

INTRODUCTION



ABOUT THIS BOOK: About this book in particular, indeed this Rulebook—what is a rulebook for a role-playing game?

What is in this book: Within these pages are all the numbers, statistics and procedures necessary to create paranormal adventures at the vivid level desired by this game's themes. The rules in this book dictate the game's proportions. The numbers balance the events of the adventure, leaving the imagination of the participants to explain why the numbers fall where they do. No additional rules are, nor ever should be, necessary for the same level of role-playing enjoyment. This core rulebook is, in a manner of speaking, 'packed', so as to include as much detail as is necessary for such vivid play, up to the limit of, but not exceeding, the conscious capacity of the average mind—if one cannot keep all the rules at a comfortable level of control, there are too many, and players will end up spending more time calculating and considering rules than they should enjoying the game.

Required materials: When sitting down to play, it is essential that you have the following:

A desire to dream and imagine adventure!
Six dice (4, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 20 sided)
This rulebook
Blank paper
Writing utensils



Suggested accessories: Aside of the above, the following is a list of suggested playing aids.

Prepared adventure material
Character Record Sheets
Game Master's Record Sheets
Adventure Record Sheets
Calculator
Extra dice
Secluded game room



RULES OF RELATIVITY: In the free world of role-playing games, there are countless 'ifs', 'buts' and uncertainties, which can often cause confusion. But the Phenomenon game is a safehouse from stress, from confusion and chaos. Truly, there are a few rules as hard as the laws of science. As a result, misunderstandings about the game and the rules applied to them are explained here *for all* . . .

Good rolls: Given the complex nature of RPG rules, various rule systems are devised for various rolling purposes. However, this often leaves Players wondering if it is better to roll high or low. In Phenomenon, a golden rule is that 'higher on the dice is always better for whomever is rolling'.

Extreme rolls: Given the many modifiers applicable to dice rolls, Players are often given false hope or unfair denials about whether their extremely high or low rolls count. In this game, a golden rule is 'the natural roll of 1 always fails and the natural roll of the dice's maximum always succeeds', save where it is specifically stated otherwise.

Overlooked rules: One rule that must be considered now and not later is that no other rules can be either—if a rule is overlooked, the proportions or consequences must be accepted and players must imagine however they can the 'why'. For once a ruling is made, the game cannot be reversed in

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TABLE 5: SUGGESTED ABILITY CHECKS

Ability Check	Ability	Check
Move heavy object	PHY	7
Bash open a sealed door	PHY	9
Force open a locked door	PHY	12
Restrain a human	PHY	13
Carry a body for a mile	PHY	14
Hike a mile along the road	MVM	5
Hike a mile in the forest	MVM	7
Hike a mile in the snow	MVM	9
Jump from a moving vehicle	MVM	12
Restrain a non-human	MVM	13
Climb on an unstable surface	MVM	14
Jump onto a moving vehicle	MVM	15
Withstand minor energy blast	GEN	3
Withstand major energy blast	GEN	9
Resist becoming contaminated	GEN	13
Resist chemicals or riot-gas	GEN	16
Return to a specific spot	INT	8
Calculate or recall a fact	INT	9
Research vague information	INT	10
Operate complex machinery	INT	12
Decipher faded writing	ITN	5
Notice someone following you	ITN	6
Follow the sound of footsteps	ITN	7
See details at a distance	ITN	8
Recall specific words	ITN	9
Hear whispering voices	ITN	10
See details in the shadows	ITN	11
Notice the law coming!	ITN	12
Hear ghostly voices	ITN	13
Compare voices on the phone	ITN	14
See a ghost that others cannot	ITN	15
Not overreact to hostility	SAN	5
Resist torture of sound or sight	SAN	8
Avoid a nervous breakdown	SAN	10
Not cry when someone dies	FTH	7
Share body with another spirit	FTH	12
Maintain a seance	FTH	14
Resist spiritual despair	PSY	8
Remain conscious near a UFO	PSY	9
Sense the presence of a spirit	PSY	12
Resist spiritual possession	PSY	13
Operate alien technology	PSY	15
Resist mind-control	PSY	16
React to aliens in time enough	CMP	9
Compare sensations of energy	CMP	10
Avoid being tricked by spirits	CMP	12
Sense time displacement	CMP	13
Sense a spirit entering a body	CMP	16



SHOCK CHECKS: Fear is the oldest and most fundamental emotion of mankind, and thus, it is the first and strongest wall separating our cozy little perception of reality and the true vastness of most supernatural space. In the most extreme of situations, indeed those scenes where the first thing that comes to a GM's mind is that the Player Characters should be afraid, horrified or at risk of madness, the GM will call for a 'Shock Check'. This is a simple roll to determine if the individual Character has the inner strength, sanity, mental and emotional fortitude to face the unknown.

When to make a Shock Check: In comparison to most other rules, Shock Checks are rare, but in truth, they occur often enough. A Shock Check is only made when a scene is both uncertain and apart from the reality most people are used to experiencing. For example, preparing to go into court for having burned down a haunted house, though an intense situation with dreaded legal consequences, would not call for a Shock Check, but entering into that haunted house in the first place certainly would have. The rule of thumb is that a Shock Check is to be required whenever a Character crosses the paranormal borderline, leaving his daily reality and daring to experience (intense) phenomena, including all Encounters that will or could potentially offer Experience Points.

How to make a Shock Check: A Shock Check is an open-ended roll on a single dice. What one needs to succeed depends upon the situation, though the difficulty will always range from 1-20. The Player rolls a single dice in order to see if his Character to have the courage, the conviction, or the insanity necessary to stand his ground and stare into the face of the unknown. There are many modifiers to all Shock Checks.

CHAPTER 3



ENERGY LEVELS: There are many forms of energy, some unknown to all science, that make up the world we live in. Sometimes these energy levels can give investigators a clue as to where phenomena may be found. Energy Levels generally range anywhere from 1-100, however they can really be anything, and only experience and comparison from one Adventure to the next will give Characters any indication as to what is a strong force and thus important, and thus also what is unimportant.

Detecting Energy Levels: All Energy Levels can be measured with various devices, generalized simply as ‘detectors’. Such devices as these can be a magnetometer, a radiation meter, or anything else. However, as there are, as established, countless varieties of energy, they are best kept abstract, as are the devices that identify them.

Known Energy Levels: Though Energy Levels can really be of any degree, those that are documented can give Players (and Adventure-designing GMs) a frame of reference as to how powerful phenomena are. As a rule of thumb, every 10 Energy Levels is potentially worth 100 Experience Points when the phenomena they designate is encountered.

TABLE 9: DOCUMENTED ENERGY LEVELS

Level	General phenomena
80	Active U.F.O.
70	The Ark of the Covenant
40	Energy released during alien abduction
36	Manifested vampyre-spirit
30	Extra-terrestrial power source
25	Extra-terrestrial biological entity
24	Tragic events replaying in the present
22	Spectral vehicle that met a tragic end
20	Spectral vehicle out of time and place
18	Time displaced memories or voices
16	Toxic waste
15	Quartz-crystal Skull of Doom
13	Tortured spirit re-living its horror
12	Newly formed crop circle
11	Tracks of a non-human lifeform
10	Disembodied spirit making contact
8	Free-floating ghostly apparition
6	Key location where there was a suicide
5	Inactive U.F.O.
4	Key location where somebody died
3	Haunted hotel room
2	Meteor crater
1	Graveyard

SEARCHING: Often are clues and evidence of phenomena hidden in some form or another—a personal ring that is important to a ghost might lay lost in the grass, or a key witness may be ‘laying low’ in a town. You can quickly see the wide range of things that can be ‘hidden’ from the investigators. Anyone who specifically states where they are looking will find anything hidden there, as storytelling tends to make sense. For example, if a Player stated his Character is looking under a rug, if there’s writing on the floor there according to the GM’s notes, no roll is needed, as he would clearly find all the writing there. However, when a Player’s ideas are exhausted, or perhaps he’s just in a hurry, he can always search ‘everything’ in an Encounter with a ‘Searching Check’.

Making a Searching Check: A Searching Check is an abstract summary of the long and tedious endeavor of searching. Be the Character searching a specific area for an object, a town for a person or even his own house, the rule is the same—the GM will roll a single dice, and if the total result is 10 or greater he has found what he was looking

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to many Character aspects and at any time. The number of Points required, and the modifications they may make to a Character, are listed below.

TABLE 41: BUILDING POINTS

Points	Character gain
1	Skill Point
1	Resource Point
3	Ability Point
4	Change Occupation
4	One less Problem
5	One less Handicap
6	One less Limitation
10	Choose one (first) Special Ability
15	Choose additional Special Ability

THEME: The universe is different for everyone. Reality is relative. Truth is subjective. Perhaps it is because the human mind is strong enough to alter reality. Whatever the case may be, the various and



vastly different ways that Players approach role-playing games is a microcosm of the universe in all its absolute unknowns, solid flexibility and fleeting certainty. Indeed, as each and every Player has a different playstyle, the game's rules must in some way be flexible enough to allow for this. In this case, each Player must choose from one of three different 'Themes' for his Character, which will forever be his, the concerns of the other two Themes simply not part of the game for him, save for when he is an Adventure of a different Theme.

The different Themes each alter the game for the Player in their own ways, just as his Character functions in a slightly different reality from others. In each Theme, one uses a different dice for all basic rolls save where specified otherwise, and enjoys the detail of optional, more comprehensive rules throughout the Core Rules and Sourcebooks alike, according to what he by definition likes to focus on. One can only use rules from his Theme.

In any Adventure keyed to a Theme, the rules specific to that Theme will be open to all types of Players, and their normal Theme rules unavailable.

Adventurer: This Theme favors Players who like to have action, fighting and lots of dice rolling more than anything else a role-playing game can offer. Those Character who are based on this Theme use the D10 for all single rolls unless stated otherwise. Players of this Theme would best appreciate and enjoy such adventures from film and literature as *Dracula*, *Jurassic Park*, and *Indiana Jones*.

Blackhand: This Theme favors Players who like to laugh and enjoy more their social time with friends at the table than any kind of serious gaming. Those Characters who are based on this Theme use the D8 for all single rolls unless stated otherwise. Players of this Theme would best appreciate and enjoy such adventures from film (and bad film) as *Ghostbusters*, *Evil Dead*, and *Men In Black*.

Detective: This Theme favors Players who like to solve mysteries, puzzle over clues, and enjoy more dramatic role-playing versus an action game. Those Characters who are based on this Theme use the D12 for all single rolls unless stated otherwise. Players of this Theme would best appreciate and enjoy such adventures from film and literature as *Close Encounters*, *Sherlock Holmes*, and *X-Files*.