

Four-Color FAE

Classic Superhero Gaming With Fate Accelerated Edition

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Introduction

Four-Color FAE is a set of rules for playing superheroes in the Fate Accelerated Edition rules. It's not specific to FAE - you can use most of these rules in Fate Core or other Fate products.

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Why FAE?

Superheroes occupy a comic-book reality. Its heroes - and villains - are skilled enough to at least attempt any mundane challenge. It is their courage and motives that are tested, not their specific skills.

In FAE, character *skills* are described by their aspects, while a character's *personal style* is described by approaches. Style is an essential element of the four-color universe. An amazing super-scientist is amazing not because of his high Lore, but because he has the aspect **Super-scientist from the 27th Century**. A scheming crime lord gets by not with a high Deceive skill, but with the aspect **Boss of New York's Underworld**. Both characters might have Clever as their peak approach, but they use it for different things and in different ways.

Creating Characters

You create a superhero or supervillain the same way as any other FAE character, with the addition of a new section on the character sheet: *Power Facts*.

Aspects

When you create your character, you'll have at least one character aspect that talks about having powers. This doesn't have to be your High Concept, and probably shouldn't be your Trouble. This aspect provides you with your power facts, described below. If multiple power-related aspects are appropriate for your character concept, each one can provide its own set of power facts.

The alternate rules describe another way to choose aspects.

Approaches

There are no specific approaches or stunts that are required to have or use powers. In FAE, you will use all your regular approaches to activate your powers.

Stunts

You do not have to pay a stunt to have superpowers, although your stunts can improve and specialize the powers that you do pick.

For example, a super-strong character might have a stunt like this:

Because there's nothing I can't lift, I get a +2 to Forcefully Overcome an extremely heavy physical obstacle by lifting and moving it.

Stunts can be used to differentiate characters with the same sort of power. One super-strong hero prefers to lift and carry things, and buys a stunt that reinforces that. Another might have a bonus to Create Advantage in combat by using "brick tricks" such as punching the ground to create tremors. If you have a "signature" ability, a stunt is a good way to bring it to the foreground.

Refresh

Characters can start with a Refresh of 3 as normal, or higher if the GM wants to run a more cinematic game. A higher Refresh doesn't mean more powerful super-abilities, only more Fate points per session.

Power Facts

Superpowers are described using a new element of your character sheet. These are light-weight [Extras](#), an idea introduced in Fate Core, and are called power facts.

Power facts are an *enumerated list of narrative permissions conveyed by one or more of these aspects*. Like any other Fate Accelerated game, [your aspects establish facts](#). You define your powers by writing down these facts ahead of time.

Your list of power facts should have 3 to 10 items. Each fact can be as detailed or as vague as you want. Some groups will prefer very specific definitions for a given power ("I can run at 320 mph"), while others will be comfortable with generalities ("I can run at super-speeds"). If the group discovers that a power fact - particularly things like immunity or invulnerability - is too vague or too specific, the power fact can be edited during play with the GM's permission.

Characters can have a variety of specific abilities - wizards and their spells, or gadgeteers and their inventions, for example. It's not necessary to list every single specific ability, unless they are a signature part of the character or are likely to see frequent use. For example, a gadgeteer who wears a battlesuit can list both "Armored battlesuit" and "Able to invent small useful devices" as power facts. Similarly, a wizard might have "Air Arrow" (his signature spell), "Conjured elemental servants" (a commonly used power), and "Wielder of elemental magic" as power facts.

Racial or Common Powers

Aliens, mutants, or magic-users might all share a common set of power facts. Your campaign can have rules like "all mutants have the ability to sense other mutants", for example. GMs can write these power facts ahead of time, or borrow them from players who want to introduce a new class of super.

A character's aspect should spell out what sort of origin justifies these racial or common powers, such as "talking dog from Betelgeuse" or "wise-cracking mutant from Jersey".

Equipment-based Powers

Characters can build equipment as power facts. An avenger of the night will have his supply of gadgets and cool car. A gadgeteer or hero in powered armor uses equipment, rather than innate powers, but these are still represented as power facts.

Sidekicks and Allies as Powers

Characters can create robotic allies, summoned monsters, or energy duplicates using power facts.

Ally characters are justification for the character to roll his normal approaches and use his normal stunts in a new way. For example, a character who dispatches a magically conjured bloodhound to track a fleeing criminal can justify making rolls to shadow the criminal, even if he himself is physically off somewhere else.

Weaknesses

If a character has a specific weakness, this can be represented as a power fact as well. Enemies who introduce a source of weakness can use it to compel the character's power-related aspect(s).

For example, a vampire might have a power fact that reads "Unable to face holy symbols". When confronted by a master vampire hunter, the vampire might be offered a Compel: "Because you are a **Bloodsucking Master Vampire**, the holy symbol drives you away and allows the hunter to save your latest victim. Damn your luck." Even if the vampire refuses that compel, the power fact is still true, and the vampire does not have narrative permission to face a holy symbol or its wielder. He must work around the hunter in some way, perhaps by attacking a different target, causing a distraction, or having his mesmerized victim attack the hunter by surprise.

Sample Powers

Let's create a sample character, called Mack Atlas. We'll give him an aspect that reflects his super-powered status: **World's strongest superhuman**. We imagine him as a "gentle giant", who has tremendous physical strength but is more interested in construction and rescue than in fighting super-battles.

We'll write down the following two power facts for Mack:

- Super-strength (able to lift battleships or even hold up a mountain)
- Super-durability (able to survive artillery barrages)

In the specific campaign Mack will be a part of, all supers have a healing factor, longevity, immunity to disease, and other things.

So we also write:

- Superhuman health (Regeneration, Longevity, Immunity to disease)

Using Powers

Powers don't change your choice of actions, approaches, or rolls. Instead, they *give you permission to make rolls in new situations*. For example, a heroic adventurer archaeologist in a pulp campaign doesn't get an Overcome roll to Forcefully lift a 10-ton rock from his path - he doesn't have narrative permission to even try. But the superhero Mack Atlas does, because he has a power fact saying that he has super-strength.

Characters with offensive powers, such as blasts of fire, can roll Attack at range. Characters with force fields or armor can roll Defend against bullets or beams. Wizards can use Create Advantage to conjure walls of ice or stone, which flying bricks can Overcome using their great strength. None of these action types are new - they're simply new applications of Fate Accelerated's traditional actions and approaches.

Power facts, themselves, are not aspects. They cannot be compelled or invoked. Instead, use the aspect which provided the power fact for invocation, compels, and so on.

Power facts From Situational Aspects

Situational aspects can provide power facts. These can be established by characters using Create an Advantage, or naturally put in play through narration or the GM.

For example, a cleric's **Holy Circle of Devotion** can have power facts like "Repels demons or possessed beings" and "Blocks attempts at mind control". These power facts would affect anyone inside the circle. A vigilante's **Smoke Bomb** can have power facts like "Blocks light-based attacks" and "Exposes holograms".

Characters who frequently reuse the same situational aspects should work out their power facts in advance. They can also suggest power facts for aspects they've just created, if it makes sense to do so.

Adding, Changing, and Losing Powers

Sometimes, a character will gain or lose powers. A mutant develops a secondary mutation, or be "cured" of his powers and take up costumed crime-fighting using only martial arts and acrobatic expertise. An inventor builds a revolutionary power source that radically alters his existing tech, or crash his battlesuit in a remote area and have nothing but the local hardware store as a source of parts for new gadgets. A wizard might lose the valuable Ankh of Argon, depriving him of much of his magic, only to find out it was a secret test of character that unlocked new arcane realms of power.

In all these cases, the player should simply update his character's power facts. Such changes happen with the GM's approval, and can happen in play, or during a milestone.

If the character changes the aspect that provides them narrative permission to use powers, they should update their power facts to reflect the new reality.

Lending and Bestowing Powers

Inventors can lend gadgets to their friends. Wizards can cast helpful benedictions on their allies or summoned minions. Vampires and werewolves might infect normal victims, turning them into creatures of the night.

If the recipient doesn't already have an appropriate character aspect ("friends with Gadgeteer Greg", "Latent witch blood", or whatever), an aspect can be created on the recipient that justifies adding new power facts. If this would deprive the original wielder of the power fact - like an inventor giving away a one-of-a-kind prototype - then this aspect deprives him of the ability to use the power until he gets it back.

Discovering Power Facts

Characters can use the Create Advantage action to discover another character's power facts by discovering the aspect which provides them. This applies to both character aspects ("he's using telekinesis") and situation aspects ("it looks like there's a force field here, and it blocks radiation").

This is only relevant in encounters where a power's true nature is intended to be important to the adventure, such as when fighting an invulnerable villain with a secret weakness or investigating a mysterious alien artifact. Characters who can fly, throw bolts of fire from their hands, and the like, usually have obvious power facts.

Running Four Color FAE

Picking Difficulty Numbers

As a GM, the factor you need to balance the most isn't power level, it's *time in the spotlight*. Every PC should matter. Every PC should have a chance to shine.

The [Fate Ladder](#) is the GM's best friend. When deciding your campaign's tone and feel, you get to decide just what "Average" means for a superhero. Can an "Average" attack roll knock down a half-dozen armed thugs in an alleyway? Or is it just enough to give a single mugger a bloody nose on a novice vigilante's first night out?

The ladder should be used with a character's power facts in mind. A Legendary feat of strength for the crime-fighting phantom Covenant might be Fair for Mack Atlas, the world's strongest man.

Power Levels

In some campaigns, everyone should get a chance to shine, and power level isn't as important as ability to do something interesting. In others, some characters are simply stronger, tougher, or more powerful, and "weight classes" exist.

Mack Atlas might be the strongest man in the world. He even has an aspect which says so: **World's strongest superhuman**. So what happens if he gets into a lifting contest with Brawl, whose powers of carbon alchemy give him a similar form of super-strength?

If both characters have nonspecific power facts like "super-strength", then it comes down to their respective rolls. These rolls will be modified by their Stunts, aspect invocations, and so forth. For example, Mack has a stunt that gives bonuses to Overcome when lifting, and can invoke "World's strongest superhuman", giving him a clear advantage.

If it's been established (through power facts or in play) that Brawl has only 10% of Mack's strength, success is very unlikely and there's point in rolling to see who can lift more. But even when one character is most powerful in a

single area, that doesn't mean you should never roll. A highly agile character can defeat a super-strong character by making the most of his agility through narration, situation aspects, and stunts. A costumed vigilante can defeat a powerful paragon with the right glowing rock, because he has the right power facts that gave him access to that rock. What matters is how the conflict is presented in the fiction.

Specific Powers

Duplication, Summons, Sidekicks and Allies

Characters who can conjure up other characters (such as duplicates of themselves, robot allies, elemental or demonic servants, and so forth) can use this power for many exciting and creative purposes. Most of these are simply opportunities for making rolls under unusual circumstances.

Examples:

- Allowing a duplicator to take action or learn information from scenes where his original is not physically present.
- Letting dupes or summons track down useful information or handle difficult or dangerous tasks.
- Sacrificing expendable allies to test a dangerous creature or zone.
- Ganging up on enemies in combat.

Many of these are Create Advantage actions, either to create a new advantage (**Overwhelmed by Conjured Imps**) or to discover a specific aspect ("as your shadow-self is disintegrated, it learns that the room is protected by a network of laser beams, and that knowledge is transferred to you").

Characters who can clone or duplicate themselves can use this for concessions in combat ("My three energy clones died, but the real me was elsewhere").

In general, characters with intelligent allies should not receive extra actions during combat. The exception is when a character buys a stunt that lets them summon NPC allies once per session, for example. The GM should look carefully at the use of all such stunts.

Immunities and Invulnerability

Some power facts will grant implied or implicit immunity to certain types of attacks and/or environmental conditions.

For example, a character with a power-fact 'aquatic adaptation' is assumed to be immune to drowning and the cold and pressure of aquatic environments, as well as effects like the bends. Likewise, a robotic character shouldn't need to eat or breathe (unless they have a power fact that says otherwise), and thus would be immune to starvation, thirst, suffocation and poison/knockout gas attacks.

As the power-facts of one character and another can differ, thus can the sort of challenges that one character might completely ignore provide a serious risk to another.

For example, the heroes Pelagos and Anthem are forced to escape a torpedoed submarine at 300 fathoms beneath the sea. Although the aquatic adventurer archaeologist Pelagos is able to swim away without any trouble at all, this situation could prove dire for the gadgeteer patriot Anthem unless the latter can locate some scuba gear or some other means to survive in the depths of the sea.

Other characters might have broad immunities to certain attack sources as well. In such cases, it's best to make the attack immunity as an explicit power fact, and to state the exact limits of the immunity to avoid confusion during play.

Example: Bill sees his character Mack Atlas as the traditional 'brick' style hero, and thus immune to mundane attack sources like knives and bullets. He writes 'Invulnerability' as a power fact to reflect this. The GM thinks that this is too broad, so Bill clarifies the power-fact as 'Invulnerability (bulletproof)'. So although Mack can now safely ignore the threat provided by a mugger's pistol, something like a rocket-launcher or equivalent force can still be used to make attacks against the hero.

When dealing with immunities and attacks, it's good to note that although a particular attack source might not be able to cause stress/consequences to a character, they can still be impacted by the attack source or be forced to react to it in other ways.

For example, Mack Atlas confronts the villain Snapshot on a rooftop. Since Snapshot's heaviest weapon is his wrist-mounted pistols, he lacks permissions to perform an attack that would pierce Mack's thick skin. But the villain is hardly defenseless: using his pistols he creates the advantage **Blinded by gunfire** on Mack with a successful opposed check, and then uses to momentum of the confused and charging hero to launch him off of the roof! Snapshot might not be able to damage the hero with his guns, but a fall of 10+ stories might just do the trick...

Immunities granted by certain power-facts reinforces genre, and gives certain characters a chance to shine under set circumstances. They should never be so broad, however, that a particular character is never in fear of any danger: without risk both the tension and the fun of the game is irretrievably broken.

Immunities & Weaknesses

A familiar trope in super-hero comics (or indeed, in other forms of fiction and mythology) is that a character granted enormous strengths is also saddled with equally enormous weaknesses to balance out their advantages.

Sometimes these sort of weaknesses are implied by the power facts themselves: although a fire-projecting character can be assumed to be

invulnerable to fire and heat, they might be very vulnerable indeed to water and cold-based attacks. Vice-versa, a cold-manipulating character might be more sensitive to heat/fire based attacks and environments.

Especially when the game mixes characters with godlike powers and those with more mundane abilities, it may be appropriate to require that an exceptional power or ability be paired with an equally restrictive limit or weakness that negates its effectiveness.

Likewise, it's entirely appropriate for a player to place limits on their own character without outside prompting to humanize the character, emulate the genre, provide further roleplaying opportunities, or just to be a compel-magnet.

For example, Emma envisions her character Miss Invictus as the traditional 'flying brick' archetype, and writes down a huge list of power facts including super-strength, invulnerability, flight, super-speed, super-senses, and energy-blasts. To balance this out, she also includes power facts making her vulnerable to certain radiation wavelengths and magic, both of which render her character powerless. Since the GM sees room for both weaknesses as coming into play in the game, they agree that these are good limits for the sort of game they will be playing.

Like all power facts, feel free to discuss which ones might be appropriate for your table with your group and the GM. Too many weaknesses with too few strengths can make a character unplayable, whereas the reverse could result in a character that is allowed to hog too much of the spotlight compared to her peers. This can be a balancing act, and you should be unafraid of making adjustments as you go if additional calibration is necessary as discovered in play.

Precognition and Time Travel

Characters who can sense the future, or change the past, can be difficult to balance. If the GM permits such characters into his setting, he has a few options.

Characters who can sense the near future, or travel back in time to undo a recent mistake, could create or discover aspects to reflect their access to time. These aspects can be offered as compels if history is meant to go a certain way - and a compel can be refused, if characters are able to fight their own fate or if history can be changed. A precognitive or time traveler can spend Fate points, as usual, to make declarations that are explained by their meddling with history.

The distant past, the far future, and even other dimensions can all be new areas of the campaign for the PCs to discover, explore, and defend.

Super-Speed and Movement Powers

Speedsters inherently "break the rules" in a lot of ways. Most of these should be treated as narrative permissions or clever aspects, unless the character

has stunts that give them some specific benefit.

Some situation aspects can effectively neutralize a speedster's advantages, such as a super-slick surface, a thick layer of caltrops, or impassable grids of laser beams.

Extra actions

Characters with super-speed shouldn't be given extra actions in contests or conflicts, as this can be unbalancing.

Zones

Normally, characters can interact with other characters in nearby zones if they can justify acting at a distance. Super-speed and movement-related power facts provide that justification.

Normally, you can move one zone for free. Super-fast characters should be allowed to move more than this, up to their stated limit, as long as they spend an action to do so. Optionally, the GM can require a successful Overcome roll to reach their intended destination, with failure sending them off course or doing damage (like running into a wall, teleporting into a solid mass, and so forth).

The GM can require a stunt for super-movement through zones if desired, though this should only be done if super-speed is found to be unbalancing.

Telepathy and Mind Control

Characters with Telepathy have an obvious avenue to Create an Advantage on an NPC's character aspects by probing their minds or memories, and usually have narrative permission to attempt doing so. Depending on how the power is defined, the NPC might be aware of such probes when other routes would be more subtle (like a detective going through police records or a hacker doing Internet searches). You can use this as a trade-off, letting the telepath gain information that the detective or hacker don't have access to at the cost of tipping off the target.

Can a telepath take control of an NPC's mind? In general, if that NPC can't offer significant resistance and it advances the plot, you should allow it as a simple Overcome. On the other hand, taking over a major NPC's mind and puppeting his or her actions can be a mental conflict, with the Taken Out result indicating total mental control.

A character with mind control could roll to achieve their real objective, bypassing the Overcome and justifying that roll by saying "I've mind-controlled a suitable target". This is best when the outcome of a failed attempt to control someone's mind isn't interesting, or success at the take-over itself seems certain.

Certain telepaths might be able to acquire new information or skills. This can justify using their approaches to make rolls outside of their stated areas of

competence (like a telepath doing surgery on a comrade, based on expertise copied from the mind of a brilliant doctor).

Super-Fights and Failing Forward

The idea of "failing forward" is important to Fate. Put simply, failing forward means that each failure - a missed roll or a botched action, losing a fight, taking serious damage, and so forth - shouldn't stop the story, but should change its direction. For example, when the PCs try to stop a supervillain from robbing a high-tech lab, they might succeed in preventing the theft. But if they fail, and the villain escapes, a new direction for the plot appears: stopping him from using the components he stole to build a dangerous invention which threatens the city! Rather than saying "you failed", the GM has raised the stakes on the overall story.

When a fight is not going well for the PCs - particularly when fighting an unfamiliar villain for the first time - it's appropriate to the genre to allow PCs to concede, rather than taking serious damage that could linger with them through the story arc. The villain will get away, but the PCs will earn valuable Fate points that can be used to improve their odds next time.

The GM can introduce genre stunts (see "New and Optional Rules") that promote this sort of play.

Campaign Design

Planning a Campaign

Here are some questions to ask when planning your new superheroic campaign:

- What style of game am I aiming for? Do I have a specific comic, or publisher of comics, that fits the style I want?
- What sorts of characters am I interested in having? Are there any sorts of characters I would prefer not to have?
- What optional rules do I want to introduce? Are there any rules that I don't intend to include?

It can be helpful to establish the tone of your game by creating one or two campaign aspects, such as **Mutant hysteria** or **Who watches the watchmen?**. You can also use some optional rules, like Genre Stunts, to encourage a style of play. Some games will feature knock-down, drag-out fights through downtown, while others are about supers being hunted by the government or alien invaders, and you can use aspects and stunts to get your group in the right mindset.

You can use campaign planning aids, like [A Spark in Fate Core](#), to help make group decisions about the feel of your campaign.

GMing a Comic Book

There are two common ways to run a game based on the world of comic books and four-color action: the *episodic story* and the *ongoing story*.

Episodic stories are generally open and shut. The heroes are going about their business when a villain appears and causes trouble. There's some difficulty in overcoming the villain at first, but the heroes eventually triumph! The villain usually ends the story imprisoned or otherwise defeated, but can return for future issues. There can be recurring story elements and supporting characters, but they are usually not the focus.

Ongoing stories are characterized by their story arcs. These stories can braid together and interact - for example, the story of two characters' attempts to reconcile their relationship can intersect with a villain attack on a major city.

There's no "right" or "wrong" way to run, and your group's style might not match either of these two approaches.

The GM can create genre stunts (see "New or Optional Rules") or introduce other rules that enforce the flavor they are interested in promoting.

The Four-Color Feel

Comic books are about outlandish, amazing things happening, and how a wildly diverse and interesting cast of characters respond to those things. For that reason, more than most other genres, the GM should be prepared to say "yes" to whatever craziness the players intend to try, as long as it's fun. The PCs will be heroic, larger-than-life sorts, and can be expected to do impossible things.

Sometimes this dramatic license can go too far, or take the game in undesirable directions. If your goal is to emulate the style of 80's Marvel comics, and some of your players are more interested in 90's Image, getting on the same page before the campaign begins is essential.

When finding your voice as GM, it's helpful to think of yourself as the narrator, rather than the opposition. Your role is to introduce the PCs, help tell their story to the audience, and put a spotlight on their strengths and victories. You can be a fan of the characters and still throw a city-wrecking giant monster at them.

Creating Challenging Encounters

This advice is based on the article [Creating Challenging Opponents](#).

An important part of conflicts in Fate is the action economy. However, a given villain can be at a disadvantage if he only has his one action against several PCs.

To challenge the players in a fight, start by picking a difficulty level from the Fate ladder. Take the corresponding bonus, multiply that by the number of PCs in play, then halve it. That is the approximate number of NPC actions that will give an appropriately tough fight. Once you have that number, you can divide them up against your major villains, their mundane henchmen (or robot allies, etc.), and any supporting villains (evil apprentices, C- or D-list villain helpers, or tough uber-henchmen such as snipers). For every major villain, you want about two minor villains or supporting characters, and about three or four henchmen.

For example, a Superb (+5) difficulty against 4 PCs would yield $(5 * 4 / 2)$ or 10 total NPC actors. The GM decides to create two major villains, three supporting characters, and five henchmen.

These characters should be introduced to the fight gradually - usually as many NPCs as their are PCs, or 1.5 times as many, to start. For example, four PCs might face four henchmen and two of the supporting villains. As the fight progresses, a major villain and the final supporting character appear, then finally the other major villain.

If the highest approach rating your PCs have is +3, give your major villains a maximum approach of +4, their supporting villains +3, and their henchmen +2 in their particular area. Scale this up as your PCs' approaches increase.

You can create monstrous opponents by giving them extra actions, stress boxes, and special rules such as being able to hit every target in a zone on a successful attack. They can also use the optional power level rules to inflict more or take less damage to smaller or weaker player characters.

The weaker supporting characters should work to create situation aspects for their superiors. The stronger characters should create situation aspects directly on their targets, make attacks, and so forth.

New and Optional Rules

Alternate Phase Trio Rules

Super-teams are made up of characters that coordinate well together. They have distinct roles, rather than clear relations with other specific characters. Origin stories hang heavily over even the strongest hero, from the masked vigilante mourning his lost family to the sole survivor of an alien planet. To represent these lasting influences, the player can choose aspects which fill each of these slots:

- *Position*. This is the character's role on the team - leader, spy, enforcer, and so on. If the character's powers changed, they would likely continue in this role in some other way.
- *Past*. The character's origin story, where they came from, and how that has affected their heroic career.
- *Personality*. The character's nature, habits, mannerisms, or persona.

Who they are as a person and how they appear to others.

- *Powers.* A description of the character's power origin or super-powers.
- *Problems.* The trouble the character faces, recurring enemies, major weaknesses, and so on.

Not all games will have all of these slots. For example, Mack Atlas is in a campaign where all supers have a common power origin. He might skip the "Past" aspect slot, and write a generic aspect in its place.

If you are translating an existing character into this model of aspect choice, you can treat "Position" or "Personality" as the character's High Concept, and "Problems" as the character's Trouble.

New Stunts

These stunts are not required for characters who have the power in question. They are presented as a way for characters to expand on the narrative permissions their powers provide, in ways that go against the normal rules of FAE.

Many of these stunts can also function as genre stunts, applied to all characters who have a given type of power.

Duplicates or Summons

Because I can summon, create, or conjure allies to my aid, once per session I can bring one or more NPCs into play in a conflict.

Suggested NPC statistics: If the character summons a single NPC, give it an approach or an NPC skill like "Supporting (player character)" at the PC's highest approach +1. They will have the same number of stress boxes as the PC, but no consequence slots. You can summon more than one NPC, but reduce their approaches and drop one stress box per extra NPC summoned. So three NPCs would have the PC's approach at -1, and one stress box each.

Invulnerability

Because I am invulnerable to conventional attacks, I use the Collateral Consequences optional rule when taking damage.

Super-Movement

Because I have an extraordinary form of movement, such as super-running or teleportation, I can move an unlimited number of zones as one action.

In games where movement, positioning, and placement are important, super-fast characters might need this stunt to ensure balance. Do not take this stunt unless the GM has specifically mandated that super-fast characters need it, however.

Super-Speed

Because I can move at super-speed, twice per conflict I can interrupt the initiative order and move before another character. I cannot act more than once per exchange.

The player should check with the GM about initiative before taking this stunt, to ensure that it's relevant.

Genre Stunts

Just like situation aspects or campaign aspects, stunts can be tied to a campaign, a particular story arc, or a location, not just a character. In Four Color FAE, *genre stunts* can be introduced that break the game rules to enforce a particular convention of superhero games.

Genre stunts are also a way to introduce risky or powerful optional rules. They can provide rules for all characters with a given power fact, such as super-speed, that the GM feels is important enough to articulate but not unbalancing enough to require each PC to have.

Example Genre Stunts

Because the final fight against a villain should be a big brawl, during such a fight each character can use the "Collateral Consequences and Extreme Effort" optional rule once in the session.

Some games like to have a flashy final battle, where a villain who was wiping the walls with the heroes finally gets his comeuppance (and the city gets soundly trashed). The GM can declare this stunt to be in play during the session when the players are ready for this big showdown.

Because the first defeat from a villain rarely leaves lasting consequences, the first time characters offer a concession to a villain, they erase any consequences inflicted by that villain.

A staple of certain games is the "unbeatable boss fight" - the one where the GM gets to establish just how tough his villain really is. To soften the blow of this first meeting, the GM can allow this stunt.

Because the status quo is generally preserved, players can use their minor milestone to clear either a Moderate or a Severe Consequence instead of changing their stunts, aspects, or approaches.

In episodic games, it is common to enforce a status quo - the hero is always after his girlfriend to marry him, the villain has always sworn vengeance on the hero, major injuries or life-changing events don't happen, and so forth. In these games, you can hit the reset button on many things, the most common being Consequences taken, at the end of the story.

Power Levels and Super "Weight Classes"

In some worlds, not every super is created equal, and your gaming group

wants mechanical effects to represent this imbalance. The GM can use the "Scale" rules from the Fate System Toolkit, found here: <http://fate-srd.com/fate-system-toolkit/scale>.

When two supers enter into a conflict with one another, the differences in their scale come into play. For every step that separates them, apply one or more of the following effects if it makes narrative sense that the power level would make a difference:

- For attacks, +1 to the Attack roll, or +1 to the Defense roll
- +1 to active opposition against an opponent's Create Advantage roll (whether active or passive)
- Deal +2 shifts of harm on a successful attack or reduce incoming harm by 2

For example, in the campaign world where Mack Atlas lives, supers get their power in "Stages". Stage 2 characters are people at peak human ability. They can function as costumed vigilantes, but don't have unique powers of their own. Stage 3 characters are minor superhumans, and have basic powers such as flight, energy blasts, and so on. Stage 4 characters are veteran-level supers, with a strong set of powers, a good healing factor, and other benefits. The few Stage 5 supers dominate their areas, and Stage 6 would be the heroes or demigods of legend.

Mack is a Stage 4 hero. He is attacked by a Stage 2 vigilante who uses smoke bombs, tonfas, and shuriken. Because there's two steps of scale in difference, Mack gets a +2 to oppose attempts by his enemy to Create Advantage using nerve strikes or crippling joint locks, and to reduce incoming shifts of damage by 4 from tonfa or shuriken attacks. The GM rules that the vigilante's smoke bombs are fully effective, because Mack's power level doesn't provide a benefit for seeing through thick smoke.

Alternate Initiative Rules

Fluid cinematic combat is sometimes hard to stage when you are rolling for initiative, or even using each character's Quick approach. Because Fate encourages a style of play where several characters build up advantages for each other, or play off of each other's actions, your group might prefer that the players determine the order in which these things happen. These rules are based on the initiative rules described by Ryan M. Danks here: <http://ryanmdanks.com/?p=13>

When a conflict begins, initiative is held by the PC or NPC that initiated it. The player (or GM) of the character who acted then chooses who goes next, then that person chooses, and so forth, until every PC and NPC has taken one action. The last character who acted in the exchange gets to pick who acts first in the next exchange. A character cannot go twice in a row, and each character can act at most once per exchange.

Characters with power facts like "super-speed" do not get to act earlier, or to interrupt other characters' actions, without a stunt.

Alternate Invulnerability Rules

For groups that want to permit invulnerable characters (particularly villains) and aren't satisfied with the rules about using narrative permission, here are some alternative approaches:

- Treat invulnerability as an opportunity for concession and compels. For example, an invulnerable villain might offer the PCs a compel on his power-granting aspect. "Because your attacks do nothing against the armored might of Doomsayer, he gets away with his ill-gotten loot, leaving you to ponder your next move. Damn your luck." This is a good way to build up Fate points for a later encounter.
- Treat the character's own consequence slots as "collateral damage", as outlined by Ryan M. Danks here: <http://ryanmdanks.com/?p=261>.
- Use the Collateral Consequences rules for invulnerable characters. You can require that a stunt be spent to invoke this rule specifically for those characters.

Collateral Consequences

The following is a reprint of the "Collateral Consequences" rules from the Fate System Toolkit, and can be found online at <http://fate-srd.com/fate-system-toolkit/consequences>:

In addition to their usual complement of consequences, the players can also make use of three communal consequences, one of each degree of severity. These represent damage to the environment or new complications in the story, such as **Injured Bystanders** or **Anti-Mutant Hysteria**. Players can effectively use them to offload harm from themselves onto the world around them. A collateral consequence can be cleared, using an Overcome action with whatever approach seems most appropriate, with two exceptions. One, it must be done during the scene in which the consequence is incurred. Two, there's no delay - with a good enough roll it clears immediately.

Collateral Consequences and Extreme Effort

The following is a variant of the "Extreme Effort" rules from the Fate System Toolkit, which can be found online at <http://fate-srd.com/fate-system-toolkit/consequences>:

Players can use collateral consequences for extra effort: by voluntarily causing large amounts of collateral damage or destruction (and taking a collateral consequence), they get a bonus on a roll equal to the consequence's value. Mild grants +2, Moderate +4, Severe +6.

Not every use of this rule involves throwing someone through buildings. Heroes can take actions that endanger their public image in the name of the greater good. Mutants can reveal their full power, causing hysteria but allowing them to defeat the bad guy.

This rule is intended for PCs who are fighting some highly challenging foe, rather than boosting Attack rolls against casual opponents. GMs who feel that this rule is being abused should start having villains offer Compels to the PCs based on the inflicted consequence. For example: "Because you rammed the Manhattan Monster through that office building, several civilians are put at risk. In your attempts to rescue them and keep the building from collapsing, the Monster gets away and you get some negative press on the 6 o'clock news. Damn your luck."

Sample Characters

TODO

Character Sheet

TODO: produce a nice four-color sheet with Power Facts section.

Further Reading

There's a lot of interest in superheroic gaming in the Fate community. In no particular order, here's a list of products, articles, and rules that cover superheroes, powers, and fluid cinematic action.

Products

- [Atomic Robo](#) - Evil Hat
- [Base Raiders](#) - Slang Design
- [Villains Accelerated](#) - Fainting Goat Games

Articles and Blogs

- [A Spark in Fate Core](#) - Jason Pitre of Genesis of Legend Publishing
- [Creating Challenging Opponents](#) - Bill Garrett
- [Making Superman Truly Invulnerable in Fate Core](#) - Ryan M. Danks
- [Superhero Nation](#) - how to write comic books, and superheroes specifically
- [Using Iron Man to Explore Aspect Justification](#) - Ryan M. Danks
- [Writing a Superhero Comic](#) - TVTropes

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