This is an unfinished version of Lexicon intended for test playing. This system was written by Jesse Galena. For any questions, you can email me at jessegalena@gmail.com or contact me through social media (@RexiconJesse on Twitter, u/RexiconJesse on Reddit). Stay awesome.

Most roleplaying games give you a set of rules, make you learn them, and then you have to change your ideas until they fit within the rules of the system.

This game works the opposite way. It starts with the character you want to play. How do they think? What makes them special? What do they enjoy? What are they afraid of? Why do you want to play this character?

It takes the character you want to play and provides rules to allow you to do what you want.

At it's core, this system is designed to do 3 things:

- Be fun as a player and a game master
- Have everything focus on roleplaying
- Be able to learn it in less than 10 minutes

No matter what you do in this system, there are a few constant rules.

You will only roll 2d4. No matter the purpose or the reason, you will only ever roll 2d4.

No matter what you do, you will always involve one or more of these factors:

- Roleplaying
- Using qualities, temporary or permanent
- Everything works in increments of one, either +1 or -1

Everything requires roleplaying. To use qualities and use their bonus, you must invoke them through roleplaying (*further explained in "How to perform an action" below*). This is not a game about rolling dice and hearing results. This is a

game about living in moments and using your strengths to overcome any obstacle.

The character sheet

Your character sheet has three parts:

- Qualities
- Inventory
- Damage counters

Qualities

Qualities are words and short phrases that show who your character is. A quality can be a single word, such as **brawler, magician,** and **brave**, but it can also be a short phrase such as **loves animals, hates the sight of blood,** and **works better as a team.** It shows why they do what they do, what they are good at, what they are learning, how they protect themselves, and what they're vulnerable to. Qualities always go into one of three places: motivations, traits, and skills.

Motivations, Traits, and Skills

Motivation is your character's drive. **Vengeance, to make friends,** and **show off** are all examples of motivations.

Traits are who your character is rather than what they've learned. **Brave, morally rigid,** and **charming** can be long-term conditioning or talents that come almost naturally to you.

Skills are things you had to practice, study, or learn. **Blacksmithing, sword fighting,** and **flirting** are qualities that need to develop with time.

Some qualities can work as both a trait and a skill. For example, **braver** may be something

you've always felt (*trait*) or something you've developed over time (*skill*). A character born with the power to use magic (*trait*: **born with magic blood**) is different from someone who studied magic (*skills*: **wizard**). Both mean you can use magic, but they each show different ways of how you gained their magical prowess. You could also have both. Just because you were born with the ability to use magic, doesn't mean you can't also study it. Likewise, a person with the skill **Blacksmith** could also have the trait **talks to metal** to show their innate ability for the craft.

Having multiple qualities that focus on a particular facet makes it more useful and versatile. If you have the qualities **born with magic blood, wizard, wand user,** and **pyromancer,** you have a lot more options and a lot more magical prowess than another character who has **sorcerer** as their only magic-based quality.

Protection

Qualities are also used when you need protection. The ability to protect your physical body doesn't have to be as simple as **full platemail, a Kevlar vest**, and **parrying.** There are many ways to protect yourself. **My stunning smile, my bitchin' coat**, or **faith that no one can hit me** may protect you just as well as a suit of armor. A quality such as **small stature** could be invoked when avoiding damage, but it also works when trying to squeeze into a tight space.

Physical, mental, and **emotional** protection are all important at differing times and against differing obstacles and opponents. Thinking about a loved one or clinging to a religious symbol could be used as protection if they are qualities.

While physical damage is the most common, mental and emotional protection can help you

from being influenced or suffering from bad situations, or taking damage to your mind.

Vulnerabilities

Your qualities may sometimes work against you. Being an orc with the quality **massive** may help you when intimidating creatures or hauling something, but the GM may give you a -1 when in tight spaces because of it. Qualities always have the potential to be used for or against to depending on the situation. They can also affect you physically, mentally, or emotionally.

How to Choose Qualities

Start with general qualities. If your character is **smart, clever, strong**, or **quick**, make one of those a quality. General qualities allow you to use them in many situations.

You can have multiple general qualities, but you can only use one broad quality per action. The GM must let you know if a quality is general or specific.

Next, choose specific qualities that build off of your broad qualities. If you chose **strong**, then think about how they solve problems, how they socialize, how they fight, etc. They could have **brawler** and **no use for a weapon** as specific qualities that help them fight.

A quality such as **act first** or **leave plan making to someone else** can be useful when starting combat or trying to open a lock by smashing it.

Qualities are meant to be multipurpose, but you'll need to hone in on how your character thinks and acts to allow you to have more useful qualities and thus be more successful.

"Could a normal person do this?" general and specific qualities, and your limitations

When using general qualities (and not exactly related specific qualities), there's a basic rule you can follow to know if you can attempt what you're doing or not. Ask yourself "Could a normal person do this?"

Could a normal person fix a broken hose in a car? With some looking, yes. Maybe not well, but there's a chance they could discover and possibly solve the problem.

Could a normal person replace an engine in a car? No. They would need training and equipment.

Could a normal person cast a spell? No. They would need some quality that allowed them to use magic.

Could a normal spellcasting person cast a spell they don't know? No. They would need a quality that allows them to cast that spell.

Qualities: Words you cannot use

You cannot use the following words in your qualities:

- Conjunctions (and, but, nor, or, so, yet).

You cannot have the ability to cast spells through your sword **AND** bow. If you want to use a weapon as a catalyst, it must be a specific weapon. If you want to use more than one, each one must be a separate quality.

- All

You cannot have the quality **master of all styles of kung fu. Kung fu** is a good general quality for how you fight. **Mantis style**, **dragon style,** and **drunken master** would all be specific styles that may aid you further.

Likewise, you cannot use those words in your explanation of your qualities. If you have the quality **thread the needle**, you cannot explain that it lets you be a master daredevil **AND** be an expert at sewing.

How to perform an action

To perform an action, you always do 3 things in this order:

- Describe
- Roll
- Resolve

First, you describe your action. In your description, you imply the use of as many applicable qualities as you possess. When you finish your description, say the total number of qualities you are using to aid you in your action.

For every quality you can use to aid you, you get a +1 to your roll.

The GM may tell you if you are taking any penalties because of external effects or qualities the target of your action has. The GM may also use a quality you have to give you a -1 penalty. The GM may also give you additional bonuses for external factors.

Second, you roll 2d4 (two four-sided dice). You take the result of both dice, add the number of applicable qualities. If the result is 7 or more, you succeed. If it is 6 or less, you failed.

Third, you resolve. Unless the GM states otherwise, you are still in control of your actions, so you explain how you succeeded or failed at your action.

Simple actions do not require a roll, but what constitutes a simple action is up to the GM.

Dramatic or fun descriptions add to action. It should take less than 30 seconds to offer a

detailed and description of your actions with the qualities you will use.

Success isn't easy

To succeed at any action, you must roll a 7 or higher (using the describe, roll, resolve method above). But succeeding isn't always easy.

When attempting an action, the target gets to apply their applicable qualities that can aid them if they describe how they using them.

For example: A character attacks a t-rex utilizing 3 qualities (+3 to attack). The t-rex has the qualities **tough hide, protofeathers, scarred, and can't reach its vitals.** Each quality that applies to the t-rex's defense gives the attacker a -1. Because of the t-rex's defensive qualities, the character receives a -4 to their action. With the character's qualities (+3) and the t-rex's defensive qualities (-4), the character rolls with a -1 to their attack action.

A character uses this same process of utilizing applicable qualities to give the attacker penalties, improve their chances of succeeding at a reaction (such as a trap), or any other action they perform.

Temporary qualities:

When something buffs or debuffs you, it gives you a temporary quality. **Blinded** is a temporary quality that the GM can use to give you a -1 to all actions involving sight.

A situation or another character may give you the temporary quality **rhino's hide**, which gives you a +1 to physical protection.

They can also conjure items. If a wizard has the spell **conjure shadow blade**, they made themselves a magical weapon that acts as a temporary quality.

As the name implies, temporary qualities are temporary. If it is from an external source, it lasts as long as it can. If the temporary quality is from a character, it will last for a number of rounds equal to the number over 7 they rolled. For example, if they got a 10, it would last 3 rounds. Each round lasts 10 seconds in game.

Damage

Humanoids take damage in 3 categories:

- Focus
- Vitality
- Endurance

Focus damage is anything that effects your concentration or mind. This can be a distraction, such as migraines, stress, anxiety (magical or mundane), or losing your sanity. Or this could be nonphysical damage, such as psychic spells or magical memory loss.

Vitality damage is damage to your physical body as a whole. Poison, disease, hypothermia, and blood loss all examples.

Endurance damage is damage to direct parts of your body. Damage by most weapons or breaking a limb are examples.

How something damages you can change based on the circumstance. If you're on fire, that is damage to your vitality. If you're hit with a flaming weapon, that is damage to your endurance.

To track damage, check a box in the category. If you take 7 damage in any category, you fall unconscious. If you take 10 damage in one category, you die.

The GM may give you a temporary penalty when using qualities affected by the damage. This temporary penalty cannot exceed the amount of damage you have in one category.

For example: If you have 3 damage to focus and 2 on endurance, the maximum penalty you can have is -3.

Other creatures and people can take more or less punishment than humanoids.

Punching a Rocket Ship

Damage is subjective. A battle between spaceships still has them inflicting one damage per hit. Unless you have some special power or weapon, even the best punch will not damage that rocket ship.

For the reverse of that, if a weapon made to blow a hole in a spaceship hit a person, it would do significantly more damage to them. The GM can decided how severe the damage is. Though hitting a person is much more difficult than hitting something as large as a spaceship.

Area of Effect Damage

Some weapons and spells are designed to hit more than one target. However, making an attack that hits multiple targets increases the difficulty. You take -1 to the attack for each target past the first.

For example, you throw a grenade into a crowd of zombies. You want to hit 3 zombies. You would take a total of -2 to your attack. If you succeed, each of them will take damage. You can use qualities specifically meant to aid you in hitting multiple targets to reduce the penalty.

To effect targets that are distant+ apart from each other, it requires special qualities or items.

An item is not the same as a quality

If you have a dagger, you do not get a +1 whenever you use it. You simply have a dagger that you can use.

If you have the quality **favors small blades**, then you get a +1 when using a dagger.

If you have the quality **my mother's ritual dagger**, then it is an item and you get a +1 when using it as a dagger. If you have both qualities, you would receive +2 whenever using your mother's ritual dagger.

Items in your inventory are usable and may allow you to perform certain actions, but it doesn't mean you are proficient with them.

Movement

Your distance from an object, creature, or destination will fall into one of three categories:

- Close
- Distant+
- Far

Close

If something is close, that means you can interact with it without moving much (10 or less ft from you. It does not require any additional actions to move (certain terrain or elevation may change this).

Distant+

Distant always has a number after it. Distant 1 objects, creatures, or destinations require a turn to get to (around 30 ft from you). If you want to move and take another action, you must split your action (*more on splitting your action in the next section*).

Distant 2 means it requires running or moving quickly to get to it. If you want to get to it and act, you'll have to split your turn twice.

Normal people cannot move more than distance 2 in a round.

When using a ranged weapon, the number after distant equals the penalty you take for attacking at that distance. This counts for any ranged weapon, including guns, bows, thrown weapons, and magic spells. Qualities (such as **sharpshooter**,) items (such as a scope,) and special circumstances (such as an open field with no cover) can all give you a bonus when attacking a creature or object at a distance.

Far

If something is far, it means it is too far to get to within a reasonable number of actions. Far objects include a mountain on the horizon, a building in the distance, or going up the stairs to the top floor of a skyscraper.

Movement is Relative

Close, distant+, and far will be different depending on where you are. Distant 2 for a person will be less than distant 2 for a car which will be less than distant 2 for a helicopter. The GM determines exactly how far each distance is for each scenario.

Actions and Splitting Your Turn

On your turn, you can perform one action without incurring any penalties. If you want to do more than one action, you must divide your time, making you less effective at each action.

If you split your turn, you can perform two actions but take a -1 to each. You can split your turn again, giving you three actions with a -2 to each. If you are using an action to move distance 1 or 2, it takes that number of actions to move it. So if you want to move distance 2 and interact with whatever you made it to, you

would split your action 3 times, allowing you to move distance 2 and act with a -2 penalty.

If the GM says the act will take longer than the amount of time you have (10 seconds for a full turn, less if you're splitting your action), you must decide whether you will take multiple turns to perform the action or to try something different.

Some things, such things as complicated as building a spaceship or a simple as cleaning a firearm, will not fit into the duration of a round.

Initiative

While most often associated with combat, initiative can happen at any point when the GM needs everyone to act in order.

When in initiative, a full round is made up of everyone's turn. Each round lasts 10 seconds in game.

Who or whatever starts initiative goes first. After that, characters in initiative can choose what order they go in. If an agreement cannot be made, then each quality a character has that gives them an advantage on going first gets them a +1. Whoever has the highest number goes next. Characters affected directly by whatever started initiative get a bonus +1.

Healing

Healing damage requires both time and supplies.

Healing damage through magic or futuristic technology is much faster than traditional medicine. To heal, a character performs an action (describe, roll, resolve) using what they can to aid them with healing. For every point over 7 on their roll, they heal 1 point of damage from a part of the body. If they want to heal

another part of the body in the same roll, it costs an additional 1 to do so.

For example, if a healer rolled a 10, they could heal up to 3 points of damage on a single body part, or heal 1 point of damage on the target's head, spend one point to switch body parts, and heal 1 point of damage on the target's torso.

To heal damage through normal medicine, the method is the same but it takes one minute of constant work to heal each point of damage.

Generally, a person cannot be healed more than 3 times in a single day. The GM may change this if it does not fit their game.

Magic

If you want to cast spells of any kind, you need a quality that allows you to cast magic in a general way. When you want to cast powerful or specific spells, you'll need specific qualities.

To cast a spell, first you need a general quality tied specifically to spell casting. This could be a specific spell slinging type. **Wizard, necromancer, druid, pyromancer,** and **fey-touched** are all qualities that give you the basic ability to tap into the magical world.

General magic qualities allow you to do only the very basics of magic, typically things that aid you in a task you can already perform. When you want to do something specific with magic, you need a quality that is the spell itself. **Telekinesis, conjure flame, teleport, summon animal,** and **conjure shadow blade** are all qualities that allow you to attempt that action using magic.

Anytime you use magic, you will always use the general spellcasting quality you have. You can have qualities that increase your bonus to casting magic. For example, the quality **wand catalyst** or **staff catalyst** gives you +1 when you use a wand or staff whenever you cast a spell.

The quality **pyro master** gives you a bonus whenever you use a spell that involves fire.

See "Temporary qualities" for buffs, debuffs, and spell durations.

Conjuring creatures using magic

If you use magic to conjure a creature (animal, zombie, ghost, and so forth), you must have the ability to use magic (through a quality or item) and have a spell tied directly to how you conjure it.

When conjured, the creature will act as it normally would, since you do not have control of it yet (controlling it requires a different spell and action, which includes a another roll). The creature acts on your turn after you, whether you control it or not.

The creature only has one quality. You choose the quality, but it must relate to the creature. For example, a zombie could have **strong, diseased,** or **frightening** as a quality. If you wish to give it more qualities, increase the difficulty of conjuring it by 1 for each additional quality. You must decide how many qualities it will have before you roll to conjure it.

The creature you conjure lasts a number of rounds equal the number between the number you rolled and 7. For example, if you rolled an 11, the creature will last for 4 rounds (11 - 7 = 4).

Mind control

To control another creature's actions, you must be able to take over its mind. You take an action to overpower the creature's mental defenses. If the creature is a standard minion (anything that doesn't have a personal name) or summoned creature, you keep control of it for as many

rounds as you got over 7. If the creature is a PC or an NPC with a personal name, you control it for a number of actions equal to the number you got over 7. If you make it do nothing for a turn, it still counts as one action for the duration of the mind control.

When making a mind controlled creature act, you may only add as many qualities to their action as they have to aid them in that action or that you used to mind control them (whichever is lower). For example, you used 3 qualities to successfully mind control a goblin. The goblin has 5 qualities that aid it in making explosives. If you make the goblin craft explosives, it can only use 3 of its applicable qualities.

Other creatures can attempt to break creatures from the effects of mind control. To do this, they take a penalty for each quality the character that cast the mind control spell used.

Advancement

As you play a campaign, characters will become more powerful. To gain advancement, the GM allows each player to choose a new quality for their character. At this time, the GM can choose to give characters another quality, mostly likely one that plays into the characters weaknesses. The GM and player alike can always use qualities creatively to try and manipulate them to make them a benefit or hindrance depending on the situation.

For example, the GM may give an undead character the quality **creepy.** If a character is always stopping to interact with animals, the GM might give them the quality **Always pet the animals.** While the player can sometimes use this to their advantage, the GM can also use it

Formula for the unknown

Sometimes you'll find yourself in a situation where you're not sure what the direct rule is. If a character is trying something and you're not

certain how to rule it, such as holding their breath or hanging onto the underside of a moving vehicle, allow them to do it for a number of rounds, minutes, hours, or days equal to the number of qualities they can use to aid them in it.

For example, if a character wants to hold their breath, they can do it for a number of rounds equal to the number of qualities they can use to aid them. If they are trying to resist the effects of horrid weather conditions, they can do so for a number of days equal to the number of qualities they can use to aid them.

Settings

This book offers several settings, and in addition, it is made to be adapted and work with whatever setting you want to use (whether it is an established fandom or your own creation). Different qualities can work in different settings. A hero-driven, high fantasy setting will likely have looser rules on what you can do than a gritty, realistic sci-fi adventure.

Whatever setting you use, it's important to establish tones, themes, and boundaries for what players should expect. For example, if you're doing a sci-fi game, establish what kind of sci-fi it is. *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* are both sci-fi, but have completely different themes, tones, and types of universes to explore.

Minions and groups

If a group of enemies is tightly packed, such as a swarm of insects or a horde of zombies, the GM can remove the penalties for hitting in groups. Each number over 7 effects or damages one more creature in the group.

Sample characters

Here are several characters in different settings you can use in your game. You can also use these to get a sense of how your original character sheets will look.

- Setting: High Fantasy -

Name: Vularus, the Undead Knight

Motivations: Protect my friends | Fulfil my dying wish: save my homeland

Traits: Undead | Resistant to the elements | No need to breathe | Creepy | Thick Headed | See in the dark |

Skills: Expert swordsman | both hands on my sword | Platemail armor is my second skin | Diplomat at heart | Chilling touch | No need for blood |

Name: Raine Starlight

Motivations: Master the art of magic | Prove I'm worth something

Traits: Human | Determined | Cautious |

Skills: Druidic spellslinger | channel magic through my staff | Control the elements | Conjure fire | Manipulate earth | Create Water | Long-distance spells | At home in nature | Overcome impossible odds |

- Setting: Spacetrash Sci-fi -

Name: Malai Tidewater

Motivations: Get paid | Stay out of prison |

Traits: Trickster | Resourceful | Frugal to a fault| Self-taught | Clever is better than smart |

Skills: Quick | Shade tree mechanic | Keep it together with hope and bubblegum | (Almost a) certified spacecraft mechanic | low-tech solutions for high-tech problems | There's grease on me somewhere | Impromptu weapon | Why use something for what it was meant for when I can use it for this? |

Name: A-Unit 00413

Motivations: Obey the first law of robotics | Figure out how to not obey the first law of robotics

Traits: Android | Neural link to the ship | Duel-network multitasking (splitting actions) | Inhuman strength | Inhuman durability |

Skills: Pilot spacecraft | Advanced piloting | Thread the needle | Knowledge of human anatomy | Unshakable | Curious | Predict likely outcome based on available data | Make a joke