CAPES & COWLS RPG

THE WORLD IS IN PERIL and your team is the only thing that stands between evil and innocence. Everything rests on your shoulders. Are you up to the challenge?

SETUP

PLAYERS: CREATE YOUR SUPERHERO

For each of the following characteristics, pick one from the list and mark it on your character sheet. When you are done, fill in some details in order to have a complete character with a backstory, personality, goals, a theme, etc.

POWER: Flight, Magic, Speed, Psionics, Gadgets, Strength, Acrobatics, Shapeshifting

STYLE: Controller, Defender, Sneaker, Brawler, Thinker, Blaster, Leader, Healer

ORIGIN: Alien, Mutant, Demigod, Mystical, Survivor, Construct, Paranormal, Super-science

MOTIVATION: Freedom, Revenge, Religion, Fortune, Justice, Glory, Love, or create your own

NAME: Pick a really awesome superhero name.

NUMBER: Choose a number, from 2 to 5. A high number means you are a cowl, and good at: detective work, calm rationality, plots and plans (think Batman). A low number means you are a cape, and good at: intuition, diplomacy, wild and passionate action (think Superman).

EMBLEM: Something that fits your name and powers. Draw it on your character sheet.

PLAYERS: CREATE THE TEAM

Once everyone has created their character, collabortively create your superhero team. Choose a name, a bane, and a boon.

TEAM NAME: What name shall evildoers curse when their plans are foiled?

BANE: Outlawed, Infighting, Underfunded, Bad Reputation

BOON: Government-backed, Good Press, Well Funded, Tight-knit

GM: CREATE A SUPERHERO ADVENTURE

Roll randomly or choose from the options below. Don't tell the players - let it come out during play. While they are busy creating their team, come up with a relevant and action-packed opening scene to throw at them.

A THREAT... 1. Electrometus: Mage of Magnetism, 2. The Ancients of Um'tach, 3. Northern Bear Tamers, 4. Alien Brain Worms, 5. The Mole People, 6. Berserk Robots

WANTS TO... 1. Blow up, 2. Bond with, 3. Steal / Capture, 4. Pacify / Occupy, 5. Protect / Empower, 6. Build / Synthesize

THE... 1. Doomsday Machine, 2. World's Satellites, 3. Alien Artifact, 4. Ancient Ruin, 5. Team's Base, 6. President

WHICH WILL... 1. Start a war, 2. Reverse time, 3. Make them rich, 4. Enslave humanity, 5. Destroy the world, 6. Destroy the heroes

PLAY THE GAME

ROLLING THE DICE

Whenever your character tries to do something risky, roll 1d6 to find out how it goes. Roll +1d if you're prepared and +1d if you're an expert. The GM tells you how many dice to roll, based on your character, your action, and the situation. The GM also has final say on whether you are acting as a cape or as a cowl. Roll your dice and compare each die result to your number.

COWL (ROLL LOW): If you're using your cowl (plans, reason, detecting), you want to roll under your number. Rolling under your number is a success.

CAPE (ROLL HIGH): If you're using your cape (rapport, passion, intuition), you want to roll over your number. Rolling over your number is a success.

FLASH OF INSIGHT: If you roll your number exactly, you have a flash of insight. You get to ask the GM a question that they'll answer honestly. Examples: What are they really feeling? Who's behind this? How could I get them to do X? What's the best way to do Y? What's really going on here? You can change your action if you want to, then roll again.

INTERPRETING RESULTS

0: If none of your dice succeed, it goes wrong. The GM says how things get worse somehow.

1: If one die succeeds, you barely manage it. The GM inflicts a complication, harm, or cost.

2: If two dice succeed, you do it well. Good job!

3: If three dice succeed, you get a critical success! The GM tells you some extra effect you get.
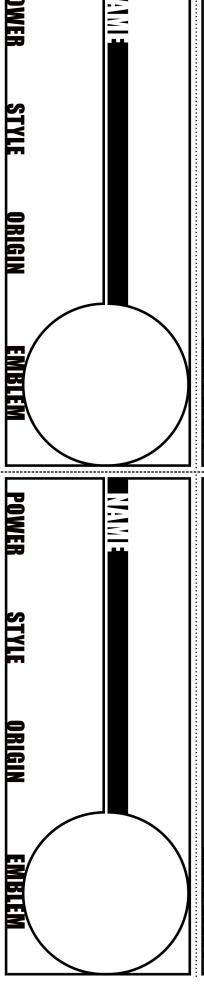
HELPING: If you want to help someone else who's rolling, say how you try to help and make a roll. If you succeed, give them +1d.

GM: RUN THE GAME

Play to find out how they defeat the threat. Introduce the threat by showing evidence of its recent badness. Before a threat does something to the characters, show signs that it's about to happen, then ask them what they do. "Electrometus raises his hands, crackling with electricity. What do you do?" "The horrific worm is poised on the guardian's shoulder. What do you do?"

Let the players use their team's boon to their advantage sometimes. Introduce complications because of their bane. Call for a roll when the situation is uncertain. Don't pre-plan outcomes, and use failures to push the action forward. The situation always changes after a roll, for good or ill.

Ask questions and build on the answers. "Have any of you encountered a Bear Tamer before? Where? What happened?"

NAME

POWER   STYLE   ORIGIN   EMBLEM

NAME

POWER   STYLE   ORIGIN   EMBLEM

CHEAT SHEET

Rolling the Dice: When you try something risky, roll 1d6 to find out how it goes. Roll +1d if you're prepared and +1d if you're an expert. The GM tells you how many dice to roll based on your character traits, your action, and the situation. Roll and compare each die result to your number.

Cape (roll high): If you're using your cape (rapport, passion, intuition), every roll **over** your number is a **success.**

Cowl (roll low): If you're using your cowl (reason, plans, detecting), every roll **under** your number is a **success.**

Flash of Insight: If you roll your number exactly, you have a flash of insight. Ask the GM a question and they'll answer honestly. Examples: What are they really feeling? Who's behind this? You may change your action and reroll the die.

Results: How many successes did you get? The GM will introduce complications or extra effects.

0: Fail. Things get worse. **1:** Succeed at a cost.

2: Succeed with extra effects. **3:** Succeed with extra effects.

Helping: If you want to help someone else with their roll, say how you try to help and make a roll. If you succeed, give them +1d.

NAME

POWER   STYLE   ORIGIN   EMBLEM

TEAM NAME   NUMBER

BANE

BOON

BACKGROUND

MOTIVATION

NOTES

TEAM

NAME

POWER   STYLE   ORIGIN   EMBLEM

TEAM NAME   NUMBER

BANE

BOON

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NOTES

TEAM

Instructions

This PDF is a three page PDF that contains

1. The single sheet of rules
2. Special bifold character sheets
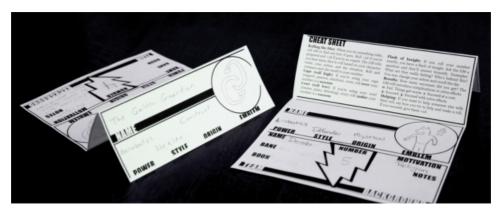3. These instructions

You'll probably want to print out one copy of the first page, 2-3 copies of the second page, and you probably won't want to print the third page at all.

Special Bifold Character Sheets

A couple of things that I find difficult in one-shot games (games like this one are best played as a single session or two, as opposed to a long-running campaign) are

1. Understanding the other players' characters
2. Remembering the essential rules

This character sheet is designed to help with that. There are two character sheets on a page, so first cut the page in half. Now each character sheet has some dotted lines. Fold on these dotted lines to get something that looks like this:

A picture of the folded character sheet

Hooray! This acts kind of like a mini GM screen for all the players. It displays relevant information to the other players (like your name, emblem, and powers), but keeps personal information to yourself (like your number, motivation, and other notes). It also has a handy-dandy cheat sheet of rules on the back of the fold, so you can remember how many dice to roll and how to interpret them.