good GM considers their PCs' *Backgrounds* and builds upon them during the story.

As stated before, a PC's *Background* may heavily influence their appearance, personality and *AAs*.

3) Attributes

One of the core gameplay features in Simple are you character's *Attributes*. These represent your character's ability to, well, act! Each attribute is generally related to a certain set of skills and receives a rank from A to E to measure your character's proficiency in them. As a simple example, a character with an A in the "Strength" attribute is more likely to be able to lift a large object than one with an E in it. However, since Simple is made so that you can create your own RPG system, there are no pre-defined *Attributes*. When you're creating your Simple system, you may choose 5 or more *Attributes* that will be used to determine the characters' skills. Depending on how much *Attributes* there are, each player will receive a certain number of points that will be used to "buy" ranks for each attribute. The point cost for each one is as follows:

E: -1 (Having an E attribute means you get another point to spend)

D: 0

C: 1

B: 2

A: 3

For the minimum number of 5 attributes, the number of recommended points is 6. You may choose to change this according to your idea of PCs power level.

Logically, if you should choose to have more than 5 attributes, you should also increase the total amount of available points accordingly. Here's the recommended values table:

Attributes	Total Points
5	6
6	7
7	8
8	9
9	10
10	11

In general, you want to have N+1 points for N attributes for a balanced experience.

If you are unfamiliar with RPGs and *Attributes*, there will be an example section showcasing different sets of *Attributes*, that can be used as templates for certain RPG worlds in Chapter 5. It's generally recommended to have a durability-related attribute for your characters, such as Endurance, Constitution, Health or other similar ones. This makes it easier to roll tests for Injuries and Conditions (see **Chapter 3.4 - Injuries and Conditions** for more information).

Note: For those familiar with D&D, "Attributes" are somewhat equivalent to "Ability Scores".

4) Injuries and Conditions

In Simple, there is no such thing as a number of "Hit Points" your character can take before dying. When a character takes damage, they will receive an *Injury* (or more than one) based on what kind of damage they've taken. They may also receive a *Condition* accordingly.

Injuries are divided into three different types:

> Light Injuries (LI): these are relatively common types of damage that a character can receive. Light injuries can be cuts, bruises, scrapes and flesh wounds, among others. This is the kind of damage that can generally be shrugged of, but letting it stack will likely be problematic, since that will generate a Heavy Injury. Light Injuries don't actually impair your character, but they can be healed by dedicating an action towards said goal during an Action Sequence.

Heavy Injuries (HI): these are more dangerous, but the most common types of damage. Heavy injuries occur when a character suffers a heavy blow, slice or gunshot, among others. This kind of injury will generally severely damage the region of the body it was inflicted upon, sometimes requiring a -3 on any roll involving it. Heavy injuries can be acquired either by simply suffering a powerful attack or by stacking 4 light injuries on the same body part. Most of the times, Heavy injuries will require medical attention or a healing ability. A character may use an action during an Action Sequence to temporarily diminsh the effects of or heal a Heavy Injury, but it is generally not an easy task.

Major Injuries (MI): these are the worst possible injuries a character can suffer from. Major Injuries are generally nearly unrecoverable types of damage, such as having limbs almost severed off or attaining to much damage without immediate treatment. When a body part has a Major Injury on it, it will most likely never be used again unless it goes through intense treatment. Major Injuries can be acquired through extremely powerful strikes or by stacking 2 Heavy Injuries on the same body part. While most Major Injuries cannot be treated, they can be stabilized through some kinds of treatment. While not stabilized, Major Injuries will apply a -3 to all rolls a character makes (except a *Fatally Wounded* roll) and may add conditions to said character.

Note: Negative modifiers from different types of Injuries will stack. That means if your character has a Major Injury on their left arm and a Heavy Injury on their right arm, any action will receive -3 in the roll, but an action with the right arm will receive -6 instead (stacking the -3 from the HI and from the MI).

Some types of damage a character can suffer may cause them to attain or develop Conditions, which are effects that afflict a character for a certain period of time. These may cause injuries, limit a character's actions and movement or even transform a character temporarily. Examples of conditions that you may create are such as "Confused" (A confused character receives -3 on their next three rolls) or "Poisoned" (A poisoned character will receive an internal HI or LI every Turn), among others.

There is only one predefined condition in Simple: *Fatally Wounded*.

A character will receive the *Fatally Wounded* condition if they see themselves with too many injuries or with a Major Injury in any body part. While *Fatally Wounded*, a character will need to roll a D20 of a durability-related attribute for every action they take or once per Turn, in the case they decide not to act during a Turn (if your characters do not have a durability-related attribute, this will be a single D20 roll that needs to be 11 or higher). Failing this test will result in an unrecoverable event. That could mean losing a limb, failure of an organ or death, among others. This is defined by the region that generated the condition - a MI in a vital body part (head, torso, etc) will generally cause death in case of failure, while one on a limb will cause the loss of said limb, and so forth.

If a character dies during a campaign, there are two viable options. In the first one, the player must leave the campaign until it has ended (nothing stops the player from just coming to the sessions and

chilling out in their corner, without playing the game or maybe assisting the GM with some things). In the second one, the player can wait until the end of the session without participating and create a new character and rejoin the campaign in the next session. In this case, it is recommended that the new character should have different abilities and behaviour from the previous one. Choosing how you will proceed in case of death is up to the GM and the players.

5) Abilities and Advantages (AAs)

Aside from just being good with some skills or capable in some aspects, a character may have certain *Advantages* when doing certain actions or certain *Abilities* that others don't have. These will influence your die rolls and what actions your character can take during a campaign.

An Advantage is something that everybody can do, but your character is better at it. Advantages are named after the skill which they correspond and a number that corresponds to the bonus they provide, such as "Penmanship +2", "Athletics +4", "Deception +1", "Perception +1" and so forth. For example, every character in a medieval RPG can sneak, but a character with the advantage "Sneak +2" gets a bonus +2 in their die roll whenever they try to execute an action that involves sneaking. Another example is a situation in which a player decides to leap over a certain obstacle and has a "Acrobatics +1" advantage. That player would then do a test of the corresponding attribute (say, Dexterity) and add 1 to their roll results. A character without the advantage would simply roll for the Dexterity test.

An Ability is something that only characters with the said "Ability" can do. Having an Ability means your character has an exclusive skillset that others don't - although you don't get bonus modifiers in your test for actions including said skills. Abilites are named after what the skillset provides and a number that indicates any extra abilities unlocked within that skillset, such as "Lycanthropy 2", "Fire Magic 3", "Fortune-Telling 1", "Elongated Neck 2" and so forth. In this case, if a player with "Flight 1" decided to soar up high and scout the area, he would simply do the corresponding tests (say, Dexterity for the flying and Wisdom for the looking around). However, if a character without the Ability tried to do the same, he simply wouldn't be able to do it - since they can't fly - and therefore wouldn't even do any tests.

As for Ability levels, every Ability a player can have starts with a 1, but not all of them can level up after that. For an example, we will look again at the "Flight" Ability. A GM may decide that the ability is simply the capability of flight and that every character in their world that has "Flight" as an Ability can do whatever action while flying. In that case, the Ability would be unable to level up. However, another GM may decide that flying is not so simple in their game world. Characters with "Flight 1" can only hover for a small period of time, "Flight 2" allows for controlled flight a few centimeters above the ground and "Flight 3" would be a complete ability to fly.

Not all AAs need to be positive skills. A character may have negative Advantage (call it a Disadvantage if you feel like it), such as "Deception -1" to indicate a lack of skill in a certain area. They can also have a negative Ability, such as "Claustrophobia", meaning a character will not act in their full potential while inside small enclosed spaces, and maybe said Ability can be leveled up to reduce the disadvantages it provides. Negative AAs can be used as compensation, such as giving a

character a negative AA and then allowing them to get extra XP or other AAs and so forth. Also, creating characters and traits with positive and negative aspects can lead to more interesting choices for players and also a more realistic RPG experience. Nobody's perfect, you know.

Note: It's generally nice if the players and the GM keep track of what each level of an Ability means - and think of them beforehand. If a player says "I WANT AIR MAGIC" specify what exactly they can do with it and what they will be able to do if they level up.

Advantages and Abilities are obtained with Experience Points (XP). Ideally, you should set a threshold cost for the strongest Advantage/Ability (AA) a character can have in the beginning of the adventure. If a player decides they want an AA that feels to overpowered, assign it a cost above said threshold and say that it can only be obtained with the XP earned after leveling up. Each level of an AA may have a different cost assigned to it. XP can also be used to level up a certain AA, after the PC has already learned/adquired it. The cost for each level up should be defined by the GM.

If these concepts are unclear to you, check out **Chapter 5** for some examples.

6) Growth and Experience

In Simple, there is no direct numerical representation of a character's growth except their level. Characters all start at level 1 and they level up according to the story flow. Characters may level up after a challenging combat encounter, extreme training, intense situation or even personal and emotional growth moment.

Whenever a character levels up, you should decide on a certain number of Experience Points (XP) they may gain. These points can be spent acquiring new *Abilities* and *Advantages*, maybe even ones unique to the character, defined by the story and events that happened in the session. A player may choose to store their XP to get more powerful rewards in the next level up.

If you intend for a one session campaign, maybe leveling up isn't so interesting - in this case, you may want to have your PCs start with more Experience Points. However, for longer campaigns, you could have a low starting XP total and a slow incremental growth on each character as they level up.

All characters must start with a certain amount of XP to acquire their starting AAs (however, this amount can be 0 - more on that in **Chapter 6**).

7) Inventory and Equipment

Since Simple's purpose is to create easy-to-use RPG systems, there is no fixed rule on how to determine inventory space. The easiest way is to simply leave it to the GMs common sense, deciding on if a PC can carry another item or not by taking a quick look at their current inventory and abilities. It is encouraged that when creating a character, the GM and player should decide on how said character will carry their equipment, by having a rucksack, a bag, deep pockets or something else - this way, each PC will have a different inventory space.

Another encouraged solution is to assign a arbitrary "Weight" value to each item and make so each

character can carry a certain amount of "Weight" according to their capabilities - however, be aware that you as a GM will need to, everytime you create an item or weapon for your PCs to find, you will need to assign it a "Weight" value that should be noted and kept consistent.

Author's Note: I don't really like the "Weights" thing, requires to much effort and balancing - and it's not interpetative. I'd rather have a PC realize their bag is full and say something as "Can I wrap this new sword around my leg then?" and that action to have future implications, than simply needing to drop a random item of the same weight.

Simple's *Equipments* can have many types, but to put it simply, anything that isn't stored in a character's bag and is of easy access is considered an *Equipment*. This can be a piece of armor, a weapon or even a vial of some sort that your character keeps in their belt. During an *Action Sequence*, if a character wants to use something in their Inventory, they will need to spend an action to equip it. There may be exceptions, decided by the GM's common sense.

In general, an armor-like *Equipment* will generally either add to the character's die roll in a Contest while defending or negate an injury and be broken. However, whatever your character is wearing may sometimes not be an armorpiece, such as simple clothing or robes, but it may still be destroyed by an attack.

Weapon-like *Equipment* will generally add to a character's die roll in a Contest while attacking. Some items like bombs or different kinds of arrows may add another test to a Contest (test number one to see if the item hits the opponent and test numer two to see how many injuries it caused) and modify these rolls accordingly.

More details on damage and injuries can be found at **Chapter 4.3 - Action Sequences** and at the *Injury Table* on **Chapter 2**.

8) Additional features

Aside from everything listed here, a Simple character sheet may also have slots for all kinds of different things your RPG world requires. Things such as ways to mark the amount of currency a character possesses, people they have a connection to and so forth.

Something that lots of RPGs have is a meter to measure some kind of power, such as mana or magic. These can be implemented easily into Simple by simply adding a counter to represent them in the blank space of the character sheet. A counter such as this could simply have a certain number subtracted from it whenever a PC executed an action while using a certain Ability, for example (these values should ideally be predetermined by the GM).

Chapter 4 - Simply playing

Now that you have established the basic guidelines of the RPG world, character attributes and the other aspects mentioned in the previous chapter, you and your friends should understand how exactly is a game played using the Simple RPG system. This chapter will cover interactions between characters and other gameplay mechanics.

1) Your character and the world

In an RPG, your character will need to roll dice to perform most of their actions - something that is frequently called "test of x", where "x" is the name of the attribute being used for the roll. The results of the dice roll will determine whether the action was successful or not, according to the values presented **Chapter 2 - Rolling Tables and Important Values**. However, not all actions require dice-rolling, only those that require significant effort of a character. In most situations, walking around, picking up light objects and talking to those around you are simple actions that do not require testing.

Whenever a character decides to execute a more complex action, the GM must assign a corresponding attribute to be tested for that action.

> **Example:** In a medieval System with Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Wisdom and Magic as attributes, Hector is playing a Barbarian character named Megalus. After invading an abandoned castle, Megalus decides to enter its former throne room in front of him to look for treasure. This is an effortless action, so the GM then narrates the throne room to the players and Megalus' entrance on it. While the barbarian is exploring, suddenly the ceiling collapses upon him. Hector then decides to jump away from the falling debris. The GM then analyses the situation and decides that the attribute which best represents this action is Dexterity - as such, Hector will have to roll 2d20 and take the smallest value to decide if the action was a success, since Megalus' Dexterity attribute is D.

According to the situation, there may also be a Difficulty applied to character's tests. If for some reason the GM feels that the action the character is trying to accomplish is too dificult due to external factors, a modifier may be applied to the test, such as a -3 in all dice rolled. These Difficulty modifiers should be used to make the story more coherent and entertaining.

2) Your character and others

In an RPG, your character will not only interact with the world around them, but also with other PCs and NPCs. These interactions can proceed in a lot of different ways, but most of them are resolved through Contests.

A Contest is similar to a test, except both the characters involved will roll their d20s simultaneously and the winner will not be determined by the roll table, but instead by who got the highest die roll. Contests occur when one character wishes to act directly against another, such as attacking them or trying to convince them of something. Then, both characters will roll their dice according to the action they would wish to do and the respective attribute. After that, the GM should narrate the results of the Contest and each player should update their character sheets accordingly, should anything change (such as injuries).

However, not all actions between characters are settled by a Contest. They only occur when both

characters are actively participating, in the sense that they are both acting towards a goal against each other. If one character is, for example, shooting at another from a distance and the target can't see the attacker, hear the shot or anything like it, there will be no Contest roll, but instead just a regular test for the shooter. If the target can perceive the shooter in someway, they will engage in a Contest to try to stop the incoming attack by an action of their choice.

It is also worth mentioning that there are no Contests among PCs when involving dialogal confrontations. Where other RPGs would measure both of the PCs' "Charisma" attribute against each other, in Simple the players should discuss among themselves to solve the issue. This is meant to promote role-playing and interaction between them. However, it is perfectly fine for a Simple-generated system to have a "Charisma" attribute to deal with dialogues and debates between PCs and NPCs.

The Difficulty mechanic may also be applied in Contests.

3) Action Sequences and Damage

Another feature in a Simple RPG is the use of Action Sequences. These are moments when characters are deeply involved with chaotic events happening in the story, from combats with hordes of enemies, to escapes from collapsing buildings and even high-stakes gambling moments.

During times such as these, it is important to keep track of all of the characters' actions, to ensure a good yet understandable game flow. As such, during a Simple gameplay session, each player must have a Token on them (this can be a coin, a pebble, a d3 or any small object in general) which will only be used during Action Sequences.

Action Sequences are divided in Turns. During each Turn, each character may choose to do one action of their choosing, from attacking an enemy to simply moving around. When a player chooses to do so, they give their Token to the GM. After all players who chose to act did so and the GM narrated everything that happened accordingly, the Turn ends and the GM gives each player their Token back, so that a new Turn may start. This process repeats itself until the Action Sequence ends, be it because all enemies were defeated, they PCs escaped the collapsing building or any other reason.

If two players or more decide their character should act at the same time, they roll 1d20 each (a GM may choose to transform this roll in a test of a certain attribute) and whoever has the better result goes first. The players may discuss in which order they want to act depending on the situation - this would not be possible in the middle of a frantic combat, but maybe it would if the Action Sequence begins while the players are hidden and planning an attack.

If the Action Sequence contains hostile NPCs, the GM needs to account for their actions as well. A pratical way to do so is to make it so that after every PC action there is an NPC action, but if the GM wishes to create a more complex, attribute-based way to determine when NPCs act, they are free to do so.

It is during Action Sequences that most of the characters will suffer injuries and hurt themselves.

The Simple RPG system tries to deal with damage in the most intuitive and natural flowing way possible.

Whenever an attack (or a damaging action in general) occurs, the GM must compare the values rolled by each character involved in the Contest and decide what injuries are applied based on the difference between the numbers. The higher the difference, the more damaging the injury (or injuries) will be. There is a reference value table on chapter 2 but, like the other tables, it doesn't need to necessarily be followed.

For those who are more accustomed with RPGs, who are currently thinking that this is madness, there is a more numerical and refined solution. After a Contest has been made and the attack has connected, you may roll a certain dice that has been previously associated with the amount and kind of injuries it is able to deal.

4) World Features

There are countless other features when creating an RPG world that need to be considered and planned. Although Simple always follows the premise of priorizing role-playing and logic when determining how things work in the world, here are some of the choices for how to implement certain features.

> This section will be updated as more things become relevant and new ideas come to mind :)

Hostile NPCs: Most hostile NPCs should have values for the same attributes as the players and also a notion of how many injuries they can handle. This amount can be lower for minions and higher for bosses.

Vehicles: Vehicles should have a total resistance value written somehwere. According to the types of damage it receives it will gradually lose its resistance - and players and/or the GM should take note of the damage it receives, similarly to injuries - until the vehicle is unusable. There should be also a certain amount of fuel that can be depleted with each action done while inside the vehicle.

Mounts: Mounts can also function normally with injuries. However, after they suffered some injuries, they should be unable to carry other beings and things anymore.

Chapter 5 - Examples

Since you can create an RPG in any world with Simple, this is a section dedicated to organizing Simple examples. Each example is in a separate file and will follow this organization pattern, to make it easier to understand - each of these files will be called a Booster Pack. They will be structured as follows:

> Name of the Booster Pack: it can be the name of the world or something else based

around it.

Name of the world/theme: if it's based on a certain fictional world, it should read, for example, "A Lord of the Rings based RPG" - else it can be simply "A medieval RPG" or "A ciberpunk RPG".

Name of the author/authors of the Booster Pack.

Tests: how many times a playgroup has played with this Booster Pack.

Description: basic description of how the world works - who lives there, how society organizes itself, what kinds of quests will the characters enroll and so forth.

Attributes: what attributes the characters will have in this world, along with a description of which situations call for a test of these attributes.

Traits: what will the traits in this world be, assigning them to each trait slot on the character sheet. There should also be a list of options for each trait and the Advantages and Abilities bound to each trait.

Advantages and Abilities: AAs available to players and how each one of them works. Should also specify the way the AAs have been or should be created and assigned to characters (see **Chapter 6 - What to do?**) and informations such as starting XP if necessary.

Extra slots: if there will be anything extra needed in the character sheets for additional features (see **Chapter 3.8**).

GM section: any tips for the GM to be able to run a campaign in this world, reading recommendations, things GMs should tell their players and any additional mechanics the world may have in relation to the system (changes in Action Sequences, Vehicles and so forth).

I will be adding new Booster Packs from time to time, based on worlds I felt like creating. If you used Simple and created your own Booster Packs, feel free to send them to me so that they can be added to the examples - and this way other people will be able to use them and provide feedback too.

An ideal endgoal would be to have a huge collection of different Simple-based systems so that everyone that wants to use Simple can quickstart an adventure in their world of choice. Even if there is already a Booster Pack for the world or theme you chose, you can also create your own anyways and submit it if you feel like it. I'm always accepting feedback, suggestions and add-ons - and will always credit those who help me in any way.

Chapter 6 - What to do?

So now that you understand how Simple works, you're probably wondering if there's a quick list of things you need to do to get started. Well, yes there is!

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 * Decide what world your campaign will take place in

 * Decide what attributes you would like to represent the actions the characters
 will take

 * Decide if there are Species, Races, Classes or any other Traits which the
 characters can have and the AAs that having said Traits would imply

 * Create the AAs available for your characters (please refer to "Quickstarting
 AAs").

 * Configure the character sheet according to you decisions

 * Start creating your story and the PCs with your players
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Note: It is heavily recommended that the GM and the players should be together for character creation - or maybe that each player should create their character while talking to the GM individually. Simple is highly customizable and a player cannot create their character just by reading this book. You and your friends are basically creating an RPG system using Simple as framework and therefore the GM needs to comunicate how the characters will be created to avoid misunderstandings.

Now you're ready to begin your campaign!

Quickstarting AAs (mainly for GMs)

Now you may be thinking, "How can I ever create a list full of AAs if I'm just starting with RPGs?" or "Why would I waste my time with creating a whole list of AAs in the case I want to play a one-session campaign?". Here's the catch: you don't have to. There is a faster way of setting up your AAs that is pretty effortless - but may cause severe trauma to RPG veterans.

First, determine how many XP your players will get when creating their character. Then, imagine the most powerful AA a player character can have when starting the game and assign a cost to it based on that XP total. For example: say each player will start with 10 XP, then maybe strongest AA they can have could cost 6, so that they can only have one very strong AA.

Now, you should dialogue with your player during character creation and suggest abilities for them. Since you created the world you'll be playing in, you should have a nice idea of the skills a character could have. Whenever the player decides that they want an AA, assign a cost to it (using the "strongest possible value" as a guideline) and add it to their character sheet, subtracting the XP from their total.

Now it's the player's turn. They will suggest AAs to you according to what they think their character

should have. You will then assign costs and allow the player to acquire some of them (again, using the "strongest possible value" as a guideline), if they have enough XP for it. If you decide that the PC cannot learn the suggested AA due to it being too strong, maybe take note of it for the time the PCs have leveled up and can become more powerful.

During this process, you will take note of several AAs that could be relevant for more than one character, such as sneaking, acrobactics, bluffing and many more. You can use these as you talk to the following players when creating their characters, saving time by already having their values written down. You will also have listed character-exclusive Abilities that you can use during characters' level ups in the future.

By the end of character creation, you and your players will have built a list of AAs perfectly suited to your RPG world. This list can also be expanded during level ups, by adding more AAs to it. Maybe, when you finish the campaign, you'll have a list so functional that you can use it to start new campaigns in the same RPG world.

Author's note: Since I frequently played RPGs "just for fun" and in relatively short campaigns, I used this method a lot. It worked pretty well for that purpose, however it could become unbalanced sometimes. Ideally, if you are more familiar with RPGs, you can use it pretty effectively - but it can also be an easy way to introduce new players to the genre and a gateway for them to try other RPGs, without being intimidated by huge skill trees and data to memorize.

Supersonic Starting (mainly for GMs that don't have the time and don't like numbers)

After reading all of that, you may be thinking "Ok, that's fast and all, but I want to make one session campaigns every time, every one of them in a different world with different characters and abilities. I really don't care about making a balanced long-time system and I need something ready for tonight because we decided this morning we wanted to play an RPG". Well, fear not, because there is an even faster (and probably less balanced) way. Simple can fit anyone's desires for a campaign.

You as a GM can simply assign AAs to your players arbitrarily. Things like "Each player gets 2 Abilities and 3 Advantages" or "Each player gets the Abilities from a class and can have either 2 Advantages with +1 or 1 Advantage with +2" (a seasoned RPG player has probably fainted right now). It's not elegant and won't build a nice AA table to look afterwards, but maybe you just want to have fun without thinking to much about it. Maybe you just want to see if an adventure in a certain fantasy world would be fun enough to build a system around it (or learn a more complex system already made around it) and you're just using Simple to test it out.

That's not a problem. Just list a few AAs and let your players choose some. If the campaign ends up interesting everyone, you'll think about balancing everything and improving your gameplay choices later. Be happy, I won't judge you (although I can't promise everyone else won't too).

Chapter 7 - Special Thanks

My playgroup for trying things out and creating adventures with Simple.

Rattman for opinions around the system in general.

This cool website.

The awesome person that's reading this :)