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# CATALYST CORE

# CHARACTER CREATION GUIDE

## Catalyst Core: Character Creation Guide

Follow this step-by-step guide to create your custom Vigilante in the Catalyst Core superhero RPG.

## Step 1: Choose Your Classification

Choose how you received your powers.

- **Mutant** – Reroll one failed saving throw per long rest.

- **Enhanced Human** – Gain advantage on all Technology-related checks.

- **Magic User** – Cast one minor magical effect (prestidigitation) per long rest.

- **Alien/Extraterrestrial** – Immune to environmental hazard and no penalty to movement in rough terrain+.

- **Mystical Being** – +2 to Persuasion or Intimidation checks.

## Step 2: Choose Your Power Style (up to 2 selections)

Choose your superpowers. (You may select up to two Power Styles but only gain the perk/bonus from one. Choose which one is primary.)

- **Physical Powerhouse** – Cut one attack by half once per combat encounter.

- **Energy Manipulator** – Reroll 1s once per turn.

- **Speedster** – +10 ft movement and +1 AC while moving 20+ ft.

- **Telekinetic/Psychic** – For one turn force enemies to reroll all rolls above a 17 once per rest.

- **Illusionist** – Create a 1-min decoy illusion once per combat encounter.

- **Shape-shifter** – Advantage on Deception, disguise freely.

- **Elemental Controller** – +2 to hit and +5 to damage once per turn when using elemental powers.

## Step 3: Define Your Origin Story

What in your past influenced you becoming a superhero.

- **The Accident** – Resistance to one damage type.

- **The Experiment** – Reroll a failed CON or INT save once per long rest.

- **The Legacy** – Use the powers of one other character you've met or are related to once per long rest.

- **The Awakening** – +5 to hit and +10 to damage when below ½ HP.

- **The Pact** – Auto-success on one save or +10 to any roll once per long rest.

- **The Lost Time** – Once per combat encounter, when using a power, roll a d20 (DC: 17) if you succeed you may declare it a **"Skill Move"** That power costs no SP and gains a +1d6 bonus to effects.

- **The Exposure** – +5 elemental damage once per round.

- **The Rebirth** – If knocked out, stand up gain 1 HP and gain resistance to all damage for 1 round.

- **The Vigil** – Create a shield once per combat encounter reducing incoming damage for all allies to zero for one turn.

- **The Redemption** – Once per day take damage for an ally withing your movement range, they heal 1d6 HP and gain advantage. After combat ends you gain advantage on all saves till dawn.

## Step 4: Assign Ability Scores

Use the following methods to set your stats:

Roll **7d20** drop the lowest

Abilities: STR, DEX, CON, INT, WIS, CHA

## Step 5: Toughness Class (TC)

TC determines how difficult it is to land a damaging or debilitating effect on a character.

Base TC = 10 + DEX Modifier + Armor/Shield Bonuses + Power/Origin Bonuses

## Step 6: Determine HP

**HP = 30 + CON Modifier + (Tier Bonus × 1d10)**
Where **Tier Bonus** is determined from the following table:

| Heroic Tier | Tier Description | Bonus Dice | Example HP (CON +2) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Tier 5** | Rookie | +1d10 | 30 + 2 + 1d10 = **33–42 HP** |
| **Tier 4** | Emerging Vigilante | +2d10 | 30 + 2 + 2d10 = **34–52 HP** |
| **Tier 3** | Field-Tested Operative | +3d10 | 30 + 2 + 3d10 = **37–62 HP** |
| **Tier 2** | Respected Force | +4d10 | 30 + 2 + 4d10 = **40–72 HP** |
| **Tier 1** | Heroic Figure | +5d10 | 30 + 2 + 5d10 = **43–82 HP** |
| **Tier 0** | Transcendent / Legendary | **+100 fixed** | 100 + CON Modifier = **102 HP** (no roll) |

Tier 0 heroes don't roll HP   their resilience is **beyond mortal fluctuation**.

## If HP Hits 0

Make a 3 **CON Save's = DC 13**

- **If 2 of 3 rolls beat the DC you remain conscious and stabilize at 1 HP, remaining prone and in critical condition, must be healed before continuing to fight.**

- **If 2 of 3 rolls do not beat the DC you fall unconscious and must be healed before the fight is over or remain in critical condition and possibly die.**

## Step 7: Customize Your Powers

In this step, you'll invent 3 to 5 custom powers for your Vigilante using the Stamina Point (SP) system. These powers can be attacks, support moves, environmental manipulation, utility effects, or even narrative abilities. Your powers should reflect your character's Power Style and their Origin Story, both mechanically and thematically.

**Power Design Template**

Each power should include the following:

- **Name** – Make it punchy and thematic.

- **Range** – Melee, 30 ft cone, 60 ft line, etc.

- **Effect** – What it does (damage, heal, movement, buff/debuff).

- **SP Cost** – Based on power intensity.

- **Saving Throw** – If applicable, include DC and type (e.g., DEX 13).

- **Description** – Describe what it looks and feels like in-game.

**Power Effect Tags** *(Examples You Can Use)*

| Effect | What It Does |
|---|---|
| Burn | Target takes 1d4 fire damage at the start of their next turn |
| Freeze | Reduces target's movement by 10 ft for 1 round |
| Stun | Target loses their next turn (WIS save to resist) |
| Push/Pull | Target is moved 10–20 ft in a direction (STR or DEX save to resist) |
| Weaken | Target suffers –2 to attack rolls for 1 round |
| Blind | Target has disadvantage on attacks and Perception checks (CON save to resist) |
| Regen | The target(s) regain 1d6 SP or HP at the end of each of their next 3 turns. |
| Shield | Target gains temporary HP or AC boost until hit |
| Phase | User can teleport short range or avoid attacks |

**Tips for Power Design**

- Try to make each power visually distinct you're a superhero!

- Match at least one power closely to your Origin Story or Signature Move.

- Don't worry about perfect balance flavor + fun > min-max in this system.

- Let your GM know if a power feels too weak or too strong they can adjust SP cost, range, or damage.

# ELEMENTAL DAMAGE HIERARCHY TABLE

| Element | Strong Against | Weak Against | Example Effects (Narrative + Mechanical) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Fire | Earth, Ice, Shadow | Water, Aether | Ignites targets (Burn), melts cover, destroys tech (1d6 fire, Burn on fail) |
| Water | Fire, Catalyst | Earth, Lightning | Extinguishes fire, slows movement (Freeze), slick terrain (DEX save or fall) |
| Earth | Lightning, Air | Fire, Ice | Impedes movement (Difficult Terrain), creates barriers (Raise Terrain) |
| Air | Water, Fire | Lightning, Shadow | Pushes enemies (Push), disarms flying foes, creates high-speed gusts |
| Lightning | Water, Air | Earth, Shadow | Stuns tech, disables energy fields (Stun), electrifies water (AoE bonus) |
| Ice | Earth, Fire | Fire, Energy | Freezes movement (Speed −10), weakens structure, causes brittle strikes |
| Light | Shadow, Psychic | Void, Corruption | Reveals hidden foes (Dispel Illusion), deals Radiant damage (1d8, Blind on fail) |
| Shadow | Light, Psychic | Fire, Light | Inflicts fear (WIS save or Frightened), causes shadows to attack (1d6 psychic) |
| Energy | Ice, Water, Light | Earth, Aether | Overloads tech, shocks enemies (2d6 Lightning, Disable on crit) |
| Psychic | Elemental, Tech-based foes | Shadow, Light | Confuses targets (Disorient), mind-read (Surface Thoughts), 1d6 psychic damage |
| Void | Light, Energy, Catalyst | None (Exists outside logic) | Deletes effects (Silence Zone), cancels abilities (Nullify), 1d8 true damage |
| Catalyst | Technology, Structure | Water, Void | Unstable explosions (Wild Surge), corrupts powers, environmental mutation |
| Aether | Fire, Lightning, Energy | Shadow, Void | Phases objects, bends time (WARP), 1d6 force + Delay action effect |

# Step 8: Track Stamina Points (SP)

**Understanding SP (Stamina Points)**

- You start each combat with SP = 5 + your CON modifier.

- SP fully regenerates at the beginning of each new combat round.

- Each power costs 1 to 5 SP, based on how strong or complex it is.

**SP Cost Reference Chart**

| SP Cost | Power Type | Examples |
|---------|-----------|----------|
| 1 SP | Basic attack, minor effect | Energy blast, melee strike, shove, trip |
| 2 SP | Core ability or status effect | Firebolt + Burn, Ice Slash + Slow, Force Push |
| 3 SP | Area of Effect (AoE), enhanced status, heal | Cone of Lightning, Stun Wave, Group Buff |
| 4 SP | Strong AoE, hard crowd control | Paralyze Zone, Mind Trap, Gravity Crush |
| 5 SP | Ultimate ability (10-round cooldown) | Meteor Storm, Time Freeze, Rebirth, Mass Heal |

## Step 9: Select Your Alignment

Choose your "moral compass" – your ideals, morals, and ethic.

| Alignment | Description | Unique Perk |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Paragon (Lawful Light) | A beacon of order and morality, upholds law and virtue at all costs | Once per session, auto-succeed a Charisma check with civilians or allies |
| Guardian (Neutral Light) | Fights for good, but flexible on rules and tactics | Once per session, restore 1d6 HP or 1 SP to an ally as a bonus action |
| Vigilante (Chaotic Light) | Pursues justice on their own terms, breaks rules to save lives | Ignore opportunity attacks when moving toward a threat or hostage |
| Sentinel (Lawful Neutral) | Loyal to institutions, systems, or a code, even without emotional drive | +1 to all saving throws when acting on orders or directives |
| Outsider (True Neutral) | Keeps balance, avoids attachments to either law or chaos | Once per session, reroll any roll OR remove one condition from yourself |
| Wildcard (Chaotic Neutral) | Acts on instinct, freedom, or self-interest unpredictable but not evil | Advantage on Initiative and Deception once per combat |
| Inquisitor (Lawful Shadow) | Uses control, fear, and authority to impose brutal justice | Once per session, deal maximum damage to enemies labeled "criminal" by GM |
| Anti-Hero (Neutral Shadow) | Walks the line between savior and destroyer, does what must be done | Heal 1d6 HP when defeating an enemy while no allies are within 10 ft |
| Renegade (Chaotic Shadow) | Operates from impulse, vengeance, or desire morally gray or villainous | Once per combat, add +1d6 damage when attacking from stealth or surprise |

## Step 10: To Better Understand Your Character

The following questions are designed to help players dive deeper into their character's identity, motivations, and moral compass within the Catalyst Core universe. By exploring their powers, personal history, vulnerabilities, and goals, players and GMs can build more immersive stories, richer character arcs, and stronger party dynamics. This questionnaire encourages introspection and creative roleplay, providing narrative fuel for impactful sessions and long-term development. **(see next page)**

**Who are you behind the mask?**

_____

**What does justice mean to you?**

_____

**What is your biggest fear or unresolved trauma?**

_____

**What legacy do you want to leave behind?**

_____

**What moment first defined your sense of power was it thrilling, terrifying, or tragic?**

_____

**What does your Origin Story mean to you now?**

_____

**What was your life like before you had powers or before you remembered having them?**

_____

**What is one way your powers scare even you?**

_____

**What is your signature move or ability, and how does it reflect who you are?**

_____

**What happens to your powers when you are emotionally compromised?**

_____

**What line will you never cross even if the world burns around you?**

_____

**Which Alignment do you identify with, and which do you fear becoming?**

_____

**Whose opinion matters more to you civilians, teammates, or your faction superiors? Why?**

_____

**What drives you to fight justice, guilt, revenge, legacy, redemption, or something else?**

_____

**What would make you walk away from this life for good?**

_____

**What is one major secret you are keeping from the rest of the team?**

_____

**What situation leaves you the most vulnerable physically, emotionally, or strategically?**

_____

**Which teammate do you admire the most and what do they have that you lack?**

_____

**If you lost your powers tomorrow, who would you still be?**

_____

## CORE MECHANICS

### Stamina Points (SP)

- SP = 5 + CON Modifier

- SP fully regenerates at the start of each combat round

- Powers cost 1–5 SP

- Non-combat powers refresh after a short or long rest.

### Power Use

- Each power has a SP cost, effect, and range.

- Some powers require concentration(+1 SP to use) or have sustained costs (+1 SP/round)

- Powers can be enhanced with teamwork or creative roleplay.

### Combat

- **Initiative:** Roll 1d20 + DEX modifier

- **Action Economy:** Each turn = 1 Action, 1 Movement, and 1 Reaction (per round). Players may ready an attack or power for use next turn as a bonus action, only 1 bonus action per turn.

- **Attack Rolls:** Roll 1d20 + TBD.

- **Critical Hits:** On natural 20, roll all damage dice twice.

## Saving Throws

Used to resist powers, environmental effects, or narrative challenges.

- **Strength (STR):** Resisting grapples, force blasts, or physical control

- **Dexterity (DEX):** Dodging lasers, explosions, or speed attacks

- **Constitution (CON):** Enduring poison, radiation, or extreme damage

- **Intelligence (INT):** Resisting illusions, hacks, or mind disruption

- **Wisdom (WIS):** Withstanding psychic pressure or sensory overload

- **Charisma (CHA):** Resisting emotional manipulation or charm effects.

## SP Costs

**Basic Attack:** 1 SP – Standard melee/ranged attack.

**Signature Power:** 2–3 SP – Core power usage.

**AoE or Status Power:** 3–4 SP – Hits multiple enemies or adds effects.

**Ultimate Power:** 5 SP – Most powerful move. It has a 10-turn cool down.

**Boost Roll:** 1 SP – Add +1d4 to any roll.

**Concentrate:** +1 SP/round – Maintain mental powers.

## Cinematic Action Points

Optional Rule: Each character gets 1 Cinematic Point per session.

**Automatically succeed on a roll.**

**Interrupt initiative order.**

**Use a flashback to gain +5 to a roll.**

**Redirect damage or rescue an ally at the last second.**

## Downtime Activity System

Narrative downtime can be spent on one of five activities:

**Media Control (CHA)** – Improve or damage public trust.

**Research (INT/WIS)** – Discover weaknesses in next threat.

**Train or Tinker (STR/INT)** – Next session +1 SP or minor upgrade.

**Gather Intel (CHA/WIS)** – Learn secrets or avoid traps.

**Personal Time (WIS/CHA)** – Refresh mind; reroll one save next session.

## Resistances & Vulnerabilities

| Classification | Resistant To | Vulnerable To |
|---|---|---|
| **Mutant** | Radiation, Psychic | Necrotic, Force |
| **Enhanced Human** | Piercing, Fire | Psychic, Radiation |
| **Magic User** | Force, Necrotic | Confusion, Radiation |
| **Alien/Extraterrestrial** | Cold, Acid, Lightning | Radiant, Emotion |
| **Mystical Being** | Radiant, Psychic | Corruption, Radiation |

# Glossary of Terms

**Game Mechanics**

- **SP (Stamina Points):** A resource used to fuel powers and abilities. Regenerates fully at the start of each combat round.
  *"SP = 5 + your Constitution modifier."*

- **SP Cost:** The number of SP required to use a power. Ranges from 1 (basic attack) to 5 (ultimate power).

- **Combat Encounter:** A structured battle or skirmish where turn order and power use is tracked.

- **Per Session:** An ability or perk that may be used once during a full play session (not per combat).

- **Per Combat Encounter:** An ability or effect that resets or can be used again with each new combat.

- **Per Long Rest:** Equivalent to "per session" unless your GM uses longer campaigns with actual rest mechanics.

- **Cooldown (e.g., 10-turn cooldown):** The number of rounds that must pass before a specific power can be used again.

## Character Creation Terms

- **Classification:** A character's origin or power source (e.g., Mutant, Magic User). Equivalent to race/species.

- **Power Style:** Your character's "class" or core combat role (e.g., Energy Manipulator, Speedster).

- **Origin Story:** A narrative-based background that grants a unique perk and defines how you gained your powers.

- **Signature Move:** Your character's most iconic power or combat action. Often a 2–3 SP custom power.

- **Skill Move (in context of Lost Time Origin):** A thematic term indicating a power used freely (no SP cost) with bonus effect. Treated like a cinematic, adrenaline-fueled moment.

## Power Mechanics

- **Effect Tags:** Descriptive mechanics attached to powers (e.g., *Burn*, *Stun*, *Push*). Usually require a saving throw.

- **Saving Throw (Save):** A roll (1d20 + modifier) to resist a harmful power or effect.
  *E.g., "WIS Save DC 14" = Roll d20 + WIS modifier and beat 14 to avoid the effect.*

- **Condition:** A lasting negative effect (e.g., Blinded, Charmed, Stunned) that alters combat behavior or stats.

- **Boost Roll:** Spend 1 SP to add +1d4 to any roll.

- **Concentration:** Some powers require ongoing focus. These cost an extra +1 SP per round and usually require the character to avoid taking damage or distractions.

**Combat Terms**

- **COMBAT:** Each turn in combat allows 1 Action, 1 Movement, and 1 Reaction. Some abilities may be used as Bonus Actions.

- **Reaction:** An action taken outside your turn, usually in response to a trigger (e.g., being hit).

- **Initiative:** The order of turns in combat, determined by rolling 1d20 + DEX modifier.

- **Attack Roll:** 1d20 + relevant modifiers used to determine if a power or weapon hits.

- **Critical Hit:** Roll a natural 20 on an attack?. Double the damage dice.

- **Area of Effect (AoE):** A power that targets multiple enemies in a specific area (cone, line, radius).

**Roleplay & Narrative**

- **Alignment:** Your moral and ethical stance. In Catalyst Core, defined by a *Moral Axis* (Light, Neutral, Shadow) and a *Discipline Axis* (Lawful, Neutral, Chaotic).

- **Faction Reputation:** A measure of how much your character is trusted or feared by major organizations.

- **Downtime Activity:** Non-combat scenes between missions where players pursue personal or strategic goals.

- **Cinematic Action Point:** A once-per-session narrative mechanic that allows a player to auto-succeed, flashback, interrupt initiative, or rescue an ally at the last second.

- **Narrative Trigger:** An event that influences public opinion, civilian behavior, or faction outcomes (e.g., saving a civilian, causing collateral damage).

- **Public Trust:** The team's reputation with the general population. Impacts story options, media coverage, and faction support.