

Dungeon Unleashed

The Prime Hack version

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Intro

Writing *Dungeon Unleashed* was inspired by three things:

1. Comments by David Beardmore who picked up a copy of *Simple Superheroes* two weekends ago at [Phantasm 2016](#). We chatted about how easy it would be to run a fantasy game with *Simple Superheroes*' mechanics. David has already run it for his 6 year old son.

2. Reading D.H. Boggs carefully researched *Champions of Zed*, and the handling therein of fighting multiple opponents.

3. Dave Arneson game day October 1st 2016. Everything I have read about Arneson, the father of Roleplaying Games, suggests that he had a framework of rules, and happily made up more rules to suit new character ideas and new campaign concepts.

Dungeon Unleashed seeks to be a framework that you can easily employ to do exactly that: create rules to suit your players and campaign.

What is found herein will be most understandable to people who have played or read *Simple Superheroes*, as it uses the "Unleashed engine" and uses a number of similar conceits. This early version is akin to a alpha playtest document.

Unfamiliar readers are encouraged to download the free [Heart of Simple Superheroes](#), or pick up a copy of *Simple Superheroes* from the [CDG Marketplace](#).

Basic Mechanics

Characters role 6 sided dice equal to their Talent's rank. For combat and spells affecting hostiles, an appropriate Talent is selected, and opposed roles are made.

Any die that rolls a 3 or above is considered a basic success. For non-combat actions a GM may require a specific die result, or a certain number of basic successes.

In opposed rolls each assailant's die has the potential to cause damage, or impose a condition. Dice showing a 2 or 1 are simply ignored. All other dice are compared, assailants highest vs defenders highest, assailants 2nd highest vs defenders 2nd highest and so forth. Any assailants die that exceeds the defenders die (and is a basic success) causes a point of damage or 1 condition factor.

A condition factor of 1 tends to be transitory, while

more than that will endure unless a opponent can successfully remove it with their own action. Most often conditions are imposed by Talents using Magic, Holy or Stunt points.

Talent System & Character Generation

Ultimately the Talent System can be treated as classless. However it is useful to put characters in certain themes. A character can always roll one die to perform any action that seems reasonable. They are considered to have a rank 1 Talent in everything. Theme here is important, a village boy with a stick has no ability to physically damage a heavily armoured mounted warrior.

Heroes can role 1 die for almost any task, though if it goes strongly against their characters theme/concept, then the referee/GM should disallow this. Only things that a character excels at are given Talent rank.

Starting characters have two rank-2 Talents, and one rank-3 Talent. Creating Talents (and even picking them from one of the lists below) should feel like brainstorming. A dialogue should occur between GM and player about what each Talent is capable of achieving, and how it will be used in game.

Intent

Whenever a Talent is created it should be given an *intent*. The standard intents are Offensive, Defensive and Functional. These are abbreviated [O], [D], and [F]. Functional covers a whole host of utility effects, and is normally used to impose some sort of positive on negative Condition on another character.

Some Talents have an associated cost, which is demarcated with a *. Such Talents require a Stunt/Magic/Holy point be expended to function at full rank.

Warrior

A warrior seeks to solve problems with his or her mundane skills. They excel at combat in arms, feats of strength and agility, knowledge of the streets, and exploring the wilderness and dungeon.

Typical Talents

Close Combat [O]

Ranged Combat [O]

Block & Parry [D]

Avoidance [D*]

Combat Stunt [F*]
Alert & Stealthy [F*]

Warriors get three Talents as a starting character, one at rank-3, and two at rank-2.

A Warrior gets 3 Lifepoints and 2 Stunt points.

*A Warrior must spend a Stunt point to use one of these Talents at full rank, otherwise they suffer a die penalty.

Mage

A mage seeks to overcome challenges with their mastery of arcane forces, and their knowledge of esoteric subject matter.

Typical Talents

Arcane Assault [O*]
Enchantment [F*]
Necromancy [F*]
Elemental Control [F*]
Summoning [F*]
Magic Resistance [D]
Dodge [D]
Lore [F]
Negotiation [F]

Mages get three Talents as a starting character. One at rank 3, and two at rank 2

A Mage gets 1 Lifepoints and 4 Magic points.

*A Mage must spend a Magic point to use one of these Talents at full rank, otherwise they suffer a 2 die penalty.

Faithful (Cleric, Shaman, Druid, Hermit etc)

A Faithful man or woman relies on the power of their beliefs. They channel through faith the power of divine beings and spirits.

A Faithful should take a title suitable to their faith, and seek to have Talents that illuminate their beliefs. Concepts include monks, priest, shaman, druid, lama, paladin, fakir, etc.

Typical Talents

Holy/Unholy [F*]
Nature Control [F*]
Countermagic [F*]
Healing & Cursing [F*]
Block & Parry [D]
Magic Resistance [D]
Close Combat [O]
Religious knowledge [F]
Leadership [F]
Wise [F]

A Faithful gets three Talents as a starting character. One at rank 3, and two at rank 2

A Faithful gets 2 Lifepoints and 3 Holy points.

*A Faithful must spend a Holy point to use one of these Talents at full rank, otherwise they suffer a 2 die penalty.

Character Race

If a player wishes to have a character other than a human, they must make one of their starting Talents something that defines that race (at least for that particular character).

Advancement

Each time a character gains a level they can advance either a Lifepoint or a Stunt/Magic/Holy point. At the GMs discretion a character may even be allowed to have both Stunt and Magic points or Magic and Holy points, etc. A player should have a good explanation as to why their character has changed and gained such abilities.

Level 2 - a new rank 2 Talent

Level 3 - a new rank 2 Talent

Level 4 - advance a rank 2 Talent to 3

Level 5 - a new rank 2 Talent

Level 6 - advance a rank 2 Talent to 3

Level 7 - advance a rank 3 Talent to 4

Level 8 - two new rank 2 Talent

Level 9 - advance a rank 3 Talent to 4

Level 10 - advance two a rank 2 Talents 3

Experience and level progression occurs at GM discretion. Generally, speaking 10 challenging fights should allow a character to advance a level.

You may instead invent raw Experience Point awards that can be converted into Talent rank advancements.

Foes

A classically ½ hit-die (HD) creature like a Kobold or goblin, has no Talents and 1 Lifepoint. Hence they roll a single die for attack and defence.

A 1 HD creature like a orc, or average human has one rank-2 Talent and a 2 Lifepoints, or one rank-2 Talent and 1 Lifepoint and 1 Stunt/Magic/Holy point.

See more in Monsters.

Multiple Foes

Facing multiple foes is extremely dangerous. If a single character is in combat with multiple foes, the foes can combine their attack dice, and make a single roll against the defender.

Multiple foes, do not gain this benefit on their own defence. However, if one of the multiple foes forgoes contributing to the attack, he can add his defensive trait to the worst defence of his allies. In this fashion a good defender can significantly improve the survival chance of those with poor defences.

Even without this action, a more skilled defender raises the overall defence of a group by one die.

When a single character counterattacks they roll once against their foes, and damage is distributed evenly among their foes. Outnumbered characters are at a disadvantage and cannot decide who they damage. Rather the GM should allocate the damage either against whomever makes the most sense, or in a random fashion.

Multiple foes with wildly different anatomies, who would rarely fight together may not gain all of these benefits, at the GM's discretion. A GM may rule that a goblin fighting with a dragon can add its attack, but gains absolutely no defensive bonus (and is easy to target) because the dragon is careless and gobbo needs to avoid being jostled, kicked, or breathed on!

Heroes ganging up on a powerful monster often don't gain these benefits. Against weaker monsters a GM may choose instead to award a bonus die to the weakest attacker for a "flanking" bonus. Some heroes may have Talents that make them exceptional at exploiting such weaknesses.

1st Example

Zeb the Warrior finds himself cut off from his companions and facing three goblins.

3 Goblins (1 Lifepoint each)

1-Close Combat [O], 1-Shields [D]

Zeb the Mighty (3 Lifepoints, 2 Stunt points)

3-Flail & Shield [O], 2 Block & parry [D],

2- Trip, tangle, disarm [F*]

The goblins move in cautiously, hooting and cackling while waving spiked weapons. (The goblins are given initiative and get to attack first simply because there are more of them.)

The goblins roll first, one focuses on tying up Zeb's weapon (i.e. one goblin focuses on defending), the other two attack cautiously. The three goblins collectively roll 2 dice for their attack. They get a 4 and 3.

Zeb rolls two dice for *Block & parry* [D] getting two 3s. With the goblins 4 beating his 3, he takes a Lifepoint of damage.

Zeb can now attack, rolling his 3-*Flail & Shield* [O].

Since one of the goblins is actively defending it adds its defence of 1 to the worst defence in his team (all the goblins defences are rank-1) for a total of 2. Zeb rolls and gets a 5, 3 and a 2 on his attack. Two's are always ignored, so this is set aside. The goblins get a 6 and a 4. The 6 beats the Zeb's 5, and the 4 beats Zeb's 3, so no damage is taken.

Emboldened by their success, all three goblins attack aggressively. They roll 3 dice, and get a 4, 2 and 1. Zeb rolls 2 dice for his rank-2 defence, getting a 4 and a 1. He successfully weaves through the goblins clumsy attacks and counters.

Zeb rolls his three *Flail & Shield* [O] dice, the goblins only roll one. Zeb gets a 5, 4 and 3. The Goblins get only a 4. This means all three Goblins are dealt a Lifepoint of damage! Dropping all of them!

2nd Example

Three goblins charge at Zeb the warrior, this time they are led by a Goblin Lieutenant in chainmail.

2 Goblins (1 Lifepoint each)

1-Close Combat [O], 1-Shields [D]

Goblin Lieutenant (1 Lifepoint)

1-Close Combat [O], 2-Shield & Chainmail [D]

Zeb the Mighty (3 Lifepoints, 2 Stunt points)

3-Flail & Shield [O], 2 Block & parry [D],

2- Trip, tangle, disarm [F*]

The goblins advance spitting and cursing, the lieutenant moving directly into Zeb's path, seeking to tie up his weapon.

The other two focus on attacking Zeb. The three goblins get a total of 2 dice for this attack. They get a 4 and a 3.

Zeb rolls two dice for *Block & parry* [D] getting two 3s. With the goblins 4 beating his 3, he takes a Lifepoint of damage.

Zeb counterattacks, rolling his 3-*Flail & Shield* [O]. Since the goblin lieutenant is focussing on defence, he adds his rank 2-*Shield & Chainmail* [D] to the other normal goblins defence of 1-*Shields* [D], for a total of 3 dice.

Zeb gets a 5, 3 and a 2, while the goblins get a 6, 2 and 2. Zeb's 5 is blocked by the goblins 6, and but his 3 succeeds (2's and 1's are simply ignored). The goblins are dealt a Lifepoint of damage, which the GM decides to mark off against the Goblin Lieutenant.

The goblins attack aggressively. All three focus on attacking and this gives them 3 dice. They roll a 5, 4, and 4. Zeb defends with a 5 and a 3. This means he takes 2

Lifepoints of damage which drops him to zero!

Death and Dying

Zero Lifepoints is not the end of your hero. If your hero is dropped to zero, they are sent reeling, and suffer a 1 die penalty on their next action.

A character is killed outright if they are dropped to negative Lifepoints equal to their positive lifepoints. This means a starting Warrior with 3 Lifepoints is killed at -3 Lifepoints.

When a character is in the negatives, they suffer a penalty to their Talents equal to the negative value. This means a character at -2 Lifepoints suffers a 2 die penalty on all his Talents. Such a penalized character is seriously injured, but may be allowed to retreat without penalty at the GM's discretion. A character who is reduced to negative Lifepoints equal to their highest Talent cannot act, and is considered helpless and are often unconscious. If a 2nd level Warrior with 4 Lifepoints is reduced to -3, they are unconscious because their highest ranked Talent is a 3.

2nd Example Continued . . .

Zeb has just been reduced to zero Lifepoints from a flurry of goblin attacks. This means his next action is reduced by 1 die, as he reels stunned. He lashes out wildly with his flail, rolling only 2 dice and getting a 6 and 4.

The goblins get to use their best defence in their group, which is the Lieutenants *2-Shield & Chainmail [D]*. They roll two 4s. This means Zeb's wild swing has dealt 1 Lifepoint of damage to a goblin, dropping it instantly.

The remaining goblin and lieutenant look nervous but continue to press the attack. They roll 2 dice for their combined efforts, getting a 5 and 2. Zeb gets two 3s for his normal defence, meaning he takes another Lifepoint of damage. This drops him to -1, which means he now suffers a die penalty on all his rolls! Things are getting desperate for Zeb the Mighty.

Stunts

Stunts cover a wide array of things, such as disarming or sundering an opponent's equipment or gear, tripping them, shoving them off a bridge etc. They also cover things like smashing down doors, picking locks, avoiding traps and dragon breath, and sneaking up on an opponent unnoticed.

Stunt based Talents can still be rolled without the expenditure of Stunt points, but suffer a 1 die penalty. While anyone may in theory attempt a Stunt that they do not have a Talent for, it costs a them a Stunt point to

be able to role a single die.

2nd Example Continued . . .

Zeb decides he needs to find a way to temporarily remove the goblin lieutenant from the fight. He decides to spend one of his 2 Stunt points to roll *2- Trip, tangle, disarm [F*]*. Since he is at -1 Lifepoints he subtracts one die, leaving him with only 1 die. He rolls and gets a 6!

The goblin lieutenant doesn't have a Talent geared to avoiding such a condition, so it only gets to roll a single die as a defence. The roll is a 4. Zeb's flail tangles up the goblin lieutenant's weapon, and he shield checks the little monster, sending it tumbling across the floor. The goblin lieutenant will spend its next action getting to its feet and gathering a weapon.

This leaves Zeb facing a single goblin. It lunges, seeing his weapon droop. The goblin gets a 4. Zeb rolls his *2-Block & parry [D]* minus 1 die. He only gets a 3. This drops him to -2 Lifepoints!

Zeb counterattacks, at a 2 die penalty. He rolls a 4 and the goblin rolls a 1. He crushes the goblin's skull! Meanwhile the goblin lieutenant has just recovered his weapon and feet. Zeb knows that he is in serious danger. But neither opponent seems eager to engage.

Suddenly, hoots and war cries ring out behind the goblin lieutenant. It smiles an evil grin and advances. Zeb turns and flees at a sprint, hoping to find his companions before the goblins catch up to him.

Magic + Holy

Many opponents will have no defence against Magic, meaning they do not even get to roll a single die.

Rank 1

A rank-1 spell effect is very minor. Generally speaking the only people who will use these frequently will be characters with a rank 3 Talent (for whom a rank-1 "spell" is free). Someone with a *3-Necromancy* Talent, could notice undead, discern quite accurately when and how a corpse was killed, etc. – without having to spend a spell point. They would roll a single die, with a good roll granting success. Someone with an appropriately themed rank-1 Talent could create illumination equal to torchlight, or sense magic, or create a finger of flames.

Rank 2

Rank-2 allows the casting of magical projectiles, hitting a couple of foes who are right next to each other, and healing allies. They can create minor effects that are of short duration like levitation, camouflage, or simple illusions. On a good roll, a spell could restrain a single opponent for several rounds, or two opponents for a single round.

Rank 3

Rank 3 allows the possibility of affecting multiple targets or a significant area. They can cast spells of minor effect for significant duration, or significant effect for a single round.

Weapons & Armour

A particular weapon, armour or shield may help explain why a character has a particular Talent at a given rank. Chiefly these things are “colour.”

However, some monsters may be immune to certain kinds of weapons. What’s more, magical weapons and armour may grant a +1 on a single die (which should be a different colour than the rest of the dice rolled) or even grant an additional die to a specific combat Talent.

Weapons with significantly longer reach than their opponent’s weapon allow a character to attack first (as do weapons thrown as opponents are closing for melee).

Mounts

A skilled rider of a combat-trained mount may gain similar benefits as a character wielding a magic items. They will often be able to gain a die in either defence or offense, depending on their chosen tactic. These benefits do not extend against creatures that are significantly larger than the mount and rider (e.g. giants and most dragons).

Given this, it is common practice for opponents to use Stunt points to dismount a rider, or injure or otherwise cause the mount to throw its rider.

Monsters

Guidance on building monsters:

Making monsters is meant to be easy. Create a couple of Talents, rate them and give the monster Lifepoints and Stunt/Magic/Holy points. Ultimately monster creation is an art form, not a science. Individual monsters will often be slightly different, and variations are encouraged.

If you are trying to build a monster based off of existing descriptions and mechanics, this can be done as follows:

All monsters start with 1 Lifepoint and Talents at rank 1. For each hit die of the monster, add either a Lifepoint or a Stunt/Magic/Holy point.

A below 1 HD monster has all Talents at rank-1 and a single Lifepoint. They may have a special schtick, such as a poison bite, but this should also functions at rank 1.

A 1 HD monster has one rank-2 Talent, and either 2 Lifepoints or 1 Lifepoint and one Stunt/Magic/Holy

point.

Similarly, a 4 HD monster has four points it can add either to its base 1 Lifepoint, or to its base 0 Stunt/Magic/Holy points.

It also has 4 points it can add to Talent ranks. Remember *one* rank is granted for free. So it could have one rank 5 Talent, a rank 4 Talent and a rank 2 Talent, two rank 3 Talents, or 4 rank 2 Talents.

Troll (as 7HD)

5 Lifepoints, 3 Stunt points

3- Double claw [F*]

3- Regenerate [F**]

3- claws [O]

2- big and tough [D]

*When a Stunt point is spent a troll gets two attacks at rank 3. A troll still attacks twice without a Stunt point being spent, but rolls only 2 dice on the second attack.

**Regenerate suffers a 2-rank penalty if a Stunt point isn’t used. Each round a Troll has a chance to regenerate even without spending a Stunt point. A single die is rolled if no Stunt point is spent, and a full 3 dice are rolled if a Stunt point is spent. Any die providing a basic success (3 or above) restores a Lifepoint. Damage from fire and acid can only be regenerated if two 6s are rolled at once.

Ogre (as 5HD)

4 Lifepoints, 2 Stunt points

4-Greatclub [O]

2-big and strong [F*]

2-thick skin [D]

*Ogres are known for pulling off incredible feats of strength. They’ve been known to pull back a catapult arm with their bare hands, and juggle halflings.

Ochre Jelly (as 6HD)

5 Lifepoints, 1 Magic point

3-acidic touch [O]

3-amorphous body [D]

3-magic resistant [D]

1- splitting [F*]

*An ochre jelly can split itself into smaller “halves” to avoid taking magical damage, or becoming trapped. If avoiding being trapped, only one half escapes.

When it splits each half loses one point of both defensive Talents, and both are 1 Lifepoint lower than the Ochre Jelly was before the split. Both halves attack as normal Ochre Jellies.

It costs a Magic point for a Ochre Jelly to split.